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Editor

Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy

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With 102 Figures and 4 Tables

 Springer

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Toward an Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy

The aim of the *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy* (ERP) is to provide scholars with an easy-access reference work that gives accurate and reliable summaries of the current state of research. It includes entries on philosophers, problems, terms, historical periods, subjects, and the cultural context of Renaissance philosophy. Furthermore, it covers Latin, Arabic, Jewish, Byzantine, and vernacular philosophy, as well as featuring entries on the cross-fertilization of these philosophical traditions.

The approach adopted for the ERP blends the methodologies of intellectual history and the history of problems. The basic principle underpinning the ERP is that the best method for understanding Renaissance philosophy is to investigate the *translatio studiorum* as an act that is fully implicit in the most rudimentary communication and fully explicit in the coexistence and interaction of knowledge, languages, and cultures. Looking at Renaissance philosophy from the point of view of the *translatio studiorum* means emphasizing the breakthroughs, the resistance, and the transformation of language, concepts, and problems within specific traditions. Understandings and misunderstandings of Renaissance literature, philosophy, art, religion, and science have come to shape European cultures and help shape other civilizations. As George Steiner pointed out in *After Babel*, every culture has come to be by means of a continuous translation and rewriting of preceding meanings – a sequence of translations and transformations – and it is no wonder then that the very notion of “Renaissance” is historically associated with the translation of texts and traditions that had gone astray during the early Middle Ages. The rediscovery of Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew texts found its place within a reinvented continuity comprising translations, transcriptions, and interpretations, entailing the passage from one culture to another and in which new philosophical problems, concepts, and ideas came to be born.

But working on philosophical problems, ideas, and concepts in their transmission means equally also to understand that they are not only the subjects of philosophical disciplines strictly defined. Few epochs in the same ways as the Renaissance have seen philosophical problems tackled by people of different levels of culture and varying degrees of expertise and knowledge. For instance, the problem of “perspective” was addressed by painters, architects, and artisans, not merely by philosophers. Renaissance philosophy is essentially interdisciplinary pursuit. It is therefore necessary in this context to reflect on the philosophical issues of a variety of disciplines, including architecture, painting, religion, literature, etc., and on their interconnections with philosophy.

The claim that there exists a “pure philosophy” of the Renaissance is untenable.

Being editor of an encyclopedia goes well beyond solving practical problems such as the coordination of more than 600 scholars, with more or less efficiency. First and foremost is the need to tackle the fundamental theoretical issue of how to write history. In this specific case, we are confronted with a string of fundamental questions such as: “what is the Renaissance?”, “what is Renaissance philosophy?”, “is there such a thing as Renaissance philosophy?”, “what are the main connections between the ideas of the Renaissance and other historical periods or intellectual movements?”. Many scholars have provided answers to these questions, establishing a priori what “philosophy,” “Renaissance,” and “humanism” were, and then proceeded to determine whether a particular author, idea, or movement might be included under this label or not. The ERP aims to offer a valid alternative to these approaches.

Starting from the nineteenth century, one of the most important historiographical issues was to characterize what the Renaissance was. Did it exist? What was it? In his *The Lost Renaissance* Chris Celenza has recently reaffirmed that “no one could deny that there were groups of early modern thinkers who believed they were living in a time of cultural rebirth” (Celenza 2001, xvii). But to what extent? Is it a period of Western history or a movement? Ernst Gombrich has explicitly argued that the Renaissance had all the characteristics of a movement which may be understood as a recovery or revival of classical antiquity or values with a core of dedicated souls surrounded by a crowd of hangers-on (Gombrich 1979). Erwin Panofsky also maintained that from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century Renaissance scholars were convinced that their period was a new age as sharply differentiated from the medieval past as the medieval past had been from classical antiquity, and marked by a concerted effort to revive the culture of the latter (Panofsky 1969, 38). This widespread insight into the peculiar character and physiognomy of the Renaissance is no doubt supported by a great deal of textual evidence and historical proof (Kohl 1992). Nonetheless, there have been several recent detailed studies – among them, those of Robert Black – that have questioned whether the Renaissance was a coherent and well-defined movement as opposed to something hybrid (Black 2005). Furthermore, conceiving of the Renaissance as a movement entails the no less slippery assumption that whoever proclaimed the importance of the revival postulated also that something dead had had to be reborn, and that the period responsible for this death was the Middle Ages (Gombrich 1974), leading to the long-standing controversy around periodization (Cantimori 1959, 340–378).

In order to solve this problem, from the Second World War onward the scholarship has tightly linked the challenge of defining the Renaissance to that of defining “humanism,” because – in Jim Hankins’s words – if all the cultural products of an age are an expression of a shared vision of the world, humanism was the vision of the world of the Renaissance (Hankins 2005, 73). But new questions quickly arise: What was humanism? Was it philosophy? Or rather, was it only a literary movement? Was it a reawakening of the human spirit, a

new view on the nature of the human being? Was it a revival of paganism or a new way of conceiving Christianity? Eugenio Garin and Paul Oskar Kristeller – the two most important twentieth-century interpreters of Renaissance humanism – offered two apparently oppositional solutions. The former argued that Italian Renaissance humanism was – in being a fundamentally new way of thinking – a new philosophy. It was a movement whose essence was determined by its philological attitude toward the past, and this attitude concerns the understanding of the ancients and enabling them flourish within their own historical environment. And it is precisely this philological attitude that constitutes the new philosophy, or rather the new method of posing problems, which is itself for Garin effectively philosophizing. Humanism as a whole was not only literary but also philosophical in content, breaking with the traditions of medieval philosophy and playing key role in the pre-history of modern thought. Furthermore, for Garin, humanism consisted in a renewed confidence in man and his possibilities, and in an enriched appreciation of man's activity in every possible sense, especially in civic life (Hankins 1995). But recent studies – see, for instance, the collections of essays edited by Hankins 2004 – have shown that any particular opinion expressed by a humanist is by no means shared by all of them, or even consistently held by the same writers – even the attractive idea of civic humanism was largely limited to Florence and prevailed for only a relatively short period of time.

On the other side, for Kristeller, humanism was strictly connected with the activity of the schools and universities and with an educational program comprising the five disciplines of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy (Kristeller 1944–45, 365; Kohl 1992, 185; Celenza 2001, 42). He was aware that humanism implies a new intellectual stance and program of study, but in his view it covered an attitude of the mind that had existed long before, without philosophical allegiance. Humanism was not a philosophical movement according to Kristeller: in fact, humanists neither shared an identifiable political ideology (Hankins 2020) nor a certain activist view of the world and place of man within it, nor certain religious or anti-religious views, nor even the desire to surpass the ancients. They merely shared a commitment to the five above-mentioned disciplines (Celenza 2001, 43; Hankins 2001; Hankins 2002; Hankins 2005; Hankins 2011). Humanists were not philosophers. Humanism was essentially a literary movement concerned with the *studia humanitatis* (Monfasani 2000).

Each of Garin and Kristeller's approaches possess their own strengths and led, in turn, to other seminal historical research. Garin seems to defend an arbitrary and aprioristic position – since “humanism” never existed as whole and unique movement, but there existed only humanists and *studia humanitatis* (Campana 1946). On the other hand, as Jill Kraye has elegantly argued, it is necessary to overcome the dichotomy between humanist and philosopher (Kraye 2016). A humanist could be a philosopher and a philosopher could endorse a humanistic approach.

The recent highly perceptive studies of Robert Black, Chris Celenza, Anthony Grafton, Kenneth Gouwens, Jill Kraye, James Hankins, and Ronald

G. Witt have pointed out that a historical period of such complexity as the Renaissance cannot be summed up by means of a simple definition. Of course, a historical period will have its own particular physiognomy, and the attempt to identify that physiognomy must proceed gradually and a definition must be formulated only at the end of the research and not at its outset. But it is even more difficult to determine what Renaissance philosophy was, because the history of philosophy is usually written from the point of view of one particular philosophy, and each point of view generally gives little attention to thinkers or problems which are unrelated.

Recent scholarship has made it very clear that the goal of historians of philosophy should be to write a history of philosophy which entertains everything that has at any one time been considered part of philosophy. The Renaissance was a complex, hybrid phenomenon, with chronologically and geographically diverse and varied roots. The latest research has established that there cannot be a simple approach to this heterogeneous series of historical developments (Black 2005, 99). This is the reason why the ERP is now tackling the question of what an effective methodology for a Renaissance history of philosophy might be, in particular reflecting on the potential for new technology for determining new historical paradigms and categories.

ERP proposes to rethink the Renaissance and its “thought” through a specifically historical and bottom-up approach. This historiographical methodology can be termed “liquid” and therefore characterizes a “liquid Renaissance.” The term is employed in the same way as contemporary historians and sociologists characterize a “liquid democracy” or “liquid society” – that is, when one or more parts of the whole constitute – whether dynamically, voluntarily, or involuntarily – the whole itself, which in a continuous cyclical movement works to redefine each of the parts. The methodological idea of the ERP is that each protagonist or event of a historical period or intellectual movement influences, shapes, and determines not only the historical period itself or the philosophical movement but also the way in which historians conceive of them through specific historiographical categories that – in turn – have impact on the historiographical research as filters that allow for the re-involvement of the same protagonists or events or novel elements. To historians it is evident that it is impossible not to see the past from the point of view of the present, but this needs to be done in the correct way, or else certain aspects of the past may be overlooked or misunderstood. The methodology underpinning the ERC should help provide a better understanding of the past through recapturing its categories as far as that is possible. The Renaissance will thus be carefully historically qualified according to time and place and constantly redefined according to the progress of scholarship, since what the Renaissance was or is shifts in the course of time almost kaleidoscopically.

This is in itself nothing very new: we learn this from hermeneutics. But hermeneutics led to negative results because it is impossible to escape from the hermeneutic circle. A possible solution can be found in applying the second sociological notion advanced recently by Peter Burke in his *Social History of Knowledge* – that is, “reflexivity.” What is reflexivity in the case of the

historiography applied specifically to the new technologies employed for the ERP? A reflexive methodology comprises three stages.

1. Writing entries – that is, case studies – on Renaissance philosophy, where in the first instance for “Renaissance” is understood the period between 1300 and 1650, and for philosophy all that material that is based on ancient or medieval philosophy or that had influenced philosophy.
2. From these case studies, there is created an overall picture of what the Renaissance was, but this is not static; rather it is dynamic. In fact, this picture allows us to reinterpret what has already been written or to speculate about what should be written in the future according to what has been uncovered. This is possible because the medium is not a static printed page on paper but a dynamic online electronic version.
3. From the first very provisional overall sketch of the Renaissance it becomes possible to write progressively more insightful entries, maintaining the record of past entries, showing thus the evolution of the scholarship, and eventually reconfiguring the initial time span (1300–1650), or even the very conception of philosophy itself. Thus it may be possible to get closer to an understanding what the Renaissance is and was, and how the conception of it has changed over time. This is an activity of writing and rewriting history not possible 20 years ago, and which opens up the possibility for historians to be more precise in their process of historical reconstruction.

To take a single example: in writing the entry “Love,” the historian understands that Pietro Bembo contributed to the topic, but Bembo is not included in the ERP because he is usually considered a man of letters and not a philosopher; yet it is possible now to include the entry “Bembo, Pietro” directly in the ERP, reshaping the idea of what philosophy was in the Renaissance. Bembo is just one instance. In writing the entry on “Bembo, Pietro,” who knows what else we may uncover – perhaps we will include authors such as Romolo Amaseo or others. It seems a never-ending story, as every good piece of research is: something very concrete in practice and that continuously mirrors the state-of-the-art of historical research.

There is a Renaissance parallel for this kind of reflexivity, and it is what the Renaissance logicians called *regressus*, where from new knowledge of a particular we arrive at new knowledge of other particulars, through a new general or universal form of reconstruction, never static as a metaphysical entity, but always “liquid.” It’s a post-modern historiographical methodology, based on micro-historical enquiry and on an inductive approach which determines the various historical narratives.

The ERP is based on a bottom-up approach – that is, the project does not presuppose a fixed idea of what philosophy is, and on that basis is it decided which entries to include; rather, the ERP aims to allow the nature of Renaissance philosophy and contemporaneous philosophical problems to emerge from the entries. The goal is ambitious, because nothing is definitive in the adoption of this methodology. However, it is possible to venture some basic

principles and assurances in that the ERP will be published in four different formats: (1) an HTML online dynamic version; (2) an online pdf version; (3) an HTML static version; (4) a paper edition. The ERP has been conceived very particularly for the HTML dynamic version in being designed from the start as a liquid and reflexive entity. The online platform allows entries to be edited and updated whenever the need arises (of course, only where necessary) on a continuous basis into the longer term. Being continuously revised and updated, it will always be at the forefront of thinking, and it will thus remain the key reference for future generations of scholars. Furthermore, with SpringerReference it will be possible to link a word in an entry to an infinite number of other entries present in SpringerReference, on SpringerLink, or on the internet.

With a determined nod to intellectual history and the history of problems, each entry considers the legacy – and departure from – of past philosophical tradition, highlighting the innovations and originality of Renaissance philosophical thought. There will be five different kinds of entry: (1) disciplines; (2) problems and concepts; (3) philosophical, political, social, religious movements; (4) philosophers; (5) context. Most entries will conform to the following format: (1) introduction; (2) connection with, and departure from, tradition; (3) innovation and original aspects; (4) impact and legacy; (5) references to other entries; (6) primary literature; (7) secondary literature. Entries on individual philosophers will include a biographical section. The introduction has been conceived as a sort of summary or abstract accessible to the general reader in philosophy or in the particular field of competence of the entry. The entries are organized in an A–Z format for ease of access. There are a range of word counts offered: two varieties of short entry of 600/700 and 1500–3000 words each; a medium entry of 6000 words; and a fuller survey entry of 10,000 words.

Being conceived as online platform, this printed edition reflects the situation at October 2020 with all its limitations. Many entries are now under revision and production for the online version, lining up to change the image of philosophy in the Renaissance.

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Marco Sgarbi
Editor

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► [Al-Jāmī](#)

Abarbanel

► [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Abbacus School

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Abstract

The abbacus school was a school for artisans' and merchants' sons, functioning in northern Italy (thirteenth to sixteenth century). It taught the use of Hindu-Arabic numerals and fundamental commercial arithmetic: the rule of three, monetary and metrological conversions, simple and composite interest, partnership, simple and composite discounting, alloying,

the technique of a "single false position," and, finally, simple area calculation. Topics like the double false position were not part of the curriculum, but they are often dealt with in the abbacus treatises; they probably served to show virtuosity in the competition for employment and pupils.

The manuscripts connected to the abbacus school tradition are of very different character. Some are messy problem collections, some orderly presentations, and a few genuine encyclopaediae. Some are produced by mathematically incompetent compilers and some by the best European mathematicians of the age.

Traditionally but mistakenly, the abbacus books are to be derived from Leonardo Fibonacci's *Liber Abbaci* and *Practica Geometriae*. As shown by closer inspection of the texts, they derive from direct inspiration from a broader Mediterranean environment, which had also inspired Fibonacci around 1200. After c. 1330, however, the abbacus tradition had become an autonomous current, no more significantly influenced by the Arabic or Ibero-Provençal world. Influences from Boethian and Euclidean arithmetic, though existing, remained peripheral.

Printing allowed the preparation and spread of the great works of Luca Pacioli, Girolamo Cardano, and Niccolò Tartaglia, as well as more modest books corresponding to the school curriculum. The former group,

Translations into English are due to the present author.

integrated with the theory of irrationals of *Elements* X, provided the basis for the renovation of algebra brought about by Viète and Descartes; the latter made possible the spread of abacus-type teaching of basic applied arithmetic to the whole of Western Europe, where it stayed alive until c. 1960.

Character and Beginnings

The abacus school was a school type existing in the region between Genova, Milan, and Venice to the north and Umbria to the south from the mid-thirteenth to the sixteenth century. It was mainly frequented by merchant and artisan youth for 2 years or less around the age of 12–14 (a few younger or older), who here learned basic arithmetic, having already learned reading and writing and before starting apprenticeship.

Etymologically, *abbaco* obviously comes from Latin *abbacus* (< Greek $\alpha\beta\alpha\chi$), a reckoning board. However, *abbaco* (which we may distinguish by using the most common spelling of the time) has nothing to do with reckoning boards of any kind. The first known occurrences of the word are in Leonardo Fibonacci's *Liber Abbaci* (1857) and *Practica Geometriae* (1862) and in a few references in the latter to the former as his *Liber Abbaci*. Most of these references are compatible with a generic understanding as “practical computation,” but a few give more restrictive information: the *Liber abbaci* (p. 5) as well as the *Practica* (p. 8) specify that *abbacus* encompasses finger reckoning, while the *Liber abbaci* (p. 353) ascribes to the abacus a particular way to extract the square root of a non-square, multi-digit number. It seems that Fibonacci refers to a particular teaching tradition, which could be represented by the school (or whatever it was) where his father let him pursue “the study of the abacus” in Bejaïa for some time during his boyhood (Fibonacci 1857, 1); but it may just as well correspond to a more widely disseminated Mediterranean type (the Italian area can probably be disregarded).

Whatever Fibonacci meant precisely by the word (if it was really his) may have been as obscure to his contemporaries as to us, but it caught on, first probably meaning “practical” or “commercial computation” and then soon

referring to the new Italian school tradition that came to teach that topic. In 1241, Fibonacci received a yearly pension from the Commune of Pisa represented by its officials in *abbacatione* for his consulting services in *abbacandi* estimations (Bonaini 1857, 241) – thus probably not for teaching; but in 1265 a document refers to a master teaching the abacus in Bologna. In the 1280s sources start talking about abacus teachers paid by the city communes; in the longer run, only smaller cities would need to do that; Florence and Venice seem to have relied on privately run schools. Such schools remained in existence at least until the late sixteenth century – Ulivi (2002) offers a convenient survey.

Students and Teaching

The students, as mentioned, were mostly sons of artisans and merchants – including those belonging to the highest mercantile patriciate. But also Machiavelli, a lawyer's son, was sent to the abacus school of Pier Maria Calandri (Black 2007, 379). In the city of Florence, in much of the period, between one fourth and one half of all children learned to read and write, and perhaps 10% of boys frequented the abacus school (Høyrup 2007, 27). In other towns the percentage may have been considerably lower – not to speak of the countryside, the abacus school was urban.

What did these boys learn? *Not* accounting – that was learned on-the-job by bank and merchant house apprentices. We happen to know two documents that outline a curriculum; one, from the earlier fifteenth century, is said to correspond to “the Pisa way” (Arrighi 1967); the other tells what was done in a Florentine school in 1519 (Goldthwaite 1972). The differences are modest and mainly concern the order in which things were taught; scattered remarks in the writings of various abacus masters support the assumption that the two documents taken together are representative.

The initial part of the course taught operations with pure numbers. First came the writing of Hindu-Arabic numerals and, next, the multiplication tables and their application. Neither source mentions addition and subtraction – these techniques may have been implicit in the learning of

the number system. Division followed, beginning with divisors known from the multiplication tables and going on with multi-digit divisors. Calculation with fractions ended the first part.

The second part of the course trained commercial mathematics (in different order in the two curricula): the rule of three, monetary and metrological conversions, simple and composite interest and reduction to interest per day, partnership, simple and composite discounting, alloying, the technique of a “single false position,” and, finally, area measurement.

From the multiplication tables onward, everything was accompanied by problems to be solved as homework. More complex matters, like the use of a double false position and algebra, are amply treated in many “abbacus manuscripts” (a notion to be dealt with imminently), but they appear not to have been part of the curriculum.

The “Abbacus Books”

Though published almost four decades ago, (Van Egmond 1980) it remains an almost complete catalogue of known “abbacus manuscripts.” These have in common to have been produced by writers who appear to have been connected – as former students or as teachers – to the abbacus school environment and to deal with mathematics. Some are messy collections of problems (*zibaldoni*), while some could look like “teacher’s books” (the students themselves did not have books), presenting a sequence of topics in an orderly way (but they may also be written for patrons or friends, some indeed claim to be adequate for self-study); three are genuine mathematical encyclopediae – Benedetto da Firenze’s *Pratica d’arismetricha* from 1363 was copied often, while Ottobon. lat. 3307 from c. 1365, and the slightly earlier Florence, Bibl. Naz. Centr. Palat. 573 are known only from their compilers’ autographs (Høyrup 2010, 32, 39). Some of the manuscripts are author’s autographs (but they may still draw heavily on earlier texts, as most mathematics textbook still do today), some are booksellers’ or similar copies, some are anonymous, some carry the name of the author, and some borrow the name of a famous author but

alter or maltreat his text in one or the other way. Some authors have a deep understanding of the mathematics they present even when it is advanced, others make blunders as soon as the inverse rule of three or volumes are involved, and some cheat, either knowingly or naively plagiarizing the fraud of predecessors – the abbacus manuscript of Piero della Francesca famously falls in the latter category (Giusti 1991, 64). This mainly regards the presentation of glaringly false rules for the solution of irreducible algebraic problems of the third or fourth degree, probably used to impress mathematically incompetent municipal authorities and to dumbfound rivals in competitions for employment (Høyrup 2009).

Fibonacci Versus General Mediterranean Background

It is a recurrent claim that the abbacus books are derived from and represent reduced versions of Fibonacci’s *Liber Abbaci* and *Practica Geometriae* – representative quotations in (Høyrup 2005, 24–25). This is an almost complete mistake. The term *abbaco*, it is true, is likely to be inspired by Fibonacci, and one of the earliest known abbacus treatises also cites and draws on the *Liber abbaci*.

This treatise (Florence, Riccardiana 2404, ed. Arrighi 1989) presents itself as *Livro de l’abbecho secondo la oppenione de maestro Leonardo de la chasa degli figluogle Bonaçie da Pisa*, “Abbacus book according to the opinion of master Leonardo Fibonacci.” It is a beautiful *de luxe* vellum copy of an original which because of misinterpreted internal evidence (copied older loan documents) has been dated to 1288–1290. It must be slightly to somewhat later but hardly later than the first decade of the fourteenth century (the author does not recognize the most basic algebraic terminology). As closer analysis reveals, the text moves on two levels, clearly distinguishable in their number terminology (Høyrup 2005). On one level we find material adapted to the curriculum of the abbacus school. This level has absolutely nothing to do with the *Liber abbaci*. The other level is constituted by sophisticated problems outside the domain

considered in the abbacus school. Here, almost everything is translated from the *Liber abbaci* – unfortunately, as it turns out, often without understanding. It seems that Fibonacci had already become a mythical culture hero for abbacus mathematics around 1300 – but with little real impact.

Characteristic is the way the essential rule of three is dealt with. Fibonacci does not really present a rule; he seems to describe (in terms taken from Euclidean theory) what he has observed to be done on an Arabic dust or clayboard (Arabic since inscription starts from the right, and the left is “behind”) (Fibonacci 1857, 83f):

In all commercial exchanges [*negotiationes*], four proportional numbers are always found, of which three are known, but the remaining unknown. The first of these three known numbers is the number of sale of any merchandise, be it number, or weight, or measure [explanatory examples]. The second, however, is the price of this sale [...]. The third, then, will be the sale of some quantity of this merchandise, whose price, namely the fourth, unknown number, will not be known. Therefore, in order to find the unknown number from those that are known, we give a universal rule for all cases, namely, in the top of a board write the first number to the right, namely the merchandise. Behind in the same line you posit the price of the same merchandise, namely the second number. The third too, if it is the merchandise, write it under the merchandise, that is, under the first, and if it is the price, write it under the price, that is, under the second. In this way, as it is of the kind of that under which it is written, thus it will also be of the quality or the quantity, whether in number, in weight or in measure. [...]. When they are described thus, it will be obvious that two of those that are posited will always be contrary [*ex adverso*], which have to be multiplied together, and that if the outcome of their multiplication is divided by the third number, the fourth, unknown, will doubtlessly be found.

Riccardiana 2404 (Arrighi 1989, 9) gives the rule like this:

If some computation was said to us in which three things are proposed, then we shall multiply the thing that we want to know with the one which is not of the same [kind], and divide in the other.

If one misreads Fibonacci’s *ex adverso* as referring to difference in kind and not to the location in the rectangular frame which he has just described, the Riccardiana formulation may seem to abbreviate the last lines from the *Liber abbaci*. This overlooks,

however, that the Riccardiana formulation had been standard in Indian and Arabic vernacular mathematics for almost a millennium (Høyrup 2012).

Another (now mutilated) early abbacus text, Siena, L. VI. 47₂, was apparently written in Pisa around 1300s; (Franci 2015) suggests a late thirteenth-century date, (Ulivi 2011), better argued, the early fourteenth century. The author might be a certain Bindo Nocchi de Ambaco, but only chronological overlap supports that assumption. A collection of numerical tables in the beginning might seem to be derived from the *Liber abbaci*. However, Fibonacci borrows a Maghreb term for prime numbers (*ašamm*) as *hasam* and *asam*, while the Siena text uses *la salma*, clearly derived (with misunderstanding) from something like *al-ašammā*⁵, with the article, double consonant, and a feminine ending which Fibonacci does not indicate and which must come directly from spoken Arabic. Moreover, even though the initial introduction of the rule of three has been lost (if it was ever present), it is clear from the way its use in problems is stated that it coincided with the vernacular form found in the Riccardiana manuscript.

A third early text is the “Columbia algorism” (Vogel 1977), probably the earliest of all, from 1285 to 1290 (Travaini 2003); it has been misdated to the mid-fourteenth century because a coin list was misinterpreted. It contains an explicit introduction of the rule of three – a characteristic twisted version of the vernacular rule which only turns up again in the late fifteenth century but may have survived outside the core abbacus area; however, problems calling for the use of three are mostly reduced to a counterfactual model, of the type “if 3 were 5, what would 7 be?”. This was the standard in all Ibero-Provençal abbacus-type treatises until the end of the fifteenth century and was also known to Fibonacci, who speaks of it (1857, 170) as the vernacular way – in agreement with Fibonacci’s reference in one early manuscript (Vatican, Palat. lat. 1343, fol. 47^r col. II) to reliance on a Castilian source. There are further Iberian affinities in the Columbia algorism, so all in all it turns out that Fibonacci as well as the budding abbacus culture drew independently on both Arabic (Maghreb or al-Andalus) and Christian Ibero-Provençal sources.

This is even more clear if we look at *algebra* – a topic that did not belong to the abbas school curriculum but which is dealt with in many abbas manuscripts. As other advanced topics (in particular the double false position), it may have served in the training of assistant-apprentices – but this is a hypothesis with no support in the sources. What we do know is that proficiency in such difficult matters played a role in the competition for employment or for pupils. Algebra is dealt with in Chapter 15, Section 3 in the *Liber abaci* – but from the very beginning, abbas algebra is in a wholly different style, probably at first borrowed from the Ibero-Provençal area (Høyrup 2007, 147–169). One school tradition in Florence honored Fibonacci and copied a translation of his algebra, but its truly outstanding members (among whom Antonio de’ Mazzinghi in the later fourteenth century and Benedetto da Firenze around 1460) made their own algebraic work in continuation of the abbas tradition.

Autonomization

After the earlier fourteenth century, we find very few plausible instances of recent Arabic or Iberian influence; by then, the abbas tradition had established itself as an autonomous current.

Beginning in the later fourteenth century, on the other hand, some ideas and concepts are adopted from Euclidean and Boethian mathematics into the non-curricular higher level. Antonio de Mazzinghi may have been the first to speak of the sequence of algebraic powers as a continued proportion; Benedetto da Firenze includes a chapter on the Boethian names for ratios in his encyclopedic *Pratica d’arismetricha*, while another chapter draws on Euclid and Campanus in a presentation of the composition of ratios. However, as the roughly contemporary anonymous abbas encyclopedia Florence, Palat. 573 (fol. 17^v) observes concerning the Boethian names, “we in the schools do not use such terms but say instead [...] that 8 is $\frac{2}{3}$ of 12 and 12 is $\frac{3}{2}$ of 8.” The external influence thus remained external and peripheral. This may astonish, given that several abbas masters also taught at universities – but what they taught there

was astronomy and astrology, subordinate to medicine, not mathematical theory.

Impact and Legacy

Only Luca Pacioli, Niccolò Tartaglia, and Girolamo Cardano were to achieve some measure of integration between abbas and theoretical mathematics from the outgoing fifteenth century onward – the former two products of the abbas environment but determined to enter the world of university learning, the latter a university scholar looking at abbas mathematics “from a higher vantage point” (as once Fibonacci). It is no accident that all three had their works printed, but also genuine abbas books appeared in print – first the anonymous *Larte de labbacho*, printed in Treviso (1478), and Pietro Borghi’s *Opera de arithmetica* (1484); Francesco Feliciano da Lazesio’s *Libro de Abbacho novamente composto* (1526) was reprinted as late as 1692.

The latter reprint is symptomatic of one of the repercussions of the abbas tradition in later centuries. Until the new math reforms of the 1960s, the teaching of practical arithmetic in European schools (and such schools of the colonial world where European teaching was imported) remained close to the pattern established by the abbas school. The most direct heirs were the German *Lese- und Rechenschulen*, which however also had to teach reading and writing. The spelling *Coss* of its translation of the algebraic *cosa* shows this German tradition to be derived from northern Italy (Milan etc.), which would write *cossa* – not from Tuscany or Umbria.

At the mathematically higher level, the indubitably most important legacy was *algebra* (Stedall 2010). In part mediated by Michael Stifel’s *Arithmetica integra* (1544) and Simon Stevin’s *L’arithmetique* (1585), the most influential works behind the renovated algebra created by Viète and Descartes were Pacioli’s *Summa de arithmetica* (1494), Cardano’s *Ars magna* (1545), and Rafael Bombelli’s *L’algebra* (1572) – and these, on their part, owe most of their inspiration to the supra-curricular work of abbas writers, complemented by the theory of irrationals of *Elements X*.

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Abrabanel

- [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Abramanel

- [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Abravanel, Jehudah

► [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Abravanel, Juda

► [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Abravanel, Judah

► [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Abravanel, Leon

Born: Uncertain Date, Around 1458–1470, Lisbon (Portugal)

Died: Between 1521 and 1535, Place Unknown, Presumptively, in Italy

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Abstract

Leon Abravanel, born Judah Abravanel and known as Leone Ebreo, was a Renaissance Jewish philosopher, author of the *Dialoghi d'amore*. Many aspects of Judah's life and the publication of the *Dialoghi* remain to this day obscure. Composed of philosophical allegories and metaphors, on one side, and mythological and hermetic images, on the other, the *Dialoghi* is a dialogue on love between two characters, a man and a woman, Filone and Sofia, which deals with the concepts of love and desire, the idea of a love circle, and the issue of the soul's

return to God. Leone's *Dialoghi* can be considered as the product of the mosaic-like cultural milieu of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, an original philosophical discussion on love, in which Neoplatonic elements join with Aristotelian and Jewish features.

Alternate Names

Abravanel, Jehudah; Abravanel, Yehudah; Abravanel, Judah; Abravanel, Juda; Abrabanel; Abramanel; Abarbanel; Ebreo, Leone; Hebreo, Leone; Hebreo, Lione; Maestro Leone

Biography and Works

Author of the *Dialoghi d'amore* (Leone Ebreo 2008, 2009), the Renaissance philosopher and physician Leon Abravanel, born Judah Abravanel, best known as Leone Ebreo, the eldest son of Isaac Abravanel, was born between 1458 and 1470 in Lisbon, Portugal, where the Abravanel dwelled, in all probability, since the beginning of the fifteenth century. A date, which can better help us establish Judah's birth year, is the year 1483 when the Abravanel were forced to leave Portugal. Indeed, Isaac Abravanel, together with the influential Duke of Bragança, was charged with conspiracy against King John II. Most scholars have suggested that Judah was a recognized physician in the last quarter of the fifteenth century in Lisbon and that, consequently, he should have been, by then, almost in his early 20s, if not in his mid-20s. This would speak in favor of a birth year before 1465. In support of this hypothesis, relevant are some verses of an elegy, *Telunah 'al ha-zeman* (*Complaint upon the Time*), written in Hebrew by Judah himself at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in particular, the passage from verse 29 to verse 35 (Rodrigues 1981, 560, vv. 29–35). Recounting his exile from Portugal, Judah remembers how, in those days, the Portuguese king pillaged his house, stripping him of all his belongings. From these lines, Judah seems to refer to King Manuel I concerning the persecution against him and his

father Isaac on the score of the aristocrat plot. Actually, the king who accused Judah's father of high treason in 1483 was John II. However, what matters in this context is that, according to Judah's words, he would have acquired, already in the 1480s, assets in silver and gold, evidence of his maturity. Sonne (1934) suggests a different interpretation of these lines, highlighting that the Hebrew personal suffix "my" to the words "silver" and "gold" complies only with the rhyming scheme of the elegy, like in other verses of the poem. Hence, those possessions would be of his family rather than strictly personal. Sonne (1934) also argues that the sources which would attest to Judah's medical practice in Lisbon are unreliable and secondary. Therefore, he estimates Judah's birth around 1470.

From Judah's *Complaint*, an invaluable source for reconstructing his life, we also know that Judah openly looked at his father Isaac as his mentor, admitting to owing him a part of his wisdom (Rodrigues 1981, 562, v. 107). The strong influence played by Isaac on Judah is undeniable, just as it is evident from how Judah commends the father in the prefaces he composed for the publication, in 1505, of three works written by Isaac (*Rosh 'amanah*, *Nahalat 'avot*, and *Zevah Pesah*). The short poem Judah composed for his father's *Commentary on the Latter Prophets*, which appeared on the literary scene in 1520, around 12 years after Isaac's death, is not less appreciatory. Judah Abravanel's *Lament for his Father*, a eulogy presumably written for the funerals of Isaac between Venice and Padua, also reveals the role of Isaac in Judah's life. Indeed, comparing the beloved father, the image of wisdom, to the light of day, Judah regards him not only as his teacher but also as the father and the leader of every Jew (Rodrigues 1981, 571, vv. 8–9).

A de facto influential financial man and a sharp statesman from Portugal to Spain to Italy, Isaac was a recognized leader of the Iberian Jewry, a biblical exegete and a religious thinker, a fifteenth-century man of learning. Although he warns against the limits of philosophy in several of his religious and exegetical works, he was well acquainted with the Greek and Arabic philosophical cultures and was master of the Latin

exegetical and theological tradition, from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas. A kind of humanistic climate could have been the cultural milieu that surrounded the young Judah Abravanel much before his arrival in Italy and the drawing up of his masterpiece, the *Dialoghi d'amore*. Indeed, already Isaac's works show the evident assimilation not only of non-Jewish philosophies but also of humanistic patterns from Latin authors, such as Cicero, Seneca, and Virgil, and the Italian poet Petrarch.

Expelled from Portugal, exiled in Castile, it is quite sure that Judah got married and had his first son, named after his father, around 1490–1491 (Rodrigues 1981, 559–560, vv. 18–23). Meanwhile, Isaac was in the service of the cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza, *el tercer rey de España*, of his nephew, and, presumptively, of the *Reyes Católicos*, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabel I of Castile. The Abravanel family lived in Spain until 1492, when the Spanish monarchs, incited by the Spanish Inquisition and its prominent leader Tomás de Torquemada, proclaimed the decree of expulsion of the Jews from the Spanish realm and its dominions at the end of March. According to the *Complaint upon the Time* (Rodrigues 1981, 560, vv. 24–29), the Spanish sovereigns attempted to persuade the Abravanel family and, in particular, Isaac to be baptized kidnapping Judah's first-born son. However, the Abravanel family were able to abort the attempt and save the young child, hiding him in Portugal.

Compelled to leave Castile, Jews could take refuge in Portugal, Navarre, Italy, or Ottoman lands. Because of the sentence of death against Judah's father still in force in Portugal, the Abravanel family headed toward Italy. Guidi (2011) proposes a possible reason for Abravanel's preference for Italy: the friendly relationship between Isaac Abravanel and Yehiel da Pisa, who lived in Florence. Indeed, an epistolary exchange, which certainly testifies to an intellectual network, the dispatch of manuscripts, as far afield as a real fondness between them, can be attested from 1472. The Abravanel family went ashore in Naples, where the sovereign was Ferrante I, born in Valencia and brought up under Spanish and humanistic mores. Ferrante was the natural son of Alfonso

V of Aragon and, for this reason, cousin of the king of Spain, Ferdinand II of Aragon. Despite the blood relation, the king of Naples had, for political and economic reasons, a benevolent and tolerant attitude toward Jews.

According to the biography of Isaac Abravanel written by Baruch Uzziel Forti, in the foreword of Isaac's *Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshu'ah*, a commentary on the *Book of Daniel*, published in Ferrara in 1551 (Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, V, Nr. 11), and considering the Edict of Expulsion, the Abravanel should have arrived in Naples around the end of 1492. Judah's father seems to have quickly become one of the most distinguished members of the court of Ferrante I and, soon thereafter, councilor of Ferrante's son, Alfonso II, during the burdensome years of his brief reign. On the 24 July 1494, Judah himself, together with his wife and all his family, was, for all practical purposes, legally like a Neapolitan citizen (*ut cives*), a special concession to Jews (Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, VII, Nr. 15).

Naples was renowned for the Academy of Giovanni Pontano, leading figure at the Aragonese court and poet, the perfect portrait of a humanist, deeply interested in astrology. This is the central theme in his work *Urania*, a text that could have influenced, according to Vila-Chã (2006), the astrological conception developed in the *Dialoghi d'amore* by Judah. Naples was also the hearth of an active Jewish community, where Yehudah ben Yehiel Messer Leon's *yeshivah* and the Soncinos' typography were active in those years, increased by the new arrivals in 1492, such as the grammarian and poet Moses ibn Habib, the kabbalist Isaac Mar Hayyim, and the Portuguese scholars Abraham ben Nissim Hayyun and David ben Solomon ibn Yahya. Moreover, in Italy and, in particular, in the Florentine area, in the fifteenth century, the rediscovery of Plato and Neoplatonism sealed a new era in the Renaissance philosophy, enhancing the Aristotelian perspective. Indeed, the structure of the *Dialoghi* is the result of the Italian philosophical and religious syncretism, the mirror image of the humanistic and hermetic sixteenth-century culture in which Platonic elements merge with Aristotelian philosophical features within a

renovated religious framework. The very same Isaac composed the better part of his writings in Italy, when, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, he withdrew to Puglia, between Monopoli and Barletta. Even if the architecture of Isaac's works and his interests are quite different from those of Judah, the closeness and the intimate philosophical interconnection between them did not diminish, fostered by the Italian humanism.

Until 1495, Judah's life appears, as we can deduce, closely linked to his father's career and experience. It is noteworthy how not only the father's life gives us a guideline to get a portrait of Judah's first years of life or youth but also how, after they parted ways, Judah's adulthood becomes challenging to reconstruct. Indeed, at the beginning of 1495, during and because of the French invasion of Italy and the conquest of Naples by Charles VIII, Isaac Abravanel followed his king, Alfonso II, to Sicily, while Judah seems to leave for Genoa, where he presumptively worked as a physician (Leone Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, VIII, Nr. 17). Aside from conjectures, it is not possible to determine precisely whether or how long Judah remains in Genoa and if he had established any relationship with the Genoese *literati*.

Most scholars traditionally suppose that Judah has undertaken his philosophical project, the *Dialoghi d'amore*, composed of three dialogues, during this period, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. One of the main elements to support this theory is the year occurring in the third dialogue of the *Dialoghi d'amore*: AM 5262, according to the Hebrew calendar. This year corresponds to the years 1501–1502 in the Gregorian calendar. However, we find this date only in the *editio princeps* of the *Dialoghi*, i.e., the edition published in 1535 by the printer Antonio Blado d'Asola in Rome, and in a manuscript of the third dialogue, MS Barberiniano Latino 3743 (Nelson Novoa 2009). The other four preserved (and known) manuscripts of the third dialogue present instead a variant reading: AM 5272, i.e., 1511–1512. In one of the manuscripts, MS Harley 5423 (Dionisotti 1959), probably copied by the amanuensis Ludovico degli Arrighi in Rome in the 1520s, the year 5272 is the result of a

correction (Nelson Novoa 2009). In this context, we should highlight that the manuscript tradition concerning the *Dialoghi* regards only the third dialogue. Furthermore, we do not have any autographed copy by Judah nor of any other evidence within the text, which can help us clarify the date of composition or give us information about the place and the situation in which Judah wrote his work.

In May 1501, Judah was in Barletta, a city in Puglia near Monopoli, where his father Isaac lived after his sojourns in Sicily and Corfu. Confirming Judah's presence in Puglia, on 10 May 1501, King Federico I of Naples requested support and assistance for Isaac's and Judah's relocation from Barletta to Naples (Leone Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, X, Nr. 19). Nevertheless, a letter, dated the last day of February of 1500 of the Venetian calendar, i.e., 1501, written by the ambassador Giovanni Badoer to the Council of Ten, would indicate that at the beginning of 1501, Judah resided in Naples, where he presumably gave public lectures (Nicolini 1930). However, Badoer's letter and the official attestation of Judah in Barletta are not necessarily incompatible. It is possible that Judah moved from Genoa to Naples at the end of 1500 and only in the spring of 1501 to Puglia, maybe to visit his father, as it also seems in Judah's prospective plan in Badoer's epistle. It is also possible that Judah left Naples due to a new forthcoming French threat, catching up with his father in Barletta, very near to Monopoli, which was at the time a Venetian dominion.

After spring 1501, we do not have any specific information about Judah's life until 1507, when he joined his father in Venice. The epistolary exchange between Saul ha-Cohen Ashkenazi and Isaac in 1507 (Leone Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, XII, Nr. 28) testifies to Judah's whereabouts in Venice. Moreover, these letters are particularly noteworthy because they highlight not only how much Isaac was proud of his son Judah for his philosophical achievements but also, presumptively, that Judah was writing his *Dialoghi d'amore*. Between 1502 and 1504, Judah also composed the elegy for his lost son, *Telunah 'al ha-zeman*, the introductory poems for his father's books, *Rosh 'amanah*, *Naḥalat 'avot*, and *Zevah*

Pesah, printed in Constantinople in 1505, and later the funeral lament for his father in 1508–1509.

After Venice and Isaac's death, Judah's life falls into obscurity. Two records allow us to know where Judah was in 1520: the first is an elegy, for his father's *Commentary on the Later Prophets*, printed in Pesaro with the cooperation of the very same Judah; the second is an official document, issued by the Viceroy Ramòn de Cardona, as proxy for Emperor Charles V, in which "maestre leon abravanel medico" together with his household was dispensed from the payment of a specific tax (Leone Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, XIII, Nr. 33). A private diary written by the Venetian chronicler Marino Sanuto reports the presence of a certain "maestro Lion Hebreo medico" in Naples in 1521, attesting to his medical activity at the Viceroy de Cardona's disposal, his competent efforts to heal Cardinal Raffaele Riario de San Giorgio during the prelate's sojourn in Naples, and his appeal to the viceroy to defend the Neapolitan Jewry's rights (Leone Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, XIII, Nr. 34). It is highly presumable that this Leone Ebreo is our Judah, the author of the *Dialoghi d'amore*. Moreover, on 15 May of 1521, an executive order repeats the tax exemption for "leon abravanel" (Leone Ebreo 1929a, *Anmerkungen*, Zu Nr. 33).

Much more uncertain is the information of the prologue to the 1584 Spanish translation of the *Dialoghi*, in which the Spanish translator, Carlos Montesa, provides us with two details: the first about the original language of the *Dialoghi*, which is still today a matter of contention, and the second concerning Judah's acquaintance with the papal court (Leone Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, XII, Nr. 31). Not all scholars have rejected the idea of a Roman period in Judah's life and a familiarity with the highest ranks of the Roman ecclesiastical office, basing this theory on the publication in Rome of the *Dialoghi*.

Finally, the words written in the preface by the editor of the *editio princeps*, the integral publication of the *Dialoghi*, Mariano Lenzi, allow us to infer that Judah was already dead in 1535. In the end, considering the ambiguous information on Judah's last years, we should generally assume

that the author of the *Dialoghi* died between 1521 and 1535.

The *Dialoghi d'amore*: The Publication and the Language

The integral edition – if we exclude the controversial theory of a fourth dialogue (Vila-Chã 2006; Guidi 2011) – of the *Dialoghi d'amore*, composed of three dialogues, was printed in Rome by Antonio Blado d'Asola. The editor of the *editio princeps* of the *Dialoghi* was Mariano Lenzi. Manuppella (Hebreu 1983) has shown a relationship between Lenzi and the well-known Claudio Tolomei, a Sienese exile in Rome, poet, and philologist, interested in the development of Tuscan vernacular. Thanks to the letter addressed by Tolomei to Pope Paul III's secretary, Blosio Palladio, Nelson Novoa (2007, 2008) has revealed that Lenzi was Tolomei's nephew. In some way, Claudio Tolomei seems connected to the publication of the *Dialoghi*. The publication of the *Dialoghi* by Tolomei's nephew could be presumptively considered as part of the active debate about the Italian vernacular. Indeed, it is not accidental that a syncretistic dialogue, like that of Leone Ebreo, appeared on the editorial scene when the Italian vernacular was a hotly discussed subject among circles of literati. The question of language was paramount, and literary and philosophical works on love, albeit with differences both in the spirit and in the approach to the love question, shared the Italian vernacular as a communication medium, becoming, in some cases, expressions of different and contrasting Italian vernacular theories. In 1525 Mario Equicola's *Libro de la natura de amore* was published, followed later by Baldassarre Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* (1528), by the 1530 revised version of Pietro Bembo's *Asolani*, and by the publication of Francesco Cattani da Diacceto's *I tre libri d'amore* in 1561. Furthermore, Neri Dortelata finally printed Ficino's vernacular translation of *Commentarium in Convivium Platonis de amore* in 1544, although Ficino had already composed the original Latin text and its vernacular

translation after the second half of the fifteenth century. Noteworthy, in this context and for the connection between the love issue and the vernacular question is Castiglione's interest for Leone's *Dialoghi*, as attested by three letters written in 1525: Castiglione asked for "Leone's books" together with Gian Giorgio Trissino's *Castellano* and Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua*, showing that the *Dialoghi* was already known 10 years before their publication.

If doubts on the publication of the *Dialoghi* remain, also the question on the original language of the *Dialoghi* is still open since there is not an autograph of the *Dialoghi*. If we consider the manuscript tradition concerning the third dialogue, we find that MS Patetta 373, the most ancient manuscript (1511–1513), according to Garvin (2001), for example, presents Latinisms, archaisms, and Spanishisms. Consequently, observing where Judah lived, it is possible that the first draft of the *Dialoghi* had been written in Italian vernacular, influenced by Spanish and Latin. Moreover, within the text, Judah often explains Hebrew words and how we should rightly translate them in Italian vernacular. These clarifications seem essential parts of his reasoning as if Judah had written his *Dialoghi* in a different language from Hebrew, addressing them to non-Jewish readers.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

The *Dialoghi d'amore* is a philosophical work in a dialogical form, organized in three dialogues, which diverge for subject and length. The first one defines the concepts of love and desire, while the second illustrates a cosmology of love. They both anticipate the principal notions of the third dialogue: the love circle and the soul's return to God. Differences notwithstanding, the three dialogues share a common framework: the courtship of the male character, Filone, toward the female one, Sofia. However, Filone is also the master of love, while Sofia is the disciple. Nevertheless, Judah overturns the roles again in the couple. Indeed, Sofia seems to lead their romantic liaison philosophically. She introduces Filone, as

the real disciple of love, to *Sophia* (wisdom) of a superior and noble love, which heads toward a *fruizione unitiva* with God, away from the physical satisfaction, in which Filone appears yet too interested. Angela Guidi (2011) has suggested an interesting and different interpretation of their intellectual relation, arguing that Leone uses for the dialogic scheme between Filone and Sofia a biblical model, that of the conversation between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Therefore, according to Guidi (2011), Filone, who embodies the Solomonic Jewish divine wisdom, maintains his primary and superior role, trying to lead on a path of “Judaization” Sofia, the foreign woman, the personification of the pagan Greek philosophy.

Significant is how Judah mentions, throughout the entire *Dialoghi*, only Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Maimonides, Ibn-Gabirol called Avicembron, Avicenna, al-Farabi, al-Gazali, Averroes and, once, the Jewish kabbalists (Pines 1983). In particular, Judah appears to be acquainted with Aristotle’s *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, with Maimonides’ *Moreh nevukhim*, and obviously with Plato’s *Timaeus* and *Symposium* (Feldman 2005). Judah, who composed his *Dialoghi* in Italy, appears influenced by contemporary authors and in particular by the Florentine Neoplatonic Academy philosophers and their philosophies of love, as well. For instance, Pines (1983) and Gershenzon (1992) estimate Ficino’s *Commentarium* in Convivium Platonis de amore as the principal Christian source of Judah’s thought. Interesting is the hypothesis of a sort of acquaintance or a friendly relationship between Giovanni Pico and Judah because of a document recorded by the physician Amato Lusitano, who met Judah’s grandson in the second half of the sixteenth century in Salonika (Leone Ebreo 1929a, *Regesten*, VI, Nr. 13). Judah’s grandson seems to have come into possession of a work about astrological themes, *De coeli harmonia*, written by the very Judah in *scholastico stilo* (probably in Latin and in the form of a tractate) upon request of the “divine” Pico della Mirandola. The issue is quite problematic, and some scholars have looked at Pico’s production in search of references to Judah. Actually, in Pico’s *Disputationes adversus astrologiam*

divinatricem, Pico talks about an illustrious man and renowned mathematician, a certain *Leo Hebraeus*. However, most scholars believe that Pico was referring to Levi ben Gershon, who lived in the fourteenth century. One of the main problems of a direct relationship between the Italian and the Portuguese is the fact that Pico died in 1494, only 2 years after Judah’s arrival in Italy, and that the *De coeli harmonia* is today lost. Thus, some scholars believe that the “divine” Pico mentioned by Judah could rather be Giovanni Pico’s nephew, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (Leão Hebreu 1983). Nevertheless, what should matter is to understand if and to what extent Giovanni Pico could have influenced Judah’s thought.

One of the key features that Judah shares with Giovanni Pico and more in general with Ficino and his followers and the Florentine Neoplatonic milieu is the idea of a *pax philosophica*, i.e., philosophical peace, in other words the belief that different philosophical and religious traditions, by means of the *prisca theologia*, proclaim the same truth and that their differences are only superficial and not essential. If on the one hand a peace seems to be established between Plato and Aristotle in a sort of, as Veltri (2009) says, *reductio ad Platonem*, which is, for example, one of the central concerns in Pico’s thought, on the other hand, this does not appear as the principal purpose in the syncretistic thought of Judah, but rather as the natural consequence of the authentic core of his philosophy: the concordance between the ancient philosophers and the Mosaic teachings and, more generally, between philosophy and religion. In particular, we should remember the long digression about the pagan cosmological myths in the second dialogue (Gershenzon 2000) and the parallel exegesis of Plato’s myth of the androgyne and the Mosaic *Genesis*, which demonstrate Judah’s in-depth knowledge of both Scriptures and Plato’s dialogues. Judah declares that the pagan fables are not untruthful or deceitful, because under the veil of enigmatic metaphors and allegorical words they tell the same truth of the biblical stories. The cryptic and fanciful tegument is a linguistic instrument used by the ancient sages to hide the

marvelous truths about the cosmos and the divine. The different levels of reading of ancient myths distinguished by Leone Ebreo are similar to those of the Christian and Jewish exegetic tradition. Noteworthy in Judah's interpretation of the pagan cosmological stories is his humanistic spirit, in which his acquaintance with the Renaissance hermeneutic tradition and the mythological work of Boccaccio's *De genealogia deorum gentilium* surfaces (Vila-Chã 2006). Some scholars, such as Veltri (2004, 2009), Guidi (2011), and Hughes (2012), have observed that the coincidence between the ancients and the Mosaic Law should be read as a submission of the ancient myths and philosophies to the Jewish highest truth. Similarly, Lesley (1992) believes that the *Dialoghi* should be interpreted within the Jewish debate on this issue and that Judah's work endorses Yoḥanan Alemanno's idea of unity of the truth in contrast to the double-truth theory supported by the contemporary Aristotelian thinker, Elijah Delmedigo, and the Cretan philosopher, Saul ha-Cohen Ashkenazi. On the contrary, Bonfil (1996) argues that the *Dialoghi* cannot be conceived as an example of Jewish apologetics.

It is undeniable that also Leone's *circulo amoroso* recalls Florentine Neoplatonic ideas and, in particular, Ficino's *circuitus spiritualis* (Gershenzon 1992). However, according to some scholars, it could be influenced by Yoḥanan Alemanno's kabbalistic theory of love. The Jewish kabbalist composed an exegetical work on Solomon's *Song of Songs* at the instance of Giovanni Pico. A treatise on love in Hebrew, Alemanno's *Heshek Shlomo* (*Desire of Solomon*) discusses the question of the cosmic love, stressing the ascending and descending love movements and the concept of the final union of the human soul with God. Indeed, Idel (1978) believes that the circle symbols of the *Dialoghi* derive from the Arabic al-Batalyusi's *The Book of Intellectual Circles* mediated by Alemanno's work. However, there is no evidence of a direct recall to Alemanno in the *Dialoghi*, even if Idel (2005) believes that Judah could know Alemanno's *Heshek Shlomo* since Alemanno lived in Yehiel da Pisa's house during the years of the epistolary communications between Yehiel and

Judah's father. In more general terms, Idel (2005) sustains the presence of a persistent Kabbalah influence and especially of the *Sefer ha-zohar* on several central issues of the *Dialoghi*. The question of a considerable weight played by the Kabbalah in the genesis of Judah's philosophy is pivotal not only in Idel's studies on Leone Ebreo but also, in particular, in Ariani's (1984) and Gluck's (2012). However, as Ogren (2016) highlights, scholars should caution against what he calls an "over-Zoharization" of the *Dialoghi*, since there are no explicit references to the *Sefer ha-zohar*.

The supreme and final union of the human soul in and with God is the most relevant element in Judah's philosophy, grounded on the terminological and ontological definition of the notions of desire and love. Based on knowledge, because we can only love what we know, the union of man with and in God is an erotic-intellective union (Damien 1971; Guanti 1978–1979; Perry 1980; Dorman and Levi 1985; Koder 1995; Hughes 2004; Vila-Chã 2006). However, there is also a knowledge that is caused by love. Indeed, knowledge is love, and love is knowledge. For this reason, Leone defines the last and perfect step of the human love and of his intellective path as *fruzione unitiva*, an intellective copulative act or unitive cognition, a loving contemplation of and within God, going beyond the limits of both rationalistic or cognitive happiness and voluntaristic or ecstatic bliss.

To conclude, Judah in his *Dialoghi* debates on many questions developed by philosophers and literati such as Marsilio Ficino; Giovanni Pico; Yoḥanan Alemanno; Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, who is considered Ficino's heir, coetaneous to Leone, and author of *De pulchro*, *De amore*, and the *Panegyricus in amorem*; Giovanni Pontano; Pietro Bembo; and Isaac Abravanel. Hence, Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore* represents as one of the most successful examples of sixteenth-century Neoplatonic love literature or, as Santino Caramella says (Leone Ebreo 1929b), of the Cinquecento erotology inspired by Marsilio Ficino's *Commentarium in Convivium Platonis de amore*. For these reasons, even if in his *Dialoghi* Leone does not quote any contemporaneous philosopher, his work, a perfect *trattato d'amore*,

should be rightly placed within the Neoplatonic love debate of his own time.

Impact and Legacy

After the publication of the *Dialoghi* in 1535 and the contemporaneous publication of the second dialogue by Leonardo Marso d'Avezzano (Nelson Novoa 2006–2007; Nelson Novoa 2007), Leone Ebreo's work was published in more than 20 different editions up until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Indeed, Aldo Manuzio's heirs printed several versions of the *Dialoghi* between 1541 and 1558 in Venice. It is undeniable that the spread of a conspicuous number of copies of the *Dialoghi* is understandable within the sixteenth-century literary and philosophical phenomenon of love literature, which became particularly popular and *du jour* in the Italian courts. However, the *Dialoghi* is read also beyond Italy and translated in French in 1551 both by Pontus de Tyard and Denis Sauvage, in Latin in 1564, and in Spanish in 1568, followed by other Iberian editions. Quoted by Cervantes and one of the books of Spinoza's library, the *Dialoghi* was obviously read by many Renaissance scholars, such as Benedetto Varchi and Michel de Montaigne, and Jewish Renaissance scholars, such as Azariah de' Rossi and Joseph Solomon Delmedigo, till Schiller and Goethe, who read it in the *Artis cabalisticae, hoc est, reconditae theologiae et philosophiae scriptorium*. The impact of Judah's philosophy of love on the following philosophers is as yet not a subject of research, although scholars believe that Judah's ideas of love may have directly influenced Giordano Bruno's heroic furor and Spinoza's *amor Dei intellectualis* (Vila-Chã 2006).

Cross-References

- Academy, Platonic
- Alemanno, Yohanan ben Isaac
- Bembo, Pietro
- Bruno, Giordano
- Cattani da Diacceto, Francesco
- Delmedigo, Elijah

- Docta Religio
- Ficino, Marsilio
- Jewish Philosophy, Renaissance
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Abravanel, Yehudah

► [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Abril, Pedro Simón

Born: around 1540, Alcaraz, Albacete, Spain

Died: 1595, Medina de Rioseco (Valladolid)

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Abstract

Pedro Simón Abril's production included grammars for learning Greek and Latin as well as translations of classical works, reading

and writing primers, and notes for the improvement of teaching. He is best known for his Spanish version of Aristotle's *Ethics*.

Biography

Most probably of Jewish ascendancy, Pedro Simón Abril acknowledged being 41 years of age in his *Latini idiomatis docendi ac discendi methodus*, which appeared in 1561. Even though we do not know where Abril took his university studies or which academic degree he obtained, he must have studied at least philosophy, rhetoric, and Greek as he referred to himself as “licenciado” in all these three disciplines in works published in, respectively, 1577, 1584, and 1586. The dedicatory letters appended to his grammar handbooks and to his translations of the classics, as well as other external documents, help us to trace Abril's teaching career, which took him to several institutions throughout Spain. In 1566 he began his teaching activities in the *Studium* at Uncastillo (Zaragoza). Four years later he was sued by the University of Huesca in Aragon for teaching Arts when he was only allowed to teach Latin. In 1571 he was hired by the local authorities at Tudela, near Pamplona, to provide teaching in grammar, rhetoric, poetry, Greek, logic, and metaphysics. Three years later Abril was appointed professor of rhetoric at the University of Zaragoza where he remained until 1576. After spending several months at El Escorial, where King Philip II praised his translation of Terence, he relocated to his home town of Alcaraz (Albacete) and became local preceptor. In August 1583 he was appointed professor of grammar at the University of Zaragoza. Information about later teaching positions is scarce. He must have been reacted to institutions in Madrid and Alcalá de Henares, cities where some of his later works were published. Toward the end of his life, he relocated to Medina de Rioseco in whose *Studium* he must have taught grammar. In 1594 he was summoned by the University of Salamanca to prepare a Latin grammar for the use of local students. This grammar handbook was to be written in Spanish, thus following Abril's own recommendations to

employ the vernacular in the teaching of classical languages.

Reprinted time and again, Pedro Simón Abril's Latin grammars and translations of Terence's comedies, Cicero's letters, Aesop, and Greek drama (Euripides, Aeschylus) are closely linked to his teaching career at different levels in several academic institutions throughout Spain. His teaching materials were designed to teach the usage of classical authors through translation, parallel texts, and comparative grammar. In his best known philosophical translation, his version of Aristotle's *Ethics*, whose preface was addressed to King Philip II of Spain, he outlined his translation methodology: “el que vierte ha de transformar en sí el ánimo y sentencia del actor que vierte, y decirla en la lengua en que lo vierte como de suyo, sin que quede rastro de la lengua peregrina en que fue primero escrito.”

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Abu al-Faʿl

► [Abū'l-Faʿl](#)

Abū'l-Faẓl

Born: 14 January 1551, South Asia

Died: 22 August 1602, South Asia

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Abstract

Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmī (14 January 1551 to 22 August 1602) was the most important courtier, advisor, spiritual devotee, and close friend of the powerful Mughal (also called Timurid) emperor Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Akbar (r. 1556–1605). He played a central role in the emperor's articulation of a cosmopolitan and religiously inclusive vision of empire that endured for nearly two centuries in South Asia.

Alternate Names

[Abu'l-Faẓl ibn Mubārak](#); [Abu al-Faẓl](#); [Abul Fazl](#)

Biography

Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmī (14 January 1551 to 22 August 1602) was the most important courtier, advisor, spiritual devotee, and close friend of the powerful Mughal (also called Timurid) emperor Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Akbar (r. 1556–1605). He played a central role in the emperor's articulation of a cosmopolitan and religiously inclusive vision of empire that endured for nearly two centuries in South Asia.

Born into an influential scholarly family that traced its origins over six generations to Sind and Yemen, Abu'l-Faẓl joined Mughal imperial service in 1574 at the age of 23. His accomplished father, Shaykh Mubārak, and older brother, Abu'l Faiẓ Faiẓī, already held key appointments at court as religious advisor and poet laureate respectively.

Abu'l-Faẓl's intellectual pursuits and logiopolitical outlook were shaped by his father

who was known for his vast learning, spiritual eclecticism, and innovative interpretations of Islamic law. Early in Akbar's reign, Shaykh Mubārak's enemies had accused him of heresy and sedition because of his links with a millenarian Sufi movement called the Mahdawīyya (lit. messianists) that had swept northern India in the first half of the sixteenth century. To escape persecution, Shaykh Mubārak and his sons had to go into hiding. Yet by the time Abu'l-Faẓl was presented at the Mughal court, the family's honor and influence stood restored. This change in fortune occurred because their free-thinking views on religion and their experiments with various Muslim and non-Muslim spiritual, philosophical, and occult systems of thought had come into alignment with the inclusive principles on which Akbar desired to consolidate his empire in India.

When, two decades later, he composed the grand chronicle of Akbar's reign, Abu'l-Faẓl wrote into the imperial text his own biography. There he stated that even before he met Akbar, he was beginning to see the vanity of dogmatic scholastic pursuits and the chauvinism of depending on only one philosophical or religious point of view. Instead, he wanted to explore the sacred traditions of the entire world. When he met Akbar, he realized that to serve the emperor would allow him to pursue these desires. In his own words, Abu'l-Faẓl described how Akbar became for him a spiritual guide:

[As a young scholar] I almost became selfish and conceited, and resolved to tread the path of proud retirement. The number of pupils that I had gathered around me, served but to increase my pedantry. In fact, the pride of learning had made my brain drunk with the idea of seclusion. Happily for myself, when I passed the nights in lonely spots with true seekers after truth, and enjoyed the society of such as are empty-handed, but rich in mind and heart, my eyes were opened and I saw the selfishness and covetousness of the so-called learned. The advice of my father with difficulty kept me back from outbreaks of folly; my mind had no rest, and my heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits of Lebanon; I longed for interviews with the lamas of Tibet or with the *padris* (lit. fathers, refers to Catholic priests) of Portugal, and I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zendavesta. I was sick of the learned of my own land. My brother and other relatives then

advised me to attend the Court, hoping that I would find in the emperor a leader to the sublime world of thought. In vain did I at first resist their admonitions. Happy, indeed, am I now that I have found in my sovereign a guide to the world of action and a comforter in lonely retirement; in him meet my longing after faith and my desire to do my appointed work in the world; he is the orient where the light of form and ideal dawns; and it is he who has taught me that the work of the world, multifarious as it is, may yet harmonize with the spiritual unity of truth. I was thus presented at Court. As I had no worldly treasures to lay at the feet of his Majesty, I wrote a commentary to the *A'ḥyat al-Kursi*, (Quran 2:256) and presented it when the emperor was at Agra. I was favourably received, and his Majesty graciously accepted my offering. (Abu'l-Faḥl paraphrased in Blochmann 2003, 33)

Impact and Legacy

In his long years of service, Abu'l-Faḥl's crowning achievement was the rationalization and enunciation of Akbar's grand imperial vision. While Akbar's grandfather, Babur (d. 1530), and father, Humayun (d. 1556), had moved to South Asia from ancestral Central Asia and founded a conquest state, it was under Akbar that a stable administrative imperial structure took shape. After he had achieved military dominance, Akbar created a successful system of imperial recruitment that incited warrior groups and their leaders in India, Iran, and Central Asia to join his growing empire. In doing so, he did not discriminate based on religious identity but made loyalty to the emperor the key criterion for imperial service. It was this new style of sovereignty that Abu'l-Faḥl articulated in the massive *Book of Akbar* (Akbarnāmā).

The *Book of Akbar* was a chronicle of chronicles written in a highly stylized form of court of Persian, the third volume of which was called the "Institutes of Akbar" (Ā'in-i Akbarī), a detailed gazetteer and manual for running the empire. These texts, illustrated by the leading painters of India and Iran, had no precedent in content or form in India or elsewhere in Muslim Asia. Through them, Abu'l-Faḥl monumentalized a major feat of state-building in the early modern world.

However, Abu'l-Faḥl's success and his close alliance with the emperor came at a price. Like his father, Shaykh Muḥarak, he too was accused of straying from Islam when he lent his support to a religious scheme initiated by Akbar that resembled, among other things, the messianism of the Mahdawīyya. There is much to indicate that to build an imperial polity on universal principles, Akbar had decided to move beyond the legal tenets of Islam (Moin 2012, 130–169). Instead, he turned to a cosmology of sacred kingship that drew upon the saintly customs of Sufi Islam and forms of cabalistic and Hermetic knowledge. Driven by such forms of custom and knowledge, Akbar chose the end of the first Islamic millennium, which coincided with his reign, to style himself as a universal saint and sovereign, a messianic being above the distinctions of all religion. Members of the court and all others who wanted to devote themselves to the emperor were invited to accept him as a spiritual guide. Although this millennial scheme was merely called discipleship (*murīdī*) in Akbar's official chronicle, it was later remembered as an attempt at a new religion, the so-called Dīn-i Ilahī or Tawhīd-i Ilahī (Divine Religion or Divine Monotheism). Abu'l-Faḥl, his brother, and his father were instrumental in giving Akbar's spiritual program coherent cosmological and ritual shape. Indeed, Abu'l-Faḥl can be considered the chief ritual specialist of the Mughal imperial cult.

Soon after Abu'l-Faḥl's appointment at court in 1574, the emperor had begun to hold debates among scholars of religion in a hall constructed especially for the purpose, the House of Worship ('Ibādat Khāna). Abu'l-Faḥl participated in these discussions and apparently embarrassed Muslim scholars much senior to him. He also described some of these discussions which involved not only Muslims of various sectarian and Sufi persuasions but also Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians, and Jesuit missionaries invited from the coastal region of Goa for this express purpose. According to Abu'l-Faḥl, Akbar took a particularly keen interest in the religious learning and painted icons of the Jesuits. The emperor also invited them to challenge their Muslim rivals by undergoing an ordeal by fire. Notably, Abu'l-Faḥl described the

Christian priests in a positive light by stating that it was his Muslim coreligionists who were too cowardly to take up the challenge.

By 1579, under the combined onslaught of the emperor and his savant, the conservative old guard of Muslim intellectuals lost its status and influence at court. The emperor declared himself better qualified than any scholar of Islamic scripture to interpret the law. A decree (*maḥẓar*) to this effect was drafted by Abū'l-Faḡl's father and signed by other senior Muslim scholars, affirming Akbar as the chief jurisconsult or *mujtahid* of the age, a supreme authority capable of using reason in matters of scriptural law. That the emperor was not even literate was considered no obstacle in this case for, as Abū'l-Faḡl explained, he was the most spiritually accomplished being of the world and as such enjoyed a status far above the "paper-worshipping scholiasts" of his land (quoted in Moin 2012, 139).

Abū'l-Faḡl justified Akbar's status as chief jurist of Islam by placing the position itself lower in a spiritual hierarchy at the apex of which stood the saint of the world. The emperor, he explained, had simply kept his true spiritual status hidden behind a veil and unveiled it only gradually, first as prime thinker and judge, and then as the foremost saint. In the court chronicle, Abū'l-Faḡl depicted Akbar as the saintlike messianic being and traced his genealogy to an ancient fatherless birth involving a divine light:

... which took shape, without human instrumentality or a father's loins, in the pure womb of her Majesty Alanquva, after having, in order to arrive at perfection, occupied during several ages the holy bodily wrappings of other holy manifestations, is manifesting itself at the present day, in the pure entity of this unique God-knower and God-worshipper (Akbar). How many ages have passed away!

How many planetary conjunctions occurred,
That this happy star might come forth from heaven!
(Abū'l-Faḡl ibn Mubārak and Beveridge 2005, 1–2:
45)

Such descriptions were not mere panegyric. They were part of a pragmatic program in which the emperor ended discrimination based on religious and sectarian affiliation and opened

the doors of imperial service based on ability and loyalty. This program was enshrined and articulated in the principle of "universal peace" (*ṣulḥ-i kull*), which Abū'l-Faḡl outlined in the imperial chronicle. Under this principle, the state protected the religious beliefs and customs of all Muslim sects and non-Muslim religions. This could only be done, in Akbar and Abū'l-Faḡl's opinion, by raising the body of the emperor above the constraints of any one scriptural tradition, including Islam. By this time, the emperor had already forged marriage alliances with Rajput warrior houses in which Hindu princesses became power Mughal queens without converting to Islam. He had also broken from Islamic custom by abolishing the poll tax on non-Muslims (*jizya*) as well as the tax on Hindu pilgrims. These steps were resisted by certain factions of his Muslim nobility, a resentment that his half brother in Kabul, Mirzā Hakīm, and other rebels tried to capitalize on. However, the emperor subdued his opponents and successfully institutionalized his imperial vision. Since Abū'l-Faḡl was the key intellectual force behind Akbar's millennial scheme, he too had to face the brunt of controversy that followed in which Akbar was accused of trying to replace Islam with his own religion.

During and after the inauguration of Akbar's millennial imperial program, Abū'l-Faḡl served as his chief secretary. It is from Abū'l-Faḡl's pen that the most important imperial correspondence and edicts were issued. We have thus echoes of his thought and deeds preserved in the writings to and by Portuguese Jesuit priests, Safavid Iranian chronicles, and works composed in Uzbek Central Asia.

The connection with Safavid Iran is the most noteworthy, for it is in competition with the Safavid dynasty, which was of Sufi origins and had conquered Iran in the sixteenth century that the Mughals of India shaped their vision of empire. The Safavids knew of Akbar's innovative religiopolitical program and that it was being led by Abū'l-Faḡl. When a group of cabbalistic Sufis called the Nuqtavīs (pointillists), who also espoused a millennial worldview, escaped persecution in Iran to find refuge and favor at Akbar's

court in India, a Safavid court historian blamed Abu'l-Faḡl for making the Mughal emperor a “libertine” (*wasī‘al-mashrab*) in matters of religion (Iskandar Beg Munshī quoted in Islam 1979, 1: 124).

Abu'l-Faḡl served his final years as a senior military commander, leading the Mughal campaigns in the south. By this time, he had made enemies with the rebellious heir-apparent, the future emperor Jahangīr. When Akbar recalled Abu'l-Faḡl to help him deal with his troublesome heir, Jahangīr had him waylaid and murdered. That he was assassinated by the crown prince in the struggle for the throne showed the heights to which this court scholar had risen in power and influence.

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Abu'l-Faḡl ibn Mubārak

► [Abū'l-Faḡl](#)

Abul Fazl

► [Abū'l-Faḡl](#)

Accademia Venetiana

► [Academy of Fame](#)

Academy of Fame

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Abstract

The “Accademia Venetiana” was founded in 1557 by the Venetian patrician Federico Badoer with the declared intention of launching a publishing project, which he announced with a sort of advance catalogue, first in the vernacular (1558) and then in Latin (1559), under the title *Somma delle opere che in tutte le scienze et arti più nobili, et in varie lingue ha da mandare in luce l'Accademia Venetiana*. The Academy's designated publisher was Paolo Manuzio, tasked with printing more than 300 titles in 20 different disciplines.

The device chosen for the imprint pictured a winged female blowing a trumpet, perched one-footed on a globe, with the legend “Io volo al ciel per riposarmi in Dio.” The formal title of the institution, chosen by its founder, was the *Accademia Venetiana*, which would soon be flanked, or superseded, by “Academy of Fame,” derived from the device.

Official depositions, dated November 1557 and December 1560, laid out the Academy’s publishing plan, revolving primarily around the printing of Latin and Italian texts and vernacular editions of key works.

The venture had a highly innovative cultural program, giving concrete expression to a new conception of learning, tending to the encyclopedic, according to which scientific, literary, and philosophical knowledge was to be developed syncretically. Simultaneously, the academy aspired to become the recognized organ for the political and social policies of the Venetian government, proposing to offer a “public interest” service aimed at turning young aristocrats into future statesmen.

In August 1561, the Badoer family was convicted of fraud and the Academy consequently closed. Despite its brief life, projects nurtured by the institute would live on after its demise, leaving a lasting impression on the structure of scholarship.

Synonyms

Accademia Venetiana; *Accademia Veneta*; *Accademia Veneziana*

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

From the late 1540s, a group of intellectuals would gather at the house of the patrician Domenico Venier in Venice to discuss literary, philosophical and scientific matters. A co-conductor of these meetings was the politician Federico Badoer, who would launch, in a document dated November 1557, a formally constituted institution whose principal scope was to

publish a large number of texts that would constitute a new “library” for the enlightenment of young Venetian aristocrats. The “*Accademia Venetiana*,” as its founder named it, proposed itself to the government of the Serenissima as a potential official cultural organ, offering “public interest” services, including lectures and publications, with the specific aim of training the younger nobility to become the future intellectuals and statesmen of the Republic.

The internal organization was envisaged as imitating that of the human body, whose parts corresponded variously to aspects of the active and the contemplative life. The institutional make-up was divided into four main sectors: science, economics, politics, and oratory, entrusted by Badoer, respectively, to his three nephews, Giustiniano, Giovanni, and Luigi, and to his secretary Mar lupino Mar lupini.

The science sector, representing the main cultural thrust of the Academy, was subdivided into four disciplines – law, philosophy, mathematics, and the humanities, each of which were in their turn broken down into a variety of specializations: future jurists into canon and civil; philosophers into supernatural, natural logical medical, and moral; mathematicians into geometers, arithmeticians, astrologers, musical scholars, and cosmographers; humanists into rhetoricians, poets, and historians. The subdivisions reflect the way that knowledge was conceived at that time, essentially split into the active and contemplative sciences, according to the Aristotelian classification of scientific knowledge proposed in the sixth book of his *Metaphysics* (1, 1025 b1–1026 a35).

The internal disposition of the four “colleges” of the Academy was also reflected in the ambitious multifaceted publishing program printed in Venice in 1558 (in Italian) and again in 1559 (in Latin), entitled *Somma delle opere che in tutte le scienze et arti più nobili, et in varie lingue ha da mandare in luce l’Accademia Venetiana, parte nuove, et non più stampate, parte con fedelissime tradottioni, giudiciose correctioni, et utilissime annotationi riformate* (“*Summary of the Works to be issued by the Accademia Venetiana on all of the noblest arts and sciences, and in various tongues...*”), entrusted to Paolo Manuzio,

appointed the Academy's official publishing house. This catalogue was a manifesto as much as a publisher's list, announcing over 500 titles distributed among 20 disciplines: theology, metaphysics, physics, medicine, arithmetic, geometry, optics, music, astrology, geography, warfare, civil law, politics, economics, ethics, logic, rhetoric, poetry, history, and grammar – an encyclopaedic project in which knowledge was presented as all-encompassing and interconnected.

The distribution of scholarly categories envisaged by the administrative structure and by the division of disciplines within the *Somma*'s ambitious lists testified to the interdependence of the cultural and the publishing projects. It was through its publications, in fact, that the institution would meet the task it had set itself, that is, to perform a genuine civilizing role at the heart of the Republic's governing class, educating young Venetian patricians in both Latin and their own language. The titles it planned to issue included new texts alongside editions of the classics kitted out with a full exegetical apparatus: scientific works by authors ancient and modern (Euclid, Galen, Tartaglia, Regiomontanus); commentaries on Aristotle (Themistius, Philoponus, Simplicius); theoretical and technical writings on music (Ptolemy, Glarean, Aristides Quintilianus, and for the moderns: Lodovico Fogliano and Giacomo Fabro); texts on rhetoric and poetics (Rudolph Agricola, Sperone Speroni, and the speeches of Philo of Alexandria, Plotinus and Cicero).

The plan was for many of the works to be translated into Italian. The Academicians' cultural aims were clearly much influenced by the contemporary linguistic theories of Sperone Speroni, who had elected the vernacular to be *the* language of literary, philosophical, and scientific communication. The transmission of knowledge should henceforth be entrusted to this new instrument, whose reach was closely tied to the growth of printing. The catalogue announced the forthcoming translation of some of the most difficult scientific and philosophical texts both in order to make them better known and with the precise intention of making room for different theoretical approaches without having to definitively espouse

one or the other. The encyclopaedic perspective of the cultural program proposed by the Academy was notable for its pronounced and explicit syncretism. That is to say that the choice of texts had been made with a view to including works representative of multiple critical viewpoints within the same field of knowledge. The *Somma* embraced different historical traditions in philosophy, for example, works of Aristotelian hue were to rub shoulders with Neoplatonic and Hermetic ones, the latter spanning writings attributed to the legendary Hermes Trismegistus, interpretations by Iamblichus and Syrianus as well as Marsilio Ficino's more recent revisiting. The Aristotelian reading-list was slanted towards a rapprochement with Plato, indicated by the presence of commentaries by Syrianus and Simplicius, Themistius and Marco Antonio de' Passeri (called Genova/Genua).

A highly eclectic attitude to all forms of knowledge was as apparent in the theological as in the philosophical sphere. Thus we find authors of reformist bent side by side with Counter-Reformation tracts, here again in token of a syncretic pluralism. It was the intention to print, in fact, texts by Reginald Pole and Jacopo Sadoletto, while works dedicated to Jacob Fugger and Alfonso Carafa were also present. At a time when religious tensions were at their highest, the Academy's conscious publishing strategy was to encourage a dialogue between opposing positions. Similarly, among academic theologians the school of Aquinas was intermixed with followers of Giles of Rome and Duns Scotus.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The encyclopaedic vision outlined in the *Somma* was channelled through a reorganisation of knowledge laid out in visually accessible form so that learning could be the more easily transmitted and taught. The design of the project took shape mainly on the basis of the theories formulated by the Dutch humanist Rudolph Agricola, by the scholar Giulio Camillo, and by the Platonist philosopher Franciscus Patricius. Aristotelian logic seemed to these to be insufficient for dealing

with the latest philosophical and scientific developments, and they therefore sought new cognitive models capable of imposing a different and unifying framework for all knowledge.

In his treatise *De inventione dialectica* (1479) Rudolph Agricola had elaborated what amounted to an “art of thinking,” that is to say a logical/pedagogical method that backed up the tools of rhetoric with reasoning of a dialectical type, involving, for example, the deployment of *topoi* as solid points of reference. The importing of elements of topical logic into the dialectical method, as posited by Agricola, was also to be found in Giulio Camillo’s writings, if explored on different lines, as he too worked towards the formulation of a new rhetoric. In the development of ideas in this reformist direction, marrying logic with traditional rhetoric, Camillo’s *La Topica* was a further attempt towards an ordering and visual representation of creative procedures. Furthermore his “universal theatre of memory” (and therefore knowledge) project, again organized according to the proportions of the human body and presented as a concrete realization of the “memory arch,” profoundly influenced the Academicians’ own ambition to schematize all of knowledge. The Academy’s attempt to give practical expression to Camillo’s idea of a single encyclopedic model was through the *Somma*’s listing of titles, in which the current state of learning was effectively tabulated.

Camillo’s treatise was published for the first time in 1560, edited by Franciscus Patricius, who in the same year formulated his own theory for founding a new rhetoric, starting out from the theories of Agricola and Camillo, in a *Discorso* introducing the *Rime* of Luca Contile. The Platonist philosopher identified the following elements as fundamental: “the hypothesis of a correlation between the structures and development of human discourse on the one side, and the structure of the cosmos and the creative development of divine thought on the other; and an amplified and renewed topical philosophy” (Bolzoni 1981b, 140). Patricius’s notion of a rhetoric renewed by the adjunct of topical philosophy strongly influenced the Academy’s promotion of a didactically oriented, visualized encyclopedism. He was

himself, besides, elected to the Academy and appointed superintendent of St. Mark’s (Marciana) Library, which had been entrusted to the new institution’s management at the end of 1558, thus becoming part of a group already boasting over a hundred *sodales* who had signed up for the venture. These included Paolo Manuzio official printer-publisher, Bernardo Tasso chancellor (Tasso 1733), Luca Contile, director of the sciences committee, Agostino Valier, provost of the philosophers’ committee.

The educational initiative directed at the young Venetian patricians was to consist in public lectures and the recommended reading of key works by ancient and modern authors. The foyer of the Marciana Library, after the Palazzo Badoer the official venue for the academic sessions, also hosted gatherings of writers who found it a congenial forum for discussions of poetic theory and practice. Their theoretical approach to poetry was based on the assumption that it, alongside philosophy, was the repository of an arcane wisdom accessible only to the chosen few, rendering them in effect inheritors of a formulation belonging to the Platonic and hermetic traditions. The poet too could arrive through the application of a range of rhetorical devices at a knowledge of philosophical truth, at the same time, the audience for lyric writing would be provided with the necessary exegetical tools to become themselves sufficiently expert in the mechanics of poetic construction.

As far as rhetorical expression was concerned, the directions mapped by Giulio Camillo tended again to the exploration of a new poetical language. In particular, the speculations in his *Idea del teatro* (1550) on rhetorical devices would favor a certain artificiality in the unmemorable verses of the poets frequenting the Academia Venetiana, such as Bernardo Cappello, Girolamo Fenaroli, Giorgio Gradenigo, Celio Magno, Bernardo Tasso, and Giacomo Zane (Atanagi 1565a, b; Atanagi and Irene da Spilimbergo 1561).

The employment of rhetorical stratagems, allied to the “sapient” reading of poetry, gave rise to a production that alternated between the profoundly serious and “inspired,” freighted with

moral and civil reflections, and a mannered exploration of metrical and stylistic models. The notion of a poetry connected with their lyrical practice looked back to Pythagorean ritualism, according to which truth was not to be arrived at by the multitude. The inspired poet-philosopher was thus a conduit of real knowledge, could be said, in fact, to illustrate and reveal through his poetry the very *idea* of knowledge.

Impact and Legacy

The Academy, then, in the *Somma delle opere* set out its cultural stall, its commendable originality consisting in the desire to embrace disparate, even distant or opposing, philosophical, literary, scientific, and theological traditions, with the intention of representing the totality of learning. At the same time, it proposed the necessity of arriving at a new organization of knowledge in all its aspects and devising the didactic procedures indispensable to its memorization and propagation. The cultural and publishing program was strongly marked by an educative intent that would be realized through the exegetical and philological practices envisaged by the list of proposed titles and equally by a visual apparatus that would accompany some of the more abstruse philosophical works. The pedagogical aspect of the publishing venture would thus bear the main burden of institution's self-imposed ambition, repeatedly declared to the Venetian authorities: that was to provide a "public interest" service.

The Academia Venetiana also made an attempt to export its cultural model and penetrate the foreign book market. On the occasion of the 1559 Frankfurt fair, then as now a key event in the commercial publishing year, it published specially, in Italian and Latin, a catalogue of *Libri, che in varie scienze, et arti nella latina lingua, e nella volgare ha nuovamente mandato l'Academia Venetiana alla fiera di Francfort* ("The Books on the various arts and sciences, in the Latin language and in the vernacular that the Academia Venetiana has lately sent to the Fair at Frankfurt"). This list of the titles so far, or about to be, published, again summarized the main

concerns of the whole project: Aristotelian philosophy in its various interpretations together with the various theoretical currents it had launched (particularly as regards natural philosophy); theology, in variety of forms of the doctrine; and advanced education, civil, and practical as well as theoretical and rhetorical, particular as aimed at young aristocrats.

The fanfares notwithstanding, of the more than 500 titles announced in the *Somma delle opere*, only 23 would actually see the light of day. In 1561, Federico Badoer was indicted for fraud before the Senate, which took the opportunity to lay down that no private institution would thereafter assume a public role. Specifically proscribed, in fact, was the precise scope for which the Academy had been established, to perform a public interest role and become an integral part of the Republic's government, with the status of an official cultural institution. The Serenissima would not in future permit that its name be attached to ventures so patently personal as that of Badoer and his academy.

None the less, the Academy did leave an important legacy for the whole cultural system, transforming the conception of knowledge, which would remain encyclopaedic in character, within a unifying philosophical project, in which different theoretical approaches could coexist. Learning would from now on assume an institutionalized form, organized in line with the reformist pedagogical and logical direction the Academy had proposed, and finding its chosen instruments in the devices offered by the new rhetoric. Elements too of the publishing project outlined in the *Somma* would resurface after its demise, inspiring such publications as: the ten dialogues of Franciscus Patricius's *Della historia* (1560), the two volumes of *Rime di diversi* published by Dionigi Atanagi (1565), Orazio Toscanella's *Bellezze del Furioso* (1574), *Le Rime di m. Francesco Petrarca* edited by Federico Ubaldini (1642), and more. The Academy had embodied impulses and pressures of various kinds and tried to channel them into a single cultural model and a certain institutional form. Although the actual life-span of the Academia Venetiana had lasted less than a half a decade,

the experiment it represented left behind a legacy of integrative renewal in the methods and the form of a “universal” system of knowledge.

Cross-References

- [Agricola, Rudolph](#)
- [Camillo Delminio, Giulio](#)
- [Dialectic in the Renaissance](#)
- [Pole, Reginald](#)
- [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)

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Academy, Platonic

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Abstract

The Platonic Academy of Florence has been the subject of many more or less far-fetched interpretations that has created around it an atmosphere of esoteric mystery. The aim of this entry is to give an accurate evaluation of what modern research has succeeded to ascertain about this cultural institution which is frequently invoked by renaissance arts scholars as well as historians of philosophy and religious beliefs (Robb 1969; Field 1988).

Synonyms

Careggi academy or Ficinian academy

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Before we try to describe what the current historiography has named the “Platonic Academy” of late Quattrocento Florence, we need to make a preliminary remark.

One must distinguish the fore mentioned structure (to the extent, as we shall see, that it did really have a material existence) from informal gatherings like those who existed in Florence at the end of the fourteenth and first decades of the fifteenth century and gathered around a personality seen at the same time as a cultural, moral, and theological authority.

This was the case, for example, of the cenacle of young humanists that met in the convent of Santo Spirito (of the Holy Spirit) around the Augustan monk Luigi Marsigli* and the humanist chancellor of the Republic Coluccio Salutati*. Both men have been admirers of Petrarch considered as the father founder of the whole humanist movement.

Some years later, some similar erudite companies are known to have been active in the Roman curia during the pontificates of Martin the Fifth* or around the itinerant court of pope Eugenius the Fourth*.

The Camaldolese convent of Saint Mary of the Angels in Florence which had hosted the famous religious painter Lorenzo Monaco* (Lawrence the Monk), a disciple of Giotto*, was also a place where scholars met around the personality of the general prior of the Camaldolese order, Ambrogio Traversari*, one of the first and most eminent Italian Hellenists of the times who translated into Latin the Greek Fathers and Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives of the Ancient Philosophers*.

None of these institutions were technically speaking “academies” for they had neither explicit scope nor program and we have very few and vague testimonies of their actual discussions or productions (Field 1988).

On the other hand, the Academies of the second half of the sixteenth century like the famous literary Academy of the *Humidi* (of the wet ones), then Accademia fiorentina*, or the Academy of *La Crusca** (of the bran) in

defense of the Italian language were well-structured entities with a determinate and articulated leadership, precise statutes, regular meetings, and accurately calibrated productions.

One could say that the Platonic Academy was a transitional form between those two alternative manifestations of this intellectual and functional manifestations of cultural life.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The starting event that gave the philosopher Marsilio Ficino* the idea to become the animator of such a revival of the environment propitious to philosophical collective and discursive investigation, as it is described by Plato himself in the introduction of his famous and venerated dialogues, was no doubt the council of Florence that took place in 1439 in which the byzantine theologians and philosophers played a prominent role.

One of them Georgius Gemistus Pletho or Plethon* somehow impressed his Florentine auditors and in particular Cosimo de' Medici who, according to Ficino had therefore the idea of founding and funding an institution to spread the neo-platonic philosophy in Florence.

In 1439, Ficino was only a 6-year-old boy and subsequently it was only several years after, in 1462 that Cosimo gave Ficino, now a grown man, a villa in the suburbs of Florence in Careggi, that is reputed to have hosted several banquets "à la platonicienne," in particular to celebrate the supposed date of Plato's death on the 7th of November of each single year.

It was in particular in this villa that was held the famous banquet of 1468 in which the hosts were in turn summoned to comment on Plato's *Symposium*, a fundamental philosophical dialogue on the Nature of love, who as then published simultaneously in a Latin and a vernacular edition, becoming one of the most important document of the European Renaissance philosophy and esthetic that exerted an enormous influence on literature and the arts until the age of Romanticism.

Always according to Ficino, the villa was decorated with allegorical paintings and mottos that evoked philosophical notions and symbols.

The correspondence of Ficino which is now almost published in English (Ficino 1975–2015) allows to cast some light on the identity of the writers, thinkers, artists, political rulers that were Ficino's partners and surely attended one or more of the Careggi occasions.

It must be added that quite recently the great American scholar and specialist of Renaissance Platonism, Professor James Hankins has written several articles in which he expresses his doubts about the very existence of the Platonic Academy and goes as far as to "consign" it "to the dustbin of cultural myths," arguing that the only information we have about it comes from Ficino himself who was very keen to forge such beautiful fantasies about his own personal intellectual itinerary, probably in an auto-apologetic intent to exonerate himself from any suspect of heretical deviation (Hankins 1991; Bredekamp 2005).

In this operation of demystification, Hankins has been recently joined by the German scholar and art historian Horst Bredekamp who defends in an essay (Bredekamp 2005) that "neo-platonism never existed except perhaps in the spirit of posterity."

Although such deconstructionist views may have had the merit to revamp the traditional and naïve image that had been given by the historians of the two past centuries and are still alimented by some esoteric and masonic adepts nowadays, the opinion of the author of the present entry is that the ideological and political aspects of the platonic infatuation of the intellectual elites of the time cannot be neglected if we want to have a correct view of the role played by Ficino and what he called his "Platonic Academy" (La Brasca 1997).

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Accademia degli Infiammati

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Abstract

The *Accademia degli Infiammati* (Academy of the Burning Ones) was founded in Padua, on June 6, 1540, by Leone Orsini, in partnership with Florentine humanist Benedetto Varchi and Venetian humanist Daniele Barbaro, who drafted the academic statute. The choice of name stems from the *impresa* adopted by the Academy: the image of an inflamed Hercules on Mount Oeta, along with the motto “once

burned, the mortal will go to heaven eternally”, which was meant to signify the search for immortality by means of devotion to scholarship. The head of the Academy was a *prince*, whose election occurred generally every 4 months and whose duty was to schedule lectures, which were usually held on Thursdays and Sundays.

The Academy remained active at least until May of 1542. Despite its brief existence, it is considered one of the most important sixteenth-century academies, because its influence on the culture of that century was ongoing and reached well beyond the Venetian area. This was primarily due to the fact that it absorbed the great philosophical-scientific tradition of the University of Padua; the influence of Pietro Pomponazzi's mentorship, especially by means of his pupil Sperone Speroni; the heritage Pietro Bembo had bequeathed to that area; and the culture contributed by such eminent Tuscan figures such as Benedetto Varchi and Alessandro Piccolomini, who along with Speroni were the leading figures of the Academy. The *Infiammati* pursued a program inspired by a philosophically based system of knowledge that preferably hinged on ethics, rhetoric, and literature, a program to be divulged specifically through the use of the Italian vernacular language and culture. By actively working in order to extend the use of the vernacular to all aspects of knowledge, including philosophy and science, the Academy did not just adjust to new requirements for the dissemination of knowledge; it also set the foundation for a universal vernacular language.

Innovative and Original Aspects and Legacy

The specificity of the long-lasting influence of the Academy on the developments of late Renaissance culture derives from the peculiar cultural physiognomy of Padua: home to a University that had established itself as a prestigious hub of philosophical studies and stronghold of the

Aristotelian-scholastic tradition, but also adoptive home of Pietro Bembo, who in that city had completed his *Prose della volgar lingua* and gathered some of the best Venetian humanists of the time. The scientific-philosophical interests cultivated at the University of Padua and the literary and humanistic interests pertaining to Bembo's heritage were, then, the two characterizing aspects of Paduan intellectual life that found in the Academy their ideal meeting place.

As a matter of fact, among the *Infiammati*, there were famous humanists and literati, prominent faculty of the University, along with promising students of various disciplines. Notable members of the Academy include Cola Bruno, most faithful follower of Bembo, Piero Valeriano, and Girolamo Fracastoro, all of whom joined the Academy in its early days, and literati and poets of the next generation such as Luigi Alamanni, Lodovico Dolce, Pietro Aretino, Paolo Manuzio, Francesco Querini, and philosopher Antonio Lapini. Fellow members and professors at the University of Padua were Giovanni Battista da Monte, professor of practical medicine and humanist as well as friend and colleague of the famous Andrea Vesalio, who occasionally also attended the meetings of the *Infiammati*; the illustrious Siennese jurist Mariano Sozzini; Lazzaro Bonamico, professor of Classics; philosopher Vincenzo Maggi; and young philosopher Bernardino Tomitano, professor of Logic, following in the footsteps of a far more prominent fellow Paduan such as philosopher, literary critic, and poet Sperone Speroni, who had held that same position until 1528 and who was also the last *prince* of the Academy, from November 1541 to the first months of the next year. Joining the ranks of the Academy and actively linking it to the University of Padua were also graduate students of natural philosophy, mathematics, medicine, and law, many of whom with brilliant careers ahead of them: an erudite Hellenist and prospective translator of Vitruvius like Daniele Barbaro, patriarch of Aquileia; Siennese philosopher and literary critic Alessandro Piccolomini, who had already joined the famous *Accademia degli Intronati* in his hometown and who served as *prince* of the *Infiammati*; Venetian Matteo

Macigni who is expert in math and ancient Greek and Latin, Michele Barozzi, and Luca Girolamo Contarini; the jurist Celso Sozzini, son of Mariano; hailing from Istria Latinist Giovanni Battista Goineo and from Vicenza Conte da Monte, soon to become a luminary professor of medicine, with a passion for literature; hailing from Brescia, Fortunato Martinengo, Ippolito Chizzola, and Vincenzo Girello; and Giovanni Andrea dell'Anguillara, Giuseppe Betussi, and Francesco Sansovino. Among the most active members during the Academy's first year of life, there was a small group of young Florentine law students: they were Hellenist and Latinist Ugolino Martelli, who became interested in the Italian vernacular during his Paduan years, as well as Lorenzo Lenzi, Alberto del Bene, and Carlo Strozzi. They were all protégées of fellow citizen of Florence Benedetto Varchi, who had left the city in 1537, because of his republican sympathies, and had made Padua his temporary home and place for study, until March 1541. After returning to his hometown with Martelli and Strozzi, he would have brought to bear his Paduan experience as *Infiammato* on the Florentine Academy, thereby allowing for a fruitful exchange between Venetian and Florentine cultures of the mid-sixteenth century.

The Academy, then, gathered professionals and specialists of various disciplines, such as physicians, jurists, and literati, all with parallel interests in the sciences, philosophy, poetry, and different forms of prose and with a sound humanist education. This allowed the Academy to configure itself as an active interdisciplinary circle. The result was a cultural program placed under the aegis of interdisciplinarity – lectures ranged from philosophy and poetry (Classical and modern) all the way to theology – and bilingualism (Latin and Italian vernacular), especially in the early stages of the Academy's activity, under the rule of *principi* such as Leone Orsini (June–July 1540), Venetian aristocrat Giovanni Cornaro della Piscopia (August–November 1540), Galeazzo Gonzaga (December 1540–March 1541), and Alessandro Piccolomini (April–September 1541). That notwithstanding, it was Benedetto Varchi who inspired the cultural tendencies and initiatives of

the Academy, up to Gonzaga's leadership. As a matter of fact, the responsibility for public lectures rested almost entirely on his shoulders. Between September 1540 and the first months of 1541, Varchi held public lectures in Latin, on ancient Greek and Latin lyric poetry and in the vernacular, on Petrarchan sonnets and canzoni (*Rvf* CCX, CLXXXII, XXIX, LIII), and on contemporary poetry (sonnets by Bembo, Giovanni della Casa, Lodovico Dolce, and Daniele Barbaro). Besides Varchi, there were two fellow Tuscan lecturers: Ugolino Martelli, who devoted two lectures to Petrarch (on *Rvf* LIII and *Triumphus Cupidinis* I) and one to Bembo's sonnet *Se la più dura quercia*, while Alessandro Piccolomini lectured on the sonnet *Ora t'en va superbo*, by fellow citizen of Siena Laudomia Forteguerri.

While the record of lecture tiles and extant texts is still incomplete, at least two observations are in order. The first concerns the canon of modern authors and texts: if Petrarch is obviously preeminent, nevertheless the avant-garde-like choices of the *Infiammati* also suggest a particular interest for coeval lyric poets, from Bembo all the way to a poet like della Casa, who, although still little-known at the time, was bound to going head to head with the great Venetian or even substitute his example of lyric poetry. Varchi's lesson on della Casa's sonnet on jealousy (*Cura, che di timor ti nutri e cresci*) started to circulate almost instantly, especially in Tuscany, and appeared in print already in 1545 in Mantua, contributing to the poet's popularity. As far as Varchi's referenced texts are concerned, the choice fell on examples of lyric poetry characterized by technical difficulty, lofty style, and elaborated conceit (thus pertaining to a less orthodox kind of Petrarchism) and appropriate for an interpretive reading particularly keen on the aptness of modern poetry and of the Italian vernacular to convey also doctrinal content. The second observation has to do with the methodology of Varchi's lessons, where a focus on the content, which is explained in the light of Florentine neo-Platonic philosophy, is made to interact, as is typically the case for Bembo, with particular concerns about form (style and rhetoric). The result is a new typology of an academic lesson – on poetic texts – documenting the quest for a new

prose and language for literary criticism. It will be widely popular also in Florence, in the Florentine Academy.

Varchi's methodological innovations also had an impact on academic lectures of philosophical content. The cycle of lectures on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* was held from October to November of 1540; also in that case, his method focused on a direct approach to the text, in opposition to many scholastic commentators, whom he considered useless and pedantic and whom he accused of substituting empty exercises with the primary source, obscuring rather than illustrating it and like sterile grammarians placing all their attention on elocution. Varchi instead advocated a direct relationship with the primary source, in order to comprehend it at the literal level and thus explain it clearly and faithfully to the original intended meaning, so as to enable the audience to participate in the search of the truth and thus achieve real knowledge of the content. Varchi's greatest revolution, however, was that of contributing a vernacular translation and comment to the original Greek text of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: he succeeded in the first lesson centered on the meaning of philosophy, but then was forced to give the following lectures in Latin, both due to the high number of foreign students in the audience and perhaps most importantly because of criticism on behalf of uncompromising classicist fellow members, who did not find it acceptable that one would discuss philosophy in the vernacular. Varchi's trailblazing choice was part of a wider program of translation into the vernacular of ancient philosophical texts, particularly Aristotle's works, in an attempt to coin a modern philosophical language that would in turn prove the Italian vernacular to be competitive, also in this field, with respect to the languages of Classic antiquity: during his Paduan years, he attended to a translation and commentary of Aristotle's work on logic (specifically the first book of the *Analytica Priora*), a discipline for which Padua was a prominent center of studies. It was a project that had met the opposition of Florentine humanists and that the Paduan entourage instead encouraged him to pursue, principally Speroni, the person responsible for the favorable orientation of the

Infiammati with respect to the development of the vernacular language and culture. In his *Dialogo delle lingue* – written in the 1530s and widely read by learned Paduans, before it was edited along with the other dialogues by the *Infiammato* Daniele Barbaro (Venice, 1542) – Speroni, who features Pietro Pomponazzi as the principal interlocutor, has him first affirm the primacy of thought and concepts (*res*) over words (*verba*) and then logically justify the substantial equivalence of the different languages for the purpose of scientific and philosophical communication.

Such program – for which Varchi had been inspired by Speroni acting under the influence of Pomponazzi – was later carried on, still under the *Infiammati* banner, by Alessandro Piccolomini, whose experience in the Academy led to a challenging translation project of Classical works, specifically of philosophical and scientific content. It was a project founded on the conviction that divulging knowledge also to those who did not know ancient Greek and Latin had become a necessity. Moreover, the project aimed at elaborating a philosophical vernacular language that could be comprehensible and communicative, not at the expense of scientific accuracy and effective exchange of information. During that same period, in Padua, Piccolomini wrote two tracts *De la sfera del mondo* and *Delle stelle fisse* (both published in 1540 in Venice), which are the first scientific works in the Tuscan language. Other philosophical works in the vernacular ensued (once he had come back to Siena, in 1543, and then to Rome): first and foremost, *L'istrumento della filosofia* was published with the *La prima parte della filosofia naturale* (Rome, 1551), a great philosophical tract focused on logic, where he implemented the teachings of the *Infiammati*, not just with respect to the choice of language but also by electing logic as the basic means to acquire any kind of knowledge.

During his semester-long tenure as *prince* of the Academy, Piccolomini managed to finally put together, with Varchi's help, a cycle of lectures on Aristotle's *Poetics*. The project had been initiated by Leone Orsini, the first *prince*: he had tasked a famous philosopher like Vincenzo Maggi, who, however, had to renounce. The task was

eventually assigned to Bartolomeo Lombardi, a prominent Veronese neo-Aristotelian philosopher. Several impediments, however, including Lombardi's bad health, postponed the schedule between November and December, when Piccolomini had already passed on the baton to Speroni. Lombardi's sickness (which eventually caused his death) did not allow him to go past the proslution to the cycle of lectures, which was eventually held by Maggi. Nine years later, Maggi himself accomplished a great commentary to the *Poetics* (*In Aristotelis librum de Poetica communes explanationes*, Venice, 1550), which was born in collaboration with Lombardi and preceded by his proslution delivered to the *Infiammati*. The Academy, then, was on the cutting edge also with respect to the interest for Aristotle's *Poetics* that exploded halfway through the sixteenth century. To be sure, Piccolomini began an ongoing reflection on poetry and rhetoric that would eventually lead, in the 1560s and 1570s, to translations into the Italian vernacular of the said Aristotelian work (along with a substantial commentary) and of the *Rhetoric*.

Sperone Speroni's tenure as *prince* of the Academy – beginning on October 14, 1541, but made official only one month later (November 13), due to Speroni's own hesitations – marked a turnaround in its history: specifically, a separation from the University of Padua. Such separation was manifested by a program contemplating the exclusive use of the vernacular in formal lectures as well as a notable reduction of the disciplinary scope of the Academy's interests, which were limited to just philosophy, eloquence, and Tuscan poetry. The new course of action was made apparent since Speroni's induction speech, which he delivered in the vernacular. Some highlights of Speroni's leadership were, besides the already mentioned lectures on Aristotle's *Poetics*, lectures on the *Nicomachean Ethics* as well as on the *Rhetoric*, respectively, by Piccolomini and Ugolino Martelli; as for poetry, the interest shifted from lyric poetry to more extensive genres such as tragedy. Sperone himself read excerpts of his *Canace*, which was in progress at the time, to his fellow members. A precious source documenting the new tendencies in the program of the

Academy is *Ragionamenti della lingua toscana* (Venice, 1545 and 1546). A tract cast in the form of a dialogue by Bernardino Tomitano, this work summarizes conversations held at the Academy, after Speroni's election, between Speroni himself, some fellow members, and a group of students of the University of Padua. Following in the footsteps of his teacher (Pomponazzi), Speroni justifies the preeminence of philosophy in the Academy's program by postulating that philosophy has a primary role in the quest for truth and wisdom, which are goals that also professionals dealing with words, such as orators and poets, strive for, in order to achieve, through the specificity of their own language – which differs from philosophy – the civic duties assigned to them. This also applies to modern poets and orators, who use the vernacular, which in turn needs to be promoted and developed, so that it may be able to become more sophisticated conceptually and thus equal to the ancient languages; the part of Speroni's academic program devoted to rhetoric and Tuscan poetry intends to serve precisely to that purpose. Thus, Speroni's reflections, as formulated under the auspices of the *Infiammati* and formalized by his pupil Tomitano, bring to the fore the distinction of languages – the proper language of philosophy and the proper language of poetry and oratory art. Similarly, coeval *Infiammati* readings of Aristotle's *Poetics* focus on comparing and contrasting philosophy, poetry, and history. This is one more aspect that reveals the impact of the *Infiammati*, given that the process eventually leading to the specialization of disciplines did begin halfway through the sixteenth century, exactly by defining the specificity of different languages serving different purposes.

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- [Piccolomini, Alessandro](#)
- [Pomponazzi, Pietro](#)
- [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)
- [Tomitano, Bernardino](#)
- [Varchi, Benedetto](#)

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Accademia Veneta

- [Academy of Fame](#)

Accademia Veneziana

- [Academy of Fame](#)

Acciaioli

► Acciaiuoli, Donato

Acciaiolius

► Acciaiuoli, Donato

Acciaiolo

► Acciaiuoli, Donato

Acciaiolus

► Acciaiuoli, Donato

Acciaiuoli

► Acciaiuoli, Donato

Acciaiuoli, Donato

Born: 15 March 1429, Florence

Died: 28 August 1478, Milan

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Abstract

Donato Acciaiuoli was one of the best known humanists, politicians, and orators in the age of Lorenzo de' Medici. He frequented the most important humanists of the time and was part of the *Accademia Fiorentina*. His literary

activity was primarily focused on commenting and translating into Latin the thoughts of Greek writers, especially philosophers and historians. He commented on the *Ethics* and the *Politics* of Aristotle, from Plutarch he drew the lives of Alcibiades, Demetrius, Hannibal, and Scipio, and he translated into Italian, as appointed by the *Signoria* of Florence, Leonardo Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi*. He was also personally involved in Florentine political life, contributing to the development of the Medici policy. He was Vicar of the Casentino and Poppi, Superintendent of the Florentine Studio, Ambassador, as well as Standard-Bearer of justice. At his death, the 28 August, 1478, Cristoforo Landino composed his funeral eulogy, and Angelo Poliziano wrote the text for his tombstone.

Alternate Names

Acciaioli; Acciaiolius; Acciaiolo; Acciaiolus; Acciaiuoli; Acciaiuolus; Acciajoli; Acciajulus; Acciajuoli; Accievolo; Accievolus; Acciolus; Donati; Donato; Donatus

Biography

Donato Acciaiuoli was born in Florence, on 15 March 1429, to Neri di Donato Acciaiuoli, who died shortly after his birth, and Lena Palla Strozzi. Donato and his brother Piero grew up in Michele Felice Brancacci's home, their adoptive father, who, however, was soon exiled for his political activity against the Medici family in 1434.

Donato devoted himself to the study of philosophy, grammar, and rhetoric early in life, having as humanist teachers like Jacopo Ammannati, Brother Angelo of Lecco, and Giannozzo Manetti. Around 1450, he began to study Greek with Francesco Castiglione and continued with Carlo Marsuppini. In 1454, with his brother Piero, Donato joined the *Accademia Fiorentina*, where he met and frequented Ottavio Rinuccini, Vespasiano of Bisticci, and Marco and Antonio

Rossi and where he had teachers such as Poggio Bracciolini and especially John Argyropoulos, with whom Donato had very close relations and whose lessons he noted in the *Expositio super libros Ethicorum*. He married, in 1461, Maria Pazzi and had with her six children: Alessandro, born in 1466; Roberto, in 1467; Cassandra, Caterina, and Lorenzo, in 1472; and Pietro, in 1474 (see Bianchi 1990; da Bisticci 1892; D'Addario 1960; Della Torre 1902; Ferrari 1943; Garin 1950; Mazzuchelli 1753 – 1763; Segni 1841; Tiraboschi 1805).

Donato was an important humanist, politician, and orator, one of the best known in the age of Lorenzo de' Medici. He endeavored to popularize classical culture, especially the Aristotelian philosophy, of which he was one of the last great scholars of the fifteenth century Florence. His literary activity was focused mainly on commenting and translating into Latin the thoughts of Greek writers, especially philosophers and historians. He produced commentaries, largely scholastic in both form and content, of Aristotle's *Ethics*, *Physics*, and the *De Anima*, all drawn from Argyropoulos' lessons, and, in 1467, he drew from Plutarch's lives of Alcibiades, Demetrius, Hannibal, and Scipio. Later, in 1471, he produced his own commentary of Aristotle's *Politics*, commissioned by Federico of Montefeltro, and, in the same period, in 1472, he also completed the translation of Leonardo Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi* into Italian, as commissioned by the Signoria of Florence (see Bianchi 1990; Della Torre 1902; Field 1988; Gionta 1992; Lines 2002; Mazzuchelli 1753 – 1763; Santini 1922; Staico 1996; Tiraboschi 1805).

In his time, Donato was one of the most important experts of Aristotle and a reference point for the philosophical orientations of Florence during Cosimo's regime and during the transition to the Laurentian regime: a time of great cultural, political, and philosophical changes. In fact, after an initial period devoted to the study of Aristotle's *Ethics* under Argyropoulos' guidance, Donato distanced himself from the master and returned to positions more similar to those of Bruni, as evidenced by the last period of his cultural production, which is characterized by the translation

of Bruni's *Historiae* and by the study dedicated to Aristotle's *Politics*, at that time completely overshadowed by the *Ethics*, but which was one of the highest points of Bruni's activity as a translator and which would later find a large following during the sixteenth century (see Field 1988; Ganz 1982, 1990; Lines 2002; Staico 1996).

Donato was also very involved in the public life of Florence, holding several political offices and actively contributing to the development of the Medici policy. The embassies, more than any other office, were opportunities for him to demonstrate his qualities as a humanist, orator, and skilled diplomat. In 1461, he participated in the embassy led by Piero Pazzi for Louis XI, to whom he presented a *Life of Charlemagne* in Latin, which was then published in Rome in 1470, in the appendix to the Latin edition of *Plutarch's Lives*, and was rewarded by the King with the granting of the titles of Counselor and *Maistre d'Hostel*. In 1462, he was Vicar of Poppi and of the Casentino, and, in 1463, he was Prior. In 1464, he recited the prayer for the death of Cosimo de' Medici, proposing that he be granted the title of "Father of the Country." In 1467, he participated in the embassy led by Luca Pini for the Duke of Milan, Galeazzo Maria Sforza, and, in 1469, he was elected Captain of Volterra, a position he also held in 1477. The following year, he was appointed *Podestà* (Mayor) of Montepulciano and Ambassador at the court of Paul II. In 1471, Donato led the embassy to Sixtus IV to congratulate him on his election, giving Sixtus IV his perhaps most famous oration. Three years later, in 1474, he was Standard-Bearer of Justice and, in 1476, was entrusted with other diplomatic missions in Rome, at Sixtus IV's court, where he was in 1478, during the Pazzi conspiracy. He was suspected of complicity with the Pazzi, but given his consistent political militancy on behalf of the Medici family, the charges were dropped. Indeed, he was entrusted by Lorenzo on a delicate mission in France to probe Louis XI's intentions regarding the Italian situation and to ask his aid on behalf of the Florentines against Pope Sixtus IV, involved in the Pazzi. He died in Milan, on the 28th of August, 1478, while on his way to Paris. His remains were brought back to Florence and buried

in the Certosa. Cristoforo Landino composed his funeral eulogy and Angelo Poliziano wrote the text for his tombstone conspiracy (see D'Addario 1960; da Bisticci 1892; Della Torre 1902; Ganz 1982, 1990; Garin 1954; Mazzuchelli 1753 – 1763; Segni 1841).

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Acciaiuolus

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Acciajoli

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Accievolo

- [Acciaiuoli, Donato](#)

Accievolus

- [Acciaiuoli, Donato](#)

Acciolus

- [Acciaiuoli, Donato](#)

Achillini, Alessandro

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Abstract

Alessandro Achillini (1463–1512) was a Bolognese philosopher and physician; he entertained a moderate form of Averroism, authored treatises on Aristotelian natural philosophy and commentaries, and also wrote a manual on physiognomics and chiromancy.

Biography

Alessandro Achillini was born in 1461 in Bologna as son of Claudio and brother of Giovanni Filoteo. He graduated in philosophy and medicine at the University of Bologna on September 7, 1484; he taught there logic till 1487 and natural philosophy from 1484 to 1494. From 1494 to 1497 he taught theoretical medicine, and from 1497 to 1506 he covered both chairs of philosophy and medicine. As he supported the Bentivoglio family, he left the city when Julius II entered the city in November 1506 and moved to Padua, where he held the chair of natural philosophy in concurrence with Pomponazzi (Riondato 1988). After 2 years he was forced to leave Padua, and in September 1508 he returned to Bologna, where he resumed his teaching of philosophy and medicine, till his death on August 2, 1512 (Münster 1933; Thorndike 1941; Nardi 1960; Baroncini 1977; Matsen 1975, 1994; Lohr 1988).

Achillini stuck to the Averroistic interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy, in particular, as to the eternity of the world, but he contemporarily endorsed divine providence. He argued that the possible intellect was unique for the whole mankind, but he viewed it as the inherent and “informing” form of individual man. He identified the agent intellect with God and defined the conjunction of the human mind with this intellect as

man's ultimate happiness and beatitude. Therefore, Bruno Nardi qualified his psychology as “Sigerian” (Nardi 1945, 1958). He extensively discussed the “calculatory” doctrines and attempted to accommodate the Aristotelian rules on the proportionality of motion with the motor force and resistance.

In the *Quaestio de subiecto physionomiae et chiromantiae* (1503), also published as premiss to Bartolomeo Della Rocca's *Chiromantiae et physionomiae Anastatis* (1504), Achillini discussed the methodological link between divination and Aristotelian natural philosophy and established that the predictions of physiognomics and chiromancy are not strictly scientific but based on a probable certainty. In Achillini's view, divination is framed in a world ruled by astral influences, but celestial and physical influx determines the sensitive appetite and the organical soul only, not the rational soul and its free will. Also his *Quaestio de subiecto medicinae* (1504) pivots on a methodological issue, namely, the relationships of medicine and philosophy, and again he dwelled on the relation between body and soul (Thorndike 1941; Zambelli 1978).

Other published works include *Quolibeta de intelligentiis* (1494), *De orbibus* (1498), *De universalibus* (in a miscellaneous edition, 1501), *De potestate syllogismi*, and *De elementis* (1505), which were issued in a joint edition in Venice in 1508. Subsequently, he published *Distinctiones* (1510), a fragment of the commentary of the *Physics* (1512), and after his death appeared *De proportionibus motuum* (1515) and *Anatomicae annotationes* (1520). In 1545 his complete works were published in Venice by his student Panfilo Monti (Achillini 1545). His *Anatomicae annotationes*, reprinted several times with different titles, were probably notes for a systematic work on human anatomy (Lohr 1988).

Cross-References

- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Foreknowledge in Renaissance Philosophy: Divine](#)

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Aconcio, Jacopo

Born: 1520, Trento/Ossana, Italy

Died: 1567, London, England

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Abstract

Jacopo Aconcio was one of the most important religious reformers of the Renaissance. His works, in which his religious interests are intertwined with philosophy and science, encompass a critique of Catholicism as well as certain aspects of the Reformation, in a perspective where an affirmation of the idea of tolerance is accompanied by the rejection of all dogmatism.

Biography

Jacopo Aconcio was born around 1520 in the city of Trento or in the nearby village of Ossana. He studied law and practiced as a notary until (probably in 1551) he followed the Archduke Maximilian, son of Emperor Ferdinand I, to Vienna. A few years later he returned to Italy and at the end of 1556 arrived in Milan to work as secretary to Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo, who had recently become governor of Milan.

However, in June 1557 his adherence to the reformed religion – an adherence matured during his years in Trento and Vienna – prompted him to flee Italy to reach the land of the Reformation. Thus, he went first to Basel and Zurich (where he befriended Bernardino Ochino) and then to Strasbourg (where he met several English exiles) until in 1559, following the death of Mary Tudor and the ascent of Elizabeth I to the throne, he decided to settle in London. In England, he alternated his work as religious reformer with his activity as expert in military fortifications, until his death in approximately 1567.

Aconcio's commitment as a religious reformer is characterized overall by his harsh criticism of the errors and excesses of Roman Catholicism, but at the same time, also by his strong condemnation of the dogmatic and absolutist consequences of Reformed confessions. His first work, the *Dialogo di Giacopo Riccamati* (previously written in Vienna but later published in Basel in 1558), depicts a close comparison between the character of Muzio, a Catholic totally convinced of his faith, and that of James Riccamati, a good Christian who aspires to know the truth of Christ beyond any confessional rigidity, and also through the exercise of doubt. In this work, Aconcio aims to explain the reasons for his rejection of the Church of Rome and at the same time, rather than set it in opposition to the reformed religion, to simply indicate two essential principles of the search for truth in matters of religion: on the one hand, the use of the word of God – that is, Scriptural text – as the sole criterion for verification of individual opinions, and on the other hand, a willingness to deal with those whose beliefs are different. His identification of the reformed religion as a landing place during the journey in search of truth becomes explicit in the *Somma brevissima della dottrina cristiana*, also published in Basel in 1558. In this work, Aconcio continues to lash out against Catholics and their errors (first of all the unjustified multiplication of sacraments, which according to the Scriptures should be kept to only Baptism and the Eucharist) and outlines the contours of a reformed religion that is more Lutheran than Calvinist, mainly based on direct reading of the Bible, reducing the value

of good works, and on the absolute centrality of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of man. Finally, in his most famous work, the *Stratagemata Satanae*, which was printed in Basel in 1565 and would enjoy great fortune in the following decades, Aconcio continues his anti-Catholic polemic but now also criticizes the Reformed Churches, to which he imputes an increasing dogmatic rigidity, frequent internal conflicts, and repeated manifestations of intolerance. To combat these wrongs, he proposes a twofold remedy: on one hand, to abandon any theological subtleties and reduce dogmatic apparatus to a few essential truths, that is, those deriving directly from the Scriptures that must be known in order to obtain salvation; on the other hand, constant application of the principle of tolerance – a principle based not on denial of the existence of a single truth, but on the belief that the truth cannot but reveal and assert itself when sought through dialogue based on rational persuasion rather than violent coercion (Rossi 1952).

However, Aconcio's importance in the cultural landscape of the sixteenth century goes beyond the sphere of religious issues. Among his major works should also be recalled *De methodo* (Basel 1558), in which he sets up – following Aristotelian logic interpreted with great originality – a new foundation for the means of gathering and transmitting knowledge, based on the analytical method. Moreover, this strong interest in logical and epistemological issues is by no means foreign to the religious problem. Aconcio's philosophical, religious, and technical-scientific interests spring from a single, fundamental need: to find a solution to the practical, theoretical, and spiritual problems that daily life presents to man, who is always at the center of his perspective. And thus, Aconcio finally appears as a figure whose sincere adherence to the Reformation does not cancel out a basic concept of purely humanistic inspiration (Rossi 1952).

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- [Ochino, Bernardino](#)
- [Theology, Renaissance](#)

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Acoustics in Renaissance Sciences

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Abstract

During the Renaissance there was no science of sound as we currently understand it. Conjectures about sound were provided by observations of particular acoustical phenomena incorporated in buildings or in open spaces, like whispering galleries or echoes as discussed in architecture. Sound was also a topic of interest for those who studied the functioning of natural bodies (i.e., voice and hearing), artificial instruments and machines (e.g., automata and war machines), among others.

Although sound could not be identified as the subject matter of any science, it was attributed a relevant role in music treatises. It is assumed that the philosophical traditions involved in its study approached sound either as motion or as the object of hearing. However, up to the seventeenth century sound, as part of music, was mostly explored within the Aristotelian framework of subalternate sciences, being studied not as a perceived quality but as the natural quality of number, the actual object of music.

Introduction

Many were the Renaissance authors that approached sound in their writings. Some of these authors attributed more relevance to historical narratives about its origin as represented by the character of Juval in the Bible, book of Genesis, and his invention of consonance; Pythagoras and the invention of consonance; as well as Hugh of St. Victor and the origin of singing.

Narratives about the invention of sound as the invention of musical consonance (agreeable musical intervals) was a recurrent theme found already in medieval treatises up to the late sixteenth century (Bromberg and Alfonso-Goldfarb 2010). The invention of consonance by either Pythagoras or Jubal was transmitted as told by Iamblichus, Nicomachus of Gerasa, and Theon of Smyrna. Such legend was specially well illustrated in the works of Franchino Gaffurio (1451–1522), a music theorist from the fifteenth century. The legend explained that instruments as different as *auloi*, panpipes, and vessels filled to various levels with liquid were showed to yield the same proportional ratios as monochords when subjected to different tensions by attaching weights to them (Gaffurio 1993).

Some Renaissance authors mentioned whispering galleries and echoes as types of sound phenomenon, others were interested in the organ of hearing, and others yet spoke of a certain sound in the cosmos, as was the case with the theory of the harmony of the spheres in which sound was emitted through the movements of the celestial bodies while remaining unheard.

Whispering galleries are a good example of the intersection between building and natural philosophy. Some authors would assert that they had been planned in advance, while others would state that their acoustical phenomena were inherent to the construction and geometric form of the building that contained them. People could experience the same phenomenon outdoors as well, along the circular walls of certain gardens or in fortifications and also in some ancient theaters (Crunelle 1991). It is assumed that a truly geometrical and not an acoustical decision often guided the elaboration of the plans for the aforementioned buildings. The German Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher (1608–1680) described this effect in his work *Musurgia Universalis* (1620), a treatise written in a dispute with an English engineer. A second treatise called *Phonurgia* would elaborate on his interest in echoes, which he considered to be founded on sound waves propagated after hitting some obstacle (Tronchin et al. 2008). Nevertheless, the cause of such effects was attributed to geometry. Other natural philosophers, such as Giovanni B. Della Porta (1535–1615), also proposed a geometrical approach to acoustics when analyzing the powerful influence of music on human soul (Barbieri 2004).

Sound was something produced by an external body and was differentiated from voice. Voice was regarded as natural, while the production of other types of sound was considered to be artificial. Whether favoring or challenging Aristotle's division between natural (voice) and artificial sounds (instruments, machines, etc.), authors attempted to recreate sound in automata, speaking machines, and musical instruments. Following Aristotle's notion of perception, sound was also understood as the object of hearing. Authors would approach hearing as a sensory science, like sight; the analogy between sound and light was common among renaissance authors. Natural philosophers such as Francis Bacon, Athanasius Kircher, or Robert Hooke saw in acoustics the way to improve the range of hearing, or to improve communication (Gouk 1982, 2006), Galileo Galilei envisaged a new instrument aiming at bringing to bring sound closer (Valleriani 2012).

Regarding physical theories, it is assumed that the then most prominent philosophy of sound was that sound consisted of a kind of motion, a philosophy inherited from the Middle Ages. The idea that motion is generated by a source, which appeared in the works of Aristotle, was mostly represented in narratives comparing the propagation of sound with the water wave (Johnstone 2013). However, the wave analogy was not unanimously accepted; sometimes authors would not reveal preference for any theory, at other times they would make use of more than one. They admitted that sound could be propagated in a diversity of forms: wave, the scholastic notion of species, corpuscular theory, and atoms. The historiography, however, places the first solution for a sound theory at the moment when discussions about numbers were transformed into questions about vibrational frequencies (Dostrovsky 1975; Cohen 1984). In fact, the vibration theory would be regarded as the first theory of sound in the seventeenth century (Truesdell 1960; Dostrovsky 1975).

Regarding historical documentation, studies about sound have been preserved in music treatises since the Middle Ages. Medieval and Renaissance music was not classified as art but as science based on speculative knowledge and characterized by its mathematical rather than physical nature. Sound was a facet of discussions involving the definitions and demonstrations of music as a mathematical science, yet, in many cases, the perceived acoustical phenomena were also described.

Classifying Sound

Since sound was placed within music, it was in music treatises that definitions of sound appear. Music was based on mathematics, more precisely on the arithmetic of pitch. The arithmetic of pitch meant that sound was defined on arithmetical bases and treated by natural philosophers and theoretical musicians through arithmetical or geometrical analyses (Dostrovsky 1975; Szabó 1978). The arithmetical definition of musical elements was an inherited Pythagorean approach that dominated music theory throughout the Middle

Ages and Renaissance. The mathematical definition of music was a consensus; Plato, Aristotle, and their followers had agreed on it, even though not in the same way (Truesdell 1976; Walker 1978; Cohen 1984; Barker 2007; Creese 2010).

Sound was analyzed solely through differences in pitch – the subject property that enables sounds to be compared with each other in terms of high and low. Aristotle argued that differences in pitch corresponded to differences in the motion of air, thus a low sound would correspond to a slow motion and high sound to a fast motion. No other attribute of sound was correctly identifiable, for timbre could not be completely differentiated from pitch, intensity was confused with pitch and timbre, and because there was no way to measure it outside the realm of music.

Questions about duration, intensity, or timbre were not pressing. The duration of sound was understood to be part of the studies about rhythm, which dealt with identifying time changes and managing the metrics of speech.

Nevertheless, the relationships between differences in pitch (high and low) were understood in terms of proportion. Musical intervals were considered multitudes in relation to one another and were expressible and measured only through integral number ratios. The specific qualification (consonant/ dissonant) and quantification (duple, triple, etc.) of ratios was dictated by textual tradition regardless of practice and experimentation.

Music belonged with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy since the medieval *quadrivium*, a classification that aimed to define the content and methods of each discipline and to establish the relationships between them (Dyer 2007). The proper order of these mathematical sciences was discussed during the Middle Ages, and two classifications eventually became relevant to music. One was based on Severinus Boethius' (c. 480–524) *De institutione arithmetica* and *De institutione musica* and the second on Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*. For the first author, music was considered to be a mathematical-arithmetical science. Boethius held arithmetic on the highest position among the four sciences (Masi 1983); for Capella, music, although still considered as a mathematical

science, was paired off with astronomy (Masi 1983; Teeuwen 2002). Both treatises were largely commented and received glosses of speculative and philosophical characters. From these glosses it becomes clear that the disciplines from the *quadrivium* were based on the same notions of mathematical ratios (Teeuwen 2002).

Boethius' classification became strongly widespread in music theory during the Renaissance (Barbera 1980). Like Aristotle, he defined scientific knowledge as a doctrine built on first principles and strict demonstration. In his system of sciences, Aristotle had defined music as a speculative mathematical science, yet a science of proportions that possessed a physical component (Aristotle 1984). He had a place for these sciences that were partly mathematical and partly natural, such as optics and music. Music was defined as the most natural of the mathematical sciences (*Physics* 194a7). This view, unknown to the early Middle Ages, was of great relevance to the development of the *scientiae mediae*, specially by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274).

Regarding the subject of music, that ambivalence meant that number was its essential attribute, but also that it held an improper part, an accident. This accident or quality was sound which came from physics (*Metaph.* 987b27). Authors from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries embraced this definition, and expressions such as *numerus sonorus*, *numerus relatus ad sonos* were used in relation to the subject of music by Robert Grosseteste, Albert the Great, and Robert Kilwardby, for example (Rico 2005). Nevertheless, regarding the developments in acoustics, it was with Aquinas that the configuration of music as a subalternate science became more fruitful. He considered the subject of music as a composite entity with a mathematical form and a physical matter, and, by doing so, he adhered to Aristotle's explanation of number as the formal cause of musical consonance. To Aquinas the *scientiae mediae* reach conclusions about sensible matter even though they proceed through mathematical principles.

Robert Grosseteste (1175–1253) also elaborated on the subject matter of arithmetical music. Following the definitions of species of

numbers as proposed by Boethius and in accordance with the *quadrivium*, Grosseteste introduced the *numerus relatus*. The term was introduced in his commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*. In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle assumes that sounds (musical intervals) acquire their particular qualities through their corresponding ratios; however, because Aristotle knew that there was no absolute consensus on this issue, he decided not to carry out an investigation on types of intervals and ratios but, instead, explained that they could be defined in terms of priority of the mathematical over the acoustical elements or vice versa. He therefore called mathematical harmonicists “those who investigate harmonics according to numbers” (*Top.* 107a15–16) and hearing-based harmonicists “those who knew the fact that” (*An. Post.* 79a2–4). Only mathematical harmonicists were in possession of demonstrations of the causes (*An. Post.* 79a2–4) (Creese 2010). When commenting on this difference, Grosseteste associated the mathematical harmonicists with *numerus relatus* and the hearing-based harmonicists with *numerus relatus sonorus*. *Numerus relatus* concerned all proportioned beings (McInerny 1990).

Authors from the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries drew on the views of Aquinas and Grosseteste, now trying to distinguish between ratio, sound, and sounding body. Sounding bodies were not the same as musical instruments; they were elements that produced sound and did not correspond to the whole musical instrument, which involved a much more complex mechanism. Strings, glasses, and tubes were considered sounding bodies.

Understanding Sounding Bodies

Sounding body is a term that appears in Renaissance treatises to name things that cause sound with pitch and therefore fall within musical mathematics. As we saw, theorists were familiar with the Pythagorean doctrine of musical ratios, but to understand the relationship between musical ratios and sound required to know how to attribute magnitude to sound (Saito and Bromberg 2015).

Since magnitude enables a qualitative and quantitative description of concepts through numbers, and given that, (a) magnitudes can be reduced to numbers and (b) measuring involves comparison, the magnitude to be measured must be material (Saito and Bromberg 2015). In music the most important method to render sounds comparable was to make them visible (Creese 2010). This process was achieved through an instrument called monochord, which consisted of a single string stretched over a soundbox, with two fixed bridges, one at either end, and a movable bridge that allowed the string to be divided at any point in between. Under the string were some scales that functioned like a rod or ruler (Greek *kanōn*).

This instrument was known since ancient times, although its function and meaning had changed over time. Again, the medieval theory of the monochord transmitted to the Renaissance was based on Boethius’ writings. The medieval monochord worked as a pitch-producing instrument for singers and appeared in writings aimed at the construction of organs and bells. By the time of the Renaissance, the monochord was still used by singers but was mostly referred to by authors whose works dealt with the construction and tuning of musical instruments (Adkins 1967). The monochord use could be related to the theory of proportions and would dispense with a theory of sound as movement or impact, for it would not enable their measurement.

The behavior of strings or tubes was not known to theorists. Luthiers, that is, instrument makers, would be consulted for information about it. As we saw, there was no theory that could properly account for the acoustic properties of either strings or tubes.

Information on strings and tubes could be found mostly in those works dedicated to the arts of mining, smelting, and metalwork. Vanoccio Biringuccio’s *De la Pirotechnia* (1540) is an example of a technical treatise that included details about organ pipes and a description of the “bell scale” (Biringuccio 1966). Descriptions of instruments with strings of varying types or thickness and varying pipe length, diameter, and volume clearly show how unusual were his distinctions between pitch and number, in particular, the distinction between

pitch production and his definitions of qualities applied to the notion of timbre.

In the first treatise dedicated to musical organology *Musica getutscht* (1511), Sebastian Virdung considered three categories of musical instruments. In the third group, which he called instruments that resound (and that is generically translated as percussion), he included the hammers on the anvil from the legend of Pythagoras, bells and chime bells along with organ pipes, explaining that the functioning and measuring of these instruments followed the proportional theory described by Boethius.

Nevertheless, many treatises were written that described old and new instruments (Vincenzo Galilei, Lodovico Fogliano, Michael Praetorius, Girolamo Cardano, Ercole Bottrigari). In such treatises, even though illustrations and information on the instruments would be given, the knowledge of how to make them would actually not be provided, and there were a number of reasons for that. Sometimes the knowledge would be kept within the circles of luthiers, unavailable for disclosure. But most often authors were either still attached to textual tradition or unable to legitimize their own theories.

Acoustics and Mathematics

Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries the acoustical dilemma lied in reconciling the natural argument with the principles of mathematics philosophically embedded in the discussion of subalternate sciences and the possibility of metabasis (Aristotle). In the specific case of music, arithmetic, with its application to the ratios of musical intervals, had to cohere with geometry and its application to the extensions of sounding bodies. Yet, being arithmetic and geometry two different sciences, each one with its own methods, and sound not being measurable as a physical entity, no philosophy or theory of sound enabled analyzing the arithmetics of interval, the geometry of the sounding body, and the reality of sound.

By that time textual tradition had legitimated arithmetic as the prime science. Then, because of arithmetic's concern with number (theoretical

abstraction of the musical interval), which is discrete, and geometry's and physics' similar concern with matter (sounding body), which is continuous, the content of the former was given greater certitude than the content of the latter. Therefore, either the sounding bodies or sound itself would still take a long period of time to become a proper object of inquiry. The theory of proportions also gave an answer to perception. Since agreeable sounds were defined by rational numbers, there was no philosophy of sense-perception beyond the distinction between consonance and dissonance.

The mathematical focus of this discussion is evident from the sources cited in the majority of the documents. The separation of the general magnitudes of geometry from the discrete multitudes of arithmetic was provided in books V and VII of Euclid's *Elements*. The authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries discussed mostly book VII, which contains the demonstration of a purely numerical theory of magnitudes (Murdoch 1963). These authors focused on Aristotle's *Physics* and *Posterior Analytics*, since the subject of natural science is analyzed especially in the second book of *Physics*, which explains how it differs from the object of mathematics and enumerates the types of causes used in its demonstrations.

The need to understand the application of abstract ratios to sounding bodies as relations between parts and of parts to the whole set voice apart, for the voice organ could not be subjected to either partition or measurement. It was probably when authors disconnected the practices of the division of the monochord from the behavior of strings that they managed to develop new approaches to sound. The development of the laws for the natural frequencies of vibrating strings would be relevant in the works of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), whose *Mathematical Discourses Concerning Two New Sciences* (1638) contained the statement and discussion about frequency equivalence (Dostrovsky 1975) and Marin Mersenne (1588–1648). Nevertheless, prior to the end of the eighteenth century music remained classified as a mathematical science. Even natural philosophers from the seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries considered the

phenomena of sound in connection with music. In the *Two New Sciences*, Galileo still referred to the questions of sound that included vibration, as problems of music.

The transition from the scientific analysis of music in terms of number to an approach with an essentially physical basis is well discussed in literature (Gozza 2000; Cohen 1984) in which it is described all the major natural philosophers from the seventeenth century who devoted themselves also to music as was the case of Johannes Kepler, Simon Stevin, Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Pierre Gassendi, and Isaac Beeckman.

It is assumed that the mathematical theory of sound propagation began with Isaac Newton (1642–1727), whose *Principia* (1686) included a mechanical interpretation of sound as being “pressure” pulses transmitted through neighboring fluid particles. Substantial progress towards the development of a viable theory of sound propagation resting on firmer mathematical and physical concepts was made during the eighteenth century by Euler (1707–1783), Lagrange (1736–1813), and d’Alembert (1717–1783).

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Acquapendente, Girolamo Fabrici

Born: 1533, Acquapendente

Died: 21 May 1619, Padua

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Abstract

Girolamo Fabrici was a physician, anatomist, surgeon, and pupil and successor of Falloppia in the anatomy chair in Padua, where he built the anatomical theater. He is remembered for the exact description of the valves of the veins (without understanding the correct function). His embryological research is also important, and so the observations on the physiology of the muscles of the limbs, the pupil's motility, phonation, uterine anatomy, and childbirth are significant. In the field of surgery, he should be remembered for the tracheotomy and the machines built for orthopedic purposes.

Biography

Fabricius was born in Acquapendente, son of Fabricio. He moved to Padua in 1550 and he obtained the degree in medicine in 1559 (Salvadori 1837).

After the death of Gabriele Falloppia (1523–1562), who was his master, Fabricius was named lecturer in surgery on April 11, 1565, with the obligation to teach also the anatomy, chair that kept for 50 years (Favaro 1911–1912). He maintained the activity of teacher, surgeon, and

esteemed practical physician. He is considered a pioneer in orthopedic field. He was the first anatomist to recognize the importance and the symbolic efficacy of the systematic anatomical illustration, leaving a big colored anatomical atlas. Nowadays, of this atlas remain 211 tables, of which 44 about his publications and 167 unpublished, all preserved in the Marciana National Library of Venice (Rippa Bonati 2015). The first permanent anatomical theater (1595), still preserved at the Bo Palace, is linked to Fabricius' name, and it is considered an emblematic symbol of the demonstrative method in anatomy, and it was the model of other anatomical theaters that were built in the major European universities during the seventeenth century (Favaro 1922).

Fabricius applied the anatomo-comparative method in the anatomical research with great efficacy. He is also considered the father of the scientific embryology thanks to his two books, *De formato foetu* (1600a) and *De formatione ovi et pulli* (published in 1621 after his death).

The *De formato foetu* is a comparative study in which are described the ripest phases of the development in many animal species, with wonderful draws of the pregnant human uterus, extraembryonic tissues, and placenta. In *De formatione ovi et pulli* are illustrated the different phases of chick's development starting from the sixth day, with different and excellent tables, that were considered the best before Marcello Malpighi's ones. It is also described and illustrated for the first time the lymphatic organ of the birds that is called "Bursa of Fabricius".

Fabricius contributed much to the field of surgery, thanks to his descriptions of the tracheotomy procedure, which is similar to that used today. He favored using a vertical incision and was the first to introduce the idea of a tracheostomy tube.

Fabricius highlighted also the passage from descriptive anatomy to functional anatomy with the books dedicated to sensory nervous system, phonation, and respiratory organs: the treatises *De visione, voce, audito* (1600b), *De brutorum loquela* (1603b), and *De respiratione et eius instrumentis* (1615). Fabricius was strongly interested to the problem of biological movement, and

he wrote a little treatise, *De motu locali animalium secundum totum* (1618). His masterpiece is the *De venarum ostiolis* (1603a), in which he systematically studied the valves of the veins, drawing them as first with excellent outcomes, but the function was misunderstood. This book had an important influence on William Harvey (1578–1657), who used some of those pictures and also based lots of his arguments in support of the blood circulation on the function of the valves of the vein (Zampieri et al. 2013).

Innovative and Legacy

About Fabricius' anatomical interests, it has also been observed that he, by dealing with different organs, did not make it clear whether he was talking about man or animal. This also denotes the peculiarity of his approach to that discipline which he wanted to treat in a “scientific” and not empirical manner, namely, describing the structure, function, and “causes” of the organ itself, regardless of whether they belong to man or animal, and therefore according to a concept of science as a true, universal explanation of the causes of the phenomenon in general, though derived from observing it in many different creatures.

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Acquaviva, Claudio

Born: 14 September 1543, Atri

Died: 31 January 1615, Rome

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Abstract

Claudio Acquaviva (1543–1615) was the fifth general of the Jesuits from 1581 until his death. Very gifted in administrative and political issues, by his election he programmed a precise reformation of the Society, culminated with the publication of the *Ratio Studiorum* in 1586. He faced many controversies, internal and external to his order, and had several clashes especially with Spanish Jesuits, the emperor Philip II, and the popes Sixtus V, Clement VIII, and Paul V. All of them were successfully solved due to his cleverness in politics. He also succeeded in developing the Society in France, the Netherlands, and Flanders. Dead in 1615, he left the Society in its brightest period and contributed to its future survival.

His thoughts and ideas on the governance of the Society are expressed mainly in the two works he personally supervised, *Ratio atque institutio studiorum* (Romae, 1586) and *Industriae pro superioribus eiusdem Societatis: Ad curandos Animae morbos* (Romae, 1606).

Biography

Claudio Acquaviva, the youngest son of the Duke of Atri, entered the Jesuits in Rome in 1567 and thanks to his organizational talent was soon selected as provincial of Naples and Rome. In 1580, the English Jesuit mission asked him to follow it in supporting the efforts of Robert Parsons. Already well-known across Europe, he gained the post of general (the fifth from the birth of the Jesuits) of the Society in 1581. Just after the election, he showed his political and administrative aptitudes and silenced the perplexities pope Gregory XIII had against his abilities. Due to his efforts for the Society and his sharpness in maintaining order in the difficulties, Acquaviva was considered the “second” founder of the Jesuits.

He managed to solve two main challenges caused by the opponents of the Society. The first one occurred in 1586, guided by the Spanish fringe of the Society that, supported by Philip II, aimed to change the basis of the Society itself against his political views. The second one, more intricate, started the next year against the pope Sixtus V, professed enemy of Acquaviva and the Jesuits, on the controversies among Spanish and Italian Jesuits and on the reformation of the Society. Despite the aid given to Acquaviva by the king of Poland, the Duke of Bavaria, and the cardinal Marcantonio Colonna, the pope with his Spanish supporters outclassed him and forced to accept their conditions.

The death of Sixtus V didn't stop the controversy, becoming even worse with the election to the Holy See of Clement VIII. The new pope, opened to the Spanish lands, helped by the Dominicans and afraid of the French politics, agreed to denounce Acquaviva to the Inquisition. The legal process was really slow, and when Clement VIII passed away, the new pope, Paul V, in 1606 opened to Acquaviva and with a detailed procedure of reformation saved him from condemnation, solved the controversy with Spanish Jesuits, satisfied the needs of the Italian fringe, and contributed to create the final order of the Society.

Meanwhile, Acquaviva succeeded in growing up foreign affairs with France, the Netherlands, and Flanders, and in these countries he contributed to increase the political and theological influence of the Society.

He died in Rome on January 31, 1615.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Acquaviva's innovative and original aspects are clearly remarked in two of the works he supervised: *Ratio atque institutio studiorum* (Romae, 1586) and *Industriae pro superioribus eiusdem Societatis: Ad curandos Animae morbos* (Romae, 1606). In these works it is possible to appreciate the intellectual smartness of Acquaviva, helped and guided in his writing by the circumstances he was living in.

The first book represents the document that formally established the new rules of the Society. It was edited in its first version as a collective work made by Acquaviva with six chosen members of the Society: Juan Azor (Spain), Gaspar González (Portugal), James Tyrie (Scotland), Pierre Busée (the Netherlands), Anthony Ghuse (Flanders), and Stefano Tuccio (Sicily). Acquaviva began to think about the book already in 1581, but its biographical events and the time required for its writing delayed its publication by 5 years. In this text, definitively approved in 1599, Acquaviva and its extenders reform the educational activity of Jesuit colleges, from that of Rome to the most remote. There, Acquaviva precisely defined the *cursus studiorum* and the teaching methods to be applied.

The second book contains Acquaviva's teachings on how members of the Society should relate to the people, especially in spiritual matters. This was to avoid the difficulties that could have arisen during their *officium*. However, it also represents a set of cautions that the Jesuits themselves had to take into account, also to not disregard teachings and guidelines proposed by Acquaviva himself.

There are also several letters written by Acquaviva to the Society or addressed to him that are helpful to better understand his thought.

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Actio in distans

► Action at a Distance

Action and Contemplation in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

Commentators have often considered a preference for the active versus the contemplative life one of the defining aspects of the Renaissance. This entry points to the long-standing nature of the debate on the possible kinds of life. It also underlines the variety of solutions put forth (also in the Renaissance) and the subtlety of many views (which tended to reconcile the two kinds of life rather than opting for just one of them). Aside from developments in fifteenth-century Florence, where a strong turn toward civic humanism led to exaltations of the active life, the Renaissance saw numerous defenses of the contemplative life and (as a separate category) of the religious life. Throughout Europe, contemplation therefore was often reaffirmed as an ideal, although thinkers rarely believed that one could engage in contemplation exclusively.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Debates about the relative merits and superiority of the active or contemplative life have been a feature of western philosophy since Plato and Aristotle (a brief survey in Kristeller 1996b, 199–202). In many ways the discussion was similar to that about theory versus practice, or about *otium* (Enenkel and Melion 2011; Vickers 1985), but did not quite coincide with

that on the solitary life (Kristeller 1996b). In Aristotle's account (*Nicomachean Ethics* I and X.7–9, but also VI.5–8), which had an especially strong influence on late-medieval and Renaissance thought, both kinds of life involve the exercise of the intellect: action is governed by the practical intellect or prudence and is strongly connected to the exercise of moral virtue, whereas contemplation is an operation of the speculative intellect. Both have as their object the human and natural world, although speculation is nearer to the life of the gods and seems ultimately concerned with the eternal causes of things (*NE* X.7). Aristotle gives short shrift to the pleasurable life (a third kind of life listed by him), given that it does not result in the *eudamonia* he is interested in (*NE* I.5).

Later thinkers associated the terms “action” and “contemplation” with different activities and gave them different emphases. With Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, the contemplative life came to be identified much more strongly with “the knowledge and contemplation of the divine mind and the divine ideas” (Kristeller 1996b, 201). Christians meanwhile often identified the life of contemplation with a life of meditation and speculation turned toward God. Monasticism, then in its early years, seemed a praiseworthy state, much as Martha (who sat at Jesus' feet) was more worthy than her sister Mary (who bustled about preparing the meal: Luke 10:38–42). In the Middle Ages, the contemplative life thus came to be conceived as something that was exercised by those who had the freedom from worldly cares that enabled them to live a life of prayer and closeness to God. In other words, it became the preserve of the clergy and more rarely of others who were able to combine it with the life of *otium* praised by Romans such as Cicero.

The common stereotype of the Middle Ages as gazing upward while in isolation from the world should, however, be treated with caution. In fact, the theme of the active and contemplative life was warmly debated by several medieval scholastics, including Avicenna (Trottmann 2009), Albertus Magnus (Tin   1995), and Thomas Aquinas (Oliva 2012) – an indication that several opposing views were tenable. In some cases,

the conclusion arrived at is quite different from what one might expect: indeed, Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler actually argue for the superiority of the active life (Mieth 1969), as does Henry of Ghent (Macken 1994). But at least three other points about these discussions are important: one is that they do not necessarily argue for the absolute superiority of either of the two lives for man; indeed, Thomas argues for the notional superiority of the contemplative life but then points out that the active one is usually the most appropriate for us (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, qq. 182 and 188; III, q. 40; Kristeller 1996b, 202). Secondly, as in antiquity, discussions do not assume that the active and contemplative lives are mutually exclusive or discontinuous. Rather, they see individuals as engaging in one or the other in different proportions and ways, depending on their circumstances, status, and other factors. As anticipated by Varro and Augustine (*De civitate Dei*, XIX, 19), the ideal can therefore be to lead a mixed life, in which one type of life is informed by the other. For instance, Thomas viewed an active life (involving, say, preaching or teaching) as a profitable enactment of the knowledge acquired through contemplation (Marenbon 2007, 244–245). This is what Bornio da Sala (†1439), following Thomas, describes as the kind of life (“*vita mixta et fructuosa*”) that Christ chose to lead (Kristeller 1996a, 188–189, 195). Finally, in some instances the contemplative life was given an even stronger religious tinge: again, Thomas sometimes uses it to signify the process by which man, beholding his beloved (God), is transformed in his essence to become like him (Thomas, *Commentum in librum III Sententiarum*, Distinctio 27, q. 1, a. 1; Kristeller 1996a, 190–191) – a perspective sharing elements in common with the Neoplatonists. By now it should be clear that the medieval understanding of the active life could itself be rather distant from the classical one: although the exercise of moral virtue is doubtless part of it, the active life can be equally strongly connected with the outworkings and communication of faith. The contemplative life is often associated with a life of philosophical or theological study but can also carry deeply religious, quasi-mystical overtones.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the Renaissance this spiritual and religious understanding of the active/contemplative life continued to be debated and to attract followers, not only among the regulars (Harline 1995; Lamy 2011) but also among teachers of philosophy such as Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Enenkel and Melion 2011) and humanists (helpful collections of essays are Vickers (1985), Trottmann (2007, 2009), La Brasca and Trottmann (2011), and Enenkel and Melion (2011)). Yet alongside it another more lay and secular vision developed (Toms Engram 1984). On the one hand, this new model may emphasize more strongly the contemplative life as one of leisure to study and acquire knowledge, as in Petrarch (Toms Engram 1984; Enenkel 1994; Hankins 2018) or Ermolao Barbaro, who includes within it disciplines ranging from grammar to theology (although he excludes eloquence and poetry in his treatise on celibacy of 1472; Kristeller 1996b, 204–205). On the other hand, the active life is interpreted in different ways: some humanists, such as Leon Battista Alberti, underline its social and familial dimension (*I libri della famiglia*; La Brasca and Trottmann 2011). Others, including Coluccio Salutati (Vickers 1985), Leonardo Bruni (Mesch 2016, 80–86), and Matteo Palmieri (Mita Ferraro 2005) – all active in Florence in the first half of the fifteenth century – see the active life particularly in terms of civic and political engagement. This gave rise to Hans Baron's influential interpretation of a Florentine *Bürgerhumanismus* ("civic humanism"; Baron 1966; Kristeller 1996b, 205–208). But here too it is important not to emphasize the one kind of life to the exclusion of the other; what Baron thought he saw was the rise of the politically and socially engaged citizen-scholar, someone able to negotiate the attraction of the life of study with the duties required by the immediate political context. A case in point is the *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* by Giannozzo Manetti, a work that sees a potential harmony between active and contemplative life (Isnardi Parente 1962, 440).

Scholars have debated both the nature and extent of this "civic humanism" as described

so alluringly by Baron (Hankins 1995) and have questioned its legacy. Some have seen Marsilio Ficino's emphasis on Neoplatonic contemplation in the second half of the fifteenth century as both root and symbol of an increasingly unpolitical spirit (Garin 1964); in this context, though, one of Ficino's merits is to reintroduce the existence of the pleasurable life (discussed also by Lorenzo Valla; see Vickers 1985 and called "Christian hedonism" in Nauta 2009, 152–190) and to indicate an individual's freedom to combine the various kinds of life (Kristeller 1996b, 208–210). Others have argued that the second half of the century in general, and the writings of Ficino and even Cristoforo Landino in particular (Lentzen 1991, 2005; Petris 2003), do not amount to a retreat from the earlier emphasis on the active life (Field 1988; cf. Kristeller 1996b, 210–212). But there certainly are clear instances, for instance, in the Aristotelian philosopher Nicoletto Vernia (†1499), in which the contemplative life is favored (Vernia 1947; Nardi 1958, 95–126; Poppi 1964). Many figures took part in the debate (see Schalk 1971, 237–238 for a suggestive listing).

Moving on to the sixteenth century, one again finds voices raised – both in Latin and in the vernacular – in favor of the active life. One such was Pietro Pomponazzi, whose university teaching in both Padua and Bologna made fun of his colleagues' dedication to the abstractions of the intellect and advocated more attention to a life of virtue (Poppi 1970). Pomponazzi's student Sperone Speroni carried forward (and perhaps exaggerated) his teacher's exaltation of the active life, buttressing this through a denigration of the speculative disciplines. He did so in the vernacular, particularly in the treatise *Del modo di studiare* (Speroni 1740, II, 486–502; Poppi 1997, 180–191) and in the incomplete *Dialogo della vita attiva e contemplativa* (Speroni 1740, II, 1–43; Poppi 1997, 191–198), written in 1542. One of the dialogue's speakers, Gianfrancesco Valerio, refers to the three kinds of life as those of the artisans, the virtuous, and the philosophers; but he praises only the second, intermediate group. The others are shown to be too fixated either on production or on speculation (Speroni 1740, II, 26). Another highly relevant example of

the defense of the active life is a highly popular work by the Sienese scholar Alessandro Piccolomini, the *Institutione di tutta la vita de l'homo nato nobile e in città libera* (1542). There Piccolomini, like Speroni a prominent member of the Paduan Accademia degli Inflammati, claims that the contemplative life is in principle superior to the active one. Nonetheless, he states that his attention will concentrate on civic (or active) happiness. This will have a double advantage for the son of the work's dedicatee Laudomia Forteguerri: it will both make him happy and virtuous in the present life and, thereby, allow him to earn happiness in the hereafter (Piccolomini 1542, f. 16r-v; Poppi 1997, 198–205). In this case, therefore, Piccolomini seems to have married a civic and secular active life with the prospect of a heavenly and contemplative one, attainable only after death (Belladonna 1972, 167), as argued by Plato and Thomas Aquinas.

The contemplative life was not, however, without its defenders. A case in point is the *Universa philosophia de moribus* (1583) by Francesco Piccolomini, a Sienese professor who spent his career teaching philosophy at the University of Padua. In his commentary on Book VI of Aristotle's *Ethics*, Piccolomini first provides a survey of the various positions on the preeminence of the active or contemplative life. He then builds on the views of Speroni and his kinsman Alessandro, strongly arguing both for the dignity of theoretical philosophy and for the necessity of combining wisdom and prudence: the two should be kept together like a plant and its fruit, and theoretical philosophy illuminates practical philosophy much as the sun does with the moon (Piccolomini 1583, 300–309; Poppi 1976, 1997, 205–212).

Although Francesco's discussion does not deal at length with theology, it nonetheless has a strong spiritual and religious undercurrent – an important factor in his attempt to reconcile Aristotle, Plato, and other philosophical schools (Lines 2002, 281–284; Kraye 2002). This should not surprise us, coming as it did in the age of Protestant and Catholic reform. Some of his contemporaries tried to argue for the value of the religious ideal by

separating the religious life from the contemplative one. This led to outlining not two but three main types of life. A powerful example is Jacopo Mazzoni's *De triplici hominum vita* (1576), which in addition to the active and contemplative lives analyzes and exalts the religious life as a separate category (Mazzoni 1576, ff. 408v–409r; Leinkauf 2017, passim).

Impact and Legacy

The respective advantages of the active and contemplative lives were also a live issue outside of Italy. Luther's support for a married clergy was based in part on the conviction that ministers should not be far removed from the condition of their flock or pass their lives exclusively in study. In England, the dissolution of the monasteries gave rise to an increased confrontation on the part of the religious with the problems of the active life. One of the most vivid portrayals of the tensions between the two is in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* I, 10, where the Redcrosse Knight, first shown the Heavenly City by the hermit Contemplation, is then urged by the same to reenter the world and defeat the dragon. But the problem is also addressed by Francis Bacon and Margaret Cavendish, raising the issue of the relationship of science to contemplation (Summit 2010). The religious dimension of the debate was also relevant to the Jesuits: Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* made considerable use of both meditation and contemplation (Enenkel and Melion 2011); but of course the point of these exercises was also to repent of or prepare one for how one confronted the challenges of life in the everyday world. The debate in France, while often touching (as in Montaigne: La Brasca and Trottmann 2011) on solitude rather than contemplation more specifically, could be strongly informed by mystical tendencies and love lyric: relevant authors here include Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Maurice Scève (Mazur-Matusevich 2004; Vance 2004; Enenkel and Melion 2011; Giordano 2016). Jean Bodin's *Paradoxon* (1596) offers a full discussion of the religious life as well as of the active and

contemplative ones (Miglietti 2020; see Isnardi Parente 1962 for his other works). A further strain was closely tied to the debate on withdrawing from public life during the Wars of Religion, as is illustrated by authors such as Loy LeRoy and Jacques Auguste de Thou (Isnardi Parente 1990; De Smet 2020). In Spain, as elsewhere, discussions take place both in philosophical and literary works (including poetry). Especially noteworthy is Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (c. 1490–1573), whose dialogue *Democrates primus* (1535) includes a sustained comparison of the active and contemplative lives. Strongly informed by a spirit of Christian humanism, Sepúlveda concludes that the contemplative/religious life is superior to that based solely on the moral virtues of the active life (Fernández-Santamaría 1977, 172–176). That position is not uncommon among his Spanish contemporaries.

Finally, discussions about action and contemplation are so pervasive in the Renaissance that they are found in many works that may not initially seem relevant. A case in point concerns discussions of climate: basing themselves especially on Aristotle's *Politics* VII and *Problems* XIV, observers distinguish the inhabitants of the earth according to their affinity for production (northern climes), action (temperate climes), or contemplation (southern climes). Significant authors within this tradition include Jean Bodin, Juan de Huarte (especially the 1575 uncensored version of the *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, soon translated into numerous languages), Levinus Lemnius (especially *De habitu et constitutione corporis* and *De miraculis occultis naturae*), and Robert Burton (*Anatomy of Melancholy*). The point is receiving increasing scholarly attention, along with studies of climate theory more generally (Glacken 1967; Floyd-Wilson 2003; Miglietti 2016).

The main point to emphasize is that, despite influential views to the contrary (Arendt 1998; see Summit 2010, 529), the Renaissance discussion of action and contemplation not only in no sense devalues contemplation in favor of action, but often regards the two kinds of life as if on a continuum. Furthermore, religious considerations lead to creating a third category in which mystical

and spiritual aspects are separated out of an earthly oriented life of contemplation and scholarly seclusion. If anything, the life of speculation (often inspired by divine love, not plain intellect) comes to be viewed with renewed favor in and after the sixteenth century – a development whose implications for science, medicine, and other fields remain imperfectly understood.

Cross-References

- [Humanism, Civic](#)
- [Practical Knowledge](#)

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Action at a Distance

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Abstract

Action at a distance, although accepted in occult and magical traditions, has generally been excluded from physics and theology (where it has generally been assumed that even God cannot act at a distance). This article gives a brief account of the acceptance of action at a distance in magical worldviews and in voluntarist theology through the Middle Ages and into the early modern period, where it was most notably promoted in natural philosophy by Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton and in theology by René Descartes and his followers. It ends with a brief consideration of the Newtonian legacy of action at a distance as a major assumption in mainstream physics throughout the Enlightenment and into the modern period.

Synonyms

Actio in distans

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The belief that things could act on other things even across a distance, with no material connection between them, was common in the magical tradition. One of the major authorities on action at a distance as far as learned magicians were concerned was the *De theoria artium magicarum* (*On the theory of the magical arts*) attributed to the Arab philosopher Al-Kindi (801–73) but perhaps written later by an unknown Latin scholar (Adamson 2007). This work, also known under the title, *De radiis stellarum* (*On the rays of the stars*), explained actions at a distance in terms of “rays”: “. . . each thing in this world, whether substance or accident, produces rays in its own way like the stars. . . Hence each place in this world contains the rays of all the things which actually exist in it” (Adamson and Pormann 2012, p. 226). The rays are held to be immaterial, and therefore the bodies emitting the rays are acting not by physical contact but at a distance. The author’s starting point was clearly a belief in stellar influence, but other prominent examples of action at a distance were magnetism and later gravity – both of which exhibited forces of attraction (and in the case of magnetism, repulsion) which could not be affected by a change of surrounding material conditions or cut off by any material barrier (although magnetism could be shielded by iron).

For those who refused to accept action at a distance, there were generally two ways to try to avoid it. The action in question was either assumed to be performed by streams (sometimes referred to as “steams”) of material effluvia (or invisibly small particles) emitted by the active body; or by a successive transmission of the action through a surrounding material medium or aether (Hesse 1963). Both were means of reducing action at a distance to indirect contact action. Often these explanations were as implausible as the magical accounts (especially when dealing with effects which could not be shielded by material barriers or effects at very great distances), but resistance to magic was always very high in the Christian tradition as a result of religious opposition (on the grounds that magical effects were always brought about by demons or even the

Devil himself). But, for the historian, this means that it is often difficult to be sure whether a particular thinker believes in action at a distance or not. A number of thinkers who seem to be assuming action at a distance never explicitly say that they are making that assumption, and so there is always some doubt as to whether they might not be thinking in terms of effluvia or transmission through a surrounding medium. In what follows, we shall concentrate only on those thinkers who explicitly mention action at a distance.

Although Aristotle (384–322 BC) never explicitly discussed action at a distance, his plenist natural philosophy seemed to take it for granted that action could only take place by contact (e.g., *Physics*, VII, 2, 243a 32–35, and VIII, 5, 267b 6–8; *De generatione et corruptione*, I, 6, 322b 28–29, and 323a 33–34). Albertus Magnus (c. 1200–1280) fully examined, and rejected, the possibility of action at a distance (Kovach 1979), and his influential follower, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), made it axiomatic for subsequent generations of scholastic philosophers that “a thing cannot act where it is not” (e.g., *Summa Theologica*, Part III, Q. 64, Art. 1, Obj. 3). During the Renaissance, however, the revival of natural magic (stimulated by the rediscovery of the *Corpus Hermeticum*) meant that action at a distance began to appear in the thought of philosophers who believed occult traditions offered the most promising alternative to a scholasticism that was increasingly being seen as misconceived and moribund. Action at a distance can be seen to feature, for example, in Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa’s (1486–1535) *De occulta philosophia* (1533), Girolamo Fracastoro’s (c. 1478–1553) *De sympathia et antipathia rerum* (1546), in the *De abditis rerum causis* (1548) of Jean Fernel (1497–1558), Giambattista della Porta’s (c. 1535–1615) *Magia naturalis* (1558, expanded in 1589), and the *Del senso delle cose e della magia naturale* (1620) of Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639).

Paracelsian claims about the so-called weapon salve also stimulated debate (Debus 2002). The weapon salve was an ointment that was held by its Paracelsian advocates to magically cure wounds when it was applied to the weapon which had

caused the wound, rather than to the wound itself (which was simply kept clean and dry). Anecdotal reports abounded of the effect working even when the weapon and the wounded person were separated by thousands of miles. Presumably many of these anecdotes were simply untrue, but some may well have been perfectly true; and it is not hard, with hindsight, to see why. The standard medical belief throughout the Renaissance period was that a wound could only heal after it had suppurated. Presumably, this is derived from experience; at this time (when antisepsis or asepsis was unheard of), wounds always suppurated before, eventually, healing. Medical intervention, therefore, deliberately provoked what was referred to as “laudable pus” in wounds (to accelerate the healing process) by packing them with caustic or irritant substances. It is easy for us now to see how this could result in detrimental and even fatal results. Treatment using the weapon salve, or the powder of sympathy as it was also called, meant that the wound would simply be kept clean and dry, while the ointment or powder was applied to the weapon or to a bandage soaked in blood from the wound (but then removed away from the wound) if the weapon was not available. Under these circumstances – with the wound left unperturbed by dangerous medical intervention – the wounded person had the best chance of recovery. Consequently, many of the accounts of the success of the weapon salve were based on what seemed like good empirical evidence for its efficacy. For many, therefore, the weapon salve was clearly magical and worked by action at a distance. For others, however, including one of its most famous promoters, Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665), it worked by contact action through an elaborate process carried out by material effluvia, even when weapon and wound were separated by continents (Hedrick 2008).

The possibility or otherwise of action at a distance also figured in metaphysical disputes as to whether God could only act where he was present. Debate on this issue was affected by the fact that God was held to be essentially omnipresent. In medieval discussions which carried over into the Renaissance period, there was a wide range of

differing views. For some philosophers, his omnipresence was simply taken as proof that action at a distance was impossible. For others, however, it was supposed that God’s presence, although undeniable, was not required by the fact that he acted on all things (he could will something to happen and it would happen, but his proximity was irrelevant). Similarly, while some argued that God could not act at a distance simply because he *was* omnipresent, others argued that he could act at a distance, because of his omnipotence, even if, per impossibile, he were not present (Kovach 1979).

The main medieval dissenters from the view that God had to be present to act were John Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308) and William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347). For both thinkers, it was God’s omnipotence that led them to believe in action at a distance. For Scotus the power of God and angels was so immeasurable that they did not have to be present to bring things about (Kovach 1979; Reid 2012). Similarly, for Ockham, God’s will constituted his action – for God, to will something was to bring it about – God’s presence was not relevant to the issue (Kovach 1979). Both thinkers also accepted that action at a distance in physics was also possible. Again, God’s omnipotence meant that he could endow bodies with the power of acting at a distance (Kovach 1979; Goddu 1984).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The concept of action at a distance seems to have had the most impact on mainstream natural philosophy in England (Hesse 1963). Francis Bacon (1561–1626), always ready to embrace magical ideas, explicitly accepted the concept of action at a distance in *De sapientia veterum* (1609) and in his major work of scientific method, the highly influential *Novum organum* (1620). In the earlier work, the influence of *De radiis stellarum* is plain:

there is scarcely anything which is not more or less radiant. This is very plainly seen in the power of vision, and not less so in all kinds of magnetic virtue, and in every effect which takes place at a distance. For whatever produces an effect at a distance may be truly said to emit rays. (*The Wisdom of the Ancients*, “Pan, or Nature”, Bacon 2011, p. 710)

Indeed, his speculations on actions at a distance stimulated the attempt by a number of subsequent English thinkers to develop an explanation of planetary movements. In the *Novum organum*, Bacon made an analogy between magnetism and gravity:

Again, if there be any magnetic power which operates by consent between the Earth and heavy bodies, between the globe of the Moon and the seas (which seems very likely in the half-monthly tidal cycle), or between the stellar heavens and the planets by which the latter are summoned and drawn to their apogees, then all these operate at very long distances indeed. (*Novum organum*, Book II, Aphorism 45)

Bacon's suggestion that terrestrial gravity, the relationship between the Moon and the tides, and planetary movements might be explained by an attractive force similar to magnetism and capable of acting at a distance led a number of fellows of the newly formed Royal Society to develop an explanation for planetary movements along the same lines (Wang 2016). This culminated in the precursor to Isaac Newton's universal principle of gravitation, developed by Robert Hooke (1635–1703) in his *Attempt to Prove the Motion of the Earth* (1674). Hooke wrote to Newton (1642–1727) in 1679 to ask his opinion of this theory, and from then on, Newton too embraced a belief in action at a distance and incorporated it into his theory of gravity in his *Principia Mathematica* of 1687. Hooke and other early fellows of the Royal Society who worked in this area did not explicitly mention actions at a distance, but nor did they try to explain the attractive forces they described in terms of effluvia or the actions of an intervening medium. Newton was similarly silent about actions at a distance in the *Principia*, although continental critics did not fail to notice that Newton's gravitational attraction operated at a distance.

By the time Newton came to publish his second great book, the *Opticks*, in 1704, he had sufficient authority and self-confidence to write explicitly of actions at a distance. The influential *Queries* that he added to the end of the *Opticks* suggested that all physical phenomena could be explained in terms of attractive and repulsive

forces operating at a distance between the particles which constituted all bodies. Even the group of eight extra queries that he added to the 1718 edition, and which suggested explanations for phenomena in terms of an intervening all-pervasive medium (which he called the aether), depended on action at a distance. The aether was held to be so subtle and tenuous that its particles were supposed to be separated from one another (comparing the tenuity of the aether with the densest substance, gold, in which the particles were assumed to be touching one another; Newton concluded that the particles of aether must be comparatively far apart). But if the particles of the aether were separated from one another, then they must be kept apart, Newton insisted, by mutually repelling forces operating across the distance between them (Henry 2011).

The metaphysical arguments as to whether God could act a distance also reappeared in the seventeenth century as a result of René Descartes's (1596–1650) claim that God did not occupy space, since the divinity is a *res cogitans*, not a *res extensa*. In response to critics, most notably the Cambridge Platonist Henry More (1614–1687), Descartes tried to insist that God was omnipresent only according to his power, not his substance. This was effectively the same position adopted earlier by John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and other medieval theologians. Later Cartesians, however, such as Antoine Le Grand (1629–1699) and Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715) tended to concede that God must also be *substantially* present (Reid 2008). Although this might look like a concession to the view that even an omnipotent God could not act at a distance, and therefore a betrayal of the strict substance dualism of Descartes, the real issue for the later Cartesians was that denial of the substantial presence of God might be seized upon by contemporary atheists as a means to deny the existence of God. Accordingly, the later Cartesians did not really abandon Cartesian dualism, but they played it down in their discussions of God, to avoid giving ammunition to contemporary atheists.

It seems clear that the dominant view among theologians, from the Middle Ages through the

early modern period, was that God could not act at a distance, notwithstanding his omnipotence (although there were prominent dissenters from this view, such as John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Descartes). It seems likely that this theological position reflected the aversion to action at a distance as an unacceptably magical notion which can be seen among Christian philosophers throughout the ages. After all, it was theologians who were mostly responsible for the aversion to magic (by insisting that all magical operations and effects were really brought about by hidden demonic activity), so it would be odd if they readily accepted a magical notion like action at a distance even when considering the actions of their omnipotent God. It was always possible, of course, to deny God's ability to do something without compromising His supposed omnipotence, by insisting that the issue in question was logically impossible. For those who defended the idea that God could not act at a distance, action at a distance was simply deemed to be a contradiction in terms.

Impact and Legacy

Generally speaking, opposition to the concept of *actio in distans* was always vigorous and unyielding. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that Newton managed to introduce action at a distance into mainstream physics for well over a century after his death (Schofield 1970; Henry 2011). The success of Newton's *Principia* ensured that his more speculative claims, in the *Queries* added to the *Opticks*, about attractive and repulsive forces operating at a distance between all atoms, were taken up by succeeding generations of thinkers – mostly natural philosophers, of course, but also including Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). Reaction against Newtonian action at a distance began to appear in the first half of the nineteenth century and culminated with Albert Einstein's (1879–1955) suggestion at the beginning of the twentieth century that there was no such thing as gravitational attraction and that gravitational phenomena that had

previously been attributed to attraction at a distance were really the result of the bending of space by gravitational masses. Remarkably, however, what Einstein referred to as “spooky action at a distance” almost immediately reappeared in quantum mechanics, as a way of understanding phenomena attributed to the so-called quantum entanglement (Musser 2015). It seems that concepts of action at a distance have a way of reasserting themselves, in spite of obdurate and long-standing opposition.

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Acuña, Hernando de

Born: 1518/20

Died: 1580

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Abstract

Hernando de Acuña was a lyric poet of the Spanish Renaissance who spent a number of years in Granada. His sonnets posthumously made him famous, some of which celebrated Charles V as Caesar and were part of the Renaissance of Empire. He also translated a Burgundian chivalric romance from French to Spanish at the request of his emperor. In addition, Acuña served in a variety of military campaigns in the Mediterranean, and he became a knight of the Order of Alcántara.

Biography

Hernando de Acuña was born in Valladolid in 1518/1520 to a family of minor nobility. He was a “poet-soldier,” who served Charles V in battle in Italy, France, and the German lands (García-Arenal 2010, 99–101). Near the age of 17, in 1537, Acuña was fighting the French in Piedmont when his brother, an infantry captain, was killed in the service of the Spanish governor of Milan, Don Alonso de Avalos (Cortés 1913, 37–39). Acuña was at one point captured by Francis I in Piedmont, and also took part in Charles V’s war against Maurice of Saxony (Cortés 1913, 72–73). In the 1540s, Acuña accompanied Prince Philip on his grand tour of his father’s realms. On April 1, 1549, Acuña took part in Philip’s tournament games in the sandy field near Brussels, and was in the “Army of the East” (Frieder 2008, 191–193). Acuña later fought in the Battle of St. Quentin in 1557.

Acuña returned to Spain in the year 1560. He soon married his cousin Doña Juana de Zuñiga.

She was 25, and he was close to 40. From the year 1569 onwards, Acuña lived in the city of Granada (Cortés 1913, 91–95). There he was a member of the literary *tertulia* which met at the home of an elite Morisco, Don Alonso de Granada Venegas, and his wife, Doña María Manrique de Mendoza. The *tertulia* met regularly between 1550 and 1570 and somewhat less regularly later under Don Pedro de Granada Venegas (d.1643) (González Vázquez 2010, 415). In the *tertulia*, Acuña interacted with elite Morisco patrons and their friends, the Mendoza family, as well as the poets Juan Latino, Gregorio Sylvestre, Luis Barahona de Soto, and Gaspar de Baeza. Hernando de Acuña died in Granada in 1580. His wife Doña Juana de Zuñiga published his poetry in 1591.

Historiography: Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

To interpret Acuña, it is necessary to understand the cultural activities of his social class. There are a number of narratives for what was happening to the minor nobility during his lifetime. Historian Helen Nader would argue that Acuña was part of the “caballero Renaissance” – a movement which had been begun by many of the sonnet-writing nobles in the fifteenth century, including members of the Mendoza family (Nader 1979, 138–142). The Mendoza were deeply ensconced in the military and noble leadership in Granada. They were the guardians of the Alhambra palace, and served as Captains General over the troops stationed there. The Mendoza were close associates of the elite Morisco Granada Venegas family, whom the crown had put in charge of the other major Nasrid palace, the Generalife. Nader argues that in the sixteenth century, humanism moved from noble households to the universities (Nader 1979, 145–149). Yet the Granada Venegas’ *tertulia* met in the late sixteenth century. There Hernando de Acuña interacted with other poets and his hosts, Don Alonso de Granada Venegas, his wife Doña María Manrique de Mendoza, and their family members.

These relationships were manifest in the literature itself. Literary scholar Narciso Alonso

Cortés has identified the true identities of speakers in a dialogue poem by Luis Barahona de Soto, “Pilas,” “Damon,” and “Lauso,” as Don Alonso de Granada, Hernando de Acuña, and Barahona de Soto (Cortés 1913, 96–97). Furthermore, Helen Nader has argued that the caballeros were ultimately eclipsed politically by the letrados – educated lawyers – over the course of the sixteenth century, as letrados began to hold more important positions at court. For Nader, the caballero Renaissance was a short one, ending in the early sixteenth century. Her caballeros had a more pluralistic worldview than the letrados, who were more closely aligned with the Inquisition (Nader 1979, 135). Historian Richard Kagan has shown in his research that the number of letrados increased over the course of the sixteenth century (Kagan 1974).

For literary scholar Leah Middlebrook, however, it was not that caballeros were becoming eclipsed by university-educated letrados. Rather, the caballeros’ role was changing from knight to courtier (Middlebrook 2009, 2–3; See Elias 2000). Acuña, in his lyric poetry, practiced these “techniques of self-restraint,” which were part of courtierization. Middlebrook argues that the Renaissance lyric genre was modern due to its interiority and its focus on the individual (Middlebrook 2009, 17).

Central to scholarship on Renaissance lyric is the role of Italian Petrarchan models. These models were reinterpreted in Castilian in a spirit of competition that contained both a fear of inferiority and an expression of national and linguistic pride (Navarrete 1994).

Literary scholars are not in agreement over whether lyric or epic was a more fundamental genre to the culture of the Spanish Renaissance or over which gave a better ideological defense of empire. According to Elizabeth B. Davis, “Even when re-examined as the product of a specific political milieu, the Italianate lyric of Garcilaso and his followers cannot presume to narrate the story of Spain’s new imperial polity in search of legitimizing myths. That narrative function corresponds more properly to the epic, a genre central to Golden Age cultural practice but not read much

today” (Davis 2000, 2). Following Davis, Elizabeth Wright has helped to make the Latin epic, the *Austrias Carmen* of Juan Latino available in English, and has published a monograph on Latino’s life. In contrast, Leah Middlebrook has argued that “the cultural framework that surrounded this poetry [the epic] had been eclipsed” by the lyric (Middlebrook 2009, 58).

Putting this in social context, Luen-Gen Liang has recently reexamined the role of the Spanish nobility in crafting the Spanish Empire itself. According to Liang, noble families, like the Fernández de Córdoba, actually took primary roles in running the Spanish Empire – they were not eclipsed by letrados and they were not merely courtiers who had lost their military function – rather they were viceroys, governors, and generals who acted as agents in the creation of the Spanish Empire throughout the sixteenth century. These early modern nobles continued to take active military roles, both in expanding and in governing the empire in the Mediterranean and elsewhere (Liang 2011).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Hernando de Acuña is well-known today as a poet. He wrote lyric poetry, and the most famous of his poems was dedicated to the emperor Charles V, “Al rey, nuestro señor,” which expressed the idea that Spain was on the brink of a golden age (Padrón 2006; Fernández, Díez, and J. Ignacio 2011). In this poem, Acuña created an image of Charles as emperor and Caesar. These were important themes of the Spanish Renaissance, and of the Imperial Renaissance, in which Spain embraced the ideologies and aesthetics of the Roman Empire, and the disciplines of poetry and history from the *studia humanitatis* were used in service to empire (Dandeleit 2014).

Acuña took on a different type of commission in 1551, from the emperor himself. This was to translate a Burgundian French chivalric romance for a Castilian audience (Tyler 1956, 29). To help him, Charles provided him with a version he had

already translated himself as a young man (Blockmans 2002, 16). The romance was *Le Chevalier Deliberé* (1483) by Olivier de la Marche, which had roughly three sections: A knightly quest and chivalric romance, the glorification of a ducal or royal house, and an emphasis on self-examination in an *ars moriendi* treatise. It is possible to see the first two sections as part of an epic tradition – a quest and pride in one’s dukes and kings. The third is more closely linked to the lyric, as it was focused on the knight’s interior self and his contemplation of death. There were numerous proto-Reformation and pre-Reformation ideas floating around in the Low Countries which connect with this interior piety of the pilgrim knight in *Le Chevalier*. In fact, Erasmus’s *Enchiridion* would follow some of the same themes, but provide guidance for the Christian layman in spiritual rather than physical warfare, like “Memory” does for the knight at the end of *Le Chevalier*. Suzie Sutch and Ann Lake Prescott have shown that this Burgundian romance took on very different shape in Spanish and English contexts, as Acuña’s *El Caballero Determinado* and Elizabethan Stephen Bateman’s *The Travayled Pylgrime*, published 1569, and Elizabethan Lewes Lewkenor’s *The Resolved Gentleman*, published 1594. (Sutch and Prescott 1988).

Much of our understanding of Acuña’s life comes from a memorial he wrote to Philip II, asking for recognition for his many years of military service (Cortés 1913, 111–123). This sort of source was typical of minor nobles in early modern Spain who were striving for a *merced* from the crown. Court life in the early modern period was full of competition. According to Leah Middlebrook, Hernando de Acuña and Jerónimo de Urrea competed with one another for the best translation of *Le Chevalier Deliberé* (Middlebrook 2009). As a further act of social striving, towards the end of his life, Acuña applied to enter the military order of Alcántara (Acuña y Zuñiga 1562).

Interestingly, the work that Acuña published during his own lifetime was not his poetry – it was his translation, *El Caballero Determinado* (1553). It was after his death that another edition of *El*

Caballero was made (1590), and that his wife published the *Varias Poesías* (1591) (Díaz, 1980, 219–220).

Impact and Legacy

As a caballero and a “poet-soldier”, Acuña manifested the dual interest in both Renaissance and chivalric culture which was common among the Spanish elite (Terry 2015, 89). As a writer of sonnets as well as a translator of chivalric romance, Acuña produced and exemplified both the admiration for classical Antiquity as well as the values of a traditional late medieval and early modern warrior elite, weaned on chivalric romance.

Interpreting Acuña and his social and cultural context, several questions are raised regarding modernity – whether the interiority of his lyric poetry is tied to modernity, or if the glorification of world empires is more linked to modernity is a matter of debate. According to scholar of literature Christopher Maurer, epic poet Juan Latino greatly influenced Hernando de Acuña’s most famous poem where he glorified Charles V as Caesar (Maurer 1993, 35–51). Latino’s epic Latin poem, *Austrias Carmen*, celebrated the victory of Spain and the Holy League at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. In the poems of these two members of the Granada Venegas family’s literary *tertulia* in Granada, both the epic and lyric poetic genres served the Renaissance of Empire (Dandeleit 2014; Terry 2015).

Interconnections

Hernando de Acuña was a translator from French to Castilian, a soldier-poet, and *caballero* in the Order of Alcántara. At the literary *tertulia* of the Granada Venegas family he not only met epic poet and Latinist Juan Latino and other poets, but he also may have met the famous Jesuit philosopher, Francisco Suárez, who was a generation younger than Acuña. Suárez’s family owned a house with an adjoining wall to the Granada Venegas’s urban

palace, the Casa de los Tiros, and the philosopher was born there in 1548 (López Guzmán 2005, 70–71).

Cross-References

► Suárez, Francisco

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Aegidius Viterbiensis

► Giles of Viterbo

Agallianos, Theodore

► Theophanes of Medeia

Agricola, Rudolph

Born: ca. 28 August 1443

Died: 27/28 October 1485

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Abstract

The Frisian dialectician and rhetorician Rudolph Agricola was an important propagator of humanism in the Low Countries and Germany. He left a small but impressive oeuvre including letters, orations, poems, and writings on dialectic and rhetoric. His *De formando studio* is an important contribution to humanist pedagogy and didactics. His main work *De inventione dialectica* is arguably the most important Renaissance theory of discourse.

Alternate Names

[Agriocola, Rodolphus \(Frisius\)](#); [Agricola, Rudolf](#); [Huisman, Roelof](#); [Huesman, Roelof](#); [Huisman, Roelof](#)

Biography

Rudolph Agricola was born as an illegitimate child in Baflo, a small town near the city of Groningen, The Netherlands. We are informed about his life by archival documents, Agricola's surviving letters, and six contemporary biographies, among which the one by Johann von Plieningen is especially important, because he had known Agricola for many years. The sources are not unanimous about the precise date of Agricola's birth, but Akkerman's careful evaluation of the relevant data leads to the conclusion that he was born on 27 or 28 August 1443 and not, as von Plieningen states in his biography, on 17 February 1444 (Akkerman 2012, 10–12). He died on 27 or

28 October 1485. His father, Hendrik Vries, administered property of the bishop of Münster in the parishes belonging to the personate of Baflo from 1440 to 1443; from 1444 until his death in 1480 he was abbot of the Benedictine convent at Selwerd. His mother, Zycka Huisman, who also died in 1480, had three children with a second partner; Agricola's half-brother Johannes became one of his close friends. Agricola probably went to the city school of Groningen that was connected with St. Martin's church. A benefice for life granted to him by the bishop of Münster in 1454 allowed him to pursue university studies. He matriculated at the University of Erfurt in 1456, probably received his baccalaureate the year after, and continued his studies, maybe first in Cologne, but certainly in Leuven, where he became *magister artium* in 1465. From 1468 until 1479 he stayed in Italy, first in Pavia (1468–1475), then in Ferrara (1475–1479). Agricola left Ferrara in the first part of 1479 and traveled to Groningen via Dillingen on the Danube, where he stayed at the residence of the bishop of Augsburg, next Speyer, where he visited Johann von Dalberg and saw his library, Cologne and 's Heerenberg. From 's Heerenberg, he went to Emmerich, where he taught Erasmus' teacher Alexander Hegius "pure Latin and Greek," as Goswinus van Halen puts it in his biography. He arrived in Groningen at the end of 1479 or early 1480, where he became a *secretarius*, i.e., a high official and legal counselor of the city government. In this position, he took frequent business trips to various cities in the Low Countries. Agricola was not happy with the busy life that came with this position, wanted to leave, but could not choose between the various employment offers he received from different parts of the Low Countries, Germany, and Italy. He eventually decided to accept the offer from Johann von Dalberg, bishop of Worms and chancellor of Philip, the Elector Palatine, to take up residence at his court in Heidelberg. He left Groningen at the beginning of April 1484, and arrived in Heidelberg on May 2. Although he found it difficult to adapt to his new circumstances, he could now devote himself almost entirely to his studies. In the summer of 1485, he joined von Dalberg on a business trip to Rome. On the way home, Agricola

became ill, stopped in Trento to recover, but became ill again after his return in Heidelberg and died there on October 27 or 28. For a full biographical account based on the available sources see Van der Velden 1911.

Works

The surviving works of Agricola comprise 8 orations (three delivered in Pavia, two in Ferrara, one in Worms (Spitz and Benjamin 1963, Van der Laan 2003), one in Heidelberg (Mack 2000), and one in Rome (Van der Laan 2009)), 28 poems, 55 letters, 7 translations of Greek texts, and a number of texts on dialectic and rhetoric. Among these we find a brief commentary on the prologue and the excerpts of Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae*, book 1, 1–3, two texts on universals, a dialectical analysis of Cicero's oration *De lege Manilia*, but most importantly the treatise *De inventione dialectica libri tres* (henceforth DID). He also made his own copies of several classical texts, wrote notes on the first book of Boethius' *De consolazione philosophiae* and we know that he annotated his copy of the Treviso 1478 edition of Seneca's works. For full details on dates of composition and publication of his works, see Akkerman and Vanderjagt (1988, 313–327).

Agricola in the World of Humanism

Agricola followed the standard late-medieval arts curriculum at the universities of Erfurt and Leuven, perhaps also Cologne. According to his biographer Geldenhouwer, he excelled in Leuven as a student of dialectic and as a debater in academic *disputationes*, but also came in contact with people who had begun to study classical Latin. He read Cicero and Quintilian and occasionally criticized the standard Aristotelian teaching program in the presence of his teachers. Geldenhouwer also mentions that he was admired in Leuven because he learned French quickly and without a teacher, and because he sang, played music, and painted very well. Agricola had a flair for languages;

besides his mother tongue and the sacred languages, he knew French, Low German and Upper German, and both the colloquial and the literary language of Italy.

Agricola went to Pavia to study civil law, but he also followed his interests in humanism. He wrote several Latin poems, started to learn Greek, and delivered at least three times the yearly speech in praise of the rector of the university (1471 in praise of Mathias Richilus, 1473 in praise of Paulus de Baenst, 1474 in praise of Johann von Dalberg; Walter 2004). After his move to Ferrara, he continued his activities as a humanist. He studied Greek, probably under the guidance of Battista Guarino, translated into Latin the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Axiochos*, the pseudo-Isocratean hortatory address for Demonicus, Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata*, and perhaps also Isocrates' hortatory address to Nicocles, copied works by Tacitus and Pliny the Younger, and began writing DID. Agricola had a prominent position as *familiaris* at the court of Duke Ercole I, and he regularly played the organ on Sundays and holidays. In 1476, he wrote and delivered the official address at the opening of the academic year in 1476 in the presence of Duke Ercole (Rupprich 1935, Van der Poel 1997a, 46–67). Agricola also wrote a biography of Petrarch, in which he acclaims Petrarch as the initiator of humanism and presents him as the embodiment of its characteristics and ideals (Bertalot 1929).

After his departure from Italy in 1479, Agricola maintained a network of relations through his correspondence and his business trips as *secretarius* of the city of Groningen. In 1483, the first collection of Agricola's writings appeared in Leuven, printed by Jan van Westfalen. The writings included in this volume (two of his translations, 12 poems, and two letters) bear testimony to his perfection as a humanist. In 1484, he wrote a pedagogical treatise in the form of a letter to his friend Jacob Barbireau (Jacobus Barbirianus), which is the first methodical exposition about the principles of humanist education north of the Alps (letter 38 in Van der Laan and Akkerman 2002). During his stay in Heidelberg, Agricola attended disputations and taught Latin literature at the university, and he learned Hebrew

from a teacher hired for him by bishop von Dalberg.

After his death, Agricola's fame as a humanist was further established by the circulation of manuscripts of his works and by oral tradition. Editions of his works were printed from 1492 (an edition of the poem *Anna mater*) onwards in various places in the Low Countries (Zwolle, Deventer, Antwerp). Agricola's fame was firmly established when the first editions of DID appeared, the *editio princeps* in Leuven, 1515, followed by Phrissemius' edition in Cologne, 1520 and 1523 (with commentary; Agricola 1523). By 1539, the year when Alardus of Amsterdam published the two volumes containing his well-known edition of DID with commentary and ancillary texts (Agricola 1539a), and the *Lucubrationes*, a collection of most of Agricola's other writings (Agricola 1539b), ca. 110 editions containing works by Agricola (including epitomes of DID) had already been printed.

The correspondence and the biographies show that Agricola was seen by his contemporaries and by later generations as a preeminent humanist. For a long time modern scholars have stated that Erasmus downgraded his debt to Agricola in a passage in the *Spongia* (1523), but Fokke Akkerman (2012, 183–240) has shown that the passage in question has been misread and that in fact Erasmus had great esteem for Agricola and consistently honored him throughout his career. Goswinus van Halen records that he had heard Erasmus admit that Agricola greatly surpassed him in eloquence as well as in all kinds of learning.

The *Oratio in Laudem Philosophiae, De Formando Studio*, the Translation of Aphonius' *Progymnasmata*

The importance of Agricola in the history of Western philosophy rests on his contribution to humanist pedagogy in the countries north of the Alps and on DID, his new Dialectic, in which he combined traditional dialectic with rhetoric to build a single art of methodical thinking and probable reasoning

applicable to all subjects in the humanities and the sciences. In the inaugural address delivered in Ferrara in 1476, which was published in 1511 (and reprinted several times) under the title *In laudem philosophiae et reliquarum artium*, Agricola presents a classical discussion of philosophy as the love of wisdom, i.e., the desire to learn to know things human and divine, joined with the pursuit of virtue. Agricola follows the ancient division of philosophy (e.g., Cic. *De or.* 1.68; Aug., *Civ.*, 21.25) into logic (subdivided by Agricola in the three arts of the trivium), physics (subdivided by Agricola in medicine, mathematics or the four arts of the quadrivium, and theology), and ethics. In his discussion of these subjects, Agricola emphasizes the need for virtue. For example, he stresses that any eloquence tainted by impure motives is not admitted in the domain of philosophy and he presents ethics not as the academic study of general moral questions but as the protreptic art that encourages people to control their desires and passions.

In the letter to Barbirianus, frequently printed between 1511 and 1532 under the title *De formando studio*, he presents a standard survey of the subjects taught in humanist schools, with a conspicuous emphasis on Christian education and on didactics. The study of moral philosophers and historians, poets and orators serves as a preparation for the study of the Bible. Agricola's discussion of the standard method of Latin language training, consisting of reading and translation and composition exercises, is followed by a brief exposition of a method of original writing. This method consists of assiduous reading in order to fully understand what one is learning, of memorizing the knowledge one has acquired, and of continual writing practice in view of developing one's own ideas. The skill of writing original texts is described by Agricola in two steps. The first step is to have one's knowledge readily available by classifying everything one has read under easily memorizable headings or *loci communes* such as virtue and vice, life and death, learning and ignorance, friendliness and hatred. The second step is to study the material collected under the headings and to develop one's knowledge about this material by means of dialectical topics, for

which Agricola refers Barbirianus to DID. The method of *loci communes*, in combination with topical description such as presented in DID, constitutes the starting point and the core of the humanist practice of the commonplace-book, which was universally applied in schools. Philipp Melanchthon developed it further as a method for the study of philosophy and the higher disciplines (Moss 1996, 119–133).

Agricola's third contribution to humanist pedagogy is his translation of Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata*. This ancient textbook, containing composition exercises preparing students for the composition of orations, was commonly used in Renaissance schools, and Agricola's translation was printed dozens of times between 1532 and 1689.

De Inventione Dialectica

General Characteristics

Agricola finished the draft of DID in the summer of 1479, during his stay in Dillingen on the Danube. It is clear from the available sources that Agricola did not himself make a clean copy of the final version of the work. The three editions produced in the Renaissance (Louvain 1515, by Alardus, Geldenhouwer, and Dorp; Cologne 1520 and 1523, by Phrissemius; Cologne 1539, by Alardus) are based on various, now lost manuscripts and show a variety of differences in both the layout and titles of the chapters and the text itself. Two manuscripts are still extant, one issuing from the circle of the brothers von Plieningen (*S*), one whose provenance is unknown (*U*). The chapter division varies in the manuscripts and the three editions. In modern scholarship, the chapter division of *S* and Alardus' edition is usually followed, but it is not certain that it stems from Agricola himself.

Goswinus van Halen relates in his biography that Agricola, referring to his studies for the degree of magister artium, had said that he regretted "nothing so much as that I wasted seven whole years on those trivialities at an immense loss of money and time taken out of my life" (Akkerman

2012, 84–85). This anecdote may be true or false, but it is a fact that *De inventione dialectica* stands very firmly in the tradition of scholastic dialectic and, unlike Lorenzo Valla, Agricola never fundamentally criticizes or rejects the scholastic philosophers, though it is clear that he found their work too profound and, as he says when he discusses Duns Scotus' opinion concerning the topic "related things" (1.26), "neque nostrae farraginis" ("not my bag", Agricola 1539a, 155, Mundt 1992, 168). Agricola wrote some undated notes on the scholastic concept of universals, published by Alardus as an appendix to the chapter on *genus* and *species* (1.6), and his response to an anonymous critique of these notes has survived in manuscript (Nauta 2012); both texts seem to indicate that Agricola intended to align himself with the realists in the debate on universals. In light of Agricola's reserve about scholastic philosophy, one may wonder whether he did plan to write an entire book on universals (for which the surviving notes were a preliminary study, as Alardus thought), or whether his view on universals fundamentally shaped his ideas on the topics, as has been suggested in recent scholarship. In any event it is clear that Agricola's focus in DID was on the use of topics as a practical instrument for reasoning. His criticism of contemporary dialectic, as presented in 2.1, concerns the theory of consequences (although he does not mention this theory directly), which uses topics to judge the correctness of arguments rather than to find them, and more generally the practice of arguing in disputations following strict rules, as a result of which, according to Agricola, theologians were unable to teach ordinary people and stimulate them to the observance of the Christian virtue. In this chapter, Agricola states it as his purpose to be the first since Quintilian to explain the use of topics as places to find arguments. In his survey of theorists who have written on topics (1.3) he mentions classical authors only, and apart from brief mentions of Duns Scotus (in 1.26 and 2.23) and Raimundus Lullus (in 2.1), he never refers to or discusses any medieval or humanist writers on his subject.

Agricola's Dialectic concerns all things about which uncertainty exists and therefore are subject

of debate for and against on the basis of probable arguments. This concerns both scientific research in the scholarly disciplines and all forms of discourse on practical subjects, i.e., discourses in the three branches of classical rhetoric, and sacred rhetoric, which, in Agricola's words, must teach justice, devotion, and piety, and exhort to the virtue. Topics and topical invention offer the appropriate method of critical thinking and arguing persuasively in all these fields. The indissoluble cohesion between the three arts of the trivium is a fundamental premise of DID. Agricola's starting-point are the functions of speech as they were defined in classical rhetoric as the tasks of the orator: *docere*, *movere*, *delectare* (teach, move, please). In the prologue, he states that *docere* is the fundamental function of speech, while the other two follow it depending on the context. This is treated in more detail in 2.3: the purpose of teaching is either to explain something or to create belief in what one says and to carry away the listener. In the first case, one needs only to speak grammatically correct language and use techniques for clarity, e.g., certain figures (e.g., repetition). In the second case, however, one needs to find probable arguments and place them in the proper order so as to make them suitable for the purpose of teaching, and this is domain of dialectic. In the conclusion of 2.3, Agricola stresses that disposition (or judgment) is an integral part of invention, because to not find anything and to find things that do not convince amounts to the same thing. Many aspects of the correct disposition of arguments for the purpose of creating conviction are discussed in the section on the instrument of dialectic, which consists of a systematic and detailed discussion of all forms of discourse (*oratio*) (2.15–2.19); in addition, general rules of disposition are discussed separately in 3.8–14. This subject was clearly important to Agricola, because in a letter to his friend Adolf Occo, written when his draft of books 2 and 3 was being copied by Dietrich von Pleningen, he mentions that he had written more on disposition than any of his predecessors (letter 18 in Van der Laan and Akkerman 2002). *Movere* is another important subject in DID. In 2.4, using Dido's plea to

Aeneas in Vergil's fourth book of the Aeneid and Cicero's emotional defense of Milo as examples, Agricola shows how emotion can be a necessary part of argumentation, and therefore that moving is not different from teaching as far as invention goes. As to *delectare*, he argues in 2.5 that it is different from teaching and moving, because it resides solely in the mind of the person who listens. It cannot, therefore, be a final goal of one's speech and it does not belong to invention. Inasmuch as things are said for the sake of delight and to please the ears, they are not the goal of what is said but of the person who says it.

DID is focused on the practice of reasoning. This focus explains to a large extent Agricola's adaptations in the traditional definitions of dialectic and rhetoric, and in the sequence and description of the topics. It also inspired his discussion of the material and instrument of dialectic. Moreover, although Agricola criticizes many of his ancient predecessors explicitly, e.g., Aristotle because his *Topics* is not a practical guide to *inventio* (1.3), Cicero's and Boethius's discussion of *antecedentia*, *consequentia*, and *adiuncta* (1.20; see also 1.28), Boethius' treatment of the *maximae* (1.29), he is not dogmatic and does not propose his discussion of the topics as one that is fundamentally better than those of his predecessors, but merely as one that is less sophisticated and more detailed (1.3). The practical focus of DID is also well illustrated by a passage in the discussion of the topic "subject" (1.13), where Agricola says that it is not a problem if one draws an argument from a topic which on close inspection does not contain it, because in the practice of the arts it does not matter how exactly one distinguishes the rules, but how adequately one uses them.

It is clear from the layout and the style of DID that the work was written, as Agricola formulates it in 1.3, for people acquainted with the classical authors, but unfamiliar with the theory of dialectic and rhetoric. He writes humanistic Latin following the usage of ancient authors from all periods, but without the rigidity of purists (e.g., in 2.8, he defends, probably against Valla, the unclassical "quidditas" by analogy with the classical

“Lentulitas,” “Appietas”). He uses examples from everyday life to explain difficult concepts, e.g., in 1.13, the propositions “water is cold” or “I have slaughtered a cow” to explain the philosophical meaning of subject as one of the ten categories, or, in 1.16, the triplet “a building,” “the man for whom it is built” and “the architect and craftsmen who build it,” to explain the differences between the topics efficient and final causes, effects, and intentions. Examples taken from classical literature and history are found everywhere, and Agricola shows the use of persuasive techniques by analyzing passages from poets and orators (e.g., in 2.17, the analysis of the story of the Greek spy Sinon in Vergil’s account of the ruse of the wooden horse, to show that Sinon had nothing to create belief in what he told the Trojans, but nevertheless managed to convince them). Agricola also makes frequent use of comparisons and examples. Some of these are taken from things he was interested in or had experience with. Thus, he says at the beginning of his chapter on the use of dialectic (1.3) that, in order to explain this difficult subject for novices, he wishes he could not only speak about it but also paint or sculpt it out. In 2.23, where he explains that one should adjust an exposition to that about which it must supply conviction, he first presents a detailed analysis of how the ancient comedian Terence’s character Simo succeeds in presenting his son Pamphilus in a good light even though he is the friend of a girl of ill repute, and then compares this clever misguiding of the audience with the technique of chiaroscuro in painting, which creates the impression that images are clearly visible even when they are covered in shadow. Similarly, in the concluding chapter of the book (3.16), he refers to the arts of painting and music to explain the all-important need to combine knowledge with assiduous practice in order to achieve mastery of reasoning.

Structure and Content

The organization of DID is exemplary with brief introductions at the beginning of each new section or subsection and summations at appropriate intervals to help the reader in following the sometimes complex argumentation and to constantly remind

him of the overall structure of the entire work. Book 1 is entirely devoted to the topics. Chapters 1–3 provide a general introduction to the topics, their origin, utility, and function, and a critical survey of the treatment of topics by Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Boethius, and Themistius. In Chap. 4, Agricola explains the logical sequence of his topics, which differs from that of his predecessors. The topics are discussed successively one by one in Chaps. 5–27, as follows: two groups of internal topics: within the substance of the thing (1. definition, 2. genus, 3. species, 4. property and difference, 5. whole, 6. parts, 7. things related by etymology), around the substance (8. qualities, 9. actions, 10. subject); four groups of external topics, two necessarily joined with the thing: related things (11. efficient cause, 12. final cause, 13. effects, 14. intentions) and attached things (15. place, 16. time, 17. connected things), and two joined to the thing without necessity: accidents (18. contingents, 19. name of a thing, 20. pronouncements, 21. comparisons, 22. similars and dissimilars) and repugnants (23. opposite things, 24. different things). A special chapter is devoted to differences between Agricola’s topics and those of his predecessors. In the final chapter Agricola provides a survey of his topics and a brief discussion of the reasons why he has omitted the maxims which Boethius had added to each topic.

Book 2 is devoted to the skill of reasoning, which consists according to Agricola of three things: material, instrument, and usage of the topics. It begins with an introductory section in which are discussed successively the faults of the contemporary use of dialectic, the definition and goal of dialectic, and the fact that moving follows the same rules of invention as teaching, whereas pleasing is separate from both because it resides in the mind of the listener and therefore cannot be a final goal of what one says. The section material (*materia*) contains a detailed discussion of the *quaestio*, the various ways to classify *quaestiones*, how to determine the essential point of a *quaestio*, and the division of a *quaestio* in subsidiary *quaestiones*. The *instrumentum* of dialectic is defined as discourse in the broadest sense of the word, including all prose genres, epic, and drama. It discusses two divisions of discourse, one based

on structure (continuous, e.g., a speech; discontinuous, e.g., a dialogue), the other on result (*expositio*, used when one teaches an audience willing to follow; *argumentatio*, when one teaches an audience that needs to be forced to assent by force of arguments), next the nature of the various forms of argumentation (syllogism, induction, enthymeme, example) and the ways to construct and refute them, the various kinds of exposition based on their purpose (pure exposition and exposition within an argumentation), and the parts of a discourse. At the beginning of the final section, on usage of the topics, Agricola stresses that there exist no topics for rhetoric alone. He continues by discussing the treatment of topics in two steps, first topical analysis of texts, second topical description of abstract and spatiotemporal entities (“philosopher,” “Socrates,” “spouse”) and collection of arguments for and against concerning questions about these (“should a philosopher marry?”). The complicated process of topical analysis, including condensation of complex and stylistically elaborated arguments to their basic form, is illustrated with many examples from classical orators and poets. Agricola also wrote a separate topical analysis of Cicero’s speech *De lege Manilia*, which was published as an appendix to DID in Alardus’ edition (Van der Poel 1997b). The section concludes with an example of topical description of “philosopher” and “spouse,” including a collection of possible arguments concerning the question “should a philosopher marry?” based on the two topical descriptions. Book 2 ends with a synopsis of the entire process of topical invention.

Book 3 discusses three items: the nature of emotions and the ways to manage them in a discourse, discussion of the things which make the discourse pleasing to the audience, including mainly a discussion of abundance and brevity, and a study of disposition in two parts, i.e., disposition in exposition (historians, poets, scholarly prose) and disposition in oratorical prose (the parts of an oration, disposition of the various questions, disposition of the argumentations in each question, variation in the elaboration of separate arguments). The final chapter discusses the importance of practice and exercise.

Impact and Legacy

The above synopsis shows that DID, although written for novices, is not only a comprehensive but also a complex study of humanist dialectic and rhetoric. Its content was made more accessible as a tool for teaching by the commentaries of Phrissemius and Alardus, and even more by the epitomes of the work by Bartholomaeus Latomus (1532), Ioannes Visorius (1534), and Alardus (1538, book 1 only). Brief summaries by chapter, with explanatory notes, were made by Caspar Rodolphus (1538). Between 1515 and 1575, around 75 editions of the text and epitomes were printed. The commentators and epitomists were themselves teachers and their writings and textbooks assured the dissemination of Agricola’s approach to dialectic and the method of analyzing and producing texts. The production of scores of textbooks exemplifying the dialectical analysis of classical texts, methods of topical invention and commonplace books in the sixteenth century illustrates that Agricola gave decisive direction to the teaching methods in the sixteenth century, especially in the countries north of the Alps, even if his name is not always mentioned. The Venice 1567 translation of Alardus’ text of DID by Orazio Toscanella, containing diagrams summarizing the contents of each chapter, is a rare testimony of interest in Agricola in sixteenth-century Italy. The importance of Agricola is also demonstrated by his influence on the ideas about dialectic and rhetoric of two of the most productive and authoritative teachers and university men in the sixteenth century, Philipp Melanchthon (who is also one of Agricola’s biographers) and Petrus Ramus. The pedagogy of the humanists, including the methods of reading, analyzing, and composing texts propagated by Agricola, remained in effect in European schools until long after humanism had ceased to be a viable intellectual force. Christian Kästner’s *Topik oder Erfindungswissenschaft* (1816) is probably the last substantial trace of Agricola’s influence in the humanities (DID is mentioned on p. 9). In their seminal work in the field of New rhetorics from 1958, Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca refer twice to Agricola, among many other earlier theorists from Aristotle onwards, though

not, as one might expect, in their discussion of the topics, but in their discussion of the disposition of arguments (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958, vol. 2, 666, 669).

In recent decades, scholarly interest in Agricola was stimulated considerably by the international conference on Agricola organized by Fokke Akkerman and Arjo Vanderjagt in 1985 at the University of Groningen. The proceedings of that conference (Akkerman and Vanderjagt 1988) contain a full bibliography of earlier scholarly work on Agricola.

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Agricola, Rudolf

- [Agricola, Rudolph](#)

Agriocola, Rodolphus (Frisius)

- [Agricola, Rudolph](#)

Agrippa von Nettesheim, Heinrich Cornelius

- [Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius](#)

Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius

Born: 14 September 1486, Nettesheim (Cologne)

Died: 18 February 1535, Grenoble

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Abstract

Agrippa was the main expounder of the occult philosophy, which is the knowledge of the hidden causes of things and is finalized to their manipulation by magic. Magic, in turn, is the highest form and the end of philosophy. According to his *De occulta philosophia*, magic is threefold: natural (concerning sublunar world), celestial (concerning stars and heavenly intelligences), and divine (concerning God and higher angels). It consists of the manipulation of concrete objects and of the summoning of intelligences and God, which is performed on the basis of the precepts of the Kabbalah. Agrippa's overall aim was to purify magic from its necromantic and irrational components: this would enable the restoration of the prelapsarian condition of man (in accordance with the Hermetic ideal of deification) and a Christian reform of culture. The critique of philosophical knowledge and of every science, presented in Agrippa's *De vanitate*, and his critique to the subordination of woman typical of Scholastic theology, contained in the *De nobilitate foeminei sexus*, are functional to these ends.

Alternate Names

[Agrippa von Nettesheim, Heinrich Cornelius](#)

Biography

Cornelius Agrippa was born in 1486 near Cologne, where he studied from 1499 and became *magister artium* in 1502. After his graduation, he joined the imperial army and traveled to Spain (1508) and to France, where he started his academic activities in Dôle, teaching Johannes Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico*, and wrote his *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminae sexus*. In the same years, he completed the first version of his *De occulta philosophia* (Agrippa 1992). In 1509 or 1510, he left Dôle after having been accused of "Judaizing heresy," as Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico* relies on a Cabalistic exegesis of the Jewish Bible and on Jewish scholarship to argue for the nature of Jesus as Messiah (Zika 1976; Lehrich 2003, 26; Perrone Compagni 2005, 16; Nauert 2011). Afterward, he traveled in Germany, the Netherlands, and England, serving Maximilian I as diplomat, and from 1511 in Italy. At the University of Pavia, Agrippa taught Plato's *Symposium* and the *Pimander* (part of the *Corpus Hermeticum*), and in Turin he taught theology. In 1518, he moved again to France and became public *advocatus* in Metz, where he clashed with the local inquisitor while defending a woman accused of witchcraft and entered in a dispute with the Dominicans, as he denied a legend on the marriages of St. Anne (Agrippa 1534). He thus left Metz and practiced medicine in Geneva, Fribourg (1521–1523), and at the French court in Lyon from 1524 on, where he held the position of physician of Louise, the mother of the King. In Lyon, Agrippa suffered financial and personal problems as he could not obtain support from his patroness Marguerite of Alençon. Eventually, he left the French court and became, in 1528, imperial historiographer in Antwerp, but he lost this position after having published his *De vanitate* (1530), containing an attack to the mendicant orders which led the governor of the Netherlands, Margaret of Austria, to report it to the theological faculty of Louvain. Finally, in 1532 he came into service of the Archbishop of Bonn but was again attacked by the Dominicans, as he was about to publish the full version of his *De occulta philosophia* that they considered heretical. This edition was intended to provide a complete

presentation and defense of his work, as only a manuscript version (1510) was circulating. Eventually, this edition appeared in 1533. In 1534–1535, he moved again to France and died in 1535 in Grenoble (Van der Poel 1997, 15–49; Lehrich 2003, 25–42; Blum and Müller-Jahncke 2010; Nauert 2011).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Agrippa was the main expounder of occult philosophy, i.e., the knowledge of the hidden properties of things that makes possible their manipulation by the techniques of magic, which is the highest form and the end of philosophy. His overall aim was to purify magic from its necromantic and irrational aspects, which would enable the deification of man and the restoration of the prelapsarian unity with God (Perrone Compagni 2000). Being interested in occult philosophy since he had read Albertus Magnus's *Speculum astronomiae*, containing a defense of the influence of stars on bodies (Zambelli 1992b), in his *De occulta philosophia*, Agrippa divides magic into three kinds: natural, which is the manipulation of concrete objects (Lehrich 2003, 44–97) and of the world spirit that underpins their occult properties (Nauert 2011); celestial or mathematical magic, which concerns the powers of stars and the intelligences (as lower angels) governing them, summoned by numeric formulas and images (Lehrich 2003, 97–113); and divine or ceremonial magic, which consists of theurgical rites – such as the use of the name of higher angels and God – based on the contents of the Kabbalah, which Agrippa knew in the Christianized version of Giovanni Pico, Reuchlin, and Francesco Giorgio Veneto (Perrone Compagni 1982). In his *De vanitate*, on the other hand, Agrippa distinguishes between natural magic – which is natural philosophy itself – and ritual magic, which has a demonic character (Zambelli 1992a, 2007, 13–34). The apparent contradiction with his *De occulta philosophia* can be explained in the light of his program of a Christian reform of culture (influenced by Erasmus, Zambelli 1970; Van der Poel 1997), to which his purging of magic was functional. In his *De vanitate*, he uses skeptical

arguments to criticize all sciences, only in order to show that these are less reliable than faith in guiding man to the knowledge of God (Van der Poel 1997, 112–115) and to establish a *prisca theologia* where faith and reason are perfectly balanced and the original harmony with God is restored (Perrone Compagni 1997, 2000, 2009). Such ideal of harmony and deification was inspired by Platonism and Hermetic philosophy, underlying also his *De homine* and *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum* (Agrippa 1958, 2005; Perrone Compagni 2005). Agrippa's criticisms are moreover directed against scholastic philosophy and theology, which are the main targets of his *De nobilitate foeminei sexus*, where the canonical interpretation of Eve's sin is disregarded as authoritarian and equality of sexes is devised as part of the reappropriation of the prelapsarian condition (Agrippa 1529, 1990, 1996; Perrone Compagni 2006).

Cross-References

- Academy, Platonic
- Albertism
- Angels and Demons in the Renaissance
- Daimon, Renaissance Idea of
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism
- Jewish Philosophy, Renaissance
- Kabbalah, Renaissance
- Manuscript
- Natural Magic in Renaissance Science
- Occult Properties in the Renaissance
- Reuchlin, Johannes
- Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of
- Spirit in Renaissance Medicine
- Theology, Renaissance
- Women Writing in the Renaissance

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Akindynos, Gregorios

Born: ca. 1300, Prilapos, Northern Macedonia

Died: ca. 1348, Macedonia

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Abstract

Gregorios Akindynos was a Byzantine theologian of the fourteenth century (ca. 1300–1348), learned in patristic literature and Greek philosophy, and leader of the anti-Palamite party in the second phase of Hesychast Controversy (1341–1347). Based on his interpretation of the Greek patristic tradition, he wrote extensive refutations of Gregorios Palamas' works and especially of the Hesychast theological justification of the essence-energies distinction within God. For Akindynos simplicity is a major attribute of the tripartite God, and everything separated from God's essence is created;

so there can be no distinction between incomprehensible uncreated divine essence and comprehensible and inferior uncreated divine energies. Any such theory subverts the unity of the Trinity and leads to ditheism, for which he accused Palamas. Divine names do not correspond to energies but just denote divine nature. Regarding man's participation in God as a means for deification, Akindynos refuses Hesychast's claim that man is capable of participating in divine energies and even seeing them in a spiritual manner. The divine light which humans experience is a symbol and, together with the created world and reason, a way to the knowledge of God. Given this kind of knowledge, it is only in divine love that the inexplicable union of man and God occurs and deification is possible. Akindynos influenced anti-Palamite writers, and his works have been severely criticized by Hesychast theologians.

Biography

Gregorios (his baptismal name is unknown) was born in Prilapos, Northern Macedonia, at ca. 1300. He studied in Thessaloniki under the humanist Thomas Magistros and the monk Bryennios, and he was trained in theology and secular learning. Between 1326 and 1330 he met Gregorios Palamas who appreciated his talents and guided him to monastic spirituality though finally he was not accepted in Mount Athos. He returned to Thessaloniki (1332), where he met Barlaam of Calabria, and before 1334 he dwelled in Constantinople.

When the Hesychast Controversy started, Akindynos, being a friend of both Palamas and Barlaam (the leaders of the rival sides), tried to reconcile them and to bring peace to the Orthodox Church. Putting aside his theological disagreement with Palamas, Akindynos attempted to persuade Barlaam not to insult the psychosomatic technique of monks and defended Palamas from Barlaam's accusations for heresy. But when an ecclesiastical Council (1341) condemned Barlaam and accepted the essence-energies distinction in God, he entered the anti-Hesychast party.

At the second phase of the Controversy, after Barlaam departed for Italy (1341), theology was mixed with politics: Akindynos became himself the leader of the anti-Palamite party, and during the Civil War (1341–1347), he took the part of Emperor John V Palaiologos against John VI Kantakouzenos, the co-emperor and theologian who had supported Palamas. He cooperated with Patriarch John Kalekas and started to gain ecclesiastical power; he charged Palamas for ditheism and a Council (1344) condemned his once friend. When John VI got back to power (1347), Akindynos lost the Court's favor and left the capital, while a new Council restored Palamas. He died soon after (1348) and he was officially condemned together with Barlaam (1351).

Doctrine

Akindynos had a fair knowledge of Greek philosophy and of the patristic literature as it can be attested in his theological works and the numerous letters written in a short period of time. He is a competent writer although sometimes his argumentative style is loose and unmethodical mostly because of its polemical tone and the intentional repetitions.

Hesychast writers created a totally negative picture of a heretic Akindynos insensitive to monastic spirituality, influenced by Greek philosophy and exponent of erroneous or even pagan beliefs. Palamas presents him as an agnosticist and some modern scholars as a rationalist who is more concerned with secular wisdom and is using its tools to comprehend theological issues and especially the triadic dogma. Akindynos' self-image is quite different: he does not claim personal originality but inscribes himself within the patristic tradition, and he constantly relies on patristic texts and recurs to their authority while accusing Palamas for dangerous theological renovations on account of textual misinterpretations.

His opus magnum is the *Antirrhetics* against what he calls Palamite heresy. He is methodically citing by paragraph Palamas' text and then comments on it. The main problem of the Controversy was not (as it was in its first phase) the dispute over the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit and

filioque but the possibility and the nature of man's participation in God as a means for deification (*theosis*).

Akindynos reduces his opponents' doctrines in two main theses: (1) the existence of uncreated energies (God's operations) that are "infinitely infinite" inferior to divine essence and (2) man's ability to participate in these energies and even to see them "in a spiritual manner through his corporeal eyes."

1. The first thesis puts in question the very nature of God in himself. For Akindynos and all those who take simplicity to be a major attribute of the tripartite God, such a distinction undermines the unity of the Trinity and lets to intrude a substantial separation and hence inferiority in God; so he accuses Palamas for ditheism and Messalianism, as if the Hesychast was influenced by the dualist heresy of Bogomils.

For Akindynos divine names do not correspond to separate uncreated energies but are mere names that humans attach to God to denote divine nature; what we call uncreated energy is divine essence because "every uncreated is essence" (*Antirr.* 5.2.5). It is the human epistemological condition that constrains man to grasp the whole at once; so when we divide the whole in smaller unities, we risk to take them as being self-existing. Thus within the divinity, as simple and as a whole, there can be no distinction between incomprehensible divine essence and comprehensible divine energy. The divinity itself is either inconceivable as a whole or entirely conceivable. Palamas' distinction introduces a hierarchical partition between essence (a higher divinity) and energies (a lower divinity), thus leading to a ditheism. In addition it implies two different ontological levels that render impossible for the energies to be uncreated (as Hesychast's claim). So every divine energy, if separated from God's essence, is created; the only uncreated energies (of the Father) are the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2. The second issue about man's participation in God has serious impact on anthropological and ethical matters. If we suppose that man acquires the uncreated grace and thus

participates in the divine essence, then man is uncreated and coeternal with the Creator, something absurd. It is only in divine love that the union of man with God occurs – something inexplicable to human reason.

As for the experience of the divine light (the Taborian light of transfiguration), Akindynos calls it mysterious and beyond human explanation, but Palamas argues that for Akindynos it is created (*ktiston*). This light is sensible; in fact it is a symbol. And such symbols, as well as the created world and reason, are ways to the knowledge of God. This knowledge is what man should pursue and not an unattainable view of God; it is a means to deification made possible by God himself and incarnation.

Akindynos' views had influenced the anti-Palamite writers of the fourteenth century, and his works have been criticized or refuted in detail by numerous Hesychast theologians as his friend Gregorios Palamas, Matthaios Blastares, Patriarch Theophilos Kokkinos, David Disypatos, and Joseph Kalothetos.

Cross-References

- Barlaam the Calabrian
- Gregoras, Nikephoros

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Akrasia

► Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Weakness of

Alberti, Leon Battista

Born: Genoa, 18 February 1404

Died: Rome, 20 April 1472

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Abstract

Writer, mathematician, and architect, Leon Battista Alberti was one of the most versatile humanists of his generation, able to innovate literary genres and to cross disciplines. Although he was not a systematic philosopher, Alberti has explored several philosophical issues in his work, making use of a remarkable and up-to-date library. This entry will offer a brief overview of his philosophical background and of his moral and political speculation.

Biography

Born in Genoa on 18 February 1404 (Cardini 2005, p. 151), Leon Battista Alberti was the second of two illegitimate sons of Lorenzo di Benedetto Alberti and Bianca di Carlo Fieschi. His father was a Florentine merchant banished from Florence after the Tumulto dei Ciompi; his mother, a noblewoman from Genoa, probably died 2 years after Battista's birth. His older brother Carlo was also active as a poet (Martelli 2015).

Despite the precarious position of the family, Lorenzo was able to guarantee his sons an outstanding education for his time. In 1415–1418 Battista attended the grammar school of Gasparino Barzizza in Padua, where he became acquainted with some of the finest humanists of his generation, such as Antonio Beccadelli, Francesco Barbaro, and Francesco Filelfo, who probably taught him some elements of Greek. He then moved to Bologna, where he engaged in the study of Canon Law, mathematics, and physics. After obtaining his law degree in 1428, Alberti entered the court of cardinal Niccolò Albergati, with whom he might have traveled through Germany and France. In 1431 Battista was in Rome, at the service of the patriarch of Grado Biagio Molin, who secured him a post as *abbreviator apostolicus*. Due to the insurgence of the Colonna and Eugene IV's subsequent flight from Rome, Alberti moves to Florence, where the Curia found shelter. Here, he comes into contact with the *avantgarde* of Early Quattrocento Humanism, and in particular with Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini, and Teodoro Gaza. He did not neglect the artistic milieu either; on the contrary, he established good relationships with Donatello, Brunelleschi, and Masaccio. Between 1436 and 1438, Battista follows the Curia in Bologna, Ferrara, and Firenze. His greatest achievement of these years is probably the organization of the *Certame coronario*, a poetic competition in the vernacular on the theme of the *vera amicitia* ("true friendship"), which earns Battista a central place in the Renaissance debate on the dignity of the Italian language ("Questione della Lingua"). Back in Rome in 1443, Alberti plays a major role in the urbanistic renovation project of the city promoted by Nicholas V by contributing his expertise as an architect, engineer, and anti-quarian (Grafton 2000, 225–49). Battista continues to serve in the Curia during the papacy of Pius II (1458–1464), before being dismissed from his post as an *abbreviator* by Paulus II (1464–1471). From ca. 1450 onwards, he intensifies his activity as an architect: his creations in Florence (Palazzo Rucellai, cappella Rucellai at S. Pancrazio, facade of S. Maria Novella, Rotonda dell'Annunziata), Rimini (Tempio Malatestiano),

and Mantua (S. Sebastiano, S. Andrea) show his sophisticated knowledge and personal interpretation of the classical art of building. In the late sixties Battista gets close to Lorenzo de' Medici and the circle of the Platonic Academy led by Marsilio Ficino. An echo of this attendance can be found in Cristoforo Landino's *Disputationes Camaldulenses* (1475), where Alberti is presented as an interlocutor in the dialogue along with Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici, Ficino, and other Florentine intellectuals.

Literary Commitment

Alberti was one of the most versatile writers of his time. Writing both in Latin and in the vernacular, he engaged in a dialogue with the classical tradition within the intertextual theoretical frame of the "mosaic", that is, his original rendering of the humanistic *imitatio*: since the ancient authors had already written everything that humankind needed to know, modern writers can only recombine the old "tiles" from the classical sources into a new picture (Cardini 1990). This does not necessarily result in a lack of originality: the quest for novelty in literature is indeed one of the *leitmotifs* of Battista's poetics (McLaughlin 2016, 146–47). In 1424 Alberti writes the comedy *Philodoxeos fabula*, which was considered an authentic work by a classical author, Lepidus, for nearly a decennium: this pseudonym will often be reused by Alberti in future works (McLaughlin 2016, 19–37). Written between 1428 and 1432 dedicated to his brother Carlo, the *Commodis litterarum atque incommotis* is a praise of the *studia humanitatis* and at the same time a critique of the society of his time, devoted only to economical profit. During his first stay in Rome, Alberti composed the hagiographical *Vita s. Potiti* (1433), and according to some scholars, the *Descriptio urbis Romae*, which is the first description of the City, based upon reliable measurements and estimates (Vagnetti 1974, 78 and others postpone the composition to the second roman period). In Florence, Alberti begun to work on the treaty *De pictura* (1435) dedicated to Brunelleschi. Written first in the vernacular and

then translated into Latin, this writing in fact deals with geometry, and was most influential in the years to come for its theoretical treatment of perspective. In 1437 Alberti publishes the *Pontifex*, on the virtues required for a bishop, and the *Apologi centum*, his contribution to the genre of the fable. But the major commitments of these years are doubtless in the vernacular: the four books *De familia*, which he worked on from 1433 to 1434 and again in 1437, and the dialogue *Theogenius*, dedicated in 1441 to Leonello d'Este. Lucian of Samosata is the model of his *Intercoenales* (1432–1443: Cardini 2010, 196–200), a collection of short dialogues on several moral themes, and *Momus* (1450), a long allegorical satire of the society of his time. Alberti also devoted himself to technical matters, such as grammar (*Grammatichetta Vaticana*, ca. 1435, which is considered the first grammar written in a romance language), rhetoric (*Trivium senatoria*, 1460, dedicated to Lorenzo il Magnifico), and cryptography (*De componendis cifris*, 1466). His most peculiar and successful work is, however, the treatise *De re aedificatoria* (1443–1452), which perfectly synthetizes Alberti's humanism, while being at the same time a critical study of classical architecture, in particular of Vitruvius' *De architectura*, and a technical work at the service of the community. With *De iciarchia* (1468), the last of his works in the vernacular, Alberti provides the prince with moral and civic counsel in order to rule properly.

Philosophical Library

The portrait of Alberti as a Neoplatonic philosopher painted by Cristoforo Landino in his *Disputationes Camaldulenses* is to be rejected as much as the other attempts to label him as a stoic, sceptic, or even eclectic thinker (Vasoli 2007, 21–24). Indeed, like most of his fellow humanists, Alberti is not a systematic philosopher but responds to the different stimuli of his philosophical library (Bertolini 2005; Regoliosi 2005). Beside the omnipresent Cicero and Seneca, his library includes texts unknown to the medieval intellectual debate as well as those revitalized by

the humanist's translations. Alberti's library is thus open to Bruni's translations of Aristotle's ethical and political writings and Plato's dialogues; Uberto Decembrio's version of Plato's *Respublica*; Xenophon's philosophical works and in particular the *Oeconomicus* and *Symposium*; Plutarch's *Lives* and *Moralia*, revived in western culture by Aurispa. On the Latin side, Alberti knows and uses Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, a recent discovery of Poggio Bracciolini and an important means of access to the epicurean philosophy (Canfora 2007a). Alberti's scientific interests are nourished not only by Pliny's *Historia naturalis* (Anselmi 2010, 122) but also by less common bibliographical items for that time, such as Celsus' *Medicina*, Columella, Euclid, ps. Hippocrates' *Letters*, Theophrastus, Manilius' *Astronomica*, ps. Pythagoras' *Aurea praecepta* and *Symbola*, Vitruvius: all decisive works to the formation of Alberti's moral philosophy, always suspended between "precise indagini scientifiche e ansia metafisica" (Garin 2007, 137). Alberti's approach to this impressive library is, however, unsystematic and often second-hand: Plato is frequently quoted from Cicero; Hesiod is derived from Seneca and in one case even from the contemporary *De re uxoria* of Francesco Barbaro (Bertolini 2005, p. 102). The frame that holds together Alberti's philosophical culture rather consists in historical and biographical accounts, and in particular Diogenes Laertius' *Vitae philosophorum*, which he could read in the recent translation by Ambrogio Traversari. Finally, it is worth to mention the persistence of medieval authors, especially in his "technical" library (Federici Vescovini 2007), and his deep knowledge of the ecclesiastical and patristic tradition (Giannarelli 2007; Piccardi 2007).

Virtue and Fortune

The dialectic between *Virtus* and *Fortuna* is the leading theme of Alberti's moral reflection as well as his peculiar angle to approach a vaster set of philosophical issues, regarding human nature, man's rapport with God, and his functioning in society. Conducted throughout all his life,

Alberti's philosophical investigations have provided a multifaceted spectrum of considerations, more often in contrast with each other than forming a harmonic system. If in his *Philodoxeos fabula* he conveys the positive portrait of a young boy able to climb the social ladder only by relying upon his virtue, in the *Commodis litterarum atque incommotis* Alberti produces a more relativistic view, in which the *virtue* of the wise philosopher bears the hallmarks of a consolation against unfair and immutable fortune. In the *Intercoenalis* "Fatum et Fortuna" Alberti presents fate as a chain of cause and effect. *Fatum* here assumes the form of "the most turbulent river imaginable" (Marsh 1987, 23; the metaphor will be borrowed by Machiavelli in *Prince*, XXV), which one can survive not only by the virtue of the individual but also through the social cooperation of people and in particular the solidarity within a single family group rather than in a larger community ("the larger the boats, the greater the danger they face": Marsh 1987, 25). Remarkable in Alberti is also the total absence of "an idea of a providential God," or at least "of a christian God" (Garin 2007, 153) in the direction of a radical determinism: following a stoic theory reported by Cicero's *De divinatione*, Alberti's *Fatum* is nothing else than a chain of cause and effect, a "cursum rerum in vita hominum," which flows undisturbed following its own *ratio* (Cardini 2010, 240). Instead of relying on Providence, Alberti chooses the "scientific" path of the astrological prediction (astrology and astronomy are, in the Renaissance, synonyms), with a clear epistemological stance (Cardini 2005; Vasoli 2007, 32).

Man and the Cosmos

This stoic and pessimistic character of his approach also emerges in his dialogue *Theogenius*, dedicated to Leonello d'Este upon the death of his father (McLaughlin 2016, 125–44). Like his model, the "laughing philosopher" Democritus in the *Letter to Damagetus* attributed to Hippocrates (Boschetto 1995), Teogenio elaborates on the misery of man, doomed to unhappiness by his own dissatisfaction

and destined to a life of disharmony with Nature on account of his desire for wealth and possession: man does not only destroy everything in his path but he is also the only creature able to kill his own kind (Garin 2007, 148; Vasoli 2007, 40). As Garin has pointed out, in these pages Alberti overturns his model, Cicero's *De natura deorum*, in which humankind is presented as the ruler over God's creation. The result is an "anti-humanist" work, opposite and specular to the famous exaltations of the *dignitas hominis* by Giannozzo Manetti and, some years later, Pico della Mirandola, which departed precisely from the very same classical model (Garin 2007, 147–49). Not even the wise philosopher can combat the madness and foolishness of the world. As with the Democritus of the *Letter to Damagetus*, philosophers are unheard prophets. People mistake their wisdom for madness, and place them in the margin of society (Knight and Brown 2003, 208–217; Vasoli 2007, 52–54). The philosopher has no other option than to attend to his own "etica personale," as Vasoli put it, which implies a substantial disillusionment as to his social relevance and impact (Vasoli 2007, 33).

Alberti's Humor

This pessimistic approach is developed in particular in the *Intercoenales* and in *Momus*. The satirical nature of the two writings and the influence of their common model, Lucian of Samosata, allow Alberti to elaborate on the same disillusion as to humankind and its moral ineptitude. As an instrument of a cognitive approach, Alberti resorts to irony and humor, which are adopted in such a modern manner that he has been considered the forerunner of modern humoristic literature (Cardini 1993). An example is provided by his approach to God. In the *Intercoenalis* "Religio" he makes a fool of a pious friend and his superstitious worship of God, in order to reiterate his "epicurean" belief in a cosmos where God does not interfere in terrestrial affairs. And when gods and humans interact, it results in a parody. Banished by Jupiter because of his disloyalty, *Momus* infiltrates in human society disguised at

first as a poet and then as a philosopher in order to unmask the immorality of the other deities and get his revenge. Once reinstated in the Olympus, *Momus* will turn down the object of his polemics, making a caricature of humankind, much to the amusement of Jupiter. Written to "make *his* readers laugh but also to make them feel they are involved in a thorough inquiry into real life" (Knight and Brown 2003, 7), *Momus* is foremost a portrait and a critique of the society of his time, imbued with a pedagogical purpose to instruct the prince: the Olympus is an allegory of the court, and the deities represent the moral attitudes of men; in this society, simulation and dissimulation are the only ways to survive and climb the social ladder (Catanorchi 2005); good and evil are relative concepts; and "la lucida consapevolezza della stolta follia" (Vasoli 2007, 45) subsists in the background, driving humans regardless of their education and social origin.

Man and the State

There is in *Momus*, however, also a social and political concern which in fact pervades Alberti's philosophical speculations. This is particularly true for *De familia* and, 30 years later, *De iciarchia*, in which the quest for a virtuous and a modest life (in the sense, of course, of the Horatian *mediocritas*) is clearly linked to civic commitment. This should not be confused, however, with the *civic humanism* proposed by the first generation of Florentine humanists. The substantial skepticism for this approach, already displayed in the *De commodis litterarum atque incommotis*, is accompanied in *De familia* by the choice of the family as a microcosm, in which the wealth of single leading groups in the end prevails against the common good. This approach is consistent with the organization of the Florentine society of that time, which "like Leibniz's universe, was divided into atomic units: the household on whose well-being society rested" (Grafton 2000, 160), and it constitutes the core of what, in a further stage of development, Guicciardini will call "il particolare." When Alberti writes *De iciarchia* in 1468, Salutati and

Bruni's model of an independent city-state governed by men of letters has definitely waned. Overturning the perspective of *Momus*, of which *De iciarchia* has been seen as the "opposto positivo" (Garin 2007, 152), Alberti proposes the idea of a "regime of virtuous 'house-princes'": an oligarchic State, held together by the *amicitia* of its citizens and ruled by a virtuous prince (Hankins 2019, 328–334).

These different and at times opposite approaches to the same issue need to be put in the context of Alberti's biographical vicissitudes, which have played a substantial role in dosing and calibrating optimism and pessimism in his work (Garin 2007, 164). But it also outlines his research methodology, which has its scientific equivalent in the optical experiments he used to conduct (Garin 2007, 175): the world appears differently according to the filter we adopt and reality needs to be altered and deconstructed in order for it to be properly analyzed. His literature is therefore a kaleidoscope that mirrors the infinite worlds (*plures mundos... variis formis*, as he writes in *Momus*) of our daily life. This requires a great capacity for adaptation (Garin 2007, 141) or, to put it otherwise, several "masks" behind which we can hide.

Impact and Legacy

The reception of Alberti's philosophical thought was immediate. His work was an influential model for the political literature of the Renaissance, starting with Machiavelli (Canfora 2007b, Anselmi 2010; Trenti 2014) and Giordano Bruno (Garin 2007, 140); *Momus*, in particular, was extremely popular both in Italy and above the Alps, feeding into the Lutheran polemic as well as being useful for catholic reformers, such as More and Erasmus (Garin 2007, 140; Geri 2011). With regard to the origin of the "capitalistic spirit" Alberti's *De familia* has been also object of investigation by Werner Sombart and Max Weber and in Italy by Antonio Gramsci, Amintore Fanfani, and Armando Saporiti (Lenoble 2012).

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Albertism

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Abstract

Albertism is a philosophical movement born in Paris in the early fifteenth century and spread, mostly in German universities, as part of the *via antiqua*. It is characterized by theoretical and methodological adherence to Albertus Magnus' philosophy, by reference to some neo-Platonic doctrines and by its axiomatic metaphysical model. In the fifteenth century, Albertism has opposed Thomism with regard to metaphysics (the distinction between being and essence and the conception of matter) and epistemology

(knowledge without phantasms and the doctrine of universals). Theological issues do not fall among the main concerns. The most prominent Albertists are Johannes de Nova Domo and Lamberto da Monte in Paris, and Heymeric de Campo in Cologne. In the fifteenth century, Albertism spreads in Germany thanks to Johannes Wenck, Johannes Hulshot of Mechele, and Wessel Gansfort. In the second half of the fifteenth century, thanks to Jacob of Gostynin, an Albertist school develops in the University of Krakow, where a *via Alberti* exists until the sixteenth century.

Definition

Albertism is a movement involving late-medieval Aristotelianism which, unlike other contemporary philosophical schools, consider Albertus Magnus as the most reliable interpreter of Aristotle (Hoenen 2011). The foundation of Albertism is ascribed to Johannes de Nova Domo, a master at the University of Paris who in 1410 wrote a treatise entitled *De ente et essentia* (Meersseman 1932). Johannes de Nova Domo's students contribute to the dissemination of Albertism in Paris and in German universities. Lamberto da Monte from Paris writes a commentary on Pietro Lombardo's *Sentences*, in which reference is made to Albertus Magnus. Lamberto's work provides evidence of the existence, in the first decade of the fifteenth century, of an Albertist school at the faculty of theology in Paris (Meliadò and Negri 2011). A commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* defined as "Albertist" and written in the first half of the fifteenth century is owed to Johannes Wenck (Haubst 1951, 1955, 1957a).

A particularly prominent Albertist fellow is Heymeric de Campo. He studies in Paris under Johannes de Nova Domo, and since 1421, he works at the University of Cologne. Heymeric becomes also regent, with Rutgerus Overhach of Dortmund, of a *bursa* at the University of Cologne, later called *Laurentiana* in honor of Friesen Laurentius Buninch of Groningen, who officially founded it in 1440. In 1423, Heymeric de Campo starts a controversy with the Thomist

Gerard de Monte. The *Tractatus problematicus. Problemata inter Albertum Magnum et Sanctum Thomam* initiates the dispute. In this treatise, Heymeric lists 18 *Quaestiones* against which Albertism is distinguished from Thomism. The *Quaestiones* are sorted by topic following the Aristotelian science. The controversy ends in 1456 with an *Apology* by Gerard de Monte (Meersseman 1935). From 1425 to 1433, Heymeric de Campo frequents Nicholas of Cusa (Hamann 2006; Fiamma 2016). They are both averse to Thomism and share a neo-Platonic metaphysics (Haubst 1952; Colomer 1964) inspired by Albertus Magnus' paraphrase of *Liber de causis*. Examples of these positions are found in Heymeric de Campo's *Tractatus problematicus* (Hoenen 2008), *Compendium divinorum* (Anzulewicz 2009) and *Colliget principiorum* (Calma and Imbach 2008, 2013), and Nicholas of Cusa's *De coniecturis* (Mojsisch 1998; Senger 2014).

In the 1440s, some German followers of Albertism, such as Heymeric de Campo, Johannes Wenck, and Johannes Hulshot of Mechelen, start mitigating their polemical attitude towards the other currents of the *via antiqua*, seeking to reconcile with them. In 1435, Heymeric de Campo is offered a teaching post at the University of Louvain with the remit of tackling the Hussite heresy (Hoenen 1994). Heymeric's writings from this period reveal his rapprochement with Thomist positions. Yet the dispute with Gerard de Monte goes on until 1456. In 1453, Heymeric writes *Centheologicon*. The influence of Nicholas of Cusa's works is evident (Imbach 1983; Fiamma 2017). Johannes Wenck becomes a professor at the University of Heidelberg and in 1442 writes *De ignota litteratura*, where he accuses Nicholas of Cusa to have espoused Meister Eckhart and the Beghards' ideas. In this pamphlet, Wenck's views are in line with the *via antiqua* orthodoxy, what has led some interpreters to consider him a Thomist master. In 1442, in Cologne, Johannes Hulshout writes a commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* (Patin 1976). Heymeric de Campo's influence on this work is clear, despite Hulshout's intention to maintain it within the realist milieu (Hoenen 1993).

In the mid-fifteenth century, Wessel Gansfort is a prominent figure of the *Bursa Laurentiana* at the

University of Cologne (Braakhuis 1993). Although Albertism has been opposed to nominalism since its beginnings in Paris (Kaluza 1995), Wessel Gansfort tries to reconcile Albertine positions with those of certain currents of nominalism. Later, Gansfort teaches at the University of Heidelberg, personally knows cardinal Bessarion and comes into contact with the Roman Humanism. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the dissemination of Albertus Magnus, Johannes de Nova Domo and Heymeric de Campo's writings in Central Europe leads to the constitution of an Albertist school at the University of Krakow (Kuksewicz 1963; Markowski 1981, 1989). The Polish master Jacob of Gostynin comments on the *Liber de causis* using Albertus Magnus' paraphrase and Johannes de Nova Domo's *De ente et essentia* (Seńko 1961). Some copies of Albertus Magnus and Heymeric de Campo's works, written in Krakow around the mid-fifteenth century, have been recently found (Calma 2012). In Krakow, an autonomous Albertist *via* of studies has probably existed until the early sixteenth century (Seńko 1970; Kaluza 1995; Calma 2012).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The historiographic category of "Albertism" was used for the first time in the 1930s of the twentieth century (Geyer 1927; Meersseman 1933). Later, many scholars have called "Albertists" those philosophers or theologians who have generally embraced Albertus Magnus' philosophy in method and content (Haubst 1952, 1955, 1957a). However, some scholars have recently challenged the idea that in the first part of the fifteenth century, Albertism was an autonomous movement or a philosophical school (Senger 1981). They rather think that Johannes de Nova Domo and Heymeric de Campo's works simply recording the debates within the *via antiqua*, without implying a coherent philosophical system independent from Thomism. This point is also confirmed by the fact that in the early fifteenth century, neither the *via Alberti* nor any Albertist *bursae* can be founded. In fact, these conditions are realized only in the

second half of the fifteenth century, and only in certain universities.

However, in the Middle Ages, certain philosophical currents are explicitly inspired by Albertus Magnus. In the thirteenth century, Ulrich of Strasbourg and Ugo Ripelin elaborate their philosophical doctrines based on Albert's teaching. In the fourteenth century, some authors who can be considered as "Albertists" in a general sense are Meister Eckhart, Dietrich of Freiberg, and Berthold of Moosburg. It should also be noted that Albert did not transmit a corpus of doctrines to his students but rather a methodological approach. In particular, as a philosopher, Albert attaches great value to natural reason speculation (Zimmermann 1980; Mojsisch 1985; Sturlese 1996) and shows an "appétit pantagruélique" for Arab science and Neo-Platonic philosophy (Wéber 1980). Albertism of the fifteenth century stems directly from the elaborations carried out by Albert's students during the previous two centuries, especially with regard to his philosophical method.

There are also some remarkable elements of discontinuity between thirteenth and fourteenth century Albertism and that of the fifteenth century. "Medieval" Albertism spreads mainly among Dominican monks. Moreover, from a philosophical point of view, it results from a heterogeneous reception of Albert's doctrines. Albertism of the fifteenth century is rather characterized as a movement within universities, which tends to influence the community organization of the Church and the political life in the cities (Hoenen 2003). Furthermore, in the fifteenth century, Albertism represents a philosophical school with a specific corpus of texts taken as reference. So, while medieval Albertism is deeply engaged in discussing theological issues, in the fifteenth century, it has little to do with theology, even though some contributions to specific *Quaestiones* in the debates between the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna* (Wegestreit) on metaphysics and epistemology. Axiomatization becomes important for the fifteenth century Albertism, while it was quite disregarded by medieval Albertism. In fact, in the fifteenth century, Albertist metaphysical works often follow the Euclidean method of

exposition and assume metaphysical positions close to Boethius' *Liber de causis* and *De hebdomadibus* tradition (Meliadò 2013). Medieval Albertism includes many cases of doctrinal intolerance towards Thomas Aquinas' philosophy. Yet Albertists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries rarely raise polemic controversy against Thomas Aquinas – except for Dietrich of Freiberg. Instead, Albertism of the fifteenth century rises in contrast to the Thomistic school.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The main element of methodological break with the scholastic tradition introduced by Albertism in the fifteenth century consists in its unprecedented use of Albertus Magnus' commentaries on Aristotle and the *Liber de causis* within universities in explicit opposition to Thomas Aquinas' commentaries. Albertists also criticize the Thomist school about several of their metaphysical and epistemological issues. Scholars, with some exceptions (Senger 1981), generally agree in identifying four original doctrinal points peculiar to Albertism (Meersseman 1935; Haubst 1957b):

- (i) Contrary to Thomas Aquinas, Albertists think that there is no real difference between the essence and the existence of an entity. Johannes de Nova Domo and Heymeric de Campo claim that the existence of an entity flows from its essence (Nova Domo 1409; De Campo 1425, 1434; Cusanus 1445). The essence and the existence are distinguished, Albertists argue, only *secundum modum significandi* and *secundum rationem ratiocinantem*. In other words, they should be regarded as two different modes of the same substance. This view results from a revision of the *Liber de causis* tradition and Albert's doctrine of the flow of entities (Korolec 1981; Meliadò 2012).
- (ii) Albertists think that knowledge of an object is possible without the mediation of phantasms produced by the imagination (Saccon 2015). Scholasticism conceives knowledge as an adaptation of the intellect to the objects.

According to Thomas Aquinas, such adaptation is mediated: sensory species (*sensibilia*) are processed by the senses, while phantasms are processed by the imagination. On this view, different intermediate stages of knowledge allow the intellect to progressively abstract *sensibilia* from perceptions and transform them into intellectual species. Albertus Magnus concurs with this view (Senger 1981). Albertists of the fifteenth century think that if knowledge were based solely on experience, the intellect would apprehend only the species of things and reach an inaccurate knowledge of them. Instead they hold that, after knowing species by sensory experience, the intellect can recognize the same species in himself, but in a more precise and refined way. The assumption here is that the intellect has in himself the species of external things but in a cognitive way (*modus*). In *De venatione sapientiae*, Nicholas of Cusa's attributes this conception to Proclus.

- (iii) Albertists reject Aristotle's idea that prime matter is devoid of any determination and form. They think instead that created matter conveys, *inchoata*, a seed of form. This claim is also found in Albert's writings (Nardi 1960; Hossfeld 1980; Rodolfi 2004). Albertus Magnus and Ulrich of Strasbourg rely on it to affirm the full presence of soul in the embryo (Park 1980). Albert also argues that the formal potential of seeds emerges thanks to the influence of stars movements (*eductio formarum*). Albertists of the fifteenth century, however, are less interested in astrology than Albert. This doctrine derives from Augustine of Hippo's conception of seminal reason.
- (iv) Albertists claim that universal concepts are really present in things. This allows us to count Albertists among realists (De Libera 1996). However, they also recognize that the reality of universals is no guarantee of our ability to know them (Kaluza 1988). This position, which constitutes a middle way between realism and nominalism, is shared by Johannes de Nova Domo (Weiler 1968;

Kaluza 1986; Rutten 2003), Heymeric de Campo (Meliadò 2012), and Nicholas of Cusa (Fiamma 2015).

Impact and Legacy

The legacy of Albertism in central Europe in early modern age is still to be clearly defined. Its main consequence for fifteenth-century philosophy is the introduction in European universities of some elements of Neo-Platonism and the opposition to Thomism. In this sense, Albertism has contributed to the crisis of scholastic philosophy and the renewed interest in Neo-Platonism which takes root in the second half of the fifteenth century thanks to the Italian Renaissance.

Cross-References

- ▶ Hus, Jan
- ▶ Negative Theology in the Renaissance
- ▶ Nicholas of Cusa

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Albo, Joseph

Born: c. 1380, Aragon/Spain

Died: c. 1444, Castile/Spain

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Abstract

Joseph Albo (c. 1380–1444) was a Jewish philosopher active in Christian Spain during the first half of the fifteenth century. His main opus *Sefer ha-Ikkarim* (*Book of Principles*) was

completed in Soria, Castile, in 1425. Albo was active in the last phase of medieval Jewish philosophy and thus was strongly influenced by his predecessors, mostly Maimonides, his teacher Hasdai Crescas, and Simeon ben Zemah Duran. He was well acquainted with the Muslim philosophic heritage, mainly Averroes, as it was translated into Hebrew during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Being active in Christian Spain, he was apparently also acquainted with scholastic philosophy, mostly Aquinas, which influenced the formation of this thought. Facing the Catholic Church persecution of the Jews in Spain, especially since the anti-Jewish riots of 1391, and the Christian increasing pressure on Jews to convert, Albo actively participated in the Jewish anti-Christian polemics of his period. Although Albo is not considered an original thinker, and much of his book consists of summaries of the ideas of previous scholars, still he significantly contributed to the history of Jewish philosophy in two areas: the theory of principles and the theory of law. He condensed Maimonides' 13 principles of faith to the fundamental three: the existence of God, the divine origin of the Torah, and reward and punishment. In his legal theory, he was the first to introduce the scholastic notion of natural law to Jewish philosophy, thereby revolutionizing it.

Biography

Little is known concerning the details of Albo's life. He was born in Aragon around 1380 and died in Castile around 1444. He studied in the academy of the great scholar of the period, Hasdai Crescas in Saragossa, Aragon, and was strongly influenced by his thought. In 1413–1414 he played a dominant role in the public Christian-Jewish disputation at Tortosa, in which Geronimo de Santa Fe (formerly Joshua ha-Lorki), a Jew who converted to Christianity, represented the Pope and delegates from many Jewish communities in Spain represented Judaism. Albo represented the Jewish community of Daroca, in

Aragon. Later he moved to Soria, in Castile, where he apparently spent the rest of his life. Albo's important contribution to Jewish philosophy is his *Book of Principles*, Albo (1929–1930) composed in medieval Hebrew and completed around 1425. Albo apparently knew Spanish and Latin. He apparently made a living as a Rabbi and preacher, and possibly also as a physician.

The *Book of Principles* is essentially an apologetic treatise; its main aim is to prove that Judaism is the true divine religion, since it is the only one which fulfills the criteria of divine law. In this respect it was an integral part of the Jewish anti-Christian polemics of this period. It was written in order to address the deep social and religious distress of the Jews residing in Christian Spain, strengthen their spirits and their Jewish identity, and provide them with arguments to counter the Christian anti-Jewish polemics. The intended reading public of this book were not only a small group of scholars but also the broader audience of lesser educated Jews, who needed this kind of support. This is why it was written in a relatively simple and clear manner, unlike most medieval philosophical books in Hebrew, which are difficult to decipher. This is also why its impact was quite considerable during the consequent centuries.

Albo developed in the first part of the treatise an elaborate theory of law, as a logical basis for his system of principles. On the basis of the Aristotelian theory of the political nature of humans, he argued that the rule of law is essential for the existence of an ordered society. Following scholastic influences, he distinguished among three kinds of law, which appear in an ascending order: natural law, which is the inherent human understanding that political association is essential for sheer survival; human law, which fulfills the urge for a better and more refined human society; and finally, divine law, which aims to direct humans to the knowledge of God, through the obligation to fulfill the divine commandments as elaborated in the Mosaic constitution. Natural law stems from the understanding of the natural processes; human law is created by humans in the political association, while divine law is bestowed upon humans by verified divine

revelation. The traditional position found in medieval Jewish philosophy distinguished between two kinds of law only, human and divine (for instance, Maimonides, the *Guide for the Perplexed* 2: 40). Albo was the first Jewish scholar who introduced natural law, in the political sense, into Jewish philosophy and thus revolutionized the Jewish theory of law. He was directly influenced here by the scholastic theory of natural law, as exemplified by Aquinas. Albo most probably knew Aquinas' legal theory, although he never mentions him.

The theory of principles is thus superimposed by Albo on his theory of law. The principles of faith are derived from divine law. Albo endeavored to create a new system of principles of faith in Judaism. He followed in Maimonides' path, but challenged him in the same time. Maimonides was the first Jewish scholar ever to create a system of obligatory dogmas of faith. One should remember that Judaism, unlike Christianity, is traditionally not based upon dogma, but upon the obligation to obey the practical commandments. Maimonides argued that a Jew should not only obey the Mosaic commandments but should also hold the essential minimum of true theological opinions. His 13 principles, thus, introduced a novelty into the conception of Judaism. In later medieval Jewish thought, there was a fierce debate concerning Maimonides' rationalism, in general, and his system of principles, in particular. The question was twofold: Is it permissible at all to create a system of principles in Judaism, and if so, which and how many such principles should be included in the system? Albo was quite critical of Maimonides' radical rationalism, being more of a traditionalist. He agreed with Maimonides that principles of faith are essential for a Jewish identity, but strongly differed with him concerning their selection and number. In the first part of the *Book of Principles*, he debated and rejected the various systems of principles which were proposed since Maimonides. Contrary to Maimonides' 13 principles, Albo condensed the number of principles to the bare minimum, three essential principles without which Judaism cannot exist in his view: the existence of God, the divine source of the *Torah*, and

reward and punishment. There is a logical order here: The first principle is the cornerstone of the whole system. The divine origins of the *Torah* are based on the belief in the existence of God, and reward and punishment is based upon the duty to obey the *Torah*. All other beliefs are presented as necessary logical derivations thereof. Each of the principles (*ikkarim*) logically leads to further beliefs stemming from them, called "roots" (*shorashim*); these lead to a third layer of less important beliefs, called "branches" (*anafim*). Albo thus proposed a semi-logical structure in which the whole theological system is necessarily derived from the minimal most essential true opinions.

Each of the following parts of the *Book of Principles* is devoted to the discussion of one of the three essential principles. Concerning the existence of God (second treatise), Albo introduces a prolonged discussion of divine attributes; concerning the divine origins of the *Torah* (third treatise), Albo discussed human perfection, prophecy in general and Mosaic prophecy in particular; concerning reward and punishment (fourth treatise), he discusses divine providence, the problem of evil, repentance, and the world to come.

The *Book of Principles* was practically the last great theory of principles of faith produced in Jewish thought. Isaac Abravanel, who was active in the late-fifteenth century, completely rejected the validity of such systems, arguing that the whole *Torah* is one big principle; it is not for humans to decide which of the beliefs of the *Torah* is more or less important; they are all equally essential.

The book was popular in the following centuries, especially after the first printed edition appeared in 1485, one of the first Jewish books of Jewish philosophy to be printed. The fact that it was written in a relatively simple style, contained summaries of earlier Jewish thinkers, and appeared in print very early made it popular among Jewish scholars of subsequent generation, practically up to the Jewish Enlightenment. The book was later translated into Latin, German, Italian, and other languages, which made it accessible to Christian scholars also.

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Alchemical Medicine and Distillation

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Abstract

Alchemical medicine – often termed “chemiatria” or “iatrochemistry” – was a part of Renaissance chymistry that sought to purify the body into its most ideal state of health and, at its height of ambition, to extend human life indefinitely. To this end, alchemical physicians utilized distillation to produce medicaments from plant, mineral, and animal matter. Much like the chrysopoetic ambition to purify base metals into gold, distillation presented a potent means of purifying natural substances through the separation of subtle essences and medicinal waters from the impurities of gross matter.

Synonyms

Chemiatria; Iatrochemistry; Spagyria

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Alchemical distillation as it was performed in the Renaissance would still be familiar to a modern chemist. The process would always involve some application of heat to a mixture in order to separate through evaporation the more subtle or purer substances into a vapor, which would then be condensed into a separate vessel upon cooling. The distillate could then be distilled further to increase its purity. The apparatus used, much like a modern distillation apparatus, included a heat source, vessels for the mixture and the distillate, and a tube or dome for conveying and condensing the distilled vapor into the receiving vessel. Renaissance alchemists would commonly use an earthenware furnace and a glass vessel with its neck elongated into an angled tube, such as a retort or alembic. Most alchemical medicines were distilled from a mixture of various ingredients and a solvent such as *aqua vitae* (typically distilled wine) (Forbes 1970; Schneider 1972; Newman and Principe 1998; Principe 2013).

Distillation long predates the medieval period, but it was in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the terminology and techniques foundational to its alchemical context were imported into the European intellectual tradition from Classical and Arabic texts. Prominent alchemists from this period include Franciscans Roger Bacon (ca. 1214–ca. 1292) and John of Rupescissa (ca. 1310–ca. 1366), who borrowed from the pseudepigraphical works of Jābir ibn Ḥayyān (“Geber”) when they wrote about purification through distillation, with the goal of producing the purest possible distillate or *quintessence*, “fifth essence.” This medical elixir perfectly isolated natural potency, allowing boundless material transformation and serving as medicinal panacea, with the potential to extend human life indefinitely. More commonly, distillation was used to study the health benefits of spa waters and to separate healing “waters” (typically alcohols or oils) from gross matter, which could be used in the production of primarily herbal medicaments (Multhauf 1966; Newman and Jābir 1991; Eamon 1994; Newman 2004).

By the fifteenth century, alchemical distillation and attendant apothecaries had become a widespread ancillary to Galenic humoral medicine, in which the body's four humors, sharing the qualities of the four Aristotelian elements, could be regulated by the same alchemical techniques that claimed to manipulate elemental mixture. However, the spread of alchemical medicine would be primarily catalyzed in the following century with the iconoclastic works of the famous physician Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, or Paracelsus (1493–1541). Paracelsus drew from the new Platonic/Neoplatonic and Hermetic texts introduced to the West by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) to produce a new natural philosophy positioned in opposition to scholastic Aristotelianism and Galenic medicine. He reconceptualized human physiology in terms of alchemical separation and purification, allowing the body to serve as a microcosmic analog to the greater macrocosm. By the end of the sixteenth century, Paracelsus' works and those of his successors, especially Petrus Severinus (1540/1542–1602) and Jan Baptista van Helmont (1579/1580–1644), would make alchemical medicine and the perfection of health central to a new chemical philosophy aimed at the perfection of nature as a whole (Pagel 1958, 1982; Debus 1978, 2001; Newman and Grafton 2001; Shackelford 2004; Webster 2008).

Impact and Legacy

Physicians after Paracelsus, such as Andreas Libavius (ca. 1550–1616) and Daniel Sennert (1572–1637), would follow his ambitious exhortation to produce medicine through the separation and purification of natural substances in the laboratory without necessarily subscribing to all of his philosophical ideas. Many physicians publishing in the seventeenth century in fact continued to draw from both new and old medical theory and practice, and alchemical medicine was also eventually taught alongside Galen in many early modern universities. In general, however, alchemical medicine was characterized by a lack of institutional regulation enjoined with a tradition of secrecy and deliberate textual obfuscation. In this context, the

number of self-identifying alchemists selling questionable pills and elixirs – and the general accessibility of alchemical medicine to unlearned upstarts – ensured an enduring association between alchemy and charlatanism. By the eighteenth century, physicians like Hermann Boerhaave (1668–1738) would introduce a terminological distinction between chemistry and alchemy in order to legitimize their work as distinctly chemical. Nevertheless, this superficial distinction belies the continuity between alchemical medicine and later medical tradition, which continues to reflect the techniques and ambitions of its alchemical heritage (Moran 1991, 2005; Clericuzio 1993; Grell 1996; Debus 2001; Newman and Principe 2002).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alchemy](#)
- ▶ [Astrological Medicine](#)
- ▶ [Chemistry](#)
- ▶ [Galen and Galenism](#)
- ▶ [Pharmacology in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Sennert, Daniel](#)
- ▶ [Severinus, Petrus](#)
- ▶ [Van Helmont, Jan Baptiste](#)

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skills, being able to handle a wide set of natural and artificial substances: they developed techniques aimed at transmuting base metals into gold and silver and were expert in the production of medicines, tinctures, pigments, and glasses. These practices were embedded in a complex and diversified natural philosophy, which relied on specific theories of matter and was to different degrees influenced by contemporary religious and medical ideas. Although never included in the curriculum of medieval universities, alchemy was an important and controversial topic in the Middle Ages. Metallic transmutation was a matter of philosophical discussion, part of the wider scholastic debate on the relations between art and nature. Fourteenth-century alchemical treatises show an increasing influence from religious themes and imagery, which start molding the very descriptions of alchemical operations. A century later, elements of Ficino's Neoplatonic philosophy and Christian cabala had a significant impact on the humanistic writings on alchemy, which was significantly reconfigured. Moreover, medical uses of the alchemical elixir were strongly emphasized by fourteenth- to fifteenth-century alchemists, who anticipated the development of Paracelsian iatrochemistry. After Paracelsus's medical reorientation of alchemy, the fierce debate on his system left its mark in sixteenth- to seventeenth-century alchemical and medical writings, which led iatrochemistry to find a new institutional home, namely, early modern universities.

Alchemy

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Abstract

Between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, alchemy reached its full maturity in the West. Alchemists mastered high professional

Synonyms

[Chemistry](#); [Chymistry](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the fourteenth century, the main streams of Arabic alchemy had been already assimilated in the West through the medieval translations of the treatises of Balīnās, Jābir b. Ḥayyān, or Abū Bakr

al-Rāzī. The authors of the first Latin works on alchemy – often ascribed to the same writers of the translated texts, such as Geber (the Latinized Jābir), Rhazes, and even Avicenna (despite Ibn Sīnā's well-known critique against transmutation in his *Kitāb al-Šifā'*) – recombined and reshaped earlier theories and practices (Principe 2013, pp. 27–58), thus paving the way for the development of new and influential lines of thought, as they are found in wide-ranging corpora of alchemical texts falsely attributed to the Catalan scholar Ramon Llull (ca. 1232–1315) and the doctor Arnald of Villanova (1240–1311).

One of the earliest works of the ps.-Llullian corpus (Pereira 1989), the *Testamentum* (ca. 1330), defines alchemy as the hidden part of natural philosophy that teaches how to produce the philosophers' stone or elixir (Latin translation of the Arabic *al-iksīr*). As the highest product of alchemical operations, the philosophers' stone was considered capable of perfecting any kind of "body": it could turn base metals into gold and silver, convert stones into gemstones, and bring human bodies to their healthiest condition. Embedded in a strong philosophical framework (with clear influences from the scholastic tradition), ps.-Llull's account represents an influential and sophisticated version of the elixir theory, a cornerstone of medieval and early modern alchemy (Pereira 1995). While the Jābirian method (as inherited, e.g., in ps.-Avicenna's *De anima in arte alchemiae*; see Moureau 2013) instructed the practitioner to make the elixir by processing vegetal, organic, and mineral substances, most fourteenth-century alchemists considered only minerals among the valuable ingredients of this alchemical compound *par excellence*. This approach is clearly adopted in some prominent treatises of the ps.-Arnaldian corpus (Calvet 2011), such as the *Rosarius philosophorum*: here the role of mercury is strongly emphasized in accordance with the so-called theory of "mercury alone," already developed in ps.-Geber's *Summa perfectionis* (Newman 1991). The liquid metal, as primary constituent of metals (according to the mercury-sulfur theory), is the prime matter to which they must be reduced: after being purified and

sublimated many times, mercury is divided (through distillation) into the four elements, which are each processed in order to obtain liquid, oily, or earthy products. These products are mixed together and reduced either to a white or to a red powder. After being respectively combined with a small amount of silver or gold (acting as ferments), the two powders can both transmute base metals into silver or gold and heal any disease in the human body.

Comparable operations based on mercury are described in Guillaume Sedacer's *Sedacina* (end 14th c.; it includes a large section on glassmaking; see Barthélémy 2002) and in the *Liber lucis* by the Franciscan John of Rupescissa (Halleux 1981), who thought that apocalypse was about to come. Rupescissa strongly believed that the secrets of alchemy were to be revealed in order to provide the Church and its followers with the gold they would have needed to contrast the Antichrist. Such an intertwinement between alchemy and religion is well attested in fourteenth-century alchemical treatises, such as Petrus Bonus' scholastic defense of alchemy titled *Margarita pretiosa novella* (1330; Crisciani 1976) and ps.-Arnald's writings. Petrus expanded the earlier idea of alchemy as *donum dei*: only God may reveal to alchemists the real knowledge about the transmutation of matter, as He already did to ancient prophets (such as Adam, Moses, David) and poets (Ovid and Virgil), who all allegorically spoke about alchemy. On the other hand, ps.-Arnald's *Tractatus parabolicus* (1350) developed a close comparison between the transformation of mercury and the passion of Christ, in which quotations from the Old Testament were read as hidden alchemical instructions.

Both ps.-Llull and ps.-Arnald clearly emphasized the medical properties of the alchemical elixir, thus contributing to establish a new and long-lasting interplay between alchemy and medicine. The quest for a universal medicine, identified by the abovementioned authors with the elixir, intensified in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Inheriting and expanding Francis Bacon's ideas on the prolongation of life, alchemists and physicians attributed great properties to gold as the perfect metal and started discussing the

medical uses of alchemical gold (Crisciani 2003). Ps.-Llull's *Testamentum* (II.18) and ps.-Arnald's *De vita philosophorum* (X) include similar recipes for the so-called potable gold: the first gives instructions to reduce gold to a dry powder and dilute it in the spirit of a plant called *Lunaria*; the second describes how to make gold as soft as butter and dilute it in aqua vitae. John of Rupescissa emphasized the centrality of aqua vitae, basically a distillate of wine already discovered by medieval doctors. In his influential treatise *De consideratione quintae essentiae omnium rerum*, he identified the "water of life" with the quintessence: by distilling wine several times, he believed to extract its quintessence, i.e., a substance corresponding to the Aristotelian eternal matter of the heaven. Similar procedures were applied to many substances, such as gold and other metals traditionally considered toxic (e.g., mercury, lead), which could be alchemically transformed into powerful medical tinctures. An expanded version of the treatise was later incorporated into the ps.-Llullian corpus under the title of *Liber de secretis naturae seu de quinta essentia*, which emphasized the role of quintessence in the preparation of the philosophers' stone and contributed to identify to a certain extent the two alchemical compounds.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, alchemy became widespread in Western Europe, and hundreds of alchemical manuscripts were copied down and started circulating among princes, scholars, and practitioners. Along with the "classical" treatises attributed to medieval alchemists, new alchemical compendia were handed down. For instance, in the second half of the fifteenth century, the *Elucidarius artis transmutationis metallorum* by the Italian alchemist Christophorus Parisiensis still identified the three main goals of alchemy with the preparation of medicines, glassmaking, and metallic transmutation (Crisciani and Pereira 2001). The same author is credited with writing two alchemical works in Italian, *Violetta* and *Sommetta*: indeed, European

vernacular languages started being increasingly used to compose alchemical prose texts and poetry (Pereira 1999; Kahn 2010). Occitan and Catalan translations or adaptations of Latin alchemical texts are already attested in the second half of the fourteenth century, such as the Catalan *Cantinena* that accompanied ps.-Llull's *Testamentum* (Pereira and Spaggiari 1999). Alchemical Middle English collections include, for instance, anonymous verses explaining how to make the elixir (Timmermann 2013) along with the alchemical corpus ascribed to George Ripley (d. ca 1490), heir and interpreter of the ps.-Llullian tradition (Rampling 2010). Jean de la Fontaine's didactic poem *Fontaine des amoureux de science* (1413) combined practical instructions with allegorical elements, while in fifteenth-century Germany, a new genre of alchemical writings was developed, namely, the *Bildgedicht*, well represented by the anonymous poem *Sol und Luna*.

Despite the criticisms expressed by many humanists – such as Petrarch, Erasmus, and Leon Battista Alberti (Matton 1995) – alchemy was well received by the Neoplatonic philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), who identified the alchemical elixir or quintessence with the cosmic principle he called *spiritus mundi*. This identification, which presupposed the possibility of extracting the "spirit of the world" through alchemical operations, led to an important reorientation of alchemy (Matton 1993; Newman 2008). Under Ficino's influence, Giovanni Aurelio Augurello (ca. 1456–1524) composed his poem *Chrysopoeia* (1515), written in an elegant classical style (mainly inspired by Virgil's *Georgics*), which quickly became a reference work for Renaissance alchemists and bequeathed an enduring legacy until the end of the seventeenth century (Kahn 2010). Augurello expanded the elixir-*spiritus mundi* equivalence with concepts and practices he probably drew from "classical" alchemical treatises, such as ps.-Geber's *Summa perfectionis* and Petrus Bonus' *Margarita pretiosa novella*. Moreover, he presented alchemy as part of the *prisca sapientia* that had been already revealed by classical authors and proposed alchemical interpretations of many classical mythological accounts (e.g., Jason's quest for the

Golden Fleece). Alchemy was progressively integrated in a new conceptual framework including natural magic, astrology, and Christian cabalistic ideas. Strongly influenced by Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), the Venetian priest Giovanni Agostino Panteo developed a “cabala of metals” in his two works *Ars transmutationis metallica* (1519) and *Voarchadumia contra alchimiam* (1530; Forshaw 2013). Moreover, Ficino’s ideas were received by the German magician and astrologer Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535): in his *De occulta philosophia* (1531), he described metals as animated elements, permeated by a celestial spirit that could be extracted and used for transmutation. He is probably the author of the short tract *De arte chimica* – often attribute to Ficino between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – where the philosophers’ stone is prepared by treating gold with philosophical mercury, able to release the divine spirit embedded in the precious metal (Matton 2014).

The chemical medicine (also called *chymiatría*, iatrochemistry, or *spagyria*) developed by Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, commonly known as Paracelsus (1493–1541), caused another dramatic shift of perspective in the history of alchemy. Heir of a long tradition of skepticism against metallic transmutation, he denied that alchemy could transform metals into gold or silver. On the other hand, he strongly emphasized the role of alchemy as a fundamental pillar of his anti-Galenic medical system, which included also astrology and natural philosophy. Precise correspondences between macrocosm and microcosm guided the practice of physicians, who had to learn how to handle a complex set of pharmacological compounds (e.g., *arcana* and *magisteria*). Paracelsus reshaped the traditional mercury-sulfur theory and added salt as the third basic constituent of metals. These *tria prima* are cosmic principles, but they are not unique. Since they give account of the qualities of each mineral (and in general, of all things), each mineral is formed by a particular kind of mercury, sulfur, and salt, which determine its specific features. These principles are contained in the seeds (*semina*) that, after being planted in a matrix

(mainly composed of water), grow up and produce their “mineral fruits” (Hirai 2005). Through alchemical operations (distillation, sublimation, putrefaction), it was possible to isolate/purify the three principles and recombine them in new and powerful medicines. Paracelsus inherited the tradition of alchemical medicines linked to the preparation of distilled quintessence and potable gold, yet substantially expanded it by exploring the properties of a large body of mineral substances: any mineral, even if toxic as such, could be alchemically processed and transformed into a healthy remedy. This attitude contributed to test the properties of new minerals, such as antimony, which entered the laboratory also of those authors who reintegrated *chrysopoeia* in their practice, such as the alchemist Basil Valentine (Principe 2013, pp. 138–153).

Impact and Legacy

Already at the end of the sixteenth century, the earliest Paracelsians began editing and interpreting Paracelsus’s works, few of which were published during his lifetime. The first edition of a large selection of his writings appeared in the 1590s (published by Johann Huser under the title of *Bücher und Schriften*), and Paracelsus’ system soon became a matter of fiery debate among physicians and alchemists (Kahn 2007). The efficacy of the new alchemical pharmacology was largely discussed along with various aspects of Paracelsus’s theory of matter. Petrus Severinus (1540/42–1602), Joseph Du Chesne (1546–1609), Oswald Croll (1560–1608), and Jean Baptiste van Helmont (1579–1644) reassessed the role and nature of the three principles in relation to the *semina* and the four Aristotelian elements (Hirai 2005). This debate on elements and principles interacted with the development of modern atomism and corpuscular theories of matter (Clericuzio 2000), as emerging, for instance, in the works by Andreas Libavius (1555–1616) and Daniel Sennert (1572–1637), professor of medicine at the University of Wittenberg (Newman 2006). Critical of Paracelsus’s magic and many fraudulent and sacrilegious aspects of his doctrines,

Sennert and Libavius had a deep knowledge of medieval alchemy. Libavius' work *Alchemia* (1597; second expanded edition 1606) describes the preparation of hundreds of medicines, by emphasizing the medieval origins of iatrochemistry, deeply rooted in ps.-Arnald's, ps.-Llull's, and John of Rupescissa's alchemical works. With his vigorous prose, Libavius strove to cleanse iatrochemistry of its mystical and obscure elements and to define a new *chymia* founded on Aristotelian philosophy and experimental practice (Moran 2007). A similar effort to ennoble alchemy (and make it appealing to learned humanists) was shared by Michael Meier (1568–1622), who composed the *Atalanta Fugiens*, a book of alchemical emblems, where alchemy was explained through fifty images taken from earlier alchemical authorities and accompanied by pieces of poetry, prose, and music (Principe 2013, pp. 173–178).

Alchemical theories and practices widely circulated in the seventeenth century. European printing presses issued hundreds of alchemical treatises, often grouped in famous collections (e.g., the *Theatrum Chemicum* in six volumes; 1602–1661). At the same time, iatrochemists reinforced the tradition of handbooks (already inaugurated by Libavius), such as Jean Beguin's *Tyrocinium Chymicum* (1612), where *chymia* (called also *alchymia* or *spagyria*) was defined as the art of dividing (*diakrisis*) and combining (*synkrisis*) substances. New professors of *chymiatría* (e.g., Johann Hartmann) were appointed in German universities (Newman 2008): they based their teaching on the abovementioned textbooks and emphasized the central role of laboratory practice, essential for students to learn how to produce the new pharmaceuticals. An even stronger experimental approach guided the work of George Starkey (1628–1665), an American alchemist committed both to producing commercial products and to exploring metallic transmutation. The influence that his experimental procedures had over Boyle's work (Newman and Principe 2002) exemplifies the significant contribution that early sixteenth- and seventeenth-century alchemical theories and practices offered to the foundation of modern academic chemistry.

Cross-References

- ▶ Alchemical Medicine and Distillation
- ▶ Chemistry
- ▶ Chemistry in Renaissance Sciences

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Alciato, Andrea

Born: Alzate or Milan, 1492

Died: Pavia, 1550

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Abstract

Andrea Alciato was a Renaissance jurist who lived both in Italy and France during the first half of the sixteenth century. He approached

the study of law, mainly Roman law, in a new way, bringing into the school of jurisprudence studies such as philology and epigraphy. This new humanistic point of view about law is called *mos gallicus*, as it was widely spread in France. He is also well-known for having created a new literary genre, called “emblematic literature.” An emblem consisted in a short title, a painting, and a short poem with moral content. Alciato's *Emblemata* were highly appreciated and spread along the whole Europe in his time and in the following centuries.

Biography

Andrea Alciato was a jurist, moralist, and humanist writer, a true paradigm of the Renaissance man. He mastered classical languages at his early youth and studied law at Pavia, where he moved in 1507 to receive the teaching of famous jurists such as Jason of the Maino and Filippo Decio. Later on, he moved to Bologna (1511), although he won his doctorate at Ferrara in 1516, shortly after publishing his first legal works in Strasbourg.

Firstly, he worked as a lawyer in Milan but soon moved on into the teaching of law. Moreover, he never gave up his classical studies and even published a comment on Tacitus in 1517.

He is considered to be the founder of the *mos gallicus*, a way of approaching Roman law which consists in applying a historical, philological, and juristic method of analysis to ancient texts, a method that deeply differed from the practical-oriented one of the *mos italicus*. However, his fine juristic sense was always aware of the great value of medieval glossators and commentators' studies, and he never rejected their achievements just because of their lack of philological accuracy. His judgment about his predecessors was always balanced, as he was able to discern the limits of the historical reconstruction of law and the value of an innovative, creative, and useful interpretation of the law, adjusted to his time's need, in the tradition of Bartolo of Sassoferrato. Alciato soon won a highly respected position among the most important European jurists of the time, such as Budé and Zasius.

His increasing prestige got him an invitation to teach as a professor in Avignon, where he remained from 1518 to 1522. In the meantime, his renown put him in acquaintance with Erasmus of Rotterdam and won for him the title of palatine count from Pope Leo X.

In 1522, he returned to Milan, where he was able to concentrate in his studies and gave birth to his translations of the *Anthologia graeca* and of Aristofanes' work. Nevertheless, those were convulsive times because of the war between France and Spain, and in 1529, the very king of France, Francis I, invited him to lecture in Bourges. Then a very fruitful period started, in which he published two very important works: his *De verborum significatione* and the *Commentarii ad rescripta principum*.

A new appointment led him to the Senate of Milan, then again to Pavia, until 1537 and, finally, to Ferrara. Pope Paul III offered him to become a cardinal, but he rejected, although he did accept the appointment as apostolic protonotary. Later on, he was appointed by Francesco Sforza to the Senate of Pavia, the city where he remained until his death. A big monument of him was settled in St. Epiphanius church. Afterward, it was moved to the University of Pavia, where it now can be admired.

Among his most important works, in addition to the already mentioned ones, we can also note his *Rerum patriae, Opusculum, Paradoxa iuris civilis, Dispunctiones, Praetermissa, Annotationes in tres posteriores libros Codicis Iustiniani*, the treatise *De eo quod interest*, his commentary to the title *De verborum obligationibus, Parerga, In Stellam et Longovallium, De singulari certamine seu duelli*, etc.

Despite having obtained his main achievements in the highly technical field of law, Alciato's most popular and widely spread works were, undoubtedly, his *Emblemata*, with which he indeed founded a new literary genre. Alciato had translated some Greek epigrams to Latin, and went on writing his own ones, with a moral content. They were published by Steiner in Augsburg in 1531 for the first time, with the title of

Emblematum Liber. They consisted in a short title followed by a drawing – the *emblem* – showing a symbolic content and, finally, a short poem referred to it. The number of emblems was extended, and in 1550, just 1 year before Alciato's death, the definitive edition of the *Emblemata* was published in Lion by Rouille and Bonhomme, consisting of 211 emblems. This innovative work got a wonderful acceptance in the whole Europe, and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were about 150 different editions of the work, made by the best European publishers.

Cross-References

- Bartolus of Saxoferrato
- Budé, Guillaume
- Emblem, Renaissance Origin of
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Universities in the Renaissance

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Aldine Press

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Abstract

The Aldine Press was one of the foremost humanist publishing enterprises in the Renaissance. The firm was founded by Aldus Manutius the Elder in partnership with Andrea Torresano and aimed to publish the canon of classical antiquity. While the partners were soon forced to diversify production, the prestige and cultural cachet of the press were unmatched. The press was supported by popes, kings, and prominent individuals for much of its lifetime. Aldine editions were among the most valued in Christendom, both for their textual accuracy (though this was not always reliable, as scholars soon discovered), for their role in bringing unpublished texts to light, and for their brand value. In its later years, the press declined due to the mismanagement of the last member of the Manuzio family to be involved in the printing world – Aldo Manuzio the Younger.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

The Aldine press takes the name from its founder Aldus Manutius, who took up printing in Venice

in 1494 (the best biographic profiles are Infelise 2007; Davies 1995, 2019). Aldus was a grammar teacher for most of his life, until he moved to Venice and set up a printing press. Initially he operated alone in an establishment called *Thermae*, near Sant'Agostino (Fletcher 1988); it was his encounter with the Venetian printer and publisher Andrea Torresano that led to the great success of the Aldine Press. Torresano was an experienced book merchant and a former employee of Nicolas Jenson (Davies 1995, 2019). In 1479 he had purchased Jenson's press and printing materials and set up a business of his own. The encounter with Aldus took place in the early 1490s, and in 1493 Torresano printed the first edition of Aldus' *Institutiones grammaticae*.

We do not know how the early discussions regarding a possible collaboration unfolded, but later documents show how they were finalized. A partnership was formed for the publication of the Greek classics in their original language, a program based on Aldus' own concept. His material contribution was negligible; Aldus owned one-fifth of Torresano's portion of the business. The Venetian patrician Pierfrancesco Barbarigo, a "silent" business partner, contributed the remaining half. It is known from Aldus' own assertions that he was busy for a few years trying to achieve a suitable font of type that was created by the typefounder Francesco Griffo of Bologna. Aldus' awareness of the value of this type is demonstrated by the privilege that he obtained from the Venetian authorities to protect their investment. The text of the privilege, describing the Greek type "of the utmost beauty," prevented others from publishing or importing books printed in Greek (or translated from the Greek) for 20 years (Barker 1974).

The Aldine Press became operative in 1494, though it was in 1495 that it undertook its most significant project, the five-volume Greek Aristotle (1495–1498). The works of Aristotle were obviously not new on the marketplace of print, and indeed Torresano himself had produced several folio volumes in Latin translation. But this was the first attempt to produce the philosopher in the original language. Aldus' effort was really aimed at creating a universal companion to

Aristotle, as he proposed himself to publish the full canon accompanied by its early Greek commentators, printed as separate editions (Sellars 2004). The effort was somewhat thwarted by the difficulty of laying hands on manuscripts for all the texts, as was the case with *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* that were not available to Aldus by 1498 (this was remedied in 1508, when both works were printed). Aldus himself only published some of the Aristotelian commentators, while several other volumes were printed by his heirs in subsequent years. While the accuracy of the Aldine texts has been questioned by modern scholarship, he certainly was more accurate than his heirs. Various editions published after his death were treated with little care – a case in point is the 1525 Galen, published despite a gap in the text amounting to a hundred pages or so (Durling 1961).

In the first 20 years of its activity, the Aldine Press issued more first editions of Greek texts than any other press (Sandys 1903–1908). In this venture, Aldus' humanist network provided tremendous support for the search of manuscripts, the editing of texts, and the proofreading of printed matter. The support of such a network also enhanced the credibility of the Aldine Press as a humanist venture. Scholars at the Studio at Padua were the natural recipients of the Aldine Aristotelian venture, and indeed the changes in the teaching of philosophy at Padua had a direct connection with the publishing program (Sellars 2004). Aldus' friend and collaborator Marcus Musurus was appointed to the new Aristotelian chair in Padua, established with the explicit intention of reforming the teaching of the philosopher. The key to the new trend in Paduan Aristotelianism was to revert to the original sources, without the intermediation of Averroism; Aldus' manifesto for the printing of Aristotle in the original Greek, following the most correct manuscripts, went hand in hand with such ideology.

While the effort was admirable, it soon must have become clear that the Greek volumes were not flying off the shelves, despite their identified Paduan readership. Measures to insulate the press from financial losses became urgent, prompting sales and publishing strategies to be devised. To

the dismay of Aldus' humanist supporters, the Press started to diversify its output by producing the Latin classics and even the modern Italian canon. This line of production was associated with the *enchiridia* or "*libelli portatiles*," the first book series proper, issued in large print runs and hugely successful. The *enchiridia* soon became the flagship editions of the Aldine Press and were purchased for many princely libraries in Europe (Lowry 1979; Graheli 2016). Many of these were even printed on vellum, intended for prominent customers; regular copies were produced on especially thin paper that enhanced their portability (Harris 2019a). For these volumes Aldus commissioned a new font that imitated a cursive hand and allowed for a more compact presentation of the text while retaining a light-weight appearance: Francesco Griffo's italics (McLeod 2015). Similarly to the Greek type, the italics was also patented and protected by a privilege, though it was soon imitated throughout Europe.

Other marketing strategies were also implemented. The Aldine Press was the first to produce formal retail catalogues for its customers, with base prices and a full description of content (Lowry 1998; Graheli 2016; Harris 2019b). The descriptions of the Aristotle set were particularly detailed and indeed remained unaltered throughout their permanence in stock. Three such catalogues are known to have been issued during Aldus' life (1498, 1503, 1513), though it is possible that more may have existed and are now lost; all three are reproduced in various printed studies (Orlando 1975; Dionisotti 1995). The three catalogues, all held in a copy in the MS Grec 3064 in the French National Library, are also freely accessible online on Gallica.fr. The recent study by Martin Davies and Neil Harris reproduces the three early catalogues, with the difference that the 1513 catalogue is given in the lesser known copy from the Municipal Library in Udine (Davies and Harris 2019). This copy is made particularly important by the presence of contemporary integrations that the authors have shown to be by a collaborator of the press (Harris 2019b).

These catalogues evolved over time, alongside the understanding of customers' needs and

requirements. The first catalogue was a single-sheet item printed on one side, materially not too different from the early stock lists produced by the likes of Erhard Ratdolt and Albert Kunne, though this one was clearly addressed to buyers external to the book trade. The second catalogue was set up as an oblong booklet and presented the typologies of volumes available at the time by introducing a separate section at the end, "*Libelli portatiles in formam enchiridii*," for the pocket-size titles. Most importantly, this catalogue presented for the first time the opening address "*Aldus Studiosius*," "*Aldus to the scholars*." The third and final catalogue issued during Aldus' lifetime was printed in his famous italic type and compatible in size and layout with the folio volumes issued by the Press. Indeed, the Udine copy has survived bound together with the Aldine edition of Niccolò Perotti's *Cornucopia* (Harris 2019b). It is quite possible that more catalogues will resurface in similar circumstances, bound at the front or at the rear of other such copies.

The same format presented in the 1513 catalogue was followed for the catalogues issued by the Press for the next 20 years or so, after Aldus' death in 1515. Two undated lists survive from the 1520s, one dated to around 1520 and the second to around 1526 (Harris 2019b); both were typeset following the earlier catalogue as a model, retaining the structure and the order of the items. A third, from the first half of the 1530s, is almost certain to have existed and is documented in a handwritten copy (Fletcher 2011). These later catalogues continued to present themselves with Aldus' address to the scholars, and indeed even the 1563 catalogue issued by Paolo Manuzio, Aldus' son, retained the heading "*ALDVS STVDIOSIS*." Aldus continued to be the banner of the Aldine marketing strategy until its end and to be included in the Aldine imprints in various forms after his death. Both Paolo and Antonio Manuzio, sons of Aldus, fashioned themselves as such ("*Aldi filius*," "*in aedibus Manutianis*," etc.). Paolo's son, Aldo Jr, went as far as adopting the effigy of his grandfather and namesake as the firm's new brand mark. In the last decades of the sixteenth century, under the leadership of Aldo Manuzio the Younger, the press introduced the

innovation of stock catalogues published regularly as part of its publications. Such lists were inserted on any blank space available at the end of the printing operations and thus can usually be found either at the end of the text proper or at the end of the preliminary matter (the last gathering to be printed in an early modern edition). The practice was to become widespread in Europe by the end of the sixteenth and the start of the seventeenth century as a way to communicate available stock to customers.

The Aldine Press strived to preserve the same aura of scholarly prestige after the death of its founder. Initially the sons of Aldus were too young to be involved, and a period of some 12 years followed where the Torresano were entirely in charge of the business. Andrea Torresano engaged with the day-to-day management of the press from Aldus' death in 1515; from 1517 he receded to a less active involvement, and the direction of the press was taken on by his youngest son, Gian Francesco Torresano (Cataldi Palau 1998). Still a teenager at the time of Aldus' death, Gian Francesco probably learnt much by living in close contact with him and often referred to Aldus in the most affectionate tones and in the hope of following in his footsteps. He was proficient in the Greek language and he continued to publish the Aristotelian commentators and other planned Greek texts in significant numbers (Cataldi Palau 1998). Earlier editions that had sold out were also reprinted, sometimes with significant textual improvements that were stated in the prefaces. In addition, Gian Francesco preserved and often improved Aldus' navigational tools for the use of texts and made further contributions to the development of the critical apparatus by developing and enhancing the lists of alternative *lectiones* (Cataldi Palau 1998).

Through the dedications that bear his signature, Gian Francesco appears to have been well connected within the Venetian Patritiate and committed to securing patronage for the Aldine Press. The firm continued to seek the support of diplomats and eminent figures, following previously established practices. The studies by Cataldi Palau and H. George Fletcher show that it was Gian Francesco, not Aldus, who had been friends

with the French Treasurer of Milan, Jean Grolier, one of the key patrons of the firm (Cataldi Palau 1998; Fletcher 2015). The relationship with Grolier shaped much of the French circulation of Aldine editions, especially within the court circles; in later years he was even involved with the practical arrangements for the sales of books in Paris.

While Gian Francesco Torresano directed the Aldine Press since 1517, his father Andrea remained involved with the business and presumably continued to oversee the overall management until his death in 1528. At this point, with the three sons of Aldus coming of age, the delicate equilibrium that had held the two families together collapsed. A phase of about 12 years followed that saw various attempts at restoring agreement between the two parties, with sporadic efforts at joint publication as well as solo editorial activities on both sides. The printing shop ceased all activities between 1529–1533 and 1537–1539, following furious arguments essentially about the right to use Aldus' name, his types, and his legacy.

By the end of this period, the collaboration between the Manuzio and the Torresano had ended. As a result of the dispute, the sons of Aldus and their uncles, Gian Francesco and Federico Torresano, parted their ways. The Torresano brothers printed various new editions (both alone and together), though Gian Francesco engaged almost exclusively in the activity of bookseller and agent. As mentioned above, it was through his intermediation that Aldine editions were sold in France, where he represented both the Torresano and the Manuzio families (Cataldi Palau 1998). His son Bernardino was active as a printer in Paris between 1554 and 1570, with a printing shop in the Rue Saint-Jacques at the sign of the dolphin and anchor. His imprints were signed "in Aldina Bibliotheca," underlining the intended continuity with the work of the Aldine Press.

Paolo Manuzio was the one among the sons of Aldus who continued to uphold the family name through the business of printing (his brother Antonio printed only a few editions in Bologna). After the end of the dispute with his Torresano uncles, the Aldine Press issued some 200 editions

in Venice under the denomination: “the heirs of Aldus Manutius,” as well as some in Paolo’s name alone. During Paolo’s leadership, the press was associated with two external entities: the Accademia Veneziana and the State of the Church. The Accademia Veneziana, founded by the Venetian Patrician Federico Badoer, was a scholarly association devoted explicitly to a universal publishing program (Bolzoni 1995; Graheli 2013). Paolo Manuzio was specifically recruited as the main printer for this venture, undoubtedly thanks to the long-lived prestige of the press. A program of about 600 titles had been proposed by the society in the first instance, promising an extensive effort to make available texts that were by then hard to come by (Rose 1969; Bolzoni 1995; Graheli 2013). The planned titles were for the most part in Latin, intended for an international audience, though generally with an eye on the ideal education for members of the Venetian Patriate. Aristotelian texts and commentaries were prominent among the philosophical texts, though they were offered in Latin translation and not in the original Greek. Only some 20 editions were printed by Paolo Manuzio and other collaborators for the Accademia Veneziana (Renouard 1834; Graheli 2013). Despite being born under good auspices, the Accademia ended abruptly in 1561 and in circumstances that remain unclear. It would seem that Federico Badoer had over-extended financially, as suggested by surviving letters of exchange; in his ambitious plans, he had possibly exceeded his position and attracted the wrath of the Venetian Republic (Graheli 2018).

The Aldine Press seemingly was not involved in Badoer’s malpractices, and it continued to operate as it had done previous to this collaboration. The timing of Paolo’s move to Rome in 1561 may suggest that he was eager to change his surroundings, though certainly the events had not damaged his reputation, as he was invited by Pope Pius IV to direct the Stamperia del Popolo Romano (Barberi 1942; Fletcher 1998). This was a role of great prestige and responsibility that entailed the publication of texts approved by the Council of Trent. Such editions required the utmost accuracy and attention to detail, and it is not accidental that

the Papacy should wish to have them associated with the great venture of the Aldine Press. A contract spelled out the agreement of what was to become “the first privileged Vatican press” (Sachet 2013). Paolo continued to be involved with the Aldine Press in Venice, now managed by his son Aldo the Younger, as demonstrated by the regular correspondence between Rome and Venice (Pastorello 1957, 1960). The Roman venture ultimately proved just as frustrating as the partnership with the Accademia Veneziana. While various important editions were published (namely, the Tridentine catechism and breviary), production was slowed down by the involvement of prominent prelates and received uneven support after the untimely death of Paolo’s patron, Pope Pius IV, in 1565. Paolo himself left Rome for Venice in 1570, returning to the Eternal City in 1573. He died there in 1574.

During Paolo’s absence in the 1560s, and after his death in 1574, his son Aldo the Younger continued to manage the Aldine Press in Venice. Business was run with the support of Paolo himself and long-term friends of the firm such as Marc-Antoine Muret through the regular exchange of letters, many of which contained proofs of works under the press. The venture proceeded initially under the famous printer’s device of the dolphin and anchor, though in later years the brand was redesigned to portray the head of Aldus the Elder. Despite attempts to follow in the founder’s steps, the press gradually declined, to the extent that in its final years at the end of the sixteenth century, it had mainly receded to the sale of remainder titles. Since 1576, Aldo had struck an agreement with Niccolò Manassi for the management and running of the Aldine bookshop (Nuovo 2018). When Aldo left Venice to take up a chair of rhetoric in Bologna, then in Pisa, and finally in Rome, Manassi remained in sole control of the business. As it turned out at Aldo’s death in 1597, his debts amounted to a staggering 3000 ducats. Manassi, soon married to Aldo’s widow Francesca Giunti, tried unsuccessfully to find a solution to financial ruin, first by attempting to sell Aldo’s famous library and then by involving the Venetian Republic in the management of the debt. Despite his attempts, the Aldine Press ended

in bankruptcy and with little of the prestige it had enjoyed during its early years (Nuovo 2018).

Impact and Legacy

Already during Aldus' lifetime, Aldine editions achieved a status of collectible items. Today they remain some of the most desirable printed books from the Renaissance, to the extent that many patrimonial libraries place these items in their rare books section, with no relation whatsoever to their actual rarity (most Aldine editions survive extremely well, although even here discoveries of undocumented editions can still happen). This practice testifies to the importance of Aldine editions in the canon of Western culture. Among the most resilient editions by the Press were the monumental Greek edition of Aristotle, already mentioned; the numerous editions of Cicero produced especially under Paolo Manuzio; and the famous enchiridia. The citations in early modern inventories, often identifying Aldine editions under the name "Aldus," are suggestive of the continuous connection to the charismatic founder in establishing the market value of these books. While the press declined significantly in quality and prestige in its later years, the importance of its early output remained untarnished. Many of the editiones principes established by the Aldine Press were used for a long time as the chief reference to several Greek classical authors.

Cross-References

- [Manuzio, Aldo](#)
- [Printing Technique, Renaissance](#)

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Aldo

► [Manutius, Aldus](#)

Aldrovandi, Ulisse

Born: 11th September 1522, Bologna

Died: 4th May 1605, Bologna

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Abstract

Ulisse Aldrovandi was an Italian polymath with particular interests in natural history. In his own time Aldrovandi enjoyed wide recognition for his activity as a collector of natural curiosities and for his extensive library. In 1561, he became the first professor of natural history at the University of Bologna. It is for his work in this field, beginning with the publication of the encyclopedic and beautifully illustrated *Ornithologiae* in 1599, that he is best known today.

Keywords

Bologna · Botany · Mathematics · Medicine · Natural history

Alternate Names

[Aldrovandus, Ulysses](#)

Biography

Ulisse Aldrovandi was born into a noble family. His father, Teseo Aldrovandi, served the senate of Bologna as a secretary, while his mother, Veronica Marescalchi, was a relative of Pope Gregory XIII. An episode early in his life seems to reveal

Aldrovandi's inquisitive nature even at a young age: At 12 he left home and his family "without money and with a bold spirit" to satisfy his desire to see the city of Rome (Frati 1907). Upon returning to Bologna soon after, Aldrovandi began studying mathematics with Annibale della Nave, one of the city's foremost scholars in the field. Mathematics would be the first in a long list of studies to which Aldrovandi dedicated himself throughout his career. It led to his employment as a bookkeeper to a group of merchants in Brescia. By 1538, however, Aldrovandi was back in Bologna. Keen to learn more of the world, he went again to Rome and from there travelled to Spain, following the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

Once again at home, Aldrovandi now began to study law and by 1542 was working as a notary in Bologna. On the point of qualifying to practice law, however, Aldrovandi had a change of direction and around 1546 he went to Padua to follow courses on philosophy, mathematics, and medicine (Montalenti 1960). This path would bring him into conflict with the Church, presumably on account of Padua's reputation as a centre of Averroism in Italy (Castellani 1981), and Aldrovandi was accused of heresy in 1549. In September of that year, he travelled to Rome to exculpate himself and was pardoned following the election of Pope Julius III (Ottaviani 2013).

Aldrovandi's stay in Rome would prove formative for his later career. Once free of suspicion, Aldrovandi came into company with Guillaume Rondelet, then working as a physician in the city, with whom he developed his interest in anatomy and natural history. Returning to Bologna, he studied medicine and philosophy at the university where he graduated in 1553 (Frati 1907). In this context he met Luca Ghini, with whom he advanced his knowledge of botany and organized extensive herborizing trips to the surrounding countryside. One noteworthy example of these excursions took place in 1554, when Aldrovandi travelled to Monte Baldo on the shores of Lake Garda in the company of several prominent botanists of his day including Luigi Anguillara, Luigi Alpagio, and Francesco Calzolari. By now, Aldrovandi was teaching at the university of Bologna. He first gave courses on logic, then

philosophy, and by 1556 he was lecturing on simples (medicinal herbs). Aldrovandi was instrumental in effecting an important step forwards in this field at Bologna when, in 1568, a botanical garden was established in the city at his insistence (Montalenti 1960).

Aldrovandi became professor of natural history at Bologna in 1561. Alongside his work at the university, Aldrovandi also fulfilled several public functions, including his role as *protomedico* (a public health official) for Bologna's College of Physicians. His work in this position brought him into conflict with the city's apothecaries in a dispute over the composition of the popular cure-all "theriac". After a drawn-out quarrel, during which Aldrovandi was removed from his public post, the case was eventually decided in Aldrovandi's favor by Pope Gregory XIII, and he was restored to honor in 1577 (Andreoli 1961; Olmi 1977).

An avid collector of books and natural historical objects, Aldrovandi's museum and library achieved Europe-wide fame within his own lifetime and, thanks to his decision to leave the collections to the city and University of Bologna, their importance continued to be recognized into the centuries after his death (Tugnoli Pattaro 1988; Bacchi 2005; Duroselle-Melish and Lines 2015). Aldrovandi began his efforts to publish the enormous amount of encyclopedic material he had collected throughout his career only later in life. The project began in 1594 when Aldrovandi made a contract with Venetian editor Francesco Franceschi, but the time-consuming nature of his endeavor to make a meticulous and richly illustrated inventory of the natural world meant that Aldrovandi saw only a small part of his work see print before his death in 1605. The volumes produced in Aldrovandi's lifetime were followed by the posthumous publication (1605–1688) of his remaining studies. These works, however, adhered less strictly to Aldrovandi's exacting standards (Aldrovandi 1929; Montalenti 1960).

Cross-References

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

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Aldrovandus, Ulysses

► Aldrovandi, Ulisse

Aldus

► [Manutius, Aldus](#)

Alemanno, Yohanan ben Isaac

Born: c. 1435, North Central Italy

Died: After 1506

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Abstract

Yohanan Alemanno was an early Jewish Renaissance thinker engaging in multiple disciplines such as philosophy and kabbalah and affected by varied traditions. He was relatively neglected, given his talents and possible influence, but has lately been discovered more and more by researchers. Many of his writings have still not been sufficiently explored and his views never fully investigated or subjected to logical analysis.

Biography

Alemanno (Allemanno), Yohanan (Jochanan) ben Isaac (c. 1435–after 1506) is an Italian Jewish philosopher, kabbalist, biblical exegete, social and political critic, and an early ecumenical participant. Many believe he was born somewhat earlier than 1435. His place of birth was somewhere in North Central Italy. Some (such as Moshe Idel) believe he might have lived till as late as the 1520s in Israel, but we don't know when and where he died. The name reveals his Ashkenazic origins, and his father's family seems to have come from France, but he may have been descended from Sephardim on his mother's side. He was heir to the entirety of the medieval and Renaissance Jewish tradition. Indeed, the range of his scholarly interests is astounding. Although interest in him has been increasing at a rapid

pace, most of his writings are still in manuscript form and unavailable to most readers. Much of his life remains a mystery as well, but he left deep traces in Jewish Renaissance thought and actively involved himself with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, the well-known Christian Hebraist and Kabbalist. Alemanno was well versed in the ancient philosophical traditions and the now well-known philosophical literature emerging from the Islamic world. He was also influenced by lesser-known Islamic thinkers such as Abu Bakr ibn Tufayl (a philosopher and mystic) as well as Christian medieval philosophical writings. These extremely wide-ranging interests create some difficulties in pigeonholing him into a specific category and may account for his relative neglect.

Umberto Cassuto's article in *Encyclopedia Judaica* from 1971 lists four works: *Heshek Shelomo*, *Einei ha-Edah*, *Hai ha Olamim*, and *Likkutim*. B.C. Novak, in 1982, supplemented that list with three others: *Shir ha Ma'a lot li-Shlomo*, a supercommentary to Moses of Narbonne's commentary on Abu Bakr ibn Tufayl's *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* and an untitled Kabbalistic work on alchemy, astrology, and magic. Since both *Heshek Shelomo* and *Shir ha Ma'a lot li-Shlomo* deal with King Solomon or the *Song of Songs* (formerly attributed to him), Novak seems to have considered them to be one work. Cassuto, who at other times stressed Alemanno's relationship to the Florentine school of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, played down that relationship in the encyclopedia article, only mentioning that della Mirandola "wished to become his student in Hebrew literature."

That question regarding the extent of bi-directional influence between Alemanno and some contemporary Christian scholarship has been a source of contention, but most recent research acknowledges it to at least a limited extent. The degree to which Pico was influenced by him and when they first came into contact is not really known. A more apposite question, perhaps, is the extent to which Alemanno utilized that relationship to refine his own opinions and beliefs rather than simply to reinforce them. It is well known that Jewish and Christian scholars were working with very similar sources and therefore

that identity in source material may seem a more parsimonious explanation for similarities than explicit influence from polemically opposed religious persuasions. Alemanno apparently obtained his humanistic interests in rhetoric from Judah ben Yehiel Messer Leon, with whom he studied. It is not fully known from whence he obtained his knowledge of Kabbalah. Alemanno and many of his contemporary Christian scholars were well versed in and influenced by Kabbalah. Indeed, Alemanno seems to take that esoteric tradition as almost certain knowledge. Yet he seems to have rejected its theurgic aspects, and Moshe Idel went so far as to say he changed the very essence of Kabbalah. This required Alemanno at times to work around it in a similar manner to the way religious, philosophical, or esoteric thinkers work around the Bible. One example is Alemanno's acceptance of the superiority and purity of the Jewish soul in contrast to that of Gentiles. But he also stresses the root of that purity and superiority in the quality of kindness, as contrasted with the root of the souls of the other nations in judgment or severity: thus, ethicizing the priestly and pagan concept of purity. Other strong beliefs of his stemming from the Kabbalah are metempsychosis and the inherent relationship between sin and impurity. It seems that for Alemanno, redemption is achieved through the mechanism of rebirth of souls within the Jewish people. This is also metaphysically connected to the unification of God in the *Sefirot*. The action of the soul on the body is likened to the action of God in the *Sefirot*. Quite likely, there is a strong pantheistic element in his thinking.

A. Melamed has written on Alemanno's inherited prejudice against Blacks as symbols of bestiality, cruelty, and slavishness, thanking his student, Michael Reuveni, for pointing this out to him in its full intensity. Reuveni wrote his doctoral dissertation on this part of the *Hai ha Olamim*. Perhaps more interesting than Alemanno's inherited prejudices, however, is the underlying political and social thought to be found in his description of the (Black) despot. The story lends itself to a more hidden interpretation though this is far from certain. The tyrant is indeed described as a Black man, but what seems

more original is his description as being large, strong, sexual, and angry. These are pejorative descriptions that could well have been taken from medieval philosophical writers such as Maimonides; but Alemanno is functioning in a Renaissance environment in which political power is more highly respected among intellectuals (such as Machiavelli). Perhaps a large stature and animalistic qualities are actually keys to effective leadership? In this case, the more normative qualities of moral goodness seem to adhere to those who are the victims of the tyrant. Biblical allusions that are rather confusing when fully analyzed might raise questions regarding who is really virtuous and who is vicious. Clearly the Black tyrant is vicious, but those Whites who propel him to power by their own weakness and destitute nature (and are supposedly virtuous) are described in similar terms to those who supported David against Saul. This seems strange. Are those supporters of the tyrant who resemble the supporters of King David virtuous, weak, or both? This raises profound questions regarding the ambiguous nature of political virtue that we cannot definitively attribute to Alemanno; but his mode of description surely raises the possibility of a nuanced notion of politics, something characteristic of his great contemporary: Isaac Abrabanel. While there was surely a connection between those two contemporary thinkers in other areas as well, the degree of influence is disputed.

In 1976, Arthur M. Lesley translated some of the *Heshek Shelomo* as part of his doctoral dissertation and made some of Alemanno's work available to the general public for the first time. This work shows Alemanno's utter acceptance of kabbalistic categories alongside astute philosophical expertise. One of the subjects dealt with is love, a rather common Renaissance theme. Alemanno shows at least a superficial acquaintance with classical literature on the subject but perhaps filtered through medieval translations or commentaries. He insists that passionate love (*hesheq*) is the highest level of love, apparently departing drastically from Maimonides and the Jewish medieval philosophical tradition. He also seems to misinterpret Aristotle's love of the useful by equating it with a father's love for his offspring,

whereas Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is confounded by the apparently irrational, unjust, and excessive love of parents for their children and conjectures (among other explanations) that they love their children as a *part* of themselves. What seems to emerge from this discussion of Alemanno is the perceived need to justify passion, something that had previously been dealt with by Crescas and Albo, and which would also be the subject of his younger contemporary (and son of Isaac Abrabanel) Leone Ebreo in his well-known *Dialoghi d'Amore*. Perhaps the importance of Hayy ibn Yaqzan for Alemanno lies in the fact that the love between Hayy and the antelope that nurtured him was a decisive factor in his single-handed construction of a valid religious/philosophical worldview. This also coheres with the Renaissance fixation on a-rational passions. But Alemanno's elevation of passion shows the most similarity to Leone Ebreo than to the other thinkers that have been mentioned.

Moshe Idel has been perhaps the most innovative and incisive of all contemporary commentators on Alemanno. Idel, perhaps in a groundbreaking manner, appreciated the unique combination of kabbalistic and philosophical knowledge in this great thinker and in the Italian Renaissance generally. Previously, the Jewish thinkers of the Italian Renaissance had been somewhat underappreciated among those interested in Jewish philosophy and mysticism. Idel was willing to admit strong magical (but not theurgic) tendencies in Alemanno as well as profound philosophical ones and analyzed the essential difference between magic and theurgy. He pointed out Alemanno's indebtedness to ibn Latif and Abraham Abulafia, as well as to other better-known Kabbalists. He also pointed out some of Alemanno's more radical opinions, such as that Moses ordered the production of the Golden Calf.

Idel's student, Brian Ogren, has ventured even further in the study of Alemanno as regards specific topics and the deep analysis of specific texts. One of the topics that he deals with is Alemanno's revolutionary distinction between the words of God and the thoughts of God. This is pregnant with creative and useful possibilities though too often contaminated by a facile acceptance of Kabbalistic traditions that may not be particularly helpful or conducive to

religious/philosophical progress. Nevertheless, the basic concept is a useful counterfoil to prior naïve readings of religious texts that clearly defiled their literal meanings in an attempt to make them more acceptable. The deep distinction between thoughts and words allows for literal accuracy in the reading of texts and a deeper investigation into the purposes of the language used, as in rhetorical or persuasive uses of speech. Another important view, commented upon by Ogren, is Alemanno's insistence that the biblical *Tohu* is matter and the *Bohu* is form. This belief might possibly have come directly or indirectly from ibn Gabirol, who refigured Aristotle's hylomorphic metaphysics in a similar fashion.

Fabrizio Lelli, aside from translating some of the *Hai ha Olamim* (perhaps Alemanno's greatest work), has provided us with an entirely new facet of Alemanno's thought that was perhaps muted previously: his great interest in the Portuguese discoveries and explorations and indeed in the wider non-Jewish world. This was a part of a much more general Jewish interest in Messianic redemption, following the expulsion from Spain, forced conversions in Portugal, and other cataclysmic events. But Alemanno's interests seem to go well beyond normal "Jewish" ones and include not only legends about the lost 10 tribes but also about the kingdom of Prester John, a mythical Christian kingdom of Asia or perhaps Africa.

In conclusion, Alemanno emerges as an incredibly curious, knowledgeable, open-minded, and creative thinker. He was a true son of the Renaissance aside from being a faithful adherent of and a fruitful contributor to Jewish tradition. There is no doubt that he was an original thinker. That does not mean, however, that much of his thinking (as is true of all humans) was not unoriginal. As is the fate of most if not all polymaths, he needed to rely upon others and showed himself to be gullible at times. But even within the category of the unoriginal, it is worthwhile to distinguish between mere tacit acceptance of communal prejudices and a more active championing of theories or explanations favored by or at odds with traditional sources. Undoubtedly, all can be found in this thinker, but only the latter is of any great interest insofar as we are interested in him as unique or exceptional or what Karl Jaspers called the "existential will" of the

author. It seems that he may have addressed himself to a diverse audience and he had very definite ideas regarding how to interpret traditional material, but as is the case with almost all pre-modern thinkers, he could not necessarily express all of his beliefs. Since so much of his writings have never really been explored, they are a gold mine for future students with the linguistic skills, intellectual historical knowledge, and philosophical reasoning that would allow them to separate the precious metal from the dross.

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Alemanus, Adrianus

► L'Aleman, Adrien

Alfonsine Tables

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Abstract

The Alfonsine Tables were astronomical tables designed to anticipate the positions of planets, lunar phases, setting and rising times of the Sun, eclipses, heavenly conjunctions, and calendrical dates. They come in two different textual traditions, the Castilian Canons (1272 ca.) and the Parisian Tables (1320 ca.). The first printed Latin edition dates 1483. From that moment, Latin Alfonsine Tables rapidly superseded every other competing tabulary system for anticipating the expected planetary positions, so that the entire astronomy of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and the first half of the sixteenth century may be labelled as “Alfonsine Astronomy.” Nonetheless, starting with Regiomontanus’ *Tabulae Directionum Projectionumque* (1467, first printed in 1485), passing through Erasmus Reinold’s Copernican *Tabulae Prutenicae* (1551), and ending with Kepler’s *Tabulae Rudolphinae* (1627), the history of the legacy of the Alfonsine Tables in the Renaissance is largely a story of their slow but progressive dismissal.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Alfonsine Tables were astronomical tables designed to anticipate the positions of planets, lunar phases, setting and rising times of the Sun, eclipses, and heavenly conjunctions. Moreover, they were useful for chronological and calendrical computations, often with astrological import. Relevant dates of both Muslim and Christian Julian

calendars could be calculated in advance thanks to their predictive numerical projections, there based on the geocentric Ptolemaic system. Even if their degree of precision was very inaccurate by any modern standard, for more than two centuries, the tables remained in consultation as the best astronomical reference charts available.

“What particularly distinguishes the Alfonsine tables is an advanced precessional theory (which includes a periodically varying term called “trepidation”) and an ingenious sliding sexagesimal scheme that allows the mean motion tables to be used with an arbitrary set of radices” (Gingerich 2011, 506). More specifically, the tables “introduced a complicated motion of the equinoxes, combining a steady motion around the zodiac in forty-nine thousand years with an oscillation of ± 9 degrees every seven thousand years” (McCluskey 2011).

Two “first” versions of them are extant: one with reading rules but no numerical tables and the other one with numerical tables but, at first, no reading rules. (1) The *Alfonsine Canons* are explanatory instructions written in vernacular Castilian around 1272 ca. by two scholars; Isaac ben Sid and Judah ben Moses haCohen, under the patronage of King Alfonso X “the Wise.” They survive in just one manuscript (Chabás and Goldstein 2003) and the tables to which the instructions originally referred to are lost. These updated the anteceding *Toledan Tables*, whose computations were based on their turn on the correction that the Arabic astronomer al-Zarqālī made to the Ptolemaic *Handy Tables*. (2) The *Tables of Paris*, dated 1320 ca., are numerical charts with Arabic numerals and Latin headings, originally with no explanatory rules, but soon supplemented by accompanying instructions provided by many astronomers (Jean de Murs, Jean de Lignières and notably John of Saxony). They seems to be unrelated to the Alfonsine Canons but independently based on different revisions, perhaps on those of Ibn al-Battani.

Historians debated at length on the relations between the two and their originality. What is certain is that Latin Alfonsine Tables rapidly superseded every other competing tabulary system for anticipating the expected planetary

positions, so that the entire astronomy of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and the first half of the sixteenth century may be labelled as “Alfonsine Astronomy” (Pouille 2005). Their completion conventionally corresponds with the inception of geometrical astronomy in the European Universities curricula. Also exploratory expeditions benefitted from the reference to Alfonsine charts for their orientation needs and navigational purposes.

Impact and Legacy

The invention of the movable type printing press offered then the opportunity to give wide diffusion also to astronomical ephemerides, almanacs, and calendars in the newly constituted European book market. Among these publications, Alfonsine Tables found their long-due way to print too. It should be reminded, however, that “users, scribes and bookbinders brought together varied groupings of these tables and canons so that, before the printing of the *editio princeps* in 1483 (roughly the Parisian version), it is impossible to define a set of tables as *the* canonical ‘Alfonsine Tables’” (Kremer 2007, 283), so that a “corpus” is what the Alfonsine standard rather defined. The prints of the various subsequent editions of the Alfonsine Tables marked also the beginning of the descending phase of their reception, since their remaining legacy in the Renaissance is largely a story of their slow but progressive dismissal.

Regiomontanus’ *Ephemerides*, whose first edition appeared in the same year of the aforementioned *princeps* (but circulated before in manuscript form) computed the expected planetary positions up to the year 1506, with minor adjustments to the Alfonsine previsions. In 1467, while in Hungary and with Martin Bylica’s assistance, he had already completed his *Tabulae Directionum Profectionumque*, which exhibited the longitudes of the celestial bodies in relation to the apparent daily rotation of the heavens. There Regiomontanus provided “tables for calculating the house boundaries, with accompanying directions for use. [...] He supplied all tables that

were necessary for casting horoscopes, not including those of the planetary positions, and taught how to use these tables with a number of examples given in the commentary. He also gave instructions for testing and expanding his tables” (Zinner 1990, 92).

In fact, Regiomontanus’ tabulary work was taken up and extended first by Jacob Pflaum and Johannes Stoeffler up to the year 1531, and later, by Stoeffler only, up to 1551, with the addition of supplementary forecasts of impending catastrophes and disasters.

In 1503, Alfonso de Córdoba Hispalensis, a natural scientist, astronomer, and physician at the service of Cardinal Borgia in Rome, published a set of *Tabule Astronomicæ* dedicated to Queen Isabella of Spain. Alfonso chose the date of Queen Isabella’s accession to the throne of Castile – the year 1474 – as new reference starting-point for computing planetary positions (Chabas 2004). The length of the tropical year indicated in these astronomical tables was the same that Copernicus later assumed in writing his *Commentariolus* (Rosen 1976, 172–174), while Luigi Lilio and the Gregorian reformers rather preferred to adopt the old length of the tropical year indicated by the Alfonsine Tables for their calendrical revision (Casanovas 1983).

Often, along those decades, the Alfonsine Tables were repeatedly simplified as “resolved tables,” as they were called, in order to reduce the number of calculations and the amount of computation needed to make a proper use of them. With this purpose, Johannes Schöner published his *Tabulae astronomicæ, quas vulgo, quia omni difficultate et obscuritate carent resolutas vocant* (shortly, *Tabulae resolutæ*) in 1536. Wheel paper charts with rotating concentric discs, called “volvelles,” were often published within astronomical text serving as pop-up computational facilitators for the reader, as notably in Peter Apian’s *Astronomicum Caesarium* (1540).

Copernicus did much practice on the Alfonsine Tables, while he was a student at the University of Cracow; however, at his time that charts were already used in parallel with those made by Regiomontanus. The copy of his personal version of the Latin Alfonsine Tables, in their second

printed edition (Venice 1485), was bound together with one of the first printed edition of Regiomontanus’ *Tabulae Directionum* (Augsburg, 1490); there the two tabulary systems were followed by some blank pages left for calculations, comparisons (Rosen 1976, 167–174), and perhaps for intended corrections. In fact, later in *De Revolutionibus* (1543), Copernicus provided new (partial) planetary tables based on his own heliocentric cosmology. However, the astronomical theory upon which their values were calculated was not so relevant for the practical purposes for which they were mainly consulted by his contemporaries, so that at first much difference was not really noted in the use of his tables over the previous ones.

Later Erasmus Reinold, a Copernican member of the Melanchton’s circle, subsequently composed the *Tabulae Prutenicae* or Prussian Tables (1551), dedicated to Albert I Duke of Prussia and based on Copernicus’ planetary theories. Reference to these tables, as reference to Copernicus’ ones, did not require any commitment to heliocentrism by their adopters (Savoie 1997). Although just slightly superior in terms of accuracy, *Tabulae Prutenicae* gradually superseded the Alfonsine Tables, especially in German speaking countries, even if their acceptance was everywhere slow and disputed.

As signs of different attitudes towards new tabulary systems for planetary astronomy, it can be mentioned, on the one hand, the *Hypotyposes* (1578), later vindicated by Caspar Peucer as a work of his own, where dissatisfaction for Alfonsine data is plain, and, on the other hand, the *Tabulae Gregorianae* (1580) by Giuseppe Moletti, still relying with confidence on Alfonsine settings. Analogously, while few years after *De Revolutionibus* Gemma Frisius in his *De Radio* (1545) recognized the superior predictive capacity of Copernicus’ tabulary emendations, at the end of the century, the mathematician Duncan Liddled was still teaching at Helmstedt both the Alfonsine and the Copernican/Prussian tabulary systems in parallel (1594/95). And in two works that appeared in the same year, *Animadversiones ad ephemerides* and *Breve discorso intorno agli errori dei calculi astronomici* (1580), Benedetto

Altavilla, an astrologist from Vicenza, criticized the reliability of all the astronomical tables and consequently of the ephemerides that were drawn from them. Despite he disregarded the pretension of previsions and forecasts by the way of astronomical tables, he admitted a higher accuracy of the Copernican charts over the Alfonsine ones (Omodeo 2014).

In the second half of the sixteenth century, new updates and revisions did not cease to be sorted out: Johannes Stadius and Giovanni Antonio Magini published, respectively, the *Tabulae Bergenses* (1560) and *Tabulae secundorum mobilium coelestium* (1585), with further numerical improvements.

In 1622, Longomontanus published new tables within his *Astronomia Danica*, called Danish tables, based on the geoheliocentric model of his master Tycho Brahe.

Finally, Johannes Kepler made use of Brahe's tabulary observations as well, but he radically implemented them in his *Tabulae Rudolphinae* (1627) as results of his newly introduced elliptically planetary orbits and peculiar logarithmic methods. In their respect, the Alfonsine Tables turned out to be 30 times less precise on average observations, so that in the short term they were no longer compared and definitively became an obsolete reference tool for modern astronomers.

Cross-References

- [Astronomical Instruments, Renaissance](#)
- [Copernicus, Nicolaus](#)
- [Geocentrism](#)
- [Ptolemy in the Renaissance](#)
- [Zodiac, Renaissance](#)

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Al-Ījī

Born: 1281, Īj, near Shīrāz

Died: 1355, Īj, near Shīrāz

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Abstract

A major theologian from the early fourteenth-century Iran, al-Ījī is one of the last representatives of the classical Ash‘arite theological tradition. His summa *al-Mawāqif* and his Ash‘arite creed have been crucial in Sunnī teaching and commentary down to our day.

Alternate Names

Qāḍī Abū al-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Rukn al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Jaffār ibn Aḥmad al-Bakrī al-Muṭarrizī al-Shabānkārī al-Shīrāzī.

Biography

Born in 1281 or shortly thereafter in the town of Īj near Shīrāz, al-Ījī flourished during the troubled end-times of the Īlkhānid dynasty. He served the

regime in influential jurisprudential positions but, as the political tide changed, was ultimately imprisoned and executed at his hometown in 1355.

Al-Ījī received his theological education in Shīrāz under a second-generation pupil of the Ash‘arite scholar ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Umar al-Bayḍāwī. In jurisprudence, he followed the Shāfi‘ite school. As a prolific writer, he produced widely read works in theology, jurisprudence, Qur’anic exegesis, ethics, rhetoric, linguistics, and historiography. His most important theological work is the summa *al-Mawāqif fī ‘ilm al-kalām*, followed by the much shorter *Jawāhir al-kalām*, and the popular creed *al-‘Aqā’id al-‘aḍudīya* that he wrote toward the end of his career. His ethical work *al-Risāla al-shāhīya fī ‘ilm al-akhlāq* follows the tradition of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*.

In his theological magnum opus, al-Ījī builds on the model, adopted from his lineage to al-Bayḍāwī, which goes back to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s and Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī’s earlier summae. By the same token, al-Ījī’s work has many of the features common to the mature theological writing of his time: it builds largely on the wealth of accumulated material but does not shy away from completing an unsatisfactory treatment of the disputed questions or collecting together and rearranging the received discussion in a more systematic fashion. In particular, he tries to incorporate the points of critique made at al-Bayḍāwī’s work by the Māturīdite theologian Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī. Following the Rāzīan tradition, he has a high opinion of the supreme value of systematic theological inquiry and structures his work along the lines of a philosophical summa that deals with all the most important fields of knowledge of God and creation.

Despite his debt to the tradition, al-Ījī comes across as a thinker with considerable systematic ambitions. He aims at defending the Ash‘arite doctrine against its critics and in so doing renders the doctrine more precise and complete. An exemplary case in point is his defense of such traditional doctrines as atomism or occasionalism and the inclusion of an extensive discussion and refutation of the Avicennian counterarguments that

had by and large been accepted by al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī. He also engages in an extensive critical discussion of astronomy, here again guided by the overarching Ash‘arite doctrine of a Creator whose omnipotence is not to be compromised by any necessities in the created world.

Al-Ījī’s most important follower was Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, who adopted a reserved stance to the teacher’s doctrine, possibly due to his Māturīdite leanings. More important for the subsequent fate of al-Ījī’s theological magnum opus was the commentary by al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. For subsequent generations until the modern times, the *Mawāqif*, like the much more concise creed, remained an influential and much-commented textbook. Indeed, in many ways, it can be seen as the last ambitious summa of the golden era of Ash‘arite theology.

Cross-References

- [Al-Jurjānī as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf](#)
- [Mullā Ṣadrā](#)

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Al-Jāmī

Born: 1414, Khurāsānī village of Kharjerd

Died: 1492, Samarqand

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Abstract

A famous Sufi scholar and poet of the fifteenth century, Jāmī's most important philosophical contributions are his commentaries on Ibn 'Arabī.

Alternate Name

'Abd al-Raḥmān Nūr al-Dīn ibn Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Dashtī Jāmī

Biography

A famous Sufi scholar and poet, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī was born to a notable family in the Khurāsānī village of Kharjerd in 1414. After early education in his hometown of Jām, he moved to Herat and later on to Samarqand to pursue his studies in the Islamic as well as some of the rational sciences. From early on, Jāmī was noted as an exceptionally gifted but arrogant student. At some point in his 30s, Jāmī was initiated into the Naqshbandī Sufi order by the *shaykh* Sa'd al-Dīn Kāshgharī. Facilitated by the intimate relations between the Naqshbandīs and the Timurid

court, Jāmī was promoted to the status of a semi-official representative of the rulers. He maintained a close connection to political power throughout his career, but this did not hinder him from acquiring wide renown as a scholar. Jāmī died in 1492 as one of the most famous authors of the Persian-speaking world.

Today, Jāmī's fame rests mainly on his voluminous poetic inheritance. Although his poems contain plenty of philosophical ideas, from the point of view of philosophy, more important are his prose works. Many of these are devoted to the practice and teaching of Sufism, such as the series of mystical meditations titled *Lawāyeh*, the famous hagiography *Nafahāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quḍs* (based for a great part on a Persian translation of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-sūfiyya*), or the treatises on *dhikr* and the question of the unity of existence, a prominent theme in the school of Ibn 'Arabī. The latter's influence is clear also in Jāmī's prolific work as a commentator; he wrote commentaries on the Andalusian's famous *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* as well as its epitome, the *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, and on a great amount of Sufi poetry, including works by Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Amīr Khosrow, as well as his own. Jāmī also wrote a number of treatises in a more traditional theological vein, including the famous *al-Durra al-fākhira fī taḥqīq al-madhāhib*, an interesting comparison of Sufism, *kalām*, and philosophy on certain doctrinal questions. Reflecting his activity as a poet, Jāmī authored several works on poetics. He also wrote on music and grammar and compiled an anthology of his own correspondence.

In his poetry, Jāmī was a neoclassical conservative, and his veneration has varied according to literary trends. In his philosophically oriented works, he is a learned follower of Ibn 'Arabī's school who shows thorough familiarity with the most important commentators of the master's works, from Mu'ayyid al-Dīn al-Jandī to Dāwūd Qaysarī. As becomes clear from the *Durra al-fākhira*, Jāmī knew theology and philosophy, referring at length to Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. The most extensive example of Jāmī's own thought is his commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's

epitome of the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. The picture it gives is not of a decidedly original thinker; rather, Jāmī stands firmly in the tradition of philosophical commentaries on the master's works, a tradition which he perceived as being largely unanimous, with differences between the commentators concerning exclusively details of minor importance. In many ways, Jāmī can be considered as the last great representative of this tradition. He played a crucial role in the dissemination of Ibn 'Arabī's thought in Persia, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. This was despite the fact that his strong Sunnism was not always well received in the Ṣafavid dynasty that seized power in Iran soon after his death.

Cross-References

- [Al-Jurjānī as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf](#)
- [Mullā Ṣadrā](#)

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al-Jurjānī

- [Al-Jurjānī as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf](#)

Al-Jurjānī as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf

Born: 1339/1340, Tājū near Astarābādh/
Southeast Iran
Died: 1413, Shīrāz

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Abstract

One of the most celebrated theologians and jurists in the fourteenth-century Iran, al-Jurjānī had a major influence on subsequent Iranian philosophy through his commentaries and teaching activity.

Alternate Names

Full name [Zayn al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī](#); [al-Jurjānī](#); the title of al-Sayyid al-Sharīf is due to al-Jurjānī's alleged descent from a tenth-century Zaydī prince.

Biography

Born in 1339/1340 in Tājū near Astarābādh in Southeast Iran, al-Jurjānī studied in Herat, Kirmān, Egypt, and Asia Minor before settling to

teach in Shīrāz in the 1370s. After Timur's conquest of the city, he was called to the latter's court in Samarqand. There he met with the older colleague Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, which resulted in a famous scholarly rivalry out of which al-Jurjānī is alleged to have come out as the victor – perhaps somewhat unwillingly, for he seems to have held a genuine respect for al-Taftāzānī. After Timur's death, al-Jurjānī returned to Shīrāz where he died in 1413.

Already as a student, al-Jurjānī was famed for his brilliance, and he grew to become a major authority in a number of fields of knowledge. His initial education seems to have been Mu'tazilite, but through his later affiliations, he veered toward the more prominent Ash'arite view, albeit not by a strict commitment for he continued to comment and teach both Mu'tazilite and Shī'ite texts. He is also said to have been involved in Sufism, in particular the study of works from the school of Ibn 'Arabī.

Al-Jurjānī wrote on grammar, logic, jurisprudence, Qur'ānic exegesis, theology, and astronomy. His writing consists mostly of brief summary works and commentaries and seems to have been largely motivated by his activity as a teacher. Despite his influence, al-Jurjānī is commonly considered as belonging to the beginning of the era of Islamic theology in which the composition of original theological summae is largely given up in favor of commentaries and super-commentaries. Indeed, one of al-Jurjānī's most important theological works is the commentary he wrote on 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's *Mawāqif*. He also commented on texts by theologians and philosophers such as Avicenna, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and al-Taftāzānī and composed a widely read book of definitions simply titled *al-Ta'rīfāt*.

In his commentary on al-Ījī's theological summa, al-Jurjānī makes extensive use of philosophy and the rational sciences. This is not an entirely novel feature in the later Ash'arite theological tradition; indeed, the impact of philosophy is decisive already in al-Ījī as well as al-Jurjānī's senior colleague al-Taftāzānī, but he seems to have taken the tendency a step further, which is

also highlighted by the fact that within two generations, we witness an upsurge of philosophical activity in Shīrāz that can be traced back directly to al-Jurjānī and his students. Through his commentaries, al-Jurjānī also played an important role in the transmission of philosophy in the teaching done in the theological seminaries (sing. *madrasa*), for texts like al-Ījī's *Mawāqif* were often studied, indeed up to our own time, with the accompaniment of his commentary.

Despite his philosophical refinement, al-Jurjānī was a staunch defender of al-Ījī's conception of theology as parallel to but independent of philosophy. Like philosophy, theology studies the entire creation, but unlike philosophy, it does this under the revealed assumption of a unique omnipotent and omniscient Creator. In particular, the basic principles of theology are independent of the sort of proofs of God's existence that the philosophers had presented and that some earlier theologians had perceived as equally formative for theology. However, al-Jurjānī's commitment to the natural sciences occasionally causes him to depart from al-Ījī's strict Ash'arism, a case in point being the question of whether perceived astronomical regularities are due to real causal connections or merely to a contingent custom ('*āda*) in God's free agency.

Al-Jurjānī was a very influential author, which is attested by the number of surviving manuscripts of many of his works. He was an important influence on the Shīrāzī philosophy of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century and thereby on the entire later development of philosophy in Iran. Two students of his, Qawām al-Dīn al-Kurbālī and Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥasan Shah Baqqāl, were the teachers of the two rival protagonists in the philosophical scene of the city, respectively, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī.

Cross-References

- Al-Ījī
- Dawānī
- Mullā Ṣadrā
- Philosophy in Safavid Persia

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al-Kostantini, Ḥanokh ben Solomon

► [Ḥanokh ben Solomon ben Ḥanokh al-Qoṣṭantīnī](#)

Allegory in Renaissance Literature

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Abstract

The allegory is not only a rhetorical figure; it is an exegetic, literary, and artistic concept. Grounded in the ancient Greek and Latin traditions, where it is considered as a sustained metaphor, it is developed as a methodology of interpretation in the Patristics and Scholastic Philosophy, becoming an essential notion during the Italian Humanism and the Renaissance.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The allegory is a rhetorical figure, which is often associated with a metaphor or a simile. By it, the meaning of a proposition, a paragraph, or an entire essay, be it religious, literary, or art does not depend on its logical, semantic, or ordinary grammatical content, but from other interpretations which rest on contextual, historical, or ethical evaluations. It is, essentially, a mode of encoding the ordinary language (Fletcher 2012, pp. 2–3).

Taking cue from thoughts expressed by Aristotle in the “Rhetoric,” the notion of allegory is traced originally within the Latin tradition and particularly in Cicero’s “De Oratore” and in Quintilian. Amongst these authors it is effectively a metaphor which is sustained. It doesn’t in fact end as a single expression within the text (a word or a proposition), but it holds through several paragraphs if not across the entire body of work. There are many ways in which the allegory is presented by Latins: the comparison, the enigma, the riddle. Furthermore, an allegory can morph from something ironical to something which is obscure and of difficult comprehension (Innes 2003, pp. 19–20).

The allegory during the Renaissance derives its roots in the interpretative practice of the Sacred Writings by Saint Paul. The use of the allegory by Saint Paul is *ante litteram* as it comes before the allegory was codified in a literary and artistic figure. Paul, who is influenced by Platonism, behaves as if the text has two interpretations: one is literal or natural and the other is philosophical or conceptual, meant in this case as divine. In this, the allegory assumes a duality of significance: what is written can signify something completely different from its meaning (Tambling 2009, pp. 19–22).

Tracing from Paul’s allegory and from that of classical Patristics and Scholastic Philosophy – particularly the considerations of Hugh of Saint Victor and Thomas Aquinas – the most stable codification of the allegory happens with Italian Humanism in authors such as Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarca and will be the foundation of the concept of allegory throughout the entire Renaissance. Of significance is Dante’s approach, which defines the end of the religious sphere hegemony of the use of the allegory and lays the ground for its literary development (Brittan 2003, p. 9).

Dante explains his notion of allegory mainly in two works: the *Convivio* and his famous epistle, of uncertain attribution, to Cangrande della Scala (Ascoli 2010, p. 129). Starting from the epistle, one can deduce a proper doctrine of allegory, although still very close to the Patristic exegetic approach; Dante outlines a quadripartition of meaning. The first meaning is the literal one: this is the foundation on which the other meanings will be developed and built upon. The second meaning is the general allegory and itself is divided in three ways. The first mode is the allegory in its proper meaning. This is represented by a punctual and attentive reading of the text, which leads to a more general and abstract meaning than the one denoted by the literal approach. The primary function of this mode is to transcend the worldly semantic field into the fideistic one. The second approach is called “moral.” As inferred by the name, this approach translates its literal meaning into the comprehension of a teaching for the ethical life. The third mode is called “anagogic.” This is the mode of transcendence which understands significance in a manner which parts from a tangible experience and elevates it to a divine perspective, passing from the level of human comprehension to a salvific dimension. At the same time, especially in the *Convivio*, Dante turns his considerations toward a more modern approach, focused on the intentionality of the author and the textual letter (Ascoli 2010, p. 135). In this direction, Dante defines the difference between the theological and poetical allegory, claiming for the second the capability of expressing the truth within beauty through a narrative which is not necessarily real.

Of relevance within the development of the allegory in Britain is the work of Edmund Spenser. In his epic poem, the *Faerie Queene*, he builds on different allegorical levels which are referred, on the one hand, in a philosophical sense to the human mind and, on the other, to the political and social analysis of Elizabethan England. The heir to Chaucer, Spenser develops and evolves declinations of the allegory: in particular the personification (Tambling 2009, pp. 55–61). The value and significance of the allegory within his work is expressed by Spenser himself in a letter to Walter Raleigh (Murrin 2010, p. 175).

During Renaissance but even in general, the allegory is not a composing and interpretative figure exclusively used in religious exegesis and literature. It envelopes art in its entirety: emblematic are, for example, the works of Botticelli, Titian, and Carracci.

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Almadura da Bergamo, Pietro

► [Pietro da Bergamo](#)

Almosnino, Moshe (Moises) ben Baruch

Born: 1510 or 1515, Salonica

Died: 1580, Istanbul

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Abstract

A rabbi, political leader, diplomat, physician, scientist, mathematician, philosopher, and biblical exegete, Moses ben Baruch Almosnino

was one of the most important Jewish leaders in the post-expulsion period and was the central intellectual figure in sixteenth-century Jewish Salonica. Well versed in rabbinic literature, science, and philosophy, Almosnino was also a prolific writer. All around, he was an exemplary “chacham kolel” (lit., “general erudite,” or “well-rounded scholar”) and a great Jewish Renaissance man.

Biography

The Almosnino family originated in Aragon and was well known in Spain already before the expulsions. Sources refer to an Abraham Almosnino, a physician and grandfather of Almosnino’s mother, who was burned at the stake by the Inquisition at some point during the fifteenth century. Almosnino’s other maternal great grandfather, Abraham Conombrial, was also burned at the same *auto-da-fé*. This suggests that members of the family were probably forced to convert to Christianity in the wake of the 1391 pogroms and returned to Judaism thereafter – for which they clearly paid dearly. Another Almosnino, Isaac, is known to have translated Aristotle’s ethics. The translation is no longer available today and is often (mis)attributed to Moshe Almosnino.

The Almosninos likely arrived in Salonica shortly after the expulsion from Spain in 1492, part of the great wave of Jewish migrant to the city, which was rapidly becoming a Jewish haven. Conquered from the Venetian Empire in the second half of the fifteenth century, the *sanjak* (district) of Salonica was part of the Ottoman *eyelet* (province) of Rumeli, which encompassed most of the Balkans and the capital of which was Edirne (Adrianople). Jewish migration to the city, which was somewhat depopulated after the Ottoman conquest, transformed its demographics, with Jews becoming one of its most important communities. As is well known, the Ottomans encouraged Jewish migration to the city: first of Jewish refugees and later of conversos fleeing the Spanish Inquisition. In 1519, soon after Almosnino’s birth, Jews made up about 54 % of

the city’s inhabitants, with more than 15,000. The city’s textile industry was the basis of Jewish economic life. In 1537, an imperial decree made Salonican Jews the main suppliers of uniforms to the Ottoman army, which further strengthened their status in the city. The community was socially and culturally diverse and intellectually vibrant. Being born into a Jewish community that was in effect a local majority shaped Almosnino’s later political thought.

Having received a “classical” rabbinic education from Salonica’s great rabbis, Almosnino began his career as a *marbitz torah* (teacher) and a rabbi in two of the city’s many congregations. His first appointment began in 1553 in the Neveh Shalom congregation, and from 1560 until his death, he led the Livyat Hen congregations. Throughout the period, he was a prominent communal leader in the city as a whole.

Almosnino rose to political prominence in the course of the economic crisis that plagued Salonica’s Jewish community after 1545. That year, fires destroyed life and property and brought disaster to the textile industry. At the same time, global changes (shortages in raw materials, growing competition with English and Italian merchants) caused further economic decline. During the early 1560s, things further worsened because of changes in Ottoman policy, which revoked privileges the community had hitherto enjoyed and which forced it to pay higher taxes. Almosnino, already a leader in the city, was a member of a three-man delegation sent on behalf of the community to Constantinople to please with Sultan Selim II for the reinstatement of lost privileges; he spent 18 months in the Ottoman capital. The delegation met with the sultan five times, without success. The two other members of the delegation – Rabbi Yaacov Ben Nahmias and Rabbi Moshe Baruch – died while in Constantinople. Almosnino remained in the capital and ultimately, after much maneuvering, was able to meet the sultan once more, in 1568, and regained the privileges the community had lost. The success of the mission not only revived Jewish economic life in the city but also ushered in an era of centralized communal life, organized under rabbinic leaderships – as now, the diplomats were the

rabbis. Almosnino enjoyed a high level of status and prestige in the city from this moment until his death.

Another significant outcome of Almosnino's 18 months in Constantinople was a unique travelogue/Ottoman history, written in Spanish: the *Cronica de los Reyes Otomanos*, a detailed description of the city. Almosnino, who was among many other things also a physician, even dedicated a large section to the city's public health and sanitation. Almosnino described his mission to the capital in this way: "When the Great Sultan Suleiman passed through the city [Salonica] he... have many privileges to [its Jews], which disappeared during the great fire in 1545 and thereafter are not respected by the local governor, who imposes even more taxes and levies upon us. This has become too much to bear and for this our noble republic [*nuestra noble republica de Salonique*] chose me to come here to the city."

"Republica," or republic, a term Almosnino uses with some frequency, probably refers to the fact that he was representing the entire community, not just his own congregation. But one can also read the term as a signal of the great autonomy that Salonica's Jews enjoyed at the time, a condition that in Almosnino's mind was translated into "republic." The text, written in Ladino while in Constantinople, was transliterated and translated into "proper" Spanish and published in Madrid in 1638, by a non-Jewish press (an indication of its import), as *Extremos y Grandezas de Constantinopla*. The rest of Almosnino's non-rabbinic works were published by Jewish publishing houses, most in Salonica.

Most of his work was rabbinic, mostly homiletic (midrash) exegetic and commentary (rather than law); he also wrote several commentaries on biblical and Talmudic texts (most notably Pirkei Avot). Steeped in the then-recent new age of print, he also published all of his sermons.

As a Renaissance man, Almosnino was also engaged in philosophy and education – which is probably the main reason for his focus on ethics and science. In this regard, he is part of a cohort of Mediterranean rabbis of the time, among them are Italian Abraham ben Mordechai Farissol (1455–1525) and Joseph Solomon Delmedigo

(1591–1655) of Crete. Like these men, Almosnino drew on a wide variety of Jewish and non-Jewish sources, in Greek, Latin, Arabic, and other languages. His other most famous non-rabbinic book is the *Regimiento de la Vida*, a moral philosophy of conduct, good will, education of the young, and other ethical and moral issues, written at the behest of Don Yosef Nasi. The book was also published in Hebrew as *Hanhagat ha-Hayyim* and can be easily compared to the "guides to life" genre of Early Modern Europe. In 1564 Almosnino also wrote a shorter book *Dreams, Their Origin and True Nature* (*Tratado de los suenyos*), in which he discusses the interpretation of dreams; it was later appended to the *Regimiento*.

Like many other Mediterranean Renaissance rabbis, Almosnino also wrote extensively on geography and astronomy.

Thus Almosnino was at once a typical Renaissance man and a Salonican Jew – and functioned fully as both. A key diplomat on behalf of Salonica's Jewish community, he helped usher in a new era of political power for the city's Jews, even as he maintained an exemplary and wide-ranging, intellectual life.

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Al-Nasafi

Born: First quarter of the thirteenth century (?), Nasaf

Died: 1310, Baghdad

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Abstract

A Māturīdite theologian and jurist who flourished in the turn of the thirteenth century, al-Nasafī is best known for his jurisprudential textbooks and a creed that became subject to a number of commentaries by subsequent generations of theologians.

Alternate Name

Ḥafīẓ al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt ‘Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd al-Nasafī

Biography

Born in the city of Nasaf (the present-day Qarshi, or the Persian Nakhshab, in southern Uzbekistan), al-Nasafī was a famous jurist and theologian who was active during the latter half of the thirteenth century. Apart from systematic treatises in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theology (*kalām*), he is also known to have written a volume of Qur’ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*). Al-Nasafī made the major part of his teaching career in Kirmān but came to Baghdad toward the end of his life and died there in 1310.

In theology, al-Nasafī is commonly characterized as a Māturīdite. He is best known as the author of a creed titled *al-‘Umda fī al-‘aqā’id li ahl al-sunna* and a commentary on the same creed titled *al-I‘timād fī al-i‘tiqād*. Both of these works

bear a strong influence of Abū al-Mu‘īn al-Nasafī’s (d. 1114) *Tabṣira al-adilla*. As most Māturīdite theologians, al-Nasafī belonged to the Ḥanafite school of jurisprudence. His jurisprudential masterpiece is said to be the *Kitāb al-manār fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, which he appended with his own commentary titled *Kashf al-asrār*. Other famous jurisprudential works are an extremely concise treatise titled *Kanz al-daqa’iq*, a compendium of rulings that seems to have been directly based on his teaching activity in Kirmān and a book titled *al-Wāfi*, which developed from a commentary on Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghinānī’s (d. 1197) celebrated work *Hidāya* and to which al-Nasafī later appended a commentary titled *al-Kāfi*, also originating from lecture notes. Apart from these original compositions, al-Nasafī wrote commentaries on jurisprudential and theological works, including texts by Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī (d. 1142) and Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Samarqandī. His commentary on the Qur’ān is known as *Madārik al-tanzīl wa ḥaqā’iq al-ta’wīl*.

Although not a strikingly original thinker, al-Nasafī remains a considerable authority in jurisprudence. His jurisprudential works as well as his creed have been the subject of commentaries by a number of jurists and theologians at least down to the eighteenth century, and the *Kanz al-daqa’iq* is known to have been used as a textbook in al-Azhar in the nineteenth century.

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Alsted, Johann Heinrich

Born: mid-March 1588, Ballersbach (Mittenaar)

Died: 9 November 1638, Alba Iulia

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Abstract

Alsted was a foremost encyclopedist of the early seventeenth century. He provided both a complete presentation of all the subjects of philosophy (of which encyclopedia consisted) and a method to learn them. This method was an original synthesis of the dialectic of Petrus Ramus, the combinatorial art of memory of Raimond Lull and Giordano Bruno, and the method of presentation of philosophical disciplines of Bartholomäus Keckermann. Alsted's encyclopedism was intended as a remedy to the postlapsarian condition of man and was functional to the pedagogical reform pursued at the Academy of Herborn; this was, in turn, an essential part of the Calvinist state reform of the county of Nassau-Dillenburg. In theology, the importance of Alsted consists of having introduced millenarianism in the Reformed Europe, though his early, optimistic views on the imminent end of the world would change to pessimistic as a consequence of the Thirty Years' War.

Biography

Alsted was born in 1588 in Ballersbach, in the county of Nassau-Dillenburg. After having studied from 1599 at the Herborn Paedagogium, in

1602 he enrolled at the Herborn Academy, which was founded by Johann VI of Nassau-Dillenburg as part of a general reform of the state on a Calvinist basis, for which Ramus' logic served as pedagogical foundation (Menk 1981; Hotson 2000a, 15–24). In Herborn, Alsted studied under Johannes Piscator (who introduced Ramism in the Academy) and Mathias Martinius, another “semi-Ramist” (Hotson 2000a, 15, b, 17, 157). In 1606, he moved to University of Marburg, where he studied under Rudolph Goclenius the Elder and Gregor Schönfeld, by whom he was introduced to mnemotechnics (Hotson 2000a, 56–59), while in 1607, he moved to Basle to study under Amandus Polanus (a Philippo-Ramist). In 1609, he became a teacher at the Herborn Paedagogium, and in 1610, after a call from Martinius to the Academy of Bremen, he could become extraordinary professor of philosophy at the Academy of Herborn, while a call from the University of Frankfurt in 1615 allowed him to become ordinary professor. In 1619, he was delegate of Johann VII of Nassau at the Synod of Dordrecht and could then assume the third chair of theology, while in 1626, after the death of Piscator, he took the first chair. In these years he published his *Systema mnemonicum* (1610a), *Panacea philosophica* (1610b), and *Cursus philosophici encyclopaedia* (1620) and was teacher of Jan Amos Comenius (1611–1613). When the prosperity of Herborn was undermined by the events of the Thirty Years' War, in 1629 he accepted the offer of the Prince of Transylvania Gábor Bethlen of a professorship at the Academy of Alba Julia (Hungarian: Gyulafehérvár, Latin: Apulum). In Transylvania, Alsted had to establish the educational program of the local Calvinist ruling class (Keul 2009, 167–186). He died in Alba Julia in 1638, after having published his *Encyclopaedia septem tomis distincta* in 1630. (Hotson 2000a, 11–13).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The main aim of Alsted was to provide a presentation of all learning in philosophy, i.e., an

encyclopedia (Vasoli 2005, 21–29). This aim was theological in nature, since it served as remedy to the postlapsarian condition and to provide men with a complete knowledge (Hotson 2000a, 66–73). Moreover, it was functional to the reform of knowledge pursued in Herborn and would influence Comenius and Samuel Hartlib (Hotson 2011; Čížek 2012). For this aim, Alsted developed first a method of teaching and learning, which consists of memorization itself (Alsted 1609, 1610a). This method includes both the dialectic of Ramus (as a systematic ordering of notions) and the visual techniques of Bruno and Lull (Hotson 2000a, 39–46; Rossi 2006, 55–60, 97–138; Ong 2005, 163–165). Alsted's encyclopedic project is outlined in the *Panacea philosophica*, in which the unification of knowledge is made possible, on the one hand, by the discipline of *ars magna* (appropriated from Lull), which explains the notions common to all sciences and precedes ontology (Savini 2009); on the other hand, knowledge is made possible by *canonica*, which presents the general *praecognita* of philosophy and explicates the method of exposition of particular disciplines. This is inspired by Keckermann's logic and consists of *lexica*, *praecognita*, *systemata*, and *gymnasia*. *Lexica* and *praecognita* define the concepts and the nature of a discipline, *systemata* explicate its contents, and *gymnasia* are the exercise of the discipline itself (Hotson 2000a, 31–32). This method underpins the *Cursus philosophici encyclopaedia*, where Alsted follows a Ramist explanation of the contents of philosophy, providing general definitions and divisions by dichotomies (Hotson 2007, 149–273; Burton 2011, 53). In the *Cursus*, however, *ars magna* disappears (Savini 2009), as the whole encyclopedia is based on *archelogia* (concerning principles), *technologia* (on the properties, order and division of disciplines), *hexilogia* (on mental habits), and *canonica* (described also in Alsted 1612). Philosophical disciplines are divided, in the *Cursus*, into theoretical (on necessary things, including pneumatics, mathematics, and cosmology), practical (on contingent things, i.e., the subject of ethics and politics), and

poetic (concerning second notions, as rhetoric and mnemonics) (Vasoli 1975; Hotson 2000a, 70–71). This partition of philosophy is kept in his 1630 *Encyclopaedia*, which presents also a new combinatorial art, based on Lull's and Bruno's mnemotechnics (though deprived of their magical, i.e., summoning, components (Yates 2001)) and on the knowledge of *praecognita*, which makes possible the learning of the entire encyclopedia (Hotson 2000a, 163–181).

In theology, Alsted maintained Trinitarian positions. His arguments in favor of Trinity, such as that reality follows threefold structures, would be used by Leibniz against the Socinians (Antognazza and Hotson 1999; Hotson 2000b, 66–69). Moreover, along with Joseph Mede he was the founder of Reformed Millenarianism (Hotson 2000b, 1–30); in his *Methodus ss. theologiae* (1611) and in the *Cursus*, he provides a calculation of the end of the millennium (i.e., the time of the triumph of Christ) and of final judgment for 1694. This position was probably determined by the influence of the Hermetic tradition, envisaging a near regeneration of man. With the dramatic events of the Thirty Years' War, however, Alsted would foresee for this date only the beginning of the millennium (Alsted 1624, 1627; Hotson 2000b, 20–30, 94–120).

Cross-References

- Bruno, Giordano
- Calvinism
- Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism
- Hartlib, Samuel
- Images in Renaissance Science, Function of
- Keckermann, Bartholomaeus
- Melanchthon, Philipp
- Ramism
- Reformation
- Socinianism
- Theology, Renaissance
- Universities in the Renaissance

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Al-Taftazānī

Born: 1322, Taftāzān, Khurāsān

Died: 1390, Samarqand

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Abstract

A famous fourteenth-century theologian and jurist, al-Taftāzānī is one of the last representatives of the high tide of Ash'arite philosophical theology.

Full Name

Full name Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ūd ibn 'Umar ibn 'Abd Allāh; subsequently also quoted simply as al-'Allāma.

Biography

A theologian and jurist of considerable renown, al-Taftāzānī was born in 1322 in the village of Taftāzān in Khurāsān. Our knowledge of his education is scant. He is said to have been a student of al-Ījī but this is unlikely, al-Taftāzānī's open admiration of the older colleague notwithstanding. Similarly, he was probably not a student of Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī either, although he may well have benefited from the latter's philosophical erudition at a more mature stage of his career. At the apex of his career, al-Taftāzānī was attached to courts of the Kart dynasty and the Golden Horde and, after Timur's ascent to

power, was favorably received in his court at Samarqand. However, the veneration dwindled due to a scholarly rivalry against the much younger al-Jurjānī. Indeed, al-Taftāzānī is said to have been hastened toward his end in 1390 by a public defeat to the junior colleague in an exegetical debate.

In jurisprudence, al-Taftāzānī commented on sources from both Ḥanafite and Shāfi'ite schools. In theology, he mainly endorses the Ash'arite doctrine although in some question he leans toward Māturīdism. Apart from theology and law, he also wrote on logic (notably the popular epitome *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wa al-kalām*), grammar, rhetoric, and Qur'ānic exegesis. His most substantial theological work is the manual *al-Maqāṣid* as well as his own commentary to it that bears the title *Maqāṣid al-maqāṣid*. He also wrote a commentary on Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafi's Māturīdite creed, which was widely used in teaching and later became the subject of several supercommentaries. Also noteworthy are his Persian commentary on the Qur'ān and a polemical treatise on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*.

Al-Taftāzānī's theology latches on to the philosophically influenced tradition that leads by way of al-Ījī back to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. In *al-Maqāṣid* and his own commentary, he describes his project in terms familiar from Avicennian philosophy; parallel in purpose and structure to theoretical philosophy, theology (*kalām*) differs from it by being practiced within a religious community and being informed by a number of revealed premises. Al-Taftāzānī also describes the structure of the science of theology in terms of the Platonic scheme of origination and return (*al-mabda' wa al-ma'ād*), following thereby the outlines of the philosophical curriculum. Moreover, the relation between theology and jurisprudence is described as analogous to that between theoretical and practical philosophy. Yet despite these similarities between the two ventures, al-Taftāzānī insists that in the end, theology is independent of philosophy. The same principles, albeit with some differences, are evident also in al-Taftāzānī's commentary on al-Nasafi's creed, which comes across as a strongly rationalistic interpretation of the central principles of

Islam. Although al-Taftāzānī was widely read by subsequent generations of scholars, it is an interesting fact that in light of the manuscript tradition, the particular combination of philosophical logic and *kalām* presented in *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wa al-kalām* seems not to have been unanimously accepted; though the two parts were copied profusely, they seem to have led largely separate lives.

His vacillation between Ash‘arite and Māturīdite doctrine notwithstanding, al-Taftāzānī can be characterized as belonging to the mainstream of anti-Mu‘tazilite Sunnism. This stance is clearly reflected, for instance, in his strong critique of the doctrine of the creation of the Qur’ān or the denial of God’s omnipotence and omniscience in favor of human freedom. Together with al-Ījī, al-Taftāzānī is a representative of the most mature point of the comprehensive theological summa tradition; subsequent centuries devoted a considerably greater effort to commenting on the achievements of earlier generations.

Cross-References

- [Al-Ījī](#)
- [Al-Jurjānī as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf](#)

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Alumbrados

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Abstract

The term *alumbrados* was applied by the Inquisition or Holy Office in Spain to denote a group of devout people who developed a new form of devotional practice in the province of Guadalajara, to the west of Madrid, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The name *alumbrado* comes from the verb *alumbrar*, to light up. The implication is that those who consider themselves *alumbrado* are lit up from within by their sense of spiritual intimacy with God. It was first invoked in an Edict of Faith proclaimed in Toledo on 23 September 1525 in response to the identification by the Holy Office of heresy among the Guadalajara worshippers, though they themselves would neither have used nor recognized the term *alumbrado*. The Edict of Faith listed the heretical practices associated with the so-called *alumbrados* and called for evidence and denunciations. The word, and the related term *alumbradismo*, would subsequently be used for almost two centuries within Roman Catholicism in Spain to describe groups of people suspected of engaging in a wide variety of heretical activities. Most of these had very little in common with the Guadalajara movement which can, with justification, be considered to be part of the gathering momentum towards reformation of Roman Catholic practices that crystallized in the one-time Augustinian, Martin Luther’s public declaration of his 95 *Theses* in 1517.

Impact and Legacy

From about 1512, in Guadalajara province in Spain, worshippers who became known as the *alumbrados* began to come together informally to develop new devotional practices, much of this in response to the mood for reform latent in the Catholic Church in the early sixteenth century. Most of the participants were *conversos* or New Christians, that is, those who had converted from Judaism prior to or in the wake of the Catholic Kings' edict of 1492 ordering Jews to leave Spain or convert to Catholicism. One of the reasons they may have resorted to establishing their own manner of intense devotional practice is that there were strict limits on the number of New Christians accepted into the major religious orders. Statutes were issued by the Spanish-founded Hieronymites in 1486, the Dominicans in 1496 and 1531, and the Franciscans in 1525 limiting numbers. A century later, the most significant Spanish-founded order, the Jesuits, under General Claudio Aguaviva, enacted a similar statute. In the Guadalajara area, those of a devout inclination who were New Christians but unable or unwilling to join conventional religious orders found themselves drawn to informal prayer groups called conventicles which were being set up in the early years of the new century. The approach of these conventicles was inspired by the growing interest in Erasmianism in Spain in the early sixteenth century, with its emphasis on the autonomy of the human subject; the direct study of the Bible as a text, unmediated by the devotional literature and books of sermons encouraged by the Catholic Church; and a form of meditation known amongst these worshippers as *dejamiento*, letting oneself go in contemplation and thus falling into the arms of God. This prayer method was very close to and partially based on the Franciscan practice of *recogimiento*, a more structured form of mental prayer which involved identifying appropriate times and places on which to meditate in silence on a particular aspect of Christian faith. *Dejamiento* was more adaptable and its adherents, the *dejados*, believed that one could abandon

oneself to the love of God anywhere and in the midst of any degree of activity. The *dejados* believed that the primary relationship of the contemplative was directly with God, not Jesus Christ, and that study of the Bible was the primary means of enlightenment. They had little time for involvement in good works as a means towards salvation in tandem with repentance. In a very Protestant and reformist sense, they saw much of this as distracting. To them, holy images, for example, used universally in Catholicism as devotional aids, were mere pieces of wood, unworthy of attention. They had a strong preference for mental or silent prayer and were unwilling to take part in formal church rituals. Their objective was to concentrate, in the purest possible way, on coming ever closer to God by means of *dejamiento* and autonomous study.

Isabel de la Cruz, a Franciscan tertiary in the towns of Pastrana and Cifuentes, a *beata* or middle or lower class laywoman devoted to living independently but as if she were a professed religious, is considered to be the leader of the movement. Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, an accountant to various noble households in Guadalajara, a married man with several children, and María de Cazalla, originally from Andalusia but married to a rich merchant from Guadalajara town, who had influential friends amongst the local aristocracy and at the nearby humanist-influenced university of Alcalá de Henares, were her two most noteworthy collaborators. All three were *conversos* or New Christians; all three had close ties to the Franciscans, an order then undergoing substantial reform, and whose mystical practices – those of the Friars Minor – were already seen as suspect by the Holy Office, and Cazalla moved in university circles, where in the 1520s the works of Erasmus, and for a limited period, those of Luther, were in free circulation, first in Latin, then in the vernacular. In the eyes of the Holy Office and those who would denounce them, their *converso* heritage left them open to the accusation of being Judaizers or crypto-Jews and their concentration on communion with God the Father and on reading the Bible, to accusations of Protestant heresy.

Indeed, the *dejados* proselytized freely only between 1512 and 1519. Two years after the posting of Luther's theses, the first denunciations were made to the Holy Office.

The movement was very much oriented towards the spirituality of lay people and women in particular, though there was also a significant number of friars and ordained priests among them. At its peak, the *dejados*' influence spread over an area encompassing contacts in Valladolid, the university city of Alcalá de Henares, and the estate of the Admiral of Castile, in Medina de Río seco. The vast majority of the *dejados* were New Christians and they represented a valid but, in their time, much distrusted and denigrated *converso* tradition of nonheretical Christian contemplation and practice within mainstream Spanish Catholicism. A series of trials took place over the next 20 years and the leaders of the movement were imprisoned and punished, though not severely. The Holy Office became much more interested in countering Lutheranism from the late 1520s onward. Throughout the sixteenth century, it frequently used the label *alumbrado* to attack those it suspected of Protestant tendencies, including some of the most luminous names in the history of the Spanish Catholic Church, such as Teresa of Avila, John of Avila, and Ignatius Loyola.

Two sets of trials took place in southwestern and southern Spain later in the century, in the province of Extremadura (Llerena) in the 1570s and in Seville in the 1620s. These trials targeted groups of mystics who professed to emulate, without much of the intellectual underpinning, the abandonment to God style of meditation espoused by Isabel de la Cruz and her disciples. Whereas the early *dejados* in general upheld the highest standards of propriety and earnestness in their meditational practice, going so far in their heyday as to condemn what they saw as the vulgar exhibitionism of some Franciscan *recogidos* all too willing to be witnessed in histrionic trance states, many of the *alumbrados* of Llerena were reportedly just as publicly demonstrative as the exhibitionist Franciscans. Most of those indicted were

either uneducated *beatas* or poorly-educated and doctrinally suspect priests who appeared to exercise minute control over how the women lived and displayed their acts of meditation, often presented as visionary transports, in public. Though the Edict of Faith issued in Llerena in 1574 listed a similar series of practices to those mentioned in the Toledo edict of 1525, there was a much greater focus on aspects of social behavior. However, in this instance, understanding of the degree of malpractice, especially sexual misconduct or episodes of demonic possession, engaged in by the *alumbrados* of Extremadura is entirely dependent on the trial transcripts and a significant proportion of the evidence for the 1579 trials was obtained through the use of torture.

The *auto da fe* which followed the trials of 1579 in Llerena saw nine men (priests) and ten women (*beatas*), tried and punished. The most severe female punishment was 400 lashes while several of the priests were sentenced to 4–6 years of service in the galleys. That these punishments were much harsher than those handed down in Toledo suggests a more aggressive approach to suspect popular mysticism on the part of the Holy Office. It also indicates the wholly malign influence of the Dominican Fray Alonso de la Fuente, a conspiracy theorist who not only orchestrated the first of the Llerena trials in 1575 but also went on to accuse the saintly preacher Fray Luis de Granada and the entire Jesuit order of *alumbradismo* and heresy in a letter written in 1576 to the Portuguese authorities. Though Fray Alonso was essentially discredited by the time of his death in 1592, the identification of *alumbradismo* with demonic possession and sexual misconduct had become entrenched. The 1623 Edict of Faith in Seville added fifteen new articles to those listed in Llerena in 1574, broadening the definition of *alumbradismo* so that it encompassed everything from atheism, witchcraft, and blasphemy to bigamy. An accusation of *alumbradismo* could thereby be made in relation to almost any conceivable social or religious transgression. In Seville, there was a new emphasis on the

eradication of imposture, that is, false mystics purporting to have visions of the persons of God or the saints, usually in public or in front of witnesses. The number of *beatas* and indeed enclosed nuns claiming visions of the divine grew exponentially under the reign of the devout Philip III (1599–1621) and the time had come to exercise some form of control. By 1623, the Holy Office was no longer concerned with fighting Protestantism, as it had been in 1525 in Guadalupe but in governing the religious and social conduct of Catholics in a nation which was by then almost wholly orthodox in terms of dogma and religious observance.

Accusations of *alumbradismo* would surface over the rest of the seventeenth century and beyond but by then the relationship between the errors denounced to the Holy Office and the ideals of Isabel de la Cruz and her followers in Guadalupe was nonexistent, and *alumbradismo* was a vague catch-all term for any form of deviation from the norm.

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Amiroutzes, George

Born: ca. 1400, Trebizond

Died: After 1470, Constantinople

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Abstract

George Amiroutzes was a Byzantine philosopher, theologian, and writer. During his lifetime he was considered the intellectual equal of Georgios Gemistos (Plethon) and Georgios (Gennadios) Scholarios. A native of Trebizond, he attended the Council of Ferrara/Florence in 1438/1439, where he supported the Unionist views. He led a diplomatic mission to Genoa in 1447 and held the title of *protovestiarios* and possibly of *megas logothetes*. After the fall of Trebizond in 1461, he was taken captive to Constantinople and, later, Adrianople but was soon invited by Mehmed II to stay at his court, where he continued his scholarly activity. His philosophical views can be reconstructed mainly on the basis of a short text preserved in cod. Plut. 87.17 in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence and 15 philosophical treatises in Cod.96-37 (ff. 1r-90r) in the Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares (Toledo). The short text in the Florentine manuscript refutes the view that Aristotle believed in a single common intellect for all men. The treatises preserved in the Toledo manuscript most probably reflect his activity as a teacher and do not constitute a comprehensive whole. One of the major themes running through them is the

attempt to refute Platonic philosophy. Most importantly, these treatises reveal the profound influence of Thomas Aquinas on A.

Biography

Amiroutzes' name, which is variously spelled in the sources (Ameroukes, Ameroutzes, Amiroukios), is a diminutive of the Turkish "emir." In the rubrics of his own writings, as well as in the writings of his contemporaries, he is frequently called "The Philosopher," which attests to the respect he enjoyed, probably in his native Trebizond but not in the competitive atmosphere of the Byzantine capital (Monfasani 2011). A. is known as a philosopher and theologian. He was born in Trebizond ca. 1400 to a wealthy and noble family and died in Constantinople after 1470. He possessed several vineyards in Trebizond (Beldiceanu and Beldiceanu-Steinherr 1981). Amiroutzes is first documented as an advisor to the Byzantine delegation to the Council of Ferrara-Florence, where he was a fervent supporter of the Union of the Churches (*ad indicem* in Laurent 1971). His pro-unionist stance is evidenced especially by his written statement on the subject of the *filioque* which he provided on 30 of May, 1439 (text in Jugie 1937). After his return to Trebizond, he supposedly repudiated his earlier views and gradually became an anti-Unionist (Karpov 2007). The main evidence adduced in support of this thesis is a letter to a certain Demetrios, Duke of Nauplion (text in Mohler 1920; Jugie 1939), but this letter has since been shown to be a forgery, fabricated most probably by George Koressios (Gill 1958). Nevertheless, the hypothesis concerning A.'s gradual drift toward anti-Unionist views after his return to Trebizond can also be substantiated from the fact that John Eugenikos (b. after 1394 d. after 1454/1455) sent him an epitaph of his brother, Mark of Ephesus (1394–1445), a staunch anti-Unionist, as well as from the fact that Amiroutzes was most probably a scribe of Cod. par. gr. 428 containing the *Mémoires* of Sylvester Syropoulos (Gamillscheg 1986), a supporter of

Mark of Ephesus. Between mid-April and the end of June 1447 (not between 1447 and 1449, see Karpov 1986, 1984), Amiroutzes was an envoy of John IV Komnenos of Trebizond (1429–1460) to Genoa, where he negotiated the marriage between one of the sons of John IV and a daughter of Lodovico di Campofregoso (Karpov 2007). This mission is mentioned in a letter of Georgios Scholarios to John IV (Scholarios IV, 453–454). Subsequently (ca. 1458–1461), he rose to the highest dignities of *protovestiaros* and perhaps *meas logothetes* at the court of John's successor David I Komnenos (1458–1461). In Turkish sources, he is known as *protovestiaros*, whereas he is called *logotheta* in the rubric of his *Dialogus de fide*. Trebizond fell into Turkish hands in August 1461. Amiroutzes was later accused of having treacherously incited David to surrender the city to the Ottomans (Bekker 1849; Lambros 1902). He may have even been related to Mahmoud Pasha (1451–1481), who led the attack on Trebizond, though this connection is disputed. There are only two sources that explicitly make depict A. a relative of Mahmoud Pasha. The *Ekthesis Chronike* (p. 26, 17–20) says that their mothers were daughters of Iagari (Trapp et al. 1976). The *Historia Politica* (p. 38, 2–3) says that A. was a nephew of Iagari, but without mentioning Mahmoud. After the surrender of Trebizond, Amiroutzes was sent as a hostage to Constantinople and later Adrianople, which provides some circumstantial evidence against the assumption of his kinship with Mahmoud Pasha. There is also a letter dated 11 December 1461 which A. sent to Bessarion telling of the surrender of Trebizond, which concludes with a plea for money to ransom his son Basil (text in Lampros 1914). A.'s fame as a philosopher must have reached Mehmed II a year or two after the surrender of Trebizond. A. was invited to stay at his court, where he continued his scholarly activity, discussing with the sultan about the Christian faith and preparing a map of the world based on Ptolemy. The literary fruit of these discussions is his *Dialogus de fide* which had been previously known only from a Latin translation. The Greek original has been recently discovered by

Monfasani in Cod. 96-37 in Toledo but remains unpublished. A short geographical work with the title *De his quae geographiae adesse debent*, based on Ptolemy, is another product of this period. It was translated into Latin by an unknown scholar and published by Johannes Werner (Vernerus) at Nuremberg in 1514. The only mention of A. by contemporary historians is found in Kritoboulos (Reinsch 1983), while the passage dedicated to A. in Laonikos Chalkokondyles' *Histories* (vol. II, p. 249, 3–24) is a later interpolation (Darkó 1922–1927, ed., vol. I, pp. xi–xii).

It is the view of modern scholarship (Frangedaki 1984; Argyriou and Lagarrigue 1987) that A.'s rather negative reputation in later sources is probably due to the hostility of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate, on account of the fact that after A.'s death, his son Alexander/Skender Bey, in his capacity as Mehmed II's chief treasurer, confiscated church property. A.'s infamy is based on several charges. Besides the role he supposedly played during the siege of Trebizond and his alleged conversion to Islam, there is his alleged abuse of confidence which resulted in the execution of David Komnenos together with his three sons and his nephew in 1463 (Chalkokondyles, vol. II, p. 249, 3–24). To this should be added the accusation of bigamy. According to the *Ekthesis chronike* (p. 27, 15–28, 6), the daughter of Demetrios Asan, the widow of the last Duke of Athens, was brought to Adrianople. From the moment A. saw her, he decided that she should become his wife. His first wife was still alive and loudly objected to the divorce, so the Patriarch Ioasaph I refused to annul their marriage. A. resorted to the Turks and as a result both the patriarch and the *megas ekklesiarches* were severely mistreated: the former's beard was shaved and the latter's nose slit, after which the patriarch was deposed and A. succeeded in his romantic plans.

Although A. must have enjoyed significant fame as a philosopher, it is not known where he studied philosophy and if and where he taught. The widespread thesis that he had studied under John Argyropoulos (ca. 1393/1394–1487) was shown by Monfasani (2011) to be a mere

assumption of modern scholarship that finds no support in the extant sources. Given that A. was born ca. 1400, he must have belonged to the same generation of Aristotelian scholars as John Argyropoulos and Georgios Scholarios. It is possible that like them, he could have studied in Constantinople under John Chortasmenos (ca. 1370– before 1439) and Joseph Bryennios (ca. 1350–1430).

Our knowledge of his philosophical views derives chiefly from two texts, i.e., a short text (a single folio) in the fifteenth-century philosophical miscellany in Cod.Plut. 87.17 in the Biblioteca Laurenziana (Florence) and 15 short philosophical treatises identified by Monfasani in Cod. 96-37(ff. 1r-90r) in the Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares (Toledo) and published in Monfasani (2011). The philosophical views expressed in these texts can be supplemented from some passages in his *Dialogus de fide*. The text in the Florence manuscript refutes the view that Aristotle believed in a single common intellect for all men. Macé and Van Deun (2009) are of the opinion that in this text, A. is refuting Averroes. Monfasani (2011) pointed out that A. could have just as easily been refuting the Greek commentators Alexander and Themistios. The 15 philosophical treatises in the Toledo manuscript cover a range of subjects and do not constitute a comprehensive or systematic work. The kind of geographical, semantic, and etymological information contained in them led Monfasani (2011) to the conclusion that they most probably reflect A.'s activities as a teacher. They could reflect basic themes in his teaching in Trebizond as early as 1430s and 1440s but might also be plausibly dated as late as A.'s stay in Constantinople in the 1460s. The first treatise is doxographical. A consistent theme running through the entire collection is anti-Platonism. Monfasani identified a procession of being and the First Cause as a major subject of the collection (I, II, IV, V, VI, VIII, IX, XIII, and IVX). Another is psychology (III, XI, and XII). Of the remaining three tractates, VII contains a critique of Plotinus' understanding of time; X is an analysis of happiness, and XV is a refutation of the theory of indivisible lines and magnitudes. More

importantly, the treatises reveal Thomistic influences. For instance, the argument in X, 18, 3, is based on the notion of *primum in aliquo genere*. XI and XII draw on Aquinas' doctrine of the unicity of the substantial form. In III, 8, 1, where A. argues that if the world were not eternal it would now not exist, Monfasani (2011) has discerned correspondences with Thomas Aquinas' famous third argument for the existence of God. In XIII, 7, 1–2, A. argues that the First Cause and not matter is ultimately responsible for the individuation of creatures, a view that has a striking parallel in the *Summa contra gentiles* II cc. 39–45, where Aquinas demonstrates that it is the First Cause and not matter that is responsible for the *distinctio rerum*. Monfasani (2011) also discovered parallels between V, 1, 9–11, and XIV, 2, 7–9, and Avicenna's doctrine of emanation, namely, that the First Intelligence necessarily produces the Second Intelligence, which in turn produces the Third Intelligence with the process continuing to the Tenth Intelligence. This doctrine is formulated in almost identical terms in the *Dialogus de fide* (f. 116v/23v), where A. makes explicit reference to a certain Apoales, which most probably conceals Abu 'Ali, the name Avicenna in its complete form Abū Alī al-Husain ibn Abdullā hībn Sīnā. If A. knew anything of Avicenna's doctrine, he must garnered this knowledge from Aquinas (SCG II c. 42), since Avicenna's works were not available in Greek.

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Amor

- [Love in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Amore

► Love in Renaissance Philosophy

Amyot, Jacques

Born: 30 October 1513

Died: 6 February 1593

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Abstract

Jacques Amyot (Melun, October 30, 1513 – Auxerre, February 6, 1593), bishop of Auxerre from 1570, former tutor of Charles IX and Henry III, is one of the greatest translators of Greek Renaissance French (Blignières, 1968 [1852]) and after. If he thus provides especially the translation of *Les vies parallèles des hommes illustres* (1559) and that of *Les oeuvres morales et meslées* (1572) of the writer and Greek thinker Plutarch of Chaeronea (ca 45–ca 125), its activity of second author raises the question of its status as “philosopher.”

Biography

Jacques Amyot (Melun, October 30, 1513 – Auxerre, February 6, 1593), bishop of Auxerre from 1570, former tutor of Charles IX and Henry III, is one of the greatest translators of Greek Renaissance French (Blignières, 1968 [1852]) and after. If he thus provides especially the translation of *Les vies parallèles des hommes illustres* (1559) and that of *Les oeuvres morales et meslées* (1572) of the writer and Greek thinker Plutarch of Chaeronea (ca 45–ca 125), its activity of second author raises the question of its status as “philosopher.”

The working philologist he realizes from previous editions and manuscripts is especially visible in his annotations between 1565 and 1572 on its Greek copy of *Moralia*. It involves the superposition of two languages but also two cultures, Amyot wishing to popularize in French the Greek and Roman stories, and more broadly, the ancient *paideia*. So, while standing as close as possible to the “intent” of Plutarch on many thematic and corpus of him, he happens to introduce on them, deliberately or not, changes. Thus, he readily adds at the beginning or end of the texts details on lacks of the text he found, sometimes explicits enunciation of the situation, highlights the kind (“en forme de devis,” “déclamation”). Especially in the translation itself, some concepts are affected slides. To take some examples, the text “De la fatale destinée” of the *Oeuvres morales et meslées* moral reveals the difficulties that may arise in the spirit of the sixteenth century a world of intelligibility system derived from neo-Platonism, what seems to fit, in several stories of *Les vies*, a stronger presence shots of “chance,” few conform to the providentialism of the author first (Guerrier and Tourmon 2006). Moreover, in the animal texts of the *Oeuvres morales et meslées*, we read in the French greater presence of “prudence” attributed to animals, the term translated from both “*phronesis*” that “*Synesis*” of the original (Guerrier 2012a, 121–136).

This is even more important than the works of Amyot, republished several times, influence number of scholars, including Montaigne, making his praise in chapter II.4 of the *Essais*, informing his own book with Amyot’s work, taking among others in the *Apologie de Raimond Sebon* (II.12) the long meditation on time of “Que signifioit ce mot Ei,” in which man is immersed in contrast to God who is permanent (Pouilloux in Guerrier 2008, 293–308), and the rehabilitation of the animal which after him continue the Libertines and materialist philosophers (Guerrier 2007). However, it is noted that since 1581, then in the seventeenth century, Plutarch’s *Moralia* will be read in the “contrefaçons” (in the words of Aulotte 1965) obtained through the Protestant S. Goulart, versions of Amyot provided of index, punctuated by headlines, and including

summaries for each text, summary that guide the direction of the latter toward a forced Christianization, completing a move that had initiated the Fathers of the Church (Morlet in Guerrier and Payen 2005, 115–138).

In short, the role of “vector” or “runner” translator, of ancient “moral philosophy” as many of its doctrines (Platonism, Stoicism, Epicureanism), gives Amyot a special place in Renaissance philosophy, putting highlight how *imitatio* and mobilized scientist gestures can contribute to a story of ideas specifically humanist.

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Anabaptism

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Abstract

The term Anabaptism refers to the Christian movement that emerged in sixteenth-century Europe as a consequence of, and in parallel to, the Reformation. Originally, the name was used by the opponents of the movement because it disapproved of infant baptism and practiced baptism on believing adults. The German term “*Wiedertäufer*” was later changed to “*Täufer*” (Baptist), while in the English language scholarship, the term “Anabaptist” was kept because “Baptist” refers to an entirely different entity.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Despite strong persecution by both Catholics and Protestants, the Anabaptist movement spread across sixteenth-century Europe. From Switzerland to Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Moravia, Poland, Hungary, Transylvania, and Britain, it finally reached North America in the

late seventeenth century. Apart from denying infant baptism, Anabaptism has often been associated with an apolitical attitude toward society that in most cases resolved in a refusal to swear oaths, in taking part in any form of public authority, and to bear arms.

Though most historians now agree with J.M. Stayer's polygenesis idea (Stayer 2002), e.g., multiple geographical points of origin of the movement, the debate over where and when the movement actually began is still an open one. The first adult "rebaptism" occurred in Zurich on January 21, 1525, when Conrad Grebel baptized George Blaurock, who in turn baptized other members of the Swiss Brethren (Estep et al. 1976). This event is considered to be the true starting point of the movement by the scholarship supporting the monogenesis theory (Bender 1950), only taking into account the practice of adult baptism and not considering the previous theological debate over the sacrament, rejecting those who did not adhere to the non-violent statements of the Swiss Brethren (such as the followers of Thomas Müntzer or the Münsterites).

The tendency in literature is to separate the early Saxon Reformation from the first Anabaptist movements in Switzerland and Austria. Recent studies (Balint and Martinuzzi 2017) have shown how the first Swiss and German Anabaptists had been influenced by the early Saxon reformers Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt and Müntzer in matters of authority, baptism and communalism, as well as on other more theological doctrines. Grebel's 1524 correspondence with Müntzer and Karlstadt shows clear evidence of this (Harder 1985; Matheson 1994). Müntzer's spiritualism influenced many German Anabaptists, such as Hans Denck, Hans Hut, and Melchior Rinck, who all created their own shades of Anabaptism. Even more so than Müntzer, the teachings of Karlstadt would not only influence members of the Swiss Brethren, such as Felix Mantz and Andreas Castelberg, but also the thought of Melchior Hoffman, and the apocalyptic leaders of the Münsterites, Jan Matthijs and Jan Beukels of Leiden. A profound change was brought about by

these figures, threatening the power of the secular rulers – traditional customs, laws, and practices – in the name of a higher authority.

Although it was seen, from the outside, as an aggregate movement, from the inside it never managed to unite in one single cohesive group. Bitter internal conflicts led to insurmountable divisions within the movement. These differences are related to political and eschatological matters. The first attempt to create doctrinal unity was with Michael Sattler's *Schleitheim Confession* (1527).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The community of goods was one of the few uniting elements: it was a project dear to the Swiss Brethren that would define it as *Liebeskommunismus* (sharing and caring); Müntzer had promoted the idea that *omnia sunt communia*; the Hutterites in Moravia promoted the restoration of the community of goods (The Hutterite Brethren 1987) while the Dutch Mennonites expressly rejected such radical interpretation of the Christian message. Other forms of Anabaptism included more spiritualist, apocalyptic, and even anti-Trinitarian views, as was the case of those that gathered at the Council of Venice of 1550.

Impact and Legacy

From 1539 Menno Simons, a former priest, became the leader of the Melchiorite remnants in the Habsburg Netherlands. Menno preached in favor of non-violence and separatism and created one of the most widespread forms of Anabaptism found today, the Mennonites. Under the leadership of Jakob Hutter, a hat maker from Tyrol, a new sect was coined (1533) that practiced the community of goods. Still keeping the original organizational form, the Hutterites are active today in North America. In the same way, the Amish trace their existence back to 1693, when Jakob Ammann revived the Swiss Anabaptist apolitical and separatist movement.

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Anatomical Theater

► [Anatomy Theater](#)

Anatomy Theater

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Abstract

Temporary and permanent anatomy theaters were used to provide public anatomy demonstrations for the academic community and, later, for a wider audience. They did not initially enhance the visual study of anatomy but rather cultivated the study of anatomy as a part of natural philosophy. Not only did they encourage interest in anatomy, they were related, as rituals, to communal expressions of sacrifice, redemption, and punishment. Variations in their use and significance depend partly on geographical location.

Synonyms

[Anatomical theater](#); [Dissection](#).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Although anatomical theaters have served as an emblem for the importance of seeing and observing nature during the so-called scientific revolution, they were initially used, like the lecture hall, for the presentation of knowledge, much of which was text-based, and for disputation (Carlino 1999). In its earliest instantiation, the anatomical theater presented anatomy “as a branch of natural philosophy” as Vesalius (following Galen) put it in *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) (Klestinec 2011). In Padua, into the “glittering cradle” of the anatomical theater (built between 1594 and 1595), the famous anatomist, Fabricius of

Aquapendente, organized his study of anatomy around Galenic and Aristotelian categories of *historia*, *actio*, and *usus (utilitas)* and, inside the theater, presented an account of anatomical forms and functions that culminated in a teleological claim about final causes (Cunningham 1997; Siraishi 2004).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Spaces, however, tend to be heterogenous, and this was definitely true of the anatomical theater. The didactic function of the theater, for example, conflicted with its designation as a potentially theatrical space. Frequently stipulated in the statutes, the seating arrangement placed professors, administrators, and statesmen near the anatomist and the corpse rather than the students, who were sent to the upper tiers of the theater. Perhaps this was why, in Padua, students sometimes complained about their professor, Fabricius' public demonstrations, and admitted to a strong preference for private anatomies, especially those held by Paolo Galeotto and by Fabricius' successor, Giulio Casseri. In these private anatomical lessons, students acquired a more comprehensive understanding of human anatomy – for example, how the bones, or muscles, or vascular structures worked as a system – and sometimes had the chance to participate in the process of dissection. So different from the public anatomy demonstration, these experiences engaged the senses of sight and touch (as well as sound and smell) and suggest an origin for the kind of visual scrutiny that has come to be associated with the study of nature in fields such as botany and natural history during the so-called scientific revolution (Findlen 2006; Mandressi 2003).

Although the statutes for the annual anatomy demonstrations are fairly consistent across Italy – designating one to two corpses a year and requiring that the bodies be both ignoble (criminal) and foreign – local settings shaped the particular features of the experiences and practices inside the anatomical theater (e.g. Semenzato 1994). Public demonstrations of anatomy took place in January and February, cold months that slowed the process of decay in corpses and coincided with the break

between semesters. This was also the time of carnival, a celebration of excess that preceded Lent, a period of deprivation. Although the tradition of public anatomies in Padua developed as formal events and is better characterized as a contrast to carnival, public anatomies in Bologna overlapped considerably with the ritualized festivities of the carnival. By the seventeenth century, as Giovanna Ferrari has explained, spectators dressed in costumes began to appear in the anatomical theater (Ferrari 1987). As carnival rituals and anatomies began to overlap, the boundary between academic and local communities became newly porous. By contrast, in Padua, students complained when local men came to the theater; and, in one instance, they explained that the presence of “gaping craftsmen and vulgar men” had contaminated the theater and their ability to contemplate its “fruits” (Klestinec 2011).

Both the ritualized public demonstration of anatomy and the theater itself have played a key role in debates about punishment and the historical transformations of state power (and rise of absolutism). Influenced by Foucault's work on punishment, Jonathan Sawday has characterized the anatomist's complicity in the expansion of state power, describing the anatomist's dissection of the body as a continuation of the work of the executioner (Sawday 1995). In contrast, Katharine Park has characterized the cultural anxiety around dissection and the work of the anatomist as a result of upended burial (Park 1994, 2006). Developing the role of ritual, Andrea Carlino has drawn attention to the authorities and religious *confortatori* who sought to mediate the salvation of the criminal, up to the last moments of his life, thereby showing how public anatomies could inspire thoughts of sacrifice (the body) as well as redemption (the soul) (Carlino 1999). These cultural dimensions subtend the study of anatomy and its presentation inside the anatomical theater.

Impact and Legacy

The relationship between public anatomy demonstrations and private dissections changed over time. In the seventeenth century, the two

formats overlap, and the anatomical theater held demonstrations that emphasized not only the natural philosophical study of anatomy but also technical skill (*peritia*) associated with dissection, vivisection, and surgery (McVaugh 2006; Klestinec 2011). Eventually, the anatomical theater incorporated the display and discussion of anatomical pathologies (Cunningham 2010).

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Anatomy, Renaissance

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Abstract

Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, the members of medical, lay, religious, university and artistic communities, often with various degrees of collaboration, observed the interior and exterior of human and animal bodies, utilizing a wide variety of practices. Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries when anatomy succeeded in establishing itself as a vital realm of medical training, the field maintained close ties to disparate philosophical traditions, from a foundation in Aristotelian inquiries into first principles in the earlier period, to increasing attention in the fifteenth and sixteenth to questions of form and function inspired by Galen. By the mid-to-late sixteenth century anatomists increasingly associated their field with natural philosophy and the study of natural phenomena and natural principles.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Scholars formerly construed Renaissance anatomy as a matter of public (and less often private) dissections undertaken by learned physicians and surgeons within universities, principally on the Italian peninsula, where the field saw its most important advances. Although important anatomical developments occurred within this context, most notably in the period leading up to, including and immediately following Andreas Vesalius, this narrow construal of anatomy resulted from the erroneous assumption that the Catholic Church prohibited dissection (Carlino 1999; Mandressi 2003; Park 1994, 2006). It was long assumed that motivating the substantial religious and civic oversight of the location, mode, and number of dissections advanced a judicial agenda in which executed criminals, whose bodies remained a

primary source for university anatomists, were punished into the afterlife (Mandressi 2003; Park 1994, 2006).

It is now generally acknowledged, however, that the practices associated with Renaissance anatomy were considerably more varied than this picture suggested. Dissection was not prohibited by the Church, although attitudes toward it remained ambivalent at best and many anatomists openly acknowledged that it would provoke feelings of repugnance in all but the most resolute of individuals (Park 1994, 2006; Ferrari 1996; Carlino 1999; Mandressi 2003). The opening of the body during autopsy and embalming considerably predated university dissections, actually originating within lay and religious contexts (Park 1994, 2006). Already in the twelfth century, cadavers were cut open as part of funeral rites; autopsies and embalming were carried out by members of male and female religious orders, sometimes in consultation with physicians (Park 1994, 2006). The early fourteenth century witnessed an increase in documented autopsies, particularly those associated with individuals of saintly conduct, though lay men and women likewise requested autopsies of family members in the hopes of preventing hereditary illnesses and conditions (Park 2006). The early fourteenth century likewise saw the emergence of university dissections. The anatomist Mondino de' Liuzzi, author of what was to become a widely utilized and heavily Galenic textbook, his *Anatomia* of 1316, alluded to dissection. Spurred in part by medical humanism and the discovery and publication of ancient texts, particularly those of Galen (such as his *De usu partium*), dissections increased both within and especially outside university contexts up through the sixteenth century (Park 1994; French 1999; Mandressi 2003). For the relative scarcity of suitable cadavers, university dissections remained numerically inferior by far to private dissections undertaken for the sake of research or autopsies requested at the behest of private citizens or religious authorities (Park 1994). In the later period, vivisection was also revived on the model of the ancients for the sake of understanding the specific functions of parts (Cunningham 1997; French 1999; Shotwell 2013).

The formal conventions that university dissections followed would see significant modifications in the Vesalian era. In the fifteenth century, university lecturers sat in a raised pulpit, reading from an authoritative anatomical text such as Mondino or Galen. Below the lecturer and next to a cadaver laid out on a table, a demonstrator pointed out the relevant features in response to the textual passages, while a dissector, typically a surgeon or barber-surgeon, cut open the body (Carlino 1999; Cunningham 2010). This tripartite practice reflected the relative nobility of and distinct professions involved. The lecturer, a physician of theoretical medicine, was regarded as the most noble; he concerned himself with Aristotelian first principles (Ferrari 1996; French 1999; Cook 2006). The surgeon, whose expertise related to particular bodies, occupied a lesser rank. A radical shift occurred when Vesalius dispensed with the barbers and demonstrators, carrying out all three roles of lecturer, demonstrator, and dissector. Vesalius regarded direct observation and handling of the body as crucial. In this regard, Vesalius hewed to Galenic principles and methods, which remained the foundation of his practice, despite his criticism of Galen's particular errors (Cunningham 1997; Mandressi 2003; Park 2006).

Hospitals or civic authorities typically supplied cadavers for university dissections, though they might also be acquired, as Vesalius attested, through grave-robbing or other illicit means. Several considerations motivated the preference for bodies of condemned criminals: those subject to hanging remained more completely intact and presumably free of diseases that might alter the morphology of organs. Furthermore anatomists risked few challenges from family members of individuals hailing from distant locations or belonging to lowly social groups (Carlino 1999; Park 1994, 2006; Mandressi 2003).

University faculties in anatomy undertook their annual dissections (typically of one or two cadavers) during carnival season, thereby reaffirming the spectacular nature of these events (Cunningham 2010; Klestinec 2011). The crowd might number in the hundreds at these events and they frequently drew not only students and the

curious but also prominent members of a community (Carlino 1999; Cunningham 2010). The early sixteenth century saw the conception of the first anatomical theater by Alessandro Benedetti, and soon thereafter temporary and subsequently permanent anatomy theaters were built, reinforcing the theatrical, ritualistic nature of the public university dissection (Ferrari 1996; French 1999; Park 2006; Cunningham 2010; Klestinec 2011). These settings were not conducive to easy observation nor did they tend to further research, but they reinforced students' memories of authoritative texts and existing anatomical knowledge (Carlino 1999; Cunningham 2010; Klestinec 2011; Laurenza 2012). Public dissections likewise underscored anatomy's ties to philosophy; they focused on broad questions pertaining to the structure, design, and purpose of parts of the body, upholding Galenic teleology, and they presented dissection as a *memento mori* (French 1999; Klestinec 2011; Siraisi 1997). The sixteenth century witnessed an increase in public dissections in which bodies were prepared beforehand and parts presented for display (Klestinec 2011). Private dissections are widely attested, though less-well documented and inherently more difficult to reconstruct. Their small size promised students more direct access to touching and observing the body and thus more opportunity for the acquisition of manual expertise and the making of new discoveries (Klestinec 2011). By the end of the sixteenth, anatomists increasingly approached their subject as natural philosophers seeking to understand natural phenomena for their own sake (Cook 2006; Klestinec 2011). Over the course of three centuries, academic anatomists succeeded in establishing their field as a fundamental arm of medical education (Park 2006).

Renaissance artists likewise distinguished themselves for their contributions to anatomy, not only in the realm of illustration but also in their discovery of the structure and functioning of the body. Already in the early Renaissance artists demonstrated a more advanced understanding of the bone structure and musculature than their medical counterparts. By the end of the fifteenth century, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarroti undertook anatomical research of

their own, each later intending to produce a treatise on anatomy, though their plans were never realized (Laurenza 2012). Each also collaborated with well-known university anatomists. In spite of these considerable exchanges, Renaissance anatomists and artist-anatomists generally agreed that the latter concentrated upon what they termed "surface anatomy," ignoring the minutiae that might interest medical professionals (Laurenza 2012). Nevertheless physicians, anatomists, and artists shared many similar philosophical interests, particularly in a canonical or normative body, in questions of corporeal structure, order, symmetry, proportion, and beauty (Mandressi 2003; Klestinec 2011). Both groups were united in their investigations into form's relation to function and the use and movement of body parts (Mandressi 2003).

Cross-References

- [Colombo, Realdo](#)
- [Vesalius, Andreas](#)

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Angelikoudes, Callistos

Born/Died: Melenikon 14th Century

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Abstract

Holy Father and saint, author of numerous unconventional works. However, there is little information about his life, apart from the fact that he practiced the monastic life at a monastery in Meleniko and wrote his works during the second half of the fourteenth century. Callistos was primarily concerned with Thomas Aquinas' scholastic philosophy and theology, which he tried to oppose.

Biography

Callistos lived and flourished near Meleniko in Eastern Macedonia, during the second half of the fourteenth century. Living in a period when Hesychasm was glorious in the Byzantine

Empire, he himself was so deeply influenced by it that he was considered one of the most important representatives of the Hesychast mysticism. Being a supporter of Hesychasm, he was favored by the Serbian despot John Oungliesa (†1371). As mentioned in a sigillum – an official decree of Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos (1300–1374) – Callistos was a monk at 1371, and he was highly appreciated by religious and political figures of his time.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Callistos is the author of a vast amount of works on neptic theology, which includes 30 chapters and has not yet been published, except for a small excerpt, attributed to him, which was published in *Patrologia Graeca's* volume 147. Neptic theology is a religious movement focused on ascetic experience, which flourished during the thirteenth and fourteenth century in Mount Athos and its spiritual practice relied on endless (uninterrupted) praying and spiritual work, sincere repentance, and internal purification. Callistos' treatise *Trianta Logoi isihastikis parakliseos* is, most probably, the second part of another work which bears the title called *Isihastiki Agogi* but has not survived in its entirety. Callistos Angelikoudes' literary skills are evident mainly in his polemical writing *Peri tis outo kaloumenis siggrafis Thoma tou Akinatou kata Ellinon*, which criticizes on the basis of rather weak arguments of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles*, which was translated in Greek by Demetrios Cydones. Although, Alain de Libera thought of Angelikoudes arguments' as sound and convincing. Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles*, which reflected the efflorescence of Latin Aristotelian Christianity, enjoyed broad circulation in the Byzantine world thanks to Demetrios Cydones' translation. The importance of philosophical realism on the development of Christian theology was doubted in this controversial work of Callistos Angelikoudes. Namely, the general outline of the conflict between Hesychasts and Byzantine Thomists was reflected in Angelikoudes work. Demetrios Cydones and the Byzantine Thomists

were Callistos' targets. Callistos refuted Aquinas' philosophical realism arguing that, from a moral point of view, theological truth is based on consciousness, rather than on intellect and epistemology. According to Callistos, human intelligence can perceive, besides God, humanity in its totality.

Impact and Legacy

Callistos sought not only to highlight the early dispute between intellectualism, giving prominence to rational thought, and mysticism which promoted experience and religion but also to dissociate the Eastern Orthodox tradition from the Western scholastic one. He dealt with issues related to spiritual experience and the theory of the divine, as well as the individual experience of the divine through the divine eros, spiritual and inner prayer, and divine radiance. Callistos held that beatitude (theoptia) is not a theoretical point of view, as suggested by Thomas Aquinas; on the contrary, it is the vivid experience of the uncreated light. Moreover, according to Callistos, it is not possible for human intelligence to conceive of the divine essence through an analogical relationship with it. In his short treatise *Peri isihastikis trivis*, he praises spiritual prayer, its spiritual illumination, and elaborates on the conditions which allow the Hesychast to be united with God. In his *Eklogi apo ton agion Pateron Peri prosefhis kai prososis*, he suggests that the heart should be shielded with caution, rigor, and vigilance, in order to avoid the traps of evil lurking throughout its struggle to reach its destination, that is, eternal life. Callistos also emphasizes the inherent autonomy of religious experience as opposed to scholastic intellectualism and challenges the scholastic method of seeking the divine truth by reflection and syllogisms.

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Angels and Demons in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Angels and demons belong to the Renaissance period in many ways: from philosophy to theology, from medicine to cosmology, to art and literature, these figures appeared regularly enough to make them an essential element of this age. While Protestant theology abolished the cult of the angels and reshaped the entire angelological vision of Pseudo-Dionysius, on the Catholic side, prayers, festivals, and meditations dedicated to angels gradually increased. As for the philosophical reflection on angels/demons, there were two different lines of thought. On the one hand, there was a strong continuity with the angelology/demonology of medieval Scholasticism, made up of all those thinkers who expounded and commented on the thought of the great masters of the past, adding in some cases their own positions (see above all the case of Suarez). On the other hand, decidedly new perspectives emerged with the development of hermetic, magical, and cabalistic thought, thanks also to the immense work of the translation of the classics on Hermeticism and Neoplatonism undertaken

by Marsilio Ficino. This second line of thought (with philosophers such as Pico, Reuchlin, Trithemius, Agrippa, Campanella, Bruno – to name just a few) went beyond the simple description or theoretical treatment of angelological issues. On the basis of magical-cabalistic knowledge, the magician-philosopher claimed that interaction with these beings was possible. Such claims have always been seen with great suspicion by the Church, both Catholic and Protestant. Renaissance art and literature in turn incorporated and reinterpreted these beings, sometimes in an original way.

Heritage and Terminological Clarifications

Angels and demons were an integral aspect of the Renaissance worldview. Although the de-animations of the heavens slowly emerged in the Middle Ages, in the cosmological vision that prevailed before heliocentrism took hold, angels were still often depicted as intelligent beings that governed the celestial spheres, which in turn were thought to produce ineffable harmony through reciprocal movement. The words addressed by Lorenzo to Jessica in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* sum up poetically this vision: "Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven/ Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold. / There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest / But in his motion like an angel sings, / Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins; / Such harmony is in immortal souls, / But whilst this muddy vesture of decay / Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it" (V.1).

In the context of a philosophical interpretation linked to the Biblical-Christian concept of creation and on the basis of the authority of the Church Fathers and great doctors of Scholasticism, the Renaissance also acknowledged angels and demons as representing beings of another nature compared to humans, positioned between God and humans in the Great Chain of Being. Similarly, in general the Renaissance conception was that angels and demons opposed each other

invisibly, since, they were thought to be the legions of celestial forces faithful to God and on the other hand were a group of beings determined to destroy and kill, deliberately opposing God.

From cosmology to poetic literature, to art and from theology and philosophy to the practice of magic, these special, rational creatures, different from humans, regularly appear in a precise role that clearly reveals an aspect that is essential to the philosophical and theological sentiment of that period. It could be said that the Renaissance was the last period in which, in philosophy, prior to the advent of the scientific revolution, the Enlightenment, and the relentless process of secularization, angels and demons enjoyed peacefully the right of citizenship, having their natural place without division in a hierarchical view of the cosmos.

Rather complex is the fact that between these two forces, some authors (albeit rarely) mention entities that take no sides but are neutral, carefully referred to as "spirits" or "genii." Such beings vaguely recall those angels that according to Dante (*Inf.*, 3, 37–42) were neutral and then condemned to remain in the vestibule of hell. Again, for instance, in *The Tempest* the character of Ariel is introduced simply as "an airy spirit," and perhaps Shakespeare intentionally created an aura of ambiguity around him.

Thus, angels and demons, as a result of the abovementioned doctrine of creation, cannot but be considered together. Nevertheless, in this case it will be more practical to deal with them in two, separate sections: without wishing to clearly separate the two fields or the authors dealt with therein, the expression "angelology" for angels and "demonology" for demons will be adopted. However, it should be remembered that, technically speaking, angelology, the discipline concerning the nature of angels, also includes the study of demons that are considered *fallen angels* (see the expression *Angelus malus*, *idest Diabolus* in St. Thomas Aquinas). Indeed, the main treatises on angelology in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries frequently included a section devoted to damned angels (see the prime examples of the treatises by Suarez [1856](#) and Pétau [1868](#)). Conversely, the term "daemon" technically

includes all kinds of *spirits*, even “good demons.” For instance, in Marsilio Ficino the terms “bonus daemon” and “angelus” are considered synonyms. However, in the Christian European tradition, the name “demon” gradually became associated with an evil, fallen angel (“cacodaemon”).

The Renaissance inherited and reinterpreted an “angelological” and “demonological” tradition that was deeply rooted in the philosophical-theological, Greek and Roman, patristic and scholastic traditions, in Talmudic-rabbinic literature, in the Cabbala, and in the Gnostic and magical-theurgical traditions in late antiquity. Thus, it is a vast, complex subject, of which only a few basic indications are provided here, taking into consideration three key fields in both the “angelological” and “demonological” sections: (1) Philosophy and Theology, (2) Impact and Legacy (with specific reference to devotion and demonic magic), and (3) History of Art and Literature.

Angelology

Philosophy and Theology

In order to assess the extent of continuity or interruption between angelological treatises written by the great doctors in the Middle Ages and Renaissance thought, the type of philosophical work and literary genre should be first kept in mind. In this way, it is clear that the greatest degree of continuity with the past may be identified in the authors who methodologically followed in the footsteps of the scholastic tradition, such as all the foremost expounders and commentators of St. Thomas Aquinas (Cajetan, Banez, Molina, Alvarez, Pesantius, John of St. Thomas, and others). The Jesuit priest Francisco Suarez is also included in the scholastic tradition with his *De Angelis* (1620), which provides an extensive summary of angelology (and demonology) skillfully steering a middle course between the positions of Aquinas and Duns Scotus, upholding one or the other alternatively, or else in some cases providing his own original contributions: see, for example, his position on the relationship between the angels with bodies and

space; on the theory of angelic knowledge, or else concerning events in the period of time that is impossible to determine through human parameters, which goes from the first moment of the creation of angels, to their elevation, trial, and downfall for some angels; or on the preservation of their relationship with God for others. Again, following Jesuit scholastic tradition but with some original traits, within angelology there is an important development with *De Angelis* (1644) by Denis Pétau (Petavius), whose treatise stands out compared to past studies, adopting a clear, historical approach and specific sensitivity to the position of the Church Fathers.

However, it is a different matter with reference to the production of the most important humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as this often means making an overall appraisal of their *Weltanschauung* and taking into consideration the disruptive Protestant Reformation. In general, it can be said that humanism, as can be seen in such authors as Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, is less interested in the intricate scholastic issues on the nature of angels and considers the angel as being able to better enhance human potential and hence the dignity of humans. For example, Marsilio Ficino interprets the human soul as a *copula mundi*, the link between the higher degrees of reality (God and angels) and the lower degrees (quality and body). In *Oratio De Hominis Dignitate* (1486), Pico della Mirandola speaks of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones as “the bond which unites the highest minds, the Palladian order which presides over contemplative philosophy.” Nevertheless, in his famous *Oratio*, Pico also says that because of the special privilege of free will accorded to humans by God, nothing may stop them from elevating themselves to perfection, to rival the dignity and glory of the angels themselves.

What has been said so far in no way diminishes the attention paid by great humanists like Ficino and Pico to previous important scholars. For example, Ficino clearly acknowledges the importance of *De Hierarchia Coelestis* by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in such works as *De christiana religione*, *De Raptu Pauli* and *Theologia Platonica*. Other writings equally

bearing copious scholarly reference to the Church Fathers and scholastic doctors on the subject of angels are such texts as *Theses Nongentae* by Pico (e.g., see some of the theses drawn from Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Egidius Romanus; in the “Conclusiones paradoxae numero XVII secundum propriam opinionem,” see thesis 8, which aims to reconcile Aquinas and Duns Scotus on the question “If angels could yearn simply to be equal to God”).

A further new concept introduced by some humanistic Renaissance considerations is a sort of “step ahead” in the potential *relation* with angels, made possible for some through magic and the Cabbala, whose texts are interpreted by Pico and Reuchlin in the light of Christian dogmas. Pico discusses the heavens in the section of his *Heptaplus* (1489), entitled “De mundo angelico et invisibili.” A contemporary of Pico, the German humanist Johannes Reuchlin in *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517), argues that the Cabalist is equipped to understand the intricate conversation of angels. He also claims that he is a friend of theirs and thanks to this friendship is sometimes able to perform those wonderful deeds that people call miracles through his knowledge of the correct form of divine names (Book I, *sub fine*).

The Cabbalistic-Christian tradition would pave the way to a form of mystical-theosophical angelology, and one of the greatest exponents of this was Jakob Böhme. In works like *Morgenröte im Aufgang* (1612) or *De tribus principiis* (1619), Böhme believed that the mysteries of God and creation may be understood by humans in the chapters dedicated to angels in which he also speaks of fallen angels. The final outcome of this elevation is the glorification of humans above the hosts of angels themselves. This “superiority” may also be found in the mystical works of Johannes Scheffler, better known under the pseudonym of Angelus Silesius, whose most famous work written in verse, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* (1657), contains echoes of themes found in Rhine-Flemish mysticism. As regards treatises, from a strictly terminological point of view, in the German area between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the term “angelography” became widespread. For

example, see the work by Otto Casmann, *Angelographia* (1597).

Impact and Legacy: Devotion and Religious Piety

In addition to strictly academic systematic treatises, in the late scholastic period flourished a wealth of treatises that were less erudite and more mainstream, written for pastoral purposes to provide spiritual guidance and worship, especially as regards the guardian angel. See, for example, the *Llibre dels Angels* (1392) by the Franciscan Catalan writer, Francesc Eiximenis. Even more clearly in the popular pastoral tradition were the successful sermons, *Prediche volgari* (1427), held in the main square of Siena by the Franciscan friar, St. Bernardino, which contain numerous references to angels. One notable aspect of this preacher is his conception of human nature as being superior to the nine choirs of angels and the incorporation of Origen’s idea that humans substitute fallen angels.

As regards the spirit of the Counter-Reformation, according to the founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius Loyola, angels are objects of contemplation and reflection in his *Exercitia Spiritualia* (1548) (see, e.g., the Second Week, First Day, First Contemplation [§§ 106–108], or else the *Rules of Discernment of the Spirit* [§ 328ff.]). Designed to uplift the soul is also the dramatic and “spectacular” *Meditations on Hell* (First Week, Meditation V [§§ 65ff.]). Likewise, during the spiritually revitalized and dynamic period of post-Tridentine Catholicism, with the specific intent to provide meditation and uplift the soul is the reference to angels in the mystical works by St. John of the Cross (*Dark Night of the Soul*, *Living Flame of Love*, *Spiritual Canticle A*, *Spiritual Canticle B*, and *Ascent of Mount Carmel*). In the works’ powerful theological lyricism, it is interesting to note that although the angels are depicted as belonging to a higher level of reality, they are also considered wholly at the service of humans, as a model and end to which the soul could be lifted through prayer, toward complete self-transcendence.

However, as regards Protestantism, in general the cult of angels was not permitted, together with

the worship of saints and the Virgin Mary. Indeed, it was considered a sort of offense against God's sole majesty. Luther on this point was adamant and even more so Calvin, and the whole body of teaching regarding the existence and the role of angels in creation was summarized in a few, essential points. Consequently, hitherto highly esteemed works such as *On the Celestial Hierarchy* by Pseudo-Dionysius became less and less relevant: Calvin without hesitation speaks of "idle talk," considering this type of erudition superficial speculations that are best set aside, without claiming to wish to know what the scriptures did not allow us to know (*Institution de la religion chrétien*, I, 14, 4). Angels make no appearance in Calvin's first French catechism (*Instruction et confession de foy dont on use en l'église de Genève* – 1537), although Satan, the devil, and hell are mentioned in the work (see Part IV, second and sixth question). Nevertheless, such general reticence to discuss angelology did not prevent systematic works from being established in Protestant circles, such as *De operibus Dei* (1591) by Girolamo Zanchi (Zanchius), or works containing specific reference to guardian angels, such as the short work by Johannes Rivius, *De familiari cuiusque genio, seu praesidio Angelico libellus* (1537), or *De angelis angelicoque hominum praesidio* (1595) by Johannes Stuckius. Moreover, Martin Luther in the final part of *Der kleine Katechismus* (1529) inserted a prayer with specific reference to the guardian angel ("[...] Dein heiliger Engel sei mit mir/das der böse Feind keine Macht an mir finde. Amen" – see "Wie ein Hausvater sein Gesinde lehren soll, morgens und abends sich zu segnen").

The Catholic Reformation also supported a brief doctrinal approach in relation to the issue of the existence and role of angels, as evident in the short paragraphs in the *Catechismus Romanus* (1566): the spiritual world and angels were created by God from nothing; all the angels, including those which later became apostates, were granted God's grace and good will (see Pars I, Art. I, "Creantur Angeli et quales"). With this assertion the *Catechismus Romanus*, apart from adopting St. Augustine's thought (*De Civitate Dei*, XII, 9), reconfirmed the precepts of the

Constitutio "Firmiter" of the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215), subsequently adding only a brief mention of the subject of science and the power of angels (grounded in fundamental scriptural reference). The abovementioned "Art. I" concludes by asserting the banishment of sinner angels from the sublime realm and being "cast into the darkest prison of the earth, where they are eternally punished for their pride" (Ibidem). In the section where the cult of saints is legitimized (Pars III, Primum Praeceptum Decalogi, "*Cultus Sanctorum huic praecepto non repugnat*"), also confirmed is the legitimacy of worshipping the angelic spirits "whose work God uses to support not only his Church but the whole universe." Furthermore, their role as guardians is also mentioned. The precious service of guardian angels is briefly discussed at the beginning of the conclusion of the work (see Pars IV, Pater Noster Qui Es In Caelis, "*Orationis Dominicae proemium*"). The last part also contains a brief description of Satan and the attack of demons (Pars IV, Sexta Petitio).

The Catholic Church during the liturgical year authorized special feasts dedicated to guardian angels and to the three archangels, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Still on the subject of Catholicism, in the sixteenth century, litanies to St. Michael and to guardian angels became common. Such forms of popular devotion were often frowned upon by the Catholic Church, to the point of provoking open condemnation of those forms of devotion that used names or invocations that had not been expressly approved by the Church.

History of Art and Literature

Angelic iconography in the Western Christian tradition emerged with increasingly precise characteristics from the fourth century AD onward: white robes, nimbus, halo, and wings. Subsequently, the *sphaira*/globe (usually in the left hand) and the rod/staff/lance/sword (usually in the right hand) were added, and other features gradually appeared, such as ribbons, crowns, *clavi*/stoles, *pallium*, multicolored wings, sumptuous apparel, or armor. All this to express as precisely as possible the dignity and authority of the different angelic orders. The success of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's work on

angelic hierarchy promoted the dissemination of further symbols to define this, such as the throne, balance, and chain. In the second half of the fourteenth century, Guariento di Arpo bequeathed a rich and complex synthesis of angelic iconography in Padua, ruled by the Carraresi family at that time. Thus, once again the Renaissance came into a rich, cultural, and artistic heritage that was reinterpreted, extended, and to a certain degree revolutionized. The angels appear as fundamental figures in the depiction of characteristic evangelical themes: *The Annunciation* (to cite only a few of these famous examples, see Leonardo da Vinci (c. 1474–1475), Uffizi Gallery; Botticelli (1489–1490), *Cestello Annunciation*, Uffizi Gallery; Raphael (1502–1504), *Oddi Altarpiece*, Vatican Pinacoteca); *The Nativity* (Ghirlandaio (second half of the fifteenth century), Vatican Pinacoteca); *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* (Veronese (1570), Milan, Brera Pinacoteca); and *Resurrection of Christ and Women at the Tomb* (Beato Angelico (1438–1443), Florence, Museum of San Marco). Other typical themes are that of the guardian angel, symbolically represented through episodes from the *Book of Tobit*, which narrates the story of Tobias on a journey accompanied by the archangel Raphael (see, e.g., Piero del Pollaiuolo (1465–1470), Turin, Sabauda Gallery, and Girolamo Savoldo (c. 1527), Rome, Borghese Gallery).

Francesco Botticini (c. 1470) and Domenico di Michelino (c. 1460–1470) with two famous paintings exhibited in Florence, at the Uffizi Gallery and the Accademia Gallery, respectively, approach the theme through an alternative account, in which Tobias is accompanied by the archangels Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel, depicted with features that make them instantly recognizable: Michael is dressed as a soldier and Raphael holds a jar of ointment and Gabriel a lily. The Virgin Mary and the *Book of Revelations* are other preeminent subjects that inspired Renaissance artists who focused on angelic themes. *The Virgin of the Rocks* by Leonardo (1483–1486 – Louvre Museum) reveals the persistence of apocryphal or esoteric literature: in the rich, complex symbolism of the painting (that is probably drawn from the gospels on the infancy of

Jesus), there is much speculation about the identity of the angel. While some scholars believe the figure represents Gabriel, others speculate that the angel depicted by Leonardo is Uriel (an angel whose worship was severely prohibited in two councils, in Rome in 745 and in Aachen in 789). The *Book of Revelations*, whose basic theme is the Last Judgement, inspired the numerous references to angels in the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo (1533–1541), where it is possible to observe some remarkable innovations. Indeed, Michelangelo's angels are completely humanized, almost enhancing an underlying unity that has been achieved between humans and angels: their wings have disappeared as well as all typical features associated with their vestments (however, it should be noted that the depiction of angels in the early centuries of Christianity was already wingless).

Another significant feature in Renaissance art is the gradual dissemination of the depiction of angels as little boys: cherubs and cupids, possibly the most famous examples being the cherubs in the *Sistine Madonna* by Raphael (c. 1513 – Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) or the *Musician Angel* by Rosso Fiorentino (1521 – Uffizi Gallery). In the *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* by Bernini (c. 1645), the young angel is no longer distinguishable from the Cupid of antiquity: the nascent Baroque bursts out vigorously in an undefined nimbus of eroticism and mystical passion.

In literature, *Jerusalem Delivered* by Torquato Tasso deserves a special note, a prime example of the epic-chivalric genre, where events on Earth of the First Crusade are inseparable from a contextual war waged between the invisible forces of heaven and hell. The beginning of the poem features a description of the archangel Gabriel, sent by God to Godfrey to tell him he has been elected as Captain of the Crusaders: “[...] il Re del mondo,/ chiama a sé dagli angelici splendori/ Gabriel, che ne’ primi era secondo./ È tra Dio questi e l’anime migliori/ interprete fedel, nunzio giocondo:/giù i decreti del Ciel porta, ed al Cielo/ riporta de’ mortali i preghi e’l zelo” (Book 1.11). (“The gentle Gabriel called he from the rest / ‘Twixt God and souls of men that righteous been / Ambassador is he, forever blest /The just

commands of heaven's Eternal King / 'Twixt skies and earth, he up and down doth bring"). The archangel Michael also makes an appearance in the poem: "(...) il qual ne l'armi/di lucido adamante arde e lampeggia" (Book 9.58), "(...) in harness strong/Of never yielding diamonds armed sure") and is called the "*duce de' guerrieri alati*" (the head of the winged warriors – Book 9.60). In the poem, the conception of the planets governed by God through the angels is briefly reiterated (Book 9.61). Michael later reappears to celebrate the final victory in a vision that only Godfrey perceives, in which he is briefly allowed to see in the sky the hosts of angel armies fighting alongside the crusaders (Book 18.92–97).

Demonology

Philosophy and Theology

It is worth considering the treatises on demons during the Renaissance again according to the type of publication. In the scholastic-type treatises (such as *De angelis* by Suarez), as mentioned above, there were specific sections on demons. Here the sources are usually limited to traditional classical philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle, together with the Church Fathers, great doctors of the Middle Ages, and discussion of the aforementioned main commentaries on St. Thomas Aquinas. The issues focused on the precise moment when angels fell, on the sin that caused their fall, on the way demons may inhabit a body, and on how these bodies are different from those of humans. In addition to discussions regarding exorcism, there are also frequent questions on the ranking and distinction between demons.

However, in order to find works with copious references to demons or that deal exclusively with this topic, we need to shift from official academic environments to a variety of different esoteric disciplines and works on magic. The main sources of literature on demons in late antiquity and during the Middle Ages were translated into Latin by Marsilio Ficino, thereby extending their dissemination throughout intellectual circles during the Renaissance: some of the most famous examples

are *De abstinencia* by Porphyry, *De mysteriis* by Iamblichus, and *De sacrificio et magia* by Proclus, together with *De daemonibus* by Pseudo-Psellus. These are often clandestine works that were censored or viewed with great suspicion by the Church, both Catholic and Protestant. Indeed, the works often bordered on sorcery, despite the enormous efforts made by the great Renaissance theorists of magic (from Pico to Trithemius, from Paracelsus, Agrippa, Bruno to Campanella – but the list of names could be extended to include other more or less renowned Hermeticists such as Plethon, Lazzarelli, Zorzi, Della Porta, Lefèvre d'Étaple, Bovelles, Champier, and Postel), to draw a clear line between natural, orthodox magic and the diabolical, deplorable magic that they condemned.

Among the most influential works by Trithemius are *De Septem Secundeis* (1545) and especially *Steganographia* (written around 1499, but only published posthumously in 1606), a work that would influence his own pupil, Agrippa von Nettesheim. Agrippa is especially well known for his three books, *De occulta Philosophia* (1533), a work that also includes numerous and precise references to demons, especially in the third book that is dedicated to ritual magic. Many of the references to demons in works on magic by Bruno (*De magia mathematica*, *De rerum principiis*, *De magia naturali*) were drawn from Trithemius and Agrippa. Campanella's theological works also include a study on the nature of angels that remained unpublished during his lifetime (*De supernaturalibus creaturis*).

In Girolamo Cardano, for example, *De secretis* (1562), demons are an integral part of the original fusion of magic and medicine. Cardano's original position is also characterized by his criticism directed against the third book of Agrippa's work on the possibility of interacting with demons.

A successful and influential work that contributed to the spread of demonology during the Renaissance is *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1563) by Agrippa's disciple, Johann Weyer (Wierus), which contained an appendix entitled *Pseudomonarchia daemonum*, also distributed separately. The *Pseudomonarchia daemonum*,

which is likely to have been based on various works on magic and the Cabbala similar to those described by Trithemius in his *Antipalus maleficiorum* (1605, posthumous – see below), contains numerous names of demons with their respective ranks, alleged prerogatives, or powers. Weyer was also one of the first authors to write against the abuses that took place during witchcraft trials, together with other opponents, such as Friedrich von Spee. On the other hand, arguing against Weyer's staunch defense of women accused of witchcraft was Jean Bodin, in his *De la Démonomanie des sorciers* (1580).

In addition to the short, doctrinal texts to be found in various catechisms, another important literary source on demons was the manuals on witchcraft. Among the most important examples of this genre were *Formicarius* (1475) by the Dominican friar, Johannes Nieder, the immensely popular *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) by the Dominican friars, Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, and *De lamiis et pythonicis mulieribus* (1489) by Ulrich Molitor. The Milanese theologian, Francesco Maria Guaccio, is the author of another well-known manual that was considered highly authoritative, his *Compendium Maleficarum* (1608).

Undoubtedly influenced by the sensation caused by a famous witchcraft trial in his kingdom in the early 1590s, James VI Stuart, king of Scotland (subsequently James I, king of England), published a work in 1597 entitled *Daemonologie, In Forme of a Dialogue*, which was a sort of brief academic dissertation severely condemning necromancy and sorcery, which greatly influenced the whole culture of his time. In addition to philosophical and theological considerations, all these manuals and the work of King James itself include important accounts concerning trials, confessions, and judicial case history, with the precise aim of supporting and endorsing the theoretical arguments.

Impact and Legacy: Demonic Magic

As regards demonic magic or necromancy, the darkest and most perverse aspects of magic emerge, in which the occultist summons the infernal powers through specific rituals for his/her own

gain. Among the more influential and interesting accounts for the study of the tradition of magic and necromancy are what may be considered the most important and prominent bibliographical resources in the Renaissance, namely, a catalogue of books cited in the second chapter of *Antipalus maleficiorum* by Trithemius, books which he generally heavily criticized. About 100 works are listed, often anonymous or falsely attributed, and to date are largely unpublished or not clearly identified. Most of these books share the same genre called “grimoire.” In these texts true or imagined names of angels/demons are associated with the stars, seasons, days, and hours so as to offer accurate instructions for rituals. The most important message that emerges from such works is in fact the possibility of a real interaction between humans and demonic powers. Some examples of the books cited in Trithemius' list are *Claviculae Salomonis*, *Liber Officiorum*, *Picatrix*, *Liber Hermetis*, *Sepher Razielis*, *Secretum Alberti* (that Trithemius asserts was falsely attributed to Albertus Magnus), and many more.

In England it is worth mentioning the case of John Dee, who wrote down in his diary for years his conversations conducted with “angels,” aided by his “scryers” (assistant mediums). Dee also used seals that had been created thanks to revelations of the spirits with whom he was in contact and an obsidian mirror (of Aztec origin). These objects are currently housed in the British Museum.

Again in England, Robert Fludd (1574–1637) pursued a medical variation of angelology already perceived in some of Cardano's works. His entire work on medicine, *Integrum Morborum Mysterium: Sive Medicinae Catholicae Tomi Primi Tractatus Secundus* (1631), is based on the words in *Revelations* 7:1 – verses that were also the subject of 1 of the 15 famous woodcuts by Albrecht Dürer (*Apocalypsis cum Figuris*, 1498). Fludd includes the names of the demons that preside over the four cardinal points and winds that carry all sorts of diseases, as well as the names of the good angels who oppose them: in the east the archangel Michael opposes the demon Samael; the archangel Gabriel, who presides

over the north, against the demon Mahazael; Uriel in the south opposes Azael; and finally Raphael, in the west, stands up against the demon Azazel. These “geographical” power dynamics (that are not always accurately reflected in the illustrations) are considered the source of diseases and potential healing.

History of Art and Literature

Like the angels, demons also regularly appear in artworks depicting Biblical scenes. Such is the case, for example, of passages taken from the *Book of Isaiah* or from the *Book of Revelations* depicting *The Fall of Lucifer* and *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* (for instance, see Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1514) (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen) and Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1562) (Brussels, Royal Museum of Fine Arts)) (Fig. 1). Another typical theme is *The Three Temptations of Christ* (e.g., the frescoes by Botticelli (1480–1482) – Sistine Chapel). Unlike the angels, however, it is unusual for demons to be depicted as the principal figures of the artwork, as they are considered subordinate to the divine subjects (Christ, the Virgin Mary, the victorious angels, or saints). In the painting entitled *The Guardian Angel* (1615) by Domenichino

(Naples, Capodimonte Museum), the devil is crouching in the corner (bottom right-hand corner for the viewer of the artwork, on the left of the subject in the foreground) sporting a faun-like sneer. The animal features, claws, long, pointed ears, horns, and tail, are more or less recurrent features. When wings are actually portrayed, monochromatic and extremely dark, they are frequently in the shape of bats’ wings. Matteo da Lecce (1574), in *The Dispute over the Body of Moses*, dispenses with them altogether (although his angels are magnificently adorned with them) but highlights the tail and horns as horrific elements. Again in the Sistine Chapel, in the *Last Judgement*, Michelangelo depicts the demons wrapped around their prey (the souls of the damned) in dark shades that recall the earth, almost fusing with it. Hieronymus Bosch in *The Haywain Triptych* (c. 1516 – Madrid, Museo del Prado) and Pieter Bruegel the Elder, in the aforementioned *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*, are characterized by the fantastic explosion of the grotesque, created with elements taken from the world of animals, insects, reptiles, fish, and mollusks or from the plant world. The figures of these hybrid demons are arguably unique in the history of the visual arts.

Angels and Demons in the Renaissance,

Fig. 1 Pieter Bruegel the Elder. *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* (1562 – detail). (Brussels, Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium. © RMFAB, Brussels)



There are various eminent examples of demons that appear in Renaissance literature. In *La vita* by Benvenuto Cellini (§ LXIVff.), the artist provides a vivid account of a Sicilian necromancer summoning demons near the Colosseum in Rome, in which the artist himself wished to participate. Famous and often amusing passages including devils may also be found in *Gargantua et Pantagruel* by Rabelais (see III, 14; III, 22–23; IV, 45–47).

There are numerous references to demons in Shakespeare's diabolical and gory *Macbeth*, from witches to fallen angels, to hell: "[Malcolm] Angels are bright still though the brightest fell"; "[Macduff] Not in the legions/ Of horrid hell can come a devil more damned/ In evils to top Macbeth" (*Mac.*, IV.III). However, it was only in the second half of the seventeenth century with Milton's *Paradise Lost* that a strong interest in these infernal beings was displayed.

Cross-References

- [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Daimon, Renaissance Idea of](#)
- [Devil, Renaissance Idea of](#)
- [Mysticism in the Renaissance](#)
- [Natural Magic in Renaissance Science](#)
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- [Witchcraft, Renaissance Idea of](#)

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Animals in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Philosophical discussions of animal nature are ubiquitous in Renaissance literature. Some of them are incidental, as Renaissance philosophers tended to approach the topic of defining animal nature as a pendant to the definition of human nature. Further, in historiographical terms, the rich variety of Renaissance discourses on animals has been overshadowed by the debate on Descartes' controversial theory that animals are senseless machines. Yet, there was a decisive rise in interest in the study of animal nature well before the mid-seventeenth century, due to two closely connected factors. First, scientific advancements in zoology and anatomy, and the beginnings of comparative anatomy, drew attention to the physical similarities between humans and (certain) animals, raising the question of whether their souls might resemble each other, too. Furthermore, the reception of ancient sources on animals, which circulated widely in the period – especially Aristotle, Pliny, Porphyry and Plutarch – reanimated the longstanding debate on whether and to what extent animals possess rationality.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

“Who will not wonder at this chameleon of ours? [...] Who, then, will not admire the human being?” (Pico della Mirandola 2013, 123 and 133, translation slightly modified). The chameleon of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) is probably the most famous Renaissance animal (see Höfele and Laqué 2011, 7–9; Busi 2007, 25–26). Yet, it is not a real animal, but rather a metaphor for the human condition. Like the skin of the chameleon, humanity is described by Pico as a blank canvas, with the potential to assume any characteristic, becoming bestial by tending towards the sensual life of animals, or elevating itself to rational life, or even to the intellectual life of angels. In thus functioning as a metaphor, however, Pico's chameleon suitably reflects the status of Renaissance animals, too: animals are ubiquitous in Renaissance philosophies, yet it is rare to find discussions of their nature explicitly foregrounded. As in the case of Pico, animality is often considered by Renaissance philosophers in terms of comparison with humanity, by way of stressing what animals lack and humans instead possess (see Muratori 2013a, 9–26). The most common approach was to consider the soul of animals as a life devoid of rationality: the life of animals was viewed as a life of passions, and the animal stood generically for the unruly tendency of certain kinds of behavior.

This approach had a long tradition, rooted equally in Aristotelian psychology – according to which animals are capable of imagination but not of thought (see for instance *De anima* 434a) – and in the Platonic representation of passions as unruly animals (as in the famous metaphor of the charioteer in *Phaedrus* 246ab). While real chameleons may change color, but not escape their animal condition, the marvellous human chameleon is presented as the only creature capable of choosing whether to live like an animal, a human, or even to rise to a higher, angelic level. Animals thus symbolize the animality within humans: those aspects of human life that are dependent on the activities of the body, and on instincts.

Traditionally, animals had been deployed since the Middle Ages as the representation and

incarnation of human behavior, and especially of virtues and vices: a human being could be described as being as sly as a fox, for instance, or as chaste as a dove. Medieval bestiaries used fictional animals to convey a moral and religious teaching. In such texts, the animal becomes an empty container, filled with symbolic meaning. This symbolic interpretation of animal nature persisted throughout the Renaissance, too, not least in art (Cohen 2008). At the same time, however, interest in animals as subjects of philosophical inquiry and of scientific investigation clearly intensified in the period. As a result, animals started to be viewed as more than just symbols for patterns of human behavior.

A common historiographical narrative has it that only from the mid-seventeenth century did philosophers and scientists become deeply engaged with questions regarding animal nature, as a reaction to the radical claim by René Descartes (1596–1650) that animals are akin to senseless machines, incapable not only of reasoning but also of feeling (on Descartes' theory: Gontier 2010; Spallanzani 2011; Wild 2006). The theory of the “bête machine” gave rise to a polarized debate between supporters and opponents of the view that animals and humans are qualitatively different, and do not share even the life of passions (Marcialis 1982; Muratori 2015). The prominent afterlife of Descartes' view has overshadowed the richness of earlier debates on animal nature. Pre-Cartesian, Renaissance writings on animals have thus remained understudied. This is also due to the fact that Renaissance reflections on animals are disseminated in a great variety of texts, and that they are often marginal to philosophical discussions of human nature as with Pico's famous chameleon.

Recent scholarship, however, has begun to reveal the extent to which animals were the focus of sustained philosophical enquiry (Adamson and Edwards 2018; Muratori 2013a; Dohm and Muratori 2013). Two major, linked developments were key in this respect: the renewed reception of ancient philosophical sources that discuss animal nature, especially Aristotle (Beullens et al. 1999; Perfetti 2000), Porphyry (Muratori 2014, Muratori 2019a), and

Plutarch (Pade 2013); and the critical assessment of such sources enabled by advances in the fields of anatomy, and zoology. It was during the Renaissance that the foundation of comparative anatomy was laid: by considering bodily similarities and differences between humans and animals, comparative anatomy offered philosophers new perspectives on the question of human uniqueness. In the emergent discussions of animals, the ancient legacy crucially coincided with new natural-philosophical approaches. The result was a lively, multifaceted debate that sought to determine differences and similarities between animals and humans, combining the study of animal and human bodies with a revision of ancient theories on animal and human psychology.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The publication of several major works on anatomy testifies to a new approach to the observation and analytical study of animal bodies in the sixteenth century (Pomata 2011; Enenkel and Smith 2014). Animals had been dissected since antiquity. Notably, the Greek physician Galen (130–210 AD) performed vivisection, especially on pigs, in order to gain information that could not be obtained from the vivisection of humans. This implied the assumption that at least on a purely physical level there existed a strong similarity between humans and certain animals, since discoveries made on animal bodies could be transferred, to a certain extent, to the understanding of the human body. As the study of anatomy offered further insight into the details of the physical similarities of humans and animals, the question arose regarding the interrelation of bodies and souls: if the bodies are similar, will the souls inhabiting those bodies also resemble each other?

In 1543, Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564) published *Humanis corporis fabrica*, a groundbreaking presentation of human anatomy. Reflecting on the structure of the human brain, Vesalius stated that he hardly noticed any differences in dissecting the human brain as opposed to the brains of other animals, such as apes, dogs, horses or sheep (Arbel 2017). With regard

to animal anatomy, it was through the study of ornithology in particular that the first images of anatomical comparison between animals and the human body were produced. In his *L'histoire de la nature des oyseaux* (1555), Pierre Belon du Mans published two tables in which the skeletons of humans and of birds were placed side-by-side to allow for a direct comparison of the bones and their proportions. In Italy, the Bolognese naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605) followed a similar path with his *Ornithologiae, hoc est de avibus historiae libri XII* (1599–1603), a comprehensive work which includes not only anatomical descriptions of birds but also stories about animal behavior and sections on the uses of animals, including for medical purposes. Aldrovandi thus combines his own study and observation of animals with information drawn from classical sources, especially Pliny's *Natural History*, and Aristotle's works on animals. The border between direct observation and the transmission of reported information remained permeable: Aldrovandi notably also authored a history of monsters (*Monstrorum historia*, published 1642), presenting wondrous cases of creatures at the border of animal and human nature. Aldrovandi thus treated the differentiation of humans from animals from the perspective of popular tradition at the same time as that of anatomy. Such a combined approach would eventually be discredited by modern science as we understand it today, but it was common in the Renaissance, when scientists and philosophers strove to create a comprehensive view of nature.

A similar approach was developed by an older contemporary of Aldrovandi, the Swiss naturalist Conrad Gessner (1516–1565). His *Historiae animalium* (1551–1558) became one of the most influential zoological encyclopaedias of the Renaissance, providing for each animal an overview of the known data on physical structure and behavior, as well as its discussion in literary, historical, and religious sources; illustrations of several of the animals are included throughout the book, and became a highlight of the publication. The first book of Gessner's *Historiae* (*De quadrupedibus viviparis*) opens with a section from the preface by Theodore Gaza to his

translation of Aristotle's zoological works: under the title *De animalibus*, this influential edition was published for the first time in 1476. In the preface, Gaza had repeated Galen's opinion that Aristotle was the first anatomist (Aristotle 1476, a6v). But, as Gaza points out, Aristotle's deep interest in the animal world did not imply a disregard of metaphysical topics. Indeed, Aristotle was not only the principal point of reference and comparison for Renaissance zoology but also the main authority for the view that the human soul is radically different from the soul of animals, due to its capacity for rational thought. According to Aristotle's *On the Soul*, the animal soul is capable of sensation, and in most cases of imagination, but not of rational thought (Sorabji 1993). This conception of human uniqueness had been interpreted throughout the Middle Ages as the foundation for the idea that the human being is the pinnacle of creation: combining this Aristotelian view with Christianity, the human soul was considered to be immortal, in contrast to the mortal soul of animals.

The Aristotelian tradition, then, harbored a troublesome contrast with regard to animal nature: the study of animal bodies tended to reveal the similarities between humans and animals, while a radical difference was asserted on the level of psychology. Within the Aristotelian corpus, the zoological works seemed to point to elements of continuity between humans and animals, while *On the Soul* asserted an insurmountable distance between humans, endowed with speech and rationality (*logos*), and all other animals (Laspia 2016). In the Renaissance, as the study of anatomy progressed, this became even more evident: physical observation invited a reassessment of qualitative differences on the level of the invisible soul.

Some authors responded to this dichotomy by extending the conception of rationality to include animals as well. Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588) and Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) both argue that the capability to think rationally is not the absolute point of distinction between humans and animals (Ebbersmeyer 2013; Ernst 2013). How – they ask – can sensation be entirely different from rationality, if data from sensation provide the necessary input for rational thinking? If

sensation and rationality are not radically different, but rather distinguished simply according to degree and not kind, it follows that animals must to some extent partake of reason, too (Muratori 2013b).

The debate on animal rationality is a key example of how the study of anatomy and the reception of ancient sources combined to create a new approach to animals in the Renaissance. The works of Girolamo Fabrici d'Acquapendente (1533–1619), professor of anatomy and surgery in Padua, are a case in point. From the study of anatomy he drew conclusions regarding the cognitive capabilities of animals, and came to question the notion of a radical differentiation between humans and animals. According to Fabrici d'Acquapendente, some species of animals can articulate their voice, too: animal language (*loquela*) shows that animals have preferences, feeling pleasure and pain, and it clearly expresses cognitive activity (Fabrici d'Acquapendente 2016; Gensini 2011, 2012). Against Aristotle, who had identified reasoning with the capability to speak – as *logos* – Fabrici understands the difference between animals and humans as a difference of degree rather than kind. Even if human languages are unique in using an alphabet, several species of animals share with humans the expressive modulation of voice.

A key authority to whom Fabrici recurs is Porphyry, who in *On Abstinence from Animal Food*, a detailed philosophical treatment of vegetarianism, had argued that animals partake in language and thus in rationality, too. *On Abstinence* was published in Latin in 1547 and the Greek *editio princeps* edited by Piero Vettori was printed the following year. The widespread reception of Porphyry's book helped to inform an aspect of Renaissance views of animals that scholars have until recently neglected: that of ethics (Muratori 2018, 2019a). Porphyry had argued that animals should not be exploited because they share in *logos*, since they demonstrate rationality in a variety of ways – from being capable of expressive voice, to choosing to avoid harm and seek to protect themselves and their offspring.

Another important source for ethical reflection on the status of animals was Plutarch's *Moralia*,

which was often reprinted after the first edition of 1509, and enjoyed international success. Three texts in particular were influential with regard to the attribution of rationality to animals, and its ethical implications: *Gryllos* (also known as *Bruta animalia ratione uti*), *De sollertia animalium*, and *De esu carniū*. *Gryllos* takes its title from the main character in the story, a companion of Ulysses, who was transformed into a pig by the magician, Circe. Given the ability to speak by Circe, he tells Ulysses that the life as animal is preferable to a life spent as human being. The dialogue inspired Renaissance philosophers to engage with the topic of the difference between animal and human life. For instance, *Circe* (1549) by Giambattista Gelli (1498–1563) is a re-working of the story in which the discussion of Aristotelian psychology plays a crucial role. The main question posed by the dialogue is whether there exist any differences between animal and human nature which justify considering the latter superior to the former (Muratori 2019b). Ulysses discusses this issue with several animals, asking whether they would prefer their current animal form to the human one: only one animal, the elephant, agrees to being turned back into a human being, on the basis of the Aristotelian theory that only humans are capable of rationality (Raber 2013, 1–4).

Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) also broaches this matter in his encyclopedic *De subtilitate* (1550). Cardano combines keen interest in the zoological variety of animals with the metaphysical question regarding the criteria for ordering animals in a scale. He thus poses the central question about the impact of anatomy and zoology for a philosophical view of the human-animal distinction: what does the study of animals imply for the understanding of the human being as the pinnacle of creation? Cardano presents a view of nature in which the living creatures are not simply ordered hierarchically, and, most importantly, the world is not centered upon the human being alone (Giglioni 2014). For Cardano, the combined lesson learnt from the ancient sources (such as Pliny's account of the capabilities of animals, or indeed Porphyry and Plutarch) and from the new discoveries, must be that the animals lead lives of

their own, whose *raison d'être* is not to be useful to humans. In *De subtilitate*, the place of animals is within a broader presentation of nature as a whole (Cardano 1663, especially Books 9–11). Yet, they are not just symbols for humanity's various characters, but rather are considered by Cardano as creatures inhabiting the world in their own right.

Impact and Legacy

Cardano's real animals stand at the opposite end of the spectrum of Renaissance discourses to the use of animals as symbols (Muratori 2017). Indeed, like Pico's chameleon, philosophical engagement with the topic of animal nature took various shapes in the Renaissance. Negotiating the legacy of antiquity with the challenges coming from the study of anatomy, philosophical reflection on animals ranged from incidental reflections in zoological and anatomical treatises (as in the case of Aldrovandi or Gessner), to sections dedicated to animal nature within a new organisation of knowledge (as for Cardano). Renaissance animals are thus to be found at the crossroad of various disciplines and within different literary genres, including the rewriting of ancient stories, as in the case of Gelli's *Circe*. As the legacy of Aristotle's conception of human rationality was reassessed, the question of human uniqueness led to a thorough investigation of animal capabilities, from animal language (Fabrici d'Acquapendente), to the more general capability to perform rational thinking at least to a certain extent (as in Telesio and Campanella). As a new image of humanity emerged, the comparison with animals also stimulated challenges to anthropocentrism. By the mid seventeenth century, the frame of the debate had significantly changed due to the prominence of the Cartesian theory that animals must be declared devoid not only of rationality but also of sensation. Descartes considered the view that animals can think nothing more than a prejudice transmitted by the Ancients (see for instance Descartes 1964–1974, 267–279). Renaissance discourses on animals, by contrast, were founded on the varied interpretations of ancient sources, frequently in the light of new observations and discoveries.

Cross-References

- [Acquapendente, Girolamo Fabrici](#)
- [Aldrovandi, Ulisse](#)
- [Anatomy, Renaissance](#)
- [Automata, Renaissance](#)
- [Campanella, Tommaso](#)
- [Observation in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
- [Telesio, Bernardino](#)
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Anthology

► [Commonplace Book](#)

Anthropocentrism

► [Homocentrism](#)

Antiquarianism

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Abstract

The aim of this entry is to provide a definition for Renaissance antiquarianism as a cultural phenomenon that influenced the way the past was interpreted between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. This cultural pathway represented a methodological perspective which involved the cross-referencing of heterogeneous sources, strongly linked to mankind's perception of time, and which helped to shape historical consciousness. The focus then turns to the history of the phenomenon and an explanation of its methodology.

Scholarship

The first attempt to describe the phenomenon of antiquarianism as one of the key moments in the evolution of Renaissance thought can be traced back to the 1950s. Stimulated by the definition formulated by Arnaldo Momigliano in his seminal article “Ancient History and the Antiquarian” (1950), the impact of material sources on the development of modern thought began to be clearly identified as a crucial factor in the classical tradition and the history of ideas. According to Momigliano, antiquarianism was a matter of historical method, which involved “the systematic collection of relics from the past” and their interpretation with a critical approach. He considered it to be strongly linked to mankind's perception of time which, thanks to the accumulation of remains over the centuries, helped to shape a deeper historical consciousness.

Scholars such as Eugenio Garin and Roberto Weiss attempted to coax out further aspects by taking into consideration the experience of philosophers and humanists from a diachronic perspective: Garin's *L'Umanesimo italiano: filosofia e vita civile nel Rinascimento* (1952) and Weiss's

The Renaissance Discovery of Classical antiquity (1969), offered general overviews of the many phases of this cultural movement. The monograph by Peter Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past* (1969), the work of Sebastiano Timpanaro, *La genesi del Metodo di Lachman* (1960), and Silvia Rizzo, *Il lessico filologico degli umanisti* (1973), on Renaissance philological techniques and the many other studies conducted on the humanist method all shed further light on the origin of antiquarianism.

Important contributions to this area were made by Angelo Mazzocco, who explored these dynamics during the fifteenth century – especially in his *Flavio Biondo and the Antiquarian Tradition* (1985) – and by the studies of Anthony Grafton, who opened up several pathways for investigating the various aspects of this subject between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, his essays on Angelo Poliziano (1977), Joseph Scaliger (1983–1991), and Leon Battista Alberti (2000), as well as his collection of essays, *Bring out your dead: the past as revelation* (2001), all represent milestones in the field. Salvatore Settis, especially in his *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana* (1984–1986), increased enormously the paradigms of the classical tradition within in the arts.

The strong foundations put in place by these masters have been built on more recently by several scholars, including Leonard Barkan, in the field of archaeology (1999); William Stenhouse, in epigraphy (2005), collecting (2014), and the idea of antiquarianism in general (2017); Christian Dekesel (1998), Federica Missere Fontana (2009), and John Cunnally (2016), in numismatics; Ingo Herklotz, who analyzed the figure of the antiquarian scholar (2012) as well several cases of ecclesiastical antiquarianism (2017) and antiquarianism in art (2019); Peter Miller, who approached antiquarianism with a geographical print (2015) and its interactions with collecting finds from antiquity (2017); Monica Centanni, who carried out a profound analysis of the many manifestations of classical tradition and rebirth of antiquity (2017); Kathleen Christian and Bianca De Divitiis, who investigated the development of local antiquarian surveys throughout Europe (2018); Joan Carbonell and Gerard Gonzalez

Germain (2020), who broadened the views on epigraphic scholarship; and Stefan Bauer, who unveiled new aspects of antiquarian studies within the context of ecclesiastical history (2019 and 2021). All these scholars have brought new readings to the multifarious and complex interpretations of this field.

Nevertheless, the concept of Renaissance antiquarianism per se has not yet been completely and fully defined: this remains very much a work in progress which deserves a thorough multi-disciplinary examination of the phenomenon from a transnational perspective. The very nature of Renaissance antiquarianism means it cannot be reduced to a simple formulation, nor can it be encapsulated in a single history: antiquarianism during the Renaissance is represented by a multitude of coexisting formulations that are expressed through a plurality of histories.

History

There are specific historical reasons why Renaissance antiquarianism became a vital piece in the puzzle of how to approach knowledge. Developing at the same time as new philological trends that found support from the increase in the number of archaeological investigations conducted, its history fully embraces the spirit of Humanism. Starting in Italy, antiquarianism spread throughout Europe between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, at which point the new scientific culture, which had initially been favored by antiquarian studies, began to establish a decisive influence as society moved toward a new phase of modernity.

Antiquarianism's origins date back to around the beginning of the fourteenth century in Padua, Veneto, where scholars such as Lovato Lovati (1240–1309) and Albertino Mussato (1261–1329) began rewriting the history of classics by removing the medieval influences from these texts. The work of Giovanni de Matociis (death 1337) of Verona is also worthy of mention, as he adorned the margins of the manuscript of his *Historia imperialis* with pictorial representations of the emperors that corresponded to his narrative

and which were somehow inspired by ancient coins.

Concurrent and corresponding phenomena took place in other areas of Italy. In Rome and its surrounding areas, interest toward and investigations of ancient ruins can be detected almost simultaneously: proto-humanists among whom Giovanni Colonna (1298–1343) and Zanobi da Strada (1312–1361) explored libraries discovering ancient manuscripts and started collecting and interpreting ancient epigraphic inscriptions. Cola di Rienzo's (1313–1354) public reading of the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* represents an iconic transitional moment to a new perception of the antique and its role in history.

Nonetheless, the title of “founding father of Renaissance antiquarianism” can justifiably be attributed to Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), who began developing an interest in the study of remains from antiquity in parallel with the many ancient manuscripts that he discovered. Within the broader restoration of the “golden age Latin,” Petrarch's followers, such as Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Niccolò Niccoli (1365–1437), and Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), represent the most prominent examples of how this humanistic sensitivity helped antiquarianism to develop in complexity. The Loggia dei Lanzi was being erected in Florence at precisely that time (c. 1396), clear evidence that the revival in literary output was matched by a resurgence in classical architecture.

A fundamental contribution to the development of this cultural dynamic was provided by Ciriaco d'Ancona (1391–1452), who, on account of his detailed descriptions of antiquity carried out during his many journeys throughout the Mediterranean, could very well be considered to be the initiator of modern archaeology. At much the same time, Giovanni Marcanova (c. 1410–1467) depicted Roman antiquities in his manuscripts, while Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) rewrote the history of Rome and many other Italian cities in his *Roma Instaurata* and *Roma Triumphans* by linking his classical readings with the findings of numerous inspections made on location. It is also interesting to note that Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446), inspired by the Pantheon in Rome,

projected the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence by applying the knowledge obtained from his observation of Roman ruins. He achieved this through his increased knowledge of forgotten elements of classical architecture and by using them to develop modern solutions: ancient source became the doorway to a new creation.

As sources of different types were uncovered, the understanding gradually dawned that texts and material findings could be complementary elements. This realization became essential for the interpenetration of the concept of history and cultural heritage, which implied the emergence of a renewed sensitivity to the unitary coherence of classical tradition. In essence, the antiquarian perspective embodied the spirit that allowed Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) to read Vitruvius critically, to write *De re aedificatoria*, and to conceive the facade of the Basilica of Sant'Andrea in Mantova as a Roman triumphal arch. Alberti was also the creator of the *Certamen Coronarium* (1441), a poetry contest which celebrated the incorporation of the Latin quantitative metric system into the Italian language – the purpose was to translate the structure of ancient poetry into contemporary language.

In the late fifteenth century, the driving force behind this evolution of thought is considered to be Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494), who constructed a critical method in his *Miscellanea* that was so effective that it became the benchmark for the antiquarian scholars who followed. His intuitions in the field of classical philology, which were based on manuscript witnesses, the identification of linguistic usages through the history of language, the constitution of cultural models, the comparative technique, and a rudimentary paleography, brought to light what was later referred to as “the history of tradition.” In this way, he approached the text as an ancient finding and heritage of the past from which tangible data could be drawn.

This approach, however, the purpose of which was to reconstruct the original shape of this cultural inheritance, was not substantially sufficient to fill the gaps in the tradition. In response, the humanists compiled a diverse range of interpretative systems to tackle this issue. One example is

the *Castigationes Pliniana*e by Ermolao Barbaro (1454–1493), who drew analogies with the world around him, especially when explaining naturalistic items, in order to compensate for the general lack of knowledge of these matters at the time. This comparison became a necessary means adopted by scholarship in many fields in order to comprehend the ancient universe through known and controllable parameters.

In parallel, encyclopedic treatises started to flourish. Even if Biondo's works, the *Elegantiae* by Lorenzo Valla (1405–1457) and the *Orthographia* by Giovanni Tortelli (1400–1466) could be recognized as a significant prefiguration of this genre in an antiquarian perspective; a mature expression of Renaissance antiquarian encyclopedism can be found only later, in Giorgio Valla's (1447–1500) *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus opus*, Raffaele Maffei's (1451–1522) *Commentariorum rerum urbanarum libri XXXVIII*, Alessandro Alessandri's (1461–1523) *Dies geniales*, and Celio Rodigino's (1469–1525) *Antiquae lectiones*. These treatises attempted to approach the ancient world from a universal perspective, cross-referencing different literary and material sources, trying to provide a complex idea of history.

The idea that history resided in ancient findings and that, through these ancient findings, history still maintained its vitality in the present sparked the research of material evidence to the indiscriminate action of counterfeiters. Forgeries were created for the purpose of supporting positions that lacked reliable data; and the frequent attempts to unmask their mendacious nature, at times in vain, represented one of the crucial aspects of the antiquarian investigation. By rejecting the authenticity of the *Donation of Constantine*, Lorenzo Valla (1406–1457) gave impetus to the unmasking of falsifications. Having rejected a testimony which had been trusted during the Middle Ages, he clearly demonstrated how the new vision of sources in their material consistency marked a change in thinking. Among the most famous antiquarian counterfeiters were Annio di Viterbo (1437–1502) and Alfonso Ceccarelli (1532–1583). The works of Annio became very popular: he produced literary and epigraphic

apocryphal texts (Berosus, Fabius Pictor, Cato, the *Decretum Desiderii*) in order to offer a new cabalistic and esoteric reading of the history of civilization that had been handed down directly from Hebrew and Etruscan sources. The extensive work of Ceccarelli, which remained predominantly in manuscript form, was put to use in genealogical and historiographical studies.

Antiquarian studies were conducted in humanistic circles, the most famous of which was the Academia Romana of Giulio Pomponio Leto (1428–1498); figures as Bartolomeo Platina (1421–1481) and Niccolò Perotti (1430–1480) frequently participated in its sessions. The humanist inclination of this circle and its desire to “revive” antiquity triggered an interest in ancient sources, the rediscovery and publication of manuscripts (one of the most important cases being the unearthing the *Codex Farnesianus* of Festus), the study of material findings (inscriptions, coins, statues, etc.), the research into institutional and social history, and the customs of ancient Rome.

One of the heirs to this cultural experience was Angelo Colocci (1474–1549), who continued this intellectual circle at Horti Sallustiani, where antiquarian interests flourished. Among the participants, Baldassarre Castiglione (1478–1529), Giovanni Pierio Valeriano (1477–1558), and Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), in particular, are worthy of mention. The presence of the three humanists, Bembo, Valeriano, and Colocci confirms that the antiquarian perspective was carried out in parallel with the historical-linguistic theories debated at the time and had a tangible effect on them. Its impact on the works of Theodore Bibliander (1506–1564) and Joachim Péron (1498–1559) is clear from *De ratione communium linguarum et litterarum commentarius* and *Dialogorum de linguae Gallicae origine, eiusque cum Graeca cognatione*, respectively.

Between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, antiquarian studies gradually became inextricably linked with collections of antiquities. Although important private collections also existed, the main collections of antiquities built up during the Renaissance were owned by the political and ecclesiastical aristocracy and were often connected to the royal

courts. This created a close bond, often of subordination, between antiquarian erudition and power, putting the first at the service of the second. Beyond the political interference that may have taken place, the most important antiquarian works of the sixteenth century emanated from the richest and most heterogeneous collections, such as those which belonged to the Farnese family in Rome, to the Medici in Florence, to the Este in Ferrara, or to the Palatine collection in Vienna and the royal collection in Madrid.

Many erudite works flourished within these environments. These included, for example, the philological and numismatic investigations carried out by Antonio Agustín (1517–1586) and Fulvio Orsini (1529–1600), the ecclesiastical and juridical enquiries by Onofrio Panvinio (1530–1568), and the extensive antiquarian encyclopedia written by Pirro Ligorio (1513–1583), which all benefited from the vitality of the Roman environment. The philological studies on classical texts conducted by Piero Vettori (1499–1585) and the antiquarian studies by Vincenzio Borghini (1515–1580) were deeply rooted in the Florentine context, and the mythographic studies of Lilio Gregorio Giraldi (1479–1552) and Agostino Mosti (1505–1584) were firmly based in the culture of the Ferrarese court. Austria and Spain were also fertile grounds for the works of Wolfgang Lazius (1514–1565) and Jeronimo Zurita (1512–1580), respectively.

The connection to the political power of the time permitted the antiquarian investigation to break free from the closed circles of collections and libraries and to be disseminated into the collective imagination, thereby developing into one of the columns of the triumphant Renaissance. When planning their works, it was common practice for artists and architects to receive support from antiquarian scholars, who took on the role of iconographic advisors and enhanced the conceptual coherence of the patron's projects. Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) was supported by Borghini when decorating the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, the Zuccari brothers by Orsini or Panvinio for the Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola, and Rosso Fiorentino (1495–1540) by a figure who remains anonymous for the Gallery of

Francis I in Fontainebleau (probably Lazare de Baïf); more rarely, the same artist took on the role of iconographer, and this was perhaps the case with Jacopo Zucchi (1542–1596).

In artistic contexts, it was possible for a stylistic feature of antiquarian origin to enter into standard decorative schemes, so that it was difficult to distinguish between the reuse of classical elements and a voluntary or unconscious citation: this was especially the case with grotesques, which became commonplace after their rediscovery in the Domus Aurea (1479 ca.) and provoked a debate about their legitimacy and whether they should be subject to censorship. Anton Francesco Doni (1513–1574), Francisco de Hollanda (1517–1585), and Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597), among others, were prominent in these disputes.

The fundamental role played by architecture underwent a revival in the development of the Renaissance antiquarian spirit. After the fifteenth century, this took the form of evocations inspired by classical buildings; and during the sixteenth century, several treatises attempted to provide a more precise and complex codification of classical architecture. Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1554), Paolo Giovio (1483–1552), Guillaume Philandrier (1505–1563), and Claudio Tolomei's (1492–1556) *Accademia dei Virtuosi*, Daniele Barbaro (1514–1570), Jacques Androuet du Cerceau (1515–1585), and, perhaps most importantly, Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) combined the study of Vitruvius with practical knowledge, paving the way for a time of deeply rooted classicism.

Another form of antiquarianism in Renaissance cultural life can be seen in the *imprese*. This genre, which was inspired by emblems, combined images and short texts (usually a motto), often reutilizing erudite elements of the antiquarian investigation and related them to the addressee. Starting with Andrea Alciati (1492–1550), who was the first to codify this “figurative literature,” a widespread editorial phenomenon took place involving scholars from all over Europe, including Girolamo Ruscelli (1518–1566), János Zsámboky (1531–1584), and Jean Jacques Boissard (1528–1602). The

most famous motto of the Renaissance was *festina lente*, most commonly presented as an anchor and a dolphin. Originally, this figuration was minted on the reverse side of a coin of the Roman imperial series of Augustus and Titus. The image and the adage were represented and cited in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), adopted by Aldo Manuzio (1449–1515) as the symbol for his publishing house; they were explained in their original sense by Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) in his *Adagia* and reinvented by Cosimo I de' Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany in his *impresa*.

The rediscovery of the *Fasti Consulares* in the Roman Forum (1546) was a pivotal moment in the growth of the entire antiquarian movement. This epigraphic finding was transferred to the Capitulum under the supervision of Michelangelo. The edition of the text transmitted in these inscriptions triggered a debate among the experts of epigraphy and chronology, in particular Bartolomeo Marliani (1487–1566), Francesco Robortello (1516–1577), Carlo Sigonio (1520–1584), Panvinio, Martin Smetius (1525–1578), and Stephen Winand Pigge (1520–1604), who all published it within a few years of each other. The major contribution to antiquarian scholarship provided by this finding was that it represented a new source for ancient Roman chronology, which until then had been known only through literary histories, and represented an official document directly connected to Roman imperial institutions. Previously, Roman chronology had often been reconstructed by comparing Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (whose accounts often contradicted each other), as demonstrated by the Roman chronotaxes of Gregorius Haloander (1501–1531), Johannes Cuspinianus (1473–1529), and Heinrich Glareanus (1488–1563).

The number of findings from classical antiquity was higher in Italy than the rest of Europe. And, although many humanists of other nations travelled to and resided for long periods in Italy, it was not possible for everyone to directly access a wide range of ancient findings. Nonetheless, antiquarian understanding had developed in the rest of Europe by the mid-fifteenth century and gradually

strengthened to the point where Italy's leading position in governing this area of knowledge was challenged.

One of the earliest examples of this circulation of ideas is represented by the arrival in Germany of a partial copy of the *Commentaria* of Ciriaco d'Ancona, brought by Hartmann Schedel (1440–1514), which had a significant influence on the compilation of Peter Apian's (1495–1552) epigraphic collection and some of the later works of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528). Furthermore, Jacopo Strada's (1507–1588) arrangement of his own *Magnum ac Novum Opus* for the Fugger bankers demonstrated how antiquarian culture passed across the Alps. And the studies on Roman antiquity conducted by Johann Roszfeld (1550–1626) clearly revealed the impact of this tradition on learned German milieus.

In France, the growth of antiquarian scholarship was encouraged by King Francis I and by the circle of humanists who gravitated around him. The studies of Guillaume Budé (1468–1540), who was an ambassador to Rome, and the journeys he made to Italy helped him amass a weight of numismatic knowledge that led to the publication of the most important Renaissance metrological treatise, *De asse*. The research carried out by Lazare de Baïf (1496–1547) was also crucial; he was an ambassador to Venice, from where he sent several antiquities to his homeland, and arranged for innovative antiquarian investigations to be carried out on clothing, vases, and vessels. Guillaume Du Choul (1496–1560) investigated several aspects of Roman religion by cross-referencing material and literary sources. Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) demonstrated his antiquarian scholarship in his editing of ancient authors and his work on historical chronology.

Antiquarian erudition was also practiced at the highest level in the Low Countries. Hubert Goltzius (1526–1583), one of the most famous numismatists of the second half of the sixteenth century, developed his scholarship while traveling from the Netherlands to Italy: the purpose of his publications was to reconstruct the history of the Roman Empire by drawing links between ancient coins and inscriptions and their related narrative sources. Justus Lipsius (1547–1606),

who spent part of his life in Rome, investigated many aspects of classical and biblical antiquity, including banqueting, poliorcetica, the real nature of the Christian cross, and more complex analyses of Roman civilization. Even though his focus was mainly philological in nature, Lipsius often used material findings to carry out his emendations and corrections of ancient texts; his *Antiquae lectiones* provide a clear example of this methodological approach. The long journey through Italy completed by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) also contributed significantly to antiquarian scholarship: he was a learned painter, and it has been proved that his drawings of statues and ruins increased the knowledge on the material bequest of antiquity, thanks also to the help of his brother Philip (1574–1611) and his son Albert (1614–1657).

The main means through which antiquarianism became a continental phenomenon was the circulation of published books. The philological editions of ancient authors and historiographical texts, especially if they included images, had a significant positive effect on the understanding of indirect records. In this way, the knowledge acquired in Italy was made available to the rest of the European humanist community, allowing research to be undertaken where findings were missing. The works of Antoine Lafréry (1512–1577) and Giovanni Battista de' Cavalieri (1525–1601) are worthy of mention in this context.

Antiquarian surveys also included national investigations, the purpose of which was to reconstruct a reliable history for a specific territory, following the model of the studies undertaken on Roman antiquity. Therefore, by comparing local literary sources with local ruins, it was possible to give a new shape to the origins of (i) France, described, for example, in the works of Pierre Pithou (1539–1596); (ii) England, investigated by William Camden's (1551–1623) *Britannia*; (iii) Germany, studied in Johan Månsson's (1488–1544) and Philipp Clüver's (1580–1622) treatises; and (iv) Spain, researched by Zurita's and Francisco Padilla's (1527–1607). In the same period, the Polish scholar Jan Łasicki (1534–1602) attempted to complete the first

erudite history of Russia, while histories of the Turkish Empire, China, and the New World, contaminating travel literature with antiquarian accounts, also flourished.

The hypothesis that there was a relationship between the triumph of antiquarian culture and the explosion of religious controversies in Northern Europe is very interesting, especially given the impact of the Reformed Approach to sacred scriptures on spiritual life. For example, the New Testamentary Commentary of Erasmus could have taken advantage of the experience acquired in his antiquarian publications. As one would expect, humanists and theologians (Catholic and Protestant alike) used antiquarianism to support their own positions and contest opposing views. The *Magdeburg Centuries*, which was overseen by Matija Vlačić (1520–1575), represented the high point for Protestant antiquarian writings and breathed life into a constellation of analogous works by authors such as Matthew Parker (1504–1575), Johan Jakob Gryner (1540–1617) and Johann Wilhelm Stucki (1542–1607). On the Catholic side, the most complete and organized response is represented by the *Annales* of Cesare Baronio (1538–1607), the purpose of which was not only to rehabilitate the Roman vision of Christianity from a historiographic perspective but also to utilize a more precise and systematic antiquarian approach. These patterns remained popular for most of the seventeenth century, as demonstrated by the monumental *Roma Sotterranea* written by Antonio Bosio (1575–1629), and *Italia Sacra* written by Ferdinando Ughelli (1595–1670).

Although the antiquarian tradition continued to generate very important successors during the centuries that followed, the turning point for Renaissance antiquarianism can be narrowed down to the early seventeenth century, when its unsuitability for dealing with new scientific enquiries started to become obvious. Hybrid figures who continued to tread the traditional path began to emerge, but they were unable to remain indifferent to the impending new developments. This was especially the case with the medical, zoological, and botanical studies carried out by Conrad Gesner (1516–1565), Girolamo Mercuriale (1530–1606), Ulisse Aldrovandi

(1522–1605), and Giovanni Battista della Porta (1535–1615) and most of all with the astronomical and scientific investigations of Nicolas Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637) and Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655). There are, however, two dates in particular which encapsulate this moment of transition: 1620, the year in which Francis Bacon (1561–1626) published his *Novum Organum*, and 1637, the year René Descartes' (1596–1650) *Discours de la méthode* was published. The emerging empiricism of evidence-based enquiry and philosophical skepticism started undermining the reliability of the antiquarian investigation, questioning the nature of the source and hence the value of the method, and this, in turn, opened the way to a new phase in the development of knowledge on the path to modernity.

Methodology

In antiquarian studies, the source began to take on a central role in the entire intellectual system and became the key aspect to consider when searching for knowledge about the past, thereby exerting an influence on the hermeneutical approach. During the Renaissance, many scholars debated the practical applications of the antiquarian methodology. Beyond specific objects of study, antiquarian techniques generally converged on a dual scheme which included a cataloguing phase and an interpretative phase. A large number of records had to be compiled (both directly and indirectly) in order to create a solid foundation; the records were then divided into different categories – in which the formal, geographical, political, and typological parameters were considered. After this descriptive stage, a process of amalgamation took place, which involved the cross-referencing of the data according to its common or distinctive elements, thereby establishing links with its cultural context in the process. The aim was for the interpretation of each finding to be grounded in the comprehension of its morphology, and these records were mainly used to fill gaps in knowledge, providing a plausible reconstruction through analogy.

Personal observation (*autopsia*) became essential in order to ascertain the reliability of the

antiquarian method and allowed other scholars to verify evidence or findings. It was no longer deemed sufficient to rely on texts that simply referred to an issue – it became necessary to elicit primary information and examine the works and pieces that developed around it. It was therefore important to study both primary and secondary sources, such as analogous treatises or commentaries, from a unitary perspective because they could provide further lost information.

Collections permitted antiquarian practice to be carried out widely. Thanks to the collections of ancient findings available, it was possible to carry out multidisciplinary excursions aimed at establishing the links between the different findings and the texts, transforming a general humanist interest in antiquity into a systematic approach to the subject. Although these collections cannot be identified with antiquarianism in and of themselves, they are related to its basic premises. The purpose of antiquarianism instead lays in its capacity to make the data react with the cultural context from which it derived, utilizing new instruments to understand the stratification of meanings, where the links between witnesses and time could be found.

The antiquarian approach during the Renaissance enabled the past to acquire a tangible and measurable connotation which was identified through its remains. The “materialization” of the object of study transformed each finding into a “semiotic” vehicle of unexpected meanings. This progress is particularly meaningful in that it moved away from the literary world: the written form lost its oracular connotation thanks to the objectivation of the support (codex/finding) and medium (the language). This represented a fundamental breakthrough in Renaissance antiquarian erudition: the awareness of the equivalence of sources. This equivalence was based on general categories which were subordinated to specific approaches. It was possible to obtain meaningful data from manuscripts, inscriptions, coins, statues, and the like due to the endeavors made in each specific discipline: philology, epigraphy, numismatics, archaeology, iconography, etc. For each field, the findings were ranked according to their reliability (the most consistent manuscripts,

the most relevant inscriptions, the best-preserved coins, etc.).

It was from this awareness that efforts were made, commencing with the collation of manuscripts, then associating of different pieces of material evidence to confirm the existence of a historical fact, and finally evaluating of data from different and ostensibly incompatible cultural areas. This also resulted in parallels being drawn between the past and present. For example, by using descriptions from ancient sources, it was possible to compare geographical places with their modern circumstances and characteristics. Different linguistic domains (ancient languages vs. current vernaculars) could also be compared in order to explain the lost meanings of words and expressions.

It is therefore clear that the convergence of disciplines in the antiquarian method derived from the interaction of specific and coherent methodologies, which ultimately modified the conformation of the entire system. The advances of one method derived from the advances of others, but only progressively, and it was understood that all were part of the same whole. The reconstruction of the past (or the idea of the past) depended on the relationship between the plethora of aspects linked to a source and to the phenomena that occurred within the history of tradition.

Through conjecture, hypotheses were formulated on the basis of the remains for the purpose of restoring their original status, which required a theoretical cognition of their essence. This was founded on the philological principle of respecting the “text/object” as handed down, which was the precondition for any amendment or modification. This meant that the criteria of emendation (*emendatio*) had to be applied to the explanation (*explicatio*): clarifying the nature of a source through its tradition, i.e., the recovery of a reliable lesson (*accuratam lectionem*), also became essential for its interpretation (*lectionem utilem*).

The relationship between documentary voids and hypotheses of reconstruction emerged: all the lacunas could potentially be filled because they were part of a “cultural grammar,” the rules of which were deduced through antiquarian investigation. The illusion of a coherent reconstruction

of the heritage of the ancients became the foundation for the construction of a culture of the present in a universal perspective, rooted in the remains of a past perceived as incomplete but also solid in its material substance.

Scholars were encouraged to draw a distinction between their conjectures and hypothetic reconstructions, on the one hand, and the data transmitted, on the other. Only in this way was it possible to preserve the integrity of the tradition without contaminating the evidence and to allow future scholars to solve the problems which they faced.

Ignoring the origins of remains often not only opened the door to a new layer of corruption of tradition but also represented the limits beyond which it was not possible to push forward conjecture in all of its forms: the “void of knowledge” was considered somehow to be a starting point for the research to be undertaken. This focus on rejecting or accepting conjectures reinforced respect for tradition: the preferred solution was to adopt the “principle of authority,” defending the stability of tradition rather than accepting positions that could have potentially undermined the legacy of knowledge. At the same time, there were also scholars who claimed that real progress could only be achieved in antiquarian studies if new discoveries were made, pointing to the limits of the *auctoritas* and the lack of canonical sources.

This also implied the possibility of a credible reconstruction of the matter using external arguments (*argumenta*). In order to obtain a thorough comprehension of remains without omitting the complex weave of meanings involved, it was necessary to examine their connection to their historical background. Although these endeavors occasionally did not reap any rewards, they remained a mandatory stage of the investigation in that they examined a context from which it was possible to glean parallel or additional information. Contradictory data emerged from this process, a problem that encouraged the development of alternative solutions to preserve the coherence of the entire system.

In this phase, the concept of “error” (or the “nature of errors”) became a further instrument to be used in understanding sources more fully. It

was hypothesized that the persistence of errors in the tradition was due to those who physically assembled the object analyzed. This permitted a distinction to be made between the identity of the “author” (the creator) and the “maker” (a scribe, an engraver, a sculptor – but sometimes also the author), admitting the possibility of an unintentional fallacy despite the authority and antiquity being known. This distinction opened new perspectives: the admission that the error was potentially common to any type of writing, and hence to any type of communication, went straight to the core of the problem, i.e., the hand of the writer, as opposed to the surface on which the wording was written.

This represented the first emergence of the awareness that all the data deriving from sources could be influenced by several variables, which had to be understood in order to fully grasp the subject matter being studied. The source was considered to be influenced by contingencies (e.g., the social or economic status of the executor), implying that quantitative differences did not necessarily correspond to qualitative dynamics (e.g., if the errors were more frequently found in manuscripts or epigraphs).

This implied that all types of writing were governed by similar mechanisms, fostering the understanding of the two laws that influenced its morphology: norm and usage. All the potential fluctuations within these factors should be taken into account, with each specific occurrence assessed in accordance with diatopic (based on geographical place) diachronic (based on time), and diastratic (based on social, cultural, and educational factors) parameters.

Definition

The intellectual phenomenon of Renaissance antiquarianism developed throughout Europe, manifesting itself in a plurality of works influenced by the origin, the environment and the personal approach of each author, the language adopted, the publishing house involved, and the commissioner. These works were related to a multitude of disciplines, which can be broadly

identified by following the setup of Poliziano's *Panespistemon* (1491). The production of antiquarian works reached its peak during and after the mid-sixteenth century, a period when antiquarianism transitioned from a phase of growth and consolidation to maturity, and the advancements made in previous centuries were systemically classified and widely utilized.

Antiquarian interests can be divided into two key areas, both of which connect all derivative disciplines: the first could be defined as "orthographic," in which the material finding transmitted a written witness, in any form, and in a variety of languages, and the second as "iconographic," in which the investigation was based exclusively on the morphological aspect, beyond the linguistic factor. It was inevitable that these two contexts would be complementary and that they went hand in hand, mutually benefiting from their respective development. From here, different disciplines emerged, each with its own peculiarities, passing from the literary to the artistic to the scientific and many other areas of enquiry, and each with clearly defined cultural horizons.

The antiquarian writings of the Renaissance were generally categorized according to three models: miscellanies of scattered records, organic works which often contained an encyclopedic in compass, and monographs. In the first case, these works contained explanations of a plurality of misinterpreted or misunderstood passages referring to the antiquarian corpus in the broadest sense, frequently with the title of *Variae* or *Antiquae lectiones*. The works in the second case, on the other hand, were comprised of systematic expositions of antiquarian themes or topics that also took related contexts into consideration, thereby significantly widening the possible implications of a single study. In the third case, surveys on specific topics were carried out.

Therefore, Renaissance antiquarianism can be defined as a cultural phenomenon aiming at interpreting the past by cross-referencing heterogeneous sources thanks to accumulation and collection. This entailed the use of new investigative techniques which involved the combination of literary sources and material findings in order to provide a reliable foundation for the idea of

history. However, Renaissance antiquarianism must not be reduced to the mere collecting, nor can it be condensed to an intellectual interest or a general fascination with antiquity. It is reasonable to assume that Renaissance antiquarianism first emerged from the study of the classical world, but it eventually evolved beyond these boundaries to become a method of approaching an object of study rather than simply a discipline. Since the universality of the method became potentially applicable to all fields and times, its essence was manifested in the methodological pathway and perspective applied. In fact, the broadening of the sources from which it was possible to obtain historical data triggered the development of competencies and interpretative instruments, which allowed the identification of evidence from an array of objects of study. From this, it can be seen that Renaissance antiquarianism represented a methodological perspective, the purpose of which was to rethink the way the past was viewed through a critical analysis of sources, producing a renewed approach toward history, which stimulated the interaction of disciplines and influenced the intellectual life of the time.

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Antitrinitarianism

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Abstract

The doctrine of the Trinity is an important article of faith in orthodox Christian belief. Trinitarian doctrine asserts that there is one God who exists eternally as three divine persons or hypostases: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The idea of the Trinity is complex, perplexing both skeptics and the faithful alike. Disagreements about the nature of the Trinity have led to the convening of councils (such as that of Nicaea and Constantinople) and formulation of creeds, aimed at separating the faithful who (are believed to) possess doctrinal truth from those who hold deviant or heretical beliefs. Doctrinal disagreements between trinitarians and antitrinitarians that took place in the fourth century, and which led to the formulation of the Nicene Creed, continued into the early modern period. As late as the seventeenth century in England and in Scotland, men were still burnt at the stake or sent to the gallows for not embracing the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.

History and Implications

The doctrine of the Trinity is an important article of faith in orthodox Christian belief. Trinitarian doctrine asserts that there is one God who exists eternally as three divine persons or hypostases: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The idea of the Trinity is complex, perplexing both skeptics and the faithful alike. The doctrine of the Trinity as we know it today owes much to an important council convened in 325 by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the city of Nicaea (in modern-day Turkey). Specifically, this council of the bishops was set up to resolve some issues of belief that divided the Christian church. The central topic dealt with by the Council of Nicaea was Arianism, a doctrine which asserts that Jesus Christ (the Son) is neither coeternal nor consubstantial (of the same essence) with God (the Father) because he was created at a point in time.

In Arian understanding, Christ is not divine but subordinate to the Father. Central to Arianism is the understanding that “the essence of true Godhood is unique and unbegotten (*agenetos*). This unbegotten essence belongs only to the paternal God, not to the Son or to the Holy Spirit” (Rumrich 1998, p. 79). Declaring Arianism’s antitrinitarian belief to be heretical, the Council of Nicaea asserts that the Son possesses the same substance (*homoousios*) as the Father, doctrinally affirming that the Father and the Son are equal in being and eternity. In 381, the credal statement formulated at Nicaea was refined and enlarged at the Council of Constantinople as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, a formal statement of belief familiarly known as the Nicene Creed. In an English translation of this Creed found in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1662), Jesus Christ is identified as “the only begotten son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made” (Cummings 2011, p. 392).

The Nicene Creed did not put an end to disagreements concerning the relationship between the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit constituting deity. In the early modern

period, the prominent Italian-born lawyer and theologian Faustus Socinus (Italian: Fausto Sozzini) (1539–1604) rejected the traditional account of the Trinity (McDonald 2016, p. 7), asserting that Jesus Christ is not divine but fully human, even though without sin. Influenced by Socinus’ antitrinitarianism, which was a development of the Arian heresy, members of the Minor Reformed Church of Poland (also known as the Polish Brethren) came to be referred to by their detractors as Socinians. After Socinus’ death, his followers published the Polish *Racovian Catechism* in 1605, a document which amounted to a nontrinitarian statement of faith (Rees 1818).

Divisions over doctrinal understanding of the nature of the Judeo-Christian God highlight the extent to which passions and convictions can reinforce a culture of deep and even violent intolerance. If the medieval Catholic Church used its immense ecclesiastical and political power to move against those it suspects of heresy (such as during the Holy Inquisition), the Reformation was also capable of deep intolerance, evinced, for example, in its antagonism toward the Catholic Church and also in violent doctrinal disagreements within its own fold. For both the Catholic Church and the Reformation, Arian antitrinitarianism was the archetypal heresy, generating violent reactions that included putting the heretic to death.

In 1553, the Spanish physician and theologian Michael Servetus (1511–1553) was burned for antitrinitarian heresy in Calvin’s Geneva. In England in 1612, during the reign of King James I, two men, Bartholomew Legate and Edward Wightman, were burnt at the stake for denying the Trinity (Atherton & Como 2005; Lim 2012, pp. 76–77). A monarch who ascended the English throne with no direct experience in dealing with the antitrinitarian heresy, which existed in pockets in parts of England, James I came to see himself responsible for extirpating this heresy from the land (Durstun 2006, pp. 125–126). Not only did the king have altercations with people who held antitrinitarian beliefs, but he was also involved in the conviction and execution of both Legate and Wightman (Durstun 2006, p. 126). In 1697 in Scotland, a 20-year-old student from Edinburgh, Thomas Aikenhead, was sent to the gallows for the

crime of blasphemy, which included denying the Holy Trinity. Found guilty under Scotland's two blasphemy acts of 1661 and 1695, Aikenhead was the last person in Great Britain to be executed for blasphemy (Graham 2008).

Disagreements over the nature of the Godhead not only unsettled relationships between members of the faithful but also influenced formulations of law in early modern England (Sirota 2013; Smith 2006). When the English Parliament passed the Act of Toleration (1689) granting freedom of worship to Non-Conformists (dissenting Protestants such as Baptists and Congregationalists), it excluded Roman Catholics and antitrinitarian Protestants (such as the Unitarians). It was only in the nineteenth century, with the passing of the Doctrine of the Trinity Act (1813) in the United Kingdom, that the legal requirement for people to believe in orthodox Trinitarian doctrine was removed.

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Antoninus of Florence

► [Pierozzi, Antonino](#)

Anusius Synesius, Petrus

► [Postel, Guillaume](#)

Anusius Venetus, Petru

► [Postel, Guillaume](#)

Apostolis, Aristoboulos

► [Apostolis, Arsenios](#)

Apostolis, Arsenios

Born: Heraklion, Crete ca. 1465

Died: Venice 1535

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Abstract

Arsenios Apostolis (Aristoboulos to his layman's name), the son of the scholar Michael Apostolis, was a post-Byzantine scholar and

philosopher and a Catholic clergyman and Archbishop of Monemvasia. He moved to Italy where he became acquainted with the cycle of the printer Aldus Manutius. He was more interested in philosophy than theology and he was more influenced by the historiographical tradition of Diogenes Laertius than by Aristotelian philosophy. Arsenios wrote appeals to prominent political figures in Western Europe exhorting them to undertake a Crusade in order to liberate Greece.

Keywords

Michael Apostolis · Erasmus · Philosophical anthology · Appeals to liberate Greece

Alternate Names

Apostolis, Aristoboulos

Biography

Arsenios Apostolis was a Greek scholar and philosopher and also a Catholic clergyman and Archbishop of Monemvasia. He was the son of the scholar Michael Apostolis. In Heraklion (Candia), he studied philosophy with his father and with Manuel Corinthios (ca. 1483–1530) and became interested in philosophy. Orphan and poor, he moved to Italy where he became acquainted with the cycle of the printer Aldus Manutius. He taught philosophy in Heraklion, in the Greek Gymnasium of Rome, in Nauplion, and in Monemvasia. He composed an anthology of dicta of ancient Greek philosophers (1519) and edited the *Introduction to Plato's Dialogues* by the Greek philosopher of the second century AD Albinus. Apostolis admitted the difficulty for the Greek scholar of his times to write original works and the concern for practical life were to account for this incapacity. He was more influenced by the historiographical tradition of Diogenes Laertius than by the Aristotelian philosophy that was dominant in its Byzantine or its Neo-aristotelian form and taught to the Greek students in Padua. Apostolis engaged in correspondence with Erasmus and assisted him to complete the second edition of his anthology of Greek gnomes by providing him with his father's

collection of apophthegms and other similar material of his own (see Geanakoplos, 259 ff.). Like his father Michael, Arsenios wrote appeals to the powerful of the West exhorting them to undertake a crusade in order to liberate Greece (see Manoussacas, 25–57). In particular, he wrote appeals to Pope Leo X and to Pope Clement VII, but at the same time, he criticized the Latins for the exploitation of the Greeks living under the Italian rule (see A. Papadia-Lala, 122 ff).

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Apostolis, Michael

Born: Constantinople, ca. 1420

Died: Venetian Crete, ca. 1480

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Abstract

Michael Apostolis (ca. 1420–ca. 1480) was a Greek Byzantine writer, scholar, scribe, and philosopher from the circle of Cardinal

Bessarion. He defended the Platonists in the quarrel between Platonists and Aristotelians. He returned to the Venetian Crete and contributed to the circulation of many ancient Greek manuscripts in Western Europe.

Biography

Michael Apostolis (Constantinople, ca. 1420–Venetian Crete, c. 1480) was a Byzantine writer, scholar, scribe, and philosopher and possibly a student of John Argyropoulos. Along with other Byzantine scholars, he left after the fall of Constantinople for Italy where he tried to establish himself professionally in a lucrative professorship of Greek language but without much success. He wrote an appeal to Western Europeans to undertake a crusade against the Ottomans and liberate his enslaved country. He took part in the great polemic between the Platonists and Aristotelians, by writing a treatise against Theodore Gaza's defense of Aristotle; in doing so, he alienated Cardinal Bessarion, his patron, since Gaza's ideas enjoyed the Cardinal's support. Bessarion wished to emphasize the compatibility of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies; thus, Apostolis, by attacking the Aristotelians, made his situation more difficult. His failure to professionally succeed in Italy made him bitter and suspicious of the Latin West. After returning to Venetian Crete, he created a scriptorium and contributed to the production and circulation of many manuscripts in the West. In a discourse to the Italians about the condition of Greek studies in Italy entitled *Λόγος παραινετικός ἐκ Γορτύνης εἰς Ἰταλίαν Πώμης* (Exhortation from Gortyna to Rome in Italy), Apostolis defended the idea that the Greek language should be taught in Greek, otherwise the knowledge acquired would be inadequate. He also vindicated the superiority of the Greek culture over the Latin one, although he conceded that the Westerners, in his time, were in a dominant position and their future was more promising. He was the father of Arsenios (Aristoboulos) Apostolis.

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Apostolis, Arsenios](#)
- [Argyropoulos, John](#)
- [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)

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Appetite, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

For Aristotle, the sensitive soul of animals was distinguished from the vegetative one because of its appetitive faculty. During Renaissance, the concept of appetite started to be applied not

only to animal and human soul but to nature in general. For several authors, nature was not conceived as a passive chunk receiving external forms and blindly following some pre-established ends. Quite the contrary, it was a “sentient” body, intentionally acting with the purpose of satisfying its appetites. The idea of an appetitive matter is associated with vitalism, panpsychism (or pansentism), and sometimes even animism.

Synonyms

[Desire](#); [Inclination](#); [Tendency](#)

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

For Aristotle, animals and humans possess a sensitive soul responsible for emotions and desires. Its appetitive faculty is both irrational (in the case of animals) and rational (in the case of humans). This capacity of humans to control their desires and appetites in accordance with their reason is called moral virtue. Aristotle’s scheme of the souls was the model for medieval authors, who emphasized the moral virtue relative to the appetitive faculty as specific to humans and their free will.

During the Renaissance, appetite becomes a more central concept, as it is associated not only with the sensitive soul of animals and humans but with matter in general. Appetites explain the way in which nature operates, given that they are the source of sympathy and antipathy between bodies, and of attraction and repulsion; shortly, they are the sources of activity in matter.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Within the Aristotelian framework, Franciscus Toletus, for example, distinguishes between natural, sensitive, and intellectual appetite. The intellectual appetite is the desire for knowledge, the sensitive resembles Aristotle’s appetitive

faculty, while the natural are the inclinations or tendencies of things to recognize their ends, that is the good God established for them. This is based on the fact that matter is appetitive, namely it has the inclination to receive forms (Des Chene 1996).

If this Aristotelico-Scholastic framework matter remains passive, within the new vital conception, however, matter is conceived as having agency. In his *De rerum natura*, Bernardino Telesio describes matter not as a passive body receiving forms from the exterior and having propensities towards the ends pre-established by God, but as a body that has the appetite to preserve itself, based on the perception of what is good or bad. Nature, for Telesio, is aware of its ends and purposes (Giglioni 2010a). As a result of perceiving surrounding bodies and the appetite to preserve its own nature, bodies “know” how to react. Natural phenomena are thus the effects of an active matter attempting to satisfy its appetitive nature.

Francis Bacon, following Telesio, also conceives of matter and its particles as being endowed with appetites and perceptions. The main appetites are those of resistance and preservation (Bacon 1859–1874, 1996–). Following a tradition coming from natural magic, Bacon builds an experimental philosophy based on this appetitive character of matter. Nature can be changed and transformed when the experimenter knows how to manipulate the fundamental appetites of matter in order to obtain the desired effects (Rusu 2013).

Impact and Legacy

These appetitive characteristics of matter developed by Renaissance vitalist thinkers had a great impact upon early modern thinkers. To offer two of the most relevant examples, Baruch Spinoza’s “conatus,” central to his philosophy, has its roots in the idea of appetite for self-preservation; Spinoza’s bodies are also striving towards self-preservation. Later on, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz attributes appetite and perception to monads, the only simple and real substances, which enter into

composites. Appetites are monadic tendencies towards transitions to new perceptions and thus, without them, no change would occur in monads (Jorati 2016).

Cross-References

- ▶ Bacon, Francis
- ▶ Human Senses in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Magnetism in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Matter in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Natural Magic in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Panpsychism
- ▶ Telesio, Bernardino
- ▶ Toletus, Franciscus

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Arama, Isaac ben Moses

Born: Spain, c. 1420

Died: Naples 1494

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Abstract

A leading rabbi of the generation that underwent expulsion from Spain in 1492, Arama is best known for his philosophical sermons and biblical commentaries that oppose the Aristotelianism of Maimonides and his followers: their subordination of revelation to reason; their belief in the eternity of the universe; and its consequent necessity that excludes miracles and individual providence. Yet Arama is no fideist, and values reason and philosophy as ways of deepening human understanding of Scripture, expressed through allegorical interpretation. A critic of previous enumerations of the basic beliefs, dogmas, or articles of faith of Judaism, Arama proposes his own list of six principles whose primary principle is creation which entails the possibility of miracles and individual providence. Arama's major work, the *Aqedat Yitzhaq* ("The Binding of Isaac"), a collection of philosophical sermons that bring together philosophical argument and scriptural exegesis, was very popular and exercised a significant influence on subsequent Jewish thinkers, especially Isaac Abrabanel.

Biography

A leading rabbi of the generation that underwent expulsion from Spain in 1492, Arama served as rabbi of a number of smaller communities in Aragon but primarily in Calatayud (Zaragoza), where he composed his mature works and engaged in several public disputations with Christian scholars. In addition to their philosophical content, his works are a rich source of historical

information on the life and culture of the Jews in Spain. After the expulsion of 1492, Arama settled in Naples where he died.

Arama is best known for the philosophical sermons he composed to counter the conversionist sermons in Christian churches which his congregants were compelled to attend. These sermons were ultimately anthologized as the *Aqedat Yitzhaq* ("The Binding of Isaac"; first published in Salonica, 1522), which both attracted a wide popular audience and exercised significant influence on subsequent Jewish philosophy. Among Arama's other works are a polemical treatise on the relation between philosophy and religion (1552) and commentaries on the Five Scrolls (1561), the Book of Proverbs (1565?), and the Book of Esther (1518). He is also said to have written a commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics* which is no longer extant.

Heritage and Rupture

The *Aqedat Yitzhaq* is composed in the form of a biblical commentary on the Pentateuch, reflecting its origins as sermons. Its 105 "Portals," or chapters, are, distinctively, each divided into two parts, a "*derishah*" (an "investigation") and a "*perishah*" (an "exposition"). The *derishah* addresses a philosophical or theological problem prompted by the biblical and rabbinic texts with which the sermon traditionally begins. The *perishah*, like scholastic *quaestiones* and *dubitationes*, addresses specific difficulties in the exegesis of the biblical proof-text of the sermon, solving issues of interpretation in light of the earlier philosophical account (in the *derishah*). The two parts complement one another and form a harmonious unit.

Although Arama did not write a systematic philosophical treatise, a relatively well-integrated and coherent philosophical view emerges that addresses most of the then-live philosophical questions: the relation between faith/revelation and reason/philosophy; the allegorical method of scriptural interpretation; the foundational dogmas or articles of religion; creation and physics; miracles and the role of divine will; providence and evil; the immortality of the soul and ultimate

happiness; human freedom and divine foreknowledge; prophecy and the Law; and the status of ethics in religion.

Arama clearly falls within the medieval philosophical tradition initiated by Moses Maimonides, a tradition based on the Arabic Neo-Platonized Aristotle. However, his relation to the specific views of these earlier thinkers is quite ambivalent. Most influenced by Judah Halevi, Moses Nahmanides, and Hasdai Crescas among Jewish thinkers and by Al-Ghazali among the Muslims, Arama harshly criticizes the fourteenth-century Averroistically influenced Maimonideans Moses of Narbonne (Narboni) and Joseph ibn Caspi.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The essential beliefs of Judaism, Arama argues, transcend or contradict reason, and must be accepted on faith, which he describes as a voluntary assent to the teachings of Scripture despite one's inability to rationally demonstrate or establish them, despite one's intellectual uncertainty about their truth. Furthermore, recalling in a manner reminiscent of Augustine's, Arama holds that even beliefs that lie within the scope of one's rational ability, and that in principle can be demonstrated, should be first accepted on faith and only afterwards verified, or understood, by reason. Taking the biblical patriarch as his model, Arama argues that, just as Abraham overcame his reason when he was commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac, so the ideal religious person must not only subordinate his reason to faith, but should also seek out irresolvable paradoxes of reason in order to discipline himself to subject his intellect to his will and, ultimately, subordinate philosophy to revelation. Thus through reasoning itself one comes to recognize the inferiority of reason to revelation.

Another subject on which Arama deviates from his Jewish philosophical predecessors pertains to the use of allegorical exegesis of Scripture. Although he did much to revive the allegorical method of scriptural interpretation after its decline in the "Maimonidean controversy," he also upholds the validity of the literal

meaning; like Nahmanides, he insists that allegorical interpretations never displace the *peshat*, literal, plain, or contextual meaning and he sharply criticizes the extreme Averroistic Maimonideans who seek to replace the literal sense of the Torah with Greek philosophical ideas.

Arama's position in the fifteenth-century debate over the foundational articles of faith or dogmas of Judaism shows the subtlety of his approach to the relation between philosophy and revelation. His articles of faith are principles essential not just to the idea of a divine law in general but to Judaism in particular. Connecting these principles with the Mosaic commandments, he argues with Halevi and against Maimonides that one achieves perfection and immortality not through intellectual contemplation but by performance of the commandments, the one feature that truly distinguishes Judaism from other religions and from the general theism of the philosophers. The commandments themselves are not articles of faith. However, Arama identifies the true principles that constitute the articles as those that are enshrined in and expressed by specific commandments – e.g., belief in creation is manifest by the Sabbath commandment.

After criticizing previous enumerations of dogmas by, e.g., Maimonides, Crescas, and Joseph Albo, Arama presents his own list of six: creation, miracles, revelation, providence, repentance, and the immortality of the soul. Of these, creation is the most important from which all the others can be derived. Like Maimonides, Arama argues that reason can demonstrate neither eternity nor creation – putting the problem of the origin of the world beyond the scope of human reason – but he then argues that in this respect creation is simply representative, or typical, of all the essential truths of Judaism. None can be established purely by reason.

Nonetheless, Arama (perhaps influenced by Nahmanides or Gersonides) articulates a quasi-Platonic account of the world's origin from pre-existent matter, itself created *ex nihilo* by God. God Himself is essentially characterized by His unconstrained will; therefore, there is no sense in which the world is necessary or necessitated. Furthermore, Arama argues that only if the world was

created freely by God's voluntaristic will can there be miracles, providence, or divine omnipotence, all of which prove that God possesses the power to suspend the laws of nature. At the same time, Arama appeals to the attestation of miracles in Scripture as evidence against eternity.

Despite the centrality of miracles and divine omnipotence in his scheme, Arama does not refute the idea of natural law and he does not hesitate to offer rational explanations where he can of scriptural miracles. Instead he distinguishes between two co-existing natures: an unintelligent "natural nature," whose laws apply regardless of human merits and desert, and a "supernatural nature" directed purposefully by a divine intelligence that is sensitive to human deserts determined by human actions. Miracles violate the laws and necessities of natural nature; however, they are instances of supernatural nature and mirror the divine intelligence's sensitivity to human actions and deserts. Moreover, in addition to the observed violations of natural nature that we designate "miracles," Arama (again following Nahmanides) argues that "hidden" miracles – i.e., miracles that reflect and manifest supernatural attention to human actions even while that they conform to nature and natural laws – constantly occur despite the fact that we do not notice their miraculousness. Because their true explanation lies in supernatural nature, all miracles, one might say, fall under *a* nature, some natural, others supernatural nature. Similarly, Arama distinguishes "natural providence" and "supernatural providence." Natural providence is directed at the preservation of species and does not attend to the individual's – moral or intellectual – perfection. Supernatural, or "providential" governance or providence, in contrast, is sensitive to individual – especially moral and to a degree intellectual – perfection. Moreover, in general the latter is limited to Israel.

Philosophers deny supernatural nature and supernatural providence, Arama argues, because they rank humanity beneath the celestial spheres and cannot understand why God would violate a higher order for a lower one. Instead Arama follows Saadiah Gaon that humankind is the ultimate end of creation, hence, that the spheres were

created for the sake of humankind and can therefore be manipulated on their behalf. Part of the original creation, moreover, endowed humans with a special power over nature. When the soul rules, establishing the “divine image” in the microcosm of the human body, harmony results in the macrocosm as well. When sin disrupts the microcosmic harmony, the macrocosmic harmony is tampered at the same time and causes universal evils. Human beings can ensure cosmic harmony by living in harmony with nature and following the natural law, which is most fully realized in the Mosaic Law. Its commandments instill all moral and intellectual virtues, including those unknown to reason. Only a life according to this revealed law will bring humanity to its highest, spiritual happiness, the ultimate end of the true philosophy.

Like creation, Arama affirms a libertarian conception of human freedom of the will, and he discusses in detail the history of the problem of the incompatibility of human freedom and divine foreknowledge. Neither human freedom nor divine foreknowledge, he contends, can be sacrificed. Accordingly, he criticizes those philosophers who attempted to escape the dilemma posed by their incompatibility by denying one or the other. Moreover, insofar as human freedom entails that humans are responsible for their actions, and are to be blamed or praised only according to their freely chosen actions, Arama criticizes the Christian doctrine that grace, hence, the greatest human good, is freely given by God independently of human works. This, he claims, would be tantamount to denying human freedom and responsibility. Thus, grace must be earned by its recipient. Throughout his writings, Arama assigns a central place to Aristotle’s *Ethics*, which he cites almost as frequently as he cites the Bible and Talmud and which he takes to be compatible with the Torah.

Arama’s political philosophy is largely Maimonidean, i.e., Al-Farabian and Platonic, but it also evokes neo-republican themes that anticipate later thought. According to Arama, a political society is necessary to ensure law and order, the personal security of its citizens, and justice. But the law and order is itself simply a necessary condition in order to enable select individuals

achieve their ultimate happiness or spiritual perfection.

Impact and Legacy

Arama’s sermons were designed to meet the particular needs of his own era but they also became classics of Jewish homiletics and sermonic preaching, exercising a strong influence to this day. The *Aqedat Yitzhaq* remains a popular widely read rabbinic text. As philosophy, Amara’s view represents a conservative attempt to withstand the challenges of both radical Averroistic Maimonideanism and Christianity. His strongest influence, especially in his political philosophy, was on Don Isaac Abrabanel (1437–1508), a Portuguese Jewish philosopher, biblical exegete, and statesman. But his work was also esteemed by Christian theologians and at least one Portal of the *Aqedah* was translated into Latin.

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Archimedes: Reception in the Renaissance

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Abstract

With only Apuleius and Augustine as partial exceptions, Latin Antiquity did not know Archimedes as a mathematician but only as an ingenious engineer and astronomer, serving his city and killed by fatal distraction when in the end it was taken by ruse. The Latin Middle Ages forgot even much of that, and when Archimedean mathematics was translated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, almost no integration with the traditional image of the person took place.

With the exception of Petrarca, who knew the civically useful engineer and the astrologer, fourteenth-century Humanists show no interest in Archimedes. In the fifteenth century, “higher artisans” with Humanist connections or education took interest in Archimedes the technician and started identifying with him. In mid-century, a new translation of most works from the Greek was made by Jacopo Cremonensis,

and Regiomontanus and a few other mathematicians began resurrecting the image of the geometer, yet without emulating him.

Giorgio Valla's posthumous *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus* from 1501 marks a watershed. Valla drew knowledge of the person as well as his works from Proclus and Pappus, thus integrating the two. Over the century, a number of editions also appeared, the *editio princeps* in 1544, and a mathematical work following the footsteps of Archimedes was made by Maurolico, Commandino, and others.

The Northern Renaissance only discovered Archimedes in the 1530s and for long only superficially. The first to express a (purely ideological) high appreciation is Ramus in 1569, and the first to make creative use of his mathematics was Viète in the 1590s.

Ancient Latin and Medieval Background

Archimedean mathematics had a certain impact in late Renaissance thinking, and it was important for changes in late Renaissance mathematics; however, much more pervasive, and of much longer duration, was the impact of “Archimedes” as an almost Protean figure, changing with the conditions of the time.

This figure was known to early Humanists exclusively through Latin sources (detailed in Høyrup 2017). These tell about the producer of marvelous military machines used in the defense of Syracuse and admired by Marcellus; about his fatal distraction when Syracuse was taken; about his “sphere,” a mechanical model of the heavenly system or his general mastery of astronomy; or, rarely, about his preoccupation with geometry, yet without indicating that this is more than a field dealing with figures drawn with a *radius* (Cicero, the Elder Pliny, Cassiodorus). Vitruvius ascribes to Archimedes a number of technical manuals that cannot be understood if one does not know natural philosophy and also tells the story of Hieron's crown. Archimedes' overall subtlety was proverbial in Cicero's time and circle.

Only two writers give hints that Archimedes made advanced geometric *theory* (yet in a way

that can only be understood by readers who know already): Apuleius, in the *Apology*, says that Archimedes' study of convex and concave mirrors outshines his general admirable subtlety in geometry, and Augustine, in *De utilitate credendi*, asks rhetorically who would take Epicurus as his guide to Archimedes' geometrical writings – “against which he spoke with much tenacity, in my opinion without understanding them.”

Medieval Latin culture until 1100 took very little notice. In the late eighth century, Paulus Diaconus borrowed some lines from Orosius referring to the role of Archimedes' machines in the defense of Syracuse, and around 810 Dungalus Reclusus took over from Macrobius that Cicero and Archimedes agree about the order of the heavenly spheres.

The twelfth century brought translation from the Arabic of a few Archimedean works (and of works drawing on Archimedes). Two translations of the *Measurement of the Circle* were made (one possibly by Plato of Tivoli and the other by Gerard of Cremona). The latter circulated well among mathematically active university scholars – witness the production of at least nine revised versions from the twelfth through the fourteenth century (Clagett 1964). Archimedean material was contained in the *Verba filiorum* of the Banū Mūsā, similarly translated by Gerard. The well-circulated *De curvis superficiebus* compiled in the late twelfth or earlier thirteenth century by John of Tynemouth contained material in Archimedean style; Roger Bacon ascribes it to Archimedes, while he never refers to the genuine works.

In 1269, William of Moerbeke made an almost complete translation of the Archimedean corpus from the Greek (ed. Clagett 1976). Only Witelo appears to have used it in the thirteenth century, but in the fourteenth it was drawn upon by Jean de Murs, Oresme, Henry of Hesse, and Albert of Saxony (Clagett 1978, 3–144) – all linked to Paris University.

Outside this restricted circle, only Gerard's *Measurement of the Circle* had repercussions. Around 1250, Vincent of Beauvais combined in *Speculum historiale* V. XLIII (1624, 149) quotations from Orosius (the machines and the defense of Syracuse) and Valerius Maximus (the death

story) with a reference to Archimedes's *Measurement of the Circle*, “of which Aristotle says that it can be but is not known” (*Categories* 7^b31–33). A century later, Walter Burley (1487, b ii^v) added to this a long *verbatim* borrowing from Valerius Maximus. On the whole, however, the Arabo-Latin as well as Moerbeke's Greco-Latin translations circulated in isolation from interest in the person – and information about the person was drawn from very few sources: Orosius, Macrobius, and Valerius Maximus.

Humanism from Petrarca to Alberti

As a rule, fourteenth-century Humanists were interested in neither the works nor the person (attitudes to Archimedes are dealt with under different but compatible perspectives in Laird 1991 and Høyrup 1992). Petrarca was, however, though only in the person. To judge from his letters, Archimedes was admittedly not central to him – he is mentioned only twice. Nonetheless, Petrarca did produce two biographical notices. In *De viris illustribus vitae* (1338), within the biography of Marcellus (Petrarca 1874, I, 280–282), he narrates in his own words Valerius Maximus' stories about Archimedes' powerful war machines and his death, with his own observations, twists, and additions: that even though Firmicus Maternus disparages Archimedes as a mechanic, he was formidable both as an astrologer and a geometer; that the figures he was drawing were astrological or geometrical; and, finally, that Cicero found Archimedes' grave. In *Rerum memorandarum libri* I.23 (1343) (Petrarca 1943, 22–24), an arrival in Syracuse offers the occasion to expand Livy's single line about Archimedes' unique observation of the heavens and the stars into a general praise of Archimedes' study of nature and of his sphere which allows understanding of the celestial motions not only by the mind but also by our eyes. Even more praiseworthy were his terrestrial mechanical feats; his fatal distraction, on the other hand, is slightly censured as “immoderate.” On both accounts, Platonizing celebration of the pure intellect is outside the perspective. The value scale is that of Cicero and the Roman elite, and

Archimedes is *almost* perfect when measured thus. Archimedes was part of the legitimate ancient heritage, respected because of his sophisticated machines, his planetary model as well as those that could serve efficiently in war. Even Petrarca's aversion for astrology only induces him to compare modern astrologers unfavorably to Ptolemy, Archimedes, and Firmicus Maternus, not to denigrate this aspect of his "Archimedes."

Other fourteenth-century Humanists were not interested in the Archimedes figure at all. That changed to some extent in the fifteenth century, as "higher artisans" (architects, painters, military engineers, etc.) and their ambience began to have intercourse with Humanists. Engineer artists like Mariano Taccola and Filippo Brunelleschi were known, respectively, as the "Archimedes of Siena" and a "second Archimedes." None of them were mathematicians. What they had in common with the "Archimedes" known at the time was to be skilled engineers and architects, designers of machines.

The main source for the admiration of Archimedes among the higher artisans is Vitruvius, a colleague. Leon Battista Alberti – the earliest outstanding Humanist who was also active as a higher artisan, Brunelleschi's partner in the creation of perspective technique – takes over Vitruvius's version of the crown story in the *Ludi matematici*. However, his *De re aedificatoria* shows that increasing familiarity with Plutarch's biography of Marcellus was also influential. It cites Plutarch for the tale of Archimedes moving a loaded ship on the ground and for the promise to be able to move this world if he could only go to another one.

As informative as borrowings is the way they are filtered. Alberti distances himself from part of what he reads and omits an essential part of Plutarch's Platonizing message. Plutarch's insistence that Archimedes considered mechanical work and even mechanical treatises improper is not argued against; it goes unmentioned – it would indeed disparage Alberti's own undertaking. Neoplatonism and esoteric Platonism remain unthinkable. Further, Alberti declares not to intend to be Zeuxis in painting, Nicomachus in the manipulation of numbers, or Archimedes

when dealing with angles and lines; he will stick to the basic principles and that which gives honor and fame to the architect. Admitting that Archimedes had been the supreme geometer (Plutarch says so), Vitruvius distances himself from this aspect of the hero.

Return of Archimedes the Mathematician

Even among Humanists with no direct links to architecture and engineering, there seems to have been some interest in Archimedes, probably because of what the Latin sources tell about him. In 1423–1424, rumors circulated that an Archimedes manuscript had been brought back from Byzantium. However, nobody ever saw it, and some 25 years passed before more happened among Humanists. Around 1450, however, Jacopo da San Cassiano Cremonensis made a fairly complete translation (d'Alessandro and Napolitani 2012). Of the works translated by Moerbeke, *On Floating bodies* is missing in the new translation, while *The Sand Reckoner*, absent from Moerbeke's Greek manuscript, is translated by Jacopo. None, of course, knew *On Method*. Whether Jacopo's translation was made while he was still in Mantua or after his move to the Papal court is not clear, the undertaking agrees well with Nicholas V's broader translation program. This translation is the basis for Regiomontanus' judgment from 1463/64 (1972, 45) that Euclid was

followed by Archimedes citizen of Syracuse, and by Apollonius of Perga, customarily called the Divine because of the height of his genius, of whom it is not easy to say whether one is to be preferred to the other. While, namely, Apollonius described the elements of conics in eight books, which have never been put into Latin, the first rank appears to belong to Archimedes the Sicilian by the variety of publications, which under Pope Nicholas V were rendered in Latin by a certain Jacopo of Cremona.

Both Jacopo and Regiomontanus were connected to Bessarion's circle, though at different moments. Bessarion himself was interested enough to get a copy for his library, and Cusanus expressed his gratitude to the Pope for having put the

manuscript at his disposition (which, however, did not affect his idiosyncratic approach to mathematics much). Apart from that, echoes among Humanists cannot be discerned during the first decades. It is noteworthy, moreover, that Jacopo himself had a thorough training in university philosophy, while Regiomontanus was an accomplished university astronomer, already familiar with the medieval direct and indirect Archimedean tradition before being introduced to Humanism by Bessarion (Clagett 1978, 343–354). Both therefore had a substantial fundament allowing them to understand Archimedes as an awe-inspiring geometer; Humanists with no similar background could only take such Latin sources on faith as claimed without specifying that he was ingenious. Even Regiomontanus, however, did not go beyond recognition – his own mathematics is not marked by Archimedean inspiration (after all, his primary interests were astronomy and astrology).

Among writers in the vicinity of the abacus tradition and the higher artisanate, there was a certain impact. Piero della Francesca, who had access to Jacopo's translation, has some Archimedean name-dropping in *De quinque corporibus regularibus* for matters that already appear without reference in his earlier *Trattato d'abbaco* (Clagett 1978, 396–398). Luca Pacioli, too, must have seen Jacopo's translation (ibid., 448, 460), but mostly draws on the direct and indirect medieval traditions for Archimedes' mathematics, giving only quite imprecise references; on the other hand, in the *Summa de arithmetica* ... (Pacioli 1494), he refers in the dedication to Duke Guidobaldo to "the great Syracusan geometer Archimedes" who with "his machines and mechanical inventions kept Syracuse safe for long." The passage is repeated almost verbatim in his *Divina proportione* (Pacioli 1509: b ii'), now addressed to Ludovico Sforza of Milan and characterizing Archimedes as a "noble ingenious geometer and most worthy architect" and pointing out that he defended his *patria*; in the same work, Pacioli gives further imprecise references to Archimedes' results.

The case of Leonardo da Vinci is similar but not identical. He appears to draw on recent as well

as medieval Archimedean mathematics (Clagett 1978, 478); he understands that Archimedes "never squared any figure with curved sides" but "only squared the circle minus the smallest portion that the intellect can conceive, that is the smallest point visible" (Leonardo da Vinci 1883, II, 446). Also insightful at least as to the conditions of his own epoch, Leonardo believes Marcellus wanted to find Archimedes in order to make use of his services – but when drawing on sources, he does so from approximate memory.

The Greek Text and Latin Printing

One late-fifteenth-century pure-breed Humanist manifested interest in Archimedes the mathematician: Giorgio Valla. He bought the manuscript from which Moerbeke had made his translation, and he at least saw Jacopo's translation (Clagett 1978, 462). He also possessed a manuscript of Proclus' commentary to *Elements* I, copied in part by himself (Rose 1975, 47). His posthumous *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus* (Valla 1501) returns to Archimedes' time and again, sometimes referring to what *could* have been known from Plutarch and the Latin sources but which Valla draws instead from Proclus (using almost every passage in Proclus' commentary referring to Archimedes); sometimes Valla discusses Archimedes' mathematics (not merely quoting or using results). Valla's "Archimedes" builds upon the same sources as his acquaintance with Archimedean mathematics – he has no need, neither for Plutarch nor for Latin anecdotes, even though he presents much of their substance.

The fifteenth-century "Archimedes" did not disappear completely for that. In 1568, Giorgio Vasari (1846, XI, 98) could still characterize the painter and architect Bartolomeo Genga as "a new Archimedes" because of his design of fortifications. Within the increasingly important and increasingly competent mathematical professions, however, Archimedes the mathematician came to equal or even overshadow his mechanic namesake.

The sixteenth century brought the printing of Archimedean works. In 1503, the astronomer

Luca Gaurico published a small volume containing Archimedes' *Quadrature of the parabola* and *Measurement of the circle* in Moerbeke's translation. In 1543, Tartaglia republished Gaurico's two Archimedean editions together with *On the equilibrium of Planes* and *On Floating Bodies I*, even these in Moerbeke's version. In 1560, Tartaglia further published as Book III of *La quarta parte del general trattato* an Italian translation of *On the Sphere and Cylinder I*.

The *editio princeps* of the Greek Archimedes was published by Thomas Gechauff Venatorius in Basel in 1544. The volume also offered Jacopo's translation as corrected by Regiomontanus. These two, and the new partial translation which Federico Commandino published in 1558 and 1565, were the main sources for later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Archimedean work (Clagett 1978, 568).

Commandino (1558a) contained *On the Measurement of the Circle*, *On Spiral Lines*, *On the Quadrature of the Parabola*, *On Conoids and Spheroids*, and *The Sand Reckoner*, translated directly from Greek manuscripts, with a separate volume of commentaries (Commandino 1558b). Commandino (1565a) was a revised version of the Moerbeke translation of *On Floating Bodies*, which was absent from the *editio princeps* and from available manuscripts. All were much sounder than preceding translations.

Better text versions and printing are one aspect of the novel way the sixteenth century approached Archimedes. Another aspect is the use made of Archimedean theory. Most important in this respect is what was done by Francesco Maurolico and Commandino.

In 1534, Maurolico had composed his own versions of *On the Quadrature of the Parabola*, *On the Measurement of the Circle*, and *On the Sphere and the Cylinder* on the basis of the various direct and indirect medieval traditions combined with information drawn from Valla (Clagett 1978, 773). In *De momentis aequalibus* from 1547 to 1548, he took up the investigation of the centers of gravity of solids (Archimedes had only dealt with those of plane figures). This topic also occupied him later on, and in the 1550s or 1560s, he applied Archimedean

mechanics and medieval impetus theory to the ps.-Aristotelian *Mechanica*.

Commandino, too, was to publish on the centers of gravity of solids in 1565b. Giovanni Battista Benedetti, Guidobaldo del Monte, and Baldi confronted the ways mechanical questions were dealt with by Archimedes, Heron, Pappus, Aristotle, ps.-Aristotle, Jordanus, and impetus theory – sometimes in mutual polemics (Rose 1975, 154–156, 230–233, 249–253).

Knowing the Archimedean texts intimately and using them obviously changed the image of Archimedes among competent mathematicians. This can be illustrated by how Cardano, Commandino, and Baldi spoke about him.

In *Encomium geometriae*, read in the Academia Platina in Milan in 1535, we find (Cardano 1663, 443) after a long list of names of geometers (drawn as far as the minor figures are concerned from Proclus' recently published commentary to *Elements I*) that:

they are all defeated by Archimedes of Syracuse, almost all of whose findings we possess. A man of the highest genius, and who will have shown the circumference of the circle pretty closely, and taught by solid geometry how to interpose two lines between two others in continuous proportion. But that has been lost.

In this context, a praise of geometry, only Archimedes' mathematics finds its place. In *De subtilitate* (Cardano 1550), the situation is different. Book I refers repeatedly to Archimedes in the discussion of mechanical questions; Book IV refers to a book about parabolic burning mirrors (mistakenly) ascribed to Archimedes and to Archimedes setting fire to Roman ships by means of burning mirrors (a story Cardano attributes to Galen). Book XVI, finally, situates Archimedes first in a list of subtle minds (pp. 313f):

not only because of his works which have now been published but also because of his mechanics which, as Plutarch relates in his *Life of Marcellus*, discouraged the Roman troops time and again by his inventions, and discourages us no less by Galen's testimony, in both areas not only the first but inimitable.

Venatorius, in the dedicatory letter introducing his edition of the Greek text, speaks at some length about the mathematics it deals with, but in the end

he also comes to the defense of Syracuse and to Archimedes' promise to move the earth if only he might get another globe.

Both Commandino's translation from 1558 and his commentaries contain dedicatory letters speaking about Archimedes. The former, addressed to Ranuccio Cardinal Farnese (to whose household Commandino belonged since years), first explains that mathematics, dealing with the intelligible only, has higher rank than metaphysics and natural philosophy – these depend on matter, and even Plato and Aristotle cannot agree about them. This higher rank is also to be ascribed to those mathematical disciplines which *contemplate* the sensible: mechanics, astronomy, optics, etc. So, nothing is more useful nor more necessary for the human race than mathematics, neither in private matters nor in public management – not only geometry, arithmetic, and proportion but also mechanics and the preparation of instruments. This leads naturally to Archimedes – first his astronomy and sphere and then arithmetic (*The Sand Reckoner*). Though Archimedes is not known for anything in music, Commandino finds it plausible that he excelled even in this discipline. That he was “a kind of God in geometry nobody sane of mind” can deny. Mechanics he first practiced for war and then transferred to peace – specifically, we hear about the ship, the defense of Syracuse, about Marcellus's grief, and about Cicero finding the grave.

The commentaries are dedicated to the Cardinal's brother-in-law, Duke Farnese. This dedication is much shorter and concentrates on military mathematics (the addressee being a warrior). Later the commentary observes (42^v) that Maurolico is so “skilled in mathematics that in these times he can with justice be said to be another Archimedes.”

Baldi began work on his *Vite de' matematici* in 1575. The biography of Archimedes (from 1595) starts thus (Baldi 1886, 388):

In all domains there have been some who, having arrived at the peak of excellence, have demonstrated how far the human intellect can advance in that direction. Without doubt Archimedes was such a man in mathematics, since the first place is due for good reasons to him.

Baldi builds as much as possible on Archimedes' own introductory letters; but he also draws on Plutarch, Cicero, Ovid, Ptolemy, Pappus, Proclus, etc., confronting them critically with each other. This allows him to present all the usual stories about Archimedes' life and his mechanical feats and also to speak of his surviving works as well as lost writings known from more or less reliable references. In conclusion (p. 453), Commandino is cited for the opinion that “that one can hardly call himself a mathematician who has not studied the works of Archimedes.”

Among the mathematicians of the outgoing Renaissance, Archimedes had thus become primarily a mathematician creating advanced theory; but his fame as most skilled in theoretical as well as practiced mechanics was not discarded. They themselves, often court mathematicians, were also engaged in practical service to prince and state. Their Archimedes was one of their own kind, as had been Taccola's and Brunelleschi's Archimedes in the early fifteenth century – only their kind had changed.

In the Northern Renaissance, references to Archimedes' mathematics are rare and late (none preceding 1530, it seems) and those to the person even fewer. The earliest example of Northern worshipping “Archimедism” is to be found in Petrus Ramus's *Scholae mathematicae* (1569). The presentation of Archimedes begins (p. 26) almost as that of Baldi:

God has decided that there should be in each art something like a unique idea which everybody studying the discipline would propose to himself as a model – as in eloquence, Demosthenes and Cicero, and in medicine Hippocrates and Galen: thus Archimedes in mathematics.

There is no mathematical substance behind this – Ramus' mathematical level hardly allowed him to understand Archimedes in any depth. Ramus' ideological Archimедism did not inspire him to become an Archimedean.

The first Northern figure to approach Archimedean mathematics as mathematics and not only as a small collection of famous results is thus Viète, at the very end of the sixteenth century. In *Apollonius Gallus* and *Variorum de rebus mathematicis responsorum liber VIII*, he makes use of *On Spiral Lines*. When it fitted his mathematical intent, Viète was thus an Archimedean;

however, there is no general praise of the person (not even a presentation) nor of Archimedes as a mathematician. In double contrast to Ramus, Viète, though sometimes Archimedean, was no Archimedeist.

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Architect

► Architect, Renaissance

Architect, Renaissance

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Abstract

In Renaissance Europe, the role of the architect was unfixed. Unlike painting, sculpture, and metalwork, where there were organized

systems of apprenticeship, for the architect there was no established curriculum of training or standard mode of practice. Every one of the period's leading architects – individuals like Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, Donato Bramante, and Michelangelo Buonarroti – assumed a different role, both in relation to his patrons and in the technical and design work he undertook. As reflected in contemporary commentaries and municipal records, the appellation “*architetto*” was inconsistently used to refer to a range of individuals involved with the building process – from patrons to construction administrators to material suppliers – even when they were not necessarily involved in building design.

Beginning in the fifteenth-century, learned practitioners became increasingly vocal about the need to elevate the status of architecture. Spurred by the rediscovery of Vitruvius' recon-dite *De Architectura*, architecture was recast an intellectual endeavor, requiring science, math, and innate talent (*ingegno*), and as such, was said to belong within the realm of the liberal arts (*artes liberales*). Distinct from the anonymous master masons and building supervisors of the medieval period, the Renaissance architect was to assume the position as authorial, supremely learned master in the art of building. This new conception of the architect was articulated in a series of architectural treatises – those of Leon Battista Alberti, Antonio Averlino “Filarete,” Francesco di Giorgio, and Andrea Palladio, among others – which taking various forms, sought to structure the modern profession.

Synonyms

Architect; Chief of works; Engineer; Mechanic

Defining the Profession

In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe, there was no distinct profession of architecture, and as reflected in the contemporary commentaries, municipal records, building patents, and treatises,

the conception of the architect varied considerably depending on context. Patrons, building administrators, on-site supervisors, and craftsmen often received the appellation “*architetto*” even if they were not necessarily involved in building design. Such was the case with Lorenzo de' Medici, who was often referred to as architect due to his great interest and investment in building (Brown 1993). There are also numerous examples in which an individual who was working as an architect was referred to by another title – painter, sculptor, engineer, or chief of works (*pittore*, *scultore*, *ingegnere*, or *capomaestro*) (Hollingsworth 1984). Luca Fancelli, for example, was accustomed to sign himself “*lapicida*” or “*scultor*” (“stonecutter” or “sculptor”) even when working on building design (Vatovec 1979). Similarly, in his contract for the position of *operaio dei bottini*, overseer of Siena's extensive system of aqueducts, Francesco di Giorgio is designated as *pittore* (Weller 1943).

The undefined nature of the early-modern architect was in part the manifestation of the contemporary cultural shifts and the extraordinary degree of social mobility of the Renaissance period. It was also a product of the desire to impose an idealized, classical conception of architecture on a discipline which for centuries had been ruled by unlettered practitioners. Beginning in the first half of the Quattrocento, learned practitioners and humanists became increasingly vocal about the need to elevate the status of architecture. Leon Battista Alberti was among the first and most notable proponents of this reconception of the profession, writing a theoretical tract which presented architecture as intellectual endeavor, requiring science, math, and *ingegno*, and placing it in the realm of the *artes liberales*. The heightened status of architecture, Alberti asserted, meant that the individual architect also gained prominence. But unlike its sister arts, painting and sculpture, where organized systems of apprenticeship prevailed, there was no established mode of architectural training or even a universally accepted definition of what architecture entailed.

As the first published and widely circulated tract on architecture in the Renaissance, Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* (c.1450) had a marked impact on how architecture was

conceived in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries. Alberti took as his model Vitruvius' *De Architectura* (c.15 BC), the only surviving tract from antiquity dedicated solely to the art of building (Krautheimer 1969). Rediscovered in 1414 by the Florentine humanist Poggio Bracciolini, *De Architectura* was considered the definitive text on architecture in the Renaissance; its abstruse Greek-Latin prose was thought to hold the secrets of superior classical building design. The tract's proposed program – to reformulate Roman architecture, liberating it from what he considered an inferior position in respect to Greek architecture – also resonated with the early-modern practitioners (Pagliara 1986; Vitruvius 1999). Although Alberti did not accept Vitruvius' theory in full, and was considerably less dogmatic on the extreme breadth of the architect's education, he was equally emphatic that the architect was to be distinguished from the craftsman or builder. The architect, according to Alberti, was a learned individual, who used his ingenuity, along with his knowledge of site conditions, building materials, classical building forms, and social practices to conceive and design beautiful structures suitable for the “noble needs of man.” The Albertian architect was all authoritative and controlled the entirety of the building's design. The craftsman, by contrast, was a manual operator, nothing more than the “hand of the architect.” He implemented the building concept but was not involved in questions of design (Alberti 1998).

Alberti supported his lofty vision of the architect using examples drawn from the texts of ancient authorities – not only Vitruvius but also Democritus, Archimedes, Theophrastus, Hippocrates, Servius, Pliny, Plato, and Aristotle, among others. In taking up these models, Alberti gave architecture a learned, theoretical foundation but also one that was highly idealistic and in large part devoid of practical applications. In content and prose, Alberti's erudite Latin *De re aedificatoria* was far better suited for the humanist patron than for the working architect, and ultimately the text had limited impact on fifteenth-century architectural practices.

With few exceptions, architectural design and construction practices in the Renaissance were

largely the same as those of the medieval period. The typical Renaissance architect rose from the ranks of artistic and building trades. Educated in *abbaco*, or practical geometry, he received the appellation of *architetto* late in his career, after demonstrating his excellence in design and his ability to administer and supervise large building projects. Although the architect possessed greater cultural and artistic authority than his artisan peers, his training and skill sets were much the same, and in keeping with the highly conservative, entrenched modes of construction, his work as building designer remained highly collaborative in nature. Rarely, if ever, did the Renaissance architect assume the consummate authority Alberti bestowed upon him (Ackerman 1991; Goldthwaite 1980; Trachtenberg 2010).

Following Alberti, learned architectural practitioners of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries continued to seek to define the diffuse profession. The outpouring of architectural treatises and Vitruvian commentaries written in the vernacular – those of Antonio Averlino Filarete, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Cesare Cesariano, Pietro Cataneo, Sebastiano Serlio, Andrea Palladio, Philibert de l'Orme, and Vincenzo Scamozzi – reveal the continued desire to bestow order and prestige to architecture where it remained absent (Cataneo 1985, Filarete 1972, L'Orme 1981, Martini 1967, Palladio 1997, Scamozzi 1997, Serlio 1996, Vitruvius 1981). At their core, every one of these tracts questions the essential definition of architecture, offering rules and formulae that might structure the architect's training and practice. Although the books vary considerably in breadth and content, taken together, they uphold a set of fundamental principles. Good architecture, it was unanimously agreed, was that which applied classical building forms and proportions. All the Renaissance authors read Vitruvius, and although like Alberti they may not have followed his theory in full, they all relied upon *De Architectura* in deciphering the difficult parts of architecture (Kanerva 2006; Pagliara 1986). In order to be a successful architect, it was said, it was necessary to study ancient Greek and Roman building models, both in text and firsthand. The Renaissance theorists were also in agreement on the importance of geometry and drawing

(*disegno*). Drawing was considered the fundamental tool of the architect, by which he studied the works of others, developed original designs, tested inventions, and communicated his ideas with workers and patrons. Knowledge of the natural environment, and the ability to modify a building design according to the local topography and site conditions, is another major theme which runs throughout the writings.

In their diversity, the Renaissance treatises testify to the degree to which architecture remained uncoded. There is no consensus, for example, on the dimensions of the columnar orders, and the authors do not agree on a curriculum of architectural education. Moreover, the tracts reveal significant discrepancies in regard to the essential duties and design responsibilities of the architect. Whereas Francesco di Giorgio and Pietro Cataneo assign to the architect projects involving defensive and mechanical design, such technical works are entirely absent from the treatises of Serlio and Palladio (Cataneo 1985, Martini 1967, Palladio 1997, Serlio 1996). The design of fortifications became increasingly specialized in the sixteenth-century, and as delineated in Giovanni Battista Belluzzi's *Trattato di Fortificazioni* (c. 1550), there was an increasing distinction between military and civil architects (Lamberini 2007). For others, however, the diffuse definition of the architect as general "master builder" endured. In Tomaso Garzoni's widely popular *La Piazza Universale di Tutte le Professioni del Mondo* (1585), a text which sought to order all early-modern social functions into distinct professional categories, architects are still defined as "masters of buildings, fortifications and fortresses, and masters of machines, mechanics and engineers" (Garzoni 1996). Over a century after Alberti's *De re Aedificatoria*, therefore, the definition of architecture remained uncertain; the qualifications and duties of the architect still largely determined on a case-by-case basis.

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Architecture and Renaissance

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Abstract

During the Renaissance in Europe, between roughly 1300 and 1650, a number of intellectual discourses and practices helped shape the discipline of architecture. This article is not about canonical buildings or the evolution of distinctive stylistic characteristics but rather six key topics within an overall threefold structure: heritage and rupture with the tradition, innovative and original aspects, and impact and legacy. The six topics are geometry as the scientific foundation of architecture; humanism, antiquarianism, and the recovery of ancient architecture; architectural histories and the creation of an *all'antica* architecture; the canonization of the architectural orders; the production of architectural theory; and *disegno* and the use of architectural drawings. Intellectual history, rather than an art history of styles, is the general approach. It begins with a history of the term “Renaissance” and its application to architecture.

“Renaissance Architecture” Versus “Architecture in the Renaissance”

The idea of the Renaissance as a distinct historical period was formulated during its own time. In the

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, humanist authors such as Petrarch (1304–1374) and Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) defined the time in which they lived as separate from the immediate past, the Middle Ages (or *Medium Aevum*). In doing so, these writers confirmed that a new epoch in human history had arrived, one that concerned all matters of human life: from science to literature, from politics to art (Günther 2009; Clarke 2003). For the Italian humanists, this concept of a new era coincided with the idea of a rebirth of the culture of classical antiquity. In the sixteenth century, Giorgio Vasari applied these ideas to the visual arts and referred to this rebirth with the word “*rinascita*” (Vasari 1550).

The term “Renaissance” itself, however, was introduced only in the nineteenth century, and specifically with reference to art history (Günther 2009). The French art historian Jean-Baptiste Séroux d’Agincourt (1730–1814) used the term in his *Histoire de l’art par les monumens, depuis sa décadence au IV^e siècle jusqu’à son renouvellement au XVI^e* (written from 1789 onward, published between 1810 and 1823). In this work, Séroux d’Agincourt understood the “Renaissance” as the artistic style of a period, which could be historically demarcated. With a focus on architectural history, he dated the beginning of the Renaissance to the middle of the fifteenth century. In the previous two centuries, he wrote, Italian authors such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, along with Greek scholars, had prepared the “triumphant epoch of renewal.” With their work, the human spirit was finally awaking from “its long sleep.” It was only in the fifteenth century, however, that the rediscovery of Vitruvius and the study of ancient ruins revealed the true origins of architecture. Only at this time did the “Renaissance” really begin (Séroux d’Agincourt 1823, III, 86). The period of the Renaissance style in architecture, as understood by him, continued into his own time.

During the nineteenth century, however, art historians revised Séroux’s classification of Renaissance architecture and distinguished Renaissance architecture from Baroque architecture. While Renaissance architecture had previously been distinguished from Gothic

architecture through its use of distinct architectural elements (e.g., classical forms, round arches vs. fine tracery, pointed arches), now it was also differentiated from Baroque architecture through the formal conception and arrangement of the same architectural elements (e.g., static vs. dynamic) (Frommel and Brucculeri 2012; Günther 2009; Wölflin 1915). Within this context, the term “Renaissance” refers more to the formal characteristics of a building than to the historical time period in which the building was built. One can therefore speak of Gothic architecture in France and Renaissance architecture in Italy as being from the same historical moment.

The terms Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque should thus be understood as modern labels, used to classify and categorize buildings based on stylistic features. There has never been a complete scholarly consensus about the exact definitions of these three terms. Furthermore, the boundary and even distinction between, for example, Gothic and Renaissance architecture has always been a matter of debate. Recently, these very distinctions have received renewed attention within the art historical discipline (Kavaler 2012; Bork 2011; Chatenet 2011).

The debate is related not only to the classification of buildings based on stylistic features, but also to the possibility of creating a sequential art history founded on a model of historically demarcated period styles. This approach to art history was already formulated in the sixteenth century, as were the doubts surrounding it (Sankovitch 2001). In the first edition of the *Vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori italiani, da Cimbadue insino a’ tempi nostri* (published in 1550), Giorgio Vasari described the art and architecture of his own time as a progressive evolution, following a natural pattern of birth, growth, maturity, and decline. According to this model, he divided recent and contemporary art into three “manners”: the *prima maniera*, the *seconda maniera*, and the *maniera moderna* (Vasari 1550). In the 1568 edition of the *Vite*, however, Vasari revised this strongly teleological system (Vasari 1568). Different styles and artists could and did operate next to one another.

After its introduction into art history, the term “Renaissance” was taken up outside the

discipline. The “Renaissance” was also regarded as a cultural movement, as well as a historical period (e.g., Burckhardt 1860). This widespread appropriation of the term in an interdisciplinary context necessitates its careful and well-defined use. In this entry, “Renaissance” is used specifically to designate the historical period between 1300 and 1650.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Since antiquity, the standard instruments of the architect had been the straightedge rule and the compass, and this remained largely so during the period under consideration. Geometry was the most important mathematical discipline for architecture, both in theoretical discourse and in design and building practices. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the dominance of geometry would be challenged when calculation by number entered architectural practice. Architects studied and wrote on geometry and included geometrical rules and formulae in their treatises on architecture; they also made contributions to the field of applied mathematics. By drawing attention to the interconnection between architecture and geometry, architects also tried to demonstrate the rational basis of their discipline.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth century, admiration for the culture of the ancients steadily grew in Europe – in Italy, France, and Spain in particular. In these places, physical traces of antiquity, whether textual or architectural, had never completely disappeared. Yet from the fourteenth and fifteenth century onward, architects, artists, and humanists changed their approach to these physical remains. Based on the careful study of ancient buildings and written texts, architects started to develop a new architectural language, creating forms that would be used until the twentieth century. Tradition thus became the catalyst for creation and innovation. The study of antiquity also encouraged the historical awareness of architecture as a discipline. Beginning in the fifteenth century, an unprecedented literature on architecture developed, taking the form of written histories, commentaries, and treatises.

Having found in Vitruvius a model, Renaissance authors began to write on architecture in all its aspects. Defining the creation of buildings as a mental practice, these treatises contributed to the concept of architecture as a theoretical and intellectual endeavor. The architectural project, illustrated and communicated in drawings and models, assumed autonomy.

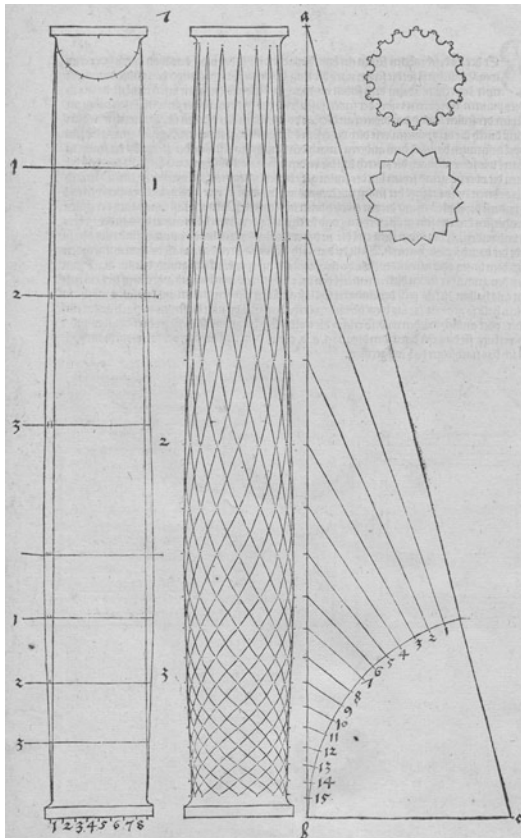
Innovative and Original Aspects

Geometry as the Scientific Foundation of Architecture

In *De architectura libri decem*, written around 15 BC, Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (c. 80/70–c. 15 BC) argued that architecture is founded in both practice and theory, in *fabrica* and *ratiocinatio*. An architect needs the artisan’s knowledge to mold the rough material into a complete building. Architecture is also, however, a rational activity. To perform their profession well, architects should study all the liberal arts (Pauwels 2012; Evers and Thoenes 2003; Payne 1999). Yet among the liberal arts, Vitruvius privileged mathematics, and specifically geometry, as fundamental to architecture (Pauwels 2012).

This close connection between architecture and geometry continued during the Middle Ages and was expanded on between 1300 and 1650. Antonio Averlino (c.1400–c.1469), better known as Filarete, defined architecture, in his *Libro architetonico* (c. 1461–1464), as comprising measurement and proportion. Albrecht Dürer (1471–1529) applied the principles of geometry to architecture, engineering, and typography in the third book of *Unterweysung der Messung mit dem Zirckel und Richtscheit*, published in 1525. In his *Premier tome de l’architecture*, published in 1567, Philibert de L’Orme (1514–1570) stressed the importance of geometrical knowledge for stereometry – that is, the science of measuring the volume of solid objects (Figs. 1 and 2).

Collaborations between mathematicians and architects also led to advancements in both fields (Günther 2009). Filippo Brunelleschi



Architecture and Renaissance, Fig. 1 Illustrating the construction of a column through geometrical principles. (Albrecht Dürer. 1538. *Underweysung der Messung, mit dem Zirckel und richtscheyt, in Linien, Ebenen und gantzen Corporen*. [Nürnberg]: [Formschneider]. 90. doi: 10.3931/e-rara-8271. ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Alte und Seltene Drucke)

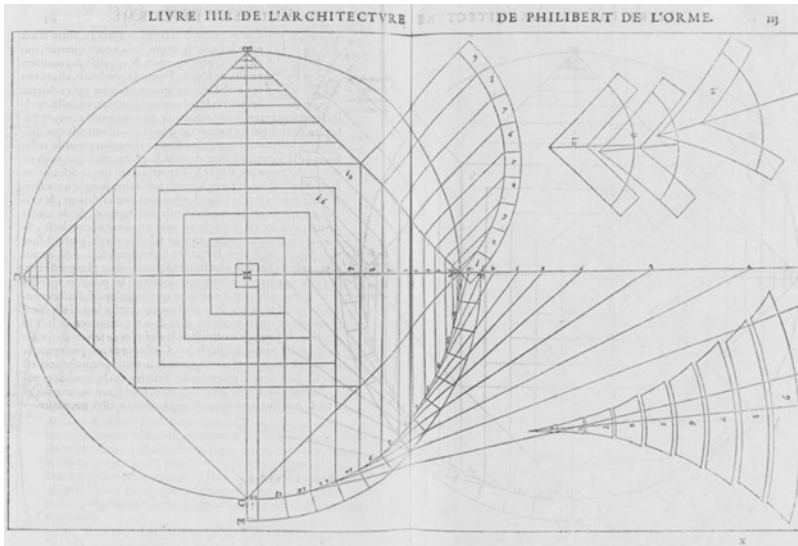
(1337–1446) was acquainted with the mathematician Giovanni dell’Abbaco (1354/1371–c. 1440), who most probably advised him in developing the revolutionary construction technique for the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence. Furthermore, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, there was a growing desire to grasp the visual world, to depict what is seen in a mimetic way, among a group of artists in Florence. In this context, Filippo Brunelleschi studied the geometrical structure of the conical pyramid, the laws of which had been identified by Roger Bacon around 1260–1270. This enabled him to identify linear perspective and illustrate it in two panels (now

lost) (Trachtenberg 2010; Günther 2009). This identification of linear perspective further revolutionized the way in which architectural structures could be represented on a two-dimensional surface.

The relation between geometry and architecture also extended to a more metaphysical level (Evers and Thoenes 2003). Plato’s geometry was one of the most important models of the universe, handed down from antiquity through the Middle Ages via a late ancient Latin translation of the *Timaeus*. According to Plato’s cosmology, a creator had used mathematical laws to transform the world from a state of chaos to a state of order. This resulted in a universal harmony, in which each part was in proportion to the others and to a larger whole. Pythagorean number theory further showed that numbers pervaded every part of the universe. Their strong reciprocal relations seemed to bind the universe together in a state of stability (Hiscock 2007).

In certain cases, the relationship between measurement, proportion, and universal harmony was made explicit in literature dealing with architecture. In *De re aedificatoria* (written between 1443 and 1452, first published in 1485) Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) based his proportional system on musical proportions. Luca Pacioli (c. 1445–1517) included architectural topics in his *De divina proportione* (composed around 1498, first printed in 1509). In Milan, Pacioli collaborated with Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), who drew the polyhedra for *De divina proportione*.

Both on the building site and in making drawings on paper, geometry was fundamental to architecture (Bork 2011; Trachtenberg 2010). During the sixteenth century, however, architects also started to calculate with numbers. At this time, modern numeracy spread rapidly across Europe in all domains of life (Carpo 2003). Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola (1507–1573) inserted proportional measurements, written in Hindu-Arabic numbers, in the images of his *Regola delli cinque ordini d’architettura* (c. 1562–1563). Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) applied the same technique in his *Quattro libri dell’architettura* (1570). The adoption of this new



Architecture and Renaissance, Fig. 2 Principles of stereometry for the construction of a spherical vault (Philibert De l'Orme. 1567. *Le premier tome de*

l'architecture. Paris: chez Federic Morel. Book IV, 113. doi: 10.3931/e-rara-15,161. Universitätsbibliothek Bern)

system in architecture seemed rather slow. In certain cases, calculation by number was met with outright hostility. As late as 1641, Carlo Cesare Osio (b. 1612) published *Architettura civile*, in which he attempted to return architecture to a state of pure geometry, without the use of numbers (Carpo 2003; Fig. 3).

Humanism, Antiquarianism, and the Recovery of Ancient Architecture

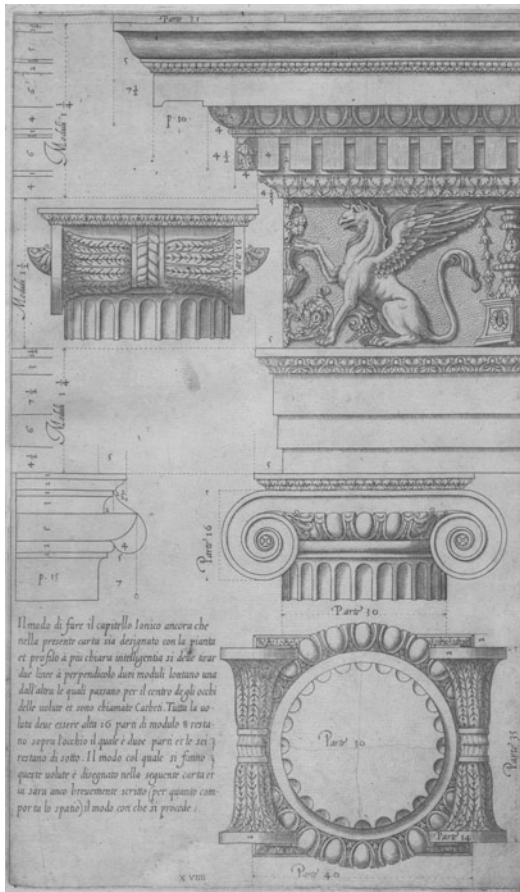
Although admiration for ancient culture had steadily grown from the thirteenth century onward, the study of ancient architecture and the creation of *all'antica* architectural forms – that is, those in the ancient manner, specifically of the Romans – began only in the fifteenth century. This study of ancient architecture took place on both a textual and archaeological level. The process of discovery, moreover, was a joint endeavor, as humanists, writers, artists, and architects all collaborated in this study of the ancient past (Günther 2009; Clarke 2003; Payne 1999; Smith 1992).

A central text in this process was Vitruvius' *De architectura libri decem*. Under the influence of Italian humanism, this treatise gained renewed

attention at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Using a new philological approach to ancient texts, Italian humanists critically edited and translated the manuscripts they found in monastic libraries. In this context, Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) “rediscovered” Vitruvius' treatise in 1414 at the Abbey of St. Gallen in Switzerland (Günther 2009; Clarke 2003; Payne 1999).

In the fifteenth century, Vitruvius' treatise attracted the attention of both humanists such as Leon Battista Alberti and architects such as Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378–1455), Filarete, and Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1502). But given the state of the treatise – which was incomplete, often unclear in its descriptions, and written in a combination of highly technical Latin and Greek – humanist scholars were better equipped to read and interpret the text. Furthermore, the images that originally accompanied the texts were lost (Günther 2009; Clarke 2003; Payne 1999).

Fifteenth-century enthusiasm for Vitruvius' work was due not only to its renown as a text recovered from antiquity but also to its potential to grant authority to contemporaries to discuss a wide variety of relevant architectural topics. As an



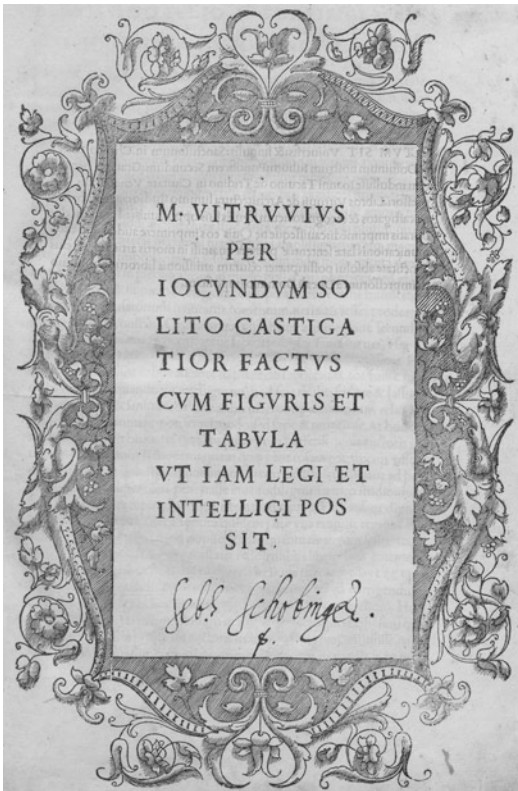
Architecture and Renaissance, Fig. 3 The introduction of fractures with Hindu-Arabic numerals to illustrate the construction of the ionic capital. (Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola. 1607. *Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura*. Rome: Andreas Vaccarius. 43. doi: 10.3931/e-rara-9949. ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Alte und Seltene Drucke)

extensive, ten-book treatise, it included such topics as the visual representation of buildings, construction techniques, proportion systems, the proper design of building types, as well as ornamental features. By the second half of the fifteenth century, Vitruvius' text also increasingly served as the model for new writings on architecture, as will be discussed later. Although architects often disagreed about the accuracy of Vitruvius' pronouncements, the ancient treatise was indisputably effective as an expository model. It showed that architecture was an intellectual discipline and a topic worthy of theoretical reflection.

By the mid-fifteenth-century, patrons and scholars all over Italy, as well as ecclesiastical librarians, copied and owned manuscripts of the treatise (Clarke 2003). From the 1470s onward, this study and interpretation of *De architectura* intensified. In 1486, the *editio princeps* was published under the supervision of Giovanni Sulpizio da Veroli (fl. c. 1470–1490). In 1511, Fra Giovanni Giocondo da Verona (1433–1515) printed the first illustrated edition in Venice. Ten years later, the first Italian translation by Cesare Cesariano (1476/1478–1543) was published in Como. Another authoritative Italian edition was published in 1556, with a commentary by Daniele Barbaro (1514–1570) and illustrations by Andrea Palladio. From the sixteenth century onward, the treatise became available in other European languages. In 1547, a French edition by Jean Martin (d. 1553), with illustrations by Jean Goujon (c. 1515–1564/1568), was published in Paris. One year later, Walther Ryff (c. 1500–1548) brought out the first German edition. In 1582, a Spanish edition followed (Evers and Thoenes 2003; Payne 1999; Figs. 4 and 5).

While Vitruvius' *De architectura libri decem* was an important written source on ancient architecture, it was not the only text humanists and architects consulted. Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (written in the first century AD), for example, was studied widely by humanists, artists, and architects for his detailed descriptions of ancient architectural wonders, as well as his elaborations on construction materials and ornamental features (Fane-Saunders 2016).

In addition to textual analysis, humanists and architects studied ruins to recover knowledge of ancient architecture. In the fifteenth century, humanists started to collect and record ancient inscriptions. They tried to classify ruins historically, as well as to identify the location of buildings they read about in ancient texts. Their detailed studies resulted in descriptions of ancient Rome, including *De varietate fortunae* by Poggio Bracciolini and *Roma instaurata* by Flavio Biondo (1392–1463). Architects, on the other hand, focused on the architectural characteristics of the fragments, such as their structural composition and ornamental features. In many cases,



Architecture and Renaissance, Fig. 4 Title page of Fra Giocondo's illustrated edition of Vitruvius's *Architectura Libri Decem*. (Giovanni Giocondo. 1511. *M. Vitruvius per Iocundum solito castigatio factus...* Venice: Tacuino. Title page. doi: 10.3931/e-rara-19,439. Stiftung Bibliothek Werner Oechslin)

however, the pursuits of humanists and architects intersected (Günther 2009; Clarke 2003). In his famous letter to Leo X (1475–1521; r. 1513–1521), for example, Raphael (1483–1520) encouraged the pope to preserve, measure, and draw the buildings of ancient Rome. In the end, the final goal was the revival of ancient architecture and its realization in contemporary practice (Sankovitch 2001; Nagel and Wood 2005).

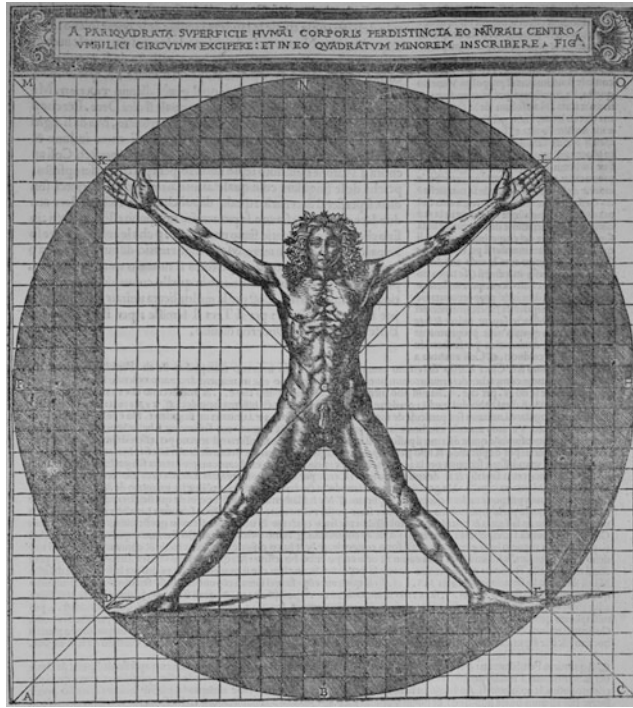
Studies of ancient fragments of columns, capitals, bases, and cornices, surviving in ruins or as *spolia*, were documented on paper. Continuously copied, these images facilitated the wide dissemination of knowledge about ancient fragments, communicating different types of information from what was contained in written texts. The

attention to clear and precise measurement and representation in these drawings varied greatly. While some studies tried to be as exact as possible in terms of the measurements and forms they represented, others took on a more imaginative aspect. With the advent of the printing press, single-sheet engravings further disseminated the wide variety of ornamental possibilities (Waters 2012).

Architectural Histories and the Diversity of all'antica Architecture

Along with the study of ancient buildings through texts and ruins, the idea that architecture was a discipline with its own history began to take form (Günther 2009). In Italy, this history of architecture was conceptualized and written down by numerous authors, each of whom adopted his own approach. Alberti, for example, saw the origins of the art of building in Greek culture. The Greeks had recognized that architecture was based on rules and had applied these rules in their buildings. The Romans, Alberti argued, had then developed this art of building to its fullest potential (Alberti 1988). But despite differences between Alberti's history and the histories put forward by Antonio Manetti (1423–1497) and Giorgio Vasari, for example, the main narratives assumed by early modern architectural historians were usually the same. They generally agreed that good architecture had flourished under the Romans. How long it continued to flourish, however, was a matter of controversy. Most thought until the reign of Constantine (c. 305–337), but some extended it further. Nevertheless, everyone held that the invasion of the Germanic tribes in Italy (fifth to eighth century) had marked the end of good architecture, as well as the necessary knowledge of construction. Only when Charlemagne liberated the Italians from German rule in the eighth century was the art of building slowly but surely restored (Günther 2009; Sankovitch 2001).

While the architectural forms imported under German rule were harshly criticized in Italy, the notions “Gothic,” “German,” and “modern” were neither uniform nor clearly defined. Likewise, authors applied the word “modern” differently. Filarete begged his contemporaries to abandon



Architecture and Renaissance, Fig. 5 The Vitruvian Man in Cesare Cesariano's illustrated and Italian edition of Vitruvius's treatise (Cesare Cesariano. 1521. *Di Lucio*

Vitruvio Pollione de architectura libri dece. Como: Gotardus de Ponte. Book III, Llr. doi: 10.3931/e-rara-19,393. Stiftung Bibliothek Werner Oechslin)

“modern usage,” for “only barbaric people could have brought it into Italy” (Filarete 1965). Vasari stated that the ancient and modern manner (*maniera dell’antica e moderna*) was “virile, solid and simple.” The German manner (*maniera tedesca*), on the other hand, was “monstrous and barbarous,” “with columns that are thin and twisted like vines and do not have the strength to bear a load, no matter how light” (Sankovitch 2001; Vasari 1568). Not all Italians criticized this foreign method of design. Occasionally, expressions of enthusiasm and admiration for German architecture appear. Pope Pius II (1405–1464) even ordered that the cathedral in Pienza be built on the model of the German Hallenkirche (c. 1459–1464).

On the other side of the Alps, the French similarly established their own definition of good architecture. Here, the adoption of Italian architectural forms was initially (and, in a certain sense, would continue to be) met with suspicion. French architects and theorists stressed the boldness and

lightness of their own architectural structures, testing the architectural references they employed against these characteristics; for example, French theorists often presented Hagia Sophia, rather than the Pantheon, as an example of good architecture (Günther 2009).

In their recovery of true architecture (constructed in Roman times and since the liberation from German rule), Italian architects viewed both ancient and local Romanesque buildings as models for contemporary practice. This is because, on the one hand, it was not yet possible to differentiate an antique from a Romanesque building based on stylistic characteristics. When the exact date of a building was in doubt, historical, iconographic, or technical arguments rather than stylistic characteristics were used (Clarke 2003, Smith 1992). On the other hand, even when it was known that a building was constructed during the Middle Ages, it could still serve as a model because it was seen as the result of ancient tradition (Nagel and Wood 2005;

Clarke 2003). Brunelleschi thus studied both the Pantheon in Rome (c. 118–128) and the church of San Miniato al Monte in Florence (c. 1018–1062) as exemplary architectural models.

This emphasis on local traditions, together with traditional building practices (material, techniques, and so on) gave rise to a variety of *all'antica* forms in Europe, even within Italy. In Venice, the adoption of Byzantine elements emphasized the cosmopolitan character of the city. In Bologna, the traditional use of terracotta gave the city its specific red color. In Florence, the geometrical patterns of the façades of the cathedral baptistery and the church of San Miniato al Monte inspired architects to use various colored marbles. But in the sixteenth century, with the canonization of the architectural orders, a certain standardization and unification of *all'antica* forms began to take shape throughout Italy and beyond.

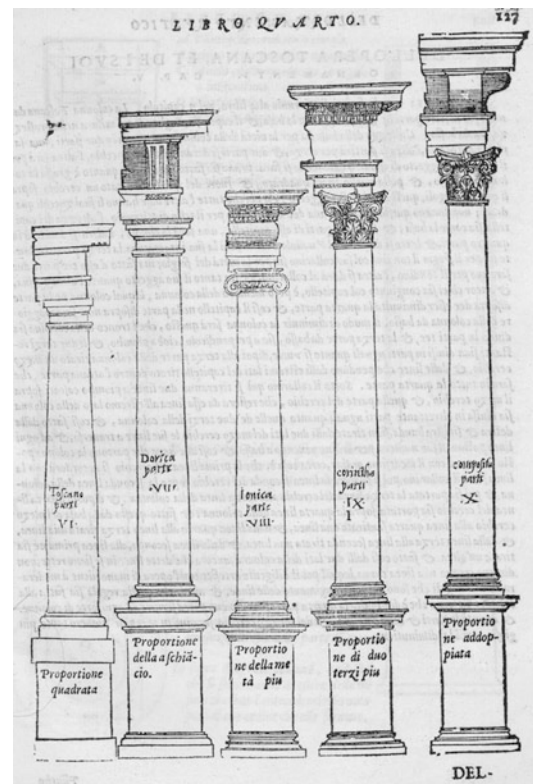
The Canonization of the Architectural Orders

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, as the study of Vitruvius and of ancient ruins progressed, the discrepancies between them became ever more obvious. In Rome, architects began to classify, systematize, and ultimately canonize ancient fragments. The contributions of Donato Bramante (1444–1514), Raphael, Baldassare Peruzzi (1481–1536), and Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1485–1546) gave rise to the concept of the architectural orders (Waters 2012; Payne 1999; Thoenes and Günther 1985). In the formulation of the architectural orders, the constituent parts, the ornament, and proportions of the columnar system were systematically defined. In the illustrated edition of Vitruvius' *De architectura*, Cesare Cesariano represented individual columns with their ornamental features on a single page.

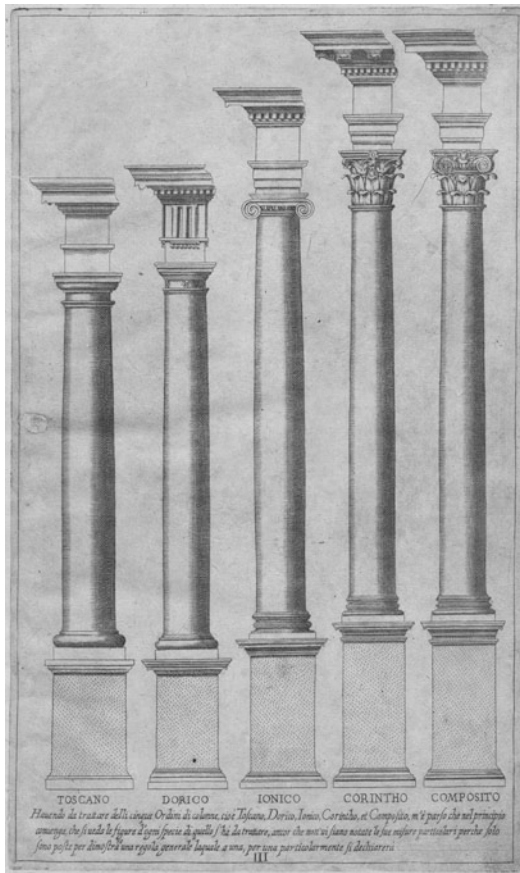
Architectural treatises contributed to the codification of the architectural orders. Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1553/1555) wrote several books on architecture, published in Venice, Paris, and Lyon, between 1537 and 1575 (Evers and Thoenes 2003; Payne 1999). In 1619, all these books were assembled and printed in Venice under the title *Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospettiva di Sebastiano Serlio bolognese*. Book IV, *Regole generali di architettura sopra le cinque maniere*

degli edifici, printed in Venice in 1537, was the first systematic treatment of the five architectural orders (*maniere*) in a printed work. Based on his study of Vitruvius, ancient ruins, and contemporary practice, Serlio organized the orders into five coherent systems: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, and Composite (Fig. 6). In Book VII of *Le premier tome de l'architecture*, printed in Paris in 1567, Philibert de l'Orme added a sixth architectural order to Serlio's "cinque maniere" (Evers and Thoenes 2003): the French order. De l'Orme's invention is a precursor to the vehement seventeenth-century debates about the existence of a typical French order.

Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola's introduced the term "order" in his *Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura*, first printed in Rome in 1562



Architecture and Renaissance, Fig. 6 The five ways (*maniere*) of building by Sebastiano Serlio. (Sebastiano Serlio. [1584]. *Tutte l'opere d'architettura di Sebastiano Serlio*. Venice: apresso Francesco de'Franceschi. Book IV, 127r. doi: 10.3931/e-rara-26,987. ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Alte und Seltene Drucke)



Architecture and Renaissance, Fig. 7 The five orders of the columns by Iacomo Barozzi da Vignola (Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola. 1607. *Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura*. Rome: Andreas Vaccarius. 11. doi: 10.3931/e-rara-9949. ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Alte und Seltene Drucke)

(Fig. 7). Appearing in more than 250 editions, Vignola's *Regola delli cinque ordini* was the most authoritative text on the architectural orders until the beginning of the twentieth century (Evers and Thoenes 2003; Carpo 2003). Printed with copper plates, the illustrations took center stage, with the text reduced to the minimum. Concerning proportion in the architectural orders, Vignola's contribution was to deduct the standard module from the building's height, using modern methods of calculation; previous authors had mainly worked up from the diameter of the column using geometrical procedures.

Building and Writing: The Textual Production on Architecture

The architectural orders, however, were just one out of many topics addressed in architectural treatises, a literary genre in which architecture itself was the main topic of discussion. The form, content, length, language, and use of images could vary greatly in such treatises, as did the readership addressed – from patrons and humanists to fellow architects and craftsmen. As written texts (whether illustrated or not), they created both a theoretical framework and a language with which to discuss architecture. The production of architectural treatises was closely connected with the position of architects in society and their attempt to ennoble the profession. The goal of such treatises was to differentiate architects from artisans, as well as to associate architecture with the liberal rather than the mechanical arts.

Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* is generally considered to be the first architectural treatise of the Renaissance (Evers and Thoenes 2003; Payne 1999; Alberti 1988). Written in Latin between 1442 and 1452, and without illustrations, Alberti presents his theory of architecture based on his personal study of Vitruvius and of ancient ruins. With its attempt to establish the rules of architecture and to prove its rational basis, the treatise addressed a learned readership rather than practicing architects. The treatise was immediately received as an authoritative text (Fig. 8).

Between 1461 and 1464, Filarete produced his *Libro architetonico* (Evers and Thoenes 2003; Filarete 1965). Using the dialogue format, Filarete handles three topics: the general outline of his architectural theory, the planning and construction of the fictional city of Sforzinda, and the description of real and imaginary ancient buildings. Written in Italian and partially illustrated, the treatise addressed a different readership from *De re aedificatoria*. Although the autograph version of the text has been lost, a number of manuscript copies, such as the Sforza group (Codex Trivulzianus, Codex Palatinus) and the Medici group (Codex Magliabechiano, Codex Valencianus), still survive.

Francesco di Giorgio Martini wrote his *Trattato di architettura* between 1475 and 1495



Architecture and Renaissance, Fig. 8 Title page of the Italian translation of Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*. (Leon Battista Alberti. 1550. *L'architettura di Leonbattista Alberti*. Florence: appresso Lorenzo Torrentino. Title page. doi: 10.3931/e-rara-770. ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Alte und Seltene Drucke)

(Merrill 2013; Evers and Thoenes 2003; Payne 1999). Like Filarete's treatise, it was written in Italian and fully illustrated. In it, Francesco di Giorgio defined architecture as a scientific discipline, founded on arithmetic and geometry. Although the treatise remained unpublished, it was reproduced in hundreds of manuscripts and became a standard reference work in Italy by the end of the fifteenth century.

The production of architectural treatises intensified in the following century. The many authors include Sebastiano Serlio, Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, Pietro Cataneo (c.1510–c.1571), Andrea Palladio and Vincenzo Scamozzi (1548–1616) in Italy; Philibert de l'Orme and Jacques Androuet du Cerceau (c.1521–c. 1568) in France; Diego de

Sagredo (first half of the sixteenth century) and Juan Bautista Villalpando (1552–1608) in Spain; John Shute (d. 1563) and Henry Wotton (1568–1639) in England; and Albrecht Dürer, Hans Blum (b. c. 1520/1530) and Hans Vredeman de Vries (1526–1609) in Germany and Northern Europe.

Vincenzo Scamozzi's *L'idea dell'architettura universale*, printed in 1615, can be considered as the last treatise of the Renaissance in which architecture is portrayed as a universal science encompassing all domains of life (Evers and Thoenes 2003; Payne 1999). As with many of his ideas, he turned to Neoplatonism to justify this claim. According to this philosophy, God had created a mathematically and geometrically ordered cosmos, in which each element was related to every other one as well as to the larger whole. Created in the image of God, the human body and its proportions gave access to these universal laws and rules of the universe. The ideal proportions for architecture could thus be found in the human body. Despite Scamozzi's attempt to write a universal theory of architecture, it was Book VI, on the architectural orders, that had the most lasting influence; from 1657 onward, it also appeared separately, in a shortened version.

Although these architectural treatises are presented here, for reasons of clarity, as isolated works, they often complemented a wider *oeuvre* of writings by the same author. Alberti wrote *De re aedificatoria* after the publication of his *De pictura* (1435, in Italian 1436), *De statua* (date unknown), and many other works. Cataneo wrote both a treatise on architecture (*I quattro primi libri di architettura*, 1554) and another on applied geometry (*Pratiche delle due prime mathematiche*, 1559), and Dürer wrote treatises on the application of geometry to architecture (*Underweysung der Messung mit dem Zirckel und Richtscheyt*, 1525), military architecture (*Etliche underricht, zu befestigung der Stett, Schloss, und flecken*, 1527), and human proportion (*Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion*, published posthumously, 1528). Furthermore, the architectural treatise was merely one of the genres in which topics related to architecture were discussed. From the second half of the fifteenth

century, written and drawn studies of machines, ancient fragments, military devices, human bodies, and geometrical patterns proliferated, all of which testify to the wide cultural field in which architecture was involved at the time. Biblical exegesis, military science, and discourses on agriculture, among others, influenced ideas and precepts about building typologies and established a variety of interconnections between building theory and practice.

Design as a Mental Practice and the Use of Architectural Drawings

The use of drawings in architectural design processes has a long history. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans most likely employed drawings in planning their pyramids and temples. The same assumption applies to the builders of the early Middle Ages. From the thirteenth and fourteenth century onward, the use of drawings in the design process is well documented. The surviving drawings mostly relate to the design of the complex stone structures of monumental churches and cathedrals (Bork 2011; Hubert 2005). The earliest of these are of French origin (Villard Honnecourt's Sketchbook, c. 1235 and the Reims Palimpsest, 1240–1260) (Bork 2011). Parallel with this corpus of design drawings, the professional definition of the architect as a skilled craftsman underwent considerable change. To design through drawing became the architect's specialized skill (Hubert 2005).

The corpus of surviving architectural drawings increases considerably from the fifteenth century onward. This is, in part, explained by technological achievements. During the Middle Ages, drawing was often ephemeral, completed either on mobile supports, such as parchment or wooden tablets which could be erased and reused, or on the building surface itself (Bork 2011; Günther 2009; Hubert 2005). Although paper had been produced in Europe since the twelfth century, it only became widely available in the fifteenth century. As a cheaper alternative to parchment, and as a long-lasting material support, paper offered great potential for architects. Its portability also allowed the wide dissemination of drawings, increasing

communication on and transmission of design concepts. By the sixteenth century, paper was the material support of choice for the design of new structures, as well as for the documentation of ancient ruins, anatomical studies, and multiple forms of graphic experimentation. Bramante's designs for St. Peter's in Rome are among the first design drawings on paper that are still extant (from 1505 to 1506) (Günther 2009; Hubert 2005).

At the same time that paper became increasingly available, the study of Vitruvius, the discovery of linear perspective, and the learned discourses in architectural treatises together encouraged theoretical reflection on and discussion of architectural representation (Hubert 2005). This development was also related to the study and documentation of ancient ruins. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, architects devised new representational techniques to document buildings completely and objectively (Günther 2009; Clarke 2003; Payne 1999). Raphael proposed one such system of graphic codification in his letter to Leo X. By means of the orthogonal projections of the plan, elevation, and section, he would document the (for the most part) lost buildings of ancient Rome.

Theoretical reflections in Italy were also concerned with the role of drawing in the architect's creative process (Caye 2008/09). In his *De re aedificatoria*, Alberti described the architect's design process as a mental activity. According to him, the architect should conceive the building in his mind before construction and entirely abstracted from any material form. Drawings and three-dimensional models are the means by which this mental image takes visual, tangible form (Trachtenberg 2010; Caye 2008/09; Alberti 1988). In his *Libro architetonico*, Filarete described the steps by which the mental image is translated into physical reality: from initial drafts, followed by more detailed sketches, to plans in scale, and finally the architectural model (Caye 2008/09; Filarete 1965). Between the architectural projects conceived in the artist's mind and the actual built structure, therefore, stood the architectural drawing and the model (Caye 2008/09, Millon and Lampugnani 1994).

Such discussions about the use of drawings in the creative process were related to cognitive psychology. In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle had formulated the idea that the outline of a creation preexists in the artist's mind before being transformed into matter (Caye 2008/09). Beginning in the fifteenth century, theorizing about this process and about related concepts (e.g., *ingenium*, *inventio*, and *disegno*) took on an ever growing importance, not only in painting and sculpture but also in architecture. A central figure was again Vasari. He understood *disegno* as an intellectual construct based on judgement and expressed through the work of the hand; *disegno* was understood as “a word of the mind as much as a word of the hand” (Didi-Huberman 2005: 78). In 1563, the academy of the *Arti del disegno* was established in Florence. For the first time, the three arts of *disegno* (architecture, sculpture, and painting) were brought together in an institutional setting.

Impact and Legacy

The study of ancient fragments and texts, together with scientific and graphical experiments, led to the introduction of a new formal language in architecture. The architectural orders were not only codified and transmitted by a wide variety of textual and graphical means, they also became the defining constitutive elements of architectural design for at least four centuries. While the twentieth century saw a profound change in the formal language of architecture, the means to create form largely remained the same as in the Renaissance. Architects still used pencil and paper to translate architectural ideas into visual form. Plans, sections, and elevations, using the orthogonal projection, as well as perspectival drawings and models, continued to be the general formats for designing and communicating architectural ideas. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s, with the emergence of digital means, that design and communication instruments experienced a new revolution. The Renaissance also witnessed the rise of ideal cities, the first notions of landscape design, and the development of distinct building typologies. It produced thorough discussions of the social and

political importance of architecture, as well as its ethical implications. The design of machines, as well as military devices and structures, very often belonged to the architect's portfolio. Such topics have not been addressed here, but they contributed, together with the six themes discussed, to the development of the architectural discipline during the Renaissance.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alberti, Leon Battista](#)
- ▶ [Antiquarianism](#)
- ▶ [Architect](#)
- ▶ [Beauty, the Renaissance Idea of](#)
- ▶ [Boccaccio, Giovanni](#)
- ▶ [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- ▶ [Burekhardt, Jacob](#)
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Argiropulo, Giovanni

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Argyropoulos, John

Born: Constantinople c.1393/1394, 1405, 1410, 1415

Died: Florence c.1487

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Abstract

John Argyropoulos was a famous Greek scholar of the fifteenth century, whose contribution in classical letters and philosophy was praised by his fellow humanists. He shared his time between Constantinople, Crete, mainland Greece, Italy, and other European countries. Argyropoulos' career in Constantinople and Italy was remarkable, as his teaching and broader scientific activities in both these places were admirable and of top quality. Argyropoulos was a leading fifteenth-century Aristotelian philosopher. His research focused on Aristotle's natural philosophy and ethics.

Synonyms

[Argiropulo, Giovanni](#); [Argyropulos, Giovanni](#);
[Argyropoulos, Ioannis](#)

Biography

John Argyropoulos was born in Constantinople or in Crete. His date of birth is dubious, although modern scholarship accepts 1393–1394 as the most probable year of his birth. Instead John Monfasani proposed 1405 as the year of his birth. Older sources placed his birth in 1410 or 1415; according to a dubious epistle, he was 76 when he died. His family was wealthy and respectable in Constantinople. Argyropoulos' parents died when he was a child and his relatives

sent him to Salonika to study under Alexios Phorvinos, a famous teacher. A few years later he returned to Constantinople and continued his studies under John Chortasmenos (1370–1437), an ardent philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer. In a letter to Georgius Trapezuntius (1395–1472), a Cretan scholar who made a considerable career in Italy, Argyropoulos praised the famous teachers of his youth, who instructed him ancient wisdom. It is possible that Georgius Gemistus Pletho (1355–1454) was among Argyropoulos' teachers. During the 1420s – probably 1424 – Argyropoulos moved to Crete, although he claimed that he was already a successful scholar in Constantinople. There, he engaged in a dispute with Georgius Trapezuntius. At times, Argyropoulos and Trapezuntius worked as tutors in Crete. In 1425, Emperor Manuel II Paleologus assigned him the direction of a public school in Constantinople. Within the same year, he became a priest and was appointed as an imperial judge. According to the historian Ducas, Argyropoulos participated in the Council of Ferrara – Florence (1438–1439), although his role in the Council was not crucial. For the rest of his life, Argyropoulos remained a pro-unionist and at a later point he probably converted to Catholicism. After the end of the Council, Argyropoulos probably returned to Constantinople with the rest of the Byzantine delegates and continued his teaching activities. Among his students was Francesco Filelfo's (1398–1481) son. The Italian humanist lived in Constantinople and worked in the emperor's court. Filelfo entrusted his son to Argyropoulos because the latter's reputation as a scholar was high in Byzantium and Italy. Around the same time, he wrote the *Comedy of Katablattas*, a very interesting text in which he gave useful information about his personal life. Specifically, he ridiculed Demetrios Katadokeinos or Katadoukinos who was a judge in Constantinople. Katadokeinos accused Argyropoulos of impiety and atheism. Argyropoulos was brilliant enough to reply indirectly in order to doubt Katadokeinos' integrity and moral status. It is possible that the serious accusations against him forced him to leave his successful teaching career and seek his fortune in Italy. In 1441, he traveled

to Italy and settled in Padua. He became the protégé of Palla Strozzi (1372–1462), a Florentine exile in Padua who was interested in ancient Greek language and culture. With the aid of Andronicus Callistus (1400–1486) – another Greek humanist who built his career in Italy – Argyropoulos taught the youth and elder citizens of the city Greek language and philosophy. Palla's support was crucial for Argyropoulos, since Palla was wealthy and influential. During his stay in Italy, he studied philosophy and medicine at the University of Padua and in 1444 he obtained the degree of doctor from the same University. Despite his career and reputation in Constantinople, Argyropoulos thought that it would be useful for his future plans to have studied in one of the best European universities. It seems probable that he planned to move to Italy even before the fall of Constantinople. After the completion of his studies in Padua, he returned to Constantinople and to his students. Among them, we should distinguish Constantine Laskaris (1434–1501), Michael Apostolis (1422–1478), Antonios Pyropoulos, Manuel Pyropoulos, John Panaretos, Demetrius Angelos, and others. Argyropoulos mentioned that even people from Italy came to attend his lessons. He taught Aristotelian logic, Galenic medicine, and philosophy of nature at the Xenon of Kral. He was a leading figure in a circle of physicians at Constantinople. Moreover, there are several testimonies that Argyropoulos was also a successful copyist. Before the final Turkish siege of Constantinople, Argyropoulos accompanied Cardinal Isidore to his delegation to Pope Nicholas V. Cardinal Isidore worked as a mediator between the Orthodox and the Catholic Church in order to reinforce the Byzantine army against the Turks. Besides the Catholic Church and the Western Christian leaders, Argyropoulos sought the salvation of the empire in classical heritage, a possible aura of Pletho's influence on him. Namely, he exhorted the last Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Paleologus to proclaim himself King of the Hellenes. Argyropoulos wrote an oration entitled *Basilikos e peri basileias* in which he grabbed the chance to declare his political views and exhort the emperor to seek help in Western Europe. Argyropoulos held that kingship was the

best form of government. In order to strengthen his views, he resorted to arguments taken from ancient Greek philosophical texts. According to the correspondence between the Pope and his prelates in Constantinople, Argyropoulos was an active pro-unionist in the last days of the Byzantine Empire. As a result of the fall of Constantinople, Argyropoulos lost his possessions and his family was captured. He was obliged to spend the next 3 or 4 years collecting money so as to set his family free. It was a really difficult period for him because simultaneously he was trying to find a job in Italy and move there. During a trip to Italy, he was introduced to Donato Acciaiuoli (1429–1478), a relative of Argyropoulos' patron Palla Strozzi. Acciaiuoli encouraged him to submit his candidacy for a professorship at the Florentine Studium. Although his candidacy was not accepted with excitement since the local authorities preferred a native Italian for the position, his supporters in Florence were able to assure his election as professor of Greek language and philosophy in 1456. Meanwhile, Argyropoulos visited Pope Calixtus III (1378–1458) as a delegate of Thomas Paleologus (1409/10–1465) – the despot of Mystra, who aspired to get aid from the Europeans in order to defend Peloponnese from the Turks. From Rome, he headed to Milan, where he met the Sforza family, France, and England. Besides his mission, it is probable that he sought support in order to reunite and liberate his family which remained captive. Before his installation in Florence, he visited Greece and managed to bring his family to Italy. Argyropoulos started to give his lectures in 1457. Instead of the standard Italian humanistic preference of rhetoric and *bene dicendi*, Argyropoulos chose a more philosophical approach because he insisted on the superiority of philosophy, especially metaphysics and philosophy of nature. He instructed his students Aristotelian Ethics and Politics; then he taught the *De anima* and lectured on physics and metaphysics. In addition to his morning courses, he taught private lessons to selected students in the afternoon at his home. In these private lessons, he expounded Aristotelian logic and even Platonic dialogues, such as the *Menon*. There are several testimonies that his lectures on Plato were of

extraordinary quality. Argyropoulos managed to stay for the most neutral in the heated debate between Renaissance Platonists and Aristotelians concerning the philosophical primacy of either one. He held that the philosophy of Plato and of Aristotle do not differ so much, let the fact that their differences are fruitful for philosophy in the broader sense. He was so friendly to Plato that even Michael Apostolis thought of him as a Platonist and admirer of Georgius Gemistus Pletho. The students accepted with enthusiasm his approach and soon Argyropoulos became extremely popular and influential in Florence. The Florentine youth sought his teaching and guidance. Among his most illustrious students, we mention Vespasiano da Bisticci, Donato Acciaiuoli, Bernardo Platina, Alamanno Rinuccini, and Angelo Poliziano. Besides his teaching activities, Argyropoulos was an excellent translator. He translated from Greek to Latin numerous works of Aristotle, including: *Categories*, *On Interpretations*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Prior Analytics*, *On Sophistical Refutations*, *Physics*, *On Heavens*, *On the Soul*, *Metaphysics*, and *Nicomachean Ethics*. In addition, he translated Porphyry's *Isagoge*. The translations were dedicated to Cosimo and Piero Medici and were probably completed between 1464 and 1469. Argyropoulos' close ties with the Medici are proven by the fact that Lorenzo Medici was his student. Between 1467 and 1469, Argyropoulos suffered the loss of his two or three sons. Furthermore, Piero Medici died in 1469. These unfortunate events led him to leave Florence. It seems that he planned to move to Hungary, but suddenly changed his mind and preferred to stay in Rome. In 1471, Argyropoulos arrived in Rome. It is highly probable that the appointment of Pope Sixtus IV (1414–1484), who was Argyropoulos' former colleague, and Bessarion's (1408–1472) presence in the Curia induced him to choose Rome as his new residence. Both the Pope and Bessarion wished to reestablish Rome as the cultural center of Renaissance Italy. Argyropoulos stayed in touch with the leading Florentine families, especially the Medici, since, as a result of his hasty departure, he left behind his books and several unsolved disputes. Upon his arrival in

Rome, he associated with scholars and artists of the Curia. According to several sources, he taught, besides Aristotle, Thucydides' *History*. As a result of Bessarion's death and his personal turmoil, Argyropoulos decided to leave Rome and looked for a new destination somewhere in Western Europe. During the same period, Andronicus Callistus (1400–1486) – a renowned Greek scholar who taught in Florence and other Italian and European cities – abandoned the Florentine Studium and accepted a position in Milan. In addition to Argyropoulos, another important Greek scholar, Demetrius Chalcocondyles (1423–1511), applied for Callistus' position. In his return to Florence, Argyropoulos shaved his beard as a proof of his Latinization. That was not so common for someone in his age. Finally, in 1477, Argyropoulos was reappointed in his former position as professor in the Florentine Studium. The Florentines also hired Chalcocondyles, an indication of their interest in classical letters. Argyropoulos taught in Florence till 1481, contrary to Chalcocondyles who retained his position till 1491. In 1481, Argyropoulos was in Rome. There are contradicting testimonies concerning his later life. In several sources, he seemed to spend a lot of money and live a luxurious life, while others attested that he was poor and struggled to overcome his problems. According to Laskaris, he was obliged to sell his books in order to buy food. He died in Rome. According to not reliable sources, the cause of his death was the consumption of watermelon.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Argyropoulos was able to present to the Latin audience a comprehensive and unified version of Aristotelian philosophy. Moreover, he instructed to the Italians the Presocratics, the proper knowledge of whom was crucial for the understanding of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In his lectures on Aristotle's *Physics*, he supported that the sciences were invented in Greece, after Deucalion's flood, despite the fact that there were sciences all over the world. According to Argyropoulos, the

Egyptians did not suffer from the flood and were capable of assisting the Greeks; the latter accepted their help pleasantly. But in that early period, science was in an infantile stage. Scientific truths were expressed in poetic form and were inaccurate. Philosophers knew a lot of things, but they were not able to communicate them with precision and accuracy. Pythagoras was the first who was able to widen philosophy. Furthermore, Plato achieved to set poetry aside, despite the beautiful language he used. In the Platonic dialogues, the reader could find a wide range of subjects. Argyropoulos disagreed with the Platonic insistence on the primacy of mathematical explanation of nature, a rather predictable reaction since he, as an Aristotelian, gave preponderance to physical explanation. Aristotle, the successor in that chain of knowledge, spoke about the principle of things as natural. In addition, he presented the world as unified. Argyropoulos admitted that even Aristotle retained some obscurity in his texts. It is obvious that Argyropoulos divided ancient philosophy into Presocratic, Platonic, and Aristotelian eras. It is of great importance that Argyropoulos did not follow common trends of Florentine Platonism, which included ancient mystical traditions, such as the *Chaldean Oracles*, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, etc., in the history of philosophy. According to Argyropoulos, Anaxagoras, despite his poetical tone, was probably the first true philosopher. Despite his positions, we have to bear in mind that Argyropoulos was an admirer of Plato's hidden doctrines and even his faithful students acknowledged that his style was extremely learned and difficult in understanding. Moreover, Argyropoulos argued against Averroes on the debated issue of the soul. He admitted that Christian truths could not be proven logically, but are of greater value in comparison to the philosophy of Averroes. This is a proof that Argyropoulos did not share the pagan tendencies of the rest of the Florentine philosophers of his times. Rather, he got embroiled in the debate between Greek and Latin scholars about Cicero. Namely, Renaissance scholars appreciated Cicero and thought of him as equal to the great thinkers of ancient Greece. Cicero held that the Greek language is poorer than the Latin. Argyropoulos felt the need to

reply to Cicero and accused him that he was ignorant of philosophy. In addition, Cicero did not know any Greek. Argyropoulos commented on Cicero's views about *entelechia* and proved that Cicero misinterpreted the term. Several Latin scholars felt offended by Argyropoulos' and other Greek scholars' attack on Cicero. Poliziano (1454–1494) defended Cicero and Giovio (1483–1552) found it to be a good reason to ridicule Argyropoulos. After his oration addressed to Emperor Constantine Paleologus, Argyropoulos' political views were further elaborated in the dedicatory prefaces of his translations, made after Cosimo Medici's bequest. Although the Florentines presented Cosimo as a man of action, Argyropoulos preferred to depict him as a virtuous Aristotelian ruler, who guided the Florentines toward *eudaimonia*. Cosimo's wealth was not a goal in itself; rather it was a means for the achievement of ideal goods, such as happiness. Argyropoulos compared Cosimo to the Platonic and Aristotelian ideal rulers. Despite the fact that Argyropoulos had ties with Bessarion, he engaged in a dispute with Theodorus Gaza (1398–1475) about Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. When the latter's work was published (1469), the author sent a copy to Argyropoulos, who replied with a long letter in Greek and a small one in Latin. In the former, Argyropoulos praised Bessarion and seemed to agree with his arguments against Trapezuntius. Despite the fact that he was an ardent Aristotelian, Argyropoulos did not underestimate Platonic philosophy and did not participate actively in the heated debate between Greek scholars concerning the preponderance of Plato or Aristotle. Despite his appreciation for Bessarion and his work, he pointed out an error to him and expressed his views which led Bessarion to correct his text. The disputed issue was a paraphrased Porphyry's passage concerning whether forms are separable or inseparable, which Bessarion and Porphyry refused to answer in depth. Argyropoulos disagreed with certain words in the translation of the *In Calumniatorem Platonis* from Greek to Latin. Furthermore, he found Bessarion's argument logically defective. Moreover, Argyropoulos argued that Bessarion should have wondered whether forms subsist or

reside only in simple concepts. Finally, he disagreed with the cardinal on the forms being separated and being subsistent. Argyropoulos found the chance to argue against Aristotle: he supported the scholastic view that imagination resided in the heart and not in the brain, as the Stagirite held. Bessarion did not reply directly to Argyropoulos' letter; instead, he ordered Theodorus Gaza to compose a short treatise entitled *Antirrhethicon* against Argyropoulos' claims. In it, Gaza attempted vainly to confront Argyropoulos' positions. Yet he did not succeed since Argyropoulos' remarks were valid.

Impact and Legacy

Argyropoulos lectures and translations impacted Renaissance scholars. His teaching renews the way the Latin West understood and appreciated Aristotle. His student and friend Donato Acciaiuoli published a humanistic commentary of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1478) based on Argyropoulos' work on Aristotle. Several others used his translations in order to comment on Aristotle. Erasmus frequently praised him for the quality of his translations.

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 Λόγος περιττής συνόδου της Φλωρρεντίας (Logos peri tis sinodou tis Florentias)
 Λύσεις φιλοσοφικών ζητημάτων προς τους εκ Κύπρου προτεινάντας (Liseis filosofikon zitimatou pros tous ek Kyprou proteinantas)
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Arias Montano, Benito

Born: 1527, Fregenal de la Sierra, Extremadura, Spain

Died: 1598, Seville

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Abstract

The Spanish scholar Benito Arias Montano, librarian of El Escorial, was an outstanding translator of, and commentator on, biblical

texts. He was one of the general editors of the Polyglot Bible published at Antwerp in 1573. He was also the author of a large body of Latin poems of religious subject matter.

Biography

The son of an inquisitorial secretary, Arias Montano studied grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, and Oriental languages at the University of Seville. After his father's death – and upon the advice of the canon of Badajoz Cristóbal de Valtodano – he transferred to the University of Alcalá, where he obtained a degree in Arts in 1549. Inaugurated in 1498 by Cardinal Archbishop Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, the University of Alcalá applied the program of humanism to its curriculum and to the study of Scripture, even if conservative positions within it ultimately prevailed. As early as 1508 Jiménez himself initiated a great project of biblical scholarship which resulted in the printing between 1514 and 1517 (even though they were not actually published until 1522) of the six volumes of the renowned Complutensian Polyglot Bible (thus called from Complutum, the Latin name of Alcalá de Henares). The foundation of the University had, moreover, its roots in Jiménez's desire for religious reform. The institution became a center for ecclesiastical education and among its professors and students were the first enthusiastic supporters of Erasmus in Spain.

At Alcalá, after completing his studies in Arts, Arias Montano took courses in Theology and continued his biblical studies under the guidance of Fray Cipriano de la Huerta between 1549 and 1552. That same year he was appointed poet laureate and moved to Salamanca, where he studied Law until 1554. Having received his first orders in 1562, Arias Montano became a clerical member of the Military Order of St. James. He was persuaded by the Archbishop of Valencia, Martín Pérez de Ayala, to leave his retirement at the Peña de Aracena – where he had been remained after his sojourn at Salamanca – and join the sessions at the Council of Trento. On his return to Spain, Arias was appointed royal chaplain by

King Philip II. In 1568 his career took a turn, and he became closely involved in the production of Christophe Plantin's Polyglot Bible at Antwerp. Despite being sponsored by the Spanish King, who had authorized the project "given the enormous demand among scholarly and religious men for the Bible printed by Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros," since its inception the enterprise was met with papal skepticism, and Plantin had difficulty in obtaining papal approval because of the implicit criticism of the Vulgate underlying the text. The Antwerp Polyglot was highly innovative because it was accompanied by a large critical apparatus in which the Bible was treated as a work of literature in its historical context rather as a source of dogma. This, together with the questionable orthodoxy of many of the editors and the use of the translation by the Italian Dominican and Hebraist Sanctes Pagnini, led the theologian León de Castro, professor of Oriental languages at Salamanca, to whose version of the Vulgate Arias Montano had opposed the original Hebrew text, to denounce Arias to the Roman Inquisition. Arias Montano traveled to Italy, and, after a series of inquiries and hearings at the Roman curia, he was freed of the charges, and the project obtained the ecclesiastical *imprimatur*. On his return to Spain in 1576, Arias Montano became, however, again the target of severe criticism, this time from the Jesuit Juan de Mariana. The case was difficult inasmuch as Arias Montano was a well-known enemy of the Society of Jesus. In spite of this, Arias Montano was declared innocent of suspicion, and the Antwerp Polyglot was finally not included in the Index of forbidden books.

Developed partly as archives of estate accounts and legal documents, and partly in pursuit of the humanist interests of their owners, in the Renaissance court, libraries became important centers of humanist patronage. One of the most ambitious court libraries of the period was the Escorial near Madrid, monastery and personal retreat for King Philip II. The library was established in the 1570s and 1580s, and Arias Montano was summoned by the King to superintend the royal collections and to purchase Greek and Hebrew manuscripts and editions for the library. Among his duties he was also entrusted with teaching of Oriental languages

to the young monks at the monastery. Arias Montano spent the last years of his life dividing his time between prayer and study, only to interrupt his seclusion briefly in 1582 when he attended the Council of Toledo as special envoy of King Philip II.

“One cannot deny that he possessed great learning,” wrote Vigouroux in his *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, “and it is certain that he greatly contributed to the progress of Oriental studies.” Apart from his versions of the Old and New Testament, Arias Montano also had a scholarly interest in Judaism. We know that he owned, for example, a manuscript copy of part of Flavius Josephus’s *Antiquitates* and the entire *Bellum Judaicum* of the same Greek (the text is now Ms. G II 7 at the Biblioteca de El Escorial). Moreover, he penned treatises on theological and juridical matters. Yet, alongside his activity as translator of, and commentator on, biblical texts, he must be remembered as an outstanding poet in Latin. A glimpse of the numerous editions and reprints of Arias Montano’s poems (listed in Alcina 1995, pp. 40–45) reveals, if only by comparison with his colleague at the University of Salamanca and vernacular counterpart Fray Luis de León (1527–1591), the wide dissemination of his Latin poetry throughout the sixteenth century. In his Latin version of the Psalms published in 1574 – “the most demanding and obscure sacred text ever rendered from Hebrew into Greek and Latin,” as he wrote in a letter to Plantin – Arias Montano recast the Psalm texts in Horatian meters, following the example of Marco Antonio Flaminio (whose translation of the Psalms had been issued at Florence in 1546). He even went one step further and opted for Horatian meters for his own Neo-Latin poetry (best represented by the *Humanae salutis monumenta*, 1571, and the *Hymna et saecula*, 1593).

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Aristocracy

- Nobility, Renaissance

Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition

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Abstract

The Aristotle-Averroes edition printed by the Giunta brothers in Venice in 1550–1552 is the most complete edition of the Latin translations of the works of Aristotle and Averroes (together with many other related texts) produced up to that time. It represents the high point of interest in Averroes in northern Italy, especially at the University of Padua.

Description

In 1550, Tommaso and Giovan Maria Giunta published a ten-volume Latin edition of the works of Aristotle with all the commentaries of Averroes; it was issued in Venice, where the intellectual products of the University of Padua were usually printed. Two years later, in 1552, a prefatory fascicle and the first volume were added to this publication, which now bore the title: *All the works of Aristotle the Stagirite that exist, in choice translations which have been compared with the most accurate Greek exemplars, illustrated with marginal notes and arranged in a new order, with the addition of some books that have never been translated into Latin before. All the commentaries of Averroes the Cordovan on these works that have come down to us, and other books of his on logic, philosophy, and medicine, of which some, too, having escaped the notice of the Latins, have recently been translated by Jacob Mantino, others have been translated by the same scholar in a clearer and more faithful way than ever before, and the rest have been most diligently corrected in almost innumerable places from the manuscripts and the best printed books of the most celebrated philosophers of our time; each adorned with a large number of marginal notes.* The prefatory fascicle includes essays by Tommaso Giunta, who emphasizes the

importance of Averroes, and by Marco degli Oddi, who recounts the genesis of the book, as well as a general introduction to the transmission of Peripatetic philosophy and individual introductions to each volume. The fascicle ends with an index covering all 11 volumes, which indicates by asterisks those books which had never been published before. The project had been initiated by Giovanni Battista Bagolini but, after his death, was continued by Marco degli Oddi and Romolo Fabi.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The volumes supplement the medieval Latin translations of Averroes made by Michael Scot, Hermann the German, Theodore of Antioch, and William of Luna with more recent ones now made from the Hebrew versions of Averroes; the translators were Abram de Balmes, Giovanni Francesco Burana, Vitalis Nisso, Elias Delmedigo, Paolo Ricci (Israelita), and especially Jacob Mantino, who was charged by the editors with correcting the older translations and making new ones; the “antiqua translatio” was often printed alongside the “Mantini translatio.” But the volumes also included works of Averroes that were not commentaries, but rather independent philosophical texts – the *Destructio destructionum*, *De substantia orbis*, the *De animae beatitudine*, and the *Epistola de connexione* – and medical texts: the *Colliget*, the commentary on the *Cantica* of Avicenna, and a work on theriac. Short texts by other Arabic philosophers, translations of Hebrew “super-commentaries” by Levi ben Gerson, copious marginal annotations, the *Contradictionum solutiones*, and a compendious alphabetical index of terms in Aristotle and Averroes compiled by Marcantonio Zimara complete the volumes.

Impact and Legacy

Many Paduan scholars were involved in the enterprise, including: Marco degli Oddi, a teacher of logic in Padua; Giovanni Battista Bagolino, whose father, Girolamo, had been a professor of philosophy and medicine at the university; Abram de

Balmes; Jacob Mantino; and Marcantonio Zimara. A second Giunta edition, printed in 1562, was even more strongly Paduan, because of the additions of commentaries and *quaestiones* on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* by Bernardino Tomitano, a professor of logic at the university. An edition brought out by a different printer in Venice, Comin da Trino, in 1560, added a "mixed" version of Averroes's middle commentary on the *Metaphysics* made by Elias Delmedigo, as well as Averroes' medical treatise *On the Sperm* and his *Epitome of Plato's Republic* (translated by Mantino).

The 1562 Giunta edition was reissued unaltered in 1574–1575, but this edition marked the end of an era. After a final printing of Averroes' *Epitome of Plato's Republic* in 1578, no more texts of Averroes were printed until the nineteenth century, and Aristotle was increasingly being read in Greek with vernacular translations.

The 1550–1552 edition of Aristotle-Averroes is remarkable for the care with which it was prepared, for the detail in which the editorial method is explained, and for the quality of the printed text. It marked the culmination of an interest in Averroes as a commentator on Aristotle and as a thinker in his own right, which had begun with the printings of Aristotle with Averroes by Lorenzo Canozio in Padua in 1472–1475. As Charles Schmitt has put it (Schmitt 1979, 131), the Giuntine edition was a "philosophical reaction to philological humanism." Through its carefully edited texts and apparatus of notes and commentaries, indexes, and cross-references, it provided a scholarly reference book which reflects the intense debates of the time and is still of use today.

antea ab aliis translata; caetera ex manuscriptis, optimisque codicibus Philosophorum hac nostra aetate celeberrimorum, innumeris pene locis diligentissime castigati; singuli compluribus margineis scholiis exornati. Levi Gersonidis Annotationes in Aver[rois] Expositionem super logices libros, Latinis hucusque incognitae, eodem Iacob Mantino interprete. Graecorum, Arabum et Latinorum monumenta quaedam, ad hoc opus spectantia M. Antonii Zimarae in Aristotelis et Averrois dicta Contradictionum Solutiones. Io. Battistae Bagolini Veronensis labore ac diligentia. Haec autem omnia tum ex praefatione, tum ex indice librorum clarius innotescunt, 11 volumes, Venice: apud Giuntas, 1550–1552.

Reissued with additions, Venice: Comin da Trino, 1560.

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Aristotelis Stagiritae Omnia quae exstant opera nunc primum selectis translationibus, collatisque cum Graecis emendatissimis exemplaribus, margineis scholiis illustrata et in novum ordinem digesta, additis etiam nonnullis libris nunquam antea Latinitate donatis: Averrois Cordubensis in ea opera omnes qui ad nos pervenere Commentarii, alique ipsius in logica, philosophia et medicina libri, quorum aliqui non amplius a Latinis visi, nuper a Iacob Mantino sunt conversi; alii ab eodem clarius ac fidelius quam unquam

Arithmetic in the Renaissance

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Abstract

In Renaissance arithmetic, we have to make a distinction between scholarly and lay cultures of mathematics. Arithmetic in the scholarly

culture was dominated by Boethian proportion theory as taught within the quadrivium. With the Latin translations of al-Khwārizmī's book on Hindu-Arabic numerals, the new system of arithmetic spread through algorisms, i.e., Latin works teaching basic arithmetic on natural numbers and fractions. The lay culture of practical arithmetic adopted the methods from the Maghreb region of calculations on the ghubar or dust board. This abacus culture became important for the growing class of merchants operating within the new mercantile economy of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Abacus treatises adopted schemes for justification of the validity of operations both in arithmetic and algebra. An early form of symbolism developed from these justification schemes. The insistence on exact solutions fitted very well the mercantile principle of the just values, not only in the mathematical sense but also in the moral sense. The practice of Renaissance arithmetic led to the expansion of the number concept, by accepting irrational solutions, negative solutions, and roots of negative numbers. With the age of printing, abacus methods of calculation spread all over Europe. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Germany, France, the Iberian Peninsula, England, and the Low Countries had vernacular works on arithmetic and established reckoning schools in commercial centers. The scholarly culture adopted the methods of lay culture by Latin works on practical arithmetic, such as by Frisius and Clavius.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

It is important to make a distinction between a scholarly and lay culture of Renaissance mathematics. A scholarly culture of arithmetic and geometry was taught at universities within the *quadrivium*. The basic text on arithmetic was Boethius's *De Institutione Arithmetica*. The Boethian arithmetic strongly relied on Nicomachus of Gerasa's *Arithmetica* from the second century. This basically qualitative arithmetic deals with properties of numbers and ratios.

All ratios have a name, and operations or propositions on ratios are expressed in a purely rhetorical form. A *superparticular* has the form $(n + 1)/n$ and thus covers proportions such as the common *sesquialter* ($3/2$) and *sesquiter* ($4/3$) proportions; a *superpartient* proportion has the form $(m + n)/n$ with $m > 1$ and includes proportions such as $8/3$. Such a qualitative arithmetic had little practical use. The theory of proportions was hardly studied outside monasteries and universities and was mainly intended for aesthetic and intellectual pursuit. During the eleventh century, a board game named *Rhythmomachia* was designed to meet with these aesthetic aspirations. The game was most popular during the fifteenth and sixteenth century. It disappeared during the seventeenth century together with the study of *De Institutione Arithmetica*. Despite its limited applicability, Boethian arithmetic evolved into a specific kind of mathematics, typical for the late Middle Ages, and left its mark on early-modern natural philosophy. Carl Boyer's book on the history of calculus (Boyer 1959) demonstrates how fourteenth-century thinkers such as Thomas Bradwardine and Richard Suiseth developed ideas on continuity and acceleration within this framework, thus also influencing Renaissance developments of mathematics and natural philosophy.

Arithmetical problem solving became much more advanced with the introduction of Arab algebra through the Latin translations of al-Khwārizmī's *Algebra* by Robert of Chester (c. 1145), Gerard of Cremona (c. 1150), and Guglielmo de Lunis (c. 1250). With the possible exception of Jean de Murs' *Quadripartitum numerorum* at the Sorbonne (L'Huillier 1990), algebra was not practiced or taught at universities for the following three centuries. Algebra continuously developed within the vernacular tradition of abacus schools in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy. Algebra thus was not only foreign by its Arabic origins; it remained mostly foreign to the scholarly tradition until the sixteenth century.

Apart from the scholarly culture, arithmetic was taught and practiced in the lay culture of merchants, surveyors, and artisans. Before the twelfth century, practical arithmetic was based

on Roman numerals and calculating procedures. In the same way that Boethian proportion theory can be understood as a qualitative arithmetic – using names rather than figures for proportions – so did Roman fractions all have specific names which were derived from the system of monetary units and units of weight. One *as* was divided into 12 *unciae*, one *uncia* into 24 *scripuli*, one *scripulus* into 6 *siliquae*, and one *siliqua* into 3 *oboli*, alternatively one *scripulus* could also be divided into 8 *calci*. Fractions of 12 parts had names such as a *dodrans* for 9/12 and thus equivalent to $\frac{3}{4}$. Also, separate symbols were used for the most common fractions. Evidently, the number of fractions possible in such a system is finite, but combinations of fractions could cover all practical needs. Operations on fractions were performed on the Roman abacus, a bronze device resembling the Chinese abacus. This practice was reformed during the tenth and eleventh century by Gerbert and Bernelinus introducing a new abacus in which operations were carried out on a table marked with columns using tokens or *jetons* (Friedlein 1867).

The Roman number system was gradually replaced by the introduction of the decimal place value system transmitted from the Arabic tradition. This revolution in practical arithmetic took several centuries within the scholarly culture through Latin texts explaining Hindu-Arabic numerals and their operations, commonly referred to as *algorisms* or by “Dixit algorismi” (DA). The term “algorism” refers to al-Khwārizmī, who wrote the first Arabic work on Hindu numerals. Later manuscript copies are further divided into three families: the *Liber Ysagogarum Alchorismi* (LY), *Liber Achorismi* (LA), and *Liber pulveris* (LP). Within the lay culture, the use of Hindu-Arabic numerals spread from the Maghreb region to the Iberian Peninsula and over the Provence region to Northern Italy, through the abacus tradition. Fibonacci’s *Liber Abbaci*, though written in Latin, fits better within the practice of lay culture than in the scholarly culture. Fibonacci’s use of the fraction bar was part of the Maghreb practices with the dust board or *ghubar* and did not appear in the early Latin algorisms.

With the commercial revolution of the thirteenth century, the main participants in commercial activities transformed from traveling to sedentary merchants (Van Egmond 1976). Instead of undertaking single commercial transactions combined with travel, merchants set up companies or *vetturali* in cities of Northern Italy, operating in multiple simultaneous buying and selling operations. The first banks, insurance companies, and shipping agencies were established for financing, insuring, and logistically supporting these early companies. For keeping track of multiple simultaneous transactions, the system of double-entry bookkeeping became in use from the beginning of the fourteenth century. A whole new social class was established consisting of merchants, bankers, bookkeepers, surveyors, and gaugers, all supporting the new mercantile economy. The mathematical enculturation of commercial personnel became a major concern. Abacus schools were founded from the end of the thirteenth century. Around 1343 there were no less than 1,200 students attending abacus schools in Florence. Boys between 10 and 14 were sent to these schools after they mastered writing at a grammar school. They were taught the essentials of calculating with Hindu-Arabic numerals, rules of merchant arithmetic and the basics of units of measurement, and the value of coins (Ulivi 2004). The abacus masters earned their living from teaching in a *bottega*. Some were employed by their city; others operated on a private basis and lived from student fees and possibly renting rooms to students. Earning a reasonable living, they belonged to the middle class. The profession often depended on family relations. The Calendri family is known to consist of five generations of abacus masters.

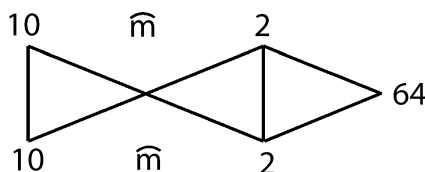
By the end of the fifteenth century, the teaching material and methods of abacus schools came to print with the first arithmetic books and circulated through Europe. The very first was *Arte dell’Abbaco*, better known as the *Treviso arithmetic*, as it was printed in Treviso in 1478. A manuscript by abacus master Filippo Calandri (Ricc. 2669) was printed in Florence in 1491–1492. But especially Luca Pacioli’s *Summa* (Pacioli 1494) was instrumental in the

wider dissemination of commercial arithmetic, practical geometry, and algebra from the abacus tradition. On the Iberian Peninsula, the first commercial arithmetic was by Francesc Santcliment, printed in 1482, both in Lyon and Barcelona from a Catalan manuscript (Malet 1998). In France, the first important merchant arithmetic was published by De la Roche (1520) appropriated from a manuscript by Chuquet (1484). In Germany, the first commercial arithmetic was authored by Johannes Widmann (1489). The most popular German arithmetic books were published by Adam Ries, first the *Rechnung auff der linihen* in 1518, but his expanded edition (Ries 1527) reached over hundred prints during the next century. In the Low Countries, the first arithmetic book was *Die Maniere om te leeren cijffren*, printed in 1508 in Brussels, translated in French and published in Antwerp in 1529. In 1539 it was translated into English as *An introduction for to lerne to reckon* and printed in London. Robert Recorde was the first Englishman to publish a book on practical arithmetic in 1543, *The Ground of Arts*. Reckoning schools flourished in the commercial centers of Germany and the Low Countries. In Antwerp the social status of arithmetic teachers grew considerably during the sixteenth century until the Sack of Antwerp in 1567 when many migrated to the North (Meskens 2013).

Innovative and Original Aspects

While the Boethian tradition depended on scholastic authoritative texts such as the *Arithmetica* by Nicomachus, the abacus tradition could not rely on any accepted authority. Even stronger, the Eastern origin of calculating with Hindu-Arabic numerals was met with skepticism and resistance from authorities. The dictate by the University of Padua of 1348 stated that prices of books should be marked not in Hindu-Arabic but in Roman numerals “non per cifras sed per literas claras” (Ball 1961). Precisely because the abacus tradition was missing the argumentative style from the scholastic tradition, it had to devise its own tools for justifying the validity of basic operations and practices. The early abacus treatises often used

marginal schemes for this purpose. The schemes were devised for the justification of the operations being a model of the concrete actions that were taught to students in abacus schools. The justification schemes also depended on the tangible aspect of carrying out the operations on a drawing board. Furthermore, the schemes depended on the early symbolism disseminated from Maghreb practices with the *ghubar*, such as the fraction bar (Høyrup 2010). Schemes were used for the operations on fractions, for validating the rules of signs, for the multiplication of irrational binomials, for special rules such as double false position, and for algebraic operations. Some schemes, as for the multiplication of binomials, facilitated the abstraction of the objects on which one operated. In some way, the early algebraic symbolism that developed during the fifteenth century can, like the schemes, be considered as nondiscursive elements in the text, providing a justification for rhetorically described algebraic procedures (Heeffer 2014).



Another distinct feature of fifteenth-century arithmetic and algebra is the consistent use of exact values and solutions. One cannot find any approximations in arithmetical or algebraic solutions. Approximations only appear in the context of practical geometry and surveying. Maestro Antonio de' Mazzinghi, in his *Trattato di fioretti*, solves a simple problem of two men bartering wool against cloth (Arrighi 1967, 31–2). He arrives at the price for the cloth at $\sqrt{43(6689/10000)} + (33/100)$ fiorini.

Through the persistent use of exact values for merchant-type problems, abacus masters established the objective true value of goods within a transaction, even if this had to be expressed in surds. The underlying idea was that there always exists a just and true value in exchange. Earlier in medieval society, the

marketplace was already recognized as a guide to the determination of value. But this value was a fuzzy concept, a value subject to many approximations in calculating the exchange rates of currencies and unit conversions which could be different from city to city.

Renaissance arithmetic and algebra together with double-entry bookkeeping gave support to the idea of a value which can be determined in principle as the just value, not only in the mathematical sense but also in the moral sense. In profit calculation of barter exchanges or in interest calculations, frequent references appear to the *fair* value or use the condition “so that no one is being cheated,” indicating the moral obligation to account for exact values (Heeffer 2011). The importance of dealing with exact values became the basic concept of mercantilism. According to Foucault (1966, 188), the essential aspect for the process of exchange in the Renaissance is the representation of value. “In order that one thing can represent another in exchange, they must both exist as bearers of value; and yet value exists only within the representation (actual or possible), that is, within the exchange or the exchangeability.” The act of exchanging, i.e., the basic operation of merchant activity, both determines and represents the value of goods. To be able to exchange goods, merchants have to create a symbolic representation of the value of their goods. Merchant arithmetic and its system of mathematical enculturation were of essential importance to mercantilism.

One more important contribution of Renaissance algebra is the expansion of the number concept. Irrational solutions were already common in abacus arithmetic. However, while negative numbers occasionally do appear, they were not accepted as isolated negative quantities. At best, an interpretation could be given as a debt. By considering negative solutions to algebraic problems as a debt, abacus masters denied the possibility of a negative quantity rather than accepting it. This attitude changed during the sixteenth century. Cardano was the first to accept negative solutions within the context of algebra. By posing a negative unknown, and so twisting

the rigid rhetorical style of abacus algebra, he also was the first to accept roots of negative numbers as valid solutions to equations (Heeffer 2010). But it was Simon Stevin who most explicitly challenged the Ancient Greek number concept. He devotes the first 20 pages of his *L'arithmetique* (Stevin 1585) to definitions of number which include irrational numbers. He also insists on considering one or the unit as a number, which is not the case for Euclid or Diophantus.

Impact and Legacy

The scholarly culture of Renaissance mathematics somewhat struggled with the reception of merchant arithmetic books. The sixteenth century inherited the humanist program, initiated by Regiomontanus and further executed by Petrus Ramus, Jacques Peletier, François Viète, and Christopher Clavius, to restore, publish, and reform the mathematics of classic works. This worked well for the geometry of Euclid, Pappus, and Apollonius, but the foreign origin of practical arithmetic and Arabic algebra posed a problem for some humanists. François Viète devised a whole new vocabulary to avoid the use of “barbarian” words such as “algebra.” The myth was spread that Arabic algebra descended from Diophantus’ *Arithmetica*. Inevitably however, many Latin textbooks on arithmetic of the sixteenth century treated merchant arithmetic and carried the term “practical” in their title. The two most prominent were Frisius (1540) and Clavius (1585). As Latin algorisms proved to be inadequate for didactic purposes at Latin schools, these two Latin books enjoyed much popularity and a long life span. They treated the subjects of the old abacus schools, such as numeration, operations of arithmetic, the rule of three, rules of merchant arithmetic, false and double false position, root extraction, and occasionally some basic algebra. Frisius (1540) was reprinted in more than a hundred editions during the sixteenth century.

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- [Abbacus School](#)
- [Clavius, Christophorus](#)
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Armory Unguent

- [Weapon Salve in the Renaissance](#)

Arminius, Jacobus

Born: 1559 at Oudewater

Died: 19 October 1609 at Leiden

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Abstract

Arminius was a Reformed minister and professor of theology at Leiden. Unlike his predecessors at this new University, he compiled a system of

theology. Adopting (neo)scholastic terminology, he attempted to solve the “political-theological” problem of predestination.

Synonyms

[Harmansz\(oon\)](#); [Harminius](#); [Hermansz\(oon\)](#)

Biography

Arminius, an armorer’s son, was born around 1559, in Oudewater. 1560, the year mentioned in Bertius’s funeral oration is incorrect. His father died while he was an infant. In 1575, after the siege of the small town, Spanish soldiers murdered his mother. A local priest, Theodore Aemilius, who detested “the abominable sacrifice of the mass,” taught him Latin and Greek and paid for his further schooling at Utrecht. After Aemilius’s death, he went with Rudolphus Snellius (1546–1613), presumably another relative, to Marburg. Snellius, who at that time taught biblical languages at that university, was an admirer of Petrus Ramus and Arminius adopted his Ramism. In 1576, he enrolled at the newly founded Reformed University of Leiden. In 1581, Arminius, funded by an Amsterdam Guild, went to Geneva in order to study theology under Theodore Beza and Charles Perrot (1541–1608), who did not adopt Beza’s view of predestination. It is therefore unlikely that Arminius ever shared “supralapsarianism.” In Geneva, his Ramism incurred the wrath of the authorities, and Arminius went to Basle where he defended six disputations. However, in 1584, Arminius returned to Geneva. In 1586, he visited Italy, provided “with a Greek New Testament and a Hebrew Psalter.” He attended the teaching of Jacopo Zabarella. In Rome, Arminius learned the “iniquity of the Roman court of the Antichrist.” His enemies, however, accused him of “kissing the Pope’s slipper” and befriending the Jesuit Robert Bellamine. In 1587, Arminius returned to Amsterdam and was ordained a minister. In 1590, he married Lijsbert Reael. It linked him with the regent class. In 1591, the regular sermons Arminius delivered on Romans 7 started the controversy

on predestination in the Amsterdam church. In the dissertation based on these sermons, published after his death, he argued that according to the Apostle, “regenerate man” is freed from “the law of sin” and by his Faith will be saved. Moreover, this position has always had defenders in the church and it does not imply “Pelagianism” – the heresy that man will be saved by his own works. He was acquitted of “teaching Pelagianism,” and the rest of his ministry passed peacefully.

In 1603, Arminius, provided with favorable testimonies of the Amsterdam church – removed from the consistorial acts after 1617 – was appointed professor of theology at Leiden. The opposition, lead by Franciscus Gomarus (1563–1641), was silenced for the time being. In October 1604, his senior colleague resumed hostilities, by almost openly attacking him in an ad hoc disputation on predestination. Arminius answered with a detailed refutation. However, in August 1605, the faculty put the churches at ease by declaring that its professors were in agreement concerning “the fundamentals of doctrine,” and in the same year, Arminius was elected *Rector Magnificus*. In the address he delivered after his term, he outlined the means to end religious dissent among Christians. As ultimate remedy, he proposed a national synod, to be organized by the magistrate. This was the practice among the Jews and the early church, and the magistrate as layman is a better judge of the fundamentals of religion.

By 1608, the magistrates of Holland could no longer ignore the enduring conflict on predestination in its university, since it implicated the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, the confessional documents of the Public Church, which all its ministers had to subscribe. The truce negotiations between the Republic and Spain (1607–1609) divided the provinces anew, and the political parties exploited existing theological and ecclesiastical antagonism in order to gain support. The States of Holland in order to regain control of the situation invited the opponents to present their views. In October 1608, Arminius outlined his sentiments on predestination. This basic text was posthumously published. At the end, he daringly called for a revision of the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. Gomarus responded

by accusing him of Pelagianism and Popery that is in secretly endorsing the cause of Roman Catholicism. Controversy remained during Arminius's last year, in which his already weak health further deteriorated. It intensified until the Synod of Dordt (1618–1619), which settled the issue of the confession for years to come (Bangs 1971).

Theological System

In 1603, Arminius began his lectures with an outline of the prolegomena of theology. He dealt with its object, author, and certainty. Using scholastic concepts, he argues for the excellence of theology and the subordination of the other sciences, since God is the cause of causes. Like Duns Scotus and Ramus, Arminius maintains the practical nature of the divine science, since human blessedness is its goal. This implies that he taught theology in an “analytical order,” because it describes the means to a given end. Its practical nature makes religion its object. It consists of all our duties toward God. God prescribes these obligations both in the word inscribed in our minds and in scripture. Arminius continues with conventional Reformed themes, such as authority, certainty, perfection, and perspicuity of the Bible. Since blessedness is only possible by knowing God, Arminius continues by dealing with God's existence and nature and His attributes. Although the existence of God is self-evident, Arminius produces eight arguments of a – vaguely – Thomist inspiration. Following the order of his system, he subsequently discussed creation, divine providence, the first covenant with man, original sin, and the order of salvation, which requires dealing with Christ and His offices, predestination, faith, the church, and the sacraments (Stanglin 2007).

Predestination

In the *Declaration of Sentiments* (1610), it is observed that the first article of religion is predestination. Arminius apparently realized the philosophical implications of the doctrine, but he merely discussed the notion by means of biblical authorities. He dealt with four rival positions

upheld in the Reformed churches. However, the most prominent alternative to his own position is supralapsarianism, which Calvin and Beza seemed to teach “in order to avoid the grave error of Pelagianism.” Their doctrine implies that God “eternally decreed to save some men and damn others before he considers them as created, much less as fallen.” The divine decree predestining some men to salvation and others to damnation logically precedes the decree of God determining the Fall, and hence the position attributed to Beza is called “supralapsarianism” (before the Fall). According to Arminius, this doctrine implied the serious heresy of Manicheism, since it made God the direct cause of damnation and the author of evil and sin. This doctrine was “new,” being neither heard in the ancient church, nor mentioned in the first Reformed confessions. Adopting the Aristotelian notion of the Golden Mean, he observed that the “catholic” truth is to be found between the falsehood of both extremes: Pelagianism, which denied the indispensable need of divine grace, and supralapsarianism, which denied free will restored by grace.

According to Arminius, the divine attributes such as perfect goodness and omnipotence imply divine providence. However, there is the reality of evil, which sin causes. If God is not its author, free will is the proximate cause of sin. In order to reconcile providence and free will, Arminius developed his own version of the sequence of decrees that is determinations of the divine will. Contrary to the supralapsarianism of Beza and Gomarus, which made predestination the first in the logical order of the determinations of God, Arminius makes predestination the last one, preceded by the decrees to appoint Christ as savior and to bestow grace on all men provided with repentance and faith. Particular to Arminius's position is also the part the divine foreknowledge has to play here (Stanglin and McCall 2012). Elsewhere he explains this foreknowledge by means of the scholastic notion of “middle knowledge,” developed in order to reconcile divine prescience, which being science in the Aristotelian sense refers to necessary objects, with the contingency of future things, such as our free volitions. Arminius argued that God knows Himself and the essence of all things with strict necessity. The

contingent existence of creatures, however, He knows with hypothetical necessity only, since they are produced into existence by a free act of the divine will. “The schoolmen” called God’s foreknowledge, he continues, “middle knowledge,” because it precedes the act of the will, which grounds His free knowledge. If, for example, A will sin, he necessarily will be damned, but that A will sin is contingent, determined by free will: God’s free will by permitting A to will to act sinfully and A by actually willing to do so (Muller 1991). It is highly probable that he took over this concept from the Jesuit Luis de Molina. This is why contemporaries saw a clear similarity between the Jesuit and Arminian position, while the contraremonstrants felt that the Dominicans anticipated their position.

Impact and Legacy

Arminius’s reputation mainly rests on the 1610 “remonstrantie” (remonstrance). This “discourse,” mainly compiled by Arminius’ lifelong friend Johannes Wtenbogaert (1557–1644) and presented to the States of Holland, created Arminianism. Signed by 46 ministers, it summarized Arminius’ views of providence, predestination, and free will, in five main tenets. These five articles were rejected by the international Reformed Synod of Dordt in 1618–1619. The judgments of the Synod opposed the “remonstrance” with the so-called Five Heads of Doctrine. In the Anglo-Saxon world, this response has become known as the “Five Points of Calvinism.” So, indirectly, Arminius created the identity of Calvinism.

Cross-Reference

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the growing demand for public correspondence among various political and religious institutions in the Late Middle Ages. Public officials found in this art a useful method and numerous examples, helpful in different situations, in order to draft a great deal of letters fitting for the most various authorities, with the due respect for social hierarchy.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Although the term *dictamen* refers to composition in general – whether prose, metrical, or prosimetrical – *ars dictaminis* (“art of prose composition”) and *ars dictandi* (“art of composing in prose”) designate a medieval system of rules defining the art of editing prose documents as well as a treatise explaining those rules. Furthermore, the Latin verb *dictare* is used by medieval scholars to specifically refer to the teaching of epistolography, namely, the art of writing letters following the prescriptions of rhetoric (Camargo, 36).

For centuries the art of writing letters has kept its practical purpose by adopting a literary prose and by tracing valid examples, such as model letters (*dictamina*), suitable for different circumstances concerning oral presentation of texts. Only in the Early Middle Ages arouse among scholars a specific need to create a system of rule in order to organize and catalogue practices and customs that had been in use since ancient times (Grendler, 775). In fact numerous textbooks of *ars dictaminis*, which spread through Europe starting from the last decades of the eleventh century, served chiefly to develop useful techniques for composing letters or legal documents; their aim was to train those clerks or laymen who intended to become professional writers dealing with official communication (Camargo, 36).

Ars Dictaminis

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Abstract

The *ars dictaminis* describes the medieval tendency to organize intellectual activities following precise rules when dealing with oral presentation of written messages. It consists of a system of guidelines, examples, and prescriptions for composing letters on the basis of rhetorical directions drawn from ancient oratory. The successful diffusion of the system throughout the European universities lies in

Innovative and Original Aspects

Looking at history, the *ars dictaminis* was technically developed between twelfth and the fourteenth centuries in Italy (primarily in Bologna) (Murphy, 211–212), where the medieval communes recruited salaried rhetoricians or public

officials with literary skills – overcoming the grammar studies given in the scholastic education system – who were highly trained in speaking and writing well, in order to fulfill administrative and cultural tasks related to public affairs. The organization of the political power in courts, chanceries, or bishoprics demanded qualified secretaries or notaries handling procedures of drafting letters and dispatches oriented toward oral presentation of the message (Grendler, 114–115). Hence public needs for live communication drove the development of the *ars dictaminis*, which early began to be taught in the universities and proved to be an efficient method built on a solid oratorical basis, particularly on the guidelines provided by classical authors (Witt 1982, 6–7).

In fact the teachers of the art (*dictatores*) drew amply from ancient handbooks of oratory as guidance for letter composition: in particular they used Cicero's *De inventione* and the pseudo Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* as basic sources to which they flanked various precepts gathered from Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (Witt 1982, 7–8). Following the instructions about the classical arrangement of an oration – made up by *inventio* (seeking for arguments), *dispositio* (arrangement), *elocutio* (style), *memoria* (recollection), and *actio* (enacting) – they introduced and modeled a typical division for a letter in five parts: *salutatio* (a calibrated greeting according to the social status of the recipient), *captatio benevolentiae* (capturing the goodwill), *narratio* (brief statement of facts), *petitio* (request of action), and *conclusio* (summingup and conclusion) (Grendler, 115; Camargo, 36). Each section of a letter was further enhanced with specific examples, sentences, or entire drafts of epistles employed as models to follow. Classifying a variety of epistolary styles, medieval teachers listed numerous stylistical remarks that ensure rhythm and elegance to the prose: for instance, they suggested elegant expressions marked by brevity or diplomacy, in place of liveliness or spontaneity (Witt 1982, 14), and recommended great accuracy in *cursus* (a set of patterns for a rhythmic sequence of syllables), *distinctiones* (the clauses of a sentence, such as *comma*, *colon*, or *periodus*), and punctuation (Camargo, 36).

Impact and Legacy

The origins of the method date back to the late eleventh century, when Alberic of Montecassino wrote his *Breviarium de dictamine* and *Flores rhetorici dictaminis* (Murphy, 207–211), expounding the rudiments of the art that were later developed by Adalbert of Samaria in his *Praecepta dictaminum* (around 1118) and by Hugo of Bologna in his *Rationes dictandi prosaice* (between 1119 and 1124) (Witt 1982, 9–10). Since the midtwelfth century, textbooks of *ars dictandi* rapidly spread in France, among the Orléans masters, and later in Germany and England (Camargo, 36). Thanks to scholars like Boncompagno from Signa, Bene from Florence, and Guido Faba, the Bolognese *dictamen* remained dominant until the rising humanists deeply reshaped the medieval rhetoric system Witt 1982, 34–35).

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Art of War in the Renaissance

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Abstract

To understand Renaissance military theory, one needs to start out from its ancient and medieval heritage. The Roman and Byzantine literature on the topic was quite narrow but still for a long time determined European military thought. Compared to these tracts on strategy and tactics, Florentine humanists introduced new themes and new arguments, a whole new approach to battlefield success and military participation.

While Bruni was perhaps the first explicit representative of this new, Florentine understanding of waging wars, this entry focuses of Niccolò Machiavelli's ideas on the art of war. The part addressing this issue in his *The Prince* established a direct connection between the art of war and that of governing the state. This was dictated by his experiences of the returning armed conflicts among the city-states and some of the major European powers in Italy.

But even more significantly, his work *The Art of War* is perhaps the best known example of a Renaissance dialogue which argued for the citizens' militia instead of the use of mercenary troops. Contrary to our intuition, he is as close here to a realist political position as in *The Prince*. The dialogue argues that a dedicated military personnel makes colonization a more promising enterprise, while at home it may help the Prince (or the *popolo* itself, directly) to rearrange the political regime.

In other words, Machiavelli found a number of strong arguments why a popular army is a much more rational choice to rely on, than a mercenary troop would have been, in his patria. His arguments sound surprisingly modern, even if history did not fully confirm his

ideas on the short term, leading to the loss of popular government in Florence.

Synonyms

Revolution in military art; Warfare, early modern

Heritage

Renaissance theorizing about warfare grew out of medieval praxis, itself theoretically based on Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus's classic piece *De re militari* (*Concerning Military Matters*), probably published in the fourth century CE, itself based on such works as that of Cato the Younger or Sextus Julius Frontinus. The Byzantine Empire also produced a number of military tracts, including the *Strategicon*, usually attributed to Emperor Maurice, which had an impact in Italy after their translations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Rupture with the Tradition

During the Renaissance new developments like the emergence of large standing armies (e.g., those of the Republic of Venice and the French and Spanish kings), technological innovations such as increasingly effective uses of gunpowder, the development of military architecture, and new military strategies fuelled a rebirth of military theory.

The best known examples of this literature are found in the works of the Florentine humanist-statesman, Niccolò Machiavelli. He refers to what he calls the "art of war" in Chapters 12–14 of *The Prince* (written originally in 1513 or 1514 but published only posthumously in 1532) and in his separate work, dedicated fully to the topic of *The Art of War*, published in 1521. In what follows we shall concentrate on his views, omitting works by other authors, such as *On Knighthood* (1420) of Machiavelli's predecessor Leonardo Bruni and various works of his contemporaries, like those of Francesco Guicciardini (Bayley 1961).

Machiavelli's main counsel to the prince is that the latter should become "a professional in this art (*professore di questa arte*)" (Machiavelli 1998, XIV, 58). In other words, as Winter points out, Machiavelli establishes a close connection between the art of war and the *arte dello stato* (the art of governing the state) (Winter 2014, 167). This theoretical linkage reflects the practical reality of princely government in the Italian city-states of Machiavelli's day and most importantly the military role of the sixteenth-century Medici rulers of Florence.

Machiavelli's work turned out to be an influential contribution to the literature produced by the European military revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. This revolution, according to the so-called Roberts' thesis (Roberts 1967), was claimed to consist of a "revolution in tactics," the growth in army size and its impact on the burden of societies, and the adoption of more ambitious and complex strategies (Parker 1996). This historiographical formula is by now under heavy attack (Black 1990). Here we have to concentrate on the question what exactly gave Machiavelli's theory its novelty.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Perhaps the most important of Machiavelli's reform proposals is his advocacy of a permanent militia recruited from Florentine territory in place of foreign mercenary troops. This was radical for the times. The proposal is understandable both from the perspective of *The Prince* (where the author advises the prince to rely more on the *popolo* than on the *grandi* of his city) and from the perspective of the *Discorsi*, where the author takes a firm (ancient Roman) republican line (Zuckert 2017).

There are two further points of interest, however, in Machiavelli's position. One is that his narrator is Fabrizio Colonna, an Italian *condottiere*, whose earlier associations with Florence were quite antagonistic. One can interpret Machiavelli's decision to use Colonna in the key role in this work as an ironic twist. But it

can also be interpreted in a context of Florentine domestic politics: Machiavelli's choice must have been read as "an anti-Orsini and therefore as an anti-Medici gesture" (Colish 1998). Finally, as a humanist he would surely be aware that an often-used device of the genre the dialogue was to employ contemporary interlocutors, who were nevertheless put into improbable rhetorical situations.

Even more surprisingly, as in *The Prince*, Machiavelli in *The Art of War* also considers the possibility that a well-ordered and well-disciplined army might colonize further territories. The work also points out the potential of a militia to reorder the political regime at home by force. As for this second point, Machiavelli understood that political power could not be withheld from those who risked their lives for the *patria*, a military force based in the people empowered a popular regime. Unfortunately, his advice did not bear fruit(s) among its intended audience, his learned republican friends who met in the Rucellai garden.

Impact and Legacy

The Art of War was republished more than 20 times in the sixteenth century and was cited by important Renaissance authorities such as Montaigne and Francis Bacon.

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Aryeh ben Joseph, Judah

► [Moscato, Judah](#)

Ascham, Roger

Born: 1514/15, Kirkby Wiske

Died: 1568, London

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Abstract

This entry treats Roger Ascham (1514/15, Kirkby Wiske–1568, London) as a philosopher of literature, a modern phrase, to be sure, but a broad one meant to cover its large and mobile subject, whose literary philosophy lay conceptualized, as typical from the Middle Ages to the Italian Renaissance, within all intellectual pursuits, within, as it were, philosophy. Poetic, of course, was the invention of Aristotle, given a new lease on life with the recovery of Greek. The analysis centers on the section “*Imitatio” in Ascham’s posthumous *The Scholemaster* (1570). Chronology belies the ages-old habit of classing Ascham among early Tudor humanists. And if Ascham clearly

has more affinities with such humanists as the great Henri Estienne (II) in France and Fulvio Orsini in Italy than with Sir Thomas Elyot, he was a fortunate Hellenist to have been formed, by his own proud testimony, at Saint John's College, Cambridge. To say *humanist* or *humanism*, could Ascham have pronounced those words, is to express Ascham's implacable desire to build and improve upon in theory and practice a Continental and English tradition of classical learning and to return to the Greek and Latin *fontes et origines* for English poetry and poetics, the whole thrust and direction of these efforts, however, being in motion. The eye Ascham casts upon poetry and poetics, ancient and modern, is critical, taking as little as possible for granted, looking instead to bring back the intention, meaning, feeling, and effect of the author and work, word by word, place by place.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Roger Ascham a Renaissance philosopher? Within poetics, rhetoric, and literary aesthetics, Ascham wrote in English to educate the intellectual and ruling elite and begin or, in a Reformation England that had destroyed most of its university and monastic libraries, begin again a Renaissance along the deepest classical lines. Ascham's Latin and Greek were equal to the age; his literary critical thought sometimes surpassed it. The break with Medieval approaches to literature (while Ascham loved Chaucer) is so wide it goes without saying. Drawn from the ranks of Oxford and Cambridge, the schoolmaster in question is really the Roman *grammaticus* brought up to date.

Innovative and Original Aspects

What philosophy of literature did Ascham espouse? In the passages most accessible today, Ascham will impress as typically English: Ascham practically derived his myriad views and illustrated his sagacious taste out of major authors, duly quoted, gamely alluded to, and often enough interpreted, and theoretically founded his principles "left in Reversion [...]"

by Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero (Ascham 1570). To them add Horace, Quintilian, Servius, and Macrobius, while the need to read them in light of Ascham's lost library, of which only a handful of books remains, is an urgent desideratum.

Ascham's animating intellectual motives are at least twofold: an implacable commitment to, without a complete detailing of, the chief positions of poetic and rhetoric stated in The Praeface. Generally, Ascham is exploring and elaborating the *imitatio* of the Roman tradition alongside the *mimesis* of the Greek; he is a realist. But to those ends, Ascham assumes the relevance and power of the text in context, archeologically explored and discovered, objectively analyzed and interpreted; he is an historicist, as empirical as not. Second, though this is, *stricto sensu*, neo-classical, it is not *Le néoclassicisme* in France nor its effects in England poetics and poetry. Rather, Ascham endorses a canon of classical authors open to and welcoming further criticism and theory even as humanists were searching for and discovering them, in part or in whole. Virgil and Homer, Horace and Pindar, and Cicero and Demosthenes stand among the exemplars Ascham wants his reader, once or future writers, critics, and teachers, to follow *en pleine connaissance de cause* in their own terms and times.

Ascham is also an inveterate comparatist, firmly but undogmatically for incorporating Greek and Roman literatures, the personal culture of the (private) Renaissance museum; here was, moreover, the stimulus to a new English literature – across all genres – more fully and properly responsive to humanism. This duality of vision intercommunicates, each side irreducible to the other, both sides dialectical, *achieved through reading*: the reader, at once a theorist and a critic, observes and judges the text in at least a trilingual context – Greek, Latin, and Neo-Latin – since the great works of history, literature, and philosophy spring most impressively, in Rome, from two languages, both at once.

Impact and Legacy

Ascham is not merely in the literary critical line of Sidney, Jonson, Milton, and Dryden; he

found the line, as conversant with primary and secondary sources of classical tradition as any of them, decidedly more than Sidney or Dryden, as a brilliant and effective mediator and agent of humanist thinking and ambitions. Seemingly continuously read, Ascham is cited with ease in England (both in Neo-Latin and English) during the hundred years after his death, and Samuel Johnson eulogizes him in the eighteenth century as pioneering and canonical.

Ascham's greatest charge to Elizabethan England, "this worke of imitation" (Ascham 1570), critical and creative hands joined to make a Renaissance future out of classical works and pasts, may be his greatest legacy for all England. On a par with the best of Renaissance humanism, the sophistication exceeded all previous efforts in Tudor English.

Cross-References

- Budé, Guillaume
- Historiography, Renaissance
- Humanism
- Philology, Renaissance
- Quintilian
- Sidney, Philip
- Sturm, Johann
- Virgil in the Renaissance

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Askew, Anne

Born: Lincolnshire, c. 1521?

Died: London, 16 July 1546

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Abstract

During the last years of Henry VIII's reign, Anne Askew eloquently affirmed her evangelical faith and defied the heresy laws enforced by the Catholic church, the city of London, and the Privy Council. In her two works, *The first examinacyon* (1546) and *The lattre examinacyon* (1547), Askew recounts her interrogations and articulates her belief in the primacy of bible reading and the Reformist doctrine of the Eucharist. Refusing to recant, she was burned at the stake. After her death, the Protestant polemicist, John Bale, published her works, representing her as an icon of the English Reformation.

Biography

Little information exists about Askew's early life as the daughter of a Lincolnshire gentry family. John Bale provides some unverifiable details from unnamed sources, including her forced marriage to her late older sister's Catholic fiancé, Master Kyme, by whom she may have had two children. Askew herself records a visit to Lincoln to read the Cathedral bible and to confront a number of priests opposed to her conversion to an evangelical faith. London city records show her three arrests for questioning in 1545 and 1546, and in her *Examinations*, she addresses a reformist community, referring to well-known preachers like Edward Crome and Hugh Latimer. In June 1546, she was questioned by the Privy Council and sent to Newgate prison. Probably hoping to incriminate high-ranking noblewomen as heretics, Lord Chancellor Wriothesley and Sir Richard Rich tortured Askew on the rack, but could not break her silence. She died with three other accused heretics in Smithfield on July 16, 1546.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Like most evangelicals in the 1540s, Askew dissented from the Catholic doctrines proclaimed in the 1539 Act Abolishing Diversity of Opinions (the Act of the Six Articles) and advocated the reform of traditional worship. Although she affirmed the importance of the Eucharist, she condemned the doctrine of transubstantiation, arguing from scriptural citations that the bread and wine were remembrances rather than the real presence of Christ (Askew 1996, 99; Malson-Huddle 2010). She used the dialogue form and her considerable rhetorical skill to represent her debates with her interrogators, challenging their authority while claiming not to overstep restrictions on women's roles as public disputants (Askew 1996, 30; Beilin 1985, 1991). Writing to her evangelical community as a teacher or preacher, she resembles dissenters like Margery Kempe or earlier Reformist martyrs (Knott 1993; Watt 1997; Summit 2000; Gertz-Robinson 2005).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Essential to Askew's significance is her assuming the right to debate male authorities of church and state, a position she supports with her constant exegesis of the English Bible (McQuade 1994; Betteridge 1999; Linton 2006). Askew provides dramatic accounts of her questioning by various city, state, and ecclesiastic officials, most prominently Bishop Edmund Bonner and the Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Wriothesley. She vividly describes her confrontations, often suggesting the folly or ignorance of her questioners and gaining authority by associating herself with Saint Stephen, whose theology and persecution she implies are models for her own (Kennedy 2000, Monta 2003; Almasy 2005; Hickerson 2006). In *The first examinacyon*, her rhetorical strategies include questions, scriptural citation, and equivocation (Wabuda 1993; Graban 2007; Pender 2010). She upbraids an archdeacon for his hasty judgment and "slendre wytt" (Askew 1996, 43), even as she appears to defer to "so manye wyse lerned men" (Askew 1996, 54). She also assumes the role of teacher and polemicist by continually asserting, "I beleve as the scripture doth teache me" (Askew 1996, 49; Snook 2005). Indeed, Askew modeled "a particularly vigorous kind of scripturally oriented polemical and political language" (Loewenstein 2006, 14). In *The lattr examinacyon*, she relates the shocking scene of her brutal and illegal torture on the rack (Berry 1997; Matchinske 1998; Kemp 1999).

Impact and Legacy

The importance of Askew's texts is clear from the speed with which they were published and republished. The exiled Protestant polemicist, John Bale, oversaw their printing in Wesel with his introductions and extensive "elucidations." Claiming Askew's resemblance to an early Christian martyr, Bale uses her interrogation and execution as an opportunity for violent attacks on the doctrines and practices of the Catholic church (Kesselring 1998). Both *The first examinacyon* and *The lattr examinacyon*

include a frontispiece woodcut, an iconic Reformation image of a female figure in a simple robe, holding the Bible and the martyr's palm, and trampling a papal beast before a wall. Thousands of copies of Askew's work may have been circulating during Edward VI's reign (Fairfield 1976, 135). Both *Examinations* appear in John Foxe's influential and always available history of the English church, *Actes and Monuments*, and have been frequently adapted and republished (Beilin 2005).

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Astral Lights

► Stars in Renaissance Science

Astrological Determinism

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Abstract

The idea that human destiny is predicted according to astrological and philosophical laws has been widespread since Antiquity. Strongly linked with the fate and fortune concepts, astrological determinism received new interpretations during the Renaissance period. The reason was a renewed interest in Cicero's treatises, as well as in Alexander of Aphrodisias and Stoic philosophy. On the other hand, the question of determinism seems to be closely related to religious and philosophical disputes of the sixteenth century.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In Ancient Rome, astrology often faced a severe opposition. The leading astrologer of Antiquity Claudius Ptolemy tried to avoid deterministic elements in his *Tetrabiblos* (also known as the *Liber Quadripartitus*), while Cicero and Plotinus opposed astrology from a philosophical point of view. However, the *ars divinatoria* remained very popular during the whole history of the Roman Empire. The fascination for astrology shown by the emperor Septimius Severus and his heirs forced Alexander of Aphrodisias to write a special anti-astrological treatise (Alexander of Aphrodisias, 1963). Alexander opposed the Stoic idea of determinism claiming that some

events did not have predetermined causes. He insisted that man is responsible for his own decisions, and that chance is a source for human freedom, since it allows to break the casual chain. Alexander's *De fato* was well known in the Middle Ages due to the translation by William of Moerbeke (Alexander of Aphrodisias, 1963). The supposition that all the events of human life could be strictly predicted using astrological tools was also strongly criticized by the Church Fathers. The most significant attack on astrology and determinism was Augustine's *De civitate Dei*.

In the Middle Ages, after the transfer of astrological and magical texts from the Islamic world into Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, European intellectuals faced an issue to tie astrological determinism with Christian dogmas. Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, and Pierre d'Ailly (to name but a few) tried to legitimate astrology within Christian theological agenda, which led to the formation of the so-called Christian astrology. However, their attempts did not solve a clear fundamental opposition between astrological determinism and Christian interpretation of human free will.

Renaissance scholars often insisted on using astrology and deterministic theories for religious purposes. Coluccio Salutati's *De fato* is a case: while rejecting astrology, he praised Seneca as a great moral and Christian philosopher and interpreted Stoic casual chain in a Christianized way. This approach was also typical for Marsilio Ficino, who was largely responsible for involving astrological sources in Christian religious discourse.

In his last treatise, the *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola severely attacked astrology (Pico della Mirandola, 2004); one of his main arguments dealt with determinism. According to Pico, astrologers are unable to provide their followers with correct and exact calculations. For him, predicting the future is exclusively in God's power. Pico's position was followed by Girolamo Savonarola, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, and other opponents to astrology. Pico's attack, however, did not find an unanimous support. One of his opponents was Pietro

Pomponazzi, the author of the famous *De immortalitate animorum*. Pomponazzi's doctrine of determinism was related to his negation of the immortality of the soul that consequently led him to the idea of the predestination of human life. In the *De incantationibus* and especially in the *De fato, fortuna et praedestinatione*, he explained his deterministic views, based on a radical reading of Aristotle (Pomponazzi, 2004). Pomponazzi defended Stoic determinism against Alexander of Aphrodisias preferring the Stoic casual chain to the Aristotelian teaching and Christian dogmas of divine providence and free will. Thus, Pomponazzi accepted astrological determinism and confirmed it using philosophical arguments.

Despite a number of attacks, such as that of Pico della Mirandola, astrology remained extremely popular over the whole sixteenth century. Dealing with its deterministic aspects, Renaissance scholars usually adopted either of the two aforementioned approaches: a Christianized interpretation of *fatum* or its interpretation in philosophical terms.

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Astrological Medicine

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Abstract

Astrology was considered to be an important tool for medical practices over the centuries. Since the twelfth century when European intellectuals got access to a great amount of previously unknown magical, astrological, and medical texts, the link between astrology and medicine had remained firm. Referring to the medieval tradition, Renaissance scholars at the same time enriched the astro-medical discourse with new interpretations and sources.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The idea to tie astrology with medicine was typical for medieval Islamic astro-medical treatises. Mostly translated into Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Spain and Italy, they gave rise to a number of Western interpretations. The most significant elements of this astro-medical tradition are the so-called astrological images, i.e., talismans. Produced in accordance with astrological techniques and calculations, they had to be used for medical purposes absorbing positive celestial influences and thus healing patients. The practice to produce astrological images was described in detail in several medieval astrological texts, including the legendary *Speculum astronomiae*, whose authorship is still subject to scholarly debates (Zambelli 1992). Michael Scot (1175–c.1232), Albertus Magnus (c.1200–1280), Pietro d’Abano (1257–1316) were also responsible for the diffusion of astro-medical techniques. In the fourteenth century, it became a commonplace to interpret the plague from the astro-medical perspective (Weill-Parot 2002). Besides,

physicians were traditionally taught to take astrology into account in questions such as conception or nativity, the so-called critical days (crises in health or illness), and medication (Siraisi 1990, Pennuto 2008).

The medieval tradition played a crucial role in Marsilio Ficino’s astro-medical writings, including the *Consiglio contro la pestilenza* (completed in 1478 but published 3 years later) and the *De vita libri tres* (1489). Remaining somewhat loyal to the medieval astro-medicine, Ficino (1433–1499) and other Renaissance scholars did not keep off adding some novelties to the interpretation of how medicine and astrology might work together.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Two episodes significantly contributed to the modification of this link between astrology and medicine in the Renaissance. One is the attack of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) on judicial astrology, expressed in his *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (published posthumously in 1496) (Pico della Mirandola 2004). Giovanni Pico rejected the divinatory aspects of astrology and accepted only its physical dimensions. He called it “natural astrology.” Eliminating any application of judicial astrology, he admits the influences exerted by physical means, that is, motion, light, and heat. Pico thus criticized the astrological aspects of numerous astro-medical doctrines. For instance, his attack had an immediate impact on the debates on critical days, which lasted through the whole sixteenth century.

Another influence was Marsilio Ficino’s *De vita libri tres* (Ficino 1998). In his third book, the *De vita coelitus comparanda*, Ficino gave his interpretation of astro-medicine. The book abounds in references to ancient Neoplatonism, specifically to Plotinus and Iamblichus, and contains ideas borrowed from late medieval alchemy, astrology, and natural magic. According to Ficino, a *magus*, having correctly mastered these teachings, can manipulate material objects in order to draw down the benefit of higher cosmic and

immaterial forces, through which he is united with the “world soul” (*anima mundi*). Ficino established an influential theory of the all-pervading “world spirit” (*spiritus mundi*), which unites the soul of the world to its body. From this perspective, the universe is conceived as a living being, and the correspondence and harmony between heaven and earth as its members are emphasized.

These episodes influenced the subsequent, sixteenth-century, theories of astro-medicine. Some Renaissance scholars, such as Nicolò Leonicensio (1428–1524), insisted on naturalistic grounds of medicine rejecting judicial astrology as such. The second trend based on Ficinian natural magic became more popular, with Jean Fernel (1497–1558) (Fernel 2005), Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) (Grafton and Siraisi 2001), and Cornelius Gemma (1535–1578) trying to “Neoplatonize” ancient medicine, thus creating harmony between heaven and earth, which included the astro-medical dimension (Hirai 2011, 2014). This gave rise to a particular interest in Hippocrates’ and Galen’s writings and their Neoplatonically orientated readings.

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Astrology in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Astrology or the science of the observation of the heaven has ancient roots which can be traced back to the oldest history of mankind, but has been practiced by ancient Greeks and Romans, too. The oldest representation of the starry sky probably is the Nebra sky disk, dated to the Bronze Age (around 2100–1700 BC). In late antiquity, the seven liberal arts were canonized as the seven basic fields of study, among them astronomy, whereby the terms “astrology” and “astronomy” were widely used parallel and as synonyms (Dooley 2014; Heitzmann 2008).

Astrology considers the stars’ influence on humans and life on Earth. Observing the starry sky and in particular the movements of the planets (Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter) and their relations to the zodiac signs (Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces,

Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Lion, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius), it was hoped to discover relations to events on Earth and to be able to predict and control catastrophes. Since antiquity, a distinction has been made between natural and judicial astrology. Natural astrology treats the relation between the movements of the celestial bodies and natural phenomena on Earth such as earthquakes, floods, or weather changes. Judicial astrology deals with the stars' influence on human fate. A central role plays the text of the Revelation of St. John (chapters 6 and 12) where an earthquake, a darkened sun, a blood red moon, and falling stars are announcing the Last Day (Schenk 2014).

In the twelfth century, there was an intensive involvement with astrological matters. Arabic handbooks were systematically translated into Latin. The planets were seen as soul-bearing entities serving as intermediaries between the upper and the lower world (Zambelli 2012).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

During the Renaissance, ancient knowledge was revived by Latin translations of the old texts and the dealing with their contents but also because of the invention of letterpress printing. In this context, astrology experienced a revival, followed by a critical review, commenting, and later attempts for reformation. Epidemics (like the plague during the fourteenth century and syphilis during the sixteenth century), end times prophecies, and unstable political situations (such as wars) in the European area ignite the faith in a predictability of catastrophes. Consolation, counseling, and call for patience, as well as offering, which help humans in a world out of order, are essential components of astrological scriptures. The knowledge of the stars was extremely important for navigation, and furthermore, people in the early modern period regarded astrologers as experts in matters concerning daily life: They determined whether a woman was pregnant and predicted the number and the sex of children and were

counselors for marriages and investments. Letterpress printing played a crucial role in the dissemination of astrological scriptures. In large print runs and on cheapest paper, so-called almanacs were printed also for simple people with poor educational background. An almanac typically contained a calendar, including church festivals, feast days, and sometimes even a selective chronology of world history or a list of kings; information about the year's astronomical events; and a series of astronomical prognostications, including predictions about the weather, crops, health, and political and religious events. Most almanacs also contained astrological information concerning farming, such as the best time to plow, to plant, geld animals, harvest, and fell timber (Eamon 2014, 14).

It is not until the seventeenth century that astrology detaches slowly from scientific subjects. The reasons for the steadily decreasing interest in astrology are complex and have not yet been finally clarified. Apparently, the abandonment of the universities from astrology as academic subject, the prohibition by the Christian Church, and new scientific methods and developments should be mentioned in this context.

Relationship with the Church and Rulers

The church's relationship to astrology was problematic. In 1327, Cecco D'Ascoli was publicly burned in Florence for having cast the horoscope of Jesus (among other offenses). In 1563, astrology was forbidden by the Tridentine Council. Since this verdict was only obeyed half-heartedly, Pope Sixtus V in 1586 promulgated the bull *Coeli et terrae* against astrology where he declared that the future was God's exclusive domain and that astrology is one of the most dangerous manifestations of human pride. After Pope Sixtus V condemned the teaching of astrology, professors at the Jesuit University in Lisbon continued to teach courses on judicial astrology (Eamon 2014). For the year 1630, different astrologers had predicted the death of Pope Urban VIII. Initially, the Pope tried to avoid the prediction with various measures, but ultimately he proceeds

with rigor against astrologers and promulgated the bull *Inscrutabilis Iudiciorum Dei* (1631), which prohibits them to predict the death of a Pope or any of his family members (Dooley 2003).

Despite of the church's difficult relationship to astrology from the sixteenth century onwards to the eighteenth century, large church halls, especially those few that pointed southwards, were chosen in order to install expensive meridians ("heliometers") in the floor for exact measurement (Heilbron 1999). Astrology played an important role at the papal courts like those of Paul II (1417–1471, confessed to astrology in his public inaugural speech), Sixtus IV (1414–1471), Innozenz VIII (1432–1492), Alexander VI (1431–1503), Julius II (1443–1513, chose the day of his accession to the throne according to the position of the stars), and Leo X (1475–1521, honored the Neapolitan astrologer Agostino Nifo and in 1520 established a chair of astrology at the papal university of the Sapienza). Paul III (1468–1549) arranged his day's work according to astrological principles and was counseled by the astrologer Luca Gaurico (1476–1558), whom he later nominated bishop of Civiltà Castellana.

Many rulers paid astrologers for predicting the future and finding opportune moments for coronations, travels, marriages, the start of wars, signing contracts, and cornerstone ceremonies of all sorts. Astrologers were to be found at the courts of King Alfons X of Castile (1221–1284, "Alfonsine Tables"), Emperor Frederick III (1341–1377), King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (1443–1490), Maximilian I (1449–1519) (astrologer Georg Tannstetter), the rulers of the Kingdom of Naples (astrologer Giovanni Gioviano Pontano (1429–1503)), Catherine de' Medici (astrologer Nostradamus, as of 1555), Queen Elizabeth I (astrologer John Dee (1527–1609), which had studied at the University of Cambridge), the Duke of Urbino (astrologer Paul von Middelburg (1445–1534), later bishop of Fossombrone), the Medici in Florence, the Fugger in Augsburg, Emperor Rudolph II in Prague (as of 1599 Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) court astrologer, followed in 1601 by Johannes Kepler, "Rudolphine Tables"), and the courts of

the Kings in France, England, Denmark, and Hungary. Leonello D'Este, Duke of Ferrara, dressed himself following the advice of his astrologer so that the choice of color favored the celestial influence on him (Eamon 2014 153; Heitzmann 2008 51ff).

Innovative and Original Aspects

At many universities (such as Bologna, Ferrara, Padua, Naples, Salamanca, Paris, Krakow, Wittenberg, Nuremberg), astrology was taught during the Renaissance, often related to the subjects mathematics and medicine. Almost every medical school in the Renaissance offered courses in astrology. Medical students were required to take astrology since each part of the human body was ruled by a particular sign of the zodiac, and therefore it was the physician's duty to understand how to read the heavens so as to prescribe drugs at the most favorable moment or to order phlebotomies to be done in the proper location and at the proper time (Eamon 2014).

Fundamental scriptures, which were rediscovered and translated in the Late Medieval times and on which the Renaissance astrology theories founded, are Marcus Manilius (early first century) and his didactic poem *Astronomica*, rediscovered by Poggio Bracciolini in the beginning of the fifteenth century. Also Marsilio Ficino and Lorenzo Buonincontri (an astrologer in Lorenzo de' Medici's court) refer likewise to the didactic poem of Manilius. Important, too, were the scriptures of the Persian mathematician, astronomer, and astrologer Abu Ma'shar (about 787–886), which have been translated into Latin and disseminated as manuscripts already in the Middle Ages. In 1230 Georgius Fendulus compiled different texts by Abu Ma'shar which dealt with descriptions of the planets and the zodiac signs. *De magnis conjunctionibus et annorum revolutionibus ac eorum profectionibus* was published in 1489 in Augsburg and in 1515 in Venice. According to Abu Ma'shar, the heavenly destiny is not avoidable and any human influence on it is impossible (Blume 2014). Ptolemais (second century) describes in his *Tetrábiblos* the

effects of the celestial bodies on humans and their destiny. The Arabic text *Picatrix* has been translated in Latin in 1256. It associates stones, animals, and plants with the different planets, the zodiac signs, and human parts of the body and is as important for Renaissance theory as the *Corpus Hermeticum* by Hermes Trismegistos, which was translated by Marsilio Ficino for Cosimo de' Medici (1463) and which was thought to be a compilation of the oldest knowledge with allusions to Christian elements. The famous Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani (1276–1348) explains numerous vicissitudes of his home city with astrology. For him the movements of the planets were the cause of many historical events. Already Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374) in 1362 had requested to combat lying astrologers and prophets defrauding people of their money and frightening them with false predictions (*Resenilium*, liber I, 6). In the fourteenth century, it was a widespread belief that knowledge rules the stars (p.e. Roger Bacon) (Garin 1982; Ritter 1962). From 1350 Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) worked on the fundamental treatise on ancient mythology *Genealogie Deorum Gentilium* in which he explains the ancient myths as poetical descriptions of astrological constellations. Marsilio Ficino (1462–1525) in *De Triplici Vita* (1489) describes the influence of universe's activity as a one-way direction: from above to below. Impulses flow continuously down from the upper sphere and maintain and keep moving the earthly sphere. Human beings, since birth, are inseparably connected with a planet and with an associated character, but within these restrictions, they can choose freely. Free will plays an important role in the thought of Ficino; behind the natural origin, he recognizes a spiritual one which lets humans rule above themselves (*Theologia Platonica*) (Cassirer 2013). For Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), astrological causality becomes a condition for understanding nature. All historical development and every natural being and becoming is influenced by the force of the stars (Cassirer 2013).

The famous Italian humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), which in Florence had close contact to Lorenzo de' Medici, Marsilio

Ficino, and Angelo Poliziano, underlined in his speech *De hominis dignitate* (published in 1496, originally without title) the individual determination of human beings caused by free action. Human's destiny is not flowing from above, from the stars, but it arises from its inner depth. In his last years of life, he was influenced by Savonarola and argued in his *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (published posthumous in Bologna in 1496) that already Plato and Aristotle did not consider astrology as science. He continues that only in rare cases predictions of astrologers had come to pass and most of the contemporary astrologers are uneducated. Only the Sun and the Moon would have some influence with their rays, but not the stars and neither the zodiac signs. The influence of the planets, he says, is controversial and in general it is often not possible to determine the exact position of the planet and zodiac signs. Pico's condemnation on astrology was grounded upon a defense of human freedom against astral determinism. Paracelsus (1493–1541) set out the influence of the heavenly bodies as one of the causes for diseases (*Paragranum*, 1529). Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) in 1602 wrote the *City of Sun* (published in 1623), a dialogue which explains a city built after astrological principles. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) remains skeptical about astrology for nearly his whole life, but nevertheless we can find traces of astrological ideas in his writings (Rutkin 2005). In Wittenberg/Germany astrology, ideas are influenced by Martin Luther (1483–1546) and his reformation efforts. He called astrology an implausible science (Brosseder 2005). The Lutherans used astrology as a weapon against the Catholics; they condemned the Pope with their confessional marked interpretations and predicted his downfall. They appreciated the fact that God would announce his punishments. In this way people could get used to the catastrophe or the upcoming end or even calm the anger of God. Luther's closest confidant Philipp Melancthon (1497–1560) has been one of the many convinced followers of astrology in Wittenberg. In 1530, together with Luca Gaurico, he tried to write an interpretation of Luther's year of birth. In his

scripture *Initia doctrinae physicae* (published in 1549), he postulates that the stars should be read as signs as expressed in Genesis 1:14. Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) compiles in his *Libelli duo* (published in 1543) 67 horoscopes of famous personalities (like Cicerone, Petrarch, Erasmus, Pico della Mirandola, Albrecht Dürer, Luther, Savonarola, Pope Leo X, Pope Paul III, Charles V, Francis I) as of various cities (like Venice, Milan, Florence, and Bologna). Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) published in 1609 his text *Astronomia Nova* in which he expressed his rejection against juridical astrology. He gives three reasons for human fortune: the constellation of stars, human's free will, and God. At the same time, he makes the famous comparison between astrology and astronomy which are related as mother and daughter, while the very wise, but poor mother (astronomy) is nourished by her foolish daughter (astrology) (*De stella nova*, 1606, chapter 12). He did not doubt the influence of the planets and their movements on Earth, and at the same time, he casted horoscopes and predictions on the court of Rudolph II. Francis Bacon (1561–1626) argued in favor of the separation between astrology and astronomy. In his opinion, the astrologic knowledge was a fact, but had to be reformed. He did not contradict the idea of the relation of human microcosm and heavenly macrocosm.

Famous predictions were made during the sixteenth century. In 1524, many astrologers interpreted the 16 conjunctions of planet in the zodiac sign of Piscis as a sign for a big flood. This causes a large debate about floods, but the predictions did not fulfill (Talkenberger 1990). The astrologer Luca Gaurico (1476–1458) prophesies correctly to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese that he will become Pope. After his election as Pope in 1534, Farnese made Gaurico his court astrologer, and it is said that he correctly predicted the year of the Pope's death. Gaurico but also Michel Nostradamus (1503–1566) predicted Catherine de'Medici's death of her husband Henry II in 1559.

Katarchic horoscopy was practiced for choosing the most opportune moment for private or public actions, such as the foundation of a new

building (like the new tower of the Benedictine abbey of Niederaltaich/Germany in 1514 or the foundation of the University of Wittenberg in 1530) (Hübner 2014).

Visual Arts

In the visual arts, the first astrological imagery after the Late Antiquity can be found at the court of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) in Southern Italy at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In the 1230s, Georgius Fendulus compiled the texts of Abu Ma'shar to develop images of the most important celestial bodies which were corresponding with the new knowledge of Arabic astrology. Aiming to show the power and influence of the planets, these were represented as medieval rulers in royal clothing. From around 1310 are the frescoes of the Great Hall in the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua by Pietro D'Abano and Giotto. The decoration shows the seasons of the year and the works of the month with the zodiacal signs. The theatrical images depict the planets at the various activities in front of a dark blue sky. Astrological cycles of the planets in the painted decorations of the representative buildings can be found in many Italian city-states like the Florentine bell tower (1324–1341, workshop of Andrea Pisano), in the framing of the paintings in the Sala dei Nove in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena (completed by Ambrogio Lorenzetti between 1337 and 1340), in the capitals of the loggia of the ground floor of the Doge's Palace in Venice (around 1341–1355), and in the pedestal zone of the Paduan cloister of the Chiesa degli Eremitani. From 1420 onwards, Cosimo Vecchio de'Medici gave order to build his family chapel in the Old Sacristy of San Lorenzo in Florence. The ceiling of the chapel, finished with the help of the Florentine astronomer Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli (1397–1482), shows a reproduction of the starry sky on a given day (4 July 1442). After 1450, a family chapel with a similar ceiling decoration was commissioned by Andrea Pazzi and his sons in Santa Croce in Florence. Between 1449 and 1457, Sigismondo Malatesta

commissioned the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini, a sepulchral church with figural reliefs by Agostino di Duccio showing planet gods besides Virtues, Sibyls, and Prophets, the liberal arts, and the muses. In the tradition of the planet's children (i.e., persons who have a practically familiar connection to a particular planet, which rules their horoscope and determines their character), a very richly illuminated manuscript was prepared between 1450 and 1460 for Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, and around 1460, the famous copper engravings for the Medici in Florence, attributed to Baccio Bandinelli, were made. The frescoes of the Salone dei Mesi in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara (around 1470), are dedicated to the year and the relative stellar influence. In the ceiling of the Loggia di Galatea in the famous Villa Farnesina in Rome, the banker Agostino Chigi hired Baldassare Peruzzi to paint his personal horoscope in about 1510–1511 (Blume 2000, 2014).

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Astronomical Instruments, Renaissance

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Abstract

Although not all the traditional instruments enjoyed a contemporaneous parabola of fortune, it is possible to include the following items in a sufficiently comprehensive Renaissance astronomical equipment list: the quadrant, the *triquetrum*, the astrolabe, the armillary sphere, the nocturnal, Jacob's staff, the sextant, the *equatorium*, and the celestial globe. Unsurprisingly, it was the telescope that turned out to be the actual game-changer in the observational field.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The majority of the Renaissance astronomical instruments were slowly developed from their ancient or Medieval equivalents as borrowed

from the Arab-Islamic culture, whose centuries-old sailing activity across the Mediterranean Sea put into practice many devices for contingent navigational purposes. In fact, pre-telescopic astronomical instruments were mostly used to *locate* the relative position of celestial bodies in the skies (for the seek of orientation) and following their movements, rather than to understand the nature of the observed phenomena (Turner 2001; Egler 2006). However, in many cases the so-called pre-telescopic instruments had an uninterrupted use also after the invention of the telescope (c. 1608, the actual game-changer device), and in many cases their origin can be traced back to their Ptolemaic descriptions (second century AD) if not before.

During the Renaissance, such observational instruments were often regarded as fully fledged inventions as such that did not require any kind of improvement but only “philological” replication, thus remaining almost identical in their peculiar design and functioning for a long time. Only after the tampering intervention of Tycho Brahe, they started to be seen as proper working tools rather than unchangeable artifacts to be preserved as they were, and so they started to be consequently handled as perfectible, combinable, and even dischangeable pieces of technology.

Although not all the traditional instruments enjoyed the same success, it is possible to include the following items in a sufficiently comprehensive Renaissance astronomical equipment list: the quadrant, the *triquetrum*, the astrolabe, the armillary sphere, the nocturnal, Jacob’s staff, the sextant, the *equatorium*, and the celestial globe.

A quadrant (“one quarter of a circle”) is a kind of protractor that is used to measure angular altitudes of celestial bodies, up to 90° , by the aid of a plumb line. These instruments ranged from being small handheld tools to very large, permanently mounted devices, such as Copernicus’ meridian quadrant or Tycho Brahe’s mural structures (up to 6-ft long, reaching the notable, alleged precision of about 10 arc sec).

The *triquetrum* (literally, the “three-cornered”) or “parallactic ruler” was made of three long pieces of wood: the first is perpendicular to the horizon, the second is connected at the head of the

first with an axis, and the third which has the chord division is nailed near the base. Originally the triquetrum was first described by Ptolemy in his *Almagest* (hence its other name: “Ptolemy’s ruler”), and it was used for determining altitudes of heavenly bodies, as the zenith distance and parallax of the Moon.

The planispheric astrolabe was widely used in Europe in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance via the Moslem Spain, peaking in popularity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and was one of the basic astronomical education tools for the teaching of astronomy. From Geoffrey Chaucer’s treatise on the use and importance of astrolabe (1319) to Johannes Stoeffler’s *Elucidatio fabricae ususque astrolabii* (1512) and after, books on the subject increasingly proliferated, up to a point where “astrolabe” designated a specific literary genre on its own, in parallel with the increasing demand of astrolabe manufacturing and supplying all over Europe. Brass, wooden, and even paper astrolabes were developed for private use, and they were set also on tower clock in public squares, like in the case of the Prague mechanic astrolabe clock (1410).

The Renaissance version of the armillary sphere consisted of a small central sphere indicating the Earth surrounded by a number of rings (*armillae* in Latin) representing the celestial spheres (ecliptic and zodiac included) as the ancient models, but it was improved in precision of its grading scales and equipped with viewfinders for observational purposes.

A nocturnal (also known as nocturlabe or *Horologium nocturnum*) is an astronomical instrument used to determine the local time based on the relative positions of two or more stars in the night sky (usually they were two stars in the Ursa Major, Dubhe e Merak, as related to Polaris). Knowing the nighttime was a very critical issue in piloting ships in the dark for calculating tides, and in fact some nocturnals incorporate also tide charts for important ports. Although Raymond Lull repeatedly described the use of a *sphaera horarum noctis* or *astrolabium nocturnum* in his Medieval times, it was not until that publications like Martín Cortés de Albarcar’s *Arte de Navegar* (1551) and Peter Apianus’

Cosmographicus Liber (c. 1539, republished later by G. Frisius) came out that the name and the instrument gained a larger popularity.

Jacob's staff (also known as cross-staff, or fore-staff, or balestilha, or *radius astronomicus*) is a cruciform stick with length markings, consisting of a single long rod and a movable (and often interchangeable) crosspiece, that was used in Renaissance astronomy and before for measuring the angular separation of two stars, or of a star and a planet, and thus to accurately determine the position of the object in the skies. Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides) is credited to be the inventor of Jacob's staff, as attested by his treatise on its use, *De Sinibus, chordis et arcibus, Item Instrumento Revelatore Secretorum* (1329), as translated into Latin by Petrus of Alexandria in 1342. During the sixteenth century, astronomers such as Metius, Frisius, Regiomontanus, Werner, and mostly Digges improved their own version of the instrument, until it was later replaced with the more precise sextant by Brahe.

The sextant is an instrument originally used in navigation for measuring the altitude of the Sun or a celestial body above the horizon at sea: from the Sun's altitude at its passage on the meridian, the user could compute the latitude of the observation point by means of numerical tables. Brahe described the making of one of the first framed prototypes, built by Paul Wittich and designed by himself, for the observatory of Cassel. Part of the fortune of such instruments, as those built by Jobst Bürgi at the beginning of 1600 in Prague, was linked to their improved practicality and portability.

The *equatorium* is a calculating instrument, consisting of several rotating disks, used to determine the longitude of one or more of the planets at any given time according to the Ptolemaic planetary system. Due to difficulty in its precise design, it was a very rare type of instrument to build, and its construction became a display of skillful technique for few engineers. Moreover, *equatoria* were harder to use than astrolabes, and the astronomical theory underpinning them was less intuitive for the general public. Given its specialist function, this kind of instrument was used for those astrological aspects often related to medical issues.

A celestial globe is a three-dimensional, spherical, scale model of the vault of heaven, used as visual reproduction of the visible nighttime skies. Celestial globes helped to put constellations into perspective and served as scientific instruments, ornamental showpieces, teaching aids, and physical illustrations of the state-of-the-art astronomy. As scientists and astronomers became more acquainted with the sky and objects in it, celestial globes became more and more detailed and accurate.

Cross-References

- [Lenses in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Telescope in Renaissance Science](#)

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Astronomy

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Abstract

In order to understand Renaissance astronomy, it is expedient to locate it, as a *mixed science*, in the cultural system of the time, in particular among the other mathematical disciplines of the *quadrivium*, and in relation to physical astronomy. Moreover, it is worth considering its internal partitions, beginning with the distinction between theoretical and practical astronomy. In

close relation to its university teaching, a canon of sources was established (the so-called *corpus astronomicum*, together with a *corpus astrologicum*). During the Renaissance, astronomy underwent momentous transformations, initiated by mathematical humanists such as Georg von Peurbach and Johannes Regiomontanus. As major steps in the development of the discipline, one shall indicate Copernicus’s work and the heliocentric planetary theory, debates on comets and cosmological space, telescopic astronomy after Galileo, and the physicalization of astronomy after Kepler. Among wider cultural aspects, the criticism of astrology and the socioeconomical factors that supported astronomical studies are here mentioned.

During the Renaissance, astronomy was one of the so-called mixed sciences. Like optics, mechanics, and music, it used mathematical demonstrations to account for physical phenomena. These disciplines were distinguished from *pure* mathematics, arithmetic and geometry, dealing with quantities *per se*, discrete and continuous, respectively. In the university curricula, astronomy counted as one of the liberal arts of the *quadrivium* (alongside arithmetic, geometry, and music). Specifically, it was the mathematical discipline dealing with continuous quantities in a “comparative manner” and “relative to motion,” since it dealt with the ratios of celestial motions (Table 1). It was complemented by physical astronomy, which was the part of natural philosophy mainly resting on Aristotle’s *De caelo*. Whereas mathematical astronomy dealt with the *quia* (or τὸ ὅτι), that is, the description of the heavens by mathematical means, natural philosophy accounted for the *secundum quid* (or διότι), that is, it offered causal explanations of the same heavenly phenomena. Natural philosophy, or *physica*, dealt with cosmology and its fundamental concepts, such as space, place, time, eternity, infinity, celestial matter, and void. During the Renaissance, the boundaries between mathematics and physics were progressively blurred until a unified mathematical celestial physics emerged.

Astronomy, Table 1 The place of astronomy within the four mathematical arts of the *quadrivium* according to a standard scholastic taxonomy, still adopted by Christopher Clavius in his widespread introduction to spherical astronomy

Divisio mathematicarum		
Quantitas	Per se, seu absolute	Comparative, seu mobilitate
Continua	Geometria	Astronomia
Discreta	Arithmetica	Musica

Mathematical astronomy, or the “science of the celestial bodies” (*scientia de rebus coelestibus*), was constituted of two parts: theoretical and practical. The former (*astronomia theorica sive contemplatrix*) dealt with celestial motions, their modeling and parameters. It comprised the study of the fixed stars as well as planetary theory and accounted for planetary stations and retrograde motions, conjunctions, and eclipses. It relied on works such as Ptolemy’s *Almagest* and Nicholas Copernicus’s *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543), as well as, to a minor extent, on Georg Peurbach and Johannes Regiomontanus’s *Epytoma in Almagestum* (1496). Mathematical astronomers were also concerned with the description and perfection of instruments such as astrolabes, quadrants, *torqueta*, and trigonometric measuring instruments. Furthermore, these practitioners were able to use astronomical tables, for instance, the *Alfonsine tables* and Erasmus Reinhold’s *Prutenicae tabulae* (1551) based on Copernican parameters, to compute ephemerides and almanacs, which were printed in large number.

The other partition of astronomy, the practical one, coincided with judiciary astrology (*astronomia practica, judiciaria, seu prognostica*) and dealt with prognostications of celestial effects on sublunary events. It rested on Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos* as well as on a wide range of Hellenistic and Islamic sources. Its main field of applications was medicine, since the successful use of medicaments and medical treatments as well as the course of the illnesses was deemed to depend on astral influences. Meteorology and agriculture were also seen as dependent on

astrology. Predictions (in the form of interrogations, elections, and judgments) could also be used as an advice for action and even for political analysis and forecasts.

Beginning in the thirteenth century, university teaching led to the gradual codification and establishment of a *corpus astronomicum*. This is witnessed by the standard choice of reference sources bounded together in medieval codices on astronomy. They included *De sphaera* and *Theoricae planetarum* as general introductions, texts on time reckoning (*computus*), and on the calendar as well as *tabulae* and *canones* offering the means for celestial predictions. Similar multi-textual anthologies were printed in Renaissance. For instance, the Venetian printer Luca-Antonio Giunta issued in 1531 an astronomical collection bringing together Sacrobosco's *De sphaera*, Gerard of Cremona's *Theoricae planetarum veteres*, Peurbach's *Theoricae novae planetarum*, al-Bitrūjī's physical astronomy, *Planetarum theorica physica rationibus probata*, and other canonical sources. In parallel, especially in the fifteenth century, a sort of *corpus astrologicum* emerged. It especially comprised a great deal of Islamic sources, among them general summaries such as Haly Abenragel's *De iudiciis astrorum* or shorter texts such as Messahalla's *De revolutionibus annorum mundi* and Zael's *De interrogationibus*.

Mathematical astronomy had momentous developments during the European Renaissance. These began with the Humanistic movement and the recovery of classical sources in astronomy. The very influential Greek Cardinal Bessarion encouraged the study and translation of the *Almagest* directly from the original. Under his auspices, Peurbach and Regiomontanus realized a summary of Ptolemy, the *Epytoma*, which expounded the technicalities of the most important source of ancient astronomy. The *editio princeps* of the *Almagest* appeared in Basel, in 1538, preceded and followed by Latin editions, among them, Gerard of Cremona's medieval translation from the Arabic (Venice, 1515), George of Trebizond's fifteenth-century version from the Greek (Venice, 1528), and Reinhold's Greek-and-Latin edition of the first book (Wittenberg, 1549). As an

accomplished humanist, Regiomontanus also planned to set up a scientific printer in Nuremberg but his editorial projects, aimed at the restoration and improvement of mathematical knowledge, were interrupted by an untimely death.

Regiomontanus's restoration proved fundamental for later developments, in particular, for Copernicus's project of an astronomical reform. His major work, *De revolutionibus*, is a milestone in the history of science. It improved planetary theory in many respects, offered a new synthesis of the discipline that could stand comparison with Ptolemy, and propounded a modern version of the heliocentric planetary theory ("► [Copernicanism](#)").

To be sure, planetary theory was not the only controversial issue in the astronomical debates of the Renaissance. Very importantly, heated discussions over the location and *nature* of comets and novae ("► [Comets](#)") had far-reaching cosmological implications. The debates on the comet of 1577–1578 and the *stellae novae* of 1572 and 1604 are particularly well known for the involvement of leading scholars of the time, like Michael Mästlin, Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, and Galileo Galilei. Accurate observations of these phenomena demonstrated their supralunary location. This undermined the Aristotelian conception of the heavens as the realm of unchangeable perfection and paved the way to new cosmologies assuming the fluidity of celestial space and the principle of cosmological homogeneity. Also due to these results, the 1580s witnessed to the expansion of natural philosophical debates on the heavens. Among others, Brahe's geo-heliocentric system ("► [Geocentrism](#)") presupposed the fluidity of heavenly space to account for such features as the intersection of the deferents of Mars and of the Sun. In the same years, the Copernican philosopher Giordano Bruno defended the view that the universe is infinite and populated by countless heliocentric systems similar to ours. His infinitism was to influence later conceptions of cosmological space, beginning with René Descartes's *indefinite* and polycentric universe.

An impetuous advance in the techniques of observation and in observation-based theory marked the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

as well. While Copernicus's observations were sporadic, Brahe inaugurated teamwork systematical collection of data at his castle observatory of Uraniborg, on the Danish island of Hven. His data served as a basis for Kepler's subsequent work, in particular as an empirical basis for the determination and testing of the heliocentric model of Mars's orbit in the *Astronomia nova* (1609). Moreover, the publication of Galileo's *Sidereus nuncius* launched telescopic astronomy in 1610. It communicated the observation of the lunar asperities and of new celestial bodies, namely, the four Medicean satellites of Jupiter. The telescopic observation of the phases of Mercury and Venus made Ptolemaic geocentrism definitively obsolete, while the sunspots confirmed the rotation of the solar body as well as the "mutability" of the heavens, *pace* Aristotle.

The astronomical work of Kepler deserves particular mention as the substitution of a kinematic treatment of planetary motions through geometrical modeling for physical astronomy, that is, the explanation of celestial motions as resulting from the action of forces. After the dissolution of the celestial spheres of the medieval tradition in the 1580s, the question about the causes of the celestial motions was raised. Kepler was not satisfied with vitalistic and *psychological* accounts allotting to planets (and their souls) an inner impulse (as was the case for Francesco Patrizi and Bruno, among others) or post-Aristotelian *metaphysical* accounts resorting to "separate intellects" regulating the trajectories of each planet (as was the case for "Tychonians" like Christian Longomontanus). Rather, Kepler pointed to the motive force emanating from the Sun as the unitary cause of celestial motions and the nonuniformity of their speeds.

In the scientific culture of the Renaissance, mathematical astronomy and astrological practice were intertwined and mutually supportive. Still, beginning with the late fifteenth century, the criticism of astrology for philosophical, religious, and political reasons progressively eroded the consensus earlier accorded to astrology. Giovanni Pico's *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (printed posthumously, in 1496), Jean Calvin's *Advertissement contre l'astrologie*

judiciaire (1549), or Jean Bodin's anti-astrological considerations, in *Les six livres de la république* (1576), are landmarks of this pre-Enlightenment criticism of superstition. Some religious and political authorities started prohibiting astrological practice, for instance, Sixtus V in 1586. In Germany, astrology benefited from great popularity, also due to the lasting influence of the Lutheran *praeceptor Germaniae*, Philip Melanchthon, who regarded this discipline as the science of Divine Providence. Later, the affirmation of mechanistic conceptions of nature and medicine led to the marginalization of astrology from the culture of the European elites. This dismissal also paved the way to the Enlightenment criticism of this practice, beginning with Pierre Bayle's *Pensées diverses sur la comète* (1680).

Several socioeconomical and cultural factors account for the momentous developments of astronomy during the Renaissance. Among them, navigation and geography had economical and political preeminence, following the interests of the Atlantic European powers. In fact, astronomical knowledge was essential for oceanic transits and for the mapping of lands thus far unknown to the Europeans. Astronomical and geographical competences often merged in the so-called *cosmographia*. Moreover, the reliance of Galenic and Paracelsian medicine on astrology fostered astronomical studies. Due to this interdisciplinary tie, astronomy remained a fundamental discipline in the Faculty of the Arts, as propaedeutic for the study of medicine, but was seen as basic knowledge also outside the learned elites by less orthodox medical practitioners. Among the civil and religious factors, the calendar reform was perceived as particularly urgent. An emendation was necessary to accord festivities and celestial motions (in particular the determination of Eastern, which had to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox). For the Catholics, this reform was eventually devised by Christoph Clavius and promulgated by Gregory XIII, in 1582. In those years, confessional elements played a role as a background of scientific investigation. This is evident in the religious and political concerns underlying the scientific *curricula* at Jesuit colleges, or the influence of

Melanchthon's support of mathematics and of astrology over German reformed universities. Moreover, while Catholic censorial practices, most notably the prohibition of the Copernican planetary theory, rebounded on teaching and scholarly practices *in negativo*, it also provoked attempts to reconcile theology and astronomical novelties as a reaction, especially in the reformed Countries.

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Atheism in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Atheism was not a philosophical position in the European Renaissance. No university hosted a disputation on the question *an sit Deus*. Nevertheless, atheism was a widely described and decried phenomenon in sixteenth-century Europe, especially in the context of confessional strife and religious civil war. Atheism can best be understood for this period as an experience of social ostracism that continues to elude historians and philosophers alike.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The historian of philosophy Winfried Schröder categorically affirms “l’extrême marginalité de l’athéisme au début des temps modernes” (Schröder 2005, 43) and counts no atheist texts in circulation in Europe before the *Theophrastus redivivus*, an anonymous manuscript dated 1659. This is an unpromising introduction to our topic and would seem to void the category of Renaissance atheism, much as Lucien Febvre famously declared the Renaissance mentally unequipped to conceive of atheism, in a monograph first published in 1942 and often reissued since (Febvre 2003). Though marginal to the history of philosophy, Renaissance atheism evoked a great deal of anxiety and a fair amount of theorizing from religious and political thinkers of the sixteenth century who regarded atheism, in the sense of alienation from confessional identity, as a ubiquitous danger in a time of religious persecution and coercive orthodoxy. The place to look for early modern theorizations of atheism is the debate on religious tolerance that flourished through the long course of a century of religious conflict and controversy.

We can begin with the situation in the Low Countries in the 1540s, when many new converts to the Reform sought to conceal their true confessional identity in order to maintain their social status within a Catholic realm and a Catholic social order. This phenomenon, known as Nicodemism, had reached sufficient proportions by 1543 that Jean Calvin thought it necessary to compose a vernacular treatise showing what the faithful are to do when living among Roman Catholics (Calvin 1867). Calvin’s explicit condemnation of attendance at the Catholic Mass provoked a crisis to which the Strasbourg Reformer Valérand Poullain bears a key testimony that can help us relate the early modern usage of *atheism* to the problem of religious tolerance. In a letter dated March 9, 1544, Poullain reports to Calvin about dissension among the faithful caused by Calvin’s *Petit traité* in the Flemish Low Countries (Herminjard 1966, 9:178–181). Poullain himself had assured the diffusion of Calvin’s treatise throughout that region, and therefore he feels some responsibility for the demoralizing effect produced by Calvin’s intransigence. Poullain remembers that, when he preached in the Flemish Low Countries, he recommended attending those public gatherings, “coetus publicos illos,” because he believed that such meetings, though tainted with superstition, brought together many who feared God and confessed Christ. He did so above all because he feared that otherwise, if they followed Calvin’s advice to the letter, they would become atheists: “Idque adeo faciebam, quod vereretur ipsos omnino fieri ἀθεοῦς, quod jam in plaerisque perspexeram” (Herminjard 1966, 9:179). In this remarkable testimony, the Greek term ἀθεός designates an outcast. When theism is a form of community, atheism is a sort of excommunication, one that results, moreover, from intolerance.

The next phase in the conceptualization of atheism involves Sebastian Castellio and his campaign for religious tolerance in the aftermath of the execution of Michel Servet in Geneva in 1553. Castellio and Calvin engaged in a furious debate about the persecution of heretics with the Basel humanist insisting that if you inflict the death penalty on heretics, then there will be a universal slaughter, for everyone is someone else’s

heretic. Atheism, as he argues in his *Contra libellum Calvinii*, is a different story. Whereas Calvin would abusively conflate heresy and atheism, Castellio would strictly segregate the two terms and authorize persecution only of atheists, not heretics (Castellio 1612). In this context, atheism defines the very limits of religious tolerance. Castellio never questions the primordial value of theism, nor does he acknowledge any intellectual argument against theism. What he challenges is the enforcement of religious orthodoxy, which naturally exposed him to suspicions of atheism.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Whereas atheists may not qualify for tolerance, tolerance itself can ward off atheism. This is the argument that emerged to great prominence in the course of the French Wars of Religion, beginning with the pamphlet literature that started to circulate even before the first War broke out in 1562. One of the most striking arguments in this debate, given widespread currency by Jean Bodin in his masterpiece of 1576 *Les six livres de la République*, was that the prince should never force the conscience of his subjects, for intolerance is likely to breed atheism (Bodin 1961, 655). If you deny people the exercise of their own religion, they will abjure all religion and lose the fear of God. Once people lose the fear of God, they will stop at nothing; they will trample on all law and civil authority. In short, intolerance breeds atheism and atheism breeds impunity, which is the downfall of the state. This is a paradigmatic argument of the writers and statesmen in late sixteenth-century France known as the *politiques*, who understood atheism as the loss or rather the confiscation of confessional identity.

While France was consumed with civil war, the nascent Dutch Republic witnessed its own debate over religious tolerance and the coercion of belief. The featured debaters were Dirck Coornhert on behalf of religious tolerance and Justus Lipsius advocating the repression of religious dissent. Responding to a sequence of chapters from book four of Lipsius' *Politicorum libri sex* of 1589 (Lipsius 2004, 386–396), Coornhert composed his *Trial of the Killing of Heretics and the*

Constraint of Conscience which appeared in September 1590 followed in October by Lipsius' rejoinder *Adversus dialogistam liber de una religione*. In the *Trial*, Coornhert identifies religious faith, which some have and others lack, as a gift of God. The one who lacks faith or loses it under pressure of persecution is disfavored but not disobedient, and his dilemma merits pity not punishment. Appealing to the principle of justice that is constitutive of divinity, he argues that belief and unbelief are not voluntary acts to be judged innocent or guilty. Unbelief is not a misdeed but a misfortune like a disinheritance and therefore not subject to legal sanctions (Coornhert 1630, 2:86–87). In this sense, unbelief is like dissent since it can claim the same freedom from constraint. Indeed, Coornhert goes beyond the conceptual boundaries of the Renaissance and announces a radically consistent commitment to freedom of conscience that could only dismay his contemporaries.

Impact and Legacy

When Pierre Bayle looked back to the Renaissance from his vantage point in the early Enlightenment and surveyed the century in search of candidates for the title of virtuous atheist, he wasn't satisfied with anyone's credentials. Bayle's *Pensées diverses sur la comète* of 1683 proposes the notorious paradox of the virtuous atheist, and his two prime examples are Epicurus in antiquity and Spinoza in the modern era. Both philosophers exemplify the independence of morality from religion, and both put into question the venerable assumption that religion is the foundation of society. Yet there is a lacuna in Bayle's account for the sixteenth century, not for any lack of virtue but rather for a lack of bona fide atheists. He reports the accusations of atheism against Michel de L'Hospital, which may have been due to the latter's defense of religious tolerance, but Bayle has no doubt that L'Hospital was a good Christian (Bayle 2007, 366). In other words, Bayle tends to confirm the suspicion that Renaissance atheism was largely a phantom in the history of philosophy. If the scourge of atheism was so ubiquitous in

Renaissance polemics, it could not have been as a philosophical thesis but rather as a social affliction, a sort of dehumanization resulting from the proliferation of religious orthodoxies in an age of intolerance.

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Atomism in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Strictly speaking, there was no such thing as “Renaissance atomism.” Although an ever-increasing number of philosophers in the period 1400–1650 came to invoke atoms, corpuscles, particles, minima, or other invisibly small structures in their writings, these little entities were never central enough to any philosophical current to warrant defining it under such an exclusive label as “atomism.” The particles that one finds in Renaissance texts on natural philosophy, metaphysics, alchemy, medicine, theology, cosmology, numerology, and other disciplines are moreover defined in so many radically different ways that it is implausible to view them as belonging to the same category. Finally, the reasons why such particles were propagated are similarly disparate. Apart from mathematical, physical, medical, or alchemical reasons, one also finds metaphysical, theological, antiquarian, historiographical, or numerological ones. At any rate, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Aristotelian concept of an infinitely divisible matter had come under fire from various sides. By the middle of that century, as a consequence of the writings of authors such as Sébastien Basson, David Gorlaeus, Jean-Chrysostôme Magnen, Etienne Des Claves, and more importantly René Descartes, Pierre Gassendi, Kenelm Digby, and Thomas Hobbes, the Aristotelian principles of matter, form, and privation looked discredited, at least inside and outside universities in Northern and Western Europe. As the microstructure of matter came to assume center stage in the natural philosophical debate, the term “atomism” was introduced for the first time in the 1660s and subsequently depicted as a part of what was hailed as the new “mechanical philosophy.”

Atomism

- [Epicureanism](#)

Introduction

The Greek word “atomos,” which means “uncut” – also in the sense of “uncuttable” – is of ancient origin. By contrast, “atomism” as the name of a philosophical school of thought is a neologism. To be sure, the issues of whether the concept of “atom” is logically sound and whether it possessed any explanatory power were already discussed in Antiquity. But it was only in the second half of the seventeenth century that this concept was taken to be so central as to define an entire school of thought; and only in the nineteenth century did it become prominent.

With Aristotle’s writings as the basis of the arts curriculum at all medieval and Renaissance universities, students all over Europe were invariably introduced to the atom as an erroneous concept. In many of his works, such as *Metaphysics* A4 (esp. 985b4–20), *Physics* IV.6 (esp. 213a28–213b12); *De caelo* I.7 (esp. 275b30–276a18), and *De generatione et corruptione* I.8 (esp. 324a25–326b28) and I.10 (esp. 327a30–328b24), Aristotle discusses and rejected Leucippus’ and Democritus’ suggestion that reality consisted exclusively of void space and of indivisible bits of “being.” In Aristotle’s eyes, the very idea of an “atom” was self-contradictory: how could any extended magnitude be said to resist further division? And how could the numerous phenomena of our physical world be explained on the basis of a limited typology of rigid material particles?

For a variety of reasons, which will be addressed below, the Renaissance and early-modern period witnessed a revival of the “atom” as well as of a number of associated concepts such as “corpuscle,” “particle,” or “minimum.” But it was only in the nineteenth century that historians started to describe this apparent revival in terms of a victory of “atomism” over Aristotelian “hylomorphism.” This bipolar pair of terms says in fact more about the nineteenth-century clash between English, French, and German schools of chemistry and physics and the fiercely discussed “question of the atom” (*Atomenfrage*; Fechner 1864, 4) than it does about intellectual constellations in the Renaissance and the early modern period.

When projected back to earlier centuries, these nineteenth-century historiographical labels are misleading, because they imply that “atom” was a central concept around which entire schools of thought rallied, and by which they defined themselves. For the period before the mid-seventeenth-century anti-atomistic decrees issued by the Jesuit order and by the Vatican Congregations of the Index and of the Inquisition, it is correct to say that “atomism” was “a thoroughly peripheral issue, inasmuch as very little turns on whether one thinks the material realm is or is not infinitely divisible” (Pasnau 2011, 88). For the Renaissance, this bold formulation seems acceptable. Indeed, the nonchalance with which certain sixteenth-century authors engaged atoms in their theories is, from a seventeenth-century perspective, surprising; a good example of a frequent and yet casual usage of an atomistic ontology is the ill-known treatise *De natura libri V* (1573) by the imperial physician Nicolaus Biesius. But the nineteenth-century notion of “atomism” is also misleading for a second reason, for it takes this label to suggest that the concept of “atom” was stable and coherent enough to allow for a “history of atomism” from Democritus through the Renaissance up to our own “atomic age.” This “history” has since the nineteenth century repeatedly been constructed and narrated, but it remains problematic (e.g., Lasswitz 1890; Mabillean 1895; Pullman 1995; Pyle 1997).

This terminology is, then, misleading. As for the term “hylomorphism,” it was coined only at the end of the nineteenth century to describe a certain type of “materialism”; and only in the twentieth century did it come to refer to the Peripatetic theory of matter and form (Manning 2012, 3). The alleged opposite, the term “atomism,” is somewhat older but has an intricate history. The term appears to have been first used in Theodor Gazes’ *Antirrheticon* of ca. 1470, in which the Greek word *atomismós* however means “indivisibility” and figures as the contrary of *merismós* (“divisibility”) (Estienne 1572, s.v.).

After the recovery of Lucretius’ poem and of various Epicurean writings in the fifteenth century, some Renaissance philosophers did indeed come to regard Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus,

and Lucretius as belonging to the same philosophical school, but until the seventeenth century, it was not because of their use of the term “atom” that they were clustered into a group (in fact, Lucretius never used that term), but rather because of such other traits as their denial of the immortality of the soul and of divine providence, and the system of ethics that accompanied that denial. Very occasionally, the group term “atomist” (*atomista*) is found in late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century parlance to refer to a Greek tradition that attributed properties to corporeal, rather than spiritual, entities (e.g., Severinus 1571; Taurellus 1603), but it was only towards the mid-seventeenth century that it began to refer to a “school of thought” (*secta*) to which also modern or contemporary authors adhered. One of the earliest examples of this process is Jean-Chrysostôme Magnen, who in the preface to his *Democritus reviviscens* of 1644 explains that he wishes to revive “the philosophy of the atom,” that “first-born of all schools of philosophy” (*sapientium secta*). In the light of what will be said below, about the heterogeneity of Renaissance and early-modern revivals of atomist thought, it is worth mentioning that Magnen counted Moschus, the legendary Phoenician, and Plato as members of that “school,” but not Epicurus.

As for the abstract noun “atomism” (or “atomicism”), it made its first and ephemeral appearance only in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. But even then, it did not come to mean what we take it to mean nowadays. For Ralph Cudworth, for example, who appears to have coined the term, it designated specifically the perverted, materialist and atheist variant of a true, ancient “corpuscular philosophy” (Cudworth 1678, Chap. 2). Remarkably enough, Cudworth’s compatriot Robert Boyle, too, distinguished between an “atomistic” and a Cartesian-style “corpuscular” philosophy, but unlike Cudworth, he found them to be so similar that they could be subsumed under the umbrella term of “the mechanical philosophy” (Boyle 1661, “Preface”).

Surprisingly, modern historiographers have accepted Boyle’s claim that “the atomical philosophy invented or brought into request by Democritus,

Leucippus, Epicurus, & their contemporaries” was in the seventeenth century “so luckily revived . . . by the learned pens of Gassendus, Magnenus, Descartes, & his disciples” (Boyle 1999–2000, 13: 227). They accepted Boyle’s oft-repeated opinion according to which a number of natural philosophies developed by a range of competing seventeenth-century *novatores* may all be regarded as expressions of an “atomist revival,” which ultimately produced an overarching “mechanical philosophy”—a philosophy that is taken to stand at the cradle of modern science (e.g., Boas Hall 1952; Westfall 1977).

Note, however, that Boyle’s regrouping and labeling of philosophical constellations has had more success in twentieth-century historiography than in its own day. After all, the late seventeenth century achieved no terminological consensus over how to demarcate the labels “atomist,” “corpuscular,” and “mechanistic,” not to mention other terms that are now entirely forgotten, such as “somatistic.” In the eighteenth century, the term “atomism” was seldom used. It was only in the abovementioned context of nineteenth-century controversies over the explanatory value of atoms in chemistry and physics that the term “atomism” was introduced into the scientific jargon. Authors favorable to the notion of “atom” began to spread the idea that there was a coherent history of atomism to be told, from the Greeks through the Renaissance up to the chemical atoms postulated after such pioneers as William Hyde Wollaston and John Dalton.

In order to avoid this misleading anachronism, the term “atomism” will therefore be avoided in this voice. The focus will entirely lie on the vastly different reasons that led Renaissance philosophers, physicians, alchemists, humanists, and theologians to suggest the existence of small and potentially indivisible material entities.

The Philosophical Heritage and Its Renaissance Development

Before the massive introduction of Aristotle’s philosophy in the twelfth and early thirteen centuries, atomistic conceptions of matter had met with some favor. In the twelfth century, for

example, William of Conches stated in his *Dialogue on Philosophy* (I, 6) that “when the Epicureans said that the earth consists of atoms, they were correct.” By contrast, he rejected the Epicurean cosmogonies as a “fable” that was incompatible with Christian faith and revelation. This combination of an atomistic conception of matter with an insistence on divine creation in time would, however, disappear under the influence of Aristotle (Robert 2011, 123).

With the foundation of the university system, from ca. 1200 onwards, Aristotle’s philosophy came to dominate European higher education. As a consequence, Aristotle’s view that all extended magnitudes – matter, time, space, and motion – were continuous by nature and could be divided indefinitely became dominant in natural philosophy and metaphysics for centuries to come. It is however important to understand that Aristotle’s objections were not exclusively aimed at a specific type of matter theory, but applied to all extended magnitudes. For Aristotle as much as for all of his later detractors, to postulate material atoms necessarily also meant to postulate indivisibles of space and time. This underlying assumption of isomorphism survived intact into the seventeenth century (Palmerino 2011). Even Jean-Chrysostôme Magnen, who with his *Democritus reviviscens* strove to replace Aristotle’s matter theory by Democritus’, insisted that “motion, time and space are analogous, that is to say, proportional” (Magnen 1646, 226).

This isomorphism is powerfully visible in those ninth- to twelfth-century Muslim theologians of the *kalâm* (the so-called *mutakallimûn*), who emphatically embraced an overall atomistic conception of time, space, and matter (Dhanani 1994). Their view implied what we would nowadays characterize under the terms “determinism” and “occasionalism,” as in their model, God was said to re-create the world in each instant, with all secondary causality apparently gone – a view that is obviously quite distant from the doctrines of either Democritus or Epicurus. Reports of their convictions entered the Latin West through Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides, and were discussed by medieval and Renaissance authors, although until the early seventeenth century, this

radically discontinuist view of the world, in which God is the only active cause, found no supporters. Sébastien Basson may have been the first author to applaud it overtly, although only *en passant* (Basson 1621, 247/227).

Scholarly acquaintance with Aristotle’s arguments against atoms led in the later Middle Ages to questions that were not theological, as the *mutakallimûn*’s had been, but natural philosophical or logical. Philosophers in the fourteenth century were, for example, obsessed by the question of mixture: what happens to the qualities of the elements when they blend into a new, continuous mixture, which according to Aristotle had once again to be a continuum? How did the original ingredients bring about the new “form of the mixt” (*forma mixti*), and how was it possible that sometimes, the original elements could be recovered from the mixt (Maier 1943)? While these questions remained unresolved in the context of the university disputations, they were of concrete relevance to medieval alchemists, whose understanding of mixture and other chemical processes often relied on the assumptions that the ultimate carriers of qualities were individual units. From the anonymous thirteenth-century pseudo-Geber (Paul of Taranto), who in his *Summa perfectionis* spoke of the combination of elementary *minimae partes* that together form a *fortis compositio*, there has existed a continuous alchemical tradition that explained chemical operations such as sublimation or mixture in terms of particles. A particularly strong empirical argument in favor of an atomical structure of compounds was constituted by the operation called *reductio ad pristinum statum*, in which the original ingredients of a mixture were fully recovered from the mixt (Newman 1991, 1996, 2006).

Another set of scholastic authors, beginning with the fourteenth-century Oxford philosopher Henry of Harclay, challenged Aristotle’s concept of the continuum and insisted that it was possible to construct a continuum from a finite (according to some) or infinite number (according to others) of indivisibles. These positions responded to problems that arose from Aristotle’s view of continuous magnitudes and had once again nothing to do with any sympathy for the doctrines of

Democritus or Epicurus (Murdoch 1974; Pabst 1994; Robert 2011). In accordance to the principle of isomorphism, mentioned earlier, the debate between indivisibilists and continuists was about the nature of extensions of all sorts, and involved above all geometrical arguments. A popular anti-divisibilist argument, which had already been used by Arabic philosophers, pointed out that according to the divisibilists, the diagonal of a square would no longer be incommensurable with its sides, but could be shown to be composed of precise number of points, each corresponding to a point on the sides (Murdoch 1969; Robert 2011). This argument remained a powerful weapon through the centuries, even into the seventeenth century, where we still find it extensively rehearsed in Libert Froidmont's *Labyrinthus sive de compositione continui* (Fromondus 1631). It is surprising to the modern reader to see that most divisibilists felt that they had to accommodate their theories to this objection. Sébastien Basson, for example, simply accepted that diagonals were in reality not lines, but steps (Basson 1621, 420). Much more thorough and systematic was the response by Giordano Bruno, who elaborated a veritable geometry of indivisible globules, which explicitly excluded the possibility of diagonal lines. This approach to mathematics, which Bruno shared with Francesco Patrizi, has at times been described as a "realist obstacle" to an understanding of geometrical magnitudes (Védrine 1976). In the seventeenth century, several authors tried – in the wake of Andreas Libavius (1606) and Daniel Sennert (1629) – to overcome this difficulty by distinguishing between the mathematical divisibility *ad infinitum* of all extended magnitudes and the physical indivisibility of material particles.

The growing late Renaissance interest in material indivisibles also has some late medieval antecedents. A small but prominent handful of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century philosophers, less interested in mathematical indivisibles than in physical issues, had put atoms to work in explaining generation and corruption or condensation and rarefaction. One of the most prominent representatives of this physicalist approach was Nicholas of Autrecourt (Grellard 2009). Their

suggestions did however not fall on fertile ground, not least because several of these authors were condemned for holding heretical views, including Nicholas of Autrecourt himself, in 1346. John Wyclif, several of whose views were condemned in 1377 and 1382, is another notorious case in this respect. For Wyclif, space consists of a number of spatial points determined from eternity, and time consists of the same number of moments. All geometrical figures are made up of such points, but since these points are identical to the bodies that fill them, possible space and the actual physical world coincide, in the same way as for God, reality and possibility correspond (Robson 1961).

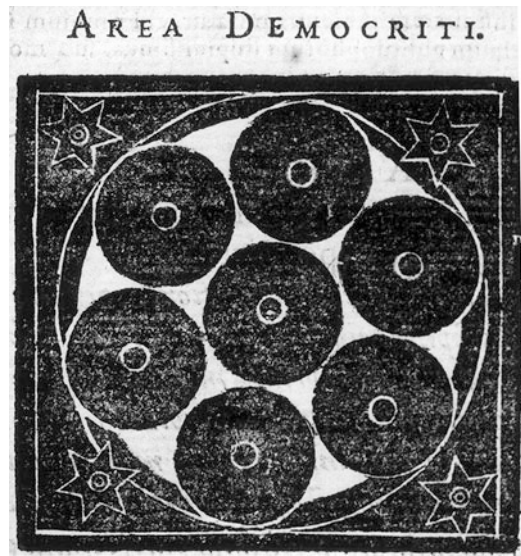
One of the primary reasons for why such proposals were suppressed was that, well into the modern age, the Catholic Church considered any such atomistic conception to be incompatible with its own dogmatic understanding of the Eucharist in terms of the distinction between substance and accident. Wyclif's condemnation for his alternative to the standard Eucharistic explanation in terms of transubstantiation was thus routinely depicted by Church authorities as a first episode in a perennial opposition between a Christian and a pagan natural philosophy – a perceived opposition that was to get René Descartes' works included in the Index of Forbidden Books as late as 1663.

We find an equally unorthodox blend of theological, logical, and physical doctrines with atomistic implications in the works of Cardinal Cusanus (Nicholas of Cusa), who however not only avoided all censorship, but enjoyed an untarnished reputation. In several of his writings, Cusanus took recourse to mathematical arguments to strengthen his theological and metaphysical reasoning. In his *De docta ignorantia* (1440), Cusanus develops his well-known doctrine of the "coincidence of opposites" (*coincidentia oppositorum*). According to him, in the field of geometry, the largest and the smallest may be shown to coincide formally, as the infinitely small point and the infinite large circle share a number of features. By the same token, in the field of metaphysics, God as the all-embracing measure of all things, and its contrary, the invisibly small unit-point, coincide in various formal

respects. In his *De ludo globi* (ca. 1462), Cusanus furthermore describes the geometrical point as a dynamic starting point, which is capable of “evolving itself” into atom, line and body, and which can therefore be present in all things (Cusanus 1998, 578). The unfolding of the point into the All, and its opposite, namely the contraction of the divine All into a point (which is everywhere and anywhere), are routinely illustrated in geometrical terms.

One of the clearest testimonies to Cusanus’ intellectual influence is constituted by Giordano Bruno, who repeatedly expressed his admiration for the “divine Cusanus” and developed the latter’s doctrine of the “coincidence of opposites” into a complex theory of the “triple minimum” (Bruno 1591). The word “triple” refers to the fact that Bruno’s “minimum” refers to the mathematical point, the mental or spiritual monad, and the physical atom. As for the physical atom, Bruno regarded it (in Cusanian fashion) as the dynamically expansive and ubiquitous minimum in an infinite universe. It is no coincidence that the atom, which for Bruno is always spherical (since it is the projection of the mathematical point into the third dimension), has the same shape as stars and solar systems (*mondi*), so that the “minimum is visible again in large things and the largest” (Bruno 1591, 49). The dynamic expansion of the geometrical points into physical atoms, from atoms into solar systems (*mondi*, in the Italian dialogues) and from the *mondi* into the infinite universe: this is, in Bruno’s mind, the path that the original *centra* take through a series of ever larger *circuli* until they reach the ultimate *circumferentia*. This ultimate, infinite and divine circumference has such a stretched-out curvature that it coincides with the straight line, its logical opposite. And when, in the opposite movement, the ultimate expansion contracts down to the level of the original unit of expansion, the indivisible point, all geometrical opposites fall together once more into a point that is also the smallest line and tiniest body.

Giordano Bruno tried to visualize this doctrine in numerous woodcuts of his own making, some of which are clearly inspired by Cusanus’ diagrams (Lüthy 2010). Several of these woodcuts



Atomism in the Renaissance, Fig. 1 Giordano Bruno’s “Area Democriti” might be the earliest visual representation of atoms ever published. It was crafted by Bruno himself and shows how a cluster of seven atoms produces once again a circular form. Bruno placed stars in the corners of his woodcut to remind the reader or beholder of the fact that atomic and cosmological patterns mirror each other. The image, which was to influence Kepler’s reflections on the hexagonal shape of snow flakes, is contained in Giordano Bruno, *De triplici minimo et mensura* (Frankfurt, 1591, 50)

carry names. A key illustration, and one that probably constitutes the very first image of a constellation of physical atoms, is called “Area Democriti” (Bruno 1591, 51), and it is contained in *De triplici minimo et mensura*, a didactic poem that imitates the style of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* (Fig. 1). Here, then, we finally encounter an acknowledged debt to Democritus (who, like Bruno, had postulated infinite worlds) as well as to Lucretius (whose preferred word for “atom,” *semina rerum*, Bruno took as a sign of Lucretius’ vitalistic understanding of these particles). And yet, it would be wrong to view Bruno simply as a neo-atomist. “The atoms and the void don’t suffice us” (Bruno 1591, 10), Bruno explained, who filled the cosmos with a vivifying ether.

In fact, no single allegedly “atomistic” author of the early modern period felt that “atoms and the void” were sufficient. None, to begin with, wished to exclude a divine creator. Furthermore,

Renaissance and early modern atoms were routinely endowed with souls, innate forces, sympathies and antipathies, and appetites, or else they were vivified by an ether or guided by God. Aggregate titles such as Nicolaus Hill's *De philosophia epicurea, democritica, theophrastica, proposita simpliciter, non edocta* (1601) or Walter Charleton's later *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charletoniana: or a Fabric of Science Natural, upon the Hypothesis of Atoms* (1654) are indicative of the combinatorial and syncretistic nature of the alleged revival of ancient atomist ideas.

The resulting combinations of matter theories were as different and mutually incompatible as the types of particles that each of them proposed. To recognize this incompatibility, it is enough to compare Giordano Bruno's ensouled spherical monads with Pierre Gassendi's or Giovanni Alfonso Borelli's highly complex corpuscular shapes, the unextended point-atoms (*atomi non quanti*) of the later Galileo Galilei, Daniel Sennert's atoms which were carriers of substantial forms, or with René Descartes curiously shaped chunks of *res extensa*. The properties ascribed to the minimal material bodies in each of these models are mutually irreconcilable and furthermore look entirely different when drawn on paper, if they can be drawn at all. In fact, the term "atom" was used in so many different ways that we must conclude that this term had neither a fixed reference nor a stable meaning (to use Gottlob Frege's useful terms).

If we return once more to the first visual representation of atoms, we may say that Giordano Bruno's atomistic speculations combine Cusanus' theologico-geometrical reasoning, Pythagorean monadological and numerological ideas, Lullian combinatorics, Ficinian Neoplatonism, and Copernicus' heliocentrism with Lucretian ideas. As for Bruno's belief in a structural similarity between clusters of ensouled spherical atoms and solar systems, we may say that it had little influence on later thinkers. By contrast, his geometrical reflections on the ways in which spherical atoms can be stacked had, thanks to Kepler's reflections on the hexagonal shapes of snowflakes (Kepler 1611), an important influence on

seventeenth-century modeling in crystallography and optics (Lüthy 2003).

Reasons for the Popularity of Atoms, Particles, Minima in the Renaissance

In the period between 1400 and 1650, which spans the period between the birth of Nicholas of Cusa and the death of Descartes, we find a slow but evident increase in the reliance on all sorts of atoms, particles, minima, and corpuscles for the explanation of natural phenomena. As has been mentioned before, there was no overall program behind this proliferation of small particles, nor can any coherence be discerned between the mathematical, metaphysical, numerological, theological, alchemical, and physical arguments that were produced in their favor. However, what most of these entities had in common was that they possessed a certain ontological stability, which was employed to explain upper-level phenomena. But besides that, they shared no other common properties. Some were described as purely material bodies, others as animated entities; some were said to be simple (such as Bruno's globules), but most others possessed complex structures, having hooks and eyes, protrusions and pores; sometimes they were said to be made up of one universal matter, but sometimes, they were distinguished according to different elements or substances. Nor was there any agreement about how many types of them existed, nor how they interacted with other atoms or with the higher levels of material organization. While for a range of authors from Isaac Beeckman over Sébastien Basson to Pierre Gassendi, atoms gathered to form higher-order molecules, which possessed what we would nowadays call "emergent properties" (such as being the carriers of live-giving seeds), for René Descartes, all physical and chemical properties could be directly reduced to the ultimate level of the corpuscles (see Joy 1987, Chap. 5).

Among the various reasons for the increasing popularity of microscopic particles, the following should certainly be mentioned: the increased attention given to book IV of Aristotle's *Meteorology*, which led to the paradoxical phenomenon

of an “Aristotelian atomism”; the recovery of ancient sources, most importantly of Plato’s *Timaeus*, Diogenes Laërtius’ doxographical work and of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*; the assumption of a *prisca sapientia*, and the increased attention this assumption demanded for Presocratic philosophy, which was sometimes even taken to include the biblical book of Genesis, Moses, and the legendary Phoenician Moschus, with whom Moses was sometimes conflated; the revival of monadological and numerological theories; alchemical theories; and, from about 1620 onwards, the development of microscopy and the feverish hope for ocular inspection of the ultimate material particles. Although several influences were usually present in any given author or text, they remained distinct enough to lead to an overall conceptual “incoherence.” They therefore also deserve each a separate treatment.

As for the phenomenon of “Aristotelian atomism,” it has to do with the attention that was paid by Italian natural philosophers to book IV of the *Meteorology*. In that work, Aristotle seems to abandon his usual four-element theory, for he mentions only two elements, namely earth (as the principle of dryness) and water (as the principle of wetness), which mix under the influence of celestial heat. “All recognizable substances in our world contain these two elements,” Aristotle states there, “and are to be assigned to one or the other according to the proportion in which they contain earth or water” (*Meteorology* 328a5, transl. Düring 1943, 41). In the same work, Aristotle also offers various physical explanations in terms of particles passing through the pores of bodies, as when he speaks of the “water-particles” slipping through the “pores” of earthen bodies (*Meteorology* 386a18ff). To Renaissance commentators, it seemed that Aristotle had here abandoned his earlier enmity to the concept of atoms. Pietro Pomponazzi phrased this impression strongly when he stated that in this treatise, “Aristotle therefore Democratizes” (*ergo Aristoteles Democratizat*; Pomponazzi 1563, 43v).

From the late fifteenth century onwards, the *Meteorology* and particularly book IV attracted much attention in Northern Italy. Many

commentaries sided with Alexander of Aphrodisias in stating that book IV was in reality an independent treatise on perfect mixtures; Agostino Nifo called this work *Liber de mixtis*, Pietro Pomponazzi *Liber de mixtione* (Martin 2011).

This attention to book IV had a number of interesting effects. Within the Aristotelian university tradition, it led to the emergence of what might indeed be termed an “Aristotelian atomism.” Francesco Patrizi mentions a disputation in which a professor confused his opponent by citing passages from “the so-called fourth book of *Meteorology*,” deriving anti-Aristotelian conclusions from it (Patrizi 1571, 113v). The intense discussion of the implications of *Meteorology* IV led to a revival of explanations of mixture in which the “minimal parts” of elements were said to move until they touched, but did not merge and instead merely exchanged their qualities so as to form a common “temperament” – an explanation that – at least according to Alessandro Achillini, Pietro Pomponazzi, or Agostino Nifo – managed to reconcile Aristotle’s theory of mixture with Galen’s (see Piccolomini 1600, 2: 98r–112v; Martin 2011). It deserves mention here, that similar notions and almost identical definitions of mixture are already found in medieval physiological treatises, for example, in Bartholomew of Salerno (Jacquart 2001).

Outside of the university context, *Meteorology* IV eventually led to explicitly anti-Aristotelian theories. The Padua-trained philosopher-physician Girolamo Cardano developed the two-element theory of *Meteorology* IV into a veritable cosmology. He defined elements as those bodies that could enter into mixtures and form more complex bodies. This definition excluded fire, which Cardano banned from the list of elements altogether, while he considered air to be a real substance, but not an element, as it could not mix with the real elements. The function of air was instead to carry celestial heat down to the terrestrial realm (Ingegno 1980).

Julius Caesar Scaliger, who attacked Cardano’s theory in his idiosyncratic but highly influential *Exercitationum exotericarum liber XV. de subtilitate* (1557), was like Cardano a physician-

natural philosopher trained in Northern Italy. In his rebuttal, he proposed a definition of mixture that was to become famous: “Mixture is the movement of minimal bodies towards mutual contact, so that a union occurs,” adding, “For our corpuscles do not touch as Epicurean atoms do, but so that a continuous and single body is produced” (Scaliger 1557, ex. 110). In other words, whereas Epicurean atoms remain merely juxtaposed, Scaliger’s corpuscles touch and thereby bring about a continuous body defined by common properties. Although Scaliger officially rejected atomistic explanations, such *novatores* as Sébastien Basson, David Gorlaeus, and Daniel Sennert in the early 1600s eagerly cited this definition in defense of an atomistic conception of mixture (Subow 1960). The same may be said about Cardano’s two-element theory, which Scaliger combated: it, too, could easily be “atomized,” by defining earth and water as material building blocks that heat up under the influence of celestial warmth. An explicitly atomistic version of Cardano’s two-element theory is in fact found in David Gorlaeus’ *Exercitationes philosophicae* and his *Idea physicae*, both of ca. 1610 (Lüthy 2012, 86–88).

However, the Aristotelian tradition was not the main cause behind the sixteenth century’s increased curiosity in the explanatory possibilities that the postulate of a structured physical micro-level offered. More direct influences are to be sought in the rediscovery of a set of ancient descriptions of atomism, most importantly in Plato’s *Timaeus*, Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*, and Diogenes Laërtius’ *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* as well as in some other genuine or pseudonymous works.

Some fragments of Diogenes Laërtius’ doxographical account of the views of ancient philosophers had been known before Ambrose Traversari translated its ten books between 1422 and 1433 into Latin, but it was this translation and its subsequent publication that started the wide fifteenth-century diffusion of this text (Dorandi 2013, 10). Diogenes’ doxography includes entries on Leucippus, Democritus, and Epicurus. On the first two philosophers, Diogenes adds much to what is said by Aristotle, who remains otherwise our main source. Notably, it depicts Democritus of

Abdera as a sage who had extensively traveled to the Orient, had been bestowed with many honors, had written 70 works on a great variety of themes, and had died, almost a saint, at age 109. Diogenes furthermore dedicates the last of the ten books of his *Lives* to Epicurus, whose doctrines had previously been known chiefly through Cicero’s even-handed discussion as well as the invectives hurled at him by Lactantius and other Church Fathers. Diogenes Laërtius, who seems to have felt philosophically close to Epicurus, not only described the latter’s life but also reproduced three long letters that he attributes to Epicurus and which he takes to explain his doctrines. These three letters cast a new light on this Greek philosopher, whom early Christian authors had accused of offering an ethics worthy of a swine. It is no coincidence that it was from this tenth book of Diogenes Laërtius’ *Vitae* that Pierre Gassendi would start his grandiose project of reconstructing Epicurus’ philosophy (Gassendi 1649).

A decidedly more important but usually underestimated source of Renaissance and early modern atomistic thought was Plato’s *Timaeus*. This dialogue had exercised a certain influence throughout the Middle Ages, but the concluding parts, in which Plato’s atomist ideas are presented, became only available after Marsilio Ficino translated and published the entire dialogue (1484) and also supplied a commentary, the *Compendium in Timaeum* (1496). Readers encountered in the extensive last part of this late work of Plato’s a theory that explained the formation of all four elements out of triangles of “space” (*chora*), with each element being made up of a certain number of triangles and defined by a regular atomic shape (the so-called Platonic solids). These shapes were taken to explain the sensory elemental properties (named “secondary qualities” after John Locke). To cite the most convincing example, fire particles burn our skin or produce a sharp taste on our tongue when we eat “hot” foods because they have a sharp, pyramidal shape, which can pierce or lacerate other surfaces. Particularly influential about this account was that it also attempted to explain a range of physiological processes by means of the interaction between our bodily machine and these particles.

Plato had since Antiquity been frequently depicted as a more Christian philosopher than Aristotle; and the first part of the *Timaeus*, in which the demiurge constructs the world, had been known since the early Middle Ages. If atomic notions needed a respectable face, then it could be found there. Still, the impact of the *Timaeus* on the evolution of matter theory is complex. On the one hand, his pyramidal fire particle is frequently found even in otherwise nonatomic theories, such as Julius Caesar Scaliger's *Exercitationes exotericae* (1557). In Galileo Galilei's *Saggiatore* (1623), to give another example, one encounters several Timaeian concepts, including the notion of the divine mathematician, who has defined all bodies geometrically, and the distinction between the true geometrical quality of the ultimate bodies and the merely sensory, secondary qualities these provoke in us. Finally, a whole range of early modern physicians – including those who would call themselves “iatromechanics” – came to take Plato's *Timaeus* as a model for how to explain physiological processes mechanically.

Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, rediscovered by Poggio Bracciolini in an unknown monastery close to Lake Constance in 1417 is the third important text that must be mentioned here. Next to Plato's *Timaeus*, this was the most extensive ancient source in which atoms played a crucial explanatory role. It is of course correct to say that Lucretius' text had never been completely lost, and that in the earlier Middle Ages, it had been copied, used, and cited. In the twelfth century, for example, William of Conches quoted Lucretian verses in his *Dragmaticon philosophiae* (Robert 2011). Still, it is obvious that for Bracciolini and his contemporaries, Lucretius' didactic poem came as a surprise. The work, brought to Italy, first spread in manuscript form, and then more rapidly and widely after its *editio princeps* of 1473, going through at least 79 editions by 1625. It was a text that was much appreciated for its poetic elegance, and at the same time dreaded for its impious character. In fact, the Roman Inquisition made sure that no translation into the vulgar was published (Gordon 1962). Marsilio Ficino, who may have been the first Renaissance

philosopher to compose a commentary on *De rerum natura*, later claimed to have burnt it. The earliest published reactions to it, Raphael Francus' *Paraphrasis cum appendice de anima immortalitate* (1504) and Giovanni Battista Pio's *In Carum Lucretium poetam commentarii* (1511), both published in Bologna, clearly indicate that initial philosophical engagement with this work took place the framework of the heated contemporary debates over the possibility of proving the immortality of the soul on philosophical grounds. It was thus initially Lucretius' materialism (which contradicted divine providence, creation, the immortal soul, and other central elements of Christian faith) that attracted attention, but not his specific theories concerning the ultimate building blocks of matter (Prosperi 2004; Nicoli 2017).

In the course of the sixteenth century, however, we see references to Lucretian matter theory increase, and not just among the so-called Lucretian *imitatores*. Interestingly, physicians seem to have been particularly interested in his theory – in fact, we encounter atoms in the sixteenth century above all in medical works. Even though Lucretius invoked “the sacred doctrine of Democritus” and extensively praised Epicurus as his philosophical teacher, his own atomism reflected also Roman medical theories. It has been suggested that his particular interest in an atomistic explanation of diseases may have been due to his acquaintance with the physician Asclepiades of Bithynia (Stückelberger 1972). Irrespective of Lucretius' own beliefs, his total avoidance of the term “atom” and his preference for the expression “seeds of things” (*semina rerum*) was interpreted by many of his readers as evidence that Lucretius' atoms were animated, dynamic units (Gemelli 1996; Hirai 2005). Such a “biological” understanding of Lucretius' atoms is found already in the sixteenth-century physician Girolamo Fracastoro, who in his *De sympathia et antipathia rerum* (1545) explained various physical and medical effects through “effluvia of atoms,” up to the seventeenth-century physician Nathaniel Highmore, who spoke of specific “seminal Atomes” (Clericuzio 2000, 89).

The notion that an atomistic conception of matter was more suitable to medicine than an

Aristotelian one could also derive support from a body of pseudo-Hippocratic letters, which Rinuccio Aretino had translated in the mid-fifteenth century. It contains a number of letters that narrate how Hippocrates has been called to Abdera to heal Democritus, who has apparently become insane, and who has removed himself to the forest, where he is busy cutting up animals. When Hippocrates visits his alleged patient, it turns out that Democritus is engaged in an exercise in comparative anatomy. In his desire to understand why his fellow-Abderites spend their lives in futile endeavors, he is trying to locate the physiological origin of black bile. After that initial meeting, Hippocrates, understanding that Democritus is a more advanced physician than himself, exchanges a number of letters from which he learns further medical secrets from his new master. This body of letters was in many quarters taken as a sign that Democritus' theory of matter was more compatible with medical doctrine than Aristotle's or even Galen's. The most striking product of this tale is Marco Aurelio Severino's *Zootomia democritea* of 1645, which depicts the encounter of Hippocrates and Democritus on the frontispiece, advocates a new method of comparative anatomy, and even interprets the term "anatomy" as "an-atomy" (which Severino took to mean "cutting up down to the level of atoms") (Lüthy 2000).

An altogether different factor that helped Democritus' matter theory in its reemergence after the many centuries of Peripatetic refutation was the emerging Renaissance belief in the existence of a primordial *prisca philosophia* or *prisca sapientia*, which had allegedly sprung up in the temporal vicinity of the divine breath of creation. This belief obviously reversed the time axis to the detriment of Aristotle's authority. No longer the victorious systematizer of rudimentary Presocratic intuitions, he could now be seen as a distant afterglow of original philosophical splendor. The improving textual base appeared to support such a view, because a comparison between Aristotle's judgment of his predecessors and their rediscovered actual or presumed doctrines encouraged humanist historiographers to charge the philosopher with deliberately misrepresenting

the views he reported, an accusation that seems to have first been formulated in 1520 by Francesco Pico della Mirandola. Although Democritus was not the main beneficiary of this reversal of fate – *pace* Ernst Cassirer (1995, 1: 166) – the perceived overlap between his theory of matter and that expounded in Plato's *Timaeus* suggested that an atomistic conception not only predated Aristotle (which had always been clear), but that it was in some sense a venerable *opinio communis*. In this vein, Francesco Patrizi could report that Democritus was generally regarded as the inventor of physics (Patrizi 1581, 3: 293). More extremely, in 1621, Sébastien Basson depicted Aristotle as a solitary rebel against a holy ancient consensus, which involved the *prisca philosophi*, Plato, Hippocrates, Democritus, and Empedocles (Basson 1621, Introduction). In the late sixteenth century, the figure of "Mo[s]chus, the Phoenician" – the true inventor of atomism according to Strabo, who in turn had taken it from Posidonius – was furthermore identified by some with the biblical Moses. This implausible idea, which never became mainstream, represented the culmination of a veritable sacralization of an atomistic matter theory and in some quarters was integrated into what was proposed as a Mosaic physics – a physics that took its cue no longer from Aristotle but from *Genesis* (Sailor 1964; Walker 1972; Blair 2000).

Another version of this quest for primeval wisdom implied numerology, which could assume a range of Pythagorean, Cabbalistic, and Neoplatonic overtones. As mentioned earlier, Giordano Bruno's own type of atomism was partially indebted to this tradition (Yates 1964). Combinations of Pythagoreanism and a monadic conceptions of reality continued, however, well into the eighteenth century, receiving an additional boost by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Neumann 2013).

Empirical Arguments for the Existence of Atoms

Most of the arguments in favor of the existence of atoms or otherwise stable corpuscles or minima

discussed up to now have been of speculative or “purely philosophical” nature. However, in the later Renaissance, and possibly beginning with Fracastoro’s above-mentioned *De sympathia et antipathia rerum* (1545), empirical arguments became ever more prominent. However, it has been argued that “in atomism, there was no experimental proof possible, although most corpuscular theories of the seventeenth century explicitly claimed to be based upon experience” (Meinel 1988, 68). Those who thought that dust motes or water vapors were atoms, which were thus accessible to ocular inspection, were sorely disappointed by Jean-Chrysostôme Magnen’s calculation that an atom of frankincense had to be at least 7.7×10^{19} smaller than a grain of this same substance (Magnen 1646). The empirical proof thus had to be indirect. But none of them was decisive. After all, the magnet could be explained by atomic effluvia – but also in terms of occult sympathies between bodies; epidemics could be explained by seminal particles – but also by corrupt air; condensation and rarefaction could be explained through particles and the void – but Aristotelians had of course for centuries provided nonatomistic explanations of these very same phenomena. One of the best proofs, which was invoked from Paul of Taranto up to Daniel Sennert, was the abovementioned *reductio ad pristinum statum*, a chemical operation in which the original ingredients of a mixture are recovered – for example silver, which had previously been dissolved in nitric acid – and which is indeed hard to reconcile with the Aristotelian theory of mixture (Newman 2006). However, while this specific chemical operation favors an understanding of chemical substances in terms of stable atoms and molecules, most other operations do not; and in fact, the *reductio ad pristinum statum* seemed to many a tedious exception on which no coherent new theory of matter could be built.

Interestingly, it was the microscope that appeared for a few decades to provide the crucial evidence for an atomistic conception of matter. One of Aristotle’s most successful epistemological objections to an atomistic conception of matter had been that if Democritus were correct, then a

person with perfect eyes (such as the mythological Lynceus) would see a very different world than we do, namely a discontinuous, literally “atomized” world (*De generatione et corruptione*, II.10). After the development of microscopes around 1620, it turned out that magnified objects did indeed look different than they did to the naked eye. Although this did not itself prove the existence of atoms, it did invalidate Aristotle’s belief in the adequacy of our senses. The first philosopher to recognize this was Francis Bacon, who was probably also one of the first persons to peer through Cornelis Drebbel’s newly invented compound microscope. When speaking of this instrument in his *Novum organum*, he remarked: “if Democritus had seen [the new microscope], he would have rejoiced a lot, believing a method to have been discovered to see the atoms” (Bacon 1620, aphorism II§39). Although Francis Bacon had a great esteem for Democritus and also postulated material microstructures and schemata, he was however not persuaded by an atomistic explanation of natural phenomena (Rees 1980). Still, his aphorism about rejoicing Democritus was triumphantly handed from one microscopical author to the next. At the height of the hype, Nathaniel Highmore wrote that he had seen Descartes’ magnetic effluvia through a microscope (Highmore 1651, 117), while Henry Power and Robert Hooke were persuaded that a little improvement of optical glasses was going to be sufficient to render atoms visible (Power 1664; Hooke 1665). In the event, they did not, and their credulousness was to become the laughter of the eighteenth century.

After a veritable atomist hype that the Catholic Church and in some minor way also certain Protestant currents tried to impede, the seventeenth century eventually ended with the widespread conviction in much of Europe that Aristotle’s description of bodies in terms of matter and form was unhelpful or outright wrong, and that there were indeed material structures to be found beneath the visible realm. However, no consensus had been reached about how many structural levels there existed underneath the level of visibility; whether there was an ultimate level to be found; and if so, of how many types of particles

that ultimate level would be constituted, and by what characteristics these types would be defined.

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Augsburg Confession

► Confessio Augustana

Augustinianism

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Abstract

Augustine exerted a pervasive influence on philosophy throughout the Renaissance period, due in large part to a renewed effort to recover the entirety of his *oeuvre* and a recognition of his role as a mediator between classical and Christian culture.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

During the Renaissance period, St. Augustine experienced his own “rebirth” (Oberman 1978, 86). Whereas, for much of the Middle Ages, his works had been known primarily through Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, Yves of Chartres’ *Decretum*, and *florilegia*, the early decades of the fourteenth century witnessed a new effort to recover the entirety of his corpus, and to acquire a more direct acquaintance with his thought. Exactly where this began is debated. While some have argued that it emerged in the circle of the Oxford Calculators, as part of a reaction against modern “Pelagianism” (Trapp 1956; Oberman 1958), others have suggested that it may instead have arisen out of the Emperor Ludwig IV’s struggle with Pope John XXII (Saak 2012). From the beginning, however, a decisive role was played by members of the Augustinian Order. Of these, the leading light was Gregory of Rimini, who perhaps did more than anyone else to restore long-neglected works to circulation and to expose misattributed works as apocrypha (Leff 1961); but also of note was Bartolomeo da Urbino, whose *Milleloquium Sancti Augustini* contained more than 15,000 quotations from Augustine’s works, arranged under more than a thousand headings.

Among the most avid readers of St. Augustine were the humanists. Seeking out his works

with undisguised enthusiasm from an early date, they soon supplanted the friars as the driving force in the recovery, collation, and emendation of texts. Petrarch not only included four of Augustine’s works on a list of his *libri peculiaries* but also confessed that, of all Catholic writers, Augustine was his favorite (*Fam.* 4.15.3). And while Desiderius Erasmus expressed a preference for St. Jerome, it is to him that posterity owes the first critical edition of Augustine’s *oeuvre*.

Augustine’s influence was consequently felt in almost every area of Renaissance culture – including philosophy (Gill 2005). So great was his reputation as an arbiter of “orthodoxy” that appeals to his authority were commonplace. In seeking to rebut George of Trebizond’s calumny of Plato, for example, Cardinal Bessarion tasked his amanuensis with finding suitable Augustinian *testimonia*, in the belief that the mere mention of the saint’s name would be sufficient to validate his position. But Augustine also provided readers with a model of the Christian philosopher. Keenly aware of how much his writings owed to classical thought, they acknowledged him both as a mediator of antique culture, and as a model of how ancient philosophy could be harnessed to the service of the Christian faith. Thus, in Petrarch’s *Secretum*, “Augustinus” is called upon to speak on Lady Truth’s behalf and, in attempting to guide “Franciscus” away from his sinful ways, frequently quotes from Cicero’s dialogues. So too, Marsilio Ficino declared that, since Augustine had chosen “Plato out of the ranks of the philosophers to be his model, as being closest of all to the Christian truth,” he would take Augustine for his guide in the *Theologia platonica* (pr. 2; q.v. Garin 1940).

This is not to say that Augustine was without his critics. Precisely because he was so ubiquitous a presence, he was a regular target of philosophical attacks. Though Benedetto Morandi thought it “foolhardy and even wicked” to challenge Augustine in matters of faith, for example, he believed that “in matters separate from religion,” the saint’s judgment could, and even should, be questioned (Trinkaus 1970, 1:287). Similarly, Poggio Bracciolini went so far as to suggest that

the pride of man was so great that even “the blessed Augustine” was susceptible to error.

Nor is it to say that Renaissance “Augustinianism” was monolithic (Lee 2012). Augustine himself had been a notoriously unsystematic thinker. The product of a philosophically diverse age, he had written his major works not as constituent components of a coherent body of thought, but in response to changing circumstances. In the course of his struggles with the Manicheans, the Donatists, and the Pelagians, he had frequently had cause to change his mind – so much so, in fact, that in his old age, he had written the *Retractationes* to correct the perceived “errors” of his earlier works. As such, Renaissance readers were able to find in his diverse and heterogeneous corpus support for a wide range of contrasting philosophical perspectives – all with equal legitimacy.

Theories of soul. If there was a common thread running through Renaissance Augustinianism, however, its beginnings lay in a distinctive conception of the human soul (Bouwsma 1975). In contrast to contemporary Aristotelians, who regarded man as a dualistic creature, consisting of a separate body and soul, Augustine’s imitators believed that, because man had been created in God’s “image and likeness” (*Gen.* 1:26), he was necessarily a unity, in which *corpus* and *anima* were inextricably bound together. This was articulated with particular clarity by Aurelio Lippo Brandolini. In his *Paradoxa christiana*, Brandolini noted that, while God had created man with both spiritual and corporeal natures, He had “joined both parts together in such a way that each needs the other, and neither can carry on its action or live in any way without the other” (Trinkaus 1970, 1:313).

There was, however, one important difference. Whereas the body, being subject to change and decay, occupied the lowest rung in the hierarchy of existence, most of Augustine’s Renaissance readers accepted that the soul, being immortal and changeable only in time, stood halfway between the fragility of the flesh and the unchanging eternity of God. The subject of innumerable treatises, this immortality could be demonstrated in a variety of different ways. While some – taking

their lead from Augustine’s *De immortalitate animae* – stressed that the soul’s immortality was a function of its direct dependence on God, others, inspired more by *De Trinitate* and *De beata vita*, found evidence for it in man’s innate longing for happiness and perpetuity.

This led many of Augustine’s readers to believe that man possessed a special – even unique – dignity. Though the soul’s mid-rank position meant that it was able either to seek its happiness in the body or to turn toward God, the mere fact of its immortality was sufficient to show that it was not only more excellent than all sensible things but also nearer to God even than angels. This was not all. Influenced by Augustine’s most strikingly Neo-Platonic works, some Renaissance philosophers – such as Lorenzo Valla and Francesco Giorgi – even came to argue that the soul was in some sense “divine” and that incarnate man enjoyed a God-like status.

Of course, not all of Augustine’s readers held to such views. On occasions, his emphasis on the unity of the body and soul could even be used to support precisely the opposite conclusions. Although Pietro Pomponazzi could hardly be described as an “Augustinian,” for example, he doubtless had Augustine in mind when he argued that, if body and soul were indeed one, the soul could be neither immortal nor “divine” and that, if any claims were to be made for man’s dignity, they would have to be built on quite different foundations. Among the saint’s more devoted followers, however, such peculiar misappropriations were rare.

As to the soul’s constituent parts, there was much greater agreement. Just as Augustine had argued that the soul reflected the structure of the Trinity, so his Renaissance readers maintained that it consisted of three parts: memory, intellect (or reason), and will. This triad was unquestioningly repeated in Lorenzo Valla’s *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie*; and, by the early sixteenth century, it enjoyed such wide currency as to appear in both Girolamo Benivieni’s Christian canzoni and Fernán Pérez de Oliva’s *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre*.

Theories of knowledge. This understanding of the soul’s nature had important implications for

the manner in which Renaissance philosophers approached theories of knowledge. Though it was accepted that perception was undergone by the body, most nevertheless followed Augustine in recognizing that, since body and soul were united, nothing which the body perceived could be hidden from the soul (cf. *De quant. anim.* 48). This being so, there was no need for “representation.” Rather than receiving an “image” of what was perceived from an intermediary faculty (as contemporary Aristotelians supposed), the soul was thought to receive perceptions directly from the body.

Needless to say, few of Augustine’s readers were under any illusions about the reliability of sensory perception. Like him, they were aware that the senses could all too easily be deceived. As such, they were doubtful about the possibility of knowing anything certain about the external world. But, like Augustine, they accepted that something, at least, could be known about the *phenomenal* world. Often elaborated in opposition to skepticism, this view – which was later to have a decisive influence on René Descartes – was expressed in a variety of different ways; but perhaps the most forceful statement was offered by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa. In *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum*, Agrippa argued that, while the senses could neither deliver any certain experience of the world nor disclose anything about the nature and causes of phenomena, the application of reason to our sensory perceptions could nevertheless provide us with *some* understanding of phenomena in themselves.

Nor did Augustine’s readers believe that the limitations of the senses prevented man from knowing something about eternal truths. Given that the soul was immortal, it necessarily contained within it a kernel of God’s transcendental reality. By means of the intellect, and with the assistance of grace, the soul could hence abstract Neo-Platonic “Forms” from the disparate evidence of our sensory perceptions or even intuit immutable truths, such as the laws of mathematics. This could sometimes be expressed in terms of “illumination,” using the same language as Augustine had done in *De magistro*. In his *Theologica*, for example, Tommaso Campanella

observed that it was by the *lumen Dei* which the soul contained within itself, and which comprised the *rationes rerum*, that the intellect was able to apprehend that which was unknown *in rationibus aeternis*. More often, however, it was presented as a form of recollection. Much as in Augustine’s *De Trinitate*, this had an unmistakably Neo-Platonic stamp. Although few – if any – of the saint’s readers would have gone so far as to suggest that the soul could recall any “Forms” with which it had been in communion before its current incarnation, Bernardino Telesio typified the majority’s opinion in arguing that, with God’s help, the soul could “remember” knowledge which it already contained within itself.

Nor, indeed, did Renaissance Augustinians have any doubt about the possibility of self-knowledge. Following Augustine’s argument in *De Trinitate*, many accepted that the soul’s attributes – thinking, willing, and remembering – were self-certifying and that any doubts about sensory experience served to validate an awareness of the self. In Petrarch’s *Secretum*, Augustine’s advice to Franciscus is predicated on the belief – derived from Augustine’s *Soliloquia* – that knowledge of the self and of the soul’s true nature was not only possible, but even necessary. So too, Ficino cited Augustine’s *Contra Academicos* and *De vera religione* as an authority for the same view in the *Theologia platonica*.

Ethics. To an even greater extent than on theories of knowledge, Augustinian conceptions of the soul had a decisive impact on Renaissance ethics. Since the soul occupied a mid-rank position in the hierarchy of creation, the saint’s readers recognized that it could either descend to the level of the body, in which case its existence would be an unhappy one, or turn heavenwards, in which case its reward would be everlasting bliss in the company of God after death. Yet *how* the soul could be rightly oriented remained to be seen. Augustine himself had never settled on a single answer, and his changing views were reflected in the diversity of opinion among Renaissance philosophers.

For some, the intellect was of primary importance. Influenced by a close reading of Augustine’s early works – especially the *Soliloquia* and

De vera religione – Petrarch maintained that, if a man came to a proper understanding of his soul's true nature, he would inevitably will the good – and thus merit *vera felicitas* in the next life (Lee 2012, 63–112). Similarly, Benedetto Morandi, for all his doubts about Augustine, accepted the saint's youthful belief that, by the “force of the intellect,” man could truly make himself happy (Trinkaus 1970, 1:284).

For others, virtue was more a matter of will – although opinion was divided over whether it was free or not. Relying on Augustine's *De libero arbitrio* and other similar works, Aurelio Lippo Brandolini and Giovanni Nesi maintained that the will not only directed the intellect but was also solely responsible for the proper ordering of the soul. Quite different, however, were the views of Coluccio Salutati, Lorenzo Valla, and – later – Martin Luther. Drawing on Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings, they argued that, while the soul could, in a certain sense, be called “free,” man was nevertheless wholly dependent upon God for his salvation. If we will the good, they believed, we do so only by cooperating with the action of grace.

To this latter view, there was a further implication – again derived from Augustine's most mature works. Since God is omnipotent, omniscient, and endowed with perfect foreknowledge, it was recognized that He not only knows in advance who is good and who is wicked but actually predestines some to Heaven and others to Hell. As such, it was possible for Augustine's readers to speak of humanity being divided between two groups: the “City of God” (those who loved God and who were destined for salvation) and the “city of man” (those who loved the self and who were doomed to perdition). Yet there was some disagreement about whether membership of either group could be known in this life. Following Augustine's most thorough treatments of the subject, some – such as Luther and Melancthon – believed that membership was known only to God and that any given human society hence contained a mixture of both. But others – such as Jean Calvin – maintained a contrary view. Seizing on passages in which Augustine appears to identify the “City of God” with the Church, Calvin used the doctrine of the “two

cities” as the basis for notions of an “elect people,” identifiable either with a confessional group or with a subgroup thereof.

Political philosophy. Augustine's ethics had far-reaching consequences for Renaissance political philosophy – although, as in other fields, the ambiguity of his works was reflected in a diversity of opinion among his readers.

Those, like Calvin, who saw the “City of God” reflected in earthly societies were led to a view of politics which, though different to Augustine's position in *De civitate Dei*, had parallels with his writings on the Donatist controversy. Under this interpretation, the ends of the political community were, in many senses, identical to those of the Church. As such, it followed that secular government should not only cooperate with the religious authorities but should also act in such a way as to maintain, or even enforce, virtuous living.

Those who believed that the two cities remained invisible, by contrast, were led to a very different vision of political authority. Derived principally from *De civitate Dei*, this often began from a rejection of Ciceronian conceptions of *societas*. Given that any group of people will contain members of the “City of God” and the “city of man,” Augustine had pointed out that a society clearly could not exist on the basis of a shared sense of right and the common good, as Cicero had suggested (*Rep.* 1.25.39). At most, a community might be able to agree on certain “goods” – such as peace – which they could either “use” for the sake of pursuing salvation or “enjoy” for their own sake. As such, Augustine had suggested that a society should instead be defined as an assembly of individuals united by an agreement as to the objects of their love (*De civ. Dei* 19.24). It thus followed that, while political authority could, in some circumstances, use law to inculcate a habit of virtue, its principal role should be merely to guarantee the “well-ordered concord of obedience and rule” needed for men to attain these objects (*De civ. Dei* 19.17). The purpose of secular government was hence *not* to make men good Christians, but simply to create the conditions in which the “City of God” could pursue salvation unmolested. As Augustine's Renaissance readers were quick to

recognize, this had particularly clear implications for the relationship between the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. In the early *Trecento*, for example, Giovanni da Cermenate used Augustine's understanding of *societas* to demonstrate that, while the emperor was obliged to defend the Church if necessary, his authority was equal to – and separate from – that of the pope. At the same time, it was recognized that this could also be turned on its head and used as the basis for more direct criticisms of the papacy's temporal power. It is even possible that Machiavelli may have had Augustine in mind when reproving the worldliness of the contemporary Church in the *Discorsi*.

Another respect in which Augustine influenced Renaissance political philosophy was in regard to just war theory. His belief that conflict could be justified, provided it aimed at peace, and was waged without cruelty for the sake of furthering the rightful ordering of humankind, lay behind almost all discussions of the topic throughout the period. It is found in Petrarch's letters on the Venetian-Genoese war of 1350–1355 and would later have a decisive impact on the thought of Hugo Grotius.

Philosophy and eloquence. A final area of influence concerns the relationship between philosophy and eloquence. Although Cicero's rhetorical theory predominated throughout the Renaissance period, Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* nevertheless provided some Renaissance readers with a model of how this could be made to serve the cause of Christian truth more fully. Among the most profoundly affected was Petrarch. For all his admiration for Cicero, it was to Augustine that he owed his belief that poetry was the proper medium not only for theology but also for philosophy and that the inculcation of virtue was more important for an orator than an understanding of rhetorical rules (Lee 2012, 277–350). A lesser – but no less noteworthy – debt can be observed in the writings of Salutati and Valla, among others.

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Automata, Renaissance

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Abstract

Automata and self-moving mechanisms have a long history – part of which, namely the medieval chapter, remains largely unexplored in any systematic fashion – and have articulated not only issues of technology and mechanical explanation of the world but also ideas of foreignness and cunning intelligence, to say nothing of the deep-ranging political significance that these instruments served in Mediterranean diplomacy. If the Industrial Revolution reflected on robots as a threat to human civilization, the Age of the Enlightenment used automata to think about the complex cultural function of bodily motion and performances.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Apart from their status as valued commercial commodities – evident, for instance, in enormously popular attractions such as Wolfgang von Kempelen's chess-playing Turk (1784) or Jacques de Vaucanson's defecating duck (1742) – and long before they served as potential metaphors for social order – at least as early as in Hobbes' influential description of society as an "Artificial Man" in *Leviathan* (1651) or in Descartes' explanation of automatic patterns in sensory data – self-moving mechanisms were able to articulate key issues of their period, particularly ideas about social hierarchy and economics. Any automaton was equipped to work as a spectacular *deus ex machina*, that is, through individualized exhibitions of entertaining wonder (Bynum 1997). At some historical juncture – namely, the Victorian Age – the inner theatricality of the automaton (Cambiano 1994) also acquired the distinction of a sympathy machine or an imaginary prosthetic.

In the Aristotelian tradition, automata were part of a sophisticated argument concerning the self-regulation of embryological development, although these devices can hardly be used as gap-fillers within a mechanistic understanding of natural history (Berryman 2004). At the same time, the idea of stunning wonder-making was never far away, both in its practical consequences – as in the military machines built by Archimedes – and in its crowd-pleasing effects. This explains why Pappus and Hero of Alexandria, two Hellenistic theoreticians whose work would be translated and further expanded in the Renaissance (Marr 2004), present useful knowledge and technical show-business as something epistemically on a par with philosophy (Tybjerg 2003).

In addition, automata represent a mechanical narrative of *metis* or cunning intelligence, which enables the triumph of the weak over the strong (Wolfe 2004) and allows a certain degree of social mobility for artisans. Finally, in a variety of intellectual and literary texts, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have expressed a tendency to lump together different examples of automaton-making, by using them as universal mechanical metaphors – often as harbingers of the threat posed by the modern industrial age to bodily motion and the human soul more generally.

This kind of teleology, however, should be actively resisted (Kang 2011). Instead, individual automata should be carefully placed within their philosophical and political contexts. To stay briefly with the eighteenth-century fascination for "robots," which shows the Enlightenment's affinity for thinking with metaphors of the machine (Schaffer 1999), some considerable differences remain: first between the objects themselves – including the engineering decisions that made them how they are – and their reception, social, and textual and second among competing representations of their epistemic relevance. One might understand a series of women automata created by Swiss families of craftsmakers like the Jaquet-Droz and the Roentgen to be simulations of live bodies (Riskin 2003), in which case they could primarily be said to provide anatomical and physiological knowledge about humans and animals. Or, conversely, one might take these

automata as replications of cultural and political body practices (Voskuhl 2013), in which case they should be investigated especially as a type of materiality painstakingly designed to perform sentiments and sociability pertaining to domestic and international markets.

Clock-making, moreover, as it was practiced in the Alpine valleys and in Central European locales such as Prague, hints at the vast role that mechanical devices played in early modern Mediterranean diplomacy, where they affected global commerce and the question of sovereignty (Iafrate 2015). To a degree, this function was already visible in the Middle Ages. Medieval accounts of technological wonders, long neglected until recently (Truitt 2015), punctuated the unfolding of geopolitical ceremonial, while also offering a narrative focus of foreignness.

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Automation

► Clocks, Renaissance

Averroism, Renaissance

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Abstract

Averroes (Ibn Rushd) exerted a profound impact on Renaissance philosophy, primarily, although not exclusively, through his commentaries on Aristotle. Renaissance scholars translated and conducted significant editorial work on his writings, which were frequently printed in the sixteenth century. The commentaries formed the basis for countless philosophical interpretations and disputes, but the most historically prominent were those related to his psychology. Averroes proposed that the material intellect is one in number, a thesis referred to as the unicity of the intellect or monopsychism. In the years around 1500, many, in particularly northern Italian, philosophers found Averroes' interpretation of the soul philosophically convincing, even if they recognized its lack of conformity to Christianity. In the same years, ecclesiastical censures were promulgated that forbade the promotion of the unicity of the intellect. Nevertheless, philosophers continued to rely on his commentaries until the last decades of the sixteenth century. Thus, Averroes had a mixed reputation. While many university professors commended his subtlety as a commentator, humanists criticized his work for its supposed impiety and poor Latin, and many Thomist theologians considered his works a threat to religious orthodoxy.

Background

The writings of Averroes (Ibn Rushd, 1126–1198) had a profound effect on Renaissance philosophy, just as they had on medieval philosophy. Similarly, in the historiography of Renaissance philosophy, the concept Averroism has played a prominent role since the middle of the nineteenth century. Scholars have often seen Averroism as a link from Renaissance philosophy, on one hand, to the debates between philosophers and theologians during the late thirteenth century, and on the other hand, to early modern libertinism, atheism, and modern conceptions of secularism.

Averroes' primary, but not sole, influence during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance was as a commentator on Aristotle. Additionally, his medical treatise, which synthesized mainly Galenic concepts, and circulated under the title *Colliget*, made him an authority for physicians and professors of medicine. The corpus of Averroes' writings is large. He wrote multiple commentaries on nearly all of the Aristotelian corpus. These commentaries vary in size, some being paraphrases; others lengthier, the so-called middle commentaries; and others very detailed, referred to as long commentaries. As such, these commentaries served as effective guides to reading and interpreting Aristotle's works on logic, natural philosophy, cosmology, metaphysics, and psychology, topics which formed much of the core of university curricula by the thirteenth century. Averroes' commentaries were also subject to philosophical investigation. Averroes' commentaries were translated into Latin in the same decades of the thirteenth century that most of the Aristotelian corpus was. Accordingly, they were the first pre-eminent guides to Aristotle in the Latin (Christian) West, in part, as a result of Averroes' dedication to revealing what he believed was Aristotle's intent or "mind" as it was often phrased in his works and in those of his followers.

While the bulk of, if not all, Renaissance scholars were unaware of the historical context of Averroes' intellectual output, nonetheless it is relevant, as it conditioned the hermeneutical approach that, at least for some thinkers, made Averroes' interpretations appealing. Averroes

attacked the philosophical approaches of Avicenna (980–1037), al-Ghazālī (1058–1111), and the Islamic theologians designated *mutakallimūn*, or *loquentes* in the Latin translation, because they, in his view, either illegitimately combined theology and philosophy or attacked philosophy using religious credos. Rather, Averroes sought to distinguish the two fields, seeing philosophy, or *falsafa*, the philosophical tradition that descended from ancient Greece, and rationality in general as largely equivalent to Aristotelian thought and thereby distinct from theology and scripture. In this manner, Averroes, like many other Islamic philosophers, followed the interpretative traditions established in the late antiquity that promoted commentaries as the main genre of philosophy. Unlike many of these ancient commentators, who also wrote on Plato's metaphysics, Averroes professed to have a hostility toward many Platonic ideas, in particular those that involved the application of mathematics to natural philosophy, even if it is possible to identify strands of Platonism in Averroes' thought.

Instead, Averroes promoted the belief that Aristotle was a standard of reason, the realization of the perfection of the human mind that providence supplied to aid humanity's knowledge. As such, his writings provided the unequivocally ideal source for discovering philosophical truths. Accordingly, Averroes advocated a method of interpretation that prized a more literal reading of Aristotle's than is found in those who attempted to reconcile or create grand syntheses of different schools of philosophy. A consequence of this approach is that Averroes' commentaries provide readings that clarify and (internally) reconcile Aristotle's thought, without explicit attempts to synthesize them with other philosophies and theology, like Avicenna or Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) did; or to use Aristotelian concepts as a foundation or starting point for philosophical speculation that goes beyond what is found in Aristotle's texts, as was the case with the Merton school of calculators that thrived in Oxford during the fourteenth century.

Averroes' desire to expound the views of Aristotle as philosophical truth meant that for several issues, his doctrines did not easily conform to the

theological doctrines of monotheistic religions. Two of the most important positions in this respect were the eternity of the world and the nature of the human soul. First, in contradistinction to a literal reading of the book of Genesis and in line with Aristotle, Averroes contended that the world was not created in time, but was rather eternal, having always existed. Similarly, God did not create living beings, but rather they are generated and participate in eternity through the endless persistence of their respective species. Second, Averroes promoted what was later labeled monopsychism or the unicity of the material intellect. This view holds that the passive or material intellect is shared by all humans. The attractiveness of this theory is that it gives a plausible explanation for unicity of knowledge. Its ramifications, however, include the impossibility of survival of the individual intellect after death, eliminating the plausibility of doctrines of the afterlife that are central to Islam and Christianity. These positions, coupled with his privileging of reason – and not sacred texts – as the ultimate arbiter of truth, rendered Averroes' works controversial in both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, even if his philosophical solutions and clarifications of Aristotle were widely read and endorsed.

During the thirteenth century in the Latin West, a number of ecclesiastical authorities and theologians rebuked Averroes' teachings, despite, or, perhaps as a result of, the diffusion of his writings in the new universities of Western Europe. Thomas Aquinas was the prominent, if not most outspoken, opponent of Averroes' views on the soul. He wrote the treatise *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* (ca. 1270) that sought to demonstrate the lack of coherence of Averroes' positions. Thomas's attacks, or triumph as they were called, were later memorialized in paintings that decorated Dominican churches, such as in Santa Maria Novella in Florence, Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, and Santa Caterina in Pisa (Polzer 1993). Thomas was by no means the only opponent of Averroes. For example, the theologian Giles of Rome (ca. 1245–1316) deemed twelve positions he attributed to Averroes as inimical to Christianity.

A few years after the composition of Thomas's treatise, Étienne Tempier, the bishop of Paris,

included a number of positions linked to Averroes in the famed Condemnations of 1277, which sought to limit what could be taught in the faculty of arts at Paris. The Condemnations of 1277 were likely aimed at Siger of Brabant (ca. 1240–ca. 1282) and Boethius of Dacia (ca. 1240–ca. 1285), who taught, among other doctrines, that Aristotle held the world to be eternal. Siger distinguished between philosophical discourse and revelation, restricting his discussions of the intellect and the eternity of the world to what he referred to as “natural reasons,” which derived from his reading of Aristotle's natural philosophical texts. Significantly, for the history of Averroism, these Condemnations forbade teaching what was called the doctrine of “double truth,” which held that different truths held for the same topic in different fields of inquiry. Thus, a proposition could be true in natural philosophy but false in theology. Numerous scholars and historians have associated the doctrine of “double truth” with Averroes and his followers, even though he did not promote that idea and the endorsement of that idea cannot be found in the writings of Siger, Boethius, or any other philosopher who was influenced by Averroes. “Double truth” is probably more closely linked to the inquisitor's caricature of Averroes and Averroism than any actual position. Nonetheless, because of its prominence in the Condemnations of 1277, it has retained a significant role in the historiography of medieval and Renaissance philosophy (Thijssen 1998; Bianchi 2008). The Condemnations of 1277 had a limited effect, and within a half century its promulgation, if not forgotten, was not nevertheless not universally heeded, as Averroes' writings and ideas spread throughout the universities of Catholic Europe, demonstrated by the examples of John of Jandun (ca. 1280–1328), Thomas Wylton (died ca. 1327), and John Baconthorpe (ca. 1290–ca. 1346). Yet, through the polemics of Thomas and the Condemnations of 1277, Averroes gained a reputation for impiety that persisted throughout the Renaissance and early modern era.

Both medieval and Renaissance understandings of Averroes differ from the interpretations of scholars of the twentieth and twenty-first

century. First of all, they did not, for the most part, seek to understand Averroes as a historical figure. Consequently, they did not trace the development of Averroes' thought. Secondly, until the late fifteenth century, they relied only on Latin translations, meaning they did not have access to his entire corpus. For example, the *Decisive Treatise*, which examined the relation between philosophy and religion, with a few exceptions, was unknown to Renaissance scholars. Other writings, such as his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, were not widely available in Latin until several decades into the sixteenth century. Furthermore, many medieval and Renaissance scholars, even those attracted to Averroes' ideas, seem to have been almost entirely uninterested in developing knowledge of the history of Islamic philosophy. Thus, their understanding of his life and works was greatly limited in comparison to what is now available, not only in Latin, but also in Arabic and Hebrew. While Renaissance philosophy was conditioned by the medieval Latin tradition, Averroes was also greatly influential in medieval Jewish philosophy, which significantly affected the transmission, translation, and interpretation of his work in the sixteenth century.

Definition and Historiography

During the Renaissance, Averroes' commentaries on almost all the Aristotelian corpus as well as his medical writings were well known, frequently cited, and greatly influential. Yet Averroism, as the term and concept has developed in the historiography of Renaissance philosophy, does not equate to the broad influence of Averroes' thought, but is largely confined to a few specific issues, most importantly his theory of the intellect.

The historiography of Averroism is one of the longest of all of Renaissance philosophy. It reveals shifting ideals of scholarship during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The modern origins of scholarship on Averroism began with Ernest Renan's 1852 *Averroës et l'Averroïsme*. This early work of Renan helped initiate a lengthy literary career that included a biography of Jesus, which emphasized his humanity, and an

innovative and influential theory of nationalism. For Renan, the history of Averroism was the history of a misinterpretation of Aristotle that revealed the historical struggles between philosophy and religion (Marebon 2013). Renan, influenced by positivism, saw in Averroism the transmission of what he considered to be an undying spirit of secularism and anticlericalism that persisted throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance until it transformed into the materialism of modern science that emerged, in his view, in the seventeenth century. As such, Renan equated Averroism with freedom of thought and resistance to ecclesiastical orthodoxy, a form of philosophical heterodoxy that stemmed mainly from two specific issues, the eternity of matter and unicity of the material intellect (Martin 2007).

Renan's emphasis on these two specific issues, however, did not temper his understanding of Averroism in broader terms of secularism. A number of the thinkers he associated with it, such as Pietro d'Abano (c. 1250–c. 1316), Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), Simone Porzio (1496–1554), Giacomo Zabarella (1533–1589), and Cesare Cremonini (1550–1631), did not endorse Averroes' theory of the intellect. Yet Renan found that their separation of philosophy from theology adhered to the spirit of Averroism. For the Renaissance, Averroism flourished in particular in what Renan called the "school of Padua," which he believed began with Gaetano of Thiene (1387–1465). This movement eventually proliferated in several major intellectual centers in all of northern Italy, until its demise that accompanied Cremonini's death in 1631 (Renan 1852).

Renan laid the foundation for much of the discussion of Renaissance Averroism for more than a century and a half. Scholars looked to figures central to Renan's narrative in order to identify parallels to positivism. The French historian Jacques Charbonnel sought to trace the origins of the irreligious libertinism of seventeenth-century France to Averroes and his sixteenth-century Italian followers (Charbonnel 1919). Erminio Troilo contended that Averroism was an outpouring of a heterodox spirit that naturalized Aristotle by deflating the importance of

metaphysics. For Troilo, this heterodoxy flourished as a result of the *libertas patavina* that encouraged freedom of discourse and thought and eventually morphed into the materialist Alexandrism of Pomponazzi and Porzio before transforming from Paduan thought to the Italian thought of Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588) and Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) (Troilo 1939). Other twentieth-century historians of philosophy, with Bruno Nardi in the lead, provided close textual studies that enriched and tempered Renan's thesis without rejecting it completely. Nardi emphasized continuities between medieval and Renaissance Averroism, like Renan, although limited its later influence on modern science and thought (Nardi 1958). Stuart MacClintock suggested that Latin Averroism emerged because of the difficulties of reconciling Aristotle with Christian theology, "when natural reason was radically separated from the domain of faith" (MacClintock 1954–1955, 180). It died, in his view, by the availability of Greek Aristotelian texts that revealed Averroes' Platonism. Accordingly, throughout the twentieth-century Renaissance, Averroism was frequently identified, by leading scholars, including John Herman Randall Jr. and Paul Oskar Kristeller, as "secular," "radical," or "Paduan" Aristotelianism (Randall 1961; Kristeller 1965).

In recent years, scholars have attempted to strip away the vagueness of the term and find a more precise definition of Renaissance Averroism that is based on how the word *Averroista* was used during the period. Dag Nikolaus Hasse's *Success and Suppression* presents the fullest analysis of the meaning of the term in the Renaissance to date. He convincingly argues that Averroism was associated with a far broader range of theories than Renan attributed, including the doctrines that proclaim that God only knows universals and not individuals, that God's power is limited, that human happiness results from the conjunction of the separate substances, that prime matter has indeterminate dimension, that the celestial influences play a role in spontaneous generation, in addition to his theory of mixture that maintains the elemental substantial forms remain in the new mixture in a refracted, diminished, or blunted

state (Hasse 2016, 190). Hasse's list is likely incomplete, as he admits. We might also add the doctrines that proclaim that God is efficient cause, not just final cause, of the world, and that celestial bodies, unlike sublunary ones, are not composed of matter and form, as set forth in *On the Substance of the Orbs*.

The term *Averroista*, for Hasse, possesses legitimate meanings useful for historical analysis, despite its frequent employment as a term of abuse for alleged heretics. The first is what Hasse describes as an expert on Averroes' philosophy. The second legitimate meaning refers to a group whose members interacted with each other, building on, or disagreeing with the work of earlier scholars. For Hasse, this group, or sect (*secta*) existed for psychology, beginning with Bolognese masters of the fourteenth century and culminating in the sixteenth century with philosophers associated with Padua, many of whom contended that Averroes' arguments for the unicity of the material intellect were strong, even though they could not be true because they do not conform to Christianity. This Averroistic sect consists of Taddeo da Parma (early fourteenth century), Matteo da Gubbio, (first half of fourteenth century), Giacomo da Piacenza (first half of fourteenth century), Angelo d'Arezzo (died 1422), Paul of Venice (ca. 1369–1429), Niccolò Tignosi (1402–1474), Nicoletto Vernia (died 1499), Alessandro Achillini (ca. 1461–1512), Agostino Nifo (ca. 1470–1538), Luca Prassicio (died ca. 1521), Marco Antonio Genua (1491–1563), Antonio Bernardi (1502–1565), and Francesco Vimercato (1512–1571) (Hasse 2016, 190–91). Furthermore, it might be possible to include in this sect Elijah (or Elia) del Medigo (1458–1493), who discussed in detail and approved of the unicity thesis. Del Medigo considered many of the same sources as other members of the Averroistic sect, while maintaining a distance by not engaging his contemporaries by name (Engel 2016).

Averroism, in this restricted sense, ended not with Cremonini, who did not endorse the unicity thesis, and the demise of Aristotelianism, or because of the efforts of inquisitors and Church councils, but largely for internal reasons.

Giacomo Zabarella (1533–1589), among others, articulated a more philosophically satisfying interpretation of Aristotle's theory of the intellect, rendering the previously esteemed Averroistic theory obsolete. In some ways, this conception of Averroism conforms to Renan's that it considers it to be a movement located primarily in Padua and northern Italy and closely associated with potentially heterodox positions for psychology. The advantage of Hasse's definition of Averroism is that it frees itself from the imprecision with which the term was used by polemicists that equates the term vaguely with philosophical heresy. Rather, it corresponds to the actors' category and defines a coherent cohort of thinkers who openly associated themselves with the most famous, or infamous, doctrine of Averroes, namely, the unicity of the material intellect. This entry, therefore, will consider Averroism according to these limited definitions of Hasse, rather than the expansive definitions of medieval and Renaissance polemicists and earlier historians of philosophy.

Renaissance Averroism as Expertise in Averroes

Although it is difficult to determine whether or to what extent expertise in Averroes grew in the Renaissance, nevertheless it is clear that it was widespread, particularly in Italy, and that Averroes' philosophy was at times divisive and a source of controversy. The high level of interest in his works is evident from the frequent printing of his works and the expansive editorial interventions undertaken to improve the accuracy of the translations of his texts (Schmitt 1979; Burnett 1999). His *opera omnia* were printed in Latin at least ten times, not to mention the numerous printed editions of single works (Cranz 1976).

While part of the attraction of Averroes was linked to his philosophical solutions, interest in him reflects the culture of humanism that had spread and rooted in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The ideals of humanism involved using ancient writings as models and privileged sources and endeavored to recover

ancient ideas, freed from medieval additions. While Averroes might seem a strange candidate, his professed hermeneutical method of attempting to retrieve the true unadulterated thought of Aristotle combined with his dependence on ancient Greek commentators recommended his writings to scholars who hoped to uncover a pure Aristotelianism (Martin 2014). Some philosophers considered Averroes and Aristotle as being nearly equivalent. For instance, Agostino Nifo wrote that he taught his students that "Averroes is Aristotle transposed" (Mahoney 1970, 453–454). Even after awareness of ancient Greek grew in the sixteenth century in western Europe, despite the fact that Averroes did not know Greek, important thinkers, including Giacomo Zabarella and Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), considered his linguistic ignorance only a minor impediment, if one at all, from uncovering the true mind of Aristotle (Sturlese 1994). As a result, Averroes' own works were subject to investigation in a manner similar to the works of other ancient authors.

A genre of super-commentaries on Averroes emerged in the sixteenth century, much like it had among medieval Jewish philosophers, notably Gersonides (Levi ben Gershon) (1288–1344) (Harvey 2003). Some of the most important philosophers of the Italian Renaissance wrote works specifically dedicated to interpreting Averroes. Agostino Nifo wrote a commentary on the *Destructio destructionis* (*The Incoherence of the Incoherence*). Both Nifo and Pietro Pomponazzi wrote on *De substantia orbis*, as did more minor figures, such as Elijah del Medigo, Giovanni Battista Confalonieri (died 1537), Niccolò Vito de Gozze (1549–1610), and Mainetto Mainetti (died 1572). These commentaries on Averroes, much like commentaries on Aristotle, sought to clarify and interpret the text, while using it as a starting point for philosophical investigation (Martin 2013). Marco Antonio Zimara (1460–1523) wrote a book that sought to reconcile seemingly contradictory statements in Averroes. It served as a philosophical manual. A generation later, Bernardino Tomitano (1517–1576) wrote a similar work of considerations of and solutions to Averroes' texts, which was included in the edition of 1560–1562. Within the sect of Averroists, there

were disagreements about how to interpret him, as a genre emerged for exploring the meaning and significance of his works. Both the philosophical lexica of Antonio Posio (1528–1580), published in 1562, and by Giovanni Battista Bernardo in the 1580s were heavily indebted to Averroes' reading of Aristotle (Schmitt 1979, 130).

The evolution of humanism influenced the reception of Averroes in other ways, particularly in an attempt to apply new philological techniques to the editing, translation, and correction of his texts. From Petrarch (1304–1374) on, humanists had repudiated Averroes and Averroists, in part because of their alleged impiety, in part for the supposedly unrefined Latin prose of their writings. Criticism of Averroes for linguistic barbarism formed a crucial feature of the attacks on scholasticism, universities, and medieval culture, which they hoped to replace with ancient models and emphasized rhetorical eloquence and Latin prose that imitated that the rules and styles of Cicero, Quintillian, and similar authors. Many of the most famed humanists, including Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Lorenzo Valla (ca. 1407–1447), Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), Desiderius Erasmus (ca. 1467–1536), and Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries participated in these polemics against Averroes (Martin 2014, 28–50).

Whether or not these polemics were well founded, by the end of the fifteenth century a number of scholars set out to improve and expand the extant body of Latin translations of Averroes. These philological activities, centered, although not exclusively, in Padua and Venice, were supported and promoted by, among others, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1464–1493), the Venetian aristocrat Domenico Grimani (1461–1523), and the Mantuan noble and bishop Ercole Gonzaga (1505–1563), who had studied under and protected Pietro Pomponazzi. The geographical center of this work, most likely, reflects the heavy use of Averroes in philosophical debates at Padua and its neighbors (Di Donato 2013).

Elijah del Medigo was the first representative of this new wave of translators. Beginning in the 1480s, under first the patronage of Pico and then

Grimani, basing his translations on Hebrew texts, he greatly expanded the Averroistic corpus, most notably to include Averroes' epitome of Plato's *Republic*. In the first decades of the sixteenth century, Paolo Ricci (first half of sixteenth century), a physician from northern Italy with a Jewish background, translated Averroes' commentaries on *De caelo* and *Metaphysics Lambda*, as he cited the corrupt text of the medieval Latin translations of Averroes as his motivation (Hasse 2016, 342–343). Not long after, Giovanni Francesco Burana (ca. 1475–ca. 1523) and Abraham de Balme (ca. 1440–ca. 1523), who both lived in Padua, produced translations, primarily of Averroes' logical works. Calo Calonymos ben David (born ca. 1480) translated the *Destructio* in 1527 and included quotations of the *Decisive Treatise* in his work on the creation of the world (Di Donato 2004).

The most important translator was likely Jacob Mantino (ca. 1490–ca. 1549), a physician to Alessandro Farnese (Paul III), and probably a member of the circle of Ercole Gonzaga (1505–1563), a member of the leading family of Mantua and a cardinal beginning in 1527. Mantino, also criticized the medieval translations, as he sought to improve the accuracy of Averroes' texts in his translations from Hebrew of commentaries on logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, the *Poetics*, Plato's *Republic*, and the *Colliget* (Hasse 2016). Many of these translations were incorporated in the Giunta *Opera omnia*, printed first from 1550 to 1552. The 1560–1562 printing for the *Posterior Analytics*, puts De Balme's, Burana's, and Mantino's translations side-by-side, allowing the reader to compare the three versions (Burnett 2013).

While the success of some of these translations might be questioned, the larger effect was an expanded engagement with Averroes' writings on subjects that are not part of the medieval tradition of Averroism. For example, Pomponazzi used Mantino's translation of the *Paraphrase on the Parts of Animals* in his lectures on the work. It is even possible that the translation was the motivation behind Pomponazzi's decision to comment on a work that was relatively infrequently discussed in university classrooms. In the following decade,

Nifo relied heavily on the paraphrase in his discussions of zoology (Perfetti 2000, 36, 100–109). The translations of the long commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* alerted numerous scholars to the importance of his views on epistemology, recognized not just by Italians but also by the German logician Bartholomaeus Keckermann (ca. 1572–1608) (Burnett 2013, 64).

Renaissance Averroism and the Intellect

Renaissance treatments of Averroes' position regarding the intellect were built upon medieval discussions, most importantly those of John of Jandun (Brenet 2003). But in other ways the Renaissance debates were not a mere continuation of the earlier tradition, as they were infused with new interpretative ideals informed by the growth in expertise in Averroes' writings, and a revived interest in newly available texts, including those of Plato (Mahoney 1986; Mahoney 1993; Kessler 1988). Renaissance authors engaged and polemized with each other by name. They followed upon the polemics of Byzantine scholars, such as those between Georgios Scholarios (ca. 1400–1472) and Giorgios Gemistos Pletho (ca. 1360–1454), and the teachings of the Greek émigré John Argyropoulos (ca. 1415–1487) (Monfasani 1993; Steiris 2018). They debated what were Averroes' views, whether John of Jandun's interpretations were correct, whether Averroes' positions were identical to Aristotle's, and whether they were true (Mahoney 1976; Hasse 2016). The participants in the debates uniformly acknowledged that at least some of Averroes' positions ran counter to Christian teachings yet considered it appropriate to discuss them as part of philosophical discourse. Many of these discussions were highly technical and likely were fully understood by few except those who were trained as philosophers. Nevertheless, they provoked ecclesiastical interventions, first in a local prohibition promulgated by the bishop of Padua, Pietro Barozzi (1441–1507), in 1489 and then later at the Fifth Lateran Council in 1513, when teaching or defending the unicity thesis was explicitly banned.

The foundation for Averroes' position of the soul depended on his interpretation of Aristotle's *De anima*, 3.5, where the active and material intellects are discussed. A primary interpretative challenge for Averroes and other philosophers was to explain how the human intellect could be separable, unmixed with the body. Averroes, like most medieval philosophers, rejected the idea that the soul, as substantial form of the body, emerged from matter. Rather, its separability and its unmixed character corresponded to its immateriality and immortality. According to this psychological theory, the intellect is divided into active and material or passive parts, in an analogical manner to material substances. The material intellect is not in fact material but plays a role similar to that of matter in hylomorphic compounds. Accordingly, the material intellect is the place and recipient of universals, which are eternal and immaterial and stem from the active or agent intellect. In order to avoid the conclusion that these universals are multiplied as they are received by the passive intellect, Averroes in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* contended that the material intellect is one in number. Universals can be considered with respect to two subjects, what Hasse calls the *duo-subiecta* theory (Hasse 2016, 197). An individual understands universals with respect to the epistemological subject of the soul's imaginative faculty. However, the universals are eternal and single with respect to the ontological subject of the single material intellect, the recipient of the universals. Thus, individual knowledge is possible, the eternity of the intellect is preserved, but its plurality denied with respect to being, a challenge to the Thomistic position that the intellect or the rational soul is the form of the body per se, a position that the Council of Vienne (1311–1312) had made part of the orthodox teachings of the Catholic Church. The position that the material intellect is one in number ran contrary to doctrines regarding personal immortality and the afterlife. Nevertheless, Averroes' solution, which upheld the separability of the intellect and the eternity and uniqueness of universals, while distinguishing the epistemological and ontological aspects of the intellect and intelligible universals, was philosophically

appealing to many philosophers in the decades around 1500.

In Italy, Averroist psychology revived with Paul of Venice (Paulus Venetus) (ca. 1369–1429), an Augustinian hermit and teacher of theology at Padua, who was sympathetic, although not entirely indebted, to the Ockhamist logic taught at Oxford. In disagreement with the nominalists who put forth an argument that he considered to comply with the dictates of natural philosophy, Paul contended that universals represent entities that are external to the mind and are obtained when the material intellect has grasped them through the process of abstraction. Because universals are singular, he argued, so must be the material intellect that receives them (Kessler 1988, 489). The singular rational intellect acts as *forma informans* of the body that gives existence and the possibility of knowledge to humans. Later in his life, Paul, however, maintained that this argument based on naturals was not true according to Christianity, and provided metaphysical arguments for the existence of multiple intellects. Paul's insistence that the intellect is one, only according to natural philosophy, has prompted some commentators to deny that he was in fact an Averroist (Conti 2017). Niccolò Tignosi (1402–1474), a student of Paul's, likewise advocated Averroes' theory of the soul, but with reservations for its theological implications, in lectures at Pisa. Another student of Paul, Gaetano of Thiene (1387–1465), a professor at Padua, while rejecting the unicity thesis, nevertheless considered it an accurate interpretation of Aristotle.

While there might be ambiguity in the case of Paul, it is less apparent in a number of his successors in Padua and Bologna, even if many modified their positions over the course of their careers. Arguing on the basis of naturals, which he considered the genuine position of Aristotle, Nicoletto Vernia (died 1499) assumed the eternity of the world and consequently rejected the possibility of the creation of individual souls. Instead, in his 1480 question on the intellect, Vernia defended the unicity thesis. Vernia followed John of Jandun and argued that the single intellect, connected to the body through the *phantasmata* of sensation, acts as the *forma assistens* and, as such, it joins the body to *phantasmata*, without uniting

to it, by acting like “a sailor to a ship,” that is, operating but being substantially distinct (Hasse 2004).

Vernia's treatment was likely just one of many at Padua during the 1480s, since in 1489, Bishop Barozzi (1441–1507) prohibited public discussions of the unicity thesis under the threat of excommunication. The decree had only local jurisdiction, yet seems to have significantly affected philosophical discourse in Italy. Vernia appears to have revised his views, recanting after the decree, an act that Nardi considered to be intellectually dishonest, as he bended to the Catholic Church's will. Yet, Mahoney (1976) saw Vernia as reacting to the climate of Renaissance humanism, influenced by his reading of Greek commentators. Similarly, Kessler (1988) perceived Vernia to have been similar to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, in that he weakened the authority of Aristotle and Averroes, while enlarging the body of ancient authorities and trying to find consensus among them. Hasse, however, dismisses Vernia's justification of having been persuaded by the Greek commentators. He construes his use of them to be consistent with Thomas's critiques and calls the affair a “sad case” in that Vernia was a victim of ecclesiastical overreach (Hasse 2016, 203–5). Vernia's later treatise, which rejected Averroes' “insane position,” probably written in 1492, but not printed until 1504, was endorsed by Barozzi and a panel of theologians. Nevertheless, it is possible that at least vestiges of Averroism remain, as Vernia cited Albert the Great's (ca. 1200–1280) views on the intellect, which closely mirror the *duo-subiecta* position. The broader ramifications of the Vernia affair can be seen in the arrival, or renewal, of censorship on philosophy in Italy. For example, even though Barozzi's censure did not extend to Bologna, its effects might be seen in the works of Alessandro Achillini (ca. 1461–1512) who lectured there. Achillini argued that Averroes' unicity was the most probable interpretation of Aristotle, yet it does not conform to either religion or the truth, suggesting that the unicity thesis was philosophically compelling to him and that, by tempering philosophical arguments with concessions to faith, he was engaging in self-suppression.

In the years after Vernia's reversal, Agostino Nifo (ca. 1470–1538) was probably the most important exponent of Averroism, in both the sense of general expertise, as editor and super-commentator on Averroes, and in the sense of participating in debates about the unicity of the material intellect. Born in southern Italy, Nifo studied under Vernia in Padua, where he also taught, before moving to Naples and Salerno, sometime around 1500. Nifo, like Vernia, altered his views about the unicity thesis. Also like Vernia, after being accused of heresy, Barozzi approved Nifo's revised discussions of Averroes (Hasse 2016, 209–210). Nifo repeatedly equated Averroes' views with Aristotle's. Nonetheless, he contended that where Averroes contradicts faith, he in fact errs. In many passages of his *De intellectu*, written around 1492 but first printed in 1502, Nifo rejected the unicity thesis yet presented arguments that appear to support the Averroistic understanding of the soul, including the *duo-subiecta* thesis. In this work, the most emphatic dismissals of Averroes theory of the soul derive not from natural philosophy but from ethics. Nifo argued that what derives from sensation is less certain than the moral truths that stem from religion and revelation. Nifo, influenced not just by Averroes, but by Albert the Great and Plotinus, represents to some an example of Renaissance syncretic tendencies (Holland 2013).

Despite these reversals, or perhaps as a result of them, ecclesiastical censures against the unicity thesis were reinforced at the Fifth Lateran Council. In 1513, the Council promulgated the bull *Apostolici regiminis* that forbade challenging the immortality of the individual soul and, thereby, explicitly condemned teaching the unicity thesis, along with the mortality of the human soul and the eternity of the world. The immediate effect of the bull was limited, and there were even theologians present who dissented (Martin 2014, 60–61). The most vehement debates about the nature of the soul of the Renaissance took place in the decade that followed the Council, after Pomponazzi published *De immortalitate animae*. The participants in the debate openly discussed and even defended the specific propositions condemned by the bull. Pomponazzi argued that according to the philosophical principles of Aristotle it is

probable that the human soul is mortal. Reversing his earlier view that Averroes and Aristotle agreed but were wrong about the unicity of the material intellect, Pomponazzi contended that Averroes' view was fatuous and inconsistent with Aristotelian natural philosophy. Pomponazzi faced threats of heresy charges, which never materialized, as well as attacks from Nifo, who among his other charges, accused Pomponazzi of misinterpreting Averroes.

In those years, Nifo continued to defend his interpretation of Averroes, even if he did not accept it as true, most famously in his exchanges with Pomponazzi and then Luca Prassicio (died ca. 1530). Nifo accused Pomponazzi of falsely positing that Averroes held that, in addition to the immortal intellect that acts as the *forma informans*, humans possess a mortal sensitive soul. Prassicio, in turn, attacked Nifo for misconstruing Averroes. Following John of Jandun, Prassicio accused Nifo of mangling Averroes, most importantly for not recognizing that the intellect acts as a *forma assistens* of the body. For Prassicio, this interpretation was also a way of defending Averroes as positing an immortal soul, despite his recognition that the theory ran counter to Christian dogma. Later, the Jandunian interpretation won over Marco Antonio Genua (1491–1563), who, while lecturing on the *De anima* at Padua, endorsed Averroes reading of Aristotle and linked it to Simplicius's commentary. At the same time, Genua conceded that Aristotle erred, unlike Plato, as his understanding of the soul contradicts Christian theology (Nardi 1958, 452; Hasse 2016, 219–221). In the decades that followed, Francesco Vimercato (1512–1571) and Antonio Bernardi (1502–1565) also endorsed Averroes' reading of the soul, while denouncing it as incompatible with the truths of religion. In doing so, they closed out the long Renaissance tradition of Averroist psychology.

The Decline of Averroism

A number of factors, such as changes in philosophical practice, the revival of Thomism after the Council of Trent, the growth of reading Aristotle in Greek, and internal philosophical

developments, contributed to the decline of Averroism in the last decades of the sixteenth century. The diminishing influence of Averroes is perhaps most easily seen in the lack of adherents to the unicity thesis, as his commentaries continued to be read and cited, particularly by professors in northern Italy, including Giacomo Zabarella and Cesare Cremonini, both of whom refuted the unicity thesis.

In the aftermath of the Reformation, instruction in philosophy changed. Lutheran universities, most notably Wittenberg, while continuing to teach natural philosophy based on Aristotle, were less prone to discuss the multitude of opinions found in late-medieval and early Renaissance lectures, as they aimed to dismiss the scholastic tradition as unhelpful and irrelevant. Alternatively, new curricula designed by Jesuits, specifically deemphasized Averroes' views about the soul. The second scholastic harkened back to the medieval interpretations of Aristotle. The proliferations of editions of Aristotle in Greek – even the Coimbrans' commentary on the *De anima* (1592) contained a version of the Greek text – slowly undermined the authority of the Latin commentary tradition on Aristotle in general.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Aristotelian natural philosophy faced numerous competitors, first from the so-called Neoterics, such as Francesco Patrizi (1529–1597) and Telesio, and then by proponents of the new sciences, such as Galileo Galilei and René Descartes (1596–1650). Increasingly, in the seventeenth century, as Aristotelianism waned, the name of Averroes became synonymous with impiety, much as it was for Renaissance humanists, associated not just with the unicity thesis but also with the denial of providence. Emphasizing his impiety and proximity to Aristotle was a means to attack Aristotelianism in general. At the end of the seventeenth century, Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) maintained, most likely truthfully, that no one read Averroes any more (Martin 2015).

Hasse points to internal developments as also contributing to the decline of Averroism, in particular the new Aristotelian theories of the intellect by Philip Melancthon (1497–1560), Giacomo Zabarella, and Francisco Suárez

(1548–1617), that preserved intellection and the individuality of the soul (Hasse 2016, 224–229). It might be added that in a certain sense the success of Pomponazzi's materialist reading of the soul rendered Averroes' position less prominent, as a number of seventeenth-century intellectuals, even if they rejected the mortality of the soul, nevertheless saw it as an accurate reading of Aristotle, and a motivation for forging new philosophies (Martin 2014, 145–168).

Impact and Legacy

The impact and legacy of Renaissance Averroism is perhaps greater in the historiography of the early modern period, as a phenomenon key to understanding the emergence of modernism, the impact of Arabic philosophy in the Renaissance, and ideals of rationalism and faith, than it was on later philosophical thinkers. While Averroes influenced later thinkers, it is difficult to discern the impact of thinkers such as Vernia, Nifo, Prassicio, and Vimercato on later early modern and modern philosophy, especially if the definition is restricted to issues surrounding the unicity of the material intellect. While Bayle, who saw Averroism as a pantheistic philosophy akin to Spinozism that recurred throughout human history, included an entry on Nifo in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, he dwelt little on his Averroism. Bayle discussed in depth Pomponazzi, Zabarella, and other Renaissance Aristotelians, who in a strict sense were not Averroists, in order to expose what he considered to be the absurd limitations on and censures of Cartesianism (Piaia 2002). Given a more expansive definition of Renaissance Averroism, such as expertise in Averroes, more influences can be identified. For example, Carlos Fraenkel argues that Spinoza broke with Elijah Del Medigo's Averroistic understanding of the duties of philosophers with regard to the allegories of scripture (Fraenkel 2013).

Perhaps, the most significant legacy of Renaissance Averroism is in the historiographical tradition inaugurated by Renan, which sees these thinkers as exponents of rationalism that countered the repression of the Church or as libertines

avant la lettre, that used subterfuges to disseminate heretical ideas. While the anachronism of such a reading has been noted, Renaissance Averroists' place as both the target of Renaissance humanists' and the object of Thomists' vehement condemnations will likely ensure the persistence of the interpretation of them as impious and linguistically unrefined. Attempts to portray Averroists as scheming and impious, however, should be counterbalanced by the realization that some Averroistic interpretations relied on and conformed to Albert the Great's writings, and that definitions of religious orthodoxy were contested and changed substantially during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

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Ayala, Balthasar

► [Balthasar de Ayala](#)

Ayala, Balthazar

► [Balthasar de Ayala](#)

Azpilcueta, Martín de

Born: 13, December, 1492, Barasoain (Spain)

Died: 21, June, 1586, Rome (Italy).

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Abstract

Martin de Azpilcueta Jaureguizar is one of the most relevant members of the School of Salamanca together with Francisco de Vitoria and Domingo de Soto. Also known as *Doctor Navarrus* or just *Navarrus*, he was a leading figure in Canon Law and Moral Theology of the sixteenth Century. Nowadays, he is better known as an original and pioneer economic thinker; he was indeed the first to make the clear and definite statement of the quantity theory of money. He is also the discoverer of the Purchasing Power Standards of the foreign-exchange. On Social politics, he held in a speech addressed to the Emperor Charles V the democratic origin of the power and the indirect power of the Church on terrestrial issues.

Alternate Names

[Doctor Navarro](#); [Doctor Navarrus](#); [de Azpilcueta Jaureguizar](#), [Martín](#); [Navarrus](#)

Biography

Born in a noble family in the small villa of Barasoain (Navarre, Spain), Martin de Azpilcueta studied Latin, Rethorics, and Dialectics. In 1508, accepted as one of the first 24 students of the newly founded Colegio San Ildefonso, he moved into the University of Alcalá de Henares, where he got the bachelor in Theology. In 1516, he enrolled in the University of Toulouse and, seven years later, he got the PhD in Canon and Civil Laws. He lectured in both in the University of Cahors

(1522) and in the University of Toulouse. In 1524, having refused the offer of becoming councilor of the Parliament in Paris, he moved to the monastery of Roncesvalles to profess as a regular canon of Saint Augustin – he was ordained in 1515 – but shortly after, he departed to the University of Salamanca to be a lecturer in Canon and Civil law. At that time, the Spanish universities would not accept PhDs obtained abroad, so he earned for a second time (1531) the PhD in Canon and Civil Laws. In Salamanca, he became a very renowned lecturer; his *lectiones* on the *Commentaria in septem distinctiones de poenitentia*, which followed the *Edictum Gratiani*, were attended up to 1000 students, something unheard of. Among the attendants of his lectures stand out Diego de Covarrubias (1512–1577), Arias Pinelo, Francisco Sarmiento, and Pedro Deza (1526–1600). In 1528, the Emperor Charles V listened to the *lectio* addressed by the *Navarrus* on the first property of the kingdom. The Emperor offered him both a position in the Royal Council of Navarre and a canonry in the Cathedral of Pamplona, but Azpilcueta refused them. In 1537, he got the Prima Cathedra of Canons, and shortly after, in 1538, the Emperor asked him to move into the University of Coimbra to occupy the same Professorship held in Salamanca. In Portugal, he gained the appreciation of the king Juan III who, in 1539, appointed him Chancellor of the University and guaranteed to him a permanent monthly salary of 1000 ducats. In 1555, his relationship with the University of Coimbra concluded, and the following year, willing to resume his very much appreciated writings and studies, *Navarrus* returned to Spain, where Philip II offered him both a position in the Council of Castilla and a second one in the Inquisition. Azpilcueta refused both, together with a bishopric Juan III would bid him in a posterior visit to Portugal. Back in Navarre, Philip II requested the *Doctor Navarrus* to defend from the charge of Erasmism presented by the Inquisition Fray Bartolomé de Carranza Miranda, the Archbishop of Toledo, and Cardenal Primate of Spain. The case would be the high point of Azpilcueta's juridical career. The process began in Valladolid, where the Archbishop stayed imprisoned, in 1561. Six years later, *Doctor Navarrus*, due to the unreasonable delays and

the political intrigues, demanded the case to be transferred to the Vatican incurring so the enmity of the King, main guarantor of the honor of the Inquisition. In Rome, Azpilcueta combined his defense of the Archbishop with the positions appointed by both the Pope Pius V and Charles Cardinal Borromeo, first of advisor in the Supreme Penitentiary Tribunal and then of Major Penitentiary. His fame was such that Pius V did try twice – in 1570 and 1572 – to designate him Cardinal, but the Philip's II antipathy impeded it. Nevertheless, *Doctor Navarrus* enjoyed the friendship of the Popes Pius V, Gregory XIII, and Sixtus V, to whom also counseled. In 1586, at the age of 93, Azpilcueta died in Rome where he was buried in the national Church of San Antonio de' Portoghesi.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Doctor Navarrus exemplifies better than many of his contemporaries the spirit of the universities in the epoch. In a time where many questions on the limits of the Church and the Civil Power raised, he, together with his colleagues of the School of Salamanca, strained on updating the accustomed medieval canons and customs in order to address the Church and Civil powers to their fair exercise. Azpilcueta coped successfully with many arising issues, which were to induce a theological renaissance. Among the factors which provoked it, there were theological factors, such as the Protestant reforms, and nontheological ones, such as the new idea of man and society, the European demographic expansion, the surge of modern national states, the discovery of the New World, the massive affluence of precious metals, the new markets in the Indies, the development of banking activities, the new forms of payment, etc.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Navarrus, unlike the canonical doctrine of the time, endeavored both to promote a reform of customs and to form the conscience of a society needful of amendment in the ecclesiastic discipline. Aware that neither the *Ius Decretalium* nor

the Canons inherited from the Medieval Age could give, in their customary form, the correct answers to the ethical problems arising up, Azpilcueta sought in the tradition, specially, in the *Edictum Gratiani*, perennial criteria upon which base the canonical principia. Convinced that the foundation of a moral opinion should not be supported by speculative arguments, but by the texts or *auctoritates* endorsing it, and conscious that the regular medieval inert repetition of the *formulae* was not useful anymore, he struggled successfully to clarify different canonical areas on specific living problems which demanded enormous erudition and very good criteria. So by safeguarding his own conventions on different matters, by pointing out some lacks of the authors and, occasionally, by confronting contemporary ones, *Doctor Navarrus* gathered everything right and valid from the theologians and canonists from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries to reach the convergence of the different doctrines. Thus, by offering the possibility of the inclusion of many normative, doctrinal, and historical erudition and by keeping the scholastic exposition of the jurist, that is, by making continue references to the authors instead of stating new rules, he changed forever the status of the Moral Theology from a prescientific *ars* to an independent scientific discipline.

Azpilcueta, troubled as he was by the realms of the salvation of souls, bothered himself with many branches of knowledge and showed a great concern in writing morally profitable dissertations.

Impact and Legacy

It is almost impossible to list all of the editions of *Doctor Navarrus*'s production for, besides being a very prolific writer, he was very keen on the accuracy of his texts, to the point that he would attend his publications making corrections, additions, etc. Still, his writings can be classified under four major groups: (1) Canon Law, on which he treated many living problems under the form of commentaries to the *Edictum Gratiani*. (2) Moral Theology, on which the most important writing is the *Manual de confesores y penitentes* (1556) later known as *Enchiridion sive manuale*

confessariorum et poenitentium (1573). (3) Ascetic and spiritual writings: *Enchiridion sive manuale de oratione, et horis canonicis*, Roma, 1577–1578 (Lyon, 1580; Roma, 1586), *Commentarius de paupertate* (1575). (4) Apologetic works: *Carta apologética a Don Gabriel de la Cueva (Duque de Alburquerque)* (1571).

Azpilcueta's most important doctrinal contributions were in the two leading fields of the time, Canon Law and Moral Theology. Fields on which Lawrence Beyerlinck granted him to be the greatest jurist among the theologians and the greatest theologian among the jurists.

His lectures, both in Salamanca and in Coimbra, on the *Edictum Gratiani*, addressed in order to raise its authority, were collected in the *Commentaria in septem distinctiones de poenitentia* (1581). In them, Azpilcueta deals with the most difficult titles of the Decretals together with the comments to the Decree. *Navarrus* maintains the order of the text set by Gracian but distributes the seven distinctions of the penance in three basic groups: (A) The relation of the penance with the justification and the implantation of the virtues. (B) The fundamental doctrine of the penance: the relations between the contrition, the sacrament of penance, and the reparation; the need of confession for the remission and the obligation of the confession of the sins; the contrition and the will to confess; the inner penance and the sacrament of penance. (C) The authoritative principles of the administration of penance that stand out for their pastoral dimension according to which the ecclesiastical nature confers a customary power of absolving which can only be exercised over a faithful subject liable to a particular priest. Ideas he later completed in works such as the *Commentarius de anno iubeleo et indulgentiis omnibus* (Milán 1573; Roma 1575, 1585), the *Commentarius de silentio in divinis officiis praesertim in choro servando* (1580, 1584), *Miscellanea centum de oratione, praesertim de psalterio et Rosario Virginis matris Mariae* (1586), the *Commentarius de oratione, horis canonicis atque aliis divinis officiis* (1590).

In the *Tratado de las Rentas de los beneficios eclesiásticos* (1566) or *Tractatus de redditibus beneficiorum ecclesiasticorum* (1568), Azpilcueta defends the doctrine on benefits of the revenues,

that is, on the right that assists the beneficiaries regarding the reimbursements of ecclesiastical profits. For him, the beneficiary's right over the revenues of the benefit does not convert them in the owner of the profits neither does it allow them to dispose of them by the inter vivos act or by testament. On this subject, he also asserts that beneficed clergymen are free to expend the fruits of their benefices only for their own necessary support and that of the poor. In addition, he also declares that the use of money in exchanges is natural, and that money is on the same level as any other merchandise, and so the morality of exchanges does not depend on money as their object, but on an equitable exchange.

In the *Relectio cap. "Novit,"* (1548) *Doctor Navarrus* was the first to formulate the doctrine of the indirect power of the Church in terrestrial issues and the origin of the civil power. He considered that everything instituted in order to an end is ordered, instituted, and contracted according to what that end demands. Thus, he follows, it happens that God's celestial power has been instituted both, to govern supernatural realities and to direct mortals to eternal life; and so, it extends to the temporary only insofar as it is required by the reason of the supernatural and not beyond. He also specifies that, as of the doctrine that knows the divine origin of power, the secular power is given immediately by God, who confers the authority to the community for their being the primary subject, the first depository of the secular power. Thus, the real power is by natural right of the community, who cannot renounce to it, and not of the king, who, save for few exceptions, is always the second cause.

Azpilcueta also applied himself to the administration of the Church and to the inquisitorial functions of the magistrates. Themes on which he disserted in writings such as *In capt. "Si quanto,"* "*De rescriptis,*" (1543) *Relectio in cap. "Cum contingat,"* "*De rescriptis,*" (1575) y *Commentarius de datis et promissis pro iustitia vel gratia obtinendis*, (1575) *Consilia et responsa* (1601). Convinced that the trial-processes have more to do with the virtue of justice than with prudence, *Doctor Navarrus* in the *Commentarius utilis in rubricam "De iudicis"* (1548) provides the judge with solid moral criteria to strengthen

his will for justice. He instructed the judge to acquit the convict if the accuser does not prove what he alleges; he also reminds that the judge sins gravely if, lacking sufficient evidence, he strains the convict to answer under torture or oath.

On Moral Theology, his *Enchiridion o Manual de Confesores y penitentes* (1556) or the *Enchiridion sive manuale confessoriorum et poenitentium* (1573) is without any doubt, together with the *Commentaria in septem distinctiones de poenitentia* (1581, 1586), his most influential work. Dedicated to the sister of Philip II, the Princess Juana, Azpilcueta's friend and patroness, it was originally written in Portuguese, and, due to its great success, it was reprinted 81 times between 1549 and 1625 – translated into Spanish, Italian and Latin – by himself in Rome in 1573. As in the *De poenitentia*, the brilliance of the text lies on *Doctor Navarrus's* ability to structure systematically the moral precepts to the point of switching the Moral Theology to an independent scientific discipline.

The organization of the *Manuale* by *Navarrus* made needless the burden of having to read over and over the medieval *Sumae* to inform about an issue. Azpilcueta arranges the *Enchiridion* in 26 chapters which can be thematically grouped in two major sections of ten chapters and a third containing the remaining six. The ten first chapters expose the guiding criteria of the sacrament of penance and the acts of the penitent and the confessor; the next ten explain the moral duties arising from each of the commandments of the Decalogue. The remaining chapters explain the following commandments: the 21st, the five of the Church, the 22nd, those concerning the Sacraments, the 23rd those on Pride and Deadly Sins, the 24th those on the external senses and the Works of Mercy and Fraternal correction, the 25th the sins of the various states; and the last chapter, the 26th, the duties of the Church.

Nevertheless, the importance of the handbook lies fundamentally on Azpilcueta's treatment of the ethical aspect of the commercial transactions. Meant to provide moral guidance for pastors and penitents, the *Manuale* surpasses the boundaries of the Catholic Catechism for its indirect analysis of sixteenth-century economic realities –

explorations on exchange practices, supply and demand, and the nature of money, etc. – to become the main milestone for the transformation of the Moral Theology into an independent scientific discipline. The growing commercial transactions rose in Azpilcueta the interest for the treatment of money as a base for the moral regulation of economic dealings among citizens of the same country and of different nations. To them he devoted the five *appendices* of the *Manuale* in the edition of 1556: el *Comentario resolutorio de cambios*, *Sobre la usura*, *Commentarius de usuris*, in *Cap. “Si feneraveris,” la Simonia*, en la *Defensa del prójimo y el hurto*. Out of which the most relevant will be the *Comentario resolutorio de cambios*.

In these added commentaries to the *Manuale*, *Doctor Navarrus* explains that the value of the money is not determined by nominal and metallic factors but by its interrelationships with goods. Supporting the commonly held view that the value of money, like that of goods, varies according to supply and demand, *Navarrus* first defines the quantity theory of money. A theory whose foundations had been laid by medieval writers, but which Azpilcueta brought to life because he had witnessed in first-hand the rising of prices and wages in Spain as a result of the imports of American gold and silver.

Doctor Navarrus wrote on pure moral-science itself the three following contributions: *De finibus humanorum actuum* (1571), in which he solves how the ends alter the acts of virtue or the sins; the *Commentarius in cap. “Inter verba”* (1584, 1588) about how honor, praise, and good reputation should be based on the truth and the testimony of one’s conscience; the *Commentarius in cap. “Humanae aures”* (1583) on the difficult problem of the possible legality of an amphibological response for a just cause that can be presented to a confessor or to any other person sued and interrogated in court.

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Bacon, Francis

Born: 22 January 1561 Strand, London, UK

Died: 9 April 1626 Highgate, UK

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Abstract

The general aim of Francis Bacon's philosophy was the reformation of human knowledge, with the intent to put it into practice and use it for the benefit of humankind. He criticized Aristotelian-Scholastic philosophy on the grounds that its method was unable to bring about progress. Bacon's method of induction was the antidote to the idleness of previous philosophies, and it had a twofold function. First, it was supposed to eradicate the errors and idols from human mind, so that this could become like a polished mirror in which the nature could reflect itself, leading to the cultivation of virtues and elimination of vices. Second, it was supposed to discover the inner structure of matter and its activity. This was done by gradual abstraction and, most important, with the help of experiments. Bacon's emphasis on experience and the use of experiments as the right tools to be employed in the study of nature was an idea that influenced future generations of philosophers, and it

is considered a building stone in the establishment of the societies of knowledge founded in the second half of the seventeenth century. Bacon contended that his method of induction should be employed beyond the study of nature into other disciplines, such as ethics. This enterprise, he believed, would bring about not only knowledge, but also welfare and happiness.

Alternate Names

[Lord Verulam, Francis Bacon; Viscount St. Albans](#)

Biography

Francis Bacon was born in London, on January 22, 1561. His father, Nicholas Bacon, was the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England during the reign of Elizabeth I. His mother was Anne (Cooke) Bacon, the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, the tutor of Henry the VIII's son, Prince Edward. All the Cooke sisters, including Anne, were successfully matched with powerful men, providing the Bacon family with important political connections. Moreover, Francis and his older brother Anthony received a very good humanistic education from their mother, which is prominent in Bacon's later writings.

When he was 12 years old, Francis went with his brother Anthony to study in Cambridge.

There, at Trinity College, they continued receiving a humanistic education. In 1576, at age 15, Francis travelled to Paris with the British ambassador. He remained there for almost 3 years, only returning to England in January 1579 upon hearing of his father's unexpected death. Though Sir Nicholas arranged profitable marriages and set a good inheritance for all his older children (two with Anne and six with his first wife), he died before making any arrangement for the youngest, Francis. This fact affected Bacon for the rest of his life, who struggled to pay his monthly expenses, was arrested for debt; and even in his wealthy years, he was in debt due to his flamboyant and expensive lifestyle. The financial problems would be a recurrent theme throughout his life.

After his return to England, Bacon went to Grey's Inn, one of the four inns of the court, professional associations for barristers and judges in London. In 1581, he joined Parliament, and in 1584 he became part of the committee dealing with the redress of disorders in common informers. In the same period, he also tried to receive advancement at the Inn, but unsuccessfully. Moreover, his attempts to expedite an early promotion to full bench status before he was fully eligible created problems at Grey's Inn. However, with the help of his uncle, Lord Burghley, Bacon was promoted in the spring of 1586 and even attended the pensions, the governing council of the inn. In 1588, he was elected Reader, possibly with the direct intervention of Queen Elizabeth.

However, the queen's attitude toward Bacon grew less favorable after he argued for granting her fewer subsidies in 1593. This affected Bacon's career, making his promotion impossible, a fact that led Bacon to considering dedicating his life to study. However, this did not happen. Bacon continued to be a member of the Parliament, even though without a crown office, and he was employed by the queen in several legal capacities. The Earl of Essex, Bacon's patron and friend, tried to intervene and bring him back on the political stage, but the auspicious situation changed for Essex himself. Judged guilty in 1600 for his decisions during his campaign in Ireland, Essex was dismissed from all political offices. Bacon also

spoke against the Earl of Essex and it has been considered that he might have influenced queen's attitude against Essex. Essex was eventually executed for treason in 1601, and it was Bacon who wrote the official account.

Bacon's situation improved after the coronation of James I in 1603, whom Bacon supported and whose favor he gained by appealing to his pretence of being erudite. The same year, he was dubbed Sir Francis Bacon, a promise made by Elizabeth but never fulfilled. Later, in 1607, after continuing to serve in the Parliament with a somewhat anomalous status, Bacon finally received a crown office – that of Solicitor-General, which provided him with a good annual income. However, only 1 year later, in 1608, he became Clerk of the Star Chamber, and then in 1613, Attorney-General. This time period coincides with the beginning of Bacon's prolific writing of natural philosophical texts. In 1605, he published *The Advancement of Learning*, dedicated to the king, followed by *De sapientia veterum* in 1609. Several other works circulated in form of manuscript over the next few years. Also, in 1606, Francis Bacon married Alice Burnham, the daughter of the deceased Sherrieff of London, whose stepfather had arranged a high dowry for her. Later on, Bacon tried to make use of his relation to her family: he settled the marriage of one of Alice's sisters and tried to instrument another one for his own financial benefit (Jardine and Stewart 1998).

As Attorney-General, Bacon's ascension continued, given that he played key roles in several political matters and off-stage affairs, through which he secured his position. In 1617, Bacon became the Lord Keeper, an office once held by his father. Bacon's fortune became even more favorable when, as a result of his activity and connections (in this case with the Duke of Buckingham, George Villiers), was made Lord Chancellor in January 1618 and in July of the same year, Baron Verulam of Verulam.

In the next couple of years, though Bacon's political activity was intense, his image started to become undermined: his ostentatious entrances were criticized and his rhetorical style mocked. This setback, combined with the cumulative effect of a series of minor challenges, led to

Bacon's fall from political office in 1621 (Jardine and Stewart 1998, p. 433). Though in January 1621, again with the help of Buckingham, Bacon is made Viscount Saint Alban, he was charged with accepting bribes 2 months later. From the initial two cases, the final charge numbered twenty-eight counts. Bacon gave up his original intention to defend himself for each particular case and gave a generalized submission for all the charges. It is believed that this happened because the king wanted to protect Buckingham by sacrificing Bacon (Jardine and Stewart 1998). This would also explain why neither the king nor Buckingham intervened for Bacon. After Bacon sent the submission for each charge, he was punished with a £40,000 fine, imprisoned in the Tower of London, and dismissed from the parliament and all public offices. His title, however, was not suspended. After only a few nights of imprisonment in the Tower of London, he was released. Bacon hoped to regain his status but was asked to retire to Gorhambury, his residence.

Bacon spent the last 5 years of his life working on his philosophical writings and performing experiments, though he never lost hope of returning to politics, and even served on the Privy Council in the last years of James' reign. It was during this time when he completed or rewrote several writings that had started in the early years and published most of his parts of the *Great Instauration*. During a trip, Bacon fell ill and died at the Earl of Arundel's house in Highgate, near London. In one of his last letters, Bacon claimed that he would die as Pliny the Elder, "by trying an experiment." The story that he got a cold as a result of preserving chickens in snow is probably nothing more than an anecdote, but it is very likely that he was indeed studying the processes of preservation and induration of bodies. It might also be, given the descriptions of the symptoms, that he was trying to cure his illnesses with soporiferous substances (Jardine and Stewart 1998). Though Bacon wanted to be buried in St. Alban, it was later discovered he was not buried there, a fact that gave birth to several conspiracy theories. Moreover, the financial issues that had bothered Bacon during his lifetime continued, with his will and possessions creating

several difficulties for his servants, wife, and creditors. His manuscripts were published in the following years by William Rawley, Bacon's last secretary and amanuensis, and by Isaac Gruter, who had inherited the papers from William Boswell, Bacon's brother-in-law.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Throughout the history, Bacon was considered to be the first promoter of experimental philosophy and of the inductive method. Bacon criticized the Aristotelian-Scholastic philosophy, which was a prevalent view of the universities in the beginning of the seventeenth century. In doing so, he emphasized the importance of studying nature through experimentation, and not through mere observation or analysis of ancient philosophical texts. Moreover, Bacon was equally critical of his contemporaries for not finding the right method able to advance human knowledge. Despite his openly critical attitude, Bacon's relation with the past philosophies is in fact a highly complex one: he admits that there are seeds of knowledge in the ancient and modern authors which should be both valued and used, something he does himself. However, his sources are difficult to capture given Bacon's eclecticism and the lack of references to these sources.

Bacon's attitude toward received philosophies seems to have changed over the course of his life, from very critical to more moderate. In Bacon's early works, such as the unpublished *Cogitata et visa* (*Thoughts and Conclusions*) and *Redargutio philosophiarum* (*Refutation of Philosophies*) (written in 1607 and 1608, respectively), what is at stake is the criticism and rejection of past philosophies. This rejection is crucial, according to Bacon, in order to make the advancement of science possible; otherwise, these philosophies will keep obstructing the acquisition of knowledge. In the *Cogitata et visa*, Bacon affirms that all previous theories, opinions, and notions should be brushed away, so that the mind can be brought in contact with facts without any bias. Several of the ideas exposed in these early texts are to be found in later published works,

particularly the first book of the *Novum organum* (1620) where Bacon discusses the current state of natural philosophy before presenting his own method. However, in his later writings, Bacon is more charitable toward tradition, affirming that he would spend time on received ideas, with the aim of perfecting them and of gaining access to new ones through them.

Another important aspect of his relationship with tradition is the fact that Bacon challenged the status of authoritative figures and texts. According to him, if philosophers worship ancient authority they are merely teachers exposing the ideas of those authors, but not inventors and thus there can be no progress. The only authority one should accept is nature itself. That is why received opinions and theories have to be tested and confronted with facts prior to being accepted in the body of knowledge or rejected from it. As expected, his criticism aims at both the Aristotelian-Scholastic philosophy and that of his contemporaries. His solution for the lack of progress is a method that follows the order of nature in acquiring theoretical knowledge, while protecting the mind as much as possible from error. This is Bacon's method of induction, which in fact should be applied to all areas of knowledge.

The Criticism of the Previous Philosophies

When it comes to refuting previous philosophers and criticizing the deplorable state of philosophy, Aristotle's name is the one repeatedly reoccurring in Bacon's writings, starting with the early ones. He gives two main criticisms toward Aristotle: first, that his philosophy was infested by logic and, second, that his philosophy corrupted almost the entirety of philosophy produced after him. Starting with the second concern, according to Bacon, Aristotle was guilty for having reduced many splendid intellects to mental slavery, being responsible for the "deplorable state" of Scholastic philosophy, and in consequence, for the lack of advancement of knowledge for hundreds of years. As for the first issue, the infestation of philosophy with logic, Bacon contented that, instead of engaging in studying nature, Aristotle busied himself with comparing, contrasting, and analyzing notions about

nature. His use of the syllogism was not adequate to capture the subtlety and obscurity of nature. Against Aristotle's deductive method, Bacon proposed his induction as the only suitable way to investigate nature. Moreover, even if in the biological writings Aristotle mentioned experience, Bacon concluded that in fact Aristotle first established some theories and then he provided some empirical evidences that were in agreement with his theories. Thus, he is more blameworthy than his Scholastic followers, who completely ignored experience.

Plato was, for Bacon, a man with a deeper understanding than Aristotle because he engaged with the knowledge of forms and he employed induction. However, Bacon suggests that Plato actually failed in both – because his forms were abstract and his induction was based on superficial and vulgar materials. Bacon's conclusion is that Plato's writings on natural philosophy have thus no foundation in facts. In a similar way in which Aristotle mixed philosophy with logic, Plato corrupted it by mixing it with theology.

According to Bacon, pre-Socratic philosophers such as Anaxagoras, Leucippus, Democritus, Parmenides, Empedocles, and Heraclitus all advanced ideas closer to truth than those of Aristotle or Plato, because they all conceived, in different ways, primary matter as having the source of activity in itself. The only exception is Pythagoras, who Bacon insists founded a religious order, and not a school of philosophy. Among the pre-Socratics, Democritus was the one to whom Bacon paid most tribute in his writings. He admired Democritus for having dissected nature instead of abstracting it like Plato and Aristotle. This is why he was the only one to arrive at "minima," the smallest particles of matter out of which all things are composed. Democritus, and other atomists, comprehended that the activity of nature is caused by some imperceptible entities within matter itself. Even if Bacon did not agree with all the premises of the atomist philosophy, such as the void, he still considered this theory to be closer to the truth than any other ancient theory.

Turning now to modern authors, in both the *Cogitata et visa* and *Redargutio philosophiarum*,

Bacon mentioned the new generation of philosophers (Bernardino Telesio, Girolamo Fracastoro, Girolamo Cardano, and William Gilbert), but only in order to criticize them. They should just be put together with the ancients, Bacon stated, because they either did not engage in a proper study of nature, or, if they did it was only with some specific experiments, which did not grasp the variety of nature. However, all of them influenced Bacon in various ways, either in his speculative or his experimental philosophy. Telesio was probably the one to whom Bacon attributed more importance. In 1612, he wrote a treatise, not published during his life, *De principiis atque originibus* (*On Principles and Origins*), in which he discussed the philosophy of Telesio, Parmenides, and Democritus. The book is an analysis of the fable of Cupid, which for Bacon is the symbol of atom, and it explains how nature was created from the first atom. Bacon argued against Parmenides and Telesio, both who claimed that there are two principles of things: fire and earth for Parmenides, and heat and cold for Telesio. Bacon considered that none of these can be principles because they are changing entities, and not immutable as principles should be.

Influence of Magic and Alchemy

Regarding the operative disciplines such as alchemy, magic, and mechanics, Bacon's attitude was critical but at the same time he admitted that the work of some members of these crafts is preferable to that of Scholastic natural philosophers. The reason for this preference is the fact that the former work with nature, while the latter take their ideas about nature from books, without making any use of experience. Alchemy, for example, reduced the study of nature to few experiments on distillation, separations, and liberation, and its speculative philosophy was full of errors and based on phantasy. While trying to produce gold, the alchemists made several discoveries from which human life benefitted. Magic, on the other hand, is based on fancies and superstitions and, instead of producing genuine effects, it only excites wonder. Moreover, their very few discoveries are trivial and akin to imposture. Finally, for mechanics Bacon had more admiration than for

the other practical arts. The mechanical arts are, according to Bacon, founded on nature and the light of experience and for this reason they flourish and always progress. Despite these criticisms, magic (and also alchemy to a lower extent) shaped the Baconian program: on the one hand, magic was using the natural powers of bodies to bring about practical ends; on the other hand, the only way to discover those powers was through trials and experiments. Both these ideas stay at the basis of the Baconian method (Henry 2002).

Bacon's Sources

There is still much work to be done in identifying Bacon's sources and in analyzing his originality in dealing with them. His philosophy has often been characterized as "eclectic." However, the variety of sources does not mean Bacon's system is not original and coherent at the same time. It is his fierce criticism toward most of the representative philosophers of both antiquity and modernity that makes following the influence these philosophers exercised upon Bacon's thought difficult. His humanist education can be easily seen from his works *The Advancement of Learning* or the *De augmentis scientiarum*. Ancient authors, especially the Stoics and Epicureans, influenced his ideas on matter. Bacon's natural and experimental histories are filled with experiments borrowed from natural magic (especially from Giambattista della Porta's *Magia naturalis*, second edition, 1589), alchemy, books of secrets and recipes, agriculture, etc. Another source for his more practical writings are the travel books, especially those about the New World, like Jose de Acosta's or Nicolas Monardes', and also those about other parts of the world, such as George Sandys' treatise. However, two of the most important sources of his natural histories remain Pliny the Elder's *Historia naturalis* and Pseudo-Aristotle's *Problemata*.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Great Instauration

Bacon's solution to the errors generated by the previous philosophies (both ancient and modern)

was his inductive method. The idea of induction appeared in his early unpublished works and was developed in the *Instauratio magna*, Bacon's project for the reformation of knowledge. Bacon considers that induction is the method that gradually gathers information about nature and brings it to the understanding, which creates axioms, first middle axioms, and then general ones. Put it differently, induction starts from the variety of particulars and arrives at the universals, or what Bacon considers "forms." First, facts are collected, then ordered into tables, and lastly generalizations can be made, on the basis of the information from the tables. Theoretical knowledge or axioms, even less general ones, which do not arrive at universals, are accepted as long as no contradictory instance can be found.

This method was supposed to eliminate the four main problems of the current natural philosophy: (1) that the information provided by the senses is not accurate; (2) that notions are poorly abstracted from the impressions of the senses; (3) that induction based on enumeration, without exclusions and separations, is useless; and (4) that establishing first general principles and then establishing middle axioms from these general ones is the "mother of all errors" (Bacon 1996-, vol. XI). This last point is connected to Bacon's distinction between anticipation and interpretation of nature. According to him, there are two ways to investigate nature. One goes from the senses and particulars to very general axioms, and it is from these general axioms that middle ones are inferred. This is the anticipation of nature, and it does not provide knowledge, because it is very easy for the mind to make mistakes in the passage from facts to general axioms. The other way is by drawing axioms from senses and particulars by degrees until it reaches the highest generality at the end of the process. This is the interpretation of nature, or induction. Bacon's induction should not be applied to natural philosophy only. He considered that other disciplines, such as logic, ethics, and politics, could benefit from his method. All these disciplines can start from the compilation of tables, and apply induction according to the nature of things.

In 1620, Bacon started publishing his project on the reformation of knowledge, the *Instauratio magna* (*The Great Instauration*). As the title of the project suggests, its aim was to provide a method that will help humankind regain its central role as the king of creation, which includes the knowledge Adam had before the fall of man. In turn, this knowledge will improve human life, providing new discoveries and resources. Human life can be improved if one discovers medicines, makes bigger crops, and produces objects that alleviate men's work. The *Instauratio magna* was planned to be composed of six parts:

1. *The Partitions of the Sciences*
2. *Novum organum*, or *Directions concerning the Interpretation of Nature*
3. *The Phenomena of the Universe*, or *Natural and Experimental History for the Building up of Philosophy*
4. *The Ladder of the Intellect*
5. *Precursors*, or *Anticipations of the Philosophy to Come*
6. *Philosophia Secunda, sive Scientia Activa*.

From the six, only the first part was finished, published under the title *De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum* (*On the Dignity and Advancement of Learning*, 1623, a development of the 1605 *The Advancement of Learning*). The second, the *Novum organum* (*The New Organon*) was planned to have six parts, but only two of them were published in 1620, together with the introduction to *Instauratio magna*, and the short treatise, *Parasceve at historiam naturalem et experimentalem* (*A Preparative to a Natural and Experimental History*), and a *Catalogue of particular histories*. Bacon planned six natural histories to form part of *The Phenomena of the Universe*, only two of which were published during Bacon's lifetime, *Historia ventorum* (*History of the Winds*) in 1622 and *Historia vitae et mortis* (*History of Life and Death*) in 1623. A third one, *Historia densi et rari* (*History of Dense and Rare*), appeared in 1658 and a fourth might have been written, *Historia gravis et levis* (*History of Heavy and Light*), but if so it is lost. From this last one and from other two, *Historia sympathiae et*

antipathiae rerum (*History of the Sympathy and Antipathy of Things*) and *Historia sulphuris, mercurij et salis* (*History of Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt*), only the introductions arrived to us, published with the *Historia ventorum* in 1622. (It is probable that only the introductions were ever written.) The last three parts of the *Instauratio magna* were never published, and only a fragment discovered later, the *Abececlarium novum naturae*, was probably prepared to compose the fourth part. This unfinished and fragmentary character of Bacon's works explains why Bacon's philosophy is not systematic, but it also represents a characteristic of Bacon's philosophy as collective and of his vision of his own philosophy as model and incentive to further investigation.

The Idols of the Human Mind

Bacon saw the relation between the mind and the human knowledge as a mirroring one: the human mind is a mirror in which nature should reflect itself. However, after the fall of man, the mirror stopped reflecting nature in an accurate way. Minds are now full of "idols," errors, and false notions. By idols, Bacon means natural tendencies and defects of the mind, which hinder the acquisition of knowledge. In the first book of the *Novum organum*, Bacon described four classes of idols. Some are innate, others are extrinsic: the innate are rooted in the nature of the intellect, which have a tendency to make errors, even more than the senses; the extrinsic idols enter the human mind either from dogmas and sects of philosophers, or from misguided laws of demonstration. The extrinsic idols can be eliminated, but the innate cannot. One can draw attention to the possibility of error, and the best weapon against them is to use induction, which has means of discovering a mismatch between nature and theories. Let's now discuss the four types of idols separately.

The "Idols of the Tribe" are rooted in the human nature. They originate from the evenness of the substance of the human spirit, its preconceptions, its narrowness, its restlessness, from contamination by the affections, or the inadequacy of the senses. It is because of these idols

that men do not look further than what is visible; and when they do, they abstract from nature rather than search what is in nature, such as spiritual matter, schematisms, and laws of motion.

The "Idols of the Cave" belong to the particular individual, and they arise either from someone's own nature, education, the books that person read, or from the impressions these all make on the soul; put it differently, they come from the tendency to excessive composition and division, from love of studying certain periods, or from contemplating large- or small-scale objects. Examples of this type are Aristotle, who made his philosophy a slave of logic, or William Gilbert, who created a philosophy explaining the entire natural world based on very few observations about magnets.

The "Idols of the Market" are derived from the mutual agreement and association of human race; they entered the mind because of alliances between words and names. They are either names of things that do not exist (such as "first mover," "the element fire") or names of things that are ill-defined and roughly abstracted from the things (such as "radical moisture").

The "Idols of the Theatre" (or "Theories") entered men's mind from the dogmas of the philosophers and misguided laws of demonstration. The cause of error resides in three kinds of false philosophy: Sophistical, Empirical, and Superstitious. The most illustrative example of the first class is Aristotle, who corrupted natural philosophy with dialectic; the second class invented theories based only on a few experiments, like the sect of the alchemists or William Gilbert; while the third mixed natural philosophy with theology, like Pythagoras and Plato.

The Disciplines of Knowledge

The first book of the *Instauratio Magna, De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum* (1623) contained the tree of knowledge, a scheme of all the disciplines pertaining to human knowledge. The *De augmentis* is an enlargement of the earlier treatise *The advancement of learning* (1605). The first book of both writings constitutes a eulogy of knowledge and a defence of it from all the possible attacks and criticisms raised by theologians and men of estate. Bacon argues that

knowledge can only lead to the improvement of human nature, by making men more devotional and eradicating heresy, by making them better citizens, by cultivating virtues and eliminating vices.

In the following books (one in the first short edition, expanded into eight in the *De augmentis*), Bacon exposes his structure of human knowledge, offering detailed definitions, descriptions, and illustration of all the disciplines of human knowledge. His own tree of knowledge is picking influences from Aristotle, medieval Christian authors, and humanists. The three main disciplines correspond to the three faculties of the mind: history corresponds to memory, poetry to imagination, and philosophy to reason. History can be natural or civil (the last can be further divided into ecclesiastical, literary, and civil); poetry can be narrative, dramatic, and parabolic; while philosophy can be of deity, of nature, and of man. These three branches meet in one trunk, which is "*Philosophia prima*," defined by Bacon as a receptacle for those axioms which are common to more than one science, even if not to all of them. The *Philosophia prima* also comprises the "Adventitious Conditions of Essence," such as Much and Little, Like and Unlike, or Possible and Impossible. Bacon compares his classification of sciences to the branches of a tree: in the same way in which the branches meet and are intertwined, in the same way one subject can be studied by more than one discipline, while information must be communicated from one discipline to another, leading to a better and quicker advancement of each of those disciplines.

Natural and Experimental History

For Bacon, knowledge of nature starts with the accumulation of natural histories. Before offering the readers his own histories, Bacon first criticizes the histories written by his contemporaries, and then he devotes himself to defining and illustrating how a proper natural and experimental history should be written and what it should contain in order to constitute the material for natural philosophy. At the end of the *Novum organum*, and before the *Historia naturalis et experimentalis*, Bacon includes a short treatise *Parasceve ad*

historiam naturalem (*Preparative for Natural History*). The main criticism toward the existing natural histories is that they only contain descriptions of nature and not reports of experimental practices. In order to be complete and to be used as material for induction, natural histories should contain three subdivisions: histories of generation (nature free); histories of monsters or preter-generations (nature erring); and histories of arts or experiments (nature bound). The last one is, according to Bacon, the most important.

The first two types of histories contain observations, so they are based on experience; the last is composed of experiments. The difference between experience and experiment is that experiments are "theorized experience" or "thought-after experience" (Fattori 2012). The compilation of natural and experimental histories is performed according to "learned experience," the art of proceeding from one experiment to another. The literate experience is seen by Bacon's commentators as either a method to order the material from natural histories into tables out of which axioms will be drawn (Jardine 1974), or as a help for the mind to generate natural histories and to keep under control the experimental variation of parameters (Jalobeanu 2015). There are several functions that experiments have in Bacon's natural histories, including but not limited to verification, illustration, and demonstration to concept-formation, exploration, classification, and modelling. Bacon himself divided experiments into two kinds: experiments of light (*experimenta lucifera*) and experiments of fruit (*experimenta fructifera*). The first are called of light because they are used to provide knowledge, while the second are called of fruit because they are oriented toward production. The natural and experimental histories compiled by Bacon have attracted scholarly attention due to the fact that they do not entirely follow Bacon's own guidelines. Instead of being collections of observations and experiments, they contain a great quantity of philosophy, which was supposed to be the next discipline in the hierarchy of knowledge. These histories contain not only observations and experimental reports, but also theories, explanations, advice to further experimentation, etc.

Philosophy of Nature

Bacon starts his analysis of natural philosophy by distinguishing it into speculative (also called natural science or theory) and operative (or natural prudence). Speculative natural philosophy seeks causes, while operative natural philosophy consists in the use of speculative knowledge for the production of effects: once we know the cause of a process, we can produce it artificially. Bacon followed Aristotle in considering that true knowledge is knowledge by causes; he also agreed on the existence of four causes: material, efficient, formal, and final. However, final causes are problematic for Bacon. In the *Novum organum*, Bacon says that they only relate to the actions of humans, and thus pursuing them only corrupts the progress of science. In the *De augmentis*, Bacon's attitude is slightly changed: final causes should be part of metaphysics, and not physics, because they constitute intentions and they presuppose a mind in nature.

Regarding speculative philosophy, Bacon first discriminates his approach from Aristotle's: if for Aristotle, the study of nature should start with individual bodies, for Bacon individuals are bundles of qualities, and the investigation should start with these qualities. They are pairs such as heat and cold, dense and rare, heavy and light, etc. These qualities, called by Bacon "schematisms" or "simple natures," can be known from the point of view of the three causes (material, efficient, and formal) and the type of cause is what further distinguishes between the disciplines of natural philosophy. The study of material and efficient cause pertains to physics. These causes are first variable, second dependent on matter, and third different for each individual that has the given quality. For example, fire is the cause of induration in clay, but the cause of melting in wax. The study of the formal cause is part of metaphysics. This cause, simply called "form" or "law," is common for all bodies that have this quality. The knowledge specific to metaphysics is thus more general and universal than the one of physics. For Bacon, natural knowledge is like a pyramid: natural and experimental histories constitute the basis of the pyramid, physics the middle because it investigates those causes that are variable and

dependent on matter, and metaphysics is the apex since it studies the universal and abstract causes.

Each of the two disciplines of speculative natural philosophy has an operative correspondent: mechanics uses the knowledge of physics in order to create effects, and natural magic applies that of metaphysics. Mechanics only imitates natural processes and translates the knowledge of physics to similar matter, that is, in cases that are very similar to those that lead to the discovery of the material and efficient causes. Because the knowledge of metaphysics is more general and goes deeper into the constitution of bodies, natural magic has greater power over nature, and it is capable of both fundamentally transforming existing natural bodies and creating new bodies that never existed before, in the sense of new species. In other words, once the form of several simple natures is known, it becomes possible to create new combinations of simple natures that never appeared in the course of nature: metals, animals, and plants different than the existing ones. Because of the unpopularity of magic and its connection to witchcraft and demonology (reflected also in Bacon's own criticisms, as we have seen), Bacon was at pains to distinguish his own conception of natural magic from the common use. For him, magic is the supreme knowledge of nature, which is used in transforming natural bodies. It does not include superstitions, witchcraft, or supernatural powers, but only a thorough knowledge of the laws of bodies (the forms) and the relations between them.

Mathematics has an auxiliary role for both speculative and operative natural philosophy. Bacon defines its subject as "quantity when applied to matter" and considers mathematics as one of the Essential Forms of things. Because at the same time it is the form most abstracted and separable from matter, its investigation should properly belong to Metaphysics, though all parts of natural philosophy could benefit from mathematical knowledge. Mathematics is pure and mixed. Pure mathematics, Geometry and Arithmetic, handles quantity "entirely severed from matter and from axioms of natural philosophy." Mixed mathematics, on the other hand, considers

quantity to such extent that it assists to explain, demonstrate, and actuate some axioms and parts of natural philosophy. Disciplines such as perspective, music, astronomy, cosmography, architecture, and machinery cannot have any inventions or demonstrations without the help of mathematics.

Inductive Method

The passage from natural history to metaphysics, that is, from sensible things to the forms of simple natures, is done with the Baconian method of induction. If *experientia literata* helps passing from one experiment to another, induction moves from experiments to axioms and back to experiments. Bacon offered two examples of how induction should work, one in the early unpublished *Valerius terminus* (1603), where he analyzes the form of white, and another in the *Novum organum*, where he analyzes the form of heat. Bacon's method starts by correcting the information provided by the senses, and then it orders experiences and experiments into tables of presence and absence. The table of presence gathers all the instances in which a simple nature is present and searches for another nature, which is always present with the first one. In contrast, the table of absence includes those instances where the nature under study is expected to be found, but it is not. The third and last table, the table of comparison, catalogs the variation of the degrees of presence and absence of the two natures, the one under study and the one discovered to be related to it – its form. This discovery of the relation between the simple nature and its form is an eliminative process and it is within it that we can find the only legitimate use of formal inference in the interpretation of nature (Jardine 1974). In the accumulation of instances of both presence and absence of the simple nature under study, and in ordering and comparing them, Bacon gives primary importance to what he calls “prerogative instances.” They are designed to help during the process of induction in various ways: they either give practical help in devising experiments by extending the power of senses, or suggesting technological benefit, or solve problems of procedure in the course of organizing the information.

Cosmology and Matter Theory

In parallel with his experimental programme, Bacon also developed a system of speculative philosophy, which can be found in both his early, unpublished works and the *Great Instauration*. Speculative philosophy was meant to remain provisory until verified through the process of induction, aspect which is also seen in the fact that some details are changed, which shows Bacon's willingness to adjust his ideas in accordance with the experimental results.

For Bacon, the way in which the bodies are situated in the universe, as well as the interaction between them, is based on the distinction between tangible and pneumatic matter. The tangible matter, dense, heavy, and inactive, is placed in the center of the earth, which coincides with the center of the universe; while the second, rare, light, and highly active occupies the rest of the universe, the sky of the fixed stars. There is a zone where the two interact, and this is placed on the surface of the Earth, more precisely, a few miles below the surface and a few miles up in the skies. The matter of the skies is of the same nature as the pneumatics from the zone of interactions, but purer than the sublunary one. Moreover, fire becomes stronger with distance from earth, while the air becomes weaker, so while in the sublunary world fire needs air as nourishment in order to survive, in the skies of fixed stars the fire is dominant and shines without the need of nourishment (see *Thema coelis*). The tangible matter from this zone of interaction cannot exist without pneumatics in it (even if those are air, the densest type of pneumatics), while pneumatics can be both free and attached to tangibles. However, pneumatic matter does not “want” to be imprisoned in the tangible one and thus tries to escape and unite with similar matter existing in the skies, causing thus the variety of processes we can observe. What Bacon considers to be the main natural processes (desiccation, liquefaction, maturation or concoction, putrefaction, and vivification), to which all the others can be reduced, result from this attempt of the pneumatics to escape the union with tangible matter.

Both tangible and pneumatic matters are separated into two “families” or “quaternia” of

things: sulfurous and mercurial. Sulfurous family is crude, watery, and noninflammable, while mercurial is concocted, oily, and inflammable. While the Paracelsian influence is obvious, Bacon transforms the Paracelsian theory in two significant points. First, Bacon changes the status of sulfur and mercury. If for Paracelsus they were spiritual principles out of which the material world was formed, for Bacon they are families of things. In other words, they distinguish all the things between inflammable (sulfurous) and non-inflammable (mercurial). Second, Bacon rejects salt from this distinction and for him salt is the union of sulfur and mercury, namely, any body, pneumatic or tangible, which is composed of both substances (Rees 1975).

Bacon’s cosmos, thus, is classified in accordance with the two aforementioned distinctions: between tangible and pneumatic and between sulfur and mercury. Taking into consideration their intermediaries, there are four types of matter. Tangible matter has two levels: at the subterranean level, it is distinguished into sulfur and mercury (the metals), and in the interaction zone, into oily and concocted substances on the one hand and crude and watery on the other. Pneumatic matter also has two levels: at the interaction, we find terrestrial fire and air, and in the skies of the fixed stars, sidereal fire and ether. These are the eight simple substances. As mentioned, for Bacon, salt is a composite of the two families, and these are, for the two sets of levels, just mentioned: subterranean salts, juices of plants and animals, attached animate and inanimate spirits, and the heaven of fixed stars.

The twelve types of matter then can be schematized in Table 1 below.

Individual bodies, as we can observe them, are composed of subterranean salts and spirits or juices of plants and animals and spirits. Spirits are a special kind of pneumatic matter, namely, a composite of fire and air, that is, of sulfur and mercury. However, there is further distinction between individuals, depending on the type of spirits they contain and the way in which they are distributed throughout the tangible parts. As it results from the *Historia vitae et mortis* and the *Sylva sylvarum*, metals and stones, which are inanimate beings, have “cut-off spirits,” this is spirits scattered in between their tangible parts. Plants and animals have two types of spirits: one is common with the inanimate beings (the cut-off spirits), but they also have a branched spirit, which is responsible for certain faculties, such as nourishment, growth, and generation. What is specific for animals is that this animate spirit has a main “cell” or “seat” in the body, the brain, that makes other faculties possible, such as the will, imagination, memory, and possible reason.

The activity of bodies, the interactions between and within bodies, is based on the interaction between tangible and pneumatic matter, but each of these types of matter has appetites that they want to satisfy. Appetites are desires impregnated in matter since its creation. The sympathy and antipathy things have between one another is the cause of appetites. There are three appetites of tangible matter: rest; motion toward what is alike; and the avoidance of void, of a contrary body, and of torture. The appetites of pneumatic

Bacon, Francis, Table 1 Structure of matter theory in Rees 1977

	Sulfur quaternion	Intermediates	Mercury quaternion
Tangible bodies (with attached spirits)	Sulfur (subterranean)	Salts (subterranean and inorganic beings)	Mercury (subterranean)
	Oil and oily inflammable substances (terrestrial)	Juices of animals and plants	Water and crude noninflammable substances (terrestrial)
Pneumatic substances	Terrestrial fire (sublunar)	“Attached” animate and inanimate spirits (in tangible bodies)	Air (sublunar)
	Sidereal fire (planetary matter)	Heaven of the fixed stars	Ether (planetary medium)

matter are of four types: of self-preservation, of bettering their condition, of propagation of their nature, and of enjoyment of their nature. These are more powerful than the appetites of tangible matter, producing more effects which are also more complex. In *Abecedarium novum naturae*, Bacon describes all these appetites and adds four simple motions for each of these appetites. The simple motions are actions through which the appetites work to gain supremacy against the other appetites, in this way satisfying themselves. Resistance, a simple motion of the appetite of self-preservation, is always invincible. Further, when in certain combinations, sequences, and quantities, these simple motions form the composed motions, or the visible processes we observe in nature, such as generation, growth, assimilation, or desiccation.

Individual bodies can also be analyzed as clusters of qualities; Bacon calls them schematisms or simple natures. These are always pairs of contraries, such as dense and rare, hot and cold, or heavy and light. The classification of schematisms is made according to five characteristics of either the tangible or the pneumatic matter which comprises individual bodies: the quantity of matter, the fluid and determinate parts, the proportion of spirits within a body, the inequality of its inanimate parts, the types of spirits, and the most profound schematisms (sulfur and mercury).

Bacon's matter theory and his general idea of a productive science was based on a consideration of matter as indefinite and as absolute potency. At this level of explanation, Bacon was influenced by the atomist theory, both in its ancient and modern versions. For Bacon, the atom is the material principle of all things. Primary matter has a form: its resistance to annihilation, which is at the same time its corporality, an appetite, and a motion. The world is the result of the emanation of the atom: the atom has a diffusive power, which creates the multiplicity of the world (Manzo 2006).

Philosophy of Man

Another branch of philosophy is the study of man. This can in turn be divided into philosophy

of humanity (which considers men as species) and civil philosophy (which considers men as members of society). The first, philosophy of humanity, studies the body and the soul of man. Logic and ethics are branches of the "Use and Objects of the Faculty of the Soul"; logic is concerned with the functioning of understanding, and ethics with the working of will, appetites, and affections. Ethics is further divided into Exemplar, or the Platform of Good, and Georgics, or Culture of the Mind. Bacon considers the latter deficient, because philosophers before him were not concerned with the practical improvement of conduct. Contrarily, for him, the main virtue of philosophers should be encountered in the active life. The public implication of philosophy is one of the main characteristics of philosophers. Science is a form of practicing the "common good" and it is superior to individual good, and active good is always greater than passive good. This leads Bacon to the conclusion, developed especially in the *Essays*, that what can be seen as immoral can actually be useful for the public use, and the other way around: what seems to be virtuous can be dangerous for the public good. For Bacon, rhetoric plays an important role in moral philosophy. It is fundamentally ethical, and it has a strong effect on human affairs. Rhetoric helps reason to apply to imagination and move the will in order to perform the good actions. Rhetoric and persuasion are needed because both reason and will are weak. This is why imagination plays a crucial role for Bacon – it censors the images of vices, selecting those of virtues and transforming them in vivid representations (Vickers 1968).

Philosophy of Divine

Bacon argued for a duality of truth: some truth can only be subject to divine revelation, while others can be acquired through philosophical investigation. They also correspond to the two books: the Bible and the nature. The first is the work of God's hands and the second is written by God's finger. Bacon discussed theology in *De augmentis scientiarum*, and he also wrote several theological treatises: *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597), *Prayers* (1603), *Translations of Certain Psalms into*

English (1624), and *A Confession of Faith* (published posthumously in 1641). But in a way Bacon's scientific project is based on theology: the aim of natural philosophy is to recover the state lost by the man after the Fall. Bacon was an orthodox Anglican and throughout his life he prosecuted both radical Protestants and Catholics.

Theology follows, according to Bacon, the same divisions as philosophy, according to the faculties of the human mind: Sacred history (including prophecy) corresponds to memory, Parables (which are a kind of divine poesy) correspond to imagination, and Doctrines and Precepts correspond to reason. Ecclesiastical history is part of civil history and is divided into History of the Church, History according to the prophecies, and History of divine judgements or providence. The last of these is supposed to observe the correspondence between God's revealed and secret will, in other words, between what serves to console the faithful and what serves to convince the wicked. Natural Theology or Divine Philosophy is a rudiment of "knowledge" about God, which is obtained by the light of nature and the contemplation of the creatures. This light is enough, according to Bacon, to refute atheism and provide information about the laws of nature, but not to establish religion. In order to convert idolaters and the superstitious, miracles are needed; but natural theology suffices to know that God exists, that he governs the world, that he is supremely powerful, wise and prescient, good, a rewarder, an avenger, and an object of adoration. Natural theology also makes it possible to attain knowledge about the nature of angels and spirits starting from corporeal things.

Legal Philosophy

Among his philosophical works, Bacon also composed a large amount of juridical treatises. Most of his life he was a practitioner who served in many legal roles: as advocate hired for certain trials, King's advocate, judge, and acted as vice-regent when the king was absent. Bacon is considered to have been the first analytical and critical jurist in the Anglo-American tradition and the first to apply an empirical and inductive analysis to

lawmaking (Coquillette 1992). Bacon emphasized the importance of the process, that is, the application of the substantive legal doctrines in practice, and the process through which the legal doctrines developed. Moreover, he developed a method that can be applied to jurisprudence. Instead of having a corpus of substantive doctrine, he established "methods of compiling, reforming, interpreting and using law" (Coquillette 1992). Because of the abundance of reported cases, Bacon argued for a systematic and critical digest of case reports. He was against torture, but also against fictions and legal distinctions. Similar to the way in which he considered that natural philosophy should be digested into maxims, he thought that the legal information should be preserved and diffused in the same form.

Impact and Legacy

In the seventeenth century, Francis Bacon was seen as the apologist for science and the authority of experimental science. In the second half of the century, Bacon became the emblematic figure of the new scientific societies across Europe, such as Accademia della Scienza (Florence), Académie des Sciences (Paris), and the Royal Society. However, it is still a matter of debate how much his own speculative ideas and the proper method of investigating nature influenced the following generations of natural philosophers.

Bacon's influence in France was immediate. Since the early 1620s, Bacon was famous for his reformation of knowledge within the intellectual circle formed around the brothers Dupuy. Moreover, Descartes characterizes Bacon's method as the legitimate complement of his own approach. Marin Mersenne stresses Bacon's criticism of scholastic philosophy as important, even though he does not give much importance to Bacon's inductive method or to his experimental practices. Nicolas Malebranche holds a similar attitude, while Pierre Gassendi is more critical, arguing that the method of induction is unable to prove anything. In the Netherlands, Bacon's works were read and discussed by Constantijn Huygens

and Isaac Beeckman, while other important figures in diffusing Bacon's works were the brothers Gruter: Isaac Gruter published a few manuscripts inherited from William Boswell (Bacon's brother-in-law) and Jacob Gruter translated *Sylva sylvarum* in Latin.

The situation was different in England. Baconian philosophy became popular during the Interregnum. Bacon's idea of improving human nature and human life with the help of natural philosophy was very widespread among the members of the Hartlib Circle, and it coincided with their protestant views on salvation. Bacon's advice for gathering natural histories was seen by most circle members as an egalitarian approach, something mirrored in Jan Amos Comenius' educational reform. The natural historical approach was followed in practice by Ralph Austen, John Evelyn, and William Petty. While it is difficult to find what is common for all Bacon's followers, some characteristics seem to identify them as Baconians: being in favor of *negotium* instead of *otium*; having an experimental, natural-historical, and inductive approach to natural science; institutionalization of natural philosophy and means to communicate knowledge; cooperative research; as well as a utilitarian and technological approach to social issues. Their identity as Baconians was also evident in the things they were opposed to: useless erudition, metaphysical speculation, superstition, theological controvert, improper reliance on unaided reason, as well as Aristotelianism and scholasticism (Rees 2002).

With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the establishment of the Royal Society, the Baconian scientific project becomes the preeminent vision of British natural philosophy. The Royal Society is the materialization of Solomon's House in the *New Atlantis*. But more than this, the aims of the society coincided with those of Bacon's *Instauratio Magna*: scientific progress attained through experimentation and examination of particulars, collaboration, and technological control over nature. The influence of Bacon's induction over the most representative exponents of the Royal Society, such as Robert Hooke, Robert Boyle, and Isaac Newton, is still a matter

of debate. Hooke was invested into collecting particulars; Boyle made use of the crucial experiment, a transformation of the crucial instance (*instantia crucis*) from the *Novum organum*; and Newton, though not mentioning Bacon even once, adopted the collection of particulars, the induction, and the crucial experiment as parts of his science. It is however disputable to what extent Bacon's speculative ideas were adopted by his followers. One can argue for example that Boyle's concept of "texture" holds a close resemblance to Bacon's idea of the "form of a simple nature." However, it could be that the oblivion of Baconian speculative ideas is the result, on the one hand, of its resembles, at the language level, with the Aristotelian substantial form, so much rejected by early modern natural philosophers, and, on the other, of his vitalist and Paracelsian conception of nature, rejected by most of the corpuscularian mechanist philosophers.

During the Enlightenment, Bacon is again seen as the revolutionary figure of philosophy. It is the humanitarian value of his technological exploitable science used to satisfy the need of the society that made Bacon significant for authors such as Jean le Rond D'Alembert, Denis Diderot, Nicolas de Condorcet, or Jean Jacques Rousseau (Pérez-Ramos 1996). Yet another interpretation of his contribution to science is given by the nineteenth-century Victorian philosophers, such as John Herschel, William Whewell, and John Stuart Mill. For these philosophers, the accent of induction is on the process of mapping out the process taking place in the mind of the practitioner while performing the scientific research. It is nevertheless debatable how much their concept of induction coincided with the Baconian idea exposed in the *Novum organum*. Bacon's fame started to fade toward the end of the nineteenth century, with the fierce criticisms of authors like David Brewster, Justus von Liebig, or G.H. Lewes. For Thomas Kuhn, the Baconian approach was a pre-paradigmatic one, to be developed only in the late seventeenth century and Bacon was the proponent of an experimentation style design to investigate how nature behaves under previously nonexistent circumstances.

Kuhn's commentators did not focus on Bacon, since their emphasis was on the paradigmatic figures, but this started to change in the last decades of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

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- ▶ [Baconianism](#)
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- ▶ [Telesio, Bernardino](#)

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Baconianism

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Abstract

The philosophy of Francis Bacon was interpreted in various ways in the seventeenth century. In England, his utopian project and natural history became the basis for the projects of religious pacification, pedagogical reformation, and scientific cooperation of Hartlib, Comenius and Charleton. In the hands of Evelyn, Wilkins, and Wren, moreover, Bacon's ideal of cooperative science engendered the birth of the Royal Society, and his natural history guided the experimental activities of Boyle and Hooke. In France and the Netherlands, attention was paid to Bacon's natural history especially within the circle of friends of Descartes. In the second half of the seventeenth century, though Bacon's historical approach was gradually supplanted by mechanical-mathematical science in Europe, Baconianism still served as a source of arguments in the Dutch Cartesian context, as to his theory of error and as a source of criticisms to Aristotelianism.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The reception of Bacon's philosophy was manifold, as one can distinguish between political, utopian, experimental, and metaphysical Baconianisms (Giglioni 2012). In England, the appropriation of Bacon's philosophy had a relevant social and religious character. For Samuel Hartlib and Jan Amos Comenius, Bacon's program of renovation of philosophy served as the basis for a

religious pacification of society based on scientific learning and on improvement of techniques as husbandry and mining. Such learning would have been made possible by the application of Bacon's natural history and substantiated in a pansophical collection of all knowledge (Bacon 1857a, b, c, 2000; Hartlib 1970). On a metaphysical level, Comenius and Francis Glisson endorsed Bacon's theory of matter as provided with life and appetites (Comenius 1668; Glisson 1672; Giglioni 2010, 2012). Moreover, Bacon's program of establishing a community of scientists ("Salomon's House") and his natural history were the basis of the pedagogical reform of Walter Charleton for the College of Physicians in London, a group of virtuosi aimed at the exchange of learning, active in 1650s (Charleton 1657; Jalobeanu 2009). Eventually, Baconianism engendered the foundation of the Royal Society: according to the official history of the early Royal Society by Thomas Sprat (Sprat 1667), Baconianism inspired the activities of the "Oxford group" of natural philosophers, including John Evelyn, John Wilkins, and Christopher Wren, who assumed a "pure" form of Baconianism, i.e., they relied on Bacon's inductive method and theory of error (Bacon 2004a), opposed to the "vulgar" Baconianism of Hartlib and the London group (Purver 1967). This account has been corrected in more recent years, as also this group was largely relying on the Baconian ideal of a cooperative science and natural history (Hunter 1981; Agassi 2013; Gaukroger 2001; Jalobeanu 2009, 2015). Also, Bacon's natural history influenced the experimental philosophy of Robert Boyle and Robert Hooke, using the Baconian distinctions between luciferous, fructiferous, solitary and in consort experiments, and the notion of crucial experiment (Boyle 1665; Hooke 1679, 1705; Bacon 1996a, b, 2004b, 2007; Anstey 2014). Moreover, Baconianism inspired the failed attempt of Sprat, Joseph Glanvill, and Abraham Cowley of establishing a College for the Society modelled on the "Salomon's House" in 1660s (Hunter 1984).

In France, Nicolas Fabri de Peiresc planned to translate Bacon's natural histories, and Pierre Amboise abridged Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum* by the technique of commonplacing (Yeo 2007; Jalobeanu 2014). Moreover, Marin Mersenne

developed an interest for Bacon's natural history after having first rejected his empirical method as atheist and skeptical. Under the influence of Descartes, who asked him empirical data for the study of meteorology, Mersenne deepened Bacon's historical study of sound (Mersenne 1648; Buccolini 2013). In the Netherlands, Bacon's natural history was commented by Isaac Beeckman in his *Journal*, though he criticized Bacon's relying on the qualitative properties of matter rather than on mechanism and mathematics (Beeckman 1939–1954; Gemelli 2013, 2014). With the emergence of Dutch Cartesianism in 1650s, Bacon's philosophy offered a theory of error and an account of past philosophical theories which served to criticize the Scholastic approach to science, as by Johannes de Raey and Burchard de Volder. Also, it served as a *medicina mentis* in the introduction of students to philosophy, as in the works of Johannes Clauberg and Arnout Geulincx (Clauberg 1691; Bacon 1996c, 2004a; Geulincx 1891; De Raey 1654; De Volder 1681; Elena 1991; Strazzoni 2012). Eventually, the emergence of a mathematical natural philosophy expounded by the Newtonians supplanted Baconianism in European science (Anstey 2015).

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Bagolino, Gerolamo

Born: End of the Fifteenth Century, Verona

Died: Around 1540

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Abstract

Gerolamo Bagolino, a physician and a professor of philosophy at the University of Padua, is best known as a translator of works by Aristotle and his commentators (Johannes Philoponus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Syrianus, Averroes). As a pupil of Nicoletto Vernia, he taught at Padua and Bologna and collaborated on the great edition of Aristotle's works and their Averroes commentaries that were published in Venice in 1522.

Biography

Bagolino was born in Verona in the last decades of the fifteenth century. He studied in Padua where he became Doctor in Artibus in 1494 and received his doctorate in medicine on 1 February 1501

(Padova, Archivio della Curia Vescovile, vol. 46, f. 146 v) (Nardi 1958; Lohr 1988). Nevertheless, he dedicated himself to philosophy and became professor in 1517 (Sanuto 1889). He held, subsequently, the chair of Ordinary Philosophy (1520), Ordinary Practice (1522), and then Extraordinary Practice (1524) (Mazzuchelli 1758; Vasoli 1963; Lohr 1988). In 1525 he returned to Verona. He also taught logic in Bologna, where he was the teacher of Francesco Burana, with whom he would continue to collaborate.

Bagolino adheres to the so-called school of Paduan Aristotelianism. He primarily produced an intense work of translation and commentary of the works of Aristotle and of Aristotle's commentators (Johannes Philoponus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Syrianus, Averroes) together with his son Giambattista and in collaboration with his pupil Francesco Burana. He also contributed to the great edition of Aristotle with the commentaries of Averroes, published by his son after his death in 1552. It is suspected that in this edition plagiarism occurred through the unattributed use of Nicoletto Vernia's commentaries, which were never published in spite of their author's intention. Bagolino had access to these by virtue of his close relationship with Vernia. Bagolino, in fact, was Vernia's student and close collaborator and together with Agostino Del Ben was allowed to edit his unpublished writings on Aristotle's work (Garin 1947; De Bellis 2012).

Bagolino thus translated the *De fato* by Alexander of Aphrodisias (*Fato de que eo quod in nostra potestate est ex mente Aristotelis Liber eximius Alexandri Aphrodisiensis, latine vertit Hieronymus Bagolinus*, Veronae 1516, then Venetiis 1541, 1549, 1555, 1559), the commentary to *De generatione et corruptione* of Philoponus (*In Aristotelis libros duo de Generatione et Corruptione commentariis Ioannis Philoponi, Hieronymo Bagolino interprete*, Venetiis 1540, poi 1543, 1548, 1549, 1558, 1559, 1588; in 2004 Frans A.J. de Haas published a copy of the edition issued in 1558 in Venice by Girolamo Scoto), and the commentary to Syrianus' Aristotelian Metaphysics (*Commentarii Syriani in Lib. II, XIII, XIV Metaphysicorum Aristotelis ex interpretatione Hieronymi Bagolini*, Venetiis 1558).

To Bagolino are ascribed some *Annotationes in Averrois compendium in Analytica Priora* published within his protégé Burana's main work (Riccoboni 1598; Lohr 1988) (*Aristotelis Priora Resolutoria latino sermone donata et commentariis illustrata a Io. Francisco Burana, adjecta Averrois expositione Secundi Secti de facultate propositionum, et Averrois in eodem compendio, eodem Burana interprete cum annotationibus Hieronymi Bagolini*, Venetiis 1524, 1536, later Lutetiae Paris 1539 and Venetiis 1567). He was also the author of some *Quaestiones naturales et morales et de fato l. IV Alexandri Aphrodisiensis. Latine vertit Hieronymus Bagolinus Veronensis*, Venetiis 1541, 1544, 1546, 1549, 1555, 1559, 1563.

Moreover, we know that there is an unpublished *Collectanea in libros Priorum* and another unpublished work *In libros I et II Posteriorum Analyticorum* (Mazzuchelli 1758; Lohr 1988). The edition of Aristotle and Averroes (*Aristotelis opera omnia Commentariis Averrois notis Levi Gersonidis, Iacobi Mantuani, Marci Antonii Zimarae et Ioannis Baptistae Bagolini*) was printed in Venice in 1552 by Giunti.

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- [Burana, Giovanni Francesco](#)
- [Vernia, Nicoletto](#)

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Baldi, Bernardino

Born: 6 June 1553, Urbino

Died: 10 October 1617, Urbino

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Abstract

A man of letters, historiographer, linguist, mathematician, and architectural historian, Bernardino Baldi may be regarded as a classic embodiment of the all-round Renaissance man. He has left his mark practically in all the fields in which he operated. He was the first modern historiographer of the mathematical sciences. Until this day, his translations of certain technical texts from antiquity, like his lexicographical work on Vitruvius, represent a valuable starting point for further enquiries. Most interesting of all are his insights in the field of mechanics, as Baldi often appears to foreshadow some of the theoretical perspectives that inform Galileo's later investigations into the strength of materials.

Biography

Baldi received his education in Urbino. Here, he first learned the classical languages and then embarked on the study of the mathematical sciences under the guidance of his fellow citizen Federico Commandino, who for many years had been working on the publication of the most important mathematical works in Latin translations. Between 1573 and 1575, Baldi moved to Padua to study medicine, but ended up regularly attending Philosophy and Classics lectures instead (Serrai 2002). He also attended the Mathematics course held by Pietro Catena, but ultimately found it disappointing (Baldi 1707).

Just after Commandino's death in 1575, Baldi started gathering information about his teacher's life. Soon, he resolved to do the same for all mathematicians from Antiquity to his own day.

In the following decade, Baldi drew upon this considerable material to compose his *Vite de' Matematici* (*Lives of Mathematicians*), a collection of around 200 biographies, still largely unpublished (Baldi 1998). Meanwhile, he continued his studies under mathematician Guidobaldo del Monte of Pesaro. In 1580, Baldi entered the small court of Guastalla as mathematician to Prince Ferrante II Gonzaga. His most important work from this period is the Italian translation of Hero's *Automata*, which was revised and published many years later with an interesting introduction (Baldi 1589).

During his first years in Guastalla, Baldi composed many literary works, most notably *La nautica*, a didascallic poem much appreciated even today. Also dating from this period is his in-depth study of Vitruvius' *De architectura*, which led to the drafting of two major works: a Virtuvian lexicon (Baldi 1612a) and a study focusing on a difficult passage from the Roman architect's treatise (Baldi 1612b).

In 1586, Baldi's life changed radically. When Ferrante II had the church in Guastalla raised to the status of abbey, the mathematician was appointed as its first abbot. Henceforth, Baldi's interests increasingly shifted from scientific topics to the study of eastern languages and theological subjects; but although he no longer regularly devoted himself to mathematics, on several occasion he had the opportunity to pursue studies related to this discipline: for example, in 1592 he completed a major work on gnomonics. The manuscript containing this work, which had long been thought lost, is now in the History of Science Collections of the University of Oklahoma.

In 1596, Baldi visited Rome, where he stayed until the early months of 1598 as a guest of Cardinal Cintio Aldobrandini. Here he met Giovan Battista Raimondi, a fair mathematician with an excellent knowledge of eastern languages who guided him in the study of Arab (Affò 1783).

In the early 1600s, Baldi sought to publish his literary works, but only some of them went to print, in Pavia and Parma. In the meantime, Baldi had become close to the Duke of Urbino, Francesco Maria II, who had entrusted him with composing a life of Federico da Montefeltro. The

favor that Baldi enjoyed with the Duke led him to quit his office as the Abbot of Guastalla and to return to Urbino in 1609.

A few years later, some of Baldi's works, including those on *Virtuvius*, were printed in Augsburg thanks to the support of Marcus Welser, a member of the Accademia dei Lincei. A Latin translation of Hero's *Belopoeeca* was also published in the German city in the author's lifetime (Baldi 1616). In these last years of his life, Baldi wrote a biography of Federico da Montefeltro's successor, the Duke of Urbino Guidobaldo I, and then fully devoted himself to the creation of a huge geographical dictionary, which remained unfinished.

Four years after Baldi's death, in 1621, his most important scientific work was published in Mainz: the *Exercitationes* on the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanical Problems* (Baldi 2011). Through a systematic application of Archimedean centrobarics, it significantly contributed to the development of modern mechanics by offering the first scientific study of the strength of materials and of the causes of the stability/instability of beams, trusses, and arches (Becchi 2004).

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Ballistics in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

This entry discusses the historical legacy in innovations of ballistics as they relate to warfare in Europe between 1300 and 1700. It primarily deals with the problems of smoothbore gunpowder weapons (both artillery and small arms) and the ways in which commanders and artillerymen adjusted their strategies and tactics to account for the limitations of accuracy and unreliability of these weapons. Also discussed are modern comparative studies of early modern gunpowder small arms and early modern scientific and mathematical studies of the trajectory of gunpowder weapons.

Definition of Ballistics and Importance for Early Modern Warfare

Ballistics is the study of the flight of projectiles, most frequently associated with the flight of missile weapons, artillery ordinance, and bullets. The bulk of our knowledge about the ballistic properties of early modern arms comes from historical resources such as battlefield reports and military treatises of the early modern period, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tests of artillery, and some contemporary recreations using both manufactured reproductions and original artifacts. In particular, thanks to debate surrounding the impact of gunpowder warfare on European

society, modern scholars have looked closely at the physics of smoothbore weaponry. Among the challenges to study accurately the ballistics of early modern weapons are the unreliability and lack of technical detail in early modern and late medieval sources, the impossibility of reproducing battlefield conditions, and the chemical and metallurgical differences between weapons and combustibles with different geographical and historical origins. Strictly speaking, the majority of scientific knowledge about ballistics was created centuries after the more practical considerations of warfare brought weapons such as guns, catapults, and crossbows to the battlefield.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition: Vegetius's Legacy in the Age of Gunpowder Weapons

The bulk of the written record of ballistic studies in the middle ages stems from interactions with the military treatise *De re militari* by Flavius Vegetius Renatus (fl. fourth century C.E.), more commonly known as Vegetius. Vegetius's work was heavily translated and summarized by early modern military theorists, among others by Christine de Pizan in her *Fais d'armes et de chevalerie* (ca. 1410), Conrad Kyeser's *Bellifortis* (ca. 1405), and even later Leonhard Fronsperger in his *Kriegsbuch* (1573). Vegetius's mark on medieval and early modern siegecraft and preparations for war should not be understated, since even today some 150 manuscripts of his *De re militari* dating from the tenth to fifteenth centuries survive in various languages. Although his text was written centuries before the advent of gunpowder warfare, its recommendations are passed along almost unchallenged save the addition of cannons and gunpowder to the list of materials needed for war next to trebuchets, mantelets, and other siege machines. Gunpowder weapons, therefore, became another – increasingly important – tool in the military commander's kit of ballistic weaponry. Due to the early ineffectiveness, burden, and unreliability of gunpowder weapons to make decisive victories in all but a handful of military conflicts, versions of Roman missile weapons, of which many were passed

down by Vegetius, remained an operative part of the manuals of war written well into the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Innovative and Original Aspects: Smoothbore Ballistics and Early Modern Theories of Ballistic Flight

The Magnus effect (1852) and Bernoulli's principle (1738) have helped to explain the inaccuracy of smoothbore ballistics in retrospect, but the operators of early modern firearms were more interested in developing battlefield tactics for overcoming these shortfalls than explaining them. Since smoothbore weapons fired rounded shot from unrifled gun barrels, slight imperfections in the shot or the barrel could send the shot spinning on an axis, giving it unpredictable angular momentum. The effect of this spin, as explained by Gustav Magnus and discovered in experiments recorded by Benjamin Robins in his *New Principles of Gunnery* (1742), resulted in deviations from several inches to several feet from the original target depending on its distance. Since musketballs (and cannonballs) could miss a target by a wide margin when mounted on a fixed position and fired under ideal conditions, it is not hard to imagine how far flung a bullet could fly in the havoc of battle.

Some early modern mathematicians and scientists, in particular Niccolò Fontana Tartaglia (d. 1557) in his work *Nova scientia* (1537), did try to deal with the mechanics of trajectory and distance, by applying different forms of reasoning such as geometrical, Archimedean, and algebraic approaches to the trajectory of ballistical objects. Tartaglia's goal, as he states in the opening of his work, was to solve the "bombardier's challenge" and determine the proper angle of a shot to create the maximum range of a cannon. Despite the fact that he claimed to pull from both observed and theoretical physics and geometry, Tartaglia's work does not account for the parabolic motion of a fired object, a mechanical fact that he would have encountered in Archimedes' *Quadrature of the Parabola* (third century B.C.), which he seems to have read and whose writer he cites as central to his own work (Ekholm 2010: 196). Based on his

ideal cannon angle of 45 degrees, his diagrams depict an object flying upward at a 45-degree angle in a straight line, then making a slightly circular descent, and finally falling again to earth in a perfectly straight line perpendicular to the ground. Tartaglia's patchwork method of calculating the maximum distance of a shot had little grounding in the actual mechanics or practical application of ballistics, but it did arrive at a moment in which the debate over the relationship between natural science and theoretical mathematical proofs was beginning to shape the development of renaissance scientific method in the Aristotelian traditions.

It would be another century before Galileo published his dialogues on *Two New Sciences* (1638), which would address the motion of projectiles, in particular those launched from firearms. In contrast to his scientific worldview, Galileo depicted the force behind firearms as "supernatural" and thus deserving of a differentiated approach from other projectiles. One consequence of "the enormous momentum of these violent shots" from firearms helps to explain the straight trajectory that Tartaglia had assumed a century earlier, because, as Galileo points out in "The Motion of Projectiles, Theorem I, Proposition I," the "beginning of the parabola" may be flatter and less curved than at the end, but "this is a matter of small consequence in practical operations, the main one of which is the preparation of a table of ranges for shots of high elevation, giving the distance attained by the ball as a function of the angle of elevation" (Galileo 1638). Perhaps notably above, and found also in his many other caveats placed throughout the dialogue in which he considers the flight of projectiles, Galileo points out that the number of factors that could affect the accuracy and speed of a cannon shot in real life are beyond his ability to calculate abstractly. More useful to the bombardier, it seemed, are tables that carefully lay out charge weights, shot weights, firing angles, and distances for consideration in practical matters of war.

Galileo was not alone in believing that practice with firearms seemed to be an important element in gunpowder warfare. Even though Tartaglia and Galileo had tried to reason the theoretical trajectories of cannonballs, and others such as Ufano,

Pizan, and Fronsperger had compiled and recorded tables and practical lessons for consideration, the operator of small arms and artillery alike had to be aware that technical limitations and a lack of standardization made practice with the actual equipment a necessary part of military training. The weapons manufacturer, meanwhile, should strive to increase standardization in order to render firing outcomes more predictable. From England to Sweden to the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires, firearms manufacturers did indeed begin standardizing their weaponry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nations also slowly began to standardize their militaries to account for gunpowder ballistics. At the end of the sixteenth century, in fact, around the same time that Galileo was teaching the concepts of physics that he would later commit to writing in the *Two New Sciences*, the idea of drilling soldiers with their weapons in very careful and exact ways was innovated by Maurice of Orange and illustrated in a bound series of images by Jacob de Gheyn. Whether firing a pistol or a gigantic bombard, the soldier on the battlefield needed to marry technical knowledge and disciplined movements to Galileo's scientific theory to overcome the number of complicating physical, psychological, strategic, and technical factors that could impact the ballistical function of his guns.

SMALL ARMS: Modern efforts to understand the ballistics of smoothbore small arms on the battlefields of Europe from the 1400s to 1700s turn to three questions with an eye to gunpowder weaponry – "How fast did the bullets travel? How accurate was smoothbore gunfire? And how much damage did such bullets inflict on their target?" (Hall 1997: 135). In terms of speed, historical comparisons of modern shoulder and side arms show that bullets fired from early modern weapons have supersonic muzzle velocities about half that of modern assault rifles but faster than most standard modern handguns. As discussed above, the accuracy of these weapons was typically poor, despite the fact that gun makers as early as the fifteenth century were familiar with the idea of rifling, a trick of physics that they had learned from the fletchers of arrows. Although it (sometimes) led to greater accuracy, rifling was not typically added to battlefield

firearms because it reduced the rate of fire and became easily clogged with gunpowder residue. Thus, a shot fired from typical musket or handgun could easily miss its target by several feet. Modern tests of smoothbore weapons have shown that there was a 50–50 chance of hitting a man-sized target at 100 m under ideal conditions. Finally, tests conducted in Austria in the late 1980s using period weapons and armor showed that smoothbore small arms created wound cavities at a short range that were two to three times larger than wound cavities made by modern assault weapons. When used against 3 mm plate armor at a distance of 8.5–9 m, the bullets would fragment, badly wounding or at least seriously bruising the target, but not inflicting immediately mortal damage. Taken together, these results showed that typical early modern European guns were tremendously dangerous at a short range, but quickly lost their effectiveness both in accuracy and inflicted damage at greater distances.

ARTILLERY: Cannons were first used as siege weapons, another kind of catapult to besiege towns and knock down walls. In fifteenth-century military treatises and fictional war literature, which drew heavily on Vegetius, such as Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Der Ring* (ca. 1410), cannons and trebuchets were given similar importance in terms of their means of delivering blows to a target. The earliest bombard cannons of the fourteenth century were little more than massive metal tubes stuffed with gunpowder and huge stones to be flung in the general direction of a defensive walls, fortifications, and towers. Accuracy was of less importance than force. Through the 1300s, these weapons were also incredibly difficult to transport, and thus to place, and therefore were of little use to field tactics. Only under the leadership of Jan Zizka, the Hussite Rebels of the 1420s demonstrated the potential value of gunpowder weapons in field warfare by using medium to large caliber *Wagenburg*-mounted artillery to fire on charging knights and infantry. Even when artillery grew more mobile and accurate in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the value of cannons for siege warfare was the ability to constantly barrage a large target area with the general idea of inflicting damage. As with small

arms, field artillery's inaccuracy required high rates of fire and oblique angles to the targets, which had to be slow and large, such as massed formations of marching men. There is significant evidence in European war treatises of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries that artillerists were constantly experimenting with angles of attack and defense, the weight and composition of gunpowder charges, design of the ordinance, and the tools used to determine distance of targets in order to add some degree of accuracy to a relatively inaccurate ballistic tool.

Impact and Legacy

Thanks to the inaccuracy and unreliability of early modern firearms, tacticians and commanders of the sixteenth and seventeenth (even eighteenth) centuries took a stochastic approach to gunpowder weapons for both the infantry and artillery. Infantry and heavy cavalry units, especially in the late 1500s, developed tactics and drills like the countermarch, the *caraçol*, and weapons drill that sought to sustain high rates of fire on the battlefield in order to increase the chances of hitting targets. Thus, soldiers were grouped carefully together in rows that could fire past each other, were trained to mechanize their movements to improve efficiency, and were deployed to maximize the surface area of the target. Gunpowder artillery was also used widely from the late fourteenth century on but required continuous technical and tactical tinkering to make it more effective both in siege, field, and sea warfare. By the mid-sixteenth century, artillery established itself as a necessary division of all large-scale armies, and the challenges of smoothbore gunpowder ballistics had become mandatory considerations in the training and deployment of both infantry and cavalry units.

Cross-References

- [Art of War in the Renaissance](#)
- [Ballistics in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Gunpowder in the Renaissance](#)
- [Mechanics in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Metallurgy in Renaissance Science](#)

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Balthasar de Ayala

Born: Antwerp, 1548

Died: Aalst, 1584

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Abstract

Balthasar de Ayala attended the University of Louvain and later served as advocate-general of the army of King Philip II in the Netherlands. He finished his only book, *De iure et officiis bellicis et disciplina militari*, in 1581, and died of unknown causes in 1584, at the age of 36. Ayala's treatise reflects the intellectual culture of Louvain, in which both scholastic and humanist jurisprudence were practiced. The work is influenced by Jean Bodin, but Ayala theorizes the Bodinian state within the higher unity of the Holy Roman Empire. With four editions, Ayala's work served jurists and canonists as an authority on the laws of war throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ayala's contemporary relevance

centers upon his strict application of a formal criterion of belligerency. Without abandoning a moral conception of "just war" (*bellum iustum*), Ayala insists that only a sovereign state can engage in hostilities as a "just enemy" (*iustus hostis*). Insurgents are to be treated as outlaws.

Alternate Names

Ayala, Balthasar; Ayala, Balthazar; d'Ayala, Balthasar; d'Ayala, Balthazar; de Ayala, Balthazar

Biography

Balthasar de Ayala was born in 1548 in Antwerp. His mother, Agnès de Renialme, belonged to the Hispano-Flemish nobility. His father, Diego de Ayala – a native of Burgos, Spain – was a citizen of Antwerp and a prosperous merchant. Nothing is known of his childhood. At the age of 17, Ayala matriculated in the Faculty of Law at the University of Louvain. His inscription is dated 17 August 1565. There is no further record of his time in Louvain, and it is not known when he became a licentiate in the laws (*licentiatius iuris*). It is likely, however, that his period in Louvain roughly coincided with that of Cornelius Grotius, later professor of law at the University of Leiden and uncle of Hugo Grotius. Ayala's parents died in 1579 and were buried in Antwerp. In May 1580, at the age of 32, he was appointed advocate-general of the army of King Philip II in the Netherlands. This made him the highest military judge in the counterinsurgency apparatus of Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma, who then held concurrently the offices of governor-general and captain-general of the Netherlands. In August 1580, two military prosecutors and an executioner were added to Ayala's personal retinue.

In 1581, during Farnese's siege of the rebel-held city of Tournai, Ayala finished his only published work, *On the Law of War, and on the Duties Connected with War, and on Military Discipline* (*De iure et officiis bellicis et disciplina militari*). The book's dedication – to Farnese – is

dated 31 October 1581 and signed in “the camp before Tournai.” It appeared in 1582 with a printing house at Douay.

In January 1583, Farnese appointed Ayala to the highest court in the Netherlands, the Great Council of Mechelen (then in exile at Namur). Even after this appointment, he remained in the field with Farnese and the army of Philip II. Ayala died in Aalst on 1 September 1584, of unknown causes, at the age of 36. He was survived by a natural daughter, Barbara de Ayala, who later married Hendrik Zoes, a professor of law at the University of Louvain and author of commentaries on civil and canon law.

A letter from the Flemish humanist Justus Lipsius to one of Ayala’s brothers suggests, intriguingly, that Balthasar de Ayala may also have written a treatise *On Peace* (*De pace*). There is no extant copy of such a text, however, and no record of its publication (Rivier 1883).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Ayala’s treatise reflects the intellectual culture of Louvain in the mid-sixteenth century. A scholastic influence seems to have predominated, but Gabriel van der Muyden and Jacob Reyvaert had introduced humanist jurisprudence in the decades before his arrival as a student (Lesaffer 2009). Both styles of jurisprudence shape Ayala’s legal reasoning in *On the Law of War, and on the Duties Connected with War, and on Military Discipline*.

Ayala’s text is replete with classical citations, the most numerous being of Livy, Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Tacitus, Appian, and, above all, Cicero. Augustine of Hippo is his special patristic authority. The corpora of Roman law – civil and canon – are comprehensively referenced. Ayala’s knowledge of the glossators seems to be thorough. Of the medieval scholastics, he favors Thomas Aquinas. Of the Renaissance scholastics, he draws most explicitly from Domingo de Soto and Diego de Covarrubias y Leyva, both of whom took part in the Council of Trent.

A less visible influence is that of a Piedmontese legist, Pierino Belli, whose *Treatise on Military Matters and Warfare* (*De re militari et bello*

tractatus, 1563) is a clear precursor to Ayala’s. Despite the fact that Ayala seems virtually to have had Belli’s *Treatise* laid out “in front of him when composing his own work” (Knight 1921, p. 222), he only cites Belli twice.

The sixteenth century’s monarchomachs provide a critical impetus to Ayala, who is committed to stemming the tide of anti-monarchical and anti-imperial militancy in Europe. Yet he limits his direct engagement to a marginal note citing the *Francogallia* of François Hotman. Ayala accepts a severely circumscribed right to kill “tyrants,” but Hotman’s broad legitimation is dismissed as “wicked and absurd” and as “subversive of the republic.”

Ayala’s conception of a “republic” signals the pervasive influence of Jean Bodin. Ayala tends to cite Bodin approvingly and, crucially, follows him on the question of sovereign powers. What is most striking is that Ayala situates the Bodinian republic within the higher inalterable unity of a *res publica christiana*, that is, the Holy Roman Empire (Peralta 1964). Ayala theorizes the Renaissance state within a legitimate continental order and not within a “state of nature.”

Impact and Legacy

Ayala’s treatise enjoyed a “vogue in its day” (Knight 1921, p. 221) and saw four editions before 1800, with the last appearing in Madrid in 1793. Commentaries and commonplace books show that it served jurists as an authority throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Bechtoldus 1654; González Téllez 1715). Of particular interest is a critical engagement by the Jesuit master-thinker, Francisco Suárez (Schnepf 2003).

In *The Rights of War and Peace* (*De jure belli ac pacis libri tres*, 1625), Hugo Grotius cites Ayala more than once as an authority on his topic. The study of Ayala in the late nineteenth century is largely due to this commendation (Nys 1882; Rivier 1883). So is the 1912 reissue of Ayala’s treatise – in facsimile and in English translation – by the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

In recent decades, historians have “attributed to Ayala a higher rank and influence which [is] not exclusively based in Grotius’ judgment” (Grewe 2000, p. 207). The most notable is Carl Schmitt, for whom Ayala signals a new epoch in European legal history by stating with singular clarity the modern “concept of the enemy.” For Schmitt, Ayala’s doctrine of belligerency – and thus, in the fullest sense, of “enmity” – marks his contribution to legal theory (Schmitt 2003).

Ayala holds that belligerency is an exclusive right of sovereigns. Without abandoning a moral conception of “just war” (*bellum iustum*), he insists that sovereignty is the formal criterion of belligerency. Only a sovereign entity can declare war, and only an entity which has declared war can engage in hostilities as a “just enemy” (*iustus hostis*). Therefore, he reasons, only sovereigns can be lawful enemies. Insurgents are to be treated as outlaws.

Certain historians have condemned this as a doctrine of “utmost cruelty ... presented in a cool manner with logical discipline” (Nussbaum 1954, p. 102). Others have concluded that Ayala’s formalization of belligerency led to a “hedging of war” in the epoch of classical international law (Dickmann 1971; Grewe 2000).

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Báñez, Domingo

Born: 1528, Valladolid

Died: 1604, Medina del Campo

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Abstract

The Spanish Dominican Domingo Báñez is best known for his leading role in the dispute regarding divine providence and free will held over the course of 20 years with Jesuit scholars, especially with Luis de Molina. He is usually associated with the so-called School of Salamanca, even though his theology and rigid interpretation of Thomas Aquinas is more speculative than, for instance, Francisco de Vitoria's who tended to have a more practical approach to issues concerning human conduct. The other field in which he excelled was in his interpretation of law and justice. Boasting a decidedly anti-humanistic Latin, his work can be seen as a turning point of Dominican theology after the Council of Trent.

Biography

Although being referred to as Mondragonensis because of his family's roots in the city of Mondragón, it seems certain that Domingo Báñez was born in Valladolid on 29 February 1528 (García Cuadrado 1998, 210). In 1542, he

began to study arts at the University of Salamanca, and from 1546 on he continued his studies at the Convent of St. Stephen taking his vows 1 year later. While studying theology from 1548 to 1552, he made Domingo de Soto's acquaintance, one of the most outstanding Dominican theologians of the first half of the sixteenth century and, after Francisco de Vitoria, one of the most recognizable scholars of the so-called School of Salamanca. Although not his student, Soto recommended Báñez for a teaching position, and in 1552, he first imparted courses of arts at St. Stephen and, in 1555, he continued as a lecturer of theology. In 1561, he graduated in theology after which he moved on to Ávila where he taught theology as well. At the University of Sigüenza, he finished his doctorate aiming at the chair of *Prima* at the University of Alcalá. After failing to obtain that chair, he returned to his teaching commitments at Ávila. There, from 1567 onwards, he taught at the convent of St. Thomas, and in 1569 he was appointed director of the convent, yet for only 1 year, after which he returned to St. Stephen in Salamanca where he resided until 1573. He then moved to Valladolid being for a short time director of the Convent of St. Gregory, and in 1574 he was appointed director of the Convent of Toro, although he did not accept the job. In 1576, he moved back to Salamanca with the intention to occupy the chair of Durandus which he finally obtained in 1577 after having to withdraw due to illness the year before. During that period he worked on the reformation of the Gregorian calendar and he also is known to have been Therese of Ávila's confessor. At the end of 1580, the eminent Dominican scholar Bartolomé de Medina died, leaving vacant the prestigious chair of *Prima* in Salamanca. Báñez won it after a hotly contested opposition in early 1581, and he would hold the chair until 1599. From 1582 on, he is ordered to publish his writings, mostly his commentaries on the *Summa theologiae*, thus starting a prolonged and publicized period of theological controversy. Interestingly, the Inquisition at one point initiated a process against him after accusations were made over his stance regarding the Eucharist. But it is the dispute with the Jesuits over the nature of

divine providence, foreknowledge, and free will that kept him busy most of the time. In 1597, he first unsuccessfully requested his retirement on grounds of poor health, but only in 1599 his request was finally granted. He spent his final years at the Convent of St. Andrew in Medina del Campo where he died 22 October 1604.

As already mentioned and unlike the *spiritus rector* of the School of Salamanca, Francisco de Vitoria, Báñez was told to publish his lectures given in the classroom. Those lectures are a substantial part of his written oeuvre; they comprise a series of commentaries to Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, some of which have been published during his life-time, such as the commentaries on the *Prima Pars* (1585b and 1614) or the commentaries on parts of the *Secunda Secundae* (1586 and 1594). Other lectures, however, such as the commentaries on the *Prima secundae* have only been edited in the twentieth century by Vicente Beltrán de Heredia. His other writings are either commentaries on Aristotle, such as the *Dialecticae summulae* (1589) or the commentary on *De generatione* (1585a) or they were written with the purpose to discuss the thesis regarding free will and divine necessity, some of which, such as the *Apologia fratrum praedicatorum* (1595), were published during his lifetime, yet many others were made available by Beltrán de Heredia (1968) in the twentieth century.

Heritage, Teachings and Legacy

The preceding biographical remarks show that Báñez considered himself a keen follower of the Dominican tradition, mainly in the spirit of the revival of Thomism, which made teaching and commenting the *Summa theologiae* a compulsory requirement for any Dominican teacher. From the outset, Báñez did not consider himself to be anything but a faithful follower of Thomas Aquinas, even though he time and again acknowledged indebtedness to Cajetan's commentaries to the *Summa theologiae* (1585b, col. 3). Aquinas's model is certainly a case of stylistic sobriety, and Báñez sympathized with it declaring, contrary to the humanistic spirit, that "the commonplaces of the orator's speeches do not please, but they

terrify" [ib.]. Truth in theology has to be clear and evident, such as shown in the *Summa theologiae* itself: "the Doctor (i.e., Aquinas) has offered so much dignity, so much sweetness of speech, so much modesty and profound humility of the catholic truth" [ib.]. Any adornment necessarily had to obscure the issues at stake, and for that reason, Báñez takes a deliberately anti-humanistic stance rejecting literary elegance not only as vain, but also as counter-productive. In this respect, he poignantly added one of his favorite quotations from Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* IV, 11: "What good is a golden key if it does not open? Or: what disservice does a wooden key if it does open?" (1585b, col. 12). As form follows style, Báñez believed that the most direct and unadorned interpretation of Aquinas's texts had to be goal.

The Debate *De auxiliis*

The most contentious debate of his career was held with thinkers that probably would have agreed with Báñez over the point of stylistic simplicity. The controversy *De auxiliis* showcased a doctrinal infighting that set the tone of the relationship between Dominicans and Jesuits for the next decades at least until Pope Paul V declared in 1607 the discussion to be over and that any further debate had to be avoided. What was at stake is one of the perennial problems in theology and philosophy, i.e., whether divine determinism overrides free will or whether it is compatible with it. In this case, the debate centered on the theological justification of how divine foreknowledge and providence do not contradict the undetermined human free will. For Báñez as well as for Molina the starting point was Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, especially *Prima pars* question 14 article 13 in which the problem was raised whether God can know future contingents.

The salient aspect of Báñez's theory is his idea of physical premotion (*praemotio physica*), which he advances controversially in his commentary to the *Summa theologiae* and in a series of treatises written to refute the Jesuit's theory. From the theologian's point of view, two apparently contradicting assumptions had to be made compatible. On the one side, divine omnipotence and

providence accounts for a causally complete explanation of general and individual events in the temporal order of the created world. In other words, everything that happens is, inasmuch as it is based on secondary causes, necessarily related to a first cause, namely God. Without it, no secondary causes and no effects would obtain. On the other side, this deterministic picture stands in a stark contrast with the assumption that human beings are endowed with reason and free choice, thus being *causa sui* and hence standing outside the order of necessary causes. Certainly Báñez thought that both assumptions, i.e., divine necessity and free will, hold true. At least one grave problem arises: assuming that each and every rational agent is responsible for their actions, does this mean that the obtainment of grace can be explained without divine providence? Báñez denied this, and yet the need to hold rational agents responsible for their actions makes it necessary to reconcile divine necessity and free agency recurring to a particular brand of divine intervention (*auxilium*) in human affairs.

On the opposing side, the Jesuits held that divine intervention has to be limited to the foreknowledge of a broad range of alternatives among which human beings make their actual choice. In 1582, a public debate between Báñez and the Jesuit Prudencio de Montemayor took place in Salamanca. On this occasion, the latter emphasized that God does foresee only general aspects of human choice and thus “divine providence does not determine the human will or any other particular cause to good operation, but rather the particular cause determines the act of divine providence” (Matava 2016, 20). Montemayor, who consequently stresses the contingency of human action, goes on to conclude that any contrary doctrine has to be thought of as Lutheran, i.e., deterministic, although he probably had in mind Báñez.

The Jesuit point of view is usually related to Luis de Molina whose seminal work *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis* was first published in 1588. Molina famously advances a novel theory, according to which God’s providence and foreknowledge does not deny free choice articulating a compatibilist theory around the idea of middle knowledge (*scientia media*). To be sure, both Molina and Báñez agreed on the

basic tenets of divine foreknowledge vis-à-vis the contingency of creaturely reality, namely, that God has to be thought of as its necessary cause and that the secondary causes, i.e., the causes within the realm of created things, contingently cause effects that would not obtain without God’s cooperation (*concursum*) (Freddoso 1988, 18). They also accepted that divine foreknowledge covers the universality of events within the created universe so that it would be impossible for God not to know certain events that in fact happened or that could happen. The difference between both lies in their explanation of the nature of divine cooperation and the extent to which foreknowledge necessitates contingent events. Molina holds that free will and contingency are part of the created world. Hence, if indeterminate events are ever to take place, God’s necessary causal contributions for them to happen only reach as far as the secondary causes, leaving the effects of those causes undetermined. In other words, God’s natural knowledge of those events, before he wills them, does not cause them to happen. Molina’s theory points at God’s knowledge of what could happen (natural knowledge) and not of what actually happens. Yet at the same time, God, after he has willed the events to take place, has knowledge of what happened (free knowledge). *Scientia media* or middle knowledge is, then, God’s pre-volitional knowledge of contingent effects; it is a kind of knowledge located between natural (i.e., of what could happen before wills it) and free knowledge (i.e., what actually happened after God had willed it).

Báñez’s objected that Molina did not only inadequately explain Aquinas’s theory of divine foreknowledge of future contingents but that it left too much room for indeterminacy in the realm of contingent effects, which is inconvenient in light of God’s all-encompassing knowledge and causality. In fact, he thought that Molina, in introducing *scientia media*, drove a wedge between divine necessity and free will. In order to maintain free will’s own contingent causality and, at the same time, the causal necessity of divine foreknowledge, Báñez came to a solution that focuses on the issue from the point of view of divine causality. The answer to the problem consists in his unique theory of physical premotion (*praemotio*

physica). While it does not entail a theory of God directly moving objects physically in the material world, it is rather the idea that divine *auxilium* accompanies, so to say, developing contingent effects, without which they could not take place. Hence he says:

But I confess myself not to understand what else that divine premotion would be, if passively considered, than the faculty of intellect itself, placed in complete act by the author of nature, who operates in all things according to the design of his providence.

But if premotion is actively considered, according as it is in God, I understand it to be nothing else than the divine will, which is present in all things, effecting in them everything that they do, insofar as what they do has the notion of being and goodness. (1948, 384; transl. Matava 2016, 61).

Freedom and Rights

Apart from his untiring effort in the discussion regarding free will and divine foreknowledge, there are other topics in his writings that stand out. The most important one is probably his theory of justice, which in parts draws on his conception of free will in the sense that relations between human beings presuppose their free and rational communication in the light of a reality created by God (1594, 121a).

The right (*ius*) that someone can have regarding an object or a person is based on a hierarchical order in the sense that a superior part, e.g., a father, dominates the inferior one, the son in this case. In the end, however, it is God himself, being the supreme being, who exerts *dominium* over all of creation, including human beings (1594, 120a). This in turn implies that no human being is strictly speaking the owner of his or her life or of that of someone else. This limitation is especially relevant for his discussion of slavery, which Báñez considers to be some sort of rightful ownership (*dominium*). Slavery is a kind of dominium when, established from a legal point of view, it is seen as a consequence of the fall from grace. The original sin made property (*divisio rerum*) unavoidable mostly because from that point onwards human beings had turned greedy and selfish. But since God is, in the proper sense, the owner of human life, slavery is not, strictly speaking, ownership over the essence of a human being, but rather over

his or her freedom. This is what makes it possible to relinquish voluntarily ownership over one's freedom; the prevalence of life over freedom is the result of divine ownership of human life. After the fall from grace, all other relationships that imply ownership regarding earthly matters have their origin in civil law or in the *ius gentium*, which thus establishes a background for positive law (1594, 124a). Positive law, however, has to be based on universal normative principles that are not only legally valid but that are also binding in the court of conscience (1594, 10b). Those principles are equivalent to natural rights (*iura naturae*), all of which leads to a very strong Thomasian identification of law and justice.

Unlike his Jesuit opponents, Báñez today does not enjoy the same academic recognition. Being caught in the rigid methodology of accurately commenting Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, Báñez does not seem to fit the ideal of the innovative thinker that most came to recognize in Molina. Yet if seen in the narrower context of the School of Salamanca, his work is indeed a departure from a more practical approach such as displayed by Francisco de Vitoria, preferring instead an analysis that explores the speculative roots of theology that has been highlighted in his debates with the Jesuits.

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Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao

Born: Venice 1453/1454

Died: Rome 1493

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Abstract

Ermolao Barbaro is an emblematic example of the complex relationship, often obliterated by the ideological simplifications in which the vulgarization of Renaissance culture and

thought has been founded, between the prescientific conceptions potentially elaborated in the medieval and scholastic philosophical speculations and the cult of the classical heritage passionately practiced in the courts since Petrarch, a fierce adversary of the barbaric language of the academic *studia* and a passionate advocate of the *Humaniores Litterae*. His family background and the geographical poles between which he moved (Padua and Florence) and his intellectual and speculative interests offer a good testimony of this: starting with a solid philosophical and juridical formation that enabled him to play a certain role as a diplomat, political functionary, and university lecturer, he dedicated a conspicuous part of his scholar production to classical philology, thus giving a well-recognized contribution on the establishment of the text Pliny’s the Elder *Natural History*, one of the main disputed intellectual questions that has shaped the erudite and scientific European debate from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment.

Alternate Names

Barbaro, Ermolao <il Giovane>

Biography

Nephew of the well-known humanist Francesco Barbaro, who had studied in Padua with Giovanni Conversini and Gasparino Barzizza and learned Greek under Guarino Veronese, Ermolao also had Guarino as his teacher of classics.

He studied classical languages in Verona under his homonym (his father Zaccaria’s cousin) Ermolao Barbaro il Vecchio (the Elder).

He joined his father in his travels to Rome where he attended the lectures of two well-known humanists Pomponio Leto and the Greek Teodoro Gaza and then to Naples where he wrote his first treatise on the celibate (*De coelibatu* 1473).

Later on, he obtained a doctorate in Liberal Arts (*in artibus* 1474) and another one in both

civil and ecclesiastical law (*in utroque iure* 1477) from the University of Padua.

In this same University, he taught Aristotelian moral philosophy in 1474–1479.

Active in Venetian political life, he served in different diplomatic missions in Bruges, Rome, and Milan and translated into Latin Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (published in Venice in 1472) and Themistius' commentaries on some Aristotelian treatises (*Themistii Peripatetici paraphrasis* first published in Treviso in 1481 but reprinted several times almost all along the sixteenth century in Venice [1502, 1559, 1560, 1570], Paris [1528, 1535, 1537], and Basel [1533, 1545]).

In 1484 and 1486, he lectured on Demosthenes, Theocritus, and Aristotle's *Poetic* in Padua. He was also an expert botanist who founded the botanical garden (*orto botanico*) of Padua in 1484 and wrote a commentary of Dioscorides' treatises on medicinal plants (published in Venice in 1516 and reprinted in Strasbourg 1529 and Cologne 1530).

In 1490, he was sent to Rome as ambassador of the Venetian Republic to Pope Innocent VIIIth after he had written a treaty on the office of ambassador (*De officio legati*, published in modern times with the *De coelibatu* already mentioned above (Barbaro 1969).

At the beginning of March 1491, the Pope elevated him to the ecclesiastical dignity of Patriarch of Aquileia (an ancient harbor on the Adriatic sea, today located in the Udine province of the Italian region of Friuli and which had been one of the most important ecclesiastical province from the Byzantine times until the eighteenth century), but without the consent of the Venetian authorities who ordered E. Barbaro to refuse this nomination.

The Pope enjoined him to obey, and consequently, E. Barbaro was forced to stay in exile in Rome where he died from the plague in July 1493.

Impact and Legacy

As we can notice by the dates furnished above, E. Barbaro's fame lasted long in the following century, but mainly as a peripatetic philosopher and commentator.

In recent essays, the stress have been made on his philosophical interests not alien, in spite what a certain traditional historiography, opposing in an excessive drastic way scholasticism and humanism, has often assumed, to the logical and physical speculations of the *Calculatores* of Merton College and the derived theory of Walter Burley on the *intensio* and *remissio formarum*. These aspects have been studied in particular in Barbaro's summary of natural science's principles as can be deducted from Aristotle, the *Compendium scientiae naturalis ex Aristotele* composed in 1484 and published in Venice in 1545 (Bianchi 2004: 351–362).

Nonetheless he deserves also to be mentioned as of the major philologists of his time and had been in relationship with the Florentine circle that gathered around Politian and Marsilio Ficino.

His very interesting correspondence (published in modern times by V. Branca in 1943 with his discourses and Latin poems) contains a famous polemical exchange he had with the great Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in 1485 about the central question of which style of language suited best philosophical speculation.

While Pico had defended the "Parisian style" of the scholastics which he thought more precise to express the subtleties of philosophical speculation, Barbaro replied that elegance and property of language should never been disjoined from intellectual quest for truth and happiness.

As we can see, this opposition is of great significance, not only to understand Humanist and Renaissance thought in relation with language and expression, but has kept all his importance in our modern era, where we are more and more concerned with the risks of dis-humanization implied in the tremendous advancement of the technical aspects of our daily lives, behaviors, and aspirations.

In his last years, E. Barbaro published in Rome his main philological work: an enormous collection of philological emendations (the modern critical republication of this work by Father Giovanni Pozzi in 1973 counts no less than four ponderous volumes) on Pliny the Elder's encyclopedia (*Naturalis Historia*) and of the most ancient geographical treaty of antiquity (Pomponius Mela's *Chorographia*).

The importance of this work (*Castigationes plinianae et in Pomponium Melam*, first published in Venice in 1492–1493) not only for the history of philology in general but also for the fundamental question of the reception of Pliny and of scientific knowledge in the Renaissance has been well documented by the modern editor.

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Barbaro, Ermolao <il Giovane>

- [Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao](#)

Barbosus, Paulus

- [Soncino, Paolo Barbo](#)

Barbus de Soncino, Paulus

- [Soncino, Paolo Barbo](#)

Barlaam de Seminara

- [Barlaam the Calabrian](#)

Barlaam Mesari (or Masari or Massari)

- [Barlaam the Calabrian](#)

Barlaam the Calabrian

Born: ca. 1290

Died: May/June 1348

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Abstract

A Basilian monk, theologian, Catholic bishop, and scholar, Barlaam the Calabrian († 1348) is one of the most interesting figures in pre-Renaissance culture. He is known for having started the so-called Hesychast controversy, probably the most crucial cultural and religious event in fourteenth-century Byzantium. However, since his life and career bridges Byzantium and the West, B. is to be regarded as a fourteenth-century forerunner to the later generation of Greek émigrés that provided such impetus to Greek studies in Italy after the fall of Constantinople. His acquaintance with Francesco Petrarca, Leonzio Pilato, and possibly Giovanni Boccaccio and Paolo da Perugia suffices to establish B. as an important figure in the history of Greek studies in the pre-Renaissance West. B.’s reputation was also called into question during the Renaissance Plato-Aristotle controversy, as in the fifteenth century Francesco Filelfo conjectured that this had begun with B.’s alleged attacks against Plato.

Alternate Names

Barlaam de Seminara; Barlaam Mesari (or Masari or Massari)

Biography

Barlaam of Calabria, Barlaam Mesari (also spelled Masari or Massari), or Barlaam de Seminara was born around 1290 in Calabria, Southern Italy, in a Greek-speaking orthodox environment. During his early years in Italy, the young B. became a monk at the Basilian monastery of St. Elias in Galatro, though he may also have been acquainted with the monastery of St. Filarete in Seminara. B.'s biography gets less mysterious around 1325, when he moved to Greece, mainly Thessaloniki, which at the time was one of the leading centers in culture and the sciences. From there, B. frequently visited Constantinople, where he got acquainted with very important figures in the Byzantine aristocracy and imperial court. The reasons behind B.'s decision to leave Italy are unknown. According to his enemies, Gregory Palamas and Nikephoros Gregoras, B. was moved by the desire to live with his orthodox fellows and to read Aristotle in the original Greek. Both these witnesses are biased, although they may not err entirely in their claims. It is certain that B. achieved more than these two goals as he soon became a prominent figure in fourteenth-century Byzantine culture and politics.

With respect to the former, B. rivaled the aforementioned Nikephoros Gregoras, a giant of the scientific and philosophical landscape of the time; as to B.'s political and social ascension, he soon gained the support of the *Megas Domestikos* and later of Emperor John Kantakouzenos († 1383), who considered B. a protégé and appointed him to be the official court theologian around 1334 with the task of defending the Greek view on the procession of the Holy Spirit in front of the Latin ambassadors Franciscus de Camerino and Ricardus Anglicus. While debating with the Latin delegacy, B. was more concerned with the method of the theological discussions than with the topic of the debate. Thus he defended the Greek view of

the procession *ex solo Patre* by claiming that strictly apodictic arguments are unfit to theological matters, for these can only be discussed by means of Aristotelian dialectical syllogisms based on the Holy Scriptures, here understood as that on which the agreement among interlocutors ultimately rests. Since the Latin arguments could be neither apodictic nor dialectic, insofar as they are not shared by the Byzantine counterpart and are not based on the Holy Scriptures, the *Filioque* cannot be defended.

B.'s strategy did not please the Athonite monk and later Metropolit of Thessaloniki Gregory Palamas († 1359), who wrote two anti-Latin treatises supporting the apodictic demonstrability of the Greek dogma. Palamas went further and approached B., first through a common friend, Gregory Akindynos († ca. 1348), and then in person in a crescendo culminating in B.'s condemnation in 1341. B. had left Constantinople for Paris and Avignon in 1339 on a secret mission demanding Western support against the incoming Ottoman threat. However, his condemnation as heterodox in June 1341 and the death of his mentor and greatest supporter, the Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos on June 15 of the same year, convinced B. to leave Constantinople for the West permanently.

The departure from Constantinople was the beginning of B.'s second life. During his earlier diplomatic mission in the West (1339), B. first visited Naples, then Paris, and finally Avignon. At that time, he must have built a network of relationships at the Neapolitan court of the Anjou and at the papal court in Avignon, for, after leaving Constantinople, B. sojourned precisely in Naples (late July 1341) and Avignon (late August 1341). At this point, B. renounced Orthodoxy and embraced Catholicism. In October 1342, Pope Clement VI († 1352) appointed B. as Bishop of Gerace, in Calabria, which nevertheless B. visited only for short periods. More importantly, in Avignon, he became acquainted with Francesco Petrarca and taught him some Greek. He may also have met Giovanni Boccaccio and Paolo da Perugia personally, possibly during one of his visits to Naples, whereas according to Boccaccio, the Homeric scholar and translator

Leonzio Pilato was B.'s *auditor* during B.'s stay in Gerace. B. returned to Constantinople one more time between the end of 1345 and the beginning of 1346. Then, after spending some few months in Gerace, he went back to Avignon at the end of 1346. He died there in June 1348.

Works and Themes

B.'s early works were all written during the first period of his sojourn in Constantinople and Thessaloniki (between ca. 1325 and 1337). In these, B. discusses scientific matters concerning mathematics (like in his *Logistica; De radice quadrato; Arithmetica demonstratio eorum quae in secundo libro Elementorum sunt in lineis et figuris planis demonstrata*) and astronomy (like in his *De eclipsi solari ann. 1333 et 1337 secundum magnam Syntaxin Ptolomaei, I-II; De paschate secundum Apostolorum canonem; Refutatio trium ultimorum capitum Harmonicorum Ptolomaei*). B.'s astronomical works are reminiscent of his harsh polemics with Byzantine erudite Nikephoros Gregoras, who in exchange targets B. in his satirical dialogue *Florentios*. B. also composed five short essays (transmitted as Λύσεις εἰς τὰς ἐπενεχθείσας αὐτῷ ἀπορίας παρὰ τοῦ σοφωτάτου Γεώργιου τοῦ Λαπίθου) on different philosophical and theological topics at the request of the Cypriot erudite George Lapithes.

The theological debates with the Latins on the *Filioque* (1334/1335) mark a turning point in B.'s life and work. From now on, theology becomes B.'s main concern. In his *Contra Latinos*, B. argues that no demonstrative argument applies to theological matters, for God and the divine properties, being absolutely transcendent and unknowable to men, cannot be the subject of a demonstrative science based on Aristotle's prerequisites as present in the *Posterior Analytics*. Intriguingly, B. will remain consistent with this view even in his later writings (like in the Latin *Epistulae*), where as a Catholic bishop he supports the Latin *Filioque* against the Greeks.

B.'s strategy during the discussions with the Latins was just the beginning of the violent

theological controversy of the following years. In fact, the Athonite monk Gregory Palamas († 1359) challenged B.'s refusal to address theological matters through demonstration and engaged in polemics which soon touched upon other issues, like the hesychast prayer purported by Palamas' monasticism, the status of the divine energies that is to say God's operations *ad extra*, and the value of profane learning.

B.'s approach to these matters is strongly influenced by philosophical authorities, though he confronts his opponent based on the exegesis of patristic authorities and Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite as well. In B.'s view (espoused in his Greek *Epistulae*), the hesychast prayer is a bodily experience which as such is unfit to transcend the material world toward pure intellection. Accordingly, B. supports purification from bodily passions and false beliefs in a way which is strongly reminiscent of the Neoplatonic interpretation of Socratic Ignorance and follows the Neoplatonist Proclus in admitting that such purification is the *conditio sine qua non* for recollecting the intellectual knowledge innate to the soul. Thus, B. counters Palamas' mystical deification with a form of intellectual assimilation to God, something which harks back to the Christian appropriation of the Platonic definition of philosophy as assimilation to God insofar as humanly possible (e.g., *Republic* 10.613a-b; *Thaetetus* 176b; *Timaeus* 90a-d).

B. wrote several other works in response to Palamas' objections, but most of these (like B.'s *Contra Messalianos*) were destroyed after B.'s condemnation in 1341. However, snippets from these lost works can be extrapolated from Palamas' *Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*, in which the Athonite monks cite several passages from B.'s writings otherwise unknown to us. From these fragments, it seems that with respect to the status of the divine energies, B. underlines that postulating the existence of energies both uncreated and at the same time separated from God's essence is an impossible contradiction, just as Palamas did. Taking for granted that God is not identical with his energies, it would be safer – implies B. – to admit that the very status of such a distinction is beyond comprehension to

the human mind and is evident only in God's providential operations in the created world.

With respect to the value of pagan learning, B.'s Greek *Epistulae* follows the Church Fathers in granting pagan philosophers a sparkle of God's divine illumination. However, apparently B.'s lost works as transmitted by Palamas suggest that B. went further, stating that there exists only one wisdom for all men, which nonetheless is granted to the few (B. thinks here of the Apostles) by direct divine inspiration and is accessible to the rest of humanity through philosophical reasoning. Intriguingly, the source for this statement is the Neoplatonist Syrianus' commentary on *Metaphysics M-N*, a work on which B. relies in his extant work as well. On this basis, B. follows other Byzantine scholars of the past, like eleventh-century polymath Michael Psellos, in charging the extreme ascetism of certain monks of his time and their rejection of classical scholarship with ignorance.

In spite of the allegations by his contemporaries of being a Latinophrone (i.e., pro-Latins) and the modern interpretation, which sees B. as a Latin theologian transplanted into Byzantium, all the evidence suggests that B.'s culture and education was that of a Byzantine Greek. His knowledge of Latin theology is vague; even B.'s Greek handwriting differs considerably from the Greek Southern Italian literary hands and conform itself to the so-called fourteenth-century neoclassical writing style evident in mss. produced in Thessaloniki and Constantinople in that period.

Yet, B. deserves his place in the prehistory of the Renaissance thanks to his late acquaintance with Francesco Petrarca. In a letter to Nicholas Sigerus (date: 10 Jan. 1354), Petrarca claims to have taught B. some Latin (though B.'s Latin was probably better than Petrarca implies), in exchange for some classes in Greek, which Petrarca did not master at all (*Fam.* XVIII 2.9). More importantly, while praising B. as "modernum graie specimen sophie," Petrarca also claims to have seen "several books" containing Plato's dialogues in B.'s private library (*De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* IV). Unfortunately, Petrarca could not profit much from B.'s lessons in Greek; first B.'s duties in Calabria as Bishop of Gerace (a title which B. had gained through Petrarca's solicitude) and then B.'s death

brought Petrarca's study of the Greek language to a premature end (*Fam.* XII 2.7). But both he and his fellow Giovanni Boccaccio, together with Paolo da Perugia, anticipated the Renaissance approach toward Greek as the authentic source for reading and understanding the Classics in glorifying the Greek-Byzantine B. as an undisputed authority in the field of classical mythology and Greek studies in general.

In his *De genealogia deorum*, Boccaccio refers to B. as being teacher of both Paolo da Perugia, the librarian of Robert of Anjou, King of Naples, and the bizarre Leonzio Pilato, who, for the aforementioned reasons, hid his Southern Italian origins by presenting himself as a Thessalian or a Byzantine. Petrarca's (*Sen.* III.6) and Boccaccio's (*De genealogia deorum* XV.6) words on Leonzio's disingenuous attitude and poor scholarship are among the sharpest ever used by these poets, whereas their esteem for B. is always the highest. Finally, a Latin work attributed to B. called "Ethica secundum Stoicos" may have some connection, if proven genuine, with Petrarca's interest in stoicism, although Petrarca already had access to Stoic material through Cicero and Augustine. Yet B.'s Greek works favor the author's fondness for Platonic and Neoplatonic source material above other philosophical secs. Curiously, in spite of B.'s dependence upon Platonism, years later, Francesco Filelfo's letter to Bessarion (*Epistulae*, 31.39) identifies B. as the very source of the attacks against Plato and as being responsible for the Renaissance Plato-Aristotle controversy.

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Barocius, Franciscus

► [Barozzi, Francesco](#)

Baron, Hans

Born: 22 June 1900 (Berlin)

Died: 26 November 1988 (Urbana, Illinois, USA)

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Abstract

This entry briefly examines the major contributions of Hans Baron to the intellectual history of the Italian Renaissance and beyond. It emphasizes Baron's conception of "civic

humanism” and how this concept remains influential even a century after its first introduction.

Biography

Hans Baron emigrated from the persecution of Nazi Germany for Italy, England and then the United States during the 1930s (Kohl 1990). In the U.S. Baron settled into a position at the Newberry Library in Chicago where he completed his historical masterpiece *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, first published in two volumes in 1955 and then again in a revised single volume in 1966 (Baron 1955). The book presented Baron’s thesis on “bürgerhumanismus” or “civic humanism,” which he had first proposed in German in 1925 (Fubini 1992) and developed in the decades following (Molho 2008). Baron’s civic humanism thesis impacted studies across disciplines as well as across typical temporal and continental boundaries. It was without question among the most influential historical arguments of the twentieth century (Hankins 2000). Beyond the specifics of his civic humanism thesis, Baron’s insistence upon the importance of social and political contexts for the history of ideas has also had long-reaching impact on the field of Renaissance history.

Baron argued that a dramatic change occurred in the political thought of Florence after the year 1402. Prior to that date intellectual life in Florence was characterized by praise for the contemplative life of the scholar; praise for the Roman Empire; and a preference for Latin over vernacular writings. Yet, all of that changed in the face of political events in the early 1400s. From the 1390s Giangaleazzo Visconti had been expanding the number of allies and towns subject to the city-state of Milan. By the summer of 1402 Florence alone of the powers in northern Italy remained free from Milanese rule. Facing conquest and the prospect of what Baron characterized as an Italian unification under a Milanese tyrant, Florence remained free, but without allies and with diminishing hope of survival. However, in the autumn of 1402 Visconti unexpectedly died, his

armies and empire dispersed, and Florence experienced a patriotic jubilation that dramatically changed Florentine intellectual life. Florentine humanists began to condemn the contemplative life and instead favored the active life within government, business and the family. They rejected the Roman Empire, arguing that the emperors from Julius Caesar onwards were tyrants. Instead, they claimed that Florence was founded and was heir to the civic liberty and freedom of the Roman Republic. Alongside this new emphasis on civic life, liberty, and republicanism, Florentines also developed a new-found appreciation for the vernacular literature of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. These changes were characteristics of the new “civic humanism” in Florence (Baron 1955).

Both Baron’s concept of civic humanism and his attempts to explicitly bring together changes in social and political history with changes in the history of thought have proven immensely influential since the 1950s. Baron devoted significant sections of his text to establishing the dates of fourteenth and fifteenth century writings. Through more accurate dates Baron sought to show the impact of specific political changes on specific texts and their ideas. Over the past several decades scholars have disputed many of Baron’s dates as well as many of his assumptions and particular points about Florence, Florentine politics and society, and specific humanist texts (Hankins 1995; Baker and Maxson 2015). However, the piecemeal dismantling of Baron’s thesis has done little to diminish his influence. If Baron’s dates are contested, most historians now accept that political forces often influenced the history of thought. Additionally, even as the specifics of Baron’s arguments have been mostly refuted, the general concept of civic humanism continues to hold wide-ranging currency in the scholarship. Different variations of civic humanism have been applied and/or rejected to Florence as well as numerous other examples throughout the Italian peninsula during the late medieval and early modern periods. Outside of Italy, the idea has been traced through thinkers across Europe and the United States, from the medieval to the modern age (Hankins 2000; Pocock 1975). For Baron and

his supporters, civic humanism served as a foundation on which modern democratic values were based.

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Barozzi, Francesco

Born: 9 August 1537, Candia (Iràklion), Crete

Died: 23 November 1604, Venice, Italy

Matteo Cosci

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Abstract

Philosopher and Mathematician with Venetian origins, Francesco Barozzi (1537–1604) bound up his name to his *Cosmography*, an extended treatise on Ptolemaic cosmology

with many mathematical criticisms to Johannes de Sacrobosco's *Sphere*. During his career Barozzi merged his humanistic and antiquarian studies (as well as those regarding the history of ancient science) with esoterism and sorcery, so attracting the Inquisition's sentence against himself at the end of his life. His major contribution remains the recognized dignity of mathematics as a science, which he always defended as not inferior to the other ones, and even as essential for solving astronomical issues with a certainty that was regarded as superior to that provided by specious and inconclusive disputes.

Alternate Names

Barocius, Franciscus

Biography

As it was expected by a Venetian aristocratic gentleman born in a Mediterranean commercial outpost during Renaissance times, Francesco Barozzi spent his life alternating his residence between his colonial birthplace in Crete and his official homeland, Venice. Besides this, Barozzi spent the years of his cultural formation in Padua, where he studied Philosophy and mathematics, up to lecturing there on Sacrobosco's *Sphere* in 1559. In reference to this work, his major contribution was in fact the correction of many mistakes that he found by the way of mathematical proofs in that widespread academic text. He engaged in a lively correspondence about the number and the nature of those contended errors with the Jesuit Christophorus Clavius, who, on his turn, was the author of a commentary on Sacrobosco's *Sphere* (Spiazzi 1964; Rose 1977, pp. 135–139). Barozzi's positive results were further developed and published in the *Cosmography* (1585 and then 1598), his *magnum opus* in four books which had the fulfilled ambition of replacing Sacrobosco's textbook as the common and more authoritative reference for Ptolemaic cosmology. A fifth book, devoted to astronomy and astrology,

was left incomplete (Dublin Manuscript 2,1 Abbot n. 380); there he dismissed the heliocentric theory and retained the Alphonsine Ninth Sphere as a proper improvement on Copernicus' views. In addition to that, he published a study about the drawing of geometrical asymptotes and ellipses (the *Admirandum Problema*, 1586) and an *Opusculum* (1560), where he defended the certainty of mathematics as equal to the one provided by Logic and even as superior – from the human point of view only – to the one provided by Metaphysics.

He complemented his scientific research with a life-long activity of humanistic retrospective inquiry and unconcealed engagement with esoterism: a typical combination of interest for that age that Barozzi always pursued in a concurrent and parallel way. About the former, he recovered a great quantity of classical scientific books from ancient collections, constituting one of the most extensive private reference libraries on the topic. Nowadays the remaining archive of *Codices Barocciani* (MSS. Barocchi) is kept by the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Among the works that he recovered, edited, and translated, it has to be mentioned his Proclus' commentary on Euclid's first book of *Elements* (1560) an unpublished new edition of Pappus' *Mathematical Collections* (1588) and Heron of Alexandria's treatise on war machines (1572). He also transcribed ancient inscriptions directly from Cretan vestiges for his epigraphic studies.

About the latter, namely, Barozzi's open engagement with esoterism, we know that at least a couple of contributions were published under his name: a book on Nostradamus' predictions (*Universal Prognostication of the Whole World*, 1566) and another one on prophecies attributed to the Byzantine emperor Leo VI (*Oracula [or Vaticinia] Leonis*, 1577) (Rigo 1996). His multifaceted expertise included also astrology, alchemy, and sorcery, but this sort of predilection for the arcane and the occult had lead him into trouble with the Holy Inquisition, since he was tried twice with the accuse of apostasy and suspect of heresy, in 1583 and 1587. He was found guilty of offenses such as distilling love-philters, of wizardry for rainmaking, and also of

necromancy for having evoked a young lady in order to ask her about future and past events: all things which actually were common indictments for all those juridical attacks just based on doctrinal regulations. The penalty of imprisonment and the due payment of a related fine marked de facto the end of Barozzi's biographical and scientific parabola (Spiazzi 1964; Rigo 1996; Scomparin 1996). Nonetheless, his practical and theoretical appreciation for the value of mathematics in general, and within astronomic demonstrations in particular, remains as one of the most important steps toward the epistemic legitimacy of that controversial subject in Renaissance times (Rose 1977; O'Connor and Robertson 2006). Also in his first work, the *Oratio ad Philosophiam Virtutemque* (1557), he argued that the fulfilment of the soul is accomplished only by the study of philosophy and that mathematics, as the most important part of philosophy, ought to be studied above all.

Cross-References

► [Clavius, Christophorus](#)

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Barros, João de

Born: Viseu, Portugal, c. 1496

Died: Ribeira de Litém, Portugal, 1570

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Abstract

Barros was educated at court and combined a literary career with an important role in the administration of Portugal's overseas empire. This enabled him to collect material for his great historical work, the *Décadas da Ásia* (Decades of Asia), for which he is best known. Though owing much to the Portuguese tradition of chronicle writing, and to the historians of ancient Rome, the Decades are original in the immense geographical range that they cover – the whole of maritime Asia and East Africa – and also in their impressive chronological sweep. However, he has been criticized for his reluctance ever to condemn the behavior of his fellow countrymen and for his concentration on individual deeds of heroism.

Rópica Pnefma (Spiritual Merchandize) is Barros's most significant work of religious polemic. It is an allegorical dialogue, aimed at the Portuguese New Christians, in other words, hastily converted Jews whose faith was believed to be suspect. However, it

contains much ambiguity, and Razão (Reason), the voice of Christian orthodoxy, does not always have an answer to the questions raised by the other speakers. Barros also shows some sympathy for the ideas of Erasmus, a writer who became increasingly suspect in sixteenth-century Portugal.

Barros's linguistic writings are a contribution to the study of vernacular languages which became widespread in southern Europe during the Renaissance. Barros is not overawed by the Latin inheritance of Portuguese and acknowledges the influence of oriental languages.

Biography

Educated at court, Barros combined a literary career with an increasingly important role in royal and imperial administration. By 1533, he was *feitor da casa da Índia* (administrator of the India House), responsible for the financial management of Portugal's overseas possessions. He made use of his position to collect information, including documents in Asian languages, for his great history of the Portuguese expansion in the East. He himself, however, never travelled further than São Jorge da Mina, on the coast of what is now Ghana. In 1567, he retired from his official position to his estate in the country, near Pombal, where he died three years later.

Works

In his own time, and subsequently, Barros is best known for his monumental historical work, the *Décadas da Ásia* (Decades of Asia). (Vols I-II, Lisbon, 1552–3; vol. III, Lisbon, 1563; vol. IV, incomplete and revised by J. B. Lavanha, Madrid, 1615). Rather surprisingly, he prepared himself for this feat of narrative history by writing a lengthy romance of chivalry, *Crónica do imperador Clarimundo* (Coimbra, 1522). His projected works on geography and on commerce have not come down to us. Barros also published religious polemic, most notably *Rópica Pnefma*

(Spiritual Merchandise, Lisbon, 1532), and books about the Portuguese language, including *Diálogo em louvor da nossa linguagem* (Dialogue in Praise of Our Language, 1540) and a grammar (1540).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

As a historian, Barros was the heir of the flourishing chronicle literature of his own country, but as the title “Decades” makes clear, he was also a writer in the Roman tradition of Livy. His originality lies in the geographical range of his work, which covers the whole of maritime Asia and the coast of East Africa. He also has a broad chronological vision, going beyond the annalistic and regnal perspective of his Portuguese predecessors. He has been criticized, though, for his reluctance ever to condemn the behavior of his fellow countrymen and for his concentration on individual deeds of heroism.

Barros's linguistic writings form part of the current of study of vernacular languages that became widespread in southern Europe during the Renaissance. He is not overawed by the Latin origin of Portuguese, and points out the differences between the two languages clearly and without preconception in favor of one or the other. His knowledge of the East led him to recognize the influence of non-European languages, including Arabic, on his own (Buescu 1978).

Innovation and Original Aspects

The allegorical dialogue *Rópica Pnefma* is aimed at the New Christians of Portugal, that is, forcibly converted Jews, and some Moslems, who were thought to retain elements of their old faith. Barros clearly expected to persuade them of Catholic orthodoxy through the arguments of the dominant speaker, Razão (Reason). However, some of the other speakers, notably Vontade (Will) and Entendimento (Understanding), who from time to time can be identified with Jewish intellectual positions, make points which Reason is unable or unwilling to answer. Will and Understanding's

denial of the immortality of the soul has been linked to the skeptical philosophical tradition, originating with Averroes, which was prevalent among Iberian Jews in the Middle Ages (Révah 1975). Barros uses his characters as vehicles for social and ecclesiastical satire, and this, together with some ambiguous references to Erasmus, caused the book to be placed on the Index of 1581. It is difficult to arrive at a coherent view of the book as a whole, whose frequent paradoxes and changes of direction show how, in the relatively open Portugal of the 1530s, orthodox thought could sometimes be tempered by uncertainty.

Impact and Legacy

Barros was effectively the official historian of Portuguese Asia, and as a consequence his work has always been read. In the early modern period, Decades 1–2 were known abroad via the Italian translation made by the Spaniard Alfonso de Ulloa (Venice, 1561). His minor works tended to be forgotten. *Rópica Pnefma*, for instance, was not reprinted until 1869.

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Bartholomew of Bruges

Born: 1286

Died: 1356

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Abstract

Aristotelian philosopher, medical scholar, and physician active in Paris and Montpellier in the first half of the fourteenth century and author of philosophical *sophismata* and Aristotle commentaries, including commentaries on marginal and previously uncommented texts of the contemporary Aristotelian *corpus* (*De inundatione Nili*, ps.-Aristotelian *Economics*, Averroes' paraphrase of Aristotle's *Poetics*).

Biography

The philosopher, medical scholar, and physician Bartholomew of Bruges may be considered to be one of the most important representatives of the early fourteenth-century Parisian Aristotelianism. He began his career at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Paris where it is recorded that he was *magister artium* between 1306 and 1309.

B.'s six extant Aristotle commentaries date from around that period. They include a commentary with questions on Aristotle's *De anima* (1306 or before), an extensive *quaestio* commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (1307), as well as undated *quaestiones* on *De generatione et corruptione*.

His main contribution to the medieval reception of Aristotle is his commentaries on three marginal texts of the medieval Latin *corpus aristotelicum*. His 1307 commentary on Averroes' paraphrase of Aristotle's *Poetics* (translated into Latin in 1256) is the only medieval commentary on this work and one of the rare specimens of the reception of Aristotle's *Poetics* before the fifteenth century. Following the tradition of

Al-Farabi and Gundissalinus, Bartholomew defines *Poetics* as a part of logic and an aid to moral philosophy.

Equally unique among medieval and renaissance Aristotle commentaries is his uncompleted commentary, surviving in a shorter and longer version, on *De inundatione Nili*, a (pseudo?-) Aristotelian treatise on the causes of the annual Nile flood. Bartholomew argues, on stylistic and doctrinal grounds, for the authenticity of the text which he considers an appendix to Aristotle's *Meteorology*.

The most influential of his works on Aristotle is an extensive commentary with *quaestiones* on the pseudo-Aristotelian *Economics* (1309), an ancient philosophical treatise on the household and marriage attributed to Aristotle that was translated twice into Latin in the thirteenth century. The commentary served as model for the *Economics* commentary of Albert of Saxony (1359), and it was partially translated into French by Nicole Oresme (ca. 1372). Bartholomew defines the *Economics* as Aristotle's textbook of the "science of the household community" (*scientia de communitate domestica*) which he considers to be a fully fledged Aristotelian *scientia* and a branch of practical/moral philosophy. The commentary contains an extensive philosophical discussion of the structure of the household and its relationship to the political community, of the natural and monogamous character of marriage, as well as of the relationship between husband and wife and their respective roles and duties within and outside the household.

B. also wrote ca. fifteen shorter philosophical treatises on logic, epistemology, and metaphysics. At least four of these *sophismata* are the outcome of philosophical disputes with colleagues from the Arts Faculty. This is also the case of his best-known *sophisma*, the *Sophisma de sensu agente*, going back to a controversy with the Averroist John of Jandun (d. 1328) and addressing the question about the sensation of material objects by the sensitive faculty of the soul.

After 1309, evidence of Bartholomew's activity at the Arts Faculty disappears. The next period of his life is marked by a radical career shift to medicine. In 1329, he resurfaces in the sources as

a private doctor of Guy I of Châtillon, the Count of Blois, in whose services he shall remain until the count's death in 1342. In 1333, he is at the University of Montpellier as a regent Master of Medicine. His medical writings probably date from that period. Less numerous than his works of philosophy, they include commentaries on Avicenna's *Canon* and on Galen's *Tegni* as well as a tract on the pest. As Cornelius O'Boyle has shown, some medical writings formerly attributed to him (such as a commentary on the *Isagoge* of Johannitius, or a commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognostics*) belong to his older namesake, the twelfth-century Italian medical scholar Bartholomew of Salerno.

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Bartolus of Saxoferrato

Born: 10 November 1313/1314, Venantura

Died: 10 July 1357

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Abstract

The name of Bartolus de Saxoferrato (1313/1314–1357) is associated with late medieval legal theory and practice, although a tradition initiated by his pupil Baldus de Ubaldis (1327–1400) portrays him as a man devoted to practice more than to theory. Bartolus was a brilliant teacher and a prolific writer. Thanks to

his critical insight, which pervades his *commentaria*, *tractatus*, *quaestiones*, and *consilia*, the hermeneutics of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* became a science aimed at the solution of the practical problems of late medieval society. In the realm of law, two clusters of questions have been debated, one concerning Bartolus' influence on the development of civil law and the other concerning the authorship of a number of writings attributed to him. Bartolus' relevance to philosophy is negligible, even if his conceptions of jurisprudence and truth in legal reasoning correspond to a certain philosophy of law. His ideas are relevant in the perspective of Renaissance political philosophy: Bartolus paved the way for the modern conception of territorial sovereignty and for a rejection of tyranny on legal-theoretical grounds.

Biography

Bartolus was born in Venatura, a village close to Saxoferrato in the province of Ancona, territory of the future Duchy of Urbino. His precise date of birth is unknown but must have been between 10 November 1313 and 10 November 1314. Most likely his father Ceccus, a small landowner of modest means, belonged to the Severi family, whereas his mother was named Santa Alfani. Two Franciscan friars, Peter of Assisi and Guido de Perusio, took care of his primary education. The former played an important role in Bartolus' formation and presumably provided the financial means enabling him, at the age of fourteen, to study law at Perugia under the guidance of Cynus de Pistoia (1270–1336/37). Bartolus' attachment to the Franciscans was notable. Various parts of his *commentaria* and a number of *consilia* are concerned with the problem of the management of the property of Franciscan convents, including hereditary matters, and the problem of the legal representation of those communities. The *Liber minoricarum decisionum* deals with these questions in particular. Cynus encouraged Bartolus to abandon the old interpretative method and embrace the dialectical

techniques developed at the School of Orléans. Possibly due to the transfer of Cynus to Florence, in October 1333 Bartolus moved to Bologna, where, under the guidance of Jacobus Butrigarius (1274–1348), on 15 December 1333 he attained the title of *baccalaureus*. On 17 September 1334, presented by Butrigarius, Bartolus defended his doctorate before a commission presided over by the canonist Johannes Calderinus (ca. 1300–1365). Among the ten members of the commission were the masters Jacobus de Belviso (1270–1335) and Raynerius (Arsendi) de Forlì (d. 1358). On 10 November 1334, Bartolus received his doctoral degree in the Cathedral of St. Peter. During the subsequent 4 years, he exercised judiciary functions in Todi, Cagli, and Macerata. In either 1338 or 1339, he married Pellina Bovarelli, who belonged to a wealthy family. They had two sons and four daughters. In 1339 Bartolus moved to Pisa where he initially exercised judiciary functions and later became professor of civil law. At the end of 1342, or in the early spring of 1343, Bartolus moved to Perugia. In 1348 the outbreak of the Black Death caused an interruption of all academic activities. In October 1348 full citizenship was conferred upon him, his two brothers, and their descendants. He was also granted the permission to hold a salaried chair. Supposedly Bartolus served as a member of the city council. A notable episode concerns his participation as a member of an embassy representing Perugia to Emperor Charles IV (1316–1378) at Pisa between May and June 1355. The Emperor received the famous law professor with great honors and made him imperial *consiliarius* and *familiaris domesticus commensalis*. The Emperor is also said to have given him, and any of his heirs who attained the title of doctor of law, among other privileges, the *venia aetatis*, whereby a minor was declared to have attained his majority before the age of 25. In his unfinished *Tractatus de insignis et armis*, Bartolus claimed that the Emperor granted him a coat of arms consisting of the image of a red lion with a twofold tail on a golden field. It is almost certain that the imperial grant never occurred. Moreover, the lion represented in the coat of arms of the Bohemian kings was two-tailed, but

silver on a red field. Bartolus died presumably on 10 July 1357, but nothing is known of the circumstances of his death (Calasso 1964; Cavallar et al. 1994; Condorelli 1995; Cortese 1995; Bellomo 1998; Lepsius 2004; Treggiari 2009).

A Contested Legacy

Bartolus was the most famous of the commentators, a juristic school mainly concerned with the potential for practical application of the Roman law. The commentators sought a harmonization of the Roman law, local law, customary law, and canon law. Bartolus abhorred the dialectical subtleties in use at Orléans, but he shared with the French jurists the opinion that the authority of the Accursian gloss had to be questioned whenever necessary and convenient. He was often referred to as “the lantern of the law” and the “king of the law.” The maxim “no one can be a good jurist unless he is a Bartolist” (*nullus bonus iurista nisi sit Bartolista*) remained of common usage for a long time (Calasso 1964; Feenstra 1972; Cortese 1995).

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in various Italian universities, courses were designed taking Bartolus’ *lecturae* and *repetitiones* as a model. In Spain and Portugal, royal decrees sanctioned that the *opinio Bartoli* should be followed where Roman or canon law, as well as certain parts of the Accursian gloss, was silent. King Philip II, who had associated the throne of Portugal to that of Spain (1580–1640), continued this tradition of favor by sanctioning the same principle in the *Ordenações Filipinas* published in 1603, after his death. This codification was applied to Brazil, where the legislative sanction of the supremacy of the *opinio Bartoli* was formally valid until the promulgation of the 1916 Civil Code (Calasso 1964). The emergence of humanism, and humanistic jurisprudence in France in particular, marked the beginning of the history of Bartolus’ discredit. Lorenzo Valla (1407–1475) considered Bartolus guilty of misinterpreting the Roman law due to his ignorance of history and Latin. Guillaume Budé (1467/68–1540), François Baudouin (1520–1573), and

François Hotman (1524–1590) expressed aversion to scholastic jurisprudence (Feenstra 1972). Bartolus came to be seen as “the plague of the intellect” and “the assassin of erudition.” Humanistic criticism of the *auctoritas Bartoli* took brilliant literary form, thanks to François Rabelais (1494–1553), who in *Pantagruel* (1532) ridiculed the jurist and other masters of the *mos italicum* not only for their ignorance of Latin, Greek, history, and philosophy but also for their habit of allegedly twisting justice for the sake of private gain. The negative evaluation of Bartolus among the French *culti* was not univocal. Jacques Cujas (1522–1590), Hugues Doneau (1527–1591), and Jean Bodin (1530–1596) praised Bartolus as a lawyer, even though they attacked his doctrine of the Emperor as “the lord of the world (Maiolo 2007).” The anti-Bartolist tradition was partially absorbed by the natural law schools of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and subsequently by the historical school (Lepsius 2003).

Jurisprudence, Truth, and Legitimacy

Medieval jurists were convinced that it was their proper task to concern themselves with problems of political authority, the main normative argument being that justice and tranquility are the chief subject matter of law. In opposition to the Aristotelian teaching that saw jurisprudence as a province of “practical knowledge,” they treated ethical matters as a province of jurisprudence. They revered the idea that the law had to be the implementation of God-given values, as well as the idea that knowledge for its own sake is shameful vanity. In order to justify the pre-eminence of jurisprudence, they argued that the fundamental legal principles of Roman law, the latter being “written reason,” contradict neither the laws of nature nor divine law, but rather actualize them in concrete situations. The roots of their conception of law as knowledge divinely founded were in the opening pages of the Digest: law is the art of knowing what is good and just (Dig. 1, 1, 1), and jurisprudence is awareness of divine and human affairs, as well as knowledge of what is just and unjust (Dig. 1, 1, 10, 2; Inst. 1, 1, 1) (Woolf 1913;

Paradisi 1983; Quaglioni 1983; Pennington 1993). In one doctoral sermon attributed to him and dedicated to his brother Bonaccursius, Bartolus defined jurisprudence as the “perfect science,” “the queen of the sciences” – save theology. Borrowing a powerful image from the Revelation of St. John (Rev. 18, 7), he proclaimed that “she will never be a widow” (Bartholus de Saxoferrato 1576). In order to support this assertion, he oddly mentioned that the jurists occupied the first position in civic parades and official ceremonies (Maiolo 2007).

The perfection that Bartolus attributed to jurisprudence is also the consequence of her power to bring certain entities into existence out of nothing. This particular power implies a certain qualification of truth in legal reasoning and becomes intelligible through the notion of legal personality. The expression *persona ficta et repraesentata* was used to denote public law corporations such as the city-states as well as private law bodies such as foundations and trusts (Woolf 1913; Ullmann 1962; Segoloni 1980; Canning 1987). Ulpian established the principle that what is owed to the corporation is not to be owed to its members, and what the corporation owes to others is not owed by its members directly (Dig. 3, 4, 7, 1). For Accursius (b. 1181/85), a corporation is a mere collection of men, even though he recognized that corporations and individuals are conceptually distinct. For the jurists at Orléans, certain bodies could exist independently of the individuals who are part of them. The canonists developed the idea that crime and excommunication can be ascribed to collectivities, specifying that each collectivity is a *nomen iuris*. In opposition to the Accursian gloss, Bartolus emphasized that what pertains to the whole does not pertain to its parts. In the *Tractatus de regimine civitatis*, he compared the city-state with the “artificial and imaginary man” (Bartholus de Saxoferrato 1576). A legal person is not a person in the ordinary sense because legal reasoning differs from common sense as well as from philosophical or theological reasoning (Woolf 1913; Ullmann 1962; Quaglioni 1983; Ryan 2000; Skinner 2002). By means of an inaccurate generalization, Bartolus asserted that for philosophers and canonists an association is

nothing other than the people making it up; lay jurists found it useful to substitute ordinary truth for fiction under certain circumstances. At the same time Bartolus believed that the meaning of *populus*, for example, is the same under different circumstances. To say that an organized group of people constitutes a *populus* is to say that such a group has a certain peculiar quality manifested in some kind of substance. Yet Bartolus promoted neither the fiction theory nor the realist theory (Bartholus de Saxoferrato 1576). He was not concerned with the philosophical question of whether the universals are mental constructions of human reason or extramental entities. Rather he defended the principle that it is proper to the logic of legal reasoning to replace truth with fiction (Maiolo 2007). He was interested in making it legally possible for the city-state to recognize no superior, even if ontologically the latter was certainly not that of which no superior could be conceived. The replacement of truth by fiction was the expression of both juristic virtuosity and political prudence (Segoloni 1962; Kirshner 1973; Canning 1987; Ryan 2000).

Bartolus defended the validity of the universal lordship (*dominium mundi*) of the Emperor, a lordship which was jurisdictional, not patrimonial. To deny it was to fall into heresy (Bartholus de Saxoferrato 1576). Yet he sought to harmonize the imperial ideology with the Christian doctrine that all powers come from God. Each according to its proper task, temporal and spiritual, respectively, Empire and church had the function to lead the Christian people toward salvation. To claim that they had distinct and separate jurisdictions was again to fall into heresy. The advent of Christ had marked a radical change in the interpretation of the origin of the Empire: God’s providence was its remote efficient cause, whereas the Roman people were its proximate cause. On account of the Donation of Constantine, which he considered to be genuine, Bartolus justified the papal control of portions of central and southern Italy that were formally part of the Empire (Cortese 1995). His conclusion was that the Emperor has no jurisdiction in spiritual matters, and his jurisdiction in temporal matters can never go beyond the borders of the territories nominally

subject to his authority. The Pope has universal jurisdiction in spiritual matters and a jurisdiction in temporal matters that is valid only in the territories subject to his direct control. Bartolus admitted that the Emperor was under the laws by free will, not necessity. Yet he is bound to keep treaties with the city-states for those agreements have their roots in the laws of the nations (Bartholus de Saxoferrato 1576; Woolf 1913; Segoloni 1980; Paradisi 1983; Quagliani 1983; Canning 1987; Pennington 1993; Ryan 2000; Skinner 2002). In fourteenth-century northern and central Italy, the Emperor was seen as the ruler of part of Germany rather than the bearer of universal authority. Since the time of Frederick I “Barbarossa” (1122–1190), some communes had based their autonomy on imperial consent through acquiescence, although some of them factually recognized no superior. Bartolus provided a legal justification for the factual political independence of the latter, ascribing to them the totality of powers hitherto reserved for the Emperor. In this respect Bartolus is said to have paved the way for the modern conception of territorial sovereignty (Woolf 1913; Canning 1987; Pennington 1993; Cortese 1995; Ryan 2000; Skinner 2002; Jonas Cesar 2004). He emphasized the importance of popular government (Ullmann 1962; Segoloni 1962; Kirshner 1973; Ryan 2000; Skinner 2002). We do not know to what extent he was a profound reader of both Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas even if he considered both of them authoritative. According to Bartolus, the up-and-coming seignorial rule was detrimental to the system of the communal liberties. Seignorial government remained a matter of concern beyond the fourteenth century. Bartolus’ *Tractatus de tyrannia* constitutes an antecedent for the humanist treatment of the matter. This work influenced, among others, Coluccio Salutati (1399–1400), Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498), and Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) (Quagliani 1983; Lepsius 2003; Kirshner 2006). Bartolus sought to demonstrate the intrinsic illegality of tyranny. He first distinguished between manifest and concealed tyranny. Then, within manifest tyranny, he distinguished the case of the tyrant who holds power in the absence of a legitimate title, that is, the usurper of sovereign prerogatives, from the

case of the tyrant who abuses power, that is, the abuser of legitimately assumed sovereign powers. Finally, he defined concealed tyranny as that of he who abuses sovereign powers under a veil of lawfulness. Concealed tyranny can be established either through machinations that make one private citizen gain possession of an office institutionally significant or through the assumption of a position that remains concealed (Bartholus de Saxoferrato 1576; Woolf 1913; Quagliani 1983).

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Baruch Spinoza

► [Spinoza, Baruch](#)

Baxter, Richard

Born: 1615

Died: 1691

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Abstract

Richard Baxter (1615–1691) was an English Puritan minister and prolific author of works on primarily religious subjects. His contribution to late Renaissance thought lies at the intersection of religion and politics, on three fronts: his theology of justification, his political thought, and his work in the area of ecclesiology.

Biography

Richard Baxter (1615–1691) was an English Puritan minister and prolific author of works on primarily religious subjects. He rose to prominence during the 1650s Interregnum and remained influential to the end of his life, although in diminished circumstances with his loss of ministerial employment following the 1662 Act of Uniformity. His contribution to late Renaissance thought lies at the intersection of religion and politics, on three fronts: his theology of justification, his political thought, and his work in the area of ecclesiology.

Baxter's writings on justification emphasize human moral responsibility, in contrast to the Lutheran free-grace position espoused by John Saltmarsh and others (Cooper 2001). For Baxter, justification requires an act of faith that he figures as a peppercorn given by a defaulting tenant as a token of homage allowing him to remain on the land (Baxter 1649; Boersma 1993).

Baxter's political thought appears chiefly in *A Holy Commonwealth* (1659), which opposes both the republicanism of James Harrington's *Oceana* and the godly popular sovereignty of Henry Vane's *A Healing Question*. For Baxter, sovereignty derives from God, not the people, and yet the same human moral accountability to God found in the writings on justification means that the obligation to obey the powers that be cannot be as absolute as in mainstream Calvinist teaching. Baxter insists that people do not owe obedience to magistrates per se, but to magistrates as officers of God. In keeping with the Calvinist allowance that inferior magistrates can legitimately resist sovereigns, Baxter acknowledges that in practice Parliaments might be better situated to determine when public resistance might be appropriate, and yet he still allows that individual subjects can engage in personal, private resistance. Political circumstances necessitated that Baxter retract *A Holy Commonwealth* in 1670, but a 1686 manuscript treatise demonstrates his continued adherence to its principles (Lamont 1979; Argent 2014).

Baxter's major significance lies in his work as a churchman. During the Interregnum he became an influential ministerial example of a political Presbyterian – someone who had sided with Parliament against King Charles I and yet opposed the regicide in 1649. He resisted attempts on the part of Oliver Cromwell and John Owen to remake the national church on an Independent model. At least until the mid-1670s, Baxter consistently preferred comprehension, or a broadly inclusive church, to toleration, or the idea of a narrower church that allowed for the existence of other churches (Lamont 1979). He expressed this preference for comprehension by calling himself a “mere catholic Christian,” a phrase that gave

C. S. Lewis the title for *Mere Christianity*. Baxter, however, resolutely opposed Hugo Grotius's defense of the idea that Christendom might be united under a universal human sovereign (Keeble 1982).

Baxter's career as a churchman has two major phases. During the Interregnum and in the negotiations that produced the Restoration church settlement, he consistently advocated for comprehension. A model for a comprehensive church could be found in the county association movement that he founded as a mechanism for local ministers of varying persuasions to collaborate on pastoral goals. After the Act of Uniformity, Baxter became a nonconformist. His activities during these years consisted largely of writing – his 1673 *A Christian Directory* put in print the pastoral advice he would give if permitted to hold ministerial office – and occasional preaching. These activities culminated in a trial and imprisonment during the 1680s (Lamont 1979). Baxter's continued pressing for comprehension, against the toleration urged by Owen and other Congregationalists, meant that nonconformists were never able to make common cause when the opportunity arose (for instance, in 1667–68, 1672–73, and 1680–81; see Cooper 2011). His *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696) remains an important historical resource for the last half of the seventeenth century.

Baxter's significance for twentieth-century philosophy lies in the important role that he plays in Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which presents him as an influential early articulator of the Puritan work ethic.

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Beati, Giovanni Francesco

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Abstract

Giovanni Francesco Beati taught metaphysics at Padua and Pisa. His most significant work proposed repositioning the second book (alpha minor) of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* to the beginning of book two of the *Physics*.

Biography

Giovanni Francesco Beati (died 1546) was a Dominican friar and theologian. He taught in Dominican convents in Lombardy and then at Treviso, where he became prior at San Nicolò in 1521 (Mazzuchelli 1760, 2:570). He then took up a chair metaphysics *in via Thomae* at Padua beginning in 1531 before moving to Pisa, where he taught from 1543 to 1546. He was referred to as being from the Veneto and was likely born in Treviso. He had a few contacts with other famed intellectuals of his era. Benedetto Varchi, the Florentine scholar, seems to have followed his lectures at Padua, and he apparently had contacts with the humanist cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto, to whom he dedicated his second book (Quétif 1721, 2:123 Fabroni 1792, 2:128–29; 2:464).

Beati published two books during his lifetime, both interpretations of Aristotelian philosophy. He also wrote an *enarratio* of the introduction of Aristotle's *Physics*, which remains in manuscript (Lohr 1988, 36). His earlier work, printed in 1542, is a brief *quaestio* on the seventh chapter of Averroes' *De substantia orbis* that attempts to reconcile the principles that the heavens are finite and have a finite power yet are eternal. The work

Beast

► Devil, Renaissance Idea of

was one of many commentaries on Averroes' writing that were published during the sixteenth century (Martin 2013). Beati applied deep knowledge of the Greek commentators of Aristotle (Alexander of Aphrodisias, John Philoponus, Themistius, and Simplicius) in his discussion of this question and his interpretation of Averroes.

In his second work printed in 1543, greatly influenced by Alexander of Aphrodisias, he argued that the second book (alpha minor) of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* should be placed as an introduction or prologue to the second book of the *Physics* because its discussion of causality is more connected to the natural world than first philosophy. In particular, he held that Aristotle's argument in the second book of *Metaphysics* that contends there are a limited number of causes was a suitable introduction to the discussions of causation in the *Physics*. Furthermore, he believed the references to nature at the beginning and end of the book (993b1–2; 995a17–19) point to the discussion of nature and natural substances in the *Physics* (Kraye 1991, 145–46).

While Beati's proposal did not change editors' placement of the book, at least a few Renaissance thinkers found it worthy of consideration. Notably, the leading Aristotelian commentator and translator, Francesco Vimercati, praised Beati as deeply knowledgeable of Aristotelian philosophy even if he ultimately rejected Beati's interpretation (Vimercati 1550, 91–93). A few even used Beati's arguments to undermine Aristotle's authority. Mario Nizolio, a humanist who favored rhetoric over Aristotelian philosophy as a route to wisdom, contended that the misplacement of the book showed that imperfect transmission of the Aristotelian corpus. Similarly, Francesco Patrizi, without mentioning Beati, employed Beati's argument to further his argument that the *Metaphysics* as transmitted was the result of a multitude of editorial errors (Kraye 1991, 147–52).

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Beatitude

- [Happiness, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Beauty, the Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

The idea of beauty in the Renaissance relies heavily on Plato's thoughts about beauty as the emanation and splendor of the divine. The Florentine Neoplatonists, among them Marsilio Ficino, were responsible for the distribution and new reading of Plato's views in the early Renaissance. The idea of beauty, however, was discussed not only in philosophical treatises but also increasingly in the art literature. The leading concepts here are, on the one hand, imitation and, on the other, the work of art as the manifestation of beauty and hence the participation of the viewer in its perception. While the idea of beauty was formulated by Leon Battista Alberti in relation to the imitation of nature in his treatises *De pictura* (1435) and *De re aedificatoria*,

the concept of *grazia* (grace) played a leading role in the discussion of the work of art as a material manifestation of beauty. Even more important, the concept of the indefinable presence, the “non so che,” which later became known as “je ne sais quoi,” appears early in the famous *Dialogue* of Lodovico Dolce (1557).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The question of what beauty is had no systematic place in Renaissance philosophy. Only in the eighteenth century did beauty become the object of philosophical aesthetics. Since antiquity, however, theoretical reflections on beauty have nonetheless reached far beyond the realm of the sensually perceptible. It was especially Plato, who, in his dialogues, sought a normatively universal concept of the beautiful in opposition to the sophists. The power of the beautiful was defined by Plato as the expression of a normative idea and not as a means of affective persuasion. The idea of the beautiful can be experienced only in a vision of the soul. This ideal beauty is described in Plato’s *Symposium* (210e–211b) as something which is “everywhere and eternally the same.” In his late dialogues, Plato emphasized the role of order, symmetry, and measure, thus laying the foundation for subsequent reflections on the concept of beauty (Eusterschulte 2012, cols. 1148–1149). While Plato had not afforded the arts a role within his idea of the beautiful, the Neoplatonist Plotinus expanded on Plato’s eidetic concept of beauty in a way that could include them. For Plotinus, a thing is beautiful only when it conveys participation in an intelligible idea, which manifests itself in form and design. The experience of beauty occurs through the contemplation of the soul within itself, which, at the same time, seeks the transcendent One and which becomes a condition for artistic creation based on form (ibid., col. 1158). This understanding of the work of art, which participates in the beautiful through the contemplation of the soul, is fundamental not only for the medieval understanding of God as eternal beauty, loveliness, and sweetness,

which Alcuin, who taught at the court of Charlemagne, presented as a counterpoint to a devotion oriented toward sensual pleasures. According to Thomas Aquinas, the relationship between good and beautiful (*bonum* and *pulchrum*) is likewise based on form. Those things are beautiful, in his view, that please by virtue of the knowledge of the senses. The senses delight in well-proportioned things and relate to God as the original cause of form. For Thomas, God is beautiful because he is the cause of the consonance and clarity of all things (Assunto 1996; Eusterschulte 2012, col. 1160). This Christian metaphysical tradition would ultimately determine the debates concerning beauty during the Renaissance as well. A key vehicle for its mediation was, of course, the work of Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), who translated the works of Plato, Plotinus, and the Corpus Dionysiacum, combined them with traditional concepts from the Middle Ages (light metaphysics, aesthetics of proportion, and the concept of form), and advocated a Christian Platonism. For Ficino, beauty is immaterial but manifests itself physically in *actu*, *vivacitas*, and *gratia* and is ultimately the reflection of the Platonic idea of beauty (Eusterschulte 2012, cols. 1164–1166).

Innovative and Original Aspects

At the same time, the Renaissance can be understood as an epoch in which fundamental groundwork was laid and in which beauty was closely associated with sensual perception without abandoning the divine origin of beauty. Because visible nature was considered deficient – since it deviated from God’s plan (Leinkauf 2005) – art was tasked with both recognizing beauty in the first place and developing a presence accessible to the senses. Mediated by Neoplatonism, which had already strengthened the position of the arts, discourses on art in their own right emerged during the Renaissance, in which the artist was regarded as a participant in the grace (*grazia*) of God and thus the work of art itself as a “manifestation” of *grazia* (Krüger 2016). In literature on art, furthermore, the idea of the beautiful was elevated to a condition and goal of artistic creation. Although

the beautiful was now perceptible in a work and became accessible through aesthetic discourses, it nevertheless remained within the context of notions of wholeness, perfection, and participation in the divine.

Just how powerful these traditional concepts were becomes especially clear in the reflections on the beautiful by Lorenzo de' Medici, Ficino's contemporary. Also evident here is how much the impression of the senses, conveyed through the media of art, now comes to the fore in the assessment of beauty. In his commentary on his own sonnets, Lorenzo lists three kinds of beauty: inner beauty (*la mente, la quale ha per obietto la bellezza dell'anima*), the beauty of the body (*bene proporzionato, di grazioso aspetto*), and that of the voice (Medici, Lorenzo de' 1992; Summers 1981, 371). He declares that, while inner beauty arises from virtue, and the beauty of the voice is based on the harmony of polyphony (*consiste quando di più voce concordi risulta un concerto*), for the body, beauty lies in good proportions. He adds, however, that the grace and lightness (*venusta ed leggiadria*) that emanate from the body are crucial, since beauty sometimes pleases "not so much because of the perfection and good proportion of the body, as because of a certain conformity that it has with the eye to which it is pleasing, that proceeds from heaven and from nature" (ibid; see also p. 372, for Aristotle's quotation of Plato, *Hippias Major*, 298a: "The beautiful is that which gives pleasure through hearing and sight").

At the beginning of the Renaissance, then, there were not only "objective," that is, heavenly, concepts of order but also criteria of perception that Lorenzo de' Medici prioritizes over perfect, absolute proportions. It is this concept that, in an encyclopedia of philosophy, allows for a consideration of the Renaissance idea of beauty from the perspective of its production and reception. With an emphasis on the eye and ear as organs for the perception, as well as the knowledge, of beauty, the arts come to the fore as media for the appearance of beauty.

Indeed, one of the most important objectives of art in the Renaissance was the representation of beauty. How beauty should be defined, however,

and where it can be found have been the subject of lively discourse since at least the fifteenth century. At this point, beauty was still fundamentally bound to notions of order and harmony, which is why the formation of proportion theories continued to hold currency in discussions on beauty. Famously, Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) made studies of proportion in order to find the perfect human form (Dürer 2003; Andrews 2016). At the same time, nevertheless, attempts to construct absolute standards by means of rules that could be learned were no longer universally convincing. In his treatise on painting, *De pictura*, of 1435, Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) took a different route and associated beauty with composition. He applied the concept of *concinntas*, which was used by Cicero in association with beautiful wording, to painting, and explained that what is called beauty becomes visible in good compositions: "From the composition of the surfaces arises gracefulness in the bodies, which is called beauty" (*Della pittura*, §35; Alberti 2000, transl. E.Oy-Marra). While Cicero understood the term *concinntas* as the construction of a beautiful sentence and assigned to this *ornamentum* the adjectives *elegantia* and *suavitas*, Alberti adopted only the adjective *elegans*, which he added to *grazia*, declaring *concinntas* to be one of the most important conditions for beauty. A more thorough explanation of *concinntas*, however, first appears in Alberti's architectural treatise, *De re aedificatoria* (Poeschke 1985, 47–49), in which he dedicates an entire chapter of the ninth book to the concept. In this text, *concinntas* now encompasses number (*numerus*), outline (*finito*), and position (*collocatio*), which Alberti employs in his attempt to describe the concept's laws. In the sixth book, he already differentiates between *pulchritudo* and *ornamentum*, subordinating the latter to beauty. For Alberti, however, *concinntas* was a principle (*ratio pulchritudinis*) that could be discerned through reason and should not be left to opinion (*opinio*). He was not interested, therefore, in individual beauty, for which a judgment could be a matter of opinion. Rather, the concept of *concinntas* was directed at a beauty superior to individual differences and inherent in all living beings, which could only be discerned through

innate reason (*ratio*). With this concept, Alberti essentially designated the goal of architecture to be the imitation of nature.

When Alberti declared the imitation of nature to be the most important rule in art, however, the participation of art in the idea of the beautiful became a theoretical problem, in so far as this could only be achieved if the imitation of nature was oriented toward the divine concept of nature, which did not reveal itself in all of its visible forms. Bound to the imitation of nature, art must be produced and re-designed according to God's model (Blumenberg 1996; Flasch 1965; Leinkauf 2005; Moritz 2010). According to the understanding of the time, then, beauty was fundamentally unavailable and could be discerned only where it manifested itself in nature or where it was revealed to the elect. In the Renaissance, the arts were first and foremost tasked with the discernment of beauty and with making that beauty visible. But how could this task be completed if visible nature no longer represented divine order in all its manifestations? In the epoch's literature on art, many writers never tired of emphasizing the need for artists to maintain a selective and discerning eye in their observations of nature.

Alberti's approach to beauty is well illustrated by a popular anecdote recounted by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* (XXXV.64; Pliny the Elder 2014), as well as by Cicero in *De inventione* (II.i.1). In this narrative, the painter Zeuxis, faced with the task of painting Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman on earth, realizes that no mortal woman could possibly serve as his model. He then asks the five most beautiful women from ancient Croton to stand before him, and he selects the most beautiful of each of their body parts, combining them in his painting of the beautiful Helen (Sammern and Saviello 2019, 39–48).

This anecdote, which Alberti included in *De pictura* (§ 56), composed in 1435, describes the pains a painter must take in order to represent beauty at all: he must first discern and select the beauty of nature, which appears only in individual fragments, and then assemble his choices coherently. It is only logical that Alberti drew on the anecdote of the virgins of Croton at the point at

which he offered instruction on nature studies. He was not concerned with painting precisely what he saw, unlike the ancient Greek painter Demetrios, who, according to Alberti (*De pictura*, §55), was “more inclined to imitate natural things than to make them beautiful.” Alberti, instead, emphasized the difficult task of identifying the “notion of beauty,” which “even the well-trained can scarcely discern” (Alberti 2000, 157; trans. S. Luther). In doing so, he introduced the Platonic idea of beauty, which subsequently gained great significance during the Renaissance, into the literary discourse on art (Panofsky 2008). However, by linking the knowledge of the idea of beauty and the study of nature, Alberti also associated the notion of beauty – which necessarily surpasses nature – with an Aristotelian grounding of all knowledge in sensual experience (Summers 1981, 188–189; Kurbjuhn 2014, 83–85). He thus laid the foundation of the *Idea del bello* as the objective and guiding principle of art. This perspective resonated in Renaissance writings on art through to Giovan Pietro Bellori's (1613–1696) discourse on the *Idea del pittore, cello scultore e dell'architetto. Scelta dalle bellezze naturali superiore alla Natura*, which was delivered as an address to the Roman Academy of St Luke in 1664, was then published as paratext to the *Vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni* (Bellori 1672/2009; Wohl et al. 2005; Panofsky 2008; Bellori 2018). Alberti's distinction between the pure observation of nature and the knowledge of beauty through selective and discerning study had an enormous impact. It is no coincidence that Giovanni Battista Agucchi (1570–1632), who composed a painting treatise between 1607 and 1615, referred to the passage from Alberti's treatise (Mahon 1947, 242). Bellori, on the other hand, underscored the formation of the notion “una certa idea” by invoking a letter attributed to Raphael (1483–1520) and addressed to Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), which states: “Per dipingere una bella mi bisognerebbe vedere più belle, ma per essere carestia di belle donne, io mi servo di una certa idea che mi viene in mente” (“In order to paint a beautiful woman, I need to see many beautiful women; but, due to a shortage of beautiful ladies, I make use of a certain

idea which comes into my mind”: Bellori 1672/2009, 17; Shearman 1994).

While Alberti essentially linked the knowledge of the notion of beauty to a study of nature refined by discernment, Michelangelo (1475–1564) argued for the role of divine providence, since, according to him, only those who were born to be artists could participate in the grace, the *grazia*, of God, which is, in turn, a requirement for the knowledge of beauty. For Michelangelo, then, *grazia* and inspiration were available only to the genius. Notably, he referred to the notion of *furor* and inspiration, which had their origins in Plato and featured in the Neoplatonism of Ficino (Summers 1981, 189 and 60–70).

Impact and Legacy

The Neoplatonic definition of beauty, strengthened by Michelangelo as well as by Vasari's (1511–1574) concept of *disegno* (Kemp 1974; Roggenkamp 1996; Kurbjuhn 2014, 72–75), was brought to a new level in the *Dialogue on Painting*, which the Venetian Lodovico Dolce (1508–1568) published in 1557, just 7 years after the publication of the first version of Vasari's *Lives* in 1550 and a year earlier than the second edition of the *Lives*. While Dolce also advocated the necessity of a selective imitation of nature in the sense of the Zeuxis narrative, he decisively associated beauty with perception. In Dolce's *Dialogue*, the Venetian Pietro Aretino (1492–1556) serves as the author's mouthpiece and attempts to persuade the Florentine Giovan Francesco Fabrini to accepting his perspective on art. For Aretino, it is not only a matter proving the superiority of Venetian painting by citing the example of Titian (1488–1576); but also, by juxtaposing Michelangelo and Raphael, he presents a concept of painting in which achievement lies beyond measurable categories. Drawing on a detailed discussion of the three components of painting – *invenzione*, drawing, and color – Aretino concludes that Michelangelo, whom Fabrini admires in all media, is only truly exceptional at drawing. He further argues that Raphael, on the other hand, not only excels in all three components of painting but also displays an element that,

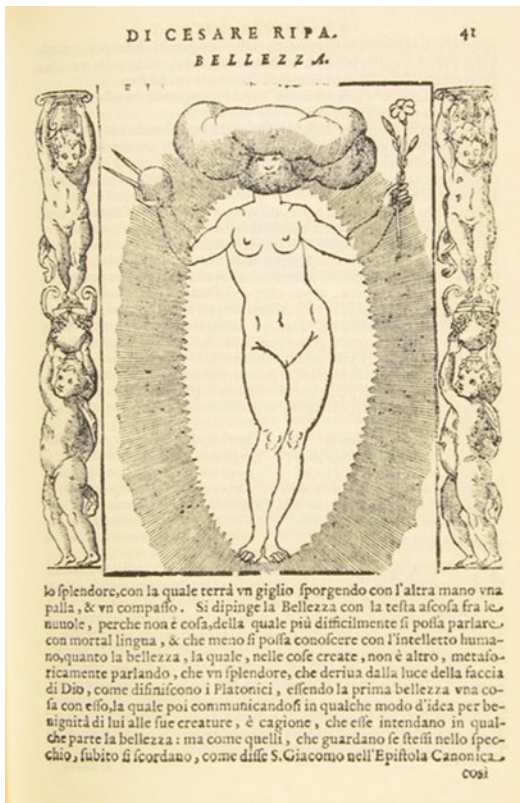
according to Pliny, Apelles also possessed: “charm (*venustà*), that is, that indefinable presence (*quel che non so che*) which customarily proves so attractive with painters no less than with poets, operating in such a way that it fills another person with infinite delight, without his knowing from what quarter this element comes, which afford us so much pleasure” (Roskill 2000, 175). For Aretino, this *non so che* is the element that likewise surpasses *invenzio*, *disegno*, and *colorito* and is capable of generating infinite pleasure. Having provided this description of a conceptually indeterminate impression, which from this point becomes the topos of the unutterable, Aretino then identifies the true perfection that he believes can be seen in Raphael's works, dismissing the question of measurable – and therefore verifiable – beauty repeatedly raised by his interlocutor Fabrini. Although Aretino also acknowledges the beauty in the proportions of the human body, it is this *non so che* that accompanies the adjectives of *grazia*, *leggiadria*, and *facilità* and evokes painting's power to enable participation in divine perfection and its beauty (Cropper 1995).

In Dolce's notion of the *non so che*, a particularly important role is played by the quality of *grazia* attributed to Raphael's paintings. Vasari would claim *grazia* for the *maniera moderna*, and his discussion of it ultimately culminates in Raphael in the second edition of his *Lives* (Krüger 2016, 79–94). Dolce, for his part, traces *grazia* to Raphael's outstanding use of color.

The accompanying indeterminacy – the *vaghezza* – with which Dolce characterizes Raphael's colors also indicates that the contours of significance, with respect to the linguistic identification of beauty, were now dissolving toward the indefinite (Rhein 2008, S.303 und 305; Krüger 2016, 90–94). With the concept of *grazia* and the closely associated *vaghezza*, “the expressive form of non-conceptuality,” in Klaus Krüger's formulation, entered the theoretical discourse on art. This dimension of the “unapproachable, unobtainable” connotes the structure of its “aesthetic mediatedness,” which allows beauty to be experienced only through the longing gaze (ibid., 62). Crucially, Dolce turned the *non so che* into an experience of the indeterminate within the viewer.

By locating the purpose of painting in the arousal of pleasure, he explicitly introduced reception into the discussion. He did not, however, propose a relative, subjective understanding of beauty. When using the category of pleasure as a guideline for the quality of a work of art, which Aristotle had claimed for imitation in his *Poetics* (1448b10–20), Dolce was by no means concerned with a superficial form of sensation. Although he claimed that every human being was capable of discerning beauty, since the eye cannot lie (Rhein 2008, 249), he defined true pleasure as that “which multiplies all the more often any human eye views it anew” (ibid., 283). Pleasure was also bound to the longing gaze, which was stimulated by the indeterminate beauty of the representation, its *vaghezza*. In his treatise on the beauty of women, published in 1542, Agnolo Firenzuola (1493–1543) had defined this as “alluring beauty,” which beguiles and initiates admiration and delight (Cropper 1976; Krüger 2016). By leaving gender determinants intentionally vague, however, Dolce extended his idea beyond a longing gaze directed only at the representation of beautiful women. It is certainly true that he preferred delicate bodies to definitively masculine ones, and he justified this preference by noting the greater difficulty of representing them. Yet while his interlocutor Fabrini understands delicate bodies as clearly female, Dolce’s spokesman Aretino points out that there are also men who are delicately built but who do not resemble women. Such men, he notes, can be found primarily among the nobility. His ideal, however, is the description of the beautiful female body in the Petrarchan tradition, which he invokes by beginning his treatise with Ludovico Ariosto’s verses describing the beautiful Alcina. Even if he stresses the diversity of beauty, it is clear that he is inclined to associate painting, which, unlike poetry, he regards as female, with beautiful women. But here, too, the boundary between beautiful painting and painted beauty is blurred. To the extent that Dolce refused to define gender identities according to clear physical characteristics, he destabilized the distinction between ideal female beauty and its representation in portraiture and the representation of natural beauty, thus undermining the distinction between object, art, and nature (Cropper 1995).

Although Aretino is able to persuade Fabrini to agree with him in Dolce’s treatise, Michelangelo’s own perspective continued to be advocated in Florence, even before Vasari ultimately anchored it in his *Life* of the Florentine artist in 1568. In his *Trattato delle perfette perfezioni*, composed in 1563, the sculptor Vincenzo Danti (1530–1576) did more than merely affirm the Neoplatonic understanding of art and stress the necessity of being born an artist (Danti 1960, 268) in order to create the perfect form that nature intended: “si camina all’operazioni dell’imitare e si crea nella mente nostra la perfetta forma intenzionale della natura” (by means of the operation of imitation we create in our mind the perfect intentional form of nature; ibid., 265; transl. E.Oy-Marra). For the first time, he also discussed the question of the temporal bondage of the human body – and thus the question of whether an old body could be beautiful, without, however, differentiating between the sexes. Unlike Dolce, he seems to have been concerned only with the male, virile ideal of beauty, referring to the triad of youth (*gioventù*), manhood (*virilità*), and old age (*vecchiezza*). Under the theoretical premise of a nature whose intentionality appears only in fragments, he explained that although a man was beautiful at any age, such beauty manifested itself primarily in the youthful body. Unlike Dolce, Danti did not reject aesthetic mediatedness as a condition for the perception of beauty. Though this was tied to conditions of the medium, Danti was more interested in the definition of the ideal subject, which was, in turn, associated with ancient prototypes. In the process, however, a fundamentalist conceptualization of beauty entered the discussion. This conception has been commonly traced back to the beauty of antique sculpture. According to Ernst Gombrich, our ideals of beauty are still informed by antique statues (Cropper 1995). Bellori, in his *Lives*, published a copper engraving of the ancient statue of Antinous (Bellori 1672/2009, 474–477) created by Charles Errard (before 1607–1689) in 1672, which was thought to illustrate the taste of the author; in his *Idea*, however, he expressed the notion of a multiple beauty already present in the ancient sculpture: “Now the idea of the beauty is not one, its forms are various, both strong and magnanimous joyous and



Beauty, the Renaissance Idea of, Fig. 1 Cesar Ripa, *Iconologia overo Descrittione di diverse imagini cavate dall'antichità e di propria inventione*, Roma: Lepido Facii, 1603

delicate of every age and each sex” (Wohl et al. 2005, 60). Eleven years later, Gérard Audran published a Treatise on the proportions of the most beautiful figures with all necessary measurements in order to instruct artists (Audran 1683; Sammern and Saviello 2019).

The attempt to define the laws of beauty and establish norms certainly did not come to an end in the Renaissance and remain influential today in the beauty industry, which changes its standards at increasingly short intervals; however, the Renaissance’s real contribution to the debate on the determination of beauty lies in the aesthetic mediatedness of beauty and its fundamental indeterminacy. An embodiment of the extent to which this indeterminacy entered the public domain can be seen in Cesare Ripa’s (1560–1622) description of the

personification of *Bellezza*, whose pictorial representation in the 1603 edition of the *Iconologia* shows a nude woman with her head enveloped in clouds (see Fig. 1). In an explanatory statement, Ripa writes: “she is painted with her head in the clouds, for beauty cannot be spoken of with mortal tongue or human intellect, as it is nothing but the divine splendor of light that radiates from the face of God” (Ripa 1603, 40–41).

Cross-References

- ▶ Cassirer, Ernst
- ▶ Harmony, Renaissance Conceptions of
- ▶ Sublime

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Beda, Noël

Born: c. 1470

Died: 1537

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Abstract

Noël Beda (c.1470–1537), syndic of the Faculty of Theology of Paris, was the leading polemicist in France defending the university's scholastic curriculum against humanism and fighting to curtail the nascent Protestant Reformation. His opposition to several policies of King Francis I, however, resulted in his eventual arrest. He died in prison in 1537.

Biography

Noël Beda (c.1470–1537) – theologian, university administrator, and polemicist – was born probably in Picardy (northern France). After nearly 20 years of study at the University of Paris in logic, ethics, scholastic theology, and Sacred Scripture, he received the prestigious Paris doctorate in theology in April 1508 (Farge 1980). At first a college administrator, he would later become one of the leading defenders of the

university's scholastic curriculum and of the traditional Catholic faith against the inroads of Lutheranism and later forms of Protestantism.

Beda's earliest involvement in these issues occurred with two books written (1519–1520) against certain biblical interpretations of the “theologizing humanists” Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Josse Clichtove (Crane 2005). In 1520, sensing much greater danger in the writings of Martin Luther, he persuaded the Paris Faculty of Theology to revive the office of syndic, an office he held from 1521 to 1534, using it against the humanists and religious reformers. Because both movements appeared in Paris at about the same time, Beda saw them as working hand-in-hand. In turn, humanists and religious reformers held Beda in contempt. The criticism and satire of humanists like Erasmus of Rotterdam and François Rabelais, as well as Beda's own intransigence in certain political matters, led to his eventual public disgrace, exile, and imprisonment.

Beda's theology relied on the conviction that, from the beginning of Christianity, God's Spirit was an active, indwelling presence in the Church and the world. For him, this implied the duty of theologians to profess, defend, and pass on from one generation to the next a continuity of dogma, moral teaching, liturgical rites, and popular devotions. Any opposition to those ideals, he concluded, had to be defeated (Farge 2008).

Particularly abhorrent to Beda was the humanists' practice of submitting the Latin Vulgate biblical texts to philological probing and advocating their translation into vernacular languages. Beda believed that the former was not only blasphemous but would also lead to textual corruption, and he held that translating the Bible into vernacular languages would result in conflicting interpretations, giving rise to schisms and sects in Christendom.

Among Beda's early targets was the circle of humanist preachers whom Bishop Guillaume Briçonnet had gathered to help reform the Church in his diocese of Meaux (Farge 2015). He also maintained a 5-year-long suit in the Parlement of Paris against his fellow theologian Jacques Merlin who had published an *Apologia* for the early exegete Origen, some of whose ideas had been

condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople (553) (Farge 2015).

Erasmus of Rotterdam, the leading humanist in Europe, was one of Beda's strongest opponents. Their exchange of letters reveals much of Beda's antipathy towards humanism and elucidates Erasmus' defense of it (Nauert 1994, 2003; Farge 2010). In 1525, Beda published his *Annotationes* in which he declared 562 propositions from works of Lefèvre d'Étaples and Erasmus to be dangerous – some even heretical. At Beda's direction, the University of Paris censured several of Erasmus' works (Farge 1990). Erasmus in turn wrote five books against Beda and his Faculty of Theology (Rabbi 2013).

In the 1520s, Beda was often a critic of King Francis I's tolerant policy towards humanists and some religious reformers. In 1530, he strongly opposed Francis's support for Henry VIII's campaign to obtain an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. The king intimated at that time that Beda would face consequences for his opposition, but this did not keep Beda from later accusing a favorite preacher of the king's sister Marguerite of Navarre, Gérard Roussel, of heresy (Farge 1985). In 1534, he brought suit in the Parlement of Paris charging that the king's *lecteurs royaux* appointed to teach Hebrew and Greek were criticizing the Vulgate text of the Bible. Although the Parlement favored Beda, the king's Privy Council allowed them to continue (Farge 2015).

Shortly thereafter King Francis arrested Beda. He was made to appear barefoot in public, to witness the burning of his papers, and to ask pardon for his errors and his actions against the king. He was imprisoned in the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel where he died 18 months later in ignominious circumstances (Gout 1910).

Historians whose predilection for humanism or for the Protestant Reformation have often pictured Beda as an ignorant madman opposed to any change or reform in the university or in the Church. But Beda had significant support from the Parlement of Paris (the Supreme Court in France), from many influential laymen, and from certain bishops who wanted to promote an intellectual and institutional renewal that would

sustain a reformed Gallican Catholic Church based on traditional scholastic theology.

Humanism eventually earned wide acceptance in French intellectual life, and, after nearly four decades of religious war, French Protestants were granted a limited form of toleration in 1598. It can nevertheless be argued that Beda's early and staunch defense of traditional theology and devotion – decades before the Council of Trent – helped keep the greater part of France in the Catholic fold.

Cross-References

- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques](#)
- [Luther, Martin](#)
- [Rabelais, François](#)

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Beelzebub

- [Devil, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Bellarmino, Roberto

- [Bellarmine, Roberto](#)

Bellarmini, Roberto Francesco Romolo

► [Bellarmino, Roberto](#)

Bellarmino, Roberto

Born: 1542

Died: 1621

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Abstract

Roberto Bellarmino (Montepulciano, Siena, 1542–Rome, 1621), Jesuit and cardinal, was among the leading theologians of the Counter-Reformation. A specialist in controversialist theology, he taught at the Roman College of the Society of Jesus and then had his lectures printed as his main work with the title *Disputationes de controversiis* (1586–1593). Appointed cardinal in 1599, he acted as adviser in theological matters to Popes Clement VIII and Paul V, resulting decisive in preventing an official condemnation of Jesuit Molinist theology in the controversy on grace with the Dominican Order. As a member of the Congregation of the Index and the Holy Office, he played a key role in the affairs of Francesco Patrizi's Platonism, the condemnation of Copernicanism, and of Giordano Bruno's trial. Bellarmino's fame is mostly associated with the theory of the *potestas indirecta in temporalibus*, "the indirect power of the popes over temporal matters," a theory he defended in the *Disputationes* and in later polemics with Anglican and Gallican theologians.

Alternate Names

[Bellarmini, Roberto](#) [Francesco Romolo](#);
[Bellarmino, Robert](#)

Biography

One of the most influential theologians of the Counter-Reformation, Bellarmino (born Roberto Francesco Romolo Bellarmini, latinized as Bellarmino, Montepulciano, Siena, 4 October 1542–Rome, 17 September 1621) entered the Society of Jesus in 1560, mostly as a consequence of the close relationship between the order and his uncle Marcello Cervini, who held the office of pope for a brief 22 days (April 1555) under the name of Marcellus II.

Bellarmino's preaching in Latin was so effective that General Francisco Borja chose to send him to Leuven, in Flanders, the hub of dissemination for Catholic culture in the Southern Netherlands, before he had even finished the *cursus* to earn the degree in theology. The Jesuit resided there from 1569 to 1576, alternating between preaching and lecturing on Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*. These years spent in a borderland between Catholicism and Calvinism were fundamental to Bellarmino's intellectual development, as a result of his contact with reformed theology and radical Flemish Catholic Augustinianism, as well as for the peculiar doctrinal tone he granted to his sacred rhetoric: indeed, more than one of his homilies took on the air of veritable lessons in Tridentine dogmatics, shaped on the basis of the methodological legacy of Melchor Cano's *De locis theologicis*.

After returning to Rome, Bellarmino was given the chair of controversialist theology at the Collegio Romano, a position he occupied until 1588; the classes he held there went on to form the backbone of his most famous enterprise, the *Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos* (first edition Ingolstadt, 1586–1593). This huge work, which enjoyed multiple reprints and an extraordinarily long-lived success, can probably be qualified as the most exhaustive compendium of Tridentine orthodoxy, articulated through an intense dialectic between the Catholic and heretical thought that runs through all the matters of faith, from biblical hermeneutics to ecclesiology, from theological anthropology to Christology, and from sacramental to liturgical questions.

Bellarmino's work as a doctrinal expert peaked under the reign of Clement VIII – who appointed him to draft the official Catechism of the Catholic Church and elevated him to the rank of cardinal (1599) – as well as that of Paul V. His appointment in the commission charged with solving the controversy on grace and free will that opposed Jesuit Molinist theologians, and the Dominican Order was decisive in preventing an official condemnation of his own order.

Sponsored by the Society of Jesus as early as 1622, his process of canonization was interrupted multiple times precisely because his name was associated with the thesis asserting the absolute primacy of the Roman See over the council and matters of temporal power; the process was finally concluded three centuries later (canonized in 1930; declared Doctor of the Church in 1931).

Impact and Legacy

Bellarmino's fame remains historically associated with his thesis regarding the Roman pontiff's indirect sovereignty over civil authority (*potestas indirecta*), which represented the theoretical cornerstone of the papal project to gain a worldwide ideological and political hegemony at the turn of the sixteenth century. This theory triggered long polemics throughout the European confessional context, which witnessed Bellarmino defending it against Anglican and Gallican theologians in his *Tractatus de potestate Summi pontificis in rebus temporalibus* (1610).

Bellarmino's work as part of the Congregation of the Index and the Holy Office intersected with some of the most significant theological and philosophical themes of the first two decades of the seventeenth century. He played a key role in multiple cases: his opinion regarding Francesco Patrizi's Platonism turned out to be decisive – indeed, he explicitly warned Clement VIII of its inherent dangerousness; in the inquiry mounted against Giordano Bruno, Bellarmino managed to unblock the process by extrapolating, from the philosopher's writings and the records of the process, the eight specific instances of unquestionable heresy that the accused was then asked to

recant; finally, he was decisive in ascribing a status of heterodoxy to Copernican theory, which Bellarmino had come to know by reading Paolo Antonio Foscarini's *Lettera sopra l'opinione de' pittagorici* and, almost certainly, Galileo Galilei's Letter to Christina of Lorraine as well. In relation to Copernicanism, Bellarmino introduced the idea of a distinction between the true nature of revealed knowledge and the hypothetical nature of experimental knowledge, a principle that continues to underlie Catholic interpretations of the relationship between science and faith even today.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- ▶ [Copernicanism](#)
- ▶ [Jesuits in the Early Modern Period](#)
- ▶ [Molina, Luis de](#)

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Belli, Pierino

► [Belli, Pietrino](#)

Belli, Pietrino

Born: Alba, 1502

Died: Turin, 1575

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Abstract

Pietrino Belli was a jurist of the Piedmont. He served Philip II of Spain as a counselor of war and Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy as a counselor of state. He wrote a significant treatise on the laws of war and the restoration of peace, *De re militari et bello tractatus* (1563).

Alternate Names

[Bellus, Petrinus](#); [Belli, Pierino](#)

Biography

Pietrino Belli was born in 1502 in the Piedmontese city of Alba. His family belonged to the city's minor nobility, and Belli affixed the name of Alba to his own. In Latin, he is *Petrinus Bellus, Albensis*. Nothing definite is known about his

youth. There is reason to believe that he read Roman law – and perhaps, canon law – at the University of Perugia. Two of Europe's most commanding fourteenth-century legists, Bartolus of Sassoferrato and Baldus de Ubaldis, taught in Perugia. Predictably, both rank among Belli's supreme legal authorities.

Belli seems to have been marked out from the age of thirty-three as “a man of high affairs” (Vernazza di Freney 1783, p. 8). In 1535, he was made a military judge (*auditor di guerra*) in the imperial forces of Charles V. After the emperor's death, Belli was made a counselor of war (*consigliere di guerra*) by Philip II of Spain. This office brought with it a lordly income – 400 crowns per annum – that he presumably drew from that point onward.

Belli himself notes that in the year 1558 (though he likely means 1559), he was writing *A Treatise on Military Matters and Warfare in Eleven Parts* (*De re militari et bello tractatus, divisus in partes XI*). Thus, scholars roughly date the work's composition to 1558 and 1559. It is Belli's only systematic work, and its massive alphabetical index (*index rerum*) suggests that he meant for jurists to consult it in the course of their duties (Gaurier 2007, pp. 3–4). The work appeared in 1563 with a Piedmontese printer in Venice, Franciscus de Portonarijs. It bears a dedication to Philip II, whom Belli hails as “the only hope of the Christian world” (*spes unica Christiani orbis*).

With the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559), Henry II of France ceded the Piedmont back to its hereditary ruler – Emmanuel Philibert, the Duke of Savoy. In 1561, Emmanuel Philibert invited Belli to serve him as a counselor of state (*consigliere di stato*). Belli held this office for the rest of his life, and a number of the legal opinions he wrote in this time were printed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century collections of *consilia*. He died in Turin in 1575, and in 1589 his bones were reinterred in a chapel of the cathedral of Asti.

Impact and Legacy

Belli's treatise on the laws of war, *De re militari et bello tractatus*, is important for its systematic

examination of most of the issues that come to the fore in texts written by the canonical early modern jurists, Alberico Gentili and Hugo Grotius. Of special note are Belli's handling of the origins and definition of war (part I), of the just (and unjust) causes for declaring war (part II), of war crimes and their punishments (part VIII), and of the restoration of peace (part X).

It is hard to determine the extent of the direct influence of Belli's treatise. The Hispano-Flemish jurist Balthasar de Ayala seems to have used Belli extensively when writing his own treatise, *De iure et officiis bellicis et disciplina militari* (1582); but Ayala only cites Belli twice. Alberico Gentili refers to Belli, in passing, in his *Encomiums to the Universities of Perugia and Oxford* (*Laudes Academiae Perusinae et Oxoniensis*, 1605); but he fails to mention Belli in the first pages of his magnum opus, *On the Law of War* (*De iure belli libri tres*, 1588). Perhaps due to this slight by Gentili, Belli tends to be forgotten by historians of Renaissance philosophy.

Petrino Belli is a fine exemplar of a late medieval style of juristic reasoning which is open to humanistic influences and which is beginning to grapple with the dissolution of the medieval *res publica Christiana* and the rise of sovereign states in Europe.

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- [Gentili, Alberico](#)
- [Grotius, Hugo](#)

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Bellus, Petrinus

- [Belli, Pietrino](#)

Bembo, Pietro

Born: Venice, 20 May 1470

Died: Rome, 18 January 1547

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Abstract

Pietro Bembo was a humanist, writer, and poet. The author of the *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), a work that set the standard of written Italian for the centuries to follow, he was also the editor of fundamental editions of Petrarch and Dante. A refined Latin poet as well as the

official historian of Venice, Bembo contributed to spreading Neoplatonic ideas on beauty and love, especially through his vastly successful dialogue known as *Gli Asolani* (1505).

Biography

Pietro Bembo was born in Venice, the scion of Bernardo, a humanist, collector of antiquities, and civil servant of the Most Serene Republic (Giannetto 1985; on the collection of Bernardo and Pietro Nalezty 2017). Bernardo was a friend of the Florentine philosophers Marsilio Ficino and Cristoforo Landino, among others (on Bembo's biography see Dionisotti 1966; Kidwell 2004). From his early youth, Pietro accompanied his father on embassies to Florence, where he became acquainted with the Medici family – especially Lorenzo il Magnifico – as well as with the most influential humanists of the time. Although very young, he developed long-lasting relationships with Florentine intellectuals. At the same time, he studied with the humanist Giovanni Aurelio Augurello, a scholar of Petrarch and the author of a Latin poem entitled *Chrysopoeia* (1515).

Bembo's philosophical background was also influenced by his studies, from the mid-1490s, of philosophy at the University of Padua with Niccolò Leonicensi, whom he later followed to Ferrara. The Paduan Aristotelian tradition influenced Bembo who, in 1516, intervened in defense of Pietro Pomponazzi and his work *De immortalitate animae*, possibly saving Pomponazzi from an inquisitorial intervention (Perrone Compagni 2015, 708).

From 1492 to 1494, Bembo studied Greek at the school of Costantino Lascaris in Messina. Upon his return to Venice, he published Lascaris's Greek grammar. This was the beginning of his cooperation with the publisher Aldo Manuzio, with whom he printed his Latin dialogue *De Aetna* (1496), where he recounts an ascent of the Sicilian volcano (Williams 2017). The work is interspersed with classical reminiscences and naturalistic notions and observations. It was with the two editions of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (1501) and

Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1502) that Bembo achieved wide renown. However, Bembo was and remained more of a philologist than a philosopher. It was not until 1505 that Bembo published *Gli Asolani*, perhaps his most successful work alongside the *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525) and his *Rime* (1530). The first work stages a dialogue on the nature of love: divided into three days, it is set in Asolo, in the Veneto, at the court of the Queen of Cyprus, Caterina Cornaro. The dialogue – a combination of prose and verse – is heavily influenced by Neoplatonic theories. While the first speaker, Perottino, complains about love, the second speaker, Gismondo, describes love as a force “which promotes the civility of both individuals and groups” (Raffini 1998, 69). The third speaker, Lavinello, explains love in properly Neoplatonic terms, as a desire of beauty that leads to God. A fourth character, a Hermit, intervenes in the work, presenting a different conception of love as completely detached from the senses and from earthly entities, which are but a pale reflection of the celestial world. Bembo expresses his ideas on love also as a character in the fourth book of Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528), taking a more orthodox Neoplatonic position. Bembo's speech in Castiglione's text is “full of deep religious feeling but none of it is specifically Christian or Catholic” (Hankins 2002, 387).

In giving voice to the Hermit, Bembo was perhaps voicing here the aspirations for a renewal of the Church that were very much alive within his circle, the so-called *Compagnia degli amici* (Company of friends), and especially among Vincenzo Querini and Tommaso Giustinian. In 1513, these latter wrote a *Libellus ad Leonem X* concerning a reform of the Church. They both chose the hermitic life and suggested to Bembo that he follow their path. While he did not do so, he later embraced an ecclesiastical career and was appointed cardinal in 1539. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Bembo was involved in the harsh religious struggles of his time. Yet, Bembo remained close to some of the main protagonists of Italian evangelism, such as Vittoria Colonna, Jacopo Sadoletto, Vittore Soranzo, Benedetto Varchi, Ludovico Beccadelli, Aonio

Paleario, and many others. From 1542 to 1547, he was also cardinal protector of the Cassinese Congregation, which belonged to the Benedictine order actively involved in the discussion on salvation through Grace and through works.

Impact and Legacy

In general, Bembo's most significant contribution to Italian culture should be identified in his elaboration of a language based on the imitation of the great fifteenth-century works of Petrarch and Boccaccio (Patota 2017), and in his poetry, based on a strict imitation of Petrarch's style. A major exhibition dedicated to Bembo's life and work was mounted in Padua in 2013 (Beltramini et al. 2013)

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Benci, Francesco

Born: 1542, Acquapendente

Died: 6 May 1594, Rome

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Abstract

Francesco Benci (1542–1594) was an Italian humanist, poet, and professor of Rhetoric, Jesuit since the 1562. He studied in Rome under the supervision of Marc'Antoine Muret and along his life he taught Rhetoric in Siena, Perugia, and Rome. He composed, in Latin, an epic poem (*Quinque martyres e Societate Iesu in India libri sex*), a work on Rhetoric (*De Stylo et Scriptione*), many orations (*Orationes*), lyrics (*Carminum libri quattuor*), and three allegorical dramas (*Ergastus*, *Philotimus*, *Elisaeus*). He also compiled and edited five volumes of the *Annuae litterae* of the Society of Jesus for the years between 1586 and 1591 and corresponded with some of the most important humanists of his time.

Alternate Names

Bencio; Bencius; Bentius; Benzi; Franciscus; François; Plauto

Biography

Francesco Benci was born in Acquapendente, in the province of Viterbo, in 1542, with the name of Plauto. After studying 7 years in Rome under the supervision of Marc'Antoine Muret, he pursued the study of Philosophy for 4 years and the study of Civil Law for 2 years. After his mother's death and a religious crisis, on 18 May 1562 he entered the Company of Jesus, changing his name to

Francesco, his father's name. After the novitiate, he started teaching and was Professor of Rhetoric in Siena, in Perugia, and especially in Rome, where he taught at the *Collegio Romano*, the most important Jesuit cultural center. He lived in Rome for the last 20 years of his life and knew and corresponded with some of the most important humanists of his time. He died on 6 May 1594 in Rome and was buried in the Church of the Society of Jesus (see Negri 1966; Sommervogel 1898; Tiraboschi 1805; Villoslada 1954).

Francesco Benci's literary production, completely in Latin, although diverse in content and genres, is a typical example of the counterreformist production and reflects the dialectic between Renaissance and Catholicism typical of the cultural climate of the time.

He composed lyrics (*Carminum libri IV*), including heroic verses, 20 odes, 9 hymns, 14 elegies, 29 epigrams, and 23 couplets; orations (*Orationes*), written for and with his students and characterized by great attention to the construction and the embellishment of the prose; and a work on Rhetoric (*De Stylo et Scriptione*), all published in Rome in 1590 and later published several times usually together (Ingolstadii 1592, 1599, and 1602; Coloniae Agr. 1617) (see Flamini 1903; Mazzuchelli 1760; Negri 1966; Tiraboschi 1805).

Benci also composed an epic poem (*Quinque martyres e Societate Iesu in India libri sex*), published in Venice in 1591. It was inspired by the real adventures of a Jesuit mission in India led by father Rodolfo Acquaviva which inspired many other works of the time and which also inspired Daniello Bartoli's famous *Missione al Gran Mogor* (1653). This work, in which Benci applied the precepts proposed to his students in *De Stylo*, can be considered the highest pick of his literary production (see Flamini 1903; Mazzuchelli 1760; Negri 1966; Tiraboschi 1805).

Less known are his allegorical dramas, which reflect the typical structure and dynamics of the Renaissance Latin theater. Two of them, *Ergastus* and *Philotimus*, were published in Rome and performed during the final ceremony of the *Collegio Romano* in October 1587 and in December 1590, respectively, and a third,

Elisaeus, remained instead in manuscript form, as did his notes and his comments on several Cicero's orations (see Mazzuchelli 1760; Tiraboschi 1805).

Finally, it is also worthy to mention his activity as a compiler and editor of five volumes of the *Annuae litterae* of the Society of Jesus between the years of 1586 and 1591, published in Rome between 1589 and 1594, and his preface to Giulio Cesare Stella's poem (*Columbeidos libri priores duo*), which he published in Rome in 1590 (see Negri 1966; Sommervogel 1898; Villoslada 1954).

Throughout his life he was involved in the humanistic cultural debate, frequenting and corresponding with some of the most important humanists of his time like Marc'Antoine Muret, Justus Lipsius, Piero Vettori, Cesare Baronio, Marco Antonio Bonciario, Paolo Sacrati, and Luigi Lollino, Bishop of Belluno, and most of his letters can be found in *Epistolarum M. A. Bonciarii libri XII* (Perusiae 1613) and in *Sylloges epistolarum a viris illustribus scriptarum* (Leydae 1727).

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- Fracastoro, Girolamo
- Humanism
- Jesuits in the Early Modern Period
- Lipsius, Justus
- Vettori, Piero

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Bencio

► [Benci, Francesco](#)

Bencius

► [Benci, Francesco](#)

Beni, Paolo

Born: 1552–1553, Gubbio (Italy)

Died: 1625, Padua (Italy)

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Abstract

Paolo Beni was an influential and controversial literary and philosophical theorist, whose main works were published in Italy in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Born in Gubbio between 1552 and 1553, he entered

the Jesuit order in the early 1580s but was forced to leave in 1593. From 1600 to 1623, he taught at the University of Padua as Professor of Humanities and Rhetoric. He died in Padua in 1625.

Beni is best known for his *Anticrusca* (Paolo Beni and Giovanni Battista Martini, Padua, 1612b), a polemical pamphlet against the Accademia della Crusca's *Vocabolario*. Giovanni Alberti, Venice, 1612). His philosophical works deal with Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* (*In Aristotelis Poeticam commentarii*. In Beniana, per Franciscum Bolzettam, Io. Baptista Martino thypographo, Padua, 1613b; *In Aristotelis Poeticam commentarii*. Io. Guerilium, Venice, 1622a; *In Aristotelis libros Rhetoricum commentarii*. Io. Guerilium, Venice, 1624; *In Aristotelis libros Rhetoricum commentarii secundum, et tertium*. Io. Guerilium, Venice, 1625) and with Plato's *Timaeus* (*In Platonis Timaeum... ex typographia Gabiana*. Rome, 1594). His various interests also included the exegesis of Latin authors, the question of the usefulness of history, and religious matters.

Biography

Paolo Beni was born in Gubbio (Diffley 1983, 1988, 13) sometime between 1 October 1552 and 4 May 1553, most likely on 10 January 1553 (Diffley 1988, 15). His parents, of noble origin, had six children. From his youth, Beni had a very troubled relationship with his father, Francesco, and with his eldest brother, Giacomo. In the late 1550s, he was sent to Rome to attend classes at the Collegio Romano. While his family wished him to study law in Perugia, he rebelled and studied philosophy and theology in Bologna (1566) and later in Padua (1573). Here, Beni published his first poetic compositions, joined the local Accademia degli Animosi (Sangalli 2016, 120), and obtained his doctorate in theology in 1576. Back in Rome in 1576, he served as secretary to Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo and developed a close relationship with the humanists Marc-Antoine Muret and Carlo Sigonio.

In May 1581, Beni entered the Jesuit novitiate at Sant'Andrea al Quirinale in Rome. He left Rome in 1587 and lectured in Padua and Milan at various times between 1587 and 1593. On 23 September 1593, Beni was expelled from the Jesuits as a result of his disobedience to the order's rules combined with his insatiable appetite for money (Diffley 1988, 38–39). Beni returned to Rome between late 1593 and early 1594 to lecture on natural philosophy at La Sapienza. In 1594, he published the first of three decades of his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* (*In Platonis Timaeum*. . . , Rome), aimed at restoring the original Platonic theories and freeing them from Neoplatonic interpretation. This exegetical work was followed by other minor literary compositions intended to obtain Papal favor (*De ecclesiasticis Baronii*. . . *disputatio*, Rome 1596; *Discorsi sopra l'inondation del Tevere*, Rome 1599).

On 3 November 1599, Beni was appointed Professor of Humanities and Rhetoric at the University of Padua, where he taught until at least November 1623. In March 1600, he delivered his inaugural university lecture (*De humanitatis studiis oratio*, Padua) and entered the local Accademia dei Ricovrati (Sangalli 2016, 121–123). In Padua, he devoted himself to university teaching, laying out an ambitious – though ultimately ignored – plan for the reform of the city university (Vatican Secret Archives, Vatican City, Archivio Beni, Quire 123), focused on both humanistic values and practical concerns (Sangalli 2001, 2016, 126–127). All his main works were composed during his mature years in Padua, where he died in 1625, sometime after August 1 (Diffley 1988, 116–117).

Beni is mainly remembered for his frenetic activity as a literary critic and polemicist. In 1600, he entered the debate on Giovan Battista Guarini's *Pastor fido* (Venice 1590) with two works backing Guarini's side (*Risposta alle considerazioni o dubbi dell'ecc.mo sig. Malacreta*. . . *sopra il Pastor Fido*, Padua 1600b; *Discorso nel qual si dichiarano e stabiliscono molte cose pertinenti alla risposta data a' dubbi e considerationi dell'eccellentissimo sig. dottor Malacreta*, Venice 1600c). The printing in the same year of his *Disputatio in qua ostenditur*

praestare comoediam atque tragoediam metrorum vinculis solvere (Padua), arguing against the use of verse in drama, stirred up a major controversy. In 1612, Beni cemented his reputation as a polemicist when he harshly criticized – in the *Anticrusca* (Padua 1612b; Padua 1613a) – the just-published *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Venice 1612). The vigorous negative response to the *Anticrusca* prompted him to publish *Il Cavalcanti* (Padua 1614) – a text supporting his previous work – anonymously. His position against the Accademia della Crusca, which omitted Torquato Tasso's works from its *Vocabolario*, is also well exemplified by his favorable commentary on Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* (*Il Goffredo*, Padua 1616), which complements his previous *Comparatione di Homero, Virgilio e Torquato* (Padua 1607; Padua 1612a). His exegetical works in the field of literature embraced Latin authors, such as Virgil (*In P. Virgilii Maronis Aeneidem commentarii*, Venice 1622c; Venice 1623) and Sallust (*In Sallustii Catilinariam commentarii*, Venice 1622d).

Beni's main contributions in the field of philosophy are his commentaries on Aristotle's works – which attracted a great deal of scholarship in the Renaissance – such as *Rhetoric* (*In Aristotelis libros Rhetoricum commentarii*, Venice 1624; *In Aristotelis libros Rhetoricum commentarii secundum, et tertium*, Venice 1625) and *Poetics* (*In Aristotelis Poeticam commentarii*, Padua 1613b; Venice 1622a), and his largely unpublished monumental commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*. His vast output also includes the discussion of religious issues (*Qua tandem ratione dirimi possit controversia*, Padua 1603) and a study on the utility of history (*De historia libri quatuor* [sic], Venice 1611; Venice 1622b).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the *Anticrusca*, Beni quarrels with the Accademia della Crusca over two questions of literary tradition. First, he notes the continued evolution of the Italian language, reaching its ultimate perfection in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and not – as the Accademia della

Crusca claimed – at the time of the *Tre Corone*. Second, once more against the Accademia della Crusca, he disapproves of the canonization of certain fourteenth-century authors, such as Giovanni Boccaccio and, to some extent, Dante Alighieri, in favor of more modern sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors.

Beni adopted a similar militant stance in his philosophical works. In his commentary on *Timaeus*, Beni argued against the Neoplatonic tradition over two key philosophical matters. First, Beni criticized Ficino's and Proclus's idea of *physis* that detached from Plato's original conception. In Beni's opinion, the subject of the *Timaeus* is the *universum* that embraces what is included within natural boundaries, and not the seminal force (or *vis seminaria*) as asserted by Neoplatonists (Bartocci 2010, 88–92; 2013, 200–201). Second, Beni proposed a rethinking of Ficino's idea of *prisca philosophia*. Although Beni acknowledged the derivation of Plato's theories from a more ancient tradition of knowledge, he confined it to pagan beliefs and separated it from Christian truths. Beni's aim in rediscussing the *prisca philosophia* is to preserve Platonic theories from a general misuse in treating theological matters and detach them from heterodox doctrines (Bartocci 2010, 95–108; 2013, 202–204).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Beni's thought allowed for a resurgence of Platonic theories over Aristotelian tradition at the time of Counter-Reformation. In his commentary on *Timaeus*, Beni intended to demonstrate the more rigorous adherence between Genesis narrative and Plato's natural philosophy compared to Aristotelian one (Bartocci 2013, 198–199). Beni also showed a high degree of receptivity to Galileo Galilei's theories. As two letters by Giovan Battista Manso showed (Galilei 1968, 291–296), Beni played an “active role in reporting the news concerning astronomical discoveries outside of Padua . . . [and] in detecting the new astronomical phenomena” (Bartocci 2016, 440–441).

There is no general consensus among critics and scholars on the evaluation of other aspects of

Beni's thought. While most Italian scholars stress the novelty of Beni's ideas in the fields of linguistics and philosophy, Diffley opted for a more nuanced interpretation of his works. When illustrating Beni's linguistic theories, Mazzacurati (1966) and Casagrande (1978, 1982) emphasized Beni's preference for art and artifice over nature, while Belloni (1922) stressed his anti-authoritarian tendency. By contrast, Diffley argued for Beni's predilection for a good balance of art and nature in linguistic matters and for his commitment to literary authorities (albeit other than the ones suggested by the Accademia della Crusca) in the shaping of his idea of language (1988, 143–146). Furthermore, analyzing his commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, Diffley provided a reassessment of Beni's supposed nearness to Baroque cultural tendencies, previously argued by Jannaco (1958) and Doglio (1973). According to Diffley, on the key issues of literary imitation and the purpose of poetry (utility vs. delight), Beni proves to be more classically inclined than traditionally thought and less open to modernity compared to *Cinquecento* commentators on the *Poetics*, such as Francesco Robortello or Ludovico Castelvetro.

Cross-References

- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- [Historiography, Renaissance](#)
- [Philology, Renaissance](#)
- [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)

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Benignus de Feliciis, Georgius

- [Salviati, Giorgio Benigno](#)

Benignus de Salviatis, Georgius

- [Salviati, Giorgio Benigno](#)

Benignus, Georgius

► [Salviati, Giorgio Benigno](#)

Benivieni, Girolamo

Born: 6 February 1453, Florence

Died: August 1542, Florence

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Abstract

Girolamo Benivieni was one of the most famous vernacular poets of his time. He is also known for his Dantean works, for his translations (especially from Latin into vernacular), and for his pious writings. Precocious member of the Florentine platonic Academy and intimate friend of the philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, he became one of the first supporters of the preacher Girolamo Savonarola, to whose legacy he remained loyal throughout his long life.

Biography

Born in Florence on 6 February 1453, Girolamo was the son of the notary Paolo and of Nastagia de' Bruni. Together with two of his siblings, the physician Antonio (1443–1502) and the philosopher Domenico (1460ca–1507), he rapidly became a prominent member of the Florentine intellectual society. A severe illness occurred in 1470 had compelled him to abandon ordinary studies, yet it did not prevent him from devoting entirely to the study of classics (Latin, Greek and also Hebrew) and of the modern Vernacular poets. It is on the latter's model that he earned a precocious fame in Lorenzo de' Medici's circle.

Moreover, his poetical qualities also fostered his success outside Florence, in other Italian courts, such as that of Giulio Cesare Varano in Camerino (Re 1906; Vasoli 1966).

His acquaintance with Giovanni Pico is probably datable to the latter's first visit to Florence in 1479. The friendship with the Count of Mirandola, with whom he shared literary interests and, later, a stern Savonarolan religious fervor, deeply marked Benivieni's life and character. From Pico's settlement in Florence in 1489 to the Count's death in 1494, the two lived a close and intimate friendship, which was best expressed by the intellectual gatherings in Pico's Florentine house and in the Dominican convent of San Marco and by the common charitable activity. Pico's premature death greatly upset Benivieni, who fostered the construction of his shrine in San Marco, which, almost half a century later, would also become his own, testifying, in death as in life, their intimacy (Re 1906; Vasoli 1966; Zorzi Pugliese 2003).

Another crucial encounter for Benivieni was the one with Girolamo Savonarola, of whom he was one of the earliest and closest supporters, converting his poetical skills to serve the moral and political reform of Florence. To Savonarola's memory, Benivieni will remain loyal long after the friar's death (Zorzi Pugliese 2015). The most visible effect of Benivieni's religious conversion was the disownment of his earlier poetical production, which he only partially later reacknowledged through a moralizing and christianizing self-commentary, published in 1500 and dedicated to Giovanfrancesco Pico (Benivieni 1500; Zorzi Pugliese 1994a; Roush 2002b). A number of the compositions which were not included in the self-commented collection have been preserved in manuscript and have recently been published (Leporatti 2008).

After the fall of the Florentine Savonarolan republic, Benivieni retired to private life, to his pious and literary works and to charitable activity. He maintained good relations with the Medici, at first with lower branches and later also with the ruling family. Despite the weak health which he lamented throughout his life, he lived to be almost ninety (Re 1906; Vasoli 1966).

His better known work is by far the *Canzona dell'Amor celeste e divino*, inspired by Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Symposion* and notably commented by Giovanni Pico (Garin 1942). Benivieni is also known for his intensive work as translator, especially from the Latin (but also from Greek and Hebrew) into vernacular, both prose and verse. The most relevant results of this activity are the translations of Savonarola's *Epistola dell'umiltà* and of the Penitential Psalms (Zorzi Pugliese 1994b, 2003). In the early years of the sixteenth century, he dedicated himself to the study of Dante, of which the most prominent result are the *Dialogo di Antonio Manetti circa el sito, forma et misure dello Inferno di Dante Allighieri* and the *Cantico in laude di Dante*, published inside the Florentine 1506 Giunti edition of the *Divine Comedy* (Roush 2002a). In 1519, the first edition of his *Opere* was published in Florence by Giunti (Benivieni 1519; Di Benedetto 2010). Almost immediate reprints were made in Venice, by Nicolò Zoppino in 1522 and by Gregorio de Gregori in 1524. This collection did not however include all of his works, but just those that Benivieni considered worthy of being diffused: the first edition of the *Canzona dell'Amor celeste e divino*, with Pico's commentary, the *Bucolica* dedicated to Giulio Cesare Varano (Battera 1990), his Dantean writing and some verse compositions.

The bibliography that follows only includes a selection of titles. Further references can be found in these works.

Cross-References

- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
- [Poliziano, Angelo](#)
- [Savonarola, Girolamo](#)

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Bentius

- [Benci, Francesco](#)

Benzi

- [Benci, Francesco](#)

Benzi, Ugo

Born: 1376, Siena

Died: 30 November 1439, Ferrara

Coralba Colomba

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Abstract

Ugo Benzi, a natural philosopher and a physician, was one of the most brilliant and appreciated professors of medicine of the fifteenth century. He spent much of his life at universities and courts of Northern and Central Italy. He studied philosophy at Florence and Pavia and medicine at Bologna. He began his teaching career at Pavia and died in Ferrara, as a private doctor of Niccolò d'Este. He wrote philosophical commentaries as well as medical treatises; nevertheless at his time he was a high-valued practice physician, sought after by the most important Italian universities and courts.

Biography

A natural philosopher and a physician, Ugo Benzi was born in Siena on 26 February 1376 from Andrea and Minoccia Pagni, in a bourgeois family. The discovering of the *Vita Hugonis* written by his son Soncino has allowed us to clarify details and episodes of Benzi's troubled life, even though it is important to acknowledge the eulogistic intent of his biographer. He started his studies in Siena and continued then in Florence and Bologna. Once left Bologna in 1394 due to a fracture with Piero Mantovano, he studied by himself and graduated at the University of Pavia presumably in *logica et philosophia* on 17 October 1396 (Lockwood 1951; DBI 1966; Lohr 2013). Afterwards, he taught logic at Pavia (1396–1399) and philosophy at Piacenza (1399–1402). In 1402, he retreated to the country by reason of the plague, and he began to study medicine. In

1402–1403 he taught philosophy at Bologna, while studying and later teaching medicine. In 1405 Benzi came back to Siena as professor of medicine and married Laia Sozzini (Lockwood 1951; DBI 1966). He had ten sons: Socino, Andrea, Francesco, Giovanni, Ludovico, Nicola, Carlo, Pietro, Lacopo, and Severo. In 1409 he left Siena and went to Pisa and then to Bologna as a doctor of the cardinal Baldassarre Cossa, reaching the chair of medicine *in nonis* until 1412. In the same year indeed called by Niccolò d'Este, Benzi moved to Parma in order to teach medicine, and there he spent four really productive years. He wrote three commentaries on Galen and also commentaries on the aphorisms of Hippocrates and on Avicenna. In 1416–1421 he taught at Siena and in 1422–1423 at Florence. Then he moved to Bologna, where in 1424 he and his family received the patent of Bolognese citizens. In 1425–1428/1429, he taught medicine at the University of Pavia hired by Filippo Maria Visconti. Later, called by Niccolò d'Este as a Court physician, he moved to Ferrara where he continued to teach privately, and Angelo Decembrio was among his students. These years were very prolific; he wrote different *consilia* (32, 19, 30, 17), and he reached the height of his fame. In May 1439 he visited Siena for the last time. He died in Ferrara on 30 November of the same year, and he was buried at the S. Domenico Church (Lockwood 1951; DBI 1966).

Benzi wrote a considerable number of both philosophical and medical works related to his teaching career. About the philosophical works, we know the commentaries to the Aristotelian *De somno et vigilia* (Benzi 1991) *De memoria et reminiscentia* and the commentary on the *Oeconomica* (Benzi 1992), all of them pseudo-Aristotelian works linked with his first teaching period in Bologna. Socino also mentioned in his *Vita* a treatise *De logicae artis ratione* which has been lost. His philosophical writings are not considered of particular value. It was undoubtedly his skills as a practice physician and medical scholar that gave him the reputation of being the most illustrious physician in Italy (Benzi 1992). Even though his thought is not particularly original, Benzi shows in his medical writings that he

knew deeply the Greek and Arabian medicine and that he had a great therapeutic experience (Lockwood 1951; DBI 1966).

Among his writing those extant today are the *Consilia ad diversas aegritudines* (Bologna 1492, Pavia 1496–1499, Venice 1518), *Expositio super Aphorismos Hippocratis et Galeni commentum* (Ferrara 1493, Venice 1498), *Expositio super libros tegni Galeni* (Pavia 1496, Venice 1498, 1518), *Expositio in primam et secundam Fen primi Canonis Avicennae* (Ferrara 1491, Venice 1498), *Expositio super quarta fen primi Canonis Avicennae* (Pavia 1478, 1484, 1496; Venice 1485, 1502, 1513, 1517, 1523, 1524, 1531; Siena 1485), and, above-all, the precious *Tractato utilissimo circa lo regimento e conseruatione de la sanitate* (Milan 1481, 1508) (ISTC 2016; EDIT 16 2016), written in Latin and successively translated into Vernacular, which is one of the first documents on hygiene published in Italian (DBI 1966), and which has found an enduring reputation.

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Bergomensis, Petrus

► [Pietro da Bergamo](#)

Bernardi della Mirandola, Antonio

► [Bernardi, Antonio](#)

Bernardi, Antonio

Born: 1502, Mirandola, Italy

Died: 1565, Bologna, Italy

Cristóvão S. Marinheiro

Réserve Précieuse, Bibliothèque nationale de Luxembourg, Luxembourg, Luxembourg

Abstract

Antonio Bernardi was a controversial Aristotelian humanist and a courtier at the court of the Farnese family. His positions in theoretical philosophy had a great impact on Jesuit scholasticism, and his views on ethics were discussed until mid-eighteenth century.

Alternate Names

[Bernardi della Mirandola, Antonio](#); [della Bernarda, Antonio](#); [della Mirandola, Antonio](#); [Bernardus, Antonius](#); [Mirandolano, Antonio](#); [Mirandulanus, Antonius](#)

Biography

Bernardi (Mirandola, Italy, March 1502–Bologna, Italy, March 18, 1565, or 19) studied philosophy at Bologna University from 1517 to 1533, where he had Piетро Pomponazzi and Ludovico Boccadiferro as teachers. In September 1533, he got his “laurea” at Ferrara under the supervision of Giovanni Mainardi and Antonio Musa Brasavola. From 1533 to 1539, he taught philosophy at Bologna University. During this time, he probably got acquainted with Achille Bocchi and his *Academia Hermathena* (Angelini 2009). In 1539, however,

he was forced to leave Bologna for Rome because of a “serious incident.” There he stayed with Giambattista Campeggi, and later with his brother Alessandro Campeggi, beginning to teach on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. His readings got noticed by Girolami Sauli, archbishop of Bari, who asked for his services. Yet, a few months later, still in 1540, he was appointed preceptor of Alessandro Farnese, grandson of Pope Paul III, initiating thus a long diplomatic and ecclesiastical career. He remained in the Farnese court until his death in 1565 (Forlivesi and Marinheiro 2009).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Bernardi’s positions on several points of Aristotelian doctrine were well-known before their publication. This has two implications for the modern reader: First, every work has an apologetic character and must therefore be crossed with the one of his opponent’s work. Second, the writings have to be considered with respect to the discussions they provoked, thus giving us a chronology to follow.

After Bernardi had left Bologna for Rome in 1539, his opinions on the Aristotelian *Categories*, which he had taught at Bologna University years before, provoked a response by Giacomo Giacomelli (1498–1560) in 1542. This forced Bernardi to defend his positions in his *Institutio in universam logicam*, published at the same time as his *Apologiae libri VIII* in 1545. Bernardi’s key argument was that the *Categories* were a purely ontological work and must not be taught as a part of logic, which would thus begin with the *De interpretatione*. The *Categories* should be considered as a part of the *Metaphysics* and integrated in the beginning of book Z. These philological and exegetical topics hide a systematic shift in the understanding of Aristotelian philosophy. First, following the Renaissance impetus *ad fontes*, Bernardi gets rid of the whole of the Aristotelian tradition, leaving aside the opinions of medieval authors as well as those of late antique commentators, trying to explain Aristotle’s positions with Aristotle only. Thus, the common interpretative aid given by Porphyry with his *Isagoge* and the well-known Porphyrian tree are dropped, and the

concept of *second intentions* developed by scholasticism is replaced by the one of *termini communes*. Moreover, *logica* and *dialectica* are not used as synonyms but distinguish two different topics: *Logica* is the discipline teaching us to assemble the instruments, such as the *termini communes*, necessary for the understanding. The way to put these instruments together is our capacity to speak in ordered sentences; this capacity is called *oratio* according to Bernardi. *Dialectica* is the discipline that uses the instruments developed by the *logica* in order to make correct judgments. The etymology of the Greek *logike* points to the Latin *oratio*, whereas the one of *dialektike* focuses on the syllogistical capacity and is translated as *ratio*.

About a decade later, Giovanni Battista Possevino’s *Dialogo dell’onore* of 1553 provoked the publication of Bernardi’s *Disputationes* in 1562. The link between these two publications is a feud between the Possevino brothers and Bernardi, who accused Giovan Battista of plagiarism. The object of the quarrel is a solution of “double truth” given to the question whether dueling was to be lawful or not. According to Catholic morals, dueling had to be prohibited. Yet, according to Aristotle and reason, dueling had to be allowed, since defending one’s honor is regarded as a legitimate defense against calumny and as a possibility to stop the ever running vendettas. This position had been developed by Bernardi in a lecture held in 1547 on the first book of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* to the papal court (ms. BAV, Urbinate Latino 1414). According to Bernardi, Giovan Battista Possevino, who attended this lecture and was appointed to prepare it for publishing, had it circulated under his own name. After his sudden death, his brother Antonio published the work his brother had left. Recent research however seems to contradict Bernardi’s argument, leading us to the problem of the use of sources in the Renaissance (Riga 2016). It seems certain that the authorship of the *Dialogo dell’honore* has to be attributed to Giovan Battista Possevino. This publication issued in 1562, which was reprinted under the title *Eversionis singularis certaminis libri XL* without date, has to be considered

Bernardi's major work, as he used it to explain in detail his understanding of the whole of Aristotelian philosophy.

The "double truth" quarrel is implicitly related to the question of the *Cognoscentia Dei*, addressed in book 27. Here Bernardi discusses the potentiality of God's knowledge of the world he created. In his understanding of *Metaphysics* book 12, it is impossible for God to know what happens in the world as this would imply his knowledge not only of all the causes but also of all contingencies. This is the truth given to us by our limited reason, whereas there is a truth given to us by supposition (*ex suppositione*), on the base of the principles of natural reason, bringing us thus to an opposite truth (Landucci 2006).

Another point of Aristotelian doctrine, present in his *Disputationes* (liber XIII and XIV) which led to controversy, was Bernardi's reading of Aristotle's classical division of theoretical sciences. Aristotle had made a distinction between first philosophy (i.e., metaphysics), second philosophy (i.e., physics), and mathematics, a distinction commonly accepted by Aristotelian philosophers ever since. According to the nominalist reading of Bernardi, this distinction was made by convenience (*per commoditatem*), with respect to our *modus cognoscendi*, since there is a *philosophia* beyond this division, regrouping all of the realms of being. This *philosophia*, which is not identical to metaphysics but above it, as the *science of being qua being*, has no own subject-matter; its subject-matter is the sum of the subject-matters of the three theoretical sciences.

This general *philosophia* has its counterpart in Bernardi's *logica*: *Philosophia* treats all the realms of being, just as *Logica* treats all the realms of *oratio*.

Impact and Legacy

Bernardi's opinions had a wide impact in the sense that they were widely discussed and refuted within Aristotelian philosophy. Zabarella (1566), Pedro da Fonseca (1964a), and Sebastião do Couto (1606) (see ► "Conimbricense, Collegium") refuted his linguistic turn in logic. His

understanding of the unity of theoretical sciences by convenience was refuted by most Jesuit scholars of the Iberic Peninsula, such as Pedro da Fonseca, Manuel de Góis, and Francisco Suárez (Marinheiro 2009). His defense of a "double truth" position on the question of God's knowledge could not be accepted by Aristotelians of Thomistic tradition like the Jesuits (de Góis 1592, p. 330 sqq.), who considered this to be an averroistic position (Landucci 2006).

Nonetheless, some of his intuitions proved to be far-reaching, once the Aristotelian framework had been dropped. In a certain way, Bernardi could be considered as a forerunner of the concept of "mathesis universalis" or as a precursor of the linguistic shift in logic. In ethics, his ideas on honor were discussed until the eighteenth century (see Riga 2016) and Cavina (2009).

Cross-References

- Averroism, Renaissance
- Boccadiferro, Ludovico
- Conimbricense, Collegium
- Fonseca, Pedro
- Mainardi, Giovanni
- Pomponazzi, Pietro
- Possevino, Antonio
- Suárez, Francisco
- Zabarella, Jacopo

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[s. a., s.d.] *Eversionis singularis certaminis libri XL, in quibus omnes iniuriae species declarantur: tum vero offensionum et contentionum, quae ex illis nascuntur; honeste atque ex virtute tollendarum ratio traditur: et praeter multos, ac prope infinitos locos Aristotelis, qui sunt difficilimi, obiter explicatos, Animi etiam immortalitas ex ipsius sententia ostenditur: Astrologiae quoque divinatione omni pene autoritate spoliatur; atque libertas humana stabilitur*, Basileiae, Henricus Petri. (Cambridge University Library, call nr. N.1.18).

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- (1562) *Disputationes in quibus ex professo Monomachia (quam Singulare certamen Latini, recentiores Duellum uocant) philosophicis rationibus astruitur; & mox divina auctoritate labefactata petitus evertitur: omnes quoque iniuriarum species declarantur; easque conciliandi & e medio tollendi certissimae rationes traduntur. Deinde vero omnes utriusque Philosophiae, tam contemplatiuae quam actiuae, Loci obscuriores, et ambiguae Quaestiones, (perfectim de Anima immortalitate, et Astrologiae iudicariae diuinationibus) Aristotelica methodo luculentissime examinatur et explicantur*, Basileiae, Henricus Petri.

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Bernardus, Antonius

- [Bernardi, Antonio](#)

Bessarion Nicenus

- [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)

Bessarion Venetus

- [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)

Bessarion, Basileios

- [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)

Bessarion, Cardinal

Born: 2.01.1399/1400/1403/8, Trebizond

Died: 18.11.1472, Ravenna

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Abstract

Bessarion was a Byzantine scholar, theologian, philosopher, and cardinal of the Roman Church. He was born in Trebizond on the Black Sea and was brought to Constantinople where he received a literary and philosophical education. In 1430–1431, he joined the circle of Georgios Gemistos' (Plethon's) students. In 1438–1439, he participated in the council of Ferrara/Florence as a speaker of Byzantine delegation. After the council, he was made cardinal of the Roman Church. In 1455, he nearly became pope. He was a *legatus a latere* to Germany, Republic of Venice, France, Burgundy, and England. Almost all of B.'s political activities were directed towards advancing the preparations for the crusade against the Turks. In addition to a number of theological works, Bessarion composed two major philosophical treatises, *On Nature and Art* and *Against the Calumniator of Plato*. In *Against the Calumniator of Plato*, he defends Plato against a number of charges which Georgios of Trebizond had formulated against Plato in his treatise *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis et de praestantia Aristotelis*. In *On Nature and Art* he evinces an agreement between the Platonic and the Aristotelian philosophies and also suggests an accord between Platonic philosophy and Christian theology.

Alternate Names

Also known as “[Bessarion, John](#)” or “[Bessarion, Basileios](#).” He was baptized with the name

Basileios and not John (Bianca [1999](#), pp. 141–149) and adopted the name of an Egyptian anchorite Bessarion upon becoming a monk. He frequently referred to himself as “[Bessarion Nicenus](#)” and, on rare occasions, “[Bessarion Venetus](#).” Since the monastic name is meant to replace the baptismal name, the combination “Basileios Bessarion” is misleading and should be avoided.

Biography

The year in which he was born is disputed; the month and date, on the contrary, are certain. While most of the older secondary literature (Vast [1878](#); Mohler [1923–1942](#); Labowsky [1967](#), [1979](#)) follows the testimony of Capranica and gives 1403 (cf. also Coluccia [2009](#)) as the year of his birth, Saffrey ([1964](#)) puts it as early as 1399 or 1400, and Monfasani ([1986](#)) has convincingly demonstrated that B. was born in 1408. Our knowledge of B.'s early years is mainly derived from the following sources: Niccolò Capranica's funeral oration (text in Mohler [1923–1942](#), vol. III, pp. 404–414), Bartolomeo Platina's panegyric of B. (PG 161, 104–116), Michael Apostoles' funeral oration (PG 161, 127–140, material for a new critical edition in A. Riehle's unpublished master thesis, LMU Munich 2006), and Pietro Ronsano's essay, composed ca. 1470 (cf. Termini [1915](#), pp. 163–167). It is very likely that all of these sources, with the exception of Michael Apostoles, were influenced by or indirectly derive their information from the biography of B. that had been composed by Niccolò Perotti, but which was never published and is now lost (cf. Monfasani [1986](#)).

According to these sources, B. was born in Trebizond on the Black Sea and was brought to Constantinople by Dositheos (PLP 5642, cf. Laurent [1933](#), pp. 153–155) in 1415–1416. There he received a literary and philosophical education under John Chortasmenos (PLP 30897) and Georgios Chrysokokkes (PLP 31142). From the autograph *curriculum vitae* preserved in Cod. marc. gr. 14, we know that he entered the Basilian order on 30 January 1423 and became a monk on 30 July 1424, taking

upon himself the name of the Egyptian anchorite Bessarion. In reference to B.'s early years, Platina and Capranica mention a certain archbishop of Selymbria who was in charge of B.'s education. This information inspired the hypothesis about B.'s sojourn in a monastery in Selymbria (cf. Mohler 1923–1942, vol. 1, pp. 43–45). However, the fact that B. studied under John Chortasmenos, who is identical with the *archiepiscopus Selymbriensis* mentioned by Platina and Capranica, does not necessarily imply that B. had actually stayed in Selymbria. As demonstrated by Loenertz (1944, p. 129) and Hunger (1969, p. 18), John Chortasmenos, who was in charge of several monasteries at the time, in fact continued to live in Constantinople and so it is safe to conclude that B.'s education, as he himself stressed on several occasions, took place in Constantinople. B. became a deacon on 8 December 1425 and a priest on 8 October 1430. In 1430–1431, he left the Byzantine capital for the Peloponnese, where he joined the circle of Georgios Gemistos' (Plethon's) students and remained until 1436. In his letters dating from this period, he refers with considerable reverence to his teacher Plethon, calling him "most godly leader" and "admirable master" (cf. letters 1, 4 and 8 in Mohler 1923–1942, vol. 3). This stay proved extremely beneficial not only for his intellectual development but also for his career: B. was soon included, together with his teacher Plethon, in the Byzantine delegation to the Council of Ferrara/Florence (cf. also Ronchey 2002). In fact, B. was made bishop of Nicaea on 11 October 1437, shortly before the Greek delegation departed from Constantinople. Later B. assembled his own early works written during this period in a single manuscript, now known as Cod. marc. gr. 533.

The Byzantines traveled to Italy to negotiate the Union of the Churches, but above all they were seeking military assistance from the West. Their delegation comprised such important intellectual figures as Georgios Scholarios, Mark Eugenikos, Georgios Gemistos (Plethon), Georgios Amiroutzes, and many others. Not all members of the Byzantine delegation were in favor of the union with the Latin Church, and even fewer were disposed to make any

concessions to the Latins. Mark Eugenikos, for instance, viewed the council as a kind of tribunal at which he would denounce the heresies of the Latin Church and thought that the Union was only possible if the Latins were ready to accept the teachings of the Greeks. For B. participation in the council was a turning point in his life and a first step towards a brilliant ecclesiastical career in the West. Soon after his arrival in Italy he was chosen to be one of the two spokesmen of the Byzantine delegation (the other being Mark Eugenikos) and was accorded the privilege of pronouncing the opening discourse on 8 October 1438. In it he encouraged the participants of the council to seek the truth and try to suppress the natural tendency of man to wish to prevail. The most controversial issue debated at the council was the question of *filioque*, which was considered both by the Latins and the Byzantines to be a significant impediment to the Union. Next in the order of importance and closely connected to it was the debate about the legitimacy of additions to the Nicene Creed, followed by discussion of the implications of the primacy of the pope and a series of other minor questions. B. played a central role in finding and negotiating solutions to each of these issues. On 13 April 1439 and 14 April 1439, he delivered his *Oratio dogmatica* to the assembled Greeks (text in Candal 1958, cf. also Lusini 2001). In it he tried to demonstrate that the teachings of the western saints on the issue of the *filioque* do not in fact disagree with those of the eastern saints. He also discussed the differences between the prepositions *dia* (through) and *ek* (from), thereby envisaging a solution that was approved by the Byzantine patriarch on 04 June 1439 and eventually accepted by the Greek delegation. The remaining issues, such as the doctrine of purgatory and the use of leavened and unleavened bread in the Eucharist, were discussed with much more haste as the Byzantine emperor urged that the negotiations be brought to a successful conclusion. The Byzantines signed the decree of Union on 05 July 1439. In a ceremony which took place in the cathedral of Florence, Cardinal Cesarini read the text of the decree in Latin and B. in Greek. The Union was achieved and the Byzantine delegation prepared to return home. B. left Florence for Venice on 20 July 1439.

Either on his way back from Florence to Venice or already in Venice he received a *breve* of Pope Eugenius IV, who invited him to collaborate with the Roman Church. B. accepted the papal offer and departed for Constantinople on 19 October 1439. On his way to Constantinople, B. was made a cardinal. The Byzantine fleet reached Constantinople on 01 February 1440. B. participated in the election of the new patriarch of Constantinople on 04 May 1440 and used his time in Byzantium to undertake research in libraries, seeking proofs for the Latin doctrine of the *filioque* in the oldest manuscripts of Basil he could find. This work was described by B. himself in a dogmatic letter addressed to Alexios Laskaris (text of the letter in PG 163, 321–406, research into the manuscripts of Basil mentioned in col. 325).

B.'s presence in the West is securely attested on 05 February 1442, when he signed the decree of Union between the Coptic and the Roman Churches, even though he must have been present in Italy much earlier, possibly as early as 10 December 1440. The bull of Eugenius IV granted B. the possession of houses and gardens adjacent to the Basilica of the Holy Apostles in Rome, which must have increased the cardinal's financial means. In the same year, he became protector and apostolic visitor of the Basilian Monasteries in southern Italy and Sicily. It was not until 1450, however, that he was entrusted with an important ecclesiastical mission on Italian soil, when Pope Nicholas V made B. his legate to Bologna, Romagna, and the March of Ancona. The objective of B.'s legation was to put an end to the ongoing unrest in Bologna and to reinforce the ties between that city and the Vatican. B. arrived in Bologna on 16 March 1450 and was to remain there for the next 5 years. During this time, he implemented a number of important regulations and reorganized the University of Bologna, establishing the chair of rhetoric. It was in Bologna that he finished his Latin translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Mioni 1960) and came to know Niccolò Perotti, who later became his secretary and close friend. It was also in Bologna that he received the sad news of the capture of Constantinople (1453) and the death of his teacher

Georgios Gemistos (Plethon). On 23 March 1455 B. was informed about the grave illness and the imminent death of Pope Nicholas V and departed immediately to Rome. He stood a fairly good chance of becoming the new pope. In fact, during the conclave he was supported by 8 cardinals out of 15, and during the night of 04 April 1455 the probability of his being elected seemed very high. On 08 April 1455, however, Alfonso De Borja was elected as Calixtus III. In the same year, B. departed for Naples, seeking to obtain the support of King Alfonso V for a crusade against the Turks. In the course of the following years, B. was appointed to a number of important ecclesiastical offices. In 1456 he was nominated archimandrite of the monastery of San Salvatore di Messina; in 1458 he was nominated Bishop of Pamplona (he renounced this title in 1462, in which year he became *perpetuus administrator sive commendatarius* of the monastery of Grottaferrata); in 1458 he also became protector of the Order of Friars Minor.

The year 1458 marked the beginning of B.'s polemics against Georgios Trapezuntios (cf. Monfasani 1976, 2008, 2012, 2013a). It was in this year that B. was informed about the pamphlet distributed by Georgios in which he attacked B.'s views on the role of deliberation in art and nature and about Georgios' publication of the *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis et de praestantia Aristotelis* (henceforth cited as *Comparatio*). In response to these publications, B. composed his two major philosophical treatises, *On Nature and Art* (*De Natura et Arte*, henceforth cited as *NA*) and *Against the Calumniator of Plato* (*In Calumniatorem Platonis*, henceforth cited as *ICP*), which were completed and published 10 years later in 1469 (cf. also Hankins 1991).

Following the death of Calixtus III on 14 August 1458 and the election of Enea Silvio Piccolomini as Pius II, B., who in the conclave of 1458 opposed his candidature mostly in consideration of his ill health, was able to quickly gain confidence of the new pope. Almost all of B.'s activity during this time was directed towards advancing the preparations for the crusade against the Turks. This political project had occupied B.'s

attention from the time of his participation in the Council of Ferrara/Florence, but had become even more important to him after the capture of Constantinople in 1453. In January 1460, at the end of the Council of Mantua, which had been convened by Pius II in 1459 and in which B. had taken an active part, he was appointed *legatus a latere* and entrusted with a difficult if not impossible diplomatic mission of communicating the decisions of the Council of Mantua in favor of war against the Turks to the German princes and gaining their support. His other objective was to mediate in the conflict between the Holy Roman emperor Frederick III and Matthias Corvinus over dynastic succession in Hungary. In spite of a number of important results that B. was in fact able to achieve in Germany, his mission as a whole is rightly considered a failure as he was not able to obtain the support of the German princes for the war against the Turks. After prolonged stops in Nuremberg in February 1460 and in Worms, B. proceeded to Vienna, which he reached on 04 May 1460 and where he remained until autumn of 1461, when he returned to Italy (he arrived in Bologna on 23 October 1461 and in Rome on 20 November 1461).

Next important diplomatic mission with which B. was entrusted was an embassy to Venice. He departed for Venice as a *legatus a latere* on 05 July 1463 and arrived there on 22 July 1463. After only a week of negotiation, the Republic of Venice declared its intent to break off diplomatic relations with the Turks; the crusade was proclaimed in the Piazza San Marco on 28 August 1463. B. firmly believed that the outbreak of war was imminent and worked fervently on the final preparations. The pope asked Cristoforo Moro, the doge of Venice, to place himself at the head of the fleet, and the doge confirmed his intent to lead the crusade. However, these preparations came to an abrupt end with the death of Pope Pius II on 14 and 15 August 1464. During the conclave of 1464, Pietro Balbo was elected as Pope Paul II on August 30. The newly elected pope declared that the “chapters” or binding agreements that determined the conduct of elected prelates were only advisory rather than obligatory, which antagonized some the cardinals and in

particular B., who had played an important role in drafting this document. For this reason and on account of his ill health, B. chose to reduce his political engagement and decided to dedicate more time to his studies (cf. Monfasani 2011). However, he did not retire completely from public life but continued to fulfill a number of important ecclesiastical functions. In 1468 he successfully interceded with Paul II on behalf of Platina who had been imprisoned together with other members of the Roman Academy (Palermينو 1980). After the death of Paul II on 26 July 1471, the humanistic circles of Rome favored the candidacy of B., and in the conclave of that year B. could count on a number of votes. However, Francesco della Rovere was elected as Sixtus IV. The newly elected pope continued the policy of his predecessors towards the Turks and decided to send five legates to a number of European rulers in order to negotiate a new alliance against the Turks. B. was nominated *legatus a latere* to France, Burgundy, and England. One of his main objectives was to negotiate between King Louis XI of France and the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany. B. was also supposed to obtain their support for a crusade against the Turks and to discuss several questions of importance to the Pope. B. was initially hesitant to accept this charge, but finally agreed, leaving Rome on 20 April 1472. On his way to France, he made frequent stops (in Urbino, Cesena, Bologna, Modena, Reggio Emilia, Parma) and reached Lyon on 20 June 1472. After a period of waiting, he was finally received by the king in Château Gontier on 23 and 24 August 1472, but his encounter with the king failed to bring the desired results. B. refused the king’s request to excommunicate the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany and was obliged by the king to return to Italy without meeting the dukes. B. died in Ravenna on 18 November 1472 on his way back from France. His corpse was transferred to Rome and a funeral service was held on 03 December 1472 in the Basilica of the Twelve Apostles in the presence of the pope. Niccolò Capranica gave a funeral oration in B.’s honor. B. was buried in the grave he had prepared for himself in advance, decorated with his emblem showing two hands upholding the cross.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In addition to a number of theological works (Rigo 1994, 2012), Bessarion composed two major philosophical works, *NA* and *ICP*, which appeared in print in Latin as one book in 1469. For a partial translation and summary of the content of the *ICP* cf. Del Soldato (2014). In the first book of the *ICP*, B. defends Plato against a specific charge which Georgios of Trebizond had formulated against him in his *Comparatio*, namely of being an ignorant person who was incapable of writing down the principles of any art. B. does not limit himself to an explanation of Plato's motives, but also praises his wisdom by demonstrating Plato's mastery of every art and science, from rhetoric to dialectic, from mathematics to physics, and, above all, theology. In particular, B. adopts a conciliatory strategy which had been characteristic of Simplicios: on the one hand, he praises Plato as theologian while, on the other hand, he describes Aristotle as an excellent physicist, who focuses on natural beings (*ICP* I, III.1; cf. e.g., Siml. *In Phys.*, 404.21–405.5).

In the second book of the *ICP*, B. states explicitly his own intentions (*ICP* II, I.1): since both Plato and Aristotle were far removed from Christian religion, he is certainly not going to demonstrate that Plato was a Christian, but to show instead that Platonic philosophy is in closer harmony with Christian doctrine than is Aristotelian philosophy, so that it is easier to corroborate the truth of Christian religion using Plato's writings rather than using those of Aristotle. Since Georgios of Trebizond, on the contrary, dares to present Aristotle as a Christian, B. intends to demonstrate that Aristotle had in fact never defended the theses characteristic of the Christian doctrine which Georgios attributes to him. B. aims to show that Georgios' conviction that Aristotle had defended Christian theses is simply due to a misunderstanding and to his ignorance of the principles of Aristotelian philosophy (*ICP* II, III.2). It is important for B. to stress that it is not his intention to offend Aristotle in any way, because he honors both Aristotle and Plato (*ICP* II, III.2); B. also declares that he is aware of the fact that some aspects of Platonic philosophy are

incompatible with Christian doctrine (*ICP* II, III.3) and cannot, therefore, be approved or shared by Christians. Nonetheless, Platonic philosophy exhibits a closer affinity with Christian doctrine than does Aristotelian, and B. intends to demonstrate this by confuting point by point each of Georgios' theses. In the *Comparatio* II 3,20, Georgios makes reference to a passage from *On the Heavens* I,1 in which Aristotle introduces the concept of the triad (*De cael.* I 1, 268 a 9–13), and he uses this passage to prove that Aristotle had arrived at the idea of the Trinity; he then contrasts Aristotle with Plato and maintains that Plato not only had never known or grasped the Trinity, but had even professed the most abominable polytheism. B. replies that the Aristotelian passage referred to by Georgios in no way has the meaning which George wishes to attribute to it; this is made evident by the interpretation of the same passage by such authorities as Thomas Aquinas (*ICP* II, V.1). In this way, B. succeeds in showing both Georgios' lack of skill as an interpreter of Aristotle's thought and Georgios' superficial knowledge of Scholastic authors. B. is convinced that neither Plato nor Aristotle had arrived at knowledge of the Trinity, since the human mind is unable to acquire by itself such knowledge. This knowledge is in fact acquirable only by faith and through divine instruction (*ICP* II, V. 3). And yet, B. makes reference to Plotinos' treatise *On the Three Primary Hypostases* and to those passages in the Platonic dialogues which had been used by Plotinos himself in this context in order to prove that his theory was the true doctrine of Plato (*ICP* II, V. 4–9; cf. Plot. *Enn.* V.1,8), and he shows that Plato and the Platonists – and not Aristotle, who never speaks about the Trinity (*ICP* II, V. 10) – had somehow arrived at an understanding of the Trinity, even though their comprehension of it was far removed from the teachings of the Christian religion (*ICP* II, V. 3). B. has no difficulties in dismissing Georgios' accusation of polytheism too: he points out that Aristotle also assumed a plurality of Gods, which becomes evident if one considers the Aristotelian doctrine of the 55 movers (*Arist. Metaph.* XII 8, 1073a37ff.). Thus, both Plato and Aristotle are guilty of an error that Georgios would like to ascribe to Plato

alone (*ICP* II, V.12–13), and both are extraneous to the Christian religion. In *Comparatio* II 10–11, Georgios maintains that while in Plato's view all beings come to be only through a process of production out of a preexistent matter, Aristotle arrives at the idea of creation out of nothing and in virtue of the sole will of God (*ICP* II, VI.1). B. replies that the opposite is true: Aristotle denies that something can come into being absolutely out of nothing (Arist. *Phys.* 191 a 30–31) and teaches that matter is eternal and nongenerated (Arist. *Phys.* 192 a 25ff.), whereas Plato is of the opinion that matter has been produced by God and is, therefore, "generated" in the sense of having a cause (*ICP* II, VI.5; II, VII). In order to demonstrate that for the Platonists matter does not constitute an independent principle or a cause which is equal to God and itself uncaused, B. relies on the Proklean doctrine according to which matter, as ultimate unlimitedness, proceeds both from the One and from the primary Unlimitedness, and cites almost *verbatim* passages from Proklos' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (cf. *ICP* II, VI.11, p. 120, 15–21 Mohler; cf. Prokl. *In Tim.* I 384, 30–385, 10). B. is aware that Plato himself declared in the *Timaeus* that "there are Being and Space and Becoming [...] even before the heavens were created" (Pl. *Tim.* 52d 2–3; *ICP* II, VI.7, p. 114, 12–13), which had led some to believe that for Plato matter is uncaused and precedes the generation of the universe. However, B. explains that this interpretation is erroneous. Taking up a well-known Proklean argument, he explains that it is only the account (*λόγος*) that divides things that have been set up together and introduces a succession where all is at once (cf. Prokl. *In Tim.* I 382, 30–32; II 101, 5–7; cf. *ICP* II, VI.7, p. 114, 17–19, where B. quotes *verbatim* Prokl. *In Tim.* II 101, 5–7). This means for B. that in Plato's view matter and cosmos are distinct merely conceptually (*epinoia*) and with respect to the account, but not in reality (*pragmati*) (*ICP* II, VI.7). It is true that matter constitutes a principle of things that come to be, but it is not the principle *simpliciter*. Moreover, for B., who takes up here the Neoplatonic distinction between the causes, properly so-called, and the by-causes (cf. Prokl. *El.Th.* prop. 75), matter is not

even conceived by Plato (and the Platonists) as a cause, but as a by-cause (*ICP* II, VI.16). In order to define its essence, B. basically reassumes Simplicios' doctrine (cf. *ICP* II, VI.16 e cf. Simpl. *In Phys.* 227, 23–231, 30).

Since Georgios also criticizes the Platonic doctrine of soul (*Comparatio* II, 12), B. felt the need to demonstrate that Plato had a "sublime" opinion on this issue. B. admits that some of Plato's opinions are unacceptable for a Christian (e.g., the idea of the preexistence of souls, cf. *ICP* II, VIII.16), but he points out that Plato's teaching is nonetheless in accord with Christian doctrine. Against Georgios who criticizes Plato's idea that souls transmigrate into the bodies of irrational animals, B. points out that Plato had spoken of the bodies of wild beasts only in order to instill fear into the common people and to keep them away from vice. Moreover, B. remarks that even if Plato had admitted this kind of transmigration, it should not be understood in the way Georgios understands it (*ICP* II, VIII.23). Georgios also contends that Plato had denied providence (*Comparatio*, II, 17). So B. lists all passages in which Plato speaks of divine providence, pointing out that especially in Book X of the *Laws* Plato accuses of impiety anyone who denies providence and presents a doctrine of providence that in many respects is quite similar to Christian teachings on the same subject (*ICP* II, IX.11). What is more, B. points out that it is Aristotle who seems to deny providence, since he conceives the divine intellect as thinking only of itself (Arist. *Metaph.* XII 9), which could lead to the conclusion that for Aristotle God is not concerned with human matters and, therefore, does not exercise providence over them, given that it is not possible to care about that which is unknown (*ICP* II, IX.2). B. also employs many arguments in order to confute the accusation that Georgios formulates in *Comparatio* II, 17, according to which Plato had supposedly stated that everything happens of necessity. In particular, B. refers to the theory of divine knowledge formulated by Proklos in the *Elements of Theology* (Prokl. *El.Th.*, prop. 124), in order to demonstrate not only that the Platonists had admitted divine providence and the divine knowledge that is connected to it, but also that they had even been

able to form such a concept of the divine knowledge that does not annihilate contingency (*ICP* II, X. 9–10).

In the third book, B. directs his attention to the same subjects that he had already addressed in the second book (such as the Trinity, matter, soul, providence, fate, and necessity) and supports his arguments with evidence taken from Christian and especially Scholastic sources, and he demonstrates how weak is Georgios' knowledge of both these sources and Aristotle. With regard to the Trinity, B. points out that the mystery of the Trinity was known neither to Plato nor to Aristotle even if some hints suggesting a vague inkling of the Trinity may be found more frequently in Plato than in Aristotle (*ICP* III, XV. 1). In reply to Georgios' assertion that Aristotle had fathomed the Trinity from vestiges of it found in the created world (*Comparatio* II 4, 17–20), B. stresses that all theologians (from Augustine to Aquinas, from Basil the Great to Gregory of Nazianzos) uphold the impossibility of knowing the Trinity by natural reason alone (*ICP* III, XV. 2). Additionally B. emphasizes that according to these theologians the created world allows one to obtain knowledge of the essential attributes of God, but neither of the personal properties nor of the essential attributes associated with persons (i.e., ascribed to the persons by appropriation), insofar as they are associated with them (*ICP* III, XV.4; cf. Thom. *S.Th.*, I, 32,1; *S.Th.* I, 39,7). This means that if Aristotle had had some knowledge of God through his knowledge of God's creatures, he could have known only the essential attributes of God (*ICP* III, XV.6). B. goes even further and makes an attempt to demonstrate that the idea of the Trinity itself does not accord with the principles of Aristotelian metaphysics (*ICP* III, XIX.3–5). Finding support in the testimonies of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas (*ICP* III, XX.11 e XX.14), B. even shows that the concept of the *creatio ex nihilo* is at variance with the principles of Aristotle's metaphysics and concludes that Georgios was able to find this concept in Aristotle only because he was not familiar with Aristotle or because he misinterpreted his thought. In the *Comparatio* II 16, 13–14, Georgios states that if God creates everything out of nothing, then the

soul too must have been created by God, and he remarks that according to Aristotle himself the soul comes into being together with the body because of God who creates it *ex nihilo* and infuses it into the body (that is, by virtue of God's creation out of nothing). In response, B. demonstrates that the idea of a *creatio ex nihilo* is entirely foreign to Aristotle as well as the idea that the soul comes into being together with the body in virtue of an act of divine *creatio ex nihilo* (*ICP* III, XXVII, 1–3).

In the fourth book of *ICP*, B. defends Plato against the accusation formulated by Georgios in the third part of the *Comparatio*, i.e., the charges of voluptuousness and depravity. Book V lists several errors which B. was able to identify in Georgios of Trebizond's Latin translation of Plato's *Laws* (cf. also Pagani 2011). In this "review," B. first cites the original passages from Plato's *Laws* that, in his view, had been translated incorrectly by Georgios, then provides observations on semantics, syntax, different readings of the manuscripts, and various possibilities for translating these passages into Latin, and finally suggests his own solution. In this way he lists from the *Laws* 76 problematic words, phrases or passages, 46 from the first book, and 30 from the second book. In some cases, B. includes longer comments or observations on Plato's text or attacks Georgios *ad personam*, for instance, by mentioning some details about Georgios' business or private life that serve to discredit him.

The sixth book of *ICP* was actually composed prior to books I–V (Marie 2013). It was written after Georgios had published the *Comparatio* but before B. had had the chance to read it. In 1458, Georgios of Trebizond had published a refutation of a letter which B. had written to Theodoros Gazes, who in turn had previously asked for B.'s opinion regarding some observations that Georgios Gemistos (Plethon) had made in his *De differentiis*. When B. heard of the letter written by Georgios of Trebizond in which he was attacked, he decided to compose a comprehensive reply. This must have been completed, or at least initiated, prior to B.'s participation in the Council of Mantua and his legation to Germany and was later added as the sixth and last book of the *ICP*.

Critical edition of the Greek and two Latin versions of this book (with German translation) is found in Mariev et al. (2015), an often unreliable Italian translation based on Mohler's text in Accendere and Privitera (2014). In Chapter I of *NA*, B. recapitulates the position of Theodoros Gazes, who defends the Aristotelian standpoint regarding the relationship between nature, finality, and deliberation, and maintains that neither art nor nature deliberates. Theodoros invites B. to offer a demonstration of the thesis which Georgios Gemistos (Plethon) had defended in his treatise *De differentiis*: in this work Plethon had criticized Aristotle's idea that nature produces its products for the sake of an end, even if it does not deliberate. In Chapter II, B. demonstrates that it is true that Aristotle attributes purposiveness to nature but denies that nature deliberates, whereas Plato and the Platonists believe that nature not only acts for the sake of an end but also deliberates. And yet, Aristotle and Plato (and the Platonists) are not in disagreement. If Plato and the Platonists ascribe deliberation to nature, they do not intend thereby to maintain that nature exercises its own proper reasoning. On the contrary, nature's deliberation is in fact the deliberation which is exercised by the intellect that governs nature and directs it towards an end. So nature is not the highest cause but only an instrumental cause. In this way, B. finds a solution that evinces an agreement between the Platonic and the Aristotelian philosophies and he also suggests an accord between Platonic philosophy and Christian theology. The concept of nature as instrumental cause is indeed Platonic (cf. Simpl. *In Phys.* 314. 9–14), but it perfectly accords with the Thomistic idea of nature as *instrumentum dei* (Thom., *S.Th.*, I–II, 1,2). B. refers to Thomas Aquinas not only in Chapter II, where he quotes Aquinas' text without mentioning his name, but also in many other passages of this treatise where he explicitly advocates the authority of "our theologians, especially the Latin ones" (*ICP* VI, VIII.4). The treatise *NA* contains the letter of Georgios of Trebizond addressed to Jesaiah of Cyprus (Chapter III) in which Georgios tries to demonstrate the various weaknesses of B.'s standpoint – it was this letter that had prompted the composition of the *NA* –

and harshly criticizes the central concept which B. had employed in order to prove that nature deliberates, namely the concept of nature as an instrumental cause, i.e., an instrument of the intellect. Georgios argues that if nature were an instrument, it would be separated from its products and not connected with them in an inseparable way and intrinsically conjoined with them as nature is supposed to be according to Aristotle. In Chapters IV–X of *NA*, B. replies to the accusations of Georgios and demonstrates Georgios' incompetence in Aristotle's metaphysics, corroborating his own interpretation of Aristotle by the reference to the exegesis of famous Aristotelians such as Alexander of Aphrodisias. In the third book of *ICP* (*ICP* III, XX.17), B. refers again to Georgios' criticism of the concept of nature as an instrument found in George's letter to Jesaiah (which forms part of *NA*), and he points out the surprising and even ironical fact that Georgios himself makes use of the very same concept in the *Comparatio* (II,10) in order to praise Aristotle, which constitutes for B. yet another proof of Georgios' incoherence and incompetence (cf. also Del Soldato 2008).

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Bessarion, John

► Bessarion, Cardinal

Bèze, Théodore de

Born: Vézelay, 24 June 1519

Died: Geneva, 13 October 1605

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Abstract

Theodore Beza (1519–1605) was a very important humanist belonging to the Reformation movement. As a close friend of Calvin, he strongly defended Calvinism and its organization. He was also the author of an important historical and literary work.

Biography

As a native from Burgundy, Theodore Beza received a strong education. He first studied Latin and Greek in Orléans with the humanist Melchior Wolmar and then completed legal studies in Bourges. After a long process, initiated after reading a treatise of Heinrich Bullinger, he converted to the Reformation in 1548 and fled to Geneva and then Lausanne, where he taught Greek in the academy. As a close friend of Calvin, he came back to Geneva in 1557, and, after the death of the reformer, in 1564, he took his succession as moderator of the Company of Pastors and leader of Calvinist world until his death in 1605.

Even if his greatest body of writing is dedicated to theology, we have to pay some attention to the political dimension of his thought. The main reflection of Beza in that domain concerns the right of resistance. Influenced by Calvin's thought, he brought his own stone to the building reformed conception of active disobedience in case of spiritual tyranny exercised by a prince on his subjects. In 1554 in a brief passage of his *De Hæreticis a civili magistratu puniendis*, he evoked, more clearly than Calvin did in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the duties of inferior magistrates who have the responsibility to resist when a prince decrees against the preservation of the "purity of religion." Nevertheless, his thought on this sensitive issue remained still ambiguous, since in the most part of his book, he continued to reaffirm the duty of obedience of the subject to his prince, regardless of his vices.

A few years later, in 1560, in his *Confession de la foy chrestienne*, he explained his position more accurately stating that it is the responsibility of middle powers to resist the tyrant. But his conception of resistance then remained strictly constitutionalist. He did not fail to insist on the absolute obligation "to individuals who are under the power of a tyrant" to stick to a passive disobedience. His reflection on that subject completed Calvin's one and played a major role in the Calvinist approach of the duty of obedience to authority.

After the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre, Beza radicalized his thought and took part to the Monarchomach movement. In his *De jure*

magistratum, first published in Latin in 1574 and then translated into French, he gave great importance of spiritual resistance against tyranny, stressing the duty of Christians to obey God in priority. He asserted the legitimacy of armed resistance to a prince who would be in violation of edicts of pacification (in the French context) allowing the practice of "true religion, since that prince would then use tyranny to which it is permitted to object." Even if the treatise was published anonymously, the authorship of Beza makes no doubt.

In addition to his theological and political activity, Beza also wrote some more literary texts: poetry, published in his *Poemata* (1548), the translation of *Psalms*, a biblical drama entitled *Abraham sacrificant* (1550), and *Passavantius* (1553), a satire directed against Pierre Lizet, former president of the parliament of Paris, which had been the source of the "Chambre Ardente." He finally compiled the *Histoire ecclésiastique des Eglises réformées de France* (1580).

As one of the most influent leaders of the Reformation, he was in touch, during his whole life, with all that the protestant international network had of prominent people: princes, their councilors, theologians, diplomats, and political writers. His very impressive correspondence is a good testimony of the importance and the intensity of his epistolary activity, which is itself a proof of its influence.

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- [Calvinism](#)
- [Duplessis-Mornay](#)
- [Luther, Martin](#)

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Bibachi

- [Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tov](#)

Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tob

- [Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tov](#)

Bibago, Abraham ben Yom Tob

- [Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tov](#)

Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tov

Born: Possibly in Huesca, uncertain date perhaps around 1420

Died: Saragossa, ~1489

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Abstract

Abraham Bibago was a Jewish Averroist, whose work treats the connection between Judaism and philosophy as well as Aristotelian logic, physics, and metaphysics. His numerous writings can essentially be divided into two groups: (1) philosophical and scientific works and (2) religious works. The first group consists of interpretations of Aristotle's works taking into account inter alia several of Averroes' commentaries. He also addressed current scholastic issues and in general strove to promote the Aristotelian approach. His religious writings, most prominently the *Derekh Emunah* ("Way of Faith"), strive to present a unified portrait of the world, which preserves a place for science and philosophy alongside Talmudic based religious life. In general, Bibago says in these works that philosophy and science can lead to human perfection, but so can faith. Often, he suggests that the perfection obtained through faith is superior to that attained through human intellect. These views, however, are not supported by the philosophical and scientific works, where Bibago presents Aristotelian philosophy as the *only* way to achieve human perfection. He even suggests in these works that the true purpose of Judaism is to allow the elite to study philosophy. Bibago's two contradictory views, which he gives in different kinds of works, mark him firmly as a Jewish Averroist.

Alternate Names

Bivagch, Bivach, Bichai, Vivachi; Bibachi; Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tob; Bibago, Abraham ben Yom Tob

Biography

Abraham Bibago lived, wrote, and taught in Aragon in the turbulent years that led to the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Bibago grew up in the aftermath of the widespread destruction of the Jewish communities of Castile and Aragon between 1391 and 1412. As an adult he witnessed the widespread unification of much of Iberia by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1479 and the subsequent establishment of the Inquisition in 1480. He lived through the expulsion of the Jews from Andalusia in 1483, but died about 3 years before the expulsion of Jews from all of Iberia in 1492. In addition to a classical Jewish education, involving study of Bible, Talmud, and a wide range of Jewish mystical, theological, and philosophical works, Bibago was well versed in the Greek works available to him (mostly Aristotle), Arabic works including Averroes, Avicenna and Al-Ghazzali, and Christian scholasticism. Bibago certainly read the scholastic works in Latin, but his study of the Greek and Arabic thinkers seems to have relied on Hebrew translations (it is not certain whether he knew Arabic; he probably did not know Greek). While in Huesca, he had some dealings with King John II of Aragon and seems to have been involved in a public discussion with a Christian scholar. It seems he left Huesca sometime in 1466–1470 under suspicion of heresy. Despite this, he seems to have led an academy at Saragossa by 1471 and to have been involved in communal life, delivering public sermons in the synagogue and working with Jews who had been forcibly converted to Christianity. He seems to have died before the 1489 trial against prominent Aragonian Jews who helped forced converts return to Judaism.

Works and Themes

The majority of Bibago's works are philosophical and scientific in character, and while they may make reference, usually in introductions, to Jewish religious texts, their primary content is not religious. Nevertheless, his writings are all in Hebrew for a presumably Jewish readership that was educated and interested in science and philosophy. His most important philosophical works are his Commentaries on Aristotle and Averroes: he wrote on the *Posterior Analytics*, on the *Physics* (now lost), on the *Metaphysics*, on the *De Anima* (which survives as marginal notes to Averroes' *Middle Commentary*), and on Averroes' medical compendium known as the *Colliget* (now lost). In those commentaries that are extant, we see Bibago make use of a vast number of scholars, Greek, Arabic, Jewish, and Christian, in addition to Aristotle and Averroes. Bibago generally presents these thinkers by name, but he does not always state when he is quoting Aristotle and Averroes. Indeed, he often substitutes Averroes' words for Aristotle's without indicating this and presents Averroes' words as though they were Bibago's own. This is most evident in certain sections of his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, where Bibago quotes from Averroes' *Middle Commentary* on the *Metaphysics* as if it were the text on which he comments and then presents text from Averroes' *Long Commentary* on the *Metaphysics* as if it is Bibago's own commentary. That is, Bibago sometimes uses Averroes' *Long Commentary* to explain Averroes' *Middle Commentary*. This confusion may be deliberate. In his introduction in rhymed-prose to the Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Bibago says that "necessity" brings him to speak in "the language of the author or according to his views" even when those views run counter to religion. As a result, Bibago notes, anywhere his commentary departs from religiously acceptable views may reflect the voice of Aristotle or Averroes. That is, Bibago's *Commentary* on the *Metaphysics*, like his other philosophical commentaries, presents philosophy as it is without apologetics and leaves to the readers the task of sorting what is

religiously acceptable from what is not, and of attributing the latter to Aristotle and Averroes, but not to Bibago. Yet, Bibago sees his commentaries as fulfilling a religious function. Especially in the *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Bibago describes philosophical speculation such as he undertakes in that work in religious terms as leading to salvation and redemption. That is, despite acknowledging philosophy's occasional differences with Judaism, he casts philosophy as the ultimate task of religious life and, in other sections, as true human happiness.

Nevertheless, Bibago's religious works depict faith as the ultimate purpose of human life, perhaps even above intellectual thought. In his most widely read work, *Derekh Emunah* ("Way of Faith"), Bibago attempts to fuse an essentially Aristotelian view of the world with one that he sees as acceptable to regular Jews of his time. *Derekh Emunah* approaches this fusion through an analysis of central theoretical and theological issues, such as God's providence, the role of human intellect and faith, and fundamental religious principles. Bibago's approach to these issues is most frequently to bring and then interpret numerous statements from the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, and even Jewish folk legends. The interpretations he gives are clearly philosophical and, indeed, quite obviously Aristotelian. That is, Bibago's interpretations of traditional texts are with a view to an outside, philosophical standard: Bibago makes religious texts conform to a view of philosophy, rather than vice versa. Moreover, *Derekh Emunah* adopts intellectual conjunction as the ultimate end of human life. Like Maimonides, Bibago identifies this conjunction with prophecy and prophetic activity and generally with human spiritual happiness. Yet, he recognizes that the traditional Jewish texts do not describe intellectual conjunction in sufficient detail and accordingly sends his readers to Aristotle's *De Anima* and *Metaphysics* as well as Averroes' *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction*. Most importantly, Bibago claims in *Derekh Emunah* that Faith can imitate intellectual thought and together with Revelation, which comes with conclusions of scientific notions, can create conjunction between humans and divine intellect,

even without full performance of the human intellect. That is, faith and revelation provide a substitute for intellect that can allow nonintellectual Jews to attain ultimate human happiness, viz. conjunction. Whereas in the philosophical works, the emphasis is on the *activity* of philosophy with somewhat open-ended conclusions, *Derekh Emunah* focuses on alleged conclusions of philosophy and utilizing them to form a pseudo-intellectual conjunction.

Impact and Legacy

Bibago's significance is in promoting an Aristotelian/Averroist view of the world after such a view had already been called into question by such important thinkers as Crescas and Albo. His community building efforts at Huesca and Saragossa were ultimately not fruitful, no doubt due to the expulsion of the communities in 1492. He had a more marked influence on other Jewish thinkers, particularly Isaac Arama and Isaac Abravanel. In particular, Abravanel's discussion of principles of faith in *Rosh Amana* is a response to part iii of *Derekh Emunah*, even though Abravanel does not mention Bibago by name there. Unlike Bibago, Abravanel does not include philosophical interpretations of traditional texts in his *Rosh Amana*, and it is possible he found those interpretations to be overly fanciful. Bibago is vehemently criticized by Jacob Ibn Habib in his *En Yakob* for his philosophical interpretations of the Talmud, which Ibn Habib states that even Bibago himself did not believe. The *En Yakob* strove to derive theological notions from the Talmud, rather than read philosophical ideas into it. We find mention of Bibago in a number of other important Jewish thinkers including Shelomo Alqabes, Jacob Luzzatto, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo, Judah Moscato, Moses Mat, and Samuel David Luzzatto.

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Bible, Editions, and Translations in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The invention of printing in the mid-fifteenth century greatly encouraged the dissemination and study of the bible in the original Hebrew and Greek, in ancient translations (most importantly the Latin Vulgate), and, from the 1520s onward, a bewildering variety of translations into the European vernaculars. Increased access to the bible encouraged philological improvement of the text and new ways of reading and interpreting it, with profound implications for philosophy and theology of all kinds.

The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

While the bible was a centrally important text in the Middle Ages, its direct readership was limited to those who could understand the languages in which it was recorded and transmitted. Throughout Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Renaissance, most Jews read or heard the Hebrew Bible either in its original language, in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible and most of the intertestamental books (the Septuagint), or in one of several early Aramaic translations (the “Targums”). In Late Antiquity, many Christian readers on the northern edge of the Mediterranean could understand Greek, which permitted them to read the *Septuagint* (which they called the Old Testament) and the Greek New Testament. In North Africa, knowledge of Greek was less widespread, and from the second and third centuries, parts of the Old and New Testaments were translated into Latin at different times and places. These early translations

are known collectively as the Old Latin (“Vetus Latina”). The Vetus Latina and the other early translations into various eastern languages provide valuable evidence of the state of the Hebrew and Greek texts in the early centuries of Christianity (Barrera 1998). Encouraged by Pope Damasus and others, the Christian scholar Jerome undertook to retranslate some books (notably the Gospels) into better Latin, and to revise other portions of the Vetus Latina. His Greek manuscripts were evidently similar, but not identical to Codex Sinaiticus (8) and Codex Vaticanus (B); his Hebrew ones presented something similar to the Masoretic text. The result, later dubbed the *Vulgate*, was not transmitted faithfully; some scribes reintroduced familiar features of the Vetus Latina or made small alterations to reflect doctrinal developments. Cassiodorus, Charlemagne, Theodulf of Orléans, Lanfranc, and others all attempted to restore Jerome’s text. The *Vulgate* was not prescribed as the official Latin translation of the Catholic Church until the Council of Trent (1546) but achieved de facto canonicity during the Middle Ages, especially in its textually deficient “Parisian text,” the *Textus Receptus* of late mediaeval theologians and philosophers. While most Christian readers in the western Middle Ages encountered the bible in the *Vulgate* translation, a few Christian scholars learned Hebrew or Greek in multilingual areas such as Spain or Southern Italy, or from immigrant native speakers, to deepen their knowledge of the Scriptures.

Innovations in Biblical Scholarship During the Age of Humanism

The advance of the Ottoman Empire during the first half of the fifteenth century encouraged attempts to overcome the entrenched animosity that had divided the eastern (Byzantine) and western (Latin) halves of the old Roman Empire. The presence of Greek delegates at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1445) stimulated interest in the Greek language and in the writings of the Greek Fathers. The Florentine humanist and statesman Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459), who served as papal secretary under Nicholas

V (1453–1455), learned Greek and Hebrew to engage with the bible in its original languages. He was struck by the ways in which the *Vulgate* differed from the Hebrew and Greek texts. He also pointed out that some of these differences have doctrinal implications; Moses, he noted, said nothing about original sin or the afterlife. Following explicit principles, he translated most of the New Testament from Greek into Latin. His intention to translate the Old Testament from Hebrew using the rabbinic commentaries was prevented by his death. The only part of this latter project to survive is the *Psalms*, which renders the Masoretic text in idiomatic Latin. He was attacked for his presumption to improve on the *Vulgate*. The Florentine chancellor Leonardo Bruni questioned the value of Hebrew studies. However, Manetti argued that his intention was to remove ambiguities in the *Vulgate* and to produce a sound translation, faithful to the original text. His knowledge of Hebrew was not always matched by a positive attitude toward Judaism. He argued that the ritual commandments enjoined on the Jews in the Hebrew Bible limit human freedom. He also believed that his work would help defend Christianity against Jewish accusations that its doctrines were founded on misunderstandings of the Hebrew text (den Haan 2016).

Lorenzo Valla (c. 1407–1457) undertook systematic philological work on the Vulgate New Testament. Valla learned Greek from the erudite manuscript dealer Giovanni Aurispa but regretted that he never learned Hebrew. Valla used philological criteria to question the purported origin and antiquity of important documents such as the Apostles’ Creed and the Donation of Constantine, a forgery purporting to grant the pope control over the western Roman empire. He also advocated a return to patristic theology in place of the intricate logic and metaphysics of scholasticism. Valla only escaped political trouble and even a heresy trial through the protection of powerful patrons, such as Ferdinand of Aragon and Pope Nicholas V. Valla intended to publish an edition of the *Vulgate* as Jerome left it, free of later textual corruptions. However, he subsequently became convinced that a new translation from the Greek, as faithful to the original as Latin idiom allowed,

would be preferable. This undertaking was only a partial rejection of the *Vulgate*, since it represented a fulfilment of Jerome's intention to reflect the "truth of the Greek text" (*Graeca veritas*) in Latin. However, Poggio Bracciolini and others criticized Valla for turning text-critical tools, useful when used to amend pagan authors, on the *Vulgate*. Valla replied that the *Vulgate* is merely a translation, not the original text. Moreover, he questioned the traditional assumption that Jerome was even responsible for translating the entire *Vulgate*; where Jerome cites the bible in Latin in his theological works, the reading sometimes differs from that in the *Vulgate*. Valla's translations of the bible employ a classicizing Latin style and contain some elements of commentary, in which he focused on the literal sense of the text, one of the four modes of reading (*quadriga*) codified as a tool for Scriptural exegesis by early Christian fathers such as John Cassian (c. 360–435). (Further on biblical hermeneutics in the Renaissance, see Hauser and Watson 2009; Greenslade 1963; Reventlow 2010; and Shuger 1998). Like many humanists, Valla preferred the older meanings of words, avoiding later ones as corruptions. He also emphasized the utility of rhetoric in theology. He was sensitive to the theological implications of the choice of words in the Greek text and the Latin translations, such as the translation of *logos* (as either *verbum* or *sermo*) when referring to Christ. Yet Valla's work was not perfect. He was hindered by his tendency to take classical Greek rather than Koine as his standard. His translations occasionally miss the point. Sometimes he added words to round out the sense. He compared readings from different manuscripts, but his selection of variants was unsystematic. Nevertheless, his approach placed biblical interpretation on a new foundation by insisting on the importance of philology (Bentley 1983).

The Latin Bible in the Age of Print

The development of printing affected biblical studies dramatically. The first complete book printed in Europe was an edition of the Latin

Vulgate. The two Latin Bibles printed by the partners Johann Gutenberg, Johann Fust, and Peter Schöffer in the 1450s, known as the 42-line bible and 36-line bible, respectively, were both set from different manuscripts of the Parisian text. Some copies were printed on vellum and illuminated, in imitation of manuscripts. Different copies show evidence of frequent in-press corrections. Fust and Schöffer printed an edition of the *Psalms*, Canticles, and other liturgical material in 1457. Further editions of the Latin Vulgate were soon printed at Mainz, Strasbourg, Rome, Basel, Nuremberg, Venice, and elsewhere. Editors and printers also responded in different ways to the need for help in interpreting the bible. In about 1480, the Strasbourg printer Adolf Rusch produced an edition of the *Vulgate* with the *Glossa ordinaria*, a mediaeval commentary drawn from the Fathers, partly interlinear, partly surrounding the biblical text. A *Vulgate* edition printed at Basel by Kessler in 1487 contains prefaces describing the early translations such as the *Septuagint* and laying out the principles of biblical interpretation.

Renaissance philologists tried to improve the text of the Latin Vulgate, either by showing where it differed from the originals or by using older and better manuscripts. The editor of a bible published in 1479, probably by the Basel printer Johann Amerbach, responded to the humanistic desire for textual accuracy by claiming to have corrected the text against the Hebrew and Greek originals. In 1522, the Nuremberg printer Friedrich Peypus produced a Vulgate Bible which contained notes on the Hebrew text in the margin. In 1527–1528, the Parisian scholarly printer Robert Estienne published a Latin Bible whose text was based on three early manuscripts, compared with the best printed editions. This edition, the first thorough attempt to improve the text of the *Vulgate*, was criticized by the theological faculty at Paris, partly because of its "heretical" paratexts. Nevertheless, Estienne reprinted the *Vulgate* in ever more carefully corrected folio editions in 1532, 1538–1540, and 1546, and in smaller-format editions derived from these. Other editions that pointed out the deficiencies of the *Vulgate* attracted similar official opprobrium. The edition of Johannes Benedictus (Paris, 1541), which contains marginal

notes pointing out where the *Vulgate* differs from the Hebrew and the Greek, was later placed on the Index. The annotated edition of Sanctes Pagninus' Latin version published by Michael Servetus (Lyon, 1542) suffered the same fate.

In 1546, the Council of Trent declared the *Vulgate* authentic, that is, both officially approved and faithful to the original languages. Accordingly, the Leuven theologian Johannes Henten produced an edition in 1547 which gives Estienne's text, modified according to further manuscript evidence, but excluding or editing prefatory and marginal material which betrayed Estienne's evangelical bent. Henten's edition appeared with the imprimatur of the conservative Leuven faculty. In 1574, a team of scholars at Leuven led by Franciscus Lucas Brugensis published an authorized revision of Henten's edition, which contained further textual material from the Antwerp Polyglot; the accompanying volume of notes appeared in 1580. Despite the declaration of the *Vulgate* as authentic, no edition was issued with full authorization of the Vatican until Pope Sixtus V (1585–1590) actively promoted the production of an authoritative text based on early manuscripts and printed editions. In cases where the choice between two variants was not clear, the editors chose readings supported by the Hebrew and Greek texts. The result, published at Rome in 1590, was quite close to Estienne's text. A preface declared this edition to represent the authentic text of the *Vulgate* and threatened to punish any who dared to alter its text. This "Sixtine edition" raised considerable resentment, and soon after his election in 1592, Clement VIII ordered the withdrawal of all copies, claiming that the printing was faulty. In fact the surviving copies of the Sixtine edition show evidence of careful in-house correction by pen or overpasting. Clement's actions were evidently motivated by animosity toward his predecessor. A new edition was prepared under Clement's auspices which differ from the Sixtine text in about 5,000 places, presenting a text closer to the Leuven editions. To circumvent the solemn bulls protecting the integrity of Sixtus' edition, Clement's edition was published in 1592 under Sixtus' name. Clement's name only appears on the title

page from 1604 onward. Yet even this 1592 edition contained some printing errors and editorial problems; the definitive text was presented in a 1593 quarto edition. This "Sixto-Clementine" edition remained the authoritative text of the Roman Catholic Church until 1907, when Pius X commissioned a group of Benedictines to edit Jerome's text even more accurately.

The *Vulgate* was not the only Latin translation of the bible available to sixteenth-century readers. In 1515, Felix Pratensis translated the *Psalms* literally from Hebrew into Latin. In 1526, the Basel printer Andreas Cratander published an anonymous Latin translation of the *Septuagint*. Between about 1493 and 1520, the Italian theologian Sanctes Pagninus (1466–1541) undertook the first complete translation of the bible from the Hebrew and Greek in modern times. Pagninus' translation appeared with papal privileges at Lyon in 1528, after some delays. In 1535, Sebastian Münster published a new Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible, which served as the basis for several vernacular versions. In 1551, Sebastian Castellio published his Latin translation of the complete bible from Hebrew and Greek, notable for its use of classical Latin vocabulary in preference to words familiar from the *Vulgate*. Castellio's work was attacked by Bèze and other Calvinists. In 1556–1557, Robert Estienne, who had moved his workshop to Geneva, published a Latin Bible containing the *Vulgate*, Pagninus' version of the Hebrew Bible, Claude Baduel's reworking of the Latin translation of the Apocrypha from the Complutensian edition, and a new annotated Latin translation of the New Testament by Théodore de Bèze, which would be reprinted many times in several revisions. In 1577–1579, the Frankfurt printer Wechel released a new Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible and Apocrypha by Immanuel Tremellius and Franciscus Junius (Further, see Gomez-Géraud 2008; and Gordon and Cameron, in Cameron 2016, 187–216).

The Hebrew Bible in the Age of Print

Jewish printers, mainly in Italy and Iberia, produced editions of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish

literature with Hebrew type from an early period. The first printed edition of any part of the bible in Hebrew was the text of the *Psalms* embedded in the commentary of Kimchi, published in 1477, probably at Bologna. The first printed Hebrew Pentateuch (Bologna, 1482) also contained the Targum attributed to Onkelos and the commentary of Rashi. This edition already contains vowel points and accents. Some copies were printed on vellum. Early editions of the Hebrew Pentateuch were also produced at Faro (1487), Hajar (1490) and Lisbon (1491). The first edition of the Prophetic Books was printed (without vowel points or accents) at the press of Joshua Solomon at Soncino in 1485. The Hagiographa (i.e., the books apart from the Law and Prophets) appeared at Naples in 1486–1487. The first complete printed Hebrew Bible, based on manuscripts of the Franco-German type, and including vowel points and accents, appeared at Soncino in 1488. An edition printed probably at Naples in 1491 gives the text of the complete Hebrew Bible based on Sephardic manuscripts. Some copies of this edition were printed on vellum. The text printed at Brescia (Pentateuch 1492, complete Hebrew Bible 1494) was influenced by the 1488 Soncino edition and utilized additional manuscripts of the same type. Some of its deficiencies were corrected from further manuscripts in the editions of Sebastian Münster (1535) and Robert Estienne (1539–1540, 1544–1546). The first rabbinic bible, containing the Hebrew text and several of the Targums, was edited by Felix Pratensis, working largely from the 1488 Soncino edition, and printed by Daniel Bomberg at Venice in 1517. The second rabbinic bible, edited by Jacob ben Hayyim (1524–1525), contained the Hebrew text, several Targums, and (for the first time) the Masora (mediaeval textual and exegetical notes). This edition long served as the *Textus Receptus* of the Masoretic text. Some Jewish printers set up presses in the Ottoman Empire. For example, in 1546, Eliezer ben Gershom Soncino, who ran a press at Istanbul, printed a Pentateuch in Hebrew, with the Targum of Onkelos, the Persian version of Jacob ben Joseph Tawus (printed in Hebrew letters), the Arabic translation of Sa'adya Gaon, and the commentary of Rashi. In 1547 Soncino

printed a Pentateuch in Hebrew along with translations into Aramaic, Castilian, and modern Greek (Further, see Mandelbrote, in Cameron 2016, 82–109).

Sixteenth-Century Developments: Reuchlin, Lefèvre d'Étaples, Erasmus

Humanistic study of the bible in the early sixteenth century, which included text-critical and interpretive aspects, was advanced by three important scholars: Johannes Reuchlin, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, and Desiderius Erasmus. The German Johannes Reuchlin, one of the first northern Christian scholars to embody the ideal of the *vir trilinguis*, skilled in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, began his studies in Hebrew and Greek as a student in Paris, and later deepened his knowledge through private lessons. After studying law at Orléans and Poitiers, he was appointed as a legal officer at the court of Württemberg. At Florence he met Pico and Ficino and became fascinated with the possibility that Cabala might reveal truths of Christianity. His importance for biblical philology lies particularly in his publication of a Hebrew grammar, based on those of Joseph and David Kimchi, but adapted to the arrangement of Priscian's late-antique Latin grammar. Although it sold quite poorly, Reuchlin's Hebrew grammar was used by several influential biblical scholars, such as Luther and Zwingli. Reuchlin also published a work on the accents and orthography of Hebrew and an edition of the seven penitential *Psalms* with Latin translation. Another short Hebrew grammar by Wolfgang Capito appeared in Conrad Pellikan's 1516 edition of the Hebrew Psalter (Dall'Asta 2020).

The French humanist Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples was deeply influenced by recent Italian thinkers, notably Ficino, Pico, and Ermolao Barbaro. Like Valla, he espoused a return to patristic theology. He was also influenced by mysticism and edited works by Nicolaus Cusanus, Ficino's Latin translations of the *Hermetica* and Traversari's translation of pseudo-Dionysius. Lefèvre worked closely with the reformer Guillaume Briçonnet, bishop of Meaux, but they were prevented from carrying out their reforming

program by accusations that they espoused evangelical beliefs. Lefèvre promoted biblical philology in his editions of the *Psalms* and commentaries on Paul. In 1509 Lefèvre published his *Quincuplex Psalterium* (*Fivefold Psalter*), which juxtaposed five different Latin translations of the *Psalms*. In the first section, he gives the Gallican Psalter, the Roman Psalter, and the “Hebraic” version – that is, Jerome’s revision of the Roman Psalter according to the Hebrew text – in parallel columns. He then gives a paraphrase (*expositio continua*), notes on the differences between the three versions, and (for Pss 1–25) a commentary providing Scripture parallels. In the second section, he gives the “Old psalter” (*Psalterium Vetus*), an Old Latin text evidently extracted from Augustine’s *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, similar to that recorded in Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare Cod. I (1), and a “reconciled psalter” (*Psalterium conciliatum*), Lefèvre’s own version. Lefèvre adopts Cusanus’ strongly Christological manner of reading the *Psalms*, which understood them as announcing the salvation of humanity through Christ. Lefèvre distinguished two kinds of literal sense: he describes one as the dead, rabbinic manner of reading, according to which the *Psalms* refer to David; and characterizes the other as the living, prophetic reading, which recognizes that the *Psalms* refer consistently to Christ. Lefèvre believed that a persistently Christological reading of Scripture revealed its internal consistency. Apparently reflecting ideas from the *Devotio Moderna*, Lefèvre emphasized that meditative reading of Scripture conforms us to Christ. Lefèvre’s edition of Paul’s letters with commentary (1512) included the canonical letters as well as the spurious Epistle to the Laodiceans and the pseudonymous correspondence between Paul and Seneca. Again Lefèvre submits these letters to a Christological manner of reading, arguing that they transmit the teaching not of Paul, but of Christ himself. In parallel columns he gives the *Vulgate* and his own Latin translation from the Greek. His extensive commentary details many places where the *Vulgate* does not adequately reflect the Greek. In 1521, Lefèvre completed a commentary on the Gospels (*Commentarii initiatorii in quatuor*

evangelia). The body text is the *Vulgate*. At the end of each chapter, Lefèvre supplies short notes providing the corresponding words in Greek and possible Latin synonymns preferable to Jerome’s rendering. In his commentary he espouses identifiably Roman Catholic doctrines, such as Purgatory and the Immaculate Conception, as well as others that suggested evangelical sympathies, such as his insistence that the Word is entirely sufficient for eternal life. He emphasized that knowledge of Hebrew and Greek was a necessary precondition for interpreting the bible. Furthermore, he hoped that his commentaries would lead his readers to true repentance, that is, a change of heart, to the exercise of good works, a pious life and spiritual ascent. In 1523, Lefèvre published his French translation of the Gospels, based on the *Vulgate*; a translation from the Greek was potentially too controversial. This was not the first French translation, but it was the first to achieve a broad readership. In 1527, he published a commentary on the Catholic Epistles, containing the *Vulgate* text corrected against the Greek. Lefèvre’s attempts to promote piety through knowledge of the Scriptures attracted considerable hostility from conservative theologians, principally those from the Sorbonne, who suspected his motivations and orthodoxy (Schönauf 2020).

Desiderius Erasmus, the greatest biblical philologist of the early sixteenth century, studied theology at the University of Paris, an institution he disliked intensely, but developed into a humanist scholar through his own efforts. Like many humanists, he preferred a rhetorical, ethical philosophy to the scholasticism that still dominated Renaissance universities. He learned Greek in England. In Leuven, he discovered Valla’s *Collationes* on the New Testament, which he published in 1505. Resolving to continue Valla’s mission of constructing a reliable text of the New Testament, Erasmus collated Greek and Latin manuscripts in Italy, England, and Switzerland, with the aim of using the variants to edit a revision of the *Vulgate* text of the New Testament. He undertook this revision in stages between about 1512 and 1516, changing some parts quite extensively and leaving others relatively untouched. Finally, he wrote a detailed commentary on his version of the New Testament, in which

he referred constantly to places where the *Vulgate* varied from the Greek manuscripts and from the Scriptural citations in the early Greek and Latin Fathers.

Erasmus was not the only person carrying out philological work on the New Testament. As he worked, he encountered Lefèvre's work on Paul. At Alcalà (Latin *Complutum*) in Spain, another editorial team was engaged in editing the entire bible. While the first volume of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible, containing the New Testament, was printed in 1514, the editors planned to wait until all six volumes were complete before publishing the edition as a single work. In the meantime, Froben began printing Erasmus' *Annotations* in late 1515. The other volume of the work, containing Erasmus' revision of the *Vulgate* and a parallel Greek text based on a few manuscripts available to him at Basel, was finished by March 1516. Due to the haste with which Erasmus' edition was put together, the text was quite faulty, and far inferior to that of the Complutensian edition. In the influential introductory materials, Erasmus outlined a pious "philosophy of Christ," a humane morality based on an intimate knowledge of the bible, which he wished to place in the hands of even the simplest readers. Erasmus continued to refine the text and commentary and published new editions in 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535. His Latin version also appeared in several diglot editions, alongside Luther's German version (1535, 1556), Olivétan's French (1552), Brucioli's Italian (1558), and Tyndale's English (1538, 1548–1549, 1549, 1550). Between 1518 and 1524, Erasmus also produced paraphrases of the New Testament (excluding Revelation), which combined translation and devotional reflection. Erasmus' criticisms of the *Vulgate* and of aspects of ecclesiastical doctrine drew him into numerous bitter struggles (De Jonge 1988; Krans 2006; McDonald 2016; Wallraff et al. 2016).

Philologically Significant Printed Editions of the Bible

The privileges granted to Erasmus' edition probably contributed to the delayed publication of the

Complutensian Polyglot Bible. When it finally appeared in 1520, this edition gave scholars access to several versions in parallel columns, some for the first time. The Old Testament volumes contained the Hebrew text, the *Septuagint*, the Aramaic (only in the Pentateuch, but with Latin translation) and "primitive" versions of the Hebrew and Aramaic, while the New Testament volume contained the Greek and *Vulgate*; an additional volume contained grammars and lexica to assist the reader. The *Vulgate* was corrected against early Latin manuscripts and the Greek text. Although the vowel pointing of the Hebrew text is inadequate, the consonantal text is very accurate. As an interlinear translation of the *Septuagint* Psalter, the editors provided Jerome's "Roman" version. Despite his disputes with Stunica, one of the editors from Alcalá, Erasmus seems to have consulted the Complutensian edition when preparing his 1522 edition of his Latin-Greek diglot New Testament, if not then certainly for his 1527 edition.

In summary: the first Greek New Testament *printed* belonged to the Complutensian Polyglot Bible (1514); the first Greek New Testament *published* was Erasmus' Latin-Greek diglot (1516), discussed above. These were preceded by isolated editions of the Greek Psalter in the fifteenth century: a Greek-Latin Psalter (Milan, 1481) and Greek liturgical psalters (Venice, 1486 and c. 1498). (For these and the other printed editions discussed here, see the descriptions in Darlow and Moule 1903–1911.) The first complete printed Greek Bible was published by Andrea Asolano, father-in-law of Aldus Manutius and heir of his workshop, in 1518. The text of the *Septuagint* is based on manuscripts from Bessarion's library. The New Testament generally follows Erasmus' 1516 edition, with some readings from elsewhere. The first attempt at a critical Greek text was issued (and perhaps edited) by the Parisian printer Simon de Colines (1534); this edition was based on Erasmus' 1522 text, drawing further readings from the Complutensian edition and from manuscripts. Its text contains numerous good, pre-Byzantine readings, but a number of these may have been chosen to make the Greek text agree with the *Vulgate*. Despite its qualities,

this edition seems to have found little following. In 1546 appeared the first Greek edition of Robert Estienne, based on Erasmus' 1535 edition, the Complutensian edition, and a collation of 15 manuscripts carried out by the printer's son Henri. Estienne's editions are distinguished by the beautiful fonts, commissioned by François I from Claude Garamond. Estienne's third edition (1550), the "royal edition" (*editio regia*, 1550), which presented the variants collated by Henri Estienne in a critical apparatus, proved highly influential. A successful innovation in Estienne's Greek-Latin edition of 1551 was the introduction of the present verse divisions. From 1565, Théodore de Bèze, Calvin's successor at Geneva, published a series of influential editions of the Greek New Testament, which included changes based largely on the collations made by Henri Estienne. However, Bèze's claims about the number of manuscripts he had consulted were inflated, and his use of variants was unsystematic. The Elzevier printing firm in Leiden published an edition in 1633 which Daniel Heinsius, author of its preface, dubbed as the "standard text" (*Textus Receptus*). This edition, based principally on Bèze's text, assumed a canonical status which later critical editors such as Mill (1707) and Griesbach (1775–1777) found difficult to displace, even when it became clear that the Byzantine text it presented was neither the oldest nor the best text form recoverable (De Jonge 1971).

The *Septuagint* attracted less attention from late sixteenth-century textual critics, but a team of scholars under the patronage of Sixtus V produced a canonical edition in 1586–1587, based on previous editions, *Codex Vaticanus* and other manuscripts. An accompanying Latin translation appeared in 1588, consisting of fragments of the *Vetus Latina*, filled in where necessary by the editorial team, led by Flaminio Nobilius.

The increasing expertise of Western Christian scholars in oriental languages led to the production of several Polyglot Bibles in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (see Hamilton, in Cameron 2016, 138–156.) Three polyglot psalters appeared in rapid succession at about the same time as the Complutensian edition: one in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Aramaic (the Targum), edited

by Agostino Giustiniani, assisted by Jacobus Furnius and Baptista Cigala (Genoa, 1516); another in Hebrew, Greek, Ge'ez (Ancient Ethiopic), and Latin, edited by Johann Potken, assisted by Johann Soter (Cologne, 1518); and one in Hebrew and Greek, with Latin translations of each (Basel, 1518). The next major fruit of the "oriental turn" among Christian scholars was the Antwerp Polyglot Bible, edited under the direction of Arias Montano and printed in eight volumes by Christophe Plantin (1569–1572). Besides the Latin Vulgate, this edition contains the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Syriac, with Latin translations of each. The Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts were based on the Complutensian edition, improved through collation with later editions and manuscripts. The Syriac was based on Widmanstetter's 1555 edition, improved with manuscript readings. This edition served as the basis of many partial reprints. A Hexaglot Bible, edited by Elias Hutter and printed at Nuremberg in 1599, was completed only to Ruth. Hutter's curious edition of the New Testament in 12 languages (1599–1600) included his own Hebrew translation; regrettably, he altered the Greek text for doctrinal reasons and inserted entire books into the Syriac which were not original parts of that tradition. The next great Polyglot Bible, a revision of the Antwerp edition, appeared at Paris between 1629 and 1645. The editorial team included two Maronites, who established the Syriac and Arabic texts. The Paris Polyglot Bible also contained the Samaritan Pentateuch and Samaritan Targum for the first time, with Latin translation. The great Polyglot Bible printed at London in 1655–1657, under the editor Brian Walton, was distinguished by its accuracy and the addition of the Ethiopic and Persian texts.

Early Translations of the Bible in Print

Several early translations of the bible were printed during the Renaissance. Parts of the Slavonic Bible, translated piecemeal from the ninth century onward, already appeared in print in the fifteenth century. A Psalter in a composite recension of the Bulgarian and Russian types was printed at

Cracow in 1491. The Serbian recension of the psalter was printed at Cetinje in 1495. The Slavonic Gospels were first printed at Tirgovişte in 1512. A Slavonic Apostolos (a volume containing Acts and Epistles) was printed at Moscow in 1563–1564, the first book printed in Russia. An edition of the *New Testament and Psalms* was printed at Ostrog in 1580. For the first complete Slavonic Bible, printed at Ostrog in 1580–1581, the text was checked against the Greek and Latin. An edition of the *Psalms* and *Song of Solomon* in Ethiopic was printed at Rome in 1513; a complete Ethiopic New Testament was printed at Rome in 1548–1549. The Arabic Psalms were included in the 1516 Genoa Psalter; an Arabic translation of Galatians appeared at Heidelberg in 1583 and the Gospels (from ms Vat. Copt. 9) at Rome in 1590–1591. The first edition of the Syriac Peshitta of the New Testament, translated in the fifth century, was edited by Johann Albert Widmanstetter and Moses of Mardin and printed at Vienna in 1555 from specially cut types. Widmanstetter also published a short Syriac grammar (1555–1556) to allow readers access to the text. Immanuel Tremellius, a convert from Judaism to Christianity, appointed as professor of Hebrew at Heidelberg, published a second edition of the Syriac Peshitta New Testament at Geneva in 1569, printed with Hebrew types. This edition also contains the *Vulgate* and a Latin translation of the Syriac, as well as a grammar of Aramaic and Syriac. For the Antwerp Polyglot, Guy Lefèvre de la Boderie revised Widmannstetter's edition, using a further manuscript from Damascus. Two independent editions of the Syriac psalter were published in 1625, at Leiden and Paris. The four shorter Catholic Epistles (2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude), omitted from the Peshitta, are included in another Syriac translation, the Philoxenian text, edited in 508; these letters were first edited from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library in 1630. Two manuscripts (a Gospel manuscript and an Apostolos) containing the revision of the Syriac New Testament undertaken by Thomas of Harkel in 616 were sent from Diyarbakır to England in 1730. The text of the Gospels from one of these manuscripts was edited by Joseph White and printed at Oxford in 1778. The bible was translated into Armenian in the fourth or

fifth centuries; the *Psalms* were printed at Rome in 1565, the entire bible at Amsterdam in 1666. A Coptic Psalter was printed at Leiden in 1663; the first complete printed *Coptic New Testament* appeared at Oxford in 1716. A Persian translation of the Gospels in Arabic characters, edited from three manuscripts by Abraham Wheelocke, was printed at London along with Wheelocke's Latin translation, in 1652–1657. Ulfila's Gothic Gospels were first printed in 1665. An edition of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels from Bodleian ms 441 was printed in 1571.

Vernacular Translations in Print

Many translations of the Latin Vulgate into various European vernacular languages were made during the Middle Ages, and some of these appeared in print already in the fifteenth century. Translations from Hebrew and Greek only began in the sixteenth century. Following the publication of Erasmus' New Testament in 1516 and the Complutensian Polyglot Bible in 1520, a flurry of translation into various vernacular languages began in the 1520s. Many were motivated by the theological emphases of one or other party in the Reformation, though ostensibly Catholic or Evangelical translations often show the influence of versions published by their opponents.

An interesting confluence of different textual traditions may be seen in the translations into Ruthenian (Belarusian) by the physician and printer Franciscus Skaryna (c. 1486–before 1541), who worked from the Latin Vulgate, with reference to the Slavonic. It seems that Skaryna intended to translate the entire bible. The surviving parts were printed as individual books, in Cyrillic characters, at Prague (1517–1519) and Vilnius (1525) (Sadoŭski 1970).

Several German Bibles and Psalters based on the Latin Vulgate were printed before the Reformation. Luther began translating the New Testament into German from the second edition of Erasmus' Latin-Greek diglot (1519) in late 1520 and continued the task while in enforced exile on the Wartburg. The translation, finished on 21 September 1522, was an instant success. The

Wittenberg printer Melchior Lotter the Younger had already produced two editions by the end of 1522. Printers in Basel, Strasbourg, and Augsburg soon reprinted the work, adapting Luther's language to local dialect conditions. Luther's German Old Testament, translated from the 1494 Brescia edition, with reference to the *Vulgate*, *Septuagint*, and the Latin versions of Pagninus and Münster, was printed in several instalments between 1523 (*Genesis to Song of Solomon*) and 1532 (Prophets); the first complete edition, carefully revised, was printed at Wittenberg in 1534. Jacob Beringer and Hieronymus Emser made superficial revisions of Luther's New Testament for Roman Catholic readers, which appeared in 1526 and 1527. A German translation of the Prophets from the Hebrew by the Anabaptists Ludwig Hätzer and Hans Denck appeared in 1527, thus predating Luther by 5 years. The printer Froschauer published the first "Zurich Bible" in 1527–1529. It contained the books Luther had already published to that point (*Genesis to Song of Solomon*; New Testament), adapted to the Swiss dialect, alongside the Prophets translated by the ministers of Zurich and the Apocrypha by Leo Jud. Variant reprints of this edition appeared soon at Worms, Augsburg, Strasbourg, and Frankfurt. Once Luther's Old Testament was complete, a Low German version was prepared by Johann Bugenhagen and printed at Lübeck in 1533–1534. Luther revised his translation in 1539–1540 in consultation with his colleagues Melancthon, Bugenhagen, Jonas, Cruciger, and Aurogallus; this revision was printed at Wittenberg in 1541. Luther's definitive text was printed in 1545. Luther's version became a foundation for the modern German language. In time, editions printed even far from Saxony included ever fewer dialectal changes, as his linguistic usage became normative. The triumph of Luther's High German version in time reduced Low German to the level of a dialect.

In 1522, Jan Pelt published his Dutch translation of the Gospel of Matthew from the *Vulgate*, corrected according to the Greek. A Dutch version of the New Testament printed at Antwerp by Hans van Roermonde in 1525 was based on two earlier Dutch versions of portions of the New Testament.

In 1523–1526, several editions of the Dutch New Testament based on Luther's German translation appeared, most at Antwerp. The Delft printer Cornelis Lettersnijder published the first Dutch New Testament claiming to be based on Erasmus' Greek and Latin text in 1524. A Dutch Old Testament, in which the Pentateuch and *Psalms* are based on Luther and the rest on the *Vulgate*, appeared in 1525. The first Dutch Psalter based on the Hebrew appeared in 1526, printed at Antwerp by Merten de Keyser (the Basel impressum is false). Further versions appeared in 1531 and 1534 (the latter by Jan Campensis). In 1526, the Antwerp printer Jacob van Liesvelt published a Dutch Bible based on those books which Luther had already published in translation; for the rest, earlier Dutch versions and Oecolampadius' Latin translation of Isaiah (1525) were used. In Liesvelt's later editions, Dutch versions of Luther's translations progressively replaced the older material. In 1528, Willem Vorsteman printed an adaptation of Liesvelt's edition, containing some revisions more palatable to Roman Catholic readers, and with marginal comments providing alternative translations from the original languages as presented in the Complutensian Polyglot Bible. The appeal to the impeccably orthodox Spanish edition concealed the evangelical origins of some of the material in Vorsteman's bible. Many of these Dutch editions contained paratexts intended to guide lay readers; those whose contents seemed suspiciously evangelical often attracted the attention of the Inquisition. In 1618–1619, a new translation of the complete bible from Hebrew and Greek was planned at the Calvinist Synod of Dort. This canonical translation finally appeared, authorized by the States General, in 1636–1637.

Lefèvre's French translation of the Gospels, a revision of an earlier version made with reference to the *Vulgate*, appeared in 1523. His translation of the complete bible was printed at Antwerp in 1530, with imperial privilege, and reprinted in 1534. The French Protestant Pierre Robert Olivétan thoroughly revised Lefèvre's bible according to the Hebrew and Greek, with reference to Sanctes Pagninus' Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible and Erasmus' Latin New

Testament. Calvin supplied a preface to Olivétan's edition, which was first published at Serrières (Neuchâtel) in 1535. A revision appeared at Geneva in 1540. Etienne Dolet's psalter, translated from Latin into French, appeared in 1542. A further revision of Lefèvre's bible made by members of the theological faculty of Leuven was published in 1550. A French translation of the complete bible from the Hebrew and Greek by the heterodox Calvinist Sebastian Castellio, printed at Basel in 1555, was censured by Geneva but later appreciated for its idiomatic qualities. René Benoist published a revision of a 1561 Geneva Bible for Roman Catholic readers in 1566. A revision of the complete bible made by the Genevan professors and pastors Bertram, Bèze, La Faye, Jacquemot, Goulart, and Rotan was printed in 1588 and was long regarded as definitive (Chambers 1983). A translation of the New Testament into Vaudois dialect revised according to Erasmus' Greek in the second quarter of the sixteenth century survives in manuscript (Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, ms. C 169 [706]), and was only published in 1890.

The first Danish New Testament (1524) was translated from Erasmus' Latin version and Luther's 1522 German translation. The first Danish New Testament based on the Greek, translated by Christiern Pedersen, appeared in 1529. The first Danish Psalter based on the Hebrew text, translated by Frants Wormordsen, was printed in 1528. The first complete Danish Bible, based on Luther's German version, appeared in 1550.

An English translation of the complete *Vulgate* Bible was made under the leadership of the Oxford reformer John Wycliffe in the 1380s and 1390s and circulated in manuscript until the sixteenth century, despite official attempts at suppression due to its association with radical Lollardy. The earliest English translation of the New Testament translated from Greek – with reference to Erasmus' Latin and Luther's German versions – was done by William Tyndale. Printing of the first edition was begun at Cologne in 1525 but was interrupted before it was finished. The first edition completed was printed at Worms by Peter Schöffer the Younger in 1526. Tyndale's translation of the Pentateuch from Hebrew – again made with reference to the

Vulgate and Luther's version – was printed at Marburg in 1530. His translation of Jonah appeared at Antwerp, probably in 1531. He published corrected editions of his New Testament at Antwerp in 1534 and 1535, before being assassinated near Brussels. The first English translation of the complete bible, made by Miles Coverdale principally on the basis of the Latin version of Pagninus and the German translation by Zwingli and Leo Jud (Zurich, 1524–1529), was printed in 1535 (place of printing uncertain). By 1537, Henry VIII had changed his policy toward English translation of the bible and granted James Nicholson permission to print bibles at Southwark. "Thomas Matthew" (perhaps a pseudonym for John Rogers) made a redaction of the whole bible combining the work of Tyndale, Coverdale, and Olivétan, which was printed (probably at Antwerp) for the London printer-publishers Grafton and Whitchurch in 1537, with a royal license obtained by Cromwell. Matthew's bible was in turn revised by Richard Taverner, a competent Hellenist in Cromwell's employment (London, 1539). Under Cromwell's patronage, Coverdale also revised Matthew's edition, using Sebastian Münster's Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible, the *Vulgate*, Erasmus' Latin version, and the Complutensian Polyglot Bible. By the time this "Great Bible" appeared, Cromwell had already instructed the clergy to set up a copy in each church for consultation by the laity. To meet demand, this edition was reprinted several times. The psalter for the Book of Common Prayer was taken from this edition. In 1547, Edward VI decreed that copies of an English translation of Erasmus' *Paraphrases of the New Testament* should also be freely available for consultation in churches around England, and an edition duly appeared in 1549. During the reign of Mary Tudor, several Protestant theologians left England for the Continent. One of those who settled at Geneva, William Whittingham, revised Tyndale's New Testament using the Great Bible and the 1556 Latin version of Théodore de Bèze. Whittingham's edition was published at Geneva in 1557. Whittingham revised his New Testament further and worked together with Anthony Gilby, Thomas Sampson, and others on a new complete bible, printed at Geneva by Roland Hall in 1560. The

Geneva Bible was the first complete English bible printed in Roman type and the first to contain the verse divisions first introduced in Estienne's 1551 Greek edition. (These typographical features had already appeared in Whittingham's 1557 New Testament.) This *Geneva Bible* was reprinted more than 140 times until 1644 and was particularly popular with Calvinists and Puritans, who appreciated its anticlerical marginal commentary, its resolutely Protestant translation choices and the inclusion of Calvinist catechisms in many editions; further distinctively Calvinistic annotations by Laurence Tomson were added in 1587 (Metzger 1960). Archbishop Matthew Parker, assisted by a committee of bishops, wished to supplant the *Geneva Bible* with a revision of the Great Bible, made according to the Hebrew and Greek. Despite official promotion, the resulting *Bishop's Bible* (1568) failed to achieve its purpose. Roman Catholic readers, no doubt offended by the violently anti-papal annotations in the *Geneva Bible*, preferred Gregory Martin's English translation of the New Testament, made primarily from the "authentic" *Vulgate*, with an eye to the Greek (Reims, 1582). A Catholic translation of the Old Testament, a complement to Martin's New Testament, corrected against the *Sixto-Clementine Vulgate*, was first printed at Douai in 1610–1611. A plan to revise the Bishops' Bible, proposed by the Puritan John Reynolds in 1604, was supported keenly by King James I (VI), who disliked the revolutionary tone of the *Geneva Bible*. The preliminary work, carried out by 3 teams of about 50 translators over 4 years under the direction of Lancelot Andrewes and the Hebraists Edward Lively and John Harding, was submitted to mutual examination and a final revision by a committee of 6 members over 9 months. This *Authorised Version*, published in 1611, was made primarily from the Hebrew and Greek (in a text close to the 1598 edition of Bèze), with reference to the versions of Tyndale, Matthew, and Coverdale, the Great Bible and the *Geneva Bible*, while the 1582 Rheims New Testament played an unacknowledged role in the drafting process (Greenslade 1963, 141–174; Herbert 1968).

The first Swedish translation of the New Testament (Stockholm, 1526), attributed to Olaus

Petri (c. 1493–1552), was based on Luther's German and the 1522 edition of Erasmus' Latin-Greek diglot. It was immediately condemned by Roman Catholics. A Swedish Psalter, likewise based on Luther, was printed at Stockholm in 1536. The first complete Swedish Bible, ascribed to Laurentius Petri, based on Luther and the *Vulgate* in the Old Testament, and Luther and Erasmus in the New, was printed at Uppsala in 1540–1541. A revision commissioned by Gustavus Adolphus was printed at Stockholm in 1617–1618 and served as the basis for many reprints.

The entire bible was translated from the *Vulgate* into a standardized dialect of Italian, based on Tuscan with some Venetian features, in the thirteenth century. The Camaldolese monk Niccolò Malermi (c. 1422–1481) retranslated or reworked some of this older material; his version was first printed at Venice in 1471 and was reissued several times over the following century. A new Italian translation of the entire bible by Antonio Brucioli (c. 1498–1566) was printed at Venice between 1530 (New Testament) and 1532 (complete bible, including Old Testament Apocrypha). Although the title page of the 1532 bible claims that Brucioli translated from the Hebrew and Greek, it seems that he leaned heavily on the Latin translations by Pagninus and Erasmus. For Brucioli's denunciation of the church's policy of discouraging vernacular translations of the bible, his version was placed on the Index in 1559. A "new" translation by Santi Marmochino (1538) was simply a reworking of Brucioli's version, made to conform more closely to the *Vulgate*; another revision of Brucioli, by Giovanni Luigi Pascale, was published in 1555. Massimo Teofilo undertook a new Italian translation of the New Testament from Greek, published at Lyon in 1551 and 1556 with a translation of Calvin's preface to Olivétan's French version (1535).

Polish translations of individual books (*Ecclesiastes*, *Psalms*, *Tobit*) were printed at Cracow from 1522 onward. The first complete Polish New Testament, translated from the Greek (with reference to the *Vulgate* and other versions) by Jan Sieklucki, was printed at Königsberg (Kaliningrad) in 1552–1553. A Polish translation made from the

Vulgate for Catholic readers was printed at Cracow in 1556. The first complete Polish Bible was edited by Jan Lwowczyk (Cracow, 1561). Although it claims to render the Latin Vulgate, it shows the influence of the Bohemian Bible of 1556–1557, while its woodcuts derive from a Lutheran model. The second Polish translation of the complete bible was carried out over 6 years by a distinguished team of scholars at the estate of Nicolas Radziwiłł. It was printed at Brześć (Brest) in 1563 by Bernard Woiewodka, whose press had been brought specially from Cracow. Because the translation team included some Socinians, many Lutherans and Calvinists declined to use this edition, and a Roman Catholic member of Radziwiłł's family destroyed all the copies he could find. The Socinian Szymon Budny undertook a revision of the *Brest Bible*; the New Testament appeared in 1563, 1568, and 1570 and the complete bible in 1572. A further revision by the Socinian Marcin Czechowicz was printed at Raków in 1577; this edition was in turn revised by the Socinian Valentin Schmalz (Raków, 1606). A versified psalter by Jan Kochanowski was first printed at Cracow before 1578 and reprinted often. Pope Gregory XIII commissioned the Jesuit Jakub Wujek to prepare a new Polish translation of the *Vulgate* for Catholic readers; the New Testament appeared in 1593, the *Psalms* in 1594, and the complete bible in 1599. Wujek's annotations draw on Bellarmino and the English New Testament printed at Reims in 1582. His translation became standard for Catholic readers. The revision of the *Brest Bible* undertaken by Mikołajewski and Turnowski (Gdańsk, 1632) established itself as a standard among Protestant Poles; the archbishop of Gniezno ordered that all copies should be burned.

A Czech translation of the New Testament made by Beneš and Gzel from Erasmus' Latin version was printed in 1533. The first New Testament translated from Greek was made by Jan Blahoslaw, bishop of the Bohemian Brethren; it was printed in 1564. The first complete Czech Bible translated from the original languages appeared at Kralitz in 1579–1593, at the instigation of Blahoslaw (Mánek 1981).

A fifteenth-century translation of the letters of Paul from the Latin *Vulgate* into Hungarian was

published at Cracow in 1533. A Hungarian translation of the Gospels by Gábor Pesti, based on Erasmus' edition, appeared at Vienna in 1536. The first complete New Testament in Hungarian translated from the Greek was undertaken by János Erdösi (Silvester), a student of Melancthon, and printed at the press established on the estate of Tamás Nádasdy on Új-sziget. An incomplete translation of the Old and New Testaments undertaken by a team headed by Gáspár Heltai, another student of Melancthon, appeared at Koloszvár (Cluj-Napoca) in 1552–1565. The first complete Hungarian translation of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament from the Hebrew and Greek was made by the Calvinist pastor Gáspár Károli and appeared in 1590; this translation was reprinted more than 100 times. A Roman Catholic translation intended to counter the influence of Károli's version was undertaken by the Jesuit György Káldi (1626).

An Icelandic version, by Oddur Gottskálksson, based on the Latin *Vulgate*, with reference to Luther's German version, was printed at Roskilde in 1540. The first complete bible in Icelandic (1584) was translated by bishop Gisli Jonsson, who also included fragmentary material by other recent scholars. King Frederick II of Denmark funded the publication of this fine translation and prescribed its use in Iceland.

Translations of parts of the New Testament into Hebrew appeared in print during the sixteenth century. In 1537, Sebastian Münster published a Hebrew version of the Gospel of Matthew made in 1385 by Shem Tov ibn Shaprut, along with his own Latin translation. Shem Tov's translation was published again by Cinquarbres at Paris in 1551. In 1555, bishop Jean du Tillet published another edition, based on a manuscript from Rome, with a Latin version by Jean Mercier. In 1557, Münster published a Hebrew translation of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In 1574, a Hebrew version of Luke's Gospel by the Lutheran Hebraist Fredericus Petri appeared at Wittenberg. The following year, a version of Mark by Walter Herbst, a Jewish convert to Lutheranism, likewise appeared at Wittenberg. The New Testament Epistles prescribed in the Lutheran lectionary were published at Leipzig in 1576 in an edition that provides the Greek text

along with Erasmus' Latin version, Luther's German, and a Hebrew translation by Johannes Clajus and Conrad Neander.

A Yiddish New Testament (excluding Revelation) based on Luther's German version by Johann Harzage, a convert from Judaism, was printed at Cracow in 1540. A Yiddish Pentateuch was printed at Constance in 1543–1544; a separate edition appeared at Augsburg in 1544. A Yiddish psalter was printed at Venice in 1545. The Cracow printer Isaac Prosnitz published individual biblical books in Yiddish in the 1580s and 1590s. Another Yiddish adaptation of Luther's New Testament by Elias Schadaeus, which included a work on the conversion of the Jews, appeared at Strasbourg in 1592. Several editions of individual books of the Hebrew Bible in Yiddish rhyming verse appeared from 1544 onward. The first complete Yiddish translation of the Hebrew Bible was printed at Amsterdam in 1676–1678.

The first translation of the New Testament into Finnish was undertaken by Mikael Agricola (c. 1510–1557), a student of Luther and Melancthon (1536–1539), bishop of Turku (1554) and Reformer of Finland. The translation, printed at 1548 at Stockholm, was made from the Greek text, with reference to the Latin version of Erasmus, the German of Luther, and the Swedish of Olaus Petri. Agricola's translation contains numerous neologisms. The first complete Finnish Bible appeared in 1642.

The first translation of the New Testament from Greek into Castilian Spanish was made at Wittenberg by Francisco de Enzinas, a pupil of Melancthon, and printed at Antwerp in 1543. Enzinas travelled to Brussels to present a copy to Charles V but was arrested and imprisoned under suspicion of promoting Lutheranism. After more than a year, he escaped and returned to Wittenberg. Thomas Cranmer later appointed him as professor of Greek at Cambridge. Spanish translations of the *Psalms* from Hebrew began to appear in the 1550s. A Spanish translation of the Hebrew Bible, intended principally for Sephardic Jews driven from Iberia, was printed at Ferrara in 1553. It was apparently based on a version translated by Rabbi Moses Arragel in 1422–1430. Perhaps in

order to make this edition more palatable to the Christian authorities, the preface claims that the editor also used the translation of Sanctes Pagninus, which had been approved by the curia. Furthermore, the publisher solicited approval for publication from the Inquisition. This edition was reprinted several times in the seventeenth century in Amsterdam for the use of the Sephardic community there. A Spanish translation of the New Testament from the Greek by Juan Perez de Pineda, a convert from Catholicism to Calvinism, was printed by Jean Crespin at Geneva in 1556 with a false Venetian imprint and smuggled into Seville in barrels. In 1556 and 1557, Crespin also published Spanish translations of *Romans* and *1 Corinthians* by the Reformer Juan de Valdés. The first complete bible in Spanish, translated by the Reformer Casiodoro de Reina (c. 1520–1594), was printed at Basel in 1569. Reina apparently knew some Hebrew but relied on Pagninus' translation and the *Ferrara Bible*. Reina's translation was later revised by Cipriano de Valera (Amsterdam, 1602). The first translation of the New Testament into Catalan (from the *Vulgate*) was published in 1832.

The first modern translation of the Pentateuch into modern Greek appeared in the 1547 Istanbul Polyglot Bible, printed in Hebrew characters. The first translation of the New Testament into modern Greek, prepared by Maximus of Gallipoli, was published at Geneva in 1638. A modern Greek Psalter appeared at Venice in 1643.

The first bible translation into Slovenian (Reutlingen, 1555) was a version of *Matthew* by Primož Trubar, based on recent Latin, German, and Italian translations, as well as Erasmus' annotations. Trubar's versions of the Gospels and *Acts* appeared in 1557–1558, *Romans-Galatians* in 1560–1561, the *Psalms* in 1566, *Ephesians-Philemon* in 1567, and *Hebrews-Revelation* in 1576–1577, all at Tübingen. Meanwhile, Trubar's colleague, the Lutheran pastor Jurij Dalmatin, was preparing a translation of the complete bible into Slovenian, from Hebrew and Greek but with reference to Luther's German. Individual books were printed at Ljubljana from 1575; the complete work was finally printed at Wittenberg in 1584.

The first translation of the New Testament (from the *Vulgate*) into Upper Engadine Romansh was printed in 1560; the first translation from the Greek was published in 1640. A Lower Engadine metrical psalter was printed at Basel in 1562; the first complete Lower Engadine bible appeared in 1679. The New Testament in Oberland Romansch, translated by Lucius Gabriel, appeared in 1648. A complete Oberland bible, containing Lucius Gabriel's New Testament and an Old Testament translation by Steffan Gabriel, appeared in 1717–1718.

The first translation of the Gospels into Romanian, undertaken by Coresi, was printed at Braşov in 1560–1561. Coresi's translation of *Acts* and the Epistles appeared in about 1563, and the *Psalms* in 1568, likewise at Braşov. A diglot edition of Coresi's psalter with the Slavonic text appeared in 1577. His Gospel translation appeared alongside the Slavonic text in 1580. A Romanian translation of *Genesis* and *Exodus* by Şerban and Marien, presumably intended as the first instalment in a complete translation, was printed at Oraştie in 1582. No Romanian translation of any biblical book appeared between 1588 and 1635. The first complete Romanian New Testament, begun by the monk Silvestru and continued by others after his death, was printed at Belgrade in 1648. The first complete Romanian Bible, translated by Nicolas Milescu, was printed at Bucharest in 1688.

Antonius Dalmata and Stephanus Consul Istrianus, Roman Catholic priests who converted to Protestantism, translated the New Testament into Serbo-Croatian, drawing principally on Erasmus' Latin and Luther's German. Their work was printed at Urach (albeit with a Tübingen imprint) in 1562–1563 in two editions using specially cut fonts, one in Glagolitic characters, the other in Cyrillic. Parts of the Old Testament were printed at the same press in 1564, with woodcuts imitating those of a Wittenberg edition of 1560–1561.

The first Welsh translation of the New Testament, the work of William Salesbury, Richard Davies, and Thomas Huet, was printed at London in 1567. The first complete bible in Welsh, translated by William Morgan from the Hebrew and Greek, with reference to the Latin Vulgate, the Latin version of Pagninus, and the

Geneva Bible, was likewise printed at London in 1588.

The first Irish translation of the New Testament, made from the Greek, was the work of Nicholas Walsh and William Daniel, using types presented by Elizabeth I in 1571 in the hope of encouraging such a translation. Printing lasted from 1595 until 1602, and the edition was duly published in 1603 with a dedication in English to the new monarch James I. The first Irish translation of the Old Testament was carried out by William Bedell (1571–1642), though it was not published until 1685, when it was issued at London, uniform with an edition of the New Testament published in 1681. Some copies were sent to the Highlands of Scotland. A handy one-volume Irish Bible in duodecimo was printed in 1690, principally for use in Scotland. The first New Testament in Scots Gaelic, translated from Greek by James Stuart, minister of Killin, was printed in 1767.

The first complete New Testament in Portuguese was published at Amsterdam in 1681, translated by João Ferreira d'Almeida, a convert from Catholicism to Calvinism, on the basis of Bèze's Latin version, for use in the Portuguese communities of the East Indies.

The bible also played a role in international missionary activity. According to John Saris (1613), the Jesuit college at Kyoto, founded by the Portuguese, included several native Japanese Jesuits, who had "the New Testament printed in the Japan language," although no copies of any such edition have survived.

The first complete Lapp translation of the New Testament appeared in 1755.

The coincidence of several factors at approximately the same time – an increased interest in using philology to restore the earliest recoverable form of a given text, the development of printing, and the desire on the part of Reformers from many denominations to make the bible available to the laity – led to an explosion of editions and translations of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures during the Renaissance and beyond. This affected not merely religious life, but also politics and even hermeneutical methods in the natural sciences.

Cross-References

- [Bible, Editions, and Translations in the Renaissance](#)
- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Hebrew into Latin Translations in Renaissance Italy](#)
- [Latin in the Renaissance](#)
- [Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques](#)
- [Luther, Martin](#)
- [Manetti, Giannozzo](#)
- [Printing Technique, Renaissance](#)
- [Reuchlin, Johannes](#)
- [Valla, Lorenzo](#)

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Bichai

- [Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tov](#)

Bickel, Konrad

- [Celtis, Konrad](#)

Birgivi, Mehmed Efendi

Born: Balıkesir, 1523

Died: Istanbul, 1573

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Abstract

Birgivi, Takıyüddin Mehmed Efendi (Balıkesir 1523–Istanbul 1573), was an influential Ottoman scholar and judge, who opposed the political ideas prevalent in his era by upholding old Islamic practice and advocating the abolishment of innovation; his ideas had an enormous influence throughout the seventeenth century.

Biography

Born into a family of scholars and Sufis in the provincial town of Balıkesir, Birgivi was the son of a prominent Sufi and teacher of the town, who initially taught him Arabic, logic, and other sciences. Later he moved to Istanbul to continue his studies under prominent scholars of the time. He became a teacher in his turn, a preacher in mosques and even an army judge in Edirne (1551), before leaving for Birgi (probably in 1571), a small but historical town near Izmir, where he became a professor at a newly founded *hadith* school until the end of his life. It was in Birgi that he wrote his highly influential works, among which the most important were the *Vasiyyetnâme* (*Testament*; also known as *Risâle-i Birgivi*, “Birgivi’s Treatise”), a catechism in Turkish; and its more scholarly counterpart in Arabic, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya wa al-sīrat al-Aḥmadiyya* (*The Muhammadan Way and the Character of the Most Laudable [Prophet]*), a detailed Hanafi-Maturidi exposition of the Sunna or Orthodox Muslim practice; his voluminous work also includes a body of essays dealing with legal issues, among which *al-Sayf al-sārīm fī*

‘adam jawâz waqf al-manqûl wa-l-darâhim (*The Sharp Sword for the Illegitimacy of Endowing Moveable Goods and Money*) and *al-Awjibât al-hâsima li ‘urûq al-shibhât al-qâsima* (*Zealous Responses to the Roots of Divisive Doubts*) on the legitimacy of monetary charitable endowments (the cash-*waqf*), as well as treatises on Arabic grammar, hadith scholarship or moral advice.

Al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya is divided into three parts: on upholding the Sunna, i.e., orthodox Muslim practice; on avoiding innovation; and on the importance of moderation (*iqtişād*). Birgivi’s emphasis on moderation notwithstanding, a major focus of the treatise is to oppose innovations in Muslim practice. Although Birgivi admits that there are innovations which may be permitted or even recommended (e.g., the building of minarets), he considers innovation a major threat to religion. Most importantly, he attacks “the Sufis of our time” and their innovative ritual practices, such as dancing or music. It should be stressed, however, that he does not dismiss Sufism wholesale, having been himself a follower of the Bayramiyye fraternity for a while. Another focus of Birgivi’s *Ṭarīqa* is piety (*taqwā*), which, in his view, is achieved by avoiding actions objectionable and doing things commanded by the faith, always with sincere intention. He discusses the matter at length, together with the various categories of sins; in this context, he employs Aristotelian theories of the soul and its faculties as formulated by al-Ghazālī and Naṣir al-Dīn Tūṣī, in order to show how one could educate one’s soul to be pious and virtuous in everyday life. In his epistemology, Birgivi classifies sciences into those that every Muslim should study (such as jurisprudence, hadith science, or mathematics), those forbidden unless studied under certain conditions (namely astronomy and scholastic theology or *kelām*, permitted only in order to erase suspicions), and those considered good and pious (e.g., medicine).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Birgivi lived in an era, in which Ottoman legal thought was dominated by Ebüssu‘ūd Efendi

(d. 1574), the *şeyhülislam* or chief *müfti*, i.e., the head of the religious hierarchy who gave definitive responsa (*fetva*) on questions regarding the Holy Law under Süleyman the Magnificent and his successors (from 1545 until his death). Ebüssü'üd had sought to reconcile the religious law (*şeri'at*), regulated by the *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence, with the codes of law (*kānūn*) issued by the Ottoman Sultans. In doing so, Ebüssü'üd devised *şeri'at*-based stratagems and legal precepts in order to justify various aspects of *kānūn* contravening previous Islamic law.

Opposition to such endeavors had already been manifest before Ebüssü'üd's appointment as *şeyhülislam*, mainly by his predecessor Çivizade Efendi. But it was Birgivi who opposed these policies in a most systematic and coherent fashion and exerted a profound influence on Ottoman politics for the century to come. Birgivi devoted the last chapter of his *Tariqa* to the fiscal and land regulations arranged by Ebüssü'üd. His numerous legal essays and a more political treatise, *Zuhr al-mulūk*, deal with several of Ebüssü'üd's "innovations." One may say that Birgivi's "usual suspect" was money: the pernicious nature of wealth is omnipresent in his criticism and underlies his rejection of various practices of his day. Thus, he negated the legitimacy of remuneration for religious services, e.g., the recitation of the Quran (although he admitted that gifts or donations may be permissible); he also was adamant in dismissing cash-*waqfs*, based on arguments such as the inevitable covetousness of *waqf*-administrators and the disruption of the normal course of inheritance, but primarily the fact that capital in cash could produce profit (to be used for charitable aims through pious foundations) only by usury, i.e., an evil practice that was strictly forbidden by Islam. The cash-*waqf* controversy was an issue for heated debate at the time. Birgivi attacked other aspects of contemporary practice as well, showing that his target was Ebüssü'üd's sanctification of *kānūn* and custom in general. Thus, he also opposed land-holding practice and, more precisely, Ebüssü'üd's assertion of state ownership over arable land and respective reconfiguration of the relevant terminology and taxation. Birgivi considered the land

tax illegal and stressed the injustice caused by it to the heirs of the peasant. Although he had to concede that state ownership was necessary in the Ottoman case, he opposed the systems established for taxation and for the transfer of land through inheritance of usufruct rather than possession.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In general, Birgivi's argumentation involved a strict interpretation of the sources of Islamic law. On the contrary, his opponents' (Ebüssü'üd and other fellow jurists) arguments were mostly based on legitimization by constant usage and on the welfare of the community, although their reasoning aligned with the principles and methods of Hanafi jurisprudence. Modern scholarship has traditionally associated Birgivi with Ibn Taymīyah's (d. 1328) Salafist views. Still, not only it seems that Birgivi never used Ibn Taymīyah (this image is mainly due to the latter's influence on Ahmed al-Rumī al-Akhisarī (d. 1632), whose works were misattributed to Birgivi), but it was exactly scholars favoring Ebüssü'üd (such as the jurist Dede Cöngi) who, in this era, were using Ibn Taymīyah's ideas on the secular authorities' role in juristic and administrative practice. Birgivi's influences are rather to be sought in his predecessors in the Ottoman anti-imperial opposition (such as Prince Korkud, d. 1513, or Çivizade, d. 1547). In this, he was following a trend in Hanafi thought emphasizing strict application of the *fiqh* principles, which was exemplified, for instance, by Ala al-dīn al-Bukharī (d. 1438). Furthermore, the aversion Birgivi exhibits toward the corruption of his time and the corrosive power of money exhibits affinities with the prevalent intellectual climate of the second half of the sixteenth century, as evidenced by the political treatises composed at the time.

A general assessment of Birgivi's work would also have to take into account his emphasis on practical issues; his treatises clearly had a didactic character, aiming to instruct the reader on leading a pious everyday life regardless the moral pathology of the times. Still, he effectively combined an

individualist approach (with his emphasis on the ethics of the soul) with a social aspect, focusing in the role of the state in encouraging or discouraging evil practices. Reform of self was for Birgivi essential, but so was reform of society.

Impact and Legacy

Birgivi's major works enjoyed a broad circulation and influence: his *Vâsiyet-nâme* was extremely popular and became one of the most consulted books on Sunni catechism (*ilm-i hal*). *Al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* became a reference text in the heated controversies associated with the Kadızadeli revivalist movement throughout the seventeenth century. Birgivi wrote on the old Islamic obligation for "commanding right and forbidding wrong" (*emr-i ma'rûf ve nehy-i müinker*), i.e., the obligation of a believer to impose righteous behavior and to act against impious practices. To be sure, he was not the first to bring it in Ottoman thought and he still considered its active practice a prerogative of the state. It was some of the revivalist thinkers influenced by him, such as al-Akhisari (d. 1632), who theorized that every Muslim was entitled to practice this obligation even by force. Indeed, acting in an environment of growing militant conservatism where Birgivi's works were widely read, the preacher Kadızade Mehmed b. Mustafa (d. 1635) turned Birgivi's teachings to an activist movement, the Kadızadelis (meaning Kadızade's followers), which dominated the Ottoman political and ideological scene for the century to come. The use of Birgivi's work by Kadızadeli preachers was explicit (the initial denomination of the latter was "Birgivi followers," and a major attack against the Kadızadelis in the early 1650s was based on a refutation of Birgivi's *Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* by two jurists, who claimed that the book was founded on weak traditions), although some issues raised by him (most tellingly, the rejection of cash-*waqfs*) were neglected while new ones were brought to the scene.

Thus, Birgivi has traditionally been considered the founding father of Ottoman Salafism and, by extension, of nineteenth-century Wahhabism as

well. Recent scholarship has emphasized that Birgivi's thought was more complex and multifaceted than mere bigotry and conservatism. Although he is often cited for his allegedly anti-Sufi views, Birgivi favored a type of Sufism based on pietism, rationalism, and a scriptural interpretation of the law that has led some scholars to associate him with the eighteenth-century "Neo-Sufism" or "Islamic enlightenment" (which, however, remains a controversial concept). Furthermore, his catechistic literature played a major role in what has been termed as the Ottoman "confessionalization" or "Sunnitization." The impact of Birgivi's thought on late sixteenth- and, especially, seventeenth-century Ottoman social and intellectual life was pervasive and had important political repercussions.

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- [Ebu's-su'ud](#)
- [Kadızâde](#)

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Biringuccio, Vannoccio

Born: Siena 1480

Died: Rome 1539?

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Abstract

Italian metallurgist and military engineer, chiefly known as the author of *De la pirotechnia* (first edition Venice, 1540), a comprehensive work dedicated to the “Arts on fire” used in chemical-metallurgical processes and casting bronze production, especially artillery and bells, with a section dedicated to the production of gun-powder, fireworks, and its components. Biringuccio gives an analytical description of minerals and metals based on classical sources and his professional experience, discussing traditional theories of metals generation and contrasting the obscure alchemical position based on not empirically confirmed substances transformation processes. Thanks also to the clear practical instruction for metalworking *De la pirotechnia* became a standard reference and remains valuable as one of the most important source for artisans and technological process during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Biography

There are no documents concerning Biringuccio's school education, but he probably first attended an “abaco school,” and subsequently acquired mining skills in the area of Siena where he met key figures from artistic and engineering circles such as Baldassare Peruzzi (1439–1501) and Baldassare Peruzzi (1481–1536). He then managed the Monte Avanza silver mine in Carnia for a few years until he was forced to abandon it due to the war between Emperor Maximilian VIII and the Republic of Venice in 1508. On this occasion

he visited several mining areas in Northern Italy and Switzerland

He was professionally tied to the Petrucci family for a long time, and they shared the tumultuous political and military events that involved Siena in the first three decades of the sixteenth century. Biringuccio was banned from the city three times, and all his possessions were confiscated.

In 1529, he served the Florentine Republic as a *procurator* of artillery during the siege of the imperial army. When the political situation normalized, Biringuccio returned to Siena and took office in the public magistrature. In 1535, he succeeded Baldassare Peruzzi as the “architect and chief of the Opera del Duomo.” His fame as a foundryman and gunner grew as he spent time at important arsenals such as those of Venice and Ferrara. This led to the conferral by Pope Paul III of the double assignment of head of the papal foundry and captain of artillery of the pontifical army. The positions were bestowed upon him in 1534, and he held them until his death in Rome, presumably in 1539.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Biringuccio is known essentially for the posthumous publication of *De la Pirotechnia*, a treatise on mining, metallurgy, the military, and more generally dedicated to all chemical arts based on thermoregulation treatments. With the intention of clarifying and defining the domain of the fire arts, and distancing himself from alchemy, Biringuccio outlined new discipline boundaries identifying them for the first time in Italian, and using the term *pyrotechnia*. He did not merely provide a detailed description of processes and machines for metalworking but promoted an epistemological renewal counter to the medieval hierarchies. Inside the artisan cultural context embodied during the second half of the fifteenth century, in which the several aspects of engineering knowledge were always more autonomous, Biringuccio strongly promoted an idea of knowledge based on empirical evidence seeing natural processes as something which could be understood gradually through technological progress.

He developed an interesting corpuscular conception of matter that integrated his observations from professional experience with the principles of atomistic tradition and Aristotelian theory, derived principally from classical authors such as Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), Plinius the Older (23–79), and Aristotle (384–322 a.C.). Natural substances were seen as the result of aggregation according to various proportions of the four elements conceived in corpuscular form, which participated in the constitution of the substances and their transformation by carrying their qualitative specificities.

Metallurgical technology and foundry engineering were Biringuccio's main specialization. He presented a very detailed analysis of pedestrian and hydraulic bellows machines for casting, with the latter conceived to be integrated in multiple workstations with a centralized hydraulic motor. Very important are metal separation techniques, among which is the first description of the silver mercury amalgamation method and cupellation on an industrial scale. Biringuccio's analytical approach to these processes also led him to observe for the first time that leaded calcination increased its weight. Many pages of *De la pirotechnia* are dedicated to distillation apparatus, especially for the preparation of acids.

Bronze casting techniques for sculptures, bells, and artillery are detailed, giving the first clear description of direct and indirect molding processes. With regards to engineering, much space is dedicated to drawing benches, one of which is powered by a hydraulic wheel for the continuous production of iron wire. Particularly important is also the analytical description of the horizontal boring machines for artillery. The last chapter is entirely devoted to the production of gunpowder and pyrotechnic preparations in general.

Biringuccio's *Pyrotechnia* was published in four Italian and two French editions before the end of the sixteenth century. There is also a reference to a lost Latin edition that would have been made in Cologne in 1658. Important parts of Biringuccio's book were borrowed in the treatises of naturalists and military engineers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The *Pyrotechnia* is traditionally associated with *De re metallica* by

the German physician and naturalist Georg Bauer, Latinized Agricola which, thanks to the Italian translation of 1563, took away a great deal of visibility from Biringuccio's book. However, the more engineering and broader thematic horizons of *De la pirotechnia* made it an important reference for craftsmen, engineers, and naturalists for a long time. A new edition was published in 1678.

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- [Metallurgy in Renaissance Science](#)

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Bivach

► [Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tov](#)

Bivagch

► [Bibago, Abraham ben Shem Tov](#)

Blackloism

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Abstract

The Blackloists were a group of English Catholics aiming to secure toleration for Catholicism in Protestant England. They were critical of what they saw as the sceptical tendencies of

early modern philosophers. Admirers of Aristotle's philosophy, some of the Blackloists believed that Aristotelianism could go hand in hand with the new mechanical philosophy.

Political and Philosophical Programme

Blackloism was a school of thought in seventeenth-century English Catholicism, owing its name to Blacklo, an alias of its leading figure, the English priest and philosopher Thomas White. Among its members were such men as Henry Holden, Kenelm Digby, and John Sergeant. Politically, the Blackloists aimed at securing toleration for Catholics in Protestant England. In exchange for toleration, they promised that leaders of the Catholic Church in England would renounce all worldly powers, and among other things proposed the installation of bishops who would operate independently from the Pope. After the execution of Charles I in 1649, Digby actively negotiated with Cromwell for toleration, and in 1655, White published his *Grounds of Obedience*, in which he effectively advised his fellow-Catholics to support the Cromwellian regime (see also Southgate 1993, 34–41).

The political aim of securing toleration for Catholics went hand in hand with a theological programme, which sought to bring Catholicism closer to English Protestantism. Thus although the tradition of the Church provided the rule of faith, the Blackloists denied papal infallibility, and they rejected those aspects of the doctrine of purgatory which had been most objectionable to the Protestants. Thus in his *De Medio animarum statu* of 1653, White criticized the idea that the living could do anything to alleviate the suffering of souls that are being purged from their sins, thereby denying that it was in the church's power to grant indulgencies (see Henry 1982, 227).

In spite of these concessions, the Blackloists remained critical of the Protestants' idea that the Bible could function as a rule of faith. The text and meaning of the scriptures were too uncertain to provide certainty in religious matters. To claim that we could be "morally certain," or certain

beyond a reasonable doubt about the scriptural texts and their meaning, as, for example, William Chillingworth had done, was to open the doors to scepticism. In White and Sergeant, this claim went hand in hand with a general quest for certainty. Thus White's 1663 *Scire, sive Sceptices et Scepticorum a jure Disputationis Exclusio* charged Joseph Glanvill with scepticism for arguing that absolute certainty is not humanly attainable, and the aim of Sergeant's 1697 *Solid Philosophy* was to beat down the scepticism that he believed to be inlaid in the philosophy of ideas of Descartes and Locke.

Although in philosophy the most important among the Blackloists shared a broadly Aristotelian outlook, they also believed that scholasticism had perverted Aristotle's true meaning. In particular, they criticized the scholastics for inferring from our capacity to think of accidents independently of their substance that accidents have an ontological status of their own over and above that of the substances in which they exist (Digby 1644, 2). For Digby, accidents were but modifications of the substances to which they belong, and White too argued that "it implies a contradiction that any Accident should exist out of its own Subject," even if theologians may have claimed otherwise to account for transubstantiation (White 1656, 196).

By purging it from real accidents and other scholastic accretions, Digby and Sergeant hoped to bring Aristotelianism in harmony again with common sense or with the "common notions" with which all men by nature grow up to understand the world. According to Digby and White, moreover, a modernized Aristotelianism could go hand in hand with the new mechanistic philosophy. Although, metaphysically, bodies were compounds of matter and form, in physics we should aim for mechanistic explanations of their operations (Digby 1644, 345).

Cross-References

- Digby, Kenelm
- White, Thomas

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Blundeville, Thomas

Born: Ca. 1520s, Newton Flotman, Norfolk

Died: Early 1600s, Unknown

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Abstract

Thomas Blundeville (c. 1522–c. 1606) was an English humanist writer and mathematician who supported a policy of maritime expansion. He wrote practical manuals on navigation, cartographic projection, arithmetic, and astronomy, as well as learned treatises on logic, history, education, and horsemanship. Many of his earlier works were based on Italian originals.

Biography

A prominent English humanist who, in the span of a four-decade career, published works on a broad range of topics. In his early years, he focused on traditional humanist topics, including moral philosophy and advice to princes. Then, after a

15-year hiatus, he published three works with a very different emphasis, intended as practical handbooks for mapmakers and navigators. The most influential of these was a popular technical guide entitled *M. Blundeville, His Exercises*, first published in 1594.

A member of the Norfolk gentry, Blundeville inherited his father's estate of Newton Hall in 1568 but seems to have spent much of his life in court circles in London. Educated at Cambridge, by the 1560s and 1570s, he was a member of the humanist entourage of Queen Elizabeth's favorite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (Ball and Rouse 1889, p. 21; Dick 1940, p. 153). By the 1590s, following the earl's death, Blundeville was associated with Francis Wyndham, judge and MP from his native Norfolk; Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Seal; and, through him possibly with his son, Sir Francis Bacon (Jacquot 1953, p. 195). At some point in the early part of his career, Blundeville likely traveled in Italy, where he learned the language and became familiar with local humanist scholarship (Dick 1940, p. 154).

Blundeville's early works were very much in the continental humanist tradition, including translations from classical sources and an emphasis on practical advice over high philosophy. In 1561 he published *Three Moral Treatises*, which was a translation of segments of Plutarch's *Moralia*. He followed this 5 years later with *The fower chiefyst offices belonging to Horsmanshippe*, an adaptation of an Italian work by Federico Grisone, which emphasized the military use of horses. In 1570 he published a translation from Italian of a book of advice to "a prince that will governe well" that was originally written by Federigo Furio in Spanish, as well as an advice book called "A Ritche Storehouse or Treasure for Nobilitye and gentlemen" translated from Latin (Bullen 1886). A book on *The Arte of Logike*, though published only in 1599, also dates from this period. Following Erasmus and most continental humanists, Blundeville, throughout these works, recommended virtue as both the right and most effective path for a ruler to follow (Jacquot 1953, p. 190).

In 1574 Blundeville published what may have been the first work in English on the theory of

history entitled *The True Order and Methode of Wryting and Reading Hystories*. Once again the book is largely a translation of two Italian treatises: One *Della historia diece dialoghi* by the leading Platonist Francesco Patrizzi; The other was an unpublished work known as *Delle osservationi* by Giacomo Concio, an Italian expatriate and, like Blundeville, a member of Leicester's circle. Following his sources, Blundeville advocates for a broad view of history, which is not limited to the deeds of great and good men of the past, but also recounts the stories of the world, of empires, of individuals, and even of the present. In writing such works, one should take into account not only men's actions but also for their motives, which may be deduced from their character, their upbringing, their education, and so on. Such histories, Blundeville insisted, would be of immense practical value to men of affairs, who can use them to experience the great events of the past and learn from them (Dick 1940).

We do not know the reasons for Blundeville's silence in the next 15 years, but when he resumed publishing, his work had a distinctly different cast. As a longtime protégé of the Earl of Leicester, he was already associated with the court faction that viewed Queen Elizabeth as the leader of the Protestant cause and advocated for an aggressive anti-Spanish stance. Now, however, he focused on directly implementing this general attitude by providing practical support to English maritime expansion (Taylor 1954).

Blundeville's first work in this vein was *A Briefe Description of Universal Mappes and Cardes*, which was published 1 year after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, when enthusiasm in England for all things naval ran high. He followed this 5 years later with his *Exercises*, which was likely his most widely read and influential work. The *Exercises* is a collection of six treatises on topics ranging from elementary arithmetic to the geometry of the sphere, geography, and cartographic projection. Despite the diversity of topics, however, the overall purpose of the work is never in doubt. It is, as he states on the title page, to be "read and learned by all young gentlemen" who desire to learn "the Arte of Navigation." The *Exercises*, in other words, is a

practical handbook for use by leaders of maritime expeditions.

The *Exercises* was notable for its comprehensiveness and its clear and accessible style, which made it indeed a useful textbook for navigators. But it also contained a novel and important contribution naval cartography: Edward Wright's tables of meridional parts. The problem for navigators is that a ship sailing at a fixed direction creates a complex spiral on the surface of the Earth, called a "rhumb." The challenge is to produce a map which would show mariners where they would make landfall if they sail in a fixed direction. Gerard Mercator (1512–1594) apparently solved the problem with what became known as the "Mercator projection" but did not explain his method. The first to do so was Blundeville's fellow Englishman, also from Norfolk, the cartographer and voyager, Edward Wright (1561–1615), who produced tables showing how to gradually increase the distance between latitude lines in order to preserve true directions. These tables, critical for the production of large-scale naval maps, were first published in Blundeville's *Exercises* (Alexander 2002, pp. 60–61; Ball and Rouse 1889, p. 22).

Blundeville followed the *Exercises* with *The Theoriques of the Seven Planets*, a book on astronomy that closely follows Georg von Peurbach's (1423–1461) *Theoricae novae planetarum*, adhering to a traditional geocentric view of the cosmos. To reinforce the practical uses of astronomy for mariners, Blundeville once again included novel navigational tables, produced by Henry Briggs in accordance with theories developed by William Gilbert (1544–1603) in *De Magnete* (1600). Gilbert argued that the precise dip of a magnetized needle was an indication of geographic latitude, thereby freeing sailors from reliance on astronomical observations that are often impractical. Briggs calculated the required tables, and Blundeville published them in *The Theoriques*, believing them to be a groundbreaking contribution to the art of navigation. As it happened Gilbert's theory was soon discredited, and *The Theoriques*, unlike the *Exercises*, proved to be of little practical use to mariners (Jacquot 1953; Sonar 2006).

Blundeville, who in all his books relied heavily on the works of others, was hardly an original author, yet the overall tenor of his opus is distinctly modern. He was a firm believer in the advancement of knowledge and did his best to encourage and disseminate the latest works – whether humanist or mathematical – that could advance the cause of his countrymen. He did so because he never doubted what his contemporary Francis Bacon reputedly stated: knowledge is power.

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Boccaccio, Giovanni

Born: June or July 1313, Certaldo or Florence

Died: 21 Dec. 1375, Certaldo

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Abstract

Boccaccio is one of the greatest writers of the Western literary tradition and among the most prolific authors of Italian literature. Today he is

renowned for his narrative masterwork, the *Decameron*, a collection of 100 tales which aims to portray the late medieval/early modern world in a realistic manner. Boccaccio's narrative style is a milestone on the way to the creation of Western realism. His model brought about the Italian novelistic genre which would thrive until the end of the seventeenth century. Boccaccio also wrote romances in narrative poetry and prose, lyric poetry, letters, vernacular biographies (viz., of Dante and Petrarch), a commentary on Dante's *Inferno* (cantos 1–17), Latin poems, biographies and treatises, among which the *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, a 15 book encyclopedia on classical myths. Here he claims as his own achievement the reconstructed unity of the Ancient Greek and Latin world in his age. Though his culture remained essentially Latin and vernacular, he was indeed the first to value Greek culture as more important than Latin, so that he fostered the return of the Greek language to the West by promoting the first Latin translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as the first chair of Greek at the Florentine University. Geoffrey Chaucer read and imitated Boccaccio's epic romances as well as, most likely, some of his Decameronian tales. In the Cinquecento Pietro Bembo singled out Boccaccio's prose writing as the best model of style for any works composed in the Italian vernacular.

Biography

Giovanni Boccaccio was born in Florence or Certaldo. Offspring of an illicit love, he was legitimized by his father Boccaccino di Chelino, an influential Florentine businessman who reached the high magistracy of the priors. At the school of Giovanni di Domenico Mazzuoli da Strada, father of Zanobi, Giovanni learned the elementary rules of Latin grammar and was probably introduced to Ovid's texts, commonly used for teaching, but also to those of Dante Alighieri. When he was around 11 years old, the father decided that his son should be trained in commerce in order to

become his business partner (*Gen.* 15.10). During this mercantile apprenticeship, most likely in 1327, Giovanni moved to Naples with his father, who had developed economic relations with the Angevin court. In Naples, Boccaccio experienced the refinement of courtly society, idealized in the famous "love questions" of *The Filocolo* (Book 4), but more importantly, he had access to the rich cultural environment fostered by Robert of Anjou. He also studied canon law and might have been in touch with Cino da Pistoia, who lectured at the Neapolitan Studio in 1330–1331. Whether it was Cino who introduced the young Boccaccio to Dante's poetry is still debated. Undoubtedly, the encounters with Paolo da Perugia and Barlaam of Calabria helped shape Boccaccio's interest in ancient mythology and the Greek language, respectively, while Andalò dal Negro, whom he valued as a mentor, introduced him to the astrological sciences.

Belonging to the Neapolitan period are the *Caccia di Diana*, a narrative poem in tercets (1334?), the classical romances *Filostrato* (1335 or 1339?) and *Teseida* (1340–1341) in octaves, and a prose romance, the *Filocolo* (1336–1338). The *Filostrato* is inspired by the Trojan cycle and narrates the tragic love of Priam's son Troilus for Criseida, Calchas' daughter, whose return to the Greek camp and new love for Diomedes lead Troilus to seek death in a mortal duel with Achilles. Portrayed as a love suicide, Troilus' death aims to teach young lovers to act "so wisely that ye shall not die in the end for an evil woman" (*Fil.* 8.33.7–8: tr. Griffin and Myrick). Drawing on different sources, among which Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* and its Latin translation, the *Historia destructionis Troiae* by Guido delle Colonne, the *Filostrato* inspired Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. Boccaccio's attempt to revive the classical world is aptly reflected in the *Filocolo*, which merges the narrative structure of the ancient novel with the famous Byzantine legend of the adventures of two lovers, Florio and Biancifiore, as it was later reworked in French and Italian vernaculars. In this way, the new prose romance aims to find its own middle path through the great classical epics of Virgil, Ovid, Statius, Lucan, as well as Dante's opus,

finding inspiration within them but never daring to challenge them. It is with the *Teseida* that Boccaccio attempts to found the epic genre in the Italian literary tradition, whose absence was lamented in Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* (2.2.10). The plot centers on two old friends, Arcita and Palemone, who must combat one another for the beautiful Emilia in a grandiose tournament. Arcita is victorious but dies shortly after from his battle wounds, while Palemone finally obtains the lady's hand. Boccaccio's statement that this ancient tale had never been translated from Greek into Latin has been interpreted as an allusion to the fact that he had knowledge of the Byzantine source, like Statius and the author of the *Roman de Thèbes*. The text of the *Teseida* is enriched by a number of mythological explanatory glosses, probably written in Florence, which in many respects anticipate the erudite works Boccaccio was to write in the second part of his life.

Sometime in the winter of 1340–1341, Boccaccio left Naples and returned to Florence. After a difficult beginning marked by longing for his Neapolitan life, he finally immersed himself in Florentine culture, which inspired the *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* (1341–1342) and the *Amorosa visione* (1342). The pastoral framework of the *Comedia*, which narrates the transformation of Ametus from a rough shepherd into a tender and noble lover, anticipates one of the most important themes of the *Decameron* as exemplified in the tale of Cimone (5.1). In the *Amorosa visione*, a poem in 50 cantos in Dantean tercets, the poet sees in a dream a succession of triumphs which culminates in that of virtue, a pattern which will later influence Petrarch's *Trionfi*. In the *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, written some time in 1343 or 1344, Boccaccio turns the Ovidian epistolary model of the abandoned woman writing to her far lover into a long monologue, intertwined with quotations from Seneca, Ovid, and Dante, which Francesco De Sanctis defined as the first psychological novel. The work has no action and its narrative motor is the introspection of Fiammetta, the first person narrator, who progressively realizes that her beloved Panfilo will not return to her. In the following years (1344–1346?), Boccaccio composed the *Ninfale*

Fiesolano, an etiological fable in 487 octaves which recounts the love of the shepherd Africo for the nymph Mensola and the birth of their son Pruneo, whose deeds are connected to the founding of Florence and Fiesole.

No earlier than the end of 1345, Boccaccio spent time in Ravenna (see Petrarch's *Fam.* 12.19), where there resided another important family by the name of Boccaccio, possibly related to that of Certaldo, and where Florentine culture, mainly due to Dante's final sojourn, was much appreciated. Between the end of 1347 and the beginning of 1348, Boccaccio was at the court of Francesco Ordelauffi in Forlì, another of Dante's cities. Here he continued to collect Dantean texts and memoirs which he transcribed in his notebook, the *Zibaldone Laurenziano*. Boccaccio's cultural experiences in Romagna and, namely, his closeness to Checco di Meleto's humanistic circle, together with the reading of Dante's Latin eclogues, most likely played a role in his return to Latin poetry, which would lead to the composition of the *Buccolicum carmen* around 1366.

Boccaccio was certainly in Florence in March–April of 1348, when the Black Death decimated the town's population. It is possible that, in the aftermath of this tragic situation, he set out to compose the *Decameron* some time between 1348 and 1351 (Branca 1976: 77); the work was certainly circulating before 1360, as we learn from Francesco Buondelmonti's letter to Giovanni Acciaiuoli (Branca 1991, II: 163–164). In the story of seven young women and three young men, who withdraw to the hills of Fiesole in order to escape the plague and enjoy one another's company with song, dance, and storytelling, "Boccaccio depicted the 'human comedy' of communal society, in the autumn of its medieval civilization" (Branca 1976: 77).

In 1350, Boccaccio met Petrarch for the first time. After this encounter, which was certainly the most influential of his literary career, he established the poet laureate's pre-humanist circle that gathered together the most important representatives of Florentine culture in those years: Zanobi da Strada, Francesco Nelli, Lapo da Castiglione, and perhaps Francesco Bruni as well. Around 1350 Boccaccio also began to

collect and develop the material that would become the nucleus of his *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, a mythological treatise in 15 books which was completed about one decade later. In those same years, Boccaccio set out to compose other works, such as the *De casibus* (1355; second edition 1373–74) and the *De mulieribus claris* (begun in 1360 and completed in 1375), which, like the *Genealogia*, would be revised and reworked up to his death. The end of this decade saw Boccaccio occupied with the promotion of a translation of Homer entrusted to Leontius Pilatus, a Calabrian Greek, who was also invited to join the Florentine Studio as the first chair of ancient Greek in non-Byzantine Europe.

In 1361, Boccaccio withdrew to Certaldo in search of solitude and meditation. This withdrawal might also have been a voluntary exile, as he may have been aware of, or even involved in, the Florentine conspiracy in the beginning of that year (Filosa 2014). Here, some time around 1365, he set out to write his final work in the vernacular, a misogynous little pamphlet titled *Corbaccio*; this satire marks the conclusion of his philogynist literary project. Between the autumn of 1370 and the spring of 1371, Boccaccio was again in Naples, where a circle of his admirers used to gather to discuss his works; his frequent epistolary exchange with them was to bring consolation to the old man's retirement in Certaldo. Among these Neapolitan friends, the most discussed of Boccaccio's works was certainly the *Genealogia*. When the Certaldese finally granted some of them permission to read the treatise, Pietro Piccolo da Monteforte commissioned copies for himself and the library of the convent of San Domenico. From his copies originated the first manuscript tradition of the work; the second or "vulgate" dates back to the decade following Boccaccio's death (Solomon in: Boccaccio 2011: 775). In the same years, Boccaccio also revised the *Decameron*, creating what is today the work's only extant autograph copy, the Ms. Berlin, Hamilton 90. Another copy was received by Petrarch in Padua at the beginning of 1373, as we learn from one of Petrarch's letters in the *Seniles* which introduces his famous Latin

translation of the Griselda tale and forms, along with the following letter, a pre-humanistic treatise known as *De insigni obedientia et fide uxor* (*Seniles* 17.3–4).

In August 1373, the Florentine commune approved a petition which requested that Boccaccio read and explain publicly Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The first lecture took place on Sunday, October 23, in the church of Santo Stefano di Badia, close to the house of the Alighieri family; others followed until early in 1374 and ending with Canto 17 of the *Inferno*. His health in decline, Boccaccio divided his physical and intellectual energies between endless revisions of the *Genealogia* and the composition of the *Esposizioni sopra la Commedia* from his lecture notes and other various materials. Still at work, on December 21, 1375, the father of European narrative died in his house in Certaldo at the age of 62.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In his *History of Italian literature*, Francesco De Sanctis wrote that the *Decameron* is a revolution in which the Middle Ages is "not only denied, but made fun of," and that Boccaccio "is the Voltaire of the fourteenth century" (1870; trans.1968: 290). Boccaccio's masterwork finally gave a literary voice to the earthly, human realm, which the dominant paradigm of a transcendental and "theocratic" literature (from Guido Guinizzelli to Dante Alighieri) had completely concealed. This interpretation of Boccaccio as a forerunner of Italian Renaissance literature loomed large well beyond his century. Only in 1956 did Vittore Branca finally react to this interpretation by arguing for a *Decameron* deeply rooted in medieval culture. Here contemporary society is at the center of a narrative work for the first time; there are no heroes as in Homer or Virgil or the Bible, but instead a broad variety of characters from Boccaccio's own time. The *Decameron* opens with the description of the Black Death of 1348; what Hegel had defined as "the modern popular epic" – that is, the novel and its new narrative art – finds in this famous beginning its proper

dramatization. Boccaccio's work, according to Branca (1976 and 1980), can therefore be defined as "a human comedy" which portrays the rise of the new Italian mercantile bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the scholar did acknowledge Boccaccio's pre-humanistic culture as it developed from the early 1350s under the direct influence of Petrarch, who finally managed to shift Boccaccio's inspiration from creative works in the vernacular to scholarly biographies and treatises written in Latin. From 1360 onward, Boccaccio's house was to become the true center of Italian pre-humanism, the place where Northern and Southern Petrarchisms could meet (Branca 1996: 277–97). In this transition from vernacular to Latin works, Bruni (1990) conjectured the existence of two cultures undergirding Boccaccio's writing; two cultures that developed into two successive – but sometimes overlapping – phases revolving around the *Decameron*, the final and most important moment of a long-lasting project devoted to his philogynist literary project. Flasch (1992) then criticized the interpretation of a medieval Boccaccio by pointing out that medieval Christian thought, in which both Boccaccio and Dante were immersed, is far too varied and nuanced to be reduced to Scholasticism alone. From a different perspective, Velli (1995) and Candido (2014) focused on Boccaccio's humanistic approach to ancient literature and his extensive use of Latin classical sources, with special reference to Seneca and Apuleius, respectively. More recently, through the analysis of his political thought, Hankins (2019) has maintained that Boccaccio is best categorized as a representative of Renaissance humanism. Lavagetto (2019) also offers a corrective to Branca's "medieval" Boccaccio, and in addition to a series of provocative readings of both the "frame" and *novelle* of the *Decameron*, he also argues for a serious reconsideration of Francesco De Sanctis's reading of the text on its own terms.

At the library of Montecassino, in fact, Boccaccio read texts that were fundamental to a historical understanding of the ancient world, and he acquired two manuscripts that would prove hugely important for Italian Renaissance thought: one bearing the fragments 5–24 of

Varro's *De lingua latina*, Cicero's *Pro Cluentio* (later copied and sent to Petrarch), and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (today Ms. Florence, Laur. 50, 10) and the other bearing Apuleius and Tacitus's *Annales* 11–16 and *Historiae* 1–5 (today Ms. Florence, Laur. 68.2; Branca 1976: 106). Boccaccio also had access to authors unknown to Petrarch, and he discovered, along with Varro and Tacitus, Lactantius Placidus (a commentator of Statius's *Thebaid*), Martial, Ausonius, Ovid's *Ibis*, Fulgentius's *Expositio sermonum antiquorum*, the *Carmina XII sapientium*, a few poems from the *Appendix virgiliana*, the full collection of eighty *Priapea*, and perhaps also Cicero's *Verrine Orations* (Sabbadini 1905: 33; Mazza 1966; Signorini 2011).

Like Petrarch, Boccaccio's relentless hunt for manuscripts of classical and Christian authors bears witness to his desire to revive ancient culture, both Greek and Latin, and to contaminate it with the Christian tradition. In 1355, for example, he shipped to Petrarch the complete volume of Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, a precious gift whose cultural importance is acknowledged in Petrarch's *Fam.* 18.3 and on the manuscript's first folio (today Ms. Paris, lat. 1989). Examples of this happy blending of classical pagan and medieval Christian sources are the *Filocolo*, *Teseida*, and above all the praise of poetry in the *Trattatello*, or *Dante's Life*, and in *Gen.* 14.7. In both works, Boccaccio wants to defend poetry against its detractors who consider it useless, fantastical, pagan, and non-remunerative. Also, in the footsteps of his mentor Petrarch (*Fam.* 10.4), as well as Dante before him, he aims to elaborate a new definition of poetry as a sacred art, indeed a theology, with the poet as priest. In aesthetic terms, the concepts of *poeta theologus* and of theology as a divine poetry are still medieval, as both stress that the truth of poetry is allegorical, or to be found underneath the surface of poetic fiction. At the same time, these concepts also imply the terms of one of the most important humanistic debates, to be inaugurated by Giovanni Dominici's *Lucula Noctis* and Coluccio Salutati's defence of poetry in his *De laboribus Herculis* (Branca 1976: 277–99).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Boccaccio was one of the most prolific authors of Italian literature and a relentless experimenter with genres, many of which had never been attempted previously in the Italian vernacular. His natural inclination to continue experimentation singles him out as a unique voice in the fourteenth-century culture as well as in the subsequent literary canon that was to be established on the solid foundation of the intellectual experiences of the Trecento. Branca (1996) underlined “the genius of his surprising cultural agility” (p. 306), which allowed Boccaccio to introduce to Italy, and to Europe as a whole, genres such as the novel, the chivalric epic, the pastoral, the so-called psychological novel, the forest idyll, the modern form of the *Decameron*, the literary hagiography, the moralistic biography, and the mythography. Seen in this light, Boccaccio’s *oeuvre* in fact reveals a well-defined intellectual project, to provide the Italian literary tradition with all its missing genres, created anew or revived in continuity with classical and medieval models. At his death, this ideal map of new Italian literary genres had transformed into a canon of influential works.

It is still debated whether it was Boccaccio who created the octave and first used it in the *Filostrato* or whether his epic romance reveals the literary adoption of the scheme from the popular *cantare* genre. Boccaccio can certainly be considered the father of the novella in its standard form, which differs from similar genres such as the *vida*, *fabliau*, or *exemplum* (Neuschäfer 1983; Bruni 1990). Another key innovation was Boccaccio’s choice to gather his 100 tales within a frame story, also known as a *cornice*. The open format of the *Novellino* (ca 1280–1300), a loosely structured anthology of stories which is the *Decameron*’s only European antecedent, is transformed into a self-contained collection in which a meta-story encompasses all the others. This change adds layers of complexity to the narrative structure: narrators in fact comment on their own stories, their origins, and the reasons for choosing them, and they use storytelling as a means to build up a

dialogue with one another (Forni 1995: 1–2). Moreover, “the frame-story enclosing other stories is, historically, a bridge between anecdote and novel” (Wellek and Warren 1949: 230). Therefore, it is a suggestive hypothesis that the narrative structure of the ancient novel, known to Boccaccio through Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass* and the *History of Apollonius of Tyre*, may have inspired the new form of the *Decameron* (Candido 2016).

Among Boccaccio’s innovations is the newly addressed female readership from the early vernacular writings to the *Decameron*, so that this vernacular corpus has been aptly labelled as philogynist literature (Bruni 1990). In the footsteps of Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*, Book 3, the Proem of the *Decameron* explicitly identifies women in love as the readership for which the work was written. Likewise, the *De Mulieribus Claris* would later be dedicated only to women, a subject group previously excluded from historiography. The *Decameron* therefore is meant to be for women, and laymen in general, a handbook of moral philosophy which will help moderate vehement passions and ultimately overcome depression potentially leading to suicide. The philosophical dimension of Boccaccio’s storytelling has been the focal point of scholarship from Flasch (1992). Andrei (2018) has investigated the philosophical aspects that concern knowledge, while Celenza (2019) has set Boccaccio’s approach to philosophy within the historical context of the pre-modern tradition that has been alive and thriving since antiquity. Earlier, Italo Calvino’s examination of *Dec.* 6.9 utilized a telling image that portrays Boccaccio’s subtle philosophy. In the novella, the natural philosopher Guido Cavalcanti, considered an “Epicurean” in the medieval sense of someone who wants to disprove the Platonic-Christian tenet of the immortality of the soul, gets rid of the annoying company of Betto Brunelleschi’s brigade with an obscure sentence, which turns out to be a veiled offense. Beyond this spirited reply, worth noting is Cavalcanti’s leap above the tombs to free himself, the gesture of the philosopher who raises himself above the weight of the world (Calvino 1988: 12).

Impact and Legacy

In *Gen.* 15.7 Boccaccio claims to have been the first who fostered the return of the ancient Greek language to Florence and to the West, by making possible the appointment of Leontius Pilatus to the chair of Greek at the Florentine University (1360–1362), as well as by promoting the first Latin translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* made by Leontius himself. Though Boccaccio's culture remained essentially Latin and vernacular, this statement of his cannot be underestimated as he indeed was the first to value Greek culture as more important than Latin; in his view, in fact, a true humanist had to be familiar with and rely on Greek culture, itself the matrix of Latin culture. Also, in Boccaccio, considerably more than in Petrarch, once again at work is the fusion between Latin and Greek cultures, which from the end of the sixth century to the second half of the fourteenth century had been kept separate (Osgood 1956: xxvii; Pertusi 1964: 380).

Boccaccio was also the initiator of the cult of Dante. His first celebration of the author of the *Divine Comedy* can be found in the imaginary coronation described in the *Amorosa visione* (5.84–88), a visionary poem written in Dante's own meter, the tercet. Widely circulated was Boccaccio's *Trattatello* (earliest redaction in 1352), the first biography of Dante and the most important, together with that by Leonardo Bruni (circa 1436). But the major achievement of Boccaccio's interest in Dante was the commentary on the *Inferno* which was interrupted at the first lines of Canto 17 due to Boccaccio's final illness and subsequent death. This commentary was developed from notes written for about 60 readings from the poem that Boccaccio made in the Florentine Church of Santa Badia from 23 October 1373 to January 1374. The literal reading of the poem, meant to offer a moral lesson to his listeners, is here juxtaposed with a less elaborate allegorical interpretation, aimed at instructing more erudite readers (Houston 2010: 140).

If the influence of the *Decameron* on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is still under debate, it cannot be called into question that the English poet, who had

a very good knowledge of Italian, did draw on Boccaccio's early works, the *Filocolo*, *Filostrato*, and *Teseida*. Although he never mentions Boccaccio, the fourth book of the *Filocolo*, and possibly *Dec.* 10.5 that is a retelling of the same story, offered a model for *The Franklin's Tale*, the general plots of the *Teseida* and the *Filostrato* for the *Knight's Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, respectively. Wallace (1985) has shown how Chaucer borrowed more from Boccaccio than from any other writer; for example, almost every stanza of the *Filostrato* offered several motifs for elaboration, which are freely utilized in the *Troilus*. Chaucer's favored method was to reduce the original text by means of paraphrase or translation and then expand it in an original way. While Petrarch's Latin translation of the Griselda tale is the primary source of the *Clerk's Tale*, together with a French translation known as *Le livre Griseldis*, for Kirkpatrick (1983) and others, it is unlikely that Chaucer also relied on Boccaccio's original story; for Thompson (1996), Hanning (2000), Edwards (2002), and Harkins (2013), it was, on the contrary, a distinct possibility. Biggs (2017) has then linked the origins of the *Canterbury Tales* to the *Decameron* by identifying Chaucer's debt to Boccaccio's writing techniques.

In Renaissance Europe, the *Decameron* enjoyed wide circulation both before and after the Church placed it on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1557 and renewed the condemnation at the Council of Trent in 1563. Italian humanists followed Petrarch's example by translating Boccaccio's tales into Latin: *Dec.* 1.1 (Antonio Loschi), 4.1 (Leonardo Bruni), 10.1 (Bartolomeo Fazio), and 10.8 (Filippo Beroaldo and Matteo Bandello). Likewise, the *Decameron* provided the inspiration for the popular genre of the *cantare*: written between the early fifteenth and late sixteenth century, a corpus of 18 adaptations of Boccaccio's tales circulated in print; another 5 have been passed down by the manuscript tradition alone (Rada 2009: 17). It was in the first decades after the advent of the printing press that the *Decameron* enjoyed its greatest fortune in terms of both new editions and illustrations of the text (Branca 1996: 355). Thanks to Lorenzo

de' Medici, Poliziano, and later Pietro Bembo, Renaissance painters such as Francesco Pesellino, Botticelli, Luca Signorelli, Bernardino Luini, Cima da Conegliano, Francesco di Ubertino, Vittore Carpaccio, and Bonifacio Veronese, among many others, found congenial inspiration in Boccaccio's tales (Branca 1999, 1: 33–34). In his influential *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), Bembo elaborated a theory of imitation which proposed the literary language of Petrarch and Boccaccio as the best models in the Italian vernacular for writing poetry and prose, respectively. In France, after the first translation appeared in 1414, Queen Marguerite de Navarre commissioned a new version of the *Decameron*, produced by Antoine Maçon and published in 1545, which was to provide inspiration for the *Heptaméron*, a framed collection of stories, attributed to Marguerite herself. Relying on Maçon's translation, William Painter translated into English 16 tales from the *Decameron* in his *Palace of Pleasures* (1566), one of which (*Dec.* 3.9) lent the plot for Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* (Wallace 1991: 110). The Spanish *Siglo de Oro*, with its picaresque novels, comedias, and Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, was also heavily indebted to Boccaccio's art of storytelling (Bayliss 2000).

The first English translation of the *Decameron* only appeared in 1620, more than two centuries after Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. By the sixteenth century, English writers had turned from the example of Chaucer to that of Boccaccio, whose rediscovery was to inspire modern authors such as John Dryden, John Keats, George Eliot, and James Payn (Wallace 1991: 111–12). In the twentieth-century Ireland, Brendan Kennelly's *The Florentines* draws a parallel between the English youth of 1960s protesting against the threat of nuclear war and the *Decameron*'s Florentine brigade escaping from the plague of 1348 (Bendelli 2012: xi). Two cinematic adaptations should be mentioned: Pasolini's *Decameron* (1971), the first chapter of his *Trilogy of Life* which also includes *The Canterbury Tales* (1971) and *Arabian Nights* (1974), and Paolo and Vittorio Taviani's *Maraviglioso Boccaccio* (2015).

Cross-References

- ▶ Barlaam the Calabrian
- ▶ Bembo, Pietro
- ▶ Castiglione, Baldassare
- ▶ Ciceronianism
- ▶ Dante Alighieri
- ▶ Guicciardini, Francesco
- ▶ Humanism
- ▶ Petrarca, Francesco
- ▶ Philology, Renaissance
- ▶ Salutati, Coluccio
- ▶ Stoicism
- ▶ Virgil in the Renaissance

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Boccadiferro, Ludovico

Born: 1482, Bologna

Died: 1545, Bologna

Leen Spruit

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Abstract

Ludovico Boccadiferro (1482–1545) was a student of Alessandro Achillini and taught philosophy in Rome and Bologna; he continued the moderately Averroist tradition of his

teacher, often finding himself at odds with Pomponazzi; he left numerous courses of lectures on the works of Aristotle, published after his death or still unpublished.

Alternate Names

Buccaferrea, Ludovico

Biography

Ludovico Boccadiferro was born in 1482 in Bologna from an ancient and illustrious family; he was the son of Girolamo and Apollonia Nordolia. He studied at the University of Bologna under Alessandro Achillini, and probably, from 1512 to 1513, he heard Pomponazzi, there. He graduated in philosophy and medicine on March 15, 1516. From 1516 to 1523, he taught logic and philosophy, and in 1520 he became member of the College of Physicians. In 1523 he became full professor, and in 1525 he moved to Rome, where he taught philosophy at the Sapienza University till 1527. He returned to Bologna, where he taught philosophy till 1545, commenting on *De anima*, *De coelo*, and *De physico auditu* (Lohr 1988). He also participated in broader discussions and attended the circle of scholars that later became the Accademia Bocchiana. Boccadiferro concluded his teaching in March 1545, and died on May 3 of this year. His pupils include Flaminio Nobili, Federico Pendasio, Alessandro Piccolomini, and Julius Caesar Scaliger.

In the University of Bologna, he represented the moderate strand of the Averroist tradition, following his master Achillini and in polemics with Pomponazzi, in particular as to the interpretation of Aristotle's psychology. Boccadiferro endorsed an Averroist solution to the issues of the immortality of the soul, the uniqueness of the intellect and intellectual beatitude. He was also interested in Plato's work, and in the final years of his career, he planned the composition of a summary of the *Laws*.

His works were published after his death mostly on the basis of the annotations of his

students: *Explanatio libri I Physicorum: Aristotelis* (1558, reprints in 1570 and 1603), *Lectiones in IV Meteororum* (1563), *Lectiones super I Metereologicorum* (1565), *Lectiones super tres libros De anima* (1566), *Lectiones in II et III Meteororum* (1570b), *Lectiones in Aristotelis Stagiritae libros quos vocant Parva naturalia* (1570a), *In duos libros De generatione et corruptione* (1571), and *Aristotelis de Physico auditu liber I Ludovici Buccaferreae praelectionibus ex Graecorum simul et Latinorum interpretum sententia explicatus* (1577).

Cross-References

► [Averroism, Renaissance](#)

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Boccalini, Traiano

Born: 1556, Loreto

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Abstract

Traiano Boccalini's rather brief career as a satirical journalist for a very elite clientele in the first decade of the seventeenth century is complemented by the enormous resonance of his printed collection, the *News from Parnassus* (1613), throughout Europe. Although Boccalini's reports have since faded from public attention, they were wildly popular

in their time, due in part to their persistent association with Galileo in the aftermath of his *Starry Messenger* and *Letters on Sunspots*. They also provide a cautionary tale for those who, like the rulers of early modern Italy, wanted to provide their courtiers with political spyglasses and were determined to convert piecemeal revelations about current events into status and profit. In short, Boccalini's brand of "optical" newswriter functioned simultaneously as informer, auctioneer, and amateur astronomer. Boccalini's writings point to a familiarity with numerous (near-) contemporary sources, from Machiavelli to Renaissance comedy. As a result, Boccalini's legacy, because of its particular portability and suitability to much larger developments of modern political thought, affected a variety of scientific activities, ranging from the Academy of the Incogniti to Spinoza's library.

Biography

When Traiano Boccalini published the first and second series of his collection of essays, *De' Ragguagli di Parnaso* (*News from Parnassus*, 1612–1613), he was very near the end of his life, which he had spent in part in the study of the law and in part trying to secure different Apostolic commissions for himself. The child of an architect, Boccalini spent his childhood and adolescence in his native town of Loreto (near Ancona), which he later always eulogized as an endearing locale in contrast to Perugia and Padua, where he endured dull and miserable years of legal studies. While in Padua, in the last part of the 1570s – pursuing that legal training that required, in his words, “an ox's brain, a porter's body” – Boccalini also sustained a passion for the Roman historian Tacitus, whose moralism served to separate his readers from Machiavelli's political writings, a more typical interest in Renaissance Italy (Sterpos 1971).

In 1584, Boccalini married Ersilia Ghislieri in Rome, settling in the city to become a writer of Apostolic briefs; this activity would be soon flanked by the secretarial services he offered to

the Marquis Spinola in Genoa. The range of his personal patronage increased due to intervention of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (1571–1621), the pope's nephew, who acted on the writer's behalf. Boccalini was almost 40 years old in 1592, when he was appointed by Clement VIII (1536–1605) to act as pontifical governor and magistrate in several small cities belonging to the church – among them, Trevi, Tolentino, Brisighella, Nocera Umbra, Comacchio, and Sassoferrato (Firpo 1969). In 1596, Boccalini also served as a lieutenant of Scipione Gottifredo in Benevento, and in 1598 he continued his diplomatic career with a mission to Venice. Amidst frustration, humiliation, and threats – including troubles with the Holy Office – Boccalini's wanderings throughout Italy also cemented his writing persona as that of a reporter, alternatively identified as *menante* or *gazzettiere* (De Vivo 2007), who objectively takes notes in all discussions: even when not enlisted in active courtly service, Boccalini would use such a posture as the narrative backbone of his allegorical-satirical fiction. After his writings attracted the attention of the Inquisition, Boccalini had to face trial twice, in 1604 and 1610. Following an acquittal, he finally moved to Venice, in a house of the neighborhood of Santa Maria Formosa, where he would reside until his death.

Boccalini died on 29 September 1613 in mysterious circumstances. Although his death was probably due to a liver tumor, the vitriolic attack he had launched on Spanish imperialism shortly before (Cozzi 1956) led to unfounded rumors of Spanish involvement in his death, either by poison or by physical assault. Thanks to the mediation of his longtime friend Angelo Grillo (1557–1629), a Benedictine priest and enthusiastic supporter of Galileo (1564–1642), who shared with him a fascination for the early media industry, as well as for its brokers and informers (Infelise 2010), Boccalini's body was buried in the church of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

At first glance, Boccalini's final trajectory in Venice appears to be an ideal culmination of two

mutually reinforcing developments in the late sixteenth century – the skeptical orientation of the city's political thinking and the immense interest provoked by the printing press, its entourage, and the writers-for-hire who collaborated with it. According to its myth of republican freedom, Venice was the best locale for satirical activity, although in a 1611 letter to Scipione Borghese (BAV, Barb. Lat. 6458, c. 81), Boccalini explicitly expressed a desire to physically join the conversation of Roman elite circles, living off the profits of his printed works. Indeed, the *Ragguagli* became a European sensation because they inspired a host of reprints, translations, and imitations. As a result, the best historical approach to Boccalini's position vis-à-vis the ideals of Cinquecento Italy cannot be artificially separated from the heritage his work itself projected.

From the point of view of modern political thought, however, while in the original *Ragguagli* the sting of irony targeted specific projects to reform the world (Skinner 1978), in its seventeenth-century recounting the collection's biting satire took on a life of its own. For example, a prominent Rosicrucian writer from Tübingen in south-west Germany, Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654), paid tribute to Boccalini in his *Menippus* (1617), an anthology of one hundred satirical dialogues whose organization is heavily indebted to the Italian reports, where the guests of a courtly wedding have to pass over a giant scale, taken from the *Pietra del paragone politico* (1614), as well as in the *Mythologia* (1619), where Boccalini joins the ranks of other famed “satirical dogs” such as Lucian, Barclay, and Rabelais (Penman 2009). At this early stage after his death, the topical image of courtly life as a perilous navigation, which Boccalini developed from classical sources and from the *Avvisi di Parnaso* of Cesare Caporali (1531–1601), his immediate inspiration for writing in the Parnasian mode (2.23), had already become an international model of critique and “judicious” prose, to put it in Gracián's terms (Bosold 1996).

To better assess Boccalini's position within the literary and philosophical tradition of his day, one can conveniently use another posthumous episode. After a decade of protracted dealings with

the Venetian government concerning his father's estate, in 1623 Rodolfo Boccalini solicited the intervention of the Holy Office, hoping for a comprehensive censorship that, opportunistically, would raise the capital of the manuscripts now in his possession. It is symbolic that in the same discussions (Russo 2015) the cardinals of the Inquisition addressed the statement of correction written by Alessandro Tassoni (1565–1635) for his mock-heroic poem, the *Secchia rapita*, and discussed a petition for deeper cuts from Marino's *Adone*; remarkably, while the judgement on Tassoni and Marino was severe, no action was recommended in Boccalini's case. Evidently, his *Ragguagli* were seen as untroubling for the sociopolitical *status quo* – caustic, but not morally offensive.

How fair was the tribunal's opinion? On the one hand, historically speaking, this lackadaisical approach missed the mark, since one of Boccalini's close associates was the English ambassador Henry Wotton (1568–1639), who secured Marino's liberation from jail. Wooton was also the intermediary for a private anthology of Parnassian reports – now housed at the Bodleian Library in Oxford – that Boccalini prepared in 1612 for James I, and in which he defended the idea of dressing the naked truth with “comic masks” and metaphors. The Inquisition's unusual leniency, on the other hand, is hardly a surprise considering how Boccalini – as in his report of a double wedding for the House of Savoy in 1608, during Aldobrandini's papacy (*Ragguagli* 1.78) – decided to adopt an antiquarian stance, glossing the presence of renowned personalities such as Chiabrera, Monteverdi, and Marino himself with figures taken from classical antiquity, like Plautus and Terence, or from Ariosto (Russo 2015), as though he wished to attenuate the militant and contemporary import of his chronicle.

Paradoxically, at least in northern Italy, Boccalini was famous as a judge, not a man of letters. This adds a further layer to the *Ragguagli* and their intentional parade of Renaissance burlesque poetry (Ciri 2005), as in the description of a Parnassian feast in which the fabulous holdings of private and public libraries provide rich yet

uneven meals to its learned banqueters (Boccalini 1948: 1.31). Here Boccalini has virtually nothing new to say on the contemporary, seventeenth-century rearrangement of the world of letters, but in a characteristic twist of his newsmongering he returns instead to an earlier phase of the emerging Renaissance industry of rumors and reports by diluting and expanding on such parodic sources as Della Casa's “Oven,” Varchi's exercise on ricotta cheese, and Mauro's praise of fava beans. Elsewhere, as in 1.14, Boccalini denounced the decline of Italian academies, an episode that is reinforced by his scorn for “babbling poets” (1.2 and 1.7) and the troubled awareness of how, in Italy, the number of virtuosi has grown out of proportion thanks to the press (at 1.100, an emphatic position inside the collection). At times, Boccalini's polemic against the “brainy slackers” of his time (2.95) appears to carry little besides a bombastic effect; otherwise his target is clearer, as in 1.28, when he attempts to rescue Tasso from the use of him made by Castelvetro and other contemporary commentators of Aristotle.

Innovative and Original Aspects

To sum up, Boccalini's reports might give the false impression of being entirely conventional, within the sixteenth-century tenets of fantastic voyages to the Otherworld *sub specie libraria* – and indeed, the passage from verse to prose continued to appear like a slippery innovation, in 1614, when Cervantes wrote his *Viaje del Parnaso* (Cappelli 2001) – but it turns out that this perspectival illusion is deliberately engineered by the author of the *Ragguagli*. Of 64 authors cited by Boccalini under the pretext of his court proceedings, 24 are classical authorities, only one medieval (Dante), and not one is a Quattrocento humanist (Procaccioli 2015); in addition, of the remaining 39 writers, only a few correspond to our established canon of Cinquecento Italy, since Boccalini privileged satire and historiography, for instance, at the surprising expense of theater. Especially instructive is 3.72, based on literary pedagogy, but also

instructive are 1.35, 2.10, and the unpublished essays in MS 681 of the Palatina Library in Parma (Pini 2008), where Boccalini distances himself from the obnoxious availability of cheap prints, by indicting prestigious names like Giunti and Plantin, rather than the humble *colporteurs* or “messengers” such as his fictional self. Even if one considers the tribunal as a model for philosophical presentation, which enables a certain amount of light, however residual or negative, on the *doxa* put on trial – that is largely the case in the ominous presence of Machiavelli in *Parnassus* – and even if, moreover, one reflects on how conspicuous absences can speak louder than silence, Boccalini’s polemical goal is unmistakable. By emphasizing comedy and epistolography, he brought to rich consequences some embryonic hints not only in Caporali, his companion in legal studies in Perugia (Marconi 1998), but also in Giordano Bruno’s heavenly court of the *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*, in certain bibliophilic fictions by Anton Francesco Doni (1513–1574) and Paolo Giovio (1483–1552), and especially in a carefully staged “dispatch from Parnassus”; the latter was included by Pietro Aretino (1492–1556) in the 1538 edition of his *Letters* and had received little attention.

In this light, the *Ragguagli* represent an original contribution at the intersection of two major developments, which are related to one another by the rhetoric of dissimulation and the culture of secrecy in early modern Europe (Bilotta 2011): first, the literature on the well-being of the body politic (Zaccaro 2002), whose long-term thrust was to deprive astrologers, in particular, of their traditional role as forecasters of coming events, and second, the diverse agenda of “Copernican” astronomy, whose claims and spectral presence, particularly in connection with Galileo Galilei and the observers of the Medici regime, would become increasingly pronounced only a decade after the first publication of the Parnassian news.

To all appearances, Boccalini spoke *of* and *to* Galileo. In turn the scientist, while in Padua, made inquiries about the writer through a common friend, Girolamo Magagnati (1565–1619), who following Boccalini’s own work on Roman

exemplarity wrote imperial biographies of Romulus and Numa; correspondence aside, Galileo was quick to react to the novelty of these writings. And as soon as he obtained a printed copy of the *Celestial Assembly Concerning the New Comet*, a work ostensibly written in the wake of *Ragguagli* that defended a Tychonic explanation of the recent phenomena (Besomi and Camerota 2000), he also set about planning a written answer to it. It is striking that such a riposte was meant to feature, in the style of Boccalini, a fast-paced procession of speakers. This demonstrates that, despite crucial theoretical differences, Tychonians and Copernicans coveted the same readership and immediately seized on the new vernacular genre of Parnassian reports. And since Galileo eventually abandoned his original plans for the *Assayer*, which in time became both bolder and more detailed, we can safely assume that to his eyes and those of collaborators like Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623), Boccalini stood out less for his content than as a prose stylist. In fact, Boccalini’s bulletins were, by comparison, *never* newsworthy (Reeves 2014).

Impact and Legacy

As a man of law, Boccalini would have appreciated the Index’s recognition that his *Ragguagli* did not have a strong political agenda and that their topical fervor was somewhat anticlerical, yet not openly antireligious. As a consequence, Boccalini’s European impact offered a kind of posture or orientation whose perspective was that of a well-educated, skeptical, and debonair reader (Varese 1958). In strictly Venetian terms, from Lepanto to the Interdict, Tassoni’s mock epic, Boccalini’s reports, and Galileo’s dialogues were strange co-travellers – all characterized by their manipulation of impolite laughter. In a manner of speaking, Boccalini gave Machiavelli the instrument of the telescope, understanding the political thinker as a figure able to turn astuteness into exercises of observation; sometimes, that meant focusing on the myopic image of the writer intent on writing, active simultaneously as *scriptor* and excerptor.

It has been recently established that, on the grounds of Boccalini's interest for the Machiavellian lexicon of *estrema rovina* and themes such as the useful "bone marrow" of political science, the *Ragguagli* can be read as a theatrical exposition of the wisdom matured in the *Commentaries to Tacitus* (Baldassarri 2015). Of course, the decision to concentrate on Tacitus and not Livy, as in the axis Machiavelli-Guicciardini, and the choice not to use *Discorsi* as a title (used instead by the historian Virgilio Malvezzi (1595–1654), a Lipsian writer and Christian neo-stoic, in 1622) indicate that Boccalini also had some ambiguity, if not animosity, toward the Florentine Secretary. Likewise, it is understandable that, whereas Boccalini's bulletins implied an audience well disposed to both the Veneto and Tuscany, his personal situation forced him to subtract some of the glamor from the Roman constitution in favor of the Venetian republic. In conclusion, Machiavelli's image, as it was shaped by Boccalini, remains significantly less engaged in moralizing discussions than in a militant position against abstraction in the study of the past (Figorilli 2015).

Boccalini's uncanny emphasis on optical devices and discernment entailed a high degree of semiotic redundancy, as did the repeated images of scribal tampering and spying that one finds in Boccalini's imitators, namely, in the *Ragguagli di Parnaso* by Girolamo Brusoni, written in Florence between 1633 and 1636, the *Avvisi di Parnaso* by Marco Antonio Nali, of 1644, which brings Boccalini's invention to a maximum of normative predictability, and particularly the *Corriero svaligiato* by Ferrante Pallavicino, of 1641. Pallavicino's echo of Boccalini's episode in 2.58 concerning troubles with Venetian magistrates, however, had only a rather local resonance; in reality, it was with the aforementioned *Pietra* – a collection of dispatches expressly conceived for transalpine markets – that Boccalini earned a full European stature (Longoni 1999), although his influence on the Academy of the Incogniti in Venice (Beniscelli 2015) continues to be the noteworthy and relatively neglected episode of a new epistemic genre enabling a translation across different disciplines and the circulation of Plutarch and Justus Lipsius, among others, to the Veneto.

While Frances Yates' framing of Boccalini as a hinge between the hermetic tradition and later skeptical developments (Yates 1964) received a lukewarm evaluation (Vickers 1979), Harald Hendrix's research on Boccalini as the "cultural conscience" of the intelligentsia in seventeenth-century Europe has been the foundational backbone of modern scholarship (Hendrix 1995), with the paradoxical corollary that we now have more studies on the critical fortune of Boccalini than on his thought (Guaragnella 2015). Furthermore, given Hendrix's focus on historiography and politics, some aspects of his legacy, namely, the favorable gesturing to Boccalini of the Paduan-Venetian circles of Galileo, Sarpi, and Pinelli, remain unclear, having received little attention. By contrast, building on Hendrix's insightful emphasis on the role of the Low Countries for the dissemination of Boccalini's ideas, more recent work has detailed the indirect debt of Spinoza, whose knowledge of Boccalini depended on one of the writer's most formidable followers, Christoph Besold (Mignini 2015). It is interesting to observe how Spinoza's intervention on the "Machiavellian" debates about the *arcana imperii* makes use of Boccalini's expressions such as the dog's false teeth or the mole's eyes, a variant of which is also found in Bruno's *Cena de le ceneri*. By then, the optical theme so characteristic of Boccalini's mercurial peddling of news had gone full circle.

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Boderianus, Guido Fabricius

► La Boderie, Guy Lefevre de

Bodin, Jean

Born: 1529/1530, Angers?

Died: 1596, Laon

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Abstract

This essay presents the French jurist, statesman, and humanist philosopher Jean Bodin, who was one of the most prominent political theorists of the sixteenth century. Bodin is more widely known for this contribution to the theory of

sovereignty which he formulated in his monumental treatise published in 1576 under the title *Les Six livres de la République* (*The Six Books of the Commonwealth*). But besides this work, Bodin's writings include various other texts that reveal his erudition and profound engagement with a much wider range of topics, from natural philosophy and religion to political economy and historical methodology. His major works include the *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (*Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, 1566), *La réponse aux paradoxes de Malestroït* (*Response to the Paradoxes of Malestroït*, 1568), *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (*On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, 1580), *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis* (*Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime*, written in the 1580s but first published in 1857), and *Universae naturae theatrum* (*The Theatre of Universal Nature*, 1596).

Biography

Jean Bodin was born in 1529 or 1530 (perhaps at Angers) to Guillaume Bodin, a merchant in the textile business based at Angers, and Catherine Dutertre. He joined the Carmelite order at an early stage in his life, but he was released from his vows sometime in 1548–1549, possibly on the grounds that he had professed while he was too young. During his time as a Carmelite, he was sent to Paris where he acquired an impressive humanist education studying at the Collège Royal. While in the French capital, he came in contact with various intellectual trends and controversies and showed special affinity for the teachings of Peter Ramus whose lectures he probably attended and the influence of whom may be traced, as has been argued, in a number of Bodin's writings (McRae 1955). He left Paris around 1550 and spent the following decade furthering his studies by pursuing law at the University of Toulouse. By the end of the 1550s, his ambition for an academic career in Toulouse was frustrated as he did not manage to obtain a professorship at the university there. This also marked the end of this stay in Toulouse.

Thus, around 1561 he went back to Paris where he found employment as an advocate at the parlement. In the following years, he also started publishing some of his major works, and this enabled him to establish himself as a prominent figure in the political and intellectual society of Paris. Following the publication of his *Methodus* in 1566, another significant text by Bodin appeared in print in 1568 under the title *Les Paradoxes de Monsieur de Malestroït* [...] avec la réponse de M. Jean Bodin ausdicts Paradoxes in which he analyzes the problem of high inflation that afflicted sixteenth-century Europe. Thus, by the end of the 1560s, he managed to attract the attention of King Charles IX who assigned him around 1570 with various political and administrative tasks. In the following year, he also entered the service of Francis, duke of Alençon (who was second in line to the throne after Henry III), as counselor, a position that significantly furthered his prospects for a career at court.

Bodin continued having a significant role at the very center of French political power after the death of Charles IX and the accession to the throne of his brother Henry III in 1574, while his acclaim was more firmly established with the publication in 1576 of the *Les Six livres de la République* (*The Six Books of the Commonwealth*), a work that enjoyed much positive reception within considerable part of the political elite of the country. At the time of the *République's* publication, France was notably still ravaged by the devastating wars of religion between Catholics and Huguenots. Within this context, Bodin's advocacy of the idea in the *République* that order could best be maintained if the ruler enjoyed absolute and indivisible sovereign power was warmly received by many.

However, Bodin's prospects for a successful courtly career suffered a setback in 1576 when he opposed Henry III's fiscal policies at the estates general of Blois (himself serving as representative for the third estate of Vermandois). Bodin, who saw the king's attempt to enforce new taxation as a measure that overburdened an already heavily taxed third estate, makes reference in his journal of the assembly of the estates general to his "determination to serve the 'public good

(*le bien du peuple*)’ even at the cost of forfeiting the king’s goodwill” (Lloyd 2013, 5). Perhaps for Bodin this opposition was not inconsistent with his belief in the king’s sovereign power and authority. However, as a result of this action he lost the favor of Henry III, and his hopes for a more prestigious political appointment at court were frustrated.

In the same year, 1576, Bodin moved to Laon having married the widow of a Laon official. While there, he employed himself in the service of the duke of Alençon whom he accompanied in 1581 on a trip to England that had the purpose of pursuing the duke’s matrimonial suit with the English queen, Elizabeth I. The Duke of Alençon’s sudden death in 1584 also marked Bodin’s definitive disengagement with the world of courtly affairs and high politics, though in 1587 he succeeded his deceased brother-in-law coming to the office of king’s attorney in Laon, a position that he continued holding until his death in 1596.

Bodin’s last few years in Laon were beset due to the eruption of a new cycle of civil strife in the country over succession to the throne following the assassination of the king in 1589. Following this event and until 1594, Laon fell under the political control of the Catholic League that opposed the Protestant Henry of Navarre’s claim to the throne (despite the fact that this claim was more legitimate on the basis of French law than that of his opponent, Cardinal Charles of Bourbon). The league clearly violated a number of the ideas advocated by Bodin in his political writings (more prominently, the principle of legitimacy). Yet, Bodin appears to have been forced to accept its rule and collaborate with it under fear of losing his position, his property, and possibly his life. His support for Henry of Navarre was only expressed in 1594, after Laon came under the control of the Protestant forces.

Despite the fact that Bodin’s last few years in Laon were politically so troubling, the two decades he spent there until the end of his life were immensely productive intellectually, and some of his most influential works were written during this period. These include his highly influential treatise on demonology and witchcraft (*De la démonomanie des sorciers*) that was published

in 1580 and his impressive treatise on religion, his *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, which was finished by 1593 but only came to be published decades later (probably due to the fact that it would put Bodin under the accusation of heresy). His remarkable contribution to the field of natural philosophy, his *Universae naturae theatrum* (*The Theatre of Universal Nature*), was published posthumously in 1596, the same year of Bodin’s death from the plague.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Bodin’s acclaim as a philosopher is largely based on his contribution to the field of political theory and, more specifically, on his contribution to the theory of sovereignty which he formulated in his monumental treatise published in 1576 under the title *Les Six livres de la République* (*The Six Books of the Commonwealth*) – a work that also includes one of the earliest treatments of slavery as an unnatural institution that is not only contrary to the dignity of human beings but also a constant threat to political stability. Besides this work, Bodin’s writings include various other texts that reveal his erudition and profound engagement with a much wider range of topics, from natural philosophy and religion to political economy and historical methodology. His first important work was his *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (*Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, 1566), which provides an attempt to advance a clear and concise method for the study of history. Another important work published by Bodin in this early stage of his career was *La réponse aux paradoxes de Malestroit* (*Response to the Paradoxes of Malestroit*, first published in 1568 and in a revised version in 1578), in which he produced one of the earliest formulations of the quantity theory of money. Other important works followed the publication of the *République* in 1576. These include *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (*On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, 1580), a treatise that examined the topic of demonology and witchcraft, and the *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis* (*Colloquium of the Seven about*

Secrets of the Sublime, written in the 1580s but first published in 1857), a work that advances the largely unorthodox for the context of the sixteenth century idea of religious toleration. Bodin's last major work was *Universae naturae theatrum* (*The Theatre of Universal Nature*), published in the year of his death in 1596. This work provides the culmination of some of the ideas previously explored by Bodin in the *Démonomanie* and the *Colloquium heptaplomeres* as it brings natural philosophy into dialogue with the pursuit of religious knowledge. The rest of this section provides a survey of Bodin's heritage by introducing his major works and the central questions they engage with.

Bodin's Methodology of History: The *Methodus*

First published in 1566, Bodin's *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (*Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*) was written with the purpose of advancing a clear and concise method for the study of history. The book – that run through thirteen Latin editions from the year of its publication to 1650 – provided Bodin's first important work and laid the basis for the examination of a number of ideas that he was subsequently going to develop in greater detail in other works. (See Couzinet 1996.)

As Beatrice Reynolds suggests, Bodin's writing of the *Methodus* reflects his engagement not only with “the universal and eternal question of the interpretation of history” but also by “the narrower and more timely problem of the nature of government in France” during the period in which he wrote (Reynolds, “Introduction,” in Bodin 1945, x). Further, in the *Methodus* Bodin “revealed the trends of his era in that his philosophy of history moved away from the authoritarian toward the natural – in this case, toward the pseudoscientific” (Reynolds, “Introduction,” in Bodin 1945, xi). The book consists of ten chapters in which Bodin exposes his theory on how history should be studied. Chapter 1 starts with the assertion that history may be divided in three types:

Of history, that is, the true narration of things, there are three kinds: human, natural, and divine. The first

concerns man; the second, nature; the third, the Father of nature. One depicts the acts of man while leading his life in the midst of society. The second reveals causes hidden in nature and explains their development from earliest beginnings. The last records the strength and power of Almighty God and of the immortal souls, set apart from all else. (Bodin 1945, 15)

The *Methodus* foreshadows Bodin's engagement with all three types of history, containing ideas that were later developed in the *République*, the *Theatrum*, and the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*: these three works addressed human, natural, and divine history, respectively. However, the *Methodus* concentrates on the first type of history, on “human actions and the rules governing them,” this being considered by Bodin, the first necessary step in a process toward the examination and full understanding of the history of nature and God. As he further highlights, the study of human history is essential “for acquiring prudence . . . because episodes in human life sometimes recur as in a circle, repeating themselves” (Bodin 1945, 17).

Bodin then proceeds in Chaps. 2 and 3 to establish his methodology for the proper study of history. Here he talks about the need to establish a certain order in the study of historical events, pointing to the merits of a sequential reading of history that starts from earlier accounts and proceeds in chronological order to more recent periods. Also he refers to the significance of reading history within the context of other related fields, such as geography and cosmography, and suggests the method of proceeding from an examination of more general accounts to more detailed ones as a means of comprehending the whole. Further, he highlights the need for systematic note-taking. But before notes are taken, one needs to make a correct choice of historians and a good assessment of one's material. Chapters 4 and 5 thereby concentrate on these issues, citing Aristotle's advice to students of history: that they should neither believe all they read nor discredit sources outrightly. Bodin also emphasizes the significance of reading history without having any emotional bias, something that is more easily achieved when one examines from a certain chronological or geographical distance.

Chapter 5 of the *Methodus* also presents Bodin's formulation of his climate theory by advancing the idea that the temperament of people is influenced by such factors as climate and geography. As noted by M. J. Tooley, in his development of this theory (that ultimately found its source in Aristotle), Bodin drew "upon some common stock of scientific notions familiar to his contemporaries," on the basis of which he offered "a masterly summary of about two thousand years of speculation" (Tooley 1953, 64). This climate theory suggests that the form of a state as well as its legal system should be adjusted according to the characteristics of its people as those are defined by its climate and geographic location and features.

These ideas would subsequently be developed in greater detail by Bodin in the *République*. This also applies to the ideas presented in Chap. 6 that is entitled "The Type of Government in States." This chapter, which is notably the largest taking up more than one third of the book, laid the basis for Bodin's exploration of many of the issues addressed the *République*. Chapter 7 of the *Methodus* provides a refutation of the Biblical narrative of four monarchies as well as a rebuttal of the classical myth of a golden age which is criticized for its naiveté. Following Chap. 8 that is entitled "A System of Universal Time," Bodin then proceeds in Chap. 9 to address the origins of races and introduce criteria by which to define these. The book concludes with a bibliographical chapter entitled "The Order and Collection of Historians."

Bodin on Sovereignty: *The République*

Bodin's treatment of the concept of sovereignty in *Les Six livres de la République* was his most important contribution to the field of political science. The work was first published in French in 1576 and a Latin version of the text by Bodin himself first appeared in print 10 years later (with extensive revisions). In English, it was first made available in 1606 in a translation by Richard Knolles. This was preceded by the publication of translations in various other languages that made

the text more widely available to European audiences: an Italian one in 1588, another one in Spanish in 1590, and one in German in 1592.

Bodin's famous definition of sovereign power appears at the beginning of Chap. 8 of the first book of the *République*, following chapters that concentrate on such issues as the primary ends of a commonwealth, the difference between a commonwealth and a family, and the power of fathers, and husbands, as well as the power of masters and the institution of slavery. As Bodin asserts in this highly influential formulation of the concept:

Sovereignty is the absolute and perpetual power of a commonwealth, which the Latins call *maiestas*; the Greeks *akra exousia*, *kurion arche*, and *kurion politeuma*; and the Italians *segniora*, a word they use for private persons as well as for those who have full control of the state, while the Hebrews call it *tomech shévet* – that is, the highest power of command. (Bodin 1992, 1)

Having provided this definition of sovereignty, Bodin then proceeds to define the terms "absolute" and "perpetual." As he suggests in his analysis of the latter, a person that is given absolute power for a limited period of time cannot be called a sovereign prince, but a mere trustee or custodian of that power, lawful possession of which always remains with the person or persons who gave it to him. For example, if a sovereign prince gives power of command to a regent for a certain time (for instance, as a means of relieving himself of the burden of certain part of government), this does not compromise his own power as a sovereign as he remains in possession of the power he has assigned to the regent, and the regent merely holds that power in trust. This "lieutenant," Bodin comments, "has nothing of his own and remains answerable for his charge to the person of whom he holds the power to command, unlike a sovereign prince who is answerable only to God" (Bodin 1992, 4). Accordingly, the person who holds power in trust goes back to being a private citizen when the definite period of time for which he was assigned this power expires. Unlike this limited form of power that is "revocable at the good pleasure of him who granted it," sovereign power is not limited with regard to time and may not be revoked but is "perpetual" in the

sense that it lasts “for the life of him who has the power” (Bodin 1992, 6). Likewise, sovereign power is unlimited with regard to its functions. Sovereignty being both “perpetual” and “absolute,” Bodin highlights, it “is not limited either in power, or in function, or in length of time” (Bodin 1992, 3).

Bodin’s definition of the term “absolute” employs his understanding of the concept of a “true gift,” as opposed to a gift which is not true or authentic. A “true gift,” he suggests, is a gift that “carries no further conditions, being complete and accomplished all at once, whereas gifts that carry obligations and conditions are not authentic gifts. And so sovereignty given to a prince subject to obligations and conditions is properly not sovereignty or absolute power” (Bodin 1992, 8). Sovereignty is only absolute in the proper sense when no obligations or conditions are attached to it as such elements would compromise its function. On the basis of this idea, a ruler becomes sovereign when those who possess sovereignty (e.g., the people or the aristocracy) “purely and simply give [him] absolute and perpetual power to dispose of all possessions, persons, and the entire state at his pleasure and then to leave it to anyone he pleases, just as a proprietor can make a pure and simple gift of his goods for no other reason than his generosity” (Bodin 1992, 7–8). As Bodin clarifies, the power given to such a ruler is not in any way compromised “if the conditions attached at the creation of a prince are of the law of God or nature” (Bodin 1992, 8). For, while sovereignty carries no other obligations or conditions, it is always subject to the laws of God and the laws of nature as well as “to various human laws that are common to all peoples” (Bodin 1992, 10).

Sovereignty and Law

Another issue that is central to Bodin’s definition of sovereignty concerns the relation between the sovereign and law. As he points out in his discussion in Chap. 8 of the first book of the *République*, the ability of the sovereign to give law to his people as well as the ability to change or repeal

laws when he deems it necessary is one of the defining characteristics of sovereign power:

persons who are sovereign [...] must be able to give the law to subjects, and to suppress or repeal disadvantageous laws and replace them with others – which cannot be done by someone who is subject to the laws or to persons having power of command over him. (Bodin 1992, 11)

On the basis of this idea, he draws the conclusion that the sovereign “is not subject to the law” – just as he “must not be subject in any way to the commands of someone else” (Bodin 1992, 11). As a means of supporting this, Bodin argues that the idea of making laws for one’s own self carries a contradiction in terms or an impossibility, “for although one can receive law from someone else, it is as impossible by nature to give one’s self a law as it is to command one’s self to do something that depends on one’s own will” (Bodin 1992, 12). This, for Bodin, highlights the incompatibility between the role of the sovereign as lawmaker and the position of someone who is subject to the law. Thus, the sovereign is said to hold a position above the law, and this covers not only his own laws but also the laws of his predecessors: the sovereign is not subject to the latter as this would compromise his absolute power. Accordingly, a sovereign prince is free either to ratify or to change and repeal the laws of his predecessors as he pleases.

As Bodin further clarifies in this chapter, it may be advisable for sovereign princes to obey their own laws. However, this is not because they have any obligation to do so but because that is an effective means for them to secure the submission of their subjects: “for there is nothing,” he argues, that makes a sovereign prince “more feared and revered by his subjects” than his keeping of his own laws, “whereas, on the contrary, there is nothing that more abases the authority of his law than his own contempt for it” (Bodin 1992, 31).

The power of the sovereign to make law is further discussed by Bodin in Chap. 10 of the first book of the *République*, where he analyzes the marks of sovereignty. As he reiterates in this chapter, “it is only sovereign princes who can make law for all subjects without exception, both collectively and individually”

(Bodin 1992, 52). Here, the sovereign's lawmaking capacity is presented as having such central significance that it is described as the first and foremost mark of sovereignty that provides the basis for all the rest of the sovereign's rights:

This same power of making and repealing law includes all the other rights and prerogatives of sovereignty, so that strictly speaking we can say that there is only this one prerogative of sovereignty, inasmuch as all the other rights are comprehended in it – such as declaring war or making peace; hearing appeals in the last instance from the judgements of any magistrate; instituting and removing the highest officers; imposing taxes and aids on subjects or exempting them; granting pardons and dispensations against the rigor of the law; determining the name, value, and measure of the coinage; requiring subjects and liege vassals to swear that they will be loyal without exception to the person to whom their oath is owed. These are the true prerogatives of sovereignty, which are included in the power to give law to all in general and to each in particular, and not to receive law from anyone but God. (Bodin 1992, 58–59)

As Bodin also emphasizes in this chapter, the sovereign does not simply have the power to make laws but to do so “without the consent of any other, whether greater, equal, or below him” (Bodin 1992, 56).

On the Indivisibility of Sovereignty

Following from Bodin's discussion of sovereignty and its main attributes (and especially the sovereign's prerogative to make law without the consent of anyone else) is the conclusion that this supreme type of power cannot be divided but has to reside with a single person or group. As Bodin clearly asserts, “the prerogatives of sovereignty are indivisible” (Bodin 1992, 104), and on the basis of this notion, he further suggests that the idea of a mixed state (i.e., a state that combines the principles of different constitutional forms, such as monarchy with aristocracy or democracy) is not simply contradictory but also highly untenable:

But [really] to combine monarchy with democracy and with aristocracy is impossible and contradictory, and cannot be even imagined. For if sovereignty is indivisible, as we have shown, how could it be shared by a prince, the nobles, and the people at

the same time? The first prerogative of sovereignty is to give the law to subjects. But who will be the subjects and who will obey if they also have the power to make law? (Bodin 1992, 92)

As Bodin argues here, the division of sovereignty (and thereby also of the power to make law) can only lead to political instability, constitutional chaos, and ultimately the failure of the state – a failure that can only be remedied if sovereignty returns to a single agent (be it to a king, the nobility, or the people – in which case the constitution would be monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, respectively). “Hence,” he suggests, “it must always come to arms until such time as sovereignty resides in a prince, in the lesser part of the people, or in all the people” (Bodin 1992, 104). Out of the three constitutional forms available, Bodin clearly positions himself in favor of monarchy as the most tenable form that avoids the possible ambiguities and contradictions that he traces in the other two forms. Irrespectively of which constitutional form may be chosen though, Bodin highlights the significance of preserving the sovereign power indivisible: as he emphasizes, this indivisibility is a necessary prerequisite for the preservation of unity in the state and a *sine qua non* for its continuation.

As Julian H. Franklin has pointed out, “the idea that concentration of power in the ruler is an essential condition of the state as such might seem at first sight to be deliberately absolutist.” Indeed, Bodin's discussion in the *République* suggests that “apparent restraints on royal power were not constitutional requirements, but mere recommendations of prudence and good government.” However, Franklin notes, Bodin's earlier writings point to a somewhat position. In his *Methodus*, for instance, he does not appear to have been an absolutist. The *République* therefore registers a certain shift in Bodin's political thought (“Introduction,” in Bodin 1992, xiii).

The Laws of God and Nature and How They Limit Sovereign Power

Even the *République* though contains traces of how the sovereign's power may be in some ways

limited – for, at the same time that he defines sovereign power in terms of the sovereign’s position above positive law – Bodin also highlights that the sovereign always remains subject to the laws of God and nature. These, he notes, are laws that sovereign princes have no right to disregard or override.

unless they wish to be guilty of treason against God, and to war against Him beneath whose grandeur all the monarchs of this world should bear the yoke and bow the head in abject fear and reverence. The absolute power of princes and of other sovereigns lordships (*seigneuries souverains*), therefore, does not in any way extend to the laws of God and of nature. (Bodin 1992, 13)

The laws of God and of nature introduce certain limits to sovereign power which are discussed by Bodin with closer reference to such issues as property and human life. For instance, as he argues, the prohibition to murder may apply to a sovereign prince as much as to his subjects. However, this is not due to the sovereign prince’s obligation to any relevant positive laws, but because that is dictated by the law of God and of nature:

But if the prince forbids killing on penalty of death, is he not then bound by his own laws? I say that this law is not his law but the law of God and of nature, to which he is more strictly bound than any of his subjects, from which he cannot be dispensed either by the Senate or the people, and for which he is always answerable to the judgement of God, whose inquiry, said Solomon, is very rigorous. (Bodin 1992, 31)

Likewise, Bodin suggests that the sovereign has no right to lay hands on the private property of his subjects without their consent as the law of God dictates that “it is illicit to take, or even to covet, another person’s goods” (Bodin 1992, 39). This rule, which safeguards the inviolability of private property vis-à-vis the voracious drives of ruthless rulers, has one possible exception according to Bodin. Normally, he says, a ruler is not entitled to take his subjects’ property “without just and reasonable cause,” but such reasonable cause may be said to exist when the commonwealth is under threat and such an action is required “for the preservation of the state” (Bodin 1992, 39). In such a situation (that might

involve, for instance, emergency taxation for the needs of warfare), Bodin notes that subjects should be expected by “natural reason” to place the public good above their personal interest and thereby to willingly give up their possessions “for the welfare of the commonwealth” (Bodin 1992, 40).

Bodin on Slavery

Bodin’s treatment of the question of slavery appears in the fifth chapter of Book 1 of *The République*. This chapter, which significantly interrogates slavery as an unnatural institution that contravenes human dignity, firmly established Bodin as one of the earliest abolitionists during this period. Bodin’s discussion here challenges the well-known Aristotelian treatment of slavery as a natural condition: for Aristotle, who advances this idea in the *Politics* (1254a–1255b), some people are born to be masters while others – those who are “capable of belonging to another” as they “participate in reason so far as to apprehend it but not to possess it” – are born to be slaves and obey others. This distinction is also reflected, according to Aristotle, in the bodily attributes of each group, with slaves naturally made “strong for necessary service” and masters made “erect and unserviceable for such occupations” (Aristotle 2005, 23). On the contrary, for Bodin, slavery is not simply a disgraceful condition that is against the dignity of the human kind but also a violation of the law of God and an affront to reason.

As has been argued, Bodin’s hostility to slavery may be said to reflect a broader set of attitudes toward slavery in sixteenth-century France, where great part of the population was only set free from personal servitude about a century earlier. On the basis of this reading, the memory of serfdom, as well as the fear of returning to that condition, produced a largely negative set of attitudes toward slavery – this despite the fact that the development of the slave trade and New World slave labor would subsequently contribute to the establishment of France as a colonial power (Heller 1994, 53–54). But, as has also been suggested, Bodin’s

opposition to slavery was above all shaped by his views on sovereignty and the state: while others “regarded the emergence of the strong state as a threat to human liberty, Bodin held that a strong state was the trustee of a citizen’s rights and possessions,” and “slavery not only robbed a whole class of humanity of such civic rights, but in so doing represented a permanent threat to the stability of the state” (Heller 1994, 54). Indeed, as Bodin suggests (in a point that reveals the relevance of his discussion in this chapter to his broader treatment of political power and sovereignty in *The République*), the long history of slavery and violent slave insurrections clearly shows that far from being a useful institution, slavery in fact undermines the state as it poses a continual threat to political order and stability. Thus, for a state to enjoy long-lasting stability no such institution should exist, and slaves should be given rights of citizenship (a point that he also extends to wage laborers).

Bodin on Economics: Malestroït’s Paradoxes and Bodin’s Quantity Theory of Money

Even though Bodin’s fame is largely based on his writings in the field of political philosophy, he also made a significant contribution to the field of economics and has been credited as the “pioneer formulator” of the quantity theory of money (O’Brien 2000 and 2007). Bodin’s introduction of this idea may be found in *La réponse aux paradoxes de Malestroït* (*Response to the Paradoxes of Malestroït*) that was first published in 1568 and then in a revised edition 10 years later. This text was written in response to a treatise published in 1566 under the title *The Paradoxes of the Seigneur de Malestroït on the Matter of Money* – a treatise that sought to address the issue of inflation, the unchecked growth of which was becoming a pressing problem for the economies of many European countries in the sixteenth century, including France. The central argument of this treatise was that in the last 300 years the prices of commodities had remained constant in terms of the precious metals. The main example used in

support of this claim was that of velvet which was presented as having a constant price in terms of the precious metals since the fourteenth century. Attempt was also made to extend this argument over perishable commodities, such as corn and wine. Thus, according to Malestroït’s *paradoxes*, the rises in the prices of commodities were “simply changes in the unit of account, resulting from debasement” (O’Brien 2007, 19) – debasement being a process that “involved adding low-value metals to the coinage, spreading the supply of gold and silver further” (O’Brien 2007, 12).

Bodin’s *Response* refuted Malestroït’s arguments first of all by challenging the validity of his data which he exposed as erroneous. According to Bodin’s own argument, for instance, it was highly doubtful whether velvet actually existed in the fourteenth century – so, Malestroït’s whole argumentation regarding its price in relation to precious metals during that period could not but be mistaken. Further, Bodin pointed out that the factor of debasement that was so central in Malestroït’s analysis could not, on its own, adequately account for the rampant inflation witnessed in France and other European countries in the sixteenth century. While Bodin’s refutation of Malestroït’s claims was in itself a remarkable achievement that exhibited his outstanding grasp of economic data, his contribution to economics in the *Response* is primarily distinguished due to his own analysis of the causes of inflation. Besides debasement (which he acknowledged as a possible cause of inflation), Bodin identified four other possible causes: (1) the abundance of gold and silver, (2) monopolies, (3) scarcity caused by factors such as export trade and waste, and (4) fashionable demand by the upper social and economic classes for luxury goods (O’Brien 2007, 22). Out of these five causes, Bodin identified the abundance of gold and silver as the most significant one, aptly noting that in the sixteenth century the supply of these two precious metals was far greater than it had ever been in the past 400 years. Indeed, this observation appears to have been valid as the development of colonization led to a constant and unprecedented influx of precious metals in European countries. The great impact of this influx was more directly seen in

Spain as gold and silver were mainly drawn from Spanish colonies, but, as has been noted, “France, as an immediate neighbor, linked both by trade and by labour mobility,” also “felt the impact quite soon” (O’Brien 2007, 13). Bodin’s analysis of the significance of this abundance of gold and silver laid the framework for this formulation of the quantity theory of money, which in simple terms involves the idea that the supply of money has a direct impact on the level of prices and, thereby, that the increase in the supply of money may cause the prices of commodities to rise.

Bodin on Witchcraft: *De la démonomanie des sorciers*

In 1578 Bodin served as judge in the proceedings against a woman called Jeanne Harvillier who was accused of witchcraft. The woman was found guilty of the offense and was thereby sentenced to death. Upon this occasion, Bodin wrote his treatise on witchcraft that was first published in French in 1580 under the title *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (*On the Demon-Mania of Witches*).

In his preface to this text, Bodin makes reference to the Harvillier case which is used as a starting point for his analysis in the rest of the book of his views on the world of spirits and the subject of witchcraft. As he explains, he was prompted to write his treatise “because there were some who found the case strange and almost unbelievable” (Bodin 1995, 37). The main purpose of the book – the title of which was chosen “on account of the madness which makes [witches] chase after devils” – is “to serve as a warning to all those who read it, in order to make it clearly known that there are no crimes which are nearly so vile as this one, or which deserve more serious penalties” (Bodin 1995, 37). Also, citing the example of the Italian Pietro d’Abano “who tried to teach that there are no spirits” but finally proved to be one of his country’s greatest witches, Bodin says that he wrote his book so as “to respond to those who in printed books try to save witches by every means, so that it seems Satan has inspired them and drawn them to his line in order to publish these fine books” (Bodin 1995, 37).

As Bodin further informs his readers in his preface, the *Démonomanie* is divided into four books which aim to facilitate the comprehension of this difficult subject. The first book starts by providing his definition of a witch, a term that is broadly employed to refer to someone who has allied himself to the devil and has espoused demonic practices, the main purpose of which is to destroy the works of God. Then, the book proceeds to talk about the association of spirits with men, the difference between good and evil spirits (or angels and demons, as they are called), as well as the difference between lawful and unlawful means to learn hidden things and accomplish something one wants. This book also refers to certain practices associated with witches, such as teratology, haruspicy, ornithomancy, and hieroscopy. The second book refers to the different types of magic and to the tacit and formal ways in which evil spirits may be invoked. Further, it examines various questions, such as whether those who expressly renounce God and their religion are bodily transported by evil spirits, whether evil spirits can transform men into beasts, whether witches copulate with demons, and whether witches can inflict illness, sterility, sexual dysfunction, or death on men and beasts. As Bodin clarifies in the preface, this book discusses “the illicit arts and methods of witches,” without yet offering anyone “the opportunity to use it for wicked gain.” The purpose of this information, he explains, is to “show the traps and snares which one must avoid, and assist judges who do not have the leisure to research such matters, but wish nevertheless to be instructed in order to establish a judgement” (Bodin 1995, 44). The third book refers to various lawful and unlawful ways to prevent or drive away spells and witchcraft and addresses questions such as whether witches may use their practices so as to earn the favor of people or obtain such things as beauty, wealth, and learning.

The fourth book of the *Démonomanie* encapsulates Bodin’s overall condemnation of witchcraft and reveals the extreme severity with which he countenanced this practice. This part concentrates, in particular, on how to investigate cases of witchcraft and proposes how to proceed against

witches, outlining the evidence that is required in order to prove the crime. Proof may be found, according to Bodin, in such evidence as the testimony of reliable witnesses but also in the voluntary confession of the person accused of witchcraft. This, he suggests, may be considered as indisputable proof, as opposed to forced confession that does not provide sufficient proof. Finally, this fourth book examines the kind of punishment witches should receive, with Bodin clearly taking a position in favor of the death penalty. This sentence, he clarifies, should only be reserved for those cases where there is solid proof of guilt, and he emphasizes the need for competent and well-trained judges who will be able to properly evaluate the evidence. Indeed, as he firmly advocates pointing to the significance of solid and indisputable proof, it is far more preferable to acquit someone who is guilty than to condemn someone who is innocent. However, as he points out, for those cases where solid proof is provided, the person accused of witchcraft should be punished with nothing less than painful death. At this point, he also returns to the case of Jeanne Harvillier that is cited as an indisputable example of a witch who allied herself with Satan and therefore merited the death penalty.

The *Démonomanie* enjoyed considerable popularity following its publication in 1580, and besides its numerous editions in French it was also soon translated into various other languages (into Latin and German in 1581 and then in Italian in 1587). It has been considered by scholars as a highly influential book that contributed to the increasing persecution of witchcraft in the decades that followed its publication. Many of its readers have been puzzled by the intolerance Bodin expresses here, an element that is seen as largely inconsistent with the views expressed by him elsewhere. Indeed, as has been pointed out, a number of scholars “have been shocked and perplexed at the apparent contrast between the ‘modern,’ ‘rational’ political Bodin” found in the *République*, or “the ‘tolerant’ religious Bodin” found in the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, “and the ‘intolerant’ and ‘superstitious’ Bodin of the *Demon-Mania*.” For others, this apparent inconsistency is merely “the result of applying

nineteenth- and twentieth-century mental categories to a thinker of a very different age” (Jonathan L. Pearl, “Introduction,” in Bodin 1995, 11). On the basis of this interpretation, Bodin’s severe condemnation of witchcraft in the *Démonomanie* is not inconsistent with his overall views on the role of religion in human existence, God’s relation to the universe and to man and further to his wish for the majesty of God to be honored: demonism and witchcraft (very much like atheism) were a direct affront to this idea and acts of treason against the glory of God.

Bodin on Religion: The *Colloquium Heptaplomeres* and Religious Tolerance

Bodin’s engagement with the issue of religion and its role in human existence may be found in a number of his writings, but more prominently in the *Démonomanie*, as well as the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, and *Universae naturae theatrum*. It is also revealed in the *République* where the question of religion is discussed within the context of his views on sovereignty and the significance of political stability in the state.

The *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis* (*Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime*) is believed to have been written by Bodin during the 1580s, but it was not published until 1857 even though numerous copies of the book circulated in manuscript. Even though Bodin’s authorship of the book has been questioned, scholars in recent years have pointed more firmly to the validity of his authorship by drawing attention to the various connections it shares with other works he wrote, especially with the *Démonomanie* and *Universae naturae theatrum* (Kunz, “Introduction,” in Bodin 2008).

Perhaps the reason why Bodin did not publish this text during his lifetime may be found in the awareness of how deeply radical and unorthodox many of his contemporaries would consider the idea of religious tolerance that he introduced in the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*. As has been suggested, Bodin never had the intention to publish this text “because he knew his age too well.” The work, according to this interpretation, may be

considered as his “religious testament for a later age, which he worked out only for this inner satisfaction.” Another view expressed more recently is that Bodin must have intended to publish the *Colloquium heptaplomeres* and would have done so if he had lived longer, as this text provides the key to great part of his work and especially to the *Démonomanie* and *Universae naturae theatrum* (Kuntz, “Introduction,” in Bodin 2008, xxxviii).

The *Colloquium heptaplomeres* – a work that has been considered as one of the earliest texts of comparative religion – provides a dialogue among a group of guests who have met in the home of a man called Paulus Coronaeus in Venice. The seven men who take part in this discussion all represent different faiths or religious beliefs. Besides the host who is a Catholic, the participants include Salomon Barcassius, a Jew; Diegus Toralba, a natural philosopher; Fridericus Podamicus, a Lutheran; Antonius Curtius, a Calvinist; Hieronymus Senamus, a Skeptic; and Octavius Fagnola, a convert from the Catholic faith to Islam. During the dialogue, each man provides his views on the various points discussed.

The question of true religion is of central significance in the text, and it is introduced from the very beginning through a story narrated by Octavius in Book 1. The story concerns a sea voyage Octavius has once embarked on, during which the ship was cast in the middle of a terrible tempest. Terrified by the dangerous situation, the captain urged all aboard to pray to God – and so they did, though as crewmen and travelers were a diverse group of people who came from many different places and had different faiths, each man prayed to the God he believed in. When Octavius finishes the story and describes how the ship eventually arrived safely to port, Coronaeus raises a series of questions the last one of which is perhaps the most central: “with such a variety of religions represented, whose prayers did God heed in bringing the ship safely into port?” (Bodin 2008, 14). The complexity of this as well as the other questions raised here by Coronaeus is marked by the silence of all his interlocutors who are unable to respond on the spot. Yet, Coronaeus’s questions are set as topics for discussion for their following

meetings. Thus, the question of which religion is the true one becomes one of their central points of consideration and special emphasis to it is given in the last three books of the *Colloquium*.

No doubt, Bodin’s engagement with this question in this work had special currency within the historical context of the sixteenth century when Christianity itself was divided by intense religious conflicts (with the wars of religion in Bodin’s own country being a prime example), but also when Christian Europe came into contact (increasingly so through travel and exploration) with a diverse set of religious beliefs outside Christianity. Bodin’s response to the question of true religion involves the idea of religious tolerance: on the basis of this idea, it is possible to approach God through different religious paths as true religion basically involves the purging of the soul and its turning toward true God. These views in many ways express Bodin’s overall theorization of the relation between God and the universe: for him, the unity of God is reflected in the harmony of nature and “the nature of true religion . . . reveals and accepts the multiplicity of ways to approach God and the multiple revelations of God to man. True religion is tolerant, for it sees the harmonious multiplicity of religions. No religion is true whose point of view is not universal, whose expression is not free, and whose center does not reflect the intimate harmony of God and nature” (Kuntz, “Introduction,” in Bodin 2008, xliii).

A number of scholars have tried to provide an answer as to which speaker in the *Colloquium heptaplomeres* may be said to represent Bodin’s own religious beliefs. In response to this debate, Marion Leathers Kuntz has aptly remarked that it is perhaps “nearer to the truth . . . that all the speakers represent Bodin’s thinking at one time or another. No one represents his thinking exclusively, but Bodin is sympathetic to some views of each as the dialogue develops. The point seems to be, however, that regardless of Bodin’s approval or disapproval of the religious views represented in the dialogue, he constantly stresses the need for toleration of all religions” (Kuntz, “Introduction,” in Bodin 2008, xliiv).

An attempt to define Bodin’s personal views on religion suggests that these actually fluctuated

during the course of his life and, as Kuntz has argued, they became increasingly more liberal as he grew older and developed as a thinker. Thus, in his *Discours au senat et au peuple de Toulouse* in 1559, he held that “people should be brought up publically in one religion” and gave emphasis to the element of religious unity as a means of preserving the unity and cohesiveness of the state (Kuntz, “Introduction,” in Bodin 2008, xliii). This is a position that is also reflected in his discussion of religion in the *République* (1576) that emphasizes the significance of political stability and the unity of the state. In the years that followed, according to Kuntz, Bodin’s “liberal views became even more apparent, until they reach a climax in the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, in which his religious opinions seem to have developed into a kind of theism which leaves each man’s religion, provided he has some, to his own personal conscience” (Kuntz, “Introduction,” in Bodin 2008, xliv). In this respect, Bodin advanced a view of true religion as a profoundly personal matter that did not necessarily require commitment to any particular church or established religion. This highly unorthodox for the standards of the sixteenth century view on religion must have been one of the elements that served to put Bodin under suspicion of heresy at different points in his life: he was suspected not only of being a heretical Catholic, but also of being a Calvinist and a Jew. Besides these, he was also considered by some as an atheist, though his writings clearly express the view that atheism is utterly unacceptable and intolerable. This is an idea that is consistently expressed in his writings throughout his career: most explicitly in the *République*, the *Démonomanie*, the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, and *Universae naturae theatrum*.

Bodin on Natural Philosophy: The *Universae Naturae Theatrum*

Bodin’s engagement with natural philosophy and his systematic exposition of his views on the universe culminated with the writing of *Universae naturae theatrum* (*The Theatre of Universal Nature*). This work of natural philosophy, which

was published in the year of Bodin’s death in 1596, is also a continuation of his attempt to understand the relation between God and the universe, as “the main theme of the *Theatrum* is that God can best be known from the theater of universal nature” (Kuntz, “Introduction,” in Bodin 2008, xl). In his preface to the *Theatrum*, Bodin refers to the reasons why one has to turn to an examination of nature in order to better understand God. Marion Leathers Kuntz outlines these reasons: “man’s laws are often irrational and full of error, but the laws of nature are logical and fixed, for God himself is the author. The contemplation of nature is of prime importance, for it often leads a man to thoughts of God” (Kuntz, “Introduction,” Bodin 2008, xxx). Thus, as Bodin points out:

the Theater of Nature is nothing other than the contemplation of those things founded by the immortal God as if a certain tablet were placed under the eyes of every single one so that we may embrace and love the majesty of that very author, his goodness, wisdom, and remarkable care in the greatest matters, in moderate affairs, in matters of least importance. For as Aristotle writes, the one who doubts whether there is God or not must be refuted by no weak arguments. (as quoted in Bodin 2008, xxx).

The *Theatrum*, which is divided in five books, is written in the form of a dialogue between two figures, Theorus and Mystagogus. The first book concentrates on proving that nature is governed by a single principle and that is God who also created the world. This book also analyzes the form and causes of nature and things therein, as well as the processes of generation, movement, growth, and decay. The second book examines various natural elements, such as rocks, meteors, metals, and minerals. The third one concentrates on plants and animals, while the fourth focuses on the world of spirits (Bodin’s discussion of the soul may also be found here). The fifth and final book examines the planetary system, with Bodin being dismissive of Copernicus’s notion of a heliocentric system.

As has been pointed out, one of Bodin’s main purposes in the *Theatrum* was to refute various ideas found in ancient philosophy, one of those being the Aristotelian notion concerning the

eternity of the world (Blair 1997). According to Bodin, the world cannot be eternal because it was created based on the voluntary decision and free will of God, whereas eternal things have no first cause and their existence cannot be the product of another's free will or decision. Unlike the world he made, God alone is infinite and eternal. God is therefore described as the prime mover of the universe, the principle which is eternal and singular, as nothing can be like it or equal to it. As the principle, that is, God cannot be compared to anything else; it can also not be understood in comparison to anything else. Therefore, human beings that are finite cannot comprehend God and can never get a full grasp of his infinite mind. On this basis, human beings may question various dire happenings they see around them, but they should always have in mind that the world is governed based on divine providence and, even though they may not be able to understand it, God always purposes their welfare. Further, God made all things in the world good and, in this respect, evil is merely the lack of good.

As has also been suggested, perhaps "Bodin's most noteworthy innovation" in the *Theatrum* may be found in his treatment of the soul (Blair 1997, 137). This significantly departs from other treatments of the soul as it advances the largely unorthodox view that the soul is immortal but also corporeal. According to this theory, the soul is corporeal, even though the body it has is not material but spiritual, and separable from the corporeal body of the flesh. Thus, the human soul is presented as an intermediate form, a form that stands somewhere in between the following two extremes: that of form that is completely disembodied and separated from matter (as in the case of angels and demons) and that of form that is completely concrete and cannot be separated from matter, like the natural bodies of human beings. On the basis of this analysis, spirits (angels as well as demons) are corporeal beings, even though their bodies are purely spiritual and separated from matter – and the body of the soul is akin to the body of these forms, even though it is not always separated from matter.

Of course, Bodin's concept of the corporeality of the soul has an important set of political

implications that may be read within the broader context of his political ideas: i.e., if human souls were considered as incorporeal, it would be difficult to define how rewards and punishments could be distributed after death. And yet, belief in such distribution might contribute to the preservation of social order and political stability, elements that are central in Bodin's political thought. However, his highly unorthodox views on the corporeality of the human souls as well as spirits met with the condemnation of the Catholic Church. Indeed, quite ironically, despite its repeated references to the figure of God and his role as the creator and prime mover of the world, the publication of the *Theatrum* served to spark afresh the accusations of atheism that had previously been launched against Bodin (especially after the publication of the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*).

The *Theatrum* was published in French translation in the year following Bodin's death, in 1597, but it has never been made available in English translation. Despite the work's great ambition and the fact that it provides the culmination of Bodin's thought on the relation between things human and divine, the *Theatrum* largely remains the least celebrated and least studied of Bodin's major works in our days – though the publication of Ann Blair's excellent study (*The Theater of Nature*) in 1997 somehow served to make amends for the broader scholarly neglect.

Impact and Legacy

As one of Bodin's twentieth-century readers once remarked, Bodin may be considered as "the Aristotle, the Montesquieu of the sixteenth century" (qtd. in Lloyd 2013, 2). His impact during his lifetime is perhaps best testified by the comment of his contemporary writer Gabriel Harvey that "you cannot stepp into a scholars studye but (ten to one) you shall litely find open either Bodin *De republica* or Le Royes Exposition upon Aristotles Politique Discourses" (qtd. in Lloyd 2013, 2). As Harvey's observation suggests, Bodin's significant impact was largely based on the wide circulation of the *République* that was edited at least twenty-four times by 1600 and was translated into

various other languages – including a Latin translation by Bodin himself, published in 1586 with extensive revisions – that made the work more broadly available to audiences across Europe. Among the rest of Bodin's works – besides the *République* – the *Methodus* and the *Démonomanie* were those that enjoyed greater circulation in the years that followed their publication and may therefore be assumed to have been read more widely. For this reason, Howell A. Lloyd's recent edition of an illuminating collection of essays on *The Reception of Bodin* concentrates on these three works.

As Lloyd notes in his "Introduction" to this volume, Bodin's immediate contemporaries in France were relatively slow in their response to his writings. Of course, the reception of his works by his fellow countrymen was unavoidably shaped by the social, political, and intellectual context of his time – especially by the political and ideological controversies that marked the French civil wars – with "opinion agitated often to the point of frenzy and yet already coloured with the rudiments and certainly the terminology of some of his leading ideas" (Lloyd 2013, 11). Within this context, Bodin's works received an often contradictory set of responses and interpretations. This varied reception is testified by the different interpretations given to his theory of sovereignty that ultimately came to be used by royalists and monarchomachs – i.e., those who opposed monarchy and the power of kings – alike to support their widely contrasting views on this issue. More broadly, the views on Bodin's scholarly contribution ranged from sharply negative and critical ones to others that were more approbatory or laudatory. Thus, while some of his contemporaries in France doubted his reliability as a scholar and accused him of plagiarism (a charge that pursued Bodin throughout his life), many others expressed admiration for his works – including Michelle de Montaigne whose essays suggest his debt to Bodin's thinking (Lloyd 2013, 15–16). As it appears, Bodin's contribution to the theory of sovereignty was duly recognized in France in the years after his death when his formulation of sovereignty had a significant impact within the absolutist movement. French

thinkers who engaged with his ideas in the seventeenth century include Charles Loyseau (1564–1627), Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642), and Gabriel Naudé (1600–1653). Thus, "Bodin's critics notwithstanding," the decades after his death "manifested as lively a reception at least of his masterpiece as that which Gabriel Harvey had observed in Elizabethan England half a century before" (Lloyd 2013, 17).

Of course, as Lloyd aptly reminds us, "the reception of Bodin was not just a French, but a Europe-wide phenomenon" as his ideas had an impact well beyond France to various other countries, such as England, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands (Lloyd 2013, 17). For example, the German jurist Johannes Althusius (1557–1638) employed Bodin's theory of sovereignty in his treatise *Politica methodice digesta* (1603) to suggest that sovereignty always belongs to the community – an argument that was used in this text to justify the Dutch revolt. Further, the Italian thinker Giovanni Botero (1544–1617) appears to have been influenced by Bodin in his treatment of the concept of "reason of state" (in French, *raison d'état*) in his *Della ragion di Stato* (1589), while a number of references to Bodin were also made by the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) in his *De jure belli ac pacis* (1625). In England (where the idea of sovereignty came under increasing debate, especially within the context of the civil war in the mid-seventeenth century), Bodin's ideas had a significant impact on Sir Robert Filmer (1588–1653) who often cites the French jurist in advancing his theory of monarchy as an absolute and divinely sanctioned type of power in his book *Patriarcha* (1680). John Locke's (1632–1704) refutation of Filmer's arguments in his *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) may thereby be seen to provide also a response to Bodin's theory of sovereignty. Another important English philosopher who appears to have been influenced by Bodin is Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Hobbes's affinity with Bodin may best be seen in his treatment of sovereignty as an indivisible form of power, an idea that is expressed by Hobbes in such works as his *The Elements of Law* (1640), *De cive* (1642), and *Leviathan* (1651).

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- [Filmer, Sir Robert](#)
- [Grotius, Hugo](#)
- [Hobbes, Thomas](#)

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Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus

Born: 475–7

Died: Around 526

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Abstract

Boethius was one of the most studied philosophers in the Middle Ages. His definition of *quadrivium*, his translations of Aristotle's *Logic*, and above all his *The Consolation of Philosophy* define medieval culture long before the Arabic transmission of ancient texts. In the Renaissance, the popularity of Boethius did not diminish, but there was a shift in the type of scholarship applied to his works: on the one hand, sixteenth-century translations of Aristotle's logical works competed with those by Boethius; on the other hand, the *Consolatio* was progressively placed within the larger context of transmission of ancient philosophy that emphasized its pagan content.

Biography

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was born in Rome, probably around 457–7. As a member of the very powerful *gens Anicia*, he spent all his mature life serving under the Ostrogoth king Theoderic the Great. Little is known about his education: after his father's death, he was adopted by senator Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, a lover of philosophy and literature; Boethius then became well-versed with the Greek philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, filtered through later interpretations, most notably the Neoplatonic tradition. He did not study in Athens or Alexandria, where the last two Platonic philosophical schools were (Marenbon 2003, pp. 12–13); his knowledge of Neoplatonism is likely to have occurred through Greek authors who lived between the third and fifth centuries (Ammonius, Proclus) or even Latin authors (Macrobius, Marius Victorinus, Apuleius; Moerschini 2014, pp. 92–131). His intellectual project was to offer a Latin translation of all the works of Plato and Aristotle, but it was never completed: he only managed to render into Latin Aristotle's *Organon* (Marenbon 2003, pp. 17–42; Moerschini 2014, pp. 9–34). He also wrote influential commentaries on Aristotle's *Logic*, on Porphyry's *Isagoge* (*Introduction to Aristotle's logic*), and on Cicero's *Topics*, as well as original works on logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and Christian theology. Under king Theoderic, Boethius had a brilliant career: he was appointed consul in 510, and in 522 he served as *magister officiorum*, a very prestigious position, whereby he oversaw other senior officials at the royal court (Galonier 2007, pp. 55–60). This appointment most likely caused Boethius' fall from Theoderic's grace: accused of treason in 523, he was detained for a short time in Pavia and then executed in a hitherto unidentified location (referred to as *In agro Calventiano*) in 524 or 526 (Galonier 2007, p. 93; Marenbon 2003, p. 10). Before his death, he was able to complete his most famous work, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (*De consolazione Philosophiae*, henceforth *Consolatio*), a dialogue between the author and a lady representing philosophy, which adopts the form of prosimetrum (mixing

prose and poetry). The *Consolatio* contains traces of both pagan and Christian religious traditions. However, Boethius, like most Roman aristocrats of the time, was not a pagan but a Christian, which is reflected in his *Opuscula sacra*, a collection of seven short treatises on a theological dispute between Catholicism and various forms of heterodoxy (including Arianism; Moreschini 2014, pp. 35–91).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Boethius represents a pivotal author in the transition between classical and medieval culture. His works on the *quadrivium* (which includes *De arithmetica*, *De musica*, and the lost translations of Euclid's geometry and Ptolemy's astronomy) determined the educational model adopted by medieval schools and universities; his translations of and commentaries on Aristotle's logical works, which also included the ubiquitous *Isagoge* of Porphyry, remained the standard Latin versions in the university curriculum well beyond the Middle Ages. Above all, his *Consolatio* was deemed an important source of information for ancient culture and philosophy, and it also became a standard textbook to learn Latin. Until at least the middle of the thirteenth century, the *Consolatio* was a prescribed text in the university curriculum for ethics and was read along Plato's *Timaeus* and part of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Lafleur and Carrier 2004). In this context, the *Consolatio* was also one of the few texts available to the medieval reader where Platonic themes could be found (Courcelle 1967, pp. 161–176, 203–238; Nauta 1993), and medieval commentators rightly recognized the links between some passages of the *Consolatio* and Plato's *Timaeus* (one of the few dialogues available in Latin). Several traits of continuity with the Middle Ages characterize the reception of Boethius in the Renaissance. The most relevant two are, first, the sustained popularity of the *Consolatio* and of the Boethian translations of Aristotle's *Organon*, even after the revival of Greek sources in the fifteenth century and the dissemination of new, humanistic

translations of Aristotelian texts (Ashworth 1988), and, second, the fact that the *Consolatio* continued to be the object of scholastic commentaries well into the sixteenth century. Concerning this latter aspect, the most popular interpretation of the *Consolatio* was a fifteenth-century commentary falsely attributed to Thomas Aquinas, which displayed many similarities with that by the fourteenth-century Nicholas Trevet (Courcelle 1967, pp. 318–319; Nauta 1997).

Signs of rupture with the medieval tradition appeared in the fifteenth century, when Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla criticized the style of Boethius' translations as well as the philosophical content of the *Consolatio*. In Valla's view, Boethius was guilty of using logic instead of faith to address theological problems to the point of being un-Christian (Nauta 2003; Brancato 2012, pp. 372–377). As a result, even though Boethius' translations of Aristotle remained central to scholastic philosophy, there appeared new, humanistic versions which competed with those of Boethius.

Innovative and Original Aspects

New commentaries on the *Consolatio* reflect the various directions taken by Boethian scholarship: in the 1400s, Denys the Carthusian gave a mystical reading of the *Consolatio* filtered through Scripture and the Church Fathers emphasizing its spiritual aspects (Macken 1984). With the revival of Plato in the fifteenth century, commentators started to recognize more fully the links between the *Consolatio* and Plato's *Timaeus*, a link that had already been noticed in the Middle Ages, but not fully developed for lack of sources. With the recovery of Neoplatonic commentaries on the *Timaeus*, some interpreters, such as Florentine philosopher Francesco Cattani da Diacceto (1466–1522), gave a distinctly Neoplatonic reading of the *Consolatio* and emphasized its pagan elements (Brancato and Vanhaelen 2015); in 1514 Dutch humanists Rodolphus Agricola and Johannes Murmellius published a commentary for school

use that put the emphasis on the linguistic and philological features of the work and aimed at perfecting students' knowledge of the Latin language (Nauta 1999; Goris and Nauta 1999). Two further lines of investigation were developed in the seventeenth century by Theodor Sitzmann and René Vallin, whose commentaries on the *Consolatio* underlined points of similarity between the *Consolatio* and other ancient traditions, such as Stoicism and Pythagorism. Finally, Jan Bernaerts (1607) and Pieter Bert (1620), both personal friends of Justus Lipsius, read the *Consolatio* as a text that combined Christian and Stoic elements, in the wake of Lipsius' *De Constantia* (Belli 2011, pp. 200–233).

Impact and Legacy

Given the vast popularity of the *Consolatio*, it is hard to overstate its impact on Western thought and literature. To some extent the readership of Boethius' *Consolatio* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries remained comparable to that of the preceding century: the text was still used in the classroom by both intermediate and advanced students of Latin (Black 2000, p. 32). As in the Middle Ages, the *Consolatio* was also read as a philosophical text connected with the cosmology of Plato's *Timaeus*; however, the revival of previously unknown Greek traditions (Neoplatonism, Stoicism, Pythagoreanism) also created new opportunities to interpret the *Consolatio*. The focus on ancient philosophical sources in the *Consolatio*, combined with the lack of any reference to Christianity, led nineteenth-century scholars to believe that Boethius was pagan (Nauta 2010, p. 133). This belief continued to a certain extent even after the discovery of the so-called *Anecdota Holderi* (1877) a fragment from a work by Cassiodorus (sixth century) confirming that Boethius was, in fact, the author of the *Opuscula sacra* (Moreschini 2014, pp. 30–32).

In addition, the *Consolatio* quickly became a canonical work and a model: many authors, such as Dante, Chaucer, and Christine de Pizan

(Lombardo 2013; Minnis and Machan 1993; Cropp 1981), imitated its prosimetric structure and philosophical content (fortune, human happiness, evil, free will, divine foreknowledge).

Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, many vernacular versions of the *Consolatio* appeared in Italian, Spanish, Catalan, French, German, Dutch, and English (Albesano 2006, pp. 38–53; Goris 2000; Goris and Wissink 1997; Rädle and Worstbrock 1978; Johnson 1997). These were generally used for the purpose of moral edification or to learn Latin through the practice of translation, but they were also central to the creation of a new vernacular culture. For instance, the Italian translation of the *Consolatio* by sixteenth-century Florentine intellectual Benedetto Varchi was a highly sophisticated linguistic experiment used to develop the vernacular into a literary and philosophical language comparable to ancient Greek and Latin (Brancato 2018, pp. 67–86).

As for Boethius' Aristotelian translations, his version (*textus antiquus*) of Aristotle's logical works was still printed well into the half of the sixteenth century (Ashworth 2008, pp. 611–618): for the most part, and despite the humanistic call for a return to the Greek Aristotle, Renaissance logicians and Aristotelian commentators continued to refer to the *textus antiquus* instead of relying on more recent translations: for instance, the 1552 Giunta edition of Aristotle and Averroes still relies on Boethius' translation of Aristotle's *Categories* and *On interpretation* and Porphyry's *Isagoge* (but his translation of *Prior Analytics* is discarded in favor of that by Girolamo Bagolino). Another common practice that developed in the fifteenth century was to correct Boethius' version through comparison with the Greek original (Minio-Paluello 1961, pp. XXXIX–XLIII, 1962, pp. XLV–LI).

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Böhme, Jacob

Born: 1575

Died: 1624

Cecilia Muratori

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Abstract

Jacob Böhme was one of the most influential philosophers of post-Reformation Germany. During his lifetime, only one short book was published out of his vast body of works (*Der Weg zu Christo* 1624). The unfinished manuscript of his first book, *Aurora*, was confiscated in 1613, due to accusations of fanaticism and heresy. From 1619 to his death in 1624, he wrote extensively, and the works circulated thanks to a growing network of followers. According to Böhme, all of his works derived from a revelation or insight that allowed him to understand the “whole Being in evil and good.” The central idea in Böhme’s philosophy is the interaction of positivity and negativity, light and darkness, “yes” and “no,” in the Divine as well as in nature, in which the Divine reflects itself. Böhme follows in the tradition of German mysticism in conceiving the Divine both as abyssal depth (which he calls *Ungrund*) and as God the creator. But he combines this theological approach with a strong interest in natural philosophy, giving shape to a comprehensive philosophical approach that aimed to explain the role and origin of evil within the Divine and in the creation, the processes of growth, and decay in nature, as well as the position of the human being in the universe, and the way to salvation. Böhme’s philosophy enjoyed a remarkable international reception, as several of his works were translated into English, Latin, French, and Dutch. In Germany, he became a reference point for many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers, most notably F.W.J. Schelling and G.W.F. Hegel.

Biography and Legacy

In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) named Böhme the “first German philosopher,” a surprising statement for contemporary readers, since Jacob Böhme’s place in the history of philosophy has been almost forgotten since Hegel’s time. Born in 1575 in the village of Alt-Seidenberg, in Upper Lusatia, Böhme is the prolific author of around 30 works, ranging in topics from natural philosophy to the question of religious salvation, and in format from extensive theological discussions to short polemical replies to his critics. Only one book, containing two short texts and titled *Der Weg zu Christo*, was published during his lifetime, in the year of his death, 1624. All others circulated merely in manuscript form, copied, and diffused thanks to an extensive network of friends and supporters (Penman 2014). Yet, Böhme played a major role in shaping post-Reformation German philosophy, and his international reception was remarkable: by the 1660s his complete works had been translated into English, and the first complete German edition followed 20 years later, in 1682. By 1741, the name of Böhme had become famous and the Church historian Johann Lorenz Mosheim could declare that Böhme’s works were “in everybody’s hands” (Mosheim 1741, 611). By the time Hegel held his lectures on the history of philosophy, readers of Böhme included Franz von Baader (1765–1841), F.W.J. Schelling (1775–1854), and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), among others.

Despite the popularity of Böhme’s works, information about his biography has long remained incomplete. This is one of many paradoxes in the reception of Böhme: he has been simultaneously well known and yet an almost mythical figure, often treated in ahistorical terms. Indeed, his books might have been “in everybody’s hands,” and his name famous, yet the number of actual readers is likely to have been more limited than Mosheim implies. This is due to the fact that information about Böhme’s

life and writing career was transmitted largely by a biography composed by Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652), which was published in the main editions of Böhme's collected works (Gilly 2007). The biography narrates several magical, prophetic, and visionary episodes, even if Böhme never reports having experienced visions or presages (Koyré 1929, 17). The popular portrait of Böhme as a mystical cobbler – a profession he practiced for some years – thus derives mostly from the biography, rather than from Böhme's work (Muratori 2012).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the historian Hermann Fechner claimed that the lack of information about Böhme's life derived from the fact that, like all mystics, he conducted a life removed from the events of the outer world (Fechner 1857, 313). This view certainly does not stand up to textual scrutiny. One of the main sources for Böhme's life is his correspondence, in which he often discusses political events as well as the genesis, circulation, and reception of his own works. The view of Böhme as a secluded mystic is misleading, but it is true that he is reticent about matters such as the sources and authors that might have inspired his writings. Böhme's education was most probably limited to attending the local school in his birthplace, Alt-Seidenberg, not far from the nearby city of Görlitz, which was at the time no provincial backwater and had had a *Gymnasium* since 1565. Böhme often remarks on his lack of education as a way of emphasizing that the source of his knowledge was not to be found in books, thus portraying himself as a “philosopher of the simple people” (*Aurora* 18.80), close to the tradition of the Old Testament prophets (Benz 1959).

By 1592 he moved to Görlitz, where in 1599 he acquired a cobbler's shop. In the same year, he married Katharina Kuntzschmann, daughter of a butcher, and their first son, Jacob, was born in 1600. The profession of shoemaker was to become a symbol of Böhme's distance from the learned world, and his familiarity with the cobbler's tools the explanation for the lack of formal elegance in his German prose. Given the fact that Jacob Böhme was a common name, “the cobbler Böhme” was often used in the city's documents to

distinguish him from namesakes (Lemper 1976, 55). The “cobbler from Görlitz” has remained the most popular label for Böhme, underlining his lack of formal training in philosophy and theology.

In 1612, Böhme wrote his first book, *Morgenröte im Aufgang*, also known as *Aurora*. As with all subsequent works, the Latin titles were not added by Böhme himself, even if, as in the case of *Morgenröte/Aurora*, or the later *Von der Geburt und Bezeichnung aller Wesen/De signatura rerum*, the Latinized version was often more successful than the original one. In a letter, Böhme explains that the writing of *Aurora* was the result of an insight, or intuition, he had experienced 12 years previously. He describes it as a “fiery drive,” “violent impulse of the spirit” (*Sendbrief* 10.3) that practically forced him to pen his intuition in his first book. In his biography, Franckenberg claimed that the catalyst had been a glimpse of a metallic container, through which Böhme was “seized by divine light” (*Bericht*, 10). Böhme himself describes the intuition as the opening of a gate, which allowed him to “see and know more in a quarter of an hour” than if he had “at distinguished schools” (*Sendbrief* 12.7). He claims that he saw and understood the “whole Being in evil and good” (*Sendbrief* 12.8): indeed, the presence of opposites in everything – in nature as well as in the divine – is, as Hegel recognized, a foundational idea of Böhme's philosophy.

The following year, 1613, a copy of *Aurora* came to the attention of the town's magistrates. A key role was played by the *primarius* of Görlitz, Gregorius Richter (1560–1624), who soon afterwards preached a sermon in which he accused Böhme of spreading fanatical ideas. The manuscript of *Aurora* was confiscated, and Böhme was issued with a warning not to write anymore. From 1612 until 1618, he obeyed this prohibition, even if in the correspondence he clearly describes it as a form of persecution (*Sendbrief* 10.5). It seems plausible that the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 was a major event that prompted Böhme to start writing again, as the desire to give voice to and spread the content of his insight were made stronger by the sense of emergency caused by political and religious conflict. In 1619,

he completed his second book, which differs greatly from the first: whereas *Aurora* had remained incomplete (on the reasons see Koyré 1929, 76, and the introduction to Böhme 2008), *Beschreibung der drey Principien Göttliches Wesens* is a voluminous work whose title alludes to the three substances of Paracelsus—salt, mercury, and sulfur. Indeed it is likely that between 1612 and 1618, Böhme increasingly came into contact with Paracelsian, or Paracelsian-inspired, natural philosophy, especially through an increasing network of followers, including figures such as the physician Balthasar Walther (1558–1631).

The extant correspondence provides evidence for how Böhme's life and writing career unfolded from 1619 onwards. Having sold his cobbler's shop, he turned to selling goods such as gloves, an occupation that led him to travel as far as Prague. There, in 1619, Böhme witnessed the Elector Friedrich V of the Palatinate entering the city. From 1619 to the year of his death, Böhme rapidly composed an astonishing number of writings. As he explains in a letter, with each of them he felt that he moved closer to revealing the secrets of which he had intuition, but which he could not clearly express at the beginning of his writing career. In fact, he admits that in *Aurora* "the great mysteries" had been expounded in too simplistic a way, and with many faults (*Sendbrief* 10.4). Yet despite the differences in style and content, he claims that all his books derive from the initial impulse to bring to expression his fundamental insight.

The publication in Görlitz of *Der Weg zu Christo* in 1624 triggered a second phase of accusations against Böhme. Once again, Gregor Richter was vocal in his opposition, which this time included the publication of a pamphlet ridiculing the "cobbler" for having stepped beyond the proverbial limits of his profession: *ne sutor ultra crepidam!* (Richter 1624). Yet Böhme succeeded in defending himself by claiming authorship of the work, but dismissing insinuations that he planned its publication, which instead had been arranged by the nobleman Hans Sigmund von Schweinichen. In 1624, Böhme was invited to Dresden, to discuss his views at court. The exact nature of this meeting is uncertain: it may have

been more inquisitorial in nature than Böhme admits in his correspondence. While in Dresden, Böhme was hosted by Benedikt Hinckelmann (1588–1659), who directed the local court laboratory. Having returned to Görlitz, Böhme died of an unknown illness in November 1624. According to Franckenberg's biography, he told one of his children that he heard music when death was near (*Bericht* 21). He was buried in the churchyard of the Nikolaikirche in Görlitz.

After his death, efforts were made by his friends and followers to collect existing manuscripts and place them in the hands of the Dutch merchant Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland in Amsterdam (1587–1648) (van Ingen 1984, 12–16). The manuscripts served for van Beyerland's own translations of Böhme into Dutch and also became the foundation for the first edition of Böhme's collected works (Amsterdam 1682), under the direction of Johann Georg Gichtel (1638–1710). A second edition, in two volumes, was printed in 1715, and a third, edited under the direction of Johann Wilhelm Ueberfeld (1659–1732), in 1730. The latter is still the standard edition today, but a few autographs have since been rediscovered, including the manuscript of *Aurora* that had been confiscated in 1613 (see Böhme 1963/1966).

Böhme's reception was heavily influenced by the way in which his manuscripts circulated, were translated and published. The European diffusion of Böhme was thus varied, involving in the years following Böhme's death especially Holland and England. Thanks to the availability of translations, England became a main catalyst of Böhme's thought: famous readers of Böhme included William Blake (1757–1827), who considered Böhme "divinely inspired" (Foster Damon 1988, 39). Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote extensive marginalia to Böhme, in which he praised the shoemaker's "superior insight," especially with regard to the conception of the Divine (Coleridge 1980, 597). In Germany, Böhme's ideas became shaping impulses for several doctrines within the religious current of German Pietism (Martin 2014). Philosophical interest in Böhme increased in particular after the publication of the 1715 and 1730 German editions of

Böhme's works. The Jena Romantics, and especially Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853) and Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), integrated Böhme within the development of Romantic *Poesie* (Mayer 1999). A more comprehensive interpretation of Böhme, based on the study of the texts, was provided by Hegel and Schelling, though their readings emphasize different aspects of Böhme's philosophy (Muratori 2016; Brown 1977; Bianchi 2016). The reception in France had a more theosophical, mystical character, especially through Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803), known by the epithet of "Philosophe inconnu," who translated Böhme into French. Reception in areas such as Italy and Spain was probably less significant, but this is a topic that still awaits research.

Böhme's Philosophy (Original Aspects; Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition)

"There is nothing in nature in which good and evil are not present" (*Aurora* 2.5): according to Böhme everything that is alive must contain in itself a duality, because it is from the contrast of polar opposites that all movement is generated, and life consists essentially in movement. In *Aurora*, Böhme introduces the concept of "quality" in order to account for the internal vitality of nature: a quality is the "mobility, springing, or urging of a thing" (*Aurora* 1.3), a definition that relies on an original interpretation of the word *Qualität*. Böhme often uses the sound and spelling of a word to convey a philosophical interpretation: in this case, a *Qualität* is something that springs (*quellen/quallen*), but also has within itself a root of negativity, that is to say a "torment" (*Qual*) (Koyré 1929, 88; Weeks 1999, 65). The meaning of the word is thus inscribed in its letters, but it requires a particular insight to understand what Böhme calls "the language of nature" (*Natursprache*). At the level of the language of nature, words and essences are said to be in perfect harmony, just as was the case with the language spoken by Adam in the Garden of Eden. But in post-Babel languages, the true meanings are hidden within the words and need to be

expounded by someone, like Böhme, capable of tapping into language of nature through a spoken language like German.

A "quality" is for Böhme a model of internal opposition that he applies, in various complex formulations, to the explanation of the entire creation. Starting from two main qualities, a good and an evil one, he develops throughout his work several lists of qualities, whereby each gives rise to the next one in a cycle. In *Aurora*, the life cycle of growth and decay is explained by reference to a bitter quality (the "heart in all life"), which prompts the opposition of the sweet quality, and from the sweet to the sour and the stringent one (*Aurora* 1.19–24).

In parallel to the term "quality," Böhme also refers to opposing "wills" (*Willen*), or also forms (*Gestalten*). In *De signatura rerum*, he explains for instance that there are "seven forms in nature, both in the eternal and in the external" nature (*De signatura rerum* 9.8). This means that the cycle of forms, or qualities, is not restricted to the worldly manifestation, that is, to say in visible nature, but it also applies to "eternal nature," since "the eternal has also got its nature" (*Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* I, 13.11; see also Koyré 1929, 354–356). Indeed, for Böhme nature and the divine are deeply connected, and understanding creation is even a path to grasping the nature of God: for this reason, Böhme calls nature his teacher, "Lehrmeister," guiding him in the discovery of the mysteries of creation. Using a common Renaissance metaphor, Böhme thus compares nature to a book, claiming that "you won't find any book in which you could better discover and investigate the Divine wisdom than when you walk on a green and blooming meadow; there you will see, smell and taste the marvellous power of God, even if this is just a similitude" (*Beschreibung der drey Principien Göttliches Wesens* 8.12). God himself inhabits nature (*Clavis* 25), even if Böhme does not adhere to a pantheistic view: rather, nature is God's tool (*Clavis* 24), and its mobility ultimately derives from God's will (*Vierzig Fragen von der Seele* 1.5–6).

The idea of an internal motion connects Böhme's views of nature and of God: "everything

exists in yes and no, be it divine, devilish or earthly” (*Betrachtung Göttlicher Offenbarung* 3.2). Within God, too, there is life-giving opposition, and a cyclical movement, due to seven spirits that together engender the movement that gives birth to the Son, rather than to natural things as in the outer manifestation of nature (*Aurora* 8.25). The number seven is of course redolent of Biblical references, but Böhme employs it to suggest that both in nature and in the divine there is a similar life cycle, linked by the existence of the same number of stages. Indeed Böhme states that “the being of all beings is one being only, and yet in its generation it divides itself two principles, that is in light and darkness, in joy and pain, in evil and good, in love and anger, in fire and light” (*De signatura rerum* 16.11).

The metaphor of light and fire, in particular, recurs throughout Böhme’s work to explain how the dynamics of separation apply also to the case of the divine itself. From the general point that “there is no light without fire, and no fire without serious torment [*Qual*],” Böhme explains that “in the fiery world” God is called “God’s anger, God’s wrath, since in this way God calls himself a devouring fire. But in the light world, that is to say in the Son of God, he is the flame of love” (*Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* I, 3.10–14). The reference is to *Deuteronomy* 4:24 and 4:31, where God is called first a furious, devouring fire of God, and then a compassionate God. For Böhme, both sides are not only present, but even necessary for God to be alive in the generation of the Son. Yet in line with the tradition of German mysticism, and of Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–1328) in particular, Böhme distinguishes between the divine in the movement of generation, and as entirely separate from the creation. The latter, which Eckhart had called “divinity” (*Gottheit*), is in Böhme’s terminology *Ungrund* that which lacks a ground, or foundation: “In the eternity, that is to say, in the ungrounded beyond and without nature there is nothing but silence without being. [...] This same ungrounded is like an eye, since it is its own mirror. It doesn’t have a being, neither light nor darkness” (*Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* II, 1.8). But the *Ungrund* is “an ungrounded eye that does not stand in anything nor does it see

anything” (*De signatura rerum* 3.2; see also Koyré 1929, 280–281).

A major philosophical issue for Böhme is that of explaining how these two different conceptions of the divine are at all combinable, since *Ungrund* remains immobile in eternity, and yet God generates his Son and creates the universe. He employs the metaphor of the mirror to explain what is not a transition in time, but a theological process (Koyré 1929, 288–290). In the mirror, the will of the *Ungrund* sees itself, and desire (*Begehren*) is generated through an act of contraction or pulling, which Böhme also calls *Scienz*, derived according to the language of nature from the verb *ziehen*, which means “to pull” (*Sendbrief* 41.6). In this way, a duality is created through the reflection in the mirror, and the immobile will of the *Ungrund* becomes internally separated and thus properly willing, since to will something implies a subject-object distinction, and thus a separation akin to the one necessary for any movement or life. The process of revelation of the immobile, divine depth through this act of self-inspection takes place through the “wisdom of God,” or “Sophia,” which plays the role of the mirror (see Benz 1937, 21–27; Koyré 1929, 212). The revelation in the wisdom of God “happened in eternity as in the figure of a virgin, who, however, does not give birth, but is a mirror of the divinity and eternity of *Grund* (ground) and *Ungrund* (ungrounded), an eye of the glory of God” (*Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* I, 5.2).

With this conception of the internal separation of the divine, Böhme faces another difficulty: he must explain how it is possible that darkness is the origin of life, even in God, and yet maintain, as he does, that God is essentially love and light. Indeed, Böhme goes as far as understanding the personification of darkness, the fallen angel Lucifer, as in all respects as a child of God, and not an external and independent principle (as in the Manichean tradition). Furthermore, the creation of Adam is for Böhme a direct consequence of Lucifer’s Fall, “because the human being replaced Lucifer” (*Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* I, 3.12), so that one could claim that the latter had been necessary and that God even planned to give rise to evil. As *Ungrund*, God is

“neither this nor that, neither evil nor good”, because it does not have “any distinctions within itself” (*Von der Gnadenwahl* 1.3). But good and evil are originated through separation, so their roots are arguably to be retraced back to this original process within the divine.

Böhme deals with this problem in most of his writings. In *Mysterium magnum*, he gives the following explanation: “If evil in the contrasting will were not useful, then God, as the only, eternal good, would not tolerate it, but would destroy it. But it serves the revelation of the glory of God and the reign of joy, and is an instrument of God, so that he can bring to expression its good, and that the good may be recognized. For if there were no evil, the good would not be recognized.” (*Mysterium magnum* 71.17). The necessity of evil does not imply that the human being does not have any power to choose between good and evil. On the contrary, Böhme conceives human life as a battlefield between good and evil, God and the Devil, and humans are called to side with one or the other. Ultimately, the aim is the rebirth of humankind (*Wiedergeburt*): “from God’s fire of anger the new human being must sprout anew [like a plant]” (*Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* I, 12.22). Only at that stage will light prevail over darkness, but human beings must work towards this aim even while caught in the cycle of growth and decay in this world, between the opposing powers of light and darkness, God and his Enemy, the Devil.

Note: All translations are the author’s own.

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1 *Morgenröte im Anfang* (= *The Redness of the Morning Arising*; quoted in this entry as *Aurora*)

- 2 *Beschreibung der drey Principien Göttliches Wesens* (= *Description of the Three Principles of the Divine Essence*)
 - 3 *Vierzig Fragen von der Seelen* (= *Forty Questions of the Soul*)
 - 4 *Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* (= *Of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ*); *Der Weg zu Christo* (= *The Way to Christ*)
 - 6 *De signatura rerum; Von der Gnaden-Wahl* (= *Concerning the Election of Grace*)
 - 7 and 8 *Mysterium magnum*
 - 9 *Betrachtung Göttlicher Offenbarung* (= *Consideration of Divine Revelation*); *Clavis; Theosophische Send-Briefe* (= *Theosophic Letters*; references are given with the abbreviation *Sendbrief*, followed by number of the letter and paragraph)
 - 10 *De vita et scriptis Jacobi Böhmii* (contains: Abraham von Franckenberg, *Gründlicher und wahrhafter Bericht von dem Leben und Abscheid des in Gott selig-ruhenden Jacob Böhmens*, here abbreviated as *Bericht*)
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Bolsec, Jérôme

Born: Unknown

Died: 1585

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Abstract

Jérôme Bolsec was a French Carmelite monk, reform-minded theologian, doctor, and Catholic polemicist. Bolsec's support for religious reform meant that he was forced to leave the French monarchy in 1545. Bolsec's conduct and his opinions about salvation theology led to a troubled relationship with other French reformers and with the authorities in Geneva

and in the Swiss lands. Bolsec eventually returned to loyalty to Rome and compiled a hostile and influential biography of John Calvin.

Biography

Jérôme Bolsec (b. unknown, Paris – d. 1585, Lyon) was a Carmelite monk whose preaching in favor of religious reform brought him to the attention of the French Catholic authorities. In 1545 Bolsec sought refuge at the court of Renée de France, the duchess of Ferrara. Bolsec got married, studied medicine, and then served as a doctor in a noble household near Geneva. In 1550 he moved to live in Geneva. Bolsec then openly challenged John Calvin's views about free will and salvation at a public meeting held in October 1551. Bolsec proposed that divine predestination was based upon God's election of those whom He foresaw would respond with faith to His love. For Calvin, the suggestion that human faith did not depend on divine election challenged God's sovereign authority. Calvin believed that Bolsec had perverted true doctrine and disturbed the peace of the Genevan church. Bolsec was arrested by the Genevan state authorities. After a hearing held by the city council, Bolsec's opinions were sent to the Swiss Reformed churches for comment. Despite a cautious response from the Bernese church in particular, the Genevan authorities proceeded to banish Bolsec from their territory in December 1551. Bolsec moved from Geneva to nearby Thonon (under Bernese control). After the Bernese introduced a ban on discussion of predestination, he was banished in March 1555. Bolsec returned to France and sought admission to the ministry of the Reformed church promising to subscribe to the church's confession. However, he was condemned by the national synod of the French Reformed church that was held at Lyon in 1563. Bolsec then moved to Lausanne (under Bernese control). When he refused to subscribe to the Confession of Bern, he was forced to return to France and was subsequently reconciled with the Catholic Church.

Bolsec published controversial biographies of Calvin in 1577 and of Theodore Beza in 1582.

Bolsec wrote his biography of Calvin (who had died in 1564) in response to the favorable version of Calvin's life first published by Beza in 1564. Bolsec departed from tradition in the genre of biography by composing a full-length, hostile account of Calvin's life and legacy. Bolsec placed Calvin in the tradition of arch-heretics, and his text combined stories based on his personal experience of Calvin alongside rumor and invention. Beza's biography had praised Calvin's pious marriage and austere lifestyle. Bolsec claimed that Calvin had been convicted of sodomy as a young man and suggested that Calvin made sexual advances on married women in Geneva under the guise of offering pastoral guidance. Beza's biography had emphasized Calvin's patient endurance of ill-health and his quiet and calm death. Bolsec presented Calvin's illnesses as a reflection of his immoral character and suggested that he died cursing his own ideas. Bolsec also completed a biography of Beza. This text was based upon a selection of hostile sources and stressed Beza's sexual depravity and heretical opinions. Bolsec also depicted Geneva as a licentious and decadent city that had turned its back on true religion. Bolsec's version of Calvin's character and life proved to be of long-lasting significance. It was published in a number of editions and was first translated into Latin in 1580, then into German in 1580, into Dutch in 1581, and into Polish in 1583, and remained a source of Catholic polemic against Calvin and Reformed religion through to an edition printed in 1875.

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- [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)

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Book, Renaissance

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Abstract

Ancient, medieval, and Renaissance philosophical texts were copied out and circulated widely in manuscript and print throughout the

mid- to late-fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries. Ancient Greek and Latin philosophical works either “lost” or otherwise obscure during the Middle Ages – including much of the Platonic corpus and Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* – were rediscovered in European ecclesiastical libraries, widely copied, and circulated for the first time since the classical period. Other ancient Greek-language philosophical works traveled westward from Constantinople and the Levant, including the full corpus of Aristotle, known only partially to medieval Europe through imperfect Latin translations and commentaries. Renaissance interest in classical pagan philosophy hardly forestalled the continuing production in script and print of medieval Scholastic texts, however, which were still widely taught in the universities. The concomitant production, particularly of printed texts, by early modern schools of neo-Aristotelian thought, Pyrrhonian skepticism, and other strains of classically inspired philosophy, nonetheless, entered the mainstream of Renaissance discourse across Catholic and Protestant confessional lines.

Multiple extant medieval and Renaissance textual versions of ancient philosophical works were collated, transcribed, edited, glossed, translated, and circulated for the first time on a major scale as Renaissance humanists applied unprecedented standards of textual criticism and philological rigor to their work. Renaissance printers and publishers helped to revolutionize the physical presentation and duplicative power of textual production by moveable type in the service of commercial and intellectual interests. These processes aided in the consolidation of a historically sophisticated canon of premodern and early modern philosophical texts that are entirely recognizable to scholars today. The prevailing socioeconomic, legal, political, and confessional circumstances within major early modern European centers of book production persistently shaped the broader discursive landscape. The material circumstances governing the production, consumption, dissemination, and preservation of philosophical books – as commodities,

conduits of information exchange, and cultural artifacts – were all determinative of their immediate cultural impact and broader legacy throughout the Renaissance period.

Synonyms

Codex; Commentary; *Editio princeps*; Edition; Imprint; Incunable; Manuscript; Monograph; Printed book; Scribal publication; Textbook; Translation

The Manuscript Tradition

The locus classicus of medieval philosophical textual production was the monastic scriptorium, particularly in the greater abbeys of the Benedictines, Cistercians, and Carthusians and the major cathedral scriptoria, from about the ninth to the twelfth centuries. Close associations between the early thirteenth-century foundations of the learned mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans and the advent of the municipal universities contributed to increasing traditions of scribal production within urban centers. These associations inspired the continuous production and reproduction of a canon of Scholastic texts throughout the Middle Ages that closely integrated the traditions of Aristotelian logic and metaphysics with the study of Christian theology. Their development is clearly reflected in the relatively high survival rates – across many late medieval and Renaissance cathedral, academic, and princely libraries – of the works of Anselm and Peter Lombard; the Franciscans Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham; and the Dominicans Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. The concomitance of these urban court scriptoria, and the artisanal professionalization of secular scribal activity, generated substantial urban book markets and even large-scale Renaissance bookshops such as that of the Florentine stationer Vespasiano da Bisticci (d. 1498; da Bisticci 1963).

Secular scriptoria could be subject, variously, to the governance of metropolitan bishops, guilds, the authority of universities, or even all the above.

All manner of book specialists in the pay of university rectors and chancellors are described in the archival record according to their specialized skills: *cartolarii* (parchment and paper merchants), *correctores* (copy editors), *exemplatores* (copyists), *illuminatores* (illuminators), *ligatores* (binders), *rubricatores* (rubricators), *stationarii* (stationers), and so on. Some Italian, German, and French universities maintained a direct, proprietary role in the commercial production of textbooks according to a *pecia* system that endured from the thirteenth century into the era of print. Scribal exemplars of school texts officially approved by university authorities were effectively rented out to merchant booksellers (*stationarii peciarum*) who had been sworn to obey university statutes. They, in turn, would administer the secondary copying of select, numbered “pieces” (*peciae*) of the exemplar in short, serialized installments of four or more sheets (often marginally designated “*p*,” then “*p*ii**,” etc.) whose separate parts might later be stitched or bound together (Gieysztor 1992, 128). *Pecia* manuscripts were also often copied out leaving ample margins and wide interlinear blanks in order to encourage students to record their classroom *recollectae* in the form of personal manuscript annotations and glosses – a tradition that also carried over into print. Together, these specially prefabricated texts offer useful insights, not only into piecemeal contemporary philosophical book production, but also their active textual interrogation by scholars and students.

Large book fairs developed in some major urban trade centers, supplying international and cosmopolitan venues for the trade and sale of manuscript books. The most famous of these was the Frankfurt Book Fair, where manuscript books were sold at least as early as the fourteenth century and, by 1462, were joined by printed books within years of the invention of moveable type (Flood 2007). Prices for some manuscript books could be legally prescribed to protect consumers and tradesman alike, though price inflation and other market forces might also shift over time to the disadvantage of buyers, sellers, or both. During the mid-fifteenth century, Vespasiano’s Florentine scriptorium employed a wide range of

skilled copyists of texts in Latin, Greek, and perhaps even Hebrew who were capable of producing magisterial philosophical works on parchment for princes and bishops, as well as less expensive popular biographies of contemporary Italian worthies for an emerging secular readership. Even as the printing press was producing its first imprints, Vespasiano employed some 45 scribes over a period of 22 months to copy out 200 fine manuscript codices of canonical theological, literary, and philosophical texts in all branches of knowledge commissioned by Cosimo de’ Medici for the library of the Badia di Fiesole (Richardson 1999, 3).

By the end of the fifteenth century, when print succeeded in greatly overtaking scribal book manufacture in scale, volume, and cost efficiency, Abbot Johannes Trithemius of Sponheim, in his *De laude scriptorum manualium*, nevertheless continued to assert the timeless superiority of monastic scribal copying onto parchment as the ultimate mode of spiritual intellection: “The printed book is made of paper and, like paper, will quickly disappear. But the scribe working with parchment ensures lasting remembrance for himself and for his text” (Trithemius 1974). Such monastic, missionary zeal found secular echoes in Vespasiano’s corresponding, if also commercially self-serving, observation about the princely libraries that his workshop actively supplied: “All books were superlatively good and written with the pen; had there been one printed book, it would have been ashamed in such company” (Steinberg 1996). The deluxe scribal production of pious books on parchment had already long ceded priority to the idols of the marketplace; however, by the thirteenth century, book production on paper – several times cheaper than parchment – had quickly moved from its conception as a passing fashion to a permanent condition of the urban marketplace. Trithemius’s late medieval antiquarian vision would inevitably yield to the cost efficiencies inherent in printing by moveable type. These pressures helped permanently to transform the very appearance of letterforms themselves, from the familiar angular gothic of medieval theology and law texts both in manuscript and in incunabular print, to the rounded roman type

avored by humanists of the early-to-mid-sixteenth century that have endured to the present day.

The collections of urban cathedral and university manuscript libraries grew considerably throughout the later Middle Ages and early Renaissance, through internal institutional production, scribal commissions from other repositories, and the outright purchase of manuscript books in the secondary book trade. The library of the Sorbonne in Paris may have reached as many as 2000 texts by the middle of the fourteenth century (d'Amico 1988). Such riches could also be augmented locally through grants of access to substantial monastic libraries within the same city. Where the humanist Petrarch's plan to leave his considerable collection of manuscripts to the Republic of Venice had proved abortive, the Florentine Niccolò Niccoli (d. 1437) succeeded through the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici. Among his many generous bibliophilic benefactions, Cosimo commissioned the construction of a new library at the Dominican monastery of San Marco in Florence (completed in 1444) to house Niccoli's collection of some 800 Greek and Latin manuscripts. Its known contents were overwhelmingly theological in nature, however, with but a handful of classical philosophical texts in Greek. The titles included, predictably, Aristotle and Porphyry, its several Latin texts – Cicero, Seneca, and Boethius – as well as Plato's *Timaeus* and various other Aristotelian works in Latin translation (Ullman and Stadter 1972). Years later, in 1452, the example of San Marco inspired Malatesta Novello to found a magnificent municipal library at Cesena adjacent to a Franciscan convent. Its original collection of some 350 codices is largely extant and is still attached by chains to 52 separate reading desks – one of a handful of chained libraries that survive from the Renaissance period, in addition to those at Hereford Cathedral and the church of Saint Wallberg at Zutphen.

More substantial collections of classical philosophical texts, particularly in ancient Greek, began, not as the personal libraries of humanist scholars or as patrician civic benefactions, but rather as the prestigious private collections of

kings and princes. Though perhaps not as vast as the now dispersed manuscript libraries of the Aragonese kings of Naples or the Visconti-Sforza dukes of Milan, the best preserved is that of Federico da Montefeltro, duke of Urbino (d. 1482), thanks to its inspired acquisition by Alexander VII for the Vatican Library in 1657. Acquired by Federico in part from the private collections of the Florentine philosopher-magnate Palla Strozzi and long-time papal secretary Poggio Bracciolini, the majority of the Montefeltro library of nearly 900 manuscript volumes was executed either by the duke's own court scribes and illuminators or by Vespasiano da Bisticci at Florence (Simonetta 2007). Approximately one-third of the collection of some 600 Latin, 168 Greek, and 82 Hebrew manuscripts represented classical authors, including a half-dozen Greek-language codices of Plato and twice that number of Aristotle – all but exhausting the available textual sources for both ancient philosophers at the time (Stornajolo 1895).

The intervention of princes of the church took this Hellenistic scribal presence in Renaissance Italy to a still greater level, beginning substantially with the interest of pope Nicholas V in forming a permanent curial library at the Vatican open to researchers “pro communi doctorum virorum commodo” (for the common use of all learned men). Formed partly from hundreds of manuscripts already held at the Vatican, and scores more added by the pope himself, by 1455, the collection grew to as many as 1300 codices, perhaps one-third of that number representing Greek authors (Piazzoni et al. 2014). After the fall of Constantinople and Cardinal Bessarion's political exile into Italy, in 1468, he formalized his intended bequest of some 746 manuscripts (482 in Greek), envisioning for the Venetian Republic a “second Byzantium” in book form. The papal legate's collection included Greek philosophical works gathered from desiderata made known to foreign agents and scouts interested to fill gaps in the collection from as far afield as Thessalonika, Crete, and Trebizond (Labowsky 1979).

Numerous classical Greek, but especially ancient Latin, texts that were all but lost to Europe

during the Middle Ages were unearthed in the Quattrocento through the efforts of Italian “book hunters” endowed with special access to ecclesiastical libraries north of the Alps. The ultramontane excavations of the indefatigable Poggio Bracciolini and his rival Enoch of Ascoli yielded major finds at Weingarten and Reichenau, the great library of St. Gall, and Cluny in France, including several of Cicero’s orations; a complete text of Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria*, of which Petrarch possessed only fragments; and, most momentous of all, the only known copy at the time of Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* (Bracciolini 1991). These Poggio and others copied, circulated, and thus preserved in numerous copies. As many as 50 extant Italian Renaissance copies of Lucretius survive in contemporary manuscripts indebted to Poggio’s transcription. In some cases, these “rediscovered” early manuscripts are known to have survived during the Middle Ages in just one recorded copy; in other instances, the original manuscript Poggio had consulted appears later to have been lost altogether.

Early Renaissance manuscript codices were sometimes accompanied by useful metatexts: alphabetical indexes (often appearing at the front of the text) or rudimentary tables of contents (usually enumerated as short titles on the early equivalents of title pages), running marginal glosses, and scribal colophons. However, these generally lacked the greater descriptive standards and sophistication more observable in imprints by the early sixteenth century. Only from about the 1520s onward would there appear with regularity closely documented title pages, regular foliation or pagination, and other apparatus friendly to ready reference and accurate critical citation, including terminal name and subject indexes, *addenda*, *emenda*, and *corrigenda*. Juridical restrictions resembling latter-day copyright law were almost unknown prior to the period of print. Interestingly, one of the earlier recorded statutes acknowledging a commercial interest in authorial rights of intellectual property was issued by the Republic of Florence in 1421 to the architect Filippo Brunelleschi. There is precious little evidence of the efficacy of such efforts, however, and such protections were only generally

enforceable within the jurisdictional boundaries of a particular municipality (Richardson 1999).

The Advent of Print

The technology of print by moveable type was invented by Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz in the early-to-mid-1450s and spread widely across western and central Europe in the decades that followed. During that time, the large majority of incunabula (i.e., books printed before 1501) consisted of Roman Catholic theological works, particularly biblical and liturgical texts, editions, and commentaries on the church fathers, medieval Scholastic theology, canon law, and, to a lesser extent, works of personal pious devotion and religious mysticism. While this same concentration of interest was to persist throughout the Renaissance and Reformation periods, the final decades of the fifteenth century were also marked by a substantial increase in classical humanist works, among them many of the printed *editiones principes* of major Roman and Greek philosophical works: Cicero’s *De officiis* (Mainz, 1465); Pliny the Elder (1469); Boethius’s *De consolazione philosophiae* (c. 1471); Macrobius’s *In somnium Scipionis* (1472); Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* (1472); Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* (c. 1473); Seneca’s collected philosophical works (1475); Ficino’s Latin edition of Plato (1484); and Aldus Manutius’s monumental, and at the time, encyclopedic, Greek-language edition of Aristotle (1495–1498).

Aside from Lucretius and Plato, the earliest printed works of classical philosophy mirror much of what was available through the medieval manuscript tradition, particularly from the twelfth century onward. Beginning with the 1465 Mainz *De officiis*, the first classical text in printed form, Cicero greatly predominated among the ancient Roman philosophers in incunabula, by century’s end reaching scores of editions of this and his other major philosophical works, particularly the *Cato Maior de senectute*, *Laelius de amicitia*, and *De finibus* – all of which had also been known to Dante. Cicero was followed closely in overall popularity by Seneca, whose *De clementia* and

De beneficiis survived in hundreds of medieval manuscripts by the era of print. Both were interpreted in orthodox Catholic medieval and early modern manuscript and printed texts as enlightened pagan moral philosophers. They were also invaluable in providing rare Latin-language distillations of ancient Greek philosophy at a time when even seemingly canonical Greek texts remained hard to come by – much as Tertullian and Ambrose were regarded by the patristic period. This indirect textual access to Greek philosophical works extended even to Aristotle, who was perhaps more widely known in the medieval world through Boethius's late-antique translations and commentaries of his treatises on logic than from the Greek philosopher's own textual *Organon*.

As the canon of the Latin scholastic tradition took form, particularly by the thirteenth century, Aristotle's corpus was received almost entirely through Latin translations and commentaries, many of them passed through imperfect Arabic intermediaries. Plato, by contrast, was hardly known at all in medieval Europe but for Calcidius's Latin translation and commentary of the first part of the *Timaeus* and some fairly obscure twelfth-century translations of the *Phaedo* and *Meno*. The appearance of Marsilio Ficino's vast Latin translation of the Platonic corpus – the *Platonis Opera omnia* of 1484, which was immensely improved in the critical second edition of 1491 – all but revolutionized Neoplatonic thought for generations to come. Aldus Manutius's corresponding five-volume Greek-language publication of nearly all of Aristotle's known works, as well as the major works of Theophrastus, Porphyry's *Isagoge*, and Philo's *De mundo* (1495–1498), would do much the same for generations of hyperliterate sixteenth-century neo-Aristotelians.

The duplicative power of print assured a permanent, even exponential, expansion of public awareness, access, and engagement with philosophical ideas. The entire extant manuscript corpus of one of the most common philosophical texts of the premodern world, Cicero's *Cato Maior* on the subject of old age – preserved in several hundred medieval and early Renaissance

manuscript copies – could be entirely outnumbered by the print run of a single edition in the mid-to-late fifteenth century (Conte 1994, 205). Between c. 1467 and 1470 alone at least five printed editions of the *Cato* were published in Cologne, Venice, and Rome, and a further 13 up to 1475, many of them incorporated into anthologies of Cicero's works in Naples, Brescia, Milan, and northward in Paris. The technology of print assured that the subsequent history of philosophy would no longer be circumscribed within rarified princely libraries or the collections of ecclesiastical institutions and elite universities. Renaissance print put philosophy, simultaneously, within the physical, commercial, and imaginative reach of a far broader, literate readership.

This broadening of access was perhaps most significantly achieved through the publication of short, separately printed editions of individual classical philosophical dialogues to be sold as schoolbooks at relatively reasonable prices. Cicero's *Laelius de amicitia* appeared in over 70 incunabular editions, for example, many in schoolbook form. Aldus Manutius continued this tradition by printing standard classical works in inexpensive octavo formats, squeezing large amounts of type onto many fewer pages by deploying a narrow italic type. This savvy printerly innovation significantly decreased the material production and sale costs of books during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, while also instilling in the minds of generations of readers concepts of humanist *amicitia* and intellectual affinity rooted in broader shared access to classical literature.

The Technology of Print

The everyday enterprise of print was hardly driven by philosophical principles however. The nascent craft, industry, and trade of print by moveable type was constantly constrained by high initial capital investment requirements, most of all for the acquisition of expensive founded metal type and other durable press furniture. The earliest printers – many of whom disappeared or went bankrupt after producing only a handful of

publications – were often vexed by unreliable supply chains and erratic market prices for essential materials such as paper and ink, difficulty in securing and retaining highly skilled labor (e.g., authors, editors and commentators, translators, and proofreaders), in addition to fairly limited formal mechanisms for marketing and distributing their products. Imaginative typefounders and adept punch cutters could invent new and appealing styles of type, creating matrices that, in turn, were reusable long afterward to cast type as needed by their owners. But the materials and industrial process for casting type were also costly, forcing printers to maintain a limited amount of characters on hand at any one time. The intensive physical pressure involved in screw-press printing also wore down the quality of typefaces, requiring their replacement over time. Whatever the state of the economy, printing by moveable type was always a capital-intensive enterprise.

Like earlier manuscript scriptoria, a broad array of skilled artisans, craftsmen, and lesser skilled laborers were required to produce an efficient, marketable, and high-quality physical product. In addition to a foreman or master printer, there were copy editors (many learned in multiple ancient languages), type compositors, hardworking pressmen who undertook the monotonous task of inking and operating the press furniture, and younger apprentices who moved paper and ink stocks around the shop and hung newly printed pages along drying ropes. (These rhythms of protoindustrial production were neatly illustrated in simultaneous, if idealized, operation in the setting of an Antwerp printing shop in Johannes Stradanus's *Nova Reperta* [1600].) Generally speaking, at least two pressmen were needed to keep up the productive cadence and repetitive pace required to churn out hundreds of pages of letterpress each day. An inker would beat the type evenly with ink balls between impressions, while the puller might alternate between laying paper into its proper register inside the press and the physically demanding work of pulling the screw-press lever. Once an assembled page of type was printed up to the designated print run, the composed type would usually be disassembled and

replaced in the appropriate rows of type cases – often capital letters in the “upper cases” and miniscules in the “lower cases.”

Also important to the quality and reputation of any printing house was a literate, and even polyglot, type compositor capable of setting the type (backwards) into separate composing sticks based on a manuscript copy text. Compositors, along with highly literate proofreaders, were often among the better-paid employees in most print shops. Heavily occupied with achieving right justification on a given page, skilled compositors were masters of the subtle manipulation of a copy text. This could be achieved through the addition or subtraction of characters, the introduction of (hopefully accurate) variations in spelling, and the extension or reduction of abbreviations and hyphens. Once the composing stick was filled, the assembled type could be transferred to a tray until the full text of a printed page was arranged, at which point, it was fixed and locked into place in a frame and imposed with other pages, so that when printed, the text would appear in the correct order. Pages were nearly always printed on both sides of a single sheet into corresponding multiples of decreasing size from 2 (folio), to 4 (quarto), 8 (octavo), 16 (16mo), and so on, pages per sheet.

Once the type was so arranged and fixed in the press and inked, each blank page of laid paper (made from rag – vellum was used only rarely in deluxe printing) was dampened prior to printing in order to better receive the ink, then removed and hung up to dry. Errors were sometimes detected after a limited number of pages of type had been printed, incurring costly and time-consuming stop-press corrections. When these occurred, the inferior printed sheets were not always discarded, resulting in significant textual variations even within a single print run. In lieu of, or in addition to, stop-press corrections, more economic errata sheets could be added to the end matter of an imprint, simply enumerating in sequence the mistakes made. These errata sheets may often have been composed by the authors of a copy text eager to protect their reputations, or even to improve their texts as originally written, as was the case, for example, in Marsilio Ficino's translation of

Iamblichus printed by Aldus Manutius in 1497 (Richardson 1999, 16).

Once dry, the printed sheets were later assembled in sequence, folded, cut, and gathered into quires. Prior to the general standardization of foliation (i.e., the same number applied to both the recto and verso of a sheet: 1r, 1v, 2r, 2v, etc.) or pagination (unique page numbers applied to each side of each sheet), the proper sequence of pages in a quire was often set in type as signature marks on the rectos of some sheets (e.g., Ai, Aii, and Aiii) to aid in the correct collation of a text. Front matter (title pages, tables of contents, epistles dedicatory and to the reader, occasional prose and verse approbations, etc.) was often printed toward the end of a book's production and sometimes acknowledged in a terminal register at the end of the imprint, indicating the proper order of the book's various components. Most books were transported to market and sold in unbound folded sheets prior to binding.

Among the greatest early successful printing houses were those of Aldus Manutius in Venice and Anton Koberger in Nuremberg. During its height between 1473 and 1513, Koberger's firm operated as many as two dozen presses and employed more than a 100 employees – from compositors, proofreaders, pressmen, illuminators and rubricators, and even binders – occupied with the printing of over 200 titles (Steinberg 1996). Many of these appeared in large and costly folio formats, including the typographically complex, heavily glossed Koberger Bible (1483), and the so-called Nuremberg Chronicle (1493) with its massive accumulation of some 1800 woodcut illustrations. (Intaglio illustration, whether in woodblock, or later in copperplate engravings and etchings, could add significantly, even exponentially, to the cost of early modern book production.)

The Economy of Print

Most printers met with only periodic success, sometimes punctuated by spates of considerable distress. Such was the experience of the great Antwerp printing house entrepreneur, Christopher

Plantin, who by 1575 may have had some 70 employees simultaneously operating up to 22 printing presses with an estimated capacity to print as many as 1250 sheets for a standard edition in a single day. Renowned for the extremely fine quality of his imprints – in particular, due to his frequent employment of the finest engravers in Europe in the production of his many illustrated books – Plantin fell into great trouble under the demanding attention of Philip II of Spain. The king had commissioned the immensely ambitious, but hardly remunerative, eight-volume *Biblia Regia* (1572), the so-called folio Plantin Polyglot Bible printed in incredibly complex facing-page Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and Aramaic translations. Despite this and other setbacks, Plantin's press continued to thrive well beyond his own lifetime after passing, within his family (as Renaissance printing firms often did), to his scholarly and pragmatic son-in-law Jan Moretus (Voet 1969–1972).

Book publication was fraught in many ways, combining high production costs, market uncertainty, and unpredictable price fluctuations. Characteristic early modern overreliance upon lines of credit, the poor liquidity positions of many printers, and a relative absence of bankruptcy protections, all presented hazards even to the most intrepid entrepreneur. Threats of competition between stationers, even within a single municipality, left many a printer packing, often relegated to diminished careers of itineracy. A majority of a city's printers might fall subject to a relatively small number of well-capitalized and socially connected publishers, and an even more elite circle of potential patrons from the princely and patrician classes. The often fickle tastes of the reading public could leave hundreds of copies of an imprint unsold for years, even decades, inspiring the hopeful and desperate alike to dress up warehoused stock with freshly updated title pages (Pettegree and Graheli 2019).

Added to these daunting financial considerations were the customary economic vagaries of the early modern marketplace: rapid price inflation, high taxation and import duties, currency fluctuations and devaluations, crop failures, epidemic disease, and dynastic wars and succession

struggles, among others. On the other hand, there was much that helped to fuel and promote the printing trade, even in seemingly esoteric philosophical works, such as technical innovations in roman (versus gothic) and ancient Greek typography, as well as the fairly sudden appearance of little-known classical works in the Latin-reading world – not least the introduction of nearly all of the Platonic corpus during the 1480s. These innovative developments both spurred and reflected emerging secular and ecclesiastical traditions of literary patronage around humanistic scholarship, as classical philosophical knowledge took on renewed prestige in princely and episcopal courts at Florence, Paris, Cologne, and elsewhere. These political advantages would extend, over time, to printers and publishers. Increasingly effective market protections were introduced through conventionalized contractual systems within municipalities and broader jurisdictions. Increasingly centralized systems of licensure and trade privileges developed, particularly during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, alongside the incorporation of specialized guilds of printers and stationers.

The enduring value of canonical works – the Bible, books of canon law, liturgical texts, or editions of certain ancient or medieval authors – may have held out the promise of relative security. These were often prudent investments for a sole publisher, even more so for a well-coordinated cartel, satisfied by the expectation of future returns on their investments through a predictable volume of sales over a reasonable period of time. The materials and labor expenses required for a book's publication could just as well have been undertaken by its author, or mutually by an author and publisher, in contractual agreements enumerating percentages of the cost of production in return for agreed upon numbers of copies, or possible shares in profits from sales. Joint contracts could vary considerably, and it is just as important to appreciate that a printer, publisher, and bookseller could also be one and the same person.

Single publishers with bookselling and export interests in a title might be willing to assume all printing and materials costs in exchange for

exclusive rights to sales. A consortium of investors could pool resources to ameliorate individual exposures to risk, bringing together members of the literate and monied classes – university professors, doctors and lawyers, courtiers and gentry, wealthy urban merchants, rich guildsmen, et al. Such groups might join forces toward a reasonable expectation of how a particular learned work might align with prevailing institutional cultures, intellectual fashions, and readerly tastes. Prudent investments in a certain number of specially embellished presentation copies (e.g., fine bindings with decorated clasps, gilt pages, and hand-colored title pages) could help pave the way for popularity and success in especially remunerative ways. While profits could be considerable, failures could be just as spectacular, as many early modern presses went into and out of business after producing but a handful of titles. Alternatively, aspiring or enterprising authors might simply hire jobbing printers at cost to work on limited, one-time commissions and fees. Many, perhaps most, early modern authors and editors of printed books who did so are known today only through single titles.

Determining the proper number of copies in a single print run often involved a complex formula of upfront acquisition and production costs, estimated sales, transportation expenses to market (including export tariffs, duties, and fees to middlemen), and longer-term warehousing of unsold stock. The earliest printed books in Germany and Italy seem generally to have been printed in small runs of perhaps 100–200 copies, though the absence of solid evidence, and inconsistencies in incunabular survival rates, suggests that the numbers could have been higher in some cases. As Venice emerged as the major southern European center of printing and bookselling during the 1470s and 1480s, print runs may have risen to about twice that number, perhaps 300–400 copies per title on average. As many as 1000 copies in a single print run may have appeared in the case of certain editions of the Bible, legal texts, or popular literary works, though the upper end of the production scale seems rarely to have exceeded 1000 or 1250 copies at any point in the sixteenth century (Grendler 1988). Still larger print runs appear

quite exceptional at any time or place in Renaissance Europe, even in the case of best-selling vernacular works, whether they be Luther's perennially reprinted German translation of the Bible, or Ariosto's runaway literary bestseller, *Orlando Furioso*.

Print runs counted for only one part of the total cost structure of books. During the first decades of printing, manuscript books may not have been vastly more expensive than some incunabula, especially in the case of large-format folio imprints requiring sizeable amounts of costly paper and complex typographical arrangements. General prices for imprints declined more significantly by the later fifteenth and early-to-mid-sixteenth centuries, though sumptuous works of special magnificence such as the Aldine Aristotle (1495–1498) might command the princely purchase price of 11 ducats – the rough equivalent of perhaps 10–20% of an average university lecturer's annual salary. Far more modest prices prevailed by the middle decades of the sixteenth century, particularly for vernacular texts and imprints produced in smaller formats. To save money, many a Renaissance book buyer simply delivered to a binder a miscellaneous group of inexpensive publications separately printed in a standard quarto or octavo format, requesting that they be bound up together into a single *Sammelband* (composite volume).

Print Patronage, Politics, and Law

The direct patronage of wealthy families and aristocrats, and their prestigious association with the intellectual work of a rising or distinguished scholar, could play an instrumental role in the successful publication of almost any Renaissance book – even the most rarified philosophical monographs, editions, or commentaries. Flattering dedicatory letters could represent the author's aspirations to future financial gifts, lucrative court sinecures, or princely pensions rather than thanks for the actual underwriting of the book in question. Philosophers like Marsilio Ficino, who received personal gifts of properties at Florence and Careggi from Cosimo de' Medici, also

implicitly relied on the support of a range of wealthy and influential patrons to subvent the costs, and influence the contractual negotiations and commissions, involved in the publication of their works in manuscript and print. In England, the royal printer Thomas Berthelet received a 4-pound annuity after his appointment by Henry VIII between 1530 and 1547. In addition to the profitable right to print all royal proclamations and statutes of the realm, Berthelet went on to publish all of the scholarly works of the humanist Sir Thomas Elyot. These included Elyot's popular work of political philosophy, the *Boke named the governour* (1531), as well as his prestigious, and likely lucrative, Latin-English dictionary (1538), which was the first of its kind to appear in print. Both works were dedicated to King Henry, and in the latter, Berthelet explicitly reproduced in the front matter the terms of his exclusive royal privilege to reproduce Elyot's 424-page folio dictionary over the ensuing 6 years “cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum” (Pantzer 2008).

Princes of the Roman Catholic Church were another source of such patronage, as were the upper ranks of Reformed ecclesiastical authorities throughout much of Protestant Europe. The names of individual popes, cardinals, bishops, and wealthy abbots that adorn the dedications of Renaissance religious and philosophical imprints are legion. Even the most controversial philosophers could enjoy the protection of such men. In an *apologia* printed in 1518, the controversial neo-Aristotelian Pietro Pomponazzi defended his *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* against the refutations of his former student, the future cardinal Gaspare Contarini. The philosopher dedicated this work to another of his former pupils, Ercole Gonzaga, a prince of Mantua who would later become a bishop, cardinal, and eventually a papal legate to the Council of Trent. In the same year, a third former student, Cardinal Pietro Bembo, then papal secretary to Leo X, intervened over threats of heresy proceedings against the philosopher, assuring Pompanazzi vindication through the renewal in 1519 of his contract to teach at the University of Bologna, then the leading academic center within the Papal States (Pine 1986).

Absent any established or easily enforceable system resembling copyright, the legal conditions surrounding printed-book production and book-selling are not dissimilar to those applied to other artisanal trades. Beyond bibliographical information preserved in early modern imprints themselves, archival evidence of particular legal aspects of the print trade generally survives in the form of contractual documentation and records of legal proceedings. The latter were usually produced in conjunction with secular municipal and guild authorities, law courts, or ecclesiastical consistories, depending on the particular printing center and its jurisdictional practices. Authorized contracts, and privileges granted and enforced within these jurisdictions, imposed some measure of legal relief for commercial violations. Proceedings often began with particular petitions and suits for violations, where they could be detected and the offending parties properly identified. Successfully, adjudicated cases frequently involved the payment of fines and other punitive sanctions such as the confiscation of imprints or the destruction of the offending printer's lead type. Payments often occurred at a negotiated rate or through schedules of fines, which were usually set at prohibitive levels to deter illicit printing in the first place.

Comparison of the printed output of a municipality with formal registers of authorized titles, such as those maintained by London's Stationers' Company, reveals that many imprints were nonetheless printed and sold outside of prescribed channels. The admixture of regulatory authority, competitive self-interest, and instances of illicit connivance or corruption may have contributed to haphazard enforcement in almost any early modern commercial guild structure. These are certainly apparent in the career of the London underground printer John Wolfe, who was accused of actively violating the privileges granted to members of the company throughout the early-to-mid-1580s. Though he was not yet a member of the Stationers' Company, a formal complaint against him was presented to the guild in 1583. Despite promises of reconciliation, Wolfe resisted subjecting himself fully to the discipline of the company through translation of

membership and was repeatedly jailed, until a raid on his shop revealed five presses, two operating "in a secret vault." His translation to the company soon thereafter did not forestall further controversy over privileges held by successful stationer John Day, to whom Wolfe was formerly apprenticed for 10 years. Remarkably, a few years later, the obstreperous Wolfe was appointed to the office of beadle in the Stationers' Company – a role he assumed with zeal for years, most of all in the detection and prosecution of other illicit printers in London (Gadd 2004).

During the early modern period, legal privileges and contracts among printers and publishers were generally enforceable only within a given jurisdiction, whether limited to a municipality, state, or kingdom. Securing licenses or legal recourse beyond one's home jurisdiction often required further petitions, suits, and fee payments. Negotiations over the sale of books through export-import were often negotiated informally or contractually between printers in different cities, or even through incorporated associations active within different municipalities. More exceptional models, such as the far-flung Giunta Press, which had offices and business interests emanating outward from Florence to Rome, Venice, Lyon, Burgos, Madrid, and elsewhere, allowed for a more closely coordinated system of distribution and sales. The Giunta often specialized in Latin-language imprints of broad scholarly and ecclesiastical appeal from the late-fifteenth to the early-seventeenth centuries. Among their more important early imprints was the first Latin translation and commentary from the original Greek of Ptolemy's *Almagest* (Venice, 1528) by George of Trebizond and Luca Gaurico (Pettas 2012). The business records of particular Renaissance printing houses are far less well preserved. The most notable exception, by far, is the archive of the Officina Plantiniana in Antwerp, which preserves thousands of ledgers, individual financial and trade documents, and the cosmopolitan and polyglot correspondence of Christopher Plantin and his heirs from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-to-late seventeenth centuries, now held by the Platin-Moretus Museum (Voet 1969–1972).

In the absence of copyright, particularly popular books of the Renaissance were often pirated and reprinted widely without commercial advantage to the authors, printers, or publishers of their editiones principes. The diplomat Baldassare Castiglione's massively popular international bestseller *Il cortegiano* (Venice, 1528) appeared in nearly a 100 editions within 50 years, the first 11 printed exclusively in the original Italian vernacular. Though Castiglione himself had been active in the contractual negotiations with the Aldine Press in 1528, and likely paid for as many as 150 copies – many fine and deluxe presentation copies for his friends, princes, and dignitaries – his death the following year precluded his receiving much remuneration from the venture. Nor is it at all clear that its original printer, the house of Aldus Manutius in Venice, profited at all from the proliferation of editions beyond its original four (1528–1545), including the Giunta Press's six Florentine editions and Viotta's three printed in Parma. *Il cortegiano* appeared in quick succession in Barcelona (1534), Lyon and Paris (1537), Toledo (1539), Salamanca (1540), Medina del Campo and Seville (1542), and Antwerp (1544). A later wave of foreign editions came to press in Saragossa (1553), London and Wittenberg (1561), Munich (1565), Valladolid (1569), and Strasbourg (1577). Translations of the Italian original generally follow the same pattern of migration, such that by 1534, it was first translated into Spanish, then French (1537), Latin and English (1561), and German (1565). Though generally a production of aristocratic court culture, the culmination of Castiglione's dialogue, delivered by the character of Pietro Bembo recapitulating the many of the virtues of Platonic love outlined in the *Symposium*, may well constitute one of the most widely circulated, quasi-philosophical works of the entire sixteenth century (Burke 1995).

Frequency and geographic diversity of reprints of a given book such as Castiglione's are generally taken by scholars as evidence of its popularity. While useful both from a cultural and commercial perspective, subjective measures of popularity must be treated with some caution. Certain classes of material, such as official government

documents (statutes, royal proclamations) or ecclesiastical publications (papal bulls, encyclicals), were normally printed by decree and often under monopoly rights. Alternatively, sensitive political controversies or religious polemics were always especially vulnerable to forms of official suppression, and punishing legal sanctions could often affect their printers or booksellers far more appreciably than their often anonymous or pseudonymous authors. Trade in books with false or misleading colophons indicating publication elsewhere and inaccurate dates of publication remained brisk throughout the early modern period, driven equally by partisan zeal, calculated profit motives, and political necessity. After the Protestant Elizabethan Settlement in England, nearly 2000 titles written, translated, edited, and published by and/or about English Catholics were printed licitly on the European continent – particularly in northern France and the Spanish Netherlands between 1558 and 1640. Many of these were smuggled into England or otherwise printed on secret Catholic domestic presses operated by lay Catholic enthusiasts and underground Jesuit missionaries (Allison and Rogers 1989–1994).

Press Censorship

Evidence of organized press censorship, both secular and ecclesiastical, is fairly rare prior to the early years of the Protestant Reformation, and large-scale efforts toward the suppression of heterodox or potentially seditious imprints generally did not appear until the mid-to-late sixteenth century. Still, ecclesiastical, even papal, interventions in Renaissance philosophical publication and discourses were not unheard of prior to Luther; arguably, the most famous case was that of the celebrity nobleman and visionary syncretic philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. His plan to convene a heroic, pan-European conference in Rome in 1487 at which he would defend a seamless synthesis of Christian revelation, magic, and kabbalistic exegesis was quashed by Innocent VIII after the appearance in print of the philosopher's provocative *Conclusiones philosophicae, cabalasticae et theologicae*

(1486). His introductory “Oration on the Dignity of Man” appeared somewhat defiantly in a published *Apologia* (1489) and, later with editorial interventions, in his nephew Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola’s *Commentationes* (1496) only after Giovanni Pico’s personal reconciliation with Pope Innocent’s successor, Alexander VI (Copenhaver 2019). Secular Aristotelians who had argued for the mortality of the rational soul drew further papal censure at the Fifth Lateran Council, inspiring the promulgation of the papal bull *Apostolici regiminis* (1513), which enjoined philosophers to clarify and defend Catholic orthodoxy no matter their arguments. This obligation did not prevent Pietro Pomponazzi’s proposition of the materialist dependence of the soul on the mortal body in his *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* (1516), nor his vindication from threats of ecclesiastical censure by ecclesiastical allies, which he answered in a decidedly unapologetic *Apologia* (1518) and subsequent *Defensorium* (1519).

Pomponazzi’s personal vindications could not forestall the future condemnations of radical philosophers within the pages of the ever-expanding *Index librorum prohibitorum*, however. Various indexes of banned books had been published by ecclesiastical and university authorities across Catholic Europe throughout the 1540s and 1550s in Paris, Louvain, Milan, Toledo, and elsewhere, culminating in the first Roman *Index*, issued by Paul IV, and the first substantial separate Spanish *Index*, in 1559. These publications would emerge in subsequent decades as powerful, if also largely aspirational, instruments for the correction, expurgation, suppression, or destruction of books deemed erroneous or heretical by the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Actual enforcement was hardly monumental; greatest attention was applied to works of theological controversy, and most of all to the infiltration into Catholic lands of explicitly Protestant texts. Philosophy was hardly immune from this mode of ecclesiastical censure, however, as was exemplified by the nearly 7-year travail of the radical anti-Aristotelian and Hermeticist Giordano Bruno at the hands of Venetian and Roman inquisitors. Vacillating between positions of willing abjuration and principled recalcitrance, he was finally condemned for heresy, his

publications summarily banned, and burned alive at the stake in Rome’s Campo de’ Fiori in 1600.

The perceived danger posed by Protestant publishing centers beyond the reach of enforcers of Catholic orthodoxy was a real one. Several of Bruno’s most controversial philosophical works, including his *De l’infinito, universe e mondi*, were printed in the Italian vernacular during his temporary exile in England between 1584 and 1585. Printers at Basel, Frankfurt, and elsewhere continued to publish the works of controversial scholars and philosophers of the Catholic world who had been added to the *Index* only retrospectively or posthumously, among them Lorenzo Valla and Girolamo Cardano. An eclectic mix of many of the most prominent philosophers of the seventeenth century, Catholic and Protestant, ended up being censored or banned outright in the *Index*, including Jean Bodin, Michel de Montaigne, Petrus Ramus, Justus Lipsius, Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Hugo Grotius, and Thomas Hobbes.

Countless examples of the enforcement of this Inquisitorial censorship are preserved in libraries across Catholic Europe in the form of manually expurgated printed books; so too, however, are petitions and licenses to read prohibited books granted by officers of the Holy Office to its agents and subsidiaries, as well as temporary privileges to scholars and lay readers. Regardless of this patchwork system of limited licensing, extant early modern library inventories from across Catholic Europe abound in titles and authors that had been banned by the *Index* (Marcus 2020). Systematic prosecutions and decisive seizures of illicit, underground imprints were generally exceptional rather than the norm, in Catholic as well as Protestant lands. Interdicts of radical philosophical works, such as those issued against Baruch Spinoza in the Reformed Dutch Low Countries, were regularly skirted by enterprising printers through the deployment of false colophons and anonymous or pseudonymous title pages.

Renaissance Philosophy in Script and Print

Though numerous examples of the printing of Renaissance philosophical texts are provided

above, a closer look at the particular, and sometimes peculiar, characteristics of this subject matter is merited. The humanist turn to ancient Greek philosophy flourished simultaneously with the early introduction of the technology of print by moveable type. As a result, the publication of Greek-language editions of these works was instrumental in the advent and progress of Greek printing throughout Renaissance Europe, particularly between c. 1480 and at least to the 1560s. The steady demand both for philosophical texts throughout that period and for patristic theological works that synthesized elements and schools of ancient Greek philosophy also contributed to the production of widely accessible and reliable Latin translations well into the early seventeenth century. While philosophical texts were not often among the most sumptuously produced or heavily illustrated genres of Renaissance imprints, applied works of natural philosophy nearly always stood at the cutting edge of early modern graphic design and intaglio illustration.

The history of Renaissance philosophical print publication of course also reflects the broader intellectual fortunes of Renaissance philosophical discourse and was thus marked by both continuities and innovations. Medieval Scholastic texts emphasizing Aristotelian logic and metaphysics were a mainstay of university curricula throughout the early modern period. Often controversial neo-Aristotelian debates attracted scores of Renaissance authors, critics, and commentators in print – from the Catholic Florentine humanist and ambassador Donato Acciaiuoli's glosses on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1464) and *Politics* (1472), to the Protestant medical doctor and Basel academician Theodor Zwinger, who published commentaries on the same in 1566 and 1582 respectively (decades after Zwinger worked in a Lyon printing shop during his student years there).

By contrast, sophisticated schools of Neoplatonic thought and print production popped up in different places at different times. As is well known, from the mid-to-late fifteenth century, the so-called Florentine "Platonic Academy" gathered under the auspices of Marsilio Ficino and others. Much later, a similar cadre of like-minded "Cambridge Platonists" published a host

of philosophical works during the middle decades of the seventeenth century, among them Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, and several of their academic colleagues. Individual works such as the ancient skeptical treatises of Sextus Empiricus were known to seminal Quattrocento humanists and book collectors, such as Cardinal Bessarion, and were repeatedly referenced in the popular published correspondence of Francesco Filelfo. It was not until the period of the French Wars of Religion during the later sixteenth century that Pyrrhonism would begin to have its fullest impact, particularly through the *Essais* of Montaigne (1580). The first printed edition in Greek of the major works of Sextus's corpus would not appear until 1621 (Florida 2013).

Anthony Grafton has usefully characterized the availability of classical philosophical works in scribal and printed forms as falling within four main periods during the late medieval and early modern periods. (1) 1390–1420 marked a period of early humanist textual recovery among book hunters and avid collectors such as Coluccio Salutati and Niccolò Niccoli, as well as fresh Latin translations of some ancient Greek texts. (2) 1440–1470 introduced large-scale translations and commentaries of more technical and applied works of Greek philosophy, among them Ptolemy's *Almagest*, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and the bulk of Ficino's work on the *Platonis Opera omnia*, as well as portions of his *Theologia platonica de immortalitate animarum* (later printed in 1482). (3) 1490–1530 was dominated by the contributions of the scholar-printer Aldus Manutius, whose press produced the editiones principes of many of the classical Greek philosophical authors known up to that time. His successors at the Aldine Press would continue to publish the works of Galen and other important Greek commentaries on Aristotle. (4) 1550–1580 constituted a period of consolidation marked by the appearance of numerous accessible, high-quality Greek philosophical works, including bilingual editions and translations, most importantly from the Paris and Geneva presses of Robert Estienne and his sons. This last period also saw the emergence of a fresh and lively monographic literature on the history of philosophical thought, inaugurating further efforts

during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that helped codify the classical philosophical canon within a more precise chronology and critical framework (Grafton 1988).

Philosophical Book Illustration

The large majority of traditional philosophical imprints from the Renaissance were not major milestones in the history of graphic design. Following medieval traditions of manuscript illustration and illumination – such as the cosmological diagrams that often appeared in Calcidius’s translation and commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*, and in Macrobius’s gloss of Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis* – Renaissance imprints in the areas of astronomy, geography, natural history, and medicine were quite commonly endowed with sophisticated intaglio illustrations, from simpler woodcuts to detailed copperplate etchings and engravings. The illustrated publication and vast expansion of Dioscorides’s ancient herbarium by Pietro Mattioli appeared and reappeared throughout the middle decades of the sixteenth century. Most notable, however, may be the vast 1562 edition, the so-called Grand Mattioli, which greatly advanced the postclassical study of botany through its hundreds of virtuosic and incredibly detailed woodblocks, produced at the imperial court in Prague. Similarly, the first printed work to illustrate human anatomy based on direct observation appeared in Giacomo Berengario da Carpi’s *Commentaria cum amplissimis additionibus super Anatomia Mundini* (1521). This thick quarto endowed with 21 full-page woodcut illustrations was quickly surpassed by the exquisitely detailed folio engravings of Andreas Vesalius’s monumental *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) – arguably one of the most revolutionary illustrated books of the entire Renaissance. Later exemplary anatomies provided students of medicine with ingeniously arranged, superimposed sequences of folding illustrated flaps, among them the second London edition of Thomas Geminus’s *Compendiosa totius anatomiae delineatio* (1559) revealing the internal organs of a man and women seated side by

side, and Georg Bartisch’s pre-Vesalian representation of layers of the human brain and eyes (1583).

Dynamic moveable calculators, or “volvelles,” comprised of layers of imprinted heavy paper illustrations individually cut out, superimposed, and sewn and glued together into the pages of books, often appeared in practical astronomical tracts such as Petrus Apianus’s *Cosmographicus liber* (1524) and *Astronomicum Caesareum* (1540). These could be put to work to calculate the movements of the stars and planets, illustrate the phases of the moon, or determine one’s position relative to the earth’s latitude. Galileo utilized special methods of super-precise copperplate etching engravings to illustrate empirically the movement of sunspots newly spied through his telescope in the *Istoria e dimostrazioni intorno alle macchie solari* (1613). Imaginatively illustrated and ever more complex terrestrial and celestial atlases were also printed throughout the Renaissance, variously reflecting the cosmological systems of Ptolemy, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, and Kepler, many of which are preserved in luxuriously hand-colored copies. Illustrated globe gores, projected mathematically and printed to scale, were designed as ephemeral cutouts to be adhered to orbital supports of a corresponding diameter starting the famous circa 1507 gores of Martin Waldseemüller, which were the first of their kind to depict the newly discovered American continent in woodcut.

Except for title-page illustrations – particularly imagined galleries of ancient philosophers such as that engraved for Conrad Heresbach’s monumental edition of Strabo (1523) – early modern philosophical imprints otherwise seem rarely to have been illustrated in any significant degree. Memorable, bespoken engraved allegorical title pages appeared more frequently during the early-to-mid-seventeenth century in philosophical imprints, such as the iconic ship sailing between the Pillars of Hercules in Francis Bacon’s *Novum organum* (1620), the three interlocutors of Galileo’s Copernican *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo* (1632), and the multi-layered vision of the body politic in Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651). Separate large-scale

engraved philosophical allegories were also sold and circulated as separate prints, from Albrecht Dürer's famous *Melancholia I* (1514) to entire philosophical programs, such as the elaborate series of mnemonic "thesis print" broadsides conceived by the Franciscan professor of philosophy at Paris, Martin Meurisse (1614–1618). Though exceptional, these fascinating prints encapsulated for Meurisse's students grand summaries of logic, metaphysics, and natural and moral philosophy. Each presents in minute and often dizzying detail complex combinations of allied symbolic and textual information about these separate philosophical themes (Berger 2017).

The humbler appearance of most Renaissance philosophical imprints by no means suggests that they were relegated to a less prestigious position among the wider contents of major early modern libraries. Many of the great Renaissance libraries also included particularly deluxe, even specially commissioned, presentation copies of printed philosophical works. Girolamo de Cremona's magnificent colored border images depicting Aristotle and Averroes in disputation on the title page of the Morgan Library's Torresanus and de Blavis Aristotle (1483) are printed on parchment in royal folio format. It richly reflects a tradition of deluxe philosophical printing that persisted well into the sixteenth century. Especially fine, costly, and esteemed printed philosophical books could be made more visually appealing across many different "price points" for potential buyers. The least expensive forms of this colored finishing work might simply include additions by rubricators and flourishers, while the more costly labors of hand colorists, illuminators, and specialist miniaturists could add considerably to the overall price of a customized or specially commissioned imprint – whether for purchase by a bibliophile or by a rich institution, or for presentation to an intended august recipient. At the same time, it is important to note that, much as often serial repair and "improvement" of original and early bindings was necessary over time, so too could hand coloring and other visual enhancements be added long after a book was first printed.

The relative prestige of philosophical works is also indicated within the implied hierarchies

applied to them in the earliest major printed institutional library catalogues, such as the *Nomenclator* (1595) of the Leiden University Library, given memorable visual form by Johannes Woudanus in an engraved bird's-eye portrait of the library itself in 1610. Atop each freestanding book press, the artist superimposed the subject to which it was dedicated. "Philosophi" appears just after "Theologi" and "Literatores" and was granted a measure of intellectual priority above the more applied disciplines of mathematics, law, medicine, and history.

In whatever its manifestation with respect to other learned discourses, the enterprise of Renaissance philosophy was conducted in and fundamentally dependent upon the material production, circulation, and consumption of physical artifacts – namely, the early modern information media of the written and the printed word. Without the means to reproduce philosophical codices in reliable but also increasingly efficient and cost-effective ways, it is difficult to imagine how the history of Renaissance philosophy could have proceeded quite as it did over the course of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries. Much the same might be said of the Scientific Revolution, or, for that matter, the Protestant Reformation, or the dissemination of wonders emanating from the Americas following the discovery of the New World.

Above all, the multiplicative power of print in classical and postclassical vernacular languages coincided with, but also fundamentally shaped and transformed, one of the most momentous periods of textual revival and philosophical debate in the West. In this sense at least, the study of the history of Renaissance philosophy must be situated not only in the progress and regress of abstract ideas and schools of metaphysical thought, but also within the very concrete physical realm of scribal and print culture where those ideas were first recorded and disseminated, transacted, and preserved. A substantial majority of philosophers and humanists who were engaged in the production or editing of philosophical works during the Renaissance lived squarely within the limitations and possibilities presented by those material realities. Much like scholars

who operate within the challenging realm of academic publishing today, Renaissance philosophers would have been keenly aware of the complexities, hard-nosed financial negotiations, and commercial constraints that governed their ability to communicate their philosophical ideas and intellectual priorities to the wider world.

Cross-References

- ▶ Academy, Platonic
- ▶ Aldine Press
- ▶ Averroism, Renaissance
- ▶ Bacon, Francis
- ▶ Bagolino, Gerolamo
- ▶ Bembo, Pietro
- ▶ Bessarion, Cardinal
- ▶ Bible, Editions, and Translations in the Renaissance
- ▶ Bodin, Jean
- ▶ Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus
- ▶ Bracciolini, Poggio
- ▶ Bruno, Giordano
- ▶ Castiglione, Baldassare
- ▶ Censorship in the Renaissance
- ▶ Ciceronianism
- ▶ Copernicanism
- ▶ Council of Trent
- ▶ Courts and Courtiers in the Renaissance
- ▶ Cudworth, Ralph
- ▶ Dante Alighieri
- ▶ Dioscorides and Greek Herbals
- ▶ Dürer, Albrecht
- ▶ Economics, Renaissance
- ▶ Ficino, Marsilio
- ▶ Filelfo, Francesco
- ▶ Galen and Galenism
- ▶ Galilei, Galileo
- ▶ Grotius, Hugo
- ▶ Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism
- ▶ Hobbes, Thomas
- ▶ Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Humanism
- ▶ Index of Prohibited Books
- ▶ Kabbalah, Renaissance
- ▶ Latin in the Renaissance
- ▶ Love in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Lucretius
- ▶ Luther, Martin
- ▶ Manuscript in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Manuzio, Aldo
- ▶ Mattioli, Pietro Andrea
- ▶ Montaigne, Michel de
- ▶ More, Henry
- ▶ Niccoli, Niccolò
- ▶ Petrarca, Francesco
- ▶ Philology, Renaissance
- ▶ Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
- ▶ Pomponazzi, Pietro
- ▶ Printing Technique, Renaissance
- ▶ Reformation
- ▶ Salutati, Coluccio
- ▶ Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of
- ▶ Spinoza, Baruch
- ▶ Textbooks of Philosophy in the Renaissance
- ▶ Trithemius, Johannes
- ▶ Universities in the Renaissance
- ▶ Valla, Lorenzo
- ▶ Vesalius, Andreas
- ▶ Zwinger, Theodor

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Books of Secrets: Renaissance

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Abstract

In the mid-sixteenth century, the literary genre which came to be known as “books of secrets” arose to become an international and long-lasting success. The features and *topoi* displayed in these books mirror some of the most important social, cultural, and scientific developments between late Renaissance and early modern period. Their authors crafted the *persona* of a restless seeker of secrets, walking the world and open-mindedly engaging with it, which was particularly appealing in an era of geographic discoveries and explorations. Spreading techniques and remedies alongside natural marvels, books of secrets participated in the late Renaissance reappraisal of artisanal knowledge, as well as the dissemination of natural philosophy within a broad audience. Taking full advantage of the mass medium of print, they promoted the circulation of technical, medical, and natural knowledge across the social ladder, attracting readers from the court to the *piazza*. The study of this literary genre has recently provided precious insights into the role of domestic households, courts, workshops, and markets in the history of medicine and science. For a brief but deeper discussion on this topic, see William Eamon’s contribution (forthcoming) on the *Encyclopedia for Early Modern Philosophy and the Sciences* (Springer).

Books of Secrets in Context

The category of “books of secrets” commonly refers to a literary genre widespread throughout sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. It defines collections of medical prescriptions,

technical and alchemical procedures (e.g., distillation), tricks, and natural marvels. Although it is difficult to draw precise boundaries, books of secrets share a set of common features: the recipe form in which secrets are reported, the tendency to choose the vernacular over Latin, the variety of subjects addressed, and a major use of rhetorical and narrative strategies. These features enabled the targeting of a broad, predominantly urban audience, now reachable throughout the mass medium of print, which led to the production of small-sized (mostly *in octavo*) and relatively affordable volumes. Indeed, it has been pointed out that printers and polygraphs played a crucial role in the crafting and distribution of many titles of this genre (Eamon 1994a; Kavey 2007; Gulizia 2014).

While these books might vary in structure (from sizeable collections of mere, unordered recipes, to more selected *corpora* of secrets, carefully organized and explained at length), the methodology remains the same: their authors declare the superiority of experience and observation while enhancing a skeptical approach toward bookish learning and established authorities. They provide endless examples of this approach, often revealing multiple secrets for the same goal and always declaring to have tested their efficacy.

These claims partly served the authors' (self-) fashioning, as the act of revealing secrets was a display of the author's mastery in crafts and understanding of nature (Eamon 2011). Self-promotion strategies were also functional to increase sales and to gain the favor of wealthy patrons (Eamon 1991). Furthermore, in many cases textual tradition was still a source of authority alongside firsthand experimentation (Smith 2011: 58). Careful to establish their own authority, some authors would even discourage experiments, urging the reader to rely solely on their expertise. Nonetheless, the emphasis on practice was not purely rhetorical nor isolated; it mirrored the bodily engagement with nature typical of artisans and practitioners (on which see Smith 2004), an approach increasingly popular in the Renaissance (as the many contemporary technical treatises and how-to books suggest). Even when their authors discouraged experimentation,

the prescriptive character of recipes called for the readers to take action; whether these replicated or adapted the recipes, they were still engaging with nature (Eamon 2011; see also Eamon 1994a: 126–133). Moreover, by endorsing the idea that nature's secrets were accessible through observation and hands-on experience, these books might have genuinely solicited a more experimental attitude in their readership, regardless of the authors' intentions (Eamon 2011; Kavey 2007). They also bore a social and economic value, allowing readers to become sharper consumers in the late Renaissance "mixed medical economy" (Leong and Pennell 2007: 144).

As repositories of artisanal and natural knowledge, books of secrets satisfied a growing desire for understanding and possessing nature. Such desire was nurtured by the expansion of geographic and commercial spaces, which made novelties and exotic specimens increasingly available on the marketplace. This fostered the exchange of scientific information within courtly and commercial environments (Cook 2007; Smith and Findlen 2002; Findlen 1991), the formation of transnational scientific communities, and the creation of collections of *naturalia* and *automata* (see Marples and Pickering 2016 for a recent survey of the vast scholarship on this phenomenon). Participating in this widespread culture of collecting, books of secrets entered libraries and cabinets of curiosities belonging to *virtuosi*, scholars, and practitioners (Eamon 2008; Findlen 1994: 212); in a way, they too can be considered virtual museums, "a sort of theatre in print" (Gulizia 2014: 18).

Just as real *wunderkammern*, books of secrets also gathered bizarre phenomena and anomalies, even teaching how to replicate (or simulate) them. They satisfied an increasing demand for the inexplicable, often associated with the pleasure of having it explained (Stabile 2006: 504). In the early modern period, this taste for wonders converged with the re-evaluation of curiosity, a distinguishing feature of the new natural philosophy (Daston and Park 1998: 303–328). Marvellous phenomena became objects of scientific inquiry, which (as natural magic advocated) could even allow an insight into the web

of correspondences pervading nature (Verardi 2018: 96–103); but they were also sources of entertainment (*diletto*). Often reported in form of anecdotes, they participated in the narrative strategies and in the “rhetoric of the prodigious” (Policardo 2006: 437) that characterized books of secrets.

Impact and Legacy

The abovementioned cultural mind-set boosted the European fame of authors as diverse as the likely fictitious Alessio Piemontese (1555), the histrionic doctor Leonardo Fioravanti (1561, 1564), and the Neapolitan nobleman and *magus* Giambattista Della Porta (1558, 1589). The same mind-set also inspired the first, albeit scarcely documented, scientific academies that were established in Naples: the *Accademia dei secreti*, founded by Della Porta himself (Eamon 2017), and the *Accademia Segreta*, described by the polygraph Girolamo Ruscelli (1567; see Eamon and Paheau 1984).

Alessio Piemontese’s *Secreti* (1555) was the first and unmatched international best seller of this genre. It inspired many similar works (see Eamon 1994a; Rizzardini 2009; Ferguson 1959), some of which were still being reprinted in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, Alessio’s *persona* set the prototype for a new profession, that of the “wanderer searcher after the secrets of nature” (Eamon 2011: 25): three decades later, the friar Tomaso Garzoni (1585: 183) would name him and his followers “professors of secrets.” Their success affected both popular and learned culture: on the one hand, they inspired charlatans to compile and peddle their own booklets of secrets (about these *professorini di secreti* see Eamon 2013, 1994a: 234–266 and appendix; on charlatans, see Gentilcore 2006); on the other hand, they became sources for Johann Jacob Wecker’s extensive Latin encyclopedia of secrets (1582). In fact, both Wecker and Garzoni (1589: 184) enlisted the new “professors” alongside classical and medieval authorities, embedding sixteenth-century works within a continuous quest for natural knowledge.

Books of secrets have been addressed by modern historiography since the late nineteenth century (see Ferguson 1959), but their role in the history of science has become clearer only in the last decades. In particular, William Eamon has suggested that these books promoted the ethical superiority of publicity, and therefore endorsed a transition from the esoteric medieval tradition to the open communication upheld by early modern “new philosophers” (Eamon 2006: 232). However, publicity was also a *topos* widely exploited by professors of secrets as part of their self-fashioning. Moreover, the open availability of a secret (which in these texts stood for “technique,” “recipe”) did not correspond to the abandon of secrecy as a social practice *tout court* (Vermeir 2012, who also argues for an understanding of secrecy and openness as entangled, not oppositional concepts). To disclose secrets was also a way to exert control over their dissemination and did not necessarily mean to relinquish the artisanal expertise on their preparation (e.g., complex technical procedures, when revealed, still needed craft-manufactured instruments; see Jutte 2015: 14).

Although their stance of openness was nuanced and performative, books of secrets may have helped in redefining the object and methodology of the scientific inquiry. Eamon relates this event to a specific connotation of “secrecy” which he calls *epistemic* (1994a: 11). In this sense, secret did not mean something willingly hidden nor intrinsically unknowable; it rather indicated something only contingently unknown (e.g., the virtues of American herbs were unknown to Europeans before the discovery of the New World). Therefore, observation, exploration, and engagement with nature could lead to their unveiling. Moreover, books of secrets conveyed a perception of nature’s secrets as “mechanism hidden beneath the exterior appearances of things” (Eamon 1994a: 297). The contingent, mechanical nature of secrets enhanced a new epistemology: the “hunt,” a search for new objects and phenomena, now prioritized over the demonstration of the already known (Eamon 1994b). This *venatio* required a kind of practical sagacity that benefitted concrete action over

abstract reflection, proceeded by clues and was opened to experimentation. Professors of secrets applied (or at least exhibited) this approach, which was later embraced by Francis Bacon and became a paradigm of the new sciences (Eamon 1994a: 285–291).

In a broader sense, which includes (but is not limited to) the literary genre started by Alessio's *Secreti*, secrets are instances of practical knowledge, gathered and disseminated (in either manuscript or printed books) in the prescriptive recipe form. As such, their manipulation and transmission within – and between – the private and public sphere has been thoroughly investigated from different angles. Several scholars have highlighted the role of domestic households, pharmacies, and small trades (alongside courts, academies, and universities) in making and circulating secrets (recently, Leong 2018; Minuzzi 2016; De Vivo 2013; Leong and Rankin 2011). The growing interest in female agency has unveiled the role of early modern women in the practice of alchemy and medicine (Ray 2015; Rankin 2013). Another line of research addresses the reception and translation of Italian books of secrets across Europe (Martins 2015). Recent researches have reconstructed the life and socio-cultural context of successful “professors”, like Fioravanti (Eamon 2010), Della Porta (Verardi 2018) and the Jew Abramo Colorni (Jutte 2015: 116–223); while ongoing debates concern the real authorship of the *Secreti* of Alessio Piemontese and Isabella Cortese (1561), possibly pseudonyms of Girolamo Ruscelli (Celaschi and Gregori 2015: 206–221; and Rizzardini 2010).

Finally, a closer analysis of the recipes contained in these books and the creation of online databases are now allowing a more concrete understanding of early modern artisanal knowledge (some recent projects: Storey 2008; Leong et al. 2012; Neven et al. 2014; Smith and The Making and Knowing Project 2016).

Cross-References

- Alchemical Medicine and Distillation
- Della Porta, Giambattista

- Epistemology, Artisanal
- Experiment in Renaissance Science
- Fioravanti, Leonardo
- Kunstkammer
- Natural Magic in Renaissance Science
- Observation in Renaissance Science
- Practical Knowledge
- Scientific Academies in the Renaissance
- Wonders in the Renaissance

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Borri, Girolamo

Born: 1512, Arezzo/Italy

Died: August 26, 1592, Perugia/Italy

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Abstract

Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pisa when Galileo was a student there, Borri was a fierce advocate of Aristotelianism. He considered Aristotle as “the true guide for philosophers” and maintained that “the whole posterity learnt more, and in a easier, better and sooner way, from him alone than from all antecedents” (*De motu gravium et levium*, 1575, *Preface*).

Alternate Names

Borro, Girolamo; Borrius Hieronymus

Biography

After studying theology, philosophy, and medicine (perhaps 3at Padua), in 1537 Borri entered the entourage of Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, serving him for 16 years. During this period he lived in Venice, Padua, Rome, and Paris. After Salviati's death in 1553, Borri became lecturer at the University of Pisa, where he remained for 6 years. He returned to Pisa in 1575, teaching philosophy until 1586. In the last years of his life, Borri is supposed to have taught in Perugia, where he died in 1592 at the age of 80.

Borri had a very troubled life, mainly because of his conflicts with the Church. Charged with suspicion of heresy, he was imprisoned twice by the Roman Inquisition, the first time in 1551 and then in 1583.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Borri authored several works, the most relevant of which are two treatises on natural philosophy: a dialogue on tides (*Dialogo del flusso e reflusso del mare*, 1561, with further revised editions in 1577 and 1583) and a book on the motion of heavy and light bodies (*De motu gravium et levium*, 1575).

As for the *Dialogue* on tides, Borri explained the raising of seas as due to the moonlight's heat, which produced a rarefaction of humid bodies and the resulting swelling of the waters. It must be remarked that, in defending such a theory (already held by several authors in the Middle Ages), Borri openly rejected the role of astrological influences, strongly denying their existence.

Borri's book on motion of the heavy and light bodies was rooted in a quarrel on the matter aroused among Pisan professors of Philosophy. We can confidently argue that his main rival in the quarrel was his colleague Francesco Buonamici. While the latter mainly relied on Greek Aristotle's commentators, Borri held a strict Averroist position, maintaining that the elements (whose dynamical tendencies determined, according to Aristotelian physics, the motion of terrestrial bodies) were not true substances, but intermediate entities between substance and

accident. On this ground, Borri also claimed that each element had a peculiar motion, being directly and entirely moved by its form.

Borri's works are important for a deeper appreciation of the Renaissance Aristotelian natural philosophy. It is noteworthy that he seems to share with other natural philosophers of the Tuscan scene (such as, for instance, Andrea Cesalpino and Francesco Buonamici) a remarkable refusal to resort to occult and theological causes in the explanation of natural phenomena.

This genuinely naturalistic approach might have exerted some influence on Galileo Galilei. Let us remind that the abovementioned books on tides and on motion were both owned by Galileo. Thus, Borri's theory of tides is discussed in the Fourth Day of the *Dialogue concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, whereas the *De motu gravium et levium* is explicitly cited in Galileo's youthful writings on motion (*De motu*) and proved to be an influential source for a few remarkable aspects of his early dynamics.

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Borrius Hieronymus

► [Borri, Girolamo](#)

Borro, Girolamo

Born: Arezzo 1512

Died: Perugia 1592

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Abstract

Girolamo Borro (1512–1592) spent much of his professional life as a professor of philosophy at Pisa, where he wrote significant works on Aristotelian natural philosophy and logic. Borro was critical of Renaissance humanism and his approach to Aristotle demanded removal of what he considered Platonic and mathematical elements. In many cases, he agreed with Averroes. Inquisitors twice investigated him for heresy, linking him to Protestant movements and heretical doctrine, but he was never convicted.

Alternate Names

[Borri, Girolamo](#)

Biography

Girolamo Borro (or Borri), a native of Arezzo, served as professor of philosophy at Pisa from

1553 to 1559 and again from 1575 to 1586. His tenure there was marked by disputes and controversies with his colleagues Francesco de' Vieri, Andrea Camuzzi, and Francesco Buonamici as well by his connections to some of the most famed intellectuals of the early modern period (Schmitt 1981). It is likely that Galileo Galilei was among his pupils and that Michel de Montaigne met him and described him as a consummate Aristotelian (Schmitt 1972; Heilbron 2010, 45–48). Some scholars have painted a largely negative picture of him as an example of the slavishness and close-mindedness of Renaissance Aristotelianism (Moody 1951, 415–18), yet his works show innovative and even experimental approaches to natural philosophy.

He published three significant works during his life, a vernacular treatise on the tides (1577), a lengthy Latin discussion of the gravity and levity of the elements (1576), and a Latin treatise on Aristotelian views of method (1584). Additionally, he wrote a short polemical treatise, *On the Causes of Our Ignorance*, which circulated only in manuscript. The *Causes of Our Ignorance* sets forth many of Borro's larger philosophical and intellectual commitments. He criticized the Greek commentators on Aristotle and Avicenna because they mix Aristotle with Plato, who was less concerned with nature than with applications of mathematical methods, which Borro dismissed as inappropriate for natural philosophy. To the contrary, Borro preferred Averroes, whose literal approach to Aristotle he deemed a pure and accurate defense of Aristotle, despite the carping of humanists and philologists (Martin 2014, 75–76; Schmitt 1981).

Borro's earliest work was *De flusso e refluxo del mare e dell'inondatione del Nilo*, first printed pseudonymously in 1561 and with the author's name attached in 1577 and 1583. It is a dialogue, a genre typical of Renaissance meteorology (Martin 2011, 66). In addition to showing the manner in which Aristotelianism entered into court settings, the work is notable for its defense of the eternity of earth against Thomas Aquinas's view (Dal Prete 2014, 309–10). Additionally, his argument that a temperate heat of the moon caused the tides by attracting water, acting in an analogical way to fire

that causes the movement of boiling water, was novel and among those that Galileo apparently rejected (Shea 1970).

In the *De motu gravium et levium*, Borro defended Averroes' understanding of the heaviness and lightness of the elements, by which the distinct natural motion of each element is defined by their form. For Averroes, the elements possess a status in between substances and accidents, meaning that the elements move on their own accord and that elements, except fire, have weight in their natural place. As a result, according to Borro, air has weight while in the air but not in water, and therefore has the tendency to move downward when in mixed bodies above the surface of the earth. Consequently, he held that wood should fall more quickly than lead because it is a mixture of three elements that have a natural downward motion, while lead is composed only of two – water and earth. Borro and a group of friends tested this hypothesis by repeatedly dropping roughly equal weights of lead and wood. The tests confirmed, according to Borro and other contemporary observers, the accuracy of Averroes' position because the wood supposedly fell faster than the lead, meaning its air's weight contributed to its descent (Camerota and Helbing 2000). These experimental tests, conducted and reported in Pisa in the years before Galileo's studies there, represent one, of several, precedents for Galileo's experimental understanding of fall bodies.

In his 1584 *De peripatetica docendi atque addiscendi methodo*, Borro discussed the nature of method. Borro contended that method was a path to learning doctrine and skill, rather than the Averroistic "way of doctrine." Thus according to the Averroistic path demonstrations and definition. Rather for Borro, method relied on analysis, synthesis, and diarsis. Analysis was the means for discovering, synthesis for writing, and diarsis for defining. He contended that the true method must be a quick, certain, uniform, and easily understood and must not be weighed down by the supposedly endless discussions found in philosophical commentaries (Gilbert 1960, 186–92).

Borro was investigated for heresy in 1570 and later in 1582–1583, accused of clandestine

Lutheranism, possessing forbidden books, and maintaining the mortality of the soul. From the last charge, he defended himself by aligning his views with Tommaso de Vio Caetano, a Dominican, who defended Pietro Pomponazzi with having the philosophical freedom to use philosophy to investigate concepts apart from the demands of Catholic doctrine. He was extricated from both processes through the intervention of powerful men. In the first case Grand Duke Francesco de' Medici intervened; in the second case Pope Gregory XIII helped obtain his release from incarceration (Baldini and Spruit 2009, 1,1:815–17).

Borro's work represents a continuation of the Italian tradition of natural philosophy that prized Averroes' exegetical approach to Aristotle. He stands out as an Aristotelian for his witty discourses, writing in both Latin and the vernacular, and for eschewing the commentary format. At the same time, his work has served as a starting point for showing the Aristotelian predecessors to Galileo.

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Botero, Giovanni

Born: 1544, Bene (Italy)

Died: 23 June 1617, Turin (Italy)

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Abstract

Giovanni Botero was an Italian preacher, poet, diplomat, and political thinker of the late Renaissance. Among his most influential works are the *Cause della grandezza e magnificenza delle città* (*Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, 1588), the *Ragion di Stato* (*Reason of State*, 1589), and the *Relationi universali* (*Universal Relations*, 1591–1596). The leading question of how States are founded, preserved, and steered to greatness is explored in his main works by engaging in a complex and not entirely unambiguous confrontation with the thought of Niccolò Machiavelli and Jean Bodin. A former Jesuit and a close collaborator of the Congregation of the Index, Botero purported to write in open reaction against the allegedly irreligious ideas of Machiavelli and his followers; at the same time, he incorporated several of Machiavelli's insights into his own political construction, thus achieving a precarious balance between religious ideals and political realism which reflects to some extent inherent tensions within Counter-Reformation political thought. Botero's main works have also been regarded as important stepping stones towards the development of modern disciplines such as political economy, demography, urban planning, statistics, human geography, and geopolitics.

Alternate Names

Botero, Jean; Boterus, Johannes

Biography

Botero was born in Bene Vagienna, in the Duchy of Savoy (Northern Italy), in 1544. At the age of 15, he entered the Jesuit College in Palermo, Sicily, which he left in 1560 to continue his studies in the Jesuit Collegio Romano. After several years spent teaching in various Jesuit schools in Italy and France, in 1580 Botero was expelled from the Society following an incident in Milan, without having pronounced his final vows nor realizing his dreams of being sent on a mission overseas (Chabod 1969; Firpo 1971). The disgraced Jesuit found unexpected succor in Charles Borromeo, the archbishop of Milan, who initially offered him a position as a parish priest in Luino (a small village on Lake Maggiore) and later hired him as his personal secretary. In the 2 years that he spent in the archbishop's service, Botero published his first important works, *De regia sapientia* (*On Royal Wisdom*, 1583) and *Del dispregio del mondo* (*On Contempt for the World*, 1584), both of which provide ample evidence of his awakening interest in political affairs (see Botero 1584, 1.17–1.19; Vasoli 1992). In 1585, following the death of Borromeo, Botero went on a secret mission to France on behalf of Charles Emmanuel I, duke of Savoy. His nine-month stint in Paris, where he worked with the duke's ambassador René de Lucinge to establish ties with the Catholic league in the midst of the civil wars, was crucial for his intellectual development and gave a new sense of urgency to his ever-growing political interests (Chabod 1969; Baldini 1992b). Shortly after returning to Italy, Botero entered the service of the young Federico Borromeo, Charles' nephew, and followed him to Rome, where the latter was elected cardinal in 1586. The 9 years that Botero spent in Rome were among the happiest and most productive of his life. Possibly as early as 1587, he began to work as a *consultore* for the Congregation of the Index, among whose members was his erstwhile

classmate at the Roman College, Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino. In 1588, Botero published *Delle cause della grandezza e magnificenza delle città* (henceforth *Cause*), the first of three masterpieces that brought him long-awaited fame and recognition. The *Cause* were followed only one year later by *Della ragion di Stato*, arguably inspired by contemporary discussions of Bodin's *République* within the Congregation of the Index (Descendre 2009). In 1591, Botero published the first volume of the *Relationi universali*, a geographical description of different countries of the world that purported to lay the groundwork for a study of the advancement of the Christian religion worldwide, but also provided a conceptual frame for justifying Spanish aspirations to a global empire (Headley 2000). Part two, on political geography, was released in 1592, whereas part three, on world religions, was completed in 1594 and published the following spring. When Cardinal Borromeo was appointed archbishop of Milan, Botero sought to remain in Rome, possibly with patronage from Philip II of Spain, but his efforts must have been unsuccessful: indeed, by the spring of 1596 he had already returned to Milan, where he put the final touches on the fourth part of his *Relationi universali*. The first complete edition of the work, in four parts, appeared in Bergamo shortly afterwards and was almost immediately reprinted in Venice. In 1598, Botero published a series of *Aggiunte* (*Additions*) to the *Ragion di Stato*, which he had been revising incessantly for the previous 9 years: the definitive edition of the work appeared that same year in Venice, for Giolito. In 1599, shortly after consigning to the press his two books *Dell'uffitio del cardinale* (*The Office of Cardinal*; Botero 1599; see Marchetti 1992 and Zucchini 1992), Botero quit Borromeo's service and moved to Turin, where he took up a well-paid position as a preceptor to the sons of Duke Charles Emmanuel I (Barcia 1992; Stumpo 1992). He remained in Turin until 1610, overseeing the education of the three young princes of Savoy and also joining them on a long journey to Spain, to the court of their uncle, King Philip III (1604–1606). Months after returning to Turin, Botero published his eyewitness account of Spain as an appendix to *I capitani* (*The Captains*),

a collection of biographies of great military leaders, and one of Botero's last works (Botero 1607; see Bielański 1992). He died in Turin in 1617, bequeathing his patrimony to the Society of Jesus and leaving the fifth part of his *Relationi universali* still in manuscript (now in Giorda 1894).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The unifying theme behind Botero's major works is the investigation of how to "found, preserve and extend the State" (Botero 1589, 1.1). Far from being unproblematic, such a definition of the essential aims of political rule raises issues of which Botero himself was acutely aware. Chief among such issues is that of the rightful boundaries of political action. Surely, Botero was careful to distinguish between a "good" and a "bad" type of "reason of State": while the former operates in conformity with Christian values and with the blessing of the Church, the latter pursues political *grandezza* (greatness) for its own sake, regardless of, and often against, the sanction of Catholic authorities. It is this latter type – allegedly propounded by Tacitus, Machiavelli, and the French *politiques* – that Botero sets about critiquing in his own *Ragion di Stato* (Firpo 1948; Descendre 2009). However, his discussions of specific cases often complicate this seemingly straightforward distinction: for instance, his call for secrecy and dissimulation (Botero 1589, 2.7 and 2.15), his praise of ruthless cunning in foreign relations (Botero 1589, 9.22), his heartfelt admiration for the greatness achieved by non-Christian empires (see, for instance, his praise of China in Botero 1588, 2, and 1596, 2.2), and his utilitarian view of religion as a stabilizing force ensuring unity and peace (Botero 1589, 2.16; see Chabod 1969) seem to suggest that the former Jesuit had learnt more from his polemical targets than he was willing to concede in principle. However, the question of Botero's "Machiavellianism" still remains to a large extent an open question. According to some scholars (for instance, Waley 1956; De Mattei 1979; Suppa 1992), a profound gap in mentality and intentions separates Botero and

Machiavelli beyond any superficial similarities; others, however, have underlined the continuities between the two authors, with particular respect to their conception of power relations within and outside the State (for instance, Tenenti 1992; Vasoli 1992; Descendre 2003, 2009).

Botero's relationship with the thought of Jean Bodin has been similarly debated. In particular, it has been suggested (Descendre 2003 and 2009, elaborating on earlier insights by Chabod 1969 and Tenenti 1992) that the absence of the language of sovereignty from the *Ragion di Stato* ought to be taken as an indication of Botero's attempt to elaborate a nonjuridical theory of the State: according to this interpretation, the Piedmontese deliberately built his idea of political power on Machiavelli's concept of *dominio* (domination or power *de facto*) as opposed to Bodin's concept of sovereignty (legitimate rule, i.e., power *de jure*). On the other hand, it should be noted that the discourse of sovereignty is not completely missing from Botero's outlook (see, for instance, Botero 1589, 2.11 and 4.6). Additionally, Botero seems to follow Bodin's *République* directly on many points, concerning (among other things) taxation, military strategy, demography, colonial policy, and climate theory. According to Waley (1956), this makes the French thinker "the most important single influence" on Botero's thought.

Another major problem encountered by Botero in his discussion of how to "found, preserve and extend the State" lay in the inherently controversial nature of the third of these objectives. Following a tradition dating back to Roman historiographers, Renaissance political theorists often viewed territorial expansion as a double-edged sword that led first to ephemeral greatness and then inevitably to decadence and collapse (see the classic discussion in Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, 1.6). Admitting that preservation and extension can be incompatible aims in the long term, Botero expressed a clear preference for the former over the latter (see, for instance, Botero 1589, 1.5–1.6, and 1596, 2.2, "Moscovia"). He argued that unchecked expansionism was not only potentially catastrophic for the State but also hardly acceptable on moral grounds, given the dubious legitimacy of military aggression (Botero 1589, 2.9).

At the same time, he believed that offensive war, though unjustified against fellow Christians, was perfectly legitimate and indeed praiseworthy against declared enemies of the Christian religion such as the Turks (*ibidem*).

As a safer alternative to territorial expansionism, Botero recommended intensive development within the country's fixed borders, by means of demographic growth, land improvement, and an ever more effective harnessing of local resources. He specifically pointed to the Low Countries (Botero 1588, 1, and 1596, 2.2, "Cina") and the Chinese empire (Botero 1588, 2; 1596, 1.2 and 2.2, "Cina") as virtuous models in this respect. Drawing attention to the "added value" produced by human labor (*industria*) as a crucial means of enhancing a country's wealth, Botero further advised that manufacturing and exports be encouraged by all possible means (De Bernardi 1931; Descendre 2003). However, despite his firm conviction that a larger population, an enlightened use of the territory, and an increased volume of exports would greatly stimulate national development, Botero did not believe in unlimited growth. In memorable pages that have been viewed by some (for instance, Roncaglia 2005) as an anticipation of Malthus' *Essay on Population*, Botero states that the greatness (*grandezza*) of a State is essentially tantamount to the size of its population, which in turn depends on two things: the "generative power" of human beings, which is relatively constant, and the "nutritive power" of a country, namely the maximum amount of people that a given territory is able to sustain. Now, since the "nutritive power" of a country can only grow up to a certain point, once this limit has been reached, stagnation or decline are the only two possible scenarios (Botero 1588, 3).

Botero's attention for the geographic and environmental conditions of political *grandezza* constitutes another major thread in his work (Magnaghi 1906, 1936; Chabod 1969; Descendre 2009; Miglietti 2016). While Bodin's sophisticated theory of climates was possibly the single most important source for the analysis of environmental influence in *Ragion di Stato* (Botero 1589, 2.7), Botero's interest in physical and human geography was also nourished by a vast corpus

of travel accounts, diplomatic reports (*relazioni*), and Jesuit missionary letters that provided him with ample information for his own *Relazioni universali* (Chabod 1969; Magnaghi 1936; Albonico 1990; Frigo 1992). Additionally, Botero was an eager reader of classical literature and particularly of Roman historians such as Tacitus (Schellhase 1992; Stegmann 1992). Although his use of sources has occasionally been condemned as uncritical (Chabod 1969 – but see Magnaghi 1936), what remains remarkable is Botero's capacity to craft such vastly diverse materials into an efficacious synthesis, thereby producing what has been rightly regarded as the first serious attempt at a geopolitical theory of the global world (Descendre 2009; Perrotta 2012; Prosperi 2013).

Impact and Legacy

The strength of Botero's thought lay in his ability to describe the complexity of the modern State in complete yet accessible terms. By aptly capturing the mutual implications of politics, war, economy, geography, culture, and religion in an age of State-building and colonial expansion, Botero imposed himself as one of the most respected political writers of his own time and made a significant contribution to the development of modern disciplines such as political economy, demography, urban planning, statistics, human geography, and geopolitics. Botero's main works were highly popular in his own day and remained influential until the end of the seventeenth century, with frequent reprints and translations into several European languages. Having crucially reformulated the terms in which the political debate was to be framed in the following decades (De Mattei 1979; Borrelli 2012), Botero's *Ragion di Stato* elicited a number of responses, critiques, imitations, and vulgarizations all over Europe, both in the form of commentaries (see for instance Apollinare Calderini's *Discorsi sopra la Ragion di Stato del Signor Giovanni Botero* [1597] and Castronovo 1973) and in that of original treatises (Curcio 1934; Thuau 1966; Firpo 1975; Betti 1992; specifically on polemical responses see De Mattei 1979). The *Cause*, too, circulated widely:

in addition to being customarily printed as an appendix to the previous work, it also occasionally appeared in self-standing editions or alongside treatises that discussed similar topics, as in the 1665 Helmstedt edition that proposed the work jointly with Hyppolit von Colli's *Incrementa urbium*. The *Relationi universali* enjoyed an even greater and more lasting success (Albonico 1992), imposing itself as a bestseller for decades to come and reaching the most disparate and remote audiences (see Tazbir 1992 on the Polish translation of 1609). The formerly vexed question of the Roman prohibition, in 1624, of the *Relationi universali* in all editions but the Tarino edition of 1601 was definitively solved by Baldini in an article based on Firpo's findings (Baldini 1992c). In England, Botero's thought influenced authors such as Francis Bacon, Walter Raleigh, Robert Johnson, and Robert Burton (Weber 2003; De Oliveira 2003; Fitzmaurice 2007; Miglietti 2016), while more generally contributing to the emergence of mercantilism and of a modern "commercial ideology of colonization" (Fitzmaurice 2007; Perrotta 2012). Botero's influence has been detected in French works such as Antoine de Montchrétien's pioneering *Traicté de l'oconomie politique* (*Treatise on political economy*, 1615: see Lavalley 1903; Panichi 1989) and Pierre Grégoire's *De Republica* (*On the State*, 1596: see Quagliani 1992); however, a full overview of Botero's fortune in France, similar to the one provided by Michael Stolleis for Germany (Stolleis 1992), still remains to be written. The reception of Botero in the Iberian Peninsula has been similarly understudied, with only a few notable exceptions (Maravall 1975; Fernández-Santamaría 1992; Puyol 2004; Casas Nadal 2007).

Cross-References

- Bacon, Francis
- Bellarmino, Roberto
- Bodin, Jean
- Burton, Robert
- Empire, Renaissance
- Exploration, Renaissance Concept of

- Geography in Renaissance Sciences
- Machiavelli, Niccolò
- Politics, Renaissance
- Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of

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Moulin, and an author of a major comprehensive work entitled *Corps de toute la Philosophie*, which, in the wake of individual publication of the works of Duplex, provides the reader with an overarching synthesis of Scholastic philosophy in French and clearly bears the stamp of Jesuit thinking.

Alternate Names

[Bouju de Beaulieu](#); [Bouju-Beaulieu](#); [Bonju, Théophraste](#)

Biography

Little is known of Bouju's life. He was born into a Protestant family in the Anger region of France, the son of Jacques Bouju, President of the Parliament of Brittany. He later converted to Catholicism and was ordained into the priesthood. The title pages of his works indicate that in 1604 he was chaplain to French King Henry IV, while in 1603 he describes himself as simply "Catholic." By 1613, he had become "Adviser and Ordinary Chaplain to the King." Little else, beyond what his books tell us, is known about his life.

Works

Bouju is renown for two reasons. The first is related to the theological controversy which brought him into conflict with the Protestant Pierre du Moulin, from 1603 on. One of his earliest publications is perfectly explicit on this point: "*Methode de convaincre par la sainte escriture, tous schismatiques et heretiques. Selon laquelle est demonstrée la fausseté de la doctrine des pretenduz reformez Calvinistes, Zwingliens et Lutheriens, contraire à celle des Catholiques [...] contre le sieur du Moulin, ministre de la pretendue Eglise reformée, continuant à renier sa confession de Foy*" [*On the Method of convincing all schismatics and heretics through the holy scriptures. According to which the falseness of the professed reformist doctrine of the Calvinists,*

Botero, Jean

► [Botero, Giovanni](#)

Boterus, Johannes

► [Botero, Giovanni](#)

Bouju de Beaulieu

► [Bouju, Théophraste](#)

Bouju, Théophraste

Born: unknown (16th century?)

Died: unknown (17th century?)

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Abstract

Théophraste Bouju was a Catholic controversialist, an outspoken opponent of Pierre du

Zwinglians and Lutherans is thereby demonstrated, unlike the true Catholic doctrine [...] and in opposition to Monsieur du Moulin, minister of the professed reformed Church and who continues to recant his confession of Faith]. This work is dedicated to the “King of England, Scotland, and Ireland” whom Bouju rather sheepishly admonishes thus: “A raison dequoy, vostre Majesté venant à s’apercevoir, que l’instruction qu’on luy a donnée, ne conduit pas à son but, et à ses desseings, elle sera obligée de choisir une meilleure voye”[By reason of which, if His Majesty should come to recognize that the instruction he has received does not guide him to his own end and designs, then His Majesty should choose a better path].

Moreover, over and above these theological controversies, Bouju is the author of *Corps de toute la Philosophie* (1614), a voluminous appraisal (1,500 pages in folio) of Aristotelian philosophy: *Corps de toute la Philosophie divisé en deux parties. La premiere contient tout ce qui appartient à la sapience [...], la seconde contient tout ce qui appartient à la Prudence [...], le tout par demonstration et auctorité d’Aristote, avec esclarcissement de sa doctrine par luy-mesme* [The corpus of all philosophy divided into two parts. The first contains all which belongs to knowledge [...], the second contains all which belongs to Prudence [...], and both are demonstrated by the authority of Aristotle, with explanations of his doctrine by himself]. The work is dedicated to the King and Queen regent. In the preface, Bouju points to his desire to make philosophy accessible to all, with a view to promoting unity and peace across the French kingdom. His main target was the largely ill-educated old nobility whom he wished to convert to reason as a means of curbing their entrenched bellicosity: “En somme la philosophie est necessaire à un Estat, pour le conserver sans troubles” [Philosophy is necessary for the State, to protect it from unrest].

The *Corps de toute la Philosophie* provides a highly didactic synthesis (Bouju uses educational innovations present in the work of Dupleix) of a generally rather conservative vein of

Scholastic philosophy, indicative of Thomism and Jesuit influences. Like Dupleix, Bouju’s work by far surpasses mere compilation – he takes a stand on a number of points, both in the physics and metaphysics (see Ariew).

Cross-References

- [Dupleix, Scipion](#)
- [Jesuits in the Early Modern Period](#)

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- Bouju, T. 1604. *Methode de convaincre par la Sainte Ecriture, tous schismatiques et heretiques. Selon laquelle est démontrée la fausseté de la doctrine des pretenduz reformez Calvinistes, Zwingliens et Lutheriens, contraire à celle des Catholiques: ès points de l’Eglise, De la Parole de Dieu, ou tradition Apostolique non écrite, De la presence réelle du corps et du sang de Jesus- Christ, au S. Sacrement de l’Eucharistie, De la Transsubstantiation, Du Sacrifice de la Messe, De la communion souz une espece, Du Purgatoire, Des Indulgences, De la veneration et invocation des saints, De la veneration de leurs reliques, et De la veneration des images. Contre le sieur du Moulin, ministre de la pretendue Eglise reformée, continuant à renier sa confession de Foy*. Paris.
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qui est intitulé: Commentaire sur l'auctorité de quelque Concile General que ce soit, sur le Pape: De la Responce Synodale à Basle, etc.

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Bouju-Beaulieu

► [Bouju, Théophraste](#)

Boulaese, Jehan

► [Postel, Guillaume](#)

Boulese Gauloys Cosmopolite, Jehan

► [Postel, Guillaume](#)

Boyle, Robert

Born: 25th January 1627, Lismore Castle, County Waterford, Ireland

Died: 31st December 1691, London, England

Jan-Erik Jones

Philosophy, Southern Virginia University, Buena Vista, VA, USA

Abstract

Best known for his work in experimental natural philosophy, Boyle published on such diverse subjects as theology, morality, chemistry, and natural philosophy.

He is revered for his empirical and rational approach to science and is credited with

defining the important scientific term “element” as well as perfecting the vacuum pump and discovering the relationship between temperature and pressure now known as Boyle’s Law. He was also an important critic of the Scholastic philosophy whose work and arguments influenced generations of philosophers and scientists.

The historical emphasis on Boyle’s rigorous work in natural philosophy often ignores his religious commitments, moral philosophy, missionary efforts, philanthropic projects, and his work in alchemy.

Biography

Robert Boyle, chemist, physicist, and arguably the most important experimental natural philosopher of the seventeenth century, was born into one of the wealthiest families in Britain. He was the seventh son and fourteenth (out of fifteen) child of Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Cork.

Educated at Eaton (1635–1638), his favorite subject was history and found the rest of the curriculum uninspiring. After Eaton, his education was completed (1639–1644) by a “grand tour” of Europe under the tutelage of Isaac Marcombe.

From 1647 until the middle 1650s, Boyle maintained regular contact with experimental philosophers and social reformers in the group known as the Hartlib Circle. Samuel Hartlib, who shared Boyle’s conviction that science and philosophy should benefit humanity, was one of the figures who paved the way for the formation of the Royal Society. His association with the Hartlib Circle (which included – among others – William Petty and George Starkey) largely contributed to Boyle’s interest in experimental chemistry and alchemy.

Boyle believed that the recipes for medicines should be publicly available so the knowledge of how to alleviate suffering would be free to all. He also worked with his nephew, Robert Fitzgerald, on a desalination project to purify seawater onboard ships.

From 1662 to 1689, he was governor of the New England Company, which he saw as an opportunity to help spread Christianity among the Native Americans. Boyle engaged in other missionary efforts that included the publication of an Irish Gaelic Bible and an effort to introduce legislation in the parliament to encourage slave owners to treat their slaves who have converted to Christianity more humanely.

Boyle's works include reconciliations of religion with science and showing that the study of nature was a religious duty. He believed that the proper and systematic study of God's creations helps to develop the virtues of discipline, self-reflection, intellectual modesty, and logical thinking.

From c.1655 to 1668, Boyle took up residence at Oxford University and became associated with (*inter alia*) John Wilkins, Christopher Wren, John Locke, and Robert Hooke. It was in this period that most of Boyle's memorable and influential works were published.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Boyle's generally Baconian approach to understanding nature consists in the reliance upon observation, natural histories, and experimentation and resists the formation of general theories. This empirical methodology was coupled with a metaphysical commitment to the mechanical natural philosophy, which claims that all natural phenomena can be explained by appeal to matter and motion alone.

Though Boyle allows for immaterial human souls in his account of the universe, he rejects the existence of any other immaterial causes within the natural order. His version of mechanism is called "corpuscularianism" because he holds that all physical objects are composed of material corpuscles, i.e., insensibly small particles arranged in various structures, but unlike atoms, corpuscles are physically divisible.

Boyle moved to Oxford in c.1655, and while in Oxford, he became a powerful advocate of the corpuscularian natural philosophy and a staunch critic of Scholastic philosophy, which appeals to

substantial forms and real qualities. He argued instead for the corpuscularian account of the origin of genera and species and of the qualities of bodies.

In Oxford, he joined the "invisible college," a forerunner of the Royal Society, and he collaborated with Robert Hooke to construct an air pump. Hooke's and Boyle's experiments on the properties of air led to discoveries on respiration, combustion, sound transmission, and – most famously – the relationship between the temperature and pressure of a gas known as "Boyle's Law." Boyle also used the air pump to create a vacuum as empirical evidence against the claim that vacua in nature are impossible.

Part of Boyle's research at Oxford was in conjunction with the American alchemist George Starkey and seems to be in pursuit of the philosopher's stone, which alchemists believed would help transmute other metals into gold.

In 1668, Boyle moved to London, set up a laboratory, and continued his scientific and philosophical pursuits. Living in London allowed him to participate in the Royal Society, and in 1680, he received an offer to become president of the Royal Society, though he declined the offer. He died in London, on New Year's Eve, in 1691.

Impact and Legacy

He was one of the founding members of the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge.

Boyle authored a prophetic "wish list" which identified advances he hoped the Royal Society would make. The list includes organ transplantation, increasing life spans, submarines, airplanes, exact navigation aids, perpetual light sources, techniques for increasing yields from seeds, the transmutation of species in animals, vegetables and minerals, and an array of drugs that could cure pain, increase strength, enhance creativity, and improve memory.

He established an endowment for a series of lectures to defend Christianity that persists today.

He discovered Boyle's Law, which states that the temperature of a gas covaries with the pressure on the gas.

His definition of "element" as a structure of smaller particles that cannot be broken up is still accepted today.

He was an important influence on John Locke and Gottfried Leibniz.

Bracciolini, Poggio

Born: 11 February 1380

Died: 30 October 1459

Hester Schadee

Department of History, University of Exeter,
Exeter, UK

B

Cross-References

- [Alchemy](#)
- [Bacon, Francis](#)
- [Baconianism](#)
- [Experiment in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Hartlib, Samuel](#)
- [Historia Naturalis](#)
- [Mechanics in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Vacuum in Renaissance Science](#)

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Abstract

Poggio, like many other humanists of his generation, was not a systematic philosopher, and his works contain many apparent contradictions. This is all the more so since he wrote few expository tracts, but rather dialogues, a history, numerous letters, and a collection of jokes. He was a humanist who sometimes ranked the Church Fathers above the classics, denied the exemplary value of the ancient world, yet balked at the suggestion that the moderns could surpass antiquity or that modernity be judged by other standards than the classical past. An almost lifelong papal employee, he agitated against hypocritical clergy, yet fathered 14 children with his common-law wife. If there was one unifying factor in Poggio's outlook, it lay in his unflinching observation of human foibles and frailty, met with good-humored laughter, biting sarcasm, and sometimes deep despair.

Alternate Names

[Poggius Florentinus](#)

Biography

Gian Francesco di Poggio Bracciolini was born in 1380 as Poggio di Guccio, in Terranuova in the upper Arno valley; in life he became known as Poggius Florentinus, after his death as Poggio Bracciolini. His father was a pharmacist; his mother, the daughter of a notary. At the end of the fourteenth century, Poggio's studies led him to

Florence, where he qualified as notary in 1402. Of modest means, he supported himself by working as a scribe and, on the basis of Carolingian models, designed the humanist script (*lettera antica*), from which modern Roman fonts descend (Ullman 1960; De la Mare 1973). In this way he attracted the attention of Coluccio Salutati, Florentine chancellor and foremost scholar of his day and mentor of a group of avant-garde humanists including Leonardo Bruni, Niccolò de' Niccoli, and Carlo Marsuppini. With Salutati's patronage, Poggio was appointed apostolic scribe (1403) and later secretary (c.1410). Poggio was present at the Church Council of Constance (1414–1418), where he showed himself critical of clerical abuses and wrote an apology for the burnt Hussite Jerome of Prague (1416). He also wrote a well-known letter on the public bathing habits of the Germans, whom he praised as Epicureans for their joyful approach to life and favorably contrasted with his compatriots (Harth 1984–1987; Gordon 1974/1991). It is unclear how Poggio sustained himself after the deposition of his master pope John XXIII in 1415 left him unemployed, and the search for ancient manuscripts he undertook from Constance may well have had a financial motive. With two curial colleagues, he explored the cathedral and cloister libraries of France, Germany, and Switzerland – most famously St. Gall – and recovered Quintilian's complete *Institutes of Oratory*, Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*, and many other texts. Notwithstanding the fame generated by these finds, the new pope Martin V did not reemploy him at the secretarial level, and Poggio consequently took a position as secretary with Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester (1419). He did not like England's physical or cultural climate, nor did he locate the hoped-for classical texts in English libraries; instead, he read the Church Fathers with new appreciation. In 1423, Poggio returned to the Roman curia and followed pope Eugene IV in his Florentine exile in 1434. In 1436, at the age of 55, Poggio married Vaggia Buondelmonti, the 18-year-old daughter of a noble Florentine family, who bore him six children. This was the occasion for the dialogue *Should an Old man Take a Wife?*, in which Poggio argued for the benefits and pleasures of female company

(Bracciolini 1963–1969). The arrangement put an end to his common-law marriage to Lucia Pannelli, with whom he had 14 children, 3 of whom were legitimated in 1430; he took care, however, to provide for some of this offspring in his will. Over time Poggio acquired substantial property, including a country villa near his hometown (1438), which he furnished with ancient sculpture. Most of his literary output was composed over the next two decades, including imperfect Latin translations of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (1443–1447) and selections of Diodorus Siculus (1449) and Lucian (1455). Yet despite his personal and professional success, the progress of time was not altogether kind to Poggio. His old Florentine friends died in quick succession, and the younger generation of curial humanists, epitomized by Lorenzo Valla, was not to his liking: he could not compete with their knowledge of Greek and found their technical philology incompatible with the ideals of humanism. Poggio had long been close to Cosimo de' Medici, the effective leader of Florence from the mid-1430s, and invited to become Florentine chancellor in 1453 he enthusiastically accepted, only to be disappointed by the realities of incessant political strife. He retired from the chancellorship in 1458 and died in October 1459. Poggio was given a state funeral and lies buried in Florence's St. Croce, alongside his friends and former chancellors Bruni and Marsuppini (Walser 1914; Martines 1963; DBI 1971; ER 1999).

Works and Themes

Aside from occasional prose such as letters and orations, Poggio did not circulate literary works until he was almost 50. His earlier contribution to the humanist Republic of Letters can be gauged from the output of others. The last important exchange of Coluccio Salutati was with Poggio (1406) and concerned the literary and moral value of the ancient authors versus the moderns. Poggio took a "classicist" position, in that he assumed the automatic literary and perhaps philosophical superiority of the ancients against Salutati's contention that, with Christ, the foundation of ethics and therefore the purpose of literature had

permanently changed for the better. This debate forms the subject of Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogues for Pier Paolo Vergerio* (c. 1406), which showed him in fundamental agreement with Poggio (Fubini 1992). An echo of this *querelle* is heard in Poggio's exchange of invectives with Lorenzo Valla at the very end of his career (1452–1453). Valla's endeavor in the *Elegances* (1441) to replace literary connoisseurship with the systematic study of Latin grammar, lexicon, and syntax earned him Poggio's ire for the assumption that a "modern" could surpass the ancients in their own field. He was especially outraged that Valla applied philological methods to the study of sacred texts. In like vein, Poggio attacked Valla's Epicurean *On Pleasure* (1431) and *On the True and False Good* (1434–1441) for the threat their relativism posed to established Christian-Stoic morality. Erasmus later opined that, while Poggio could boast a fluent Latin style, Valla surpassed him in his knowledge of the language (Camporeale 1982; Trinkaus 1987).

Poggio's first independent work *On Avarice* (1428–1429) is of interest for its theme and for the light it sheds on his methods as an author (Germano 1994, Kohl and Witt 1978). Although the text is presented as an academic dialogue, there is neither a Ciceronian reconciliation of different views nor a skeptic suspension of judgment; furthermore, the choice and assertions of the three main speakers are ironic, so that it is unclear where Poggio stands. The question under consideration is the evaluation of avarice, which can refer to the sin of usury, but also glosses the impulse toward commercial activity for the sake of the accumulation of wealth. Pertinent issues are distinctions between public and private wealth, the Church and secular society, the moral or theological status of the vice or sin, and their effects. Since the dialogue takes issue with recent sermons of the Observant Franciscan San Bernardino of Siena endorsing commerce, it also raises the question of the value of the clergy as model and arbiter of the mores of secular society. Some scholars have seen Poggio as a spokesperson for a new, guilt-free approach to economic activity (Garin 1965), while others by contrast read his opposition to San Bernardino as a plea

to reinstate the rigor of the patristic Church (Oppel 1977, but cf. Goldbrunner 1979). In truth Poggio probably approves of what he views as part of human character – the wish to better one's position – as long as the ethical and economic costs and gains are considered carefully. He thus condemns the Church's arrogation of the right to forbid or condone, as well as the doubtful example set by the mendicant monks (Fubini 2003). Clerical hypocrisy is also a theme in Poggio's antimonastic dialogue *Against Hypocrites* (1447–1448) (Canfora 2008). Poggio notes, however, that hypocrisy is a uniquely human characteristic and – just like greed – not without societal benefits: the question is, again, under what conditions hypocrisy is acceptable. *On Avarice* is indebted to Bruni's translation of pseudo-Aristotle's *Economics* (1420), and *Against Hypocrites* to Bruni's 1418 treatise of the same name. Themes and examples from both Poggian dialogues recur in the *Prince* (1513) and *Discourses* (1513–1519) of Machiavelli.

Poggio's next texts address the triangulation of virtue, honor or glory, and nobility in the context of political life. In 1435 Poggio wrote a short letter denouncing Julius Caesar's crimes against the Roman Republic while presenting Scipio Africanus as the prototype of a leading citizen. An outraged vindication of Caesar by the Ferrarese humanist Guarino Veronese drove Poggio to compose a lengthier second treatise, which in turn inspired responses from Ciriaco d'Ancona (1436) and Pietro del Monte (1440). Poggio's text bespeak the political thought of the Roman Stoa – Cicero and Seneca are frequently cited – and advance virtue, rather than greatness of achievements, as criterion for evaluating leading men. Scipio deserves praise for putting his country's interests above his own, which demonstrates his Stoic self-control. By contrast, Caesar's supposed virtues Poggio redefines as vices – his liberality for instance was actually theft: cf. Machiavelli's *Prince* 16 for a similar re-description – since they served his tyrannical desires rather than the common good. Poggio also blames Caesar for the demise of Latin letters, since literary culture is incompatible with single rule. Taking up Bruni's anti-Caesarism in the

abovementioned *Dialogues* and his *Laudation on the City of Florence* (1404), Poggio's contributions to the *Caesar-Scipio Controversy* have become key exhibits of Florentine republican "civic humanism" (Baron 1966; Canfora 2001). His juxtaposition of Caesar and Scipio Africanus also inspired Giovanni Pontanus' meditations on both men (Schadee 2015). Poggio's following work, the dialogue *On Nobility* (1440), likewise advocates the paramount importance of virtue, this time as criterion for nobility. Yet in contrast to the political arena studied in the *Controversy*, the main speaker of *On Nobility* asserts that virtue is most plausibly approached through a contemplative life. The nature of this virtue is not systematically analyzed, but it again corresponds to the ethics of the Roman Stoa. The Aristotelian counterargument that virtue can be exercised only in a political life, which itself depends on external factors such as status and wealth, is certainly not Poggio's own position. However, to the other objection, that the Stoic ideal of virtue is unattainable, Poggio must have been sympathetic, as his following dialogues attest. Subsequent humanists writing on nobility, including Lauro Quirini, Platina, and Cristoforo Landino, all depend on Poggio's dialogue (Rabil 1991; Canfora 2002).

On the Unhappiness of Princes (1440), its counterpart *On the Vagary of Fortune* (1447–1448), and the rambling *On the Misery of the Human Condition* (1455) all discuss – with increasing anguish – man's vulnerability in the face of fortune. Although Poggio does not define fortune, his treatment suggests that he conceives of it not as a cosmic necessity, but rather as the uncertainties and complexities of human existence, which man cannot control and to which god, apparently, is indifferent (Fubini 1982). While his concept of virtue in these dialogues remains Stoic in the sense of being internal, autarkic, and founded on self-control, Poggio denies the Stoa's central tenet that such virtue equals happiness. In *On the Unhappiness of Princes*, he shows that power almost inevitably corrupts – regardless of the political system in which it is held (Canfora 1998, 1999). Yet, no less importantly, even if a prince were to succeed in cultivating virtue, the afflictions of fortune that

come with his position would still result in his unhappiness. *On the Vagary of Fortune* extends the latter argument to all men, public and private, as well as peoples and states (Merisalo 1993). In the process it offers reflections on the ruins of Rome and the calamities of contemporary politics: the classical past was no less wretched than the present, according to Poggio, and the greatness of Rome's former glory merely indicates the inevitability of decline. *The Misery of the Human Condition* elaborates these themes in combination with a fierce attack on the papacy, which also revisits Poggio's previous targets avarice, hypocrisy, and ambition (Kraye 1997). The text stands in stark contrast to humanist literature on the dignity of man produced at the time by Bartolomeo Facio, Giannozzo Manetti, and later Pico della Mirandola. As specimens of political thought, Poggio's works fit into a tradition stretching from Xenophon's *Hieron*, Cicero, Sallust, Seneca, and John of Salisbury's *Polycraticus* to Gian Battista Alberti's *Momus* (c.1450), Agostino Nifo's *On the King and the Tyrant* (1526), and again Machiavelli's *Prince* (Canfora 1998). As reflections on fortune, they echo Boccaccio's *On the Fate of Famous Men* (1355–1374) as well as Christian *contemptus mundi* literature (Fubini 1982; Merisalo 1993).

Arguably, Poggio's non-philosophical works, namely, his letters, the *Facetiae* or *Jokes* (1438–1452) and the *History of Florence* (unfinished), offer the clearest evidence of his mentality (Pittaluga 1995). In the *History*, which continues Bruni's (1415–1444), Poggio dispenses with some of his predecessor's partisanship and surpasses him in acute observation of the conduct and motives of his protagonists (Wilcox 1969; Struever 1970; Krantz 1987). The letters and especially the ribald *Facetiae* similarly demonstrate his sharp eye for human interactions, their rights and wrongs from different perspectives, and their comic potential. About a quarter of the *Facetiae* have a moral message; the remainder rather replace exemplarity with exhortations to see the world as it is, adapt to its conditions, brace oneself against fortune, and in the meanwhile try to live a joyful life (Tateo 1982; Sozzi 1982). This attitude may offer a connective thread through Poggio's manifold and seemingly contradictory concerns. Poggio

was strongly critical of the Church and set little store by Christian mores but defended the authority of scripture. Not immune to the value of pleasure and alert to cultural differences, he nonetheless rejected Epicurean relativism as a threat to any firm morality. He advocated republican values, but favored a contemplative life over politics as a more plausible path to virtue. This virtue he conceived of in Stoic terms, yet he denied it guaranteed happiness in life as it is actually lived. Thus, the primacy of virtue and its Christian-Stoic foundations were never in question for Poggio. However, he was always aware of the ways in which human experience falls short of the ideal. This realism, anti-dogmatism, and striving for authenticity, combined with a belief in absolute, if unattainable, moral standards, reverberates in all the works discussed, and is the particular voice of Poggio.

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Bramhall, John

Born: Pontefract, 1594

Died: Dublin, 1663

Jack Cunningham

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Abstract

Archbishop John Bramhall's first significant appointment was in 1633 when he was made Bishop of Derry. Bramhall was a Laudian and in his new role he was mandated to bring the Irish Church in a more Catholic direction. His efforts to do so were interrupted by the Civil Wars.

As a Royalist, he fled to the continent when Parliament gained the upper hand. Here, his famous arguments with Thomas Hobbes took place firstly at a Royalist gathering and then Later in print. Against Hobbes' determinism, Bramhall's thesis rested on the principle that man is capable of choice. In addition, his positive assessment of the human condition led him to assume that we are capable of choosing good and therefore, in part at least, able to work out our own salvations.

Biography

John Bramhall was born in Pontefract, south Yorkshire, the eldest of six children. He attended King Edward VI Grammar School until the age of thirteen when he went up to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He graduated MA in 1616, the same year as he was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church. His first parish was at Micklegate, York, in 1617, and the following year he married Helen Collingwood who provided with a good library.

In the archdiocese of York Bramhall's industry soon brought him to the attention of Thomas Wentworth who had been made Lord Deputy of Ireland. It was his remit to fix what was regarded as the broken Church of Ireland, and clearly he saw in Bramhall a potentially able assistant. Very shortly after he arrived in Ireland in 1633, Bramhall was made Bishop of Derry, in apparent disregard of the fact that at 39 he was a year too young for the episcopate. Working closely with Bishop William Laud, who was at this stage leader of the Church in England in all but name, their mission was twofold. Firstly, they would reform the rather Calvinist protestant ethos of the Irish Church then under the primacy of Archbishop James Ussher. Secondly, they would restore to it its lost fortunes. In both they managed some success until the English Civil War made martyrs of both Wentworth and Laud; Bramhall escaped with his life but only by fleeing to Brussels.

On the continent, he formed part of a Royalist circle in exile which included Charles II. He moved around a great deal including a risky visit to Catholic Spain. He also penned seven books which were largely controversies with either Catholics or Protestants from a more reformed stable. His most famous exchange came about after an incident in 1645 at the Parisian residence of the Marquis of Newcastle where Bramhall engaged in a debate on free will with Thomas Hobbes. Afterward, their arguments were continued in print with three books from Bramhall and two from Hobbes.

At the Restoration in 1660, Bramhall arrived back in England with the royal household. He was

rapidly made Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland. He continued, as much as he was able, his previous effort to drag the Anglican Church in Ireland in a more Catholic direction, but he managed only 3 years in the role. In 1663 he died after a number of strokes.

Bramhall's reputation as a thinker rests largely on his exchange with Thomas Hobbes about "liberty and necessity," a discussion that has been characterized as the most famous of the seventeenth century (Chappell 1999). Bramhall's three volumes, *A Defence of True Liberty from Antecedent and Extrinsic Necessity* (1655), *The Castigation of Mr. Hobbes' Last Animadversions* (1658), and *The Catching of the Leviathan* (1658), set out to defend man's ability to choose between right and wrong. Hobbes' counterargument maintained that humans were compelled by a series of imperatives. As the arguments progressed, they became more heated and have been described as going "beyond sober philosophizing (Thomas 1971)." Bramhall brings to his philosophy an optimistic assessment of the human condition. His theological circle has now become known as Laudianism after the abovementioned William Laud. The prevailing Calvinistic theology in the English Church regarded man as so marred by the fall of Adam that he was incapable of his own salvation. Heedless of this, Laudians like Bramhall believed that mankind retained something of a spark of goodness, a spark that eventually drew them to God. When he translated this into philosophical terms, it made him a proponent of "Libertarianism," which argues that man has the freedom and ability to make real moral choices (Cunningham 2007). There is much riding on this for Bramhall since according to him Hobbes' determinism brings down the entire Christian edifice. If we cannot choose, we cannot help what we do and in the eyes of God and mankind we can subsequently be neither good nor evil.

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Brandolini, Aurelio Lippo

Born: 1454

Died: 1497

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Abstract

Aurelio Lippo Brandolini was an Italian poet and teacher of rhetoric who briefly attended the court of King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary. While in Budapest, he wrote the most interesting of his humanistic prose works, a political treatise, written in the form of a dialogue, in which he made analytical and original comparisons between kingdoms and republics to assert that the former constituted the better form of government. Because of its anti-republican arguments, this dialogue has been considered one of the most important works of Renaissance political thought.

Biography

Aurelio Lippo Brandolini was born into a middle-class family in Florence in around 1454. When, in

1466, they faced financial difficulties, his parents moved the family to Naples. That was the year in which an anti-Medicean coup took place in Florence.

Despite being almost blind (“Lippo” means to have blurred vision), Brandolini completed his education in *studia humanitatis*, became a poet of a certain renown, and obtained a position teaching rhetoric in a school in Capua. His skill as a poet earned him the favor of King Ferdinand I of Naples, who was a staunch supporter of humanistic culture and a patron of the arts.

In addition to his poems in Latin and the Italian vernacular, during his stay in Naples, Brandolini wrote a number of eulogies in tribute to such personages as Lorenzo de’ Medici and Federico da Montefeltro and two works in prose: an Italian translation of Pliny’s panegyric of Trajan, which he dedicated to the king in 1478, and the *De rei militaris litterarumque dignitate affinitate et laudibus*, an oration on the dignity of arms and letters, completed in 1479.

The following year, Brandolini moved to Rome, where he taught rhetoric at the university. There he composed a collection of poems dedicated to Pope Sixtus IV, a commentary on Virgil’s *Georgics* (after 1480), a work influenced by the new humanistic approach to classical texts, and an oration in defense of Antonio Lauredano (1486), a rare example of Renaissance judicial oratory. Since his efforts to obtain Lorenzo de’ Medici’s patronage and thus return to Florence proved fruitless, in 1489 he accepted the invitation of the Hungarian ambassador to Rome to take up a post-teaching rhetoric at the University of Budapest.

Hungary was then ruled by Matthias Corvinus, who had married the daughter of Brandolini’s former patron, Beatrice of Naples, in 1474. Matthias was the first non-Italian monarch to promote the spread of Renaissance culture in his realm: a learned man, educated in humanistic studies, he was an extremely generous patron, and many artists from the Italian city states and Western Europe frequented his court.

Although Matthias died mysteriously in April 1490, Brandolini had time to dedicate a moral dialogue on the human condition to him, the *De*

humanae vitae conditione et toleranda corporis aegritudine (1490). In the same year, he completed the aforementioned political dialogue on the best form of government, *De comparatione reipublicae et regni*. While the former work was printed in Basel in 1498, the latter survived in only two manuscript copies: one dedicated to Lorenzo de’ Medici (copied in around 1492) and the other dedicated to the future Pope Leo X (copied in the first decade of the sixteenth century).

After the death of Matthias, Brandolini returned to his natal city and taught Latin at the university for 1 year. He then came under the influence of the preacher Fra Mariano da Genazzano, an adherent of the Medici and critic of Savonarola; in 1491 he joined the Augustinian order and dedicated his life to preaching in various cities of Italy. He did not, however, entirely give up writing humanistic works, as evidenced by *De ratione scribendi libri tres*, an adaption of classical rhetoric used for Christian purposes, written in around 1495 and published in Basel 3 years later. Having contracted the plague while on a visit to Rome, Brandolini died in Florence in 1497.

Heritage and Break with Tradition

Although Brandolini was celebrated by his contemporaries for his skill as a poet and teacher of rhetoric, he was also a writer of humanistic works in prose, which, like his poems, were written in both Latin and the Italian vernacular. He played no part in the humanistic controversy about the literary merits of the Italian vernacular, but in the dedicatory letters of his translation of Pliny’s panegyric, and in the preface to his oration on arms and letters, he made clear his belief that Italian should be preferred to Latin in order to expand the readership of literary works.

The translation of Pliny’s panegyric was intended as a eulogy of the King of Naples, who was described in accordance with the humanistic depiction of the perfect prince. Like other Neapolitan humanists such as Antonio Beccadelli (*De dictis et factis Alphonsi regis*, 1455), Giovanni Pontano (*De principe*, c. 1465), and Diomedes Carafa (*De boni principis officio*, after 1480),

Brandolini claimed that a good prince should be endowed with all the virtues necessary to be a beloved ruler and faithful servant of his subjects.

The oration on the dignity of arms and letters dealt with another typical humanistic theme: Brandolini did not limit himself to extolling the importance of humanistic studies, but went as far as to say that moral wisdom and eloquence were required to become good citizens, create sound laws for the city, engage prudently in war, support soldiers, and make peace with enemies. Thus he showed that humanistic studies lay at the core of political life.

Brandolini's *Georgicorum carminis commentarii* is worthy of particular attention, since the author, in the wake of Pomponius Laetus's philological approach to classical texts, focused on the literal meaning of Virgil's *Georgics* rather than the allegorical one and peppered the commentary with erudite quotations drawn from Greek and Latin works in order to impart maximum information on the history and way of life of the ancients.

Also of interest is *De humanae vitae conditione et toleranda corporis aegritudine*, a treatise conceived as a dialogue between King Matthias Corvinus and the ambassador of Ferdinand I of Naples in Hungary. While the king deplored the physical suffering and spiritual anxiety of men, echoing the *De miseria humanae conditionis*, a highly successful treatise written by Lotario di Segni (the future Pope Innocentius III) in 1195, the ambassador gave voice to Brandolini's ideas in praise of the greatness of men as described in Giannozzo Manetti's *De dignitate hominis*. Manetti wrote his masterpiece between 1448 and 1450, at the insistence of the King of Naples, Alfonso V of Aragon. His aim was to complete Bartolomeo Facio's *De excellentia ac prestantia hominis* (1448–1449), which challenged Lotario di Segni's view that the human condition was one of unrelenting miseries. To pay tribute to the greatness of man, Manetti added many quotations drawn from classical sources, such as Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, Aristotle's *On the Soul*, and Aristotle's ethical works, to all the traditional religious arguments on the dignity of the human being. Like

Manetti's work, Brandolini's dialogue used both religious arguments and classical sources to celebrate man's extraordinary ability to act in imitation of his creator and in accordance with his divine, immortal, and rational soul.

But the other dialogue written in Hungary, *De comparatione reipublicae et regni*, was without doubt the most original and influential of all Brandolini's writings. It compared monarchies and republics, Matthias Corvinus himself championing the former, while Domenico Giugni, a Florentine merchant in the Hungarian court, sought in vain to defend the latter.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Brandolini's political dialogue was so innovative in form and content that it has been recently considered by James Hankins "the most fascinating work of humanistic political theory written before Machiavelli" (Hankins 2009, p. ix). As noted by Brandolini himself in the preface, *De comparatione reipublicae et regni* was written in the Socratic style. Unlike a Ciceronian dialogue, the form most commonly used by humanists from Petrarch onward, it was a series of questions and answers aimed at cross-examining naïve opinions and debunking uncritical assumptions. Matthias Corvinus took the role of Socrates, and, in response to a question from his (illegitimate) son, John Corvinus, about the ideal form of government, demolished one by one all the republican arguments advanced by his Florentine interlocutor.

The Socratic dialogue between the King of Hungary and Domenico Giugni spanned 3 days, which were dedicated, respectively, to liberty, justice, and effective government. It provided a direct, analytical comparison between kingdoms and republics unequalled in Renaissance political thought. From Nicolai Rubinstein (1991, pp. 30–65) to Quentin Skinner (Skinner 2002, pp. 368–413), scholars have in fact highlighted how for humanists good governance depended on the moral virtues of good rulers rather than on the political particularities of constitutions. Apart from Niccolò Machiavelli, only a few of them,

such as Bartolomeo Platina and Francesco Patrizi of Siena, wrote about kingdoms as well as republics, but they did so in separate treatises in order to avoid making overt comparisons between the two forms of government (Platina's *De principe*, 1470, and *De optimo cive*, 1474; Patrizi's *De regno et regis institutione*, 1481–1484, and *De rei publicae institutione*, 1465–1471). Lauro Quirini's *De republica* (1450) was no exception, since it dealt only with the republican form of government. It is true, however, that Baldassarre Castiglione explicitly juxtaposed kingdoms and republics in the fourth book of his *The Book of the Courtier* (1513–1529), but this comparison followed the Ciceronian style of dialogue, leaving readers free to draw their own conclusions. By contrast, Brandolini's dialogue made it clear that Matthias's commendation of kingdoms was the correct point of view to be accepted and supported without reserve. It is therefore unsurprising that at the end of the dialogue, the merchant was forced to admit that he would leave the Republic of Florence, which he had used as an example in his analysis, to live in a kingdom as good as the one described by his interlocutor.

To convince Domenico Giugni that the kingdom was indeed the best form of government, the King of Hungary referred to Plato's *Laws* and *Statesman*, which had become available only a few years earlier when Marsilio Ficino's Latin translations were printed in Florence (1484), rather than to Aristotle's *Politics*, which was still the most popular reference for humanists. He also made hints about the sixth book of Polybius's *Histories* to thereby develop a criticism of the mercenary system, a negative comment rare among humanists before the circulation of Machiavelli's works. During the fifteenth century, Polybius's theory of the evolution of constitutional forms, according to which kingdoms degenerate into tyranny, tyranny into aristocracy, aristocracy into oligarchy, and so on, was almost unknown. Even so, Brandolini's dialogue built on this theory to contend that kingdoms were the most natural and therefore most common type of government. Yet his work did not present the ancient Republic of Rome as a form of mixed government able to avoid the spiral of political decline: instead, several historical

examples proved that all republics were inherently unstable, whereas kingdoms always guaranteed order and peace.

The idea that kingdoms represented the ideal form of government was demonstrated through a series of arguments that appear to be antithetical to those used by civic humanists such as Leonardo Bruni and Matteo Palmieri, even though they were not explicitly mentioned. For instance, the notion that the principal feature of a republic was autonomy or self-rule was challenged by the claims that citizens nevertheless had to obey the law in any event and that there was no difference between citizens imposing laws on one another and a king doing so. If anything, it was better if laws were emanated by kings chosen for their virtue, as proved by a kingdom as perfect as Hungary, rather than by citizens who become rulers by chance, as in the Republic of Florence where citizens attained public office by lot.

In the course of his analysis, Brandolini offered a highly idealized image of the royal constitution, which maintained that kings were virtuous by definition. And since kings were flawless, they were able to adapt laws to different people and circumstances in the interests of the common good. On the other hand, as the case of Florence unquestionably demonstrated, the rulers of republics were bound hard and fast to the letter of the law, which became the expression of the interests of the most influent and powerful citizens. In Brandolini's view, hunger for power was closely connected to lust for money, and the pursuit of wealth was the main and most dangerous problem that beset republics.

In the wake of John Pocock's studies (Pocock 1975), many scholars have remarked that Florentine civic humanist and, more generally, early modern republican thinkers believed that the search for private wealth should be subordinated to the defense of the common good. The Florentine interlocutor of Brandolini's dialogue shared this belief with Florentine civic humanists, but the king proved that it was false, arguing that only in kingdoms the search of private wealth did not conflict with the defense of the common good. What is more, he disclosed that the sumptuary laws that were intended to guarantee egalitarian practices in the Republic of Florence concealed

economic inequalities that were absent in any kingdom as the mass of wealth was concentrated in the hands of the king while the subjects enjoyed more or less the same level of prosperity. Once again, the Republic of Florence was depicted as the negative pole of the comparison, whereas kingdoms represented the positive pole due to the fact that they were highly idealized. Clearly the comparison between kingdoms and the Republic of Florence was partial and unfair, but if it had been conveyed in more balanced terms, it would not be as interesting as it is.

In contrast with another commonplace belief of civic humanists, who made Florence a case in point to show that the Renaissance in arts and letters depended on republican institutions, Brandolini's dialogue drew attention to the fact that the Naples of Ferdinand I and the Rome of Sixtus IV housed a greater number of artists and writers than republics like Lucca and Siena. The extraordinary excellence of Florence in the arts was not denied but viewed as a corollary of the Tuscan climate, the physical weakness of its inhabitants, and other such factors. In other words, the flourishing of culture in Florence was viewed as a product of nature, not of politics.

Since Brandolini maintained that kingdoms promoted culture, equity, and liberty better than republics, his dialogue stood out from the mass of more conventional works on the virtues of the perfect rulers. Moreover, the arguments he used to demonstrate that kingdoms constituted the best form of government shed a new and interesting light on the republican claims generally developed by civic humanists.

Impact and Legacy

As already noted, only Brandolini's dialogue on the dignity of men and his final work on the subject of rhetoric ever made it to print, and since they were reprinted many times during the sixteenth century, the *De humanae vitae conditione* (Basel, 1540, 1541, 1543; Wien 1541; Paris 1562) and the *De ratione scribendi* (Basel 1543, 1549, 1565, 1585; Cologne 1573) had a certain impact on Renaissance thought.

However, his most compelling and original work, the *De comparatione reipublicae et regni*, survived in only two manuscripts and remained undiscovered until the end of the nineteenth century when it came into print for the first time (Brandolini 1890). The editor of the most recent edition has considered it the most fascinating work written prior to Machiavelli. If that is true, there can be no doubt that the legacy of Brandolini is truly exceptional.

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Briggs, Henry

Born: 1561 Warley Wood (Yorkshire)

Died: 1631 Oxford

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Abstract

Briggs is a English mathematician. He is the author of the first table of decimal logarithms, published in 1617, of the first extensive table of decimal logarithms of numbers (1624), and of the first extensive table of decimal logarithms of trigonometric functions (1633).

Biography

Briggs was educated in Cambridge and took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1581. In 1592, he was made examiner and lecturer in the faculty of mathematics, and soon after reader of the physics lecture.

In 1596, Briggs became the first professor of geometry at Gresham College, London. Gresham College was then England's scientific center for navigation, geometry, astronomy, and surveying and was founded under the will of Sir Thomas Gresham. Briggs kept an interest in navigation and around 1600, he worked with William Gilbert and Edward Wright and constructed a table relating the latitude and the magnetic declination (Wright 1610). Briggs' investigations were published by Blundeville (1602) and Ridley (1613). In the early 1610s, Briggs worked on the computation of eclipses. He also published a partial edition of Euclid's Elements (Briggs 1620). Later, in 1622, he published a small tract of the *Northwest Passage to the South Sea, Through the Continent of Virginia and by Fretum Hudson*.

But Briggs' main work took place from 1615 to his death, when he developed decimal logarithms, and in particular methods to compute them, together with extensive tables.

Briggs stayed at Gresham until 1620, at which time he went to Oxford, having been appointed the first Savilian Professor of Geometry in 1619.

Heritage and Rupture with the Traditions

In 1614, John Napier (1550–1617) had published his *Mirifici logarithmorum canonis descriptio*, the description of his table of logarithms. After Napier's publication, Briggs went to visit him in Scotland in the summers of 1615 and 1616 and they agreed on the need to reformulate the logarithms, a task that Briggs took over.

Briggs published his first table of decimal logarithms in 1617 (Briggs 1617). It was a small booklet of 16 pages giving the decimal logarithms of the integers 1 to 1000 to 14 places.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Seven years after his first table of logarithms, Briggs published his *Arithmetica logarithmica* which gave the logarithms of the numbers from 1 to 20,000 and from 90,001 to 100,000 with

14 decimals (Briggs 1624). In this book, Briggs gave a detailed account of his methods, which sometimes anticipated Newton's developments. It is thought that Briggs had completed a large portion of the interval 20,001–90,000 in the subsequent years. But it is likely that Adriaan Vlacq's own table published in 1628, and based on Briggs' work, caused Briggs to postpone his project.

So, Briggs worked on tables of logarithms of trigonometric functions, first introduced by Gunter in 1620. Briggs' tables, his *Trigonometria britannica*, were completed by Gellibrand and published in 1633 (Briggs and Gellibrand 1633). That same year, Vlacq published again his own tables of logarithms of trigonometric functions. Although Briggs and Vlacq both used a division of 90 degrees, Briggs divided the degrees centesimally, whereas Vlacq used the usual sexagesimal division.

The *Trigonometria britannica* contains the sines to 15 places, the tangents and secants to 10 places, the logarithms of the sines to 14 places, and the logarithms of the tangents to 11 places, every hundredth of a degree.

Impact and Legacy

Briggs' tables, adapted by Vlacq, formed the basis of most tables of logarithms published until the mid-twentieth century, tables which were essential in engineering practice until the advent of electronic calculators and computers. But the decimal logarithm, as well as the natural logarithm, survive these tables and have remained fundamental functions in mathematical analysis.

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► [Napier, John](#)

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Browne, Sir Thomas

Born: October/November 19, 1605, London, England

Died: October 19, 1682, Norwich, England

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Abstract

Thomas Browne, physician, philosophical prose writer, and natural philosopher of profound and unique literary power, was highly

influential in seventeenth-century England and in the European Republic of Letters. His works blend scientific and theological insights to meditate on the nature of religious belief, the empirical pursuit of truth and the banishment of error, the frailty of human enterprise, and the marvellous richness of the natural world. His writings, persistently influential in the Western tradition, have inspired writers as diverse as Coleridge, Melville, Thoreau, Woolf, and Borges.

Biography

Thomas Browne (born London, October/November 19, 1605 – died Norwich, October 19, 1682) could never be described straightforwardly as a “philosopher,” and yet his influential meditative and investigative writings in an enormous range of early-modern categories – natural philosophy and natural history, theology, introspective life writing, medicine, and the problem of error – helped to establish the forensic relation to phenomena that characterizes the mid- and late-seventeenth century, especially among practising scientists.

Born into a comfortably secure merchant family in London, he was educated at Winchester and then at Oxford, where he was exposed to the rising scientific culture that prompted his interest in medicine. After completing his M.A. there in 1629, he sought his medical training on the Continent, at Montpellier, Padua, and finally Leiden, where he was awarded his degree in 1633. In these very distinct medical regimes, he encountered learned medical botany and natural history, holistic clinical approaches and advanced anatomical training, as well as intensely practical, professional guidance.

Returned to England, he eventually settled in Norwich in 1637, where he remained for the next half century as a practising doctor, learned savant, and internationally acclaimed writer. His major works, *Religio Medici* (1643), *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646–1672), and *Urne-Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658), all draw on personal experience, of religious belief and controversy, of erroneous belief and empirical corrections, of mortuary customs, and of local botany. He corresponded with some of the most celebrated

figures of the learned republic, who were admirers of his work. In Norwich, however, although the city was second only to London in wealth and population, he was remote from the convivial intellectual communities of the metropolis: he was made an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Physicians only in 1664 and had no formal association with the Royal Society. That removal is fortunate for students of Browne, who thereby have a surviving, mainly learned, correspondence that might have been far less voluminous had he lived in close proximity to his peers.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Browne exemplifies a broadly bipartisan address to investigation during the period when the long reign of Aristotle and the remnants of Scholastic philosophy were yielding to Baconian principles of the reestablishment of fundamental knowledge by empirical means. If the textual authorities of the High Middle Ages (which were still featured in the university curriculum) were in competition with the empirical practices of the anatomy theatre, the physic garden, the telescope, and with the developing culture of clinical observation, Browne’s writings portray both an intellectual engagement with the new learning and a justifiable reluctance to jettison everything that had come before it. Thus, he observes an unimpeachably Galenic medical regime while practising a patient-specific bedside manner that is far more typical of early-modern departures from Galenism; he is astronomically and mathematically learned and is yet skeptical of heliocentrism; he is a powerful apologist for Anglican toleration while advocating civility to the Pope and keeping clear of English Republicanism; he investigates a strange disease of children in the south of France like an open-minded clinician and testifies in a local witch trial with similar latitude. Nothing in Browne’s writing strictly breaks with his inherited traditions nor does he slavishly follow them. What is striking is his consistent refusal to be governed by any but his own conclusions, which naturally varied between the old and the new. He is both an ancient and a modern, “Janus in the field of knowledge.”

Innovative and Original Aspects

His most important philosophical work is undoubtedly *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, also known as *Vulgar Errors*. This exceptionally successful work, an encyclopedia of errors that he systematically corrects – in the natural world, in history, and in superstition – is perhaps the clearest application of Francis Bacon's proposed instauration of learning, a work structured as a series of searching questions about commonly believed "fact." In clearing the debris of ignorance and misapprehension from the landscape of knowledge, Browne demonstrates not only what is to be done in each case but how to do it. This is by no means original, for Bacon had many enthusiastic followers at mid-century, but it is comprehensive beyond anything else produced in the period. Its most important section, moreover, is his extended disquisition on error and misbelief: part theological, part anthropological, and part psychological; Book 1 of *Pseudodoxia* is a powerful interrogation of our propensity to error and most significantly our adherence to received authority. It is not too much to claim that this discussion best summarizes the empirical tenor of early modernity.

Impact and Legacy

Leading writers and natural philosophers of his own day acknowledged Browne's ideas and influence – Robert Boyle and John Evelyn were two of his English admirers. His work, its style as well as its subjects, has animated succeeding generations, and those who cite him with great approval include Pepys, Johnson, Coleridge, Melville, Thoreau, Poe, Dickinson, Woolf, and Borges. But he has suffered, at least until recently in the academy, as a "quaint" rather than a substantive writer, notable for his *bien pensées*, attractive especially to the belletristic tradition of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In a famously rebarbative (and misapprehending) essay, Stanley Fish attempted to demolish Browne in comparison with more meaningful work of Donne, Herbert, and Milton. But Browne has colluded in his own

demolition: too various and polymathic to fit easily into one or another thematic or generic category, his writing is in some respects fissile, digressive, and contingent, his style at once gorgeous and opaque. His prose is metaphysical and forensic, conceitful and empirical, and these qualities now interest scholarship and even lay readers as they have not done since Browne's own lifetime.

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Bruccioli

► Brucioli, Antonio

Brucioli, Antonio

Born: 1498

Died: 1566

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Abstract

Printer and writer, Antonio Brucioli never received a formal philosophical training but developed nonetheless one of the most remarkable editorial program of vernacular philosophy: he translated Cicero, Pliny, and most importantly Aristotle, and composed a series of dialogues, which recovered motifs from many ancient and modern philosophers. His philosophical achievements – in any case – have been usually shadowed by his reputation as a heretic and a political opponent of the Medici family. Raised in the context of the Orti Oricellari meetings in Florence, Brucioli spent the better part of his life in Venice.

Alternate Names

[Bruccioli; il Bruciolo](#)

Biography

Brucioli was born in Florence in 1498 into a well-established family. He befriended Luigi Alemanni and was introduced as a young man to the meetings of the Orti Oricellari, where he developed literary and philosophical interests. Despite some sources made of him a pupil of Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, it is not possible to connect the two men in a precise relationship (Dionisotti 1980). In 1522, some members from the circle of the Orti were involved in a conspiracy against cardinal Giuliano de' Medici: Brucioli was among them and he left Florence, traveling around Europe and establishing contacts particularly in France.

He went back to Florence in 1529, during the second republic, but he was forced to leave the city for good when he was accused of being a follower of Luther. He went therefore to Venice, where he opened a printing press together with his brothers and soon devoted his efforts to a well-known vernacular version of the Bible, first published in 1532 (Spini 1940a). This was not, in any case, Brucioli's first printed offspring: in 1526 he had already published the first volume of a series of philosophical dialogues, the *Dialogi*. Brucioli worked intensely, also in collaboration with other printers, producing editions of Petrarch and Boccaccio, but also a vast array of religious texts, which included commentaries on the Scriptures and booklets (Spini 1940b). A significant – and dramatic – turning point of his life happened in 1548, when he had to close his printing shop and leave temporarily Venice, because of a trial for heresy. When he went back to the lagunar city, he desperately looked for patrons and was forced to work even more intensely than in the past. In 1558, he faced his third and final trial for heresy (the second happened in 1555): old and poor, he was granted home arrest and he died in 1566 (Grendler 1977, Del Col 1980, Barbieri 2007).

Brucioli was not a professional philosopher, but certainly a man of great erudition. This is clear from his *Dialogi*, which were devoted to every branch of philosophy (ethics, politics, and economy in the first volume; natural doctrines in the second and in the third; metaphysics in the fourth; a selection of witty dialogues discarded from the other four volumes in the fifth) and presented a vast array of sources. In certain passages – and particularly in the first book – Brucioli even plagiarized other authors (e.g., Erasmus, see Seidel Menchi 1979; Leushuis 2013), while showing a preference for utopian topics (Lastraioli 2012): the perfect captain, the perfect city, etc. Despite the scarce originality of the doctrines expressed in the books, where both Platonic and Aristotelian traditions play an important role, the *Dialogi* were one of the first philosophical work to appear in the vernacular, a primacy that Brucioli constantly emphasized in the prefaces to each book. The *Dialogi*, furthermore, offer a fresh outlook on the conversations that animated the

Orti Oricellari (Machiavelli appears as a character and his ideas are alluded to from time to time in the dialogues) and some of Venice's cultural organizations (Procacci 1995, Bausi 2015). Between 1526 and 1544 Brucioli constantly revised the dialogues, changing and adding passages, and modifying the names of the interlocutors. The other philosophical achievements of Brucioli were mainly translations. Those of Cicero (the *Dream of Scipio* and the spurious *Ad Herennium*) and Pliny are significant, but his most important efforts were his vernacularizations of the Aristotelian corpus (Boillet 2008). Brucioli translated the *Politics* (1547), the *Physics* (1551), *On the Heavens* (1552), *On Generation and Corruption* (1552), the *Meteorology* (1555), and *On the Soul* (1557) (Allen and Del Soldato 2014), which were all printed by Bartolomeo Imperatore, the only exception being the *Politics*, which was issued by the Brucioli brothers before the forced closing of their printing press. Brucioli was therefore the first author to translate a vast selection of the scientific works of Aristotle in the vernacular, a choice that, as he himself declared in the preface to the *Physics*, was largely dictated by circumstances, because Bernardo Segni had just finished translating the ethical and rhetorical works of the Stagirite at the time. Brucioli needed in fact to work on texts that – until then unattended to aside from the *Politics* and the *Meteorology* – could have earned him the appreciation of patrons and a place in the burgeoning market for vernacular books (Del Soldato 2016). His need to produce these translations as quickly as possible probably explains why – despite the fact that he declared that his versions were taken directly from the Greek – they are in reality based on Latin translations of the Aristotelian works (Del Soldato 2016). Brucioli's translations – which were probably intended for a university audience – did not meet with wide appreciation and circulation. The reputation of Brucioli as a heretic made him a controversial author, to the extent that his *opera omnia* was condemned in the Index of Prohibited Books. Aside from Brucioli's biographical misadventures, the absence of commentaries that accompanied the translations weakened their editorial impact as well. Nonetheless, despite the

commercial nature of these works, Brucioli achieved the most important corpus of philosophical vernacularizations of the entire sixteenth century.

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Bruni, Leonardo

ca. 1370 (Arezzo)–1444 (Florence)

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Abstract

Leonardo Bruni was among the bestselling authors of the fifteenth century and among the most influential early Renaissance humanists. This entry briefly explores Bruni's life and writings with emphasis on his contributions to the history of rhetoric and philosophy across the many genres of his published works.

Biography

Leonardo Bruni was born ca. 1370 in the Tuscan town of Arezzo. In his youth, he came to Florence

and joined the circle of people around Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), the elderly Florentine chancellor who was actively promoting the new focus on the *studia humanitatis* – that is, the study of history, poetry, grammar, rhetoric, and ethics – among both learned people and the population at large. Bruni was among the first to publish Latin translations of Greek texts under the tutelage of Manuel Chrysoloras (1350–1415), a Byzantine who began teaching Greek in Florence in the late 1390s. Multiple translations of Greek texts into Latin and even Italian followed, in addition to original works heavily indebted to Greek models. Beyond his prolific translations, Bruni also published works of history, philosophical instruction, education, model letters and speeches, biographies, political treatises, and others. He was the official historian of the Florentine Republic from 1415 and served as the city's chancellor, that is, the city's head secretary and occasional spokesperson, from 1427 until his death in 1444. Bruni was arguably the most widely read author and translator of the fifteenth century (Hankins 1997).

Bruni lacked a coherent underlying set of philosophical principles that shaped his writings. Instead, Bruni wrote works across genres for different purposes and in different contexts. Despite their heterogeneity, his writings across genres served as a model that many later writers, orators, and thinkers sought to emulate. Moreover, Bruni came from comparatively humble origins in Arezzo, and yet he transformed his station into that of a prominent statesman and patrician within Renaissance Florence, a position that he passed down to his son. Bruni's rise in power and wealth through learning and politics served as a model that others sought to emulate throughout the fifteenth century. This essay examines some of the many areas in which Bruni's writings and life proved influential, particularly during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries: his activities as an orator and letter writer; his translations; his writings on language, politics, history, ethics, and metaphysics; and his model career as a humanist statesman.

Orator and Letter Writer

Most of Bruni's professional life was spent writing letters and delivering speeches, and, in both

areas, his works served as influential models throughout the fifteenth century. Bruni's career as a secretary began in 1405 when he joined the men charged with writing letters and documents for Pope Innocent VII (r. 1404–1406). Bruni continued to serve as a papal secretary for the next 6 years, serving under two more popes before leaving papal service around 1410. For a single year, Bruni took over the position of Chancellor of the Florentine Republic, a role that required him to write letters and documents conveying the decisions of the city's officeholders and their advisors. In 1411, he briefly returned to papal service before ending that role again and returning to Florence in 1415. It was not until 1427 that Bruni returned to an official secretarial role. In that year, Bruni resumed his former position as Chancellor of the Florentine Republic. It was a post he held until his death in 1444 (Griffiths et al. 1987). Over the course of these decades, Bruni created an immense body of letters and speeches in both the vernacular and in Latin, a quantity far too large to list individually here.

Over his career, Bruni wrote commissions and letters to Florentine diplomats, letters to foreign rulers, summaries of speeches delivered in advisory bodies, wrote speeches for others to deliver, speeches for himself, and collected letters sent to friends and colleagues. The content of the overwhelming majority of this work was indebted to the very specific political circumstances at hand. The instructions and basic contents for most of these documents were determined by the Florentine officeholders at the time. Nevertheless, one common theme to which Bruni often returned in these writings related to the significance and legitimacy of republican regimes in a European world dominated by princely rule. Bruni frequently framed the decisions provided to him by officeholders within the context of Florentine liberty, by which he generally meant the ability of Florence to set its own external agenda, free from external claims to power, as well as the freedom of elite Florentines to aspire to and occasionally hold political office (Viti 1992; Griffiths 1999).

Bruni broke with past Florentine chancellors in his more overt emulation of classical rhetorical models and his rejection of more recent styles.

Previous chancellors and orators had striven to emulate a formal rhetorical style, known as the *ars dictaminis*, which relied upon quite specific word patterns, superlative adjectives, and other particulars. Bruni, however, led the way to a new form of oratorical eloquence aimed at imitating classical rhetoricians such as Cicero. He was a master at emulating the classical Latin style that he and his contemporaries valued. In orations, Bruni emphasized the rearrangement of words toward aural effect. He also sought to base the vocabulary of his Latin speeches much more closely to the words and forms used by ancient writers. His speeches were frequently modeled explicitly on classical models (Witt 2000). For example, his speech delivered before the Florentine mercenary captain Niccolò da Tolentino (1350–1435) was based upon an ancient speech by Cicero, the *Pro lege manilia* (Maxson 2015). Bruni's speeches became highly sought after as models to emulate, and later speakers have left examples of speeches heavily indebted to words uttered by Bruni on similar occasions.

Translations and the Theory of Translating

Bruni's translations from Greek into Latin and from Latin into Italian introduced multiple new texts and authors to Latin Europe. The study of Greek, while not unknown, was little practiced in the centuries before Bruni. As such, many classical authors were completely unknown in western Europe, while others were known only through descriptions or short extracts included in late Antique and early medieval encyclopedic works. Bruni was among the first group of individuals who actively sought to reintroduce Greek works into western Europe through Latin and vernacular translations. For example, his first Greek to Latin translations were also some of his most popular, partly for their subject matter and partly for their short length: St. Basil's *Letter to the Youth*, which defended the value of a liberal arts education, and Xenophon's *Hiero*, which explored the benefits and drawbacks of being a ruler (Hankins 1997; Maxson 2010). Many other works followed. Bruni translated several *Lives* of Plutarch, including the lives of Aemilius Paulus, Cato, Demosthenes, Mark Antony, and others. In addition to

Xenophon's *Hiero*, he also translated Xenophon's *Apology*. He created Latin versions of several dialogues by Plato, such as the *Apology*, *Crito*, *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*, as well as a set of letters then thought to have been written by Plato. Bruni also translated the *Nichomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* by Aristotle, in addition to the *Oeconomics* (at the time considered genuine). Bruni reintroduced several speeches by Demosthenes, excerpts from Homer, parts of Aristophanes, and others. These translations brought works to readers in western Europe that had not been read there in centuries.

Many of these translations into Latin were then translated into Italian and even other languages, at times under Bruni's supervision. Bruni's conception and use of the vernacular as a literary and learned language will be discussed in more detail below, but for here, it is sufficient to state that Bruni not only reintroduced some of the now classic works of Greek philosophy into the Latin west, but vernacular translations of his works by others helped popularize the texts for the large and literate population of the Italian peninsula and beyond. Bruni's Latin translation of St. Basil's *Letter to the Youth*, for example, was translated into both Italian and Spanish. Bruni's biography of Cicero existed in Latin, Italian, and French versions. His *On the Gothic War* was translated into Italian, Spanish, and even English, while his *On the Punic War* had an extensive manuscript tradition in both Latin and Italian, with fewer copies of versions in French, Spanish, and Catalan. Both Bruni's *Introduction to Moral Philosophy* and his *Hiero* existed in German editions, among other languages (Hankins 1997). In short, Bruni's introduction of several Greek classics to Latin and vernacular readers secure him primacy of place in the history of Renaissance thought and philosophy.

Yet, in addition to his actual translation of Greek works, Bruni was also innovative in terms of his ideas about how best to translate a work from one language into another. Specifically, Bruni advocated for translators to capture the sense of a passage when translating, rather than focusing on the then more traditional practice of translating one word at a time. In his *On the*

Correct Way to Translate, Bruni urged translators to capture the ideas of a text but also to transfer, as much as possible, the eloquence of the original author into the new language (Bernard-Pradelle 2008; Hankins 2003; Botley 2004). These ideas about translation led Bruni into a heated controversy with a contemporary Aristotelian philosopher. For two centuries, scholastic philosophers had been relying upon a literal Latin translation of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*. Bruni produced a more rhetorical translation (1416) that altered both the sense and the vocabulary of the text in Latin. His translation was controversial and sparked an exchange that reveals how far Bruni's approach differed from previous translators. Bruni's critic (Alfonso da Cartagena (1384–1456)) claimed that Aristotle was not eloquent as Bruni had claimed; that Boethius was the translator of the older version, not a Dominican friar as Bruni had claimed; and that Bruni was wrong to have criticized this older translator. Bruni responded to each point in turn, stating that Aristotle was in fact eloquent, that Boethius was not the translator; and that he was merely criticizing the translation and not the integrity of the previous translator. The matter did not end there, however, and a second controversy erupted nearly 10 years after the book's original publication. In this second controversy, Bruni's accuser was far more wide-ranging. He questioned Bruni's attempts to make the text more rhetorical and thus stray from the familiar terms of the older translation. He argued that Aristotle, as an authority, spoke the truth and that those instances where he seemed incorrect were places where Aristotle had attempted an allegory or, perhaps, where the translation might be incorrect. He contended that Bruni was placing rhetorical eloquence above philosophical content, but that in philosophy true eloquence came, not from style, but from finding and understanding answers to questions. Bruni responded to these arguments by reiterating the claims he had made earlier about translation, namely, that his concern as a translator was to render into Latin that which the Greek had said (Griffiths et al. 1987).

Bruni's translations in practice at times deviated from his ideal of capturing the sense and

eloquence of an original text. For example, Bruni – and other fifteenth-century translators – tweaked or even removed passages that he found offensive or unnecessary. For example, Bruni removed or modified references to homosexual relations in works by Plato and Xenophon. Bruni also tended to paraphrase and choose Latin words for Greek concepts that reinforced the usual values and assumptions of Bruni's contemporaries, thus making the classical work in question intentionally more palatable to his audience (Hankins 1990). Moreover, Bruni's contemporaries argued that he did not distinguish adequately between translating and composing original works. The most prominent example of this was Bruni's *History of the Gothic Wars*, which was heavily indebted to Procopius' book on the same topic. Detractors of Bruni's treatment, particularly a rival Biondo Flavio (1392–1463) who was writing an account of the same events, argued that a history based upon a single source was insufficient for constructing an accurate historical narrative (Ianziti 2011).

Bruni's translations enjoyed enormous success in the decades after his death. Manuscript copies of early translations of short works like St. Basil's *Letter to the Youth* and Xenophon's *Hiero* exist in 200 or more copies. Copies of Bruni's translations of various lives by Plutarch and dialogues of Plato exist in dozens of copies each. Vernacular versions of Bruni's Latin translations were created, and an Italian version of Bruni's translation of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* survives in at least ten copies, while the Spanish version is preserved in at least five more manuscripts. Even more popular were vernacular versions of Bruni's historical works, which often exist in dozens of manuscript copies (Hankins 1997). Bruni's translations were progressively replaced by later translators, such as Marsilio Ficino and Erasmus, in the latter fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Conceptions of Language

Bruni's prolific career as a translator fit into a broader context of reflection upon the relationship and statuses of different languages. These concepts arose across several works that spanned Bruni's career. In Bruni's *Dialogues*, the

individuals presented discuss different opinions on the significance of vernacular writings by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio versus the Latin production of the same figures. Bruni returned to these themes much later in his two biographies of Dante and Petrarch, respectively. He also contributed to a discussion among learned papal secretaries about the relationship between the vernacular and Latin.

In many ways, Bruni's views on the relationship and respective statuses of different languages were quite traditional. He argued that the study of Hebrew, for example, was a waste of time, given that what was significant from Hebrew writings already existed in Latin. Bruni's arguments contrasted with those advanced by some of his contemporaries. For example, Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) viewed the study of Hebrew as useful, if for nothing else the insight it offered into the translation methods of Saint Jerome. Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459) worked to learn Hebrew and created a rough translation of the Vulgate Bible into Latin, even as his primary motivation was the conversion of Jews to Christianity (Botley 2004).

Bruni's views on the status and validity of Italian as a literary language seem to have changed over the course of his career (Hankins 2006). In the early fifteenth century, Bruni was close to Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437), a man who viewed the vernacular with some disdain. He and others around him were known for their learned discussions in which they praised Antiquity, sought to recover the writings and forms of classical Latin as it had been read and written during the ancient period, and bemoaned the loss of the ancient world and its culture over the past millennium. Niccoli and like-minded individuals grouped the vernacular into that postclassical period of decline. Bruni's *Dialogues* preserves some of the types of arguments that this group was making. The vernacular, they argued, was the language of the mob and unfit for literary expression. As examples, they offered texts such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Petrarch's *Sonnets*, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*. They argued that these three famous Florentine authors should be judged solely upon the style of their Latin works, and all three men were found wanting (Griffiths et al.

1987; Bruni 1996; Bernard-Pradelle 2008). It was quite common to view Latin as a superior and more sophisticated literary language than the vernacular, but the embrace of this extreme form of classicism was controversial even among humanists (Quint 1985). Bruni seems to have been ambivalent in his early career: the way the arguments are presented in his *Dialogues* suggests they may not have had his full support, even as the work explicitly states that Bruni was sympathetic to them.

Bruni's audience for his original works and translations was expanded through the vernacular versions mentioned above. Bruni's use of the vernacular, however, coincided with views on the origins of Italian that differed from those of his contemporaries and of modern linguists. In 1435 Bruni engaged in an oral discussion about the relationship between Latin and the vernacular in the classical past. Bruni argued that classical Rome, like fifteenth-century Florence, had two distinct languages. He claimed that a speaker in classical Rome like Cicero was only understood by the well-educated, while most people only understood a few Latin words, much like many of Bruni's contemporaries experienced the mass. Bruni's arguments contrasted sharply with those of his contemporary Biondo Flavio, a long-serving papal secretary who penned several long humanist histories. Biondo argued that Latin was the only language of the classical world, even as there were clearly different styles of expression. Over time Latin had changed, and the vernaculars had differentiated themselves from both Latin and each other. Biondo's arguments are much closer to how modern students of language view their subject; however, both Bruni and Biondo's positions were taken seriously in the 1430s, and the debate has been positioned as one of the earliest theoretical and historical discussions on the relationship between Latin and Italian, a discussion that continued into the next century (Celenza 2015; Griffiths et al. 1987; Tavoni 1984). Bruni's arguments fit into stronger affirmations of the literary potential of the vernacular than he had offered earlier in his career, as evidenced by passages in his *Life of Dante* written around the same period (Baron 1955).

Political Writings

Perhaps Bruni's best-known works in recent decades are his largely pro-republican works written on behalf of the Florentine state. These works spanned over forty years of Bruni's life and have given rise to heated debates among historians over the dating of specific works, the depths of Bruni's sincerity in writing them, and their originality. The most significant works in this debate have been Bruni's *Dialogues*, his *Praise of the City of Florence*, his *Oration for Nanni Strozzi*, and his *History of the Florentine Republic*. Each of these works fits into a different context: The *Dialogues* and the *Praise* were literary works produced in the early 1400s; the *Oration* (ca. 1428) and *History* (1415–1444) were works written while Bruni served as head secretary of Florence. Yet, despite their temporal and contextual differences, all four works argue that Florence enjoyed a legitimate form of republican government. This legitimacy derived from the Roman Republic, under which Florence was founded by Roman veterans. As the descendant of Rome, Florence could argue that it did not owe allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor, the French, the Byzantine Emperor, or the pope, because all these figures traced their authority back to the Roman Empire, which post-dated the republic. Thus, not only was the city independent, but all its wars and territorial claims were justified because Florence was heir to the same lands once possessed by its Roman republican progenitor (Fubini 2003).

Bruni's arguments for the independence and authority of the Florentine Republic built upon the thought of earlier writers. The fourteenth-century thinker Bartolo da Sassoferrato had expounded a definition of tyrannical rule based upon a legitimate source of power and benevolent treatment of the ruled. Bruni's mentor Coluccio Salutati had picked up this definition and used it in his treatise *On the Tyrant*, a work written around 1400 and thus at a time when Bruni was a member of his circle. Bruni applied this same definition across his original political works. For example, in both the *Dialogues* and the *Praise*, Bruni used the illegal usurpation and wicked rule of the Roman emperors as evidence to delegitimize their claims – and thus those individuals claiming

descent from them – over Florence. On only one occasion did Bruni question the legitimacy of non-republican forms of government and instead applied standard definitions of just versus unjust rule to evaluate the validity of competing claims to power (Maxson 2010).

Bruni also conceived of the Florentine republic along the traditional lines of an oligarchic regime ideally consisting of a well-educated, wealthy, and noble patriciate. He worked closely with the Florentine Guelph Party – a governmental body that sought to promote oligarchic government of the most established families in Florence – to rewrite their bylaws. He dedicated a treatise, *On Knighthood* (ca. 1420), to the city's most prominent members of the oligarchic regime (Bayley 1961). Additionally, Bruni sought to position himself, socially, among the Florentine oligarchs, although he was clever enough to avoid inextricable entanglements and thus managed to enjoy political prominence throughout the politically tumultuous 1420s, 1430s, and 1440s in Florence (Martines 1963; Viti 1990; Maxson 2014; Field 1998).

Yet, Bruni's arguments were innovative in several ways too. Although relying upon standard abstract foundations for his republican thought, Bruni's writings had far wider implications than previous thinkers. Bruni helped create a form of "civic humanism" that was a malleable concept that spread throughout the population of Florence. Civic humanism in this context was the propagation of the idea of the legitimacy of the Florentine republican form of government; that this government was rightly dominated by a small group of individuals; and that all other members of the Florentine ruling groups had the possibility of holding office on occasion, with the expectation that this potential for and occasional practice of officeholding would bring social honor, but not real political influence (Najemy 2006). The Florentine population seems to have bought into this conception of rule, and it helped reinforce the increasingly restricted nature of political power in Florence during the 1410s, 1420s, and 1430s. Thus, Bruni's arguments, while not necessarily original in an abstract sense, were innovative in the extent of their widespread application.

In addition, the ways that Bruni presented and sought to prove his points were also original. The *Praise of the City of Florence*, for example, was modeled on a Greek oration in praise of Athens. This emulation was original because it made such heavy use of a Greek text, as well as for Bruni's reintroduction of a solid, classical example of a Ciceronian style (Witt 2000; Griffiths et al. 1987). In another example, in the *Oration for Nanni Strozzi*, Bruni made a blanket condemnation of all princely rule, an extreme statement that he did not repeat, but one that demonstrates the lengths to which his argument about the legitimacy of Florence's republican government could be stretched (Hankins 2000b). Bruni shaped the narrative and structure of his *History of the Florentine People* to emphasize the city's independence and legitimate claims to rule others, points further developed in the next section.

Bruni's arguments about Florentine republicanism had a long-lasting impact on the history of political thought in Europe. The republican, patriotic, and civic duty ideas popularized by Leonardo Bruni were picked up by other writers, most notably Niccolò Machiavelli in the early sixteenth century. Readers of Machiavelli, in turn, also adopted these republican ideas, with influences felt throughout many political thinkers of the Enlightenment. The ideals of civic humanism have been traced in the writings of men like Thomas Jefferson, who helped draft the foundational documents for the United States (Pocock 1975). The concept of civic humanism, meanwhile, in slightly altered form, has even been controversially assigned to the underlying principles of American, British, French, and Italian governments during the late twentieth century (Hankins 2000a).

Historical Writings

Bruni wrote biographies and histories of classical, medieval, and even contemporary events. Bruni's first original historical writing was a biography of Cicero published in 1413. In 1415, Bruni was commissioned to write an official history of the Florentine Republic in Latin and based upon classical models. Although this project occupied him

for the rest of his life, Bruni also produced several other pieces of historical writing while he worked on that project. In 1422, Bruni published his *On the First Punic War* to fill in a key missing section from Livy's only partially extant history of Rome. Around 1430, Bruni returned to biography and penned a *Life of Aristotle*, in part to offer a counter-narrative to the portrait offered by the classical writer Diogenes Laertius, which a rival (Ambrogio Traversari [1386–1439]) was then translating from Greek into Latin. Another pair of biographies followed in 1436, this time of the Florentine poets Dante and Petrarch, where the contrasting *prudencia* of the two men in political affairs was brought to the forefront. Three more historical works appeared toward the end of Bruni's career: The *Commentary of Greek Affairs* (1439) relied heavily on a work of Xenophon to present a history of Greece in the fourth-century BCE; Bruni's *On His Own Times* (1441) chronicled a history of Bruni's lifetime from his own perspective; and finally, in 1441 Bruni published his *On the Gothic War*, which drew heavily upon Procopius' version of the same events (Ianziti 2011).

Across this multitude of works, Bruni made many innovative moves in the study of the past. For example, he was among the first historians to adopt the influential periodization scheme of European history into a classical past, a middle age in which the major achievements of the classical past were lost, and then a Renaissance period in which those classical innovations were being rediscovered. He was among the first historians to conduct archival research to help construct an historical narrative, an approach that is particularly revealing in the latter books of the *History of the Florentine People* (Bruni 2001–2007). Bruni expanded the scope of history to include places outside the ordinary: for example, his *Commentary* was the first work of Greek history published in Latin since Antiquity (Ianziti 2011). When constructing historical interpretations, Bruni at times ostentatiously compared and critically analyzed the sources available and tended to rely upon those evidentiary sources that were closest to the events discussed. The best-known example of this approach was in Bruni's account of the role of

Charlemagne in Florentine history, where Bruni concluded it was unlikely that Charlemagne had refounded Florence, but had instead just helped rebuild the city. Bruni's adoption of Livy as a model for an official history of Florence inspired imitators throughout the Italian peninsula. Courts and other republics scrambled to have their own version of the past created to compete with the version so eloquently written by Bruni. The sum of these many innovations has inspired some historians to label Bruni as the first modern historian (Ianziti 1997).

Alongside and often underlying these multitudinous innovations, Bruni retained many of the motivations and practices of his historical predecessors. For example, Bruni's critical use of sources was sporadic and usually was used as a tool to argue for or against a historical point that served to legitimize or delegitimize a historical action or claim. Bruni clearly viewed the period before his own as lacking in Latin eloquence, but Bruni did not question that political arguments in the present could be and were based upon unbroken lineages back to classical Antiquity. Bruni's incorporation of source material into his own works often constituted only superficial changes for stylistic purposes. Some of his historical works, such as his *On the Gothic War*, were criticized already in Bruni's own day as being so close to his original sources as to blur the lines between an original work and a translation. Bruni presented logical and historical arguments for interpretations that furthered his own goals and that of his patrons, but he also relied on quite traditional means to establish historical narratives as more "true" than a competing claim. For example, in both 1428 and 1439, Bruni presented drafts of his *History of the Florentine People* to the Florentine government amidst rituals rife with civic and religious significance. The inclusion of the books in these rituals sought to associate divine favor and blessing upon the narrative, and then the copies of the books presented were housed within the chapel in the principal Florentine governmental building. Research, logic, and beseeching divine favor all meshed together to argue for the accuracy of Bruni's narrative (Maxson 2012).

Ethical and Metaphysical Writings

Renaissance humanists like Leonardo Bruni embraced a different kind of learned ideal than had been prized in the medieval period. In Antiquity, two different types of learned ideals had emerged. On the one side, some individuals prized the pursuit of philosophy, which they understood as the pursuit of truth and understanding. On the other side, others prized the pursuit of oratory, which they understood to mean the ability to speak, argue well, and persuade others to a specific proposition. The philosophical side of this coin had dominated European learned discourse since the 1000s. Humanists, particularly from the mid-1300s, began offering a competing ideal that focused on the study of ethics and the tools necessary to persuade others to ethical action or the orator's point of view (Griffiths et al. 1987). Toward this end, the humanists argued that people should receive an education grounded in moral philosophy, the tools of persuasion (grammar and rhetoric), and a pool of emulative examples (poetry and history). Bruni presented this basic model for education in his *Treatise on the Study of Literature*, while his contemporaries made similar arguments in educational treatises of their own (Kallendorf 2002).

Bruni made one contribution to contemporary debates about ethics in his popular compendium of classical ethics, his *Introduction to Moral Philosophy*. The work draws heavily upon various works by Cicero and Aristotle, even as it diverges from both authors in various specifics. Bruni's work examines three basic questions: Is there an end to human affairs? What is that end? And how is that end acquired? After quickly affirming that a final end does in fact exist, the treatise examines the nature of that end by presenting differing answers based upon different schools of classical philosophy, particularly the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Peripatetics. All of them are in basic agreement that happiness is the common end, and thus Bruni turns to discussing the pursuit of virtues and the avoidance of vices as the path toward this final end (Griffiths et al. 1987; Bernard-Pradelle 2008). Although the content of the work is largely derivative, during the fifteenth century it enjoyed wide circulation, existing in

dozens of manuscript copies as well as a German and a Spanish translation (Hankins 1997). In addition, the work is interesting as an historical piece in that it was among the first philosophical works of the Renaissance based upon classical sources in their original languages, rather than intermediaries. The book also features a consideration of Aristotle not as "The Philosopher," but as one thinker among many (Griffiths et al. 1987).

Other Contributions: Textual Studies and Political Career

Beyond the ideas and style of his writings, Bruni made important contributions in areas outside of his oratory, original writings, and translations. Bruni played a role in the rediscovery of Latin texts in the early fifteenth century and in the humanist-influenced changes in status measures during the 1400s. Bruni himself made few manuscript discoveries, although he was both interested in the efforts of and corresponded with individuals, like Poggio Bracciolini, who were more actively scouring monastic libraries for new classical texts. With more classical texts and authors, and with more manuscript copies of previously known works available, Bruni's contemporaries began comparing works and passages across copies to compare and correct texts. There is little evidence of Bruni's role in these early philological inquiries in Latin manuscripts, but Bruni did offer corrections in Greek manuscripts, making him one of the first individuals to critically emend Greek works (Griffiths et al. 1987).

In addition, Bruni's political career outside of the Florentine chancery helped to change how people thought about the importance of learning as a marker of social status. Highly prestigious governmental appointments in Florence were reserved for key members of the Florentine ruling group. Marriages, meanwhile, occurred between families who could, one way or another, claim equal status within Florentine society. By traditional standards, Bruni should not have had access to either the most significant political offices or major marriage alliances. He was an immigrant from Arezzo and thus could not claim an ancient ancestral history of holding prestigious political office in Florence, a key standard by which social

status was measured. His work as a papal secretary and then chancellor gave him access to political power and secrets, but it was indirect – Bruni was charged with framing the decisions that other people made and keeping to himself the secrets of others. Finally, his economic standing in his youth does not seem to have been particularly exceptional.

However, Bruni used his ability with humanist letters and financial acumen to largely overcome his background and pass down an enhanced social position in Florence to his son. Already by 1427, Bruni was among the wealthiest citizens in Florence (Martines 1963). By that date, he had also cultivated strong connections, both within the Florentine ruling regime and with Pope Martin V, a man who was quite hostile toward Florence during his pontificate but whom, for reasons that remain unclear, Bruni seems to have enjoyed good relations and served as an occasional go-between. In 1426 Bruni secured an election as a diplomat to the pope, the type of position almost always reserved for the more elite members of the Florentine ruling groups. More positions followed in the Florentine domestic sphere. His career reached its peak with his appointment to the *Dieci di Balìa* in (1439, 1440, and 1441). This immensely powerful group was an ad hoc governmental body convened at times of war. Its members were handpicked and as such always featured the key individuals from the Florentine regime. In addition to his great wealth and political status, Bruni's orations, letters, treatises, and translations were known in both Latin and Italian. Not all of Bruni's learned and dilettante contemporaries liked or agreed with Bruni, but his style and contents were a reference point for admirers and detractors alike, across Florence and beyond (Maxson 2014; Martines 1963).

As Bruni's contemporaries argued over whether nobility was an in-born or earned trait, Bruni's success provided a practical example for people who viewed nobility as something that could be attained through the acquisition of wealth, political honors, and displays of humanist learning. People from all walks of life sought to emulate the learning and success of people like Bruni, particularly from the 1420s. The

consequence of this emulation was a change in the social view of humanist learning from a fringe interest associated with a few classical scholars to a necessary component in the education of anybody with social and political aspirations. By the 1480s, just four decades after Bruni's death, a reputation for learning could allow people to overcome other economic, familial, or political shortcomings in their background and be viewed as the equal of people with far greater amounts of the traditional marks of status.

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Bruno, Giordano

Born: 1548, Nola, near Naples/Italy

Died: February 17, 1600, Rome/Italy

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Abstract

Giordano Bruno is one of the most important philosophers of the Renaissance. His thinking is characterized, on one hand, by a very close relationship with tradition, from which it veers markedly in several essential aspects, but to which it also owes a great debt; on the other hand, it presents some highly original features that, taken together, constitute the mainstay of a new concept of man and a new world view. Bruno's criticism of tradition has three main objectives: Aristotelian philosophy (of which he rejected both the idea of matter as pure power without act, and that of a finite world structured in rigid hierarchies), the Christian religion (in particular several fundamental dogmas, and more generally the passive and defeatist attitude of the faithful who entrust themselves totally to divine will), and humanistic culture itself (of which he primarily rejects the celebration of man, based on an ontological peculiarity that distinguishes man from all other beings). Bruno's thought – also linked in many ways to tradition, especially pre-Socratic philosophy and Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy – is based instead on the idea of matter itself as generator of forms, the primary source of life and of all that exists; on a cosmological vision that conceives of an infinite universe in constant motion; on a concept of man that while not acknowledging any specificity of a substantial nature, exalts his practical skills to the highest degree, the ethical aspects and the civil vocation (also through the development of disciplines such as mnemonics and natural magic); finally, on a concept of religion, able to maintain the

unbridgeable distance between the human and the divine, but at the same time, encouraging the formation and preservation of forms of solid and fair society.

Biography

Filippo Bruno (who would take the name Giordano upon entering the monastery) was born in Nola, near Naples, in 1548, the son of Fraulissa Savolino and Giovanni Bruno, a soldier. In 1562 he went to Naples, where he initially studied under two teachers: Giovan Vincenzo da Colle called the Sarnese, of Aristotelian-Averroean orientation, and Teofilo da Vairano, Augustinian friar. In 1565, more to be able to continue his studies than due to a real religious vocation, he entered as a novice into the Order of Preachers (that is, the Dominicans) at the Neapolitan convent of San Domenico Maggiore. In 1573 he was ordained as a priest, and in 1575 he earned a degree in theology. In 1576, due to his heterodox opinions and especially his doubts on the dogma of the Trinity, he was forced to leave the monastery of San Domenico Maggiore and fled to Rome, where he settled at the convent of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. However, in the same year he also fled from Rome and began a long journey that, over the years, led him to stay in many towns, wandering all over Europe. Between 1576 and 1581 he moved between Italy, Switzerland, and France; this period is especially memorable for his short stay (in 1579) in Geneva, during which he adhered to Calvinism, and a longer one (1579–1581) in Toulouse, where he taught philosophy at the university.

Between the summer and autumn of 1581 Bruno reached Paris, where he would stay for about a year and a half. During this first stay in Paris he came into contact with the court of Henry III of Valois; he obtained by the sovereign's decree a temporary post teaching philosophy at the University; above all, he composed and published his first important works: *De umbris idearum* and *Cantus Circaeus*, two works on mnemonics that also addressed complex epistemological issues, as well as *Candelaio*, a comedy in

which several cornerstones of his philosophy emerge (from the idea of universal vicissitude to criticism of what he considered to be some of the worst traits of the Christian religion, beginning with excesses of superstition on the part of the faithful). This first visit to Paris was followed by an important period in England. Bruno arrived in London in April 1583, in the train of the French ambassador, Michel de Castelnau, at whose home he stayed. He came into contact with the circles of the court of Queen Elizabeth and became friends with Philip Sidney, one of the foremost figures of sixteenth century British culture. In the summer of 1583, he published other writings on the art of memory (among them *Sigillus sigillorum* stands out) and went to Oxford twice: the first time he participated in a public debate, while during the second he began a course of lectures which were soon interrupted due to an accusation of plagiarism. Between 1584 and 1585, he composed and published the Italian philosophical dialogues (in 1584 *Cena de le Ceneri*, *De la causa, principio et uno*, *De l'infinito, universo e mondi*, and *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*; in 1585 *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo* and *De gli eroici furori*), a group of works in which he puts forth the essential principles of his thought, between ontological and cosmological research on one hand and ethical-religious inquiry on the other.

From England Bruno returned to Paris in October, 1585. This second sojourn in Paris was shorter than the first and during it (in 1586) he published several works including *Centum et viginti articuli de natura et mundo adversus Peripateticos*, a work with an anti-Aristotelian bent; he also participated in a public dispute at the Collège de Cambrai. Also after the controversy raised by this dispute, Bruno decided to leave France for good and began a new phase in his long European pilgrimage, which would bring him to the territories of the German region. In 1586 after passing through Mainz, Wiesbaden, and Marburg, he arrived at Wittenberg where he settled and with the help of Italian jurist Alberico Gentili, began teaching at the university (lecturing especially on Aristotle's *Organon* and *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*). Between 1587 and 1588 he composed a series of works on Aristotelian and

Lullian topics, some of which would be published posthumously (among them *Artificium perorandi*, *Lampas triginta statuarum*, and *Libri physicorum Aristotelis explanati*). In March 1588 he left the University of Wittenberg writing the *Oratio valedictoria* (a short but intense text, in which he expresses his gratitude to the academic environment that had welcomed him), and after a 6-month stay in Prague, where he published, among others, *Articuli adversus mathematicos*, Bruno arrived in Helmstedt. Here he began to compose the set of works dedicated to magic that would all be published only posthumously in the late nineteenth century, and joined the university, but also as a result of excommunication by the local Lutheran church decided to move in June 1590 to Frankfurt, where he lodged at the Carmelite convent. The year 1591 was especially intense for Bruno, who went for a few months to Switzerland and in Frankfurt published both *De imaginum, signorum et idearum compositione*, another work on mnemonics, and the so-called Latin poems, which are in some ways the culmination of his thought: *De triplici minimo et mensura*, *De monade, numero et figura*, and *De immenso et innumerabilibus*. But 1591 was also the year that saw Bruno's return to Italy: at the end of the summer he accepted the invitation of the Venetian patrician Giovanni Mocenigo, to move to the city of the Doges.

Bruno arrived in Venice the following fall, but almost immediately went on to Padua, where he taught a short course for German students of the university and composed some minor works. However, at the beginning of winter he returned to Venice, and by the end of March 1592 he settled in the abode of Mocenigo. But on May 23 the latter reported him to the Inquisition, accusing him of having beliefs contrary to the Christian religion and Bruno was imprisoned on the same day. Thus began a long legal procedure that consisted of a first phase in Venice and a second phase in Rome. The first part of the trial concluded with a formal retraction by Bruno, who on July 30 declared he repented of his mistakes and was willing to ask for forgiveness. But the Roman Inquisition required the transfer of the trial from Venice to Rome and on February 27, 1593 Bruno

entered the Roman prison of Sant'Uffizio. The second part of the trial, which lasted for several years, had many ups and downs and accelerated over the course of 1599; Bruno, who on January 12 was asked to recant eight propositions – judged heretical – taken from his writings and his testimony during the trial, said he was willing to do it at first but then changed his mind, until on December 21 he said he did not wish to repent and, indeed, did not know what he should repent about. The sentence was inevitable at this point, and on February 17, 1600, Bruno was burned at the stake in the Roman square of Campo de' Fiori.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Bruno's thought develops and defines itself in direct opposition to Aristotelian tradition on the more strictly philosophical level, to the Christian tradition on the religious level, and to the humanistic tradition itself in terms of the specific understanding of the knowledge and understanding of man. In all three cases, the central category is "pedantry," which Bruno often used to indicate the intellectual attitude of representatives of these traditions. In a philosophical context, the "pedants" are those who interpret Aristotle's thought in order to repeat and perpetuate his countless errors, thus becoming the main cause of the decline of philosophy which Bruno identifies as one of the negative traits of his era. In the religious sphere, the "pedants" are the followers of Christianity, a form of religion from which Bruno began to distance himself, on several key points, since his formative years spent in the convent of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples; and from which he would depart definitively as soon as his thought took on precise contours. Finally, in Bruno's eyes humanists also appear "pedantic," or more precisely, those humanities scholars who favor the most empty and inconclusive knowledge, which is – according to Bruno – erudition for its own sake, the arid investigation of grammar and language, and a kind of fetishistic cult for words (i.e., the form), whereas what really matters are the concepts (i.e., content). Bruno's criticism of these three kinds of "pedantry" is very broad and

diverse and at least the most important aspects should be explored.

As regards the criticism of Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition, the issue is primarily ontological and cosmological, and individual points on which Bruno focuses concern the idea of matter on one hand and the concept of the physical world on the other. According to Aristotle and his followers, matter is a *prope nihil* (an "almost nothing"), mere power without act, which can reach perfection only by receiving a form from the outside and expressing itself in it. Bruno, in the pages of *De la causa, principio et uno*, completely reverses this idea and – partly inspired by the medieval philosopher David de Dinant – conceives of matter as something that already contains in itself, implied, all possible forms; as an entity, that is, which does not receive from time to time its form from the outside but generates it itself, power which in a sense is already act, inexhaustible source of reality and reality itself. For Bruno, moreover, matter is a universal and disembodied entity that arises at the basis of both the bodily and the disembodied substance, depending on whether it is to be carried out in a dimension of multiplicity or unity, temporality or eternity, and the extended or unextended. And – most importantly – it is finally possible to also identify in matter as well as the root of life itself in all its shapes and ways, a principle of divine nature, whose existence and whose presence in reality permit one to think of infinite matter, infinite life, and infinite universe. It is, in short, the idea that is the basis of all Bruno's philosophy, which has been rightly defined as the idea of "infinite Life-matter" (Ciliberto 1990), an idea to which are indissolubly bound some other theoretical acquisitions of paramount importance. First, to a perspective such as this, dominated by the idea of a matter endowed with its own life that eternally and continuously produces different shapes, compounds, and individuals, the concept of death is quite alien, if by death one means the total end of life, the exhaustion of the vital principle; that which "dies," that which ends, is only the compound, i.e., the single form taken from the material on any particular occasion, while the life inherent in it and propagated by it never ends.

Secondly, the idea of “infinite Life-matter” is closely related to that of “vicissitude,” a true underlying structure of being at every level; all beings – thus all those endowed with life, so-called living beings as well as that which is apparently inanimate – are governed by a single vicissitudinal principle which determines the various events and continuous transformations, in an overall scenario in which, then, life does not have to deal with death but rather, simply, with mutation. Thirdly and most importantly, the idea of “infinite Life-matter” produces the decisive consequences that drive Bruno – and so we come to the other side of the criticism of Aristotelianism – to reject with great firmness, especially in the pages of *Cena de le Ceneri* and those of *De l’infinito, universo e mondi*, Aristotelian cosmological vision. First of all, the whole of reality as understood by Bruno, all given life and all governed by the vicissitudinal principle, is obviously in constant motion; thus even the motion of the earth, which is a being like any other, must be recognized and affirmed, against all evidence of the senses and contrary to the opinion of Aristotle. Then, reality according to Bruno is also characterized by a profound unity and substantial homogeneity, resulting from the fact that beyond any formal difference and any specific peculiarity, any being may be placed on the same footing as the others by virtue of its participation in substance and universal life; for which any hierarchical distinction regarding the Aristotelian cosmos falls away. Finally, due to the continuous and eternal production of forms of life by matter – as previously mentioned – it is impossible not to imagine an infinite universe and, within it, the existence of infinite living worlds; and it is precisely this theoretical fact that made Bruno famous in the history of Western thought, and which – as far as is relevant here – distances him from Aristotle’s cosmological concept in general and his idea of a unique, finite world in particular.

Regarding instead the critique of Christianity, it must immediately be said that Bruno believes some basic tenets are unacceptable, especially those of the Trinity and the Incarnation. We have just seen that Bruno admits the presence of a divine principle at the very heart of reality; this

does not mean, however, that he was not firmly convinced of the existence of an actual deity, unique, belonging to the realm of the supersensible and separate from the scope of the human and the tangible by an unbridgeable distance. From this point of view, it is evident that a theological perspective such as that of the Trinity, which effectively splits the divine entity into three different (though coessential) parts, cannot be shared; and indeed Bruno, also influenced by the Aryan heresy, already expressed his doubts about this dogma in his youth and later repeats them, even before the inquisitors during the Venetian phase of the trial (Firpo 1993). Equally – and even more so – it is clear that even the dogma of the Incarnation cannot be shared, which is the belief that God could become man, that the distance between the divine and the human could somehow be overcome; and indeed Bruno, in the final pages of the *Dialogo terzo* of *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*, makes the figure of Christ himself, half man and half God, subject to a merciless parody and ironically likens it to that of the mythological centaur Chiron, half man and half animal. More generally, however, there are several other aspects of the Christian religion which fall under the ax of Bruno’s criticism. First of all, on several occasions – such as in *Candelaio*, the Neapolitan comedy written during his first stay in France, a work that stigmatizes various forms of human stupidity – Bruno attacks with ferocious satire the more exterior and questionable aspects of Christianity, behaviors that make authentic devotion degenerate into mere superstition, intellectual poverty, and corruption of the morals of the clergy and religious orders. Then, especially in the early sections of *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo*, Bruno’s criticism focuses on the attitude of Christians as a whole: an attitude that is systematically defined as “asininity” and that translates, in fact, into a state of total passivity, lived in the renunciation of the use of the properly human powers and prerogatives and in the perennial waiting and docile acceptance of the decisions of the divine will. Finally, special attention is given to that part of Christianity represented by Protestantism. The sixteenth century, as is well known, is a century profoundly marked by the advent of the

Reformation and religious and cultural debate as well as by the historical events that originate from it. And Bruno, who in the first phase of his European pilgrimage came into direct contact with the dramatic reality of the wars of religion and the bitter religious, social, and political clashes related to them, took up his precise position condemning in no uncertain terms, especially in the pages of *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*, the Christianity of the Reformation, to which he imputes – among other things – remaining tied to a barren and misleading purely literal interpretation of the Scriptures; to be a religious front anything but united, indeed rent internally by innumerable fragmentations; to have turned Europe into a vast battlefield, by provoking the wars of religion; having unlawfully taken possession of those structures – churches, libraries, universities – which had been previously created by others; and more than any other thing, to have taken to the extremes the fundamental error of Christianity (which consists in having spread a doctrine that prevents any independent initiative by humans) through a marked accentuation of the Pauline concepts of “justification by faith alone” (i.e., salvation without the need to do good works) and “predestination.” Important, in relation to the latter point, is the fact that Bruno found himself in a head-on conflict both with a fundamental text from the origins of Christianity, the letters of Paul of Tarsus, referred to several times in his works (Meroi 2003), and with one of the most significant texts of sixteenth century Reformed Christianity as *De servo arbitrio* (1525) by Martin Luther, lurking in the background in many pages of the *Spaccio* (Ciliberto 1985).

Thus Bruno severely criticizes two traditions thousands of years old, the Aristotelian and the Christian; but he also distances himself, with his thoughts and his work, from a far more recent – but no less solid – tradition, humanism. Again, he criticizes humanism for empty erudition and philological excesses, i.e., a maniacal attention to the purely formal aspect of texts, so as to lose sight of the more important part, content. And in doing so, Bruno captures very well what actually is a limit, at least of a certain humanism; but his criticism does not stop at this unique aspect. Obviously,

humanistic culture was not only scholarship and philology in the worst sense; it was also – and most importantly – a sincere and convinced appreciation of the role that humanity can – and should – play in its most intimate context, namely that of a comparison at the same time conscious and ambitious with nature, with history, with one’s own kind, and also with God. But then, such an appreciation ended very often in a celebration, sometimes rich in rhetorical tones, of the objective greatness of the human being and his absolute centrality in the context of the natural and animal world; a celebration made possible mainly by the fact that man was attributed – even based on an anthropological model of Aristotelian origin – with the exclusive possession of certain faculties (first and foremost, the intellect) considered lacking in other living beings. So it is against a concept of this sort that Bruno above all argues, and his distance from the humanistic tradition is greatest at this point. In common with the humanistic perspective – it must be said – Bruno certainly has, on one hand, the idea that man should be well aware of his limitations and on the other hand simultaneously recognizes his privileged status, but this recognition – as we shall see – is based on completely different grounds, not on the possession of substantial characteristics that in other beings – indeed, other entities – are lacking. As we have seen, the idea of “infinite Life-matter” leads Bruno to conceive of a universe populated by beings and entities that all participate equally, although to a greater or lesser extent, in the same life and the same matter, so that it is impossible to imagine any real differences in quality among them – if there are differences, they are only of quantity. And, since unique and universal matter is both corporeal and incorporeal, there can be no substantial differences either on the material or on the spiritual plane. Finally, it follows then that a faculty such as that of the intellect cannot in any way constitute a sufficient reason for declaring the superiority of man over other beings, since they too possess it in some way. Bruno’s anti-humanism thus consists precisely and essentially of this radical reassessment of exquisitely human prerogatives, reaching its peak in the first part of the *Dialogo secondo* of *Cabala del cavallo*

pegaseo, where a heated confrontation between man and beast occurs, culminating in a paradoxical and provocative alternative: or one is willing – considering what some of them are able to do – to admit that also animals have an intellect, or one must recognize – if one does not wish to abandon the traditional distinction between intellect and instinct, which guarantees the specificity of man – that animal instinct is worth more than human intellect.

Moreover, the fact that Bruno elaborates his philosophy in direct opposition to most preceding knowledge and doctrines does not mean that many threads do not bind him closely to various other aspects of the tradition, from antiquity to the Renaissance itself. Regarding ancient and late classical thought, we must recall the frequent presence in Bruno's writings of hints and references, explicit or implied, to the pre-Socratic thinkers, from Parmenides and Pythagoras to Empedocles and Heraclitus. But we must also recall that Bruno was greatly influenced by Hermetic texts, that is, by the *corpus* of writings of the Hellenistic period on magical-astrological and religious-philosophical subjects, that Renaissance thinkers – and Bruno with them – believed to be the work of Hermes Trismegistus, a legendary figure of wisdom, with almost divine traits, whose authority was considered equal, if not superior, to that of the greatest sages of the ancient world; in particular, Bruno takes from the hermetic text *Asclepius* – a part of which appears, translated from the Latin in an almost literal way, in the *Dialogo terzo* of *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante* – the idea of an apocalyptic dimension in the sense of the imminent coming of new times and new worlds that would put an end to an age of decadence (Ciliberto 2002). Nor can we forget Bruno's great debt to Plato himself and Neoplatonism (as we will also see shortly, dealing with the Renaissance thinkers who continued this line of thought): basic ideas such as the existence of an intangible world clearly distinct from the tangible yet in close relationship with it, or that of a reality divided into several levels, from unity to multiplicity and vice versa – although reworked in an original way – are real cornerstones of Bruno's philosophy. And finally, we cannot neglect to

emphasize the fact that even in the face of criticism that could be called “global” of the entire Christian tradition, from its origins to its most recent manifestations, Bruno frequently draws inspiration from the content of biblical books such as *Job* and the *Song of Songs* (Tirinnanzi 1999; Bassi 2008). Regarding later medieval thought, we have already mentioned the role played by David de Dinant in the development of Bruno's idea of matter; and we must add here that, despite Bruno's overall detachment from a tradition – such as the medieval one – that for him represented precisely the set of theoretical orientations to which he intended to oppose his new philosophy, his sincere appreciation for some other thinkers belonging to it must be mentioned. This is the case, for example, with certain Arab authors such as Avicenna (also called upon for his views on the concept of matter) and Averroes; but it is also the case of Thomas Aquinas, the highest representative of that scholastic philosophy of Aristotelian imprint which was for Bruno the main obstacle to overcome, but whose intelligence and wisdom he held in the highest regard (as he also reminded his Venetian inquisitors: Firpo 1993). Finally, regarding the thought of the Renaissance, it is necessary to dwell briefly on the relationship between Bruno and at least four authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who beyond his aforementioned negative judgment on the humanistic conception of man, were for him of undoubted and remarkable importance: Nicholas of Cusa, Marsilio Ficino, Desiderius Erasmus, and Nicolaus Copernicus.

Bruno often refers explicitly to the first and last of these authors, considering them both thinkers who had taken decisive steps on the path to overcoming Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmology and, especially, geocentrism. Nicholas of Cusa especially had the merit – according to Bruno – of anticipating several key points of the new cosmological vision, particularly in his work *De docta ignorantia* (1440): the nonexistence of fixed stars, the absence of an absolute center, the resulting equivalence of all points in space, the motion of the Earth, the possibility that other planets are inhabited, the relativity of motion and the infinite nature of the universe; while heliocentrism as

illustrated by Copernicus in his famous *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543), a work in which the motion of the Earth is also affirmed and explained, would be truly – according to Bruno – the cornerstone of a new cosmology. But then, Bruno believes that neither Nicholas of Cusa nor Copernicus followed through to the end, that is, they did not develop their thinking to its ultimate consequence, which should have been unconditional adhesion to a genuine vision of an infinite universe: in fact, Nicholas of Cusa would come to imagine an infinite universe, but only in a negative sense, due to deprivation and lack of precision, that is, simply because he thought it was not possible to define it exactly; and Copernicus, on his part, would in fact remain linked to the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic theory of a finite universe bounded by the motionless sky of the fixed stars (which, however, is objectively true). Bruno also profoundly reworks Copernican heliocentrism, turning it in the direction of the infinite, which in fact is totally foreign to Copernicus: in Bruno's new universe the heliocentric idea remains, of course, but applied – inevitably, one might say – in an infinite number of suns and solar systems. In any case, despite these criticisms, Bruno's debt to these two Renaissance thinkers is great, and no less, certainly, than to the other two thinkers named above. Ficino, as is well known, is the leading exponent of the Platonic and Neoplatonic school of thought that flourished in Italy, in Florence of the Medici, in the second half of the fifteenth century (known as the Platonic Academy). In the culture of the time, this intellectual phenomenon was a kind of reaction distancing itself from Aristotelian tradition and in that sense it was almost natural for Bruno to turn his attention to the works of Ficino, in which he could find, replicated in an abundance of topics and illuminated by a new light, themes and motifs belonging to a theoretical orientation to which he too looked with great interest. Among the many points of contact between the thought of Ficino and of Bruno we can highlight two in particular (though closely related): first, the idea of a universe that while characterized by obvious differences and varying degrees of perfection, appears to be substantially homogeneous, marked

by an indelible divine imprint, and all animated by active forces and deep spiritual affinities; second, the absolutely central role attributed to love, which conceived of as a vital principle and as an existential category rather than as mere sentiment, has the task of raising man from the mere desire for worldly sensuous beauty to the highest contemplation of beauty in itself and the divine splendor that illuminates all things. Finally, regarding Erasmus, the European humanist par excellence, his influence on Bruno can be divided into two stages: at first, coinciding with Bruno's years in the convent of San Domenico Maggiore, reading Erasmus' works was decisive in Bruno's abandonment of a Christianity oriented in a predominantly devotional direction and weighed down by strictly theological subtleties; at a later time, coinciding instead with the more mature phase of Bruno's theoretical reflection, then when the final separation from the Christian religion was accomplished, Erasmus was still, for Bruno, a valuable source – and virtually limitless, considering the copious production of the Dutch humanist – on which he drew to take up and develop individual motifs of various kinds. But, also concerning Ficino and Erasmus, along with notable elements of proximity, one must also take into account their fundamental distance from Bruno: on the one hand, Ficino's Platonism is decidedly Christian in nature and the universe he imagines is totally dependent on God, which coincides with the God of the Christian religion; on the other hand, Erasmus' humanism itself, although highly critical of certain aspects of Christianity (and this is, more than anything, a sure reason for agreement with Bruno), cannot even be conceived outside of it. Evidently, in both cases, they deal with general points of view that the Bruno of the English dialogues and later works could not share at all as a whole.

Innovative and Original Aspects

As we have seen, from the moment Bruno was forced from the very outset to confront preceding philosophical and religious doctrines and at the same time develop his theoretical reflections in

close dialectical relationship with them, it would have been difficult, dealing with the main points of his departure from tradition, to do so without treating some of the most innovative aspects of his thought, from the idea of “infinite Life-matter” and that of “vicissitude” to the new cosmological vision and the development of a global perspective that was exquisitely anti-Christian and anti-humanistic. Thus, we must now integrate what has already been mentioned, taking up some of the issues already addressed and examining further elements of originality in Bruno’s philosophy, taking into account – in order – the ontological, anthropological, epistemological, and ethical-religious aspects.

Regarding the ontological aspect, it must first be specified that the concept of “infinite Life-matter,” essentially established in the pages of the London dialogue *De la causa, principio et uno*, is taken up and carried in a direction decidedly atomistic in one of the three Frankfurt poems, specifically *De triplici minimo et mensura*. In this work of fundamental importance Bruno, after having distinguished between the minimum in the metaphysical sense (consisting of the monad), the minimum in the physical sense (consisting of the atom), and the minimum in the geometric sense (consisting of the point), focuses in particular on the second, making the atom, the smallest indivisible physical entity, the ultimate foundation of all reality. Bruno’s concept of a living, eternal, unique, and infinite matter, is thus completed with the identification of an infinite number of physical particles that make it up, all identical and eternal, which, combining with one another according to infinite possibilities and infinite ways, give origin – and life – to infinite bodies and infinite entities. The infinite production of “infinite Life-matter” thus coincides with the incessant movement and action of individual and innumerable atoms; and this further determination of the Bruno’s ontology – one may observe – still moves in a radically anti-Aristotelian direction: on one hand, the existence of atoms, which are all strictly indivisible, shows the profoundly erroneous nature of the Aristotelian theory of the infinite divisibility of matter (a theory, which however already contradicts the idea of a finite world,

since it is absurd – Bruno notes – that a finite amount can be divided into infinite parts); on the other hand, the fact that the atoms are all strictly identical removes any legitimacy – more than the idea of “infinite Life-matter” itself already does – from the hierarchical distinctions that Aristotle introduces in reality, instead attesting to the constitutive units of the universe and the substantial identity of all its parts. This atomistic outcome is, in short, a very significant development of Bruno’s concept of matter; but, at this point, it must be pointed out that this concept is directly linked to a highly qualifying aspect of Bruno’s thought: the theory of metempsychosis. Even before *De minimo*, with the consequences we have just seen, the reflections in *De la causa* are taken up in *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo*, a short but very complex text in which Bruno presents his ideas with particular energy. In the first part of the *Dialogo secondo* of the penultimate London dialogue – previously mentioned regarding the confrontation between man and animal concerning the possession of intellect – the absolute identity of both the bodily substance and the incorporeal substance is reaffirmed with extreme decision. From this derives above all the essential equality of all beings, which in these pages is amply illustrated through a rich set of references to the almost total absence of differences between the nature and behavior of men on one hand and those of animals on the other. But from the particular identity of incorporeal substance, that is the spiritual, also derives the possibility that individual souls incarnate all the same in any body, in the universal rhythm of “vicissitude” and without hindrance of any kind. That is why Bruno, in a manner fully consistent with the ontological presuppositions of his thought, firmly believes in the transmigration of souls, as suggested in the aforementioned section in *Cabala*, in which he also appeals to the Pythagorean doctrines and the narrative of Virgil in the sixth book of *Aeneid*; and as he argues explicitly – distinguishing, however, between the religious and philosophical levels – before his Venetian inquisitors (Firpo 1993).

It is also necessary to refer to the same section of the *Cabala* to better delineate the contours of Bruno’s anthropology, that is, Bruno’s concept

of man. By treating his anti-humanism, we have already hinted that Bruno indeed recognizes the privileged status of man in relation to other living beings, but that this recognition is not based on his higher nature or the exclusive possession of specific faculties. It is precisely in these pages that it is revealed why man can dominate animals and therefore be defined, at least in a sense, “the god of the earth”; the superiority of man does not depend on substantial grounds, but only on the factor, purely accidental, of his “complexion,” i.e., his exterior constitution. In particular, if man can perform certain operations that allow him, objectively, to occupy a position of preeminence in the realm of nature and, above all, to dominate other living beings, it is only because he can count on the contribution of the hand, that is, of a single component of his purely physical structure (which could also have been different); a component that ultimately turns out to be the true element to which he owes his greatness. However, we must make two clarifications in this regard. First, it must be said that in spite of this unique celebration of the hand that we find in the *Cabala*, in a work of just a few months earlier, *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*, instead we find a joint celebration of hand and intellect. In the first part of the *Dialogo terzo* of the fourth London dialogue, in fact, Bruno also identified in the possession of the intellect, as well as that of hand, the datum at the origin of the peculiarities of the human being. But although this might seem like a contradiction, it is explained, on one hand, by the fact that compared to the *Cabala*, *Spaccio* is a text in which Bruno, struggling with questions that are essentially moral, does not draw the most extreme consequences from the ontological premises of his thought (as he does, in fact, in *Cabala*); on the other hand, by the fact that on closer inspection, Bruno’s entire reflection is characterized by a nearly constant variation of the same basic reasons that determine its complexity and richness; Bruno’s thought is truly one that develops in an original and creative way, from time to time confronting different issues and continually reorganizing the theoretical material that accompanies it. The second clarification refers to a fundamental aspect of Bruno’s philosophy, also

concerning his relationship with humanism. The praise of the hand, whether accompanied by that of the intellect or not, fits perfectly – and indeed provides a crucial element – with the exquisitely practical vocation of Bruno’s thought. In reality, if the theme of the hand, as presented in *Spaccio* and especially in *Cabala*, helps to clearly reduce the claim of human excellence at every level (and, in this sense, the position taken by Bruno radically surpasses the typically humanistic idea of *dignitas hominis*, as proposed, for example, by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in his famous *Discorso sulla dignità dell’uomo*, 1486), on the other hand, this issue has also – and probably most importantly – the function of enhancing the aspect of the *praxis*, i.e., those operational capabilities and the freedom of action which, if properly exploited, allow people to play an active and constructive role in both civil and political (and from this point of view, Bruno seems to be quite in tune with the call to *agere et intelligere*, seamlessly, which is done by an author such as Giannozzo Manetti, in his treatise *De dignitate et excellentia hominis*, 1452).

Regarding Bruno’s refusal of the Christian dogma of the Trinity, we have already had occasion to mention the idea of the unbridgeable gap which separates the human from the divine, the sensible from the supersensible, and the finite from the infinite. It is true that the divine is present in the world in a substantial way, both as a generative principle of life and reality, and as a condition of possibility of the infinite nature of the universe; but, considered in itself, in its unity and in its purity, it remains unattainable by man, who is a constitutionally finite being and basically bound to sensible reality. This idea is another cornerstone of the ontological conception of Bruno; but at the same time, it is also the basis of his epistemological concept, namely, of his theory of knowledge. Just as man is unable to establish a direct contact with the deity, he is not able, in fact, to arrive at a full and complete knowledge of the truth. Drawing inspiration from ancient philosophy (in particular the “myth of the cave” in Plato’s *Republic*), as well as from ideas of biblical origin (in particular the figure of the “beautiful Shulamite” in the *Song of Songs*),

Bruno treats this fundamental subject recurring in many of his works (from *De umbris idearum* to *De gli eroici furori*) to the symbolic motif of the “shadow”: structurally unable to grasp the divine in its true essence and eternal glory, as well as to be illuminated by the essential causes of things, human knowledge seems hopelessly limited and, in fact, shadowy. This does not mean, however, that to the man is not granted any form of knowledge. This shadow is not total darkness, but rather an intermediate state between full light and darkness. And before man, in reality, infinite possibilities of knowledge open up, as infinite as the world in which he is living. In this sense, Bruno’s perspective, far from being a vision that annihilates man’s cognitive abilities, strictly functions as a true celebration of them: in fact, Bruno is firmly convinced of the possibility and need, on the part of man, to take full advantage of all the intellectual faculties in his possession, even with full awareness of his limitations. For that matter, this explains his critique of skeptical philosophy that took shape in the third part of the *Dialogo secondo di Cabala del cavallo pegaseo*. Among the various forms in which “asininity” (that is, ignorance) manifests itself, skepticism is without a doubt the most insidious: the skeptics, by saying that nothing can be known with certainty, programmatically waive any type of knowledge; and worse, they do so by arguing their reasons at length and presenting their intellectual attitude as an authentic form of philosophy – i.e., using those same cognitive tools that they question. Instead, for Bruno philosophy is, in the highest degree, free and continuous aspiration to knowledge – in spite of its constitutively shadowy nature. However, this picture would be incomplete if we did not mention another aspect of Bruno’s epistemological reflection, an aspect that changes – at least in part – the scenario so far. In *De gli eroici furori*, the last of the London dialogues, Bruno clearly distinguishes the figure of the “wise” from that of “furious,” characterizing them as follows: the wise man stops at a degree of knowledge which has its highest point in the intellectual contemplation of the vicissitudinal mutation that structures all planes of reality, thus reaching a level of wisdom that perfectly embodies the shadowy

dimension; the furious, however, is not content with this and tries to push his knowledge beyond the limits granted to man, relying not only on the senses and the intellect but also the will and, above all, abandoning himself to the bond of love in an attempt to arrive at a deeper and more authentic vision of reality. That connected to fury is thus an extraordinary experience, in which intellectual energies merge with those of feeling, allowing the furious to catch a momentary glimpse of unity in diversity, the complicated in the explained, the supersensible light and truth behind shadows and sensible appearances. But it is also an experience destined ultimately to fail: human and divine planes cannot meet in a complete, definitive way; and the condition of the furious remains inevitably fleeting, a state of consciousness that is absolutely impossible to stabilize. At the same time, what he manages to do is extraordinary; and the pages that Bruno devoted to the experience of fury and the figure of the furious are one of the highest pinnacles of his work and thought.

But now we come to the ethico-religious aspect. Strictly speaking, the absolute substantial identity of entities established on an ontological level and the consequent total confirmation of the human events and destinies determined by the rhythm and cycle of vicissitude should leave no room for a qualitative differentiation of the behaviors of individuals. Yet, despite this, Bruno still wants to preserve the ability to recognize – and reward – the value of right action, and in the pages of *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*, expends greater effort to achieve this goal. *Spaccio* is a magnificent fresco with a mythological background, in which imagining that Jupiter wants to cleanse the world of the gods, marked by a profound moral decay, Bruno lays the foundation for a general reform, first of all of ethics, but also of political and religious society. The purpose of Jupiter – and Bruno – is the systematic replacement of each vice with a specific virtue, and in this context, moral values such as commitment, merit, and justice are enhanced. Bruno fights a dual battle: on the one hand, against any conception that includes a universe dominated by pure chance and blind luck, in which every action is equivalent to another, and

every attitude is lawful; on the other hand, against those who consider the greatest virtue to be idleness and disengagement, rather than exhort men to an ongoing, constructive, and just activity. In this sense, it is no coincidence that – as we have seen – in *Spaccio* itself Bruno polemicizes in the most direct and violent way against Protestants who, resting on theological positions that lead them to believe that everything is already decided (“predestination”) and deprive good deeds of any actual weight (“justification by faith alone”), are thus proponents of a worldview profoundly fatalistic and idle. Nor is it a coincidence that in *Spaccio* itself Bruno proposes a practical alternative of a religious sort. In the face of faults and damages caused, in his opinion, by Christianity in general and reformed Christianity in particular, he looks positively to the religion of the Egyptians as well as that of the Romans. The first is a religion of purely natural origin. The inhabitants of ancient Egypt were well aware of the presence of divinity in nature and therefore represented and worshiped their gods in animal form, thus establishing an organic relationship – beyond the ontological distance that separates them – between the divine world and the natural world and at the same time, between divine justice and human justice. That of ancient Rome, on the other hand, is a heroic religion with a marked civil vocation. The Romans deified heroes in fact, as those who stood out for their virtues, and were able to perform feats of exceptional greatness; in doing so, they established very high standards of behavior, to be imitated by aiming at the construction and maintenance of a just and organized society (for this exploitation of Roman religion Bruno also drew inspiration from *Discorsi sulla prima decadi Tito Livio* by Niccolò Machiavelli, 1531). Thus for Bruno the ideal religion is one founded on natural bases and aiming at the development of civilization. And this all in all instrumental idea of religion – that is, a religion must be judged not so much for itself, but for its consequences on a civil level – is confirmed by Bruno’s substantial indifference to the historical religions. If Bruno momentarily adhered to Calvinism when he was in Geneva in 1579, and if, before the inquisitors during the Venetian phase of the trial, he was

willing to at least partially put into question his beliefs, it was not a form of inconsistency but because for him the validity of individual religious denominations was purely relative and depended, in the final analysis, not on choices of faith but on strictly philosophical reasons, or even simple reasons of expediency. This explains as well that sort of recovery of Catholicism that takes place in the final pages of *Spaccio* itself, in which Henry III of France is celebrated as a perfect Christian king: before the theological errors of Reformed Christianity and the social unrest it provoked, Catholic Christianity is preferable – as a “lesser evil,” one might say – purged of its faults and exclusively for the benefits it can offer society, by virtue of the value attributed to doing good works.

This is the overall picture of Bruno’s philosophy, considered in its essential features and in its internal articulations. However, this view would be incomplete if one did not mention in conclusion, the other two sides of theoretical – and practical – Bruno’s thought, very peculiar and themselves very relevant: that of magic and that of mnemonics, or the art of memory. A large part of Bruno’s production consists of the so-called “magic works,” a series of writings that place Bruno in the tradition of Renaissance natural magic, where he repropose and reformulates various aspects independently. That of natural magic is a very important strand in Renaissance thought, with one of its principal founding texts in *De vita coelitus comparanda* (1489) by Marsilio Ficino and developing in the sixteenth century through the work of authors such as Cornelius Agrippa, Girolamo Cardano, and Giovan Battista Della Porta. Beyond the differences that characterize the approaches of individual thinkers, it is possible to identify some common and distinctive features: magic, if properly understood, has nothing supernatural about it, and consists simply in the knowledge of natural principles and in their use for beneficial purposes; the magician, then, is nothing more than the supreme sage, that is, one who is able to grasp and exploit all the properties of the natural elements, even those that remain hidden to other men; of these properties, those that combine entities on the basis of relationships of attraction

(“liking”) or repulsion (“dislike”) stand out, thus creating a network of connections that pervades the whole of reality, and that the magician can precisely manipulate and direct to his liking; magical knowledge, in the light of all this, does not in any way conflict with the Christian religion, since its practical outlet, the magic act, being based on strictly natural assumptions, is clearly distinguishable from the miracle, which instead is supernatural and can be accomplished only by God or by those with divine powers. On the whole, this is Bruno’s perspective, while he introduces some variants of absolute importance. First, he insists in a particular way and with great originality (especially in works such as *De magia naturali* and *De vinculis in genere*) on the theme of “bond”: the magician is one who acts not so much on things as on people, binding them to himself and thus being able to pursue his aims in essentially social and political terms, such as laying the foundations for a reform of customs and institutions; and, in this sense, the practice of natural magic is the culmination of the aforementioned practical aspect of Bruno’s philosophy (Scapparone and Tirinnanzi 1997). Second, a fundamental emphasis is placed, in the context of the magical performance of the act, to the role played by *fides* (“faith and trust”): showing himself to be perfectly aware of the psychological aspects of the relationship between men, Bruno theorizes about the impossibility of a successful magical act in the absence of a positive predisposition on the part of the onlookers, so if they do not believe in the ability of the magician, he cannot exert any suggestion on them and is doomed to failure (Meroi 2007). Thirdly, in Bruno’s view natural magic lacks any religious tinge: Bruno, unlike most Renaissance authors who deal with natural magic, does not even bother to reconcile his position with the Christian vision of the world and thus has no problem distinguishing the magic act from the miracle; in fact, for him Christ was a simple wizard who as such could perform his alleged miracles in the appropriate circumstances, but could not do so in their absence (Scapparone 2007).

If the “magic works” are concentrated in a chronologically advanced stage of Bruno’s activity (around 1590), the mnemonic writings – from *De umbris idearum* and *Cantus Circaeus* to

Sigillus sigillorum and *De imaginum, signorum et idearum compositione* – are located throughout his entire intellectual production, confirming the great importance he attached to this particular field of knowledge. The art of memory, that is the set of techniques for better remembering concepts by linking them to a sequence of images arranged in a specific order, is rooted in classical antiquity when authors such as Cicero and Quintilian made it an integral part of rhetoric; and it enjoyed particular fortune during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when it was used mainly by religious preachers, especially Franciscans and Dominicans. Bruno, educated in a Dominican convent, was quite familiar with these techniques and made extensive use of them; although, as in the case of natural magic, even in this case his approach was not limited to a simple passive recovery of tradition. From a purely technical point of view, Bruno’s mnemonics is actually not very different from the traditional one, since it also relies on the use of images and their ideal locations; but what changes, compared to tradition, is the very concept of the art of memory and its aims. In Bruno the cognitive value of the art of memory is not limited to better management of knowledge already gained through the enhancement of mnemonic activity, but it can also be considered a means of acquiring new knowledge. For Bruno, in fact, if the creation of a system of relations between concepts, images, and locations does not occur in an external manner (that is, based on more or less random combinations) but in an organic way (i.e., taking into account the actual connections between the different components of the system and giving rise to new horizons of meaning), then the profound analogy appears obvious between the art of memory and the action of nature itself, which constantly produces new entities from existing ones and continually transforms the appearance and configuration of reality. The art of memory is thus an absolutely privileged tool for penetrating the secrets of nature and better understanding the dynamics of the progress of the real, since it reproduces nature’s mechanisms and creative effects. And one can clearly see, finally, that in this way the exercise of mnemonics and theory related to it

are anything but secondary in the complex and rich philosophy of Bruno.

Impact and Legacy

Bruno's works were included in the Index of forbidden books of the Catholic Church in 1603, i.e., shortly after his death; despite this, they enjoyed considerable circulation throughout Europe over the following centuries, ensuring that Bruno's ideas were widely discussed and were the subject of often conflicting opinions. During the seventeenth century the debate focused mainly on ontological and cosmological issues, as well as on the problem of Bruno's atheism. Let us see some examples. In a letter to Galileo Galilei on April 19, 1610 Johannes Kepler, while not hiding a certain sympathy for the figure of Bruno, decidedly distances himself from his infinitist cosmological hypothesis. And an orthodox thinker like the Franciscan friar Marin Mersenne, in his polemical work entitled *L'impieté des Deïstes* (1624), condemns Bruno in no uncertain terms because he believes that his concept of an infinite universe, and in particular his belief that from an infinite cause must necessarily derive an infinite effect, lead inevitably to assume the coincidence in God of freedom and necessity, and thus deprive God of his own freedom. Instead a positive judgment is made by Gabriel Naudé, who in *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont été faussement soupçonnés de magie* (1653) recognizes Bruno's merit in having contributed in a decisive way, through his research, to setting humanity on a path toward knowledge of nature on purely rational bases and free from any kind of constraint or coercion. On the other hand Pierre Bayle, in the pages of the article on Bruno in his famous *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697), criticizes Bruno's anti-aristotelianism, considering him an unrepentant atheist, and creating a combination that in time would become almost proverbial, identifies in the ontology of *De la causa, principio et uno* the roots of Spinoza's pantheism.

This alternation of positive and negative can also be found in the eighteenth century. The great

philosopher Leibniz, for example, did not have a high opinion of Bruno; while John Toland was a great admirer, especially appreciating the rigorously natural imprint of Bruno's philosophical reflection and the critique of revealed religions that follows, found in the pages of the *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*. Bruno was held in some regard by historians of astronomy Johann Friedrich Weidler and Jean Sylvain Bailly, who discuss him in their writings, setting out the main points of his cosmology. Similarly, Bruno's name is frequently mentioned in impressive works of scholarship of the time: writers such as Jean-Pierre Niceron, Jacques Georges de Chauffepié, Johann Jacob Brucker, and David Clément reserve for Bruno plenty of space in their dictionaries or in their historiographic and bibliographic texts, acknowledging some merit, but also insisting on his mistakes (beginning with atheism) and underlining the analogy between his ideas and those professed by Spinoza. However, of the eighteenth century, we must especially recall two very important interpretations that contributed not a little to raising awareness about and appreciating Bruno's thought. The first is that of Diderot, who admired Bruno greatly and wrote an entry dedicated to him in the *Encyclopédie* (1765). The Enlightenment thinker summarizes the essential principles of Bruno's philosophy, and seeing it as a real anticipation of that of Spinoza and Leibniz makes Bruno the true founder of modern thought, the first to break free from the theoretical constraints of Aristotelian concepts (such a positive judgment must be counterbalanced, within the Enlightenment, by that of Voltaire, who in the *Lettre sur François Rabelais* of 1767 presents Bruno as a fool, who to defend his own ideas could not avoid death at the stake). The second interpretation is that of the German philosopher Jacobi, who in the appendix to the second edition of his work *Über die Lehre des Spinoza. Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (1789) translates, publishes, and comments on an extract from *De la causa*. According to Jacobi, philosophers of the likes of Gassendi, Descartes, and Leibniz also drew inspiration from Bruno; but, above all, Bruno would have been, along with Spinoza, the greatest exponent of an atheist pantheism which,

in spite of its contradictory aspects (especially, conferring freedom on the human spirit without recourse to faith), is also a crucial moment in the history of modern thought.

The nineteenth century began with another important interpretation of Bruno's philosophy, which moreover moved in the wake of that already provided by Jacobi. In 1802, Schelling published the philosophical dialogue *Bruno, oder über das göttliche und natürliche Prinzip der Dinge*, in which the idealist thinker, while expressing some differences compared to Bruno, sees him as a philosopher who was able to capture and illustrate in an exemplary manner various essential theoretical points, such as the fundamental unity of everything, the presence of life throughout all nature, the relationship between the finite and the infinite, and the substantial identity of opposites. Still within the context of German idealism, Hegel himself devoted considerable attention to Bruno's philosophy, reserving for it a prominent place in his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* (1836), and recognizing the deep bond that would unite it with that of Spinoza; however, he finally passed a judgment that was on the whole negative, finding Bruno's philosophy representative of a still-imperfect state, in its purely objective dimension, of the development of the universal spirit. But the nineteenth century was also the century of the first modern editions of Bruno's writings: that of his Italian works edited by Adolf Wagner (1830), that of the Latin works edited by August Friedrich Gfrörer (1836), the Italian works edited by Paul de Lagarde (1889), and especially the Italian national edition of Latin works (including the "magic works") edited by Francesco Fiorentino, Felice Tocco, Girolamo Vitelli, Vittorio Imbriani, and Carlo Maria Tallarigo, distinguished from all others for its great philological rigor (1879–91 = Bruno 1962). Nor can we forget, finally, that in the second half of the century several scholars who studied Bruno were active in Italy: Bertrando Spaventa considered him one of the leading philosophers of modernity – a precursor, in particular, of Spinoza – and as a true hero of freedom of thought, though he could never completely resolve the problem of the relationship

between God and nature; Francesco Fiorentino, while recognizing its greatness, criticizes his pantheism as a form of unfinished dialectic and he too connects his thought to that of Spinoza; Felice Tocco mainly studies Bruno's complex concept of religion, the relationship between Bruno's works and their ancient and modern sources, as well as the relationship between the set of Latin writings and the Italian writings.

In the twentieth century the thought of Bruno – now universally recognized as one of the greatest thinkers of the modern age – is at the center of a lengthy new period of study and research, on the one hand taking up and developing traditional exegetical grounds with a more pronounced historiographical sensitivity compared to the past; on the other hand leading to innovative and original interpretations, highlighting previously somewhat neglected aspects of Bruno's work, such as those related to magic and the art of memory. In this sense, one must recall the research of Frances Yates, who interpreted the works of Bruno by including them in the tradition of Hermeticism and proposing an interpretation of great originality; that of Paolo Rossi, whose exemplary pages on Bruno focused especially on the roles of magic and mnemonics in his works; and that of Giovanni Aquilecchia, who made fundamental contributions to Bruno studies in philological, exegetical, and documentary terms (among other things, in 1958 he edited an important reprint, revised and corrected, of the meritorious edition of Bruno's Italian dialogues prepared by Giovanni Gentile at the beginning of the century). This is a time that saw an intensification of scientific production in the years around 2000 (the date of the fourth centenary of the death of Bruno), which continues today – also due to the contribution of a younger generation of scholars – with the frequent publication of new editions and new monographs, testifying in the best possible way the great relevance and vitality of Bruno's thought.

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Astronomy](#)

- ▶ Atomism
- ▶ Copernicanism
- ▶ Copernicus, Nicolaus
- ▶ Cosmology in the Renaissance
- ▶ Erasmus, Desiderius
- ▶ Ethics, Renaissance
- ▶ Ficino, Marsilio
- ▶ Geocentrism
- ▶ Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism
- ▶ Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Life in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Manetti, Giannozzo
- ▶ Nicholas of Cusa
- ▶ Sidney, Philip
- ▶ Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of

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Buccaferrea, Ludovico

► [Boccadiferro, Ludovico](#)

Buchanan, George

Born: 1506, Killearn, Scotland

Died: 1582, Edinburgh, Scotland

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Abstract

George Buchanan was a humanist writer and educationalist. His prolific literary and administrative activities exerted a significant influence upon intellectual culture in Scotland and Europe. He played a central role in the implementation of humanist educational reforms in France, Portugal, and Scotland. An accomplished Neo-Latin writer, he produced works in a remarkable variety of Neo-Latin genres and forms. Often addressing political and philosophical volatility across early-modern Europe, his works are pervasively informed by a stabilizing prescription of Stoic moral and natural philosophy.

Alternative Names

[Buchananus, Georgius](#)

Biography

Buchanan was born in 1506 in Killearn, a Gaelic-speaking community (Erskine and Mason 2012; McFarlane 1981, 19) between the Campsie hills and the western highlands of Scotland.

After completing his early education in local schools, he moved east to St Andrews University, where he studied until 1525. He

left Scotland for Paris, where he gained a BA in 1527. He began his career in education at Paris at the Collège Sainte-Barbe, where he taught and latterly held an administrative role as the curator of the German Nation (McFarlane 1981, 23–25). For the following 10 years, he also tutored members of the Scottish nobility in Paris and Scotland (Buchanan 1598).

After a brief period of incarceration in 1538 for religious transgressions (Buchanan 1582, 14.45), he returned to formal education a year later at the Collège de Guyenne in Bordeaux, at the invitation of the principal André de Gouveia. At Bordeaux, he taught, among others, the French philosopher Michel de Montaigne. In 1547, Buchanan traveled to Coimbra in Portugal with many of his colleagues from Bordeaux, including André de Gouveia, Elie Vinet, and Buchanan's brother Patrick (Buchanan 1598). At Coimbra both Buchanan and Vinet befriended and worked with the Portuguese mathematician and educationalist Pedro Nunes (Desgraves 1977, 7). Buchanan's time at Coimbra was brought to an end when he was detained and interrogated by the inquisition in 1550 in relation to his confessional disposition (Aitken 1939).

Between Buchanan's eventual departure from Portugal in 1552 and 1556, he published his first collection of verse paraphrases of the biblical psalms (Green 2011, 24–5). Many of these poetic renderings highlight the influence that both astronomical conjecture and pedagogy (didactic tradition) had upon Buchanan's presentation of the universe's guiding divinity (especially Psalm 104). Buchanan had developed his interest in and understanding of natural philosophy during his period at Coimbra, where his colleagues Vinet and Nunes were refashioning Sacrobosco's *Sphaera* into a humanist educational tool (McFarlane 1981, 370) and intellectual response to the recent publication of *De Revolutionibus* by Copernicus. In 1555, Buchanan was appointed tutor to the son of the Count De Brissac, at which time he began working on his monumental didactic explication in verse of stoic moral and natural cosmology, *De Sphaera*, which he

would ultimately never finish (Naiden 1952). Buchanan returned to formal education again in 1566, acting as a reforming principal at the University of St Andrews (St Leonard's College) until 1570, at which time he earned his ultimate pedagogical reward when appointed tutor to the young King James VI of Scotland (McFarlane 1981, 224).

During his time at St Andrews, and then as tutor to the young king, Scotland experienced significant political turmoil. It was at this time that Buchanan produced two major works: the *De Iure Regni apud Scotos Dialogus*, a dialogue on good kingship, and *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*, a monumental history of Scotland. As with his earlier work *De Sphaera*, Buchanan manipulated his literary forms to present a stabilizing philosophical message heavily influenced by stoic moral and natural philosophy (Mason 1982). The mid-sixteenth-century natural philosophy that Buchanan advocated was eventually swept aside by the advances of the Scientific Revolution. However, his reputation lived on in the literary and educational value of his forms and genres and their continued use in political (Mason 1982; Mason and Smith 2004; McGinnis and Williamson 1995; Smeesters 2013), scientific (King 1616; Ruddiman 1715), and religious discourse (Sharrat and Walsh 1983; Green 2011) in Scotland and Europe. He died in Edinburgh in 1582.

Cross-References

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- [Montaigne, Michel de](#)
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Budé, Guillaume

Born: 26 January 1468, Paris

Died: 22 August 1540, Paris

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Abstract

Guillaume Budé's manifold humanistic production represents a puzzling challenge in today's specialized scholarship and makes it difficult to encompass all its aspects. A higher civil servant at the French Court, Budé never held teaching appointments, but showed in his books how French university teaching should be renewed through the study of the humanities. He is considered to have been the founder of Collège de France, whose first lectures were given in 1530. Budé became King Francis I's counsellor and thus helped Parisian humanism to develop. His production was wide ranging, including a philological study of Justinian's Digest ushering in the *Mos Gallicus iuris docendi* (a new historical approach to Roman law), an outstanding monograph on economics in Antiquity, moral essays, and a large Greek prose thesaurus anticipating that of Henri Estienne. Budé also published some translations from Greek and a selection of his own letters, written in Greek and Latin. His extensive knowledge was based on a large personal library, which is still known only partially. From a religious point of view, Budé defended in his *De Transitu hellenismi ad Christianismum* a sort of Gallican version of Catholicism against, on the one hand, the growing French Lutheran movement and, on the other, the conservative Sorbonne theologians hostile to the humanistic renewal of the University of Paris.

Alternate Names

Budaeus, Guillielmus

Biography

Born in Paris on 26 January 1468, Guillaume Budé came from that *milieu* of higher civil servants that would eventually become the French *noblesse de robe* or “*robin*” establishment (Delaruelle 1907; McNeill 1975; Gadoffre 1997; Maillard 1999). His father, Jean, was an educated man, a jurist appointed as a royal secretary at the King's court; the family of his mother, Catherine Le Picart, was linked to the powerful Poncher family. The fourth of 15 siblings, Guillaume received a primary school education in Paris and then studied law in Orleans, 1483–1486. Some three years later, he went far beyond his father's love for books and started a period of intensive and lonesome studies, at first on Roman law, then on Antiquity as a whole; Jean tried to discourage his son by getting him appointed at the royal court as a secretary, so that Guillaume could start a career as a court jurist. Instead, Guillaume used any spare time he had to get in touch with some Italian humanists who came to Paris and with the humanistic circle of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, at that time a successful professor in the Faculty of Arts in Paris, after his journey to Italy.

Probably in 1494, Budé was taught basic Ancient Greek by Georgios Hermonymos, a scribe and professor in Paris. As King Charles VIII returned from war in Italy with the famous Greek scholar and diplomat Janos Lascaris, Budé was introduced to him, became his friend and obtained from him some advanced Greek lessons which fostered his learning. Thanks to that and to an intensive training, Budé was now able to read – in addition to ancient and medieval Latin literature – several major Greek authors he could find either in manuscripts (Hermonymos copied a few for him) or in the first *incunabula* printed in Italy. In 1501 and 1505, he also had the opportunity to travel to Italy with the King's court, visited Venice, Florence, and Rome and met a few Italian scholars, including Poliziano's disciple Pietro Ricci, who showed Budé, in Florence, some of his master's notebooks.

At this time, Budé started to publish his own productions. A few short translations from

Plutarch, Ps.-Plutarch and Basil of Caesarea (Budé 1505, 1506) marked him as the first Frenchman to translate from Ancient Greek into Latin in modern times. He soon published his first monograph, a vast and controversial inquiry on Roman laws and institutions grounded on an innovative historical and philological study of Justinian's Digest: *Annotationes in XXIV Pandectarum libros* (Budé 1508; see also Budé 1544). Yet Budé did not acquire international fame before his 1515 masterpiece *De Asse et partibus eius libri V*, which solved some fundamental mysteries in understanding Antiquity's economic system and was read by key scholars of the day, like Erasmus and Thomas More (Budé 2018).

Under King Louis XII, Budé kept away from the court, dominated by a group that was indifferent or hostile to the humanistic renewal Budé and his friends wanted to implement in France following the example of Renaissance Italy. However, when in 1515 a new King, the young Francis I, ascended the throne. Budé gradually obtained the King's attention and support. Thus began a prestigious career at his court, where he became counsellor of the King, then *maître des requêtes*, a sort of mayor of Paris, and *maître de la librairie du roi*, the King's personal librarian. A first step on this path was a French manuscript work (Budé [1519]) addressed to Francis and containing various counsels on how to be a good monarch collected from Plutarch, from the Bible and from ancient historians and philosophers (The book is known under the title of *Institution du prince* and was printed after Budé's death with some additions: Budé 1547). Later on, a French summary of *De Asse* (Budé 1522) enjoyed local success and would be republished many times. Francis I came to appear in some of Budé's fictional dialogues; two of his works were dedicated to him.

On the other hand, Budé addressed the humanist public again in 1520 with the first edition of his Greek and Latin *Epistles*, a collection of letters between Budé's and various French, Italian, and other European scholars, whose contents indicated international acknowledgement for *De Asse* (Budé 1531; Gueudet 2004). He wrote a philosophical essay on the concept of chance (Budé 1520; Lecoindre 2006) and issued three

other editions of *De Asse*: in Paris in 1516, in Venice, at the press of the heirs of Aldo Manuzio, in 1522, and then in Paris in 1524, again with his friend the printer Josse Bade.

By this time, Budé and his Parisian humanist friends had reason to believe that the struggle for a humanist renewal in France would be successful. But the King's captivity in Spain (1525–1526) as well as the quick progression of Lutheranism in France and especially among Parisian humanists changed the situation.

French humanists came more often and more openly under attack by the Sorbonne theologians as they were suspected of being Lutheran. The danger was such that some of them had to be granted royal protection, often due to Budé's interventions. He also launched another ambitious research project on the lexicography of Greek prose, based on thousands of quotations, which would lead to the publication of the *Commentarii linguae Graecae* (Budé 1529) and to the enrichment of earlier books through new editions: in 1526, he both issued an enlarged edition of *Annotationes in Pandectas* and a new translation of Philo's and Ps.-Aristoteles treatises *De mundo* (Budé 1526); in 1527, a fifth, greatly revised edition of *De Asse* was published.

The *Commentarii* enjoyed immediate success and had three international editions in 1530. In order to protect French humanists, Budé opened his work with a remarkable Greek preface to Francis I, boldly asking him to found and sponsor a wealthy Royal College meant to disseminate the knowledge of all sciences through the study of ancient tongues, in particular Greek and Hebrew, and to create a new French educated élite rivalling that in Italy. The preface was read to King Francis in a French manuscript version. Printed in September 1529, the masterpiece was followed, at the beginning of 1530, by the creation of the first two chairs of "Lecteurs royaux" (royal professors) in Greek and Hebrew. This was later recognized as the starting point of Collège des Lecteurs royaux (now known as the Collège de France).

Budé's last ten years of life – he died in Paris on 22 August 1540 – were equally restless. He prepared new editions of his *Epistles*, of the

Annotationes in Pandectas (1535), of *De Asse* (1532 and 1541, posthumous) as well as of the *Commentarii*, fully reworked and enriched by one third (1548). But he had to keep battling, together with other important French humanists like François Rabelais, Étienne Dolet, and others, because their enemies, mainly the conservative Sorbonne theologians, would not stop attacking humanist teachings and books: a trial against the Royal lecturers was launched no later than 1533. Budé gave active support to his friends at the King's court, also by writing theoretical treatises on the importance of philology and the humanities, *De Studio recte ac commode instituendo* and *De Philologia*, a dialogue with Francis I (Budé 1532a, b).

The King's attitude suddenly became much less favourable after the Affaire des Placards, a radical Protestant provocation against the "papal Mass" which occurred in October 1534; this event unleashed a general repression including, among others, a ban on printing books. Probably worried about the survival of French humanism, Budé felt the need to publish his thoughts about scholarship and Christian religion; he argued that the latter needs to be subject to the former in a scholar's life. *De Transitu hellenismi ad christianismum* ("The Transition from Hellenism to Christianity") was printed in 1535 with a vibrant preface to the King, where Budé attempts to make a distinction between the "good" humanists asking for peaceful discussions and the "bad" radical reformers aiming at subverting the society (Budé 1535; de La Garanderie 1995). The following year, John Calvin opposed this point of view in his own preface, addressed to the King, of the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian religion* (Bohatec 1950).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Like Erasmus, Budé aimed at becoming the heir of the best Italian humanist tradition, represented by Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano (Budé 1556; Sandy 2003). For him, the meaning of humanism is essentially the possibility to study thoroughly Antiquity's complex universe in order

to reform modern nations. His first approach is that of a jurist: after Valla and Poliziano, he understood the need for a better grasp of Roman law, taking Justinian's Digest as an exceptional monument of ancient literature that reveals several aspects of Greek and Roman civilization. So Budé's *Annotationes* (Budé 1508) harshly criticized the medieval tradition of Digest interpretation to introduce a new, historical way to study it (Kelley 1970). With *De Asse* (Budé 1515; Sanchi 2012), he tried to equal Italian humanism in its best results – Poliziano's *Miscellaneorum Centuria prima* (1489) and Ermolao Barbaro's *Castigationes Pliniana* (1492–1493) – by offering emendations to Pliny's difficult texts and reconstructing features such as counting and monetary systems, variations of prices and economic value in Antiquity, which his predecessors did not fully understand. Budé may also be linked to the late Byzantine tradition, thanks to his friendship with Janos Lascaris and to his relations with Georgios Hermonymos; he thus came to have a deep knowledge of elevated byzantine Greek, derived directly from Greek speakers and writers.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Most of Budé's innovations are to be found in his scholarly production. Together with Andrea Alciato and before Jacques Cujas, Budé is considered as the founder of the *Mos Gallicus iuris docendi*, the new historical school of Roman law interpretation opposed to the medieval, and systematic, *Mos Italicus*. His research on Roman law included a large-scale comparison of the institutions in Greece, in Rome, and in France; in the footsteps of Poliziano, but in a much more intensive way, he focused on the study of rare or difficult words and on the emendation of textual errors that had occurred during medieval transmission and interpretation.

If the *Annotationes in Pandectas* still has the structure of a commentary, *De Asse* is one of the first modern scientific monographs, composed like an essay and focused on philological problem solving, mostly on Pliny and other difficult texts and on reconstructing ancient economic systems.

It displays a modern approach, including a study of primary sources like Hellenistic and Roman coins. Moreover, Budé explains to his readers the development of his research in minute detail, offering a sort of philological detective story about his discoveries and the difficulties he had to overcome. This feature makes *De Asse* a unique masterpiece. More generally, Budé's method is described in terms of "philological imagination" (Logan 2003).

Budé's third philological large work, the *Commentarii linguae Graecae*, includes a collection of some 20,000 quotations chosen to illustrate several semantic *nuances* in Greek vocabulary, mainly taken from the prose style of a wide range of authors, from Homer to Ps.-Dionysius (Sanchi 2006). The first Greek thesaurus produced in the West, the *Commentarii* was the standard work in this field until Henri Estienne's 1572 *Thesaurus linguae Graecae*.

Impact and Legacy

Budé's work enjoyed a broad influence until the end of the seventeenth century. During his lifetime, his major works were constantly republished in France and abroad and enjoyed a large success in the scholarly world of humanists, even though Budé's prose was seen as harsh and difficult (Wallace 2009; de La Garanderie 2010). After his death, he became the point of reference for the new generation of French scholars, including Cujas, Lambin, and Casaubon.

His permanent struggle to set French humanism on a solid footing under royal protection reached its goal with the foundation of the first chairs of "Lecteurs royaux," an institution given more permanence at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This achievement derived from a preoccupation reflected in almost all of his writings, since Budé was wont to insert even in his philological works some long digressions on French national issues, mostly about the need to develop high-level education in the élites and to better organize the kingdom. In the area of politics, Budé authored a precocious reflection on the power of monarchs ("*Princeps legibus solutus*" in

Annotationes, but also in *Institution du Prince*) which gave rise to an absolutist point of view, if not to a complete theory of absolutism.

Budé's sincere Christian faith led him to publish his thoughts on religious matters. He boldly criticized the established Church, calling for a deep reformation of it, but soon began to oppose the Lutheran and radical Reformation movements, which he mainly saw as the roots of public disorder (yet Budé and his sons probably knew John Calvin, born 1509, since the early 1530s; and in 1549 Budé's widow, Roberte Le Lieur, joined Calvin in Geneva with a majority of their family). If many reflections about these religious issues are already within his scholarly works as digressions, a full development of them is given in *De Transitu*, which has received recent editions with French translation (see at Budé 1535).

Even though Budé is far less renowned today than his contemporary Erasmus, his works continue to be republished and several aspects of his scholarship and intellectual positions are being investigated anew.

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Buonamici, Francesco

Born: 1533, Florence/Italy

Dead: September 29, 1603, Orticaia (near Dicomano, Tuscany)/Italy

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Abstract

Francesco Buonamici was professor of Philosophy at the University of Pisa for almost 40 years. His most important work is the treatise *On Motion (De motu)*, a huge volume of 1011 pages, which covers the whole range of aspects of Aristotle's concept of motion. Buonamici supplies a careful survey of the topic, with an extended discussion of the Aristotelian views as well as of the opinions of a number of ancient and early modern authors who played a major (sometimes innovative) role in philosophical debate of the Sixteenth century. His *De motu* (Buonamici 1591) was read and cited by Galileo, who often used Buonamici's bulky treatise as a source for mastering Aristotelian natural philosophy.

Biography

Buonamici was born in 1533, very likely in Florence, where his father served as a notary. He studied philosophy and medicine at the University of Pisa, and he was friend and disciple of two eminent philologists of the age, Pier Vettori (1499–1585) and Ciriaco Strozzi (1504–1565), under whose guidance he gained an excellent competence in reading Greek texts. In 1565, Buonamici became “assistant professor” (*extraordinarius*) of Philosophy at the University of Pisa. Then, in 1571, he became “full professor” (*ordinarius*) of Natural Philosophy, with the duty of teaching Aristotle’s *De caelo*, *De Anima*, and *Physica* in 3-year cycles. He stayed at the University of Pisa all his life, although, after 1598, he was asked to succeed Francesco Piccolomini on the chair of Natural Philosophy in Padua. He died in his holding of Orticaia, a hamlet in the municipality of Dicomano (about 25 miles away from Florence), the 23 September 1603.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Before his death, Buonamici published a book on nourishment and embryology, *De alimento*, printed in Florence in 1603 (Buonamici 1603). The book deals with various topics related to the action of food on human body, and it also discusses the making and development of fetus.

Yet, Buonamici’s major work remains the *De motu*, completed in 1587 but issued in 1591. The treatise is divided in ten books. In the first one, Buonamici establishes his method, giving the rules to be followed in natural research. The second book provides the definition of motion, touching the problems of its continuity and its relationship with quiet. The third and the fourth books discuss the motion of the elements, mainly surveying the role of the form in producing it, with interesting digressions on the motion in the void and on acceleration in free fall. In the fifth book, Buonamici, after discussing Copernican cosmology, examines the concepts of “heaviness” (*gravitas*) and “lightness” (*levitas*), expounding his views on the fall of heavy bodies. The next books till the eighth are devoted to aspects of

motus different from the local motion, such as the substantial transformation, the generation, the increasing and decreasing, the condensation and rarefaction, the alteration, the intension, and remission of qualities. Then, the last two books deal with the celestial circulation and its movers, the matter of heavens, the eternity and perfection of the world, and finally with God, who Buonamici, echoing Epicurus, outlines as an entity which eternally contemplates itself, without any worry about human events.

Impact and Legacy

Buonamici was a firm advocate of Aristotelian philosophy. Notwithstanding, his thought was permeated of classical influences and willing to take into account the opinions of modern authors. His philosophical approach was purely naturalistic, since it did not take into account occult or supernatural explanations.

Some of the main topics treated in Buonamici’s *De motu* resonate also in the pages of Galileo’s early writings on dynamics. In particular, we can find implicit references to Buonamici’s work in the discussion of the questions of falling bodies and of Archimedean extrusion. Hence, Buonamici’s treatise can be considered as a valuable source for the knowledge of Renaissance natural philosophy as well as of the intellectual context in which Galileo matured his early theories on motion.

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Burana, Giovanni Francesco

Born: 1475/1480, Verona

Died: 1523 ca., Venice

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Abstract

Giovanni Francesco Burana, a philosopher and a doctor in medicine, is well known for his translations of Prior and Posterior Analytics and Averroes commentaries, which have been

republished many times in the Renaissance, starting from the Giunta edition in 1552. At a very young age he translated music treatises (Aristides Quintilianus, Manuel Bryennius) for Franchinus Gaffurius in Milan. Then he studied and taught logic in Padua, as a pupil of Gerolamo Bagolino, but he left early the teaching in order to study and practice medicine, probably in Verona. However, he continued to study logic, bequeathing translations and commentaries on Aristotelian texts.

Biography

Giovanni Francesco Burana was born in Verona sometime in the last decades of the fifteenth century between 1475 and 1480. We do not know much about his life. Still young, even before receiving his doctorate, he translated some Greek texts on the theory of music for the musician Franchinus Gaffurius, maestro di cappella at the Duomo of Milan (Stabile 1972; Gallo 1963). While he was a guest at Gaffurius's house, Burana translated *De musica* by Aristides Quintilianus, and probably in the same year, also from Greek, the *Brevis musicae tractatus*, in the codex CCXL (201) held at the Capitular Library of Verona. The same codex contains the translation of two books of the *Harmonica* by Manuel Bryennius, dated back to 15 April 1494. Burana translated the Bryennius treatise a second time in 1497 at the request of Gaffurius. This second translation is preserved in the codex XXVIII A 8 at the Biblioteca comunale in Lodi (Gallo 1963; Stabile 1972).

We cannot know if Burana was residing in Milan from 1494 to 1497. Possibly he studied languages and music there (Lohr 1988). Yet, it is certain that he moved to Padua where at the Studium he attended lessons on logic by Gerolamo Bagolino, slightly older than him, and they became friends. In Padua, he received his doctorate *in artibus* on 24 May 1500, supervised by the logician Gerolamo Suriano (Facciolati 1757; Stabile 1972; Lohr 1988), and the following year was there to teach logic (Facciolati 1757; Mazzuchelli 1758; Sanuto 1880; Nardi 1958; Lohr 1988). Between 1501 and 1502 we find him among the examiners for some degrees,

such as those in medicine for Bagolino and Gerolamo Fracastoro. He soon left the teaching of logic in order to study medicine, as both the well-known Nicoletto Vernia and his friend Bagolino did before him. He subsequently devoted himself to his work as a doctor, probably in Verona (Stabile 1972; Lohr 1988).

After he left his chair in logic we do not know much about Burana. He did not abandon completely his studies and, in his free time when he did not practice his work as a doctor, he started to reorganize his teaching material and to write an extensive commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics in order to publish it. But, unfortunately, he died in Venice working as a doctor during a plague epidemic around 1523 (Stabile 1972).

Impact and Legacy

Before dying, Burana disposed by his Will that his heirs were to publish his work after a careful revision of the texts which he had been unable to complete. The task to edit the texts and later publish them was given to Gerolamo Bagolino. So, on 23 July 1523, the Great Council of Venice allowed Bagolino to print "un'opera sora i priori di Aristotile composta per Zuan Francesco Burana" (Sanuto 1892; Stabile 1972). The work was published for the first time in March 1524 by the heirs of Octavianus Scotus. Its title was *Burana in libros priorum resolutorium* (Lohr 1988), and it contained the translation from Greek of the *Analytica priora*, together with a commentary by Burana and a translation from Hebrew of the *Expositio media* on the Prior Analytics and Averroes' *Compendium in librum priorum Aristotelis*. It contains also some *Annotationes* by Bagolino on Burana's commentary (Stabile 1972).

Burana's fame and name are linked to this posthumous publication. The work was reprinted in Venice in 1536, without the translations of Averroes, with the title of *Ioannis Francisci Burane Veronensis Interpretatio fidissima necnon exactissima expositio in priores Aristotelis resolutorios nuper accuratius recognita*.

Following the spread of Paduan Aristotelianism in France, it was printed in Paris by Wechel in 1539 (*Aristotelis Priora analytica seu resolutoria a Io. Francisco Burana in Latinum sermonem versa, commentariis... illustrata*). The work then had two other Venetian editions in 1545 and in 1550, with Hieronymus Scotus (*Aristotelis Priora analytica seu resolutoria a Io. Francisco Burana Veronensi in Latinum sermonem versa*) (Stabile 1972; Lohr 1988).

During these years, the Giunta publishers had begun a big editorial project of translating Aristotle's complete works, a project coordinated by Giovambattista Bagolino (Gerolamo's son), and, after he died, by Marco degli Oddi. The first volume of the *Aristotelis Stagiritae omnia quae extant opera* (Venetiis, apud Iuntas 1552) gathers Burana's translations of the Prior and Posterior Analytics, together with the related Averroes' commentaries. Bagolino, in fact, had Burana's manuscript material, and the publishers themselves stated that they had a hand in revising both the *Priora* and Averroes middle commentary (Bagolino), and the *Posteriora* and Averroes' long and middle commentaries (Oddi) (Stabile 1972; Schmitt 1979; Burnett 2013).

As regards the *Analytica priora*, Burana's translation (already published in 1524) is a revision of the Boethius's translation, modified and corrected on the basis of a comparison with the Greek text (Minio-Paluello 1962; Stabile 1972). The Giunta edition of the *Posteriora* contains two versions: the first one, although ascribed to Burana, is James of Venice's Greek-Latin version, while the second is the Hebrew-Latin one which Burana took from Kalonymus ben Kalonymus's version of the Averroes long commentary (Minio-Paluello 1954; Stabile 1972).

More complex is the story of Burana's translations of Averroes's commentaries. The Giunta edition contains the translation of the *Expositio media* on *Analytica priora* (already released in 1524) and, for the first time, the translations of the *Commentarium magnum* and of the *Expositio media* on the *Analytica posteriora* (remembering that Burana translated the *Commentarium magnum* based on Kalonymus ben Kalonymus's Hebrew version, while the translation of the

Expositio derives from Jacob Anatoli's Hebrew version) (Stabile 1972).

The *Expositio media* to the *Priora* – as mentioned above – had been revised by Bagolino's son, Giovambattista, and the two commentaries to the *Posteriora* were collated again by Oddi using Burana's unpublished manuscript. Oddi underlined that Burana's version of the *Commentarium magnum* was “manca ac depravata,” thus he decided to choose as a source text Burana's version, editing it and completing it with the translations made by Jacob Mantino and Abram de Balmes. The three translations would be published separately, and with synopses, only in the Giunta edition of the *Opera aristotelici* edited by Bernardino Tomitano (I, 2, Venetiis 1562) (Stabile 1972; Schmitt 1979; Burnett 2013).

Under Burana's name, therefore, is hidden so much activity of editing, correcting and adding as to make it impossible to find his original work with certainty (particularly as far as the Averroes commentaries is concerned). Criticism has been raised concerning Burana's real skills in translating the Hebrew texts “car on ne peut guère supposer qu'un chrétien à cette époque ait pu savoir assez bien l'hébreu rabbinique pour traduire des tetes aussi difficiles” (Renan 1866). However, these doubts were removed by Gerolamo Bagolino's authoritative testimony (Maffei 1731), and by the fact that Burana was a student of Gerolamo Suriano, a publisher and an expert on Arabic-Hebrew texts (Stabile 1972). Nonetheless, we cannot exclude the possibility that Burana used Hebrew translations which at that time circulated among Venetian circles. This could explain the similarities of the passages of the translation of Averroes's commentary to the *Analytics* made by Elia del Medigo to Burana's text (Kieszkowski 1964; Stabile 1972).

Burana's translations were well received and often reedited and reworked. His version of the *Analytica priora* was included in many commentaries to Aristotle and in subsequent editions of his work, and was largely circulated due more to the Venetian publishers' reputation than to its real value. It was used by Bernardo Feliciano (*Alexandri Aphrodisiensis in Priora resolutoria*, Venetiis 1542); for Leo Magentino's commentary,

translated by Giovambattista Rasario (*Magentini in Priora Aristotelis resolutorios explanatio*, Venetiis 1544); Lucillo Filalteo (*Philoponi in libros Priorum resolutiorum*, Venetiis 1544); and by the physician from Genoa, Alessandro Giustiniani Chio (*Philoponi in duos Priora analyticos... commentarii*, Venetiis 1560). It is also worth mentioning the following editions: Venetiis, apud H. Scotum 1557; apud Iuntas 1562, 1574; ad signum Seminantis 1572; apud Bindonium 1576; Lugduni, apud Iuntas 1560, 1561, 1579; apud Michaellem 1578; apud Cardonum 1618; Genavae-Lugduni, I. Berjon 1580; Coloniae Agrippinae-Basileae, Stoecker 1608; Romae, A. Bernabò 1668, an edition with a commentary by Silvestro Mauro, republished in Paris, with Lethielleux in 1885 (Stabile 1972).

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- Vernia, Nicoletto

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Burckhardt, Jacob

Born: 25 May 1818, Basel (Switzerland)

Died: 8 August 1897, Basel (Switzerland)

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Abstract

Jacob Burckhardt was an art and cultural historian, renowned for his historiographical method known as *Kulturgeschichte*. In the analysis of a historic moment, this method focuses on the moment's inner aspects, such as the contemporaneous art and literature, the religious and moral habits, and the economical and social developments. Burckhardt was the author of the notable *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860; *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*), in which he declared that modernity was born in Italy in the fifteenth century. This work has long remained – and it

still remains, even if outdated in many aspects – a classic of the critical literature on the Renaissance and an excellent example of cultural historical studies.

Alternate Names

Burckhardt, Jacob Christopher; Burckhardt, Jakob Christoph

Biography and Works

Father of a new historiographical method named *Kulturgeschichte* and author of the notorious book *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860; see Burckhardt 1955–1959, vol. 3 or Burckhardt 2000–2014, vol. 4), Burckhardt was born in Basel in a protestant evangelical family. The father was a clergyman of the Reformed Church in Basel, and he prompted the young Burckhardt to undertake theological studies. Thus, from 1837 to 1839 Burckhardt studied at the University of Basel, where the theologians Karl Rudolf Hagenbach and Wilhelm De Wette taught. In particular, De Wette made use of the new-fangled historical criticism in the exegesis of the Bible, an approach which left a deep mark in Burckhardt's soul, engendering in him a substantial crisis of faith. In the end, the historical biblical criticism allowed Burckhardt to distance himself from the pious community of Basel. However, in Basel he had also the opportunity to focus on humanities, especially on ancient Greek, which drew him near to philological and historical research. For these reasons, he abandoned his studies in theology, and he went to Berlin, where he attended the lessons of the philologist August Boeckh and of the historians Johann Gustav Droysen and Leopold von Ranke at the *Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität*. Burckhardt recognized in Ranke one of his mentors, sharing with him a criticism of Hegel's philosophy of history, but he ended up developing a different historical approach. Ranke, one of the most eminent proponents of the political history school, endorsed the leading role of nations and states as individual

political entities able to preserve order and cohesion. Instead, Burckhardt steered the analysis of history towards the inward conditions of society, highlighting the cultural transformations, which had caused the evolution of people and nations. Their differences notwithstanding, Burckhardt owe Ranke at least three aspects of his *Kulturgeschichte*: first, the judgment that individuality is the foundation of every historical event; secondly, the relevance of the contemporaneous sources; and thirdly, the adoption of an all-embracing perspective. In 1841 Burckhardt headed towards Bonn, where he spent a summer term, joining the Gottfried Kinkel's literary group, the *Maikäferbund*. Thanks to Kinkel's enquiry on paganism and the influence of his friend and cultural historian Heinrich Schreiber, Burckhardt wrote *Die Zeit Constantin's des Grossen* (1853; Burckhardt 1955–1959, vol. 1 or Burckhardt 2000–2014, vol. 1), in which he dealt with the troubled passage from the classical world to the Christian orthodoxy. Between 1843 and 1845, Burckhardt was granted a PhD degree from the University of Basel and was appointed first *Privatdozent* and later *ausserordentlicher Professor* in history. In addition, 1842 was the year of his first publication, *Die Kunstwerke der belgischen Städte*, dedicated to his art history teacher Franz Kugler, who was also an illustrious member of the Prussian ministry of culture. The relevance Kugler attributed to the historical context in which the development of art should have been included and to the strong bond between art and society represent the roots of Burckhardt's cultural history. Following the long-lasting friendship between him and Kugler and a first "*Italienische Reise*" in 1847–1848, the Swiss historian edited a second art book, *Der Cicerone* (see Burckhardt 1955–1959, vols. 9–10 or Burckhardt 2000–2014, vols. 2–3), in 1855 in which not only he geographically explored the Italian art but he also judged the ruins of the ancient Roman art as the result of the overwhelming Christian paradigm over the pagan world, blaming Christianity for the loss of the principle of individuality and of any aesthetic pursuit. In the same year, he was offered the chair of art history at the *Eidgenössisches*

Polytechnikum in Zurich, but in 1858 he was obliged to return to Basel where he taught history and, from 1874 until his retirement in 1893, history of art as well.

The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy

In 1860 Burckhardt edited his masterpiece, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (see Burckhardt 1955–1959, vol. 3 or Burckhardt 2000–2014, vol.4), an emblematic example of a cultural history book. Divided into six parts, it reports contemporaneous records, and it dwells not only on events but also on concepts, customs, and personalities. The *Versuch*, as Burckhardt calls his work, appears as a sort of painting, made of words, of the Renaissance myth. The image of Italy as the cradle of modernity and as the cultural and social milieu where the bonds to progress first failed, breaking with the medieval *Weltanschauung*, is upheld by Burckhardt through three main issues: the awakening of the ancient Greek-Latin spirit in Italian minds, the new awareness of the individuality of both man and state, and the discovery of the exterior world. Even if Burckhardt gives special attention to art, literature, and to the evolution of ideas, he also analyzes the political framework in which the Renaissance cultural transformation could have developed. However, his outlook on the Renaissance, on those switching forces that he considered dynamic, could appear fixed and static. Anyway, Burckhardt always preferred vital historical periods, during which entire populations experienced dramatic turning points, were spectators of the collapse of a previous world and bearers of a new culture. This appears clear in many of his early historical works, especially in 1853 *Die Zeit Constantin's des Grossen* (Burckhardt 1955–1959, vol. 1 or Burckhardt 2000–2014, vol. 1), a sort of antecedent of his Renaissance book, and in his university essay on Conrad of Hochstadt (see Burckhardt 2000–2014, vol. 8).

Impact and Legacy

Burckhardt's *Weltschmerz* and his contemplative historical view, his Archimedean point, were in

dissonance with the Comtean positive attitude on history or with Marxist, Neo-Hegelian, and Nietzschean historical paradigms, which focused on the concept of action. Nonetheless, Burckhardt was admired by Nietzsche, with whom he partakes of a late Schopenhauerian anti-Hegelianism and a general criticism of the leveling of democratic tendencies. His notoriety extended to nearly 40 years after his death, when Karl Löwith wrote a well-known essay about him. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* has been one of the most important and influential perspectives on the Renaissance for years, even if many aspects of it were already criticized at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as the stressed hiatus between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, denied by Burckhardt's *Kulturgeschichte* spiritual heir, Johan Huizinga. However, we should remember that Burckhardt did not deny the importance of the Middle Ages, considering that he studied the German medieval epoch, stressing, for example, the creative spirit enlivening in the thirteenth century Cologne Cathedral (see Burckhardt 2000–2014, vol. 8).

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Burckhardt, Jacob Christopher

► [Burckhardt, Jacob](#)

Burckhardt, Jakob Christoph

► [Burckhardt, Jacob](#)

Burgersdicius

► [Burgersdijk, Franco](#)

Burgersdijk, Franco

Born: 3 May 1590 at De Lier

Died: 19 February 1635 at Leiden

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Abstract

Burgersdijk's reputation in the seventeenth century rested on his well-ordered manuals dealing with all parts of philosophy. They adapted the *Corpus Aristotelicum* to the standards of humanist method. Burgersdijk's so-called neo-Aristotelianism is related to the Contra-Remonstrant movement in the Dutch Reformed Church, which triumphed at the Synod of Dordt (1619) and at Leiden University caused the dismissal or suspension of all philosophy professors with Arminian sympathies, such as Caspar Barlaeus and Gilbertus Jacchaeus, and a reform of philosophy teaching in the Dutch Republic, which had to be in harmony with the newly established reformed orthodoxy. In accordance with the 1625 School Order of the States of Holland, his textbooks were aimed at creating uniformity in the pre-university curriculum. His logical writings in particular remained in use at the Latin schools till nearly the end of the seventeenth century. Although abhorred by students, these manuals lingered in the curriculum of the British universities well into the eighteenth century. Due to the influence of both the manual of metaphysics and of logic on the early works of Spinoza in particular, Burgersdijk and his pupil and successor at Leiden University Adriaan Heereboord play a minor part in Spinoza research.

Alternate Names

Burgersdicius; Burghers-dyk; Franco; Frank

Biography

Burgersdijk, a farmer's son, was born in 1590 at De Lier in the Delfland region. The family name derived from a hamlet in the same region. According to his first biographer, Johannes Meursius in *Athenae Batavae*, Burgersdijk's father had some knowledge of Latin. Between 1606 and 1610 Burgersdijk attended the Latin school at Amersfoort and the Delft Gymnasium, where besides the classical languages, he learned logic and rhetoric. In 1610 he went to Leiden University in order to study theology. He attended the lectures of Franciscus Gomarus and Gisbertus Voetius and unwaveringly adhered to the Contra-Remonstrant faction. However, in that centre of humanist learning, Burgersdijk received a complete humanist formation, attending lectures on Latin, Greek, Roman history, and rhetoric. Moreover, he attended private lectures on practical logic and the art of disputation given by Voetius, at that time the vice-principal of the Staten College, a boarding school for students of theology established by the States of Holland. In 1614 Burgersdijk left Leiden in order to make a grand tour. He stayed at the Protestant Academy of Saumur, where he continued his theological studies with Gomarus, who in 1611 had left Leiden because of the ascendancy of the Remonstrant party in the Reformed Church. In 1615 he was appointed professor of philosophy. Due to his "deep affection toward philosophy" and his progress in that discipline, according to Meursius, the governors "deemed him fit to become master in the liberal arts and to obtain a doctorate in philosophy." Burgersdijk took this degree on 29 March 1620, only 2 days before he delivered his inaugural address on the use of logic in one of the vacancies caused by the purges of the universities after the Synod of Dordt. In November 1620 ethics was added to Burgersdijk's teaching assignment. In 1623 he completed his theological education by defending a disputation entitled "The Clarity of the Bible and Its Interpretation."

In 1621 he married a mayor's daughter. After 2 years, his son Pieter was born, who later studied law and was to become an important civil servant.

The recommendations of the Synod of Dordt included the call for a reform of the Latin schools. In 1625 new regulations were promulgated. In the final year, some ethics, physics, and geography would be taught and Burgersdijk was asked to raise the medieval “barbaric” Latin of Johannes de Sacrobosco’s *De sphaera* to humanist standards by making “astronomy” perspicuous and easy to understand. This schoolbook aimed at making the pupils familiar with the “first principles” of the subject, which were to be dealt with more fully at the university, as is observed in the introduction of the compendium.

In 1628 Burgersdijk exchanged moral philosophy for physics, but well before that date he lectured on physics. In 1624 a first series of fifteen disputations dealing with the Aristotelian corpus of natural philosophy was held, and in 1627 the next series was organized. Although his funeral orator, Petrus Cunaeus in his *Oratio habita in funere Franco Burgersdicii*, recorded that several of the deceased’s friends were amazed by this step, for “moral philosophy is the most excellent part of philosophy,” he noted the humanist ambition of Burgersdijk “to uncover the truth hidden in nature.” He therefore made the Aristotelian philosophy taught “by public authority” more perspicuous by clearing away “its scholastic obscurities.” In 1629 and 1630, Burgersdijk served as *Rector Magnificus*, and he was in this capacity when Descartes matriculated on 27 June 1630 as student of mathematics. During his rectorate, he helped to formulate new rules for the teaching of philosophy at the Staten College, which included the teaching of metaphysics. In 1634 Burgersdijk was elected Rector for the third time. Eleven days after the end of his office, he died, on 19 February 1635. He was buried in the choir of the Leiden Pieterskerk.

Notwithstanding his theological education, Burgersdijk’s teaching contributed to raising the status of philosophy at the Dutch universities. Through his manuals, he transformed philosophy into a discipline independent of theology and philology. In the early disputation *Utrum quod est verum in theologia possit esse falsum in philosophia*, he had the inalienable rights of

philosophy with respect to theology defended and adopted Aquinas’s view of the relationship between the disciplines by observing that both sciences deal with the same object. Its final conclusion is neat: Although theological dogma may exceed the limits of human reason, philosophy may be free from error. That is why the pagan Aristotle was the greatest philosopher. So Burgersdijk fully acknowledged the authority of Iberian neo-Scholasticism and of other Roman Catholic philosophers. Due to Burgersdijk’s teaching, the confessional neutrality of philosophy was generally taken for granted in the Dutch Republic, which attitude facilitated the quick acceptance of Cartesianism.

Works on Logic

In the dedication of the *Institutionum logicarum libri duo* to the States of Holland, Burgersdijk in a humanist way opposed arms to letters. The study of both is imperative for the well-being of the state. In order to be effective, the study of the arts should be methodical. This manual of logic contains all the useful rules of the art of reasoning, which means that the advanced student only needs to practice them. The beginning student should start with an excerpt of this manual, which had been added to the *Institutiones* and was published separately in 1632. It uses the catechetical form of questions and answers. In the preface, Burgersdijk attempts to justify the publication of the new schoolbook. He distinguishes between three groups of manuals. The first group consists of manuals, which adhere closely to Aristotle’s text – Burgersdijk uses the Greek expression *kata podas*. Such philological textbooks are insufficient as manuals of logic, since the *Organon* is without order. Moreover, while focusing on the syllogism, Aristotle does not deal with many logical instruments. The second group is formed by Petrus Ramus, Rudolph Agricola, and Lorenzo Valla. They reject the Aristotelian tradition and follow Cicero and the Stoics. Their textbooks are well ordered, and their precepts are useful in order to interpret famous authors, but “in one stoke”

they wipe out the demonstrative syllogism. That is why we should follow the example of Bartholomaeus Keckermann – the last group consists of only one manual – and adopt “the method of Ramus and use the material of Aristotle.” The main difference between the *Institutiones* and Keckermann’s *Systema* is that Burgersdijk replaces the traditional tripartite structure of logic – simple terms, proposition, and argument – by a bipartite one. He distinguishes between the *thema*, i.e., all the things presented to the mind in order to acquire knowledge of it (book 1), and the instruments, i.e., definition, division, syllogism, and method (book 2). Moreover, contrary to the *Systema*, the text consists of a series of propositions called *theoremata*, often followed by a commentary in which the theorems are explained and sources and illustrations given. The book summarizes the material with ten diagrams according to the model of Ramus.

Works on Physics

Physics is the most noble part of philosophy, since it leads man from the manifold things in nature we perceive by the senses to their hidden causes and finally to God. To physics, Burgersdijk devoted two manuals. The *Idea* is conceived as a “guide” to be used in disputations, presenting the subject matter in definitions and short theses. By referring only to “new” authorities such as Jacopo Zabarella, Benedict Pereira, Franciscus Toletus, and the commentators of Coimbra, Burgersdijk stated as his goal to open the debate on the “text of Aristotle.” In the more extensive *Collegium*, the same doctrinal tradition is elaborated in a synthetic order. The first section of the thirty-four disputations deals with basic topics such as “the subject of the science”: the natural body, its principles – matter, privation, and form – and the final and efficient causes. This section continues with the properties of natural body – magnitude, place, motion – and time and reflects Aristotle’s *Physics*. The second section deals with more specific and concrete topics, such as the heavens and the stars. The *Collegium* continues with the

elements, the origin and destruction of things, the atmospheric phenomena, and what we would now call chemistry and mineralogy. Here the corresponding parts of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* are *De Coelo* and the *Meteorology*. From disputation 20 onward, the soul, its functions, and faculties are treated. These are themes Aristotle dealt with in his books on generation, parts of animals, and the soul.

It is obvious that the structure of Burgersdijk’s manuals on physics is not simply a matter of didactic convenience, but mirrors the complexity of nature, which requires a study by means of the golden principles of Zabarellian method. These new ideas on the order of nature, however, conceal a framework of the traditional concepts of scholastic physics: motion arising from an internal principle, generation and corruption, the beginning and the end of motion, and locomotion, which was produced by the principles of the natural body. What is more, Burgersdijk did not take much notice of important discoveries such as the sine law of light’s reflection made some years before by his colleague Willebrord Snellius, which prepared the way for the mathematical calculation of natural phenomena. Burgersdijk, however, acknowledged a primitive form of the circulation of the blood discovered by William Harvey in 1628. Other examples of his readiness to accept new observations are his acknowledgement of the appearance of new stars, notwithstanding Aristotle’s doctrine of the incorruptibility of the heavens, and his acceptance of the plausibility of the “Copernican hypothesis.” If the diurnal motion is attributed to the celestial bodies and not to the earth, the speed of the diurnal motion observed by Philippus van Lansbergen would imply that Saturn in 5 min traverses more than 900 German miles and the fixed stars more than 643.000 miles. This is hardly conceivable.

Burgersdijk never pondered the theoretical implications of these observations. Apparently he did not see how these new discoveries could be integrated into the Aristotelian framework of physics. Within a generation after his death, the majority of Dutch scholars had embraced Cartesianism.

Manual of Metaphysics

In 1645, 10 years after Burgersdijk's death, the Leiden professors of theology asked the Governors to establish a chair for the teaching of metaphysics. This concern corresponds with the argument that Adriaan Heereboord, Burgersdijk's successor, developed in the preface to his posthumous edition of Burgersdijk's manual the *Institutiones metaphysicae*. Metaphysics clarifies the concepts the theologians use and teaches them "all the natural intellect is able to know about God, the angels, and the rational soul." Therefore, metaphysics is properly called natural theology. The edition of his lectures shows that Burgersdijk in defiance of the statutes of the humanist university already taught metaphysics well before 1645. In defining the object of metaphysics as *ens reale qua immateriale* [real being in its immaterial aspects], Burgersdijk attempted to distinguish the discipline from (Christian) theology and physics. Although he did not adopt definitions of a Scotian and Suarezian type metaphysics in his view is essentially a general science of being, and does not refer to substances only, but also to all beings which are not absolutely nothing. In accordance with the Aristotelian theory of science as developed in the Middle Ages, Burgersdijk continues with the principles of being – essence and existence, definitions, and axioms – and its affects. Under this heading, the Suarezian theory of the transcendental terms is dealt with. In the second book, special metaphysics is discussed: God, angels, and rational soul. Burgersdijk, however, does not only divide being into created and uncreated, but uncomfortably also into substance and accident, which is dealt with in the last chapter.

Manual of Moral Philosophy

In the *Idea philosophiae moralis* a humanist vein, Burgersdijk elaborates upon the preeminence of ethics. The use and necessity of the discipline is obvious, since it teaches us the end of all human endeavor. Moreover, we learn – as far as possible in post-Fall conditions – the means to acquire this ultimate human felicity: the virtues. Their main categories are probity, which composes our

passions and rules our relations with other humans, and piety, which consists of our knowledge and love of God. In this sense ethics is even more than metaphysics a natural theology. According to Burgersdijk, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Plutarch among the Greeks and Seneca and Cicero among the Romans were just as important scholars in the field of morality as Aristotle, so Burgersdijk discusses the text of the *Ethica Nicomachea* together with the works of these other authors. Like his Leiden predecessors Petrus Bertius and Justus Lipsius, he reserves an important part of the manual to the theory of the passions. In general, the material is substantially, but freely, taken from Aristotle, as the subtitle states. Burgersdijk, for example, rejects the traditional Aristotelian distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis* made on account of its effect and observed that the making may be an end in itself, while the moral nature of an action depends on the appetite. According to Burgersdijk, moral philosophy is divided into three chapters: (1) the final felicity resulting from attaining the ultimate good; (2) moral actions, the object it studies, outlining their differences and immediate causes such as the affects and pleasure and pain; and (3) the means to achieve felicity, that is to say virtues and friendship. So also this manual methodically presents the Aristotelian material in order to be pedagogically effective.

Manual of Politics

Burgersdijk's manual of politics and economics the *Idea oeconomicae et politicae doctrinae* was also edited posthumously. The first edition was anonymous, but done by Heereboord, the second edition by Georgius Hornius, at that time professor of history, who added extensive notes, but skipped the section on economics. These notes are partly in the form of additional theses, partly in the form of questions, and include elucidating schemes. The manual is special, being one of the few works on these topics written by a philosopher. – At Leiden as a rule historians dealt with politics. – It was conceived as specifying the universal rules of the general practical science, ethics, and applies them to the life of man in a family and in a state. Burgersdijk's politics has

been called a “humanist mirror of the prince.” After an introductory chapter on the body politic in general and the different forms of government, he elaborates on the knowledge and the virtues of the “good” prince. He has to be familiar with languages, Latin in particular; mathematics, which is extremely useful, both in war and peace; the philosophical disciplines, with the exception of metaphysics; the principles of law and of theology; and ancient and modern history. The virtues the prince requires are the traditional prudence and justice, but also piety toward God and toward man, i.e., the love of the citizens, veracity, and the ability to participate in social life. In the second part of the treatise, Burgersdijk deals with the means of government: laws, advisors, health care and schooling, the administration of justice, the maintenance of a monetary system and taxation, the protection against natural disasters, and the preparation for war. Moreover, good government is impossible without the preservation of true religion. The prince is the protector of the church, which implies that he possesses the *ius circa sacra*. Notably, the Contra-Remonstrant Burgersdijk does not specify the proper rights of the church. Although the good prince will punish blasphemy and will prevent the propagation of a false religion, he is not obliged to enforce religious unity at all costs. In the remaining four chapters, Burgersdijk discusses aristocracy and democracy. Living in a Republic, Burgersdijk’s preference for monarchism caused much surprise. Commentators are inclined to explain this curious phenomenon by referring to the force of tradition. However, Burgersdijk argued that in the commercial cities of Holland, the best form of government is a combination of aristocracy and democracy. The predominance of the nobility in a monarchy would be detrimental to commerce and industry, he observes, anticipating similar comments by Pieter de La Court.

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Burghers-dyk

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Burton, Robert

Born: 8 February 1577, Lindley, Leicestershire, England

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Abstract

Robert Burton was an English clergyman and fellow of Christ Church College, Oxford. Although he was appointed vicar of St. Thomas's Oxford in 1616 and vicar of Seagrave, Leicestershire, in 1630, he led a rather scholarly and bookish existence at the university. His significance rests solely on his treatise *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), the largest and most comprehensive treatment of the disease in English.

Biography

From the time of his admission, Robert Burton remained a student of Christ Church College for his entire life, earning only a Bachelor of Divinity as well as a BA and MA. Burton is known chiefly for his book, and this book is strongly bound up with its author. *The Anatomy of Melancholy* came out in six separate, seventeenth-century editions, which attest to its popularity with contemporary readers. Its popularity may have been a consequence of the Renaissance's fascination with melancholy, since feigning its symptoms offered courtiers, like Hamlet and *As You Like It's* Jacques, a fashionable posture through which they could express their individuality, if not affected unsociability. *The Anatomy* was also famous on account of its learnedness, supplying readers with a storehouse of ready anecdotes and sayings from approximately 1000 different authors.

Burton pushes to a baroque extreme the humanist predilection for quoting authorities, and, though the text has been said to defy generic classification, it may be called, at least in its

method, a *cento* – what the period regarded as a patchwork composition of citations. The term appropriately captures Burton's scholarly practice of plundering Latin and English sources for textual rags and ribbons to stitch into his own motley fabric. At Oxford, he had, indeed, considerable material to work with. He made use of the Bodleian, while, as a student of Christ Church, he had at his disposal his college's library, to which he was named Keeper in 1626. And he was an avaricious bibliophile too, having amassed a personal collection of 1700 volumes, an exceptional cache for an Oxford Don.

The Anatomy's title page gives Burton the alias of Democritus Junior, associating him with the pre-Socratic philosopher who sought to discover the seat of melancholy through dissecting animal carcasses. But, whereas his namesake chose an empirical route to the problem, Burton figuratively anatomizes books to uncover as many commonplaces about the disease as possible. Besides representing his cento method, "anatomy" could also mean in the period the analytical process of dividing something into its constituent parts, and Burton's treatise accordingly articulates a desire both to master melancholy in its various manifestations and to gain control over his book's massive bulk, the revisions of which led to its continual expansion. Burton performs these two anatomies by leveraging the Ramist method, a pedagogical practice of progressively dichotomizing a topic from the general to the particular so that it can be easily comprehended. Headings break down the text into "partitions" and three types of smaller division, namely, "sections," "members," and "subsections." Each of the book's synoptic charts maps out one of the three overall partitions, the first containing melancholy's causes and symptoms, the second covering its cures, and the third recursively reproducing the former two partitions in examining its three species – love melancholy, jealousy, and religious melancholy. The metalanguage of medical discourse that determines many of the headings conforms to Galenic categories; however, Burton's playful commentary, especially in his preface and long formal digressions, troubles these distinctions with a reflexive and skeptical attitude. Throughout the text, symptoms can slide into causes, and causes slip into cures,

while his humanist amplification of exempla, commonplaces, and quotations often leaves him exclaiming upon the infinite nature of melancholy's signs in addition to the never-ending production of the printing press.

Burton does not confine his encyclopedic subject to the aegis of medicine but allows it to metastasize into a universal condition afflicting everyone and everything, while its pursuit provides him with a hermeneutic key to understanding the fabric of all texts and knowledge, even the cosmos itself. In its capacity as a metaphor for the malaise of existence, Burton's approach to melancholy takes some of its satirical prompts from *The Praise of Folly*. Democritus Junior's madcap utterances foster further parallels with Erasmus's avatar insofar as the former paradoxically betrays melancholic symptoms and signs in his preface – perhaps fueling the posthumous legend that he moved his hand to self-slaughter, rendering him a victim of the disease that he devoted so much of his life to studying.

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- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Galen and Galenism](#)
- [Humanism](#)
- [Ramism](#)
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Byzantine Philosophy, Renaissance

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Abstract

The philosophical debate in the early Byzantine Renaissance has been characterized primarily by a significant renewal of interest in ancient philosophy and by a wave of scholarship attracted to Western theology. The study

of secular philosophy was not undertaken as a way to improve theological knowledge or method, and consequently the equilibrium between these domains was maintained. The openness to Latin theology has been made possible by the activity of translation of Latin texts at the Dominican monastery of Pera in Constantinople, which involved philosophical and theological works until that time unknown to the Byzantines. Whence, an innovative philosophical trend took life, that of the so-called Byzantine Thomism, alongside the reception of the Scholastic method, consisting in the adoption of secular speculation and syllogism in theological reflection. These speculative paths, hitherto largely autonomous, were destined to come into conflict in the frame of the Hesychast disputation. By this quarrel, which ended with the triumph of Gregory Palamas' doctrine of uncreated energies, philosophy and theology were established on parallel tracks, and significant attempts of overlapping their areas of competence were generally avoided. As a consequence of these developments, fifteenth-century philosophical scholarship was characterized by a progressive focusing on Hellenic philosophy, while theologians opposed systematical criticism against Pagan philosophy. The philosophical debate gave life to new perspectives, such as the project of restoration of ancient Hellenism envisaged by Gemistus Pletho, and produced recurrent debates between Aristotelians and Platonists (Bessarion, George of Trebizond). Byzantine humanism was destined to survive after the Fall of Constantinople in Italian Renaissance, where it played a large influence, while the intellectual life of the Byzantines living under the Ottoman rule was engaged in the task of preserving and transmitting Hellenic learning and Orthodox theology.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Historico-political and Cultural Context

The application of the historiographical category of Renaissance to Byzantine philosophy from the

fourteenth to the first half of the seventeenth century requests the adoption of many nuances and needs more precisions than the common comprehension of this category applied to Western philosophy of the same period. The meaning of the word "Renaissance" not only implies a general flourishing in the fields of culture and arts but also suggests the undergoing of a radical renovation which revolutionized the global perception of the world, and deeply influenced culture and arts in all their expressions. Byzantine fourteenth century has been characterized by a general renewal that is conventionally defined as "Palaeologan Renaissance." This period was opened by the reconquest of Constantinople in 1261 from the Latin Empire, which was established after the Fourth Crusade and the Sack of the City (1204). Its name derives from the dynasty that ruled on the remains of the Roman Empire from that date until the fall of the City under the Turkish armies in 1453. The Palaeologan Renaissance involved all of the fields of art, literature, science, and philosophy but paradoxically was a period of political, military, and civil decadence, which preludes to the final catastrophe. Philosophical speculation during this period had to be influenced by these major historical events and cannot be understood without considering the network of cultural exchanges, especially with the Latin West, that were intensified in the Palaeologan period as never before in Byzantine history.

The Palaeologan dynasty restored the capital of the Roman Empire in Constantinople, after almost 60 years of exile of the legitimate Byzantine rulers in Nicaea. The conquest of Constantinople by the Christian Western crusaders in 1204 constituted indeed a moment of political and institutional discontinuity, but it did not provoke by any means the end of the Byzantine culture, which knew a significant continuation in the temporary Empire of Nicaea. The reconquest of the capital by Manuel VIII Palaiologos in 1261 allowed subsequently the renewing of Byzantine culture in its traditional geopolitical area and gave life to a remarkable flourishing in almost all of the intellectual domains. It will be only after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 that Byzantine culture will be constrained to survive in a radically

overturned context. The end of the Palaeologan Renaissance coincided with the extinction of the political space of the Byzantine civilization and represented its last period of cultural renewing. Nonetheless, also the beginning of the Palaeologan culture was more influenced by external factors, i.e., the historical and political context, than by merely deriving from an inner cultural development. As a matter of fact, the Fourth Crusade, ended with the Sack of Constantinople perpetrated by the crusaders, and the following assumption of the power over the capital and part of the former territories of the Empire by the Latins, provoked a major shock that deeply undermined the Byzantine awareness of the prestige of their history and identity. This catastrophe involved also major religious aspects, as the loss of confidence in the providential role of the Empire and the withdrawing of divine favor and protection over the Polis. These consequences weakened the universal and ecumenical conscience of the Byzantines and introduced an ethnical point of view into their perception of their identity and culture.

It is not by chance that the word "Hellene," which was used formerly by the Byzantines to address the Greek pagans, by the mid-fourteenth century appeared rather customarily as synonymous of "Rhomaioi," which is the name of the citizens of the Roman Empire, as the Byzantines has always considered themselves. The confrontation with the West, triggered by religious, political, and military tensions, had also significant effects on Byzantine intellectual life. On one side in fact the Crusader Sack of the Imperial City harshened the old theological and ecclesiastical divisions that have determined the separation between the Church of Rome and the Eastern Churches in 1054, but on the other side, the political situation after the Fourth Crusade and the reconquest of Constantinople imposed a new dialogue in search for the reunion of the Churches. The need for the restoration of the union with the Roman Church was considered in fact by the Palaeologan dynasty as an insurance against potential new attacks by the Westerners. Two attempts of union were made, the first at the Council of Lyon, held in 1274, and the second at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in the years

1438–1445. In both cases, the act of union signed by both Latin and Byzantine delegations was rejected by the Emperor, after the repudiation by the majority of Byzantine episcopate. The union of Florence, attained in the dramatic situation of the Turkish threat, was rejected after the leading example of the Metropolitan of Ephesus, Mark Eugenikos (1392–1444), who denounced the ephemeral union as a sacrifice to the need of arresting the Turkish advance, while not reflecting at all the theological position of the Eastern Church. Even if both these attempts of union did not reach the hoped goal, and even if the historical scenarios and political motivations beyond them were sensibly different, they constituted an important occasion of encounter between eastern and western theological paradigms and speculative orientations, which constituted an important ground for the renewal of the Byzantine philosophical culture out of its traditional boundaries.

One of the main features of the philosophical debate throughout the Palaeologan Renaissance was the interest in Greek antiquity. In the domain of Byzantine philosophy, this was not the first wave of attraction for ancient philosophers. We have in fact to recall the emblematic case of eleventh-century Platonism, embodied by Michael Psellos, John Italos, and Eustratius of Nicaea. The distinction of field between dogmatic theology and philosophical learning was a common feature of the intellectual trends in early Palaeologan Renaissance. This feature marked a substantial difference from western Scholastic theology, whose methodological peculiarity was the search for a synthesis capable to compose in a unified system the philosophical with theological and scientific knowledge. The lack of an attempt to overlap philosophical speculation to the domain of theology was at the base of an equilibrium that has generally characterized Byzantine thought through the ages. It is not astonishing that the statesman and Aristotelian scholar Theodore Metochites (1270–1332), who was the pious patron of the impressive decorations of Chora monastery in Constantinople, has been the teacher both of the champion of Hesychasm, Gregory Palamas, and Palamas' opponent, Nicephorus Gregoras. Byzantine philosophy in the Renaissance, since the early

Palaeologan age, was a Greek renaissance, because one of its primary features was embodied by the rediscovery of the classics. Nevertheless, with the only remarkable exception of George Gemistus Pletho, this revival was never invoked as a religious alternative to Christianity. The equilibrium between humanistic learning and orthodox theology was ensured by self-acknowledging of humanists as true orthodox Christians and by philosophical education that also the theologians used to receive. Gregory Palamas, for instance, recalled of having being publicly praised by his master Theodore Metochites for his competency in Aristotelian philosophy.

A significant break of this equilibrium nevertheless arrived: it happened in the circumstance of the polemics raised by Barlaam of Seminara (1290–1348) against the Hesychast monks of the Mount Athos. The reaction of their most skilled spokesman, Gregory Palamas, repurposed once more in Byzantine philosophical history the clash of methodological and speculative paradigms between Christian orthodoxy and pagan philosophy. The combination of interests for ancient philosophy as well as for scholastic philosophy in Baarlam was indeed at the origin of the Hesychast debate, which provoked the most important theological disputation that was originated by late Byzantine though. This debate lasted for approximately 30 years and established a turning point in the development of Byzantine philosophy in the Renaissance. The theology of energies, which was Palamas' main focus constituted a major renewal in the mainstream of Orthodox theology, but it was also a significant confrontation of opposite ontological models, which presumed a skillful usage of philosophical argumentations and concepts. The debate was ended by the triumph of the Palamite doctrine, which was approved by two ecclesiastic synods. This resolution sanctioned the definitive separation of philosophy and theology in forthcoming Byzantine intellectual developments. The Hesychast debate as well as the discussions held at the Council of Firenze-Ferrara has made evident that among the Byzantines prevailed a hard core of theologians who were not inclined to evolve the theological speculation toward a compromise with the secular wisdom of the ancient Greeks.

Even if this position prevailed and was fixed – due to the Fall of the Empire – throughout the forthcoming centuries, the Byzantine philosophical culture in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries knew also a growing interest in contemporary Western Scholasticism. This aspect constituted a radical novelty in Byzantine intellectual life, and one of the most original aspects of the Palaeologan Renaissance, since the speculative issues of Western Christianity, has remained undisclosed to the Byzantines until then. Greek-speaking theology remained in fact impervious to the texts of the Latin Fathers, not to speak of the complete lack of knowledge of the Late Antique Latin secular philosophy. Also Western medieval theology and philosophy never attracted the curiosity of the Byzantine scholars. A first window of interests in Latin speculative production was opened by the missionary expansion of western monastic orders after the Latin Sack of Constantinople (1204). After this date, new foundations depending on western monastic orders were established with the aim of starting an action of preaching and proselytism. The Dominicans, which were the order of the Preachers Friars by definition, founded some monasteries, among which the most reputed convent of Pera (the district of Constantinople bordering the eastern seaside of the Golden Horn). By the fourteenth century, this convent became the center of diffusion of the Scholasticism into the Christian East. Moreover, the Council of Lyon, despite its failure in the achievement of the union between the Churches, engaged a confrontation which led the Byzantines to focus their attention on the until then unknown theological texts of the Latin tradition. The Emperor Michael Palaiologos asked for the translation of some of the most representative Latin theological and philosophical texts in order to have a better insight into the dogmatic positions held by the Westerners, on which disagreement the looked-for union was still far away. Maximus Planudes' pioneering work of translation found its place into this historical scenario. Maximus (1260–c. 1305), a monk born in Nicomedia, translated for the first time important works of the Latins philosophical and theological tradition, such as Augustine's *De Trinitate*, Boethius' *De*

consolatione philosophiae, Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* with the commentary of Macrobius, as well as other literary works. After Planudes the biggest contribution to the eastern diffusion of Latin speculative works, either philosophical or theological, was given by those Byzantine scholars who have attended the theological college of Pera, where they learned Latin and became familiar with the methodologies and the arguments of Latin Scholasticism and particularly with Thomism. It was the case of the brothers Demetrius (1324–1397) and Prochorus Cydones (1335–1371), of Manuel Calecas (†1410) and John Kyparissiotis (1310–1378/1379), and of the Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory III Mammas (†1459).

Ultimately, we can list three major features characterizing Renaissance Byzantine philosophy: the recovery of ancient Hellene learning, the speculative enrichments issued from the Hesychast-Palamite debate, and the discovery of the Latin scholastic tradition and its philosophical elaboration. The importance assumed by the rediscovery of ancient philosophy played in fact a role that was unknown to all speculative trends of the former medieval period. However, despite the new relevance obtained by ancient philosophy, Renaissance Byzantine thought cannot be reduced to the mere exegesis of the texts survived from the Antiquity. Consequently, a more wider comprehension of what means philosophy in the Byzantine Renaissance should also extend to the debates in which conceptual aspects of both philosophical and theological thoughts were involved.

The Recovery of Ancient Greek Philosophical Learning

The general revival of interest in ancient Greek learning during the Palaeologan Era established the frame for the renewing of the studies in ancient philosophy. The most striking aspect of this revival is that philosophical Hellenism was no more considered as the poisonous legacy of the pagans, but as an element of the cultural identity of the Byzantines. Unlike the Latin west, the Byzantine culture has never known archaeological fascination for the classics and never had a cultural shock in recovering ancient philosophical

works, since the textual treasures of the antiquity have been always available in Byzantine libraries. Moreover, Byzantines shared the same language of ancient philosophy, so they did not have to pass through the slow process of translation as the Westerners. In the Latin west, the recovery of the classics was a constant aspiration since the Carolingians, and the rediscovery of Aristotle between twelfth and thirteenth century produced a cultural shock that compelled theologians in the search of a synthesis between the Stagirite's philosophy and Christian doctrine. The Byzantines did not attempt such a synthesis, and this perhaps diminished the originality of their results, compared to Scholasticism, which used Aristotelian philosophy to elaborate a new understanding of reality whereby the problems of ancient philosophy were faced at the light of Christian faith and vice versa.

Aristotelian philosophy always attracted the interest of Byzantine scholars from the beginning of the fourteenth century, when Aristotelian studies were approached by two opposite epistemological perspectives, those of Nikephoros Choumnos (1250/1255–1328) and Theodore Metochites. Both were statesmen who became monks in the last part of their life, and both embraced the study of secular philosophy carefully avoiding every possible conflict with the Christian dogmatic tenets. Choumnos manifested interest in Aristotelian science while rigorously holding the traditional apophatic approach to theological knowledge. His writings included nine scientific treatises of Aristotelian inspiration, in which he discussed topics such as the nature of the cosmos, the imperishable bodies, the existence of primordial matter, and the status of separate forms. In all these topics, he contended against what he found in disagreement with the cosmology issued from the Bible. Thus, he denied the existence of bodies composed by a fifth imperishable element, as Aristotle held, and opposed the theory of the pre-existing matter. Finally he argued against the theory of separate forms, holding that matter and form are created simultaneously. He also wrote a *Refutation of Plotinus on the soul*, in which he confutes the platonic theory of the pre-existence of the soul and the theory of reminiscence, relying on Aristotelian

psychology adapted to a creationist perspective. Theodore Metochites wrote an exposition of Aristotelian natural science (*Eis panta ta Physika Aristotelous*), composed of 39 chapters on physics and psychology, biology and meteorology. In the 1320s he engaged in polemics against Choumnos, who accused him for lacking in clarity in his writings. Metochites answered by accusing his rival of being limited to the knowledge of ancient physics while ignoring the superiority of Ptolemaic astronomy and mathematics. As a true humanist, even if this definition applied to him has been challenged by modern historiographers, Theodore conceived Byzantine civilization as the continuation of the ancient Greek culture, and he often used to call "Hellenes" rather than *Rhomaioi* his contemporaries citizens of the Roman Empire.

George Pachymeres (1242–c. 1308), the foremost historian of the early Palaeologan Era, also gave a remarkable contribution to the knowledge of ancient philosophy. He was both a Platonic and Aristotelian scholar. One of his most renowned work, written between 1278 and 1302, was the adaptation of the commentary by Maximus the Confessor on pseudo-Dionysius' writings, concluded by an original paraphrases of the pseudo-Dionysian *Letters*. He also composed a summary of several Aristotelian treatises, collected together with a series of long quotations in a work entitled *Philosophia*. Pachymeres' philosophical interest in Platonism is demonstrated by the handwritten copies he made of seven Platonic dialogues and three Neoplatonic commentaries, one of Hermias on *Phaedrus*, and two of Proclus, on *Parmenides* and the *First Alcibiades*, all of these conserved in surviving manuscripts. From Aristotelian materials assembled by Pachymeres, Joseph the Philosopher (1280–1330) composed around 1323 his *Encyclopedia* of rhetorical and scientific knowledge. Joseph chose monastic life, but unlike many monks of his time, he was persuaded of the usefulness of secular philosophy. He conceived his work as a synthesis of the "inner wisdom" of Christians and the "outer wisdom" of ancient Greeks. Nevertheless he had to admit the errors of ancient philosophers on many topics, among which the doctrine of the soul. Alongside with Pachymeres' florilegious, Joseph used

analogous philosophical compilations realized by other Byzantine authors, like Nikephoros Blemmydes and Michael of Ephesus, as well as the works of theologians like Maximus the Confessor, and ancient commentators like Alexander of Aphrodisias.

Another important exponent of the early fourteenth century has been Nicephorus Gregoras (1296–1361). He is acknowledged as the most remarkable among Theodore Metochites' pupils. He taught in the school attached to the monastery of Chora, whose library, enriched by the manuscripts owned by the same Theodore, was one of the most outstanding of the capital. Nicephorus was a philosopher and historian, and following the epistemological path traced by his master, he was also a skilled astronomer and mathematician. His erudition and literary taste made of him a relevant figure of Byzantine humanism. He imitated the model of Plato's dialogues, and unlike his master, who was more deeply involved in the imitation of his classics models, Gregoras used prevalently ancient philosophical texts as source of quotations. He wrote few properly philosophical works, but he expressed a quite original position, conceiving Plato's thought as more acceptable to Christians and denying that Aristotle was more compatible to the dogmas of faith, as it has been traditionally assumed. In a work dating around 1347–1349, he composed a miscellaneous series of eight questions and answers, where he assumed that Aristotle was more a sophist than a real philosopher. In the domain of cosmology, he denounced contradictions in Aristotle's *De Caelo*, while in the domain of psychology, he believed, by mistake, that the Stagyrte denied the immortality of the soul, unlike Plato. Gregoras' most successful and popular work was however a commentary on Synesius' *On Dreams*. He observed that Synesius was closer to Plato's views, according to whom dreams are sent by the gods, while Aristotle comprehended the dreams as the product of imagination and as projection of conscious thought. In this case Nicephorus was more favorable to Aristotle's position than to Plato's one. Nicephorus had also a role to play in the Barlaam-Palamas disputation, opposing both of them: he wrote a caricatural dialogue against

the first and assumed the leading role of the anti-Palamite party after 1350, addressing against the Athonite theologian a series of polemical writings, the *Antirrétikoi Lógoi*.

The reappearance and the diffusion among Byzantine scholars of a wide interest in the study of Ancient philosophers became a common feature of the intellectual life throughout the Renaissance. Early Palaeologan authors engaged themselves in the redaction of anthologies, commentaries, manuscript copying, and exegesis, but they carefully avoided to exploit in the theological reflection the issues of ancient philosophy involving metaphysics, politics, and religion. Most of them were aware of the difficulties to adopt pagan doctrines conflicting with the Christian dogmatic standing points. The two main exponents of this attitude were Theodore Metochites and Nicephorus Gregoras. The first was closer to Platonism, but also expressed interest in Aristotle, the second noticed more reconcilable aspects in Plato than in Aristotle. The tendency to polarize Plato and Aristotle found its first evidence among the scholars of the early Byzantine Renaissance, anticipating the harsh polemics that opposed pro-Plato and pro-Aristotle scholars in the late Renaissance. This attitude puts in evidence that the reception in the Byzantine Renaissance of the two major Greek philosophers avoided the methodological approach held by the Neoplatonic school, whose exponents looked for the concordance between them.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Byzantine Thomism and Anti-Thomism

The discovery of the philosophical theology of Thomas Aquinas in Byzantium was made possible due to the missionary action of the Dominican friars at the convent of Pera. They were also responsible for spreading into the West of summaries of Byzantine theology, whose purpose nevertheless was more apologetic than systematic, as it is possible to observe through the erroneous opinions affecting Aquinas' *Contra errores Graecorum*, which was based on materials issuing from Pera Dominicans. The most innovative

contribution of the Dominican school of Pera has been the launching of a Byzantine movement of Thomist philosophers, whose first impulse was given by the translation of Aquinas' works. This task was accomplished by the Cydones brothers and some other yet unknown translators (hypothetically Maximos Planudes and Manuel Calecas). Demetrius translated the *Summa contra Gentiles* in 1354, and the *Summa Theologiae* between 1355 and 1368, and other minor works. His brother Prochoros helped him in translating the *Summa Theologiae* and translated the *De aeternitate mundi*.

Demetrius Cydones was born in Thessalonica in 1324 and studied under Nilus Cabasilas. He occupied important roles in the administration of the state and was a skilled diplomat, devoting himself to the making of alliances in Western Europe finalized to front the Turkish menace, but his efforts were unsuccessful. Demetrius has been the most remarkable Byzantine Thomist: one of his principal aims was to demonstrate the unity of Eastern and Western theologies. His attraction for Thomism is mainly explainable through the novelty of the Scholastic method, based on the agreement of faith and reason. In the Scholastics in fact, Byzantine scholars found a model of theological exploitation of the arguments of ancient philosophers. Accordingly, Demetrius stated that Westerners "show great thirst for walking in those labyrinths of Aristotle and Plato, for which our people never showed interest." Beside the works of Thomas Aquinas, Demetrius translated also other Latin theologians, like Anselm and Gregory the Great. When his ancient master Nilus attacked the Latin doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit, addressing above all Aquinas, Demetrius answered with a work in defense of the Dominican theologian and his views on the procession by adopting the theory of the *Analogia Entis*. Being a convinced Thomist, he did not accept the Palamite distinction between essence and energies in God (a problem that was at the center of the theological debate at that time), since this distinction opposed, to his view, the principle of simplicity and unity in God, which was a firm point of Latin Trinitarian tenets, from Augustine to Anselm and Thomas. Embittered by the triumph of Palamism, which led

also to the condemnation of his brother Prochorus, he converted to the Catholic confession of faith in Rome, in the occasion of one of his embassies. He died in Crete in 1397.

Prochorus Cydones, born in 1335, became a monk at the Great Lavra on Mount Athos. As his eldest brother Demetrius, he was attracted by Latin theology, whom he contributed to diffuse in Byzantium through translations of some of Augustine's, Jerome's, Boethius', and Thomas Aquinas' works. He has been a fierce opponent of Palamism, becoming the head of the opponent movement after Nicephorus Gregoras' death in 1361. Because of his engagement, he was condemned by the Palamite patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos in 1368. More than his brother, Prochoros pursued the application of Thomist philosophy into the theological domain. He wrote a work *On Essence and Energies* in confutation of Palamas' doctrine, which, according to him, was a step toward polytheism. In this work he discussed also the nature of the Taboric light, which was at the center of the Palamite and anti-Palamite discussions. He died in 1371.

After Demetrius Cydones' death, Byzantine Latinophrones found their leading figure in Demetrius' former pupil, Manuel Calecas (†1410). Calecas became a severe opponent of Palamism since its beginnings and because of this Gregory Palamas refused him the monastic tonsure. He then converted to Catholicism and became Dominican friar in a convent in Mytilene. Calecas composed a synthesis of Aquinas teachings, entitled *On Faith and Principles of Catholic Faith according to Scripture and the teachers of Catholic Faith*. While never quoting openly Aquinas, this work shows Calecas' mastership in the philosophy of the Dominican theologian and permitted the diffusion of his doctrines to a wider audience outside the narrow circles of the readers of the translations realized at Pera convent. He translated also Boethius' *De Trinitate* and Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*, and realized Greek versions of several liturgical offices, perhaps for the need of those Byzantines who converted to Catholicism. Following his brother he stepped further in the attempt of harmonizing Thomist philosophy with Eastern theology.

The growing of interest in Western Christian authors consisted not only in a renovation of the panorama of Byzantine philosophical sources but was also a moment of confrontation on methodology, after the example of late-antique Latin theologians, which adopted dialectics and the syllogistic method in theological reflection, and Scholastics, which arrived to the point of defining theology as a science. Anti-Thomist reaction was consequently an answer to Scholastic methodology applied to sacred theology. The first voice against syllogistic method was raised by Barlaam of Seminara (1290–1348), also known as Barlaam the Calabrian, author of two discourses against Aquinas. Another voice of dissension was expressed by Demetrius Cydones' former teacher, Nilus Cabasilas (1285–1363). Cabasilas, who aligned to the Hesychastic movement, and became Palamas' successor on the episcopal see of Thessalonica, argued against the possibility of applying syllogism to theological knowledge at the place of divine revelation, since human logos is inferior to Divine Logos. He did not address Thomas openly in his writings, but Thomist doctrine is plainly recognizable there. Open criticism against Aquinas was instead addressed by Matthew Angel Panaretos (1341–1391), who wrote two works in confutation of Aquinas' doctrine on the procession of the Holy Spirit and the Purgatory. Another opponent of Aquinas and scholastic syllogistic method has been the Hesychast monk Callistos Angelikoudes (1340–1420), who, in his *Against Thomas Aquinas*, denied the identity in God of his essence and his attributes and rejected the possibility of seeing God's essence.

The Hesychast Debate

The Hesychast controversy lasted over 30 years (1335–1368) and has been one of the debates of major impact on the theology of the Eastern Church in his whole history. It had also a great impact on Renaissance Byzantine philosophy, since its discussions provoked the confrontation between the methodological and philosophical trends that featured contemporary intellectual developments, shading light on the underground contraposition between the renewed interest in

ancient philosophy and Scholastics, and the mainstream of traditional Byzantine theology, based upon the Scripture and the Fathers. The polemics between Thomists and anti-Thomists and the debate on the compatibility of some aspects of pagan philosophy with Christianity largely converged into this debate. The Hesychasts held a much more defined position, castled in the defense of the tradition. On the opposite side, we can observe much more nuances, since the configuration of the anti-Palamite party cannot simply be assimilated to the positions of Thomists or humanists: for example, Nicephorus Gregoras, one of Palamas' main opponents, remained hostile to Western Latin theology, and George Gennadios Scholarios (1405–1473), which has been the last great Thomist among the Byzantines, as well as a philosopher and commentator of Aristotle, accepted Palamite theology.

The debate, at the beginning, was engaged by Barlaam the Calabrian. Born in Seminara, he moved from the South Italy to Constantinople where he taught philosophy and wrote some works on logics and astronomy, which found a large audience in the capital city. In 1335 he was asked by the emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos to defend Byzantine position on the procession of the Holy Spirit, in the occasion of the visit of a Roman delegation, whose task was to discuss the union of the Churches. Barlaam wrote a treatise on the *Procession of the Holy Spirit against Latins*, where he argued that human reason cannot demonstrate anything about the Divine. Furthermore, he classified the arguments used by Byzantine theologians to defend the procession from the Father alone as matter of dialectical or hypothetical syllogisms. After learning about the contents of Barlaam's treatise, the Athonite monk Gregory Palamas accused the Calabrian theologian of looking for an agreement with the Latin position. In reality, one of Barlaam's purposes, on behalf of his anti-Western zealotness, was to contrast Thomist reduction of the theological knowledge to the positive affirmation of ontological definitions. In doing this he also exploited the Franciscan nominalistic positions expressed by Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.

Gregory Palamas, born in Constantinople in 1296, studied rhetoric and philosophy at the school of Theodore Metochites. Having become a monk, he renounced to secular studies, accusing in particular Platonism of being an erroneous and deceiving learning. Then he moved to the Mount Athos, where he embraced Hesychast spirituality. Hesychasm was a spiritual method conceived as the search for deification in the inner quiet (*hesychia*) and continuous prayer, consisting in the invocation of the name of Jesus. Palamas' philosophical training allowed him to oppose Barlaam through philosophical arguments. He accused his rival of considering the Father and the Son as two principles deriving one from the other, in a way that lead to consider the Son as the principle of the Holy Spirit. Palamas affirmed also that human syllogisms on God are apodictic and not merely dialectic. Barlaam reacted by detailing further his position on Trinitarian procession and the value of syllogism in theology and by accusing his rival of being "ignorant and uncultivated." Furthermore, he attacked the Hesychasts, alleging them of Messalianism and "omphalopsychism," a neologism by which he criticized the Hesychast conception of prayer as a process involving also the body, through concentration on some of its parts (navel, heart). Finally he denied the possibility, claimed by Hesychasts, to see God's uncreated light through bodily eyes: according to Barlaam, the light is just a symbol of the Divinity and cannot be identified with the same light that has been seen by the Apostles on the Mount Tabor at Christ's Transfiguration. Palamas' confutation of Barlaam's criticism led him to the definition of the distinction between essence and energies in God, claiming, on the ground of Greek patristic apophaticism, that the first remains totally unknown and unreachable to the intellect and cannot be participated by anyone of the created beings. Nevertheless men and angels can participate in the divine life through God's uncreated energies, which are themselves God, but are distinct from his essence. Palamas defended his thesis in a treatise entitled *The Triads*, and synthesized his views in a document, the *Tomos hagioreitikos*, which was subscribed by the most of Athonite prominent monks. A Synod convoked

in Constantinople in 1341 condemned Barlaam's teaching and decreed that Taboric light was truly uncreated God's energy, affirming the validity of Hesychast prayer as a way to attain the experience of divine light and to achieve deification. Disappointed by the condemnation and by the contextual victory of Palamas, Barlaam retired to Italy, where he converted to Catholicism and taught Greek to Petrarca, before being appointed as bishop of Geraci. After 1341 the anti-Palamite party was led by Gregory Acyndinos (1300–1348), once a common friend of both Barlaam and Palamas. Acyndinos refused to admit that energy could be uncreated, since, in this case, it would be the divine essence itself. Secondly he denied the possibility that men participate in something uncreated, since they would be coeternal to God. The disputation entered into its second phase, which turned this time against Palamas. The Athonite monk was persecuted by the patriarch John XIV Calecas, until 1347, when Calecas was removed and Palamas elected as Archbishop of Thessalonica. A third phase of the debate begun thenceforth with Nicephorus Gregoras, who refused, as already Acyndinos did, the distinction between essence and energies in God. The main feature of Palamas' theology was indeed seen as a patent contradiction of the argument of God's simplicity, as also Prochorus Cydones remarked from a Thomists perspective. Another Synod, in 1351, acknowledged definitely the truthiness of Palamite distinction. Palamas died in 1359 and was canonized in 1368 by the patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos, one of his former pupils.

Impact and Legacy

The triumph of Palamism represented a watershed in Byzantine philosophical history. Palamas' epistemology admitted the validity of secular philosophy as a tool of investigation of created beings, but the knowledge of God should have remained within the competence of theology alone. Diminishing the worthiness of dialectics in theological investigation, Palamas emphasized on the other side the value of experience, relying on the

tenets of Hesychast mysticism. This epistemological distinction turned out to be highly influential on future developments of the philosophical and theological method and at the same time was conflicting with the contemporary diffusion in Byzantium of the Scholastic method and Thomistic philosophy. Nevertheless external events, such as the Council of Florence and its failure, and finally the Fall of Constantinople, aligned Byzantine intellectuals on a general anti-Latin sentiment and discouraged any further development of the theological method through philosophy and dialectics. The main tenet of Byzantine theology remained then fixed in the shape of Palamism.

Aristotelianism and Platonism in the Fifteenth Century

The influence of Palamism on the following Byzantine intellectual debate can be noticed, for example, in the attitude of Matthew Panaretos, whose anti-Thomism we have already mentioned above. Panaretos assumed that between philosophy and theology, there cannot be any compatibility, since revealed truth is undeniably superior to the power of the human mind. Nevertheless, he used Aristotelian logics to confute the Latin doctrine of *Filioque*. Similarly, the Cretan monk Joseph Philagrios (1335–1400) cultivated his interest in Aristotelian philosophy and Platonism while engaging at the same time in the theological debate against the union with the Latin Church. He commented on the *Categories*, and established a school of theology and philosophy in his monastery, but always maintaining the separation between secular and religious learning. He also criticized Byzantine Thomists Demetrius Cydones and Manuel Calecas.

Another consequence of the affirmation of Palamism was the shift of interest among Byzantine humanists toward the sole exegesis of the problems of Ancient philosophy, focusing in particular on the confrontation between Platonism and Aristotelianism. As a result of disfavoring the application of philosophy and dialectical method to theological issues, we can also point the extreme reaction of George Gemistus Pletho out. In fact, Pletho (1355–1452), stepping outside the borders of Christian philosophy, devoted

himself to the reestablishment of Pagan polytheism. He studied in Adrianopolis, which was under the Ottoman control since 1365. After traveling in Palestine and Cyprus, he settled in Mistra, the capital of the Byzantine Despotate of the Morea. Here he taught philosophy, astronomy, and history. The location of Mistra, close to the site of the ancient Sparta, offered an evocative scenario for his project of political and moral renovation by recovering ancient Greek paganism through Platonic and Stoic philosophy. He exposed this utopic project in the *Treatise on Laws* (*Nomon syggraphé*), having in mind the foundation of natural religion through dialectics, recurring exclusively to human reason. Pletho had many students: among them, we can remember Bessarion and George Gennadius Scholarios. This latter became Pletho's harsh enemy, and having been elected as the first Patriarch of Constantinople after of the Sack of 1453, he condemned the largest part of the works of his ancient master. Pletho's most important work, which survived from the condemnation, is the treatise on the *Difference between Platonic and Aristotelian Philosophy* (1439), in which he claimed the superiority of Plato over Aristotle through a detailed confrontation of their systems of thought. In particular he criticized Aristotle's *Metaphysics* because its conception of God as the Prime mover and he purposed a defense of Plato's theory of ideas against the Stagirite's criticism. Scholarios replied to Pletho assuming the defense of Aristotle and denouncing his deviation toward paganism. Pletho composed then an apologetic work *Against Scholarios' objections*, in which he detailed his former thesis, and rhetorically presented Platonism as the closest system to the Christian dogma. Another significant disputation based on the confrontation between Aristotle and Plato was animated by two major scholars from Trebizond: George Trapezuntius (1395–1472) and Bessarion (1403–1472). The first wrote a *Comparatio Aristotelis et Platonis*, in which he attacked Plato accusing him of diffusing mythological narrations (metempsychosis) and immorality (the communion of women). Bessarion, former Pletho's student, rejected Trapezuntius' accusations, coming to the defense of Plato in his *Against the*

Calumniators of Plato. Byzantine debate between Aristotelian and Platonist scholars will play over the next decades a great influence on Italian humanism and western Renaissance, making this kind of confrontations a literary genre.

Both the opposing trends that featured late Byzantine speculation, that is, theological traditionalism and humanistic classicism, were destined to seed their legacy in the division of the Byzantine intellectual world in those dramatic years that stretch from the Council of Florence to the Fall of 1453: all the theologians and philosophers who remained faithful to the Byzantine tradition and refused, after Florence, the union with the Catholic Church were tasked to transmit their knowledge to the posterity under the Ottoman rule, which necessarily limited their freedom to pursue original developments. Byzantine humanists, who had the occasion to meet Italian universities and cultural circles in the years of the Council, emigrated to Italy, where they had the chance to continue their intellectual activity and to diffuse ancient philosophical learning in Italian Renaissance. After 1453 we can recognize two major legacies of Byzantine philosophy: in the west Byzantines offered a major contribution to the diffusion of the knowledge of ancient philosophy, by direct teaching and by transmitting the manuscripts brought out of Constantinople. As member of the Greek delegation to the Council without obligation to attend all of the sessions, being layman and secular philosopher, Pletho had the chance to meet Italian humanists. In one of these occasions, according to the witness of Marsilio Ficino, Cosimo de' Medici was among his listeners and received the inspiration from Pletho's talk to promote the foundation of the Florentine Platonic Academy. In this same context, the Byzantine humanist Demetrios Chalkokondyles (1423–1511) helped Marsilio Ficino in translating Plato's complete works.

Bessarion has been perhaps the most influential figure of Byzantine diaspora in Italy. He accepted the union of Florence in 1439, but once back in Constantinople, he suffered the unfriendly attitude against unionists, and when the majority of Byzantine bishop withdrew from the union, having been already invested of the rank of

Cardinal by the pope Eugene IV, he moved definitely to Italy in 1440, where he played an important role in helping Byzantine refugees and rescuing Greek culture and learning. His collection of manuscripts was destined to become the core of the Marcian Library of Venice. Thanks to his contribution, Platonism prevailed over Aristotelianism. Plato's knowledge was diffused in Italy also thanks to Michael Apostolis (1422–1478) and John Argyropoulos, who was more properly an Aristotelian. Argyropoulos (1393/1415–1487), possibly one of Pletho's former students, participated in the Council of Florence holding a pro-unionist position. He studied in Padua around 1444, and once back in Constantinople, he taught Aristotelian logic, medicine, and philosophy of nature. After 1453 he moved to Italy, where he continued his career teaching Aristotelian logics, metaphysics, ethics, and physics. He translated many of the Stagirite's works and gave lectures on Plato's dialogues. Assuming that Plato and Aristotle were equivalent, he declined to take part to the debate on which of the two philosophers was the preeminent. Among Aristotelians the most remarkable scholars were Theodore of Gaza (1398/1415–1475/1476), Andronicus Callistus, and George of Trebizond (or Trapezuntius). The first one taught Greek at the university of Ferrara since 1446, and in 1449 moved to Rome, where he was charged by the Pope Nicholas V to translate several works of Aristotle and revise some of George of Trebizond's translations. Theodore adopted an innovative method of translation, which had a vast influence, but Trapezuntius, being disappointed by the choice to revise his texts, entered in polemics against Gaza's choices of translation. Gaza criticized also Pletho and supported Bessarion in his disputation against Trapezuntius. Byzantine Aristotelianism received another remarkable recognition when, in 1497, the Epirot Nicholas Laonicus Thomaeus (1456–1531) was appointed as lecturer on Aristotle at Padua University, where he distinguished himself by using in his teaching nothing but Greek texts and Greek commentaries, in the attempt to overpass the hegemony of Arabic exegesis.

Byzantine Philosophical Learning After Byzantium

Intellectual life in former territories of Byzantium under the non-Christian rule of the Ottomans or under the non-Orthodox western occupants (as in the island of Crete and in the Ionian see) was subjected to significant limitations. The first aim of Byzantine scholars became consequently the preservation of the legacy of their culture and religion. The century after the Fall of the Empire is considered as the Italian period of Byzantine culture, since the most part of Greek scholars emigrated to Italy. After the generation of Bessarion and Trapezuntios, who were more properly intellectual refugees, by the sixteenth century, we find Byzantine philosophers in Italy fully adapted to the local scholarship mainstream, which means writing in Latin and using Latin and Arabic exegesis of Aristotle. This was the case, by instance, of Michael Sofianos (†1564) and Daniel Fourlanos (†1592). On the other side, those scholars who remained in Constantinople undertook a completely different task, that of ensuring the continuation of the Orthodox tradition and Byzantine learning. Theodore Agallianos (afterward metropolite of Medeia with the name of Theophanes) (1400–1474), beside witnessing the tragic events connected to the Turkish conquest, wrote three works in refutation of the Latin Church, as well as two philosophical treatises, respectively, devoted to the Providence and to the soul. George Amiroutzes (1400–1470), philosopher, theologian, medicine, and statesman from Trebizond, is found later at the service of Mehmed II, the conqueror of the City, whereby he was granted of the privilege of consulting the Greek manuscripts collection at the Topkapi, which was otherwise inaccessible. In Constantinople the preservation of the Byzantine learning was ensured in particular by ecclesiastical institutions such the Patriarchal Academy. One of its illustrious sixteenth-century figures was John Zygomalas (1498–1584), who was engaged in the dialogue with the Lutherans, and contributed to spread the knowledge of post-Byzantine culture in Germany. He played an essential role,

with his son Theodosius (1544–1607), in the transmission of Byzantine and ancient Greek learning. Representative of the conservative theologians, in line of Markos Eugenikos and Gennadios Scholarios, Pachomios Roussanos (1508–1553), born in Zante, criticized many primary doctrinal tenets of ancient philosophy, such as the eternity of the world and the role of the fate, but accepted some aspects of the Platonic doctrine of the soul.

The prevailing conservative orientation in Orthodox theology was destined to exercise an evaluable influence in Russia through the teaching of Maximus the Greek (1470–1556). Born in Arta to a family originated from Mistra, he studied in Italy, where he attended the most important milieux of Italian renaissance, coming into contact, among others, with Marsilio Ficino and the Platonic Academy, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Angelo Poliziano. In Florence he had also the occasion to appreciate the preaching of Girolamo Savonarola. He became a monk at the Mount Athos in 1505, where he changed his intellectual attitude, rejecting his former openness to humanism. In 1518 he moved to Moscow, having been sent as translator of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church after the request of Tsar Basil III. Since he did not know Russian, he translated from Greek to Latin, letting other translators realize the final Russian version. His position was rather critical toward all of intellectual issues other than Orthodoxy: he harshly criticized Latin theology, passing from the accusation against Augustin of having supported the Filioque to the opposition to Scholastic methodology, which – in Maximus' view – gave too much place to Aristotle (in particular to his logics) and Plato, or even to Averroes, and relied excessively on syllogistic argumentations. Nevertheless he admitted the study of philosophy as propaedeutic to the study of theology. He also disapproved Lutherans and condemned all attempts, like that of Pletho, to Hellenize the Byzantine culture. He finally complained the evolution of Russian culture toward the taste of Renaissance, maintaining that Russian Church ought to maintain its Byzantine roots. Relying on the weight of Scriptures and

Patristic authorities, Maximus lacked in originality and anyway he did not support his criticism by rigorous argumentations.

One of the rare schools still open and active was that of Candia (Crete), where scholars like Meletios Pegas (1549–1601) and Maximos Margunios (1549–1602) were trained. Both studied afterward philosophy and medicine in Padua. Pegas, who became thereupon Patriarch of Alexandria, has been a strong opponent of the Catholic Church but accepted the doctrine of Eucharistic transubstantiation. At the opposite, Margunios, invested of the ecclesiastical rank of bishop of Chythera, wrote several theological treatises, in which he expressed a conciliatory view on the Filioque and approved the way Augustin of Hippo exploited Platonic themes in Christian theological argumentation. Generally he accepted the possibility of drawing useful arguments also from secular philosophy. The radical separation of philosophy and theology was instead the methodological principle assumed by Theophilos Korydaleus (c. 1570–1646), who also held that philosophy cannot have any implication in theological reflection. Korydaleus was born in Athens and was trained in Aristotelian philosophy in Padua under Cesare Cremonini. He introduced the study of secular philosophy in the patriarchal school of Constantinople, having been appointed here to the role of teacher and successively of director. His position was attacked by traditionalists like Nikolaos Koursoulas (1602–1652), but finally the Church of Constantinople accepted Korydaleus Aristotelianism, on the basis of the doctrine of the “double truth,” which postulates the equivalence of philosophical and theological truth as two parallel types of knowledge. Starting from these epistemological principles, the official Church gradually accepted the idea of teaching natural philosophy independently from the biblical doctrine of Creation. By the seventeenth century, the Greek orthodox came into the idea of thinking at their culture as the legitimate heir not only of Byzantium but also of Ancient Greece. At the end of the century, a generation of Greek scholars taught natural sciences in Orthodox schools following the teaching of Korydaleus and adopting his writings as textbooks.

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C

Cabasilas, Neilos

► [Kabasilas, Neilos](#)

Cabasilas, Nicholas

► [Kavasilas, Nikolaos](#)

Cabasilas, Nicolas

► [Kavasilas, Nikolaos](#)

Cabasilas, Nikolaus

► [Kavasilas, Nikolaos](#)

Cabinet de Curiosité

► [Kunstkammer](#)

Caesalpinus, Andreas

► [Cesalpino, Andrea](#)

Caietano

► [Cajetan, Thomas de Vio](#)

Cajetan, Thomas de Vio

Born: 20 February 1468, Gaeta

Died: 10 August 1534, Rome

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Abstract

A Dominican philosopher and theologian, among the main representatives of sixteenth-century Aristotelianism and perhaps the greatest Renaissance commentator on St Thomas's works. He is known for his restatement of the doctrine of the analogy of being and for his innovations in psychology.

Alternate Names

[Caietano](#); [Gaetano](#)

Biography

A Dominican philosopher and theologian. Born in Gaeta on 20 February 1468. Died in Rome on 10 August 1534. Among the most notable representatives of Dominican Aristotelianism, De Vio entered the Order at the age of 16 and studied in Naples, Bologna, and Padua. He became Padua University's professor of Thomist metaphysics, a post he held from 1494 to 1497. In Padua, where he was known as Cajetan, he came into contact with, and often debated with, the followers of Scotus, like Trombetta, and of Averroes, like Vernia, Pomponazzi, and Nifo. He later taught theology in Pavia (1497–1499) and philosophy at La Sapienza University in Rome (1501–1508). He was a senior official in the Dominican Order and in 1508 became its General Master. He was made a cardinal in 1517. From then until 1519, he was a legate in Germany, where he was involved in debates with the Lutherans (Cossio 1902; Groner 1951). In 1523–1524 he was in Hungary, where he dedicated his last years to study and writing.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Cajetan's work mainly belongs to the tradition of scholastic commentary (developing the ideas of previous authors), of which he is perhaps the greatest representative. His philosophical and spiritual guide is mainly Thomas Aquinas, most of whose works he commented on thoroughly. He became the main defender of Aquinas's ideas against those of Scotus and Averroes's followers, which were becoming prevalent in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Although his thought is set out as comments on Thomas's, De Vio's Aristotelianism has its own original features which in some cases reinterpret or even modify Aquinas's doctrines. It is in this respect in particular that Cajetan's work was to become a constant point of reference for the doctrines (and the debates) of Spanish Aristotelians, especially Jesuits, who discussed his positions in depth. The most important and original concepts put

forward by De Vio are to be found in metaphysics and psychology.

Metaphysics, The Doctrine of Analogy

Concerning metaphysics, Cajetan is well known for his views on the doctrine of analogy, which emerges in particular in his commentary on Thomas's *De Ente et Essentia* (see Cajetan 1558) and is founded on the prior distinction between the "formal" concept and the "objective" one, through which De Vio develops two senses of the very concept of a being (Gilson 1953; Reilly 1971; Porro 1995; Riva 1995). The first sense, the formal one, is the concept of the representation, generated by a possible intellect, of the thing understood. In this sense then, the being serves as a single representation that brings together substance and accident, God and His creatures, all sharing the status as beings. The second sense, the objective one, is the concept of the thing itself represented by the formal concept, taken as the thing that is known through representation. In this second sense then, the being is not something general and shared by all realities, but is actually a real something that may be assigned to types and categories. By denying the being the possibility of representing in general something objectively common to all realities – substances and accidents, Creator, and things created – De Vio thus puts himself, with Thomas, in opposition to the view put forward by Duns Scotus, whose concept of a being was as a definite objective reality above any incidental categories. Scotus, according to the Dominican, makes the mistake of confusing the formal concept of a being with the objective concept, thus making the being, in its most general sense as a representation, into an objectively real something preexisting in any particular being. From there, Cajetan had to give an account of whether it was possible for a being or its essence to represent something analogically or univocally stable of the substance or of the accident or of God or His creatures, a question De Vio answered by formulating a proposal that was to have great influence on later scholars (McCanles 1968; Ashworth 1995; Porro 1995; Krause 1999). He distinguished between "equivocal" concepts,

i.e., those cases where the same word has different meanings, and “univocal” concepts, where one word has the same meaning, and “analogous” concepts, those where the same word has a meaning that is in a sense the same but in a sense different. Where and when are terms considered analogous? Analogy can be meant in two different ways: one is in “attribution,” i.e., based on the fact that different terms share a relationship to a term that is primary and paradigmatic for the whole set, while the other is in “proportionality,” where a relationship between two terms can be established only in that there is a proportion between them. As far as essence and being are concerned, only this latter form of analogy is possible, since between God and His creatures, there is no sharing of essence or reality in a univocal sense, but only a parallelism based on a proportion. So the formal concept of a being represents what is generally understood to be the essence of whatever it is, including substance and God, whereas in the objective sense, a being can be considered a being in common with other beings only by the nonunivocal means of proportionality. The doctrine of analogy put forward by Cajetan then goes together with his positions concerning the real distinction between being and essence, set out by the Dominican still in opposition to Scotus and Trombetta and in accordance with what Thomas’s teaching on the matter was believed to be (Porro 1995). De Vio was among the supporters of the reality of that distinction, because essence, he argued, always owes its existence to reality independent of it. Being therefore has to be understood in an essentialistic sense, since existence is not, except in God’s case, a predicate of essence, and everything that has being is made up of characteristics defining its essence. By taking this turn toward admitting a real distinction between essence and existence and allowing an essentialistic view of reality, in a way far removed from the primacy of *actus essendi* that had seemed to emerge here and there in Thomas’s work, Cajetan actually opened the way toward the deeply essentialistic version of Thomism (Gilson 1953; Krause 1999) that was to typify Spanish scholasticism (Ashworth 1995, 2008).

Psychology

From the psychological point of view (Cajetan 1938; Laurent 1938; Gilson 1961), De Vio again stayed close to Thomas Aquinas, whose thought he “tidied up” and restated. Cajetan held, like Aquinas, that the act of understanding should be thought of as an “objective” illumination and that the first principles of the intellect are known through sense experience, like the whole of human experience. On the other hand, concerning the human soul, De Vio gave a proof of its immortality and asserted its individuality in disagreement with the materialists, the skeptics, and the Paduan followers of Averroes (Gilson 1961). Like Aquinas in *De Unitate Intellectus*, he held that the immaterialness of mental operations – volition and cognition – revealed the simplicity of the soul and its separability from the body. It is worth noting, however, that on this point Cajetan’s interpretation actually parts company with the doctrines that Aquinas had set out in various versions not always consistent with each other, contributing again to creating a reworked version of Thomism that was to be popular over the following decades and finding in a sense a compromise with the major attacks it had been subjected to by Franciscans and by followers of Averroes from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century.

Cajetan supersedes Thomas’s doubts (and his inconsistencies) about, for example, the separability of the soul by considering it “*praeternaturalis*,” i.e., supernatural, rather than, as Thomas had said in his *Contra Gentiles* IV, 79 “*anti-natural*” (a description he would himself move away from in his *Summa Theologiae* I, 89). Practically then, De Vio thought of the soul, as some of the main Jesuit thinkers would, not just as potentially separable and capable of continued existence outside the body but as separate from it by its very nature, thus breaking with the identification of the soul with the form of the body in Thomas’s thought in opposition to Averroes’s and Plato’s. Accordingly, De Vio himself ended up arguing that the separate soul is more or less the same as an angel-like intellect, which practically paves the way toward thinking of the soul in its separated state as identical with the person’s intellect – a position

that would naturally lead into the kind of intellectualistic concept of mind that would steadily, right through to Descartes, become consolidated among the eclectic thinkers in the Aristotelian school, eating away at the foundations of the strong hylomorphism of the Champion of the Dominicans. Lastly, it should be remembered that De Vio, while clearly an opponent of Averroism as has been said, nevertheless explicitly denied, as a matter of history, that Aristotle's *De Anima* had meant to defend the immortality and uniqueness of the soul, thus conceding victory to Averroes on the question of interpretation, though not that of doctrine, a position that was to be used against the Aristotelians themselves a few years later by Pomponazzi in his *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* (Gilson 1961).

Cross-References

- [Nifo, Agostino](#)
- [Pomponazzi, Pietro](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Calcagnini, Celio

Born: Ferrara, 1474

Died: Ferrara, 1541

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Abstract

Celio Calcagnini, one of the most notable cultural figures in Ferrara, Italy, in the first half of the sixteenth century, was a humanist and a man of wide-ranging scholarship, highly erudite, and interested in a variety of fields such as philosophy, science, and religion. A renowned professor of rhetoric at Ferrara's Studio, Calcagnini was a student in the city in the years when Copernicus resided there and studied for his degree.

Biography

Celio Calcagnini, who was born in 1479 in Ferrara, where he died in 1541, championed the theories of Euclid and Ecphantus. His work *Quod coelum stet terra moveatur, vel de perenni motu terrae*, written before 1525 (it was then published in Basel in 1544 and, more recently, by Bacchelli in Italy in 2017), begins with the assertion that it is not the sky that moves, but the Earth. Recent studies have shed new light on his life and work, and some of them emphasized the Nicodemite element in his religious attitudes, and his connection with scholars and scientists of the Reformation such as Jacob Ziegler, a Bavarian scholar who kindled Calcagnini's scientific interests, and physician and humanist scholar Theodor Zwinger.

Calcagnini's efforts at reconciling Aristotelian and Platonic concepts and, above all, his own scientific and astrological knowledge, emerge in the treatise *Quod coelum stat*, which was indicative of the uneasy climate prevailing in Ferrara at the time of Ariosto. The fact that a humanist who was not

without astrological knowledge – though he surely wasn't much of an expert in mathematical calculations and was distant from Copernicus's theoretical presumptions – was trying to dismantle credulous beliefs in the senses in order to assert that the Earth rotates is a remarkable clue from a history of culture perspective. While Calcagnini's notions of physics and metaphysics were undoubtedly set within a traditional framework, as was his world system, the fact remains that his purpose was to debunk the presumptions of Aristotelian and Ptolemaic cosmology, also by making a more independent, critical use of traditional scholarship. Upon his death, Calcagnini bequeathed his “extremely precious library comprising as many as 1,249 volumes” (D'Ascia 2010) to the Dominican monastery in Ferrara where he is buried. His *De libero animi motu*, a small treatise in letter format addressed to Bonaventura Pistofilo and composed in January 1525, is not so much a Nicodemite-style apology of the bondage of the will but rather a comparison of philosophical opinions which, for its moderate outlook, is akin to the collating of biblical passages initiated by Erasmus (Calcagnini 1536). Like Cicero, Calcagnini combined practical dogmatism, which led him to reject Luther's doctrine of salvation through grace and to defend good deeds, with a degree of theoretical skepticism and eclecticism, which justified the oratorical practice of *declamatio in utramque partem*. It is worth noting that Calcagnini did not own any of Luther's works, while he appeared to be very open to Reformist thinkers who focused on themes closer to humanistic inclinations. He was a friend of scholar Pellegrino Morato, a die-hard advocate of the use of Latin who was much involved in Ciceronian controversies. Calcagnini was an influence on the education of poetess Olimpia Morata and in the composition of an oration in defense of Cicero, now lost, which the 14-year-old girl wrote after reading Calcagnini's critique of Cicero's *De officiis* (Plastina 2011). Calcagnini, taking his cue from Erasmus's *De libero arbitrio*, argued against Luther's bondage of the will, starting a written correspondence with Erasmus of Rotterdam (whom he met in 1508 when the latter spent a short time in Ferrara), who greatly appreciated Calcagnini's intervention, in which Reformist

doctrines were labelled as “Lutheranum ulcus” and Luther himself was described as a ferocious boar laying waste to the Lord’s vineyard (Calcagnini 1973). Calcagnini openly referenced Erasmus – who argued against the Lutheran doctrine of predestination and advocated free will by drawing on the holy scriptures – and underlined that the issue of free will had been long debated by ancient, non-Christian authors, cataloguing the opinions, both in favor of and against it, of Greek philosophers like Democritus, the Stoics, Epicurus, Carneades, Plato, and even Aristotle, whose thinking on the matter remains unclear. After refuting the claim that human freedom doesn’t exist, because of divine omniscience, Calcagnini sided with Cicero in stating that freedom is rationally necessary to acknowledge virtue, reward, and punishment, thus welding together the philosophers’ elevated words with the holy scriptures. Calcagnini may have met John Calvin during the visit the latter made to Ferrara in 1536. It is to Calcagnini himself, a protonotary apostolic prelate, that Calvin is probably referring in a famous passage of his *Excuse à Messieur les Nicodémistes* against Nicodemite courtiers, defined as “prothonotaires delicatz” (Ginzburg 1970).

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Calidum Innatum

► [Innate Heat](#)

Callistos, Andronicos

Born: Thessaloniki, ca. 1400

Died: London 1486

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Abstract

Andronicos Callistos was a Byzantine philosopher and scholar who, after the fall of Constantinople, moved to Italy to teach the Greek language. He later left for Paris, where he was instrumental in the growth of Greek studies, and London. He took part in the controversy between Platonists and Aristotelians that divided Byzantine émigrés in Italy. As an Aristotelian, he defended Theodoros Gazes against the accusations of the Platonist Michael Apostolis.

Biography

Andronicos Callistos was a Greek philosopher and scholar and the cousin of the philosopher and scholar Theodoros Gazes (ca. 1398–ca. 1475). Like Gazes, he took part in the controversy between Platonists and Aristotelians that was initiated by Plethon’s treatise *De differentiis Platonis et Aristotelis* (*On the Differences between Plato and Aristotle*) and occupied the Byzantine philosophers-émigrés of the Renaissance like Basilios Bessarion, Georgios Trapezountios, and Michael Apostolis. Andronicos belonged to the intellectual cycle of Bessarion who, though a student of Plethon, adopted a moderate stand in the dispute,

advocating a mild variant Platonism. After the fall of Constantinople, Andronicos sought refuge, like many other Byzantine intellectuals, in Italy and taught Greek in various Italian cities like Bologna, Rome, Florence, and later in Paris and London where he spent the rest of his life. In Paris he became a renowned professor and scholar and purveyor of Greek learning (see Cammelli 1942). Callistos had a profound knowledge of Aristotelian philosophy and translated Aristotle's *On generation and Corruption* into Latin (on Callistos' erudition see Centanni 1984/1985; Günther 1999; Powell 1938). When Michael Apostolis criticized Gazes' defense of Aristotle against Plethon's Platonist condemnation of the Stagirite, Andronicos wrote a scathing refutation of Apostolis's treatise (see Callistos 1967; Monfasani 1985). Callistos refuted the accusations made by Apostolis against Gazes that he was a compiler, an allegation that for Apostolis concerned also the Latins of the time. Callistos defended the Latins and Latin philosophy and referred to the work of Cicero as an example of philosophical excellence in the West. Callistos insisted that the Latins possessed scientific accuracy, in addition to a genuine philosophical spirit, and he criticized Apostolis's comparison of the Greeks with the Latins as a form of essentialism.

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Calor Innatus

► [Innate Heat](#)

Calor Nativus

► [Innate Heat](#)

Calor Vitalis

► [Innate Heat](#)

Calvin, Jean

Born: 10 July 1509; Noyon, France

Died: 27 May 1564; Geneva, Switzerland

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Abstract

Provides an overview of the life, work, and impact of John Calvin, the sixteenth-century Protestant reformer. Calvin spent his early life in France, but his career as a reformer focused on the city of Geneva. Calvin's most influential

work was the *Institutes*, and under his leadership Geneva became the center of an international Protestant movement.

Biography

Born in Noyon, France, John Calvin was a central figure of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. At a young age, Calvin left Noyon for theological studies at Paris, but – in part due to the influence of his father – Calvin moved from Paris to pursue the study of law at Orléans. During this period Calvin came into contact with the new learning of the French humanist movement and gained an appreciation for historical and literary studies, as well as the study of biblical and classical languages. In fact, Calvin's first work was a Latin commentary on Seneca's *De Clementia* (1532). By the early 1530s, Calvin had also become acquainted with a group that supported reform of the church, and many of them were familiar with the writings of both Erasmus and Luther. In 1533 Calvin got tied up in the Cop Affair – in which Nicholas Cop, the new rector of the University of Paris, gave an address which was sympathetic to the reforms of the humanists and the new Protestant movement. Both Cop and Calvin were forced to flee Paris, and Calvin moved to Basel, where in 1536 he published his first edition of the *Institutes* – one of the most important works of the Protestant Reformation. Later in 1536 Calvin ended up in Geneva where William Farel implored Calvin to stay and assist in the reform of the church. Both Farel and Calvin came into immediate conflict with the city magistrates – primarily over the degree of control, the magistrates should exercise over the church – and in 1538 Calvin and Farel were forced out of Geneva. Calvin then spent 3 years (1538–1541) in Strasbourg where he married and served as pastor for a French exile congregation; at this time he also came under the influence of the German reformer, Martin Bucer, and published an expanded French edition of his *Institutes*. In 1541, with the Reformation in

jeopardy in Geneva, Calvin was called back to the city; almost immediately upon his return, he produced the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, a model plan for the organization and governance of the church. Calvin then remained in Geneva, engaged in the work of reform, until his death in 1564. It was only later in life that Calvin's conflicts with the city magistrates and leading families of Geneva diminished.

Impact and Themes

Calvin's impact on the sixteenth-century Reformation cannot be underestimated: his summary and exposition of the new Reformed religion contained in the *Institutes* remains extremely influential. In the *Institutes* one finds the dominant themes of Calvin's theology: the sovereignty of God, salvation as a divine gift, the authority of Scripture, and the importance of sanctification. Calvin also preached regularly in Geneva, wrote commentaries on almost every book of the Bible, carried on an extensive correspondence with Protestant leaders throughout Europe, and engaged in polemical exchange with both his Catholic and Protestant (Lutheran and Anabaptist) opponents. Calvin argued for a church polity in which the church was independent of state or magisterial control – although he never fully achieved the kind of independence for the church in Geneva that he wanted. For Calvin the true church was distinguished by the right preaching of the word and the correct administration of the sacraments, and Calvin promoted a simple style of worship. Geneva also became a center of the international Protestant movement under Calvin – many refugees came to Geneva in the 1540s and 1550s, and Geneva served as a training center for Protestant ministers in the middle and later decades of the sixteenth century. Calvin placed a strong emphasis on the need for a disciplined Christian life and created the consistory (composed of ministers and elders) whose role it was to engage in the moral oversight of the Genevan community. Finally, Calvin developed

at least the foundation for a theory of resistance and revolt that would turn out to be an important force within European politics in the sixteenth century and beyond.

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Calvinism

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Abstract

Named after John Calvin and centered in Geneva, Calvinism became an international movement of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. Calvinism developed into a theological system – with an emphasis on the sovereignty of God – and an active movement for reform of the church and society.

Impact and Legacy

Calvinism refers to the theological system and reform movement that developed under the leadership of John Calvin in the middle decades of the sixteenth century. Calvin grew up in a Catholic family, but by the early 1530s, he had begun to associate himself with the Protestant reform movement in France; forced to leave his native country because of his association with Protestantism, he spent most of his life in the Swiss city of Geneva (1536–1538; 1541–1564), where

he remained until his death in 1564. Under Calvin's influence, Geneva became the center of an international Calvinist, or Reformed, movement. Much of Calvin's theological system is contained in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* which he first published in 1536 but continued to revise and expand until the final edition in 1559. Calvin was trained as a lawyer and shaped by the Renaissance humanist movement in France – and both of these influences are present in the *Institutes*.

Calvin's theology – and thus much of later Calvinism as well – was characterized by a strong emphasis on the corrupting power of sin and human depravity and hence the need for grace and the gift of divine salvation. It was in this context that Calvin developed his now famous doctrine of predestination, including both election and reprobation. God is active in the universe and ultimately nothing happens apart from God's will. Calvin also described faith as a true knowledge of God, characterized by obedience to the will of God. Other theological emphases in Calvinism include the sovereignty and providence of God, the absolute authority of Scripture, the centrality of preaching, and the importance of sanctification as an ongoing process. Calvin stressed the need for a biblical piety and for an active and disciplined life lived in service to God. Calvin also strongly opposed the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, rejected the Mass as a sacrifice, and repudiated the concept of papal authority over the church. The doctrine of the covenant also became a dominant feature of later Calvinism.

Much of the influence of Calvin came through the establishment of Geneva as a center of international Calvinism in the sixteenth century. Many Protestant refugees came to Geneva where they were influenced by Calvin's preaching and teaching, and the Genevan Academy, established in 1559, served as a center for the training of Protestant ministers – who then took Calvin's ideas to other parts of Europe. Geneva became a publishing and printing center for the

international Calvinist movement, and certain universities, such as Heidelberg and Leiden, also became known as Reformed centers of learning. Calvinism distinguished itself by its church polity which emphasized the need for an independent church governance free from the influence of the civil magistrate. The role of the magistrate was to support true religion but not to interfere in the internal organization of the church. Calvinism came to be characterized by its emphasis on the four offices of the church (teacher, minister, elder, and deacon) and by the role of the consistory (ministers and elders) in providing religious and moral oversight of the Christian community.

Calvinism also proved influential in the social and political realms. Calvin placed a strong emphasis on work and vocation, and a disciplined moral life became a feature of Calvinist piety. Social welfare or poor relief also became an important characteristic of Calvinist communities. Calvinism made significant contributions to political theory as well with its emphasis on the right and duty of armed resistance and revolt against unjust or tyrannical rulers. In this context Calvinism became associated with resistance to Catholic rule in France, the Low Countries, and Scotland, and it encouraged perseverance in the faith even in times of extreme persecution. Calvinism also supported an activism in politics and at least in certain contexts a republican form of government – which set it apart from the Lutheran political tradition and Lutheran attitudes toward civil authority. By the 1560s Calvinism had extended its influence throughout much of Europe, and this influence would expand, through the Puritans, across the Atlantic as well.

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Camariotes, Matthaïos

Born: Thessaloniki Early Fifteenth Century

Died: Constantinople 1490

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Abstract

He was a Greek scholar, who lived in the fifteenth century. He was heavily influenced by Gennadios Scholarios' views and he fervently attacked Georgios Gemistos Plethon.

Alternate Names

[Kamariotis](#); [Matthaïos](#)

Biography

His family originated in Thessaloniki and lived in Constantinople. His father was a priest. He initially studied with Gennadios Scholarios. Afterward, he studied grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology, and he had some knowledge of mathematics, geometry, and mathematical astronomy. His extensive humanistic education made him a well-known scholar and led him to teaching, copying manuscripts, and writing original treatises. His remarkable activity as a teacher led some scholars to hold that he was the first Director of the Patriarchal Academy after the Fall of Constantinople, although such a claim is not documented.

After the Fall of Constantinople, his family broke up, his father and his brother were lost, and he was captured. Later he managed to be liberated and reunited with his mother, sister,

Sotiris Fournaros: deceased.

and one of his nephews. In the following years, his traces are lost. He is believed to have lived for some time in Thessaloniki and later spent some years in Constantinople. He died in the winter of 1490.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Camariotes belongs to the scholars who criticized the so-called “first neo-Hellene” Philosophers, as Plethon (or Georgios Gemistos, c. 1360–1454). In *Rhetorikes Epitomi ek ton tou Ermogenous (Compendium of Rhetoric from Hermogenes)* Camariotes leans on the Greek rhetorician’s, Hermogenes of Tarsus’ (second century) *Peri Staseon (On Legal Issues)*, while he invokes Aristotle, and especially his *Rhetoric*, for all the important definitions, discriminations, and clarifications regarding the art of discourse. Camariotes disputed Plethon’s *Peri Eimarmenis (On fate)* with his *Logoi duo pros Plethona peri eimarmenis (Two Discourses on Plenthon’s on Fate)*. He stood aside with Gennadios – Scholarios in the anti-platonic movement, especially by reinstating the Christian God and setting aside anti-Christian notions.

Other treatises focused on rhetoric: *Peri ton Stoicheion tou Logou (On the Discourse’s Elements)*, *Epitomi eis ta tes Rhetorikes Progyrnasmata (Compendium on Rhetoric’s Preparation)*, and *Synoptiki Paradosse tes Rhetorikes (Concise Tutorial of Rhetoric)*. Strictly philosophical are the *Logoi duo pros Plethona peri eimarmenis (Two Discourses on Plenthon’s on Fate)*, and the *Exegesis eis tas Epistolas Synesiou (Exegesis in Synesius Epistles)*. Religious insights characterize the *Egomion eis tous Treis Ierarches (Praise for the Three Hierarchs)* and *Exegesis tou Symvolou tes Pisteos (Exegesis in Credo)*. Moreover, Camariotes has written *Stichoi Iamvikoi (Iambic Verses)* and *Epistoles (Epistles)*.

Impact and Legacy

Camariotes defended the Ecumenical Patriarch’s, Gennadius Scholarius’, philosophical and

religious views. He took active part in the debate between Platonists and Aristotelianists defending the Aristotelian philosophy.

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Camillo Delminio, Giulio

Born: 1480

Died: 15 May 1544

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Abstract

Giulio Camillo was a poet and a scholar active in the first half of the sixteenth century. Involved against Erasmus of Rotterdam in the controversies concerning *imitatio*, he sided with those who advocated Cicero as the only model of language for Latin prose. Camillo made himself a reputation as the proponent of a method for inventing tropes based on the topics of argumentation. He became even more well-known as the designer of a theater that organized the entirety of what

there is to be known according to a syncretic model that harmonized Christian, Neoplatonic, Hermetic, and Kabbalistic ideas, and that provided users with a repository of language enabling them to express any aspect of reality with single words and phrases gathered from the writings of classic poets and orators.

Biography

Giulio Camillo was born in Friuli, Italy, around 1480 (Stabile 1974). He adopted the toponymic Delminio from a city in Dalmatia that was supposedly his father's hometown (Camillo 1560). As a young man Camillo lived in Venice for some time or at least made frequent visits to the city, and was probably there during Erasmus's sojourn with Aldus Manutius and Andrea Torresani between 1506 and 1509, for Erasmus confessed to have once shared a bed with him (Stabile 1974). It also was in Venice that Camillo met his lifelong friend, Girolamo Muzio, to whom we owe the most detailed accounts of Camillo's intellectual career (Muzio 1590; Neri 1884; for more information on the young Camillo, although not always reliable, see Liruti 1780).

No records confirm that Camillo ever completed a university degree. In any case, his earliest extant works point to his eclectic interests, including Petrarchism, Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy, Hermeticism, and Kabbalah. Letters from the period from 1521 to 1525 place Camillo between Bologna and Padua, from where he communicated with a network of renowned scholars, writers, and artists. Titian painted a now-lost portrait of him (Vasoli 1984), and in 1528, Camillo appeared as the universal heir in the will of architect Sebastiano Serlio (Olivato 1979). Camillo also corresponded with Pietro Aretino and Marcantonio Flaminio and was mentioned in proximity to painter Lorenzo Lotto and future exile Alessandro Citolini (Stabile 1974; Vasoli 1975). In a period of increasing mistrust and surveillance of religious affairs, some of Camillo's acquaintances to varying degrees played the game of heterodoxy, and soon enough he was

compelled to gather proof of his adherence to established dogma in order to defend himself from accusations (Camillo 2015b).

In terms of reputation, Camillo's contemporaries considered him to be on a par with the personalities mentioned above. He aroused equal portions of veneration and scorn as the creator of a device that he called "a theater," which he intended to avail to anyone seeking to dissert eloquently about any topic whatsoever. According to Sebastiano Fausto da Longiano, Camillo conceived of and "finished" the theater in the summer of 1525 at Sebastiano Sauli's villa near Genoa (Bolzoni 2015). Thereafter, Camillo peregrinated from court to court in search of patrons who might take interest his project, and in 1530, Camillo seized the opportunity to join Muzio in the retinue of Count Claudio Rangoni, bound for France. King Francis I had learnt from Camillo's project, perhaps through Lazare de Baïf and Jean de Langeac, his ambassadors in Venice (Stabile 1974). At court in Fontainebleau, the king agreed to try Camillo's method. He perused the device for some time, after which Camillo tested the progress accomplished by the king. The results were satisfactory, and Francis I paid Camillo a generous sum with the condition that he complete the theater, and not communicate about it with anyone else (Neri 1884).

Beginning in 1530, Camillo wandered through different cities in France and Italy. In the retinue of Cardinal Jean de Lorraine, he saw Paul III elected pope in Rome in 1534 (Neri 1884). Despite arousing admiration among many, Camillo faced criticism from Paolo Giovio and Étienne Dolet, among others, and Andrea Alciato expressed concern that Camillo's deal with the king might be a scam (Stabile 1974; Christie 1899). Erasmus was particularly tenacious in his inquiries about Camillo's true allegiance. Wrongly persuaded that the latter was the real author of Giulio Cesare Scaligero's reply to his dialogue *Ciceronianus* (1528), Erasmus sent his friend Viglio Zwichem to Venice on a mission to clarify the issue (Bolzoni 1993). In a letter to Erasmus dated June 1532 that remains the sole surviving eyewitness account of Camillo's wooden amphitheater, Viglio described both the building and the man,

halfway between fascination and disdain (Yates 1974; Bolzoni 2015).

Most of Camillo's works can be considered to be partial descriptions of his project. Although he protested that writing about the theater risked the disclosure of the secrets of his method, Camillo escaped contradiction by pretending that his revelations were much-needed responses to adversaries who depicted him as a fraudster. Early in 1534, Camillo circulated his speech *Pro suo de eloquentia theatro ad Gallos oratio* in France, and in Italy, he dedicated *Discorso in materia del suo theatro* to Trifon Gabriele. In *L'idea dell'eloquenza*, Camillo sketched a plan for seven orations devoted to the orderly exposure of his project. This included *Dell'imitazione*, which was partially a response to Erasmus's *Ciceronianus*, and *Delle materie*, which he dedicated to Duke Ercole II of Ferrara when support from Francis I seemed to falter.

For the rest of his life, Camillo never stopped traveling. As late as 1542, Jean Calvin's letters place him in Geneva (Stabile 1974), and in 1543, he returned to Italy, convinced that he would never go back to France. Muzio's protector, the governor of Milan Alfonso D'Avalos, expressed curiosity in Camillo's secrets. Neither age nor disillusionment prevented him from hosting yet another demonstration to a prospective patron. In the presence of D'Avalos, Camillo disserted as if in rapture throughout a series of meetings that culminated in the governor's declaration, "True or false, I want it," which epitomized the blend of wonderment and skepticism that Camillo's project aroused everywhere. Before departing for war in Piedmont, D'Avalos asked Camillo to lay out his project in writing. As Muzio recalls, with him as scribe, the two friends completed the manuscript of *L'idea del theatro* "in seven mornings" (Muzio 1590; Neri 1884). Soon after, on May 15, 1544, Camillo died at Domenico Sauli's home in Milan.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Camillo's approach to rhetoric centered on the notion of imitation, which he argued had two sides that required separate consideration (Camillo 1970–74a). On the one hand, imitation

implies adherence to the conventional use of words that is common to speakers in a given time and place. Camillo described the realm of convention as something public, meaning that if someone were to say or write exactly the same utterance as someone else, then he or she would not be stealing, because notions such as creation and ownership are meaningless there. Quite differently, artifice is a field delimited by the ways in which particular speakers depart from conventional use by creating forms that, if repeated verbatim, would constitute theft. This is what happens, for instance, with tropes and figures.

Regarding convention and the use of Latin, Camillo sided with strict Ciceronians such as Pietro Bembo by declaring Cicero's writings to be the sole model for prose. In Erasmus's eyes, the absence of native speakers of Latin implied that sixteenth-century speakers should imitate the language of the ancients by selecting the best words from the books of the best authors of antiquity. However, for Camillo the eclecticism proposed by Erasmus was something that foreign speakers of a language could simply not afford in good conscience, for it required the kind of judgment that makes it possible to discern whether particular forms are better or worse, in order to critically choose and reject from what a multiplicity of writers have left in their works. This was a task for which only native speakers might lay legitimate claim, and therefore it had to be abandoned. If that rationale were not enough, then Camillo added that eclecticism begets monsters, for it results in a mixture of words from different periods that produces creatures that no one ever spoke at any time of history and that therefore cannot be assigned to any period. At the same time, Camillo justified his advocacy of Cicero as the model of Latin prose to the detriment of other authors by resorting to the notion popularized two decades earlier by Adriano Castellesi that language is a living being (Monfasani 1999). Languages are born, mature, decay, and eventually die. For Camillo, Cicero's era, and Cicero himself in particular, marked the perfection of Latin's existence. From that standpoint, it was easy to conclude that only his writings should be imitated as far as the use of the language is concerned.

Imitation works differently in the case of tropes and figures. Camillo warned that, in contrast to what happens to words in their usual meaning, if we were to reuse one of Vergil's metaphors or Cicero's periphrastic turns without altering them, then we would be guilty of theft. As he explained, because the notions of creation and ownership are relevant in the realm of artifice, the imitation of tropes and figures requires variation in order to be permissible. Camillo proudly claimed to have devised a method to do this. Conceiving the imitation of artifice as a form of invention, he naturally adapted the theory of the topics to the tropes. Rhetoricians had used the topics to find arguments since the days of Aristotle and Cicero and recently Rudolf Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* had again rendered them fashionable. Tropes, after all, make arguments on the basis of a relationship, however elliptical the way in which they formulate it may be (Camillo 1560, 1970–74a, 1970–74b). Camillo suggested that speakers should analyze the trope that they wish to imitate and identify by abstraction the topic upon which it is based. For instance, when Petrarch describes a sigh by saying that he breaks the air before his mouth, he argues in reference to the topic of consequence – that is, what necessarily follows. When the poet writes that he makes foliage tremble, however, he describes the same sigh according to the topic of adjuncts – that is, what may or may not occur subsequent to the action being described, “for it is not necessary that when we blow we make the things in front of us tremble, unless they are really close to us.” To imitate Petrarch's description of a sigh without incurring theft, Camillo's method prescribed that speakers identify other occurrences that necessarily or might follow the act of sighing. Acutely aware of the nuances of his method, Camillo warned that topics generally less valid for argumentation, including the adjuncts that lay no claim to necessity and argue only according to what is possible and contingent, show greater artifice when they serve the invention of tropes. In fact, those topics make the speaker's wit shine more brilliantly, for the audience recognizes the greater difficulty of using them and still formulate something that appears plausible (Camillo 1970–74b).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Camillo's aim at renewing the whole of rhetoric did not stop there. To assist poets and orators in disserting on any discipline whatsoever, he compiled a repository of concepts that listed single words and phrases (“locuzioni”), both Latin and Italian, used by classics such as Virgil, Cicero, and Petrarch to put any idea into language. What Camillo called his “anatomy” of the tradition provided users with “two forests, one of things and the other of words,” seeking to restore the link between wisdom and eloquence, which (according to him) Socrates had destroyed (Camillo 1567; Muzio 1590). The project started as a dictionary arranged in alphabetical order, but the method revealed itself useless for speakers who did not know the term for the concept that they sought to express. Accordingly, Camillo recast his project as a map of places, inspired in the tradition of the arts of memory. Refusing the kind of random associations between places and content characteristic of certain models, such as that of the parts of a building proposed by Cicero, Camillo eventually identified a pattern of motivated, “natural” places in the microcosm of the human body (Camillo 1560, 2015b). Should anyone wish to speak of visual perception, they would find right in the part of the map corresponding to the eye a drawer with a piece of paper containing single words and phrases used by Virgil or Petrarch to speak about sight.

At some point, Camillo replaced the human body with a theater, or amphitheater, that would display “in spectacle” the entirety of what is knowable. Camillo's device served as a mind outside the mind that made knowledge visible (Camillo 1587). By providing a map of symbols able to embody even concepts that only the intellect can grasp, the theater could help anyone to understand the order of the universe, but also to speak eloquently about any part or aspect of it thanks to the repository of language that was associated with each symbol. As in ancient theaters, where spectators sat in definite, distinct places according to rank, the stands of Camillo's theater of memory mirrored the hierarchy of being (Camillo 2015a). However, Camillo's theater

radically transformed the criteria for segmenting, ordering, and visualizing reality. Instead of the more or less transparent relations symbolized by the parts of the body, spectators faced now a more complicated order of things that harmonized Christian and Neoplatonic principles with Hermeticism and especially Kabbalah, a discipline that Francesco Zorzi may have taught Camillo in Venice (Secret 1959; Bologna 2002). In a letter to D'Avalos, Muzio depicted this bend in Camillo's trajectory with dramatic overtones, as a neglect of the study of Petrarch and Virgil's artifice in the expression of feeling for the study of the secrets of nature and God (Muzio 1590). Camillo's new interests led him to a syncretism that suited the intellectual climate of the first third of the sixteenth century and which had a famous precedent in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. In fact, contemporaneously with Camillo's theater, Pope Clement VII commissioned a work such as Giles of Viterbo's *Scechina*, which epitomized a model of learned and eclectic Catholicism that would become suspect, and eventually obscured in the decades that followed (O'Malley 1968; Wilkinson 2007; for Camillo's involvement with Kabbalistic hermeneutics, see Vasoli 1984).

From the stage of Camillo's theater, the user could contemplate in the stands a grid of 49 places resulting from the intersection of seven vertical and seven horizontal ranks. The former corresponded to the seven columns of the temple of Solomon, also alluding to seven planets, seven angels, and seven sephirot or emanations in which, according to Kabbalah, God's creative power unfolds in both the physical and metaphysical realms (Scholem 1965; Bolzoni 2011). The theater represented the natural and celestial world. God's inner mind, unknowable to us (and to which the three remaining sephirot of Kabbalah correspond), remains out of scope (Camillo 2015a; Bolzoni 2011). Seven degrees cut the seven columns horizontally. They reproduce Creation, the passage from unity to multiplicity that mirrors, according to Camillo, the work performed by any of the arts, from sculpture to painting to poetry, as they transition from the idea of perfection to the making of each individual artifact (Camillo 2015a, b). Conversely, only by

the movement of abstraction to simpler beings, Camillo wrote, is it possible for the mind to understand particular creatures and events, much in the same way that one may see the forest only from above.

In Camillo's theater, the intersection of vertical and horizontal ranks creates meaning, according to a principle that was familiar to contemporary works influenced by Raymond Lull (Rossi 1960; Bolzoni 2015; see Bolzoni 1984 for the relation between Camillo and sixteenth-century Lullism). It is precisely at the intersections that we find the places through which memory and invention find a path to move across the map of what is knowable. The places are denoted by painted or sculpted images, symbols that point to God's secrets while keeping them concealed, and which, much like metaphors, enable language to express concepts that otherwise remain unspeakable (Camillo 2015a).

As a window to the world, Camillo's theater was a tool for interpreting poetry, which Camillo considered a sort of *prisca philosophia*, or primeval philosophy, in which God's secrets are expressed through "obscure veils" (Camillo 2015a; see Zaja 1994, 1995). Contemporaries recalled witnessing Camillo offer ten different elucidations of one of Petrarch's sonnets (Pietrobon 2015). The theater made this possible because it allegedly embodied the same philosophy with which poets were familiar when they encrypted the secrets of God and nature in their poems (Camillo 2015b). The theater served for purposes of interpretation and creation alike. In fact, it guided the invention of the poet by providing "matter, artifice, and language." Each place was a repository of single words and phrases legible in pieces of paper contained in drawers or hanging from the wall for the spectator to unroll (Bologna 2002). One could find expressions in several languages, meaning that the theater also functioned as a machine for translation (Muzio 1590; Camillo 2015b). Camillo considered eloquence to be a modality of transformation that allows man to become God-like and do with words what alchemy does with matter. The theater provided its users with a tool to do that (Vasoli 1984; Camillo 2015c).

Impact and Legacy

Camillo's influence was remarkable. In 1560, Giovan Mario Verdizzoti and Francesco Patrizi hailed the use of the topics for the invention of tropes as revolutionary. It served as the basis of Bernardino Partenio's *Dell'imitazione poetica* and received praise in Francesco Robortello's *De artificio dicendi* (1560) and Torquato Tasso's *La cavaletta* (1587). Patrizi used Camillo's method in his commentary of Luca Contile's sonnets (1560) and praised it as late as 1587 in his *Deca plastica*. Camillo's terminology pervaded fields as varied as translation studies and literary criticism, respectively exemplified by the works of Fausto da Longiano and by Pompeo Garigliano's commentaries on Giovanni della Casa's sonnets. In 1643, Giuseppe degli Aromatari considered Camillo's theory of the topics still relevant, and reprinted it in his anthology of grammatical and rhetorical writings almost one century after Camillo's death. The impact of Camillo's theater was no less remarkable. The publication of his works only increased the desire to find traces of the building itself, which a series of scholars and artists aspired unsuccessfully to retrieve. Many of the symbols described for the places of the theater reappeared in works such as Achille Bocchi's *Symbolicae quaestiones* and in posthumously augmented editions of Pierio Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica*. Camillo's works fascinated Anton Francesco Doni and provided iconographic programs for cycles of frescoes painted by artists as important as Correggio, which is unsurprising, given that Titian had famously illustrated a copy of *L'idea del teatro* dedicated to Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (Bologna 2002; Bolzoni 2015). Insofar as Camillo's theater was to a great extent also a library, it might be said to have foreshadowed sixteenth-century projects that aimed to transform the order of book collections into visualizations of the encyclopedia, or the connectedness of knowledge, such as the one that Federico Badoer's Venetian *Academy of Fame* planned for the Biblioteca Marciana (Bolzoni 1995, 2015). It also furnished a structure for Samuel Quiccheberg 1565 "theater," a pioneering text on art collection and museums, as well as to Giovanni Paolo

Lomazzo's 1590 "temple" of painting. Camillo's attempt at mapping the inventory of Creation descending from the unity of God to the multiplicity of things that exist in the world appeared excessively ambitious to his admirer Patrizi in 1562. However, this did not prevent others from following on his steps, and it probably stimulated encyclopedic repertoires such as Alessandro Citolini's 1561 *La Tipocosmia* (Bolzoni 2015).

Cross-References

- Academy of Fame
- Ciceronianism
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism
- Imitation and Mimesis in the Renaissance
- Invention, Renaissance Idea of
- Kabbalah, Renaissance
- Memory in the Renaissance, Art of
- Petrarca, Francesco
- Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
- Rhetoric in the Renaissance
- Robortello, Francesco
- Theaters, Renaissance
- Topics in the Renaissance
- Tropes in Renaissance Rhetoric
- Virgil in the Renaissance
- Zorzi, Francesco

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Campanella, Tommaso

Born: 5 September 1568, Stilo, Calabria/Italy

Died: 21 May 1639, Paris/France

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Abstract

Tommaso Campanella was one of the foremost Italian philosophers of the late Renaissance. Known mostly today for his famous utopia, *The City of the Sun* (*La Città del Sole/Civitas Solis*), his many writings cover a range of subjects, including natural philosophy, ethics, politics, theology, metaphysics, epistemology, magic, astrology, medicine, education, rhetoric, historiography, and mathematics.

Despite its apparent fragmentary structure, his overall project sought to establish an encyclopedia of knowledge that could serve as a basis for the reform of the sciences. This, in turn, was to lay the foundations for his project of universal political and religious reform and reconciliation. He is also known as a philosophical poet and his extant epistolary corpus includes some 170 letters. Most of his works were written during his almost 30-year long imprisonment in Naples and Rome. A self-described but often heterodox Thomist, Campanella was also among the staunchest critics of Aristotelianism and Machiavellism, and one of the most notable defenders of Galileo.

Biography

Campanella was born on 5 September 1568 in the town of Stilo, on the eastern coast of Calabria. He changed his baptismal name, Giovanni Domenico, to Tommaso, in honor of Thomas Aquinas, upon joining the Order of Preachers (Dominicans).

As a child, Campanella received a very rudimentary education that included some lessons in grammar and catechism. Seeing his promising intellect, his parents planned to send him to Naples to be tutored by his paternal uncle, a young lawyer whose footsteps their son could follow. However, Giovanni Domenico opted instead to join the Dominicans after being introduced to logic and becoming fascinated by the figures of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas (Longo 2003). Years later, recalling that his own education had left much to be desired, Campanella would advocate access to free education for children of all social backgrounds.

After taking vows, Campanella studied philosophy and theology at the Dominican houses of study in San Giorgio Morgeto and Nicastro. He soon grew dissatisfied with the *studium's* exclusive, rigid Aristotelianism, which was compounded by his teachers' inability to respond to the questions he kept asking. As he explored other intellectual avenues, the author who most impressed him was the naturalist philosopher

Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588). Neither the young friar's sharp intellect nor his restlessness went unobserved. He was moved to Cosenza, his Order's headquarters in Calabria, to conclude his theological studies. Here he had hoped to meet Telesio, only to learn of his demise soon after reaching the city. The internal struggles and intellectual aridity that the Dominican province was experiencing at the time seem to have led Campanella to consider leaving the Order, but instead he left Cosenza and settled in Naples. In the Kingdom's bustling capital, he befriended several scholars, including Giambattista della Porta (1535–1615), and was employed as the private tutor in the household of nobleman Mario del Tufo, to whom Campanella dedicated his first major work, *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* (1591). It was also in Naples that he became acquainted with esoteric magic.

The *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* presented a strong defense of Telesio's natural philosophy. This led to the first proceedings, within the Order, against Campanella on strong suspicion of heresy. The outcome was a relatively mild censure and the injunction to uphold Thomistic doctrine and renounce the teachings of Telesio. He was also ordered to return to Calabria at once, but instead the philosopher moved in the exact opposite direction, heading north towards Florence with a short stop planned in Rome in order to clear his name. In Florence, he had hoped to be given a Chair in either Pisa or Siena so that he would be able to enjoy the intellectual freedom his homeland could never have afforded him. Although Grand Duke Ferdinand I of Tuscany received him courteously, an ambiguous reference he had managed to obtain in Rome from Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte did little to help him reach his goal. His potential patrons were suspicious of his adherence to Telesio's teachings, whose *De rerum natura* the Roman Inquisition was about to place on the Index of Prohibited Books. During a brief stay in Bologna, the Holy Office there confiscated all his manuscripts, which included titles such as *De investigatione rerum*, *De sensu rerum*, *De philosophia Empedoclis*, *De philosophia Pithagoreorum*, and other works on

metaphysics and physiology. Some of these works would be lost forever.

In early 1593, Campanella moved to Padua, where he appears to have enrolled as a student of medicine under a pseudonym. Here he also met a young Galileo Galilei, with whom he would remain in correspondence in the decades that followed. During the 1616 proceedings against the astronomer, Campanella would write the *Apologia pro Galileo* at the request of Cardinal Caetani (a member of the commission of qualifiers who supported Galileo). The *Apologia* was eventually published in Frankfurt, in 1622. Although in disagreement with several of his assertions, in the *Apologia* Campanella affirmed Galileo's right to intellectual freedom (*libertas philosophandi*). The yearlong sojourn in Padua was an especially prolific one for Campanella, who composed now-lost treatises such as *De regimine Ecclesiae* and *De monarchia Christianorum*. Towards the end of that year, or early in 1594, Campanella was arrested in Padua at the behest of the Venetian Holy Office. The charges brought against him accused him, among other things, of adhering to Democritean materialism, of being in possession of a book on geomancy, and of entertaining conversations with a relapsed Jew. The philosopher was tortured before a decision was taken to transfer the trial to Rome, where he was imprisoned in October 1594 and tortured again in April of the following year. He was eventually condemned of strong suspicion of heresy (*de vehementi*), ordered to make a public abjuration at Santa Maria sopra Minerva, and confined to the Dominican convent of Santa Sabina in Rome until December 1596 (Firpo 1998; Spruit 2000). Campanella wrote several works during this period of house arrest, including the *Dialogo politico contro Luterani, Calvinisti e altri eretici*, which had the twofold aim of exposing the theological errors of Protestantism and highlighting the political value of unity among Christians. These themes remained central to his thought and writings for the rest of his life.

Campanella remained under a cloud of suspicion when he moved to the convent of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Although subjected to

further investigations, he was not found guilty of heresy. However, in May 1597, the Holy Office placed his books on the Index of Prohibited Books and instructed his superiors to send him to a convent where he would not be of danger or scandal. He was thus ordered to return to his native Calabria, where he soon became embroiled in juridical disputes between ecclesiastical and civil authorities. His defense of bishops' prerogatives, and his criticism of abuses perpetrated by officials of Spanish Kingdom of Naples, earned him the latter's scorn.

On 10 August 1599, the Spanish authorities received a report that Campanella, "who is held throughout the world to be a leader in the sciences" (Ernst 2010, 67), together with several prelates and noblemen conspired to organize a revolt in Stilo against the Spanish Crown. The exact nature and extent of his material role in the conspiracy remains contested in the scholarship, but there can be little doubt about the impact of his preaching about a new golden age of natural freedom and social change, which was prefigured by astral motions and natural phenomena. Campanella was arrested on 6 September 1599 and transferred to Naples to face capital trial for lèse-majesté. A protracted process which saw the intervention of the Pope himself resulted in the setting up of a joint tribunal to deal with charges of both high treason and heresy. After being subjected to torture and confined awaiting trial, Campanella started writing two series of defense submissions, the second of which would later be elaborated as the *Articuli prophetales*. However, seeing the ill disposition of his judges, he soon stopped writing and opted for a more drastic course of action. On Easter Sunday of 1600, he set fire to the mattress he lay on, thus beginning a simulation of insanity that would last for almost two years. He was enjoined to stop feigning madness as he was tortured several times, but he persisted even when subjected to the most terrible form of torture, the thirty-six-hour *veglia* during which he was hung from the wrists while seated, legs open, on a splintered horse-like device. Judges were left with no choice but to declare his insanity and were thus unable to order his execution. Instead, the

philosopher was sentenced to life imprisonment (Ernst 2018).

Campanella's forced confinement spanned almost three decades, during which he wrote and rewrote most of his works on natural philosophy, metaphysics, theology, ethics, politics, prophecy, astrology medicine, and magic, as well as many poems and letters. Soon after recovering from the ordeal of his trial, in 1602, he started writing *La Città del Sole* (*The City of the Sun*), the utopia for which he became most known. Simultaneously he began working on a political treatise that would eventually be published as the fourth part of *Philosophia rationalis*, entitled *Politica* (Frankfurt, 1623; Paris, 1637). It is significant and relevant to a proper interpretation of Campanella's political thought that, during his lifetime, *The City of the Sun* was published twice, in Latin as *Civitas Solis*, as an appendix to this political treatise. Unlike his more contingent political writings, the *Politica* discusses the foundations of politics and offers a realist analysis of different forms of government. *The City of the Sun*, then, describes an idealized form of society through the dialogue between a Genoese sea captain and a Grand Master of the Hospitaller Order of the Knights of Malta (De Lucca 2009).

During his long captivity, Campanella worked on the *Metaphysica*, a treatise consisting of 18 books which begin with a confutation of skepticism (Paganini 2009) and proceed with an elaboration of his notion of Being incorporating the three metaphysical primalities (*primalitates*) of power, wisdom, and love. This work would only see the light of day in Paris, in 1638. He also composed a monumental *Theologia* in 29 volumes, which were never published during his lifetime. Other important theological-political works written during this period include the work described as being that closest to his heart (Ernst 2016), *L'Ateismo trionfato*, which he would publish after much trouble in Rome in 1630/1 and later in Paris in 1636, in Latin as *Atheismus triumphatus*. In this treatise, Campanella advances his views on religion being founded in natural law against Machiavelli's followers who conceived of religion as a tool subordinate to politics. He also

argues that Christianity was the positive (historical) religion that came closest to the universal, natural religion. Closely connected to this work is the *Reminiscentur*, a work of "practical theology" in which he addresses a series of legations to the rulers and religious leaders of all the world (Christians, pagans, Jews, and Muslims) (De Lucca 2017b). Their twofold purpose was to argue in reason for the primacy of a reformed Christianity and to call for the establishment of "a general council on the true faith" to which the all religions and denominations would be invited to participate. This work was also intended to serve as a guide for missionaries trained at the newly established Urban College of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, with which Campanella seems to have been indirectly involved.

In prison, Campanella also started writing a treatise on mathematics and another one on astronomy, as well as the *Medicinalium libri VII*, published later at Lyon in 1635. Other works on grammar, logic, rhetoric, poetics, and historiography were also written during the prison years and were eventually published in Paris, in 1638, as the five parts of *Philosophia rationalis*.

In May 1626, the Spanish Crown finally ordered the Neapolitan authorities to release Campanella. A month or so later, at the request of the Holy Office, he was transferred to Rome where he remained detained for almost three more years. He was finally freed of all charges towards the beginning of 1629 and on 2 June of that same year, in an apparent reversal of fortune, he was given the prestigious title of *magister theologiae* during the Dominicans' General Chapter. This unexpected promotion of a friar who had been repeatedly accused of heresy was a vindication for Campanella that would have limited and potentially reversed restrictions on his writings, but it also intensified the resolve of his opponents (especially within his Order) to discredit him.

Campanella's release and promotion were thought to have been supported by Pope Urban VIII. When rumors of impending astral movements heralding Urban's demise started circulating in 1628, the pontiff called upon the philosopher and reputed astrologer to perform

expurgatory rites in the apostolic palace (Walker 2000). When the philosopher's *Astrologicorum libri* (Lyon, 1629) was published, it included, unbeknown to him, the text containing the rituals he had performed with the pope. Campanella attributed this attempt to embarrass the pope and sow discord between them to an "insidious friar." The potentially disastrous effects of this astrological affair were eventually mitigated, and during his years in Rome Campanella dedicated his energy to the long-awaited publication of his works and to fostering new friendships. He interacted and corresponded with several influential French intellectuals and diplomats such as Gabriel Naudé, to whom he dictated several works, including an intellectual autobiography published posthumously as *Syntagma de libris propriis et recta ratione studendi* (Paris, 1642).

The resentful hostility of Campanella's rivals all but waned and this period of relative serenity came to an abrupt end when news reached Rome that his former disciple Tommaso Pignatelli, a fellow Calabrian Dominican, had been charged in Naples for conspiring against the Spanish Crown. Before his execution in October 1634, Pignatelli ostensibly mentioned Campanella, raising once again the specter of bygone years. On the night of 21 October 1634, Campanella hurried to the French embassy disguised as a Minim friar. With the assistance of the French Ambassador, de Noailles, he fled the city and headed for Paris via Lyon and Marseilles. Shortly after his arrival in Paris, he was received by King Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu, who took him under his protection, afforded him a pension, and engaged him as an adviser on Italian affairs. Although his antagonists in Rome instructed the Papal Nuncio in Paris to keep a watchful eye on him and thwart the publication of his works, Campanella was nonetheless able to revise his writings and begin publishing his projected *opera omnia* (which he never managed to complete). He also gained access to political and intellectual circles, including the networks of Mersenne, Gassendi, and Peiresc.

At the birth of the dauphin on 5 September 1638 (Campanella's 70th birthday), the author of *The City of the Sun* was summoned as the

astrologer tasked with charting the horoscope of the future "Sun King," Louis XIV. The poem he composed on that occasion, *Ecloga in portentosam Delphini nativitatem*, was to be his last written work. Campanella died at the break of dawn on 21 May 1639 at the convent of the reformed Dominicans (known as the "Jacobins") on Rue St Honoré. His remains, it would appear, were dispersed during the French Revolution.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Campanella's opposition to Aristotelian philosophy was stated strongly in his first published work and permeated his entire philosophical enterprise. While still a Dominican student, he already showed signs of an increasing disenchantment with the exclusive teaching of scholastic Aristotelianism in the houses of study, and sought opportunities to read, clandestinely, the works of Plato and the Neo-Platonists, Pliny, Galen, the Stoics, the Hermetic corpus, and other texts on natural philosophy. Campanella disavowed the primacy afforded to Aristotle by his Peripatetic followers and was deeply critical of the intellectual dogmatism that resulted from Aristotelian philosophy being considered as containing the fullness of truth. This, he asserted, shunned the importance of empirical knowledge and observation especially in the fields of natural philosophy and metaphysics. His later defenses of Telesio and Galileo, two of foremost critics of the predominant Aristotelian physics, marked the high points of his break with the Aristotelian tradition.

The influence of humanists such as Ficino (Giglioli 2013), Pico della Mirandola, and Patrizi on Campanella went beyond their Neoplatonism and extended into the fields of magic and astrology. However, he did not spare criticism of what he depicted as the humanists' overreliance on books at the expense of overlooking the knowledge that can be derived for nature's "great book" (Ernst 2010; Gatti 2010). In a 1607 letter, he famously explained the difference between his own "way of doing philosophy" and Pico's by stating that he "learns more from the anatomy of an ant or of a herb than from all the books that

have been written since the beginning of time, after learning how to philosophize and learn the book of God [i.e. nature].” Elsewhere he also decries the humanists’ penchant for their overly ornate use of language, which, Campanella maintained, often led to obfuscation and unnecessary confusion.

Campanella defined himself as a true disciple of Aquinas and in many of his works he sought to interpret and develop the Angelic Doctor’s thought in the light of more recent developments and discoveries. His brand of Renaissance Thomism sought above all to reconcile the key elements of Telesio’s naturalism with the theology of Aquinas, given that he saw himself as an intellectual heir of both. Following the currents of reinterpreting Aquinas by scholars such as Cardinal Cajetan (Tommaso de Vio), who he quotes often albeit not always approvingly, Campanella sought to show how Thomism, and Christian philosophy in general, should not be reduced to Aristotelianism (Delumeau 2008, 301–307; Sgarro 2018). In *De gentilismo non retinendo* (1643, 60), he makes the bold assertion that “St Thomas is not a Peripatetic.” His brand of Thomism often placed him at odds with both his Dominican confreres and Jesuit thomists, although his reception among the latter has been viewed as being generally more positive than among the former (Lerner 1995, 1998).

Machiavelli, or rather his followers (“machiavellisti”), were the main object of Campanella’s criticism in his works on politics and religion (Panichi 2015). Like Botero before him and Grotius after him, the Calabrian philosopher rejects the doctrine of the “reason of state” (*ragion di stato*) that descended from Machiavelli (Ernst 2006). He considered this doctrine to be ineffective because its reliance on history and political action excludes the broader and more complex considerations on the causality of events (Ernst 2006). Campanella opposes the “Machiavellian politicians” equation of power and the highest good, accusing them of reducing justice to mere power and of instigating political division. This was diametrically opposed to his own ideal of moving towards political unity through the establishment of a universal monarchy. Unlike

Giordano Bruno, he also rejects what he defines as the Machiavellian view of religion as a political construct and instrument (De Lucca 2021). Throughout his works, Campanella juxtaposes “politicians” and “philosophers and prophets,” accusing the former of constantly persecuting the latter in order to advance their erroneous view of reality based solely on considerations of political power and ambition (Ernst 2002, 143–197; Suggi 2018).

While Aristotle is the chief target of Campanella’s criticism in the fields of natural philosophy and metaphysics, and Machiavelli in the political realm, Luther and the Reformers are denounced as causing division on the religious plane. Besides engaging with various theological arguments, Campanella’s major contention is that the division brought about by the Reformation fragmented religious unity, which he held to represent the strongest political bond (the “unity of souls”), thus pushing humanity further away from the desired return to original unity. Notwithstanding the heterodoxy of some of his ideas and the charges of heresy levelled against him, it has been noted that Campanella remains “a free but Catholic thinker” (Giovannozzi 1996). His specific religious heritage is reflected in the universalism reminiscent of the medieval *respublica christiana*, from which his ideal of reunification after the Reformation draws partial inspiration; a deeply reformed and cleansed Catholic Church, he thought, could serve as a catalyst for achieving this ideal. There are various parallels between his vision of religious concord and reunification and the ideas of Bodin before him, and Comenius and Leibniz after him.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The vicissitudes of Campanella’s life and the publishing obstacles he faced resulted in a vast but fragmented corpus. The rewriting of stolen or confiscated works, and the need to self-translate others to facilitate their publication, contributed to obscuring the fundamentally unitary character of his works and the architecture of his philosophical project (De Lucca 2012). Campanella never

managed to complete the task of giving a unitary form to his works as he outlined it in *De reformatione scientiarum* (1638), the index of his projected *opera omnia*. When considering his works in their entirety, he may be rightfully placed alongside Francis Bacon, Comenius and other reformers who developed innovative approaches to knowledge and learning. Comenius himself acknowledges Campanella's direct influence on his own theory of education and pedagogy.

Campanella's epistemology points in the direction of the unity of knowledge, but in the *Meta-physica*, he also posits the doctrine that "to know is to be" ("*cognoscere est esse*"). Developing Telesio's pansensism, he elaborates a version of panpsychism in his metaphysics and epistemology to affirm the position that all things are sentient, although the degree of sentience (*sensus*) depends on the kind of being. The theory of universal sentience is connected to the doctrine of the primalities found at the core of his metaphysics (Ernst 2010; Headley 1997). The three metaphysical primalities of power (*potential*), wisdom (*sapiential*), and love (*amore*) are the manifestations of the internal dialectic within the infinite Being-One (the Prime Unity), in which they have their fullness. The multiplicity of other (finite) beings, then, participate in varying degrees in the unity of Being. While all beings are infused with a certain degree of sentience on account of the corporeal sentient spirit (*spiritus*), human beings are further endowed with an incorporeal soul (*anima/mens*) infused by God (De Lucca 2015a).

Campanella's political universalism, which reaches the peak of its expression in his idea of the universal monarchy, transcends its medieval roots and contains elements of what may be considered as pioneering ideas of world governance and global distributive justice (De Lucca 2017a). It is also connected to some of the more innovative aspects in his philosophy of religion, particularly his views on natural religion (Blum 2010), which have been mentioned briefly above. The complexity of Campanella's thought combines his proposed reform of knowledge and the sciences with his project for political and religious reform (Fournel 2012).

One other aspect of originality in Campanella lies in his philosophical poetry, which has received considerable attention in Italian literature as one of the foremost examples of its genre (Roush 2002). In his *Poëtica*, Campanella counted himself among the "poetizing philosophers" who employ poetry and poetic discourse to illustrate philosophical ideas. Apart from his poetry, which reflects the variety of concepts elaborated elsewhere in his writings, he employed this style in the "Poetical Dialogue" that is *The City of the Sun*. Campanella's utopia stands as one of the most representative examples of its genre in the Renaissance and had a direct influence on later utopias, such as Johann Valentin Andreae's *Christianopolis*. Moreover, the originality of Campanella's utopianism lies also in his unique theoretical justification for the genre. In the last of the four *quaestiones* that accompanied his political treatise (to which *The City of the Sun* was placed as an appendix), he invokes the authority of "the most recent martyr" Thomas More, Plato, Aquinas, and others, as well as his own doctrine of the primalities, to respond to eight objections raised by critics who argue that it is useless to write about something that is impossible to achieve.

Impact and Legacy

Campanella's fame during his lifetime and in subsequent centuries was due in no mean way to his life story, especially the foiled revolt in Calabria and his endurance of a long imprisonment. His reception was often contradictory, oscillating between views of him as a pioneering reformer of considerable originality to caricatures of him as a somewhat outdated thinker and meddler. Such assessments must be considered in the light of the specific contexts of his reception. Careful consideration should also be given to the history of the circulation of his works, a comprehensive account of which remains a research desideratum notwithstanding significant advances in this regard in recent years (Ricci 2018).

It should suffice to point out that although Campanella is known mostly nowadays as the

author of *The City of the Sun*, other works surpassed it in popularity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In England, for instance, his *De sensu rerum et magia* and *Medicina* circulated widely and had a positive impact on the Hartlib circle and other scholars close to the Royal Society. At the same time, the *Monarchia di Spagna* fueled an aggressive reaction from strongly anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic quarters, where Campanella was denounced as a “Spanish Jesuit” [sic!] and “second Machiavel” whose plots to “reduce England unto Popery” were being advanced by the Royal Society. Likewise, in the Low Countries, the circulation of a Latin translation (not by Campanella) of a chapter of the *Monarchia di Spagna* (Ernst 2010) led to the philosopher being perceived as a promoter of Belgium’s subjugation by Spain. On the other hand, the Flemish physician Jan Baptiste van Helmont was impressed by some of Campanella’s ideas in the *Medicina*, *De sensu rerum et magia* and other texts. In Germany, where many of his works were published, Campanella was hailed in some Protestant circles as a vociferous critic and victim of the Roman Church, while Hermann Conring propagated the view that had been expressed by Dominican censors in Rome that the *Atheismus triumphatus* presented in a veiled manner the author’s admiration of Machiavelli and the transmission of his own atheism (Panichi 2016). Positive views of the Calabrian philosopher include those expressed by Alsted, whose affinity with Comenius and Campanella is acknowledged, as well as by Leibniz, who cites Campanella approvingly in several works. Two centuries later, Schopenhauer wrote favorably about his views on magic and, significantly, on justice.

Campanella’s reception in France has been studied more systematically (Lerner 1995) and displays the same sort of ambivalence. Jacques Gaffarel was among his main supporters, while Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc and Pierre Gassendi engaged courteously with his ideas (even when he expressed reservations about the latter’s atomism). The Paris-based Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius wrote a commentary on Campanella’s political aphorisms (De Lucca

2015b). Marin Mersenne, on the other hand, showed himself suspicious of what he viewed as eccentric behavior and ideas. Descartes was even more critical: after including Campanella among the “*novatores*” (together with Telesio, Bruno and others) – a term which has sometimes been interpreted as pejorative – he ultimately refused to even read his works, ostensibly after reading the *De sensu rerum* (Duncan 1991; De Lucca 2015a). Descartes’ judgement impacted the relegation of Campanella in later historiography well beyond France.

Ideological appropriations characterized much of the Campanella’s reception during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both in Italy, where most of the scholarship was concentrated, and elsewhere. Even recent attempts at shedding light on such appropriations and interpretations run the risk of perpetuating some of their tenets and dichotomies (Addante 2018). The most important contribution to scholarship on Campanella in recent decades has taken the form of privileging his texts: editions, revised editions, new editions, digital editions, and translations have made his oeuvres more widely available in a bid to enable a better appreciation of his thought, and to sustain further and deeper research (Ernst 2016).

Early in the twentieth century, Étienne Gilson lamented the persistent prejudice and unfair assessments against Renaissance philosophy, noting that “perhaps the most ill-treated of the thinkers of that epoch is Campanella” (Gilson 1912/1913). A century later, the revived interest in Renaissance philosophy and the increased access to Campanella’s works bode well for a reversal of fate.

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- Bruno, Giordano
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- Comenius, Jan Amos
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- Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism

- ▶ Ficino, Marsilio
- ▶ Galilei, Galileo
- ▶ Grotius, Hugo
- ▶ Luther, Martin
- ▶ Machiavelli, Niccolò
- ▶ Naudé, Gabriel
- ▶ Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of
- ▶ Telesio, Bernardino
- ▶ Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Van Helmout, Jan Baptist

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Campian, Edmund

- [Campian, Edmund](#)

Campianus, Edmundus

- [Campian, Edmund](#)

Campion, Edmund

Born: 25 January 1540, London

Died: 1 December 1581, London

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Abstract

Edmund Campion SJ was a Jesuit and martyr, eminent scholar, and orator who worked as lecturer of Rhetoric in Oxford and professor of Rhetoric and Philosophy in the Clementinum in Prague. Deeply admired by his contemporaries as an eloquent and elegant orator, he is best remembered for his powerful sermons, which he delivered to crowds in many parts of England and Bohemia. In 1580, he moved back to England to begin the English mission and minister the Catholics. During the last year of his life, he published *Decem Rationes*, an apologetical work addressed to the theologians of the Established Church of England, which immediately spread across Europe and became his most popular work. He also wrote the first history of Ireland in the English language and many poetical and dramatical works.

Alternate Names

[Campian, Edmund](#); [Campianus, Edmundus](#)

Biography

Edmund Campion was an English Jesuit and martyr, eminent scholar, and eloquent orator admired and called by his contemporaries as the “English Cicero” (Alfield [1582](#); Bombino [1620](#); Turner [1602](#)). He was born on 25 January 1540 to a *bibliopola* (stationer), who died before he was twelve, so, after starting his education at St Paul’s

School, he was sent to the newly founded orphanage, Christ's Hospital, in 1552 (Alfield 1582; Bombino 1620; Kilroy 2015). Even at a young age, he excelled himself in school debates and literary competitions.

In 1561, Campion was admitted as a fellow to the newly restored St John's College in Oxford (Kilroy 2011; 2015). Here he read philosophy and theology, and completed his Bachelor of Arts in 1564. On September 1564, Campion was made lecturer in Rhetoric from 1564 to 1570. While at Oxford, Campion spoke before Queen Elizabeth I during her visit to Oxford on 3 September 1566 and wrote his first Latin epic poem, *Sancta Salutiferi nascentia semina verbi* (The birth of the sacred seeds of the Word that brings salvation) in which he contrasts the transience of the Roman Empire to the permanence of the Early Christian Church (Kilroy 2005). In 1569, Campion became a deacon of the Church of England, ordained by Bishop Richard Cheney, Bishop of Gloucester, and accepted a benefice (Simpson 1896; Pollen 1905; Kilroy 2015).

In 1570, Campion traveled to Ireland, invited by his former pupil, Richard Stanihurst, whose father, James Stanihurst, was Recorder of Dublin and Speaker of the Irish lower house (Alfield 1582; Bombino 1620; Simpson 1896; Kilroy 2015). During his brief stay here in Dublin, Campion wrote, *The Two Bookes of the Histories of Ireland*, the first systematic history of Ireland in English (Campion 1633, 1963). It was most probably also during his stay in Ireland living with prominent Irish Catholics, such as the Stanihurst and Barnewell Families, that Campion decided to convert to Catholicism, which at this point was outlawed in England. Facing serious threats of arrest for high treason, Campion departed for England in June 1571 and arrived at the English College of Douai later that month. At Douai, he studied scholastic theology and passed the Bachelor of Theology. After only 18 months, still undecided in his vocation, Campion made a solitary pilgrimage to Rome, dressed as a beggar (Simpson 1896; Kilroy 2015). Here he decided to enter the "newly formed" Society of Jesus and was allotted to the Austrian Province (McCoog 2007). Campion was then sent to the novitiate in

Prague in 1573, which then moved to Brno. A year later, he was re-assigned to Prague to work at the Jesuit College, the Clementinum. He served as spiritual director of the Sodality of the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin and was made a professor, first of Rhetoric and later of Philosophy, teaching Aristotle's *Logic* and *Physics* after his ordination in 1578 (Alfield 1582; Bombino 1620; Simpson 1896; Kilroy 2015). Here Campion delivers his speech on *De Iuvene Academico* (On the Young Scholar) a discourse, in which he sets out his views on education and the ideal student. It was also during these years that Campion wrote *Tractatus de Imitatione Rhetorica* (Tract on Rhetorical Imitation), a treaty, which discusses the models of rhetorical invention and the imitation of the Ciceronian style (Campion 1631; Turner 1602). He also received prestigious royal engagements for the new emperor, Rudolph II, and his court (Kilroy 2015; McCoog 2007, 2013). In 1577, Campion delivered the *Oratio in funere Mariae Cardonae*, a funeral sermon for Maria Cardona y Requesens, and, after his ordination in 1578, wrote the play *Ambrosia* that was performed in the presence of Rudolph II and of the Dowager Empress, Maria Augusta (Campion 1970; Kilroy 2015; Campion 1631; Turner 1602). In 1579, Campion was called back to Rome to lead the first English Mission and minister to the Catholics in England (Reynolds 1980). He turned down the request to be superior but created a sensation preaching in southern shires of Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire (Alfield 1582; Bombino 1620; Kilroy 2016). He then printed his famous polemical work, *Decem Rationes* (The Ten Reasons), which was distributed at the Commencement in St Mary's Church, in Oxford (Lake and Questier 2000; Lennon 2007; Kilroy 2011). He was arrested, put on trial, and hanged at Tyburn on 1 December 1581. Campion's work, *Decem Rationes*, quickly spread across the Channel and was printed in over 80 subsequent early modern editions and translated into 12 languages (Pollen 1905; Waugh 1935; Kilroy 2016; Campion 1581, 1631, 1632). He was canonized by Pope Paul VI on 1970 as one of the 40 Martyrs of England.

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Canapicius

► [Javelli, Giovanni Crisostomo](#)

Canaye, Philippe

Born: Paris, 1555

Died: Paris, 25 February 1610

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Université Bordeaux Montaigne, UFR
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Abstract

Philippe Canaye was a jurist, initially brought up according to Calvinist principles before converting to Catholicism. He played an important political and diplomatic role under

French Kings Henry III and Henry IV. In the field of philosophy, he produced a paraphrase of the *Organon* in French, the first vernacular adaptation of the text, and spoke out in favor of instrumental logic.

Alternate Names

[Canaye, Philippe, sieur de Fresne](#); [Canaye, Philippe du Fresnes](#)

Biography

Philippe Canaye was the son of Jacques Canaye, a lawyer at the Parliament of Paris. He trained as a jurist and chose Protestantism as his religion. In 1572–1573, he was in Italy and accompanied the French ambassador to Constantinople. In his account of travels, his *Ephemerides* (published only in 1897), he reflects on the religious tolerance practiced in Constantinople and levels criticism at French intolerance. He in turn became a lawyer at the Parliament of Paris (he was a friend of Du Vair and De Thou), and, under French King Henry III, he purchased a position as Conseiller d’État. He grew in eminence when Henry IV sent him as an ambassador to several European Protestant countries (England, Switzerland, and Germany). In 1595, he presided over the bipartite chamber of Languedoc, established in Castres. He was also one of the judges at the 1600 “Conférence de Fontainebleau” between the Catholic Du Perron and Protestant Du Plessis-Mornay. He himself converted to Catholicism in 1601. He was then appointed ambassador to Venice, a post in which he remained until 1607. He returned to Paris and died in 1610. He distinguished himself throughout his career for his efforts to promote peace, goodwill, and religious tolerance across the kingdom.

Works

Philippe Canaye’s most distinguished contribution to the history of philosophy is his publication in 1589 of *L’Organe, c’est-à-dire l’Instrument du*

Discours. This text is a paraphrase rather than a translation of Aristotle's *Organon*. As M.L. Demonet has shown, it was probably inspired by a paraphrase penned in Latin by Claude Aubery - *Organon, id est Instrumentum doctrinarum omnium* (1584). As the title indicates, the text defends logic as an instrument or tool of reason and science, rather than as a science per se. Canaye considers that analytical philosophy is the most important element in logics and he asserts that "l'art du discours donc ne consiste pas à trouver l'ornement du langage, mais à fonder et établir la raison par laquelle on puisse contempler clairement la vérité" [the art of discourse does not then consist in uncovering the ornaments of language, but rather in founding and establishing reason as a basis for plainly contemplating truth] (*L'Organe*, Préface).

The Preface to *L'Organe* is a key element of the work. In it Canaye defends a highly political conception of the role of logic. He sees logic as a means of promoting goodwill, national unity, and religious tolerance and also as a means of harmonizing opposing modes of reasoning and thereby bringing appeasement to controversy.

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Canaye, Philippe du Fresnes

► [Canaye, Philippe](#)

Canaye, Philippe, sieur de Fresne

► [Canaye, Philippe](#)

Cano, Melchor

Born: 6 January 1509 (or 1506) in Tarancón, Spain

Died: 30 September 1560 in Toledo, Spain

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Abstract

Living during the sixteenth century, the Spanish Dominican Melchor Cano was the first in the history of theology who attempted to write a theoretical treatise concerning theological topology (*loci theologici*) by collecting unique theological places (e.g., the authority of the Holy Bible) and combining them with foreign ones (e.g., the authority of History). His intention was to create a reliable manual to be used in theological disputes with heretics and pagans. Developing this system, Cano was laying the foundations of fundamental theology.

Alternate Names

Melchior Canus

Biography

Melchor Cano was born in Tarancón in the diocese of Cuenca on 6 January 1509 (or 1506) as the son of Fernando Cano, a lawyer, and his wife Maria Delgado de Valle. In August 1524 he joined the Dominican Order and started to study theology and philosophy in Salamanca and Valladolid in 1527. His teachers were the famous Diego de Astudillo and Francisco de Vitoria, whose successor Cano became as professor of theology at Salamanca in 1546. His philosophical teaching activities had already started in 1533 at the Convent San Gregorio in Valladolid; from 1536 he taught theology and was also appointed as professor of philosophy at the University of Alcalá de Henares in 1542. In the academic years 1546/1547 and 1547/1548, Cano first held lectures about the fourth book of *Sentences* of Peter Lombard – the two *Relectiones, de sacramentis in genere* (1548) and *de sacramento pœnitentiæ* (1549), resulted from this. At the request of Charles V, to whom Cano was advisor in theological questions, he was nominated council advisor on 30 December 1550 and participated in the second session of the Council of Trent (1551/1552). Cano actively joined the discussion on the Eucharist, penance, and the question of the sacrificial character of the mass.

After his return from the Council, he was appointed bishop of the Canary Islands by Pope Julius III. Cano, however, did not take this position and subsequently renounced both the bishopric and also his professorship in Salamanca (1554) and retired to the Convent at Piedrafita near Avila. In the same year, he was elected rector of the San Gregorio College in Valladolid (1557) and became Prior of St. Esteban in Salamanca. At the same time, he was also elected Provincial Superior, but without being confirmed by the Pope; during a visit to Rome in 1560, Cano finally received the papal confirmation after his reelection. On 30 September 1560, Melchor Cano

died unexpectedly at the age of 51 in Toledo (Caballero 1871; Belda Plans 2006).

Despite his obvious genius in matters of theology, Cano is still classified as characteristically difficult in modern research (Sanz y Sanz 1959). On the one hand, this is justified by Cano's hostility to the Order of the Jesuits (founded in 1534), which can clearly be seen from several documents, e.g., *Carta de Melchor Cano al P. Fr. Miguel de Arcos, sobre los Jesuitas. Valladolid, 1556* (= nr. 32); *Carta de Melchor Cano al Venerable M. Venegas, sobre los Jesuitas. Valladolid 28 de marzo de 1556* (= nr. 33); and *Carta de Melchor Cano à Fr. Juan de Regla, sobre los Jesuitas. Salamanca 21 de setiembre de 1557* (= nr. 44). Cano denounced the Jesuits to be the *pseudo-Sophistæ* and *pseudo-Prophetæ* and compared the appearance and conduct of the Society of Jesus with the work of the Lutherans in Germany and the resulting harm to the Catholic Church. That the Dominican remained a fanatical opponent of the *Societas Iesu* until the end of his life is a judgment that can be very clearly seen by the cited letters (Hogenmüller 2013a).

On the other hand, Cano's rigorous behavior toward his friar Bartolomé Carranza is often quoted, which ended with the well-known *Censura* commissioned by the Inquisition (Tellechea Idígoras 1992; Hogenmüller 2012). The origin of the confrontation of the two Dominicans arose in the private sector, probably at the time of their studies: old rivalry mixed with private presumptions was the foundation, the difference in theological issues and ideas intensified the conflict, so that hostility emerged out of suspicion. It may also be possible that the application for the position of the Provincial Superior of Castile, which Carranza was finally awarded, was the decisive reason for escalation (Caballero 1871). The conflict culminated in Cano's drafting of two reports – one with 130 Latin and one with 205 Spanish censored sentences – to Carranza's *Comentarios al Catechismo christiano* (Carranza 1558) at the instigation of the Grand Inquisitor Fernando de Valdés y Salas, the archbishop of Seville, in 1558.

Cano's *Censura* clearly reflects the practical use of the theoretical concept of systematic theology pointed out in *De locis theologicis*: using

Cano's concept, the theologian can refute the heresies with the arguments taken out of the different *loci*. Similarly, he is able to confirm his own position (Ulrich 1989). The criticized and refuted sentences in Carranza's *Comentarios al Catechismo christiano* are perfect examples of Cano's theoretical concept.

A few months after writing the *Censura*, however, Cano himself became the focus of the Inquisition. The reasons are not clearly defined in the sources. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct some of the charges and allegations brought against Cano which probably provoked the investigation of the Inquisition among others. Today, it seems clear that many of these accusations against Cano and his theological work may have emerged prior to the publication of the *loci*, but have just been written down after the *editio princeps* – a fact that prompted the French Dominican Francois-Jacques-Hyacinthe Serry (1658/1659–1738) to publish a short paper entitled *Melchioris Cani Vindicationes quibus nonnullorum in ejus libros de locis Theologicis accusationes refellentur* (Serry 1714), which he arranged as a preface in his edition of *De locis theologicis*. There Serry listed the suspicious parts of the *loci* including the accusations and tried to refute them. Though Serry wrote the *Vindicationes* almost 150 years later, in 1714, the mass of charges and suspicious parts is still astonishing showing the explosive nature of Cano's writing – even in a time after the publication of the “expurgated” version of the *loci*.

Works

During his lifetime Cano published the following works: *Relectio de sacramentis in genere* und *Relectio de sacramento poenitentiae* (Salamanca 1550; Cano 1550a) *Tradado de la Victoria de sí mismo* (Valladolid 1550; Cano 1550b) Cano's votes at the Council of Trent in the conciliar documents (1551) (= CT VII/1,124–127. 261–264. 387–390); *Consulta de theologos, si Su Magestad puede pedir á Su Santidad para vender los vasallos de las Iglesias de España y Respuesta de los Theologos* (Valladolid 1553;

Cano 1553) his expertises for the Emperor: *Parecer de Fr. Melchor Cano sobre la guerra con el Papa Paulo IV* (1556); *La censura de Melchor Cano y Domingo de Cuevas al Catacismo y otros escritos de Carranza* (1559). In this list his *magnum opus*, *De locis theologicis* (Cano 1563), is outstanding (Hogenmüller 2013b). The composition of the *loci* was probably started during Cano's time at the University of Alcalá de Henares around the year 1543, the year of its completion is uncertain. The *editio princeps* was published posthumous in 1563 at Salamanca. Other prints were made in 1564 at Leuven, 1567 at Venice, 1569 at Leuven again, and 1585 at Cologne.

Innovating and Original Aspects

In Cano's *De locis theologicis*, which consists of twelve books, the first attempt in the history of theology was made to select from the rich fund of so-called *topoi* those which are peculiar to theology and to arrange them by observing their inner strength and their power in discussion or dispute. In doing so Cano directly relates on Rudolph Agricola's famous treatise *De inventione dialectica*, which was first published in 1515. There, Agricola considered the main purpose of dialectic to be the invention of arguments and the structure of the argumentation according to the rhetorical theory of the antiquity. Following these principles and applying them on the matters of theology, Cano identifies ten “places of theology”; each of them he made subject of a single book. In every book, however, the intention is to define the argumentative force (*vis*) of the discussed *locus* and to determine finally from which of those *argumenta certa* or *argumenta probabilia* can be extracted.

Concerning his selection there are seven peculiar theological places (*proprii loci*) – e.g., the authority of the Holy Bible, the authority of the Church Fathers, the authority of the Councils – which contain the written and spoken words of men who wrote or spoke in the presence or under the influence of the Holy Spirit (*spiritu sancto adspirante*). These places include arguments of

authority (*auctoritas*) which the theologian has to use in disputations against heretics.

But according to Cano, there are three more places the theologian has to examine, although they are not common to theology: Philosophy, the authority of the Natural Philosophers – that means the old pagan philosophers like Plato and Aristotle – and the authority of the Secular History. These are places which are foreign to theology (*loci alieni*), but implicate certain (*argumenta certa*) or at least probable arguments (*argumenta probabilia*) as well. For Cano this shows that they should also owe authority in the theological discussion. Consequently, it is necessary to use both sources of arguments, the peculiar and the foreign, in order to succeed in every dispute concerning Christianity.

In order to prove his method, Cano gives three different practical examples in the twelfth book of the *loci*, entitled *De locorum uso in scholastica disputatione*. The third and last example relating on the Immortality of the Soul (*de immortalitate animae*) is of special quality. As the discussion touches both types of places, Cano assumes it needs *argumenta propria* as well as *argumenta aliena* to be entirely convincing (Hogenmüller 2013c).

By developing this kind of system, Cano created the foundations of systematic theology, which dominated theology for centuries. During the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Cano's outstanding work gave influence to several catholic writers (e.g., Gaspard Juénin, Girolamo Buzi, Johann Opstraet, and Benedict Stattler) who equally wrote short compendiums about the peculiar places of theology.

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► [Vitoria, Francisco de](#)

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Capnion

- [Reuchlin, Johannes](#)

Captives

- [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)

Captivity

- [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)

Carafa, Diomede

Born: 1406 or 1408, Naples

Died: 17 May 1487, Naples

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Abstract

Diomede Carafa, trusted aide of Ferdinand of Aragon, was in charge of educating the king's children. He continued to exercise this role even when they were adults, writing for each of them a *Memoriale*, a work through which, following the tradition of the *Specula principum*, as well as the thought of the ancient philosophers, he suggested to each of them how to live their lives whether as a man of arms or a king or a princess.

Biography

Diomede Carafa was the youngest son of Antonio Carafa, well known as a warlord with the nickname of “Malizia,” and Caterina Farafalla. At about 20 years of age, once the struggles for the inheritance of the Kingdom of Naples had been resolved, Diomede accompanied Alfonso of Aragon to Spain. We do not know exactly what the role of Carafa in the Spanish royal court was, but we can assume that he had been able to earn the trust of Alfonso, since he once again fought alongside him in 1442, during his campaign in Naples for the conquest of the kingdom.

Certainly, Carafa developed close ties to Alfonso's son, Ferdinand, becoming his trusted aide once he inherited the Kingdom of Naples. In return for his loyalty and able leadership in diplomatic affairs on behalf of Ferdinand, Carafa obtained considerable political power and distinctions, including his appointment to the Order of the Ermine. He also obtained a number of noble titles and lands, most importantly that of Earl of Maddaloni's land.

One of Carafa's preeminent roles was as educator of Ferdinand's children (Alfonso, Giovanni,

Federico, Eleonora, and Beatrice). He continued to exercise mentorship over them once they had reached adulthood, writing for one of them a *Memoriale* on good behavior. Carafa is mainly remembered today for his *Memoriali*, which also include instruction manuals for being a good courtier and a good wife and a book dedicated to Henry of Seville and Toledo. These writings' dates of composition range from 1467 to 1479.

The first *Memoriale* (1467) was dedicated to the older Ferrante's son, Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Calabria, on the occasion of the alliance of Naples, Florence, and Milan against Venice. In 1470, during the fights of Henry of Castille against Alfonso v of Portugal, he composed, under the name of Ferdinand of Aragon, King of Naples, the *Memoriale in nome di Ferdinando primo re di Napoli ad Arrigo di Siviglia e di Toledo*. Probably between 1472 and 1476, he wrote *I doveri del principe*, which was dedicated to Eleonora of Aragon, Duchess of Ferrara. In 1476, he composed two *Memoriali*: one for Beatrice of Aragon and the other for her brother Francesco who came with her to Hungary, where Beatrice married King Matthias Corvinus. They are the *Memoriale a Francesco d'Aragona* and the *Memoriale alla serenissima regina de Ungheria*. Some contents of this last work are similar to those of the *Memoriale et recordo de quello have da fare la mulglier per stare ad bene con suo marito et in che modo se have ab onestare*, dedicated to an unknown woman (Carafa 1988a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m).

The *Memoriale* of Giovanni of Aragon (1478), cardinal and papal legate in the Kingdom of Hungary, was followed by a *Memoriale per il capitano prudente* (1479), dedicated, once again, to Alfonso of Aragon, who in 1479, after the Pazzi conspiracy in Florence, helped the pontiff's army against the Medici. Carafa's last treatises also date from 1479, the *Libro delli precepti o vero instructione delli cortesani*, which seems to be dedicated to Diomedè's oldest son, Giovanni Tommaso, and a second *Memoriale* is dedicated to Federico of Aragon who was moving to France to marry Anne of Savoy, the niece of King Louis XI of France.

After these years, Carafa seems to have ceased to write, perhaps because he had reached his

purpose of imparting, through a series of books, a range of moral precepts or suggestions to the sons and daughters of the King of Naples. After writing these *Memoriali*, Carafa totally dedicated his life to diplomatic affairs until his death on 17 May 1487 (Petrucci 1976a, b).

Despite his literary activity, we do not know much about Carafa's studies both during his boyhood and adulthood, even if we can assume, from the contents of his works, that he was acquainted with ancient and contemporary authors. Probably he attended Naples' literary circles, and certainly he was part of Giovanni Pontano's Academy, which exercised a significant influence on Carafa's literary activities.

His works, like some others that come from the fifteenth century's Neapolitan literary environment, reflect the moods and political situations of the Kingdom of Naples during the reign of Alfonso of Aragon and, above all, of his son Ferdinand, who had been involved, for all of his reign, in fights against the kingdom's barons and in the struggles among the Italian states. But it is surely due to internal political problems that Neapolitan literati focused their attention, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, on political topics, giving rise to a series of works in which they advised princes and princesses how to live their lives and relate to people around them (Sapegno 1984; Villani 1996).

Certainly the main known work that depicts this Neapolitan tradition of political and behavioral treatises is Giovanni Pontano's *De Principe* (Pontano 2003), whose style may have inspired Carafa's treatise *I doveri del principe*. Like Pontano, Carafa lists and describes the moral virtues that a prince should possess in order to create harmony and order among people and between him and his subjects. Carafa, as well as Pontano before him, follows an established view, which derives from antiquity, according to which a kingdom is a mirror of its sovereign. Thus, in his *Memoriali*, he emphasizes the function of a virtuous prince as the main guarantee for an ordered reign.

Among all the moral virtues, Carafa gives a prominent and essential place to the princely virtue of justice. The high value attributed to this

virtue links Carafa's works not only to Pontano but also to the ancient tradition, especially to Cicero and Aristotle, more than to Plato, probably studied by Carafa but certainly known through Pontano and Petrarch's *Epistolario* (Patrizi 1984; Persico 1899). This kind of knowledge seems to have been used, by Carafa, to adapt the ideas expressed by the ancient philosophers to the reality of Carafa's time. Above all, according to him, justice seems to express the measure of the ability of a prince or princesses to govern a kingdom and defines their relationships with their subjects. It seems that the ability to rule well in everyday life is the main characteristic of the modern prince, the one that distinguishes him from the prince described by the medieval *Specula principum*.

Carafa was well acquainted with and was likely influenced by the *Specula principum* tradition, including its evolution during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Originating from a medieval line of thought that made the king's power derive directly from God, the *Specula* saw God as the only one to whom the king was responsible for his actions. As an intermediary between God and the people, the prince was expected to exercise virtue and avoid vice (Sapegno 1984); thus, the *Specula* often included a catalogue of virtues and vices, and Carafa's *Memoriali* follow this model, both ideologically and stylistically. Furthermore, according to Carafa, God is the source of the prince's misfortunes; he must face them patiently (Carafa 1988b, e, f, g). In this way, he can be considered a good sovereign and gain the obedience of his people.

Carafa saw patience and prudence as the foundation of a way of living that was called the *giusto mezzo* ("golden mean"): the ability to live life according to the right measure, whether in actions or words. This outlook connects the *Memoriali* to the medieval *Specula* and, above all, to Aristotle. Pontano had referred to it often, and Carafa strongly developed it, making it a leitmotiv of his entire oeuvre and probably of his life. In all his treatises, he explained to his addressees how to live rightly, within the *giusto mezzo*, not giving them an abstract law, but practical directions that they could, immediately and directly, apply in their everyday life.

The purpose of Carafa's *Memoriali* was not, however, to create an exemplary prince, like the one auspicated by the political and pedagogical-behavioral treatises that had been written during the fifteenth century. Rather, through his works, Carafa depicted concrete life situations, as well as concrete characters that could be found in the reality of his time. Carafa's innovation is his focus on real characters, in need of practical suggestions. This approach contrasted with political and pedagogical treatises that had concentrated their attention on building a perfect, as well as a hypothetical, prince or courtier. An example of his practical instructions for deportment is his suggestion to Eleonora of Aragon that "it is not true that you have to give your goods to your subjects in order to be loved by them, but it is enough if you do not deprive them of theirs." And we can find a sort of application of these words in some letters of hers addressed to Ercole of Este in which she recommends that he must control his soldiers and that he should punish them if they kill, steal, or beat his subjects, because in this kind of actions "I see a real danger" (of subversion of his political power) (Guerra 2005). It is also notable that Carafa's texts were written in the vernacular, so as to meet the needs of his audience more immediately.

This focus on real people and situations is also characteristic of *I doveri del principe*, Carafa's most-studied work. As a counselor to the powerful, Carafa had a particular insight into what the prince needs to consider in his decision-making. Thus, Carafa emphasized a focus on the needs of the state, leaving aside considerations having to do with relatives and friends (Carafa 1988b).

Four themes of Diomede Carafa's life and works are especially significant: his view that experience should be the sole guide of policy, the importance of wisdom and wit, the role of courtesy and *humanitas* (i.e., the *giusto mezzo*), and, finally, the obedience and loyalty that the sovereign should be able to elicit from his subjects by making use of the other three values mentioned (Miele 1989; Miele 1976). The focus on experience underlines Carafa's emphasis on everyday observation of facts, leading to the prince's ability to solve problems concretely. According to

Carafa, this was more important than any abstract law or idea if a man or a woman wanted to have an ordered reign. As for wisdom and wit, they are the means through which a sovereign can display his ability to solve political problems. A prince who has them is surely able to live his life and to rule his reign according to the *giusto mezzo*. In this context, words (whether spoken or heard) play a fundamental role in solving or preventing problems and are thus essential to wisdom and wit, as well as to courtesy and *humanitas*.

Finally, according to Carafa, it is only through moderate gestures and a moderate use of words that a prince can display his wisdom. Although similar features are emphasized in Pontano and in Baldassarre Castiglione's *Il libro del Cortegiano* (Castiglione 2000) – a work that is often connected to Carafa's courtier – Carafa's works differ from theirs because he gives steady attention to reality, eschewing the temptation to create abstract characters. For him, literature offers men and women concrete guidance, not just inspiration.

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Alternate Names

[Caramuel y Lobkowitz, Juan](#); [Caramuel Lobkowitz, Juan](#)

Biography

The name “Caramuel” is a Spanish variant of “Kramer” (when he was in Salamanca, Caramuel still used Charamuer or Caramuer). His father, Lorenzo Cramer, was from Luxembourg and was a military engineer and amateur astronomer. His mother was Catarina De Vries, and his maternal grandmother is believed to have come from the noble Lobkowitz family.

Caramuel studied philosophy at Alcalá de Henáres (under Benito Sánchez, John of St. Thomas (João Poinset), Juan Martínez Prado, and Pedro Lorca) and theology at Salamanca (under Francisco de Araújo and Ángel Manrique). He joined the Cistercian Order in 1625 at the Royal Monastery La Espina near Valladolid, taking his religious vows in 1627. Later he resided and taught at various monasteries in Spain and Portugal. Between 1635 and 1638, he was a doctoral student at the theological faculty in Louvain where he met Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638) and took part in the intellectual debates between Jansenists, Irish Franciscans, and Jesuits in this era. In the most important debate – that over the work and legacy of Jansen – he sided with the Jesuits. In Louvain he taught at the Cistercian house of studies but failed to secure a place at the university.

Thanks to the intercession of the papal nuncio in Cologne and the future Pope Alexander VII Fabio Chigi (1599–1667), Caramuel was named titular abbot of the dissolved Scottish monastery in Melrose in 1638 and in 1643 was also named abbot of Disibodenberg only to discover the monastery had been destroyed in war. After his trip to Disibodenberg, Caramuel spent the next few years in southern Germany (at Bad Kreuznach, Speyer, and Frankenthal) where, as a military engineer, he took an active part in defending the fortress of Frankenthal. In 1645 he became the coadjutor of the Archbishop-Elector of Mainz, and a year later, he was named an envoy of King Philip IV of Spain

Caramuel Lobkowitz, Juan

► [Caramuel Lobkowitz, Juan](#)

Caramuel Lobkowitz, Juan

Born: 23 May 1606 Madrid

Died: 7 September 1682 Vigevano

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Abstract

Juan Caramuel was a polymath whose contributions lie in the fields of theology, mathematics, theory of architecture, military engineering, speculative linguistics, logic, and others. His major contribution in philosophy consists in extending Aristotle’s syllogistics and creating a fragment of artificial language based on scholastic Latin encompassing sufficient resources for expressing subtle differences in the meaning of the verb “is.” There are other important advances: Caramuel expresses the theoretical foundations of a key view in moral theology, that of probabilism. In the debate over theological determinism and human freedom, he attempts to steer a middle way between the two opposing views of Molinism and Banezianism. His understanding of moral ontology, beings of reason, and proofs of divine existence is novel and original. Working within scholastic paradigm, Caramuel thus extends it in several new directions.

to Emperor Ferdinand III in Vienna. The Emperor named Caramuel abbot of the Benedictine Emmaus Monastery in Prague which was staffed by monks from Montserrat Abbey, and he assumed the role in 1647. A year later Caramuel led one of three troops of ecclesiastics in a valiant defense of the Old Town of Prague against the attacking Swedes. His treatise *Sacri Romani Imperii Pax licita demonstrata* (1648), which was commissioned by the Emperor and presented the argument that making peace with the Protestants would be morally legitimate, was an important factor leading to the signing of the peace treaty of Westphalia. However, it also alienated his long-time patron, Chigi. In 1649 Caramuel went to Vienna and afterward became Grand Vicar to the Archbishop of Prague, a title he retained until 1654. In this office he was in charge of the tribunal for the reform and reduction of heresy and favored a harsh line against Protestants consisting in imposing prison sentences, forced emigration and authorizing military occupation of private property, confiscation of property, and even the use of the death penalty (Royal Law of 1650). In 1654 he was appointed a nominee for a new bishopric which was to be established in Königgrätz (Eastern Bohemia), but the process of setting up a new diocese was slow, and opposition to Caramuel grew, so in 1655 he left Prague for Rome, with the intention of obtaining a bishopric from Pope Alexander VII (F. Chigi). In 1657 Caramuel became bishop of Satrignano and Campagna, a poor Italian diocese in the Naples region, and in 1673 he was appointed bishop of Vigevano, near Milan. In both places Caramuel set up print shops and continued writing and publishing books. He died in Vigevano in 1682.

Caramuel was an extremely prolific author who wrote some 50 works on subjects ranging from mathematics Caramuel (1669, 1678), the theory of architecture, music, and theology to logic and philosophy. This entry focuses on his work on logic and philosophy.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

One can say of Caramuel's philosophy that it was embedded in the scholastic paradigm of his time,

even though Caramuel seems critical of various strands within this tradition – including Aristotle himself – and his approach is eclectic (e.g., he favors nominalism in relation to the existence of universals, Thomism in the debate between theological determinism and freedom, Scotism in fundamental matters of moral principle). He expresses sympathy for other philosophical and scientific ideas of his time: alchemy, the works of Campanella, Descartes and his mechanistic philosophy, as well as the vitalism of his Prague friend Johannes Marcus Marci (1595–1667). He was linguistically and mathematically gifted, and his most innovative work relates to the philosophy of language and logic.

First, let us concentrate on Caramuel's moral thought for even here he made a striking innovation. Schmutz (2008) has shown, based on the correspondence of Caramuel with the Carmelite and Thomist Franciscus Bonae Spei (1617–1677) and other texts, that Caramuel was opposed to deducing moral conclusions from physical or metaphysical premises and was thus the first proponent of the idea that it is illegitimate to derive “ought” from “is,” stating this well before D. Hume. Caramuel followed a radical interpretation of Scotus by the Irish Franciscans of Louvain (a debate in 1643), according to which moral principles are founded on the decision of the will (divine will, human will) and not on the divine intellect. If divine will were per impossibile taken away, there would be no breach of moral law. Thus Caramuel rejected the theory of natural law in its standard form. We can see from this that Caramuel was not a moral realist like the Jesuit G. Vázquez (1549–1604), defending the notion of the intrinsic evil or goodness of some acts, but a moral positivist. For Caramuel there were no “sins in themselves” and no moral evidence; everything depended on the legal framework.

Moral ontology cannot be deduced from physical ontology. Just as there are real categories, there are also moral categories, for instance, something which is one substance physically (e.g., sheep) might be two or more substances from a moral standpoint (eating sheep flesh has a different moral quality from eating sheep's head: while the latter is allowed on a day of fasting, the

former is not). Similarly there might be four physical acts (e.g., killing four people with one blow) but only one moral act (homicide). There are also epistemic and logical differences between the way one treats moral matters and the way one deals with real objects. The role of probability will be mentioned below. Logic in moral matters is not the same as the logic of facts, so moral logic ought to be a subject of special enquiry (again, see below). These differences in subject matter and method should give rise to independent sciences of moral matters – “moral physics” and “metaethics” (speculative ethics) – which are to be considered parallel to “physics” and “metaphysics.” The need for a special science of moral entities is clear from Caramuel’s early work *Theologia moralis* of 1645 and the subsequent editions of *Theologia Moralis Fundamental* (1652, 1656, 1676). Caramuel tries to determine the proper ontological place for moral entities halfway between real entities and linguistic entities (to which status he reduces the so-called beings of reason, e.g., impossible entities such as a square circle, see below). Moral objects are not physical, but work *as if* (*ac si*) they were physical. For instance, an adoptive son functions exactly as a biological son would in certain contexts (e.g., inheritance).

Caramuel is most famous (or infamous) for his ideas in the field of moral theology. He was a staunch defender of probabilism and was called “the prince of laxists” by the well-known eighteenth-century moral theologian Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787). Although probabilism was a theological doctrine, i.e., derived partly from the sources of faith (Holy Scripture, tradition), aspects of it have relevance even from a purely philosophical point of view; for example, the problem of what constitutes morally responsible action in the face of moral uncertainty pertains to ethics as do various aspects of moral epistemology (probable vs. certain reasons for action). For this reason it is justified to include the essentials of Caramuel’s moral theology in a study devoted to his philosophy.

Probabilism is a particular teaching in moral theology. Its theoretical foundation lies in the 1577 commentary on Aquinas’ *Prima Secundae* by a Spanish Dominican, Bartolomé de Medina

(1528–1580), who was a professor of theology at Salamanca. The doctrine concerns the question of whether, in a moral situation, a moral subject is obliged to follow a specific moral law or is free to choose action contrary to the law without thus acting morally irresponsibly or, to use theological language, committing a sin. Once again, the situation is characterized by a lack of demonstrative arguments for or against the action in accordance with the law which would produce speculative moral certitude, thus rendering one course of action certain and its contrary improbable. Only probability is conferred on the action by the argument.

Probabilism answers the question in the following way: one is free to act in conformity with the law or not provided that there are strong reasons (arguments) for the chosen course of action and regardless of how strong the arguments for the contrary action are. A somewhat more rigorous solution, probabiliorism, takes into account the reasons for the contrary action and requires one to act in conformity with the stronger reasons, in other words to take the more probable of the two courses of action. In cases where the reasons are equal in strength, one is obliged to follow the law. A more rigorous position in relation to probabiliorism and probabilism on a scale of being rigorous, tutiorism, favors the action according to the law over the action contradicting it and asks one to follow the “safer path” regardless of the strength of the arguments for the other course of action. In practice the problem was usually posed in the form of a question as to whether one can disregard a particular moral obligation and act contrary to the law constituting the obligation without sinning. One can simplify matters and say “yes” provided there is a strong reason for doing so (probabilism), “yes” on condition that the arguments for acting in contravention of the law are stronger than those against (probabiliorism) or, finally, “no” (tutiorism).

One can distinguish several stages to Caramuel’s thought on probable opinion. The texts most relevant to the early phase of his thinking can be found in *In Divi Benedicti Regulam* (1640) and the first edition of *Theologia Moralis Fundamental* (1652). The so-called

Fundamentum II, which was progressively elaborated in later editions of the latter work, represents a kind of transitional stage. Before summarizing Caramuel's arguments in favor of probabilism in these works, let us note that they constituted the basis for much of the criticism leveled against Caramuel in subsequent decades and centuries. This is because some of Caramuel's formulations lend themselves to misunderstanding as Caramuel was not as cautious in his wording at this time as he was in later years.

Caramuel accepts the common distinction between two types of probability in relation to a course of action, the "authoritatively (*authentice*)" probable and the "rationally (*rationaliter*)" probable. While the former is based on the authority of learned men and comes from without (*ab extrinseco*), the latter is based on argument and is thus intrinsic. An opinion (concerning action) is intrinsically probable if there is a strong (but not demonstrative) argument supporting it and responses to the major objections which can be raised. If this is not the case, the opinion is intrinsically improbable. The (primary) truth of a proposition and its probability (secondary truth) are two different things. The latter is an epistemological notion: the proposition seems true regardless of whether it actually is true. Although a proposition and its negation cannot simultaneously be true, they can be simultaneously probable. The probability of a proposition is subject relative (what is probable for one subject, can be certain or improbable for another) and can change over time based on changes in the subject's epistemic state. Thus education is needed to assess intrinsic probability, and the opinion of learned persons serves as evidence, from an external epistemic source, of intrinsic probability. Caramuel refuted the received view of his time that four authorities suffice to make a view probable. According to him, since at least four authorities attest that one authority is sufficient to make a view probable, one doctor suffices. His most extensive discussion of extrinsic probability is to be found in *In Divi Benedicti Regulam*; in later works such as *Theologia Moralis Fundamental*, the emphasis shifts to intrinsic probability.

Caramuel's major argument against probabiliorism is that the acceptance of probabiliorism commits one to probabilism: one is to follow the more probable opinion, but probabilism is more probable than probabiliorism; ergo one ought to follow probabilism. One of the main reasons why probabilism is more probable is that it enables more people to follow a safe path and avoid sin. Given that following a rule might be harder than not following it due to human frailty and that probabilism licenses the latter course of action more often than its more rigorous counterpart, probabiliorism, more people avoid sin if a probabilist view is taken. Caramuel opposed Libert Froidmont of Louvain who was a rigorist (tutorist), and *In Divi Benedicti Regulam* (disp. 6, a. 3, pp. 27–28) contains a response to him. Similar material is to be found in *Theologia regularis* (published in Bruges 1638, disp. 6, a. 3, pp. 26–27 in 1646 edition). In Froidmont's view one should follow the safer path, which, according to him, means following the moral precept (even if its binding force in the particular situation is disputable) rather than ignoring it, although the latter is usually the less demanding course of action. For Caramuel, however, the "safer" course is the one "more likely to be undertaken without failure." This relates to one of Caramuel's controversial statements which attracted heavy criticism on the grounds that probabilism made it possible to follow, without sinning, certain courses of action which would previously have been considered sinful. Similarly, the dedicatory epistle to another probabilist, A. Diana, in *Theologia Moralis Fundamental* (1652) states that some courses of action, previously sinful, lost this stigma through becoming probable. This latter statement is criticized by, among others, B. Pascal in *The Provincial Letters* (1657, Letter VI of April 10, 1656). What Caramuel means by such admittedly ambiguous statements is that choosing an action perceived as probable in the given circumstances (either on the basis of one's own reasoning or according to authority) and choosing the same action in the absence of such a perception have different moral implications: the latter choice is wrong, while the former is not. This argument becomes much clearer in the second, transitional

stage of his work on probable opinion. Probabilism was linked to the formal Roman condemnation of two sets of laxist moral positions in 1665–1666 and 1679.

The next stage of Caramuel's thought on probabilism is represented by the *Apologema*, a response to Prospero Fagnani's rejection of probability as sufficient grounds for a licit course of action (P. Fagnani, *Commentaria in Primum Librum Decretalium*, first edition 1661, c. 5, no. 44ff, p. 34ff). After publication, the book was consigned to the Index of Forbidden Books. Both Froidmont and Fagnani emphasized that probabilism was a recent doctrine, and in the *Apologema*, Caramuel takes great pains to argue that reliance on probable opinion has been widespread since biblical times. He sets probable opinion halfway between certitude and complete ignorance. Thus probable opinion does involve some (invincible) ignorance. A probable opinion may prove to be incorrect (uncertainty in relation to the object), but this would not undermine the legitimacy of an act based on that opinion (there is no uncertainty in relation to the act). Invincible ignorance makes one's act at most hypothetically sinful (based on the hypothesis that there is such a law), not formally sinful, nor even materially so. There is no material sin: an uncertain law is like a law which is not promulgated, and such a law is in fact no law at all (Aquinas, Suarez). In the *Apologema* Caramuel addresses the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic probability. Extrinsic probability, based on authority, cannot be established if the contrary view is certain. It is difficult to determine the strength of extrinsic authority as not all authorities are equally authoritative. It is equally difficult to judge the degree of probability of a given opinion based on arguments (intrinsic probability); hence, for practical purposes, it is probability as such which makes an act legitimate or morally secure, not the strength or degree of probability. Intrinsic probability is subject relative: an opinion on action is intrinsically probable for a subject S, if there are strong arguments supporting it and if the subject S is capable of understanding and assessing them and if in fact assesses them to be strong. In the later editions of *Theologia Moralis Fundamental*

Caramuel claims that unlike the ignorant person, the learned person has a moral duty to rely on intrinsic probability.

If one or more of the above conditions are not present, the subject should base his or her judgment about probability on external authorities, who thus substitute for the missing conditions. If the conditions are fulfilled, S sees that the opinion is probable, i.e., supported by a strong argument (intrinsic probability), whereas if they are not, S hears that the opinion is probable (extrinsic probability). Extrinsic probability of a certain opinion acts as evidence for its intrinsic probability but in no way creates it, as intrinsic probability derives solely from strong arguments regardless of who supports the opinion.

The final stage of Caramuel's theoretical perspective on probable opinion emerges in the *Dialexis de Non-Certitudine* (1675) and the Fundamentum II of *Theologia Moralis Fundamental* (1675–1976 edition). In these works the formal reason for an act being morally justifiable is not its probability; instead he states a more general reason which applies to probable actions and to morally certain ones: the non-certitude of the contrary act. In other words, it cannot be certain that the opposite act is to be performed and hence also certain that the act under consideration should *not* be done. Also, both moral certainty and probability are based on strong arguments; what distinguishes the former from the latter is the absence of strong arguments in support of the contrary view. Only certainty in relation to a law creates moral obligation rather than probability. Just as one remains in possession of a certain property until it is proved otherwise and one is deemed innocent until proved guilty (the principle of possession), freedom takes precedence over law for Caramuel. Liberty can be constrained only by a (certain) law. If the obligation stemming from the law is not proven, the law does not bind. What is not forbidden by law is licit. As in *Apologema*, a person cannot formally or materially break a law of which he or she is ignorant as it is not a law for that person. There does not have to be any special, strong grounds for considering a view probable apart from the general reason that one remains in possession of

liberty unless one is certain of there being a law constraining it.

In 1972 the Italian Dino Pastine published Caramuel's *Animadversiones in Meditationes Cartesianas*, Caramuel's response to Descartes's *Meditations* (first published in 1641). This was a lengthy manuscript, written in 1644, that Pastine had discovered in the Vigevano archive (*Archivio capitolare*). According to Baillet (1691, pp. 209–210), Caramuel asked Descartes for a response and permission to publish the *Animadversiones* with Descartes's reply in correspondence. Descartes agreed, but Caramuel never sent him the *Animadversiones*.

A few points from Caramuel's criticism are worth mentioning. In the Third Meditation, Descartes proves the existence of God on the grounds that his idea of an infinite being he has in his mind must have come from such a being and not from a finite cause. Caramuel objects that the idea of an infinite being is inconsistent. Inconsistent ideas do not have any being apart from being linguistic entities (*ens linguae*); hence, the idea needs no cause. The idea is inconsistent because the concepts of being and finiteness are coextensive: any being is finite and vice versa. Why? Because an infinite being, a whole consisting of entities or properties (formalities, perfections), would violate three evident principles based on natural reason: (1) A whole is greater than its parts. (2) The remainder resulting from subtracting a part from a whole is smaller than the whole. (3) In a multitude, the number of singles is greater than of the number of pairs, which in turn is greater than the number of triples, the latter of quadruples etc. But part of an infinite whole is also infinite (which violates 1), the remainder is also infinite (which violates 2), and the number of singles, pairs, triples, etc., is equal, namely, infinite (which violates 3).

Descartes' proof of the divine existence in the Fifth Meditation is based on the idea that a perfect being has an essential existence just as a triangle is essentially three sided. According to Caramuel, however, essential properties are conditional on the assumption that the object to which they apply exists. This means that if there is a triangle, it necessarily has three sides. By analogy, if there

is a God, He necessarily exists. The assumption of existence, however, is not granted by the atheist.

In the Sixth Meditation, Descartes attempts to prove that there are external material things on the grounds that he has ideas about such things and that he has a strong inclination to believe they are produced by external things. Since the inclination is given by God who cannot deceive, the inclination is not deceptive. However, according to Caramuel, we do not know whether the idea is produced from without or is inborn, nor do we know the manner of production. God cannot deceive, but we can make errors when using our epistemic capacities. Errors arise not only from inadequate use of the capacities, as Descartes observes, but also from invincible ignorance. The fact that God cannot deceive does not imply that He must give us either infallible capacities or the capacity to correct our fallible capacities. Not deceiving is different from giving fallible capacities.

In criticizing Descartes's first proof of divine existence from the Third Meditation, Caramuel referred to inconsistent ideas as linguistic entities. To such a status, Caramuel reduces what other scholastics considered beings of reason (*entia rationis*). A treatise on beings of reason is to be found in a late work entitled *Leptotatos* (1681) (*Leptotatos*, Dissertatio II Philosophica, pars II, a. 1 and 2, pp. 89–118). Impossible entities (such as, for Caramuel, infinite beings) are beings of reason. For Caramuel (as for some Jesuits before him, see Novotny 2008) the reverse is also true: all beings of reason are impossible entities. Such entities cannot exist in reality, but according to Caramuel, they do not exist in the mind either, as they cannot be conceived. Caramuel rejects the argument that if one asserts that a being of reason does not exist in reality, it has to exist in the mind. According to this argument, if one denies that a being of reason, say a square circle, exists, one first produces the being of reason by thinking (conceiving) and then denies its existence. Caramuel instead maintains the following: one first thinks of a circle and then asserts that if the circle were a square, it would be a being of reason. But as the antecedent is false – the circle is not a square – the being of reason is not conceived.

From this there follows a proof of divine existence. Since one does not conceive impossibilities, whatever one conceives thus exists either possibly or actually. God is conceived by humans; therefore, God is either possible or actual. But God cannot be merely possible. Hence, God is actual. For Caramuel, beings of reason are merely entities of language, juxtapositions of words. This position he held since Caramuel 1642. Only in this sense they can be said to be part of reality.

While discussing arguments for divine existence in *Leptotatos*, Caramuel presents a modal proof for divine nonexistence (*Leptotatos*, Dissertatio III, Theologica, a. 1, pp. 193–215). The proposition “nothing exists” is obviously false, but it does not seem to be impossible (necessarily false). If it were impossible a contradictory statement would be derivable from it. Such a statement would have to be positive as the contradictory of a negative statement (“nothing exists”) has to be positive. But one cannot deduce a positive proposition from a negative one. So “nothing exists” is false but possibly true. If it were true, God would not exist (as God is something). But a God who could not exist is contingent and therefore no God at all. So God does not exist.

Caramuel finds the following fault in this argument: if nothing exists, the proposition that nothing exists also does not exist, but remains at least possible. If it is possible, it is a knowable truth. If it is a knowable truth, there has to be something which could know it, and that something is God. Hence God exists. Hence the truth of “nothing exists” implies that something exists, namely, God, which is a contradiction. The *Leptotatos* contains an extensive correspondence on the matter with A. de San Pedro, A. Mendo, and P. Symphronius.

Caramuel presents the proof as an example of use of his philosophical language. Caramuel’s thought exhibits a constant, multifaceted interest in language in general and artificially constructed language in particular. He occupied himself with the art of cryptography. In *Steganographiae Ioannis Trithemii Genuina Declaratio* (1635), he gives an explanation of the cryptographic method of the German Benedictine abbot Johannes

Trithemius (1462–1516) contained in his *Steganographia* (written c. 1499, published 1606) which was added to the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1609 as it appeared to contain elements of magic. Caramuel commented on Trithemius’s text and thus helped to disseminate Trithemius’s ideas although the monograph was banned. The art of cryptography consists of replacing symbols of one language with another with the help of an encryption key. A universal key would be capable of encoding any language into a universal language.

Caramuel, who allegedly had some knowledge of 24 languages, took an interest in the idea of a universal language. He corresponded with A. Kircher about the version of a universal language outlined in Kircher’s *Polygraphia nova et universalis ex combinatoria arte directa* (1663) (letter dated August 4, 1663).

Another idea is that an artificial language could be constructed directly, without reference to any natural language. Such a language would capture the world directly and encode its structure. The idea comes from Francis Bacon (*De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum*, 1623). The language, consisting of so-called real characters, could be translated into natural languages similarly to the symbols of mathematics. Some such real world signs are natural, some artificial. In the seventeenth century, there was a widespread, false supposition that Chinese pictorial script consists of such natural signs. Caramuel dealt with the idea in the third volume of his *Apparatus Philosophicus* (1665), which also was devoted to the classification of sciences, both those in existence and those Caramuel thought should exist (first volume). Before one can construct an artificial language, one has to undertake the philosophical task of outlining the structure of reality. Caramuel calls such signs *ciphrae*, ciphers. They denote parts of the world. Ciphers themselves can consist of meaningful parts. The smallest element endowed with meaning is a *nota*. These notes would be written characters or signs. Caramuel’s sign language captures the tree structures of the ten Aristotelian categories. The inner structure of the categories, only briefly described by Caramuel, differs to some extent from what was traditional.

By giving these notes, Caramuel provides the dictionary of the language. A graphic sign indicates a category and a particular place within it. The basic sign is a square which means “being.” The pattern of lines within the square indicates the particular category and the place within the category to which a being belongs. God does not belong to any category, and it is represented by a triangular sign. The grammar of the language resembles that of a natural language. In order to eliminate prepositions, there are ten nominal cases. There are two numbers for nouns, and verbs are affected by mood. Graphically, grammatical categories are represented by commas placed just outside the squares. In appearance, Caramuel’s written sign language bears some resemblance to Chinese script; however, Caramuel, who was acquainted with Chinese through Fichinpai, a Portuguese-speaking Chinese native he met in Vienna in 1654, showed in his *Apparatus* that Chinese script does not consist of real characters. In *Apparatus* he presents an outline of Chinese grammar.

Caramuel’s contribution to the language of real characters appeared between the rather well-known works of G. Dalgarno (*Ars Signorum*, 1661) and J. Wilkins (*An Essay towards a Real Character and Philosophical Language*, 1668).

A third approach to language which was common in the seventeenth century is the attempt to construct an ideal philosophical language by revising the grammar and lexicon of a natural language, often Latin. Caramuel outlined his speculative grammar in *Grammatica Audax* (1655) but devotes more space to it in *Leptotatos*. He calls his language “metaphysical dialect” (*dialectus metaphysica*). His objective was to revise scholastic Latin to create a language with sufficient expressive resources for the science of metaphysics. The idea was to enhance the expressive power of Latin and dispel the ambiguities. The central task was therefore to eliminate the ambiguity of the verb “to be” (*esse*) and add new meanings of “being” used by various schools of scholastic philosophers. These days it is customary in philosophy to distinguish three senses of the verb “to be.” It can either express existence (e.g., “God exists”), identity (e.g., “Cicero is Tully”), or

predication (e.g., “the table is round”). Caramuel, a nominalist in relation to the existence of universals, reduces the third sense of “to be” (predication) to the second, namely, to identity. Thus, for him “the table is round” does not express the predication of a general property of roundness of the particular table denoted by the subject expression “the table”; rather it expresses an identity between the table in question and a thing denoted by the word “round.” Besides identity, the copula “to be” also expresses a particular sense of being belonging to the subject, e.g., table. Here it is clearly real existence in the present. In order to capture this sense of existence, Caramuel coins the verb form “sere” (conjugated “sem,” “ses,” etc., with the present participle being “sens”) with the meaning “to exist now,” replacing *esse* in the sentence. Caramuel distinguishes four other basic types of existence in addition to this (*Leptotatos*, *Dissertatio I*, *Meta-logica*, a. 11, pp. 37–59):

1. “Sare” (conjugated “sam,” “sas,” etc., participle “sans”)

This meaning of “to be” relates to the being of essences and its parts (*esse essentiae*). For instance, “is” as in “the whale is a mammal” would be rendered by this form. Such statements would be true even if no whales existed in reality.

2. “Sere” (conjugated “sem,” “ses,” etc.)

For example, “Peter exists,” meaning “exists in the present”.

3. “Syre” (“sym,” “sys,” etc.)

This form means “to have a simultaneously existing eternity” which is a type of being pertaining to God only (e.g., “God exists”).

4. “Sore” (“som,” “sos,” etc.)

In this sense, only the Aristotelian prime matter exists. Being a physical constitutive principle, it does not have its own act of being. In being actualized by some substantial form, a composite of matter and form (itself said to exist in sense 1) receives the act of existence and thus exists in sense 2.

5. “Sure” (“sum,” “sus,” etc.)

This sense of real existence abstracts from a particular point in time and means “to exist at

some time or another": e.g., "The Antichrist exists." In contrast, "sere" is essentially tied to the present.

From these basic verbs, Caramuel constructs yet further forms. The insertion of "m" is used to produce a factitive form in the sense of "produces the particular type of being" (*Leptotatos*, Dissertatio I, Metalogica, a. 13, pp. 65–72). Thus *samere* means "to produce essence." This action pertains to God. For instance, Scotus and his followers maintain that God produces essences of possible beings through his intellect. In this context the word "produces" should be represented by the form *samit* according to Caramuel. The meaning of *semere* is clear: an efficient cause produces an effect in real being, here and now. We know that "syre" applies to the mode of divine being only: "The Father and the Son *symunt* the Holy Spirit" (i.e., "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son").

On the other hand, the insertion of the vowel "i," resulting in "saire," "seire," "syire," etc., weakens the particular mode of existence (*modos essendi imperfectos*) (*Leptotatos*, Dissertatio I, Metalogica, a. 12, pp. 59–65). Thus the first two mean "exist in intentional being only." Something exists in the intentional mode if it is present in the intellect as known. "Syire" means "exists as created from eternity." For instance, if the world is eternal (a subject of dispute among medieval scholastics), then the world "is" in this sense.

Altogether there are fifteen forms of the verb "to be" in the existential sense. Caramuel believes that such a dialect is needed, and one of the examples of its utility is its use in the counterargument against the modal proof of divine nonexistence given above. If "nothing exists" ("set"), then there is a contradiction. The claim that "nothing exists" remains possible ("sat"), even though it does not exist ("set"). In being possible ("sat") it is knowable. Hence, there is something ("set") with the capacity to know.

Another application of Caramuel's dialect can be found in *Grammatica Audax* (Pars III, Med. IV, a. 5, p. 117ff). The issue at stake is the various modes of being of essential features in general and the ontological status of the possible entities, in

particular their being and relationship to God. Caramuel invites the reader to carry out a thought experiment: suppose that there is a certain being, a mind, whose existence amounts to thinking (pronouncing within himself) all the different letters or characters that there are or that there could be. Let us further assume, for simplicity's sake, that there are only a limited number of these characters, e.g., the twenty-five uppercase letters of the Latin alphabet in use in Caramuel's time. Now this mind, called *Abecedarius* or "Alphabet" by Caramuel, is a simple entity constituted by all the aforementioned characters which are really identical in him. While Alphabet exists by pronouncing all the characters of the Latin alphabet within himself, externally he pronounces or speaks only some of them. Now let us take a certain statement made by Alphabet, for example, "sum" ("I am"), and explore the various different ways it, and the characters constituting it, can be considered. There are four: the first, fairly obvious, way to take the characters – based on what has been said about Alphabet – is to consider them a real part of Alphabet himself, identified with all the remaining characters. Secondly, it can be said that Alphabet pronounces the characters *ad extra*, thus making a statement (*dictio*), so one can take the characters in this replicated form as being different from all the rest ("replicated" meaning that there is no loss of a character in the mind when the character is spoken out loud). In this form the statement is really distinct from the speaker. Another way to interpret the statement is to view it as externally replicable and really distinguishable from the speaker, in other words as pronounceable and, in short, possible. Finally, when one considers the characters in abstraction from their ontological status, i.e., from their being identified within Alphabet or distinct when pronounced externally, they can be seen in themselves (*secundum se*) as they appear both in Alphabet and in the external statement.

In this thought experiment Alphabet stands for God. The characters, e.g., perfections (attributes), combine into statements, i.e., creatures and things. One can consider the perfections and the creatures constituted from them in the same fourfold way as the characters and statements above. God is in

Himself all perfections, the merely possible as well as those existing in created things; however, only some of these perfections are combined by Him into creatures which are really distinct from Him. Just as it makes sense to speak of a statement being pronounceable or possible only in relation to the speaker's power of pronouncement, it also makes sense to speak of possible creatures only in relation to God's creative power. Hence, the important conclusion that Caramuel draws from the analogy is this: before the creation of the world, before God's creative potency, there was nothing, neither any of the ontologically weaker things (the *entia diminuta* of the Scotists), nor essences, nor even any possible entities that were really distinct from God. The Scotists, according to Caramuel, are not wholly off the mark; however, neither are they open to the objection that they introduce a kind of being which exists independently of God. Rather, they express themselves in a misleading way. A better way of capturing the distinction they have in mind is to say that the possible entities are (*sant*) in the sense of having their essential predicates and being capable of being created by God, instead of saying that they are (*sunt*) in the sense of being real at some time or other.

In this context and elsewhere, Caramuel invokes the idea of a possible world whose introduction into philosophy is popularly associated with G. W. Leibniz. Caramuel notes a striking parallel:

whoever could see through and comprehend the essence and combinations of the Alphabet, would understand all languages and books, those written as well as those capable of being written . . . whoever could rationally apprehend (*intueatur*) the essence of God, would understand not only this world, but all possible worlds. (*Grammatica Auda*x, Pars III, Med. IV, a. 6, p. 119).

Writing about human and divine knowledge of possible entities in *Metalogica* (part of *Theologia rationalis*, Frankfurt a. M. 1654), Caramuel draws yet another analogy between linguistic characters and aspects of reality, this time not perfections but entire possible worlds (Liber X, Thesis I, p. 190ff). He states that there are three kinds of knowledge about possible entities: By *scientia*

simplicis intelligentiae, one can know that, for instance, *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* are possible characters. By *scientia conditionata*, one obtains a conditional knowledge: if one were to move a pen this way or that, this or that character would be produced. Finally, by *scientia visionis*, one knows a particular decision of the will and hence future things, i.e., which characters will be written down. Turning now to God's knowledge of possible entities: divine knowledge parallels that of man. Caramuel states that by the first type of knowledge, *scientia simplicis intelligentiae*, God comes to know the five possible worlds (*mundos possibiles*), *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*. Then (in a logical, not temporal sense) He selects *e* and creates it. Using the third kind of knowledge, He reflects on the decision of His will and observes that *e* is or will be realized whereas *a*, *i*, *o*, and *u* will not.

There is a third analogy in *Metalogica* which uses linguistic characters (Liber X, Pars II, Thesis VIII, p. 74). This time the characters are compared to individual possible beings (humans): when God wanted to create Adam, A, He first came to know, by *scientia simplicis intelligentiae*, a great number of people whom He could have created had He so wished: B, C, D, etc. By the same act of knowing by which He knows A, He also knows the whole of A's posterity. Since effects become individual through their causes, no descendant of Adam could have been created by any descendant of B and vice versa. By choosing A, God relegated B, C, D, etc., to the ranks of the purely possible which would never become actual. Yet Adam sinned, and the original sin afflicts all of his descendants, actual as well as merely possible. The sin does not afflict the descendants of B, however, so God chose the Virgin Mary, the mother of God, who as theology says was exempt from the original sin, one of B's possible descendants, and miraculously implanted her among the descendants of Adam.

One of the analogies above invoked *scientia conditionata*, the Molinist "middle knowledge," and the reader may be wondering what Caramuel's stance was on one of the most vexing problems of early modern Catholic philosophy and theology, that of human freedom and theological determinism. Caramuel's approach to this

matter underwent substantial development over the years. We see this first of all in two sets of theses on the matter which he defended a decade apart in his earlier days. Secondly, these theses were subsequently reprinted in other works, namely, *Metalogica* and *Theologia moralis fundamentalis*, accompanied by an ever-increasing number of notes which testify to his intellectual development in this area. One can distinguish at least three stages to Caramuel's thinking, which together amount to an attempt to find a middle way between Thomism and Molinism.

Stage one finds its expression in the Salamanca theses of 1630: *Physicae Praedeterminationes Infallibiliter et Non Necessitantes. Inventae et Defensae Sunt ab Authore Salmanticae Anno 1630* (*Metalogica*, Lib. X, pp. 154–161). As is clear from their title, Caramuel tries in these theses to rescue Thomist teaching from the charge that it destroys human freedom. He does this by drawing a sharp distinction between the concepts of necessity and infallibility. In essence, Caramuel attempts to show that physical predetermination, i.e., *premotio physica*, does not necessitate the act for which it is given, but makes the occurrence of the subsequent act de facto – i.e., in the actual world – “infallible,” which means always the case. Predetermination necessitating the act would destroy freedom, because it is incompatible with the ability to resist the act required by any true freedom. However the concept of predetermination as leading to an infallible act is compatible with resistance and therefore does not destroy freedom. Moreover, infallibility also suffices as an explanation for God's knowledge of the future.

In order to be compatible with freedom, the premotion must allow resistance. Hence, according to Caramuel, a particular premotion is given not only for its act, e.g., A, but also for its negation, non-A, at the very same time but in a different, i.e., non-actual modal context. There are two senses in which one can speak about the effect of a particular premotion: *simpliciter* and *modaliter*. In the first sense, *simpliciter*, a premotion may fail to produce its effect – although in fact it does not – because in a possible, but non-actual world, there exists a negation of the

effect A, non-A, which is regarded as the absence (*carentia*) of the effect A, rather than as some positive effect B which is incompatible with A. In the second sense, *modaliter*, the notion of effect is taken to encompass both act A and its negation in some non-actual world. In this sense, premotion can never fail in producing its effect. Hence, in one sense (*simpliciter*) a premotion can exist within a possible world – possible modal context – without the positive act, i.e., the effect for which it is given. Caramuel thus accepts that there *can* be nonproducing premotions and hence that resistance is possible, but in fact there *are* none, because the absence of the act is never actual given a certain premotion. The latter is what infallible connection means.

The middle stage of Caramuel's thought is related to the Louvain theses of 1641 (*Theses Theologicae De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio ad Mentem Mellistui Doctoris Decretis Tridentini Concilii Confirmatam* and a somewhat different later version *Theses Theologicae De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio: In Quibus Demonstramus Doctrinam Illustrissimi P. Didaci Alvarez Archiepiscopi Tranensis et Salpensis, ex Doctissimo Ordine PP. Dominicanorum Assumpti, Esse Eamdem, Quam Hodie Solent in Scholis Suis Defendere Patres Iesuitae Metalogica*, pp. 161–171). In these theses he regards his previous solution to be the real sense of the solution defended by Thomists (in the Salamanca theses, he argues that Thomists *do not* but *should* defend this solution). He expounds his original theory in the context of Diego Alvarez's (1550–1635) writings, claiming that he has found the correct interpretation of Alvarez's teaching, which is opaque in its formulation. Caramuel uses Alvarez's insights to enrich his own theory, arguing that if we add to the relationship between premotion and the act of the human will a connection between the decree of the will of God and the act of the will of man, then it is correct to say that it is not possible that the decree of the will of God should will that man decides something or other and the will of man not will accordingly; however, it is possible to have predetermination of this act (promotion) combined with its absence. This is because God wills man to

decide freely, and if this were not possible – i.e., predetermination of an act combined with its absence – then human acts would not be free and God's will that it be so would be frustrated.

In the second version of the theses, Caramuel optimistically considers the Thomist and Jesuit solutions to be the same at heart, differing only in their linguistic formulation. He thinks that the Jesuits should accept Thomist theory as true because it rescues both predetermination and freedom. It follows that as saving freedom is the goal for which the Jesuits originally devised their theory of middle knowledge they should abandon it, for it is actually superfluous.

Caramuel presents further arguments as to why the Jesuits should accept Thomist teaching: if it is admitted that it is at least possible that physical premotion is not destructive of freedom, then it is at least possible that middle knowledge does not exist in God. Hence, the possession of middle knowledge is contingent and cannot constitute a divine attribute, because all attributes of God are necessary. While the Jesuits think that determination in general destroys freedom, their theory has it the other way round: human will determines divine will and thus destroys God's freedom, and so Jesuits should accept the Thomist teaching of physical predetermination which does not destroy freedom.

Caramuel regards the Molinist teaching on middle knowledge as useless (*Metalogica*, Lib. X, *Theses theologicae De omniscientia et omnipotentia*, thesis VI, p. 195). Both Thomists and Molinists agree that one can distinguish logical phases *prior to* and *posterior to* the act of the divine will, i.e., divine decree. The Thomists and Molinists differ, however, on the issue whether conditionals of freedom are absolutely true or false before (prior to) or after (posterior to) the act of the divine will. Caramuel seemingly agrees with the Thomists that they are true or false only after the act, but he understands “before” and “after” differently. He does not think one can distinguish these logical phases in God, so he takes “prior” or “before” to mean “in abstraction from” the divine decree. Hence, prior to, or in abstraction from, the decree of God that these conditionals are neither true nor false, they lack

truth value and hence are unknowable. That which is unknowable does not threaten or destroy God's omniscience, because it cannot be known. Also, after the act of the divine will, only those conditionals are true which correspond to absolute future contingent events, not all such conditionals (in this he differs from both Thomists and Molinists).

In *Leptotatos* (1681) (Dissertatio III, Theologica, a. 5 “De Scientia Media,” pp. 271–276) Caramuel argues against middle knowledge in the following ways. First he argues indirectly, defending the Thomist account (that of Cabrera, John of St. Thomas, Nazario, Zumel, and others) of divine foreknowledge of conditional future contingents against misrepresentation by some of the Jesuits (Vázquez, Martinon, Amico, Alarcón); his second argument is direct, presenting two arguments against middle knowledge, one a priori and the other a posteriori. Only the first is presented here as the second is theological.

As we have seen, in *Leptotatos* Caramuel devised a special vocabulary so that confusion and ambiguity could be avoided in subtle scholastic debates. While possible beings, *sant*, created real beings either exist now, *sent*, or at some time or other, *sunt*. Possible beings are necessary and exist prior to the divine decree (though it is nevertheless God who confers their existential status on them), whereas created beings are contingent and exist as a consequence of the divine decree. If there were conditional future contingent entities, their being would be somehow intermediary, these beings *saent* (would possess *esse intermedium*). Existential status or being of any of these types (*sare*, *sere*, *sure*, as well as *saere* if it exists) must be received from God. The question now is the being of the conditional future contingents, *saere*, conferred before or after the decree? If they are objects of the putative *scientia media*, conditional future contingent entities must exist prior to the decree, because this knowledge precedes it. However, this makes them necessary, not contingent or free, apparently because their being is conferred “automatically” (by being known), independently of the divine will. So, one can prove a priori, observes Caramuel, that there can be no such objects (non-necessary conditional

future events prior to God's decision) and hence no such knowledge.

In the third and final stage, Caramuel rather pessimistically regards both the Molinist and Thomist solutions to the problem of divine determinism and freedom as wrong and advocates a return to what might be considered the original sources, namely, Augustine and especially Thomas Aquinas himself. Now he once again interprets the Thomists as advocating the strict version of the theory of predetermination based on the identification or confusion of necessity and infallibility. This becomes clear from notes he adds to the reprints of his earlier theses in the 1676 edition of *Theologia Moralis Fundamental* (p. 22, 24). Similarly, when reprinted in this edition of *Theologia Moralis Fundamental*, the *Meta-logica* theses which are critical of middle knowledge – *Theses Theologicae De Omniscientia et Omnipotentia* – are expanded and entitled *Neutrum*, neither, to indicate his opinion that neither theory works (Thesis VI, pp. 52–59). Hence, it is clear that Caramuel later rejected the solution he proposed in the Salamanca and Louvain theses.

It should be noted that the late work *Leptotatos* (1681) constitutes something of an exception to this pattern, for in *Leptotatos*, as we have already seen in the case of middle knowledge, Caramuel presents doctrines from the first or second stages of his thought (adherence to Thomism). This is also true of physical predetermination, where he presents ideas from the first stage of his thinking. I think this can be explained by his overall goal in this work, which was to devise a technical vocabulary for dealing with subtle philosophical and theological issues which avoided vagueness and ambiguity. In order to devise the language and prove its worth, he returns to some of his earlier doctrines.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Caramuel's chief contributions to the field of philosophy lie in the philosophy of language and in formal logic. His "metaphysical dialect" has been already introduced above in the context of his

other preoccupations with language. Now let us briefly outline Caramuel's logic. His major work on logic is *Theologia Rationalis*, an anthology which brings together several more or less independent logical treatises, some of which were published separately prior to 1654 or later. *Theologia Rationalis* escaped the attention of logicians, no doubt due to its misleading title, *Rational Theology*. Caramuel's original title, *Philosophia Rationalis*, which was more appropriate to the content, was changed by the printer, as Caramuel reports in the printed list of his works composed in Vgevano.

Theologia Rationalis consists of two main parts, *Praecursor Logicus* and *Metalogica*. The former comprises several parts: *Grammatica Audax* has been already discussed, *Logica Vocalis*; *Scripta et Mentalis* takes logic to deal primarily with language rather than concepts, which is clearly a sign of a nominalist approach. The formal organization of logical matter according to the level of language – spoken, written, or mental – appears to be novel. Another part of *Praecursor Logicus*, an independent treatise called *Logica Obliqua*, constitutes a truly original contribution to the field of formal logic. It presents the logic of binary relational statements at the levels of proposition (Part I) and argument (Part II). The specific advance this logic represents over standard syllogistics is explained below. The final part of the *Praecursor*, "Three Logical Labors of Hercules, the Logician," *Herculis Logici Labores Tres*, is a set of three studies devoted to logical problems. The first labor, which is called *Nilnegans* ("negating nothing"), is a reduction of the system of valid moods of the syllogism. In essence it reproduces Caramuel's bachelor thesis from Alcalá on so-called infinite logic. The idea is to eliminate copula negation in favor of term negation (negated terms are called "infinite"). The second labor, entitled *Non-omnis*, is based on the observation that in Latin "non omnis" ("not every") does not solely express the negation of a universal affirmative statement (which is obviously equivalent to the particular negative), but is equivalent to the conjunction of a particular negative and a particular affirmative. Caramuel

explores this idea and demonstrates the logical properties of statements containing the expression “non omnis”: equivalences and oppositions of these statements as well as valid moods of syllogism. Last but not least, the third labor, *Contingens*, is a systematic treatment of modal logic based on the by now familiar idea that the modal “contingent” is not equivalent to “possible,” but “possible and possible not.”

The second part of *Rational Theology, Metalogica: Disputationes de Logicae Essentia, Proprietatibus, et Operationibus Continens*, is a set of treatises (books) in the fields of the philosophy of logic (Book I), philosophical logic (Books VII and IX), metaphysics (Books II, III, IV, V, VI, VIII, and X) and informal logic (Book X). The topics dealt with range from the nature of logic, the theory of proposition, and semantic paradoxes to issues of metaphysical kind (rational entities, universals, individuation, self-evident principles, etc.). Book X, *De Severa Argumentandi Methodo* (published independently in 1644), is the most extensive; its content ranges from informal logic to applications of logic to specific problems in philosophy and theology.

What is “metalogic” and why, according to Caramuel, is it needed? Caramuel draws a parallel between logic and music: both direct sound but for different purposes. Just as knowledge of the production of musical sound (music) depends on musical theory (“metamusic”), knowledge of the production of language sounds (whose goal is the discovery of truth), logic, depends on metalogic. Hence metalogic is logical theory. In contemporary terminology Caramuel’s metalogic encompasses the philosophy of logic, philosophical logic, and parts of metaphysics. Alternatively, metalogic is, for Caramuel, “metaphysical logic” dealing with topics at the intersection of logic and metaphysics.

Caramuel, who was a famous moral theologian, also dealt with logic in moral and legal argument. There are two works devoted to the topic: *Pandoxion physico-ethicum* (“physico-ethical summary of belief”) (1668) and somewhat extended treatment in *Moralis seu Politica Logica* (“moral and political logic”) (1680). The nature of

legal argument prompts Caramuel to analyze the scale or gradation of natural language quantifiers and to focus on certain aspects of epistemic logic. What one finds in moral or legal argument is very often an inference from a statement in which less than all members of a certain class are subject of predication to a statement whose truth is consequently only more or less probable. The so-called *sylogismus iuridicus seu moralis* consists of a general major premise which states some moral or legal norm (*ius*) and a singular minor premise which states some fact (whose truth is to be proved by the accusant at the trial). The conclusion, also singular, is the sentence (*Moralis seu Politica Logica*, Lib. I, sect. XVI, pp. 41–45). For instance:

1. Whoever injured some person with the intention of causing death is guilty of murder and sentenced to death.
2. Peter injured John with the intention of causing death.

Therefore, Peter is to be guilty of murder and sentenced to death.

The minor premise has two parts; the first (Peter injured John) is established by the testimony of the witnesses, whereas the second, intentionality, is to be proved by another moral or legal argument:

- RA 1. Rarely anyone (almost none) boasts of a killing for which he or she was not responsible.
 PI 2. Yet Peter boasted of inflicting a serious injury on John in a particular way.
 DI – Therefore, it would be reckless to believe that he did not commit the crime.

The syllables “RA,” “PI,” and “DI” indicate the quantity of the particular statement and hence, taken together, the mood of the syllogism (all moods being of the first figure). In the latter two statements, quantity is expressed by the vowels (“I,” “I”). The quantity of the first statement is expressed by the entire syllable (“RA”) as is clear from the table below. Therefore, while the consonants in the latter two syllables probably play no

role other than helping to create a memorable word, the consonant in the first, “RA,” is meaningful.

Abbreviation	Quantifier	Mood	The mode of the conclusion
CA	Absolutely all (<i>cuncti omnes</i>)	<i>Camilli</i>	Really certain
FA	Almost all (<i>fere omnes</i>)	<i>Fallitis</i>	Morally certain
PL	Most/majority (<i>plures</i>)	<i>Placidi</i>	More probable
MA	Half (<i>media pars</i>)	<i>Magistri</i>	Equally probable
PA	A minority/not half (<i>pauciores</i>)	<i>Paridis</i>	Less probable
MU	Many (<i>multi</i>)	<i>Mugavit</i>	Scarcely probable
PU	Few (<i>pauci</i>)	<i>Pudici</i>	Reckless
RA	Almost none (<i>rari fere nulli</i>)	<i>Rapidi</i>	Reckless
NO	None (<i>nulli</i>)	<i>Nobilis</i>	Against the manifest truth

A large part of *Moralis seu Politica Logica* concerns what would now be called the philosophy of law. However, in the second book, Caramuel analyzes the so-called moral modes and the logical properties of propositions containing them: “it is certain that” (*certum esse*), “it is probable that” (*probabile esse*), and “it is doubtful that” (*dubium esse*) (*Moralis seu Politica Logica*, Lib. II, c. 2, sect. IX, p. 149).

Now let us turn our attention to Caramuel’s formal logic in the treatise *Logica Obliqua*. Scholastic logicians commonly regard syllogistics as being founded on the principle of the transitivity of identity, *quaecumque sunt eadem uni tertio, sunt eadem inter se*. Caramuel denies the absolute generality of the principle. He extends the scope of syllogistics to encompass relational syllogisms consisting of (at least some) binary relational statements containing oblique terms; for instance, in “every man loves a (some) woman,” the term “woman” is oblique (not in the

nominative case in Latin). He calls such statements, and consequently their logic, oblique or discrete (*propositio/logica obliqua seu discreta*). By “discrete” Caramuel means that the terms denote numerically distinct individuals (the men are not identical with the women in the latter statement); hence, not every valid syllogism is founded on the principle of the transitivity of identity, and the transitivity of other relations has to be taken into account. The point is that such syllogisms are not reducible to the standard ones (*syllogismi recti*) but are recognized as having an independent logical form. One can even go a step further and say that standard syllogisms are but a special type of oblique syllogism. It is not entirely clear whether Caramuel wished merely to extend or amend the standard syllogistics with his oblique logic or to replace it with a more general system. Evidence can be found for both views in his writing:

I am about to introduce a logic wholly distinct from the old logic and based on opposite foundations. In order to work and prove the validity of syllogisms, the old logic held fast to the following principle: Two things, both identical with a third thing, are themselves identical (*Que sunt eadem uni tertio, sunt eadem inter se*): Peter and an animal are identical to a man; hence, they are themselves identical. . . I do not take this proof to be sound as I find the major premise [the principle of the transitivity of identity], which is taken by the Aristotelians as a dogma, false. Setting out on a new way, I use really distinct terms from which I form propositions and new syllogisms. . . My intention is not to destroy the ancient logic which is put forth by others as well as by us with the utmost care, but to add the new logic to it and extend the number of the Muses (*Logica Obliqua*, “Lectori”, p. 406).

Before Caramuel there were other logicians who recognized some relational syllogistic forms as independent, i.e., not reducible to the standard valid moods, namely, P. Fonseca (1528–1599) (*Institutionum dialecticarum libri octo*, Lib. VI, c. 30, pp. 297–302) and F. Toletus (1532–1596) (*Introductio in dialecticam Aristotelis*, Lib. IV, c. 14, pp. 158–159) whose textbooks were cited in the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* of 1599. In summary, Fonseca gives four rules and Toletus three. Caramuel’s set of rules includes all of the latter rules (*Logica Obliqua*, disp. VIII, pp. 430–432).

Caramuel's logic is founded on a peculiar analysis of the binary relational statement. Take the statement "every man loves a (some) woman" in the valid relational syllogism.

Every man loves a woman.
Every woman is human.
Every man loves a human.

The syllogism has more than three terms and so is not a species of valid Aristotelian form: "man," "woman," "human," "loves a (some) woman," and "loves some human." There are essentially two ways of looking at such a statement. According to one the predicate of a statement such as "loves a woman" is complex: it is itself a predication. Consequently, "loves," let us call it a relative term, is treated as a predicate term of the embedded predication ("a (some) woman is loved by"). Thus the statement contains two copulae. In the other interpretation of the statement, the relative term "loves" is not treated as a term at all, but as a generalized copula connecting the quantified subject and predicate terms "every man" and "a woman."

Caramuel devised two symbolic ways of capturing the structure of relational statements corresponding to these two interpretations. He gives symbols for the quantifiers "all," "no," and "some" ("a," "e," "i") and the negation. While there are two symbols for negation, the quantifier negation "n" and the copula negation "ñ," stemming from the first interpretation, only one symbol, "n," is needed for the second. Let us illustrate this. In the first, more complex symbol system the copula negation in "añ*i" affects the dominant copula, whereas in "a*ñi" it negates the embedded one (the symbol "*" separates the subject and the predicate parts). However, since "añ*i" is equivalent to "a*ni," one could replace the major copula negation with the negation of the second quantifier and distinguish the embedded copula negation by syntactic position rather than by a special symbol. Thus the symbol "n" occurring before a quantifier symbol is a quantifier negation, and "n" occurring after the quantifier symbol is the copula negation. Thus "añ*i" becomes "ani" and "a*ñi" can be replaced by "ain." The

embedded copula merges with the relative term to become the only generalized copula. By "generalized" we mean that any transitive verb might play the role of a copula, not just the verb "to be." This is clearly Caramuel's preferred option in his oblique logic. The generalized copula connects the subject and predicate terms (called *connotans* and *connotatus*, respectively) which are often numerically distinct, or discrete, as we have observed. Thus the second, simplified symbolism is the one Caramuel uses to list valid moods of relational syllogism. For instance, "aa.aa.aa" and "aa.a.ai" are valid moods in the first figure as symbolized by Caramuel in *Logica Obliqua* (Pars II, disp. IX, pp. 432–436). The former is of the pure relational syllogism type, all of whose statements are binary relations, the latter of the mixed type, containing a non-relational premise "a" (the mixed syllogisms are discussed in *Logica Obliqua*, Pars II, disp. XI, pp. 442–457). However, sometimes Caramuel treats "a" as "ai," so the standard "a.a.a" mood in the first figure is the valid relational "ai.ai.ai" under the same figure. Also the distinction between the mixed "aa.a.ai" and the pure "aa.ai.ai" is rather superficial. Thus Caramuel's oblique syllogistics can be seen as a more general system including the standard syllogistics in itself. At any rate, Caramuel's system is particularly innovative, both in its systematic character and the symbolism employed, when compared with the logic of his era.

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Caramuel y Lobkowitz, Juan

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Cartagena, Alonso de

Born: 1384

Died: 22 July 1456

Barry Taylor

The British Library, London, UK

Abstract

Alonso de Cartagena (c. 1384–22 July 1456) was a Castilian churchman (ultimately Bishop of Burgos) whose public life as counselor and diplomat was dedicated to the service of the crown. His works, in Latin and the vernacular, are chiefly concerned with the role of moral philosophy in matters of state. The three classical authors with whom he interacted were Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca. Even allowing for conventional protestations of humility, his role is commonly genuinely one of transmitter and Christianizer of ancient wisdom. He was the translator of Cicero and Seneca (his Senecan translations were particularly popular in noble libraries); in the *Memoriale virtutum*, he is the compiler of texts from the *Nicomachean Ethics*. His awareness of Italian humanism and engagement with it are patent. He thus played a key role in conveying to the Castilian and Portuguese ruling elite the heritage of classical learning.

Biography

Alonso (Alfonso) de Cartagena was born c. 1384 and died on 22 July 1456. His father was the rabbi Selomo ha-Levi, who on his conversion to Christianity on 21 July 1390 took the name Pablo de Santa María. His father became successively Bishop of Cartagena and of Burgos. Both father and son wrote in Latin and Spanish.

Alfonso was therefore a Jew for the first 6 years or so of his life. It is unclear how much of his intellectual profile is due to his converso background, and he appears to show no knowledge of Hebrew.

In 1463, Juan de Lucena characterized Cartagena in an imaginary dialogue: “You wrote in the vernacular on chivalry, the republic and Christian faith, and translated the famous works of our moral Seneca” [Tú de cauallería, de re pública, de fe cristiana escreuiste vulgar, y las obras famosas del moral Séneca nuestro vulgarizaste], (Lucena 2014: 11) and this accurately encapsulates his career as an author.

After the cathedral school at Cartagena, he studied civil and canon law at Salamanca. By 1415–1416 he was Dean of Santiago de Compostela and by 1420 Dean of Segovia. From 1419 he was a courtier, serving four monarchs, John I, Henry III, John II, and Henry IV, as a diplomat and translator. His most fruitful relationship was with the cultivated and scholarly king John II of Castile (reigned 1426–1454).

From 1421 to 1431 (December 1421–December 1422; January–April 1423; December 1424–April 1425; September–December 1427), he visited the court of John I of Portugal, on a mission to negotiate peace: a particular sticking point was the ownership of the Canary Islands, which was not entirely settled by the treaty of 1431. It was not until 1437 that Cartagena wrote his *Allegaciones super conquesta Insularum Canariae contra portugalenses*.

Enforced leisure at the Portuguese court encouraged Cartagena’s first translations. The princes of the Portuguese house of Avis were notable as authors, translators, and patrons of translations. At Dom Duarte’s request he made what is thought to be his earliest translation from

Latin into Spanish, Cicero's *De inventione* (1421–1433?); only a part has survived). (The Portuguese court was as fluent in Spanish as Portuguese.) In 1422, he translated Cicero's *De senectute*, followed by the *De officiis*. The prologues are addressed to John II's secretary, Juan Alfonso de Zamora, who was on the same diplomatic mission. Zamora was also a translator of Valerius Maximus (1418–1421, from the French of Hesdin). An Old Spanish translation of Cicero's *Pro Marcello*, although unsigned, is preserved in manuscripts with other works of Cartagena and is reliably accepted as his.

In the prologue to the *De senectute*, Cartagena gives a revealing account of his working methods: "the which [this book], I dictating and you writing, caring more for the sense than for the narrow meanings of words, turning it from Latin to our language, with very little effort was completed in the spare hours, as you know" [El qual, yo diziendo y vós escribiendo, más curando del seso que de la estrecha significación de las palabras, tornándolo de latín en nuestro lenguaje, con muy pequeño trabajo se acabó en las oras que sobran del tiempo que sabedes] (Cartagena 1996: 157).

The technique of the Cicero translations is to imitate the syntax of the Latin original, to avoid Latinisms in vocabulary, and to be conservative in explanatory glosses; in general, the later Seneca translations are more given to glossing.

These Ciceronian translations, although not securely dated, form the first period of Cartagena's literary career.

His earliest Latin work is probably the *Memoriale virtutum* (1422?), dedicated to Dom Duarte: this is a mirror of princes informed by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as commented by Thomas Aquinas. (The Spanish translation of 1474 is therefore not Cartagena's.) Cartagena casts himself in the role of compiler: "a little work encompassing sayings not of my own but of the philosophers and of certain saints under a brief epilogue" [opusculum [...] sentencias non meas set philosophicas et aliquorum sanctorum sub brevi epilogo continens] (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 9178, f. 40r).

It is also believed that Cartagena, encouraged by Zamora, completed the translation of

Boccaccio's *De casibus* which had been begun by Pero López de Ayala (d. 1407).

In Salamanca in 1427, Cartagena entered into an epistolary debate with Leonardo Bruni (they seem never to have met) on the correct way of translating Aristotle's *Ethics* with his *Declinationes* [or *Declamationes*] *contra novam translationem Ethicorum Aristotelis*. Bruni's translation had come out in 1418. Cartagena may have owed his knowledge of this translation and others of Bruni's to Bolognese students he met at the Portuguese court; however, as Bruni is known to have corresponded with John II and sent the king his *Isagogicon moralis disciplinae*, Cartagena may well have encountered his work in Castile.

Cartagena criticizes Bruni for translating Aristotle as a work of literature rather than one of philosophy. Jerome's old division of translations into word for word and sense for sense had been joined by a newer category (present in Cicero) of a translation that aims to match the original in its rhetorical effects. To a degree Cartagena places Bruni in the Ciceronian class, while himself advocating sense for sense as more appropriate to a text to be read for its content. Bruni had of course translated directly from the Greek original but Cartagena, who confesses his ignorance of Greek, drew on his reading of the Latin Aristotle and his experience as a translator of Cicero.

Cartagena's second diplomatic mission came in 1431, when he accompanied John II to Cordoba to negotiate with the Granadans. John was the patron or at least dedicatee of a number of Spanish translators; he commissioned Cartagena to translate a good number of works by Seneca the Younger, including some works erroneously attributed to him: *De providentia*, *De clementia*, *De constantia sapientis* (the rendering of the title as *Libro de la providencia divina* is indicative of Cartagena's medievalism), Epistle LXXXVIII on the seven liberal arts, *De vita beata* and *De otio* (combined as *Libro de la vida bienaventurada*), Manelli's *Tabulatio et expositio Senecae*; not now considered as Senecan are: *Formula vitae honestae* (in fact by Martin of Braga), *Declamations* of Seneca the Elder, *De legalibus institutis*, *Tratado de la guerra* (in fact an epitome of

Vegetius), *Dichos de Seneca en el acto de la caballeria*. The attribution to Cartagena of *Dichos de Quinto Curcio* is doubtful.

The importance of Cartagena as a transmitter of the works of Seneca is obvious: these were the first Spanish translations of Seneca since the reign of Sancho IV (d. 1295) and were much copied.

Cartagena's next diplomatic mission was to the Council of Basel from 1434 to 1439. He travelled via Avignon, where he wrote for oral presentation his Latin *Expositio super legem Gallus*, a discussion of a civil law text on the confirmation or disenfranchisement of heirs.

The purpose of the Council was church reform, the settlement of the Hussite wars, and the reconciliation of the Western and Eastern churches. It was the occasion of two Latin works by Cartagena, the *Propositio super altercatione praeminentiae sedium inter oratores regum Castellae et Angliae in concilio Basileensi* and the *Allegationes super conquesta Insularum Canariae contra portugalenses*. The latter refers back to issues left unresolved in 1431, but proved successful in that it persuaded Eugenius IV to grant the Islands to Castile. The immediate question addressed by the former is the seating plan for the Council, but Cartagena marshals evidence for the general superiority of Castile over England, citing Castile's earlier Christianization and commenting on the variety of languages (Castilian, Galician, and Basque) spoken in his kingdom.

Cartagena seems to have produced only one self-translation: he put the *Propositio* into Spanish (as the *Proposicion contra los ingleses* or *Tratado de las sesiones*) at the request of the knight Juan de Silva, who was present at Basel.

The Council proved a fertile meeting-ground for men of letters. Here Cartagena met Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, Francesco Pizolpasso, Poggio Bracciolini, Ambrogio Traversari, and Pier Candido Decembrio. When Decembrio came to translate Plato's *Politics* into Latin, Cartagena supplied advice on Aristotelian ideas. At Basel Cartagena circulated his *Declinationes contra novam translationem Ethicorum Aristotelis* of some 20 years before.

Cartagena succeeded his father as Bishop of Burgos in 1435. There followed diplomatic missions to Breslau to reconcile Albert II King of the Romans and King Casimir of Poland. In 1440, he brought Blanche of Navarre to Castile to marry Crown Prince Henry and negotiated peace treaties between the two kingdoms.

An interesting work of c. 1440 is the unsigned *Epistula ad inclitum et magnificum virum dominum Petrum Fernandi de Velasco Comitem de Haro*. The Count was a notable bibliophile who founded a home for twelve decayed knights and donated a library of 160 works for their use. Cartagena advocates that the nobleman should combine arms and letters and defines the areas of knowledge with which he should be familiar: two areas of reading which the noble should avoid are fiction (romances of chivalry such as *Amadis of Gaul* are criticized by name) and theology (the preserve of the cleric), as opposed to good Christian doctrine (for all). The Epistle forms the introduction to the *Cathoniana confectio*, a gloss in goliardic meter on the *Disticha Catonis* and *Contemptus mundi*: Cartagena's claim to have found it in his library may be a modesty topos which disguises his authorship.

Of the same period (c. 1443–47) is the *De questionibus hortolanis*, a debate with his pupil Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo on the superiority of sight (Arévalo) or hearing (Cartagena).

The *Duodenarium* is dated January–July 1442. Drawing on Aristotle's *Politics*, Cartagena addresses four questions put to him by his friend Fernán Pérez de Guzmán: the relationship between king and emperor; how many languages have there been; who was the most virtuous prince; who is more to be praised, the virtuous man or the virtuous woman?

His first work on chivalry (dated 17 March 1444) is the *Respuesta a la Question fecha por el magnifico señor Marques de Santillana*. Santillana had been reading Bruni's *De militia* and consulted Cartagena on a passage regarding the oath of Cato the Censor. Displaying a confidence which enabled him to criticize Bruni's Aristotle translation from a language he did not know, Cartagena admits he has not read the *De militia* but is able to answer Santillana regardless. The *De*

militia is dated 1421: the lapse of time between 1421 and 1444 reminds us that controversial literature of the time was not necessarily immediate in its responses.

Cartagena wrote more extensively on chivalry in the *Doctrinal de los caballeros* of c. 1444. It was written for a noble patron: originally Cartagena addressed it to Diego Gómez de Sandoval but later switched allegiance to Alvaro de Luna. It draws heavily on civil law sources such as the *Fuero* and particularly the *Siete Partidas* (c. 1260) of Alfonso X and on Aristotle to discuss topics both ethical and practical. Cartagena says on a number of occasions that his role has been to compile and order his material, adding little of his own (primarily the prologues and epilogue), and cites the method of Gratian. We learn that although he may not have read Bruni's *De militia*, he knew Aeschines in Bruni's translation.

Cartagena followed the *Doctrinal* with a number of purely religious works. The *Defensorium unitatis christianae* (1449) is usually seen as a response to the pogroms of that year. His *Pastoral sobre las reliquias de santa Juliana* of 16 September 1453 refers to his transfer of the relics of St Juliana to the altar of the church of Santillana and is a defense of relic worship. The *Oracional de Fernan Perez* (1454) is a work on prayer and the *Apologia sobre el psalmo "Judica me Deus"* is a work of exegesis.

His last work is the *Anacephaleosis* (1454–56), a genealogy of the kings of Castile which testifies to the late medieval interest in the gothic heritage. Earlier, in the *Propositio*, Cartagena had claimed that Castile was the heir of Rome via the Goths.

To judge from the number of extant manuscripts his most popular works were Spanish: the Seneca translations, the *Proposicion contra los ingleses* (more popular in Spanish than in Latin), and the *Doctrinal*.

At a time when it was unusual for Spanish authors to have input into the form of their books, it is interesting to note cases in which Cartagena prescribed certain formal features of his works. The *Doctrinal* is divided into Book, Chapter, Law, and Rubric (following the *mise en texte* of the juridical sources from which Cartagena quotes). Cartagena draws the reader's

attention to headings in red, "suprascriptcion de bermejo" (Cartagena 2006: 66). Like certain contemporaries, he saw it as part of the translator's task to divide the text into more readable form and add marginal cross-references (as he did with the *De inventione*). For the *Anacephaleosis*, Cartagena indicated the inclusion of miniatures of the kings and prescribed their iconography. He also took care in his will to deposit copies of his works in Burgos Cathedral library.

Many studies have been concerned with debating whether or not Cartagena is a humanist. It is more fruitful to see him as a man on the threshold of humanism, looking forwards and backwards in different works. Among his medieval features are his ignorance of Greek, his praise of (if not authorship of) the *Cathoniana confectio*, his subordination of classical wisdom to Christianity, and his stance on translation against Bruni; his humanistic features are his interaction with Italian humanists, a knowledge of Greek literature in Latin translation, his use of the phrase "studia humanitatis," and his promotion of the ideal knight who combines arms and letters. His legacy was as a popularizer of Cicero and Seneca in his translations and of Aristotle in his moral and political work, teaching philosophy for the court, and nobility.

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Cartography in the Renaissance

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Abstract

This essay draws a cultural history of cartography and cosmography focusing on some of the transformative processes and changing functions that characterized these fields of knowledge, using European sources, over a period of nearly four centuries, from 1250

until 1650. This long-term analysis of cosmographic and cartographic corpora is essential to highlight both continuity and structural changes in Medieval and Renaissance knowledge systems as well to develop a theoretical understanding of knowledge transformation and evolution, taking into account epistemic, social, and material dimensions.

Until the twelfth century, the Medieval Christian cosmography was based on two main assumptions: (1) the number of peoples of the world had been established definitively following the flood; and (2) the inhabited world had been comprehensively described, once and for all, by the Greek and Roman geographers. Since circa 1250, these two assumptions were challenged and subverted by long-term and interdependent processes, which embrace diverse horizons of the history of culture, economics, science, and technology.

Literary discoveries of long forgotten cosmographic classical works were translated into Latin at first from Arabic and later from Greek. The appearance and diffusion of marine charts, portolans, and other measurement instruments in several (port) cities in the Mediterranean Sea basin and the Atlantic European coasts, the technological evolution of ships and sails, the collapse of long-distance terrestrial trade networks in central Asia after the fall of the Mongol Empire, the Iberian quest for new maritime routes, and the mental opening toward seas previously considered inaccessible to humans, all together had structural, transformative impacts on the way the world has been experienced, conceived, and represented, also through cosmography and cartography, by several communities of interpretations, from learned scholars and men of letters to members of religious orders and missionaries, urban classes, including, merchants, navigators, soldiers, and diplomats.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Between circa 1250, when a few Franciscan missionaries and Christian merchants reached the

capitals of the Mongol Empire – first, Karakorum, in Mongolia, and subsequently Khān Bālīq (in Uyghur, The City of the Khān), nowadays Beijing (Khān Bālīq, also known in Mongolian and Chinese sources as Dadu (in Chinese 大都, “The Grand Capital”), was transformed into the capital of the Mongol Empire by Kublai Khān in 1272. See Haw 2006, pp. 44–52.) – and the end of the sixteenth century, when Abraham Ortelius (1528–1598) published in Antwerp the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570) and the *Theatri orbis terrarum parergon sive veteris geographiae tabulae* (1579–1606), the shape, dimensions, and perception of the inhabited and known part of the earth (*oikumene*) underwent a slow but profound change. (The title means: “Beside the *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, or some maps of ancient geography.” Freely translated, it means “Additional maps of historical geography added to the *Theatrum orbis terrarum*.” The title is based on the Greek noun and concept of *párerigon*, nominal use of the neuter of *párergos*: “beside the main subject.” On the *Theatri orbis terrarum parergon*, see Besse (2009).) This transformation developed in a critical juncture in world history when an unprecedented number of people – Europeans, Africans, Asians, and, to a lesser extent and from c. 1500 onwards, also Amerindians – made or were forced to make transoceanic or long-distance journeys and all the major urban civilizations of the world became globally interconnected for the first time. (Among several recent publications, for the period before 1500, see: Brentjes and Renn (2016); for the period post 1400, see: Bentley et al. (2018)). Both Ortelius’ *Theatrum orbis terrarum* and the *Theatri orbis terrarum parergon* – the first atlas of historical geography and cartography printed in Europe – provide a most effective cartographic conceptualization and representation of the remodeling of the ancient world in the period 1250–1650.

Among the historical maps of the biblical and classical world of the *Theatri... parergon*, one in particular, entitled *Aevi veteris, typus geographicus* (literally, Map of the Ancient Time, that is, a map of the classical world) is paramount to understand the early modern intelligence of the space of (Mediterranean) Antiquity

and its successive transformations. The *Aevi veteris, typus geographicus* displays a Ptolemaic representation of the Roman *oikoumene*, at the time of the widest expansion of the Roman Empire, during the Nerva–Antonine dynasty (96–192 AD). The map is inserted into a graduated cartographic grid that encompasses the entire surface of the terrestrial globe in oval projection, purposely left blank (Fig. 1). Through this image, Ortelius aimed at highlighting the main foundational principles of classical cosmography and world cartography, epitomized by the works of Ptolemy. According to the Alexandrian scientist, the earth was occupied for 6/7 by land and all the seas were Mediterranean, including the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, only 1/4 of the entire surface of the earth was considered habitable and knowable by human beings. This portion measured 180° in longitude (from the Canaries, called *Insulae fortunatae*, in the West, to *Cattigara* and the *Magnus Sinus* – the Gulf of Siam – in the East) and c. 90° in latitude (from *Thule* in the North – placed at circa 63° N., to *Syene*, nowadays Assuan, in Egypt, to the South, at 16° lat. S.). Beyond these longitudes and latitudes there was *terra incognita* that could not be inhabited due to excessive heat (at the equator) or excessive cold (at the poles). Within the *oikumene* Ptolemy placed instead c. 8.000 places (towns, rivers, mountains, gulfs, seas, and islands), each of them accompanied and identified by pairs of latitudes and longitudes (Dilke 1987)

The readers of the *Parergon* who were familiar with the famous planisphere of the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* – one of the most widespread and known sixteenth-century cartographic representations of the whole world, reproduced and plagiarized in dozens of multilingual editions until the mid-seventeenth century – could thus easily observe and appreciate the enormous extent of the lands and seas discovered by the moderns (Fig. 2) (Koeman et al. 1672) The world of the moderns exemplified by Ortelius’ *Typus orbis terrarum* (map of the world) encompassed the whole globe and was therefore nearly four times bigger than that of the ancients. As is well-known, beside the three parts known to the ancients, a fourth part, named *America* by the Humanist cartographer Martin



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 1 Abraham Ortelius, *Aevi veteris, typus geographicus* (literally, Map of the Ancient Time, that is, a map of the classical world) in

Theatri orbis terrarum parergon, sive veteris geographiae tabulae. Antwerp: [s.n.] 1590, pl. 25

Waldseemüller in 1507 – a tribute to the cosmographer and navigator Amerigo Vespucci – was added to the circumnavigable Africa, the much-extended Asia, the Pacific Ocean, and, in the South, a huge *Terra australis incognita* (Among others see Johnson (2006)).

On the basis of interpretations that emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, positivist historiography has long insisted on a “revolutionary” interpretation of these articulated symbiotic processes of expansion and representation of the earth, understood as radical shifts from alleged “symbolic” and “theological” Medieval geography and cartography (which supposedly were not interested in representing the “real” world, but only the universal history of creation and salvation) and the accurate, mathematical, and experience-based knowledge of Renaissance cartography, focused on the “real” world.

More recent contributions have instead highlighted the *longue durée* and the structural dimension of continuity between the Middle Ages and the early modern age, not only with respect to the process of the European maritime expansion, but also in the epistemological status of its literary and cartographic representations, in particular cosmography and world cartography (Woodward 2007; Dalché 2015a). At this regard, epistemological ruptures such as “from the flat Earth to the round Earth” – often mentioned at ongoing celebrations of the “discoveries,” e.g., of America, Brazil, and the Strait of Magellan, by various “first European expeditions” – that allegedly took place between the late Medieval and early modern eras, remain undocumented. Indeed, they may be characterized as banal and misleading oversimplifications about the European expansion, as well as its cartographic delineations



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 2 Abraham Ortelius (engraver: Frans Hogenberg), *Typus orbis terrarum* (map of the whole world) in *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, Antwerp: Apud Aegid. Coppenium Diesth, 1570

and scientific implications (Inadequate as held in Randles (1994)).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Until the twelfth century, the Medieval Christian cosmography, transmitted by monastic schools (*scholae*) and universities (*studia*), was based on two main assumptions: (1) the number of peoples of the world had been established, once and for all, from the moment in which the sons of Noah and their descendants spread over the *oikoumene* following the flood; and (2) the inhabited world had been comprehensively described by Greek and Roman geographers and poets (above all Virgil, Pliny, and Soline). The Roman pagan *imago mundi* was then reinterpreted in the light of the Christian revelation by Paulus Orosius (c. 375–c. 420), disciple of Saint Augustine, in the first Christian universal history as the *Historiarum*

adversus paganos septem libri (fifth century). These two principles implied an important consequence in terms of method: to cope with the need to update the description of both the *oikoumene* and the peoples of the world it was sufficient to trace the changes in the history of the denomination of the regions and peoples (Gautier Dalché 2008).

These two assumptions were challenged and subverted by four main historical, long-term, interdependent processes, which embrace diverse horizons of the history of culture, economics, science, and technology. All together, they had a structural impact on the way a rapidly changing and expanding world has been experienced, conceived, and represented, also through cartography, by several communities of interpretations, from learned scholars and men of letters to members of religious orders and missionaries and urban merchant classes, including navigators and diplomats.

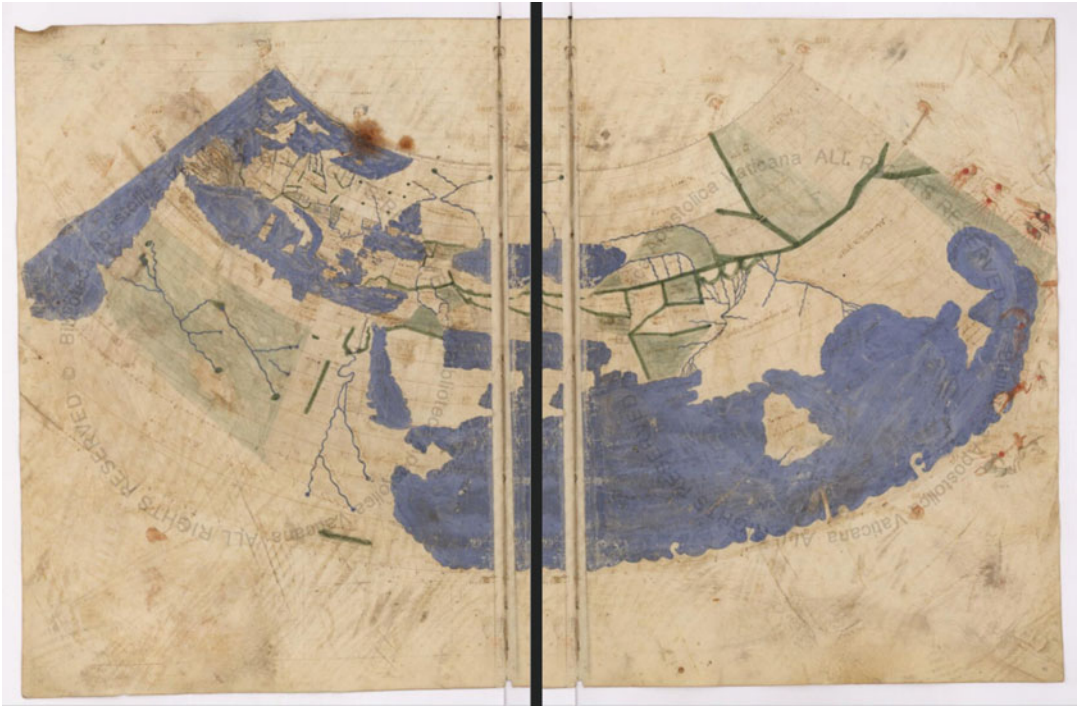
Starting from the second half of the twelfth century, literary discoveries enriched the range

of available geographical knowledge. Long-forgotten cosmographic classical works, originally in Greek, were translated into Latin from Arabic (in particular the Aristotelian corpus, later defined as *Aristoteles latinus*, including the *De caelo* and the *Methereologica* that discussed the relative position and size of the earth within the sublunary world, in relation to the other Aristotelian elements of water, air, and fire, placed beneath the circle of the moon) (*Aristoteles Latinus Database* 2018). One hundred years later, ancient treatises of Roman geography, such as the *De chorographia* of the Roman geographer Pomponius Mela (first century c.e), were rediscovered, while at the same time several written recounts in Latin as well as in various vernaculars of the pilgrimages, such as *ad Terram Sanctam*, and the reports of both missionary and merchant journeys to the Near East, Central Asia, and even Mongolia and China led to the first significant redefinition of the *imago mundi* inherited from Antiquity. Among these treatises were particularly relevant, because widespread in tens and even hundreds of manuscript copies, those of the Franciscans John of Pianocarpine (c. 1182–1252), William of Rubruck (c. 1220–1293), John of Montecorvino (1247–1328), and Odoric of Pordenone (c. 1265–1331), among others, about the Mongols and the Mongol Empire, together with merchants-travelers' and diplomats' recounts, such as those of Marco Polo (1254–1324) about the Mongol Empire at the time Kublai – co-written in Genoa with the Arthurian romance writer Rustichello da Pisa (second half of the thirteenth century) – Ruy González de Clavijo (d. 1412) on the Court of Tamerlan, and Niccolò de' Conti (1395–1469), on several places and people of South East Asia, the latter recounted by the humanist Poggio Bracciolini as the *Liber IV* of the *De varietate fortunae* (The Vicissitudes of Fortune) (*Sinica Franciscana* 1929; Tucci 1981; Dalché 2013; Gadrat-Ouerfelli 2015; Gonzalez de Clavijo and Markham 2010; *De l'Inde* 2004).

From the mid-fourteenth century, a later stage of this process had its roots in the Italian Humanism (involving several communities of scholars and readers, in particular in Florence, Pavia,

Milan, Venice, and the Roman Curia, which were linked to other communities of scholars, all over Europe) and the interest on the part of its most important protagonists in the geography, medicine, and astronomy of the ancients (See Garin 1989). It was in the framework of the Humanistic rediscovery and translation into Latin of long-forgotten Greek texts that the *Geographike uphégesis* (Guide Cartography) by the Alexandrian scientist Ptolemy (II cent. AD) and Strabo's *Geography* (I cent. BC) were translated into Latin, between 1406–09 and 1453–1458, respectively (Diller and Kristeller 1960).

In the context of this essay, it is worth recalling the history of the Humanistic reception in Latin of Ptolemy's *Geography*, a milestone not only in Renaissance cartography but also for the modern foundation, affirmation, and dissemination of mathematical cartography (*cosmographia more mathematicorum*, in the words of Iacopo Angeli's introduction to the Latin translation of the work). (Iacopo Angeli's introduction to the *Cosmographia*, his Latin translation of the *Geographiké uphégesis*, is published in Hankins 1992.) While Ptolemy's *Almagest* had been translated from Greek into Syriac and Arabic between the seventh and ninth century and from Arabic into Latin in 1172, by Gerard of Cremona (1114–1187), Ptolemy's *Geographike uphégesis* remained unavailable in the West until the end of the fourteenth century, though the Arabs had known it since at least the ninth century. In 1397, when Manuel Chrysoloras (c. 1350–1415), a byzantine humanist from Constantinople and diplomat for Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (1350–1415), was officially called to Florence by Coluccio Salutati to teach Greek, he brought with him a set of Greek manuscripts, among which was a codex of the *Geographiké uphégesis* (probably, the current codex Vatican Library, Urbinas graecus 82) illustrated with twenty-seven maps (Gentile 1991; Claudius Ptolemaeus 1932): twelve for Europe, four for Africa, and ten for Asia, plus a map of the entire inhabited world (*oikoumene*) (Fig. 3). In 1409, one of his pupils, Iacopo Angeli from Scarperia (c. 1360–c. 1410), at that time apostolic secretary at the Holy See



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 3 Map of the *oikumene* (the known and inhabitable part of the world), in Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Geographiké uphégesis* (Guide to

Cartography), manuscript on vellum, Byzantium, 13th century. Vatican City, Vatican Library, Urbinas graecus 82, ff. 60v-61r. https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.gr.82

under the pope Alexander V, translated it into Latin with the title of *Cosmographia*, to emphasize the links between the earth and the cosmos, that is, the celestial world (Farzone 2004). Iacopo Angeli understood that the scientific value of the *Geographiké uphégesis* lay in the fact that Ptolemy had solved the problem of representing the known and inhabitable part of the world and, in theory, the earth as a whole, on the flat surface of maps by using codified geometric procedures that allowed for a clear identification of places through their permanent astronomical coordinates. In Book I, chapters 23 and 24, and Book VII, chapter 6 – the so-called theoretical chapters of the *Geography*, probably already translated into Latin by Manuel Chrysoloras himself – Ptolemy demonstrated how to construct ecumenical maps in accordance with three geometric procedures. This way the methodology and practice of creating cartographic projections, originally developed in Alexandria in the second century of the Christian era, were revived in Florence, and spread all

over Europe, in the fifteenth century (Jones and Berggren 2000; Gentile 2001; Dalché 2007).

From the end of the thirteenth century, a second process concerns the appearance and diffusion of marine charts and portolans in several port cities in the northern side of the Mediterranean Sea basin, with two main *foci*, the Italian peninsula and the Catalan islands and coasts. Marine charts are manuscript cartographic representations, generally on vellum, that detail the coastlines of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea basin, the Atlantic coast of North Africa, the Iberian peninsula, France, England, and the Flanders, on the basis of the main winds that are graphically designed and connected through wind roses. The oldest undated chart might be the so-called *Carte pisane*, presumably of c. 1290 (Fig. 4) (Paris, BnF, Cartes et Plans, Rés. Ge B 111. Pujades i Bataller (2013), for a comprehensive view: Pujades i Bataller (2007)). Among the oldest dated charts, those by the Genoese cartographer Pietro Vesconte (fl. c. 1310–30) stand out. Active in



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 4 Marine chart of the Mediterranean Sea basin, the Black Sea, and the European Atlantic coasts, known as “Carte Pisane,” manuscript on vellum, end of the 13th century. Paris,

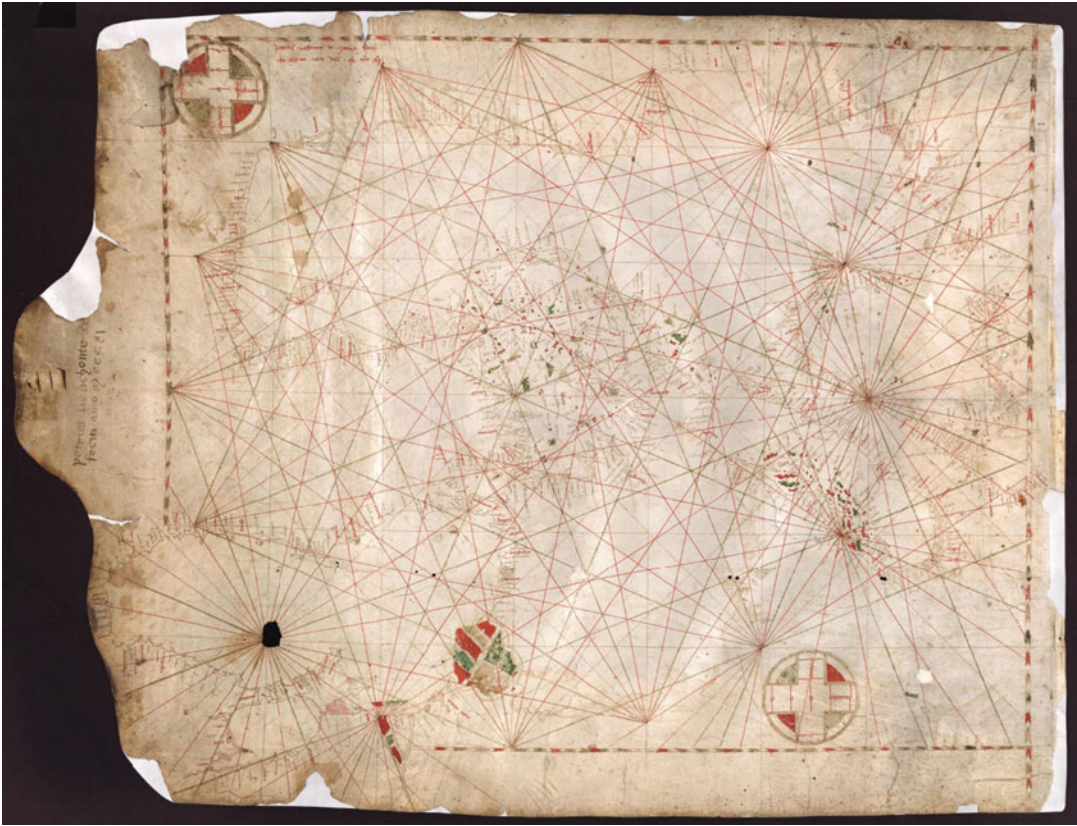
Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Cartes et plans, GE B-1118 (RES). <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52503226n.r=carte%20pisane?rk=21459;2>

Genoa and by 1318 in Venice, Vesconte signed and dated charts since 1311 (Fig. 5) (Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carta nautica 1, Pietro Vesconte, ink and colours on vellum, 1311. – <http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/archividigitali/riproduzione/?id=148176>).

The portolans (from the Italian *portolano* – that is, a list of ports – also known as *compasso* or *compassus de navigare*) consist instead of lists of port cities, promontories, sea rocks, shallows, gulfs, and river mouths, with their respective distances of navigation as well as angular distances, calculated on the basis of the main winds, half winds, and quarters of wind, written on paper codices.

The origins as well as the use of the marine charts and portolans can no longer be researched solely through and within the experiences of navigation and sea trade, but more so through the learned and scholarly framing of such practices within the context of urban cultures within which practical and erudite items of knowledge flowed together in a symbiotic manner as eloquently shown by the *Liber de existencia rivierarum et forma maris nostri Meditteranei* (late twelfth century). The *Liber* was written in Pisa, most likely

by one of the many clergymen, who acted as notaries and chaplains on the naval convoys and as urban notaries between the end of the twelfth century and the first decades of the thirteenth century. (London, British Library, Cotton Domitianus A XIII, ff. 114r-129v, c. 1200. Dalché 1995.) This work contains about 1200 place names that detail the coastal toponymy of the whole of the Mediterranean Sea basin, including a range of open-sea crossings – features which would be directly relevant to a sailor. However, Tony Campbell argues, that was certainly not the work’s sole purpose: information for a well-educated Christian pilgrim is also plentiful, hence the prominence given to the Holy Land (Campbell 2018). Also, the wealth of maritime information aggregated in the *Compasso de navigare*, the oldest extant manuscript *portolano* in the vernacular, completed in 1296 (the current codex Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Hamilton 396), circulated well beyond the marine milieu in which it was originally produced (Motzo 1947. New edition: Debanne, Alessandra *Lo Compasso de navegare. Edizione del codice Hamilton 396 con commento linguistico e glossario*. Brussels, Wien: Peter Lang, 2011. See also Bouloux



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 5 Pietro Vesconte, Marine chart of the Mediterranean Sea basin, the Black Sea, and the European Atlantic coasts.

Manuscript on vellum, Venice, 1311. Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carta nautica 1. <http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/archividigitali/riproduzione/?id=148176>

2002, pp. 45–68, 88–97). Marin Sanudo the Elder (c. 1270–c. 1324) used and translated into Latin a conspicuous part of the *Compasso* for the cartographic descriptions and maps of the *Liber secretorum fidelium Crucis super Terrae sanctae recuperatione et conservatione*..., an appeal to the crusade presented to pope John XXII in Avignon in September 1321 (this is the current codex Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 2972) displaying six maps designed by Pietro Vesconte. (On Sanudo the Elder: Bongars, Jacques (ed.) *Liber secretorum fidelium Crucis super Terrae sanctae recuperatione et conservatione. quo et Terrae sanctae historia ab origine et eiusdem vicinarumque provinciarum geographica descriptio continetur. Cuius auctor Marinus Sanutus dictus Torsellus patricius Venetus. Nunc*

primùm, cum libello eiusdem argumenti, sine auctoris nomine, ex mss. veteribus editus. Orientalis historiae tomus secundus. Hanoviae (Hanau), Typis Wecheliani, apud heredes Ioannis Aubrii, 1611 (re-edited by Joshua Prawer, Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972). English translation and commentary: Marinus Sanutus dictus Torsellus 2011. There are 19 manuscript complete copies of the *Liber secretorum*; nine of which have maps. See Peter Lock's introduction, pp. 13–16.)

The examination of extant marine charts preserved in the archives, libraries, and private collections reveals that they were not destined to be used wholly for navigation; in fact, not only they do not bear any trace of having been used at sea, but not even of having been associated with

determining the route of the journey or the calculation of distances, on which there do not appear indeed the points of the compass. Despite the testimony of rare archival documents indicating the presence of marine charts accompanied by a written portolancon board ships, their presence on board appears to have been far from a general custom (Campbell 2011. See also the classical essay Campbell 1987. Also see de la Roncière (1897)). The studies on the practice of both Medieval and early modern Venetian navigation up to the end of the sixteenth century through outstanding works such as Michael of Rhodes' maritime manuscript and Benedetto Cotrugli's treatise *De navigatione* (On Navigation), both written in the Venetian vernacular in 1430–1460 and 1464–1465, respectively, have shown that the use of nautical chart was mostly made recourse to in order to determine distances and calculate the routes. Still, it was empirical knowledge and the ability to “read the sea” of the sea captains guiding navigation, for both military and the commercial kind of navigation in the Mediterranean and along the Atlantic coast. (Long et al. 2009 (the entire Book 3. Tucci 1958. Falchetta 2009 (in particular “Della Cartha de Navegare. C. I,” pp. 57–58 and pp. 182–183). Available on-line at <http://independent.academia.edu/PieroFalchetta>. Dalché (2015b).)

The function of nautical cartography, from the time of the crusades until the oceanic expeditions (as it were at least to begin from the voyage of the Genoese Vivaldi brothers around 1290 and from the conquest of the Canaries around 1341), was also that of an effective holistic intellectual organization of space (Padoan 2012). Therefore, besides being practical instruments for calculating distances at sea, they were also perceived as complex cultural syntheses for the use of the urban merchant classes, men of letters, and princes for their understanding of the Mediterranean Sea basin, the Black Sea, and the African and European Atlantic coasts. In short, for all those who had a particular interest in space in the hope of organizing and planning navigation and commercial activity, warfare, and conquest, as well as for facilitating pilgrimage to holy sites, but also imaginary journeys, as in the case of Francesco

Petrarca's *Itinerarium ad sepulcrum Domini nostri Ihesu Cristi ad Iohannem de Mandello* (1358), in which the humanist poet also relied on a marine chart to compose a fictional pilgrimage guide to the Holy Land (Cachey 2002; Dorninger 2006–07. There are also a French and an Italian editions).

From the second half of the thirteenth century, nautical cartography of Mediterranean provenance and, from the beginning of the fifteenth century, Ptolemaic cartography, broadened in the light of either textual discoveries or of the knowledge emerging from voyages beyond the ecumencial space known to the ancients, provided the spatial graphic structure on which an expanded *imago mundi* was depicted by cartographers. Fra Mauro's mid-fifteenth-century map of the world and Henricus Martellus Germanus's *Insularium illustratum* show in clear visual form the interaction between the abovementioned processes, representing a summa of both geographic and textual discoveries that became available at that time. The first is the extremely renowned work of the Venetian Camaldolese Fra Mauro (died c. 1459/64), designed around 1450, in the monastery of St. Michael of Murano in the Venetian lagoon, which is now kept in the Marciana Library of Venice (Fig. 6). (Fra Mauro's *mappa mundi*, manuscript on vellum, written in Venetian vernacular, San Michele di Murano (Venice), c. 1450. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, inventory number 106173. Gasparrini Leporace 1956; Falchetta 2006; Cattaneo 2011.) In 1457, the Portuguese court of Afonso V commissioned a copy of this *mappa mundi*, which was sent to Lisbon in April 1459 but is now lost. Fra Mauro's map outlines the *imago mundi* at the onset of the Portuguese and Spanish sea voyages and explains their cosmographic scenario. The shape of Africa, even if mostly conjectural, in particular in its southern tip, clearly aims at illustrating that its circumnavigation was possible. This work was among the first attempts to update the world view of Ptolemy's *Geography* through the massive use of the travelers' accounts of Marco Polo, the Franciscan missionaries, and Nicolò di Conti (that is, the *Liber IV* of the *De varietate fortunae*



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 6 Fra Mauro Camaldolese, [*Mappa mundi*]. Manuscript on several pieces of vellum glued on wooden panels. Venice, San

Michele di Murano, c. 1450. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, inventory number 106173

written by Poggio Bracciolini) for Asia, the Indian Ocean, and its islands, that are placed in a Ptolemaic coastal profile nonetheless designated in the graphic form of marine cartography.

Henricus Martellus Germanus' graduated planisphere in the *Insularium illustratum*, designed around c. 1490, radically modifies the world maps in of Ptolemy's *Geography*, updating them according to the Portuguese discoveries along the western coast of Africa (Fig. 7). (Five copies of the *Insularium illustratum* survive: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. XXIX 25, considered to be Martellus's working copy and the basis for the other codices; London, British Library, MS. Add. 15,760; Leiden, Bibliothek der Rijksuniversiteit, Ms. Vossianus lat. Fol. 23;

Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 698-0483; Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, James Ford Bell Library, Bell 1475fMa without the planisphere.) The fundamental characteristic of this planisphere in comparison to the ancient Ptolemaic world map is its widening up to 220° of longitude, the enlargement of over 40° to the east depending most of all on Marco Polo. In addition, it represents the African coast as far south as the Cape of Good Hope, demonstrating Africa's circumnavigability and the opening of the Indian Ocean into the Atlantic Ocean. Around 1490, Martellus included, almost simultaneously, information derived from the navigation of Diogo Cão along the African coast to the Congo River (1482–1483 and 1485–1486) and of Bartolomeu Dias



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 7 Henricus Martellus Germanus, Ptolemaic planisphere expanded to include Portuguese navigations of 1485–1489, circumnavigating Africa. Manuscript on vellum, written in Latin and

Florentine vernacular, in *Insularium illustratum* (Illustrated book of islands), Florence, c. 1492. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pluteo 29 25, ff. 66v–67r

(1487–1488) up to *Cabo das Tormentas*, called *Cabo da Boa Esperança* after Dias’s return to Lisbon and recorded on this planisphere as “cavo de esperanza” (Cape of Hope), almost overflowing from the graphic space of the map.

The design of Mauro’s and Martellus’s map becomes explicable by taking into consideration three distinct but overlapping historical processes. These were the foundation of a world capitalist economy within a context that Fernand Braudel, Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, and Emmanuel Wallerstein have defined as a “world economy”; the development of long-distance networks of knowledge; and, finally, the expansion and mental opening toward lands and seas previously considered inaccessible to humans (Cattaneo 2011, 185–225. See also Fernández-Armesto 1987; Cattaneo 2016a).

Even fifteenth- and sixteenth-century cosmographers and cartographers working for the Portuguese and Spanish Crowns – the only ones to have direct access to the maps designed by sea captains during their voyages, and to their

official written reports (*roteiros*) – also availed themselves of “bookish knowledge” for the design of their world maps. Such cartographers, notably Amerigo and Giovanni Vespucci, Pedro and Jorge Reinel, Lopo and Diogo Homen, and Diogo Ribeiro, for those parts of the globe regarding which they lacked direct knowledge, had recourse to ancient maps, although they were aware that those maps were fully conjectural. At this regard, one of earliest and most spectacular testimonies for the Portuguese expansion, the so-called *Cantino Planisphere* – secretly obtained in Lisbon by Alberto Cantino, agent of Ercole I d’Este (1431–1505), Duke of Ferrara, in October 1502 – reproduces the conjectural “bookish” coastal shapes of Ptolemy’s *Chersonesus Aurea peninsula* and *Magnus Sinus* for Eastern Asia, which Portuguese expeditions had not yet reached around 1500. The “bookish knowledge” of Ptolemy is placed beside the very accurate representations of the African coastal profile, the first ever representation of the coasts of Brazil and of India, all based upon



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 8 Marine planisphere expanded to include Portuguese navigations until 1502, circumnavigating Africa and as far India, known as

Cantino planisphere. Manuscript on vellum, written in Portuguese. Lisbon, 1502. Modena (Italy), Biblioteca Estense e Universitaria, C.G.A.2

sistematic astronomical observations that enabled the precise determination of latitudes (Fig. 8). (Modena, Biblioteca Estense e Universitaria, C.G.A.2, [*Carta del Cantino*], ink and colors on three sheets of parchment, 1502. Cortesão and Teixeira da Mota 1960; Milano 1991; Alegria et al. 2007. On early modern nautical charts: Gaspar 2017.)

Impact and Legacy

From the end of the fifteenth century, nautical cartography and Ptolemaic cartography were integrated by cartographers and cosmographers working for the Iberian Crowns with systematic surveys of coastal latitudes, first starting from the Atlantic coasts, then on a global level. It is important to stress the role of low educated people, such as sea captains, sailors, and soldiers, in measurement practices that brought to a mathematical reconfiguration of the world image, beyond those inherited from Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Teixeira da Mota 1961; Leitão 2013). These measurements, the first to be conducted through astrolabes and other scientific instruments at a global scale, were systematized and aggregated in the framework of the

cosmographic activities of the *Casa da Índia* and *Casa da Mina e da Guiné* (the House of India and House of Mina and Guiné) in Lisbon and the *Casa de la Contratación* (the House of Trade) in Seville and, starting from the second half of the sixteenth century, also in the main colonial urban centers, like Goa, Macao, Malacca, Nagasaki, Mexico City, and Lima (Cortesão and Teixeira da Mota 1960–1962, in particular vol. 3 and vol. 4. Mundi 1996; Portuondo 2009). These innovative institutions were founded by the Iberian Crowns to centralize the following functions: prepare maritime travel, recruit sea pilots and take care of their cosmographic education, issue navigation licenses, prepare the official charts for navigation and their synoptic aggregations known as *padrão real* (in Portuguese) or *padrón real* or *padrón general* (in Spanish) – that is, “master chart” – but also secure the payment of taxes in favor of the Crown, particularly of goods from oversea territories. From the beginning of the seventeenth century Amsterdam and Batavia (nowadays Jakarta) also became major hubs for the global cartographic production, by aggregating geographic information through the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, VOC, founded in 1602) and the Dutch West India Company (*Geocroyeerde*

Westindische Compagnie, GWIC, founded in 1621) (Zandvliet 2007).

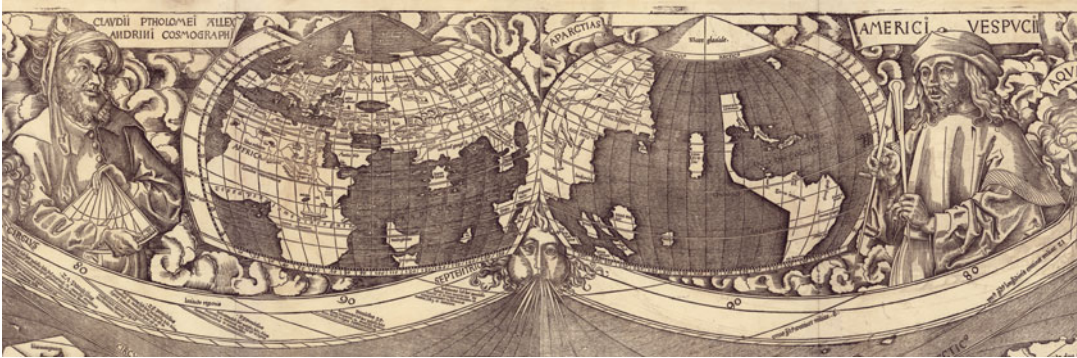
To conclude, the cartographic and cosmographic works of the humanist cartographer Martin Waldseemüller (1470–1521) and the Latinist, Hellenist scholar and poet Mathias Ringmann (1482–1511) provide a very clear example of the cultural synthesis operated through Renaissance cartography. Waldseemüller and Ringmann were active in the *Gymnasium Vosagense*, a literary and scientific association located at Saint-Dié des Vosges, under the patronage of Duke René II, and were in contact with Venetian, Paduan, and Florentine humanist circles. Their major works are the *Cosmographiae introductio* accompanied by a universal planisphere, both printed in 1507. The introduction to cosmography was conceived in such a way as to prepare the reader for a more complex work: a new edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*, eventually published by Ringmann and Waldseemüller in Strasbourg in 1513 to correct and update previous editions of the work that strictly relied upon Iacopo Angeli's problematic Latin translation of 1409 (for an in-depth study on the cosmographic activities of the *Gymnasium*, see Baldi 2018).

It is worth mentioning the entire title of the *Introductio: Cosmographiae introductio cum quibusdam geometriae ac astronomiae principiis ad eam rem necessariis. Insuper quatuor Americi Vesputii navigationes. Universalis Cosmographiae descriptio tam in solido quam plano, eis etiam insertis quae Ptholomaeo ignota a nuperis reperta sunt* (Saint-Dié, [25 April] 1507). (The Library of Congress has made available a free digital edition: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbc3&fileName=rbc0001_2008thacher16176page.db&recNum=8.) This is the English translation of the title: "Introduction to cosmography with certain necessary principles of geometry and astronomy to which are added the four voyages of Amerigo Vespucci: A representation of the entire world, both in the solid and projected on the plane, Including also lands which were unknown to Ptolemy, and have been recently discovered." The introduction to the first edition of the *Cosmographiae introductio* details the entire cultural and editorial project –

an introduction to plane and spherical geometry, elementary notions of astronomy, a world map, a globe, and a new edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*:

[...] the idea was born among us, who have recently opened a printing press in the Vosges Mountains of Lorraine in the little town called St Dié, and who have studied the books of Ptolemy from a Greek codex, to add the reports of the four voyages of Amerigo Vespucci. I have prepared a map of the whole world, for the general use of scholars—in the manner of an introduction to cosmography—both as a three-dimensional globe and as a two-dimensional map. ("Hinc effectum et ut nobis (qui librariam officinam apud Lotharinge Vosagum in oppido cui vocabulum est Sancto Deodato nuper ereximus) Ptholomei libros post exemplar Grecum recognoscentibus, necnon quatuor Americi Vesputij navigationum lustrationes adijecientibus totius orbis typum tam in solido quam plano (velut previam quandam ysagogen) pro communi studiosorum utilitate paraverimus", *Cosmographiae Introductio*, p. Aii (first edition, 25 April 1507).)

Beside Ptolemy, also the name of the cosmographer and navigator Amerigo Vespucci is given emphasis. Waldseemüller and the *Gymnasium* openly gave credit to their contemporary Vespucci for having recognized and described lands beyond the space known to the ancients as a new *quarta pars orbis* unknown to the ancients, as opposed to Columbus, who, notwithstanding his status as discoverer, had a delayed understanding of his own accomplishment. As is known, not only did Waldseemüller name the *quarta pars orbis* "America," but he also proclaimed Vespucci to be the "New Ptolemy." Both Ptolemy's and Vespucci's names are also used in the title of the planisphere mentioned in the *Cosmographiae introductio*, which was engraved on twelve wooden boards and printed at Saint Dié in 1507: the *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vesputii alioru(m)que lustrationes* (the Universal Cosmography according to the Tradition of Ptolemy and the Discoveries of Amerigo Vespucci and others) (Fig. 9) (Waldseemüller (1470 circa 1519). Digital interactive edition: *A land beyond the stars* – <http://exhibits.museogalileo.it/waldseemuller/index.html>.) Two hemispheres are illustrated in the upper part of the world map. The ancient hemisphere (from the prime meridian crossing the *Fortunate Isles* to *Cattigara* 180° E. long.) is placed next to Ptolemy; whereas,



Cartography in the Renaissance, Fig. 9 Martin Waldseemüller, Matthias Ringmann, [The ancient world and the modern world], detail of the *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et*

Americi Vespucii aliorum[m]que lustrationes, 1507. Woodcuts on twelve sheets of paper, written in Latin, Saint-Dié des Vosges, 1507. Washington, DC, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G3200 1507. W3

the second hemisphere is placed next to Vespucci and includes the *quarta pars orbis* and Asia beyond *Cattigara*, that is to say *Cathay* and *Mangi*, a path that was mostly traveled by Franciscan missionaries and merchants such as Marco Polo, his father and uncle from the mid-thirteenth century onwards. Thus, Vespucci is depicted as the “new Ptolemy”: a landmark and at the same time a symbol representing a new way to conceive the world, which was far more vast than *America* alone, and with a much more extensive temporality. On a cartouche at the bottom-right corner of his planisphere Waldseemüller writes:

Although most of the ancients were particularly diligent in describing the regions of the world, many lands remained unknown to them, such as, for example, to the west, America, named after its discoverer, which should be regarded as the fourth part of the world. Likewise, to the south, the part of Africa that begins almost 7 degrees on this side of the Tropic of Capricorn, and stretches far to the south beyond the torrid zone and that same tropic. And also, to the east, the region of Cathay and the part of southern India lying beyond 180 degrees longitude. We have added these places to those known previously, so that the students of subjects of this kind, looking with their own eyes at all that is known in our day, will recognize our accuracy [...]. (“Licet plerique veterum describendi terrarum orbis studiosissimi fuerint, non tamen parum ipsis eisdem incognita manserunt, sicut est in casu Americae, ab eius nominis inventore dicta; quae orbis quarta pars putanda est. Sicut et versus meridiem Aphrice pars, quae septem pene gradibus citra Capricornum incipiens ultra torridam zonam et Egoceri tropicum ad austrum latissime protenditur. Sicut quoque in tractu orientali regio CATAIAE et quicquid INDIAE meridionalis

ultra centesimum et octogesimum longitudinis gradum est situm. Quae nos prioribus omnia adiunximus ut istiusmodi rerum amatores quaecunque sub hanc diem nobis patent oculis intuentes, diligentiam nostram p[ro]bent”, *Universalis cosmographia*, cartouche placed in the bottom right corner, outside of the graduated grid. English translation: Hessler 2008, p. 34.)

According to Waldseemüller, cartography provided the cognitive space to represent and conceptualize complex historical process of transformation of the world and periodization of world history marked by various milestones: the delineation of the space of Antiquity by Ptolemy in the second century AD, thirteenth-century voyages along the caravan trails of Asia, beyond the space of Antiquity, fifteenth-century Portuguese navigations along the coast of Africa, and finally the Iberian *nova reperta* across the Atlantic.

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Casale, Crisostomo da

► Javelli, Giovanni Crisostomo

Casaubon, Isaac

Born: 18 February 1559, Geneva

Died: 1 July 1614, London

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Abstract

A major figure in the late humanist world, Isaac Casaubon spent his career working with ancient texts, many of them philosophical. He produced important and influential commentaries on authors such as Diogenes Laertius, Theophrastus, and Persius, but he did not formulate a distinctive philosophical program of his own. Toward the end of his career, his work became more adventurous in its scope and more explicitly normative in its functions, as it extended into the field of religious and political controversy. This development produced one of Casaubon's most important contributions to the history of philosophy: his de-attribution of the so-called Hermetic corpus.

Biography

Isaac Casaubon was born in Geneva in 1559, to Huguenot parents. He spent his early life between the town of Crest, in the Dauphiné and Geneva, whose Reformed Academy he eventually attended. This led to his first academic appointment, in 1582, and he continued to teach Greek and other ancient languages in Geneva before moving to the University of Montpellier at the end of 1596. Casaubon left Montpellier in 1600, at the invitation of the King of France, Henri IV, who had offered him a post at the University of Paris. In the end, however, Casaubon's religion prevented him from being able to take up any public teaching position, and he relied instead on a stipend granted by the French crown. After the assassination of Henri IV in 1610, Casaubon accepted the invitation of King James I of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Bancroft, to visit London, where he resided until his death in 1614 (Pattison 1892; Considine n.d.).

Like many other humanists, Casaubon's contribution to the history of philosophy lay principally in his extensive philological and historical work on ancient philosophical texts, rather than in any particular philosophical program. However, Casaubon was not just devoted to erudition for its own sake. He believed that scholarship could complement more abstract and prescriptive forms of intellectual endeavor, even if his own ambitions to make it do so were more often thwarted than fulfilled.

Casaubon spent most of his career editing and annotating Greek and Latin texts (Parenty 2009; Glucker 1964). Among these, Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of the Philosophers* (Casaubon 1583), Theophrastus's *Characters* (Theophrastus 1592), Persius's *Satires*, and Athenaeus's *Learned Banqueters* (Casaubon 1600) gave him the most opportunities to discuss philosophical matters. However, none of them can be considered a work of philosophical argument in the strict sense, and Casaubon's commentaries do not give the impression that he was more interested in ancient philosophy than he was in literary, legal, political or cultural history. Casaubon's polymathic and indiscriminating approach to ancient

texts was reinforced by his near-unwavering preference for the commentary form over alternative publication formats that might have encouraged a tighter thematic focus. Casaubon refused to reduce or repackage his sources in the manner of his friend and correspondent, Justus Lipsius, who became known for codifying and popularizing ancient moral and political philosophy by producing accessible dialogues and collections of *sententiae*. Casaubon did, however, become a more ambitious and flexible exegete as his career went on. His later annotations on Athenaeus (1600) and Persius (1605) abound with dazzlingly compendious, essayistic treatments of difficult topics in classical scholarship, for which the passage in question is a mere starting point. The commentary on Athenaeus often touches on philosophical subjects, and the commentary on Persius provides an account of the poet's philosophical, especially Stoic influences that still commands the respect of classicists today. Yet the most philosophically ambitious commentary on an ancient author which Casaubon undertook was the one which he never finished. This was on Polybius, the historian of the early Roman republic. At least part of Casaubon's desire to edit Polybius seems to have derived from Polybius's use of Aristotelian constitutional theory to explain Rome's political and military ascendancy and from the fact that Polybius offered a republican or mixed-constitutionalist alternative to the more Tacitean, monarchical, and absolutist vision of Rome which Lipsius was popularizing. But Casaubon died before he could produce a complete commentary to accompany the edition and translation of Polybius which he had published in 1609.

At the same time as he mastered and even redefined the art of commentary, however, Casaubon was beginning to consider other generic possibilities. One of the formats pioneered by Lipsius that did appeal to him was that of the scholarly "monograph" treating a single specific topic. Casaubon proposed to write monographs on subjects as diverse as the Roman constitution, circus games and other entertainments, and the classification of colors in antiquity. One of these projected monographs, provisionally entitled *De critica*, would have reconstructed the history of

scholarship in antiquity, including sections on the ancient philosophical sects, their pedagogical practices, and institutional settings. In the end, however, Casaubon only managed to publish one example of this genre: his pathbreaking study of Greek satyr-play and Roman satire (Casaubon 1605).

One reason why Casaubon failed to produce more such works was his turn toward another mode of writing that engaged his philosophical interests in a different, and more direct, way: religiopolitical controversy. The first product of this turn was an incomplete 264-page treatise entitled *De libertate ecclesiastica*, inspired by the papal interdict placed on the Republic of Venice in 1606–1607 (Casaubon 1607). Here, Casaubon offered not only scriptural and historical but also rationalistic arguments for his own understanding of the relationship between Church and state, which was informed by the writings of the Venetian theologian, Paolo Sarpi (Cozzi 1959). In the end, however, the *De libertate ecclesiastica* was the high water mark of Casaubon's involvement with political philosophy. His later interventions in confessional debates saw him concentrate on sacred and ecclesiastical history. His last publication, the *Exercitationes* against the Roman Church historian, Cardinal Cesare Baronio (Casaubon 1614), did contain one passage of tremendous import for the history of philosophy, in which Casaubon drew on his extensive knowledge of ancient philosophical concepts and vocabulary to challenge the common attribution of the Hermetic corpus to the legendary sage, Hermes Trismegistus. Casaubon's argument prompted later scholars to produce new accounts of the relationship between pagan, Jewish, and Christian thought in antiquity. From Casaubon's point of view, however, it was a destructive exercise rather than a constructive one: he intended not to place the history of ancient philosophy on a new foundation but rather to debunk Baronio's conviction that pagans before Christ had enjoyed clear insight into Christian doctrines (Grafton 1983, 1988; Grafton and Weinberg 2011; Hardy 2017).

Casaubon's contributions to philosophy, in sum, were always intertwined with other concerns, cultural, theological, and political. In

order to understand them, it is necessary to examine his entire printed and archive *Nachlass*, from his voluminous commentaries to his correspondence (Casaubon 1709), diary (Casaubon 1850; Millet 2006), notebooks, and annotated books (Birrell 1980). This corpus has still not been studied systematically, and it presents a major opportunity to intrepid historians of Renaissance thought.

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Case, John

Born: 1540/41?, Woodstock, England

Died: 23 January 1600, Oxford, England

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Abstract

John Case was the most important Aristotelian philosopher of sixteenth-century England. He demonstrates the continued vitality of the Aristotelian tradition in this period, in England as elsewhere, and in particular its eclecticism and capacity for absorbing new and humanistic currents.

Biography

John Case was an Aristotelian philosopher and physician who spent almost his entire life in Oxford. There he was a fellow of St. John's College from 1568, receiving his MA in 1572. With the exposure of his relationship with a

widow, Elizabeth Dobson, he was forced to resign his fellowship in order to marry her, which he did in 1574. He continued, however, to teach in his home and was highly successful in this. He was a member of the Oxford intellectual circle of the printer Joseph Barnes, who published his works, and he combined scholarship with medical practice, gaining an MD in 1589. He was accused both in his own time and subsequently of Catholic sympathies, but there is little solid evidence to prove this. Rather, a picture emerges of a staunch supporter of the University of Oxford, a political conservative with influential courtly connections. Case was a prolific Latin writer in the Aristotelian tradition, authoring at least ten separate works, some of which were reprinted both in England and in Germany. Although not a philosopher of the first rank in European terms, his interests were wide-ranging and his intellectual achievement significant.

Championed by the intellectual historian Charles Schmitt in a major study of 1983, Case is the prime representative of Aristotelianism in Renaissance England (Schmitt 1983). He indicates the revival of that philosophical tradition, which had been so significant in Oxford in late medieval times, and the extent of its European impact during the Renaissance. Through his success and influence as an author and teacher, he demonstrates that in England as in other European centers of learning, the Aristotelian tradition was far from being eclipsed by Renaissance humanism and Neoplatonism (McConica 1973). On the contrary, Case's flexibility and eclecticism both demonstrate ways in which this tradition continued and was revitalized by new currents. While it is all too easy to characterize Case, the suspect Catholic and critic of Machiavelli, Paracelsus, and Ramus, as old-fashioned, this neglects his tendency to absorb humanistic and other currents into his Aristotelian commentaries in the fields of logic, ethics, politics, economics, music, education, physics, and natural philosophy (Binns 1990). The result of work across these areas is a comprehensive and wide-ranging and at times humanistic updating of the Aristotelian tradition.

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Casmann, Otto

Born: 1562, Warburg

Died: 1 August 1607, Stade

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Abstract

Otto Casmann was a German humanist professor of philosophy and theology of the late sixteenth century who became an important early figure in the history of anthropology

and psychology due to his two-volume *Psychologia Anthropologica* (*Anthropological Psychology*, 1594–1596). Over the next decade Casmann published on a wide range of subjects, all of them grounded in a “Scriptural” or “Mosaic” Philosophy (Blair 2000). The first were works of natural philosophy, one on the sea and tides, *Marinarum quaestionum tractatio philosophica* (*A Philosophical Treatise on Marine Questions*, 1596), another *Cosmopoeia et Uranographia Christiana* (*Christian World-Formation and Description of the Heavens*, 1598). In the latter, Casmann refuted the sixth-century arguments of the Neoplatonist Simplicius against the biblical account of creation and aimed at eliminating the doctrine of “double truth,” in which, for example, the eternity of the world could be true in philosophy but false in theology (Lüthy 2012; Martin 2014). Casmann also published works of a more esoteric nature: his *Angelographia* (*Angelography*, 1597) appeared as a counterpart to the *Psychologia Anthropologica*, again a study of “spirited beings” (Bell 2005), but this time concerned with angelic psychology (Hotson 2007), as well as the knowledge and powers of demons (Clark 1997, 2007).

Alternate Names

Casmanus, Otho

Biography

Casmann was born as the son of Catholic parents in Warburg, in the state of Westphalia, in 1562. Following the death of his parents, his uncle, the mayor of Warburg, Konrad von Geismar sent him to study in the gymnasium of Kassel, where he was taught by the Calvinist rector, Rudolph Goclenius the Elder (Rudolf Göckel, 1547–1628). Under Goclenius’s influence, Casmann converted to Protestantism and when Goclenius was offered a professorship in Lutheran Marburg in 1581, Casmann followed him there

to study philosophy. In 1582 Casmann enrolled at the University of Helmstedt, where he focused on philosophical and theological studies, being awarded a Masters in philosophy. It was there, attracted to the teachings of the French convert to Protestantism, the humanist logician Petrus Ramus (Pierre de la Ramée, 1515–1572) that he began lecturing on logic and criticizing the teaching of the Aristotelian system. Casmann’s first publication, albeit without his permission, appeared in 1594: *Petri Rami dialecticae et Melanchthonianae collatio* (*A Collation of the Dialectic of Petrus Ramus and of Melanchthoniana*). In 1589 Casmann joined the Trivialschule in Schüttorf, which moved in 1591 to the Reformed city of Steinfurt, where it became the academic Gymnasium Illustre, with Casmann teaching philosophy and anthropology. In 1594 he was offered the post of Rector at the new Gymnasium in the Lutheran city of Stade, where he taught philosophy and theology, specializing in logic and natural philosophy until his death in 1607 (Mahnke 1914; Hotson 2007).

In Stade, Casmann embarked on his publishing career. His first official publication was the *Psychologia Anthropologica, sive doctrina animae Humanae* (*Anthropological Psychology, or the Doctrine of the Human Soul*, 1594–1596). Writings on the soul existed from antiquity, and Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) had been particularly influential in his own reflections on Aristotle’s *De Anima* (Kusukawa 1995). Casmann’s mentor, Goclenius, was the first to publish a work with the Greek word for psychology in its title: *ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑ, hoc est, De hominis perfectione, animo, et in primis ortu hujus* (*Psychology, that is, on Man’s Perfection, the Soul, and above all, its Origin*, 1590), an anthology of writings on the theological question of the origin of souls. Casmann’s *Psychologia Anthropologica* was the first monograph to bear the word *Psychology* in Latin (Vidal 2011). As for the other main term in his book’s title, the neologism *anthropologia* had first been coined – a Greek rendering of the term “Humanism,” as a counterpart to *theologia* – by the German anatomist Magnus Hundt (1449–1519) in his *Antropologium, de hominis dignitate*,

natura et proprietatibus (*Anthropology, on the Dignity, Nature and Properties of Man*, 1501), a work that aimed to present a synthetic vision of the human being from Greco-Roman medical traditions and Christian teaching on human nature. For Casmann, man is twofold, a *Homo duplex*, with *anthropologia* having two branches or sub-disciplines: *psychologia* (study of the mind) and *somatologia* (study of the body) (Mengal 2000). Casmann defined anthropology as “the study of human nature . . . an essence partaking of two worlds, the spiritual and the corporeal, yet united in one vehicle” (Stagl 2000), the human being conceived as neither a bodiless soul nor a soulless body, but their union in the oppositional dyad of physis and psyche. This conceptual division continued in Casmann’s *Nucleus mysteriorum Naturae enucleatus* (*Kernel of the Mysteries of Nature Explained in Detail*, 1605), where *anthropologia* is included under natural philosophy and *psychologia* under moral philosophy. Published in the same year, *Homo novus, sive spiritualis* (*The New, or Spiritual Man*, 1605) offered a “methodical anatomy and meditation on spiritual man,” derived from scripture and experience (Bell 2005; Gaukroger 2016; Gundlach 2012; Edwards 2012).

Anthropologia was, in its turn, a subdiscipline of the study of spirited beings, with its counterpart, the study of angels, developed in his *Angelographia* (1597). In this work, Casmann delved into the worlds of natural and supernatural magic, as well as Christian Cabala, with lengthy excursions on angelology and demonology (Clark 1997, 2007). Two years later saw the publication of *Astrologia, chronographia et astromanteia* (*Astrology, Chronography and Divination by the Stars*, 1599), a work in which, despite being severely critical of astrology, Casmann shows himself to be well read in the occult works of Marsilio Ficino, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, Girolamo Cardano, and Hieronymus Wolf (Thorndike 1941).

In religiously tolerant Stade, Casmann became a member of the charitable Brotherhood of Saint Anthony in 1598, a deacon at the Lutheran Church of Saint Wilhadi from 1601, and full-time pastor of the Benedictine Abbey of

St. Mary in 1603. His religious works include *Christliche Betrachtungen und gründlicher Beweis der Liebe Gottes in Christo Jesu* (*Christian Reflections and Thorough Proof of the Love of God in Christ Jesus*, 1599); *Lucta Peccatoris Resipiscentis in Tentationibus De Certitudine Salutis Suae adversus Diabolum, Carnem, & Mundum* (*A Sinner’s Struggle with respect to Trials concerning the Certainty of his Salvation against the Flesh, World and the Devil*, 1600); *Mundus immundus ... describitur ex piorum et doctorum scriptis, usu et experientia* (*The Impure World . . . Described from Pious and Learned Writings, Use and Experience*, 1606); and the posthumous *Anti-Socinus* (*Anti-Socinus*, 1612), against the doctrines of the Italian anti-Trinitarian Fausto Sozzini (1539–1604).

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- Melanchthon, Philipp
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- Sozzini, Fausto and Lelio

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Casmannus, Otho

- [Casmann, Otto](#)

Caspi, Joseph

- [Ibn Kaspi, Joseph](#)

Cassirer, Ernst

Born: 28 July 1874 (Breslau, Prussia)

Died: 13 April 1945 (New York, New York)

Dustin Garlitz

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Abstract

This entry focuses on the Renaissance philosophy scholarship of German Neo-Kantian philosopher of culture Ernst Cassirer. The contents of his book-length contributions to Renaissance philosophy are summarized, as are his essay contributions to the field of scholarship. The motives of Cassirer's Renaissance philosophy research are highlighted, as are his original theses in the field of study. The entry also focuses on Cassirer's formative influences in the historiography of Renaissance philosophy and his impact on subsequent generations of intellectual thinkers.

Biography

Ernst Cassirer was a German Neo-Kantian philosopher. He was a leading member of the Marburg School of Neo-Kantianism, trained at the doctoral level by the Neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen at the University of Marburg. As an undergraduate, Cassirer was a student of the Neo-Kantian sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel at the University of Berlin. Cassirer embarked on developing a philosophy of culture throughout his academic career, one that was elaborated in the tradition of the Marburg School of Neo-Kantianism. He also worked in the history of philosophy throughout his academic career.

Works and Themes

Cassirer's works as a historian of Renaissance philosophy included *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (Cassirer 2010), *The Platonic Renaissance in England* (Cassirer 1953), and *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Cassirer et al. 1948), the latter coedited with Paul Oskar Kristeller and John Herman Randall, Jr. *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* focused on Francesco Petrarca, Lorenzo Valla (Cassirer et al. 1948), Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Pietro Pomponazzi, and Juan Luis Vives. *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (Cassirer 2010) focused on Nicholas Cusanus, Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo Galilei, Pico, Francesco Patrizi, and Giordano Bruno. Cassirer critically confronted the philosophical tradition of the Renaissance in his work, pairing it with a critical engagement of the mathematical and scientific knowledge from the era.

Cassirer published journal articles and reviews of Renaissance philosophy throughout his academic career as well. His review of Paul Oskar Kristeller's *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* was published posthumously in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* in (Cassirer 1945). He wrote a two-part essay on Pico, published in (Cassirer 1942a, b), also in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*. His coauthored essay titled "Some Remarks on the Question of the Originality of

the Renaissance" was published in the same venue 1 year later.

Original Aspects

In some cases, Cassirer studied the Renaissance together with the Enlightenment in his history of philosophy scholarship. Not only did Cassirer apply history of philosophy scholarship to the Renaissance, his philosophical anthropology was developed, in part, from the historical period and its philosophers' works. In such a sense, his overarching critique of culture was applied to Renaissance philosophy, as demonstrated in his works such as *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Cassirer et al. 1948) and in selected portions of *An Essay on Man* (Cassirer 1968). Cassirer's historiography of Renaissance philosophy was in part influenced by older traditions of scholarship in continental European intellectual life, including that pursued by historian Jacob Burckhardt in works such as *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, which had been published in 1860. In Cassirer's book on Pico, Patrizi, Ficino, Bruno, and others, he presented these Renaissance philosophers as historical precursors to G.W.F. Hegel's philosophical system.

Legacy

Cassirer broadened Burckhardt's method of inquiry in the history of Renaissance scholarship by investigating the philosophical basis and source of individuality in these thinkers' works. In the final chapter of Cassirer's book *The Platonic Renaissance in England* (Cassirer 1953), he argued that historical receptions of the Renaissance would continue to remain incomplete unless considered was the idea that the notion of the comic was a central part of the first and greatest victories of the Renaissance spirit (Cassirer 1953; Brandist 1999). Accordingly, Cassirer was motivated by evaluating how Renaissance philosophy engaged and treated humor. This Renaissance philosophy scholarship of his influenced the work of contemporary cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin.

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Castelein, Matthijs de

Born: ca. 1485

Died: 1550

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Abstract

The Flemish rhetorician Matthijs de Castelein (1485–1550) is best known for his *Art of Rhetoric* of 1555. It was the first art of rhetoric in the Dutch language, and although De Castelein propagates a traditional, medieval poetry, he tried to relate this kind of poetry with classical poetry and this way paved the way for a humanist approach of rhetoric and poetry.

Biography

Matthijs de Castelein was born around 1485 in Oudenaarde, where he visited the Latin school. He settled as a priest and notary in Pamele, near Oudenaarde in 1516, and kept these posts until the end of his life. De Castelein was the *factor* (leading poet) of two Chambers of Rhetoric: of the *Kersauwe* (Daisy) from Pamele and of *Pax Vobis* from Oudenaarde. In this function, he composed many poems and plays, for which he was widely renowned in Flanders, but his most important work was the *Const van Rhetoriken* (Art of Rhetoric).

De Castelein's Art of Rhetoric

The *Const van Rhetoriken* (*Const*) was first published by Jan Cauweel in 1555, 5 years after De Castelein's death, and saw its sixth and final reprint in 1616, which illustrates its continuing popularity among Dutch rhetoricians, even after the publication of more humanist Dutch poetics.

The *Const van Rhetoriken* was the first Dutch vernacular Art of Rhetoric. It is shaped as a true rhetoricians' poem, consisting of 239 stanzas of 9 verses. De Castelein intended it as a manual for the beginning Flemish rhetorician, modeled after the French *Arts de Seconde Rhétorique*. De Castelein explains every aspect of the technicalities of composing a poem extensively, like rhyme, rhyme schemes, and different forms of lyrical genres. Every aspect of every rhetorician's genre is illustrated with several poems by De Castelein himself.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The most innovative aspect of the *Const van Rhetoriken* is, however, the way in which De Castelein is able to relate his own rhetorical art to classical rhetoric. As much as 27% of his *Const van Rhetoriken* consists of quotations from Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, Cicero's *De oratore*, and Horace's *Ars poetica*. He adopts their ideas on decorum and on the education and personality of the rhetorician, describing the ideal rhetorician as a virtuous and learned man, who spends his spare time reading learned poetry.

But not only in his ideas on rhetoric, in general, does De Castelein turn to Antiquity. For every rhetorician's genre of poetry, he tried to find a classical counterpart as well, this way legitimating his art. De Castelein states, for instance, that the epigrams of Martial are the Latin forerunners of the rhetoricians' ballads and that the rondel is the Flemish equivalent of Horace's odes.

With his *Const van Rhetoriken*, De Castelein is capable of relating his *Seconde Rhétorique* to classical rhetoric and poetry and this way created the first defense, and at the same time the first manual, for early modern Dutch poetry.

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► [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)

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Castellani, Giulio

Born: 1528, Faenza

Died: 23 October 1586, Roma

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Abstract

Giulio Castellani was an Italian nobleman, Aristotelian scholar, and clergyman born in Faenza, Italy, who is mostly known for his *Adversus M. Tullii Ciceronis academicas quaestiones disputatio* (1558) where Castellani defended dogmatic Aristotelianism against Cicero's *Academica* and Skepticism in general as exposed by the influential humanist Francesco Pico della Mirandola. Castellani

also published a book entitled *De humano intellectu libri III* in Bologna in 1561, where he gave an important contribution to the controversy on the immortality of the soul raised by Pomponazzi and Averroism. In this book, Castellani favors Alexandrist positions against the trend of Simplician Averroism defended by the Paduan scholar Marcantonio Genua. As a professor, Giulio Castellani taught at the *Accademia degli Invaghiti* in Mantua where he lectured on Aristotle's *Ethics* at the beginning of the 1560s. At the end of his life, he received the chair of philosophy at the Sapienza University in Rome. Castellani also developed an important career in Italian religious institutions. Named Canon of the Cathedral of Faenza by Pope Pius V in 1571, he was later appointed Bishop of Cariati (Calabria) by Pope Sixtus V, but he died in October 1586 just before being consecrated.

Alternate Names

Castellanus, Julius; Castellanus, Iulius; Castellanius

Biography

Giulio Castellani was born in 1528 in Faenza, a city located in Northeastern Italy in a family pertaining to the old nobility. He was the nephew of Pier Nicola Castellani, a physician, teacher, and philosopher who, among various treatises, published a *De immortalitate animorum secundum Platonem et Aristotelem* in 1525. As a young man, Castellani devoted himself to the study of Humanities, first in Faenza under the supervision of the orator Sebastiano Regoli da Brisighella and then pursued his education at the University of Ferrara, benefiting from the courses of Vincenzo Maggi. He took part to the foundation of the *Accademia degli Invaghiti* in Mantua in 1562 where he lectured on Aristotle's *Ethics*. From 1560 onwards, his career in ecclesiastical institutions developed as he was named Canon of the Cathedral of Faenza by Pope Pius V in 1571.

He moved to Rome in 1577 under the request of Gregory XIII where he received the chair of philosophy at the Sapienza University. Appointed Bishop of Cariati (Calabria) by Pope Sixtus V, Castellani died in October 1586 just before being consecrated (Schmitt 1978).

Apart from a vast correspondence that is largely unedited (with prestigious correspondents like Ulisse Aldrovandi, Carlo Borromeo, or Federico Pendasio), a few poetical works and a book on the miracles of the saints published in 1569, Castellani's contribution to philosophy amounts to two treatises published early in his career. "A work nearly unique in the Italian Cinquecento" (Schmitt 1972), his *Adversus M. Tullii Ciceronis academicas quaestiones disputatio* published in Bologna in 1558 is a defense of dogmatic Aristotelianism against Cicero's *Academica* and skepticism in general as exposed by Francesco Pico della Mirandola in his *Examen vanitatis doctrinae genitum* of 1520 (Schmitt 1967). While this first opus entails an interesting use of experience and observation, his *De humano intellectu libri III*, published in Bologna in 1561, is a contribution to the controversy on the immortality of the soul raised by Pomponazzi and Averroism (Mahoney 1970; Kessler 1988). In this book, Castellani's position is more original, favoring Alexandrist positions against the trend of Simplician Averroism defended by Marcantonio Genua. While he identifies the Agent intellect with God, Castellani nonetheless holds the human intellect as a substance endowed with real cognitive power, a claim that pushes him to reduce the Agent Intellect to a distant cause of the actualization of forms inherent to the human mind, presenting then a "moderate innatism" (Spruit 1995). In the same context, he develops a naturalistic epistemology which amounts to immersing the human intellect within duration, giving an important contribution to a debate about the instantaneousness of intellectual acts, and more generally about the temporal nature of thought, which is carried on by Antonio Montecatini and also Francesco Piccolomini at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Dubouclez 2015).

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- [Intellect, Renaissance Concept of](#)
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Castellanius

- [Castellani, Giulio](#)

Castellanus, Iulius

- [Castellani, Giulio](#)

Castellanus, Julius

- [Castellani, Giulio](#)

Castiglione, Baldassare

Born: 6 December 1478, Casatico, Near Mantua

Died: 8 February 1529, Toledo

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Abstract

Baldassare Castiglione, an Italian courtier and diplomat for the dukes of Urbino and for the Roman Curia, is the author of *The Book of the Courtier* (*Il libro del cortegiano*), a courtesy book examining social interaction between gentleman, ladies, and their rulers. It was published in 1528 to immediate international acclaim.

Biography

Castiglione was born in the Margravate of Mantua; via his mother he was related to a lesser branch of the Gonzaga family. When he was a teen, he was sent to Milan, where he received a humanistic education. Back in Mantua, he entered the service of the Marquis, but in 1504 he transferred to the Montefeltro court of Urbino, a vibrant epicenter of Renaissance culture, where he stayed until 1513, befriending among others, Pietro Bembo, Bernardo Bibbiena, and Raphael, who famously painted his portrait (Fig. 1). He carried out important diplomatic missions (e.g., to England in 1506) and became Urbino's ambassador in Rome. Made a widower in 1520, he took minor orders and entered the service of the Roman Curia: in 1525 he was posted as a papal nuncio at the court of Emperor Charles V in Spain, where he remained till his death, facing sharp criticism about his failure to prevent the Sack of Rome. His diplomatic career

Castiglione, Baldassare,
Fig. 1 Raphael, born
 Raffaello Sanzio
 (1483–1520), *Portrait of*
Baldassare Castiglione,
 1514–1515, Oil on canvas,
 82cm × 67 cm, Paris,
 musée du Louvre (Inv 611).
 Photo (C) RMN-Grand
 Palais (musée du Louvre) /
 Daniel Arnaudet



is typical of how the Italian nobility was trying to cope with the rapid erosion of the peninsula's political clout by choosing career paths that lead to Rome, the only political center deemed capable of exerting a European influence.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Set at the court of Urbino, during four evenings in the spring of 1507, *The Book of the Courtier* discusses the qualities of the ideal courtier in dialogue form, closely imitating Cicero's *De Oratore*, whose interlocutors are well-known contemporary orators (Castiglione 2002, 2016a). Likewise, Castiglione's characters are exemplary courtiers and ladies who live at the court in Urbino: this courtesy book is as much trying to teach courtly behavior through the content of the discussions as through dialogic form itself: a

witty, lively display, sometimes heated, but never aggressive nor pedantic, and always tending toward agreement (Cox 2008). Whereas topics such as the use of vernacular language and the virtue of women provoke intense debate with rapid turn-taking, the qualities of the courtier and his lady, the nature of grace, and the service to the prince are presented in continuous speech, which contains entertaining examples and is occasionally interrupted by questions, comments, and objections. The dialogue culminates in Pietro Bembo's passionate monologue in defense of Neoplatonic love. Castiglione's dialogue, thus, can be read as an exemplary performance of conversational rhetoric (*sermo*).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The ideal courtier is virtuous but at the same time perfectly in control of his performance at court,

pursuing both ethical and aesthetical aspirations. The most innovative aspect of the *courtier* is that perfect behavior is situated at the crossroads of rhetoric and practical ethics. A reader of both Cicero's *De Oratore* and *De Officiis*, Castiglione firmly grounds the courtier's central quality, gracefulness (*grazia*), in decorum, i.e. the capacity to discern (*discernere*) – with judiciousness (*giudicio*, *discrezione*) – every single circumstance and to choose – with prudence (*prudenza*) – the most appropriate behavior (Saccone 1992). Appropriateness, or measure, is effectively an art to achieve grace for those who are born without it; however, to convince peers and prince alike of his true nobility, the courtier needs to hide the art behind grace: *sprezzatura* or effortlessness, the art of dissembling one's efforts, is rooted in the rhetorical figure of dissimulation and is ultimately the art to persuade the audience of one's innate nobility (Whigham 1984; Snyder 2009). The *Courtier's* fortunes as a courtesy book are probably linked to the presence of this encompassing rule, an adaptable tool to navigate complex life at court.

Impact and Legacy

Taking 15 years to complete *the Courtier*, Castiglione produces three full manuscripts (Motta 2003). The publication was eagerly anticipated, and unauthorized copies had started to circulate, prompting the author to a hasty final revision. The book was published in 1528 by the most prestigious publishers of the time: the Aldine press in Venice and, a year later, the Giunti of Florence (Quondam 2000) (Fig. 1). The text became a European bestseller, with as many as 115 publications and translations even before 1600 (Burke 1995). It was very quickly translated into Spanish (1534) and into French (1537), with other languages following soon after: Latin and English (1561) and German (1565). Castiglione's *Courtier* became the ultimate conduct book for court life during the ancien régime, a blueprint for its aristocratic role models such as the gentleman and the *honnête homme*.

Castiglione also leaves an impressive body of just under 2000 letters, consisting of familiar and diplomatic letters, an important testament of the conversational spirit of Renaissance court life (Castiglione 2016b).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Bembo, Pietro](#)
- ▶ [Ciceronianism](#)
- ▶ [Court Philosophy, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Courts and Courtiers in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Dialogue](#)
- ▶ [Grace in the Renaissance](#)

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Cataldi, Pietro Antonio

Born: 15 April 1552, Bologna

Died: 11 February 1626, Bologna

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Abstract

Pietro Antonio Cataldi was an Italian Renaissance mathematician. He was born in Bologna, in 1552, and he started teaching very young in Florence and in Perugia and finally went back to Bologna, where he held the position of professor of mathematics and astronomy until his death, in 1626.

Cataldi devoted his life to diffuse the mathematical culture, and for this reason, he chose to teach and write his works in Italian rather than in Latin, and he printed at his own expense and distributed for free to poor students his most didactical works.

He wrote around 30 books on mathematics and some on other topics. He contributed to the theory of Euclidean perfect numbers, discovering the sixth and seventh of the perfect numbers and the sixth and seventh of the Mersenne prime numbers, and he offered a notable contribution to the development of infinite algorithms. His works, all published in Bologna between 1602 and 1626, represented an important advancement to the Renaissance mathematical thought and a perfect documentation of the mathematical knowledge of his time.

Biography

Pietro Antonio Cataldi was an Italian Renaissance mathematician. He was born in Bologna, at that time part of the State of the Church, in 1552. The information concerning his life is few, but we

know he was educated in Bologna, although he does not seem to have attended the university there. He started teaching in Florence at the *Accademia del Disegno* from 1569 to 1570 and then moved to Perugia, where he taught mathematics both at the University of Perugia and at the *Accademia del Disegno*. In 1584 he returned to Bologna where he was awarded a doctorate in philosophy and medicine, and the Studio of Bologna offered him the teaching position in mathematics and astronomy left open in 1583 by the departure of Ignazio Danti, who became Bishop of Alatri. He held the position for almost 40 years until his death, in 1626. Cataldi devoted his life to diffuse the mathematical culture in Bologna. He chose to teach and to write his works in Italian rather than in Latin, enabling in this way many people to benefit from his teaching. He printed at his own expense and distributed for free some of his didactical works, and he also tried to set up an Academy of mathematics in Bologna, but a ban by the Bologna Senate closed it after the first meeting. When he died, in 1626, after a life spent studying and teaching, he left his money to set up a school in his own house, but this does not seem to have happened either (see Bortolotti 1931; Carruccio 1970–1990; De Ferrari 1979; Fantuzzi 1781–1794; Mazzetti 1848; Riccardi 1870–1880; Simeoni 1940; Tiraboschi 1780).

Cataldi wrote around 30 books concerned with theoretical and practical arithmetic, algebra, geometry, military engineering, and astronomy. He wrote on arithmetic publishing, in four parts between 1602 and 1617, *Pratica aritmetica ovvero elementi pratici delli Numeri aritmetici*, a manual for school use dedicated to the Senate of Bologna, which he printed at his own expense and distributed for free to poor students of monasteries and schools in the area. Along his life, he also published an edition of Euclid's *Elements*, between 1613 and 1625, and working on Euclid's fifth postulate, he attempted to prove the postulate was a consequence of the other four in *Operetta delle linee rette equidistanti et non equidistanti* (1603). The work was dedicated to the mathematicians of Bologna and distributed to them for free (see De Ferrari 1979; Kline 1972; Loria 1950;

Orlandi 1714; Riccardi 1870–1880; Tiraboschi 1780).

He is, however, best known for his work on perfect numbers and on continued fractions. His most important works on these topics were *Trattato de' numeri perfetti*, published in 1603 but already composed in 1588 and stolen from him, and *Trattato del modo brevissimo di trovar la radice quadra delli numeri*, published in 1613. The first work was a contribution to the theory of Euclidean perfect numbers originated as a response to the work of the French mathematician Charles de Bovelles. In it, he published his discoveries of the sixth and seventh of the perfect numbers (8.589.869.056 and 137.438.691.328) and the sixth and seventh of the Mersenne prime numbers (corresponding to $p = 17$ and $p = 19$ in the formula $M_p = 2^p - 1$), holding the record for the largest known prime for almost two centuries. In the second work, elaborating theories dating back to Hero of Alexandria (10–70 A.D.) and reflecting on the recent work of Rafael Bombelli (1526–72), he calculated the square root of numbers through the use of infinite arithmetic progressions and unlimited continued fractions, offering a notable contribution to the development of infinite algorithms. The book, dedicated to Bologna's Senate, applied algebra to military operations, specifically to problems related to the range of artillery (see Bortolotti 1919–1920, 1939; Favaro 1874; Gunther 1874; Kline 1972; Loria 1950; Maracchia 1976).

Among his other works, it is worth to mention *Trattato dell'algebra proportionale* (1610); *Transformatione geometrica* (1611), dedicated to the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo II de' Medici; *Trattato della quadratura del cerchio* (1612), a book on squaring the circle; *Aritmetica universale* (1617); *Operetta di ordinanze quadre di terreno et di gente* (1618), a book concerned with the application of algebra to military formations; *Regola della quantità, o cosa di cosa* (1618); *Nuova algebra proportionale* (1619); *Difesa d'Archimede, trattato del misurare o trovare la grandezza del cerchio* (1620); *Elementi delle quantità irrazionali, o inesplicabili*

necessarij alle operazioni geometriche et algebraiche (1620); *Algebra applicata, dove si mostra la utilissima applicazione d'essa alla invention delle cose recondite nelle diverse scienze* (1622); and *Difesa d'Euclide* (1626) (see De Ferrari 1979; Fantuzzi 1781–1794; Kline 1972; Loria 1950; Orlandi 1714).

Cross-References

► [Euclid: Reception in the Renaissance](#)

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Catena, Pietro

Born: 1501, Venice/Italy

Died: 1576, Padua/Italy

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Abstract

Professor of mathematics at the University of Padua, Catena is significant for being one of the authors who contributed to a debate pertaining to the certainty of mathematics, known as *quaestio de certitudine mathematicarum*. The debate mainly focused on the relationship between mathematics and syllogistic logic. Catena defended the certainty of mathematics, maintaining that mathematical demonstrations were superior to syllogisms as tools to acquire knowledge.

Biography

Little is known about Catena's life, only that he taught mathematics at the University of Padua from 1547 to his death in 1576. In alternating years Catena lectured on mathematics texts (the *Elements* of Euclid) and astronomical texts (Sacrobosco's *Sphaera* and the *Geography* of Ptolemy). He also lectured on mechanics. Guidobaldo del Monte and Bernardino Baldi, two of the most prominent authors of mechanical treatises of the age, attended Catena's

lessons on pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanical Problems*, respectively, in 1564 and in 1573. They both expressed a low opinion of Catena's teaching.

Pietro Catena died from the plague in 1576.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Catena's most important works are related to the debate on mathematical certainty. In that context, he tried to develop a Platonic reading of Aristotle's logical works (Catena 1556, 1561b).

In accordance with his Platonic attitude, Catena viewed mathematical objects as universal intelligibles existing in the intellect. As such, they do not depend on the senses and cannot be derived via abstraction from particulars, but are known to us through a pure rational process.

Remarkably Catena believed that those ideal, purely rational entities (i.e., the mathematical objects) played a role in acquiring a scientific knowledge of the natural world. In fact, particular things of the perceived world also participate in a universal nature. Starting from the premise that mathematics allows us to recognize universal (i.e., geometrical) properties of empirical individuals and since "science is the knowing of the universal" (Catena 1556: 97), one must conclude that mathematics is able to transform particular things into scientific objects. Hence, a true knowledge of the empirical world can only be possible through the application of mathematical procedures.

From this point of view, Catena affirmed, in general, that mathematical disciplines were "most certain" (*certissimae*), and for this reason "they are usually used to give light and certainty to the other parts of philosophy, both speculative and practical" (Catena 1563: 2v).

While defending the epistemological value of mathematics, Catena also emphasized the power of its demonstrative procedures. He maintained that geometrical demonstrations were different from the most powerful form of syllogistic demonstration (the so-called *demonstratio potissima*). Unlike syllogisms, mathematical demonstrations had heuristic capacity, as they could provide us with new truths.

In his work on method (*Oratio pro idea methodi*), issued in 1563, Catena also praised the excellence of mathematical method, which he identified with “the very same Idea of method.” In his words: “You can see how admirable is the order by which mathematics is treated, considering that [...] mathematics itself is used as a perfectly similar model of the Idea of Method, or rather as the very same Idea of method” (Catena 1563: 6v).

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Catoptrics

► [Optics, Renaissance](#)

Cattani da Diacceto, Francesco

Born: 1466

Died: 1522

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Abstract

Francesco Cattani da Diacceto was the most beloved student of Marsilio Ficino and a leading personality in Florentine cultural and political life at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Despite his clear preference for Platonism, he was also trained in Aristotelian philosophy. His most important works are devoted to the problems of beauty and love, framed in a canonical Neoplatonic structure. He was also interested in literary and linguistic matters, as testified by his participation in the meetings of the Rucellai Gardens and his network of correspondents, which included Pietro Bembo, Girolamo Querini, and Gian Giorgio Trissino.

Alternate Names

[il Diacceto](#); [il Ghiacceto](#); [il Pagonazzo](#)

Biography

Cattani was born in Florence in 1466 into an ancient and prosperous family. From 1487 he studied in Pisa under Oliviero Arduini, an Aristotelian who also cultivated an interest in Plato. Cattani never finished his university studies, and in 1492 he returned to Florence, where he joined the circle of Marsilio Ficino. During this period, and after Ficino's death, Cattani taught several courses on Aristotelian philosophy, first in the Studio Fiorentino and then at the University of Pisa. He attracted the attention of Gasparo Contarini, who repeatedly attempted –

unsuccessfully – to bring him to the University of Padua (Jedin 1959). In the meantime, Cattani began corresponding with Pietro Bembo and Girolamo Querini, a relationship that was probably born out of their common association to the Camaldolese order (Lackner 2002), and he became a prominent member of the circle of the Orti Oricellari (the Rucellai Gardens) where he exercised a strong influence on younger Florentines and met Gian Giorgio Trissino, who greatly admired him. He also associated with the members of the Accademia Sacra, where he entered into contact with Michelangelo, who may have been influenced by his doctrines. Cattani even held important public offices after the return of the Medici to Florence: a few months before his death, he was named Gonfaloniere di Giustizia.

Cattani had a deep knowledge of Aristotelian philosophy because of his own intellectual formation and his experience as a teacher. His attitude toward the relationship between Aristotle and Plato, a subject of intense debate at the time, is therefore complex. According to Cattani, modern philosophers abused Aristotle, distorting his ideas and neglecting Plato. Cattani reacted by attempting to revive Platonic doctrines and arguing that Aristotle and Plato in fact agree on almost everything, in particular on the existence of demons, the fifth essence, and even the immortality of soul (Kristeller 1946). Nonetheless, Cattani was probably interested in demonstrating the harmony between Plato and Aristotle only insofar as it helped to legitimize Platonism. Cattani never composed a treatise devoted to the harmony between Plato and Aristotle, despite having announced several times that he would do just that, and he rejected the solution offered in the *De ente et uno* by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (with whom he polemicized on more than one occasion). When engaging with another *vexata quaestio*, the relationship between Platonism and Christianity, Cattani emphasized the similarities between the two, but when they conflicted declared that Christian truth was inevitably superior. Cattani was nonetheless very faithful to Neoplatonic exegesis, to the extent of not including in his works the innovations proposed by Ficino. His

ideas are expressed in texts related to his university lessons (paraphrases and prolusions); in his letters; in the *Panegyricus* (ante 1508) and the *De amore* (1508), of which Cattani made a vernacular version as well (*Panegirico allo amore* and *I tre libri d'amore*, both around 1511); and, mainly, in his most significant work, *De pulchro* (1496–1514). In the *Panegyricus*, *De amore*, and *De pulchro*, Cattani argued for the traditional Platonic association between exterior beauty and interior goodness. Following Ficino's exegesis of the *Symposium*, Cattani advocated physical beauty as the first step toward the divine, despite the fact that the celestial grace has to be sought in the angelic nature, and not above, because the One is deprived of beauty for its absolute simplicity. This motif is recovered, as Cattani himself declares, from Plato's *Parmenides* and from the negative theology of Dionysius the Areopagite. The motion of the soul from beauty to God is what we call love, and the soul itself is the knot of the universe, which must maintain an equal distance from the Angel – which is superior – and the body, which is inferior. According to Cattani, therefore, the human soul is of an ambiguous nature, capable of inclining up or downward.

None of Cattani's works were printed during his lifetime, though numerous copies circulated in manuscript form. The fact that Cattani never published anything while alive, together with the imposing presence of Ficino as a teacher of Platonism, significantly limited the influence of his philosophical doctrines in both the short and the long term. Apart from Florentine Platonists (such as Francesco Verino the Elder) and a handful of exceptions (most notably Mario Equicola, Baldassare Castiglione, and, at the end of the century, Francesco Verino the Younger and Paolo Beni), Cattani is usually assigned a marginal role, even in contemporary lists of authors who wrote on love. Nonetheless, the degree of posthumous fame that Cattani did not receive as a philosopher was granted to him as a vernacular author (Del Soldato 2013). In the 1550s, the vernacularizations of the *Panegyricus* and *De amore* gained the admiration of a number of members of the Accademia Fiorentina: this renewed

interest in Cattani led to the publication of a printed edition of his works, edited by *accademici* like Frosino Lapini, Benedetto Varchi, and Francesco Cattani the Younger (a grandson of the philosopher). Among the members of the Accademia, Cattani was evidently regarded as a pioneer because of his early interest in the vernacular, an interest which was founded on a reasoned attempt to reconcile the linguistic theories of Aristotle and Plato. In the dedicatory letter to the *I Tre libri d'amore*, Cattani had in fact stated that since exterior discourse is an image of interior discourse, which is universally immutable, there is no reason why one exterior artificial language should be preferred to another. That is why secrets of philosophy cannot be expressed more appropriately in Latin or Greek rather than in *volgare*, since the choice of writing philosophy in the vernacular does not imply a renunciation of its elitist character: philosophy is selective by nature, regardless of the language used to express it.

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Causality, Renaissance

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Abstract

How providence correlates with free will and the divine agrees with the natural order have been the foundational issues of Christian teaching. Owing a great deal to ancient discussions on fate and causality, Christian theologians adjusted the notions in hand to meet their needs. In the Renaissance, an alleged connection between a divinely structured universe and the causes of terrestrial events was put into question. There were two main reasons for that. First, the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries witnessed a revival of the philosophical ideas that challenged the Aristotelian teaching on the four causes. On the other hand, contemporary scientific developments shook belief in the harmonious design of the universe.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Most ancient thinkers suggested that the world was structured in a harmonious manner. This consequently implied that events of the terrestrial world, regardless of their effects, are in relation to the divine design of the universe. It was believed that the divine influenced two main instances, for a long time seen inseparable from each other: human existence and nature. The most famous doctrine deriving from this assumption was concerned with the theory of microcosm/macrocosm. It stated that macrocosm manifests itself in the image of microcosm, while microcosm reflects the structures of its supernatural prototype. A cosmic soul, which has the immanent God as its origin and model, illustrates this idea

most clearly. Based on this premise, ancient thinkers explained causality accordingly and applied the argument to, among other things, medicine and music. Thus, Pythagoras was thought to have found a link between musical consonances or harmonies and mathematical proportions, which underlay the belief in universal harmony. Developed in Plato's dialogues, mostly in the *Timaeus* and in the famous myth of Er in the *Republic*, the music of the spheres later became a widespread notion among medieval and Renaissance thinkers (Prins and Vanhaelen 2018). Similarly, stressing the connection between the soul and the body, Hippocrates and those who followed his teaching argued that the human body consists of four substances (or humors), which, when imbalanced, cause bodily diseases. Along with being related to particular elements, the substances, Hippocrates postulated, correspond to, and determine, human temperaments. Hence, disease is to be cured by reinstating the balance within its cause, a patient's soul (Nutton 2004). As a result, this conception had long-standing implications since it established a strong link between medicine and philosophy, which remained in place until the seventeenth century.

Aristotle contributed to the problem of causality in his own right (Falcon 2005). In opposition to Plato's theory of forms, which asserted that a whole variety of things existed exclusively in the intelligible realm and not in the physical world, Aristotle put forward his causal explanation of being centered on four elements: (1) matter, or the material cause, of which things are composed; (2) form, or the formal cause, which transforms matter into a particular thing; (3) agent, or the efficient cause, which is responsible for making changes; and (4) and the final cause, to which everything is leading. After the prime mover provided the physical world with motion, nature in its entirety is subject to constant change. As regards teleology or final causality, it was labeled as the Good – something which Christian theologians subsequently adopted for their purposes, indicating that the whole multitude of things is driven through to accomplish the divine design.

Another problem related to causality and widely debated in antiquity was *fatum*. Suffice it to recall Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* or Seneca's *Letters to Lucilius*, which, despite having been written in completely different contexts and periods, insist on the deterministic character of human life and insist on one's full acceptance of the fruits of *heimarméne* (destiny, fate), either malign or benevolent. Despite the remarkable impact Stoicism had on contemporary thinking, some of the prominent ancient philosophers refused to uncritically accept the fatalistic interpretation of human destiny. Among those who proposed alternative approaches to fate, Plotinus and Alexander of Aphrodisias are to be mentioned *in primo loco*.

Plotinus polemicized with the Stoic tradition rather than with particular Stoic philosophers of the time. While demonstrating refined expertise in Stoicism that he considered being the most dangerous form of "anti-Platonism," Plotinus denounced Stoic materialism and epistemology. This consequently brought him to the Stoic notion of universal causality to which he opposed the providential governance of the universe combined with God's goodness. According to Plotinus, it left room for a human being to reject the fruits of evil passions and turn the soul toward to the Good, thus allowing them to take personal, seen as primarily moral, responsibility for their actions (Rist 1967; Gerson 2016). Plotinus goes on to say that external elements occasionally interpreted as the causes of events, such as the position of the stars and planets, are to be regarded exclusively as signs of providence's involvement in the terrestrial world (Barton 1994; Adamson 2008). Plotinus' position on fate and fatalistic astrology was rediscovered in the Renaissance and influenced, among others, Marsilio Ficino (Vanhaelen 2007).

Apart from the Neoplatonic attack, Stoic teaching on the causal chain was subjected to criticism by the Peripatetic school personified above all in the figure of Alexander of Aphrodisias. The fascination for astrology and other deterministic theories in Rome, at the court of the emperor Septimius Severus and his heirs, led Alexander of Aphrodisias to write his

famous treatise *De Fato*, well known in the Middle Ages thanks to William of Moerbeke's translation (Alexander of Aphrodisias 1983). There, Alexander opposed the Stoic idea of determinism, claiming that there were no pre-determined causes for terrestrial events. He insisted that human beings were responsible for their own decisions and that chance was a source for human freedom since it allowed the breaking of a casual chain. Later in the Renaissance, Pietro Pomponazzi dismissed Alexander's interpretation in favor of a deterministic design of the universe, which he put in line with the negation of the immortality of the soul (Pomponazzi 2004). Finally, the Epicurean teaching firmly rejected the causal chain for the random movement of atoms, which, among other things, accounts for human free will.

Of the variety of ancient responses to causality, Christian teaching adopted some elements of Stoicism, at the same time denying determinism. What Christians were inclined to admit was acceptance, to a certain extent, of the fruits of fate considered as manifestations of the divine will. God might direct someone toward salvation through ordeals that test and verify their faith. Thus, in a significantly modified and Christianized version, the Stoic view of fate and causality resurfaced in later theological writings. It is worth noting that several ancient thinkers' deeds and texts were often reinterpreted from a Christian perspective. The most famous case of such a conversion is Virgil, whose *Eclogue IV* was believed to have predicted the birth of Christ. Stoic philosopher Seneca went through the same transformation. Jerome and Augustine, as well as later scholars and theologians, such as Jacobus da Voragine, all praised him as one of the most prominent writers who foresaw the rise of Christianity. This image of Seneca as a pre-Christian saint was reinforced in the early Renaissance.

The other substantial problem to which Christian theology had to respond was the relationship between divine providence and free will. Forged in the heated controversy with the followers of Pelagius, the Catholic Church's position was developed by Augustine (Teselle 2014).

According to the Church father, and in contrast to Pelagius' teaching, free will that provided humans with an ability to choose good over evil was insufficient to obtain salvation. To turn them to the right path, God, as the Supreme Being that controlled and governed upon the universe, might intervene in the life of people and grant them the gift of divine grace. The latter, which implied divine providence, did not deny free will but by its importance undoubtedly exceeded all other divine gifts and led people to salvation. Later advanced in medieval scholasticism, receiving its full justification in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, the Augustinian theory presented a famous dilemma: although the soul kept control of its actions, God was aware of what choice it was inclined to make and, therefore, might act to direct it, without, again, compromising free choice. In the sixteenth century, John Calvin adopted Augustine's concept to develop his own doctrine of double predestination and predestined salvation (Hesselink 2004).

As for the natural order, in Christian theology God is believed to be the sole creator of the universe *ex nihilo*, with the physical world predestined to an end, which is expected to coincide with Jesus' Second Coming. Regardless of the eschatological perspective, nature is seen as an evident manifestation of divinity. After the twelfth century, when numerous previously unknown manuscripts were translated in Spain and Sicily, including, *in primis*, Aristotle's writings, the Stagirite's theory of four causes supplemented the Catholic teaching on divine creation and provided medieval thinkers with a philosophical framework to further the study of nature. The teaching of Aristotle, usually through the lens of his "Commentator," Ibn Rushd (or Averroes in the Latin West), subsequently became part of the university curriculum. This opened Pandora's box eventually resulting in the famous Paris condemnation of 1277, which abolished Aristotle's natural philosophical writings from Sorbonne as they were thought to contradict the Catholic doctrine on nature. Étienne Tempier's decree put an end to a confrontation between the faculty of theology and that of liberal arts in Paris (Piché 1999). However, it did not prevent Aristotle's thought from disseminating

across Europe: thus, after 1277, Padua took over from Paris as the intellectual center of Aristotelianism. Within a broader European context, as some scholars believe, the Paris condemnation signifies the beginning of philosophy as an independent area of knowledge devoid of theological implications and initially perceived as a non-theological study of nature.

The rediscovery of Aristotle also played a crucial role in the legitimization of occult knowledge (De Libera 1991; Pompeo Faracovi 1996; Boudet 2006; Federici Vescovini 2008). As is known, the medieval West was flooded with a large number of texts attributed to, but in fact not written by, Aristotle. By capturing a distorted metaphysics of Aristotle, astrologers and alchemists, first in the Islamic world and later in medieval Europe, had sought to adapt in a modified way and then managed to misinterpret the rest of Aristotle's legacy, including his natural philosophy. They created a phantom of Aristotelianism since, along with the corpus of his original texts, including *Physics*, *De Caelo*, and *Meteorologica*, three-quarters of the writings attributed to Aristotle at the time were not by him. The most important texts of this list were the *Liber de Causis* and the *Secretum Secretorum*, both extremely popular in the Middle Ages in the West. Thus, through Aristotle's authority and these translations, mainly of pseudo-Aristotelian texts, occult disciplines, such as astrology and alchemy, were accepted. Astrology was taught at medieval universities as an integral part of the quadrivium. Many prominent scholastic *doctores*, including Albert the Great, Roger Bacon, and Pierre d'Ailly, devoted much attention to astrology and alchemy aiming to investigate the hidden structures of divine design. Finally, occult knowledge quickly became indivisible from medicine, which, following the ancient idea, tied a bodily microcosm together with and a celestial macrocosm. This synthesis of the fields reflected, for example, in medieval art and is best illustrated by the famous miniature of the anatomical zodiac man from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (1412–1416, Limbourg brothers, now in Musée Condé, Chantilly, France) (Bober 1948). Occult disciplines were at times opposed, but these

attacks did not manage to challenge their popularity and status as of appropriate knowledge.

Renaissance responses to causality largely drew from the previous tradition and took the aforementioned features of the debate into account. What follows will demonstrate how Renaissance scholars developed, transformed, and questioned the existing approaches.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Renaissance reflections on individual fate and human freedom concentrated on two main points. The first one was indebted to Stoicism, which received its second life in the fifteenth century onward (Kraye 2016). Standing on the shoulders of giants, Petrarch, Coluccio Salutati (Salutati 1985), and those who follow them, sometimes called “Neostoics,” aimed to Christianize the Stoic notion of fate further. Their argument was twofold. Thus, on a level of a personal *fortuna*, they insisted that, as a divine gift, an individual’s free will had no limitations. Refusing to admit fatalism, they at the same time supposed that divine providence, which did not come into conflict with free will, might favor the virtuous. The idea to adjust Stoicism to the needs of Christian teaching gained its momentum in the sixteenth century and culminated in Justus Lipsius’ *De Constantia* (1584) (Lipsius 2016). Composed in a turbulent time of religious controversies in Western Europe, the treatise outlines the ways in which a Christian could rely on a Stoic understanding of constancy to withstand the evils of this world. Justus claims that resisting numerous temptations accompanying one’s everyday physical and intellectual life could eventually bring them consolation.

On the other hand, on a sociopolitical level, Renaissance scholars explored an alleged correlation between political virtues of an individual ruler or the institution of a specific political regime and events occurring under their reign (Hankins 2019). Most evidently, this problem declared itself in the accounts that dealt with the origin of natural disasters and, therefore, combined contemporary natural philosophical debates on the matter with political ethics (Manetti 2012).

In most cases, Renaissance thinkers sought to sit on two chairs at once: suggesting that negative manifestations of divine providence might indicate the need for a change, in the meantime, they acknowledged that the events could be of a fortuitous character, as they often occurred under the reign of good and virtuous rulers. This inconsistency demonstrates that for several fifteenth- and sixteenth-century intellectuals, the issue in hand presented a dilemma. It comes as no surprise that in pursuit of responding to it, they came up with new solutions to causality. Probably, the most significant among those was Machiavelli’s, who stressed the direct relationship between the body politic and the body of nature and within his political theory tied together three central concepts: the body politic, the notions of political fate and fortune, and the study of nature and, mainly, anatomy (Gaille 2018). In doing so, he extended the microcosm/macrocosm principle to political theory. Following Machiavelli, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw an avalanche of texts that perceived various natural events through the body politic.

The second instance that embraced the notion of causality in the Renaissance was astrology. With the Aristotelian framework legitimizing astrology still in force, its credibility was substantially reinforced in the fifteenth century due to the revival of Neoplatonism and Hermeticism. Marsilio Ficino, the first translator of the entire Platonic corpus, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Plotinus’ *Enneads*, and Iamblichus’ *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum* into Latin, was responsible for enlarging the astrological discourse with new sources. He ascribed the previously unknown knowledge to the *prisca theologia* tradition, which stated there existed a single wisdom transmitted over times through various ancient theologians, spreading from Egypt and Persia to Greece and Rome. Ficino insisted that most *prisca theologi*, including the most significant one, Plato, had been rediscovered by Christians, after not being properly understood during their lifetimes and wholly forgotten after their death. His intention was to revive the legacy of *prisca theologi* and supplement it with Christian teaching. Given that most of these texts abound in magical and astrological elements, it opened

the door for magical speculation in Ficino's and his contemporaries' thought. Thus, when exploring celestial influences upon the terrestrial world, Ficino generally combined traditional medieval astrological texts with new, mainly Neoplatonic, ideas. This novel reading of astrology formed the basis for late fifteenth-century disputes on the status of astrology in both Ficino's own writings and that of his entourage. The third book of Ficino's famous *De vita libri tres* (1489) (Ficino 1998) exemplifies this trend.

Originally designed as a commentary to a chapter of Plotinus' *Enneads*, the *De vita coelitus comparanda* was a *credo* of Ficino's astrological medicine. According to him, a *magus*, who had correctly mastered the teachings of natural magic, astrology, and occult *prisci theologi*, could manipulate material objects in order to draw down the benefit of higher cosmic and immaterial forces and, consequently, use them to cure both a patient's soul and body. Ficino established an influential theory of the all-pervading "World Spirit" (*spiritus mundi*), which united the macrocosmic and microcosmic structures. From this perspective, the universe was conceived as a living being, with Ficino particularly emphasizing the correspondence and harmony between heaven and earth. What is important to note that Ficino's interpretation gave the green light to sixteenth-century Neoplatonized readings of ancient medicine, mainly of Hippocrates and Galen. Jean Fernel, Girolamo Cardano, and Cornelius Gemma all unanimously agreed that a physician's main task was to restore the balance in one's soul to cure their physical illnesses (Hirai 2011). It remained the dominant position on what epistemologically constituted medical knowledge, regardless of Vesalius' groundbreaking *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (1543), which was believed to address human internal and physical functioning only and did not touch upon the philosophical dimension of disease.

In the course of the early modern period, astrology as a theoretical discipline went through similar developments. Thus, in his last treatise, the *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (1496), Giovanni Pico della

Mirandola harshly attacked astrology on the basis of three arguments (Pico della Mirandola 2004). Firstly, he believed that astrology had embroiled in numerous discrepancies within the tradition caused by outdated mathematical calculations. Secondly, Pico meticulously reconstructed the astrological appropriation of Aristotle's philosophy and concluded that astrology was in fact in conflict with Aristotle's teaching on nature. Thirdly, astrology fundamentally contradicted Christian dogmas on free will. However, the elaborate critique did not lead to a complete rejection of astrology, in part due to fact that the authenticity of the treatise has been disputed since its publication; nor did the status quo change after the 1543 publication of Nicolaus Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, which in principle made the foundations of astrological speculation obsolete. Instead, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scholars attempted to reform astrology in light of Pico's *Disputationes* and adapt the discipline to contemporary cosmological discoveries (Vanden Broecke 2003; Westman 2011). For instance, that was the case of Johannes Kepler's *Harmonices Mundi* (1619), in which with the use of geometrical methods the renowned astronomer justified the harmonious structure of the universe, including harmonic configurations in astrology and harmonic proportions in the music of the spheres. Cosmic music still debated in as late as the early eighteenth century was indeed another revealing example of how the at-first-glance outdated cosmological framework outlived multiple attacks. Only in the eighteenth century, in the wake of the Enlightenment, did astrology eventually lose its credibility and become marginalized.

The last fortress of the traditional framework, the harmonious design of the natural order, was under major scrutiny starting from the second half of the fifteenth century. Without necessarily casting doubts on divine involvement in human affairs, what competing theories did challenge was the Aristotelian notion of four causes, which, as mentioned above, had been integrated into Christian teaching since the Middle Ages. Neoplatonism provided a first reliable alternative to Aristotelianism and remarkably shook its

foundations. Despite all the attempts by pro-Aristotelian scholars to modify the system from within, the concerns about its possibility to operate adequately in a shifting world of Renaissance philosophy and science increased. One of the most fervent attacks on Aristotelianism was conducted by Bernardino Telesio in his foundational *De Rerum Natura Iuxta Propria Principia* (first edition – 1565; expanded edition – 1586) (Telesio 2009). Telesio proposed his own natural philosophical system in which he replaced the Aristotelian principles of matter and form with passive matter and active force the latter of which is twofold – heat and cold. Assuming that God had created two opposite primary globes, the cold Earth and the Sun considered the seat of heat, Telesio went on to claim that all natural things resulted from the confrontation of the two forces and were different depending on the amount of heat and cold they had. Abolishing the main categories of the Aristotelian philosophy, namely, the motion of the sky, the two principles of matter and form, and the prime mover, Telesio concluded that all natural things act only in accordance with their own nature and are not created and influenced by any external element. This also applies to the primary forces. To recognize their nature caused either by cold or heat, the forces, as well as all other natural things, have senses of perception. According to Telesio who firmly rejected the traditional interpretation of the subject in question, sense organs are nothing but organs and are not responsible for any sense perception. Telesio provided a more naturalistic and “neuroscientific” explanation of the phenomenon by claiming that sense perception is a sensation of sensing (*sensus sensus*), which takes place in the brain. He argues that human brain receives impulses from the external world and thus determines one’s sensory perception. This leads Telesio to the conclusion that empiricism based on sense perception is the only way to cognize nature. Telesio’s work was extremely influential at the time. His severe criticism of Aristotle, revolutionary aspects of his natural philosophy, and the theory of knowledge were widely recognized by Telesio’s contemporaries. Thus, paying tribute to Telesio’s *opus magnum*, Francis Bacon called him “the first of the moderns,” while Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, another ardent

critic of Aristotelianism, considered Telesio to be his mentor.

The revival of Skepticism and Epicureanism was another turning point in reconsidering the existing approach to nature and universal causality. Unlike their ancient predecessors, Renaissance skeptics did not deny the very possibility to acquire knowledge; instead, they adopted the writings of Sextus Empiricus to advance moderate forms of skepticism and to argue that only faith and religion, not reason and philosophy, could lead to truth and salvation. In the meantime, while attacking radical skepticism, Renaissance scholars admitted that although philosophical and scientific generalizations were often inaccurate, people were able to comprehend certain truths through cognitive faculties, experience, and senses. In the long run, this opened the door wide for the empiricist turn in early modern philosophy and science (Popkin 2003). The rediscovery of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* in 1417 and the rise of Epicureanism revealed another danger for the integrity of the traditional Aristotelian framework and its vision of causality. Seen as an alternative to Aristotelian physics, no more capable of explaining new scientific discoveries, atomism appeared to be in the avant-garde of early modern thought by offering a valuable physical system based on a corpuscular theory of matter (Lüthy et al. 2001). With Galileo, who applied it in his famous experiment with falling bodies, Descartes, and Gassendi embracing the atomic theory, the Aristotelian causal interpretation and the notions of impetus and efficient cause became anachronistic. This, in turn, put on hold the long-standing belief that a divinely structured universe and an entirety of events in the physical world are strictly interlinked.

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Cavalcanti, Bartolomeo

Born: Florence, 1503

Died: Padua, 1562

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Abstract

Bartolomeo Cavalcanti was a Florentine nobleman, diplomat, translator, and orator and was an opponent of the Medici.

Biography

Bartolomeo Cavalcanti helped defend Florence during the siege of 1530, when the Spanish-Imperial army surrounded the city, overthrew the Florentine Republic, and placed it under the rule of Alessandro de' Medici, Duke of Tuscany. After the assassination of the Duke in 1537, Cavalcanti voluntarily left Florence and went into exile, entering the service of Ercole II d'Este. In 1548, he went to Rome, first in the service of Paul III (Alessandro Farnese) and then Ottavio Farnese, grandson of Paul III. Within the walls of Siena, he fought Francis I de' Medici, grandson and successor of Cosimo I.

Works

Bartolomeo Cavalcanti wrote a number of works, including *La retorica divisa in sette libri con le postille di Pio Portinatino*, published in Venice in 1558 by Giolito de' Ferrari. From 1559 onward, the book was published under the title *La retorica di m. Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, gentil'huomo fiorentino*. [...] *Con le postille di m. Pio Portinaio giureconsulto, che dimostrano sommariamente tutto quello, che vi si tratta*. The text was quite a success: besides this edition, published in 1559 by Giolito de' Ferrari, there were also the 1559 (Pisa: B. Cesano), 1560 (Venice: G. de' Ferrari), 1564 (Pesaro: B. Cesano), 1569 (Venice: B. Robini), 1578 (Venice: C. Franceschini), and 1585 (Venice: Zoppini fratelli) editions. *La retorica* provides a complete rhetoric, taking into account *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocution*, *actio*, and *memoria*. Cavalcanti's rhetoric incorporates the ideas of Aristotle, as well as Cicero, Quintilian, Hermogenes of Tarsus, Demetrius of Phalerum, Themistius, and George of Trebizond.

Cavalcanti translated Polybius and also wrote speeches to the Florentine militia (1529), a critique of Sperone Speroni's tragedy *Canace* (1550), and an essay on the different types of republics.

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Cavendish, Margaret

Born: 1623, Colchester, England

Died: 15 December 1673, Welbeck (London), England

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Abstract

Margaret Cavendish was a philosopher and writer active in mid-seventeenth century England. She is important not just as one of the first women active in philosophy in early modern age but as the expounder of an original scientific theory based on vitalism and materialism, by which she rejected the mechanical philosophy of Descartes and Hobbes and the experimental philosophy of Boyle and Hooke. Also, while not developing a theory of gender equality, she envisaged a form of emancipation of women based on intellectual activity as a

way to social recognition and to the exercise of influence on society and politics.

Alternate Names

[Duchess of Newcastle-upon-Tyne](#); [Lucas, Margaret](#)

Biography

Margaret Cavendish was born as Margaret Lucas in Colchester (Essex) in 1623. Her life was impacted by the English civil wars as early as 1642: being a member of a royalist family, her house was seized by parliamentary forces and she looked for the protection of the Queen consort Henrietta Maria, whom she followed in exile in Paris in 1644. The next year, she married the royalist exile William Cavendish, who hosted the “Newcastle Circle,” which was attended, among the others, by René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, and Pierre Gassendi (Kargon 1966, 68–76). After having moved to Antwerp, in 1651 she temporarily came back to England to compound her family’s properties and started there her publishing activity in 1653 (Cavendish 1653). Being steadily back to England with her husband in 1660 (following the Restoration), she continued her writing and publishing from their manor in Newcastle, where she died in 1673. In the course of her life, she wrote a twenty-three volumes corpus covering diverse topics, from autobiography to natural philosophy and politics, and including literary pieces and novels. (Battigelli 1998, 1–5; Schiebinger 1999, 2–4).

An Independent Figure in the Age of Mechanical and Experimental Philosophy

As she did not attend university – as a consequence of the conditions of women at her time and of her temperament (Battigelli 1998, 7) – her participation to the Newcastle Circle did not bring her much contact with philosophers (Schiebinger

1999, 2). Margaret Cavendish was a self-educated thinker. Striving to develop her own philosophy, she engaged the main positions in natural philosophy at stake in mid-seventeenth century (Sarasohn 2010). Besides Aristotelianism, she criticized the expounders of “mechanical philosophy” and of “experimental philosophy” proposing her own synthesis (Cavendish 2001, x–xv, 7–10; Lewis 2001). As a main tenet in natural philosophy, she argued for the identity of “Matter, Self-motion and Self-knowledge” (Cavendish 2001, 137; Schiebinger 1999, 4–8). On this basis, she could propose a natural philosophical account alternative to Hobbes’ and Descartes’ and expounding a form of organicism or vitalism aligned with materialism (Hutton 1997; Cavendish 2001, xiv–xxxiii), capable to explain the stableness of nature itself (Cavendish 1996 [1668], 7; Michaelian 2009, 33–36), as well as its freedom (Detlefsen 2007), and requiring no active role of God on matter (Cavendish 1664a, 13–17; James 1999; Broad 2004, 46–49). Against Henry More’s and Jean Baptiste Van Helmont’s vitalism, on the other hand, she argued for the complete distinction of extension and spirit. The latter cannot be truly conceived by mind, which is material in itself (Cavendish 1664a, 526; Cuning 2006). Also, she criticized the expounders of the experimental philosophy, Robert Boyle and Robert Hooke, as for Cavendish philosophy is to be grounded on reason rather than on senses, insofar as reason is more reliable than empirical evidences and can ascertain the regularity of nature (Cavendish 1996 [1668], 56; Hutton 1997, 422–423; Schiebinger 1999, 4–8).

Naturalism and Feminism

As to her views in moral philosophy and politics, these entail a natural philosophical normative ideal: the highest ends to be pursued in life and society are stability and peace, just as nature tends to the same aims (Cavendish 1664b, 389–391, 2001, 128; Boyle 2006, 253–259). In turn, self-preservation leads to the desire of recognition of the self by the others, as by writing itself (Boyle

2006, 262). Indeed, given the separation of natural and spiritual domains, no concept of afterlife can be used as a foundation of morality (Wright 2014). Also her views on the condition of women bear witness of this normative ideal, as chastity is regarded by Cavendish as the highest virtue for women, since it preserves peace and stability in society. Women, however, may find the way to political power by exercising influence on men and by their intellectual achievements (Cavendish 1664b, 27, Cavendish 2003b, I; Boyle 2006, 276). In politics, such normative ideal is reflected by her royalism and the rejection of social contracts as the foundation of the absolute sovereignty of the King, since democracy would lead to chaos (Cavendish 2003a, 276–278; Boyle 2006, 282–283). Though considered as part of nature, for Cavendish all political bodies act as a republic (Walters 2014, 159).

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- Descartes, René
- More, Henry
- Spirit in Renaissance Medicine
- Women Writing in the Renaissance

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Celtis, Konrad

Born: 2/2/1459, Wipfeld (near Schweinfurt, Lower Franconia)

Died: Vienna 4/2/1508, Vienna

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Abstract

The entry deals with Konrad Celtes, known as the German “Arch-Humanist” (“Erzhumanist”), one of the most influential authors and scholars in pre-Reformation Germany.

Alternate Names

Bickel, Konrad; Pickel, Konrad; Protucius, Conradus

Biography

Originating from a family of winegrowers near Schweinfurt (Lower Franconia), K.C. studies in Cologne, Heidelberg, and Leipzig where his first publication – a textbook on prosody and metrics (*Ars versificandi et carminum*, 1486) – appears. In Leipzig, he becomes a protégé of Frederick the wise, elector of Saxony. On April 18, 1487, he is crowned by Emperor Frederick III as *poeta laureatus* at the Nuremberg castle. Soon afterward, he sets out for a journey to Italy. In Bologna, he meets Filippo Beroaldo, editor of Apuleius and Neo-Latin poet, in Florence Ficino and his circle, and in Rome Pomponio Leto and the Roman Academy. Via Budapest C. reaches Krakow in 1489 where he meets Philippus Callimachus (Buonaccorsi) and Laurentius Corvinus. After a stay in Prague, he is appointed professor of rhetorics and poetics in Ingolstadt where he delivers his famous inaugural speech in praise of the *studia humanitatis* (Gruber 2003). In these

years, he is closely connected to the Nuremberg humanist circle around Sebald Schreyer and Hartmann Schedel becoming the primary inspiration for the young Albrecht Dürer who cuts the famous *Philosophia*-woodcut for C.’ *Amorum libri quatuor* (1502; on Celtes and Dürer cf. Robert 2012; Schauerte 2015). In 1497, C. is invited to Vienna by the young emperor Maximilian I who appoints him as director of the *collegium poetarum et mathematicorum* in Vienna (formally inaugurated on 1 February 1502). In return, C. dedicates to Maximilian his *magnum opus*, a volume with illustrations by Dürer containing among others the *Amorum libri quatuor*, the *Norimberga*, and the *Germania generalis* (1502; Robert 2003). C. spends his last years in Vienna and Augsburg where he keeps close contact to Konrad Peutinger. He dies on 24 January 1508. His original gravestone is located inside St. Stephen in Vienna. Shortly after his death, Dürer attributes Celtes a place at his own side in his painting *Martyrdom of the ten thousand Christians* (1508).

Heritage and Rupture of Tradition

In pre-Reformation Germany, C. represents a new type of humanist intellectual deeply influenced by Italian Renaissance thought, literature, and “self-fashioning.” In contrast to Italian Quattrocento poets like Sannazaro or Poliziano, C. writes exclusively in Latin. His main works – *Odorum libri quatuor* (ed. 1513), *Epigrammatum libri* (ed. 1886), and *Amorum libri quatuor* (1502) – are milestones of a brand new and formerly unknown secular poetry which gives a wide space to religious criticism and erotic frankness. C. provides his *Amores* with a highly ambitious philosophical program: its four books follow a tetradic structure showing the protagonist in different places and cities, in different ages and “humors” with different concubines (Robert 2003). Love elegy thus becomes a medium of topography, history, and platonic philosophy (cf. the *Philosophia*-woodcut, executed by Dürer).

Innovative and Original Aspects

C. stands at the beginning of German “Landeskunde” (*descriptio Germaniae*) comprising philology, archeology, and geography. Driven by a patriotic impulse based on the reception of Tacitus’ *Germania* which C. edited in the 1490s and which he supplemented by his *Germania generalis* (Müller 2001), C. tracked and promulgated systematically “ancient” German poetry like the *Comoediae* of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (ed. 1501) or the *Ligurinus* of Gunther of Pairis (Robert 2009, 382–385). Another highly important aspect represents C.’s networking strategies: in the course of his *peregrinatio*, C. sets up a series of friendships and academic societies (*Sodalitates*) all over Germany which are reflected in his *Codex epistolaris*.

Impact and Legacy

C.’s immediate impact on the evolution of German humanism was deep. He opens a rich production of sixteenth-century Neo-Latin poetry in Germany (Kühlmann et al. 1997). Whereas C. is well remembered as founder of the *studia humanitatis* in Germany, the impact of his poetry diminishes and finally vanishes after the Reformation. Nevertheless, all his scientific ideas, especially the *Germania illustrata* and the search for the remains of ancient German poetry (“deutsche Altertümer”), are taken over by his immediate disciples and friends like Aventinus and Vadianus and by following generations of German poets like Martin Opitz or Johann Christoph Gottsched.

Cross-References

- Dürer, Albrecht
- Ficino, Marsilio
- Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance
- Opitz, Martin
- Poliziano, Angelo
- Reformation

- Scientific Academies in the Renaissance
- Vadianus, Joachim

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Censorship in the Renaissance

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Abstract

During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Western attitudes to censorship were determined principally by Christianity, the hegemonic religious and political discourse in Europe. While the religions of the Hellenistic and Roman world, within which Christianity was born and developed, were concerned for the proper performance of religious ritual, the earliest documents of Christianity – like those

of Judaism, from which it sprang – were even more deeply motivated by a concern to identify, articulate, and maintain correct beliefs (“orthodoxy”). Accordingly, Christian censorship represents an attempt to control both inward beliefs and their outward expression. The word “censorship” can refer to customs or laws that prohibit the expression of certain opinions, to the legal processes through which conformity to such norms is achieved (whether before or after publication), or to the punishments imposed on those who refuse to conform. It is essentially an imposition of authority for the purpose of creating agreement or silencing dissent.

This entry first explores medieval mechanisms of censorship and then describes the new institutions and practices of censorship developed in response to the invention of printing and the Protestant Reformation. Finally, it briefly describes some important medieval and Renaissance thinkers and writers whose work was subject to ecclesiastical or state censorship.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Hebrew Bible and the Christian Scriptures contain commandments intended to guide the life of the individual and his or her relationship to God and the community. Censorship attempts to enforce these commandments by removing what might offend them. The biblical commandments include injunctions to purity of thought, action, and speech. The Bible contains stories that describe punishments suffered by those who failed to keep these rules and even an explicit reference to the burning of books that offended against the divine prohibition of magic (Acts 19:19). On the basis of statements in the Christian Scriptures, the church claimed the right to punish or forgive wrongs (Matthew 16:19). The selection of the Christian canon of Scripture is perhaps the church’s earliest, and arguably most significant, act of censorship. The desire of the early church to

guide believers toward orthodox writings and away from heresy is fully expressed in the *Decretum Gelasianum* (sixth century), which contains lists of approved and proscribed authors.

The practice of censorship is intimately associated with the notion of heresy. The Greek word *hairesis* (“choice”), from which the word “heresy” is derived, originally designated a philosophical or religious sect, or a decision to follow one particular variety among the spectrum of beliefs present in early Christianity. Once the “orthodox party” (and the writings it considered canonical) had established its dominance, the notion of “heresy” came to signify dissent from majority belief and practice, deviations which the church attempted to extirpate in the interests of maintaining the unity of its dominant position. By definition, heresy is a relative term, used to characterize a position held by an opponent; nobody fights to hold an opinion he or she believes incorrect.

There was a relatively high degree of doctrinal agreement in the Western European church during the Middle Ages, due in part to the church’s virtual monopoly on education and learning, and to internal structures of doctrinal review. Authors routinely submitted their writings to the judgment of their fellows, and formally subjugated their own judgments – whether sincerely or not – to the ultimate arbitration of the church. When medieval writers or orators did advocate dissent, those who condemned them often resorted to the patristic diatribes against heresies for their language, imagery, and accusations. This can lend late medieval and early modern writings against heresy a curiously antiquarian feel, as apologists sought to equate new forms of dissent with earlier ones.

Religious dissent in the Middle Ages was generally of three kinds. The first comprised learned dissent over doctrine or conduct, generally within the context of religious communities. The second kind attempted to disrupt the temporal order of the church; such attempts often began as zealous reform movements within the church that were expelled once their protagonists refused to capitulate to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Third were popular heretical movements such as

Catharism, drawing support largely outside the church. Some movements of dissent, such as Lollardy or Hussitism (see below), might contain elements of all three kinds. The medieval church had few mechanisms to deal with large-scale dissent until the rise of the Inquisition. The medieval Inquisition was not yet a centrally organized body; rather, it was a method of legal examination enjoined on itinerant inquisitors – usually members of the mendicant orders – to stem the spread of heresies such as Catharism. Usually, the church had to rely on the cooperation of the secular authorities to execute heretics it had condemned. In the papal bull *Sicut universitatis conditor* (1198), Innocent III likened the relationship between church and state to that between sun and moon, respectively: while both are necessary and glorious, the moon's light is derived from that of the sun. In the bull *Ad extirpanda* (1252), Innocent IV empowered inquisitors to use limited torture to compel heretics to confess or name their associates, and authorized the secular arm to execute those condemned. When relations between church and state were harmonious, both could move decisively against heretics. When the secular authorities withdrew their co-operation, the church might be powerless to enforce its will to control dissent. The establishment of universities under princely patronage in the late Middle Ages could create environments in which ideas disruptive to the church's power could flourish under secular protection. Dysfunctional relationships between the church and princely powers contributed to the rise and entrenchment of several uncontrollable movements of dissent, notably Hussitism and Lutheranism.

The medieval church distinguished various kinds of control. A *prohibitio* does not make any judgment on the truth of a proposition, but merely proscribes its expression within a determined place and time. A *condemnatio* prohibits the expression of ideas which are generally – though not always – implied to be erroneous. In medieval usage, *censura* refers to the imposition of disciplinary action – excommunication, interdict, or suspension – by an ecclesiastical judge. Modern conceptions of censorship are thus closer to the

medieval notions of *prohibitio* and *condemnatio* than to *censura*. In the late thirteenth century, an anonymous author compiled an account of approximately thirteen cases of errors condemned by the University of Paris (and one in England, the condemnation of Archbishop Robert Kilwardby by the University of Oxford in 1277). From these and similar cases, it is clear that medieval scholars considered censorship as part of the exercise of teaching authority rather than as a shackle on free expression (Thijssen 1998).

The church possessed various means to enforce censorship. It could try to suppress suspect texts or limit their spread to the laity. Such practices could lead to self-censorship, in which authors declined to voice ideas likely to attract official opprobrium; to an author's ostensible disavowal of his real opinions as mere hypotheses or probabilities; or to the deliberate use of an obscure or esoteric manner of expression, in which the author's real position was hidden from the uninitiated. In the age of print, the economic mechanism of market censorship forced printers and publishers to weigh the projected profit from the sale of desirable suppressed literature against the potential penalties if caught.

Several developments in the intellectual life of the later Middle Ages increased the incidence of dissent. One was the trajectory of Christian philosophy. For example, the French philosopher Roscelin (c. 1050–c. 1124) was led by his commitment to nominalism to reject the ontological notion of wholes, and with it the traditional notion of the Trinity as a single whole, a notion deplored by many contemporaries. The translation of philosophical works (both ancient and recent) from Arabic into Latin introduced Western readers to ideas that challenged the theological consensus. Aristotle's ideas on the eternity of the world or human virtue were difficult to square with Christianity, and many of his ideas were initially condemned by the University of Paris. However, when Thomas Aquinas used Aristotle's ideas to explore Christian doctrines such as transubstantiation, the Stagirite's ideas assumed a unique authority in Christian philosophy that would last well into the seventeenth century.

Innovative and Original Aspects: The Effect of Print on Censorship

Increased lay literacy, especially in densely populated regions such as the Rhineland and the Low Countries, posed a potential threat to doctrinal unity. The invention of printing from moveable type in the middle of the fifteenth century augmented this danger by rapidly increasing the availability of reading material, and by creating a medium through which controversial issues in religion and politics could be discussed more openly in the public sphere (Infelise 1999). In the bull *Inter multiplices nostrae sollicitudinis curas* (1487), Pope Innocent VIII predicted the potentially disruptive power of the printing press, and commanded that printers were to submit all works to ecclesiastical review before printing, under pain of excommunication and fines. Alexander VI confirmed this bull in 1501.

Such texts routinely protested their benign intention: the authorities simply wished to shield believers from the moral and doctrinal error bound to result from reading heretical literature. The desire to censor impinged on all kinds of writings that affected the inner life of the Christian, including religious beliefs and moral sentiments. Censorship thus covered not only potentially dangerous doctrinal writings but also literature deemed obscene or otherwise morally corrosive (Helm 2014). Sometimes censors wished to restrict access to writings which were good in themselves but which could become harmful in the hands of the unlearned. The popular Strasbourg preacher Geiler von Keysersberg maintained that placing German bibles in the hands of the laity was like giving a child a knife to cut its bread. Such attitudes were certainly paternalistic, but modern theories of censorship in democratic countries – especially those intended to restrict the availability of sensitive material on the Internet – are hardly less so.

Delegates to the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517) discussed ways to control dangerous recent developments in education and culture. In the bull *Apostolici regiminis* (1513), Leo X sought to balance the study of ancient pagan literature against a renewed commitment to the study of

theology and canon law. This council declared that some recent thinkers, by accepting the notion that the domains of theology and philosophy were separate (the theory of “double truth”), had erred by following Muslim exponents of Aristotle, such as Averroës, in asserting the heretical position that the human soul is not immortal.

In the bull *Inter sollicitudines* (1515), Pope Leo X – possibly inspired by reforms suggested by the Camaldulensian monks Pietro Querini and Paolo Giustinian – commanded that all books should be censored before publication. The document declared that while printing was a great benefit which made texts easily available even to the poor, it potentially exposed believers to harmful literature. Emphasizing the role of education as the wellspring of reform, the bull declared that students should be exposed to the best of ancient literature but protected from modern imitators who confused paganism and Christianity. Translations of foreign works that contradicted the Catholic faith were deemed suspect. Henceforth, all publications, whether in Latin or the vernaculars, were to be submitted to a bishop, the Master of the Sacred Palace (the papal theologian), or their vicars for pre-publication approval. However, many authors, including Erasmus, remained unsure where they were supposed to send their works for official inspection.

Since the Master of the Sacred Palace was always a Dominican, this command implied that the Roman Inquisition, dominated by the Dominicans, would be involved in this process. In the decades around 1500, several inquisitorial bodies were instituted to renew or replace the medieval Inquisition, an institution founded in the thirteenth century to deal with popular heretical dissent. In 1478, the Catholic Monarchs Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon instituted the Spanish Inquisition to investigate the sincerity of Jewish and Muslim conversions to Christianity. The Roman Inquisition was founded in 1542 to extirpate the threat of Protestant heresy.

With its “Rubric on teachers, heretics, and those who cause scandal to the faith of Christ” (*Rubrica de magistris, deque haereticis & Christi fidem scandalizantibus*), the Provincial Council of Florence (1517–1518) acted to limit the teaching

of classical languages from the work of authors deemed either obscene, such as Catullus or Martial, or philosophically suspect, such as Lucretius, who denied the immortality of the soul. This rubric also proscribed mockery of the church. Disobedience was to be punished with fines, imprisonment, or even excommunication.

The Protestant Reformation as Catalyst to Further Procedures of Censorship

The Western church was governed by the conviction that continual internal reformation was necessary for its ongoing health. Numerous reform movements grew up during the Middle Ages, sometimes at the instigation of the papacy, but more often driven by individual clerical reformers motivated to remove clerical abuse or return religious orders to their original simplicity. Some reform orders, such as the Cistercians, Franciscans, and Dominicans, became established within the bosom of the church. However, this ostensible unity also masked tensions: within the Franciscan order, some demanded ever stricter renunciation of property and wealth and wished to impose this standard on the rest of the church. The disciplinary mechanisms of the medieval church could usually deal with such internal dissent relatively effectively. However, complications could arise when the claims of those the church condemned as heretics were supported by secular powers, as was the case with John Wyclif and Jan Hus (see below).

Martin Luther's protest began with his objections to the practice of selling indulgences, documents remitting the temporal penalties due to the church as propitiation for sin. Luther realized that the aggressive sale of indulgences to raise money for the building of the new St. Peter's in Rome led ill-informed laypeople to imagine that they were purchasing salvation. This snowballed into a wider critique of abuses within the church and an attack on the legitimacy of papal claims to power. Luther's complaints were thus to a degree comparable to medieval reform movements. However, his rapid mobilization of the press to win over secular powers, educated urban elites,

and discontented rural hierarchies placed his protest in an entirely different order. Initial attempts to silence Luther or force him to recant failed. In June 1520, Pope Leo X issued a bill, *Exsurge domine*, in which he threatened Luther with excommunication and called for the burning of his books. Luther responded by burning the bull. Emperor Charles V ratified the bull in October 1520, and Lutheran books were burned, sometimes in the emperor's presence, at Leuven, Liège, and Cologne (Kronenberg 1948; Soen et al. 2017). Following Luther's excommunication in January 1521, Charles issued further decrees for the destruction of Luther's works, which were described as promoting the heresies of Hus, previously condemned by the church. Charles also had lists of prohibited authors and works printed on placards. Charles's edicts encouraged individuals to denounce neighbors who owned Lutheran books with the promise of a third of the fines levied as a result of their information.

In April 1521, Luther was summoned to the imperial diet at Worms. Here again he refused to retract his opinions, which he defended as consistent with Scripture, the highest arbiter of doctrine and morals. After his sudden departure from the diet, the emperor issued an edict on 8 May 1521 which commanded the seizure and destruction of Luther's books. This Edict of Worms became the legal basis for subsequent imperial censorship of heretical literature. Failure to comply was equated with *lèse-majesté*, which bore a potential sentence of execution.

The burning of books was both a practical means to eradicate dissenting literature and a symbolic measure to purify the community from its contagion. When the writings of Peter Abelard on the Trinity were condemned as heretical, he was forced to burn them personally. In 1248, cartloads of Talmuds were burned at Paris as an affront to Christianity. In the decades around 1500, Jewish and Muslim books were burned in Spain. Jewish books were burned at Venice in 1553 and 1568. In 1495, the Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) encouraged his hearers to purify Florence by burning books by Ovid, Propertius, Dante, and Boccaccio. However, the

practical efficacy of burning books as a means for eradicating their content was diminished by the proliferation of printed copies.

Rulers commissioned the universities in their territories to examine books for suspect material. Most important were the theological faculties of Cologne, Leuven, and Paris; the latter two would subsequently draw up lists that were formalized as Indices of Forbidden books. Sometimes the initiative came from bishops, such as Johannes Fabri, coadjutor bishop of Wiener Neustadt, who issued a proto-Index of Forbidden Books in 1528. The most important target of such examinations was heretical literature, including vernacular translations of bibles containing commentaries or glosses considered inimical to the Roman church. A secondary target was obscene literature, though censors sometimes declined to name such titles explicitly, lest they should draw attention to them.

The Index

In 1542, with the bull *Licet ab initio*, Pope Paul III established a body that would henceforth become intimately involved in the regulation of heresy: the “Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition” (*Sancta Congregatio Romanae et universalis Inquisitionis*), often simply abbreviated as the “Holy Office” (*Sacrum Officium*) (see Wolf 2006). The Holy Office was empowered to pronounce on erroneous beliefs including sorcery, magic, and astrology; sexual crimes, such as polygamy or solicitation during confession; pretended holiness; veneration of non-authorized saints; simony; unauthorized assumption of authority; and abuse of the sacraments. This body was to act as court of last instance for all lower religious tribunals. It was constituted by 6 (later 12) cardinals, coordinated by a Dominican; its decisions were made in the presence of the pope. The establishment of the Holy Office marked the beginning of a concerted effort on the part of the church to control printed books.

The first Italian Indices of Forbidden Books were drawn up at Lucca in 1545, perhaps at the

insistence of the Inquisition, and at Venice in 1549, at the request of the papal legate Giovanni della Casa. The Venetian list included three classes of books: those of authors whose works were banned *tout court*; individual works; and anonymous works. The delay in producing such lists – even if provisional lists had been promulgated by secular powers since the 1520s – may be explained by the fact that their publication was likely to damage ongoing attempts to reconcile Protestants to the Catholic Church. Only once reconciliation had become hopeless – as acknowledged in the bull *Licet ab initio* – did the Catholic Church take serious measures to shield its members from harmful contact with heretical literature.

In 1571, Pope Pius V established the Congregation of the Index, an offshoot of the Holy Office, to strengthen the church’s power over the burgeoning book industry. This body had the specialized task of assessing printed books post-publication, drawing up lists of forbidden works, and publishing updates every few decades. Printers were obliged to send a copy of every title to the Congregation for inspection. The Congregation examined not only religious literature but also medical, legal, scientific, and creative literature. Books were sent to the Congregation by authorized agencies, such as papal nunciatures, superiors of religious orders, or bishops. The secretary of the Congregation made an initial decision whether the work was worth further investigation. If so, he commissioned *consultatores* (expert members) or external experts such as theologians or prelates to examine the work and submit written reports. On this basis, a book was either prohibited or acquitted, or the case was adjourned. In case of doubt, further opinions might be solicited. Once the pope had pronounced the final decision of the Congregation, a decree was posted at the doors of the major Roman churches and sent to nuncios abroad. These decrees were then compiled into the next edition of the Index, which appeared every few decades. In time, the Congregation was also used to block undesirable individuals, such as Jansenists, from advancement. Apart from censoring books, the Congregation was also authorized

to issue permits for individuals to read prohibited works. This body was finally abolished in 1966.

The first Roman Index, published even before the establishment of the Congregation, was drawn up under the instruction of Paul IV in 1557; however, this Index, which may have been intended simply as a working paper for the Holy Office, was never promulgated. A revised version, published in 1559, included about 550 authors, including Boccaccio, Rabelais, Aretino, Erasmus, and Machiavelli, whose works were condemned entirely or in part. It also contained blanket bans on all works on the occult, all anonymous works written by heretics, many editions of the Bible (including a universal ban on vernacular translations), and all books printed by any one of a list of 61 printers. (Some printers who resisted censorship of the press, such as Étienne Dolet, paid with their lives. Others evaded detection by omitting their names or using false printing addresses.) It is clear that most of these works had not been subjected to any detailed process of examination but were simply declared automatically erroneous through their authorship, even if they contained much material that was unobjectionable. Some complained that this Index limited free thought. The Grand Duke of Tuscany even threatened to fine any printer in his territory who published it.

The Council of Trent published another Index in 1564, which would form the basis of future Roman lists. It proscribed all works of heretics produced before 1515, as well as works by Protestant heresiarchs. (Books on nonreligious subjects by less prominent Protestants might be approved after inspection.) Since the Council of Trent had declared the Latin Vulgate as the only authoritative text of the Bible, the Tridentine Index banned unauthorized editions and translations of the Bible, though it allowed those explicitly licensed by an inquisitor or bishop to read such editions and translations. It required that biblical lexica and concordances should be examined and expurgated if necessary. It banned the laity from reading controversial vernacular literature treating religious questions on which Catholics and Protestants disputed. It clamped down on obscene literature and works on divination, magic, and the occult. A further revision in

1593 incorporated material from earlier local lists. It provided lists of passages in some works which, once deleted, would render such books innocuous. It also prescribed that books had to be submitted to inspection by the ecclesiastical authorities and supplied with the certification *Testatur* ("We declare"). Later, a more differentiated system was introduced: the certification *Imprimatur* ("may be printed") indicated that a bishop or his vicar general had given permission for the publication of a book dealing with faith or morals; *Nihil obstat* ("nothing should prevent") indicated that an ecclesiastical censor believed that the book contained nothing harmful to faith or morals; and the permission *Imprimi potest* ("can be printed") was given by the superior of a religious order to a work written by a member of the same order. Inspection and approval were to be carried out free of charge. The Indices banned not simply the publication of banned material but also its sale, trade, and possession. The 1664 Index included the work of many of the foundational thinkers of early modern thought, including Copernicus, Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Pascal, and Spinoza. On the other hand, the Index had a positive side in that it required printers and publishers to conform to high standards of textual accuracy.

These measures were not uniformly popular, even in Catholic territories. The Venetian book industry, the largest on the Italian peninsula, supported by the government, initially resisted the church's attempts to regulate the trade. Indeed, the city government itself exercised a degree of censorship over politically sensitive or salacious books, even illustrated editions of Ovid. Together, the Venetian book industry and the city government defeated the Indices of 1549, 1554/1555, and 1559. However, several factors eventually won the printers of Venice over to the church's side. Many Venetian patricians were alarmed by fears that Protestantism was gaining support among the city's youth. Moreover, the Council of Trent raised hopes for realistic internal reform of the church. The increased numbers of religious publications arising as a result of the Council also promised to provide steady work for Venetian printers. By the 1560s, Venice had a system of

pre-publication censorship in place. The Inquisition was now granted power to inspect Venetian bookshops and consignments of imported books and to arrest those who dealt in prohibited literature. However, disputes over commercial issues, such as the right to publish the new Tridentine breviary and missal, led to renewed conflict between the church at the Venetian state. Although the Inquisition prevented Venetian printers from producing almost all titles on the Index from about the 1570s until the early 1590s, dealers within the city still trafficked in imports of illicit materials. From the 1590s onward, the Venetian state again began to assert its control over the book trade and over the ways in which its citizens expressed their religious convictions. Censorship in Venice became virtually restricted to control of political expression. Ironically, the imposition of the Interdict on Venice in 1606–1607 allowed for the virtually unfettered importation of prohibited publications, since the church had rendered itself powerless to take further action in the city. Even after the Interdict was lifted, book dealers in Venice frequently ignored the Index with impunity (Grendler 1977).

The Roman Catholic Church was not the sole agent to suppress the books – or bodies – of dissidents. Luther urged princes to put down the Peasants' War of 1524–1525, a political and ideological conflict, with deadly force. He condemned "Spirituals" and Anabaptists as subverters of society. He and his followers roundly condemned antitrinitarians. After Luther's death, "genuine Lutherans" persecuted the followers of his more moderate lieutenant Philipp Melancthon. Lutheran authorities sent out visitations to check whether local clergy taught in conformity with the established orthodoxy and encouraged local informants to provide information. Lutheran universities, such as those of Tübingen and Leipzig, exercised inspection and control over printed books. The evangelical city council of Basel passed decrees in 1524, 1531, and 1558 to outlaw unauthorized printing (and reprinting) and to encourage publishers to deposit copies of their books in the university library (a requirement made binding in 1558). The Geneva Consistory began censoring books in 1539; Calvin became

actively involved in 1542. Calvin also famously contributed to the condemnation and execution of Miguel Servet (Michael Servetus), although this famous case – condemned in the nineteenth century as a symptomatic expression of the repressive temper of Calvinism – was the only such action ever taken in Protestant Geneva.

A Variety of National Responses

Various European states responded to the need for controlling the book trade in different ways (Maclean 2012). The response of Charles V to the sudden explosion of heretical literature was closely linked to the policies of the papacy. While Protestant literature continued to circulate in the Low Countries in spite of legal penalties, Protestant literature made fewer inroads into Charles's Spanish territories. Most of the heretical books in Spain were printed abroad, for example, in France. In the 1550s, Fernando de Valdes, the Inquisitor General, became increasingly concerned by the presence of such literature in Spain and had the 1551 Leuven Index of Forbidden Books reprinted there. As part of a campaign to stanch the influence of Protestantism in the peninsula from 1558, Philip II passed laws restricting the importation of books from England, France, and Germany and required Spanish printers to apply for a royal privilege, which was to be printed in each book. When Philip instructed Benito Arias Montano, his scholarly envoy to the Low Countries, to prepare an edition of the Tridentine Index in 1570, Arias suggested an *Index expurgatorius*, which listed suspect passages in books that were otherwise orthodox. (This approach had already been suggested in an Index prepared at Leuven in 1550.) Once offending passages had been deleted, the books might be safely read. Arias' *Index expurgatorius* appeared at Antwerp in 1571 and would become a model for later Spanish practice. In 1583–1584, the Spanish Inquisitor General Gaspar de Quiroga published a two-volume index which proscribed the works of several philosophers and literary figures, including Abelard, William of Ockham, Dante,

Machiavelli, and Rabelais. However, booksellers complained of inconsistency and often ignored the lists.

The book trade in Paris was regulated well before the Reformation. Booksellers in Paris could apply for a license from the Sorbonne to acquire the status of “libraire juré” (sworn bookseller or stationer). Printers were required to use a distinct mark to identify their products, to employ competent correctors, and to supply deposit copies. In 1521, the University of Paris was granted the right to inspect religious books and to approve or condemn them; from 1544 onward, the university published lists of restricted books. Such measures were consistent with the efforts of François I both to promote erudition and to check the spread of evangelicalism in France. In 1540, Pierre Rebuffi wrote a treatise that regulated the French book trade by codifying many earlier customs and requirements. Royal edicts passed in 1539, 1551, and 1566 brought the French book trade even more firmly under state control, for example, by requiring that every book printed in France from 1566 should bear a royal privilege, which presupposed that it had been inspected and passed.

Within the German-speaking parts of the Holy Empire, the book trade came under tighter regulation from around 1567 with the establishment of the “imperial book commission” (*Kaiserliche Bücherkommission*) at the Frankfurt book fair. This provided a convenient point of contact between booksellers at one of the two largest fairs in Western Europe (the other being at Leipzig) and the imperial chancery in Vienna. The chancery regulated the trade of books through its own system of post-publication censorship while also offering authors and publishers the right to apply for legal protection through printing privileges, which threatened those who produced or distributed unauthorized reprints of protected materials with confiscation and fines. The commission obliged printers and publishers to produce catalogues. These catalogues thus served not merely a commercial role, drawing new works to the attention of potential purchasers; they also allowed the commissioners to ascertain whether a given publisher was offering potentially

problematic material for sale. From the end of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church exercised an increasingly dominant role over the book commission. In 1597, the imperial chancery expanded the body’s activities by appointing a second commissioner. While the officers of the commission or the city council were initially empowered to demand to see a printer’s printing license or to inspect their stock for offensive material during the fairs, in 1601 the imperial book commissioner Valentin Leucht – himself a Catholic priest – acquired the right to inspect book shops in Frankfurt at any time. The commissioners were also responsible for collecting the obligatory sample copies from printers or publishers, which were sent to the court library in Vienna. When the Jesuits attempted to use the commission’s collection of multiple sample copies to bag copies for themselves, publishers resisted, complaining that the order simply wanted to stock its schools’ libraries for free.

In England in the 1520s, Henry VIII regulated printed materials strictly. He had the parliament ban evangelical literature in Latin or in English translation, as well as works that speculated on the royal succession. The first modern English New Testament was printed in Germany and smuggled into England. Although royal and ecclesiastical agents tried to use their influence abroad to stop the printing and seized imported copies where they could, their measures were only partly successful. In the meantime, printed French New Testaments circulated among evangelically inclined members of the English royal court. The first Act of Supremacy (1534) gave Henry VIII, as head of the church in England, the right to commission visitations, to repress religious dissent – which was now equated with sedition – and to reform the church as he saw fit. The Act of Six Articles (1539) threatened those found guilty of denying Catholic doctrines such as transubstantiation, clerical celibacy, or confession with the same penalties due to felons. Henry’s policy on the admissibility of English bibles was inconsistent and changing; while he had earlier persecuted and executed William Tyndale for publishing an English bible, he later commissioned a revision of Tyndale’s version, which

appeared with a title woodcut which displayed Henry lavishing the divine word on a grateful populace. During the reign of Henry's daughter Mary, the Stationers' Company was instituted to register and license all books printed in England. By the end of the sixteenth century, other individuals and bodies also licensed books: the bishop of London, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Court of High Commission, and the Star Chamber. In Britain, censorship was used to control controversial theological literature, such as works of antitrinitarian theology, throughout the seventeenth century. In 1683, at a delicate moment for the Stuart dynasty, the convocation of the University of Oxford issued a decree *Against certain pernicious books and damnable doctrines destructive to the sacred persons of princes, their state of government, and all human society*. Under this decree, works by Milton, Richard Baxter, and Hobbes were to be burned. On the other hand, Bodley's librarians at Oxford in the 1620s used the Catholic Index as a guide for selecting works for purchase.

Censorship of Medieval and Renaissance Philosophers

The writings of several major philosophers and thinkers of the Middle Ages and Renaissance were censored. In many cases, this was due not simply to the content of their ideas but also to rivalries and enmities or to the philosophers' own tactlessness and political ineptitude (see Jones 1999 for further details of each of the philosophers treated here).

Peter Abelard (1079–1142) held that the doctrine of the Trinity could not be understood by reference to the Scriptures but primarily through human reason. Even if it is mistaken to consider Abelard an exclusive rationalist, several synods judged his position erroneous. He was forced to burn his books, to recite the Nicene Creed publicly, and to submit to a short term of imprisonment. Opposition to Abelard was certainly motivated by the many enemies he had made through his disdain of lesser intellects, as

well as by his seduction of the scholar Héloïse, a ward of Fulbert, a canon at Paris. Abelard's works were listed on the Roman Index of 1559 and the Tridentine Index of 1564 (see Bujanda et al. 1985–2002 for an analysis of each of the Indices).

The poet and political philosopher Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) lived in an Italy divided by two rival parties: the Guelphs, who favored papal supremacy, and the Ghibellines, who supported the political primacy of the Holy Roman Emperor. In his treatise *On Monarchy* (*De monarchia*), Dante criticized the papacy for its rapacity and argued that the emperor receives his power directly from God, not from the pope. Dante's treatise was burned in France in 1318, under the French pope John XXII, and later placed on the Roman Index of 1559 and the Tridentine Index of 1564.

In his radical work *Defender of the Peace* (*Defensor Pacis*), Marsilius of Padua (c. 1275–c. 1342) not only defended the radical Franciscan position that the church should not own property; he also denied that the clergy, even the pope, should become involved in temporal affairs. He held that society should only have one ultimate coercive power: the emperor, who could elect, censure, or remove popes at will. The only authority exercised by the church was doctrinal. This authority was exercised not by the popes but by councils of the church. John XXII condemned Marsilius' work. In the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the resulting splintering of political power, the church evidently felt that Dante's *Monarchy* and Marsilius' *Defender* were still dangerous texts and placed them on the Index.

The Oxford professor John Wyclif (c. 1330–1384) attacked abuse and corruption in the church and advocated that all Christians, whether clergy or laity, should study the Scriptures. In his treatise *On Civil Dominion* (*De civili dominio*, 1375–1376), he criticized clerical ownership of property, defended the primacy of the King of England over the English church (including his right to nominate or remove holders of benefices), and suggested that the kingdom of England would be justified in refusing to pay papal taxes. Human dominion is conferred solely

by divine grace; moreover, the property derived from this authority is to be shared with others. Nineteen propositions from Wyclif's work were condemned by Pope Gregory XI in 1377. In his treatise *On the Truth of Holy Scripture* (1377–1378), Wyclif conceived of the Bible as a divine emanation and thus true and free of error. Apparent contradictions or errors are therefore the result of the limits of human understanding. He also suggested that assent to his own metaphysical model was a necessary precondition to understanding the Bible. The political implications of his theology were even more explosive. Firstly, he declared that human conduct was to be guided solely by Scripture, not by the teachings of the church. Secondly, he denied that the church can be identified with the elect, whose identity is known only to God; this proposition undermined the legitimacy and authority of the church. Moreover, he argued that all Christians, especially temporal rulers, should know the Bible; he therefore called for the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular. Although he did not make such translations, his followers did. The first results were overly literal and rough, but later versions more successfully render complex theological ideas in English. Wyclif subsequently criticized two earlier articulations of the doctrine of transubstantiation: he rejected both Aquinas' notion that the qualities of bread and wine are transferred from their substance to their quantity and the position of Duns Scotus and Ockham, who maintained that the accidents of bread and wine remain after the destruction of their substance through an act of divine will. Rather, Wyclif posited that the substance of bread and wine remain the same, even as their substantial form is replaced by that of the body and blood of Christ; thus the elements of the mass are simultaneously bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ. As a result, in 1382, William Courtenay, the Archbishop of Canterbury, condemned 24 propositions drawn from Wyclif's writings and barred him from teaching. After Wyclif died in 1384, his followers continued to promote his ideas. In 1409, Thomas Arundel, a later Archbishop of Canterbury, convened a commission to examine Wyclif's works. In 1411, a list of unorthodox propositions was sent to the Roman

Curia, which condemned them in 1413. Although attempts were made to suppress Wyclif's followers, dubbed "Lollards," they continued to discuss his ideas and use the Wycliffite translations, which survive in many manuscripts. Wyclif's ideas were condemned by the Council of Constance, and his works were placed on the placards of Charles V and the Indices of Leuven, Portugal, Spain, Venice, and Rome.

Jan Hus (1369–1415) lectured on the works of Aristotle and Wyclif at the University of Prague. The faculty at Prague was divided into the German camp, which generally favored Ockham's nominalism, and the Czech party, which comprised philosophical realists. Further tensions within the university were caused by the conflicting claims of the Bohemian Crown – the university was founded by Emperor Charles IV in 1348 – and the archbishops of Prague. During Hus's time, the political situation was complicated further by the rival claims of Italian and Avignonese popes. When the papacy urged the Archbishop of Prague to condemn Wyclif's ideas, Hus was drawn into a dispute about the Eucharist. As a result of shifting political allegiances, the archbishop excommunicated Hus; the sentence was confirmed by Odo de Colonna (later Martin V). Hus complained to Pope John XXIII that Wyclif's books were being burned at Prague and that indulgences were being sold to fund a war against Naples. Hus instrumentalized Wyclif's ideas in the struggles between the Bohemian Crown, the church, and the University of Prague. Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia sent Hus to face trial at the Council of Constance, under a safe conduct offered by his half brother, Emperor Sigismund. At Hus's trial for heresy, the Council demanded that he retract his ideas. Hus protested that he understood all the disputed propositions in a perfectly orthodox manner, but he was finally condemned. After he was burned at the Council on 6 July 1415, his followers split into several groups which continued into the sixteenth century, when they merged with the Protestant Reformation. Hus's works were proscribed on the placards of Charles V in the 1520s, the 1559 Roman and 1564 Tridentine Indices, the Venetian Indices from 1549, the

Spanish Indices from 1551, and the Portuguese Indices from 1551.

Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) advocated the possibilities of classical literature in a modern context. His textbook *The Elegances of the Latin Language* (*Elegantiae linguae latinae*) contributed much to the re-establishment of classical Latin as a stylistic norm. In a subtle historical and philological analysis (1439–1440), Valla showed that the *Donation of Constantine* – a charter which purported to record the Emperor Constantine’s acknowledgment of the primacy of the church of Rome over the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem and a bestowal of huge grants of land – was a later forgery. As Valla showed, this text uses language and concepts unknown in Constantine’s day. Valla was not the first person to question the authenticity of the document – Emperor Otto III and Nicolaus of Cusa both doubted its genuineness – but he was the first to demonstrate its status beyond reasonable doubt. He also brought his philological acuity to the New Testament in a detailed comparison of the Latin Vulgate and the original Greek text. And where the late-antique philosopher Boethius defined “person” as an “indivisible substance of rational nature” (*substantia individua rationalis naturae*), Valla argued that this was not merely poor Latin, but also philosophically unnecessary: Valla preferred to define “person” as a “quality”, that which distinguishes one person from another. In his book *On Free Will* (*De libero arbitrio*), Valla distinguished between divine will and foreknowledge and argued for the importance of individual ethical choices. His work *On Pleasure* (*De voluptate* or *De vero bono*) consists of a fictional conversation between an Epicurean, a Stoic, and a Christian (who may represent Valla’s own views). The ancient pagan philosophies are surpassed by Christianity, which teaches the individual how to transcend worldly concerns and reach heaven. Although Valla clearly depicted Christianity as superior to its philosophical rivals, his positive account of Epicureanism attracted censure. He was accused of heresy at Naples, but the investigation was suppressed by King Alfonso. After Pope Nicolaus V appointed him

as papal secretary in 1448, he contributed to the rich intellectual life of the curia. Despite his prominent position at the papal court, many of his works – *On the Donation of Constantine*, *On Pleasure*, *On Free Will*, *Annotations on the New Testament*, and *On Boethius’s Definition of Person* – were placed on various iterations of the Index in Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) attempted to create a workable synthesis of Christianity and Neoplatonism. Through his reading of such ancient philosophers as Plotinus, Iamblichus, and pseudo-Hermes Trismegistus, Ficino became interested in magic. In his major treatise *On Life* (*De vita*, 1482–1489), an extended commentary on Plotinus, he outlined a system of natural magic which described the use of natural magic to ensure health and extend longevity; in the third book, he touched delicately on demonic magic, though he carefully protested that he asserted nothing contrary to the Catholic faith. Shortly after *On Life* appeared, it was investigated by the papal curia, though the intercession of Rainaldo Orsini, bishop of Florence, saved Ficino from further trouble. However, the third book was included on the 1580 Parma Index.

The thought of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) was driven by the urge to find common religious themes between Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and the esoteric “Ancient Theology” of Hermes Trismegistus and Orpheus and common philosophical ground between Plato, Aristotle, Western scholasticism, and Islamic philosophy. Pico also recommended magic, theurgy, and Christian Kabbalah as means to achieving the goal of union with the divine. This syncretic tendency is worked out in the treatise *De ente et uno* (*On Being and Unity*, 1492), a torso of a larger exposition which was never completed. In a programmatic letter to Ermolao Barbaro, Pico defended the highly specialized Latin vocabulary and style used by scholastic philosophers – criticized by most humanists – as a necessary tool for the expression of the content of this philosophical school. After intensive studies of Hebrew and Aramaic, Pico had a series of 900 theses printed, which he proposed for debate in early 1487. However, a papal commission under Innocent VIII

examined the theses before the debate could take place and found 13 of the theses heretical or suspect. Pico defended his position in an *Apology*, published in May 1487. The pope was irritated by Pico's tone, condemned all 900 of the theses, and ordered that he be arrested and imprisoned. The printed text of his theses was condemned, and many copies were burned in 1491. When Alexander VI came to the throne, Pico received a pardon, though the status of his theses remained unresolved. Although his work was never placed on the Index, it was still treated with some suspicion, both for his unusual anthropology, which emphasized the potential of humans to use their reason to rise to the level of the divine, and for his treatment of the thought of Arabic and Jewish philosophers on the same terms as Christian ones.

Following the execution of Savonarola in 1498 and the restoration of the government under Piero Soderini, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) worked as a diplomat in Florentine service. When the Soderini regime was toppled, Machiavelli retired to his family estate, where he distilled his political knowledge into writings such as *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*. When *The Prince* was published posthumously in 1532, Machiavelli was accused of amorality, anticlericalism, and secularism. His complete works were placed on the Roman Index of 1559 and the Tridentine Index of 1564. However, editions of the Italian text printed as far afield as London were smuggled into Italy, satisfying curiosity for Machiavelli's hard-edged political analysis. A Latin translation appeared at Basel in 1560 and was reprinted often.

Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1467–1536) was arguably the greatest humanist of his generation; in any case he was the most influential. His wit and elegance charmed scholars and princes alike, while his mordent criticism of the church and his application of philology to the criticism of the New Testament and the patristic writers infuriated many conservative theologians, who considered him insufficiently qualified to comment on their professional materials. He criticized superstition, but never doubted the importance of human effort for salvation. In the minds of many, Erasmus'

criticisms of the church suggested that he and Luther were fighting on a common front. However, Erasmus never wished to separate from the church and carefully distanced himself from Luther's movement. A final break between them came over the issue of free will. Nevertheless, Erasmus' criticisms of the church and of traditional university learning made him many enemies, some of whom sought to censure him. In 1527, the Sorbonne condemned his *Colloquies*, school dialogues laced with caustic social commentary. The same year, a meeting of theologians was called at Valladolid to adjudicate the orthodoxy of a number of ostensibly representative passages from Erasmus' works. The written reports display a variety of responses, from sympathetic to hostile. In 1537, the *Report on the emendation of the church* (*Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, 1537), commissioned by Paul III, urged that Erasmus' *Colloquies* be removed from schools, but the report was never actuated. Paul IV's unpublished Index of 1557 banned all of Erasmus' works. The Tridentine Index includes only a few, including the *Praise of Folly* and *Colloquies*. In his *Index Expurgatorius*, Arias Montano provided a list of passages that were to be struck out. Yet perhaps more serious than overt censorship was the degree of self-censorship that readers, especially in Catholic countries, imposed on themselves, declining to read Erasmus for fear of being suspected of Lutheran sympathies.

Erasmus' friend Thomas More (1478–1535) held an ambivalent attitude to censorship. A fervent defender of Catholic orthodoxy against the gains of evangelical religion in England during the 1520s and 1530s, he used his influence as Lord Chancellor to see several Lutherans punished and imprisoned. He assisted in efforts to prevent the importation of Lutheran books into England and to punish those who owned or distributed them. He also staged bonfires of evangelical literature. He also wrote vigorously against evangelical dissenters, notably William Tyndale. After More found himself unable to agree to Henry VIII's desire to divorce Catherine of Aragon and assert himself as head of the church in England, he resigned the office of Lord

Chancellor. Henry had him arrested for treason; after More had been in prison for a year, he was tried and executed. In an ironic conclusion, his *Utopia*, a highly original and ironic sketch of a hypothetical political order, was placed on the Portuguese Index in 1581 and several editions of the Spanish Index.

Martin Luther (1483–1546) revealed the disruptive power of printing to a hitherto unparalleled degree, publishing theological, devotional, and polemical works quicker than his opponents could refute them. His writings were universally and immediately condemned by Catholic authorities and appear consistently in Catholic Indices from all jurisdictions. Though feted in Protestant circles as a champion of conscience and freedom from spiritual oppression, he acted as de facto censor at Wittenberg from 1522 and advocated the suppression of the works of Anabaptists and Jews in the strongest terms.

The satirist Pietro Aretino (1492–1556) was unusual in being censored not simply for obscenity but also for religious unorthodoxy. His best known works are his *Sensual Sonnets* (*Sonetti lussuriosi*, 1524), written to accompany a series of 16 engravings by Marco Raimondi illustrating various sexual positions, and his *Reasoned Discussions* (*Ragionamenti*, 1534–1536), dialogues in which an older, sexually experienced woman coaches an innocent younger woman. The sonnets were banned by Pope Clement VII in 1527. Censors objected not simply to the material but also to the fact that it was written in the vernacular and printed, thus bringing it to the attention of the masses. However, Aretino defended obscenity as a means to expose hypocrisy. Ironically, Aretino objected to the muscular sensuality of Michelangelo's depiction of Christ in the Sistine Chapel. This ostensible disapproval may constitute revenge for Michelangelo's studied distance from Aretino. In any case, his opinion contributed to censorship of Michelangelo's fresco. Aretino's *Tre libri della humanità di Cristo* (1535) was placed on the 1557 Index, while his complete works were included on the 1559 and 1564 Indices, as well as the Spanish Index of 1583. However, such strictures did little to dampen interest in Aretino's work, and

discreet booksellers could be sure of a steady market.

The physician and religious thinker Miguel Servet (Michael Servetus, 1511–1553) wished to find common ground between Christians, Jews, and Muslims but considered the doctrine of the Trinity as a major stumbling block. His critique of the orthodox teaching on the Trinity in his works *On the Errors of the Trinity* (*De Trinitatis erroribus*, 1531) and *Restitution of Christianity* (*Christianismi restitutio*, 1553) was universally condemned by Catholics and Protestants alike. Like the Anabaptists, Servet also rejected infant baptism, arguing that only a mentally mature person could choose to undergo this sacrament. Since baptism was considered not simply as a sacrament of salvation but also as a ceremony integrating an individual into Christian society, the Anabaptist view was considered an attack on social stability. After the Inquisitor of Lyon found Servetus guilty of heresy, he fled to Geneva, which he hoped would be more hospitable. Here he was denounced by Jean Calvin, condemned by the city council, which claimed disciplinary powers in such cases, and burned on 27 October 1557. His works were placed on the Venetian Index in 1549 and 1554, the Paris Index of 1556, the Portuguese Index of 1551, the Spanish Index of 1551 and 1559, and the Roman Indices of 1554, 1559, and 1564.

Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) developed a literary form, the vernacular philosophical essay, which drew on models by ancient writers such as Seneca and Plutarch. In 1580, when Montaigne was travelling in Italy, a copy of his published essays was seized for examination. The following April, he was informed that he was expected to make a series of cuts to the work. In the subsequent editions, Montaigne declined to make any of the changes demanded, though he did insert disclaimers: what he wrote was not the truth, simply notions submitted in search of the truth. Over the following century, his thoroughgoing skepticism became problematic in the context of Descartes's emphasis on reason. Some of his themes, such as a direct approach to sex and suicide, which endeared Montaigne to libertine writers, also began to offend a more polite

readership. Accordingly, he was placed on the Index in 1676.

The heliostatic model of the cosmos proposed by Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) initially caused little concern. Nevertheless, Copernicus, foreseeing that the implicit challenge posed by his ideas to the biblical cosmology, exercised a severe self-censorship and declined to publish the fully worked-out expression of his ideas, *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Orbs* (*De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*), until the end of his life, and even then under pressure from admirers. Protestant theologians, heavily invested in the literal truth of the Bible, generally rejected his work, despite the preface by Copernicus' editor Osiander, who guarded against rejection by couching Copernicus' theory simply as a hypothesis. The work was sufficiently popular to warrant a reprint at Basel in 1556. When Giordano Bruno and Galileo Galilei espoused Copernicus' work – admittedly for different ends – the church's attention was attracted more closely to *De revolutionibus*, which was placed on the Index in 1616. (The work was reprinted a year later in Amsterdam, safely out of the reach of the Congregation of the Index.) An expurgated version was authorized for publication in 1620, but the original text remained on the Index until 1758.

The Dominican friar Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) used Copernicus' ideas to question the foundations of the Christian world view. Even as a young friar, Bruno attracted adverse attention on account of his austere piety, which aroused suspicion of Protestant sympathies. He left the order to avoid trial. Hoping to find greater toleration in Switzerland, he enrolled at the University of Geneva. When a treatise he wrote here was judged heterodox, he was forced to destroy it. After teaching Ramón Lull's art of memory at Toulouse, he moved to Paris, where he taught on Aquinas. Henri III was so impressed by Bruno that he offered him a position at the Sorbonne. After entering the service of the French ambassador to England, he wrote works that outlined his new cosmology. His espousal of an infinite universe was theologically disturbing, since it hinted that there might be other planets with other humans who may have been saved by another

divine action, a suggestion that implied that the redemptive work of Jesus on earth was not unique. In 1585 he visited Wittenberg but was criticized for his espousal of Copernicanism. After travels through Central Europe, he found a position in 1591 as tutor to the Venetian patrician Giovanni Mocenigo. However, Bruno's new patron, shocked by his denial of transubstantiation and Christ's miracles, his unorthodox opinions about the Trinity, and his notion of infinite universes, denounced him to the Inquisition. When Bruno refused to recant, he was imprisoned and finally burned at Rome, with his books, in 1600.

In 1616, Cardinal Bellarmino, who had attempted to persuade Bruno to renounce his errors, tried to convince the mathematician and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) to desist from promoting Copernicus' heliostatic cosmology. When the Congregation of the Index condemned a work by Paolo Antonio Foscarini, which claimed that the motion of the earth was not necessarily repugnant to Scripture, Bellarmino assured Galileo that he was not under investigation. In 1632, with Urban VIII, a supporter of Galileo, on the papal throne, the astronomer felt emboldened to publish his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (*Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo*), in which he presented Copernicus' ideas in an unmistakably positive light. However, the book estranged his former supporters, Urban VIII and the Jesuits. Although Galileo requested and received an *Imprimatur* from the ecclesiastical censors, the book brought a suspicion of heresy on him. He was tried and sentenced to house arrest for the rest of his life, and his works were placed on the Index until 1718. This condemnation also led others to censor their own work; Descartes, for example, rewrote his *Traité du monde* after hearing that Galileo had been condemned.

Impact and Legacy

While Robert Darnton (Darnton 2014) has shown that state censorship in eighteenth-century France could improve books when censors acted as constructive editors, the ecclesiastical censorship

exercised during the Middle Ages and Renaissance was rarely so positive. Admittedly, the demands of censors did improve the quality of printed texts. Yet when authors were forced to destroy their own work, when authorities prevented the publication of dissenting literature, burned copies after publication, expurgated offending passages, or threatened to punish or even execute those who possessed or distributed materials judged dangerous or subversive, they not merely restricted the works in question; they also discouraged thinkers from expressing non-conventional ideas that might offend and publishers from bringing such ideas to print. The extent of such self-censorship is more difficult to quantify than simply examining official organs of censorship such as the Index of Forbidden Books.

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Cerameus, Nikolaos

Born: Early Seventeenth Century

Died: 1663

Dimitrios Paradoulakis

Hamburg, Germany

Abstract

Distinguished intellectual and eminent philosopher – physician of the first half of the seventeenth century.

Biography

Nikolaos Cerameus was born in Ioannina and obtained an extended and profound education in the fields of classical studies, philosophy, and theology (Sathas 1868: 322–323; Tzoga 2015). After completing his basic education in his hometown, he travelled to Venice in order to be admitted as a student in the local Greek School, and later he proceeded to higher studies at the Università degli Artisti in Padua. Certainly, Cerameus resided in the city of Venice during the 1640s and worked as an editor for the printing press of Giannantonio Giuliani. In 1646 he edited an anti-Jewish treatise entitled *Dialogue between the holy father Gregentius, Archbishop of Cefro, and a Jew named Eran* (Διάλογος τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρός ἡμῶν Γρηγορίου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κεφρῶ γενόμενος μετὰ Ἑβραίου τινὸς Ἑρβᾶν ὀνομαζομένου). In 1652 he travelled to Constantinople at the behest of Patriarch Paisios I to work as a teacher in the Patriarchal Academy. Four years later (1656), at the instigation of Patriarch Parthenios III, he composed the following doctrinal and polemical works: (a) *Refutation Against the Unjust Prosecutors of the One and Only Holy Catholic and Apostolic God-bride Church of Christ* (Ἀντέγκλημα κατὰ τῶν ἐγκαλούντων ἀδίκως κατὰ τῆς μίας καὶ μόνης ἀγίας καθολικῆς καὶ ἀποστολικῆς θεονύμφου τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας) and (b) *Refutations Against the Primacy of the Pope in 83 Sections*

(*Αντιρρητικά κατά τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα τῆς Ρώμης εἰς 83 τμήματα*). In the last years of his life, Cerameus moved to Iași, where he passed away in Galata Monastery in 1663 (Sathas 1868).

Impact and Legacy

Respected for his erudition among his contemporaries, Nikolaos Cerameus was a prolific author with his writings to be related to the mainstream scholarly fields of his time: dogmatic and polemical treatises, brief works on Divine Liturgy and the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, lexicographical attempts, medical textbooks, and commentaries on the works of Aristotle, especially on his *Physica*, *De Caelo* and *De Generatione et Corruptione* (Tzoga 2016: 239–272). In his philosophical writings, Cerameus emerged as a prominent representative of Neo-Aristotelianism with the impact of the revised philosophical perspective by the circles of Paduan Aristotelians, especially Cesare Cremonini, to be considered distinct in his thought and word. Cerameus promoted in his philosophical writings the authority of Aristotelian philosophy in the context of the model of corydaleanism, which in his time had already prevailed in the Greek educational system. Although there is no evidence about the possibility of a direct contact between Cerameus and the originator of Neo-Aristotelianism in the Greek region Theophilos Corydaleus, the Epirote scholar knew and followed the thought of the Athenian professor and thinker, and furthermore he owned in manuscript most of his works.

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Cervantes, Miguel

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (Alcalá de Henares, 29 September 1547–Madrid, 22 April 1616)

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Abstract

Not normally considered a philosopher, the novelist Miguel de Cervantes nevertheless touched upon many of his era's most important philosophical themes. After a representative sampling of what might be called philosophical moments in Cervantes's works, we shall proceed systematically to examine his connection to three distinct philosophical schools or movements: skepticism, cynicism, and sophistry. We shall then consider some innovative and original aspects of Cervantes's thinking by comparing him to first Plato and then to Descartes. Finally, we will conclude with his views of both epistemology and ontology before saying a word about his legacy and influence on later philosophers.

Biography

Perhaps the world's most famous novelist, Miguel de Cervantes did not come from a background of great privilege. His father, a surgeon, was not wealthy. He spent his boyhood in Valladolid and Seville before studying with a humanist

schoolmaster, Juan López de Hoyos, in Madrid. It is doubtful whether he ever studied at any university. He travelled to Italy in 1569 before fighting for his country in the Battle of Lepanto against the Turks. There he lost the use of his left hand, occasioning the memorable epithet which he bestowed upon himself, “el manco de Lepanto.” He spent 5 years as a captive in Algiers after having been kidnapped by pirates, before finally being ransomed in 1580. Once he returned home, he was rewarded only with small and relatively unimportant government jobs such as supplying the Armada with provisions. He married in 1584 but later separated from his wife. For a while he lived again in Valladolid, where he also spent some time in jail after a man died at the door of his house under mysterious circumstances. In 1606 he moved to Madrid along with the royal court, which had previously been located in Valladolid. He died in 1616 and was buried in an unknown location within the Trinitarian convent, where he had asked to be interred out of loyalty to the Trinitarian order for organizing his ransom while captive. His literary production consists primarily of three novels – the pastoral *La Galatea*, *Don Quijote* (published in two parts, 1605 and 1615), and an unfinished romance, the *Persiles*, the prologue for which he penned on his deathbed – along with a collection of short stories known as the *Novelas ejemplares*. He was also the author of a volume of poetry, *Viaje del Parnaso*, and eight comedias with their accompanying *entremeses*, in addition to his tragedy *La Numancia*. However, he is generally considered to have failed as a poet and dramatist, an assessment which he himself might possibly have shared. His greatest works by far were in prose, with *La Galatea* and the *Persiles* also considered by many to be failed experiments. His real legacy resides in the two volumes of *Don Quijote*, the world’s first and greatest novel, and in his short stories.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

In the famous Prologue to Part I of *Don Quijote*, Cervantes disavows any connection whatsoever

to Plato, Aristotle, and philosophers in general, to whom the author’s “friend” refers derogatorily as “the whole horde of philosophers.” At another place in his works, Cervantes offers a playful definition of philosophy but one that nevertheless shows it to be a preoccupation for him. The two talking dogs in his *Colloquy of the Dogs* debate about what the word “philosophy” means:

Berganza: Tell me, if you know, what philosophy is. Though I use the word, I don’t know what it means. I only know it’s supposed to be good.

Cipión: Here it is in a nutshell – the expression has two Greek roots, *philos* and *Sophia*. *Philos* means love, and *Sophia* means science, so that philosophy means ‘love of science,’ and a philosopher, ‘a lover of science.’

In the course of his fiction, Cervantes refers not only to philosophy in general but also to the work of specific philosophical texts and thinkers. In fact, explicit references to philosophers and their ideas abound in Cervantes’s writing. Cascardi points to Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* along with Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque fortunae* as possible sources for some of the sentiments expressed in Cervantes’s first famous prologue to *Don Quijote*, while Ihrle traces a fairly exact parallel between the author’s oft-repeated valedictory words to his second volume and the *Essais* of Montaigne. Other, less obvious philosophical allusions also echo through the work, along with philosophical concepts that would be difficult to trace to any single source. Don Quijote’s freeing of the galley slaves may echo philosophies of natural law such as that expounded by Francisco Suárez, who wrote that all men were born free and that no man could claim a “natural” right to dominate others. Perhaps the quintessential philosophical mandate is “know thyself,” a Delphic maxim inscribed in stone in the temple of Apollo at Delphi. This nugget of wisdom appears too in *Don Quijote*, in the second part when Sancho gets to play at being governor of the *Ínsula Barataria*.

The most paradigmatic episode, and certainly the most written about, illustrating Cervantes’s connection to philosophy is the Cueva de

Montesinos. The cave is dimly lit, as in Plato's allegory, and has been read by Gagliardi as a symbol of the philosopher's contemplative life. Don Quijote emerges from the cave and recounts his experiences there in language reminiscent of Montaigne's *Essays on Experience* or Descartes' *Meditations*. Cascardi connects this episode to several important concepts from classical philosophy, including *katabasis* and *nostos*.

After the Cave of Montesinos, the second most commented-upon episode in *Don Quijote* is the adventure where the knight and Sancho imagine that they "fly" through the air on the wooden horse Clavileño. The episode of Clavileño has been interpreted in light of various philosophical and religious concepts, for example, as a burlesque symbol of the mystical flight of the soul toward God. It may be compared to a similar episode of the *Persiles* in which a horse owned by the Polish king Cratilo, who bears the same name as one of Plato's dialogues, is tamed by the hero Periandro. Cascardi innovatively relates the episode of Clavileño, the Trojan-like wooden horse on which Don Quijote and Sancho take a fanciful and utterly imaginary "ride," to the ancient spectator figure of the *theoros* who travelled abroad to witness spectacles in other lands and then returned home to report what he had seen.

Skepticism

It is generally accepted that there were two schools of skeptical thought in the classical world, the Pyrrhonian and the Academic, both active in Greece in the fourth and then third centuries before Christ. Skepticism was conceived as a reaction to more dogmatic philosophical movements such as Stoicism. Basically it questions whether any certain knowledge is possible. Skeptical ideas were diffused in the Renaissance through three fundamental texts – the *Academica* of Cicero, the biographies of ancient philosophers written by Diogenes Laertius, and the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* by Sextus Empiricus – and through commentaries written by erudite Spaniards such as Francisco Sánchez (1552?–1623), known as the Skeptic, who wrote *Quod Nihil Scitur* (*That Nothing is*

Known), and Pedro de Valencia (1555–1620), author of *Academica sive de iudicio erga verum*.

Maureen Ihrle, in *Skepticism in Cervantes*, presents the author as demonstrating skeptical prudence and caution while avoiding essentialism, always operating on the premise that others may view reality in a different way. She catalogues the many skeptical qualifications and reservations voiced by his characters (such as, "if I am not mistaken. . .") and cites other skeptical rhetorical "moves" like multiple causation, vacillation as to the correct name of a person or an object (reminiscent of Montaigne's essay "Of Names"), the proliferation of consequences, and the chipping away at absolute certainty by systematically substituting synonyms or other labels. She concludes that *Don Quijote* as a text is infused with skeptical attitudes, preoccupations, vocabulary, and procedures, with no single character ever attaining a full grasp of the entire truth of any situation. Such is the skeptical model expressed by Montaigne when he writes "I do not see the whole of anything" ("Of Democritus and Heraclitus"). Michael Nerlich has studied the synchrony he sees between Michel de Montaigne and *The Colloquy of the Dogs*. Further work in this area has been done by Barbara Mujica, who published an essay on Cervantes's use of skepticism in his comic interlude *El retablo de las maravillas*.

The skeptical literary atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion in *Don Quijote* is heightened by the knight's lack of confidence in the *morisco* chronicler Cide Hamete Benengeli, who in turn voices doubts about the accuracy of the text he is allegedly translating. Ihrle further traces the modes of skepticism in the *Persiles*, where she notes that the protagonists interpret appearances and experiences with caution, resist their passions, and avoid hasty impulses. They also go by multiple names (Persiles/Periandro, Auristela/Sigismunda), a technique which both Cervantes and Montaigne employ to avoid essentializing (Leo Spitzer calls this *polynomasia*). If she is right, then skepticism is one bond uniting rather disparate poles of the Cervantine canon. She finds further evidence of skeptical philosophy in the stuff of grammar, notably Cervantes's heavy use of the subjunctive in *La Galatea*.

Cynicism

This strand of Cervantes's philosophical thought was studied independently by both Edward C. Riley and Alban Forcione, both of whom argue for the influence of Diogenes Laertius (author of *The Lives of Eminent Philosophers*), particularly upon his short story *The Glass Licentiate*. Riley sees the protagonist of this story, Tomás Rodaja, as embodying the negative qualities of the cynical philosopher Diogenes of Sinope. Forcione even sees Rodaja's 6-month-long illness as a possible parallel to the purifying *askesis* demanded of initiates into the Cynic sect and explains that Cervantes recreates in Rodaja's speeches the extemporaneously delivered Cynic diatribe or *chria*, which he describes as a loose combination of invective, anecdotes, maxims, and *sententiae*. It is this rhetorical aspect of Cynicism to which Cervantes refers in the *Colloquy of the Dogs* when, in reference to the etymology of the word "cynics," the dog Berganza alleges, tongue in cheek, that the name "quiere decir perros murmuradores" ("means 'dogs who murmur'").

Sophistry

The sophists were famous for arguing both sides of any question with equal vehemence, an ability Charles Presberg has studied in relation to paradoxical discourse in *Don Quijote*. Plato opposed the sophists, proposing instead that truth does exist and is knowable, even if our access to it while on earth remains limited. The scholarship on Cervantes's relation to sophistry is divided, but critics seem to agree that this ancient philosophical and rhetorical movement does appear explicitly in his works. The most important study in this area is Heinrich Merkl's *Cervantes anti-sofista: Sobre Platón, Ficino, y los tres Quijotes* (1605, 1614 y 1615), which covers both parts of Cervantes's *magnum opus* as well as the spurious sequel by Avellaneda. Merkl argues for Cervantes's familiarity with the Platonic dialogues as well as the sophist Lucian of Samosata, although Plato's ideas would have also been available to him by way of contemporaneous Spanish authors such as León Hebreo and Juan Huarte de San Juan. Merkl's basic thesis is that Cervantes contradicts what he calls "el conjunto ideológico

sofista" (the sophists' ideological conglomerate), a philosophical grab bag containing, among other elements, the famous "man is the measure of all things" along with the assertion that all opinions are equally true (a corollary to which is the impossibility of error). Merkl sees the priest and the barber in *Don Quijote* as sophistical and therefore targets of Cervantes's attack on sophistry.

At other points in the novel, however, sophistry appears in ways that are more subtle. Anthony Cascardi sees the picaresque autobiographer Ginés de Pasamonte, who later becomes the puppet master Maese Pedro, as imbued with sophistical ideals and strategies. Cascardi mentions that a specific text, *The Sophist*, written by Plato, had been discussed by Pico della Mirandola and was the subject of a detailed commentary by Marsilio Ficino. Cascardi presses the analogy even further when he calls Don Quijote himself an "amalgam of philosopher and sophist." In doing so, Cascardi seems to refute Heinrich Merkl's claim that Cervantes is anti-sophistic. But perhaps a compromise position between their two views may be reached by virtue of the fact that Plato associates poetry with sophistry, while Cervantes – according to Cascardi – follows the Neo-Aristotelian Torquato Tasso in distinguishing clearly between poetry and sophistry, in particular by citing the possibility of the so-called "legitimate marvelous."

Innovative and Original Aspects

Contrast to Plato

Cervantes may well have sided with Plato in denouncing the sophists, although it would be a mistake to assume he embraced Platonism as a satisfactory alternative to their deviousness; indeed, Merkl claims that the second part of *Don Quijote* may be designated both anti-sophistic and anti-Platonic. If this is so, it would mark an evolution in Cervantes's thought in the years subsequent to the publication of his *Galatea*, a pastoral novel often said to be steeped in Neoplatonism. Cervantes's ambiguous and often vexed relationship to Plato and Renaissance Neoplatonism has been dissected most shrewdly by Anthony

Cascardi, who makes the important distinction that Cervantes, unlike Plato, does not present us with any way to distinguish between true and false myths. Any sense in which Cervantes could be considered a Platonist would have to be limited to a handful of discrete, fully contextualized, and non-generalizable examples, which may well be seen as coming almost exclusively from his early works.

Contrast to Descartes

When seeking to attribute to Cervantes some form of philosophical innovation, some critics contrast him with Plato but far more compare him to René Descartes. Scholars such as Américo Castro have long seen in Cervantes a precursor of Descartes, although with the obvious qualification that the novelist made no pretense to any sort of systematicity. Cascardi contrasts and then compares Cervantes with Descartes, ultimately concluding that out of fear of the Inquisition, Cervantes employs strategies of masking – similar to the ones Descartes found – to speak obliquely about controversial topics.

These alleged similarities to Descartes and his method may hold some validity. With regard to the Cueva de Montesinos, however, Cascardi regards Cervantes as anti-skeptical – in other words, he thinks knowledge is possible but “not submissible to reason.” In fact Cascardi views the cave episode as a possible critique of Descartes’ dream argument *avant la lettre*. In a different version of the same argument, in which he emphasizes Anselmo’s frustrated demand for tangible proofs and empirical tests of his wife’s faithfulness in the intercalated tale of “El curioso impertinente,” Cascardi states categorically that the *Quijote* is both anti-skeptical and antirational.

Epistemology and Ontology

If Cervantes critiqued, at least implicitly, the epistemological assumptions of his day, what would he propose to fill the void left by their absence? He seems to validate intuitive ways of knowing, or epistemes, which may be more appropriate for the literary world than cold scientific analysis. This form of philosophizing, sometimes called “noetic” (from Aristotle’s Greek word for

intuition, or *nous*), privileges figurative language, for which it finds a place within the reasoning process. Noetic philosophy insists that not all knowledge is demonstrable, but it remains valuable nonetheless. Indeed, Emilio Hidalgo-Serna sees in *Don Quijote* a condemnation of rationalist metaphysics.

Cervantes may have condemned rationality, but he often concocted unique linguistic solutions to ontological questions, as with his much-commented-upon neologism *baciyelmo*. In this and other instances, he betrays a preoccupation with ontology, what Alban Forcione has aptly called “the nature of truth itself.” Forcione emphasizes Cervantes’s affinities with Aristotle and the Renaissance Neo-Aristotelians who shared the belief that art must deal responsibly with truth. While Neo-Aristotelians such as Torquato Tasso, arguing for Christian humanistic concepts like the legitimate marvelous, tried to push the concept of verisimilitude as far as possible toward literal truth, Forcione argues that Cervantes employs reason to undermine the rational system. But it is actually a very different thing to say there is no truth than to say there is truth, but it may not be knowable. Maureen Ihrle believes that Cervantes’s fideism kicked in right at the point where his skepticism ran out – in other words, there are some things he (as a devout Catholic) was just willing to take on faith. This was a common combination of belief systems during this time period, including for other Christian Humanist authors in Spain such as the slightly later picaresque novelist and poet Francisco de Quevedo.

Impact and Legacy

E. C. Graf sees the influence of *Don Quijote* on the English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes. He notes that Hobbes refers to *Don Quijote* explicitly in *Human Nature* (1650), which argues for a skeptical approach as the solution to fallible human perceptions, and claims that Hobbes had the knight errant in mind when he wrote his more famous *Leviathan* 1 year later. Graf further traces the influence of Cervantes through Hobbes to

David Hume (1711–1776), who is considered to be the father of pragmatism.

To follow what is perhaps a less circuitous line of descent, Cervantes is known to have influenced later Spanish philosophers Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset. The existentialist Unamuno in particular believed the *Quijote* to be representative of what he saw as a uniquely Spanish philosophy. Ortega y Gasset in turn proclaimed the doctrine of *quijotismo*, which may merely be a synonym for perspectivism. Ortega urged Spaniards to live quixotically, which for him meant to “decide not to be satisfied with reality.”

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition](#)
- [Descartes, René](#)
- [Montaigne, Michel de](#)
- [Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of](#)
- [Sophists](#)

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Cesalpino, Andrea

Born: 1524 or 1525, Arezzo

Died: 23 February 1603, Rome

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Abstract

Andrea Cesalpino is an important figure in the history of science. He demonstrated that blood circulates into heart from veins and from the heart to arteries, paving the way to Harvey's complete description of blood circulation. Moreover, he was the founder of botany as a systematic discipline, which he based, rather than on the observation of accidental similarities of plants, on the discovery of their vegetative-generative principle. In philosophy, he attempted to conciliate the immortality of the soul (i.e., the form of the body) with the existence of a unique immaterial intellect, which is individuated and multiplied in the singular souls that participate to it.

Alternate Names

Cisalpino, Andrea; Caesalpinus, Andreas

Biography

Andrea Cesalpino was born in Arezzo in 1524 or 1525 (Repici 2005, 47–48, n.1). Between 1544 and 1551 he studied in Pisa, under Luca Ghini (professor of botany), Realdo Colombo (anatomy), and Simone Porzio (philosophy), attending also the anatomical lectures of Vesalius. He obtained a doctorate in medicine in 1551, and in 1555 he became director (*prefetto*) of the botanic garden (*Orto dei semplici*) in Pisa, succeeding its founder Luca Ghini. In 1555 he started his teaching at University of Pisa, where he lectured for 36 years, although not with continuity: He taught medical botanics for 16 years and then practical medicine as ordinary professor for 20 years (s.n. 1755, 6–7). In these years he published his major works in philosophy, i.e., the *Quaestiones peripateticae* (1571, 1929) and *Daemonum investigatio peripatetica* (1580) and his *De plantis* (1683) in botany. Between 1582 and 1584 Galileo probably attended his lectures. In 1592, he moved to Rome, after having being defamed by his colleague in philosophy Francesco de Vieri, who accused him of propagating the ideas of Telesio. Also, he probably did not meet the expectations as a botanic of the Grand Duke, as testified by the belated publication of his *De plantis* (Repici 2005, 47–48, n.1). In Rome, he became physician of the Pope Clemente VIII and published his *De metallicis* (1596). He held a lecturer position in medicine at the *Sapiientia* University until his death in 1603 (s.n. 1755; De Ferrari 1980; Repici 2005).

Original Aspects and Legacy

Cesalpino is an important figure both for the history of science and for the history of philosophy. First, he paved the way to Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood. Building upon the discovery of Vesalius and Realdo Colombo that blood does not pass through the pores of the cardiac septum (as maintained by Galen), Cesalpino ascertained by anatomical observations on ligatures of veins that blood perpetually

circulates into heart from veins (vena cava and peripheral veins) and from the heart to arteries. In this way, he foreran Harvey's discovery that the centripetal movement of blood to heart is by veins only (Cesalpino 1571, 1583, 1602; Pagel 1967, 169–171; Bylebyl 1972; Pagel 1975). Moreover, Cesalpino inaugurated botany as a systematic discipline. He aimed to rewrite the pseudo-Aristotle's *De plantis*, which he found to be inconsistent with Aristotle's zoology, and to replace Theophrastus' classification of plants based on exterior similarities only. Cesalpino's *De plantis* consists of a classification of plants not provided with illustrations, as he wanted to give scientific descriptions rather than representations. His classificatory criteria prescribe not to look at similarities concerning singular parts of plants, and to find their vegetative-generative principle, shown by fruits and seeds (Repici 2005). In his *De metallicis* he provides an explanation of the formation of fossils consistent with the retreat of the sea. Finally, his teaching of mechanics constituted the Aristotelian background of Galileo's mechanics, as he dealt with the composition of motions (Helbing 2008).

In philosophy, Cesalpino attempted to rediscover the “original” thought of Aristotle (Repici 2005, 51–53) and, in doing so, to solve the problem of the immortality of the soul raised by Pomponazzi, who maintained on the basis of *De anima* that soul performs all its knowing activities with corporeal imagination and it is therefore mortal (Sellars 2016). To solve this problem, Cesalpino argues that intellect is a potency or faculty, i.e., it is not a substance, and that it is not separated from the body; at the same time, intellect is not mixed with the body and is in itself intelligible, in order to make corporeal images intelligible. Secondly, he defines human soul (which is the form of the body) as participating to the unique immaterial substance or intelligence, i.e., God, which is separated from the world and is located in the first heaven. In this way, soul can participate of the intellect and individuate it in singular bodies. However, Cesalpino could not solve the problem of the loss of individuality of

soul after the death of the body itself (Cesalpino 1571, 1580; Colombero 1977).

Cisalino was portrayed as a main sample of impious Aristotelianism by Nicolaus Taurellus, since his idea of participation entails that of universal animation, and by Samuel Parker, accusing him of atheism as he maintained that first intelligence is speculative, i.e., not directed to the providential ordering of the world (Taurellus 1597; Parker 1678; Colombero 1980, 343–345). Moreover, Cesalpino's idea of the participation to a unique immaterial substance was labeled as proto-Spinozist by Pierre Bayle (1734; Colombero 1980, 349–354).

Cross-References

- Colombo, Rinaldo
- Images in Renaissance Science, Function of
- Imagination in Renaissance Philosophy
- Intellect, Renaissance Concept of
- Observation in Renaissance Science
- Spinoza, Baruch

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Cesi, Federico Angelo

Born: February 26, 1585, Rome

Died: August 1, 1630, Acquasparta

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Abstract

Federico Angelo Cesi (1585–1630) was a Roman-Umbrian patrician who was the founder and patron of the Accademia dei Lincei. Direct seeing, without the peripatetic filter, was essential for the Linceans. Cesi used a compound microscope which the Lincean Galileo Galilei had invented but which had been perfected by the brothers Kuffler, who had distributed it in Rome. With the use of this optical device, the Prince produced several collections of precise drawings of his observations of insects, fungi, fossils, and plants. The naturalist was one of the first in the history of science to publish microscopic observations of plants. Cesi also proposed a system of classification of plants and aimed to establish the foundations of the science of plants.

Biography

Federico Angelo Cesi was a Roman-Umbrian patrician. He was the eldest of seven brothers, and born in Rome on February 26, 1585. He was the son of Federico Cesi (hereditary Marquis of Monticello and Duke of Acquasparta, and later made a prince by Pope Paul V) and Olimpia Orsini. Federico's uncle, Bartolomeo Cesi, was a cardinal in the Roman church, and most of the family's wealth came from that connection. The young Cesi was educated privately and he became particularly interested in the natural sciences at an early stage in his life. His father strongly opposed

this career direction, but his mother supported him morally as well as financially (Drake 1957).



In 1603, at the age of 18, Cesi founded the Accademia dei Lincei (the “Academy of the Lynx-Eyed”, anglicised as the Lincean Academy). In a charter (*Lynceographum to Praescriptiones Academiae Lynceorum...*) – which was never published – that he began to compile in 1605, the goals and numerous prescriptions of the academy were stated to be “...not only to acquire knowledge of things and wisdom, and living together justly and piously, but also peacefully to display them to men, orally and in writing, without any harm” (Galluzzi 2017). Cesi devoted the rest of his life to these goals and his academy. The founder and his friends aimed to understand all the natural sciences and to inform the public via discussions about, and publications of (Cesi 2003), their observations. But above all, it was clear from the start that Cesi and the fellow Lycians were embarking on the very important enterprise of liberating consciences and nature itself from the tyranny of Aristotle and his followers (Galluzzi 2017). Through its activities, the Accademia distinguished itself from other Italian societies which, at that time, were much more devoted to literature and the classics. The Accademia served as a prototype for the Royal Society of London and the French Academy of Sciences.

Cesi was more than just a founder of the Accademia. He proudly called himself not only

the “Prince and Founder of the Association” [*Consessus princeps et institutor*], he was also its sole funder. It was very much a personal academy. Hence, after his sudden death in 1630, the academy died with him.

Meetings took place in his palace where he provided the fellows with a botanical garden, a natural history collection, a library, and scientific instruments. Moreover, the Linceans resided in Cesi’s palace in Rome where they lived communally and almost monastically. Besides Cesi, the three initial members of the Academy were the Dutch-born physician Johannes Van Heeck (1579–c. 1620), who changed his name to Giovanni Ecchio (Heckius 1605), and two fellow Umbrians. These were the mathematician Francesco Stelluti (1577–1653) and polymath Anastasio de Filiis (1577–1608) (Stelluti and Rycke 1625) who was a relative of Cesi. The Academy’s most famous members, however, were Luca Valerio (1553–1618), Giambattista della Porta (1535–1615) and Galileo (1564–1642) who joined respectively in 1610 and on April 25, 1611. After Galileo’s induction the membership grew rapidly. At its height, by 1625, the Accademia had 32 members, not only Italians but also foreigners such as Johann Faber (1624), Mark Welser, and the young German botanist Giovanni Battista Winther, who was Cesi’s physician from 1624.

Cesi’s Accademia was named after “Lincei” (Italian for lynx) which came from Giambattista della Porta’s book *Magia Naturalis* (1558) (Della Porta 1589), which had an illustration of the fabled cat on the cover and the words “...with lynx like eyes, examining those things which manifest themselves, so that having observed them, he may zealously use them”. Additionally, as each of the found members, Cesi (1980) adapted also a name that symbolically expressed his personality. *The Prince* adopted *Coelivagus* (Wanderer of the heavens) and chose the eagle bathed by the Sun’s rays bearing the Earth in its talons with the motto “utrumque,” to indicate his knowledge of both the celestial and the terrestrial worlds (Galluzzi 2017). The Linceans choose the lynx and the eagle as their symbols because both animals

were known for their keen senses. However, the name of Cesi's Accademia referred also to Lynceus, the argonaut of Greek mythology renowned for his sharpness of sight (Galluzzi 2017; Freedberg 2002) (Fig. 1).

Direct seeing and observing things in nature, without the filter of the Peripatetic Philosophy, was essential for the Linceans. Not only seeing with the naked eyes but also – and perhaps more importantly – with the use of optical instruments. In 1609, Galileo had invented a new telescope. With this improved version of the “Hollandsche kijker,” he made spectacular observations which he commented in his *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610) and the *Letters on Sunspots* [*Istoria e dimostrazione intorno alle macchie solari*] (1623). The latter book was – just as the *Assayer* [*Il Saggiatore*] (1623) which stated that the universe is a grand book “which stands continually open to our gaze” – published by Cesi's Accademia. Directly after his invention, however, Galileo adapted his telescope to look at small things. The result was a double lens instrument different to the one lens microscope which would be used later by A. van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723) in Holland. On September 23, 1624, Galileo had sent Cesi an *occhialino* (or *occhiale*) to view “the smallest things as if from nearby.” Initially, this microscope had a convex objective and a concave ocular lens. However, Cesi managed to obtain a microscope with two convex lenses and a better magnification from Cornelius Drebbel's brothers-in-law, the Kufflers, who had recently arrived in Rome. By mid-April of 1625, the Lincean Giovanni Faber (1574–1629) introduced the modern name “microscope” [*microscopio*] for Cesi's new compound *occhiale* (Freedberg 2002).

Cesi did not just observe with his new microscope; he applied the microscope in a very innovative way. The founder of the Accademia published the first record of microscopic observations, more precisely of bees, in his *Apiarium* (1625) long before Robert Hooke (1635–1703) would publish his *Micrographia* (1665) and Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723) would note his observations. The first microscopy

illustrations, however, were published 5 years later in Stelluti's book, *Persio* (Freedberg 2002). The *Apiarium* (Cesi 1625a, b, and 2005–2006), was published by the Linceans in celebration of Urban VIII's first Jubilee year and printed on four large separate sheets (that measures 107 × 69.5 cm) joined together. Cesi and the Lycians, however, did not only apply optical instruments in order to observe the eyes of a fly, cheese mites, a louse, a vinegar fly and other insects, they also used the microscope [*“microscopio spectatus”*; *“microscopio observatus”*, *“ex microscopio”*] and other optical instruments to observe fossils, plants, fungi, and the fauna and flora of South America. Cesi was among the very first to produce botanical drawings with the aid of a microscope (Pegler and Freeberg 2005).

In addition to the activities already mentioned, Cesi's Accademia was also interested in other disciplines such as astrology and alchemy (influenced by Paracelsus) (Ricci 1992). As he made clear in the *Lynceographum* (Cesi 1904 and 2001), the Prince attributed great value to the disinterested study of chemistry, which he considered a useful means to throw light on the operations of nature (Clericuzio and De Renzi 1995) (Fig. 2).

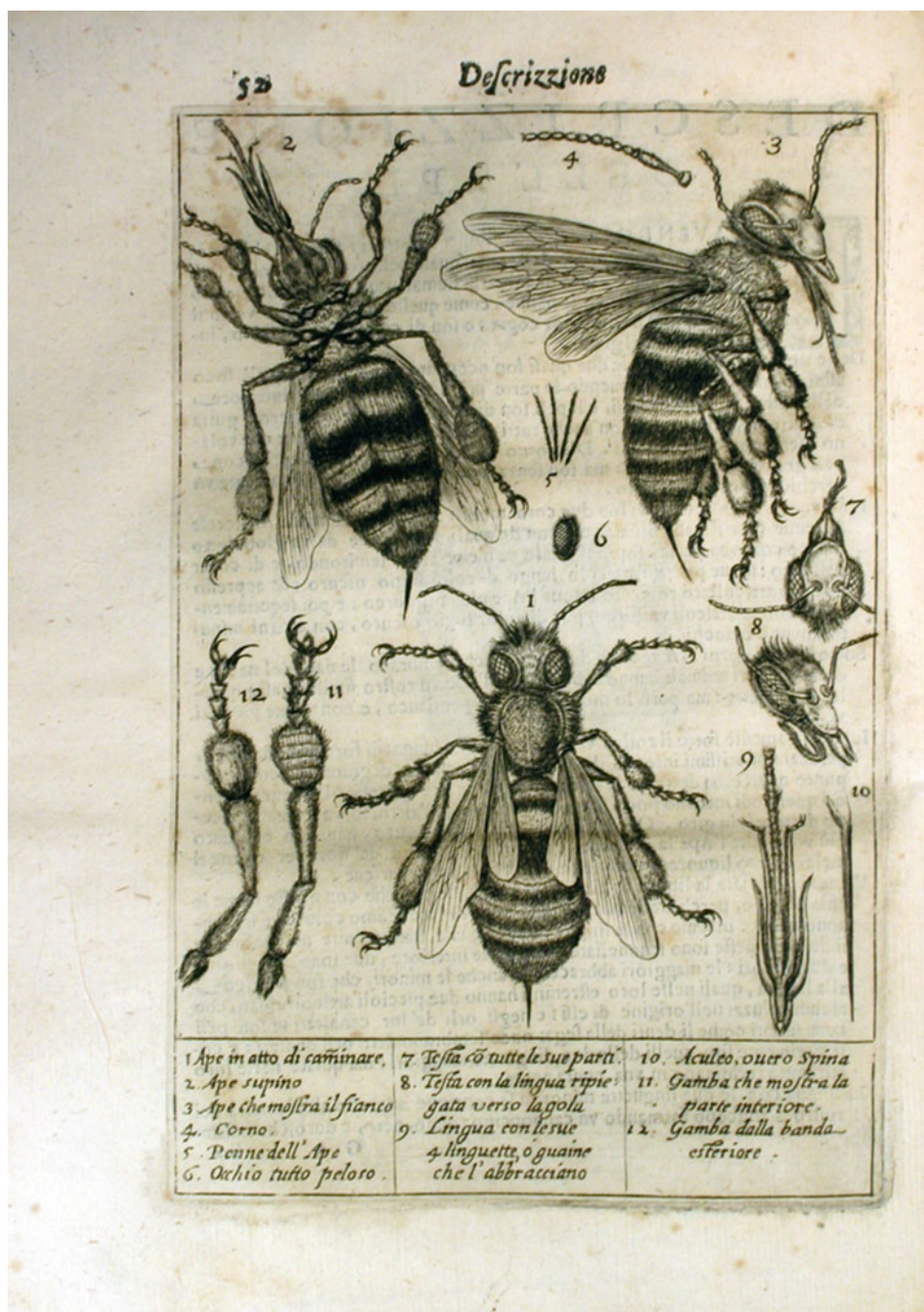
Cesi and the other Lynceans shared the ambition of compiling an entirely new inventory of nature in the awareness that the traditional encyclopedia had been superseded by the flood of new data emerging from geographical discoveries (Galluzzi 2017). The number of drawings, which Cesi and his companions made with great skill and precision, is overwhelming. Today several collections of Cesi's drawings are available and have been documented. Most of them are part of the so-called Cassiano dal Pozzo's “Paper Museum” which is a collection that the Lincean Cassiana acquired in 1633 from the widow of the founder of the Accademia. Most of the “Paper museum” which includes among others a collection of Cesi's drawings is preserved in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle (Montagu et al. 1997).

Included in this collection is the The Erbario Miniato (“illuminated herbal”). These albums of



Cesi, Federico Angelo, Fig. 1 Frontpage of Galileo's *Il Saggiatore* (1623) with the symbol of the Accademia dei Lincei. (With permission of the History of Science Collections of Oklahoma University)

211 drawings not only depict the native flora of central Italy, but also mycological specimens, rarities from across Europe, and recently imported species from the New World such as the crown imperial, the tobacco plant, the tomato, and the aubergine (Garbari and Tomasi 2007). In



Cesi, Federico Angelo, Fig. 2 Illustration from Stelluti's *Persio tradotto in verso sciolto e dichiarato* (1630). (With permission of the History of Science Collections of Oklahoma University)

the years after the compilation of *The Erbario Miniato*, Cesi was engaged with ambitious programs of botanical illustration. The preparation of

the *Tesoro Messicano* engaged him for much of the rest of his life. The first incomplete version of this work was published in 1628 and completed

in 1651 by his successors after his death. In the first edition of the *Tesoro Messicano*, Cesi proposed his system of classification (*Tabulae Phytosophicae*) of plants with the aim of establishing the foundations of a science of plants (*phytosophia*). Just as Linnaeus (1707–1778) would do much later, Cesi tried to find a sign that was characteristic of a species. The kind of distinctive signs for which Cesi searched were, however, often beyond the scope of the naked eye but within the reach of the microscope. In this *Tesoro Messicano*, Cesi added to the complex schemata and diagrams lengthy digressions demonstrating his literary and scientific learning with many references to the works of Pliny, Virgil, Theophrastus Galen, Dioscorides, and Pietro Andrea Mattioli (1501–1577).

Around 1622, Cesi was also compiling a new collection of drawings which are also included in the collection of Cassiano dal Pozzo. These are now preserved in the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France in Paris (Chamoux 1997). This collection was rediscovered and subsequently brought to attention in 1980. Three of the eight volumes of the Paris drawings are devoted to fungi and five mostly to flowers and plants. This corpus includes about 1900 drawings depicting the subjects in minute detail and sometimes observed through a microscope. These drawings differ greatly from the drawings of *The Erbario Miniato* (Garbari and Tomasi 2007). The two sets of drawings clearly represent different stages in Cesi's botanical investigations. In his later work, Cesi's main concern is to understand not only the form but also the function of the different plant structures.

Cesi died on August 1, 1630, at the age of 45 after a brief high fever. His Accademia died out after his death despite the efforts of some of its members. He was survived by two daughters from his second marriage to Isabella Salvati, who was the daughter of the Marquis of Lorenzo. His library, scientific instruments, and manuscripts, dispersed after his death, have now been largely reacquired by the present Accademia dei Lincei in Rome, which was reconstituted as a national academy in 1875 (Aiton and Drake 1959).

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- Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism
- Galilei, Galileo

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Chalkokondyles, Demetrius

Born: 1423, Athens

Died: 1511, Milan

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Abstract

Demetrius Chalkokondyles (1423–1511) was a humanist, a scholar, and an editor. He was a Byzantine émigré who had a long teaching career in Western Europe, being engaged in the teaching of Greek letters at prestigious Italian universities (Padua, Florence, Milan). Chalkokondyles was also a pioneer in the editorial activity of Greek texts in fifteenth century Italy. He contributed greatly to the intensification of Greek learning and the advancement of the study of philosophy in Renaissance Italy.

Biography

Demetrius Chalkokondyles' name is also spelled Demetrios Chalcocondyles, while his surname is found in various ways, for example, Chalcondylas, Chalkondyles, Chalcondyles, as Chalkokondyles, “the man with the bronze pen,” or as Chalkokandyles, meaning “the man with the bronze candlestick” (Cammelli 1946). Born in Athens in 1423, Demetrius was the scion of a noble Athenian family, son of Basilios Chalkokondyles (ca. 1393–1487) and related to the historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles (ca. 1430–1468?). The Chalkokondyles family found refuge in the Mystras after it was expatriated from Athens, due to the participation of George Chalkokondyles, Demetrius' uncle, in an unsuccessful coup against the Acciaiuoli (1390–1460), the Florentine ruling party of Athens. Though it cannot be confirmed, it is possible that Demetrius followed his family and left his native city for the Peloponnese (Cammelli 1946).

At the age of 26, Demetrius arrived in Rome (1449), where he came in close connection and was taught by the Greek humanist Theodore Gaza (ca. 1398/1410/15–1475/6), to whom Chalkokondyles refers to as a teacher and guide (*kathigemōn*) (Noiret 1887). The two men retained a long friendship, and their close relation is confirmed also by the fact that Demetrius inherited Gazas' library after the latter's death. In 1452 and possibly for the following 3 years, Demetrius was in Perugia teaching Greek. In 1455 he returned to Rome, where he resided for a few years. There he entered the literary circles of Italian and Greek humanists and forged strong links to the scholar and philosopher Cardinal Bessarion (ca. 1400/08–72). It was during that period, around 1462, that he was involved in the controversy about the superiority of the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle, a matter engaging Renaissance humanists. Theodore Gaza, a supporter of Aristotelian theories, was challenged by the Platonist Michael Apostolis (ca. 1420/22–1478). Chalkokondyles, though a Platonist, appears to have advocated a moderate approach, and honoring his friendship with Gaza, he defended his teacher against Apostolis' accusations (Cammelli 1954).

In 1463, Chalkokondyles was appointed to the chair of Greek studies at the University of Padua, where he taught until 1472 or 1475. Chalkokondyles provides, in his inauguration orations, information concerning his appointment and teaching activities in Padua. It is most possible that he received the position with the support of Theodore Gaza, Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481), Palla Strozzi (1372–1462) (Cammelli 1954), and Cardinal Bessarion. It is also recorded that Chalkokondyles "at Padua was the first teacher of Greek who received a fixed stipend in any of the universities of Europe" (Sandys 2011; Geanakoplos 1974). Prominent scholars of the Renaissance, such as Ianos Laskaris (ca. 1445–1534), Hartmann Schedel (1440–1514), Giovanni Lorenzi (ca. 1440–1501) – who assisted Chalkokondyles with the correction of the *Planudean Athnology* in 1466 – Guarino Favorino (ca. 1445–1527), Nikolaus Laonikus Tomaeus (1456–1531), and

Andrea Brenta (ca. 1454–85), were among his students in Padua.

Continuing his teaching activity, Demetrius came, again with the help of Francesco Filelfo, to Florence. There, he succeeded John Argyropoulos (ca. 1393/4, 1405/10/15–1487) and Andronicos Callistos (ca. 1400–1480) in the chair of Greek studies and taught at the Florentine *Studium* for 16 years, from 1475 to 1491, having as students several humanists of the Renaissance. Among his students were Giovanni de' Medici (later Pope Leo X) (1475–1521), Piero de' Medici (1471–1503), Michael Marullos Tarchaniotes (ca. 1453–1500), Cristoforo Landino (1424–1498), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), Alessandra Scala (1475–1506), Thomas Linacre (ca. 1460–1525), and William Grocyn (ca. 1449–1519) from England, and the German Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522). Concurrently with Chalkokondyles, between the years 1477–1481, the scholar and Aristotelian philosopher John Argyropoulos taught in the Florentine *Studium*, which he had previously abandoned. The competition for the chair of Greek at the *Studium* between Chalkokondyles and Angelo Poliziano (1454–94), recorded primarily by Paolo Giovio (ca. 1486–1552), appears somehow problematic (Legrand 1885). Other evidence pointing to a friendship between the two scholars, as for example, the laudatory epigrams Poliziano dedicated to Demetrius upon his arrival to Florence, and their depiction alongside in a fresco found in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence dated in 1498 (Vasari 1996; Cadogan 2000), cannot lead to safe conclusions (Cammelli 1954). It is confirmed that Chalkokondyles was well received in Florence, while his teaching of Greek language, philosophy, poetry, and rhetoric was fruitful and successful, though no specific information concerning the exact curriculum can be found. At the same time, Demetrius was involved in translating and editorial activities, such as the Latin translation of Plato's works published in 1491 in Venice by Marsilio Ficino (1433–99) and the first edition of Homeric works in Greek in 1488.

At the invitation of the Duke of Milan, Ludovico Sforza (1452–1508), Chalkokondyles

went in 1491 to Milan, where he further pursued his teaching activities, once again crowned with success, as it becomes evident from his students, being among others Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), Gian Giorgio Trissino (1478–1550), Giovanni Maria Cattaneo (d. 1530), Giglio Gregorio Giraldi (1479–1552), once again Johann Reuchlin, as well as Guillaume Budé (1468–1540). It has been suggested that it was actually Chalkokondyles who initiated the systematic learning of Greek studies in Milan (Cammelli 1954). Continuing his editorial activities in Milan, Demetrius edited and published Isocrates' *Orations* (1493), his own grammar entitled *Erotemata* (1494) as well as the *editio princeps* of *Suda* Lexicon in 1499. It is also possible that Demetrius produced a translation on Galen's *On Anatomical Procedures* that was printed in 1529 in Bologna (Legrand 1885). Chalkokondyles left Milan most probably in 1499 at the time of the French invasion in the city, and was invited back to the city in 1501 by the French Georges d'Amboise (1460–1510), king Louis XII's (1498–1515) advisor, and continued his teaching until the end of his life. He died in Milan on 9 January 1511 at the age of 88.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Demetrius Chalkokondyles is recorded to have had the longest career among the Greek émigrés active in Italy. He contributed with his teaching and editorial activities to the development of Greek learning in Renaissance Italy for over 35 years. His teaching methods and choice of curriculum, which resemble those followed in Byzantine *enkyklios paideia*, show that he was a genuine representative of the Palaeologan Renaissance in the West. Chalkokondyles' appointment to the newly established chair of Greek in Padua and his success, was a turning point in the cultivation of Greek studies in Italy. The inaugural speeches, which were composed in Latin, were delivered by Chalkokondyles in Padua and edited by his student Hartmann Schedel, provide information about his teaching methods. Apart from grammar, Chalkokondyles taught “poetry and

oratory” and philosophy, considering that it was a prerequisite for those engaged in philosophical endeavors to have a mastery of the Greek language in order to “fully and correctly” understand Greek philosophy and hence produce adequate Latin translations (Geanakoplos 1974). Without appearing dismissive of the Latin language, Demetrius appears to have realized the increasing interest in Greek studies, which were promoted by the Byzantine émigrés, in the Renaissance humanists' efforts to gain a better learning of the Greek language in order to understand ancient Greek culture (Geanakoplos 1974). This becomes clear with his remark “how much utility, how much style and perfection they [Greek letters] bring and how the study of Greek literature has explained and does explain Latin letters” (Geanakoplos 1974).

Chalkokondyles followed the trends of the Byzantine exiles in yet another aspect, i.e., the propagation of the idea of a crusade for the liberation of the occupied Greece from the Ottomans with the support of the Latin West. Of interest is his statement that “just as she [Greece] had expended for them [the Latins] all of her most precious and outstanding possessions liberally and without any parsimony, and had restored into her state with her hand and force of arms Italy, long ago oppressed by the Goths, they [the Italians] should in the same way now be willing to raise up prostrate and afflicted Greece and liberate her by arms, from the hands of the barbarians” (Geanakoplos 1974). Yet, unlike his contemporary Byzantine scholars, who emphasized that the West was indebted to ancient Greece, Chalkokondyles appears to be indirectly placing emphasis in the significant role of Byzantium in the transmission and preservation of Greek culture in the West.

Impact and Legacy

Although there is no evidence concerning the precise philosophical texts he taught in Italian universities, Chalkokondyles contributed greatly to the development of Renaissance philosophy and humanism. In Padua, it is possible that he

taught Aristotle, especially his scientific treatises (Geanakoplos 1976, 1989). Demetrius was not actively involved in the debate over ancient philosophy which took place in the West, although he appears to have been an advocate of Platonic theories. This is of extreme significance especially in the context of the direction philosophical learning in the Florentine *Studium* took, which until the time of the assumption of the chair by Chalkokondyles was directed towards Aristotelian teachings. Hence Chalkokondyles played a major role in the cultivation of Platonic studies in Florence, at a time when Marsilio Ficino's (1433–99) *Platonic Academy* was at its prime, being supported by Lorenzo de' Medici (Cammelli 1954). Nevertheless, there is evidence indicating that at the time when Chalkokondyles and Argyropoulos were teaching in Florence the debate concerning the prevalence of Platonic or Aristotelian philosophies has been settled. A more moderate approach was promoted and, despite the existence of two groups, students would attend lectures on both Plato and Aristotle. (Della Torre 1902; Cammelli 1954).

Chalkokondyles' most important legacy was his editions. More specifically, the *editio princeps* of the Homeric works produced by Chalkokondyles and printed in Florence in 1488 is considered of enormous importance for the promotion of Greek learning and of Homeric studies in particular. The edition, which was financed by Chalkokondyles' students Bernardo and Neri Nerli, was produced with the assistance of Giovanni Acciaiuoli (1460–1527) and printed by Demetrios Damilas (d. 1510?), included Homer's *Hymns*, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the pseudo-Homeric *Battle of Frogs and Mice*, as well as Herodotus's and Plutarch's *Life of Homer* and Dio Chrysostom's oration 53 *On Homer*. The edition is not original, given that the text resembles that transmitted in Byzantine manuscripts (Cammelli 1954). Nevertheless of interest is the editorial method followed by Chalkokondyles, and the reconstruction of the text with the use and collation of manuscripts, as well as of "Eustathius' commentary" (Legrand 1885), i.e., the annotations on Homer produced by Eustathius

of Thessalonike (twelfth c.). Demetrius emphasizes the value of Homeric works as "a source of the Greek language, an example of human affairs and a luminary for Greek and Latin poets" (Legrand 1885), pointing also to the necessity of printed books for learning. The utility of books for learning and for the study of philosophy is stressed by Demetrius also in the preface of his edition of the *Suda* Lexicon (1499) (Legrand 1885).

Chalkokondyles' awareness of the necessity of printed editions and his application of proper didactic methods during his long teaching career indicate that he was one of the most influential Byzantine scholars who promoted Greek culture and learning in Renaissance Italy. As the Renaissance humanist Piero Valeriano (1477–1558) wrote in his *De litteratorum infelicitate* (*On the Ill Fortune of Learned Men*) "Demetrius Chalcondyles, is responsible for the fact that Greek letters in our time are now flourishing, after being rescued somehow from destruction" (Valeriano 1999).

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Chalkokondyles, Laonikos

Born: Athens, ca. 1423/1430

Died: Unknown, after 1464/1468

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Abstract

Laonikos Chalkokondyles was a seminal Byzantine intellectual and historian. He belongs, together with George Sphrantzes (1401–77/8), Doukas (ca. 1400–70) and Michael Kritoboulos (ca. 1406–10), to the group of the four Byzantine historians who recorded the events of the Fall of Constantinople (1453). Laonikos is one of the few Byzantine historians who dealt extensively with the history of the Ottomans (Tōmadakēs 1993). He composed a history in a way that he “seems to have taken oral . . . traditions and transformed them into Herodotean-Thucydidean narrative prose” (Kaldellis 2012a), relying at the same time upon various sources. He contributed to the cultivation of the study of Byzantine and Ottoman history and of ancient Greek historiography in the Renaissance, and was influenced by ideas about historical causation.

Biography

Laonikos Chalkokondyles, also spelled Laonicus Chalcocondyles, while his surname is found in various versions, Chalkondyles, Chalcondyles, Chalkokondyles, “the man with the bronze pen,” or as Chalkokandyles, meaning “the man with the bronze candlestick,” with Laonikos being most possibly an anagram of his real name Nikolaos (Miller 1922). Very little is known about his life, and information concerning his exact date of birth, which is placed either in 1423 or 1430, vary (Nicoloudis 1996; Akisik 2013). He was the scion of a noble and distinguished Athenian family, related also to the scholar and humanist Demetrios Chalkokondyles (1423–1511). His father, the “learned George” (Cyriac of Ancona 2003), was involved in a plot against the Florentine ruling party of Athens the Acciaiuoli. The failure of the conspiracy led the Chalkokondyles family to flee from their native city (1435) and sought refuge in the Mystra, at that time under Despot (1443–48) and future Byzantine emperor Constantine XI Palaeologus (1448–53). In 1446, Laonikos’ father George was sent in an embassy to sultan Murad II (1421–51). It is documented that in 1447, Laonikos was at Mystra and studied “Latin and Greek literature” under the neo-Platonist philosopher Georgios Gemistos Plethon (1355–1454) (Cyriac of Ancona 2003). The remainder of his life remains unclear, and the short biography on Laonikos composed in the sixteenth century by the Cretan physician and scribe Antonios Kalosynas is incomplete and untrustworthy. Nevertheless, Kalosynas’ description of Laonikos’ education and skills is reliable, for he is depicted as “a man famous for his great zeal and disposition in the study of historians, orators and philosophers” (Kalosynas 1873: 243; Darkó 1923–24; Kampouroglou 1926). It is accepted that in 1453, Laonikos was not in Constantinople, and hence he did not witness the events associated with the Fall. Though it cannot be confirmed where he spent his life, his work indicates that he resided in a location that allowed him access to information and to use “Turkish informants, including secretaries” (Kaldellis 2012a). An examination of the manuscript tradition of the

Histories has led to the suggestion that Laonikos composed his work in postconquest Constantinople (Kaldellis 2012c, 2014a). There is no evidence to support Laonikos’ presence in the Aegean, in the Venetian-occupied Crete, in Italy (Nicoloudis 1996), or in a place where he would be in contact and exchange ideas with Westerner scholars (Harris 2003b). The hypothesis that he must have embarked upon several journeys that allowed him to collect information that he used in his work is plausible. There is no precise information concerning Laonikos’ death, which should be placed after 1464/8 (Kaldellis 2012a; Preiser-Kapeller 2013).

His only known work, *Histories* or *Demonstrations of Histories* (*Apodeixeis Historiōn*), covers the historical events of the period 1298–1463/4 and is divided into ten books. It begins with the emergence of the Ottomans and ends with the description of events that took place on the Greek island of Lemnos and the Peloponnese. It should be noted that his narrative lacks chronological accuracy and that posterior interpolations have been identified in the *Histories* (Kaldellis 2012c). The work, which appears to be incomplete, was probably composed between 1464 and 1468 (Kaldellis 2012a). Laonikos states the purpose of his *Histories* in the introduction, i.e., to write a history of the destruction of the Byzantine empire (*Hellenōn teleutēs*) and the Ottomans’ ascendance to power (*Tourkōn epi mega dynameōs afikomenōn*) (Chalkokondyles 1843:4; Chalkokondyles 2014: 2–3), and narrate “other events that happened throughout the world” and as he claims “not all of which occurred during my own time; some I was able to witness personally, others I describe based on the most reasonable conjecture that I have been able to form about them” (Chalkokondyles 1843:3; Chalkokondyles 2014: 3; Kaldellis 2014a) contributing, as he believes, to the exposition of the truth. Laonikos places great emphasis on the history of the expansion and rise of the Ottomans. He also discusses the history and relations of other nations and regions, as for example, Germans, Russians, Slavs, English, and Spaniards. In this regard, he follows the ethnographic and geographic tradition of Herodotos, whom he uses as the main source for these descriptions (Kaldellis 2014b).

Laonikos expresses his admiration for the ancient historian and frequently uses Herodotean phrases (Hunger 1978; Kaldellis 2014b). Herodotos' influence on the *Histories* becomes evident in terms of structure and the presentation of the material. It is possible that Laonikos' intention was to write nine books following Herodotos' *Histories*. The Herodotean imitation influenced Laonikos' decision not to use dates, which leads to chronological mistakes. His style, ideas, the emphasis placed on the description of the enemy, and the use of the pattern Hellenes-barbarians are also based on Herodotos (Markopoulos 2000). The effect of Thucydidean language and style, manifested in the use of the Attic dialect and the introduction of direct speech, permeates the text. Laonikos imitates classical syntax and uses Attic vocabulary, referring also to names and places with classicized terms, and translating Ottoman and other foreign words into Greek. The ancient Greek sources which he used for his composition are distinguished, from Herodotos and Thucydides, "Diodoros of Sicily, pseudo-Aristotle's *Meteorology IV*, some of Plutarch's essays and possibly Ptolemy's *Geography*" (Kaldellis 2012b). It is, however, difficult to identify the Ottoman and Western sources Laonikos depended upon, having only indirect knowledge of some of them. It has been confirmed that he had used Turkish oral sources and traditions, and that he had access to Ottoman official sources and knowledge of Ottoman institutions and administration (Vryonis 1976; Kaldellis 2012a). Laonikos appears to have used Byzantine sources as well, as for example, the *Roman History* of Nikephoros Gregoras, Manuel II Palaeologus's *Funeral Oration on his Brother Theodore*, and Plethon's *Corrections to Some of the Mistakes in Strabo*, though it has been recently argued that it cannot be established whether he had direct access to all these sources (Nicoloudis 1996; Kaldellis 2012b).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Laonikos may appear to have followed the Byzantine tradition of imitation of antiquity (Hunger 1978), namely because of his dependence on Herodotos, yet it is argued that as a

"new Herodotus" (Kaldellis 2014b) he deviates from the Byzantine tradition in terms of ideas and the choice of themes, and offers a perception of the world without relying on Christian or Byzantine conventions. The *Histories* do not record only the history of Byzantium, since the narration focuses on the rise and expansion of the Turks. Laonikos deals extensively with the structure and organization of the Turks, focusing on their history, the reasons of their expansion and success, praising at times individual Turks and being critical towards others. He also depicts Islam "as a decent culture rather than a religious error" (Kaldellis 2014a, b; Nicoloudis 1996). In comparison to other Byzantine historians, Laonikos does not express hatred against the enemy. He appears objective also in his description of the social and political mores of other nations and although he attributes to people some standard cultural characteristics, he often emphasizes on the strengths of the nation he presents. Therefore, his "ethnographic and geographic digressions" differentiate him from his Byzantine predecessors (Kaldellis 2014a: xii; cf. Akisik 2013).

A rupture with the Byzantine tradition is also indicated by the use of the term *Hellene* to refer to those who speak Greek and are of Greek origin, among which the Byzantines. For Laonikos, the Byzantines are Greeks and not Romans; *Romans* are the ancient Romans or the Westerners, and the Ottomans are referred to as Turks. Christian kings, Muslim rulers, and the sultan are designated as *basileus*, a term traditionally used for the Byzantine emperor, to whom Laonikos refers as *basileus Hellenōn* or *basileus Byzantiou* and not as *basileus Romeōn*, a term he uses for Western kings. Of interest is also the fact that while Byzantine rulers are described and often criticized, unlike other Byzantine works, they are not central figures in Laonikos' narrative (Harris 2003b; Kaldellis 2014a; cf. Lamers 2015).

Another element that sets Laonikos apart from his Byzantine predecessors and his contemporaries who recorded the events of the Fall of Constantinople is his notion of historical causation, and more specifically his perception of the reasons that caused the Fall in 1453. Contrary to

the Christian explanation of those who viewed the Fall as God's punishment for the sins of the Constantinopolitans, and to those who adopted the classical idea of merely fortune (*tychē*) or ill fortune, Laonikos contends that the victory of the Turks, and generally the success and rise of any people or nation, are brought about by the synthesis of *tychē* (fate or fortune) with *aretē* (virtue), while in the case that *aretē* is replaced with hubris, events take the opposite turn, leading to failure. Although a direct influence of his teacher Plethon, who has composed a short treatise *On Fate* (*Peri Heimarmenēs*) and of Herodotus and ancient Greek writers is manifested in this view, Laonikos' notion of historical reasoning is an exceptional case in Byzantine historiography (Kaldellis 2014a; Harris 2003a; De Bakker 2015). It has been suggested that Laonikos formed his views adopting ideas of ancient Latin writers, such as Livy and Cicero, which were reproduced and developed at the time of the composition of the *Histories* by humanists in Renaissance Italy, with whom Laonikos was most possibly in contact. Therefore, it has been proposed that his work, dealing extensively with the enemy and the reasons for its success, was perhaps influenced by humanist ideas about fate which are crystallized in Giovanni Pontano's (1426–1503) *De Fortuna* (*On Fortune*), Machiavelli's (1469–1527) *Il Principe* (*The Prince*), and other Renaissance works (Harris 2003a, b). In contrast to this, it is argued that Laonikos' "knowledge of the West is spotty" and the *Histories* should be perceived as a "post-Byzantine work, not a protohumanistic one" (Kaldellis 2014a).

Laonikos' willingness to present the competence of the enemy, the absence of discussion on doctrinal matters, the events of the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–45), and of Christian views in regards to the end of the Byzantine Empire, which are observed in the work, indicates his intention to produce a history free of biases and differentiates him from his contemporaries. In no case does Laonikos appear in favor of the Turks, neither as pro-Latin (Turner 1964: 358–361).

Impact and Legacy

Laonikos "writes as a Greek" and embraces a belief in the supremacy of Greek culture and a hope for the spread of the Greek language in the whole *oikoumenē*, alluding most probably to the increasing interest in Greek studies in the West and especially in Renaissance Italy. At the same time, Laonikos appears to be expressing his optimism about the regaining of power by the Greeks and their reunification under a Greek *basileus*. He states that "the language of the Greeks has spread to many places throughout the world and has mixed with many other languages. It is already exceedingly prestigious and will be even more so in the future, when a king who is Greek himself, along with the kings that follow after him, will rule over a substantial kingdom. There the sons of the Greeks may finally be gathered together and govern themselves according to their own customs, in a manner that is most favorable for themselves and from a position of strength with regard to other peoples" (Chalkokondyles 1843: 4–5; Chalkokondyles 2014: 3–5). It is therefore argued that Laonikos was promoting, influenced by his teacher Pletho, the idea of a Hellenic identity (Kaldellis 2014b; Lamers 2015).

The value of the work becomes evident from the large number of manuscripts of the text, as well as from the various translations and publications of the *Histories*, especially in Latin, as early as 1556, with the Greek text being for the first time published in 1615. The *Demonstrations of Histories* has been used as a source for the composition of historical works, such the *Historia Universale dell' Origine et Imperio de' Turchi* (1560) of Francesco Sansovino (1521–86), Theodore Spandounes' *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors* (16th c.), the anonymous' *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*.

Laonikos composed an original work, explored a variety of themes related to the Fall of Constantinople, and offered to Renaissance readers an account of the events and an insight on Ottoman and Byzantine history. Laonikos produced a work that contributed to an innovative

application of Herodotean and Thucydidean historiography, while being one of the earliest sources recording the history of the Ottomans. The eighteenth century scholar M. De Vigneul-Marville assesses in a few words the *Demonstrations of Histories*, stating that Laonikos “treats the history of the Turks without dishonoring the Byzantines. He has the gift of arousing our attention, by inspiring us with curiosity, and of not letting us fall asleep over his book.” (De Vigneul-Marville 1701).

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Chalkokondyles, Theophilos

Born: 1486, Florence

Died: ca. 1511, Pavia

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Abstract

Theophilos Chalkokondyles or Theophilos Tryfon Chalkokondyles or Theophilus Chalcondyles or Chalcocondyles (ca. 1486–1511) was the son of Demetrios Chalkokondyles and a disciple of the great Renaissance scholars Demetrios Chalkokondyles and Ianos Laskaris. His life and career ended unexpectedly, for he was murdered at a young age. Theophilos' only known work is a commentary on Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*.

Biography

Theophilos was born in 1486 and was the eldest son of the teacher and scholar Demetrios Chalkokondyles (1423–1511). Demetrios married in 1484 at the age of 61 and had ten children. In an autograph manuscript, *Parisinus graecus* 2023, f. 323, Demetrios provides information about his children's names, birth dates, and godparents. (Legrand 1885a, b). Not much information exists on Theophilos' life and career. According to the account of the Renaissance humanist Piero Valeriano (1477–1558) found in his work *De litteratorum infelicitate (On the Ill Fortune of Learned Men)* (1529), "Theophilos was outstanding in ability and learning and . . . the source of great hope" for his father (Valeriano 1999). Theophilos studied Greek and Latin, first under his father and later under Ianos Laskaris (ca. 1445–1534), who was his patron for several years. Theophilos' description as a learned and competent young man is confirmed by his brother-in-law, Aulus Janus Parrhasius (1470–1522), who

mentions that young Theophilos was almost "equal to his father" in learning (Parrhasius 1567; Legrand 1885b). While Theophilos was in Pavia, where he continued his studies after leaving Laskaris, he was murdered. Piero Valeriano (1477–1558) states that "he was killed by those who envied another man's talent" (Valeriano 1999). Paolo Giovio (ca. 1486–1552), a contemporary biographer, portrayed Theophilos as having mercurial personality that was responsible for his assassination (Giovio 1577). Giovios' description is viewed as unreliable by modern scholars (Legrand 1885b; Cammelli 1954). According to Giovio, Demetrios never learned about the assassination of his son, since his wife had kept it secret from him. This information is not consistent with that of Valeriano, who notes that Theophilos was the cause of his father's "bitter sorrow" (Valeriano 1999), alluding most possibly to the grief caused to the father by the youth's death, which occurred probably in 1511.

Aside from the fact that Theophilos was taught by his father and Ianos Laskaris and that he studied in Pavia, there is no detailed information about his education, teaching, and scholarly activities. Paolo Giovio records that Theophilos taught Homer during his stay in Pavia (Giovio 1577). He produced a commentary on the *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia (Memorable Deeds and Sayings)* of the Roman historian Valerius Maximus, a work that was extensively used in university curricula during the Renaissance. Theophilos' commentary was first printed in Milan sometime around 1508 and was reprinted several times (Crab 2013). The commentary indicates that he was adept in the Greek and Latin language, well acquainted with classical authors and various genres, as for example, historiography, poetry, and philosophy. He was particularly interested in geography and had good knowledge of contemporary works produced by Italian humanists.

Theophilos' commentary on Valerius Maximus is exceptional among those produced in his time; while it reflects the practice of Renaissance humanists to produce commentaries on classical authors that could be used by students, it does not follow the convention of systematic interpretation of the ancient sources. Theophilos'

commentary, though depending to a great extent upon the comments produced by the humanist, teacher, and textual editor Aulus Janus Parrhasius (1470–1522), differs from the works of other commentators namely in terms of methodology, given that he provides unsystematic comments of various length on the entire work, focusing on certain matters while disregarding others. Most probably Theophilus' aim was to "correct and improve the text of the *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*" (Crab 2013) and thus offer a critical assessment of the text that would be beneficial for private study.

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- Laskaris, Ianos
- Vettori, Piero

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Chambre, Marin Cureau de la

Born: 1594, Saint-Jean-d'Asse

Died: 29 December 1669, Paris

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Abstract

He was a French physician and natural philosopher, a member of the *Académie française*, and one of the founders of the *Académie des sciences*. He is known for his reinterpretation, from a metaphysical and physiological point of view, of pneumatology, on which he founded his theses on psychology, optics, and physiognomics. His thought attempted a mediation between scholastic conceptualism and the science of physics that was taking off at that time, sometimes also using elements originating in Renaissance Neoplatonism.

Biography

He was born in Saint-Jean-d'Asse in 1594 and died in Paris on 29 December 1669. He studied medicine in Montpellier and later practiced in Le Mans. In 1634 he became the personal doctor to the Chancellor Pierre Seguier, enjoying his protection. He later became Louis XIV's personal

doctor and then in 1635 a member of the *Académie française* initiated by Richelieu. In 1666 he was one of the founders of the *Académie des sciences*. La Chambre was one of the seventeenth century's most distinguished doctors and natural philosophers. His output includes, among other works, the five-volume *Les caractères des passions* (1640–1662), the ambitious essay *L'Art de connaître les hommes* (1659), and its follow-up, the *Système de l'âme* (1664b), works that were highly considered at the time.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Pneumatology, Physiognomics, and Anthropology

The most original element in La Chambre's work is a theory of spirits (Darmon 1985) that shows the obvious influence of pneumatology (especially Jean Fernel's) deriving from Galen and Hippocrates, but at the same time, it finds mediation through the mechanistic thinking that was beginning to take hold, and it represents in some ways the connecting theme that holds together all his work. The "spirit" is understood by La Chambre as a being with an intermediate status between material and immaterial substances, or between the embodied and the disembodied, characterized by extreme volatility, mobility, warmth, and brightness, and that allows the French doctor to set up a philosophical system equidistant between animism and materialistic mechanism (Darmon 1985; Burgio 2005; Wild 2008). From an ontological point of view, then, La Chambre does not seem to think of his notion of "spirit" as contrasting, as it does in Descartes, with the Ficinian and Augustinian tradition (Burgio 2005) that flourished throughout the seventeenth century, in spite of the fact that this author seems to alter his position a few times over the years, shifting between a doctrine that has spirits actually coming out of people and one that considers spirits in a more classical sense as an active force that conveys the appetites and manages the body's inner working processes (Darmon 1985; Burgio 2005).

An application of his theory of spirits in Cureau's later work is to be found in his most substantial text, *Les caractères des passions*, an

essay on physiognomics and psychology in five books, in which the French doctor, on the basis of an earlier attempt in *Nouvelles pensées sur le causes de l'amour d'inclination* (Burgio 2005), describes spirits as the fundamental medium between the soul and the humors. Spirits allow La Chambre to think of the passions of the soul as states of the soul and the body at the same time, as if the two entities amounted to one: the emotions of the soul cause movements of the spirits, which are the soul's instruments, and these movements in turn cause an ebbing and flowing of blood and humors, which give us the expressions we read on the body. Based on this scheme Cureau describes and analyzes every human passion. It should also be noted that by bringing in spirits as the intermediaries between the mind and the body, La Chambre is also able to avoid falling into materialism but without having to do without a moderate form of mind-body ontological dualism.

Gnoseology

La Chambre's ideas in the theory of knowledge are centered on a concept of "image" (Darmon 1985; Burgio 2005; Wild 2008) that turns out to be not far removed from that theory of the spirit that is in turn the foundation of his theory of "immaterial bodies," which Cureau developed in his studies of optics (Cureau de la Chambre 1634, 1657, 1650). The French doctor held that knowing is an action carried out by the intellect on the representations produced by the imagination, but at the same time, it must be understood as an operation that, while always mediated through material representations, is of an active and spiritual nature. The soul, which can "read off" sensory representations but can also create them, does not distinguish inside itself between an agent intellect and a possible one (Cureau de la Chambre 1664b). The notion of "image" makes it possible to think of the spiritual representations of the intellect and the material ones of the imagination as opposite from the ontological point of view, although able to ensure an operative continuity (Darmon 1985; Wild 2008). Cureau's ideas in the philosophy of mind also extend to a consideration of animal cognition, in relation to the debate between Chanut, Charron, and Montaigne (Marcialis 1982; Scribano 2010). Partly

taking up Platonistic innatism, Cureau puts forward a theory of mental images according to which animals have all their actions determined for them from birth by figures impressed on their imaginations. Animal thinking is therefore only sensory, attending only to particularities, without any universal concepts, since it arises from imagination, not intellect. Thus, without moving too far from Aristotle, Cureau manages to find room for Platonistic innatism, allowing in animals for a stock of innate notions for the imagination to draw on in the memory. This, however, is not able to operate by itself, but needs powers of reasoning, though inferior to human ones, by which animals can reach practical judgments, though not actual deliberations of the will (Scribano 2010). By attributing to animals this “weak” form of reasoning, Cureau goes as far as to credit them with an imperfect but genuine use of language, as well as the habit of communicating practical thoughts and indications to each other Cureau de la Chambre (1647).

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Champaignac, Jean de

Born: unknown (15th century?)

Died: unknown (16th century?)

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Abstract

Jean de Champaignac was one of a number of erudite magistrates who, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, undertook the popularization of Aristotelian philosophy for

an elite readership unwilling to read in Latin. While his ideas were not the most original (his work is mainly compilation), he is the author of the first French *Physique* and *Sommaire des Quatre Parties de la Philosophie*, bringing together the four branches of Scholastic philosophy.

Alternate Names

Champeynac

Biography

Very little is known of the life of Jean de Champaignac, as almost no archive research has been carried out into the subject. What is known for sure are the dates of publication of his works and their titles – his first texts, *La Physique Françoise* and *Traité de l'Immortalité de l'Ame*, were published in 1595. At this time, he was a lawyer with the Parliament of Bordeaux and held a position as Master of Requests for “Madame la Princesse, sœur unique du Roy” (Madame la Princesse, only sister to the King), Margaret of Valois. One deduces from this that he was born some 25 or 30 years prior to this date. In 1607, when his *Sommaire des Quatre Parties de la Philosophie* was published, he presented himself as Equerry, sieur Dumas, Councilor to the King, Lieutenant assesseur at the Présidial tribunal of Périgueux. He was still officiating as Margaret of Valois’s Master of Requests. The *Sommaire* was reedited in both 1607 and 1610. After this, all editorial trace of Champaignac is lost for good.

Works

The work of Jean de Champaignac has the merit of being the first attempt on the part of a Jurist at penning a synthesis of Scholastic philosophy in French. This project, which only came to fruition in 1606, is explicitly mentioned in the preface to

La Physique in 1595. Before Champaignac, the reader could turn only to the *Œuvres de Philosophie, à Sçavoir Dialectique, Phisique, et Ethique d'Aristote Reduictz en Epitome* (1583), a concise manual produced by Noël Taillepied, a schoolmaster, intended for educational purposes.

Champaignac’s project targeted an entirely different readership. In the preface to the *Physique*, Champaignac leaves the linguistic dimension aside, although he does introduce a number of elements borrowed from Scholastic Latin. He describes himself rather as a man who, however committed to his work as a magistrate, does not neglect “good sciences,” even if he lacks the time and energy they might merit – “un vray courtisan [...] qui ne peut vouïer tout son esprit à un project” (a true courtier [...] who may not devote his spirit entirely to a single project). This translates Champaignac’s desire to educate the kingdom’s elite in a comprehensive, swift, and efficient way. The identity of the dedicatees of his texts is also worthy of note. *La Physique* and the *Traité de l'Immortalité de l'Ame* are dedicated to a woman, Jacquette de Montbron, a member of the new female elite. She was born into a noble family from southwest France, was well educated, and was a cousin of Brantôme. The *Sommaire* is dedicated to Margaret of Valois. Champaignac’s work, before that even of Dupleix and Bouju, thus marks an important stage in the development and popularization of philosophy.

Only the two treatises on physics are fully developed works. Champaignac completed his initial project in order to publish the *Sommaire*, but in doing so cut his subject matter short. In terms of content, his *Physique* and *Traité de l'Immortalité de l'Ame* are lacking in originality – they set forward Aristotelian doctrine as it was taught at the arts faculty, firmly rooted in the Thomistic tradition (particularly the *Traité de l'Immortalité de l'Ame*), but delving also into a number of available manuals in Latin and clearly Christianized (see, e.g., the chapter establishing that the world was created, a fact which could be proven through reason). Like other manuals aiming to provide swift and comprehensive edification, Aristotle’s text is

elaborated upon in a number of areas. Champaignac takes his inspiration from the model of the “*Tractatus de sphaera*” to develop his explanation of astronomy.

One passage from his treatise on the soul is celebrated for its critique of the hypothesis of animal intelligence, in response to Montaigne’s position.

Cross-References

- [Bouju, Théophraste](#)
- [Dupleix, Scipion](#)

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Champeynac

- [Champaignac, Jean de](#)

Chance

- [Fortune in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Charron, Pierre

Born: 1541-Paris

Died: 16 November 1603

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Abstract

Pierre Charron made an important contribution to French sixteenth-century thought, partly because of his controversial skepticism. His *Traité de la sagesse* enjoyed extraordinary popularity, especially in the circles of the erudite libertines of the first half of the seventeenth century, who championed its skeptical aspects and the criticism of prejudice. Charron’s skepticism takes the form of an acute criticism of all dogmatism and philosophical and religious fanaticism.

Biography

The son of a bookseller, he graduated in law at Bourges and was ordained priest in 1576. A fervent Catholic theologian, he made an important contribution to French sixteenth-century thought, partly because of his controversial skepticism. He was greatly esteemed as a preacher by Margaret of France, Queen of Navarre, and also enjoyed the favor of King Henry IV. He worked intensively as a theological consultant in various dioceses (Agen, Cahors, Condom, and Bordeaux). After 1589, the year in which he met Michel de Montaigne whose friend and disciple he became, he tried in vain to withdraw to a life of seclusion in a monastery. It was from Montaigne that he learned the skepticism which emerged in his two principal works, *Les trois vérités* (1593) and *Traité de la sagesse* (1601). These bring together polemic against the rational theology of the scholastics and a message of tolerance, procuring him an accusation of atheism. The

Jesuit François Garasse defined the treatise “a breviary for free thinkers” and dubbed its author a “closet atheist”; Charron was energetically defended by the bishop of Boulogne, Claude Dormy, and other influential churchmen. Condemned by the religious and civil authorities and then reprinted in an amended edition in 1604, the *Traité de la sagesse* enjoyed extraordinary popularity, especially in the circles of the erudite libertines of the first half of the seventeenth century, who championed its skeptical aspects and the criticism of prejudice. Charron’s skepticism takes the form of an acute criticism of all dogmatism and philosophical and religious fanaticism and a strenuous upholding of the autonomy of the *esprit fort* in its interior liberty in contrast to the passive mores of the majority (the *esprits faibles*).

Charron died of a stroke in a street in Paris, where he was supervising the reprinting of his treatise *De la sagesse*.

In his other works – *Les trois vérités* (1593) and above all the *Discours chrétiens* (1604) – Charron defined a concept of the moral independence of religion founded on Renaissance naturalistic notions, paving the way to secular thought. He makes a clear distinction between religion and morality: reason must waive its metaphysical claims, accepting the religious truths by faith, and must carve out a place in the world in which it is sovereign and free. For Charron, true wisdom lies in acting, irrespective of one’s religious creed, according to the laws of nature and according to the rational and universal principles that spring from these. True moral behavior has its foundation in itself, that is, in the very exercise of virtue and not in an ethic servile to a religion which instils fear. The wise man is distinguished by an ethic that is free of reward, which he must arrive at within himself without seeking to impose it on other people.

The result is a natural rational morality, free of otherworldly rewards or punishments, aimed at spirits capable of exercising skeptical doubt against dogmatism and blind obedience to fanaticism and superstition. Hence, reason must never be dogmatic, but must rather free itself of prejudices and restrict itself to knowledge only of human issues, without pointlessly posing itself

metaphysical questions to which it cannot give any certain answer. Charron exhorts us not to get mixed up in discussions about the religious truths: instead, we must believe by faith and by virtue of tradition. He is fiercely critical of the dogmatic fideism that claims to possess an absolute knowledge and code of values. This is what gives rise to the human bestiality of imposing one’s opinions on others by every possible means. A fundamental feature of Charron’s work is the apologia of doubt, which is what renders the wise man free. Precisely because he knows that no research can be definitive or exhaustive, the wise man never stops using and exercising his reason: it is this that makes him the image of God on earth.

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Chelčický, Petr

Born: 1380

Died: 1460

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Abstract

Petr Chelčický was a Czech medieval thinker who became famous primarily due to his rejection of all physical forms of violence and also his criticism of the contemporary society and most importantly its division into three states.

Biography

Until recently, historians considered the date of birth of Petr Chelčický to be approximately

around 1390. Currently, researchers are coming to the opinion that this Czech philosopher and theologian probably more likely was born around 1380. We are able to reconstruct the biography of Chelčický only partially. The most certain chronology can be gathered from his treatises, some of which can be reliably dated. Furthermore, we have at our disposal a few allusions to Chelčický's character, which were written by his contemporaries in their works. Finally, we do not even have reliable information about Chelčický's death. Another item of significance is the hypothesis which states that the name Petr Chelčický is only a pseudonym of the Czech yeoman Petr Záhorka from Záhoreč (near Strakonice in Bohemia, now Czech Republic). It can be said with a high degree of probability that Chelčický was a layman, a member of the lower aristocracy, and according to what we know did not attend university (evidence of this is his limited knowledge of Latin).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The most significant feature of the considerably original teaching of Petr Chelčický was his almost unconditional rejection of all forms of violence. This question is addressed in his first (preserved) writings, *O boji duchovním* (On Spiritual Warfare). In his argumentation, he relies primarily on theological reasoning. He cites, first of all, the *Commandments*, and then various passages of the *New Testament*.

Chelčický is also well known for his criticism of the contemporary society. In his contemplations, he proceeds as a matter of principle from comparing the current state of society with the state demanded by the *New Testament*. In his writings *O trojím lidu řeč* (On the Triple Division of Society) and *O církvi svaté* (On the Holy Church), he arrives at the very harsh criticism of the power and property conditions prevailing in society at that time. The most space in his critical contemplations is focused on his rejection of the worldly powers of the church. A result of his criticism is finally a radical attack on the division of society into three states. Chelčický rejects the

idea that *one fights, the second prays, and the third works*. God, according to Chelčický, did not form a king, a magistrate, a town councilor, or a judge and executioner.

Impact and Legacy

Even though Petr Chelčický was not the founder of the new Czech church, the Unity of the Brethren, he is historically considered to be its spiritual father. It was under the influence of his treatises that the new religious groupings in the years 1467 and 1468 were founded by Řehoř Krajčí (died 1474).

Historically, the possible influence of Chelčický can be seen on the later irenicism of Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius; 1592–1670). Regarding this matter, it is obviously necessary to remember the different roots of the attitudes of Chelčický and Komenský and stress that Komenský in his rejection of violence arrived at this through his own and original journey.

The legacy of Petr Chelčický had a great influence among others on L. N. Tolstoy and his attitude to faith and his rejection of all forms of violence.

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Chemiatra

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Chemistry

► [Alchemy](#)

Chemistry in Renaissance Sciences

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Abstract

The recent historiography of alchemy clearly marked a substantial shift away from the view held by earlier historians of science, who tended to dismiss the discipline as a pseudoscience that played no role in the so-called Scientific Revolution. No longer considered as a kind of mystic or spiritual science (as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century occultists and psychologists

wanted to interpret it; Principe 2013, 94–106), alchemy is now studied as a complex set of theories and laboratory practices aimed at manipulating natural substances and producing artificial products, which we would nowadays call chemical. Until the beginning of the eighteenth century it is impossible to draw a clear-cut distinction between alchemy and chemistry without retrospectively applying modern categories and definitions. At the end of the fifteenth century, Humanists introduced the terms *chymia*, *chymicus*, or *chymista* (“chemistry,” “chemical,” or “chemist”). Although this new vocabulary was sometimes interpreted as evidence for the existence of two distinct areas of expertise (namely chemistry and alchemy), it is now clear that the abovementioned terms were used as synonyms of “alchemy,” “alchemical,” and “alchemist.” Both *alchymia* and *chymia* referred to the same discipline mainly concerned with metallic transmutation and the production of medicines. In order to avoid any anachronism, scholars have recently introduced the term “chymistry” in reference to these activities from the late fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth centuries (Newman and Principe 1998). The rise of Paracelsianism and the debate that it generated greatly contributed to reshape late medieval alchemical theories and practices. New chymists reworked Paracelsian elements and combined them with the teaching of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century alchemists (such as ps.-Geber, ps.-Lull, ps.-Arnald of Villanova), thus contributing to lay the foundation of eighteenth-century academic chemistry.

Synonyms

Alchemy; Chymistry

Problems of Vocabulary: “Alchemy” and “Chemistry” as Synonyms

The terms “alchemy” and “chemistry” share a common etymology, since both stem from the Greek *chym(e)ia/chēm(e)ia* [χυμ(ε)ία/ χημ(ε)ία;

Halleux 1979, 45–46], which occur in late antique and Byzantine authors in reference to a wide array of technical skills. While the lexicon *Souda* (tenth century) defines *chēmēia* as “the preparation of gold and silver,” Byzantine alchemical collections mention a *chymeutikē biblos* (χυμευτική βίβλος, “alchemical book”) that instructed on how to make gold and silver, how to solidify mercury, how to produce artificial gemstones, pearls, and colors, and how to dye leather purple (Berthelot and Ruelle 1888–1889, vol. 2, 220). When Greek alchemical treatises were translated into Arabic, the Greek term was transliterated (through a Syriac intermediary) as *kīmiyā*’, to which the Arabic article *al-* was prefixed. The Latin terms *alkimia*, *alchymia*, *alchemia* are instances of the different attempts to render the Arabic *al-kīmiyā*’, as attested in twelfth-century Western translations of astrological (e.g., Hugo of Santalla’s translation of ‘Umar’s *Book of Questions*, see Burnett 1992) and alchemical Arabic treatises (e.g., Robert of Chester’s *De compositione alchemiae*, the translation of an alchemical text attributed to the Umayyad prince Ḥalīd b. Yazīd). The Latin *alchymia* (along with its orthographic variants) became common in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and was even transliterated into Greek (e.g., ἀρχημία or ἀρχμία) in late Byzantine texts, such as the alchemical section of MS *Parisinus gr.* 2419 (fifteenth century), which preserves a Greek translation of Albert the Great’s *Semita recta* and a collection of recipes translated from Latin (Colinet 2010, xiv–xvii).

Later on, the form *chymia* was rediscovered and reintroduced by Humanists, who were intrigued by the etymology of the term *alchymia*. In his commentary on Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Lehnerdt 1890, 10–12), John Kanaboutzes (mid-fifteenth century) preferred the term *chymia* (χυμία) to the Latin *archymia* (ἀρκυμία) in his description of alchemy, which included methods for transmuting base metals into gold and silver, dyeing stones, and producing artificial pearls. In his interpretation, the term *chymia* stems from the Greek verb *cheō* (χέω, “to pour”), since the alchemical art teaches how to dissolve metals (Sakorrafou and Merianos 2014). According to

Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481), the correct name of *alchemia* was *chalchimia* (attested also in the early modern editions of Nicholas of Cusa's works; see Matton 1995, 293–295): in a letter of 1471 he explained *chalchimia* as the art of corrupting copper, from the Greek *chalkos* (χαλκός, “copper”) and *miainō* (μιάινω, “to stain”; see Williams 2003, 335–336). The Humanist Ermolao Barbaro (1454–1493) surely knew the lexicon *Souda* and the Byzantine alchemical writings collected in the famous MS *Marcianus gr.* 299 (tenth to eleventh century), belonging to Bessarion's library. In his *Castigationes pliniana*e (1492) he criticized *chymistae* (i.e., “alchemists”), who adulterate metals: their name, Barbaro argued, stems either from the verb *fundo* (“to melt”; χέω in Greek) or from the term *succus* (“juice,” χυμός in Greek). The same terminology occurs in Pandolfo Collenuccio's *Agenoria* (1497), where *chymistae species* are mentioned among the useless Greek “sciences” (Matton 1995). At the beginning of book 2 of *De auro libri tres* (ca. 1515; published in 1586), Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) refers back to Barbaro's explanation and clarifies that the correct name for the art that transmutes metals is *chemia* rather than *alchimia*, an Arabic term adopted by many Latin writers. Keen on Greek terminology, he further specifies that Greeks used to refer to gold-making as *chrysopoeia* and to silver-making as *argyropoeia*.

This “Greek” vocabulary was widely adopted by sixteenth-century scholars and alchemists. Giovanni Aurelio Augurello (ca. 1456–1524) gave the title of *chrysopoeia* to his influential alchemical poem. Giovanni Agostino Panteo (mid-sixteenth century) defined his new cabalistic alchemy, called *vorachadumia*, in contrast with the traditional alchemy (in his view, the art of adulterating metals), which was referred to as *alchimia*, *chemia*, or *calcimia*. Among the Renaissance commentators of Aristotle's *Meteorology*, Agostino Nifo (ca. 1469–1538) denied the possibility of metallic transmutation advocated by the experts in *alchimia*, a vulgar name that he proposed to replace with *ars fusoria* (“melting art,” from the Greek χέω, “to melt”; Martin 2004,

252–253). In his books on mining and metallurgy, Georgius Agricola (1494–1555) speaks of *ars chymiae* in reference to alchemy, and the Latin translators of Paracelsus' treatises used *chemia* to translate the German *Alchimei*, namely the art of *Alchimisten* (Rocke 1985). Moreover, Paracelsus introduced the neologism *spagyria* (a term later interpreted as stemming from the Greek verbs σπάω, “to draw out,” and ἀγείρω, “to bring together”) to emphasize the centrality of *Scheidung*, that is, the separation of the three principles that compose every substance (sulfur, mercury, and salt). In his view the term better explained the basic processes of a medically oriented alchemy, whose aim was to isolate the three principles, which were purified and then recombined to produce effective drugs. Paracelsians usually referred to this medical domain of alchemy as *chemiatria* or *iatrochemia* (both stemming from *chēmia* and the Greek term ἰατρός, “physician”; Schneider 1972).

The terms *alchemia* (or *alchymia*) and *chemia* (or *chymia*) continued being used as synonyms until the end of the seventeenth century, as well exemplified by the title *Theatrum chemicum* given to the impressive collection of alchemical treatises, which included both medieval and Renaissance writings (six vols, 1602–1661). Andreas Libavius (ca. 1555–1616) interpreted Paracelsus' *spagyria* in the light of Aristotle's *Metereology* and defined it as the art of *synkresis* (“association”) and *diakresis* (“dissociation”), two terms used by Aristotle to describe Democritus' atomism (Newman 2006, 66–81). Through these operations it was possible to reach the two main goals of alchemy (called either *alchemia* or *chemia*), namely metallic transmutation and the preparation of medicines. He also introduced the neologism *chymeion* (χυμείον) to refer to the equipped chemical workshop (*laboratium chymicum*), where alchemists performed their work. Likewise, seventeenth-century authors of chymical textbooks did not distinguish between *alchemia* and *chemia* and the practices these terms encompassed. For instance, in his *Tyrocinium chymicum* (1612; it was reprinted more than 40 times in the seventeenth century) Jean Beguin

listed *chemia*, *alchemy*, and *spagiria* as synonyms. He accounted for the Greek origin of *chemia* and the Arabic origin of *alchemy*, yet he was mistaken (alike other contemporary authors) in interpreting the Arabic article *al* as an emphatic prefix (Newman and Principe 1998).

Chymistry Between Metallic Transmutation and Spagyric Medicines

A learned interest in the etymology of the Graeco-Arabic word *alchemy* led Humanists to reintroduce the “original” form *chemia*, which was used by no means to distinguish a different (or new) scientific and technological field somehow closer to modern chemistry. Early modern chymistry was a complex and diversified field: while it would be a historiographical mistake to look retrospectively into it and take just those elements that resemble modern chemistry out of their context, historians of science have more and more convincingly proved that the development of modern academic chemistry is deeply rooted in medieval and early modern alchemical practices and theories.

One fundamental step toward the definition of modern chemistry was the disappearance of metallic transmutation, which became an old-fashioned relic of the past in the eighteenth century. *Chrysopoeia* was not just denied within a broader philosophical debate on art and nature (such as in the medieval *quaestio de alchimia*; Newman 2004, 34–114), but it was rejected as something fraudulent and immoral (Principe 2013, 84–89). Within a quite different cultural milieu, some Renaissance scholars and artists already tried to remove *chrysopoeia* (strictly intertwined with the quest for the philosophers’ stone) from the wide array of chymical operations discovered by alchemists. In his notebooks Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) refused the claim of alchemists, who pretended to replicate or even perfect natural products, yet praises their useful inventions. Likewise, in his manual on metalworking *De la pirotechnia* (1540) the Italian engineer Vanoccio Biringuccio (ca. 1480–1539)

denied the possibility of transmuting metals. He first criticized the sophistic and unnatural alchemy practised by those who were impious in their attempts to counterfeit natural products; then he praised the practitioners of a “good” alchemy, who, despite their vain efforts to make gold, greatly contributed to the discovery of very valuable technologies, such as the production of metallic alloys and colors, cementation, glass-making, and distillation (Newman 2004, 120–132; Bernardoni 2014).

The epistemological status of these arts and their relation with alchemy remained quite fluid, as one can see from the different classifications of *artes* proposed by Renaissance scholars. The great contribution that alchemy gave to different technologies (metalworking, distillation, glass-making, production of medicines) was certainly acknowledged; however, these technologies were sometimes classified as separate arts, such as in the small encyclopedia *Specchio di scientia universale* (1564) by Leonardo Fioravanti (Mandosio 1993). Fragmented pieces of theories and practices taken from alchemists were shared by craftsmen and experts in different fields. In the early 1530s, a group of craft manuals known as *Kunstbüchlein* was printed in Germany. The first 50-page booklet was entitled *Rechter Gebrauch d’Alchimei* (*The proper use of alchemy*); although based on an alchemical treatise by Petrus Kertzenmacher, it did not include either Kertzenmacher’s theoretical discussions on alchemy or his recipes on metallic transmutation, yet focused just on recipes for making artificial gemstones and metalworking procedures, which could be particularly useful for craftsmen (Eamon 1996, 113–116).

Metallic transmutation remained, however, a fundamental topic in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe (Nummendal 2007). For instance, at the court of Cosimo I de’ Medici (1519–1574) all the applications of alchemy, including *chrysopoeia*, were studied and put into practice in the *Fonderia* (“workshop/laboratory”) of Palazzo Vecchio. The duke asked Benedetto Varchi to compose his *Si l’archimia è vera o no quistione* (1544), where Varchi, alike Biringuccio,

praised the true alchemy (*alchimia vera*), which led to hundreds of useful discoveries: metallic alloys, medicines, colors, artillery, glass, and many other chemical compounds and instruments (Perifano 1997). All these different arts continued being practiced in the Casino of San Marco, where Francesco I de Medici (1541–1587) set a new laboratory, or in the *Fonderia* of the Uffizi Gallery (Beretta 2014). *Chrysopoeia* was discussed and practiced by the authors of seventeenth-century chymical textbooks (a tradition inaugurated by Libavius' *Alchemia*), which greatly contributed to the reorganizing of this impressive body of knowledge (Hannaway 1975). By combining a deep understanding of medieval alchemy and Aristotelian philosophy with a strong emphasis on laboratory work, Libavius was successful in composing a handbook that clearly explained the main chymical procedures (both metallic transmutation and the preparation of chymical medicines) for academic purposes (Moran 2007). The academic identity of chymistry was reinforced by the seventeenth-century textbook tradition, which brought Paracelsian and alchemical methods and theories to a new audience, namely those who attended French Paracelsians' lectures or the students of the physicians who were appointed professors of iatrochemistry in North-European universities.

Although these textbooks were mainly devoted to the preparation of new spagyric pharmaceuticals, they also included more theoretical parts discussing Paracelsus' principles and Aristotelian elements. Their authors tried to match these principles with the results of analytic practices performed in the laboratory. Joseph Du Chesne's theory of the five principles (water, mercury, sulfur, salt, earth), for instance, was endorsed by the Parisian teacher Étienne De Clave, who identified these principles with five classes of distillation products (Kim 2003, 17–63; Clericuzio 2006). Analytic and synthetic operations were already at the basis of medieval alchemy (e.g., in ps.-Geber's *Summa perfectionis*) and fire distillation became quite popular in the framework of Paracelsian spagyric alchemy, which emphasized *Scheidung* procedures to analyze substances into their main constituents. Beyond the French tradition, the mid-sixteenth-century Prussian iatrochemist

Alexander von Suchten (1520–1575) described his laboratory techniques to assay the alchemical metals produced by combining antimony compounds with other substances (e.g., silver and mercury; a method inherited by the alchemist Starkey): he dissolved these metals in mineral acids and weighted the products after distilling them. Fire analysis became a sensitive subject discussed by early modern chymists and physicians: the Heidelberg professor of medicine Thomas Erastus (1524–1583) stressed that fire does not analyze the substances into their components, but rather transforms them into new products. Within this debate Jan Baptist van Helmont (1580–1644) emphasized the role of solution analysis and introduced the concept of mass balance: scholars have convincingly shown how his emphasis on analysis and synthesis influenced Boyle's works and even Lavoisier's chemistry (Newman and Principe 2002; Debus 1967).

Moreover, laboratory procedures of analysis and synthesis were used to test and support the different conceptions of principles and elements, which were endorsed by early modern chymists (Klein and Ragland 2014). The legacy of alchemical corpuscular theories, as emerging in ps.-Geber's influential work *Summa perfectionis*, and the revival of classical atomism led chymists (such as Sennert, Billich, Saba) to introduce corporeal elements and principles in their theories of matter (Clericuzio 2000; Klein 2014). William Davidson (ca. 1593–1669), teacher of iatrochemistry at the Jardin du Roi, identified the ultimate constituents of bodies with atoms, identified as the basic components both of Paracelsian principles and of Aristotelian elements (Clericuzio 2006). Daniel Sennert (1572–1637), professor of medicine at the University of Wittenberg, used solution analysis to break up metals into their main components, namely, corporeal corpuscles. His theories and practices paved the way for the development of Robert Boyle's corpuscular theories (Newman 2006, 157–190).

Cross-References

- [Alchemical Medicine and Distillation](#)
- [Alchemy](#)

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Cherbury, Herbert of

Born: 1583

Died: 1648

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Abstract

Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648) was a diplomat, soldier, writer, and philosopher. He is considered one of the earliest

advocates of English deism. His most important philosophical treatise is his *De veritate, Prout distinguitur a Revelatione, a Verisimili, a Possibili, et a Falso* (1624). In *De veritate*, Hebert of Cherbury presents his faculty-based epistemology and defends common notions that are the rational foundation for his deism. Hebert of Cherbury writings exercised an influence on a wide range of early modern philosophers, including Grotius, Casaubon, Gassendi, Bacon, Descartes, Locke, and some of the Cambridge Platonists.

Biography

Edward Herbert of Cherbury was born in Eyton on Severn in Shropshire in 1583. He was born into a wealthy and political family. His father, Richard, was a justice of the peace and a parliamentarian. The poet John Donne served as a tutor for the Herbert children. In 1596, Herbert of Cherbury matriculated at University College, Oxford, and he remained there until 1600 when he moved to London. His education was interrupted by the death of his father and his marriage at the age of fifteen. Herbert was a soldier and a diplomat, and for many years, he divided his time between the royal courts of England and the continent. In 1603, he was made a Knight of Bath by King James I. In 1608 he moved to Paris, where he encountered many leading intellectuals of his day. His life as a soldier took him across the continent. In 1618, King James I appointed him as ambassador to Paris, a position that he held until he was recalled to England in 1624. For his service, he was awarded an Irish peerage, and in 1629, he received his title as the first Baron of Cherbury. In 1632, he was appointed to the Council of War. From the mid-1630s to his death in London in 1633, Herbert of Cherbury was involved in sundry controversies between the king and parliament and his political career languished. The

year before his death he travelled to France to meet with Pierre Gassendi.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

In many ways, the philosophy of Edward Herbert of Cherbury – his criticism of Scholasticism, the search for a new philosophical method, and his focus on epistemology and the mind – is representative of the early modern period. In other respects, however, Herbert articulates positions that are largely idiosyncratic in the landscape of early modern thought. Like Frances Bacon and Rene Descartes, Herbert is a harsh critic of Scholasticism. Similarly, he rejects his formal education in search for a more effective philosophical method.

Herbert's most significant philosophical treatise is his *De veritate, Prout distinguitur a Revelatione, a Verisimili, a Possibili, et a Falso*. The treatise circulated among philosophers in manuscript form until he published it in print in Paris in 1624 at the urging of Hugo Grotius. *De veritate* is ambitious and wide-ranging that primarily examines epistemological questions about truth, falsehood, and method. At the same time, he articulates his metaphysical assumptions about the nature of the mind and world. In *De veritate*, Herbert examines the nature of truth, its conditions, falsehood, and method. This treatise also presents a faculty-based philosophy of mind. Herbert grounds his view in the overarching harmony that exists between the mind and nature, a harmony that is ultimately grounded in the divine. *De veritate* also articulates many of the foundational positions of English deism, and he argues that the intellect possesses common notions, or natural instincts, for which there is common assent among all humankind. The existence of God and other theological positions are among the common notions. Herbert is also the author of posthumous *De religione gentilium*, a treatise on comparative religion in which he expands upon the common notions of the *De veritate*. In addition to philosophy, Herbert also wrote poetry, literature, and history.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In *De veritate*, Herbert defends a faculty-based philosophy of mind. Faculties are special powers of the mind that operate when a corresponding object is present. He argues that the mind is always active and never passive. Objects do not, strictly speaking, act on the mind, rather the right faculties are brought into operation when the corresponding object is present. There are countless faculties needed for the mind to know and appreciate all of nature. Herbert argues that there are distinct mental faculties that correspond not only to the generic natures of things that abound in our world, but also to the myriad and specific differences to be found in each of them individually.

Truth, according to Herbert, is a harmony that exists between objects and the mind's corresponding faculties. Truths are not limited, however, to our understanding of the natural world; the intellect has a domain of truths uniquely its own, and that do not depend on faculties associated with external objects. Herbert enumerates four kinds of truth: truth of the thing, appearance, concept, and intellect. Herbert views these four kinds of truth as a hierarchy that begins with things and ascends to the intellect. According to Herbert, error results from a faulty connection between faculty and object. Underpinning Cherbury's account of truth is the assumption of a mind-object harmony between the mind and nature, or between the mind's faculties and objects. There is a further harmony between the human mind and God. Herbert describes truth as a light that is diffused the further it travels from its source, namely, God. The mind itself, he argues, is the expression of the highest truth of the universe, Herbert argues, that exists first in God.

Herbert's philosophy of mind departs from medieval, Renaissance, and early modern theories. He diverges widely from Scholastic views by dispensing with intelligible species, and further by denying that the mind is active in abstraction of species but passive in its reception of them. At the

same time, however, does not closely resemble prominent early modern viewpoints on the mind. Herbert of Cherbury does not advance a materialist viewpoint, like Thomas Hobbes, and he is not a substance dualist, like Rene Descartes. For Herbert the body is an intermediate of sorts that bridges the natural world and consciousness. In some respects, Herbert's views resemble some Renaissance and early modern Platonists, especially G. W. Leibniz, who believed that there is a pre-established harmony between the intellect and other substances.

Today Herbert is most widely known for his doctrine of common notions that was famously criticized by John Locke in Book I of *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. In *De veritate*, he argues for a faculty of natural instinct that is responsible for a set of common notions that enjoy common consent or universal assent. The divine light of truth, Herbert explains, is strongest in the natural instinct, which is communicated to it directly from God. For Herbert, however, there are distinctions to be made among common notions; some are immediately and intuitively known in themselves, while others require the aid of reason and discourse in order to be evident. Herbert argues that there are five common notions that pertain to religion, and for which there is common consent: (1) that God exists; (2) that God should be worshipped; (3) that virtue and piety are the core of worship; (4) that sin requires repentance; and (5) that God will reward and punish justly. These five notions are the core tenets of early English deism.

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Chiaromonti, Scipione

Born: 21 June 1565, Cesena, Italy

Died: 3 October 1652, Cesena, Italy

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Abstract

Italian philosopher and astronomer, Scipione Chiaromonti (1565–1652) was one of the last defenders of the Aristotelian orthodoxy in its entirety and in particular in regard of the traditional cosmological view, openly arguing with intellectual personalities of his time such as Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler and Galileo Galilei and their new discoveries.

Biography

Defender of old academic as well clerical interests, Scipione Chiaromonti turned out to assume the role of intransigent and conservative Aristotelian philosopher during an age in which orthodox Aristotelianism was increasingly under attack. Born in a rich and noble family in Cesena and graduated in Philosophy at the University of Ferrara, he became soon and without resistance the heir of a cultural tradition made of dogmatic scholasticism and erudite scholarship. Polemicist,

polygraph, and pedantic compiler of various works on different topics, Chiaromonti was a learned and prolific writer along all his life. About his first production, it is possible to mention his written answer about the problem of making shooting munitions, his (posthumous) treatise about scenic perspective for theatrical backgrounds, and also a couple of studies about the relation between physiognomy and living environment, but Astronomy remained a consistently favored subject of dispute. Since the beginning of his career, he taught Natural Philosophy at the University of Perugia, having become the mathematician of Cardinal Alessandro d'Este. Later, he also enjoyed the favor of the Duke Cesare of Este, to whom he dedicated his *Discourse about the comet* (Venice, 1619) where he defended in a prejudicial way the sublunar nature of some unexpected celestial phenomena, like comets and novae. Along such lines, in his *Antithyco* (Venice, 1621), Chiaromonti strongly polemicized not only against Tycho Brahe but also against the Italian astronomer Orazio Grassi, upholding the traditional Aristotelian views even against new astronomical evidence. As a late herald of Ptolemaic cosmology, he attracted many uncharitable criticisms by Kepler, who some years later publicly replied him with his *Tychonis Brahei dani Hyperaspistes, adversus Scipionis Claramontii. . . Anti-Tychonem* (Frankfurt, 1625). Kepler's attack gave to Chiaromonti the pretext to reiterate publicly his bookish knowledge, first in his *Apologia pro 'Antitychone' suo, adversus 'Hyperaspitem'* (Venice, 1626) and then in his *De tribus novis stellis* (Cesena, 1628). Despite some prudent appreciation at first, Galileo Galilei addressed sarcastic remarks against him in his *Dialogo* (Florence, 1632), and also Galileo's students and partners did not show any serious consideration of his work in their correspondence but only sarcasm and deprecation (Benzoni 1980). Nonetheless he was appointed to the position of Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Pisa. From there he had to vindicate constantly the value of the Aristotelian doctrine, as well as his professionalism, from disreputation. He tried to accomplish this task by means of his vernacular dialogue with

the eloquent title of “Self-defence of ‘Anti-tychone’ and of my ‘Treatise of the Three Stars’ from the author of the Dialogue [namely, Galileo]’s attacks ... in favour of Aristotle’s main dogmas in regard of the heavens ... and in rejection of the Copernican system” (Florence, 1933). In the following years, his treatises fueled analogous disputes, for example, against the mathematician Giovanni Camillo Gloriosi, against the peripatetic “coreligionist” Fortunio Liceti, and also against the Jesuit Nicolò Cabeo, who replied all on their turn. The point of contention was mainly the nature and location of what seemed to be apparent generations of stars and comets over and beyond the sublunar region of the sky – something that Chiaramonti always and consistently denied in accordance with the Aristotelian view. In fact in his */De methodo ad doctrina spectantem/* (Cesena 1639) he made “no pretense of originality... The Greek commentators [were] discussed, together with Averroes and Avicenna, with the sources cited in convenient fashion... This traditional Aristotelian felt no obligation to point out the use of Peripatetic theories of method by Galileo: his discussion deal [ed] only with the text of the Master” (Neal Ward 1963, 194–196), with aversion for anything new. He regarded the images provided by the telescope as perceptual illusions, whose deceptivity should have been somehow made known. Despite the occurred death of Galileo, Chiaramonti did not renounce to publish a resentful rejection of his theories (*Antiphilolaus*, Cesena, 1643). After his commitment in Pisa, he retired back to Cesena, where he took part to the diplomatic life of his hometown as designated ambassador. Moreover he wrote some last treatises about political theory, local historiography, philosophical methodology, and further commentaries on Aristotle. Not without a shade of irony, Chiaramonti’s erudition became proverbial. In fact, although the coeval poet Pier Francesco Minozzi named him as a sort of “Aristotle of our times,” Chiaramonti seemed always to be bound more to the letter of the Aristotelian lines than to the spirit of inquiry promoted by those texts that he so often quoted and flaunted.

Cross-References

► [Galilei, Galileo](#)

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Chief of Works

► [Architect, Renaissance](#)

Chillingworth, William

Born: October 1602, Oxford

Died: 30 January 1644, Chichester

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Abstract

William Chillingworth was an English Protestant theologian. In his 1638 *Religion of the Protestants*, he argued that the scriptures are our rule of faith. Although we may not be able to establish their text and meaning with

absolute certainty, we can have moral certainty or certainty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Biography

William Chillingworth was born in Oxford in 1602. Having attended a grammar school there, he was admitted to Trinity College in 1618, where he graduated B.A. in 1620 and M.A. in 1624. In 1628, Chillingworth was elected a Fellow of Trinity. During his years at Trinity, Chillingworth came into contact with the Jesuit John Percy, alias Fisher, who convinced him that an infallible church was needed to guide Christians in their faith. Under Fisher's influence, Chillingworth in 1629 converted to Roman Catholicism and in 1630 travelled to the Catholic seminary of Douai, France. Perhaps influenced by letters sent to him by his godfather William Laud, the later archbishop of Canterbury, Chillingworth at Douai soon came to doubt the Roman church's claim to infallible authority and returned to England in 1631, reconverting to Protestantism in 1634. In 1635, Chillingworth became prebendary of Chester Cathedral and in 1638 was nominated chancellor of Salisbury Cathedral. After the outbreak of the English Civil War, Chillingworth joined the Royalist party. A chaplain to the Royal army, he was taken prisoner at the surrender of Arundel Castle in 1643. In poor health, Chillingworth was held at the bishop's palace at Chichester, where he died 30 January 1644 (See also Chernaik 2004).

The Religion of Protestants

Soon after his return to England in 1631, Chillingworth had begun to frequent the meetings of scholars and intellectuals that were held at Great Tew, the country house of his friend Lucius Cary, the second Viscount Falkland (On the Great Tew Circle, see Mortimer 2010, 63–87). At Great Tew, Chillingworth and Cary discussed the ideas of Grotius and of the Socinians, who insisted that Christians should take their own critical reason, not ecclesial authority, as a guide in reading the

scriptures. This insistence on individual reason would become a major theme in Chillingworth's most important work, his 1638 *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*.

The Religion was written in response to the Jesuit Matthew Wilson, alias Edward Knott. Between 1630 and 1634, Knott had been engaged in a controversy with the English clergyman Christopher Potter, attacking Protestantism on the ground that without the infallible authority of the church to decide on the correct interpretation of scripture, "every man is given over to his own wit and discourse" (Chillingworth 1838, vol. 1, 10). This was dangerous, Knott reasoned, for at least two reasons. First, the scripture is hard to understand, and so we cannot expect the untrained to discover its true message without a guiding authority. Second, if every man is to decide on the meaning of scripture for himself, subjectivism looms large.

To the first point, Chillingworth responded that those biblical truths that were necessary for salvation were "plain and easy," so that with regard to these, every reader is "a competent judge for himself" (Chillingworth 1838, vol. 1, 172). To the second, he responded that reason must guide all scriptural reading. Our rationality we share with all other men, and it is "public" in the sense that rational arguments are open to trial and examination (Chillingworth 1838, vol. 1, 282). Therefore, readings that meet the standards of reason will enjoy more than just an individual validity. When reason guides us in our faith, we will "believe many things above reason, but nothing against it" (Chillingworth 1838, vol. 2, 453). For example, we will not accept the doctrine of transubstantiation, which goes against reason. But we will still believe in a triune God, which, though above our understanding, does not contradict it.

Chillingworth believed that scripture read in the light of reason was "sufficient to inform us what is the faith" (Chillingworth 1838, vol. 1, 71). Yet he admitted that we could not be absolutely certain about the text or meaning of the scriptures. In general he denied that absolute certainty was humanly attainable. For the most part, we have but a "moral certainty," or a certainty beyond a reasonable doubt. Thus we are morally certain that a

given scriptural passage has been preserved uncorrupted or that we correctly understand its meaning. But just as certainty beyond a reasonable doubt suffices for a judge to convict a criminal, moral certainty is certainty enough to guide us in religion (Van Leeuwen 1970, 15–32).

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Chivalry, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

Broadly speaking, chivalry or chivalric culture was a set of values cultivated by Europe's military elite from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. These values differed in time and in place and interacted with other cultural values, such as those of the European Renaissance movement. Chivalric values often greatly contrasted with reality and were not embraced or acted upon by all warriors, knights, or nobility. While there was no "chivalric code" that all knights ascribed to, it is possible to identify several core chivalric

ideals which appear in numerous types of sources over time. These were loyalty to one's lord, skillful fighting on horseback (prowess), and generosity to one's men (largesse). These ideals appear somewhat consistently starting in the twelfth century in both proscriptive literature for real knights and imaginative literature and chivalric romance. European chivalric culture was transformed by tensions between courtliness and prowess and between history and legend, as well as by the rise of the early modern state and the construction of its new armies and bureaucracies. Periodization for the end of chivalry helps to shape scholarly understanding of the nature of the European Renaissance and of the early modern period itself.

Introduction

The chivalric ethos developed in Northern Europe, in the aftermath of the Carolingian Empire. Vikings and Northmen settled in Normandy and built castles (Searle 1988). The practice of a lord having his warriors live with him in a castle where he provided for their needs, including a horse and chain mail, slowly became more common, just as the idea of knighthood also became fully formed, in the twelfth century. The twelfth century was a time of expansion, crusading, and conquest for Europe and also the time of chivalry's first distinct entry into European culture. The international military orders, such as the Knights Hospitaller, were founded in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in the age of the Crusades against Muslim powers in the Holy Land. These monastic, military, and chivalric orders were real fighting organizations. Furthermore, among lay knights, the concept that there was a general "order of knighthood" also developed – that in society there was the order of marriage, the monastic order, the order of the priesthood, and the order of knighthood, which was the "most rigorous order of all" (Kaeuper 2009, 95). It was in this expansive period when lay knights began to develop an ideology of chivalry, which included religious values.

According to historian Richard Kaeuper, the religious ideology of chivalry in the Middle Ages had several components. First, knights were meant to suffer, and suffering was meritorious for their salvation (Kaeuper 2009, 95). Whether fighting Muslims or their fellow Christians, they considered fighting loyally for their lord to be meritorious. Secondly, as military heroes and suffering servants, knights emulated and imitated Christ, especially according to the soteriology of St. Anselm and others (Kaeuper 2009, 107, 116–118). The Christ-knight concept became especially popular as Cistercian spirituality developed in the twelfth century. Many of St. Bernard of Clairvaux's monks had been knights before they took their vows, steeped in the culture of chivalric romances and courtly love from Northern France, exemplified by the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and the poems of Marie de France. The chivalric values of Bernard and the young knights who joined him not only influenced a new type of monastic spirituality, distinct from the Benedictine monasticism of Cluny, but Bernard was also a spokesman and advocate for the new military orders – particularly, the first major military order, that of the Templars, in his book *Liber ad milites Templi: De laude novae militiae*.

Medieval peoples experienced the culture of knighthood in a variety of ways, but in general, there are three types of written sources they have left us which express their chivalric ideals – the writings of clerics (Bernard of Clairvaux and early members of crusading orders can be included in these), the proscriptive manuals of chivalry and histories written by secular knights and noblemen, and the imaginative literature and chivalric romance, written by a variety of authors (Painter 1940; Keen 2005). For a comprehensive history of chivalry, all three of these sources need to be examined.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition: Courtliness and Conquest

In these three types of sources, loyalty, prowess, and largesse were routinely praised as necessary

qualities in a knight. In one important thirteenth-century manual, written by the Catalan cleric, Ramon Llull, knighthood was given an origin story in the distant past:

In the beginning, when contempt for justice had come into the world because of the diminution of charity, justice sought to recover its honor by means of fear. And thus the entire populace was divided into groups of a thousand, and one man—more kind, wise, loyal and strong, and with nobler courage, a better education and better manners than all the rest, was picked and chosen from every thousand. (Llull 2013, 40)

This man was given a horse and was called to join the order of knighthood. In this description it is clear that both prowess and strength and education and manners were necessary qualities for Llull's legendary first knight.

One of the founders of European chivalric culture was Geoffrey of Monmouth, writing in Oxford in the twelfth century. In his *History of the Kings of Britain*, Geoffrey provided the core of the Arthurian legend – King Arthur, his round table and his knights, and Merlin and his prophecies. Significantly, Geoffrey wrote that King Arthur's court had “such a code of courtliness” that “even the man of noblest birth, once he was roused to rivalry, thought nothing at all of himself unless he works his arms and dressed in the same way as Arthur's knights.” However, Arthur was not just a man of courtly ideals; he also had imperial ambitions. “The fact that he was dreaded by all encouraged him to conceive the idea of conquering the whole of Europe” (Monmouth 1966, 222). Not merely a provincial ruler, Geoffrey's Arthur faced the Romans themselves in battle and acquitted himself well against the most powerful army in the world.

From the start, the histories of courtliness and conquest, the courtier and the knight, were intertwined. C. Stephen Jaeger, following Norbert Elias's *Civilizing Process*, describes the early history of this tension in his book on *The Origins of Courtliness, 939–1210*. For Jaeger, the courtier bishop of the Ottonian court embodied the civic ideals he took from Cicero and Roman statesmen and imposed them upon the warriors of the court, who ultimately internalized the ideals, striving to

uphold them themselves (Jaeger 1985, 4–15). These values were then reinforced by the narratives of chivalric romance (Jaeger 1985, 236–254). The question of how chivalric values civilized and controlled violence, or did not, is one of the more interesting questions in the historiography of chivalry.

One of the most famous knights of the twelfth century, William Marshal, born in England in 1147, took on multiple roles in his career, including courtier. After he learned the trade of knight in Normandy, he worked on the tournament circuit to gain wealth and a potential employer. There he met Henry, son of the English King Henry II, known as the “young king,” and then served in his retinue. After the death of the “young king,” Marshal went to Jerusalem to fulfill a vow. He fought in a variety of Angevin conflicts, married well, became a landed baron, and joined in imperial adventures in Wales and Ireland, and he was a signer of the Magna Carta. Marshal’s career peaked when he served as Lord Protector when King Henry III was a boy. On his deathbed in 1219, William renounced his wife and joined the Templar order. He was a knight and Templar but was also clearly an influential courtier and statesman (Asbridge 2014).

Late medieval proscriptive literature for knights often emphasized the need for greater asceticism and restraint. Fourteenth-century French nobleman Geoffroi de Charny, in particular, discouraged knights from excessive ease or pleasure (de Charny 2005). Some clerical authors, such as the Castilian, Alonso de Cartagena, even discouraged the joust (Fallows 1995, 129–141). Fifteenth-century Castilian nobles and *caballeros*, best exemplified by the Marqués de Santillana, became interested, as a group, in rhetoric and poetry in addition to traditional martial pursuits (Nader 1979). Baldassare Castiglione’s famous book, *Il cortegiano* [The Courtier], first published in 1528, revealed tensions between martial and courtly ideals and contains lively debates about what qualities a courtier needed most in order to best influence his prince. Juan Boscán translated the Italian original into Castilian and published it in 1534, and translations into other European languages followed soon after. Castiglione had spent

the last 5 years of his life in Spain, having been just named the Bishop of Ávila. His work emerged out of both Spanish and Italian contexts (Navarrete and Terry-Roisin 2019).

The expansion and exploration which characterized Europe in the early modern period were inspired in part by the success and momentum of the Reconquista, which moved from Iberia to a new theater in the New World after 1492. Many Iberian *conquistadores*, desirous of land and titles, were either already members of the Spanish military orders or hoped to become so – Hernán Cortés was, for example, a *caballero* in the Order of Santiago. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Morisco Granada Venegas family used membership in the military orders as part of their strategy to enter the Spanish nobility – a quest in which they were successful, when Don Pedro de Granada Venegas became the Marqués of Campotéjar in 1643 (Terry 2015).

History and Legend

In the twelfth century, Geoffrey of Monmouth had traced the races of the British Isles to the ancient Trojans. In the cult of the Nine Worthies, popular in Valois Burgundy and elsewhere in the fourteenth century, Hector, Caesar, Alexander, Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon were all admired together as eternal military heroes (Huizinga 1924, 60–61). Despite Renaissance emphases on historicity, the early modern period was not immune to an interest in these figures, considering that as late as the end of the seventeenth century an Englishman wrote an extended biography of them (R.B. 1687). The cult of the Nine Worthies honored historical figures (Julius Caesar), as well as figures from Greek myth (Hector), from the Bible (King David), and from European myth and legend (King Arthur). However, there was another genre of work honoring famous men which was more concerned with historicity, known as the “lives of illustrious men” or the *De Viris Illustribus*. The genre arose in antiquity with Plutarch and Polybius and was taken up by St. Jerome in the fifth century, who, instead of

listing Caesars, included the apostles and bishops who followed them in time, starting with St. Peter. St. Isidore of Seville wrote another version in the seventh century, adding 33 more men. In the ninth century, Carolingian historian Notker the Stammerer made his own version of the lives of illustrious men that included his contemporary Alcuin (Phelan 2014, 271). In the fourteenth century, Petrarch famously wrote another version of the *De Viris Illustribus*. Paolo Giovio wrote one in the sixteenth century that followed ancient, medieval, and Renaissance precedent, but its addition of portraits with almost every entry, and its vast size and scope, covering men from across time and space, from antiquity to the sixteenth century, from Italian generals to Ottoman Sultans, connected it to both the Renaissance cult of personality and the high politics of sixteenth-century Europe. In 1568, Granadan humanists Gaspar de Baeza and Gregorio Sylvestre would translate Giovio's Latin volume on the men of war into Spanish.

One of the major differences between medieval chivalric culture and the culture of the European Renaissance is the emphasis the Renaissance movement placed on historicity and the ideal of an authentic revival of antiquity based on criticism of primary sources rather than on legend. According to scholars of Arthurian literature Rob Gossedge and Stephen Knight, "another source of Arthurian doubt was the increasing value given to classical learning over medieval tradition: Aeneas had become a more credible nation-builder than Arthur" (Gossedge and Knight 2009, 103). Though modern scholarship would probably ascribe to Arthur and Aeneas comparable claims to historical veracity, the interest in going to ancient sources *ad fontes* and the rejection of medieval authors who had also commented on those sources is an orientation of the Renaissance which its contemporary movement, the Reformation, also shared.

While there is robust scholarly debate surrounding many of these issues, two individuals, Francesco Petrarch and Lorenzo Valla, discussed together, are representative of a Renaissance view of history and a Renaissance orientation toward historical sources. Petrarch wrote in the fourteenth

century that he did not include any of his contemporaries in his *De Viris Illustribus* because he was "unwilling to carry my treatment to such a distance and through so many shadows (*tenebrae*) for so few famous men" and that he thus "set and determined the limit of my history long before our century" (Petrarch cited in Witt 2000, 281). The shadows between himself and the Ancient Rome he admired and wished to revive were a Middle Age of little historical importance. From his formulation, and those of others after him, historians have created the tripartite periodization of ancient, medieval, and modern, which is an innovation of the Renaissance. In the fifteenth century, Lorenzo Valla used the historical tools of the *studia humanitatis*, including his knowledge of Latin, to unmask the supposed Donation of Constantine as a ninth-century forgery. The admixture of history and legend was seriously challenged by Renaissance authors, but the practice did not entirely die out. Ronald Witt has argued that while Petrarch had an historian's sense of distance from his chosen Roman subjects and he understood Roman historians as imperfect men who wrote arguments, he still confused myth and history (Witt 2012).

The legend of the last world emperor was a similar fusion of history and legend to that of the Nine Worthies. This legend dated from interpretations of the book of Revelation which were made at the court of the emperor Constantine in the fourth century and were repeated and elaborated in many medieval sources. According to historian Marie Tanner, in the legend of the last world emperor:

...the Kingdom of God, which was foreshadowed in Revelation, will come when the Last World Emperor has defeated the heretic. After this, the emperor will go to Jerusalem and recover the Holy Sepulcher. When this is accomplished, he will put off his diadem, lay aside his whole imperial garb, and render the empire to Christ. This event will usher in the thousand years in which Satan is bound. At the end of this time, divine forces shall defeat the Antichrist in a final battle. (Tanner 1993, 121)

The struggle for an authentic revival of antiquity based on primary sources, *ad fontes*, constituted a large part of European culture in the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries, yet the Habsburg dynasty remained intrigued by the legend of the last world emperor, and despite Lorenzo Valla's famous unmasking of forgeries using his humanist tools, forgeries were still being written. Courtier Antonio de Guevara, in his *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius* (1528), used "forged" letters from the pagan emperor Marcus Aurelius to urge Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain Charles V to stoic resolve and military triumph (Dandeleit 2014, 88–90). Finally, much Renaissance art and literature celebrated Greek and Roman gods and legends.

Impact and Legacy: The Survival of Chivalric Romance

Chivalric romance, as a genre, provides key primary sources for European chivalric culture. Medieval romances such as Chrétien de Troyes' *Yvain, Erec et Enide*, and *Le Chevalier de la Charette*, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, and the English *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* established the genre. Chivalric romances like Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* (earliest remaining printing, 1508) and Thomas Malory's encyclopedic *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485) remained popular as Europe passed into the world of print in 1450. With the exception of Geoffrey of Monmouth, early authors depicted Arthur as a weak king, and knights like Gawain and Lancelot dominated his court. In later medieval romance, many Arthurian knights became hermits, and their adventures were focused on religious pursuits and on the Holy Grail. However, the early modern Arthur became a powerful ruler again, and various English authors wrote Arthurian tales as "royal propaganda" for the Stuarts (Gossedge and Knight 2009, 104–105).

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, a hybrid genre emerged in Italy called the epic chivalric romance, or the Renaissance epic. In this genre, epic battles reminiscent of the work of classical authors like Virgil were interspersed with typical courtly scenes taken from chivalric romance. The primary examples of this

genre are Luigi Pulci's *Morgante* (1483), Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1485), and Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516). Boiardo and Ariosto follow the topic of the "matter of France" and the court of Charlemagne, which had been first substantially laid out in the twelfth-century *Song of Roland*. However, instead of the twelfth-century Roland whose emotions were tied to his love and loyalty toward his fellow knights, the Orlando of Ariosto "loses his wits for alluring Angelica" (Whitman 2015, 14). According to Eleonora Stoppino, Ariosto draws from both medieval and classical traditions, from both romance and epic. (Stoppino 2012, 9–13). In England, Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590), Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (1590), and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), while substantially different, also contained some elements of this hybrid genre.

In the early modern period, chivalric romances became the object of some criticism. In sixteenth-century Granada, a bookseller became convinced that selling romances was a sin and dramatically tore up his books and became a local holy man named San Juan de Dios (Coleman 2003, 131). Sixteenth-century Spanish saints St. Teresa of Ávila and St. Ignatius of Loyola both rejected chivalric romance. It played a starring role in the "early temptation" part of their conversion stories. An Italian Jesuit named Antonio Possevino expressed his concern in 1593 that chivalric romances, including the *Orlando Furioso*, had an "immoral, heretical influence on the nobility" (Scaglione 1991, 273). According to Jon Whitman, these Italian critics "aligned poetry with history" and "treat(ed) romance as a defective form of epic" (Whitman 2015, 17). Over time, chivalric literature had come to be seen as secular literature and popular entertainment – something dangerous and worldly – yet in the early modern period, it was still extremely popular among readers and was culturally significant (Eisenberg 1982). For example, in 1575 Torquato Tasso published his *Gerusalemme liberata*, an epic poem about the First Crusade which drew on chivalric themes to engage with Counter Reformation questions and debates, which impacted his *Gerusalemme conquistata* (1593) even more.

In Cervantes' famous work of 1605, *Don Quixote*'s friends tried to rid the hidalgo of his chivalric romances, because they had "lied" and led him into madness.

Albert Ascoli writes in his Introduction to Sergio Zatti's book, *The Quest for Epic* (Zatti 2006), that

Ariosto certainly takes notable steps towards 'epicizing' the chivalric *romanzo*; Tasso is notoriously the more attentive to that defining trait of the modern novel, character psychology, and his overt attacks on what he perceives to be the corrupting ethos of chivalry in fact rather closely match the moving premise (however pretextual) of the *Qui-xote* . . . the Italian cinquecento has its own internal literary history that may tell us something different about the refashioning of classical epos and medieval *romanzo* into the forms of literary modernity. . . (Ascoli in Zatti 2006, 2).

Early modern literature drew from the epic and lyric traditions of antiquity, as well as the worlds of romance, and some imitated antiquity more than others. Vaz de Camoes *The Lusoids* (1572) is a good example of what Thomas Dandele calls an "imperial Renaissance" text, because the crew of Vasco da Gama's ship appeared in its pages like the crew of Aeneas and Roman gods influenced the plot. The work gave prestige to Portuguese imperial projects in Asia and Africa by associating them with Roman epics and with the founding of the Roman Empire. Another example is Juan Latino's Latin epic poem, the *Austrias Carmen*, celebrating the victory of Don Juan de Austria and the "Holy League" over the Ottoman Turks at Lepanto in 1571 (*The Battle of Lepanto* 2014).

Chivalry as Revival

A complicating factor in the interplay between Renaissance culture and chivalric culture is that chivalry itself was thought to be of ancient origin and was an object of revival. A statement at the beginning of Chrétien de Troyes' twelfth-century romance, *Cligés*, reads, "Our books have taught us that chivalry and learning first flourished in Greece, then to Rome came chivalry and the sum of knowledge, which now has come to

France. May God grant that they be maintained here. . ." (de Troyes, 123). As a type of revival, the Order of the Star was founded by the French king Jean II in the fourteenth century to compete with the English Order of the Garter in order to inspire more of his men to fight the English boldly. They did so at the battle of Poitiers in 1356 when Geoffroi de Charny and the knights of the Star died en masse. In 1430, the Dukes of Burgundy also founded an order to compete with the Garter, the Order of the Golden Fleece, with the stated goal of taking back Jerusalem from the Turk, and though they did build a fleet of ships to do so, this goal was not realized (Smith and DeVries 2005). The Valois Dukes, and later Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor (d. 1519), with his autobiographical romance, *Theuerdank*, and Henry VIII Tudor, with his jousts, sought to revive an age resembling that of William Marshal and Chrétien de Troyes in the twelfth century. The desire to revive a Golden Age was a part of both chivalric and Renaissance cultures, yet the nature of that Golden Age differed between them, for example, Florentine Coluccio Salutati's fascination with the Roman Republic and the early Tudors' fascination with Arthur and his round table.

The End of Chivalry

A number of historians of chivalry, including Maurice Keen and Richard Kaeuper, argue that the history of chivalry ends in the sixteenth century. Kaeuper points to Reformation doctrines disputing the role of good works and penance in salvation, famous peacemaking humanists who criticized war, such as Erasmus, and a revolution in military technology and strategy as causes for chivalry's end (Kaeuper 2009).

Another argument is that the independent knight of the Middle Ages became a key advisor and companion to his prince, spurning war for rhetoric, manners, and poetry – that the knight left knighthood for courtiership and was "civilized." Norbert Elias, Ignacio Navarrete, and Leah Middlebrook have all emphasized the significance of this transformation, and Ignacio

Navarrete has especially explained the role of Castiglione's *The Courtier* in representing a fascination with Renaissance courtiership in both Italy and Iberia. Both Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Castiglione's *The Courtier* were published in the early years of the sixteenth century.

Two general elements of courtiership are giving advice and seeking favor. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli's advice did not contain an exhortation to traditional chivalric values, like keeping one's word, or generosity. Rather, Machiavelli tempered these values with the practical advice that a prince should appear to have these qualities but only use them if they actually help him maintain power. He should be willing to act against them at a moment's notice, like Ferdinand of Aragon clearly was able to do, using religion as a "cloak" (Machiavelli, Ch. XXI, 77). Machiavelli wrote, in Ch. XVIII of *The Prince*:

It must be understood, however, that a prince—especially a prince who has but recently obtained power—cannot observe all of those virtues for which men are reputed good, because it is often necessary to act against mercy, against faith, against humanity, against frankness, against religion in order to preserve the state. (Machiavelli, Ch. XVIII, 63)

Machiavelli emphasized first and foremost the prince and his courtiers' duty to the success of the state. In the twelfth century, John of Salisbury had written another "mirror for princes" called the *Policraticus*, and he was also a learned man who took *exempla* from antiquity. However, to Salisbury, the primary obligation of a soldier, and a prince, was to God, not to political leaders and institutions: "In addition, this formula is to be prescribed for and fulfilled by every soldier: that he will keep unimpaired first the faith owed to God, and thereafter the loyalty owed to the prince and to the republic" (Salisbury 1990, 117). To Salisbury, chivalric virtues and ideals were worth pursuing for their own sake, "As the image of the deity, the prince is to be loved, venerated, and respected; the tyrant, as the image of depravity, is for the most part even to be killed" (Salisbury 1990, 191). Politics, in Salisbury's rubric of Christian kingship, were a holy calling, and God would ultimately judge the prince. Machiavellian politics

were that the ends (the success of the state) justify the means (any means necessary). In *The Prince*, virtue was a tool, not an end.

In between the lives of John of Salisbury in the twelfth century and Machiavelli in the sixteenth century was that of Leonardo Bruni of Florence (d. 1444). Bruni wrote a treatise, *On Knighthood*. In it, he wrote that

the miles (soldier) is nothing but the guardian of the citizens and a wager of war who has been legitimately qualified for this task by his own oath. The militia itself is a highly respectable and indispensable institution designed by nature to hold the city together (Bruni 1987, 135).

In addition to identifying the knightly profession with the urban environment, Bruni also traced the differences between soldiers on foot or on horseback to the difference between foot soldiers and the noble equestrian order of ancient Rome. He thus linked chivalry with a revival of antiquity—but his were never the knights errant of romance—they were the citizens of a Renaissance city.

On a practical rather than ideological level, knighthood clearly continued into the early modern period. Knighthood remained a real military office in the sixteenth century, and knights continued to join active military orders like the Orders of Santiago and Alcántara in Spain. One change that historians of chivalry point to is that knighthoods were increasingly granted only as gifts from a prince or ruler. Ultimately, the rise of the early modern state killed the independence of the knights, and their sacrifice began to be channeled toward national goals—the famous sixteenth-century French chevalier Bayard's battle cry was "France! France!" (Kaeuper 2009, 214). The end of Olivier de la Marche's chivalric romance and treatise on preparing to die, *Le Chevalier Deliberé* (1488), was a memorial to the house of Valois Burgundy, and its sixteenth-century versions celebrated the Tudors and the Spanish Habsburgs. Historian Nigel Saul calls this "a chivalry harnessed not to knight errantry but to the service of the state" (Saul 2011, 346). A comprehensive history of chivalry should compare the service of these early modern knights to that rendered by William Marshal to the Angevin empire. Most importantly, however, these early

modern states, with their growing bureaucracies, had the sort of war budgets that made it impossible for nobles to have enough men and arms to compete. For instance, a knight might still be required to supply his own armor and horse, but not his own cannon – the cannons belonged to his prince (Keen 2005, 241). Gunpowder and the military revolution would change the way war was waged and impact the future of the mounted knight (Rabb 2006).

Historians have identified two other trends which helped to bring knighthood and the power of the nobility to an end in the seventeenth century. One was the “inflation of honors,” in which cash-strapped monarchs like James I of England sold offices to any who were able to pay, thus cheapening the concepts of knighthood and nobility (Dewald 1996, 27; Stone 1967). The other trend was the “domestication” of the nobility by a powerful absolutist monarch like Louis XIV of France: rich territorial lords and military leaders became merely domestic servants of the crown (Elias 2000). According to these arguments, first published by Elias in 1969, far from the influential courtier of Castiglione’s sixteenth century, these seventeenth-century nobles were weak and dependent on their king. These were symptoms of an age of crisis. Jeroen Duindam, in his book, *Myths of Power*, disputes this, arguing that Elias exaggerated this change (Duindam 1995).

Interconnections

Western Europe was not the only region of the world to develop a warrior ethos. In a broad history of chivalric culture, the ideologies espoused by Islamic warriors and holy men from across the Mediterranean, including in the tenth-century *Way of Sufi Chivalry* (al-Sulami 1983), should also be examined, as should the ethos of the medieval Japanese samurai, which was laid out by Nitobe Inazo (1862–1933) in *Bushido* (Inazo 2012). It is important, however, for scholars to make precise statements about these different systems. Many historians of Japan argue

today that the samurai can be compared to European knights but should not be seen as simple analogues to them.

One of the best places to examine the interactions between Islamic and Christian warrior elites is on the border between Nasrid Granada and the kingdom of Castile in the fifteenth century, where frontier ballads like *Abenamar*, *Abenamar* praised the qualities of Muslim nobles. The king of Castile had a “Moorish guard,” which was his personal bodyguard and retinue (Echevarría 2009). During and after the Conquest of Granada (1492), a number of Muslim Nasrid knights converted to Christianity and became members of a new Morisco elite. In particular, Cidi Yahya Al Nayar (d.1506) changed his name to Don Pedro de Granada and founded the Granada Venegas family. The Granada Venegas successfully assimilated into the high Spanish nobility, sponsored a group of Renaissance poets, and entered the Spanish military orders, using both classical culture and chivalric culture to their advantage (Terry 2015).

The historiography of chivalry demonstrates how the culture of Europe’s elites can influence medieval and early modern periodization. Debates regarding the timing and nature of chivalry’s end are also debates about what early modernity was and about what the Renaissance was.

Cross-References

- [Art of War in the Renaissance](#)
- [Cartagena, Alonso de](#)
- [Castiglione, Baldassare](#)
- [Cervantes, Miguel](#)
- [Courts and Courtiers in the Renaissance](#)
- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Gunpowder in the Renaissance](#)
- [Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- [Neo-Latin Epic](#)
- [Nobility, Renaissance](#)
- [Sidney, Philip](#)
- [Spenser, Edmund](#)

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Chortasmenos, Ioannis

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Abstract

Ioannis Chortasmenos (ca. 1370–1431) was a scholar, mathematician, astronomer, and bibliophile; under the name Ignatios he became Metropolitan of Selymbria. He taught in Constantinople philosophy (logic) and rhetoric to major intellectuals of late Byzantium (Bessarion, Scholarios) and wrote compendiums and textbooks on these fields, especially on Aristotelian logic. He continued the commentary tradition of the Palaeologan Byzantium and he compiled introductory texts for educational purposes. As a bibliophile and a copist, he contributed to the circulation of philosophical and scientific texts.

Biography

Ioannis Chortasmenos (Ignatios) was born ca. 1370. He studied in Constantinople under Michael Balsamon “the Greek courses” (the profane disciplines: logic, rhetoric, quadrivium, and physical sciences) and “the sacred letters” (mostly biblical exegesis). He was a notary and then an advocate of the patriarchal chancery, at least from 1391 to ca. 1415. After 1410, he became a monk and took the name Ignatios. The last years of his life (perhaps from ca. 1425) he was ordained Metropolitan of Selymbria. He died on October 4, 1431.

Ca. 1407/1410 he was honored with the title of “universal teacher” at the Patriarchate School in Constantinople, i.e., a teacher charged to educate the clergymen. Among his pupils were three

distinguished Byzantine theologians, all of them protagonists in the Ferrara-Florence Council (1438–39) and the last two in the Platonists-Aristotelians controversy: Marc Eugenikos (Metropolitan of Ephesus, a leading figure of the Anti-union party), Basil Bessarion (a leading figure of Unionists and later Cardinal), and George Scholarios (later Patriarch Gennadios II). He taught grammar, rhetoric, astronomy, geometry and mathematics, and philosophy (Aristotelian logic).

As many Byzantine scholars of his time, Ioannis wrote a wide range of works. His philosophical writings include a fragmentary Prolegomena to Aristotle's *Organon*; a paraphrase of *Posterior Analytics II*; and perhaps a commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. Besides some notes and collected excerpts from Aristotle, other short texts have been preserved, e.g., some moral precepts for laymen and clergymen. Chortasmenos wrote also short mathematical and astronomical treatises and exercises (1404–1415), a number of rhetorical works (political addresses, epitaphs, prolegomena to Rhetoric, paraphrases of extracts from Hermogenes), letters, scholia on John Chrysostom, poems, and historical works.

His manifold interests in philosophy, rhetoric, astronomy, geometry, history, etc. lead him to collect, copy, and annotate manuscripts (more than 30 are entirely or partially autographs), and his contribution to the manuscript tradition is significant. His codices include many ancient Greek authors as Aristotle, Plutarch, Lucian, Livianus, and Euripides. Perhaps he was involved in the oldest surviving Greek manuscript of the Bible (*Vaticanus* gr. 1209 or B), and we owe to him the restoration of the valuable for the history of medicine codex of Dioscorides (*Vindobonensis med.* gr. 1) and the rich philosophical codex called *Ocean* (*Laurentianus* gr. 85,1), as well as an enormous compilation of important ancient astronomical texts (*Vaticanus* gr. 1059).

The Commentary Practice of Chortasmenos

By the time of Chortasmenos, commentary had become an inseparable part of Byzantine

philosophical curriculum. Philosophical activity was interwoven with philosophical learning in the patriarchal and private schools, so commentary served didactic purposes though not exclusively. In the intellectual circles in Constantinople in the first decades of the fifteenth century, only few decades before the Fall, rhetoric and logic were two basic subjects of the curriculum, and Chortasmenos' effort was to provide the appropriate texts. He compiled textbooks collecting freely and without due reference from the existing material, i.e., commentaries of late Antiquity and of Byzantine scholars. All these works were meant for esoteric educational use and their copies remained unsigned:

A commentary (paraphrase, *metaphrasis*) of *Posterior Analytics II* composed for his students (main autograph: *Vindobonensis suppl. gr.* 75). More than a half originates in the commentaries of Theodoros Prodromos (twelfth century) and John Philoponus. Chortasmenos deliberately omits their names; that was quite common in Byzantium and it was not considered necessary for a school book. The text varies in the several manuscripts and in some cases is enriched by diagrams and notes. It is integrated in a larger corpus, probably compiled by him, that contains material for his teaching of logic and rhetoric. Its diffusion of the text can be attested by its transmission in ten manuscripts from early fifteenth to the second half of the sixteenth century; among the copyists were Bessarion and George Scholarios.

A logic compendium (*Lovaniensis De Wulf Mansion Centrum* 1) organized near the beginning of the fifteenth century. The manuscript comprises only the scholia concerning *Prior Analytics I*, *Posterior Analytics I-II*, and the beginning of the *Topics* but not the relevant texts of Aristotle. His model was a similar corpus compiled by Neophytos Prodromenos in the middle of the fourteenth century, with texts from the *Organon* and scholia from the Neoplatonic and Byzantine commentaries on Aristotle. Chortasmenos follows the Byzantine tradition of compendiums, mostly on logic; e.g., the "Anonymous Heiberg" (1007), George Pachymeres' *Quadrivium* (ca. 1310), and his condensed paraphrase of Aristotle's philosophical writings (the *Philosophia*). These texts are

introductory and accessible to non-experts in Aristotelian logic.

There are also short logical treatises (Hunger 1969), prolegomena to Aristotelian logic, comments (*marginalia*) on a logical epitome of Neophytos Prodromenos (*Vaticanus* gr. 1018), and collections of “definitions” for logical works of Aristotle. An anonymous commentary on Aristotle’s *On interpretation* was perhaps written also by Ioannis and has been copied by his pupil Scholarios who continued and amplified his commentary activity.

In his *Moral exhortations* and his addresses to the Emperor Manuel II, Chortasmenos refers traditionally to “spiritual” and political precepts that must be combined: compliance to moral rules and the recognition of social hierarchy is the way for the *Homo byzantinus* to be both Christian and obedient to the rules of social behavior. The Christian state is a “legitimate empire” ruled by the law (as opposed to the Turkish), and the Emperor is the animate law, the guarantor of justice, and happiness. It is interesting that Chortasmenos, in an anachronistic manner familiar to Byzantines, contrasts the ancient image of Alexander the Great (as the Byzantine Emperor) to that of Persian Kings (as he calls the Turkish rulers).

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Chrysoloras, Demetrius

Born: before 1360, Thessalonica

Died: after 1417- before 1439, Constantinople?

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Abstract

Demetrius Chrysoloras was a Byzantine anti-Unionist and anti-Thomist theologian. He was in the service of John VII Palaeologus and a member of the court of the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus. He wrote theological, philosophical, astronomical, and rhetorical works.

Biography

Demetrius Chrysoloras' precise dates of birth and death are unknown. He was born in Thessalonica sometime before 1360. The widely held view in the past that Demetrius Chrysoloras was Manuel Chrysoloras' brother has been first rejected by Cammelli, and nowadays it remains an open question.

Very little is known about Demetrius Chrysoloras' life. Around 1384/1385 he participated in the delegation sent by John V Palaeologus possibly to the Ottoman sultan Murad I (1362–1389), and probably in the 1390s, he was in the court of John VII Palaeologus in Selymbria. From 1400/1401 to 1403, Chrysoloras stayed in Constantinople and held an official position in the service of John VII Palaeologus. On 28 July 1403, he delivered a thanksgiving oration addressed to the Virgin Mary on the first anniversary of the battle of Ankara. Later that year, he moved to Thessalonica, where he served as representative (*mesazon*) of John VII Palaeologus. In 1407 he was sent by John VII Palaeologus to Constantinople, but the reason for this mission is still unknown. After John VII Palaeologus' death, on September 1408, Chrysoloras returned to Constantinople. In August 1409 he participated as a member of the senate and a domestic (*oikeios*) of the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus in the synod which excommunicated the former bishops Macarius of Ankara and Matthew of Medeia. Chrysoloras also participated as an imperial delegate in the synod of April–May 1416 for the election of the new Patriarch of Constantinople.

Chrysoloras' death should be placed presumably in Constantinople after 1417 and before 1439, based on the chronology of his correspondence and writings, according to which he received a letter (no. 61 in Dennis' edition) from the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus in 1417, and he wrote his *Διάλογος ἀναιρετικὸς τοῦ λόγου, ὃν ἔγραψε κυρὸς Δημήτριος ὁ Κυδώνης κατὰ τοῦ μακαρίου Θεσσαλονίκης, κυροῦ Νείλου τοῦ Καβάσιλα* (*Dialogue on Demetrius Cydones' Antirrhetic against Neilos Kavasilas*) after 1425 and shortly before 1439 (Pasiourtidis' 2013).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Demetrius Chrysoloras is known for his anti-Unionist stance. He wrote several theological treatises on the procession of the Holy Spirit and on the primacy of the Pope in which he defended the Orthodox teachings against the Latin doctrines of the *Filioque* and the primacy of the Pope. Chrysoloras also provided a summary of Neilos Kavasilas' argumentation in favor of the procession of the Holy Spirit only from the Father (see Chrysoloras 1998). Furthermore, Chrysoloras wrote an anti-Thomist fictitious dialogue among Demetrius Cydones, Neilos Kavasilas, Thomas Aquinas, and himself, in which Chrysoloras defended Kavasilas' arguments against Cydones' positions on the *Filioque* and the syllogistic method in theology. In addition to these works, Chrysoloras authored an encomium to Saint Demetrios and many homilies on the birth and ascension of Christ, as well as on the Annunciation and Dormition of Virgin Mary.

Apart from theological treatises, Chrysoloras' corpus includes one astronomical work, two philosophical treatises, and a number of rhetorical writings dedicated to the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus: a description of the ideal emperor in comparison with the previous emperors (Chrysoloras 1926) and a collection of hundred laconic letters praising the Emperor (Chrysoloras 1984).

Impact and Legacy

Demetrius Chrysoloras' rhetorical writings as well as his extensive correspondence with the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus are an important historical source for the Palaeologan period.

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- [Kabasilas, Neilos](#)
- [Manuel II Palaeologus](#)

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Chrysoloras, Emmanuel

► [Chrysoloras, Manuel](#)

Chrysoloras, Manuel

Born: ca. 1350, Constantinople

Died: 15 April 1415, Constance

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Abstract

Manuel Chrysoloras was a Byzantine scholar and diplomat. He is best known as the first notable professor of Greek language in Italy.

He occupied the chair of Greek at the Florentine *Studium*, and he also taught Greek occasionally in Pavia, Milan, and Rome. Among his students were some of the prominent early Italian humanists including Leonardo Bruni, Uberto Decembrio, Guarino of Verona, Pier Paolo Vergerio, Palla Strozzi, Roberto Rossi, Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia, Cencio de' Rustici, and others. His method of teaching Greek language and literature was innovative and was continued by some of his students. He had a significant impact on the revival of Greek studies in the West through his *Erotemata*, as this work became the central textbook of Greek grammar until the sixteenth century. He was a pioneer of the so-called *transfere ad sententiam* method for translating Greek texts into Latin, and he was the first who translated Plato's *Republic* (in collaboration with his student Uberto Decembrio). His other writings are mainly rhetorical epistles; he engaged in extensive correspondence with many of his contemporaries, eminent humanists and ecclesiastical and political figures, such as the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus and Coluccio Salutati. He was appointed to a number of important diplomatic missions on behalf of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus, and he was in the service of Pisan Pope John XXIII. He spent most of his life visiting the European courts in an attempt to secure help for Byzantium and to negotiate the Union of the Churches. He was an ardent unionist, he participated in the Council of Constance, and he may have converted to Catholicism.

Alternate Names

[Crisolora, Manuele](#); [Crisolora, Emanuele](#); [Chrysoloras, Emmanuel](#)

Biography

Manuel Chrysoloras was born in Constantinople into a noble Byzantine family. His exact date of birth is unknown, albeit it is commonly accepted that he was born around 1350. The widely held

view in the past that Demetrius Chrysoloras was Manuel Chrysoloras' brother has been first rejected by Cammelli (1941, pp. 198–201), and nowadays it remains an open question (cf. Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 12–15).

Almost nothing is known about Manuel Chrysoloras' early life. The first mention of Chrysoloras dates back to 1386, when Demetrius Cydones makes reference to Chrysoloras' deep knowledge of Latin in a letter sent to an unidentified recipient (Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 33–34). Another piece of information dates back to 5 July 1388, when the Byzantine senator John Lascaris Calopherus named Manuel Chrysoloras and Demetrius Cydones as executors of his will in case they were in Venice at the time of his death; this indicates that both Cydones and Chrysoloras were soon expected in Venice. There has been considerable disagreement among the scholars about Chrysoloras' first trip to Italy. According to Thorn-Wickert (2006, pp. 36–37) and Wilson (1992, p. 8), who follow Loenertz (1950, pp. 64–65), Chrysoloras accompanied Demetrius Cydones to Venice in 1390–1391. There Chrysoloras first met Roberto Rossi (ca. 1355–1417) to whom he gave instruction in Greek. Cammelli (1941, pp. 25–29) and Setton (1956, p. 57n95) dispute Loenertz's view and along with Thomson (1966, p. 76) argue that in 1394–1395, Chrysoloras with Cydones arrived in Venice to request financial and military aid against the Turks. The diplomatic mission failed, but their presence attracted the attention of two young Florentine students of the Florentine chancellor Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Roberto Rossi and Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia (ca. 1360–1411), who went to Venice to meet them. Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia followed them in Constantinople (1395–1396) in his determination to study Greek under Chrysoloras, whereas Roberto Rossi returned to Florence.

In a letter on 8 March 1396, Coluccio Salutati informed Chrysoloras, who was at that time in Constantinople, that he had arranged for him to teach Greek in Florence. On 28 March 1396, Chrysoloras received the invitation of the Florentine state, also written by Coluccio Salutati, to teach Greek language and literature in Florence's highest institution known as the *Studium* (text in

Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 41–42). He had been initially offered an annual salary of 100 gold florins and a 10-year contract. On 11 December 1396, when his appointment as a professor of Greek at the University of Florence was announced, the final terms offered to him were an annual salary of 150 gold florins and a 5-year contract. The following autumn (probably in October), Chrysoloras and Cydones returned to Venice where they spent the winter of 1396–1397. At the end of January, Chrysoloras moved to Florence where he remained for almost 3 years (1397–1400), being one of the first Byzantine scholars who moved to Italy long before the fall of Constantinople. His *Erotemata*, a sort of text for teaching Greek grammar, dates from this period, perhaps written in the first months of his stay in Florence (Cammelli 1941, p. 83; cf. Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 199). Chrysoloras gave his opening lecture at the Florentine *Studium* on 2 February 1397. One year later (14 March 1398), his salary was raised again, reaching 250 gold florins annually. On 31 October 1399, the onset of plague necessitated the Republic of Florence to give permission to Chrysoloras to stop lecturing temporarily at the *Studium*. In the winter of 1399–1400, Chrysoloras took shelter in Casentino, in the villa of the wealthy Florentine nobleman Palla Strozzi (1372–1462), who had taken a leading part in the negotiations regarding his appointment. Before his 5-year contract had expired, Chrysoloras' teaching activity in Florence ended officially on 9 March 1400. During his 3-year tenure at the *Studium*, he taught Greek to a small number of humanists. Among his students were the Florentine Palla Strozzi, Roberto Rossi, and Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia and, from October 1398, the Paduan teacher of arts Pier Paolo Vergerio (ca. 1370–1444/5). His most famous student in Florence was Leonardo Bruni (ca. 1370/72–1444), the apostolic secretary to four popes, the future Florentine chancellor (1427), and the official historian of Florence (Hankins 2002). Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437) and Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) should not be thought of as regular students of Chrysoloras, since they took only a few courses at the *Studium* (Cammelli 1941, ch. 2; Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 47). It is worth noting that Coluccio Salutati had never

been a student of Chrysoloras, even though he was a correspondent and an ardent admirer of him. Contrary to what is often claimed by scholars (Thomson 1966, p. 64n3; Mergiali-Sahas 1998, p. 4n18), who follow older sources (Bolgar 1954, p. 403), Carlo Marsuppini (ca. 1398/9–1453) and Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439) could not have been Chrysoloras' students; during Chrysoloras' teaching in Florence, Carlo Marsuppini was in his early childhood, and Ambrogio Traversari had not yet arrived in Florence (Cammelli 1941, pp. 66–67; Geanakopoulou 1989, pp. 283–284; Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 45–47).

Chrysoloras left Florence on 10 March 1400, the day after he announced his resignation as the chair of Greek at the *Studium*. Undoubtedly the reason for his early departure from Florence was the arrival of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus in Italy, who has left Constantinople on 10 December 1399 to visit the European courts in an attempt to secure help for Byzantium. After a quick stop in Pisa, where he met his nephew John Chrysoloras on 11 March 1400, Manuel Chrysoloras joined Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus in Pavia. From 1400 to 1403, Chrysoloras stayed in Pavia and in Milan. During this period he moved around in Lombardy trying to collect funds for the Byzantine Empire. In the same period, he taught Greek intermittently, but very little is known about his teaching activities. There are some indications (listed in Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 55) that he offered private lessons in Pavia and in Milan, in the circle of the Duke of Milan, Giangaleazzo Visconti (1351–1402), who supported him financially during his stay in Lombardy. While Chrysoloras was still in Florence teaching Greek (1397–1400), Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti, who was Florence's hated enemy, had already invited him several times to join his court at Pavia and to teach Greek and rhetoric to the scholars of his dominions; Chrysoloras however continued to refuse the Duke's invitations until Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus visited his court to request financial assistance (Hankins 1991, p. 105). It is without doubt that Chrysoloras did not occupy the chair of Greek at the University of Pavia, given that it had been transferred to Piacenza before his arrival in Pavia, because of the plague, from 1398

to 1403; and in addition it is known that Chrysoloras never taught at the University of Piacenza (Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 55). Chrysoloras' best and only known student, since there are no records of his tutoring from that time, was Uberto Decembrio of Vigevano (ca. 1350/1370–1427), a humanist and an influential figure in the service of Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan (Cammelli 1941, ch. 4). The first translation of Plato's *Republic* into Latin, composed by Chrysoloras and his student Uberto Decembrio, dates from this period (see below for details). After the unexpected death of Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti, in September 1402, Chrysoloras remained in Lombardy continuing his diplomatic missions until he joined Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus either in Genoa (22 January 1403) or in Venice (21 March 1403). Chrysoloras had already spent almost 6 years in Italy, when he decided to return to Constantinople accompanying Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus at the beginning of April 1403. A few months later (probably after 21 August 1403), the Italian humanist Guarino of Verona (1374–1460) went to Constantinople to learn Greek under Chrysoloras (Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 67–68). He stayed in Chrysoloras' house most of the time, perhaps until 1406 (Thomson 1966, p. 69). In Chrysoloras' absences from the city, due to diplomatic missions, Guarino of Verona studied with his nephew, John Chrysoloras. During the time Guarino of Verona was in Constantinople (1403–1408), he made a compendium of Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* which he also translated into Latin (Cammelli 1941, p. 84; Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 199–200). Guarino's Greek-Latin compendium of Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* was widely circulated in Italy in the late fifteenth century (see below for details).

Chrysoloras stayed in Constantinople in the period 1403–1407, but not constantly. He travelled twice in Italy as an imperial envoy; he was in Venice in December 1404 and early in 1406 and in Padua on 3 January 1406. We know that he was in Constantinople by the end of 1405, when he requested Pope Innocent VII (1404–1406) to be ordained in the Roman Catholic Church with permission to perform the Latin rite in Greek.

Although the permission was granted by the Roman Pope on 19 February 1406, Chrysoloras was never actually ordained. Therefore, it is uncertain if and when he formally embraced Roman Catholicism. Thomson (1966, p. 81) claims that Chrysoloras' conversion to Catholicism took place at the end of 1405, whereas Hankins (2002, p. 180) suggests the year of 1406. Thomson (1966, p. 81) further asserts that his conversion to Catholicism was perhaps sincere, but it is also possible to be seen as another diplomatic move to reconcile with the West (cf. Loenertz 1950, p. 68). Cammelli (1941, p. 141) and Thorn-Wickert (2006, p. 70), however, doubt that Chrysoloras was indeed converted to Roman Catholicism (cf. Dennis 1977, p. xxxvi).

By the end of 1407, Chrysoloras left Constantinople for the last time and moved permanently to the West where he spent the rest of his life travelling from one country to another in order to form new alliances against the Ottoman Turks and to negotiate the Union of the Churches (the Greek Orthodox Church with the Latin Catholic Church). In the course of the following years, he was appointed to a number of important diplomatic missions on behalf of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus; from 1407 to 1410, he travelled round the courts of Europe (Italy, France, England, and Spain). Little is known about the reason for and the outcome of these diplomatic missions. In addition, there is no evidence that Chrysoloras taught Greek in the period 1407–1410. He was in Venice in December 1407 and in January 1408. According to Cammelli (1941, pp. 144–145), who draws from Leonardo Bruni's correspondence with Niccolò Niccoli (dated 16 December 1407), Chrysoloras' mission was to discuss a possible union of the two Churches with Pope Gregory XII (1406–1415), who had succeeded Pope Innocent VII. Based on other sources cited by Thorn-Wickert (2006, pp. 75–76) and Mergiali-Sahas (1998, p. 7), Chrysoloras' mission was to request financial support for the fortification of Hexamilion in Peloponnese. Later that year, on 18 April 1408, Chrysoloras was in Genoa as it is evidenced by an official document, according to which he was

granted tax exemption for buying horses (Cammelli 1941, p. 146; Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 76). No later than May 1408, Chrysoloras arrived in Paris. His duty there was to deliver as a gift an eleventh-century illuminated manuscript (bound in gold and ivory) of Dionysius the Areopagite's writings to the royal abbey of Saint Denis on behalf of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (Dennis 1977, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii; Mergiali-Sahas 1998, pp. 7–8; Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 77). The following year, in 1409, Chrysoloras travelled to London and Salisbury as attested in his *Comparison of Old and New Rome* written in 1411, where he mentions that he was in London 2 years earlier (Mergiali-Sahas 1998, p. 8; Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 77). His presence in England is also confirmed by a letter of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (letter no. 55 in Dennis 1977, pp. 154–157), written sometime in 1409, in reply to Chrysoloras' discouraging report which he had probably sent to the Emperor either from England or on his way from there to Spain. Nevertheless, the reason for this mission is unknown. On 7 April 1410, Chrysoloras arrived in Barcelona in order to deliver as diplomatic gifts a series of precious relics associated with Christ's Passion to King Martin I of Aragon who died upon his arrival in Spain, on 31 May 1410; and thus it remains unclear whether Chrysoloras accomplished his mission or not (Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 78–80; cf. Mergiali-Sahas 1998, p. 9). The final destination of his long-lasting diplomatic mission was Bologna, which he reached after 4 May 1410 and before the end of June 1410 (Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 82). He was sent by Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus to Pope Alexander V (26 June 1409–3/4 May 1410) who died before his arrival and succeeded by Pope John XXIII, and hence he entered the service of the newly elected Pope, in which he remained until his death. On 31 August 1410, he followed Pope John XXIII to Saint Michele in Bosco and then on 14/15 September 1410 to the castle of Saint Pietro in Bologna, where Pope John XXIII stayed until 14 November 1410 to protect himself from the plague. Chrysoloras stayed at the papal court in Bologna until April 1411, when he accompanied Pope John XXIII to Rome. In this period,

according to Cammelli (1941, pp. ch. 6), who follows older sources, Chrysoloras returned for one last time to Constantinople, sometime after 4 May and before 29 December (which is the date of a letter addressed to Leonardo Bruni written in Bologna). The reason for this trip was to deliver letters from the Pope (probably Pope John XXIII) to the Patriarch of Constantinople Matthew (1397–1410). Thorn-Wickert (2006, pp. 82–83), however, argues that it was Chrysoloras' nephew, John, who was sent to Constantinople and not Manuel himself.

In April 1411, Chrysoloras accompanied the papal curia from Bologna to Rome, where he stayed for 2 years, until 1413, in an effort to promote the Union of the Churches and to receive financial and military assistance for Byzantium. While in Rome, Chrysoloras taught Greek in private to the humanists Cencio de' Rustici from Rome (ca. 1390–1445), the official historian of the Roman curia, and Bartolomeo Aragazzi from Montepulciano (after 1350–1429), the papal secretary of John XXIII (Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 91–95). Nevertheless, there was nothing on the scale of the widespread enthusiasm that Chrysoloras encountered in Florence in 1397 (Cammelli 1941, pp. 154–155). The available main body of his correspondence dates from this period, including his three famous letters addressed to Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus which is widely known as the *Comparison of Old and New Rome* (text in PG 156: 23–53; cf. no. 6 in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 223–229); to his nephew John Chrysoloras (text in PG 156: 53–58; cf. no. 7 in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 229–230); and to Demetrius Chrysoloras (text in PG 156: 57–60; cf. Baxandall 1965, pp. 197–199; no. 8 in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 230–231). In these letters Chrysoloras deals with the physical beauty of Rome, providing a theoretical basis of the Byzantine aesthetics. From the same period are also his letters to Palla Strozzi and Guarino of Verona (nos. 9–11, 14 in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 231–236, 240–242). It is not yet clear whether Chrysoloras was in Rome or in Florence, when he addressed a letter to Ambrogio Traversari about friendship (Cammelli 1941,

p. 181; cf. no. 13 in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 237–240).

On 8 June 1413, Chrysoloras left Rome following Pope John XXIII to Florence, where he stayed for a few months. On 6 September 1413, he was sent by Pope John XXIII, together with the cardinals Antoine de Challant (ca. 1350–1418) and Francesco Zabarella (1360–1417), to the king of Hungary and the future Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund (1433–1437), whom they met in Tesserete (north of Lugano) on 13 October 1413, in order to determine a suitable location for the forthcoming ecumenical Church Council regarding the Union of the Churches and the Great Western Schism which divided the Roman Catholic Church for almost 40 years, from 1378 to 1417, when there were two, and later three, rival popes: Pope Gregory XII (1406–1415) in Rome and antipopes Benedict XIII (1394–1417) in Avignon and John XXIII (1410–1415) in Pisa. After the mission ended, Chrysoloras rejoined the papal curia either first in Florence and then in Bologna or direct in Bologna, where Pope John XXIII arrived on 25 February 1414 (Cammelli 1941, p. 163; Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 101). His *Discourse to the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus* dates from his sojourn in Bologna (see below for details).

In the middle of July 1414, Chrysoloras left Bologna and, in company with Guarino of Verona, travelled to Venice; the reason for this journey is unknown. In the late summer or early autumn of 1414, Chrysoloras may have visited Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus in Thasos or in Thessalonica (Loenertz 1950, pp. 70–71; Dennis 1977, p. xxxvii; cf. Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 104–105). According to Cammelli (1941, pp. 163–164), however, Chrysoloras, after visiting Venice, returned to Bologna and from there departed with the papal delegation on 1 October 1414 for the Council of Constance, the proceedings of which he attended from the start as representative of the Greek delegation. It is undeniable that Chrysoloras travelled to Constance in the autumn of 1414, albeit it is disputable whether or not he accompanied Pope John XXIII, who arrived in Constance on 28 October 1414 (Loenertz 1950, p. 71; Thorn-Wickert 2006,

p. 107). What is certain is that Chrysoloras participated in the Council of Constance (1414–1418), which ended the Great Western Schism with the election of the new Pope, Martin V, in November 1417. Chrysoloras' death occurred a few months after the Council of Constance had begun, on 15 April 1415; he died from high fever and was buried in the Dominican convent. From Pier Paolo Vergerio's funeral oration on Chrysoloras (text in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 118–119; cf. Cammelli 1941, pp. 167–168), we learn that Chrysoloras' presence at the Council of Constance was so dominant that he was considered as one of the possible candidates for the papal throne. This is also demonstrated by Guarino of Verona's letter addressed to Jacopo de Fabris (on 1 July 1416), as well as by Battista Guarino's letter addressed to his father Guarino of Verona (Cammelli 1941, p. 166; Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 115).

Innovative and Original Aspects

For teaching Greek language in the Florentine *Studium*, Chrysoloras composed a grammar under the typical Palaeologan title *Erotemata* (*Ἐρωτήματα*) which means *Questions*. This however was not modelled on the traditional Byzantine type of grammar manuals, since it provided a simplified and abridged grammar of Greek. As Wilson (1992, p. 9) notes, a comparison of Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* with Manuel Moschopoulos' *Erotemata* (fourteenth century) reveals that the categories of the noun have been reduced from 56 to 10. Chrysoloras' success in teaching Greek lays in his innovative approach to the theoretical system of Greek grammar, in particular the noun declensions (Nuti 2012, p. 241; cf. Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 190–199). His *Erotemata* was written in question-and-answer form, containing examples of sentences but no texts for reading, and it was soon abbreviated and translated into Latin by Guarino of Verona. Both versions were originally used in manuscript; Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* is preserved in more than a hundred manuscripts, and Guarino's Greek-Latin compendium survives in at least 30 manuscripts. It is noteworthy that Guarino's

compendium was printed several times before Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* appeared in print in its original form by Lorenzo de Alopa in Florence in 1496, which was once thought to be the editio princeps. From 1475 to 1491, the Guarinian compendium was printed five times: three in Vicenza (1475, 1490, 1491), one in Parma (1481), and one in Venice (1484). At the same period dates one more edition; in 1471, Adam of Ammergau/Ambergau, one of the earliest European printers in Italy (Venice), issued an abridged Latin version of Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* whose author has not yet been identified, albeit it seems unlikely to be Guarino (Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 200–201). Moreover, Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* had been more useful than other traditional Greek grammars distributed throughout the West, such as those of Constantine Lascaris' and Manuel Moschopoulos', given that it was the first Greek grammar provided with a Latin translation (Geanakopoulos 1962, p. 286). From the fifteenth century until the sixteenth century, Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* was widely circulated in numerous manuscripts (in various long and short versions) as well as in multiple printed editions and reprints, including those of Aldus Manutius' in Venice in 1512, Demetrios Ducas' in Spain in 1514, and Zacharias Calliergis' in Venice around 1520–1522 (Geanakopoulos 1962; Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 199–205; Rollo 2012, ch. 2; Nuti 2012).

Chrysoloras left no account of his teaching methods. All the details known are drawn from the testimonies of his students: Leonardo Bruni's treatise entitled *De studiis et litteris* (ca. 1425) which was the first exposition of Chrysoloras' pedagogic technique; the correspondence of Guarino of Verona and Cencio de' Rustici; and Battista Guarino's famous treatise on education, *De modo et ordine docendi et discendi* (ca. 1459), in which he outlined his father's teaching methods, Guarino of Verona, that were adopted by his teacher Chrysoloras (Cammelli 1941, ch. 3; Thomson 1966, p. 67; Wilson 1992, pp. 9–12). Chrysoloras method of teaching Greek could be summarized as follows. In the beginning he taught vocabulary and grammar, emphasizing the importance of constant revision and regular discussion

of subject matter as the most effective ways of learning: a method of learning that has already been in use in scholarly circles of Florence. When his students possessed a good knowledge of Greek, he taught original texts of ancient authors, focusing on the correct pronunciation, on the use of mnemonics, and on the thorough study of a text with emphasis on *methodice* (vocabulary, grammar, syntax) and *historice* (the historical context of the text) (Thomson 1966, p. 67). In the early stages, they were introduced to prose authors writing history, biography, oratory, and moral philosophy, such as Lucian and Xenophon; in the advanced stages, they were instructed in poetry (starting from Homer), tragedy, and comedy. The favorite authors of Chrysoloras and his students were Plutarch, Demosthenes, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Lucian, and Claudius Ptolemy (Hankins 2007; cf. Wilson 1992, p. 10). Hankins (2007) points out that Chrysoloras' practice of studying prose before poetry is one that has lasted down to modern times in Western educational practice.

Another important aspect of Chrysoloras' teaching process is that he introduced a new method for translating Greek texts into Latin. He was opposed to the well-known *ad verbum* translation, namely, a literal translation word by word, as well as to a free translation. Both practices of translation were inadequate and could entirely falsify the meaning of the original text; an *ad verbum* translation could not preserve the author's style of writing, and an overly free translation could lead to a commentary. Chrysoloras suggested rendering a passage according to the sense, but without changing the textual nuances. His method of translation into Latin is known as *transfere ad sententiam* (transfer to thought), and it was followed by all his students, particularly by Leonardo Bruni and Uberto Decembrio (Cammelli 1941, pp. 88–92; Geanakopoulos 1989, p. 10; Wilson 1992, pp. 11–12). Furthermore, while Chrysoloras was teaching Greek at the Florentine *Studium* (1397–1400), he began to translate Plato's *Republic* and Ptolemy's *Geography* into Latin for teaching purposes; nonetheless, both translations were completed later. Chrysoloras translated the *Republic* in collaboration with his student in Pavia Uberto Decembrio;

the philological part of the translation was almost certainly done by Chrysoloras and the style improved by Uberto Decembrio. The first Latin translation of the *Republic* was published before the summer of 1402; being an unsatisfactory translation, with an abundance of errors and omissions, it was later corrected by Uberto Decembrio's son, the eminent Milanese humanist Pier Candido Decembrio (1399–1477), who may have taught himself Greek in the early 1930s from Chrysoloras' *Erotemata* (Hankins 1991, pp. 105–153, esp. p. 108; cf. Cammelli 1941, ch. 4; Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 57–60). The Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Geography* was completed in 1409/1410 by Chrysoloras' student – first in Constantinople (1395–1396) and then in Florence – Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia, who was encouraged by Cardinal Peter Filargis of Candia (later Pope Alexander V of Pisa) to revise and complete Chrysoloras' version for publication; Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia's translation was circulated under the title *Cosmographia* (Geanakopoulos 1989, p. 10; Hankins 2003, pp. 457–459; cf. Gentile 1992).

Chrysoloras' best known work is a lengthy letter written in Rome in 1411 (in April or later but before October) and addressed not to the future Emperor John VIII Palaeologus (1425–1448), son of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus, as it was widely held in the past (Cammelli 1941; Dennis 1977, pp. xxxvii), but to Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus himself (Rollo 1999, pp. 77–78; cf. Crisolora 2001, p. 13; Thorn-Wickert 2006, p. 223). It bears the title *Σύγκρισις τῆς παλαιᾶς καὶ νέας Ρώμης* (*Comparison of Old and New Rome*), and it is also known in the secondary literature by its abbreviated form as *Synkrisis* or *Syngrisis*. In the first part of his *Synkrisis*, he provides a detailed description of architectural and sculptural monuments of Ancient and Christian Rome (Smith 1992; Webb 2012); in the second part, he makes a systematic comparison between Rome and Constantinople which he regards as the new Rome (Crisolora 2000, 2001, pp. 13–25). Chrysoloras' purpose in this letter was to promote good relations between the East and the West by showing that these two cities, Rome and Constantinople, share a common bond which is nothing other than their cultural heritage dating

back to Greco-Roman antiquity (Thomson 1966, p. 70; Mergiali-Sahas 1998, p. 2). His letter is highly rhetorical in both style and structure, and it represents a fine example of the Greek rhetorical tradition (Webb 2012, pp. 127–131). Chrysoloras' *Synkrisis* was successfully distributed throughout Northern Italy by his devoted student Guarino of Verona, who had received a copy of the letter from him in October 1411 (Thomson 1966, pp. 69–70; cf. letter no. 10 in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 233).

Chrysoloras' longest and probably most significant work is a discourse addressed to Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus, written in Bologna in 1414, between 25 February and 15 July (Patrinelis 1972). Since the first folio of the sole extant manuscript is missing, the title *Λόγος κατ' ἐπιστολὴν περὶ τοῦ βασιλέως λόγου* (*Discourse to the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus*), which is found in the literature, was created by its editors, Patrinelis and Sofianos (see Chrysoloras 2001, p. 50). His *Discourse* was composed at the request of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (letter no. 56 in Dennis 1977, pp. 158–160), and its original purpose was to improve the funeral oration which the Emperor had written for the second anniversary of his brother's death, the Despot of Morea Theodore I Palaeologus (Chrysoloras 2001, pp. 38–39, 44–48; cf. no. 15 in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 242–245). The *Discourse* is divided into two main sections. In the first part, which is the largest, Chrysoloras discusses the funeral orations as a literary genre, and then he eulogizes the deceased Despot Theodore I Palaiologos and comments extensively on the Emperor's funeral oration in a laudatory tone. In the second part, consisted of four paragraphs and written as an addendum, Chrysoloras expresses his deep concern about the growing Ottoman threat, and he proposes a series of educational reforms based on a revival of the Greco-Roman heritage that would prevent the imminent collapse of the Byzantine Empire (particularly in the first two paragraphs). Chrysoloras advocated the promotion of education (establishments of schools, support to scholars, and a systematic study of the literary corpus of the Greco-Roman antiquity) as a measure for the salvation of Byzantium, and he underlined the twofold lineage of its citizens; he was one of the first exponents of the racial

identification of the Byzantines with the Greeks and Romans. Therefore his conception of Byzantium as being the cultural and political continuity of both Greek and Roman Antiquity is of great importance (Patrinelis 1972, pp. 500–502; Chrysoloras 2001, pp. 48–52).

Apart from the four works mentioned above (the *Erotemata*, the first Latin translation of Plato's *Republic*, the *Synkrisis*, and the *Discourse*), Chrysoloras translated the Liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church into Greek and plausibly composed a pro-Latin theological treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit (Cammelli 1941, p. 178). Chrysoloras' correspondence should also be included in his writings, being rhetorical and literary in character; besides the letters addressed to Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (the *Synkrisis* and the *Discourse*), 13 letters are known to be extant today (listed in Cammelli 1941, pp. 180–182 and in Thorn-Wickert 2006, pp. 217–245), 2 of which are written in Latin (those addressed to Pope Innocent VII and to Uberto Decembrio). He engaged in correspondence with his relatives and his friends, as well as with many of his students. Among his correspondents were prominent humanists of the early Quattrocento, eminent ecclesiastical figures, and leading personalities.

Impact and Legacy

Chrysoloras had a significant impact on the revival and the development of Greek studies in the Italian Renaissance. He introduced the *transfere ad sententiam* method for translating Greek texts into Latin which was followed by the Italian humanists. Chrysoloras' students contributed significantly to the dissemination of Greek culture in the Latin West. They became distinguished translators of Greek literature as well as teachers of Greek language. Leonardo Bruni produced influential translations of Greek authors (mainly of Plato's dialogues); Uberto Decembrio, Cencio de' Rustici, and Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia also engaged in the translation of Greek texts; Palla Strozzi and Pier Paolo Vergerio taught Greek at the Florentine *Studium* and introduced the teaching of Greek at Padua; Roberto Rossi founded a

Florentine center of Greek and Latin studies; Guarino of Verona established the first humanist school in Venice, in which the study of Greek literature was an essential part of the curriculum, and he promoted the pedagogic technique of his teacher (Cammelli 1941; Thomson 1966; Geanakopoulos 1989; Hankins 2007).

Cross-References

- [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- [Manuel II Palaeologus](#)
- [Salutati, Coluccio](#)
- [Vergerio the Elder, Pier Paolo](#)

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Chunradt

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Ciceronianism

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Abstract

The force of Ciceronian discourse does not only depend on its clarity, but also on its masterly usage of multiple registers and styles, according to the circumstances and the literary

genre. Therefore, Cicero seems to be an author who difficulty lends himself as a united model of writing and thinking. Nonetheless, this is exactly what happened during the Renaissance. The term Ciceronianism dates back to the nineteenth century and signifies an important trend among the Humanists who were looking to imitate Ciceronian writing, understood as the norm of correct Latin. In this regard, Erasmus of Rotterdam's (Rotterdam, 1467–Basel, 1536) reaction, in his fictional dialogue *Ciceronianus* (1528), was extremely violent. It is a satirical dialogue that dramatizes three figures: Bulephorus, who represents Erasmus, Hypologus, who asks the questions, and Nosoponus, who embodies the unconditional follower of Cicero. But Erasmus' criticism is of a literally and theological nature. From a literary point of view, he denounces the pedestrian imitation of Cicero. The only true Cicero, as Erasmus point out, was Cicero himself. From a theological point of view, the faithfulness to Cicero, as well as the cult of the vocabulary of Latin culture, distorted the Christian spiritual message. The only veritable imitation must be, for Erasmus, the imitation of Christ. Even the title of *Ciceronianus* text takes up Saint Jerome's letter 22, in which he opposes the fact of being *ciceronianus* to the fact of being *christianus*.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Marcus Tullius Cicero (Arpino, -106/Formia, -43) was a coherent author, although manifold. Politician, lawyer, and philosopher in Rome, he wrote just as well treatises in rhetoric, such as the *De Oratore*, as moral essays, on the therapy for the soul and the definition of goods and evils, such as the *Tusculanes*, the *De Officiis*, as well as numerous speeches and discourses. As a lawyer in ancient Rome, Cicero was able to plead in a variety of trials and cases: corruption, murder, inheritance, fraud, etc. Numerous were his victories. His extraordinary intelligence, his persuasive ability, and his rhetorical talent were celebrated by his contemporaries, both friend and enemy. Such

renown has spanned the ages with a rare consistency in the history of culture.

However, the force of Ciceronian discourse does not only depend on its clarity, but also on its smart practice of multiple styles, according to the circumstances and the literary genre. Moreover, Cicero looked to establish a philosophical language in Latin, this is why he did not limit himself to translating Greek terms, but rather invented novel Latin terms, complaining of the poverty of the Greek language. At the level of contents, his writing was equally varied. It is not a matter of a versatile attitude, but of the claim, on his own behalf, of his affiliation to a specific philosophical school, the Academy. Cicero constantly defined himself as *academicus*, a partisan following the school that had stayed faithful, after Plato's death, to Socratic doubt. It is not so much a radical skepticism, but rather the expression of doubt concerning any form of certainty: every subject, in philosophy, in politics, in morality, in jurisprudence, is controversial. Only an argumentation *in utramque partem* (which weighs the arguments for and against every time) can determine a credible and plausible conclusion, because the interrogation is never closed once and for all.

Therefore, Cicero seems to be an author who difficulty lends himself as a unified model of writing and thinking. Nonetheless, this is exactly what happened during the Renaissance. The term Ciceronianism dates back to the nineteenth century and signifies an important trend among the Humanists who were looking to imitate Ciceronian writing, understood as the norm of correct Latin. At first sight, it is a matter of a stylistic quarrel, which implies however a deep disagreement about the idea of language and of culture. The dispute between Paolo Cortese (Rome, 1465–1510) and Angelo Poliziano (Montepulciano, 1454–Florence, 1494) during the fifteenth century is, in this respect, significant. Cortese considers that Cicero is the only model of writing for Neo-Latin culture. Poliziano, on the contrary, asserts that such a conception of imitation would make us similar to parrots. If the ancient culture must be a model for any imitation, this must not be understood in a servile manner, because the exclusivity of the paradigm is a form

of impoverishment. Moreover, the ancient tradition provides a variety of forms, of solutions, and of authors, that must be read and assimilated by the new humanist writers.

Innovation and Original Aspects

Behind these remarks hides a specific idea about language and culture. Poliziano, who wrote in three tongues (Greek, Latin, and Vernacular), is aware that all language has its own historical development, so that the Latin of Cicero cannot be taken back up because the idiom itself is no longer the same, and no longer has the same significance. Therefore, it is necessary to follow new paths, even though in the footsteps of the Ancients. As a grammarian and philologist, Poliziano endorses the position of Crates of Mallus (the ancient librarian of Pergamum) against Aristarchus (the librarian of Alexandria). Language is not an immutable system of rules, whose irregularities can be resolved by recourse to analogy, but rather a composite field, characterized by accumulation, variety, and anomalies. There are changing rules, so Cicero cannot be the unique model of all Latin writing; this approach is foreign to the living practice of the language.

In this respect, Pietro Bembo (Venice, 1470–Rome, 1547) supported an opposite conception. In his letter *De Imitatione* (“On Imitation,” 1512), he criticizes the eclectic style and the multiple references of the prose of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Mirandola, 1469–1533), who had reprised Poliziano's conception. For Bembo, it is necessary to adopt a unique model of writing according to the literary genre: Cicero for prose, Virgil for poetry. The same point of view is assumed in the *Prose della volgare lingua* (“Prose of the Vernacular Language,” 1525): here Bembo is looking to set up grammatical criteria for literature in the vernacular language (actually Tuscan). The unique models must be Petrarch for poetry and Boccaccio for prose, just as Virgil and Cicero were for Latin writing. On the contrary, the language of Dante is criticized as

trivial because it is too close to the insignificant things in life.

In fact, Pietro Bembo, the Secretary to Pope Leo X, was at the head of an intellectual circle that professed a profound cult for ancient Roman culture, notably for Cicero, as a stylistic model. Within this circle were Jacopo Sadoleto (Modena, 1477–Rome, 1547) and the Franco-Flemish humanist Christophe de Longueil (Malines, 1488–Padua, 1522), a highly contrasting figure, who had started by criticizing the cult of Latinity and then was conquered by Bembo's Ciceronian ideas. So the necessity of using Ciceronian and Virgilian turns of phrase was maintained in order to compose hymns to the Saints or in order to translate the Bible.

Impact and Legacy

Against such an attitude, Erasmus of Rotterdam's (Rotterdam, 1467–Basel, 1536) reaction was violent. He wrote the fictional dialogue *Ciceronianus* (1528). It is a satirical dialogue that dramatizes three figures: Bulephorus who represents Erasmus, Hypologus, who asks the questions, and Nosoponus, who embodies the unconditional follower of Cicero in a pedantic manner. From a literary point of view, Erasmus denounces the slavish imitation of Roman philosopher by adopting her own criteria. The contemporaries who recognized themselves in this portrait were appalled. The only true Cicero was, for Erasmus, Cicero himself. From a theological point of view, Erasmus blamed the pagan attitude of the papal court. The faithfulness to Cicero, as well as the cult of the vocabulary of Latin culture, denies the simplicity of the Christian spiritual message. Even the title of *Ciceronianus* text takes up Saint Jerome's letter 22, in which he opposes the fact of being *ciceronianus* to the fact of being *christianus*. However, we can suggest that these oscillations characterize Erasmus' writing.

The erudite public recognized either Pietro Bembo or Christophe de Longueil behind the figure of Nosoponus, so that a fierce polemic followed. Giulio Cesare Scaligero (Riva del Garda, 1484–Agen, 1558), an Italian philologist

and a specialist in the Latin language who had immigrated to France, wrote a defense of Longueil entitled *Oratio pro Cicerone contra Desiderium Erasmum* ("Speech for Cicero against Erasmus" 1531–1537) and Etienne Dolet wrote a significant pamphlet: *Erasmianus* against *Ciceronianus* (1535). In a much drastic way Guillaume Budé (Paris, 1467–1540) broke any relationship with Erasmus,

A more interesting use of Cicero's works was the commentary of his speeches before the court, in which the humanists appreciated the civil and political engagement of the orator. If the imitation of the Ciceronian speeches progressively became a repetitive pedantic exercise, it was, at its start, an effective model of argumentation in order to formulate credible and plausible arguments in the circumstances of an active life. In this respect, around 1390, Antonio Loschi (Vicenza, 1368–1441) wrote a commentary of 11 Ciceronian orations, analyzing as much the argumentation as the style. The enthusiasm for Cicero's orations was very strong in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when for example, Guarino Guarini (Verona, 1370–Ferrara, 1460) commented the *Pro Roscio Oratio* and Rudolph Agricola (Bafflo, 1443–Heidelberg, 1485) examined the arguments of the *Pro Milone Oratio*, which was one of the most commented texts in the history of ciceronian tradition). However, the most significant author was the Byzantine George of Trebizond. For Trebizond (Crete, 1395–Rome, 1484) in his *Rhetoricorum libri V* ("The Five Books of Rhetoric" 1433–1444), rhetoric is essentially a political discipline, detached from philosophical speculation and moral obligations. A political speech must be effective, in the sense that it must convince the public. Cicero's orations therefore offer the best living model of the link between politics and rhetoric. This is why, Trebizond commented the *Pro Ligario Oratio*, in which Cicero defended, with an unhoped-for success Ligarius, who had been accused of high treason with regards to Caesar. The trait is significant: Cicero had equally been one of Pompey's supporters against Caesar. The orations in favor of exiles, partisans of Pompey, were the occasion for Cicero, sidelined from political power after

Caesar's victory, of developing the peace after the civil war.

After all, a substantial change took place between the Middle Ages and Humanism. In the Middle Ages, Cicero was considered above all a *magister* of dialectic, thanks to his rewritings of Aristotle's *Topics*, which were commented by Severinus Boethius. He was equally read as a moral philosopher, as much by Albert the Great as by Thomas of Aquinas, thanks to his interrogation of the true happiness. In the Renaissance, the necessity of elaborating an effective rhetoric in political, juridical, and social conflicts led to considering Cicero as a model of eloquence.

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Imitation-Rhetoric-Style- Latin Language- Tradition.

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Circle of Learning

► Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism

Circulation of Blood in Renaissance Medicine

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Abstract

From the antiquity to the Renaissance, the heart was figured as a container, rather than a pump of blood. Galen's system hypothesized that blood was produced in the liver and that some amount of it passed from the right to the left ventricle through invisible pores. Since the rediscovery of human anatomy in the Renaissance, all Galenic dogma around cardiovascular anatomy and physiology were gradually discredited. Andreas Vesalius denied the patency of interventricular septum. Matteo Realdo Colombo proved that blood passed from the right to the left ventricle through the lungs (pulmonary circulation). William Harvey, basing on Hieronymus Fabricius' finding of valves in the veins and on Aristotle's concept of circular movement, discovered blood systemic circulation and demonstrated that heart was a pump, rather than a simple container, or vase, of blood. Harvey's concept of the heart as a pump and his quantitative and experimental method influenced seventeenth- and eighteenth-century medicine, which was characterized by a mathematical and mechanical approach to living creatures.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The discovery of blood systemic circulation has a long history, even though the complete

understanding of cardiovascular physiology arrived only in modern times, while all antiquity and middle ages were characterized by a totally different conception of the structure and function of the heart and blood vessels.

Since the Egyptian medicine (3500 BC), the heart was believed to be the center of the organism and the site of human passions, will, and intelligence. Morphologically and physiologically, it was considered a vase or container from which a system of channels transported throughout the body, blood, feces, semen, benign and malignant spirits, and even the soul (the *metw*) (Wilson 1962; Nunn 1996). The fundamental idea that the heart was a vase, rather than a pump, characterized in some way all ancient cardiovascular physiologies. The main synthesis arrived with Galen of Pergamon (129–217 AD). According to him, the right atrium and ventricle of the heart were the sites in which blood arrived through the vena cava, after having been produced by the liver. Then, pushed by the continual arrival of new blood, it was distributed through the veins to other organs and tissues of the body (to the lungs it arrived by pulmonary arteries), where it was continuously consumed and replaced by new blood (Nutton 2004). Because of its ability to conciliate elements from Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy and Hippocratic and Alexandrine medicine, Galen system persisted almost unvaried until the whole Renaissance (Singer 2014; Hankinson 2008). Moreover, the finalistic approach at the base of his medical and philosophical view, according to which any biological feature was perfectly designed by the wisdom of the creator, represented the crucial feature of its fully integration in the scientific and philosophical orthodoxy of Christianity. An integration that turned his medicine in a dogmatic system which endured, in some of its aspects, even until the XIX century.

Innovative and Original Aspects

One of the central dogmas of Galen's cardiovascular anatomy and physiology was the patency of interventricular septum. His system, in fact, presumed that some blood passed from the right to

the left ventricle, where it was mixed with air coming from the lungs through pulmonary veins for the creation of the vital spirit, one of three fundamental spirits in psychosomatic functions (Temkin 1951; Donini 2008). From the late fifteenth century, through a more rigorous philological approach to Galen's corpus and an even more diffused practice of dissection, the ideal conditions were established for physicians' emancipation from Galen dogmatic system (Landucci Ruffo 1981). The first step for rethinking this system was done at the peak of Renaissance rediscovery of human anatomy, thanks to the work of Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564). Vesalius, professor of anatomy at the University of Padua (1537–1543), revolutionized the study and teaching of human anatomy because he was the first to base his research exclusively on his own dissections and observations on human cadavers. Thanks to his new empirical approach, which had an important influence also on Renaissance and modern philosophy and epistemology (Cassirer 1943), Vesalius could prove, in his famous *De humani corporis fabrica*, that septal interventricular pores did not exist (Vesalius 1543). In the second edition of the *Fabrica*, Vesalius claimed that this discovery forced him to rethink cardiovascular physiology, even if he was not able to propose any new theory (Zampieri et al. 2014; Vesalius 1555). Matteo Realdo Colombo (1516–1559), student and for some time successor of Vesalius at the chair of anatomy of the University of Padua, pursued his studies, discovering (and experimentally proving by vivisection) pulmonary circulation, that is, the transit of blood from the right to the left ventricle through the lungs (Elmaghawry et al. 2013; Ongaro 1971; Colombo 1559). Another Padua professor of anatomy contributed decisively to the discovery of blood systemic circulation by William Harvey (1578–1657) in 1628 (Harvey 1628): Hieronymus Fabricius ab Aquapendente (1537–1619). He was professor of Harvey during Harvey's stay in Padua (1599–1602). Exactly in this period, Fabricius discovered the valves in the veins (Fabricius ab Aquapendente 1603), which gave to Harvey a pivotal insight to think about the centrifugal distribution of blood in the body. Interestingly, both Fabricius and Harvey were admirers

of Aristotle. In the introduction of his revolutionary *Exercitationes de generatione animalium*, Harvey mentioned Aristotle as his “general” and Hieronymus Fabricius as his “guide” (Harvey 1651). From Aristotle, Harvey took the idea that the perfect movement in nature was the circular one. He hypothesized that this kind of movement should exist also in the human body, because it was a microcosm reflecting the same laws and functions of the macrocosm (Zampieri et al. 2013).

Impact and Legacy

The discovery of blood circulation revolutionized not only medicinal theory and practice but also epistemology. Harvey used a quantitative and experimental argument for denying Galen’s centripetal theory of blood distribution (from the liver to the organism without return). He estimated the volume of blood passing through the left ventricle in half an hour (about 12 k, or 26 lb), clearly indicating that the liver was unable to produce so much blood in such a short period of time. Only a close circulatory system could keep it constant. This mathematical approach and the concept that the heart was a pump influenced seventeenth- and eighteenth-century physiology, which was developed through a mechanistic approach. Marcello Malpighi (1628–1694) discovered capillary vessels (Malpighi 1661) and Thomas Bartholin (1614–1680) gave the first complete description of the lymphatic system (Bartholin 1653), thus closing the circle of cardiovascular system understanding.

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Cisalpino, Andrea

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Cities and Urban Life, Renaissance

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Abstract

At the time of the Renaissance, Europe was already heavily urbanized. The Middle Ages had witnessed an extraordinary period of city building in which many new settlements were founded. During the Renaissance, this activity dramatically slowed. However, the Renaissance did give rise to new ways of considering the city and to new discourses regarding urban life. These included innovative forms of city description and the birth of the modern architectural treatise, something that, arguably, also initiated the modern discourse of urbanism. Simultaneously, there were multiple developments in the visual representation of the city, with the genre of city views becoming increasingly popular throughout the sixteenth century. Renaissance thinkers of various kinds concerned themselves with the ideal city, formulating schemes that ranged from the practical to the unrealizable. While these projects frequently remained unbuilt, colonialism did give rise to new city building in other continents – particularly “Spanish America” where the grid became more or less ubiquitous. Among the small urban projects that were executed in Europe, some have continued to exert enormous influence on discussions of urban planning. For example, the Tuscan city of Pienza – a hilltop village that was given a new central piazza, a cathedral, and a number of other monumental buildings in the fifteenth century – continues to be held up as a model for development by urbanists adhering to a

variety of different views. Meanwhile, the works of the architectural treatise writers of the period are still regarded by many as foundational documents for the theory and practice of urbanism.

Cities and Urban Life

By the middle of the fourteenth century, the European network of cities was mostly complete (de Vries 1989). Medieval builders had consolidated what survived from the urban legacy of antiquity, incorporated the formerly Moorish cities of Sicily and the Iberian Peninsula into a broader Christendom, and founded over 1,000 new towns (Benevolo 1993). To this day, the distribution of cities across the continent largely conforms to the medieval pattern. This extraordinary period of urban growth did not continue into the Renaissance. The Black Death of 1348 ushered in a century of economic and demographic decline during which few new cities were built. Simultaneously, political changes, particularly in the heavily urbanized peninsula of Italy, saw the widespread collapse of communal governments and their replacement by seignorial regimes. Nonetheless, the urban population remained stable, bolstered by immigration from rural areas, and the life of the cities continued (de Vries 1989).

The Renaissance inherited not only the medieval city network but also a powerful urban imaginary populated with what might be termed “cities of the mind.” Of these, Rome and Jerusalem were the two most important, just as they had been in the Middle Ages. However, where medieval Christians seriously entertained the idea of occupying Jerusalem (and succeeded briefly in doing so), this prospect sharply receded in the Renaissance, notwithstanding frequent fifteenth-century calls for a new crusade. Increasingly difficult to access, Jerusalem – which always occupied an unstable position as both a lamentably flawed earthly city and a longed-for spiritual paradise that would appear at the close of history – retained its place in the religious imaginary, even as the actual city slipped from view. While it often stood at the center of medieval *mappae mundi*, the

discovery of the Americas and the development of new forms of cartographic projection displaced Jerusalem from the center of the map. By the time of Gerardus Mercator's famous world map of 1569 – a landmark in the establishment of the modern world's cartographic image – Jerusalem had to take its place as one city among many. Pilgrimage to the city was sometimes replaced with visits to substitutes such as the “sacred mountain” established above the Italian hill town of Varallo in 1491, where the Jerusalem pilgrimage route was recreated (Siew 2015).

Rome, by contrast, continued to draw pilgrims to its holy sites and tourists to its ancient wonders. Abandoned by the papacy for the majority of the fourteenth century and left without stable government during the papal schism, the entry of Martin V into the city in 1420 initiated a long and often faltering period of urban transformation. From Martin's reestablishment of the *maestri della strada* (Masters of the Streets) to Sixtus V's major reorganization of the city in the 1580s, Rome was gradually converted from an anarchic and depopulated backwater into the impressive seat of a major spiritual and political power – albeit one that was proven by the Sack of 1527 to be militarily defenseless (Ackerman 1982; Frommel 1986; Kostof 1995; Taylor et al. 2016). Rome's ancient ruins, often repurposed or mined for building materials, continued to inspire wonder in visitors and stimulated humanist writers to ponder both the collapse of a great urban civilization and the manifest differences between contemporary cities and those of antiquity. Humanists were often painfully aware that ancient Rome exceeded the urban society of their own times according to almost every measure. In Roman literature and particularly the works of writers from the late Republican period such as Cicero, they found a rich source of thinking about the res publica that offered a fertile stimulus for their own works.

Depending on the observer, Rome might exceed expectations, as it did for Petrarch (2008), or fall horribly short of them, as it did for Luther among others (Marius 1999). The desire to achieve a full architectural understanding of the ancient city, as articulated in a famous letter

written by Raphael and Baldassare Castiglione to Pope Leo X, remained constant throughout the sixteenth century, spurring the activities of many architects and architectural treatise writers, artists, mapmakers, historians, and topographers (Shearman 2003). The comparison between ancient and modern Rome was a staple of both literary and visual descriptions of the city (Fall 2012). Like Jerusalem, Rome was thus always essentially “double” – ancient and modern, pagan and Christian, real and ideal – creating a gap in which desire thrived and creativity flourished.

Such was the length of Rome's shadow that many cities styled themselves as new Romes in order to enhance their status in the eyes of the outside world. Cities could be troublesome entities for the larger territorial powers that often sought to control them. Whether in the hands of a local aristocracy, a communal government, or a despotic regime and whether existing as city-states or simply as cities within a larger state, cities regularly aspired to a degree of autonomy that the kingdoms, imperial lands, and papal dominions with which they rubbed shoulders found intolerable. In an age in which monarchy was routinely considered the most natural and legitimate form of government, the cities had long bolstered their own claims to legitimacy by pointing to illustrious founders who ranged from Roman emperors all the way back to Noah. Additionally, the Middle Ages had developed a distinct genre of descriptions of cities in which the major monuments were enumerated, the antiquity of the city was vaunted, and the illustrious deeds of the citizens were praised (Hyde 1965–1966).

Leonardo Bruni's *Laudatio florentinae urbis* (*Panegyric to the City of Florence*), composed 1403–4, marks a major development in this literature. Bruni had learned Greek from the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras (who himself wrote an important text regarding cities: the *Comparison of the Old and New Rome*, in which the author lauded Constantinople – a city that, after its capture by the Ottomans in 1453, would become ever more a “city of the mind” for the Christian west). His command of Greek allowed Bruni to use a new kind of source, modeling his

panegyric on Aelius Aristides's *Panathenaicus* and thereby introducing considerable novelty to the literature of Italian city descriptions (Witt 1978). Bruni praises Florence for its situation and climate, its cleanliness, abundance of ancient ruins, numerous bridges, and fine buildings. He repeatedly invokes the beauty of the city and argues that all who see it will be immediately convinced of its greatness. Placing the city in its territory according to a concentric hierarchy, Bruni employs the simile of a round buckler, arguing that Florence, in like manner, sits within circles, surrounded by its walls, suburbs, country houses, towns, and castles. Writing in the wake of Florentine victory in the recent war with Milan, Bruni casts the Florentines as the ancestors of the Romans of the Republican period, praising the city's republicanism and arguing that true liberty cannot exist under the rule of a single individual (Bruni 1978).

Despite its highly literary and deeply idealizing (and indeed ideological) character, the *Laudatio* does nonetheless relate to other orders of writing that emerged from the administration of cities themselves. Bruni's insistence on the beauty and cleanliness of the city mirrors the preoccupations of a wealth of urban statutes regulating a wide range of activities – building, commerce, waste disposal, street cleaning, and so forth – of which particularly complete records exist for the Tuscan city-states. Also related to this discourse is another monumental work of Neo-Latin prose dating from the fifteenth century: Leon Battista Alberti's architectural treatise *De re aedificatoria*, which was partially completed by 1452 (Alberti 1988). Drawing on the treatise of the ancient architect Vitruvius, as well as a huge variety of ancient and medieval sources (not to mention his own experiences), Alberti – a humanist of the highest pedigree who also practiced architecture – sets out to establish generative rules for the construction and regulation of the entire built environment. It has been argued that, with this treatise, Alberti initiates the modern discourse of urbanism (Choay 1996). Certainly, questions of the city (how it might be made secure, how it will differ when ruled by a tyrant as opposed to a king, how it ought to be ordered and made beautiful) are

confronted throughout the treatise (Pearson 2011). The cool tone in which Alberti weighs up the strategies of different political regimes anticipates the writings of Machiavelli, while his discussion of the relationship between buildings and civic life establishes a key theme for architectural treatise writers throughout the period. Concepts from political philosophy easily cross into Alberti's discourse on urbanism and continue to flow into the writings of his successors. Thus Francesco di Giorgio Martini's design for a fortified town based on the human form coheres happily not only with Vitruvius's analogies between architecture and the body but also with the notion of the body politic articulated by writers such as Marsilius of Padua (not to mention a broader tradition of political thinking that goes all the way back to antiquity) (Di Giorgio Martini 1967; Marsilius of Padua 1956; Barkan 1975).

Modern commentators have mostly agreed that Alberti does not describe an ideal city in his treatise. Indeed, throughout his substantial literary output, Alberti reveals a marked ambivalence regarding cities and urban life. Aristotle had argued in the *Politics* that anybody who is able to live without the *polis* must be either a beast or a God. Alberti, who drew heavily on Aristotle, often inverts this position, arguing that the city-states make beasts out of men. Other significant distortions of Aristotle occur in the architectural treatise, where Alberti modifies the philosopher's discussion of the relationship between the household and the state to argue that a city should be considered a large house and a house a small city. In fact, a fascination with the interrelated scales of palace and city can be found throughout the Renaissance, for example, in Castiglione's observation that Urbino was a city that seemed to be a large palace and in reactions to the palace of Diocletian at Split, where a huge palace really did enclose a small city (Castiglione 1967; Payne 2014). However, despite the correspondence that Alberti draws between city and house, the relationship between the social units of city and family was far from settled in his thinking; in his treatise on the family, it is raised as a question that the participants in the dialogue are unable fully to resolve. Speaking as a character in

another dialogue, Alberti flatly contradicts Aristotle's assertion that the city exists by nature, asserting instead that it is the product of chance (Pearson 2011).

Although Alberti did not offer an ideal city, many subsequent architectural writers did. Antonio Averlino, known as Filarete, dedicated his treatise (completed c. 1464) to Francesco Sforza, the Duke of Milan, and described within it *Sforzinda*, an ideal city designed for the Duke. In the center of the city, a group of monumental buildings clusters around a rectangular piazza from which radial streets lead outward to walls that describe an eight-pointed star made from two squares (Filarete 1972). Polygonal shapes of this kind would become a staple of the many ideal cities that were designed during the Renaissance, both in Italy and beyond (Kostof 1991). They encapsulate the Renaissance attraction to abstract geometries and the central plan on the one hand and the exigencies of fortification with which architects were often intensively involved, on the other (just witness Francesco di Giorgio's many designs for fortresses and radial cities). A number of towns were constructed in Europe on the basis of such polygonal planning. For example, Palma Nova was founded by the Venetian Republic from 1593 as a fortified town with a hexagonal central piazza from which straight streets lead to a polygon made from nine bastions (later encompassed by successive phases of further polygonal fortification works). Far from constituting an "ideal" town or fortress, however, Palma Nova was beset by intractable problems from the outset (Howard 2011). It is tempting to consider such projects "utopian," and indeed there is some relationship between them and utopian thinking. They are, however, in many senses quite different from Thomas More's *Utopia* (published 1516) which, although it does include the description of a city, exists essentially as a complex critique of European society.

More wrote *Utopia* as a dialogue, set in a city that was among the most important in Europe at the time: Antwerp. By the dawn of the sixteenth century, the urban situation within Europe had changed. A growing population led not to the widespread construction of new towns but to the

expansion of existing large cities. As ever, port cities provided the motors of economic growth. Venice, Genoa, and Bruges had dominated in the fifteenth century; for the best part of the sixteenth, Antwerp was preeminent. Among the many reasons for the precipitous rise of this city, one might cite its connections to a large web of international trade. The city provided a convenient entry to continental markets for English cloth merchants. Additionally, its links with German traders in precious metals were attractive to Portuguese merchants who required silver to exchange for spices in Asia and copper and other metals that could be traded in ports along the West African sea route (Limberger 2001). This activity was part of a nascent European colonialism that provided the most significant occasion for the building of new cities during the Renaissance period. In particular, the Spanish established many new settlements in the Americas, sometimes on existing Aztec and Inca cities (whose sophisticated urban layouts they seem mostly to have disregarded) and other times on land that had not previously been heavily urbanized. In every case the grid, which had also been fundamental for the medieval new towns, provided the basic organizing structure. Across the course of the sixteenth century, this practice of orthogonal planning in the Americas was gradually formalized by the Spanish into detailed instructions for the founding of new towns and cities. European urban planning in the Spanish Americas thus partook of a high degree of uniformity, although improvisation *within* the grid could lead to the creation of very different urban environments (Benevolo 1993; Kostof 1991; Kinsbruner 2005). There were also a number of exceptions. Most striking among these are the initiatives of Vasco de Quiroga, a bishop and judge of the royal audiencia in Mexico who, from 1531, founded two hospital villages from his own funds, in which he intended the local Indian population to live according to principles derived from More's *Utopia* (Benevolo 1993). In so doing, Quiroga brought *Utopia* "back" to the continent in which More had located the fictional island in his book. This extraordinary episode was, however, thoroughly atypical. Quiroga's proposals for a "utopian" structuring of Spanish

America had been rejected outright by the Spanish crown, and he founded his villages in spite of official policy and at his own expense (Zavala 1955).

In most cases, Utopia remained on the page. Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun*, the first version of which was completed in 1602 while the philosopher was in a Neapolitan jail for his part in an anti-Spanish conspiracy, takes clear inspiration from More's *Utopia*. Where Plato's *Laws* was an important text for writers on both politics and architecture, the *Republic* and particularly the description of the philosopher kings, looms large for both More and Campanella. *The City of the Sun* takes aspects of the ideal city tradition and fuses them with utopian thinking in order to create a city of philosophy that contains splendid buildings and impregnable fortifications built, in concentric circles, around an astrological temple (Campanella 1981). Campanella himself was given to prophecy and was influenced by hermetic philosophy and the teachings of Joachim of Fiore. These teachings had, from time to time, affected thinking about a number of cities, including Florence – a city that was inclined to nurture a prophetic sense of its own destiny. In the fifteenth century, as André Chastel first pointed out, both Florence and Rome occasionally appeared in manuscripts to illustrate St Augustine's *City of God*, while Girolamo Savonarola proclaimed Florence to be the New Jerusalem (Chastel 1954; Weinstein 1968). Indeed, the city appears in the place of Jerusalem in the background of Botticelli's *Mystic Crucifixion* (c. 1500). The claim to have established the New Jerusalem was also made, with dramatic consequences, by the Anabaptists at Münster. In the same years that Quiroga was building his hospital villages in Mexico, the Anabaptists began a radical utopian experiment of their own in this German city, one that would end in terrible violence.

Examples of city-making in Renaissance Europe, particularly from the fifteenth century, are relatively rare. When they did occur, they were often on a small scale; one need think only of the Tuscan micro-city of Pienza. From one point of view, this city is little more than a hilltop village with the addition of a trapezoid piazza and

a few monumental buildings. However, it has had an enormous influence on discussions about planning and is still held up as a model by the New Urbanism movement today. The Renaissance did witness sustained and vigorous efforts to theorize and to represent the city, inventing new modes of understanding and new urbanistic frameworks in the process, and this must be considered one of its chief legacies. A steady accumulation of literature devoted to the description and analysis of the city was produced following Bruni's *Laudatio* and Alberti's architectural treatise. The visual representation of the city also continued apace. The subject is too extensive to be explored here; we might merely observe that the genre of the city view gained steadily in popularity from the late fifteenth century (Fall 2012). The publication of the *Civitates orbis terrarum*, a collection of representations of the major cities of the world, printed in Cologne in six volumes between 1572 and 1616, attests to the existence of a substantial market for such images (Swift 2008). By this time, Antwerp was already in decline and Amsterdam was on the rise. The focus of economic activity continued to drift from the Mediterranean to the cities of the North Sea. Meanwhile, in Rome, Sixtus V and his architect Domenico Fontana sought to convert the city into an enormous pilgrim shrine with straight roads that could be easily navigated by coaches. In the process they quite literally paved the way for the new city planning of the Baroque.

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Citizenship, Renaissance

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Abstract

In the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, civic conceptions and practices flourished in Western and Central Europe,

beginning in northern Italy but later in other places, including France, Flanders, Spain, England, and Poland-Lithuania. Classical influences and political reality saw the rise of a Republican political sense of citizenship, i.e., a conceptualization of elites as engaged in self-rule of their independent political community, called a *civitas*, a republic, or a commonwealth (which could be a town, a region, a kingdom, or the Church). As such, Republicanism emphasized Classical civic traditions and historical awareness, and it manifested itself in elites' conceptions of politics and in forms of political practice and rhetoric. As part of this process, political identity grew more attached to these political communities. Elites developed ethics of good citizenship, based on the active participation and contribution to the political community of armed citizens and an unequal conception of citizenship that excluded people outside the elites. Jurists legally elaborated citizenship through the formalization of rules on who was or was not part of the political community, how citizenship was gained, and what the grades of civic status were. The sixteenth century saw a transformation of citizenship as the state began its long and gradual process of monopolizing it.

Analytical and Contemporary Conceptions of Citizenship

"Citizenship" has many meanings. Among the conceptions of citizenship regularly used today by scholars in the field of citizenship studies, four conceptions are especially important for an understanding of Renaissance citizenship. First, political citizenship is understood as membership in an independent community entailing participation in its self-rule. Second, legal citizenship is an understanding of citizenship as a legal status conferring rights or privileges, such as protection of the law, welfare rights, political rights, etc. While today these two definitions of citizenship often converge, both historically and analytically, the two senses are distinct: the first sense refers to

being an active political citizen and the second to being a passive national and subject to the law. The third regular sense is citizenship as the identity of individuals through membership in communities or social associations. Today, citizenship as identity is often equated with nationality (i.e., membership in a nation). The fourth sense of the word is more closely related to the ethics of being a citizen. Ethical citizenship is a political virtue or a cultural activity, to which we allude when we exhort someone to "good citizenship" or admonish someone for displaying "bad citizenship" (Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Smith 2002; Joppke 2007; Lurie 2015).

These four concepts of citizenship (political, legal, citizenship as identity, and ethical citizenship) convey our own contemporary analysis of citizenship. While we use these analytical concepts to discuss historical conceptions of citizenship, we should remember that Renaissance conceptions of citizenship varied. For instance, during the Renaissance, regular meaning and usage of the words "citizen" and "citizenship" sometimes simply meant "free city dwellers." Various regions of Europe had various terms to call such people, not only "citizens" but also, for instance, "burghers." Such urban discourse was of course distinct from religious discourse, seen in works of Fathers of the Church such as St. Augustine that elites continued to read and to translate, which discussed "citizens of the heavenly city" (Presles 1486).

Beyond these urban and religious meanings, contemporaries had conceptions of citizenship that were closely related to citizenship in its aforementioned four analytical senses. Political culture, language, and theory resonated with these conceptions, as elites developed and transformed them throughout the period. We shall now turn to these developments.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Two Classical conceptions of citizenship are especially important for the history of citizenship in the Renaissance. The first conception is the ancient Greek and Roman traditions of political

citizenship practiced in the Greek *polis* and in the Roman Republic and articulated in writings of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. The second important ancient tradition is imperial Roman citizenship. Imperial Rome replaced the political form of citizenship in Republican Rome (and ancient Greece) with an imperial form of citizenship, which fits better with the second sense of citizenship, i.e., passive enjoyment of rights (protection of courts and of Roman troops) (Pocock 1998, 2003).

Beyond these somewhat forgotten two Classical forms of citizenship, several important medieval traditions of citizenship flourished long before the Renaissance. Medieval Western Europe saw as many forums for political participation as there were communities. Both urban centers and rural countryside were permeated by communities, each with its own forum for political participation and collective action (Reynolds 1984). The various political forums were based on the idea that the lord should govern through the counsel of his subjects and on Church-based ideas on the legitimacy of power. Ideas on the legitimacy of authority were a major reason for the practice of ruling through negotiation and political participation. Another reason was often a lack of enough power by rulers to enforce their will on reluctant and sometimes distant subjects. Contemporaries based political legitimacy in a large measure on the concepts of “aid” and “counsel,” with strong ideas and practices of contractual relationships among the rulers and the ruled (Bloch 1939; Canning 2011). In the cases of towns, communal ideas of political participation also manifested themselves (the result, in part, of the so-called communal movement, of the High Middle Ages in which towns gained political privileges of self-government through communal institutions).

Against the background of political fragmentation and periods of upheaval, the political and ethical senses of citizenship were underdeveloped before the Renaissance (Heather 1990). Still, ideas about the political body circulated through much of the Middle Ages (Tierney 1982; Black 1992). The eleventh-century rediscovery of Roman law in northern Italy had important consequences for civic ideas. Jurists rearticulated

ideas relating to imperial Roman citizenship as they related to their own social and political reality. Writers on the political authority of rulers relied on precepts of Roman and Canon law to buttress the king’s (or the Pope’s) authority in the kingdom; he was “emperor in his realm.”

Writers in northern Italy and beyond wrote of political virtues in texts used to teach reading and writing and in books of advice to princes. In the thirteenth century, such writers began to incorporate the Roman Republican ideas of Cicero through Macrobius’ *Commentary on Scipio’s Dream* by Cicero and Cicero’s *De officiis*. Brunetto Latini’s *Book of Treasure* (1260s), for instance, elaborated on political virtues and the virtues of the ruler. The translation of Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Politics* into Latin in the thirteenth century, and later into various vernaculars, was a development that had a profound influence on European political thought, in general, and on civic ideas in particular. Scholastic writers and others began to incorporate Aristotelian ideas into the Christian faith and into their own political reality. Beginning with Albertus Magnus (c. 1200–1280) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) but continuing with many other writings such as Dante’s *Monarchia* (composed between 1309 and 1313) and Marsilius of Padua’s *Defensor pacis* (1324), writers discussed politics as the art of ruling an independent political community (a commonwealth, a polis, or a res publica) in justice for the common good. Writers on the Church (e.g., “conciliarist” writers such as Jean Gerson [1363–1429]) also developed these ideas, for instance, in the context of the Great Schism (beginning in 1378) (Skinner 1978; Black 1992; Viroli 1992).

Jurists in the cities of northern Italy (and beyond) wrote more and more under the influence of Aristotle and Classical Roman Republicanism, especially in the school of jurists called the “Post-Glossators.” Thus, Bartolus of Sassoferrato (1313/1314–1357) applied corporation theory and ideas on imperial sovereignty to the *civitas*, an independent urban commonwealth. Accordingly, citizens were members of such a *civitas* either by birth, naturalization, or privilege. Baldus de Ubaldis (1327–1400) further developed the concept of citizenship, its grades, and how to

acquire it. He also developed the idea that a kingdom may have citizens just as a republic may have subjects. He did so through inserting Aristotelian terms into the legal discourse on citizenship, i.e., recognizing the Aristotelian analysis of “the citizen as both ruler and ruled” (Aristotle 1984). He thus accepted that the citizen of the *civitas* acts also as a subject when he must obey the laws of the city (Canning 1987; Riesenberg 1992; Wells 1995). Similar conceptual moves were followed in other places in Europe in this period. Nicole Oresme of France (in a manuscript written in 1372), for instance, described the *civitas* as potentially a kingdom or a region. He also described the citizens as “subject citizens” who as “citizens” could “participate in ruling, in counseling, and in judging” and as subjects must “obey and suppose and consider that the prince commands well” (Oresme 1970).

The jurists and theorists were embedded in the elitist social and political reality of the towns. As such, the citizens were part of a legal estate or status, free people of means dwelling in towns. Town governments (or other local or realm-wide rulers) defined who in the towns enjoyed full political citizenship and how newcomers could become citizens. The conditions varied somewhat and included heredity, residence, participation in communal expenses, and property qualifications (Riesenberg 1992). These elites often faced pressure for change by rising new social forces within the towns and thus feared civil strife. By defining citizenship legally through heredity and property qualifications, these elites excluded the vast majority of the population: women, artisans, workers, small merchants, and lower classes such as prostitutes and the poor. The excluded majority had various other legal statuses, such as inhabitants and subjects. The work of the jurists, such as Bartolus and Baldus, remained exclusionary and simply gave an Aristotelian theoretical conceptualization of those elite citizens.

Fifteenth-century northern Italy saw a particularly impressive flourishing of civic ideologies, based on Roman sources but connected to the social and political realities and to attempts of the elites to preserve liberty and Republican institutions in the face of the replacement of republics

for single rulers. Today scholars call these civic ideologies “civic humanism.” Writers in that age, especially in northern Italian urban centers (particularly Florence), such as Leonardo Bruni (1369–1444), Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), and Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), to name a few illustrious figures, developed political citizenship and Republicanism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They developed the idea that ideal politics were based on equal and free citizens who are active and participating members of an independent republic governed by a “mixed constitution” (involving the Aristotelian three good forms of government). Their writings were based on liberty of the republic, anti-monarchical conceptions, individualism, humanism (although humanists in northern Italy did not always take a Republican stance), and Ciceronian-Republican virtues of the citizens. These writers discussed the level of participation citizens needed to display. They exalted not only Republican liberty but also individual civic virtue and an armed and active citizenry (Skinner 1978; Viroli 1992; Pocock 2003).

Republicanism and civic humanism were not confined to northern Italy. In the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, Republicanism gained ground throughout much of Europe, including not only Italy but also France, Flanders, Spain, England, and Poland-Lithuania. Social and political realities varied greatly, including devastation of wars and epidemics, social and religious strife, levels of towns’ independence, degrees of bureaucratization, and political integration. Thus, civic practices as well as civic ideologies also varied. Generally speaking, Republicanism emphasized Classical (particularly Roman) civic traditions in rhetoric and stressed historical awareness in chronicles and other writings. Republicanism manifested itself in elites’ conceptualization of politics, in their ideas on the active citizen and his involvement in politics for the common good, as well as in ideas on the Classical virtues. The varied attempts of the Western European monarchies to integrate and coalesce their powers, and reactions of elites to these attempts, influenced civic conceptions. No less influential were regional and urban powers with which they sometimes worked and

sometimes contended. The Reformation too became influential as civic ideas intertwined with it.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The relatively rich sense of political citizenship, seen in conceptions of active participation of free and equal citizens in the self-rule of an independent *civitas* and in Republican rhetoric, retained elitist and exclusionary features as before. That said, popular pressures on the social boundaries of citizenship remained both in political practice and in civic ideas (see, e.g., Nederman 2002). Public opinion too remained important as before (Connell 2016) and sometimes even gained in importance through a growing politicization of the public sphere and a rise in popular participation in politics (Bourquin and Hamon 2010). Civic ideas reflected these pressures through precise definitions of unequal political citizenship, namely, who may participate in exactly what manner. Elitist mechanisms remained almost constant (Magnette 2005). Thus, while popular pressure sometimes rose and while civic humanism rhetorically celebrated the participation in politics of free and equal citizens, the social function of this civic discourse remained not only elitist but also exclusionary: the elite citizens needed to participate in self-rule; the rest needed to obey.

Legal discourse on citizenship also had a dual aspect. While, as detailed, the period saw a formalization of the rules pertaining to citizenship in the political sense, there was also greater formalization of who were citizens only in the legal sense. More elaborate rules were also developed pertaining to issues of naturalization as well as the privileges of citizens versus foreigners in Italy, France, England, Castile, and various other places in Europe. Such more and more detailed rules regarding the status of foreigners, their disabilities, and their ways to attain civic privileges and naturalization, all came to define – through such liminality – what it meant to be a legal citizen, how one acquired such status, who was part of this group, and what were their duties (e.g., taxation) and privileges (Riesenberg 1992; Wells 1995; Kim 2000; Herzog 2003).

At the same time, a growing sense of citizenship as identity potentially also enlarged the *civitas*. This political community in the Aristotelian sense was not the city of old but also the contemporary political bodies such as kingdoms. The Republican discourse had the effect of exhorting activism in defense of these political bodies, for the love of the *patria*. The greater personal commitment to the political body of citizens exhorted by writers sometimes entailed also greater identification with these political entities and even with grander regional or realm-wide entities (such as France or England).

Perhaps nothing shows the innovative nature of Renaissance conception of Republicanism more than the issue of civic agency. While medieval thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas subordinated human institutions to divine institutions, Renaissance thinkers brought back to the forefront worldly concerns and human institutions. Thus Machiavelli's conception of citizenship, for instance, was focused on achieving personal glory in this world (rather than salvation in the next) through success within and through political society. Machiavelli argued that it was essential to channel civic activism toward political achievements of the commonwealth (Machiavelli 1950).

One of the distinctly new aspects of Renaissance civic conceptions was its greater Classical awareness and historical self-reflection. Instead of older notions focused on the universal entities of Church and Empire, contemporaries had a greater sense of history. They conceived of their own times and of contemporary republics, in chronicles and in other forms of expressions, often with historical Classical context (with comparisons, e.g., to Republican Rome) (Skinner 1978; Viroli 1992; Pocock 2003; Nederman 2005).

Impact and Legacy

The sixteenth century gradually saw another transformation of the language and practice of citizenship. Political and social processes contributed to shifting the focus from political citizens to legal subjects. By the seventeenth century, the centrality of the republic was coming to be

eclipsed by the rise of the state. Over the centuries, the state gradually monopolized the granting of citizenship (though the process was by no means linear). Subsequently, nationality and citizenship gradually came to mean almost the same thing, as the nation-state gained a monopoly of providing citizenship (Skinner 1978; Viroli 1992; Sahlin 2004). The legacy of the Renaissance jurists was very important in the rising legal definition of citizenship. The formalization of rules pertaining to civic status began with these Roman and Canon laws jurists, even if later elaborated by modern jurists and finally incorporated into a state (rather than a republic).

Walter Ullmann has argued that the Middle Ages ended when “citizens” in the political world replaced “subjects” in the Christian world (Ullmann 1961). Yet this supposed end of the Middle Ages came only gradually. The legacy of political citizenship in the Classical Republican tradition, which resurfaced in the Renaissance in northern Italy as well as in other regions in Western and Central Europe, remained important but not ubiquitous in light of the aforementioned sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries’ transformations in political language and the rise of the state. The heirs of this type of political citizenship included the English Commonwealth of the seventeenth century, the French Revolution, and the United States of America in the eighteenth century (Pocock 1998, 2003).

Cross-References

► [Humanism, Civic](#)

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Civility

- [Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Classical Tradition

- [Humanism](#)

Clavius, Christophorus

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Abstract

Christophorus Clavius (25 March 1537/8 – 6 February 1612) was a Jesuit mathematician from Bamberg who defended Ptolemaic astronomy. At the same time, he confirmed Galileo's contradicting observations, such as

the moons of Jupiter and the phases of Venus. However, he was hesitant to interpret them. As an expert mathematician, he contributed to the reform of the Gregorian calendar. His largest success was the promotion of mathematical studies in European and even Chinese Jesuit chairs and colleges. During his life he was famous for his commentary on Euclid's *Elementa*.

Alternate Names

Christoph or Christopher Clavius. The origin of the first name is uncertain. The *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Bruhns 1876) suggests that “Clavius” is derived from the Latin word *clavis* meaning “Schlüssel” (“key”), whereas the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (Müller 1908) assumes that the original surname was “Christoph Clau.” Other suggestions for Clavius' original name are “Nagel,” which is Latin *clavus*, or “Klau(e).”

Biography

Little is known about Clavius' early life (Lamalle 1957). He was born in Bamberg on 25 March 1537 or 1538. In 1555, at nearly 17 years of age, Clavius entered the Roman Jesuit order (Romano 1996), and the following year began his studies at the University of Coimbra in Portugal under Pedro Nunes, where he excelled in mathematics. While in Coimbra, Clavius witnessed the solar eclipse on 21 August 1560, which probably inspired his later career as astronomer. He is recorded as having been in Rome in 1561 and 1562, where he studied physics, metaphysics, and theology. In 1567, Clavius became a professor of mathematics. In the same year, he observed the total eclipse of the Sun with the telescope. Aside from a brief stint as a professor in Naples between 1595 and 1596, Clavius taught at the Collegio Romano until his death. However, his theological career had a slower start: ordained in 1564, he only became a full member of the Jesuit order in 1575. On 6 February 1612, Clavius died in Rome (The Galileo Project 1995).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Clavius followed the medieval tradition of Ptolemaic-Aristotelian astronomy (Lattis 1994, 2–7). For that reason he upheld the geocentric cosmos: the theory of solid spheres and of uniform planetary motions, against the increasing attempts to replace Ptolemy and other ancient astronomers with new theories (Jardine 1979). In 1581, Clavius published *Gnomonices libri octo*, an evaluation of rival cosmologies. Here, he addressed the theories of medieval and Renaissance philosophers, such as Agostino Nifo, Bartolomeo Amico, and Clavius's colleague in Rome, Benito Pereira, who believed that Ptolemaeus' astronomy was not compatible with Aristotle's physics. Clavius instead supposed the epicycles and eccentrics were derived from reality, since they explained the celestial phenomena. Moreover, he tried to save Ptolemaic cosmology by combining it with Copernican mathematical devices. However, Clavius failed to draw physical or philosophical conclusions from his observations.

April 1611, he confirmed Galileo's observations to Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino of the Holy Office, but he did not follow Galileo's interpretations (Snow 2005, 3). These findings are mentioned in Clavius' last version of the *Sphaera* (1611–1612) and included the following: the lighting on the surface of Venus (named “phases of Venus”), the moons of Saturn (known today as Saturn's ring), and the moons of Jupiter. Referring to Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610), Clavius doubted that the lunar surface was uneven or mountainous, because he maintained the Aristotelian concept of the perfect spherical shape of the celestial bodies. Moreover, the phases of Venus observed by Galileo contradicted Ptolemy's planetary order (The Galileo Project 1995).

Clavius had been acquainted with Galileo since his visit to Rome in 1587, and from then on exchanged letters and books with him (Clavius 1992a, vol II, 1, no. 42–45, vol V, 1, no. 240, vol VI 1, no. 318, 319, 327). He had a large influence on Galileo's thinking and methods. There have even been suggestions that Cardinal Bellarmino was influenced by Clavius in testifying to

Galileo's abnegation when Galileo was first tried by the Inquisition in 1616.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Clavius was not so much an innovative mathematician (Knobloch 1995a, 41–54), but a promoter of mathematical studies (Smolarski 2002). He revised the mathematics curriculum at the Collegio Romano, where he taught for almost 50 years. The textbooks he wrote at the Collegio Romano were read by Jesuit chairs throughout Europe and also China. For example his early commentaries on Sacrobosco's *Sphaera* (1570) (Clavius 1999a), in which Clavius gives a precise account of mathematical problems (Pantin 2013, 93) and on Euclid's *Elements* (1574) Clavius 1999b were published in multiple editions during his lifetime (Sommervogel 1891; Knobloch 1990a; Knobloch 1995b; Snow 2005, 3f.).

In his work on the *Astrolabium* (1593), Clavius was the first to use the decimal point in goniometric tables (O'Connor and Robertson 2008), a system to study the phenomena in luminous reflection. With his *Algebra* (1608), Clavius attempted to elevate the status of this discipline, referring to the late ancient mathematician Diophantus (Sasaki 2003, 74–76). At the end of his life, Clavius collected his works in five volumes entitled *Opera mathematica*, published between 1611 and 1612 in Mainz (Bruhns 1876; Delambre 1827; <https://clavius.library.nd.edu/>). Moreover, he also intended to write a *Theorica planetarum*, which he never completed and of Clavius solar theory only.

Clavius was one of the first to make telescopic observations verifying Galileo's phenomena. He observed eclipses of the Sun in Coimbra on 21 August 1560 and in Rome on 9 April 1567, and he experienced the *novas* of 1572, 1600, and 1604. Moreover, Clavius was a constructor of astronomical instruments; in particular, he constructed an instrument used to determine fractions of angles, sundials, and quadrants. He also improved and described the Nonius, a system of concentric circles used to improve the measuring of angles. This instrument made a scale more

sensitive so that subdivisions of a distance could be determined.

Furthermore, Clavius introduced the globe composed of land and water into Scholastic theory (*terra firma*), combining Aristotelian physics with the evidence of the Earth being above sea-level (Baldini and Casanovas 1996; Echeverría and Amunátegui 2013). In particular, he analyzed the physical relation between the four elements in detail to develop a structure of the sublunary world.

Another great achievement lies in the calendar reform (1577–1582) (Lattis 1994, 20f.). Clavius took part as the oldest member of the commission selected by Pope Gregory XIII, which also included names of other noteworthy individuals. As a consequence of the inaccuracies in the Julian calendar, Christian holidays were changing over the years in relation with the seasons. The problem was that there were three more leap years within 385 years. For this reason, the spring equinox, which is the date from which Easter and the subsequent holidays had been calculated, was not compatible with the calendar. In 1579, Clavius computed the basis for a modern “Gregorian” calendar, modifying a proposal by Luigi Lilio. Clavius’ solution was that 4 October 1582 should be followed by 15 October so that 11 days of the calendar could be skipped. Moreover, he introduced the idea that all years divisible by four are leap years, as well as years ending with 00, if they are divisible by 400. For this he used Erasmus Reinhold’s *Prussian Tables* along with Luigi Lilio’s book. His calendar reform was prescribed in 1582 in the bulla *Inter gravissimas* by Pope Gregory XIII.

Impact and Legacy

Clavius’ fame remained untouched in the seventeenth century, because his writings were not dangerous to the Catholic Church. Clavius owes his epithet, “Euclid of the sixteenth century,” to his commentaries and editions of Euclid and Sacrobosco (Rommevaux 2005; Claessens 2009). His works became the standard university textbooks for mathematicians and astronomers for almost 200 years. They were, for example

mentioned by René Descartes, Tycho Brahe (Lerner 1995, 145), Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilei, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and René Descartes, (O’Connor and Robertson 2008) in their works. Also the critics of Copernicus and Galileo learned mathematics partly from Clavius’ textbooks. These commentaries were even introduced in China, for example by Clavius’ student Matteo Ricci, who translated Clavius’ *Euclid*, *Geometria Practica*, and *Trigonometrica* into Chinese (Lattis 1994, 5; Sigismondi 2013).

The missing 11 days in Clavius’ new calendar were opposed by scholars such as François Viète, Joseph Scaligar, Michael Maestlin, and the Protestants for confessional and political reasons. However, despite these criticisms, the Gregorian calendar was quickly introduced in Spain, Portugal, and most of Italy, as well as the other Catholic countries 1 or 2 years later. In Germany, the Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1700, in Great Britain in 1752, in Russia in 1918, and in Turkey in 1927. Today it is used worldwide and it is fragments survived (Clavius 1992b) assumed that it will function correctly for over 3,000 years until an error occurs.

Bernardino Baldi (Baldi 1998), a younger contemporary of Clavius, wrote Clavius’ biography. He probably knew Clavius personally; at least in one letter he requested information on his life (Clavius 1992a, vol II, 1, 128–130, no. 52). Furthermore, Johannes Kepler mentioned Clavius’ *Sphaera* in the dedicatory letter to his *Epitome of Copernican Astronomy* (written 1617–1621) (Kepler 1866, 117). The English clergyman and natural philosopher John Wilkins cited the words that Clavius spoke on his deathbed in his *Discourse Concerning a New Planet* (1640). Here, Clavius expressed the need for a new theory besides Ptolemy’s to explain the phenomena observed by Galileo. In this treatise, Wilkins tries to prove that the Moon is inhabited.

There are also two personal judgments by contemporaries. First was Franciscan Pope Sixtus V, and judged Clavius with these words: “If the Jesuit order had not achieved more than Clavius, it should have been praised for his sake alone.” Second was Joseph Justus Scaliger, a Dutch religious leader and scholar, who had suggested an

alternative calendar reform, and mentioned that “a critique by Clavius was for him more worthy than an appraisal by any other man.”

Cross-References

- [Astronomy](#)
- [Bellarmino, Roberto](#)
- [Copernicus, Nicolaus](#)
- [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Court Philosophy, Renaissance](#)
- [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)
- [Geocentrism](#)
- [Meteorology in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Nifo, Agostino](#)
- [Optics](#)
- [Pereira, Benito](#)
- [Scientia in the Renaissance, Concept of](#)
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Claymond, John

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Abstract

John Claymond was a prominent representative of early Tudor humanism and the first president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. His most

extensive scholarly work is a 20-volume commentary on the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder (Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MSS 178–181; Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS K I 4). His commentaries on Plautus and Aulus Gellius are lost.

Biography

Claymond was admitted to Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1484, and appointed fellow in 1488. In 1499 he was ordained as priest and perhaps met Erasmus, who later spoke admiringly of Claymond's moral probity, and dedicated to him an edition of Chrysostom's *On fate and divine providence* (1526). In 1507 Claymond was appointed as president of Magdalen and lectured on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. In 1517, Bishop Richard Fox appointed Claymond as first president of Corpus Christi College, a trilingual institution intended to promote humanistic education, like similar institutions at Alcalá (1508), Leuven (1518), and Paris (1530). Claymond held several benefices and used their income to support students at Magdalen, Brasenose, and Corpus Christi Colleges. Besides his own extensive (and extensively annotated) library, Claymond built up the college library at Corpus Christi College, for example, with books from the estate of the English Hellenist William Grocyn. Corpus Christi College would train many prominent figures in sixteenth-century England. Its strength in medical learning was probably a result of the influence of Thomas Linacre on Claymond and other early members of the college, such as John Clement and Edward Wotton.

The earliest curriculum of Corpus Christi is somewhat unclear. Fox prescribed seventeen authors whose works were to be expounded by the lecturer in humanities, an office that Claymond apparently held until the end of his life. Among these was Pliny, whose encyclopedic but uncritical writings on political and natural history – astronomy, geography, zoology, botany, and mineralogy – were known throughout the Middle Ages. Despite the strong reception of Pliny in the Middle Ages, the received text in print, based principally on

continental manuscripts, was partially corrupt. Although the accuracy of some of Pliny's statements was questioned in the fifteenth century – in 1492, Niccolò Leonicensio published a refutation of Pliny's errors in medicine – many scholars remained hopeful that improving the text of Pliny or gaining further insight into his technical vocabulary would resolve these apparent difficulties.

Several important early manuscripts of Pliny were preserved in England, and some medieval British writers – Aldhelm, Bede, John of Salisbury, and Roger Bacon – had commented upon his work. Claymond used manuscripts at Oxford to improve the received text by using the philological methods developed by Poliziano and Beroaldo. He mined the works of ancient authorities – Galen, Hippocrates, Dioscorides, Celsus, Paul of Aegineta, Ptolemy, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, Columella, Varro, Cato, Aelianus, Solinus, Aristotle, and Theophrastus – and modern writers – Barbaro, L'Aigue, Rhenanus, Budé, and Tunstall – to verify Pliny's assertions. (It was not until later in the sixteenth century that readers of Pliny tested his assertions more persistently against natural observations.) However, he sometimes heaped up authorities uncritically and occasionally repeated their errors of citation. Claymond was perhaps prompted to pursue philology rather than engage with the controversies of the *vita activa* after witnessing the fall of the political humanist Thomas More.

Two plans to publish Claymond's Pliny commentary foundered. The first was initiated by the Basel humanist Simon Grynaeus and the printer Johannes Bebel, who gathered manuscript materials in England in 1531 and 1532. Sixteen volumes of Claymond's commentary are preserved in Basel, presumably brought in preparation for this edition, which never appeared. In the 1560s, the Basel printer Johannes Oporinus tried to revive the project, soliciting further materials from the English medical humanist John Caius, but this plan also failed, probably because the work was simply too long. Among the few contemporaries who cited Claymond's commentary was Edward Wotton, who drew upon it for his commentary on Aristotle's *On the parts of animals* (1552). Despite its limited reception,

Claymond's commentary on Pliny represents a peak of early Tudor humanist erudition.

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- [Historia Naturalis](#)
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Clocks, Renaissance

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Abstract

The reintroduction of time-keeping technology to the Latin West from the thirteenth century and its subsequent submission to new applications produced the appearance of both large and small-scale clocks in the Renaissance. The great bulk of these works often replicated principles preserved from Classical antiquity and Medieval Arabian sources, but major technological advances appeared intermittently in the Renaissance which propelled clock-making technology forward. Just as we would no sooner exchange the precision of an atomic clock today for a sand-glass, so too in the Renaissance did old ways of clock-making rapidly become obsolete with the invention of new systems: weights, spring-drivers, wheels, gears, and organ-barrels. A similar phenomenon comparable to modern trends also has been observed with the Renaissance explosion of

technology; as it became more advanced, it became smaller and more compact. What had been housed in the monumental proportions of Medieval Cathedral clock-towers had by the late Renaissance been reduced at its most extreme to the size of a ring to be worn on an emperor's finger. The Renaissance aim of mastering the natural world around, space as well as time, can be inferred in the increasingly masterful method devised to standardize and measure the passage of not only the sun but the moon, the planets, the zodiac, and other visible astronomical phenomena as well.

Synonyms

Automation; Clockwork mechanics; Time-keeping technology

Innovative and Original Aspects

The time-keeping device, whatever its operating principle – sun, water, weights, springs, or gears – had stood in the culture of Classical antiquity inherited by the Renaissance humanists as the quintessential symbol of the ordered cosmos. In scholarship of the early-modern period, the clock became a seminal image for how many Enlightenment-era philosophers began to reimagine the cosmos and man's place within. In the period directly preceding this flourishing of thought, the thirteenth through the mid-seventeenth centuries, the development of time-keeping technology mirrored what was on a macroscale humanity's ever-increasing command and quantification of the surrounding natural world. Technologically and artistically, the Renaissance continued to develop and refine a phenomenon most properly traced to the Medieval Period, as returning Crusaders and invigorated trade routes are credited with the reintroduction of time-keeping technology to Western Europe. The line of direct descent from Classical (predominantly derived from the work of Ctesibius and Hero of Alexandria) sources of clocks in Western Europe is believed to have

been severed sometime after the documentation of a sixth-century clepsydra by Cassiodorus. That technology would not reappear until it had been filtered through the cultural influence of the Medieval Muslim East, through the preservation of Classical technology and subsequent original elaborations and novel applications, such as the dimension of human comfort, previously absent from known Greco-Roman mechanical devices, but prominent in the ideation of the robotic serving-girl in the *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Devices* by Al-Jazari. Many mechanical arrangements observable in Arabic-engineering works have had to varying extents their corollaries located in existing medieval mechanical treatises. The water-clock, with its origins developed into the "turret clocks," which substituted solid weights in lieu of water-weight. The most monumental assimilation of this reinvigorated mechanical and technological knowledge was put on display in the clock-towers of the great medieval Cathedrals (Strasbourg and Venice are early, large-scale examples of astrological clocks) built from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth, and in some cases beyond. As clocks became household objects and correspondingly diminished in size to a comfortable portability, they increased proportionally in prestige and esteem as objects of luxury and social status in Renaissance courtly and educated circles. The development of spring-technology in the 1400s facilitated the ever-increasing intricacy of minute clockwork, primarily in the German craft centers of Augsburg, Nuremberg, Dresden, and Ulm. Works created by the Habrecht brothers in the 1550s have been recognized as the earliest documented departures from strictly Heronic components: wheel-work replaced levers, gears replaced strings, and organ-barrel programming replaced hydraulically delayed sequences. Clockwork technology began to infringe upon the monopoly of previously hydraulic-powered organs in princely gardens and some churches of the same time period. In the majority of cases, time-keeping technology was further ornamented with and embellished by mechanically driven moving automata, from the large cathedral-jacquemarts (bell-ringers) and assortment of angels, shepherds, and other major

characters from predominantly (but not always) Biblical sources in religious and secular theatrical tableaux to the smaller automated minutiae of the opulently crafted mechanical *nefs* which propelled themselves around the tables of Rudolph II and other European rulers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the case of the former, the prevailing inclination to veil the mechanical operations of mechanical devils, angels, animals, and humans in church dramas and elsewhere was intermittently lifted by engineers such as Giovanni Fontana, who wrote openly of the purely mechanical processes causing statues to spit fire or move their eyes and wings. A fifteenth/sixteenth-century automaton of a chained devil in the Collezione Permanente of MUDEC Milano provides perhaps the only surviving example in size, function, and style of the automata whose workings Fontana's manuscript drawings reveal. The sixteenth-century automata of Juanelo Turriano, a lute-player in the Kunsthistorisches of Vienna and an automated monk currently in the Smithsonian's collection, are miniaturized iterations of the larger theatre-automata powered by spring-driven clockwork and belong with the *nefs* in the latter class of objects created for the personal delight of a single patron (in the Turriano automata's case Emperor Charles V) rather than an audience to a spectacle with religious or entertainment aims. Fantastic tales of mechanical inventions which made use of the rapidly developing engineering facilities of the Renaissance range from those generally acknowledged to be apocryphal (the android of Albert the Great or the iron fly of Regiomontanus and Bishop Virgilius of Naples) do not necessarily fall too far from descriptions of documented automata created by Leonardo da Vinci and Hans Bullman.

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Clockwork Mechanics

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Colégio Real in Coimbra

► [Conimbricense, Collegium](#)

Collège de France

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Abstract

A long-lasting Renaissance creation, the Collège de France was precariously founded under King Francis I thanks to Parisian humanists who asked the monarchy to protect free studies on ancient and oriental tongues against the powerful, traditional Sorbonne University. The professorship of Petrus Ramus, from 1551 to his assassination in 1572, set the

acme of sixteenth century's Institution des Lecteurs Royaux. Its building was not officially decided before King Henri IV and was opened after 1610, under Louis XIII. Less brilliant during the seventeenth century, and then called Collège royal, it still allowed new disciplines, ranging from languages and history to maths through medicine, to be taught in stable conditions and at international standards by French or foreigner scholars.

Synonyms

[Collège royal](#); [Institution des Lecteurs Royaux](#)

The Background: A Long Struggle for Humanism in Paris

Thanks to the spread of Italian Humanism, early sixteenth-century Western Europe was in conditions to start permanent university teaching in ancient and oriental tongues. This was no longer meant for practical purposes, such as obtaining religious conversions by Orientals, but for building and spreading a scientific knowledge in itself. More than in Italy, ancient Greek and Hebrew interested many European scholars aiming to better understand biblical texts, a cultural movement known as “Christian Humanism.” Towns with important theological universities, like Oxford and Cambridge, launched chairs in Greek and Hebrew; Louvain opened in 1517 its “Collegium Trilingue” (dedicated to the “Three Tongues”: Greek, Hebrew, and classical Latin); Rome itself had a college for Greek studies, founded by Janus Lascaris in 1515; new universities were founded, like Vienna's Collegium Poetarum et Mathematicorum in 1501 or Alcalá de Henares, Spain, in 1508.

Medieval Paris was par excellence the theological capital with its Faculté de Théologie, also called La Sorbonne, and was bound to keep traditional university practice without changes. That is probably the main reason why the Parisian equivalent for Louvain's Collegium Trilingue took until 1530 to be established – and that in a precarious

way. Attempts to charge Erasmus, in 1517, and Lascaris, in 1518, of founding this kind of new “college” in Paris were not successful (Lefranc 1893, 1932; Gadoffre 1997; Tuilier et al. 2006; de La Garanderie 2010).

Led by Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples and, later, by Guillaume Budé (de La Garanderie 1995; Fumaroli 1998; Maillard et al. 1999, 2010), the Parisian humanist movement struggled during King Louis XII’s reign to be recognized but obtained the Court’s favors only after 1515, with King Francis I, who will be afterward remembered of as the “Father of Arts and Letters.” Budé introduced his philological masterpiece *Commentarii linguae Graecae*, printed in September 1529 (Budé 1529), with a Greek Preface to the King which is considered to be the starting point of Collège royal, because he vibrantly asked the King, to whom the preface was read in a French version (Paris, B.n.F., ms. fr. 25445), to fulfill an old promise to finance the construction of a majestic building for the teaching of the “two languages” (Greek and Hebrew) and to appoint French and international scholars in order to educate the French (Sanchi 2006). Shortly after, beginning of 1530, the first scholars were given the professorship, but no building was started; this will officially be decided only by King Henri IV and opened after 1610, under Louis XIII (Chamard and Girot 2001).

Humanists in Paris took full advantage of such important protectors and sponsors as the King’s sister Marguerite de Navarre, Paris’ bishop Étienne Poncher, the King’s confessor Guillaume Petit, and a few others, like Jean Du Bellay, the future cardinal, who represented an enlightened wing of the French catholic Church as decisive as the Parisian humanist movement for the survival of Collège de France during its first years (Bulæus [Du Boulay] 1673; Lefranc 1932; Tuilier et al. 2006). Such protections were really necessary. Defined as the chief of the intellectual “Conservative Party” (Farge 1992), Noël Bêda, the dean of the theological Faculty from 1520 to 1533, actively menaced any scholar in Paris who tried to teach biblical Greek or Hebrew or criticize Jerome’s Vulgate, without a Ph.D. degree in Theology. The trial that Bêda called in 1533 against

the first “lecteurs royaux” is a famous moment in Collège de France’s history and a fundamental, if silent, humanist victory on the theological faculty (Lefranc 1893, 1932; Tuilier et al. 2006). That guaranteed the Institution even from the prosecutions which took place the next year, after the “Affaire de Placards” scandal (October 1534), a radical anti-Catholic bill-sticking which provoked emotion in Paris and potentially endangered every humanist or printer in France, systematically suspected of being a Lutheran.

Textual Approach, Scientific Horizons

Founded on a thorough study of ancient tongues, pushed at the best time’s standards, the teaching of the first “lecteurs royaux” extended quickly to all the sciences, since the proficiency in Ancient Greek opened the way to enlarge knowledge in many scientific areas, ranging from medicine to mathematics. That is why the first chairs in 1530, allowed to the French Pierre Danès and Jacques Toussain in Greek and to the Italians Agathias Guidacerius and Paulus Paradisus (Paolo Canossa) in Hebrew, came together with one in mathematics, offered to the French Oronce Fine (Parenty 2009; Kessler-Mesguich 2013). Because of the opposition of the university, the Institution had to wait until 1534 to get a chair in Latin Eloquence (Bulæus 1673), appointed to Barthélémy Latomus, from Luxembourg. In 1538, Guillaume Postel was appointed with a new chair dedicated to the “Oriental Tongues” (Arab and others) which also helped developing the study of sciences; in 1540 a second chair in mathematics was created, and, in 1542, the new medicine teaching was opened by the Italian surgeon and anatomist Guido Guidi (Vidus Vidius). The lectures were announced by billposting in the Latin Quarter and open to the public, as it is attested by a register of the Paris Parliament, where the contents of some bills are quoted (Paris, Archives Nationales, X1A 4895).

An important step forward to strengthen the legal existence of the Institution was done in 1546 with a “Committimus,” a King’s letter setting the Royal Professors out of the reach of ordinary justice – a privilege giving them a

prestigious status. After that, the second half of sixteenth and early seventeenth century made the glory of the Collège with key scholars as Adrien Turnèbe, Denis Lambin, and Isaac Casaubon in Greek and Léger Du Chesne and Frédéric Morel in Latin; new chairs in surgery, Arab, anatomy, and botany were founded (see a list of professors in Lefranc 1932). Jean Dorat, professor in Greek, educated the poets of the Pléiade group, like François Ronsard and Jean Du Bellay.

It was ordered in 1566 that any new candidate for professorship be elected after a public examination by the other Royal Professors and, in 1594, that they take the loyalty oath to the King, after the Civil War.

The most successful as well as revolutionary teaching was Petrus Ramus' teaching in Greek and Latin philosophy, which was characterized by a bold anti-Aristotelian point of view, from 1551 to his assassination in 1572 (Couzinet et al. 2004). In his 1568 testament, Ramus also left an amount of money to fund a chair in sciences, called "Ramus chair," which lasted until the French Revolution (Lefranc 1893; Chamard and Girot 2001).

A Still Living Heritage

The Institution of the Royal Professors was the central organization for what has been called a "Cultural Revolution" in France (Gadoffre 1997): it operated the long-term shift in the selection of French *élite* from mainly military or merely legal to scientific and erudite. The educational strategies of families who wanted to have power and government responsibilities in France mirror this major change. The renewal of French and European universities as well as general culture received an important contribution from the first Parisian humanists. These scholars took the legacy of Italian Renaissance, then, in a more mature phase, by sixteenth-century Royal Professors and finally by the Collège Royal as it was established in the seventeenth century. These professorships were narrowly associated to the activity of the most celebrated French printers – and, among them, the Royal printers, such as Robert Estienne (Stephanus) or Morel, aiming to give Europe a

new generation of Classical editions in all fields, after the first, mostly Italian, generations of humanist printers.

Collège Royal's impact needs to be measured more precisely by adding each professor's teaching and legacy during his period of activity at the Collège, especially for the most famous of them. It can also be said that fields of Classical and Oriental philology, medicine, and physical sciences took a great advantage from the existence of the Collège, given the King's protection it had in an era of heavy control on public teaching in Catholic Counter-Reformation countries, when several intellectuals and scholars were pushed to leave France and its censorship. The privileged status that was granted to Collège Royal ensured its survival also through the French Revolution and until today. A characteristic point of its legacy is the call for scientific innovation and excellence and for the creation and fostering of new disciplines, which became a major feature from the nineteenth century on.

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Collège Royal

► Collège de France

Colombo, Realdo

Born: Probably between ca. 1510 and 1515

Died: 1559, Rome

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Abstract

Realdo Colombo was a pupil, colleague and later rival of Andreas Vesalius. He studied and subsequently taught at the University of Padua. A major anatomist of Vesalius' generation,

Colombo's only published work was *De re anatomica* (1559). He was a friend and physician of Michelangelo Buonarroti, with whom he intended to collaborate on an anatomical treatise.

Biography

Documentation concerning Colombo's life and work is minimal. After a youthful stint in his father's pharmacy, Colombo transferred to Venice, apprenticing between ca. 1531 and 1538 under the anatomist Giovanni Antonio Lonigo, who performed dissections at the *Studio* in Padua, though he was not a member of the faculty. In 1538, a year after Andraes Vesalius had assumed the chair in surgery and anatomy at Padua, Colombo matriculated there. Colombo was evidently no ordinary student; already a year before he received his degree (1541), he was appointed to the chair of logic. In 1542, while Vesalius temporarily vacated his chair to oversee the publication of *De humani corporis fabrica*, Colombo assumed Vesalius's post. At this point the two men's relationship was amicable, but it was shortly thereafter to turn sour, and Vesalius and Colombo became bitter rivals. Nevertheless, Colombo took over Vesalius' chair when he vacated it permanently in 1544. Colombo remained in Padua only briefly, however, transferring to the *Studio* in Pisa by 1546. His stay in Pisa was likewise short. By 1549, Colombo had moved to Rome permanently, where he would pass the remainder of his life, holding positions at the *Collegio Medico* and the *Studium Urbis* (Moes and O'Malley 1960; Colombero 1982; Colombo 2014).

In an important letter of 1548, Colombo addressed his patron Cosimo I de' Medici, requesting leave to reside in Rome in order to undertake research for an anatomical treatise. For this work he declared his intention to collaborate with Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1565). The nature of their collaboration remains subject to considerable speculation. Colombo's sole treatise is *De re anatomica*, published posthumously by his sons in 1559, though it may have been completed earlier. The degree to which Michelangelo may have contributed to this treatise, if at all,

is debated (Parronchi 1968; Cunningham 1997; Stringer and Becker 2010).

Colombo frequently remarked in *De re anatomica* on Vesalius' errors, but his primary points of departure remained Galen, the Alexandrian anatomists Herophilus and Erasistratus and Vesalius (Cunningham 1997). In contradistinction to Vesalius, however, who leant emphasis to dissection, Colombo was the leading advocate of vivisection, the subject of the fourteenth book of *De re anatomica* (Cunningham 1997; French 1999). Colombo promoted vivisection for the purpose of studying the function and movement of the body. He underscored the role of experience in anatomy and sought clarity in his textual presentation (Cunningham 1997; Shotwell 2013; Colombo 2014).

Colombo claimed two major anatomical discoveries, that of the pulmonary circulation (making him an important predecessor of William Harvey), and that of the clitoris. In neither case could Colombo claim absolute primacy, though his knowledge of the work of Michael Servetus (1509/11–1553) and the Arab anatomist Ibn al-Nafis (1213–1288) in the case of the pulmonary circulation is unlikely. Although several writers had previously remarked on the existence of the clitoris, Colombo certainly considered its function in detail, emphasizing the importance of female pleasure in generation (Colombero 1982; Stringer and Becker 2010).

Cross-References

- [Anatomy, Renaissance](#)
- [Vesalius, Andreas](#)

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Colonna, Vittoria

Born: 1490 or 1492, Marino (Rome)

Died: 25 February 1547, Rome

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Abstract

The noblewoman and poet Vittoria Colonna, Marchioness of Pescara, was an exceptionally influential and complex figure of Renaissance Italy. She experienced a crucial and delicate period for Italian history, and she participated actively in contemporary cultural, political, and religious debates. She had epistolary exchanges and long friendships with the most relevant figures of her time, and throughout her sophisticated and successful poetry, and her acute and effective letters she contributed in different and original ways to the development of Early-Modern Italian culture and tradition. Moreover, she was the first woman of the Italian Renaissance to publish her collections of poems under her name, opening the way to other women writers.

Biography

Daughter of the military leader Fabrizio Colonna and Agnese da Montefeltro, Vittoria received a

fine humanistic education. Since her youth, she used to be involved in aristocratic circles and had a role in the administration of her family's territories. In 1509, she married Ferdinando (Ferrante) Francesco d'Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, to whom she had been betrothed when she was a young child. During the years of the marriage, while Ferrante was in war, Vittoria moved to the Aragonese Castle in Ischia, at the court of her husband's aunt Costanza d'Avalos, where she entertained cultural relations with the Neapolitan cultural circles and literati. In December 1525, Ferrante died in war, and this grief signed profoundly Colonna's life. The widow, who was dissuaded to become nun by Pope Clemente VII and refused to marry again, chose an austere, pious, and mostly secluded lifestyle. This, however, never stopped her from travelling in different parts of Italy, from writing sophisticated poetry, and from maintaining intense epistolary exchanges with contemporary intellectuals, literati, and relevant political figures. She was undoubtedly a thoughtful observer of the complex political, cultural, and religious life of her time, and she was part of the intellectual elite who contributed actively to its development. Indeed, during her lifetime, which coincided with the apex of Italian Renaissance literary, artistic and philosophical flourishing, important events such as the wars in the Italian peninsula and the protestant reform changed radically Italian and European politics and culture. In early 1530s, in Rome, Colonna was involved in the – successful – defence of Capuchin friars against the Pope's decision to submit them to the Observants. The Capuchin movement, based on humility and charity, was particularly important for Colonna. The friars represented a model of new spirituality and renovation of the Church, which would have been crucial aspects for the development of her spirituality in the following years. In the same period the Marchioness met Bernardino Ochino and Michelangelo Buonarroti, who would have become important friends and reference points for her, and she began a long and fruitful epistolary exchange with Pietro Bembo. Between 1537 and 1538, Colonna spent 9 months in Ferrara, where she had contacts with Renée of France and Marguerite de Navarre, both involved

in Reformed movement. In 1538, she travelled to Prato, Bologna, Pisa, and Lucca to attend Ochino's sermons, and in the same year the unauthorized *princeps* edition of her *Rime* came out in Parma.

In 1541, the Marchioness moved to the Convent of Saint Catherine in Viterbo. In those years, the group of *Spirituali*, known as *Ecclesia Viterbiensis*, close to Valdesian Evangelism, were meeting in Viterbo. Figures such as Reginald Pole, Marcantonio Flaminio, and Pietro Carnesecchi were active in the movement and met to discuss religious issues and to find a peaceful compromise between Reformers and Catholic Church in order to avoid the scission. Colonna participated in the meetings and discussions of the group and established a close friendship with Cardinal Pole, who became a crucial figure for the development of her spiritual thought. Between 1539 and 1542, she wrote her religious proses – the *Pianto sopra la Passione di Christo* (*Plaint on the Passion of Christ*), which was originally a letter addressed to Ochino, and the *Orazione sopra l'Ave Maria* (*Oration on the Hail Mary*), both printed posthumously for the first time in 1556. In 1544, Colonna moved back to Rome, guest of the Benedictine convent of St. Anne, and died in 1547 in the Palazzo Cesarini.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

With her *Rime* Vittoria Colonna reinvented the lyrical tradition from a female perspective, throughout her very own poetical pursuit and sensitivity. She used Petrarchan model in a moment in which Sixteenth-century Petrarchism was still being codified, and she contributed to its development. Therefore, it would be misleading and reductive to define her as just a Petrarchist poet. Her poetry includes Petrarchan, Dantean, Platonic, and Biblical references, all interpreted from a personal and original perspective. The result is a very original and sophisticated poetry, which reinterpreted and elaborated the models, seeking its own words and images (Sapegno 2016b).

Her theological thought, which emerges in her poems, in her letters and in her religious prose writings, is certainly based on the deep knowledge of Christian tradition but also reflects the delicate and complex historical and religious moment she experienced, her network of friends as well as her extra-ordinary personality. She never adhered to the Reform, as some of her friends, such as Ochino, did, but she had probably read the same books that reformers read, while accepted and elaborated some philo-reformed concepts like the doctrine of justification for *sola fide* (Brundin 2008).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Colonna was the first woman author of an entire collection of poems printed under a female name in the Sixteenth century. From a female and widowed point of view, she modified radically the tradition of love lyric poetry, based on the paradigm of a male lover and a female beloved. She gave a female and authoritative voice to the lyrical “I,” and reflected on poetry and its definition from a female point of view. By using, re-interpreting and modifying the lyrical tradition, she realized a new and original form of poetry/meditation/prayer, in which a profound attention both to meaning and form emerges, as well as a continuous pursuit of knowledge (Sapegno 2016a, b).

The central theme of Colonna’s poetry is indeed the poetic writing itself, developed through the analysis of the relationship between suffering and writing, and the capacity of reason to dominate the senses. These topics, associated with the construction of an inner view and thought, crucial for writing poetry, are on the basis of all Colonna’s poetic production and its evolution, transformation, and sublimation. They are recognizable in both the so-called *rime amorose*, addressed to the dead husband, and the more mature *rime spirituali* (Sapegno 2016b).

Colonna’s religious prose and spiritual letters, focused in particular on the figures of Christ and the Virgin Mary, reveal a profound understanding of the Christian tradition. However, at the same time, they reflect a very personal,

original, empathic, and introspective interpretation of the figure of the Virgin Mary and her role in salvation, a topic which emerges also in some of her *Rime* (Brundin 2008; Carinci 2016). In the letters to Costanza D’Avalos Piccolomini on contemplative life of St Catherine of Alexandria and on the active life of Mary Magdalene, Colonna also considers the role of women in learning and teaching (Brundin 2008).

Her vast correspondence depicts an exceptionally powerful woman, well aware of and actively involved in the political and religious issues of her time. She had a political impact in several questions, such as the abovementioned defense of the order of Capuchins, while relevant figures, including the Emperor himself, asked for her advice.

Impact and Legacy

In spite of a withdrawing character, Vittoria Colonna was an influential and well-known woman, greatly estimated by her contemporaries. As her epistolary exchanges demonstrate, literary and relevant figures of her time, such as Pietro Bembo, Baldassar Castiglione, Paolo Giovio, Gasparo Contarini, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Bernardino Ochino, Reginald Pole, Marguerite de Navarre as well as Popes Clemente VII and Paolo III, and the Emperor Carlo V, took under great consideration her literary, religious, and political view (Chemello 2016). A number of works, both in print and in manuscript, were dedicated to her, and the praises for her were uncountable (Ranieri 1985). The several, all unauthorized, editions of her *Rime*, printed when she was still alive and beyond, had a great success (Crivelli 2016). Selections of her poems circulated widely, copied in different internal order even before the printed editions came out. However, despite the enormous dissemination of her poems, the only manuscript collection of spiritual poems certainly assembled by the author was a gift manuscript for Michelangelo (Colonna 2005). This complicated editorial situation is one of the reasons because a proper and satisfying critical edition of Colonna’s poetry has yet to appear (Sapegno 2016b).

Colonna had the primacy in a number of achievements: In addition to being the first woman whose work was printed under her name, she inaugurated the genre of spiritual poetry as well as that of spiritual letters, which would have had a great success in the following decades. Moreover she was the first author for whom a commented edition of her poetry was written and printed by a contemporary scholar, in part when she was still alive (Sapegno 2016a, b). On the wave of her incredible success, other women such as Veronica Gambarà, Chiara Matraini, and Gaspara Stampa, just to cite the most famous, published their poems, but Vittoria Colonna was the only woman writer of her time to remain in the literary canon almost continuously until today, and whose name was never forgotten.

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Comedy in Renaissance Literature

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Abstract

After centuries of condemnation by the Church, classical comedies were revived and staged in Latin or in translation at the courts and cities of the fifteenth century. However, in the sixteenth-century original theatrical productions in the vernacular appeared and flourished (mainly before the public of the courts), aiming to represent reality and its demystification with the aid of *contaminatio* between different literary genres.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The fifteenth-century rediscovery of the Latin texts of playwrights Plautus and Terence, soon staged in the original language or in translation, marked the beginning of a new flowering of comic theater, fallen into oblivion during the Middle Ages due to severe condemnation by the Church. The initial phase, characterized by the *imitatio* of classical theater, was followed in the sixteenth century by a period of intense and distinctive production of comedy in the vernacular. The highest comedy – as distinguished over the course of the century from popular comedy, presented by companies of amateur actors such as the “compagnie della calza,” composed of aristocratic devotees of the dramatic arts – arose in the setting of the courts to entertain nobles and lend prestige to princes and was increasingly perfected with regard to stage machinery.

First and foremost among Renaissance playwrights was Ludovico Ariosto, who drew situations and characters from classical comedies, ably re-adapted them to the changing social and cultural situation of the courts. His plays in prose and verse profoundly influenced the comic genre of the time, and he personally directed their staging at the court of Ferrara. Emblematic of Ariosto’s comic *vis* is *Cassaria*, a dramatic text in prose of 1508. As counterpart to its Latin heritage (mainly Terentian), it contains numerous references to contemporary life and reflects a new taste for the multiplication of intrigues and adventures.

In dispute with Ariosto, in 1513 Cardinal Bernard Dovizi of Bibbiena staged *Calandria* at the court of Urbino; it departed considerably from the Latin models, contaminated by the Italian tradition of short stories and in particular by the *Decameron*, and was programmatically proposed as “new” comedy for a world by now irremediably mutated from classical antiquity.

Also noteworthy were the productions of Anton Francesco Grazzini, called Lasca, author of lively plays written in the popular Florentine dialect anticipating several solutions of the seventeenth-century Commedia dell’Arte, and the anonymous *Venexiana*, probably written in 1535, distinctive for its anticlassicist alternation of literary Florentine, Venetian, and Bergamasco dialects and for the raw realism of its theme, an uninhibited love triangle.

Mention must be made of two authors who turned their backs on the cultural life of the court and fiercely criticized the rigid literary customs of the time: Pietro Aretino and Angelo Beolco, called Ruzante. Aretino wrote five comedies (*La cortigiana*, *Il marescalco*, *La Talanta*, *Lo ipocrito*, and *Il filosofo*) with a modern setting and realistic, even gloomy tones. But his theater was not only innovative regarding content; he also proceeded to destroy *ab interno* the traditional canons of the genre, reshaping them in a grotesque way to describe a world in disarray, lacking the comfort of religion and traditional values. Ruzante as well analyzed current issues in his comedies, such as the socio-economic crisis in which the Republic of Venice found itself; a distinctive connotation of his dramatic art was the use of Pavano dialect –

thanks to the expressive realism of this dialect, Ruzante succeeded in accentuating the features of his violent and bitter comedy.

To conclude this survey, thanks to the philosophical inspiration that pervades these works, *La Mandragola* by Machiavelli (1518) and the *Candelaio* by Giordano Bruno (1582) – that also influenced the flourishing of comedies in Elizabethan England – deserve a place at the forefront. The two philosophers describe a corrupt world dominated by profit and greed, and their primary goal is to represent, with ruthless and disillusioned gaze, the reversal of values afflicting the world around them – a world at the mercy of blind Fortune. With *Candelaio*, we may consider concluded the upward trajectory of sixteenth-century comedy: the schizophrenic proliferation of paratextual elements has “avant-garde” connotations that reflect the final “implosion” of this literary genre. Its heuristic capabilities now exhausted, and Renaissance comedy will give way to the fixed masks of the *Commedia dell’Arte*.

The rediscovery of classical theater and the great period of sixteenth-century Italian comedy encouraged the flowering of the comic genre in Europe. An example is the case of France, where Jean-Antoine de Baif’s comedies, modeled on Plautus’ and Terence’s themes, coexisted with *Eugène* by Étienne Jodeue (1552) a work of politico-religious propaganda, and *Les corrivaux*, a 1573 comedy by Jean de La Taille, who also gave us a translation of Ariosto’s *Il Negromante*. In Lutheran Reformation Germany, vernacular farces enjoyed great success (masterfully represented by Hans Sachs’ work) but there was also room for the erudite theater, influenced by Aristophanes and Plautus, of Nicodemus Frischlin, author of *Priscianus Vapulanus* (1578), and *Julius Redivivus* (1585). Popular farces were common in England as well, while at the same time court entertainment flourished, with its interludes and masques. A key date in English comedy is 1553, when Nicholas Udall wrote *Ralph Roister Doister*, taking themes from Plautus’ *Miles gloriosus* and inserting them into a rural and popular context. English comedy reached its peak with the extraordinary work of William Shakespeare: a tangible sign of a now-consolidated literary genre is the *Love’s Labour’s*

Lost, dating from circa 1593–1596, a true self-reflection on the value of the word and the compositional possibilities of comedy.

In Spain, Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio was the prolific author of many comedies – with historical, religious, mythological, and amorous themes – and of the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* (1609) in which he declares the need to leave behind Aristotelian precepts, recommending the fusion of the comic and tragic and sustaining the importance of the playful role played by the *gracioso*, an irreverent character. Finally, a masterpiece of Spanish comedy was *La vida es sueño* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1635) in which a careful reflection on reality offers the author an opportunity to strongly assert the existence of free will.

Cross-References

- [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- [Comic, the Renaissance Idea of](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- [Satire in Renaissance Literature](#)
- [Spectacle in Renaissance Theater](#)
- [Tragedy in Renaissance Literature](#)

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and pedagogical legacy, today it is his philosophical and theological works that are gaining increasing attention. These are represented mainly by the extensive treatise *De Rerum Humanarum Emendatione Consultatio Catholica* (*General Consultation on the Improvement of Human Affairs*), in which Comenius contemplates the ways to remedy the three basic human institutes (philosophy, politics, and religion) through the systematization of knowledge based on a new methodology, a new system of education, and a new universal language and through building new social organizations. Comenius' works as such were heavily influenced by eschatology, rejection of violence, and the pursuit of religious reconciliation.

Alternate Names

Comenius, Iohannes Amos; Komenský, Jan Amos

Comenius, Iohannes Amos

► [Comenius, Jan Amos](#)

Comenius, Jan Amos

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Abstract

John Amos Comenius was a Czech theologian, philosopher, writer, and educational reformer. Although renowned primarily for his didactic

Biography

John Amos Comenius, a Czech theologian, philosopher, writer, and educational reformer, was born on 28 March 1592 in southeast Moravia, today's Czech Republic. The exact place of his birth is uncertain (it could have been Uherský Brod, Nivnice, or Komňa). His family belonged to the Unity of the Brethren, a Czech church, of which Comenius later became a bishop. In 1608 he began studying at a Latin school in the town of Přerov, which he left in 1611 for an academy in Herborn, where he met Johann Heinrich Alsted. He then continued his studies in Heidelberg, only to return in 1614 to Přerov to head the local Latin school. In 1616 he was ordained a preacher. After the defeat of the Czech uprising in 1621, Comenius was forced to hide in various places in Bohemia and Moravia because he refused to convert to Catholicism. In 1628 he fled Bohemia for Leszno, Poland, which became the center of the Brethren faith and a second home to Comenius. Between 1641 and 1642, Comenius visited London; in the

fall of 1642, he went to Sweden in order to implement a program of educational reform. Growing disagreements with the Swedish monarchy made him return to Leszno in 1648. In 1651 he accepted an invitation of the Hungarian prince Sigismund Rákóczi to Sárospatak in order to organize another educational reform. While living in Leszno once again between 1654 and 1656, a fire swept the city, destroying a large part of his unfinished work. Comenius spent his final years in the Netherlands (Amsterdam), where he took refuge at the invitation of Louis De Geer. Comenius died on 15 November 1670. He was buried in Naarden.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The first philosophical works of Comenius are largely influenced by the encyclopedism of J. H. Alsted. Like him, Comenius aspired to write a great encyclopedic work, but unfortunately his attempts, *Theatrum Universitatis Rerum* (1616–1618) and *Amphitheatrum Universitatis Rerum* (1624–1627), were never fully completed or survived as fragments only.

The time when Comenius was forced to hide in his own country is reflected in his writings of “consolation”: *Truchlivý (The Mournful)*, *Centrum Securitatis*, and *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* (1623).

Texts that would be philosophically significant began to appear only at the turn of the 1630s. It was then that Comenius began to believe that it would be feasible to reform contemporary knowledge. This conviction resulted in Comenius’ idea of pansophia (*all science*), materialized in *Pansophiae Praeludium*, *Conatuum Pansophicorum Dilucidatio*, *Pansophiae Diatyposis*, and *Via Lucis* (written in 1641). In these writings, Comenius presents his idea of a reform and unification of fragmented contemporary knowledge in a single science – pansophia – which would be a synthesis of philosophy and theology.

Comenius’ pansophic concept transformed into panorthotic (emendation) efforts in the 1640s. The pivotal aim of Comenius was no longer only to build a pansophia, but also to fully

remedy all of key human affairs (philosophy, religion, and politics). This is addressed in his masterpiece *De Rerum Humanarum Emendatione Consultatio Catholica*, which the philosopher worked on from 1644 until his death in 1670. Although the treatise was nearly completed, Comenius died before it could be finalized or published. In addition, shortly after his death, it was considered lost, and it was not until the 1930s that it was discovered. The Latin edition was published in Prague in 1966, and its Czech translation came out in Prague in 1992.

The philosophical core of *Consultatio Catholica* that Comenius laid out in seven interrelated volumes is introduced in the dedicative preface, where Comenius presents the nature and intentions of his work. He explains that it is an extraordinary attempt to remedy **contemporary knowledge** (*eruditio* or *philosophia*), **politics** (*politia*), and **religion** (*religio*). Comenius argues that universal remedy is only possible through collaboration, while all human affairs are remedied simultaneously. Another major point is, according to Comenius, to define what human affairs (*res humanae*) are. This question is addressed in the first of the seven volumes, *Panegersia*. Comenius discusses the definition of human affairs, but also their current sorry state and the need to awaken a desire for their remedy in humans. The second volume, *Panaugia*, contemplates the path that would facilitate success for the emendation efforts. The philosopher proposes focusing on examining three divine books (nature, mind, and *Scripture*) through the senses, reason, and faith, using three methods, the analytical, synthetic, and syncretic ones (the latter involving knowledge acquisition based on analogy between the created and the uncreated). The third volume of the treatise is *Pansophia*, which systematizes the new knowledge. Such corrected and organized knowledge empowers and binds us to contribute to its distribution among all people. The most appropriate means to achieve this is, as Comenius states, a universal language that all nations of the world would comprehend. Universal education, *Pampaedia*, and a universal language, *Panglottia*, thus constitute volumes 4 and 5 of *Consultatio*. Once all these conditions are met, we may

anticipate the emendation of philosophy, politics, and religion, as recounted in detail in the sixth volume, *Panorthosia*. The entire work would not be complete without the seventh, final volume, *Pannuthesia*, which encourages the reader to initiate the remedy.

Comenius' work was greatly influenced by his strong **eschatological** beliefs. In his view, this temporal world is coming to its end, and we must not postpone the remedy of human affairs any longer. This attitude is inextricably linked to Comenius' faith in new **revelations**, which only strengthened with advancing years. Testifying to this is their publication (*Lux in Tenebris*, *Lux e Tenebris*), as well as an unfinished manuscript of Comenius entitled *Clamores Eliae*, based on which the new revelations are extraordinarily important. The same work introduced the invention of the perpetuum mobile (*machynka*).

Comenius' work is highly valued also for the author's opposition to all forms of **violence**. In terms of confessional disputes, the thinker is generally regarded as representing non-confessional or **supra-confessional Christianity** (Válka 1994) for his attempts at harmonizing the differences between confessions. His late *Unum Necessarium* is eloquent in this regard, as Comenius himself viewed the tenth chapter as his intellectual testament. The text provides insight into his most intimate opinions: If inquired about his theology, Comenius would name the *Apostles' Creed*, with which he fully identified.

Apart from philosophy and theology, Comenius' thinking also greatly influenced **pedagogy**. Already in his early works, he highly valued the importance of education. He believed that no child should be excluded from education. Comenius tried to determine the conditions of schooling, including a number of practical aspects, and divide the educational process into phases. He pointed out the fact that education is a lifelong process – from the prenatal stage to the school of death – preparing us for eternal life. In particular his explanatory textbooks and encyclopedias, *Janua Linguarum Reserata* and *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, became eminent. The pedagogical writings of Comenius were published all together as *Opera Didactica Omnia*.

Heritage and the Rupture with Tradition

The philosophical and theological work of Comenius greatly benefits from a broad intellectual base. The main source and the highest authority for Comenius is the *Scripture*, which he leans on heavily. The inspiration for his philosophical thought included St. Augustine (triadism, reception of the triad of nosse/scire – velle – posse), Nicholas of Cusa (triadism, the idea of coincidentia oppositorum, panharmony), Francis Bacon (efforts for knowledge emendation), Tommaso Campanella (three sources of human knowledge, the Neoplatonist concept of the universe), Johann Heinrich Alsted (encyclopediaism), and Johannes Piscator (eschatology).

Impact and Legacy

Comenius' work is especially appreciated for its didactic and pedagogical dimensions. Comenius is considered the predecessor of special education and developmental psychology (especially for the valuation of the uniqueness of children's psyche). Shortly after his death, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz commended Comenius' work. The philosophical dimension of his work could only be fully appreciated after his magnum opus, *De Rerum Humanarum Emendatione Consultatio Catholica*, was rediscovered (1934–1937). The twentieth century praised in particular Comenius' democratism and humanism and sought to find (although often rather unnaturally) analogies between Comenius' peace and irenic efforts, on the one hand, and the idea of the UN, international court or ecumenism, on the other hand.

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- [Bacon, Francis](#)
- [Campanella, Tommaso](#)
- [Nicholas of Cusa](#)

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Comets in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

The study of comets in the Renaissance is here presented from the viewpoint of the reception of ancient philosophical theories and of their interplay with astronomical observation and quantification. The ideas of prominent natural philosophers and astronomers are discussed in chronological order. Renaissance cometary theory is thus retraced through its intellectual shift from the Aristotelian meteorology to being a constitutive component of early modern cosmology.

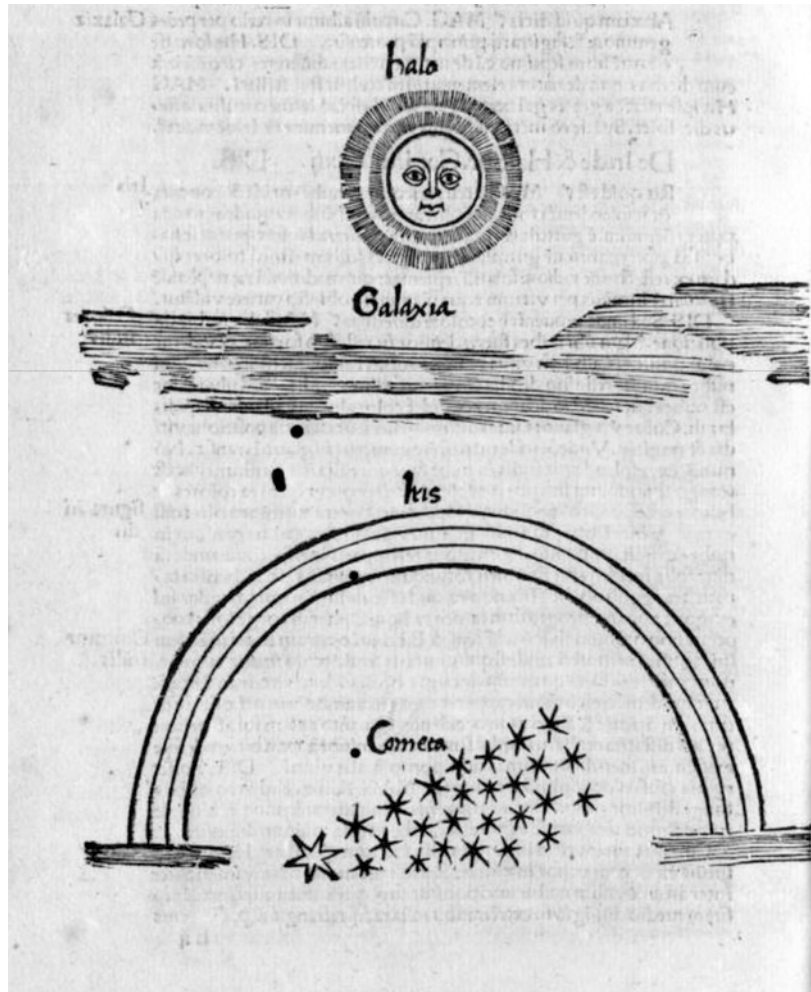
Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

At the dawn of the Renaissance, comets had long been conceived as meteorological phenomena similar in nature to the clouds, the rainbows, and the morning dew (Fig. 1). They all had in common their location in the terrestrial region, which extended from the center of the Earth to the lower border of the sphere of the Moon. Natural phenomena within this realm were taken to be unstable, transient occurrences owing their origin to conditions that we would now call “atmospheric,” a word that would come into use in the early seventeenth century (Martin 2015). The model of explanation for comets that was most widely accepted in the West from Late Antiquity to the end of the Renaissance was devised by Aristotle in his *Meteorology* (I, 6–7). His approach derived from the principles that inform his cosmology, as developed in *On the Heavens* and in *Physics* (Wilson 2013). The Aristotelian

cosmos is spherical and finite and is divided in two realms differentiated by both substance and motion. The celestial region comprises everything from the Moon to the sphere of the fixed stars and is composed by one perfect and unchangeable substance called ether. This is accorded perpetual circular motion and does not allow for any other change that is not of place. By contrast, the terrestrial region, nested within the celestial one and occupying the center of the universe, is the realm where substances generate and corrupt. Generation and corruption are produced by the interactions of the primary bodies (or “elements”) of which the sublunary sphere is formed, that is, earth, water, air, and fire. The elements have a common substrate and are mutually dependent. Moreover, they are affected by the motion of the celestial region and by the heat coming from the sun, both of which intervene in the formation of comets. Like clouds are formed by humid vapors exhaling from warm water, heated earth releases a hot dry exhalation which ascends to the upper regions of the terrestrial realm. Comets appear when the earthly exhalations reach the fiery region and ignite. The quantity of exhalation, the strength of the spark that ignites them, and the motion of the sphere of fire, which in turn depends on the circular celestial motion, determine the duration and the shape of the comet (*Meteorology*, I, 7, 344a8–25). While largely theoretical and conceived in harmony with physics, Aristotle’s cometary theory also takes into account direct observation. The appearance of several comets is recorded in the *Meteorology*, two of which at least were witnessed by Aristotle, who, in turn, links them to meteorological events, such as dry winters and northerly winds (Heidarzadeh 2008). The connection between comets and the earthly natural environment is explained by positing that comets, winds, and droughts are concomitants from the same causes, that is, the large concentration of dry exhalations in the aerial and fiery regions.

Scholastic and Renaissance philosophers accepted the main tenets of the Aristotelian meteorology, which became part of the medieval university curriculum, thus ensuring the transmission of the cometary theory. The principal interpreters

Comets in Renaissance Science, Fig. 1 Comets as meteorological phenomena similar to the halo, the Milky Way, and the rainbow. The illustration comes from a popular sixteenth-century textbook, confirming the transmission of the Aristotelian theory in the Renaissance. Woodcut from Gregor Reisch, *Margarita philosophica*, Freiburg im Breisgau: J. Schott, 1503, f. E2v



of Aristotle, such as Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Agostino Nifo, Pietro Pomponazzi, Giacomo Zabarella, and Ludovico Boccadiferro, wrote commentaries on the *Meteorology*, and all of them invariably included sections on comets that perpetuated the Aristotelian doctrine, although occasionally with some variants and additions. Starting from the fifteenth century, however, the meteorological theory of comets came under increasing pressure from competing philosophies and new observations.

Ancient cometary theories different from, or actively opposing, Aristotle's were revived by Renaissance natural philosophers. Some ancient sources were transmitted, while critiqued, by Aristotle himself (*Meteorology*, I, 6). Among

them, there were the theories by Anaxagoras and Democritus, who took comets as mere optical illusions produced by the reflection of the combined light of two planets. Conversely, the Pythagoreans thought that comets were celestial bodies similar to planets, although seldom seen, while Hippocrates of Chios and his pupil Aeschylus speculated that the tail is not of the same nature of the comet's body, but is an optical effect produced by the light reflected by the humidity near the comet's body (Wilson 2013). Another source that did not align with the Aristotelian theory was the Latin Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC – 65 AD), who speculated in his *Natural Questions* that comets were among the "eternal works of nature"

(7, 22, 1), a kind of celestial bodies whose course in the heavens still remained to be understood. Seneca was a unique and important authority for Renaissance cometology, as his account was the most extensive after Aristotle and provided powerful arguments against the theories of his predecessors, including Aristotle himself. Stoic doctrines were studied with renewed interest in the Renaissance and for some represented a theoretical alternative to the Aristotelian cosmology and physics. Sixteenth-century natural philosophers and astronomers, such as the French professor of mathematics Jean Pena and the German astronomer Christoph Rothmann, used Stoic arguments and doctrines in their works to contradict the Aristotelian theory. Particularly important for the later developments of the cometary theory is the work of Jean Pena. In his preface to Euclid's *Optics* (1557), he combined Stoic physics and Euclidean optics to argue against the Aristotelian doctrine of the elements and to deny the existence of the sphere of fire, the place where comets ignite according to the Aristotelian theory (Barker 2008). Pena also observed, in the wake of some of his contemporaries, that the tail of the comet always pointed away from the Sun, a sign that it may have been an optical illusion, and that the slow motion of some comets was incompatible with their sublunary position.

Innovative and Original Aspects

At the height of the Renaissance, comets became the subject of new investigations from the part of astrologers, astronomers, and physicians. Astrological concerns were often the main center of interest of the authors of works on comets and of their readers. A relevant part of cometary literature is astrological in nature. In this respect, comets were in the same category as other celestial signs, such as eclipses and planetary conjunctions, whose astrological interpretation could anticipate the occurrence of natural calamities, wars, and death of princes (Niccoli 1990).

In the fifteenth century, the Florentine humanist physician and astrologer Paolo Dal Pozzo Toscanelli (1397–1482) took regular observations

of comets along 50 years of activity. His attempt to chart cometary paths with respect to the fixed stars and to determine their position accurately was the first application in the Latin West of mathematical and astronomical techniques to the study of comets. Toscanelli did not elaborate on the consequences of his work in relation to the Aristotelian physical theory, but his work was taken up by the German astronomers Georg of Peurbach (1423–1461) and Johannes Regiomontanus (1436–1476), whose investigations became largely influential at a crucial time for cometology. Peurbach sought to determine the 1456 comet's distance from Earth by measuring its parallax. His findings were at odds with the Aristotelian theory, as the comet appeared to be located in the sphere of the air, and not in the fiery region. Regiomontanus continued and extended his master's work, improving the methodology of cometary observation and producing a work on parallax (the *Sixteen Problems Concerning the Magnitude, Longitude and True Position of a Comet*, published posthumously in 1531) that influenced the astronomers of the second half of the sixteenth century. On another front, the German astronomer Peter Apian (1495–1552) and the Italian physician Girolamo Fracastoro (c. 1478–1553) observed that the comets' tails always pointed away from the Sun. The regularity of this phenomenon could not be explained by the chance movements of inflamed exhalations. A solution to this problem came from optics. According to Apian, followed by others later in the century, the refraction of the sunlight affected the appearance of the tails. Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) further elaborated this theory in his *De subtilitate* (Cardano 2004) and argued that the entire body of the comet was transparent and reflected the sun rays, which produced the optical effect of the antisolar tail. Cardano also believed that comets were located in the celestial region, as their motion was similar to that of the planets.

It was in the last quarter of the sixteenth century that the discussion over comets and other celestial novelties, most prominently the two supernovas of 1572 and 1604, brought about momentous changes to the consideration of comets as astronomical phenomena. In the wake

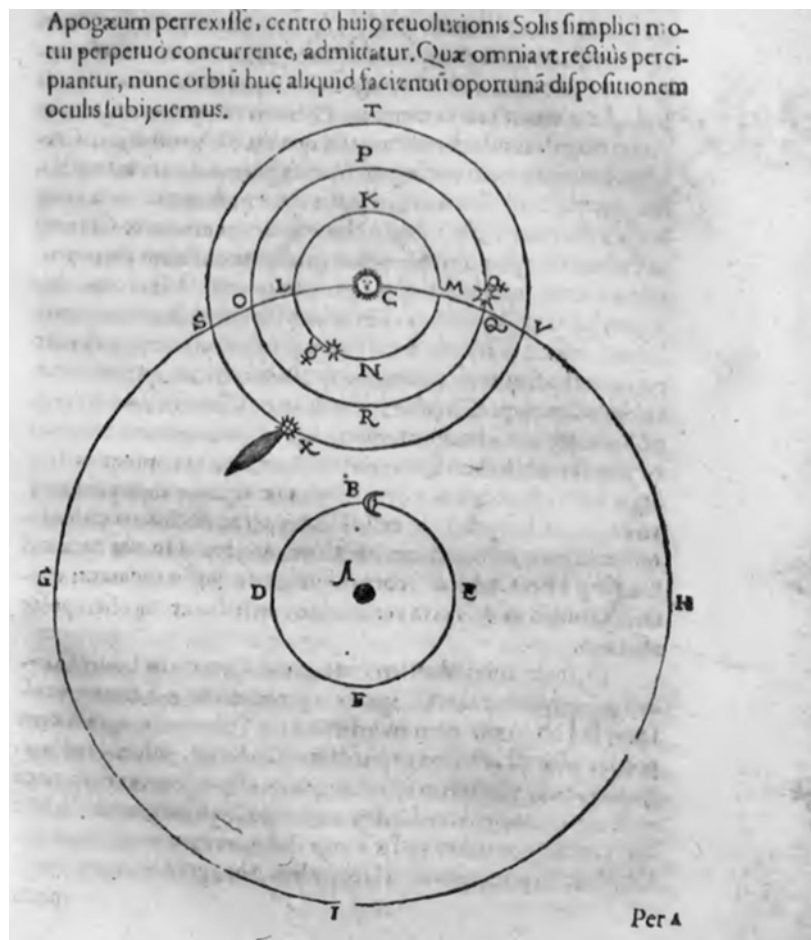
of the appearance of the new star of 1572 and of the comets of 1577 and 1585, the German astronomer Christoph Rothmann (c. 1560–1601) and the Danish Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) subverted the fundamental tenets of the Aristotelian cometary theory and of his celestial physics (Rothmann 2014). Their observations led to the conclusion that comets were located in the celestial region (Fig. 2). Not only the commonly accepted cometary theory was put into serious question, but also other fundamental cosmological concepts came under scrutiny, such as the inalterability of the heavens, and the celestial spheres that moved the planets and the fixed stars (Lerner 1997). In the following years, the matter of the heavens also became the subject of a wide philosophical debate that led to the abandonment of the Aristotelian quintessence (Granada 1996). From this point of

view, cometary observations offered a decisive input to the intellectual shift that marks the passage from the medieval to the early modern cosmology.

The early seventeenth-century debate on comets continued to address the questions of the location of the comets and of their nature, that is, whether they were transient occurrences, optical phenomena, or celestial bodies. Undoubtedly, the advent of the telescopic era in the 1610s opened up the possibility of new insights for cometary theory, but these did not come about until the mid-seventeenth century. In 1618–1619, the appearance of three comets sparked a heated debate between Galileo Galilei and the Jesuits, whose allegiance was to Brahe's theories on the celestial position and nature of the comets. Galileo replied first with a *Discourse on Comets* (signed

Comets in Renaissance Science, Fig. 2

Tycho Brahe's diagram of the motions of the comet of 1577. The comet moves together with the other planets, far removed from the terrestrial region. Also note the antisolar position of the tail (From Brahe (1610) (first edition 1588), p. 191)



by his friend, Mario Guiducci) and then with the *Assayer* (Galilei 2005). As he could not observe the comets directly, since he was bedridden at the time of their appearance, Galileo had to rely on his friends' accounts. However, the *Assayer* gained him considerable fame and intellectual credit, as well as powerful enemies. Galileo's position on comets was somewhat indebted to the Aristotelian meteorology, since he considered comets transient phenomena originated by the earthly exhalations and by the action of the sunlight. Differently from Aristotle, though, Galileo's comets were not fiery inflammations, but optical effects similar to the auroras (or "northern lights") moving straight upwards from Earth to the celestial region (Camerota 2004, 370). Around the same time as Galileo's activity, Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) engaged at some length with cometary theory. He supported a version of the optical theory according to which the comet's body is formed by transparent and perishable celestial matter (Kepler 1619). In turn, the tail is produced by sunlight refracted through the body, which releases its matter as a visible "effluvium" that, over time, completely depletes the comet's head. As for the motions of the comets, Kepler believed they moved rectilinearly and that only some comets were visible from the Earth (Boner 2013). Kepler was the last major thinker to support a cometary theory whose fundamental principles could still be brought back to the Renaissance period. Although there is no clear watershed moment in the cometary history from the Middle Ages to the early modern period, cometary theory after Kepler becomes more distinctively a product of the Scientific Revolution.

Impact and Legacy

In the early modern period, comets continued to capture the popular imagination, as well as being a subject of study for early modern natural philosophers (Schechner 1997). Both René Descartes and Isaac Newton continued the process of elaborating cometary theories based on data obtained through systematic observations and on quantification. In Newton's *Principia* (1689), the pinnacle of early modern science, comets are an integral

part of the celestial physics grounded on gravitational attraction. In fact, comets are considered to be a necessary element for the stability of the universe. Telescopic observations of comets begin to have a principal role only in the second half of the seventeenth century. While Johannes Hevelius' observations of the comet of 1652, that led to the publication of his *Cometographia* (1668), are still somewhat indebted to Brahe methodology and theoretical approach, John Flamsteed's work on the comet of 1680–1681 at the newly established Greenwich Observatory (1675) and Edmund Halley's discovery of the periodicity of the comet of 1682 ('Halley's comet') will project cometary theory into modernity.

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- [Astronomy](#)
- [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Fracastoro, Girolamo](#)
- [Meteorology in Renaissance Science](#)
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Comic, the Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

During the Renaissance, the comedian was a means of understanding the world, a structural element in the expressive quest to describe and expose reality. Thus he took on precise literary

traits – playful, farcical, bound to the sphere of the body – as well as profound theoretical connotations, as reflected in the poetry, theater, treatises, and novelistic genre of the time.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Renaissance comedian offered a special key to unlocking our understanding of reality, its truthful description, and above all, the revelation of the mechanisms that intimately regulate it. The *serio ludere* – creating texts that had playful overtones but hid between the lines serious allusions to the events, usages, and customs of the time – allowed one to look at reality from an alternative, irreverent point of view.

In a poetic context, the anti-petrarchist and anti-classicist authors (and especially Francesco Berni) revived the tradition of comic-realistic poetry that originated in Tuscany during the age of the medieval communes and boasted poets such as Rustico Filippi and Cecco Angiolieri, bestowing new expressive vitality through corrosion of the most abused *topoi*. Thus, poetic compositions were an occasion for irreverent and skeptical satire and for reclaiming the carnal (even obscene) experience that “serious” poetry excluded a priori, and the comical and farcical became an important literary tool to show that literature should portray all of reality, even its basest aspects.

The importance given to the natural expressive needs, in order to upset our usual vantage point from which we perceive reality, also characterizes mock-heroic poems in Luigi Pulci's *Morgante* – whose final edition was published in 1483 – and even more so in *Baldus* by Teofilo Folengo, whose last edition appeared posthumously in 1552 (Folengo 1989; Pulci 1994). The old world of chivalry was now but a pretext for comic mockery aimed to emphasize that the chivalric values no longer existed, in an ethical universe that had changed completely and now found itself at the mercy of ineptitude and empty pedantry. Pulci's experience also provides an opportunity to understand the importance of the interplay between literature and philosophy in comic poetry. In the sonnet *Costor, che fan sì gran disputazione*, Pulci

uses traditional forms of comedy – for example, as derisive references to natural elements such as fruit – to ridicule the philosophical debates of Marsilio Ficino on the immortality of the soul (Pulci 2013).

In Folengo's *Moscheide*, a mock-heroic poem in elegiac couplets also printed in 1552, the story of the battle between the flies and ants in the pseudo-homeric *Batracomiomachia* becomes an occasion for scathing social satire (Folengo 1983).

Emblematic of the comedian in Renaissance theater is the opening motto of Giordano Bruno's *Candelaio*, printed in 1582: *In tristitia hilaris, in hilaritate tristis*. It is the union of comic elements with the tragic and disillusioned gaze that characterizes the highest expressions of Renaissance comedy, a union well summed-up in these words (Bruno 1993). In fact, they would later be considered by Luigi Pirandello in his 1908 work *L'umorismo*, exemplary of the "humorous" poetic attitude, which perceives and takes up the grotesque elements of reality to then construct a more complex reflection.

The revival of the tradition of Lucianist satire and the Hellenistic novel eventually led to the development of new forms of comedy. In *Encomium moriae* by Erasmus of Rotterdam, written in 1509 and published in 1511, the prosopopoeia of folly offers an alternative vantage point from which to observe the corruption and decadence of the Church and society, and in works such as *Momus* by Leon Battista Alberti, written around 1450 and printed in 1520, and *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante* by Giordano Bruno, published in 1584, following the manner of *serio ludere*, the clownish figure of Momus scourges the customs of the time (Alberti 1986; Bruno 2000; Erasmus 2015).

In conclusion, there are the special cases of *Le vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel* by François Rabelais, printed between 1532 and 1554, where the preeminence of the body is a mockery of pedantry and hypocritically virtuous attitudes, and *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes (1605), in which comic situations typical of the picaresque novel are used to gaze disenchanted at the

world and to reveal the unbridgeable gap between reality and the ideal (de Cervantes 2003; Rabelais 2006).

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- ▶ Bruno, Giordano
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- ▶ Chivalry, Renaissance Concept of
- ▶ Comedy in Renaissance Literature
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Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis e Societate Iesu in [opera] Aristotelis Stagiritae

► [Conimbricense, Collegium](#)

Commentary

► [Book, Renaissance](#)

Commonplace

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Abstract

Commonplaces hold the key to the relationship of dialectic and rhetoric, and they emerge into full prominence as Renaissance humanism begins to override the long dominance of scholastic methods and values. Whether understood in the etymological sense of common topics of

argument or in the looser sense of excerpts and quotations collected in commonplace books, or the headings under which such excerpts are organized for retrieval, the *loci communes* forged a cultural bond among Renaissance humanists and provided a conduit of thought and speech from antiquity to modernity.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

In the history of rhetoric and dialectic, commonplaces are the topics or places of argument by means of which one interlocutor may vanquish another in a verbal contest on any subject. In classical antiquity, Aristotle founded topics-theory in his *Topics*, and he extended this analysis to practical application in the *Rhetoric*, where Book 2, Chap. 23, rehearses 28 common topics or argumentative strategies useful in treating a wide range of subject matters in all three rhetorical genres: demonstrative, deliberative, and forensic. Aristotle's treatment of the places of argument implies that all of his topics can be turned both ways, to prove the affirmative or the negative of a given proposition, thus sharpening the double-edged sword of rhetoric. Cicero systematizes Aristotle's topics for use in Roman forensic oratory in his own *Topica*. One of the topics he adapts from his model is the argument from contraries, and the example he offers is rife with literary potential: if folly is to be avoided, wisdom is to be sought after (*Topica* 47). Reverse the premise and you get *The Praise of Folly*. In the *Brutus*, Cicero, on Aristotle's authority, reports the pre-Socratic genealogy of the commonplaces, identifying the sophist Protagoras of Abdera as the first to prepare opposing speeches on notable themes, “which are now called commonplaces” (*Brutus* 46). This testimony forever associates *loci communes* with the stigma of sophistic rhetoric. Quintilian further catalogues the common places of argument, or places from which arguments are to be sought, in Book 5, Chap. 10 of his *Institutio oratoria*, whence they flow, after a long interlude of scholastic obscurity, into Lorenzo Valla's *Dialectical Disputations* of the mid-fifteenth century. Valla along with his

pedagogical vulgarizer Rudolph Agricola, author of a treatise *On Dialectical Invention*, have been credited with engineering a major shift in emphasis in the history of logic from strict syllogistic reasoning to topics-theory (or more schematically, from scholasticism to humanism) that came to fruition in the sixteenth century (Jardine 1988). This shift, in turn, would draw dialectic closer to rhetoric through their shared places of argument.

Innovative and Original Aspects

At the same time, commonplaces, as Ann Moss has shown, began to assume a new meaning and a new function in humanist schooling and indeed in the “structuring of Renaissance thought” (Moss 1996). The key text in this process of innovation is Desiderius Erasmus’ rhetorical textbook *De copia* or *On abundance of words and things*, where we can see the creative interference of competing senses of the term locus or place. After treating copia of words, Erasmus turns to copia of things as a tool for transferring classical culture from what we read to what we write. Readers should collect commonplaces, in the sense of anecdotes, examples, and pithy sayings, and arrange them under antithetical headings or places in a personal notebook. These places or rubrics can in turn be treated according to all the places of argument, understood as answers to the basic questions of definition, cause, effect, time, etc. With a characteristic indifference to pedantic distinctions, Erasmus blends his places in order to facilitate the circulation of commonplaces in Renaissance culture. But that is another story.

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- Commonplace Book
- Dialectic in the Renaissance
- Erasmus, Desiderius
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Commonplace Book

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Abstract

Commonplace books emerged out of a range of classical Greek and Roman literary practices of gathering and organizing fragments from different texts and miscellaneous excerpts deemed to be useful, wise, or otherwise memorable in abstracted forms. Intellectually, these *loci communes*, or “commonplaces” of

knowledge, were rooted in Aristotelian topical philosophy, Greco-Roman rhetorical methodology, and popular readerly metaphors such as that of the busy bee gathering nectar from various flowers to make honey. During the Middle Ages collecting commonplaces was largely absorbed by a broader medieval encyclopedic tradition of theological and philosophical canons and authorities assembled in *florilegia* and especially useful to preachers. In the Renaissance, the more broadly conceived ancient rhetorical tradition of *loci communes* reemerged, particularly within the curricular reforms of classical moral and rhetorical education. From the early sixteenth century onwards, the commonplace book was also adapted as a pragmatic mnemonic tool for organizing literary excerpts, as well as professional theological and legal texts.

Synonyms

[Anthology](#); [Florilegium](#); [Memoranda book](#); [Miscellany](#); [Notebook](#); [Pocket book](#); [Vade mecum](#)

Ancient Philosophical Foundations and Medieval Innovations

The theoretical foundation of “commonplaces” (Greek, *koinoi topoi*; Latin, *loci communes*) – denoting notable places and themes of philosophical discourse – derived from the further development and application of Aristotelian logic, rhetoric, and dialectic. In the *Topics*, Aristotle enumerated specific philosophical “locations” or “places” of dialectical argument and reasoning that could be applied usefully by the philosopher to any number of individual arguments: “accident,” considerations of “better” and “worse,” “genus,” essential or permanent versus temporary or relative “properties,” etc. In Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, this same general concept was applied to the practical art of persuasion; the places of rhetoric constituted broadly applicable headings of argument under which various enthymemes could be applied by the rhetor.

The early colloquial association of these elements of dialectic and rhetoric with specific places or locations of knowledge also invoked the ancient mnemonic tradition of linking specific forms of information to visualized places within the mind set out in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero’s *De oratore* and Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria* (Moss 1996, 6–10). In these later Roman contexts, pragmatic rhetorical lists of *loci communes* were recommended, many times in conventional combinations: e.g., definition and etymology, cause and effect, genus and species, consequents and antecedents, qualities and quantities, contraries and adjuncts, etc. While expounding on such *sedes argumentorum*, or “seats of argument,” Cicero did not discourage the rhetorician from deploying lesser forms of argument and persuasion, such as rhetorical appeals to classical *auctoritates* (authorities). Carefully chosen and applied *sententiae* from the received wisdom literature of the most approved ancient authors could be enlisted to help “authorize” an argument by appealing to the fame and personal credit of its inventor, in addition to the eloquence, concision, and self-evident moral virtue of the commonplace itself. Quintilian elaborated further on these great authorities worthy of quotation, appropriation, and imitation within the context of a prescribed course of study, which included the Attic orators Demosthenes, Lycurgus, and Aeschines, as well as Cato the Elder and Cicero.

In parallel there emerged idiosyncratic Hellenistic and Roman works that loosely resembled these idiosyncratic methods of organizing *loci communes*. Not always designed to aid in dialectic or persuasive oratory, such works could offer an eclectic and semi-encyclopedic exposition of a given subject. Alternatively, they might simply entertain readers with a curiously arranged *copi*a of clever and pleasing thoughts and memorable phrases. Pliny the Elder’s *Historia naturalis* is perhaps the most famous exemplar, offering up little new information about the natural world but rather supplying a thorough assemblage and synthesis of scores of ancient Alexandrian paradoxologies, which Pliny consulted and collated in the course of his research and writing. Others,

like Aulus Gellus's *Noctes Atticae*, were arranged more casually still presenting colorful conversation pieces as a loose anthology, which was only nominally organized into 20 separate books. Here the reader's titular "Attic lucubrations" were not so much preoccupied with the best philosophers. Preferring spontaneity at the expense of system and variety over homogeneity, Gellus's sundry ruminations encompassed little-known antiquarian curiosities and peculiar archaizing literary fragments. Aelian's *Varia historia*, a slightly later third-century CE admixture of purple passages, lists, biographical details, mythographic curiosities, and various wonders of nature and human invention, was written in a similar spirit; so, too, was the contemporary *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (Collection of curiosities) of Solinus, though he was at least consistent in his focus on ancient "wonders" borrowed largely from Pliny the Elder, Suetonius, and Pomponius Mela, among others.

These classical philosophical-rhetorical foundations and accumulations of textual miscellanies were themselves synthesized and popularized in numerous memorable metaphorical passages about the art of collecting sententiae within canonical works of classical literature whose literary tradition would resonate throughout the Middle Ages. The *locus classicus* was the oft-quoted anecdote of the *Epistulae morales* of Seneca the Younger, which merits quotation due to its persistent reiteration elsewhere:

We also, I say, ought to copy the bees, and sift whatever we have gathered from a varied course of reading, for such things are better preserved if they are kept separate; then, by applying the supervising care with which our nature has endowed us . . . we could so blend those several flowers into one delicious compound that, even though it betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing from that whence it came (2:84.3–9).

Seneca recasts the roles of the reader and author in a manner that would greatly appeal to the Renaissance humanist interest in literary imitation and invention representative of a thorough mastery of classical Greco-Roman moral and philosophical exempla. Both categories of *imitatio* and *inventio* were enlisted in the collation of one's own

curriculum of reading but whose result belonged exclusively to the taste and *virtù* of the gatherer. The commonplacing reader's discrimination, rigor, and connoisseurship combined to engender a literary tertium quid possessed and reflective of its own creative merit. This same metaphorical sentiment of commonplacing would become a commonplace in its own right, for example, in the preface to Macrobius's *Saturnalia* (1:1. praef.2–6). The readerly honeybee topos charged the imaginations of influential Renaissance authors, whose works would also come to embody elements of the loci communes tradition. Like-minded echoes appeared in Desiderius Erasmus's lively encomium to the learned daughters of Sir Thomas More in the *Commentarius in nucem Ovidii*: "As they flit like so many bees between Greek and Latin authors . . . you would swear you were watching the Muses at graceful play in the lovely pastures of Mount Helicon, gathering flowers and marjoram to make well-woven garlands" (Erasmus 1969, 1.1, 146; Moss 1996, 114, 300). The *Essais* (1580) of Michel de Montaigne, which were richly laden with classical commonplace quotations, included "Of the Education of Children": "The bees plunder the flowers here and there, but afterward they make of them honey, which is all theirs: it is no longer thyme or marjoram. Even so with the pieces borrowed from others; he will transform and blend them to make a work that is all his own, to wit, his judgment" (Montaigne 1992, 1.26.111).

The Middle Ages present a broad set of recombinant approaches to these various strains of classical loci communes. Pliny the Elder's natural philosophical synthesis presaged a sequence of ever more expansive compendia of universal knowledge, from the early seventh-century *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville to the vast *Speculum maius* of Vincent de Beauvais in the mid-thirteenth century. The latter was to stand as a mirror not only of all things natural (*naturale*), but also of all times (*historiale*) and all the arts of theoretical knowledge (*doctrinale*). Such ambitious omnium-gatherum enterprises, as these would supply generations of glossators, homilists, scholiasts, and compilers of the major *distinctiones* – lexicons of biblical symbolism

regarding things *in bono et in malo*, often arranged alphabetically – with a seemingly limitless fund of subject matter of universal reference, fitted for the widest practical and philosophical applications.

A less comprehensive but extremely popular adjunct to these medieval encyclopedias were the florilegia (lit. “books of flowers”) formed as collections of auctoritates organized under particular topics and themes. They presented practitioners of the *artes praedicandi* (the arts of preaching) with a host of ready references capable of digesting several of the most general, and several of the more abstruse, theological concepts for the consumption of the laity in strings of thematically arranged passages from the scriptures and church fathers. Of these, many could be usefully cited, including the relatively early *Florilegium gallicum*, which excerpted particular passages from various canonical works *in seriatim* in the manner of a digest. Over time, these early florilegia were themselves excerpted and gathered together, with still more notable passages from other authoritative sources arranged under thematic headings like the *Floretus*, sometimes ascribed to Bernard of Clairvaux. All manner of titular terms and categories would be assigned to these sorts of practical texts variously suggestive of their many potential purposes, whether as rich and colorful sources of rhetorical copia, as well-digested stores of wise sayings, or as a ready supply for formal apology and polemic: *sylva*, *thesaurus*, *polyhistor*, *theatrum*, *pharetra*, and so on.

While many of the great medieval encyclopedias were constructed according to iterative classifications of knowledge within conventional theological categories, and ever more complex and ramified subcategories (requiring increased reliance by their readers on elaborate tables and indices for practical use and reference), many compilers of medieval florilegia adopted simpler, user-friendly formats. Thomas of Ireland’s popular *Manipulus florum* (handful of flowers) eschewed encyclopedic complexity for something approaching a latter-day “book of quotations” simply by listing a sequence of canonical themes in alphabetical order and populating them with

many of the more familiar quotations from patristic and medieval authors. Thus the entry *De gaudio* (Of joy) lists germane quotations from Augustine, Jerome, Gelasius, Gregory the Great, and Bernard of Clairvaux; but at least one fifteenth-century copy was customized further with numerous scribally reproduced additions from Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque fortunae* within the ample blank spaces of the same page of the manuscript (Yale, Beinecke Library, MS 380; Havens 2001, 21).

The turn from a nearly exclusive reliance on biblical, patristic, and otherwise theological sources to more humanistic gatherings of quotations from ancient Greco-Roman sources was a gradual one and was largely, though not exclusively, restricted to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Notable among these was the Paduan “pre-humanist,” Geremia da Montagnone’s *Epytoma sapientie* (written c. 1310, printed 1505), a traditional moralizing collection that leavened the traditional sententiae of the Doctors of the Church with pagan passages from Catullus, Cicero, Isocrates, Juvenal, Lucan, Macrobius, Martial, Ovid, Plato, Quintilian, Sallust, Seneca, Statius, Valerius Maximus, Virgil, and many others. In early printed editions of Montagnone, these passages were sometimes modified with parenthetical caveats to the reader as “*proverbia vulgaria*,” or the “vulgar proverbs” of pagans. Other more eclectic compilations of Christian and pagan *loci communes* would emerge throughout the Quattrocento that were increasingly free of such conservative anxieties. Indeed, the very first dated book printed in England was William Caxton’s *Dictes and sayings of the philosophers* (1477) – an English translation from the French of maxims excerpted by an eleventh-century Arab reader of ancient Greek philosophers.

Renaissance Education and Humanist Prescriptions

Reforms in Renaissance educational theory regarding dialectic and rhetoric once again elevated the classical *loci communes* to the position of a fundamental organizing principle within the

broader mastery of Latin eloquence. Following the seminal influence of Petrarch, great advances were made in fifteenth-century Italy through the many contributions to the *studia humanitatis* by Gasparino Barzizza, Guarino da Verona, Vittorino da Feltre, Lorenzo Valla, and their contemporaries and immediate successors. As Marsilio Ficino would exclaim in a letter to Paul of Middleburg: “This age, like a golden age, has brought back to light those liberal disciplines that were practically extinguished: grammar, poetry, oratory, painting, sculpture, architecture, music and the ancient singing songs of the Orphic Lyre” (Ficino 1576, 944). As these scholars and educators focused increasingly on the particular attributes of rhetorical sophistication in ancient Greco-Roman authors – and their allied capacity to articulate and teach particular moral and philosophical themes – a renewed pedagogical practice emerged in the schools that encouraged students to collect sententiae systematically and to organize them thematically for future reference and use.

Latin vocabulary, tropes, and figures were often introduced to students in the form of lists – metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, onomatopoeia, parenthesis, etc. – accompanied by rhetorically sophisticated textual examples from classical sources. Agostino Dati’s *Elegantiolae* (c. 1472), a much reprinted textbook of the later Quattrocento, enumerated two hundred *praecepta* of Latin syntax, followed by a second section of substantive moral *loci communes* (“*flosculorum*”) – *aequitas*, *iustitia*, *copia*, *fortuna*, *ius naturae*, *pietas*, etc. – cross-referenced with specific ancient sources. The commonplaces of rhetoric and dialectic were, in this way, inextricably mirrored in commonplaces of moral excellence. Further adaptations would appear along more elaborate lines among ultramontane scholars such as the Dutchman Rudolphus Agricola, whose best-selling *De formando studio* (1484) remained a great influence on both sides of the Alps for at least a half-century. Therein the Dutch humanist addressed the formation of a student’s private course of study and acknowledged that mere rhetorical skill must not be an end in itself. Rather, facility

and eloquence in Latin were the essential means of a far more comprehensive moral philosophical attainment. The proper objects of this integrated pedagogical model were diverse, encompassing poetry, history, oratory, ethics, and, of course, theology, in addition to canonical philosophical texts.

However high-minded Agricola’s educational reforms, his recommended method for composing philosophical arguments was entirely practical: the student had first to undertake an initial phase of textual compilation and cross-referencing suited to his interests and to build a rich and versatile fund of material from which to work. Agricola suggested arranging and cross-referencing these according to traditional moral themes – virtue and vice, life and death, etc. – though not restricting oneself to these alone. His model was expansive, resistant to the conventional theological themes that predominated in medieval florilegia. First collecting and creatively juxtaposing the wisdom literature of the ancients around specific themes, the student-philosopher would then filter them through the classical commonplaces of rhetoric and dialectic: causes, effects, conjugates, antecedents, etc. Agricola’s form of study was essentially tripartite: read widely, compile commonplaces selectively, and then shape the raw material of that investigation and discovery into moral knowledge through deliberative, sophisticated classical Latin compositions intended to persuade and to elevate (Moss 1996, 74–80). The influence of Agricola’s prescriptions cannot be underestimated, as is well reflected in the repeated appearance of *De formando studio* in printed anthologies of other equally popular humanist pedagogical treatises along similar themes by Desiderius Erasmus and Philipp Melanchthon (Erasmus 1971, 1.2.; 1988, 1.6; Melanchthon 1521).

Agricola’s fellow countryman Erasmus elaborated greatly upon the seemingly endless possibilities presented by the properties of literary copia in his 1512 pedagogical work combining the handbook *De ratione studii* with his more detailed *De utraque verborum ac rerum copia* in which he recommended a still more expansive deployment of commonplaces. Beneath each of those was to

be placed a secondary layer of binary divisions consisting of similars (*affinitatis*) and opposites (*pugnantiae*) in the manner of pithy descriptions, such as adages like “Make haste slowly,” or conventional philosophical questions such as “Is the active life superior to the contemplative life.” Further beneath each of these, the exercitant was then instructed to compile apposite quotations and anecdotes in a manner not dissimilar to Erasmus’s own lifelong accumulation and composition of *Adagia* (1508–36), which, like his *De copia*, counted among the runaway pedagogical best sellers of the sixteenth century. Sententiae were not mere tools for the elaboration of rhetorical commonplaces. They had been elevated to the status of commonplaces for argument in their own right – the accumulated wisdom literature of the ancients, now revived and ingeniously redeployed as fundamental building blocks of the studia humanitatis.

Erasmus’s younger contemporary Philipp Melancthon would go on to redeploy the commonplace book tradition in the dual service of education along similar if also more expansive grounds as well as in the generation of cross-confessional polemic. His influence in these precincts, particularly in the Protestant world, dominated much of the middle decades of the sixteenth century. Indeed, it is perhaps no coincidence that one of his very first systematic expositions of reformed evangelical Lutheran theology was entitled *Loci communes* (1521), taking the form of a stridently anti-Catholic and controversial theological commonplace book. Others working for the same Protestant cause went so far as to produce large folio commonplace books with simple theological commonplace headings printed at the top of large blank pages to be filled in later by tireless theologians or pamphleteers. The English printer John Day did just this in 1572 according to a scheme presented by the martyrologist John Foxe. However, the resulting enterprise appears to have been an abject failure, for Day later trimmed and recycled many of the unsold sheets for use in other more popular Protestant works that, nonetheless, still preserve trimmed glimpses of Foxe’s original headings (Foxe 1572).

Further Applications of the Commonplace Book in Renaissance Europe

Clearly, by the sixteenth century the commonplace book had emerged as something of a ubiquity among the educated classes of Europe and would naturally go on to inform further applications in many of the professional disciplines and in the study of the liberal arts more generally. Such crossover was often affected by humanist scholars with literary pretensions, such as Antonio Mancinelli, the pedagogue and glossator of classical Roman texts and the compiler of a literary commonplace book *De poetica virtute* (c. 1499). No doubt a student of Agricola’s works, Mancinelli demonstrated the morally edifying elements of ancient pagan Roman literature within the context of contemporary Catholic culture, seeking to syncretize the two traditions with a minimum of controversial commentary. By listing apposite quotations from Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and others under conventional commonplace headings of particular virtues that were just as often treated as Christian, the commonplace book format was left to “speak for itself.”

Other exemplars followed, among them the Phillipist theologian Georg Maior’s *Sententiae verterum poetarum* (1534) and Ottaviano Mirandula’s *Illustrium poetarum flores* (1538). The full title of the latter indicates its organization “*in locos communes digesti*” (a frequent attribute in titles of works directly inspired by the commonplace book tradition) with a wide range of quotations from Catullus, Plautus, Propertius, Terence, Tibullus, and Virgil. Great prominence was given to this subgenre of literary activity by the natural philosopher Conrad Gessner when he applied his love of encyclopedic compilation to ancient Greek verse and prose extracts arrayed in the manner of a commonplace book. His *Sententiae ex thesauris Graecorum delectae* (1543) was, in essence, an edition of the late antique *gnomologia* of Johannes Stobaeus made more useful to a latter-day audience. Nor were literary verse and prose compilations arranged under commonplace headings restricted to ancient texts. In the later context of the English literary

Renaissance, compendia of contemporary vernacular verses were similarly compiled in the first printed poetical anthologies of the Elizabethan period, notably in Francis Mere's *Palladis Tamia. Wits treasury* (1598) and Robert Allott's *Englands Parnassus, or The choysest flowers of our modern poets* (1600).

Far more pragmatic developments in the commonplace book tradition appeared in other pedagogical contexts, most notably in the law. In a field where capaciousness of memory was highly valued, particularly in the customary traditions of the English common law, commonplacing was widely applied throughout the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, culminating in works such as William Phillips's primer *Studii legalis ratio* (1662) and Matthew Hale's adaptation of the earlier work of Henry Rolle into a comprehensive commonplace book of the English common law, *Un abridgement de plusieurs cases et resolutions del common ley* (1668). However, the post-Renaissance legacy of the commonplace book is most closely associated with the philosopher John Locke's influential and frequently employed system for indexing commonplace books, *A new method of a common-place-book* (1706). There he recommended a method that resolved the natural problems that arose through the compilation of disparate passages under various headings over time. Compilers could easily run out of space under a particularly favored theme and be forced to move one to another page somewhere else in their blank books or even to successive volumes. According to Locke's method, a space is given for each letter of the alphabet in a summary index, and beside each letter is listed each of the five English vowels. Take a commonplace in your book, such as "Virtue," and then place the page numbers wherever relevant entries appear and simply record them in the slot for "Vi-." Blank commonplace books with prescribed headings like John Day's would reappear in print during the eighteenth century with printed versions of Locke's ingenious index.

Exemplary printed commonplace books arranged in the Renaissance tradition had declined considerably by the later decades of the

seventeenth century. They were displaced, in part, by the encyclopedic movement of the early Enlightenment represented by such works as Daniel Georg Morhof's *Polyhistor* (1688–92) and Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* (1728). Personal commonplace books would nonetheless continue to be compiled in manuscript form well into the modern era, much as they had been throughout the Renaissance.

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Compà Lomazz, Compà Zarvagna

► Lomazzo, Gian Paolo

Complexio

► [Complexion, Temperament, and Four Humor Theory in the Renaissance](#)

Complexion, Temperament, and Four Humor Theory in the Renaissance

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Abstract

A central concept in Galenic medicine, the temperament designates the state of health resulting from the balance of the four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile (or melancholy). Produced in the liver during digestion, the humors stem from the mixture of the primary qualities (hot, cold, dry, and moist) related to the four elements (air, fire, water, and earth). The notion of temperament was fundamental for theoretical and practical medical branches, from physiology and pathology to therapeutics and dietetics. It defines the physical constitution of all living beings as well as food, drugs, and natural things in general. In therapeutics, the patient's humoral imbalance is cured by a qualitatively "contrary" remedy, an appropriate diet or by surgical means such as bloodletting and clyster. Because temperament also involves the mixture of elements, it gave rise to long-standing debates in medieval and Renaissance philosophy about the status of the elements in the compound, in particular their qualities, matter, and form.

Synonyms

[Complexio](#); [Crisis](#); [Temperamentum](#); [Temperatura](#); [Temperies](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Throughout his works, Galen established the notion of temperament by merging into a

systematic theory the Hippocratic approach to humors and qualities in *On the Nature of Man* with Aristotle's physics of elements and mixture in *On Generation and Corruption* (Jouanna 2012; Hankinson 2017). In this perspective, the Galenic tradition aligned the four humors with the four elements and their qualities, and more broadly with the four ages of the human being and the seasons (Nutton 2004; Siraisi 1990). According to Galen's *On Mixtures*, the temperament varies from one individual to another within the same species and is determined by the standard of "well-temperate" median state (*eukraton*), which is specific to each species of plants and animals. Such a canonical model of "just" temperament (*ad justitiam*) is a proportionate mixture of the four qualities. From this model derive eight variations including four simple temperaments with one prevalent quality, and four compound temperaments with two complementary qualities (Galen 1997).

On that basis, scholastic physicians developed sophisticated explanations of the complexional variations of living beings, body parts, and drugs (Ottosson 1984; French 2001; McVaugh 1975). In order to map the multitude of temperaments in the physical world, the temperaments of living beings were classified following an intensity scale of qualitative degrees, which were associated with the Galenic definition of "latitude of health." The numerous variants of temperaments were integrated into the framework of four humoral complexions corresponding to the four compound ones: "sanguine" (hot-moist), "bilious" (hot-dry), "phlegmatic" (cold-moist), and "melancholic" (cold-dry). Furthermore, the discussions on complexion opened on diverse interpretations of the Aristotelian concept of mixture. They questioned the permanence of the elemental forms in the compound and the nature of the substantial form of the "mixt," as testify the accounts of Avicenna, Averroes, and Thomas Aquinas, among others (Maier 1982). Such a doctrinal background is patent in the medical terminology of temperament designating either the process of mixture (*commixtio*) or its temperate product (*complexio*) (Jacquart 1985).

In the late Renaissance, the medical philosophy of Jean Fernel spread the idea that the temperament of living beings not only results from the

blending of the four elements but also involves a celestial entity related to the body's life, innate heat, and substantial form. When subject to violent affections such as epidemics and poisons, this life principle requires a specific therapy alternative to the Galenic cure by contraries (Fernel 1567). For its Platonic interpretation of Galen, Fernel's account of temperament was widely discussed by early modern physicians (Hirai 2011; Richardson 2018). Moreover, followers of Paracelsus like Petrus Severinus challenged the Galenic notion of temperament on the basis that it endorses the mixture of elements as perishable and sterile material units. Instead, they established that the physiological functions and diseases stem from alchemical processes operated by three principles (Salt, Sulfur, and Mercury) which are rooted in incorporeal and celestial seeds. Nonetheless, many alchemist physicians such as Joseph Du Chesne and Daniel Sennert proposed a compromise by reuniting Fernel's theory of temperament with Paracelsian alchemy.

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- Innate Heat
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Compton, Thomas

Born: Cambridge, 1591

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Abstract

Thomas Compton Carleton, S.J., was a seventeenth-century English Jesuit philosopher-theologian. His major philosophical work, the *Philosophia Universa*, is a model of Jesuit pedagogical practice insofar as it stays true to a fundamentally Aristotelian vision of philosophy, as required by the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*, but expresses originality in its theses and tenor.

Biography

Thomas Compton Carleton, S.J. (Cambridge, 1591; Liege, 24 March 1666), was a Jesuit philosopher-theologian who was born at the end of the sixteenth century in Cambridgeshire, England (Doyle, p. 4). In 1617 he joined the Society of Jesus and began his formation at the English College in Douai, France. Carleton was ordained a priest there in 1622 and later, in 1625, returned to his native England where he eventually took his fourth religious vow on 21 May 1628. He returned to France to teach literature in the Jesuit College at St. Omer, near Calais. Late in 1639 Carleton left for the Jesuit College in Liege where he was a professor of philosophy, then theology, followed by sacred scripture (Doyle, p. 4).

During his time in Liege, Carleton authored his *Philosophia Universa* [PU] (which would later be republished posthumously in 1697 as the *Cursus philosophicus universus* [McCormick, p. 80]). As the title suggests, this work covered the entire spectrum of philosophical topics including logic, metaphysics, physics, generation, corruption, the heavens, and the soul. After giving some preliminary definitions of logical terms such as subject, predicate, copula, discussions of kinds of proposition, and rules for syllogistic reasoning (fols. 1–27) in his introduction to logic that runs for seven disputations, Carleton composes a much lengthier *Disputationes in universam Aristotelis Logicam*, which ranges over 50 disputations (McCormick, p. 80). As the nature of the topics Carleton treats indicates, he was largely taking his direction from Aristotle's own philosophical outlook, although the Jesuit is by no means a slavish commentator on the Stagirite's work. Rather, as some have suggested, Carleton's pedagogical commitment to the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*, which mandates that in things philosophical the thinking of Aristotle should be followed, is clearly at work (McCormick, p. 80).

Like many other Jesuit scholastics from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (e.g., Fonseca, Suárez, Lynch, Semery, Wietrowski), Carleton also address the issue of super-transcendentality. He does so in the context of his logic, more specifically in his treatment of

the nature and division of terms (*de divisione terminorum*), which fall into one of the following: “transcendental, supertranscendental, and non-transcendental” (*PU*, d. 2, s. 6, n. 5; fol. 8). Transcendental terms, explains Carleton, are those that can be said of everything and are the standard six: “*res, ens, verum, bonum, aliquid, unum*” (ibid.). Supertranscendental terms, however, are those that can be said of more than only “real things” and can be “affirmed of fictions” (ibid.). Here, Carleton has in mind the “imaginable” and the “possible” (ibid.). Later in his *Philosophia Universa* in a discussion of *ens rationis*, Carleton goes so far as to suggest that beings of reason, though they do not have “physical” or “real” existence, have “intentional existence” effected by the intellect (ibid., d. 15, s. 3, n. 6; fol. 75). This intentional being would thus be considered supertranscendental according to the divisions established earlier (cf. Doyle). Finally, non-transcendental terms are those that have a “limited signification and essence,” such that they do not extend to all things but only to some, such as “man, horse, lion, etc.” (*PU*, d. 2, s. 6, n. 5; fol. 8).

Also noteworthy with the *Philosophia Universa*, published only a year before René Descartes’ death, is the fact that in it Carleton offers occasional criticisms of the Father of Modern Philosophy (McCormick, p. 80). These criticisms are largely directed to a perceived lack of clarity in expression and Descartes’ ambivalence in the positions he takes, which philosophical commitments seem to be more a matter of political expediency rather than philosophical commitment (ibid.). Also, in matters pertaining to physics, Carleton thinks Descartes has gone too far in dissolving the notion of “substantial forms” and he even offers theological reasons for finding problematic Descartes’ rejection of accidental forms (ibid., p. 81).

Carleton followed his *Philosophia Universa* with a work devoted to ethics in 1653, the *Prometheus Christianus seu liber moralium*, and a two-part theological treatise, *Cursus theologici: tomus prior* (1659) and *tomus posterior* (1662). Only a few years after his publication of this last work, Carleton died in Liege on 24 March 1666 (Doyle, p. 4).

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Concept of Seeds

► Seed Concept in the Renaissance

Concordia

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Abstract

This entry analyzes the notion of philosophical concord (sometimes with that of peace so often inextricably associated with it) in the Renaissance by providing a glance at the thoughts of five influential thinkers between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century. Rather than taking into consideration the historical milieu in which such notion propagated, it traces its evolution across the most relevant works by Ramon Llull (1232–1316), Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), Desiderius Erasmus (ca. 1468–1536), and Joan Lluís Vives i March (1493–1540).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The idea of concord (*concordia*) intended as a political and religious concept rooted in philosophical and theological speculation and as a development in Western thought of the Greek term *homonoia* (opposed to that of *stasis*) can be observed in five influential late medieval and Renaissance philosophers.

Ramon Llull

Even in a Renaissance perspective, an account of concord cannot fail to mention Ramon Llull's notion of such an ideal and its link to peace, as Llull's ideas always remained linked to the question of how the three monotheistic religions could peacefully coexist or, more precisely, how they could unite into one true religion. In his 1309 *Liber de acquisitione Terrae Sanctae*, Llull argues that such a unified religion, which could only be Christianity, is not possible because of the divisions between the different Orthodox churches and the Roman Church. Llull's plan for a unified church is, ultimately, a tripartite one. First, he advocates the founding of monasteries, where future missionaries can acquire the necessary linguistic skills and knowledge. Second, he is convinced that one single knightly order (like the Templars) would be sufficient to reconquer the Holy Land. Third, he envisions military intervention, which, for the sake of peace, may vary according to context. Llull, aware as he was of the counter-factuality of his ideas, used to call himself a fool or a *vir phantasticus*.

Nicholas of Cusa

Nicholas of Cusa's formulas of learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*) and coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*) testify to his foundational method of dialectics that elevates apparent contrarities to a transcendent understanding.

Cusa – a pivotal figure in philosophy and theology as well as in the history of the Christian Church – was exposed to, and active in, various contentions of his time: the ecclesiological battle of the Council of Basel, negotiations with leaders of the Byzantine and Roman Churches, his contested government of the Brixen diocese, and his response to the Fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453. On that occasion, Cusa wrote his *De pace fidei*, one of the major works of philosophy of toleration, arguing that, while faith as a truth claim is controversial, the aim of faith (that is, salvation and union with God) is unifying. Religious strife therefore mirrors the tension between the perceptive plurality of created objects and the oneness of creation in the light of the Creator. Accordingly, Cusa's search for concord has its philosophical foundation in the speculative idea of oneness that regulates all possible understanding.

Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola deals with concord (*concordia*) by way of unity and peace (*pax philosophica*, as he calls it) in a number of his works, and most notably in his so-called *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (1486), in the *Conclusiones nongentae* (1486), in the *Heptaplus* (1489), and in the *De ente et uno* (1490–1491). While in his speculative works Pico della Mirandola tackles in philosophical and theological perspective how to achieve an agreement among discording parties and avoid the fragmentation and armed feuds (when not wars) that the lack of a resolution for such theoretical and practical conflicts had been causing and would continue to cause if not addressed urgently, his need for political action is witnessed by the proclaimed intention to organize what he defines as a council (*concilium*) to be held in 1487 in Rome in order to debate the *Conclusiones nongentae*, after having introduced them by reading the *Oratio*. While the planned council could not take place – ultimately for the opposition of Pope Innocent VIII and of the commission, which he had appointed to verify the orthodoxy of the *Conclusiones* – Pico della

Mirandola's commitment to the achievement of peace lives on in his attempt to show in his works the unity of truth that can only be understood with an in-depth study of every philosophical and religious tradition followed by an active attempt at reconciling their differences.

Desiderius Erasmus

Desiderius Erasmus defended religious concord throughout his theological dispute with Martin Luther and most explicitly in his *De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia* (1533). His two great political and religious ideals are pacifism and church unity, and they are also his two most scorching failures. Virtually inseparable in his writings, they are defined, respectively, as *pax* and *concordia*. Erasmus promoted concord reducing the number of fundamental articles of faith to a minimum, in order to avoid doctrinal disputes and conserve religious unity. His ideal of concord endured long after it ceased to be viable and can be seen at work in the colloquies and polemics that preceded the French Wars of Religion.

Joan Lluís Vives

Joan Lluís Vives made a significant contribution to the discourse of concord in the early sixteenth century and left a legacy widely disseminated in the early modern period. In his *De Europae dissidiis et bello Turcico* (1526), and the treatise *De concordia et discordia in humano genere* (1529), Vives explicitly structures his arguments around the categories of concord and discord. *De Europae dissidiis* examines the origins of European religious and philosophical dissension and dynastic war and suggests remedies such as church councils, effective diplomacy, and defensive alliances between Christian powers. *De concordia et discordia* extends these arguments, such that concord and discord encompass all levels of human life, from the individual to the family, city, church, and secular and ecclesiastical rulers.

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Confessio Augustana

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Abstract

Written by Philip Melanchthon for the Augsburg Diet of 1530, the Confession was presented by five princes and two cities in order to illustrate the changes introduced in their territories following the Lutheran inspiration. Melanchthon took up and reformulated previous professions of faith trying, on the one hand, to quell the internal fractures to the Protestant movement and, on the other, to show a continuity with the Catholic theological and institutional tradition. In those years in fact, deep rifts had emerged inside the reformed front, and discussions attempting to overcome them had multiplied. Background political events – primarily the prospect of a weak Christian front facing the Turkish threat – made essential an attempt to take a unified position on many controversial issues. The articles of Schwabach and Thurgau, together with those derived from the Colloquium of Marburg, formed the

starting points for Melanchthon who, instructed by Luther himself, was in charge of bringing order to the theological and ecclesiological situation. An uneasy situation also within the reformed formation, which among other things, witnessed the controversy about the real presence – according to the Lutheran interpretation – or symbolic, in the Zwinglian, the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. While acknowledging the reported abuses, Rome refused any form of solution that went against its own tradition, considering it a guarantee of universal agreement as founded on Peter's mandate and the apostolic heritage.

Synonyms

[Augsburg confession](#)

History and Original Aspects

Written by Philip Melanchthon for the Augsburg Diet of 1530, the Confession was presented by five princes and two cities in order to illustrate the changes introduced in their territories following the Lutheran inspiration. Melanchthon took up and reformulated previous professions of faith trying, on the one hand, to quell the internal fractures to the Protestant movement and, on the other, to show a continuity with the Catholic theological and institutional tradition. In those years in fact, deep rifts had emerged inside the reformed front, and discussions attempting to overcome them had multiplied. Background political events – primarily the prospect of a weak Christian front facing the Turkish threat – made essential an attempt to take a unified position on many controversial issues. The articles of Schwabach and Thurgau, together with those derived from the Colloquium of Marburg, formed the starting points for Melanchthon who, instructed by Luther himself, was in charge of bringing order to the theological and ecclesiological situation. An uneasy situation also within the reformed formation, which among other things, witnessed the controversy

about the real presence – according to the Lutheran interpretation – or symbolic, in the Zwinglian, the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

Formally, the Confession was composed of 28 articles, the first 21 devoted to matters of faith, the remaining ones to “abuses” they intended to remedy. The starting point was the Lutheran anthropology: due to the original sin, humans have become weak and cannot achieve salvation through their own efforts but only through the sacrifice of Christ, which has reconciled them with God. This sacrifice is reflected in Eucharist, in which His body and blood are to be considered truly present in the bread and wine. The sacrifice is the basis of the reconciliation, and therefore the preaching of Old and New Testament aims precisely to strengthen the faith in the sacrifice, because it is in the knowledge of the Scriptures that the human possibility of acting properly rests. Being naturally sinful, man can neither remember nor comprehend all the sins he commits and therefore is not able to refer them to the priest. How should therefore man behave? The traditional devotions – related to relics, saints, fasts, etc. – can be functional to edification, but they are not mandatory: those who do not carry them out do not commit a sin, precisely because of their symbolic dimension. Works in fact do not lead to salvation: in contrast, faith leads to good works; nor is the intercession of the saints useful to salvation: they are to be considered examples to follow. In fact, everybody is called, according to different forms of “vocation,” to follow God and can do it in different ways. There are no different degrees of vocation: priests, nuns, husbands, wives, and so on will be evaluated for the purity of their intent and not for their outward acts, characterized by freedom of choice. In human affairs indeed man has free will because he has been endowed with reason and therefore can choose, a possibility he is not guaranteed in the realm of the Spirit. Listed among the “abuses remedied” in articles 22 to 28 are the innovations of communion under both species, the marriage of priests, confession, the elimination of sins related to food and ecclesiastical power, which

was limited to preaching and the administration of sacraments.

The articles were characterized by a degree of caution also toward the Church of Rome: Melancthon constantly recalled the coherence of the proposal with the formulations of the Fathers, of the primitive Church, and of course with the Biblical text.

While acknowledging the reported abuses, Rome refused any form of solution that went against its own tradition, considering it a guarantee of universal agreement as founded on Peter's mandate and the apostolic heritage. These issues, connected to a strong sense of the importance of religious experience and material religiosity, formed elements of friction and split, as well as the concept of "good works" and their role for salvation. However, the limits of papal and episcopal power were above all the issue that stiffened Roman positions: there were too many overlaps between the spiritual mandate to care for souls and the temporal sphere. In particular, in the spirit of the Confession, it was primarily the position of the German bishops that was to be revised, to limit their interference in the civil and political life at the expense of pastoral care. Rome's choice was rejection and took the form of a papal Confutatio, to which Melancthon responded with an Apology of the Confession. The Roman attitude led Lutheran representatives to abandon the Diet and to form in 1531 the Schmalkaldic League, so that the Augsburg Confession was recognized as legitimate only in the Diet of Augsburg of 1555 and confirmed in the Peace of Westphalia.

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Conimbrans

► [Conimbricense, Collegium](#)

Conimbricense, Collegium

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Abstract

The time frame covered by this article goes from 1548 to 1606, i.e., the year of the foundation of the *Collegium Artium* by King John III of Portugal (1502–1557) to the year the last commentary on Aristotle was published. The main focus is given to the period from 1555 onward, when the college was entrusted to the Jesuits. A detailed study on the pedagogical discussions leading to the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* and the link to the *Cursus Conimbricensis* on the main works of Aristotle is then disclosed. The structure of the commentaries combining the Aristotelian text, a prose comment and up-to-date *quaestiones* on philosophical issues, creating thus a hermeneutic

circle, a *Corpus Aristotelicum Interpretumque*, is explained, as well as the development it led to. Although the Jesuits chose to edit these commentaries as a group of authors, they could partly be identified. Finally, the legacy of these commentaries on the main European philosophical traditions up to the twentieth century is summarized.

Synonyms

Colégio das Artes (Collegium Artium); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis e Societate Iesu in [opera] Aristotelis Stagiritae*; Conimbrans; Conimbricenses; Jesuit Aristotelianism of Coimbra; Jesuit Commentaries of Coimbra on Aristotle; Colégio Real in Coimbra

Introduction

The term *Collegium Conimbricense* refers in the first place to the *College of Arts* (Collegium Artium) founded by King John III of Portugal (D. João III) (June 7, 1502–June 11, 1557) at Coimbra City (Portugal) in 1548 in order to prepare young men in Latin and philosophy for their eventual admission to university studies. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, this College became famous for the commentaries on Aristotle that were produced there by the Jesuits, who had taken charge of the college in 1555. Actually, the term *Collegium Conimbricense* was a recurrent feature in the titles given to these commentaries, which were issued between 1592 and 1606 (*Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in ... libros ... Aristotelis Stagiritae*) and quickly worked as a “brand” (Casalini 2012, p. 11) for unrivaled Catholic Counter-Reformation textbooks on Aristotle. The strategy of choosing a brand name for a collection, unheard of in those days, had such an impact on the history of philosophy that this college has ever since been remembered as the very school which produced these commentaries, thus leading to an identification between *Collegium* and *Cursus*. In a narrower sense, the expression

Collegium Conimbricense usually refers to the *Cursus Conimbricensis*, viz., the following eight commentaries on Aristotle:

- Collegium Conimbricense. 1592. *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in octo libros physicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae*. Coimbra. António Mariz
- Collegium Conimbricense. 1593a. *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in quattuor libros de coelo Aristotelis Stagiritae*. Lisbon. Simão Lopes
- Collegium Conimbricense. 1593b. *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in libros meteorum Aristotelis Stagiritae*. Lisbon. Simão Lopes
- Collegium Conimbricense. 1593c. *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in libros Aristotelis, qui parva naturalia appellantur*. Lisbon. Simão Lopes
- Collegium Conimbricense. 1593d. *In libros ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum, aliquot Conimbricensis cursus disputationes in quibus praecipua quaedam ethicae disciplinae capita continentur*. Lisbon. Simão Lopes
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- Collegium Conimbricense. 1598. *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu, in tres libros de anima Aristotelis Stagiritae*. Coimbra. António Mariz
- Collegium Conimbricense. 1606. *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu, in universam Dialecticam Aristotelis*. Coimbra. Didaco Gomes Loureiro (The works of Pedro da Fonseca, the commentary on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* by Cipriano Suarez, and the *Grammar* of Manuel Alvares (1523–1586) could also to a certain extent be considered as works belonging to this school, since they were the first results of the pedagogical thoughts that would lead up to the editorial work; see below. The works by Francisco Suárez (January 5, 1548–September 25, 1617), written after these commentaries

had been published, can be considered as the finest developments these comments led to. The commentaries on the *Nicomachen Ethics* and the one on the *Parva naturalia* do not use the text of Aristotle, but only consist of *quaestiones*).

These comments are intimately linked to the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* and can be considered to be its first tangible result. Moreover, they were also consciously written with a political scope in mind: to strengthen the Catholic faith within Europe (against the Reform movements) and to spread it all over the world. The close link to the Portuguese maritime expansion is evidenced by the fact that these commentaries were translated into Chinese in the first half of the seventeenth century, constituting thus the first expression of Western philosophy translated into an oriental language (Zhang 1999, pp. 364–379; de Carvalho 2010, p. 16).

In 1759 the Jesuits were dispossessed of their College, which was integrated into the University in 1772 through the Pombaline University Reforms.

In 1836, the College was finally closed, having as its successor the *Liceu Nacional de Coimbra*.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

By the mid-sixteenth century, preparing students for university admission in philosophy meant providing them with a solid basis in Latin, rhetoric, and Aristotelian philosophy. Instead of sending pupils abroad, as was usual in his time, King John III chose to found the *Collegium Artium* at Coimbra, where the University was already based. The first Principal chosen was the humanist André de Gouveia (1497–June 9, 1548), who had been Principal of the *Collège de Guyenne* at Bordeaux (France). His uncle, Diogo de Gouveia the Elder (1471–December 8, 1557), had been Principal to the College of Sainte Barbe, a college initially intended to prepare young Portuguese pupils for university and which became best known as the school where Ignacio de Loyola (May 31, 1491–July 31, 1556) studied theology. When André was

appointed Principal to the C. C. in 1548, some teachers of his crew came with him to Coimbra, among them the Portuguese Diogo de Teive (1514–1569), João da Costa, the French Nicolas Grouchy (1510–1572), and the Scot George Buchanan (1506–September 28, 1582). Very quickly the rivalries between Diogo de Gouveia the Younger (†April 2, 1576) (the nephew his homonym uncle would have preferred as Principal in Coimbra) and André provoked a quarrel involving the recently founded Inquisition, as the teachers coming from Bordeaux were alleged to have sympathized with the Reform. The teachers from Bordeaux were accused of heterodoxy by the ones brought in from Paris (Brandão 1948–1969, pp. 1–107; Pereira 1989 10,430 sq.). This led the King to entrusting the responsibility of the college to the recently founded Order of the Jesuits in 1555.

When considering the many translations Nicolas de Grouchy, who taught Greek and philosophy, left behind, it is clear that Aristotelian philosophy was already represented in the college. When the Jesuits took over the college, however, the question of how to read Aristotle in order to tighten the knots of the Catholic faith was the main problem they were faced with. Hence, the question about how to comment on that author was their most pressing.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Idea and Development of the Commentary

Humanism brought major innovations into the Aristotelian tradition inherited from the Middle Ages (Kessler 2008, pp. 139–142; Copenhaver and Schmitt, 1992, pp. 65–76; Schmitt 1992, pp. 31–34). Although the Latin Aristotle continued to be studied at European universities, the renewed philological interest compelled more and more readers to go back to the Greek sources. The first edition of the Greek Aristotle, the Aldine edition, published in Venice at the end of the fifteenth century, gave rise to various Latin translations as well as to editions of most of the ancient commentators on Aristotle. By the end of the 1530s, all texts of Aristotle and his ancient commentators were available in print, be it in Latin or

in Greek (Grafton 1988, pp. 767–791). Most of the Aristotelian texts went through various translations into Latin, thus weaving ever new interpretative threads throughout Europe (Schmitt 1992, 13). This is the reason why Schmitt chose to speak about the Aristotelianisms of the Renaissance, preferring the plural to indicate these different interpretative threads). Hence, when the Jesuits took over the C. C. in 1555, they were confronted with a variety of Aristotelian and anti-Aristotelian interpretative lines to be refuted in order to comply with Catholic Aristotelianism. Moreover, the European maritime expansion made it urgent to have trustworthy textbooks in order to school not only Europeans but also Asians (Zhang 1999, pp. 364–379) and, to a lesser extent, natives of South America, mainly Brazil.

The Rise of the Textbooks

The choice made by the Conimbricenses to publish their textbooks as the works of a group of authors instead of signing them individually is certainly unique for that time and needs to be explained, since it is highly relevant for understanding their strategy.

The idea of assembling textbooks was first suggested in a letter written February 9, 1560, by Father Torres, *praepositus* of the Portuguese Province, to Jeronimo Nadal (1507–April 2, 1580), Father General of the Order. He recorded that two lecturers (*lectores*) of the Arts had given some dictations accurate enough to be published, one of them having been on rhetoric (cf. *De arte rhetorica libri tres ex Aristotele, Cicerone et Quintiliano deprompti* published by Cipriano Suarez that very same year in Coimbra). This, Torres suggested, would benefit teachers as well as students and lecturers: both would have more spare time in order to concentrate on the important topics; the former to write and read their lectures, the latter to write them down and to assimilate them. (The letter can be found in Lukács 1974a, II 59–64. Cf. also Lukács 1974b, III 317: “Uno de los lectores de artes ha hecho buena parte de unos ditados en ellas con diligencia para poderse imprimir; y otro hizo otros en la retórica. [...] Nos an escrito que haríamos un gran beneficio a esta tierra, si imprimiésemos estos ditados de las

artes. Y en la verdad ansi lo creemos. Por lo menos sería gran alivio y descanso ora los nuestros que leen, y para los que oyen; porque los unos gastan mucho tiempo y estudio en hazer los ditados y escribirlos, y después en ditarlos en la cátedra a los oyentes; y los otros en recibirlos; y aviéndolos impresos, quedavan todos con más tiempo libre y descanso.”) In 1561, Jeronimo Nadal visited Portugal and asked some of the professors of this country, and first of all Pedro da Fonseca (1528–November 4, 1599), to write a course on philosophy (Lukács 1974b, III 317; cf. also Rodrigues 1931–1938, II.2 103), since the lack of one such course was perceived even by the professors of the Roman College (*Collegium Romanum*). (Although this lack will only be explicitly expressed 2 years later, see Lukács 1974a, II 317.)

Nadal’s instructions of 1561 already set the course for the disposition of the commentaries:

1. At the beginning of the cursus, when reading the introduction, read carefully what concerns the Prior Analytics, the Perihermeneias and the Sophistici elenchi, so that this may serve the students for the whole cursus and help them pass more easily through the books. [...] 3. Aristotle should be read in such a way that many parts he treated diffusely [difusamente] and that are not important for the science be read in summary [compendium], indicating only their substance without reading the text [letra], so that there is more time left for reading the Metaphysics and the De generatione and the De anima and the Parva naturalia and especially the Metaphysics, since this is the most profitable for scholastic theology. (Lukács 1974b, III 59: “1. Al principio del curso, quando se lee la introducción, se lea con diligencia lo que toca à Prioras, Perihermeneias y Elenchos, para que se ayuden dello los estudiantes por todo el curso, y después passen más facilmente por los libros. [...] 3. Aristóteles se lea de manera, que muchas partes que él trató difusamente, y no son de importancia para la sciencia, se lean en compendio, diziéndosse la substancia solamente dellas, sin se leer la letra, para que quede más tiempo para leer *Metaphysica* y *De generatione* y *De anima* y *Parvos Naturales*, y especialmente la *Metaphysica*, que es lo que más aprovecha para la theologia scholástica.”)

In the same year, the *Masters of Coimbra* answered Nadal’s proposition by listing the exact passages that should be read in detail, those only to be commented on by a scholium (*glosa*), as well as the ones to be summarized (*en*

summa) (Lukács, 1974b III 66 sqq.: “Porphyrio todo, *Predicamentos* todos, *De interpretatione* todos los libros, excepto el último cap° del 2° libro con *summa*. *Prior*es: los 7 capítulos del primero, 8° 9° 10 11 con *summa*, el 12 letra con glosa, 13 14 15 con *summa* breve, 16 hasta donde dize “hoc autem monstrato”, letra y glosa; de lo demás del mismo cap° *summa* breve hasta el cap° 21, *summas* brevísimas, y assí hasta el 29, y en este 29, *summa* extensa sin letra, en lo que queda del libro, ni *summa* ni letra. En el 2° libro hasta el cap° 18 exclusive, dexar lo de todo, dando una *summa* breve. Las 6 potestades de los *sylogismos*; el 18 se lea el principio, donde pone los modos *petitionis principii*. Lo que se sigue, se dexe todo, sin *summa*; si no el 23 y 24 y 27 con *summas*. *Posterior*es : 8 capítulos primeros con glosa y letra, y assí el 10 11 23 24 26; en todos los demás se dé, en cada uno *summa*; en el 2° libro, primero cap° y ultimo con glosa y letra; los demás con *summa*. De *Tópicos* los diez capítulos primeros con letra y glosa; en los demás capítulos *summa*. El 4° y 6° libro, con letra y sin glosa, colligiendo solamente, en cada libro, un argumento breve de cada uno. *Elenchos* : los 4 capítulos, con letra y glosa; y el 5°, con *summa* sin letra; y el último capítulo de los *Elenchos*, la letra solamente. El primero de los *Physicos*, todo con letra y glosa. El 2° libro, todo con letra y glosa, excepto el cuarto cap° en que se dará *summa*. En el 3° libro, los 3 capítulos primeros con letra y glosa; y los demás capítulos, hasta el fin, en cada uno, una buena *summa* que ponga las razones en forma, excepto el 7° capítulo que se leerá con letra y glosa. El 4° lib., el 10° cap° por *summa*, sin letra; y de la misma manera el 6° y el 9°. Los demás capítulos, con letra y glosa. El 5°, todo con letra y glosa, excepto el último cap° en que se dé *summa*. Del 6° libro, primero y 2° capítulos, con letra y glosa. En los demás capítulos, *summas* buenas que declaren bien la sustancia de Aristóteles con tratar las cuestiones ordinarias. El 7° libro se leerá todo, con letra y glosa, excepto el 4° cap°, en que se dará *summa*. En el 8°, todo con letra y glosa, excepto el 2° cap° en que se dará una buena *summa*. El primero *De Coelo* en el cap° 5 6° y 7°, con *summas* y letras; los demás con letra y glosa. Del 2° libro, los

primeros 8° capítulos y el 10 y 11, con letra y glosa. El 9° y los demás, con *summa*. El último cap° con letra y glosa. El 3° libro se dexe todo, dando un argumento breve dél. En el 4° libro se dexe el 2° cap°, con un breve argumento; los demás capítulos, con letra y glosas. Los *De generatione*, en el primero libro, se dexe la letra del 2° y 8° y 9°, dando *summas*; lo demás con letra y glosa. Del 2° libro, se dexa el 6° y 9°, con *summa* breve. Lo demás, con letra y glosa. Los *De anima* del primero libro, se leerá el primero cap°, con letra y glosa; lo demás se dexará, dando un argumento de todo. El 2° y 3° libro, todo con letra y glosa.” Lukács, 1974b, III 67).

On January 14, 1562, Fonseca was ready to provide Nadal with an outline of the course. He proposed to choose “two or three serious interpreters of Aristotle” without naming them, in order “to point out the doubts and the good explanations, clarifying the passages by one another” (Lukács 1974b, III 319: “Assimismo me parecía que yo fuesse en este tiempo viendo todos los libros de Aristóteles que no tengo vistos y pueden servir (o no tam vistos) apuntando las dudas y buenas exposiciones con dos o tres graves interpretes como cifras, exponiendo unos lugares por otros, etc”). He thus suggested to create a hermeneutic circle, a *Corpus Aristotelicum Interpretumque* that would work like a closed reference system within these texts only, allowing the obscure passages to be explained by clearer ones. But Fonseca was aware of the fact that the texts retained did not give an answer to all the problems Aristotle had pointed out, nor did they explain the whole tradition the Conimbrans lived in. Hence, he proposed that Cipriano [Suárez] should focus primarily on the mathematical problems raised by Aristotle, for example, those pertaining to geometry and demonstrations. In addition to this, he added that one should also cover the passages dealing with cosmography, astrology, and perspective (the latter being a pet subject of the Jesuits) that can be found in *De Coelo* and the *Meteors*. On top of all this, the theory of the planets, as presented in the fourth chapter of Johannes de Sacrobosco’s *Sphaera*, should also be included, since this work was already being lectured on in Coimbra. Finally,

one should include those passages in Pliny and in some others that could be used for explaining the *Meteors*, such as those dealing with the winds or the sources of rivers (Lukács 1974b, III 319: “[Y] que el P. Cypriano attendiese especialmente a las cosas de matemáticas que ay en Aristóteles, como son exemplos de geometría, demonstraciones, lugares que hablan de lo que pertenece a cosmographía, astrología y perspectiva, como ay muchos en los libros de coelo y metéoros; y allende desto hiziesse por traer algo de las theóricas de los planetas al 4º cap. de la sphaera de Sacrobosco que acá se lee, quanto buenamente se pudiesse hazer, y se compadeciesse con el tiempo que se daa a estas cosas. Finalmente que leyesses en Plinio y otros algunos lo que puede servir para materia de metéoros, como de vientos, de origine fontium, etc.”). Neither must the works of Cicero be omitted, for they taught one how to write and argue (modos de hablar y tratar) (Lukács 1974b, III 319). Marcos Jorge (1524–1571) (Sommervogel 1869–1876, col. 821) was singled out to deal with some questions relating to Scotist philosophy and others that he considered important with a view to pointing out their difficulties and their resolutions. The same held for the *Natural Questions* of Seneca and for Alexander of Aphrodisias, as well as for some other ancient authorities that would serve the point. (Lukács 1974b, III 319: “[Y] que el P. Marcos Jorge podría ver algunas questiones (que sabe seren altercadas en el curso) por Scoto y otros que le pareciesse, apuntando brevemente lo que ay de dificultad o de resolución, y leyesses las questiones naturales de Séneca, Alexandro Aphrodisio, et de alguno otro antiguo que hiziesse al caso.” To the third quoted in this letter, P. Pero Gómez, there is no specific task mentioned. Cf. Lukács 1974b, III 318.)

This letter is interesting on many counts, the most significant one perhaps being the authors and works that it does *not* mention. Fonseca establishes a plan for his fellow teachers by providing them with a precisely defined framework. A handful of canonical authors, both from Antiquity and the Middle Ages, are named, among them Alexander, Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, Scotus, and John of Holywood. But only two works are

explicitly referred to – the *Natural Questions* and *The Sphere of the Universe*. The staff is left with only a moderate degree of independence to add *some other authors* related to the questions and authors already listed. Nonetheless Fonseca does not specify whether these authors should be contemporaries, or classical, or both, leaving the choice open. Another striking point is the absence of Thomas Aquinas. António M. Martins argues that the Doctor Angelicus was implicitly present in this outline without there being any need to mention him explicitly. This problem will be indirectly addressed by Ariew (1998), when he tries to prove that the Conimbrans were Scotists, not Thomists, as the French historian of philosophy Etienne Gilson had already maintained.

When we consider the Aristotelian works to be commented on, we notice that they follow the medieval canon, leaving aside the *Mechanics* and the various biological writings that were being rediscovered in Northern Italy (e.g., by Ulisse Aldrovandi [September 11, 1522–May 4, 1605]). The works retained in order to comment on Aristotelian problems could also hardly be considered as up to date, mirroring as they did a medieval tradition. Nonetheless, this all-in-one strategy of presenting the Aristotelian text – a prose commentary followed by questions in the tradition of medieval treatises, both together creating a *Corpus Aristotelicum Interpretumque* – was the major pedagogical innovation in textbooks at the time. These encyclopedia Aristotelian treatises became best and long sellers in their time, when we consider the many reeditions issued all over Europe. (The most striking difference to be noted is the use of the Greek Aristotle in several reeditions, whereas the Portuguese *editiones principes* only use Latin. The question of the translations used is not yet resolved. A census of these foreign editions was first established by A. A. de Andrade (Góis 1957), which is more recently revised by Mário Santiago de Carvalho and is available from the site <http://www.saavedrafajardo.org/Archivos/Conimbricenses_Bibliografia.pdf>. This census is not meant to be exhaustive.) Not only were students and teachers spared the labor of dictating and writing down the lessons, but they were also

provided a complete textbook that could be used as a reference work.

The Authors Chosen to Comment on Aristotle

Fonseca thought that, by joining forces, this common task could be accomplished within the span of 2 or 3 years' time, as it was split up among a group and everyone would work on it on a daily basis in order to complete it. After this preliminary work, the gathering of the manuscripts and the revisions for editing could then be done by one single person (Lukács 1974b, III 319: "Creo que a cabo de dos o tres annos, si esto procede deste modo y los otros maestros y theólogos ayudan en lo que tengo dicho, estaraa la materia tan dispuesta, que se haga mui en breve el curso todo, y con ocupación de quasi no más que una persona"). Although this is not stated in the sources known to us, it is plausible to assume that Fonseca wanted the whole course to be ready for 1565, the year in which the College of Arts was integrated into the University of Coimbra. At that time, the new statutes that would also affect the didactical disposition of the courses were probably already being prepared. The 3-year course approved in 1552 by the College of Arts (the College of Arts existed since 1548, but the leadership was only given over to the Jesuits in 1555 by King João III) was extended to a 4-year course (the eight semesters of the course were organized according to the works of Aristotle in the following way: first and second semester, dialectics; third semester, *Physics*; fourth semester, *Ethics*; fifth semester, *Metaphysics*; sixth semester, *Parva Naturalia*; seventh semester, *De anima*; eighth semester, review and preparation for the degree).

When we consider the time frame set by Fonseca and the publication years (i.e., 1592–1606), we understand that his fellow Jesuits did not meet the deadline aimed for. The only work published during that time slot was Fonseca's own *Institutionum Dialecticarum Libri Octo* of 1564. Even his *Commentarii in libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* were only published during the next two decades, when he spent his time in Rome. After having promised these commentaries in the first edition of his *Institutionum Dialecticarum Libri*

Octo (Fonseca 1964, p. 10: "[U]t ego, quod in profitenda Philosophia aliquot annos posuissem, qua possem brevitate, et perspicuitate eos libros Aristotelem exponerem, qui auditoribus Philosophiae explicari consueverunt"), Fonseca explained in the "Preface" in the second edition of 1574 the reasons that had kept him from his work and the choice finally to publish his commentary on *Metaphysics*:

Concerning the remaining commentaries on Philosophy I promised to write in the first edition, there is no reason for anyone to accuse me of having published none of them until now. But no sooner had I concluded the interpretation of Porphyry's *Isagoge* and on Aristotle's *Categories* that I was compelled for quite some years to deal with things which left me with no spare time to write. But finally delivered, I decided to comment first of all the books of the *Metaphysics* and even to publish them. (Fonseca 1964, 10 sqq.: "Quod verro attinet ad reliquos Philosophiae commentarios, quos in prima editione, me conscripturum pollicitus sum, non est quod me quisquam iure accuset, quod nihil hactenus ediderim. Vix enim absoluta explicatione Porphyrianæ Isagoges, categoriarumque Aristotelis eas res non paucis annis obire coactus sum, quæ nihil otii ad scribendum permittebant. Mihi vero tandem aliquando redditus, in eam sententiam sum adductus, ut ante omnia, constituerim libros primæ philosophiæ enarrare, atque adeo in publicum emittere." Cf. also Rodrigues 1931–1938, II 2 109 sqq.)

The first commentary finally to be edited displaying a common position of the Coimbra Jesuits under the title *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu* ... would only be issued in 1592 in Coimbra. This delay was certainly related to Fonseca's appointment in Rome as Assistant to the Father General in 1572 (Martins A. M. "Pedro da Fonseca"; in *Logos*, II, 657; Rodrigues 1931–1938, II 2 105 sqq.). But this was not the only reason.

Fonseca had turned his attention to the *Metaphysics*, as he said in the second edition of his *Dialectics*, but he had not imagined that this work was destined to become his *opus magnum*. Although the first volume was published in 1577 and the others were ready by 1579, he only saw the second volume published in 1589, the others being issued after his death in 1606 and in 1612, respectively.

As early as 1575, however, the first critiques of Fonseca's accuracy were raised by the Provincial Manuel Rodrigues (1549–1612) (cf. in Sommervogel 1869–1876, col. 1940). The detailed treatment suggested, so Rodrigues said, would need too much study time and was not suited for school reading (Rodrigues 1931–1938, II 2 110). The best solution therefore would be to print the manuscript commentaries already in use at Coimbra, since one needed succinct and summary explanations (Rodrigues 1931–1938, II 2 110). The commentaries written by Fonseca would be of use to scholars, not to students.

In 1579, the same request was sent anew to Rome with the following arguments: the students were still forced to write down the course, and their teachers to dictate it. More important than this however was the evidence that this course was not only useful but even necessary to finally achieve the desired consistency on philosophical issues within the Company (Rodrigues 1931–1938, II 2 111: “Por fim com êsse Curso se alcançaria finalmente a tão desejada uniformidade nas opiniões entre os Padres da Companhia. Por estas razões se persuadia a Congregação que era não só útil, mas necessária a publicação do Curso de Artes”). One year later the Provincial for the Portuguese Province came from Rome with the publishing order. A new chief editor had to be sought for this task. Luis de Molina (1536–1600) (Sommervogel, 1869–1876, col. 1167 sqq.) seemed to position himself as the right man for this. It seems however that his difficult and litigious character led the company, and first of all Fonseca, to reject him as the general editor. (The only evidence we have are the letters by Molina addressed to Claudio Aquaviva in Rome, published in Stegmüller 1935, 548 sqq. In the introduction to this work, Stegmüller also evinces his character traits on pp. 78 sqq. A more crucial issue, though one we cannot deal with in this article, is the fact that Molina was a Spaniard in the midst of Portuguese colleagues. He himself refers to this in a letter to Aquaviva from August 29, 1582: “[...] propongo lo que en ella se contiene, no dexaré para más luz de advertir a V. P. la aversion, que en muchos, etiam superiores, e sentido, y el poco favor que an dado para que

luzgan y se impriman mis cosas, parece que por extranjero; y aunque no uviera de ser tenido por tal, pues a veinte y nueve años que estoy y me crié entre ellos” (Stegmüller 1935, p. 558). In other letters he points out the malevolence of Fonseca in the latter's dealings with him. This may be relevant as the letter was written exactly 2 years after Philippe II of Spain had reclaimed the Portuguese crown, since Philippe II of Spain was the uncle of the heirless king D. Sebastião (1554–1578). (This political change led to the messianic movement known as *Sebastianism* in the Portuguese culture. We do not know how the Jesuits positioned themselves in this movement, since it was a company founded by a Spaniard and coming from the neighboring country. Moreover, the Jesuits were firmly established in the political power since 1542, and the Spanish Queen D. Catarina (1507–1578), sister of Carlos V of Spain (1500–1558), always knew how to unite the policy of these two countries against part of the parliament (Cortes) (cf. Cruz 2009)). The dedication of Fonseca's *Metaphysics* to King D. Sebastião in 1577 may denote some nationalistic feelings. Yet we would overinterpret it if we considered this a *Sebastie* dedication. We do not follow Rodrigues 1931, II, 2, 114, here, who contends that Molina was a “too easily suspicious, demanding and difficult [...] character with his pretensions.” This too seems to us a nationalistic argument of the early twentieth century.)

It was finally Manuel de Góis (1543–February 13, 1597) who was appointed to the task, as he was considered to be a good philosopher writing good Latin. Moreover he was well prepared by a continuous teaching experience covering two complete courses (i.e., 8 years), which he had taught at the College from 1574 to 1582. In 1584 the commentary on the *Physics* was almost ready, since the Father General in Rome was asked whether this commentary should be printed in Portugal or not (Lukács 1992, p. 302; Rodrigues 1931–1938 II 1 115). Around that time, the commentary on the *De Coelo* likewise seemed to be ready, and in October 1585, Góis was working on the commentary on the *De Generatione et Corruptione*. Although Góis wanted these to be already sent to the printer's, the Father General

Aquaviva (1542–1615) (Sommervogel 1869–1876, col. 480 sqq.) suggested to wait until the whole course was completed. The insistency of Góis and of the whole Portuguese Province finally prompted Aquaviva to send his *imprimatur* to Coimbra. The first volume of the Coimbra commentaries was then sent to the press in March 28, 1592 (Rodrigues 1931–1938, II 1 116).

Nonetheless, Góis cannot fully be considered to be the author of these commentaries. As stipulated by Fonseca since the very beginning of the enterprise, the chief editor had to collect the manuscripts used in the lectures and arrange them for publication. Evidence of this is given us in a letter written by Molina to the Praepositus Claudio Aquaviva in 1582 (Stegmüller 1935, pp. 548–557). He complains that his course in the Arts, which had to be printed, was still being used in Coimbra but in an unacceptable way: “A great part was taken from the *glosas* I had put together, cutting many things out and retaining opinions that are shown by experience to be quite hard to understand. And these *glosas* do not deal with the topics as coherently as should be done” (Stegmüller 1935, p. 550: “[...] que en gran parte fueron sacadas de las que yo hize, cortando muchas cosas, y metiendo opiniones que se experimentaron asaz duras. Y hallaronse aquellas glosas no tener las cosas coherentes como convenia”).

We have no clue as to why the treatise *De Anima* separate and the passage from the *Problems on the five senses*, included in the commentary on the *De Anima*, were written by Cosme de Magalhães (1551–1624) or by Baltasar Álvares (Stegmüller 1959, p. 96; 461; de Carvahlo 2010, p. 11) (de Carvahlo (2010, p. 11) believes in an “editorial collaboration” by Cosme de Magalhães, as the commentary on the *De Anima* was issued after Góis’ death in 1597).

The commentary on Logic was finally issued in 1606, when the Coimbra Jesuits came to know that a commentary using the title *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu...* had been published in Frankfurt in 1604. This *logica furtiva* forced them to assert their position on logic; it was Sebastião do Couto who was entrusted with this task. (Despite many conjectures advanced to this

day, the printing history remains unclear. Rodrigues asserts that this Frankfurt edition recycles a text by a former teacher of his that he used to dictate to his students. One of them would have sold it to the editor, who in turn would have used the title as a marketing strategy. Cf. Rodrigues 1931–1938, II 1, 119.)

In the end, no commentary on the *Metaphysics* would ever be printed. Rodrigues says that, in 1592, Fonseca was asked to complete a commentary on logic and metaphysics, although the Jesuits from Coimbra could see that Fonseca was a bad choice if they wanted to have it done quickly. In 1606 a letter exchange between Rome and Coimbra suggests Sebastião do Couto as the editor of these commentaries. As we know, only one of them would ever appear in print (Rodrigues 1931–1938, II 1 118).

The time these commentaries took until their first appearance in print and the way in which they were composed clearly show us the problems the Jesuits of Coimbra were facing. The first one is obvious to anyone who has ever worked in a university department: managing the different characters and ambitions of faculty members. The second one is less obvious but philosophically relevant: the positions held in the commentaries had to be in accordance with the positions of the group in general. Moreover, the hierarchical structures obliged them to develop a *via media* on Aristotle, thereby eschewing the actual problems the Aristotelian text led to. Actually, the Jesuits not only had to respect the ideological positions of their time, they also had to respect the decisions of the Councils and of the See of Rome. Striking examples for these commitments are the questions on *Natural history* about the torrid zone and the antipods (Marinheiro 2012, pp. 395–424), as well as the question about the eternity of the world, which had to respect the Paris condemnations of 1277 by Etienne Tempier and the challenges of the Copernican Revolution.

One must not lose sight of the fact that by that time, the positions Peter Ramus (1515–1572) had developed in his *Aristotelicae animadversiones* of 1543 got more and more appreciated, although they were leading away from Aristotle. In this perspective, the Jesuits of Coimbra are the last

philosophers trying to save Aristotle from his critics in Catholic countries. The way they chose to do this was the most arduous: rejecting any position on Aristotle that was irreconcilable with their *Corpus Aristotelis Interpretumque*, whatever period it was from.

Impact and Legacy

Textbooks are hardly intended to be innovative, their scope being to disclose and vulgarize the information already known to the specialists. Nonetheless, the Conimbran commentaries presented certain aspects that were innovative and would have a certain impact on the authors of the following centuries.

The main innovation was of course the didactical presentation of the textbooks and the greater importance given to the development of the *quaestiones*. The availability of these comments in print would allow other authors to address the philosophical topics present in the *quaestiones* directly and in a systematic manner, leaving aside the narrowly philological sentence by sentence commentary and the explanation about how Aristotle would have considered the issue. (The best example can be found in Francisco Suárez's *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, also a teacher at Coimbra. Since the comment on *Metaphysics* by Fonseca was already available in print, he could focus on the different topics and *dispute* them.)

Hence, the major innovation of these textbooks lies in their capacity to bring together all the positions known in the Aristotelian tradition on the different topics, including recent discussions and controversies. Even if they mostly prefer not to name names, classifying them as schools (e.g., the *Averroists* in psychology) or referring to them as “more recent authors” (*recentiores*) [cf. Marinheiro, 2012], the latter's positions are considered, discussed, and in many cases also refuted. Hence, the commentators' positions on many issues force them to remain up to date and to acknowledge the existence of other authors.

Early modern philosophy will lead away from Latin to vernacular languages; philosophers are

no longer university teachers but gentlemen (e.g., Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Vico) founding new philosophical systems that will be known as rationalism and empiricism. Nonetheless, the commentaries continued to be read in schools and universities (their importance cannot be overestimated when one considers the reeditions published all over Europe), giving an Aristotelian hue to modern philosophy (Descartes' reference to them in a letter dated September 30, 1640, to M. Mersenne can be considered as the most striking example). It will be in Germany that this legacy will be most palpable. The followers of Luther had to call upon Aristotle in order to put the reformed theology on a solid philosophical ground, using for this purpose the most up-to-date textbooks, even if they had been written by their confessional enemies (Lewalter 1935). The Jesuit commentaries will thus bequeath upon modern philosophy antique and medieval concepts and problems, which Christian Wolff (1679–1754) would translate into German, thus creating the background of the German tradition (de Carvalho 2001). (The concepts of *tempus et spatium imaginarium* found in Kant's *Dissertation* of 1776, leading up to the *Transcendental Aesthetics* in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, could be found in Christian Wolff's *Physics*, concepts which were passed on from the medieval tradition through the Jesuit commentary on *Physics*. See de Carvahlo 2001).

Modern history of philosophy has shown a certain difficulty in getting to grips with this school and the textbooks that came out of it. In metaphysical issues, the most recurrent name in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German philosophy is that of Francisco Suárez (de Carvahlo 2010, p. 16), as the highest representative of the tradition in which the commentaries had their roots. Suárez is mostly referred to as the head of the school of what they called the “Spanische Barockscholastik” (Spanish Baroque Scholasticism). (This antiquated denomination, which is still in use, is absolutely unfit to describe the school: the term Baroque is taken from art history; the term Scholasticism refers to the medieval Thomistic heritage. The term Spanish may fit if we consider it in its wider and antique sense, as a

synecdoche to describe the Iberian Peninsula.) The Italian and Spanish historiographies use the term *Seconda Scolastica* (Second Scholasticism), thus evidencing the clear medieval Thomistic heritage.

A renewed interest in the commentaries has arisen through the semiotics as developed by Charles S. Peirce (September 10, 1839–April 19, 1914), whose notion of *sign* (signum) goes back to Sebastião do Couto's comment on *Logic* (*The Conimbricenses* 2001).

Cross-References

- [Buchanan, George](#)
- [Ethics, Renaissance](#)
- [Jesuits in the Early Modern Period](#)
- [Metaphysics in the Renaissance](#)
- [Soares, Cipriano](#)
- [Teive, Diogo de](#)
- [Textbook](#)

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Conimbricenses

► [Conimbricense, Collegium](#)

Connan, François

Born: 1508

Died: 1 September 1551

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Abstract

François Connan, French jurist of the sixteenth century, is one of the greatest representatives of the legal humanism. His only book, called *Commentarii juris civilis libri X*, applies a systematic method, which criticizes both the structure of the *Corpus juris civilis* and the work of the medieval jurisconsults.

Alternate Names

[Franciscus Connanus](#)

Biography

François Connan was a French jurist of the sixteenth century, born in 1508 and died in 1551 in Paris. During his studies, he has been the pupil of two great figures of the Renaissance. First, he studied at the *Collège du Cardinal-Lemoine* in Paris, where Raoul Spifame taught him Aristotelian philosophy. Second, he followed the lectures of Andrea Alciato in Bourges around 1529. The Milanese was then laying the foundation of legal humanism in France. Moreover, Connan was also influenced by Jean Calvin, who was his friend during their legal studies in Orléans and Bourges. Connan became a lawyer at the Parliament of

Paris, before being appointed *maître des comptes* by Francis I in 1539. The following year, he was promoted *maître des requêtes de l'Hôtel*. His career allowed him to further expand his circle of humanist friends: statesmen, such as Michel de l'Hospital and Christophe de Thou, but also the poets of *La Pléiade*. The unique and unfinished book of Connan is then published by another of his humanist friends, Louis Le Roy, who made printed the *Commentarii juris civilis libri X* in 1553, two years after Connan's death (Connan 1553).

Because of the new method used by its author, this book is certainly one of the most important works of the legal humanism. Indeed, Connan appears as one of the first representatives of the systematist current of legal humanism, which was influenced by Cicero and his famous expression *jus ad artem redigere* (Bergfeld 1968). According to Connan and all the systematist jurists of the sixteenth century, the classical Roman law formed a coherent and rational system, unlike the compilations of the Byzantine Empire. Thus, they aim to expound the law in a logical order according to a deductive approach, going from general to specific. They have not rediscovered the ancient Roman law – which was not systematic – but their works have deeply transformed the European legal orders of the modern times. The *Commentarii juris civilis libri X* have taken part in this major break with the previous jurisprudence.

Connan criticizes both the structure of the *Corpus juris civilis* and the work of the medieval jurisconsults. Like all the humanists, he rejects the scholastic method of the Commentators. Contrary to the Bartolists, he tries to come back to the sources. But, in Connan's view, the sources are also distorted and the Justinian's compilations are incoherent. So, in order to find the true sense of the Roman rules, he deconstructs the *Corpus juris civilis* and reassembles it according to a rational method (Piano Mortari 1966). Thus, the *Commentarii juris civilis libri X* are built on the framework of the *Institutes* of Justinian. In fact, only this book of the Justinian's compilations is deemed coherent by Connan. Consequently, the French humanist begins his commentaries with

the sources and the legal history (book I). Then, he resumes the tripartite division of the *Institutes*: persons (book II), things (books III and IV), and actions (books V to X). Connan develops all his commentaries from Roman law, by gathering together the texts scattered in the *Corpus juris civilis*. Besides, he mentions some French customs.

After Connan, numerous jurists have used the division of the *Institutes* in order to build their own commentaries. So, even if they are still unrecognized, the *Commentarii juris civilis libri X* represent an important break in the history of legal thought; and Connan's work has had a real legacy. His original method has given rise to a prolific movement. Especially thanks to Hugues Doneau, the systematist current of legal humanism has had a big influence on Grotius and the school of natural law.

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Conscience, Renaissance Understanding of

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Abstract

Unlike the scholastic tradition, the Renaissance as a cultural phenomenon did not produce a distinctive cluster of theories of conscience. Renaissance authors, scholarly as well as literary ones, largely used and modified the medieval and scholastic models of conscience in very diverse ways. However, within the temporal range of the Renaissance (1300–1650), the scholastic discourse of conscience underwent momentous changes and Protestantism developed its own discourse of conscience. The present article does not canvas these developments, beyond shortly elucidating the medieval background of Renaissance dealings with matters of conscience, but focuses on the cultural impact of the Renaissance, and specifically Renaissance humanism. In this respect, four vectors of influence are addressed: humanist rhetoric, with its criticism of scholastic uses of opinions and preoccupation with virtue; Renaissance individualism, born of the claims of a new class of intellectuals (i.e., humanist) to moral competence (but not of an alleged “invention of the individual”); Machiavellian and reason-of-state political thought; and a fledgling moral relativism nourished by a first age of globalization.

Conrad

► [Khunrath, Heinrich](#)

Conrathus

► [Khunrath, Heinrich](#)

Introduction

The catch-word “Renaissance conscience” suggests some unity in the subject matter to which it refers (on the Renaissance conscience in general, see Leites 1988; Stone 2009; Braun and Vallance 2011). However, it does not require a deep dive into the history of the concept of conscience to question this assumption. Most observable unity in theory and use of the concept of conscience in

the period usually associated with the Renaissance (c. 1300–1650) seems to derive from currents of thought not specifically characteristic of the Renaissance as a cultural phenomenon. Christian and especially scholastic understandings of conscience, which had become highly elaborate and differentiated since the twelfth century, formed the main building blocks used by Renaissance men and women in formulating their own very diverse views on conscience. In due course, we will therefore have to look at this shared premise of Renaissance dealings with conscience. The Reformation altered the Christian discourse on conscience decisively and, for instance, largely shaped the discourse of conscience in Renaissance England (e.g., by producing a pronounced English Protestant moral casuistry [see Wood 1952; Stone 2000; Andrew 2016; Germann and Decock 2017; Iacono Lobo 2017] or influencing literature [see Slights 1981; Wilks 1990; Gallagher 1991; Tilmouth 2011; Stoll 2017]). Yet the main driving force of these developments was the Reformation, not the Renaissance. The idea of a Renaissance conscience is also often associated with “heroes” of conscience, such as Luther, Erasmus, and Thomas More (Hein 2000; Cummings 2011; Suzanne 2014). The latter two are quintessential northern Renaissance men, so that Luther’s placement in this triad suggests a Renaissance element in his heroism of conscience (“Here I stand, I can do no other”). This view naturally fits the classical Burckhardtian narrative of the Renaissance as a period of nascent individualism, strong willed personalities, and consciousness of one’s own dignity as a human being (Burckhardt 2004). Upon closer inspection, however, heroism of conscience is too unspecific of the Renaissance to form a building block in the present context. There were strong-willed heroes of conscience before the Renaissance or unaffiliated with it (Thomas Becket, Catherine of Siena, Jan Hus, and others), and a great number of Renaissance rulers (highlighted with relish by Burckhardt) had apparently no conscience at all. Individualism seems a better indicator of the direction in which the Renaissance altered the Christian discourse of conscience. Although the lack of individualism in

the Middle Ages is often vastly overstated, there is a point in depicting the medieval care for consciences as a collective endeavor (Biller 1998; Firey 2008). Renaissance humanist and Protestant views both fostered a significantly more individualistic approach to conscience. Yet this is not the only major change attributable to the Renaissance. We should (and will) also account for Renaissance amorality, as embodied in Machiavellism or “reason of state” theories as a transforming power for the discourse of conscience in politics. Finally, the rise of relativistic views of morality in the Renaissance should be addressed. It was fed by the European global encounter with cultures whose moral norms differed more starkly from its own than the moralities of the long familiar fellow “book religions” of Judaism and Islam. Renaissance authors such as Montaigne excelled in discussing relativistic views, which are therefore a fitting subject here.

It is thus possible to identify some notable influences the Renaissance as a cultural phenomenon (broadly conceived) exerted on the European discourse of conscience from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. However, it would be wrong to assume that the respective vectors of influence characterized the Renaissance exclusively. The global expansion of European trade and power was not specifically a Renaissance affair. Hardnosed power politics was not alien to medieval rulers, and scholastic preachers had a penchant for rhetoric, too. The most we should claim is that Renaissance contributions in the abovementioned three fields stand out as particularly incisive, but not as exclusive. Yet before we come to that, the considerable background of medieval dealings with conscience needs to be elucidated at least in rough outline.

Heritage: The Medieval Conscience

The concept of conscience as a human ability or disposition to individually judge moral issues, and in particular to distinguish between right and wrong conduct, did exist in some form already in classical antiquity (Kirk 1936; Sorabji 2014; Giubilini 2016). It acquired an increasingly

important role in late antique Christian thought and was fleshed out in minute detail in the Middle Ages (Potts 1980; Langston 2015). Although conscience could therefore have been a topic for the Renaissance's trademark return to classical ancient thought, this was apparently no major concern of Renaissance humanists. They continued to use or adapt medieval notions of conscience in their writings (see Greene 1991; Weber 2010; Stoll 2012 for the case of 'syn-deresis'). Starting in the twelfth century, scholastic thinkers (for simplicity's sake here identified with medieval academics who reasoned in a university style steeped in logic) had systematized and added to the ideas on conscience of the ancient Fathers of the Church, such as Augustine. In the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition, the workings of conscience were largely conceived in a logico-deductive mode, starting with very general moral premises, into which human right reason had insight independently of historical or cultural differences between human beings. These general premises (like the Golden Rule 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you') were also the foundation of what was called natural law. More specific premises, which usually required some empirical knowledge often varied case by case. They were required to derive practical guidance from the principles of right moral reason, and humans could both err and be uncertain with respect to these minor premises, and thus also with respect to the moral conclusion. On a theoretical level, the various respective models of conscience of scholastic authors were buttressed by elaborate psychological, epistemological, and metaphysical considerations. On a practical level, they became the backbone of a vast scholastic system of moral theology (and practical ethics), in which confessors could variously fill the roles of judges, advocates of penitents, or therapists (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988; Schuessler 2014a). Transgression of the dense, but not inflexible medieval regulations of moral conduct and right use of conscience could be harshly punished, not only but not least by the Inquisition.

It is important to note that the regulation of consciences, mainly through case-wise (i.e., casuistic) analysis of permitted, sin-free, and

prohibited, sinful conduct, was neither monolithic nor unchanging in medieval and scholastic thought. A plurality of approaches co-existed, and especially in the period often associated with the Renaissance, important developments in the scholastic applied discourse of conscience occurred. In fact, the widespread view of decline and inertness of scholastic thought in these centuries is totally misleading with respect to the applied discourse of conscience. Scholastic analyses of conscience became ever deeper and more detailed in this period. They gave rise to massive treatises on conscience (*de conscientia*) for which nothing comparable in scope and depth exists in Renaissance thought. Specific ideas about conscience and its workings in Renaissance authors are often adapted in simplified form from this background. Marsilio Ficino's views on conscience, for instance, are largely "scholasticism light" (Hein 2000, p. 141).

Scholastic casuistry, on the other hand, was also influenced by the Renaissance. The dynamism of the Florentine Renaissance economy under the Medici, for instance, notably influenced which economic transactions the scholastic moral theologian Antonino of Florence considered licit in conscience (Peterson 1985). This was an indirect influence of the Renaissance but not a direct one of Renaissance humanism. Therefore, the question remains whether Renaissance humanism also directly impacted the discourse of conscience.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Impact of Renaissance Humanism

Humanism and scholastic thought did not evolve independently of each other (Rummel 1995; Mazzocco 2006). More than a few scholastic authors were open to humanist styles and interests, and it is plausible to assume that some of these cross-over tendencies affected the discourse of conscience. The problem, however, is to ascertain vectors of influence. One of the most important possible vectors concerns the "currency" of the medieval guidance of consciences: the reputable or plausible opinion (*opinio probabilis*, see

Kantola 1994; Franklin 2001; Schuessler 2003, 2014b). Applying the Aristotelian concept of *endoxon* – i.e., a reputable or plausible opinion held by all, most, or the most competent users (Top. 100b20) – Renaissance humanist authors like Lorenzo Valla or Rudolph Agricola did not wholly abandon the Aristotelian approach via reputability but put emphasis on the coherence of a reasoning process as legitimizing ground for the adoption of opinions (Mack 2011; Spranzi-Zuber 2011; Schuessler 2014b). When the scholastic moral theological understanding of *opinio probabilis* changed at the end of the sixteenth century to a twin-pillar model based on reason or authority, it therefore seems natural to look for humanist influences behind this move. In fact, it has been claimed that the Jesuit penchant for Ciceronian rhetoric motivated them to spearhead changes in the scholastic discourse of conscience (Maryks 2008). If this were the case, Renaissance humanism would have had a momentous impact on Catholic moral theology.

It is, however, difficult to prove such a strong influence. The respective modifications of the “currency” of moral guidance might have arisen from different causes. Not only humanists but also scholastics avidly read ancient authors like Quintilian and the rediscovered texts by Cicero, and might themselves have developed a modified understanding of *opinio probabilis* in response. The Renaissance rediscovery of ancient texts rather than a direct influence of Renaissance humanism would then be the relevant vector of transformation. Moreover, reasons were already important for the choice between reputable opinions in medieval regulations for moral conduct, not least in medieval jurisprudence (Evans 2002), which operated with a wider range of understandings of reputability than moral theology. To sum up, further research concerning the influences of Renaissance humanism on the scholastic discourse of conscience is required before a confident conclusion in this respect is warranted.

Renaissance individualism is a safer bet with respect to a key transformative influence on the discourse of conscience. It does not require the old and dubious claim that “the individual” was re-discovered in the Renaissance to

make this claim. Scholasticism was distinctly “expertocratic” in its approach to moral judgment. Trained moral theologians and canon lawyers were the scholastic model evaluators of applied moral matters. All others (except the pope, who in any case usually was a lawyer or theologian) were called upon to follow the guidance of these moral experts. The rise of well-educated humanists as a social group challenged this moral expertocracy. Virtuous and well-educated laypersons increasingly began to claim moral competence and thus in the long run to undermine the scholastic system of moral guidance. Whereas individual experts could exert a remarkable influence in the scholastic system, the virtuous individual in general now began to assert his or her moral self-reliance. Women profited from this trend because they were barred from the university training that defined scholastic moral professionalism. They had long been acknowledged as possible moral exemplars but lacked authority in their intellectual assessments of moral issues (For the female conscience, see Daybell 2011; for their denigration as ‘simple little women’ [*mulierculae*], Weber 1999; and for the ‘women question’ in the Renaissance in general Ross 2009).

Yet, not only Renaissance individualism but also a humanist penchant for virtue (Lines and Ebbersmeyer 2013) shifted the balance between deontic regulation and virtue ethics in the guidance of consciences. In the scholastic tradition, moral guidance in the confessional was largely conducted in a jurisprudential manner based on permissions or prohibitions (i.e., deontic norms). Of course, exhortation to virtue did play some role in the confessional as well as generally in Christian ethics, and above all in preaching (Murray 1998). Yet it is difficult to assess how much impact the preaching of virtue had on pre-modern merchants or rulers to whom a profitable course of action was outlined in the confessional (or by theological advisors, whom the client paid) as permissible but less virtuous than an alternative. In any case, whatever impact the discourse of virtue had on medieval and Renaissance agents, humanist preoccupation with virtue ethics contributed in the long run to a shift in the balance between deontic regulation and virtue orientation.

It remains to be asked, however, how much of this shift occurred in the period presently under discussion and how much of it had to wait until the Enlightenment era.

Machiavellism and “Reason of State”

One of the most conspicuous developments in Renaissance thought with respect to matters of conscience is their absence in Machiavelli’s account of prudent political action (Cox 2010). Machiavelli hardly ever appeals to the concept of conscience when he addresses issues of morality. It is clear, of course, that in his eyes medieval Christian practical ethics was not an appropriate yardstick for judging the performance of a prudent and successful head of state. Moreover, if Burckhardt’s ruthless Renaissance princes (Burckhardt 2004, part I) are taken as role models for political action, the conscience of successful Renaissance rulers was already Machiavellian *avant la lettre*. Post-Machiavellian theorists of reason of state, who developed approaches to realistic power politics under early modern conditions for avowedly Christian princes (Viroli 1991; Anglo 2005; Braun 2011), did not return to the old norms of Christian practical ethics as embodied in thirteenth- or fourteenth-century treatises on moral theology. Whether in issues of just warfare, taxation, choice of counselors, economic policy, or other matters, they transformed norms of Christian practical morality in ways sensitive to considerations of reason of state (i.e., to concerns of power, security, reputation, and wealth of states or republics). They could not have done so if scholastic practical ethics had not been flexible to a certain extent from the outset. Many scholastic moral theologians were willing to adapt norms to the exigencies and possibilities of the real world. As indicated above, a change of gear occurred in this respect in the fifteenth century, above all with respect to economic issues. Whether this generally mirrors the new opportunities and realities of “a Renaissance era” or was just a response to Europe-wide developments in late medieval societies is bound to be controversial. In any case, with respect to reason of state, Christian morality seems to have responded to Renaissance thought in the sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries. The inbuilt flexibility and lawyerly spirit of scholastic practical ethics facilitated the mitigated acceptance of reason of state with respect to the regulation of princely consciences. Mitigated considerations of reason of state were increasingly flagged up at least as “probable opinions” and thus as *prima facie* morally acceptable (Reinhardt 2016). Counter-opinions, which advocated moral restraint, were often also acceptable or even advisable, but not prescribed, and this was the crucial point for a hardnosed legalistic practical ethics that condoned every action as permissible which did not cross the red line of actions explicitly prohibited by the Church. Renaissance reason-of-state thinking thus transformed Christian political ethics by systematically working hand-in-hand with scholastic doctrines for the guidance of consciences. In this way, the Renaissance conscience of political agents remained within the bandwidth of moral theological legitimacy, which it in turn helped to broaden.

Early Modern Relativism

The increasing globalization of European cultural encounters in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought Europeans into contact with more exotic moral views than ever before. Conquerors, missionaries, merchants, and travel writers did not hesitate to dwell on shocking differences in morality between “them” and “us” (Schiffman 1991). Renaissance intellectuals were fascinated by reports of alien customs and sometimes turned them into reflections on moral relativity. The most famous such reflection is perhaps Montaigne’s essay on cannibals (Montaigne 1993, Essay 31; Conley 2005). It uses the interplay between the cannibals’ “otherness” and similarities to us as occasion to question presumed certainties in European and Christian morality. In this way, moral relativism seems to serve as a handmaiden to an increasingly skeptical morality taking hold of Renaissance consciences. Apart from the relativism aspect, however, uncertainty was not extraordinary for Christian consciences. Medieval theologians had developed elaborate doctrines for reaching safety of conscience despite the uncertain truth of moral opinions (opinions, in

contrast to knowledge or *scientia*, were by definition uncertain according to scholastic terminology; see Franklin 2001, Schuessler 2014b). The usually limited skepticism of the Renaissance (Popkin 2003) did therefore not appear shocking to most Christian moralists. Relativism, in the sense of a true culture-bound morality, was a different issue, because it was incompatible with the purported universalism of Christian moral beliefs. Renaissance authors thus paved the way for natural law's loss of acceptance in the eighteenth century. Yet the career of moral relativism in modernity is a complex issue, bundling a hodgepodge of disparate influences. The transformation wrought on Renaissance consciences by new cultural encounters was just one of them, albeit an important one.

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Contagion, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

This article focuses on the notion of contagion from Antiquity to the sixteenth century. Hippocratic and Galenic medicine left an important medical legacy to medieval and early modern physicians. During the Middle Ages, the plague was explained on the basis of the Galenic theory of contagious disease, which was enriched by the belief of the stars and God. During the Renaissance, Girolamo Fracastoro started to have doubts about Galenic theory and tried to innovate it through his own experience and medical knowledge. He changed the way one considers an infected patient and pushed physicians away from making the patient feel guilty for their ills. Fracastoro’s theory of contagion was debated during the sixteenth and following centuries.

Synonyms

Epidemics; Plague

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

The concept of contagion is time-old, and it can be found in medical sources dating as far back as Antiquity. In fact, ancient medical and literary texts testify to the spread of contagious diseases, labeled as epidemics and plagues. The historian, Thucydides (c.460–c.400 B.C.), and the poet, Lucretius (first century B.C.), speak of the plague of Athens, which probably was epidemic typhus (Thucydides 1967; Lucretius 1924). Galen (second century) observed the so-called “Antoninus plague” (Boudon 2001; Sabbatini and Fiorino

2009), and Procopius of Caesarea (sixth century) the plague of Justinian (Procopius 1962). Many epidemics can be noted in Europe during the Middle Ages, the most significant being the Black Death, 1346–1351. The Black Death is the first epidemic of a pandemic, which lingered over Europe until 1722 (Biraben 1975). As recent medical literature has shown, the pandemic, which ravaged Europe between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, is “the main historical event responsible for the introduction and widespread dissemination of the ancestor to all currently circulating *Y. pestis* strains pathogenic to humans”: *Yersinia pestis*’ spread was conditioned by such factors as environment, vector dynamics, and host susceptibility (Bos et al. 2011: 506). Climate fluctuations also contributed to the spread of *pestis* from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries at least (Schmid et al. 2015).

Ancient and medieval medical literature tried to explain contagion by medical knowledge of the time, namely, Hippocratic and Galenic humoral medicine. In fact, health and disease were explained through the harmonic balance of the four fluids of the body, called humors: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. This balance was a very individual one and it changed according to the relation between the person and the environment. As such, a given population may enjoy a particular humoral balance depending on geography and climate; inside a population, an individual had a specific balance, according to the place, the water, the air, the diet, the practice of gymnastic, sleeping, sex, emotions, and so on. Therefore, disease was an individual event; every one reacted differently to the disease and fell ill differently.

In this context, plague was a very upsetting disease, since during an epidemic almost the entire population became ill and died everywhere and in a very narrow lapse of time. How can this phenomenon be explained? The way the disease spreads means it must be able to reach many countries and stay there for a certain period of time: this means it is the air which is affected by a level of qualitative change, namely, pollution, and becomes miasmatic. According to Hippocratic medicine (Jouanna 2001), miasmatic air reaches every breathing being.

Observing plague, Galen questioned the origins of the miasmas of the air and decided that no buried corpses, exhalations from basins and marshes, heat waves, and so forth, caused them. All these factors created very small seeds in the air: the pestilential seeds (*loimou spermata*), which in turn formed miasma. These seeds of the air introduced the disease to the patient through breathing (Galen 1821: 289–291). Nevertheless a problem remained in medicine: if everyone breathes the same pestilential air, why during a plague do some people survive and not die as others? This was a major problem according to Galen, since the entire system of humoral Hippocratic medicine was put at stake by this very question. The Hippocratic explanation of the spreading of plague no longer worked.

Thus, Galen had to find a reason why some people could survive during a plague, whereas the majority died. He found the answer to the question in diet and in the lifestyle of patients. If a person lives well, that is, if he eats and drinks according to a balanced diet, breathes good air, practices moderate exercise in alternation with rest, sleeps enough, and dominates passions, he in turn can enjoy good health when a plague breaks out (Galen 1821: 291–292). All the elements just mentioned are part of the Galenic hygiene and were named “6 non-natural things” in medieval medicine (Nicoud 2007).

As such, Galen’s good patient does not die during epidemics; he can survive. Galen left substantial medical heritage to the medieval and early modern physicians, and his theory of contagion and miasmatic air was somewhat influential. During the outbreaks of *pestis* in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, physicians published a number of treatises in order to educate people on how to keep well through diet and lifestyle, like medical textbooks, *regimina*, *régimes*, antidotarium, and so on.

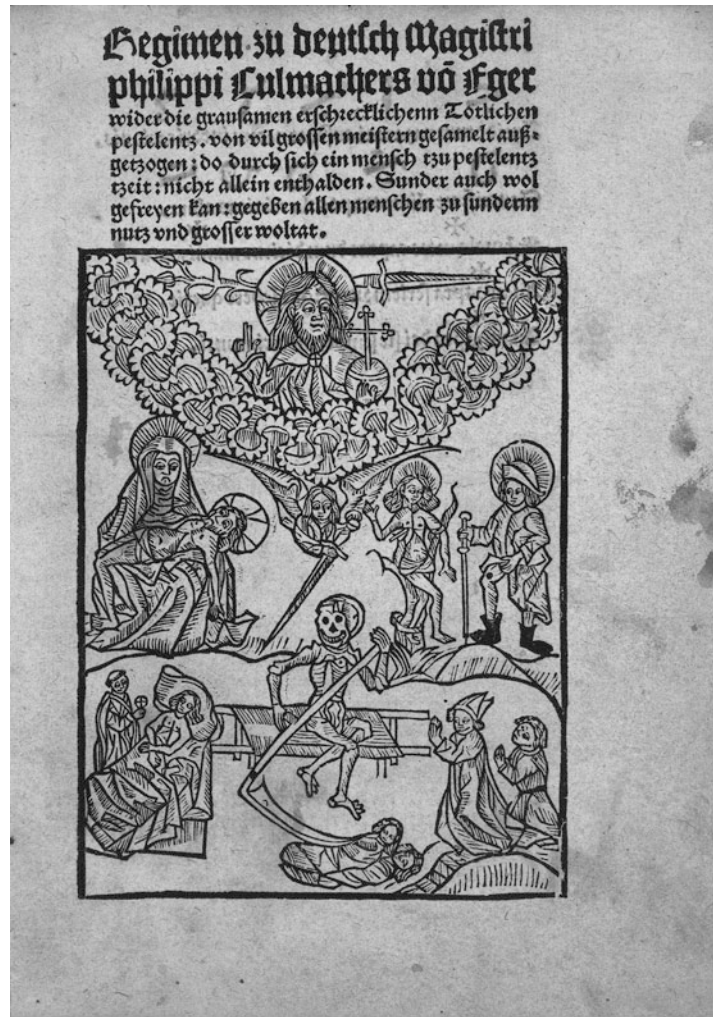
Innovative and Original Aspects

Galen innovated Hippocratic tradition by his questioning about the origins of the disease and the way it spreads and captured public attention. During the Middle Ages, physicians explained the

Black Death and the other outbreaks of the disease accordingly to the Galenic theory: people fell ill breathing miasmatic air. Contagion was explained by the contact of individuals with the infected air. Air could be polluted by the Galenic causes (corpses, swamps, and so on), but also by God's wrath. According to Laurent Joubert, professor of medicine at the University of Montpellier, the first cause of plague was the divine justice, since God punishes human beings because of their sins (Joubert 1581, 14). According to François Valleriole, professor of medicine at the University of Turin, the plague is the club by which God castigates mankind (Valleriole 1566, 22–23) (Fig. 1).

As regards the plague, philosophers and physicians explained that God could send it by means of the stars or from heaven. Indeed, the stars changed the quality of the air. The physicians of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris were asked by the king of France to explain the causes and the nature of the Black Death. The remote cause was found in the conjunction of the three superior planets (Saturn, Mars, and Jupiter) which took place the 20th of March 1345, at 1 p.m., as well as in the numerous eclipses, which characterized that period: all these phenomena corrupted the breathed air (*Compendium* 1888 [1348], 77–79). Nevertheless, astrological causality became the center of animated polemics during the fifteenth

Contagion, Renaissance Idea of, Fig. 1 Culmacher Philippus, *Regimen wider die pestilenz*, Leipzig, M. Landsberg, ca. 1495 (Wellcome Library@London)



and sixteenth centuries. Some physicians, like Giovanni Mainardi, did not believe in its impact, whereas others continued to search for the cause of contagious disease, also venereal disease, like syphilis, in the alignment of the planets (Zambelli 1965).

Divine causality and the stars are to be considered as a way to enrich ancient causality. Nevertheless, medieval physicians did not change the Galenic epistemological issue of the outbreak and the spread of epidemics, that is, to say that they still considered miasma as the means of infecting people and lifestyle remained at the bottom of the reasons why people can survive during a plague. As already mentioned, a huge number of treatises on diet were published during epidemics, since one must avoid contagion by a body not predisposed to catch the contagious disease.

Nonetheless, a change in the study of causality can be observed in the middle of the sixteenth century. In 1546, Girolamo Fracastoro (1478 ca. – 1553) (Fig. 2) published in Venice (Giunti) *De sympathia et antipathia rerum liber unus. De*

contagione, contagiosis morbis et curatione libris tres (Fracastoro 1546). This was the second major publication of Fracastoro on the topic of contagion, since he had already published the poem *Syphilis sive morbus Gallicus* in 1530 (Fracastoro 1530). Fracastoro was also an astronomer, a poet, and a philosopher. The search for the cause of natural phenomena and the way they worked out were the major questions of his medical thinking.

According to Fracastoro, contagion must be explained as the transmission of illness from one person to another, as well as from one part of a body to another part of the same body. To trigger contagion, contact between two bodies is required and/or their separate parts (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 2). Fracastoro asks how contagion starts. In order to have contagion, one must have putrefaction in the first body or part of the body. The existence of putrefaction of the first body can be due to many reasons, like meteorological influences of the climate (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 8). What is of great interest for him is the way putrefaction operates in the body. In fact, bodies are composed of very little and imperceptible particles and putrefaction makes them release. The body thaws, while its released particles overflow from it and create bigger aggregates called *seminaria*: the seeds of contagion (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 8–10).

Fracastoro's choice to use *seminarium*, seed, is quite important. He could use *semen*, which is the common Latin translation of the Greek and Galenic *sperma* (seed). But he preferred to change the name of the carriers of the disease into *seminarium*. In order to germinate, a *semen* (seed) needs to find a soil, which has been prepared to receive the plant. A *seminarium* is a nursery, a hotbed, the place where trees grove up (Estienne 1536, 8). It is more than a seed, which generates a plant: it is also tinder, namely, a seed, which can propagate its content, as described in 1536 by a Ciceronian lexicon (Nizolio 1536, 1599).

Actually, Fracastoro innovated Galen's idea of contagion through lexical choice and the context in which he placed the *seminarium*. In fact, there still was a point in Galenic theory, which did not fit with Fracastorian thought and experience of



Contagion, Renaissance Idea of, Fig. 2 Girolamo Fracastoro, *Opera omnia*, Venetiis, apud Iuntas, 1574 (Wellcome Library@London)

contagious disease: the notion of hygiene in relationship with the lifestyle of the patient. Galen got wrong, according to Fracastoro, since experience shows that well-being persons catch the seeds (*seminaria*) of disease as well as not well-being persons. There are persons whose health is very good. Nonetheless, they get ill. If a person is already ill and suffers from imbalance of humors or plethora, she/he can of course easily catch the disease. But it is a coincidence; a nonhealthy person, a person who drinks wine or does not make physical exercise can be free from the contagious disease: “we see that countless persons who are perfectly healthy and whose humors have suffered no depravity, nevertheless catch that contagion from merely associating with the plague-stricken, or from his clothes. [...] the humors in some individual may be in a normal condition, obstruction and plethora may be entirely lacking, and yet the plague may be contracted from another person” (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 80–82).

As a matter of fact, the Galenic explanation according to which the patient could not only act on health, but also determine his physical being in order to catch the plague was no longer valid for Fracastoro. According to him, the patient is not responsible for falling ill with the plague or a contagious disease. Falling ill is no more a question of lifestyle; it is a question of analogy, namely “sympathy” (*sympathia*) and “antipathy” (*antipathia*), with the agent of contagion. The aptitude of the matter (*materiae aptitudo*) of the body determines analogy, whereas according to Galen one should speak of aptitude of the patient (*patientis aptitudo* – *tou paschontos epitedeiotes*) because of lifestyle, (Fracastoro 2008 [1546], 74–76; Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 83–85). As Fracastoro said, “Not that there is any reason why the above-named conditions [*sc.* plethora, obstruction] may not sometimes be present in addition, but they are an accidental addition to the principle (primary agent) that acts per se [...] In fact it may happen that, in an individual, either the phlegm or the bile is predisposed to putrefy [...], but that they nevertheless are not infected by the contagion so much as some other

humor is infected, because the analogy with them is lacking” (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 83–85). So, the *seminaria* find a body with which they have antipathy: “antipathy to the natural heat of the body, and to the soul itself” (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 85).

In the case of a pestilent fever, for instance, the seeds, *seminaria* have quite a strong power of adhering to the humor with which they have analogy; they are very active and moist. Moreover, because of their antipathy with the natural heat of the body of the patient, “the humor, deprived of this heat, quickly contracts deep-seated putrefaction” (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 85). This putrefaction broadens to all the parts of the body and generates other *seminaria*, which increase here and there, as if they produce progeny (*soboles*). *Seminaria* produce contagion, since they go inside a second body and affect it with the same disease, and then a third is affected, and so on. One can speak of contagion only when there are *seminaria* which spread the disease from one body to another (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 85–87).

The spread of a contagious disease can happen through three ways of transmission: direct contact only; the same with the addition of tinder (*fomes*), like clothes, wooden objects, which could preserve the seeds of contagion: one can find this type of contagion in the case of scabies, phthisis, bald spots, elephantiasis; and the contagion that infects by contact, by tinder and at distance in the case of pestilent fevers, phthisis again, certain kinds of ophthalmia and exanthemata, like variolae (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 7). A case of contagion by direct contact is rabies, where the direct contact is represented only by the bite of a dog, which tears the skin and may draw blood (Fracastoro 1930 [1546], 125).

Impact and Legacy

Galenic medicine explained contagion through the seeds of the air, namely, the miasmatic air. People fall ill with plague because the body is already corrupted by bad diet and bad lifestyle. In the sixteenth century, Fracastoro tried to

innovate Galenic medicine through experience and clinical observation: falling ill was no more a question of lifestyle, even if a bad diet could influence the way a body reacts in the case of contagion. In the following centuries, the Galenic theory of contagion was still spread, but Fracastoro started to show that physicians could make use of their own experience in order to understand the way contagious diseases spread and act varyingly on different patients. In his treatise on contagion (Fracastoro 1930 [1546]), he studied many contagious diseases, like syphilis (Fracastoro 1530), measles, plague, rabies, and so on. Every disease is particular and must be differentiated from one another. Diseases act differently on the human body depending on the natural constitution of individuals.

Fracastoro's book was frequently reprinted in the following centuries. As Vivian Nutton pointed out (Nutton 1990), during the sixteenth-century Fracastoro's theory of contagion raised many reactions in favor and against *seminaria*, especially in the event of the epidemics of the 1550s and 1570s. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the notion of seeds and progeny developed, thanks not only to observations through the microscope, but also to the philosophical debates on the notion of progeny (Wilkinson 1984).

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Contarini, Gasparo

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Abstract

Gasparo Contarini was an Italian philosopher, ambassador, and cardinal. His wide range of interests covered metaphysics, elementary physics, but also political history and biblical exegesis. He was an important philosophical interlocutor of Pietro Pomponazzi, Girolamo Fracastoro, and Juan Sepulveda. As ambassador of Venice, he traveled to Germany and Spain. Here he soon became close friend with the Emperor Charles V and often engaged him in conversations about their common naturalistic interests. Finally, he was appointed cardinal while he still was a layman. He was personally involved in the reform of the Church, of the administrative offices, and of the role of the bishops. He was also probably the last strong advocate of a reconciliation between Lutherans and Catholics. With this aim he presided over the failed Diet of Regensburg, in 1541.

Biography

Gasparo Contarini was born in Venice on October 18, 1483, from Alvise Contarini and Polissena Malipiero (on his life, see Dittrich 1881, 1885; Ross 1972; Fragnito 1978, 1983; Cavazzana Romanelli 1988; Fragnito 1988; Gleason 1993; De Doncker-Nejeschleba-Robiglio 2020). Alvise came from one of the most ancient and prestigious families of the city, which would give eight doges to the Republic. Gasparo received his first education at the School of San Marco with Giorgio Valla and Marcantonio Sabellico, who may have introduced him to Platonism. In 1500 he then started attending the School of Rialto, whose teachings mainly revolved around logic and naturalism. From 1501 to June 1509, he attended the University of Padua, together with Marco Musuro, Giovanni Calfurnio, Pietro Pomponazzi, and Alessandro Achillini. Unfortunately, the Siege of Padua, on June 1509, forced him to leave the city and go back to Venice, therefore leaving the university unfinished.

After several attempts started in 1512, he finally managed to obtain a public office in October 1518, when he was nominated *provedador sora la Camera de Imprestedi* (i.e., public debt officer). In the 9 years between his return to Venice and his appointment, he deepened his philosophical and scientific knowledge, by studying Euclid, Aristotle, St. Thomas, and Lucretius (Blum-Blum 2018). In that period, he made fundamental connections with many scholars, like Francesco Cattani, Alberto Pio of Carpi, and Trifone Gabriel. With two of his friends, Tommaso Giustiniani and Vincenzo Querini, monks in Camaldoli from 1510, he carried on an important correspondence: thanks to these letters we can rebuild the religious and social hesitations of a young aristocratic man, attracted to the eremitic life but at the same time strongly involved in the active participation to the public life of his republic (Jedin 1951, 1957; Gilbert 1968; Ross 1970; Massa 1988; Rossi 2011, 2013).

In 1517 Pietro Pomponazzi asked Contarini to review his *Tractatus de immortalitate anime* (1516) and took Contarini's comments in such a

great consideration that he devoted the first book of the *Apologia* (1518) to defend his own position (Burzelli 2019). Putting aside the usual malice toward his opponents, Pomponazzi understood the relevance of Contarini's comments and published them anonymously together with his own treatise. Contarini refused his master's proof that the immortality of the soul cannot be demonstrated from the Aristotelian point of view. By contrast, he underlined the essence of the soul as *forma per se subsistens*, namely, a form that can exist even out of its composition with the bodily matter. In doing so he was influenced by Avicenna's *De anima*, whose argument of the *Flying man* is explicitly quoted (Giaccon 1960).

In the same period, Contarini composed his first organic treatise, *De officio episcopi* (1517), in which he put forward a proposal for a renewed ethical life for the clergy and the bishops. The book was composed for Pietro Lippomanno, 13-year-old bishop of Bergamo. For the composition of this work, Contarini took the bishop of Padua, Pietro Barozzi, whom Contarini met during the university, as his ideal model. In this text he laid out the formation and virtues that a bishop should follow in his pastoral activity, as well as his responsibilities. Accordingly, a bishop should personally take care of his community, by regulating all the aspects of its ethical and religious life. Twenty years later, Contarini will devote to this care his treatise *De sacramentis christianae legis* (1540), a sort of manual of the form and the meaning of every sacrament.

The turning point of his political career was in September 1520, when he was elected ambassador of Venice at the court of Charles V, in Germany. He reached the Emperor in Worms on April 20, 1521, just few days after Luther's convocation. He saw the German monk in person during the Diet and judged his approach against Rome too radical, although he claimed that his religious beliefs were not completely wrong. In 1530 he would analyze every article of the Lutheran doctrine in his *Confutatio articulorum lutheranorum* (Contarini 1923; Ruckert 1926; Jedin 1949), with a critical but also constructive attitude: he always looked at what can bring people together, rather than what pits them against each other. For this

reason, he could appreciate some theoretical points of Luther's biblical interpretation, but, at the same time, he firmly rejected Luther's polemical attitude.

From Worms he followed the Emperor in Flanders, then in England, and finally in Spain, where he remained until August 1525. During this period, he came into contact with influential scholars like Thomas More, Giovanni Corsi, Sebastiano Caboto, and Antonio Pigafetta, and he personally visited the king of France, Francis I, prisoner in Madrid. While in Spain, he could alternate diplomatic activities with philosophical studies. He composed his *Compendium primae philosophiae*, reviewed and completed in 1527, in which he goes through the four scholastic transcendentals (*one, being, true, and good*) from a hypostatic standpoint: one and being, in a strong sense, are God as indivisible perfection; every other creature can only imperfectly partake of this ontological fullness (Robiglio 2018). The *Compendium* translates into a sixteenth-century perspective the same question on one and being that Pico and Ficino had already addressed in 1491 (Bartocci 2019). Finally, in Spain Contarini had first to face the Inquisition that suspected his brother and other Venetians of an illicit sale of prohibited books.

After his return to Venice, he first joined the *Collegio dei Savi di Terraferma* until 1527, and then he worked as ambassador of Venice for Ercole d'Este and from 1528 to 1529 for Pope Clement VII (Negrato 2010). During his service in Rome, he obtained the restitution of Milan to Francesco Sforza, but Venice lost Cervia and Ravenna. He also presided over the signing of the settlement in Bologna, where he remained until February 1530, in order to attend the imperial crowning of Charles V. His political career reached its peak in the following 5 years: he was designed *savio* of the Council, then in the Council of the Ten, fiscal revisor, official of the University of Padua, and ducal counselor. Finally, in May 1535 he was notified of his designation as cardinal of the Roman Church, even if he still was a layman. His election was probably fostered by the Venetian nuncio Girolamo Aleandro; nevertheless, its approval by Pope Paul III Farnese – who

was close to Contarini during the Roman embassy – sounded completely unexpected in Venice. According to Paolo Giovio's testimony, someone saw this elevation as the coming of a future angelic pope.

During these last Venetian years, he could complete important works like *De elementis* and *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum*. The first treatise deals with the four elements, which constitute the physical bodies, their origin, and their mixture. Contarini shows a deep knowledge of the physical ancient and medieval tradition, by quoting Alexander of Aphrodisia, Averroes, Avicenna, and Theophrastus. An interesting peculiarity of the text is that the author provides concrete examples of the constitution of the elements, taken from his voyages around Europe. In *De magistratibus*, probably begun in Spain, Contarini celebrates the harmonic constitution of the Venetian Republic, a mixture of democracy (public elective offices), aristocracy (the Council), and monarchy (the doge). This work seems fundamental since it lays down the foundation for the *Myth of Venice* (Gilbert 1969; Florio 2010). In the very months which preceded his election as cardinal, he composed the first of three important texts called *De potestate pontificis* (Contarini 1923): in this first one, he defended the divine origin of the power of the pope against some Venetian opponents like Sebastiano Foscarini. This work, that even met with nuncio Aleandro's approval, might have earned Contarini the red hat.

Contarini was firstly assigned to the diocese of Belluno, but he could hardly visit it, and thus he sent a minister, Girolamo Negri. Even when he was far, Contarini composed for the clergy and the preachers of Belluno some important instructions to educate the simple people: the *Modus concionandi* (1539) and *Instructio pro praedicatoribus* (1541). In these interesting writings, Contarini makes the point that preachers cannot talk to simple people about complex doctrinal issues like free will or predestination, and they rather must simplify their predication to few easy points, concerning penance and social activity. In 1536 he was deputed to a commission of prelates who were in charge of watching over any ecclesiastical violation: the

Consilium de emendanda ecclesia, which later flowed into the *Consilium super reformationem Ecclesiae*. He also wrote a useful analysis of the previous Christian councils, the *Summa conciliorum*, for the benefit of the commission (Friedensburg 1904).

In parallel with these official activities, he tried to induce the pope to a self-reformation (*De potestate pontificis in usu clavium and in compositionibus*), persuading him that the spiritual power was far more important than the political one, but this position was explicitly in contrast with the canonistic tradition (John of Turrecremata, Paul of Castro, Giambattista Caccialupi). During the Roman years, Contarini was often very close to the exponents of the *Spiritualism*: he was in touch with Vittoria Colonna, Reginald Pole, Marcantonio Flaminio, Bernardino Ochino, and Giovanni Morone (Jedin 1927). He personally found Valdes' ideas too radical, but at the same time, he could not hide an interest for the doctrine of God's election. His involvement with *Spirituali* seems evident, although ambiguous, from his letters *About free will* (1536, to Vittoria Colonna) and *About predestination* (1538, to Lattanzio Tolomei, now in Contarini 1923; Stella 1961; Blum 2017) and from his important commentaries on St. Paul's *Epistles*, which were read with interest by the heterodox circle. The ambiguity of his doctrine becomes evident in the question of justification. Contarini thought that humans can reach salvation thanks to a double input: on the one hand, God's election through grace, which seems the fundamental condition and, on the other hand, a free acceptance, which translates divine grace into a concrete ethical life.

In the last part of his career, Contarini was involved in the Diet of Regensburg (fall 1541). He was sent to Germany as representative of the pope, in order to mediate with the Protestants (Schultze 1879; Solmi 1907; Mackensen 1958, 1960; Matheson 1972; Lane 2004). With this aim, Contarini tried to find a middle formulation of the problem of justification (the so-called 'double justification'), but this solution did not meet with the approval of Luther and of part of the cardinals. As a consequence of this, after his

return to Italy, Contarini became more and more isolated. He tried to defend his position in a long letter to Ercole Gonzaga (*About justification*) which explains how to put together the two apparently incompatible ways to salvation (Hunermann 1921). In January 1542 he was nominated papal legate to Bologna where he had to deal with the heretical agitations of Modena (Casadei 1960). He was asked to write a *Formulario* with the aim of settling the dispute, but the attempt to find a compromise between heretical and catholic doctrines generated a deep ambiguity into the text. Gasparo Contarini suddenly died on August 24, in Bologna. The last man he met, Bernardino Ochino, an important representative of the *Spirituali* who was suspected of heresy, quickly escaped from Italy. Many of Contarini's works were published after his death in Italy (*De sacramentis, De potestate pontificis, Instructio*, Florence 1553) and France (*De elementis*, Paris 1548; *Compendium*, Paris 1556), without the permission of the family. The first official collection of his all works was published in Paris by his nephew Alvise in 1571 (Contarini 1571).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alumbrados](#)
- ▶ [Astrological Determinism](#)
- ▶ [Atomism in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Colonna, Vittoria](#)
- ▶ [Fate, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Galen and Galenism](#)
- ▶ [Immortality of the Soul, Renaissance Problem of](#)
- ▶ [Intellect, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Meteorology in Renaissance Science](#)
- ▶ [Mysticism in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Ochino, Bernardino](#)
- ▶ [Pomponazzi, Pietro](#)
- ▶ [Predestination](#)
- ▶ [Reformation](#)
- ▶ [Scuola di Rialto](#)
- ▶ [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Unicity of Intellect](#)

- ▶ Universities in the Renaissance
- ▶ Valdés, Juan de
- ▶ Water Culture in the Renaissance
- ▶ Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free

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Conway, Anne

Born: 1631

Died: 1679

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Abstract

Anne Conway (1631–1679) is best remembered as the author of a single book published posthumously, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. Conway worked out a metaphysics to account for the relationship between matter and spirit and found models for her writing in the philosophical and theological disputes of the day. Her treatise owes a particular debt to Jewish Cabbalism and English Quakerism. Conway based her philosophy on a spiritual monism that has affinities with vitalism while running counter to the mechanistic theories that shaped seventeenth-century scientific thought. Her book offers an eclectic mix that combines a

monistic theory of substance with Neoplatonist doctrines on the spirit of nature and sets forth a philosophy that remained in the shadows until its rediscovery in the twentieth century.

Introduction

Anne Conway (née Finch), Viscountess Conway and Killultagh (1631–1679), is best remembered as the author of a book published posthumously, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. First translated into Latin as *Principia philosophiae antiquissimae et recentissimae* (Amsterdam 1690), it appeared later as a re-translation into English of the probably lost original manuscript (Conway 1692). Writing at a time when a substantial segment of the market for printed books centered on devotional subjects and when literate women confided their opinions to manuscript, diaries, and letters, Conway belongs to a humanist tradition of “the learned lady.” An object of satire in comedies by Ben Jonson, Molière, and Aphra Behn, learned ladies also won their share of praise and admiration. Conway’s great gift for doing philosophy was recognized by a few contemporaries and preserved for posterity in a single treatise (Conway 1996).

Biography

Conway joined the privileges of wealth and pedigree to the benefits of private tutoring. Born to Sir Heneage Finch and his wife, Elizabeth Craddock, her father died a week before her birth in 1631. Considered unfit as a woman to attend university, she received instruction in the London mansion that eventually became Kensington Palace. Her family recruited Henry More (1614–1687), the Cambridge Platonist, to teach her religion and philosophy, and the two struck up a friendship that lasted from 1650 until her death. Their correspondence is preserved and available in a twentieth-century edition (Nicolson and Hutton 1992). More held Conway in the highest regard and in the dedication to one of his books commended her “singular *Wit* and *Vertues*”

(More 1655). In 1651, she married Edward Conway and took up residence at Ragley Hall, the family seat in Warwickshire. Fortunate in her marriage as in her mentor, Viscountess Conway assumed a place within an intellectual circle of family and friends and gained access to an extensive library assembled by her father-in-law. Her husband, made a fellow of the Royal Society in its first decade and created Earl of Conway in 1679, moved through the overlapping spheres of politics, religion, and philosophy. Among the guests invited to Ragley were Ralph Cudworth, Joseph Glanvill, and Jeremy Taylor. Francis Mercury van Helmont – a physician, Christian Cabbalist, and chemist – had a profound impact on her thinking toward the end of her life, when she also had conversations with early Quakers such as George Fox and George Keith. Conway supplied a bridge for members of her circle: van Helmont, for example, served as her personal physician and began to attend Quaker meetings in 1675. Conway's commitment to devising a metaphysics to account for the relationship between matter and spirit chimed both with the general European zeitgeist and with more local theological and scientific controversies (Duran 2006). Her conversion to Quakerism at the end of her life, against the wishes of friends and family, inserts her monism into a specifically English (and non-aristocratic) context. Just as Quakers regarded all bodies as replete with spirit, Conway affirms the presence of spirit in all things, while avoiding any imputation of pantheism by treating Christ as an intermediary between God and nature (Byrne 2007). She suffered from chronic pain throughout her life, particularly from excruciating headaches, and her monism encouraged her to make sense of how the mind and body suffer in conjunction and to develop a theodicy justifying the very existence of human suffering. Her life experience, as a result, directly underwrites important aspects of her philosophy and its characteristic concerns (Hutton 2004b).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The anonymous publication of the *Principia philosophiae*, under the supervision of van

Helmont, brought before the literate public a thinker well versed in the philosophy of her day. In it she asserts positions that owes more to theology, especially Jewish Cabbalism, than to the writings of René Descartes, chosen as a *maître à penser* by many of her contemporaries. Despite her criticism of Descartes, we find certain commonalities. Where Descartes posits the existence of three kinds of substance – God, mind, and body – Conway's own tripartite hierarchy divides among God, a middle term she identifies with Christ, and the creation. Conway introduces Christ, or "Middle Nature," or "Adam Kadmon" to fill in gaps left by a theory of dualism that she read critically and found wanting. This middle type combines properties but occupies a separate niche rather than sliding along a continuum. Christ stands as an intermediary between divine perfection and a creation regarded as a single substance comprised of numberless "monads" (not a term she uses frequently), which combine spirit and matter (Duran 2006). In the last category, she gathers all creation, positing the existence of a unified material world subject to mutability. If a thing were incapable of corruption, she reasons, it would be, in essence, God, whose divine attributes include immutability. Opposed to materialism no less than to Cartesian dualism, Conway rejects any picture of the world that treats nature as mechanical or machinelike, regarding it as endued with life and the powers of movement and perception. One recent study of Conway locates in her religious naturalism and vitalism an ethos that opposes the domination of nature and points toward a philosophy that places humanity in a new relation with other sentient beings (White 2008). For some readers, her work offers hints, if not a model, for a feminist epistemology and a conception of nature that breaks with paradigms long dominant in the West.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The influences that molded Conway's philosophy were varied and eclectic (Hutton 2004a). The Platonism of her mentor Henry More remains visible in much of her thinking. More considered

Cartesian dualism unequal to the task of explaining the interaction of mind and matter and offered a more fluid model of interaction to take its place. Conway built her system on More's foundation. The notion of the monad had roots in Renaissance Neoplatonist rewritings of the Cabala by figures such as Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–1689), whose grounding in Jewish learning went far deeper than the dabbling of his contemporaries. In 1670 van Helmont met Henry More and introduced him to Knorr's work, and the combined influence of the men inspired Conway to undertake a serious study of cabbalistic texts in translation. Working toward a synthesis of Quakerism and Cabbalism became a goal of Conway and some of her friends who wrestled with questions involving the nature of God and His creation. For example, the Cabbalistic notion of an indwelling spirit – the Shekinah (שכינה) or presence of God – in some respects resembles the Quaker idea of the Inward Light or the Christ within. Conway also broke with the dualism of much Christian theology by regarding soul and body as a single substance, drawn together by their attraction for one another. The affinity of soul for body arises from the similarity and desire they both have to unite with one another. Any “body” bereft of spirit and perception becomes dead matter or no body at all, analogous to the difference between a person and a corpse. Between soul and body, there exists a “love” that rests on their shared single nature and mutual recognition of goodness in one another (Broad 2002).

Impact and Legacy

A nineteenth-century commenter described Conway as “the profoundest and most learned of the female metaphysical writers of England” (Broad 2002; quoted p. 65). Earlier, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz acquired some familiarity with her work, but the extent of Conway's influence on his monadology remains doubtful (Brown 1990, 83–84). Conway's book presents a pathway diverging from the mechanist materialism that eclipsed other systems in the seventeenth century,

while not abandoning natural philosophy altogether. The author of the *Principles* found the moral implications of Cartesian mechanism objectionable and disallowed the sort of materialism she encountered in modern philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza (Hutton 2008). In their place she established what one contemporary student of her writings describes as “a clearly argued concern for all of nature, and the place of humankind within that nature” (Duran 2006), an intellectual departure that continues to give rise to new appreciations of her book.

Cross-References

- [Kabbalah, Renaissance](#)
- [Metaphysics in the Renaissance](#)
- [More, Henry](#)
- [Women Writing in the Renaissance](#)

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Copernicanism

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Abstract

The historiographical category of Copernicanism is here discussed from the viewpoint of the reception of Copernicus's work in the cultural debates of the Renaissance. First, an account of Copernicus's *De revolutionibus* (1543) is offered. Then, different strands of reception and the most visible actors of this cultural process are considered: mathematical and astronomical (Reinhold and the Wittenberg School), natural philosophical and physical (Bruno, Galileo, and Kepler), and ethical and theological (up to the effects of the Catholic censure of 1616).

The Historiographical Problem

"Copernicanism," like most "-isms" in historiography, is an anachronistic interpretative category. It refers to a particular aspect of the reception of the Renaissance astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, namely, to his heliocentric theory, and to the philosophical and cultural impact of his major work, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543).

Moreover, "Copernicanism" is evocative of the idea of the Scientific Revolution as a major cultural, epistemic, and epistemological shift, which occurred between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. According to the historian of science Alexandre Koyré, astronomy, in particular the Copernican system, was crucial to the formation of the modern scientific outlook hinged on a mathematized view of nature, space infinity, and cosmological homogeneity. The philosopher and historian of science, Thomas Kuhn, reinforced this narrative treating the "Copernican Revolution" as the *paradigmatic case* revealing of the "structure" of scientific advance in general. "Scientific revolutions," he argued, are intellectual shifts undermining well-established knowledge systems, just like how the Copernican theory exploded the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic worldview. This narrative looked verisimilar in the light of Renaissance reflections on Copernicus's achievement, such as Giordano Bruno's celebration of the historical meaning of Copernicus as "the dawn which must precede the rising of the Sun of the ancient and true philosophy, for so many centuries entombed in the dark caverns of blind, spiteful, arrogant, and envious ignorance" (Bruno 1995, p. 87). Additionally, Galileo Galilei's *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo* (1632) conveyed the sense of a radical opposition between "Two Chief World Systems," the Ptolemaic and the Copernican. The Catholic prohibition of the heliocentric system (1616) and the persecution of Galileo for its dissemination (1633) suggested to later historians the sense of an irredeemable contrast between scientific advance and tradition qua religion.

Recent historiography has casted into doubt many points of this narrative of the Copernican discontinuity, since they rested on oversimplifications. First, no unity existed between Aristotelian and Ptolemaic approaches to the heavens; thus, the very idea of an Aristotelian-Ptolemaic paradigm to be undermined and superseded is problematic. In the Middle Ages, natural explanations versus mathematical accounts of heavenly phenomena dependent on the two *auctoritates* of Aristotle and Ptolemy were often perceived to be in strong contrast. Second, early mathematical

readers of Copernicus often neglected the cosmological issue (heliocentric astronomy and its physical implications). Many mathematicians were rather interested in the computational problems regardless of planetary hypotheses. Third, there is much continuity between Copernicus and his ancient and medieval precedents. Most importantly, he followed the Ptolemaic approach to mathematical astronomy.

For these reasons, it is convenient to abandon the Koyrean and the Kuhnian narratives and to address in the following the issue of Renaissance “Copernicanism” from the viewpoint of the multifaceted receptions of Copernicus.

Copernicus’s Astronomical Proposal: Strengths and Weaknesses

Copernicus’s *De revolutionibus* is an all-encompassing astronomical work, composed according to the example of Ptolemy’s *Almagest*. Its structure is the following:

- Book One: Foundational book, with discussion of general cosmological and natural issues, plus trigonometry
- Two: Spherical astronomy and catalogue of the fixed stars
- Three: Precession of the equinoxes and solar theory
- Four: Lunar theory; distance, parallax, and apparent diameter of the Sun and the Moon; and eclipses
- Five: Planetary theory of longitude
- Six: Planetary theory of latitude

The comprehensiveness of this synthesis of astronomical knowledge was perceived as a valuable achievement. It is precisely on this account that Copernicus was often mentioned during the Renaissance as *Ptolemaeus alter*, referring to his capacity of standing comparison with the most authoritative astronomer of antiquity.

De revolutionibus had also other qualities that were universally acknowledged. As Copernicus’s pupil Rheticus stressed in the *Narratio prima* (1540), the first printed report on the astronomical

novelties of *De revolutionibus* brought together ancient and medieval astronomical data with new observations gathered by Copernicus himself, following a “geometrical method” (Rheticus 1959, pp. 109–110). This permitted him to offer updated or improved parameters for the precession of the equinoxes, for the solar and lunar theory, as well as for planetary motions.

A theoretical aspect Copernicus paid particular attention to was the construction of planetary models in accordance with the so-called *axioma astronomicum*. According to it, planetary motions shall be uniformly circular around their centers or result from the composition of circular uniform motions. Copernicus’s models were in fact so designed as to substitute the Ptolemaic equant by means of epicyclical devices. His solution had wide success among German scholars, especially thanks to the work of the Wittenberg astronomer Erasmus Reinhold and of his pupils.

Moreover, Copernicus’s heliocentric (or, rather, *heliostatic*) model offered simple and intelligible accounts for features that needed special constructions from the viewpoint of Ptolemaic theory, such as retrograde motions and planetary elongations. Furthermore, assuming the uniformity of speeds of the celestial bodies on their circles, the heliocentric theory permitted to establish the proportion between planets’ annual periods and their distances from the cosmological center without ambiguities (while in a geocentric perspective, the periods of the inferior planets do not correspond to their order). Copernicus used in fact the Earth-Sun distance as the yardstick to determine all planets’ distances and to establish the order of our system.

While Copernicus’s contemporaries and direct followers were ready to acknowledge the inclusiveness of his work as well as his observational and computational improvements, the excitement for the respect of the principle of circular uniformity was less universal even though it was shared by a very visible scientific community, namely, by scholars stemming from the so-called Wittenberg School (i.e., scholars trained in mathematics at Melanchthonian universities). As to planetary theory, terrestrial motion, and solar centrality and immobility, these issues remained the most

controversial of the Copernican proposal due to many difficulties, the most relevant of which can be grouped as follows:

- (a) The contrast with common sense: The motion of the Earth, in spite of its velocity, is not perceived by our senses.
- (b) Astronomical shortcomings: The Earth is apparently always located in the center of the celestial “sphere.” Its de-centration should trouble celestial appearances. For instance, the horizon of an observer on Earth always appears to bisect the heavens into two equal hemispheres. Copernicus claimed (*De rev.* I,6) that the Sun-Earth distance is negligible relative to the dimensions of the heavens. In other words, the annual revolution of the Earth around the Sun forces a heliocentric astronomer to greatly enlarge the distance of the stars from the last planet of our system (and to momentarily augment the extension of cosmic space).
- (c) Physical shortcomings: Terrestrial motion subverted existing explanations (embedded in the Aristotelian theory of natural places) accounting for physical phenomena on Earth such as the fall of heavy bodies. Terrestrial motion was at odds with the Aristotelian assumption that the gravitational center and the cosmological center (almost) coincide, and that natural motions are simple (and cannot result from the composition of two motions as would be the case for falling objects on a moving Earth, displaced at the same time vertically toward the terrestrial center and circularly about the same center).
- (d) Theological difficulties: Several Biblical passages refer to the immobility of the Earth and the motion of the Sun (e.g., Joshua 10.12–14 and 2. Kings 20:8–11). In order to reconcile Copernican theory and the Bible, one ought to abandon a literal exegesis of these passages and therefore to dismiss the interpretations of the Fathers of the Church and of the most credited theologians.

In the face of these problems (cognitive, mathematical, physical, and theological), the

geokinetic and heliostatic thesis met with strong opposition, despite the general appraisal of Copernicus’s geometrical models and improved parameters.

The Astronomical Reception of Copernicus

Reinhold’s *Prutenicae tabulae* (1551) inaugurated the mathematical-astronomical reception of Copernicus. These *first* “Copernican” tables met with immense success, first in Germany and then on a European scale. They constituted a valid alternative to the earlier *Alfonsine tables* (from the thirteenth century) and offered a basis for new tables and ephemerides – such as Johannes Stadius’s *Ephemerides novae et exactae* (1556), Antonio Magini’s *Ephemerides coelestium motuum... secundum Copernici hypotheses, Prutenicosque canones* (1582 and later editions), and David Origanus’s *Ephemerides novae* (1599) – until Johannes Kepler’s *Tabulae Rudolphinae* (1627) supplanted the Reinholdian computational tradition.

Besides, mathematical astronomers discussed and reworked Copernicus’s planetary theory along two diverging lines, geocentric and heliocentric. In fact, the systematic character of Copernicus’s theory could be maintained also in a geocentric perspective, to be exact, in a geo-heliocentric. Therefore, many scholars found it expedient to translate Copernicus’s theory into a geocentric, as was the case for reputed geo-heliocentrists such as Nicolaus Raimarus Ursus and Tycho Brahe (► [Geocentrism](#)). In the *Astronomia nova* (1609), Kepler, who was aware of the intricacies of post-Copernican transformations of planetary theory, regarded geo-heliocentric systems not in radical opposition to heliocentrism. Rather, they appeared to him as alternative options directly descending from Copernicus’s theory. As he wrote,

[One] should be aware that there are two schools of thought among astronomers, one distinguished by its chief, Ptolemy, and by the assent of the large majority of the ancients, and the other attributed to more recent proponents [...]. The former treats the

individual planets separately and assigns causes to the motions of each in its own orb, while the latter relates the planets to one another, and deduces from a single common cause, those characteristics which are found to be common to their motions. The latter school is again subdivided. Copernicus, with Aristarchus, of remotest antiquity, ascribes to the translational motion of our home the Earth the cause of the planets' appearing stationary and retrograde. Tycho Brahe, on the other hand, ascribes this cause to the Sun, in whose vicinity he says the eccentric circles of all five planets are connected as if by a kind of knot (not physical, of course, but only quantitative). Further, he says that this knot, as it were, revolves about the motionless Earth, along with the solar body. (Kepler 1992, p. 47)

In other words, heliocentrism and geo-heliocentrism developed as systems genetically related but mutually exclusive, which is a situation that often emerges in the history of science.

As far as heliocentrism is concerned, Kepler's work marked a fundamental step. Whereas geo-heliocentrists stuck to the astronomical axiom of circular uniformity but renounced terrestrial motion, Kepler, the other way round, maintained the heliocentric thesis while renouncing the astronomical axiom about the uniformity of speed of circular motions in planetary theory. In the *Astronomia nova*, he presented his theory of the elliptical orbit and nonuniform speed of Mars and then extended to the other planets. He accounted for that not in geometrical terms, as was usual, but rather in "physical" ones. In other words, he offered a causal explanation, individuating the forces out of whose action planets' paths result, in particular a vital force emanating from the Sun (► [Astronomy](#)).

The Natural Reception

Copernicus was well aware of the natural philosophical questions raised by his planetary theory. Therefore, in the first book of *De revolutionibus*, he treated the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic objections against terrestrial motion in detail. In particular, he hinted to a possible alternative physics, discarding the theory of natural places and the related idea that sublunary bodies can be *naturally*

moved only along straight lines, upward or downward. Rather, he based on Neoplatonic and Plutarchian insights his redefinition of circular motion as the *only* natural one (especially the circular motion of the terrestrial element and of our terraqueous globe) and reduced vertical motion to the violent tendency of the parts to rejoin their whole.

Besides, Copernicus's cosmology opened up a series of natural possibilities that only later supporters of his theory fully assessed. First, the axial rotation of the Earth made it possible to conceive of the heavens as infinite, since the principal Aristotelian argument in favor of cosmological finitude was based on the observation that the starry sphere could not accomplish the daily rotation if it were not finite. Second, the annual revolution of the Earth around the Sun implied its celestial location and its transit through the heavens like the other planets. This virtually discarded the distinction between a corruptible sublunary realm and an unalterable superlunary, suggesting cosmological homogeneity. Third, the momentous enlargement of the distance of the stars from our system raised the question about the existence of a physical void. All of these theses were in stunning contrast with the dominant Aristotelian doctrines about nature and the heavens.

Giordano Bruno was the first philosopher who fully developed these perspectives. Space infinity, cosmological homogeneity, and the existence of the intra-atomic void along with heliocentrism were pillars of his vision of nature. In addition to this, he asserted the infinite plurality of heliocentric systems, on the basis of an equation between the Sun and the other stars. Bruno presented his doctrines in several publications, in particular in the philosophical dialogues *La cena de le ceneri* (1584), *De l'infinito, universo e mondi*, and in the Latin poem *De innumerabilibus et immenso* (1591). His views had a lasting impact on the conceptions of the next century, beginning with Descartes's multicentric, homogeneous, in-definite, and corpuscular cosmology.

Through telescopic observations, Galileo Galilei reinforced the thesis of celestial homogeneity (e.g., through observation of the lunar asperities) and multi-centrism (testified by the Jovial

satellites). The observation of the phases of the inner planets indisputably showed their solar orbit. Therefore, Ptolemaic geocentrism was demonstrated to be untenable on empirical basis. Moreover, in his *Dialogo sopra i massimi sistemi* (1632), Galileo rejected the most important geostatic arguments on the basis of his proto-inertial physics and pointed to the phenomenon of the tides as evidence for terrestrial motion. He also extended the application of Renaissance mechanics to cosmological problems (e.g., through the treatment of the terrestrial globe by analogy with a turning wheel). In this manner, Galileo furthered the alliance between mechanics and Copernican astronomy initiated by his direct forerunner, Giovanni Battista Benedetti.

Kepler's physicalization of mathematical astronomy (already mentioned) was fundamental in the assessment of the natural dimension of the heliocentric theory. For the treatment of the solar system as a mechanical system of interacting forces, his work paved the way to later syntheses such as the Newtonian.

Ethical and Theological Concerns

Many scholars in cultural and intellectual history pointed out the moral implications of the Copernican system. The loss of centrality of the Earth in the cosmos implied, in fact, the decentralization of humankind and a new image of it. This de-anthropomorphizing tendency did not necessarily entail negative consequences as far as the conception of human beings is concerned and the assessment of its place in nature. In fact, as Arthur Lovejoy remarked, the novel world vision emancipated humanity from the theologically tinged and "diabolocentric" cosmology of the Middle Ages that confined it in the (physically and morally) lowest place of Creation. Drawing on Cusanian suggestions (► [Nicholas of Cusa](#)), Bruno was particularly emphatic on the freeing potential of the celestial transposition of the Earth, as well as of his cosmological infinity. Yet these novelties were not easily reconcilable with the letter of the Bible and the theological tradition.

Copernicus and his entourage were aware of the tensions between heliocentrism and Biblical

exegesis. Reconciliation was only possible at the expenses either of Biblical literalism or of physical realism. Copernicus and his friends and collaborators chose the first path, that is, accommodating the Scriptures to natural knowledge. The Bishop of Chelmno, Tiedemann Giese, authored a lost apology, *Hyperaspisticon*, in favor of heliocentrism, while Rheticus penned a defense of the scriptural tenability of the Copernican planetary theory, which is today known as *De Terrae motu et Scriptura Sacra*. The Lutheran theologian Andreas Osiander chose a different path. He inserted an anonymous introduction in the first edition of *De revolutionibus* in which he invited the reader to take Copernicus's planetary theory as purely hypothetical and as solely aimed at computation.

In spite of these cautions, theological reactions accompanied the earliest reception of the Copernican hypotheses. Luther is reported to have commented on him: "That fool wants to distort the entire astronomy." Additionally, his close associate Philip Melancthon rejected heliocentrism for physical and theological reasons, as is evident from his criticism in the textbook of natural philosophy, *Initia doctrinae physicae* (1549¹ and 1550²). In Rome, the Master of the Sacred Palace, Bartolomeo Spina, and his Dominican brother Giovanni Maria Tolosani were the first Catholic critics of Copernicus's theory. The latter's anti-Copernican objection, *De coelo supremo immobili et Terra infima stabili, ceterisque coelis et elementis intermediis mobilibus*, remained unpublished only due to an untimely death in 1549.

In the *Cena* (1584), Bruno tackled the scriptural problem and proposed to read the Bible according to the principle of accommodation. Accordingly, the Bible is written in a manner that is comprehensible for the common people; it does not deal with natural issues, but only with moral ones. Galileo later affirmed the same principle in reaction to religious opponents, in a letter (21 December 1613) to his friend and collaborator, the Benedictine Benedetto Castelli, and in the revised and extended version of this text, addressed to his protectress, the Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine (1615). In parallel, the Calabrian Carmelite Antonio Foscarini published his

Lettera sopra l'opinione de' Pitagorici e del Copernico (1615), in which he argued that the doctrine “of the mobility of the Earth, and stability of the Sun, held in ancient times by Pythagoras, and then put into practice by Copernicus,” was not at odds with philosophy or with theology.

In spite of these efforts toward reconciliation, the Catholic censure arrived in 1616. On 24 February 1616, three Father Theologians of the Holy Office declared that solar immobility and centrality is “foolish and absurd in philosophy, and formally heretical,” whereas terrestrial motion is “at least erroneous in faith.” On this basis, the Sacred Congregation of the Index decreed on 5 March 1616 the prohibition of all books defending the “Pythagorean” cosmology and suspended *De revolutionibus* “donec corrigatur.” The Cardinal Inquisitor Roberto Bellarmino, who had played a major role also in the condemnation of Bruno to death for heresy, immediately communicated the ban to Galileo and forbade him to teach and circulate impious cosmologies. These events, followed by the trial against Galileo and his abjuration of the Copernican system in 1633, produced a confessionalization of astronomy and a bifurcation of the discussion of planetary theory and of the scientific culture in Catholic and protestant countries.

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Copernicus, Nicolaus

Born: 1473, Toruń, Poland

Died: 1543, Frombork, Poland

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Abstract

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) – astronomer, mathematician, physician, and Catholic clergyman – was one of the most important contributors of the Scientific Revolution due to the formulation of the heliocentric model of

the universe, according to which the earth revolved around the stationary mean sun. He managed to provide an astronomical system consistent with the apparent motions of the celestial bodies and also explain the exact necessary order and the inner coherence of the universe by following the Aristotelian distance–period relationship and the postulate for the uniform circular motion. Although the system presented in his book *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*) was as complex as that of Ptolemy, the harmonious order of his geokinetic model led to the foundation of modern [astro]physics. His scholarly interests included economics, politics, and translation of ancient Greek texts.

Alternate Names

Koppernigk, Niklas

Biography

Nicolaus Copernicus was born on 19 February 1473 at Toruń, a thriving merchant town, right next to the Vistula river, as the youngest of four children. When Nicolaus was 10, his father, a merchant and very active in the political affairs, passed away. Lucas Watzenrode (1447–1512), the maternal uncle of Nicolaus, and eventually the bishop of Warmia, came to the family's aid, and influenced Nicolaus' studies. As such he attended the elementary school at Toruń, in which he learned Latin, the language of the intellectual world. In 1491 Nicolaus enrolled in the arts program of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. The list of the University's lectures shows that the treatises of Georg von Peurbach (1423–1461) and Regiomontanus (1436–1476), e.g., *Epitoma in Almagestum Ptolomaei*, were among the standard textbooks, which became a crucial factor for the emergence of Copernicus' interest in astronomy (Berry 1898: 94). Among his collection of books preserved today (i.e., the *Alfonsine Tables*, Regiomontanus' *Tabulae*

directionum, In iudiciis astrorum by ‘Alī ibn Abī l-Rijāl, Euclid’s *Elements* with Campanus’ commentary) (Swerdlow and Neugebauer 1984: 4) some contain calculations in Nicolaus’ handwriting which date back to the days when he was a student at Cracow (Swerdlow 2000: 162–168). It is worth noting that some of them give the impression that he had already begun to take the first steps in the conception of his new system. At any rate, Nicolaus left the university after 3 years of study, probably in 1494, without taking a degree, which was not unusual at that time.

During the next year or two he lived partly at Watzenrode’s palace at Heilsberg, and in 1497 he assumed an administrative position (canon) of the Chapter of Warmia. Meanwhile his life was about to change once again: from 1496 to 1505 or 1506 Copernicus studied in Italy (at first canon law in Bologna) with only a short break in 1501. In 1497, he met the influential professor of astronomy Domenico Maria Novara da Ferrara (1454–1504), and expanded his own knowledge of astronomy by assisting him with his observations. Novara described Copernicus as *non tam discipulus quam adjutor et testis observationum* (not so much a student as an assistant, and witness to the observations) (Koyré 1973: 21). He embraced the “renaissant” Pythagorean and neoplatonic ideas, dominant at the time. And apart from law, he studied ancient Greek, medicine, and philosophy. From Bologna Copernicus proceeded to Rome in 1500, a year declared as Jubilee by the Catholic Church. Copernicus gave lectures on mathematics in Rome before a large crowd of students, important men, and experts (Swerdlow and Neugebauer 1984: 5).

In 1501 Copernicus returned home, but only for a short period, for he received further leave of absence in order to study medicine at the University of Padua – one of the most distinguished institutions in Europe – and serve as medical advisor to Lucas and members of the Chapter. We know very little about his studies in Padua, but we can have a glimpse about it from Siraisi who has highlighted the prominent role of astrology in medicine (Siraisi 1990: 16). Whatever the truth of this, Copernicus probably showed no interest in astrology throughout his life (Omodeo

2014: 134–136; Kuhn 1957: 94). Finally, in the mid of 1503 he received his doctorate in canon law from the University of Ferrara. After the completion of his studies, Copernicus returned to Heilsberg, assisting his uncle Lucas and helping him when the later became ill. Eventually, Lucas Watzenrode died in 1512, and so Copernicus left Heilsberg for good, moving to the Cathedral of Frombork, where we find him staring at the night sky on 5 June during an opposition of the planet Mars.

Despite the fact that Copernicus did not publish anything important in astronomy throughout his life, his fame as an astronomer appears to have been settled among experts. Indeed, as Dreyer has mentioned, when the question of the reform of the calendar was brought before the Lateran Council in 1514, Copernicus was invited to give his opinion on the subject by Paul of Middelburg (1446–1534), Bishop of Fossombrone; but though he was supported by a personal friend and colleague, Bernhard Sculteti (1455–1518), the invitation was declined, as Copernicus did not think that the motions of the sun and moon had yet been sufficiently investigated to allow a final settlement of the problem (Dreyer 1953: 309). Copernicus’ research in astronomy had already taken an unexpected turn, and between 1510 and 1514 he had written a brief essay, which contained an account of his heliocentric (or rather heliostatic) astronomical system, the *Commentariolus*. Another important event happened about 1524: Copernicus wrote a critical evaluation of Johannes Werner’s (1468–1522) small treatise *De motu octavae sphaerae tractatus primus*. He pointed out Werner’s chronological error of 11 years which was made in the calculation of an observation made by Ptolemy.

In the final years of his life, Copernicus met an enthusiastic young astronomer, known as Rheticus (1514–1574), from the University of Wittenberg, who came to study alongside him. Rheticus began to eagerly study Copernicus’ manuscript and to press the great astronomer to publish it. Within a few weeks Rheticus published a valuable brief treatise to Copernicus’ ideas, the *Narratio Prima (First Report)*; and he finally convinced Copernicus to publish *De Revolutionibus*

Orbium Coelestium (henceforward *De Revolutionibus*), of which title the last two words were probably the addition of a Lutheran preacher, Andreas Osiander (1498–1552). Osiander also anonymously wrote a preface of the work claiming that the fundamental principles laid down in it “need not be true nor even probable. On the contrary, if they provide a calculus consistent with the observations, that alone is enough.” According to popular belief, Copernicus received a copy of his magnum opus on 24 May 1543, the day of his death (Koyré 1973: 34–42).

Astronomical Heritage and the Rupture with the Tradition

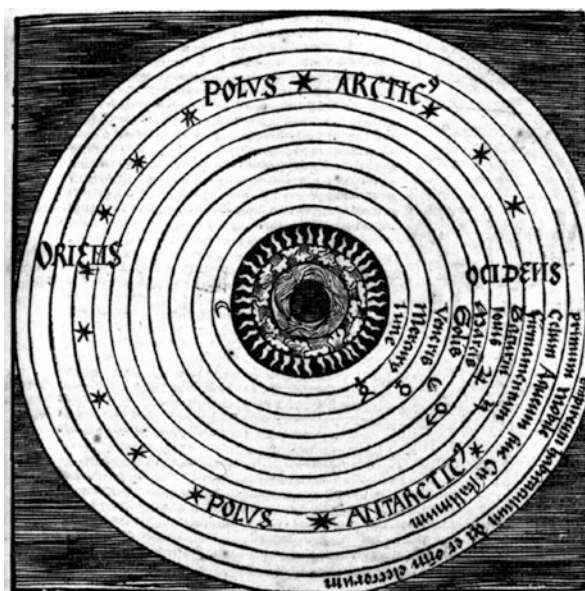
Both the principles and the scientific domain of astronomy before Copernicus were dominated by the Aristotelian conception of the physical world. According to these principles (*De Caelo* 286a3–286b9; 291a29–b10; *Meteorologica* 339a11–32; 340a19–341a13) the natural place of the four physical elements was the realm of eternal change, the so-called sublunary region, which contained the earth at the center of the world followed by the sphere of water, air, and fire, while the moon was the boundary between those

elements and the sphere of the unchanging, perfect celestial bodies, known as the superlunar region with the seven wondering stars or planets: moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Beyond the sphere of Saturn was the sphere of the fixed stars or the firmament. All the planets revolved around the earth as the true center with uniform circular motion (Fig. 1).

However, there was a serious gap between theory and observation. Instead of moving uniformly, the planets appear to move faster and slower, and even stop at times (stationary planets). While the sun and the moon move continuously along their paths from west to east (prograde/direct motion), the motion of the planets is usually from west to east relative to the stars; occasionally though they reverse their motion, moving from east to west relative to the stars (retrograde motion). Furthermore, planets appear to be closer and further away from the earth along their paths. As a consequence, ancient Greek astronomers developed an array of firm mathematical techniques to account for the celestial motions. Among these were the cosmological models of concentric spheres of Eudoxus of Cnidus (c.390–c.337 BC), Callippus (c.370–c.300 BC), and Aristotle (384–322 BC), and the Ptolemaic model, the mathematical tools of which were the

Copernicus, Nicolaus,

Fig. 1 The Aristotelian cosmos as portrayed in Gregor Reisch’s *Margarita philosophica nova*, Strasbourg 1508, sig. EE2^r. At the center are the four elements (earth, water, air, and fire); then comes the nested concentric spheres of the planets (the moon, Mercury, Venus, sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn), followed by the firmament (the sphere of the fixed stars), the crystalline heaven, the First Mover, and the Empyrean Heaven (the dwelling place of God)



eccentric circle, the epicycle-deferent system, and the equant point (*punctum aequans*) (Neugebauer 1975: book 1). All astronomical systems presented, more or less, the basic tenets of geocentricism, but there was no widely accepted system.

Claudius Ptolemy (c.100–c.170 AD) wrote a work titled *Μαθηματικὴ Σύνταξις* (*Syntaxis Mathematica* in Latin, *المجسطي* (*al-majisṭī*) in Arabic – widely known as *Almagest*), which became one of the most influential books in astronomy ever written. Ptolemy laid the foundations of medieval astronomy. His system was sufficiently accurate to remain in use for approximately 1500 years. The first two introductory books contain his fundamental assumptions: that the earth is spherical endorsing the Aristotelian eclipse argument (*De Caelo* 297b30–34); that the heavens are spherical turning round a fixed axis and that the earth is in the center of the heavens, without motion, being but a point in comparison to the heavens.

Copernicus saw into the problems of the astronomical systems mentioned above. On the one hand, despite its conformity to the principle of uniform circular motion, the concentric astronomy contradicts the observations because it was impossible to explain the differences in the planetary distances. On the other hand, although the Ptolemaic astronomy agrees for the most part with the observed phenomena, it violates the principle of uniform circular motion due to the equant point. But the most important one was the inability of every astronomical system to discover the structure and form of the world (*forma mundi*), meaning the lack of certainty regarding the universes' *symmetria*: while some following the “principle of plenitude” (no vacuum between the nested celestial spheres) placed Venus and Mercury below the sun, others placed them above it because the sun has never been obscured by them when observed with the naked eye (i.e., the planet's apparent passage across the solar disk) (Vesel 2014: 67–76).

Another peculiar aspect was the relationship of those planets to the sun because they can only be in conjunction with and never in opposition to it (i.e., conjunction means that the sun and planet

have the same ecliptic longitude; and opposition means that the sun and planet are exactly 180° apart in the sky). Ptolemy solved that problem with an even more peculiar proposition having Mercury and Venus move in epicycles, whose centers are fixed on the line joining the sun and the earth. Ptolemy introduced this relationship due to the maximum elongation of those planets (~47° for Venus and ~28° for Mercury). As a result, according to Ptolemy, the sun separates the spheres of the three planets that are observed in opposition and the two that are not: “For by putting the sun in the middle, it is more in accordance with the nature [of the bodies] in thus separating those which reach all possible distances from the sun and those which do not do so, but always move in its vicinity; provided only that it does not remove the latter close enough to the earth that there can result a parallax of any size.” (Toomer, 1984: 419–420).

Copernicus highlighted the problem regarding the implementation of the principle of full or limited elongation writing that “Ptolemy [Syntaxis, IX, 1] argues also that the sun must move in the middle between the planets which show every elongation from it and those which do not. This argument carries no conviction because its error is revealed by the fact that the moon too shows every elongation from the sun” (*On the Revolutions* 1992). It is worth noting that as for the outer planets (Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn), the radii of their epicycles always remain parallel to the earth-sun axis. Consequently, the Ptolemaic system displays an incredible aspect: the motions of all the planets are linked to the motion of the sun.

Innovative Aspects and Legacy

Despite the fact that the Copernican system was as complex as that of Ptolemy, the real superiority of the heliocentric model consists in the determination of the order and the relative distances of the planets. As Vesel has rightly argued “Copernicus seeks a principle of arrangement that can be universalized, a principle that applies to the entire universe evenly and that would not produce

inherently inconsistent and contradictory results. This requirement is satisfied neither by the ‘principle of plenitude’ nor by the principle of full or limited elongation. Instead of many principles of arrangement, which are all inconsistent and contradict each other, there must be *one* principle, one common measure that can be unambiguously applied to all the planets, or, in other words, to *All* (=universe). Cosmos must be governed by one principle that would arrange its parts in an inherently coherent and homogenous way” (Vesel 2014: 223).

The placement of the sun in the center was the key to the harmonious order of the universe. Copernicus’ first writing of heliocentrism was a small manuscript, which gives a general description of the new cosmological system regarding the heavenly motions. Copernicus had written *Commentariolus* by 1514, though it was never printed during his lifetime. In its first section Copernicus listed seven postulates, which, according to the great astronomer, are the ways of dealing with all the problems of ancient astronomy:

1. There is no one center of all the celestial circles or spheres.
2. The center of the earth is not the center of the universe, but only of gravity and of the lunar sphere.
3. All the spheres revolve about the sun as their mid-point, and therefore the sun is the center of the universe.
4. The ratio of the earth’s distance from the sun to the height of the firmament is so much smaller than the ratio of the earth’s radius to its distance from the sun that the distance from the earth to the sun is imperceptible in comparison with the height of the firmament.
5. Whatever motion appears in the firmament arises not from any motion of the firmament, but from the earth’s motion. The earth together with its circumjacent elements performs a complete rotation on its fixed poles in a daily motion, while the firmament and highest heaven abide unchanged.
6. What appear to us as motions of the sun arise not from its motion but from the motion of the

earth and our sphere, with which we revolve about the sun like any other planet. The earth has, then, more than one motion.

7. The apparent retrograde and direct motion of the planets arises not from their motion but from the earth’s. The motion of the earth alone, therefore, suffices to explain so many apparent inequalities in the heavens (Rosen 1971: 58–59).

These seven fundamental postulates formed the basis of the heliocentric system, which Copernicus exhibited in detail in his book *De Revolutionibus* which following the structure of Ptolemy’s *Almagest* consisted of six books:

Book 1 elaborates the basic natural philosophical principles of geokinetic astronomy (the universe is spherical; the earth forms a single spherical object with water; the motion of the heavenly bodies is uniform, eternal, and circular or compounded of circular motions; the immensity of the heavens compared to the size of the earth, concluding that the latter has multiple motions; and the order of the heavenly spheres).

Book 2 describes the notions of the heliocentric astronomy mentioned in the first book, and also gives a catalog of the fixed stars.

Book 3 deals with the precession of the equinoxes and the apparent motion of the sun.

Book 4 deals with the apparent motion of the moon.

Book 5 offers a heliocentric calculation for the planetary longitudes.

Book 6 explains the latitudes of the planets.

The essential principle of the Copernican system – the principle of uniform circular motion, which, according to Copernicus, was the only way to explain the periodicity of the celestial phenomena, is taken for granted – is the distance–period relationship, which means that the farther the orbit of a planet is from the center of its motion, the longer its period is. Indeed, the correlation between the mean planetary distances calculated by Copernicus (in his “Uppsala Notes” or “U” cataloged as Copernicana 4 at the Uppsala University Library;



Copernicus, Nicolaus, Fig. 2 The Copernican system from book I of *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*, presented in the Jagiellonian Library at Cracow University. The outmost of all is the immobile sphere of the fixed stars (1). Then is Saturn (2), which revolves in 30 years;

Jupiter’s revolution in 12 years (3); Mar’s revolution in 2 years (4); the annual revolution of the earth, together with the moon (5); Venus’ revolution in 9 months (6); Mercury’s revolution in 80 days (7). In the middle of everything is the sun. (Gingerich 2014: 37)

see table below) and the periods of the planets in his surviving autograph manuscript of *De Revolutionibus* is obvious (Fig. 2). Unlike Ptolemy, Copernicus managed to provide a coherent system in which all the apparent celestial motions could be explained (save the appearances, *σώζειν τὰ φαινόμενα* in Greek) with reference to one necessary principle that did not allow alternative arrangements of the celestial bodies.

*	Copernicus’ U notes in AU (Astronomical Units)	True Value in AU
Mercury ☿	0.376	0.387
Venus ♀	0.72	0.72
Earth ⊕	1.00	1.00
Mars ♂	1.52	1.52
Jupiter ♃	5.2	5.2
Saturn ♄	9.23	9.54

There were several advantages of the Copernican model. The Copernican lunar theory was far superior to that of Ptolemy. The apparent retrograde motion of the planets was explained with

reference to their relative positions in contrast to the ad hoc modification of large epicycles of the Ptolemaic model. It was clear now why Mars and Venus had longer retrograde arcs, large epicycles, and longer periods of invisibility than the outer planets in the Ptolemaic model: the spheres of Mars and Venus are the closest to the earth compared with the spheres of the outer planets. It was obvious why in the Ptolemaic model the centers of Venus and Mercury were fixed on the line joining the sun to the earth: they are inferior planets and as such always seen near the sun; why the radii of the epicycles of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn always remain parallel to the earth-sun axis: they are superior planets. The earth was not the center of the universe anymore; it was an ordinary planet orbiting the sun. And that was precisely the problem, according to the traditional worldview.

The arguments against the motion of the earth came from theologians, philosophers, and astronomers. Protestants were the first that came up against Copernicus. Martin Luther (1483–1546) objected that Copernicus’ work went against specific verses from the Old Testament (especially

Joshua 10:12–13; Psalms 93; Ecclesiastes 1:5–6) “people gave ear to an upstart astronomer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. [...] This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth” (Barker 2005: 34, n. 16). The Catholic Church had a similar but much slower reaction, condemning *De Revolutionibus* in *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1616). On the other hand, peripatetic astronomers and philosophers, using common sense arguments, objected that the movement of the earth was absurd due to the easily noticeable violent consequences that it would have, like non-vertical fall of objects, continuous blowing of the wind toward one direction, etc. While there were plenty of other objections, one of the most intriguing arguments was made by Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) concerning the absence of annual parallax and the immensity of empty space, which had to be assumed between the sphere of Saturn and the sphere of the fixed stars (Dreyer 1953: 360). Copernicus acknowledging this already, although he did not answer for the empty space, wrote that the absence of parallax “proves their immense height, which makes even the sphere of the annual motion, or its reflection, vanish from before our eyes” (*On the Revolutions* 1992).

The Copernican system was not immediately accepted, or even understood. *De Revolutionibus* was a very technical book, not meant for anyone who did not have a solid background in mathematics. “Astronomy is written for astronomers” Copernicus wrote in his dedication to Pope Paul III. It was a revolutionary thought that challenged well-established notions, like the Aristotelian disciplinary boundary between mathematics and physical philosophy. Indeed, as Westman has argued quite convincingly “Copernicus asserts implicitly the right of the astronomer to make new kinds of claims about the physical world. In disciplinary terms: an argument from geometry together with certain privileged observations is taken to be sufficient to refix the reference frame of the ‘real world’ and fundamentally to question the evidence of the senses on which much of the discipline of natural philosophy had been built”

(Westman 1980: 111). Many other astronomers followed popularizing, improving, and heavily modifying the heliocentric model. It served its purpose presenting well enough an alternative against a system of ideas that seemed immovable. In the decades that followed, many scientists were converted to the Copernican model. Computations using his new model proved to be more accurate and useful for new astronomical tables, like the *Rudolphine Tables* of Johannes Kepler (1571–1630). Ultimately, our understanding of the universe grew and evolved from Copernicus’ premise to what we have today.

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Coressios, Georgios

Born: ci. 1570

Died: 1659

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Abstract

Amateur naturalist, physician, and theologian of wide education and profound intellectual thought.

Biography

Born in Chios around 1570, Georgios Coressios was strained in his homeland studying near his scholarly uncle, Leonardo, and gaining solid knowledge of classical education, theology, and philosophy. Upon completing his basic studies, he followed the tradition of his time and travelled at the University of Padua for higher studies in medicine and philosophy (Sathas 1868; Legrand 1896). At the same time, he attended similar courses at the University of Pisa. It is in Pisa where Coressios carried out his academic career, since he became a professor of Greek studies at the university for the period 1609–1615. During his stay in the city, he is under the protection of the Grand Duke of Tuscany (Florence, Pisa) Cosimo II (1590–1621) de' Medici, but mainly his brother Francesco (1594–1614). As a professor in Pisa, Coressios participated in the discussion about the new ideas of his contemporary mathematician and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564–1642)

contained in the latter's treatise entitled *Discourse on Bodies that Stay Atop Water, or Move in It* (*Discorso alle cose che stanno in su l' acqua, o che in qualle si muovono*) published in 1612. In his response of the same year entitled *Statement of the opinion of Aristotle on the floating bodies against the opposition of Mr. Galileo Galilei* (*Dicharazione dell' opinione d' Aristotile, intorno al galleggiare della figura contro l' opposizione del Sig. Galileo Galilei*), Coressios criticized Galileo's opinions based on his strong faith toward Aristotle and his commentators, along with his personal experience. Nevertheless, Galileo, who also enjoyed the support of Duke Cosimo, finally prevailed. In 1615, Coressios' contract at the university ended without being renewed anymore (Stoupakis 1992).

With the completion of his academic career, the Greek scholar possibly worked as a physician firstly in Pisa and then at Livorno. Definitely, however, he returned to his homeland Chios before 1618, where he continued to practice his medical profession. Having earned the reputation and prestige as a university professor, he developed pedagogical activity as a teacher at the local School of the Orthodox Religious Fraternity of Agioi Anargyroi. There he taught ancient Greek, rhetoric, theology, and philosophy, as well as introductory lessons on medicine and natural philosophy. Furthermore, he proceeded to the composition of medical, philosophical, and theological writings. Being highly appreciated by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Coressios observed closely and intervened on the dogmatic and confessional disputes of his time. Shortly before 1633, he made a brief journey to Constantinople at the invitation of the Patriarchate in order to counteract the active Calvinist theologian and chaplain of the Dutch Embassy Antoine Leger, who uninterruptedly promoted the principles of his confession through his theological treatises and pastoral activity. In the case of Leger as well as in later similar cases, Coressios contributed to the defense of the Greek Orthodox faith by constantly proceeding to the refutation of the arguments raised by the Protestants and the Jesuit missionaries in Constantinople. Coressios' firm attachment to Orthodoxy offered him the recognition by his contemporaries (Gabriel Seviros,

Theophilos Corydaleus, Paisios Ligarides, Patriarchs Nektarios and Dositheos of Jerusalem, Gerasimos Vlachos) as the main representative at his time of the Greek Orthodox theological theses. At the same time, however, he drew intense dissatisfaction and became the target of numerous criticisms by representatives of opposite ideologies (Cyril Lucaris, Leone Allacci, Ioannes Matthaios Karyofyllos, Nikolaos Komnenos Papadopoulos). Coressios died in his homeland in 1659 (Stoupakis 1992).

Impact and Legacy

Georgios Coressios' writing production consists of textbooks, treatises, and commentaries focusing on the interpretation of the Aristotelian corpus. A prolific writer, the scholar from Chios dealt in his works with topics of rhetoric (classical and ecclesiastic), grammar and epistolography, theology (exegetical, doctrinal, polemical), and poetry. His philosophical writings served educational purposes and belonged to the tradition of the early modern Greek commentaries on the Aristotelian Logic, Physics, and Metaphysics. Apart from the particular subject of each treatise, Coressios proceeded to the quotation of a number of other scientific fields: mathematics, medicine, astronomy, chemistry, and mineralogy. He mainly referred to Aristotle as the undisputed authority in all fields of knowledge and his ancient commentators (Ammonius, Simplicius, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, John Philoponus). However, he did not hesitate to rely on works from the patristic, early Christian, and medieval – scholastic and early modern theological literature. Although he seems to deal with both traditions (classical and ecclesiastical) in his interpretation of Aristotelian thought, Coressios adopted in a more modest extent the tendency by Theophilos Corydaleus to the distinction in his word of the theological thought from the purely philosophical reason. Methodologically, Coressios engaged a parallel activity: firstly, his interpretation of the philosophical terms and topics of the Aristotelian texts and, secondly, his own original argumentation on various philosophical questions. He

critically presented the opinions of Aristotle and the other philosophers, while he did not hesitate to argue and reject those theses which opposed to his philosophical and religious beliefs. Often he proceeded to the development of his own analysis and conclusions, presenting his personal view on the various philosophical matters he studied.

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Corsairs

- [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)

Corvinus, Laurentius

Born: c. 1465, c. 1465, Neumarkt, Silesia (Środa Śląska)

Died: 1527, Breslau (Wrocław)

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Abstract

Laurentius Corvinus was one of the foremost humanists in early sixteenth-century Silesia. His writings introduced three important

intellectual currents into the civic humanism of Breslau (Wrocław): first, the literary humanism of Conrad Celtis; second, a combination of the Franciscan spirituality of Bonaventure and the Renaissance Neoplatonism of Marsilio Ficino; and third, Lutheranism.

Biography

Corvinus enrolled at the University of Kraków in 1484 (see Bauch 1883 and McDonald 2007 for the outlines of Corvinus' biography). After gaining his BA and MA, he lectured there on Aristotle's *On the soul* and *Posterior Analytics*, Boethius' *Consolation*, and Vergil's *Georgics*. He attended Conrad Celtis' classes at Kraków in 1489–1491 and later corresponded with him. His students there included Heinrich Bebel, and perhaps Nicolaus Copernicus. Bebel later arranged for the publication of Corvinus' first book, *Cosmography* (Basel, 1496), in which he expanded the geographical picture derived from his classical sources with poems describing Poland and Silesia. Several Latin poems by Corvinus from his time at Kraków have survived, primarily in manuscript, including mythological poems and pieces addressed to members of the Polish royal family (Krókowski 1962).

In 1494, Corvinus was appointed as schoolmaster at Schweidnitz (Świdnica), where he wrote the first of three successful Latin textbooks, *The structure of poetry* (1496), in which he shows an incipient interest in Plato's theory of poetic inspiration (Glomski 1999). In 1496 or 1497, Corvinus was appointed as rector of St Elisabeth's school in Breslau, where he wrote and published two further textbooks, *Idiomatic Latin* (c. 1498) and *Garden of elegant usage* (1502). His extensive mythological poem *Apollo and the Nine Muses* (1503) is accompanied by an encyclopedic commentary that attests to Corvinus' broad erudition. In 1500 and 1502, Corvinus and his students staged the first known productions of Roman comedy north of the Alps since antiquity. In late 1502 or 1503, Corvinus married and found a new position as city secretary (*Stadtschreiber*) at Breslau. In 1506, he was appointed as city

secretary at Thorn (Toruń), where he associated with Nicolaus Copernicus. Corvinus contributed a poem to Copernicus' translation of the letters of Simocatta (1509), which describes his permanent return to Breslau in mid-1508.

In 1516, Corvinus published his major work, *A Dialogue with the Divine Mind*, a fictional conversation between himself and Mens, a personification of the second ontological principle in Neoplatonic metaphysics. The work is a prosimetrum, like its formal model, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. Here Corvinus expounds Ficino's anthropology, based on the conflicting carnal and spiritual elements within the human person. Mens proposes an educational curriculum based on Plato, whose philosophy she praises as compatible with Christianity. Mens also recommends that believers should meditate on the passion of Christ and model their lives after that of the suffering Savior. To assist such contemplation, Corvinus edited Bonaventure's *Hours of the Passion*, augmenting the liturgy with invitatories and office hymns, which he set to music. Corvinus established a chantry at St Elisabeth's church in 1516 to perform these offices, which were sung even after the parish converted to Lutheranism. Ambrosius Moibanus, the first Lutheran pastor of the parish, included Corvinus' office hymns and a poem from the *Dialogue* in his *Catechism* (1548).

While working as city secretary, Corvinus continued to teach privately and to publish poetry. The city council exploited his poetry as a political tool, as when he represented Breslau at the wedding of Sigismund I and Bona Sforza at Kraków in 1518, declaiming two poems in praise of the bridal couple.

Corvinus converted to Lutheranism in about 1522, and he assisted the preachers Johann Heß and Ambrosius Moibanus in introducing Lutheranism to Breslau. He defended Luther's theology at Heß's public disputation with the Dominicans in 1524 (McDonald 2008), and in an extended correspondence with the Catholic theologian Stanisław Byliński (published posthumously in 1531). Corvinus defended education against radical Reformers, and he helped to transfer the provision of welfare from ecclesiastical to municipal control.

Corvinus expressed a Christian humanism that united several different intellectual strands: civic

humanism; a conviction that correct and persuasive Latin style could bring about ethical improvement in the individual and society; a fusion of Franciscan spirituality with Renaissance Neoplatonism; and finally a new kind of piety that resonated deeply with the religious impulses of the educated bourgeoisie.

Cross-References

► [Copernicanism](#)

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Corydalleus, Theophilus

► [Korydalleus, Theophilus](#)

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Cosmography in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Literally a description of heaven and earth, Renaissance cosmography was primarily confined to the terrestrial realm. In addition to verbal descriptions, cosmography found embodiments in graphic representations, known as *imago mundi* or *mappaemundi* and regional maps. Cosmography was connected with various branches of natural philosophy, including astronomy, cosmology, and geography. Though rooted in the medieval examples and textual traditions, during the Renaissance cosmography was transformed through the input of various cultural forces, ranging from the rediscovery of ancient texts offering descriptions of the world to the discovery of the new lands. In addition to flourishing through the continuity in some textual and graphic renditions, Renaissance cosmography and its maps aptly epitomize the achievements and innovations brought about in the early stages of the Scientific Revolution. These can be readily appreciated by comparing medieval *mappaemundi*, allegorical and nonmetrical in essence, with sixteenth-century Ptolemaic maps, which were measured, scaled, and based on mathematical projections.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the medieval period, texts such as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* and *De responsione mundi et astrorum ordinatione* (both first printed in 1472

by Gunther Zainer at Augsburg, both with woodcuts including a T-O map in the first and an elemental map and a climate-in-circles map in the second) proposed descriptions of the cosmos and invited creations of world maps. Of these, the most famous ones are the T-O maps, or schematic representations of the inhabited known world (Europe, Africa, and Asia), and zone maps devised according to the five *climata*. The fourteenth century saw the rise of “transitional maps” or world maps that combined these maps with information from portolans. These latter ones are nautical maps of the coastlines of the Mediterranean and Black Seas and European Atlantic side; taking as reference the magnetic North Pole, these maps functional for navigation were drawn since the 1200s and continued to be created in the Renaissance, thus exemplifying the continuity of mapmaking and map conception with the medieval period. Renaissance portolans were produced side by side with Ptolemaic maps, which are non-local, but of little use for navigation, and maintained a different audiences: Ptolemy’s maps interested a public of scholars and intellectuals.

In the Renaissance, the interest in cosmography is first signaled by Petrarch’s searches for manuscripts of lost classical texts on the subject. He recovered Pomponius Mela’s *Chorographia* or, as it will become known, *Cosmographia sive De situ orbis*. This first-century author, who had been praised highly in Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia*, married geographical and ethnographical information and had no mathematical component. In the fifteenth century, Mela’s *De situ orbis* remained popular and was printed before, in 1471, and reprinted more times than Ptolemy’s text.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Ptolemy’s text was rediscovered thanks to the manuscript brought to Florence by Manuel Chrysoloras in 1397, who held the chair of Greek. The interest generated by this text is captured by the opening scene in Poggio Bracciolini’s *De infelicitate principum* (1440) which presents

Cosimo de’ Medici, Carlo Marsuppini, and Niccolò Niccoli studying together a manuscript of Ptolemy’s work. Though humanists were primarily interested in the text rather than its graphic dimension, humanism and the *Cosmographia* maintained a close connection throughout the fifteenth century. Its reverberation in the larger cultural landscape is attested by the artist Lorenzo Ghiberti who, in his *Commentarii*, noted that in the Siena palace Ambrogio Lorenzetti painted an imperfect “Cosmography or all the inhabitable world [because] then they did not know about Ptolemy’s *Cosmographia*.”

Ptolemy’s *Cosmographia*, which in Greek carried the title of *Geographia* (or more precisely Γεωγραφικὴ σφηγγισ, or Guide to Geography), set the requirements for maps that they be the products of vertical perspective based on a uniform scale, with boundaries and important locations/points being the products of coordinates calculated through astronomical and geometric means. An important distinction set by Ptolemy is between geography and chorography: the first is quantitative and mathematical, and the second is qualitative and figurative. In addition to a new expectation for accuracy in maps, Ptolemy’s prescription for mapmaking supported a conception of space based on coordinates, longitude and latitude. The older historiography linked this “grid mentality” to the development of linear perspective, one of the pivots of the Renaissance paradigm. However, there is no actual proof for the connection between linear perspective and Ptolemaic projection methods.

Chrysoloras’s codex together with a separate map, a “cosmografia,” became properties of Palla Strozzi who treasured them highly as demonstrated by his will. Yet, it was not the Greek manuscripts and their copies that supported the cultural impact of this text. In Florence, Chrysoloras began composing a Latin version at the request of Coluccio Salutati who, like Petrarch and Boccaccio, had a special interest in toponymy; the Byzantine scholar died in 1406, and his translation was completed by his student, Jacopo Angeli – though also Leonardo Bruni volunteered to complete it. In addition to not including translations of the maps and the names on them,

Angeli's work proved wanting, and corrections were offered in Italy and beyond, including by Pierre d'Ailly in his *Compendium cosmographie* (composed around 1415 and printed with the *Imago mundi et tractatus alii* in 1480–1482 at Louvain). The Byzantine examples were also copied as independent maps, produced in Florence by Nicolaus Germanus and Piero del Massaio in the 1460s–1470s, and Enrico Martello (active 1480–1496), who were more than illuminators and also created new maps. A different but equally noteworthy innovation from this period is represented by the Harley Codex 3686 in the British Library: its unknown author married the coastline information of nautical maps with the Ptolemaic coordinates for the locales in the interior.

Strabo's *Geographia* was introduced in 1439 and offered a mine of textual information about the different regions of the works and their inhabitants; maps or graphic representations were not part of it. Recalling the humanists' interest in text, it is not surprising that Strabo was printed before Ptolemy and Mela: the editio princeps of his *Geographia* was published in 1469 by Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz in Rome (their second edition in 1473) and in 1472 by Vindelinius de Spira in Venice, possibly the two most successful publishing houses in Italy at the time. The first edition of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* appeared only in 1475 (Vicenza: Hermannus Liechtenstein), listing the coordinates of places but no maps, even though it includes four woodcut diagrams. Though the printing of Ptolemy's maps had to wait until 1477, it was a milestone in this history of the printed book. Appearing months apart, the second edition (Bologna: Dominicus de Lapis, 1477) and the third edition (Rome: Arnoldus Buckinck, 1478) offered, respectively, 26 and 27 folio-size maps. In both editions the maps are engravings; in the Bolognese edition, each map is one plate, while in the Roman edition, each map is the product of prints from two plates; these are the first large engravings to be integral to a printed book. Interestingly, these three editions of Ptolemy were in the works at the same time together with two more: a translation into Italian by Francesco

Berlinghieri that will be issued in Florence in 1482 and a revised Latin one with new maps and many corrections was at the top of the list of works to be published by Johannes Regiomontanus – his death cut short the enterprise of which left only a manuscript in Nuremberg library, but his effort will be recovered by Willibald Pirckheimer's 1525 edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, which also includes prints by Albrecht Dürer.

Impact and Legacy

Thanks to these and subsequent publications, Ptolemy's text gained currency in the culture and was also studied by Christopher Columbus (in the 1490 edition issued at Rome by Petrus de Turre). The Ptolemaic principles that had remained ideals, without finding rigorous application in practice in the drawing of maps throughout the fifteenth century, were progressively implemented in the sixteenth century, which also saw the first complete representation of the earth in a cartographic grid in Cosimo Rosselli's engraving of 1508. Martin Waldseemüller's *Cosmographiae introductio* issued in 1507 not only included information about America, but it also compiled a basic reference for the technical matters of geographic description. Important innovation for the accuracy of the locations of locales was the new methods of triangulation published by Peter Apian in his *Cosmographia* of 1513 and its later editions revised by Gemma Frisius, the two dominant authors in cosmographic matters for the sixteenth century. Later in the century, the most distinguished geographer and cosmographer was Egnazio Danti (1536–1586); he worked first for Cosimo II and later for Pope Gregory XIII. The privileged status obtained by cosmographic knowledge in the High Renaissance culture is perhaps epitomized best by the globes appearing in Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* (1533, National Gallery of Art, London) and the appearance of Ptolemy in Raphael's *Stanza della Segnatura*.

Cross-References

- [Bracciolini, Poggio](#)
- [Chrysoloras, Manuel](#)
- [D'Ailly, Pierre](#)
- [Perspective](#)
- [Petrarch](#)
- [Printing Technique, Renaissance](#)
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Cosmology in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The Renaissance views of the cosmos largely followed the medieval pattern. Only by the sixteenth century, some important innovations were proposed. These resulted from the increased application of mathematical methods. Whereas earlier ideas on the universe depended on metaphysical and religious

insights; astronomers increasingly discussed the constitution of the universe referring to empirical facts. Especially the work of Copernicus (1543) set the agenda for the early modern debates on the constitution of the universe. It is only in the course of these debates that a field of study arose that can be identified to modern cosmology.

Introduction

In their considerations on the universe, most people in the sixteenth century agreed on at least one thing: very soon, it would come to an end. The world, as people knew it, would be utterly destroyed and would have to make place for a new heaven and a new earth. And in a sense, they were right. The world as people had known it for centuries was quickly coming to an end, be it not factually but conceptually. New discoveries and new questions forced people to reconsider their ideas on the universe and in the end led to a completely new view of the world – arguably one of the most important conceptual shifts in human history.

The new cosmical views went beyond introducing new theories on the heavens or the stars but pertained to the field of “cosmology” as such. Strictly speaking, in the Middle Ages there was no such thing as cosmology. Of course, people contemplated the universe and at the universities, philosophers disputed certain questions that we can regard as cosmological. But the study of the cosmos could not be isolated from other topics. The structure of the universe was considered interesting because it told about creation, about the end of the world, and about the generation and corruption of things on earth. Much that was written on the cosmos actually pertained to man, the “little world” (microcosmos). The “harmony of the spheres” concerned both the cosmos and the musical theory. And many statements on the cosmos first of all expressed religious truths. It is questionable whether we could interpret them as mere sayings about the structure, order, or other properties of the *physical* universe.

The great innovation of the Renaissance in the study of the cosmos is not just the application of new tools and methods but also the way the field was detached from its philosophical meaning. However, this was a slow process. Only by the end of the Renaissance, the contours of modern cosmological thinking and an identifiable field of “cosmology” became dimly visible. A viable alternative for the traditional view of nature and the world emerged only around the middle of the seventeenth century. Speaking of the “cosmology” of the Renaissance, we should realize that it was something in full flux, and not a well-defined field. Rather, it was a chaotic debate in which many different positions were held on a variety of issues.

Heritage

During the Middle Ages, people were interested in the universe, but their main interest concerned theological and metaphysical aspects rather than physical properties. Actually, the various aspects were not kept distinct. Physical aspects were discussed because they were supposed to express some higher truth. Cosmological information was found as much in philosophical works, like Aristotle’s *De caelo*, pseudo-Aristotle’s *De mundo*, or Plato’s *Timaeus*, as in theological works like pseudo-Dionysius’ *On the celestial hierarchy* and, last but not least, the creation account in Genesis.

So, the “chain of being,” the hierarchical ordering of beings, was a philosophical principle which was supposed to be physically present in the creation. Also, several medieval philosophers (starting with Robert Grosseteste) wrote elaborate explanations on light, wherein light was taken both in a physical and a biblical sense. Light was a symbol of the divine essence as it unfolded itself in the creation, but as such, it also was a physical entity, fundamental for the way God governed the world. (And then, it also was the means by which humans could attain higher knowledge). Even purely physical discussions on the universe, as in commentaries on the works of Aristotle, concerned questions that were relevant foremost

from a theological point of view: the existence of a world soul, the cause of the motion of the celestial spheres, the finity/infinity of the world, etc.

Still, there was a basic agreement upon the physical outlook of the universe. Although there were many debates on points of detail, most scholars would agree on the following points. (1) The world was finite. (2) There was a fundamental distinction between the celestial and terrestrial regions, the celestial world (from the moon upward) being perfect and immutable, the terrestrial world (under the moon) imperfect and changing. (3) The celestial world consisted of crystalline spheres that carried the celestial bodies. Above this region was the place of God and the Elect. (4) The earth, on the contrary, was at rest in the center of the universe. Hell was often thought of as being at the center of the earth. (5) By its motion and light, and perhaps by more occult influences as well, the celestial world caused the various changes in the terrestrial world, such as meteors and the generation and passing away of animals, plants, minerals, etc.

It is important to realize that this was not a doctrine systematically explained. Information on the universe can be found, often piecemeal, in a variety of writings on spherics, natural philosophy, and theology. Some topics were the subject of elaborate speculations, others were largely disregarded. For instance, hardly any medieval scholar bothered to discuss the substance of the celestial spheres. Other relevant topics were discussed in a non-cosmological context. So, because Aristotle regarded the Milky Way as a sublunar phenomenon, medieval authors used to discuss this phenomenon in commentaries on Aristotle's *Meteorology*. Even though most of them would agree that the Milky Way actually had its place among the fixed stars, this insight simply did not make it into works on the heavens or on astronomy.

Innovation and Continuity in the Renaissance

The cosmology of the Renaissance for the most part continues the ideas and theories of the

preceding period. It is true that in the sixteenth century, several important new ideas were proposed and discoveries made. Still, they fully bore fruit only in the following period, when natural philosophy underwent a complete overhaul, and cosmology was set on a new footing by thinkers like Descartes and Newton. However, the contribution of Renaissance thinkers went further than just proposing new individual theories and facts. The new philosophy and the new cosmology of the seventeenth century did not just concern technical details but implied a new way of contemplating the heavens and the universe. The new views could become the focus of intellectual developments because the study of the cosmos had already become a main field of research.

Increasingly during the Renaissance, the cosmos, instead of being understood and studied mainly in symbolic and metaphysical terms, was looked upon as some other foreign continent that could be mapped and investigated by purely natural means. The various disparate questions were brought together and included into a more or less coherent area of physical study, from which other traditional questions, notably the theological elements that hitherto had dominated, came to be excluded. One can say that in this period the field of cosmology really came into being.

Obviously, the emergence of the study of the cosmos in physical terms was a slow and far from straightforward process. Ideas on the universe, like on other subjects, underwent the impact of the great intellectual shifts of the period. Three factors should be mentioned here. The first factor is the rise of humanist scholarship and the renewed study of classical texts. Philosophies like (neo-)Platonism, Pythagoreanism, and Stoicism became more widely known, gained new credibility, and thereby became serious competitors to the Aristotelian ideas (including ideas on the universe) still dominant at the universities.

The second factor is the renewed study of the Bible and the emphasis on a literal interpretation. The increased religious sensibility often disqualified Aristotelianism as pagan and opened the doors to other forms of philosophy that were regarded as more in line with Christianity. Indeed,

the various factors did not work in isolation but often influenced each other in complicated ways. On the other hand, biblical literalism was sometimes used to oppose new ideas, such as the motion of the earth. It could be a source of inspiration, but also a constraint.

A third factor is the growing prominence of mathematical methods in studying the world. This is directly relevant for our purpose, because astronomy was regarded as a field of mathematics. Astronomy, in particular spherics, had always been a source of elementary information on the physical outlook of the universe. But the contemplation of the universe was foremost a philosophical or theological affair. Astronomical theories served mainly practical purposes (the casting of horoscopes, the calculation of calendars, etc.) and were not really taken into account for philosophical questions. However, in the era of the Renaissance, mathematicians imposed themselves in an increasing number of fields and tried to put their discipline on a higher footing. In particular, astronomers claimed that their theories and observations were relevant for the understanding of the cosmos.

One should not exaggerate the innovativeness of these trends. Neither humanist scholars, nor theologians, nor mathematicians, were primarily concerned with cosmology in our sense. If they were interested in the cosmos, then it is because they still regarded the visible world as an expression of higher, metaphysical, or biblical truths. They might advance original ideas in metaphysics or theology but only rarely they contested the basic ideas on the physical constitution of the universe (Copernicus being the obvious exception). If in course of time their activities came to constitute a new approach to the cosmos and thereby a new field of cosmology, then that was without their intent, or even without their being aware of it.

Some examples of the three trends indicated above are given below. As to the rise of classical studies, in their ideas on the cosmos humanist scholars generally followed the medieval examples. In contemplating the universe, they were first of all interested in the religious and metaphysical dimensions. Physical positions were normally

inspired by these larger issues. If their descriptions of the cosmos entailed new elements, then it is only on points of detail.

The preponderance of a metaphysical outlook can well be seen in the neo-Platonism of Marsilio Ficino, one of the most important philosophers of the fifteenth century. Ficino regarded the cosmos as the unfolding of God's order. In his work *De sole* [On the sun], he gave a detailed description of the sun and its activity, but in a purely symbolical sense. He described the physical light of the sun, which at the same time was seen as an image of the Good, the Trinity, and the choirs of angels. Since the sun and the heavens were the image of God, they were a life-giving force. Ficino maintained the spiritual influence of the heavens in the terrestrial world.

In his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, Ficino discussed the harmonic order according to which God had created the world. This "harmony of the spheres" again was thought of as being present in the world in a very physical way. It was not just identified with the angelic choirs but with the speed and distances of the planets. Ficino even discussed the exact order of the planets, preferring Plato's order above Ptolemy's. He also discussed the exact tonal scale to which the celestial harmony answered. However, here too his description of the world serves a spiritual aim and is exclusively informed by a symbolic way of thinking. Although he regarded the order of the world in mathematical terms, Ficino did not try to describe the world in a quantitative-mathematical way.

Ficino and other neo-Platonist philosophers felt that their philosophies were better in line with the Biblical message than the dominant Aristotelianism. In this sense, they also represent the second tendency, the return to the sources of the Christian tradition and, in particular, the text of the Bible. This tendency most clearly manifests itself in the protestant Reformation. The Protestants, of course, were first of all moved by religious and theological considerations, but the principal place they gave to theology had its impact on their view of the universe as well. They felt that Aristotle's philosophy was too pagan in character and that a description and explanation of the universe should

be based on the Bible, in particular Genesis. In practice, however, they most often took their theories from some other philosophy. The direct application of Genesis to the explanation of the cosmos remained limited, but it did occur. Biblical texts that touched upon cosmological issues were for instance Genesis 1: 6–7, on the waters above the firmament, and 2 Corinthians 12: 2, wherein Paul speaks of being elevated to the “third heaven.” Increasingly, such texts were not just discussed in exegetical works but also in philosophical and astronomical treatises. The division of the heavens into three parts became quite common, both in academic and nonacademic texts.

A thorough overhaul of traditional cosmology in the name of Christianity can be found in the works of the sixteenth-century physician Paracelsus. Again, Paracelsus was not primarily interested in the world as such. To him, the world only made sense in the terms of Christian salvation. Rather than a division of the universe in a terrestrial and a celestial region in traditional terms, he saw the world as divided between a visible, material realm and a spiritual, invisible. This held true for both man and the universe. For a true understanding of the cosmos, knowledge of the invisible world is more important than of the visible world, as the visible world in the end obtains its true nature from the invisible. Paracelsus’ influence was considerable. For instance, Francis Bacon’s cosmological ideas clearly bear his impact.

By far, the most important trend is the third one, the growing influence of mathematics. Initially, the impact of mathematics on other fields was limited. However, the rise of mathematical methods did imply that increasing value was attached to factual and quantitative descriptions. This is best seen in the rise of “cosmography.” The *Cosmographia* of Petrus Apianus in particular became an extremely popular work. It combined basic geography and basic spherical astronomy, thus giving a description of both the terrestrial and celestial regions of the universe. From the sixteenth century onward, mathematicians increasingly came to challenge the arguments and the conclusions of traditional philosophers. This eventually would result in a

complete overturn of people’s views on the universe.

An early example of a mathematical description of the universe is the *Theoricae novae planetarum* by Georg Peurbach, first printed in 1472. Whereas earlier astronomical descriptions had a purely practical purpose, Peurbach’s work has an important theoretical component. In the line of Ptolemy’s *Planetary Hypotheses*, he described the universe as a whole of nested orbs. So, he regarded the spheres and epicycles that astronomers used to describe the motion of the planets as real entities, and he calculated their dimensions based on the assumption that there was no space left between them.

In 1543, Nicolaus Copernicus published his book *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* [On the revolutions of the celestial orbs], wherein he proposed the revolutionary idea that not the heavens are turning around the earth, but that the heavens are standing still and the earth is turning on its axis; moreover, that the earth is not the center of the universe but has an annual motion in an orbit around the sun. His theory presented a decisive turning point in the history of cosmology, not because it was perfect or was immediately accepted (it was not) but because it started a general debate on the constitution of the universe that would go on for decades, if not centuries, and would lead to a general overhaul of natural philosophy.

Little is known about Copernicus’ motives to propose this momentous new idea, but from what he writes it is evident that he was partly motivated by a strong a priori conviction about the harmonious and divine character of the universe. He defended the axiom that all celestial motions were either regular circular motions or composed of such motions. Regular circular motions were regarded as an expression of divine perfection. Both Aristotle and Plato had therefore postulated that in the heavens, only regular circular motions could exist. This was a generally accepted idea, but it was violated in the astronomical hypotheses of Ptolemy. One of Copernicus’ main aims therefore was the construction of astronomical theories that were in line with cosmological demands. This ideal was more widely shared at the time and this

aspect of Copernicus' theories was quickly accepted by other scholars. (Some other astronomers, by the way, tried to obtain the same aim in another way, by reintroducing the homocentric spheres of Eudoxus.)

As to Copernicus' more fundamental, and also more controversial, claim that the earth is moving in an orbit around the sun, his main argument seems to be that in this way the harmonious proportions of the solar system and its various motions are best preserved. In Copernicus' heliocentric system, the period of the planets increases regularly with their distance from the center, whereas in the system of Ptolemy, Venus and Mercury present an anomaly. So, as in the work of other Renaissance authors on the universe, metaphysical considerations appear very much at the core of Copernicus' work. But these demands were not answered by symbolical or religious interpretations but by an exact mathematical description of the real world. In this way, Copernicus' work proved a true game-changer.

Other mathematicians too did not immediately abandon the quest for a divine or harmonious order in the world, but they increasingly demanded exact astronomical calculations. Johannes Kepler, arguable the most important early follower of Copernicus' theories, presents us with a similar approach of a metaphysical or even religious point of depart that should be answered by exact mathematical models. Kepler left no doubt about his true motivation in describing the universe. He saw the universe as an expression of the divine Mind. The divers parts of the universe were an image of the Trinity. By mathematics, he hoped to reveal the proportions according to which God had created the world. The key to the divine blueprint were the five Platonic solids. Kepler felt that the relative distances between the planetary spheres as well as the musical intervals could be derived from the proportions implied in the five Platonic solids. The divine harmony of the world, in which Kepler firmly believed, could be discovered by studying the empirical data.

So, the mathematical approach initially was not intended to replace the more metaphysical considerations. On the contrary, in so far

mathematics was used, it was in the service of establishing the harmonious relations that were required by a view of the universe as God's creation. The difference between the views of Paracelsus, on the one hand, and those of Copernicus and Kepler, on the other, is not that the latter were not interested in describing the universe in Biblical and religious terms, for they definitely were. It is rather that Paracelsus tried to achieve this aim without referring to mathematics, whereas to Copernicus and Kepler this was a main instrument. Both Copernicus and Kepler created a vision of the world determined by a mathematical order. What ultimately inspired them were metaphysical considerations, but their vision had to be in agreement with the empirical facts.

Developments After Copernicus

Copernicus' work had far reaching consequences. The geocentric cosmos was no longer self-evident. Astronomers had to make a choice between two very dissimilar alternatives. This gave the study of the cosmos a new urgency. Whereas up to that time, astronomers had largely relied on the work of classical authors, by now they felt the need to start from fresh observations. Mathematicians and astronomers increasingly set the debate on the universe on a new footing, not by speculations on the harmony of the spheres or the divine order (although, as stated, this element remained important) but, on the one hand, by demanding that all models of the universe should answer to the empirical data and, on the other, by collecting ever more, and more accurate, of such data. The interpretation of the universe in symbolic terms was not abandoned, but faded into the background.

An idea that was now quickly abandoned was the idea of fire as the upper element in the terrestrial world, forming a sphere of its own. The idea that fire was an element had been disputed earlier by philosophers. But in 1557, the French mathematician Jean Pena refuted the idea of a sphere of fire referring to astronomical observations: a sphere of fire should result in a notable atmospheric refraction. More generally, for studying

the world he defended the use of mathematical over philosophical considerations.

In particular, the Danish nobleman Tycho Brahe started a campaign of systematic astronomical observations, achieving an accuracy that far surpassed that of earlier observers. Especially relevant for the view of the cosmos were his parallax measurements. In 1572, Tycho observed a new star (a nova) that remained visible for several months. In a brilliant campaign, Tycho determined the parallax of this nova and found that it was above the moon, thus in the celestial region. This violated the traditional view that there was no change in the heavens. The technique was repeated, with similar outcome, with comets, first of all the big comet of 1577. Aristotelian philosophers had always maintained that comets were atmospheric phenomena, but astronomers now proved mathematically that they were celestial objects. The nature of comets and new stars (other novae were observed in 1600 and 1604) gave rise to much debate, without for the moment a consensus being reached.

Tycho also propagated a new model of the planetary system. Although very few people could swallow the motion of the Earth, other aspects of Copernicus' innovation were more readily accepted. That Venus and Mercury moved around the sun instead of the Earth, an idea already defended in late antiquity, made very good sense to many scholars. In the wake of Copernicus, astronomers wondered whether the same could hold for other planets as well. Tycho made the radical step of postulating that *all* the planets, except for the moon, moved around the sun. The whole system of sun and planets moved around the earth, which was still at rest in the center of the universe. In order to make his system physically plausible, Tycho had to abandon the solid spheres which carried the planets. In his view, the planets moved freely through space. By and large, the idea of solid planetary spheres would be abandoned by philosophers.

Tycho's system gained many adherents in the course of the following century, although seen from a traditional perspective, it made only limited sense. Tycho strove above all to maintain the

rest of the Earth, which was deemed important for reasons of physics, common sense, and, above all, biblical exegesis. But in order to achieve this goal and still do full justice to the astronomical data, he had to sideline the principle of divine order or harmony.

Most mathematicians were more cautious. Innovations were accepted only piecemeal and hesitantly. Still, the quest for the true constitution of the universe became a core business of astronomy. An interesting case is the cartographer Gerard Mercator, who represents many of the trends described above. Mercator stood in the tradition of writing cosmographies, but instead of writing short overviews, he aimed at a massive, multivolume work, his *Atlas*, describing all the parts of the visible universe. It remained unfinished, but in 1595, the first part was published, a description of the 6 days of creation. As a mathematician, Mercator was critical of philosophy and found fault with both Aristotle and Plato. He claimed that his description was founded on biblical principles, but, in practice, one finds many Stoic elements. He rejected heliocentrism, but he accepted the heliocentric orbits of Venus and Mercury. Referring to Genesis 1: 6–7, he felt that the planets are moving in some kind of water. He also felt that from this water, God had created the angels and the human souls.

Astronomy and mathematics were thus creating a new idea of the universe. The impact was felt in the field of philosophy as well. Philosophers increasingly felt the need to incorporate the new discoveries into their philosophical systems. Although they normally started from metaphysical principles, they had to take the empirical facts much more seriously than before. The physical constitution of the universe became an object of philosophical study in its own right.

A heroic attempt to bring the philosophical ideas on the universe in line with the new scientific discoveries was undertaken by the Italian philosopher Francesco Patrizi in his *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591). He remained a geocentrist, but he rejected the existence of solid planetary spheres and did not believe in a qualitative difference between the celestial and the terrestrial realm. Also, he believed that space is

infinite: the visible universe is at the center of an infinite space. Patrizi's case is interesting, because it demonstrates that it became increasingly difficult to accommodate the ancient symbolic interpretation of the world with the new mathematical demands. Patrizi was a neo-Platonist, very much influenced by Ficino, and like his predecessor, his aim was to describe the world in terms of cosmic harmony. However, he was much more interested in natural science than Ficino and tried to found his ideas on "divine prophecies, geometrical necessities, philosophical reason, and conclusive experiments." So, although convinced of the harmonious order of the world, he had trouble applying the concept of the harmony of the spheres, because he regarded music not in terms of abstract proportions but as a manifestation of physical sound. In the end his work proved a dead alley, mainly because he distrusted astronomical calculations and insisted on philosophical principles.

A philosopher whose ideas did have a certain impact was Giordano Bruno. His main contribution to the cosmological debate was his defense of the infinity of the universe. The idea was not completely new. Already in the fifteenth century, cardinal Nicholas of Kues (Cusanus) defended the view that the universe should be infinite, as it had been created by an infinite God. For the time being, he got few followers. Since the universe was believed to turn on its axis, Aristotle's argument that in an infinite universe the outer parts would have to move with infinite speed seemed invincible. However, in Copernicus' system, the heavens were at rest, so this argument no longer held water. The English mathematician Thomas Digges was the first to propose a sun-centered universe wherein the sphere of the fixed stars (which he identified as the heaven of the elect) extended itself infinitely upward.

Bruno however, in his dialogue *De l'infinito, universo e mondi*, went considerably further by maintaining that there is neither center nor boundaries in the universe. Space extends indefinitely into all directions. The universe is one, but it is full of an infinite number of stars. Each star is a sun like our own, each with its own planets similar to our Earth. Those planets are inhabited by rational

beings like us. Bruno was a philosopher, not an astronomer, and his arguments were metaphysical, not mathematical. Like Cusanus before him, he referred to God's infinite power. Still, he also referred to Copernicus' ideas. In a sense, he carried the new approach to its logical conclusion. His ideas would have considerable influence on the cosmological thinking of the seventeenth century.

Legacy

A decisive blow to the old world system came with the introduction of the telescope in 1608 and the subsequent discoveries by Galileo and others. The mountains and valleys discovered on the moon demonstrated that the moon was more of an earth-like body than conceived in traditional philosophy. This had been argued earlier on theoretical grounds, but the testimony of the telescope was harder to dismiss. Likewise, the discovery of sunspots gave fresh arguments to those who claimed that the heavens are not perfect, as even the seemingly perfect body of the sun showed spots. These discoveries made the division of the universe in a celestial and a terrestrial world pretty much untenable. The possibility that the celestial bodies were inhabited like the earth no longer seemed really far-fetched. In the following years, Copernicus' heliocentric ideas would slowly gain more adherents.

For a long time, there was no consensus on basic questions regarding the constitution of the universe, although some general trends can be discerned. As the counterreformation gained pace, religious authors generally felt the need to keep as much of traditional learning intact as they possibly could. Authors outside the universities felt lesser constraints and ventured many speculations about the constitution of the universe. Many came up with explanations drawn from analogies with existing terrestrial physics. Comets and new stars were no longer regarded as the results of terrestrial exhalations, as Aristotle had taught, but as the result of exhalations from the planets or the fixed stars. Many authors referred to the ideas of William Gilbert (1600), who had argued that the earth was a big magnet and that all the

other celestial bodies were likewise magnets. The magnetic force was a life-giving soul. For Copernicans, who could not refer to the motion of the heavens as the ultimate cause of change, this offered a new source of life and motion in the world. However, very few people doubted the crucial role of celestial influences (even though they became increasingly critical of astrological predictions).

The new discoveries were still interpreted in a religious framework. Apart from stars and planets, many authors discussed angels, the empyreum, prodigies, and the divine order. Some authors speculated that stars were “clarified” planets and that the earth too would return to a luminous state after the Day of Judgment. Similar ideas were still upheld in the work of Thomas Burnet of 1681–1689. However, these religious elements became less and less important in the cosmological debate. To establish the true constitution of the universe, in principle only mathematical or physical arguments were acceptable, although biblical arguments too for a long time would remain important (and to many even decisive). Mathematics became the foundation of a gradually evolving field, wherein people discussed each other’s results and methods. A body of standard questions was gradually put together, so that around 1600, one can indeed speak of a field of “cosmology.” (Academic teaching, however, was lagging behind. Here, the new questions only became leading in the second half of the seventeenth century.) The metaphysical dimensions that had been crucial in the earlier debates were relegated to the sidelines and became the domain of purely personal speculation. The results of Copernicus or Kepler could be used by people who had no patience with their metaphysical inspiration.

However, metaphysics and religion were still what mattered most to most people in their understanding of the world. A new standard view of the universe therefore could not arise until some form of consensus had been reached on these very issues. It is only with Descartes and Newton that the mathematical view of the world obtained a solid religious and metaphysical underpinning and thereby could become the core of an integrated view of the cosmos.

Cross-References

- [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Astronomy](#)
- [Comets in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Copernicanism](#)
- [Copernicus, Nicolaus](#)
- [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- [Peurbach, Georg of](#)

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Council of Ferrara, Florence, and Basel

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Abstract

Convened by Pope Martin V, the council opened on 23 July 1431 in Basel, where the first 25 sessions took place until 7 May

1437. Fearful of the conciliarist turn that was emerging, the new Pope Eugene IV decided to move it to a nearer and more controllable area. On 18 September 1437, the new phase of the council thus opened in Ferrara, while the conciliarists who remained in Basel declared Eugene IV decayed and elected in his place, as anti-pope, the Duke of Savoy Amadeus VIII under the name of Felix V (who would spontaneously put down the tiara only in 1449). The council remained in Ferrara until 1 January 1438. From there – partly because of an epidemic that struck Ferrara – it was transferred to Florence on 16 January 1439. The last phase of the council was held in Rome from 25 April 1442. The first goal of the Council consisted of the unification between the Latin and Orthodox Churches. The results of the council were not ratified: pressures from the Byzantine communities and a general hostility from the anti-Latin front led many of the countersigners of the unionist pact to retract. The emperor did not ratify the agreement, and only his successor, Constantine XI, promulgated it in 1452. A few months later, Constantinople fell into the hands of the Ottomans. In 1472, a synod held in Constantinople rejected the union of Churches.

History and Original Aspects

Convened by Pope Martin V, the council opened on 23 July 1431 in Basel, where the first 25 sessions took place until 7 May 1437. Fearful of the conciliarist turn that was emerging, the new Pope Eugene IV decided to move it to a nearer and more controllable area. On 18 September 1437, the new phase of the council thus opened in Ferrara, while the conciliarists who remained in Basel declared Eugene IV decayed and elected in his place, as anti-pope, the Duke of Savoy Amadeus VIII under the name of Felix V (who would spontaneously put down the tiara only in 1449). The council remained in Ferrara until 1 January 1438. From there – partly because of an epidemic that struck Ferrara – it was transferred

to Florence on 16 January 1439. The last phase of the council was held in Rome from 25 April 1442.

Although the issues addressed were manifold, the crux consisted of the relations between the Latin and Orthodox Churches. The schism of 1054 had not been repaired, and, at that time, political and strategic needs were pressing. The growing Ottoman pressure on the Byzantine Empire pushed Emperor John VIII Palaeologus to be part of the Byzantine delegation: it was appropriate to reach an agreement also in view of military aid. The difficulty of finding a balance between the parties continued throughout the council, possibly emphasized by the role played within the Latin Church by theologians, especially Dominican. Theological issues were therefore placed in the foreground, at the expense of the episcopal component. Work concerned almost completely doctrinal aspects and thickened around the problems of the *filioque* formulation (the Catholic doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, and not, as did the Greeks, from the Father through the Son), the claimed supremacy of the bishop of Rome, the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, and the existence of purgatory. These were the issues that had led to the schism and that had to be fixed back together, albeit in an environment characterized by cultural differences and a certain mutual distrust, fuelled by two different approaches: the biblical-patristic one of the Greeks and the scholastic-dialectical of the Latin. All further complicated by the need to arrive at a unified formula that would solemnly sanction the union and that would represent therefore a highly sensitive decree of faith.

The most tangible result of the council was the bull *Laetentur Caeli*, issued by Eugene IV on 6 July 1439. It was an arrangement of the main issues already mentioned (the procession of the Spirit, Purgatory and the papal authority, Eucharistic bread): the need to find a unified formulation did not lead to innovations on the theological level, but rather to an overlapping of previous positions. To tell the truth, within a text that sought a narrow dogmatic definition, the question of bread was resolved in pluralistic terms by arguing that each priest could consecrate

the Body of God in one form or another, according to the rule of the Church to which they belonged. However, this was an exception. The question of the *filioque* was resolved by affirming mutual “understanding” of the two Churches and the unified position: there was “one and identical sense of truth, with the same aim and significance”; thus the Latin formula “and the Son” and Greek “through the Son” were declared equivalent. In fact the Holy Spirit “proceeds eternally from both as from one principle and through one blow”: the two different formulas used in the past by the Churches would then agree on this, albeit in different ways, for mere purposes of clarity. Therefore the *filioque* expression was accepted “lawfully and reasonably... to clarify the truth.”

The theme of the limits of papal authority was solved reaffirming the supremacy of the pope “on the whole universe” as an object of faith. In this framework, the hierarchy of the patriarchs was confirmed: immediately after the pope came the Patriarch of Constantinople, then in order those of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Similarly the existence of Purgatory and its characteristics were confirmed.

The results of the council were not ratified: pressures from the Byzantine communities and a general hostility from the anti-Latin front led many of the countersigners of the unionist pact to retract. The emperor did not ratify the agreement, and only his successor, Constantine XI, promulgated it in 1452. A few months later, Constantinople fell into the hands of the Ottomans. In 1472 a synod held in Constantinople rejected the union of Churches.

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Council of Trent

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Abstract

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) was one of the major turning points in the internal reform of the Church of Rome and in the organization of a structured response, in terms of protection and closure, against the reformed movements. The conciliar decrees not only marked the theological, ecclesiological, and institutional structure of the Church for centuries to come, they were also crucial in giving the lives of Catholics a new shape and frame. The Council of Trent represented the defeat of any prospect of reconciliation with the Protestant front and the beginning of a wider program of intervention in the daily life of the faithful. Theologically, the Church of Rome came out of the Council with a strengthened confessional identity. The road to the Counter-Reformation was thus marked.

History and Original Aspects

The Council of Trent was one of the major turning points in the internal reform of the Church of Rome and in the organization of a structured response, in terms of protection and closure, against the reformed movements. The conciliar decrees not only marked the theological, ecclesiological, and institutional structure of the Church for centuries to come, they were also crucial in giving the lives of Catholics a new shape and frame.

The request for the convening of a council was deeply felt within the Church since the closing of the Fifth Lateran Council. Luther himself repeatedly appealed to the convening since as early as 1518. This position gradually gained both a popular consensus and support at the Imperial Diet. Even Charles V saw the Council as a good

opportunity to put an end to the internal strife and to concentrate forces against the Turks.

After several postponements, the Council convened by Pope Paul III opened in Trent in December 1545. The choice of the city – which caused many logistical problems in hospitality, supplies, and availability of adequate libraries for theological discussions – was not neutral: a town at the edge of the Empire, it evoked in the pope fears of a Protestant presence difficult to control. After all proceedings were immediately put at risk by the difficult debate on the bishops' obligation of residence in their diocese, on imperial drive, in fact, it was decided that the dogmatic issues were to be discussed together with the disciplinary ones. In addition to a preaching ban on alms collectors, the sessions thus decided even on hot-button issues such as the original sin and justification, by rejecting Lutheran interpretations and establishing that baptism amended the sin, while a predisposition to sin, called lust, remained in the baptized. Nevertheless, baptism allowed the achievement of a "state of grace" that affected the tendency to commit meritorious deeds. The latter, despite being a consequence of grace, were nonetheless deemed necessary to salvation. The state of grace could be achieved only through absolute trust in God: it was therefore a state that was to be deserved by faith and acts and would lead to earn the infusion of the Holy Spirit, in any case possible only after baptism. The doctrine of predestination was thus completely rejected in favor of an emphasis on the human freedom to decide one's own destiny. Catholic positions were also reiterated in the decision to restate completely the validity *ex opere operato* of the seven sacraments, deemed as instituted directly by Christ, and in the denial of the free examination of the Scriptures (whose canonical form was identified in the Vulgate), the interpretation of which it was a matter for the Church.

The international scene, however, was rather confused: the Schmalkaldic War began in July 1546, and the defeat of the Protestant princes would lead to the proclamation of the Augsburg Interim in 1548. In the meantime, the outbreak of an epidemic in Trent had offered the pope – after eight sessions – the opportunity to move the

council to Bologna where, although crippled of a meaningful portion of representatives, two sessions were held.

With the death of Paul III in November 1549, the first phase of the Council ended. His successor, Julius III, summoned it again in Trent in May 1551. On the basis of decisions already taken in Bologna, it issued a series of decrees related to the Eucharist, Penance, and Extreme Unction. Representatives of the Protestant states had been invited to attend by the Emperor and presented orally their demands, which included the cancellation of all previous decrees. Hopes of reconciliation therefore fell through immediately: the Council was suspended at the end of April 1552 because of the rampaging of the Princes' Revolution led by Maurice of Saxony.

The Council was reopened by Pius IV only in January 1562: pressures to the reconvening came this time from France, where the Reformation was gaining ground. The context had definitely changed, and expectations of reconciliation were now mostly extinguished. The publication of the *Index librorum prohibitorum* in 1559 and a number of moves against the possibility of a dialogue had marked almost symbolically a shift in the Council's agenda: the defense strategy was to be deployed now, without any doctrinal and dogmatic concession. The reality of the sacrifice of the Mass and the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist were reaffirmed, as was the validity of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as established by Christ: at its head were the pope, successor of Peter, and the bishops, successors of the apostles. The doctrine of Purgatory was repeated, as well as the devotional matters: saints, relics, and sacred images could and should be venerated. These decisions were accompanied by a series of decrees that were intended to create a more rigid control grid on the lives of the faithful. It was obviously necessary to pay attention to the formation of the clergy, which should be formed in diocesan seminaries. This was necessary because the clergy became guide, guardian, and companion of the whole life of the Christian, marked by precise rituals. The necessity of baptism was reiterated, and it was prescribed that priests compiled a dedicated register. The same

was to happen for christenings, weddings, and burials. Precisely in the case of marriage, the change of pace became evident: its sacramental nature was reaffirmed and so was its indissolubility: the rules for the cancellation were fixed in canon terms, and, in parallel, to mark even more the two ways of the service of God, the tradition of clerical celibacy was made totally binding. The bishops were supposed to monitor the implementation of the decrees by carrying out an annual pastoral visit to the parishes. The drafting of a new *Index librorum prohibitorum* to be issued in 1564 and the revision of the Catechism and the Missal were delegated to the Pope, who in turn ratified all decrees with the bull *Benedictus Deus* of 30 June 1564.

The Council of Trent represented the defeat of any prospect of reconciliation with the Protestant front and the beginning of a wider program of intervention in the daily life of the faithful. Theologically, the Church of Rome came out of the Council with a strengthened confessional identity. The road to the Counter-Reformation was thus marked.

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Counter-Reformation

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Abstract

The term Counter-Reformation was used for the first time at the end of the eighteenth century to indicate the process of

re-catholicizing territories put in place by the Church of Rome against the Protestant threat. Since then, the concept of Counter-Reformation has long been at the center of occasionally rather harsh historiographical debates, whose sides have sometimes been defined by creed. A purely oppositional idea of the Counter-Reformation, understood as the opposite reaction to the Reformation, has been supplemented by a broader vision: this tends to emphasize that, since the Middle Ages, attempts were made, within the Church of Rome, to reform and thus meet the demands of a considerable part of the clergy and of the faithful. This historiographical orientation has subsequently preferred to adopt the concept of “Catholic Reformation,” thus emphasizing the propositive plan of internal reform of the Church rather than on the oppositional reaction to the Reformation.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The term Counter-Reformation was used for the first time at the end of the eighteenth century to indicate the process of re-catholicizing territories put in place by the Church of Rome against the Protestant threat. Since then the concept of Counter-Reformation has long been at the center of occasionally rather harsh historiographical debates, whose sides have sometimes been defined by creed. A purely oppositional idea of the Counter-Reformation, understood as the opposite reaction to the Reformation, has been supplemented by a broader vision: this tends to emphasize that, since the Middle Ages, attempts were made, within the Church of Rome, to reform and thus meet the demands of a considerable part of the clergy and of the faithful. This historiographical orientation has subsequently preferred to adopt the concept of “Catholic Reformation,” thus emphasizing the propositive plan of internal reform of the Church rather than on the oppositional reaction to the Reformation.

Historiography is fairly unanimous today in acknowledging the need to go beyond the

definitions – hence the partial abandonment of the label “Catholic Reformation” – in favor of a deeper understanding of a complex historical period, in which needs for reform intertwined with an extreme perception of danger, leading to openings perhaps more limited than closures.

We can thus define the Counter-Reformation as a fairly long period in which the Church of Rome promoted a process of change – and sometimes profound transformation – which brought more significant outcomes on the Italian territory than elsewhere. The results were evident on the level of religious life, culture, and society and were achieved via the control on the various forms of religious dissent exerted by new institutions or by the strengthening of existing ones.

However, the widespread desire for a reform of the Church had deepened during the Middle Ages as a response to the dissatisfaction toward the organization and the behavior of the clergy, the scandals involving the Curia, the economic demands of the Church, and so on. Expectations and plans for reform had thus clustered in large movements of uncertain boundaries, as the *Devotio moderna*, Erasmian evangelism, and Gerson’s theology of piety, often involving religious orders in a reflection on the need to return to a form of original purity. Attempts in these directions at some councils (as in Constance, Basel, and at the Fifth Lateran) did not lead to lasting effects. It was the Council of Trent that definitively signalled the overlap between the two trends, toward internal reform and a reaction against an enemy, with whom it now appeared impossible to come to any settlement. Trent, in other words, made sure that the Church of Rome, in its almost systematic refusal of the Protestant doctrine, would define in this way a unified and stable doctrine, proposed in a series of decrees that would play a key role in shaping the faith of Catholics in the following centuries.

The first obvious process was the final centralization of religious power in the figure of the Pope and the cardinals’ court. The figure of the “Sovereign Pontiff,” in its dual nature as a state sovereign and spiritual and religious leader, was finally recognized as the summit of the

Church, and any conciliarist ambition was wiped out. The city of Rome became the stage on which to represent the prestige of the papal monarchy through art, architecture, and literature. From Rome the activities of the key players of the Counter-Reformation radiated, in a renewed role of congregations – risen in the early part of the sixteenth century as restricted and temporary committees – which, once stabilized, were assuming an enormous power over the political and ecclesiastical policy arena. Among them the congregation of the Holy Office took over a role of particular importance – even at a symbolic level – as well as, at a different and lesser degree, that of the Index. The Holy Office (created in 1542) formed the “armed wing” of the Church in the defense of orthodoxy and ecclesiastical authority and probably remains the symbol of a period and of an ideology of control. In the new configuration of the Roman power, the Inquisition became the first element of a centralized bureaucratic structure of repression, despite the particularities of individual peripheral tribunals, which were subject to some sort of negotiation with the governments of their hosting States.

In a context in which the ecclesiastical policy was passing more and more through the instruments and channels of international politics, a key role was played by papal nuncios, guarantors of a communication, and transmission network between center and periphery with very broad jurisdiction: to diplomatic activities as ambassadors, they flanked authority within the pastoral government, the relationships with the local ecclesiastical authorities, also arriving in many cases at the fight against heresy.

Such centralization came somehow in conflict, in terms of institutions, with the figure of the bishops, to whom the Council of Trent had in effect entrusted – as the highest representatives of local churches – a central role in ecclesiastical reform. Thus the Counter-Reformation, at institutional level, witnessed a rather marked tension between the needs of the Roman centralism, local churches with their bishops, and the role of regular orders. Although the dimensions of the conflict varied significantly according to the periods, it represented a sort of constant in an

attempt to apply Trent decrees and the overall Counter-Reformation strategy.

In fact it should be noted that the Counter-Reformation constituted not only a moment of dogmatic definition and institutional, theological, and church stabilization: it was a much more far-reaching process, which aimed at a much broader and more systematic control on individuals via a complex system of prohibitions on one side and propaganda on the other. It was not only a matter of prohibiting behavior, reading, or discourses: inquisitors and, to a different degree, bishops could and should deal in various capacities with all this. It was also a matter of educating faithful that were still considered “children.” Here the new religious orders, instituted and grown in the atmosphere of the Counter-Reformation, intervened. Subject to heavy attacks in the first half of the century – from both Reformed and Catholics – religious orders had to face Luther’s radical criticism, which had denied the legitimacy of their setting up a special body within the Christian community. However, the anxiety that was common within monasteries resulted in a widespread feeling of unease even among friars and monks, who often during the sixteenth century featured among the main vehicles of heterodox ideas. Nevertheless, the structure of the regular orders was perfectly functional to the centralizing project of the Counter-Reformation Church, and therefore their privileges were safeguarded and strengthened, at the expense of the bishops’ jurisdiction. The orders therefore represented on the one hand a deep wedge in bishopric authority and on the other a fundamental tool in the care of souls and in the preaching and education of the faithful.

Among the many orders generated within the Counter-Reformation, a distinguished role was played by the Jesuits, who were the protagonists of an impressive work of “acculturation,” by modulating communication in a strikingly modern way. On the one hand, they addressed European elites, by supporting the teaching in colleges and universities with more individualized work, exercised through a direct relationship with princes and noblemen of whom they became confessors and spiritual directors. On the other

they manifested a clear awareness of the need to undertake a missionary conquest not only in territories to be evangelized but also in the neighboring lands to re-evangelize, the “Indies over here.” If in the true Indies missionaries – mostly Jesuits – had been facing an otherness after all expected, in most territories near the center of Christianity, including Italy, they found places of very limited evangelization, packed with “superstitions,” “idolatries,” and “popular” beliefs and often completely impervious to theological questions. In other words, missionaries and preachers attempted to exercise control on the “lived religion” of the masses by putting in place more education action. An attempt, however, destined to a rather obvious failure, remarked with growing forbearance by preachers and bishops, who faced a sort of “primitive religion,” often insensitive to the language of a faith perceived as distant. Confronted with a similar situation, it was necessary to develop tools of persuasion that took the public into account. Missions took on an increasingly theatrical, scenographic connotation, accompanied by music and capable of stirring consciousness. Masses, sometimes imposing, of individuals therefore gathered to hear sermons and participate in such missionary meetings. Impressed and awed, definitely shaken, thus the faithful took part in processions in which they became themselves actors of a ritual of edification and forgiveness, which ended with mass communions. In parallel the secular and regular clergy established schools of Christian doctrine, in which the faithful were to find the key elements to be educated in the faith. However, it was an education whose perspective was totally hostile to achieving a conscious faith and proceeded through a learning process based on the memorization of concepts and prayers. This process excluded a direct relationship with the sacred text for large sections of the population, since the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, already subject to bans, had been permanently prohibited with the Index of 1596. The result was a type of devotion mostly based on external practices, on collective rituals, and on remembering prayers and Latin formulas whose meaning remained unknown to the large majority of Catholics.

Even practices defined as idolatrous were channelled to more controllable devotions that could embody in objects, like saints, the Virgin, or the sacred heart of Jesus.

In a similar effort of acculturation, all the means of expression were mobilized. With the simple folk, different tools had to be used than mere censorship and prohibition. Thus images, for instance, became functional to the creation of the Counter-Reformation faithful: although the represented subjects had engaged the senses of the onlookers, the sensuality had to be addressed first and foremost to communicate the suffering endured by the saints, Christ, and the Virgin. Bodies to identify with because they had been subject to the same afflictions everyone may experience. What could be outrageous was hidden, hence the focus on nudities, thoroughly covered. The result was a new concept of "obscurity," which was unprecedented and must have significantly surprised a substantial segment of the population, which witnessed the conviction of performances and, as will be seen, behavior deemed hitherto entirely lawful.

Censorship then integrated into a propaganda operation of ample proportions, which ended up giving the tone for an entire culture: literary, scientific, artistic, and social life came under a veneer of at least external conformism under which, however, some widespread elements of rebellion did not stop harboring. If, for example, the sentence of Galileo Galilei in 1633 certainly represented one of the high points in the affirmation of the cultural model of the Church of the Counter-Reformation, it was nevertheless true that Galileo's disciples continued to develop, albeit discreetly, the lesson of their teacher. From this point of view, inquisitorial archives provide evidence of a stubborn resistance on the part of large sections of the population: the illegal circulation of prohibited books, for example, formed a characteristic feature of the world of the Counter-Reformation. And, on the other hand, the structure of control and repression was itself weakening: censoring institutions increasingly realized the impracticability of a model that, moreover, a growing number of individuals found flawed. Contradictions were

present within the Church, whose members were increasingly engaging in a difficult balance between conformity and the necessary openings toward Europe that, especially since the second half of the seventeenth century, was traversed by concerns that made sectarian fractures, in the end, a secondary problem. The challenge that was opening was the "crisis of the European conscience" and not so much a different interpretation of the faith, as its negation became the enemy, especially on the doctrinal level.

The territory, mainly Italian, on which ecclesiastical authorities exercised stronger control, became, therefore, a context in which cultural production suffered in a particular way, but in which a kind of outward commitment to the principles of the Counter-Reformation also developed. This externality – which was to reassure the authorities – found expression in a deep split between the external manifestation and real beliefs.

In this ambiguity – which obviously did not escape the attention of the ecclesiastical hierarchies – the army of confessors had to intervene. To them, the difficult task of harmonizing consciences and behavior was entrusted, to link the internal and external forum. Starting from 1559 they were obliged to refuse absolution to those who confessed in the internal forum of having sinned or being aware of crimes within the Inquisition's jurisdiction. Only after formally deposing in front of the inquisitor, the penitent would be welcomed by the confessor for absolution. Conscience, therefore, was not only washed in the internal forum but had to find a justification in the external one. Also, the role of the confessor increasingly likened a spiritual guide that should not be content to grant or deny absolution but had to direct the weak minds of penitents to salvation. The role of the Jesuits in this respect, as already mentioned, was of primary importance, especially among European elites.

Nevertheless, confessors and pastors in general were charged with the daily business of contact with the faithful, which were not only faced with the need to change their way of believing and often the objects of this belief but also their behavior. On the basis of Trent decrees, the life

of the faithful was to take place within a rather rigid grid of sacraments and rituals. These were going to affect in particular the major moments of transition in the lives of individuals, by marking them with rites in which the Church was to be the first reference. The reaffirmed confidence in the Seven Sacraments as essential for salvation had led to an increase in their importance also at the ritual level. Some established social practices had to be bent and lifted, ancient rites to be replaced by new ones. The restrictions applied in the selection and number of godfathers, for example, were an element of conflict as baptism traditionally constituted an opportunity to forge alliances and establish relationships. However, at a more symbolic level, the Church also intervened to break up the continuity between the world of the living and of the dead ensured by an ancient ritual system, which preserved the long relationship between the earthly world and the hereafter even after death. To intervene in this area meant to provoke a cultural trauma of ample proportions, and, in fact, many of these rituals largely survived the attempts of change brought by missionaries and the secular clergy. Similarly, pre-Tridentine rituals related to marriage continued to be practiced long after: until the Council a marriage was considered valid as long as the consent to enter into marriage was audibly exchanged, with the assent of the two families. Marriage “promises” were considered binding, and even sexual acts performed within a couple, who would only afterward join in marriage, were deemed acceptable. The Council, reiterating the sacramental nature of marriage, changed this state of affairs and consequently intervened on sexual mores, condemning any act performed outside the marriage bond, which was to be considered valid only if celebrated in front of the parish priest and two or three witnesses and after that the priest himself had given repeatedly announcement to the community for three successive holidays. “Secularism” of marriage was thus lost in favor of the further clericalization of society and extension of the Church in the context of sexual “troubles,” which had traditionally been the responsibility of civil authorities. It was not so much – or not only – question of a judicial application of decrees, rather of a new

morality that, through multiple channels, was to constitute a new concept of family and role for women. The scapegoating of sexuality also occurred in confessionals, a sort of small private courts within which priests were called to inquire about the sexual life of penitents, trying somehow to regulate it. Doctrinal heresy was no longer the Church’s main worry. From the second half of the sixteenth century, this could be regarded as settled on the geopolitical level. It was within the borders of Catholicism that now it was question of operating in depth, extirpating the most obvious forms of what remained of heresy, of course, but mostly aiming at crashing “inorderly” beliefs and behaviors, disciplining them and creating a new theology of obedience.

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Court Philosophy, Renaissance

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Abstract

This entry explores the connection between philosophy and Renaissance court culture and the relevance of a philosophical education for those who aspired to become part of the courtly milieu. Humanists were often employed in different roles at court, their philosophical background making them perfectly fit to hold sensitive and relevant positions within the courtly establishment. The connection between philosophy and the court became stronger over the course of the Renaissance, resulting in philosophy being taken out of its traditional university milieu, and creating a complex dynamics: on the one hand, philosophers became subject to the will of the lords of the court, but on the other hand they could also profit from a larger degree of intellectual freedom that allowed them to investigate potentially troublesome topics that may have been considered unacceptable within universities. The most relevant depiction of the connection between philosophy and court culture can be found in the fourth book of Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, which is devoted to an explanation of the Neo-Platonic notion of love and of its importance for the art of courtliness.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Philosophy played an important role in the culture of the courts of the Renaissance, and a philosophical background was often part of the education required for a member of the courtly elites, especially for those courtiers who aspired to relevant positions at court.

By the time courts and court culture were flourishing in all of Europe, humanism had become an established educational tradition. Humanists rediscovered previously neglected ancient philosophical texts, edited and translated them, and proposed a reform of traditional philosophical education and of other educational traditions as well, such as medicine, law, and logic (Hankins 2007). Humanistic education would play a pivotal role in the culture of the Renaissance courts. The influence of humanists and of the culture that they promoted coexisted with the persistence of scholastic philosophy in the universities. Yet, Humanists, in virtue of the allegiance that they often established with the courts and their culture, were also responsible for taking philosophy outside of the universities.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Humanists often held relevant jobs at court. Their extensive education rendered them perfectly fitted for employment as chancellors and as secretaries in the courts. Princely and papal courts alike were in need of a staff trained in tasks such as composing letters, drafting speeches, copying important documents, and in general of taking appropriate care of the numerous and different papers that were essential to the politics and to the administration of the court. Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca), usually credited as the “father” of humanism, was occasionally employed by his patrons, the lords of Milan and of Padua, as a secretary and as an orator. Courtly establishments that featured humanists among their ranks included the courts of Milan, of Naples, and the papal curia. Italian humanists also held offices in foreign courts (Schmitt et al. 1988, 116–18). The most famous example of a humanist employed at a Renaissance

court is probably that of the Sienese Enea Silvio Piccolomini (who was later to become pope under the name of Pius II). Piccolomini entered the imperial court in Vienna in 1442, where he took up the role of secretary in the imperial chancellery, and in the following years went on to serve as an ambassador as well. The writings that Piccolomini composed during his years at the imperial court, however, show that he aspired to something more than the position of secretary, desiring instead for himself the role of princely counselor. Such a goal was shared by other humanistically educated intellectuals, who often aspired to become princely advisors at court (Black 2007).

The association between humanism and courts became stronger during the second half of the fifteenth century. In this period, humanists were for the most part no longer active politicians, mainly interested in moral philosophy, but were instead teachers, professional philosophers who were not engaged in political activity, and, most importantly, courtiers, whose career and finances depended entirely on the support of their lord.

The association of humanism and courtliness also had an effect on the traditional relationship between philosophy and theology. According to James Hankins, in medieval schools philosophy had been humbled by its subjection to theology, which was regarded as the most important discipline. The new allegiance with courtliness resulted, in Hankins's opinion, in philosophy having to learn the good manners of courtiers and princes, that is to say, in elegance and urbanity becoming more important than originality of thought (Hankins 2007).

At the same time, however, the connection of philosophy with court culture also meant a larger degree of freedom for philosophical enquiry and for new philosophical approaches if compared with what happened in the universities. Philosophers employed at court could afford to be less concerned with the protocols, the academic requirements, and the traditions that were so relevant within the universities. Instead, a philosopher working at court had to respond only to his prince's desires. This aspect, of course, made the court philosopher dependent on his prince's generosity and therefore potentially subjected to

upheavals of fortune. Yet, the dependence on the will of the prince also meant that heterodox views were better received and overall safer at court than in the universities. This explains why many philosophers – just like poets, artists, or musicians – sought patronage at court during the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Copenhaver and Schmitt 1992, 12–13, 53,).

Thanks to this alliance between philosophy and court culture, Renaissance courts became important places for philosophical debate. Such debates were especially concerned with the most noteworthy philosophical current within Renaissance court culture: Neoplatonism. In particular, Marsilio Ficino's version of Platonic love, which combined Platonism with the tradition of courtly love and made it appealing to the learned elites, became extremely popular in Renaissance courts (Celenza 2007).

Impact and Legacy

The importance of Neoplatonic philosophy and specifically of its conception of love within the culture of the Renaissance courts is testified to by one of the most influential texts of the period, Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528). It was this work which defined the figure of the courtier and the art of courtliness throughout Renaissance Europe: the presence of an exploration of Neoplatonic love in its pages illustrates how relevant such a philosophical concept was for Renaissance court culture.

Divided into four books and set at the court of Urbino, the *Book of the Courtier* features speakers who investigate and discuss among each other the principal attributes that the ideal courtier and court lady should possess. The main quality that such a perfect courtier should possess is defined as *sprezzatura*. Roughly translatable as “nonchalance,” this term conveys the notion that the courtier should prove himself able to accomplish all the different and complex activities (ranging from military tasks to sports, from erudite conversation to dancing) that characterized the daily life of the courtly elites of the Renaissance, while giving an impression of effortless and naturalness,

almost of careless disdain. Although apparently a mere matter of style, *sprezzatura* shows instead the legacy of philosophical notions within court culture, since the concept finds its origins in the portraits of the perfect citizen that one can find in the moral philosophical teachings of Aristotle and of Cicero (Black 2007).

Castiglione did not possess an extensive philosophical background, having not received an education in philosophy such as the one provided in universities. Nevertheless, he had a good knowledge of contemporary philosophical trends, such as Neoplatonism and Aristotelian moral philosophy. In Hankins's opinion, Castiglione's lack of formal training in philosophy prevented him from becoming a partisan of any specific doctrine. His references to philosophy in the *Book of the Courtier* are not aimed at defending any particular philosophic school against another. Instead, philosophy becomes a language of reference to be used in the project of sketching the picture of the perfect courtier (Hankins 2002).

The last part of the *Book of the Courtier* is devoted to an exposition of Neoplatonic love presented by Pietro Bembo, one of the most celebrated Petrarchan poets of the Renaissance and the author of *Gli Asolani*, a dialogue on the nature of love. Bembo's speech, which describes the courtier as lover in a manner reminiscent of Plato's *Symposium*, can be credited with popularizing Platonic philosophy throughout Europe (Black 2007).

Bembo's speech is provoked by a contradiction: the previous speakers have asserted that the ideal courtier should be old enough to serve as a wise advisor to his prince. Yet, such an ideal courtier should not limit himself to being the perfect advisor. He also needs to embody the figure of the perfect lover. The problem that arises is how could the courtier also be an ideal lover, since it is generally believed that the best lovers are the young. Bembo then proceeds to solve the contradiction by defining the nature of love. Referring to notions expressed by Florentine Neoplatonists, Bembo defines love as a desire for Beauty. The perfect lover, however, must not limit himself to corporeal beauty, but be able to go beyond it and reach the contemplation of

transcendental beauty, which is a radiation from God. Young men are the ones who tend to limit themselves to the contemplation of corporeal beauty, while older and wiser men, such as the ideal courtier whose portrait has been sketched in the dialogue, have the necessary knowledge to reach transcendental beauty and God with it. The dialogue ends precisely on this notion of transcendental beauty.

Yet, also the previous part of the fourth book needs to be taken into account in order to explore the influence of philosophical notions over the systematization of courtliness. The first half of the fourth book – generally interpreted as Aristotelian, while the second part is considered Platonic – sees the main speaker, the Genoese gentleman Ottaviano Fregoso, describing the ultimate purpose of courtliness. Courtly arts such as dancing, jousting, and conversing, far from being only trivial occupations, are here defined as ways to conquer the prince with the ultimate goal of teaching him virtue and turning him into the philosopher-ruler advocated by Plato (Hankins 2002). It is precisely this recourse to Neoplatonic philosophy that, in Castiglione's intentions, redeems courtliness from any accusations of triviality. The figure of the courtier is transformed from a potential flatterer engaged only in vain and futile activities into a respectable philosopher and advisor, thus providing the art of courtliness with a higher, virtuous purpose.

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- [Bembo, Pietro](#)
- [Courts and Courtiers in the Renaissance](#)

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Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

The transformations of the Renaissance involved a gradual but irreversible passage from a theocratic society to a more secular society that deftly harmonized respect for the teachings of the Christian Church with an appreciation of emerging secular philosophies and practices that, without apology, paid homage to the human manifestations of God's divinity. While medieval courtesy standards were built around the duty to God and the monarch, Renaissance humanism gave birth to a more modern conception of courtesy as an interaction standard designed to facilitate exchanges between citizens who, despite social and economic inequality, were deserving of consideration and respect.

This article discusses how secular humanism played a vital role in creating a Renaissance courtesy tradition that was to inspire Western civilization for many centuries to come. Included is a review of the seminal conduct books of the period and how they helped form a new conception of human agency while providing subsequent eras with valuable guidance on ideal manners.

Synonyms

Civility; Courtly behavior; Deference; Magnanimity; Manners; Renaissance city states; Renaissance manners

From Modesty to Magnanimity: Rupture with the Medieval Heritage

The study of courtesy is more than the study of how people treat one another. It is also the study of the spirit of an age. Shifts in political, philosophical, religious, economic, literary, and artistic conditions have a determining influence on the courtesy practices of a given era. That is why two closely connected periods in history can have substantially differing courtesy practices. This is most evident in comparative studies of courtesy standards in the Medieval and Renaissance periods.

Medieval courtesy standards were founded on the classical ecclesiastical belief that ideal behavior required “love without measure.” Modesty, prudence, humility, and a penitent spirit were qualities taught to knights and courtiers who were expected to serve the Church and rulers with selfless loyalty while minimizing violence and greed towards one another. It was an elitist behavioral philosophy that stayed out of the reach of the common population.

The Renaissance ushered in a radical transformation of this worldview. While Renaissance philosophers, statesmen, and artists accepted the legitimacy of the Church, they represented humankind as an admirable part of God's creation. This astute unification of the sacred and temporal helped bring the natural world and the embodied individual into the center of social philosophy and cleared the way for a more forgiving and more liberal view of human nature.

An educated university elite (empowered by the invention of the printing press) and a rising merchant class (enjoying surplus wealth) welcomed humanist philosophy because of its validation of earthly pursuits. This secular humanism was eloquently expressed by Gianfrancesco Pico de Mirandola who, in his now classical oration *On*

the Dignity of Man (Oratio de hominis dignitate) (1486), side-stepped the morbid fatalism of the medieval Church by affirming the sanctity of human free will: “‘I have set thee,’ says the Creator to Adam ‘in the midst of the world, that thou mayst the more easily behold and see all that is therein. I created thee a being neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal only, that thou mightest be free to shape and to overcome thyself To thee alone is given a growth and a development depending on thine own free will.’”

Such mistrust of clerical infallibility was also present in the works of Rabelais (1532) who ridiculed the pretense of contrived virtue, favoring instead a natural courtesy based on an intuitive sense of personal honor. Rabelais’s democratizing dictum, *Fay ce que tu voudras* (do what thou will), implied that no dogma or elaborate rules of conduct were needed as long as a person possessed an unaffected sense of right and wrong.

The mendicant writings of St Francis of Assisi were far from the minds of the new Renaissance merchants and politicians. Matteo Palmieri gave his approval to family wealth and the accumulation of possessions in *Della vita civile* (1528). Leon Battista Alberti similarly approved of wealth by cautioning that a man without a house and possessions was seriously jeopardizing his freedom (c. 1450). In a speech given in 1427, the anti-papist political rebel Stefano Porcari passionately affirmed the moral legitimacy of wealth and argued that it was vital for the common welfare: “Let us contemplate the needs of private life. Whence are our houses and palaces procured? From riches! Whence come our clothes? Whence the meals for us and our children? From riches! Whence the means to educate our children and make them virtuous? From riches! These consecrated churches with their decorations, the walls, the towers, the defenses. . . your places and dwellings, the most noble buildings, the bridges, the streets, with what have you built them, whence do you obtain the means of preserving them, if not from riches?”

This acceptance of the corporeal affected the manner in which the body was adorned and presented in private and public. The theocratic climate of the medieval era had exercised a

stronghold over the body. Until the fourteenth century, the high valuation placed on modesty (behavioral and sexual) had prescribed that both men and women had to wear long and loose tunics that covered the entire body. Fabrics were monochromatic and styling was austere. Renaissance fashion, on the other hand, celebrated the beauty and innocence of the human body; medieval modesty (*modestus* – “keeping within measure”) was set aside for clothing that was colorful and profusely decorated with ornaments. The shape of the body was accentuated without embarrassment: short fitted jackets, tight hose, and prominent codpieces for men and tight busts and décolletages for women.

There was something quite self-celebrating about the new norms of permissible behavior. The diaries and letters of wealthy families of the epoch reveal the new enjoyment of conspicuous spending and the sense of personal power released by such displays of wealth. Giovanni Rucellai (1481), a prosperous Florentine wool merchant, wrote in his journal: “I think I’ve done myself more honor by having spent money than by having earned it. Spending gave me a deeper satisfaction . . . the rich man must be generous, for liberality is the most noble and attractive virtue which he can possess.”

Thus, the practice of “magnanimity” and “calculated deference” became means for imposing order and meaning on what was becoming a very competitive society. *Fortuna* (fortune) could be extremely capricious in this new society. The fatalistic notion of *divine providence* had helped explain many unforeseen calamities during the Middle Ages. In the Renaissance, however, *chance* came to compete with the will of God. Lurking in most powerful and wealthy men’s minds was the fear of suddenly losing their fortune through bad business decisions and political maneuverings. In Florence, where respect for the new wealth was most intense, loss of wealth was rarely looked upon with sympathy; men who fell into poverty were even shunned by their own relatives. *Deference* became a means for promoting non-conflicted and profitable alliances. This quality was quite different from the *submissiveness* of the feudal vassal. A person now

deferred to another in recognition of the other's identity and in order to avoid outright confrontation; this deference was more an act of alliance than of submission. In this volatile political and economic climate, it became important for a family to develop relationships with other families more powerful and influential than itself. This transformation of virtue as an obligation to God into an obligation to community becomes quite understandable when viewed from the economic perspective and the political structure of the new city-states.

Renaissance art also reflected the growing acceptance of the temporal. It is no coincidence that Michelangelo's statue of the Biblical *David* in the nude was placed in the public square in front of the seat of civic government in Florence. Never before since classical times had nude statues been placed in outdoor areas. Botticelli's *Venus Rising* was a similar homage to human sensuality, as were some of the figures painted by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. A hundred years before such works would have brought immediate (and perhaps violent) Church censure.

So, unlike the courtesy literature of the Middle Ages, which coupled virtue with the search for enlightenment and divine salvation, the literature of the Renaissance encouraged the individual to deal with reality and social relations from the perspective of a personal sense of honor that remained at peace with utilitarian realities. Honor required much more than obedience to prescribed virtues. It required a considerable amount of self-reflection. The Courtesy books of the Renaissance promoted this new liberalism.

Balancing Courtesy and Integrity: *The Book of the Courtier*

The tensions between the crudity of political life in an increasingly commercial network of social relations, on the one hand, and the ideal of aesthetic excellence, on the other, are noticeable in the content and tone of one of the seminal courtesy books of the Renaissance, *The Book of the Courtier* (*Il Cortegiano*) (1529). Although medieval values of *chivalry* had become nearly

obsolete in the new urban mercantile climate, Baldassare Castiglione managed to revive the ideal of chivalric honor and style within the context of his era. *The Book of the Courtier* became one of the Renaissance's most widely read books and managed to leave an indelible imprint on the European aristocracies.

Castiglione's treatment of courtesy differs considerably from that of his predecessors. Neither brute force nor the mixing of force and piety, qualities favored by the medieval romances, are considered sufficient for the making of a courtier. The ideal courtier has to blend the graceful and the secular so as to become a courageous individual committed to justice, truth, and wise counsel. Certainly, he or she must not boast about his accomplishments or appear greedy for rewards. Discretion and self-dismissal, even in the presence of great personal worth and accomplishments, are the principal virtues of Castiglione's courtier.

Grazia (grace) and *gravitas* (dignity) assure a courtier that his speech will not seem affected or forced. The art of personality presentation is to remain unnoticeable, not because of deceitful motives but because of the natural "bearing" appropriate to a refined courtier, a bearing designed not to cause offence to others. Castiglione admonishes his courtier to "avoid affectation in every way possible . . . so as to conceal all art and make whatever is done or said appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it."

There is a strong affinity between Castiglione's preference for lack of ostentation (*sprezzatura*) and the Aristotelian ideal of the *golden mean*, an ideal that was the basis of Cicero's *Orator*, a work that urged men of proper bearing to exhibit a "purposeful negligence" (*neglegentia diligens*) so as to give off the impression that ideas interested them more than the artifice of style. This studied spontaneity (*all'improvviso*) was also a cherished theme in Ovid, who advised young men at court to cultivate a casual look of neglect (*forma viros neglecta decet*) in order to exude self-confidence. The ability to seem unaffected became the new courtesy ideal.

Petrarch and Alberti had affirmed their faith in the human will; Castiglione furthered their

humanism by arguing that only through a disciplined application of *willful intent* could the ideal courtier manage to consistently speak the type of truths that would allow him to become a trusted and useful adviser of the court.

Unlike Capellanus, who had written of a very distinct personality suited to a theologically governed knightly culture, Castiglione managed to write a work that was in many ways urbane, universal, and not limited to a particular epoch or region. In effect, he managed to build a bridge between the world of humanism and the world of courtly intrigue, finding some meeting point that could render the process of membership in court elites morally and aesthetically satisfying despite the rampant injustices of the rising absolutist states. A series of works in Spain, Poland, Portugal, and France imitated the format of *The Book of the Courtier*, and the themes of honorable behavior and studied natural demeanor appeared frequently in the courtesy literature that followed Castiglione's work.

Balancing Religious Creed and Personal Conscience: *The Colloquies*

The Renaissance humanists attempted to avoid immutable categorizations, perhaps hoping that human awareness would increase through the confirmation of the creative will. Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1466–1536) personified this delicate Renaissance balance between the religious and the secular. Erasmus insisted that the Bible be put in the hands of ordinary laypeople so that they could read the message of the Gospels for themselves. His *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (*Handbook of the Christian Soldier*) had enormous influence at the time of its third printing in 1515. He argued that a reading of the New Testament would provoke an inner change in the reader and guide him to the love of God and humanity. Believing that a religious person was defined by his relationship to the word of God rather than by his allegiance to priests, he did not accord the clergy the right to stand between scriptures and the layperson. He believed that the philosophy of Christ was sufficiently represented in the New

Testament; thus, a person who consciously chose to live a moral life could chart his own path according to scripture and without clerical intervention.

Erasmus also believed that a culture could transform its practices and norms without falling into disorder. In *The Colloquies*, he freely permitted himself to comment on the mores and events of his time, agreeing with some while mercilessly criticizing others. He valued, for example, the ideal of loyalty embedded in the writings of monastics but wondered why celibacy was necessary for a virtuous life. He supported the maintenance of religious orders while heaping abuse on the misuse of power by existing orders. It took him 40 years to write the *Colloquies*, in the process composing one of the most complete records of life in the Renaissance.

What makes the work an excellent representation of the best the Renaissance humanists had to offer is its unrelenting preoccupation with social reform and its refusal to align itself with any particular class or political group. Humanist intellectuals were increasingly carving out a social position for themselves by claiming the freedom to criticize the nobility as well as the common population. And, certainly, Erasmus made good use of this emerging intellectual freedom – writing with irony and outright ridicule, he facilitated the acceptance of a critical intellectual spirit and the recognition of ordinary individuals as thinking rational beings.

This movement away from categorical aristocratic behavioral standards had a democratizing effect. Yet, it required new specifications of ideal manners for the general population. A rising concern over manners and the corresponding importance accorded to *civility* among strangers marked a radical break with insular courtly conduct standards. Rather than training their readers to be ideal courtiers, the new courtesy writers focused on developing rules of public conduct. Erasmus's (1530) *De civilitate morum puerilium* (*On Civility in Children*) substantially departed from the format of medieval courtesy literature. Even though the book was written for the son of a nobleman, it did not pretend to be exclusively addressed to the nobility. While, like his

predecessors, Erasmus criticized the coarseness (*rusticas*) of the peasant, he did not approve of the pretensions of the nobility. He addressed universal good manners as reflected in bodily carriage, gestures, dress, and facial expressions. He not only gave specific instructions on how one was to sit and behave at table but also promoted a civility based on consideration for the sensibilities of others. He paid little attention to social distinction, setting his work apart from the medieval courtesy writings and the works on *civilité* that were to follow in France. A universal standard was being sought, one capable of serving the rising merchant class. The book was so popular that over 30 printings were made in the 6 years following its publication. Erasmus's work led to the Europeanization of the word *civilitate*: *civility* in English, *civilité* in French, *civiltà* in Italian, and *civilität* in German.

Manners for All Seasons: *The Galateo*

Another book that had a far-reaching effect on European courtesy codes and manners was Giovanni Della Casa's *Il Galateo* (1558). Unlike Castiglione, Della Casa had no interest in providing instructions for the formation of a perfect courtier. Even though some passages in the text mention and laud certain nobles, Della Casa states early on in his narrative that the elaborate interaction rituals and posing of those who consider themselves of high station are quite distasteful and to be avoided by truly well-mannered persons.

Rather than being a book on the noble virtues, *Galateo* is a down-to-earth guide to what a person must know and practice if he is not to *offend* others. Its most important difference from other courtesy books of the period lies in the reasoning used for promoting circumspect manners. Manners are not presented as marks of aristocratic distinction but as practical devices meant to help a person do certain things and desist from doing others in order not to cause discomfort to other individuals. Its approach is psychological. Public nudity, spitting in public, eating with one's mouth open, yawning, going to bed naked, urinating, and defecating in public – these have all taken on connotations of

embarrassment and are being replaced by practices designed to hide primary physical functions from view. A *publican* civility is in the making.

The chapters of the text are fairly equally divided between the proper handling of physical functions and the rules to be followed when conversing. The author distinguishes between *etiquette*, which he admits can be pretentious and even hurtful to the sensibilities of others, and *civility*, which, when practiced without hypocrisy, provides a person with the right frame of mind for remaining sensitive towards the feelings of others: "It is certain that people who like to carry ceremonial to excess do so from empty-headedness and conceit, like the useless person they are . . . But they are incapable of learning important things."

Some of Della Casa's rules regarding bodily functions might appear quite evident to us. Yet, written just after the medieval period, they were necessary admonitions in a society increasingly concerned with concealing and refining the expression of bodily functions. Della Casa's advice to his readers was given quite plainly:

It is a repulsive habit to touch certain parts of the body in public, as some people do . . . No polite person will prepare himself for the relief of nature while others are looking on. . . It is bad manners, when you see something to nauseate you by the roadside, as sometimes happens, to turn to your companion and point it out to them. . . Refrain as far as possible from making noises which grate upon the ear, such as grinding or sucking your teeth, making things squeak, or allowing rough stones or metal objects to scrape together and rasp. . . When you have blown your nose, you should not open your handkerchief and inspect it . . . such behavior is nauseating. . . When you are talking with someone, you should not approach him so close as to breathe in his face. . . many people dislike the sensation of another's breath even if it is not tainted. . . A man who knows how to behave will take care not to get his fingers so greasy as to dirty his napkin. . . It is not polite to scratch yourself while seated at table. . . It is also bad manners to clean up your teeth with your napkin.

In all of the above examples there is a reaction against practices that must have existed at the time. Otherwise, there would have been no need to comment on them. The author's admonitions seem to indicate a new sense of disgust that requires many practices to be veiled with the

cloak of privacy: "What disgusts the senses also upsets the mind."

Della Casa's advice on the art of conversation is also based on a new aesthetic standard. Conversation is not meant to be a competitive mechanism; good conversation skills involve knowing the golden mean in the length of conversation, the speed at which one should be speaking, and the subjects that should be avoided in order not to bore one's audience. Della Casa considers all vice and all absence of good manners as ugly and degrading. He does not refer to religious predispositions but to a human need for beauty and harmony, something that he considers natural and not dependent on religious doctrine.

The works of Della Casa and Erasmus differed from that of Castiglione in one important respect. While Castiglione was trying to compose a code for the ideal courtier – a personality quite distinct from the rest of the population – Erasmus and Della Casa were espousing conformity and amiability regardless of social station. Their purpose, in some important measure, was to develop a public civility that cut across class boundaries. The *other* is the center of attention, and all physical and speech mannerisms are to be directed at making that other remain within their intellectual and psychological comfort zone. Written a few hundred years before the English books on *politeness*, *The Galateo* was to become the forerunner of the book on *tact*. It is no surprise that it eventually became extremely popular in England. Della Casa's most important advice, "Neither say or do anything to show dislike or disparagement of the other person present," would be heeded by the English conduct book writers.

Other conduct books of the Renaissance reveal this emerging trust in personal judgment. The medieval courtly literature had, in great measure, been ideological, seeking to establish political unity in a closed-off feudal hierarchy. There had been a tolerance of coarse manners in the general population paralleling the aristocracy's conviction that only the higher sectors of society could learn to appreciate and practice courtesy codes. Renaissance conduct books, however, began moving away from such elitist instruction, going to great pains to encourage people to desist from

practicing certain manners that they had been habituated to practicing. What we would take for granted today was at the time a new code of emerging manners and one that would have a considerable effect on subsequent conceptions of ideal behavior.

Legacy of the Renaissance Courtesy Standard

The legacy of the Renaissance and the courtesy literature that emerged from it cannot be understated. The manner in which Renaissance philosophers questioned the top-to-down authority of the Church cleared the way for a mankind-centered conception of religious life. The Protestant Reformation, which stood against priests who would intervene with God on behalf of their supplicants, was indebted to Renaissance humanist thought. Subsequent eras also owed much to the guides to ideal manners that appeared during the Renaissance. These guidelines spread to other European countries and, eventually, made their way into the Americas. Even now, in the twenty-first century, the debate regarding civility in private and government affairs continues, and some seminal works, including works by Benet Davetian and P.M. Forni, have addressed how a competitive capitalistic society is to maintain civility despite economic, social, and political inequalities. The debate initiated by Renaissance humanists continues.

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Courtly Behavior

► Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of

Courts and Courtiers in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Courts were the center of political and cultural life in the Renaissance. A longstanding sociological theory sets the origins of our modern concept of civilized behavior in the Renaissance courts. Differentiating themselves from medieval courts by abandoning itinerancy and becoming more and more stable, Renaissance courts assumed a fixed, enclosed, and elitist structure, with the prince or lord at its center and a complex entourage of courtiers employed in different tasks surrounding him.

At the same time, courts were places of unprecedented social mobility, where men of humble origins and great ambition could strive to obtain success and fame. In addition, they were important venues for the distribution of patronage: princes invested in writers and artists who could bring prestige to their court and make it outshine any rivals. Renaissance courts are also of paramount importance for gender studies. The courtly environment saw examples of powerful and influential females, who challenged the still existing stereotypes of women's weakness and inferiority to men. Finally, the court was one of the main topics of Renaissance satiric writings, which offered a completely different picture from the image of splendor and magnificence that the courtly environment tried to present, depicting courts as overrun by hideous vices such as envy, flattery, and ruthless competition for success.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Renaissance Court: Meaning and Myth

A well-known theory originating with the sociologist Norbert Elias's groundbreaking work *The Civilizing Process* (first published in 1939) states that what we nowadays recognize as manners, polite behavior, and control over one's body – in short, what we define as “civilized” behavior – first developed in the courts of the Renaissance (Elias 1978, 1982). Although Elias's theory has been the object of criticism and revision through the years, it remains a pivotal piece of scholarship thanks to its highlighting of the important changes that courts and the culture which originated within them brought to the mentality and to the organization of civic life in Europe.

The court was not a Renaissance innovation: it had existed in ancient and medieval societies. Yet in the Renaissance the court assumed entirely new characteristics and an unprecedented importance that together allow us to define it as a peculiarly Renaissance phenomenon. The term “court” encompassed a multiplicity of areas of meaning, denoting at the same time a physical place, a political institution, and the many

different of people living and working within it. The third meaning – the court as an entourage – is the most important connotation of the term in the early modern period, while the related Latin terms *aula* and *curia* designated the physical place alone.

The notion of the physical presence of the court in a specific place is also an important aspect that sets Renaissance courts apart from medieval ones. In the Middle Ages, the courts were itinerant: the prince and his entourage moved throughout the kingdom, and the court was located whenever the prince was at a given time. In the Renaissance, however, as the princely staff grew, the court became more and more settled in a precise location. The term court thus began to indicate a fixed and enclosed space entrance to which was reserved for those who belonged to a very restricted group. The Renaissance court was strictly elitist in nature. It was separated from the rest of the city by physical boundaries and by its rigid codes of conduct. The courtly code of conduct dictated every aspect of life at court, from dress to social etiquette, reinforcing the notion of the courtly space as belonging only to a select few (Mateer 2000).

Scholarship has often recognized the importance of Renaissance courts and of the culture that they developed and promoted for the history of Western civilization. Defined as “laboratories of modernity” (Muchembled 2002), their concentration of culture, power, and manners made them into places where many of the behavioral norms and the customs of living that were to influence European societies in the centuries to come were first created and put into practice.

In analyzing the court as a political and social subject that shaped the reality of early modern Europe, it is important to point out that the term court also came to designate a mythical place (both utopian and dystopian) that existed not so much in reality as in the imagination of those who depicted it. The court as a “place of mind” gave birth to two antithetical representations of courtly life. There was an entirely positive representation of a courtly utopia, according to which the court was the breeding ground of the noblest virtues and the most exquisite manners, inhabited by men and

women who devoted their life to honest behavior and to the most refined pursuits. This courtly utopia, interestingly, was often presented as belonging to the past and now lost in the decay and corruption of contemporary courts. The second representation of the court was a foil to the courtly utopia, a dystopian picture where anything associated with the court becomes tainted, morally depraved, and damaged beyond repair.

The Origins of Renaissance Courtliness

An important distinction between Renaissance courts and their predecessors is that medieval courts were not places devoted to cultured pastimes and elegant manners, as in their Renaissance incarnation, and were instead more associated with warlike behavior (Muchembled 2002). According to Aldo Scaglione, the history of courtliness began in tenth-century Germany, when the emperor Otto I started attracting talented men into his entourage, investing them with the office of bishop, while at the same time employing them in administrative positions for the empire (Scaglione 1991; Jaeger 1985). In the same period, there was a shift in cathedral schools, which no longer focused on producing teachers of the Bible and became more oriented towards training religious leaders and public administrators. Courtier-bishops and cathedral schools started laying the foundations for the development of courtly culture and of courtly manners, and the German episcopate became “a training ground for manners.” Courtliness, however, abandoned its association with cathedral schools during the twelfth century, when it shifted to secular courts (Scaglione 1991).

After the initial development of courtliness in Germany, Renaissance Italy was the place where the court came to assume a unique role as the foundation of cultural and social life. In Italy as well, courtly manners were developed and systematized to their highest standard, thanks to Baldassar Castiglione’s extremely influential manual for conduct at court, *Il libro del cortegiano* (Castiglione 2000) (*The Book of the Courtier*).

The predominance of the court structure throughout the Italian peninsula was also a Renaissance innovation. During the Middle

Ages, only the south of Italy was structured as a princely court, due to the presence of the kingdom of Naples. The papal court had been in exile in Avignon for the greater part of the fourteenth century, but had returned to Rome at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The main form of government in the northern and central parts of Italian peninsula in the Middle Ages was represented by city-states with a republican government. Yet the situation of these republics had begun to change over the course of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, a time when Italian Renaissance courts were still small structures, whose claim to power often rested on shaky foundations. It was only during the course of the Renaissance that they were able to expand, to consolidate their power, and to become the cultural centers of the period.

Finally, it is necessary to underline that the history of Renaissance courts is also complicated by the fact that major courts (ruled by a prince, a duke, or the pope) coexisted with various “satellites” represented by minor courts or households. Members of the minor nobility, powerful members of the clergy such as cardinals, the female consorts of rulers, and, in some cases, even rich and influential private citizens were holding their own courts. This multiplicity of courts created a particularly fertile, but also hectic and extremely competitive, environment. It was an environment in which, furthermore, the most ambitious men of the time could decide to try their luck and work their way towards social advancement.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Structure of Renaissance Courts

Renaissance courts, both large and small, tended to share some general characteristics. Courts usually had a rigid structure, centered on a prince who in the course of the early modern period would become more and more powerful, often to the point of being represented as a God-like figure. Even in the less absolutistic models of court, the prince stood at the center of the complex structure of the court, providing its order. The prince’s favor or disfavor could determine a courtier’s fate: he

was therefore respected and feared, and contemporary writings on courts advised courtiers never let down their defenses when in the presence of the prince. Instead, they should always behave as if they were in the presence of a ferocious and unpredictable lion.

The facility with which one could rise or fall in the favor of a prince made the court an extremely competitive environment. Courtiers knew very well that they could never consider any position, even the most successful one, as permanent and safe; and they were also very aware that the misfortune of another courtier could result in their own good fortune. At court, that is to say, one needed to guard oneself not only against the fickleness of princely favor, but also against the potential attacks of fellow courtiers.

At the same time, the competitiveness of the courtly environment also presented men of talent born into the lower social strata of society with an unparalleled opportunity to climb the social ladder. This opportunity for social advancement was, however, paired with a constant anxiety both on the personal level – due to the constant instability of a courtier's position – and on the class level, since individuals belonging to the higher levels of society could feel at risk of being superseded by ambitious and talented ones from below.

The court was also a place where constant performance was a necessity. This theatrical aspect was typical of the Renaissance court and is another feature that distinguishes it from its medieval counterpart. The necessity of constantly reaffirming one's talents and accomplishments in front of the prince, of making oneself noticed in order to avoid being neglected in the distribution of rewards or falling from grace, meant continuously engaging in performative behavior. In addition, the main function of the court was also to showcase the power of its prince: a function that was especially critical in Italian courts, which were relatively new and therefore in need of persistent assertion of their power. As a consequence, it was imperative that the court publicly displayed the power of its prince. No one – neither the courtiers, nor the prince – was exempt from the pressure to enact their power, talent, refined manners, and intellectual sophistication.

Renaissance courts also offered new opportunities to women. Though still far from being considered equal to men, Renaissance women, in some cases, experienced an unprecedented degree of power and influence at court. This feature of Renaissance court is of paramount importance for the history of women.

Court Culture, Patronage, and Status

As cultural centers of the Renaissance, the courts worked to sustain the ideology on which the courtly system was based. Court culture created tales, beliefs, and symbols to establish its set of values and to reinforce its own existence. Renaissance courts represented a distinctive combination of power and elite culture. In order to support a fitting image of themselves, courts created what has been called a “marriage of power and imagination” (Martines 1979).

Courtly patronage, by offering support to some of the most gifted writers, artists, and musicians of the time, worked precisely towards the goal of creating and sustaining the best possible image of courtly power. The talents that were attracted to the court brought prestige to it, celebrated courtly power in their works, and created an aura of grandeur around the prince and his entourage. Renaissance courts also rivaled each other in influence and splendor, and a court's ability to attract the most highly reputed artists and *literati* was the equivalent of a publicity move aimed at asserting its superiority over any potential competitors.

This resulted in an unprecedented alliance between art and power. Works of art were created not for a market, but directly for patrons, who regarded them as tokens of their influence and refinement. Patronage was also of great benefit to the artists, who could count on demand for their work and on a secure income. This bargain, in turn, gave patrons considerable influence over the artist's creations, limiting the freedom of court artists (Martines 1979).

Patronage of the arts and the consumption of refined goods should be seen in connection with the need of the Renaissance court culture to display luxury and power. The same desire motivated the construction of buildings, a practice that

allowed princes to make statements of power for the entire city and for visitors from rival courts. This continuous display of power and luxury has been seen as a way to support the princes' claim to power and to assert their role as leaders (Martines 1979). It was particularly important for the *signori* who ruled Italian courts, since their position was often new and relatively unstable, and therefore in need of continuous reinforcement.

The consumption and the display of Renaissance courts almost inevitably resulted in a dramatic shortage of money. Princes often overspent their budgets and eventually found themselves in dire straits. In addition to the expenses for buildings and for works of art, they often squandered vast amounts of money on ephemeral matters such as celebrations, feasts, and banquets, which can appear puzzling to the modern eye. In order to explain the courtly vogue for squandering money on such events, we need to take into account that occasions like these revolved around fundamental issues of status. In a society where everyone was competing to affirm their status, lavishing large sums on luxury and in feasts brought a return in prestige. In addition, liberality was regarded as a core virtue of a good prince, while one who leaned towards parsimony risked alienating his subjects. Similarly, magnificence, the act of spending money on luxurious objects, of sponsoring building projects, and of offering patronage to artists, was considered a pivotal virtue in the Renaissance mentality.

It was not only princes who incurred great expense in order to achieve and maintain status, but also many of their subjects. Renaissance courtiers needed to invest in statements of prestige such as clothes, jewelry, and horses before trying their luck at court – with potentially ruinous consequences, in the event that they eventually were not able to gain the favor of the prince.

The Prince and His Power

Securing the prince's favor – his grace, as it was referred to in Renaissance writings on courts – was the primary aim of every courtier. The prince was the fulcrum of the court and the embodiment of power that was seen as radiating directly from him. Everything at court centered around the

prince, and energies of his entourage converged on serving and pleasing him. In some cases, such as at the court of Elizabeth I, the monarch also became the incarnation of moral virtues (specifically, in her case, those of Protestant morality). From the Renaissance period to the Baroque, the power of the prince became more autocratic, rendering him increasingly distant even from those among his courtiers who could claim the highest ranks among the nobility.

Yet for all his influence, the prince's power needed to be carefully constructed and constantly maintained. Renaissance texts often convey the notion that the power of the prince was in need of ornamentation and continuous embellishment. In addition, recent scholarship has pointed out that even the prince was not immune from the necessity of mastering the courtly code of comportment and engaging in constant performance at court, since it was precisely on such mastery and performance that the display and the retention of power at court was based (Snyder 2009).

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the ability of the prince either to concede or deny his grace was the source of great apprehension among his courtiers. Since the fate of any courtier depended on the will of the prince, and since his will could change on the spur of the moment, he was often also represented as the personification of the Wheel of Fortune, who could suddenly raise a man to the highest honor or cause him to lose everything he had ever achieved.

In order to gain and to maintain the prince's favor, courtiers needed first of all to make themselves visible to him, putting on show their virtues and talents for his eyes. In addition, to win his grace courtiers employed obedience and also, very often, flattery. A courtier was expected to obey all the prince's commands and to fulfill all his desires – or, if he really wanted to succeed, to foresee them before they were even spoken. Courtiers were also supposed to like whatever their prince liked and to despise whatever he despised, in order to please him as much as possible. The obedience required from courtiers in some cases raised ethical dilemmas, such as what they should do when the orders received from their prince conflicted with their own moral code.

It would be simplistic, however, to view courtiers as completely subject to the prince. Through their display of courtly arts, courtiers aimed to influence the prince in order to receive rewards or privileges. The most favored and esteemed among courtiers, in addition, were often able to have an impact on the prince's decisions. The possibility of becoming a respected counselor to a prince, one who could assist and guide him, was, indeed, the highest aspiration of many Renaissance courtiers.

The Figure of the Courtier and His Role at Court

The court was composed of a wide array of subjects who differed both in their social origins and their role at court. Some courtiers belonged to the minor nobility: they were often the rulers of small estates located within the prince's domain. Such noble-born courtiers, whose aristocratic titles rendered them worthy of acting in lieu of the prince, usually held the most prestigious roles, such as leading the prince's armies, governing territories under his jurisdiction, or going on diplomatic missions. Many high ranking courtiers, because of their strong humanist education, were also prominent figures in the cultural life of the court, in some cases writing literary works (such as chivalric poems) that brought fame to it. Courtiers who did not come from a noble background were instead assigned more lowly tasks, such as working as stable masters, attendants, and service staff. For a long time, the distance separating noble-born courtiers from their non-noble counterparts was apparent, with higher-ranking courtiers traditionally seen as closer to the prince and often styled as his companions. By the sixteenth century, however, the distance between the prince and his noble-born courtiers had widened significantly, separating even elite courtiers from their ruler (Cox 2016). Noble-born courtiers were often suspicious of their lower-ranking counterparts, whom they saw as a threat to their status. The unflattering portraits of those who rose too quickly at court and the discontent of others who considered themselves unjustly neglected that we find in some in early modern writings on courts can be partially explained by the uneasiness of

elite courtiers forced to compete with ambitious social climbers.

The *Book of the Courtier* and the Definition of Courtliness

Despite the importance of the courtier for Renaissance culture, for a very long time there were no depictions of his ideal features nor definitions of his role at court. He was a figure who was almost always depicted in an unflattering light, with negative representations appearing in satirical writings against courts and courtiers (Anglo in Dickens 1977).

One of the earliest positive depictions of courtiers is offered by Diomedes Carafa's 1479 treatise *Dello ottimo cortesano* (*On the Excellent Courtier*), an early example of a genre – manuals offering advice to prospective courtiers – destined to enjoy a vast success in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A positive image of the courtier was finally produced at the end of the 1520s, with the publication of the most influential work on courts and courtiers, followed by a steady stream of reprints, imitations, and even parodies: Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. Castiglione belonged to the class of the elite courtiers: both his paternal and maternal ancestors were descended from the northern-Italian nobility, and he was directly related to the ruling family of Mantua on his mother's side. He began his career as a courtier in his native Mantua and later moved to the court of Urbino, at the time one of the most culturally refined and influential courts of the Italian peninsula. Like many noble-born courtiers, Castiglione acted as a diplomat and an ambassador, in his case for both the duke of Urbino and the pope.

Structured as a dialogue, the *Book of the Courtier* is divided into four books, each dealing with a specific topic concerning the courtier and his life at court. The dialogue is set in the Urbino court (ruled by the Montefeltro dynasty) where Castiglione was a courtier and casts some of his closest acquaintances as speakers. The text was first printed in 1528, but it had been circulating previously in manuscript form and appears to have attracted considerable attention before its publication. The main novelty of the *Book of the*

Courtier resides in featuring, for the first time, a group of courtiers who take themselves and their role and function at court as a topic for reflection and discussion: the goal of the speakers is to define the qualities of the ideal courtier and of his natural companion, the perfect court lady. The dialogue structure of the text allows Castiglione to portray the courtiers and their culture in action. It is also worth noting that the occasion for the discussion of the perfect courtier is described as a game; so, the dialogue portrays one of the sophisticated and erudite pastimes that were common practice among Renaissance courtly elites. Over the course of four evenings, under the supervision of Duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga and her lady-in-waiting Emilia Pia, the courtiers of Urbino engage in an elegant battle of wits aimed at “forming in words” the perfect courtier.

On the first day of the dialogue, the *Book of the Courtier* introduces its key term. The ideal courtier should be able to employ in all of his actions something defined, with a neologism, as *sprezzatura*, an almost untranslatable word that conveys the notion of a carefully constructed nonchalance, while being semantically related to the word *sprezzare*, disdain. *Sprezzatura* is also defined in the *Book of the Courtier* as “the art of concealing art”: the courtier always needs to style his behavior with extreme care and yet make it appear as if it were entirely natural. The ideal courtier will excel at all the activities considered important in court culture, from the more military ones, such as jousting and fencing, to more social and artistic activities, such as engaging in polite conversation and dancing or playing music, but he will always hide any effort behind such accomplishments. Only through the attentive practice of *sprezzatura* will the courtier be able to gain his prince’s attention and finally to be granted his “grace” or favor.

The Goal of Courtliness

Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* offers a portrait of courtliness as the way in which court nobility engage in refined activities. The depiction of the court and its inhabitants presented in the dialogue, the interaction between the protagonists, the topic of the discussion, and the very nature of “game” surrounding the formation of the ideal courtier

may reinforce the stereotype of Renaissance courts as sites where an idle elite spent their days in elegant but ultimately useless pastimes.

The apparent idyll of courtly pastimes, however, hides a much harsher reality. Courtliness, intellectual refinement, and elegant manners often concealed violence and conflict. Courts, by stimulating competition for princely favor, and with their frequent and sudden upheavals of fortune, were the perfect environment for the development of cut-throat rivalry among peers. The ritualization of relations demanded by courtly manners was also therefore a way to contain potential outbreaks of violence (Muchembled 2002).

According to the theory originating with Norbert Elias, courtliness was a means of domesticating a previously independent class of warriors and subjecting them to the authority of the prince (Elias 1978). The discontent expressed by court writers in texts criticizing courtly life has been interpreted as a lament for this lost independence. Elias’s theory has been called into question on the grounds that it is too general to provide a thorough explanation of the reality of different courts. At the same time, however, the pages of the *Book of the Courtier* offer testimony to issues such as fear of disempowerment, of triviality, and of effeminacy that were a source of anxiety for Renaissance courtiers.

While the first book of the *Book of the Courtier* is devoted to defining the qualities of the perfect courtier, in the second book the participants in the dialogue debate how the courtier is supposed to put his virtues into practice. The second book shows significant signs of uneasiness concerning the role of the courtier and the aim of courtly manners by evoking the virtuous courts of the past, while lamenting the decay of most present-day courts, and by implying that, despite all of his accomplishments, the courtier’s relationship to his prince could easily be a troublesome one.

The problem of the potential triviality of courtly arts and of the complex rapport between the courtier and his prince is confronted in the fourth book of the dialogue. In this part of the text, furthermore, a courageous attempt is made to carve out for the courtier a prominent role at the

side of his prince. The courtly arts that have been outlined in the previous books are justified as ways to capture the attention of the prince and almost enchant him, with the aim of gaining his confidence and trust, in order to become his wise, moral counselor. In a society where princes were depicted as over-powerful, childishly whimsical, often prone to fall prey to vice and under the bad influence of devious flatterers, the perfect courtier's role was to guide him along the path of virtue instead. Courtly arts, therefore, become a "salutary deception" practiced by the courtier with a concrete and moral end in mind. Assigning the role of counselor to the courtier also solved the problem of his disempowerment, establishing an influential position for him. Yet the growing absolutism of early modern courts rendered this role very difficult to exercise in reality.

Impact and Legacy

The Legacy of the *Book of the Courtier* and the Evolution of Manuals of Court Conduct

The *Book of the Courtier* enjoyed a remarkable success. After the first edition in 1528, the book was soon reprinted, for a total of 62 editions in Italy over the course of the sixteenth and of the seventeenth centuries; publishers also appear to have competed to produce more attractive versions of the text, with new prefaces and notes added to the editions. The popularity of the *Book of the Courtier* was not restricted to Italy alone. Around 60 translated editions of the text were published in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, in languages that included French, English, Spanish, German, and Polish. It was not until the 1650s that a significant decline of interest took place.

In addition to translations, the popularity of Castiglione's work led to a number of imitations, with over a thousand books offering advice to courtiers being published in Europe in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century (Burke 1995). There is, however, an important difference between Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* and the works that followed it, a difference that is perceivable even in the space of a few years. As

princely power became more detached from courtly elites, the already problematic model of the courtier-counselor set out in the last book of the dialogue became even less likely to find a counterpart in reality. As courts became increasingly bureaucratized, each member of court began to have his own specialized position. This resulted in court intellectuals experiencing a reduction in their autonomy, which in turn led to a decrease in the possibility of exerting any significant influence on the prince. This change is reflected in the development of manuals for the instruction of the secretary, a specialized figure who was in charge of assisting his lord, but not of advising him. In addition, mastery of the courtly code of conduct and the performative aspect of courtliness became more important for gaining and for maintaining power at court (Snyder 2009).

The most important writings on courtliness produced after the *Book of the Courtier* reflect this turn of events by moving away from Castiglione's emphasis on the courtly arts and insisting instead on providing useful, down-to-earth, and practical advice for ambitious courtiers whose main intent was to climb the social ladder at court. Or in other less cynical and more pessimistic cases, manuals of conduct at court presented themselves as sets of recommendations for surviving the increasingly merciless competition among peers at court.

Some of the most interesting writings on courts that emerged in the wake of Castiglione's masterpiece – for example, Stefano Guazzo's *Civile conversazione* (*Civil Conversation*, 1574), Giambattista Giraldis Cinzio's *Discorso intorno a quello che si conviene a giovane e nobile e ben creato nel servire un gran principe* (*Discourse on What Benefits a Young Well-Mannered Nobleman in Serving a Prince*, 1569), and Torquato Tasso's *Malpiglio, overo de la corte* (*Malpiglio, or on the Court*, 1585; Tasso 1973) – offer very different pictures of courtly life and models of conduct at court from the *Book of the Courtier*. All of these works prescribe less zealous conduct on the part of the courtier than the one proposed by Castiglione, moving away from the active pursuit of virtue at court to passive contentment with the mere avoidance of vice. These models of conduct

were more feasible to attain in the grim reality of contemporary courts than the high-minded portrait painted in the *Book of the Courtier*. The ideal of the courtier-counselor was left aside, and the courtier was advised instead to concentrate on surviving the threat of cut-throat competition and the risk of sudden fall from grace that are a constant of life at court. Both Giralaldi's *Discourse* and Tasso's *Malpiglio*, in addition, present an idea of courtliness as a set of precepts for self-defense against the dangers of courtly life. The courtier is advised not to make too much of a display of his talents in order to avoid the danger of provoking the envy of his fellow courtiers or even of the prince. Prudence, as a result, becomes the most important virtue for the courtier, while dissimulation is recommended as the only way to protect oneself from the omnipresent menace of envy.

The endorsement of prudence, dissimulation, and simulation paves the way for the morally ambiguous practices set out in seventeenth-century manuals of conduct, exemplified by the "chilling cynicism" (Anglo 2005) found in a text such as Lorenzo Ducci's *Arte aulica (The Courtly Art, 1601)*. This new notion of the courtly code of conduct created the basis for the disenchantment with courtliness and with life in general that one sees in Baroque writings on courts.

Courtliness and the Renaissance Self

Court culture, with its rigorous code of conduct and its performative structure, compounded by the attention devoted to secrecy, prudence, and dissimulation, also had a profound influence on notion of the Renaissance self. For a long time, the dominant scholarly theory concerning issues of selfhood and individuality in the Renaissance was the one proposed by Jacob Burckhardt in his *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). According to Burckhardt, the Renaissance witnessed for the first time in history the "birth of the individual" in the modern sense. In the Middle Ages, men and women's identities depended on their belonging to a group or collectivity. In the Renaissance, by contrast, people began to strive to affirm their unique identities and to differentiate themselves from their peers as much as possible. The desire to excel that Burckhardt sees as typical

of Renaissance individuals played the leading role in this process, as did the centralized power structure of the court and distinctive kind of competitiveness that court culture promoted. In Burckhardt's opinion, the power structure of the courts fostered the individuality, not only of the prince, but also of all those who were part of his entourage: all members of the court "were forced to know all the inward resources of their own nature, passing or permanent; and their enjoyment of life was enhanced and concentrated by the desire to obtain the greatest satisfaction from a possibly very brief period of power and influence" (Burckhardt 1990).

Burckhardt's notion of the birth of the individual in the Renaissance has met with increasing skepticism in recent times, and scholars are now stressing that collective identities remained strong during the Renaissance. Nevertheless, the influence that court culture had on shaping particular aspects of selfhood in the Renaissance is still an important factor. In his monograph *Myths of Renaissance Individualism*, John Jeffries Martin has identified different forms of identity in the Renaissance. Among the forms of identity, he emphasizes the prudential self and the performative self, the structure of both he sees as directly related to features of life at court. The pressure to perform that courtly life entailed, along with the strict codes that operated in this environment and were described in books of conduct, created a need to distinguish between what should be revealed and what should be kept hidden. Dissimulation was key in navigating potentially dangerous situations. Such issues (together with the even more powerful need to hide one's beliefs from the Inquisition) strongly influenced the formation of the prudential self. The performative self is described by Martin as the direct opposite of the prudential self: while the prudential self was reserved and carefully chose what to display, the performative self was concerned with acting and with calling attention to its performance. Martin underlines how courtesy books had an important impact on the evolution of the performative self. These books encouraged readers to reinvent themselves and taught them to play the right role at the right time. Courtiers, as a result, had to figure

out how to be at the same time prudential and reserved, on the one hand, and avid performers, on the other (Martin 2004).

The dynamics of court culture also resulted in dissimulation becoming more and more significant in a courtier's life. According to Jon Snyder, in the period from the early sixteenth to the seventeenth century, dissimulation became a constituent part of courtliness, to such an extent that it was regarded as an unwritten rule of the courtly code of conduct. In texts complaining about life at court, however, dissimulation was more of a defensive practice and the sign of an "insuperable split" between the courtier's public and private persona. Court culture, in the end, was a system designed to ensure that appearance and reality never coincided (Snyder 2009). The courtier, in addition, needed to become skilled in observing his peers' behavior, knowing that they would, in turn, try to investigate his conduct. Interactions between courtiers were therefore based on a dynamics of mutual psychological scrutiny, and the court, in Snyder's opinion, became not only a place of cultural production and a political center of power, but also a system of communication. All of these issues had a profound influence on the development of the modern notion of the self as divided between a public persona and the privacy of one's inner thoughts.

Women at Court

It is important to underline that the impact that court culture had on the identity of its members concerned women as well as men. One of the major novelties of court culture was, in fact, that it applied to both sexes. It could even be argued that Renaissance courts and their cultural environment had a more significant impact on women than on men.

First of all, court culture allowed a new, close interaction between its male and female members that profoundly shaped Renaissance gender dynamics. Moreover, Renaissance courts allowed women to experience a significant amount of influence and power. In the opinion of some scholars, it was precisely thanks to such changes in court culture that notion of women as inferior to men began to be challenged (Cox 2016).

In the past, scholarly readings of the relationship between court culture and women tended to underscore their subjection to male power. This view dates back to an influential essay by Joan Kelly-Gadol, provocatively entitled *Did women have a Renaissance?* (Kelly-Gadol in Castiglione 2000). According to her interpretation, Renaissance noblewomen were little more than aesthetic objects. Kelly-Gadol saw a reduction of female autonomy in the Renaissance in comparison with the Middle Ages and attributed this phenomenon to the increased control of the state or the court over the feudal power of the nobility. In her view, feudal noblewomen of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were able to engage directly in cultural activity and even in some cases to exercise political power. By contrast, she considered women's access to power in the Renaissance as only indirect and provisional. Kelly-Gadol referred to the *Book of the Courtier* in order to show the purely aesthetic role of women in Renaissance court culture, underlining how in Castiglione's dialogue only four women are admitted to the conversation, and of the four, only two are participants, but even they do not actively contribute to the discussion. Kelly-Gadol also underscored the role of the humanist education that elite Renaissance women received, noting that it required women to be placed under male cultural authority.

In recent years, scholarship has begun revising the notion of Renaissance women's subjugation to male authority both in the social and in the cultural sphere, focusing instead on the many possibilities for influence and autonomy that Renaissance court culture offered to women. Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* is still adduced as evidence, but now to stress that the very presence of women among the interlocutors of the dialogue was a significant novelty.

The theatrical and performative character of Renaissance courts demanded that everyone associated with the court should be educated and able to behave publicly according to its complex and culturally refined code of conduct, and court ladies were part of courtly performances as well as men. As a consequence, they had to possess the manners, the education, and the conversational skills deemed necessary within court culture,

especially during occasions, such as ceremonies or visits from foreign officials, when the image of the court itself was at stake (Cox 2016). In order to comply with these necessities, girls belonging to elite families received a rigorous education from childhood aimed at preparing them for the numerous responsibilities that they would have to face as court ladies and as wives of influential members of the court.

Manuals of conduct at court specifically designed for court ladies began to be produced and circulated in different European countries. The first attempt at creating a manual of court conduct specifically addressed to a female readership is generally considered to be Anne de France's *Les enseignements d'Anne de France, duchesse de Bourbonnais et d'Auvergne, à sa fille Susanne de Bourbon* (*The Teachings of Anne of France, Duchess of Bourbonnais and Auvergne, to Her Daughter Susanne de Bourbon*), written around 1505, and published between 1517 and 1521. Other manuals for court ladies soon followed, such as Lodovico Domenichi's *La donna di corte* (*The Court Lady*, 1564). An intriguing and original example in this genre is Annibal Guasco's *Ragionamento a D. Lavinia sua figliuola, della maniera del governarsi ella in corte, andando per Dama alla Serenissima Infante D. Caterina, Duchessa di Savoia* (*Discourse to Lady Lavinia His Daughter Concerning the Manner in Which She Should Conduct Herself When Going to Court as Lady-in-Waiting to the Most Serene Infanta, Lady Caterina, Duchess of Savoy*, 1586) (Guasco 2010). The text is presented as a *vade mecum* for the author's talented daughter, who since her early years had been provided with an elite education, preparing her to become a lady-in-waiting worthy of a princess, and the work was given to her at the moment when she was about to begin this career.

A ruler's consort had to possess even more sensitive skills than those required for a lady-in-waiting. She might be expected to cooperate with her husband in the management of the state, and, most importantly, she would often be called on to fill in for him when he was absent at war or, if he died prematurely, to act as a regent while waiting his heir to come of age. This happened fairly

frequently in Renaissance courts and resulted in court ladies acquiring more autonomy, influence, and visibility. A ruler's consort also had her own courtly entourage, distinct from that of her husband, and surrounded herself with cultured and talented ladies who – as in the case of Annibal Guasco's daughter mentioned above – were often carefully raised by parents with the aim of providing them with the best instruction that they could afford in the hope that their skills and education would enable them to participate in prestigious courts. Female artists and performers, such as musicians and singers, were also increasingly sought after in Renaissance courts.

Moreover, like their male counterparts, powerful and affluent court ladies were active patrons of artists and writers. Artistic patronage allowed female rulers to stress the legitimacy of their rule in a society that still generally regarded women as unfit for positions of power. Giving their financial support to church building or commissioning religious works of art could, in addition, help women rulers to present an image of themselves as chaste and God-fearing, and therefore alien from the stereotype of female lasciviousness that continued to pervade Renaissance culture.

The rise of women within court culture contrasted with persisting notions of female inferiority, weakness, and sexual wantonness. According to the Aristotelian interpretation of female biology that had been influential in Europe since the thirteenth century, women were an imperfect, lesser version of men. A female occurred whenever hostile circumstances prevented the creation of the perfect human being, that is, a male. A female human being, according to this view, was a nonfully formed male. As a consequence of their imperfection, females were considered to be weak and emotionally unstable – in short, almost child-like in their physical and intellectual development and therefore unsuited for any roles requiring responsibility and physical and intellectual strength. Women's immaturity also made them more likely to fall prey to their instincts, and as a result, they were regarded as more prone than men to sexual promiscuousness. Recent scholarship has underlined that the Aristotelian view of women's inferiority became more

and more at odds with the reality of the Renaissance courts all over Europe, and court culture has been credited with producing notions of womanhood that could challenge Aristotelian theories (Cox 2016).

The *Book of the Courtier* provides a valuable testimony to the popular Renaissance debates on the nature of women and their role in society. The third day of the dialogue, in fact, is devoted to the construction of the perfect court lady (the ideal companion of the courtier depicted in the first two books) and features a debate between speakers who present progressive and conservative visions of womanhood. The speaker supporting the cause of women rejects the Aristotelian notion of their inferiority and proceeds to sketch a picture of the court lady with the same accomplishments and – most importantly – the same moral virtues as the courtier. Yet despite having the same qualities and despite being expected to engage in similar activities at court (including conversation, music, and dancing), there are some fundamental differences between the courtier and the court lady. The courtier focuses on traditional masculine traits, such as robustness and vigor, while the court lady concentrates on being graceful and avoiding the kind of physical activity that might make her look too masculine.

Castiglione's preoccupation with defining the masculine qualities required in the courtier is related to the anxieties that surrounded the courtier's masculinity. These anxieties, in turn, have been explained as related to the presence of women, especially, influential and powerful ones, at court. The role of women at court can also be explored in terms of the relationship of court ladies to male performances of courtliness. Within the theatrical dynamics of court life, court ladies were often intended to have the role of evaluating men's performance of courtly manners. Elias's notion of the civilizing process enacted by court culture on a previously untamed nobility can also prompt a reading of court women as pivotal in enforcing the domestication of warrior aristocrats and their transformation into refined courtiers. According to this reading, the discontent expressed in writings lamenting the conditions of life at court can be interpreted

as reflecting the unhappiness of former warriors who saw themselves tamed by a female-dominated court.

The role of court ladies as judges of men's performance of refined manners is related to the importance of courtly love among the European elites of the time. In courtly love, the male lover declares his inferiority to his beloved and strives to behave in a brave and honorable way in order to prove that he is worthy of her favor. David Quint has underlined how the dynamics of courtly love – an adoring subject who longs for the favor of his superior – recalls the relationship between the courtier and the prince. As a consequence, Quint interprets the misogynistic outbursts found in writings on courts (such as the *Book of the Courtier*) as actually directed towards the prince. It was easier and safer for courtiers to vent their anger on court ladies, already the object of a long tradition of misogyny, than to challenge directly a system that they often saw as neglecting the virtuous (Quint in Castiglione 2000).

Anticourt and Anticourtier Writings

Renaissance writings on courts and courtiers not only provided advice to prospective courtiers. They also offered testimonies which belied both the image of the court as a place of cultural refinement and the notion of courtiers as the embodiment of good manners that are still part of the modern representation of Renaissance society. Negative depictions of courts and courtiers were widely disseminated throughout Renaissance literature, in a variety of different genres. One of the most popular examples is Enea Sivio Piccolomini's *De curialium miseriis* (*On the Miseries of Courtiers*), written in the form of a letter to a friend and dated 30 November 1444 (Piccolomini 1928). Piccolomini's text gathers together all the most common clichés concerning the evils of court life that were later developed by sixteenth-century anticourt satires: the courtiers' flattery of the prince, the cold-blooded competition among courtiers, the envy of those who benefitted from the prince's favor, and most of all, the lack of liberty suffered by those who voluntarily submitted themselves to the yoke of service to the prince. Texts like Piccolomini's

were the legacy of a preexisting medieval tradition – represented, for example, by writings such as Walter Map’s twelfth-century work *De nugis curialium* (*Courtier’s Trifles*) – that portrayed the court as the antithesis to Christian virtue because of its mundane nature and focus on material gains. Renaissance anticourt texts perpetuated the vision of the court as a place where virtue could not exist, and yet they moved away from the medieval Christian perspective by focusing instead on the earthly shortcomings of the court. The *De curialium miseriis* is based on Piccolomini’s own experience as a courtier and features a portrait of its narrator as an ambitious young man who begins his career as a courtier confident of his own talents and determined to acquire fame and wealth in the service of his prince. The image of the gifted and motivated young courtier with aspirations to success is a common feature of writings hostile to the court, as are representations of the disillusionments and the failed hopes that inevitably accompanied his life at court. Piccolomini presents the desires – for honor, power, riches, and pleasure – that can lead a man to become a courtier and then proceeds to explain in detail how the court is the negation of each and every one of these desires. At court, he explains, life is unpleasant, and all delights of the senses are denied. In addition, only sycophants are rewarded by the prince, and, as a consequence, recognition and riches remain only a mirage. Yet Piccolomini’s anticourt lament also highlights how, in spite of all of the court’s shortcomings, many men of talent continue to be attracted to it and to invest in it their highest hopes of success.

Writings against courts and courtiers rose in popularity during the sixteenth century, encompassing different literary modes. In collections of verse satires, it is common to find at least one piece of work bemoaning the many afflictions of courtly life.

Among the famous examples of this genre, which would become models for later negative depictions of courts and courtiers in various European literatures, are Ludovico Ariosto’s verse satires. In the first of these satires, Ariosto describes the events that led him to quarrel with his patron, Cardinal Ippolito d’Este, and his

dissatisfaction over the treatment he received at court. Another satire recounts his life under a new patron, Ippolito’s brother, Alfonso d’Este, Duke of Ferrara, and paints a picture of the difficult conditions of early modern court intellectuals.

Anticourt writings in prose often took the form of a dialogue in which one of the speakers states his intention to join the court, but is eventually persuaded against his decision by interlocutors who express disappointment over their own careers at court and enumerate the physical and psychological discomforts that courtiers are forced to tolerate.

Invectives against the court are also frequent in pastoral plays, where one can find the character of the disillusioned ex-courtier who explains how the luxurious appearance of the court hides a reality of squalor and treachery and who praises instead the happiness of the shepherds’ simple lifestyle.

The themes and the subjects featured in anticourt writings are strikingly similar even in works belonging to different genres and to different national literatures, to the extent that they can be seen as recurrent sets of *topoi* of anticourtliness. These *topoi* involve both the representation of the court, the dynamics of courtly life, and the figures of the courtier and the court lady.

Courts are described as the cradle of the most hideous vices: flattery, envy, deceit, cut-throat competition among peers, and moral depravity. Echoing the motto of the Roman poet Lucan, “*exeat aula, qui vult esse pius*” (“leave the court, whoever wants to be virtuous”), anticourt writings present the court as a place that fosters only immorality, so that no virtuous man can enter it and leave uncorrupted. Courts are also defined as the place of fallen hopes, where only the worthless are rewarded, while the worthy and virtuous are denied well-deserved honors and rewards. Princes are depicted as vain and fickle, an easy prey for sycophants, whom they reward, while disregarding their loyal and deserving servants. Courtiers, on their part, are well versed in the art of duplicity, and they will stop at nothing to obtain material gains. There is no honesty at court, and no friendship is possible between courtiers, intent as they are at putting each other down in order to

make themselves more pleasing to their lord. Court ladies are depicted as supercilious, self-obsessed, and preoccupied with futile activities. Daily life at court is a constant source of pain. The courtier must be aware at all times that each of his peers is constantly scheming behind his back. In addition, every sort of material comfort is denied at court. Courtiers are forced to reside in squalid rooms and often also to share unclean, shabby beds. Anticourt satires devote a good deal of space to the depiction of the horrible dinners eaten by courtiers in the servants' quarters, with dirty tableware, rotten food, and acidic wine, while the prince and his closest associates enjoy a superb meal. Courtiers always squander their money on the expenses needed to sustain their lifestyle, and poverty and a lonely death are the destiny that awaits anyone who enters the court.

Satirical depictions of courts and courtiers such as those offered by Piccolomini and Ariosto influenced generations of satirists to come, and the court remained a popular topic in satirical writings well beyond the sixteenth century. The legacy of anticourt satires is still, in fact, evident nowadays, with the word "courtier" often employed in modern languages as a synonym for an obsequious yes-man.

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- [Bembo, Pietro](#)
- [Carafa, Diomede](#)
- [Fortune in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
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Cox, Leonard

Born: c. 1495, Thame, Oxfordshire

Died: in or after 1549, England?

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Abstract

The Welsh humanist scholar, poet, and educator Leonard Cox is remembered mostly for his involvement in Erasmian circles in Poland and the Kingdom of Hungary, as well as his contribution to the educational and religious reforms of the 1530s and 1540s in England. During his extended stay in Central Europe, he was instrumental in disseminating Erasmus's and Melanchthon's works, and his publications include educational treatises, editions of and commentaries on classical and Neo-Latin authors, and occasional poetry addressed to prominent figures associated with the University of Kraków and the Polish court of Sigismund I. After returning to England, Cox became an evangelical reformer and continued, with lasting effect, popularizing continental humanist ideas in the vernacular through his English translation of Erasmus's *The Paraphrase of Erasmus Roterdame upon the Epistle of Saint Paule unto His Discyple Titus* and his *The Art or Crafte of Rhetoryke*, the first English rhetorical handbook based on Melanchthon's *Institutiones rhetoricae*. Through his ambitious, though incomplete, translation project which meant to cover other works by Erasmus, Cox intended to expand his educational mission not only to grammar schools but also to the general public of the newly reformed English commonwealth.

Alternate Names

Coxus, Leonardus

Biography

Although Cox's place of birth cannot be ascertained from extant documents, his matriculation record at the University of Tübingen suggests that he was born around 1495 in Thame, Oxfordshire, to a family of Welsh descent. His early education in England is similarly shrouded in mystery. He may have studied at the free school at Reading, where he would later return as schoolmaster, before he set out on his lengthy peregrination on the continent, which started in the early 1510s and lasted until his return to England around 1529. According to the English humanist, antiquarian, and royal librarian, John Leland's encomium, Cox had spent some time in Paris, likely in the early 1510s. Cox may have attended the University of Paris, where he likely befriended the English humanist and linguist John Palsgrave and the French scholar, engraver, and first royal printer Geoffroy Tory, whose scholarly activities he would later commend in two poems appended to Palsgrave's French grammar and English-French dictionary, *Lesclarissement de la langue francoyse* (1530). Cox's edition of Jerome's *De virginitatis custodia* (Cox 1519) further attests that he continued to nurture friendships established in Paris, particularly with Henri Estienne the Elder, the Parisian scholar-printer, after leaving France. The most formative influence on his education came from his professors at the University of Tübingen, where he matriculated on 12 June 1514. He studied under the grammarian Georg Simler, the astronomer Johann Stöffler, and most importantly the *Praeceptor Germaniae*, the humanist scholar and reformer Philip Melanchthon, the main inspiration for his later works published in England (Murphy 2015).

Having earned a B.A. in 1516, Cox arrived, most likely via Prague, in Kraków, where he registered at the Jagiellonian University on 24 September 1518, styling himself, like his friend from Tübingen, Johannes Alexander Brassicanus (later professor of rhetoric in Vienna), as *poeta laureatus*. In his widely successful inaugural university oration, *De laudibus celeberrimae Cracouiensis Academiae* (Cox 1518a), Cox attributed special place to rhetoric,

poetry, and astronomy among the disciplines. He subsequently lectured on Livy and the letters of Jerome at the Jagiellonian University (Ryle 2003). As one of the chief promoters of Erasmus's works and methods in Kraków, Cox was deeply involved in the intellectual circles around the Polish court of Sigismund I and was associated with and patronized by such prominent civil and ecclesiastical figures as the royal secretary Justus Ludovicus Decius; the vice-chancellor, later bishop of Kraków, Piotr Tomicki; the poet and writer, and later primate of Poland, Andrzej Krzycki; the grand chancellor Krzysztof Szydłowiecki; as well as Tomicki's political rivals, Jan Łaski Junior, the later reformer, and Jan Łaski Senior, the royal secretary and primate of Poland (Glonski 2007; Zins 1973, 1994). On the invitation of his humanist friend, Johann Henckel, Cox interrupted his stay in Kraków in 1520 to become schoolmaster first in the town school of Lőcse (Leutschau, Levoča, Slovakia) and in 1521 in Kassa (Kaschau, Košice, Slovakia) then both lying within the Kingdom of Hungary. Cox's publications during his sojourn in Central Europe, his most productive period, reflect the marked influence of Italian educational theorists and Erasmus, with whom he exchanged letters in 1527 (Epistles 1803, 1824, 1826; Fantazzi 1974). Following his return to Kraków in 1526, a number of Cox's educational treatises and grammatical handbooks intended for students in grammar schools appeared in print: *Libellus de erudienda iuuentute* (Cox 1526a), the probably spurious *Methodus humaniorum studiorum* (Cox 1526c), and an edition of Donatus's *Grammaticae methodus* and *De octo orationis partibus libellus* (Cox 1526b). Cox's prolific publications in the period, furthermore, include editions of Erasmus's works, such as the anti-Lutheran *Hyperaspistes* (Cox 1526a), Jerome's *Epistola ad Rusticum monachum* (Cox 1518b) and *De virginitatis custodia* (Cox 1519), as well as commentaries on classical and Neo-Latin poets: Statius's *Sylvae* (Cox 1527c), Horace's *Epodon liber* (Cox 1527), Giovanni Pontano's *De laudibus diuinis opusculum* (Cox 1520), and Adriano Castellesi's *Venatio* (Cox 1524) (Breeze 1987–1988; Ryle 1992). Influenced by Erasmus' treatise *De duplici copia*

verborum ac rerum commentarii duo, in his commentaries Cox upheld the stylistic ideals of copiousness or abundance of diction (*copia*), and the purity of Latin style (*puritas*), the latter modelled on Cicero's writings. Cox's commentaries that meticulously explicate the proper meaning of Latin words found both in classical and Neo-Latin poems were intended to enrich the students' vocabulary and help them lay the foundations of an abundant style by fulfilling the prerequisites of *copia rerum et verborum*.

Cox himself composed a number of poems, mostly commendatory verses appended to a variety of publications by his friends, patrons, and associates, which reflect his interests in philosophy, theology, and astronomy. Significantly during this period, Cox was also associated with publications that promoted the use of vernacular languages, and his poems appeared in the leading Kraków printer Hieronymus Vietor's edition of the Dutch educator Johannes Murmellius's *Oratiunculae variae* (Cox 1527b) and *Dictionarius* (Cox 1528), the latter of which contained the first printed Polish dictionary. Cox's only documented contribution to English politics during his continental peregrination is his publication of Luther's epistle to Henry VIII and the English king's response to the reformer, *Epistola Martini Lutheri ad Henricum VIII, Responsio dicti inuictissimi Angliae ac Franciae regis, defensoris fidei, ac domini Hyberniae*, etc. (Cox 1527a), which enhanced the Polish king's image as defender of Catholic faith on the international stage and advanced Cox's own position in royal circles in Kraków (Glonski 2007; Juhász-Ormsby 2012).

In 1529, Cox left Poland and returned to England, presumably because he did not find stable employment at the university or among his private pupils. His first known patron in England, abbot Hugh Cook Faringdon, secured him a teaching position at the abbey's foundation, the free public grammar school in Reading. Although Cox consolidated his appointment at Reading by supplicating for the master's degree in Oxford in 1530, his headmastership was briefly suspended at the time of the dissolution of Reading Abbey in 1539 (Emden 1974; Murphy 2015). It was during

his tenure at Reading that Cox turned to translation and aided the promotion of educational and religious writings by reform-minded humanists in England. While at Reading, he produced his most significant contribution to scholarship, the first English rhetorical handbook, *The Art or Crafte of Rhetoryke* (Cox 1532), which was reprinted within 3 years of its first publication. Cox's elementary rhetoric is largely an adaptation of Melanchthon's *Institutiones rhetoricae* (1521) with added material from Melanchthon's *De rhetorica libri tres* (1519), Cicero's *De inventione*, and his own reading notes. Cox took great pains, however, to remove Melanchthon's name and antipapal sentiments from his rhetoric, thus avoiding any religious associations during the precarious times preceding the English Reformation. Unlike his earlier politically uncommitted publications, Cox's subsequent writings responded directly to the religious and educational reforms prompted by the English Reformation and administered by Cox's new patron, Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's secretary and one of the most influential political figures of the 1530s. Cox's translation of *The Paraphrase of Erasmus Roterdame upon the Epistle of Saint Paule unto His Dysciple Titus* (Cox 1534), in particular, demonstrates his acute awareness of the changing political climate. His strongly anti-papal preface provides an overt declaration of his evangelical leanings and reformed position while advancing to the general reader the reformation statutes, especially the controversial Act of Supremacy, which confirmed Henry VIII's status as the supreme head of the Church in England. Cox's choice of publishing Erasmus's paraphrase on Paul's letter to Titus must have been instigated by Melanchthon, who lectured on Paul's epistle in 1518. It also meant to appeal to Cromwell, who was a known sponsor of translations from Erasmus. Although Cox seemed to have intended to dedicate further Erasmian translations, religious and educational, to Cromwell, he never completed the proposed English versions of Erasmus's *Modus orandi Deum* and *De pueris instituendis* and his paraphrase on Paul's first and second letter to Timothy. However, in the dire situation after the dissolution of Reading Abbey and the execution

of Faringdon on charges of high treason in 1539, Cox turned again to Cromwell with an edition of William Lily's and Erasmus' popular Latin grammar, *De octo orationis partium constructione libellus*, published by the king's printer Thomas Berthelet in 1540. Cox considerably expanded Lily's and Erasmus's text with annotations derived from the Westphalian educator Henricus Primaecus's popular commentary, which he supplemented with his own extensive reading notes, explanations, and examples from a wide range of classical and humanist authors. Although its appearance coincided with the royal initiative to produce a uniform grammar for common use in schools throughout the realm, Cox's annotated edition was superseded in the same year by Lily's authorized Latin grammar, *Institutio compendaria totius grammaticae*. Nor was Cox's plan to compose another rhetorical handbook for students' use, under the proposed title *Erotemata rhetorica*, realized. Within months of the publication of Cox's new textbook, Cromwell fell out of power and was executed in July 1540. Notwithstanding Cromwell's fall, Cox was reinstated in a royal patent to his former position as headmaster of Reading school in 1541. In 1546 he sold the patent and left Reading only to reappear as a participant in another important royal project during the reign of Henry VIII's successor, the Protestant Edward VI. In 1549 Cox's translation of Paul's letter to Titus was reprinted in the officially sponsored *The Seconde Tome or Volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the Newe Testament*, which was significant in popularizing ecclesiastical reforms and was ordered to be displayed in every parish church in England by the royal injunctions of 1547. According to the testimony of the preface, dedicated to his last known patron, Cromwell's former client John Hales, Cox was a licensed preacher within this period and, due to the preaching ban imposed in 1548, was working on Greek patristic texts by Mark the Hermit at that time. With Hales's imprisonment and subsequent exile shortly after the publication of the *Paraphrase*, Cox also disappears from the records, and nothing can be firmly established about his later life or death. Nevertheless, Cox's last extant publication

confirms that he maintained his association with the English court and was patronized by people who continued to advance religious reforms during the reign of Edward VI (Ryle 2004; Murphy 2015).

Cox's Erasmianism, which placed him at the center of the intellectual circles in Kraków, proved to be an indispensable asset in England and helped him advance his position under both Henry VIII and Edward VI. The career path that eventually led Cox to resign from his headmastership at Reading and to devote himself wholeheartedly to preaching resembles that of evangelical humanist educators who converted their Erasmianism simultaneously into the production of new textbooks and the introduction of humanist methods of instruction into English grammar schools, as well as the spiritual reformation of the English commonwealth (Juhász-Ormsby 2012).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Cox's early publications, especially his theoretical treatise on the education of youth, *Libellus de erudienda iuventute*, reveal his indebtedness to Italian humanist educators, as well as Erasmus and Melanchthon (Glomski 1998, 2000; Breeze and Glomski 1991). Influenced by Battista Guarini's methods, in *Libellus* Cox emphasized the moral character of the schoolmaster and advocated for a parallel Greek-Latin program in grammar schools. He also adapted Erasmus's recommended list of authors and his guide to textual exegesis in *De ratione studii* (1512), although he delineated a far more rigorous and systematic curriculum than either Erasmus or the Italian pedagogues had. Like Melanchthon, Cox stressed the formation of good grammatical habits, which he demonstrated in his annotated edition of Erasmus's and Lily's grammar *De octo orationis partium constructione*. In his commentary, Cox provides an alternative to the systematically organized precepts of Erasmus's and Lily's grammar, and his notes constitute an encyclopedic manual of the Latin language, illustrating the imitative method of instruction. Following the

Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus, Cox based his study of the Latin language on usage, attributing authority not only to classical writers but also to modern interpreters. Furthermore, Cox assigned a central role to the vernacular in elementary language instruction which led him to produce an English translation of Melanchthon's *Institutiones rhetoricae*. Possibly the first part of an incomplete series, Cox's *The Art or Crafte*, focuses on invention and arrangement and covers the three types of oration with extended, freely translated examples drawn from a broad range of humanist and classical Greek and Latin works, among which Cicero's orations and rhetorical treatises feature prominently (Carpenter 1899; Ryle 2003). Like Melanchthon, Cox stressed the speaker's moral character and the role of dialectic as opposed to stylistic artifice and ornamentation that characterized contemporary school texts composed for elementary rhetorical instruction. Cox's educational handbooks popularized Erasmus's precepts concerning the foundation of an abundant style and Melanchthon's rhetorical theories first in Central Europe then in England, where the Erasmian (and to a lesser degree Melanchthonian) pedagogical ideals would define the Henrician school reforms in the first part of the sixteenth century and would consequently effect a more broadly based education of the general public in the vernacular.

Impact and Legacy

The direct impact of Cox's educational activities and his promotion of the use of the vernacular in preuniversity instruction is most discernible in his disciples' activities in Central Europe. Cox's student in Kassa, the German educator and reformer Leonhard Stöckel's humanist curriculum, founded on Erasmus's and Melanchthon's pedagogical methods, in his school in Bártfa (Bartfeld, Bardejov, Slovakia), would exert considerable influence especially in Lutheran schools within the Kingdom of Hungary throughout the sixteenth century, earning Stöckel the reputation of *Praeceptor Hungariae* (Witt 2008). Similarly, the Hungarian humanist Johannes Sylvester, who

studied under Cox in Kraków and contributed to his edition of *Statius*, would become a pioneering educator and an ardent advocate of the Hungarian language, producing several influential works: Christopher Hegendorf's elementary grammar, *Rudimenta grammatices Donati*, with an Hungarian commentary; a Latin-German-Polish-Hungarian phrase book based on Sebald Heyden's *Colloquia puerilia* (1527); the first Hungarian grammar, *Grammatica Hungarolatina* (1539); and an Hungarian translation of Erasmus's Greek-Latin New Testament, *Újszövetség* (1541) (Breeze 1987–1988). Cox's role in championing vernacular languages is also apparent in his prefatory poems appended to Palsgrave's French grammar, in which he highly praised both Tory and Palsgrave for their promotion of the French language and their call for a systematic vernacular grammar.

Although it is more difficult to trace how his *The Art or Crafte* impacted later rhetorical handbooks, Cox's extensive English commentary that supplemented Melanchthon's rhetorical precepts and adapted the Erasmian commonplace book method and textual analysis would be followed in subsequent educational textbooks intended for English grammar schools, most notably in Nicholas Udall's popular *Floures for Latine Spekinge* (1534) and Palsgrave's rhetorically oriented English-Latin edition of the Neo-Latin play *Acolastus* (1540). It will be Thomas Wilson, Udall's student under the reformed humanist curriculum at Eton College, who would continue Cox's work in producing the first English treatise to provide a comprehensive treatment of rhetoric, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), which he intended for the benefit of the general public. Wilson derived some material from Cox's *The Art or Crafte*, but more importantly, Wilson's work, like that of Cox's textbooks and commentaries, was deeply informed by both Cicero's entire rhetorical corpus and Erasmus's educational writings. Through its numerous reprints and extensive English examples, Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* would profoundly affect not only the concepts of rhetorical theory but also sixteenth-century English letter writing and literature in general.

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- Melanchthon, Philipp
- Valla, Lorenzo
- Wilson, Thomas

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Coxus, Leonardus

► Cox, Leonard

Crasis

► Complexion, Temperament, and Four Humor Theory in the Renaissance

Cremonensis, Cosmus

► Raimondi, Cosma

Cremonini, Cesare

Born: Cento (Ferrara) and baptized on the 22 December 1550

Died: 19 July 1631, Padua

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Abstract

In the complex scenario of the Aristotelian tradition during the second part of the sixteenth century in Italy, Cesare Cremonini

is a philosopher who shows a really interesting profile both in his life and in his works. His activity as a university professor took place in two important cities of the Italian Renaissance, Ferrara and Padua, two cruxes in the multifaceted network of centers and peripheries (Burke 1998), where many aspects of early modernity culture were rooted. Furthermore, owing to the specific history of the University of Padua, Cremonini's life is also interwoven with the important city of Venice, the Republic guarantor of a greater degree of freedom, and the scenario of rising libertinism. In the existential and intellectual biography of Cremonini, we see the presence of relevant topics such as: the immortality of the soul, the role of experience in learning, the question of method, and the delicate issue of *libertas philosophandi*. After a long period in which Cremonini's contribution to Renaissance philosophy was confined to an over-easy contraposition with the revolutionary thought of Galileo Galilei (Renan 1852; Mabillean 1881; Berti 1877), the last two decades have shown a new interest for this philosopher (Khun 1996; Poppi 1991, 2000; Muir 2007).

Biography

In some cases, the life of a philosopher is placed *a latere* in respect to the most relevant events of his epoch, while in others the biographies are deeply plunged into the tumultuous becoming of history. The rich life of Cesare Cremonini reflected the second case: an intellectual and a university professor who took part in the cultural and political life of a city as important as Padua and a philosopher under the protection of the illustrious Republic of Venice. Cremonini was born in Cento, a very small town between Modena and Ferrara, politically under the influence of the powerful Este family; we do not know the exact date of his birth, but we do know his day of baptism: December 22, 1550. His mother was Mattea Pilanzi and his father was Matteo; the family was active in painting: his grandfather, Giovan Battista, father, and brother, also called

Giovan Battista, were all painters. We do not have any clear information about the first period of his studies: after the first degree in humanities – traditionally the initial step for entering one of the three big faculties in the sixteenth century – Cremonini chose the faculty of law: after a brief period, however, he left this *cursus studiorum* and devoted himself to philosophy. Probably, these steps of his education occurred in an unknown *Studium* of Ferrara; we know that he was a student of Federico Pendasio (1526–1603), a professor of *Natural philosophy* both at the University of Padua (1565–1571), and at the University of Bologna (from 1571 till his death) (Schmitt 1980; Forlivesi 2012).

Thanks to his doctorate, taken most probably in Ferrara, Cremonini earned the *licentia ubique docendi*, the qualification necessary to teach in universities. During these years, he spent his time in the rich milieu of Alfonso II d'Este's court (1533–1577) in Ferrara, and he became familiar with Giambattista Pigna, Francesco Patrizi, and Torquato Tasso. It is important to remember that Tasso had been a professor of *Mathematics* (1574) in the same faculty of Arts and Medicine where, from 1578 to 1590, Cremonini himself held his courses. In fact, in 1578 his first chair, as professor *straordinario* (adjunct professor) *in secundo loco* (second place) was *Natural philosophy*; from 1581 to 1584, he was both adjunct professor *in primo loco* (first place) and professor *ordinario* (full professor) in second place for the same discipline. From 1584 to 1587, he was only adjunct professor in first place and then until 1589, he was full professor in first place. During his last academic year at the University of Ferrara, Cremonini was appointed to the same chair of *Mathematics* that had belonged to Tasso, an important and relevant task, because the course was centered on the reading and explanation of Euclid's *Sphere*. His life in Ferrara was very successful but not without problems: already during this time, in fact, the philosopher had faced some slanders by his colleagues, a hostility rooted in academic rivalry and, probably, in the very leitmotif of Cremonini's life: the first accusation about his teaching and manner of reading Aristotle's works is proved by a letter,

sent on May 20, 1589, addressed to Duke Alfonso II d'Este (Tiraboschi 1833, p. 475; Schmitt 1984).

On the November 23, 1590, Cremonini was invited with an official decree to teach at the prestigious University of Padua. This date is very important because at that date Cremonini was in a position to take the chair of *Natural philosophy* as professor *in secundo loco*, the place freed by the death in 1589 of Jacopo Zabarella, who had spent part of his life in this position. Following the University's antiprivilege rules, the latter philosopher, born in Padua, could not obtain the most prestigious place, steadily occupied by Francesco Piccolomini, full professor of the same chair but *in primo loco*. Moreover, Zabarella's death was significant for another circumstance as well: in the same year, Girolamo Capizucchi also died. For the Jesuits, this meant the loss of the two most important professors in line with their positions (and their requests) inside the *Studium* of Padua (Muir 2007; Sangalli 2001; Grendler 2002, pp. 479–483). These two elements, a new academic horizon and the relations with the Jesuits, were relevant aspects of the early period of Cremonini's activity in Padua; two official speeches, both in 1591, perfectly represent the philosopher's role in the new *Studium*: the first is the inaugural lesson of his course (January 27, 1571), the second is the discourse held in Venice against the powerful *Gymnasium patavinum* founded by the Jesuits (December 20, 1571). In these two speeches, we can see the rich and complex profile of Cremonini as an intellectual and citizen: a skilful and cultured orator, he had profoundly changed his context and found a new identity in relation to an institution very different from the University of Ferrara. In this city, the *Studium* was strictly linked to the will of the Duke, and in management near to that of a private institution; under the protection of Venice, Padua University was a solid public reality with a greater degree of freedom, where Cremonini was able to develop his career (Schmitt 1980), inside and outside the *Studium*.

After this beginning in Padua, Cremonini's reputation and fame constantly grew: in the academic years 1601–1602, after Piccolomini's retirement, he held the chair of *Natural*

philosophy as professor *in primo loco*, the role that he kept until his death on July 19, 1631, probably due to a lung disease. During this period, we see strong evidence of Cremonini's importance: the increase of his salary from 200 to 2000 florins; his role as an orator on behalf of Cento in the delicate business regarding the victory of Pope Clemente VIII against Ferrara (May 27, 1598); and three times on behalf of the Faculty of Arts and Medicine, the task of making the speech on the occasion of the election of a new *Doge* (1606, 1616, 1618). His public role was also strengthened by his activity inside the *Accademia dei Ricovrati*, where he was elected with Galileo Galilei and Gambattista Pigna in 1600.

Another important chapter in Cremonini's life was his presence in different debates: against Galileo Galilei on the nature of the skies (1605); with Paolo Beni supporting his pupil Giuseppe degli Aromatari against Alessandro Tassoni on Petrarch's heritage (1611–1613); against Giorgio Raguseo about the nature of elements and some points in Aristotle's interpretation (1613); and against Pompeo Caimo about Galenism (1626–1627) (Ongaro 2000). His authority as professor and philosopher earned during his life in Padua, however, did not save him from the harassing attentions of the Inquisition of this city and, of course, of Rome: some relevant studies on these topics (Poppi 1993a, b; Sangalli 1998; Muir 2007) clearly show the tenacity of the Inquisition's attacks against Cremonini. After a first moment of attention in 1599, Cremonini's works and teaching activities were subject to examination seven times: in 1604 (the most recent discovery), 1608, 1611, 1614, 1619, 1622, and 1626. Despite this continuous fight with the Inquisition, Cremonini was very prudent and succeeded in escaping from any humiliating or violent consequence, reinforcing his standing as a masterly intellectual: in this framework, thanks to his teaching activity and cultural influence, Cremonini's legacy is linked to libertinism especially during the seventeenth century; later, also as a result of the *Naudeana et Patiniana* (1701, 1703, p. 56), the posthumous books attributed to Gabriel Naudé and Guy Patin, Cremonini's ironic and shrewd profile was strengthened by the

famous motto ascribed to him: *intus ut libet, foris ut moris* (Kristeller 1968; Bosco 1989; Turner 2003; Cavaillé 2011).

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition – Innovative and Original Aspects – Impact and Legacy

In order to understand Cremonini's contribution to late Renaissance thought, it is necessary to place this philosopher in the problematic and multifaceted scenario of Italian universities in the seventeenth century, with its debates and principal topics. First of all, it is important to bear in mind the prominent position of Aristotelian tradition and its relations with Christian dogma. Whereas in Europe, in France (Paris), and England (Oxford), Aristotle was often utilized in the Faculty of Arts as a first step for studying Theology, during the fourteenth century, the specific situation of Italian Universities and the absence of a strong tradition in this field in *Studia* such as Padua, Bologna, and Pavia favored a separation between natural philosophy, focused on Aristotle's works, and religious faith. Despite the respect for Christian dogma, Italian professors often claimed the autonomy of reason in explaining natural phenomena and the reading and comments of Aristotle's legacy were directed to the study of Medicine: the most common books were *De caelo*, *Physics*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *Parva naturalia*, the so-called *Organon*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, and *Politics*.

During the sixteenth century, as a result of the studies developed in the previous century, a new approach arose: beside the Scholastic tradition, the new humanistic lesson had a powerful impact on university practice. Aristotelian humanism had important supporters such as Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (1456–1531), Angiolo Poliziano (1454–1494), and Ermolao Barbaro (1453–1493), and it promoted new translations in Latin and new editions of the Greek texts, among which the contribution of Aldo Manuzio (1452?–1515) and his typography in Venice played an important role. This new approach created a divide between two ways of reading and interpreting Aristotle: the

first, traditionally linked to Averroes, which recalled the validity of the medieval lesson, and a second manner, focused on the contribution of Alexander of Aphrodisias, which found in the Hellenistic tradition the principal contribution for reading Aristotle. The differences and relations between these two traditions are very complex, also because of reciprocal influences and the different shades within each philosopher, but we could say that Averroes's tradition tended to pantheism and Alexandrian traditions tended more toward a split between a transcendent God and the immanent world (Bianchi 2003). In this context, relevant for the history of North Italy's *Studia*, we must recall the contribution of Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), one of the most important philosophers of the Alexandrian traditions: a pupil of Nicoletto Vernia (1420–1499), Pomponazzi tried to explain the world's order only by human reason and one of his most renowned topics was the immortality of the soul, widely debated in Latin and vernacular treatises during the Renaissance (Sgarbi 2016). His major work, *De immortalitate animae* (1516) was written only 3 years after the papal seal *Apostolici regiminis* (December 19, 1513) by Leone X, where certain Christian dogmas are reaffirmed: the soul truly exists of itself and essentially as form of the human body, it is immortal, created by God and instilled in the body, and each person has his own rational soul. Furthermore, the second part of this papal seal lays down the obligation for university professors to teach these dogmas and to confute every different philosophical argument. With *De immortalitate animi* and *De naturalium effectuum admirandorum causis sive de incantationibus* (1520), Pomponazzi proposed an intrepid approach for questioning world, miracles, and the nature of the soul (Landucci 2006). Although his faith in the Christian dogmas is undisputed, the philosopher attempted a clarification of reality from a rational perspective: the Church affirms the truth and philosophy interprets Aristotle. A rational explanation is applied by Pomponazzi on the soul too, depicting a horizon where recompenses and penances are immanent to mortal life; in this manner, a long philosophical and theological tradition, engaged in a research

inside Aristotle's thought on the question of the immortality of the soul, is undermined causing a strong reaction. *De immortalitate* was burnt in Venice and only the protection of Pietro Bembo and the magistrates of Bologna saved Pomponazzi from dire consequences.

After Pomponazzi's contribution, the topic of the immortality of the soul remained an element of living debate: we could refer to Simone Porta (1496–1554), the author of *De anima et mente humana* (1552), and, most importantly in Padua's context, to Jacopo Zabarella (1533–1589). With a solid education having a hallmark rooted in the new humanistic approach and in agreement with the interpretation of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Zabarella wrote works in an elegant Latin on the interpretation of Aristotle and he confirmed some of Pomponazzi's positions; in particular, in his opinion the soul is the form which gives being to the individual body and moreover, the soul cannot operate without the *phantasmata* given by the perceptive organs and it cannot survive the body's death: the Christian dogmas are not refused, but they are confined to the field of theology. Another important topic debated by Zabarella was the method in the logic field (Zabarella 1578a): his proposal of a *regressus demonstrativus* was a relevant issue in the university's context (Zabarella 1578b). Zabarella and his pupil Giulio Pace (1550–1635) contributed to the diffusion and success of the Aristotelian tradition of Padua in Europe.

A last element of interest for understanding the cultural scenario of Padua is to be found outside the University, in the fragmented horizon of *Accademie*: Of particular importance, this features the activities of the *Accademia di Infiammati* and of one of its members, Alessandro Piccolomini (1508–1579). Engaged in the defence and promotion of the vernacular, Piccolomini and the *Infiammati* achieved many important translations and new works in particular devoted to topics not sufficiently present in the university curriculum, such as rhetoric, poetry, and moral philosophy. In this sense, his adaptation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* was relevant to the new civil context, *De la istituzione di*

tutta la vita dell'uomo nato nobile e in città libera (Piccolomini 1542, 1560).

In the versatile profile of Cremonini, all these elements are present. Already in Ferrara, with his familiarity with Francesco Patrizi (1529–1597) and the dynamic milieu of the Este court, Cremonini had a foretaste of the *libertas philosophandi* enjoyed by the previous generation of Italian philosophers such as Pomponazzi and, in a different manner, Patrizi. During the Counter-Reformation, however, the Church engaged in a conflict to re-establish orthodoxy: its fight was against the Platonism of philosophers like Patrizi, Francesco Giorgi, and Agostino Steuco in favor of peripatetic philosophy, but it was also fueled by the intention to restrict freedom in interpreting Aristotle. In this sense, the Church was not inclined to accept the split between faith and natural philosophy anymore, reaffirming the position articulated in the papal seal *Apostolici regiminis*. In Padua, during Cremonini's life, these religious intentions were summarized by the work of Antonio Possevino (1534–1611), *Biblioteca selecta* (Possevino 1593), in which some opinions were considered particularly dangerous such as: «mundum esse ingenitum, animos mortales, Deum non curare res humanas».

In 1590, when he arrived in Padua, it is easy to understand Cremonini's delicate situation: as professor of *Natural philosophy*, his course was once more supervised by the Inquisition and, in order to face this obstacle, the choice of Cremonini was a continuous play of prudence and erudition. This feature is perfectly represented by his inaugural speech of January 27, 1591: Cremonini introduced himself as a philosopher and humanist through a wide range of literary and philosophical citations, linking his image with a noble tradition of inaugural oration typical of the humanistic approach. Furthermore, his humanistic education and his attention to literature were shown also in his poetical works written throughout his life (Cremonini 1590, 1622). The framework of his speech is the perpetual *motus* which rules reality, a powerful movement wherein all elements of the world are dragged «mundus nunquam est, nascitur semper et moritur» (Cremonini 1591).

In this *motus*, the human being is the problematic microcosm illustrated with references from Plato, Dante, and Petrarch, without any mention of Aristotle, showing a strategic solution for bypassing the attention of the Inquisition and of some hostile colleagues. Nevertheless, his approach did not protect him from the attacks of his adversaries: the success of his courses and the rigour of his interpretation of Aristotle's work took him far away from the Christian lessons about peripatetic philosophy. In his works, Cremonini went further than Zabarella: for the philosopher of Cento the world is not created by God and the sky's movement is caused by the desire toward God. Against Averroes' idea of a unique intellect, Cremonini finds in this reality the principle of differentiation between the human being and other animals and the connection between soul and body is guaranteed by innate heat, which is placed in the heart (Cremonini 1626).

Cremonini's interpretation of Aristotle led him toward the affirmation of the mortality of the soul; this element, together with the other positions about the peripatetic philosophy, must be placed in a moment of conflict between the Padua *Studium* and the Jesuits.

This aspect is almost inseparable from Cremonini's philosophical works and teaching activity: today, we know that Cremonini was, in fact, one of most determined rivals of the Jesuits, a contrast which was not limited to academic disagreements. In Padua, a cultural vision and the influence on young people of the aristocracy and the upper class are at stake: indeed, in that period, Padua's *Studium* was one of the most important – and wealthiest – Universities in Italy, for its liberal and antiprivilege rules as well as because it was under the protection of Venice. In 1589, the Jesuits' College, one of those first established in 1542, expanded until it had 450 students among which 70 from the aristocracy (Muir 2007). After 2 years of harsh conflict in which Cremonini played an important role, in 1591 the Venetian Senate declared that only Jesuit novices could attend the courses in the Jesuits' College. Between 1591 and 1606, when Jesuits were banned from Venice's territory, the attacks conducted by Jesuits

became increasingly intense; during these years, the first accusations against Cremonini were made: the first, possibly in 1599, but the trial has still not been ascertained, and the second in 1604, in which the names of Cremonini and Galilei were linked together. This second accusation is interesting because both the opinions and the teaching of the two philosophers were brought to the Inquisition's attention; this attack had been prepared at three separate times: the first, certain Jesuit sermons inviting citizens and students to denounce any ideas in the odor of heresy (March 3, 1604); the second, a denunciation of Cremonini by one of his colleagues Camillo Belloni (April 12, 1604); the third, another denunciation against Galilei made by Silvestro, another colleague (April 21, 1604) (Poppi 1992). The elegant and clever defence that Cremonini presented to the *Signoria* of the Republic was a plea for the civic value of culture, denouncing the subterfuges concocted by Jesuits. Furthermore, we see Cremonini's willingness to explain his position even in front of the tribunal of the Inquisition in Rome in order to dispel any doubts about his conduct, because: «La cosa è di tale importanza, che non solo a persone di qualche grado si conviene mancar di colpa, ma del sospetto della colpa» (Cremonini 1998, p. 108). On this occasion, we observe Cremonini's particular strategy for facing the criticism of his interpretation of Aristotle: the philosopher accepted only the authority of Venice's Senate, avoiding every claim made by the religious power. The Jesuits employed an interpretation designed to link Aristotle's doctrine to Christian dogma, proposing lessons where Aristotle's original works were not used. On the contrary, with a different approach linked to humanistic tradition, Cremonini and many professors in *Palazzo del Bo*, the principal location of Padua's *Studium*, proposed a method founded on an ideal of education addressing the formation of a citizen of the Venetian Republic and guided by sceptical doubt. On the occasion of this first trial and on similar occasions later, the protection guaranteed by Venice preserved Cremonini from any serious persecution. After all, during the same period, there was another strong supporter of the

Republic living in Venice: Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623), who devoted an important part of his work to defending an education guided by the ideals of civic humanism. A similar outline of the trial which took place in 1604 occurred for the famous accusation of 1611, where once again Cremonini and Galilei came under attack: «Videatur an in processu Doctoris Caesaris Cremonini sit nominatus. . . Galileus philosophiae et mathematicae professor» (Berti 1878; Poppi 1992). And once again, the *libertas patavina* saved Cremonini from the Inquisition's darts. The philosopher's trust in Venice's protection is perfectly represented by his famous affirmation full of regret, quoted in a letter from Paolo Gualdo to Galileo (July 29, 1611): «Oh quanto harebbe fatto bene anco il Sr. Galilei, non entrare in queste girandole, e non lasciar la libertà patavina».

Cremonini's most significant books of this period come within this conceptual and political framework; among these, particularly *Disputatio de coelo* (1613) represented a relevant case. This book was published 1 year after another Jesuit defeat, in 1612, when Venice forbade every citizen of its territory from sending his sons to Jesuit schools. Despite his reactionary character (Muir 2007), this work represented a specific approach to humanistic culture: Cremonini promoted philosophy as a research without guarantee of certainty, a discipline which can expose only possible truths. These assumptions are rooted in the same double-truth of Pomponazzi but applied to a different context, where the *libertas philosophandi* is more difficult and dangerous; in this sense, the dedication to Niccolò Donato, reformer of Padua's *Studium*, is very significant: a clear statement of Cremonini's political and cultural affiliation. This book engendered a complex debate made of accusations and clever responses by Cremonini (1616), but there is another element of great interest: the attention to method. This topic, object of debate in Padua till Zabardella's contribution, was not a novelty in Cremonini's reflection; already in 1596, the philosopher had written the *Tractatus de Paedia* (Cremonini 1596). The treatise was created as an introduction for his course dedicated to Aristotle's *De physico*

auditu, but, on this occasion, Cremonini proposed a radical method rooted in the heuristic function of experience for natural philosophy, ethics, and theology. In this manner, Cremonini refused abstract logic such as that of mathematical demonstration and opened the way for a method more sceptical than the systematic doubt of Descartes' future lesson in *Discours de la méthode* (1637) (Kessler 1997; Vasoli 2007).

Another element of interest in the *Tractatus de Paedia* is the relation between professor and student: unlike the Jesuits' approach, for Cremonini this relation is founded on reciprocity and election. The reciprocity is guaranteed by the use of Socratic dialogue as a better method of teaching, the election is found in the conviction that not everyone can learn everything (Muir 2007): the *Paedia* is a method for building a learning community that has the features of the *Respublica literaria* of which Cremonini was a noble member. In this context it is necessary to place the philosopher of Cento, who had responded to every accusation by saying that his affirmations were made «ex Aristotelis doctrina deinde secundum veritate». In the harsh time of the Thirty Years' War, his complex relation with civic power and religious doctrine was a model for the following generation of intellectuals: a difficult harmony between public adhesion to common sense and private freedom, a polyphony which is near to the *arrière-boutique* of Michel de Montaigne, another philosopher who had focused on the heuristic and sceptical power of experience. It is not surprising that in 1630 a group of Cremonini's students founded the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, which openly embraced libertinism. And this is the portrait of Cremonini that the seventeenth century preserved thanks to the work of authors such as De Silhon (1634), La Mothe Le Vayer (1637), Naudé (1644), and Crasso (1656).

Cross-References

- Copernicus, Nicolaus
- Descartes, René
- Galilei, Galileo

- Immortality of the Soul, Renaissance Problem of
- Jesuits in the Early Modern Period
- Libertines and Libertinism
- Naudé, Gabriel
- Pendasio, Federico
- Pomponazzi, Pietro
- Sarpi, Paolo
- Scientific Academies in the Renaissance
- Universities in the Renaissance
- Zabarella, Jacopo

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Crescas, Chasdai

► [Crescas, Hasdai ben Judah](#)

Crescas, Hasdai ben Judah

Born: Barcelona, circa 1340

Died: Saragossa, 1410–1411

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Abstract

Rabbi Hasdai Crescas was the head of the Jewish community of Aragon, and in some ways, all of Hispanic Jewry. Crescas was one of the leading rabbinic authorities of his time, the political leader of the Jews of Aragon, and a philosophical polemicist against Christianity. As one of the main medieval Jewish philosophers, Crescas critiqued the radical Aristotelian philosophy of Maimonides along with some of Maimonides' Averroist philosophical heirs. Crescas denounced the various Aristotelian opinions as contradicting not only the Jewish tradition but also the true empirical and rational understanding of the world. By assembling adducing traditional Jewish opinion, the diverse Aristotelian sources, the neoplatonic thought of the apostate Abner of Burgos, and the new science of scholastics of the fourteenth century, Crescas succeeded in at

creating one of the most original philosophical opinions and critiques of Aristotelianism belonging to the medieval period: the *Or Hashem*. This seminal work, an oeuvre of both Judaic thought and criticism of Aristotelian science, spurred the growth of the new science of the modern period, which started in the fourteenth century.

Alternative Names

[Don Hasdai Crescas](#); [Crescas](#), [Chasdai](#)

Biography

R. Hasdai was born around 1340 in Barcelona to a prominent Jewish family of merchant and rabbis. By the year 1370, Crescas was a proficient young scholar, a Talmudist, and a judge in Barcelona. Following the death of Rabbi Nissim of Gerondi, Crescas and his friend Rabbi Isaac bar Sheshet (Ribash) became one of the main Jewish authorities of Aragon, and possibly of all Spain. In 1389, Crescas left Barcelona and became the rabbi of the capital of the crown of Aragon: Saragossa. A year later, the King and Queen appointed him as the highest judge of all the Jews in the crown and bestowed him with a high degree of authority over the Jewish community. The pogroms of 1391 had a decisive influence on Crescas' life. In those pogroms, thousands of Jews perished and many converted to Christianity. The pogroms began in Castilla, but the rioters crossed the Aragon border. Almost half of the Jews of Spain after 1391 became Christian. Aragon's important Jewish communities in Barcelona, Valencia, and Gerona vanished. One of Crescas' sons died in Barcelona. After these events, Crescas became the leader of the Spanish community in its fight to survive. With the help of John I King and his Queen Violant of Bar, he tried to restore the Jewish community of Barcelona (without success). He helped *converso* Jews who wanted to come back to Judaism to leave Spain for Muslim countries in North Africa. He ultimately wanted to find a safer place for the Spanish Jews, possibly in the Kingdom of Navarre. Until his death late in 1410 or in

January of 1411, Crescas remained the spiritual head of Spanish Jewry.

Works

We know of three works composed by Crescas:

- (I) An untitled philosophical sermon on Pass-over. The principal subjects of this work are miracle-based faiths and free will.
- (II) A book known by the title *Refutation of Christian Principles*. In this book, Crescas offers a philosophical critique of ten principles of the Christian faith: (1) original sin; (2) salvation; (3) the Trinity; (4) incarnation; (5) the virginity of Mary; (6) transubstantiation; (7) baptism; (8) the coming of the Messiah; (9) the new laws; and (10) demons.
- (III) His major work, the *Or Hashem (The Light of the Lord)*. This book deals with the main subjects of Jewish philosophy. The structure of *Or Hashem* is based on a hierarchical arrangement of Jewish dogma opposed to the Maimonides thirteen principles of faith. Crescas separates his book into four different essays: (1) the existence of God; (2) six foundations of the law; (3) obligatory beliefs; (4) beliefs for which the Torah does not clearly establish what the correct opinions are.

Major Opinions

One of the more notable and enduring contributions of Crescas to the history of philosophy is his critique of Aristotelian science. This critique takes place in the second part of the first essay in *Or Hashem*. Crescas's opinions regarding natural science reflect the influence of the new Christian physics of the fourteenth century. Another key source of Crescas's scientific thinking appears to be the lost book by Abner, *The New Philosophy*. But in this case, as in others, Crescas weaves together different sources and utilizes them freely in an effort to build one unified opinion. These critiques include arguments in favor of the existence of a void, a new definition of matter without dimension, and the definition of "place" as a part

of the dimensions that a body occupies within the infinite expanse of the universe.

Crescas also argues that the Aristotelian proofs for the existence of God are inaccurate due to their errant physical bases. Crescas believed that he had a proof for the existence of God, but not for His uniqueness. For to understand the true uniqueness of God, one must learn it via divine revelation. This conclusion is very important because he implies that the believer has a better understanding of God than the philosopher does.

Crescas was the first Jewish philosopher to argue for a deterministic view of the world. His main sources are Averroes and the Jewish apostate Abner of Burgos. According to Crescas, humans can choose between different possible options, but their relation to external causes determines their choices.

Regarding the topic of the soul's essence, Crescas holds a Platonic opinion: The soul naturally continues its life after its separation from the body. Crescas seeks to prove that the soul and not the mind holds the potential for knowledge. He argues that the true goal of the soul is not rational knowledge but love of God. This is a very important move against the elitist opinion of the Aristotelians (especially Maimonides). According to Crescas, philosophical (and religious) learning is only one way, and inferior at that, to love God. The best way to love God is the practicing of the commandments with religious fervor, which, it should be noted, is an easier path for the mass of the people.

Impact and Legacy

Crescas exercised an important influence upon the Jewish community of his time, and indeed, the major leaders of the next generation of Spanish Jewry were his disciples. However, and quite ironically, the majority of Crescas's students did not adopt his philosophical opinions. Thus, his main philosophical influence was mediated through Pico della Mirandola and Spinoza, who espoused a number of his critiques of Aristotelian science, in addition to several of his definitions of God's attributes as well as his opinions on determinism.

Cross-References

- [Albo, Joseph](#)
- [Jewish Averroism in the Renaissance](#)
- [Maimonideanism in the Renaissance](#)

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Cretensis

- [Peter of Candia](#)

Crisolora, Emanuele

- [Chrysoloras, Manuel](#)

Crisolora, Manuele

- [Chrysoloras, Manuel](#)

Croatian Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

Turbulent political situation and no continuity of organized philosophical activity on the territory of the present-day Croatia in the Renaissance period allow only for an overview of individual philosophers who originated from that territory, or conducted their philosophical activities there, between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century. A few of these thinkers were influenced by the cultures of Central Europe, but most came from the coastal area which belonged to the Italian cultural and political sphere, especially that of the Republic of Venice. Most philosophers in this entry received their education and pursued their careers abroad, in cities of Italy and other European centers. Biographies, achievements, and main works of these thinkers are grouped into four topographic sections: (1) the continental area, (2) the northern coastal area, (3) central Dalmatia, and (4) south Dalmatia, in particularly the Republic of Dubrovnik. Within each section, philosophers are listed in chronological order. Philosophers of wider renown are mentioned briefly, mainly to situate them in this context and to refer the reader to the corresponding biographical essays.

Biographies, Achievements, and Main Works of Croatian Renaissance Philosophers

The Continental Area

Apart from ► [Giulio Camillo Delminio](#), who originates from Tomislavgrad (Lat. Delminium) in present-day Bosnia, and ► [Pavao Skalić](#), who was born in Zagreb, the continental area saw few philosophers in the Renaissance. One person of

note was **Andrija Dudić** (Andreas Dudith; Buda, 1533 – Wrocław, 1589), whose father comes from Orhehovica near Čakovec. He was educated in Buda, Wrocław, Brussels, and Paris, and he travelled widely as a Church diplomat. Dudić was appointed bishop of Knin in 1562 and of Pecs in 1563, the position which he held until his conversion to Protestantism in 1567. After a diplomatic career, he retired to Wrocław in 1579, where he composed most of his works and maintained cordial correspondence with notable antitrinitarians. He wrote on astronomy (*De cometarum significatione commentariolus*, 1579), history, rhetoric, and politics.

Northern Coastal Area

Matija Vlačić Ilirik (Matthias Flacius Illyricus; Labin, 1520 – Frankfurt, 1575) is one of the most influential Protestant theologians of the sixteenth century. After education in Venice, Basel, and Tübingen, he went to Wittenberg, where he received the title of Magister of Liberal Arts. There he befriended ► [Philipp Melanchthon](#), but they soon came into conflict. Melanchthon hoped for a reconciliation with the Catholic Church, whereas Vlačić was resolutely against it. In 1549 Vlačić moved to Magdenburg, where he started working on his 13-volume *Centuriae Magdeburgenses*, a detailed church history. Vlačić's adamant positions contributed to the preservation of Protestantism in its original form. Vlačić taught at the University of Jena from 1557 to 1561, but was expelled for theological conflicts with Melanchthon. Having moved to Regensburg, he argued for a foundation of a Protestant university that would cover Austria, Czechia, and the South Slavic lands. There he wrote a catechism in the Croatian language (1566) and started his most important work, *Clavis scripturae sacrae seu de sermone sacrarum litterarum*, which he continued composing in Antwerp and Frankfurt. Vlačić is considered one of the founders of the interpretative and philosophical method known as "hermeneutics." Of special note is Vlačić's work *De materiis scientiarum, et erroribus philosophiae, in rebus divinis* (1561), in which he explains his understanding of the relation between theology, philosophy, and the liberal arts. He wrote more

than 200 works in Latin and German, most of which remain unpublished in various German libraries.

The most original and influential Renaissance philosopher of Croatian origin is Frane Petrić (Patrizi, Patricius, Patritius; Cres, 1528 – Rome, 1597). He left his native island of Cres at the age of 9, travelled across the Mediterranean, and spent time in Ingolstadt, Venice, Padua, Ferrara, before settling in Rome. Towards the end of his life, he was eager to enter the Society of St. Jerome in Rome, a Croatian confraternity, which required a proof of Croatian origin and probably some knowledge of Croatian vernacular to admit new members.

Marko Antun de Dominis (Rab, 1560 – Rome, 1624) received his early education in Rab, studied at the Croatian College in Loreto and in Padua. He taught mathematics, rhetoric, and philosophy in Brescia from 1592 to 1595. In 1597 he was appointed bishop of Senj and in 1602 he became bishop of Split. Having renounced his clerical duty in 1616, he went to England, where he was awarded a doctorate in theology in Cambridge and elected the Dean of Windsor in 1618. In England he published his main work, *De republica ecclesiastica* (1617–1622) and several anti-Catholic treatises. In 1622 he returned to Rome, where he received formal absolution under Pope Gregory XV. However, Pope Urban VIII ordered the trial of de Dominis to be reopened, followed by his imprisonment. De Dominis was declared guilty post mortem, his body, image, and books being publicly burned in Rome in 1624. As a theologian, he was closer to Protestantism than Catholicism. As a philosopher, he adhered to the scholastic tradition, but also used mathematical and experimental methods in his research. He published two treatises on natural philosophy, *De radiis visus et lucis in vitris, perspectivis et iride* (1611), and *Euripus seu de fluxu et refluxu maris sententia* (1624).

Matija Frkić (Matthaeus Ferchius; Krk, 1583 – Padua, 1669) studied in Bergamo, Padua, and Rome, where he obtained a doctorate in theology. He taught philosophy and theology in Padua, while holding high offices in the Franciscan order in Krk. His main work is *Vestigationes*

peripateticae de quibusdam philosophicis ad mentem Aristotelis (1639), in which he interpreted Aristotle as a thinker who anticipated some central Christian doctrines, such as *creatio ex nihilo*. He responded to criticisms of his work in *Defensio Vestigationum* (1646). Frkić also published a treatise on the life and philosophy of Duns Scotus (*Discussiones Scoticae*, 1638) and a wide-ranging reconstruction of Anaxagoras' cosmological views (*De caelesti substantia et eius ortu ac motu in sententia Anaxagorae*, 1646).

Although of Italian origin, **Antonio Zara** (Aquileia, 1574 – Pićan, 1621) served from 1601 to his death in 1621 as the bishop of the ancient diocese of Pićan (Latin *Petina*, Italian *Pedena*) in Istria. While in Pićan, Zara wrote his encyclopedic work *Anatomia ingeniorum et scientiarum* (1615), in which he connects all forms of talent and knowledge, from magic arts to seven liberal arts, with one of the three cognitive faculties (imagination, intellect, and memory) and presents them systematically in four large “sections” as “members” under a single “head.” The work is followed by a very detailed alphabetical index of subjects.

Central Dalmatia

Although known mostly for his erudite poetry, ► **Marko Marulić** (Marcus Marulus Spalatensis; Split, 1450 – Split, 1524) wrote several books that discuss the fundamentals of Christian ethics and extol Christian virtues, notably *Evangelistarium* (1500), *De institutione bene beataeque vivendi* (1506), and *Quinquaginta parabola* (1510).

Federik Grisogono (Grisogonus, Chrysogonus, Chrisogonus; Zadar, 1472 – Zadar, 1538) studied law, philosophy, and medicine in Padua. In 1507 he obtained his doctorate in philosophy and medicine and was appointed professor of astrology and mathematics in Padua. In 1509, Grisogono returned to Zadar, where he worked as a physician. However, we have evidence of an incident caused by his erroneous astrological prophecies in Venice in 1512. To avoid conviction, he returned to Zadar where he died in 1538. Two of his books were published in his lifetime. *Speculum astronomicum terminans intellectum humanum in omni scientia*

(1507) deals with mathematics and its various sub-disciplines: arithmetic, astrology/astronomy, geometry, and music. The other work is *De modo collegiandi, prognosticandi et curandi febres* (1528), a manual of astrological medicine. This work contained two interesting appendices. In the first appendix (*De felicitate et humana perfectione*), Grisogono claims that astrology, of all human disciplines, contributes most to human flourishing. The second appendix (*De fluxu et refluxu maris*), containing Grisogono's explanation of tides, is his most important contribution to the history of science.

Ivan Polikarp Severitan (Joannes Barbula Pompilius, J. Polycarpus Severitanus; Šibenik, 1472 –? c.1526) received his early education in Rome, then studied philosophy and theology in Ferrara and Bologna. He was appointed to various offices in the Dominican order in Šibenik, Perugia, Ancona, and Rome. He was a humanist polymath who wrote poetry, commentaries on classical authors, local histories, texts on grammar, metric, geology, logic, and theology. He published one work of political and moral philosophy, *Monoregia ex qua conicitur totius humanae vitae modus libri quattuor* (1522).

Fran Trankvil Andreis (Andronicus Tranquillus Parthenius; Trogir, 1490 – Trogir, 1571) was a diplomat, writer, poet, and philosopher. He was educated in Trogir, Dubrovnik, Vienna, Padua, and several other Italian cities. He first taught rhetoric in Leipzig and then embarked on a diplomatic career, serving in Vienna and Istanbul. After a failed diplomatic mission to Turkey, he withdrew to Poland and eventually returned to Trogir in 1550. He published many works in fine Latin style imbued with many references to contemporary events. His main philosophical works are *Dialogus Sylla* (1527), a fictional dialogue between Caesar and Sulla on the best form of government and *Dialogus philosophandumne sit* (1545) in which he defends philosophical lifestyle as a way to increase cognitive capacities and attain happiness.

Faust Vrančić (Verantius, Verancius, Veranzio; Šibenik, 1551? – Venice, 1617) studied in Padua and served from 1581 to 1594 as a secretary to king Rudolph II in Prague, where he

was in contact with Kepler and Brahe. In 1594 he went back to Šibenik and later moved to Italy. In 1598 he acted as a bishop of Chand in Hungary, and later became a Barnabite monk in Rome. Vrančić is most famous for his book on mechanical inventions, *Machinae novae* (1595?). His *Dictionarium quinque nobilissimarum Europae linguarum* from 1595 was a dictionary of five main European languages, expanded with two other languages in the second edition of 1605. As a philosopher, he published two texts: *Logica suis ipsius instrumentis formata* (1608), reprinted with significant changes as *Logica nova suis ipsius instrumentis formata et recognita* in 1616 in which Vrančić argues both against Aristotle (refuting metaphysics) and the humanist logic of Petrus Ramus. His other philosophical text is *Ethica Christiana* from 1610, reprinted in 1616.

South Dalmatia

The earliest philosopher from South Dalmatia who deserves a mention is ► [Nicholas of Modruš](#) (Nikola Modruški, Nicholas of Modrussiensis/Machinensis), born in c. 1427 in Kotor, present-day Montenegro.

Juraj Dragišić (Georgius Benignus; Srebrenica, 1445 – Barletta, 1520) was a philosopher and theologian. He received his initial education in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica, and from 1464 to 1469 he studied theology in Ferrara. While in Rome he joined the intellectual circle around Cardinal Bessarion. He taught philosophy in Urbino, Pisa, and Florence. He was Bishop of Cagli and Archbishop of Nazareth based in Barletta. In 1496 he was living in Dubrovnik. In the trial against the Dominican ► [Girolamo Savonarola](#) he took the side of the defendant with the text *Profeticae solutiones* (1497). In 1512 he wrote *Defensio praestantissimi viri Ioannis Reuchlin* and a treatise on logic *Artis dialecticae praecepta vetera et nova* (1520). His most significant work is *De natura coelestium spirituum quos angelos vocamus* (1499).

Klement Ranjina (Clemens Araneus; Dubrovnik, 1482 – Dubrovnik, 1559) was educated in Dubrovnik and studied theology in Padua, Perugia, and Naples. After returning to Dubrovnik, he joined the Dominican order. He

carried out diplomatic missions for the Pope Paul III and the Habsburgs. Ranjina is the author of several theological treaties, such as *Quodlibet declamatorium* (1541), *Expositio super epistolam Pauli ad Romanos* (1547).

Antun Medo (Antonius Medus Calossius; – Dubrovnik, 1603) was born to a family of Greek immigrants in Dubrovnik, had no formal training in philosophy, and earned a living as a merchant. He was an autodidact who enjoyed encouragement from his younger contemporary Juraj Dubrovčanin. Medo published commentaries on two books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (*In librum duodecimum Metaphysicae Aristotelis expositio*, 1598; *In librum septimum Metaphysicae Aristotelis expositio*, 1599), both marked by a close reading of the text, relative independence from other commentators, and reluctance to reconcile Plato and Aristotle. Medo also published a polemical treatise on Porphyry's *Isagoge* (*Quaedam animadversiones in Praedicabilia Porphyrii*, 1600), which he blames for many misunderstandings of Aristotle's philosophy.

In contrast with Medo, ► **Nikola Vitov Gučetić** (Nicolaus Viti Gozzius; Dubrovnik, 1549 – Dubrovnik, 1610) was born to a distinguished patrician family, educated entirely in Dubrovnik but well connected with leading lights in Italy. He was a member of four Academies (two in Dubrovnik and two in Perugia), and he was elected to the position of the Dodge of Dubrovnik seven times. There is no evidence of his interactions with the other two of his contemporary philosophers from Dubrovnik, Antun Medo and Juraj Dubrovčanin.

Juraj Dubrovčanin (Georgius Raguseius; Dubrovnik, 1550 – Padua, 1622) was educated in Venice and Padua, where he studied philosophy, mathematics, medicine, and theology. He taught philosophy in Padua from 1601, competing against ► **Cesare Cremonini**. He published *Peripateticae disputationes* (1613) in which he comments on 24 then controversial issues in Aristotle's philosophy, showing familiarity with a broad range of interpretative traditions and arguing against both Christianizing interpretations of Aristotle as well as blind adherence to his

authority. An early treatise on the elements (*Tractatus de formis elementorum*, 1605), written against Cremonini, was incorporated in the *Disputationes*. Dubrovčanin published a treatise on astrology and other forms of divination (*Epistolarum mathematicarum seu de divinatione libri duo*, 1623), in which he explains phenomena such as magnetism, healing properties of gems and plants, etc., with reference to effluences (*defluxus*) from the heavenly bodies. His unpublished texts include commentaries on the logic of Raymond Lull and on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, and *Epistolae morales, dialecticae et mathematicae*.

Marin Getaldić (Marinus Ghetaldus; Dubrovnik, 1568 – Dubrovnik, 1626) was a mathematician, physicist, and philosopher. He received his early education in Dubrovnik. In 1595 he travelled to London with ► **Nikola Vitov Gučetić**. He also travelled in Germany, Belgium, Rome, Paris, and Padua. Getaldić was interested in optical instruments and corresponded with Galileo Galilei. His first book was on physics (*Promotus Archimedis seu de variis corporum generibus gravitate et magnitudine comparatis*, 1601) and the last on mathematics (*De resolutione et compositione mathematica*, 1630). Getaldić's treatise on cosmology, *De sphaera mundi seu cosmographia* is preserved in a single manuscript.

Stjepan Gradić (Stepanus Gradius; Dubrovnik, 1613 – Rome, 1683) studied civil and canon law in Fermo and Bologna, where he obtained a degree in theology. He was a deputy archbishop of Dubrovnik and Dubrovnik's long-standing ambassador to Vatican. He wrote one unpublished treatise on philosophy (*Peripateticae philosophiae pronunciate disputationibus*, ms. c. 1634), in which he provides a comprehensive treatment of Aristotelian logic, physics, and metaphysics. He corresponded extensively with illustrious men across Europe, among others with Honoré Fabri on the subject of probabilism and epistemology. Gradić left unpublished texts on astronomy (*Astronomia geometrica*), natural science (*De acceleratione motus naturalis*), scientific instruments (*De horologis et telescopis*), history and biography.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Following the standard classification, Croatian philosophers can be divided into three main groups: Aristotelians, Platonists, and Concordists. Those working solely or predominantly in the Aristotelian tradition are Matija Frkić, Juraj Dubrovčanin, Klement Ranjina, Antun Medo, and Stjepan Gradić. Philosophers who embrace the Platonic tradition, often in open opposition to Aristotelianism, are Giulio Camillo Delminio and Frane Petrić. The Concordists, who combine or switch between different traditions, are Pavao Skalić, Federik Grisogono, and Nikola Vitov Gučetić.

Some Croatian Renaissance philosophers were engaged in religious disputes of their times, mostly concerned with the rise and spread of Protestantism. Matija Vlačić Ilirik contributed greatly to Protestant doctrines, especially to Biblical exegesis. Dudić and de Dominis converted to Protestantism, whereas Juraj Dragišić, Nikola Vitov Gučetić, and Faust Vrančić openly defended Catholicism. Pavao Skalić switched sides several times over.

Several Croatian philosophers of the Renaissance period tapped into the topics and ways of thinking characteristic of what came to be known as the Scientific Revolution, notably Antun de Dominis, Marin Getaldić, Stjepan Gradić, and Faust Vrančić. The tension between the old and the new ways of thinking is ostensibly felt in Grisogono's works on astrology.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Frane Petrić was one of the boldest thinkers of the Renaissance. His originality extends from philosophical innovation (e.g., the replacement of the Aristotelian four causes with space, light, heat and fluid, all emanating from God) to philological insights (e.g., the idea that Aristotle's book *Metaphysics* is not a coherent unity, but an assemblage of different treatises) and anticipations of some key aspects of the modern scientific world-view (e.g., the geometrization of space).

Matija Vlačić Ilirik's most influential work, *Clavis scripturae sacrae*, is considered to be the

first hermeneutical encyclopedia of the Bible. In this work, Vlačić Ilirik defends the position that the Bible should be interpreted through itself and by itself, in isolation from other ancient texts as much as from the established exegeses.

Pavao Skalić, with his work *Encyclopaedia seu Epistemon*, stands at the beginning of a long tradition of authors who aimed to provide a comprehensive account of all knowledge. However, he understood knowledge in an indiscriminately broad way and executed his account without much system, which cannot be said for Antonio Zara's *Anatomia*.

Faust Vrančić's *Logica nova* is an original attempt to formulate the principles of logic in logic itself, without any metaphysical, epistemological, or rhetorical underpinnings. For him, logic is formal and analytic, in the sense that he thinks of it as a mere tool of presenting already acquired knowledge, incapable of producing any new insights.

Impact and Legacy

Frane Petrić has been quoted by leading thinkers of the 16th and the seventeenth century, including Johannes Kepler, Jan Amos Komenský, Thomas Hobbes, and Henry More. Pierre Gassendi openly acknowledged Petrić's influence on his thinking about space and atoms, and he was mentioned by Leibniz and Mersenne. However, Petrić's indirect influence may be more significant. One of his followers, and a person who inherited Petrić's chair at *La Sapienza* in Rome, was Jacopo Mazzoni, a teacher of Galileo Galilei. There is an identifiable line of thought that goes from Petrić's philosophy, developed in opposition to Aristotle's, to the mathematization of nature in Galileo.

Matija Vlačić Ilirik is considered one of the founders of hermeneutics by ► [Wilhelm Dilthey](#) and Hans-Georg Gadamer. In his exegetic works he introduced the concept of "scope" (the original intention of a work) and operated with what came to be known as the "hermeneutic circle" (the whole work is understood in terms of its parts, and each part is understood in terms of the whole).

Federik Grisogono's theory of tides in terms of a combination of celestial influences and motions

inherent in the element of water with calculable results, sparked some interest among thinkers of the Renaissance, such as Petrić and ► **Gerolamo Cardano**.

De Dominis' theory of rainbow as a result of refraction of light in the interior of water droplets was praised by Isaac Newton and Christian Wolf and criticized by Christiaan Huygens and Ruđer Bošković.

Faust Vrančić's work *Machinae novae* (1595), containing detailed pictures with accompanying descriptions of 56 different machines and contraptions of new or improved design, including the parachute and the mill powered by tides, had very small circulation at the time, but was later recognized as a major contribution to civil engineering.

Cross-References

- **Bagolino, Gerolamo**
- **Camillo Delminio, Giulio**
- **Cremonini, Cesare**
- **Dilthey, Wilhelm**
- **Gučetić, Nikola Vitov**
- **Marulić, Marko**
- **Melanchthon, Philipp**
- **Nicholas of Modruš**
- **Savonarola, Girolamo**
- **Skalić, Pavao**

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- A majority of works mentioned in this article are scanned and available for download from the Digital Library of Croatian Philosophers curated by the Institute of Philosophy in Zagreb: https://content.ifzg.hr/digitalnaBastina/digitalnaBastina_ENG.htm

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Crosson

► [Grocyn, William](#)

Cudworth, Ralph

Born: 1617, Aller (Somerset)

Died: 26 June 1688, Cambridge

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Abstract

Ralph Cudworth was an expounder of “Cambridge Platonism.” His main tenet is that natural phenomena cannot be explained only by the principles of mechanism; therefore, the existence of a “plastic nature,” which orders the

world in accordance with divine decrees, has to be postulated. The order of creation, in turn, does not depend only on divine will but also on the essences present in God’s intellect. These essences can be known through the notions innate to human soul, which recollects them by means of its active nature. On this basis, Cudworth opposes the Calvinist and the Hobbesian voluntarism, for which divine will is the only source of natural and moral laws. Hobbes is also attacked as a main expounder of atheism, which Cudworth traces back to the idea that matter alone is the source of any activity and phenomenon. To this idea, Cudworth opposes an argument of the existence of God that foreruns Locke’s.

Biography

Cudworth was born in 1617 in Aller (Somerset), by Ralph Cudworth the elder, fellow of the Emmanuel College of Cambridge, and was educated by his stepfather Richard Stoughton, another fellow of the College. In 1632, he was admitted there as pensioner, and took his BA in 1635 and his MA in 1639. As a student, Cudworth was acquainted with Calvinist theology and with Scholastic philosophy dominating the milieu of the Emmanuel. Moreover, he was introduced to Platonism by his tutor Benjamin Whichcote (Scott 1994, 140–143), whose circle was characterized by anti-Calvinist positions inspired by the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (Carter 2010a, 100–102). In 1639, he became fellow of the Emmanuel, while in 1647 he gave a sermon (Cudworth 1647) at the House of Commons and became Regius Professor of Hebrew and Master of Clare Hall. In the following years, he obtained the doctorate in divinity (1651) and became Master at the Christ’s College (1654). During the Interregnum (1649–1660), he was favored by the patronage of Cromwell’s secretary of state, John Thurloe, and was consulted by Cromwell on the readmission of the Jews in England. He held his position at Christ’s College also during the Restoration, and in 1678 he became prebendary of Gloucester. He died in Cambridge in 1688. The main work published during his life was the *True*

Intellectual System of the Universe (1678), while his *Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* (1731) and *Treatise of Freewill* (1838) appeared after his death. Cudworth was the father of Damaris, known as Lady Masham (Birch 1820; Hutton 1996, 2013, 2015, 148–158).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Together with Whichcote, Henry More, and Anne Conaway, Cudworth was part of the Cambridge Platonists, as he used various Platonic-inspired theories in his philosophy. His overall aim was to counter Hobbes's and Spinoza's materialism, atheism, and determinism, which he traces back to the perversion operated by Protagoras of the atomism of Moses (Cudworth 1996a, book II; Hutton 2008, 147–148) and to the Stoics (Cudworth 1996b, Chaps. 2 and 3; Sellars 2012). The main tenet of his *Intellectual System* is that the phenomena of motion cannot be accounted for only in material terms, i.e., by the principles of mechanism. They are explained by the Platonic-inspired hypothesis of “plastic nature,” which is both an immaterial substance and the summation of the laws of motion by which God teleologically orders the world. This notion discards the idea of a direct action of God on the world (Cudworth 1964, Chap. 3; Jacob 1991; Cunning 2003; Allen 2013; Hutton 2013; Russell 2008, 148–150; Bergemann 2012). It also bears witness of the Stoic notion of *pneuma*, although Cudworth rejects the idea that plastic nature is conscious of itself, as it was for the Stoic conception (Gigliani 2008). To this regard, Cudworth introduced the modern English notion of “consciousness” as the awareness of thoughts and actions (Thiel 1991, 2011, 67–71; Carter 2010b). The idea of plastic nature would later be used by Jean Le Clerc to criticize the atheists and would be attacked by Bayle as it excludes the knowledge of its ends (Le Clerc 1703–1713; Bayle 1737; Simonutti 1993, 1997; Rosa 1994).

Secondly, in the *Intellectual system*, Cudworth addresses the atheism of the materialist positions. He distinguishes between four forms of atheism: *hylozoic* (or “Stratonical,” as

Spinoza's), *cosmoplastic* (or “Stoical”), *atomist* (or “Democritical,” as Hobbes's), and *hylopathian*: the main kinds being the *hilozoic*, according to which matter is alive (as in the cosmoplastic hypothesis), and the *atomist*, for which matter is brute (as in the *hylopathian*, based on forms rather than on atoms) (Cudworth 1964, Chap. 2; Armour 2008; Russell 2008, 148–149; Gigliani 2008). In order to refute atheism, Cudworth develops an argument anticipating Locke's: since something exists from eternity, and it cannot be matter (which has no power to create particular things), God is the eternal being (Cudworth 1964, Chap. 4; Scribano 1989; Russell 2008, 113–119).

The problem of determinism is dealt with in the *Treatise of Freewill* and in the *Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*: to Hobbes's determinism Cudworth opposes the idea of *to hegemonikon*, i.e., the power of self-determination which is the very principle of individuation of the self (Cudworth 1996b, Chap. 16; Hutton 1996), and which he appropriates from Alexander of Aphrodisias (Sellars 2012). Moreover, he criticizes Hobbes' idea of justice as based on convention instead of on a natural justice that precedes God's will (Hutton 2015, 132–133). This criticism entails an attack to the Calvinist theory of the absolute inscrutability of divine will (Passmore 1951, 11–14; Carter 2010a, 100–102; Carter 2011; Attfield 2008), undermining the possibility of morality and of knowledge (Hutton 2001a). Cudworth opposes to voluntarism a theory of morality and knowledge based on Platonic innatism and on the principles of archetype (model) and ectype (copy): in the same way as the world is a copy of a divine model, ideas (including moral principles) are copies of divine ideas or essences, which are before divine will and are recollected by the mind in virtue of its active power (Cudworth 1996a, book 4; Scott 1994; Armour 2008; Hutton 1996). On this basis, Cudworth's idea of morality has been labelled as “rationalist” in eighteenth-century debate between rationalists and sentimentalists, although he admits both the role of reason and passions in motivating right behavior (Cudworth 1969; Darwall 1995, 109–148; Gill 2004; Hutton 2001b).

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Arminius, Jacobus](#)
- [Atheism in the Renaissance](#)
- [Atomism](#)
- [Calvinism](#)
- [Conway, Anne](#)
- [Hobbes, Thomas](#)
- [Imitation and Mimesis in the Renaissance](#)
- [Spinoza, Baruch](#)
- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

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Cujas, Jacques

Born: 1522

Died: 4 October 1590

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Abstract

Jacques Cujas, French jurist of the sixteenth century, is one of the greatest representatives of the legal humanism. Cujas is a prolific author: his *Opera omnia* represent ten volumes in folio, which concern mainly Roman law, but also canon law and feudal law. He applies a historical method, which represents one of the biggest divide with medieval jurisprudence.

Alternate Names

[Cujacius, Jacobus](#)

Biography

Jacques Cujas was a French jurist, born at Toulouse in 1522, where he did all his studies. When his master, Arnaud Du Ferrier, left the university in 1544, Cujas decided to deepen on his own side his knowledge in classics. However, he did not neglect law, and he became lecturer in charge of Justinian's Institutes at the University of Toulouse in 1547. Since he did not manage to get a chair of Roman law in Toulouse, he left for Cahors, where he succeeded as a professor to Antonio de Goveia in 1554. Then, his career was more on travelling. He stayed in Cahors less than a year, thanks to Margaret of France, Duchess of Berry, who offered him a chair in the renowned University of Bourges, which was then the centre of the legal studies reform. Confronted to the opposition of a part of the university, Cujas resigned himself to leave in 1557. He spent less than two years in the

Cujacius, Jacobus

► [Cujas, Jacques](#)

University of Valence and came back to Bourges in November 1559, after the death of Le Douaren. His first books have then established his reputation. When Margaret of France – become Duchess of Savoy – called him to teach at Turin in 1566, he was already one of the most renowned juriconsults in Europe. But Cujas stayed only a few months in Italy. He was back in Valence in September 1567, covered with honour and money. However, due to a financial conflict, he accepted the offer of the University of Bourges in 1575, after a few months in Paris where the prohibition of teaching civil law was suspended in his favour. Cujas ended his career at Bourges, where he died on the fourth of October 1590, celebrated as the greatest jurist of the time (Berriat-Saint-Prix 1821; Spangenberg 1822). Ten volumes in folio in Latin are the result from this long and brilliant career, which was devoted to the humanist reform of legal studies (Cujas 1658).

Cujas is indeed one of the greatest representatives of legal humanism. More precisely, he belongs to the historicist current of legal humanism, which considers that the concept of evolution is central to legal analysis. The law does not exist in a vacuum but is created within a specific historical context. This approach represents one of the biggest divide with medieval methods. In part thanks to their extensive knowledge of the sources, especially of ancient times, the humanists thus removed the *Corpus juris civilis* from timelessness, underlining the different stages of the construction of the legal system. Cujas's method seeks both to restore the texts in their original version and to take into account the whole history of the texts. To this end, the French humanist uses not only his knowledge of the medieval and modern legal thought but also his vast literary and philosophical culture. So, Cujas might be considered as the first legal historian. Besides this historical reading of the texts, three stumbling points distinguish Cujas from the medieval jurisprudence: the consideration of Greek sources, the better command of the language and the search for a "classical" Latin, and the discovery of interpolations and transcription errors.

Nevertheless, Cujas does not completely break with his predecessors. If, as all the humanists,

Cujas rejects the scholastic method and the authorities, his works borrow some features to the first exegetes of the *Corpus juris civilis*. Especially, he does not hesitate to confirm some interpretations of the glossators and commentators. Indeed, the absence of dogmatism is certainly one of the most distinctive characteristics of Cujas's writings (Prévost 2015).

Maybe, this is one of the reasons of its incredible posterity. Cujas has influenced a great part of the jurists, from the middle of the sixteenth century to the promulgation of the French "code civil". Though he despised authorities, Cujas has become – before his death – the authority, quoted in courts and books. Today, even if his books are no longer read, he is still a reference notably for his editions of the ancient legal sources.

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Cunrad

► [Khunrath, Heinrich](#)

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Curione, Celio Secondo

Born: Ciriè, near Turin, 1503

Died: Basle 1569

Lucio Biasiori

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Abstract

Celio Secondo Curione was one of the leading philologists of late Renaissance Europe. At the same time, he was a very complex figure from a religious point of view. Exiled from Italy because of his religious positions, he came into conflict with Protestants themselves, who eventually put him under trial for his theory of universal salvation and his tolerant conception of religion.

Biography

Born from a noble family, Curione was educated as a humanist in Piedmont. According to the biography written by his pupil Stupanus in 1570, as a young boy he became familiar with Protestant ideas. After reading Luther's and Melancthon's works, he planned to move to Germany but was caught before crossing the Alps and sent to a monastery, from which he is said to have been expelled for violation of relics.

From that moment, he started a wandering life among the most important centers of Italian religious dissent: from Milan (1526–1528), where he met his future wife, to Casale Monferrato

(1530–1535) and Pavia (1536–1539), where he became professor of humanities at the university. Between 1539 and 1541, he was in Venice, the most attractive city in Italy at that time both from a cultural and from a religious point of view. There he composed the *Pasquino in estasi*, a harsh satire of the Catholicism and a true best seller of the Italian Reformation. First published in Italian in 1542, the work was then translated into Latin, German, Dutch, English, and French and spread out all over Europe during the wars of religion. Forced to leave Venice, Curione took shelter in Ferrara, at the court of the philo-protestant Duchess Renée of France, and then in Lucca, where he survived as a private preceptor.

In 1542, after the reorganization of the Roman Inquisition, he fled with his family to Switzerland, first in Lausanne and then, after a sexual scandal, in Basle (from 1546). There, he was appointed professor of classics at the University and wrote a great deal of grammatical, rhetorical, and pedagogical works, which consecrated him as one of the most prominent humanists of mid-sixteenth century Europe.

The thirst for religious freedom, for which he left Italy, was not satisfied in Switzerland either. On the one hand, he kept working for evangelical propaganda in his native country; on the other, he came into an increasing conflict with protestant dogmatism, as well. Around 1550, he was close to anabaptistic and antitrinitarian opinions, as we can assume both from his works of the period and from his participation to the council of Italian anabaptists in Venice. After John Calvin and the religious authorities of Geneva executed the Spanish humanist and antitrinitarian Miguel Servet (1553), Curione distanced himself over and over from Protestantism for supporting religious tolerance. Right after Servet's death, he collaborated with his friend Sebastian Castellio to the *De haereticis an sint persequendi* (on heretics, whether they are to be persecuted) in which he criticized the punishment for unorthodox religious opinions, raising Calvin's irritated reaction and starting the European debate for religious tolerance. The year after, he published his most theologically engaged work, the *De amplitudine beati regni Dei* (On the Wideness of

God's Holy Kingdom), where he criticized the Calvinist conception of predestination and theorized the universal salvation even for those who did not know anything about the Gospel, such as Pagans, Jews, and inhabitants of the New World. Because of this belief, he was tried by the senate of Basle, but he was eventually able to prove his innocence by means of showing that his opinion was largely shared even by some Fathers of the Church. From that moment, however, he tried to avoid to publicly discuss religious matters and transmitted his ideas through a constant activity as a translator and editor of works from the classical world and from European humanism. After most of his family died in a plague, he withdrew into himself until his death in 1569.

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Curiosity Cabinet

► [Kunstskammer](#)

Cydones, Demetrius

Born: 1324, Thessalonica

Died: 1397, Crete

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Abstract

Demetrius Cydones (c. 1324–1397) was a dominant intellectual as well as a leading statesman of fourteenth-century Byzantium.

In foreign policy he consistently and unsuccessfully sought the support of Western European powers in the Empire's struggle with the Ottomans. He produced influential Greek translations of Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, and other Latin theologians. The substantial corpus of his correspondence is an important source for the history of the period.

Alternate Names

[Kydones, Demetrios](#)

Biography

The biographical sources for the life of Demetrius Cydones are primarily his own writings, especially his extant letters and autobiographical discourses.

He was born c. 1324 in Thessalonica where he also received his formal education, studying under Nil Kabasilas, among others. After his father's death in 1341, the family estate was destroyed in 1342 during the Zealot uprising, eventually leading D. to turn to his father's friend John Cantacuzenos for protection. When the latter took control in Constantinople in 1347 as Emperor John VI, the young D. assumed the post of *mesazon* (chief minister) at the imperial court. He began at this time to receive instruction in the Latin language from a priest at the Dominican monastery in Pera, though he had not yet embraced Roman Catholicism, as his letter to Barlaam c. 1347 makes clear.

Like his brother Prochorus, D. was hostile to the spread of the doctrines of Gregory Palamas. The official acceptance of Palamism at the Synod of Constantinople in 1351 pushed D. further in the direction of the Latin Church. By this time, D. was studying the works of Thomas Aquinas and, with the emperor's encouragement, began to translate some of them into Greek. By his own admission, D. greatly admired the wisdom, sanctity, and lucid reasoning of Aquinas and, not least, his understanding of the Greek philosophical tradition. To

make Thomas better known to Greek speakers became one of the driving goals of his life.

A renewal of the civil war between John VI and his nephew John V Palaeologus forced John VI to abdicate in December 1354. D. accompanied him into retirement to the monastery of St George in Mangana, and it was in there that D. completed his translation of the *Summa contra gentiles* on Christmas Eve 1354. In the years to come, he was to continue translating Thomas as well as other Latin theologians (Anselm, Gregory the Great, works attributed to Augustine).

In 1356 John V recalled D. to imperial service, again in the office of *mesazon*. Not much later, probably in 1357, D. entered the Latin Church. From then on, his theological position and his foreign policy went hand in hand. He was convinced of the need of a Western crusade against the Turks in order to save the empire and consistently advised the emperor to seek Western support and oppose the Ottomans, a dangerous position to maintain in the circumstances. His speech *On not surrendering Gallipoli* (1370) was aimed against those who sought accommodation with the Turks. The overall failure in obtaining Western aid, along with D.'s close association with the emperor's son (the future Manuel II Palaeologus), in disfavor at the time, eventually led to his fall from the emperor's good graces in 1371, although he returned to the imperial court in 1375. He declined to serve under the usurper Andronicus IV (1376–1379) and eventually resigned from the government of John V around 1386. D. sailed for Venice in 1389/1390, receiving honorary citizenship there in 1391, but later returned to Constantinople, maintaining his friendship with Manuel II (emperor 1391–1425).

With Manuel Chrysoloras he travelled to Italy in 1396, but, as Ganchou has shown, moved to Crete to join members of the Chrysoberges family and died there at the end of 1397.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

A gifted diplomat and sympathetic by nature, D. was able to win the esteem and friendship of both ideological allies and opponents. Highly

literate and educated, keenly interested in politics and theology, D. is in some ways the quintessential Byzantine statesman. Nevertheless, he was a daring nonconformist: implacably opposed to accommodation with the Ottomans, rejecting Palamism as irrational, enthusiastically embracing Latin scholasticism, scornful of prejudice against non-Greek speakers.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Though controversial, D. was a unifier, consistently seeking ecclesial, European, and intellectual unity. He learned Latin well and loved it, rendering Latin works into elegant Greek, translating *ad verbum* and *ad sensum*. A self-declared Thomist before Thomism was quite accepted even in the West, he adamantly maintained the unity of faith and reason.

Impact and Legacy

One may count among D.'s numerous disciples and/or admirers the Chrysoberges brothers, Manuel Chrysoloras, Manuel Kalekas, and even Gemistus Pletho. His most lasting legacy lies in his introducing Aquinas and scholastic modes of argumentation to the Greek East. By the time of the Council of Florence-Ferrara, his compatriots were well acquainted with the Latin positions. The extensive corpus of his extant letters is a substantial source for the latter half of the fourteenth century.

Cross-References

- [Barlaam the Calabrian](#)
- [Cydones, Prochorus](#)
- [Kabasilas, Neilos](#)
- [Manuel II Palaeologus](#)

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Cydones, Prochorus

Born: 1335, Thessalonica

Died: 1371, Great Lavra on Athos

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Abstract

Prochorus Cydones (c. 1335–1371) was a monk of the Great Lavra on Mount Athos. A prominent anti-Palamist, he was condemned and excommunicated at a Synod in 1368. Younger brother of Demetrius Cydones, he is chiefly known for his anti-Palamite writings as well as for translations of Thomas Aquinas and Augustine.

Alternate Names

[Prochoros Kydones](#)

Biography

The chief sources for the life of Prochorus Cydones are his older brother Demetrius' writings, the *Synodal Tome Against Hieromonk Prochoros Kydones* composed by Philotheos Kokkinos, and P.'s own extant letters.

P. was born in Thessalonica in 1335. His father died in 1341, and the family became impoverished under Zealotic revolutionary rule (1343–49). P. displays the education of a Byzantine humanist of his class. At the age of 15 or 16, he became a monk at the Great Lavra on Mount Athos. There, according to Philotheos, he applied himself “maniacally to the vanity of Hellenic studies.” It is not known how he learned Latin, but he became proficient and was able not only to help his brother in translating the *Summa Theologiae* but also translated other works on his own, among them Augustine's *De vera religione* and *De libero arbitrio*.

After Gregoras' death in 1361, P. emerged as the intellectual leader of the anti-Palamites. Other monks, including his superior Jakovos Trikanas, denounced him to Patriarch Philotheos. “Heretical writings” were found in his possession. P. wrote to Philotheos to defend himself, sending along his refutation of the Synodal Tome of 1351 and (apparently) his treatise *On Essence and Energy*. Instead of proving his orthodoxy, these works convinced the patriarch that P. had fallen into worse errors than either Barlaam or Akindynos.

In late 1367, with characteristic imprudence, P. accelerated his own condemnation by issuing a manifesto (*pittakion*) against the veneration of Palamas as a saint. Philotheos convoked the synod in the spring of 1368 and led the interrogation. The outcome of the trial was determined by P.'s *pittakion* and, especially, by his confusing interpretation of the light of the Transfiguration which appeared to border on an heretical Christology. Thus P. was formally excommunicated and condemned in April 1368. In 1369 John

Kantakuzenos wrote a detailed response to the difficulties (*aporiae*) P. raised in regard to Palamism, claiming that for P., enlightenment came through logic rather than grace. Some years later, Theophanes, the metropolitan of Nicaea, provided more profound replies to the *aporiae* in his *Five Discourses on the Light of Tabor*.

P. died in 1371 at the age of 36. A century later the Kydones brothers were still being condemned in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy in their native city. P. is called a false monk (*pseudomonachos*), a fighter against God and against the light of truth.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Intelligent and charismatic, P. had the misfortune to be a convinced anti-Palamite in an age of Palamite ascendancy. P.'s opposition to Palamism was socially motivated in part but depended more on his conviction that Palamism went against Orthodox tradition and opened the way to polytheism. P. never expressed a desire to leave the Greek Church and does not seem to have followed his brother into the Latin Church.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Though both brothers translated Aquinas, P. was the one to adopt Thomas' methodology in theology. In *On Essence and Energies*, he freely excerpts from Aquinas in Books 1–5 but presents his own novel ideas on the light of Tabor in Book 6, maintaining the style of the *Summa*. Another work in which he developed his ideas was his treatise on the kataphatic and apophatic ways in theology. P. argued that Christ was free from original sin because he assumed human nature and not a human person and that Christ's light on Tabor was created, though also uncreated, because Christ was both created and uncreated. Though generally following a more Platonist tradition, P. explained deification (*theosis*) in terms of analogy rather than participation.

Impact and Legacy

P.'s Thomistic methodology came to be associated with anti-Palamism, though this was not the case originally. His *aporiae* concerning the theophany stimulated theological discussion and spurred a new debate on the Christian appropriation of pagan philosophy. His translations of Latin authors helped to prepare the way for the Council of Florence.

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- Barlaam the Calabrian
- Cydones, Demetrius
- Gregoras, Nikephoros

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D

D'Afeltro, Pietro

Born: 1463, Naples

Died: After 1526, probably Naples

Charles Burnett

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Abstract

Pietro d'Afeltro was a teacher of philosophy and medicine at the University (Studio) of Naples. He probably belonged to the circle of Giovanni Pontano. He took an anti-Scotist position in philosophy. He published works principally on the *Physics* and *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, accompanied by the Long Commentaries of Averroes.

Biography

Pietro d'Alfetro was born in Naples in 1463. In 1487 he was appointed by King Ferdinand of Aragon to the chair of metaphysics at the Studio of Naples at the age of 24 with a salary of 36 ducats, but within a year the studio was closed because of the baronial wars and the invasions of the French. He (together with his brother Niccolò) became part of the *familia* of cardinal Oliviero Carafa, whom he served as his personal physician and to whom he dedicated his book *De fato* in

1508. During this period he published a *Questio de subiecto naturalis philosophie* (between 1485 and 1490). On the restoration of the studio in 1507, D'Afeltro took up his old position again, teaching alternately philosophy and natural science, this time with a stipend of 50 ducats. He immediately published a series of short texts, including the *Prohemii Averrois in libros phisicorum Aristotelis*, which he said was the result of the demands of students attending his "ordinary" lectures on the *Physics* of Aristotle. At some time he added to his teaching "filosofia de anima," but in 1518 his chair was transferred to that of the "practice of medicine." In 1523–1524 he held the "extraordinary" chair of the "Liber Noni Almansoris" – i.e., the teaching on illnesses from head to toe. While this is the last reference to his teaching in the studio, in 1526 he published his *Lectio prima in Metaphysica et Questiones in duodecim libris Methaphysice* which resumed his early teaching and elicited praise from his colleagues. This text was the culmination of the life-work of d'Afeltro, who must have died shortly afterward.

Heritage and Cultural Affiliation

D'Afeltro was clearly proud of belonging to Naples, whose classical connections he hints at in his description of himself as "Parthenopei Philosophorum ac medicorum minimus" (title of his *Lectio prima in Methaphysica*). His teaching in

the studio coincided with the presence in Naples of Egidio da Viterbo, and among his colleagues were Augustino Nifo; Girolamo Galeota, brother of Francesco Galeota; Cola Santillo, with whom he shared the teaching of philosophy and natural science; and his brother (?) Giulio d'Afelto. The accompaniment of the *Lectio* by eulogistic poems by the Neapolitan writers, Girolamo Carbone, Pietro Gravina, and Pietro Summonte, suggests that d'Afelto was acquainted with members of the Aragonese Neapolitan Academy of Giovanni Pontano. Already in 1483 d'Afelto is mentioned in an epigram addressed by Pontano to Carbone, in which Pontano urges Carbone to bring Afelto to his Accademia. The dedications, however, to the cardinals, Oliviero Carafa and Bernardino Carevajal, were probably due to his function as a learned physician within their households.

Innovative and Original Aspects

As far as we know, d'Afelto wrote no book on medicine. His printed works are on the *Physics* and *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, as commented on by Averroes, with the exception of *De fato*. In his *Questio de subiecto naturalis philosophie*, he asks “utrum ens mobile in quantum mobile sit subiectum naturalis philosophie” and gives the opinions of the Thomists, the followers of Albertus Magnus and Egidio Romano, the “scotizantes,” and the “modernus doctor” Nicoletta Vernia, to conclude that Aristotle's natural philosophy had been handed down erroneously and insufficiently. In his *Lectio prima in Metaphysica et Questiones in duodecim libris Methaphysice*, d'Afelto puts into print, late in life, the lectures he gave 39 years earlier, when he was 24. It consists of an introduction to the history of philosophy and the divisions of science, leading on to the encouragement to students to study metaphysics. This is followed by questions arising out of each of the twelve books of Aristotle's work. The first four questions, each discussed over several pages, are “whether being taken simply, which is shared by God and His creation, is the subject of the science of metaphysics,” “whether it is true that ‘All men naturally desire to know,’” “whether among all the

senses, sight makes us know most,” and “whether brute animals have prudence.” For many of the questions d'Afelto starts by putting forward the opinions of Duns Scotus and Antonius – i.e., Antonio D'Andrea, who had published his *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam Aristotelis* in Naples in 1475. D'Afelto then criticizes both these authors and puts forward his own views, based rather on Averroes and Albertus Magnus. His commentary on Averroes's *Prohemium* to his Long Commentary on the *Physics* of Aristotle addresses the problem of philosophical method. D'Afelto tries to reconcile the view of Aristotle, that demonstration was of two kinds – “quia” and “propter quid” – with that of Averroes who believed that there was a third kind: *demonstratio simpliciter*. He does this by suggesting that *demonstratio simpliciter* is really a subspecies of *demonstratio propter quid*. D'Afelto confesses that Averroes's text is difficult and obscure but nevertheless accepts him as the most reliable interpreter of Aristotle. His works make allusion to recent historical events and pour scorn on contemporary philosophers. In his *De fato* he lumps together heretics, followers of Epicurus, and those interested in astrology whom Averroes had attacked in his commentary to the *Metaphysics*, XII, commentum 45, while in his *Lectio prima in Metaphysica*, he rails against followers of all the mantic arts.

Cross-References

- [Nifo, Agostino](#)
- [Pontano, Giovanni](#)

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D'Ailly, Pierre

Born: 1350, Compiègne

Died: 9 August 1420, Avignon

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Abstract

Pierre d'Ailly was a theologian, philosopher, and churchman playing a pivotal role in Church reform at the time of the Great Schism and especially at the Council of Constance. He had an intense public career, becoming

Chancellor of the University of Paris, confessor to King Charles VI, a cardinal of the Roman Church, and papal legate, as well as bright intellectual interests spanning theology, philosophy, astrology, cosmology, and geography and producing more than 150 writings. In particular, his *Imago mundi* (1410) was read and annotated by Cristopher Columbus, who derived from it the idea of the practicability of his enterprise.

Alternate Names

[de Alliaco, Petrus](#)

Biography

Pierre d'Ailly was a French churchman, theologian, philosopher, and astrologer. The son of a wealthy butcher, Colart d'Ailly, and his wife Perrine, he was born in Compiègne in 1350 and died on August 9, 1420, in Avignon. The name d'Ailly refers to the town from where the Marguerite, which was Pierre's family name, came from (Guenée 1987). D'Ailly enrolled in the College of Navarre at the University of Paris in 1364, receiving his licentiate in Arts in 1367, teaching on the Bible in 1374-1376 and on the *Sententiae* by Peter Lombard in 1376-1377, promoting the teachings of William of Ockham (d. 1347), and becoming a Doctor of Theology in 1381. A few years later, he was appointed rector of the same College of Navarre, which under his guidance became an important center of humanistic teaching with the active participation of his former pupils Jean Gerson (d. 1429) – who would later succeed him as Chancellor of the University of Paris – and Nicolas de Clémanges (d. 1434/1440), and Jean de Montreuil (d. 1418). D'Ailly became canon of the cathedral chapter of Noyon in 1381, was elected Chancellor of the University of Paris and confessor of King Charles VI in 1389, was appointed Bishop of Le Puy in 1395 and Cambrai in 1397 by Benedict XIII, and was named Cardinal of San Crisogono by John XXIII in 1411. D'Ailly was deeply involved in

the reformation *in capite et in membris* of the Church, writing on the problem in his *De reformatione ecclesiae* as part of a tract *De materia concilii generalis*, and working a great deal to find a solution to the Western Schism (1378–1417) (Pierre D'Ailly 1706). He saw the Schism in apocalyptic and demonic terms, as shown by his *Epistola diaboli Leviathan* written in 1381 (Raymond 1953) in which the devil himself is represented writing to the Church “pseudo-prelates” rejoicing for the division of Christendom. With the purpose of contributing to solve the Schism, d'Ailly attended the Council of Pisa (1409), was nominated legate to Germany by the Pisan antipope John XXIII, and played a prominent role at the Council of Constance (1414), which eventually led to the end of the Schism with the election of Pope Martin V, who sent d'Ailly as his legate to Avignon, where he died.

Elaborating on the thought of the Dominican John of Paris (d. 1306), d'Ailly expressed convinced support to the conciliar theories, claiming that the power of bishops derive directly from Christ rather than from the Pontiff and that the Pontiff himself can err, while only the universal Church, which is represented by the general council, should be considered infallible (Oakley 1964). His apocalyptic views and general preoccupation for the future are some of the main elements at the basis of his pursuit of astrology, which he considers as a science playing a role in both assisting theological discourse – astrology as “natural theology” – and in discerning the order of earthly events (Ackerman Smoller 1994; Ribordy 2011). The relationship between the natural and the supernatural are more fully covered in his *Quaestiones super primum, tertium et quartum libros Sententiarum* (Petrus de Alliaco 2013). D'Ailly's focus is the dialectical relationship between God's omnipotence or *potentia absoluta* and his revealed will or *potentia ordinata*, by virtue of which he freely decided to establish a precise system for the world based on grace. As in Ockham so in d'Ailly the *sine qua non* (or covenantal) causality describes the nature of sacraments, which are not seen as efficient causes of grace since only God himself is such (Courtenay 1971). D'Ailly followed Ockham's

Nominalism in considering the human intellectual limitations to provide proofs for the existence of God. He also dealt with cosmography and astronomy, preoccupying himself with issues ranging from the rotation of the Earth, to the correction of the calendar, and the way to reach the Indies by sea. His collection of treatises entitled *Tractatus de imagine mundi*, written in 1410 and printed in Louvain in 1483, takes its name from the first of that series of texts – the *Imago mundi* – covering geographical, astronomical, and astrological matters, and is well known for its role in the scientific training of Cristopher Columbus, who read and annotated it, absorbing the idea that he was living near the end of time and setting his voyages within that framework (Burton 1930; Bouloux 2011).

Cross-References

- [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Universities in the Renaissance](#)

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d'Almadura, Pietro

► [Pietro da Bergamo](#)

D'Aubigné, Théodore-Agrippa

Born: 1552, Pons

Died: 1630, Genève

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Abstract

Agrippa d'Aubigné is a very prolific author: he composed both love and religious poetries, meditations, satirical tracts, political treaties, historical books, and an autobiography. He is also a man of action, who played a very important part in the Huguenot Party and a soldier who fought with energy against Catholics during the religious wars (1562–1629). He is not a philosopher nor a theologian, but all his works lie on a personal theology which draw on different authorities: the ancient philosophy, the Church Fathers, the reformed hermeneutics, and especially the Calvinist one. To understand Agrippa d'Aubigné's thought, it is necessary to bear in mind the historical context. His religious thought is torn between two opposing feelings: a radical vision of suffering that lives the persecuted Protestants and a theology of hope which gives them the assurance of salvation. Affliction is for d'Aubigné the evidence of the election of protestant people.

From the eschatologic point of view, the afflicted ones will triumph and the arrogant ones will be destroyed. This purifying conception of pain, called tribulation by Paul or "l'épreuve" by Calvin, induces d'Aubigné to justify war and martyrdom, that are the promises of celestial beatitude. The writer also took part in the political discussion about tyranny sharing the "Monarchomaques" point of view that consists of limiting the royal authority if the king exceeds his rights. D'Aubigné is especially in favor of a "monarchie mixte" under the strict control of nobility.

Biography

Agrippa d'Aubigné's life cannot be separated from his involvement in the Reform and to the Huguenot Party. His birth in 1552 in Pons caused his mother's death: that's why was Agrippa (*aegre partus*). From 1568 to 1592, he took part in different religious wars with Henri de Navarre until their quarrel. In 1571, he had a short romance with Diane Salviati, who inspired the famous collection of love poetry, *Le Printemps*, that had never been published before the nineteenth century. In 1577, after his serious wound at the battle of Casteljaloux, he dictates "les premières clauses de ses *Tragiques*" that had been published in 1616. In 1583, he married Suzanne de Lezay. After Henri IV's abjuration in 1593 and after his wife's death in 1595, he retired to his property and devoted his time to his works. Meanwhile, he went on defending Protestants' interests in the different "assemblées" which prepared the Edict of Nantes. After Henri IV's death, he took the struggle again until Louis XIII banished him in 1620. He lived his last 10 years in Geneva, where he married Renée Burlamachi and applied himself to his work without stopping the political struggle until his death in 1630.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Agrippa d'Aubigné's religious thought is inspired by Calvinist doctrine (Calvin, *Institution de la*

religion chrétienne, Genève, 1536). The profession of faith of the Italian martyr Montalchini (*Les Tragiques*, *Feux*, v. 647–706) gives a summary of his credo, founded on the formula “Seul, seule et seulement” which characterizes this purified religion: only the holy Bible reveals God (*sola scriptura*), only faith justifies (*sola fide*). This is the assertion of God’s power on man’s salvation: “On appelle prédestination le conseil éternel de Dieu, par lequel il a déterminé ce qu’il voulait faire de chaque homme. Car il ne les crée pas tous en pareille condition, mais ordonne les uns à la vie éternelle, les autres à l’éternelle damnation. Ainsi selon la fin pour laquelle est créé l’homme, nous disons qu’il est prédestiné à la mort ou à la vie” (Calvin, *Institution de la religion chrétienne*). According to d’Aubigné, the assurance of salvation is absolute but it implicates the experience of suffering. The affliction is a proof of purification necessary to access to salvation, it is the promise of celestial beatitude. All the religious thought of d’Aubigné lies on a theology of proof and hope, inspired by prophetic and apocalyptic movements, particularly by danielists.

Innovative and Original Aspects

If d’Aubigné is greatly inspired by Calvin’s theology, he combines different authorities – Aristotle, the Church Fathers (especially Augustine and Tertullian), the pseudo-Denys, Hermès Trismégiste, the kabbale, and other marginal religious movements of his time – to such a point that he creates an original religion far from his own confession, between a mystical pantheism, a pragmatic of salvation, and an obvious pessimism caused by the disorders of the history that he likes to describe in his works, in *Les Tragiques* particularly.

Impact and Legacy

The violence and the “rudesse” of his poetry went against the “goût classique” of measure and

elegance defended by Malherbe at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Concerning his radical theological thought, it did not obtain the favor of a pacified century, first in the reign of Henri IV and then in the authoritative monarchy of Louis XIII and of Louis XIV, where Protestants were persecuted. That explains the misfortune of d’Aubigné’s works. Only the Protestants of the “Désert” will recover the prophetic and violent accents of d’Aubigné’s voice. The romantic authors like Sainte-Beuve, Mérimée, and especially Hugo will rediscover his works and will publish them.

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d'Ayala, Balthazar

- [Balthazar de Ayala](#)

d'Ayala, Balthazar

- [Balthazar de Ayala](#)

da Bergamo, Pietro

- [Pietro da Bergamo](#)

da Casale, Crisostomo

- [Javelli, Giovanni Crisostomo](#)

da Modena, Leone

- [Modena, Leon](#)

da Sessa, Agostino

- [Nifo, Agostino](#)

Daimon, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

The term *daimon*, an ancient philosophical and religious notion, has a broad spectrum. Generally speaking, it indicates a divine being, although not the Supreme Being, to which the function of a mediator is usually attributed. The philosophical fortune of the notion of *daimon* is mainly linked to the history of the Platonic tradition.

The revival of Plato's and Neoplatonists' codices, in fifteenth-century Italy, stimulated the spread of the demonologies that these texts described and commented on. In the framework of the Renaissance demonologies, Marsilio Ficino's demonology is fundamental to understanding the resurgence of classical doctrines on the *daemones*, on the one hand, and the subsequent evolutions of the debate about them, on the other.

During the sixteenth century, the notion of *daimon* would undergo a process of cultural contamination. In many instances, within the general category of *demons*, it would be placed next to the Christian devil or to the spirits of the popular magical tradition. Gerolamo Cardano's reflection represents a turning point in the process of transformation of the notion of *daimon*. When the Counter-Reformation was in full swing, the debate would become extremely heated. In such political and religious context, the very ambivalence of the term *demon* would prove particularly problematic.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The term *daimon*, an ancient philosophical and religious notion, has a broad spectrum. Generally speaking, it indicates a divine being, although not the Supreme Being, to which the function of a mediator is usually attributed. The term is believed to derive from the Greek *daiomai*, which means "allot, divide." According to this acceptation of the term, the demons would be responsible for allocating the "lots" of fate. In Plato's *Symposium*, for example, this allotting significance is expressed by the *daimon*'s power of conveying to the gods the things that reach the human beings, and to the human beings the things that reach the gods (Cuniberto 2002).

The philosophical fortune of the notion of *daimon* is mainly linked to the history of the Platonic tradition. It suffices to think that an entire current of the Middle Platonic and Platonic demonology

appears as an effort to reconcile the concept of *daimon* found in the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* with the one found in the *Timaeus*. Later on, the rediscovery of the fundamental texts of Platonism – in the Byzantine era first and again later during the Renaissance – fostered the revival of the discussion of the *daimon*. Thanks to the contribution of authors such as Michael Psellus and Marsilio Ficino, the discussion would retain its vitality well beyond the limits of ancient times (Timotin 2012). The revival of Plato's and Neoplatonists' codices, in fifteenth-century Italy, stimulated the spread of the demonologies that these texts described and commented on. In the framework of the Renaissance demonologies, Marsilio Ficino's demonology is fundamental to understanding the resurgence of classical doctrines on the *daemones* as well as the subsequent evolutions of the debate about them (Walker 2000; Stephens 2010).

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the renowned commentary on the *Symposium*, Ficino resumes and elaborates further on the conception of the Platonic *daimon*. The demon is viewed, therefore, as an entity mediating between the superior world and the lower world, operating between the divine and the human (Katinis 2002). Such a discourse is widely developed in the exegesis of Socrates' oration expounded by Tommaso Benci, where he discusses the mixed nature of love, god and demon, and underlines the idea that the *daemones* inhabit "the middle ground between heaven and earth." To confirm this thesis, Ficino makes reference to the words attributed to Diotima in the *Symposium*, to Socrates in *Philebus* and in *Phaedrus*, and to the "Athenian Stranger" in the *Laws*.

Discussing the eternally *living* nature of the entire cosmos, Ficino observes that *daemons* are animate beings that, beneath the sphere of the Moon, inhabit the regions of the eternal fire, of the pure air and the cloudy air. They are immortal creatures but, nevertheless, they are passible,

destined to govern inferior things and human things. They are benevolent and propitious to good men, whereas they are adverse to evil men, to the extent that they can be assimilated to the “Angels, the governors of the lower world” discussed by Dionysus the Areopagite. On the other hand, Ficino points out that he is not concerned, on this occasion, with bad demons, that is, the *kakodaemons*. Rather, he shows interest in establishing two hierarchies of ministers of the cosmic order: the souls of the spheres and stars, on the one hand, and the demons on the other. The former enjoy the vision of God and, according to his will, they rule and move the circles of the world, and can easily govern earthly creatures; the latter, in their turn, are “ministers” of God so that they can operate in the subaltern reality (Ficino 1987).

The “worldly gods,” Ficino continues, serve the ideas of all things that exist in the divine mind, while the demons fulfill the function of intermediaries between the gods and the inferior things, to which they hand the divine gifts bestowed by the angels and the celestial souls. Therefore, the demons – that are evidently related to astral influences – perform the duty of establishing and strengthening the divine gifts and the original endowments (Vasoli 1988). For example, Saturn – through the *Saturnian demons* – strengthens the gift of contemplation. Whereas Jupiter and his demons foster the *gubernandi et imperandi potestas*, the power of governing and ruling, Mars and its *Martial demons* confirm the greatness of soul. The Sun and the solar demons clarify sensations and opinions, while Venus and her *Venerian demons* inspire love. Mercury and the *Mercuriales* promote the skill of exegesis, just as Luna and the *Lunar demons* foster the function of generation. Ficino believes that love can be said to be “divine,” since it comes down from God, and at the same time can be called “daemon,” since it is “confirmed” by “daemons.” Ficino succeeds in developing a further distinction between the *Venerian* demon that, as a “Heavenly Venus,” is placed in the angelic mind, and the demon that, as a “Vulgar Venus,” has the same

generating power as the *anima mundi*, or World-Soul, and finally, the order of demons who are the companions of the planet Venus (Ficino 1987).

Ficino goes back to the theme of the demon/love when he introduces the distinction between five kinds of love in the human soul. Specifically, he defines “demons” two of them: the eternal love of the divine beauty and the love that manifests itself in the mysterious stimulus for generating offspring. In Ficino’s view, they are both naturally good; however, a disorderly use of the latter may induce to *vilia ministeria*, or base pursuits (Ficino 1987).

Since the demons know perfectly well the attraction and the relationship of things, the ancients attributed the magical art to them, as Ficino subsequently recalls. After all, some philosophers were surely familiar with demons, either because of a certain similarity of their nature, as in the case of Zoroaster and Socrates, or because of their adoration, such as Apollonius Tyaneus and Porphyry. By virtue of their relations with demons, such philosophers seemed to be themselves “magicians.” They received extraordinary signs, voices, and portents from the demons while they were awake; as well, in dreams they obtained revelations and visions of demonic origin (Ficino 1987).

Ficino returns to this subject in his commentary on the *Sophist*. This, however, represents an opportunity to discuss the relations between the demons and the technique of human production of images. He explains that the demons mimic the divine action by producing images of things created by the gods. In other words, divine creation is to demoniac production as objects are to their images. As a consequence, *imagines* and *umbrae* – images and shadows – are *quasi daemoniaca machinamenta*, that is, demonic instruments and artifices, operating in a dimension halfway between heaven and earth, between divine and human (Katinis 2002). The demonic nature is halfway between superior and inferior beings, just as the light is halfway between incorporeal and corporeal beings. This is why, Ficino explains, the light has in itself, somehow, a

demonic power, on which depends the existence of images and shadows, the same that appear to men either waking or asleep. Therefore he goes on by stating that imagination acts thanks to a demonic power, through which it creates images (Ficino 1989).

Impact and Legacy

During the sixteenth century, the notion of *daimon* underwent a process of cultural contamination (Maggi 2006; Verardi 2014). According to Cornelius Agrippa, there are three orders of demons or intelligences; supercelestials concerning the divinity only, celestial the demons belonging to the signs, decan, planets and other stars, and demons of the lower world, such as demons of fire, air, earth, and water (Agrippa 1992; Yates 1964).

In many cases, the general category of *demons* was placed next to the Christian devil or to the spirits of the popular magical tradition (Maggi 2001). Gerolamo Cardano's reflection represents a turning point in the process of transformation of the notion of *daimon*.

Cardano provides his own synthesis of the syncretistic conceptions of demons of the Renaissance. The ancients – Cardano recalls – attest the existence of multiple types of guardian spirits. There are spirits that restrain, such as the Socratic one, and spirits that admonish, such as the one that appears to Cicero before his death. There are spirits that instruct men on their future, acting through dreams or through the actions of inferior beings. Similarly, there are good spirits and evil spirits (Cardano 1930). The ethereal presences that inhabit human minds, in Cardano's view, do not depend on subjectivity. Following Plotinus and Ficino, he understands demons as presences residing in the subject's mind, yet they do not correspond to the mind itself (Maggi 2001). In his autobiography, he claims he has had – in the same way as Socrates, Plotinus, and Synesius – an attendant spirit that alerted him to imminent dangers. However, he points out that his tutelary spirit is not under his control and cannot be described (Cardano 1930).

In *De arcanis aeternitatis*, Cardano subsumes different beings under the category of *demons*, such as specter, genius, guardian spirit, and *daimon* (Cardano 1663c), whereas, in the *Paralipomenon*, he explains that demon means “wise man,” thus postulating a basic coincidence between the demoniac presence in the subject and the subject itself (Cardano 1663d). In the *Contradicentium medicorum*, he explains that “two things know in us,” the mind and the demonic presence, which – sometimes – may deliberately convey false and misleading communications (Cardano 1663a). In the *De Rerum varietate*, dealing with Psellus's *De operatione daemonum*, Cardano seems to be certain that Christian theology has neglected the infinite variety of demoniac beings since, like humans or animal beings, demons can be distinguished from one another based on their wisdom and their natural inclinations. Trying to reconcile his Neoplatonic conception with the dogmas of Catholicism, he claims that the evil demons are able to invade the individual's mind and body only because of one's sordid thoughts or negative actions. In other words, evil angels come to the human being because the human being has invoked them (Cardano 1663b).

When the Counter-Reformation was in full swing, the debate became extremely heated. In such political and religious context, the very ambivalence of the term *demon* – which, as we have already seen, could denote either the Neoplatonic *daimon*, or the Catholic devil – proved particularly problematic. Consider that, especially after the bull *Coeli et terrae*, issued by Sixtus V in 1586, the condemnation of the demonic fell either on the necromancers – accused of trading with the devils – or on those who, as atheists-rationalists, denied the existence of demons as fundamental components of the cosmic order (Verardi 2014).

Also, Tommaso Campanella reflected on the ambiguous and multiple essence of the demon. A significant example is represented by his discussion of melancholy (Maggi 2012). In the *Senso delle cose e della magia* (*On the Sense of Things and on Magic*) – arguing against Ficino, who saw in melancholy also an important condition for divination – Campanella believes that this mood

not only is not a reason of sagacity but it can become the seat of evil spirits and of the devil. He refers to the typologies of demons: evil demons and more specifically Christian demons. On the contrary, Campanella underlines, “lucid and pure spirits” are often the seat of angels that operate in the mind by taming and enlightening it. They are good demons, also called guardian angels (Campanella 2007).

Between the end of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century, demonologists such as Martin del Rio and Pierre de Lancre insisted on the difficulty to discern the angelic apparitions from the demonic ones, due to the devils’ habit to assume all appearances, to perfectly mimic the divine. Not surprisingly, toward the end of the Renaissance, the inclination to reduce demons into natural agents goes hand in hand with the tendency to represent them as holders of an enormous power of illusion. In this view – although they do not have superior powers when compared to a creature – they are able to mix truth with lie. Through an illusory simulacrum, they shroud God’s creation and, in this way, they obscure its dazzling clarity (Céard 2012).

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dall'Almadura, Pietro

► Pietro da Bergamo

dalla Maldura, Pietro

► [Pietro da Bergamo](#)

Daneau, Lambert

Born: c. 1530, Beaugency-sur-Loire, France

Died: 11 November 1595, Castres, France

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Abstract

Lambert Daneau (c. 1530–11 November 1595) was a French jurist and Calvinist theologian. His *De veneficis* (1574) featured among the first Protestant demonologies, and he developed the idea of a “Reformed Christian physics” in *Physica christiana* (1576).

Biography

Lambert Daneau was born at Beaugency-sur-Loire, and educated in Paris under François Vatable, Guillaume Postel, and Adrien Turnèbe (1547–1548). Then studied in Orléans and Bourges where he graduated in law in 1559. In 1560, he moved to Geneva, where he studied theology. With a short interruption, he was Protestant minister in Gien from 1562 to 1572. Then he returned to Geneva, where he made a reputation as a preacher and as a professor of theology. Subsequently, he left for a position in the University of Leiden (1581–1583); he also taught in Orthez (1583–1591), and finally in Castres, where he died. In *De veneficis* (Geneva 1574; English translation: London 1575), he provides an account of the nefarious practices of witches and of the “devil’s marks” that betray their true identity. In *Physica christiana* (Lyon 1576;

reprints: Geneva 1579, 1580, 1588, and 1602; English translation in 1578 by Thomas Twyne; the second part appeared in 1582, reprints in 1589 and 1606; and in *Physique françoise*: Geneva 1581), he argued for a Scriptural basis for physics. He is also known for his systematization of Calvinist ethics (Daneau [1577](#)).

Works

The dialogue *De veneficiis* (1574) outlined the agenda of Protestant demonology at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Daneau developed this discipline principally on biblical sources, and he argued that stating that witches were victims of melancholy amounted to the blasphemous denial that even the victims of demoniacal possession which Christ cured were only melancholics and not actually possessed. Furthermore, he linked the increase in the number of witches to the spread of superstition and false religion which the Reformation was attempting to dispel. Daneau held that the era of miracles had ended in biblical times and that the magic performed by witchcraft through the power of Satan consisted in mere wonders. Daneau also formulated the argument that the Devil, notwithstanding his immense power, could operate only within the limits of the laws of nature. In virtue of this doctrinal line, the crime of witchcraft started to be viewed as primarily a spiritual offense, which consisted in the covenant with the Devil (Daneau [1574](#)).

In Calvin’s view, not only theology, but all other scientific disciplines have a theocratic foundation and a universalistic aim: the glory of God and the christianization of society. Calvin saw no need for a specifically Protestant natural philosophy. Lambert Daneau was among the first Protestant scholars to define the Calvinist standpoint as regards natural philosophy in some detail. He shared the earlier Reformers’ views on the deficiencies of pagan learning. Heathen philosophers were deeply drowned in darkness, for they were destitute of God’s Word, that is, the true light of knowledge. In *Christian Physics* (1576), he developed a natural philosophy based on descriptions

of the workings of nature as found in the Scriptures. The idea of a “Reformed Christian physics,” a Protestant version of the Mosaic physics, was at least partially based on older writings, such as those of the hexaemeric tradition of the Church Fathers (Basil, Ambrosius, Cyrillus) and the medieval schoolmen, and contemporary works, including Levinus Lemnius’ *On the Occult Miracles of Nature* (1561) and Francisco Vallés’ *On Sacred Philosophy* (1587).

Daneau argued that one cannot rely upon the study of nature without knowing Scripture. *A fortiori*, in his view, the Pentateuch provided all necessary knowledge about the Creation. Thus, physics is the true knowledge of the causes by which the creation and the distinction of this whole world and its parts are brought about and of the effects that follow therefrom, serving the glory of God’s works. Daneau preferred Moses to Aristotle. And yet he held that philosophy should approximate the Biblical truth. Thus, he evaluated theories of natural philosophy according to their success in presenting the world as governed by divine administration (Daneau 1576; Fatio 1971, 1976; Laplanche 1991; Ruler 1995; Blair 2000; Goudriaan 2006; Giacomotto-Charra 2019).

mieux rapportées à leur vray but, Genève, Eustace Vignon.

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Dante Alighieri

Born: 1265, Florence

Died: 1321 Ravenna

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Abstract

This entry details the life and literary legacy of Dante Alighieri, especially within the complex vicissitudes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Latin humanism and the revival of classical antiquity vied with the affirmation of Florentine as Italy’s literary language and of Florence as the center of Italian politics. If Dante’s antipapal position and choice of the vernacular caused initial negative reactions,

his *Divine Comedy* soon became a text to be loved or hated, glorified by Florentine elites but placed just below Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* by Pietro Bembo and many Venetian intellectuals. Many commentaries and series of public lectures contributed to Dante scholarship in the Renaissance, before the fortune of the *Divine Comedy* waned in the seventeenth century, only to resurface in the late eighteenth century.

Biography

Dante (or Durante degli) Alighieri was born under the sign of Gemini (*Par.* XXII 106–20) and probably in the month of May (Boccaccio 2009, *Expositiones* I literal 5) 1265, in Florence. While his family was wealthy enough to grant him an education and means to undertake a political career, Dante's own claims to aristocracy are unconfirmed by other sources. Dante's friend and poetic competitor Forese Donati even alluded to the involvement of Dante's father in money lending and usury.

Dante writes (*Vita nuova* I.ii) of his first encounter with Beatrice (Bice di Folco Portinari), as it happened in 1274, but in 1277 he was betrothed to Gemma di Manetto Donati. Married in 1285, Dante and Gemma had four children: Giovanni (see Regnicoli), Jacopo (1289–1348), Pietro (1300–1364) and Antonia (dead before 1371), who would join the poet in Verona and Ravenna during his exile. After his apprenticeship in grammar and rhetoric with Brunetto Latini, Dante began exchanging sonnets with other Florentine poets such as Dante da Maiano, Guido Cavalcanti and Cino da Pistoia. He spent time studying philosophy in Bologna, as attested by Boccaccio's *Trattatello* (1974, 25) and Giovanni Villani's *Nuova cronica* X.36. The Bolognese notary Enrichetto delle Querce copied Dante's sonnet "Non mi poriano già mai fare ammenda," in which Bologna's tower Garisenda is mentioned, in the *Memoriale Bolognese* of 1287, thus providing a probable date *ante quem* for Dante's stay in the city.

In the summer of 1289 Dante took part in two military campaigns against the Ghibellines of Arezzo (Campaldino, 11 June) and Pisa (Castle of Caprona, 16 August), fighting as a cavalryman for the Florentine Guelfs. On June 8, 1290, according to *Vita nuova* 19, Beatrice died, causing the poet much grief and pushing him to seek consolation in the study of philosophy with the Dominicans of Santa Maria Novella and the Franciscans of Santa Croce. In 1296 Dante was a member of the inner Council of the *Capitano del Popolo* and later of the Council of the One Hundred. By 1297 he had enrolled in the Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries, after Giano della Bella's 1293 Ordinances of Justice made being part of a guild a mandatory requisite to hold political office. Two political factions were forming from the Guelf leadership: the Whites, led by Vieri de' Cerchi and closer to popular participation, and the Blacks, led by Corso Donati and supported by Florence's wealthiest families. Dante sided with the Whites.

In the summer (15 June–15 August) of 1300 Dante was one of the six *Priori*, the highest public office in Florence, and during his term a number of White Guelfs were banned from the city, including Dante's old friend Guido Cavalcanti. In October of 1301 he was part of the Florentine delegation to the Holy See. Pope Boniface VIII would hold him as a forced guest until the early months of 1302. Meanwhile, Charles of Valois, brother of France's King Philip the Fair, had manipulated Florentine politics in favor of the Black party: more White Guelfs were exiled, among them Dante. On March 10, 1302, Dante was sentenced to death in absentia and his properties were confiscated. He took part in a diplomatic mission to Forlì to negotiate an alliance with local Ghibelline forces, but the allied Whites and Ghibellines were defeated in 1303 and again in 1304. During 1303–1304, Dante was in Verona for an extended time and possibly had the chance to visit Padua, Venice, and Treviso. After the death of Bartolomeo della Scala, Lord of Verona (March 7, 1304), Dante moved to Arezzo, hoping for the possible reconciliation of the Whites with Florence. In 1305–1306, Dante enjoyed the protection of the White government in Bologna, but

when the Blacks took over there too, he had to flee and seek refuge in Lunigiana under Moroello Malaspina. Here, the poet worked as an ambassador for the Malaspina family whose liberality he would later remember (*Purg.* 8.121–139). Epistle 4, written in 1307, places the poet in the Casentino region, and a notarial document suggests a long stay in Lucca during 1308. If Boccaccio's and Villani's claims are correct, Dante traveled to Paris, probably around 1309, a journey of which the sole textual indication seems to be a reference to "Vico de li strami" (*Par.* 10.137), the address of the Sorbonne Faculty of the Arts, in Paris. During 1310–1311, Dante passionately followed the Italian campaign of Emperor Henry VII, whose aim was to reestablish imperial control over Italy and especially Tuscany. Epistle X, dating to 1311, places Dante at the Castle of Poppi, in Casentino once again, and he would remain in Tuscany until the death of Henry VII (August 24, 1313). After the emperor's failed attempt to bring order to Italy, Florence offered a pardon to banned citizens who would accept the charges and a fine, but the offer, published on October 15, 1315, expired the next day, making it impossible for Dante to consider it. Dante and his sons were sentenced to death through decapitation. Moroello Malaspina had died earlier that year, so the Alighieri retreated to Verona, at the court of the imperial vicar Cangrande della Scala, where they stayed until 1319. The poet's last home was the court of Ravenna, where Guido Novello da Polenta granted him the respect of a public intellectual. During this time Dante traveled to Mantua, Verona, and Venice. He died of malaria in Ravenna on September 14, 1321, upon returning from an embassy in Venice.

Works

Rime

Dante's earliest lyric production included sonnets in the style of Guittone of Arezzo and poetic exchanges with such poets as Dante da Maiano, Guido Cavalcanti, and Cino da Pistoia.

Unlike Petrarch, Dante never collected all of his poems into a songbook. Even recently, editors

of his poems have disagreed on which and how many to include as well as on the order in which they should be printed. Barbi (Alighieri 1921) attributed 88 poems to Dante and included an appendix of 26 more of doubtful attribution; Contini in 1939 included only the lyrics that were not collected in the *Vita nuova* and *Convivio*; De Robertis (Alighieri 2002a) reconstructs the early circulation of Dante's lyrics and repropose a subdivision by genre as in the 1527 *editio princeps* (*Giuntina di Rime antiche*), but alters its sequence within the blocks; Barolini (Alighieri 2014) offers a chronological ordering and a sensible treatment of previous scholarship, but has so far only published one volume which includes the poet's production up to the *Vita nuova*.

Vita Nuova

Around 1293–1295, a young Dante who had exchanged poems with Florence's most reputable poets collected 31 of his own lyrics into a narration of his love for Beatrice, the salvific woman whose death in 1290 is at the core of this work. The protagonist is Dante himself, who undergoes shock, depression, and finally a new experience of writing the love lyric. Borrowing from the form of the Provençal *vidas*, which combined lyrics and biographical accounts of their authors, and from the tradition of courtly love towards a Christological interpretation of Beatrice, Dante inserts theological elements into the narration, thus transforming the popular Italian love lyric into a personal account of his "new life." The fortune of the *Vita nuova* during the Renaissance was not comparable to that of other Dantean works: as already noted by Barbi (92), the *Vita nuova* was not read or copied during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, it was included in the *Raccolta Aragonesa*, the collection of 480 texts that Lorenzo de' Medici sent to Frederick of Aragon in 1477, but not without Angelo Poliziano remarking on Dante's "antique coarseness" in the prefatory letter.

De Vulgari Eloquentia

In the early years of his exile (1302–1305), Dante set out to write a linguistic treatise in Latin to identify the noblest form of Italian vernacular. We only possess two books of the incomplete "On

Vernacular Eloquence,” but we can infer that Dante favored the Florentine, Bolognese, and Sicilian forms of Italian. The author displays an impressive knowledge of different vernaculars and literary texts from Occitan to those of northern and southern Italy. Dionisotti (1965, 344) notes that at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the *Vita nuova*, the *Convivio*, and the *De vulgari eloquentia* were almost entirely forgotten: no manuscripts were copied and nearly no mentions of these works punctuate the pages of the humanists, more interested in the recovery of the classics than the theological vagaries of a medieval exile. The *De vulgari eloquentia* had remained virtually unknown and even misattributed (by Giambattista Gelli) until Gian Giorgio Trissino’s translation into Italian fostered a critical discussion on the vernacular among Italian intellectuals (Montuori 310), and Jacopo Corbinelli reestablished Dante’s paternity in his Parisian edition of 1577.

Convivio

Composed around 1304–1307, the *Convivio*, or “Banquet,” was left unfinished after just four of the intended 15 books. Dante’s philosophical treatise was nearly forgotten in the first half of the fifteenth century, but enjoyed a certain popularity from the 1460s onward and was printed in 1490 by Francesco Bonaccorsi in Florence. The first book is a proem and the only one that does not begin with a canzone. It contains a passionate defense of Italian as a worthy language for literary and philosophical writing. The second and third books deal with the author’s consolation found in the study of philosophy after the death of Beatrice. The fourth book treats true nobility, based on character and not birthright. The influence of scholastic philosophy is evident in the treatise, but the choice of Italian instead of Latin for a philosophical work offers the bread of the angels (i.e., philosophical knowledge) to a larger readership (I.i.7–8). The *Convivio* announces Dante’s disaffection from his first love Beatrice, and the shift in his affection toward Lady Philosophy (II.xv.2); but the work was interrupted just around the time that Dante began writing the *Divine Comedy*, in which Beatrice’s return heralds the triumph of Christian theology.

Epistles

The 13 letters we possess were written by Dante to Niccolò Albertini, Bishop of Ostia, and Velletri (I); Oberto and Guido, Counts of Romena (II); Cino da Pistoia (III); Moroello Malaspina (IV); the Rulers of Italy (V); the most iniquitous Florentines (VI); Emperor Henry VII (VII); to Marguerite of Brabant, in the name of the Countess of Battifolle (VIII–X); the Italian Cardinals (XI); to a Florentine friend (XII) and to Cangrande della Scala, Lord of Verona (XIII). The last of these letters, to Cangrande, has been the object of much critical attention because it contains a set of interpretive instructions for the *Divine Comedy*. Doubts on its authenticity have lately been minimized (see Azzetta) but not entirely silenced. During the Renaissance, Dante’s *Epistles* were variously debated, in 1436 by Leonardo Bruni (1917), in 1467 by Giovanni Mario Filelfo (1828), by Anton Francesco Doni (1547), and by Giambattista Gelli (1562). Bruni described the poet’s handwriting, having read some of his letters, as “fine and slender and very accurate” (Toynbee 1917, 5).

Quaestio de Aqua et Terra

On January 20, 1320, Dante gave a lecture in Verona on the relative size and position of water and earth on our planet: The “Dispute on water and earth” was the result of a debate begun in Mantua in which Dante argued that the earth was everywhere higher than water. The text was first published by Giovanni Moncetti in 1508 (Barbi, 103), and its authenticity was debated until Edward Moore made a case for it in 1899.

Monarchia

Written around 1312–3 or 1319–20, this Latin treatise in three books passionately defends the autonomy of imperial power from its papist adversaries, arguing that the rule of an independent emperor is necessary to the pursuit of man’s happiness. It is ironic that the *Monarchia*, a treatise that promotes imperial authority and denies the papacy temporal power, was first printed in 1559, the very year of Paul IV’s promulgation of the *Index of Prohibited Books*. Its inclusion on the *Index* would not allow for Italian publication,

and the text's first printer, Joannes Oporinus – based in Basel, a city outside the borders of Catholic influence – thought that the author of the *Monarchia* was not the poet of the *Commedia* but a homonymous friend of Angelo Poliziano (Kay, xxxv). The interest of the Lutheran world in Dante's antipapal pamphlet was confirmed in the same year by Johannes Basilius Herold's German translation from Marsilio Ficino's Italian version of 1468.

Eclogues

Between 1319 and 1321 Dante composed two Latin poems (of 68 and 97 hexameters, respectively) in response to the Bolognese magister Giovanni del Virgilio who invited him to write in Latin instead of Italian and move to Bologna to receive the poetic laurel. Dante replied that he would rather pursue a quiet life of study and write in Italian than move to Bologna to write in the language of Virgil. First printed in 1719, Dante's *Eclogues* testify not only to his ability in Latin versification, but to his consistent agenda of pursuing excellence in the vernacular.

Divine Comedy

Dante's given title was *Comedia* (*Inf.* 16.128 and 21.2), a work that blends classical poetry with Christian theology, approaching the basest Infernal subjects and the loftiest heavenly mysteries in the Florentine vernacular, but with influences from Occitan, Latin, and other varieties of Italian. The poem's style ranges from bawdy and grotesque to realistic and elevated, rich with neologisms; to early readers it appeared at times slangy, uncouth, and even shocking. However, echoes and reminiscences of Dante's verses surface in many writers including Petrarch, Boccaccio, Poliziano, Savonarola, Ariosto, Trissino, Folengo, and Michelangelo (Bigi 1981a, 160, 163, 1981b, 179). Dante's *Commedia*, written in *terza rima* (tercets rhymed ABA, BCB) is divided into one hundred cantos grouped into three canticles (*Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*), recounting the protagonist's journey (that of Dante Alighieri himself) through the Christian afterlife, where he interacts with a vast array of

historical and literary figures, prominent and otherwise.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The first biographer of Dante was Giovanni Boccaccio who, in his *Trattatello in laude di Dante* (extant in three versions), presents a eulogy of the poet, having researched the facts and interviewed those who knew him, among them Dante's daughter Antonia. As a great admirer, copyist, and editor of Dante's works, Boccaccio's aim was to cleanse the poet's reputation from any residue of political or moral bias that might be lingering in Florence after his exile, and to cast poetry as the highest means to attaining theological truth. Despite his effort toward objectivity, Boccaccio's life of Dante is notorious for its unreliability, presenting an idealized image of Dante's person and little evidence to support many of its claims; thus, when Leonardo Bruni wrote his own biography of Dante in 1436, he distanced himself from Boccaccio's romanticized and mysticizing approach. Significantly reassessing Dante's civic engagement and literary value with respect to his 1401 *Dialogues to Pier Paolo Vergerio*, in which he criticized Dante's inferior Latinity (Quint, 427), Bruni, now chancellor of the Florentine Republic, while recognizing the linguistic superiority of Petrarch, celebrated Dante's role in the birth of Florentine humanism.

Other biographical accounts of Dante include Giannozzo Manetti's 1440 *Vitae Dantis Petrarchae ac Boccaccii*, which shifts interest toward the contemplative aspects of the poet's life, and Matteo Palmieri's *Città di vita* (ca. 1455–1465) which completely abandons the view of Dante as a model of the civic poet and focuses instead on the style and structure of his great philosophical poem, even extolling Dante's ennoblement of the vernacular (Garin, 20–21). In this philosophical wake, Marsilio Ficino translated Dante's Latin treatise *Monarchia* into Florentine in 1468, tracing a neo-Platonic interpretation of Dante, later restated in Ficino's introductory epistle to Landino's 1481 commentary on the *Commedia*. Here, the prestigious iconography of the poet as Florentine civic glory combines with the neo-Platonic vision of poetry

as earthly image of divine harmony and sublime cognitive tool of theological wisdom. For Ficino and Landino, the goal of the soul's journey, allegorized in the pilgrim's journey, is contemplation of divine matters.

Impact and Legacy

Soon after Dante's death, controversy arose around his political ideas. The poet's strong support of the empire scandalized papal supporters across Italy: Guido Vernani da Pisa wrote a polemic refutation titled *De reprobatione monarchiae* in 1327, and Cardinal Bertrand du Pouget ordered the book burned in Bologna in 1329. Shortly after, however, Dante's fortune would grow, especially in Florence: Giovanni Boccaccio began lecturing on the *Divine Comedy* in 1373 (*Esposizioni sopra la Commedia*, running only through *Inferno* 17 because of Boccaccio's declining health). Boccaccio also copied many of Dante's works and composed his first biography (*Trattatello in laude di Dante*, extant in three versions). Dionisotti (1965, 337) points to the tradition of Dantean readings as evidence that the *Divine Comedy* had become, by the late fourteenth century, a canonic Italian literary text. Readings of Dante's *Comedy* took place in several northern Italian cities by Giovanni Villani, Benvenuto da Imola, Giovanni Malpaghini, and Giovanni Gherardi da Prato (Garin, 12; Rossi, 309; Arduini 7), but the most controversial cycle was certainly the 1431–1432 Florentine readings by Francesco Filelfo, which provided the grounds for the anti-Medicean political campaign of the Albizzi and the Strozzi. A scholar from Tolentino in the Marches, Filelfo, who had come to Florence after Venice and Constantinople, appropriated Dantean ideals of liberty to the republican cause of Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Palla di Noferi Strozzi, provoking the violent reaction of Cosimo de' Medici the Elder. In retaliation, Cosimo had his thugs attack and disfigure Filelfo, leaving a mark not only on the scholar's face but also in the history of the reception of *Commedia*: in Florence, Dante had become a valuable icon and legitimizing stamp for ambitious political agendas.

Florentine humanists of the late fourteenth century such as Cino Rinuccini and Coluccio Salutati

returned to Dante with an interest that was only partly diminished by the fact that Dante's majestic poem of heaven, earth, and hell was not written in the language of Cicero. This waxing and waning interest occurred, after all, in the wake of Petrarch's mild appreciation of Dante's excellence in the vernacular, too dear "inter ydiotas in tabernis et in foro" ("among vulgar people in taverns and town squares" *Fam.* XXI.15.15), a prejudice that did not die easily, if even Leonardo Bruni's positive assessment could not refrain from noting Dante's limited Latin eloquence (Bruni, *Vita*, par. 12). The debate at the turn of the fifteenth century broadened when some humanists, enamored of the Latin language, disparaged the *Divine Comedy*'s vernacular. Rinuccini's *Invettiva contra a certi calunniatori di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio* responded to Antonio Loschi's *Invettiva in Florentinos* taking the defense of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio; Angelo Decembrio relayed, in his *Politia literaria*, his teacher Guarino da Verona's harsh judgment of vernacular literature as mere fable fit only for women and children; Leonardo Bruni's 1401 *Dialogues to Pier Paolo Vergerio* featured Niccolò Niccoli, the most strenuous opponent of the vernacular, reproaching Dante for punishing Brutus and Cassius by placing them in Lucifer's jaw along with Judas, when they should have been praised for killing the tyrant Julius Caesar. This episode frames the political discourse of republican Florence, justifying tyrannicide as a way of defending republican ideals, a concept that would survive there until the French Revolution. The second part of Bruni's *Dialogues* contains a marked change of perspective, with Niccoli acknowledging the literary value of the Three Crowns; however, this concession remains a rhetorical device and does not reflect Bruni's true acceptance of the ethical, philosophical and literary values disparaged in the first part of the work (Bigi 1981a, 150). Bruni's *Dialogues* also continue the criticism of Dante's choice of the vernacular as a new literary language, a choice that had already been covertly criticized by Rinuccini and Salutati (Garin, 9), who in *De fato, fortuna et casu* had even translated into Latin portions of *Inferno* 7 and *Purgatorio* 16.

In the following decades, after the war with Milan and the ascent to power of Cosimo I (the “Elder”), Florence developed a cult of Dante that rested on the poet’s civic and political activity. Leonardo Bruni’s *Vita* not only insists on Dante’s civic commitment, but even justifies and supports his choice to write in the vernacular instead of Latin. This attitude became dominant in the Renaissance: Dante was often appropriated by one ideology or another and was even bent to the purposes and necessities of entirely diverse intellectuals. With the coming of the Lutheran Reform, at a time of deep religious crisis and renovation, Dante’s antipapal inclinations were construed as the forerunners of spiritual rebirth, a witness of truth, a poetics of the Reformation (Dalmas, 40). The end of the fifteenth century was thus characterized by a renewed interest in Dante’s political and moral stances, although the debate regarding the excellence of language was soon to turn in favor of Petrarch. With the publication in Venice of Pietro Bembo’s *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), the linguistic models for the Florentine vernacular were Petrarch’s verse and Boccaccio’s prose. The edition of Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and the *Giuntina di rime antiche*, both published in 1527 by Giunti in Florence, testify to Dante’s secondary position as vernacular model at a time when Florentine was exalted as the new literary language of Italy.

And yet, the Accademia Fiorentina, sponsored by Grand Duke Cosimo I, began its cycle of Dante lectures in 1541 with such distinguished names as Giovanni Mazzuoli (nicknamed Lo Stradino), Anton Francesco Grazzini (nicknamed Il Lasca), and Benedetto Varchi. In 1547, Anton Francesco Doni collected lectures by more Florentine *Accademici* – Francesco Verini, Giambattista Gelli, Giovanni Strozzi, Pierfrancesco Giambullari, Cosimo Bartoli, Giambattista da Cerreto, and Mario Tanci – in his *Lettioni d’academici fiorentini sopra Dante*, testifying to the lively interest in the theological, political, and poetical aspects of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. Over time, the many unorthodox or anticlerical passages in Dante’s *Divine Comedy* authorized a number of ideological readings and appropriations of the cultural icon that the Florentine poet

came to represent. Indeed, these unorthodox appropriations were not mere passing fancies of the moment: “the heterodox use of the poet is less strong than the text might indicate, but also more lasting than the history of censorship suggests” (Dalmas, 257).

The constitution in Padua of the Accademia degli Infiammati, in 1542, issuing from Pietro Bembo’s pro-Petrarchan aesthetic and Pietro Pomponazzi’s neo-Aristotelian rationalism, represented a strong reaction to Florentine “Dantismo.” Intellectuals such as Girolamo Ruscelli (d. Venice, 1556) and Bernardino Tomitano (Padua, 1517–1576) sparked the controversy by criticizing Dante for being more a theologian and a philosopher than a real poet, and for using lowly expressions and coarse language in his verses. These attacks opened a first phase of the *querelle* over Dante, with the anonymous 1556 *Difesa di Dante come cattolico* (attributed by some to Vincenzo Borghini), followed by Carlo Lenzoni and Benedetto Varchi who also argued in defense of Dante. Pierfrancesco Giambullari, Girolamo Benivieni, and Lodovico Dolce (whose 1555 edition of the poem adds for the first time the adjective “divina” before Dante’s intended title *Commedia*) all sided with the Florentine poet and the excellence of his poem. The debate seemed settled until Varchi’s dialogue *L’Ercolano* was published posthumously in 1570; in it, the author extolled Dante as a superior poet to Homer and Virgil, stirring a second round of reactions. An unidentified author under the pseudonym of Ridolfo Castravilla (possibly Lionardo Salviati or Bellissario Bulgarini) slighted the divine poet with the inflammatory *Discorso nel quale si mostra l’imperfezione della Commedia di Dante*. Moving from the Aristotelian principle that philosophy and poetry cannot be successfully combined in a work of art, Castravilla found many imperfections in the *Commedia*, including its style, content, logical construction, and storyline. He disparaged Dante’s poem as a satire, rather than a comedy, “a messy mix of the lectures he might have heard from this or that friar.” Among those who rose in defense of the Florentine poet, Iacopo Mazzoni’s *Discorso in difesa della Comedia del divino poeta*

Dante (1572) most effectively countered Castravilla's argument that Dante had barbarously mixed poetry with philosophy stating that "removing philosophy from human reasoning is tantamount to removing the shepherd from the sheepfold" and that "poetics and philosophy are one and the same thing" (Battaglia 7). The dispute continued for years, counting among Dante's adversaries Alessandro Carriero (*Breve et ingegnoso discorso contra l'opera di Dante*, 1582), Bellissario Bulgarini (*Considerazioni sopra il discorso di Iacopo Mazzoni*, 1573; *Repliche*, 1585), and Orazio Capponi (*Risposta alle cinque prime particelle delle Considerazioni*, 1575) while Dante's defenders included Girolamo Zoppio (*Ragionamenti in difesa di Dante e del Petrarca*, 1583), Sperone Speroni (*Discorsi sopra Dante*), and Vincenzo Borghini.

Editions of the *Commedia* in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

The *editio princeps* of the *Commedia* was printed in Foligno in 1472 by Johan Numeister and Evangelista Angelini. Thirteen further printed editions followed in the fifteenth century, and 36 more in the sixteenth century (Parker, 133–134). These numbers, especially if compared with the 167 editions of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* in the sixteenth century alone, testify to Petrarch's position as the dominant vernacular Italian literary model in the Renaissance.

Editions of the *Commedia* (Sources: Parker, 133–134 and http://www.italnet.nd.edu/Dante/text/List_Editions.html)

1472 Foligno, Johann Neumeister ed Evangelista Angelini
 1472 Mantua Georg and Paul Butzbach, with Colombino Veronese
 1472 Venice, Federico de' Conti da Verona
 1477 Venice, Windelin von Speyer, with commentary by Jacopo della Lana, although mis-attributed to Benvenuto da Imola
 1478 Naples, Francesco del Tuppo

1478 Milan, Ludovico and Alberto Piemontesi, with Martino Paolo Nidobeato. With commentary by Jacopo della Lana revised by Guido Terzago
 1481 Florence, Niccolò di Lorenzo della Magna, with commentary by Cristoforo Landino and illustrations by Sandro Botticelli
 1484 Venice, Ottaviano Scoto
 1487 Brescia, Bonino de' Bonini
 1491 Venice, Pietro di Piasi, edited by Pietro da Figine, with Landino's commentary, first fully illustrated edition (images by Bernardino Benali and Matteo Capcasa, or "Codecà")
 1493 Venice, Bernardino Benali and Matteo Capcasa, or "Codecà" with Landino's commentary
 1497 Venice, Pietro Quarengi with Landino's commentary
 1502 Venice, Aldus Manutius, pocket edition titled *Le terze rime di Dante* edited by Pietro Bembo who set it from Vat. Lat. 3197, in which he had copied the text by Boccaccio in Vat. Lat. 3199. Bembo distances himself from the edition by Cristoforo Landino
 1506 Florence, Giunti, editor Girolamo Benivieni
 1507 Venice, Bartolomeo Zani with Landino's commentary
 1512–20 Venice, Bernardo Stagnino with Landino's commentary
 1515 Venice, Aldus Manutius and Andrea Torresani
 1515 Venice, Gregorio de' Gregoriis da Forlì
 1515–33 Venice, Paganino and Alessandro Paganini
 1529 Venice, Jacob Burgofranco or "Pocatela" with Luc'Antonio Giunti with Landino's commentary
 1536 Venice, Bernardino Stagnino, underwritten by Giovanni Giolito with Landino's commentary
 1544 Venice, Francesco Marcolini, with commentary by Alessandro Vellutello
 1545 Venice, Al segno della speranza
 1547 Lyon, Jean de Tournes
 1551 Lyon, Guillaume Roville
 1554 Venice, Giovan Antonio Morando

- 1555 Venice, Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, edited by Lodovico Dolce: *Divina Commedia*
- 1564 Venice, Giovanni Battista and Melchiorre Sessa, edited by Francesco Sansovino with commentaries by Landino and Vellutello
- 1568 Venice, Pietro da Fino, with commentary by Bernardino Daniello
- 1569 Venice, Domenico Farri
- 1571 Lyon, Guillaume Roville
- 1572 Venice, Domenico Farri
- 1572 Florence, Bartolomeo Semartelli with commentary on the *Inferno* by Vincenzo Buonanni.
- 1575 Lyon, Guillaume Roville
- 1575 Venice, Domenico Farri
- 1578 Venice, Giovanni Battista and Melchiorre Sessa, edited by Francesco Rampazetto with commentaries by Landino and Vellutello
- 1595 Florence, Domenico Manzani, Accademia della Crusca.
- 1595, Florence, Domenico Manzani, edited by Giambattista Deti sponsored by Accademia della Crusca, with illustrations by Antonio Manetti of the geography of Hell.
- 1596 Venice, Giovanni Battista and Bernardo Sessa, with Domenico Nicolini and with Landino's and Vellutello's commentaries.
- 1613 Vicenza, Francesco Leni
- 1629 Padua, Donato Pasquardi
- 1629 Venice, Niccolò Misserini
- 1716 Naples, Francesco Laino

After the 1595 edition of the Accademia della Crusca, Dante's works nearly fell into oblivion, perhaps because the *Divine Comedy* was placed on the *Index of Forbidden Books* in 1614; or, as Barbi would have it (76), as a consequence of the negative judgments of Castravilla and Bulgarini.

Commentaries on Dante's *Commedia*

Commentaries on the *Divine Comedy* began with the 1322 tercet by tercet explanation of the *Inferno* by Jacopo Alighieri, son of Dante. Many more followed in the fourteenth century, including those by Jacopo della Lana (Italian, 1324–1328), Ottimo (Italian, 1333–1338), Pietro Alighieri (Latin, 1340–1464), Benvenuto da Imola (Latin,

1375–1380), and Francesco da Buti (Italian, 1385).

During the early fifteenth century, readers of the *Divine Comedy* showed a growing appreciation for its moral and poetic aspects, as testified by Giovanni Bertoldi of Serravalle's Latin translation and commentary, requested by an international audience of scholars and theologians during the Council of Constance in 1416. Serravalle shows a preference for the eloquence of Petrarch, but credits Dante with greater doctrine (*Par.* 1.34–36), following in the wake of the humanist critique of Dante's choice of Italian, a seemingly unfit tool for the lofty subject of *Paradiso*. After Serravalle, Guiniforte Barzizza wrote a commentary in Italian on the *Inferno* (1438–1440), after which there was then no new commentary produced until those of Martino Paolo Nidobeato in 1478 and Cristoforo Landino in 1481.

The 1481 edition of the *Divine Comedy* with Landino's commentary marked a turning point in the reception of the poem. Not only was this edition the first printed in Florence (following Nidobeato's 1478 printing of Jacopo della Lana's commentary in Milan, Florence was obliged to respond), it was also accompanied by engravings by Baccio Baldini after Sandro Botticelli's drawings and introduced by Landino's long defense of "Dante and Florence" against their opponents (*Apologia nella quale si difende Dante et Florentia da falsi calunniatori*), thus marrying the literary fortune of the poet to the political agenda of the city. Landino's work, the first integral commentary in the Italian vernacular, was strongly marked by the cultural idiom of Medicean Florence: neo-Platonism (Caesar, 281).

Beginning in the 1540s, Dante commentaries took a new direction: the aesthetic and linguistic interest of the Bembo school was replaced by moralistic preoccupations, a taste for theory and erudition, that brought a narrower critical scope and an attention to the religious value of the Dantean poem (Bigi 1981b). The Lucchese Alessandro Vellutello (Lucca 1473?–Venice 1576) published his commentary on Dante's *Commedia* (*La Comedia di Dante Alighieri con*

la nova esposizione di Alessandro Vellutello, Venice: Marcolini, 1544) dedicated to pope Paul III with a set of 87 engravings by Giovanni Britto. While vehemently polemical with regard to Bembo's Petrarchism, and accusing Bembo of having provided printer Aldus Manutius with highly incorrect texts for the editions of Dante and Petrarch, Vellutello was also hostile to Florentine political ideals, admiring Dante as a rebel to his own city and a free spirit. Vellutello states in his introduction, "Ai lettori," that he had received information and documents from a descendant of Dante himself, and thanks to this new material his commentary would be able to explain the text more faithfully on literal, historical, and geographical levels. Vellutello's commentary was reprinted in 1551 (Lyon: Roville), 1564 and 1578 (Venice: Sessa, both of these with Landino's commentary).

Although Trifone Gabriele never published his *Annotazioni a Dante* (1525–1541), a set of learned notes on the stylistic, allegorical, moral, and theological aspects of the *Divine Comedy*, the "Venetian Socrates" (as he nicknamed himself for his predilection for informal teaching) left a mark that, departing from Landino's Platonic tradition and line by line paraphrase, corrected many interpretations and offered original insights especially regarding Dante's language and style (Parker, 89).

The only other complete commentary in the sixteenth century was that of Bernardino Daniello (1568), but critics have often expressed skepticism about its originality because of its indebtedness to Daniello's teacher Trifone Gabriele. If Daniello follows very closely his teacher's anti-Landinian spirit, to the point that they were both taunted for alleged Protestantism, he also explains stylistic and rhetorical devices with painstaking care (Parker, 121).

Lodovico Castelvetro (Modena, 1505 – Chiavenna, 1571) wrote marginal notes in an incunabulum of the *Commedia* containing Landino's commentary (Modena, Bibl. Estense, Alpha K. 1. 13, printed in Venice: Piero de Quarenghi, 1497) and a commentary to the first 29 cantos of the *Inferno* (*Sposizione a XXIX canti dell'Inferno dantesco*), probably completed in 1569–1570 but first published only in 1886

(Franciosi, Modena). Castelvetro sees contradictions and vulgar expressions in Dante's language, especially in the section of Malebolge, and accuses the divine poet of lacking in consistency, logic, and verisimilitude. Despite this stern criticism, Castelvetro argued against Bembo in favor of Dante's poetry, placing it above all others and comparing Dante's superiority over Petrarch to Homer's superiority over Virgil (*Sposizione*, 91). Suspected of Lutheranism, Castelvetro was accused of the murder of Alberico Longo, a friend of Annibal Caro, and forced to flee Venice in 1556. Allegations of Lutheran heresy may also have originated from his reassessment of the heretical Pope Anastasius as a follower of Photinus in *Inferno* XI (Dalmas, 248). Here we should note that Bembo's preference for Petrarch's balanced style did not mean that he excluded Dante from the canon, as is proven by his Aldine edition of the *Commedia* (Venice, 1502).

After Castelvetro's incomplete commentary, no other was produced until the 1732 work by Pompeo Venturi.

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Davenant, William

Born: 1606

Died: 1668

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Abstract

Davenant's philosophical interest is explicit and implicit in his work. Disraeli's romantic praise of him as "a poet and and a wit... and at all times a philosopher" (Disraeli 1859, p. 404) signals the two-sided appreciation that has been extended and complicated by later

intellectual historians and critics. Primarily a literary figure, Davenant helped theorize the emergence of a logically clarified, empirically chastened neoclassicism in opposition to what his friend Thomas Hobbes called the "ambitious obscurity" of late Renaissance aesthetics. Active during an era of political upheaval, Davenant emphasized rationalized order and conservative, royalist loyalties; nonetheless, recent scrutiny has been devoted to the contradictions and ambivalences within his explicit themes and methods.

Biography

William Davenant (D'Avenant, D'avenant) spanned three major phases early-modern England – the late Renaissance, the Puritan Commonwealth, and the early Restoration – distinguishing himself as a poet and playwright as well as an active figure in military and political affairs. Part of his historical reputation is the legend, which he apparently encouraged, that he was not only Shakespeare's godson but also his illegitimate son and, spiritually, his literary heir. A successful writer of comedies and tragedies for Shakespeare's old company, the King's Men, and of court masques (elaborate spectacles including music and dance), he was appointed England's poet laureate in 1638. Living in French exile during the early years of the Puritan Commonwealth (later termed the Interregnum), he wrote his most influential philosophical work, a *Preface* to his quasi-epic *Gondibert*. Publishing it in 1650 along with Thomas Hobbes' sympathetic *Answer*, he continued to work on the poem itself after being captured at sea later that year and imprisoned in England, awaiting possible execution. Pardoned in 1654, he produced informal "entertainments" as well as England's first opera despite the Puritan closing of the theaters. His career blossomed during the Restoration of the monarchy, which also revived English drama; he became a transformative theatrical manager, adapting several major Shakespearean plays for new tastes and pioneering the use of moveable scenery and female actors.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Davenant's early works affirm virtuous reconciliation and mutual love in reaction to an anxiety about an impending collapse of order – a dramatic and productive tension articulated by generations of Renaissance thinkers and literary forebears such as Spenser, Donne, Shakespeare, and Milton (Haydn 1950, *passim*; Greenblatt 1980, *passim*; Bouwsma 1990, pp. 157–189). Davenant's attitudes were also complicated across his lengthy career by a skepticism about the puritanical zeal or improbable idealizations that his contemporaries variously posited as remedies for an unsettled culture (Sharpe 1987, ch. 2 *passim*). In Davenant's pre-revolution court masque, *Salmacida Spolia*, part of a genre that allegorized broad harmonies triumphing over discord, recent critics have discerned strains of hostility, obsession, and coercion lurking behind high-minded political theory and idealized civility (Wilcher 2001, pp. 33–35; Sanchez 2011, pp. 168–175). His late works, too, show complex engagement with the problematics of order. Readers used to dismiss his revisions of Shakespeare for the Restoration stage as reductive mutilations or ill-considered elaborations, but fresh attention has probed the self-consciousness of their aesthetic, political, and epistemological projects. One study sees Davenant's *Macbeth*, despite its added spectacle and music, reworking the darkly mysterious character of the original through a rational and empirically minded causal structure (Kroll 1990, *passim*). Yet another study finds in the same play a rehearsal of anti-foundational political theory, celebrating yet also skeptical of transcendent claims for authority (Miller 2008, *passim*).

The polarized world of the Civil War and the Interregnum serve as the background to Davenant's best known work, the uncompleted, narrative epic *Gondibert*, including its prefatory material, written in French exile and English prisons. An eclectic, professedly “heroick” poem that interweaves a projected five-part dramatic structure with lyric, epic, and romantic elements, *Gondibert* was contested as to its literary quality in its own day and is rarely defended on such

terms today. Even so, it draws respect as a “philosophical poem,” related to earlier Renaissance works such as Sir John Davies' *Nosce Teipsum* (Gladish 1971, pp. x–xvi) and Fulke Greville's *A Treatie of Humane Learning* (Davenant had begun his career under Greville's patronage). Echoes of Bacon, Hobbes, Harvey, and others sound throughout, and in the reluctant hero's retreat to the House of Astragon, an institute of contemplative study and research ruled over by a wise man, many readers espy the template of “Salomon's House” in Francis Bacon's philosophical-scientific utopia, *The New Atlantis* (1627). “This was a poem to delight a philosopher,” writes Disraeli (Disraeli 1859, p. 408). Of greater interest is *The Author's Preface to his Much Honor'd Friend, M. Hobbes*, published in 1650, in advance of the poem itself, together with the philosopher's concise, generally sympathetic *Answer of Mr. Hobbes to Sir Will. D'Avenant's Preface Before Gondibert*. The independent life of these two documents is an ironic outcome for an author so ambitious of literary fame.

Though some regard Davenant's aesthetic ideas as “pretexts” for political concerns (Zwicker 1993, p. 26), the *Preface* retains its philosophical importance as a “manifesto of neo-classicism,” channeling and combining continental and native theory to chasten the mannerist, metaphysical, and baroque tendencies of Elizabethan and Jacobean poetics (Harbage 1935, p. 197). At once traditional and innovative (Gladish 1971, p. 18), it values classical epic – above all Homer and Virgil – but also aligns itself with Moderns over Ancients, presenting the latter's supernatural machinery and other improbabilities, especially when aped by Moderns, as errors of a dreamlike imagination. For Davenant, the moral function of literature, long a humanist concern, requires a balance of restraint and freedom of the probable and intriguing strangeness.

These caveats prepare for Davenant's location of poetic Wit at the confluence of painstaking labor, “lucky resultances,” and “dexterity of thought.” Wit is essential to “full comprehension,” in distinction to facile cleverness, ostentatious conceits, or the pretense to “inspiration,” which he calls “a dangerous word... a spiritual

Fitt" (Gladish 1971, pp. 18–22). Supernatural mystification recalls claims to prophetic power, which "pretend authority over the people." The usefulness of poetry, rather, lies in persuading readers to moderation, civility, and knowledgeable obedience – an aesthetic solution to political chaos that Davenant championed, despite the mockery of contemporary satirists for his apparent self-importance.

There do remain, however, troublesome paradoxes in Davenant's version of poetic persuasion. Renaissance didactic theory often promises to reach a broad audience, but Davenant's poetry of "Courts and Camps," with "patterns fit to be imitated," aims only at the elite, "the most necessary Men," with the "common Crowd" tamed by legal precept and punishment or, more optimistically, by imitating the rules embodied in their leaders' imitations (Gladish 1971, p. 13). Epistemological shifts are likewise tricky in their search for scrupulous balance. We must, Davenant stresses, eschew fantastical indulgence for the sake of probability, but we must also be wary of the "bond to truth" that plagues "austere Historians": "Truth narrative, and past, is the Idoll of Historians, (who worship a dead thing) and truth operative, and by effects continually alive, is the Mistress of Poets, who hath not her existence in matter, but in reason" (Gladish 1971, pp. 10–11). Grafting Philip Sidney's enthusiasm for poetic fictions onto Bacon's sharp-eyed, empiricist critique of Idols, Davenant seeks to whet the rational appetite, "bringing Truth (too often absent) home to mens bosoms," enlivened "in an unusuall dresse" (Gladish 1971, p. 20). But this project also reflects a complex insight into the psychology of didacticism, acknowledging the imaginative power needed to rouse the virtuous, who often have "too little appetite for greatness" to match the ambition of the vicious (Gladish 1971, p. 13). A similar riskiness appears in his treatment of the affections in poetry and politics: to raise and direct passions for the sake of renewing civic virtues may pander as well as instruct, enabling vicious as well as virtuous ends (Kahn 2004, pp. 143–145; Chua 2014, *passim*).

The relation of Hobbes's *Answer* to Davenant's *Preface* has been read variously: as complement, adjustment, or firmer and more concise rationalization. Like Davenant, Hobbes attacks unregulated imagination and the pretenses of inspiration on political and epistemological grounds. The vain-glory of poetic fantasy, which Hobbes had compared more than a decade earlier to the delusions of Don Quixote, may well impel seditious violence (Kahn 2004, pp. 142–145). Hobbes now compares affectations of prophetic power to farcical or incompetent conjurers summoning ungovernable spirits or storms. Instead of truth and "Reformation," discord and tumult may be the consequence of a "man enabled to speake wisely from the principles of nature and his own meditation" yet preferring "to be thought to speake by inspiration, like a bagpipe" (Gladish 1971, pp. 48–49). True knowledge, Hobbes contends, is scrupulous and self-aware. It submits experience of Nature to memory (fabled mother of the muses), thence to her twin offspring, judgment, and fancy, which, if guided by true Philosophy, produce all that separates civility from barbarity. As in politics and philosophy, so in literature, the "limit of Poetic Liberty" constrains the "exorbitancy" of "strange fictions" to a proper resemblance of truth in a world of matter and motion. And though Hobbes's emphasis alters in other works depending on context, he insists that even the most delightful poetic fancy must play the role of philosopher as well as poet, "to furnish and square her matter" (Gladish 1971, pp. 50–51).

Impact and Legacy

While Davenant's legacy is more conspicuous for the theater than for philosophy, it has resonance for speculation as well. His *Preface*, together with Hobbes's *Answer*, has shared in the disapproval sometimes leveled at the new "rationalistic spirit" for its "stringent classicism," its "confinement of the imagination," and worse: "Something had gone out of life... In Davenant and Hobbes the fire is gone" (Spingarn [1899] 1963, p. 164; Hall 1963, p. 56.). But restraint in one direction opens

range and dexterity in another, one sign of which is the tone each takes in addressing the other. For both writers, philosophizing allows “perspicuity, property, and decency” to excite the mind to “curiosity, which is a delightfull appetite of knowledge” (Gladish 1971, p. 52). Hobbes ends his *Answer* with a double act of wit as Davenant had defined it. First he reproaches his companion seriocomically for his careless repetition of the cliché that age is a second childhood. Endless curiosity and openness to the future fends off mental decline, he reminds his much younger friend. The friendly jab is followed by an ingenious compliment to the notoriously disfigured Davenant, whose nose had collapsed years earlier because of mercury “treatments” for syphilis. In a “far-fetched” similitude, allowable because apt and comely (Gladish 1971, p. 53), Hobbes imagines the characters of *Gondibert* with their multiple virtues as fragments of their author, all reassembled in the mind’s eye of the reader into his perfect portrait, as if composed in the tube of a multifaceted perspective glass (Gladish 1971, p. 55).

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Dawānī

Born: 1426, Dawān

Died: 1502

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Abstract

An important philosopher and theologian in the late fifteenth century Shīrāz, al-Dawānī's teaching and commentaries were formative for subsequent philosophical development in the Ottoman Empire, the Ṣafavid Iran and the Muslim India.

Full Name

Muḥammad ibn As'ad Jālāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī
al-Kāzīrūnī al-Ṣiddīqī

Biography

Born around 1426 in Dawān, a village near the city of Kāzīrūn southwest of the Iranian plateau, Jālāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī first studied *hadīth*, jurisprudence, Qur'ānic exegesis, and the rational sciences in his hometown with his father Sa'd al-Dīn As'ad and a certain Maḥzar al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Murshidī al-Kāzīrūnī, both of whom prided themselves in belonging to a lineage of disciples that could be traced through al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī all the way back to Avicenna. During his early education, al-Dawānī was also initiated to the Murshidiya *silsila* of Sufis. Later on, he continued his studies in Shīrāz where he subsequently rose to prominence as one of the leading scholars and jurists of his time, holding some of the most prominent religious appointments. Despite the uneasy political conditions of the fifteenth century, al-Dawānī managed to stay in intimate

terms with a number of rulers of his time from the Qaraqunly, Aqqunly, Timurid, and Ottoman dynasties (dedicating three works to sultan Bāyazīd II) and also enjoyed the patronage of certain Indian political authorities (notably sultan Maḥmūd I of Gujarat to whom he dedicated several works, among them the *Unmūdḥaj al-'ulūm*, a kind of encyclopedia that covers questions in a wide range of both Islamic and rational sciences). This, however, did not prevent his sizable property from being confiscated during an uproar in 1498–1499, subsequent to which al-Dawānī left Shīrāz, according to some sources in order to migrate to India where two of his students had established some fame. Originally a staunch supporter of Sunnism, the reports about al-Dawānī's attitude to the emerging Shī'ite cause of the Ṣafavid *shāh* Ismā'il are conflicting. However, having passed away in 1502, he did not live to witness Ismā'il's final conquest of Fārs.

Although al-Dawānī was active in a number of fields of the sciences, he made his most important contributions in philosophy and theology. A highly venerated teacher, he is known to have lectured widely on works belonging to different schools of philosophy and theology, including the Avicennian Peripatetic tradition (the *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's and Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentaries), the *ishrāqī* tradition founded by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (most notably the eponymous *Ḥikma al-ishrāq*) to which he seems to have been particularly affiliated, the mature fourteenth century Ash'arite theology (exemplified by al-Jurjānī's commentary on 'Aḥud al-Dīn al-Ījī's *Kitāb al-mawāqif*), as well as al-Ṭūsī's philosophically oriented Shī'ite theology (the *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*). A prolific writer from early on, he composed several theological commentaries and supercommentaries on works such as 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī's *Ṭawālī al-anwār*, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wa al-kalām*, and 'Alī al-Qūshjī's commentary to al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*, al-Ījī's creed, and al-Jurjānī's commentary on his *Mawāqif*. His philosophical treatises and commentaries, such as the *Shawākil al-ḥūr* on

Suhrawardī's *Hayākil al-nūr*, signal a thorough familiarity with the *ishrāqī* and the Avicennian commentary traditions. He also wrote on various Sufi topics, for example in the work titled *al-Zawra'* which shows a decisive influence from the school of Ibn 'Arabī. Arguably his best known work is the Persian *Lawāmi 'al-ishrāq fī makārim al-akhlāq*, also known as *Akhlāq-i jalālī*, a primer on practical ethics, economics, and politics modeled on al-Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In his practical philosophy, as witnessed by the *Akhlāq-i jalālī*, al-Dawānī comes across as a relatively unoriginal thinker who seems satisfied with rerendering al-Ṭūsī's treatise, derived in turn from earlier works by al-Miskawayh and al-Fārābī as well as the Persian "mirror for princes" tradition, in a terminology more consonant with Islamic revelation. Interesting examples of this tendency are his interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean in terms of the Qur'ānic idea of moderation and his consistent use of the loaded Islamic term *sharī'a* in the general discussion of the institutional basis of the just society. He also differs from al-Ṭūsī by adopting a decided *ishrāqī* approach in place of the latter's relatively mainstream Avicennism. Despite the relative unoriginality, al-Dawānī's rewriting of the Ṭūsīan treatise seems to have had an important role in the consolidation of the philosophers' ethical and political ideas (such as the hierarchical classification of different types of societies, the isomorphic relation between types of society and types of personality, and the classification of different groups of citizens according to their natural tendencies) as parts of mainstream Islamic thought, especially in the Ottoman and Mughal empires.

Al-Dawānī's philosophical career was strongly marked by a sustained, and occasionally heated, written and oral debate with another Shīrāzī philosopher, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī. This exchange, which was later carried on by Dashtakī's son

Ghiyāth al-Dīn, would determine the philosophical scene in Shīrāz, and Iran in general, for decades or even centuries to come as people would define their own positions in philosophy by taking sides in the debate or by further developing ideas first spawned in it. Apart from public debate, the discussion mainly took shape in the form of layered superglosses on selected theological and philosophical texts, including al-Qūshjī's commentary on al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*, al-Jurjānī's glosses on works by 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī and Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and Suhrawardī's *Hayākil al-nūr*, but both participants also composed brief treatises on strictly determined philosophical questions.

One particularly heated topic of debate was the correct solution to the logical problem of the liar paradox, a question tackled by most of the major figures in later Islamic theology. Al-Dawānī's solution was to deny that the utterance "whatever I say at this moment is a lie" constitutes a genuine statement. In order to be a proper statement ascribable with a truth value, he stipulated that a sentence must have a semantic relation of reference to the external world – a condition which the convoluted self-referential sentence at the heart of the liar paradox fails to satisfy.

Another debate revolved around the metaphysical question of the relation between God as absolute existence and the created things as determined existents; here al-Dawānī held to a strict distinction according to which God alone is existence in an absolute sense of the word while all other things are merely existents, that is, essences that *have* existence as an accidental relation to something other than themselves. Interestingly, al-Dawānī introduces his position as having been instigated by the *ishrāqī* commentator Ibn Kammūna's famous "sophistical" argument for the possibility of two necessary existents; holding that the argument hinges on conceiving of God as an existent, al-Dawānī's conclusion was to deny the validity of attributing this term to Him. Another interesting feature of this debate is that in formulating his case, al-Dawānī liberally employs concepts and ideas derived not only from the traditions of philosophy and theology

but also from the Sufi tradition of Ibn ‘Arabī and his disciples.

Al-Dawānī’s critical remarks concerning the Avicennian idea of mental existence also gave rise to a dispute. According to him, mental existence violates the idea of formal identity, crucial to Avicenna’s Aristotelian epistemology. This is because if we suppose that objects of knowledge exist mentally as accidents in the soul, we will have no way of accounting for an adequate knowledge of substances, for no formal identity can be established between objects falling in two different categories – the extramental form of the substance to the category of substance and the corresponding mentally existing and therefore accidental form to the category of quality. A fourth major point of content concerned the question of God’s knowledge of particular things and a fifth the question of the separability of the human soul from its body; in the latter case, al-Dawānī subscribed to mainstream Avicennian substance dualism.

Impact and Legacy

The debate between al-Dawānī and the elder Dashtakī on questions like the relation between essence and existence, or the question of mental existence, can clearly be seen to determine the positions of such major philosophers of the Ṣafavid era as Mīr Dāmād or Mullā Ṣadrā. In al-Dawānī’s case, the influence took place mainly through his presence in the minutes of the debate, which was recorded in various layers of glosses on the works listed above. He did have a number of students who were instrumental in carrying on his influence although no school adamantly defending his position, comparable to that initiated by al-Dashtakī’s son, seems to have emerged. Yet some of al-Dawānī’s students, such as Jālāl al-Dīn al-Astarābādī, rose to prominent religious positions and were capable of influencing the cultural policies of the new rulers. Another chapter in al-Dawānī’s posthumous influence would have to be situated in India and the Ottoman empire, where he wielded a major influence through his students such as Muẓaffar al-Dīn

‘Alī al-Shīrāzī and Mu’ayyadzāde ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Efendī.

Cross-References

- [Al-Jurjānī as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf](#)
- [Mīr Damad, Muhammad Bāqir](#)
- [Mullā Ṣadrā](#)
- [Philosophy in Safavid Persia](#)

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de Ayala, Balthazar

► [Balthasar de Ayala](#)

de Azpilcueta Jaureguizar, Martín

► [Azpilcueta, Martín de](#)

De Balmes, Abraham ben Meir

Born: Around 1460, Lecce

Died: 1523, Padua or Venice

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Abstract

Abraham ben Meir de Balmes, born in Lecce, in Southern Italy, and active in Padua and Venice, belonged to a group of Jewish thinkers who participated in the Renaissance movement of translation of medieval Arabic philosophical and scientific works. In addition to his translation activity, he is particularly known for his Hebrew-Latin grammar, *Miqneh Avram* (*The Flock of Abram*; *Gen. 13:7*).

Biography

Abraham ben Meir De Balmes was a Jewish physician, grammarian, philosopher, and translator. His family probably hailed from Spain and moved to Southern Italy around the middle of the fifteenth century; it obtained numerous privileges thanks to Abraham ben Meir's grandfather (c. 1420–1489, Abraham De Balmes the Elder) who was a prominent physician at the court of King Ferdinand I of Naples. De Balmes' education combined traditional rabbinic wisdom and philosophy and science, in the Averroistic and

Maimonidean form that Aristotelian philosophy took in the Jewish Middle-Ages. He studied medicine in Naples and he obtained, in July 1492, the title of *artium et medicinae magister* under permission of Pope Innocent VIII (d. 1492). He obtained the title of *artium et medicinae doctor* too (the document is exceptionally extant, Zürich, Braginsky Collection, BCB 371), a title that appears in the headings of his manuscript translations and in the frontispiece of his grammar *Miqneh Avram* (*The Flock of Abram*). This latter work is the source of an additional detail about De Balmes philosophical learning, as the author himself names in several places the rabbi, physician, logician, and Aristotelian philosopher Judah ben Yehiel Messer Leon (~ 1425–1498) as one of his teachers, in Naples.

Probably because of the expulsion of the Jews from the kingdom of Naples in November 1510, De Balmes emigrated to the Venetian territories. He participated in the animated philosophical debate around the humanistic center resented by the university of Padua, where he possibly delivered philosophical lectures. He was one of the most remarkable figures of Italian Jews involved in the wave of translation – from Hebrew into Latin – of the philosophical and scientific medieval Arabic heritage that began around 1480 in the framework of the Renaissance interest in the Aristotelian tradition and Aristotle commentators. Other illustrious figures have been Elia del Medigo, Calonymos ben Calonymos, and Iacopo Mantino.

De Balmes was one of the most prolific Jewish translators of this period, under the erudite patronage of Alberto Pio di Carpi (1475–1531) and of Cardinal Domenico Grimani (1461–1523) of Venice, qualified by his contemporaries as one of the most eminent and influential scholar of his time, who De Balmes served as personal physician. He accomplished about thirty Hebrew-Latin translations of philosophical and scientific works, notably of Averroes Commentaries (Ibn Rushd 1126–1198). His versions of almost all Commentaries on Logic reflected his strong interest in that field; these translations of Averroes works have been incorporated in various Venetian editions (with the only exception of the *Quaesita naturalia*

that are extant in manuscript): The first edition of De Balmes translations of Averroes Commentaries on Logic was published in 1523 (Gian Antonio da Sabio); his versions were then published in the Aristotle-Averroes Giunta editions of 1550–1552, 1560–1562 and 1574, and by Nicolò Boscarini in 1552.

The Latin translations of other works of Averroes and of other Arab philosophers certainly met the interests of De Balmes, protector – in physics and in the nature of the human soul, and they were relevant original sources of the animated philosophical debate Cardinal Grimani was involved in, notably at the Paduan School. Among De Balmes translations it figures: Averroes' *Liber modorum rationum* (*Kitāb al-Kashf an Manāhiḡ al-adilla*; *The Book of Exposition of Religious Arguments*), the *Epistola expeditionis* (*Risālat al-wadā*; *Letter of the farewell*) of Ibn Bājja (~1085–1139), and the *Libellus De intellectu et intelligibili* (*Risālah fī 'l-'aql*; *Treatise on the intellect*) of al-Fārābī (870–950). The corpus of his versions is completed by the translation of *De mundo* (*Maqāla fī hay'at al-'ālam*) of Ibn al-Haitham (965–1039) and the *Isagogicon Astrologiae Ptolomei* of Geminus of Rhodes. These translations survive in manuscripts.

De Balmes composed three original works that reveal his doctrinal interests and the role, in his thought, of a distinctive original aspect of Jewish philosophy of the sixteenth century, represented by kabbalah linked to philosophy. His already mentioned Hebrew-Latin grammar (*Miqneh Avram/Peculium Abrae*) was published in Venice in 1523, by Daniel Bomberg. This work occupies a particular place within the Hebrew grammatical and lexicographical tradition, presenting influences of the Latin grammar and of the Aristotelian philosophy. The edition of 1523 included also his *Liber de demonstratione*, a thematically organized compendium of the *Great commentary* of Averroes to the *Book of the Demonstration* (Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, as the book was named in the Arabic and Hebrew traditions). The third work, the *Iggeret ha-'asirya* (*Epistle of the Decad*), is a kabbalistic-philosophical text on the

ten *sefirot*; it is extant in a unique manuscript (New York Public Library, ms. Heb. 186, previously in the Montefiore Library of London).

Cross-References

- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Delmedigo, Elijah](#)
- [Mantino ben Samuel, Jacob](#)
- [Messer Leon, Judah b. Jehiel](#)

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de Bergamo, Petrus

► [Pietro da Bergamo](#)

de Bergamo, Petrus

► [Pietro da Bergamo](#)

de Bérulle, Pierre

Born: 4 February 1575, Cérilly

Died: 2 October 1639, Paris

Simone Guidi

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Abstract

A French cardinal, among the main intellectuals of the French Counterreformation and the founder of the Oratoire de France. Bérulle's thought is the fruit of an eclectic meeting between the scholastic tradition, looking back to its father figures (notably Augustin) and neo-Platonist Hermeticism. He is known as "the Apostle of the Word Incarnate" for his doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ.

Biography

A French cardinal, one of the main representatives of the Catholic Counterreformation in France (Dagens 1952), he is the founder of the Oratoire. Born in Cerilly in 1575 and died in Paris in 1629. Schooled by Jesuits in Clermont, he studied at the Sorbonne and was ordained in 1599. His efforts concentrated on leadership of the French Counterreformational front. Two events were fundamental: the introduction of the Carmelite Order of nuns in France (of which he became the Superior in 1604) and the founding of the Jesus Oratoire (in 1611), designed to assist and encourage the clergy in their spiritual advancement. He became a cardinal in 1627 and in 1629 was appointed head of the Queen's Council. In 1628 he had a meeting with René Descartes (Marion 1981; Rodis-Lewsi 1990), whose spiritual guide he is said by some scholars to have become.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Bérulle is a perfect example of the Counterreformational eclecticism, often of Jesuit character, prevalent in the early seventeenth-century France (Dagens 1952). His fundamentally scholastic doctrinal thought structure embraces and integrates the most varied and wide-ranging influences, including a strong mystical streak. Accordingly he was nicknamed “the Copernicus of Incarnation” or “the Apostle of the Incarnated Word” (as he was described by Pope Urban IV), as his work was centered on a sort of mystical cosmography, quite common at that time, dominated by God's “solar” centrality. His best known doctrine, expressed in a kind of oration that Bérulle calls an “elevation,” is that of the mystical incorporation of Man with Jesus Christ achievable through the work of the Holy Spirit, whose action reproduces the virtues of the Son in those who turn to it. Bérulle's thought is an Augustinian Theory of Man, deeply influenced not only by a thorough knowledge of Hippocrates but also by readings and doctrines in the Platonic and the Hermetic traditions (Rodis-Lewis 1990), which his work contributed to reintroducing into the culture of the

seventeenth-century France. Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola are particularly relevant, but Bérulle was also strongly influenced by Montaigne (Bady 1964).

This syncretic Theory of Man emerging from Platonic-Augustinian thought already shows through in his early *Traité des Energumenes* (Walker 1981), at the beginning of which Bérulle celebrates Man as the center of creation by virtue of his analogical ability to be the reflection and image of the world. It was again from the early sixteenth-century Platonistic Hermeticism that Bérulle took the idea of Man as a composite being, halfway between spirit and matter, the battleground in a struggle between animal drives and moral living, in which Man alone is always driven downwards. While all God's creatures are characterized by a striving towards their Creator, Man has become, through sin, the victim of his pride and unable to turn to his Father (Dagens 1952; Bellemare 1959; Cadoux 2005). But if original sin has taken Man away from God, a connection between the Creator and his creature has nevertheless been restored by the Incarnation, as expressed by the Augustinian saying “Si homo non periisset, Filius hominis non venisset.” The whole point of the Incarnation is thus human redemption and the safeguarding of the perfection of creation. But Christ, by his very nature, is a quite unique figure, able to be at the same time both human and divine, as he was really the Son of God and the Son of Man (Dagens 1952; Bellemare 1959; Cadoux 2005). By the act of restoring the relationship with the Father, he offers Man the opportunity of a real “creation” within creation, the “creation in Christ” referred to by St Paul. The Incarnation is thus the highest and yet at the same time the humblest of mysteries, and the ability of Man to embrace salvation inevitably requires self-denial through the constant repression of his own pride. In the observance of spirituality, however, Bérulle takes a stand in firm opposition to stoicism: virtue, he says, must be pursued because it takes us closer to Christ, not because it is good in itself. Man, in other words, is completely in God's hands, and his only chance is to open up to the discovery of the Creator who lives inside his soul (Dagens 1952).

Cross-References

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- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)

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de Bonafide, Honoratus

- [Duran, Profiat](#)

De Dominis

- [De Dominis, Marc'Antonio](#)

De Dominis, Marc'Antonio

Born: 1560, Rab, Croatia

Died: 1624, Rome, Italy

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Abstract

Marc'Antonio De Dominis was a prolific scholar, who composed, among other things, two pioneering scientific treatises, the *Tractatus de radiis visus et lucis in vitris, perspectivis et iride* (1611) and the *Euripus, seu de fluxu et refluxu maris sententia* (published posthumously in 1624). However, his controversial religious and intellectual outlook, which led to a break first with the Catholic Church and later with the Anglican Church, caused his work to be subjected to criticism and consequently neglected.

Alternate Names

[De Dominis](#); [Marco Antonio](#); [Markantun](#)

Biography

Marc'Antonio De Dominis was born on the island of Rab (modern Croatia), to a noble family of Dalmatian origin (Patterson 1978). He studied at the Illyrian College in Loreto, Italy, after which he entered Padua University. De Dominis later taught at several institutions in Italy and in 1579 joined the Society of Jesus. Upon leaving the Jesuits in 1596, he received various ecclesiastical appointments in Dalmatia. De Dominis' career within the Catholic Church culminated in his appointment to the archiepiscopal see of Spalato. However, during the conflict between the Holy See and the

Venetian Republic in 1606–1607, De Dominis leaned toward supporting the latter. Along with the controversial way of governing the Spalato diocese and numerous conflicts with fellow clergymen, this forced him to resign from the position. After the Inquisition started scrutinizing his views, De Dominis, who at the time entered into contact with the English ambassador to Venice, decided to flee to England.

When in England, he composed a number of texts harshly criticizing the Catholic Church. The most ambitious one, the *De republica ecclesiastica contra primatum papae* (De Dominis 1617–1622), was reprinted several times. It allowed De Dominis to establish himself as a fervent opponent to Rome and gain some power at the court of James I. De Dominis did not enjoy the new status for a long time. As testified by numerous accounts, in the end, vanity, avarice, and constant intrigues turned his patrons against him. After his secret correspondence with Rome had been revealed, De Dominis was expelled from England and had to return to Italy. There, the character of his writings turned upside down, which resulted in a series of anti-Anglican sermons, just as harsh as the previous anti-Latin pamphlets. The Church authorities did not buy De Dominis' alleged reconversion, and he was subjected to an inquisitorial trial. Confined to the Castel Sant'Angelo, he died a natural death there before the end of the trial. However, De Dominis' case was continued, with judgment pronounced over his corpse in the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. Following the order of the inquisitors, De Dominis' body was taken from the coffin, dragged through the streets of Rome, and publicly burned together with his works in Campo dei Fiori.

Innovative and Original Aspects

De Dominis' pamphlets on religious matters are in line with the genre of cross-confessional writings flourished at the time. What makes these texts particularly interesting is the way they reflect De Dominis' floating position and mirror his biography. At the same time, two scientific treatises that put De Dominis at the forefront of contemporary natural philosophical investigations deserve closer

examination. In the *Tractatus de radiis visus et lucis in vitris, perspectivis et iride* (De Dominis 1611), he provides a detailed account of the phenomenon of the rainbow – a topic widely debated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in its connection to the philosophy of light and optics. De Dominis was the first to draw attention to the fact that in each raindrop the light undergoes two refractions and an intermediate reflection. He went on to explain, with the use of optical and scientific arguments, the formation of the interior bow. De Dominis' study, highly praised by Isaac Newton, is now considered to have significantly contributed to Descartes' later description of the rainbow (Scott 1952).

In the second writing, the *Euripus, seu de fluxu et refluxu maris sentential* (De Dominis 1624), relying on a long-standing tradition of natural philosophical discussions on the origin of tides, De Dominis attributes the phenomenon to the effects and positions of the sun and the moon. He claims that the tides are due to the interaction of the luminaries, which exert an effect on the water similar to magnetism, and their action is at its maximum not only where they are at the zenith but also at the antipodal point (Bonelli and Russo 1996). Unlike many of his contemporaries who interpreted the flow and ebb by applying astrological and vitalistic theories, and in contrast to Galileo, who considered tidal motion to be one of the most significant arguments for the heliocentric system (Omodeo 2017), De Dominis made an important step toward the final scientific interpretation later coined in Newton's *Principia Mathematica*.

Impact and Legacy

Despite De Dominis' clear achievements in the fields of natural philosophy and science, they were overshadowed by his controversial personality, mainly in what was concerned with the ecclesiastical legacy. This makes Newton's note on De Dominis' rainbow account the only major recognition of his scholarly efforts. Thus, without naming De Dominis, Galileo firmly dismissed his theory of tides in the *Dialogue*. In the meantime, those scholars, who remained loyal to the Catholic Church, continued to consider De Dominis a *bête noire* after his death. This negative attitude was

summarized in Jesuit Roger Joseph Boscovich's extensive notes on the poem *De Iride* ("On the Rainbow") composed by another Jesuit scholar Carlo Noceti: Boscovich, who was also of Dalmatian origin, refused to acknowledge any intellectual value of De Dominis' *Tractatus*. He claimed that what De Dominis had done in his treatise was so insignificant that any other scholar could have easily come to the same results (Noceti 1747).

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de Espinosa, Bento

- [Spinoza, Baruch](#)

de Flandinis

- [Flandino, Ambrogio](#)

de Fluctibus, Robertus

- [Fludd, Robert](#)

de Gouvea, Andre

- [de Gouveia, André](#)

de Gouvea, Antonio

- [de Gouveia, Antonio](#)

de Gouveia, André

Born: 1497, Beja, Portugal

Died: 1548, Coimbra, Portugal

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Abstract

André de Gouveia was a Portuguese humanist and one of the most outstanding sixteenth-century pedagogues, having occupied distinguished positions in important educational institutions in France and Portugal. A man of singular character and personality, Gouveia's progressive views influenced the educational programs and the *ethos* of these institutions.

Alternate Names

[Gouveanus, Andreas](#); [de Gouvea, Andre](#)

Biography

André de Gouveia (1497 (Beja, Portugal) to 1548 (Coimbra, Portugal)) was born into a family of

humanists: his uncle was Diogo de Gouveia (diplomat, theologian, and principal of the College of Saint-Barbe), and he was brother to António de Gouveia (famous for his polemic with Pierre de la Ramée, defending Aristotelianism, and a teacher in France and Italy) and Marcial de Gouveia (who corresponded with both Erasmus and Melancthon and later became a teacher in Coimbra).

His education was the fruit of royal initiatives to send Portuguese young men to study in Paris with scholarships (Matos 1952): in 1524, Gouveia became one of the first generation of Portuguese to study at the College of Saint-Barbe (Paris), which was under the leadership of his uncle (Pellerin 2009; Serrão 1966, 1967). His intellectual trajectory, however, is intimately linked to the international Republic of Letters, especially in France, and to the Reformation movement which spread across Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century. A master in arts in 1528, he became a doctor in theology in 1530 and was asked by his uncle to direct the College, which he did by opening the institution to more progressive forms of humanist training (Quicherat 1860–1864).

Soon, however, in 1534 Gouveia was invited by the municipal authorities of Bordeaux to become the principal of the local College of Guienne and to reform the institution. Under Gouveia's leadership (1534–1547), the College flourished to become one of the most prestigious educational institutions in Europe (Dezeimeris 1970; Gaullieur 1874) – rivaling with the College of Saint-Barbe in Paris – and one of the most progressive: the democratic running of the school, the religious tolerance promoted by the College (no religious differences were to be recognized among tutors and pupils until 1535), and the quality of the teaching staff (including Budin, Mathurin Cordier, Nicholas de Grouchy, and George Buchanan) and of the program of study (recorded by Élie Vinet in his *Schola Aquitanica*, 1583 – Vinet 1886, 1944) made it *alma mater* to some of the most influential intellectuals of the time, like Montaigne, Etienne de la Boetie, and Joseph Justus Scaliger (Woodward 1965). It was

while at the College of Guienne that the rumors about Gouveia's Protestant sympathies began to gain consistency (Bataillon 1952, pp. 121–129; Gorris Camos 2001).

Between 1546 and 1547, Gouveia traveled continuously between France and Portugal, as he was asked by King John III to launch a newly founded Colégio das Artes in Coimbra (Brandão 1933). This royal institution was designed along the same lines as the Trilingual College of Louvain instituted by Busleyden and was intended to provide the country's youth with a solid humanistic training (Silva Dias 1969; Saraiva 1955). The Colégio opened in 1547, with a cosmopolitan group of eminent scholars: George and Patrick Buchanan, Nicolas de Grouchy, Élie Vinet, Arnould Fabrice, Guillaume Guérente, Diogo de Teive, and João da Costa. The Colégio provided teaching in the areas of grammar, rhetoric and poetics (Pinto de Castro 1984), Latin, Greek and Hebrew, theology, as well as logic, philosophy, and mathematics, its program being very similar to that in place at the College of Guienne in many ways (see Vinet 1944 and Anon 1944). The Colégio was home to the intellectuals mentioned above but also to the mathematician and cosmographer Pedro Nunes and an important tradition of commentary to Aristotle by Jesuit scholars developed there between 1592 and 1606.

This was, however, after Gouveia's death in 1548. In 1555 the Colégio was handed over to the Society of Jesus: motivated by envy and orthodoxy, Gouveia's uncle complained to the King that André had Lutheran sympathies and denounced some of the staff (Buchanan, Teive, and da Costa) to the Portuguese Inquisition as Protestant (Brandão 1948–1969). This rivalry between the Bordeaux staff members and the more traditional Parisian teachers eventually caused damage to the institution, and the Colégio became the battleground for the dispute between a more orthodox group of Parisian intellectuals and the more progressive Bordeaux group (Silva Dias 1960): the three humanists were convicted, and in 1555 the Society of Jesus took over the Colégio das Artes founded by André de Gouveia (Brandão 1948–1969).

Cross-References

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- [Buchanan, George](#)
- [Collège de France](#)
- [Conimbricense, Collegium](#)
- [de Gouveia, Antonio](#)
- [Dolet, Etienne](#)
- [Montaigne, Michel de](#)
- [Nunes, Pedro](#)
- [Vinet, Élie](#)

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de Gouveia, Antonio

Born: 1510

Died: 1566

Catarina Fouto

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Abstract

António de Gouveia (1505–1566?) was a Portuguese humanist. Gouveia developed a multifaceted career as philologist, jurist, and Neo-Latin poet but is best-known for his polemic with Pierre de la Ramée on Aristotle.

Alternate Names

[Gouvêa, Antoine](#); [de Gouvea, Antonio](#); [Goueanus, Antonius](#); [Gouvea, Antonius](#)

Biography

Born in Beja, Portugal c. 1510, António de Gouveia studied in Paris, at the Collège de Saint-Barbe (1527–34), where he became a Master of Arts in 1532. He moved to Bordeaux (1535–37), most likely thanks to the invitation of his brother, André de Gouveia, who was the principal of the Collège de la Guyenne. From this time dates his friendship with the humanists George Buchanan, Diogo de Teive, Nicolas de Grouchy, and Guillaume de Guérente. After brief stays in Toulouse and Avignon, Gouveia remained for 2 years in Lyon, working at Sebastian Gryphius' printing house as a proofreader from 1539 to 1541. It was Gryphius who published his *Epigrammatoi libri duo ad mortalitatem* (1539, 1992), his *Epigrammata. Epistolae quatuor* (1540), his translation and commentary of Porphyrius, *Introductio ad Chrysaorium* (1541), and his edition of Virgil and Terence, *Virgilius et Terentius pristino splendori restituti* (1541). His close friendship with the jurist Emilio Ferreti dates from his Lyon years.

Gouveia returned to Paris, to the Collège de Saint-Barbe, where he taught arts and philosophy (1542), and where he published a slim volume entitled *Alphabetum Graecum* (1542), an edition and commentary of Cicero's *In Vatinius* (1542), *Ad Atticum* (1544), and *Topica* (1545). Increasingly interested in philosophy, he became involved in polemic with Pierre de la Ramée, then a young master of the Collège de Navarre, who voiced a strong reaction against Aristotle's undisputed primacy in the medieval university curriculum (see Ong 1958). In 1543, Gouveia published a slim book entitled *De Conclusionibus commentarius* (see Serrão 1966) in which he defends Aristotle's *Organon* against the attack launched by Pierre de la Ramée, who later that year published two volumes setting out his own objections to Aristotle in *Dialecticae institutiones* and *Aristotelicae animaduersiones* (both in 1543). Gouveia's lengthy response to Ramée, *pro Aristotele responsio aduersus Petri Rami calumnias*, appeared just 2 months later also in

1543. The book was warmly received by the university, and Gouveia was appointed to debate with la Ramée in 1544 for 3 days, by order of François I, before a jury made up of five members and presided by Jean de Salignac, theologian appointed by the King. Gouveia was held victorious and the sale of de la Ramée's books was forbidden and his lectures interdicted.

Gouveia left Paris, very likely due to the breaking down of relations with his uncle, the orthodox Portuguese humanist Diogo de Gouveia (c. 1471–1557). After a brief period in Toulouse, Gouveia settled down in Bordeaux at the Collège de la Guyenne, where he studied Law and began publishing books on this subject matter. It was, however, in Toulouse that Gouveia concluded his doctorate in Law towards the end of 1548 or the beginning of 1549 and he married Catherine Dufour, daughter of the local Toulouse Parliament in 1549. This period corresponds to a new phase in his career, Gouveia publishing a flurry of books on law (1545, 1551, 1554): these include a commentary on Cicero's *De legibus* (1552), and in Toulouse he published books on pupillary substitution (1554) and the Falcidian law (1556), among others.

Having settled in Cahors as a professor of Law for 5 years, Gouveia then moved to Valence also to teach at the university where he stayed only for 1 year: in 1555 he began teaching at the University of Grenoble, which he left only in 1562 when classes were suspended due to religious conflict – his last published work dates from this period: his *Opera juris civilis* appeared in Lyon in 1562. He was invited to teach at the University of Mondovi thanks to the intercession of Michel de l'Hôpital, and there he married Lucrezia Guerrilla, daughter of a Senator of Turin, after the death of his first wife in 1563. Gouveia died in 1566.

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de Loyola, Ignacio

- [Ignatius Loyola](#)

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de Montaigne, Michel Eyquem

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► [Regiomontanus, Johannes](#)

de Moscati Hebreo, Leon

► [Moscato, Judah](#)

de Oliveira, Fernando

► [Oliveira, Fernão de](#)

De rerum natura

► [Lucretius](#)

de Reycho

► [Reisch, Gregor](#)

de Silhon, Jean

Born: 1596, Sos in Lot-et-Garonne

Died: 1667, Paris

Simone Guidi

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Abstract

A French philosopher and politician of the seventeenth century. Among the founders, in 1634, of the *Académie Française*. The author of numerous essays in French noted for their refined style and lengthy exposition. He was Richelieu's secretary and later Mazzarin's Counsellor of State.

Biography

Born in Sos in Lot-et-Garonne in 1596. Died in Paris in 1667. Among the founders, in 1634, of the *Académie Française*. The author of numerous essays in French noted for their refined style and lengthy exposition. He was Richelieu's secretary and later Mazzarin's Counsellor of State. A friend of Guez de Balzac and René Descartes.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Silhon's philosophical output concerns two areas: political thought, with works like *Le Ministre d'Etat*, and metaphysics, notably with *Les deux vérités* in 1626 and *L'immortalité de l'âme* in 1634.

Political Thought

Silhon's political thought (Thuau 1966) argues for mediation between divine and temporal power based on the idea of an overall balance between the two: natural reason has led people to build for their needs a hierarchy of power completely compatible with the moral principles handed down by God through revelation, which are safeguarded by the clergy. The two orders should therefore develop in parallel, without either hindering the other, so that the good minister will have to understand and constantly maintain consistency between the interests of the state and the dictates of conscience, which are essential prerequisites for the proper exercise of political power. Ideally, therefore, a minister should know how to combine civic and religious understanding. Here Silhon was explicitly referring to Richelieu, whose political actions he justified even in their most controversial aspects such as the war against the Huguenots (which he said was waged against their rebellion, not against their religious belief).

In his work *De la certitude des connaissances humaines* (Silhon 1661) in particular, Silhon takes a firm stand in favor of Catholic absolutism and state Catholicism, drastically curtailing the room for freedom of action of individuals in relation to the political power of the sovereign. Subjects,

being quite unable to manage themselves and the good of society, are relegated to obeying the political authorities without question. As authority is rooted in the Christian religion, which teaches people to obey their sovereigns, good or bad, since all power is legitimized by God, obedience is both sacred and necessary. Authority ultimately derives from the Creator Himself, like a great machine set in motion by God.

Metaphysics and Christian Apologetics

Because his Christianity is so closely tied in with temporal power, the metaphysical and apologetic aspect of Silhon's thought hardly takes us away from his political ideas, in which, especially in the essay *De la certitude des connaissances humaines* (Silhon 1661), the fight against skepticism becomes one of the fundamental starting points (Popkin 2003). Just as his friend Descartes would later do, Silhon sets out to refute atheism and skepticism and tries, in *Les deux vérités* (Silhon 1626), to prove the existence of God and the immortality of the soul (Popkin 2003). His later work would again be in defense of belief in immortality (Fowler 1999). Silhon held that all human certainty is based on the idea, which he took to be universally obvious since it is naturally imprinted in all human beings, that there is a divinity, an idea which he tried to prove in various ways (Popkin 2003). Thus the immortality of the soul must also, he argued, be proved by referring back to the source of all being, i.e., the existence of God, which is required for the existence of any kind of substance, including matter, which has no being in itself, and spiritual substances, which continue to exist after death because that is the will of their Creator (Fowler 1999). Moreover, Silhon seems to take up the doctrine of continuous creation, earlier proposed by Suárez, and later held by Descartes: God is the creator of all things, but He also constantly maintains them as they are, since nothing but God, in this theory of ontology, is really able to sustain its own existence. About the soul, Silhon, who denies that animals have an immortal soul, bases his proof of the immortality of the human soul on God's goodness, which after creating it keeps it in existence. Silhon may be considered one of the

philosophers whose theory of human nature showed a dualism rich in Platonistic elements but did not, as Descartes' dualism would do, break with Aristotelian hylomorphism (Silhon 1634; Gilson 1930). Another interesting aspect of his thought is the distinction he makes between *démonstrations physiques*, which lead to certainties that are absolutely evident, and *démonstrations morales*, which lead to knowledge that though not absolutely certain is well supported. The latter type makes up most human belief (Popkin 2003).

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de Spinoza, Benedictus

► [Spinoza, Baruch](#)

de Vernia, Nicoletto

► [Vernia, Nicoletto](#)

de' Vieri, Francesco

Born: 1524

Died: 1591

Craig Martin

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Abstract

Francesco de' Vieri II was a proponent of Platonism, who aimed to reconcile pagan thought with Catholic theology. Most of his printed works were written in the vernacular and include meditations on Plato's theology, a treatment of Aristotelian meteorology, and lectures on ethics, love, and literature. He taught at Pisa and gave lectures at the Accademia Fiorentina.

Biography

Francesco de' Vieri II, 1524–1591, also known as “il Verino Secondo,” taught philosophy at Pisa, from 1554 to 1590, where he held chair in Platonic philosophy beginning in 1576 (Kristeller 1956, 292–43). He was the first holder of the chair. De' Vieri's grandfather, Francesco de' Vieri I, had been a professor of first logic then natural philosophy at Pisa and had lectured at the

Accademia Fiorentina on Dante in 1547 (Grendler 2002, 255, 259).

Most of de' Vieri's printed works were composed in the Tuscan vernacular, although he published a defense of philosophy in Latin in 1586. His commentaries, in Latin, on portions of Aristotle's *Physics* and *De anima* and on the tenth book of Plato's *Laws* are extant in manuscript (Lohr 1988, 477). His vernacular treatises address a range of learned topics, many related to his Platonism. Charles Schmitt has characterized him as a proponent of perennial philosophy (Schmitt 1966, 530).

De' Vieri had the explicit goal of showing the compatibility of Platonic philosophy with Christianity in several of his works. His 1577 *Compendio della dottrina di Platone* used Platonic concepts to demonstrate God's existence and providence. In the 1590 *Vere conclusioni di Platone*, he attempted to show that Plato's philosophy demonstrated a number of theological truths including that God is the one, unchanging, and all powerful, creator of the universe. Furthermore, according to de' Vieri, Plato's philosophy bolsters arguments for the efficacy of prayer, the existence of angels, and that divine justice is meted out in the afterlife to humans' immortal souls. In the second part of the book, de' Vieri outlined 15 points where Aristotle and Plato were in agreement (Martin 2014, 107–11).

De' Vieri maintained that his interpretations of Aristotle conformed to those of Thomas Aquinas. In 1582 the Roman Holy Office accused de' Vieri's son, Giovanni Battista, along with Giulio Libri and Girolamo Borri (or Borro), also a professor of philosophy at Pisa, of possessing forbidden books and entertaining heretical ideas. In a letter to Cardinal Giacomo Savelli, asking for the release of his son, de' Vieri emphasized that in his 29 years of lecturing, he had always sided with Thomas Aquinas's interpretation of Aristotle over Averroes'. His son was eventually released. Two years later, once again de' Vieri vowed his fidelity to Thomas Aquinas in *Liber in quo a calumniis detractorum philosophia defenditur*. In this work he determined that Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy present solutions that conformed to Catholic conceptions of God, angels, demons, and the

human soul. De' Vieri's Platonism put him at odds with the physician Andrea Cesalpino and Borri, who favored an Aristotelian stripped of Platonism and who was in many cases partial to Averroes (Schmitt 1972).

De' Vieri's other printed works, all in the vernacular, addressed numerous learned subjects, including psychology, ethics, history, literature, aesthetics, and natural philosophy. His *Trattato delle Metheore*, 1573, explains sublunary phenomena, following, for the most part, the first three books of Aristotle's *Meteorology*. The second edition, printed in 1582, includes the subject matter of *Meteorology* 4. This work is similar in its scope and content to university teachings on meteorology (Martin 2012, 10–11).

Some of his other works seem distant from the setting of Renaissance universities. For example, his 1587 discourse on gardens, *Discorsi delle maravigliose opere di Pratolino*, includes a history of gardens, comparing contemporary ones to ancient examples, before moving to a discussion of Aristotle's and Plato's views on the function of myth in philosophy. Several of his works derive from lectures given at the Accademia Fiorentina, including a lecture on ideas and beauty, *Lezzione dove si ragiona delle idee et delle bellezze*, 1581. In this work, de' Vieri considered not only Plato's and Aristotle's views but also meditated on the concepts of beauty found in Petrarch's sonnets. Petrarch's Laura is the subject of another treatise from the same year that looks at greatness and fortune.

De Vieri's works show him participating in some of the major movements of Renaissance philosophy, including Neoplatonism, the interpretation of humanist literature, and vernacular Aristotelianism.

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Death, Renaissance Conception of

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Abstract

With the advent of the Reformation, Protestantism did not so much as abolish the Catholic death arts as revise and add to them. The Renaissance's every day awareness of and meditation upon mortality, epitomized by the phrase *memento mori*, would face slow yet steady erosion from humanism's revival of classical thought. Humanist thinkers and natural philosophers began to question prevailing religious verities and practices by engaging with Platonist, Aristotelian, Stoical, and Epicurean *topoi* on death, chief among which was the status of the soul's immortality. As humanism gave way to scientific inquiry, the growing materialism and empiricism of the seventeenth century performed the spadework for the next century's endorsement of the individual's total annihilation, notoriously promulgated by the French philosophes. Occupying a liminal position between medieval religion and the Enlightenment, the Renaissance's heterogeneously complex attitude toward the death arts has sparked ongoing debate on its legacy. Did the Renaissance lead to the enrichment or impoverishment of our contemporary conception of death?

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Although the Reformation shook up medieval Catholicism as “a cult of the living in the service of the dead” (Galpern 1974), the Renaissance modified – not eliminated – this religion’s many death arts from the *ars moriendi* to the danse macabre and memento mori, as well as developing its own distinctive commemorative methods, such as the genres of elegy and epitaph. Religiously motivated scripts and habits around dying, death, and the dead still preoccupied the living in the Renaissance. Humanism’s fetishization of reviving classical writers and voices may also be said to contribute to the mindset of dwelling upon the dead. However, it is with the humanist enterprise that we begin to see students of the main schools of ancient philosophy implementing ideas that displace the hegemony of theological discourse in thinking about mortality. A favorite source of ethical *exempla*, the principled deaths of Socrates, Cato the Younger, and Seneca the Younger offered a philosophical alternative to the fabular executions of saints and martyrs and predisposed humanists to the *topos* of managing one’s death through courage, not fear, and through premeditation, not avoidance. In his essays, Michel de Montaigne wrestles with this *topos* extensively, influenced as he and so many other writers were by the stoicism of Seneca’s moral letters and dialogues. His Senecan ruminations, bearing out his famous dictum “to philosophize is to learn to die,” yield later on to the outlook that death requires no intellectual preparation, no death art, because it is – as his experience with plague victims showed him – a natural part of life (Montaigne 1993).

Earlier in the Renaissance, the *topos* of the immortality of the soul proved a major battleground for religious controversy, with Marsilio Ficino mobilizing Platonism to champion the soul’s divine origins and Pietro Pomponazzi deploying Aristotelian principles to assert its finitude. A fixation on this *topos* would continue unabated into the seventeenth century, when, for example, René Descartes, who was invested more in scientific than in humanistic inquiry, sought out natural reasons for the Platonic dualism of the soul outlasting the body (Descartes 1989). The ancient

construct of the *psyche* or *animus*, so integral to sustaining the hope of the self’s prolongation after breathing one’s last breath, met its match in the multiplication of empiricist and materialist theories during the ascendancy of science. Kindled by the Epicurean atomism of Lucretius, thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke denied altogether the existence of the soul’s immaterial substance and laid the foundation for the philosopheme of total annihilation, which reached its most direct expression – that is, without Pascalian hedging about the afterlife – in the atheism of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment.

If the Renaissance did not propose new or innovative insights into mortality because of the dominant humanist project of recovering classical learning, the period’s transitional status does pose the larger question of what exactly happened to Western Europe’s mentalité toward dying, death, and the dead. In the passage between medieval times and the Enlightenment, when science emerged from superstition, capitalism from feudalism, secularization from religion, and the individual from the collective, did the Renaissance enhance or diminish our relationship to death? According to Paul L. Landsberg (1977), the heightened consciousness of one’s own mortality during the disintegration of the feudal order makes possible the progress of human individualization freed from the conformity of clan thinking. But for Philippe Ariès (1991), the liminal period of the Renaissance has impoverished contemporary society: the increasing privatization of the funeral and burial led away from the recognition of mortality as belonging to communal life and toward the modern fear and denial of one’s own *quietus*. Other cultural and intellectual historians of note who have addressed this question of a historical break in the attitude toward death include Johan Huizinga (1996), Michel Foucault (1975), Michel Vovelle (1978), Arthur Imhof (1996), and Thomas Laqueur (2016).

Cross-References

- [Atomism in the Renaissance](#)
- [Descartes, René](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)

- [Hobbes, Thomas](#)
- [Montaigne, Michel de](#)
- [Pomponazzi, Pietro](#)
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Decembrio, Pier Candido

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Abstract

A leading figure of the Lombard humanism with Francesco Filelfo, Pier Candido Decembrio was a prolific, but not gifted author. He used to write to ingratiate himself with

powerful figures or directly on demand of his patrons, the Visconti in Milan, the papacy, the Aragons in Naples, and the House of Este in Ferrara. His major work was an encomiastic biography of Filippo Maria Visconti, but his translations of classics, especially Plutarch, the historians, and Plato, had a fair circulation too. His renderings were similar to medieval ones, because Decembrio preferred to preserve the meaning of the original texts and not to make his prose elegant, as is clearly shown by his versions of Platonic dialogues *Republic* and *Lysis*. In spite of this, he felt free to remove some philosophical passages that were too difficult to understand or could offend moral standards.

Alternate Names

[Decembrius, Petrus Candidus](#)

Biography

Pier Candido was born in Pavia on the 24th of October 1399 and owes his name to the Candiot bishop Pietro Filargis, whom his father Uberto worked for and who stood as godfather to him. In 1402 he moved to Milan, where Uberto began to serve the duke Gian Maria Visconti. In 1419 he became himself the secretary of Filippo Maria Visconti and began to travel in Italy and Europe on diplomatic missions. This period was tormented because of the loss of two of his sons, of his father (1427), and of both his mother and his brother Modesto in the same year 1430. When Filippo Maria died in 1447 and the Ambrosian Republic was constituted, he showed himself loyal to the city he always regarded his land and became secretary to the new government. With the advent of Francesco Sforza in 1449, he was discharged and compelled to wander in search of a new patron. The Pope Nicholas V received him as *magister brevium*, but soon after his death and the election of Calixtus III, he left the Papal Court and went to Naples to Aragon family. In 1459 a new troubled decade began: in straitened circumstances, he turned to the Gonzagas, the Sforzas,

the Estes, and to the Pope, but his desires were never fulfilled. Furthermore, in 1464, he lost his wife Caterina and a year later married Battistina. At last, in 1467 he was received at the court of Ferrara and remained there happily until March 1476 serving Borso and Ercole. Coming back to Milan, he died there in December 1477 and was buried in S. Ambrogio cathedral. His library, left to his second wife Battistina, passed afterwards to the Milanese monastery of S. Maria delle Grazie, but has been dispersed at its suppression (Viti 1987; Hankins 1991).

Works and Themes

Only a small part of the huge literary production of Pier Candido has survived, but it is enough to reconstruct his skills and interests. Omitting some minor works of humanistic inspiration (orations, verses and epigrams, a grammar textbook, etc.), he wrote historical works to celebrate his patrons. The most successful was the *Life of Filippo Maria Visconti*, a biography that he did not benefit from during his life, but became afterwards quite famous. Other less known titles are the biography of Francesco Sforza (1461–1462), the *Vita Herculis Estensis* (1471), and the tardy *Opuscula historica* (Pyle 1988), which he dedicated to Borso d'Este.

The relationships with international leaders and with contemporary humanists are well depicted in his correspondence (Zaccaria 1952; 1967; Zaggia 1993b), never completely published, but written in three different manuscript collections: the first one covers the years 1419–1433 and was offered to the archbishop of Milan Bartolomeo Capra, with the title *Epistolae iuveniles* (1433); the second one is a choice of letters dated 1433–1443, with some later additions, dedicated to the secretary of the Viscontis Simonino Ghilini; and the last selection (1440–1468) is dedicated to the Este referendary Ludovico Casella (1468).

Some works are simply compilations of ancient sources, such as the *Historia peregrina* (Zaccaria 1956) and the *De animantium naturis* (Pyle 1984). The *Historia* is divided into three

books, entitled *Cosmographia*, *De genitura hominis*, and *De muneribus Romane reipublice*, respectively. They are a revisiting of Orosius, Aristotle's *Historia animalium*, Avicenna's *De animalibus*, Pliny, and Macrobius. The other work, composed at the end of the 1450s and dedicated to marquis Ludovico Gonzaga, is an illustrated bestiary focused on marvelous creatures, animals, and monsters and founded prevalently on medieval authors (Albertus Magnus, Thomas of Cantimpré, Vincent of Beauvais), although Aristotle and Pliny are often quoted as well.

Most of his efforts were directed to Latin and vernacular translations of classical authors, among which must be mentioned the *Historia Alexandri Magni* by Curtius Rufus, the *Corpus Caesarianum* (Ponzù Donato 2012), and Leonardo Bruni's *De primo bello Punico* (1438), dedicated to Filippo Maria Visconti and Inigo de Avalos, respectively. Between 1440 and 1442, he translated books I–IV and X of *Iliad* and drew up a *Vita Homeri*, which is not an original work, but the result of the juxtaposition of what he could find in the ancient sources. At the Papal Court, on demand of Nicholas V, he translated Appian (1450–1454; Zaggia 1993) and then was involved in a project around Diodorus Siculus (1455): Poggio Bracciolini had the first books to translate, George of Trebizond the central section, and Decembrio was charged with books XVI–XX, but he could carry out just the first 49 chapters of book XVI. One of his favorite authors was Plutarch: after 1460, he composed the *Ex illustrium comparationibus in Plutarcum Cheronensem libri quattuor*, an abridged Latin version of the *Lives*, which remained unfinished. In spite of his criticism of the translations made by Leonardo Bruni, Jacopo Angeli, and Guarino, he used them extensively to write his epitome (Resta 1962; Gionta 2005).

He had never shown any particular attitude toward philosophy, but he dealt with Platonic texts such as *Republic* and *Lysis*, of which he proposed Latin renderings.

His *Celestis Politia* was written between 1437 and 1440, drawing from the rendering produced by Manuel Chrysoloras and embellished by his

own father Uberto, which he found in the manuscript now Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B 123 inf. Its readings were amended with the Greek text of Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, E 90 sup. (Fera 2005). These supplements and the rendering of political terms were Decembrio's greatest merit (Gusmini 2012).

In 1437 he faced the book V, which touches the discussed theory of the common possession of women and property. Pier Candido solved it modifying the meaning of the Platonic thought in the Latin text so that the subordination of individual conscience to reason of State and the consequent admission of incest were dissimulated. The fifth book was sent in 1438 to Humphrey of Gloucester, who was the dedicatee mentioned in the prefatory letter, and was followed by books I–IV in 1439. The translation of the whole work was completed in August 1440, books I–IV and VII–IX given to Humphrey, V to Giovanni Amideo, VI to Alfonso de Cartagena, and X to Francesco Pizolpasso. Whereas it was spreading in Italy, England, Switzerland, and Spain, Angelo Decembrio picked a quarrel with his brother Pier Candido and accused him of copying their father and Chrysoloras' rendering (Zaggia 1993b). The relationship between the two brothers cooled, and the *Celestis Politia* did not find great success, because of the diffusion of the translations by Uberto, Antonio Cassarino, and Marsilio Ficino.

Between the end of 1454 and March 1455, he devoted himself to the translation of *Lysis*, which he dedicated to Ottaviano degli Ubaldini. Decembrio could read the Greek text in the manuscript Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Ack. 1949/60, which he had bought in Siena on the 13th of September 1442. The two extant manuscripts (Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, II 66 [= F] and Madrid, Universidad Complutense, Biblioteca Historica, Mss. 129 [= M]) bear versions a little different, because both derive from the same (now lost) model, but M shows traces of a revision by Decembrio himself on the basis of a new inspection of the Greek text (Gallego Moya 2001; Martinelli Tempesta 2010). As Decembrio had done with *Republic*, here as well he tried to improve the meaning of the text, when it was not completely clear to him, modifying the Greek text

with corrections and conjectures. As a result, the original Platonic thinking was often distorted and lacunae or small errors of the Greek model were amended only in some isolated cases. In his preface, he openly stated that he had done an excerption, as Cicero and Virgil did. His major aim was to make Plato acceptable to the Christian moral view, and in order to do so, he moralized and censored those passages that sounded improper and particularly those explicitly related to pederasty or homosexuality. Sometimes, instead, he cut off passages he could not understand. His translational technic shows a literal adherence to the Greek model, with the rendering of technical terms with calques from Greek, according to the position he had taken up at the end of the so-called *controversia alphonsiana*, when he had distanced himself from the technic *ad sententiam*, which Leonardo Bruni had previously supported in his rendering of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Decembrio's prose therefore seems literal, clumsy, and similar to medieval translations, from which he inherited the rendering of the participle of the verb to be with the Latin *ens* or *existens* (Martinelli Tempesta 1997; Hankins 2003; Martinelli Tempesta 2009).

Decembrio's philosophical interests can be seen also in his seemingly original works: after a careful exam, they prove to be inspired by classical or medieval *auctoritates*, not always explicitly quoted. This is what happens in his juvenile dialogue *De vitae ignorantia*, written after 1428 on the basis of the *Dialogus de dispositione vitae suae* by Lombardo della Seta, a friend and follower of Petrarch. Pier Candido supports the hedonistic-epicurean theory that happiness and spiritual pleasures coexist with a quiet life and a moderate pleasure coming from worldly things: if you want to be happy, first of all you need riches which free you from everyday cares (Viti 1987).

The Platonic doctrine is clearly recognizable in the dialogue *De humani animi immortalitate* (1460), dedicated to Francesco Visconti and depending on the pseudo-Augustinian *De spiritu et anima*. There Decembrio reflects upon the human soul: unique of its kind and not consisting of several parts, it has a vital force unconnected to the contingent human forms it may have and is

therefore immortal; it has been created by God; there are differences among rational, irascible, and concupiscible soul, as well as its behavior differs if it is directed at the flesh or God. The conclusion is that men have to strive to live as spiritual as possible. This is in contradiction to the theories proposed in the *De vitae ignorantia*, due to the different sources they stand upon, but the work itself “is noteworthy for its attempt to show the large area of agreement between Plato and Christianity on the subject of the immortality of the soul” (Hankins 1991, II, p. 418).

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Decembrius, Petrus Candidus

► [Decembrio, Pier Candido](#)

Dee, John

Born: London, 13 July 1527

Died: London, 26 March 1609

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Abstract

Mathematician, geographer and navigational expert, John Dee combined a firm grasp of sixteenth century science with his occult studies of alchemy and Kabbalah. Intellectually attuned to Renaissance Europe, he often found it necessary to defend himself against accusations of conjuring and the practice of black magic. He prepared horoscopes for

royalty and, while highly respected by Elizabeth and many of her courtiers, was likewise feared and even mocked by others. His practice of trying to consult with angels in order to extend his scientific investigations made him dependent upon the manipulative assistance of “scryers” or interpreters of mystical appearances in special show stones. His lack of social and political tact generally prevented him from gaining any material benefit from Elizabeth’s belief in his knowledge and insight.

Biography

John Dee matriculated at St. Johns, Cambridge, at aged 15 where most of his teachers were Catholic humanists and that study in Britain prepared him for his advanced work in Europe. Aside from logic and mathematics, Dee began to study alchemy at St. Johns. After taking his MA and becoming an underreader in Greek at Trinity (Cambridge), he studied advanced mathematics and civil law at Louvain in the Netherlands. At Cambridge and Louvain, he studied alchemy and astrology with an emphasis on advanced mathematics, navigation, and geography. Throughout his career, Dee would integrate these apparently diverse interests. At Louvain he conferred with European intellectuals such as Gerard Mercator, Gemma Frisius, Antonius Gogava, and later with Guillaume Postel in Paris. With his return to Trinity (1548), he added to the research the materials he brought from Europe and later failed to interest Queen Mary in establishing a library to gather rare texts endangered by the dissolution of the monasteries. Dee unsuccessfully petitioned Mary and then Elizabeth for advancement that would help fund his research. Although ordained a Roman Catholic priest (1554), Dee married twice and remained relatively unconcerned with the rituals of either the Roman Catholic or a Protestant Church. Elizabeth constantly encouraged Dee about possible livings, but the politicians required to facilitate the appointments avoided finalizing them. His expertise in geography and navigation made him a key resource in the search for a northwest passage. Although he amassed a huge

library which he opened to various scholars, many of his books and manuscripts were stolen during an extended stay in Europe (1583–1589). He believed that his scientific endeavors had to be supplemented by his occult research. His expertise in mathematics and navigation was of major importance for his time but his reliance on communication with angels made it possible for others to deceive him and distort his material measurements and understanding. He claimed that he had been offered a permanent position by at least one European monarch but preferred to wait for something similar from Elizabeth. After her death, Dee received little or no support from James and died penniless in London at age 82.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Until recently Dee was considered somewhat insignificant for Elizabethan culture and politics, but a recent biography (Parry 2011) makes his centrality for the queen and her court unmistakable. She consulted with Dee many times, although she rarely rewarded his advice as he desired. In 1555 he cast her horoscope (along with ones about Mary and Philip) and was even arrested for a short time thereafter, accused of conjuring. In 1564, when *Monas Hieroglyphica* was rumored to defend conjuring, Elizabeth silenced the reports. She consulted with him about alchemy and gave credence to his ultimately false prediction that Spain would invade England in the 1590s. Parry shows that Elizabeth and many of her courtiers were firm believers in Dee’s mystical approach to science.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Dee was primarily concerned with a scientific account of the material world as a significant aspect of praising God’s creation. In his “Mathematical Preface” to Euclid (1570), he claimed that perspective could be used to measure the cosmos so that astronomy became an aspect of astrology. His studies with Mercator made him an expert in geography and navigation. The vast private

library that he managed to amass allowed him to share and sell knowledge to his contemporaries.

Impact and Legacy

Dee's well-known work on mathematics, geography, and navigation made him esteemed yet feared during his lifetime. Meric Casaubon's publication of his diaries made Dee a laughing stock of the Royal Society, especially the account of wife swapping required by Edward Kelley. Francis Yates (1969) claims that Shakespeare idealized Dee as Prospero in *The Tempest*. Peter Ackroyd's novel (1993) provides a fascinating fictional treatment of Dee's life, while Neil Gaiman's graphic novel (2003) clearly presents Dee in the character of Dr. Strange.

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Deference

- [Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Degen, Jakob

- [Schegk, Jacob](#)

Del Bene, Judah

Born: ca. 1618, place uncertain, probably Mantua
Died: April 2, 1678, Ferrara

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Abstract

Judah del Bene is an Italian rabbi and preacher in Ferrara in the early seventeenth century.

Alternate Names

[del Bene, Judah Assael](#); [del Bene, Judah ben David](#)

Biography

Judah del Bene was the son of a prominent rabbi, Eliezer David del Bene of Mantua (d. 1635), whose use of secular work in sermons was controversial (Kaufmann 1896). He was educated in the typical eclectic education of early modern Italian intellectuals and had extensive knowledge of Talmudic and halakhic literature, biblical exegesis, and philosophical and scientific texts. Del Bene spent most of his life in Ferrara where he developed a reputation as a preacher, philosophical writer, and Talmudic scholar.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Del Bene was not interested in kabbalah, which was of major interest to most Italian Jewish intellectuals of this period (Ruderman 1995). Del Bene is sometimes understood as breaking from the philosophical legacy of early modern Italian Jewish thinkers, but recent scholarship (see below) has challenged and revised this view.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Del Bene has long been perceived as a conservative critic of philosophy (see Barzilay 1967). But his position is better understood in terms of an anti-rationalist critique of Aristotelianism along with some openness to new scientific ideas (Bonfil 1992, 77–79; Ruderman 1995, 187–199; and references cited there). Thus, contra Barzilay, he might be best understood as part of a synthetic tradition of Italian Jewish intellectuals interested in using Maimonides, Judah Halevi, and non-Jewish thinkers, like Socrates and Plato, to understand science and philosophy in relation to biblical and rabbinic traditions (Shear 2007, 58 and references there). In many ways, Del Bene's work fits into traditions of early modern skepticism, but also contains a certain amount of knowledge of new scientific and geographic discoveries, albeit with "little evidence of any technical mastery of the sciences" (Ruderman 1995, 188–195). Del Bene was also among a group of other

seventeenth-century Jewish intellectuals interested in the figure of Socrates, including the Venetian apologist Simone Luzzatto. (Bonfil 1992, 78). Robert Bonfil has outlined some ways in which Del Bene's fideistic and moderate platform in his work for elite readers (*Kisot le-Veit David* [Thrones of the House of David, after Psalms 122:5]) takes a more conservative turn in his unpublished sermons, as recorded by a listener in an unpublished manuscript. In these unpublished sermons, the rejection of secular and scientific pursuits was more wide-ranging and less nuanced than the anti-rationalist approach in the *Kisot le-Veit David* (Bonfil 1992, 80–85). Bonfil suggests that this difference might be analyzed further for insight into how Del Bene innovated a modern approach to science which disentangled it entirely from religion (Bonfil 1992, 82; cf. Ruderman 1995, 196).

Impact and Legacy

Albeit somewhat influential in his lifetime and later in the seventeenth century, del Bene had almost no substantial influence on future developments in Jewish thought. His sermons remained in manuscript, and *Kisot le-Veit David* was not republished.

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► [Del Bene, Judah](#)

del Medigo, Elia

► [Delmedigo, Elijah](#)

Del Medigo, Elijah

► [Delmedigo, Elijah](#)

Del Monte, Guidobaldo

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substantially to a better understanding of the mathematical foundations of these sciences. He was also one of the most important patrons of the young Galileo.

Biography

Guidobaldo del Monte (Pesaro, 11 January 1545–Pesaro, 6 January 1607) was one of the most prominent Italian mathematicians from the second half of the sixteenth century. He was a nobleman from the Duchy of Urbino and occupied a central position at the courts of the Dukes Guidobaldo II and Francesco II della Rovere for large part of his life, until he fell out of favor in the 1590s (Frank 2011). He studied at the University of Padua, but he probably received most of his mathematical education from Federico Commandino at court in Urbino. He combined practical work as an architect, designer of instruments, and surveyor of fortifications (see numerous contributions in Becchi et al. 2013), with theoretical works on astronomy, perspective and mechanics. In cosmology he appears to have been an orthodox Aristotelian, as judged by his reaction to the supernova of 1604 (Meli 1992; Giostra 2013). Notwithstanding this latter position, he was also one of the most important patrons of the young Galileo. Together with his brother, Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte (well known for having been a patron of Caravaggio), he helped Galileo secure his first teaching positions at the University of Pisa (in 1589) and Padua (in 1592) (Shea 2013). Around this period, Guidobaldo and Galileo also collaborated on an experiment, recorded in Guidobaldo’s notebook that can be seen to have contained the germs of Galileo’s revolutionary new science of motion by showing that the trajectory of projectiles is approximately parabolic (Renn et al. 2000).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Guidobaldo’s most important books were the *Mechanicorum Liber* from 1577 (with an Italian translation supervised by Guidobaldo in 1581), the *Paraphrasis* from 1588, and the

Abstract

Guidobaldo del Monte (1545–1607) was one of the most prominent Italian mathematicians from the second half of the sixteenth century. He published influential texts on Archimedean mechanics and perspective that contributed

Perspectivae Libri Sex from 1600. He also prepared Commandino's edition of Pappus' *Collectiones Mathematicae* for printing in 1588, after the former's death (see Rose 1976).

The *Mechanicorum Liber* was probably the most influential treatises on mechanics of its time (see Meli 2013; Laird 2013 for some reflections on its place in the history of mechanics). It carried out in detail an idea taken over from Pappus (and, through Pappus, Heron of Alexandria): to reduce the operation of the so-called simple machines (lever, pulley, axle in a wheel, wedge and screw) to the law of the lever. He gave careful and rigorous treatments of the first three (though the discussion of the axle in a wheel is somewhat hampered by the fact that Guidobaldo had no way of dealing with a bent lever, or equivalently, forces applied in another direction than the weight of bodies), but he had to limit himself to qualitative statements regarding the wedge and screw (a problem aggravated by the fact that he lacked a satisfying treatment of the inclined plane, which played a crucial role in the analysis of both instruments). Importantly, Guidobaldo put the concept of center of gravity, as defined by Pappus, at the foundation of the science of mechanics. This led him to an extensive discussion on the possibility of what is currently called indifferent equilibrium, which arises when a body is suspended in its center of gravity: it will remain in any position given to it. This possibility had been denied by earlier authors (such as Jordanus, Tartaglia, and Cardano), who were severely criticized for this by Guidobaldo (see Meli 2006; Frank 2011; Renn and Damerow 2012; Van Dyck 2006 for discussion). Partly in reply to some criticisms on his book, he published an extended commentary on Archimedes' text on the equilibrium of plane figures in his 1588 *Paraphrasis*. This text was the first printed in-depth analysis of Archimedes' proof of the law of the lever in modern times (see Frank 2011; Van Dyck 2009, 2013). Guidobaldo's texts on mechanics provided an original synthesis of existing ideas and treatments, which actually created what is often referred to as the Archimedean tradition by showing how to conceptually integrate Archimedes' highly abstract mathematical demonstration of the law of the lever with an analysis of actually operating machines.

Guidobaldo's book on perspective was similarly directed toward foundational issues underlying an established practice. He was the first to give a satisfying and general mathematical treatment of the fundamental principles underlying perspective constructions (Andersen 2007, 2013). The core of his innovation consisted in a rigorous establishment of the concept of a general vanishing point for any set of parallel lines – even if Guidobaldo might not have realized the full generality of his results.

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della Bernarda, Antonio

► [Bernardi, Antonio](#)

della Mirandola, Antonio

► [Bernardi, Antonio](#)

della Pagliara, Antonio

► [Paleario, Aonio](#)

Della Porta, Giambattista

Born: 1535, Naples

Died: 14 February 1615, Naples

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Abstract

Giambattista Della Porta was born in Naples in 1535. His first teachers were his maternal uncle, who had a well-endowed museum and a large library, and his brother Giovan Vincenzo. Della Porta became involved in the study of nature at an early age. He was a

promoter and member of several academic societies. He founded the *Academia Secretorum Naturae*, and in his later years was one of the most prominent members of both the Lincean Academy and the “Accademia degli Oziosi” (Academy of the Idle). He died on 14 February 1615, attended to by his daughter Cinzia.

The two editions of *Magia naturalis* (1558, 1589) preserve the most significant aspects of the scientific thought of the contemporary Neapolitan culture: an “analogical” view of man and the universe and a method of investigation directed toward experimental verification of the *auctoritates*.

In addition to the two important editions of *Magia naturalis*, Della Porta also published three significant physiognomical works: *De Humana Physiognomonica*, *Phytognomonica*, and *Coelestis Physiognomonica*. He intended to follow these works with a *Chiropysiology*, which, however, was only published posthumously, and a *Metoposcopy*.

His demonology plays a particularly important role in his thought, as the result of a coherent examination of the Latin philosophical tradition, which he reread in the light of his inclinations as a man of science, as well as that of the particular historical, political, and cultural climate of Counter-Reformation Italy.

In a universe structured “according to degrees,” from the first heaven it is possible to ascend to the intelligences (which Della Porta, following Avicenna and the Author of *Liber de causis*, identifies with angels), and on up to God himself, who is the creator of form, as well as the universal cause of every natural entity. The same demons, if they acted, would only operate in accordance with the inviolable “physical laws” of *ordo naturae*. The secrets, although they cannot be explained by the criteria of Aristotle’s rationality, are nevertheless attributed by Della Porta to within the known. They, in fact, are simply the effects of the “particular properties” of things, “buried” by God in the “nature’s womb.”

Biography

Giambattista Della Porta was born in Naples in 1535 of Leonardo Antonio and a Calabrian mother who was a sister of Adriano Guglielmo Spadafora. He had three siblings, Giovan Vincenzo, Ferrante, and a sister, whose name is not known. He married and had a daughter called Cinzia. His first teachers were his maternal uncle, who had a well-endowed museum and a large library, and his brother Giovan Vincenzo, who was a scholar of astrology, natural philosophy, and antiquity. Della Porta became involved in the study of nature at an early age. He was eclectic, curious, and as committed to “experimentalism” as to the study of antiquity, and he surrounded himself with both scholars and craftsmen, alongside whom he often worked. He was a promoter and member of several academic societies. He founded the *Academia Secretorum Naturae*, and in his later years was one of the most prominent members of both the Lincean Academy and the “Accademia degli Oziosi” (Academy of the Idle). He also travelled extensively throughout Italy and Europe, thanks to which he came into contact with the leading cultural exponents of his time. He died on 14 February 1615, attended to by his daughter Cinzia (Fiorentino 1880; Gabrieli 1927; Sirri 1968; Muraro, 1978; Piccari 2007).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Giambattista adopted both his method for studying analogies between the macrocosm and the microcosm and his inclination to put the “secrets” of the ancients directly to the test from the Neapolitan scientific circles of his time. The two editions of *Magia naturalis* (1558, 1589) preserve the most significant aspects of the scientific thought of the contemporary Neapolitan culture: an “analogical” view of man and the universe and a method of investigation directed toward experimental verification of the *auctoritates* (Corsano 1959; Badaloni 1960; Balbiani 2001; Verardi 2015).

In addition to the two important editions of *Magia naturalis*, Della Porta also published three significant physiognomical works: *De Humana Physiognomonica*, *Phytognomonica*, and *Coelestis Physiognomonica*. He intended to follow these works with a *Chiropysiognomy*, which, however, was only published posthumously, and a *Metoposcopy* (Trabucco 2003).

His physiognomical works form a sort of encyclopedic *corpus*, in which Della Porta addresses both the *Physiognomonics* of pseudo-Aristotle, as well as several other ancient and medieval physiognomical works, and attempts to study and investigate the “great book of nature” *per signa externa*, in a world conceived of as the “creative” work of God (Della Porta 1588, 1996, 2011).

With regard to his natural magic, it should be noted that his position was distinct from that of certain medieval magicians, such as Michael Scotus (c.1175–c.1232) and Cecco d’Ascoli (1269–1327), as well as that of the Hermetic magicians of the Renaissance. His universe is closer to that of most thirteenth-century natural philosophers than to the Neoplatonic-Hermetic universe of Marsilio Ficino or Agrippa of Nettesheim, which was pervaded by celestial spirits and demons. In the physical realm, many of his positions were similar to those of Albert the Great (c.1206–1280), particularly in regard to Aristotle’s doctrine of natural places, which Albert had reinterpreted in an astrological key that Della Porta adopted with explicit reference to the master of Cologne. His hierarchical structure of the universe, ordered “according to degrees,” was taken from Avicenna and the author of *Liber de Causis*, as was his identification of the angels with heavenly intellects. The sublunar world was governed “by the inviolable law of nature,” i.e., by precise physical and astrological laws that did not affect the freedom of man’s rational soul in any way. The stars were considered as physical bodies that acted on the human material plane through motion and heat. It should be noted, however, that Della Porta’s thought also contains aspects that are not found in his medieval sources: (1) a tendency to discard certain

metaphysical presuppositions that hindered natural research; (2) a vision of nature in “vital” and “harmonic” terms.

His demonology plays a particularly important role in his thought, as the result of a coherent examination of the Latin philosophical tradition, which he reread in the light of his inclinations as a man of science, as well as that of the particular historical, political, and cultural climate of Counter-Reformation Italy.

The topic, as already mentioned, is fully addressed in *Criptologia*, the fifth book of the unpublished *Taumatologia*. In this text, by taking some opinions held by William of Auvergne and inserting them in the context of the Platonic-Augustinian tradition, Della Porta does not exclude that demons may act in the world. Both of them sustain that the damnation of human beings is always the aim of such action. Della Porta, as a philosopher, puts greater faith in man’s cognitive abilities, so much so as to state, in the *Index* to book V, that he boasts to have spent his whole life unveiling the deceptions of demons by studying nature. Della Porta states that demons, in order to confuse men, add words and spells to the natural processes which are totally ineffective as these words and spells are nothing but blasphemies and curses. In fact, the effects of those alleged spells simply derive from natural causes (Della Porta 1982).

Hence, the demons, although endowed with particular wisdom, are, in Della Porta’s opinion, creaturely beings. As such, Della Porta’s position seems partially similar to that of Vitellione, according to whom, although rarely, demons may perform actions that are apparently miraculous, however are usually caused by optical illusions or the hallucinatory phenomena of sick minds. It is nevertheless important to remember that Della Porta is a careful student of perspective, by means of which, already in the first *Magia*, he rationally explains some optical illusions. So, Della Porta’s position seems to oscillate between that of *theologizantes* like William of Auvergne and that of rationalists like Vitellione, and he seeks a subtle and difficult compromise (Valente 1999; Verardi 2013, 2014, 2015).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The pages of *Magia naturalis* in which Della Porta explains his theory of nature are of particular significance for grasping the originality of his thought and in turn provided the basis for a specific view of natural occult forces. The elements, Della Porta writes, are the “first parents,” the “seed” of all things. They are the “material principle of the natural body” they reside in the sublunary world and can be altered “by a perpetual permutation.” The earth is the only fixed element and is placed at the center of the world. The others, instead, are moved in circles by the motion of the sky. These four “bodies” have four corresponding elementary qualities: hot, cold, wet, and dry. Of these qualities, two are active: the hot and the cold, and two are “passive,” the wet and the dry. Then, there are the “secondary” qualities: they “serve” the first and operate afterwards. Not always do the virtues of things come from the mixture of the “qualities” of the elements. Besides, there are three “efficient causes” of a natural substance: matter, form, and quality of the elements. The action of form is not completely cognizable by the philosopher. In this sense, it is “occult.” According to Della Porta, the action of form in the production of a given phenomena cannot be known, but by its effect it is always possible to locate the “particular property” that the effect produces. Such property depends, in turn, on the complexity of the qualities of elements that make up the natural substance, as well as on the “occult” action of form. Although the “occult” is unknown, the action of form comes from the starry sky: interpreted by Della Porta in the physical (Aristotelian) sense, and not as populated by celestial demons as in the Neoplatonic-Hermetic cosmologies. In fact, the heavenly bodies act upon the things in the world because of their motion and heat. The form allows the celestial influences to be transposed, giving as a remedy its specific, “peculiar property.” How this happens – Della Porta writes – we are not allowed to know, at least according to the canons of Aristotelian rationality (that is, with probable or evident demonstrations). The action of form, despite being “occult,” is however an action of physical nature, and so its location is physical: the first heaven. This

is not in contrast with the fact that form ultimately has a divine origin (Della Porta 1558, 1589, 1982).

Impact and Legacy

In a universe structured “according to degrees,” from the first heaven it is possible to ascend to the intelligences (which Della Porta, following Avicenna and the Author of *Liber de causis*, identifies with angels), and on up to God himself, who is the creator of form, as well as the universal cause of every natural entity. The same demons, if they acted, would only operate in accordance with the inviolable “physical laws” of *ordo naturae*. The secrets are simply the effects of the “particular properties” of things, “buried” by God in the “nature’s womb.” To discover these secrets (even by the verification of those passed down from ancient times) is for Della Porta to unveil the deceptions of demons: since what is natural can always be attributed to the first universal cause, namely God.

Della Porta devoted a lifetime of research to his role as a “hunter of secrets,” making him one of the most prominent figures in the Italian and European debate on the rationalization of “occult” natural phenomena until the start of the Eighteenth century.

Herbalists, philosophers, doctors, and intellectuals all referred to him when combating superstition. His works were widely read and reprinted numerous times until the eighteenth century (Ferrone 2000).

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della Scala, Paulus

► Skalić, Pavao

Delmedigo, Elijah

Born: c. 1455

Died: 1492/3

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Abstract

Elijah Delmedigo is one of the most representative Jewish philosophers of the Italian Renaissance. As a staunch follower of Averroes, he played a key role in disseminating Averroes' ideas among early modern scholars and philosophers through commentaries, *quaestiones*, and various translations from Hebrew into Latin. Between 1481 and 1486, he was among the Jewish collaborators of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and assisted him in his investigations in Aristotelian and Averroistic philosophy. Delmedigo is known mainly for his short treatise *Behinat ha-Dat* (*The Examination of Religion*), a philosophical-religious work that influenced, among others, Spinoza. In it he reinterpreted some of the key issues in Averroes' *Decisive Treatise* in the light of Jewish context.

Alternate Names

Delmedigo, Elijah ben Moshe Abba; Hebreus Cretensis, Helias; Del Medigo, Elijah; del Medigo, Elia

Biography

Elijah Delmedigo was born in Candia (nowadays Iraklion), in the island of Crete. His date of birth is debated among scholars, but some external evidence suggests that it might be around 1455 (Licata 2013a, pp. 47–49). Crete – a strategic island for trade in the Mediterranean Sea – had been under Venetian domination since 1204. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Cretan Jews, in particular those of Candia, were part of a lively and learned community, as emerges from a number of manuscripts preserved in the Vatican Library (Cassuto 1935, pp. 29–44; 79–96) and from the *taqqanot*, i.e., the ordinances issued by the self-governed Jewish community (Artom and Cassuto 1943). Together with traditional subjects of the Jewish lore, Cretan Jewish intellectuals were well versed in philosophy and the sciences, as attested by the dissemination of numerous philosophical and scientific translations from Arabic into Hebrew, produced by enlightened circles of Provençal Jews during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Steinschneider 1893; Licata 2013a, pp. 38–45). We also know that fierce conflicts originated because of the ideological differences between the followers of the Kabbalah and those of philosophy (Ravitzky 1999). This was the milieu where Delmedigo received his first education and probably began to be fascinated with Aristotle, as interpreted by the commentaries of Ibn Rushd, the Andalusian polymath known in the Latin Western world as Averroes (1126–1198). It is also here that Delmedigo may have developed his aversion for the Kabbalistic tradition exemplified by the book of *Zohar*.

The family of Delmedigo was among the wealthiest and most learned in Candia. Since Crete was a Venetian territory, it was not uncommon for these families to send their sons to Padua in order to study medicine or Jewish law. Delmedigo moved to Padua around 1480, if not before. He lived at least for 10 years in the Italian peninsula, mainly between Venice, Padua, Bassano del Grappa, Florence, and Perugia, working as a lecturer at the University of Padua and

introducing Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle to intellectuals such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and Domenico Grimani (1461–1523). He played a role of primary importance in Renaissance culture as a mediator of Arabic philosophy, translating previously unknown commentaries by Averroes, and being the first among other Jewish translators of the Renaissance – like Abraham de Balmes (c. 1460–1523) and Jacob Mantino (d. 1549) – to begin “the second revelation of Averroes” to the Latin world (to use Harry Wolfson's words in his pioneering article “The Twice-Revealed Averroes”; see now Hasse 2016).

Between 1480 and 1482, Delmedigo lived in Padua, lecturing in an unofficial form – at the time, Jews were not allowed to teach at university, nor could they receive the doctorate degree. His profound knowledge of Averroes' commentaries, however, won the favor of scholars and students, for at the University of Padua, Averroes was still considered to be the most reliable interpreter of Aristotle's philosophy. The *Quaestio de efficientia mundi* (*Question on the Efficient Causality of the World*) and the *Quaestio de primo motore* (*Question on the First Mover*) constitute his first works, written at the request of the humanist Girolamo Donato (c. 1457–1511) (Licata 2013b, pp. 53–54). These metaphysical questions examine Averroes' position on divine causality and God's relation to the universe and show the extent to which Delmedigo relied on the commentaries and original treatises by Averroes.

Around 1481, Delmedigo met in Padua Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who was there attending the university. Pico decided to hire Delmedigo as his teacher, translator, and Averroist interpreter of Aristotelian philosophy, for he was well aware that many works by Averroes were only preserved in medieval Hebrew translations unknown to his Christian contemporaries. These were the years when Pico was especially interested in the question concerning the conjunction of the potential intellect with the active intellect – a theme widely discussed by Averroes and other Arabic philosophers, like Avempace (Ibn Bājja,

c. 1085–1139). For this reason, Pico asked Delmedigo to clarify what the correct interpretation of Aristotle was on two crucial points: whether the human intellect is one, being shared by all human beings, or multiplied according to the number of the individual souls; and, secondly, whether a conjunction with the active intellect was possible. As a result, between December 1481 and January 1482, Delmedigo wrote two *Quaestiones de intellectu* (*Two Questions on the Intellect*), which soon after he translated into Hebrew with small additions concerning the relationship between philosophy and religion and some critical remarks on the Kabbalah. The two *quaestiones*, also known as *Two Investigations on the Nature of the Human Soul* in the Hebrew version, can be read as a compendium of the doctrine on the intellect and its cognitive activity along the lines of Averroes' interpretation, which postulated the existence of an eternal and transpersonal Intellect, shared by the human species as a whole (Engel 2017).

The intellectual collaboration between Pico and Elijah gave rise to a genuine friendship that lasted at least until 1486. At the beginning of 1482, Delmedigo moved to Venice from Padua, probably because of a conflict with the local community of Ashkenazi Jews, hostile to the study of philosophy – at that time the *yeshiva* (rabbinical school) was directed by the respected and orthodox rabbi Judah Minz (c. 1408–1508), with whom Delmedigo quarreled on legal issues. After he left Venice, Delmedigo lived in Florence with Pico in 1484–1485, a year that represents the peak of their collaboration. In Florence Delmedigo composed for Pico the *Annotationes in librum De phisico auditu*, i.e., a commentary on Averroes' Long Commentary – a “supercommentary,” to use Wolfson's expression – on Aristotle's *Physics*. He began his commentary on Averroes' *De substantia orbis* (*On the Substance of the Celestial Sphere*). He translated some logical investigations by Averroes on the *Prior Analytics* and the Paraphrase of Plato's *Republic*. During his stay in Florence, he was well integrated in the humanist circles: a letter by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) indicates that Delmedigo, who used to live in Pico's household, had some arguments with

Flavius Mithridates (alias of Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada, c. 1450–after 1491), a Jewish convert to Christianity, on the subject of whether or not the Jewish prophets had announced Jesus as the real Messiah. In the same period, i.e., May 1485, there was an exchange of letters between Ermolao Barbaro (1454–1493) and Delmedigo, in which the former harshly criticized the latter's worship of Averroes, and in particular some interpretation related to the doctrine of the syllogism (Licata 2013a, p. 68). As is shown by the preface of his commentary on *De substantia orbis*, Delmedigo was extremely critical of the fascination that several scholars in Florence had for the Platonic philosophy, esotericism, magic, and astrology. As he did with *Two Questions on the Intellect*, he translated from Latin into Hebrew his commentary on *De substantia orbis* in order to spread Averroes' point of view among contemporary Jews. This indeed was a challenging task, as Averroes' star was inexorably declining among fifteenth-century Jewish intellectuals, increasingly captivated by the Kabbalah and forms of Platonic mysticism. In September 1485, Delmedigo moved again to the Veneto region, living between Bassano and Padua, where he privately lectured on the *Prior Analytics*.

Delmedigo always strove to persuade Pico to become a leading light in Aristotelian philosophy (*magno in secta peripatetica*) (Licata 2017). His hopes, however, were gradually frustrated by Pico's fascination with the Kabbalah and the latter's friendship with Flavius Mithridates, who, around 1485–1486, taught him the rudiments of Hebrew and translated for him many Kabbalistic texts into Latin. Rather than being Pico's instructor in Hebrew – as has sometimes been claimed – Delmedigo confined his work exclusively to the translation and explanation of Averroes' philosophy. Nor was he willing to help Pico understand the principles of the comprehension of the Kabbalah, being aware that a Christian-oriented interpretation of the Kabbalistic texts could pose a serious threat to Jewish religion. From an important letter he addressed to Pico in Latin and in the Italian vernacular (Paris, BnF, ms. lat. 6508), we know that Delmedigo did not have a high opinion of Jewish mysticism in general (Licata 2017):

“As I see that you, my Lordship, are working hard on this bloody Kabbalah [*isto benedicto Chabala*], I would like to tell you something that I have already pointed out in my Hebrew commentary on *De substantia orbis*, when I was speaking about spiritual power, and which I never wanted to tell you. And what I will say is a highly concealed subject, and none of those who are dealing with it knows this. Actually, perhaps, few of the ancients knew it. And [what I am telling you] is little in quantity, but in quality is of the greatest worth.”

These introductory remarks betray Delmedigo's contempt for Jewish mysticism – the adjective *benedicto*, referred to Kabbalah, is used here as a rhetorical device to express his disregard for or annoyance at this type of doctrines. In describing the process of emanation of the Sephiroth from the *En Soph*, i.e., the Infinite, Delmedigo maintains that, according to the Kabbalah, the Sephiroth are responsible for the order of the universe: even though these entities are contingent in themselves, their necessity is due to the Infinite, which is unknowable in itself. And yet, in Delmedigo's opinion, the Kabbalists do not deserve attention, for they simply reproduce the doctrines of the Platonists without even knowing or acknowledging their debt, and these are views that are in sharp contrast with Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle. Although Delmedigo's attitude toward the Kabbalah seems sometimes ambivalent (as showed, not always convincingly, by Bland 1991), many passages of his works – especially in the *Behinat ha-Dat* (Licata 2013a, pp. 214–217) – clearly testify to a negative judgment concerning its theoretical foundations.

It is very likely that the last meeting between Pico and Delmedigo took place in the summer of 1486 in Perugia, where the two discussed metaphysical subjects, which Delmedigo partially collected in his short *Quaestio de esse et essentia et uno* (*Question on Being, Essence and the One*). At the end of November of the same year, Pico moved to Rome to publish his *Conclusiones non-gentae* (900 Conclusions). The book was intended as a programmatic introduction to the great intellectual conference which was to be held in Rome after the Epiphany of 1487. Pope Innocent VIII, however, prohibited the conference, and Pico was obliged to defend himself against accusations of

heresy. Meanwhile, Delmedigo went back to Padua and found a new patron, the humanist Domenico Grimani. With his assistance, some of his original works and Averroes' translations were published in 1488. Around 1489 he left the Venetian Republic and returned to Crete, where he spent the final years of his life. A few hypotheses were made on the reasons behind his departure – the conflicts with orthodox Jews of Padua or the ban proclaimed by the bishop Pietro Barozzi (1441–1507), who in 1489 forbade any public discussion of the Averroist doctrine of the unicity of the intellect – but there is no certainty. In 1490, probably at the request of his pupil Saul ha-Kohen Ashkenazi, he wrote in Hebrew the *Behinat ha-Dat* (*The Examination of Religion*), a treatise dealing with the question of the relationship between philosophy and religion. The work, published posthumously in 1629 by his relative Joseph Shlomo Delmedigo (1591–1655), became especially popular among Jewish intellectuals and scholars.

Philosophical Works: *Quaestiones* and Commentaries

During his stay in Italy, Delmedigo engaged in philosophical and exegetical investigations that bear no traces of biblical, Talmudic, and religious sources. This is an aspect worth emphasizing, as it marks a clear difference with respect to the majority of Jewish philosophers, who used to quote the Bible in support of their philosophical theses. This feature is strongly linked to Delmedigo's methodology, influenced by Averroes' position and by the tradition of Latin Averroism, according to which religious and theological doctrines, such as miracles, prophecy, and the afterlife, cannot be the subject of any rational inquiry.

Delmedigo's principal exegetical contributions are focused on psychology, natural philosophy, and cosmology. While the *Two Investigations on the Intellect* are devoted to the question of how one has to understand the relationship between the soul and the intellect, the *De efficientia mundi* and *De primo motore* – as well as his commentary on *De substantia orbis* and his *Annotationes in*

librum De phisico auditu – address key points in cosmology and divine causality. From these works it is clear that Delmedigo was a staunch defender of Averroes' positions in philosophy, including the more radical and controversial ones, such as: (1) the unicity of the intellect; (2) the eternity of the world (in the variant known as "eternal creation"), which entails the impossibility of miracles and divine providence toward individuals; and (3) the separation, or the autonomy, of philosophical investigation from the tenets of revealed religion.

- (1) The doctrine of the unicity of the (material) intellect was formulated by Averroes in his Long Commentary on *De anima*. Here he advanced the somehow paradoxical thesis that all humans share one and the same eternal intellect. Averroes thought that he could guarantee the objectivity of knowledge only by divesting the human soul of its character of individual substantiality. It is only by losing their personal identity that human beings could reach the truth: since only truth is eternal, only a portion of men – the intellective one – can live eternally. Averroes called this process "conjunction" with the separate and eternal active intellect. Although this view is contrary to a reductionist or materialistic approach, as both the material and the active intellects, for Averroes, are separate and independent of each single individual human being, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) perceived a danger in it, for Averroes' theory undermined the traditional doctrine of immortality that was taught by revealed religions. This is the background of Delmedigo's *Two Investigations*, where Delmedigo openly embraced Averroes' solution – as expressed in his Long Commentary – and defended it from the objections moved by Aquinas in his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* (*On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists*) (Engel 2017).
- (2) In the works dealing with physics and cosmology, Delmedigo championed the thesis of the eternity of the world. Although this view can be traced back to Aristotle (*Physics*, VIII),

it became particularly controversial during the Middle Ages when Averroes advocated it against the philosopher and theologian al-Ghazali (c. 1058–1111) in the *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (*The Incoherence of the Incoherence*). The *quaestiones De efficientia mundi* and *De primo motore*, in particular, explore the following dilemma: does the First Mover, that is, the Aristotelian God, move the celestial spheres only as a final cause (i.e., as an object of desire), or as an efficient cause, too, that is, as an Agent? Delmedigo embraced the hypothesis that God acted as both a final and efficient cause of the celestial movements. As such, God was not only the cause of their movement but, more significantly, the principle of their being and everlasting subsistence (Puig Montada 1998; Licata 2013b, c). In defending this idea, he was reconnecting to a distinctive interpretation of Aristotle, common among some Latin Aristotelians (Poppi 1966) and Jewish Averroists, who followed the authoritative response given by Averroes in *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* and in *De substantia orbis*. By attributing the power of efficient causality to the Prime Mover (a doctrine contrary to the letter of Aristotle's text), Delmedigo could avoid the charge of atheism that al-Ghazali had leveled against Aristotelian philosophers, since an inactive God, from a religious point of view, was perceived as a caricature of the living God of Abraham (Licata 2013b).

Among Delmedigo's works on physics, his commentary on *De substantia orbis* stands out as a particularly remarkable exegetical accomplishment. It doesn't come as a surprise that this treatise, together with the *Two Investigations*, are the only works that he decided to translate from Latin into Hebrew, as he thought that they could have an impact on philosophically minded Jews. Paradoxically, unlike his other philosophical works, they have not been published until now and are still in manuscript form (a critical edition of his commentary on *De substantia orbis* is under preparation by Michael Engel and Giovanni Licata).

The *De substantia orbis* is an original work by Averroes, no longer extant in Arabic, but preserved in Latin and Hebrew translations (the latter under the title *Ma'amar be-'Etzem ha-Galgal*). This work is a collection of *quaestiones* focused on the nature and properties of the celestial region. It also engages with metaphysical and cosmological topics, such as the incorruptibility and animation of the heavens, prime matter, the causality of the Prime Mover, and the physical influence of the celestial region on the earth. Aristotelian cosmology, which is the foundation of *De substantia orbis*, is based on a set of principles which shaped the global picture of the world for about two millennia. According to this view, our universe is composed of two regions, the celestial and the terrestrial, which are radically different in composition and which follow different physical laws. The celestial region, from the moon up to the sphere of the fixed stars, is composed of ether, an incorruptible substance naturally endowed with a permanent circular motion, while the terrestrial region is composed of the four elements and is subject to the processes of coming-to-be and passing-away. Aristotle, however, was not always consistent in his views, nor did he develop them in sufficient detail. For example, he did not mention whether the celestial region was composed of matter and form, like corporeal beings, nor did he explain how the immaterial Unmoved Mover was supposed to move the celestial spheres which were carrying the planets and the stars. In writing the *De substantia orbis*, Averroes drew especially on Aristotle's *Physics* and *De caelo*. His aim was to complete the philosopher's theory of the heavens and to defend it against Avicenna's far-fetched interpretation. The *De substantia orbis*, however, cannot be understood as an astronomical treatise in the technical sense, for it is concerned with the nature of the heavens in general rather than with the prediction and the determination of planetary and stellar positions.

Between the end of the fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth century, the *De substantia orbis* was commented on by many thinkers of the Italian Renaissance. This is evidence that the work was attracting increasing attention not only in Italian universities (Bologna, Padua, and Pavia) but also

in humanist circles, as is clearly shown by the commentary of Delmedigo. Unlike his Christian contemporaries, Delmedigo mastered both the Latin and Hebrew traditions of *De substantia orbis*, which is why Giovanni Pico asked him to write a commentary on the treatise. As we read in the preface, Delmedigo agreed because he considered Averroes' treatise to be a sort of compendium of Aristotelian natural philosophy. He wrote the commentary in Latin, but shortly afterward translated it into Hebrew for Jewish scholars interested in philosophy, adding some critical remarks on the Kabbalah. Luckily, both the Latin and the Hebrew versions survive in manuscript. The Latin manuscript, now in the Vatican Library (Vat. Lat. 4553), was copied under Delmedigo's supervision and includes some notes in Pico's own hand (Licata 2016; Murano 2019).

- (3) A common feature of Delmedigo's philosophical works is the formula, usually found in their opening or concluding sections, that when philosophy is at variance with religion (*lex*), he gives credit to the latter. Philosophy, however, ought to be distinguished from religion, for the "path" of the latter is different from the "path" of the former (*via legis alia est a via philosophica*) (Licata 2013a, p. 84). Indeed, it is not the philosopher's task to look for a possible harmonization between philosophical theses and religious tenets, especially when they seem to oppose each other, as is the case with the unicity of the intellect and the eternity of the world. This methodological approach – often used as a protective device to avoid religious persecution – was common among Aristotelian and Averroist philosophers, as Siger of Brabant (c. 1235–1284) and John of Jandun (c. 1285–1328), and is known through the historiographical label of the "double-truth theory." Historians have devoted many pages to Delmedigo in order to decide whether he supported or not this "theory" (Licata 2013a, pp. 194–208). This depends on the definition of double truth one intends to adopt: if there is double truth "when a thinker, after reaching a reasoned conclusion

in contradiction with faith, declares that he does not share this conclusion through a mere act of reverence and in absence of rational arguments against it" (according to Landucci 2006, pp. 141–142), then Delmedigo adopted a double-truth strategy. This is of particular importance for the interpretation of his *Behinat ha-Dat*, since a part of this treatise is thematically devoted to analyzing the relationship between philosophy and (Jewish) religion. And yet it should be noted that, although Delmedigo was not always coherent in his responses to this delicate problem (Engel 2016), he nevertheless remained faithful to the idea that "to a philosopher, there is only one true science and only one true way-of-life; the love of wisdom" (Motzkin 1987, p. 19).

Behinat Ha-Dat (The Examination of Religion)

This short treatise, written by Delmedigo in 1490 when he returned to Crete, is the only work devoted to the analysis of themes which traditionally belong to medieval Jewish philosophy. Delmedigo's general purpose was to highlight the principles of Jewish faith, defending the reasonableness of Rabbinic Judaism against its enemies, both internal (kabbalists and *mitpalsefim*, i.e., philosophizers) and external (Christian religion). At the same time, Delmedigo intended to justify the necessity of (Aristotelian) philosophy for the enlightened elite. The first part of the treatise deals with the question of the relationship between philosophy (or reason) and religion (or Torah), showing that, according to the Torah, the study of philosophy is necessary and praiseworthy for the enlightened few; common people must believe in simple principles of faith, without explanations or demonstrations of their truth, which, by contrast, is the duty of the philosopher. With other Jewish Averroists, Delmedigo conceives the Torah primarily as a book intended to educate the unlearned with rhetorical (not scientific) arguments. The strong influence of Averroes' *Fasl al-Maqal* (*Decisive Treatise*) is

evident in the *Behinat ha-Dat*, as Delmedigo reshaped many features of Averroes' theological-political thought according to the Jewish context (Licata 2013a, pp. 120–186). Delmedigo then acknowledged the contrast between few religious principles and (Aristotelian) philosophy, on such matters as prophecy, rewards and punishments, and miracles. He also maintained, however, that philosophy and religion were two distinct and independent areas within the domain of human knowledge, with their own specific source of legitimacy (reason and revelation).

In the second part of the *Behinat ha-Dat*, Delmedigo listed 11 fundamental principles of Judaism (such as, among others, existence, unity, and incorporeal nature of God; rewards and punishments; resurrection), according to his opinion, which was indeed influenced by Maimonides (1138–1204) and his 13 principles of faith. He then defended the legitimacy of Rabbinic Judaism and the Oral Law (Mishnah and Talmud). He then criticized the exegetical method of the Kabbalists and the philosophizers (*mitpalsefim*) influenced by Maimonides' philosophical allegorization of the Torah. He launched the first attack against the authorship of the *Zohar*, the most important book of the Kabbalah, arguing that it was a recent human creation influenced by some specific trends in the Platonic tradition, liable to be in conflict with traditional Judaism and therefore devoid of any authority. Finally, he examined the reasons behind the Jewish commandments (*ta'ame ha-mitzvot*).

It should also be said that the original composition of the *Behinat ha-Dat* contains here and there violent anti-Christian passages, arguing for the irrationality of Christian dogmas of the Trinity, incarnation, and transubstantiation. Although these passages are apologetic in tone, directed as they are to demonstrate that principles of Jewish religion are more rational than the Christian ones, they could also be related to Delmedigo's disappointment with the time he spent in Italy, when he was in touch with Christian humanists and intellectuals. These passages, however, when the *Behinat ha-Dat* was first published in 1629, were cut out. Thanks to the rediscovery of one uncensored manuscript, dating back to the

sixteenth century, the *Behinat ha-Dat* can now be read in its entirety (Ross 1984; Licata 2013a).

Significance and Legacy

As Delmedigo once wrote to his patron Giovanni Pico, he preferred by far explaining than translating Averroes' works (Licata 2013a, p. 83). In his interpretation of Averroes, he was influenced not only by former Jewish rationalists, or better Averroists, of the Middle Ages – such as Isaac Albalag, Moshe Narboni, Joseph ibn Kaspi, and Isaac Pulgar (Licata 2016) – but also by the general climate of Paduan Aristotelianism and Averroism (Engel 2017). This is quite unique in the panorama of Renaissance Averroism, for Delmedigo had access to key texts by Averroes preserved in both Hebrew and Latin translations and was therefore able to merge two distinct and parallel Averroist traditions, the Jewish and the Latin one. Although he respected Maimonides, he rarely mentioned him in his philosophical works, and in the *Behinat ha-Dat* he openly criticized him for his philosophical interpretation of the Torah in the *Moreh Nevukhim* (*The Guide of the Perplexed*). For these reasons, to view Delmedigo as a Maimonidean, as some interpreters have done, is too narrow a view. He was – and saw himself as – an Averroist, committed to defending the Commentator from the criticisms made by Christian philosophers, such as Thomists and followers of the Platonic tradition (Engel 2013). He often attacked and derided philosophers that he regarded as half-baked thinkers, referring to them with the derogatory term *mitpalsefim* or *philosophantes*.

His original works and translations heavily influenced Pico's *900 Conclusions* – in particular those concerning Arabic philosophy (Fellina 2017). His *Two Questions on the Intellect*, which may be read as a supercommentary on Averroes' Long Commentary on the third book of *De anima* (Engel 2017, p. 26), his questions dealing with matters of physics and cosmology, and his commentary on *De substantia orbis*, as they were originally composed for a Latin audience, might also have influenced some Paduan Aristotelians,

such as Agostino Nifo and Pietro Pomponazzi (Poppi 1966; Engel 2015). Both, for example, wrote a commentary on *De substantia orbis* at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

In Jewish culture, Delmedigo began to be appreciated only in the nineteenth century, when, as a result of the rise of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah), his criticism of the Kabbalah was seen as an important accomplishment. This was the main reason behind the reprinting of the *Behinat ha-Dat* by the Italian scholar Isaac Samuel Reggio in 1833 (Licata 2013a, pp. 103–110). It is however worth pointing out here that Spinoza owned the first edition of the *Behinat ha-Dat* (1629) and that this text had certainly some influence on the composition of the *Theological-Political Treatise* – a milestone of the European Enlightenment – especially with respect to a few theses characteristic of the Averroistic tradition, among which the central assumption that philosophical and scientific investigations should be independent from any intrusion of a religious or dogmatic kind (Fraenkel 2013; Licata 2013a, pp. 245–285).

Works

- *Quaestio de efficientia mundi* (1480). First printed in Venice in 1488, together with other Latin works, in an incunabulum containing works by John of Jandun (*Quaestiones in libros physicorum Aristotelis*) and reprinted many times during the sixteenth century. A critical edition is now in Licata 2013c.
- *Quaestio de primo motore* (1480–1481). First printed in Venice in 1488 and many times during the sixteenth century. See John of Jandun 1969.
- *Quaestiones de intellectu* (1481–1482) or, according to the Hebrew version, *Two Investigations on the Nature of the Human Soul*. The Latin version, dedicated to Pico, appears to be lost. The Hebrew version by the author himself, extant in two complete manuscripts, is still unpublished (Paris, BnF, ms. hébr. 968; Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, X 128 sup.). A detailed study can be found in Engel 2017.

- *Annotationes in librum De phisico auditu super quibusdam dictis Commentatoris* (1485). Written upon Pico's request in Florence, it was printed in Venice in 1488 and reprinted many times during the sixteenth century. See John of Jandun [1969](#).
- *Expositio super librum Averrois De substantia orbis* (1485–1486). Still unpublished, it is preserved both in the Latin version, written for Pico, and in the Hebrew version, translated by the author himself (Vatican city, BAV, Vat. lat. 4553; Paris, BnF, ms. hébr. 968).
- *Quaestio de esse et essentia et uno* (1486). First printed in Venice in 1488 and many times during the sixteenth century. See John of Jandun [1969](#).
- *Behinat ha-Dat*. Written in 1490 in Crete. First published in 1629. Critical edition in Ross [1984](#) and Licata [2013a](#) (the latter with Italian translation). English translation in Geffen [1970](#); the 1992 French translation by Maurice-Ruben Hayoun is not always reliable.
- Compendium of Aristotle's *Meteorology*, Venice 1488.
- Middle Commentary on Aristotle's *Meteorology* (partial), Venice 1488.
- *Proemium* to Book XII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Venice 1488.
- Long Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Books I–VII), Venice 1560. Sometimes mistaken for the Middle Commentary, as it was published under this title.
- *Quaestio in librum Priorum*, Venice 1497.
- *De spermate*, Venice 1560.
- Paraphrase (Middle Commentary) of Plato's *Republic*. See Averroë [1992](#).
- Compendium of Aristotle's *De anima* (partial).
- Paraphrase (Middle Commentary) of Aristotle's *On the Parts of Animals*.

Letters

- Ermolao Barbaro to Delmedigo, 4 May 1485 (in Barbaro [1943](#), pp. 87–90).
- Delmedigo to Giovanni Pico, *De nervis et sensu tactus*, 1485/6 (in Licata [2014](#)).
- Delmedigo to Giovanni Pico, between October 1485 and April 1486 (according to Busi [2008](#)). The letter was only partially edited by Jules Dukas and Eugenio Garin and was then published in its entirety in Kieszkowski [1964](#). This transcription, however, is marred by several mistakes. A new emended edition, updated according to recent research, is in Licata [2017](#) (but see also Licata [2019](#)).
- Delmedigo to Domenico Grimani, c. 1487 (in Kieszkowski [1964](#)).

Hebrew into Latin Translations of Averroes

Delmedigo's translations mark the beginning of a more detailed knowledge of Averroes in the Renaissance. Although only his translation of the Compendium of Aristotle's *Meteorology* was included in the famous Giuntine edition of Aristotle and Averroes (*Aristotelis omnia quae extant Opera... Averrois Cordubensis in ea opera omnes, qui ad haec usque tempora pervenere, commentarij*, Venetiis apud Iunctas, 1550–52; reprint 1562–74), it is nevertheless likely that some of Averroes' works which appear in the Giuntine edition were retranslated by other Jewish translators (e.g., Abraham de Balmes, Jacob Mantino) taking into account Delmedigo's earlier version (Steinschneider [1893](#); Di Donato [2013](#)). In some cases, a faithful manuscript copy with Pico's marginal notes is still preserved. Detailed bibliographical information can be found in Bartola ([1993](#)), Licata ([2013a](#), pp. 93–98), and Murano ([2019](#)):

Cross-References

- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao](#)
- [De Balmes, Abraham ben Meir](#)
- [Hebrew into Latin Translations in Renaissance Italy](#)
- [Jewish Averroism in the Renaissance](#)
- [Maimonideanism in the Renaissance](#)
- [Mantino ben Samuel, Jacob](#)
- [Spinoza, Baruch](#)

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Delmedigo, Elijah ben Moshe Abba

► [Delmedigo, Elijah](#)

Demon

► [Devil, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Demonstrative

► [Epidictic in the Renaissance](#)

Denores, Giason

Born: ca 1510/1530 (?), Nicosia, Cyprus

Died: 1590, Padua, Italy

Eleni Lampaki
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Abstract

Giason Denores was a Cypriot scholar who lived and taught in Italy. He wrote on various subjects ranging from cosmography to civil philosophy, although he was mainly concerned with rhetoric and poetry and their relation to ethics. He is mostly remembered for his philosophical quarrel with Giovanni Battista Guarini

over the literary genre of pastoral tragicomedy, represented by Guarini's *Pastor Fido*.

Biography

Giason Denores was born in Nicosia, Cyprus. His father, Peter, belonged to a powerful and noble family originating probably from Normandy, whose presence in Cyprus is attested already during the thirteenth century. Many members of the Denores family, as well as from his mother's side, held important posts for the Venetian Republic. His date of birth is uncertain. His older biographers placed his birth ca 1530 (Budd 1927; Patrizi 1990), although according to more recent evidence, he must have been born significantly earlier, around 1510 (Panagiotakis 1985; Gialama and Kaklamanis 2000).

Denores studied in Padua, probably after 1530; some of his notable teachers were Trifone Gabriele and Sperone Speroni. A manuscript dated at 1539 (Palatinus 260) contains some of his first pieces of work, epigrams and short poems written in Greek and Latin (his only works in Greek) and some speeches. After the end of his studies, he probably returned to Cyprus; the exact dates are not known. At some point before 1553, he traveled to Venice, where he printed his first book: a commentary of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, based on the lectures of Trifone Gabriele. At the same period, he became a member of *Academia Pellegrina*. Afterward, he returned back to Cyprus where he probably remained till the Turkish invasion of 1570. In Cyprus he got married to Aikaterini Sygklitikou, who came from a noble Cypriot family; they had three children. There are no news of his literary or other activities in Cyprus, although it is probably that he held some important posts (Gialama and Kaklamanis 2000).

After the Turkish invasion, Denores family fled to Venice, where he was occupied as tutor to children of noble Venetian families. After many requests, his family was given estates in Crete, and his brother moved to live there, although Giason remained in Venice. His second book, a treatise on cosmography (*Breve trattato del*

mondo, et delle sue parti) appeared in Venice in 1571.

In 1573 he is found in Padua, where he received a position as reader in rhetoric at the newly founded Accademia dei Rinascenti. His third book is related to his activities in the academy: a study on rhetoric, in two parts, published in 1574 and dedicated to the academy (*Breve trattato dell'oratore* and *Discorso intorno alla rhetorica*). In 1577 he was chosen among the Cypriot refugees in Venice to address the new doge Sebastiano Venier, in order to ask for protection, help, and employment for the members of the expatriate Cypriot community. His address was successful, and the Cypriots were granted permission to settle in the city of Pula; Denores himself had been offered the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Padua, which had been vacant for 10 years since the death of his predecessor, Francisco Robortello. The years after this appointment, till his death in 1590, were the most productive: 13 of his books were published between 1578 and 1590.

His books covered many fields, from cosmography and politics to rhetoric and poetic art, and were deeply rooted in the Aristotelian tradition. His most discussed works were his books on poetics, because they involved him in a literary quarrel with Giovanni Battista Guarini over the validity of the new genre of tragicomedy. His other works include an introduction on rhetoric, based on Aristotle (*Introduttione ... sopra i tre libri della Rhetorica di Aristotele*), printed in 1578 in Padua, a political treatise based on Aristotle (*Breve institutione dell'ottima repubblica*), printed in Venice in 1578, a commentary on Cicero (Padua 1581), and cosmographic and geographical studies (*Tavole ... del mondo et della sphaera, Discorso intorno alla geographia*). His theoretical views on rhetoric and poetry are mainly elaborated in his rhetoric (*Della rhetorica*, printed in 1584 in Venice) and his poetic (*Poetica* 1588). Some of his speeches and lectures have also been published, while works in manuscript can be found in many Italian libraries.

His work (*Discorso... intorno a' que' principii, cause, et accrescimenti, che la comedia,*

la tragedia, et il poema heroico ricevono dalla philosophia morale), published in 1586, where he criticized pastoral tragicomedy, triggered a response by Giovanni Battista Guarini, the author of *Pastor Fido*, which had started to circulate in manuscripts around that time. Guarini, although his name and his work were not at all mentioned in *Discorso*, published in 1588 a critique on Denores' work, with the title *Il Verrato*, where he aimed to refute the arguments against tragicomedy, attacking personally the author of *Discorso* as well. Denores published his answer in 1590, *Apologia contra l'auttor del Verrato*. This book gives important autobiographical information, as Denores felt insulted from Guarini's dismissive remarks on his personality. Guarini's response was published 3 years later, although Denores was already dead.

Denores died in Padua in 1590. The last years of his life were affected by the quarrel with Guarini, as well as unfortunate family circumstances: his son Peter had been convicted of killing a Venetian nobleman in a duel.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The general idea which guided Denores' poetic theory was the Counter-Reformation doctrine that the aesthetic function of literature cannot be separated from the utilitarian one. Literary critics of this period, such as Julius Scaliger and Antonio Minturno, stressed the moral utility of literature. D.'s views on the moral function of poetry are deeply rooted in this tradition. He expanded Varchi's statement that literature should serve not only religion but the state as well. The genres that can perform these functions are tragedy, comedy, and the epic, and these are the only genres presented in his poetics.

Denores excludes the possibility of a happy ending in tragedies, because a change of fortune from misery to happiness will not evoke the emotions of pity and terror which lead to catharsis. In this aspect, he differs from Scaliger, Castelvetro, and Giraldi. In his treatment of tragedy, he strictly follows Aristotle, and for that reason, he does not deal with contemporary questions such as the use

of historical themes or the unity of place, formulated by Castelvetro.

Catharsis according to Denores is assigned a moral and political function: “to make [the spectators] detest the life of tyrants and of the most powerful”. The means to achieve it are the sentiments of terror and pity. The heroic poem, on the other hand, does not purge the passions but “instills virtue into the minds of the listeners”, while comedy purges “those torments which disturb our quiet and tranquility, such as the ‘amours’ of wives and daughters” (Budd 1927). Denores insists on the political function of poetry and links each genre with a political message: comedy makes spectators to desire the life of private citizens; tragedy teaches them to abhor tyrants and the epic makes them to desire a good prince. On the contrary, pastoral poetry did not have any utility for civic life; moreover, it could promote the idea of leaving the cities and preferring the countryside.

Under this light, Denores’ rejection of pastoral tragicomedy can be explained: this new genre is not only devoid of any moral function, but is a mixed genre as well. His criticism is based upon issues which were very important for Renaissance literary theory, such as the edifying function of literature, the mixtures of genres, and the role of Aristotle’s *Poetics* as a set of rules which are to be followed strictly. Denores was not the only one to criticize *Il Pastor Fido*, and Guarini was not the only one to defend it.

Denores’ political interests are found not only in his poetics, but in his rhetoric treatises as well, where he insists on the importance of oratory skills to civic life and to good governance. His moral and political interests are also shown in other works, as the *Breve institutione de l’ottima republica*, the commentary on Cicero’s philosophy, and his panegyric on the Republic of Venice.

Impact and Legacy

Denores is mainly known for taking part in the controversy surrounding Guarini’s *Pastor Fido*. His life and works have remained mostly unstudied till the last decades, and, as one of the few

researches who have studied their work wrote, “he has been treated with a neglect that is by no means wholly deserved” (Budd 1927).

During his lifetime he was held with respect not only among the members of the Cypriot community in Venice, who chose him to address the doge for help, but also among aristocratic and literate circles in Venice and Padua, as one can assume judging from the teaching posts he held and his relation to important Academies. According to the information he gives in his *Apologia* (p. 329); the King Sigismund invited him to teach in Poland. However, only the first of his books was reprinted during his lifetime.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Accademia degli Infiammati](#)
- ▶ [Ciceronianism](#)
- ▶ [Counter-reformation](#)
- ▶ [Horace in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Minturno, Antonio](#)
- ▶ [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Scaliger, Julius Caesar](#)
- ▶ [Tragedy in Renaissance Literature](#)

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Descartes, René

Born: 31 March 1596 (La Haye en Touraine, France)

Died: 11 February 1650 (Stockholm, Sweden)

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Abstract

Scholars generally consider René Descartes to be the father of early modern philosophy insofar he rejected scholasticism, Aristotelianism, but also Renaissance philosophies and grounded a new system of knowledge whose roots lie solely in the mind and not in previous assumptions. This defines a modern self that achieves the knowledge of nature and shapes the modern universe. In the *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) and the *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (1641), after rejecting earlier education, doctrines, and *scientiae*, Descartes isolates the powers of the mind (i.e., clear and distinct ideas) as the beginning of any certainty. Yet, having considered Descartes' system as dismissing all doctrines and

Secondary

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beliefs, in this entry I will first examine some relations between the French philosopher and those contexts and then discuss the novelties of his system. After a short biography, in the second section, I will briefly explore the interrelations between Descartes and Renaissance scholars, whom he reproached for their precipitate conclusions. Third, I will unearth his criticism of Aristotelian-scholastic philosophy (which he reproached for its preconceptions), while highlighting his attention to a few Aristotelian texts. Fourth, I will investigate a few innovative aspects of his methodology; this consists of novel combination of intellectual cognition and experimentation. As a result, Descartes' entire natural philosophy consists of a theoretical framework that defines the principles of knowledge and the architecture of science, while the body of all disciplines and the knowledge of particular issues are methodologically and experientially constructed. Despite several limitations, Descartes' system is remarkably innovative.

Biography

René Descartes was born in La Haye en Touraine, today named Descartes, on March 31, 1596. (For a fascinating biographical reconstruction, see van Ruler 2019.) His father was Joachim Descartes and his mother Jeanne Brochard, and he was born into a bourgeois legal family that served the French crown. Both his grandfathers were physicians and had associations within a cultivated environment that likely influenced the early life of René (Rodis-Lewis 1971; Aucante 2006; Baldassarri 2014; Meschini 2013). Later on, Descartes enrolled at the Collège of La Flèche (probably between 1606 and 1614, but the exact dates are uncertain), where he followed the traditional *cursus studiorum* and was raised reading the classics, disputing and debating, exploring obscure and false subjects, and generally referring to a traditional system of knowledge. Yet, Descartes grew consistently critical of the schooling he received, as he famously writes in the first part of the *Discours de la Méthode*: “as soon as I had

completed the course of study at the end of which one is normally admitted to the ranks of the learned, I completely changed my opinion. I found myself beset by so many doubts and errors that I came to think I had gained nothing from my attempts to become educated but increasing recognition of my ignorance” (Descartes AT VI 4–5; CSM I 113). While the rule of professors was not to depart from Aristotle, Descartes experienced the need for both a different ground for knowledge and a different theoretical framework: indeed, he writes he “entirely abandoned the study of letters. Resolving to seek no knowledge other than that which could be found in [him]self”, because he claimed there is “much more truth [...] in the reasoning which a man makes concerning matters that regard him than in those which some scholar makes in his study about speculative matters” (Descartes AT VI 9–10; CSM I 115).

Once he left school, and after taking the *Baccalauréat* and *Licence* in law at the University of Poitiers, Descartes enrolled as a volunteer in the army of Maurice of Nassau (1567–1625). In Breda, he met Isaac Beeckman (1588–1637), a chance encounter that changed his life (Richard 2007; van Berkel 2013). He spent a few months working with Beeckman on mathematics and music, whose results are collected in a *Compendium of Music* (1618) and in some notes on mathematics contained in Descartes' manuscripts and in Beeckman's *Journal* (on Descartes and music see Fabbri 2008, de Buzon 2019). Afterward, he traveled to Denmark, Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and Italy.

What triggered Descartes' *grand tour* was the possibility to visiting courts, gathering experiences, and visiting people of different knowledge and sorts, as he later suggests in the *Discours*. Indeed, he visited Prague, certainly an important cultural center at the time, and planned to go to Rome, although he probably never descended beyond Northern Italy (Mehl 2019). Apparently, during these years he found time to define the grounds for a philosophical program to construct a new science (although the premise for this occurred while he was dreaming), which he intended to adhere to when he returned to Paris. Yet, the Parisian years (1624–1628) appear to have

been less productive for Descartes, who joined Marin Mersenne's (1588–1648) circle in Paris but found little time to achieve his project. What Descartes actually did in Paris is, regrettably, difficult to say. Apparently, he began to work on different treatises, developing parts of his algebra and geometry, a study of optics, and possibly an epistemological treatise (which later develops into the *Regulae ad directionem ingenii*, posthumously published in 1701). While this appears to be a period of leisure and idleness, things thereafter change quite rapidly. Somehow in consequence of a meeting in which Nicolas de Villiers, sieur de Chandoux (?–1631) presented his alchemical studies of nature (Matton 2013; Joly 2013), Descartes figured out the importance of bringing his treatises to completion (Clarke 2006, 81), and he moved to the United Provinces in order to achieve this (Verbeek 2015).

In the Netherlands, Descartes slightly changed and broadened his focus. Several events played a role in this. The first is his rupture with Beeckman in October 1630, the consequence of which consists of Descartes' departure from a physico-mathematical method toward a more general and theoretical one. The second is his matriculation at the University of Franeker in 1629 and at Leiden University in June 1630, where he developed medical interests (in anatomy, physiology, and therapeutics), although he never graduated. The third is his interest in experimentation and big pictures. In 1629, for example, he testified to this change to Mersenne claiming that, moving from a single phenomenon, the *parhelio*, he intends to develop a “systematic study of the whole of meteorology” that contains “all sublunary phenomena” (Descartes AT I 23; CSMK 6, which later became *Les Météores*, 1637). Furthermore, several collaborations with Dutch scholars such as Henricus Renieri (1593–1639), Vopiscus Fortunatus Plempius (or Plemp, 1601–1671), and Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687), among others, importantly helped Descartes shape his philosophical and experimental knowledge of nature (Buning 2013; Baldassarri forthcoming).

As a result of his early years in the Netherlands, he planned a whole physics, posthumously published as *Le Monde* in 1664, which, though,

he abandoned in 1633. This is a rather innovative text in which he rejected traditional forms, defined nature as extended matter, and grounded physical knowledge in three mechanical laws of motion. Along these lines, the last chapter of this text was supposed to deal with a few living functions of the human body, namely, sensation, memory, and imagination in a mechanical way, and composed a text later detached from *Le Monde* and published on its own in 1662 and in 1664 as *L'Homme* (Antoine-Mahut 2016; Alban-Zapata 2016). Apparently, the reason for refraining from publishing this work lies in the 1633 condemnation of Galileo by the Inquisition in Rome. Descartes would have imagined that a physics grounded in reason alone, as it is in *Le Monde*, would have encountered a similar negative reception.

A few years later, Descartes reluctantly acquiesced in the insistence of his friends and prepared for publication three essays, *La Dioptrique*, *Les Météores*, and *La Géométrie* (1637). Stripped of a general framework, such specific studies would have not been confronted with the antagonism of the Church. Still, he prefaced these essays with a short, but meaningful, introduction, the *Discours de la Méthode*, in which, after a short biographical reconstruction, Descartes presented in French a few epistemological rules (Part 2), elaborated a metaphysics (Part 4), and introduced his previous scientific work (Part 5). He concluded his text with a section on the importance of achieving knowledge through combining theory with experimentation (Part 6) (Gadoffre 1987; Bos and Verbeek 2013). This text is revolutionary.

First, Descartes rejects the traditional system of knowledge. Second, he introduces a simple methodology that anyone could understand and make fruitful (and which could have been devised by anyone without a specific knowledge of traditional philosophy, such as artisans and craftsmen, see Descartes AT VI 11–12). Third, he situates himself in a Baconian perspective, developing a practical philosophy that can be used to make one master of nature and contribute to the knowledge of general physics, of all natural phenomena (such as of the rainbow, for example), but especially for “the maintenance of health” (Descartes AT VI 63; CSM I 143). Against the traditional system,

Descartes reveals an alternative program based on the evidence of the mind, in which the rules of a mechanical physics would help him coherently explain nature and living bodies, as the case of the heartbeat supposedly reveals. Yet, no revolution immediately followed from the reception of the *Discours* (Garber 1988).

While his project to publish a second edition of the *Discours* together with a section of objections and answers (some of which are however contained in the correspondence) floundered, Descartes decided to establish a first philosophy in Latin as a metaphysical ground for any knowledge of nature. Doubts about all knowledge and experience and even the hyperbolic and universal doubt about the nature of God led the meditator to a metaphysical ground: the *ego cogito, ego sum* (I think, therefore I am), and the infinity of God (Scribano 1997; Agostini 2019; Nolan 2019). The result is the *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, published with a long appendix of seven objections (raised by scholars such as Pierre Gassendi, Antoine Arnauld, and Thomas Hobbes) and Descartes' replies to each of them.

The consequence was twofold. On the one hand, a fierce opposition developed to his rationalistic framework (such as in the Utrecht crisis, Verbeek 1988); on the other, Descartes grounded an entire program of physics on his metaphysical system (Garber 1992), discovering a new force for the knowledge of nature. In the first part of the *Principia philosophiae* (1644), Descartes deals with the metaphysical principles of knowledge, in the second with the physical principles, in the third with the universe, and in the fourth with terrestrial bodies. Established through a mechanical physics and through a few laws of motion, Descartes devises an indefinite universe and a world composed of extended matter. He was therefore able to describe minerals, stones, and the magnet. Still, when he came to describe living bodies, namely, animals and plants, and the human beings, he faced unsurmountable difficulties that made impossible to bring his natural philosophy to completion. In 1647–1648, however, Descartes claimed to be working on the animal body, and especially on embryology, and writing a text today known as

La Description du corps humain (posthumously published in 1664), and in 1649 he published a treatise on human passions, *Les Passions de l'âme*, on the connection between the mind and the body (Kambouchner 2019). In both these texts, Descartes' attention to medicine, physiology, and anatomy surfaces as the tip of an iceberg that composes one fifth of Descartes' texts. Indeed, medicine was one of the most important enterprises in which Descartes was interested, as he anatomized bodies, developed an important physiological system, and elaborated a therapeutics grounded on his mechanical understanding of the living body, the famous theory of the animal machine (Bitbol-Hespériès 2000; Aucante 2006; Manning 2013; Baldassarri 2018, forthcoming). Finally, tired of fighting the philosophers, Descartes moved to serve at the court of Maria Christina of Sweden in Stockholm, where he died in February 1650.

What is interesting to note is that Descartes' thought received huge and various attention from both followers who intended to bring his project to completion, such as Henricus Regius (or Hendrick de Roy, 1598–1679) and opponents on various sides (Bos 2002; van Ruler 1996). Without any doubt, Descartes' philosophy sparked enormous discussion throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, playing a major role in shaping the early modern period (Nadler et al. 2019).

Descartes and the Renaissance: Precipitate Conclusions

In his famous letter to Beeckman, Descartes stresses that along with Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus “Telesio, Campanella, Bruno, Basson, Vanini, and *Novatores* all say something different,” (Descartes AT I 158; CSMK 27) but who has got anything to teach him? In his denunciation of authority, Descartes thus gathers together Ancient philosophers and *novatores* as heralds of incorrect systems of knowledge, in which correct opinions have been deduced from false principles. (I will not investigate all possible relationship between Descartes and such *novatores*, see the articles in

the volume edited by Faye (1999b).) Drawing knowledge from their systems is useless, if you are not merely reconstructing a history of philosophy. Yet, while he allows a position to Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus in the history of philosophy he reconstructs in the *Lettre-Préface* (1647; Descartes AT IX-2 6–9), no room is given to *novatores* at this stage. In this section, while discussing the Cartesian evaluation of a few scholars from Renaissance period, I unearth his judgment on the systems of knowledge tied to the Renaissance culture as precipitous and lacking solid principles.

The most relevant case is Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639). On March 1638, Descartes thanks Huygens who had sent him a new edition of *De sensu rerum et magia*, a text he had known since 1623. Yet, he found nothing but “little substance in his writings” as “to go astray through fondness for the most out-of-the-way paths is less excusable than to follow the well-trodden ones” (Descartes AT I 659–660; CSMK 91). In Cartesian terms, this is a methodological reproach. A similar (but anonymous) criticism surfaces in Rule 4 of the *Regulæ*, where Descartes writes that “so blind is the curiosity with which mortals are possessed that they often direct their minds down untrodden paths, in the groundless hope that they will chance upon what they are seeking” (Descartes AT X 371; CSM I 15). Apparently, this blind desire especially affects scholars whose keenness to discover new things makes them desperate and impulsive, while proceeding “in a forest” ought to be done in the light of method. Precipitation appears to be the error leading all *novatores*, not just Campanella, insofar as they ground their philosophy in insubstantial principles and look for the truth inconsistently. As Descartes claims in Rule 3, in *vulgaris philosophia*, scholars have moved away from acknowledging what is clear and certain and “on the basis of merely probable knowledge [have] venture[d] to make assertions on obscure matters about which nothing is known [. . .]. The result is that the only conclusions they can draw are ones which apparently rest on some such obscure propositions, and which are accordingly uncertain” (Descartes AT X 368; CSM I 14).

Similarly, Descartes claims that the system of neither Lull nor Agrippa is “supplied [with] certain keys which are [. . .] essential for revealing the secrets of the method” (Descartes AT X 165; CSMK 5) or, at least, the proponents of these theories ignore the principles, which appear to be useless in inferring true knowledge. And Lull’s arguments are mere “sophistries” (Descartes AT II 629; CSMK 142).

In more solid disciplines, Renaissance scholars generally stop their chain of reasoning at a determinate point and without including all possibilities. This is the case Descartes suggests in *La Géométrie*, where he claims that the formula Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) acknowledged to solve cubic equations (discovered by Scipione dal Ferro) fails to include all equations and therefore is not as general as it could be (Descartes AT VI 474). Something similar occurs to alchemists, as alchemical theory lacks solid principles: the three elements (*tria prima*) of alchemy are not the first elements to which natural bodies should be reduced (Joly 2013; Baldassarri 2015), while in the end nature is nothing but extended matter deprived of all other qualities.

A not wholly dissimilar case is that of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). In his exchange with Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia (1618–1680), in commenting on *The Prince* (1512), Descartes claims that on Machiavelli’s “foundations, he rests some very tyrannical precepts” (Descartes AT IV 487; Shapiro 2007, 140). Descartes stresses that “thinking that a good man is he who does everything true reason tells him to, it is certain that the best thing is always to try to be one” (Descartes AT IV 490; Shapiro 2007, 142). Against the incorrect principles of Machiavelli, one should ground politics in the order of reason (Baldassarri 2014).

In the end, these examples reveal Descartes familiarity with several theories tied to Renaissance culture, which he generally lumps together as precipitous systems that lack solid principles (for a different view, see Faye 1999a, b, 2016). Accordingly, these theories incorrectly infer knowledge across the various disciplines, from logic and physics to chemistry and politics.

Descartes and the Aristotelians: Preconceptions

Against the Ancients, Descartes was even harsher. In a juvenile text, today collected as an appendix to the *Studium bonae mentis*, Descartes wrote that “we shall not confer much [authority] to the ancients due to their antiquity, as we ourselves are more ancient than them. Today the world is older than at their time, and we have more experience about things” and then “may the gods ruin the Ancients, and save my things [*Dii male perdant Antiquos, mea qui praeipueri mihi*]” (Descartes AT X 204; cf. Gouhier 1979, 142–149). In this rewriting of the traditional claim of dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, Descartes reveals how fiercely he contested any acquired system of knowledge and how much he looked forward to making his own discoveries.

Yet, Descartes developed two ways to deal with the Ancients. The first is to consider them as pundits, whose system taught in the schools fails to lead to truth or discoveries but just helps repeat acquired assumptions. In the previously mentioned letter to Beeckman, for example, Descartes defies any claim that knowledge derives from pre-assumptions authoritatively established, as this leads to error. For example, the training in the schools, grounded as it is on syllogism, makes scholars strive for victory in disputes, as partisans or advocates able to establish plausibility (i.e., the internal coherence of an argument) rather than being judges able to weigh reasons or knowledge, failing to deal with truth or to discover a new one (Descartes AT VI 69; CSM I 146). Without any effort, “they are like ivy, which never seeks to climb higher than the trees which support it” (Descartes AT VI 70; CSM I 147). Additionally, through controversies they “are inclined to employ the most subtle arguments” and they generally wrap up them in “various obscurities” (Descartes AT X 366–367; CSM I 13) that leads to blindness, departing from the evidence or the light of the mind. One example is the notion of substantial form, to which Descartes opposed a mechanical system (Hattab 2009).

According to Descartes, the scholastic system is built on erroneous principles. In his

exchange with Plemp, there is a clear example of this error. Against Plemp’s claim that the fermentation of blood is already given in Aristotle, Descartes replies that Aristotelian theory is erroneous since it was grounded on Aristotle’s ignorance of the true cause of blood fermentation, namely, the natural heat of the heart (Descartes AT I 522; cf. Descartes AT XI 245, CSM I 319). Indeed the error of Aristotelian scholars consists of grounding their knowledge in incorrect principles. Moreover, the followers of Aristotle had corrupted his writings insofar as they attribute to him opinions he would not recognize as his own (Descartes AT IX2 7; CSM I 182), therefore revealing how far from preconceptions and false knowledge, taking diverse shapes form, may be developed from incorrect principles.

Besides this methodological line, Descartes also deals more directly with Aristotle’s and Aristotelian philosophy and texts. Contemporary scholars have commented on the shades of Aristotle in Cartesian texts such as the *Regulae* (Marion 1975) or the *Essais* (Belgioioso 1990) or highlighted the direct relations with scholastic traditions (Gilson 1913; Ariew 2019; Agostini et al. forthcoming). It is true that Descartes used the texts of Aristotelian scholars such as Aquinas’ *Summa theologiae* to carve out his own thoughts and accommodate them to the reader, something he especially did when he intended to defend his philosophy from scholastic readers (Descartes AT I 366–367, 376, AT II 435, AT III 185, AT IV 117; Agostini 2010; Baldassarri 2016). Among others, he consulted the Conimbricenses, Abra de Raconis’ *Totius philosophiae*, and Eustache de Saint Paul’s *Summa philosophica quadripartita* and was likely aware of Francisco Suarez’s work, acknowledging that these texts had a role in unveiling the order of reason of his own philosophy. In other words, when stripped of their false principles and preconceptions, even scholastic texts (or, at least, some of them, what he called *libri primarii*) have a utility insofar as a chain of reasoning arises in them. These texts help in shaping the order of knowledge. And Descartes did not shrink textual confrontation with Aristotelianism as a way of disseminating his own philosophy and

communicating it in a way that is adequate for other scholars.

Descartes' Program for Combining Reason and Experience

Free of any preconceptions and precipitate conclusions (the errors investigated in the previous sections), anyone may achieve *scientia*, or true knowledge, by means of clear and distinct ideas and intellectual evidence (Descartes AT VI 18; CSM I 120). Accordingly, science is certain and evident cognition achieved by the mind (Descartes AT X 362; CSM I 10), that is, by the means of the intellectual operations, these being deduction and intuition. In the *Regulæ*, Descartes suggests that the intellect alone is capable of scientific cognition, while he rejects the Aristotelian claim that knowledge is in the senses before it reaches the intellect. Still, even in the epistemology of the *Regulæ*, Descartes does not reject experimentation as such, but acknowledges “two paths of arriving at a knowledge of things – through experience and through deduction” (Descartes AT X 365; CSM I 12). More precisely, experimental knowledge should be regulated by the intellectual powers, under which all experiences become experimentation (Baldassarri 2017).

From the epistemological point of view of the *Regulæ*, the method or *mathesis universalis* operates in steering evidence from the mind to experience through a few methodological operations, such as the disposition in a series, comparison, enumeration, and induction. The method, therefore, establishes experimentation within a mental order, restoring the intellectual evidence and reducing nature to intelligible patterns.

In this sense, mental construction defines cognition and provides an *ordo* of nature. If one wants to know colors, one should reduce their variety to a geometrical structure, as he suggests in the *Regulæ*. This system works especially for the physical knowledge of nature. In *Le Monde*, Descartes embeds his physics within a mental construction of a universe composed of extended matter in which the mechanical laws of motion are at work. In *L'Homme*, he frames the

explanation of living functions within the assumption of the animal machine. In all these cases, the mind provides a theoretical framework to encompass the knowledge of particular bodies, framing either physics or physiology within a mental order which is *a priori*. Then, within this *aprioristic* framework, scholars may develop the knowledge of the body of a discipline. As a result, cognition is a mental operation that constructs the boundaries and provides the principles for knowledge of particular sciences. Within these theoretical borders, one should add experiments to increase the knowledge of any discipline. As Descartes claims in the *Discours*, “regarding observations, the further we advance in our knowledge, the more necessary they become” (Descartes AT VI 63; CSM I 143). Scientific knowledge is thus a combination of intellectual evidence and experimentation.

Accordingly, the order of any *scientiae* should be the following: First, one should define the principles of a discipline through the intuition of the intellect – in the case of medical knowledge, there is a metaphysical principle, the mind-body distinction, a physiological principle, the mechanical laws of motions, and the animal machine. Second, one should deduce from these principles the rules operating in any discipline – these are the motions and arrangement of particles (of liquids such as blood) and the heat within the heart. Third, one should observe the structure of specific bodies to see how much these laws apply to it – Descartes invites the reader to perform anatomical dissections. Fourth, one should combine the theoretical framework with the experiential knowledge – from the observation of the cardiac movement and the perception of the heat in the heart, one will be able to infer that the blood heats the stomach and activates digestion or that the blood forms the animal spirits populating the nerves and the brain.

Yet, from the epistemology of the *Regulæ*, this order of knowledge could be unveiled in the structure of the *Principia philosophiæ*: first come the metaphysical principles (which also provide certainty); second comes the physical structure, which is mechanical; and third comes the experiential understanding of specific bodies (cosmology and observable nature such as

minerals, stones, magnets, and living bodies). Of course, while in the *Regulae* and the physics of the early 1630s, Descartes claims nature as a theoretical model and the intellect as a faultless ground of all knowledge, in the *Principia* Descartes adds a metaphysical role for God (mostly derived from the elaboration of the *Meditationes*), unfolding a traditional plan (Verbeek 2000) with an innovative system. This traditional plan somehow proceeds from Descartes' willingness to accommodate his natural philosophical program within the system of the school, thus replacing Aristotelianism. Grounding knowledge on the powers of the mind and on the clarity and distinctiveness of ideas helps him develop a new approach to nature, in which one constructs one's own knowledge through a mental order valid for everyone. To this system, one should add experimentation. Knowledge of nature easily follows.

As a result, this system works by reducing the variety, curiosity, and rarity of nature to a mental order: the fantastic cases that populate Renaissance culture, such as monsters, magic stones (e.g., he discusses the Bologna stone), and plant animals (such as the *Mimosa pudica*), ought to be reduced to his mechanistic system. By observing these strange objects as natural, one will know their mechanical structure and reduce their variety to a theoretical framework whose principles unify all nature and include these strange cases (Baldassarri 2019). Regrettably, Descartes was unable to bring his plan to completion, as the sections on animals and vegetation is left unfinished, while he later developed the section on the union of the mind and the body in the *Passions de l'âme*. In this text, psychology as a medical discipline finally emerges from his mechanistic framework, ultimately shaping early modern man.

In the end, his method provides an epistemological and theoretical framework in which all sciences ought to be embedded within, therefore achieving the project of a *scientia universalis* grounded in the powers of the mind, but innovatively combining experimentation and mental knowledge. If he left several corners of his project incomplete, he however shaped a modern philosopher and scholar who fights in battlegrounds,

teaches sovereigns, performs observations, cultivates a garden, and does commerce in the Amsterdam marketplace.

Conclusions

In this entry, I have presented Descartes' biography and philosophy. His main aim was to build a philosophy of nature to replace the Aristotelianism taught in schools and get rid of the uncertainties of new philosophies, such as those developed in the Renaissance and which attracted the attention of scholars in Paris, Germany, Prague, Italy, and the Netherlands. Yet, Descartes dealt with these philosophies, and, in the case of the Aristotelian tradition, he even referred to some texts as basic volumes one should use to outline various issues. Still, this has to be achieved within the order of reason.

Within this framework, Descartes conceived a system that provided an order for the discoveries he variously applied to the disciplines of knowledge: from the explanation of the rainbow to the heartbeat and sensation, Descartes' methodology proved his effectiveness at combining a theoretical, *a priori* architecture with experimentation and observations of more specific issues. Universal wisdom is intellectually established and guided and embeds experiments (and life) within the order of reason. This constitutes of an innovative project combining a priori theoretical knowledge with a posteriori experimentation and where traditional issues found innovative solutions. In sum, all philosophy is like a tree, whose roots are metaphysics, the trunk is the mechanical laws of physics, and the branches are the diverse disciplines, from which one picks the fruit. In practical terms, the result is a mechanical medicine (and especially a therapeutics) and a new morality through which he aimed to tailor the modern man, whose bodily functions and living activities are mechanically established (and could be therefore healed) and whose life is methodologically governed. Despite a few inconsistencies, his philosophy successfully grounded early modern reflections on nature and on the human self.

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Desire

► [Appetite, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Determinism

► [Fate, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Devil, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the Western Schism, Europe is crossed by concerns of eschatological and apocalyptic nature which weigh down and darken the intellectual and social climate of the time. In this context, the Devil, with his endless array of demons, represents one of the main symbols of the baleful omen predicting the end of the world. In the Middle Ages the Devil was represented as a creature relegated to

the infernal world, while in the Renaissance he made his incursions among the living through the phenomenon of the demonic possessions. The Devil and his acolytes, demons and witches, become subjects of reflections and debates of intellectuals, theologians, philosophers and artists, through increasingly sophisticated investigative tools.

Synonyms

Beast; Beelzebub; Demon; Lucifer; Mephistopheles; Satan; Serpent

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Devil is an essential figure both in Christian and not Christian Western horizon. In the mediaeval Christian tradition he is an absolute protagonist of the history: Christian spirituality, obsessed by the presence of evil among humanity, is persuaded that any enemy of Christianity is sent by the Devil.

Thanks to his innate ability to transform himself and take on various forms, he is represented iconographically with exaggerated and feral features symbolizing his moral monstrosity in order to distinguish him, together with the damned and the demons accompanying him, from the angelic creatures, and to arouse great fear to sinners.

But, if in these ancient descriptions Devil is a hideous monster, with a terrible smell and a particularly disgusting appearance, on the contrary, modern writers find him attractive, seductive, with a troubling and sometimes effeminate beauty, and an admirable speaking ability (Gregory 2013).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Between the end of the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, two different phenomena characterized the European culture: witchcraft and demonic possessions (Broedel 2003).

As for witchcraft, from the end of the fifteenth century up to the end of the seventeenth century, the whole of Europe was affected by an uninterrupted series of prosecutions, trials, lynchings, executions and burnings of people suspected to have concluded a pact with the Devil at the sabbath in order to perpetrate some of the most terrible crimes in his name and to destroy Christianity (Ostorero 2013). In 1436–1438 the German theologian Johannes Nider (1380–1438) published his *Formicarius*, the first demonological work in which the role of women in witchcraft is considered central (Clark 1997). On December 6th, 1484, Pope Innocent VIII produced the bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus* in order to instigate the zeal of the inquisitors to start trials against bewitchment and diabolical witchcraft for faith purification. The bull was the immediate cause of the work *Malleus maleficarum* (and, indeed, the bull was printed acting as its preface), which is one of the most famous inquisitors' manuals. The epigraph on its title page made clear its purpose: *Haeresis est maxima opera maleficarum non credere* ("To disbelieve in witchcraft is the greatest of heresies"). Written by the two Dominican inquisitors, Heinrich Institor Kramer and Jacob Sprenger (in fact much evidence points to Kramer as the sole author), and published in 1486, the *Malleus* had at least 34 editions between 1486 and 1669 (Flasch 2019).

As for demonic possessions, the *Malleus* exerted considerable influence on these phenomena, since it explained that even if demons could possess individuals directly with God's permission, they usually did so at the instance of witches. So, notwithstanding certain exceptions as Germany, witches were widely believed to have caused possessions by commanding the Devil to enter the bodies of their victims (Levack 2013). The phenomena of demonic possession, which took place throughout Europe, with particular intensity in Italy and France in the sixteenth century, contributed to fuel the obsession with the Devil, and to provoke phenomena of collective possession, especially in female convents, as evidenced by the cases of Marthe Brossier (1599), Louis Gaufridy (1609–1611), Loudun

(1632–1640), Louviers (1642–1647), d'Auxonne (1658–1663) (Lombardi 2005).

In Italy, two important treatises written by the exorcist Girolamo Menghi are published at the end of the 1500s: the *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica* (1576) and the *Flagellum daemonum* (1578) (Romeo 1990).

Discussions on the figure of the Devil were greatly influenced by the role played by the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin, deeply concerned with the profound personal experience of evil (Johnston 2006), supported witch-hunting; later, confessional rifts between Reformed and Lutheran become fertile ground for mutual accusations of being servants of Satan.

Intellectuals, jurists and philosophers, too, as widely shown by the works of the Dutch physician Johann Wier (1515–1588) (Wier 1567), Henry Boguet (1550–1619) (Boguet 1602) and Jean Bodin (1529–1596) (Bodin 1580) largely contribute to the diffusion of the interest towards devils, witches and magic (Houdard 1992).

Impact and Legacy

During the Renaissance the fear of Devil and witches reaches its highest peak (Delumeau 1978), above all thanks to the role played by the press which, through the dissemination of editions and translations of the most famous demonological treatises, as well as of anonymous and popular pamphlets, contributes to create and nourish an increasingly heavy and disturbing eschatological atmosphere. Evidence of it is not only the fantastic narrative but also theatre production, histories of travel or scientific texts (Closson 2000); on the other hand, since the Protestant Reformation, the depictions of the Devil seems to be becoming rarer (Muchembled 2000).

Cross-References

- [Angels and Demons in the Renaissance](#)
- [Bodin, Jean](#)

- [Counter-Reformation](#)
- [Reformation](#)
- [Witchcraft, Renaissance Idea of](#)

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Dialectic in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Aristotelian dialectic went through a real renaissance in the first half of the sixteenth century in Italy. Thanks to the recovery and Latin translations of Alexander of Aphrodisias' and Averroes' commentaries, Agostino Nifo recovered the ancient meaning of dialectic as the art of conducting a structured debate between a questioner and an answerer: "Peirastic" dialectic serves to test claims to knowledge, and to prove principles to someone who denies them. Aristotle's *Topics* was also the basis for several treatises on the dialogue form by Carlo Sigonio, Torquato Tasso, and

Sperone Speroni. Finally, the recovery of Aristotelian dialectic spurred the birth of a new dialectic, incorporating important parts and concerns of rhetoric, in continuity with humanist approaches to reasoning and philosophy against Medieval dialectic.

Introduction

What Aristotle first called the "art of dialectic" underwent a true renaissance during the Renaissance and more precisely in the first half of the sixteenth century (Spranzi 2011). Despite humanists' attacks against dialectic, which they identified with barren and obscure scholastic logic, dialectic thrived in the sixteenth century, although it took on an entirely different meaning. Indeed, Renaissance authors recovered the original meaning that Aristotle gave to the term. Moreover, in an interesting switch, a newly defined discipline of dialectic developed some of the aspects that early humanists identified with rhetoric: it deals with things rather than words, and it allows its users to reach new knowledge and explore new domains rather than simply justify knowledge that has already been acquired. Its essential link with "invention" allows dialectic to incorporate the best part of rhetoric. As Lorenzo Valla writes in the preface to the second book of his "re-foundation" of dialectic and philosophy: "For dialectic used to be an entirely brief and simple thing, which can be seen from a comparison with rhetoric. For what is dialectic but a kind of confirmation and refutation? These very things are part of invention, which is one of the five parts of rhetoric" (Valla 2012, 175). In an interesting reversal, it is philosophers rather than rhetoricians who are seen as sophists, using empty and only superficially effective discourse. Humanists play Aristotle against (Medieval) Aristotelians: the perfect philosopher embodies, in Ciceronian fashion, the union of wisdom and eloquence (Seigel 2015). "Aristotle, who was a man of fervent spirits, discussed problems of the highest order and wrote about them (...). No greater contrast can be imagined than that between this great philosopher and a man who does not write anything,

understands but little, and shouts much and without consequence” (Petrarca 1948, 136).

Aristotle’s *Topics* (1989), the treatise he devoted to dialectic, became the founding text of a rich and innovative tradition of thought that came to completion in the Renaissance. Against the backdrop of humanist reactions to Medieval dialectic, an entirely new conception of dialectic emerged, linking dialectic to a structured debate between a questioner and an answerer. New translations of Aristotle’s *Topics*, and the recovery of the ancient commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes newly translated from the Greek and from the Hebrew respectively, all contributed to the reinterpretation of dialectic in a sense which had been lost in Boethius’ early Medieval commentary (Stump 1978). Thanks to its intense editorial and printing activities, Northern Italy, and more particularly Padua and Venice, became the hub of a thriving intellectual activity around dialectic in the form of translations, commentaries, and treatises. Several treatises on the dialogue form and important treatises on a “new dialectic” enriched the tradition of Aristotle’s dialectic. In the second half of the sixteenth century, dialectic migrated north and it lost its Aristotelian nature. Although Aristotelian dialectic in the sense highlighted in the Renaissance was not explicitly discussed as such in later periods, one can sense its practical influence in forging a particular philosophical style, and in furthering a reflection on the nature of rationality, argumentation, and controversies.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

A tradition of thought is “more than a coherent movement of thought. It is such a movement in the course of which those engaging in such movement become aware of it and of its direction and in self-aware fashion attempt to engage in its debates and to carry its enquiries forward” (MacIntyre 1988, 326). Aristotle’s *Topics* is a concise, quasi cryptic text, and the art it describes – dialectic – can probably be identified with what J. Barnes describes as “an early Apodeictic, unhampered by bonds of necessity and universality” (Barnes

1981, 58). It has been interpreted by scholars in widely differing ways: as an instrument for rational persuasion, as a tool for testing claims to knowledge and of raising doubts about uncertain statements, as an instrument for justifying claims to knowledge, and even as a way of reaching the first principles of the sciences (Sim 1999, IX–X). Given the absence of interpretative consensus, it is plausible to rely on some privileged moments of the tradition the text has initiated in order to highlight its meaning: focusing on Renaissance developments will offer a more dynamic, and historically plausible, reading of Aristotle’s founding text that might well be viewed as a canvas to be completed by later authors. Indeed, Renaissance commentators thought that they captured the real meaning of Aristotle’s text. Whether they actually did is a moot point, but they certainly gave it a reading that was informative, innovative, and coherent, and based on a careful and comprehensive analysis. In particular, against the Medieval scholastic tradition, Renaissance authors took seriously, and built upon, Aristotle’s assertion that dialectic is a kind of “examination” and that it “lies along the path to all methods of inquiry (‘pros tas apason tōn methodōn archas hodon echei’)” (*Topics*, 101b4). They went much further than Aristotle himself in explicating how dialectic, with its question and answer methodology, can achieve this goal.

Aristotle’s Dialectical Reasoning

Aristotle devoted the first book of the *Topics* to the definition of dialectical reasoning and to the discussion of its uses; the eighth and last book discuss different types of dialectic and its rules of implementation. Books II–VII contain the “topoi” properly understood: a list of argumentative blueprints for arguments and maxims that justify several types of inductive or deductive arguments. The whole of the Sophistical refutations was conceived as the ninth book of the *Topics* and considered as such by some commentators. It deals with improper uses of dialectical arguments and teaches ways to defend oneself from a sophistical opponent. Aristotle defines dialectic as follows: “A method (‘methodos’) by which we shall be able to reason deductively (‘syllogizesthai’) from

reputable opinions ('endoxa') about any problem set before us, and shall ourselves, when sustaining an argument, avoid saying anything self-contradictory" (*Topics*, 100a 18–21). Four points characterize dialectical reasoning: its essential link to dialogue and debate, the asymmetry between questioner and answerer, the crucial importance of dialectical premises, 'endoxa' and the particular nature of a dialectical problem, that can only be expressed in the following form: "Is X p or not p?." In other words, in Socratic fashion, the questioner takes up one of two contradictory theses, let's say p, and tries to deduce it by deriving it from a series of premises that have been suggested to the answerer. The latter has to concede them unless he has objections or the reasoning does not respect the argumentative maxims summarized in the 'topoi.' If he can prevent the questioner from deriving his/her thesis, then the answerer has indirectly proved its contradictory, non-p. If, on the contrary, he fails, then we can consider that the questioner's thesis is well-tested and corroborated. We shall call this rendition of dialectic "disputational dialectic." In this context 'endoxa,' the premises of dialectical reasoning, are not "probable" or "plausible" premises but rather premises which have powerful guarantors: "Endoxa," writes Aristotle, are those opinions "which commend themselves to all or to the majority or to the wise – that is, to all of the wise or to the majority or to the most famous and distinguished of them" (*Topics*, 100b 22–23). In this respect they differ from first principles ('archai'), the premises of demonstrative reasoning that command belief "through themselves." 'Endoxa' are not simply widely held opinions, but they are such as they can force the answerer's assent thanks to the authority which they have acquired *by being held* by such and such a group of people.

Aristotle, however, introduced some confusion. When he described the uses of dialectical reasoning for knowledge, he associated it not with disputations (what he calls "conversations") but with what we can call "*aporetic dialectic*" or reasoning in *utramque partem*: "if we are able to raise difficulties on both sides ('amphoterā diaporēsai') we shall more easily discern both

truth and falsehood on every point" (*Topics*, 101a 35–36).

Cicero and the Middle Ages: Dialectic as a Lower Form of Reasoning

In his commentary on Aristotle's *Topics*, Cicero interprets dialectic in this second sense, which is congenial to his mildly skeptical conception of knowledge (Cicero 1976). More importantly, he translated "endoxa" with "probabilia," a term under which he conflated two concepts: what is true for the most part ('eikota') and what is persuasive ('pithanon'); neither captures the original meaning of Aristotle's 'endoxa' as reputable opinions. The Latin translation of the term 'endoxa,' and the meanings it vehiculated, proved long-lasting. Boethius used this term in his Latin translation of the *Topics* – the only translation which was used until the Renaissance. His interpretation of dialectical reasoning was in line with this choice: dialectic became a secondary and less powerful form of logic where premises are only probable, rather than certain.

Later in the Middle Ages, dialectic came to be identified with the whole of logic and opposed to rhetoric. Probable, as opposed to demonstrative, reasoning was associated with rhetoric, a discipline attending to the persuasion of the many and to a superficial examination of things. Following the famous portrait of the liberal arts by Martianus Capella (1977), dialectic was defined as the handmaid of philosophy and it was represented as a beautiful, elegant and sober woman, whereas rhetoric was painted as a superficial woman, showing off her outward eye-catching appearances and hiding a deep inner shallowness. Albert the Great, for example, who wrote around 1250 B.C. the only Medieval commentary that was published and cited in the Renaissance, argued that dialectic is linked to invention not because it "lies along the path to knowledge" but rather because "it is mixed to conjecture and does not have a perfect grasp of the link between the premises and the conclusion ('consequentiae perfectam rationem')" (1890–1899, 233b). Dialectic, he writes, "deals with common notions which are not deeply entrenched in (things) ('non profundata in ipsis') as specific and

essential notions are, but which appear only in the surface” (234a). In the Middle Ages, the *Topics*, in particular book VIII, was also studied as an argumentation textbook and served as a source for different kinds of oral and written disputations, the ‘quaestio disputata,’ a form of dialectical verbal exercise which was despised by Renaissance humanists.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In contrast to their Medieval predecessors, Renaissance authors linked dialectical reasoning to a richer and truth-sensitive art. In an interesting reversal, logic, identified with Medieval dialectic, came to be represented as a skinny and frail woman, while rhetoric was pictured as an imposing, sensual woman of majestic beauty. However, the foundation of a new dialectic only became possible through the rehabilitation of the true meaning of Aristotle’s text, through the commentary literary form. By drawing on a more genuinely Aristotelian notion of dialectic, Italian Renaissance authors managed to rehabilitate the art of a regulated exchange of questions and answers against both demonstrative reasoning and sophistic rhetoric. They turned “disputational” dialectic into a subtle and powerful instrument for acquiring new knowledge and for proving it, not absolutely but to the best intellectual experts in each particular field. Renaissance authors took seriously the distinction that Aristotle made in the eighth book of the *Topics* between “peirastic,” “didactic,” and “sophistical” modes of disputational dialectic and they privileged the former as the only form of genuine dialectic. They developed in some detail the reasons why a peirastic form of dialectical exchange, where ‘peira’ means “examination” and “test,” can be useful for knowledge, a point that Aristotle himself had not sufficiently developed. Italian Renaissance authors developed this general approach to dialectical reasoning along three different directions: new commentaries on Aristotle’s *Topics* (a major commentary by Agostino Nifo, as well as an interesting more eclectic, anonymous, commentary produced by

the Venitian Academy); several treatises on the dialogue form (Carlo Sigonio in 1562, Torquato Tasso in 1585, and Sperone Speroni in 1574) and the Italian translation of one of the most influential treatises of the so-called new dialectic – Rudolph Agricola’s *De inventione dialectica* in 1567. All these developments, however, would not have occurred if it were not for an intense editorial activity centered around Padua (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/padova>) and Venice that produced new translations and editions of Aristotle’s own texts on dialectic and of those written by his ancient commentators.

New Editions and Translations of Aristotle’s *Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations*, as well as of their Its Earlt Commentaries

Aristotle’s texts on dialectic (the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Refutations*) were retranslated several times from the Greek into Latin, replacing Boethius’ old translation. Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples, a French Aristotelian Humanist, published the first Renaissance translation of the *Topics* under the title of *Libri logicorum* (1503). It became the reference translation and was republished in 1550–1552 in Aristotle works’ Junta edition. An interesting new Latin translation of both the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Refutations* was later produced by Johannes Baptista Rasarius.

What allowed Italian Aristotelians to breath new life into the Aristotelian notion of dialectic, however, were the recovery, Latin translations and editions of two major commentaries to Aristotle’s dialectical works: Alexander of Aphrodisias’ (second century AD) and Averroes’ (twelfth century AD). Although “alexandrinism” and “averroism” are usually considered as two different Renaissance schools of thought, as far as dialectic is concerned, they were used and discussed together (Kristeller 1960).

Alexander’s commentary on the *Topics* was recovered and published in Greek in 1513 and 1520, in Alexander’s *editio princeps*. Together with the pseudo-Alexander commentary on the *Sophistical Refutations*, it was translated into Latin several times in the first half of the sixteenth century, most notably by Baptista Rasarius (Alexander 1573). Alexander stressed the

essential link between dialectic and dialogue, the uses of dialectic for knowledge, as well as the similarities and differences between dialectic and rhetoric. The two arts deal with common principles and with all subjects. However, while dialectic does so from the point of view of what is “common and approved (‘koinon kai endoxon’),” rhetoric does so through what is “persuasive and approved (‘pithanon kai endoxon’)” (1573, 6a–b). More importantly, whereas rhetoric uses continuous discourse, dialectic addresses others through a sharp exchange of questions and answers.

Averroes, for his part, knew Alexander’s commentary which had been translated into Arabic in the eighth century; his own middle and short commentaries on the *Topics* and on the *Sophistical Refutations* were translated from the Hebrew into Latin in the 1520s. Both commentaries were included in Aristotle’s Junta Latin edition of 1550–1552. Averroes restructured Aristotle’s logical corpus and included rhetoric in the *Organon*. He separated the first and the eighth books of the *Topics* from the middle books (which barely listed a number of argument forms), and he considered them on a par with the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Rhetoric*. He viewed each of these arts as describing different ways of securing “assent” (the Arabic ‘tasdiq’): whereas the assent brought about by demonstration cannot be challenged, the assent brought about by dialectical arguments is as firm but can be challenged (Averroes 1977, 47). This itself is indicative of the fact that Averroes valued arguments with respect to how they contribute to creating conviction, rather than with respect to their formal characteristics.

Nifo’s Commentary on Aristotle’s *Topics* and the Logic of Disputation

The Aristotelian philosopher Agostino Nifo (Mahoney 1971) obtained his degree in philosophy and medicine in Padua in 1490, taught in Padua, Pisa, Rome, Naples, and Salerno, and died in 1538. His commentary on Aristotle’s *Topics* appeared posthumously in 1540 and 1542 in Paris and in 1557 and 1569 in Venice (Lohr 1988). He also wrote a commentary on the *Sophistical Refutations*, which appeared for the first time in Venice in 1541. In his commentaries, he firmly

anchored dialectic in the Aristotelian tradition against both Plato and the Stoics. Indeed, unlike these major sources of dialectic, he does not understand dialectic as a straight road to knowledge, but rather as a flexible tool for achieving well tested albeit provisional conclusions. In a conciliatory move, Nifo cites and critically discusses passages from Alexander of Aphrodisias’ and Averroes’ commentaries, and he even integrates elements of Albert the Great’s Medieval commentary.

By harmonizing all these different sources, he paints a coherent picture of dialectic’s nature and function: “It is clear, he writes, that dialectic is worth the attention of those who philosophize, insofar as it is of no little weight in the invention of truth itself (‘ad ipsius veritatis inventionem momentum non parum praebet’), which is the aim of the philosopher” (1573, 2.1). He explicitly links the function of dialectic for knowledge to the confrontation between a questioner and an answerer. Dialectic is fore and foremost a tool for regulating dialectical exchanges so that they can play a positive role for acquiring, testing, and confirming knowledge. It differs both from sophistry, which he believes was practiced by Medieval logicians known as ‘caculatores,’ and demonstration. Like Alexander, Nifo considers that the difference between dialectic and demonstration is not in the *form* of the syllogism, but in its *matter*, namely in the nature of their respective premises. Rephrasing Aristotle’s definition of syllogism in the *Topics* (100a 25–27), Nifo writes that every syllogism is “a discourse (‘oratio’) in which from something which has been conceded, something else follows” (1573, 2.2). But whereas “demonstrative syllogisms [reason] about necessary things from true and necessary [premises] (‘circa necessaria ex veris et necessariis’), dialectical syllogisms [reason] about probable things from probable [premises] (‘circa probabilia ex probabilibus’)” (ibid.).

Although he uses the Latin term ‘probabilia’ to translate the Greek ‘endoxa,’ the premises of dialectical reasoning, Nifo follows Aristotle and Alexander in interpreting the term “probable” not as “what is true for the most part,” but rather as “what is approved”: “For nothing is more probable

than something else thanks to its own nature, but [only] as long as we approve it ('probamus'). We approve what appears to us, which is demonstrated by the Greek word; for 'probabilia,' which in Greek are called 'endoxa,' are also called 'approved' ('approbata')" (1573, 4.4). According to Nifo, therefore, probable premises are those premises which are more easily conceded to by the answerer in a dialectical disputation, and thus indirectly contribute to the corroboration and establishment of the questioner's thesis. By contrast, Albert interpreted "probable premises" as those which "appear" to someone and are "common," as opposed to "specific," in the sense of "superficial."

Nifo's commentary is especially useful for detailing the reasons why dialectical reasoning is conducive to knowledge. He draws on both Alexander and Averroes in order to develop Aristotle's very allusive rendition of the purposes of dialectic. He builds especially on what Aristotle described as the third and the fourth uses of dialectic, i.e., reasoning *in utramque partem*, and traveling towards the principles of the sciences. On the first point, Nifo argues that by furnishing arguments on both sides of an issue, dialectic can help in the "invention and judgment of the truth" (1573, 7.1). In detailing the heuristic function of dialectic, Nifo gives a positive interpretation of Aristotle's "aporetic" dialectic, distancing himself from Cicero's mild skepticism. He provides three reasons why aporetic dialectic is useful for knowledge: (a) by multiplying arguments, it increases the probability of someone hitting upon the truth; (b) the practice of aporetic dialectic can reinforce our knowledge of the truth, by preparing us to answer possible objections to our own theses; (c) dialectic can enable us to recognize ("judge") the truth, should we hit upon it, by building a *habitus* through exercise (1573, 2.3): through "the practice of disputation ('exercitium in disputationibus')," a "good condition of the soul ('bona animae valetudo') is created, thanks to which dialectic can invent and judge the truth ('inventrix et iudicatrix veritatis')" (7.1).

On the second function of dialectic, which corresponds to Aristotle's fourth use ("for the knowledge ('ad cognitionem') of the truth of

first principles" (1573, 7.2)), Nifo, following Alexander, associates dialectic to justification rather than discovery. Through disputation, writes Nifo, dialectic does not help us find the principles themselves but proves them to someone who denies them. In this process, the questioner and the answerer have the same task. Both Alexander and Nifo explain that the "common task" mentioned by Aristotle (*Topics*, 161a22) is not the fact of carrying out the disputation itself. Rather, since a statement is proved when the questioner derives the conclusion from premises that cannot be denied by a sufficiently knowledgeable answerer, both contenders indirectly share the burden of ensuring that the conclusion is either refuted or well-tested.

The Treatises on the Dialogue Form: Sigonio, Tasso, and Speroni

Dialogue is a very common style in the Renaissance, and it is used for a variety of purposes: literary, moral, and even scientific (Snyder 1989; Cox 1992). But dialogue is also theorized in a particular way. Three major works describe the conceptual underpinnings of the dialogue form: Carlo Sigonio's *De dialogo liber* (1993), Torquato Tasso's *Dell'arte del dialogo discorso* (1982), and Sperone Speroni's *Apologia dei dialogi* (1989). All these authors are in one way or another linked to the Venetian academy, which also produced an anonymous commentary on the *Topics* and the Italian translation of Agricola's *De invention dialectica*. The first two treatises are remarkably similar in that they both link dialogue to Aristotle's dialectic as it is expounded in the *Topics*. They defend the use of dialogue as a privileged "road to truth" (Armstrong 1976).

As far as Sperone Speroni is concerned, he bases his own theory of the dialogue form on an aporetic, Ciceronian version of dialectic. He writes that far from being an instrument for acquiring or testing knowledge, dialogue is the antithesis of serious science: it is a "pleasant garden" (1989, 274), filled with digressions and allowing its author to decline responsibility for the statements it contains. According to Sigonio and Tasso, on the contrary, dialogue is the "image of a

dialectical disputation” (Sigonio 1993, 14v), in the Aristotelian sense of the term: a disputation “is a rational investigation (‘disquisitio rationis’) conducted among learned men by means of questions and answers (a procedure the Greek called ‘dialegethai’)” (ibid., 12v). Dialectic provides dialogue with the instruments which are necessary “in order to sustain the difficult and subtle task of debating” (ibid., 14v). This is especially true for what he calls “inquisitive” dialogues, that differ from both didactic and sophistic dialogues, and that correspond to what Aristotle calls “peirastic” disputations. Insofar as it embeds a disputation, a dialogue is connected to dialectic, and insofar as it is an “image” of it, it is founded upon poetic imitation. These two functions are based respectively on the power to reason and on the power to fictionally represent someone else’s discourse. Sigonio’s treatise explores both issues with great subtlety.

In order to explain the essential link between dialogue and dialectic, Sigonio discusses four issues: the historical and intellectual origins of dialogue, its “nature and force,” its constitutive parts, and finally its various forms. He states that there are two ways of examining an issue: “One in which one seeks out what truth there is in things within oneself, and another with somebody else. Of which the first consists of a certain silent activity of the mind, the second consists of an open questioning and answering with the person with whom we engage in a disputation” (ibid., 4v). Knowledge gained by dialectical reasoning is different from that derived by both scientific discourse and rhetorical persuasion. Dialectical reasoning uses premises that are common, as opposed to specific, and commonly accepted (‘opinabiles,’ the Aristotelian ‘endoxa’) as opposed to true. It deals with topics about which one can discuss on both sides and it yields a knowledge which is always accompanied by doubt insofar as it is “unstable and perishable (‘caducam atque instabilem’)” (ibid., 38r). Science, on the other hand, addresses itself to experts and produces firm and imperishable conclusions. Dialectical reasoning also uses “probable” as opposed to “necessary” reasoning; whereas

“necessary” arguments produce a “tacit change of mind,” “probable” arguments cause an “open confession” (ibid., 5v). This is a reference to the fact that the questioner’s reasoning depends on the answerer’s assent. But dialectical reasoning also differs from rhetoric: rhetorical assent is not only produced by reason but is also “driven by desire (‘ab appetitione impellitur’)” (ibid., 39r).

Dialogues, however, are not real disputations, but only images of them. Sigonio argues that in order to ensure that they are faithful representations of the underlying disputations, and that therefore, the conclusions they arrive at are reliable, a writer of dialogues has to respect poetic “probability (‘verisimilis’)” and “fitness” (‘decorum’). “Poetic probability “ensures that things which are fictional do not appear so” (ibid., 18v). Fittingness places restriction on the representation of the characters so that a reader finds them appropriate, familiar, and coherent. Moreover, the different roles of “confirming,” “refuting,” and “listening” have to be assigned to different characters. This is designed to make the dialogue both more intelligible and more credible.

Agricola’s New Dialectic and Rhetoric : The Art of Proving Statements

Rudolph Agricola’s *De inventione dialectica* was written in 1479 in Italy at the end of his ten-year stay in Pavia and Ferrara, and was published for the first time in 1515 in Louvain. It became a very influential dialectic textbook in northern Europe. The treatise is composed of three books: the first is devoted to the topics, as the seat of different arguments; the second concerns the nature of dialectic and rhetoric, and the third deals with the role of affects and disposition in dialectical invention. Unlike Ramus, Agricola is uninterested in judgment. He finds judgment simple and uninforming, insofar as it concerns the form rather than the content of discourse. Its function is limited to verifying that the reasoning “is not fallacious and misleading” (DID 8). Rather, Agricola focuses on dialectical “invention” that he understands as a particular “logic of inquiry” (Cogan 1984, 182). Moreover, he thinks that reasoning by question and answer is just one possible kind of

dialectical argument among others. In these two respects, he clearly follows Cicero rather than Aristotle, despite the fact that he explicitly states that he takes his inspiration from Aristotle's *Topics*, and wants to improve on his text, that he considers as too obscure and limited in scope. He argues that whereas Aristotle restricts dialectic to things that cannot be demonstrated, "dialectic applies to everything which we can dispute about through some reason or method." A question, the subject matter of dialectic, is simply "all matter in doubt" (II.6; DID 206–207).

Agricola defines dialectic as "the art of disputing in a probable way ('ars probabiliter disserendi') about any proposed thing, to the extent to which the nature of its object is capable of conviction ('fidei')" (1967, II.2, 193). The term "probable" does not mean that which is approved or truthseeming, but it is linked to what Agricola considers as dialectic's main task, namely to *prove* something, albeit in the generic sense of "removing doubts" about it (Cogan 1984, 196). Dialectic thus becomes a general art encompassing many forms of argumentative discourse. Demonstration is but a particular kind of dialectical reasoning, one employing a more stringent reasoning, and using specific, as opposed to common, premises. Moreover, the most important components of rhetoric are also incorporated into dialectic. Indeed, Agricola devotes the third book of his textbook to affects and disposition, traditionally considered as crucial dimensions of rhetorical persuasion. Rehabilitating Boethius' distinction between an argument (the content of discourse) and an argumentation (its form), he argues that proving a statement also implies constructing an argument to the effect that a particular audience is convinced: the "nerve" of discourse, he writes, is intimately and inextricably associated to its "flesh" (III.14; DID 441).

But according to Agricola, arguments are not only verbal tools. Rather, "[Agricola] makes the more sweeping claim that there are similar connections really existing in the world" (Mack 1993, 141). Insofar as the topics, as the "seat" of arguments, also serve to describe the objects to which they refer, an argument reveals the *real*

relationships existing among objects and events in the world. Agricola writes: "By following these headings, we can turn our minds around the things themselves and perceive whatever in each of them is convincing and suitable for what our speech sets out to teach" (I.2; DID 9).

Dialectic in Northern Europe

In the second half of the sixteenth century, Aristotelianism migrated north (Schmitt 1983). Outside Italy, notable humanist translations of Aristotle's *Topics* include Périon's *Topicorum libri VIII*, published in Paris in 1558, Charpentier's *Aristotelis ars disserendi* published in Paris in 1567 and 1572, and Julius Pacius' *Organon* which was published in Geneva in 1584 and included the Greek text.

The French school, itself divided into Aristotelians and anti-Aristotelians, gave different, and less innovative, renditions of dialectic and developed it in two divergent directions: Périon and Charpentier wrote looser humanistic commentaries giving dialectic a Platonic and Ciceronian reading. Also, anti-Aristotelians like Peter Ramus paradoxically developed a form of dialectic oriented towards judgment rather than invention, tailored as a scholastic tool for apologetic and for suitable forging a new juridical logic. This approach to dialectic, geared towards the study of argument forms, was developed in the German-speaking countries by Philip Melancthon, Yohannes Eck and Julius Pacius. Dialectic became a practical and useful discipline but lost its Aristotelian connection to dialogue and invention.

Impact and Legacy

Quite surprisingly, disputational dialectic – a well-regulated exchange of questions and answers – was not taken up as an object of study in the seventeenth century and onwards. Dialectic, and dialectical reasoning, became an enlarged form of logic. The different argument forms highlighted and discussed as 'topoi' in Aristotle's texts (the *Topics*, the *Rhetoric*, and the *Sophistical Refutations*) were integrated into logic proper, and served as a basis for juridical logic, which became

the quintessential dialectic. Unlike Agricola, however, judgment, as opposed to invention, came to be viewed as the most important part of dialectic, and from this point of view, Peter Ramus's and other anti-Aristotelians' legacy was far more important than that of Renaissance Aristotelians. The reasons why the structure and meaning of dialogical reasoning ceased to be a specific object of study are obscure. However, Renaissance dialectic lived on in practice and influenced the writing of philosophical, and even scientific, dialogues. In more contemporary times, two trends in argumentation theory and philosophy of science can be viewed as the continuation of the tradition of Aristotelian dialectic. Although these contemporary works do not refer specifically to Renaissance authors, they implicitly use elements of the tradition of dialectic which percolated through the centuries, undetected, so to speak. The first is informal logic and the search for a softer form of rationality. Reasonable discourse, equally comprising elements of logic and rhetoric, has come to be recognized as a more adequate approach to scientific reasoning. Although the term "rhetoric of science" is sometimes used to characterize this approach, it is a rich notion of rhetoric, rather than the mere compilation of figures of speech and advices about the delivery of discourse, which serves as a model for this enlarged notion of rationality. Second, a rehabilitation of dialogical exchanges has provided the backdrop for the theorization of controversies as a necessary tool for advancing knowledge, as well as for the study of a pragma-dialectical approach. Different kinds of dialogical exchanges can thus be thematized which are reminiscent of the Renaissance Aristotelian classification of different types of dialectical exchanges: didactic, "peirastic" (both constructive and destructive), and sophistical.

Cross-References

- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Dialogue](#)
- [Humanism](#)
- [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)

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Dialogue

► Humanism

Digby, Kenelm

Born: 11 July 1603, Gayhurst, Buckinghamshire

Died: 11 June 1665, Covent Garden

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Abstract

Kenelm Digby was an English courtier, book collector, and natural philosopher, advancing in particular the fields of chemistry and

biology. He carried on his service to the state beside his scientific experimentation and a lively involvement in the international intellectual life of his time. Digby is a transitional figure, attempting to synthesize Aristotelian traditions on the body and the soul with modern developments of atomism and mechanical physics. Among his various commentaries and treatises, his “On the body” (published 1644), especially the pioneering chapters on embryology, was most influential.

Biography

Digby is born into a family of ancient gentry, strongly holding fast to their Roman Catholicism (his father was executed for involvement in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605). He is homeschooled by Jesuits before enrolling at Gloucester Hall, Oxford, in 1618, a college which required no religious conformism. Owing to his personal and scholarly brilliance, Digby makes an impression on Thomas Allen, Gloucester Hall’s don and co-founder of the Bodleian Library, so much so that he calls him “the Mirandola of his age” after the noble Florentine philosopher Pico della Mirandola (John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, 1.225). Between 1619 and 1623, Digby goes on a grand tour to France, Italy, and Spain, making connections to the European political elite and the continental intelligentsia, as well as collecting books and manuscripts, and continuing his study of natural philosophy. Upon his return to England, he marries his childhood sweetheart, Venetia Stanley (1600–1633), to whom he remains devoted his entire life. The couple had three surviving sons. From 1628 to 1629, Digby gains wealth and national admiration in a privateering campaign against ships from France and Spain with whom England is at war at the time. When his wife suddenly dies in 1633, a grief-stricken Digby retires from public life to Gresham College, then a center of scientific research. Pursuing scholarly and religious freedom, Digby moves to Paris in 1635 where he meets Thomas Hobbes. Upon killing a nobleman in a duel, Digby returns to England in

1641 but is imprisoned at the beginning of the civil war in 1642. During his 1-year incarceration, Digby writes a commentary to Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, as well as two scientific treatises, "On the soul" and the immensely learned and influential "On the body." Upon his release in 1643, Digby joins Queen Henrietta Maria's household in Paris and spends the next years petitioning the English parliament for restitution of his confiscated estates and his right to return. Back in England in 1654, Digby mostly withdraws from politics in favor of scientific experimentation in his laboratory in Covent Garden. He is among the earliest members of the Royal Society founded in 1660 but largely retires from active involvement. After a long and illustrious career in international politics and science, Digby dies from illness at home in 1665.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Like most learned persons of his age, Digby was thoroughly trained and intensely interested in astrology, alchemy, and other mythical lore (such as the cyclical death and rebirth of the phoenix) and conducted experiments pertaining to the same. Aristotelianism, although by no means monolithic, was still central to the university curriculum, and Digby attempted to wed various interpretations of it with current sceptical trends spearheaded by René Descartes. While accepting Thomist metaphysics, he embraced chemical theories of atomism, together with mechanical physics which understood processes in the world as matter in motion. Like Pierre Gassendi, Digby attempted to integrate contemporary interpretations of received knowledge with recent scientific developments in rational thought and deduction.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In his huge work the *Two Treatises* (1644), Digby sets out to infer the immortality of the soul through evidence from the physical world. The longer first part, "Of bodies," describes

natural phenomena via his blend of Renaissance Aristotelianism with atomism and mechanical physics. The second part, "On the soul," circumvents Christian theology, basing its proof for the existence of the soul on purely material grounds, a testament to its time, yet less influential than Digby's experimental deductions on embryology.

In a publication for the Royal Society, *A Discourse Concerning the Vegetation of Plants* (1661), Digby realizes the importance of air to plant growth, putting a basic theory of photosynthesis forward. He constructed several laboratories for experimentation, contributing to the advancement of empirical knowledge but also falling prey to faulty conclusions and fanciful beliefs such as his recipe for "sympathetic powder" which, when applied to the weapon, was thought to cure the wound made by it.

In his later life, Digby focused on refining and gathering recipes for cooking, alchemy, and medicine, a collection of which was posthumously published by his steward George Hartmann, *A Choice Collection of Rare Secrets* (1682). Digby also had a lifelong interest in wine-making and wine-keeping, inventing, for example, an improved bottle.

Impact and Legacy

A true Renaissance man, Digby excelled in various activities, including private, public, and scholarly life. Widely read in his own age, he was often mentioned in the company of leading thinkers of his times with whom he sustained lively correspondences. After his death, however, his fame and authority as scientist declined, perhaps owing to his sometimes arcane beliefs and reliance on authorities. Most of Digby's observations, however, draw on some form of scientific experimentation, attempting to reconcile neo-scholasticism with empiricism. Apart from his natural philosophy, as well as his dashing figure at court, Digby's legacy also stretches into the humanities: donating some of his choice collection of manuscripts and early printed books to Oxford and Harvard universities, he

also saw through for preparation of the 1640 Folio of Ben Jonson's poetry in manuscript form, attesting to his lively role in the intellectual and cultural lives of England and the Continent in the seventeenth century.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alchemy](#)
- ▶ [Atomism](#)
- ▶ [Browne, Sir Thomas](#)
- ▶ [Chemistry](#)
- ▶ [Descartes, René](#)
- ▶ [Immortality of the Soul, Renaissance Problem of](#)
- ▶ [Motion in Renaissance Science](#)

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Dignity of Man and Woman

- ▶ [Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Dignity of the Human Being

- ▶ [Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Dilthey, Wilhelm

Born: 19 November 1833 (Biebrich, Germany)

Died: 1 October 1911 (Seis am Schlern, Austria-Hungary)

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Abstract

This entry focuses on the Renaissance work of German Kantian philosopher of the human sciences Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911). Emphasis is placed on Dilthey's original works on the Renaissance, his formative influences, and his impact on Renaissance philosophy scholarship in the German-speaking world. Included in the entry are his interlocutors in Renaissance philosophy scholarship. Also included in the entry is the review work of Renaissance material that Dilthey wrote over the course of his academic career.

Biography

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) was a German philosopher of the human sciences. Trained as a Kantian, Dilthey was a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Berlin. He conducted research on a philosophy of the human sciences at a time when the leading members of Neo-Kantianism that surrounded him in Germany attempted to

provide a philosophy of the cultural sciences. Accordingly, Dilthey's work has been characterized by hermeneutics and as part of the German historical tradition.

Original Aspects

Dilthey studied the Renaissance, especially Renaissance humanism, in relation to the Reformation, arguing that the Reformation developed in the same manner as the Renaissance. He regarded these two historical periods as the foundation of the modern world. Dilthey published *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation* in 1893 (Dilthey 1914), in which he made such an argument. In his studies of the Renaissance, Dilthey was first influenced by the historian Jacob Burckhardt at the University of Basel. His *Hermeneutics and the Study of History* (Dilthey 2010) includes his writing on Burckhardt's Renaissance. Dilthey in fact started to criticize Burckhardt's approach to the Renaissance as early as 1862. The argument has been made by commentators that while Dilthey may have appropriated a great amount of history of Renaissance scholarship from Burckhardt, especially as related to the realm of the social, he departed from Burckhardt's aesthetic approach to cultural history. Therefore, commentators have argued that Dilthey's notion of the aesthetic in Renaissance philosophy scholarship is original. Commentators have also sought a convergence in this Renaissance philosophy scholarship with that of Ernst Cassirer (Cacciatore, 1997) (Leinkauf, 2003) (Luft 2004).

Dilthey, in his history of philosophy scholarship, was concerned with how the Roman Stoics influence the philosophers of modernity, and the path in between (Frohmman 1995). Identified was a "natural system" (Leinkauf 2003, p. 47) that gave birth to Renaissance philosophy historically. In addition to seeking a convergence in Dilthey's Renaissance philosophy scholarship with that of Cassirer, recent commentators have placed his work aside twentieth-century historians of Renaissance philosophy such as Eugenio Garin (Cacciatore 2011). Both Dilthey and Burckhardt

studied in Berlin under the historian Leopold Ranke. Dilthey's work influenced subsequent German-speaking scholars' work on Renaissance philosophy, including that of Ernst Bloch and the aforementioned Cassirer. Dilthey's work on Burckhardt's Renaissance is developed in the context of his larger career projects of hermeneutics and the study of world-intuition in historical perspective. Dilthey's work on the Renaissance, in part, related to that of Italian thinker Niccolò Machiavelli. Dilthey in fact challenged Burckhardt's cultural-historical interpretation of the Renaissance in his 1862 review of *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, 2 years after the work's initial publication in Germany. Dilthey engaged in a controversial dialogue with Ernst Troeltsch in Germany regarding his research on the relation between Renaissance humanism and the Reformation. Troeltsch would go on to train Renaissance historian Hans Baron, while Dilthey would influence the Renaissance work of philosophers Cassirer and Bloch, among other German intellectual thinkers.

Cross References

- [Baron, Hans](#)
- [Burckhardt, Jacob](#)
- [Cassirer, Ernst](#)
- [Garin, Eugenio](#)
- [Kristeller, Paul Oskar](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)

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Diogenes Laertius

Born: Unknown, Likely Early Third Century CE, Greek-Speaking Mediterranean

Died: Unknown, Likely Late Third Century CE, Greek-Speaking Mediterranean

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Abstract

Known for his compendium *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (*Bíoi kai gnōmai τῶν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ εὐδοκμησάντων*), which contains short biographies of 82 classical philosophers. The compendium is extremely unreliable, but provides many otherwise-unknown biographical details, titles of lost works, and more than a thousand excerpts and references to more than 250 authors, including three long letters of Epicurus, which are the only works by Epicurus surviving from antiquity.

Synonyms

[Lives of eminent philosophers](#); [Lives of philosophers](#)

Biography

Practically nothing is known about Diogenes Laertius beyond the fact that he was well educated. His compendium is provisionally dated to the mid third-century CE because he mentions Theodosius the Sceptic, Saturninus, and Sextus Empiricus, but does not discuss Neoplatonists or Neopythagoreans. References to his compendium in Stephanus of Byzantium and Sopater of Apamea confirm that was circulating by 500 CE. “Laertius” was a common nickname for the learned in post-classical times, referring to Odysseus son of Laertes, though a phrase in Stephanus of Byzantium, “Διογένης ὁ Λαερτιάδης” suggests that Diogenes might have come from a town called Laerte, perhaps in Caria and Cilicia. Others have suggested descent from clients of the Roman Laertii. He mentions that he wrote a poetry collection titled *Πάμμετρος*, now lost, and he quotes 39 of his own epigrams. Efforts to assign him to a particular school – Epicurean or skeptic – cannot be confirmed.

Transmission

One tenth century text, *Tractatus de dictis philosophorum*, shows knowledge of Diogenes Laertius. In the twelfth century Henricus Aristippus produced the first Latin translation, now lost, which was the basis of the anonymous Italian compendium *On the Lives and Mores of the Philosophers* (*De vita et moribus philosophorum*) once attributed to Walter Burley (1275–c. 1345). The Pseudo-Burley compendium circulated widely, surviving in more than 270 manuscripts. It was printed seven times in the sixteenth century, but its popularity waned with the recovery of the Greek original. In the 1420s Giovanni Aurispa brought a complete Greek manuscript to Florence from Constantinople, an expedition financed by the future Pope Nicholas V. In 1433 a Latin translation was executed for Cosimo de Medici by the Camaldolese monk and theologian Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439). Traversari's translation circulated widely in manuscript, was first printed in Rome in 1472 and was reprinted more than

20 times by 1600. Although a new translation by Tommaso Aldobrandini (1540–1572), the brother of Pope Clement VIII, was completed in the 1560s and published in 1594, along with annotations on the first nine books, Traversari's translation remained dominant into the seventeenth century Hankins and Palmer (2008). Revised versions of Traversari's Latin were undertaken by Joannes Boulierius (Jean Boulier), Janus Sambucus (János Zsámboky, 1531–1584), and Henricus Stephanus (Henri Estienne, c. 1528–1598).

Greek circulation came late. The Greek lives of Aristotle and Theophrastus appeared in the second volume of Aldus Manutius's 1497 Aristotle, but the first complete Greek edition was printed by Froben in 1533, a full century after the completion of Traversari's translation. Vernacular translation began with the 1545 Italian edition by Bartolomeo, Lodovico, and Pietro Rositini, then a 1598 Italian paraphrase by Giosefo Salviati, a 1602 French edition by François de Foucherolles, and another French translation by Gilles Boileau in 1658. Comments and annotations on the work, primarily philological in nature, were published by Stephanus (1570), Isaac and Meric Casaubon (1583, 1593), and Gilles Ménage (1664, 1690).

Impact

In the Renaissance, Diogenes Laertius was used as a biographical source, and as a model for organizing the history of philosophy Hicks (1972), and Le Page (2012). The compendium divides philosophers into two traditions: Ionian Philosophy, including the Seven Sages, predecessors and followers of Socrates, Plato, the Academy, Peripatetics, Cynics, and Stoics; and Italian Philosophy, including Pythagoreans, miscellaneous thinkers including Eleatics, Atomists, and Skeptics, and finally Epicurus. This division was used by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) in his reconstruction of the intellectual genealogy of ancient thought, and by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522) especially in their forays into Pythagoreanism. Reading Diogenes Laertius stimulated Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) to write his *De venatione sapientiae*

in 1463, and many biographical details from the compendium appear in the entries on philosophers in the 1506 encyclopedic *Commentaria Urbana* of Raffaello Maffei Volterrano (1451–1522). In the sixteenth century, content from Diogenes Laertius – in excerpt or paraphrase – was frequently used by printers in introductions to print editions of ancient thinkers' works. The self-professed Christian Epicurean Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) used the life of Epicurus extensively in his 1649 *Life and Mores of Epicurus*, and the 1625 *Electa Laërtiana* by Scottish humanist Walter Donaldson contains an account of the triumphant history of philosophy based on Diogenes Laertius and influenced by Ficino.

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Atomism](#)
- [Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism](#)
- [Epicureanism](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Historiography](#)
- [Humanism](#)
- [Nicholas of Cusa](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
- [Reuchlin, Johannes](#)
- [Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of](#)
- [Stoicism](#)
- [Traversari, Ambrogio](#)

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Dioscorides (Διοσκουρίδης)

► Dioscorides and Greek Herbals

Dioscorides and Greek Herbals

Born and Died: First Century AD, Anazarba [Asia Minor]

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Abstract

Traditionally considered a physician who accompanied the Roman troops as a military surgeon under the emperors Claudius or Nero, Dioscorides is the first-century author of a vast compilation in Greek on the natural substances to be used as ingredients for medicines (plants, animals, and minerals), identified in scholarly literature as *De Materia Medica*. The work was transmitted by an abundant manuscript tradition in Greek and Arabic, with some Latin translations, rearrangements, and derivatives. Early printed in Latin (1478) and in Greek (1499), it was edited five more times during

the sixteenth century and abundantly translated first into Latin and further on in the vernacular and also commented on, with multiple editions, particularly by the Italian Pietro Andrea Mattioli. The treatise acted as a catalyst on the Renaissance transformation of *materia medica* and botany. After a first phase of classicizing interest, it provided the main substance of Brunfels and Fuchs' herbals devoted to medical botany, to be further studied per se to properly identify the plants. The gradual development of botanical descriptions rapidly made the work obsolete, as did also the amalgamation of plants originally not described in it, which led to its collapse and made it necessary to compile botanical encyclopedias on a fresh basis as early as the late sixteenth century.

Alternate Names

Dioscorides (Διοσκουρίδης); **Dioscorides, Pedanius** (Πεδάνιος Διοσκουρίδης).

Biography

The author of a massive compilation in Greek on the substances used in the preparation of medicines (*De Materia Medica*) (Wellmann 1906–1914), Dioscorides is not well known. Born in Anazarba in Cilicia (southeast Asia Minor), he is credited in scholarship with an activity as a military physician (or surgeon) with the Roman troops under the emperors Claudius or Nero. He may have frequented Roman administrators in Cilicia, possibly in Tarsus, sometimes during the third quarter of the first century AD (Touwaide 2007). He collected information on over 1000 medicinal substances (plants, animals, minerals, and manufactured products). Although many Greek manuscripts contain color representations of the plants studied in the work, it is not known whether these illustrations date back to Dioscorides' original or are additions. Since the work is not cited in Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, it is believed to have been published after 75 AD ca.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

The heir of a tradition of writings on *materia medica* in the Greek World, the work innovated, according to its preface, by its coverage and organization of data. Renouncing to the alphabetical order, Dioscorides chose another, which he did not explicitly explain, however (Touwaide 1999). Because of its sheer volume and the lack of information on the exact nature of this organization, data have been rearranged in different ways in Byzantium, including a herbal, which contains a selection of entries devoted to plants, ordered according to the alphabetical order of their name.

Impact and Legacy

The treatise had an extraordinary diffusion in Byzantium. It underwent multiple textual transformations resulting from its use in medicine which made it necessary to edit it in the fourteenth century in Constantinople. Translated into Latin before the sixth century AD (possibly several times), it was also rendered into Syriac in the sixth century and into Arabic possibly as early as the late eighth century in an early version and several times again from the ninth to the twelfth century. In the West, Pietro d'Abano brought an alphabetical version from Constantinople, which he translated into Latin and commented on at Padua University. This version was printed as early as 1478. The form of the Greek text supposedly original was printed as early as 1499 by Aldo Manuzio, and five times from 1516 to 1598, sometimes with a Latin translation and commentary. Multiple translations, first into Latin and further on into the vernacular, were also printed, many of which with commentaries. The most famous and most largely circulated were those by Pietro Andrea Mattioli, originally published in Italian and subsequently translated into Latin, Czech, German, and French, with multiple reeditions.

Renaissance interest in the treatise was enormous (Riddle 1980). First studied by Ermolao Barbaro (which left his work unfinished and

unpublished), *De Materia Medica* was promoted by Nicolao Leonicensio in his effort to return to classical Greek science and probably edited by him for its printing by Aldo Manuzio. Barbaro's commented translation, which was posthumously printed in 1516, heralded a first wave of classicizing studies subsequently represented by Marcello Virgilio Adriani in Florence and Jean Ruel in Paris. These translations were quickly superseded by the herbals of the so-called *German fathers of botany* Otto Brunfels (*Herbarum vivae eicones*, 1530) and Leonhart Fuchs (*Historia Stirpium*, first published in Latin in 1542). These works (with black and white woodblocks of the plants) were largely based on the text of Dioscorides (together with that of Theophrastus and Galen) in Latin translation without much critical analysis. They mostly aimed to equate the ancient Mediterranean and the north/central European flora (Reeds 1991). The translations and commentaries published from 1544 on by Mattioli (with illustrations from 1554 on) popularized *De Materia Medica* thanks to their multiple versions in different languages and their constantly revised and augmented editions. Besides identifying the plants described by Dioscorides, Mattioli introduced multiple new species which he amalgamated to the text, obscuring its classification system and consequently generating the need for new and comprehensive botanical syntheses and classification system. The last sixteenth-century edition (1598) is typically more philological than botanical in nature.

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- [Leonicensio, Nicolò](#)
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Dioscorides, Pedanius (Πεδάνιος Διοσκουρίδης)

► [Dioscorides and Greek Herbals](#)

Dissection

► [Anatomy Theater](#)

Dissenters from the Anglican Church

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Abstract

English Dissenters were Protestant Christians who chose to worship outside of the established Church of England in the early modern period. English Dissent mainly followed two streams, one of which was radical and influenced by continental Anabaptism, and the other was Calvinist and

Puritan. The freedom of religious practice that was granted during the English Republic was followed by a period of persecution under the Restoration when the term “Dissenter” emerged to stigmatize clergymen and their followers who resisted the Act of Uniformity and left the established Anglican Church.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

English Dissenters were Protestant Christians who chose to worship outside of the established Church of England in early modern period. They have been known by different names, including “Anabaptists,” “Brownists,” “Separatists,” “Sectaries,” “Dissenters,” “Nonconformists,” and “Free Churchmen,” depending on the circumstances and nature of their Dissent.

Two different theological sources were at the root of English Dissent, which mainly followed two streams, one radical and the other Calvinist (Watts 1978). The first one can be traced back to the pre-Reformation movement of the Lollards, based on the teaching of John Wycliffe (ca. 1330–1384) (McFarlane 1966), which was subsequently influenced by continental Anabaptism. This tradition then went underground, moving to the Netherlands with John Smyth (1554–1612), and reemerged in England with the seventeenth-century “General Baptists.”

The second one streamed from Elizabethan Calvinistic Puritanism. This movement aimed at “purifying” the church of its Catholic elements and initially tried to reform the Anglican Church from within. Some individual Puritans moved towards separation in the 1570s, founding congregations first in England and then in the Netherlands (Hahn-Bruckart 2017). This was the case of Robert Browne (ca. 1550–1633) and Robert Harrison (ca. 1545–1585), and “Brownists” or “Separatists” became the earliest terms to signify groups outside of the established Anglican Church. But the majority of those in the Puritan movement can be described as “nonconformists” as

they declined to conform to certain practices that had been set out in the Prayer Book of 1559 which they considered to be “Roman,” while still remaining in communion with the Church of England.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The situation changed greatly with the civil war and English Republic (1641–1662). The freedom of religious practice granted in England during this period allowed many people to join Puritan circles, and some also joined the Quakers, founded by George Fox (1624–1691) (Villani 1996).

Following the Restoration (1630–1685) however, dissenters were subjected to persecution under various acts of the parliament; non-conformists were excluded from all municipal offices and the Act of Uniformity of 1662 demanded that all clergymen, teachers, and professors adhere to the Book of Common Prayer in its entirety. The term “Dissenter” for referring to clergymen and their followers who resisted the Act of Uniformity and left the established Anglican Church emerged at this time (Hahn-Bruckart 2017).

Impact and Legacy

After the Toleration Act of 1689, a wave of “New Dissent” emerged, influenced by German Pietism and connected to the Evangelical Revival. By the mid-nineteenth century, the term “Nonconformists” gradually replaced that of “Dissenters” to refer to people who attended religious services outside of the established church (Watts 1995, 2015; Hahn-Bruckart 2017).

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- [Everard, John](#)
- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

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Dissimulatio

- [Irony, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Docta Ignorantia

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Abstract

The expression *docta ignorantia* (“learned ignorance”) refers to a gnosiological doctrine by Nicholas of Cusa emphasizing human structural inability to know the truth. Cusanus states that human mind is characterized by the fact that it builds relationships between the things,

moves itself belonging to quantity and quality and between things opposed to each other. But truth has neither quality nor quantity, and it is the infinite coincidence of the opposites. So, mind because of its finitude is inadequate for knowing the truth. The learned ignorance doctrine stems from Nicholas of Cusa's reworking of Dionysius' *Mystical Theology*. It has been conceived in contrast to scholastic gnosiology and rests on the claim that there can be no correspondence between intellect and things. In the sixteenth century, this doctrine becomes widespread especially in France.

Term

The expression "learned ignorance" refers to a gnosiological doctrine emphasizing human structural inability to know the essence of things. Nicholas of Cusa is the first to mention the "learned ignorance" in the Renaissance (Cusanus 1440; Haubst 1992). By this expression he indicates a gnosiological doctrine that contrasts the scholastic one of *adaequatio intellectus ad rem*. In *De docta ignorantia* I, 3, Cusanus states that the human mind, because of its finitude, is unable to precisely attain the truth. The awareness of such ontological inadequacy of our intellect vis-à-vis the "precise [ultimate] truth" constitutes learned ignorance. Cusanus depicts learned ignorance as a polygon inscribed in a circle: while the former, with its finite number of sides, represents the human mind and the latter hints at the essence of things. No matter how much the number of sides might be increased, the polygon will never precisely fit the circumference, unless it turns into the circle itself. So human knowledge is conjectural in its nature. This view does not lead Nicholas of Cusa to scepticism. Instead, he emphasizes the importance of our finite knowledge as the only way we have to attain what is finite and to approximate what is infinite.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the *Apologia doctae ignorantiae*, Nicholas of Cusa argues that learned ignorance was also used

by Augustine and Bonaventure (Schnarr 2009). Recent studies have emphasized that learned ignorance belongs to the tradition of the medieval interpretations of Dionysius the Areopagite's *Mystical Theology*. Some examples are found in John Scotus Eriugena, Meister Eckhart, and Albertus Magnus (Duclow 2006). It should be noted, however, that Nicholas of Cusa has distanced himself from these authors, accusing them in *De beryllo* not to have properly understood Dionysius' philosophy. Other scholars consider learned ignorance as a legacy of the School of Chartres' theology (Albertson 2014).

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the late Middle Ages, the prevailing gnosiological conception relies on the Aristotelian-Thomistic view, according to which knowledge takes place as correspondence between mind and things. In contrast to this view, the learned ignorance recognizes the ontological inability of our intellect to precisely fit things. Thus the *docta ignorantia* represents one of the first philosophical attempts at breaking with the medieval world (Cassirer 1927). In Cusanus' view, the learned ignorance should have entailed a renewal of philosophical theology (Flasch 1998). He regards the learned ignorance as the structure of all human knowledge. This leads him to formulate a new ethical and theoretical perspective within the doctrine of conjectures (Bocken 2004). However, the most innovative application of learned ignorance takes place in metaphysics and cosmology (Blumenberg 1966; Flasch 1998). In the second book of *De docta ignorantia*, Cusanus argues that man cannot precisely locate the center of the universe. Some scholars have claimed that this output of Cusanus' researches about the universe anticipates in some sense the Copernican revolution (Duhem 1917).

Impact and Legacy

In the *Apologia doctae ignorantiae*, Cusanus reports that the learned ignorance method has

had some fortune among his Italian contemporaries. In the fifteenth century, some copies of *De docta ignorantia* circulate in the humanists' milieu. Pico della Mirandola mentions Cusanus' "learned ignorance" and "conjecture" doctrines (Flasch 1980). In the sixteenth century, the learned ignorance is mentioned by French humanists, mostly in the domain of morals, as a principle borrowed from Augustine and Petrarch (Santinello 1969; Emery 1984; Meier-Oeser 1989). In the *Apologie de Raymond Sebond*, Michel de Montaigne appeals to the learned ignorance as a call for humility on the path to knowledge and quotes some geometrical examples on the circle and the circumference mentioned by Cusanus in *De docta ignorantia* (Montaigne 1580; Gelder 1961; Avis 2016). This "sceptic" interpretation of Cusanus' thinking, however, weakens the original ontological import Nicholas of Cusa has ascribed to learned ignorance (Bocken 2002). Lefèvre d'Étaples instead traces the notion back to negative theology and to Dionysius the Areopagite's *Mystical Theology* (d'Étaples 1527). He employs learned ignorance as a doctrine for mystical knowledge. Beatus Rhenanus highlights the positive potential of knowledge *per doctam ignorantiam* and identifies a thematic affinity with the Rhineland tradition (Rhenanus 1505; Faye 1998). Charles de Bovelles, in *De sapiente*, argues that the learned ignorance has a role in positive knowledge building, and in *De nihilo*, he takes over Cusanus' attempt to build a philosophical theology of infinity according to the principle of learned ignorance (Bovillus 1510a, b). Bovelles also mentioned a several number of geometric examples drawn from Cusanus' works (Albertini 1993, 2000; Secchi 2006).

Cross-References

- Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques
- Negative Theology in the Renaissance
- Nicholas of Cusa

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Docta Religio

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Abstract

Docta religio, or learned religion, in the intention of his creator, Marsilio Ficino, is the outcome of a process aimed at unifying in one system the whole religious experience of humankind, thus reconciling philosophy and religion.

This theme is treated widely in *De christiana religione* (1473–1474). The

fundamental purpose of this work is to proclaim the absolute identity of *pietas* and *sapientia*, i.e., the inseparable unity of *religio* and *philosophia*. Only the Platonic-Hermetic philosophy is seen as rich in esoteric evocative power and capable of showing, even to the illiterate, the most secret and divine mysteries, the chief and essential truths at the basis of the highest spiritual experiences.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Docta religio, or learned religion, in the intention of his creator, Marsilio Ficino (*De christiana religione*), is the outcome of a process aimed at unifying in one system the whole religious experience of humankind, thus reconciling philosophy and religion. This concept is based on the assumption that between ancient religion and Christianity there is no opposition, but a certain continuity. Philosophy and religion, according to Ficino, are parts of a single historical-salvific process reaching its ultimate climax with Christianity, which constitutes a *perfecta religio*. The task of the philosopher is to bring the continuity of this process to light and to illustrate the mysterious genealogy of *sapientia*. *Sapientia*, in Ficino's opinion, comes into being by divine revelation in ancient Egypt and – through Pythagoras and Plato – reaches Jesus Christ. Afterward, thanks to the mediation of the Neoplatonic philosophers, *sapientia* reaches the Church Fathers and Dionysus the Areopagite. Without taking into consideration medieval Scholasticism – which represents, in Ficino's view, an irreligious philosophy due to its intrinsic Aristotelianism – *sapientia* directly reaches the Renaissance of the fifteenth century. The red thread that unifies the religious experience of humankind is indeed represented by philosophy. While the Orphic, Hermetic and Chaldean doctrines constitute a *prisca theologia*, Platonic thinking and Christian religion both have the task of organizing revelation into an organic doctrinal corpus, which Ficino calls *pia philosophia* with the intention of bringing it to a

full end (Hankins 1994; Allen 1995; Lauster 2002).

In Ficino's view, the origins and development of philosophy consist in an enlightenment of human mind, brought about by divine revelation (Ficino 2001). It shines the light of a single truth upon the world, along different paths, often hidden and in need of being unveiled. Thus, Ficino intends to grasp that one *sapientia* in all the forms in which it reveals itself: in the sacred books, in the poets' compositions, in the harmony of the heavens, as well as in the perfect arrangement of nature, expressed in its perennial beauty. *Pia philosophia* is therefore changed into a *docta religio*, capable of grasping the divine roots of everything: the unfolding of Unity in the inexhaustible multiplicity of its creation (Garin 2008). As a man of Providence – as he defined himself – Ficino is convinced that his *docta religio* is the only religion capable of accomplishing, after the Middle Ages, a renaissance of his own times marked by Platonic philosophy. It will be able to involve all the spheres of human action: from philosophy to theology, from arts to literature, and from ethics to politics.

Innovative and Original Aspects

This theme is treated widely in *De christiana religione* (1473–1474). The fundamental purpose of this work is to proclaim the absolute identity of *pietas* and *sapientia*, i.e., the inseparable unity of *religio* and *philosophia*. Ficino claims the right of philosophers to treat *divinae res*. Ever since ancient times, they have been at the same time priests and wise men, investigators of *causae rerum* and regulators of the worship of the primary cause. In order to support his thesis, Ficino does not fail to invoke a long tradition. In ancient Jewish times – Ficino recalls – the prophets were also philosophers. Similarly, in ancient Persia, the Magi would oversee religious rites and, at the same time, engage in speculation. The Egyptian priests were custodians of the secrets of both divine and material nature. In ancient Greece, Linus, Orpheus, Musaeus, Melampus, Eumolpus,

Aglaophemus, Trophimus, and Pythagoras were also priests. Moreover, the Indian Brahmins and Gaul Druids were wise men and priests. Not differently, the proto-Christian Presbyterians and Episkopos were devout saints and men of learning (Ficino 1476).

On the basis of such premises, Ficino formulates his program of reformation of the Christian religion. He is convinced that the separation between *pietas* and *sapientia* has caused serious consequences. If philosophy has become a tool of impiety in the hands of totally unbelieving men, the care of sacred things is entrusted to priest without learning. The only possible remedy for this situation is represented by the reunification of religion and wisdom. This can be done by recovering the principles that religion and wisdom have in common – that ancient, deep core of *veritas* which all men must share. Religion can be enlightened and confirmed by *sapientia* by returning to the sources of the old tradition of *prisci theologi*, i.e., the philosophers–theologians who were the guardians of one common truth (Vasoli 1999; Gentile 2002). Orpheus and Zoroaster, Hermes Trimegistus and Pythagoras, Plato and Plotinus, and Porphyry and Proclus represent, together with the scriptural *auctoritates*, the leading exponents of a *docta pietas*, or *pia philosophia* (Ficino 1476). The latter will no longer be entrusted to the intellectual poverty of an unlearned clergy or to the blurred knowledge of scholastic theologians. Only the Platonic–Hermetic philosophy is seen as rich in esoteric evocative power and capable of showing, even to the illiterate, the most secret and divine mysteries, the chief and essential truths at the basis of the highest spiritual experiences. These are the necessary criteria that can restore to religion its character of “universal endowment” of humankind, thus joining it to the Platonic, Hermetic, Chaldean, and Orphic philosophy (Vasoli 2007).

In Ficino's view, the renaissance of this *docta religio* – philosophic and sapiential religion – will restore to the *sapientes* their function as highest administrators of human knowledge and divine *misteria*. Ficino addresses the philosophers and priests of his times, so that they may, by common

consent, devote themselves to such renewal of the religious doctrine (Ficino 1476).

As a priest and philosopher himself, Ficino proposes himself as a master of those new ranks of artists, technicians, merchants, and politicians, far removed from the theological discourse, now willing to take part in the debate on the major themes of the *christiana veritas*, to trace back to the reading of the Biblical and Evangelical sources, and to seek a *renovatio*, in those times of deep unease and growing spiritual anxiety (Vasoli 1988).

Impact and Legacy

From the outset, the ideal of *docta religio* would achieve a success destined to go beyond the circle of the first Ficino's followers (Garin 1966), as shown, for example, by its spread in Jewish contexts (Lelli 2000). In the age of Counter-Reformation, the encounter between Platonic philosophy and Christianity, postulated by *docta religio*, would prove quite problematic and would stir up a number of contradictions and controversies, mainly on an ethic ground, such as those concerning the notions of sin, freedom, predestination, evaluation of deeds, and grace (Papuli 2002; Verardi 2011).

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- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism](#)

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Doctor Navarro

- [Azpilcueta, Martín de](#)

Doctor Navarrus

- [Azpilcueta, Martín de](#)

Dolet, Etienne

Born: 3 August 1508, Orléans

Died: 3 August 1546, Paris

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Abstract

Etienne Dolet represents the complexity of intellectual life in the first half of the sixteenth century: before his imprisonment in Paris in 1544, he is intensely active in Lyon between 1534 and 1544; orator, poet, historian, grammarian, linguist, translologist, editor, publisher, and printer, he made the most of each of his competencies to build a very diversified *oeuvre* in only 10 years. The determination of his intellectual and religious positions is much more complex and uncertain. It would be a mistake to pin a simple label on them. The question whether Dolet was a “freethinker” or a “Gospel propagator” is not the right one. Etienne Dolet was a humanist; he died for being a humanist. Language will be at the heart of his thinking; he is a philologist and a philosopher because of language.

Biography

Étienne Dolet is born in Orléans in 1508 (see Bingen 2018). He began his literary studies in Paris in 1520, then went to Padua in 1525 to study rhetoric with Simon de Villeneuve, until 1528. After returning to France, he began law studies in Toulouse in 1532, then flew to Lyon in the summer of 1534. As a proofreader, an author, and an editor at the workshop of S. Gryphe, he published several books, among others, his *Commentariorum linguæ latinæ*; he trained in the book trade and owned his own printing shop in 1538. Between 1542 and 1544, he went through three successive trials: the first inquisitorial trial in 1542 sentenced him to the stake; the trial on

appeal in 1543 saved him, and the one on September 1544 sentenced him again, for being an Epicurean, and led him to the stake. He was burnt with his books in place Maubert in Paris on August 3, 1546, on his forty-eighth birthday.

With Etienne Dolet, we touch the complexity of intellectual life in the first half of the sixteenth century: orator, poet, historian, grammarian, linguist, translologist, editor, publisher, and printer, he made the most of each of his competencies to build a very diversified *oeuvre* in only 10 years. The determination of his intellectual and religious positions is much more complex and uncertain. It would be a mistake to pin a simple label on them. The question whether Dolet was a “freethinker” or a “Gospel propagator” (Febvre 1957, p. 231) is not the right one. Etienne Dolet was a humanist; he died for being a humanist. Language will be at the heart of his thinking; he is a philologist and a philosopher because of language.

His polemical first book, *Orationes duae in Tholosam*, published in Lyon in 1534, opens his intellectual carrier, which will develop under the sign of Ciceronian Latin that he will defend, against Erasmus, among others. From 1536, he becomes a popularizer of the French language, quickly understanding the political, historical, medical, and religious stakes. Before his imprisonment in Paris in 1544, he is intensely active in Lyon between 1534 and 1544. He is simultaneously a poet with the *Carmina* (Langlois-Pézeret 2009), the author of a dictionary with the *Commentariorum linguæ latinæ*, a translator, a historian of the reign of Francis I, a scientific publisher, and a printer (Cicero, Terence, Virgil, Suetonius, Sophocles, Aesop, Galen, Marot, Rabelais, Castiglione, Erasmus, the Psalms, the New Testament, etc.). However, his admiration for the pagans, his studies in Padua, and his problematic Christianity will lead him to the stake. At the end of a first trial by the Inquisition in 1542, he is condemned as a heretic for publishing prohibited books and using the word “*fatum*” “non comme devait le faire un chrétien” (Longeon 1977, p. 26); King Francis I grants him his clemency in 1543. Dolet backslides willfully in 1544 with the publishing of the *Second Enfer* (Dolet 1544) as well as two of Plato’s dialogues

dedicated to the king. One of the dialogues contains the sentence that will kill him. One sentence from the *Axiochus* (ascribed at the time to Plato) enables the Sorbonne to accuse him on 4 November 1544 of denying the immortality of the soul: “Quant à ce dialogue mis en français intitulé *Axiochus*, ce lieu et passage, c’est à savoir “attendu que tu ne seras plus rien du tout” est mal traduit, et est contre l’intention de Plato, auquel n’y a, ni en grec, ni en latin, ces mots *rien du tout* [. . .] “attendu que tu ne seras plus rien du tout” est *dictum epicuraeum*” (Longeon 1977, p. 71). The *Parlement* of Paris condemns him to death on 2 August 1546. The sentence is executed on 3 August. Using a word that questions Christian providentialism (*fatum*), translating a sentence in a radical way, and printing forbidden books, these are the reasons for his execution. Like Berquin in 1529, Michel Servet in 1553, or Giordano Bruno in 1600, Dolet dies an intellectual, because he contributed to the richness of public space without self-censorship or caution.

Providing the texts from antiquity without Christianizing them is one of the risks that Dolet takes, just as he risks the printing and circulating texts which have been condemned by the Sorbonne. Dolet is defined by the intellectual risk that combines philological strictness and audacious transmission. The risk was covered by the king until 1544 (“privilege” of 1538; “lettres de rémission” of 1543) (Longeon 1977, p. 41). Did Dolet overestimate the king’s authority in the face of the power of the Church and the *Parlement*? In his jail, the philosopher is naked.

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- [Ciceronianism](#)
- [Fate, Renaissance Concept of](#)

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Domestic Slavery

- [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)

Don Hasdai Crescas

- [Crescas, Hasdai ben Judah](#)

Donati

► [Acciaiuli, Donato](#)

Donato

► [Acciaiuli, Donato](#)

Donatus

► [Acciaiuli, Donato](#)

Doni, Agostino

Born: Mid-sixteenth century, Cosenza

Died: After 1583, unknown place

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Abstract

Agostino Doni was an Italian physician, philosopher, and heretic of the second half of sixteenth century. His work, *De natura hominis* (1581) is strictly related to the Italian context of the first *novatores* in the field of natural philosophy. He can be partly considered as a follower of Bernardino Telesio, partly as a freethinker of his own.

Biography

Agostino Doni was born in Calabria (Southern Italy) in the mid-sixteenth century. In the frontispiece of *De natura hominis*, he defines himself *Augustini Doni cosentini, medici et philosophi*. During his youth, Doni was detained for 5 years in the prisons of the Inquisition due to

religious reasons. This information is obtained from one of Doni's letters, in which he says "religionis causa me habuit in carcere adolescentem per quinquennium" (Rotondò 2008, p. 762). No explanation is given for his arrest but it is reasonable to assume that it is related to the cruel massacre of the Waldensians that took place in San Sisto and Guardia Piemontese in June 1561.

In the late 1570s, he probably studied philosophy and medicine at the University of Padua, learning the new critical approach to the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition. Soon after, he left Italy, persecuted by accusations of heresy. In the winter of 1579, he went to Basel, a city well known for religious tolerance and freethinking. Here he formerly received a kind hospitality, getting acquainted with some eminent men of the university. In fact, he had the support of personalities known as protectors of those thinkers who fled for religious reasons: Basil Amerbach, rector of the university, and Theodor Zwinger, physician and professor of medicine. Doni was then able to devote himself to his studies, achieving, in 1580, his doctorate in medicine.

He received hospitality in the house of Francesco Betti (1521–1590) and worked with the famous printer Pietro Perna (1557–1582). He spent a brief period far from Basel, because of some preposterous accusations moved against him, which later he proved to be unfounded. About 1581 Doni came back to Basel, working out, with the support of Zwinger, to the publication of the *De natura hominis*, which came out the same year, by the prestigious printer Hieronymus Froben.

De natura hominis (dedicated to Stephen Bathory, King of Poland), Doni's only known work, was soon considered one of the most original in the field of the natural philosophy, causing his name to appear among the number of the new philosophers of late Renaissance Italy.

Since the beginning, Doni explains the focus of his study: the investigation of human nature. He can be considered an innovator because for the first time his psychology of human nature is examined from a physical point of view. Like every other living being, the human is the result

of the cooperation of two active forces, heat and cold, operating on a certain portion of matter. In the first book of his work, Doni gave a critical reading of the medical tradition of Hippocrates and Galen (on one hand), and of the Aristotelian philosophy (on the other). In the second book, which represents the *pars construens* of the work, Doni holds the vital core of his philosophy: “Omne quod natura constat vim sentiendi habet et sine ea esse non potest” (Doni 1973, p. 333). The *spiritus-sensus*, the only vital force acting within the nature, is equivalent to the mind, in a continuous process of self-organization of the knowledge. It is a new philosophy *sub species hominis*, where human is not considered as a set of two distinct parts, but as a single living body able to perform thoughts and actions. It is the unity of the spirit to ensure the unity of the human being. In the effort to be faithful to its radical naturalism, Doni decides to start from the faculties belonging to the spirit.

The hectic events of the months following the publication of his work remain shrouded in mystery: the philosopher of Cosenza precipitously left Basel to travel to Poland hoping to find the protection of King Bathory.

At this point in his restless wandering, it becomes difficult to reconstruct the events of the last part of Doni's life: some witnesses reported that he had religious controversy with some Italian intellectuals exiled in Krakow, especially with the historic Venetian Gian Michele Bruto (1517–1592).

The difficulties, the isolation, and the “melancholy humor” pushed Doni most likely to abandon the Polish city, as we learn from the latest news transmitted by the nuncio Alberto Bolognetti (1538–1585) in 1583. From that moment we lose track of him.

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Doni, Anton Francesco

Born: 16 May 1513, Florence

Died: September 1574, Monselice (Padua)

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Abstract

Anton Francesco Doni was born in 1513 in Florence. Writer, musician, painter, and printer, he is credited as being the first Italian bibliographer for his two collections, *La libreria* (1550) and *La seconda libreria* (1551), in which he lists and discusses contemporary volumes as well as imaginary texts. His most relevant works are *I marmi* and *I mondi* in which (in witty, malicious, and sometimes melancholic tones) he laments the corruption of his age and the decay of civil and religious sentiments. While in his basic features Doni's humanism is the expression of courtier cultural world, he distinguishes himself for his moralistic critique, and sometimes melancholic rejection, of the ideology of the court.

Biography

Mostly renowned as a writer and a printer, Anton Francesco Doni was born in 1513 in Florence, son of Bernardo d'Antonio, a humble scissors-maker. Little is known of his youth, except that he probably served militarily under Giovanni Bandini in 1530 and Luigi Guicciardini in 1534 or 1535. Out of economic need, at an unknown date, he entered the Servite Order in the Santissima Annunziata Monastery of Firenze and was ordained under the name of Fra' Valerio. In 1538, he wrote a laudatory letter to Pietro Aretino, showing a profound knowledge of his works and an interest in literature and writing. Uncomfortable with religious life, in the early months of 1540, Doni left the monastery and Florence and moved to Genoa, embracing the life of the "letterato" and started living by his pen. During his journey, he also visited Alessandria, Pavia, and Milan in search of patronage, which he may have enjoyed for some time from Duke Alessandro De' Medici and Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici. In January 1543, he arrived in Piacenza where, having failed to read law and having a greater interest for letters, he joined the Accademia Ortolana with the nickname of "Semenza" (seed). The Accademia Ortolana was a literary circle of literati and nobles with an interest in light forms of literature and worldly pleasures. Its members also shared a strong anti-clericalism. Within this context, Doni published his first literary work, a long letter with an annex of sonnets written by other members of the Accademia.

In 1544, Doni moved to Venice where he printed a collection of *Lettere* (1544) and a *Dialogo della musica* (1544). Doni had a lifelong interest in music, and his *Dialogo* is, in fact, a collection of madrigals, dialogues, and music of various authors, intermixed with his own dialogues and verses. In Venice he probably met Aretino, to whom he offered the first book of his *Lettere*. The following year, he published an enlarged edition of his collection and his reputation grew, but his earnings were not sufficient to live from his art. He struggled to find a position as a courtier and unsuccessfully offered his

services to a variety of nobles and prelates. Following the split of the Accademia Ortolana, and having alienated the nobility of Piacenza in search of patronage from Duke Pier Luigi Farnese, Doni moved to Florence and reinvented himself as a printer for Duke Cosimo de' Medici. His first printing effort was a new edition of his own *Lettere*. At the beginning of 1546, he was chosen as secretary of the Accademia Fiorentina, and his printing shop began to prosper. He then broke with Lodovico Dominici, a former friend and a member of the Accademia, whom he accused of being a heretic and a Calvinist. Having alienated the sympathy of his former associates, in late 1547, he closed his printing shop and departed to Venice to work as an editor for the printer Aurelio Pincio. The following year, he edited Ortensio Lando's translation of Thomas More's *Utopia*, to which he added a valuable introductory letter. Between 1548 and 1550, he also benefited from the support of Pietro Aretino, which provided him with occasional work. In 1549, he wrote a treatise on sculpture and painting, the *Disegno*, and the following year, a historical work on the life of Caesar, *La fortuna di Cesare*. In 1550, he then moved to Giolito's shop, at the beginning to work as an editor and translator and then as an author. With Giolito he published his *La libreria* (1550), the first Italian bibliography of Italian contemporary authors and classics. While in Venice, Doni helped to create the Accademia Pellegrina of which he was the secretary from 1553 to 1563.

It was from the 1551 to 1553 that Doni enjoyed his most fruitful years of his literary life. In 1551, he printed his *La seconda libreria*, a work that also includes lists of imaginary authors and books filled with comments seldom related to the works in question. It also includes short stories, observations, and comments intermingled with mythology, moral advice, ancient histories, novels, and his own observations on the contemporary world. His next book published was *La zucca*, a collection of moral tales, witticisms, aphorisms, and letters, printed in four parts in late 1551 and in 1552. In 1552, Doni also published *La moral filosofia* (1552), a large edition of his *Lettere*, and the *Pistolotti amorosi* (1552), a satire of

Petrarchism and love treatises. However, it was in 1552 and 1553 that Doni wrote his most relevant works: *I marmi* and *I mondi*, the latter with its accompanying *Inferni*. In 1553, he also gave in print a new treatise of moral philosophy, *L'asinesca gloria*, in which the humble and patient ass is contrasted with the cruelty and ambition of mankind.

The prosperity that the success of these works gave Doni did not last. Because of a serious fever, he was unable to write, and in 1555, he had to leave Venice in circumstances not completely understood due to an altercation with a Florentine priest. Despite the previous good relations with Aretino, in 1556, he published the *Terremoto* subtitled "with the ruin of a great Colossus, bestial Anti-Christ of our age" (Grendler 1969: 62). The book is deemed to be "the finest example of diffamatory writing in the sixteenth century, for Doni hurled every imaginable insult against Aretino in language worthy of the Scourge of Princes himself" (Grendler 1969: 62). The quarrel, however, did not last for long, as Doni had predicted that Aretino would die in the year 1556, "and Aretino obligingly expired in October of that year" (Grendler 1969: 62).

Little is known of Doni's activities in 1556 and 1557; in 1558, he tried to open a printing press in Ancona but was forced to leave the city because of Paul IV's order that all vagant friars were to return to their convents. From the middle of 1558 to August 1562, there is no trace of his activities. Probably in 1559, he wrote a comedy, *Lo stufaiuolo*, which was not printed until 1861. In 1562, three new works by Doni were published. Of these the most significant is a cabalist numerology (an expansion of a section of *I marmi*), which tried to prove that Luther was the great beast of the Apocalypse. In 1654, he wrote *Le pitture*, a collection of allegorical word pictures, and, after his retirement to Monselice (near Venice), he wrote *La lumiera*, a poem lamenting man's miserable fate and failings. In late July 1574, Doni journeyed in Venice aiming to present the French King Henri III a poem on the battle of Lepanto. In September of the same year, he died.

Doni's Literary Activity

Anton Francesco Doni is a very complex humanist intellectual. A writer, musician, painter, and publisher, his works are rich in observations, wit, and inventions, described in his *Zucca* as "chiacchiere, filastrocche, frappe, chimere, castelli in aria, [...] novelle, cicalecci, parabole, baie, proverbi, motti, umori ed alter giravolte e storie" (chitchat, rhymes, fripperies, chimeras, castles in the air [...] tales, chatters, parables, jests, proverbs, jokes, humor, and other twists and stories) (soni 1656: c.72). This quotation is representative of Doni's prose, strongly influenced by the Florentine tradition established by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio and by the "regionalistic" belief in the superiority of the Florentine tongue, clearly expressed in *I marmi*.

Doni is a very typical figure of a late Renaissance literato, who struggled to live by his pen while at the margins of courtly society. In a letter of 7 February 1553 to the sculptor Giovan Angelo Fiorentino, Doni confessed that "io scrivo del continuo, per non passar la vita malinconica più tosto che cercar fama, con ciò sia di che di tutte le cose che hanno fine terreno mi fo beffe, e ridomene come sono le mie carte" (I restlessly write, so that I will not spend my life in melancholy, rather than for seeking fame. I laugh at all earthly things, as I do in my writings) (soni 1994: 401). In all his works, the witty, malicious, and sometimes melancholic tone depicts his complaints about the corruption of his age and the decay of civil and religious sentiments.

Doni's religious ideas can be deduced from his constant polemics against monasticism and from his desire for a Christian renewal that, while sympathetic to the critical spirit of the Reformation, never questioned Catholicism. In this sense, Doni participates in a very common aspiration toward the Erasmian ideal of a Christian religion based on charity and modesty. He was certainly in contact with a few representatives of the Italian Reformation, such as Francesco Linguardo and Lelio Sozzini, and in an interesting letter to B. Guerrieri, a well-known leader of the Reformation in Siena, dated 28 November 1546 (ed. by

Grendler 1969), he expressed his faith in a manner not too distant from Lutheranism and Calvinism.

I marmi and the *Mondi* are probably Doni's two most notable literary and philosophical works. *I marmi* (*The Marbles*, 1552) gathers a series of dialogues, on various themes, by *Accademici pellegrini* or by ordinary Florentines. They are set on the marble steps (*i marmi*) of the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence. Through a very distinctive style, in his dialogues Doni expresses his literary inventiveness and his moral resentment of his contemporaries, as well as an acute reading of human instability and of the restlessness of human dispositions. Doni is convinced that men are inevitably trapped between their insatiable appetites and the vanities and frailties of their mortal being (Borrelli 2000). *I mondi* is probably Doni's most successful and best-known work. In his huge volume, "seven worlds" are imagined: the small, the large, the greatest, the mixed, the imaginary, the laughable, and the world of fools. It develops through these imaginary worlds that are discussed by different Members of the Accademia Pellegrina under pseudonyms. Social and moral criticism, together with moral advice, witty observations, and critique of man dominate a work that is significant for its inventiveness and imaginative style. The best-known dialogue is the one between two academicians named "Il Savio" (the wise man) and "Il Pazzo" (the madman), to whom Jove and Momus send the vision of a new utopian world. The ideal city they describe, in fact, is ruled by a communitarian utopia, most likely influenced by More's *Utopia*, and by the wise laws of Garamanti, the utopian people narrated in the *Relox de los Principes* (1529) by Antonio de Guevara. The use of Pazzia (Folly) to praise simplicity and authenticity is borrowed from Erasmus. While always maintaining his light and satiric tone, Doni gives voice to a critique of his contemporary society and to the desire for peace and the greatest possible degree of social justice. Doni's utopian city follows the typical model of the radical ideal city of Italian renaissance being "fabricata in tondo perfettissimo a guisa d'una stella" (fabricated in the perfect round shape of a

star). This is a rational utopia, in which conflicts are repressed through a strict regulation of the passions, from love to greed and religion, in a paradoxical order that converts itself into folly "onde, levate via le occasioni, ci sarebbe pochi pazzi, o noi saremmo tutti pazzi a un modo" (thus, having removed the occasions, there will be few madmen, or we all will be mad in the very same way).

It is been argued that Doni's view is profoundly different from that of the other renaissance utopians, for he belonged to a smaller group of social critics who, in their exasperation with the injustice of the social order, "rejected also the most of the values of Renaissance civilization" (Eliav-Feldon 1982: 21). In this sense, the scholar Giorgio Simoncini interpreted Doni's utopia as a utopia opposing the principles and values of courtly society and as being "against the prince" (Simoncini 1974). However, if Doni's utopia gives an answer to the aspiration for a new well-ordered world as a reaction to the decay of contemporary society, this new world reproduces the needs of social and political control expressed by princely and courtly literature. In his own ambiguous and contradictory way, Doni participates in the court ideology of his age. The political and social topographies of his utopia have the temple at their center and show a need for order, simplification, and coercion. However, his adherence to the literary universe of the court is constantly challenged by his unease with the injustice and corruption of contemporary society.

Anton Francesco Doni's humanism is thus the expression of a specific cultural world centered on the court and its artistic and social representation. However, he distinguishes himself from the most typical discursive world of courtly literature as he constantly moves from acceptance to a melancholic rejection of the court's values and orders. In this sense, it may be argued that his anxieties about and acquiescence toward courtly society, in their mutual interconnections, do express Doni's imbalance between the acceptance of a conventional social order and the social critique that is implied in his moral philosophy (Pissavino 1991).

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Donne, John

Born: 22 January 1572, London, England

Died: 31 March 1631, London, England

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Abstract

This encyclopedia entry provides information about the life, heritage and rupture with tradition, and innovative and original aspects of metaphysical poet John Donne. Its purpose is to inform readers of how Donne, a Roman Catholic living in a time when his religion was considered "illegal," used his poetry to express how he attempted to live justly in an unjust society. While only his later works explicitly discuss the topic of religion, references and allusions to religion can be found even in his love poems. His belief in God was central to who he was as a person, and his fear of being persecuted for worshipping the same God, but in the outlawed branch of Christianity, permeated through this writing.

Biography

John Donne was born in London in 1572 to John Donne, of Welsh descent, and Elizabeth Heywood. His maternal lineage, as well as his parents' refusal to conform to the Church of

England, meant that Donne was a nonconformist from birth. In fact, Heywood's great-uncle was Sir Thomas More, recognized as a saint in the Catholic Church as well as a dissenter because of his refusal to acknowledge King Henry VIII as the head of the Church of England. Both his mother and father were considered "recusers," a position punishable by law. Donne's father died when Donne was only 4, and his mother married a wealthy doctor, adding three step-siblings to his 5 biological siblings (one of whom perished in jail for being a Catholic sympathizer).

Continuing with his reactionary beliefs and practices, Donne remained privately educated at schools like Hart Hall and Cambridge University; however, he left school before graduating because he did not want to take the Oath of Supremacy required by King Henry VIII. This act of refusal would have been considered treason, so he sacrificed his degree to honor his beliefs. In his post-collegiate life, he spent much of his inheritance and most of his time womanizing. Eventually, a few years later, he met and fell in love with Anne More. At the time he was working for the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal as his Chief Secretary, but he jeopardized his career when he secretly eloped with Anne. Anne's father was furious and had Donne arrested. He was imprisoned and subsequently lost his job.

Following his release (and the forgiveness of Anne's father), he took whatever job he could to support his wife and growing family. Anne bore 12 children, but ultimately only 7 survived. During this time, Donne and his wife relied on the charity of their friends and her family in order to survive. Donne could have accepted a position with the church and had gainful employment, but from 1614 to 1620 when offers were abundant, he resisted. Anne died delivering a stillborn baby in 1617, and in 1621, Donne accepted a job as Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in order to support his children. Though he was a womanizer in his younger years, Donne vowed that he would never marry again and remained faithful to his wife despite her death.

Donne was a passionate writer, and the emotional highs and lows he experienced are ever-

present in his works. His content is classified as metaphysical, and he is known for his artful use of extended metaphors. Since he only authorized nine of his poems to be published in his lifetime, the dates of his works are uncertain. It is estimated that the elegies and *satires* were written in the 1590s. His poetry manuscripts were shared among the literary community, and he only gained fame posthumously. His originality lies in the fact that while he was a religious man, he often wrote of man's carnal desires. These themes were present in his initial works, but upon the death of his wife, his themes changed to a melancholic tone.

For example, assumed to be his first works are his elegies, which are about love and lust. Most famously, his poem "The Flea" employs an extended metaphor that requests his object of desire to consider having sex on the basis that a flea biting him and then her would be essentially like consummating their desire anyway. He argues that the lovers being bitten and their blood mixing together would be far worse than the act of sex. The metaphor in this particular poem is quintessential Donne: he connects the seemingly unrelated in a fanciful, inventive manner (Schoenfeldt 2019). As he matured, his poems showed an even more introspective side where he contemplated the unfairness of having to align with the Church of England.

Donne is among other famous metaphysical poets, such as Andrew Marvell and George Herbert; however, he is unique in that his content shows that humans can have complex, complicated feelings and relationships. For instance, he can fall in love with a woman, her body, and her soul all while remaining faithful to his religion. Once he found his true love, the woman who embodied all of the qualities in his love poems, he wrote more about his search for how to truly be faithful to God and religion as a practice. The anxieties he felt during his conversion from Roman Catholicism to Anglicanism are illustrated in his *Holy Sonnets*, where he explores the problem of faith in a tortured world (Eckhardt 2019). Donne fell ill with typhoid fever, and after his recovery, he developed stomach cancer. While ill, he wrote what many consider to be his own funeral sermon, *Death's Duell*.

Cross-References

- [Reformation](#)
- [Ut pictura poesis](#)

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Dragišić, Juraj

- [Salviati, Giorgio Benigno](#)

Drebbel, Cornelis

Born: Alkmaar, 1572

Died: London, 1633

Vera Keller

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Abstract

An alchemist, inventor, engineer, and natural philosopher, Drebbel fits in the vernacular

maker's knowledge tradition (Smith 2004) during a period of changing status for meteorology and alchemy.

Alternate Names

[Drebbel, Cornelius](#); [Dremmel, Kornelis](#)

Biography

Drebbel began his career as an inventor and engraver, marrying the sister of artist Hendrick Goltzius. He and Goltzius also practiced alchemy, and Drebbel composed a natural philosophical work, *On the Nature of the Elements*. The first surviving edition is a German translation (Drebbel 1608). In 1604, Drebbel moved to Ipswich, England. In 1607, he offered King James I a “perpetual motion” device (Drebbel 1607). James assigned Drebbel to Prince Henry's service. Drebbel installed a complex of “perpetually” moving devices in Eltham Palace outside London, all sensitive to slight changes in temperature.

This was a period of rising epistemic status for the study of meteors, as scholars sought to identify consistent causality for impermanent phenomena and to use contrived demonstrations to measure and depict meteorologic change. Drebbel's theory of the origin of the winds, in which he was preceded by Giambattista Benedetti (1585), opposed dominant views (Borrelli 2008; Martin 2016). Drebbel's recognition of weather patterns was also significant (Dove 1866). Drebbel deployed his meteorological ideas in the design of his “perpetual motion” devices and “glasses of thunder and lightning,” as well as in his more utilitarian thermostatic oven, which engineers today consider a milestone in feedback control (Mayr 1970; Keller 2013b). His discussion of vital substances borne within the elements also contributed to debates concerning the “aerial nitre” (Keller 2013b).

Drebbel was invited to Prague to reproduce his perpetual motion for Rudolf II, a trip which coincided with Rudolf's death in 1612, and Drebbel's brief imprisonment,

followed by the death of Prince Henry (Jaeger 1922). The next 8 years saw straitened finances but fertile inventions, including the submarine, a new mordant for scarlet dye, a method of chemical air-conditioning, and various improvements to telescopes and microscopes. Drebbel's *On the Fifth Element* was published in Latin (Drebbel 1621). No surviving works relate closely to the inventions of this stage of his career, his optical writings having been lost (Keller 2008).

Around 1620 Drebbel met the Küffler brothers of Cologne in England. They peddled his microscopes and telescopes in France and Italy, married his daughters, and after his death, further developed his inventions, including the scarlet dye and an improved oven for drying malt. Drebbel also developed a relationship with the brothers Sir William and John Heydon, in the circle of Prince Charles (Keller 2012). With the support of Charles, William Heydon developed a plan for deploying Drebbel's submarine and air-conditioning in India in 1622. This plan was not realized, but Drebbel enjoyed renewed courtly employment (Keller 2013a). He worked for the Duke of Buckingham's building, gardening, and collecting project at New Hall in 1624 (McEvansoneya 1986). With the accession of King Charles I, William Heydon was appointed Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance Office, overseeing Drebbel's development of military technology. Drebbel traveled to France to serve as engineer in the battle of the Isle of Ré in 1628 and continued to serve in the Ordnance Office in the position of Chief Engineer until his death (Keller 2008).

Drebbel's career has been considered in light of Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (Colie 1954). Drebbel claimed to discover his ideas with "his own hands," through the use of "living instruments," but without difficult mathematics or lengthy writing. His texts proved popular, with twenty-six editions in Dutch, German, French, and Latin until 1785 and an enthusiastic reception within the new discipline of academic alchemy (Keller 2010). His modern reputation has been mixed, due to heated debates over his role in the invention of the thermometer, barometer, and

microscope, and in other discoveries (Naber 1907; Jaeger 1922).

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Drebbel, Cornelius

► [Drebbel, Cornelis](#)

Dremmel, Kornelis

► [Drebbel, Cornelis](#)

Du Chesne, Joseph

Born: 1546, Lectoure (Armagnac)

Died: 20 August 1609, Paris

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Abstract

Joseph Du Chesne advocated for the fusion of chemistry and medicine, claiming that chemical medicine could offer substantial benefits to academic or Galenic medicine. This advocacy was contemporaneous with bitter controversies, ranging from the agitation of Paracelsus's followers to the rise of Spagyrist, and the debates over the need to purify Galenism. A backdrop to all of this was the changes in and growth of alchemy. Du Chesne proposed two things: first, a conceptual framework that would serve as the theoretical basis for chemical medicine and, second, a practical, demonstrative system, characterized by distillation. In addition, Du Chesne was well aware that he faced significant challenges in proposing his chemical innovations, but he persevered in

the hopes that his new medical system would gain adherents.

Alternate Names

[Quercetanus](#)

Biography

After studying surgery for 3 years at Montpellier (1564–1566), Du Chesne worked as an army surgeon in Germany. It was there that he came in contact with the Paracelsian movement and the work of Théodore Birckman. Birckman introduced Du Chesne to the Danish Paracelsist Petrus Severinus in Köln, and by 1573, Du Chesne was studying medicine in Basle. In 1575 he earned a doctorate under Jakob Zwinger (Gilly [1979](#), 57–137). After marrying Anne Trye, a Calvinist, in 1574, Du Chesne became a Calvinist himself and moved to Geneva. There, Du Chesne began practicing a form of medicine heavily influenced by alchemy and Paracelsism. At this point, he became involved in a heated controversy with Jacques Aubert, a dogmatic Galenist; the substance of the controversy had to do with the new Paracelsian medicine (Aubert [1575](#), 8; Aubert [1576](#)). In 1575 Du Chesne published his answer to Aubert, *Ad Jacobi Auberti Vindonis De ortu et causis metallorum contra chymicos explicationem Josephi Quercetani* (Quercetanus [1575](#)); this book marked Du Chesne's first step in reconciling Galenism and Paracelsism. One year later, he published *Sclopetarius* (Quercetanus [1576](#)), in which he advised the use of both chemical and traditional remedies. A decade later, in 1587, he published *Le Grand Miroir du Monde*, a long alchemical and philosophical poem, in which Du Chesne expounded on the intellectual bases of his alchemical ideas, as well as the relationship between medicine and alchemy (Hirai [2005](#); Kahn [2004](#)). Upon being named royal physician of Henry IV of France, he moved to Paris in 1596. From then on forward, Du Chesne practiced his particular form of medicine (Kahn [2007](#), 233–250). In 1603 he published *De priscorum*

philosophorum verae medicinae materia, where salt is identified as the key element in both medicine and alchemy (Queretanus 1603; Frankowiak 2010, 281–283). In addition, he made and developed a system to classify schools of medical thought and practice: “Hermétiques,” “Empiriques,” “Méthodiques,” and “Dogmatiques.” University medical faculty at Paris, headed by Jean Riolan, criticized and censored Du Chesne’s *De priscorum philosophorum*. Chemist Théodore Turquet de Mayerne was also swept up in the controversy. Both Du Chesne and Turquet de Mayerne received vociferous support from German physicians who attacked Riolan and the Parisian medical faculty; the controversy had escalated and become an international debate. In the end, Henry IV came to the defense of Du Chesne and Turquet de Mayerne, ordering the Parisian faculty to back down. In 1607, according to the royally mandated conciliation between Dogmatiques and Paracelsians, Du Chesne published his famous *Pharmacopea dogmaticorum restituta*. Du Chesne died 2 years later, on August 20, 1609.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Du Chesne’s life coincided with the rupture with dogmatic Galenism that has been called a Paracelsian revival (Debus 1977, 149–154). Defending several novel approaches (such as the use of chemical remedies, alchemical ideas, and distillation), Paracelsism broke with medical tradition. But Du Chesne’s embrace of chemical medicine did not imply a complete break with the classical tradition: he rejected many of Galen’s theories but reserved a special place for Hippocrates. This put him at odds both with Paracelsians and with Galenists.

To a great extent, Du Chesne advanced chemical medicine by providing it with a systematic framework that included guidelines and norms. In his rendering, chemical medicine was not merely alchemy, nor was it simply an elevation of Paracelsianism; Du Chesne’s chemical medicine was a universal system for the explanation of natural phenomena. He believed that even Galenists

should incorporate at least the use of chemical remedies, even if they rejected his theoretical bases. In the end, Du Chesne is notable for his work to reconcile academic, Galenic medicine and novel, chemical medicine. All this he did for the improvement of medicine.

Impact and Legacy

His *Pharmacopea dogmaticorum restituta* was reedited 25 times during the first half of the seventeenth century (Chesne et al. 1607). Du Chesne’s goals were largely realized, and chemical medicine became the principal avenue for the development of medicine broadly for a century. The impulse he gave to chemical medicine at the beginning of the seventeenth century bore fruit when chemistry became consolidated as a science during the early eighteenth century.

Cross-References

- [Alchemical Medicine and Distillation](#)
- [Alchemy](#)
- [Galen](#)
- [Severinus, Petrus](#)

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Du Pont, René

Born: Unknown

Died: Unknown

Simone Guidi

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Abstract

A French polemicist of the first half of the seventeenth century. He was the author of

a *Philosophie des esprits* published in two editions (Paris 1602, Paris 1612), in which he defended and developed, in opposition to the materialists, the concept of intelligent spiritual substance. Du Pont's views were close to those of Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, and he put forward a theory of human nature in the scholastic tradition, with strong influences from Hermetic, Augustinian, and neo-Platonic thought.

Innovative and Original Aspects

A French polemicist of the first half of the seventeenth century, Du Pont is known mainly as the author of a *Philosophie des esprits* published in two editions (Paris 1602) in which he defended and developed, in opposition to the materialists, the concept of intelligent spiritual substance. Here he took up Pico della Mirandola's anthropocentrism, putting forward a theory of human nature in the scholastic tradition, with obvious roots in the Hermetic, Augustinian, and neo-Platonic schools of thought. Du Pont was a fervent Catholic who on various issues fell into line somewhat uncritically with the Aristotelian-Scholastic orthodoxy. His work is nonetheless an original and deeply felt appeal for a spiritual life expressed through a theological account of spiritual realities, notably featuring angels, demons and blessed souls, and the rewards and punishments of the next world. Throughout his work Du Pont drew abundantly on the imagery of mysticism, neo-Platonism, and Augustinian thought, often taking positions close to those of the Italian Renaissance thinkers.

Du Pont's views are particularly well illustrated by the sixth book of his *Philosophie des esprits*, dedicated to the order that, in governing the universe, brings together all God's creatures under the sign of His omnipotence. Nature, he argued, considers and brings together within itself all the possible combinations and patterns of the living, in a kind of universal and reciprocal reflection of everything. That means, he says, that even living beings are connected to each other by a set of analogies and that even explains

the existence of mythological animals and other wonders and resemblances among living beings. By contrast, intellectual and angelic substances are quite unlike the bodily creatures living on earth. In this case too, proceeding from a tradition that we could trace back to Thomas Aquinas, spiritual and bodily creatures are the opposite sides of a contrasting and complementary polarity, characterized by completely different attributes.

Man, the point of connection in this cosmological dualism, is, as he had been in Pico's thinking, at the center, as a third element able to reconcile the contrast and as a microcosm summing up the whole variety of creation. From the point of view of his theory of mind, Du Pont draws on the hylomorphist tradition, but, as many sixteenth-century neo-Platonists had done, he revived various elements inspired by Platonistic or dualistic thinking (see Rodis-Lewis 1990) which he reconciled with the idea of a soul that was clearly identified as *forma corporis*. In line with Ficino before him (and with Pascal after him), Du Pont identified Man as an "animal and angel," a creature between sense and intellect. It should be noted, however, that to illustrate the spiritual nature of the soul, he recommends a particular thought experiment of "removal" of the body from the human combination that perhaps illustrates the transition that had occurred in the sixteenth-century Aristotelian theory of mind, a shift toward a kind of "moderate" and intellectualistic hylomorphism that looked with interest at the common spiritual nature of angels and souls. According to Du Pont, by imagining the body not existing, Man can know what it feels like to be pure intellect (as Aquinas, e.g., could not do, except as far as the first principles are concerned), which amounts to knowing what it feels like to be an angel.

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Duchess of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

- [Cavendish, Margaret](#)

Dupleix, Scipion

Born: Condom, 1569

Died: Condom, 1661

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 Humanités, Pessac, France

Abstract

Scipion Dupleix was a magistrate born in the southwest of France and renowned for his historiography of the Bourbons. He was also a pioneer in the popularization of scholastic philosophy in France. Between 1600 and 1610, he produced four works, his *Logique* (Paris, Salis, 1600), *Physique* (Paris, Vve Salis et Sonnius, 1603, followed in 1604 by the *Suite de la Physique*, dealing with the question of the soul), *Métaphysique* (Paris, Vve Salis et Sonnius, 1610), and *Éthique* (Paris, Vve Salis et Sonnius, 1610), along with two other works, the first entitled *Les Causes de la Veille et du Sommeil, des Songes, de la Vie et de la Mort* (Paris, Vve Salis et Sonnius, 1606), inspired by Aristotle's *Parva Naturalia*, and *La Curiosité Naturelle Redigée en Questions* (Paris, Vve Salis et Sonnius,

1606), inspired by the *Problemata* genre and classifying each “problem” in alphabetical order, a singularly new idea at the time. These texts were later brought together and published under the title *Corps de Philosophie*. This was a commercial, mass circulation edition, free of royal censorship, first printed in Lyon by Rigaud in 1620 and subsequently in Rouen and Geneva. A further edition, entitled *Cours de Philosophie*, was published with the author’s approval by his customary publisher, Sonnius. Dupleix’s complete works met with resounding success up until 1645 and his *Curiosité Naturelle* was even translated into English (*The Resolver or Curiosities of Nature*, London, 1635).

Short Biography

Scipion Dupleix became an orphan at the age of 11. He was educated at the Collège de Guyenne, where he followed the teaching of Scottish scholastic philosopher Robert Balfour to whom he claimed he owed his learning. Contrary to popular opinion, he was not appointed preceptor to the Comte de Moret (there is no historical proof to corroborate this (Blanquie 2008a)) and did not embark upon his career in philosophy on the instigation of Queen Margaret of Valois, first wife of King Henry IV of France. Dupleix had published *La Logique* and *La Physique* before meeting her and put his work to good use in winning the Queen’s favors (Blanquie 2008a, 2008b). She took him into her service in 1605 and encouraged him to pursue his philosophical reflections. In 1619, he published his *Memoires des Gaules* and became king’s historian, in the service of King Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu. Despite the fact that he entered into the King’s service, he remained a magistrate until his death (he became “Premier consul” of Condom in 1626 and State Councillor).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Dupleix was both a philosopher and pioneering figure in the popularization of philosophy. In the

latter role, he was the first person to produce a complete work on scholastic philosophy in French that was more than the mere digest or abridged version like those hitherto penned by Noël Taillepied (*Œuvres de philosophie, à Sçavoir Dialectique, Phisique, et Ethique d’Aristote*, 1583) or Jean de Champaignac (or Champeynac: *Sommaire des Quatre Parties de la Philosophie, Logique, Ethique, Phisique et Metaphisique*, 1606). Dupleix was also keenly interested in pedagogical questions and takes great care to accompany his reader, even the novice, step by step down the path towards philosophical enlightenment. He coined or disseminated a number of philosophical terms in French directly borrowed from scholastic Latin and peppered his treatise with numerous quotations from Aristotle which he translated into French, at a time when not a single of the treatises of the *corpus naturale* had as yet been translated. His writing is characterized by the values of humanism and clearly expresses a desire to please those most bookish among his readers – his texts are enriched with snippets of Latin or Greek poetry, and he refers abundantly to the work of the great French poet Guillaume du Bartas who worked in the field of science in the 1580s (Balsamo 2004; Giacomotto-Charra 2014). Dupleix unites his desire to disseminate a philosophical train of thought, faithfully translating scholastic works and drawing its inspiration directly from Latin manuals, with that of striking a happy medium between the scholarly idiom of French philosophy and a more amiable style capable of winning over readers with no natural predilection for philosophy.

In many ways, Dupleix was a true philosopher. He resolutely adopted instrumental logic and, in his other works, made clear philosophical choices. He regularly (albeit not systematically) voiced his opposition to Thomist interpretations, preferring Duns Scot or Durand de Saint-Pourçain (Ariew 1992; Faye 1986, 1998). He discussed the philosophy of his day and was a vehement critic of Jean Bodin and his *Universae Naturae Theatrum*, integrating contemporary ideas on medicine formulated by Jean Fernel into his treatise and correcting Aristotle on certain points. He explored such questions as

metempsychosis and demonomania, thereby directly responding to commonplace concerns of his day. While Roger Ariew considered him a scholastic philosopher, in *Wonder and the Order of Nature*, L. Daston and K. Parks regarded him as a preternatural philosopher, providing ample proof if any were needed that his philosophy, hitherto so little studied, is worthy of far greater exploration.

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Duplessis-Mornay

Born: Buhy, 5 November 1549

Died: La Forêt-sur-Sèvre, 11 November 1623

Hugues Daussy

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Abstract

Philippe de Mornay is Lord of Plessis-Marly, called Duplessis-Mornay or Du Plessis-Mornay, and baron of La Forêt-sur-Sèvre (Buhy, 5 November 1549, to La Forêt-sur-Sèvre, 11 November 1623). He is a Huguenot diplomat, polemicist, man of letters and theologian who devoted his life to the defence and promotion of the Reformation in France and Europe.

Biography

French gentleman born in a catholic family, Philippe Duplessis-Mornay made his conversion to Calvinism when he was still a child, after the death of his father and under the influence of his mother. He received a good education which ended by a “grand tour” through Europe. Well integrated in an international protestant network, he was at first a theologian, but in order to promote the French protestant cause, he moved to a political action. After the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre, which he miraculously escaped, he took his part in the elaboration of monarchomach thought, writing one of its most important treatise, the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*. He entered then in the service of the king Henry of Navarre and developed a less subversive political thought, writing tens of pamphlets in order to defend the

rights of his master to the throne of France and the right, for the Huguenots, to get a legal status allowing them to live in the realm of France. After his disgrace, in 1600, he remained a major leader of the Huguenot movement.

Two clearly distinctive aspects can be perceived in the political thought developed by Duplessis-Mornay. The first is his secret involvement in the monarchomach movement. Recent researches tend to prove that he was the real author of the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, first published in 1579 under the pseudonym Stephanus Junius Brutus but written a few years earlier. In that treatise, Duplessis-Mornay developed the theory of the contract between the people and the prince founded on the sovereignty of the people given by God. The conditional obeisance to the prince, submitted to the respect, by him, of the terms of the contract, allowed the magistrates leading the people to destitute the prince in case of tyranny. The regicide right was strictly limited to a fight against a tyrant who usurped his power. The authorship of this very subversive treaty has never been recognized by Duplessis-Mornay.

The second dimension of his political thought also has an innovative dimension, but without any subversive aspect. Simultaneously, he fought for the accession to the throne of France of the protestant first prince of the blood, the king Henry of Navarra, who became Henry IV, king of France, in August 1589, and for the defense of the Huguenot minority. His reflection was based on the absolute defense of the Salic law, a fundamental law of the realm, which had to prevail on any religious consideration. He tried to demonstrate that the religion of the prince had no importance in the process of succession, which had to remain only politic. He thus worked in favor of the separation of the political and religious spheres, which were absolutely confused. His effort in that way played an important role in the process of negotiation and elaboration of the Edict of Nantes which was the concretization of the distinction, in each person, of the citizen as the political personality and the Christian as the religious personality.

During his whole life, Duplessis-Mornay was in close relation with the most important

protestant theologians and philosophers of his time. Above them, we can quote François Hotman, who developed a similar thought on many subjects, or Theodore Beza. But he was also in touch with many diplomats, like Hubert Languet, statesmen and princes, as well as with catholic writers as Michel de Montaigne.

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- [Calvin, Jean](#)
- [Calvinism](#)
- [Luther, Martin](#)

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Dupuy, Claude

Born: Paris, 1545 [bap.: 13 August 1545]

Died: Paris, 1 December 1594

Shanti Graheli

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Abstract

Claude Dupuy was a jurist, a humanist, and a bibliophile (Dupuy et al. 2001). He trained in Paris under prominent scholars like Jean Dorat, Adrien Turnèbe, and Denis Lambin, completed his studies in jurisprudence at the University of

Toulouse, and was a pupil of Jacques Cujas in Bourges. He travelled in Italy between 1570 and 1571. Gian Vincenzo Pinelli in Padua, Carlo Sigonio in Bologna, and Fulvio Orsini in Rome were among the most important connections he made during this time. He was based in Paris for most of his professional life, mixing his duties at the *Parlement* as *avocat* and later *conseiller* with his passion for the letters. He was of a sickly constitution and died of kidney stone disease at 49 years of age. His wife Claude Sanguin bore him eight children, two of which, Pierre and Jacques, were prominent bibliophiles in the Parisian circles of the seventeenth century.

Alternate Names

Puteanus

Biography

Claude Dupuy was born in Paris in 1545, the eldest child of Clément Dupuy and Philippe Poncet. His father was a lawyer, originally from the Forez region, who had moved to Paris in his youth. His mother came from a prominent Parisian family. Clément Dupuy died in 1554, leaving his wife and three children under the protection and support of eminent figures such as Cardinal François de Tournon and Ippolito d'Este (Delatour 1998). Being of frail constitution, Claude was more naturally led to studying than to physical exertion (Delatour 1998). He grew up having access to the circle of Paris humanists, such as Jean Dorat, Adrien Turnèbe, and Denis Lambin; he was initiated early to the study of Greek, and completed his humanities education by the early 1560s. He completed his studies in jurisprudence in Toulouse and followed the lectures of Jacques Cujas in Bourges. By the end of 1566 he had been appointed a lawyer of the *Parlement* of Paris.

Familiarity with the great humanist circles in Paris nurtured Dupuy's interest in Classical Antiquity and philology. In 1570 he undertook the then

traditional *voyage d'Italie*, provided with letters of introduction and a well-trodden itinerary including Venice, Padua, Bologna, Rome, and Florence among his destinations. In Venice he met Aldus Manutius the Younger; their exchanges left a trace in the editions published by the Aldine Press in the following months, acknowledging Dupuy's assistance (Delatour 1998). In July 1570 Dupuy was in Padua, where he met Melchior Wieland (director of the botanic gardens), renowned physician Girolamo Mercuriale, and he became fast friends with the great bibliophile, Gian Vincenzo Pinelli. Their long-lasting correspondence is representative of their efforts in seeking and correcting ancient and modern texts (Dupuy et al. 2001; Lastraioli 2001). Dupuy met Carlo Sigonio in Bologna, strong of a letter of introduction signed by Pinelli, and later continued his journey to Rome, where he spent the remaining months of his Italian tour. There he had the opportunity to use the Vatican Library, collating the works of Sallust, and private libraries such as that of Fulvio Orsini (Delatour 1998). He also followed the lectures of Marc-Antoine Muret in November 1570. On his return journey Dupuy stopped in Florence, where he met Piero Vettori, this time recommended by Fulvio Orsini.

Thanks to the contacts he made in Italy, Dupuy was now able to rely on an extensive epistolary network, to which were added in the following years important names such as Joseph-Juste Scaliger, Jacques-Auguste de Thou and Jacopo Corbinelli (Calderini De Marchi 1914). In 1575 he was made *conseiller au Parlement de Paris*, taking the office of Jean Morelet du Muiseau (Delatour 1998; Dupuy et al. 2001). He married a niece of Christophe de Thou, Claude Sanguin, who bore him eight children. Among them, the most prominent were Pierre (1582–1651) and Jacques (1591–1656), who followed in their father's steps as bibliophiles. Pierre was born in Agen in late 1582, when Claude and his wife were travelling throughout Guyenne on his assignment for the chamber de justice at Bordeaux, Agen, Périgueux, and Saintes. As well as keeping faith with his professional engagements, Dupuy also took this

opportunity to strengthen his ties with the humanists of the south-west (Delatour 1998).

With the aggravation of the political turmoil in France, Dupuy took refuge in his studies and his garden; having close friends among both the Catholic and the Huguenot parties, he took no sides for one faction or the other (Delatour 1998). As the city of Paris fell into a state of disarray during the War of the Three Henrys (1587–1589), several magistrates of Dupuy's standing were rounded up by the Catholic League's forces and taken to the Bastille. Dupuy himself was imprisoned for over 2 months, a sore trial given his bad health (Delatour 1998; Dupuy et al. 2001). In the summer of 1589 he took his family to safety to a property in the country owned by his brother-in-law, Claude Séguier; here his wife gave birth to their seventh child, who did not survive. The last period of Dupuy's life was characterized by financial difficulties and ill health. He was reinstated to his former office after pledging his disassociation from the Catholic League, and he was present at the crowning of Henry IV in Chartres in February 1594. The king entered Paris in March 1594. Dupuy did not live long to enjoy the newly restored peace and died of kidney stone disease on 1 December 1594.

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Duran, Profayt

► [Duran, Profiat](#)

Duran, Profiat

Born: Perpignan, c. 1355

Died: Valencia, 1433 (?)

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Abstract

Profiat Duran was a fourteenth-/fifteenth-century Jewish polymath who was born in Aragon/Catalunya and was forcibly converted to Christianity during the 1391 Iberian anti-Jewish riots but continued writing in Hebrew, including anti-Christian polemics.

Alternate Names

[Efod](#); [Efodi](#); [Bonafide](#), [Honorat](#); [de Bonafide](#), [Honoratus](#); [ha-Levi](#), [Isaac ben Moses](#); [Duran](#), [Profayt](#)

Biography

Born most likely in the mid- to late 1350s, Profayt Duran lived in Perpignan and worked as a physician. He wrote exclusively in Hebrew, but must have spoken the local vernacular, Catalan, and could read Latin. Forcibly converted to Christianity around 1391, Duran took the name Honoratus de Bonafide; afterward he wrote in Hebrew under the pen name “Efod.”

Duran studied and privately taught astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and philosophy, producing notes on the first book of Ibn Sina's *Qanun fi-l-tibb* (*Canon of Medicine*) and a well-known Hebrew commentary on Moses Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*. He did not compose original astronomical works but was technically and theoretically proficient; he did compose a commentary on Ibn Rushd's *Abbreviation of the Almagest*, comparing it with a “Correction” of the *Almagest* by Jabir ibn Aflah, and criticized a fourteenth-century work on theoretical astronomy by Joseph ibn Nahmias.

In 1393, Duran wrote a funeral eulogy for a rabbi who had perished in the 1391 riots. There he asserts that although the outward deeds of his fellow forced converts might be characterized as idolatrous, their hearts were pure – and they therefore merited redemption along with the rest of the Jewish people. Two years later, Duran wrote *Heshev ha-Efod* (*Cincture/Computation of the Efod*), a concise elementary work on the astronomical concepts behind the Jewish calendar, reconciling rabbinic sayings with current astronomical knowledge.

Best known among his post-conversion writings are two anti-Christian polemical works: *Al tehi ka-avotekha* (*Do Not Be like Your Fathers*, c. 1395), a sarcastic epistle of “praise” that actually pours scorn on a recent voluntary convert to Christianity, attacking the irrationality of Christian dogma and pointing up the absurdity of a philosophically educated Iberian Jew converting to a religion based on faith rather than reason, and *Kelimat ha-goyim* (*Shame of the Nations*, c. 1397), a serious historical and textual critique of contemporary Christianity as a corruption of Jesus' words and life, from the perspective of the historical development of religion.

The *Ma'aseh Efod* (*Work of the Efod*, 1403), Duran's most important work, is a treatise on Hebrew grammar. It argues that, as against the obligation to observe ritual practices, the ultimate purpose of Jewish religious life is to study and internalize the Hebrew Bible and its grammar. Duran offers an entire curriculum of study as well as advice for pursuing it, touching as well upon the origin of Hebrew, the place of Hebrew

Scripture in the order of the universe, and the potency of words – in particular the Tetragrammaton – in the working of miracles. As he conceived it, reading, studying, fully understanding, and remembering the biblical text, or select parts of it, can provide the means of attracting divine emanation and divine providence and of atoning for transgressions. The salvific powers of the Bible are not limited to those persons able to apprehend the meaning of the text on the highest intellectual level; it is a source of salvation even for those who do not or cannot fully understand it. Duran's reshaping of Judaism as a system of intellectual meditation on divine texts, functioning by means of an occult virtue, bears distinct similarities to Jewish and Christian magical thought of the late-medieval Iberian and southern French world.

At some point after his conversion, Duran spent time in Navarre and Italy; he returned to Perpignan in 1411. The following year, he was a minor participant in the Compromise of Caspe. A *magister in medicina Honoratus de Bona Fe* registered his will in Valencia on May 26, 1427, and died there January 20, 1433.

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Dürer, Albrecht

Born: 21 May 1471

Died: 6 April 1528

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Abstract

We have a large amount of documents concerning Albrecht Dürer, one of Renaissance Europe's most important artists, an amount which is much more significant than that concerning any other German artist of the time and comparable to the amount available about Italy's great masters of his time, such as Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo. Engraver, painter, and art theorist, Dürer has left us about a thousand drawings, as well as about 300 prints, a little less than 200 paintings, three amply illustrated treatises on art theory and a large body of theoretical studies more or less linked to the drafting of these treatises.

Biography

Dürer was born on May 21, 1471 in Nuremberg, the city to which his father Albrecht the Elder (1427–1502) had moved 16 years earlier in order to exercise his goldsmith profession with more and more success. Dürer's initial training was with his father. However, in 1486 he had already moved into Michael Wolgemut's (1434–1519) workshop, Nuremberg's most famous painter and engraver at that time. Dürer stayed in Wolgemut's workshop until 1489, perfecting his training and collaborating to drawing some of the illustrations contained in *Liber chronicarum* by Hartmann Schedel. Afterward, between April 1490 and May 1494, Dürer was engaged in a series of travels along the Rhine, still partly mysterious because of the very little surviving documentation. He stayed with certainty in Colmar, Basel, and Strasbourg. In this decisive

period, the young artist came into contact with the art of Martin Schongauer (c. 1450–1491), the master who had revolutionized German painting and engraving in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and with Basel's and Strasbourg's leading typographers. Between 1494 and 1495, he completed his training and education, studying the Italian art of the time: a number of drawings, accurate copies of Italian models (Andrea Mantegna, Antonio Pollaiuolo, Lorenzo di Credi, Gentile, and Giovanni Bellini) date back to this period.

The obvious influence of these models, which led to a substantial change in Dürer's art style, led scholars of the second half of the nineteenth century to believe that Dürer had spent a short amount of time in Venice between the autumn of 1494 and the spring of 1495. However, this fact is still debated, since Dürer could also have received these decisive Italian art influences in Nuremberg through the mediation of prints and drawings, whose trade was widespread north and south of the Alps at that time. From the spring of 1495 until his death on April 6, 1528, Dürer kept a workshop in Nuremberg, a city which he left only in a few significant occasions, among which a long, essential, and well-documented stay in Venice between the late fall of 1505 and January of 1507 (from Venice the artist then travelled to Bologna, Ferrara, and probably Padua) and an equally long and important journey to the Flanders and the Netherlands in 1520–1521, during which he wrote a detailed diary which has fortunately survived to this day.

Dürer had direct relationships with leading Nordic humanists: citizen and imperial counsellor Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530), with whom he had the friendship of a lifetime, with very important effects on his engraver, painter, and most of all art theorist activity; lawyer Christoph Scheurl (1481–1542), whose works are a primary source for the reconstruction of a proper biography of Dürer; Pope Alexander VI's bedroom master and, later, canon of Bamberg Lorenz Beheim (c. 1457–1521), who wrote Dürer's first horoscope; poet Conrad Celtis (1459–1508), who

celebrated him as the new German Apelles; and philosopher Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/1469–1536), who, after being portrayed in a touching pencil drawing as well as in a famous engraving, supplied the first incisive praise of Dürer as an engraver.

In 1525, in his workshop in Nuremberg, Dürer printed the *Unterweisung der Messung*, the Course in the Art of Measurement with which he began the publication of his art theory, a book for practical use and not a treatise on pure mathematics. The *Unterweisung der Messung* “served, so to speak, as a revolving door between the temple of mathematics and the market square. While it familiarized the coopers and cabinetmakers with Euclid and Ptolemy, it also familiarized the professional mathematicians with what may be called ‘workshop geometry’” (Panofsky 1943). Two years later, in October 1527, Dürer printed his military architecture text, one of the first books on the subject (*Etliche Unterricht zu Befestigung der Stett, Schlosz, und Flecken*, <https://books.google.com/books?id=JyS5-tUNtskC>), and in November of the following year, about 6 months after his death, came his essential treatise on the proportion of the human body (*Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion*). This vast *corpus* of theoretical treatise – which Dürer had started drafting much younger, immediately after returning from his travel to Italy in 1505–1507 – was immediately translated into Latin and printed from 1532 on in Nuremberg (at the home of Dürer’s widow, Agnes) and Paris (in Christian Wechel’s workshop). In just 3 years, a new and impressive Latin-written work by “Albertus Durerus” was ready to be widely read and studied throughout Europe, until the end of the seventeenth century.

For the first approach to Dürer’s vast bibliography, the following sources can be consulted: Mende (1971) and Hutchison (2000); moreover, the following bibliography is available online: http://duerer.gnm.de/wiki/Dürer-Bibliografie_nach_1971. More recent and updated biographies are Hutchison (1990) and Rebel (1996).

The following classic monographic works can also be consulted: Thausing (1884), Wölfflin (1926), and Panofsky (1943). Recent studies are *The Essential Dürer* (Silver and Smith 2010) and

Smith (2012). The catalogues of two important exhibitions held at Nuremberg’s Germanisches Nationalmuseum are also essential: *Albrecht Dürer 1471–1971* (1971) and *Der frühe Dürer* (2012). The most important catalogue *raisonné* of the artist’s drawings is still Winkler (1936–1939), only partially integrated by Strauss (1974). The most thorough catalogue of Dürer’s paintings is Anzelewsky (1991). As for printed work (prints, prints bound in volumes, illustrated treatises), the following publication is now available with broad and inclusive references to previous catalogues: *Albrecht Dürer. Das druckgraphische Werk 2001–2004*. The standard edition of the artist’s many manuscripts is contained in *Dürer. Schriftlicher Nachlaß* (Rupprich 1956–1969). In English language is now available: Ashcroft (2017). Dürer’s impressive success in Europe, namely, the varied reception of his art during the Renaissance and the Baroque period has been the subject of many recent publications, among which: Fara (2007), Dürer and Bartoli (2008), Vogt (2008), Grebe (2013), and Fara (2014).

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E

Ebreo, Leone

► [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Ebu's-su'ud

Born: 30 December 1490 [?], Müderris, near Istanbul

Died: 23 August 1574, Istanbul

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Abstract

Ebu's-su'ud, son of Mehmed son of Mustafa al-ʿImad (Müderris, near Istanbul, 30 December 1490 [?]-Istanbul, 23 August 1574), was one of the most prominent Ottoman jurists and contributed greatly to what we came to regard as Ottoman law.

Biography

Son of an Anatolian scholar and dervish with strong links to the Ottoman palace and intellectual elite, Ebussuud studied under his father and other scholars and begun his own teaching career in

various *medreses* in Istanbul, Bursa, and other towns from 1516 on. In 1527/1528 he became a teacher in the *Semâniye* medreses in Istanbul, the highest educational post at the time, and then jumped to the judicial career with his appointment as judge of Bursa in 1533. Only 6 months later he became judge of Istanbul and 4 years later military judge (*kazasker*) of Rumili. Finally, in 1545 Ebussuud was appointed by the Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent as *şeyhülislam* or chief *müfti*, i.e., the head of the religious hierarchy who gave definitive responsa (*fetva*) on questions regarding the Holy Law. He kept this post under two Sultans till his death in 1574. Apart from his *fetvas*, which virtually formed Ottoman law in the Suleymanic era, Ebussuud also wrote commentaries on juristic issues and the Quran, as well as legal treatises.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

By the time Ebussuud became *şeyhülislam*, there was already a huge literature on *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence regulating everyday aspects of the *şer'iat* or Holy Law; on the other hand, Ottoman Sultans from the late fifteenth century onward had issued several codes of law (*kânûnnâmes*), especially on landholding, tax, and penal issues, which in various ways departed from the precepts of the *şer'iat*. Ebussuud's task became to reconcile the religious law with the *kanun* or secular law, in order to produce a coherent body of legal precepts which would respond to the needs of a quasi-feudal

empire as the Ottoman was in this period. In practice, what Ebussuud did was to create Islamic foundations for a secular legal building, i.e., to provide justifications based on *şer'iat*-based stratagems and precepts for institutions and practices which had a clearly secular basis; the emphasis on the enhanced authority of the Sultan was facilitated by Ebussuud's redesignation of the former as Caliph. Moreover, Ebussuud's rulings had often clearly political goals, justifying the Sultan's policies in various disputable issues (such as the executions of Princes Mustafa in 1553 and Beyazid in 1559, or the breaking of the peace treaty with Venice in 1570).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Ebussuud brought important transformations in the posts he served: as a *Rumili kazaskeri*, he organized the system of rotation and promotion of judges, which prevailed for the period to come; as a *şeyhülislam*, he institutionalized this office and the production of *fetvas*. His most important contribution, however, was the identification of Sultan's rule with the rule of *şer'iat* and of the Sultan as a guardian of the faith and of the Holy Law; under his rulings, the competence of judges was to depend on the Sultan who appointed them, and thus their applying the *şer'iat* was bound to the Sultan's directives. With his legal devices, and in close collaboration with Süleyman (and perhaps less with his successor, Selim II), he legitimized current Ottoman practices under Islamic terms. In landholding, Ebussuud established state ownership over the land (a key notion for the Ottoman feudal and taxing system) using an elaborate distinction between *dominium eminens* and possession and usufruct and redefined the relevant terminology (and taxation) on the basis of traditional Hanefi theorizing on rent and loan.

As for religious endowments (*waqf*), he argued that the Sultan maintains the ultimate control over the endowed land, but also defended the legitimacy of donation of cash, i.e., of using lending money with interest for charitable purposes. Ebussuud's arguments in this case are of special interest: he stressed that such endowments had

been legitimized by constant usage for centuries and also that a possible annulment of these established endowments would jeopardize the welfare of the community. On this issue he embarked on a bitter debate with Birgivi Mehmed b. Pir Ali (1523–1573), a scholar who insisted that such endowments would constitute usury and thus should be condemned (another issue of debate with Birgivi was Ebussuud's permitting remuneration for religious services).

Impact and Legacy

Ebussuud's legal edifice dominates over Ottoman law of (at least) the century following his death, all the more so since his period came to be considered a "Golden Age" for the empire, deviations from which were held responsible for any signs of "decline." Only in the 1670s, under the influence of Birgivi's successors (the followers of Kadızade Mehmed, q.v.), did the Ottoman administration begin to experiment with a revival of purely Islamic law, especially in land and taxation systems.

Cross-References

► [Kadızâde](#)

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Economics, Renaissance

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Abstract

How did Western economic learning come to claim the status of a separate discipline? When – and how – did it begin to define and organize its own field of specialization, vocabulary, areas of interest, and methods of study? What kind of methodological problems were raised by the attempt to make economic knowledge a real science? In order to answer these questions, this chapter suggests that we need to resist the temptation to treat the Renaissance as a mere repository of “premises,” “forerunners,” and “anticipations” of the present discipline of economics. Instead, the discontinuity between Renaissance and modern economics, as well as the culturally fragmentary nature of the Renaissance “economic” knowledge, will be emphasized. Rejecting the conventional narrative that takes for granted a homogeneous and necessary development of modern “economic thought,” it is maintained that this notion is a cultural artefact constructed by choosing, among various past “economic” discourses, those on which our present reality casts a false glow of inevitability.

Synonyms

[Economie](#); [Economy](#); [Oikonomia](#)

Methodology

We can define “economic knowledge” as the body of attempts to furnish a fairly general view of the functioning of economic life in society. Joseph A. Schumpeter (1981, 2) defined “History of Economic Analysis” as “the history of the intellectual efforts that men have made in order to *understand* economic phenomena or which comes to the same

thing, the history of the analytic or scientific aspects of economic thought.” This interpretative ambition also distinguishes economic knowledge from the mind-sets brought into play by the separate groups – merchants, farmers, laborers, and consumers – historically engaged in acts of production, exchange, and consumption, for these figures did not intend to interpret economic life as a whole; they meant simply to act in ways which may be judged economically important according to specific theories or points of view.

Inevitably, any attempt to study the forms which economic knowledge took in Western culture between the Middle Ages and the early modern era is conditioned by the forms and methods the field assumed in mid-eighteenth century, when it became a distinct discipline among other human and social sciences. The intellectual operation fixing the premises which led to its classification as a science is in some measure conditioned by what that science has become today, so it is difficult to resist the temptation to pick and choose from among past economic discourses those which are closest to, or perhaps overlap with, positions espoused by economists of our own time.

It is almost inevitable that if one takes a narrow neoclassical view of economics, equating it with the study of competitive market prices, one will not find any “economic” knowledge in the Renaissance (Ekelund and Hébert 1999). But the privileged theories and objects of today’s economic debate (production and the exchange of goods and services, effects of public policies and expenditure on the distribution of income, causes of unemployment, determinants of richness or poverty of some countries, origin of trade flows, and so on) are such precisely because a specific discipline – economics – has chosen, and distinguished, them from other theories and social phenomena. It is well known that the term “economics” has been used in English since the 1890s; before then, the name commonly used was “political economy,” indicating “the connection between the study of the economy and the political life and institutions of society” (Sandmo 2011, 3).

Textbooks, even when they admit that descriptions and analyses of the economic organization

of society and of economic decisions can be traced far back in history, usually begin with a short bird's-eye view on economic thought before Adam Smith ("pre-Adamite," in the words of Mark Blaug (1997, 10)), the aim of which is to identify a selection of various views or "schools" presenting the functioning of an economic system or a set of economic policy prescriptions. The attention of such research, moreover, is almost always concentrated on the strictly logical and argumentative dimension within a rather rigid canon of authors, works, and theories (Psalidopoulos 2000), under the assumption that this canon gradually developed into classical and postclassical theories of political economy. This approach does not, however, fully resolve the historical and cultural problem posed by the "origins of scientific economics" (Letwin 1963).

With reference to the Middle Ages, Joel Kaye (2000, 14) has had the merit of emphasizing how scholastic natural philosophers began to create a new model of nature, one that could explain the order and logic of the marketplace – "dynamic, self-equalizing, relativistic, probabilistic, and geometrical . . . It was within the new model of nature that science emerged." Terence Hutchinson's seminal book (1988, 14–24), in turn, identified throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries two distinct streams of economic "thought and literature" which "flowed mainly independently of one another": the mercantilist literature on current policy problems and the ideas of the natural law philosophers, which introduced the concepts of natural order and natural law and contributed to the formation of value and price theory. Another interesting approach, following Emil Kauder (1965) and Albert Hirschman (1997), consists of inquiring into the genealogy of single economic principles, placing axiomatic choices in their historical and philological context.

The relationships which these research agendas set up between that culture and the economic science that took shape between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries might be defined, in Michel Foucault's (1966) terms, as archaeological: just as someone uncovering the remains of a Roman basilica below a Christian cathedral is led to examine the nature of the basilica in question

and the relationship between the two human constructs, the reader of this chapter will be referred back to a period in which some of the *topoi* of what would become political economy, and later economics, were slowly taking on the visible traits of objects of study and observation.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Iconology, or a Description of Universal Images (Iconologia, overo descrizione dell'immagini universali), an influential encyclopedic repertoire of human images personifying abstract concepts, composed by Cesare Ripa (1593) as an aid to artists and printed in Rome, had no image for economy. Only in the revised 1603 edition, consulted by Jan Vermeer and the artisans decorating Versailles, was "economy" offered: a "matron of venerable mien, crowned in olive leaves, holding in her left hand a compass, and in her right hand a wand, and having by her side a rudder." This, Ripa advised, was her aspect "for the happiness of common political life requires the union of many families, which live under shared laws and with them govern themselves." And since "for each family to support itself with proper decorum, it needs laws that are more specific and limited than universal [laws]," the "private order of family government is passed on to us in a word that comes from the Greeks – Economy" (ibid., 118). The familiar dimension of the word-concept "oikonomia" induced Ripa to suggest that artists who might wish to represent it should portray the profile of a mother "with the wand signifying the authority the householder has over servants and the rudder signifying the care and guidance a father must exercise over his children." The "olive chaplet" with which the woman was crowned further showed that "the good economist must of necessity keep the peace in her home. The compass marks how much each person must measure his forces and, govern himself accordingly, in spending as in other things, to support his family and perpetuate it through careful [management]." Guidance, consensus, and measure, these were the characteristics of all good economy, and in virtue of this, "it is to be pictured as a matron, almost as

if that were the age most apt for the government of the household, because of the experience she has of worldly things" (ibid., 118–119).

This iconographic stereotype, inasmuch as it is an image created for immediate identification, offers us the contemporary sense of the term at its most banal and usual. Its origins are to be found in chapters eight, nine, and ten of the first book of Aristotle's *Politics* and in the fifth chapter of the fifth book of his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Xenophon had also contributed to this view with the *Economicus*, and so, too, had the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*, along with the treatises on agriculture by Cato, Varro, and Columella, as well as Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (Brunner 1968). The belated inclusion of a personification of economy in the *Iconography* also suggests the lack of popularity of the term, chiefly employed among scholars and in learned treatises. In the second half of the fifteenth century, Marsilio Ficino (1548, 62) wrote to Angelo Poliziano that he had set out an *Economia*, the structure of which must have been quite similar to the one proposed in Giorgio Valla's appositely entitled *On Economy, or Domestic Administration* (*De æconomia, sive administratione domus*) (1501), which was part of his general encyclopedic system *Of the Things to Pursue and Those to Avoid* (*De expetendis et fugiendis rebus*) composed in the same period.

The place assigned by High Renaissance culture to economy within the realms of knowledge was, then, that of a branch of "real, practical, philosophy," as the Florentine humanist Benedetto Varchi (1841, 763) explicitly stated:

Real, practical, philosophy is divided into two principal parts. The first and more worthy is called practicable, treating things that are not necessary – and consequently incorruptible and eternal – as real contemplative philosophy does, but things which are contingent and made by men – and consequently may or may not be; and this part is, in turn, divided into three parts: Ethics, or Morality, which considers chiefly the habits of a single person; Economy or Familial, which teaches how a father should govern his household; the third and last [part] is called Political, that is Civil, and declares the way in which states and republics should be maintained and governed; and this is nobler than the other two and is commonly called civil science and, in a single word, prudence.

So, the traditional etymology of the word "economy" continued to be current. In 1583, Tommaso Garzoni's notorious *Universal Marketplace of Every Profession on Earth* (1996, I, 386), though aspiring to present an authoritative *summa* of all the arts, crafts, and occupations of the time, still advised its readers that "the economy is nothing other than a discipline pertinent to the correct and worthy government of one's own family or what one has taken on as one's own." And economists are "those who follow with attention the care and government of their own households, so that they become capable of political and civil administration." As late as 1650, the *Summa politica* written by the Portuguese Sebastian Cesar (1650) gave a reading of *The Prince's Economy* based on Renaissance display and liberality. This conception is shared by a number of tracts on domestic economy of the same period; among these is Giovanni Battista Alessandri's (1616) *Regarding Economy*, which counsels generosity to its readers and censures those who "in bestowing" feel "displeasure, as the illiberal and the avaricious are wont to do" (Guerzoni 2007, 60). These recommendations are based on the conviction – which in 1635 Leone Zambelli stresses in *The Wise Man Industrious in Economy* (*Il savio industrioso nella economia*), a project for the education of noblemen dedicated to Odoardo I Farnese – that the dichotomy between "raison d'état" and "economia" in the domestic management was only formal. The activity of the prince, as "head of the family" and as ruler, must rest on the same value system. Therefore, education combined the two areas of activity (raison d'état and "economia") indicating the same moral attitude toward both as proper behavior for the young man being formed.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Minute and apparently secondary linguistic developments signal the way in which the declensions of *oikonomia* in the early modern period produced semantic vibrations, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies which were still instable and in evolution. Even where the "economic" lemma seemed

to hit on meanings which seem familiar, its echoes and shadings refer us back to less evident substrata of discourse and epistemology. Let us then try now to broaden the scope of our observations, noting that such transformations mature in contexts of discourse that are strongly diversified.

We should first recall that Christian theology had, from the start, used the word *oikonomia* in the context of one of the two interpretative paradigms dominating the reading of political relationships. The first of these paradigms was political in the strict sense since it was primarily public, situating in the one God the transcendence of sovereign power. A second paradigm of economic theology coupled to the first conception was the idea of an *oikonomia* conceived as immanent order, in divine as well as human life. The contemporary philosopher Giorgio Agamben (2011) has argued that political philosophy and the modern theory of sovereignty derive from the first paradigm; in the second, instead, he finds the roots of a genealogy leading to modern biopolitics, that is, the affirmation of discourses and techniques aimed at regulating populations and adapting, intensifying, and distributing human energies. In the second century, patristic writings began to articulate what – with the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople – became the Trinitarian dogma; the re-employment of the word and the category of *oikonomia* (formulated by Aristotle) helped to conciliate the Trinity with monarchy and monotheism. This was true in an anti-monarchical sense as well, that is, in positions which affirmed that the oneness of God could not in any way be resolved into a plurality of divine figures without falling into polytheism. In the organizational paradigm of *oikonomia*, early Christian theology found the instrument which made the conciliation of monotheism, monarchy, and the Trinity possible. It did so on the basis of the argument that God, who both in essence and nature is one, may, insofar as regards his *oikonomia* – that is, the organization of his *oikos* and his divine life – have a son and may be articulated in a threefold figure. This is an *oikonomia* that is not, then, science in itself, for it is not bound to an internal system of discursive coherence. Rather, it was a group of decisions and

dispositions that were declared “economic” since they coped with specific, ever differing, problems concerning the functional order of the various parts composing the *oikos*. This was already the case in Aristotle, where the term “householder” (*despotes*) “does not indicate a science [*epistemen*] but a certain way of being” (*Politics*, 1255b, cited in Agamben 2011, 17).

After Nicaea and the other great councils, Christian philosophical and theological language became more sophisticated with the introduction of the concept of the *homousian*, the unity of substance; as a result, the economic paradigm with which the Trinity had originally been presented, which was too pragmatic for the new linguistic and conceptual arrangements, was officially abandoned. We should, however, note that this “organizational” sense of the theological *oikonomia* took on a certain vigor once again in religious debates – especially among Protestants – during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Maifreda 2012). This was especially true of works which, like the Lutheran theologian Justus Menius’ *Christian Œconomie* (*Œconomia Christiana*) of 1529, had as their object the governing of the Christian family. For example, the Huguenot Jean Daillé (1594–1670) gave the word economy a distinctly organizational tone when, in his sermons, he affirmed, “This œconomie of the Lord in the work of our health is the foundation of the exhortation which St Paul in other times addressed to the Philippians and which today he addresses to us in the verses we are about to read to you” (Daillé 1659, 472–473). His fellow Calvinist Jean Claude (1619–1687) made an analogous observation in his *Treatise on the Composition of a Sermon* (*Traité de la composition d’un sermon*): “Nearly all these motifs may be found consolidated in Jesus-Christ, and in the mysteries of his Economie: and they are such that there is no soul which is not touched by them, unless it be – I say – not hard and insensible, but entirely dead or possessed by the devil” (Claude 1688, 402). The eighteenth-century English translation of Claude’s *Treatise*, in turn, used the word *æconomy* in the text (“In this meeting of the angels and shepherds you see a perpetual character of the *æconomy* of Jesus Christ,

wherein the highest and most sublime things are joined with the meanest and lowest”) (Claude 1788, I, 272), as well as in Robert Robertson’s annotation to his comments on the work: “The Mosaic *œconomy* included the patriarchal religion” (Claude 1788, 155). Robertson went on:

The Son presents to the Father at the last day, an account of his whole œconomy for public approbation. The world judged – the righteous rewarded – the wicked punished – he devils confined – death swallowed up in victory – eternal election accomplished. Heaven peopled with a holy multitude – Behold me, and the children, whom [sic] thou hast given me! (ibid., 333)

Another interesting seventeenth-century example of English use of the term *oikonomia* with reference to the divine activity of ordering is found in *Contemplations Moral and Divine* by the judge and natural philosopher Matthew Hale (1609–1676): “There is an admirable (Economy of the divine Godness and wisdom, to bring his creature Man both to his duty and happiness” (Hale 1699, 422). “Motion, order, and divine (Economy” were, in any case, terms whose “qualities, causes and operations” he intended to examine (ibid., 232). Richard Allestree (1619–1681), provost of Eton, also spoke of a divine economy of God regarding men: “God who is essentially happy in himself, can receive no accession to his felicity by the poor contributions of men”; he wrote those with an allusively financial choice of words. “How can it therefore be suppos’d to have made them upon intuition on increasing, but communicating his happiness. And this original design is very visible in all parts of his Economy towards them” (Allestree 1677, 2). Allestree, an able administrator of his college, was even more explicit in mentioning the divine organizing activity in another work, *The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*:

What then are our clamorous repining, but so many loud invectives against Fods decree; a desire to subvert his fundamental law, and confound the distinction her has irreversibly set between our earthly and our heavenly state: and, alas, what mad insolence is this, to expect that the whole (Economy of the world must be chang’d only to humour us? (1667, 211–212)

There are some examples of a theological use of the category “economy” in Catholic contexts, too.

An especially significant one is that advanced by the Jesuit historian Daniello Bartoli (1608–1685) in *The Sage’s Recreation* (*Ricreazione del savio*) of 1659. After recalling the variety of languages, laws, customs, and forms of government in the world, Bartoli concluded that for God:

That great Father of the family (since God so names himself), the whole world is a home and as St Cyprian shows, all the generations of men are a family. Thus, the economy of his providence, in so far as regards the universal motives of public sustenance, is the same for all: in the perpetual movement of the heavens, in the infallible rising of the Sun, in the fecund influences of the stars, in the stable coming of the night and the day, in the ordered succession of the seasons, in the opportune administration of the rains and the winds.

Bartoli turns from the economic dimension of the household to the organization of the system of the universe, in turn economic. He does this through the agency of God who, as father of the family, diffuses governing intelligence throughout reality. The theological foundations of the systemic sense of “economy” could not be put more explicitly nor more explicitly linked to exchange, since, as Bartoli went on:

If, because of their different positions and their various relations to the heavens, to heat and to cold, to cloudy and to fine weather, and to day and night, one or another country holds diverse shares [of natural bounty], this, too, as we shall presently demonstrate, is wise foresight on the part of that great householder Providence, in order to unite what is divided and bring those far apart closer through abundance and need, so that commerce is born: otherwise, if every clime were to have everything, none would bother with the others; and that they do not have certain things and possess more of certain other things than they can use is the work of Providence, which causes the variety of climates and, in accordance, the varying participation of the superior influences. (Bartoli 1992, 444–445)

The encounter between the economic and theological paradigm and scientific knowledge is an especially important phenomenon. It is necessary to note that significant methodological affinities link the interpretative paradigm of theological economy to another important “economic” qualification which appears frequently in the same period: animal economy. The concept of animal economy, both as a heritage of its use by

Hippocrates and Galen and as a modification of the ancient theological acceptation discussed above, occurred in the medical and alchemical literature of the sixteenth century. This happened mainly through the Hippocratic school of Paris and Paracelsus' pupils (Balan 1975). In Paracelsus' view, the real power of stars lies in the firmamental coordination and correspondence by which phenomena and objects are chained together. There is a double firmament, he maintains, one in the heavens and one in each body, and these are linked by mutual concordance. Once again, the concept of economy becomes central in describing systemic interrelations based on an intrinsic balance. "If, for example," Paracelsus writes, "a discord takes place in the coordination of the firmament on one hand and the human economy on the other, the latter will be broken" (Pagel 1982, 68).

On this basis, the category of animal economy entered Renaissance medical culture, designating a functional internal order of any organism in which a healthy condition is the result of the sum of the health of every single individual part through a harmonious balance. In this way, animal economy became central in the writings of chemists and biologists such as Georg Ernst Stahl (1660–1734), Buffon (1707–1788), and, above all, Charles Bonnet (1720–1793), who made a comparison between animal economy and world economy as a harmonic equilibrium of single parts (Balan 1975).

In 1615, Antoine de Montchrétien (1575–1621), a poet and dramatist, published what is sometimes considered the founding text of political economy: *Patronal Political Œconomie. A Treatise in Political Œconomie: Dedicated in 1615 to the King and the Queen Mother of the King (Œconomie politique patronale. Traicté de l'æconomie politique: dédié en 1615 au Roy et à la Reyne mère du Roy)*. It was his only "economic" work and the last work he published (Panichi 1989). Montchrétien wrote of "economy" at the end of his literary career; this is the same course taken some decades later by another author from Normandy, Pierre de Boisguilbert (1647–1714), though his production was more ample.

A dramatist and translator from the Greek at Port Royal from 1674 to 1685, Boisguilbert wrote *France in Detail, the Cause of the Waning of Its Goods and the Ease of Remedy, furnishing in a Month all the Silver which the King Needs to Enrich Everyone (Le Détail de la France, la cause de la diminution de ses biens et la facilité du remède en fournissant en un mois tout l'argent dont le Roi a besoin et enrichissant tout le monde)*, printed in 1695 but written much earlier, as well as *Facts of France (Factum de la France)* and *A Dissertation on the Nature of Riches (Dissertation sur la nature des richesses)*, which can be dated to 1707 (Faccarello 1999).

The prior literary experience of these two authors had a significant bearing on the development of "economic" discourse. The habit of referring to economic operators as "actors" who "play their roles in the Republic" and "contribute" in this way to "the perfection of all sorts of projects and exchanges" was launched by Boisguilbert who also used the term "applause" to indicate the approval of those who were directly interested in perpetuating the state of crisis in French finances, which he dated back to 1660 (Faccarello 1999, 11). That Montchrétien's education was not that of a merchant was quite evident in his style of discourse, which was almost wholly lacking in quantitative aspirations, relying instead on ample metaphorical, philosophical, and political argumentation. Well aware of the scarce estimation in which the elites of the time held his theme and of the distance between what the public expected of him and what *Œconomie politique patronale* really had to say, Montchrétien excused himself to his sovereign, in the work's dedicatory letter, "for the minute things which seem to be treated here," warning him that "the principles I propose are not the most striking and magnificent [ones]" (Montchrétien 1899, 5).

Montchrétien situates his presentation on a consciously scientific plane, inviting those to whom he dedicates it – and other readers – to look at "the truth" of a nation, of France, as a single great living organism. A "mighty plane-tree, such as [the one] Themistocles compared himself to, where everyone seeks cover and then, departing again, breaks off and carries away a

branch or two” (ibid., 5). The national economy and organized political action could be identified with a natural cycle and were, therefore, themselves natural in the double sense of their inalterability and their “truth” when subjected to the analytic instruments of a philosophical observation of nature. Given that “those who are called to the government of the estates should have the glory, the increase and the enrichment of it as their chief object,” Montchrétien’s project was first of all a re-evaluation of the function of government. “To that great and most honourable design,” he wrote, “your pacific majesties can apply yourselves; in what may the persons whom you choose to admit to the administration of your affairs be more worthily and usefully employed, if not to vigil over and work for the order, employment and reconciliation of your people?” (ibid., 5). In this question was the very definition of the “patronal political *œconomie*” named in the title: order, labor, and “reconciliation,” which might be obtained through work and government vigilance.

So, an economy at once can be political and patronal: political (since it represents “the true maxims of estate and police” (ibid., 3)) because it was an essential part of the functions of royal power, the science of the administration of the property and resources of the state, and the end result of a process of a separation of the “civil” and the “political” (or public) which had been in course at least since Bodin (Panichi 1989, 68–70) and patronal because it envisioned a decisive governing action on the part of the sovereign and his functionaries, fathers, and masters of the *oikos* (“household”) in the Aristotelian sense (Montchrétien 1899, 12). The *oikos* with which political economy is concerned is not then the state in its entirety: its components are the lowly, the subjects who appear negligible to a sovereign, used to seeing in the first two *états*, the clergy and the nobility, the very essence of the nation. In contrast to what occurred with regard to justice, in the context of which the three estates of the national body acted and were placed in relation to one another, society was once more divided up into its fundamental components in order to serve the ends of *political œconomie*. The theory of

political œconomie can act on the meaner parts of the body politic, leaving the ordering of the high, “delicate,” parts in the hand of the sovereign (“Your Own hands”)—once again, a metaphor that is, as we know, full of theoretical implications. Economic science is, then, a science of the third estate: the one “made up of three kinds of man – workers, artisans and merchants.” Farmers, artisans, and merchants, inasmuch as they are holders of the dignity afforded by labor, are considered as a single culturally and socially homogeneous entity: “They mingle and join together easily, since they symbolize the same quality and tone of life, manners and humours, of action and condition” (Montchrétien 1899, 12; Maifreda 2012).

Impact and Legacy

In the early decades of the eighteenth century, the prince of the physiocrats, François Quesnay (1694–1774), physician to the Duke of Villeroy, placed the lemma *œconomie animale* in the title of his first work, the *Physical Essay on the Animal Economy* (*Essai physique sur l’œconomie animale*) (Quesnay 1736; Groenewegen 2001). The content of the treatise, which indicates yet again the long life of the Hippocratic-Galenic hypothesis, was divided into three parts. A first chapter was devoted to the elements, posing questions as to matter and its movements, as well as to fire, air, water, earth, oil, and salt. A second section regarded the humors; in this, Quesnay discussed digestion and the blood and proposed a general classification of the humors. The third and final part treated the “solid parts,” describing the various temperaments. In virtue of this work, Quesnay – who was already a member of the Académie de Lyon and the author of tracts concerning the utility of bloodletting (*Observations sur les effets de la saignée*, 1730, and *L’Art de guérir par la saignée*, 1736) – was elected secretary of the Académie de Chirurgie in 1739. When, in 1755, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715–1780) – who had taken a degree in theology at the Sorbonne – published his *Treatise on Animals* (*Traité des animaux*), he credited Quesnay with having, in the *Animal Economy*,

“destroyed . . . the mechanism imaged by the Cartesians” and repropounded by Buffon as the theme of the cerebral origins of movement (Bonnot de Condillac 1798, 465).

In any event, when François Quesnay put the term *œconomie* in the title of his volume, it had been in use for some time, especially in the context of the first efforts to give a firm basis to physiological knowledge. In 1659, Walter Charleton (1619–1707), who was physician to both Charles I and Charles II and who popularized Harvey’s physiology, published an *Œconomia animalis*, which came out simultaneously in English under the title *Natural History of Nutrition, Life, and Voluntary Motion*. Another work, entitled *Medical and Physiological Dissertation on the Œconomy of Animals (Dissertatio medico-physiologica de Œconomia animali)*, by Johann Adolf Wedel (1645–1747) was printed in Jena in 1717. It is significant that Charleton declared himself to be one with the chief atomist scientists in the full title of his most important work, the *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana: Or a Fabrick of Science natural, upon the Hypothesis of Atoms, Founded by Epicurus, Repaired by Petrus Gassendus*. His writings were, in fact, the main vehicle for the diffusion of Epicureanism in England, and his work represents an important element for understanding atomism and theological voluntarism in English natural philosophy during the latter half of the seventeenth century (Parkin 1999). In this way, the “economic” investigation of physiology or of other human and animal functions became common usage: in 1803, for example, Vincenzo Monti, when inaugurating the academic year at the University of Pavia, referred to Marcello Malpighi’s discoveries. “For us Italians,” he stated, these discoveries meant that “the entire economy of animal motion has felt the laws of calculation and even perspiration has been weighed on scales” (Monti 1841, 224).

With the outstanding success of Robert Dodsley’s *Œconomy of Human Life*, first published in 1750, the word became increasingly present everywhere. In fact, the volume ran to some two hundred editions, including forty eight in the United States, as well as translations into

Latin, Hebrew, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Danish (Eddy 1988). Widely popularized and parodied in daily newspapers as well as in magazines, the book’s first part, entitled “Duties that Relate to Man Considered as an Individual,” included treatments of “Consideration, Modesty, Application, Emulation, Prudence, Fortitude, Contentment and Temperance” and the second part, “On the Passions,” treated the themes of “Hope and Fear, Joy and Grief, Anger, Pity and Desire and Love.” The following parts were dedicated to “Woman,” to the family (“Consanguinity, or Natural Relations”), and to hierarchical relations (“Wise and Ignorant,” “Rich and Poor,” “Masters and Servants,” “Magistrates and Subjects”). The last two parts discussed the themes of “Social Duties (Benevolence, Justice, Charity, Gratitude, and Sincerity)” and “Religion.” Dodsley’s *Œconomy*, which appeared anonymously, was a veritable psychological and social physiology, offering an integrated image of the human spirit and a social and religious system with a strongly moral cast. The final page of the text presented a unified vision of this *œconomy*:

O fear the Lord, therefore, all days of thy life; and walk in the paths which he hath opened before thee. Let prudence admonish thee; let temperance restrain; let justice guide thy hand, benevolence warm thy hearth, and gratitude to Heaven inspire thee with devotion. These shall give the happiness in thy present state, and bring thee to the mansions of eternal felicity in the paradise of God. This is the true ŒCONOMY OF HUMAN LIFE. (Dodsley 1781, 94; capitals are in the original)

Again, what is most interesting for us in the “economic” production, insofar as it relates to social and naturalistic themes, is the methodology which it applies to reality. This affirms a systematic epistemology of observation regarding the links between diverse phenomena, illustrated in metaphors that sink deeply into successive economic language. The one present in the very title of the book Johann Bohn (1640–1718) dedicates to Malpighi, printed in Leipzig in 1686 – *The Anatomic-Physiological Circle, or the Œconomy of Animal Bodies (Circulus anatomico-physiologicus, seu œconomia corporis animalis)* (1686) – is especially significative. Marcello Malpighi’s own monumental

compendium (*Opera omnia*), published in London in 1687 by the Royal Society, was greeted enthusiastically by the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* with the typically “economic” metaphors of separation and medley:

Here is the beginning of the discoveries of our author regarding the liver, the spleen, the kidneys, and the brain, from which one gathers that these organs are sorts of sieves or drains, that filter through their glands various kinds of juices, to serve the needs of the *animated body*; that almost all the *animal Economy* turns chiefly on the separation, and a part on the mixture, of certain liquors. (Le Clerc et al. 1688, 59)

We should also recall that the metaphor of the circulation of liquidity within society – proceeding from circle-oriented theoretical formulations widespread in cosmology and physiology during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Lowry 1974) – finds a classic formulation in Thomas Hobbes. When, in the dedicatory letter prefacing *On Bodies* (*De corpore*, 1655) he listed the members of what he considered the tiny group of true scientists, Hobbes included Galileo Galilei, Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, Marin Mersenne, Pierre Gassendi, and William Harvey. The last of these, in *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood* (*De motu cordis et sanguinis*, 1628), had dedicated his discovery of the circulation of blood to King Charles I (Martinich 1999; Sorell 2000). Hobbes, who was interested in autopsies, saw those carried out by Harvey himself and by his personal secretary, William Petty, who, from 1650, was professor of anatomy at Oxford and, contemporaneously, taught music at Gresham College (Martinich 1999, 218–219; Aspromourgos 2001). In Chapter 24 of *Leviathan*, entitled “Of the Nutrition, and Procreation of a Common-Wealth,” Hobbes could thus adopt Harvey’s innovations and re-elaborate them in monetary terms. The circulation of wealth was represented by Hobbes as an autonomous force intrinsic in “artificial man,” in line with the mechanistic, Cartesian structure which characterizes *Leviathan* as a whole: the state there is a mechanical body, a clock, or an automaton:

The conduits, and ways by which [money] is conveyed to the public use, are of two sorts; one, that

conveyeth it to the publique coffers; the other, that issueth the same out again for publique payments. Of the first sort, are collectors, receivers, and treasurers; of the second are the treasurers again, and the officers appointed for payment of severall publique or private ministers. And in this also, the artificial man maintains his resemblance with the natural; whose veins receiving the blood from the severall parts of the body, carry it to the heart; where being made vital, the heart by the arteries sends it out again, to enliven, and enable for motion all the members of the same. (Hobbes 1998, 168)

Harvey’s discoveries were a decisive, foundational component of the whole physiology originally conceived as an “economic” science of nature. The heart took on the role of a muscle or pump, whose chief function was to exert pressure on the blood, permitting circulation. The blood, in contrast to Descartes’s hypothesis that it boiled like crushed grapes in a fermentation vat and increased in volume like heated milk, was instead pushed. The heart thus found itself at the center of a mechanical system in whose conception the heritage of Aristotle may still be discerned: Harvey’s demonstration of his theory was based on the perfection of circular movement as an imitation of celestial and atmospheric phenomena, especially the water cycle (Lennox 2006). He had, in fact, received his doctorate at the University of Padua, where he studied between 1599 and 1603, when he was a pupil of Fabrizio d’Acquapendente, whose fame is linked to the discovery of the venous valves (formalized in *De venarum ostiis* of 1603), which were the central feature of his anatomy lessons in Padua. And it was precisely in thinking about the relationship of the venous valves to the heart that led – as he told Robert Boyle – to Harvey’s intuition about the circulation of the blood in the years before 1628. Hobbes himself travelled to Italy twice: firstly, on a trip in 1610–1613, when he spent most of his time in Venice, and, secondly, in 1634–1637, when he went to visit Galileo, who was under house arrest in Arcetri. It has recently been suggested that, in the course of one of these trips, Hobbes – perhaps through Paolo Sarpi – became acquainted with Bernardo Davanzati’s *Lesson on Money*, which termed money “a second blood” – probably the oldest example of recourse

to such an analogy in monetary theory (Pagel 1967; Boldizzoni 2005).

The physiological-circulatory category of “flow” is also the basis of the conceptual model of the market formulated by Thomas Mun who, somewhat imprecisely, is considered the creator of the idea of “balance of trade.” In the three tracts he wrote in the 1620s (*A Discourse of Trade, from England unto the East Indies*, 1621; *England’s Treasure by Forraign Trade*, written in 1623, but published only in 1644; and *The Petition and Remonstrance of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East-Indies*, 1628), Mun, an East India company magnate and member of the Privy Council subcommittee instituted to gather information on the contemporary English economic situation and possible remedies, in reality built up an interpretative model of international commerce for which the metaphor of the scale is inappropriate (Oldham Appleby 1978, 37–39). Mun did not evoke a system of weights and counters capable of balancing one another, but rather a persistent, complementary, and orderly flow of goods and money. Omitting entirely any expression of the propulsive force of the movement of purchase and payment and scanting the role of the consumers, he delineated a transmission of fluids, linking country to country, supported by the private interest of merchants, landowners, and their dependants. As one of the most acute scholars who have studied him observed, Mun’s universe of commercial exchange is “essentially a coherent and mutually supporting community” (ibid., 38), which might be damaged by any restriction, destroying a chain of emulation like a cancer reaching out to devastate a body. The flow of trade must then remain free, so that “the particular members do accommodate each other, and all accomplish the whole body of the trade, which will ever languish if the harmony of her health be distempered by the diseases of excess at home, violence abroad, charges and restrictions at home or abroad” (ibid., 39).

As the seventeenth century wore on, the term “economy,” then, consolidated into a synonym of systemic interrelation. For example, Danilo

Bartoli, in his treatise of 1682 *On Coagulation (Della coagulazione)*, wrote the following:

I know there are those who, considering a certain little creature, deny that it has well-formed organic parts, but only a something or other – that not even they themselves know – that substitutes everything. I regret that to show them, I can find no anatomist, nor any anatomist can find tools – if not a thousand times larger than the body they would have to cut up. If such might be found, perhaps we would not be without a microscope with many lenses, and so excellent, that it would be able to show each of the parts large: and then, oh how much more worthy a spectacle would the economy of the body of that undefinable little creature be, than that of a huge elephant! (Bartoli 1682, 198–199)

Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655), in his treatment of the generation of animals (summarized under the title *De la generation des animaux* in François Bernier’s *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*), used the term economy to designate the extremely complex and shadowy system governing the relationships between parts of the body of animals. Its significance – and, indeed, the very recognition of its existence – implied no knowledge of the single parts which composed it. It had characteristics of uniqueness and reproducibility, exactly like the objects of what would become the economic science of society:

When, I say, we shall have managed to express all that, and a hundred other things of the same sort, all our sagacity and all our eloquence will at last be obliged to stop there, and it must be declared that we will have done nothing that gives us a true knowledge of this internal – hidden – Economy and that we glimpse this sort of artisan, or labourer, who has used such exquisite little organs with such address to work a matter – and has made so right a work of it, so well proportioned and so well organized. That is why we have only to admire these inimitable works and this divine and incomparable labourer who in the seeds of things to be created, placed, fixed, these sorts of tiny workers, so wise, so prudent, so far-seeing, so industrious. (Bernier 1984)

It is, in any case, significant that the linguistic diffusion of the economic-physiological metaphor came about in the same years in which the nearly synonymous Latin word *organismus* and its derivatives re-emerged in the work of Georg Ernst Stahl (1660–1734), a chemist who was Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia’s physician. The first use of

the term *organisme* in French can be found in the early eighteenth century, parallel to the progressive affirmation of *organism*, *organismo*, and *organismus* in medical-physiological literature in English, Italian, and German, always with reference to a specific, systematic, ordering principle applicable to plants, animals, or the entire terrestrial globe. At the end of the eighteenth century, the term “organic” began to assume its contemporary sense of a generic way of indicating individual living entities. It was probably around 1830 that the adjective finally became a noun, commonly used in the sense of “organic body,” with the emergence of biology in its contemporary forms (Cheung 2006).

In this manner, the physiological-systemic sense of “economy” links up to the equally evocative sense of procedures of organic coordination: that is, the sense, already current in the classical period, of harmonious order of the parts of a work (Maifreda 2012). The *œconomy* in question referred to the meditated and functional reorganization of a subject or a group of enunciations, according to usage that was fully consonant with the period. In any case, the physiological and discursive-organizational senses of “*œconomy*” found perfect accordance in volumes like *Œconomia Hippocratis alphabeti serie distincta* (1588) by the Metz physician Anuce Foes (Foesius, 1528–1595), a doubly “economic” treatise in its organization and its theme. Foes’ other great effort, the *Opera omnia* of Hippocrates, the first virtually complete collection of his Greek texts with Latin translation, printed in 1595, was certainly among the volumes possessed and read in a seventeenth-century edition by another famous philosopher with a medical education and strong economic interests: John Locke (Locke 1989, 341).

Finally, we should not forget that Linnaeus himself, in *Academic Specimen of Œconomy of Nature* (*Specimen academicum de œconomia naturae*), printed in Uppsala in 1749, put forward a precise definition of the expression “economy of nature.” He did so using concepts and terms that were theological and scientific, building a heuristics of the natural world founded on a theological and systematic view of phenomena:

For “natural economy” we intend the most wise disposition [*dispositio*] of natural beings, instituted by the sovereign Creator, according to which these tend to common ends and exercise reciprocal functions. All the things comprised within the limits of this universe celebrate aloud the wisdom of the creator. All that which falls under our senses, all that which is present in our minds and is worth existing, concurs, through its disposition, to manifesting the glory of God, that is to producing the end that God has willed to be the scope of all his works. (quoted in Agamben 2011, 306)

It has been demonstrated that a strict relationship exists between Linnaeus’s epistemology of nature and the economic categories set out by him in various parts of his work. Linnaeus believed that science, with its practical effects, was the primary instrument in pursuit of an ideal of national autarchy by substituting importations through the development of agronomic knowledge. That is why he engaged in an ambitious project of research aimed at discovering techniques for growing exotic plants and essences, studying together the substitution of species which could not be grown in Sweden and domestic plants carrying analogous qualities. In addition, Linnaeus’s economic interests informed his agenda for a reform in educational and administrative systems founded on the assumption that *œconomy*, viewed as the science of natural production relative to human needs, must be included in obligatory university programs. Linnaeus’s economy is, then, a “new science” and a pedagogical tool capable of providing a secure methodological foundation for a culture of the administrative apparatus of the state and, at the same time, a systematic discipline of the allocation and exploitation of natural resources (Koerner 1999). We should also note the way in which – even in the botanic and classificatory research which made his fame – Linnaeus applied a criterion of onomastic selection basically drawn from a market metaphor regulated by specific institutions. In his *Botanic Critique* (*Critica botanica*) of 1737, he wrote that “the generic name” of every plant “has the same value on the market of botany, as the coin has in the commonwealth, which is accepted at a certain price – without necessitating a metallurgic examination –

and is received by others on a daily basis, as long as it has become known in the commonwealth” (Müller-Wille 2003).

Along this road, the term “œconomy” travelled throughout the eighteenth century and a part of the nineteenth century as well, representing an important theoretical model in the development of the physiological and natural sciences. The situation changed at last when, in 1866, Ernst Haeckel declared that the term “œcologie” was more appropriate (Schabas 1990; Schabas and de Marchi 2003), freeing the path for “political economy,” a distant, and by then cumbersome, “relative.”

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Eilert

► [Lubinus, Eilhard](#)

Eilhardus

► [Lubinus, Eilhard](#)

Eleavoulkos, Theophanes

Born: 16th Century

Died: 16th Century

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Abstract

Theophanes Eleavoulkos was a scholar and monk that held the title of the Grand Rhetor of the Greek Church. He engaged in a controversy with the physician-scholar Hermodoros

Listarchos († ci. 1600) about the question of philosophical culture and education. The letters that the two thinkers exchanged constitute a testimony about the condition of post-Byzantine philosophy in Greece under Ottoman rule.

Keywords

Hermodoros Listarchos · Philosophical compilation · Sane philosophy · Greek philosophical culture

Alternate Names

[Eleavoulkos, Thomas](#)

Biography

Theophanes (Thomas by his layman’s name) Eleavoulkos was a Greek scholar and monk; his family came from Peloponnese (Sparta), but Theophanes lived in Constantinople, Mount Athos, and the city of Veroia in Northern Greece. In Constantinople, he held the title of the Grand Rhetor of the Greek Church granted to him by Patriarch Dionysius II (†1556). After the death of the Patriarch, he fell into disfavor and left Constantinople (See Sathas 1868, 144–145; Gritsopoulos 1966, 91–94). The question about philosophical education was the object of a dispute between him and Hermodoros Listarchos (ci. 1500–1577) during the years 1539–1542; Listarchos was a doctor-scholar from the island of Zakynthos in the Ionian Sea who studied in Rome and Ferrara, taught in Chios, and wrote letters about the philosophical culture of the sixteenth century. To oppose Hermodoros, Eleavoulkos wrote, in form of a series of letters, the treatise, “Ἐλεγχος κατὰ τῶν ἀπαιδευτῶς χρωμένων τοῖς λόγοις ἢ κατ’ Ἑρμοδώρου (*Critique of Those Who Exercise into the (Philosophical) Discourse Without Education or Against Hermodoros*) (See Bobou-Stamati 2002, 21–32). The controversy revolved around the nature of the philosophical discourse and

education and provided sparse evidence about some philosophical activity in Greece during the first century of the Ottoman occupation (See Steiris 2009, 182). In particular, the object of the dispute was the criticism of the philosophy in the form of an anthology of opinions and *dicta*. It also includes references to the role of the new and the old (Aristotelian) positive sciences and the concept of true philosophy. Although the quality of the arguments is not particularly high, it is possible to identify there themes that were destined to occupy post-Byzantine and Modern Greek philosophy philosophical activity up to the time of Enlightenment.

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Eleavoukos, Thomas

► [Eleavoukos, Theophanes](#)

Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural

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Abstract

For centuries, the conception of natural elements in the Western world was dominated by Aristotle's four elements-theory. In addition of being part of university curricula, such theory scaffolded the alchemical conception of matter. Starting from the seventeenth century, mechanical philosophers claimed that different material qualities were due to quantitative differences among their components. This new understanding of matter – also informed by the revival of classic atomism – paved the way to the emergence of chemistry.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

For centuries, the conception of natural elements in the Western world was dominated by Aristotle's four elements-theory. Aristotle expounded this theory mainly in book II of *On Generation and Corruption*. Accordingly, everything is composed by a material substratum – called by Aristotle “matter” – that has no separate existence from, but is always bound up with, what Aristotle calls “contrary qualities” – hot, cold, dry, and moist. Hot and cold are characterized by a certain “power to act,” while dry and moist by “susceptibility.” Contrary elements – hot and cold, dry and moist – cannot be in the same subject; from this, it follows that the material substratum can be characterized by four couplets: hot and dry, hot and moist, cold and dry, cold and moist. These couplets correspond to the four elements – fire, air, water, and earth – but just in the sense that their characterizing quality (heat, moist, cold, and dry) predominates in the couplet – so fire, for instance,

is a blend of heat and dry, but where heat is present in excess, etc. As these elements are active, they continuously turn into one another in a process that is described by Aristotle as one of “coming-to-be”; however, this takes place through the change of one of the two qualities of each couplet characterizing the element. For instance, fire, which is hot and dry, will turn into air, which is hot and moist, if the moist will overcome the dry. This is important because Aristotle excludes the possibility of alteration, that is, the idea that an element, being univocally characterized, turns into another – for instance, that air, being “only air” and thus not a combination of different qualities, turns into fire, or water, or earth. The exclusion of alteration has an important role in Aristotle’s theory, because it allows him to deny the pre-Socratic theories of the origin of the universe from a single element. The coming-to-be of the elements can be cyclical (as one turns into another which turns into another, etc.), or due to combination: for instance, from fire (hot and dry) plus water (cold and moist), it will result air (hot and moist) and earth (cold and dry). The change of both qualities at once (and so the possibility that, for instance, fire turns into water) is not completely ruled out by Aristotle, who however described it as very difficult.

It is important to keep in mind that Aristotle’s theory of natural elements was integrated in his description of motion. Elements have indeed different “natural places” – or, as Aristotle puts it in *On Generation and Corruption*, belong to different “regions” – namely, the “center” of the Earth and the “limit” of the Earth’s sphere. Cold elements belong to, and (if not impeded) tend to move towards, the center, while hot ones to, and towards, the limit. Though all hot and cold elements tend towards the same places, the elements that Aristotle deems as “purest” – namely, fire and earth – tend to occupy the regions that are close to their natural places, while water and air, which for Aristotle are more intermediate and blend, tend to occupy intermediate positions.

As a consequence, Aristotle’s theory of natural elements was part of a doctrine that provided a comprehensive account of sublunary phenomena; for centuries, it enjoyed wide acceptance and institutional endorsement. This theory represented also the basis for the alchemical matter theory, which was often complemented with additional elements – sulfur and mercury – and provided the rationale to understand the possibility of transmutation.

In the Renaissance, a number of natural philosophers developed criticisms of the Aristotelian theory of natural elements. The criticisms were inspired by an array of sources. For instance ancient atomism (whose re-popularization had started in the fifteenth century with the rediscovery and publication of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*) provided the rationale for quantitative explanation of different material qualities. Copernicanism, to quote another, contradicted the Aristotelian claim that the center of the Earth corresponded to the center of the universe, and so the idea of the natural motion of elements. Other criticisms were even more comprehensive, to the point of offering the basis for a new system of natural philosophy.

In the seventeenth century, quantitative, corpuscularian explanations of the nature of different qualities begun to challenge first, and then replaced, Aristotle’s theory of natural elements, thus paving the way to the emergence of quantitative chemistry.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Renaissance thinkers offered original and eclectic criticisms of the Aristotelian theory of natural elements. In *The Ash Wednesday Supper* (1584), for instance, Giordano Bruno endorsed Copernican heliocentrism, and on that basis denied that elements have absolute natural places. While his idea of an infinity of worlds was inspired by Lucretius, he later argued that the universe was composed by a Universal Soul informing an undifferentiated and passive Universal Matter. To make another example, in *De rerum natura*

iuxta propria (firstly published in 1570) Bernardino Telesio provided a comprehensive rethinking of Aristotelian cosmology based on a new conception of matter. Telesio argued for the existence of two active principles – heat and cold – endowed with sensibility and constantly fighting for the reciprocal information of matter, otherwise inert and deprived of qualities. A strong addition came also from alchemy, and especially from Paracelsus (1493–1541). Paracelsus argued that the Aristotelian four elements were not simple, but in turned composed by the mixture of other three: sulfur, salt, and mercury. In addition to this, many inquirers – such as Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558), Angelo Sala (1576–1636) – started developing corpuscularian conceptions of matter.

In the seventeenth century, a number of philosophers began to offer corpuscularian and mechanical interpretations to natural elements. Elements of a corpuscularian conception of matter can be found in various works of Francis Bacon's (1561–1626); they coexist with elements derived from Paracelsian alchemy. Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) offered a comprehensive revival of Epicurean atomism and thus a decisive contribution to a quantitative understanding of natural elements. Gassendi presented the hypothesis that all things in nature are made of atoms (which in the 1649 *Animadversiones* he described as endowed with motion and gravity, while in 1658 *Syntagma philosophicum* he described as inert). Atoms form in turn “molecules.” While all atoms have the same motion, molecules are endowed with different texture and a specific motion – on which grounds Gassendi explains the emergence of different biological and chemical properties. But it was especially René Descartes (1596–1650) to provide a comprehensive corpuscular rethinking of natural elements. In the *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), Descartes argued for the existence of three natural elements – earth, air, and fire – corresponding to corpuscles of different shapes – respectively, coarse and irregular, spherical, fine, and elongated – and size – with the corpuscles of earth being the biggest and those of fire being the smallest. Descartes believed that

the universe is a material continuum where no vacuum is given and that the different celestial bodies are set in motion by vortices of matter. The corpuscles of different elements are brought about by the friction of these different vortices, with the corpuscles of fires being the smallest debris – and for this reason most susceptible to motion – of such process.

Impact and Legacy

The new understanding of natural elements offered by alchemy and corpuscularianism had a significant impact in the development of modern chemistry. Robert Boyle (1627–1691), one of the founding figures of modern chemistry, was particularly receptive of them. In the *Sceptical Chymist* (1661), Boyle argued against the Aristotelian conception of elements, showing that it was impossible to combine the four elements to form any substance, and equally impossible to resolve any substance in the four elements. On the contrary, Boyle provided a new definition of element that approached the modern definition of chemical element. He defined elements as perfectly unmingled bodies, which, in other words, are not made by any other body and compose other bodies, into which they are ultimately resolved. In *The Origine of Formes and Qualities* (1666), he provided a mechanistic underpinning to this theory, by claiming that matter is composed by minimal corpuscles that have only mechanical properties. However, these corpuscles form clusters of higher degrees, which are endowed not only with mechanical properties, but also chemical ones.

Cross-References

- [Alchemy](#)
- [Boyle, Robert](#)
- [Chemistry](#)
- [Copernicus, Nicolaus](#)
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Emblem, Renaissance Origin of

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Abstract

Fortuitously created in 1531 when the Augsburg publisher Heinrich Steyner published an unauthorized collection of Latin epigrams by the legal scholar Andrea Alciato to which he had added woodcuts, the European emblem rapidly became a pan-European phenomenon that lasted some two centuries. As a bimodal construction in which a visual image combines with one or more textual fragments in a unique way to impose a moral lesson on the reader, the emblem is similar to other such Renaissance genres, including the device, the *impresa*, and the beast fable, but differs from them semiotically in several important respects. Modified emblematic forms quickly spread beyond the confines of the printed page to find a home in the applied arts. Emblems frequently appear on and in both public and private buildings, usually without the bulk of their accompanying text, no doubt with the purpose of signalling or bringing to mind the moral lessons the originals had conveyed and of linking them with the proprietor of the built space. As emblems moved from the realm of moral literature to that of design and pedagogy, many emblem books were dismembered for their woodcuts, and derivative compilations of visual emblematic material appeared late in the seventeenth century for use in the applied arts. Emblems and the emblematic reading process survive today in advertising, propaganda, flags, corporate logos, and elsewhere.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The European emblem has at times been considered the intellectual heir and successor of the

heraldic tradition, of the *Physiologus* and bestiary literature, of Egyptian hieroglyphics, and of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. In reality, however, it was essentially the brainchild of one Andrea Alciato (1492–1550), an Italian legal scholar of Milanese origin living in Bourges, France. In the 1520s, Alciato had composed and circulated in manuscript form a collection of moralizing Latin epigrams – which he called *emblemata* – inspired by a variety of sources: the *Greek Anthology*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, memories of Roman monuments and tombs he had seen as a student in Italy, and his deep knowledge of classical literature. Alciato’s use of the term appears to derive both from his use of found textual fragments and his view that humanists could adopt such epigrams as a kind of “badge.” His manuscript came into the possession of the Augsburg publisher Heinrich Steyner, who added a set of woodcuts to them and published them without seeking permission. Alciato had not foreseen the addition of illustrations to his texts, but was quick to recognize the commercial potential of the combination, and authorized editions overseen by him until his death began to appear from 1534 onward, ultimately expanding the number of emblems from the original 100 or so to 212. Alciato was quickly emulated by scores of other authors wishing to capitalize on the new craze, and both vernacular and Latin emblem books began to appear in the 1540s, spreading throughout Europe as far as Russia, Spain, and England.

The canonical emblem is often said to be a tripartite form (the *emblemata triplex*), consisting of a visual image (or *pictura*), a motto, title, or caption (the *inscriptio*), and a short explanatory verse or prose text (the *subscriptio*). In reality, however, the number of emblematic forms is so large and varied as to defy systematic description or codification, despite valiant attempts by theorists from the seventeenth century to the present day. The emblem is both a moralizing polyform and the process of reading it: a bimedral combination of image and text – the so-called “naked emblems” published by Denis de Harsy and others may safely be considered aberrations published purely for commercial reasons – encoding a generalized moral lesson that is

personalized and transferred to the reader’s own life through an iterative reading in which text and picture take turns to direct the reader’s attention back and forth among the emblem’s parts. Though the initial visual image is enigmatic – and a given *pictura* may thus appear in various emblems with different meanings – the riddle is meant to be unambiguously resolved by this reading process, so that the final meaning is unequivocal. The emblem differs from such other bimedral Renaissance genres as the *impresa* and the device, which function by signalling a personal aspiration or quality of the owner (as in heraldry) rather than by presenting a moral lesson to the reader for his or her own use.

Impact and Legacy

The emblem’s legacy is astonishingly pervasive. Quickly leaping from print to the applied arts, emblematic reminiscences soon appeared in literature, in painting, and across the entire spectrum of material culture: in tapestry, embroidery, ceramics, glassware, furniture, trenchers, book-binding, tombstones, numismatics, personal adornment, and architecture. The Jesuits were particularly keen adopters of the emblem, which was well suited to their spiritual practices and to their pedagogy, producing many collections of manuscript emblems in their colleges. Emblems were carried by Christian missionaries to Africa, to South America, and to East Asia, resulting in new and exotic productions. European publishers also produced enormous compilations of emblematic visual material for the use of designers. Emblematic survivals in our own time include the semiotic processes at work in advertising and propaganda, as well as flags and corporate logos, not to mention a few modern emblem books and several excellent emblematic websites.

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Empire, Renaissance

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Abstract

This entry traces the evolution of the meaning of empire during the long Renaissance from roughly 1340 to 1700. It focuses on the rebirth or revival of knowledge concerning the ancient

Roman Empire and the central role that this new historical consciousness played in shaping both the political meaning and reality of the new European empires of Early Modern Europe. Beginning with the foundational work of Petrarch for the revival of historical interest in Caesar as a political role model and example to be imitated in the fourteenth century, the early section also notes Petrarch's fifteenth-century disciples, Guarino Guarini and Flavio Biondo, who embraced and furthered a distinct form of *imperial humanism* that was produced for the Renaissance courts of Ferrara and Rome and that was meant to inspire and instruct princes such as the d'Este and Gonzaga. They, in turn, patronized artists such as Mantegna and Alberti whose artistic and architectural work was instrumental in giving early material form to the idea of imperial revival. In the sixteenth century, the Renaissance idea of imperial revival that had previously remained a literary dream took on powerful new meaning with the rise of the empire of Charles V (1500–1557), the first Renaissance Caesar who rivaled the ancient Caesars in power and authority, as the Florentine humanist Francesco Guicciardini noted. Ruling over a global empire that included most of Iberia, much of Italy, substantial parts of Germany and the Netherlands, and the conquered American empires of the Inca and Aztec, Charles V was surpassed only by his son, Philip II (1527–98), who added Portugal and all of its empire to the territories inherited from his father. Spanish royal historians such as Pedro Mexia and Juan Gines de Sepulveda provided political guidance and models as they added to the literature of imperial humanism that also served to provide justification for this new Roman Empire. For the sixteenth century, the meaning of empire was subsequently expressed by and embodied in the Spanish Empire. Envied by the French and British, it became a model for their own imperial pursuits that came to fruition in the later seventeenth centuries bolstered by the same imperial humanist ideals of empire and aesthetics that first rose in early Renaissance Italy.

The Medieval Heritage

In the middle of the fourteenth century, as the Petrarchan Renaissance was just beginning to take root in Italy, the word empire for western Europeans first and foremost referred to the Holy Roman Empire. A fragmented collection of Germanic territories ruled over by an emperor whose title was originally bestowed by Pope Leo III on the Carolingian king, Charlemagne, in 800, the Holy Roman Empire by the fourteenth century was a weak pretender to the ancient empire whose name it partially claimed, the ancient Roman Empire. Nonetheless, the political prestige and rank of the Holy Roman Emperor among European monarchs pointed to the continuing power of the *idea* of the Roman Empire in late medieval and early Renaissance western Europe. For the educated class, in particular, empire also referred to the other competitor for the title of true heir of ancient Rome, namely the Byzantine Empire centered in Constantinople.

While both the western and eastern empires ruled over a small fraction of the territories once ruled by Rome, they both claimed to be direct descendants from ancient Rome to increase and legitimize their political status. Thus, the meaning and memory of empire in the ancient Roman sense of the word was never far beneath the surface in the political and historical commentaries on empire in the late medieval period. Dante's *Divine Comedy*, for example, made many references to the ancient empire while stopping short of providing any substantial historical or political reflection on the Roman imperial model.

Petrarch and the Renaissance Rupture with the Medieval Idea of Empire

The clear rupture with the medieval idea of empire that entertained a romantic notion of continuity between ancient Rome and medieval Europe came with the writings of Francesco Petrarch (1304–74), the father of Renaissance humanism in the fourteenth century. He was the first to develop a more expansive and detailed meaning of empire that aimed at reviving ancient Roman

imperial greatness and the fullness of its past political meaning. More specifically, it was in Petrarch's letters and his historical writings that we find expansive reflections on the ancient Roman Empire that inspired a large body of humanist literature on that theme in the following centuries and that established what we can describe as the Renaissance philosophy of empire. Aiming for nothing less than the rebirth of the ancient Roman Empire in all of its intellectual, cultural, military, and political grandeur, this *imperial humanism* privileged historical writing above other modes of scholarly analysis (Dandeleit 2014). Indeed, it was history that was the "teacher of life" for Renaissance writers reflecting on the meaning of ancient Rome and its empire.

A foundation stone of this literature, for example, was Petrarch's "Life of Julius Caesar," a long biography of the first emperor included in the author's largest historical work entitled the *Lives of Illustrious Men* (Petrarch 2007). It presented Caesar as one of the greatest military leaders who had ever lived, and the person who had imposed upon Rome and all of its conquered territories **the rule of one**. This was a central principle and defining characteristic of empire for humanists throughout the Renaissance, and again, it was Petrarch, in one of his letters focused on the ancient Roman military, who explained the idea concisely using the Roman Empire as the central example: "With its valor and arms it overcame Italy, Europe and the entire world, and ordered it to be content with one ruler" (Petrarch 2005: 251).

For Petrarch, the purpose of studying the Roman Empire and the Caesars was anything but antiquarian. Rather, the ancient ideas and example of empire were held up as models to the rulers of his own day. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, for example, was encouraged by Petrarch to follow the example not of his Germanic predecessors but of the ancient Roman emperors. That was the path to glory, honor, fame, and real military strength. Broadly speaking, it was Petrarch's emphasis on the primacy of the ancient Roman Empire as the imperial ideal that came to dominate the scholarly focus and meaning of empire for Renaissance Europe.

The Flowering of Imperial Humanism in the Fifteenth Century

Prominent fifteenth-century Italian humanists including Guarino Guarini (1374–1460) and Flavio Biondo (1388–1463) followed Petrarch's lead in turning their attention to the ancient Roman Empire both as scholars and as political advisors. Guarino's new edition of Caesar's *Commentaries* (1433), dedicated to the marquis of Ferrara, Leonello d'Este (1407–1450), served as a pedagogical text for the young ruler as it explicitly called upon him to imitate Caesar and the politics of the rule of one, albeit in the limited setting of Renaissance Ferrara. At the same time, the idea of empire also inspired the transformation of the material culture of the city as Leonello commissioned a new equestrian statue of his father, Niccolò d'Este, from two disciples of Brunelleschi in the classical Roman style. Artistic representation in the form of statues, medals, paintings, and palaces subsequently joined new literary productions as part of the language of empire in Renaissance cities. These were the most innovative, original, and transformative aspects of the meaning of empire in the early Renaissance, and they set the stage for the next two centuries.

In some instances imperial texts and images went hand in hand as in the case of Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) and Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506) who produced, respectively, a text and series of paintings on the theme of ancient Roman triumphs. Reviving the memory of imperial victories, conquest, and the accompanying rewards of the ritual triumphs awarded to Roman generals added further meaning and depth to the idea, ambition, and lure of empire. Dedicated to the papal rulers of Rome in the case of Biondo's text, *Rome Triumphant*, and to the Gonzaga rulers of Mantua in the case of Mantegna's paintings, both works articulated an exalted image of empire that begged imitation from rulers for whom real empire was but a distant fantasy (Biondo 1544). From Biondo's perspective, especially, the Roman Empire was presented as the political ideal that united the peoples of the Mediterranean world through language, law, commerce, and

culture. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this was the political dream of many rulers, even if it remained a far off fantasy.

But the sixteenth century witnessed political developments that transformed the meaning of empire in both theory and practice. More precisely, it was the global empire of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (1500–1558), that constituted a European empire that surpassed even the Roman Empire in its geographical size, wealth, and military power. As such, it was also the first Renaissance empire to actually realize many of the goals of imperial revival advanced by Petrarch and his disciples over the previous two centuries. The hybrid empire of Charles V was created first through the dynastic alliance of the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella and the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian. They collectively left to their grandson, Charles V, all of the Spanish kingdoms in Iberia except Portugal, the Caribbean territories in the New World, the kingdoms of Sicily and Naples, the Balearic islands, and the Habsburg territories in Germany and the Low Countries. Charles V added to these through conquest two previously sovereign empires of the Inca and Aztecs in the New World, and the Duchy of Milan.

Perceived as a new Caesar not only in title but also in “theory, authority, and power,” as the Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540) described him, Charles V and his empire established the meaning of Renaissance empire as a realized political entity that both equaled and surpassed the previous model of ancient Rome (Guicciardini 1857: 384). Conquering previously sovereign empires and extracting huge sums of wealth from these new colonies to fund large armies, navies, and colossal building projects and artistic programs, this empire also coincided with numerous humanist texts that expanded upon the meaning of empire for the newly emerging imperial era (Pagden 1995).

Among the earliest of these was Niccolò Machiavelli’s *Art of War* (1521) that took as its main protagonist one of the most celebrated Italian generals of the empire of Charles V and his grandfather Ferdinand, the Roman nobleman Fabrizio Colonna. Presented as a real dialogue

that took place in the Rucellai gardens in Florence between Fabrizio and the Rucellai prince, the text revolved around the Colonna general’s reflections on war both ancient and contemporary. While the example of the Roman Republic dominated the first chapters of the book, by the end of the text, it was the ancient Roman Empire and Julius Caesar that provided the most useful examples and lessons for the waging of war. Like *The Prince*, *The Art of War* was thus marked by an imperial turn as it provided instructions for rulers who sought to impose the rule of one. The Republican age was passing as the theories and practices and ideologies of empire came to dominate European political thought, a development that the debate over the rights and legitimacy of the Spanish Empire in the New World highlighted (Pagden 1990).

Prompted by the criticism of the Spanish conquistador turned priest and advocate of Indian rights, Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566) in his famous treatise *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, a formal debate over whether the wars of conquest were justifiable was ordered by Charles V in the early 1550s. His royal historian, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1489–1573), a scholastic theologian trained at Alcalá and Bologna, argued against Las Casas that the war was justified using a combination of Aristotelean natural law theory and the historical example of ancient Rome. In his treatise, *Democrates Segundo*, Sepúlveda, following St. Augustine, argued that “God conceded to the Romans a very expansive and glorious empire to impede the great evil that spread among many people” (Sepúlveda 1997: 63). Just as the superior civilization of the ancient Roman Empire justified their conquest of so many inferior peoples and the enslavement of those who lacked the marks of civilization, so too the superior civilization of the Spanish Empire justified their conquest of the native peoples of the Americas. Merging the tools of Aristotelean natural law theory applied to contemporary conquest and humanist history rooted in the example of ancient Rome, Sepúlveda subsequently bolstered the political philosophy of empire for the supporters of the Spanish imperial project.

In the same period, another Spanish royal historian, Pedro Mexia, added to the Renaissance understanding of empire with an important piece of humanist history entitled *Historia Imperial y Cesarea* (Mexia 1547). Dedicated to Philip II (1527–98), the son of Charles V, the work urged the prince to not only learn from the emperors dating back to Julius Caesar but to move beyond them. It was a challenge Philip II accepted, and when he conquered Portugal in 1580 adding all of that empire's lands to his own, he created the largest global empire in terms of territory that the world had ever known. Empire in the second half of the sixteenth century first and foremost meant the Spanish Empire. The old Holy Roman Empire ruled over by Philip II's uncle was a medieval shadow of the new Rome, a title increasingly given to the Spanish empire by a long line of humanist writers and artists.

This new political reality of empire inspired envy and competition among Spain's foes, primarily the French and British, who increasingly pursued imperial ambitions of their own in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For the French monarchs, Jean Bodin's text, *The Six Books of the Republic* (1576), was a central example of a high Renaissance political treatise and that drew upon the history of ancient Rome as a political model while also including an extensive reflection on Roman law. The combination of historical and legal analysis was described by Bodin himself as the new discipline of political science. At its heart was the common imperial humanist premise that "The Romans had the greatest empire that ever was" (Bodin 1606: 620). It followed that the political lessons that he drew from ancient Rome encouraged expansive monarchical power and a military agenda that include maintaining a strong standing army as did Augustus.

Both the French and British humanists followed the lead of the Italians in reviving the texts and memories of the Caesars and the ancient Roman Empire, but it was the Spanish Empire that their monarchs sought to imitate and displace in the New World. Colonies were central to the meaning of Renaissance empire, and by the middle of the seventeenth century, the French

and British had claimed parts of North America and the Caribbean for their own. With the colonies they also claimed the title of empire, and increasing numbers of French and British humanists described their monarchs as emperors and their collective kingdoms as empires (Armitage 1998). Thus by the late Renaissance, the term empire was used by multiple European powers all competing for the title of heir to ancient Rome.

The fact that Renaissance imperialism had given birth to numerous new empires by the late seventeenth century also contributed to increasing scholarly reflection on the meaning of empire. A large collection of essays produced by members of the Palatine Academy of Naples between 1698 and 1700, for example, produced over 127 essays one-third of which focused on themes related to the theme of empire. As a late Renaissance production, this work represents a culminating synthesis of the meaning of empire in its most expansive and mature form. Themes and interpretations ranged widely from the dominant school of very positive Petrarchan reflections on the best individual ancient emperors, to more nuanced philosophical reflections on the origins of empire, to a quite negative critique of empire as a whole. At one end of the spectrum, the author Gregorio Calaprese, in his essay "The Origins of Empire," saw empire as a divine remedy to human weakness: people "are constrained to create a person above them, with authority to make laws and impose penalties and prizes with the goal of obligating everyone to act within the boundaries of honesty and justice. It is this which constitutes the nature of empires" (*Raccolta*: f. 48r). At the other end of the spectrum, the anonymous author of an essay entitled "On the Roman Empire" concludes after recounting the violence of the civil war that gave birth to the Roman Empire that "Every new Empire, as Rome then was, is violent and hateful" (*Raccolta*, f. 326 v).

By the end of the Renaissance, then, the meaning of empire had been complicated by the emergence of new empires as well as by a large body of scholarship on ancient Rome. Subsequently, the most substantial development in the philosophy of empire in the Renaissance was that it had gone

from being a largely academic reflection on empire lost to being an urgent and pressing reflection on the consequence of European empires reborn. The revival of imperial ambition had an unmatched impact on the development of European and global political life as the dream of a Renaissance of empire as an intellectual, cultural, and political project became the dominant master narrative that drove European political life for over four centuries. Moreover, the numerous global empires that reshaped the world during the early modern period set the stage for even more expansive nineteenth- and twentieth-century European empire building, the most lasting legacy of Renaissance Empire for better or worse.

Cross-References

- [Art of War in the Renaissance](#)
- [Law in the Renaissance, Roman](#)
- [Morales, Ambrosio de](#)

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Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism

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Abstract

Renaissance encyclopedism can be understood in terms of the history of problems, the history of concepts, book history, and cultural history. Remaking classical and medieval models, encyclopedic writing ranged from modest plans to provide a “general education” to the impossible ideal of securing universal and complete knowledge in all the sciences. Given a changing disciplinary map, the flood of books, and new epistemological criteria, the notion of encyclopedic *paideia* increasingly competed with more systematic, if often idiosyncratic, efforts to order, transmit, and evaluate kinds and quantities of knowledge. Prospective as well as retrospective, synchronic and diachronic, propelled by the timeless desire to “know all” while responding to historical contingences of all kinds, Renaissance encyclopedism undertook a massive, multifaceted *translatio studiorum* variously driven by pedagogy, philology, antiquarianism, curiosity, faith in scientific and philosophical progress, as well as numerous material, cultural, and political motives. Central to this *translatio* was the problem of finding the correct order for organizing materials. Some encyclopedic writers followed a Plinian model which encouraged adducing ever more material without overmuch concern for contradiction; others preferred either the Platonic-Stoic

or Aristotelian division of the disciplines; still others made the liberal arts their model; more analytic orders were also cultivated, as was, conversely, alphabetical order. Whatever order was adopted, though, compilation and the use of the commonplace book were generally the rule. Sites and genres of encyclopedic knowledge were as numerous as they were varied: from the book to the museum, from the miscellany to the *theatrum*.

Synonyms

Circle of learning; Paideia; Pansophy; Polyhistory

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

As distinct from its Enlightenment successors, Renaissance encyclopedism assumed a wide variety of discursive and material forms, particularly as the classical ideal of attaining sufficient knowledge of all the liberal arts was transformed in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries into systematic attempts to secure complete and unified knowledge of all subjects. At once synchronic and diachronic, such encyclopedic writing represented a timeless *desideratum* shaped by concrete contingencies and shifting historical forces. As the sixteenth-century Aristotelian natural philosopher Ulisse Aldrovandi observed, recycling an ancient Greek maxim: “Nothing is sweeter than to know all things” (Aldrovandi 1645). Or as the seventeenth-century pansophist Johann Amos Comenius wrote, with one eye on Plato and the other on Francis Bacon, the hope is to teach “omnes omnia omnino” (“all people all things in light of the All”) (Comenius 1960). Such idealism notwithstanding, Renaissance encyclopedism was also a belated, derivative form of thought that tried to inventory and organize what others had written, even as it endeavored, though with limited success, to respond to the mathematization of nature promoted by the “new science” and to mediate the explosion of empirical facts (especially as the *orbis terrarum* expanded with the discovery of the New World) and other forms

of “early modern information overload” (Rosenberg 2003). It was encouraged, that is, by the invention of the printing press, which precipitated an enormous growth in the publication and circulation of old and new texts. Further, as with Pliny the Elder’s *Naturalis historia* written in imperial Rome, Renaissance encyclopedic writing was informed by a culture of curiosity and collecting (Goering et al. 2013) and, less benignly, as it acquired political and economic value, by imperialism and colonialization.

Renaissance encyclopedism was both utopian (Schmidt-Biggemann 1983) and destined to fail. As a central vehicle for the *translatio studiorum*, it aimed eventually to encompass all knowledge and to save the classical legacy from another eclipse; but it also reflected the growing historical consciousness that such knowledge might be incorrect, in need of contextualizing or supplementing in the light of new discoveries, theories, and methods. In brief, Renaissance encyclopedism ranged from the purely retrospective to the increasingly prospective. Its history, accordingly, can also be viewed through the prism of changing emphases on authority, reason, and experience. As Renaissance humanist habits of mind underwent greater scrutiny, authority, as a form of cultural memory, became pejoratively associated with mere opinion. Encyclopedic writing, in turn, tried to find forms of representation that could mediate between old and new learning. Bacon, for example, targeted those humanist and cognitive modes that fueled most species of Renaissance encyclopedism, even as he wanted to reconfigure the encyclopedia according to his novel program for the “advancement of learning” (Bacon 2000, 2004).

As for precedents, Renaissance encyclopedism was partially rooted in late classical and medieval thought. Works by Martianus Capella, Isidore of Seville, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Vincent Beauvais, and Raimond Llull were edited and widely read throughout the period. And in attempting to give such encyclopedism novel, less static form, Renaissance authors reworked the medieval metaphors of the *theatrum mundi* and the Book of Nature, even as they supplemented these with metaphors associated with the circle,

journey, path, labyrinth, architecture, digestion, bees, etc. Isidore of Seville's seventh-century *Etymologiae sive Origines*, with its 448 chapters in 20 books, offered medieval readers a *summa* of classical knowledge about a nearly vanished world and the meanings of the Latin words which described that world. But reprinted in 1599 in a heavily annotated edition sponsored by Philip II of Spain, its *mise-en-page* at once confirms and undermines the original text's authority. Further, while vernacular texts and translations constituted a relatively small, if growing, portion of early modern encyclopedic writing, it was mainly Latin's universality that enabled encyclopedism to become a primary vehicle of humanism and that facilitated the migration of encyclopedic texts and notions about content (*inventio*) and arrangement (*ordo* or *dispositio*) across Europe and the Americas.

Renaissance thinkers also mined a variety of classical encyclopedic models: Pliny's omnivorous *Naturalis historia*; Valerius Maximus' eclectic *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri IX*; Solinus' thoroughly derivative and unsystematic *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*; the motley, pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata*; and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, with its pragmatic notion of what an orator's general education or *orbis doctrinae*, which translates the Greek ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, should be (I.10.1). These canonical texts provided Renaissance encyclopedic writers with matter and words (*res et verba*) to be imitated, adapted, and, increasingly, challenged.

Other, more structured, classical models were used to order the human sciences. One model followed the seven liberal arts: grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Alfonso de la Torre's *Visión delectable de la filosofía y artes liberales, metaphísica y filosofía moral* (1435) refashions *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, Martianus Capella's early fifth-century allegorical journey through the *artes liberales*. An oration attempting to classify all the branches of learning, Angelo Poliziano's *Panepistemon* (c. 1492) envisions a "philosophy" beyond the reductive confines of the Aristotelian *cursus philosophicus* to include not only all the liberal arts but also the mechanical

arts, even cooking and carpentry (Poliziano 1994). An impossibly ambitious program, the *Panepistemon*, nonetheless spurred more realized efforts, such as Symphorien Champier's *Libri VIII de dialectica, rhetorica, geometria, arithmetica, astronomia, musica, philosophia naturali, medicina et theologia, et de legibus et republica eaque parte philosophiae quae de moribus tractat* ... (1537), and Conrad Gesner's *Pandectarum sive partitionum universalium ... libri XXI* (1548). More influential, though, was Gregor Reisch's *Margarita philosophica* (1503), a carefully structured, twelve-book compendium meant to teach boys the liberal arts as well as natural philosophy, natural history, faculty psychology, and moral philosophy. Reisch's diagrammatic illustrations and tables also played instrumental roles in his pedagogy (Siegel 2009; West 2002, 24–28).

Another model corresponded to the Aristotelian division of philosophy into theoretical, practical, and poetic (or productive) philosophy – a triad often conceived via the categories furnished by faculty psychology: reason, memory, and imagination. Bacon relies on this schema in *Instauratio magna* (1620), where he redefines each faculty to meet the needs of his experimental program. Indeed, one way of grasping Renaissance encyclopedism is to track the shifting emphases put on these three faculties: most accounts stress the interplay of memory and reason, but others stubbornly focus on the imaginative aspects of encyclopedic writing (Kenny 1991).

Alternatively, some Renaissance encyclopedists adapted the Platonic-Stoic division of the sciences into logic (or metaphysics), ethics, and physics. Borrowing from a bevy of authors, Pierre de la Primaudaye's *Academie françoise* (1577–98) begins with a volume on ethics, followed by two volumes on natural history and natural philosophy, and then a fourth volume dedicated to "Christian philosophy" or religious doctrine. Reacting in part to Michel de Montaigne's skepticism, La Primaudaye's text proved popular in France and abroad – both Shakespeare and Bacon used it. A century later, G. W. Leibniz' *De ratione perficiendi et emendandi Encyclopaediam Alstedii* (1669–1671) and – in the course of

refuting Locke's philosophy – *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (1704) urge that the Platonic-Stoic division of knowledge be given new, encyclopedic unity. Such unity abandons all previous attempts to classify and to define and delimit content; instead, it consists in a “metaphysics of a referential system” (Selcer 2010, 78) which enables each proposition to potentially entail every other proposition.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the fifteenth century and throughout much of the sixteenth, the *encyclopaedia* signified a pedagogical ideal that no longer corresponded to its classical origins. Humanists misread, that is, the Greek phrase, ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, which they found in Quintilian and Pliny, so that it came to denote not “general learning” or *paideia*, but rather an ever growing “circle of learning” (*orbis doctrinae*) and, eventually, an exhaustive, systematic knowledge of all things, often in the material form of a book (Dierse 1977; König and Woolf 2013). *Paideia*, or being well educated in the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, did not suffice, nor did efforts to reform the curriculum. Instead, a second ideal emerged, which saw the encyclopedist trying to compile, arrange, and systematize all that had been written about the human sciences (including now the mechanical arts). In the course of the Renaissance, then, there was a shift from encyclopedism as pedagogy to encyclopedism as synthesis or analysis, by means of which the dream of universal and complete knowledge was pursued. As Johann Heinrich Alsted writes in *Philosophia digne restituta* (1612): “Philosophia est omnis scibilis cognitio” (“Philosophy is the understanding of all knowable things”). Alternatively, in England, Bacon envisioned a new kind of encyclopedism grounded in empirical natural philosophy, so did, though with less consistency, Federico Cesi and his colleagues in the Roman Academy of the Lynx-Eyed (Accademia dei Lincei). Meanwhile, there were also more idiosyncratic, imaginative encyclopedic writers, like François Béroalde de Verville and Thomas Browne, who did not so much try to compass the “circle of learning” as to explore and exploit its gaps. Many

encyclopedic writers, especially in paratexts, expressed the irony and pathos of their impossible undertaking, even as their texts proper continue to accumulate unmediated particulars. Montaigne mined his encyclopedic intertextuality to know himself better; as he writes in “Of Experience” (1580): “I have a dictionary wholly to myself” (“J’ai un dictionnaire tout à part moi”). But whether idealist or skeptical, objective or subjective, encyclopedic writers tended to adopt a rhetoric – fueled by figures like parataxis, digression, asyndeton, *distributio*, and *systrophe* – that strove to enumerate, to distinguish, but also to exhaust.

More specifically still, the few sixteenth-century works that featured “encyclopaedia” in their titles were as much treatises on the organization of knowledge as they were containers of encyclopedic content. And even then, the problem of finding the best order was never quite resolved. Praised by Erasmus and later reedited by Girolamo Cardano, Joachim Sterck van Ringelberg's *Lucubrationes vel potius absolutissima kyklopaideia* (1538) ends with a miscellany entitled *Chaos*, which invokes Ovid to justify its jarring juxtaposition of subjects. Notwithstanding its debts to Lullism and the cabala, Paul Skalich's *Encyclopaedia seu orbis disciplinarum epistemon* (1559) often devolves into a kind of Rabelaisian list. In other instances, the “circle of learning” was idiosyncratically or narrowly drawn. Mario Nizolio's Ockhamist Ciceronianism motivates *De veris principiis et vera ratione philosophandi contra pseudo-philosophos* (1553), four volumes that would marry philosophy and eloquence in order to teach the correct “circulus doctrinarum omnium, sive encyclopaedia” – an effort lauded by Leibniz in a preface for a later edition. By contrast, the Erasmian Juan Luis Vives composed *De disciplinis Libri XX* (1531), which consists of three treatises: *De causis corruptarum artium*, *De tradendis disciplinis*, and *De artibus*. Espousing a practical epistemology, which values knowledge gained by experience and doing (a kind of “maker's knowledge”) and so also eschews the pursuit of metaphysical truths, Vives critiques contemporary education and its reliance on scholastic language in order to offer his own reform

program. The humanist, he writes, should be both a “philologist” and a “polyhistor” – the latter, versed in multifarious experience, embodies the ethical ideal of “prudence.”

As these examples suggest, *ordo* was the chief problem riddling Renaissance encyclopedism. Alphabetical order was adopted in most sixteenth-century lexica, but occasionally in other genres, too, such as Domenico Nani Mirabelli’s miscellany *Polyanthea* (1503) and Conrad Gesner’s groundbreaking, annotated bibliography *Bibliotheca universalis* (1545). Yet alphabetical order, for all its indexical utility, had no intrinsic meaning, and so given the early modern thirst for ontological and other hierarchies, it became the rule only toward the end of the seventeenth century (Blair 2010). And while a few thinkers effectively attempted to reconcile encyclopedism with the law of noncontradiction (e.g., Jean Bodin used dialogue to weigh conflicting views), most embraced the implicit principle that it was best to adduce all that has been written about a topic without worrying too much about harmonizing divergent views. In brief, compilation (*compilatio*) rather than selection dominated – a manner of thinking and writing that goes hand in hand with the vastly greater availability of printed texts in the Renaissance. These copious texts adduced methods, ideas, and controversies of all kinds. Still, the hope of finding the proper order remained a constant. As Alsted writes at the beginning of his *Encyclopedia, septem tomis distincta* (Alsted 1630, 1), which aims to be the most systematically constructed encyclopedia: “ORDINE nihil pulchrius, nihil fructuosius esse nemo non videt Ordo siquidem in amplissimo hujus mundi theatro rebus omnibus conciliat dignitatem, et ipsarum est velut anima” (“Nobody has seen anything more beautiful, nothing more fruitful, than order Order provides worth to all things in the widest theater of this world and is like their very soul”).

Yet given the constitutive tension between order and variety – a permutation of the perennial dialectic between the one and the many – that informs all encyclopedic efforts, unsurprisingly, Renaissance encyclopedism featured competing,

often conflicting, methods and epistemologies (Rossi 2000; Vasoli 2005). In the sixteenth century, as religious authority waned, as Aristotelians (in Padua, Oxford, and elsewhere) grappled with the status of universals, as the gathering of empirical facts or “secrets” and the affirmation of mathematical truth claims became more central, and as varieties of ancient skepticism, the shape and status of encyclopedic knowledge were contested with more and more fervor. One exemplary clash is between the polymathic, Neoplatonic Cardano and the more skeptical, Aristotelian J. C. Scaliger (Maclean 1984). Cardano composed the wide-ranging *De subtilitate* (1550); Scaliger responded with the scathing, massive *Exotericarum exercitationum liber XV de subtilitate* (1557). Both encyclopedic texts vainly pretend to epistemological and methodological superiority: whereas Cardano finds subtlety in nature and our understanding of nature, Scaliger blames Cardano for having an overly subtle imagination. Alternatively, in a late work like *De triplici minimo et mensura* (1591), Giordano Bruno promotes an encyclopedic method which insists that to know something in mathematics is always only a partial truth, as it also must be mirrored by natural philosophical and metaphysical knowledge. Put another way, even if the utopian avatars of encyclopedic thought (e.g., Cardano (2004), Bruno, Tommaso Campanella, Bacon, Comenius, Leibniz) have their skeptical counterparts (e.g., Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, J. C. Scaliger, Béroalde de Verville, Robert Burton), the utopian strain tends to reemerge in new forms. But again, such idealism is always shaped by different biographical, cultural, and political circumstances. Athanasius Kircher’s numerous pansophic efforts, for example, relying partially on a global republic of letters facilitated by his position as head of the Jesuit Collegio Romano, were rooted in the cultural politics of Counter-Reformation Rome, which valued an eclectic, but not heterodox, version of antiquarianism (Stolzenberg 2013).

Another epistemological fault-line riddling Renaissance encyclopedism was between Plinian natural history, on the one side, and Baconian natural history and natural philosophy, on the other. The Plinian model encouraged the

gathering of particulars, *res et verba, naturalia et artificialia*, without overmuch concern for their veracity or for larger structural, organizational questions. Yet Plinian natural history was, of necessity, reconsidered in light of early modern European discoveries in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Most obviously, encyclopedic histories of the New World became a primary vehicle of Spain's *translatio imperii* and *translatio studii*. In metaphorical terms – though a metaphor with ontological pretensions – the Book of Nature was rewritten by transatlantic discovery and conquest. The encyclopedist's task was now to rewrite this book, to produce new verbal *copia*, new *tesoro* (treasure), out of novel flora, fauna, peoples, customs, and beliefs (Hernández 2000; Bleichmar and Mancall 2011). Encyclopedic writing in the Middle Ages and throughout the early Renaissance confidently ransacked classical sources: Virgil was an authority on agriculture, Livy on political history, and Strabo on geography, etc. But in sixteenth-century transatlantic encyclopedism, classical authority was everywhere undermined (Cañizares-Esguerra 2006). Just as the flood of books, an ascendant empiricism, and the waning of eschatological certainty prevented encyclopedists who remained in Europe from closing the *orbis doctrinae*, the experience of New World novelty led to an ineluctable awareness of the imperfection of classical sources. Such novelty was cartographic, ethnographic, zoological, botanical, even, at times, theological, but it also had a second-order, cognitive effect whereby questions of how to represent such novelty, how to limit multiplicity, and how to forge unity out of this multiplicity acquired new force and urgency.

In his *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1536–42), Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo initially follows Pliny's *dispositio*, which begins with cosmographical matters, then considers, in turn, animals (including humans), fish, birds, insects, plants, and minerals, while interspersing throughout accounts of the arts and mores. But in the event Oviedo's massive *Historia* (the first 19 books published in his lifetime, 31 posthumously) falls back on a geographical rather than a topical structure. It also vaunts the primacy of firsthand experience over Pliny's bookish

authority. Oviedo boasts of writing “as copiously as the subject matter,” even as he underscores how the brevity of a single historian's life and a dramatically enlarged world (in comparison with antiquity) greatly complicates his task (Oviedo 1944–45).

By contrast, Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España* (1579) was initially conceived as the pedagogic means of instructing the indigenous population of Mexico who had survived the Conquest. Loosely adapting the *ordo* of Bartholomew Angelicus' Aristotelian *De proprietatibus rerum* (c. 1240), which was translated into Spanish in 1529, Sahagún relied on Nahua *informantes*, scribes, and translators for much of his material. Written in Latin, Spanish, and Nahuatl, his *Historia* offers a comprehensive account in twelve books of Nahua deities and religion, astronomy, ethnography, rhetoric, government, vocations, natural philosophy, and political history (ending with Tenochtitlan's fall). The 2,400 thousand pages and 1,850 illustrations of the version of the *Historia general* known as the *Florentine Codex* constitute the first great flowering of New World encyclopedism and a founding document of Mexican *mestizo* culture. While presenting his text as an instrument of conversion, Sahagún, defying post-Tridentine orthodoxy and the perceived interests of Crown and Church, also defends the subtlety and breadth of the Nahua circle of disciplines. Furnishing the *indios* with an encyclopedic account of their culture, he regrets, though, his failure to alleviate their suffering (Sahagún 1990).

For his part, Bacon first wanted to cure various “distempers” of learning (2000), or as he later puts it, to destroy false “idols” which haunt the “human intellect” (2004). Secondly, and more positively, he sought to reorient the encyclopedia around a reformed natural philosophy, whose methods and “progress” were to be paradigmatic for the other disciplines. To this end, the Baconian model encourages the collection of particulars, but judiciously as a part of an inductive method to reach axioms and laws that might then direct the collection of further particulars by distinguishing them from extraneous matters and mere verbiage. In the preface outlining the scope and content of his

never-to-be-completed *Instauratio magna*, Bacon writes: “Now to the human intellect reflecting on it, the fabric of the universe looks in its construction like a labyrinth, where we find everywhere so many blind alleys, such deceptions and misleading signs (*tam fallaces rerum et signorum similitudines*) and such oblique and intricate convolutions and knots of nature. But the journey has always to be made through the woods of experience and of things particular (*per experientiae et rerum particularium sylvas*), guided by the uncertain light of the sense which sometimes flares up and at others dies down” (Bacon 2004, 18–19). Such *sylvae* threaten to become labyrinthine if not illuminated by a proper method that would allow Bacon to be “engaging purely and unceasingly with things.” The encyclopedic natural historian’s initial task, then, is to distinguish these “woods” from “misleading signs,” to discern differences between *res et verba*. (In this way, Bacon skirted another question roiling some instances of Renaissance encyclopedism: whether language is realist or nominalist.) Yet such efforts never entirely succeeded – as Bacon’s own motley *Sylva Sylvarum* (1626), meant to be a cornerstone of the *Instauratio magna*, confirmed. Alternatively, while Descartes’ epistemology sharpened the criteria of what could be known clearly and distinctly – thereby culling what he perceived to be humanist, that is, encyclopedic error and excess – tellingly, his 1619 dream vision, the *Olympica*, which inspired his *prima philosophia*, features a single book, a “dictionary” which “gathered together all the sciences” (Descartes 1908, 10, 179–88).

Given all this, Umberto Eco’s distinction between a “Dictionary” and an “Encyclopedia” model of semantic representation greatly helps to illuminate the dynamics of Renaissance encyclopedism (Eco 1986, 2010). The “Dictionary” offers a limited set of definitions and deductions, the “Encyclopedia” endless descriptions and inductions. But this distinction is more than just a formal one; Eco also identifies a historical transition in the late Renaissance from logical representation that sought the “Utopia of a Porphyrian tree” in the “Dictionary” to writerly expression generated by the “the idea of the labyrinth” in

the “Encyclopedia.” In short, any synchronic or diachronic attempt to exclude contingencies (*accidentia*) and their real and potential encyclopedic relations from accounts of the nature of things was doomed to fail. Or as Michel Foucault’s *Les mots et les choses* (1966) suggests, the Renaissance “episteme” of “resemblance” encouraged more varied kinds of encyclopedic writing than did the subsequent, classical “episteme” of “identity and difference.”

Further, if “Renaissance encyclopedism is primarily a question of genre” (Kenny 1991, 56), then throughout our period encyclopedic genres were very much in flux, in part because the relations between words and things were also extremely fluid. Explicit and implicit debates about *dispositio* fostered a remarkable variety and fluidity of genres, including the catalogue, *biblioteca*, digest, lexicon, thesaurus, commentary, miscellany, essay collection, *theatrum*, natural history, anatomy, atlas, as well as the encyclopedia itself. Exemplary of this generic variety is Poliziano’s *Miscellaneorum centuria prima* (1489), 100 brief essays on specific philological problems that also call for encyclopedic learning and the philosophical interpretation of texts. Alternatively, Juan Pérez de Moya wrote a digest or handbook, *Philosophia secreta* (1585), which leans heavily on Giovanni Boccaccio’s and Natale Conti’s Latin compendia of classical mythology. Translating them into Spanish and reordering their material topically (with the help of an alphabetical index), Pérez de Moya also gave the concept of the “secret” new natural-historical, hermetic, and, above all, moral meanings. More systematic is Bodin’s now Aristotelian, now Plinian *Universae naturae theatrum*, 1596 (translated into French in 1597 as *Le theatre de la nature universelle*), which eclectically, but dialectically, organizes natural philosophical material drawn from his commonplace books into ten hypostases that follow the chain of being from simpler substances to more complex ones, thus showing the way to natural theology. In practice, however, Bodin’s *Theatrum* “often meanders from one topic to the next following no pre-existing logic” (Blair 1997, 30). Then there is Antonio Zara’s nearly 700-page *Anatomia*

ingeniorum et scientiarum (1614), which consists of four *sectiones* containing 54 *membra*. The first section treats the dignity and excellences of man (18 members), the second the sciences of the imagination (16 members), the third the sciences of the intellect (eight members), and the fourth the sciences of memory (12 members). This Aristotelian schema, along with marginal signposts and a detailed 70-page index, enables Zara to consider individual topics in a succinct if also thoroughly intertextual and usually quite credulous manner. Zara, in turn, became one of many models for Burton's inimitable *The Anatomy of Melancholy: What it is. With all the kindes, causes, symptomes, prognostickes & severall cures of it. In three maine Partitions, with their severall Sections, members & subsections. Philosophically. Medicinally. Historically opened & cut up* . . . (1621). However, that Burton despairs that his all-encompassing, humanist learning, his "Encyclopedian," will satisfy his readers or, more urgently, cure his own melancholy, is symptomatic of the subjective doubts affecting much seventeenth-century encyclopedic writing. Indeed, if generic variety and fluidity confirm the dynamism of Renaissance encyclopedism, then they also hint at its methodological inconsistencies, if not aporias. Further, as the elaborate synoptic charts of Burton's *Anatomy* exemplify, there was a crucial dependence in the period on illustrations, diagrams, tables, and maps in the effort to support or clarify the *copia* of discursive claims – even if these visual forms reveal significant epistemological tensions as well (Siegel 2009).

This is also to say that Renaissance encyclopedism was driven by the compulsion to compile. Such *compilatio* may be viewed as augmenting and renovating static medieval models with new material or, conversely, as spurning more abstract, systematic attempts to order materials. In this regard, encyclopedic writing often became a rabid form of intertextuality, one oblivious to or disdainful of the contradictions created by the unmediated addition of more and more voices, opinions, facts, etc. The history of early modern encyclopedic writing is therefore partially the study of the reading and study habits of the learned – specifically of the fundamental role of

commonplace books in the compositional process (Blair 2010). And while most encyclopedic writing presents itself as an individual rather than collective work, as soon as its intertextuality is considered, this distinction tends to collapse.

Compilatio, following various philological and irenic principles, fueled the "heroic" lexicography of early modern Europe (Considine 2008). For example, Niccolò Perotti's *Cornucopiae, sive linguae Latinae commentarii diligentissime recogniti* . . . (1489), nominally a commentary on Martial's epigrams, becomes in the course of its glosses an encyclopedic account of Roman culture. Perotti's text later provided a great deal of the material used by Ambrogio Calepino in his influential alphabetical Latin dictionary (1502, 1509), subtitled *Cornucopiae*. With entries featuring extracts from many classical authors, Calepino's lexicon was expanded and reprinted dozens of times during the sixteenth century by other lexicographers, who effectively transformed it into a polyglot dictionary. *Compilatio* was also the rule in natural history. Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum vitae humanae* (1565) casts itself as a form of moral philosophy, a "human natural history," rather than a Plinian "natural history of the universe." Borrowing from Aristotle and Petrus Ramus for his *dispositio*, in the course of later editions (1571, 1586), Zwinger triples the book's size and organizes its content more loosely. Although reflecting more on the difficulties of ordering the disciplines, and notwithstanding the analytic complexity of its indices and synoptic diagrams, the *Theatrum* puts growing emphasis on particulars, mainly by mining the commonplace tradition to furnish materials from other authors. Within this welter of particulars, an irreconcilable variety of facts and views are allowed to flourish. It is up to the reader to select and to judge, Zwinger affirms, not the compiler (Blair 2010, 193–202). A still more extreme case is Lorenz Beyerlinck's utterly derivative *Magnum theatrum vitae humanae* (1631), whose seven volumes are billed as sequels to Zwinger's *Theatrum* and whose alphabetical order, table of contents, diagrams, and indices vainly try to give some direction to the interpretation of its copious materials. In this respect, Renaissance

encyclopedia's erudite textuality was at odds with the Baconian and Cartesian desires to reform philosophical method by avoiding the lures of humanist philology and instead attending to things themselves (*res ipsa*). And while such philology was still crucial to the encyclopedia of Alsted and Kircher, in Leibniz' various encyclopedic schemas, language itself became an explicit philosophical challenge.

During the mid-sixteenth century, various thinkers began to fuse Lullian traditions in mnemotechnics and logic with Neoplatonic thought and, frequently, Ramist notions of arrangement to create another current of encyclopedia (Rossi 2000). Giulio Camillo, in *L'Idea del teatro* (1550), and Bruno, in *De lampade combinatoria Lulliana* (1587), invented new forms of Lullian mnemotechnics. For their part, the systematic encyclopedists Bartholomäus Keckermann, Clemens Timpler, and J. H. Alsted preempted the Cartesian call to start philosophy with a *tabula rasa* by relying on *praecognita* (general definitions and divisions), which they thought proper both to nature and philosophy. Leibniz, writing after Descartes, similarly insisted on these axiomatic truths in the schematic text, *Praecognita ad encyclopaediam sive scientiam universalem* (1678/79). Conversely, Alsted, Kircher, and Leibniz continued to assign Lullian combinatorics an essential role in the search for a *scientia universalis*.

In numerous encyclopedic works, but above all his *Encyclopedia, septem tomis distincta* (1630), Alsted borrowed from Platonism, Aristotelianism, Lullism, and Ramism, from Bernard de Lavineta, Zwinger, Jacopo Zabarella, Bruno, and Keckermann, to offer a systematic account of the *cursus philosophicus*. Treating encyclopedia as a pedagogical, ethical, philosophical, and, ultimately, religious undertaking, Alsted methodically reconfigures the *orbis disciplinarum*. In over a thousand chapters, his *Encyclopedia* defines, arranges, and explicates all the disciplines, including "mixed ones" (*farragines*). Adapting Keckermann's method of dividing each discipline into *praecognita*, *lexica*, *systemata*, and *gymnasia*, he reorganizes the encyclopedia so that it might transmit both the

latest learning and still be pedagogically useful. By systematically arranging the diverse material he draws from the commonplace tradition and then trying eclectically, if not syncretically, to harmonize its contradictory elements, Alsted, uniquely among his contemporaries, manages to complete his encyclopedic account of the disciplines and their interrelations (Hotson 2000, 2007). But in the event, in attempting to cram the latest, often conflicting, sources – especially from the physical and empirical sciences and the mechanical arts – into his theoretical frame, Alsted betrays the harmony promised by his theoretical claims and introductory tables. Like so many of his predecessors, he effectively sacrifices the clarity and simplicity he idealizes to strive instead after comprehensiveness. Here, as with various other exemplary instances of Renaissance encyclopedia, pedagogical and philosophical aims conflict. Still, throughout his career, Alsted never wavered from the belief that philosophy should be the chief discipline to establish encyclopedic order and secure the foundations of knowledge.

Kircher's many – several dozen by some counts – encyclopedic tomes cover topics including magnetism, geology, musicology, optics, numerology, Egyptology, and Sinology. His principal method, as detailed in *Ars magna sciendi sive combinatoria* (1669), is Lullian. The world, Kircher writes, is structured like the combinatory intellect, so that the study of one subject necessarily illuminates and is illuminated by all other subjects. Analogy and two species of combinatorics, *combinatio expansa* and *combinatio contracta*, serve as the chief engines of his attempts to achieve an all-encompassing *scientia* and *sapientia* (Leinkauf 1993, 32–33). More concretely, in *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1651–1654), combinatorics, informed by Kircher's antiquarianism, cabala, and other forms of *prisca sapientia*, yields an encyclopedia of all things Egyptian that aims, in the end, to decipher a single hieroglyph, which, not accidentally, is made to reconcile unity and multiplicity (Findlen 1996; Stolzenberg 2013).

Leibniz made encyclopedia a key element of his philosophical program. Influenced by Alsted (especially in his "Nova methodus discendae

docendaeque jurisprudentiae” of 1667, which is a mini-history of the encyclopedia culminating in Alsted) and Kircher (with whom he corresponded), Leibniz called for a new “scientific order.” More particularly, he defined the “encyclopedia” as the “system of all things . . . , of true and useful propositions that hitherto have been thought” (cited in Dierse 1977, 27). But rather than ever managing to undertake, let alone complete an encyclopedic project himself, Leibniz, beginning with *Dissertatio de arte combinatoria* (1666), sketched various meta-encyclopedias. These were based, at least initially, on the search for a “universal characteristic” (*characteristica universalis*), which would consistently, ideographically, and so truthfully represent mathematical, scientific, and metaphysical thought. Once secured, such characters were to be arranged by a unique encyclopedic “combinatory art,” a logical calculus, which looks explicitly back to Llull’s *ars magna*, but also anticipates Gottlob Frege’s and Charles Pierce’s work on logic in the late nineteenth century and, by his own account, Norbert Weiner’s idea of a computing machine. “The characteristic that I am proposing,” writes Leibniz, “requires only a new kind of Encyclopedia. The Encyclopedia is a body, where the most important human sciences (*connaissances*) are arranged in order” (cited in Dierse 1977, 32). But in “Nouveaux essais sur l’entendement humain,” Leibniz contemplates the Platonic-Stoic division of knowledge into logic, physics, and ethics, only to reject it as untenable. He proposes instead that every true proposition can be expressible, given the proper form and system of referential meaning, such that disciplinary divisions disappear. It is in this sense that his encyclopedia promised universal *mathesis*.

Besides the purely discursive book, Renaissance encyclopedism assumed many other material forms. Visual encyclopedism included the tabular or diagrammatic efforts of diverse thinkers such as Gesner, Alsted, Burton, Bacon, and Cesi. Drawing on Ramism, logic, and Vesalian empiricism, Johannes Jacob Wecker’s *Medicae syntaxes, medicinam universam ordine pulcherrimo complectentes* (1562) consists entirely of synoptic

tables that arrange and distill the medical knowledge of Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna for aspiring physicians. Robert Fludd’s *Utriusque cosmi, maioris scilicet et minoris, metaphysica, physica, atque technica historia* (1617, 1621) incorporates numerous tables and diagrammatic drawings to promote a comprehensive, syncretic, Hermetic science. With his *Orbis sensualium pictus* (1658), Comenius offers a pictorial encyclopedia for adolescents learning Latin. Meanwhile, encyclopedic emblem books by Andrea Alciato, Juan de Horozco y Covarrubias, Jacob Cats, Cesare Ripa, and many others instructed and delighted readers in moral and political philosophy, religious doctrine, and other topics. Cartography, such as Benedetto Bordone’s *Isolario* (1528) and Abraham Ortelius’ *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570), also had encyclopedic pretensions. More radically, Antonio Saliba’s *Nuova figura di tutte le cose che sono e del continuo se generano dentro la terra e sopra nell’aere* (1582) distills the known cosmos to a single broadsheet. Encyclopedic “sites of knowledge” also include libraries, academies, gardens, theaters, courts, pharmacies, and artisanal workshops (Findlen 1996, 97–154). Cabinets of curiosity (*Wunderkammer*) assembled by natural historians and *virtuosi* found discursive support in Samuel von Quiccheberg’s *Inscriptiones vel Tituli theatri amplissimi* (1565), the first early modern treatise on museology. Then there is Cassiano dal Pozzo’s “Paper Museum,” which combines antiquarian, art-historical, and natural-historical topics. Dal Pozzo, moreover, was instrumental in helping the Linceans publish their empirical, but also thoroughly humanist, *Rerum medicarum Novae Hispaniae thesaurus* (1651). This collaborative, encyclopedic account of Mexican flora, fauna, and antiquities was based on manuscripts by Francisco Hernández, who traveled to Mexico in the 1570s. Filled with numerous illustrations (but unfortunately not the originals done by native artists) and crowned by Cesi’s *Phytosophicae tabulae*, which aim to reconceive the *encyclopaedia* through a series of tables classifying botanical *res* and the many disciplines that can be used to know them, this hybrid text confirms the global pretensions of late Renaissance encyclopedism (Gabielli 1989; Hernández 2000). All the more

unfortunate, then, that Europeans had no inkling of how encyclopedism in China, in the form of the *leishu* (literally, “classified writings”) tradition, was reaching an apex in the same period.

Impact and Legacy

As Comenius, Kircher, Leibniz, and others pursued various Baroque forms of encyclopedism in the last half of the seventeenth century, another exorbitant strain emerged: polyhistory. Following and expanding on the precedents of Zwinger and Gesner, the polyhistor, with their unwieldy, often monstrous, compendia, earned mockery from many contemporaries for their unbridled pretensions. Yet while their *res publica litteraria* was often more imagined than real, among their number were some of the first intellectual historians to seek to convey the structure, content, relations, and history of all the humanist disciplines. Most notably, Daniel Georg Morhof, in his *Polyhistor; literarius, philosophicus et practicus* (1688), heroically labors, in the face of the “New Philosophy,” to resuscitate the moribund ideals of encyclopedic learning and Renaissance eloquence (Grafton 1985). Polyhistorical attempts at “universal history” also find significant parallels in Giambattista Vico’s *New Science* (1725, 1730, 1744).

Meanwhile, Pierre Bayle’s influential *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697) cultivates the new genre of the philosophical or critical dictionary. Employing an elaborate *mise-en-page*, Bayle juxtaposes differing opinions and source texts, while also deploying cross-references to enrich and complicate his alphabetical order. In this manner, he creates a skeptical, subjective, thoroughly dialogic form of encyclopedism that underscores what he takes to be errors in philosophy, history, literary criticism, and theology. Exemplary of this are the articles “Spinoza” and “Rorarius” – the latter disputes with Leibniz on the question of animal souls. In fact, Leibniz corresponded with Bayle and advised him in vain to trim down his annotations and focus on truths rather than errors. But as it stands, “the *Dictionary* is an encyclopedic anti-encyclopedia”

which charts the limits of knowledge and the folly of those who pretend to know with certainty (Selcer 2010, 76). More positively, Bayle espouses the principles of toleration, adumbrates a theodicy, and makes a strong case for fideism. Ironically, J. C. Gottsched’s German translation of the *Dictionnaire* (1740) begins by lauding Bayle as the scholar most deserving the title of *polyhistor*. Yet at the same time, German polyhistory was developing in another direction: J. J. Brücker’s *Historia critica philosophiae* (1742–1744), a cardinal text of philosophical eclecticism, aims to give the history of philosophy a scientific status and so remove the taint of doxography.

By the mid-eighteenth century, with the republic of letters thriving mainly in French rather than Latin (or German or English), *L’Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751–65), edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert, adopted an alphabetical order for its 17 volumes (later supplemented by 11 volumes of plates) to achieve a “better linking” of words to things. More to the point, in urging the amending and cultivation of all fields of knowledge, Diderot and d’Alembert enthusiastically proclaim their debts to Bacon (“[c]e génie extraordinaire”). As d’Alembert writes, given the infinite number of particulars, the endless possible perspectives on these particulars, and humanity’s inability ever to achieve a divine perspective, they have pragmatically opted for making “man” and the Baconian division and classification of the human sciences into history (memory), philosophy (reason), and poetry and the other productive arts (imagination) into their organizing principle. This *Tree of the Human Sciences* is, with various modifications, shown in the diagram, “Système figuré,” and then further glossed in another paratext. Likewise, the *Prospectus* for the entire *Encyclopédie* begins by asserting that those who doubt such a project should recall Bacon’s claim in *De augmentis scientiarum* (1623), where the “impossibility” of such a work is rejected, provided that it is undertaken by many capable men and that it is “done in the succession of ages, though not in one man’s life” (Diderot and d’Alembert 2016). Further, in contrast to Bayle, Diderot, in his article

“Encyclopédie,” urges a positive form of encyclopedism. For the sciences, he insists, have already made enormous advances, as has language. Stressing the need for an order that is “clear and easy” rather than “a torturous labyrinth,” Diderot reiterates the utility of Bacon’s division of the sciences, even as he outlines five other ways the material of the *Encyclopédie* is ordered; the fifth way being a network of cross-references (*renvois*), which he provocatively calls the “most important part of encyclopedic order.”

In sum, Renaissance encyclopedism can be understood as a nascent form of intellectual history and, in many instances, of the history of philosophy. Given, then, the differences between “internalist” and “externalist” accounts of intellectual history (a distinction implicitly made by Leibniz and explicitly in recent times by scholars such as Thomas Kuhn and Donald Kelley), externalist approaches more profitably explicate early modern encyclopedic thought and its contingent representations of the nature of and relations between the various disciplines. In other words, what matters in Renaissance encyclopedism is not only what is written, but also how, why, where, and when it is written. For the “larger context” in which to understand the history of intellectual history is the “history of literature – literature in the traditional sense of the total accumulation of humanity’s written remains. This was the view taken by scholars like Alsted, Morhof, and [G. J.] Vossius, for whom philosophy itself, especially in the age of print culture, was in the first instance a form of literature” (Kelley 2002, 6). But already Bacon, in *Advancement of Learning* (1605), calls for a *historia literarum* that would help distinguish between truth and falsity. In other words, the history of most disciplines, like Renaissance encyclopedism itself, operates in the gray area of opinion, in between certainty and doubt. Leibniz’ various, ambitious, but ultimately unrealizable schemas to put the “encyclopaedia” on a firmer, more metaphysical foundation rests on his imperfect efforts to excise historical and linguistic contingencies. In the same vein, Hegel’s “philosophical encyclopedia” – as embodied by his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline* (1817) –

seeks to distinguish itself from inferior, positivist, that is, contingent disciplines like philology or even from a contextualist history of philosophy. But by following exclusively the logic of Absolute Spirit, such an encyclopedia ignores or sublates the very differences that enable the variety and subtlety of Renaissance encyclopedic thought. Conversely, recent direct descendants of Renaissance encyclopedism include *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (1971–2007), *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (1973–1974), the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and *Daphnet (Digital Archives of Philosophical Texts on the NET)*. Lastly, there is this *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy* in which this entry plays a small, if synechdochic, part.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Aldrovandi, Ulisse](#)
- ▶ [Alsted, Johann Heinrich](#)
- ▶ [Bacon, Francis](#)
- ▶ [Bodin, Jean](#)
- ▶ [Book, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- ▶ [Comenius, Jan Amos](#)
- ▶ [Commonplace](#)
- ▶ [Commonplace Book](#)
- ▶ [Cosmography in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Descartes, René](#)
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- ▶ [Keckermann, Bartholomaeus](#)
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- ▶ [Ramus, Petrus](#)
- ▶ [Reisch, Gregor](#)
- ▶ [Scaliger, Julius Caesar](#)
- ▶ [Scientia in the Renaissance, Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Translatio Studiorum](#)
- ▶ [Translation](#)
- ▶ [Trivium](#)

- [Utopia in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Vives, Juan Luis](#)
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Engineer

- [Architect, Renaissance](#)

Epagōgē

- [Induction, Philosophical Conceptions of](#)

Epicureanism

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Abstract

Epicureanism posed a unique challenge to dominant belief systems in the Renaissance, because of its attacks on Providence, divine action, planned creation, prayer, and the immortality of the soul, its atomist physics and self-sufficient materialist model of nature, its account of natural selection, its developmental account of the origin of society and government, and its focus on pleasure-seeking as a moral good. After being known in the

Middle Ages mainly through attacks by early Christian apologists, knowledge of Epicureanism expanded thanks to humanist interest in reconstructing the classical world and the recovery of texts. Epicurean content in Cicero's philosophical dialogs was followed by the recovery of Lucretius (1417) and Diogenes Laertius (translated into Latin 1433). In addition to figures who treated Epicureanism extensively, such as Lorenzo Valla, Girolamo Fracastoro, Giordano Bruno, and Pierre Gassendi, Epicurean influence can be seen in the works of figures including Niccolò Machiavelli, Marcello Adriani, Michele Marullo, Bartolomeo Scala, Michel de Montaigne, Edmund Spenser, Henry More, Marin Mersenne, Margaret Cavendish, Isaac Newton, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and others. At the same time, heterodox Epicurean doctrines continued to be stigmatized and associated with atheism, hedonist sensualism, sodomy, and general irreligion, so Epicureanism appears as an object of fear and a term of abuse in general accounts of atheism and heresy, especially Reformation and Counter-Reformation literature, and in specific attacks on radical figures, from Luther and Erasmus to Spinoza. Epicureanism's recovery has received particular attention from modern scholars because of the powerful similarities between its core doctrines and characteristically modern secularized science, ethics, and political theory.

Synonyms

[Atomism](#); [Epicureanismo](#); [Epicureísmo](#); [Épicurisme](#); [Lucretianism](#)

Introduction

All the ancient philosophical schools revived by the classicizing efforts of Renaissance humanists contained some elements which combined easily with the religious, scientific and moral doctrines inherited from the late medieval world, and other

elements which challenged them. Epicureanism fell on the most radical and controversial end of this spectrum at every stage of its recovery. This was due in part to the deeply heterodox and secularizing potential of its core doctrines, and in part to the paranoia and stigma attached to Epicureanism by early modern stereotypes about the effects of certain radical beliefs. Epicureanism's core doctrines are closely interlinked, but can be roughly subdivided by their arenas of influence: science, theology, moral philosophy, and political thought.

Heritage: Pre-Renaissance Knowledge of Epicureanism

Between the ninth century and 1417, when no Epicurean authors circulated, Epicureanism was known primarily through a mixture of passing references in classical works and fierce attacks by early Christians. This produced a contradictory as well as fragmentary portrait of the school. Seneca, Cicero, and other ancient thinkers spoke of Epicureanism with some respect, acknowledging it as a peer of the Stoics and Platonists. Seneca specifies that the Epicureans believe pleasure (*voluptas*) is the highest good, and describes the Epicurean ideal life: enjoying a modest, healthy meal in the tranquility of a garden while discussing philosophy with friends (*Epist.* II. xx.10). Fragmentary Epicurean voices, mostly Lucretius, were preserved in single-sentence chunks by grammarians, who did not comment on anything but the language of the *De rerum natura*, but still lent Lucretius status by presenting him as a peer of Virgil, Ovid, Empedocles, Varro, and other valuable authorities. In contrast, Christian apologists including Arnobius, Lactantius, Jerome, Ambrose, and Isidore of Seville presented Epicureanism as a wicked rival to be crushed and an exemplar of the folly of paganism. Lactantius describes Epicurean doctrine in more detail than Seneca or even Cicero, but he claims that Epicurus' aim was to reassure the wicked that they could carry on safely in their sins, by telling the irreligious that the gods are indifferent to their impiety, telling the ungenerous that they share no bond with fellow humans beyond base matter, and

telling all sinners that they need have no fear of posthumous punishment (*Divinae Institutiones* III.17). These apologists usually presented the Epicurean thesis that pleasure is the highest good as advocating sensual pleasure, thus licentiousness, sodomy, and gluttony, a stigma it carries to this day. Such works predisposed late medieval scholars to see Epicureanism as a particularly wicked enemy, and, while Dante placed other classical philosophers with the virtuous in Limbo, he reserved a special punishment in hell for "Epicurus and his followers" who deny the afterlife. Yet, as Petrarch and his successors gave greater weight to Seneca and Cicero, these contradictory accounts of Epicurus became a point of confusion and curiosity.

Heritage: Renaissance Recovery of Sources

Knowledge of Epicureanism expanded first in the fourteenth century, when Petrarch and his peers read with renewed interest the dialogues of Cicero which had already been available in the later Middle Ages: *De finibus*, *Tusculanae disputationes*, *De natura deorum*, *De officiis*, as well as *De divinatione*, *De fato*, *De senectute*, *De amicitia*, *Paradoxa* and the *Topica*. These focused on moral philosophy and Epicureanism's rivalry with the Stoics, whom Cicero preferred, so their presentation of Epicurean material is highly selective. Petrarch recommended Cicero along with Seneca as the central textbooks of humanist moral education, and Cicero's dialogues were printed as early as 1456 (Hankins and Palmer 2008). Cicero was interested primarily in moral philosophy, as were many of his humanist readers, making ethics the first arena in which Epicureanism made a visible impact.

The full text of the *De rerum natura* first returned to circulation thanks to Poggio Bracciolini, who brought his transcription of an unknown manuscript back from the Council of Constance to Florence in 1417, where it entered the library of Niccolò Niccoli. Centers of early interest in Lucretius have been identified in Florence (Brown 2010b), Rome (Palmer 2014a),

Naples (Goddard 1991), and Spain (Vera 2009), and manuscripts were owned and used by prominent figures including Pietro Vettori, Giovanni Sulpizio Verolano, Pomponio Leto, Antonius Panormita, and Bonifacius Amerbach. The poem provided much more detail than was previously available, particularly about natural philosophy, but its structure is unsystematic and its poetic language difficult, more so given the poor condition of the earlier manuscripts, making it far from a straightforward overview of the school and its doctrines. Yet, the poetic form was a powerful asset to the work's circulation, since it appealed to scholars of poetry and literature even if they had no particular interest in the poem's radical content, especially once it became clear that Virgil had borrowed lines from the *De rerum natura*. Printed 30 times from 1473 to 1600, the *De rerum natura* became a focus of controversy over whether it was safe to teach classics for their literary value even if their content was potentially heretical. Starting in the later sixteenth century, the poem sparked philosophical rebuttals. These included the apologetic but critical 1563 commentary published by Lucretius' foremost editor, the Parisian Aristotelian Denys Lambin, Girolamo Fracchetta's 1589 *Breve spositione di tutta l'opera di Lucretio*, Lucy Hutchinson's late seventeenth-century project to translate the epic into English for the express purpose of understanding and rejecting it, and the 1745 Latin verse epic *Anti-Lucretius* by Cardinal Melchior de Polignac.

The only surviving writings of Epicurus himself are letters and a collection of maxims included in the life of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of the Philosophers*, Book X). These offer a far more direct introduction to the Epicurean system than the more ubiquitous Latin sources. Some content from Diogenes Laertius' lives was known in the high Middle Ages thanks to a twelfth-century translation into Latin by Henricus Aristippus, which did not circulate but became the basis of the popular compendium *On the Lives and Mores of the Philosophers* once attributed to Walter Burley, which was printed as early as 1470. A full Latin translation by Ambrogio Traversari was completed in 1433 and saw considerable

manuscript circulation before its first edition c. 1472, while the Greek of Book X was not printed until 1533 (Hankins and Palmer 2008).

Innovative Impact: Science and Natural Philosophy

Epicureanism's scientific core is atomism, a theory pioneered by Democritus, which posits that matter is composed of vacuum and of atoms, which are the smallest unit of matter, indivisible, variable in shape and size, and infinite in quantity but finite in type, much like the elements of the modern periodic table. While Epicurean atoms are too small to be perceived directly, their shapes and motions generate color, sound, and all sense perception – smoothness generating sweetness, roughness bitterness, etc. – and their finite variety means that their finite possible combinations form the recurring patterns visible in nature. By explaining natural phenomena, such as weather, planetary movements, tides, and magnets, using the natural properties of atoms, Epicureanism became the first account of nature which did not depend on divine participation, radically different both from pagan accounts of Neptune and Aurora and from such Christian models as angelic movement of spheres or Dante's belief that gravity reflected the tendency of base things to fall downward toward Satan.

Epicurean atomism had few direct followers in the Renaissance. Girolamo Fracastoro (c. 1476–1553) taught at the University of Padua and is best known as a physician. His work on syphilis, typhus, and other sicknesses pioneered the contagion theory of disease, and he argued that fossils are remains of ancient creatures now extinct, building upon the Epicurean argument made by Lucretius that in early times the Earth produced many bizarre species, but only those suited to their environments survived to the present day (Lucretius V 837–877; Goddard 2003). In addition to his overt appeals to atomic theory, Fracastoro's debt to Epicureanism is clear in his general rejection of hidden and immaterial causes, and in his decision to follow Lucretius in writing his scientific work

Syphilis sive morbus gallicus as an epic poem (Maurette 2014). Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) was burned at the stake for heretical opinions including rejection of several Catholic doctrines traditionally tied to Aristotelian models, and his Epicurean-influenced views on astronomy, including belief in multiple earthlike worlds. Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) was a self-proclaimed “Christian Epicurean” and used Epicureanism and classical skepticism to attack Aristotle (Lolordo 2007). Gassendi focused on the Epicurean atomic model of cognition, which states that we can have no direct empirical knowledge of material things, only of the perceptions of things which our sense organs receive from shells of atoms cast off by objects, arguing from it that we can never have true knowledge of things themselves, against Aristotelian claims to offer real knowledge of forms and categories. Gassendi’s project demonstrates how the unique form of “constructive skepticism” or “weak empiricism” used in Epicurean denial of direct knowledge of the atomic substructure of nature contributed to the foundation of the modern scientific method, especially through his friend Marin Mersenne and his association with René Descartes, Galileo Galilei, Tommaso Campanella, Margaret Cavendish, Thomas Hobbes, and others (Popkin 2003; Palmer 2014; Wilson 2008), as well as how late Renaissance thinkers strove to harvest what they saw as the most desirable aspects of Epicureanism and combine them with more orthodox religion. In addition to these overt atomists, many more figures expressed interest in atomism as an example proving that it was possible to develop a model accounting for the operations of nature without divine participation. Its influence can thus be felt as far as the systems of Henry More, Newton, Locke, and Enlightenment clockmaker Deism (Wilson 2008).

Innovative Impact: Theology

Epicureanism is even more radical than Deism in its denial of an afterlife and its rejection of any

Providence or design in nature or history, attributing even creation to chaotic natural forces: the Earth and other worlds formed when atoms floating in the void collided and clumped together by chance thanks to a random “swerve” which randomized their movement. While Epicurus denied the immaterial and the possibility of Heaven or Hades, he did not deny the existence of gods directly. His model of cognition posits that thoughts are formed from atomic impressions received from real objects, so, just as a chimera is a jumble of atomic impressions generated by lion, goat, and snake, so human ideas of Zeus and Venus must derive in part from an atomic impression from some real blissful and eternal being – an argument not unlike Descartes’ thesis that the concept of God can only derive from an infinite source, i.e. God. However, Epicurus claimed that, in order to be happy and eternally unchanging, gods must logically be distant and insensible, free from the stresses of heeding prayers and ordering nature.

This system is technically theist but functionally atheist, in that removing these gods from the system would have no impact except for requiring a new cognitive model, which, by the Renaissance, Ockham and nominalism had already supplied. Consequently, the reception of Epicureanism is inextricably linked to the history of atheism, both because Epicurus and those who studied him were frequently accused of atheism throughout the early modern period, and because modern scholars of early atheism can learn much from Renaissance reactions to and transformations of the first robustly developed philosophy which did not require the divine.

The *De rerum natura* in particular is filled with attacks on veneration of the pagan gods, which can be read as anti-theist, but in the Renaissance they were more often read as anti-pagan attacks on superstition, to which the true faith was presumed to be immune. These were appropriated in their anti-pagan and anti-superstition spirit by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanists, for example, by the Florentine literary teacher Marcello Adriani (1464–1521), who used them against Girolamo Savonarola (Brown 2010b), and later by such critics of dogmatic Christianity as Montaigne and Voltaire (Screech 1998).

Denial of Providence and of the afterlife was more directly problematic. The immensely influential Florentine Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) later burned in horror a work on Lucretius he wrote in his youth, and devoted large sections of his *Platonic Theology* to rebutting Lucretius' attacks on the immortality of the soul (Hankins 2013). It was a commonplace of Renaissance psychological theory that only fear of God and Hell restrained people from wild criminality, to the degree that wantonness, sodomy, and public lewdness were in themselves sometimes sufficient to invite prosecution for atheism even without any profession of heretical belief. Political theorists from Thomas More to Thomas Paine considered some basic theism mandatory for a good citizen, and Pierre Bayle was accused of atheism himself for saying in his *Philosophical Dictionary* (1697) that it was possible for an atheist (he names Epicurus and Spinoza as examples) to be a moral person. Reformation and Counter-Reformation literature frequently employs Epicureanism as a term of abuse, sometimes using it as a label for denial of Providence, but more often equating it generically with whatever position the author wishes to condemn.

Innovative Impact: Ethics and Political Thought

Just as Epicureanism supplied the first model of self-sufficient nature, so too it supplied the first ethical system which had no concern for the divine. Epicurus' goal in promoting atomism was eudaemonist, to facilitate happiness by freeing people from fear of wrathful gods and posthumous punishment, which he saw as a substantial source of human suffering. Since the soul was destroyed at death, long-term consequences were meaningless, and no external set of divine laws regulated right and wrong. With pleasure as the ultimate good, all actions could be judged good or bad based solely on the effect they were likely to have on the happiness of the subject during his or her lifetime. Epicurus defined happiness negatively as the absence of pain. Thus, he recommended, not positive pleasures such as

delicious food or sexual pleasure, but tactics designed to avoid long-term pain, such as a healthy diet, moderate sexual activity sufficient to satisfy appetites, and avoiding the stressful arenas of politics, glory seeking, and romantic love. The positive experiences prescribed to the Epicurean are those likely to be stable and long term, such as friendship, contemplation, literature, and a retired life in a beautiful garden.

One of the most innovative steps in moral philosophy stimulated by Epicureanism was made before any Epicurean texts had returned, when scholars knew almost nothing about Epicurean ethics apart from the core doctrine, repeated by Seneca and Lactantius, that according to Epicurus pleasure was the highest good. With little more than this and a little Cicero at his disposal, the pugnacious philologist Lorenzo Valla (c. 1407–1457), best known for disproving the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine, wrote *De voluptate* (also called *De summo bono*), which presents a dialog focused on Stoic and Epicurean interlocutors based on Cicero's Philosophical works. Valla's supposed Epicurean outlines a philosophy of pleasure focused on positive pleasures, and boasts of the many delights nature has designed for human enjoyment, fundamentally contradicting Epicurean attacks on Providence, intelligent design, and the centrality of humanity in the cosmos, which, lacking Lucretius, Valla did not yet have access to. Valla's vivid and wholly novel "Epicurean" ethics typifies the tendency of humanists to disguise their original creations by framing them as reconstructions of ancient systems, a self-presentation which increased their desirability and authority in the Renaissance, but has largely prevented humanist innovations from being studied or even recognized by scholars in the post-Descartes world which favors innovators and system builders (Kessler 1988; Nauta 2009).

The Epicurean developmental account of the origin of society, religion, and government was outlined in Lucretius Book V. It combined with Epicurean ethics to exert an enormous impact on radical political thought. Lucretius describes how early humans lived simply, gathering the fruits of nature and sleeping beneath the trees, without

language, law, or religious practices, but gradually gathered in groups to build cities, develop governments, and acquire luxuries which eventually led to corruption and the necessity of law. Much like Aristotle's *Politics* and other classical images of the four Ages of Man, this passage offered a strong alternative to the orthodox model of law descending from Adam and Noah, and kings and governments as agents of divine will acting out the script of Providence. This naturalist account of the origin of society excited considerable attention in late fifteenth-century Italy, fired by attempts to understand travelers' accounts of unknown cultures from the New World and elsewhere.

Machiavelli transcribed the entire *De rerum natura* himself (BAV Ross. Lat. 884) and was part of a concentration of Epicurean activity in Florence, including his colleagues Marcello Adriani and Donato Giannotti, and the broader Florentine intellectual atmosphere shaped by figures including Ficino, the Greek émigré Michele Marullo, Bartolomeo Scala, and Leon Battista Alberti, who had close ties to Machiavelli's family (Brown 2010a). Machiavelli's innovative approach to depicting the human origins and natural evolution of governments certainly resembles Lucretian primitivism, as do his radical historical and utilitarian evaluations of Roman and Christian religion. Machiavelli's annotations in his personal copy of Lucretius demonstrate an unusually keen interest in the technical details of atomic theory, especially the swerve as the origin of free will (Palmer 2014). Arguments that Machiavelli himself was an atomist rely only on indirect evidence (Rahe 2007), but undeniably his pioneering utilitarian ethics divorces human ethical questions from divine concerns. Thus, Epicurean ethics was not Machiavelli's starting point, but it provided ammunition for his argument that – contrary to the common consensus – it is possible to design a functional ethical system isolated from divine concerns. Thus Machiavelli isolated Epicurean secularized ethics from the rest of Epicureanism and reused it for his own purposes, much as Gassendi and his associate Mersenne extracted and reused Epicurean empiricism, and as Isaac Newton and John Locke later extracted and reused the Epicurean practice of evaluating natural phenomena in

isolation from the divine. Both directly and through Machiavelli and others, Lucretian primitivist accounts of the evolution of society and government then exerted substantial influence on Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

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- ▶ Alberti, Leon Battista
- ▶ Atomism
- ▶ Bacon, Francis
- ▶ Bruno, Giordano
- ▶ Campanella, Tommaso
- ▶ Contagion, Renaissance Idea of
- ▶ Diogenes Laertius
- ▶ Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural
- ▶ Ethics, Renaissance
- ▶ Ficino, Marsilio
- ▶ Flow and Ebb in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Fortune in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Gardens, Ethics
- ▶ Generation in Renaissance Sciences
- ▶ Hobbes, Thomas
- ▶ Law, Renaissance Idea of Natural
- ▶ Lucretius
- ▶ Machiavelli, Niccolò
- ▶ Montaigne, Michel de
- ▶ Niccoli, Niccolò
- ▶ Savonarola, Girolamo
- ▶ Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of
- ▶ Stoicism
- ▶ Syphilis in Renaissance Medicine
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- ▶ Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free

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Epicureanismo

► Epicureanism

Epicureísmo

► Epicureanism

Épicurisme

► Epicureanism

Epideictic in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The epideictic (derived from the Greek term) or demonstrative (Latin origin) genre is one of the three rhetorical genres – together with the judicial and deliberative – which form part of the cultural heritage passed down by scholars of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The judicial speech is used to accuse or defend somebody, the deliberative to recommend or warn against something, and the epideictic to praise or blame someone. While the counsel evokes the future (deliberative speech) and the judge the past (judicial), the author of an epideictic text focuses instead on the present but can also take into account the past and future (Aristote, *Rhétorique*, Le Livre de poche, Paris, 1991, p. 94). The concepts discussed are varied: as part of a panegyric or eulogy, one can praise the gods, men, places, and many other subjects (Cicero, *De oratore*, Les Belles-Lettres, Paris, 1869; *Topiques*, Les Belles-Lettres, 1990; *L'orateur*, Les Belles-Lettres, 2002; Quintilian, *Institution oratoire*, Panckoucke, Paris, 1839 III, 7, p.113).

Synonyms

[Demonstrative](#)

Inherited Definitions

In literature, many portraits fall into the epideictic genre, which, in such cases, can be referred to as the “(epideictic) register.” It reflects a fundamental affect or attitude to the world and forms the basis of a wide variety of discourses (Bonhomme 2008). Blason poetry is a classic example, as is encomiastic poetry. Quintilian helped draw the

link between the epideictic register and what would centuries later be called “literature”; this association was inspired by the texts of Theophrastus and supported by the fact that the demonstrative genre essentially seems to have an aesthetic and/or recreational purpose.

Epideixis may, however, retain its argumentative scope (Quintilian 1839 III, 7, p. 99). This type of discourse, a priori better suited for show than action, still has an argumentative interest even if no thesis is proclaimed, “because it reinforces an inclination towards action by increasing adherence to the values it praises.” It therefore “increases the intensity of adherence to certain values” (Perelman et al. 2008, p. 66–67). Although it is part of a broad chronology, the pragmatic scope of *epideixis* should be considered, as this communion of values can/must lead to actions or consequential modification of behaviors.

When it comes to praising or blaming an individual, the notions addressed relate to a specific *topos*, in this case the location or argument of the person. Time is mentioned (the period preceding that person, the one during which they lived, or, when applicable, the events following their death), as well as their country, parents, ancestors, children, qualities of their soul, or external circumstances related to their body (Quintilian 1839, III, 7, p. 101 *et seq.*). Above all, the audience’s preferences must be taken into account (Quintilian 1839 III, 7, p. 111).

Finally, the epideictic genre/register is based on different figures of *elocutio*, such as the macrostructural figure of amplification, with its microstructural variations, which include hyperbole, enumeration, and any figure of syntax that heightens the sentence. It may also include metaphors or comparisons (gratifying or demeaning) and is characterized by a subjective lexicon that can be evaluative, ameliorative, or pejorative, depending on the intentions of the speaker assessor using it (Molinié 1992; Reboul 1984).

Cross-References

► [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)

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Epidemics

► Contagion, Renaissance Idea of

Epigram

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Abstract

The concise and witty genre of the classical epigram enjoyed a significant revival among Renaissance humanists, serving as an important component of school curricula, social exchange, and political and cultural commentary.

Literary and Social Contexts

At the end of his *Lives of the Philosophers*, Diogenes includes one or more epitaphs for the philosopher whose life and career is the subject of that book. Drawing on the tradition of funerary inscriptions and inscriptions used as *tituli* for statues, Diogenes created a precedent that would be widely imitated during the Renaissance by the

likes of Paolo Giovio and Giorgio Vasari, each of whom included epitaphs at the end of their biographies – epitaphs incised on tombstones but also those written by colleagues in literary commemoration of the deceased. The epitaphs' incorporation into these texts betrays not only the importance of ancient models for these Renaissance writers but also the supreme social value of this genre of occasional poetry. Including them in the biographies of important statesmen, writers, and artists identifies such individuals as members of an intricate social web while at the same time raising their social status. Often it is not clear from the text whether the epitaph was inscribed or literary, especially as literary epitaphs were often written on slips of paper and attached to tombs in order to honor the deceased.

Most Renaissance epigrams, including funerary epitaphs, were written as a form of social exchange between friends and colleagues, but they were also popular at court and in learned societies. Epigrams, along with the personal letter, eventually came to characterize Renaissance humanism as these two genres were dramatically revived beginning in the fourteenth century, after having been dormant in the West since Late Antiquity. Characterized by their brevity (consisting in elegiac couplets of usually two to six lines), pointed focus, philological sophistication, wordplay, and double entendre, epigrams addressed a wide range of topics, belonging above all to intimate contexts and dinner parties. They also served as the object of contests and provided political commentary as in the famous case of the ancient Roman statue dubbed “Pasquino” in Rome which received numerous anonymous epigrams criticizing, above all, the papacy and representatives of government in the early sixteenth century.

While some epigrams were encomiastic in function, many others were ironic, critical, ephrastic, polemic, erotic, or even insulting, following such ancient models as were preserved in the *Planudian Anthology* (first published in the original Greek language by Janus Lascaris in 1494) and in the epigrams of Martial, Catullus, and Ausonius. These ancient Greek and Roman poets offered stylistic models but also subject

matter for their Renaissance followers so that epigrams were written about ancient heroes or even lost works of art such as the sculptor Myron's famous bronze statue of a cow which had once graced the Athenian Acropolis but then was taken to Rome sometime after the late Republic and then eventually to Constantinople. While the ancient authors might have seen the statue, their Renaissance imitators surely did not so that their epigrammatic epigrams amounted to a purely literary exercise.

As humanist schooling became ever more prominent over the course of the fifteenth century, the epigram rose in popularity since its short format and simple basic rules made it the genre of choice for the teaching of Latin poetic writing. Since school epigrams tended to be about everyday subjects and surroundings, including classmates' appearance and foibles, it is not surprising that these same individuals would continue to write them in social contexts at university and after their schooling was completed.

Beginning with Andrea Alciati's first edition of his *Emblematum liber* (1531), itself heavily based on the *Planudian Anthology*, epigrams took a new more public turn. Immensely popular, this collection of epigrams with interpretive commentary was soon illustrated with highly abstracted images making for complex image-poem relationships that could generate endless interpretations – and thus the quintessential Renaissance and Baroque genre of the emblem book was born.

The production and eventual collection of epigrams into Renaissance anthologies, including emblem books, precede their theoretical analysis in poetical treatises which takes place only in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after epigrams no longer fulfilled the same intimate social functions and also began to be written in the vernacular languages.

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Epistemology, Artisanal

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Abstract

Craft is often viewed as “knowledge how” and science as “knowledge why,” but the term

“artisanal epistemology” challenges this dichotomy to recognize that the ability of craftspeople to produce material things rests upon experientially derived bodies of knowledge that can be employed rigorously and methodically to extend, categorize, innovate, and accumulate new knowledge. This view, in emphasizing the bodily labor of the crafts-person as the source of knowledge about the world, constitutes a corrective to a long philosophical tradition that views “mind” and consciousness as the primary source of knowledge. The idea that artisans possess a mode of gaining and conceptualizing their knowledge that can be named an epistemology is a recent innovation of the historiography of early modern science; however, several different twentieth-century currents in history and the social sciences led up to the formulation of this term. “Artisanal epistemology” has been used by historians of science since the 2000s in studies that foreground the contribution of artisans and practitioners to the Scientific Revolution.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The idea that artisans possess a mode of gaining knowledge that can be called an epistemology is a recent innovation of the historiography of early modern science. Craft is often viewed as “knowledge how,” while science is seen as “knowledge why,” but the term “artisanal epistemology” challenges this facile dichotomy to recognize that the ability of craftspeople to produce material things rests upon experientially derived bodies of knowledge that can be employed rigorously and methodically to extend, categorize, innovate, and accumulate new knowledge about nature. This view, in emphasizing the bodily labor of the crafts-person as the source of knowledge about the world, constitutes a corrective to a long philosophical tradition that views “mind” and consciousness as the primary source of all knowledge. Moreover, this term works to erase the long-standing division between “mind” and “hand” that has informed philosophical analysis

and helped foster social stratification for millennia.

Although the term itself is new, it rests upon a wide swath of important developments in twentieth-century philosophy, history, and the social sciences. The development of phenomenology by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) emphasized the primacy of human sensory perception in knowing the world. His followers, especially Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), developed a focus on the body and the lived world of everyday activity as the primary site of knowledge formation. As they saw it, as human beings interacted with their environment, and as they apprehended the world through their senses, they enter into relationships with things, through which meaning is made. The human body, then, is the source of human intention and of meaning-making in the world. From this perspective, the making practices of the productive crafts constitute a prime realm from which human knowledge and culture emerge. Phenomenology has had recent interpreters, for example, the anthropologist Tim Ingold, who regards the development of useful skills of manipulating natural materials as characteristic of both nonhuman and human animals, with the interaction between bodies and environments bringing about the emergence and growth of skills and knowledge (Ingold 2000; Marchand 2010). This view has explicit implications for science and craft, and Ingold’s work has inspired research on crafts and craftspeople in a variety of disciplines.

Similarly foundational developments from the realm of the nascent discipline of the history of science occurred in the 1920s and 1930s when a handful of philosophers, impelled by Marxist historical materialism and the logical and empirical positivism of members of the Vienna Circle, produced germinal works on the history and philosophy of science that gave a role to artisans in the formation of scientific knowledge. These scholars were concerned with the period that later became known in the history of science as “the Scientific Revolution” – a series of shifts in worldview from about 1450 to about 1750 that were viewed as the first steps toward the system of knowledge and

knowledge production about nature called “modern science.” These scholars did not form a unified research program or school, but rather opposed from several different realms of scholarship and activism the prevailing idealist philosophy, instead viewing all knowledge and intellectual change as arising from experience, rather than from ideas. Most influential of this group was the physicist and philosopher, Edgar Zilsel (1891–1944), whose work on the concept of “genius” (and on associated concepts such as “inventor” and “artist”) in the Renaissance sought to show the ways in which social forces, including the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism, gave rise to and mediated developments in human consciousness. Zilsel’s essays, “Problems of Empiricism” (Zilsel 1941b) and “The Sociological Roots of Science” (Zilsel 1942), outlined his general view that the emergence of the new sciences of the seventeenth century was a sociological process, rooted in the transition from feudalism to early capitalism. During this period, as towns grew and new technologies of shipping, mining, and gunpowder warfare emerged, a new group of “superior artisans,” such as those who began to call themselves architect-engineers, as well as scientific instrument makers and others who used practical mathematics, such as surveyors and navigators, brought about a new experimental approach and a new idea of progress that informed and was absorbed by those who began to call themselves “new philosophers” and “experimental philosophers” from the early seventeenth century (Raven et al. 2003). Two decades later, Paolo Rossi built upon Zilsel’s work in important ways, arguing that artists and practitioners in the early modern period formulated the values that informed modern science, among them the progressive and cumulative nature of scientific knowledge, the view that technology is perfectible, and the idea that scientific knowledge consists in knowing how a mechanism works or is made, rather than knowing the causes, as Aristotle and the scholastics had taught (Rossi 1957, 1962).

At the same time, other philosophers, also influenced by Marxism but starting from a different perspective than Zilsel, argued that the rise of machines and new technologies of capitalist

production gave rise to a “modern” mechanistic picture of the world. Of these, the Russian physicist Boris Hessen (1893–1936) was perhaps best known in the Anglophonic world for his 1931 paper, “The Social and Economic Roots of Newton’s *Principia*,” which laid out his view that the rise of the new science of Galileo and Newton was a by-product of capitalist modes of production and their technologies. Newton’s mechanics, for example, arose out of the new types of machines used in warfare, mining, shipping, and other areas of merchant capitalism of the seventeenth century (Hessen 1931). Scholars associated with what became known as the Frankfurt School, such as Franz Borkenau (1900–1957) who published *The Sociology of the Mechanistic World Picture* in 1932, developed similar views about the social origins of scientific change, especially in his assessment of the centrality of practices and practitioners of technical fields in the rise of mechanical views of the cosmos.

Research and publications emerging from completely different realms of scholarship also contributed to the view that practice formed the basis of the new science. For example, the literary scholar Leonardo Olschki (1885–1961) made known the contents of many practical writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which he viewed as influencing the new scientist, Galileo Galilei (Olschki 1927). In a similar vein, but based on a different body of practical writings, American historian Lynn Thorndike (1882–1965) argued in *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (eight vols., 1923–1958) that the roots of experimental science lay in the operative worldview and practical actions of practitioners of magic, as expressed in books of magic, eventually collecting together eight volumes of writings on practical magic (Thorndike 1923–1958). He claimed that “magicians were perhaps the first to experiment; and that the history of both magic and experimental science can be better understood by studying them together” (Thorndike 1923, I.2). At roughly the same time, but from the direction of sociology, American sociologist Robert Merton (1910–2003), in his 1938 publication, *Science, Technology, and Society in Seventeenth-Century England*, argued that the development of new

technologies especially associated with the rise of commerce in seventeenth-century England was crucial to the development of empiricism (Merton 1938). Merton's work was taken up by sociologists of knowledge and eventually in the 1980s by historians of science.

Before the 1980s, many Anglophonic historians of science, influenced especially by the work of Alexandre Koyré (1892–1964), A. R. Hall (1920–2009), and Thomas Kuhn (1922–1976), rejected the approach of Zilsel and even of Merton, denying any importance to practice and practitioners in the making of scientific knowledge (Koyré 1968; Hall 1959; Kuhn 1977). The situation in France, however, was quite different, where French social history, especially that practiced by the so-called *Annales* school, whose members examined in extensive detail the historical conditions of life in preindustrial French villages and towns, brought to the fore historical documents and writings of agricultural laborers, craftspeople, and other practitioners (Febvre 1935; Long 2005). An agronomist, François Sigaut (1940–2012), whose professional activities took him throughout France and French Africa, formulated an approach to the history of technology that focused on bodily “gestes” and techniques in preindustrial European and African agricultural practices (Sigaut 1994). His work was influential in the human sciences and history of science in France in the 1990s and 2000s (Bouillon et al. 2017; Cardinal et al. 2016). Also growing out of French social history was the turn to cultural history and microhistory by historians such as Natalie Zemon Davis, Carlo Ginzburg, and James Amelang that brought to light the lives and worldviews (*mentalité*) of non-elites, including craftspeople (Davis 1975; Ginzburg 1992; Amelang 1998). From the direction of a new social history of art, especially in the work of Michael Baxandall (1933–2008), the “cognitive style” and “period eye” of Renaissance artists also began to be explored, which emphasized the cognitive and intellectualizing dimensions of artistic work (Baxandall 1972, 1980; Alpers 1983). Theorists of modern craft concerned to articulate the role of design in craft and art have also been influential in explicating the union of

hand and mind involved in making (Pye 1968; Dormer 1994, 1997; Sennett 2008; Adamson 2007, 2013).

At the same time, the growth of social anthropology, especially as pursued by E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1902–1973) in his study of the magic and witchcraft of the Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1937), came to the attention of philosophers of science in the 1960s and 1970s who made use of it to argue for the symmetry of “science” and “pseudoscience” as knowledge systems. In the wake of this work, studies of indigenous knowledge systems in anthropology and in the anthropology of science multiplied, leading to the view that modern science can be regarded as simply another such knowledge system (Watson-Verran and Turnbull 1995). In a series of important ethnographic studies on “everyday mathematics,” social anthropologist Jean Lave made clear that cognition takes place in quotidian practices (Lave 1988; Lave and Wenger 1991; Chaiklin and Lave 1993).

All these various strands of scholarship brought about a sea change in the history of preindustrial science, because they validated the study of knowledge systems and practitioners who could not be fit into a linear teleological history of the development of modern science. The idea that the history of science did not have to take as its task the explanation of how the present day state of scientific knowledge emerged has resulted since the early 1980s in a significant change in the conception of the goals of the history of science, which came to include the history of “dead ends” such as alchemy and astrology, of ignorance, and of the knowledge systems of artisans and practitioners (Smith 2009).

Two further developments in the study of science, technology, and medicine have brought forth more intensive explorations of craft knowledge. The first occurred during the 1980s in several different centers, including Paris, Edinburgh, and various universities in the UK, when sociologists of knowledge began to focus on the social construction of scientific knowledge (abbreviated SSK) (Golinski 2005). Their research included some exploration of laboratory work, including the relationship between technique and theory,

and the role of lab technicians and their bodily knowledge in the scientific enterprise, but this was generally not their primary focus. Nevertheless, this work helped inspire a study of the ways in which bodily “gestural knowledge” (influenced also by the work of François Sigaut) played a crucial role in historical scientific experiments (Sibum 2000; Chang 2011; Fors et al. 2016). Meanwhile, in *Personal Knowledge*, chemist and philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891–1976) focused explicitly on bodily and tacit knowledge in the natural sciences (Polanyi 1958; Collins 2010). Informed by this research both on tacit and on gestural knowledge, historians of science began to explore the methodology of recreating scientific experiments in order to better understand their actual historical course. Recently, this method of reconstruction has been extended more broadly to historical experiential knowledge and craft practices (Smith 2012, 2016; Smith et al. 2016; Fors et al. 2016).

Impact and Legacy

All these developments in the study of scientific knowledge opened the way for the bodily knowledge of craftspeople to be regarded as significant – even central – for the study and understanding of epistemologies of natural knowledge. Roughly from the 1990s, historians of science began to study a very diverse range of practitioners – including craftspeople – who were not primarily university-trained scholars nor “new experimental philosophers,” but who engaged with nature and natural materials in a great variety of ways, including directly transforming natural materials as a part of a craft or of alchemy, formulating vernacular knowledge systems about natural processes, or calling upon the authority of nature in making claims to certainty. Historians of science who studied this diverse group of largely non-elite practitioners formulated the notions of “makers’ knowledge,” “vernacular science,” and “artisanal epistemology,” expressing thereby a newfound sense that craftspeople possessed a philosophy, a science, or a “knowledge system” (van Berkel 1985; Pérez-Ramos 1988; Egmond 1999; Smith

2004; Roberts et al. 2007; Harkness 2007; Long 2011). In contrast to previous understandings of craft, these historians disputed that craft practices were rote and mechanical, arguing instead that craftspeople carried out their techniques in light of a coherent set of principles, but that these principles were often codified in objects, in tools, in rituals, or in songs – in other words, in types of externalizations of knowledge other than writings.

These historians have, for example, described the vernacular epistemology of midwives (Fissell 2006) and the artisanal epistemology of artists, including painters, sculptors, and metalworkers (Smith 2001, 2004, 2010, 2011). The artisanal epistemology, as contained in preindustrial craft practices, and in the writings of practitioners and their books of recipes, includes artisans’ claims that nature and experience are foundational to their knowledge, with certain or positive knowledge contained in the materials of nature, which must be extracted by the practitioner through bodily struggle. Their search for knowledge is thus active – knowing is doing. This process of struggle often takes the name of “experience” and is learned and explicated through imitation and replication of natural processes. This imitation of nature produces an effect – an intervention in the material world such as a work of art – which both displays and constitutes knowledge. Bernard Palissy (ca. 1510–ca. 1589), ceramicist and author, laid out such a view explicitly in his writings, calling this knowledge a “philosophy of laborers.” He and other artisans, such as Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), saw this method of imitating nature as a cognitive process (Lestringant 1992; Smith 2004). Imitation as a mode of gaining knowledge for these artists thus simultaneously constituted an aesthetic striving, an articulation of an artisanal epistemology (sometimes in textual form and sometimes in the material form of made things), an investigation into the properties of natural materials, and, at its most basic and all-encompassing, it was simply a mode of going about skilled work (Smith et al. 2016).

The artisans’ epistemology emerged in part from their training by apprenticeship in which bodily techniques of observation, imitation,

repetition, and active doing were modes of work and knowledge transmission. This epistemology, as articulated in texts, in conversations with scholars and patrons, and in naturalistic works of art, suggested that direct access to nature was both possible and necessary, that knowledge was gained through bodily engagement with matter, that “scientific” knowledge (in Aristotle’s sense of “*scientia*”) could be extracted from nature, and that the imitation of nature yielded productive knowledge. The articulation of this epistemology – in part by the artisans themselves and in part by intermediaries such as Theophrastus von Hohenheim, called Paracelsus (1493–1541), and Georgius Agricola (1494–1555) – created an identity through which practitioners could express claims to authority on the basis of their hard-won knowledge of natural processes (Smith 2004, 2014, 2015). The artisanal epistemology thus played an important role in the Scientific Revolution, as, through the articulation of this vernacular epistemology in objects and texts, European artisans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries engaged in making direct access to nature and the production of effects count as “*scientia*,” that is, as certain, positive knowledge (Smith 2004).

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Epistle in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The epistolary genre flourished intensely during the Renaissance; if the fifteenth was the century of humanistic Latin epistolography, in the sixteenth century there arose a “fashion” of books of letters in the vernacular and even treatises on the subject. However, over the course of the century, the original vitality of the letters gave way to their complete codification.

Synonyms

[Letter in the Renaissance](#)

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the thirteenth century, epistolary correspondence began to spread rapidly; on the one hand, letter writing in the vernacular emerged in the merchant class – which usually had little knowledge of Latin – and on the other hand, a tradition of cultured epistolography developed in both the vernacular and in Latin (Petrucci 2008).

Francesco Petrarca in particular, with his collections of Latin letters (the *Familiars*, the *Seniles*, the *Sine nomine*, the unfinished *Epistola post-eritati*, and the *Epystolae* in hexameters), founded this new genre of correspondence as a literary work, modifying classical antecedents according to the process of recovering ancient sources that would also be followed by Coluccio Salutati, and would converge in humanistic Latin epistolography. The fifteenth century saw numerous publications of letters by classical authors such as Cicero, Pliny, and Seneca, in Latin or in the vernacular translation; they were joined by books of humanistic correspondence, and miscellaneous and technical epistolary manuals in Latin, such as those by Erasmus of Rotterdam and Justus Lipsius. Worth mentioning in this context is the *Epistolarum familiarum libri* by Marsilio Ficino (Ficino 1988, 2010), published in Venice in 1495, made famous by the vernacular edition proposed between 1546 and 1548 by the Siennese Felice Figliucci (Figliucci 2001). In addition to reflecting the consolidation of the epistolary literary genre serving to reveal an intellectual's progress, since the Florentine humanist utilized his letters to trace the evolution of his own philosophical development, the *Epistolarum familiarum libri* are also the place of choice for the author to subject to critical scrutiny any ideas that had found or would find a place in his works.

Thanks to the rapid development of printing, the sixteenth century saw the growth of a double phenomenon: on the one hand, famous poets such as Pietro Aretino (Aretino 1995) and Annibal Caro (Caro 1957) published their letters, and shrewd editors, aware of an audience interested in the genre, printed anthologies (the most successful, arriving at 28 editions between 1542 and 1567, was *Lettere volgari* edited by Paolo Manuzio; Manuzio 1545). On the other hand, following humanist epistolography manuals, similar treatises in the vernacular appeared, beginning with *Secretario* by Francesco Sansovino, published in 1564.

Progenitor of all subsequent books of letters in the vernacular are the *Lettere* by Pietro Aretino, whose first book saw the light in 1538: the immense public success of Aretino's correspondence marked

the beginning of a real fashion, standing out even with regard to the typography (Quondam 1981; Matt 2005).

The books of letters were characterized by their divisions according to type: along with "family letters," there were witty, loving, spiritual, and moral ones, to name just a few, that maintained a dense intertextual reference network with other literary genres (the amorous letters with collection of poems, facetious letters with comedy and short stories, and so on).

Among letters qualifying as "comic," are the *Pistole vulgari* by Nicolò Franco (Franco 1538) in 1539 in which a jocular tone is achieved thanks to stylistic devices such as verbal accumulation, the *Tre libri di lettere del Doni e i termini della lingua toscana* by the polygraph Antonfrancesco Doni (Doni 1552), printed in 1552, in which the rhetorical space of the epistolary genre is constantly "distorted" by the use of stories and parables; and the *Lettere* of Andrea Calmo (Calmo 1888), singular in his use of Venetian. Although the category of witty letters was one of the richest and most interesting types of the sixteenth century, it too was destined to undergo the gradual crystallization which the entire epistolary tradition met; evidence of this process is the *Argute et facete lettere* by Cesare Rao (Rao 1585), in which the comic components are now limited to following established patterns.

After springing from the fertile soil of humanist comparison, in the late sixteenth century and throughout the following century, the book of letters became a mere collection of carefully indexed formulas. The aim of this editorial type became the creation of a stereotyped handbook; the same demand gave rise to *Secretario* by Francesco Sansovino, a tract on the role of the secretary at court – which enjoyed as many as 14 editions between 1564 and 1608 – where writing letters was reduced to a problem of *elocutio*, while the *inventio* was standardized according to preestablished categories (Braidà 2009). The originality that characterized collections in the 1540s and 1550s was now lost, and in the seventeenth century the book of letters became the *vademecum* of the courtier.

Cross-References

- [Ciceronianism](#)
- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Latin in the Renaissance](#)
- [Lipsius, Justus](#)
- [Rao, Cesare](#)
- [Salutati, Coluccio](#)
- [Sansovino, Francesco](#)
- [Vernacular Languages](#)

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Erasmus, Desiderius

Born: Rotterdam? 28 October [1466?]

Died: Basel, 11/12 July 1536

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Abstract

Erasmus was the most important humanist of the sixteenth century. His work in theology and education deeply influenced the European culture of his times and of subsequent centuries. In theology and ecclesiology, he was a reformer, criticizing the doctrine of sacraments and condemning the existence of the religious orders and the role of their exponents as theologians, preachers, and inquisitors. He radically refused Scholastic theology as well. His view of Christianity and the Church as a community was an evangelical one, and he believed that salvation for mankind could only be found in Christ, understood as the Word of God made incarnate in the written words of the New Testament. For this reason, he dedicated his theological activity to the philological study of the text of the New Testament and to the works of the Church Fathers, making this the main purpose of his life. Conversely, he refused to join the Lutheran movement, which he considered schismatic, and condemned any form of aggressive dissent. He stayed faithful to the Pope of Rome, believing in a theological and moral reformation without rifts in the body of the universal (Catholic) Church. Alongside his theological work, his writings on education focused on the moral reform of Christian people. Children, women, common men, and men of power are the addressees of books that became classics (e.g., the *Colloquies*, first published in 1518). In line with his humanistic thinking, he greatly appreciated rhetoric as an excellent means of communication, whereas he considered dialectics a dangerous science. Many of his writings are conceived as examples of the art of rhetoric, and let his brilliant and creative style come

through at its best. The *Praise of Folly* (first published in 1511) is the most famous of these examples.

Biography

Erasmus was probably the illegitimate son of a priest. His father's name was Gerhard (Geert, Gerardus), his mother's Margareta. He had an elder brother, Peter. E. spent his very first years at the home of his grandmother. When he was about four, his father made a first attempt to send him to school. But the child did not achieve good results, due to the antiquated and strict method of teaching being used at that time. At nine he was sent to school at Deventer, where he took up residence with his mother. In Deventer he remained till he was 13 (c 1479), when the plague killed Margareta; he therefore went back to Rotterdam, where, shortly after, his father died, too. Gerhard entrusted Erasmus and Peter to three guardians, including Peter Winckel (teacher at a nearby school in Gouda). They had to manage the quite considerable family assets and take care of the education of the two boys. Probably in 1480, when E. was about 14, although ready for university, he was sent to Bois-le-Duc to live in a house of the Brethren of the Common Life. He unwillingly spent 3 years there ("There [he] lived, rather wasted almost three years," *Compendium Vitae Erasmi*, Allen I, p. 49, ll. 52–53). He went back to the home of his guardians because of a new plague, as he was in the grip of the quartan fever. At this point, he underwent heavy pressure to persuade him to take religious vows. Due to the bad administration of his guardians, the legacy left by his father had vanished and the only solution for the two young brothers was to enter a monastery. Erasmus, now 17, felt deep repugnance for monasteries, but quartan fever and harassment by his guardians made him malleable, and he eventually agreed to enter the monastery of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine in Steyn (Emaus), near Gouda (probably in 1484). His initial intention was to leave before professing monastic vows, but pressed as he was by necessity and threats, at the moment of taking a decision he

felt obliged to do it. He took the Augustinian habit, took the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and in 1492 was ordained as a priest. Meanwhile, secretly, and despite having to face frequent reproaches from the fathers ("furtive et reclamantibus patribus", Ep. 1436, ll. 98–99), he succeeded in studying, taking advantage of the monastery library, and so gradually acquired a classical education, and a Latin style well above the average. About 1494, Henry of Bergen, Bishop of Cambrai, who was aspiring to become a cardinal, began looking for a secretary with a good knowledge of Latin. Someone suggested to the bishop the name of Erasmus, who obtained from the Bishop of Utrecht permission to leave the monastery and move to Henry's court. When the longed-for cardinal's hat did not arrive, Henry lost interest in the young secretary and let him go to Paris to study theology. Jacob Batt (c 1466–1502), a friend Erasmus had met at the court of Cambrai, helped him to obtain the required permission. In the summer of 1495, at the age of 29, Erasmus enrolled at Montaigu, the college for poor students at the University of Paris. At Montaigu the Rector was Jan Standonck (d 1504). Erasmus respectfully remembered that austere man for his attitudes towards faith and his commitment to a spiritual reformation, but criticized him bitterly for the inhuman physical conditions in which the young guests at Montaigu had to live. For that reason, and because of the recurrence of plagues during his years in Paris, Erasmus often went back to "Hollandia," sometimes to Antwerp, other times to St. Omer, or Louvain. Henry of Bergen had promised him an annual allowance that was never paid, so Erasmus gave private lessons and began to publish some short works in print to be dedicated to rich patrons. In these years he went for the first time to England (summer-autumn 1499) following the invitation of his pupil William Blount, fourth Baron of Mountjoy (c 1478–1534). During this first visit, he met in London Thomas More (1477/1478–1535), who became a lifelong friend of his, and in Oxford John Colet (1467–1519), with whom Erasmus shared an interest in biblical studies and children's education, and who probably influenced his decision to dedicate his time to the philological study

of the New Testament. The *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum* (Paris, Badius, 1512) was dedicated to Colet and to the pupils of Saint Paul's School in London, which Colet had founded in 1509. Once back in Paris, E. published the first edition of the *Adagia* (*Adagiorum collectanea*), a collection of proverbs from pagan and Christian antiquity, and dedicated it to Mountjoy. In 1503 he published with the Antwerp printer Thierry Martens the *Lucubratunculae* (*Little Dissertations*), a collection of devotional writings including the *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (*The Handbook/Dagger of the Christian Soldier*), the most important of his spiritual works. In the *Enchiridion* Christian people are exhorted to follow a personal form of religion independent of ceremonies, to be lived in the intimacy of one's own heart (*in interiore hominis*). Right from the start, the *Enchiridion* had an extremely favorable reception and found in Martin Luther one of its most enthusiastic readers. In 1504 the *Panegyric of Philip of Austria* (Antwerp, Thierry Martens) marked a first link between Erasmus and the Habsburg dynasty and earned a conspicuous reward. In 1505 Erasmus published in Paris with the printer Josse Bade (Badius) the *Annotations* that the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407–1475) had written to the Vulgate Latin text of the New Testament. During the previous summer – as E. tells us in the preface – through his habit of hunting for ancient manuscripts, he had found Valla's *Annotationes* in the library of the Premonstratensian Abbey of Parc, near Louvain. In 1505, till approximately the first half of 1506, Erasmus travelled to England for the second time. During this visit, he met William Warham (1456–1532), Richard Foxe (d. 1528), and John Fisher (1469–1535), was introduced to the Cambridge milieu, and dedicated himself to the study of Greek. In London he was guest of Thomas More, and with him translated some of the *Dialogues* of Lucian of Samosata, published at the end of 1505 in Paris by Badius. During his English visit, the king's physician, the Italian Giovanni Battista Boerio, asked him to accompany his two sons on an educational tour through Italy, as supervisor of their studies. As a result, after a few months spent in

Paris, Erasmus arrived in Italy at the end of summer, 1506. On September fourth he was awarded a doctorate in Theology in Turin (Allen, vol. I, p. 59, ll. 108–110; Ep. 200 and 201). He stayed with his pupils in Bologna till approximately the end of 1507, except for taking refuge in Florence at the time of the war between the Pope and Bologna (Ep. 200). At the end of 1507 his duties in training the young Boerios finished, and E. went to Venice, where he presumably stayed right through 1508. In Venice he lived as a guest in the home of the printer Aldus Manutius (1449–1515). There he made the acquaintance of the scholars who worked with Manutius and made friends with Girolamo Aleandro (1480–1542), with whom he shared a bedroom (Ep. 2443). In Venice he worked on an enriched edition of the *Adagia*, printed by Aldus in September 1508. At the end of 1508 he moved to Padua, where he was requested as a tutor to Alexander (1492–1513) and James (1499–c 1544) Stewart, natural sons of James IV, King of Scotland, and dedicated himself to studying Greek (de Nolhac 1898, pp. 55–56). In December 1508, after a brief stay in Ferrara, he went on to Siena with his pupils. Here he left the boys, to continue on to Rome, where he stayed during the winter. After returning briefly to Siena, in 1509, E. left again with Alexander for Rome, where he spent Easter (eighth April), and then went to Naples (CE, s.v. Alexander STEWART). It was in this period that he received from his beloved pupil (who was to die at 20, fighting side by side with his father in the battle of Flodden, 1513) a ring carrying an ancient precious stone representing the god Terminus. Years later, Terminus, accompanied by the motto *Concedo Nulli*, would become Erasmus' symbol (Ep. 1558). After a few more months in Rome, he decided to go back to England, following a warm invitation from his former pupil Mountjoy (Ep. 215). English men of letters were, indeed, very hopeful about the young and well-educated King Henry VIII, who came to the throne in April 1509. The most probable moment of E.'s arrival in London was at the beginning of July 1509 (de Nolhac 1898, p. 92). Once there, he lodged again at Thomas More's and set to work on revising the text of the *Praise of Folly* (*Stultitiae*

Laus), resuming the work he had begun during the return journey from Italy and would be printed for the first time in Paris, by Gille Gourmont, in 1511. Erasmus stayed in England till the summer of 1514, except for a brief move to Paris. In 1513 the Basel printer Johannes Froben reprinted the *Adagia* on the basis of the Aldine edition of 1508. This work was destined to be very successful and went through nine more editions, each richer than the previous one, up to 1536. Being very satisfied with Froben's work, in autumn 1514 E. moved to Basel to launch an editorial project that was to occupy the rest of his life. In Basel he went to live in the great Froben's estate, known as "zum Sessel." Froben became his close friend, and Froben's family became the only real family Erasmus had till his death. From then on, Erasmus would pass many times through Europe, sailing down the Rhine to return to England and the Netherlands, but his main center of interest remained Basel, the free imperial town that freed him from court duties and, as far as possible, kept him away from religious conflicts, at least till 1529. In 1516 Erasmus' project of editing texts for an authentic reform of Christianity began to materialize. In June, the *Life of Saint Jerome (Hieronymi Stridonensis Vita)*, the philologist Father and, in Erasmus' view, the best example of a learned man who was also a Christian ascetic, was published. Soon after, the *Novum Instrumentum*, a New Testament edition with the Greek text and the Latin translation revised by Erasmus, followed. A separate volume contained the *Annotations*, which were Erasmus' commentary; in that volume the reasons for his textual choices were explained. Froben would print four other authorized editions (1519, 1522, 1527, 1535) of this seminal work. At the same time Saint Jerome's *Works (Opera omnia)* were printed, as the result of a great amount of work that had been divided up between the main Basel humanists, first of all the Amerbach brothers Bruno (1484–1519), Basilius (1488–1535), and Bonifacius (1495–1562). Editing Jerome's *Letters* was the part of the project taken on by Erasmus: four volumes that required of him – or so he claimed – an effort devoted to correcting greater than that made by Jerome in writing them

(Ep. 396). Jerome's edition was the first in the hefty series of editions of the Church Fathers (the Christian authors of the first four centuries) to which Erasmus dedicated his best energies throughout the remaining years of his life. Meanwhile, in January 1516, Erasmus had been created counselor of the 16-year-old Charles of Habsburg (1500–1558), who had just inherited the Spanish possessions of the family (including American colonies) from his maternal grandfather, Ferdinand II of Aragon. When added to the Habsburg possessions in central Europe, this heritage gave Charles a much wider-ranging dominion in the world. Among the counselors to this young prince, there were several men of refined humanistic culture. One of these, Jean Le Sauvage (1455–1518), counselor for Brabant, successfully worked to get the position of counselor assigned to Erasmus. It should have brought with it a reward of 2000 florins a year, which was, however, only occasionally paid. For this new pupil of his, Erasmus published *The Education of a Christian Prince (Institutio Principis Christiani)*, (Basel, Froben, 1516), where the principles of his pedagogy are applied to a boy on whom the happiness or the ruin of the world depended. The counselor's new position implied the obligation to frequent the Court, an activity not well suited to Erasmus' temperament. In particular, when in 1517 Charles moved to Spain to take possession of his new reign, Erasmus succeeded in avoiding the journey, even though he had to accept staying in Brabant, more precisely, residing in Louvain. In that city he was expected to establish a good relationship with the members of the prestigious Faculty of Theology, founded about a century earlier, at the end of the Great Schism, as a bastion defending the authority of the Pope against the Faculty of the Sorbonne in Paris, which supported the theories in favor of Conciliarism. So, after a brief stay in England, a country to which he would never return, in the summer of 1517 Erasmus moved to Louvain and settled there until 1521. His relationship with the Faculty of Theology, however, was troubled, and a long series of theological quarrels started in this period, taking up much of Erasmus's time till the end of his life. The main cause of discussion was his edition of the New

Testament and the theological consequences that derived from it. Erasmus's adversaries explicitly charged him with irreverence towards ecclesiastical traditions, and, above all, of heresy in his attitudes to the basic dogmas of Christianity, starting with Christ's divine nature and the doctrine of the sacraments. From Louvain the charges directed against E. were destined to spread to Paris and Spain, where theologians made common cause with their colleagues in Brabant against what they saw as dangerous Erasmian novelties. This rift with the exponents of traditional theology bitterly marked the life of Erasmus, who hated polemics and apologies but would unfailingly send a pointed answer to everyone who attacked him. In this connection, we can recall his replies to Maarten van Dorp (1485–1525), Jan Briart of Ath (1460–1520), Nicolaas Baechem of Egmond (d 1526), Latomus (Jacques Masson, d 1544), Edward Lee (d 1544), Stunica (Diego Lopez Zúñiga, d 1531), Noël Bedier (Beda, 1470–1537), Johann Maier von Eck (1486–1543). Erasmus did not achieve a reconciliation with any of them, except Dorp, who remained his devoted friend till death. The writings produced in this period brought an official condemnation in 1527 from the Paris and Valladolid Faculties, and 30 years later they were used in Rome and Trento to build a definitive condemnation by the Roman Church of Erasmus's works. On the other hand, in Louvain Erasmus inspired the foundation of the Collegium Trilingue (1517), a University college where the three biblical languages (Latin, Greek and Hebrew) were studied, financed thanks to the testament of Jerome de Busleyden (c 1470–1517), a rich and cultivated Erasmus's friend.

To help him in the task of completing his Christian editorial project, Erasmus began to publish paraphrases of every book in the New Testament. In 1517 the *Paraphrase of the Epistle to the Romans* was published. Meanwhile, in Germany, quarrels against ecclesiastical abuses and ceremonies reached fever pitch. The Lutheran doctrine that condemned human works in view of attaining the salvation of the soul spread widely, and Erasmus was seen as the champion of a Germany ready to rise up against Rome. In this phase, Erasmus did not back away from the enthusiasm

of the Germans. With Luther he exchanged a number of letters showing mutual esteem and a consciousness that they were fighting for the same cause. It was in this period that an anonymous libel entitled *On the Death of Julius* (*De obitu Iulii*) began to circulate in Germany. It was to become known later as *Julius Excluded from Heaven* (*Iulius exclusus e coelis*) and was a ferocious satire of Pope Julius II, who had died in 1513. The author imagines the warrior pope kept away from the doors of Paradise by Saint Peter in person and being condemned to Hell along with all the soldiers to whom he had misleadingly promised eternal salvation. Erasmus always denied the authorship of this work, but it seems to have been definitively demonstrated. In this period, Erasmus' editorial activity was intense. Inter alia, in 1517 the first authorized collection of his epistles was published (*Epistolae sanequam elegantes*, Louvain, Thierry Martens), a kind of book that had a resounding success in the sixteenth century, and was widely imitated. At least 14 other editions of Erasmus's epistles followed till the end of his life. In 1517 he also received from Rome an exemption from wearing the habit of the Augustinian order (Ep. 296, l. 186n), a practice that was the subject of heavy reproaches brought against him by his enemies throughout the rest of his life. In 1518 the *Ratio verae theologiae*, one of the prefaces to his edition of the New Testament, was enlarged and printed in a separate volume. Along with the *Enchiridion*, it constitutes the manifesto of Erasmus's Christian philosophy, based on studying the Scriptures and imitating the model they put forward. In 1520 Froben published the *Antibarbari* (*Against Barbarians*), a dialogue in which the reasons of the humanistic studies are discussed against the arguments in favor of the Scholastic theology, having Erasmus's old friend Jacob Batt as the main and winning character.

At the end of 1521, Erasmus went back to live in Basel, where he stayed for 8 years. In 1522 Froben printed the first edition of the *Colloquies* (*Familiarum colloquiorum formulae*), dedicated to Erasmus' godson Erasmus Froben, son of Johann, who was 7 years old at the time. This work too was destined to have widespread success

and become one of the seminal books in Europe for the education of young people. There were ten further editions, each enlarged on the previous one, that were printed during Erasmus' life. In this period, in addition to his intense activity of publishing Christian and classical works (above all, the *Paraphrases* to the New Testament and Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*) he had to write more *apologies*, not only against the pro-Roman theologians, but also against Luther's followers, who pressured him to openly support their cause. The controversy with Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523), a German humanist and a fervent admirer of Erasmus, who in 1515 had hailed him as the German Socrates, was a particularly painful one. Erasmus had welcomed Hutten's friendship, but always refused to support his military initiatives (invariably failures) against the Roman Church, until in 1523 the two entered into a written clash that ended in August with the death of Erasmus's enemy. Meanwhile, Charles of Habsburg had become Emperor Charles V (1519), and his counselors exerted strong pressure on Erasmus to publicly distance himself from the schismatic movement. Eventually, in 1524, he decided to write the *De libero arbitrio diatribè* (*On Free Will*), which led to an aggressive answer by Luther, the *De servo arbitrio* (*On the Bondage of the Will*), followed by other polemical writings from both sides. This controversy marked the end of the previously good relationship between Erasmus and the "Lutheran party," who for centuries would charge him with cowardice and moral weakness. By contrast, when, in 1525, the Peasants' War, inspired as it was by Anabaptist doctrines, led to widespread destruction and repression in Germany, Erasmus's behavior was much more tolerant than Luther's. Indeed, though condemning rebellions and the use of physical force against secular authorities, he wrote in a way that showed significant sympathy towards Anabaptism (Asso 2006).

In the autumn of 1527, Johann Froben, Erasmus's fraternal friend, died, and his elder son Hieronymus (1501–1563) succeeded him as the man in charge of the publishing house.

In 1528–1529 Erasmus got involved in a literary polemic with some Italian humanists, and

published the *Ciceronianus* (*Cicero's Follower*), where he criticized the stylistic cult in Italy that had Cicero as its focus. This polemic was also connected with the theological clash with the Italian prince Alberto Pio of Carpi (1475–1531).

In spring, 1529, the town council of Basel decided to welcome the Reformation. The main theological guide of Basel at the time was Johannes Oecolampadius (1482–1531), a humanist and an old friend of Erasmus, but there were violent clashes in the city, and Erasmus, fearing for his personal safety and his property, moved to Freiburg, where he was welcomed with great honors (Ep. 2158). Though his health was becoming increasingly precarious, he continued to follow the Froben publishing house and to publish classical and patristic works under its imprint. Meanwhile, his best friends in England fell into disgrace for refusing to recognize the king as the head of the Church of England. In late spring, 1535, Erasmus went back to Basel for reasons that are not well documented (Ep. 3025). Shortly afterwards (summer 1535), Henry Fisher and Thomas More were beheaded in the Tower of London. Erasmus passed the last year of his life in his old lodging at the house of Froben, lovingly cared for by his friends, above all Beatus Rhenanus (1484–1547), Erasmus' administrator for many years and the future executor of his will. Heavily troubled by arthritis and dropsy, Erasmus was finally struck down by dysentery, which led to his death on July 12, 1536. He was buried in the Basel cathedral.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Like every man of his age, Erasmus considered the problem of salvation a central one. Indeed, in early modern Europe, endemically scourged by wars, plagues, and famines, the issue of how a man could avoid the "second death" – that of the soul – was a very important one. Erasmus' answer was that the only means of salvation for human beings is Jesus Christ, the Word (*Logos*) by which God had decided to save them. God revealed himself through the teachings of Jesus, which can be found in the Gospels, the Acts of the

Apostles and the Epistles. Any individual looking for salvation should therefore turn to the New Testament and never feel tired of reading or reflecting on it. But the Holy Scriptures reached us written in natural languages not easily comprehensible to the common people – Hebrew, Latin and, above all, Greek. Not everyone had the time or capacity to study them. For this reason, as argued by Erasmus, there is room in Christian society for people who wish to dedicate themselves to the Scriptures, and explain them to others. Such people, however, did not acquire any peculiar power to impose one interpretation rather than another; they could, in fact, be controlled and criticized even by the people they were teaching at the time. These considerations explain why Erasmus dedicated the best of his time and energies to editing the New Testament and the works of the Church Fathers (the Christian authors of the first four centuries), who were considered by him to be the best examples of moral and theological teaching. This editorial activity, sharply focused on the education of Christian people, had a counterpart in Scholastic theology, the theology of the “moderns,” as it was called in the universities. Erasmus considered it a deceptive replacement of the teaching of the word of God, capable of corrupting the intellect and morals of Christians by the wrong use of logic and dialectics. The main resource of the Christian teacher is, inevitably, rhetoric, the art of persuasion of which, in Erasmus’ opinion, the Apostles and Jesus himself were masters.

Apart from the biblical and patristic editions, the educational writings of Erasmus explicitly aim to bring about a reform of Christian society. To widen the scope of the discussion, it is now time to give an overview of his vision of mankind and human society.

Erasmus had a rather pessimistic idea of human nature. It must be shaped and well directed starting with the earliest days of life. Otherwise, if left alone, it will unavoidably tend towards evil. This matter of fact, Erasmus says, is the heritage of Original Sin, which the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church speak about, but the best resource that human beings have to save themselves is not a sacred rite, such as baptism, but a

focused and constant activity of educating people, in body as well as in mind. For this reason education should first take a physical form. Like a little clay vase, a new-born baby must be so modeled that, when its mind develops, it will be able to become home to the message of redemption in the best way. At the roots of the Erasmian pedagogy, we can thus observe a strong materialistic concept of human nature. A sick or malformed body will prevent the mind from developing and from adequately receiving Christian teaching and Divine Grace. Erasmus does not specify what is likely to happen to the innocent victims of this kind of bad situation if no one is at hand to help them, but it is clear that parents and teachers must make every possible effort, first of all to guarantee to each child physical health and a good Christian education. That principle explains why a good Christian should take the greatest care of his/her body in all the successive phases of life. Personal care, being wary of infectious diseases (and for this reason being suspicious of mixed environments), using personal utensils like handkerchiefs, cutlery, glasses to drink from, also living in healthy, well-ventilated rooms, following a simple but nutritious diet while avoiding fasting and a selective diet, all these recommendations are frequent in Erasmus’s writings, but, in contrast with what we might think, they are strictly functional to the salvation of one’s own soul. Being personally fed and cradled by a Christian mother is the first step towards a Christian education. Following a humanistic model that he borrowed from the Greek philosopher Plutarch, Erasmus recommends that mothers breastfeed children, to allow them to acquire the best and most natural nourishment, but at the same time receive the morality and religious feeling of the mother. If the only possible way to ensure breastfeeding is entrusting the baby to a wet nurse, she must be chosen only after careful selection; she should not only be tidy and trustworthy, but a good Christian as well, because a wicked, corrupt, or impious woman would instill her bad qualities into her baby through her milk. The father will take care of the correct implementation of this first, delicate phase of his child’s life. Even this is one of the innovations in Erasmus’s views compared with more

traditional attitudes. Following Quintilian, the ancient Latin author of a work on rhetoric and education (*Institutes of Oratory*) who was greatly esteemed by the humanists, Erasmus places the father at the center of family life, giving him the role of being the main teacher of his wife and children. Erasmus condemns one of the common practices of his times, which was widespread in noble but also in middle-class milieux, of entrusting children to women and rough servants almost up to the age of puberty. In this way – Erasmus maintains – boys and girls indelibly absorb the worst flaws that have their origin in a lack of education: superstition, lasciviousness, aggression. When such children reach adulthood, it will be impossible, even for the best of the teachers, to change them into honest men and true Christians. What is worse, if they possess power and money, they will become a curse on their community.

When a child begins to understand and speak, he/she should listen to fables and songs that are pleasing and amusing, but also in compliance with Christian morals; they should contain the first religious teachings. When growing older, that child will receive a more complex and deeper kind of teaching, but it should still take a pleasant form, and be combined with various traditional religious practices, such as the Mass and the cult of the saints, which, in Erasmus's opinion, are not a really important component of religion, but do constitute a good introductory pathway leading into it. These material and childish religious practices may be permitted even to adult people who have not yet managed to develop in their piety, or to people recently converted to Christianity. Erasmus calls these people *infirmi* (weak), using an expression that derives from Saint Paul.

Thus, at the center of Christian society, there is the institution of the family, based on Christian marriage and governed by the father. People who want to dedicate themselves to religion, as seen above, have as their main task that of studying the Scriptures, so as to become capable of teaching them to the people. This is not a mediation between God and ordinary people, like that found in the traditional Church. Everyone is free to study and interpret the Word of God. The priest

simply helps people who are unable to study by themselves. If a priest has a vocation to chastity, that is a good thing, as Saint Paul says, but if not, then he must channel his sexuality and affectivity into marriage.

Likewise, the role and education of women plays an important part in Erasmus' vision of a reformed Christian society. In early modern Europe, the "status" of women's (their social condition) could only – accordingly to Roman law – belong to one of three main categories: virgins, married women, and prostitutes. In Erasmus' writings, this scheme underwent a radical change. As to virgins, nunneries are seen by him with horror as places encouraging idleness and corruption. A woman who does not wish to marry and prefers to dedicate herself to prayer and charity may do so, Erasmus suggests, by remaining in her father's home. On the other hand, women who decide to marry, when they have fulfilled their duty of giving birth to children, should live in chastity, each with her own husband. In Erasmian society, there is no room for prostitution. Brothels (just like cloisters) must remain empty, and the women who live like slaves there must be reintegrated into society, their only choice being between marriage and chastity.

Generally speaking, Erasmus condemns every aspect of the life of religious orders. More exactly, the main object of his polemic is the mendicant orders, whom he charges with having appropriated the right to preach and to administer sacraments to the people, a right that should be given back to priests. The wish to become isolated from society in order to pray and study may be understood, and Erasmus sympathizes with it in his writings. But it should only be enacted by following the model of ancient monasticism and of the earliest followers of Saint Benedict. By contrast, the system of the wandering and begging friars that flourished during the life of Erasmus aroused in him no more than a feeling of disgust. In his opinion it would be useless to reform or amend any such system, just because its functions should find a natural place in every common Christian's life. Prayer, chastity, and poverty were, in the broadest sense, the duties of every Christian, even though those who wish to practice them

more strictly may do so by remaining inside society and earning their living with dignity.

Adopting all due caution, we can say that Erasmus's model of society is fundamentally "bourgeois." He nourishes a profound aversion for the culture of feudal nobility that triumphed in Europe during his lifetime. Despising manual and intellectual work, loving weapons and hunting, having habits free of morality, being haughty and overbearing towards others, were characteristics typical of noblemen that Erasmus openly detested and bitterly mocked.

As for politics, from Erasmus's writings, an overall picture of towns ruled by self-government and obedient to the emperor seems to emerge. In June 1517 he seemed to consider the imperial institution as having decayed (Ep. 586), but when the Lutheran fracture became more and more evident and Charles of Habsburg became emperor (1519), ruling over more than half of Europe, the hope of finding a solution to religious and national conflicts under a revived imperial authority seemed to attract him. At this point it should be stressed that Erasmus always passionately condemned war between Christians and constantly appealed to European princes to resolve their controversies by diplomatic means. His idea of toleration should be kept in mind here. Actually, in his opinion, none of those who receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, may be considered outside Christendom, and killing a brother for any disagreement over faith is unacceptable. On the basis of that opinion, none of the European wars in the sixteenth century should ever have been fought. On the other hand, people who are not part of Christianity, such as Muslims, must be converted, and, to carry out this task, war may be waged, even though it must be a means of last resort after attempts have been made to live in peace. It must also be noted that Erasmus's toleration did not apply to Jews or their culture, which denies the historical existence of Jesus Christ. From this standpoint, Erasmus contributed to the development of anti-Judaism, which is one of the historical roots of modern anti-Semitism.

The problem of reforming the Church in the sixteenth century was a political one, and, from the perspective of Erasmus, it seemed to coincide

with the reformation of Christian society as a whole. The distinction between clerics and laymen, which, at the end of the Middle Ages, shaped European society, in the writings of Erasmus appears to be so weak it can hardly be discerned. As seen above, Erasmus condemns without appeal the status of religious orders, maintaining that anyone who wishes to dedicate their time to monastic life may live in isolation from society, but cannot constitute a separate juridical or economic *corpus*. As for taking care of the souls, it is a duty that belongs to priests and bishops. These will be family fathers like other Christians, but specifically devoted to studying the Scriptures, preaching, teaching, and caring about the morals and religion of the members of the community. We have to judge Erasmus's behavior towards the papacy (that has generated misunderstandings in interpretation, most notably with respect Luther's behavior) in this context. As is true of all other priests, the Bishop of Rome should first of all change his habits, starting with the practice of aggressiveness and temporal power. Then he should practice chastity, poverty, and mildness and devote his efforts to banishing illiteracy, above all with regard to Christian philosophy and literature. Indeed, the main activity of a priest must be studying, but (despite the importance of classical culture for young people's education) an adult Christian should not dedicate his/her attention excessively to pagan culture. Actually, Erasmus refuses the Renaissance papacy, with its gorgeous but semi-pagan culture. Even so, unlike Luther, Erasmus does not see the papacy as an irreparable evil. Whenever the early simplicity is recovered, the Bishop of Rome will sit in the assembly of all the other bishops, and it may even happen that he could enjoy, as an act of homage to the seat of Saint Peter, a particular respect and authority inside the Council. What counts most is that the Council is the authority appointed to decide in theological matters. As a matter of fact, 3 hundred and 50 years before the dogma of Papal infallibility (1870), at the moment of the Lutheran crisis, one of the most important problems to be settled was, in fact, who should be the ultimate authority in matters of faith. The most influential theological academies in Europe

(Paris, Louvain, Valladolid), whose professors were almost all members of religious orders, were the places where theological matters were discussed. And the leaders of the Roman church, who were often distant from theological studies and acted as secular princes, were inclined to passively accept the decrees in matter of faith that were issued by theological academies. Moreover, when the task was to judge the theological rectitude of a man or a written work, it was entrusted to the exponents of the academies, who often sat side by side with the bishop in the inquisitorial tribunals, and had the last word about heresy and orthodoxy. Erasmus' hostility towards religious orders originates too from the great influence that they exerted on the destiny of the Christian people, overriding the priests' role as judges, in addition to superseding them as teachers, preachers, and confessors. Furthermore, Erasmus took up an uncompromising position against scholastic theology, theorizing and spreading throughout his life the only form of theology that he considered appropriate to a Christian mind – the theology he called *philosophia Christi*, the philosophy of Christ. Studying Scriptures and Fathers is a complex and demanding activity, because it requires a good knowledge of the sacred languages (Latin, Greek, and Hebrew), above all the Greek of the New Testament, and of a considerable number of other sciences that are useful in moving, as far as possible, close to the heart of God's word, while breaking the hard shell of its archaic and metaphorical form. Whoever dedicates himself to this kind of study, Erasmus says, has no spare time or energy to waste on the quibbles of an academic dialectic. It follows that, when Christian priests decide to concentrate on their authentic work as wise, cultivated and loving guides for their people, then theological questions will be discussed and resolved inside the councils.

On the basis of what has been stated above, the Christian society that Erasmus yearned for appears to have been much simpler than Christian society as it really was in early modern Europe, but, nevertheless, closer to a large portion of European society in the following centuries. Having abolished the distinction between clerics and

laymen and the values of the feudal nobility, in such a renewed society work (whether manual or intellectual) became the most noble activity, and one principle that gradually became central was that all individuals are equal at birth, and that differences between them depend on their capacity to improve their personal gifts.

Impact and Legacy

Erasmus' place in European religious history can nowadays be considered largely debatable. He died in 1536, before the final break between the Roman and evangelical churches. During his life, the institutional exponents of the Church, definable as the academic theologians, repeatedly charged him with heresy, and two official condemnations were delivered by the Universities of Paris and Valladolid. After his death, the Roman Church somehow ratified those sentences, by including all of his works in the Index of forbidden books. At the end of the sixteenth century, the Roman theologian Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) wrote that Erasmus' writings could not be amended, only burned to ashes. On the other hand, the fact of having disputed with Luther, refused to openly join the Lutheran movement and condemned the schism and its more aggressive expressions, also made him hateful to the Protestant tradition, which accused him of ambiguity and cowardice. It is, in any case, worth observing that the Protestant party never accused him of being a "papist." On the contrary, some of his opinions, after being stigmatized by his Roman critics, especially those that dealt with the divine nature of Jesus Christ and the baptism, were regarded with suspicion even by the reformers who founded institutional churches. In particular, Luther thought that Erasmus' exclusive faith in the central role of the Scriptures in leading to salvation brought him inevitably to theological skepticism and to a denial of dogmas that even Lutherans and (subsequently) Calvinists preserved as the basis of their faith (Asso 2006). Actually, most of the radical Reform movements (such as the Anabaptists and Socinians) and their successors in the seventeenth century (notably the

Arminians) based their doctrines on Erasmus' writings (Bietenholz 2009).

England was probably the place where the legacy of Erasmus was in the best position to develop unimpeded. His writings influenced the English educational system and culture (and even the language, considering that many acquisitions from Latin arrived through Erasmus' writings). Even the history of the Church of England – despite a period of unrest lasting over a century – seems to have acquired a deeply Erasmian aspiration to preserve the traditional form of religion, while undergoing at the same time a deep reformation of the essence of its doctrine.

The influence of Erasmus on the theory and practice of children and young people's education in general has been of primary importance in the Western world. Condemning corporal punishment, the idea that teaching must be the result of a loving relationship between teacher and pupil, the idea that even in this field the technique of persuasion is more effective than obligation or repression, making use of psychology – in other words, counting on a deep knowledge of human nature – in applying this method, the idea that the father of the family must personally take care of his children's education from infancy onwards, all these principles have sent down roots and come to constitute over the long term the backbone of children's education in Europe and North America.

Erasmus' contribution to the development of the good manners has been of no less importance. This aspect of his thought, which has largely been overlooked by the traditional literature, was of crucial importance in transforming European society during the modern age (Elias 1939). In the following centuries, it penetrated the educational programs dedicated to the ruling class, despite Erasmus's deeply antiaristocratic spirit, and above all it contributed to shaping the consciousness of the bourgeoisie in England and the Netherlands, eventually reaching North America. Closely linked with this aspect of Erasmus's thought was the principle that the value of an individual consists of his personal virtues, regardless of the prestige of his/her family tree. Such virtues may be expressed only through the ability

to be a good communicator. Moreover, communication through the *logos*, the capacity to speak and write well, even if the most important ability, loses much of its value if it is not accompanied by physical communication, comprising pleasant looks and gestures. Everyone can achieve access to an adequate knowledge of these means of communication. In its absence, the son of an earl will certainly be inferior to the son of a workman who has found the way to acquire it.

E

A Preliminary Chronological List of Erasmus' Works

(Abbreviations: OW = Original Works; ET = Editions and Translations)

1500

OW

- *Adagiorum collectanea* [ASD II/9; CWE 30].

1503

OW

- *Disputatiuncula de tedio pavore tristitia Iesu* [ASD V/7; CWE 70].
- *Enchiridion militis christiani* (first ed. in *Lucubrationculae*) [ASD V/8, CWE 66].

1504

OW

- *Panegyricus ad Philippum Austriae ducem* [ASD IV/1; CWE 27].

1505

ET

- Lorenzo Valla, *In Latinam Novi Testamenti interpretationem adnotationes*.

1506

ET

- Euripides, *Hecuba et Iphigenia* [ASD I/1].
- Lucianus, *Opuscula ab Erasmo Rot. Et Thoma Moro traducta* [ASD I/1].

1508

OW

- *Adagia* (first ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].

1511

OW

- *Concio de puero Iesu* [ASD V/7].
- *De ratione studiorum* [ASD I/2, CWE 24].
- *Moriae Encomium*, id est *Stultitiae laus* [ASD IV/3, CWE 27].

ET

- *Missa Sancti Ioannis Chrysostomi ab Erasmo Rot. versa.*

1512

OW

- *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum* [ASD I/6, CWE 24].

ET

- Lucianus, *Complures dialogi*.

1513

OW

- *Adagia* (second ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Libellus de constructione octo partium orationis* [ASD I/4].

ET

- Plutarchus, *De tuenda bona valetudine praecepta* [ASD IV/2].

1514

OW

- *Opuscula aliquot (Catonis praecepta; Mimi Publiani; Septem sapientum celebria dicta; Institutum Christiani hominis, carmen pro pueris ab Erasmo compositum).*
- *Parabola sive similia* [ASD I/5; CWE 23].

ET

- Plutarchus, *Opuscula* [ASD IV/2].
- Seneca, *Tragoediae*.

1515

OW

- *Adagia* (3d ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Enarratio allegorica in primum psalmum Beatus vir* [ASD V/2, CWE 63].

ET

- Seneca, *Lucubrationes*.

1516

OW

- *Hieronymi Stridonensis Vita* [ASD VIII/1 (forthcoming), CWE 61].
- *Institutio principis christiani* [ASD IV/1, CWE 27].

ET

- Hieronymus Stridonensis, *Epistolae*.
- Isocrates, *De institutione principis* [ASD IV/7].
- *Novum Instrumentum* (1st. ed) [ASD: VI/2 (*Ioh. and Acta*); VI/3 (*Ep. Apost. 1*); VI/4 (*Ep. Apost. 2 and Apoc.*); VI/5–10 (*Annotationes*); CWE 56 (*Ann. on Rom.*), 58 (*Ann. on Gal. and Eph.*)].

1517

OW

- *Adagia* (fourth ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Apologia ad J. Fabrum Stapulensem* [ASD IX/3, CWE 83].
- *Epistolae sanequam elegantes*.
- F.A.F., *De obitu Iulii* (editio princeps of *Iulius exclusus e coelis*, never recognised by Erasmus) [ASD I/8, CWE 27].
- *Paraphrasis in Epistolam ad Romanos* [CWE 42].
- *Querela pacis* [ASD IV/2, CWE 27].

ET

- *Epistola Eucherii episcopi Lugdunensis ad Valerianum propinquum de philosophia Christiana*.
- Isocrates, *Paraenesis ad Demonicum*, translated by Rodulphus Agricola.
- Lucianus, *Opuscula*.

1518

OW

- *Adagia* (fifth ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Argumenta in omnes epistolas apostolicas nova*.
- *Auctarium selectarum epistolarum*.
- *Declamatiuncula* [ASD IV/7].
- *Enchiridion militis christiani* (second ed.).
- *Encomium artis medicae* [ASD I/4, CWE 29].
- *Encomium matrimonii* [ASD I/5].
- *Ratio verae theologiae*.

ET

- Basilius, *In Esaiam commentariolus*.
- Q. Curtius Rufus, *De rebus gestis Alexandri Magni*.
- Theodorus Gazae, *Grammatica institutio*.
- Ulrich Zasius, *Lucubrationes*.

1519

OW

- *Apologia ad Latomum* [CWE 71].
- *Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii* [CWE 71].
- *Farrago nova epistolarum*.
- *Paraphrasis in Epistolas ad Corinthios* [CWE 43].
- *Paraphrasis in Epistolam ad Ephesinos* [CWE 43].
- *Paraphrasis in Epistolam ad Galatas* [CWE 42].
- *Paraphrasis in Epistolam ad Timotheum* etc. [CWE 44].

ET

- Ciprianus, *Opera*.
- Libanius, *Aliquot declamatiunculae* [ASD I/1].
- *Novum Testamentum* (second ed.).

1520

OW

- 22 axiomata pro causa Martini Lutheri (s.d., but see Ep. 1155) [CWE 71].
- *Adagia* (sixth ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Antibarbari* [ASD I/1, CWE 23].
- *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo'* [ASD IX/9, CWE 73].
- *Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis Ed. Lei* [ASD IX/4, CWE 72].
- *Responsiones ad annotationes Lei* [ASD IX/4, CWE 72].

ET

- Cicero, *De officiis*.

1521

OW

- *Apologia ad Stunicam I* [ASD IX/2].
- *De contemptu mundi* [ASD V/1, CWE 66].
- *Epistolae ad diversos*.
- *Paraphrases in omnes Epistolas Pauli germanas et in omnes canonicas*.
- *Paraphrases ad Hebraeos* [ASD VII/6, CWE 44].
- *Progymnasmata quaedam primae adolescentiae Erasmi*.

1522

OW

- *Apologia ad Sanctium Caranzam* [ASD IX/8].
- *Apologia ad Stunicam II* [ASD IX/8].
- *Apologia ad Stunicam III* [ASD IX/8].
- *Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem resurgemus'* [ASD IX/9, CWE 73].
- *Colloquia* (first and second eds.) [ASD I/3, CWE 39–40].
- *Commentarius in psalmum II Quare fremuerunt gentes* [ASD V/2, CWE 63].
- *De conscribendis epistolis* [ASD I/2, CWE 25].
- *Epistola apologetica de interdicto esu carniū deque similibus hominum constitutionibus* [ASD IX/1, CWE 73].
- *Paraphrasis in Matthaeum* [CWE 45].

ET

- Arnobius, *Opera*.
- *Novum Testamentum* (3d ed.).

1523

OW

- *Adagia* (seventh ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Catalogus omnium Erasmi lucubrationum*.
- *Colloquia* (3d ed.) [ASD I/3, CWE 39–40].
- *Paraphrasis in Marcum* [CWE 49].
- *Paraphrasis in Lucam* [CWE 47–48].
- *Paraphrasis in Ioannem* [CWE 46].
- *Praecatio dominica in septem portiones distributa* [CWE 69].
- *Spongia adversus aspergines Hutteni* [ASD IX/1; CWE 78].
- *Virginis matris apud Lauretum cultae liturgia* [ASD V/1, CWE 69].

ET

- Hilarius (Hilary of Poitiers), *Opera*.

1524

OW

- *Apologia ad Stunicam IV* [ASD IX/8].
- *Colloquia* (fourth and fifth eds.) [ASD I/3, CWE 39–40].
- *De immensa Dei misericordia concio* [ASD V/7, CWE 70].
- *De libero arbitrio diatribe* [CWE 76].
- *Exomologesis sive modus confitendi* [ASD V/8; CWE 67].
- *Modus orandi Deum* [ASD V/1, CWE 70].
- *Paraphrasis in tertium psalmum Domine quid multiplicati* [ASD V/2, CWE 63].
- *Paraphrasis in Actus* [CWE 50].
- *Virginis et martyris comparatio* [ASD V/7, CWE 69].

ET

- *Commentarius in duos hymnos Prudentii* [ASD V/7; CWE 29].

- *Commentarius in Nucem Ovidii* [ASD I/1; CWE 29].

1525

OW

- *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* [ASD IX/9].

- *In psalmum quartum concio* [ASD V/2; CWE 63].

- *Lingua* [ASD IV/1a; CWE 29].

ET

- Celio Calcagnini, *Libellus elegans de libero arbitrio*.
- Io. Chrysostomus, *De orando Deum libri duo*.
- Io. Chrysostomus, *De sacerdotio* (greek).
- Plinius, *Historia naturalis*.
- Plutarchus, *De curiositate* [ASD IV/2].
- Plutarchus, *Libellus de non irascendo* [ASD IV/2].

1526

OW

- *Adagia* (eighth ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Christiani matrimonii institutio* (1526) [ASD V/6, CWE 69].
- *Colloquia* (sixth and seventh eds.) [ASD I/3, CWE 39–40].
- *Consilium . . . in causa evangelica*.
- *Detectio praestigiarum cuiusdam libelli Germanici . . . 'Erasmi et Lutheri opiniones de coena Domini'* [ASD IX/1; CWE 78].
- *Hyperaspistes diatribae adversus Servum arbitrium Martini Lutheri*, lib. I [CWE 76–77].
- *Prologus in supputationes calumniarum Natalis Bedae* [ASD IX/5].

ET

- Io. Chrysostomus, *Conciunculae tres de fato et providentia* (greek).

- Io. Chrysostomus, *In Epistolam ad Philippenses homiliae duae* (latin and greek).
- Galenus, *Exhortatio ad bonas artes, praesertim medicinam, de optimo dicendi genere et qualem oporteat esse medicum* [ASD I/1; CWE 29].
- Irenaeus, *Opus*.
- Plutarchus, *De vitiosa verecundia* [ASD IV/2].

1527

OW

- *Colloquia* (eighth ed.) [ASD I/3, CWE 39–40].
- *Hyperaspistes*, lib. II [CWE 76–77].
- *Supputationes errorum in censuris Natalis Bedae* [ASD IX/5].

ET

- Ambrosius, *Opera omnia*.
- Athanasius, *Lucubrationes aliquot*.
- Io. Chrysostomus, *De Babylla martyre* (greek).
- Io. Chrysostomus, *In Epistolam ad Galatas* (latin).
- Io. Chrysostomus, *Lucubrationes* (latin).
- *Novum Testamentum* (fourth ed.).
- Origenes, *Fragmenta commentariorum in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*.

1528

OW

- *Adagia* (ninth ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Ciceronianus* [ASD I/2, CWE 28].
- *Concionalis interpretatio in psalmum LXXXV* [ASD V/3, CWE 64].
- *Deploratio mortis Ioannis Frobenii* (= Ep. 1900).
- *De recta Latini Graecique sermonis pronuntiatione* [ASD I/4 CWE 26].
- *Apologia ad monachos quosdam Hispanos* [ASD IX/9].
- *Selectae epistolae*.

ET

- Faustinus episcopus, *De fide adversus Arianos et De praepositis quaestionibus Arianorum*.

- Faustus episcopus [Faustus of Riez], *De gratia Dei et humanae mentis libero arbitrio ... cum D. Erasmi Rot. Praefatione*.

1529

OW

- *Colloquia* (ninth and tenth eds.) [ASD I/3, CWE 39–40].
- *De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis* [ASD I/2, CWE 26].
- *Loca quaedam in aliquot Erasmi lucubrationibus per ipsum emendata*.
- *Opus epistolarum*.
- *Responsio ad collationes cuiusdam gerontodidascali* [CWE 73].
- *Responsio ad epistolam parenneticam Alberti Pii* [ASD IX/6, CWE 84].
- *Responsio adversus febricitantis cuiusdam libellum*.
- *Vidua christiana* [ASD V/6, CWE 66].

ET

- Ambrosius, *De interpellatione Iob et David*.
- Ambrosius, *Liber de apologia David*.
- Augustinus, *Opera omnia*.
- Io. Chrysostomus, *Aliquot opuscula* (greek).
- Lactantius, *De opificio Dei*.
- Seneca, *Opera* (= *Lucubrationes* 1515).

1530

OW

- *Adversus mendacium et obtreptionem utilis admonitio* [ASD IX/9, CWE 78].
- *Consultatio de bello Turcis inferendo (Enarratio in psalmum XXVIII)* [ASD V/3, CWE 64].
- *De civilitate morum puerilium* [ASD I/8, CWE 25].
- *Epistola contra pseudevangelicos* [ASD IX/1, CWE 78].
- *In psalmum XXII enarratio triplex* [ASD V/2, CWE 64].
- *Responsio ad fratres Germaniae Inferioris* [ASD IX/1, CWE 78].

ET

- Georgius Agricola, *Bermannus sive De re metallica*.
- Alger, *De veritate corporis et sanguinis in Eucharistia*.
- Io. Chrysostomus, *Opera* (latin).
- Xenophon, *Hieron* [ASD IV/7].

1531

OW

- *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* [ASD IX/6, CWE 84].
- *Apophtegmata* [ASD IV/4 (libri 1–4); CWE 37–38].
- *Colloquia* (11th ed.) [ASD I/3, CWE 39–40].
- *Enarratio psalmi XXXIII* [ASD V/3, CWE 64].
- *Epistolae floridae*.
- *Paraphrasis in Elegantias L. Vallae* [ASD I/4].

ET

- Aristotelis, *Opera*.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Orationes XXX*, translated in latin by W. Pirkheimer.
- Titus Livius, *Historiae*.

1532

OW

- *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* [ASD IX/7, CWE 82].
- *Enarratio psalmi XXXVIII* [ASD V/3, CWE 65].
- *Epistolae palaeonaei*.
- *In Epistolam de delectu ciborum scholia* [ASD IX/1; CWE 73].
- *Precatio ad Dominum Iesum pro pace Ecclesiae* [CWE 69].

ET

- Basilius, *De Spiritu Sancto*.
- Basilius, *Duae homiliae de laudibus ieiunii*.
- Terentius, *Comoediae*.

1533

OW

- *Adagia* (tenth ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Colloquia* (12th ed.) [ASD I/3, CWE 39–40].
- *De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia* [in *Ps. LXXXIII*] [ASD V/3, CWE 65].
- *Explanatio Symboli Apostolorum* [ASD V/1, CWE 70].

ET

- Io. Chrysostomus, *Aliquot homiliae* (latin).
- Haymo of Halberstadt, *Pia brevis in omnes Psalmos explanatio*.

1534

OW

- *De praeparatione ad mortem* [ASD V/1, CWE 70].
- *Purgatio adversus epistola non sobriam Martini Lutheri* [ASD IX/1; CWE 78].

1535

OW

- *Ecclesiastes, sive de ratione concionandi* [ASD V/4–5, CWE 67–68].
- *Precationes aliquot novae*.
- *Responsio ad Petri Cursii defensionem nullo adversario bellacem*.

ET

- *Novum Testamentum* (fifth ed.)

1536

OW

- *Adagia* (11th ed.) [ASD II/1–8, CWE 31–40].
- *Enarratio psalmi XIV qui est de puritate tabernaculi sive ecclesiae Christianae* [ASD V/2, CWE 65].

ET

- Origenes, *Opera latine ... partim versa, partim recognita*.

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Erculiani, Camilla

Born: 1540s, Padua

Died: 1585?, Padua?

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Abstract

Camilla Gregghetti Erculiani was apothecary with her husband at the *spezieria* “Alle tre stelle” in Padua. Thanks to her connections with the Paduan network of scholars and students of medicine and philosophy, and with Polish scholars studying in Padua, in 1584 she published her *Letters on Natural Philosophy*, printed in Krakow. Shortly after the publication of her work, she was accused of heresy by the Paduan Inquisition for some of the ideas expressed in her book, which aimed to demonstrate the natural cause of the biblical Flood.

Alternate Names

Herculiana Gregetta, Camilla; Gregghetti Erculiani, Camilla; Gregeta Erculiani, Camilla

Biography

Camilla Erculiani was the only woman who published her theories on natural philosophy in sixteenth-century Italy. Probably born in early 1540s, she was the daughter of the wealthy Paduan merchant and apothecary Andrea Gregghetti. In the early 1560s, she had married the apothecary Alvise Stella, and after his death, she married the apothecary Giacomo Erculiani in 1573. She had a child from the first marriage and five children

from the second. She worked with her husband Giacomo at the *spezieria* “Alle Tre Stelle” (“At the Three Stars”) in Padua, previously owned by Stella, and in 1584 she published her first and only book, *Lettere di Philosophia naturale* (“Letters on Natural Philosophy”). In 1585 she was interrogated by the Inquisitor of Padua for the content of her *Lettere*. Her book was printed in Krakow, probably thanks to Polish students and scholars at the University of Padua she met in her pharmacy.

It is likely that most of Erculiani’s philosophical knowledge was due to her job and to the network of students, physicians, and natural philosophers who were connected with the University of Padua and frequented her *spezieria*. She presumably read books for apothecaries and works by Galen, as well as works on natural philosophy and meteorology in the vernacular, addressed to a larger nonacademic audience, such as those by Alessandro Piccolomini; she had some knowledge of astronomy and astrology, and she might have learned some Latin; she certainly read Sebastiano Erizzo’s translations into Italian of Plato’s dialogues, and she had epistolary exchanges with Erizzo himself (Vanhaelen 2016); she also used the Bible to demonstrate her theories.

The *Lettere di filosofia naturale* include four letters, three composed by Erculiani, and one, presumably, by her correspondent Georges Guarnier, a Burgundian physician graduated in Padua in 1577. In her Letters Erculiani aimed to demonstrate her theory of the natural origins of the Universal Flood, of the composition of men, on the nature of the rainbow, and on the role of planets on all of this. Her “scientific” and, in some regards, materialistic theories were based on, or inspired by, Galenic, Aristotelian and Platonic thought. The book is framed by several paratextual devices, including two poems, a dedicatory letter to the Queen of Poland, and a note to the readers, in which Erculiani defends her ability as a woman to write about philosophy. Erculiani expresses her thoughts from an explicitly feminine point of view and inserts her text into the vibrant contemporary debate by and about women over their role in Italian culture.

Erculiani wrote in the particularly favourable cultural context of late sixteenth-century Padua, where the scientific debate was open and active. Throughout her work she positioned herself on equal footing with contemporary male philosophers and vied forcefully with their theories, often contradicting them, and claiming to express her own opinions – sometimes quite original – based on her experience and on her own interpretation of various authors and theories. What emerges from her writings is a woman who aims to express her opinion discussing with other philosophers and encouraging other women to do the same.

In spite of the limited number of copies printed, Erculiani's work did not pass quietly and unnoticed. A *consilium* published by the lawyer Jacopo Menochio recounts how Camilla Erculiani was accused of heresy by the Paduan Inquisition for the ideas expressed in her book (Carinci 2013). The *consilium* reports in detail Erculiani's statements which were considered against the Catholic belief, first of all her main challenging and quite materialist theory about the natural cause of the Universal Flood, which denied that the Deluge was a divine punishment of men's sins, and argued that it took place for natural causes, related to the equilibrium of elements in the world. Menochio's defense includes the fact that Erculiani claimed to speak philosophically and not theologically – seeming to appeal to the so-called double truth theory – and that as a woman, like ignorant people and children, she was more excusable. The outcome of the trial is unknown, but certainly it blocked Erculiani's ambitions: her further works "On the sin" and "On the soul," mentioned in her letters and now lost, were never published, and even if she did not die soon after, she disappeared from the Paduan cultural panorama.

Cross-References

- [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)
- [Meteorology in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Piccolomini, Alessandro](#)

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Eros

- [Love in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Esprits forts

- [Libertines and Libertinism](#)

Ethics, Renaissance

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Abstract

This entry begins by outlining some of the main medieval views on the purview of ethics and how this discipline relates to the other branches of moral philosophy or other fields. These views, as well as the question of the compatibility between pagan and Christian ethics, were highly influential on later thinkers. The second section examines various features of Renaissance ethics, such as the sources on which it drew, the contexts in which it was debated, the approach taken to philosophical and religious boundaries, the forms through which ethics was discussed, and the themes that were examined. It also covers five different historiographical approaches to Renaissance ethics. Ethics emerges as a highly interesting subject, in part because it was claimed by both humanists and scholastics, allowing one to gain insights into both approaches. Although the rise of early modern philosophy questioned many of the assumptions of Renaissance ethics, various solutions accepted in the period continued to attract both professional philosophers and other cultured individuals before reemerging in the past few decades, thanks in part to virtue ethics.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Questions about ethics and moral philosophy more broadly had been central to discussions in ancient thought, including the writings of Plato and Aristotle and the Epicurean and Stoic schools. To various extents these had left their mark on Roman writers such as Cicero, Seneca, and Boethius, whose works were much better known in the Latin Middle Ages than their Greek

counterparts and whose thought often became assimilated with or joined to Christian views about virtue. A telling example is the seven virtues, which from early on comprised the four cardinal virtues proclaimed by various pagan writers (prudence, justice, temperance, and courage or fortitude) and the three theological virtues (faith, hope, and love). Discussions about virtues (and vices) were commonplace (Bejczy 2011), but it was not until the translation into Latin of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and the Greek commentaries on that work (completed by Robert Grosseteste c. 1250) that a more philosophically grounded understanding of ethics developed in the Latin West (Lines 2002a, 111–157). Many of the most influential thinkers commented on Aristotle's *Ethics*, including Albertus Magnus (1200–1280), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Giles of Rome (1245–1316), Walter Burley (1275–1346), Gerard of Odo (1290–1349), John Buridan († after 1358), and Albert of Saxony († 1390). Also strongly influenced by Aristotelian thought were John Duns Scotus (1265/1266–1308) and William of Ockham (c. 1288–1347). These writers were also aware of and responded to the views offered by the ancient Greek commentators, by the Byzantine commentator Eustratius of Nicaea (†1120), and by the middle commentary on the *Ethics* by the Arab philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rushd, 1126–1198). A hotly debated topic was how ethics as a field of enquiry should be understood, something that was often resolved on the basis of its subject, its object, its method, its end, and various other considerations (often discussed in the commentaries' prologues). Two main views developed (for what follows, see Lines 2002a, 123–129, 143–149; Kraye 1988, 303–306).

The first takes as its basis the views of Eustratius of Nicaea and Thomas Aquinas. Eustratius starts his discussion from the aim of ethics (i.e., individual betterment); the main function of ethics is to help people live faultlessly, ruling their passions and living by reason. The proper sphere of ethics is earthly action, but there is nonetheless a strong connection with the contemplative life of impassibility that unites

the individual soul with God. This view sees moral philosophy as a tripartite subject, which takes into consideration the individual (ethics), the family (oeconomics), and the state (politics). The connections between these three branches are not always clear, given Eustratius's insistence on individual perfection. Thomas builds on Eustratius's view but gives a more prominent role to action; indeed, the proper subject of moral philosophy as a whole is human actions, inasmuch as they are related to one another and to their end. Thomas is then able to argue that ethics concerns the actions of the individual, whereas economics and politics concern the actions of increasingly broader groups (i.e., the family and the state, respectively). Within this scheme, the highest place is accorded to politics, since it considers the largest grouping. Nonetheless, ethics remains of fundamental importance, as it considers actions in view of individual betterment and happiness (*eudaimonia*), something that achieves a religious coloring when it is translated, as it sometimes is, by *beatitudo* (blessedness) instead of *felicitas*.

A second, influential perspective was offered by the writings of Averroes, Albertus Magnus, Gerard of Odo, and John Buridan. This view, which is particularly clear in Albertus Magnus, again sees *felicitas* as playing an important role as the end of ethics. Nonetheless, the subject matter of ethics is considered to be the *disciplina hominis* as opposed to the *disciplina unius hominis*. In other words, it is not the well-being of the individual that is under consideration here, but rather that of mankind in general. Ethics is thus seen as the branch of moral philosophy that provides the theoretical principles of virtue; these are then applied by the other branches (oeconomics and politics) in order to make people good. In this system, ethics is superior to the other two branches inasmuch as it is a theoretical subject from which the other two derive their principles. Buridan follows this line when he insists that the subject of ethics is man inasmuch as he is free and capable of attaining to happiness. Its concern is therefore not how specific individuals should act, but how people in general should behave in particular situations.

Both viewpoints outlined above agree that ethics is not a science *sensu stricto*, since it deals with the realm of the contingent and variable. They also insist that discussions of ethics are not for the sake of theoretical speculation, but of practice and action. Nonetheless, they involve notable differences of emphasis. Albertus Magnus, for instance, underlines that ethics does not derive its principles from metaphysics, but from considerations internal to itself. He explicitly confines its remit to the earthly and the civic, accusing of impropriety commentators who take Aristotle's discussion of the *summum bonum* as an excuse for discussing heavenly happiness. Thomas Aquinas does not discuss the method of ethics at length, but he does follow Albertus in applying to it Galen's distinctions between the three orders of enquiry (*resolutivus*, *compositivus*, *definitivus*). Ethics follows the second of these, or the synthetic method (which proceeds from knowledge of the end and moves toward first principles), rather than the first, or the analytic method (which is proper to the theoretical sciences and moves in the opposite direction). He also sees similarities between the method of ethics and that of dialectic, rhetoric, and poetics. Buridan's views are also of considerable interest. Of the medieval commentators, he comes closest to seeing ethics as a theoretical science (although not on the same order as, say, natural philosophy). At the same time, like Averroes and others, he assigns a significant role to what he calls a *logica moralis* or *dialectica moralis*. Buridan says this particular kind of logic can be found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. He views this as a counterpart to the method used in the speculative sciences; yet it is not a method of investigation, but of teaching and expression: its function is to dispose the appetite not to resist the intellect as it indicates the path of virtue.

All of the points just mentioned (including the practical purpose of ethics, its status as an intermediate discipline between the theoretical and the applied, its earthly focus, its close relationship with rhetoric and poetics, and the question of how it fits within the methods outlined by Galen) are seized upon and further developed in Renaissance discussions and debates about ethics. For

instance, nearly all Renaissance interpreters (with the exception of Felice Accoramboni) agree that ethics is not a science. Even Petrarch's view (in *De sui ipsius ac multorum ignorantia*) that moral philosophy is only as effective as it is eloquent draws on this tradition.

A particular issue worth noting is the relationship of Christian and pagan ethics. Partly influenced by Eustratius, who offers an interpretation of Aristotle's *Ethics* strongly colored by Christianity, Thomas and other commentators argue for the compatibility between the two. Yet the preferred kind of pagan ethics was that of Aristotle, not the unsystematic and often poorly known (when not clearly problematic) accounts of Plato, Stoics, or Epicureans. The sections on ethics in Thomas' *Summa theologiae* owe a clear and heavy debt to Aristotelian moral philosophy. The Dominican friar's discussion of prudence, for instance, concerns not only how to define it and what its parts are, but whether it is present in sinners and in those enjoying God's grace (*ST*, IIa IIae, q. 47, a. 13–14). Likewise, Thomas explores both moral virtues and vices by bringing to bear Christian considerations as well as pagan authorities. Thomas' synthesis, though not unique, enjoyed a considerable *fortuna*, both as a model and in its specific conclusions (Gauthier 1947–48; Lines 2005a), even though some fifteenth-century Dominicans such as Girolamo Savonarola and Ludovico Valenza preferred to decouple philosophy and theology (Lines 2006). In Italy the theological orientation of moral philosophy was less strong than elsewhere in Europe, particularly in the university context, where theology was often absent. But we shall see that influential commentators in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries contributed even there to building a new synthesis between Christian and pagan ethics.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Despite obvious points of continuity with the late Middle Ages, Renaissance discussions of ethics also departed from previous treatments in various ways. This section examines the sources,

contexts, approaches, forms of expression, and themes of Renaissance ethics. It concludes by considering how Renaissance ethics has been approached by various scholars.

Sources. Most late-medieval and Renaissance discussions of ethics took their starting point from the works of Aristotle (Kraye 1988, 325–348; Bianchi 2013), who had written the *Nicomachean Ethics* and (or so it was thought) both the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Magna moralia*. Of these works, the most important was the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which was taught as the standard textbook in courses of moral philosophy all over Europe. This work provides a fairly ordered discussion, starting with happiness and its connection to virtue (Bk. I), and then explaining how virtue is acquired (Bk. II), the identity of the specific moral virtues, including justice (Bks. III–V), the intellectual virtues and the role of prudence (Bk. VI), the problem of the passions and *akrasia* (Bk. VII), the importance of friendship (Bks. VIII–IX), and the choice between the active and contemplative lives (Bk. X). As a result, the *Ethics* was translated, edited, or commented on by a broad range of figures such as (in Italy) Leonardo Bruni, Donato Acciaiola, Giovanni Pontano, Giovanni Bernardo Feliciano, Bernardo Segni, Pier Vettori, Alessandro and Francesco Piccolomini and (outside of Italy) by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, Philipp Melanchthon, Theodor Zwinger, Joachim Périon, John Case, and many others (Kraye 1988).

In addition to Aristotle, late-medieval and Renaissance ethics drew increasingly on numerous other classical sources, including Plato (and Plato commentaries), the Stoics, and Academic Sceptics (Kraye 1988, 2007, 2008; Poppi 1997b; Lines and Kraye 2013). Works such as Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* and the writings of the Stoics Seneca and Epictetus (in the seventeenth century, also Marcus Aurelius) were particularly influential. At the end of the sixteenth century, the Neo-Stoic project of Justus Lipsius was culturally fundamental to help heal the religious divisions that had descended into violence and war (Papy 2017). Ficino's version of Plato's doctrine of love had literary and philosophical repercussions well beyond the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

(Kraye 1994; Ebbersmeyer 2002). Epicurean writings were of comparatively little moment until around 1600 (Wilson 2008), although thinkers such as Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus were aware of them and Christianized them (Kraye 2007, 102–106; Gambino Longo 2007; Palmer 2014). Many of these currents (some of them revitalized by the appearance of new sources) attracted eclectic, rather than wholehearted, devotion, to the extent that many thinkers cannot be described as belonging to a single ethical school (Kristeller 1985, 180–183; Lines and Kraye 2013). Strategies varied as to how to combine various sources and which to include (Schmitt 1983, ch. 4; Kraye 1993, 45–48; Kraye 2002a; Cuttini 2005).

One should not, however, forget the influence on Renaissance ethical discussions of Christian thought, which despite some older studies (e.g., Trinkaus 1970) has not been sufficiently explored (Bianchi 2011). Indeed, the operation of evaluating, reconciling, or sifting the various sources available often took place with Christian considerations in mind (Kraye 1988; Kraye 2004). Thus, the fifteenth century saw attempts to censor or soften passages in Plato's *Republic* on the community of women, since these ran counter to Christian morality (Hankins 1991). Luther raised strong objections on theological grounds to Aristotle's theory of virtue (which has no place for grace). And Epicureanism was usually depicted as a doctrine of lustful abandonment to the senses, even by those who knew better; it was thus fended off until the seventeenth century, when attempts to reinterpret it made it more palatable. Even Stoicism, close in some respects to certain Christian tenets, could be held at arm's length, particularly for its rejection of clemency and other Christian virtues, as is clear from Francesco Piccolomini's *Universa philosophia de moribus* (1583) among other works (Kraye 2002a). What is also notable, however, is Piccolomini's deployment of Plato's philosophy as a confirmation of Christian viewpoints and a shield from other potentially unorthodox doctrines. This strategy already had its roots in the commentary by Eustratius, but gained considerable ground with the immensely influential *Ethics*

commentary of Donato Acciaiuoli, first printed in 1478 on the basis of the Florentine lectures (1457–58) of the Byzantine émigré Johannes Argyropoulos (Bianchi 2003). This approach was only strengthened with the recovery and publication of Plato's complete works in Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation (1484). The Aristotle commentaries of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, written in Paris at the end of the fifteenth century, are already highly indicative of the new trend (Kraye 2002b, 104–105; Lines 2007). Another significant example is the *Epitome in X libros ethicorum* by the Dominican Crisostomo Javelli, an opponent of Pietro Pomponazzi's controversial views on the soul, who tamed Aristotle through Plato's works and Christian doctrine. Probably written in the 1530s (Lines 2002a, 499), Javelli's work observed the directives of the papal bull *Apostolici regiminis* (1513) to combat potentially heretical notions through Christian teachings. Also instructive in this sense is the *Institutione dell'huomo nato nobile e in città libera* by Alessandro Piccolomini (Cestelli Guidi 1998); this work (first ed., 1542) had a deep Christian hue and promised to treat practical philosophy both "Peripatetically and Platonically." A strong Catholic orientation can also be seen in four other vernacular works written during the Counter-Reformation by Felice Figliucci, Galeazzo Florimonte, Giulio Landi, and Antonio Scaino (Bianchi 2013, 155–156).

Contexts of ethics. The study of ethics (as opposed to the imparting of moral precepts via the works of classical or Christian writers) took place in many parallel contexts (Lines 2013). The universities, for instance, particularly outside Italy, considered moral philosophy an essential part of the Arts curriculum: it was early on a mandatory subject and taught by senior professors; many lecture manuscripts and disputations survive, often indicating close ties with theological concerns (Lines 2005b; Darge et al. 2010). But Italian universities too gave it an increasingly prominent place and served as a context for discussion of a variety of ethical problems, including how moral education should take place (Lines 2002a). In Italy, however, ethics for a long time lacked a clear place in the curricular ladder; it

was assigned to junior professors and was taught on feast days as an optional (rather than as a required) course. This made for considerable fluidity with other subjects. It was not until the sixteenth century that it came to be more permanently associated with rhetoric (Pisa, Padua) or philosophy (Bologna) and was taught more consistently. The Jesuits too taught moral philosophy (and especially ethics) within their full-fledged colleges. Some analysis of its features has taken place, particularly for the Collegio Romano (Lines 2002, 348–383), but much remains to be done. We are also not well informed about ethics teaching in the *studia* of the mendicant religious orders, which provided training in philosophy and theology to their most promising members (for the Franciscans, see Roest 2000).

Ethical problems were also discussed in numerous informal contexts. Humanist “academies” – such as those of Marsilio Ficino in Florence, Aldo Manuzio in Venice, and later on the *Orti Oricellari* in Florence – also paid attention (although not exclusively) to ethics, often in connection with works of literature, history, or philosophy. Thus, the circle around Giovanni Pontano in Naples must have discussed ethics, on which Pontano wrote numerous works (Roick 2017). Likewise, the many academies that sprang up in sixteenth-century Italy often gave a privileged place to literature, but on several occasions (particularly in the Accademia degli Infiammati in Padua or the Accademia Fiorentina), literary works were examined from a moral and even philosophical perspective. A famous case is that of Benedetto Varchi, who lectured on the *Ethics* in the Accademia degli Infiammati in Padua and in Florence treated moral subjects while ostensibly lecturing on literary authors such as Dante and Petrarch (Andreoni 2012). Ethical debates also took place in the courts of kings and princes, thus providing a credible setting for works such as Baldassar Castiglione’s *Il libro del cortegiano*, whose dialogues are imagined as taking place in the court of Urbino. For informal contexts the evidence tends to be scanty, although quite a bit survives for the court of King Henri III of France (Lines 2013, 67–73) and we are fairly well informed about the

philosophical debates at the court of Queen Marguerite de Valois, where – among others – Scipion Dupleix was active (Giacomotto Charra 2015). It may well be that the topics discussed in informal contexts, and the ways in which these were approached, had a different hue from those that took place in more formal ones (Quondam 2010; Mack 2013), although they were probably closer than is usually imagined.

A fundamental consideration when thinking about contexts is the difference between Catholic and Protestant lands (and, within Protestant territories, the difference between Lutheranism and other confessions; for the following see Saarinen 2005, 2013). Luther’s emphasis on the “three orders” of church, household, and the state stressed the communitarian, rather than the individual, dimension of ethics. Luther and Philipp Melancthon were also initially somewhat more favorable toward the Stoic ethical tradition than the Aristotelian one (which was seen by some as being close to Pelagianism), although several later Lutherans, including Joachim Camerarius, wrote important commentaries on the *Ethics*. A stronger emphasis on ethics is found among the Calvinists, who regarded individual *ethica Christiana* as providing evidence for belonging to the company of the elect. The close relationship of some Protestants with both Stoicism and Aristotelianism is made clear in Lambert Daneau’s *Ethices Christianae libri tres* (1577), but Calvinists were also critical of certain Stoic notions, particularly the ideal of *apatheia* (impassibility). The Catholic tradition continued, to a considerable extent, to exploit Aristotle’s writings (reconciling them when possible with Platonic and other elements), but also gave new attention, particularly in the wake of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), to developing the field of moral theology and to debating the relationship between nature and grace. Eventually Tridentine reforms also had an effect on university ethics, although the process was slower than sometimes thought (cf. Schmitt 1979).

Approaches. One characteristic these diverse ethical works had in common was that they became increasingly religious in orientation. Indeed, contrary to the views of some historians,

at least from the second half of the fifteenth century, most Renaissance thinkers underlined the compatibility of pagan and Christian ethics (See ► “[Happiness, Renaissance Concept of](#)”). Various models of concordism were embraced (here it is not possible to consider their possible relationship to late-medieval ones, outlined in Solère 2002). Melancthon kept philosophy and theology separate, but viewed Aristotelian ethics as an important first step for appreciating the truths of the Gospel (Meerhoff 2007). Many Italian interpreters sought to accommodate all of the known sources with each other, under the banner of Christianity (Kraye 1988; Bianchi 2011). Nonetheless, this characterization should be seen as a trend rather than a rule. Notable exceptions include the Florentine Pier Vettori, whose commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1584) is almost exclusively a philological enterprise (Lines 2002, 238–246), or the Bolognese professor Claudio Betti, whose lectures (1570s) used the *Ethics* as a text through which to teach logic (Lines 2002, 310–324). Throughout Europe, the text of the *Ethics* was approached in markedly different ways and for different purposes (Kraye 2002b).

Forms of expression. Ethical discussions during the Renaissance often continued the earlier practice of examining particular points in the course of a commentary on a canonical text (e.g., Aristotle’s *Ethics*, Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations*), whether or not this was associated with the classroom. Nonetheless, many other forms and genres were also in use. The medieval practice of collecting moral sayings of antiquity under specific moral headings (such as “virtue” or “friendship”) illustrated by the *Compendium moralium notabilium* of Geremia da Montagnone (before 1310) continued within humanism, where it was brought to new heights in the tradition of the commonplace book (Moss 2013). Likewise, biographical accounts (of saints, lay people or even pagans) could provide examples of virtuous living that deserved to be followed (Frazier 2013). Sermons, plays, and poems such as Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen* (1590–1596) continued, as in earlier times, to be effective vehicles of ethical teaching. But the Renaissance also saw an

emphasis on new or less usual genres, represented by Desiderius Erasmus’s *Adagia*, Michel de Montaigne’s *Essais*, the sayings and letters contained in Antonio de Guevara’s *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*, and the dialogue form of Castiglione’s *Il libro del cortegiano* (Mack 2013). In addition to these genres, particularly relevant to informal settings of ethical discussion are the academies’ *lezioni* on literary authors (see above) and the increasing number of treatises, paraphrases, philological analyses, philosophical textbooks, or dichotomous tables outlining the relevant moral works of Aristotle (Lines 2002a, 223–246). All of these genres allowed authors to depart from the linear nature of the commentary tradition, giving them the freedom to rearrange canonical works and elaborate their own (often less systematic) ethical vision (Bianchi 2013, 156–160). The Jesuit development of textbooks dedicated to philosophy (sometimes including ethics) may seem to pull in the opposite direction, but in fact the systematic treatment they reserved for philosophical topics meant they enjoyed more freedom to choose which aspects to emphasize. As an example, the *Ethics* textbook produced by the Coimbra Jesuits (first ed., 1573) proceeds by a series of disputations, each of which contains several questions relating to ethics, but abandoning altogether the attempt to correlate these to a direct and linear reading of the *Ethics*, also because several other sources are taken into account (Schmitt 1988; Leinkauf 2017, I, 780–782).

Language represents another important dimension of the variety of Renaissance forms of moral discourse. Greek editions of the relevant texts became increasingly available from the end of the fifteenth century, but almost all Renaissance discussions of ethics took place either in Latin or in the vernacular. Latin had a particularly prominent place in schools and universities, as well as in humanist circles. Throughout the period it remained fundamental partly because the interpretation of Aristotle’s *Ethics* was based on Latin translations dating from the thirteenth century, updated or supplanted by fresh efforts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (The most influential translations in the Quattrocento were penned

by Leonardo Bruni and Johannes Argyropoulos.) It is not surprising that most learned works on the *Ethics* and moral philosophy more generally were written in Latin (listings in Lohr 1988, *passim*; Lines 2002a, Appendix C; Risse 1998 for printed works in all languages). But the vernacular was also gaining ground (Bianchi 2009; Lines 2015a). Especially in Italy, early-fourteenth-century works of vernacular philosophy by Brunetto Latini and Taddeo Alderotti were followed (in the fifteenth century, and even more frequently after c. 1540) by numerous translations, commentaries, dialogues, treatises, and other works in Italian (Lines and Refini 2015; Bianchi et al. 2016; Cotugno and Lines 2016). Again, greatly relevant in this context is Alessandro Piccolomini's *Institutione* (1542; rev. ed., 1560), dedicated originally to Laudomia Forteguerri and reflecting the eclectic and religious slant of many similar works in Latin (Cestelli Guidi 1998). It was followed by Bernardo Segni's substantial translation of and commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics* (1550), a project that emerged from his activities within the Florentine Academy (Lines 2013). Even university professors such as Francesco Piccolomini felt the draw of the vernacular; in later years he produced an Italian compendium of his massive *Universa philosophia de moribus* (1583) for the infant Tuscan prince (Lines 2015b). The vernacular was used for both original and interpretive works of all philosophical schools, not only in Italy but across Europe (Le Blanc and Simonutti 2015; Lines and Puliafito 2019).

Themes. Both Latin and vernacular discussions of ethics gave attention to a shifting constellation of problems. The following are selected examples (cf. the more comprehensive listings in Kristeller 1985, 173–179; Kraye 1988; Mack 2013, 190–191): happiness (Poppi 2013); the active and contemplative lives (Vickers 1985; Poppi 1997c); the connection between happiness, virtue, and external circumstances; the application of the “golden mean”; the importance of specific virtues, such as magnificence and justice, friendship (Langer 1994 and Langer 1999; Sère 2007), and heroic virtue (Saarinen 1990); honor (Bianchi 2000); the applicability of Aristotle's virtues to

both rulers and subjects (Langer 2013); the compatibility of classical and Christian virtues (Kraye 2004; Lines 2006); the interconnectedness and location of the moral virtues; the difference(s) between moral and intellectual virtues; the freedom of the will (Poppi 1988; Knebel 2000); the role of the passions (Casini 2002; King 2002; Knuuttila 2012) and of pleasure (Boulègue and Lévy 2007); *akrasia* or weakness of the will (Saarinen 2011); the respective roles of habituation, education, law, and grace in the acquisition of virtue (Herdt 2008); ethics as science or art (Ebbersmeyer and Kessler 2007); issues in moral education (Lines 2002a); the debate as to whether Plato or Aristotle was the best guide for ethics (Poppi 1997a); and the relationship of ethics to politics (Scattola 2003).

A particularly significant debate developed in Padua around the middle of the sixteenth century on the method and order of ethics (Lines 2002b; Cuttini 2014). The main protagonists were two professors of philosophy, Jacopo Zabarella and Francesco Piccolomini, who especially differed on how ethics should be taught and presented: should one begin with the subject's end (happiness), as Zabarella maintained, or consider this goal only at the very end, as Piccolomini thought? Although these positions were not altogether original with Zabarella and Piccolomini, they were part of a broader controversy at the time on whether the arts and sciences should be taught differently, and on the nature of ethics (art or science?) and its relative importance vis-à-vis politics. These were issues of great moment, which had echoes throughout Europe until the seventeenth century, particularly in German-speaking territories.

The attention to these various themes was often tied to historical circumstances. Aristotle's understanding of friendship, for instance, became of particular interest to Savonarola in the late fifteenth century (Lines 2006), but was problematic for Protestant Reformers who considered its application to man's relationship with God. Likewise, the Stagirate's views on the acquisition of virtue through habituation seemed to them to give too little space to the workings of grace. Fifteenth-century humanists who wished to exalt the active

life were exercised by Aristotle's stated preference (or so it seemed) for the contemplative life in the *Ethics*, Bk. X. So they seized on virtues such as magnificence and were happy to follow this as an ideal for themselves and their rulers. Honor became an issue of particular social relevance in sixteenth-century Spain and Italy. Ruling one's passions surged in importance with the violence of the Wars of Religion and the Thirty Years' War.

The problem of a "Renaissance ethics." The historical context and shifts in audience and language led, as discussed above, to emphasizing and developing various themes in ethics. But did the Renaissance produce an ethics recognizably different from what preceded or followed it? One way of addressing this point might be to ask whether the Renaissance witnessed a "morality of obedience" or a "morality of self-governance." Given that the latter did not emerge, at least in a self-conscious way, until the eighteenth century (Schneewind 1998), one might wonder about the existence of a "Renaissance ethics," in the sense of an identifiable body of moral thought that can be clearly differentiated especially from what preceded it.

Generally speaking, scholars have addressed the difficulty in one of four different ways; the first two of these emphasize discontinuity with the medieval tradition, whereas the other two stress continuity. For Eugenio Garin and his followers, humanism was a philosophical school that centered its attention on mankind and its potential and autonomy; thus, ethics stood at its core to the exclusion of logical, metaphysical, and natural-philosophical concerns (Garin 1994). In this view, religious and theological considerations play an extremely limited role: humanists are often seen as critics of religious institutions and dogmas, who oriented their ethics instead to the active life and to the good of the city or wider community (i.e., to 'civic humanism'; Baron 1955). Close to this position is that of Eckhard Kessler, for whom the humanists' exaltation of rhetoric changed the purpose and subject matter of ethics, leading them to shy away from questions about what was universally valid and to focus instead on the sphere of the individual and the probable (Kessler 2013, 108–111; also

Ebbesmeryer 2010). In this view, humanists traded the arid discussions of the scholastics for much more practical and personal questions. Paul Oskar Kristeller offered a very different perspective: his emphasis on humanism as a cultural and educational movement dedicated to the *studia humanitatis* (Kristeller 1956) placed ethics among the historical and literary disciplines and denied its nature, for the humanists, as a philosophical subject. At the same time, he accorded religion a strong role in humanist thought (Kristeller 1965, 1985) and saw the differences between scholastics and humanists largely as a matter of professional rivalry rather than substance. Followers of Kristeller accordingly deny that humanists shared a common ideology or philosophical program; they often assume that they were uninterested in debating philosophically meaningful questions, even in ethics. Finally, Jill Kraye has refined Kristeller's position and sees Renaissance humanists and scholastics as engaging in a dialogue about a common set of ethical issues; although they tended to treat these in and through varying perspectives, sources, approaches, and genres, there was much that linked Renaissance with medieval discussions (Kraye 1988, 2003). In Kraye's view, the difference between Renaissance and earlier ethical treatments lies therefore more in style, approach, and sources than in specific philosophical conclusions, although she does see a particular novelty in Michel de Montaigne's view of "himself in all his individuality as the central subject of moral philosophy" (Kraye 1988, 316; Kristeller 1985, 182–183). Kraye has especially focused on Renaissance Aristotelianism and Stoicism.

A proposal recently advanced by Thomas Leinkauf is to see humanist ethics in the light of discussions about the self: in this view, self-knowledge is inextricably linked to self-realization and self-expression. It is this focus on the self that leads to understanding how ethics is tied to the good, to virtue, to the will, to freedom, and to society (Leinkauf 2017, I, 629–778). Yet one should not equate this sense of the self with an individualistic understanding of ethics, according to modern parlance. Nor should one see this emphasis as implying a process of secularization

in ethics (Leinkauf 2017, I, 613–614, 618–622). It does, however, lead to severing links between ethics and metaphysics and to focusing instead on the practical world of action and human society (Leinkauf 2017, I, 623–628). Leinkauf suggests that ethical topics debated since the high Middle Ages received a new context thanks to four “irritations” (nominalism and the “linguistic turn,” the Black Death, the exploration of the new world and the questioning of the geocentric model, and the Protestant and Catholic Reformations; Leinkauf 2017, I, 28–113). This rich analysis deserves close study and verification.

While humanist ethics is a growing area of scholarship (e.g., Kircher 2012; Roick 2017), comparatively less attention has gone to the development of scholastic ethics in the Renaissance (but see Kraye 1988, Pink 2005, Lines 2007b, Edelheit 2014, Leinkauf 2017, I, 778–795). What is clear from recent studies is that, like Aristotelianism more generally (Schmitt 1983), discussions about moral philosophy in universities and schools of the religious orders continued to be lively, diverse, receptive toward outside cultural developments, and influential. Enriched by humanist expertise in Greek and new translations, many interpreters across Europe turned to new renderings for their lectures on core texts. Their views on various points, such as the active/contemplative lives, could be colored by humanist discussions. In addition to the Lutheran understanding of the relationship of ethics to the gospel (see above), new perspectives were offered by the School of Salamanca on natural law (Scattola 1999) or by various others on points such as fate, freedom, and God’s power (Knebel 2000; Leinkauf 2017, I, 659–691).

A comprehensive understanding of Renaissance ethics has been especially hampered by four factors: the assumption that only humanists were interested in ethics; a narrow focus on specific languages, national contexts, genres, or chronological periods; the challenge of analyzing countless (often unexciting) commentaries, treatises, and other works; and the relatively scarcity of modern editions, whether in the original or in translation. The most important collections are Kraye 1997 and Ebbersmeyer et al. 2007.

Impact and Legacy

With the rise of early modern philosophy, the earlier consensus concerning the centrality of ancient writings came under attack, in moral philosophy as in other fields. Nonetheless, Aristotle’s works and ideas continued to be taught in many universities and religious colleges until the end of the seventeenth century or even beyond (Darge et al. 2010; for France, see Brockliss 1987). Specific notions that had a strong presence in Renaissance ethics maintained some currency well into the early modern period (for instance, the ideas of Platonic love, Stoic fortitude, or Aristotelian *mediocritas* continued to be familiar themes in popular works; Kraye 1998). Early modern philosophers could hardly turn their backs on the past entirely, and scholars have seen continuities (though of different kinds) between Renaissance viewpoints and the philosophy of Spinoza (Kristeller 1985, 184) and even the moral thought of Thomas Hobbes (Boonin-Vail 1994; Paganini 2016). Despite the rise of utilitarian and other theories of ethics, older ethical perspectives continued to be known through the literature and art that they informed. More recently, a new interest in virtue theory has led scholars and philosophers to consider medieval and Renaissance ethical thought afresh (e.g., MacIntyre 2007); surveys all-too-often continue to skip from Thomas Aquinas to Descartes and his contemporaries, but a younger generation of scholars may well manage to provide what is currently missing: a compelling book-length sketch of ethical developments in the Renaissance, across Europe and across languages. A welcome move in this direction in Kraye and Stone (2000).

Cross-References

- ▶ Cities and Urban Life, Renaissance
- ▶ Economics, Renaissance
- ▶ Epicureanism
- ▶ Happiness, Renaissance Concept of
- ▶ Politics, Renaissance
- ▶ Stoicism

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Euclid: Reception in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Although the Latin Middle Ages received a number of versions of *Euclid's Elements* and several other Euclidean works, by the fourteenth century, only the Campanus redaction

from c. 1259 was in circulation. In the fourteenth and fifteenth century, this redaction was encountered by students of Arts or Medicine university faculties, even though we have scant evidence that Euclid impressed their minds. In the fifteenth century, other circles discovered him: Alberti took over the idea of elements, Regiomontanus used Euclid alongside Archimedes as an argument for the superiority of mathematics over philosophy, and one Florentine abacus school tradition was able to give correct references to the *Elements*.

A turn arrived with book printing. In 1482, the Campanus *Elements* were printed, and in 1498 and 1501, Giorgio Valla inserted pseudo-Euclidean and Euclidean material in two bulky volumes. A new though somewhat problematic Latin translation from the Greek (including also some minor works) was published by Zamberti in 1505, and until 1540 a number of reprints or reeditions of Campanus's and Zamberti's texts were published – at times in combination. From the 1540s onward, revisions, selections, and vernacular translations began to appear, all based on the same two texts. In 1572, however, Commandino made a new Latin translation from Zamberti's text and a sounder manuscript, and in 1574 Clavius produced a didactically oriented redaction. These two set the scene for the next two centuries.

Medieval Latin Background

Until the beginnings of the twelfth century, the Latin Middle Ages had access to Euclid only through Boethian translation of the *Elements* (or, quite likely, of an epitome of that work) – another translation, also from c. 500 CE (Bohlin 2012), seems not to have circulated. Part of the Boethian translation was conserved in coherent form – how much and for how long is disputed; Boethian fragments were also integrated in gromatic writings (which served didactical purposes rather than surveying).

In the twelfth century, a new translation directly from the Greek was made (ed. Busard 1987); it was used occasionally by Fibonacci (Folkerts 2006, IX) but left few traces beyond

that. The translations from the Arabic made by Gerard of Cremona (ed. Busard 1984) and Hermann of Carinthia (ed. Busard 1967) also had limited circulation. The one prepared by Adelard of Bath, so-called Adelard I, on the other hand, became the basis for the didactically adapted redaction known as Adelard II (ed. Busard and Folkerts 1992), probably due to Robert of Chester (or “of Ketton”), and for the epistemologically more sophisticated “Adelard III” (ed. Busard 2001), probably the work of John of Tynemouth. Versions II and III were then used by Campanus of Novara for his redaction, written between 1255 and 1259 (ed. Busard 2005). This redaction was well adapted to use in the scholastic university, where at least part of the *Elements* was supposed to enter the Arts curriculum (in some places alternatively with Book I of Witelo’s *Perspectiva*). Campanus *Elements* came to dominate until well into the sixteenth century. All of these except the Hermann translation contain 15 books, that is, they include a Book XIV written by Hypsicles and a Book XV written by Isidore of Miletus; of the Hermann translation, only 12 books are extant.

Euclid’s *Data* and *Optics* were also translated in the twelfth century (from the Greek as well as the Arabic) and so was the pseudo-Euclidean *Catoptrics* (Murdoch 1971, 444). The (probably pseudo-)Euclidean *De ponderoso et levi* (ed. trans. Moody and Clagett 1952, 21–31) was translated from the Arabic. However, none of these works had an influence coming close to that of the *Elements*.

Early Humanist Interest and Knowledge

The fourteenth-century humanists who had frequented one of the integrated Arts and Medicine faculties of Italian universities or an Arts or a Medicine faculty elsewhere were likely to have gained some familiarity with the first books of the *Elements*, but sources give little more than hints (cf. Siraisi 1973, 74–77). A copy of the Campanus version in the library of S. Spirito in Florence listed in a catalogue from 1451 may have been part of the legacy from Boccaccio (Ullman 1964,

285). In any case, in his *Della genealogia de gli Dei*, we find an attack on those who have had brief contact with the schools (“have seen its door”) and have looked into some vernacular booklets and now wish to be held philosophers; they are characterized by citing authors they have never seen – “Priscian, Aristotle, Cicero, Aristarchus, Euclid, Ptolemy, and others, most famous in the sciences” (Boccaccio 1564, 225^{r-v}). This may be seen as a minimal list of those authors people of manners were supposed to know about.

In the fifteenth century, Leon Battista Alberti went beyond name-dropping, manuscript possession, and possibly manuscript reading. His *Elementi de pittura* (ed. Grayson 1973, 109–129) from c. 1435 (as well as the parallel Latin *Elementa*) not only borrow the Euclidean title. “For the sake of brevity,” they also open with 5 sets of definitions, 22 in total in each of the 2 versions (not fully identical, however); for the rest they consist of specified elementary tasks similar to Euclidean problems – firstly “to describe a straight line from one point to another one.” As stated in the opening of *De pictura* (ed. Grayson 1973, 6–107), Alberti does so borrowing from mathematicians but adapting what they say about the merely intelligible to a topic interested only in that which can be seen. This is probably the first Renaissance example of use of the “geometric method” – inspired by Euclid and not by Archimedes, whose axiomatic-deductive works Alberti does not know.

In 1564, Regiomontanus – first trained and active in the University of Vienna and then under the influence of Bessarion drawn into Italian Humanism – held a series of lectures on the astronomer al-Farghānī in Padua. The inaugural lecture (ed. Schmeidler 1972, 43–53), an oration “explaining the mathematical sciences and their utility,” mixes the two currents of thought (Byrne 2006) but also shows traces of that pride of Italian mathematical practitioners which made them claim priority of mathematics over philosophy. Regiomontanus uses Euclid and Archimedes for that purpose – while philosophy is split into warring schools, “Euclid’s theorems have the same certitude today as a thousand years ago, and Archimedes’s inventions will call forth no less

admiration in a thousand centuries than pleasure in us when reading them.” In the beginning of the oration, Euclid has already been declared “the father of all geometers.”

We also find in this oration an early instance of the mistaken identification of Euclid the geometer with the philosophers Euclid of Megara mentioned in Plato’s *Phaedo* (and by Diogenes Laërtius). This Renaissance mistake may go back to Theodoros Melichita in the early fourteenth century (Heath 1926, 3) (there is no reason to believe Theodoros to have been inspired by a similar but oblique reference in Valerius Maximus nor to assume that the fifteenth-century Italian writers took over from Valerius something that medieval authors, eager readers of his, had not thought of). But Latin humanist readers, finding the name Euclid in Plato, can also have reinvented the mistake independently.

Around the same time, two encyclopedic treatises coming from the Florentine abacus school environment testify of interest in the *Elements*. One is the anonymous Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palat. 573; the other is Benedetto da Firenze’s *Trattato di prattica d’arismetrica* from 1463, the autograph of which is Siena, L.IV.21. Both are described with copious extracts in Arrighi (2004). That they mention Euclid’s name is not very informative – many abacus books excelled in dropping names in the way described by Boccaccio, often in fully misguided ways. But these two treatises are different: they refer repeatedly correctly to Euclidean books (II, V, VII, IX, X), at times with quotations pointing (as could be expected) to Campanus. The citations are so similar that the two writers must be assumed to have drawn on the same intermediate source – which shows that their branch of abacus culture (descending from Paolo dell’Abbaco and Antonio de’ Mazzinghi) had a tradition for such interest in Euclid. How far this tradition goes back we cannot know, but it seems likely that it was a product of the fifteenth century. From the fifteenth century, there are also two manuscripts (Siena, L.IV.16 and 17) containing Italian translations of the Campanus version (Kristeller 1965, VI, 158; Folkerts 2006, XI 223), which might come from the same tradition.

Euclid in Print

The fifteenth century is also the time when some pure-bred humanists started collecting mathematical manuscripts for their libraries (Alberti, though a humanist, was more than that and so was Regiomontanus) – most famously of all probably Bessarion. However, Euclid was not their first choice. Accordingly, the first printed *Elements* (Campanus 1482) were made by Erhard Ratdolt in Venice in Campanus’ version. Ratdolt was no humanist but an outstanding and innovative German printer. His dedicatory letter to doge Mocenigo of Venice shows him to be more closely linked to the university tradition than to the humanist current.

This edition can be seen to have fulfilled a need. Ratdolt produced a reprint in the same year, another one was made in Ulm in 1486, and a third was in Basel in 1491 (Cantor 1892, 266f).

The first Euclidean texts produced by a humanist are found in an anthology collected by Giorgio Valla (1498, c vi^r–d v^r) – namely, *Elements* XIV and XV – and thus actually pseudo-Euclidean; Valla presents the former as Euclid’s 14th book and the latter as Hypsicles’s interpretation of the same book. Scattered properly Euclidean fragments taken from a Greek manuscript were to be found in his posthumous encyclopedia *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus opus* (Valla 1501). In this work he draws much on Proclus’s commentary to *Elements* I, which gives him access to Eudemos’s catalogue of geometers and to the dating of Euclid to the time of the first Ptolemy; nonetheless, the identification of the geometer and the philosopher from Megara survived not only Valla’s insight but also the publication of Proclus’s commentary in 1533 (*infra*).

The first full Renaissance text of the *Elements* translated from the Greek was produced by Bartolomeo Zamberti in 1505 (reprinted in 1510 and 1517 by the same Venetian printer), with copious attacks on Campanus. The (unidentified) manuscript he used was in the Theonine tradition, and Zamberti supposed that the demonstrations were due to Theon; Campanus instead had relied through Adelard on Arabic, pre-Theonine manuscripts, which is one of several reasons for the

divergences which provoked Zamberti's anger. The volume also contained Books XIV–XV, presented as “Hypsicles report of a volume supposed to be by Euclid,” respectively, Book XIV of Euclid's *Elements* “in the report of Hypsicles” (Zamberti 1505, X iiiii^r, vii^v); moreover, Euclid's *Phenomena*; the pseudo-Euclidean *Catoptrics*; Euclid's *Optics*; and his *Data*, with Marinus's introduction. A long dedication also serves as introduction, presenting the history of mathematics in its relation to philosophy from Homer to Plotinus and Proclus; where relevant, it draws on Proclus's commentary (and thus on Eudemos). Identifying Euclid with Euclid of Megara, Zamberti states him to have listened to Socrates and to be a contemporary of Plato and at the same time takes Proclus as his witness that Euclid lived at the time of the first Ptolemy. After the introduction comes Euclid's *vita*, consisting of excerpts from Suidas, Diogenes Laërtius, Plutarch, Aulus Gellius (all speaking of Euclid of Megara), Heron of Alexandria, Proclus, and Marinus (speaking of the mathematician). In the end, Zamberti attempts to find from available chronicles the epoch of Ptolemy I, coming to 291 BC; he does nothing to determine that of Socrates and appears not to be aware of any contradiction. In any case, this *vita* demonstrates to the full Zamberti's humanist credentials. Unfortunately, as Maurolico was to observe in a letter from 1556 (Napoli 1876, 27), while translating faithfully, Zamberti lacked the necessary mathematical insight and did not discover the mistakes of his manuscript.

Zamberti's attacks against Campanus were answered by Luca Pacioli, who produced a new edition of the Campanus *Elements* (Pacioli 1509), also in Venice. It promised to correct the errors that had crept in because of the negligence of copyists. Actually, Pacioli's text and his diagrams are very close to those of Ratdolt's edition, but he added a number of commentaries (Folkerts 2006, XI, 227f) – 138 in total, of which 42 over 10 lines long, according to Folkerts. Already a decade or so before publishing this edition, Pacioli had made a vernacular translation of Campanus, which however has been lost.

A phase followed where publishers might play safe and print the Campanus- and the Zamberti- texts together. The first edition of this kind was made by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples in 1516, containing only the *Elements* (15 books). Lefèvre d'Étaples supposes only the definitions, postulates, and common notions to be due to Euclid, while he ascribes the proofs to Campanus, respectively, Zamberti. Another combined edition was made by Herwagen in Basel in 1537 (Euclidis Megarensis 1537), with an introduction where Philip Melanchthon speaks at length about the utility and the moral implications of mathematics. It included the other Euclidean works translated by Zamberti (the *Data* still with Marinus's introduction) and the pseudo-Euclidean *De levi et ponderoso* (sic; *supra*), presented as a fragment and indeed lacking the fifth and final proposition of the medieval text (and formulated in very different words). New editions of this collection were published by Herwagen in 1546 and 1558 with only modest changes.

Already in 1533, Simon Grynaeus had brought out the *editio princeps*, also at the printing house of Herwagen – unfortunately from two low-quality manuscripts (Heath 1926, 101). It also contains Proclus's commentary to *Elements* I. Books XIV and XV are presented as “according to others, by Hypsicles.” There is no trace of Euclid of Megara, not even a polemical refutation.

The number of editions and reprints may seem to suggest that there was strong interest at least in the *Elements*. A letter from Maurolico to Pietro Bembo (ed. Spezi 1862, 80) gives the opposite impression – “Galen flourishes everywhere, the academies resound with Justinian, the marble is shattered in dialectical disputes. Why is the excellent Euclid silent? Why are Archimedes and Theodosius silent? [...] Of Euclid, hardly six books are read.” Compared to what we have encountered in fourteenth- and even fifteenth-century Humanism, however, “hardly six books” constitute a qualitative jump – and six books remained a standard school book for long.

The first (bilingual) six-book edition was published in the same year by Oronce Finé (Finé 1536). It presents itself as Finé's “demonstrations

of the first six books of the *Elements* of Euclid of Megara, augmented and emended, together with the same Euclid's Greek text, and Zamberti's Latin interpretation," all examined by Finé himself. What this means is that the part of the text which Zamberti had ascribed to Euclid – that is, definitions, postulates, common notions, and enunciations – are given as by Grynæus and Zamberti. The demonstrations are rephrased pedagogically by Finé (and marked "Orontius").

A particular six-book version of "Euclides Megarensis" was published by Johann Scheubel (1550). It also borrows the formulation of the matters which were regarded as properly Euclidean from Grynæus and Zamberti. The proofs, however, are not only Scheubel's own – the diagrams are not lettered; instead the lines often carry numbers corresponding to a supposed length; there are also regularly numerical computations – and the whole is preceded by a 76-page-long introduction to algebra (including the theory of irrationals). Rather than a humanist attempt to restore Greek mathematics, this edition is thus an early, still groping attempt at synthesis of Greek theory with the higher level of *Rechenmeister* mathematics.

A number of other editions based (sometimes faithfully, sometimes with innovations) on Grynæus, Campanus, and Zamberti are listed in Heath (1926, 101f) and Murdoch (1971, 449). Taken together they confirm that there was much more interest in Euclid in the sixteenth than in previous centuries – Maurolico's complaints notwithstanding.

Further confirmation comes from the vernacular translations of the *Elements* that appeared; at the same time, these make clear the diversity of groups that partook in this interest. Earliest was (Tartaglia 1543), "according to the two translations" (Campanus and Zamberti) but presenting a single text. Different from Finé and the combined editions of Lefèvre d'Étaples and Herwagen, Tartaglia presents enunciations and demonstrations as belonging on an equal footing to the *Elements* and adds his own discussions under the heading "The translator."

A French translation followed (Forcadel 1564) (six books only), in which the demonstrations are (justly) ascribed to Forcadel. Scheubel made a German translation of Books VII–IX in 1558; Xylander a full German translation adapted to the needs of artisans (that is, largely without proofs) in 1562 (Heath 1926, 106–108; Murdoch 1971, 449); and in 1570, Henry Billingsley made an impressive English translation, prefaced by John Dee, and including "Scholies, Annotations, and Inventions, of the Best Mathematiciens, both in time past, and in this our age" (Heath 1926, 109).

Euclid for the Future: Commandino and Clavius

All of these editions and translations, from Zamberti onward, can be said to define and even constitute the sixteenth-century Euclid. In the early 1570s, however, two very different translations appeared that were to define the Euclid of the next two centuries. One was Commandino (1572). Federico Commandino based this Latin translation on Grynæus as well as another, better Greek manuscript (still in the Theonine tradition), and also included many previously unknown Greek scholia; moreover, being an outstanding mathematician, he understood the text much better than any sixteenth-century predecessor. There were thus very good reasons that Commandino's translation became the direct or indirect basis for many new translations and editions (Murdoch 1971, 44) – also editions combining with Grynæus Greek text. It was superseded only when François Peyrard discovered and published an apparently pre-Theonine text (Peyrard 1804).

Commandino was also a better historian than his predecessors. Whereas Valla and Grynæus appear not to have believed in the identification with Euclid of Megara but did not discuss why, and while Zamberti did not notice that the evidence he draws on excludes it, Commandino wants (fourth page of the unfoliated preface) to "free those many from their error who firmly believe our Euclid to be the same as both the philosopher from Megara and the geometer" and

sets out briefly the reasons – both chronological and from what Diogenes Laërtios tells about the work of Euclid of Megara.

The other was Clavius (1574). In an initial address to the reader, Christophorus Clavius explains why all preceding editions are deficient – “excepting that of Federico Commandino, a highly skillful geometer, by whose work and diligence Euclid has been rendered in Latin in its pristine splendor.” However, Clavius’s aim is (as he explains) to produce a book that can serve those who progress in the sweet study of mathematics; therefore he does not propose Euclid’s naked words, which are often more concise than illuminating. He provides them with extra explanations, sometimes his own, sometimes borrowed from Proclus (Clavius uses Francesco Barozzi’s translation from 1560), Campanus, or others. Rommevaux (2005, 31–58) analyzes the additions and occasional changes of the Euclidean text.

Clavius published new editions of these *Elements* in 1589, 1591, 1603, 1607, and 1612. They were used for the teaching of Jesuit recruits and hence became the book behind the teaching of much of the social elite of Catholic Europe for long. They were also the Euclid which Matteo Ricci and Xu Guangqi translated into Chinese in 1607 (the usual six books), in time for Clavius to see the Chinese printed book.

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Eugenikos, Ioannis

Born: Constantinople 1394

Died: Sparta 1454/5

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Abstract

Ioannis Eugenikos was a theologian and prolific writer. He took part at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438/39. His bother Marc Eugenikos was the leader of the anti-Unionists and refused to sign the Union of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Ioannis followed his brother and became a radical anti-Unionist.

Alternate Names

[Eugenikos, John](#); [Metaxoloulos](#)

Biography

Ioannis Eugenikos was a cleric and ecclesiastical writer. He was born in Constantinople. He died in Sparta two years after the fall of Constantinople. His brother, Marc Eugenikos, Bishop of Ephesus, was his first teacher at the school founded by their father. Ioannis continued his studies in Mistra, under the supervision of the Neoplatonic philosopher Gemistos Pletho. Eugenikos, during his stay in Constantinople, was appointed notary, as well as chartophylax; later he was appointed nomophylax at the service of the rulers of Mistra. He maintained the office of nomophylax after he returned to Constantinople, around 1431, most probably in order to take over the management of a school. He was a member of the Patriarchal delegation to the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438/39. Eugenikos was the first to leave the Council, when he realized that there was no

chance the Catholics would support the Byzantine Empire. Like his brother Marc, he was a strong opponent of the Union of the two churches, i.e., the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, and as soon as he returned to Constantinople, he engaged in a fierce polemic against the Unionists and the advocates of the Latins, namely, Emperor Ioannis VIII Palaiologos (1392–1448) and Patriarch Mitrophanis (died 1443). As a result, Eugenikos was exiled in Trebizond, from where he later moved to Peloponnese (1442–1447). Despite his persecution from the official Church, he did not stop to fight against the Union of the two Churches.

He authored a number of polemical writings, letters, and treatises, the most influential of which is considered to be *Antirrhētikos kata tou Orou tis Florentinis Sinodou* (*Against the Decree of Union of 1439*). Ioannis' efforts to attack the Union gained Georgios Gennadios Scholarios attention. Scholarios, who was the first patriarch of Constantinople after its fall to the Turks, favored Eugenikos. Ioannis He passed his last years in the Peloponnese, where he was appointed guardian of the Metropolis of Lacedaemonia (Sparta). He was in Constantinople just before the fall and was captured by the Turks. After his release, he wrote a *lament* (*threnos*) on the fall of Constantinople.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Eugenikos' most significant treatise was the aforementioned *Antirrhētikos kata tou Orou tis Florentinis Sinodou*, in which he analyzes the causes for the dispute between the two churches. He also wrote the *Apologies pros ton Autokratora*, as well as *Parainētikos peri tis kata Christon Politeias*. Ioannis composed a vast *corpus* of writings consisting of *paramythetikoi*, *ekphrasis*, *pro-seuxai*, *kanones*, *omilies*, *akolouthies*, *hymns*, as well as *monodies* that were devoted to certain persons or historical events. His works also include the *Oration of Thanksgiving*, *Monodia eis tin Marian Palaiologinan*, *Monodia epi ti alosi tis Konstantinopoleos*, and the narration of a shipwreck he experienced in 1438 in the Adriatic Sea.

Legacy

His letters, which were addressed to ecclesiastical and political figures, point to a prolific scholar with a consistent devotion to Eastern Orthodox dogmas.

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Eugenikos, John

► [Eugenikos, Ioannis](#)

Eugenikos, Mark

Born: Constantinople c.1391/1392

Died: Constantinople c.1444/1445

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Abstract

Mark Eugenikos was a leading Byzantine scholar and theologian. He participated in the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439). He declined to sign the conciliatory agreement between the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church. Because of his refusal he became a key figure in the anti-unionist movement and enjoyed high popularity among the Orthodox clergy and people.

Synonyms

[Mark of Ephesus](#)

Biography

He was born Manuel Eugenikos. His father George was chief judge and deacon of the Great Church. His mother's name was Mary and she was daughter of Luck the doctor. Despite his father's sudden death when he was a child, Eugenikos' mother cared for his education. He studied theology and philosophy under John Chortasmenos (1370–1437), a renowned mathematician and astronomer, and Georgius Gemistus Pletho (1355–1454), the famous neo-pagan philosopher. Chortasmenos instructed him in Aristotelian logic and syllogistic. It is probable that one of his future rivals, Cardinal Bessarion, was his schoolmate. Macarius Macres (1386–1431), a well-educated monk, introduced him to theology, including the works of Latin

authors, especially Aquinas. In his early adult life, he chose to teach rhetoric. Among his students were Georgios Gennadios Scholarios (1398/1405–1472), who after the fall of Constantinople became Patriarch; Theodore Agalianos; Theophanes, bishop of Medea; and his young brother John Eugenikos. When he was 25 years old, Eugenikos decided to become a monk and joined a monastery on the Princes' Islands, near Constantinople, where he studied the Scriptures with the famous monk Symeon. After 2 years they both moved to the famous monastery of Mangana and Eugenikos was ordained a priest. The monastery of Mangana was a prominent cultural center in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. In 1436 Eugenikos was elected bishop of Ephesus. When the Emperor John VIII Palaeologus (1392–1448) persuaded the Pope to organize a council in order to achieve the union of the Churches, Mark Eugenikos accompanied him in Ferrara and Florence. The emperor and the Byzantine delegates solicited the assistance of the Westerners against the Turkish threat. Although Mark was the most ardent anti-unionist and the leading figure of the party, he assisted Cardinal Nicholas Cusanus (1401–1464) in obtaining Greek manuscripts. Eugenikos was not preoccupied and his attitude toward the Catholics was moderate. Yet the Catholic delegates were in continuous disputes with him and asked the Byzantine emperor to appoint Bessarion (1403–1472) the official spokesman of the Orthodox Church because he was more suitable on the occasion. Certain Byzantine officials shared the same view. Namely, Eugenikos argued that, despite conciliatory dogmatic formulas, the Roman Church was schismatic and heretic. He also refuted the doctrine of the Purgatory, and his objections led the members of the Council to omit from the Acta of the Council any reference to the purgatorial fire. According to the sources, Pope Eugene IV (1383–1447) said that since Mark did not agree, the Council was a failure. The Pope tried to dissuade Eugenikos, but his attempts failed. Yet there are several Orthodox officials, like the bishops of Lakedemona and Lesvos, who did not endorse Eugenikos' views and attitude and moved against him. Eugenikos returned to Constantinople together with the rest

of the Byzantine delegates and the emperor. The people of Constantinople cheered him, while the pro-unionists were hooted. Joseph, the bishop of Methone and a leading pro-unionist, records that the crowd kneeled before Mark and called him a saint. The scene reminded Joseph of the reception made by the Jews for Moses and Aaron after they received the Ten Commandments from God. In 1440 Eugenikos faced serious threats against his life and he was forced to leave Constantinople. He resorted to Ephesus, which was under the Turks in order to guide his folk. After a short while he was forced to leave Ephesus and he decided to recede in Mount Athos. The ship which carried him made a stop at the island of Lemnos, where Eugenikos was arrested by the local authorities, at the emperor's order. He remained imprisoned in Lemnos for the next 2 years. During his imprisonment he composed and published a letter to the Orthodox people blaming those who accepted the union of the Orthodox and Catholic Church. Once again he accused the Catholics for heresy and exhorted his fellow Orthodox to not socialize with the pro-unionists. After he was released from prison, he returned to Constantinople. But his health was seriously damaged as a result of his hardships. In 1444 he died. Before his death he addressed his former students and collaborators asking them to continue the opposition to the Catholics. Among them was Georgios Scholarios, who delivered the funeral speech. Eugenikos addressed a letter to Scholarios, in which he named him his heir in the anti-unionist party. When Scholarios became Patriarch of Constantinople, he canonized Eugenikos and his feast day is the 19th of January. The Great Synod of 1484 included him in the list of Father Saints.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Eugenikos considered himself a disciple of St. Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), the leading figure of the Hesychasm movement, a kind of philosophical and theological mysticism, which was very popular during the fourteenth century and gradually became the core dogma of the Orthodox Church. Eugenikos defended the

distinction between divine essence and energies, which is crucial for Hesychasm. During the Council of Ferrara-Florence, his role was significant, since he was responsible for the preparation of the Orthodox. He gathered the required texts and analyzed their grammatical precision and authenticity. He did not accept any conciliatory solution concerning the Filioque, even if this was expressed in Greek language. Eugenikos argued that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father. In the opening speech he accused the Latin delegates and Pope Eugenius IV for their attempt to prevent him from reading the Acts of the Ecumenical Councils because that would have weakened the argumentation of the Catholic Church. Eugenikos also rejected all the Latin authorities and texts that the Catholic delegates attempted to bring into notice during the council. Unlike Byzantine Platonism, especially Plethon, Eugenikos articulated a philosophical anthropology that focuses on the embodied life. He did not give preponderance to the soul regarding human beings. Despite his dogmatic hostility against Catholic Church and Latin Fathers and scholars, Eugenikos was influenced by Scholastic philosophy. Schmemann has proved that Eugenikos resorted to Aquinas' hylomorphism and *Summa Contra Gentiles* in order to defend some of his key doctrinal positions concerning resurrection and afterdeath punishment. Eugenikos avoided condemning Aquinas in his treatises, despite the fact that he launched fervent attacks on the Byzantine Thomists, especially Manuel Kalekas (d. 1410). It is also noteworthy that Eugenikos spent several years in the monastery of St. George of the Mangana, where the Byzantine Thomist Demetrios Kydones (1324–1398) studied and translated Aquinas' works. Despite his insistence on the preponderance of Byzantine philosophy and theology, Eugenikos did not underestimate Aquinas and Western Scholasticism. Rather he juxtaposed the Byzantine and Latin intellectual traditions. Aristotle was the common ground for Aquinas and Eugenikos. Moreover, he was interested in the works of Augustine, and during his stay in Italy, he purchased a number of manuscripts in order to familiarize himself with his theological and philosophical ideas.

Eugenikos believed that Augustine's texts contained arguments and positions in favor of Orthodox theology. It is rather interesting that Eugenikos studied and used Bernard of Clairvaux's works in order to support his arguments in favor of beatific vision, a significant aspect of Palamas' theology. His philosophical education is obvious in his treatises since he frequently presents his syllogisms in the form of *aporiae*.

Impact and Legacy

Besides his theological and philosophical works, Eugenikos is highly appreciated for his stance during and after the Council of Ferrara-Florence. He is considered as one of the pillars of the Orthodox Church. Pope Eugenius IV, according to certain sources, demanded from the Emperor John VIII Palaeologus to dismiss Eugenikos from his duties. Despite the emperor's desire for the success of the Council, he chose not to succumb to the papal demands, and he did not deprive Eugenikos of his rank.

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Eugubinus

► [Steuco, Agostino](#)

Eustache Asseline

► [Eustachius a S. Paulo](#)

Eustachius a S. Paulo

Born: 1575 (?), Paris

Died: 1640, Paris

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Abstract

A seventeenth-century French theologian and philosopher. One of the most important intellectuals and churchmen of his time. A leading figure in the French Counter-Reformation. The author of a *Summa Philosophiae*, published in 1609, which was reprinted many times all over Europe, becoming one of the most widely used school textbooks of the time, famously favored and used by Descartes himself.

Synonyms

[Eustache Asseline](#)

Biography

A French theologian and philosopher. His real name was Eustache Asseline. Born in 1575 in

Paris, where he died in 1640. His father was Lord of Champeaux and attorney to the Paris Parliament. His mother, Marie Le Grand, was a cousin of the French statesman Claude Mangot. He studied at the Sorbonne in the same years as Pierre Bérulle and became a *Doctor* there in 1604. In 1606 he became devoted to Bernardo di Chiaravalle, who persuaded him to be ordained in the *Feuillants* Cistercian Order, where he took the name Eustachius a Sancto Paulo. Because of the Order he belonged to, he was also known as Le Feuillant. He was one of the most influential church intellectuals of his time and one of the leading figures of the Counter-Reformation in France. In 1622 Cardinal François de La Rochefoucauld appointed him Apostolic Commissioner, with the task of reforming the religious orders in France. He worked in cooperation with the main church leaders to restore proper worship in the Augustinian, Benedictine, Cistercian, and Cluniac orders. He is also known to have supported the activities of French nuns, in particular the Pontoise Carmelites, including the mystic Barbe Jeanne Avrillot Acarie, and the Port-Royal nuns, but also the Ursulines of Paris.

Innovative Aspects

Within the Paris Faculty of Theology, Eustachius published his *Summa Philosophiae Quadripartita* (first edition Paris 1609) that Descartes is known to have read (Marion 1981; Arbour 1993; Ariew 1999). There were many later editions all over Europe. His *Summa* became one of the main philosophy textbooks in the seventeenth century, reprinted many times until the middle of the century. The work is divided into four parts, dialectics, ethics, physics, and metaphysics, in which Eustachius, following the conventions of the time, sets out his system of doctrines, which were frequently marked by Scotist tendencies.

Logic

On logic and theory of knowledge, Eustachius held that the mind reaches knowledge through three stages: (Eustachius a S. Paulo 1609: In Logicam, Preface) (1) simple apprehension, or

awareness of the presence of something, without affirmation or negation; (2) judgment, the comparing and distinguishing of the objects of awareness, culminating in a judgment of agreement or disagreement about something; and (3) discourse, the result of bringing together various things, leading to the inferring of something further beyond just their sum, achieved through reasoning. Eustachius also presents an interesting distinction, which would be taken up by Descartes, between hazy and distinct understanding of discourse: the former is just understanding of what the words mean in themselves; the latter is a clear understanding of the nature or essence of the thing discussed. Still concerning his role as a possible source for Descartes, but in connection with the theory of cognition just described, it is worth noting that Eustachius put forward these epistemological ideas (which perhaps follow on from Jean Louis Vives, Pierre de la Ramée, Jacopo Zabarella, and the main sixteenth-century logic textbooks): any scientific inquiry has to be conducted through three stages, applied consecutively to two basic elements, the objects of the investigation and the meanings attributable to them. (1) First, objects of awareness need to be compared to each other, determining an order of importance in the account given of them, which then makes it possible to understand clearly any terms that presuppose the correct understanding of other terms; (2) the meanings attributed to the various items should also be compared with each other, establishing their conceptual closeness to or distance from the object of investigation; and (3) these meanings must then be compared to the objects of investigation themselves, working down to the least important objects and to minor meanings (Ibidem).

Physics

On the philosophy of nature, Eustachius, like the Jesuit theologians before him, held that matter is definable as what has quantity, whereas quality was what enabled form to be received by matter. It seems moreover that Eustachius, though an orthodox hylomorphist (Fowler CF 1999; Des Chene 2000), believed it is possible for matter to exist independently and, with God's help, to come

into being without form, whereas form would not be able, without God's help, either to exist or to come into existence without matter (Des Chene 1996, 2000).

Metaphysics

In metaphysics Eustachius is known for his opposition to essentialism and essentialistic Platonism. In his *Summa Quadripartita* he considers it irreligious to suppose that the essences of things are eternal and that there is an *esse essentiae* or *esse quidditativum* and that the impermanence of worldly things concerns only their existence but not their essence. In God there is the slightest possible distinction between existence and essence, since in God's case existence is essential, whereas for created things the distinction is neither real nor nominal, but through mediation it is modal, since existence is something different from essence but a way in which it comes about. Finally, according to Eustachius, essences preexist in God before they exist in things, as objectively real potentialities in the divine mind, which has always known them as eternal (Marion 1981).

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Eutychus Nyphus, Augustinus Philoteus

- Nifo, Agostino

Everard, John

Born: c. 1584

Died: 1640/41, Fulham

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Abstract

John Everard is not an obscure figure. He has been seen as an important Quaker forerunner, as an anticipator of the Leveller Richard Overton's unadorned prose style, and as a possible influence on the Digger Gerrard Winstanley. This Cambridge-educated, multilingual Doctor

of Divinity was a politically radical preacher who objected to the Spanish Match and also had a deep interest in alchemical, mystical, Hermetic, philosophic, and Rosicrucian texts – several of which he copied and translated from Latin into English. Besides having powerful aristocratic patrons, it is noteworthy that Everard also appealed to his poorest auditors – “beggarly fellows” “despised by the world.” He was, moreover, a heretic and charged in the ecclesiastical Court of High Commission with propagating Familism and Antinomianism. Indeed, his entire career followed a recognizable pattern: preaching incendiary sermons and disseminating heterodox doctrines, subsequent imprisonment, pleading for clemency, submission, release and re-offence. If that is not enough, Everard was also engaged in alchemical experimentation. He thus offers in miniature an opportunity to explore two important questions: the sources of radical social and religious ideas during the English Revolution and the possible connections between that radicalism and what is now considered to come under the umbrella of “Western Esotericism.”

Biography

John Everard was born about 1584, possibly in the county of Northamptonshire. It is difficult to disentangle Everard’s early life from several contemporary namesakes but is likely that he matriculated at Clare Hall (now Clare College), Cambridge, in the late sixteenth century. Everard may be the man of that name who graduated BA in 1601 and MA in 1607. Certainly his signature subscribing to the 39 articles attests that John Everard of Clare, Cambridge, was conferred the title of Doctor of Divinity on 5 July 1619. Moreover, he may be the John Everard who was successively ordained by the Bishop of Peterborough as a deacon (15 June 1606) and then priest (11 June 1609).

In late November or early December 1616, Everard married Elizabeth, orphaned daughter of Otho Mawditt (deceased Merchant Taylor) by license in the parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-West,

London. Thereafter he was appointed lecturer at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Westminster, on 1 January 1617 (replaced 19 May 1623); instituted rector of Hinton Martell, Dorset, on 1 May 1621 (replaced 16 January 1622); and of Wilby, Northamptonshire, on 11 October 1622 (resigned 10 February 1626).

From the outset, Everard’s ecclesiastical career followed a recognizable pattern: preaching incendiary sermons and disseminating heterodox doctrines, subsequent imprisonment, pleading for clemency, submission, and release and re-offence. Thus he condemned the Lord Mayor’s and Aldermen’s administration of the Court of Orphans at a Paul’s Cross sermon on 11 January 1618, for which he was censured by the Bishop of London. Then in February 1621, he preached against Spanish cruelty in the West Indies as well as the proposed marriage of Prince Charles to the Spanish Infanta, for which he was imprisoned in the Gatehouse next to Westminster Abbey. In August 1622 Everard was committed again for saying something he should not have done (the source is not more specific). Indeed so often was Everard in and out of jail – he recalled six or seven occasions – that his notoriety brought him to the monarch’s attention. Thus King James reportedly quipped, “What is this Dr. Ever-out? his name ... shall be Dr. Never-out.”

Yet at an undetermined date, Everard also began enjoying aristocratic support. Thus according to the publisher of his posthumous collected works, “one Lord or the other” would often beg the king to grant Everard his liberty. These unnamed noblemen were most likely the courtier Henry Rich, who was created earl of Holland in September 1624 and whom Everard would serve as chaplain; and the vehemently anti-Spanish future first earl of Mulgrave, Edmund Sheffield. By the time Sheffield became one of his auditors, Everard was living at Fulham, Middlesex, and had been appointed lecturer at St. Mary Abbots, Kensington. In addition, Everard had published a sermon at the outbreak of the 30 years’ war with a Latin dedication to the philosopher Francis Bacon entitled *The Arriereban* (1618); had issued anonymously a brief account of a preternatural apparition which he interpreted as an ominous portent connected with the recent Catholic massacre of

Protestants in the Valtelline (July 1620); had completed manuscript transcriptions and translations of several alchemical and mystical writings (some of which would be published pseudonymously); and had undertaken expensive alchemical experiments, even employing the services of a renowned furnace maker. The translations indicate Everard's extensive command of languages, for besides Greek and Latin he consulted works in French and Italian. Furthermore, it can be demonstrated that Everard and Sheffield shared mutual acquaintances such as the physician Robert Fludd, not to mention a common interest in alchemical, mystical, philosophic, and Rosicrucian texts.

On 26 November 1637, a warrant was issued to seize Everard's papers and a poor young cutler named Giles Creech accused of holding heretical opinions in the ecclesiastical Court of High Commission. Under questioning Creech claimed that he had been mixed up with various sects, namely, Familists, Antinomians, and Anabaptists and that he had been infected with their pernicious doctrines through Everard's teachings. Although Creech's confession was somewhat sensationalist even a little muddled at times, many of its details can be corroborated – notably Everard's translation and later transcription of *Theologia Germanica*, which was intended for the Earls of Holland and Mulgrave (Henry Rich and Edmund Sheffield).

The action against Creech in the Court of High Commission was but a prelude, setting the stage for proceedings against Everard in the same court. These, however, dragged on over several law terms. After more than 6 months, articles were eventually drawn up against him. Even so, by 29 November 1638, the court had not yet responded to Everard's answers. Then additional articles were drawn up. Among the charges were that Everard maintained blasphemous opinions which undermined the "foundation of Christian Religion," notably that God is everything; that the pains of Hell were not eternal; that there would be no resurrection of the material body; that after the Last Judgment all things would be turned into God again; that all Scripture was false if understood literally; and lastly that he cherished the works of Hermes Trismegistus, saying that Trismegistus gave a clearer exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity than Moses.

Sentence was passed on 11 July 1639. Those of Everard's books deemed to contain heretical and schismatic doctrine, especially the *Theologia Germanica* – which along with the *Corpus Hermeticum* contained "matter of dangerous consequence" – were to be seized and publicly burned. Everard was also suspended from all his offices and fined the enormous sum £1000. Having failed to defend himself adequately against the charges, Everard submitted to the court professing his belief in the "orthodox doctrine of the Church of England." On 18 June 1640, he read his submission on his knees at the Court High Commission. His suspension was swiftly lifted, and 2 weeks later his fine rescinded. Throughout the course of these legal proceedings, however, Everard had continued undaunted with his translations of alchemical and hermetic writings. He died at Fulham sometime between 18 December 1640 and 12 January 1641.

Everard has been written about continually since the mid-nineteenth century. His historiographical fortune, however, is instructive. Accordingly, Everard has been successively regarded as a Christian Platonist, an important forerunner of Quakerism, a precursor of mystical enthusiasm, and a harbinger of the political, social, and religious radicalism that erupted during the English Revolution. Moreover, Everard has been viewed as an anticipator of the Leveller Richard Overton's unadorned prose style and a possible influence on the Digger Gerrard Winstanley.

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Experiment in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Experiment, considered in its modern sense, did not overall belong to natural philosophy proper until the Early Modern period. While the practice of experimentation existed already long before, it was rather limited, and no specific concept or even methodology was attached to it. The history of experimentation during the "long" Renaissance is properly the history of the gradual spreading and general establishment of experimental practices and

methodologies for the study of nature. In our entry, we shall, after some historiographical observations, outline that development in its various strands, from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance into the Early Modern period, with a focus on Europe and the Islamic-Arabic world. Experimental practices had ancient roots in medicine, alchemy, music, and optics, and these were expanded and further developed in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Moreover, they showed up in magnetism and were given first systematic reflections. Natural Magic and the Tradition of Secrets, flourishing from the Renaissance on, had experimental procedures deeply embedded. In the early seventeenth century, all those strands were taken up and, for the first time, conceptually integrated into a large-scale programmatic framework. Moreover, they expanded to evermore fields of research, such as mechanics, natural history, and pneumatics, among others. What we see from the early seventeenth century on is a wide spread of experiment as means of natural research, and the promulgation of what was now labeled "experimental philosophy." While the specific ways of doing experiments, and even more the ways of drawing conclusions from them, varied widely, it was out of question that experiment now counted as a viable way to learn about nature. However, it is clear that the pathway that led to that new situation is less characterized by a few singular events or authors, but was strongly rooted in broader developments of the Renaissance period.

Introduction

An encyclopedia entry on ► "[Experiment in Renaissance Science](#)" in the period between 1300 and 1650 requires a few caveats. If, toward the end of this timeframe, the notions of "Experiment" and "Experimentation" tend to be used in a more specific and recognizable form, this is not the case for the initial part of the period. This is likewise true for the concept of "observation," and Daston and Lunbeck, who have dealt with its history, point to similar historiographical

challenges (Daston and Lunbeck 2011, 11). In part, the difficulty is due to the fact that experimentation, considered in its modern and general sense, as intervention into the material world with the main goal to learn something about it, did not overall belong to natural philosophy proper until more recent times. Moreover, in the early part of our period, the practice of experimentation, while it well existed, was on the whole rather limited; and no specific word was attached to it, let alone a concept or a methodology. Indeed, the history of experimentation during the “long” Renaissance is properly the history of the gradual spreading and general establishment of experimental methodologies for the study of nature. In this entry, we shall, after some general observations, outline that development in its various strands, from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance into the early Modern period. As generally done in this Encyclopedia, we focus on Europe and (for the Middle Ages) on the Islamic-Arabic world.

Experimental procedures and practices reach back to antiquity and were not an invention of the Renaissance or of the Early Modern period. However, their role and status within the enterprise of learning about nature changed dramatically over time. From a marginal role in antiquity, they gained prominence in some fields in the Arabic-Islamic and Latin Middle Ages, and on an even wider scale in the European Renaissance period. In medicine, physiology, alchemy, optics, magnetism, natural magic, and the tradition of secrets, experiments played a prominent role and brought together crafts and practical knowledge with philosophical and mathematical considerations. When, in the Early Modern programs of a new science, experiment was placed center-stage, at least rhetorically, this did not come out of the blue, but was rather a binding-together of practices that had been made highly visible through the Renaissance.

Conceptual and Terminological Issues

Every investigation of “Experiment” in the Renaissance is at risk of strong anachronism. For instance, it is important to keep in mind that, at least in the

early part of our period, “Experimentum” and “Experientia” are terms indicating similar notions (Schmitt 1969; Agrimi and Crisciani 1990). The scholarly discussion on *Experimentum/Experientia* during the Renaissance develops as a part of the Aristotelian and Thomistic notions out of which these terms originated. This means to distinguish between *epistème*, or certain knowledge of universal truths, and *empeiria*, or tentative experience and knowledge of particulars. *Empeiria* is in Aristotelian tradition a precondition of *epistème*. By means of induction (or *epagogé*) experience of particulars can be generalized to universal knowledge. This differentiation also implies a hierarchy: experience, or knowledge of particulars, is always inferior to science (*epistème*), or knowledge of causes and universals. The former is characterized by *phrónesis*, or wisdom about specific things, while the latter by *sophía*, or theoretical knowledge of universals. As Spinoza (2002) points out, this is the basic Aristotelian and Thomistic framework which will dominate the medieval notion of experience.

Agrimi and Crisciani (1990) have shown that more specified and relevant examples of *Experimentum* as “knowledge of particulars” were developed in the late medieval period in the medical realm and also in the natural magical context. With those, we are referring to non-philosophical domains, genuinely promoting some form of intervention over nature. These types of practices tend to alter the traditional Aristotelian notion of the study of nature as the knowledge of the usual course of its events – makers of experiments are then active organizers of natural constellations. As another strand, we might add here the alchemical tradition, in which from early on different, more interventionist types of Aristotelianism have been discussed (Newman 1998; Lloyd 1991).

Medicine

There are two fields of inquiry of nature in which experimental practices reach far back: medicine (which included what we now call anatomy and physiology) and alchemy. Those traditions had strong impact on Renaissance activities.

In Renaissance medicine we frequently find practitioners' insistence on the Hippocratic-Galenic conjunction of reason and experience (Pomata 2005). Galenic categories often overlapped with Aristotelian formulations from the *Posterior analytics*, with the result that physicians sought to complement the *via rationis* with the principles generated by the *via experimenti* (Agrimi and Crisciani 1990). But this must not too easily be seen as the "way of experiment" in the present-day sense. In central fields of medicine, such as testing drugs and tracking diseases, we hardly find animal testing, and it was far from being the standard or even necessary method (Maclean 2002). By the mid-1600s, however, physicians and natural philosophers across Europe tested drugs, poisons, and possible morbid agents in animal subjects (Ragland 2017; Schickore 2017). Historians agree that this period, and especially the sixteenth century, displays a clear trend of greater attention to sensory or empirical knowledge (Pomata 2005; Siraisi 2012). Exploration in authoritative texts and the natural world, as well as new diseases such as the pox, drove much of the turn toward empirical knowledge. From Hippocratic and Galenic texts, Renaissance physicians increasingly adopted an attitude that elevated *historia*, and even reintroduced the term *observatio* as the description of a case, including even failures of treatment (Pomata 2011). The concept of *experimentum* itself was in great flux: in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it resonated with *experientia*, and appears in medicine with a generally stable meaning of "medical recipe" (Schmitt 1969; Agrimi and Crisciani 1990; Eamon 1994; McVaugh 2009).

Engagement with texts and controversies over facts and explanations repeatedly drove physicians and philosophers to make trials (Ragland 2017). Continuing controversies over the cause and effective treatment for the plague and other diseases required physicians to make tests of new medicinal substances, especially drugs from the Ottoman Empire and the New World. In the 1490s, controversies over the accuracy of Pliny's natural history, faced with opposing descriptions in other textual authorities and physician-naturalists' own experience, led to increasing emphasis

on personal sensation and experience of things, in conjunction with humanist textual scholarship (Ogilvie 2006). Reports of trials are increasingly common in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century medical writings, including discussions by Marsilio Ficino and by the eminent naturalist Pietro Andrea Mattioli (Ficino 1481, 1518; Mattioli 1554; Eamon 1994; Park 1999; Ragland 2017). Physicians increasingly performed trials and recorded the results in some form of descriptive *historia* and with commonplacing methods. Tests of poisons often involved a parallel structure, and some rulers sanctioned tests of supposed antidotes against poisons by the mid-sixteenth century (Palmer 1985; Findlen 1994; Stolberg 2013).

In physiological questions, late-medieval practices of autopsies for saints and aristocrats as well as learned interest in generation and other "secrets of women" attracted early interest in empirical anatomical dissections (Park 2006). Galen had described experiments with living animals, e.g., to study the pathway of urine into the bladder or the function of the heart (Schramm 1998). In the same spirit, and following a long tradition, Berengario da Carpi in the early sixteenth century performed discrete experimental interventions to test previous claims such as the supposed sieve-like action of the kidneys or the structures and pathways of the fetus and placenta (Berengario de Carpi 1521; French 1985). In some of these trials Berengario explicitly describes his experience as singular: *ista experientia* (Ragland 2017). In the 1520s and especially the 1530s, far more complete Latin editions of Galen's works spurred a revival and innovation in dissection and vivisection, with Vesalius as a particularly prominent example (Bylebyl 1979; Shotwell 2013; Durling 1961.) Anatomists increasingly turned to manual trials of structures, actions, and fluid flow in order to test competing anatomical claims, such as whether the kidneys worked by mechanical filtration alone, whether the pulse moved along the blood or the arterial coats, or whether the testes contributed any power for reproduction (Aristotle denied they produced male seed, Galen rebuked Aristotle). In the 1550s and 1560s, the next generation of anatomists and physician-naturalists increasingly performed trials to test ancient or

“modern” claims, or to make new discoveries. Paracelsian texts became more widely published in the 1570s, provoking further controversies and, with their close connexion to chemical practices, encouraging recourse to hands-on trials. In Padua, we see Santorio Santorio, a well-established doctor, proposing and carrying out a quantitative experimental series with a weighing chair in order to test and elaborate physiological doctrine, such as his own of an “insensible perspiration” (Hollerbach 2018).

In the seventeenth century, William Harvey’s experimental arguments for the circulation of the blood pointed to his elevation of the status of observational and experimental knowledge to *scientia*, even certain *scientia* (Wear 1983; French 1994). It is important to remember, though, that Harvey understood his experimental demonstrations and rational arguments for the circulation of the blood as also giving the *propter quid* of the heartbeat, all embedded in his programmatic search for the deeper philosophical ends of the circulation and other anatomical actions (Goldberg 2016). For later experimenters, such as Robert Boyle, Harvey’s experimental approach to establishing a new doctrine was a notable exemplar for “the Experimental Philosophy” (Sargent 1995). By the first decades of the seventeenth century, Van Helmont and William Harvey defended radical and widely influential revisions of learned medicine (Pagel 1982; French 1994). In the light of recent historical research, however, many of their categories and even their reliance on sophisticated experimentation appear more as the harvest of late medieval and Renaissance medicine rather than a direct turning away from it (Ragland 2017).

In sum, we see a steep rise of trial-making in medicine in the sixteenth century. Ample evidence of how widespread this practice was comes from universities, especially the University of Padua. Three to five hundred students matriculated in medicine each year at Padua, throughout the mid-1500s. Students learned that arguments based on authority were weak, and that personal experience of medicaments, clinical practice, including diagnosis, the efficacy of drugs, anatomy, uroscopy, etc. could be essential for a

successful and thriving medical practice (Stolberg 2013; Ragland 2017).

Alchemy

Recent historiography has strongly reevaluated the experimental component of western alchemy in the medieval and the early modern period. This reevaluation followed from a shift away from conceptions of alchemical practice that focused on its spiritual features. Recent historians have stressed instead that even the most symbolical aspects of alchemical texts were strongly related to actual laboratory work and experimental practice. In general, as Newman and Principe point out,

it is clear that there did exist a strong experimental tradition in the alchemy of Western Europe from the High Middle Ages through the seventeenth century. Not only did alchemy involve considerable laboratory experience and practice in a general sense, but many alchemists were even deeply concerned with testing; some employed a kind of quantitative method that is both akin to the later traditions of chemistry and quite alien to the image of alchemists as primarily seekers of an *unio mystica*. (Newman and Principe 2002, 38)

Medieval alchemists, both in the Arabic-Islamic and the Latin context, already employed refined experimental techniques (Halleux 1986; Newman and Principe 2002, 38ff.; Principe 2013). A particularly striking case is that of the author of the influential alchemical treatise *Summa perfectionis*, attributed to Geber and probably composed by the alchemist Paul of Taranto around the end of the thirteenth century. In this text, Paul displays a sophisticated experimental methodology, employing a wide range of gravimetric techniques. The goals of this text were not only practical but also an “attempt to arrive at the nature of the metals by exposing them to a variety of tests” (Newman and Principe 2002, 43ff).

Experimentation in early modern alchemy was quantitative. As a norm, alchemical recipes indicated the precise quantities of components. As Newman has shown, evidence for the use of an analytical balance goes back to the treatise *Ordinal of Alchemy* by Thomas Norton (1433?–c. 1513) (Newman 2000). Medieval and early

modern alchemy also challenged the strong separation between works of art and nature, a distinction originated from the Aristotelian doctrine. According to this notion, experiment, being an artificial and extraordinary production, would be useless for the understanding of the behavior of the ordinary course of natural processes. The challenge to this view is often linked with early modern authors, and Francis Bacon in particular; however, there had been a long-lasting debate on this topic in the alchemical tradition, with medieval alchemists claiming that true transmutation could actually replicate natural products. According to Newman, this claim was fully developed inside Aristotelian and scholastic doctrines about art and nature: “Aristotelianism, far from providing a metaphysical prohibition against experiment, actually gave alchemy the tools to justify learning from radical interventions in nature by means of laboratory-based experimentation” (Newman 2011, 315; see also Newman 1998). To sum up, alchemy was probably the first domain in which experiment was not only widely practiced, but its use for philosophical investigation explicitly discussed.

Medieval Experimentalism and the Tradition of Mixed Sciences

In the second half of the thirteenth century, the philosophies of Roger Bacon and Robert Grosseteste included features resembling more modern experimental practices. While these authors have sometimes been indicated as forerunners of the experimental method (most prominently by historian Alistair Crombie: Crombie 1953, 1961, 1994), more recent historiography agrees on the fact that the exact status of these early formulations, and also their influence on subsequent ideas of experimentation, is debatable (e.g., Hackett 1997). While Grosseteste clearly understood and introduced a notion of controlled experiment in his philosophical reflection on Aristotelian experience, we do not know to what degree he actually made use of any in his scientific work (Eastwood 1968; Marrone 1986). The difference between more recent

notions of experimental practice and these late medieval antecedents is of particular importance here. Bacon usually employed the terms “experiment” and “experience” interchangeably. He counted as experiments a long list of phenomena and notions, including “contrived or artificial experiments, casual everyday experience, reports of the experiences of other observers, the spiritual experience of divine illumination” and thought experiments (Lindberg 1996). Bacon’s new *Scientia experimentalis*, developed in part six of *Opus Majus* (Bacon 1859), might then be more precisely defined as an “experiential science,” in which knowledge is based on certain experience. At the same time, Bacon’s doctrine of experience defines a methodology that includes contrived experimentation as an integral part.

Grosseteste and Bacon, if perhaps not themselves heralds of a new experimental practice, developed their ideas in a terrain that was already receptive to operation and intervention over nature. This is sharply visible in the tradition of mixed mathematics and its expansion to magnetism. Aristotle’s notion of mixed sciences referred to natural disciplines making use of mathematical demonstrations, such as astronomy, harmonics, and optics. The mixed mathematical sciences often investigated natural behaviors that were not obvious from everyday experience, with recourse to specific instrumentation and mathematical devices and, most of all, to the notion of validation through “artificially prepared experiences” (Dear 2001, 130–131). This was particularly visible in the field of optics, which had seen Ibn al-Haytham’s highly innovative optical work in the first half of the eleventh century. Ibn al-Haytham made abundant use of experimental arguments, using a broad variety of instruments and apparatus (Ibn-al-Haitham 1989). His optical writings were translated into Latin, and Roger Bacon was one of the first authors to work with them and continue their approach. Among others, Bacon was the first to determine experimentally the height of the rainbow at 42 degrees. Also, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Theodoric von Freiberg and the Persian astronomer Kamal al-Din al-Farisi independently executed optical experiments with a sphere of glass filled with

water in order to simulate the behavior of light on raindrops, and explain primary and secondary rainbows. Because of the late medieval incorporation of optical studies in the university curricula, treatises in the perspectivist tradition reached an enormous popularity during the Renaissance. In general, the works of Al-Haytham, Roger Bacon, Pecham, and Witelo constituted the backbone of Renaissance discussion on optical matters until the seventeenth century, counting many manuscript versions and several printed editions (Lindberg 1996; Smith 2015). For instance, in the sixteenth century, experiments on the rainbow analogous to the late medieval ones were recreated again by Giovanni Battista della Porta. René Descartes would later and independently execute again the same experiments measuring the angles of emergence (Descartes 1637). Renaissance musicians and natural philosophers drew on traditions of testing musical phenomena from at least Ptolemy's *Harmonics* to develop increasingly systematic, quantitative, and experimental analyses. Vincenzo Galilei, Isaac Beeckman, and especially Marin Mersenne tested earlier formulations of the quantitative relations between string length, tension, and pitch. As in his investigations of local motion, Mersenne tested the experiments of his predecessors with "*expériences* well-regulated and well-made" and worked toward a systematic theory of musical sound production and hearing, isolating, and manipulating factors while holding others constant (Cohen 1984; Crombie 1994).

As to magnetism, the French nobleman Pierre de Maricourt authored, in 1269, what is commonly regarded as the first text ever to be devoted exclusively to the magnet (*Epistula de magnete*, Peregrinus 1995). In his considerations and arguments about magnetism, experimental practices showed up in prominent places. It is not always clear whether Maricourt had really performed the trials he described, but there are clear positive and clear negative cases. What is more, he brought together mixed mathematics and experimental research by transferring the astronomical notion of (celestial) poles to the magnet. Finally, while he did not propose a general program of a *Scientia experimentalis*, he was possibly cited by Bacon as "dominus experimentorum" (Bacon 1859, 46–47),

and he was well aware of the novelty of his approach: he emphasized that the scholar of magnetism had to be at the same time a philosopher and a skilled manual worker – a clear and conscious deviation from traditional natural philosophy. To what degree this move was inspired by the example of alchemy (in which, as described above, a similar stance was taken) is still an open question. In any case, all further treatises on magnetism, through the Renaissance and up to William Gilbert in 1600, referred not only to Maricourt's results but also followed his experimental-philosophical approach to the subject (Grant 1974; Radelet-de-Grave and Speiser 1975).

However, apart from these specific cases, the widespread emphasis on the origin of all knowledge in the senses did not mean that the experiences (*experientiae*) generally adduced in natural philosophical discussions derived from first-person observations or tests. On the contrary, they appear most often as drawn from daily common experience, from other textual sources, or, most prominently from the late thirteenth century on, from scenarios constructed *secundum imaginationem*. It is certainly too strong to characterize medieval natural philosophy, as historians John Murdoch and Edward Grant did, as "natural philosophy without nature" and "empiricism without observation" (Murdoch 1982; Grant 2001), but it is clear that experiment in our understanding was not a general approach. Medieval philosophers at times emphasized their personal experience in natural histories, used at times to test and expand beyond works by Aristotle. Recourse to personal experience is especially prominent in Albert the Great's work on plants and animals, in which he objected to common myths and described particular cases in detail, e.g., even checking eggs and chicks in an eagle's nest over six years, lowered down a cliff face by rope (Reeds and Kinukawa 2013). Yet, in their works on motion, the intension and remission of forms, and other topics more squarely in the ambit of natural philosophy, it seems philosophers did not expect one another to actually perform experimental tests outside the realm of thought, governed by a shared analytic vocabulary and forms of argumentation.

More generally, as the previous sections show, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw a reconfiguration of the relations between natural histories, medicine, alchemy, craft traditions, mathematics, and natural philosophy, with experiment being one of the major issues, and the role of mathematics another. Both in optics and magnetism, mathematical notions were brought together, by way of experiment, with craft practices on the one hand and philosophical claims on the other. This reconfiguration profoundly shaped the Renaissance developments, and needs further historical studies. It underlines, moreover, much of the critique that has been raised against Thomas Kuhn's dichotomy between a mathematical and an experimental tradition at the origin of modern science (Kuhn 1976). While his approach was historiographically innovative at its time, a study of Renaissance science and medicine (to which Kuhn gave only scant attention) makes clear how problematic that division is. Renaissance mathematical sciences were deeply rooted in practical applications and linked to natural philosophy, and it would be misleading to disentangle theory and practice in those disciplines (Bennett 1986).

Experimentation, Natural Magic, and the Tradition of Secrets

Natural magic was an important and visible strand in the sixteenth century and contributed to dignify and give prominence to operative and technical forms of knowledge. In the self-understanding of its practitioners, both the operative character and the strive for knowledge was evident, as, for instance, exemplified by Cornelius Agrippa and Giovan Battista della Porta (Henry 2008, 8–9). In traditional, scholastic divisions of disciplines, natural magic, because of its operative character, was not usually considered part of natural philosophy, a purely theoretical activity. By contrast, magical texts themselves stressed the philosophical character of their discipline (Anstey and Vanzo 2012). Such an understanding can already be found in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) who had stated that “magic was the practical part of natural philosophy” (Pico della Mirandola

1995), and hereby followed the byzantine Neoplatonist philosopher Michael Psellus (Zambelli 1973, 136).

Given the practical character of natural magic, it is appropriate that modern historiography emphasizes its role and importance in the origins of early modern experimentation. In analyzing the origins of modern science, Floris Cohen associates Francis Bacon and William Gilbert because of their common “empirical, magic-infused, and practice oriented” programs and their general, “liberal use” of the literature in the genre of natural magic (Cohen 2010, 249). He sums up that the transformation and “consolidation” of a fact-finding experimental tradition in the early seventeenth century overall happened within magical and organic worldviews (Cohen 2010, 260). John Henry, in his survey on the Scientific Revolution, mentions the “pragmatism” and “empiricism” of the magical tradition, and its “inextricable” link with technology (Henry 2008, 58), something also William Eamon pointed out (Eamon 1983). Henry also links magic with the rise of court academies: for instance, he refers to the Accademia dei Lincei as to an institution for the “advancement of natural magic.” At the same time, however, the precise forms of the interaction between natural magic and early modern experimental science are still not well defined and understood, as again John Henry has sharply formulated (Henry 2008, 58).

Similar concerns can be raised for the genre of secrets, a tradition with its roots in Hellenistic times, but extremely popular all over Europe during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, brought to general attention by the seminal work of William Eamon (1994). By “secrets” one should mostly intend collections of recipes and instructions derived from artisanal practices, medicine, practical alchemy, cookery, and so on. These texts were often “linked with a literary tradition of works that promised to reveal the esoteric teaching of revered authorities like Aristotle and Albertus Magnus” (Eamon 1994, 4). Eamon traced an evolution from medieval times to the printed books of secrets of the early modern period, suggesting that the recipes in such books were the “‘missing link’ between medieval ‘secrets’ and Baconian

experiments” proper (Eamon 1994, 9). Early modern secrets articulated a “novel concept of experimentation,” because they were not anymore private, orally transmitted recipes of the craft tradition, common in the medieval period – they were in fact written down and published, an early form of what Francis Bacon would have called *experientia literata*, or literate experience, experience put down in writing (Eamon 1994, 9).

The collection of secrets particularly flourished in courts and academies. Giovan Battista della Porta, author of the extremely popular book of secrets *Magia Naturalis* (della Porta 1589, initially published in four books in 1558 and subsequently enlarged to 20 books in 1589), was the founder of the short-lived Accademia dei Secreti in Naples in the 1560s and, subsequently, a leading member of the Accademia dei Lincei. Among others, the courts of the emperor Rudolph II and Francesco I de’ Medici were leading centers of an “economy of secrets,” where recipes and trade secrets became valuable commodities in the courtly marketplace (Eamon 1994, 270–271; see also Findlen 1994). While the tradition of secrets testifies of a strong interest in experimental and technical practice during the Renaissance, more complex is the question of their relevance for the subsequent development of experimentation. Certainly, as for instance Peter Dear notices, secrets were relevant, as they promoted “attitudes” of non-academic (non-Aristotelian), practical, artisanal knowledge (Dear 2006). Eamon has specified further their role, suggesting that authors of books of secrets did not intend “their works to be read as experimental books in the usual sense: that is, they did not expect, nor did they instruct, readers to experiment with the recipes or even to deviate from them in any way.” Recipes came as “tried out,” already “certified by experiment.” Books of secrets were, so to speak, like “cook-books” whose primary aim was not that of “serving as guides to experimentation,” but to “demonstrate the authority and expertise of the author” (Eamon 2011, 29–30). How their role in the development of the notion of the early modern experiment can be grasped in detail, however, is still an open question. What we can see, however, is that books of secrets ended up

presenting, deliberately or not, the role of experimental “storehouses”: catalogues and collections of experiments, to be copied, passed on, and possibly tried. This was for instance the case of Francis Bacon and his use of Della Porta’s *Magia naturalis* (Rusu 2017).

The Loci of Experiment

It is instructive to complement the above view on various experimental strands by a survey of the institutions and spaces at which those experiments were actually conducted. After all, experimental activities require specific resources, such as materials, equipment, instruments, spaces, and helpers, often those with craft experience. Those resources were expensive and not easy to have. No surprise then that the court, be it a minor or a more important one, was a central place of technical practice and experimentation. For alchemy in particular, courts were the typical home. They offered the necessary space and financial support. But, while the court was a typical place of experiments, it was also a dangerous one: existence at court was precarious and totally dependent on the patronage and good-will of the ruler (let alone the occasion when the ruler changed). Rulers had their expectations when they supported an alchemist (be it practical or symbolic successes, depending on what the alchemist had promised), and once they saw those expectations not fulfilled, they often withdrew their support, and sometimes put the alchemist to jail or death (Moran 1991; Nummedal 2007).

The example of alchemy in courts is also relevant because it highlights the existence of a broad constellation of environments in which experimentation was conducted for usefulness and profit. For those constellations, Pamela Long has suggested the concept of “trading zone” (originally introduced by Galison for particle physics: Galison 1997) to identify places in which artisans and practitioners “engaged in substantive communication” with learned men and scholars (Long 2015). Apart from courts, Long refers, for instance, to mines, arsenals, but also to commercial environments like the shops of

instrument makers. The concept is particularly useful to describe situations in which experimentation escaped traditional, more philosophical categories, and also settings marked by strong technological innovation and presence of commerce, in the absence of a courtly culture of patronage – two cases in point being, for instance, the Republic of Venice and the Dutch Republic.

Following the claims of some seventeenth-century experimentalists, historiography has long regarded universities as alien or even opposed to experiment. More recently, however, it has become clear that there were indeed numerous and important experimental activities at universities, in particular at the medical faculty. With botanic gardens, herbaria, and anatomical theaters (already in the sixteenth century, though not permanent in those early times), the medical faculty had both the resources and the experience to allow for experiment, and indeed important medical and physiological experiments were conducted here, sometimes even on large scale, as the case of Vesalius and the high numbers of students in Padua may illustrate (Stolberg 2013; Ragland 2017). Apart from the medical faculty, however, there was not much experimental activity at universities. The reason was perhaps less a general resistance against experimental research, as was sometimes claimed, but rather a question of resources and structures: teaching was traditionally focused on texts, and accordingly there were resources in the form of libraries, scriptoria, etc. To install resources for experiments, by contrast, would have required not only a major financial investment but also a major revision of established structures. However, it was already around mid-seventeenth century that also the philosophical faculty of some universities (such as Würzburg in 1657, by the Jesuit Gaspar Schott) would start to implement those restructurings (Wiesenfeldt 2002) – a point that is apt to revise the traditional view of universities as resisting experimental approaches.

Again, other places of experiment were the homes of interested individuals who could afford and were ready to invest both resources and their own time. Pierre de Maricourt might have counted

among those, but certainly many of those doing natural magic (some might have been at courts too) over the Renaissance period. Not the least, clerical institutions provided a stable environment for scholarly activities throughout our period, and some of them seem to have allowed space for experiments and sometimes (al-)chemical laboratories (Campbell et al. 2018). Roger Bacon's optical experiments illustrate the point, but also medical gardens at monasteries, and the much later case of Newton's alchemical laboratory in Cambridge might not be singular. For fields with immediate practical aspects such as magnetism, also workshops of instrument makers were in some cases (such as Robert Norman in the second half of the sixteenth century) spaces for experiments.

The survey makes clear that still in the Renaissance there was no genuine place of experiment. Apart from medicine, there were no institutions that provided space and resources with some stability. Once experimental research raised in size and importance, this situation would become even more unsatisfactory. This may be the background of why, from mid-sixteenth century on, the model of academies, already practiced since mid-fifteenth century in the scholarly fields of language or classical studies, was taken up and adapted to experimental research. This was either done on initiative of individuals talented in gathering others around them (such as della Porta with the Accademia dei Secreti, 1560, or Joachim Jungius with the Societas Ereunetica sive Zetetica in Rostock, 1622, or a small group of doctors in Schweinfurt with the Academia Naturae Curiosorum (later Leopoldina) in 1652), or of rich noblemen (such as Federico Cesi with the Accademia dei Lincei, 1603), or of rulers (such as the Medici dynasty with the Accademia del Cimento, 1657). When in the second half of the seventeenth century, further academies were founded (London and Paris) and became (at least for a while, and without making the previous places disappear) the central place for doing and exchanging experimental research, this had its roots in the late Renaissance, and provided a solution for the challenges that had become visible in that period.

The Rise of Experimental Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century

The various Renaissance developments came together in the Early Modern Period and formed a substantial part of what is often called the Scientific Revolution. Most significantly, moreover, strong voices in that period promoted not only experimental practices, but a full experimental program, coming along with the (new) claim that experiment should form the central or even the only pathway to make progress in knowledge about nature. In this last section, we shall briefly describe three of those approaches and sketch how experimental practices and experimental philosophy spread over Europe.

In 1600, the English court physician William Gilbert published *De magnete*, a study of magnetic and electric phenomena, including geomagnetism. Experimentation played a fundamental part in Gilbert's research, as it had done in other magnetic treatises before him. However, other than those older authors, Gilbert formulated an explicitly experimental research program. *De magnete* opens with programmatic remarks: "Nothing is brought forth in this book which has not been investigated and made completely certain, performed and done [*actum et transactum*]." Gilbert's declared methodology proceeded through a combination of "sure experiments and demonstrated arguments," avoiding the "probable conjectures and the opinions of philosophical speculators" (Gilbert 1600; trans. Gilbert 1900). One has to be careful, of course, not to take such methodological announcements to be strictly followed through the book: indeed, there are numerous passages no less speculative than previous works. What is clear, however, is that Gilbert performed a large number of experiments, and also integrated experiments from others, such as Pierre de Maricourt, della Porta, and Robert Norman (mariner, instrument maker, and author of *The New Attractive*; Norman 1581). He frequently used experiments to make philosophical arguments about the cause of phenomena, be it directly by way of analogy. The question of why Gilbert was not content (as others before him, e.g., in the natural magic tradition, or in magnetic

research by the Jesuit scholar Leonardo Garzoni whose text Gilbert knew (Ugaglia 2006)) with practicing an experimental approach, but turned to spell out a sort of methodological program, has scarcely been treated (see Georgescu 2017). The other question, however, i.e., from where Gilbert's experimental methodology specifically derived, has raised historical controversies, with a general view on the origins of modern experimental practice. In a classic paper, Edgar Zilsel identified the origins of Gilbert's method in the experimental activities on magnetism of the practitioners of the mechanical arts, miners, and Renaissance instrument makers (Zilsel 1941). The case fit Zilsel's thesis according to which the scientific revolution was mainly brought about by the collaboration of natural philosophers and elite practitioners of the mechanical arts. More recently, John Henry has argued against this interpretation, suggesting that Zilsel overemphasized the role of craftsmen, and that Gilbert's method derived instead from the magical tradition (Henry 2001). Jim Bennet (1986) has emphasized the impact of the tradition of practical mathematics, highlighting the role of the instrument maker Robert Norman.

A strong push for the use of experiments in philosophical arguments was given by Galileo Galilei, Florentine court mathematician and philosopher after a long period as mathematics professor and instrument maker. While Galileo did not formulate an explicit experimental research program, he used experiments widely from early on, e.g., in disputes about floating bodies or about the nature of heat and cold. It might be noted, however, that also his opponents, often Jesuit scholars, performed experiments to make their arguments. In Galileo's mechanical considerations, there was also another use of experiments visible, namely, by most precise measurements and evaluation for mathematical schemes, as in his famous experiments with the inclined plane or with pendulums. This latter use gave rise to historiographical disputes, going back to the claim of the French historian of science Alexandre Koyré that for Galileo experimentation was a secondary activity compared to mathematical deduction of physical theories and that he actually had not performed many of the experiments he discussed in his

works (Koyré 1939). But already earlier Leonardo Olschki (1927) had shown how Galileo was proficient in the use of instruments and machines, and close to the world of technical practitioners and engineers. In 1961, Thomas B. Settle showed that, contrary to Koyré's view (Koyré 1953), Galileo could have materially executed his experiments on the inclined plane (Settle 1961), and Stillman Drake brought attention to actual manuscript evidence for Galileo's experimentation (Drake 1990). Current scholarship agrees that Galileo executed experiments from an early stage in his career. As early as 1592, together with his patron Guidobaldo Dal Monte, he performed experiments for the determination of the parabolic trajectories on bronze balls rolled over inclined planes (Renn et al. 2000, for his experiments with pendulums see also Palmieri 2009). Furthermore, because of his activities as an instrument maker, he was intimately used to the practice of instruments and tried to experimentally develop and understand lenses and thermoscopes (Valleriani 2010).

Perhaps the most visible experimental program was proposed by Francis Bacon – lawyer, statesman, and prolific writer and philosopher. In his program, the role of observation and experimentation was central and fundamental, and put to the service of a radical reform of the way to obtain, produce, and validate new knowledge. Bacon also made every effort to mark a strong discontinuity from prior authors in the reflection on experimental practice (e.g., by downplaying Gilbert's work). He emphasized the need of a broad empirical foundation: in his mature form, he grounded his project on a plan for the production of “natural and experimental histories,” furnishing the raw materials to be elaborated further through his new philosophical approach. Natural history traditionally had the task to order and categorize all knowledge. This genre got transformed in the Renaissance when naturalists aimed at highly precise descriptions construed in contrast to what they saw as inaccurate and partial accounts of their medieval predecessors (Ogilvie 2006, 6–7). Inspired by the example of authors in the natural magic tradition, Bacon's idea further departed from that model: his histories were not only for the purpose of describing, but also for that of

concrete application and operation. For this reason, Bacon introduced as a fundamental part the history of the mechanical arts, also referred to as “Mechanical and Experimental” history (*Parasceve ad Historiam Naturalem, et Experimentalem*, Bacon 2004, 455). He even suggested that the experiments of the arts (in fact, identifiable with technical inventions) were the most important part of natural history, as they have “the greatest importance for philosophy.” Baconian histories were supposed to extend far beyond the traditional realms of the genre (such as mineralogy, botany, zoology), covering every aspect of natural and human activity. In general, according to Bacon, proper natural history should be “a single unbroken run of narratives” derived “from the Course of Nature, the Wandering of Nature, and Art or the application of man to natural things.” They also included more philosophical topics that Bacon deemed essential and universal, like the histories of “Dense, Rare, Light, Heavy, Hot, Cold, Consistent, Fluid, Similar, Dissimilar, Specific, Organic and the like” (*Descriptio globi intellectualis*: Bacon 1996, 103–109). A deeper study of the numerous natural and experimental histories Bacon himself had worked out (such as Corneanu et al. 2012; Jalobeanu 2015 or Pastorino 2011) has started only recently, whereas previous historical accounts had focused on his more programmatic writings. These new studies make clear that observations and experiments in those histories took a wide variety of forms; however, all of them were construed as trials, tests, inquiries, “investigations by means of experience” (OED, s.v. “trial”).

Bacon's experimental program had a deep influence, particularly in seventeenth-century England, where Baconian experimentalism became engrained in society and culture (Webster 1975). In the second half of the seventeenth century, the Royal Society made him its hero, and there were indeed important attempts to pursue the “natural and experimental history” approach further, with authors like Boyle, and a flood of experimental and observational reports in the early *Philosophical Transactions*, among others. However, even in England, Bacon's

program did not push out other approaches like in the case of William Harvey and physiological experimentation, traditional natural history, and chymistry. In many of those, experiment played a central role. The expression “experimental philosophy” used as early as the 1635 by Samuel Hartlib and in common use from the 1650s/1660s on (Anstey 2005; Anstey and Vanzo 2012) did not grasp a very unified phenomenon, but essentially meant doing natural philosophy while including experiments.

This variety of approaches was also present in other European countries. While the English context has been discussed at length, a comprehensive historical analysis of the development of experimental practice in the first half of the seventeenth century on the continent is still lacking and is a desideratum of future scholarship. As a common basis, however, we clearly see that importance of experiment as means of research steadily grew during the period under consideration. This held for France, where a few circles of experimental philosophers formed in various cities, notably Aix, under the tutelage of Fabri de Peiresc, and Paris, with the supervision of the Minim friar Marin Mersenne and Blaise Pascal (Brockliss 1992, 60–61). Also, in the 1640s, Pascal and his circle conducted influential experimentation on barometric pressure and the vacuum in Rouen (Shea 2003). Also the founding of the Paris Academy of Science in 1666 stood fully in the sign of experimental research. In the Italian states, with researchers such as Vincenzo Viviani or Evangelista Torricelli, and with the Accademia dei Lincei, and later the Accademia del Cimento, experimental approaches were vivid. Finally, it is important to highlight the strong presence of experimental activities in the Jesuit order, with researchers such as Leonardo Garzoni (Venice), Niccolò Cabeo (Parma), Athanasius Kircher (Avignon, then Rome), Honoré Fabri in Paris, and Gaspar Schott in Würzburg (who was active in the natural magic tradition and made Otto von Guericke write down the results of his experiments with the first ever-built airpump), among many others (Feingold 2003).

To sum up, what we see in the early seventeenth century, and more so in its second half, is a

wide spread of experimentation as means of natural research. While the specific ways of doing experiments, and even more the ways of drawing conclusions from them, varied widely, it was out of question that experiment was a viable way to learn about nature. This was a radical change from just a few decades before. It is however clear that the pathway that led to that new situation is less characterized by a few singular events or authors, but was strongly rooted in broader developments of the Renaissance period, as described in this entry.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alchemical Medicine and Distillation](#)
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Exploration, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

Exploration influenced Renaissance philosophers indirectly rather than directly. Although few references to it are found in the writings of Renaissance philosophers, the discoveries in the Americas, soon referred to as a New World, stimulated the imagination of many European thinkers and intellectuals leading them to reconsider a number of fundamental classical philosophical issues such as the plurality of the worlds, human nature, atheism, slavery, and just war. It was, however, not until the seventeenth century that reflection on exploration deeply influenced the philosophical ideas of Europeans.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Greek culture linked exploration to the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. The Greeks ascribed the origin of most of their knowledge to the Egyptians. Plato's travels to Egypt, Magna Graecia, and

Sicily played a part in the development of some of his most important doctrines (Field 1930, p. 5; Capizzi 1984, p. 89). In medieval culture, the figure of Ulysses was associated with the desire to know. Dante (1265–1321), in his *Comedy* (c. 1308–1320), described how the Greek hero had perished in the vain attempt to cross the Gibraltar channel in order to learn about the unexplored world. Ulysses persuaded his comrades to follow him with a short speech, which included the famous line: “fatti non foste a viver come bruti, ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza” (“you were not made to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge”) (Dante, *Comedy, Inferno*, ch. 26, lines 118–20). At the beginning of his *Utopia* (1516), Thomas More (1478–1535) explicitly linked the journey to Utopia of Raphael Hythloday, who claimed to have traveled with Amerigo Vespucci, to that of Ulysses and, above all, to Plato, stressing in this way the connection between exploration and the search for knowledge (More 1989). The relationship between exploration and the desire for knowledge also had a negative side, as it often entailed conquest and expropriation. In the *Ash Wednesday Supper* (1584), Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) associated exploration as conquest with the myth of the Argonauts by quoting Medea’s reproach to Tiphys, the Argonauts’ helmsman, in Seneca’s tragedy (*Medea* ll. 375–79) and with the censure of Columbus’s action in the New World (Bruno 1584/2002, vol. I, p. 451; Granada 1990; Ricci 1990). It is worth noting, however, that for those writers who praised the conquest of the New World, such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478–1557), the myth of the Argonauts did not have any negative connotation in relation to exploration (see Coello de la Rosa 2002, 2012; Oviedo 1535).

Innovative and Original Aspects

According to a number of scholars (Elliott 1970; Gliozzi 1977; Ryan 1981), the main features of European philosophy and culture were not much affected by the discovery of the New World. References to the Americas do not seem to have been crucial in the writings of the most important Renaissance philosophers. Although Johannes

Kepler (1571–1630) and other European astronomers used the catalogue of southern stars compiled by the Dutch navigator Pieter Dirkszoon Keyser, there was apparently little connection between the contemporary exploration of the earth and the astronomical study of the heavens (Cañizares-Esguerra 2006, p. 80). At the beginning of the sixteenth century, philosophers were not greatly concerned with the novelty of the New World. An interesting case is that of the Society of Jesus, who promoted teaching and scholarship in Europe and evangelization in the Americas and Asia. The most important commentators on Aristotle and authors of late scholastic Aristotelian works, such as Benedict Perera, the Coimbra Commentators, Domingo de Soto, Francisco Suárez, and Francisco de Toledo, were Iberian Jesuits. Yet, their thought was not affected by the work of their brethren in the New World (Bianchini et al. 2013). Nevertheless, the discovery of the New World affected the world of ordinary Renaissance men and women (Grafton 1995), and exploration did have an indirect impact on philosophers: rather than acting at a causal level on their philosophical doctrines, the discovery of the Americas stimulated the imagination of European intellectuals and played a part in a number of original Renaissance ideas and theories. Authors of tales and chronicles about the Americas referred to the lands discovered beyond the Atlantic as a New World. At the beginning of his *Historia de las Indias*, Francisco López de Gomara (1511–1566) contrasted the view of ancient philosophers such as Democritus, Leucippus, Anaximander, Plutarch and Galen, as well as Heraclitus and the Pythagoreans, on the existence of many worlds with the Christian doctrine of the uniqueness of our world, which was also rooted in Aristotle. Nonetheless, he explained that he would still refer to the Indies as the New World. Francisco Cervantes de Salazar (c. 1514–1575), however, in his *Cronica de la Nueva España* maintained that referring to the Indies as a New World was a mistake, as there was only one world (de Gomara 1554, pp. 1–3; Cervantes de Salazar 1985; Gliozzi 1977, p. 209). In doing so, these authors ended up relating the philosophical debate on the plurality of the worlds to the diversity of the lands, people, animals, and

plants experienced by Europeans in the Americas, which, in turn, inspired the imagination of some philosophers. In his *Expulsion of the triumphant beast* (*Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, 1584), Giordano Bruno linked his views on the existence of many infinite worlds and his severe criticism of Aristotle's idea of a single universe with the transoceanic travels and creation of trade routes with the Americas which connected many distant peoples (Romeo 1953; Aquilecchia 1955; Granada 1990; Ricci 1990). Tales of sailors and travelers led other intellectuals to reconsider their opinions. Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) developed his criticisms of contemporary French culture and society in light of the stories told by explorers of the Americas and of his own experience of encountering Native Americans in France. He contrasted the purity of life of the savages in the New World to European civilization, and he compared the customs of Native Americans with the accounts of barbarians and Middle East peoples in the works of ancient Greek and Latin authors. In his essay “On Cannibals” (1580), he recalled asking three Native Americans from Brazil at the Court of Charles IX in Rouen about the habits of the French (de Montaigne 1969, vol. 1, pp. 251–265). This essay also reveals the difficult interaction at the Paris court between Montaigne and the visiting Native Americans. It is clear that he was not interested in understanding Amerindian civilization but instead was seeking evidence for his philosophical relativism and for his criticism of French society (de Montaigne 1969, vol. 1, pp. 251–265; Gliozzi 1977).

The new information from the Americas stimulated more critical minds to reconsider aspects of Aristotelianism. For Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), the discovery that the Southern hemisphere was inhabited required a revision of Aristotle's notion of demonstration as a form of knowledge production, since a number of conclusions Aristotle drew by means of his theory of science had been refuted (Nardi 1965; Pagden 1993, p. 90). Pomponazzi's suggestion was not followed up, however, and the Renaissance debate on demonstration continued to develop along the lines of Aristotelian logic (Arndt 1971; Engfer 1982; Mancosu 1996). In the seventeenth

century, new data from the Americas began to have had a more direct influence on the philosophical and scientific debate over Copernicanism and on the acquisition of scientific knowledge. Johannes Kepler, in the *Dissertatio cum nuncio sidereo* (*Conversation with [Galileo's] starry messenger*, 1610), stressed the difference between empirical observation and theory by comparing Columbus's direct observation of what he believed to be the antipodes with Ptolemy's theoretical work on geography (Kepler 1965a, b, p. 17; Jardine 1984; Pagden 1993, p. 91). Other writers compared Galileo to Columbus (Pagden 1993, pp. 97–98). The comparison between major breakthroughs in physics and the discovery of new worlds by sailors enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the centuries. It is suggestive that Arthur Holly Compton announced to James B. Conant, the president of Harvard, that Enrico Fermi had produced the first controlled nuclear chain reaction with words: “the Italian navigator has just landed in the new world” (Compton 1956, p. 144), drawing a comparison between the new Galileo and Columbus. In his *Somnium, sive Astronomia lunaris* (1609), a fictional tale of lunar exploration, Kepler connected earth and space exploration, a topic that gained momentum in the Western imagination during the Cold War space race (Kepler 1965b; Bonhomme 2012; Gerovitch 2015).

In the seventeenth century, such suggestions were not only a matter of mere rhetoric. In his *Apologia pro Galileo* (*A defense of Galileo*, 1622), Tommaso Campanella invited the Roman Church to revise the interpretation of the Holy Scripture on the impossibility of the motion of the earth, by arguing that the interpretation of the Holy Scripture had already been revised on the impossibility that the Southern hemisphere could be inhabited after travelers from the New World provided evidence for it (Campanella 2001). Francis Bacon, in the *New Atlantis* (1627) and the *Novum Organum* (1620), related the construction of a state-organized research system to the knowledge gained by exploration (Bacon 1963a, b; Gliozzi 1977, pp. 232–246).

Explorers' tales and chronicles also stimulated the Renaissance imagination about the utopian

state. Tales of travelers had excited the imagination of the Europeans for centuries. The writings of John of Mandeville and Marco Polo circulated widely, even in the lower strata of European societies: Menocchio, the miller studied by Carlo Ginzburg in *The cheese and the worms*, for instance, read Mandeville's *Travels* (Ginzburg 1976). Such tales were rooted in the medieval taste for the fantastic: like epic poems of the period, they were not intended to be informative but to intrigue the imagination of the reader (Bloch 1994, pp. 143–156). It was a combination of the humanist need for careful historical research and the discovery of the New World that led authors to focus on exploration as a source of knowledge. Thomas More contrasted the fantasies of authors such as John of Mandeville with the realism of Hytholoday's (in fact, fictional) account. Nonetheless, it was only in the seventeenth century that Francis Bacon (1561–1626) in his *New Atlantis* directly linked the construction of a utopian state and the process of acquisition of knowledge to exploration.

Renaissance political philosophy was also indirectly influenced by the exploration of the Americas. Neither in *The Prince* (1513/1514) nor in the *Discourses on Livy* (1518/1519) did Niccolò Machiavelli refer to the exploration of the Americas. The Florentine secretary's political reflections were developed by comparing Roman history with contemporary events rather than by considering the discovery of the New World (Machiavelli 1980, 2016). Nonetheless, the “Age of Exploration,” by reinforcing the nation-state and international diplomacy, encouraged thinkers to reconsider the nature of political power (Cassi 2007). European expansion into the New World posed new questions for jurists and philosophers concerning dominion over the seas and over the inhabitants of the Americas. Throughout the Middle Ages, jurists extended Roman law on the “Mare Nostrum” (Mediterranean Sea) in order to regulate conflicts between maritime republics. Since Roman law was concerned with the seas close to the coast and the islands, whereas oceanic exploration entailed establishing a legal framework for vast and far lands and seas, it was necessary to reformulate the Roman categories

of *res publica*, *res nullius*, and *res commune* (Cassi 2007).

Once it was recognized that the New World was not the East Indies, Europeans made efforts to understand who the Natives they encountered there were. Had they received the divine word? Were they proper human beings? The debate concerning the nature of the Amerindians led jurists and philosophers to rethink the idea of human nature and reconsider the arguments against the descent of all human beings from Adam. A debate arose between the polygenists, who believed in the simultaneous and independent creation of humans in different places, and the monogenists, who accepted the biblical account and, therefore, had to postulate inter-oceanic travels long before Columbus (Gliozzi 1977; Cañizares-Esguerra 2006). Bruno, in *Expulsion of the triumphant beast* and in *On the infinite universe and worlds* (*De lo infinito universo et mundi*, 1584), challenged the monogenetic descent of the Amerindians from Adam, arguing instead in favor of the spontaneous generation of human beings. In *De immenso* (1591), he also defended the pre-Adamite hypothesis by claiming that only the Hebrews had descended from Adam (Gliozzi 1977, pp. 344–345).

The debate on the nature of the inhabitants of the New World was also intertwined with another classical philosophical issue: the relationship between slavery, human nature, and just war. Aristotle connected these concepts by arguing that slavery could be the consequence either of inferiority by nature or of a just war (*Politics* I.6). In the sixteenth century, Iberian philosophers and intellectuals began to be concerned about whether the subjugation of the Amerindians by the *conquistadores* was a form of legitimate warfare. In the famous debate held in Valladolid in 1550, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573) argued that the Spanish Crown was entitled to wage a just war against the Amerindians, while Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566) defended the Amerindians (Pérez Luño 1992; Casas 2009). The most interesting contribution to the debate was provided by Francisco de Vitoria (1492/1493–1546). In his two most famous lectures, *De indis et de iure belli* (*On the Indies and the law of war*), drawing

on Thomas Aquinas, he opposed the traditional doctrine laid down by Pope Innocent IV that a difference of religion could justify war, which was the basis of Sepúlveda's case. For Vitoria, however, "the sole and only cause for waging war is when harm has been inflicted" (de Vitoria 2008, p. 303). He maintained that in a war it was possible for both sides to claim that they were fighting a just war, even the Turks and the Saracens, who could say that they were waging war in the service of God (ibid., pp. 306–307).

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F

Faber

- [Le Fèvre, Tanneguy](#)

Faber Stapulensis, Jacobus

- [Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques](#)

Faber, Philippus

- [Fabri, Filippo](#)

Fabri, Filippo

Born: 1564, Spianata

Died: 1630, Padova

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Abstract

Conventual Franciscan, lived between the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century, Filippo Fabri was one of the most representative exponents

of Italian Scotism. Among his most important works are *Disputationes theologicae* (1613–1614) and *Expositiones et disputationes in XII libros Aristotelis Metaphysicorum* (1637). In 1630, he died in Padua.

Alternate Names

[Faber, Philippus](#)

Biography and Thought

Filippo Fabri was born in Spianata, near Faenza, in 1564, and in 1582, he entered the Order of Friars Minor Conventual. After studying in the colleges of his Order (Ferrara, Padova, Roma), Fabri in 1593 he took doctoral degree at the College San Bonaventura in Rome. Following graduation he taught in several colleges of the Order: Venice, Cremona, Parma, and Padua (Forlivesi [2011](#): 95; Forlivesi [2014](#): 425). From 1603 to 1606, he taught metaphysics *in via Scoti* at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Padua, and from 1606 to 1630, always in the same faculty, he held the chair of theology *in via Scoti* (Forlivesi [2011](#): 95–97; Forlivesi [2014](#): 425; Forlivesi [2018](#): 42–43). In Rome in 1624, he was commissioned to reform the constitutions of the Order, and in 1625, he was elected Provincial Minister of the province of Bologna (Forlivesi [2011](#): 96). Fabri's philosophical reflection focuses

mainly on the nature of metaphysics (see Forlivesi 2018), and his position can be defined “proto-ontologistic”: metaphysics is science of the supreme *rationes*. Fabri is the most representative defensor of Aristotelian tradition in opposition to three specific theoretical positions: (I) Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola and Francesco Patrizi da Cherso; (II) Francisco Suárez; and (III) Pythagorean or Galileian model (see Schmitt 1976; Poppi, and Zen Benetti 2010; Forlivesi 2011, 2014, 2018). In 1630, he died in Padua.

Works

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Disputationes theologicae librum primum Sententiarum continentes... In secundum Sententiarum complectentes materiam de Creatione et de Angelis... In tertium Sententiarum complectentes materiam de Incarnatione... In quartum Sententiarum complectentes ea quae spectant ad Sacramenta in genere et in specie ad Baptismum, Confirmationem et Eucharistiam, 4 t. en 1 vol., Venezia, Bartolomeo Ginammi, 1613–14 [Avignon BM; Granada BU (t. 4); Madrid BNE; München BSB; Namur CDRR; Palencia BP] ... *in hac secunda editione ab auctore recognita*, Venezia, Bartolomeo Ginammi, 1618–1619 [Augsburg

UB; Köln SUB; Madrid BSem; München BSB; Palma BP (t. 3); Paris BNF]; Paris, 1620 [Namur CDRR; Paris BNF]; *Editio postrema*, Paris, Michel Sonnius, 1620 [Burgos BP; Mahon BP; Palma BP; Toledo BP].

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Disputationes theologicae de sacramento ordinis, de poenis et censuris, Venezia, Ginammus, 1628 [Avignon BM; Palma BP].

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Fallopius

► [Falloppio, Gabriele](#)

Falloppia

► [Falloppio, Gabriele](#)

Falloppio, Gabriele

Born: c. 1523, Modena

Died: October 9, 1562, Padua

Joel A. Klein

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Abstract

Gabriele Falloppio was one of the most distinguished Italian anatomists and physicians of the sixteenth century. He made multiple significant discoveries, for instance, regarding the anatomy of the internal ear and of the reproductive organs, but also was consequential in the development of the genre of anatomical *observationes*.

Alternate Names

[Falloppia](#); [Fallopius](#)

Biography

Gabriele was born in Modena to Caterina and Girolamo Falloppio, and while some biographers

suggested that the family was noble, this conclusion is unlikely (Favaro 1928). Girolamo worked first as a goldsmith and then as a soldier, and some sources suggest that his latter employ involved criminal endeavors in service of rulers in Modena. Regardless, it is reported that he contracted syphilis, perhaps on an expedition to Naples, and died when Gabriele was approximately ten, leaving his family practically destitute. Gabriele received a humanist education, but upon the financial difficulties resulting from the death of his father, was guided toward an ecclesiastical education and career. When his family's fortunes began to recover he took up the study of medicine and anatomy in Modena, and it is possible that he later spent some time in Padua studying with Giambattista da Monte and Realdo Colombo, Vesalius's successor. It is certain that he studied in Ferrara with Antonio Musa Brasavola and Giambattista Canano.

Falloppio became the chair of pharmacy in Ferrara before accepting the chair of anatomy at the University of Pisa in 1549. After a lengthy affair in which he was accused of practicing human vivisection, he was appointed the chair of anatomy at Padua, succeeding Realdo Colombo, and taking a post that had been made particularly famous several years earlier by Andreas Vesalius.

Falloppio's career in Padua reached its zenith with the publication of his *Observationes anatomicae* (1561), which contained various comments and observations on Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) based on Falloppio's own anatomical investigations. While the *Observationes* was not a comprehensive textbook on anatomy, it contained numerous discoveries and challenged many earlier notions, albeit in a relatively conciliatory fashion.

Having dissected adult, juvenile, and infant human bodies, Falloppio was able to describe the ossification of parts of the skull, the sternum, and the centers of the hipbone. Falloppio's account of the anatomy of the internal ear superseded that of Vesalius, and likewise he provided an important description of the muscles of the scalp and face, most notably the extraocular muscles of the orbit, as well as the extrinsic muscles of the ear. He also garnered some fame for his

description of the clitoris and for coining the word “vagina,” but his name, of course, came to be associated with the uterine tubes, which he carefully described, and which are now referred to as the Fallopian tubes. Falloppio’s diverse observations were based not only on dissections but also on his extensive clinical practice and experience with patients.

Beyond its contributions to the particulars of human anatomy, Falloppio’s *Observationes* inaugurated an important subgenre of medical writing, anatomical *observationes*, which highlighted case-studies and became particularly influential in the seventeenth century. These anatomical *observationes* were, as Gianna Pomata has argued, a part of the larger epistemic genre of medical *observationes*, which emerged in Renaissance humanistic medicine (Pomata 2010, 2011).

Many texts attributed to Falloppio were published posthumously and were based on lecture notes taken by students. These are concerned with subjects ranging from mineralogy and balneology to surgery and pharmacy, and while O’Malley concluded that they likely represent the original content of the lectures, he notes that the popular *Secreti diversi et miracolosi* (1563) that is attributed to Falloppio is spurious (O’Malley 1981).

Cross-References

- [Anatomy, Renaissance](#)
- [Colombo, Realdo](#)
- [Della Porta, Giambattista](#)
- [Harvey, William](#)
- [Syphilis in Renaissance Medicine](#)
- [Vesalius, Andreas](#)

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Farel, Guillaume

Born: 1489, Gap, France

Died: 13 September 1565, Neuchâtel, Swiss Territories

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Abstract

Guillaume Farel initiated and advanced religious reform in the French-speaking Swiss cantons, starting c. 1524. From 1538 to his death in 1565, Farel served as the leading pastor of the Reformed Church in Neuchâtel. Together with Pierre Viret (1511–1571) in Lausanne and Jean Calvin (1509–1564) in Geneva, he is regarded as one of the three great reformers of the Swiss territories. All of them worked closely with – at first against – the local city councils.

Alternate Names

[Farellus, Guilelmus](#); [Farel, Wilhelm](#); [Farellus, Wilhelmus](#); [Farel, William](#)

Biography

Born in 1489 in the southeast of France, in Gap, Farel came late to theological studies. He earned his Master of Arts in Paris in 1517. This degree opened the way for Farel's sometime teacher, the French humanist Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1455–1536), to obtain for him a teaching position at the Collège du Cardinal Lemoine, attached to the University of Paris. According to Farel's own account, he began to see the need for reform in the church late in this period of his life (Farel 1530, 175; Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 72–74).

In 1521, Farel joined Lefèvre at Meaux to assist the reforming bishop Guillaume Briçonnet by lay preaching within the parish. This circle of reformers enjoyed the patronage of Marguerite of Navarre (Reid 2009, 1:185, 243–47). After a royal decree prohibited this work in Meaux, Farel preached around France, but after little success joined Oecolampadius and other reformers in Basel in 1524. Here, he instigated a formal disputation; he argued in 13 theses about Christ's words forming the only rule for doctrine and practice in the church (Comité Farel 1930, 122–123). Banished later that year, he was welcomed to Montbéliard by its duke, preaching there until October 1525. Then he worked in Strasbourg with Bucer, Lefèvre, and others, until November 1526.

Farel wrote his first evangelical French language treatise in 1524 – a prayer book on the Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed, partly dependent on Luther's (Farel 1524; Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 103–116). Soon after, the beginnings of liturgical forms in French appeared from his hand (Comité Farel 1930, 141; Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 191–223; Farel 1533). Possibly as early as 1529, Farel also produced the first evangelical confession in French, his *Summaire*, and in 1532 a treatise on the Lord's Supper (Farel 1532; Desrosiers-Bonin and Kemp 2007, 1:9; Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 117–190). After the Bern Disputation of 1528, Farel became an emissary of Bern, preaching throughout the Pays de Vaud with that city's protection (Bruening 2005, 35–37). Between 1526 and 1533, Farel preached in many Swiss cities, such as Aigle, Bienne, Erguel, Neuchâtel, Orbe, Grandson, and Morat,

witnessing the adoption of reform in many (Comité Farel 1930, 173–284). For example, on 4 November 1530, due in large part to Farel's persistence, the Neuchâtel bourgeoisie voted to abolish the mass and follow the way of reform. Here, from 1533 to 1535, the printer Pierre de Vingle joined Farel, printing early Reformed works in French (Desrosiers-Bonin and Kemp 2007).

Farel was also key to Geneva's reformation. The Genevans rudely kicked him out in 1529, and sent him away again in 1532 in spite of Bern's letter of protection. However, he preached openly at the end of 1533, publicly debated Guy Furbity in 1534 and Pierre Caroli in 1535, and, with the help of Antoine Froment and Pierre Viret, helped convince Geneva's *citoyens* to swear to follow reform on 21 May 1536 (Desrosiers-Bonin and Kemp 2007, 1:205–215; Comité Farel 1930, 298–337). The military campaign of Bern through the Pays de Vaud also played a large part in Geneva's decision (Bruening 2005, 39–41).

In 1532, Farel attended a Waldensian synod, helped unite them to the Reformed churches, and received 500 gold écus from them to support a new French translation of the Bible from the original languages, which was completed by Olivétan (Comité Farel 1930, 291–97).

On 10 November 1536, Farel recruited yet another young man to serve as pastor in one of the cities that Farel had led in reform – the famous Jean Calvin, in Geneva. Shortly after, Farel wrote Geneva's first Reformed confession of faith and church order articles (Farel 1536; Stam 2000). In 1538, Calvin, Farel, and Courauld were banished from Geneva, but Calvin agreed to return in 1541 (Speelman 2014, 89–142). Farel became the leading pastor of the Reformed Church of Neuchâtel from 1538 until his death in 1565 (Comité Farel 1930, 421–728). He became deeply involved in promoting reform in the key city of Metz from 1542 to 1545 (Farel 2009) and travelled as needed to preach in other places such as his hometown of Gap in France (Comité Farel 1930, 701–708), but otherwise primarily cared for the church of Neuchâtel.

Farel was known for his persistence, relentless energy, impetuosity, verbosity, and earnest spirituality (Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 4–5,

31 ff.). In Neuchâtel, Farel preached four sermons each Sunday and three on other weekdays, a total of seven sermons per week, about 350 per year, and perhaps well over 12,000 in his lifetime. Recognizing some of his own weaknesses, he urged Calvin to write treatises against the Anabaptist Libertines. Both of them countered the attacks of Pierre Caroli in the 1540s. As friends who belonged to what has been called the renaissance “republic of letters,” these two men on average exchanged a letter per month for decades.

In 1558, the itinerant Farel appeared perhaps ready to settle down: to the embarrassment of his colleagues, he married the daughter of his deceased housekeeper, a 17-year-old girl. They received one child who died young, 3 years after Farel (Comité Farel 1930, 673–80). His body was interred in the Saint-Guillaume chapel in Neuchâtel. Farel has been commemorated by public statues in both Geneva and Neuchâtel.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Farel taught in broad agreement with the Reformed confessions such as the Theses of Berne (1528), his own *Summaire* (1528, 1534, 1542), his own *Confession de foi* (1536), Calvin’s Geneva Catechism (1537), and the French churches’ *Confession de foi* (1559). In 1542, when reissuing his *Summaire*, he highly recommended Calvin’s *Institutes* as a biblical and clear exposition of doctrine (Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 187). His view of the Lord’s Supper may have evolved from an earlier Zwinglian position to a later Calvinist position, but he did not simply parrot the arguments of others (Jacobs 1979).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Farel’s emphasis on the use of prayer as a means to teach doctrine is somewhat unique among the reformers and in sharp contrast to prevailing church practices prior to the Reformation (Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 56–62). Like the European reformers generally, he emphasized the

use of the vernacular in religious discourse and published all his works but two in French. A high view of the glory of God, ample admittance of human sin, and stark contrasts between good and evil mark all his writings. Farel also highlights God’s self-love as ground for his grace (Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 95). Farel appears to have introduced to French Protestantism the Reformed liturgical element of the *sursum corda*, i.e., “let us lift up our hearts to the Lord” (Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 5–6). Frequent communion and congregational singing also appear to have been Farellian ideas prior to Calvin (Zuidema and Van Raalte 2011, 6–7, 85).

Cross-References

- Calvin, Jean
- Lefèvre d’Étaples, Jacques

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Fate

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Fate, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

The term fate (*heimarmenē* in Greek, *fatum* in Latin) can be understood in different ways. Ancient tradition sometimes likened it to the idea of chance (*tyche*) to signify the unfathomable force that governs cosmic events. On a more strictly philosophical level, fate indicated the unfailing causal order regulating the course of events. This order was at times identified with divine providence itself or as its subordinate, depending on whether the existence of a supernatural causality had been accepted. The concept of fate also has logical and ethical implications. It involves the possibility of moral conduct and mankind's responsibility for it. These themes were associated by Christianity with the issue of divine grace and human predestination, both of which were extensively discussed during the Renaissance. It was at this time that several authors turned their attention to the subject of fate and its opposite, the theme of mankind's freedom. Therefore, the debate over fate is first and foremost part of the wider discussion over predestination and free will, which was based on an ancient and late antique legacy that acquired a distinctly religious meaning with Erasmus of Rotterdam and Martin Luther. The debate mainly concerned how human behavior affected the soul's eternal salvation and the role Christ's grace played in the process. The issue of predestination was also crucial in the theological controversies that led to the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. In addition, Renaissance philosophers argued over whether cosmic influences affected human events and whether the planets governed human life by affecting bodily fluids. This debate had a remarkable

impact on the early modern age, especially on Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, and the French Enlightenment.

Synonyms

Determinism; Necessity; Predestination

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

For the Greeks, fate was represented by the Moirai (the Roman Parcae), a group of female deities who spun the thread of each person's life, an image which was often recalled in Renaissance iconography. The literary genre of tragedy had a paradigmatic way of presenting the Greek view of human life as the subject of blind chance (*tyche*) and its dominance over helpless mankind. Plato did not agree with this view: instead, while recounting the myth of Er, he affirmed man's independence from fate, since *aitia* (indicating both responsibility and guilt) always belongs to the person who chooses rather than to the deity who tries to affect human events (*Republic*, 617E). Plato, however, seemed to believe that this choice is made once and for all when the soul descends into the body and selects which of the three parts into which the soul is divided (reason, spirit or appetite) will determine the course of its future life. The goal of human life is happiness, which according to Plato coincides with the chief good and, as far as possible, assimilation to God. Even though the purpose of human life is pre-determined, individuals are free to decide the means by which they will pursue it, and this decision depends on which part of the soul it chooses.

The debate over Aristotle's position on fate is controversial, since he does not appear to be specifically interested in the topic, except in *Physics* II.4-6. Modern critics, who shared Alexander of Aphrodisias's quarrel with the determinists, regarded Aristotle as an indeterminist philosopher. During the Renaissance, too, this reading of Aristotle was led by the interpretation

put forward by the School of Padua. Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes was viewed as a confrontational response to Stoic determinism; thus, the human intellect's self-determination was seen as the foundation of its own freedom. In late antiquity, by reporting the thought of the Middle Platonic philosopher Atticus, Eusebius of Caesarea associated Aristotle with Epicurus, accusing both of being atheists in denial of God's providence or divine intervention in human events (*Praeparatio evangelica*, XV.5.14).

Hellenistic schools and Christian philosophy systematically dealt with the issue of human freedom and, along with the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, significantly influenced the Renaissance debate. By moving away from the determinism of ancient atomists, Epicurus introduced the theory of the *clinamen* or swerve; he also reduced the role of logical and ontological necessity and left mankind a wide margin of self-determination. But it was the Stoics who paid most attention to fate, which they viewed as a physical concept, that is, something belonging to natural philosophy, the logical and ethical implications of which were only consequences. For the ancient Stoics, the *logos*, which was immanent in the cosmos, guaranteed the self-determination of the cosmos itself. *Heimarmenē* was the rational necessity of divine law (*pronoia*) which guided the life of the living cosmos in a finalistic manner and according to a providential plan. Stoics saw fate as an ineluctable "chain of causes", the necessary development of *logos* in its function as the producer and ruler of the cosmos (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, II, 912–951). They believed each event to be preceded by one or more antecedent causes, which necessarily and providentially produced a specific given effect instead of another.

In late antiquity, Middle Platonism preserved the worth of human freedom and separated the concept of fate from that of providence. Thus, Calcidius, whose commentary on the *Timaeus* influenced the Renaissance Neoplatonist tradition, stated that providence preceded fate and was a superior cause to it, marking its boundaries of fate and favoring mankind's self-determined action.

With the rise of Christian philosophy, divine providence replaced blind fate, and Renaissance thought reinterpreted these concepts in both a mystical and a theological-philosophical sense. First and foremost, Renaissance mysticism – drawing on medieval and Oriental traditions – affirmed mankind’s freedom to make decisions about its own eternal salvation; and it placed the height of human freedom in the rapture of participation in and total surrender to God’s will. This can clearly be seen, for example, in Nicholas of Cusa, who drew inspiration from Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena, and Meister Eckhart. Furthermore, in response to the Gnostic heresy, the Greek Church Fathers Clement of Alexandria and Origen maintained that the only true knowledge was that which enabled one to discover the divine and providential order that governs the world. Ethical development coincided with intellectual fulfilment: God has endowed mankind with a free intellect, which is capable of reaching intellectual unity with him. These themes would be evoked by Giordano Bruno in the sixteenth century.

Augustinian reflection on free will and divine grace was the focal point of the Renaissance religious debate which was introduced by Erasmus and Luther. Augustine, who was at odds with Pelagianism, separated divine prescience from predestination: Predestination does not compel the human will, even though God has known man’s will forever. Augustine also separated free will from freedom. Free will was the chance to welcome God’s grace through the Church, that is, the opportunity to choose between good and evil. Human freedom, on the other hand, was the *actio* (action) of the *velle* (volition) dictated by free will, that is, the possibility of making a choice with the *auxilium gratiae* (assistance of grace).

Renaissance reflection on free will and freedom was also influenced by Thomas Aquinas, who viewed human beings as free to determine their own choices, just like God, who created them in his own image and likeness. Nevertheless, Thomas believed that intellect was joined by rational appetite (*voluntas*), which always pushed man towards his ultimate object, the universal good; by following the intellect’s activity,

therefore, will was free to determine itself and pursue the goal chosen by the intellectual faculty.

Innovative and Original Aspects

At the end of the fourteenth century, Coluccio Salutati wrote *De fato et fortuna* (On Fate and Fortune), a treatise which, by citing ancient opinions on free will, was responsible for opening the Renaissance debate on the subject. During the Renaissance, the theme of chance was first and foremost approached on an astrological level, even though this had already been done in antiquity. Judicial astrology was viewed as a means of forecasting human events, since the arrangement of planets and stars was believed to be the cause of all occurrences. Human physiology and physiopathology were thus believed to be a consequence of the effects planets had on bodily fluids (for instance, in the theories of humorism and of the four elements developed by Hippocrates and Galen).

Opposing this strictly determinist attitude was, among others, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Based on the *Corpus Hermeticum* (see *Asclepius*, 6), he celebrated man as a *magnum miraculum* (great miracle), who had the freedom to determine his own fate, which made him ontologically superior in dignity to all other created beings; he was also free from the influence of stars, as Pico argued in his *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (Disputations against Divinatory Astrology). In his *De hominis dignitate* (On the Dignity of Man), Pico (2012) presented man as the object of his own nature, but also as a subject, since he is able both to embrace it and to act on it according to his will. Man, he claimed, is an “intermediary” between heaven and earth, and between God and nature. Mankind thus possesses ontic freedom (liberty to do) and ontological freedom (liberty to be) whatever he chooses. The basis of these arguments was the *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* (On the Dignity and Excellence of Man) by Giannozzo Manetti, which anticipated Pico’s anthropological themes in the same vein as Ovid, Lactantius, and Augustine. Manetti also evoked the *homo faber*

image, which was absent in Pico but which would be important for both Marsilio Ficino and Tommaso Campanella.

By contrast, Giordano Bruno's ethical views were decidedly elitist. In the *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante* (Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast), he was openly opposed to Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone, seeing industriousness as mankind's greatest virtue. It is responsible for life after death, just as in metempsychosis the soul is subject to rewards and punishments. In *De gli eroici furori* (The Heroic Frenzies), Bruno identified three types of frenzy and found that only the heroic frenzy enabled contemplation of the truth, that is, the unity of the universal whole. This condition – which the philosopher believed himself to possess – was shared by only a few individuals who reached it by exercising virtue but also by natural talents God himself gave them.

Niccolò Machiavelli, on the other hand, saw fortune as the series of events that are not subject to human will and are thus unpredictable and determined, while human virtue only intervenes within his own range of action, thus leaving room for free will. Such differentiation was reaffirmed by Pietro Pomponazzi: by recognizing that philosophy is incapable of proving the immortality of the soul, he reinterpreted the Stoic (and later, Christian) concept of providence affecting man's will in *De fato, de libero arbitrio et de praedestinatione* (One Fate, Free Will and Predestination). From a cosmological and natural point of view, in *De naturalium effectuum causis sive de incantationibus* (On the Causes of Marvelous Natural Effects or On Incantations), Pomponazzi reflected on the events that seem not to abide by the laws of nature and denied they might have super-sensible causes, thus reducing all events to natural astrological causes that are nevertheless impossible for mankind to grasp. These causes abide by hard-and-fast rules that compel God himself, who acts on events only in an indirect manner, through the celestial bodies, which, in turn, have a direct effect on the cosmos and human events.

Furthermore, during the Renaissance, the theme of predestination was one of the main subjects of theology proper and was almost always discussed

in relation to St Paul's letters: the question was no longer man's earthly fate, but rather his eternal fate, the outcome of the merits and guilt earned in this life (according to some), or the result of divine grace alone (according to others). Lorenzo Valla's *De libero arbitrio* (On Free Will) criticized philosophers who, because they took an intellectual approach to the problem, were unable to grasp the divine mystery of salvation of the predestined. Nicholas of Cusa, too, following the Neoplatonist Augustinian tradition, often referred to "God's predestined", in the belief that every man, as a *simulacrum Dei* (likeness of God), is destined to join the Principle of which he is an imperfect copy that still needs grace in order to reach eternal life. In manifesting canonical church doctrine, Nicholas stated: "*Homo liber est in arbitrio, et eligere potest viam iustitiae et paenitere de peccatis*" ("Man is free in his will and can select the path of justice and repent his sins", Nicholas of Cusa 2004: 380; *Sermo CXCI.8.4-6*).

The issue of predestination acquired a crucial historical role with Erasmus of Rotterdam's *De libero arbitrio* (On Free Will, 1524) and Martin Luther's *De servo arbitrio* (On the Enslaved Will, 1525). Their debate contributed to the separation between Rome and the Reformed churches, and the subsequent Catholic Counter-Reformation promoted by the Council of Trent. Erasmus was in line with the Platonic tradition in considering the human soul separable from the body, and he interpreted this tradition in the light of St Paul's letters. Mankind's bodily nature was tainted by original sin, while its spiritual nature strived toward God and was thus inclined to good, since Christ's grace saves humanity from sin and gives it new freedom. Humans experience a choice between vice and virtue, and the decision will determine their eternal life, since they are solely responsible for their own salvation or damnation. They cannot rely on their will alone, as it is incapable of moving the action and, most of all, moving it towards good. It is grace that gives humans a desire for the good, and it also allows them to pursue it; but the space of human freedom is inviolable and inescapable, since mankind autonomously determines its own contingent acts and ultimately its own eternal fate.

Luther responded to Erasmus's work by affirming that man's natural freedom is enslaved by sin; thus, the human will is incapable of striving toward the good, as it is hampered by man's corrupt nature, which unavoidably makes him sin again and again. In order to gain salvation, actions are useless: the only means is God's grace, which comes from Christ's sacrifice. By interpreting Paul's *Letter to the Romans*, Luther affirmed that redemption was a divine act, the outcome of grace and faith in justification through God. The actions of humans are thus merely the result of the condition to which they are predestined: those who have been saved will necessarily perform good deeds, while the damned will always behave sinfully.

Impact and Legacy

Renaissance reflection on the theme of fate was to leave behind an important legacy in the early modern era. From the seventeenth century onwards, following the scientific discoveries (especially in the field of astronomy), philosophy was confronted with scientific determinism and Cartesian mechanism, which also dealt with human passions, viewed as predictable due to the cause-effect ratio that caused them.

Hobbes's anthropology, for example, denied all forms of spontaneous causation, and French organicist materialism during the Enlightenment (La Mettrie, Diderot, Helvétius and d'Holbach) reaffirmed this view by involving ethical positions, along with strictly naturalistic ones, and openly challenging Christianity.

As opposed to Descartes's ontological dualism, Spinoza introduced radical monism, according to which thought and extension do not subsist autonomously but are rather attributes of the same substance. Ideas and bodies, which are modes of these attributes, are a necessity of the causal sequence proceeding from God. Contingency is thus denied, since God, the one and only free cause, is immanent in the Whole, which is irrevocably governed by the laws of matter. Unlike finite entities – which are compelled by some necessity – Divine substance is

necessitated by itself, by its own nature (God is *causa sui*): this self-determined necessity is therefore the only possible form of freedom.

Even though between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the determinist view found supporters, many still backed human free will, including Samuel Clarke, who affirmed the freedom of indifference of both God and man, though the latter was decidedly weaker. Moreover, Leibniz, despite presenting a determinist view of preestablished harmony, defended the monads' freedom of action, by separating determination and necessity and distinguishing between contingency-necessity and determination-necessity. He also re-interpreted the Aristotelian concept of spontaneity by seeing it as a complete exclusion of the external determination of the monad, which was nevertheless subject to strong internal determination (Kant would refer to such spontaneity as the "freedom of the turnspit").

On an empirical level, on the other hand, philosophers underlined the freedom for humans to do whatever they want but not the freedom to desire whatever they want. Thus, the will is not free, but action is, even though it is always determined by the will and by the human mind. Locke and Hume, therefore, transformed Renaissance determinism into psychological determinism.

Cross-References

- [Liberty in the Renaissance: Political](#)
- [Necessity](#)
- [Providence, Renaissance Idea of](#)
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Felicitas

► [Pleasure in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Fernel, Jean

Born: c. 1497, Montdidier, France

Died: 26 April 1558, Fontainebleau, France

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Abstract

Jean Fernel was one of the leading physicians and medical writers of his age, who not only set out compendious synoptic accounts of Galenic theory for the first time but also offered his own major reforms of medical theory in order to deal with contagious and other infectious diseases (which were not adequately dealt with in ancient medicine). He stands, therefore, alongside Paracelsus (1493–1541) and Girolamo Fracastoro (1483–1553), as the only would-be medical reformers of the sixteenth century.

Alternate Names

[Fernelius, Johannes](#)

Biography

Fernel was born at Montdidier (near Amiens) but raised in Paris from the age of 12. After taking an MA in 1519 at the Collège de Sainte Barbe, of the University of Paris, he turned down the immediate offer to teach dialectic there and embarked instead on a rigorous course of autodidacticism. He developed such a profound interest in mathematics that he considered mathematics alongside divinity and

jurisprudence as possible careers. He decided upon medicine, however, because his love of solitude made him unsuited to the public performance required in law and in the church, and mathematics had no clear opportunities. Fernel taught philosophy at the Collège de Sainte Barbe while pursuing his MD, but he also published his first works at this time: three short mathematical treatises.

Fernel achieved his doctorate in 1530, but he continued his autodidactic course, particularly in mathematics. Fernel's devotion to mathematics absorbed much of his time and money, to the detriment not only of his medical studies but also of his recent marriage. Fernel's wife and his father-in-law, a senator of Paris, finally prevailed upon him to give up mathematics and concentrate on medicine (Henry 2011).

He now embarked on his chosen career in earnest. After 6 years of teaching Hippocrates and Galen at the Collège de Cornouailles, he was forced to stop teaching to concentrate on his burgeoning practice; but he also now embarked on writing the major medical works for which he became renowned. His reputation was so high by 1542 that he was summoned by Prince Henri (1519–1599) to treat the serious illness of his mistress, Diane de Poitiers (1499–1566). Believing that Fernel saved his beloved mistress's life, Henri wanted to appoint Fernel his physician-in-chief. Fernel managed to avoid this obligation until 1556, when he finally ran out of excuses and became royal physician for the last years of his life. At first, Fernel believed this post would allow him more time to pursue his studies, away from his crowding patients, but war with Spain and England rudely intervened. Fernel in his sixties had to march with the army. When he returned to court at Fontainebleau, he fetched his wife from Paris, but after a few days there, she developed a fatal illness. Fernel was overwhelmed by the death of his wife and was himself taken ill and soon followed his wife to the grave. It is recorded that before he became a royal physician, his practice generated an annual income that often exceeded twelve thousand French pounds and rarely fell below ten (Sherrington 1946, p. 170).

From Mathematics to Medicine

Fernel's three mathematical treatises mark his early efforts to forge a career for himself in mathematics. *Monalosphaerium* (1527) was a description of a new mathematical instrument (based on the astrolabe). *Cosmotheoria* (1528) included Fernel's description of how he measured the distance on the ground of a degree of latitude (accurate to within 0.8 percent of today's value), and *De proportionibus libri duo* (1528) was a simple instructor on proportions (Henry 2011).

The transition to medicine, however, would not have been a major wrench in intellectual outlook. On the contrary, medicine and mathematics were closely affiliated in his day. An obvious association occurred through the juxtaposition of astronomy and astrology and the taken-for-granted assumption that astrology was useful in prognosis. The *Monalosphaerium* includes material on "critical days" in fevers and the effect of the lunar cycle and the motions of the zodiac on medical matters. It also gives instruction in casting horoscopes. In the *Cosmotheoria*, Fernel suggests that even the sphere of the *primum mobile*, which he agrees is starless, exerts an occult influence on earth. Given these interests, it is hardly surprising that Fernel's first medical work should also draw heavily upon astrological theory. It was a major premise of the *De abditis rerum causis* (*On the Hidden Causes of Things*, written around 1538, although not published until 1548) that many of the phenomena of life derive from a nature in things which corresponds in some way to the nature of the stars and that there is a "celebrated heavenly power, diffused into the whole universe, [which] makes its way right into the remotest recesses of the earth, penetrating the most close-knit and solid bodies" (Fernel 2005, Book I, Ch. 8, p. 313) (Henry 2013).

Fernel, Reformer of Medical Theory

The *De abditis rerum causis* was a major study of the nature of contagious and pestilential, or epidemic, diseases which seemed anomalous

according to ancient theory. Fernel's new theory was closer to what historians of medicine, following Owsei Temkin (1977), call an *ontological* concept, rather than a *physiological* concept of disease. Hippocratic and Galenic theory saw all disease in terms of a disturbance of the patient's four humors such that the normal healthy temperament (the balance of the humors in the body) was disrupted. It follows from this that diseases do not have a separate existence in their own right. It was recognized, of course, that diseases can be characterized and can be seen to have their own specific natures: scabies is easily distinguished from rabies, for example. But for the Hippocratic or Galenic physician, the nature of disease remains rooted in disturbance to normal human physiology. The difficulty with this individualistic physiological approach to sickness, seeing every illness as the special problem of one patient, is that it cannot easily explain conditions which seem to be infectious. Why should one patient's physiological disruption be capable in some cases of being passed on to others with different constitutions or temperaments? The difficulty is especially severe for Galenic theory in the case of epidemic diseases, such as plague. Infectious diseases, especially epidemic ones, strongly seem to suggest that diseases have a kind of life of their own; they seem to be real, distinct entities, which can pass from one person to another. It was the increasing prominence of this kind of disease which led some thinkers to develop an ontological theory of disease.

Fernel did not reject humoral pathology but saw his own theory as an extension of ancient theory, an addition to it, specifically for dealing with infectious, and pestilential conditions, as well as what he calls "poisonous diseases" (by which he meant those bodily disturbances brought about by those poisons which evidently do not operate by upsetting the balance of the humors). This was written up in the form of a Ciceronian dialogue in *De abditis rerum causis* and was already finished by 1538, but withheld from the press.

Fernel decided that before publishing his refinement, or addition, to the standard medical theory, he should clarify what he took to be the full

extent of the standard medical theory. By 1538, therefore, he had already begun writing *De naturali parte medicina* (*On the Natural Part of Medicine*), which was published in 1542 and which offered a compendious account of the structure, powers, and functions, of the healthy human being. Fernel subsequently appropriated the term *physiologia* (which then signified the study of nature in general) as the title of this work and so gave rise to the modern usage of "physiology" as the study of living systems.

The *Physiologia* was extremely useful and made Fernel one of the most renowned medical writers of the day. Its importance lay in the fact that it was the first serious attempt to present the prevailing assumptions about the nature of the human body, which underlay the Renaissance system of medical theory, in a comprehensively synoptic way. The medical theory of Fernel's day was based mostly on the eclectic system of medicine propounded by the prolific Hellenistic physician and philosopher, Galen of Pergamum (129–199 AD). Galen's own accounts were fragmented and diverse; accordingly, they were taught to medical students through the summary and commentary provided in the *Canon* of the Persian polymath, Avicenna (980–1037) (Siraisi 1987). So, there was no systematic treatment of physiology until Fernel's. Accordingly, the *Physiologia* is probably the fullest and most clearly organized exposition of Renaissance Galenism that was ever written and represents the high-water mark of European Galenism. Its appearance also coincided with changes in demand for published works. During the Renaissance, the systematic textbook came to be seen as a more useful commodity than the commentaries on ancient authorities and the compilations of *Quaestiones* which had been more typical in the medieval period. One way and another, the *Physiologia* was a book which made its author's reputation (Fernel 2003).

Fernel followed this up with would-be comprehensive surveys of pathology (*Pathologia*), and therapeutics (*Therapeutice*), and gathered all three together in the compendious *Medicina* (1554). It seems likely that Fernel intended to withhold the *De abditis rerum causis* until after the appearance

of this full survey of all of ancient medicine, but in the event, he published it after the *De naturali parte medicina*, in 1548. It is possible that he decided to publish at this time as a result of the publication of Girolamo Fracastoro's *De contagione* in 1546, which also offered a new theoretical understanding of contagious diseases (Fernel 2005). After Fernel's death, the *Medicina* and *De abditis causis* were included together in his *Universa medicina* (1567).

On the Hidden Causes of Things (1548)

De abditis rerum causis is divided into two parts. The first is concerned with the natural philosophy of generation, or animal reproduction, and the means by which the soul enters into a newly created human. The second part is concerned with three sorts of "hidden disease," which is to say, diseases with hidden causes: "poisonous, contagious, and pestilent." The linking factor between these two parts is the role of the stars or the heavens. Fernel argues that the stars do not send any material substance down to earth, but they can send down a part of their power which can then work on correctly organized and constituted bodies to make those bodies produce within themselves life and a soul or in pathological circumstances one of the "hidden diseases" (Fernel 2005, Henry 2013).

All three kinds of hidden disease present the standard physiological concept of disease of the Galenic tradition with severe difficulties. The unvarying pattern of such diseases, so that all patients irrespective of type or temperament respond in essentially the same way, seemed to offer evidence that the physiological view of disease, based on an individual's humoral imbalance, was misconceived. Consequently, Fernel offered his own alternative account. Diseases of these types were held to act, not on the humors but on what Fernel called the "total substance" of the body. The "total substance" seems to be equivalent to the scholastic notion of substantial form, and it is not clear why Fernel did not simply call it that. Perhaps it was simply because he did not want to become involved in contemporary debates

about the validity and usefulness of the concept of substantial form.

The diseases with hidden causes were all held to act by means of some occult power. The model for all of them was essentially disease caused by poison. A substance entering the body from outside, either through a bite or a wound, or simply through contact with the skin (and the ability to soak through), or by ingestion or inhalation, could wreak havoc in the healthy body and could work with such immediacy that it was impossible to believe that it acted through an accumulation of corrupt humor, which would have been required on the precepts of humoral pathology. A poison is a material thing, but by working immediately on the whole body, it was considered to work by occult means. It was not such a big step, therefore, to claim that pestilential diseases were caused by the occult influence of the stars. The stars did not send anything material to earth, but merely transmitted part of their power, which could then enter into the body and cause it to break down, analogously with the way a poison caused the body to break down. A poison has an occult power, and the stars have occult powers.

The problem with this theory, of course, was that its recourse to occult qualities and powers would have been dissatisfying to many of his readers – no better than a confession of ignorance (the position later satirized by Molière when he made a doctor in one of his plays pompously intone that opium puts patients to sleep because of its occult "dormitive virtue"). Consequently, Fernel devoted much of the *De abditis causis* to explaining as fully as he could what these particular occult qualities or powers were, where they come from, where they reside, and what they could do (Hirai 2002). It is evident, however, that Fernel did not believe that his arguments about these matters were sufficient to persuade all his contemporaries, and as a consequence, another major effort of the book is directed to justifying in more general terms recourse to occult powers. One aspect of this was to throw doubt on the validity of the distinction between so-called manifest qualities (hot, cold, dry, and wet) and occult qualities (Fernel 2005). Another was to extol the virtues of empiricism as a way of

discovering the operations of occult qualities and processes (Henry 2013). Fernel also drew extensively upon two influential aspects of the occult tradition: astrology and alchemy. Interestingly, his use of alchemy to help make his case was taken up in turn by contemporary alchemists who used Fernel's views to bolster alchemical theory (Matton 2002). It is these nonmedical aspects of the book which made it a major contribution not just to medical theory but also to current natural philosophy.

Impact and Legacy

During, and immediately after, his own lifetime, Fernel was immensely influential. As one of the prime movers in the development of theories suggesting an ontological, as opposed to a physiological, view of disease, Fernel's works attracted a lot of attention. One reason for his success, among his contemporaries, was the modest way in which he introduced his reforms – often seeking to show that his innovatory ideas can either be found in, or at least can be seen to emerge from, the works of Aristotle and Galen. This contrasted sharply with the iconoclastic approach of Paracelsus and his followers, whose dismissal of Aristotle and Galen seemed to contemporaries to be not just arrogant but also absurd (since everyone knew that the works of Aristotle and Galen were “tried and true” and had been for hundreds of years). Fernel did not reject Aristotle and Galen but seemed to want to build from their works, extending and refining them (Hirai 2005). His influence upon his contemporaries was at least as great as Fracastoro's, and rivalled that of Paracelsus, particularly among more conservative thinkers.

Even so, Fernel has failed to attract the kind of attention from historians accorded to either Fracastoro or Paracelsus. Perhaps this lack of interest stems from the fact that Fernel's theory of occult diseases has no easy association with modern ideas. On the face of it, Fernel seems less interesting than Fracastoro, because Fracastoro's seeds of disease can easily be likened to “germs,” while nothing in Fernel's works seems to prefigure

modern ideas (Hirai 2002). On the contrary, because Fernel's ideas were bound up with Renaissance theories of the occult, they have been treated by his modern commentators, until very recently, with some embarrassment. It is important, however, to judge Fernel's theories according to the standards of his own time. Fernel's explanations, drawing heavily upon supposed occult properties, were controversial, but they were not regarded as in any way absurd or ridiculous. Indeed, the Renaissance was a time of reassessment of the validity of the notion of occult qualities, and Fernel's claims about occult diseases undoubtedly fed into that wider debate.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alchemy](#)
- ▶ [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Contagion, Renaissance Idea of](#)
- ▶ [Fracastoro, Girolamo](#)
- ▶ [Galen and Galenism](#)
- ▶ [Generation and Embryology in Renaissance Science](#)
- ▶ [Occult Properties in the Renaissance](#)

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Fernelius, Johannes

► [Fernel, Jean](#)

Ferrari, Ottaviano

Born: 1516 in Milan

Died: 1586 in Milan

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Abstract

Ottaviano Ferrari, an Aristotelian philosopher, and doctor, was born in Milan in the first half of the sixteenth century. He taught moral philosophy at the Scuole Canobiane of Milan, before teaching Logic in Pavia for 4 years around 1548. Returned to Milan, he lived there until his death, where he was part of the cultural elite of the Lombard city. While his lessons on Aristotle's *Ethics* and many of his notes are still manuscript, Ferrari published three works. Two of them, *De Disciplina Encyclo* (Ferrari O, *De disciplina encyclo liber, ad L. Annibalem Cruceium*.

Paolo Manuzio, Venice, (1560)) and the *De Sermonibus Exotericis* (1575), are thought as introductions to the study of Aristotle. The third one, *De Origine Romanorum*, published posthumously in 1588, is concerned, instead, with the history of ancient Rome.

Biography

An Aristotelian philosopher and doctor, Ottaviano Ferrari was born in Milan in 1516 and died there in 1586.

Ferrari studied eloquence, philosophy, and medicine in the most renowned Italian universities, although there is no precise indication about which universities he attended. It was mistakenly thought that Ferrari lectured in Peripatetic philosophy at the University of Padua, where he was called by the Aristotelian scholar Francesco Vimercato. A letter of his close friend Jacopo Bonfadio and the presence of his name on the list of professors for the year 1548 clearly indicate that Ferrari was, instead, professor of Logic at the University of Pavia. From 1554, Ferrari taught moral philosophy and politics in Milan's Scuole Canobiane, founded in 1553 by Paolo Canobio, whose curriculum was built on the teaching of metaphysics and Christian ethics (Verri, 17). From the exam of the still manuscript lectures on the ten books of Aristotle's *Ethics*, it emerges that Ferrari considers the study of moral philosophy as a preliminary stage to prepare the mind to contemplation. Ferrari objects to Thomas Aquinas' conflation of Christian doctrine and Aristotelian philosophy but could not avoid the saint's influence. The titles of the numerous and still unpublished notes, kept in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan, attest to a particular interests in Aristotle's *Politics*, *De Anima* and *Ethics* (*In primum et secundum Librum Politicorum Aristotelis; In primum, secundum, tertium Aristotelis De Anima; In I, II, III et IV Ethicorum Aristotelis; In Ethicorum Aristotelis Libros V, VI, VII et VIII; In Ethicorum Aristotelis Libros IX et X*). Other manuscripts are devoted to more general topics of moral and natural philosophy (*De Instrumento ac morali virtute, et unde oriatur*;

Quaestio de Scientiae Naturalis utilitate, et de generatione virtutum moralium; Quaestiones de Vacuo). Among Ferrari's autographs, it is also listed a *Censura in I Caput variorum Lectionum Marci Antonii Mureti*, addressed to the French humanist Marc Antoine Muret, professor of moral philosophy in Rome and one of the last to uphold the link between rhetoric and ethics.

Ferrari had been teaching at the Scuole Canobiane for 18 years and enjoyed a great intellectual and personal success in Milan. He had many famous students; among them the doctor Ludovico Settala, remembered by Alessandro Manzoni in *The Betrothed*.

Ferrari was known for his clear and elegant speech that earned him the nickname of "second Aristotle" (Sangiorgio, 210). His great fondness for the Greek philosopher is confirmed by a medal, attributed to Annibale Fontana, which portrays on one side the profile of Ferrari, on the other of Aristotle.

Most of his private life can be inferred from the correspondence with the printer Paolo Manuzio, son of Aldo, and Giulio Poggiano, one of the most important Latinist of the Counterreformation. In a letter addressed to the latter in 1567, Ferrari confirms that he studied medicine, but confessed that he decided not to practice because it is a discipline that requires a continuous application.

Manuzio, instead, published in 1560 Ferrari's first book, the *De disciplina encyclo* (*On the encyclopedic discipline*). Dedicated to the Milanese nobleman Annibale Della Croce, this work discusses the union of knowledge as the necessary foundation to approach the study of Aristotle. Fifteen years later, in 1575, Ferrari published the *De sermonibus exotericis liber* (*Book on the exoteric speeches*), in which he examines philological problems connected to the genesis and structure of the *Corpus Aristotelicum*.

His most famous book is not concerned with Aristotelian philosophy, but with Roman history: *De origine Romanorum* (*On the origin of the Romans*), published posthumously in 1588 by Andrea Viani. Tiraboschi, in fact, includes Ferrari among the most important ancient historians of the sixteenth century. This book accurately

reconstructs the Roman history from its inception, carefully drawing on a vast number of Greek and Latin authors. Praised for his extensive knowledge of ancient sources, and in spite of the more than occasional oversights, Ferrari's *De origine Romanorum* is considered one of the most important attempts to dispel the fabrications of Annio da Viterbo's *Antiquitatum Variarum*.

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Ferraris, Antonio de

Born: 1444/48

Died: 1517

Donato Verardi

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Abstract

Antonio De Ferraris (1444/48–1517), known as Galateus, practiced as a physician at the Aragonese court in Naples and joined the Accademia Pontaniana. He combined broad humanistic scholarship with a wide knowledge of scientific disciplines, including medicine. He had a broad philosophical background. His letter *De educatione* acquired a certain importance due to its description of ancient and contemporary systems of education.

Alternate Names

[Galateus](#)

Biography

Antonio De Ferraris (1444/48–1517), known as Galateus, was born in Galatone (Salento). He graduated in medicine in Ferrara in 1474, practiced as a physician at the Aragonese court in Naples and joined the Accademia Pontaniana, also in Naples, where he changed his name to Galateus after the town of his birth. Galateus alternated his residence between Naples, Gallipoli, and Lecce. While in Naples he certainly came into contact with the intellectuals gravitating around the Aragonese court. Among his contacts were Giovanni Pontano, Benedetto Gareth, Paolo and Giovanni Attaldi, Giovan Francesco and Galeazzo Caracciolo, Giovanni Pardo, Fra'

Roberto da Lecce, and Jacopo Sannazaro. In the decade of 1470–1480, Galateus lived more permanently in Salento. In 1490 he once again returned to Naples, where he associated with Pontano. Galateus spent his last years between Gallipoli and Lecce. He died in Salento on November 12, 1517 (Antonaci [1970](#); Corsano [1970](#); Vallone [1970](#); Tateo [1989](#); Zacchino [2009](#); Dall'Oco and Reggio [2019](#))

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

His philosophical background included Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Avicenna, and Averroes. His polemic with Coluccio Salutati on the dignity of medicine is particularly relevant. Salutati, in his *De nobilitate legum et medicinae*, had criticized the scholastic approach to knowledge, particularly the interpretation of medical knowledge embodied by Pietro d'Abano and the Arab physician Avicenna. Almost a century later, in his *De dignitate disciplinarum ad Pancratium*, De Ferraris supported the thesis of the nobility of medicine, referring, in direct contrast with Salutati, to the same philosophical presuppositions of d'Abano that were advocated in Ferrara by the physician and philosopher Michele Savonarola (De Ferraris. [1947](#); Verardi [2013](#)).

Innovative and Original Aspects

His letter *De educatione* expresses hope of a restoration of the Neapolitan branch of the House of Aragon. The precepts contained in this work are not very different from the usual advice found in humanistic literature, but Galateus' attempt to outline a description of ancient and contemporary systems of education acquired a certain importance. He was not slow to criticize the Spanish works that were starting to circulate in Italy, considering them as having a "corrupting" influence on morality. De Ferraris even expresses a favorable opinion of the severe treatment of the female sex by the Turks, contrasting it with Spanish corruption as a vehicle for obscenity and other immoral behavior (pederasty, deceitfulness, and narcissism).

His deep piety and morality, distrust of the false idols of good government and disdain for the degeneration of Christianity were given space not only in his *Lettere*, but also in his extensive commentary on the *Pater Noster* (De Ferraris 1504). This highly unique work harks back to the monastic tradition that had flourished greatly in Apulia and is written in a coarse and sharply eloquent vernacular. De Ferraris scorned the literary model of the Tuscan language and made conscious use of dialectal forms. The commentary is preceded by a justification of the variety of dialects, based on the example of Greek, in contrast to the “Tuscanization” of the Italian language pursued by the “literati” (Vallone 1970; Zacchino 2009, Dall’Oco and Reggio 2019).

In his work *De situ Japigiae*, Galateus provides a detailed description of the uses, customs, and places of Salento. The work contains criticisms of vulgar superstitions, against which he proposed to do battle, providing his readers with rational explanations of phenomena wrongly considered by people to be supernatural (De Ferraris 1868, 2005; Verardi 2018).

Impact and Legacy

De Ferraris manages to combine broad humanistic scholarship with a wide knowledge of scientific disciplines, including the practice of medicine.

The exaltation of his Greek origins and the use of the Salentine vernacular are elements that make Galateus an emblematic author of the Salentine culture. This exaltation of his origins will ensure him a significant impact among local scholars until the twentieth century (Zacchino 2009).

Cross-References

► Pontano, Giovanni

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Ferreira, António

Born: Lisbon, Portugal, 1528

Died: Lisbon, Portugal, 1569

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Abstract

António Ferreira was a Portuguese poet and dramatist whose work, written entirely in Portuguese, is representative of the High Renaissance in Portugal. He was educated at the University of Coimbra, at a period when it was open to foreign influence. Later he moved to Lisbon where he became a judge. His work demonstrates clearly the clash of

competing ideologies in the Renaissance. Especially in his Senecan tragedy, *Castro*, Ferreira shows the difficulty of maintaining a consistently Stoic philosophical stance in the face of adversity. In the same work, he shows himself to be aware of the classical and especially Senecan concept of a deterministic fate, but he rejects it, so that the catastrophe of *Castro* becomes the consequence of ill-considered moral choices made by a number of characters.

In 1598, many years after his death, the final version of the tragedy was published, in a volume, entitled *Poemas Lusitanos*, which also contained Ferreira's collected lyric poetry. In this large body of verse, he rejects entirely the medieval poetic tradition of Portugal. However, his classicism was tempered by his Christian faith. In his odes, for instance, the evocation of a pastoral landscape in the Greco-Roman tradition is tempered by the need for Stoic restraint and a Christian concern with proper preparation for the inevitability of death. Yet his Stoicism, too, is subject to an awareness of his own human failings, such as the fear of the consequences of speaking too openly in an increasingly intolerant and oppressive society.

Biography

António Ferreira was born into a family in the service of the Dukes of Aveiro. Probably through the influence of his father's employer, from around 1543 to 1555/56 he was able to study at the University of Coimbra, at a time when it was open to foreign influence and before it had come under exclusively clerical control. After obtaining his doctorate, he entered the royal service in Lisbon, becoming a *desembargador* (judge) before his relatively early death, from plague.

Works

Ferreira was a poet and dramatist, not a philosopher, but his work demonstrates very clearly the clash of competing ideologies in the Renaissance.

He wrote two comedies in prose (*Bristo, ou o Fanchono*, 1562, and *Cioso*, 1622) as well as a verse tragedy, *Castro* (1587), his best-known work. A revised version of the tragedy and an extensive collection of lyric poetry were published together as *Poemas Lusitanos* in 1598.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Like his predecessor, Francisco de Sá de Miranda (1487–1558), Ferreira attempted to use the Portuguese language in all the poetic genres practiced in classical antiquity, rejecting entirely the medieval verse tradition (*Carta a D. Simão da Silveira*, Book II, 10). At the same time, as heir to the Iberian Stoic tradition of the later Middle Ages (Blüher 1983), he sought to combine the aesthetic with the moral, in this following in the footsteps of Horace (Weinberg 1961). However, he was acutely aware of the difficulties of putting Stoic precepts into practice. In addition, his leaning towards the aesthetic and philosophical tradition of ancient Rome was tempered by his orthodox Catholic faith. His works for the stage are notable for their strong, even dominant female characters, in a way which reverses the misogynous tradition of mediaval Iberia (Archer 2005).

Innovation and Original Aspects

In the tragedy *Castro*, Ferreira followed the model of Seneca's works for the stage for its structure and for some aspects of characterization. However, he found Seneca's deterministic fate incompatible with his Christian faith and the catastrophe is driven by the moral failings of the characters, no one of whom is solely responsible for the course of events. As a consequence, a complex web of causality is established. The principal character, Castro herself, owes something to the heroines of the sacrificial dramas of antiquity and of the playwrights of Ferreira's own time (Buchanan, *Iephtes*). However, unlike them, she does not accept her fate passively, and in the climactic Act IV persuades the king to rescind the death sentence which he had

pronounced against her. Her arguments are driven by a Stoic confidence in her own virtue, but she rejects *ataraxia* and wins the day by an appeal to pity. She thus dominates the stage and the male characters entirely. Only when she has left does the king change his mind and order her execution (Earle 2012).

The best of Ferreira's lyric poems also bring into sharp relief the intellectual conflicts so vividly dramatized in the tragedy. In the *Odes* (especially Book I, 7 and Book II, 5), the evocation of a classical landscape is contrasted with a need for Stoic restraint and a Christian consciousness of impending death. In the verse *carta* (letter) to the poet Diogo Bernardes (Book I, 12), Horatian moral and aesthetic precepts are tempered by a wholly unStoic fear of the consequences of speaking freely in an intolerant and oppressive society.

Impact and Legacy

The posthumous publication of the *Poemas Lusitanos*, written exclusively in Portuguese, helped to promote the national literature during the 60 years of Spanish rule in Portugal (1580–1640). However, Ferreira's classicism did not appeal to the baroque taste of the seventeenth century and his works were not republished until 1771. More recently, *Castro* has frequently been edited and performed.

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Fiandini, Ambrosio

► [Flandino, Ambrogio](#)

Fiandino, Ambrosio

► [Flandino, Ambrogio](#)

Fibonacci

► [Fibonacci, Leonardo](#)

Fibonacci, Leonardo

Born: Pisa, 1160/70

Died: Pisa, after 1241

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Abstract

Innovative mathematician or representative of a tradition? Although Leonardo Fibonacci is considered one of the most important exponents of medieval mathematics, his originality, his expertise in knowledge originating from Arab and Latin environments, and his influence on the medieval Italian writings on the *abbaco* remain controversial.

Synonyms

[Fibonacci](#); [Leonardo of Pisa](#); [Pisano](#), [Leonardo Bigollo](#)

Biography

There is little evidence of Leonardo's life. A charter of 1226 establishes him as procurator for his brother in the purchase of real estate and in 1241 his hometown began to pay him an annual salary for administrative counseling. His date of birth is estimated on the basis of the dates of his writings.

Leonardo himself said that his father Guglielmo had called him to Bugia (Bejaïa, Algeria) to study calculation with Indian-Arabic numerals and that he improved his mathematical skills during business travels around the Mediterranean. It follows from Leonardo's writings that he had close contact to the court of Frederick II during the emperor's stay in Pisa in July 1226 and to associate scholars, for example, Michael Scotus and Giovanni of Palermo.

Writings and Sources

The *Liber abaci* (1202, revised 1228) is a unique collection of mathematical problems. It begins with an introduction to the positional system and to calculation with Indian-Arabic numerals (without an abacus). The textbook presents many problems concerning trade (e.g., price of goods, calculation of interest, partnerships) and includes an elaborated section on algebra (see Boncompagni (1857) and Sigler (2002)). Leonardo collected mathematical knowledge also from Arabic sources of the ninth and tenth centuries that were probably available in Latin translation.

The *Practica geometriae* (ca. 1220) is dedicated to problems of measurement, with or without instruments (e.g., perpendicular, quadrant, at sight), and to theoretical geometry (see Boncompagni (1862) and Hughes (2008)). One of its main sources is Plato of Tivoli's *Liber embadorum*.

Leonardo's shorter writings *Liber quadratorum*, *Flos*, and *Epistola ad Magistrum Theodorum* deal with various problems, for example, in algebra and number theory (see Boncompagni (1862) and Sigler (1987)).

A commentary on Book X of Euclid's *Elements* concerning irrational magnitudes and a treatise on commercial arithmetics *Liber de minore guisa* have not been preserved.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The originality of Fibonacci's *Liber abaci* did not lie in the use of Arabic numerals, which was not new in Europe at that time, but rather in the breadth of its sources and the compilation of many examples resulting from his experience in trading. Leonardo presents innovative ideas in his shorter treatises, for example, the *Liber quadratorum* where he solves problems by combining algebra with Euclidean arithmetic in a way not found in other writings so far. Leonardo's creativity and proficiency may be estimated more adequately when further research provides more details concerning Arab textual traditions and their transmission.

Impact and Legacy

Since the beginning of the thirteenth century, a large number of vernacular abacus books have appeared in Italy. The texts focus on commercial arithmetics and reflect a teaching tradition in the *abbaco* schools for merchants. The extent to which abacus books refer to Leonardo's work remains an open question. Leonardo's achievements were later acknowledged by talented mathematicians such as Luca Pacioli in his *Summa de arithmetica* of 1494 and by Girolamo Cardano in *Ars magna* of 1545. Only in the nineteenth century did researchers first begin to undertake thorough investigations into Fibonacci's texts.

Cross-References

- [Court Philosophy, Renaissance](#)
- [Textbook](#)
- [Treatise, Renaissance](#)

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Ficinian Academy

► Academy, Platonic

Ficino, Marsilio

Born: 19 October 1433, Figline Valdarno, Italy

Died: 1 October 1499, Florence, Italy

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Abstract

This brief entry is on Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), the most famous Platonic philosopher of the Renaissance. It provides a brief biography for Ficino and introduces readers to

essential features of his Platonic scholarship, commentaries, and philosophy.

Biography

Marsilio Ficino, the son of Dietefeci d'Agnolo da Figline and Alessandra di Nannoccio da Montevarchi, was born on 19 October 1433 in Figline Valdarno. Having lived in and near Florence through the rediscovery of what must have seemed like countless textual and antiquarian treasures from the ancient world, wondrous developments in the arts and sciences, and the invention of the printing press but also violent plagues and regime changes by the Medici, Savanarolans, and republicans, as well as wars with the papacy, a French invasion, and explorations of the new world, he died on 1 October 1499, as one of the most famous philosophers of his times (Della Torre 1902; Kristeller 1937–1945, 1938, 1988; Marcel 1958; Vasoli 1997; Celenza 2017).

Ficino's father, Dietefeci, worked as a physician for the Medici and ensured that the young Ficino not only learned traditional medicine but also was educated in novel humanist programs in Florence. The details of Ficino's early educators are not completely certain, but he received a humanistic education in *grammatica* under the tutelage of Luca d'Antonio de' Bernardi di San Gimignano and Comando Comandi, and he might also have learned Greek from Francesco da Castiglione and scholastic philosophy and theology from Antonio degli Agli, Lorenzo Pisano, and Niccolò Tignosi (Della Torre 1902; Kristeller 1944, 1988; Marcel 1958; Gentile 1990; Field 1998; Hankins 1990a; Vasoli 1997; Celenza 2017; Lines 1990; Robichaud 2016a). There is some debate whether Ficino studied at the University of Bologna (Della Torre 1902; Kristeller 1944; Marcel 1958; Vasoli 1997), but in any case, he was also trained in natural sciences, medicine, and astrology. Ficino was long thought to have organized a Platonic Academy of Florence (or Careggi) (Della Torre 1902; Field 1998, 2002), but the nature of Ficino's "Academy" has been reinterpreted as nothing more than a metaphor for his Plato manuscript (Hankins 1990b, 1991). Ficino's contemporary, Benedetto

Colucci, employed the expression “Academiae princeps” to describe Ficino’s role as an instructor of youths, and “academy” also seems to denote Ficino’s informal Socratic conversations (Celenza 2007, 2017). Ficino himself also employs the term “academia” as a prosopopoeic image to describe various philosophers that constitute Platonic traditions of philosophy and hermeneutics (Robichaud 2017a). Ficino did in fact also hold official paid teaching positions. He briefly taught at the Florentine *Studium* (Davies 1992) and was a private instructor of youths in Florence and at the Camaldolese order (Davies 1992; Celenza 2017). Regarding the physical site where Ficino worked, he did in actual fact receive a home on S. Egidio in Florence along with Platonic manuscripts in 1462, as well as a small villa in Careggi in 1463 as gifts from Cosimo de’ Medici (Marcel 1958; Field 1998; Gentile et al. 1984; Hankins 1990b; Vasoli 1997).

Ficino devoted himself at a very young age to becoming a man of letters, a scholar, and a Platonic philosopher and theologian. Powerful patrons supported Ficino throughout his life, often paying for the costs of printing his many works, but Ficino also owned family properties in Montevarchi, Figline, and in the parish of S. Leo a Celle, and lived on ecclesiastical benefits. He received earnings from the chapel of S. Maria della Neve a Montevarchi as early as March 1470 (1469 in the Florentine dating system). He became parson of S. Bartolomeo a Pomino in Fiesole in January 1473, was ordained as a deacon in December, and soon thereafter became rector of the church of S. Cristofano a Novoli in January 1474. Ficino later became a canon of the Florentine Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in November of 1483, and it does not seem like he pursued an opportunity to become a bishop (Kristeller 1937–1945, 1938, 1985; Gentile et al. 1984; Vasoli 1997).

Ficino enjoyed the close company of the cultural elite of Florence, including, to be brief, Cristoforo Landino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Angelo Poliziano, and Lorenzo de’ Medici. He was also well acquainted with mercantile, political, diplomatic, and religious leaders and with such important families as the Medici,

Valori, Salviati, Bembo, Cavalcanti, Soderini, and Rucellai. Although his network of correspondents, which included humanists, philosophers, theologians, poets, artists, physicians, scientists, monks, churchmen, businessmen, Popes, princes, and Kings, stretched across Europe, Ficino seems to have spent his life in Florence and Tuscany. However, as a central node to a philosophical Republic of Letters, Ficino’s intellectual life extended far beyond the walls of Florence and its surrounding countryside.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Translations and Commentaries

Marsilio Ficino’s philosophy is closely intertwined with his work as a scholar, translator, and commentator. He is of course rightfully celebrated as the first person to translate Plato’s complete works into Latin. Ficino translated a first collection of ten dialogues (*Hipparchus*, *Amatores*, *Theages*, *Meno*, *Alcibiades I and II*, *Minos*, *Euthyphro*, *Parmenides*, and *Philebus*) for Cosimo de’ Medici in 1464. He then seems to have finished a first draft of his translation of Plato’s complete works as early as 1469, which he first printed in 1484 at an auspicious astrological moment (Ficino 1990–2010; Hankins 1990a; Robichaud 2017c).

It is also known that after translating the first batch of ten Platonic dialogues, Ficino turned his attention to translating Hermetic dialogues into Latin, which he published under the title *Pimander* (Kristeller 1937–1945; Ficino 2011a). Ficino’s early translation of Hermetic texts also signals his long-standing interest in pagan religious sapiential texts, which he understood as parts of traditions of ancient theologies and that he expressed as a lineage of ancient spokespersons, as we read in his *Pimander*, Hermes, Orpheus, Aglaophamus, Philolaus, and Plato, or in his later lists, Zoroaster, Hermes, Orpheus, Aglaophamus, Pythagoras, and Plato. Ficino translated other texts from these traditions early on, including the Pythagorean *Symbola* and *Aurea verba*, as well as the lengthy tomes of Iamblichus’s *De secta Pythagorica*, which includes a large collection of (Pseudo-)

Pythagorean fragments (Kristeller 1937–1945; Walker 1972; Gentile 1990; Hankins 1990a; Allen 1998; Ficino 2011a; Celenza 1999; Toussaint 2014a, b; Robichaud 2016b, 2017a). Only fragments of Ficino’s translations of the *Orphic Hymns* and the *Oracula Chaldaica*, which Ficino considers Zoroastrian, survive as quotations in various works (Klutstein 1987). Ficino also claims to have translated a number of ancient works of poetic theology in his youth: “Argonautica et hymnos Orphei et Homeri et Proculi, Theologiamque Hesiodi... adolescens, nescio quomodo, ad verbum mihi soli transtuli” (Klutstein 1987; Robichaud 2016a).

In addition to Proclean *Hymns*, which he claims to have cast into the flames, Ficino also translated Proclus’s *Elements of Theology* and *Elements of Physics* (Robichaud 2016a) again in his youth. Along with these early translations of Proclus, as well as his aforementioned Latin version of Iamblichus’s *De secta Pythagorica*, early on, Ficino also translated a number of other Platonic texts into Latin, including Theon of Smyrna’s *Mathematica* and Hermias’s commentary on Plato’s *Phaedrus* (Kristeller 1937–1945; Allen 1980; Sheppard 1980; Gentile 1990; Robichaud 2016b, 2017a). His ambitious translation projects continued late in life. He produced partial or complete translations of many other Neoplatonic texts, which he published with a number of other Platonic works at the press of Aldus Manutius in 1497: Iamblichus’s *De mysteriis*; Proclus’s *In Alcibiadem*; Proclus’s *De Sacrificio et magia*; Porphyry’s *De divinis atque daemonibus*; Synesius’s *De somniis*; Psellos’s *De daemonibus*; Priscianus Lydus’s *In Theophrastum de sensu, phantasia et intellectu*; Alcinous’s *De doctrina Platonis*; Speusippus’s *De definitionibus*; and Xenocrates’s *De morte*. Ficino circulated Latin translations of excerpts of Proclus’s commentary on Plato’s *Republic* in 1492, soon after Janus Lascaris arrived in Florence with a manuscript copy of this work (Robichaud 2016a). The list of Ficino’s translations is even longer than this already impressive catalogue. In the 1480s and early 1490s, Ficino translated all of Plotinus’s *Enneads*, along with Porphyry’s *De vita Plotini* (Kristeller 1937–1945; Förstel 2006; Robichaud 2016a, 2017b, c; Ficino 2017–2018), and in the 1490s, he

produced a full translation of Pseudo-Dionysius’s *De mystica theologia* and *De divinis nominibus* (Kristeller 1937–1945; Toussaint 1999; Ficino 2011b, 2015). He even tried his hand at vernacular translations, notably by producing Tuscan versions of Dante’s *Monarchia* (Ficino 2004) and his own *De amore*, i.e., his dialogic commentary on Plato’s *Symposium* (Ficino 1956, 1984, 1985, 1994, 1996, 2002b).

Ficino’s contributions to the history of philosophy can also be measured by his prolific work as a commentator on the works he translated. Ficino’s first major effort as a Platonic exegete is the set of introductory *argumenta* that accompany the collection of ten dialogues he translated for Cosimo de’ Medici. With these commentaries and the preface that accompanies them, Ficino became the first philosopher since antiquity to interpret Plato’s dialogues as a unified corpus. Ficino orders and interprets the ten Platonic dialogues according to a Neoplatonic series, whereby the order of dialogues aims to turn the reader away from the desire of wealth and worldly things to the love of wisdom, virtues, and human nature and finally toward the one and the highest good, in order to make him, following the famous dictum from Plato’s *Theaetetus*, become like God as much as possible. Inspired by Iamblichean Pythagoreanizing Platonism, Ficino caps off the series by including the Pythagorean *Aurea Verba* and *Symbola* (on Ficino’s work on these ten dialogues, see Kristeller 1937–1945, 1966; Marcel 1958; Hankins 1990a; Toussaint 2013; Robichaud 2017a).

Ficino elaborated on these exegetical strategies as time went on. To develop his own philosophical hermeneutics, he studies in detail a number of works of Greek Platonists like Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Hermias, Proclus, Olympiodorus, and Damascius, as well as Latin Platonists like Boethius and Calcidius, but also earlier so-called Middle Platonists like Alcinous and Albinus – Ficino attributes the works of both to Alcinous (Robichaud 2017a) – as well as Theon of Smyrna and Numenius of Apamea and later biographical and doxographical works like Diogenes Laertius’s *Lives of Philosophers*. Given the fact that Ficino’s readings of ancient Platonism were dependent on

Byzantine manuscripts, it is also not surprising to learn that Ficino read works of Byzantine Platonism (or Byzantine critiques of Platonism) including by Michael Psellos, Nicholas of Methone, Nicephorus Gregoras, Gemistus Pletho, George of Trebizond, and Cardinal Bessarion (Monfasani 2002).

Ficino developed a prosopopoeic interpretation of the Platonic corpus, arguing that Plato adopts different *personae* for philosophical purposes, for example, a Socratic *persona* to refute Sophists and encourage youths to pursue a philosophical life and Pythagorean *personae* to formulate mythologies or put forward elaborate metaphysics and cosmologies. It is only in the *Laws*, the *Epinomis*, and the *Letters* that Plato speaks in his own *persona*, adopting a style of writing that Ficino argues begins to resemble later Neoplatonists. According to Ficino, therefore, these later Platonists did in fact inaugurate a new stage of Platonism but a stage that returned to a Platonism that was closer to Plato's original message (Allen 1998; Robichaud 2017a). Ficino's Platonic commentaries largely take the form either of short *epitomes* and *argumenta* or in the case of a few dialogues, namely, the *Philebus* (Ficino 2002a), the *Phaedrus* (Allen 1981, 1984), the *Timaeus*, and the *Parmenides* (Ficino 2012a, b) longer commentaries (see also Leinkauf 2014; Hankins 1990a; Robichaud 2017a). Although on occasion Ficino includes philological or historical material in these commentaries, he largely conceives of them as philosophical exegesis. In other words, there is no impenetrable line demarcating Ficino's roles as a scholar of Platonic works from his status as Platonic philosopher.

This is clear most of all in Ficino's original commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, the *De amore*, which he finished in 1468. In the *De amore*, Ficino restages the dramatic conversations and speeches from Plato's banquet. Ficino imitates the structure of the *Symposium* by casting a friend to interpret each of the seven speeches in Plato's dialogue. Ficino plays with prosopopoeia to produce a dialogic and imitative commentary on Plato's famous work. Ficino translated his Latin *De amore* into Tuscan (Ficino 1987), and

the work was widely influential on Renaissance aesthetics, works of art, poetics, and philosophies of love (Festugière 1941; Ficino 1956, 2002b; Kraye 1994; Robichaud 2017a).

In the 1480s, Ficino wrote other commentaries on Neoplatonic texts including Priscianus Lydus's own commentary on Theophrastus's *De sensu, phantasia et intellectu* but also importantly on Plotinus's *Enneads*. Ficino finished translating Plotinus in early 1486 and completed his commentary on the work in August 1490. He later revised and printed it in 1492. Ficino's philological work on the Greek manuscripts is careful and precise, and his commentary is just as sophisticated, with respect both to Ficino's reconstruction of Plotinus's thought in difficult passages and to Ficino's own philosophical responses to Plotinus's work (Kristeller 1937–1945; Förstel 2006; Robichaud 2016a, 2017b, c; Ficino 2017–2018; Gersh 2019). Once again, we notice how the hermeneutical boundaries between Ficino's work as textual interpreter and as philosopher merge, especially insofar as recent scholarship has confirmed that the third book of Ficino's *Three Books on Life* (the *De vita coelitus comparanda*) originated as an exegesis of Plotinus's *Enneads* 4.4.26–45 (Ficino 2002c; Kristeller 1937–1945; Walker 1958; Garin 1960, 1976; Yates 1964; Klibansky et al. 1964; Copenhaver 1984, 1986; Weill-Parot 2002; Robichaud 2017b).

Ficino read more ancient Platonism than any of his contemporaries, but he was also an astute student of a number of Church Fathers and scholastic doctors, including Clement of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Eusebius, Origen, Athanasius, and Thomas Aquinas. Augustine's own debts to Platonism ensure his special place in Ficino's studies, though Ficino repeatedly challenges the Bishop of Hippo's censures of the Platonists (Allen 1998; Robichaud 2014, 2017a). One finds a constant motivation to understand Christianity's relationship to pagan Platonism in Ficino's work. This is remarkably evident, for instance, in his translation of and commentaries on Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's *De mystica theologia* and *De divinis nominibus*. Just as in his commentaries on Plotinus, Ficino's commentaries on the

Corpus Dionysiacum are precise and complex. He deploys a rich array of ancient Platonic sources to understand Pseudo-Dionysius and to realign his theology with ancient Platonic traditions (Toussaint 1999; Ficino 2011b, 2015). Ficino spent his final hours of scholarship commenting on St. Paul (Ficino 2018), since it was this author, as perhaps nearly all of Medieval Christianity believed, who taught the Athenian convert Dionysius the mysteries with which he composed the earliest source of Christian theology.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Writings

In addition to being one of the greatest Renaissance Hellenists and philosophical exegetes, Ficino also wrote a number of important works, any one of which would have been enough to earn him widespread recognition in his day. Ficino was a precocious philosopher, and fortunately, many of his youthful writings survive. A number of texts reveal that Ficino worked in a “scholastic background,” as Kristeller famously put it (Kristeller 1944). Still, Ficino’s writings before 1456 already demonstrate his early penchant for Platonism: *Invectiva Marsilii Fighinensis ad suum Ghuardavillam Volaterranum*, *Summa philosophiae Marsilii Ficini ad Michael Miniatensem*, two different *Tractatus physicus*, *Tractatus de anima editum per Marsilium*, *Quaestiones de luce et aliae multae Marsilii*, *Divisio philosophiae*, and *De voluptate* (Kristeller 1944; Vasoli 1997; Gentile 1983, 1990; Robichaud 2016a; Ebgi 2019). However, one important piece of writing seems to have been lost, namely, his youthful *Institutiones ad platoniam disciplinam*, which he presented to Cristoforo Landino and Cosimo de’ Medici in 1456, both of whom encouraged the young philosopher to devote himself to mastering the Greek language to read ancient philosophy in the original. A number of other important works that survive from this period, including the *De divino furore*, the *De deo et anima*, the *De virtutibus moralibus*, and the *De quatuor sectis philosophorum*, demonstrate that even before Ficino became the fifteenth-century expert on Greek Platonism, he had already begun to define the goal of

Platonism as becoming like God (Gentile 1983; Robichaud 2017a).

Ficino’s *De amore* has been rightly considered as Ficino’s first major work of philosophy. It enshrined Ficino’s status in his day as a master of ancient Platonism. Ficino continued to write a number of short philosophical and theological tracts. Many of these, including the *Disputatio contra iudicium astrologorum* and the *De sole*, *De lumine*, and *Orphica comparatio solis ad deum*, pertain to questions of optics. Ficino’s studies in this field take the form of metaphysical, cosmological, astrological, and geometric explanations (Ficino 1981, 2008; Sorokina 2015).

Ficino was also highly innovative in his use of letter writing as a means to circulate short works, like the *De raptu Pauli*, which he sent as letters to friends, fellow philosophers and theologians, and patrons (Ficino 1975–2015, 1990–2010). His letters frequently engage in philosophical dialogue with his contemporaries. Even the shortest playful notes are often filled with prompts to engage in philosophical self-knowledge (Robichaud 2017a). Ficino eventually printed twelve books of collected correspondence in 1495, but his letters had by then circulated in manuscript to the four corners of the burgeoning Republic of Letters. Although he never abandoned circulating his works in manuscript, Ficino was also very quick to employ the new technology of the printing press for his philosophical projects. For example, Ficino composed a new philosophical biography for Plato, the *De vita Platonis*, on which he first lectured, in all likelihood c. 1469, before including the work in his epistolography c. 1477–1478, and finally placed it as an introduction to his printed translation of Plato’s complete works in 1484 (Allen 1977; Toussaint 2004; Robichaud 2006; Podolak 2011).

Between c. 1468 and 1474, Ficino was in the throes of writing his eighteen-volume magnum opus, the *Theologia Platonica de immortalitate animorum*. The first four books of *Theologia Platonica* contains a summa of metaphysics, psychology, and cosmology (Kristeller 1988; Ficino 2001–2006, 2007; Robichaud 2020). In book five, Ficino begins his demonstrations for the immortality of the rational soul. The *Theologia*

Platonica contains a number of important arguments against Averroes, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Epicureanism. Concerning the latter, it should be noted that Ficino was the first Renaissance philosopher to engage systematically with Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, famously rediscovered by Poggio Bracciolini in 1417. Ficino even recounts that he was briefly under the spell of Lucretian Epicureanism in his youth and wrote *commentariola* on the poem (Snyder 2011; Gentile 2013; Hankins 2013). The *Theologia Platonica* draws heavily on Greek, Latin, and Arabic (which Ficino read in Latin translations) philosophy. Its publication is a major moment in the history of philosophy that signals Ficino's renewed attempts to reintegrate Greek sources for ancient and late ancient Platonism into philosophical and theological thinking about the rational soul.

Ficino also published another important work of theology in 1476, his *De Christiana Religione* (Ficino 2019). The work seeks to explain providential nature of Christianity and draws heavily on the Bible, Church Fathers and Doctors, and ancient philosophers and historians. It is worth noting that a group of Ficino's religious sermons have been recently edited and bear witness to Ficino's activities in religious communities in and near Florence (Vasoli 2003; Ficino 2014).

In 1478–1479, Florence was hit with the plague. Ficino took care of patients and wrote a medical handbook in the vernacular, the *Consilio Contro la Pestilentia*, which he printed in 1481. The work is filled with practical medical knowledge, and Ficino refers to some of the most revered ancient and medieval authorities, in Greek, Arabic, Latin, and vernacular medical traditions, including Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna, Averroes, Avenzoar, Rhazes, and the Italian physicians Tommaso del Garbo and Gentile da Foligno. The work became one of Ficino's many best sellers and well read well into the eighteenth century (Katinis 2007).

Another work of philosophical medicine (albeit unconventional medicine), the *De vita libri tres*, was also a great success. It was printed in over thirty editions and translated into numerous languages between 1489 and 1647 (Ficino

2002c). The *De vita* is in fact much more than a work of medicine. It is also a foundational work for Renaissance theories of saturnine melancholy and genius, philosophy, theology, astrology, image theory, talismans, magic, music, and prayers – to keep the list short. The third book in particular, the *De vita coelitus comparanda*, originates in Ficino's commentary work on Plotinus but further develops a number of Ficino's interests in the *Hermetica*, celestial influence, and Iamblican religious theurgy to produce fascinating synthesis of his religious and philosophical thinking (Ficino 2002c; Celenza 2002; Robichaud 2017b).

Impact and Legacy

The huge impact of Ficino's Platonic scholarship and philosophical writings, especially on metaphysics, cosmology, psychology, and theology, is difficult to assess in few words. Ficino's famous early modern readers include the likes of Diaceto, Marcello, Bruno, Campanella, Copernicus, Kepler, Liceti, Cardano, Nifo, Erasmus, Colet, Cambridge Platonists, Agrippa, Montaigne, Rabelais, Lefèvre d'Étaples, and Gianfrancesco Pico. They serve as witnesses to the fact that Ficino's texts often found themselves on the period's bookshelves, especially of thinkers either interested in Platonism or in criticizing Platonism.

Before Ficino arrived on the scenes, Latin readers in the West had access to too few Platonic works to understand and appreciate Plato and later Platonists fully. The *Meno*, the *Phaedo*, and parts of the *Timaeus* and the *Republic* and, famously because of William of Moerbeke, the *Parmenides* were translated into Latin before the fifteenth century, but these manuscript, however important they certainly were, would not have been nearly as widely available as Ficino's translations. There were, of course, humanist translations of Plato before and after Ficino. Ficino consulted some of his predecessors, for instance, Leonardo Bruni's translation of the *Phaedrus* and George of Trebizond's translation of the *Laws*. But Ficino's feat was altogether different. He

approached Plato's works as a corpus, and he was one of the few scholars in his day who was highly skilled in ancient Greek and had access to the Greek manuscripts of Plato's works. The publication of his translation of the Platonic corpus, which circulated widely in manuscript and especially in print, ensured that generations of philosophers, scholars, theologians, and artists were able to study Plato's thought. Ficino's scholarship was contested but never completely replaced in the early modern period. The famous Bipontina edition of 1781–1787 continued to publish a corrupted version of Ficino's translation (Neschke-Hentschke 2008; Robichaud 2016c). Even August Immanuel Bekker's important critical edition of the Platonic corpus continued to publish Ficino's Latin translation along with the Greek text, ensuring that Ficino's Plato continued to be read widely into the nineteenth century (Hankins 1990a; Robichaud 2016c, 2017a). One can draw similar conclusions about the legacy of Ficino's Latin scholarship on Plotinus. Georg Friedrich Creuzer's 1835 critical edition of the *Enneads* was the only complete version of Plotinus to appear after Ficino's edition printed by Petrus Perna in 1580, but Creuzer's own edition of the Greek text also includes Ficino's translation, commentaries, and preface (Robichaud 2018).

Cross-References

- ▶ Academy, Platonic
- ▶ Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius
- ▶ Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition
- ▶ Astrology in the Renaissance
- ▶ Augustinianism
- ▶ Averroism, Renaissance
- ▶ Bessarion, Cardinal
- ▶ Bible, Editions, and Translations in the Renaissance
- ▶ Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus
- ▶ Bracciolini, Poggio
- ▶ Bruni, Leonardo
- ▶ Bruno, Giordano
- ▶ Campanella, Tommaso
- ▶ Copernicus, Nicolaus
- ▶ Cosmology in the Renaissance
- ▶ Dante Alighieri
- ▶ Diogenes Laertius
- ▶ Erasmus, Desiderius
- ▶ Galen and Galenism
- ▶ George of Trebizond
- ▶ Gregoras, Nikephoros
- ▶ Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism
- ▶ Hippocrates and Hippocratism
- ▶ Humanism
- ▶ Kircher, Athanasius
- ▶ Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques
- ▶ Liceti, Fortunio
- ▶ Love in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Lucretius
- ▶ Metaphysics in the Renaissance
- ▶ Montaigne, Michel de
- ▶ Natural Magic in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Nifo, Agostino
- ▶ Optics, Renaissance
- ▶ Origenes in the Renaissance
- ▶ Philology, Renaissance
- ▶ Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
- ▶ Poliziano, Angelo
- ▶ Proclus in the Renaissance
- ▶ Rabelais, François
- ▶ Theology, Renaissance
- ▶ Tignosi, Niccolò

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Fieravante, Leonardo

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Figo, Azariah ben Ephraim

Born: Venice, 1579

Died: Rovigo, 1647

Beatrice Variolo

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Abstract

Azariah Figo was a rabbi and preacher who served the community of Venice and Pisa. Figo is mostly known for his commentary *Giddulei Terumah*, a commentary on Samuel Sardi's *Sefer ha-Terumot*, the first comprehensive code of Jewish commercial and civil law, as well as for his collection of sermons, *Binah le'Ittim*. Printed in 1648, this compilation of sermons continues to enjoy an important reception as it occupies an important position in the evolution of Jewish sermons. Considered a conservative, traditionalist preacher, Figo lately attracted the attention of several scholars who demonstrated the consistent presence in his preaching of scientific and medical analogies and thereby challenged Figo's image as a strict teacher of morality.

Alternate Names

[Piccio, Azariah ben Ephraim](#); [Picho, Azariah ben Ephraim](#); [Pigo, Azariah ben Ephraim](#)

Biography

Azariah Figo was a preacher and rabbi, born in Venice in 1579. He initially had a secular

education but later came to regret his excessive preoccupation with mundane studies and committed himself to the *Talmud*. In 1607, he became the rabbi of the Jewish community of Pisa, where he composed the *Giddulei Terumah* (*The Crops of Donation*), a commentary on Samuel Sardi's *Sefer ha-Terumot* (*The Book of Donations*), the first comprehensive code of Jewish commercial and civil law. Figo had trouble accessing the materials needed to compose the commentary; after the burning of the *Talmud* in 1553, copies of the book were rare, and Figo had to borrow tractates from the neighboring communities. He completed the *Giddulei Terumah* only in 1627, after his return to Venice, in 1643 by which it was published. During his stay in Pisa, Figo also wrote the *Iggerot Vetshuvat*, or *Letters and Responsa*, addressed to the scholar Yissachar Ber Eilenburg, who successively included them in his *B'eir Sheva* (*Well of the Oath*, 1614).

After his return to Venice, Figo became the preacher for the Sephardi community. His sermons reflect a tendency toward a rigorous interpretation of the Jewish law. Vehemently opposed to the establishment of a theater in the Venetian ghetto, Figo was a harsh critic of what he saw as the lax behaviors of his community. His sermons addressed the ostentatious display of wealth and the practice of usury that afflicted the ghetto and could create social rifts among its inhabitants. Figo openly attacked the prohibitive interest rate on the loans with which the rich exploited the poor, devouring "their flesh with several forms of clear-cut, open interest" (Bettan, 239). The rabbi was particularly outraged by the general acquiescence toward these practices in spite of being explicitly forbidden. Figo also condemned with particular fervor the deterioration of sexual customs. He lamented that adultery became a widespread but amply condoned practice that started with the seemingly innocent habit of staring at women but "inevitably leads to graver offences" (Bettan, 237). In another sermon, Figo lists adultery together with idolatry and murder as the three sins that beset the people of Israel. He points out that, while the former subsided, adultery is still rampant and that Jews not only failed to control it but, even worse, lost the

sense of shame and embarrassment associated with this sin.

Although Figo lived in a period in which Jewish religious and cultural life was under constant threat after the Counter-Reformation, his sermons concentrate on the dangers that affect the community from within. His admonishments treat what he perceived was the shattering of traditions and ties in the Jewish community. Figo's words indicate their author's preoccupation in the face of economic and social changes that were impossible to control.

Figo's sermons were collected in the *Binah le'Ittim* (*Wisdom for the Proper Times*), published in Venice in 1648, a year after his death. The 76 sermons of which the *Binah le'Ittim* is composed are devoted to Saturdays and festivities of the Jewish calendar but include some orations on *Avot* (*Chapters of the Fathers*), a compilation of ancient ethical teachings on such topics as education and charity. The *Binah le'Ittim* was a great success, and since its first publication, it was reprinted 50 more times; it still is particularly popular among Eastern European Jews.

Besides preaching, Figo was actively involved in protecting and defending Marranos and Jewish captives, declaring them Jewish. Figo had two sons, Lazzaro and Efreim, who followed in his footsteps and became rabbis. Together they composed a commentary on the medieval scholar Yeruham ben Meshullam's *Toldot Adam veHavva* (*The History of Adam and Eve*, 1516). None of his sons survived him: they both died during the outbreak of bubonic plague that ravaged Italy during the period 1629–1631. Figo died several years later, in 1647 in Rovigo, where he was buried.

Heritage and Innovations

The image of Azariah Figo, as it emerges from his two major works, is that of a staunch defender of his faith and a traditional preacher. In his commentary *Giddulei Terumah*, Figo confesses that, during his youth, he regretfully spent too much time following "the children of strangers," the secular studies, before fully devoting himself to

rabbinic studies. The main topic of his collection of sermons is the passionate plea to his community to follow the *Torah* and its commandments, the only source of truth and eternal happiness. Although these statements seem to reinforce Figo's traditionalist impression, the accusation leveled against him by certain scholars (Berzilai, Rabinowitz, Zinberg) of being anti-rationalist has been amply disproved. Recent research points out that Figo's sermons are littered with scientific and medical references but also that he was a disciple of Leon Modena (Venice 1571–1648). A Venetian rabbi and scholar, author of the *Historia de' riti ebraici* (*History of the Jewish rituals*, 1637), the first detailed description of Judaism written for a non-Jewish audience, Modena cultivated an interest in science and medicine that Figo never opposed. Evidence about their close relationship can be found in a celebratory sonnet for the publication of Modena's sermons in 1602 as well as in an encomiastic poem for the graduation from medical school of one of Modena's protégés, Joseph Hamiz. His longstanding friendship with Modena indicates "his identification with Modena's long-felt commitment to the study of medicine and the sciences among Italian Jews" (Ruderman, *Jewish Thought*, 201). Another sign of Modena's influence can be found in Figo's reticence toward the Kabbalah and its mystical teachings. Although suspicious toward philosophical speculation, Figo was receptive to science and scientific discoveries. In light of these considerations, the shift of his focus to rabbinic studies appears more as a *topos* strategically placed at the beginning of his commentary than the fruit of a profound realization. Figo's secular training, in fact, left clear traces in his sermons, where he refers to various scientific inventions, such as eyeglasses and the telescope.

Figo uses these images to capture his audience's attention with effective and familiar examples, directly drawing from their cultural context. In doing so, Figo perfectly exemplifies the scientific spirit of the seventeenth century permeating with the scientific discoveries and inventions, especially in the fields of optics and astronomy. Figo's repertoire extends further, encompassing also references to techniques to enhance memory

and artificial limbs. The underlying principle that Figo purports and shares with his audience is that humankind is authorized to replicate and improve nature, God's creation.

Even more common than the scientific metaphors are the medical ones: Figo plays at length with the analogy between the sickness of the body and sinful behaviors. In one of his most famous sermons, Figo equates repentance to healing from a disease. He distinguishes two possible treatments: by natural means – or voluntary repentance – and by artificial ones, using cures as evacuation or bloodletting. Figo asserts the superiority of natural healing and references the challenges associated with treatments among them, misdiagnosis, or the weakening of the body in consequence of the cures. These two types of cure mirror the realm of the soul: Artificial remedies stand for repentance out of fear or coercion, which violently cure the symptoms but not the cause of the sin or leave the spirit drained of its strength.

The similes employed in the *Binah le'Ittim* are clear but do not attest to any kind of formal medical education. They rather reflect "the perspective of a person very close to the medical profession" (Ruderman, *Jewish Thought*, 208), a person who had some cognition of the practical aspects of being a physician.

Figo's openness toward science is further confirmed by his epistemological positions.

He juxtaposes to purely rational knowledge the knowledge derived from senses and experience: While the former cannot be fully verified and is susceptible to human errors and fallacies, the latter is always truthful and reliable. The conception of science as the result of observation and experience reflects the distinction between the academic philosopher and natural philosopher that characterizes the empiricist approach that became prevalent in the seventeenth century. This epistemological stance, according to Figo, finds perfect correspondence in the *Torah*, whose wisdom is conveyed through the language of hearing and seeing. Figo does vindicate the superiority of the *Torah* over the secular sciences as the only source of complete wisdom that does not depend upon the natural sciences and external knowledge in general. Although Figo emphasizes their limits, he does not reject sciences. On the

contrary, he dismisses only that kind of knowledge, which derives solely from theoretical knowledge and is devoid of empirical foundations, pretends to reach the truth. The charge of anti-rationalism directed at Figo is, hence, denied by a more in-depth reading of his sermons. The line that he drew between the natural sciences and the *Torah* enables the symbiosis of the two, while, at the same time, upholding the superiority of the second. Figo's defense of Judaism appears modern and aligns with the lexicon of seventeenth-century empiricism.

Impact and Legacy

Azariah Figo is considered one of the last great Talmudists and most authentic voices of Jewish preaching in sixteenth-century Italy. His sermons are still today considered a prime example of Jewish preaching, as proved by their many reprints. Structurally, Figo's writings combine argumentative cohesion with a great clarity of expression. He gradually guides his audience toward the objective of his preaching through an accurate and insightful exegesis of the texts, coupled with the orderly arrangement of ideas. Figo's sermons synthesize elegance of style with topics of high social relevance and make his message particularly compelling.

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Figuerola, Francisco de

Born: Alcalá de Henares ca. 1520

Died: Alcalá de Henares 1588/9 Spain

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Abstract

Francisco de Figuerola is one of the most representatives poets of the Hispanic *petrarquismo* who lived under the reigns of Charles V and Philip II. His singularity resides in a sustained loving poetry in a syncretism of philosophical sources, Neoplatonic, and fundamentally literary that he learns during his stay in Italy to the service of the Spanish diplomacy. The reading of treaties and philosophical texts on the nature and loving process (*De amore* of M. Ficino, Cavalcanti's lyric poems, *Dialoghi d'Amore* of Equicola, and *Asolani* of Bembo, among others), plus the stimuli of the academic circles with their personal relations with

intellectuals of the time, conforms the solid basis of his poetry that, although not very wide, it was sufficiently recognized by its contemporaries, among them Cervantes, like one of the most important poets of loving Neoplatonism and of the Italian lyrical tradition that melts with the Hispanic tradition.

Biography

A Spanish Petrarchan poet (Prieto 1984), Figuerola was born in Alcalá de Henares (Madrid, Spain) at an uncertain date (1520 or 1530 Rossi 1993). Probably belonged to an illustrious family of this town, the Ávila o D'Ávila (Portilla 1725), here he received his early education under the private teaching of the humanist Ambrosio de Morales (Redel 1908), of whom Figuerola would see himself years later as his “pupil.” Considering the scarce biographical evidence about the poet, it seems possible that he did not begin his academic training at the prestigious University of Alcalá since, according to the (hardly reliable) biographical notes provided by his first editor Luis Tribaldos de Toledo, “siendo mancebo pasó a Italia donde en parte fue soldado. . .” At that time, Alcalá was a source of young soldiers, and many of the sons of noble families swelled the ranks of Charles V's army, fighting in the Emperor's military campaigns. Italy witnessed Figuerola's intellectual development in the course of several stays in cities like Siena, Rome, and Naples, as can be deduced from the poetical allusions to the rivers (Arbia, Tiber, and Sebeto). In 1559 he leaves Italy for good and begins a diplomatic career that will result in his withdrawal from the lyrical activity.

In 1560, after the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, he spends some time in France, working as a secretary to Tomás Perrenot de Granvela, and so attending the negotiations between this country and Spain, while witnessing the progress of heresy and the Spanish mediation in the Scottish affairs. After his return to Spain, Figuerola is appointed Philip II's “contino” in 1561. With a stable job at the court in Madrid, Figuerola comes into contact with other poets such as Laynez and Cervantes himself, who immortalized him in his

La Galatea. Before his final return to Alcalá, Figuerola will carry out two more diplomatic missions: the first one, at the service of the Count of Benavente (1567–1570), Viceroy of Valencia for the problems of Moorish insurrection, and the last one on the side of the Duke of Terranova (1579) for the affairs of the Netherlands, which will result in the failure of the religious and economic policy of the Spanish empire. He retires permanently to Alcalá de Henares, where he dies in 1588 (9?).

Heritage and Rupture

His lyrical production, mostly fragmentary love poetry, has not been preserved in autographical documents but in manuscripts by copyists or compiled in other authors' printed material, until the first 1625 edition (Lisbon, Pedro Craesbeck). It is limited to the Italian period and springs from the intellectual inspiration that Figuerola found there. Written evidence from the period (1544) refers to the presence of members of the Ávila or Dávila family in the area of Orbetello and Porto Ercole (Tuscany), strongholds of the Spanish domination in that area, so it is possible that Figuerola's first Italian stay was in Siena, where Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, the humanist poet, governed as the Imperial representative since 1547 (Losi 1997). The sonnet with the epigraphs “Estando Sena en poder de franceses” and “Lauro que en la ribera deleitosa/un tiempo, agora solitaria y triste/del Arbia. . .,” written after the fall of the city on French hands and the dismissal of Hurtado de Mendoza in 1552, and also the poem “Io Bonifacio in questo carnevale” (Gotor 1988) attests to his presence there. Indeed, there are documents that prove Figuerola's involvement with the academic life of Siena from at least February 1547 to February 1549. Perhaps, after his subsequent stays in Rome and Naples, Figuerola returned to Siena in 1557. It is possible that Figuerola studied law in the old Studio of Siena, whose renown attracted a great number of foreign students. In an epistle that Juan de Verzosa, the humanist scholar and diplomat at the service of Hurtado de Mendoza, addressed to Figuerola that

same year (Rome, April 20th, 1551), he reproached the poet for his neglect of the duties as a lawyer and his devotion instead to the ludic and intellectual pleasures of the city, shared with some friends in common. As a matter of fact, in Siena Figuerola enjoys an atmosphere of courtly gallantry and genteel evenings (Ricco 1993) where poetical creativity, stimulated by the reading of the Italian classics (Petrarch, Bembo, Sannazaro, Ariosto), emerges as the social and ludic praxis (Bargagli 1572, 1587). This explains Figuerola's lack of editorial concern. Moreover, he is in contact with the circle of the academies flourishing in Siena at that time (Kosuta 1981; Maylender 1930), which became another of the cultural centers of the city: the Intronati, founded by Claudio Tolomei, the Svegliati, the Inspidi, the Travagliati, or the Rozzi, whose members Figuerola entered in contact with, absorbing the latest literary trends far from his own Spanish tradition. This is the period when he adopts the pastoral name of Tirsi to develop a lyrical-love and Neoplatonic tension in a bucolic key. So far, there is no document proving that Figuerola was a member of any of them.

Innovative and Original Aspects of His Poetry

In this context, the poet gained the knowledge informing the main core of most of his lyrical production, in the light of the poetical standards of the time, where tradition and current literary practice conflated in Marsilio Ficino's widespread Platonism. His *De Amore* or commentary on Plato's *Symposium* inspired the different treatises on love that, in the first half of the sixteenth century and thanks to the print, spread throughout Italy. They are, mainly, Pietro Bembo's *Asolani* (1505), Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'Amore* (1535), and Mario Equicola's *Libro de Natura de Amore* (1525). These were all Figuerola's first-hand readings, in their original versions, before being translated in Spain, and possibly, in the copies that made up Hurtado de Mendoza's well-stocked library. Figuerola's training developed therefore from the very beginning in the culture of a country

where he never saw himself as a foreigner. His command of the Tuscan literary language, already given a status by M. Ficino with his vernacular version of *De Amore* and the abovementioned treatises, allowed Figuerola to write directly in Tuscan lines or to combine in the same composition lines in this language and in Spanish, thus proving the assimilation of the prevailing metrical patterns (as madrigals) and the Petrarchan expressivity. This linguistic skill, which would provide him with the direct knowledge and access to this literary-philosophical culture about love that pervades his poetry, makes him unique in the face of other Spanish poets and contemporaries, who repeatedly described him as a "learned" poet.

In this way, Figuerola could work with this first edition of Ficino's *De Amore*, published in 1544 in Tuscan language. The treatise, an organic and commented compilation of the theories of love by Plotino and Plato (*Symposium* and *Phaedrus*) and of the Neoplatonic postulates by Hermias and Lucretius, probably offered a first approach to the love for philosophy that Figuerola would later deepen with the reading of the abovementioned treatises, which proposed a more contemporary view. *De Amore* was a basic text because, apart from providing the Platonic foundation of the love process and its phenomenology, it formulates a connection with poetry. In this treatise, Figuerola learns about the definition of love as the desire of the soul to search for true beauty (God, as the center or primary source) and the theory of the four circles (mind, soul, nature, and matter or four "lights"), on which the divine beam progressively shines spreading its essence (Ficino, Or. II, chap. 3). Furthermore, here he will read, too, about the perception of the dual nature of love, the spiritual one, and the voluptuous one (Ficino, Or. II, chap. 7), mythographically represented as Celestial Venus and Earthly Venus, which became one of the philosophical axioms to explain the theory of love that would lie behind all the abovementioned treatises (Leone Ebreo, III, "De l'origine d'amore"; Equicola, "Libro II") and, as a result, behind the poetry of the Cinquecento. Ficino explains and illustrates this with the song by the poet and stilnovist "philosopher" Guido Cavalcanti, *Donna me prega* (Ficino, Or. VII,

chap. 1). Widely commented on from the fourteenth century onward, it became a major referent for the treatise writers (G. Pico della Mirandola, M. Equicola, etc.). This emblematic song, which has a controversial interpretation (Averroist, Platonic, Aristotelian; /Marti 1972/), contains a brief lyrical-philosophical treatise on the notion of love and the love process. It represents then to Figuerola a key text that, in general terms, allows him to know Stilnovism. In this text, he learns about the concept of love as an “accident” that springs from and resides in the (lover’s) sensitive soul after the contemplation of the beloved, who stands as the representative of harmonic perfection, and whose eyes project the divine beam of nature. The image of the beloved (“phantasma”) settles in memory (a part of the sensitive soul), and through a process of abstraction, it will reach the intellective soul. This is the origin of Figuerola’s series of poems about the myth of Celestial Venus, focusing on the contemplation of the beloved, the supreme work of nature, where the Ficinian and Cavalcantian readings coexist: *canción* “Tomó Naturaleza/ en su mano un pincel/ y quiso hacer perfecta una figura”; “¿Cuál idea o colores/ de tan sutil manera, pintó jamás pincel o ingenio humano?” or the sonnet “Alma real, milagro de Natura . . ./nido de amor. . ./ni es bien que imagen tan divina sea/sino de amor/. . .en las almas se escriba, allí se lea” (sensitive soul) or also the glose “Desde el corazón al alma quiero señora mudaros,” as the desire for the transfer or process of abstraction whereby the image or “form” will move from the sensitive soul (memory) to the intellect (intellective soul). However, according to Cavalcanti, the evil influence of Mars (*animositatis ardor*) interferes in this process hindering its goal. Then the feeling of love becomes the lover’s inner war, in the dichotomy reason/senses (passion/knowledge) and in melancholy or pessimism. This is the crossroad upon which Figuerola’s other compositions are built. Specifically, Mars’ influence is described by Figuerola in sonnet “Fiero planeta y duro nacimiento/(si en esto, alguna parte tiene). . .”; (López Suárez 1985), where the reading of G. Pico della Mirandola is superimposed over that of Cavalcanti (*Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*),

as that influence is rejected on the grounds of its coercion of human freedom, giving voice to the doubt with Petrarch’s word (“Fera stella (se’l ciel ha forza in noi/quant’alcun crede”). From the reading of Cavalcanti and of Stilnovism, with the psychological and emotional renewal through a new poetical language that reaches the Petrarchan *Canzoniere*, Figuerola learns and handles better than any other Hispanic poet, the *topos* of the “spiritelli d’amore” (“Per gli occhi fere uno sprito sottile/che fa in la mente sprito destare,/del qual si move spirito d’amare”). This emerges as a poetical formulation of the philosophical-scientific principle of the vital spirits, which he recreates in his sonnet “Oh espíritu sutil dulce y ardiente/ que sales de las dos vivas estrellas. . .” However, in the rest of the sonnet, following the Cavalcantian principle “sentir non po’ di lui spirito vile” in *Donna me prega*, v.5), Figuerola states that “dentro está quien no consiente”. All in all, this “vile” spirit which our poet, alluding to the “sangre corrompida,” blends with the Ficinian explanation (Ficino, Or. VII, chaps. V–IX) condemns the voluptuous love (Earthly Venus).

On these Cavalcantian principles, which portray love as passion, Figuerola’s poetry rests and will rely on those contemporary treatises on love philosophy, providing a syncretism of sources. One of such works is L. Ebreo’s *Dialoghi d’Amore*, a real best seller where Figuerola will find a treatise that amalgamates different philosophical trends together with the Holy Scripture. In *Libro de Natura de Amore*, particularly in “Libro IV,” Figuerola discovers an anti-Platonic theory on the concept of love: love as a natural instinct and an analysis of the phenomenology of love and its physiological motivations underpinned with poetical examples. “I poeti” – Equicola will argue – “descrivono i segni esterni dell’ innamoramento,” and hence, Figuerola will seek a number of love: jealousy (“Dime Fili, así amor dure en el pecho”), tears (s. “Lágrimas que salís regando el pecho”), lover’s pallor (check s. “La palidez y la flaqueza mía”), or sleeplessness: “il somno, ocio dell’anima” (Equicola states), and Figuerola, “Ocio del alma, sosegado sueño.” Figuerola learns through Equicola, too, the defense of the sense of touch (“De’sensi” 8. “I quattro

elementi e i cinque sensi”;13. . .“l’importanza del tatto”) (in opposition to the Neoplatonics’ and L. Ebreo’s disapproval of it), and he will recreate this in the song “Sale la aurora de su fértil manto,” partly cut by censorship already in its first, 1625 edition (“...con amoroso fuego/blandamente me toca y bebe las palabras de mi boca/. . .cogí las tiernas flores /con el fruto dichoso” lines 55–6 and 70–1), which will conclude, in sum, with sensuous pleasure. This is a sensuous feeling probably rooted in the anti-Platonic and medico-physiological theories found in *De pulchro et amore* (1529), by the Aristotelian author Agostino Nifo, a friend of Equicola associated with Charles V’s politics.

The philosophical framework behind Figuerola’s love poetry has its best representative in Bembo’s *Asolani*. Already in his Book I, Equicola provided a highly favorable commentary on this treatise, describing it as “giocondi per somma arte, ordine, dottrina e peritia nell’argomentare.” Together with the example of the interspersed *canzonette*, two main reasons for Figuerola’s view of this work as the key referent for his lyrical training were, firstly, the courtly love nature of the text and, secondly, the writing modeled on the Petrarchan lyricism of the *Canzoniere*, of which Bembo will be the theoretical and regulating *auctoritas* until the end of the sixteenth century. Moreover, Figuerola’s Bembian Petrarchism and Neoplatonism grew stronger through Varchi’s *Lezzioni* (Andreoni 2012) in the Florentine circles. He got ahead of the other Hispanic poets in the reading and success of the *Asolani*, which were not available until the Salamanca translation in 1552. Here Figuerola finds the literary topics of love cultivated in the popular lyrical tradition and the process and concept of love, bringing together its different perspectives through the characters (Perottino’s love-passion; Gismondo’s sensual love; Lavinello’s Platonic-spiritual love) and concluding with a Platonic-Christian version of this concept (Romito). Although in some of his poems Figuerola recreates Gismondo’s approach (madrigal “Vermigli e bianchi fiori” or “Bendito seas Amor perpetuamente”), in general he tends to remain faithful to the idea of love-passion (as developed by Perottino), “disruption” or “fire” as writers call it according to Bembo, amalgamating thus all the

contents that the poet transfers into his poetry as a fragmented practice. From the principle of “amare senza amaro non si puote” (*Asolani*, I, XI), Figuerola explores topics such as the effects of this type of love on the lover: the curses against love (s. “Maldito seas amor perpetuamente”), the effects or dichotomies created by this (“Come porgerà Amore al mio dolore” /ardo, agghiaccio/”), the pain and tears, the effects of fortune, and even the confirmation of the Stilnovist trend as the “spiritelli d’amore” (*Asolani*, II,XXXI).

Impact of His Poetry

Figuerola gained the reputation of “learned” poet among his contemporaries due to this syncretism of philosophical sources that coexist in his lyrical-love poetry. The poet Ramírez Pagán, whom Figuerola could have happened to meet during his stay in Rome and so have a direct access to his poems, includes in the *Floresta de varia poesía* (1562) some compositions by Figuerola, as well as others addressed to him, such as the laudatory sonnet “Tirsi honor y gloria desta ribera” or remarks that: “. . .si desde oy a la cumbre que mereces/como de ingenio el ala más ligera. . .” Similarly, Sánchez de Lima in his treatise *Arte poética* (1580) states that: “Oy día vive y vivirá. . .el divino Figuerola, a quien con tanta razón fue dado este título, pues en sus obras tanto lo mostró, que las mas desechada se puede con justa causa alabar.” Above all, it is Cervantes who will grant Figuerola greater recognition from *La Galatea* (Book II) (1581–1583). In a pastoral note, Cervantes acknowledges his well-deserved reputation as a poet experienced in the “sciencia” of love, through his prominence in this work as an advocate of the Platonic theory of love: “nombrado Tirsi, con lo que tu valor y discreción en las cercanas y apartadas tierras la parlera fama pregona.” Cervantes puts these lines, clearly Neoplatonic, in Tirsi’s (Figuerola’s) mouth: “que la memoria puesta en el objeto/ que amor puso en el alma, representa/ la amada imagen viva al intelecto.” Moreover, he gives voice, as an evocation, to the *incipits* in Figuerola’s compositions such as “Ay de cuán ricas esperanzas vengo” and “La amarillez y la flaqueza mía” and those “so

well-known” lines “Sale el aurora y de su fértil manto.” Figueroa’s renown was, therefore, acknowledged by his contemporaries as it sprang from his poetical-philosophical knowledge acquired in his youth in Italy. Some years later, it was confirmed by Cristobal de Mesa in his *Restauración de España* (1607), next to the praise of Cervantes: “Figueroa con metros elegantes/ iguala los más graves y eruditos. . .”

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Filarete

Born: circa 1400 in Florence

Died: circa 1469 in Rome

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Abstract

As a theorist of architecture, Filarete is well known for his *Treatise on Architecture*, which

he wrote between 1461 and 1464 in Milan. In the *Treatise*, which is the first such book in Italian, rather than the usual Latin, Filarete proposes the first star-shaped, ideal city of the Renaissance, reflecting the era's humanism, naturalism, and utopianism. The ideal city of Sforzinda, named after the duke of Milan, was a search for harmony, proportion, and order, which were to be found in ancient history, nature, and geometry. The laws of nature were reflected in the body and expressed in mathematics. The human figure was the source of inspiration, the Greek orders were the best model to be followed, and perfect geometrical shapes were the tools with which to design the city. The human head was the primary measure of the body, which was extended to architecture, as the basis of harmonious relationships between the parts. The desired order was to be achieved by a single design for an entire city, anticipating Machiavelli and Descartes who also looked for a single source of order, which politically became manifest in absolute monarchies. The shift from the human head and body to the human mind, from Filarete to Descartes, however, took two centuries to emerge. The utopian designs of alternative realities became common practice for centuries, and the paradoxical relations with the natural world, simultaneously imitating and transforming it, which Sforzinda displays, are still with us. Although Sforzinda was never built, Filarete's built projects survive in Milan's castle and university.

Biography

Antonio di Pietro Averlino, who adopted the name Filarete (Greek for lover of virtue or excellence), was a sculptor, architect, and theorist, born circa 1400 in Florence. From 1433 to 1447, he worked in Rome on the carved bronze doors of St. Peter's and from 1451 to 1465 in Milan at the Duke Francesco Sforza's castle, the cathedral, and the Ospedale Maggiore (now Milan University). Between 1461 and 1464, he composed his *Treatise on Architecture*, describing in detail the design and construction of the first ideal city of

the Renaissance, the city of Sforzinda, named after the duke, and its port Plusiapolis. He died circa 1469 in Rome (Filarete 1965; Lazzaroni and Muñoz 1908).

Key Ideas

Filarete searches for harmony, proportion, and order, which he finds in history, nature, and geometry. The treatise was inspired by his contemporary theorist Leon Battista Alberti (1988) and the ancient Roman theorist Vitruvius (1999), but it was the first such work written in Italian rather than Latin, with the explicit aim of making it more accessible. History provided the tools to break from the immediate past and the guidelines for the construction of the future.

Nature was reflected in harmony and proportion. Located in a fictional fertile valley, Sforzinda is shaped by a natural order in which "every building [is] located in its place" (Filarete 1965, p. 26). The natural harmony is also found in the human body and its proportions. With its architecture based on the human figure, his city will be "fine, beautiful, and perpetual according to the laws of nature" (Filarete 1965, p. 5). God had formed humans in His image, and they were now able to shape the world in their own godly image. The head, as "the most noble and most beautiful member," was the measure of the body: "if the arms are opened and the hands extended, [the man] will be nine heads in either direction" (Filarete 1965, p. 8). The body becomes the measure of everything in the construction of an anthropomorphic world. As reflected in his fictional host's concern about the future of his natural habitat after the construction of a new city, however, the new relations between the human body and the natural context create a paradox which we still identify to this day: embracing nature while trying to transform it at the same time.

Geometry was the expression of natural proportions and the rational order of space. Sforzinda was the first star-shaped city of the Renaissance, "the first wholly symmetrical town plan in Western history" (Pevsner 1963, p. 185). The basic form of the city is "two squares, one atop the

other without the angles touching,” all enclosed within a circle (Filarete 1965, p. 25). Sforzinda’s radial pattern and its central tower and square reflected central planning, the design of buildings with a central focus, a Roman idea now taken up as a potent symbol of humanism. The discovery of the laws of perspective in around 1425 led to designing buildings that focused on a single center, where the human body stood, a secular idea in contrast with the medieval sacred architecture that aimed at bringing the faithful to the altar (Pevsner 1963).

Legacy

Sforzinda’s geometrical plan prefigured similar designs and the search for a utopian alternative in future centuries. The twentieth-century modernist movement in architecture was one of the latest revivals of this celebration of geometry, order, and utopian futures (Le Corbusier 1978). Filarete’s advocacy of designing an entire city by a single architect anticipated modern philosophical rationalism and political absolutism (Madanipour 2007). A generation before Machiavelli (1950), who argued in favor of a single source of legal and political design, and two centuries before Descartes (1968, p. 35), who advocated that a city should be designed by one designer, Filarete had already designed a completely new city on the basis of a geometrical order. Filarete and Descartes both searched for a new foundation, which they found in human beings, albeit one focusing on the body and the other on the mind but both trying to uncover the laws of nature and express them through mathematics, the language they shared with Galileo’s scientific worldview. Filarete’s sense of the possible tension between urban development and the natural environment was an early indicator of a major problem that is still with us today.

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Filargis, Petros

- [Peter of Candia](#)

Filargis, Petrus

- [Peter of Candia](#)

Filelfo, Francesco

Born: 25 July 1398

Died: 31 July 1481

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Abstract

Filelfo was not a systematic philosopher, yet his works are an apt illustration of the ways in which Quattrocento humanists negotiated the return of the Greek legacy in the West. Filelfo himself brought numerous manuscripts of ancient Greek philosophical texts from Byzantium to Italy, and he was often among the first to incorporate those texts into his writings. Boasting a superior knowledge of the Greek language, he entertained philosophical polemics, mostly concerning doxographical and terminological issues.

Alternate Names

Philelfus, Franciscus

Biography

Francesco Filelfo was born in Tolentino, close to Macerata, in the Marche region. In his numerous writings he remains silent about his parents and pedigree. He received his training in Padua, taking courses of Gasparino Barzizza and Paolo Veneto. In 1417 Filelfo moved to Venice, where as a young teacher of moral philosophy he became acquainted with the Giustinian family, Guarino Veronese and Vittorino da Feltre. In 1420 he left for Constantinople, where he would stay for 7 years. In Byzantium, Filelfo acquired an excellent knowledge of Greek and married Teodora Chrysolorina, a niece of Manuel Chrysoloras. He was sent on diplomatic missions by the emperor, John VIII Palaeologus, and befriended Bessarion. In 1427, Filelfo was summoned back to Venice to teach Greek, but when he arrived with his wife and first-born son Gian Mario, the plague was raging in and Filelfo departed for Bologna to become a professor of rhetoric and moral philosophy. Because of the political turmoil in the city, in Filelfo departed from Bologna in 1429: declining invitations from Rome and Ferrara, he moved on to Florence, where Palla Strozzi and Leonardo Bruni had been instrumental in his appointment as the successor of Giovanni Aurispa. Filelfo lectured on Greek and Latin authors, but also on Dante. He soon ran into conflicts with supporters of Cosimo de' Medici, such as Niccolò Niccoli and Carlo Marsuppini, Ambrogio Traversari, and Poggio Bracciolini; they were all severely ridiculed for decades to come in Filelfo's writings. The purges after Cosimo's return to power in 1434 drove the oligarchic faction into exile, and Filelfo decided to leave Florence for Siena. There he was attacked by the Medici hit-man who had already left a life-long scar on Filelfo's face in Florence. Filelfo then hired a mercenary himself to go after Marsuppini and Cosimo, which made his situation in Siena untenable. He accepted Filippo Maria Visconti's invitation to come to Milan, where he

arrived, after a second short intermezzo in Bologna, in June 1439. After his first wife passed away in 1441, Filelfo married Orsina Osnaga, and after her demise in 1448 Laura Maggiolini. Following Visconti's death in 1447, Filelfo's patrons were, first, his son-in-law Francesco Sforza, and then the latter's son Galeazzo Maria Sforza. Their at times lukewarm attitude made Filelfo look for employment at other courts, but in the end he stayed in Milan for most of his life. Repeated attempts to secure a position at the Curia in Rome failed until Pope Sixtus IV invited Filelfo in 1474. In 1476 Filelfo's third wife died as well. After long negotiations with Lorenzo de' Medici, Filelfo was finally invited in 1481 to return to Florence to teach Greek at the Studio. Shortly after the exhausting journey from Milan, he died on 31 July, and was buried the next day in the basilica of Santissima Annunziata (Viti 1997).

Writings

Filelfo was an exceptionally prolific writer (De Keyser and François 2015). He started his career as a translator of classical Greek literature and did so Latinizing Dio Chrysostom's *De Troia non capta* while travelling back from Constantinople to Venice (Leotta 2008). Apart from some minor efforts, such as Latin versions of two orations by Lysias (*Funebris oratio* and *Eratosthenes*), two short treatises by Hippocrates (*De flatibus* and *De passionibus corporis*), Basil the Great's letter *De vita solitaria* to Gregory of Nazianzus, and twice the apocryphal *De sacerdotio Christi* (De Keyser 2013), his main focus was on Xenophon, with renderings of the *Respublica Lacedaemoniorum*, *Agésilas*, and – his last and major undertaking – the *Cyri Paedia* (De Keyser 2012), and on Plutarch, one of his favourite authors. Filelfo translated Plutarch's two apophthegm collections (*Apophthegmata Laconica* and *Apophthegmata ad Traianum*) and his biographies of *Lycurgus*, *Numa*, *Galba*, and *Otho*. His translations of three letters by Plato (Hankins 1990) and of the *Euthyphron* (Martinelli Tempesta 2009), probably produced in the 1430s or early 1440s, were not widespread and

received little attention. Filelfo's Latin version of ps.-Aristoteles' (Anaximenes') *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, on the contrary, survives in some thirty manuscripts and went through six incunabula editions.

The plethora of Filelfo's own works displays his ambition to be active in as many genres as possible, both in prose and in verse. He produced 100 *Satyrae*, of 100 hexameters each (Fiaschi 2005); 5000 verses of *Carmina* or *Odes*, in all possible Horatian metres (Robin 2009); a collection of epigrams, *De iocis et seriis*; the *Sphortias*, an epic poem celebrating his patron Francesco Sforza (De Keyser 2015a); and even a collection of Greek poems (Cortassa and Maltese 1997).

Filelfo's prose writings comprise the *Commentationes Florentinae de exilio*, a consolatory philosophical dialogue in three books dedicated to the aristocrats that were exiled after the return to power of Cosimo de' Medici in 1434 (De Keyser and Blanchard 2013) and the *Convivia Mediolanensia* in two books, a Plutarchan dialogue also written in the 1440s; this ambitious encyclopaedic and eclectic work may reflect an attempt to supersede Pier Candido Decembrio's *De inventoribus septem artium liberalium* (Gionta 2005a). The *Consolatio de obitu Valerii*, written for the Venetian patrician Jacopo Antonio Marcello, whose son Valerio had died at the age of eight in 1461 (François 2015), contains a long section discussing the immortality of the soul; the topic is repeated in a similar, yet more concise way in the *Oratio parentalis de divi Francisci Sphortiae Mediolanensium ducis felicitate*, the eulogy delivered by Filelfo in 1467 at the first anniversary of the demise of Francesco Sforza (De Keyser 2015a). Another celebratory biographical writing is the unfinished *Commentarii de vita et rebus gestis Frederici Urbinate*, about Filelfo's patron Federico da Montefeltro. His last major work was the philosophical treatise *De morali disciplina* (1475) intended to enhance his standing as a philosopher when he tried to convince Lorenzo de' Medici to call him back to Florence, where he had been teaching Greek and philosophy more than 40 years earlier (Kraye 1979). Filelfo also produced numerous occasional Latin orations, but his

most important literary legacy is arguably the collection of 110 Greek and more than 2000 Latin letters, addressed to friends and family as well as to princes and prelates all over Europe. This massive *epistolarium* in 48 books is a major source of information, both for Filelfo's own life and opinions, and for the history of the Quattrocento in general (De Keyser 2015b).

Philosophical Positions

Named as the only Italian humanist before Ficino with a real grasp of Plato (Hankins 1990), Filelfo is usually considered an eclectic and syncretistic thinker, holding some kind of middle ground between *Platonici* and *Aristotelici* (Bianca 1986), mostly leaning towards Aristotelianism (Kraye 1979). While he first seemed to remain on the fence in the famous controversy between Plato's defender Bessarion and his slanderer George Trapezuntius, in the end Filelfo sided with Bessarion and his supporters (such as Niccolò Perotti and Theodore Gaza), albeit somewhat reluctantly. His ambivalence may in this case have been more personal than principled, given his life-long friendship with both Bessarion and Trapezuntius (De Keyser 2011), although he often did try to reconcile both philosophers' stances, emphasising what united the master and his pupil rather than what divided them (Bianca 1986). However, his allegedly gradually increasing sympathy for Platonism (Robin 1991) had been present for a long time: the Platonic flavor perceived in the late *De morali disciplina* pertains to passages that Filelfo actually recuperated almost verbatim from his *Commentationes Florentinae de exilio*, written a quarter of a century before (De Keyser and Blanchard 2013). Even before *De exilio*, he had produced his translation of the *Euthyphron* (Martinelli Tempesta 2009) and of three of Plato's letters (Hankins 1990), while in various writings he discussed the Platonic concept of Ideas, mainly through an Augustinian prism (Kraye 1979; Hankins 1990).

Apart from those philosophical writings, other relevant sources for Filelfo's philosophical positions are the discussion of the immortality of the

soul in the *Consolatio ad Iacobum Antonium Marcellum* and the *Oratio parentalis* (De Keyser 2015a) along with numerous letters in his epistolarium (De Keyser 2015b). In one of his letters, Filelfo underscores that the manuscripts he brought back from Byzantium contained not only poets, orators, and historians but also philosophers and theologians (letter PhE-06.57); elsewhere states that the only true philosophy is Christian philosophy (PhE-07.21) and that all Christian theologians are superior to any pagan philosopher (PhE-12.80). Still, his explicit stances on theology and patristics are all but limited to an assessment of the relative value of Jerome and Augustine, which shows him to consider the latter the more competent philosopher (PhE-06.74). Although he expounds Platonic theories on the tripartite division of the soul (PhE-01.12; see also Giustiniani 1980; Kraye 1981) and defends Epicurus against his detractors, claiming that the latter's *voluptas* concept concerned the pleasure of the soul rather than of the body (PhE-01.46), Filelfo explicitly calls himself a lifelong adept of the Stoa (PhE-08.08), which he considers the most serious of all philosophical schools (PhE-26.01). This Stoic preference is reflected in numerous letters highlighting the true philosopher's concern for *virtus*, *honestas*, and *officium*. In other letters, Filelfo can be seen chasing philosophical manuscripts, in particular of Pythagorean texts and of Albert the Great. According to Filelfo, a philosophical scholar needs a thorough knowledge of all philosophical schools (PhE-29.28) and it is clear that he considers his own broad knowledge in this respect a most important asset, as is most aptly illustrated in a long essay letter on the Platonic Ideas (PhE-22.01; see also Hankins 1990) and in the doxographical catalogue in the *Oratio parentalis* (De Keyser 2015a, §25–26).

Philosophical Relevance

Although Filelfo might justifiably be considered more a poet and a – mainly philologically interested – “scholar” than a real philosopher, he did like to fashion himself as an expert concerning

(the history of) philosophy as well. Boasting his superior knowledge of the Greek language, he entertained polemical discussions about doxographical and terminological issues. However, fundamental theological questions – such as the ones dividing the Churches of Rome and Byzantium – do not seem to interest him. Filelfo was certainly not an original philosophical thinker, nor did he pretend to be one. His role was that of a mediator between ancient Greek philosophical source texts and contemporary intellectual debates. Filelfo enjoyed a privileged position when it came to realizing such endeavors because of his 7-year sojourn in Constantinople, which made him perhaps the foremost nonnative expert on Greek in the Quattrocento. It also yielded direct contacts with the most prominent Byzantine scholars. After his return to Italy, and subsequently the fall of Constantinople, Filelfo stayed in close contact with the Greek diaspora, enjoying the patronage of émigré scholars such as Cardinal Bessarion and his circle.

Filelfo also played a crucial role in the import of manuscripts of ancient Greek (philosophical and other) texts to Italy – which he famously listed in a letter to Ambrogio Traversari (quoted in, e.g., Cao 2001, note 47) – and made extensive use of them in his own writings. His collection of Greek manuscripts must have been very extended (Eleuteri 1991) and so was his familiarity with the entire Greek literature, be it directly or indirectly (Calderini 1913). Nevertheless, it is striking how mediated his knowledge often was. Second-hand information, such as supplied by Diogenes Laertius, Diodorus Siculus, ps.-Plutarch's *De placitis philosophorum* and *De musica*, or the Byzantine *Suda* lexicon, often appears to be Filelfo's first source (Gionta 2005a, b). Even his reading of the most important authors, such as Plato and Aristotle, at times appears derivative (Wilson 1992). His ability to read both authors in the original Greek notwithstanding, Filelfo borrowed many of his utterances on Platonism from Middle and Neoplatonic sources, often either Plutarch or (ps.-)Augustine (in particular *De spiritu et anima*). Furthermore, in the *Commentationes Florentinae de exilio* he

incorporated entire pages from Albert the Great's commentary on the *Ethics* rather than citing Aristotle himself (De Keyser and Blanchard 2013). These dialogues *On Exile* are also important because they prove Filelfo to have been the first humanist who was familiar with Sextus Empiricus, although his extensive quotations do not contain a thorough critical assessment of Scepticism. Of Sextus' text Filelfo owned the current Laurenziana ms. Plut. 85.19, which was later also used by Angelo Poliziano, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Marsilio Ficino (Cao 2001).

While fashioning himself as a learned and well-balanced Stoic sage – with a touch of cosmopolitan Cynicism (Blanchard 2007) – Filelfo's first and foremost calling was that of an expert translator and commentator of the classical tradition.

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- Chalkokondyles, Demetrius
- Chrysoloras, Manuel
- Council of Ferrara, Florence, and Basel
- Decembrio, Pier Candido
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- Ficino, Marsilio
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- Latin in the Renaissance
- Manetti, Giannozzo
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Filmer, Sir Robert

Born: East Sutton, Kent 1588

Died: East Sutton, Kent 1653

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Abstract

Victim of John Locke's late seventeenth-century searing attack aimed to dismantle his patriarchalist political ideas, Sir Robert Filmer (1588–1653) was for a long time considered the villain par excellence in the history of political thought. His works were seen as containing archaic, obsolete, and authoritarian principles. However, thanks to new scholarly approaches based on the methodology of contextualism, Filmer's writings have been studied in connection with the polemics of the time during which they were composed. His political ideas have thus been analyzed as a powerful – even though in the long term unsuccessful – theoretical attempt to shape an absolutist vision of sovereignty at the center of which stands the king as father of the fatherland. This revisiting of Filmerian works has also cast light on his less-known tracts on important early modern issues such as theology, women and the household, witchcraft, and usury. Ultimately, Filmer has nowadays acquired a different – that is, finer – reputation as a thinker whose contribution to the history of ideas deserves a place only a level lower than that of high-caliber authors like Hobbes and his archenemy Locke.

Biography

Born in a wealthy and influential gentry family, Sir Robert's formative years were similar to those of many young members of his milieu: after matriculating at Trinity College, Cambridge (1604), where he never graduated, the following year he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn and 8 years later he enrolled as a member of the Bar despite

never practicing as a lawyer. Married to Anne Heton, elder daughter of Martin Heton, the powerful Bishop of Ely during James I's reign, Sir Robert is mainly known as the author of the notorious *Patriarcha* (published in 1680 but ready for publication in the early 1630s) whose sole merit for many interpreters was to have been picked by John Locke as the main target in the *First Treatise* (1689). Filmer – who besides political tracts such as *The Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy* (1648) and *Observations Concerning The Original of Government, Upon Mr. Hobs Leviathan, Mr. Milton against Salmasius, H. Grotius De Jure Belli* (1652) wrote short works on theology, women and the household, witchcraft, and usury – came to be associated with the patriarchalist theory since he insisted on the political role of Adam as first king on earth to whom God had assigned absolute power over all creatures and from whom power had then passed on to kings through the ancient patriarchs.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Filmer has been depicted as a narrow-minded representative of a patriarchal society; as a conventional absolutist; or, simply, as the exponent of archaic beliefs which failed to succeed in the theater of ideas when confronted by the typhoon of modern philosophy, empirical science, and social change. *Patriarcha* has throughout the centuries attracted a long list of detractors, including the *philosophe* Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Filmer's treatise has been seen as a strong justification for the dominion of fathers/husband/masters over children/wives/servants. His patriarchalism has been portrayed as the epitome of a personal authority antithetical to an artificial and liberal conception of politics, as the quintessence of women's subjugation to men, and as a specific structure of production and labor characterizing the household.

Innovative and Original Aspects

His originality lies in that Filmer employed a conservative political vocabulary (patriarchalism)

in a radical fashion to demonstrate that an all-powerful monarch was the sole guarantee of people's liberties and the nation's peace against internal conflict and external interference.

Impact and Legacy

Always opposed to popular participation in government, Filmer's works – where he also stressed the need for subjects to unconditionally obey their king represented as protective *pater patriae* and argued that politics was a complex domain that required specific competence – anticipated some modern reflections on the solitude of the (unbounded) ruler and the solitude of power as indispensable and irrevocable conditions for the working of all good and effective politics. In this respect, Filmer is one of the early modern thinkers who did the most to show the faults of democratic government in ways which are still employed nowadays to criticize this polity: a careless attitude toward the public good, cumbersome mechanisms of decision-making, high taxation, and limited viability (e.g., small territories).

Interconnections

Undoubtedly absolutist, Filmerian ideas have very often been read out of context, that is, with no relation to the debates and controversies in which they originated. Victim of Locke-inspired mockery, Sir Robert was until recently viewed as, at best, a straw man, when not a plain villain, in the history of political thought where his opinions were reputed to be both absurd and oppressive. This historiographical approach failed to engage with Filmer's forceful theory of absolute and arbitrary government as the response to authors who supported the idea of an original state of nature in which people were free and equal (e.g., Thomas Hobbes) and to a growing number of thinkers as well as MPs who in the first decades of the seventeenth century in England claimed Parliament's patriotic role against the king (e.g., Puritan and resistance theorists). In addition to these targets, Filmer attacked Jesuits such as Robert Bellarmine

and Francisco Suárez for defending the theory whereby the Pope could intervene in the temporal sphere.

Cross-References

- [Bellarmino, Roberto](#)
- [Jesuits in the Early Modern Period](#)
- [Suárez, Francisco](#)

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as a common empirical healer in Palermo, he moved up the Italian peninsula as well as the social hierarchy, becoming first a licensed surgeon (Naples, Rome), then a successful medical writer (Venice) and a graduated physician (Bologna), and finally a doctor at the court of king Philip II of Spain. A supporter of alchemical medicine and a master of self-fashioning, Fioravanti portrayed himself as the miraculous healer, the new Asclepius, the initiator of a new way of curing. His reputation swung for all his life (and in the following centuries) between that of an untrustworthy mountebank and that of a medical genius, earning him admiration and contempt in equal measure. The truth lies probably in the middle: although his bombastic claims and his advertising strategies put him in close relationship with charlatans, some aspects of his practice truly foreshadowed some future developments in medicine. His whole activity is characterized by an explorative attitude, an experimental approach, and a general refusal of the academic immobilism, all key features of the upcoming scientific revolution.

Alternate Names

[Fieravante, Leonardo](#); [Fieravanti, Leonardo](#); [Floravanti, Leonardo](#)

Fioravanti, Leonardo

Born: Bologna, 10 May 1517

Died: After 1583

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Abstract

Leonardo Fioravanti was one of the most peculiar medical practitioners active in late sixteenth-century Italy. Beginning his career

Biography

Although it is possible to pinpoint a few moments in Fioravanti's life by means of archival records (whose most complete account is provided by Eamon 2010; see manuscript and archival sources below), what we know about him comes mostly from the autobiographical notes disseminated throughout his books; his journeys and accomplishments therefore have to be taken with some reservations.

Fioravanti was born in 1517, in Bologna, where he might have started a training in medicine or surgery. In 1548 he left the city, headed to Genoa and from there to Sicily, without any

experience nor academic title. Nevertheless, he states to have quickly gained some recognition in Palermo with his spectacular healings (among the others a splenectomy, a very difficult operation at that time), and to have become acquainted with the Spanish milieu. In 1549 he moved to Messina, and after a few months he sailed to Naples. During his journey he stopped in Tropea, where he tricked the surgeons Pietro and Paolo Vianeo and learned their secret rhinoplasty technique. In Naples, he entered the service of the Spanish viceroy, don Pietro de Toledo. While there, he became familiar with the Neapolitan scientific milieu, the philosophy of Bernardino Telesio and the local academies (see Eamon 2010, 102–121; Eamon 2017): he probably gathered around him a group of friends and disciples, devoted to experimenting and distilling drugs. Also, in this period he obtained a license for practicing surgery from the local *protomedicato*. In the following years he joined the Spanish army as a military surgeon in the campaign of Africa (1550–1551; nowadays Mahdia, in Tunisia) and in the first years of the war against Siena (1552–1559).

He then moved to Rome, where – he says – his miraculous cures gained him both the friendship of the noblemen and the envy of the graduated doctors. Although reports of his surgical treatments in the city are available since 1555 (ASR, Tribunale del Governatore, bb. 6 and 6/2), he was practicing without a license from the Roman *protomedicato*, which he eventually obtained in 1557 (ASR, Camerale II, Sanità, f. 20v). Despite being now authorized, he states that in the same year he was sued by a group of 12 physicians who wanted his license revoked and his remedies forbidden, and lost the trial.

After this setback, Fioravanti left Rome for Venice, where he arrived in autumn 1558. There he soon befriended local apothecaries, alchemists, and artisans, but also well-known polygraphs like Girolamo Ruscelli, Dionigi Atanagi, and Francesco Sansovino, and became acquainted with the Venetian book market. He stayed in Venice for at least 15 years, becoming a successful medical writer: apart from editing a few surgery texts (see Rositini and Rositini 1561), he authored two books of secrets (*Secreti medicinali*, 1561,

reprinted in the same year with the new title of *Capricci medicinali*; and *Del compendio de i secreti rationali*, 1564a), a treatise on the plague (*Del regimento della peste*, 1565), one on surgery (*La cirugia*, 1570a) and his most autobiographic book, *Il tesoro della vita humana* (1570b). He also wrote an encyclopedic work on human arts and professions (*Dello specchio di scientia universale*, 1564b), deeply influenced by his observation of the Venetian marketplace.

In the meantime, he also tried other ways to increase his fame. Officially appointed by the Republic of Venice (ASV, Senato, Terra, b. 45, c. 200v), in 1561–1562 he made an attempt at repopulating the dying city of Pola, strained by malaria: but despite some good ideas in terms of land reclamation and hygiene (such as the suggestion of putting *incerate*, prototypes of mosquito nets, on the windows), his effort was essentially a failure (Camporesi 1997, 192–198; Eamon 2010, 228–232). He also repeatedly tried to gain the favor of two princes particularly fond of technical arts, grand duke Cosimo I de' Medici and duke Alfonso II d'Este; but neither of them showed much interest in his letters (nowadays conserved in the State Archives of Modena and Firenze, and at the Biblioteca Estense in Modena) and his high-flown projects, nor they offered him a place at court.

With all this, he was still practicing medicine without authorization, as the Venetian *Provveditori di sanità* had refused his application in 1563 (ASV, X poi XX Savi, b. 24); eventually he was licensed, although probably only for surgical interventions (ASV, Giustizia Vecchia, b. 49, reg. 79). Finally, in 1568 Fioravanti applied for a degree in arts and medicine at the University of Bologna: he quickly obtained the diploma and the title of count and knight associated to it (ASB, Studio Bolognese, 193, Liber Actorum Utriusque Collegii, ff. 131r, 134v; edited in Gentili 1951).

Nevertheless, his unorthodox convictions kept causing him troubles with the medical establishment: in 1573, in fact, he was imprisoned in Milan under the charge of causing some deaths with his unconventional medicine. The episode, carefully omitted by Leonardo in his books, is reported by an archival source (ASMi, Autografi, Medici,

215, fasc. 15; edited in Dall'Osso 1956 and Camporesi 1997).

In 1576 Fioravanti was invited at the court of king Philip II of Spain, in Madrid. There he acquired a first-hand knowledge of the drugs and marvels from the New World and of the treatise written on American herbs by the physician and botanist Nicolás Monardes (1574). But once again, in 1577 his alchemical medicine led him to trial, standing charges of having killed a servant with his unorthodox drugs and of practicing medicine illegally. Fioravanti withholds this fact too, but a manuscript in Castilian accounts for it (see BL, Add. MS 28,353, ff. 57–61).

Although the outcome of the trial is unknown, soon after it Fioravanti was back in Italy, traveling between Naples, Rome, and Venice. His last book, *Della fisica*, largely indebted to his experience at king Philip's court, was published in Venice in 1582.

Fioravanti's date of death is unknown: it was certainly after 1583 (when he authored a new edition of his *Specchio*), and possibly even after 1594, when his *Regimento* was republished with some original additions (Eamon 2010, 300). The most accepted date, 1588, probably derives from the eighteenth century historians' confusion with Valerio Fioravanti, a Bolognese physician who died in that year.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Fioravanti's writings are characterized by a decisive rupture with academic medicine. His practice is guided by experience, common sense and a certain dose of skepticism: such approach makes him close to the ancient Empiric School. "The scourge of the doctors" (Eamon 2010, 10), Fioravanti accuses them to have abandoned the people, to be greedy and ignorant, and to have lost sight of the true medicine. He gradually comes to consider the Galenic theory of humors (which cannot be seen and are therefore impossible to prove) to be useless, because medicine should cure the disease, not speculate on its invisible causes. A similar repugnance is reserved for anatomy (Eamon 2010, 41–47; Klestinec 2016,

48–52) and for some pointless – if not dangerous – practices. He rejects long-lasting treatments based on strict regimens and weak drugs (the most frequent course of action prescribed by academic physicians). He also refuses to drain wounds or to cauterize them with boiling oil or red-hot iron: instead, they should be disinfected with ointments and waters, tied up strictly and cleaned often.

Although sharing the Galenic appreciation for *simplices*, Fioravanti firmly believes that these should be brought to their essence (where the healing power lies) by means of alchemical processes – first of all, distillation. In his appreciation of quintessences, he shows some connections with the medieval tradition of Arnaldus de Villanova, John of Rupescissa, and pseudo-Ramon Llull. His familiarity with alchemists and distillers dates back to his Sicilian and Neapolitan years; but it is especially after his encounter with the Milanese alchemist Ettore Ausonio that Fioravanti embraces the quest for the philosopher's stone. What he seeks is not much a way to produce gold from mere metals, but rather the universal cure, a panacea for all diseases, what he calls "Magna Medicina" (Fioravanti 1582, 171; see Eamon 2010, 204–209). Such goal might also have inspired his journey to Spain, where king Philip II was commissioning alchemical experiments inspired by the pseudo-Lullian philosophy (Eamon 2005).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Fioravanti's main critique of the medical establishment stands on its theoretical nature. In his opinion a good physician could not acquire true knowledge by reading and speculation, but only by observing nature and "walking the world" with curiosity and open mind. The doctor's most important tools, according to him, are not bookish notions but shrewdness and good judgement. He advises speaking especially with craftsmen and common people: midwives, shepherds and farmers are in his eyes the bearers of an empirical wisdom which comes from their close contact with nature, and which therefore far outclasses the academic medicine. Still, he believes that

experience has to be guided by a method in order to acquire true knowledge; but he never clearly defines the nature of this method (Eamon 1994, 190–191).

Another criticism is directed to the Galenic tripartition of medicine in diet, drugs, and surgery, radicalized in his days by the growing authority of the *Protomedicati* and by the predominance of graduated physicians over apothecaries and surgeons. Fioravanti advocates the necessity of reuniting these three arts, arguing that originally they were but one profession. He embraces the idea of a Golden Age when medicine was close to nature and at everyone's hand, until it started to be codified in philosophical systems, giving power to theory over practice and to the learned physician over the illiterate empiric (see Eamon 1993).

The predilection for hands-on experience over theory leads Fioravanti to praise all technical arts: he shows interest in metallurgy, perfumery, agriculture, military weaponry, naval engineering and many other manual skills. Above all he is fond of alchemy, which he considers in its practical implications: mostly how to distill drugs and prepare quintessences. He doesn't appear to take much interest in the obscure, theoretical aspects of alchemy (although showing appreciation for pseudo-Lullian philosophy), nor in its connection to astrology. William Eamon (2000) has even argued that, although sincerely believing in the power of distilled drugs, Fioravanti's alchemy was largely a matter of fashion and competitiveness in the contemporary medical marketplace.

Standing somewhere between Telesian philosophy and medical primitivism, Fioravanti sees nature as "the universal standard of the truth" (Eamon 2010, 110); he therefore proposes a new way of curing which is, essentially, a return to what he considers the "rules of nature." He distances himself from anatomy (which he compares to butchery) and finds a better source of inspiration in farming: hence his refusal of cauterizations and draining procedures and the idea that a surgeon should help the natural healing of wounds, just as the farmer does with a broken plant. Similarly, his internal medicine is inspired by the observation of animals, which know by instinct how to purge their bodies from ailments (Eamon 1993).

Purgation is probably the major stronghold of Fioravanti's medical doctrine: rejecting Galenic theories and conceiving of the body as the "kitchen of nature" (Fioravanti 1570a, fol. 22r), he maintains that every disease is the result of foul corruption which condenses in the stomach; he therefore aims at purifying it with powerful emetics. The martial spirit of his medicine probably conveys his experience with the Spanish army and might even be intended to play on the popular chivalric theme (Eamon 2010, 125), but it also aligns with the Counter-Reformation temper: illness is a corruption of the body, just as heresy is a corruption of the soul, and both have to be driven out of the human being quickly and by extreme means, if necessary (Eamon 1994, 189–190). His idea that all diseases originate in the stomach also motivates his quest for a universal remedy (a medical philosopher stone). Eamon has suggested that this obsession with purging the body derives from Fioravanti's familiarity with barber-surgeons, whose job was to cleanse the body not only aesthetically, but also internally: for instance, with blood-letting therapy (Eamon 2010, 83). Blood (and its purging) is very important to Fioravanti; in his latest work, *Della fisica*, he states that all diseases are originated from the corruption of either blood or stomach. He even affirms that distilling blood would produce a quintessence which, according to him, has marvelous curative properties (Fioravanti 1582, 166).

While establishing his new way of healing, Fioravanti also carries out an ideological message, which targets not only the medical culture: to him, the spread of new and old diseases and the uselessness of official medicine are a consequence of the corruption of contemporary society. He is clearly pointing out such moral decline not only when he participates in the common belief that the plague is God's punishment for men's sins, but also when he suggests that syphilis (the sixteenth-century new and dreadful epidemic disease) is caused by the practice of cannibalism (Eamon 1998). More than once he laments the depravity of Italian princes and of their courtiers; on the contrary, he praises the lower classes for their closer connection to nature and for their practical knowledge. Coherently with his concrete

approach to life, he acknowledges the dignity of mechanical arts: in his *Specchio* he presents the professions by practicality and usefulness (giving the first place to agriculture), in what Douglas Biow has called “a rhetoric of praise and blame” (Biow 2015, 135–136). Despite this veiled effort at somehow “leveling” society (an effort carried out also by divulging his knowledge in cheap books written in the vernacular) he avoids any further step in the sociopolitical direction, confining his reformistic attempts to medicine.

Impact and Legacy

Fioravanti's fortune largely relies on his communicative skills (Biow 2015, 117): with his books he paved the way to a new style of medical writing. His friendship with polygraphs like Ruscelli and Atanagi on the one side helped him understand the great potentialities of printing, and on the other side allowed him to broaden his culture. In his works he shows a remarkable entrepreneurial attitude and a talent for narration, which go along with a careful self-fashioning in words, pictures, and behavior (on Renaissance self-fashioning, see Greenblatt 1980). As such, books were not only a means to disseminate his ideas and to provide an alternative to the academic medicine; they were also the virtual *piazza* of his medical performances, a place where Fioravanti could display his histrionic character and advertise his own remedies and works, like a charlatan from his bench. Fame was what he sought in the first place: to achieve this goal, he chose to write in the vernacular and to adopt a simple, effective, and attractive style. His books are rich in hyperboles, anecdotes, and remedies with catchy names, but they also contain contemptuous criticisms of contemporary society: all useful ingredients in drawing the attention of a broad audience. However, as those polygraphs that he befriended, he was not unfamiliar with plagiarism: Paolo Cherchi has shown how the second book of his *Specchio* (the more humanistic in style and contents) is largely indebted to Antonio Guevara's *Epistolas familiares* (Cherchi 1995, 1998).

Story-telling and theatricality played a crucial role in fascinating and luring readers into buying (more of) his books. This is most evident in the *Tesoro della vita humana*: the second section of this work is largely a picaresque account of Fioravanti's life, the tale of a nobody who with tricks, boldness, curiosity and fortune acquires truth and wisdom, finally achieving the social rank of doctor and knight. Furthermore, in the third section Fioravanti publishes the letters received from (and sent to) patients and colleagues seeking his counsel; and from admirers praising him both as doctor and writer. The dialogic nature of these letters allows Fioravanti both to promote his empirical method and to advertise his books and remedies by means of many different voices (Bayle 2009).

His strategies proved to be highly effective: all his books met with immediate success, and almost 100 editions and translations were issued up until 1700 (a complete list is provided by Eamon 2010, 322–323; for 16th-century editions see also EDIT16 2019). The adaptation of his works by the London apothecary John Hester played a relevant role in the spread of alchemical medicine and distillation practice in England (Pantin 2013); his empirical approach and his statements about social corruption even resonated in Montaigne's writings (Losse 2015, 85–105). His remedies were known throughout Europe as well as his books, even reaching the New World: one of his drugs, *Fioravanti's balm*, was still sold by the apothecaries well into the eighteenth century.

In his attempt to captivate the public, Fioravanti not only denounces the uselessness of contemporary medicine; he also proposes a concrete “other way,” with drugs and therapies characterized by a deep understanding of what was fashionable on the sixteenth-century marketplace (Eamon 2003). Moreover, among his blustering claims it is possible to find some noteworthy statements: his idea that cures should rely on drugs rather than on a rebalancing of humors was, for one, particularly modern. Also, his description of practices like splenectomy and rhinoplasty influenced the medical debate in the

following decades (see Webster 1971, 159–161; Santoni-Rugiu and Mazzola 1997).

In fashioning his *persona* of “maverick physician” (Biow 2015), Fioravanti managed to put himself at the center of an alternative medical movement, with followers everywhere. The extent of such milieu is suggested especially (but not only) by the epistolary section of his *Tesoro*. The publication of his private correspondence with his patients, despite being essentially a promotional enterprise, played also a significant role in expanding the medical discourse out of the academic niche: by addressing the patient directly and in vernacular, he was sending the message that medical knowledge could be within everyone’s grasp (Bayle 2009).

With his adventurous life, Fioravanti also set a prototype for wandering empirics and charlatans, although staging his *persona* in books rather than squares (Gentilcore 2006, 268–269; Gambaccini 2004; Eamon 2010, 166–174; Cosmacini 1998). His defiant behavior inspired satirical characters like Giulio Cesare Croce’s *Bertoldo*, and political and religious polemicists like Costantino Saccardino. Although not a Paracelsian, he had many admirers among spagirists, like Tomaso Zefiriele Bovio or the later Giuseppe Donzelli. He became a symbol of anti-authoritarianism, and was often quoted in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century medical literature by those aiming at demolishing Galenic dogmas. However, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians of medicine mostly branded him as an untrustworthy charlatan: his name has been somehow rehabilitated only during the last century starting with the biography of Davide Giordano (1920; see Eamon 2010, 302–314).

Finally, Fioravanti managed to extend his influence beyond medicine: his *Specchio di scientia universale*, a result of his insatiable observation of human arts, anticipates and provides a model – although from a completely different perspective – for Tomaso Garzoni’s *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (1585), one of the first examples of a new literary genre, the *letteratura dei mestieri* (Mocarelli 2011; Vidali Giorio 1969).

Cross-References

- ▶ Alchemical Medicine and Distillation
- ▶ Galen and Galenism
- ▶ Humors in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Observation in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Syphilis in Renaissance Medicine
- ▶ Telesio, Bernardino

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Flaccus, Quintus Horatius

- [Horace in the Renaissance](#)

Flandini, Ambrosio

- [Flandino, Ambrogio](#)

Flandino, Ambrogio

Born: 1467, Naples

Died: 3 December 1532, Mantua

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Abstract

Despite the lack of novelty in his thought and of elegance in his writings, Ambrogio Flandino was in many ways a rather important voice in several debates of the early sixteenth-century

Italian intellectual world, engaging in philosophical and theological disputes with Erasmus, Pietro Pomponazzi, and Martin Luther.

Alternate Names

[Flandini, Ambrosio](#); [Fiandino, Ambrosio](#); [Fiandini, Ambrosio](#); [Flandinus, Ambrosius](#); [de Flandinis](#); [Neapolitanus](#); [Parthenopaeus](#)

Biography

Ambrogio Flandino was most likely born in Naples around 1467. Not much is known of his early life if not what he himself tells us: that he entered the Augustinian order, in which he was fostered by the future general Giovanni Antonio da Chieti and in which he studied modeling himself on the examples of Mariano of Genazzano and Giles of Viterbo. It is with the election of the latter as the Augustinian order's prior general (1507), as numerous letters testify, that Flandino's career enhanced: he became regent of the convent of S. Giacomo in Bologna and later *magister senior* and regent in Florence (1509) (Giles of Viterbo 1992). The date of his nomination as provincial of Terra di Lavoro is uncertain, yet he surely had already been appointed by mid-1511. Flandino had no success here neither in appeasing the unruly Neapolitan convent nor in ushering the order's reform. He soon had to face the enmity of several friars, and for this reason he was probably removed from his administrative office in favor of more scholarly ones: in 1514 he became regent of the *Studium* in Naples, a role in which he was confirmed again a year after for the following 4 years. However, his contrasts with the Neapolitan friars remained unsolved, and it is probably for their escalation that he was sent to preach in Mantua in January 1517, provided with Giles of Viterbo's reference letters for the local convent and court. He succeeded in being nominated bishop of Lamos, *in partibus infidelium*, and suffragan bishop of Mantua. He spent his last 15 years in this city, dividing his time between

his pastoral duties and scholarly efforts. His stay in Mantua was however troubled in 1528 by his public siding in favor of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples' critique of the biblical figure of Mary Magdalene. The Mantuan court's devotion – and of the marquise Isabella in particular – for the biblical saint brought to severe contrasts, which reached their peak in the marquis' injunction to Flandino to leave the city. This turbulent phase could only be overcome thanks to the support of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, holder of the Mantuan bishopric. Flandino could thus spend his last years in Mantua, troubled by gout, which eventually led him to death at the beginning of December 1532 (Bacchelli 1997).

Almost all of Flandino's preserved works date from his years in Mantua. Alongside his wide production of sermons, his interest for platonic philosophy is clearly visible. The strong influence played on him by Erasmus has been demonstrated and so has its central role in the dispute which opposed Flandino and another Augustinian friar, Ambrogio Quistelli, initially on the figure of Mary Magdalene, but soon expanding to the role of pagan authors in Christian culture (Seidel Menchi 1981). Two of Flandino's writings originated from this dispute: the now lost *Apologia ex templo post resurrectionis festum*, dating from 1529, and the *Apologia ubi statur pro Ecclesiae doctoribus et patribus ac philosophis in eos qui negant citandos hos esse in concionibus* included in the 1532 sermon collection entitled *Seraphim*. In his later years, Flandino distanced himself from Erasmus, although not entirely, as testified in some of his writings, especially in the unfinished *Contra lutheranos de vera et catholica fide conflictationes* and *Examen vanitatis duodecim articulorum Martini Lutheri*, in which he took sides with Alberto Pio against the Dutch scholar and against Martin Luther and Gasparo Contarini (Gutiérrez 1976; Graiff 1978b; Seidel Menchi 1981). The best known among Flandino's works are, however, those against Pietro Pomponazzi. Already at the time of his earliest preaching in Mantua, Flandino attacked Pomponazzi's doctrine on the soul, though not making his name, and 2 years later (1519) he published his *De animorum immortalitate liber contra assertorem mortalitatis*, having also fostered Agostino Nifo's

writing on the same matter (Lemay 1976). Moreover, Flandino's debate with Pomponazzi was not only limited to the immortality of the soul but also contrasted his view on fate and human will with the *De fato contra Petrum Pomponatium*, composed in the mid-1520s and preserved in a single manuscript copy (Garin 1972; Lemay 1976; Graiff 1978a; Del Soldato 2010).

The following list of Flandino's works only refers to the ones which have been preserved (for mentions of other lost works, which include commentaries on Aristotle, on the *Sentences* and on Hermes, see Lemay 1976 and Seidel Menchi 1981). The dates of composition have been in most cases conjectured. The titles of secondary literature only include the main studies; further references can be found in them.

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Florilegium

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Flow and Ebb in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the origin of tidal motions was hotly debated in various intellectual circles. The entry examines how in the early modern period the astrological interpretations of the phenomenon first put forth in the writings of Persian astrologer Abu Ma'shar were challenged; this, in turn, opened the door for a variety of other natural philosophical interpretations.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

As is well known, two of the most famous early modern interpretations of tides are by Galileo Galilei and Isaac Newton, but the origin of this natural phenomenon was widely debated before the publication of Galileo's *Dialogo*. We still do not have enough evidence about ancient representations of tides; at least, none of the theories achieved consensus. According to some studies, the primary source of the ancient theories of tides is Pliny the Elder, who strongly influenced all

medieval authors concerned with natural history. In his *Naturalis Historia*, he states that an interaction between the sun and the moon on the basis of the fortnightly cycles causes the tides, but he does not go into much detail and gives no explicit explanation for the fortnightly cycle.

In the Middle Ages, many explanations for tidal motions were put forth. Some of them had a clear astrological background and were introduced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries due to the transmission of Islamic knowledge in the West. There were three main tidal theories in the Middle Ages. The first admitted the existence of underwater chasms, which periodically drew in and forced out the water, and thus in analogy with breathing in an animal, caused the movement of the tide due to certain natural rules. The second theory, also of more physical nature, attributed tides to, among other things, the action of rivers and winds, the salinity of the water, or the natural heat of deep water. Finally, the third, astronomical/astrological theory was based on a recognition of the correlation between tides, diurnal rotation, and the lunar cycle. It dated back to Abu Ma'shar's *Liber introductorii maioris ad scientiam iudiciorum astrorum*, the most influential astrological "manual" in medieval Europe, and thus had a strong astrological dimension. Also, Abu Ma'shar contributed to an idea that besides the moon, other heavenly bodies including the sun and the planets also influenced the tides, which gave additional weight for the diffusion of pro-astrological explanations of the phenomenon. The theory was widely accepted in medieval Europe and gave rise to new interpretations of tidal motions. At the same time, Abu Ma'shar himself confirms that the tides can have dual origin: after a lengthy exposition on the astronomical/astrological origin of tides, he adds, as another cause of the phenomenon, the action of the winds.

Impact and Legacy

Even though in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries some scholars continued to rely on Abu Ma'shar's ideas, the astrological interpretations

of tidal motions were challenged. It is worth noting that for medieval and Renaissance thinkers, the flow and ebb phenomenon dealt with debates of a more philosophical and theological character, namely, on how celestial impulses influenced terrestrial phenomena. While medieval scholasticism intended to reconcile Christian teaching with the newly discovered astrological knowledge widely legitimized with the use of numerous pseudo-Aristotelian texts, Renaissance scholars who questioned the predominance of the Aristotelian natural philosophical framework had, in turn, sought for new interpretations primarily devoid of astrological elements. Most of sixteenth-century Renaissance scholars followed Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who tried to denounce the astrological explanation of tides in the *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, and came out with three major approaches to the problem in question. While according to vitalistic interpretations, the motion of water is caused by the subterrestrial impulses, some scholars, such as Bernardino Telesio, insisted that thermic changes might provoke the phenomenon. Finally, the third explanation, that of mechanical and mathematical origin, backed by leading late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century natural philosophers, quickly became dominant. Described in the works of Simon Stevin and Marco Antonio de Dominis, the mechanical/mathematical cause of flow and ebb was analyzed in great detail in Galileo's *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, in which it was considered one of the main arguments for the heliocentric system. However, Galileo's attempt to establish a link between the motion of the earth and the motion of water was later rejected as contradicting the theory of universal gravitation, according to which the tides occur depending on the position of the moon in its relation to the earth. Evidence suggests that since the 1687 publication of the *Principia* Newton's interpretation was widely accepted as the only reliable and scientifically proven. Thus, in the mid-eighteenth century, in his *Dissertatio de maris aestu* and some other writings, while exploring the origin of tides, Roger Joseph Boscovich known as the "Croatian Leibniz"

praised Newton's theory of gravitation claiming that it had been the greatest scientific achievement the world had ever seen.

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Floyd, John

Born: 14 October 1572, Cambridgeshire, England

Died: 16 September 1649, Saint Omer-France

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Abstract

John Floyd is an English Jesuit priest, militant defender of the faith, and Counter-Reformation

author, also known under the pseudonyms Daniel à Jesu, I. R., A.C., Fidelis Annosus, and Hermannus Loemelius. Although nothing is known of his parentage, Floyd was the brother of Henry Floyd, also a Jesuit priest. Like other Jesuits with a mandate to teach and preach, Floyd traveled across the continent, wrote prolifically on a range of subjects addressed to a wide audience of clerics and lay readers, and published many works, challenging Protestant thinking and defending a Counter-Reformation papacy. Heavily influenced by scholasticism and the practices of medieval piety, Floyd's writings emphasize church teachings alongside scripture, but also maintain the active, visible, bodily presence of God.

Biography

Floyd received his schooling at the English colleges in Reims (1588) and Rome (1590) and joined the Society of Jesus in 1592. He began his scholarly career in Rome, instructing clergy in philosophy and theology at the Collegio Romano. Sent on the English mission, Floyd was captured when he visited a fellow Jesuit Edward Oldcorne and jailed for his alleged involvement in the 1605 gunpowder plot. Floyd was imprisoned for a year and banished from England upon his release, although he returned to England several times and was repeatedly arrested. Floyd taught at the English College, Louvain, from 1607 to 1616, and spent the rest of his life at the French Jesuit college of Saint-Omer, a setting which supplied him with “convenient access to the printing press” (Milward 2004).

Floyd's works are written in Latin or in an earthy vernacular and are notable for their harsh wit and sometimes caustic rhetoric. His theology is pragmatic and polemical, its terminology both legalistic and vividly imagistic. His *Apology for the Holy See* produced in support of papal authority incited the ire of French bishops (Basset 79–80), but his writings continued to receive the support of Rome, and nearly two dozen works

articulate Counter-Reformation positions on issues at the center of reformist debate, including priestly apostasy, the role of devotional images, the belief in Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, and the existence of purgatory (O'Malley 84). They respond to criticisms of Catholic superstition, defend the prerogatives of papal authority, and seek to explain how the antiquity and authority of the Catholic church are established through the sacraments (Mazzola 55, Dudley 279). English writers such as Sidney, Spenser, Donne, Shakespeare, and Milton were similarly influenced by reformation debates over "speaking pictures" and the efficacy of sacred signs.

Floyd's writings were intended for a wide readership including fellow Jesuits, Catholic clergy, and university theologians, as well as lay readers, for whom Floyd provided more popular formulations of post-Tridentine refinements of church teachings. In *The Overthrow of the Protestants Pulpit-Babels* (1612), Floyd proposes that although sacred images should not be worshipped, there "doth redound some kind of honour unto the very image" "represent[ing] him whom we worship with diuine worship, whom, did not the image resemble, we would not worship before it." Other works confront Floyd's opponents more directly, such as the Latin *Deus et Rex* (1619), which parodies Floyd's Anglican critics.

Floyd's works affirm Catholic teachings as providing sure access to the sacred past and to truth. In *Purgatories Triumph over Hell* (1613), Floyd links belief in purgatory with adherence to biblical doctrine as well as "happy purgation from heathenish superstition." Floyd also cites as proof of purgatory's existence "the miracles done at the Reliques & by the Intercession of Martyrs." This epistemology is influenced by the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola (founder of the Jesuits), which similarly expound the ways devotional practices enable believers to "taste, smell, and feel internally" the truths of doctrine.

Floyd's writings contribute to a post-Reformation Catholicism more clearly centered in Rome and an epistemology grounded in the literalness of church teaching, the efficacy of sacred objects, and the authority of the pope.

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Fluctibus, Robertus de

► [Fludd, Robert](#)

Fludd, Robert

Born: Bearsted, Kent, 17 January 1574

Died: London, 8 September 1673

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Abstract

An English physician, philosopher, and alchemist, Robert Fludd was Welsh in origins. His father, Sir Thomas Fludd, M.P., had been appointed as treasurer to the court of Elizabeth I. Between 1591 and 1598, Robert Fludd was reading for his master's degree at St. John's College, Oxford. In 1598–1604, he traveled on the continent where he was employed as tutor to the children of aristocratic French Catholic families. He also spent a winter in the foothills of the Pyrenees with a group of Jesuit priests, although, as he publically proclaimed, he was always a staunch Anglican. Fludd recorded that the priests taught him various magical

practices, not least the art of divination. This contact with the Jesuits probably colored Fludd's magical, as well as his religious, concepts to an extent hitherto underestimated by later scholars.

Alternate Names

de Fluctibus, Robertus; Fluctibus, Robertus de

Biography

On his return to England, Fludd undertook further medical studies at Christ Church College, Oxford, and in 1604 and 1605, he was awarded his degrees of M.B and M.D, respectively, after which he moved to London and attempted to gain entry to the College of Physicians. He was rejected six times due to his offensive remarks concerning the medical system of the ancient Greek physician, Galen, whose writings were the foundation of the university medical curriculum. In his place, Fludd was proposing the medical theories of the notorious sixteenth-century German theosophist, Theophrastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim. In 1609 Fludd was finally granted admission to the College of Physicians and was, thus, duly authorized to practice. Disregarding his new position in the medical establishment, the alchemical medicine and theosophy of Paracelsus and his followers continued to provide the foundation for Fludd's medical practice as well as his religious and philosophical ideas.

Fludd was a prolific writer of vast, multi-volume encyclopedias that described a universal range of topics from magical practices such as alchemy, astrology, kabbalism, and divination to a radical theologized cosmology concerning the interrelation of God with the natural and human worlds. At the same time, Fludd proudly displayed his grasp of practical knowledge, such as mechanics, architecture, military fortifications, armaments, military maneuvers, hydrology, musical theory and musical instruments, mathematics, geometry, optics, the art of drawing, chemistry, and medicine. Fludd employed a well-used

contemporary metaphor for these mundane arts, viz., that human endeavor was the "ape of Nature." Fludd achieved notoriety after he published his *Apologia* (1616), one of the earliest polemics written in support of the "Rosicrucian Manifestos." (He expanded this treatise into the *Tractatus Apologeticus* (1618)). The Rosicrucian Manifestos consisted of two texts, the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614) and the *Confessio* (1615), which had been published anonymously in Kassel. They have been the subject of continuing debate among scholars ever since in respect to their origins and authorship. The existence of the Rosicrucians as an authentic grouping has never been proven. Nevertheless, they were supported by a heterogeneous group of prestigious Protestant religious reformers, among them, Johann Valentin Andreae and his colleagues in the theology school at Tübingen University. These may, in fact, have been the authors of the Manifestos. Other Rosicrucian followers included those magical practitioners and alchemists involved in the study of the late antique magus Hermes Trismegistos as well as the writings of Jewish and Christian kabbalists. These further subscribed to the more recent magical ideas of Cornelius Agrippa and of the religious philosophy of Paracelsus. All of these fellow travelers, like Fludd, may be loosely described as "Rosicrucians."

Fludd's most famous work is the *History of the Two Worlds (Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia, 1617–1621)* published in five volumes by Theodore de Bry in Oppenheim. The two worlds under discussion are those of the Microcosm of human life on earth and the Macrocosm of the universe (including the spiritual realm of the divine). Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of Fludd's exhaustive and exhausting output is the range of copper plate engravings in his texts. Due to the originality of his designs and ideas, Fludd's visual images are likely to be the product of his own imagination. Kabbalistic elements were also included in the imagery. In comparison to several other remarkable visionary excursions into visual alchemy, most exceptionally, those of Heinrich Khunrath and Michael Maier, Fludd's illustrations remain unique and owe absolutely nothing to the visual imagery of his alchemical peers.

Furthermore, Fludd's cosmological system is an inventive reworking of Paracelsian alchemy. In his first volume of the *Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia*, concerning the "Macrocosm" (1617), Fludd devised a lavishly illustrated account of the origins of the universe, describing how its materials were separated out of Chaos by God acting in the manner of an alchemist, distilling and purifying the different elements. From the outset in the "Macrocosm" (*UCH*, 1617), Fludd's cosmos was structured by the three generative principles of Paracelsus's alchemy – those of light, darkness, and water. From these were generated three further primary elements – first the "Prima Materia," or salt; which arose from darkness; then the soul, or sulfur, which came forth from light; and, finally, the spirit, or mercury, which emerged from water. These three elements, in turn, produced four qualities (already established in antique and medieval physics), those of heat, cold, dryness, and moistness.

In the third book of the "Macrocosm," Fludd offered yet another, quite unique, interpretation of the structure of the universe, complementing his earlier alchemical visions, but, this time, expressed in musical form. He analyzed what he termed the "Musica Mundana," the musical structures underlying the cosmos. Fludd's musicology and his mathematical theories relied on those of the ancient Greek, Pythagoras (*UCH*, 1, 1617, pp. 79–81). The fifth chapter of the "Musica Mundana" included an illustration of the Cosmic Lyre that provided an analogy of the universal musical forms. Fludd's musicology has attracted much attention from twentieth-century scholars such as Godwin and Amman and, most recently, Hauge. The latter has defended Fludd against the dismissal by earlier researchers of Fludd's musical theories as being outmoded already in his own time. Hauge has reexamined Fludd's ideas and has demonstrated that they were, in fact, in the vanguard of contemporary musicology.

Fludd's medical treatises comprise the *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum* (Frankfurt: J. T. de Bry, 1623); the *Medicina Catholica* (Frankfurt: William Fitzer, 1629–1631); the *Philosophia Sacra* (Frankfurt: J. T. de Bry, 1626); the *Clavis Philosophiae* (Frankfurt: William Fitzer, 1633),

and the *Philosophia Moysaica* (Gouda: Petrus Rammazenus, 1638) which was translated into English as the *Mosaical Philosophy* (London: H. Moseley, 1659). Another important resource for Fludd's medicine, apart from Paracelsus, was the kabbalism of the Judaic *Sepher Yetzirah*. (He also mentions the *Zohar*.) Fludd drew even more heavily on the Christian kabbalism of the German humanist, Johannes Reuchlin, as well as on the ideas of Reuchlin's Italian exemplar, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Some of Fludd's most extraordinary imagery depicts a kabbalistic universe of letters and names centered on the letter "Vav," which, according to his ideas, refers to the Second Person of the Christian Trinity, Jesus Christ. In these texts, Fludd's medical practice is almost entirely devoid of chemical remedies but rather depends on prayer and the use of the name of Jesus (following the example of Christ's exhortation to his disciples to heal the sick in his name.) Accordingly, Fludd employed the Hebrew form of the name of Jesus since he claimed that this possessed immense magical power. He equated Jesus Christ with the kabbalistic angel Metatron, the heavenly form of the Jewish Messiah (*UCH*, 2 1621, pp. 2–5), who was the soul of the world. Fludd equated Metatron with the late antique Hermetic "anima mundi" or "Anthropos" (*UCH*, 2 1621, Tract II, Sect I, pp. 8–9).

Fludd went on to argue that the first manifestation of the Godhead in the Jewish kabbalah, "Hochmah" ("Wisdom"), was the same Hypostasis as the Second Person of the Christian Trinity who was Jesus Christ. He was the "Verbum" ("Word"), as in the first verse of the Gospel of John. In turn, the Christian "Word" is also the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, "Aleph." The "Verbum," or Metatron-Christ-Messiah, as the form of God resides in the sun. Fludd's concepts of the creative and healing forces of the divine light of the sun were illustrated by diagrams, the principles of light and darkness being represented by two intersecting cones, or pyramids. The base of the "pyramidis formalis" was placed in the Empyreum of God, signifying rays of divine light shining downward, while the base of the "pyramidis materialis" was located on the earth pointing upward toward God. Fludd described these

diagrammatic forms as “pyramides lucis,” “cones of light,” claiming to have invented them himself, although they are, in fact, based on antique and medieval optical theory. Within the lozenge shape created by the intersection of the downward and upward pointing cones, Fludd placed the sun who balanced the oppositions of spirit and matter, male and female, and sulfur and mercury.

In Fludd’s medical theories, the operation of the aerial nitre, or quintessence, in the human body was of critical importance to health. The essence of the aerial nitre was the celestial light that originated in the tabernacle of the sun. It was breathed in by the lungs and carried to the heart, where it was separated from the air and dispersed as the vital spirit throughout the body. In his short text, the “Tractatus de Tritico” (“Tractate on Wheat”), which re-appeared in his *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum* (1623) and again in the *Philosophia Moysaica* (1638), Fludd described the distillation of the aerial nitre from wheat using the heat and light of the sun’s rays. Fludd claimed that this distilled spirit was the Universal Panacea, a generative celestial fire drawn out of the sun. In his account of this particular alchemical process, Fludd produces an extended exposition concerning the healing power and sacred nature of wheaten bread in a manner that clearly recalls the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. In fact, from his account Fludd’s Universal Panacea seems to be identical with the physical Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Similar Eucharistic references are found in the writings of another contemporary English Protestant alchemist, Sir Kenelm Digby, who eventually converted to Roman Catholicism. (There were more Catholic alchemists practicing in that period in England, such as the members of the noble Clifford family, practicing at Skipton Castle in Yorkshire, although Lady Anne Clifford, the most famous alchemist, was herself a Protestant.)

This Roman Catholic aspect of Fludd’s alchemy has not been remarked, hitherto, by scholars. However, the recent study of John Donne’s Catholic alchemy by Albrecht has opened up the issue of Roman Catholic aspects in English alchemy. She has examined Marian references in Donne’s poetic imagery, but her

argument is suggestive, rather than conclusive. Comparing other types of Marian references in Fludd’s works, Szulakowska has identified at least one visual image with accompanying texts that alludes to Marian Catholic doctrine. In the first volume of *Utriusque . . . Cosmi Historia* (1617), there appears a large and very well-known engraved illustration of a naked woman standing in the midst of the cosmic spheres (Fludd, *UCH*, I, pp. 4–5). The engraving is entitled “Integra Naturae Speculum Artis Imago.” In his textual account, Fludd explains that the woman represents “Natura” as a virgin existing in the sublunar world of the four elements. Although she is not herself a divine goddess, she is the most intimate minister of God at whose command she governs the subcelestial worlds. In the engraving she is joined by a chain to the Empyreum above in which there shines the Hebrew name of God – the Tetragrammaton “Yahweh,” “YHWH” (Hebr., יהוה). The virgin in Fludd’s image is the Soul of the World, the “anima mundi,” who turns the spheres of the stars and nourishes all creatures. The sun is shown resting on her breast, while the crescent moon lies on her belly. Her hair is loose like that of an unmarried girl. The Marian associations in this picture are, specifically, the halo of twelve stars (one hiding behind her hair on the right) and the crescent moon. These, along with the loosened hair and her pose itself, bear close comparison to seventeenth-century Roman Catholic images of Mary as the Immaculate Conception. The attributes of the crown of stars and the crescent moon are the primary iconographic attributes of the Virgin Mary. They are derived from the account in the Book of Revelation, 12, of the Apocalyptic Woman: “Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.” (Another image related to this particular context is that of the Assumption of Mary into heaven.) In fact, in his text Fludd provides an alchemical analogy to the unborn child of the Apocalyptic Woman when he refers first to the mercurial spirit living in the virgin’s womb. He further recalls the starry context of the Woman when he states that the virgin’s heart

gives light to the stars. The mercurial spirit, whom the philosophers call the Spirit of the Moon, is sent down from the virgin's womb to the center of the earth to quicken it into life. Catholic dogma taught that it was the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son (later manifested as Jesus) who had acted as the Creator of the universe.

The right foot of Fludd's virgin stands on the earth, while her left foot is in water which signifies the conjunction of sulfur and mercury in the alchemical art. The alchemical context of Fludd's "Natura" is equivalent to the Catholic dogma of Mary who, like Christ, was an intermediary between heaven and earth, incorporated physically into the spiritual realm after death, both human and divine. Nonetheless, Fludd's virgin has been modified to accord with alchemy theories, while the figure's nakedness relates her to medieval imagery of Eve. In Catholic dogma Mary was the second Eve. In another of his works, the *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus* (Oppenheim: Johann Theodore de Bry, 1617), Fludd also describes the virgin Psyche, daughter of Nature, as a pure bride. She is described in the context of the Holy Trinity as being a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, an important attribute of the Virgin Mary. He states that this noble and most pure virgin is decked with divine light. She is the minister of life to all creatures, and the airy virtue of the God as the Holy Trinity, the Father and Son through the Holy Spirit of intelligence, has placed its tabernacle in her. The Virgin Mary in Catholic doctrine is depicted at her coronation in heaven as the Bride of the Trinity.

An imaginatively re-worked copy of Fludd's Cosmic Virgin is found in Daniel Johann Mylius' *Opus Medico-Chymicum* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1618). Fludd's Marian image may have also have influenced the contemporary treatises of the German Lutheran alchemist Jacob Boehme, who developed an even more strongly focused Catholic Marian presence as Maria-Sophia in his theosophical alchemy. Though it would be difficult to trace direct cross-influences, these certainly exist in the case of the illustrator to Boehme's collected works published later after his death in Holland who copied wholeheartedly from Fludd's illustrations (J. G. Gichtel, ed., *Boehme Des Gottseeligen*

Hoch-Erleuchteten Jacob Bomens Teutonici Philosophi Alle Theosophische Wercken, Amsterdam, 1682.) It may be the case that the development of the rich repertoire of Renaissance alchemical imagery was, in part, a compensation for the loss of Roman Catholic icons in the Protestant Reformation. Moreover, alchemists required recourse to Catholic Eucharistic doctrine in order to express and, more importantly, in order to validate, their own concepts of transmutation of substance. There are encountered other Marian references in Lutheran alchemy, namely, an image in Michael Maier's *Symbola Aureae Mensae Duodecim Nationum* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1617) and in Jacob Boehme's *Aurora Signatura Rerum oder Morgenrothe in Anfang* (1612.)

The standard authority in the secondary resources remains Allen Debus in his extensive studies of Fludd's Paracelsian and cabbalistic theology. Fludd's pictures have been examined in some depth by Joscelyn Godwin, though from the point of view of the twentieth-century Theosophy and the psychology of C. G. Jung. According to Yates, Fludd's visual imagery was integral to his theoretical concepts, and Szulakowska has attempted to redress the lack of scholarly analysis of the visual imagery. Other research on Fludd includes Amman's musicological study as well as the more recent one of Hauge. The most extensive discussion of Fludd's intellectual development has been provided by William Huffman, although he pays the closest attention to those of Fludd's works published in English, rather than the Latin sources.

Fludd's main admirer seems to have been another alchemist, the Count Palatine Michael Maier, but he was also heavily criticized, particularly by the astronomer Kepler in the *Mathematicae* (1622) for his faulty and outmoded cosmology. Fludd responded publically to Kepler in his treatises *Veritatis Proscenium* (1621) and *Monochordon Mundi Symphonicum* (1622). Fludd's theology was strongly criticized by Pierre Gassendi in his *In Fluddanae Philosophiae Examen* (1630) at the request of the theologian Marin Mersenne, and Gassendi rejected Fludd's typically Rosicrucian syncretism in which he treated alchemy, kabbalism, and Christian doctrine as

being of equal importance. Mersenne himself attacked Fludd for his Roman Catholic tendencies and use of magic in *Quaestiones Celebres in Genesim* (1623.) Fludd replied to Mersenne in *Sophiae cum Moria Certamen* (1629) and in *Summum Bonum* (1629.). On the other hand, a close supporter and similar Rosicrucian supporter was Michael Maier whom he may have encountered at the court of James I. (The details of Fludd's relations with the English king himself remain unknown.) Further, Szulakowska has suggested that there may have been some cross-influence between Fludd and Boehme, but this has not been conclusively established. There also exists an old tradition, according to A. E. Waite, that Fludd was one of the first Freemasons in Britain, being received into the order during the first years of its existence in Scotland, prior to its official inauguration in London.

It is difficult to find a successive lineage for the influence of Fludd's kabbalistic theosophy and his theosophical medicine. His main influence has, rather, been on the twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists and occultists. The early twentieth-century French avant-garde was fascinated by Fludd, and a notable follower was no less than Georges Bataille, the French Surrealist, whose own drawings display the influence of Fludd's cosmology. (Bataille was a librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris where he was undertaking research into the occult tradition.) André Breton also mentioned Fludd in the company of Heinrich Khunrath and Johann Valentin Andreae. Joscelyn Godwin's (now out of print) volume in the Thames and Hudson Art and Imagination series popularized Fludd's imagery from the 1980s. Regrettably, in the field of academic scholarship, Fludd's work remains relatively little studied by the present generation since his vast volumes have rarely been translated out of their original Latin.

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Folengo, Teofilo

Born: Mantua, 8 November 1491

Died: Campese, 9 December 1544

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Abstract

The Benedictine monk Teofilo Folengo was the author of a macaronic poem entitled *Baldus* and of a series of minor macaronic texts written in Latin and the vernacular. While the poem *Baldus* has traditionally been considered a comic work, a parody of the then fashionable epic and chivalric poems, it has complex philosophical, religious, and allegorical meanings. Folengo, who took an active part in the religious controversies of his day, elaborated a peculiar take on reality. Dismissing some traditional aspects of Aristotelian philosophy and mixing theological ideas with Neoplatonic themes, Folengo shaped the image of a chaotic universe, in which Truth is apparently unattainable and paradoxical.

Biography

Girolamo Folengo was born in Mantua to Federico and Paola Ghisi. He entered the Benedictine Cassinese congregation in 1508 and took the name Teofilo, spending most of his life in Benedictine monasteries. During his travels he made the acquaintance of some of the most prominent contemporary Benedictine theologians. Folengo claims to have spent a period in Bologna where he studied under the philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi: however, there is no archival evidence to support this statement. The hypothesis of a Bolognese stay has in recent years been favorably reconsidered (Curti 1993). Between 1525 and 1530, Folengo lived in Venice, temporarily leaving his order to work in the service of the commander Camillo Orsini. In Venice he wrote

the *Chaos del Triperuno*, an allegorical work on the path to purification of the soul from the moment of its embodiment: the work relies on a multifarious series of philosophical (especially Neoplatonic) and theological sources, still largely unexplored (Folengo 1911; Carotti 2014–2017). From 1530 to 1533, he spent a period of hermitage together with his brother Giambattista, during which they lived for a while close to Naples. Here they made friends with the poet Scipione Capece (author of a philosophical poem entitled *De principiis rerum*). After Folengo was readmitted to the Benedictine order in 1530 (though he had never formally left it), he continued to travel around Italy – including a significant period in Sicily – until 1542, when he moved to the little church of Campese, near Bassano del Grappa, in the Veneto, where he died in 1544 (on Folengo's biography see Billanovich 2014).

Impact and Legacy

Folengo was one of the most innovative writers of the Italian Renaissance, praised and imitated by such diverse authors as François Rabelais, Erasmus, and Giordano Bruno. He was the first and last to use macaronic – a mixture of Latin and vernacular, especially local dialects – to write a successful and complex work, the poem *Baldus*, divided into 25 books. In this poem he drew from both the classical tradition of epic and contemporary chivalric romances to create an unprecedented work. The poem was first published in 1517, and subsequently reprinted, in different versions, three times. Folengo was also the author of biblical poems in the vernacular – among which *La Umanità del Figliuolo di Dio* (The Humanity of the Son of God 1533; Folengo 2000). This work employs ottava rima to develop a narrative based on the life of Christ, on the assumption that knowledge of the sacred text should reach as broad an audience as possible. As in many of Folengo's works, it is possible to find in both the *Baldus* and the *Umanità* ideas stemming from contemporary religious debates. In particular, Folengo was a supporter of the ideas later expressed in the *Beneficio di Cristo* (1543), an

important text for Italians influenced by the Northern European Reformation in these years. Like many Italian reformers, Folengo maintained that man is saved through Grace and not by good works, which are nevertheless fundamental as a form of co-operation in the process of Salvation.

In his works Folengo often mocks Aristotelian philosophy and philosophers lost in abstract theoretical discussions. In the *Baldus*, the fundamental terms of Aristotelian logic and metaphysics are represented in the form of flying insects crowding the so-called *Domus phantasiae* (The House of Fantasy; see Folengo 1997, 1030–1039; *Baldo*, vol. 2 [2007–2008], 473–479; Carotti and Macinante 2015). The fundamental rejection of Aristotelian philosophy should be seen in the context of a return to the purity of the Gospel. It is in this sense that one should also read the statement concerning Ptolemaic cosmology in the sacred poem *La Palermitana* (Folengo 2006, 86). Here Folengo, on biblical grounds, rejects the division of the sky into different spheres. Folengo might also have drawn on theories developed at the beginning of the 1530s by the philosopher and astronomer Basilio Sabazio (Faini 2010; on Sabazio, see Bacchelli 1990, 2019).

The choice of macaronic language, in which high and low are mixed, seems to reflect the peculiar structure of Folengo's universe, in which there is no such thing as a celestial world, free from sublunar corruption and chaos. Chaos pervades the whole world, represented as turned upside-down. The mission of *Baldus* is precisely that of conquering Hell and restoring the lost order in the world. Yet he fails and ends up inside a huge pumpkin, symbolizing vanity, where he meets the poet himself who is being punished there for having written nothing but lies. The poet thus claims to be a liar, a paradoxical statement that discloses the impossibility, in Folengo's world, of attaining Truth.

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Fonseca, Pedro

Born: 1528 Cortiçada

Died: 4 November 1599 Lisbon

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Abstract

Pedro da Fonseca, S.J., was a Jesuit philosopher in the sixteenth century during Iberia's second scholasticism. Known as the “Portuguese Aristotle,” Fonseca helped organize and oversee the massive project known as the *Cursus Conimbricensis* that commented on many of the works of Aristotle. Fonseca also helped devise and implement the Jesuits' *Ratio Studiorum*, which was a kind of ground plan

for the nature and dynamics of Jesuit education. Fonseca himself contributed to Jesuit education with the composition of his *Institutionum dialecticarum*, which was an eight-volume treatise devoted to logic and was eventually adopted as an official textbook at a number of Jesuit universities. Fonseca also produced a critical edition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, to which he added a Latin translation and commentary. Later in life, Fonseca authored yet another logical text, a shorter one this time: the *Isagoge philosophica*. Fonseca died in Lisbon in 1599.

Biography

Pedro da Fonseca, S.J. (Cortiçada, Portugal, 1528–Lisbon, Portugal, 4 November 1599), also known as the “Portuguese Aristotle,” was born in Cortiçada (Proença-a-Nova), Portugal. He joined the Society of Jesus on 17 March 1548 (Solana 1940, p. 339). In 1551, shortly after having completed his novitiate, Fonseca enrolled in the University of Évora, where he functioned both as a student and teacher, there studying theology between 1552 and 1555 and teaching philosophy between 1552 and 1553 (Doyle 1998, p. 688). From 1555 to 1561 he taught in the faculty of arts at the University of Coimbra, which King John III of Portugal had recently placed under the care of the Society of Jesus (Doyle 2001, p. 15). It was during that time that Fonseca devised the *Cursus Conimbricensis*, which was an ambitious project produced by the Jesuit professors of the University of Coimbra (the *Conimbricensis*) consisting of several volumes of commentary on the *Corpus Aristotelicum*. The texts commented upon included: *Physics*, *De caelo et mundo*, *Meteorum*, *Parva naturalia*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *De anima*, and *Organon* (Doyle 2001, p. 16).

After his time at Coimbra, from 1561 to 1564, Fonseca's work was more administrative than professorial (Doyle 1998, p. 688). Nevertheless, in 1564 the Jesuit published his important *Institutionum dialecticarum*, a text that, like the

Logica mexicana of Ant^onio Rubio, achieved great popularity and success, underwent several editions, and was eventually adopted as an official textbook at several Jesuit schools throughout Europe and beyond (ibid.), and likely ended up as an official text at La Flèche where it could have had an impact upon Descartes (Ashworth 1997, pp. 47–48). Fonseca returned to Évora where, in 1570, he received his doctorate in theology and became the university's chancellor (Doyle 1998, p. 688). Throughout the 1570s–1582, Fonseca once again served the Society of Jesus in a number of administrative capacities, which eventually lead to his moving to Rome, where he functioned as assistant to the Jesuit provincial of Portugal. In 1581 he contributed to yet another project; together with 11 other Jesuits, Fonseca was charged by the Superior General, Claudio Acquaviva, to develop the *Ratio Studiorum*, the Jesuit pedagogical plan (Doyle 2001, p. 15). A draft of the *Ratio Studiorum* emerged as soon as 1586, but it was not until 1599 and after many revisions and adaptations that it was officially adopted for use in all Jesuit schools (Fichter 1940, pp. 140–144).

While busy devising the *Ratio Studiorum*, Fonseca was also composing a commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which was published in Rome in 1577. The text is remarkable in many ways. In addition to its comprehensiveness and lasting influence upon other Jesuit intellectuals such as Francisco Suárez, Fonseca establishes himself as more than a capable philologist (Schmutz 2014). Included in the commentary is a critical Greek text that Fonseca himself established from both printed editions and available manuscripts. Not only does Fonseca offer a commentary on the Aristotelian text but he himself also provides a Latin translation (Solana 1940, pp. 344–345).

In 1582 Fonseca left Rome to return to his native Portugal where he became the superior of the Jesuit house of San Roque in Lisbon and also served as the Visitor of the Jesuit province in Lusitania (ibid., p. 339). In 1591 Fonseca composed a second but relatively shorter treatise on logic: the *Isagoge philosophica*. Of concern in this text are the nature of universals, the

particulars, and the process of abstraction. A year later in 1592, Fonseca returned to Rome to prepare for the Fifth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, which would open in 1593 (Doyle 2001, p. 15). In addition to addressing various political concerns stemming from tensions between the papacy and the king of Spain, significantly, the Fifth General Congregation reaffirmed that Thomas Aquinas would be followed in matters of theology and Aristotle in philosophical issues (Padberg 2006, p. 29). In 1598 Fonseca, still tending to Jesuit pedagogical concerns, produced yet another redaction of the *Ratio Studiorum*. Eventually, Fonseca returned to Lisbon where he died on 4 November 1599 (Solana 1940, p. 339).

Logic

Fonseca's principle contributions to the history of philosophy reside in logic and metaphysics. By and large, his most detailed thinking on logic can be found in the eight books of his *Institutionum dialecticarum* (*ID*), and he also composed a smaller treatise, the *Isagoge philosophica* (*IP*), which consists of only 66 folios arranged in 12 chapters.

Isagoge philosophica

The first half of the volume deals with matters related to universals, particulars, and abstraction, whereas the second portion treats various kinds of universal. Chapter one addresses the nature of universals in general. A universal of its own nature is apt to be in many things, explains Fonseca, as “animal” is in several animals and “man” is in several men, and thus it is naturally apt to be predicated of several things (*IP*, c. 1; fol. 5). Yet, one should not consider a universal, Fonseca warns, as some one thing that is in each of the things of which it is predicated (ibid.; fol. 6). Nevertheless, the universal does point to a more than mere nominal identity among things similarly predicated since each has the same ratio (ibid.).

In the second chapter, Fonseca goes on to explain that there are four modes of universal,

each following upon the degree of unity that the ratio of the universal has within each particular falling under its scope. Here, Fonseca seems to have in mind a sort of analogical unity (though he does not use the term) as he gives the quintessential example of health (as well as sickness) and the diverse – but proportionally unified – *rationes* that emerge among those things denominated “healthy.” Thus, the first mode of universal pertains to those things having “one and the same *ratio*” but in such a way that they are “sometimes excluded from equivocity” (ibid., c. 2; fol. 10). Fonseca appeals to being – which, though one in itself and most universal, is said in many ways but not equivocally – as an instance of such universal (ibid.). The second mode of universal, continues the Jesuit, is such that those things of which the universal is predicated have one and the same *ratio* resulting from their sharing in a nature that is located in one of the ten categories (ibid.; fol. 11). The third mode occurs wherein there is one and the same *ratio* that is unequally participated so as to impede univocal predication of the *ratio* of its participants (ibid.). Finally, with the fourth mode, there is, again, one and the same *ratio*, except that only what falls within the definition of the universal *simpliciter* and absolutely is considered (ibid.; fol. 11–12).

In chapter three Fonseca discusses particulars and how they can be the “subjects” of various universals, for example, “Socrates [as the subject of] man, and man [the subject of animal]” and the like (ibid., c. 3; fol. 13). The relation of a particular to universals results in the latter being subject to greater or lesser degrees of universality. For example, Fonseca notes that “man and white” are less universal, while “animal and color” are more universal. Greater still are “substance and quantity,” which are “maximally” universal (ibid.; fol. 14). Ultimately, as Fonseca sees it, the singular or individual is that which, of its own nature, cannot be in or predicated of many things (ibid.).

Chapter four – which some regard as the most original element of Fonseca’s *Isagoge philosophica* (Solana 1940, p. 342) – pertains to the abstraction of universals from singulars. Abstraction occurs, Fonseca holds, with the “ministration” or assistance of the senses, which gather

certain “species of natural similitude” – and not common natures themselves – from singular things in which no individuating differences are represented (*IP*, c. 4; fol. 19). Fonseca explains that any faculty of knowledge abstracts certain species from things and separates their own proper objects from the objects of other faculties (ibid.). This is true not just of intellectual faculties but, significantly, of sense powers as well. Here, Fonseca gives the example of sight as it perceives butter. Though in butter there simultaneously exist various sensible qualities such as whiteness, sweetness, particular odor, and softness, the Jesuit notes that sight “abstracts” the aspect of whiteness from the singular thing leaving behind, as it were, the other sensible qualities (ibid.; fol. 19). Similarly, yet in a more noble fashion because of its immateriality, the intellect is able to perceive universals that are abstracted from singulars that are of a higher nature than sensible species and are called *intelligibiles* (ibid.; fol. 20). In short, for Fonseca, abstraction is of two kinds: one made through the sensitive power and the other made through the intellect. Through the former, an object separated by a sense power is represented in a species; through the latter, what is separated is known (intelligibly) precisely as such (ibid.; fol. 23). The remainder of the chapter then discusses in a rather straightforward Aristotelian fashion the process of abstraction beginning with sensation, moving through phantasms, to the work of the agent and possible intellects. What is somewhat peculiar about Fonseca’s account, however, is that he thinks the possible intellect is capable of knowing singular beings, albeit in a fashion that is much superior than what sensation achieves (Solana 1940, p. 343).

In chapter five Fonseca addresses the relationship between universals-particulars and dialectics. Of particular interest to the Jesuit here is the relationship that universals have to particulars in terms of cause and effect. Cause and effect can be considered in three ways: first, inasmuch as they are things themselves, as the sun inasmuch as it is the sun or gold inasmuch as it is gold – to use Fonseca’s examples; or, second, either as a cause and or as an effect, as the sun generates gold or as gold is generated by the sun; or, finally, as cause

and effect are referred to one another, as cause to effect or effect to cause (*IP*, c. 5; fol. 25). Fonseca holds that a universal's relation to a particular can be understood in the same manner. First, a thing can be considered without reference to having the character (*ratio*) of universality or particularity as "animal" or "man" may be considered *per se* or simply in themselves. (Here, one is reminded of Avicenna's teaching when he says *equinitas est tantum equinitas*.) Second, these same things can be considered as either universals or particulars, for, the Jesuit explains, it is one thing to be in an animal (*in animali est*) or to be an animal (*esse animal*) and another thing to be "common to man and beast" or as that which agrees with all animals (*ibid.*; fol. 25). Third, universals and particulars can be considered in terms of their mutual relationship to one another, universals as a certain kind of total community and particulars as certain parts of a subject (*ibid.*; fol. 26).

The sixth chapter explores the unity that universals possess. Here, Fonseca holds that there are two kinds of unity: one "formal" and the other "prescise" (*ibid.*, c. 6; fol. 28). Formal unity, says Fonseca, is "nothing other than the undividedness of a universal thing in itself, that is, in its nature or in its definition [*ratio*], which is how 'animal' is undivided in that which is an animal and 'man' in that which is a man" (*ibid.*). The undividedness of formal unity is merely negative (*ibid.*; fol. 30) or non-exclusionary and results from the community that arises among several individuals that share in some communicable property such as a nature or form. Fonseca also describes such unity as pertaining to the properties of universals as things (*ibid.*; fols. 29–30). Formal unity does not presuppose an aptitude of the universal thing to be in many of itself (*ibid.*; fol. 30). In contrast, prescise unity, says Fonseca, consists in the privative (*ibid.*) undividedness of the universal thing, not in itself, but in its particulars, as occurs, for example, in the undividedness of "animal" as it is found in a man and a beast or "man" as found in Socrates and other men (*ibid.*; fol. 29). Prescise unity concerns the properties of things as they are apt to be in several things (*ibid.*; fol. 30).

In chapters seven through eleven, Fonseca treats successively the five Porphyrian universals, namely, genus (c. 7), species (c. 8), difference (c. 9), properties (c. 10), and accidents (c. 11). The work then concludes with a chapter (the twelfth) devoted to other kinds of universals "unknown to heathen philosophers." Here, of central concern for Fonseca are the implications involved with the Incarnation in which "God" and "man" are predicated of the singular Christ (*ibid.*, c. 12; fol. 61). The Jesuit maintains that whenever anything about God is predicated of Christ, such predication has no character of universality, which is not to say that the divine is merely a singular thing, but is maximally singular (*ibid.*; fol. 62). The situation is different, however, when things pertaining to human nature are predicated of Christ. "Human" and "human attributes" are not predicated of the divine Word with necessity but only contingently (*ibid.*; fol. 63). Nevertheless, Fonseca insists, Christ's human nature is not united to the Word accidentally (*ibid.*; fol. 64). Here, the Jesuit notes that none of the modes of universals known to the "heathen philosophers," viz., quidditative, essential, necessary, generic, specific, or difference, will suffice to account for the manner in which human nature is predicated of Christ, for the two (the divine and human), Fonseca holds, are united substantially (*ibid.*; fols. 64–65). Thus, the kind of predication involved is "substantial predication," which Fonseca regards as neither essential nor accidental (*ibid.*; fol. 66).

Institutionum dialecticarum

Substantially longer than the *Isagoge philosophica*, Fonseca's earlier work on Aristotle's formal logic, the *Institutionum dialecticarum*, runs throughout eight books. The work has all the classic characteristics of a textbook intended for classroom instruction; it is precise, clear, and concise (Solana 1940, p. 340). It is no surprise, then, that the text was adopted by the Jesuits for use in their courses offered not only within Europe but also in the New World and Far East (Doyle 1998, p. 688).

The *Institutionum dialecticarum* opens with a discussion of the necessity, terms, and nature of

logic. Fonseca notes that one and the same art is properly described as either “logic,” as the Peripatetics called it, or “dialectics” as the ancient philosophers named it (*ID*, I, c.1; fol. 7). According to these ancient philosophers, dialectics is rightly defined as a “quasi art” that teaches formulas of differentiating (*differendi*) (*ibid.*). But after having described this art as “dialectics,” Fonseca immediately distinguishes the nature of the present work from the “dialectics” – which only concerns probability – that Aristotle articulated in his *Topics* (*ibid.*, I, c. 2; fol. 8). Over the next 30 chapters, Fonseca addresses various elements pertaining to logic or dialectics, such as its subject matter – which is the proposition (*oratio*) – whereby the unknown is made known (c. 3); three modes of differentiating, viz., division, definition, and argumentation (c. 4); nouns and verbs – some of which are fabricated by the mind, some spoken, and others written (cc. 7, 12, 14); signs and signification (cc. 8–10); middle terms (c. 11); univocal terms (c. 21); comparison of equivocal, analogical, and univocal terms (c. 22); difference between concrete and abstract nouns (c. 23); common and singular terms (c. 26); and transcendental and non-transcendental terms (c. 28), among many other topics. Regarding transcendental terms, Fonseca follows Thomas in identifying them with what is said of all true beings, viz., *ens*, *unum*, *bonum*, *aliquid*, and *res*. While the Jesuit seems to leave no room for the Scotistic disjunctive transcendentals or pure perfections, he does open a space for the consideration of super-transcendentality, understanding it as that which is “opine-able, thinkable, apprehend-able, and the like,” which are affirmed of all beings and not only “true beings” (*ID*, I, c. 28; fol. 35).

The second book of the *Institutionum dialecticarum* examines the nature of universals, which would be revisited in greater detail later in the *Isagoge philosophica*. As would be the case in that later text, in the present work Fonseca begins with a general consideration of universals before examining in the characteristics of the five Porphyrian universals as well as universals found in each of the Aristotelian categories in successive chapters.

Book three explores the nature of propositions, which Fonseca defines as “a voice [*vox*] signifying out of custom, of which some of its parts signify separately, such as: ‘Socrates is a philosopher,’ ‘Socrates is wise’” (*ibid.*, III, c. 1; fol. 56). In the remaining chapters of book three Fonseca then explores various kinds and divisions of propositions. The first division mentioned is that between a perfect and imperfect proposition. A perfect proposition, he says, is one in which some complete or express thought (*integra sententia*) is declared, for example, “God is the highest good” (*ibid.*, III, c. 2; fol. 57). In contrast, an imperfect proposition is one in which an incompletely expressed thought is signified (*muta sententia*), for example, “To be afraid of God” (*ibid.*). Fonseca then divides enunciations or judgments into two kinds: simple and conjoined; he further subdivides the former into simple absolute and simple modal (*ibid.*, III, c. 3). In short, as he sees it, a “perfect proposition” is such that it is either true or false (*ibid.*; fol. 58). A simple proposition is one in which “one thing” is expressed, for example, “Man is an animal,” “Man is a rational animal,” “A just man is prudent,” and the like. A conjoined proposition (*enunciatio coniuncta*) is hypothetical, for example, “If it is day, it is light” (*ibid.*; fol. 59). An absolute proposition, continues Fonseca, is one that “signifies something absolutely to belong [*inesse*] or not belong to [*non inesse*] something else,” for example, “Man is an animal,” or “Man is not a rock” (*ibid.*). Finally, according to the Jesuit, a modal proposition is one wherein the mode of something’s belonging to (or not) is expressed, for example, “Man is necessarily an animal,” “Man is, of necessity, not a stone,” “It is necessary for man to be an animal,” and “It is necessary for man not to be a stone” (*ibid.*). The remainder of the chapter discusses various aspects of propositions, quantity, quality, etc., and their relations according to the square of opposition.

Book four of the *Institutionum dialecticarum* studies “division.” Division is treated in a number of distinct sciences, including metaphysics, but the sort that dialectics or logic is concerned with, Fonseca says, is with the parts into which a proposition is divided. A whole, for example, “man” or

“animal,” is that which can be divided into parts such as when one says that “Of a human, one part is the soul and the other the body” or “Of an animal, some are man and others beasts” (ibid., IV, c. 1; fol. 94). At issue here are logical distinctions (c. 2). This discussion gives Fonseca a reason to address how distinctions among genera and species and even of reason affect one’s metaphysical considerations (c. 5).

In the fifth book, Fonseca moves onto an exploration of “definition.” “A definition,” says Fonseca, “is a proposition that declares some essence or nature: as [for example] ‘rational animal;’ for it [the definition] declares the nature of a name” (*ID*, V, c. 1; fol. 109). Put simply, a definition attempts to explain, as it were, an essence or quiddity through placing that thing into its proper divisions of genus and species (ibid.). A definition is properly a proposition, Fonseca holds, since no name, being only one word [*vox*], is adequate for the purposes of a definition, which, at the very least, requires two concepts that are synthesized in a proposition (*enuntio*).

The sixth book concerns “consequence,” which, as Fonseca sees it, is a certain kind of argument. More specifically, “consequence” is a “kind of proposition in which, from something, another thing is known, as for example, [from the claim that] ‘every man is an animal; therefore some man is an animal’” (ibid., VI, c. 1; fol. 128). A “consequence,” then, can also be called a “conclusion” as it is inferred from some antecedent (ibid.). Of particular concern for Fonseca in the present book is the structure of a syllogistic argument, which, ultimately, results in a conclusion or “consequence,” its valid as well as invalid forms (c. 2), formal and material consequences, i.e., necessary or probable conclusions (cc. 3, 4), as well as rules governing arguments in general (c. 5). Fonseca offers a very lengthy discussion concerning immediate and mediate inference and lays out the nineteen rules for valid syllogistic inference through the by-then popular mnemonic poem relating universal affirmative, universal negative, particular affirmative, and particular negative (A-E-I-O) propositions: “*Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio, Baralipon/ Celantes, Dabitis, Fapesmo, Frisesomorum/ Caesare,*

Camestres, Festino, Baroco, Darapti/ Felapton, Disamis, Datisi, Bocardo, Ferison” (ibid. VI, c. 13; fol. 147).

Book seven treats the division of simple syllogisms into four genera and is concerned with demonstration. Here, Fonseca treats the material that can be found in the *Posterior Analytics*, namely, the demonstrative character of scientia as either *propter quid* or *quia* (ibid., VII, c. 2; fols. 182–83). In this book the Jesuit addresses issues such as middle terms (c. 5); dialectical syllogisms which only yield probable conclusions (c. 6); *locus*, that is, the position elements have in an argument (c. 9); and two kinds of loci, viz., *maxima* and *differentia maxima* (the former concerns self-evidence but the latter involves authority (c. 10).

The *Institutionum dialecticarum* finally concludes with an eighth book devoted to fallacies. After spending nineteen chapters discussing various kinds of fallacies, such as the fallacies of composition and division, affirming the consequent, *petitio principii*, and many others, Fonseca moves onto a treatment of supposition, which, following Aristotle, he defines as “the acceptance of a name that signifies a thing” (*ID*, VIII, c. 20; fol. 286). Fonseca marks a distinction between formal and material supposition, which distinction basically amounts to the claim that something has formal supposition when it signifies something other than itself. Material supposition, however, signifies itself, for example, “‘Man’ is a noun; ‘Blictri’ is a voice [*vox*] that signifies nothing” (ibid., VIII, c. 21; fol. 288). Fonseca’s treatment of supposition occurs over fifteen chapters, after which he then addresses “ampliation,” “restriction,” and, finally, appellation (ibid., VIII, cc. 41–42).

Metaphysics

One is hardly surprised to find that Fonseca’s thought on metaphysics is found most expressly in his *In libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae (In met.)*, which, as noted above, contains both a critical Greek edition and Latin translation of the Aristotelian text. The work is

contained in four volumes published over a number of years. The first volume, published in Rome in 1577, covers the first four books of the *Metaphysics*. Also published in Rome in 1589, the second volume is devoted entirely to the fifth book of the *Metaphysics*. Moving on to a treatment of books six through nine, the third volume of Fonseca's commentary was published in Cologne in 1604. Finally, the fourth volume, which explores books 10–12 and offers a translation of books 13 and 14, was published in Lyon in 1612 (Solana 1940, p. 344).

The work is organized in a threefold manner. First, as noted above, Fonseca prepares a critical edition of the Greek text presented side-by-side with a Latin translation. Second, the Jesuit offers an *explanatio* of the text, the meaning of certain words, and key phrases through adverting to other commentaries on Aristotle as well as using other Aristotelian texts to illuminate the Stagirite's meaning (Solana 1940, p. 345). Finally, Fonseca concludes with "questions" that arise from the topic under discussion. The procedure of these "questions" has been described as thoroughly "scholastic" (indeed one might say they are adumbrations of Suárez's own *Disputationes metaphysicae*) in that they propose a variety of sententiae together with objections as well as reasons for and against the positions entertained – all before offering his own conclusions (*ibid.*).

Perhaps that part of Fonseca's metaphysical commentary which reveals most clearly his own unique thinking on the nature of metaphysics can be found in the *quaestiones* pertaining to the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*. This particular book, as is well known, attempts to determine both the scope and nature of the first philosophy. In it, Aristotle states that the first philosophy has being as being for its proper subject. Yet, in *Metaphysics* 6.1 he then argues that separate substances or the gods form the proper subject of the first philosophy. This tension within the text generated not only obvious interpretive difficulties but also metaphysical debates between not only Avicenna and Averroes but also succeeding generations of medieval and scholastic philosophers. It is within that context and its tradition that Fonseca raises his first *quaestio* which asks whether "being [*ens*],

inasmuch as it is common to God and creature, is the subject of metaphysics?" (*In met.*, IV, c. 1, q. 1). In answering this question Fonseca notes and refutes arguments to the contrary, which hold that God is its proper subject. Somewhat like Scotus, but departing from Thomas, Fonseca maintains that the proper subject of metaphysics is being insofar as it is common to God and creature (*ibid.*, IV, c. 1, q. 1, s. 2). Unlike Scotus, however, Fonseca holds that *ens commune* is analogical.

Naturally, Fonseca explains the analogical character of being in the questions stemming from the second chapter of *Metaphysics* book four. Following the standard scholastic practice, he first notes the opinion that the community arising from being is equivocal – which Fonseca identifies as the position of Moses Maimonides and also Petrus Aureoli (*In met.*, IV, c. 2, q. 1, s. 1; cols. 689–91) – followed by the position, famously defended by Scotus and his disciples, which holds that the concept of being is univocal (*ibid.*, IV, c. 2, q. 1, s. 2; cols. 691–94). The Jesuit rejects both theories. Being cannot be equivocal, Fonseca thinks, since it would flatly contradict the teaching of Aristotle who held that, though being is said in many ways, is not said "equivocally" (*ibid.*, IV, c. 2, q. 1, s. 3; col. 694); this would render knowledge of God through creation impossible, as Thomas argued (*ibid.*; cols. 694–95), and it would destroy the scientific unity of metaphysics if being as said of substance were entirely diverse from being as said of accidents (*ibid.*; col. 695). Nor is the concept of being univocal, insists Fonseca. Aristotle says that being is said in many ways but multiplicity is opposed to the unity that would result from univocity (*ibid.*, IV, c. 2, q. 1, s. 4; col. 695). Additionally, the Jesuit argues that if being were univocal, then it must be a genus; but being cannot be a genus; therefore, it cannot be univocal (*ibid.*; cols. 695–96). (Apparently, Fonseca was unaware that Scotus himself held both that being is not a genus and that nevertheless its *ratio* is univocal.) If neither equivocal nor univocal, Fonseca concludes that the character of being (*ratio entis*) is analogical, which the Jesuit understands to be simply the teaching of Aristotle (*ibid.*, IV, c. 2, q. 1, s. 5; col. 700).

Though the *ratio* of being is analogical, Fonseca does admit that being need not always be predicated analogically of all things, for there are some beings that share being univocally, namely, those things that have the same nature, whether generic or specific (ibid., IV, c. 2, q. 1, s. 5; col. 700). In fact, the Jesuit maintains that, in itself, the ratio of being is not one *simpliciter* but is such that its unity results from a relation or comparison of many beings (ibid.; col. 701). Here, then, Fonseca seems to allow for a greater degree of multiplicity in the concept of being than his order brother, Suárez, who insists on the absolute unity of the concept of being (*DM* 2.2.36), is willing to admit. For the medievals and their scholastic successors – especially those following in the wake of Cajetan, whom the Jesuit cites explicitly (ibid., IV, c. 2, q. 1, s. 6; col. 701) – “analogy” is said in many ways. Fonseca himself, in the task of explaining the sort of analogy that governs the community of being that forms the subject of metaphysics, identifies, along with Cajetan, an analogy of inequality (which, Fonseca says, does not necessarily impede univocity) as well as analogies of proportion (*proportio*) and attribution (ibid.). Reminiscent of Boethius’s own distinctions within *aequivoca a consilio*, Fonseca further subdivides an analogy of proportion into *ad unum* and *ab uno* (ibid.; col. 702A-B). Then, noting Thomas’s distinctions in *Summa theologiae* I, q. 13, a. 5, the Jesuit subdivides analogies of attribution into *unius ad alterum* and *duorum ad tertium* (ibid.; col. 702D-F).

With these distinctions in place, Fonseca denies that the community of being extending to God and creature can be understood in terms of an analogy of attribution *duorum ad tertium*, for the reason that there is nothing besides God and creation in virtue of which both can be called “being” (ibid., IV, c. 2, q. 1, s. 7; col. 704D). The Jesuit also points out that an analogy of attribution *unius ad alterum* with respect to a creature cannot obtain either, for God is not called “being” through attribution to a creature (ibid.). Nor can there be an analogy of attribution with respect to creation’s relation to God as the prime analogate for the reason that – somewhat as Cajetan had maintained – such an analogy would imply that

“only God is formally being [*ens*],” which means that “it would be necessary that, inasmuch as it is a being [*ens*], a creature would be defined through God,” which Fonseca thinks is patently false since a creature is properly defined as “that which is able to exist in reality [*rerum natura*]” (ibid.; 704E). Accordingly, Fonseca concludes that the analogy pertaining to common being is one of proportionality or, what is the same, “an analogy of proportion” (ibid.; col. 705A). “As God is related to His being,” Fonseca explains, “so is a created substance proportionally related to its own [being]” (ibid.; col. 705C). Similarly, the relationship between a substance and its accidents is proportionally maintained in the relationship between “one class [genus] of accident and its own existence,” and, finally, “the character [*ratio*] of real being is of the same [proportional relationship] to the character [*ratio*] of beings of reason” (ibid.). In short, “there is in all things an equal proportion, although things themselves and also existence itself taken per se are of diverse modes” (ibid.; col. 705D).

Be that as it may, though he favors proportionality, Fonseca does not abandon attribution but accords it a critical role in his metaphysical project. While he rejects the claims of those who hold that only substances have being formally, such as Agostino Nifo and Aegidius Romanus maintained (ibid.; col. 706A-B), Fonseca grants that accidents are called “being” on account of their relation to created substance (ibid.; col. 706C). Thus, when what is at issue is the relationship between accidents and substance such that the former are called “being” precisely on account of their relationship to the latter, the analogical community at hand is one of *duorum ad tertium*. But, when considering the relationship that one accident has with a substance, Fonseca explains that the resulting analogy is one of attribution *unius ad alterum* (ibid.; col. 706C-D). These divisions of attributions have germinal seat in the text of *Metaphysics* 4.2 itself as well as in the philosophical tradition that followed, especially Thomas Aquinas, but what seems to be unique to Fonseca is that he extends an analogy of attribution to accommodate the relationship between real being (*ens reale*) and beings of reason (*entia rationis*). As he sees it,

beings of reason stand in a relation of dependence upon real being in the same way that accidents stand in relationship to some substance. Fonseca notes that “beings of reason do not depend upon real being less than accidents [depend] upon substance” (ibid.; col. 706E). Fonseca’s position regarding beings of reason stands in rather stark contrast with the position of Suárez; it is worth noting, who only admits an analogy of proper proportionality, which the *Doctor eximius* regards as always extrinsic, between real being and beings of reason (*DM* 1.1.5; ibid., 54.1.9). Indeed, Suárez thinks that beings of reason do not even fall under the common objective concept of being (ibid., 1.1.4), for which reason they do not properly pertain to the adequate object of metaphysics (ibid. 2.2.1).

Fonseca, however, seems more sanguine about the role of beings of reason within metaphysics, but with this outlook the question naturally arises about the character that the (analogical) concept of being has with respect to its extension and unity. One is not surprised, then, to find that Fonseca turns his attention to this important topic in the immediately succeeding question which enquires into formal and objective concepts. A formal concept, writes Fonseca, “is nothing else than the actual similitude of a thing, which is understood, produced by the intellect to express the [known] thing” (ibid., IV, c. 2, q. 2, s. 1; col. 710C). He gives as an example the intellect that understands human nature by producing a similitude of human nature through which human nature is expressed and known (ibid.; col. 710D). Fonseca explains that this concept is called “formal” because it is a certain accidental form inhering in the intellect as a *habitus* (ibid.). In contrast, the objective concept is “the thing, which is understood, according to its form or nature, and is conceived through the formal [concept]” (ibid.; col. 711A).

With respect to the concept of being, then, the question of its unity is at issue since distinguishing it from an absolute unity that is proper to univocity is critical for Fonseca’s ability to sustain the concept of being’s analogical character. Again, in contrast to Suárez, Fonseca admits that the unity of the concept of being is less than absolute but more general than the distinct

rationes that constitute the proper concepts of various kinds of being. To explain his claim, Fonseca marks a threefold distinction within the formal and objective concepts, viz., an entirely distinct concept, an entirely confused concept, and a concept that is partly distinct and partly confused (ibid., IV, c. 2, q. 2, s. 3; col. 714D, 715B). A distinct concept is one that determinately and expressly represents all beings in their distinctness, but such a concept is unavailable to us, Fonseca notes, and is proper only to God’s own understanding of all things (ibid.; col. 714E). A confused concept, the Jesuit continues, is, as its name suggests, one wherein all things are represented by means of a concept that is entirely indistinct and most imperfect (ibid.; col. 714F). And, finally, there is that concept that represents one thing or a certain aspect of a thing expressly and determinately and another thing or aspect only implicitly and indeterminately, such, for example, are the concepts representing the highest genus, substance, in which a substance is expressly represented, but quantity and other accidents inhering in it are only implicitly and indeterminately represented (ibid.; col. 715A).

With these distinctions in place, Fonseca explains that any concept can be called one in a twofold matter, either according to the thing or according to reason (*aut re, aut ratione*) (ibid.; col. 715C). Furthermore, there is a twofold manner in which any concept is said to prescind from others: in terms of the “thing itself” and according “to reason” (*a re et a ratione*). A concept prescinds *a re* if the thing itself is distinct from the prescinded things (ibid.; col. 715D). A concept prescinds *a ratione* if in its character (*ratio*) nothing of those things – that are properly conceivable – from which it prescinds is included (ibid.; col. 715E-F). For example, the concept of “human” prescinds from, but does not explicitly exclude, the conceivable elements (e.g., short or tall) that pertain to particular humans. With respect to the objective concept of being, then, Fonseca argues that it is not one in *re*, nor does it prescind from “all the members [i.e., *inferiora*] that divide the objective [concept]” (ibid., IV, c. 2, q. 2, s. 4; col. 716B). Nor, adds the Jesuit, is the “objective concept one in reason [*in ratione*]

except qualifiedly [*secundum quid*]” (ibid.; col. 716C), for which claim he gives the reason that, where the objective concept is one *simpliciter*, it would be univocal (ibid.). Thus, Fonseca concludes that “the objective concept of being does not rationally prescind from all the objective members that divide it except *secundum quid*,” in which its fundamental analogical unity consists (ibid., col. 716F).

The remaining questions addressed in the second chapter of book four pertain to the proper attributes of being (q. 3), the thorny matter of the relation (or distinction) between essence and existence (q. 4), and Fonseca’s transcendental theory wherein he discusses unity (q. 5), truth (q. 6), and goodness (q. 7).

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Force in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

During the Renaissance, the growing importance of mechanics stressed previously noticed tensions in natural philosophy when dealing with some specific cases of motion – the motion of projectiles and the free fall of bodies – peripheral in Aristotle’s texts but moving into the spotlight by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Later, by the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, mechanics was in a sturdy position to question the assumptions of natural philosophy in the explanation of these two specific motions. But these assumptions also constituted the foundation of other explanations. As a consequence, criticisms initially aiming to replace the notions involved in the account of these phenomena finally targeted the main principles underlying natural philosophies, particularly those rooted in Aristotle. One of the major changes issuing from this was the proper conception both of change in terms of motion – by contrast with the Aristotelian idea of motion in terms of change – and its causes. In order to explain how motion was originated and preserved in bodies, a variety of conceptions of force were introduced, relying

on traditions flourishing during the Renaissance. However, the emergence of the mechanical philosophy by the early seventeenth century, in which motion was conceived by contact action, explicitly aimed to replace explanations in terms of occult qualities and forces. In this context, Galileo, Kepler, and Descartes, among others, struggled with a redefinition of motion and its causes, developing new mathematical techniques and applying them to the study of natural phenomena. In this way, they generated substantive transformations in natural philosophy, finally leading to the formulation of Newton's laws of motion, which established the classical conceptions of motion and rest appealing to forces, substantially modifying the mechanical philosophy.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Ancient and Medieval Background

The roots of the transformations that ended in the establishment of the cornerstone of classical mechanics – Newton's second law of motion – can be traced back to Aristotle's (384–322 BC) distinction between natural and forced motions (Westfall 1971). This division emerges in the context of Aristotle's *sublunar* world (below the moon, with the Earth at the center), where generation and corruption dominate natural change; this is opposed to the *superlunar* (above the moon) world, where there is no change but perfection and permanence. In the *superlunar* world, celestial bodies are made of eternal and unchangeable aether or quintessence; their motion (if any) is circular, identical to itself, and perpetual. In the sublunary world, by contrast, bodies are composed of the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. Every element has a natural tendency to move toward a specific place in the cosmos: water and earth tend to fall to the center (because of this, the Earth is made of land and oceans usually remaining steady in the center of the cosmos), while fire and air rise up away from it. In *On Generation and Corruption*, Aristotle explains that bodies can also be moved from side to side, against their natural tendency, in a forced or

violent motion, for example, a piece of furniture pushed across the floor. In Aristotle's view, the natural tendency pulls the piece to the center – or kept it at rest, if it was already there – but the intervention of a mover pressing the body constantly led it to a different place. In consequence, the forced motion requires the constant action of a mover, pushing the body in an unnatural direction. When the action of the mover ceases, the body tends to its natural place or, as in the case of the furniture moved across the floor that is already on its natural place, it only rests. If we lift a stone, that is, if we move it away from the center, it would still keep its tendency to go back to its place, as it can be easily appreciated once it is dropped.

Within this framework, Aristotle explains a wide variety of phenomena, including the motion of projectiles and the free fall of bodies. The motion of projectiles apparently breaks the principle stating that forced or violent motions require the constant action of the mover, for once the projectile is thrown away it is no longer in contact with the mover and yet remains in motion until it finally falls down. In *Physics*, Aristotle outlines two rather vague explanations: (1) the air accomplishes the function of keeping the body in motion, acting as a mover, because it is displaced backward by the initial motion of the projectile, but when it reaches the back of the body, it moves forward and pushes the body together with it, creating in this way some kind of temporary system of replenishment of motion. Air was rushing in to fill the vacuum that otherwise would have been left at the back of the moving object, because “nature abhors vacuum.” This explanation, widely known as the *antiperistasis* (meaning “against standing around”) spread during the medieval times. (2) The air is not only moved by the original mover but it also receives the power to act as a mover; then, by this power it moves the air next to it and the projectile; the air next to the projectile is moved, but it also receives some capacity to move; in consequence, the projectile is successively pushed in the direction originally intended by the original mover (Barbour 2001; Clagett 1959; Sorabji 1988). Regarding the observed acceleration of falling bodies, Aristotle's views are far from being clear. In *On the Heavens*,

he suggests that the acceleration of bodies depends upon their proximity to their natural places: once bodies are approaching their natural places, they move faster. However, when dealing with infinite locomotion, he seems to imply that the speed of fall rather varies with weight. Aristotle's views circulated widely and were developed by early commentators, who further developed these views and added elements coming from others sources such as Neoplatonism.

Problems associated with these explanations were noticed early, although these phenomena are not central to Aristotle's works. The Alexandrian commentator of Aristotle's works, John Philoponus (c. 490–570), remarked in his commentary on the *Physics* that these explanations assign three different, incompatible functions to the air: it must be pushed forward by the projectile, then move back, and finally turn and proceed forward again. In Philoponus' view, an incorporeal kinetic force impressed in the body, not in the medium, better explains the motion of projectiles. By this force, the projectile continues the movement until the resistance of the weight of the body and the air exhaust it. Notice that this kinetic force is a transitory condition, not a property of the body. Philoponus also observed that Aristotle's explanation of free fall seems erroneous according to experience: if you let fall from the same height two weights of which one is many times heavier than the other, you will see that the ratio of the times required for the motion does not depend on the ratio of the weights, but that the difference in time is a very small one (Clagett 1959). Philoponus' criticism on Aristotle seems influential during medieval times. In fact, Avicenna's (c. 980–1037) theory of *mail* (inclination) relies to a large extent on Philoponus' views. In Avicenna's account of the motion of projectiles, the body receives what he calls an inclination from the mover. The action of the inclination differs according to the weight of the body. This inclination is that which is perceived as resisting immobility. However, in Avicenna's view, this inclination is not a force but the vehicle of it, even if it is a permanent capability of the body – such as the capability of getting heat. On the other hand, Avicenna remarks that if there were no

resistance to the inclination, it would last indefinitely and that would apply to the motion that it generates. That would be the case of a body moving in the void; but since there does not appear in nature any case of infinite locomotion, as noted by Aristotle, a void does not exist. A major qualification of Avicenna's theory was made by his disciple Abū'l-Barakāt (c. 1080–1665). According to Avicenna, only a single inclination could reside in a body at one time. In the motion of the projectile, the inclination of gravity would tend to act only when the inclination of the propelling force would be extinguished. By contrast, Abū'l-Barakāt considers that contrary inclinations can reside in a body. In his view, there is a natural inclination that can be opposed by a temporary inclination. In the case of the projectiles, as long as the body is moving upwards is dominated by the temporary, projecting inclination and the natural one only functions as a resistance; but as the temporary inclination dissipates, the natural inclination dominates, and the body starts to move downward: the temporary inclination acts now as resistance.

As interesting as these views appear, late medieval, influential authors held Aristotelian principles as standards to judge these theories. Roger Bacon (c. 1219/1220–1292) criticized the idea of an influence of the projector in the projectile, because there would be no substantial contact to keep the motion of the projectile. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) rejected this idea of impressed force by pointing out that putting some source of motion in the body, as an inclination, would violate the very idea of violent motion. From a different perspective, William of Ockham (1287–1347) who considered that motion is not a separate entity of bodies but a mode of relationship considered that projectile motion does not require a continuing cause and, in consequence, rejected these theories of inclination or forces.

Innovative and Original Aspects

By the fourteenth century, the divergent analysis of the motion of projectiles and the free fall of

bodies started to make untenable not only Aristotle and Aristotelians' explanations but also the very categories on which these explanations relied: the conception of motion and its causes. The tendencies dominating the landscape were (1) Francis of Marcia's (c. 1290–1344) theory of *virtus derelicta* ("force left behind"), in which the original mover leaves behind a force in the projectile, which is the principle continuing motion. This force, however, is not permanent but temporary, such as heat is temporary in the body. By this theory, Francis of Marcia also explained the motion of the heavens, claiming that the widely spread idea that celestial bodies were moved by the action of intelligences was, in fact, a proof that these intelligences left behind a force in the celestial objects. (2) Nominalist views associated with Ockham's analysis of motion rejected the Aristotelian opinion on the continuity of motion by the medium. The terminological analysis of Ockham and his followers led to the idea that motion is only a way to name the body in different positions, not a separate entity. (3) Jean Buridan's (c. 1295–1363) theory of impetus offers the first articulated explanation both of projectile motion and free fall by postulating an impressed force causing motion. This impetus is a permanent property of the body. His followers, including Nicolas Oresme, Albert of Saxony, and Marsilius of Inghen, developed variant theories, especially discussing the permanent or temporary character of the impetus, influenced by previous theories.

Buridan's theory of impetus explained motion by appealing to some property of the body, by clear contrast with Aristotle, who appealed to the action of the medium, and with Philoponus, Avicenna, or Marcia, who postulated a vanishing property. Buridan not only articulated the idea of motion as caused by force but also provided a quantification of this. In his view, the impetus imparted by the projector to the projectile varies, on the one hand, as the velocity of the projector, and as the quantity of the body in a moment, on the other – a characterization close to the classical conception of momentum. Furthermore, the impetus was taken as a permanent quality, not self-expanding, and the resistance of the air and the contrary inclination of the body must overcome it;

otherwise it would last indefinitely. The permanent character of impetus clearly contradicted the previous views according to which the *virtus* keeping the body in motion vanished or was exhausted. The acceleration of bodies in free fall of bodies is explained as well by the continual impression of impetus and by gravity (*gravitas*, understood not as a force but as tendency to move downward). Finally, the permanent character of impetus led Buridan to claim that God impressed some impetus to the heavens at the creation of the world, explaining in this way their motion. It is important to highlight, as a corollary, that Buridan's concept of impetus did not make any distinction between rectilinear and circular motion – a central distinction in subsequent dynamics (Gabbey 1971; Hall 1969).

Buridan's theory of impetus opened up new possibilities to consider motion as caused by a force related to some internal, permanent property of bodies. But Buridan's departure from the crumbling Aristotelian establishment is just an infinitesimal part of a larger trend, emerging with more strength during the following centuries. In fact, a growing dissatisfaction with Aristotle, Ptolemy, Galen, and their medieval followers led Renaissance and early modern thinkers to look for alternatives to fully replace these traditionally accepted views and then severely questioned. One of the main sources offering alternatives to replace these traditional explanations of natural phenomena came from the magical views boosted by the Renaissance discovery of Hermes Trismegistus and other presumed ancient magical texts, backing up explanations based on the influence of stars on terrestrial events, sympathies and antipathies, and forces of attraction and repulsion. All these explanations were clearly at odds with the Aristotelian and Medieval accepted views and, because of this, became highly influential in providing alternatives. Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) offered the starting point of a highly influential trend of Neoplatonist views based on occultism that can be followed, for example, in the works of Jean Fernel (1497–1558) and Girolamo Fracastoro (1476–1553). Fernel pursued explanations based on the influence of the stars, while Fracastoro relied on the idea of sympathies.

Others considered light as responsible for animating nature, capable of acting on bodies, generating motion and transformations. What is at stake in the occult qualities traditions is the possibility to provide explanations based on unknown qualities – such as forces, sympathies, or mutual influences – which are still natural (Henry 1986). In other words, these qualities are not directly known but occult; nevertheless, their ways of operating can be uncovered by experience. The idea of a force internal, transmitted or acting to generate motion, is at odds with Aristotelian explanations and takes hold in the magical traditions, as part of the attempts to replace unsatisfactory explanations, as those of the motion of projectiles and the free fall of bodies detected as problematic since the Middle Ages.

Meanwhile, the mechanical philosophy emerging during the early seventeenth century was critical both of Aristotelian philosophy and of explanations based on occult qualities. Mechanical philosophers attempted to explain *all* phenomena by appealing only to matter in motion. As a consequence, occult qualities were described as unintelligible phantasies. Galileo's (1564–1642) approach to natural philosophy makes a powerful use of mathematics to reveal truths about the physical world (Valleriani 2010). However, his natural philosophy is shaped by a kinematic approach, including only bodies in motion and avoiding in this way all discussion on the nature of force (Jammer 1957). His explanation of the free fall of bodies – his most remarkable achievement – conceived motion as “naturally accelerated” as different from and nondependent upon the weight of the body. In a similar way, the uniform motion of terrestrial objects around the center of the earth was natural as well. As a consequence, Galileo conceived a circular inertia, that is, a natural tendency of bodies to describe circular motions, providing in his view a physical explanation of the Copernican astronomy. Another example can be appreciated in his theory of tides, which completely relied on the motion of the Earth as generating the flux and reflux of the sea. Galileo criticized Kepler's theory of the tides, based on the attractive force of the moon as mere “puerility” (Henry 2011a).

Kepler (1571–1630), in fact, attributed to the Sun an attractive force acting at a distance on the planets. In his view, the motion of the Earth could be explained in terms of an efficient cause flowing out from the Sun. In the *Mysterium Cosmographicum* (1596), Kepler explains this phenomenon in terms of a solar soul extending throughout space; later, in *Astronomia Nova* (1609), he moved to an explanation in terms of a motive force. Sometimes he also appealed to William Gilbert's (1544–1603) magnetic philosophy, to portray planets as magnets driven by the magnetic force of the sun. These characterizations are connected to his mathematical findings. As a matter of fact, Kepler's mathematical discoveries of the elliptical shape of the planetary orbits and the variable speed in the motion of the planet when approaching the Sun convinced him that this had some kind of attractive power or virtue to perform these actions.

In the meantime, Descartes (1596–1650) projected a full system of philosophy to replace the Aristotelian, following the ideas of certainty and clarity, inspired by geometrical approaches. Because of this, Descartes openly rejected occult qualities and, in consequence, any meaningful idea of force. In its place, he depicted the universe as completely full of a pure geometrical matter, set in motion by God in the creation. All motion is caused by the collision of particles, and, because God is immutable, the total amount of motion remains always the same. However, instead of forces or qualities, bodies have tendencies to move according to their geometrical nature, which Descartes described in his laws of motion, avoiding all reference to force (Hatfield 1979). This being so, Descartes conceives that circular motion is, in fact, a detour of the natural tendency of particles to move in straight paths, generated by the constant impact in a universe full of matter. Descartes' philosophy was highly regarded and inspired critical followers such as Huygens (1629–1695) and Leibniz (1646–1717).

Impact and Legacy

The concept of force finally made its way to classical mechanics through the work of Isaac

Newton (1642–1727). Newton’s approach is also critical of Aristotelian philosophy, but his main target is the Cartesian universe. In his view, a world full of matter, in which all phenomena occurred by impact, was not enough to explain what we can gather from experience and particularly the empirical regularities of planetary motion devised by Kepler and codified as laws. In his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1687), Newton demonstrated that terrestrial and celestial phenomena could be explained by the same set of concepts and laws – demolishing what was still standing of the Aristotelian distinction between the *sublunar* and the *superlunar* worlds. At the very center of this new conceptual edifice, Newton placed the force of gravity, whose action is universal (De Gandt 2014). As a matter of fact, by conceiving terrestrial gravity as the same attraction retaining the planets in their orbits, Newton was able to differentiate the weight of bodies, which is a function of their distance to the center of the earth, from their mass or “quantity of matter,” that is, a property of the body independent of their position. Once this distinction is done, it is possible to conceive the quantity of motion of the body or momentum and of force, as determined by the ratio of change of momentum. This new conceptual structure includes a variety of forces: (1) the force of inertia or the capacity of the body to resist motion or to persevere, in its state of rest or rectilinear, uniform motion. Newton usually calls this force “innate” and, in his view, is a passive force or a force of resistance, proportional to the quantity of matter; (2) impressed forces or forces in which an action is exerted upon a body in order to change its state, for example, percussion or pressure; finally, (3) centripetal force, which draws or impels the body toward a point as to a center. From these definitions, Newton was able to conceive the motion of the celestial bodies as a balance of forces (inertial and centripetal) and the acceleration of motion as a function of the force of gravity between the Earth and the terrestrial bodies. Newton thought the motion of the particles composing matter should also be explained in terms of forces, attractive and repulsive. In the famous “Questions” of his *Opticks*, Newton offered extensive experimental support to these claims.

Newton was able to provide a mathematical definition of the kind of force he dealt with in his *Principles*, as variables depending upon the change of momentum. These forces could explain a wide variety of motions mathematically. Newton definition of force in his *Principles* is a mathematical one, useful to explain physical phenomena, but this does not amount to a definition. By contrast, he claims that he has been able to offer a mathematical law explaining the action of gravity and to deduce from this a wide variety of celestial and terrestrial phenomena, but that he ignores its cause. In so doing, Newton inscribes his conception of the force of gravity as action at a distance in the experimental tradition of occult qualities and, at the same time, provides a new way to apply mathematics in the study of natural phenomena (Henry 2011b). In so doing, Newton resumes traditions going back to the Renaissance, whose conclusions, however, constituted the starting point of the Enlightenment.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Action at a distance](#)
- ▶ [Astronomy](#)
- ▶ [Ballistics in Renaissance Science](#)
- ▶ [Descartes, René](#)
- ▶ [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- ▶ [Gravitas, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Impetus, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Law of Free Fall in Renaissance Science](#)
- ▶ [Mechanics in Renaissance Science](#)
- ▶ [Motion in Renaissance Science](#)
- ▶ [Natural Magic in Renaissance Science](#)

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Foreknowledge in Renaissance Philosophy: Divine

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Abstract

This entry deals with the notion of God's foreknowledge. First, Augustine's position is delineated, after which follows that of Boethius, in order to introduce the theological and philosophical topics which characterized the later discussion on divine foreknowledge. Then, the focus will turn to Aquinas' view. Augustine, Boethius, and Aquinas furnish the arguments necessary to comprehend the discussion of the early modern era, characterized by both the Catholic–Protestant debate and

the inner-Catholic debate between Molinist and Augustinian-minded theologians. Therefore, attention will be paid to Calvin, while the last section will focus on Molina, who followed (and improved) Aquinas' terminology in order to better rebut Reform-minded theologians, although his theses were harshly criticized by anti-Pelagian Catholics.

Augustine

By means of his foreknowledge, God knows all future contingents. Such knowledge is *fore*, since God knows the future events *before* the creation of the world. The problem is therefore the relation between God's foreknowledge and the possibility of human free will. In brief, if God knows all future events, and therefore each person's acts, how could men be free? For instance, in his *Predestination of the Saints*, Augustine (Thagast, 354 – Hippo, 430) affirms simply that God foreknows what he will create, but he also foreknows those things that do not depend on his will, such as sins: he of course foreknows them, given his omniscience, but he could not predestine them otherwise this would have the absurd consequence that God is the cause of men's sins. Augustine therefore affirms on the one hand that God's foreknowledge is necessary, namely that what God foreknows will happen in any case, but such necessity in no way determines or influences men's acts. More specifically, according to Augustine it is not technically correct to speak about “God's foreknowledge,” as Augustine explains to Simplician, since the temporal difference between past, present, and future does not pertain to God. Everything is present to him in his timeless condition. Therefore, God has knowledge (*scientia*) of what is considered future by men (Augustine 1970: II.2).

Severinus Boethius

In his *Consolation of philosophy*, Severinus Boethius (Rome c. 475 – Pavia, 525) also considered eternity to belong to God's condition; therefore, he thought of God's knowledge as able

to grasp all events which occur in time in the never-failing instant which characterizes the a-temporal dimension of eternity (Craig 1988: 96). The problem was again the correlation between God's knowledge and human free will, since God's eternal view on his creation may be thought to determine men's acts. Boethius' solution was the distinction between two kinds of necessity: *simple necessity*, according to which necessity is due to the essential attributes of a being, as for instance, the necessity that men are mortal, since it is in man's nature to be mortal. Opposed to this is *conditional necessity*, according to which something is necessary only when it happens, as for instance, the necessity that I write in the moment in which I'm effectively writing. Boethius applies this difference between *simple* and *conditional* necessity to God's knowledge, in its timeless present: "His knowledge imposes no absolute necessity on the things He knows, but only a conditional necessity: *if* He knows them, then they must exist – but there is no necessity that He knows them. Therefore, events which for us lie in the future are known by God as present and as occurring contingently, insofar as they are product of our free decision" (Craig 1988: 98).

Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1225 Roccasecca – 1274 Fossanova) dealt with the problem of God's knowledge by distinguishing between two sets: (1) The knowledge of vision, by means of which God knows those things that occurred, or occur or will occur, so that they not only were, are, or will be in potency but they have also been, are, or will be actualized. (2) The "knowledge of simple intelligence," by means of which God knows those potencies that do not exist in any time (Aquinas 2000: d, 39, q. 1 art. 2). Of course, Aquinas also thought God's eternity as a timeless dimension. Therefore God, by means of his knowledge of vision, knows the entire succession of events which occur in time. According to Aquinas, God's knowledge is necessary and infallible, but it does not determine human acts, since

the knowledge of vision which God has in his timeless eternity is not prior to the events that occur in time. Rather, God's act of knowledge and the event in time happen simultaneously. In particular, in *Summa contra Gentiles*, he maintains that any part of time, past, present, and future, is in God's intellect "somehow present." In the *De veritate*, he clarifies that what men know as past, present, and future in time, God knows timelessly; what men consider as future, in God's vision is present, since God is "extra" time. Furthermore, Aquinas thought a "knowledge of approval," by means of which God chooses which potency will be actualized (Craig 1988: 124), between the knowledge of all possibilities by means of his simple intelligence and the knowledge of the actual things by means of knowledge of vision. That voluntary act of the knowledge of approval necessarily determines which potency will be actualized. However, the events are consequently and not (onto-)logically necessitated: the necessity of a particular event is not given by its essence, but by the cause–effect relation. In Aquinas' view, this explanation is sufficient to save human free will.

John Calvin

Among Reform-minded theologians, John Calvin (1509 Noyon – 1564 Geneve) was perhaps the one who focused most upon the concept of foreknowledge. At least, he developed the concept of predestination, strictly related to foreknowledge. In particular, Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, maintains that "when we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things have always been and eternally remain under his observation, so that nothing is either future or past to his knowledge: he sees and regards them in the truth, as though they were before his face. We say that this foreknowledge extends throughout the circuit of the world and over all his creatures. We call predestination the eternal decree of God by which he decided what he would do with each man. For he does not create them all in like condition, but ordains some to eternal life, the others to eternal

damnation” (Calvin 1962: III.21.5). Concerning the terminology used, Calvin’s definition of foreknowledge does not diverge from that of Augustine. The Reformed theologian reflects Augustine’s theory, as presented in the *Predestination of the saints*, in which the Church father explicitly affirms that God foreknows his creation and predestined before creation those people who will receive grace by means of vocation, choosing them on the basis of his own purposes, not for their merits (Augustine 1962: 570).

Luis de Molina

In the sixteenth century, the problem of God’s foreknowledge was further analyzed by the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina (Cuenca, 1535 – Madrid 1600), who developed a new model of God’s knowledge, close to that of John Scotus, although using a terminology similar to that of Thomas Aquinas’. Molina’s great innovation lies in his description of God’s pre-volitional “middle knowledge,” which replaces Aquinas volitional “knowledge of approval.” In his *De liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, praedestinatione et reprobatione Concordia* (On the Concord of Free Will with Grace’s Gifts, Divine Foreknowledge, Predestination and Reprobation), the Spanish Jesuit affirmed that God, anterior to creation, has three different orders of knowledge, differentiated logically, rather than chronologically. Anterior to any voluntary act, God has “natural knowledge,” by means of which He knows any potency; “middle knowledge,” by means of which He knows only those potencies that would be actualized; and finally “free knowledge,” by means of which He knows those potencies that will be actualized after the intervention of his will. In this scheme, human free will is conserved thanks to “middle knowledge,” since by means of it God has certain foreknowledge of those events that would occur in the future, even though their existence is not necessary. Indeed, middle knowledge is pre-volitional, since it intervenes prior to any act of God’s will, in the sense that He knows a particular event even though He has not (yet) decided whether He will create it or

not or, more accurately, whether He will actualize it (Molina 1988). Concerning human acts, God knows “what each created free agent would do in any situation in which that agent might be placed” (Gaskin 1993: 412–413). However, the agent maintains the logical possibility of acting differently from what God has foreknown, because God has not yet created that particular order of things. Molina could develop this threefold conception of God’s knowledge because he considered eternity, not in the way that Augustine and Boethius had, namely as a timeless presence, but Molina, conceived eternity not as containing the future if considered as the entire extension of the time. Any event exists only when it occurs in time; therefore, a contingent event retains the possibility of not being in the future although God could have foreseen it in his eternal dimension.

Cross-References

- ▶ Augustinianism
- ▶ Báñez, Domingo
- ▶ Calvin, Jean
- ▶ Calvinism
- ▶ Molina, Luis de
- ▶ Molinism in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Predestination
- ▶ Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy

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Formula Concordiae

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Abstract

Elaborated in 1577 to resolve the theological disputes within the Lutheran movement, the *Formula Concordiae* is the result of the joint work of a group of theologians gathered first in Torgau from April to June 1576 and then – in a reduced composition – in Bergen Abbey between March and May 1577. After the Augsburg Interim of 1548, substantial doctrinal and liturgical aspects had cracked the Lutheran front, and issues such as those of good works, free will, or the rule of law in Christian life were at the center of the debate. At the same time, elements of dispute with other Reformed denominations – such as the one between Luther and Zwingli about the presence of the blood and body of Christ in the Eucharist – had led to harsh confrontations among the disciples of Melancthon. Attempts to resolve disputes had continued – with unsuccessful results – during the 1550s and 1560s. The spirit of the 12 articles of the *Formula Concordiae* was inspired by a reiteration of the Augsburg Confession. Presented to the Elector of Saxony on 28 May 1577, the document was signed by a large number of imperial electors, princes, imperial cities, and pastors. In other words, about two thirds of the Empire Lutherans welcomed the text, which however was rejected by many others. Despite such partial acceptance, the *Book of Concord* is still the official definition on doctrinal matter for the majority of Lutheran Churches.

Synonyms

[Formula of concord](#)

History and Original Aspects

Elaborated in 1577 to resolve the theological disputes within the Lutheran movement, the Formula

Concordiae is the result of the joint work of a group of theologians gathered first in Torgau from April to June 1576, then – in a reduced composition – in Bergen Abbey between March and May 1577. After the Augsburg Interim of 1548, substantial doctrinal and liturgical aspects had cracked the Lutheran front, and issues such as those of good works, free will, or the rule of law in Christian life were at the center of the debate. At the same time, elements of dispute with the other Reformed denominations – such as the one between Luther and Zwingli about the presence of the blood and body of Christ in the Eucharist – had led to harsh confrontations among the disciples of Melancthon. Attempts to resolve disputes had continued – with unsuccessful results – during the 1550s and 1560s. The group of theologians who met in Torgau, among whom featured Jacob Andreae, Martin Chemnitz, and David Chytraeus, could rely on some texts already formulated in the past: firstly the Swabian-Saxon Concord, drafted in 1574 by Andreae, subsequently the *Maulbronn Formula* produced in that same 1576. The outcome of this first phase of work was a provisional text (the *Torgau Book*), condensed by Andreae in a new text that would become known as the *Epitome*, that is, the first part of the *Formula Concordiae*. The *Torgau Book* circulated among German ministeria in 1576. Criticisms were incorporated by Andreae, Chemnitz, and the smaller group of theologians who met in Bergen. The final product was the *Bergic Book* (or the *Solid Declaration*).

The spirit of the 12 articles of the *Formula Concordiae* was inspired by a reiteration of the Augsburg Confession. In contrast with the opinion expressed by Matthias Flacius Illyricus, the original sin was not considered “essential” but rather as a corruption of the spiritual powers of the sinners, which brought them to a separation from God (Art. 1). Once fallen, the sinner could only rely on the Holy Spirit, according to the idea that the will had a “passive capacity” to be moved toward faith (Art. 2). Human merits did not affect the will of God, whose word could create a new reality in the new creature by virtue of the obedience demonstrated by the Son to the Father, up to the sacrifice on the cross (Art. 3). Good works therefore were not necessary for

salvation, though they were so for Christian life (Art. 4). The latter had to be guided by God's Law, whose relations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ were defined in contrast to antinomian positions. According to the *Formula*, the Law not only served to order society and punish sinners but, reinforced by the "pure grace" of the evangelical truth of forgiveness and justice, could bring the faithful to desire to please God (Art. 5). The Law therefore would be a guide for the regenerated man to take the right decisions, enlightened by the Gospel (Art. 6). The formula brought to an end, in Article 7, the controversy about the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, capable of giving strength to believers, especially the more feeble. Article 8, instead, focused on the unity of the human and divine nature of Christ, indirectly proven in Article 9 by the affirmation of Christ's descent into hell: "we believe simply that the entire person, God and human being, descended to hell after his burial, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his power." The issue of *adiaphora* – religious practices deemed indifferent to the faith because neither prescribed nor prohibited – was addressed in Article 10, in which emphasis was put on the need for a clear confession of faith, and on the fact that the faithful should not yield even on insignificant matters, if they were forced by "enemies of the word of God." Article 11 recalls the Lutheran doctrine of predestination, asserting God's unconditional choice of who is to be saved, and human responsibility for the rejection of God and faith. Knowledge of one's fate will be known only through Grace. Article 12 closes the *Formula* with a clear rejection of Anabaptist, spiritualist, and anti-Trinitarian doctrines.

Presented to the Elector of Saxony on 28 May 1577, the document was signed by a large number of imperial electors, princes, imperial cities, and pastors. In other words, about two thirds of the Empire Lutherans welcomed the text, which however was rejected by many others. Despite such partial acceptance, the *Book of Concord* is still the official definition on doctrinal matter for the majority of Lutheran Churches.

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Formula of Concord

► [Formula Concordiae](#)

Fortune in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

Renaissance thinking on fortune is complex and expressed as often in symbol as through concepts. Drawing on a range of classical, Patristic, and medieval sources, writers articulated fortune both more abstractly in terms of its place in a metaphysical ontological

hierarchy and more concretely with respect to the immediate conditions of life that tested one's virtue. For each of these viewpoints, fortune connoted favorable or adverse circumstance as well as mutability and temporality. In the course of the Renaissance, thinkers focused more intensely on how virtues and moral freedom were secured by reason against fortune's sway. Toward the close of the period, this focus shifted to the nonrational and amoral qualities required to contest fortune's influence.

Synonyms

Chance; Fate; Luck

Introduction

The theme of fortune in human affairs holds a special place in philosophizing, because it is a constant enigma. Whether treated in Calvin's thoughts on predestination, Kant's pondering over the forces of nature versus nurture, or contemporary medical inquiries into whether genetics determine our destiny, fortune is a steady topic of reflection. It addresses the range and limits of human freedom; it elicits the feeling of powerlessness. Toward the close of the Renaissance, Shakespeare's Cassius speaks of the fault lying not in the stars but in ourselves, still, on another occasion, Hamlet senses a "divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will" (V.ii.10–11). Fortune's riddle is insoluble, provoking schemes to make sense out of accidents and to build a frame that contains transience. His Helena, inspired by Boccaccio's Giletta, expresses the challenge for the early seventeenth century with balanced cadence:

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to heaven. The fated sky
Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.
(*All's Well that Ends Well*, I.ii.216–219)

Since fortune escapes our conceptual grasp, Renaissance writers and artists made of it a metaphor. *Fortuna* is for Petrarch's poetry the storm

the poet faces on the sea of life (*Canz.* 272.12). Fortune, like the Greek Lachesis or Roman Fortuna, remained feminine and could embody both the virtues and frailties commonly assigned to women. She became the fertile subject for numerous artists. She is melded with the virgin in Olivuccio di Ciccarello's International Gothic altarpiece of the early 1400s, balancing on her crescent moon. In Pinturicchio's moral mosaic of the Sienese cathedral from 1504, she is a towering nude deity, carrying a billowing sail, with one foot on a sphere and the other in a ship with broken mast.

As the two examples show, Renaissance fortune wears different faces. It ranges in figuration. What is of interest for Renaissance philosophy is the way writers and thinkers made sense of the riddle it presents. It was one they inherited, but their treatment is innovative. In no way should we expect, in their reactions to this existential and moral quandary, a consistent response or one that followed a uniform development. Considering that dialogue was a favorite form of Renaissance exposition, a writer could express the instability of his or her own viewpoint through an exchange among interlocutors, for example, in Poggio Bracciolini's *De varietate fortunae* of the late 1440s. Nonetheless even with the fluctuations of their responses, we can chart the flow of the tide.

Renaissance thinkers confronted the theme of fortune with a double vision. The first view was rooted in medieval metaphysical ontology. It held fortune to be under the sway of providence, divine foreknowledge, or, as in Olivuccio's painting, heavenly mercy. It offered the bereft or confused the security of divine guidance and care as the anchor of the chain of being. But it also, especially in the wake of catastrophe, raised questions about the transparency of God's goodness or the authority of his clerical representatives. The other view looked apart from this ontological foundation and focused more on the immediate, sensible conditions and circumstances. Here Renaissance writers were concerned not only with the arbitrariness of fortune, in its own agency, but also with the strength or weakness of human virtue and volition in taking arms against it. They focused

on fortune's influence on the emotions, which could disturb virtuous tranquility. If the first view held fast to a metaphysical grounding in God as the source of being, the second conception aimed at securing the safety or happiness of one's lot through the imagined clarity of reason or firmness of virtue. This second conception grew in scope during the fifteenth century, gradually obscuring, but never eclipsing the first. In the end, however, even this rational clarity became darkened and virtuous stolidity more labile.

Each of these visions of fortune embraced in varying measure two different qualities of fortune itself. Fortune was encountered, first of all, as the set of accidents or circumstances that one traversed on life's path. These could be positive or negative, for example, wealth or poverty, beauty or ugliness, and status high or low and so were often conceived as contraries. The second quality of fortune took root in the first, circumstantial one: it emphasized its vacillation and capriciousness. Circumstances were unstable, a spinning globe or stormy ocean, and here thinkers concentrated, with increasing measure, not simply on change but on the incessant, existential process of change. Novelty entailed transience in the sense not only that accidental goods or perils were fleeting but also that a person's life was always in motion as well. Both external circumstance and inner character were in flux, and the individual was set out into life at an involuntary, indeed fortuitous moment, unable to choose the conditions into which he or she was born. This second quality of fortune emphasizing temporality, mutability, and history, along with the perspective of rational and virtuous contest, became more pronounced in the course of the Renaissance, without ever forgetting fortune's quality of accident or circumstance: this quality was in fact seen in a new light.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition: Innovative and Original Aspects

The classical and medieval sources of these two views, both the more abstract and the more earthly, have been discussed by the foundational studies of Doren (1924), Patch (1927), Courcelle

(1967), and Cioffari (1973). The study of providence and divine foreknowledge governing fortune developed throughout the Middle Ages from the writings of Augustine (*De civitate dei*), Boethius (*De consolazione philosophiae*), Thomas Aquinas (*Summa contra gentiles*), and also from readings of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. It received its most poetic syntheses in the Dante's *Inferno* 7 and in the closing speech of Theseus in Chaucer's "Knight's Tale," which was based on Boccaccio's *Teseida*. The focus on fortune's more mundane and emotional effects derived from Cicero (*Tusculanae*, *De officiis*) and especially Seneca (*Epistulae morales* and presumably *De remediis fortuitorum*). This variety of sources, with their range of viewpoints, allowed Renaissance writers to ground their own conceptions on different bases and perspectives; the rediscovery of Lucretius's *De rerum natura* in the fifteenth century, through its atomizing agnosticism, provided them with yet another provocative authority. Regardless of the sources, writers retained throughout the Renaissance an important legacy of this tradition: that fortune played a crucial role in the investigation of moral freedom.

The Renaissance rupture with this tradition, whereby thinkers and poets expressed their innovations, can be grasped by noting a number of their assessments in chronological sequence, with respect to each of the two viewpoints.

With regard to the first perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, Petrarch formalizes a vision of the goddess Fortune in *Canz.* 325. She describes to the poet the heavenly design of the birth of his beloved Laura, but this starry messenger also foretells her death before turning from him on her revolving wheel. Boccaccio, in his later writings, suggests Fortune is the equivalent of Lachesis and the instigator of all happenstance (*GDG* 1.5), relying on, among other sources, the authority of Apuleius (*De mundo*) and the more transcendental notion of Boethius. He cites Boethius's view again in his commentary on *Inferno* 7 and refers to Aristotle when asserting the influence of celestial intelligences over earthly affairs (*Esp.* VII.lit. 55–91). His *De casibus virorum illustrium* maintains this subordination, in order to cast down the pride of princes. Coluccio Salutati, friend of

Boccaccio and follower of Petrarch, devoted an entire treatise to fate and fortune. Composed after the death of his wife, *De fato et fortuna* bases its analysis of free will and necessity on authors ranging from Augustine to Scotus. It upholds a balance between heavenly causes and earthly contingencies (Witt 1983). What is striking, apart from their original combinations of sources, are the poetic and rhetorical idioms that convey these writers' observations: the tone is often personal, urgent, and heartfelt. If Salutati claims that the will is fated to be free, Lorenzo Valla's dialogue *De libero arbitrio* delves more deeply into this paradox, rejecting these philosophical reconciliations, especially those of Boethius. God's foreknowledge, his eponymous interlocutor asserts, cannot be comprehended by reason. He records a discourse by Apollo, in which Jupiter and Fortune are the secret arbiters of destinies: Apollo may foresee, but not alter, what is to come.

Valla explodes the conventional treatment of philosophical questions, in a way that Luther would later appreciate. But his analysis did not subdue the need to pursue a metaphysical solution, even if a solution's foundation now seemed less secure. An early letter of Marsilio Ficino, *Della fortuna*, declares human prudence a divine gift. God grants people both good fortune and the moral ability to overcome mischance, so that fortune is subordinate to God (Kristeller 1964). Bartolomeo Scala, like Salutati a Florentine chancellor, treated the theme of fortune in 1496, the year before he died. His *Apologia contra vituperatores civitatis Florentiae* challenges the position, abetted by Lucretius, that fortune holds sway over all creation. While mentioning his sympathies with the opposing view, which proclaims the power of prudence, Scala focuses on the way humanity attributes to fortune what is actually the hidden workings of nature, "who is also God." Fortune, in other words, is a creature of our ignorance (6–8). A late work by Giovanni Pontano, the Neapolitan humanist, reflects anew on human frailty before fortune. Published posthumously in 1512, *De fortuna* shares the melancholy tenor of Machiavelli's 1513 *Il principe* in the wake of the Spanish and French invasions of Italy. In

opposition to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who would liberate human agency from astrological influence, Pontano emphasizes the power of the stars. Citing a host of classical and scholastic authorities, he strives to harmonize this power with moral clarity and virtue. Thus in the sixteenth century, the traditional metaphysical hierarchy governing fortune perdures, but these later treatises nonetheless manifest a preoccupation with moral virtues and reason as the prime defense against fortune's contingencies.

This second perspective on fortune, which contends with the way we respond directly to fortune's accidents, receives its most extensive treatment in Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortune*. Adapting the psychomachia of Seneca, Petrarch creates a series of dialogues between reason and four contrasting emotions (sorrow, joy, fear, and hope). His *Secretum*, an imaginary discourse between the eponymous Franciscus and the figure of St. Augustine, reinforces this moral, often Stoic exchange, in which the life of reason is upheld as the bulwark *sub imperio fortune* against emotional turmoil (2.14). Around the same time, Boccaccio's *Decameron* recounts various tales, often derived from Alexandrine romances that show the force of fortune or the human ingenuity required to overcome it. The narrators and their stories focus on comedy and tragedy in the sublunary realms, apart from celestial influence (days 2–3). Both Petrarch and Boccaccio underline fortune's temporal impetus. *Sub imperio fortune*, humanity is subject not only to happenstance but also to temporal revolution, aging, and mortality, against which, these works suggest, there is no rational refuge or choice.

Both qualities of fortune, its circumstantial and temporal or historical, are explored almost obsessively by later writers. Leonardo Bruni begins his *Isagogicon moralis disciplinae* by asserting how moral enlightenment prevents us from "wandering about in the dark on what whatever by-way fortune should offer us" (Baron 1928). Matteo Palmieri's *Della vita civile* glosses Bruni's position in the Tuscan vernacular, opposing the "circumstance of fortune," into which each person is born, with the "virtues of the mind," which transcend fortune's influence (1.168–69). Lapo da

Castiglionchio the Younger and Niccolò Perotti reiterate this confidence in reason and virtue's power over fortune when dedicating their translations of Plutarch to Cosimo de' Medici and Nicholas V. Leon Battista Alberti uses the thematic of virtue and fortune in his vernacular dialogues *Della famiglia* and *Theogenius*. His concerns, too, involve the temporal changes fortune brings, whether in one's personal life or in the histories of the Alberti clan and indeed of entire nations. This temporal and historical sensibility finds metaphorical expression in his dinner piece *Fatum et fortuna*; here a philosopher recounts a dream vision in which shades transverse the river of life, singly or in ships, occasionally buoyed by planks (*tabule*) of the liberal arts. Alberti revises the Patristic metaphor of penitence as the salvific plank after shipwreck in the sea of life, relocating this aid from sacramental to humanist sources. But Alberti revises too the conflict between virtue and fortune, since fortune paradoxically provides people with the occasion to embrace liberal studies as the guide in navigating its currents. Fortune is not only momentary accident or circumstance but suggests timing as well as time itself. Poggio's *De varietate fortunae* also speaks of both attributes of fortune; the work describes the "theater" and "game of fortune" that affects all, especially the powerful, in a way that anticipates Erasmus: fortune "cherishes them, using them according to its rule: first casting them down, then unmasking their folly" (*Proem.*). There is a Lucianic caste to Poggio's treatment as he strives to maintain detached, rational objectivity on human foolishness; nonetheless his dialogue opens with a long lament over the ruins of Rome, its history, too, being subject to fortune's sway.

Thus in anticipation of Machiavelli and Guicciardini's meditations on fortune, fifteenth-century writers note another of fortune's qualities: its kinship with *occasio*, in the sense of timing. This kinship becomes an allegorical feature in Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's *Somnium de fortuna*. Aeneas likens Fortune to the Roman god of opportunity; the dream vision proclaims the virtue of Alfonso of Naples, who seizes Fortune by the hair and holds her still (Warburg 1999).

This image of seizing fortune, which was part of Alfonso's triumphal procession in Renaissance Naples, resonates in Machiavelli's treatment of fortune in chap. 25 of *Il principe*, where he calls fortune a woman that the bold ruler must beat and bend to his will. Despite this show of misogynist bravado, Machiavelli states that even able rulers can only determine half of their success: they might raise the banks surrounding fortune's river and yet see flooding. In his observations, moral virtue is displaced by *virtù*, strategic acumen and tactical skill. It has the amoral quality earlier found in the *ingegno* of various characters of the *Decameron*. The contest between fortune and *virtù* remains in doubt; Cesare Borgia, whom he praises for political ability, failed either from malignant fortune or lapse of judgment. Like earlier humanists, Machiavelli emphasizes fortunate timing: for example, Julius II's rash personality suited the situations he confronted. Francis Bacon provides a neat formulation of this timing in his essay "On Fortune": for the fortunate, "there be not stonds nor restiveness in a man's nature, but that the wheels of his mind keep way with the wheels of his fortune."

Francesco Guicciardini, Machiavelli's compatriot, agrees with these sentiments while tinging them with greater pessimism. Recalling Petrarch and Alberti's treatments, he claims it requires greater skill to resist prosperous than adverse fortune (C 164). In general, "fortune has the greatest power in human affairs," so that our efforts, if they are to moderate its effects, still require good fortune (C 30). Along these lines he observes that fools often accomplish more than the wise, since they rely more on fortune than on reason; in sum, he never read anything quite so well expressed as the dictum, "Ducunt volentes fata, nolentes trahunt" (C 136, 138).

The turn to folly and fortune finds its place in late-Renaissance rumination. Bacon writes, as if reading both Italian statesmen, "there be not two more fortunate properties, than to have a little of the fool, and not too much of the honest." In Erasmus's inspired *Stultitiae laus*, his voice piece Folly claims that Fortune, as "directrix of human affairs," is hostile to the wise with their cautious prudence, favoring instead bold fools.

Michel de Montaigne, throughout his *Essais*, laconically accepts Fortune's sway: "I have hardly the skill to dodge Fortune and escape or force her, and to direct and lead things foresightedly to serve my purpose" for "I owe much to Fortune in that up to this point she had done nothing hostile to me, at least nothing beyond my endurance. Might it not be her way to leave in peace those who do not trouble her?" (2.17; 3.9).

Impact and Legacy

With Montaigne, Renaissance reflections on fortune have shifted from their traditional astral origins and also from their common moral imperatives. Humanity is seen without either the benevolent guidance of the heavens or the confidence in reason and virtue that resounded in dialogues a century earlier. When considering free will's contest with fortune, writers emphasize its relative impotence or political acumen rather than moral strength. But the diminished moral discussion is compensated through other equally fundamental philosophical inquiries: a renewed assessment of the limits of human agency, not only in terms of what we might do but also with regard to what we might know. Montaigne's *Que sçay-je?* (2.12) sounds a Socratic note already present in earlier Renaissance writings: it draws attention to the personal, historical context in which philosophical assertions are conceived. Fortune may favor or fight us, but she (or it) is always with us; we are not born without her presence. If her legacy is now overlooked – it is ignored, for example, in the *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* – that, too, Renaissance writers remind us, is part of her legacy. We need only search for her new face, which we may see in our DNA.

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Fotherby, Martin

Born: c.1560, Grimsby

Died: 11 March 1620, London

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Abstract

Bishop of Salisbury from 1618, a former protégé of and chaplain to Archbishop John

Whitgift and also, ironically, the grandfather of the author of the deistic *Treatise of Humane Reason* (1674), Fotherby's intellectual legacy comprised a treatise attacking atheism, published posthumously as *Atheomastix* in 1622, and a collection of four sermons, which appeared in 1608.

Biography

Martin Fotherby (c.1560–1620), Bishop of Salisbury, was born in Grimsby, the second son of Martin Fotherby and his wife, Isabell. After studying at Cambridge and becoming a Fellow of Trinity, he took holy orders and was appointed Archdeacon of Canterbury in 1596 and Dean in 1615. He is regarded as having been a protégé of Elizabeth I's last Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift. In 1592, Fotherby married Margaret, the daughter of John Winter, a prebendary of Canterbury. He was appointed chaplain to King James I and installed as Bishop of Salisbury in 1618, but seems to have made very little impression on his diocese. Fotherby died in London on 11 March 1620 and was buried two days later in All Hallows, Lombard Street, where his brother-in-law Francis Dee was rector. Three years later, his daughter Cecily (the third of ten children, only five of which survived their father) married Henry Clifford in the same church. Their firstborn son, named after his eminent forefather, was Martin Clifford (1624–1677), who later became master of Charterhouse and wrote the deistic *Treatise of Humane Reason* (1674) (Tarantino 2000, pp. 15–18).

Impact and Legacy

Fotherby's unfinished *Atheomastix: Clearing Four Truthes, Against Atheists and Infidels: 1. That, There is a God. 2. That, There is but one God. 3. That, Jehovah, our God, is that one God. 4. That, The Holy Scripture is the Word of that God*, was published posthumously in 1622. In this treatise, packed with erudite references, first and foremost to classical philosophy, the bishop

declared himself to be persuaded of the universal assent to the existence of God. Although Fotherby noted that “this is the worst kinde of Atheisme of all other, when as Atheisme is grounded, not so much upon Ignorance, as it is upon the opinion of Knowledge” (*Atheomastix*, sig. B3), he seems to exclude the possibility that there might exist speculative atheists, that is, those who believe “generally and constantly” (p. 99) that there is no God and who reiterate it to the end, “of which sort there can be none, though many have been so reputed and taken” (p. 107). Instead, he defends the appropriateness and urgency of an offensive against “the pragmatic atheists” of his time (“men of the sharpest wits, the greatest spirits, and the richest endowments”), explaining that by them he means only those who outwardly deny (“by outward profession”) the existence of God and not in their hearts (“by inward persuasion”) and, even when they were inwardly persuaded, that was due only to some “sodaine and passionate eruptions.” However, some passages of his work reveal a certain disquiet that the worm of unbelief might in truth be acting on various fronts and having much more devastating and pervasive effects on his age (cf. Berman 1988, pp. 33–34). It is quite simply erroneous, Fotherby comments, “to thinke, that either amongst Christians there can be no Atheists; or, that secret Atheists are not to be convinced, as well as the publique: or that the principles of Religion . . . ought not to be prooued unto those men, of whom they bee already beleueed. . . . For besides the two fore-named sorts of Atheists, the one both in word, and heart denying God; the other in word confessing him, but in heart renouncing him; there is yet a third sort of them . . . who though both in word and in heart they confess him, yet doe they in their works deny him.” As for those “acute Naturalists, who hold it a seruility to be led with brutish-beleeuing, and will therefore entertain no more of Religion then they find to be consonant unto Reason,” they would find in his treatise, he confidently asserted, “reason for their Religion” (sig. B2). Fotherby’s apologetic arguments are rather more original in the second book, *Of the Grounds of Arts*. Here he affirms that every art, whether metaphysical or mechanical, liberal or illiberal, “leadeth a man to

God.” It is impossible for any one person to have a command of all the arts (“they all doe make one single Ring, in that ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία, whereof the Philosophers doe so pleasantly dreame”), and so we rely on an omniscient God to tie together the chain of knowledge (*Atheomastix*, pp. 362, 187). Fotherby significantly preempts the objection that in his work there is “so much Philosophie, and so little Diuinitie,” arguing that for the “adversaries” against whom his book is prevalently directed, the philosophy of pagans has much more importance than the theology of Christians (sig. B4). Ironically, some English freethinkers (aka Fotherby’s “Naturalists”), most notably Martin Clifford and Anthony Collins, would employ a similar – albeit reversed – rhetorical strategy in their own writings, skillfully amassing textual references to unquestionably orthodox Christian authors in order to convey their own deistic if not yet atheistic convictions (Tarantino 2014, pp. 93–94).

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Fountains

- [Water Culture in the Renaissance](#)

Fourlanos, Daniel

Born: 1550, Crete

Died: 1592, Crete

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Abstract

Daniel Fourlanos (ci. 1550–1592) was a Cretan physician/philosopher. He commented in Latin upon Aristotle's *Parts of Animals* I in the style of the Aristotelianism of Padua where he studied medicine. Back in Crete, he adopted a more philological approach editing, commenting, and translating Theophrastus and Aristotle.

Biography

Daniel Fourlanos (ci. 1550–1592) was a Cretan physician/philosopher. He studied medicine at the University of Padua as many Cretans did at the time. Crete was then a Venetian colony, and the University of Padua was officially the highest educational institution of the Venetian Republic. The University of Padua's Aristotelianism was distinguished from Florentine Neoplatonism and Roman Neoscholasticism by promoting methodological naturalism. Fourlanos left Padua and returned to his island, where he became an eminent member of the Cretan Academy of *Stravaganti*, a friend and associate of many scholars of the intellectual scene of Candia and beyond like Maximos Margounios (1549–1602), Meletios Pigas (1550–1601), Alvise Luigi Lollino (1552–1625), and Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535–1601). He published one volume in his lifetime, and a second one was printed posthumously (See Manoussacas 1974). His first book is characteristic of the training he received in Padua. It is a commentary in Latin of the first book of Aristotle's *Parts of Animals* (See Furlanus 1574). Since Paduan Aristotelianism was mainly

methodological, one can easily understand how Fourlanos's commentary was integrated in his university education. The volume published posthumously includes a collection of works by Theophrastus along with pseudo-Aristotle's *De spiritu*. Fourlanos edited them with corrections, translated them into Latin (except two, for which he used the translations of Andrien Turnèbe), and commented upon them. There is thus a turning point in Fourlanos' career, from his methodological interest for the *Parts of Animals* I to a compromise with a more philological flair that was characteristic of the Greco-Byzantine tradition. In his commentary on the *Parts of Animals* I, Fourlanos is quite critical toward the Byzantine commentator Michael of Ephesus (eleventh/twelfth century) who produced a commentary on the same work. In his second book, Fourlanos' approach is more philological. Interestingly, his edition of Theophrastus's *Characters* employs a succession of chapters that is different from any other early edition of the same work. Fourlanos's engagement with philosophy was enhanced by the cultural ambience; Crete has been for two centuries before he was born a major center for the circulation of Greek manuscripts from Byzantium to Western Europe.

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Fox Morcillo, Sebastián

Born: Seville, ca.1528

Died: Seville, after 1558

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Abstract

A political theoretician and philosopher, Sebastián Fox Morcillo was born in Seville, where he received his early education. He subsequently enrolled at the University of Alcalá de Henares and in 1548 he relocated to Leuven. Fox Morcillo published commentaries on Plato as well as tracts on Aristotle's natural philosophy, works in which he endeavoured to reconcile both philosophers' teachings. In 1556 Fox Morcillo was appointed as one of the tutors to Don Carlos, son of Philip II.

Biography

Although traditionally he was said to have been a member of the Fox, an aristocratic family stemming from Aquitaine, we now know that Fox Morcillo reverted the order of his family names in order to conceal his *converso* origin. Born into a family of prosperous artisans at Seville in the late 1520s (possibly in 1528), Sebastián Fox Morcillo studied Latin and Greek there under Fray Alonso de Medina. He subsequently enrolled at the

University of Alcalá de Henares and in 1548 he moved to Leuven to study at the *Collegium Trilingue*. The prestige of Fox Morcillo's works, chiefly published between 1554 and 1556, led to his appointment, in May 1556, as one of the tutors to Don Carlos, son of Philip II. We know that Fox Morcillo had returned to Spain by 1558. That year, whilst in Seville, and due to his stay at Leuven, Fox Morcillo became suspicious in the eyes of the Dominican Baltasar Pérez. He instructed an inquisitorial process against Fox Morcillo, whose life must have taken a turn to the worse as shown by the last remaining document related to Fox Morcillo. In it the Spanish humanist is recorded as having been forced to pawn his collection of Latin and Greek books, indisputable proof of his waning fortune. There is no truth in the assertion that Fox Morcillo died at sea. His death must have taken place in Seville shortly after 1558.

Fox Morcillo's first works were an examination of Cicero's *Topica* (now lost), and the treatise *De inventione dialectica*, which was published in 1550. Several works followed, including a compendium of moral philosophy, treatises on history and on imitation, as well as commentaries on Plato's dialogues and a tract discussing a harmonization of Plato and Aristotle on natural philosophy. In 1554 Fox Morcillo published his *De imitatione*, a rhetorical treatise in which he explains the art of perfecting one's style by imitating a model. Divided into two books and portraying a conversation between the author and his brother under the pseudonyms of Gaspar and Francisco Enuesia, Fox Morcillo's text examines the chief elements within the art of imitation: *natura*, *ars* and *exercitium*, and concludes by arguing that Cicero should be the exclusive model for rhetoricians. Dealing largely with politics and with the consequences of moral decisions in a rhetorical way, in Renaissance historiography came to form a fundamental part of the *studia humanitatis* and thus began to be treated for the first time as an autonomous discipline. In 1556 Fox Morcillo published at Antwerp his *De regno et regis institutione libri III*, a dialogue conceived in terms of the Roman moralists between a spokesman for monarchy and another for

republicanism, in which Fox Morcillo shows great confidence in the ability of the prince's educators and advisers to maintain a moral outlook on their prince. Theoretical reflection on history was also the subject of Fox Morcillo's last work, his *De historiae institutione dialogus*, in which history is described as a "narratio vera, ornata et culta alicuius rei gestae aut dictae ad eius notionem hominum menti firmiter imprimendam" (p. 17). In his work Fox Morcillo offers a set of accepted precepts that could draw on contemporary humanist models as well as on models from Greek and Roman historians. Particularly important are the limits of decorous historical discourse: historians must maintain a certain degree of "evenness" (*aequalitas*) that is consistent with the dignity of history. Fox Morcillo also excelled for his commentaries on classical philosophers. Though based on Marsilio Ficino's Latin versions of Plato, Fox Morcillo's annotations to the *Timaeus*, *Phaedo* and *Republic* were extremely critical of the Italian translator. He stated in the preface to the *Republic* that Plato had not been skilfully or properly translated by Ficino. In the end, however, his corrections of Ficino's solutions accounted to only three passages, all of them relating to minor points of biological or medical terminology.

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Fracastoro, Girolamo

Born: 1478

Died: 1553

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Abstract

Girolamo Fracastoro was one of the leading figures on the sixteenth-century intellectual scene. Not only is he renowned for his famous poem, dedicated to Pietro Bembo, *Syphilis sive De morbo Gallico libri tres* (Verona 1530), and for his recognized medical expertise, but his fame among historians of science and medicine owes much to the *De sympathia et antipathia*

rerum, the short treatise which introduces the three books *De contagione, et contagiosis morbis et eorum curatione* (Venice 1546).

His work is characterized by the presence of heterogeneous elements, coming from the Neoplatonic and Hermetic traditions, as well as from Lucretius. It can be seen as a solidly philosophical synthesis in which the matrix is, no doubt, Aristotelian and the rationalist imprint is evident. It is exactly within the theoretical framework of Aristotelianism that Fracastoro develops his interest in the problem of knowledge and his attention to the world of experience. His reflections confirm the *lectio* of the ancient philosophers, passing through Ficino's rereading of Plato, the intellectual stimuli deriving from the writings of Giovanni and Gianfrancesco Pico Della Mirandola and the teaching of Pomponazzi. It is partly because of these research themes that Fracastoro's works became particularly popular in the context of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century natural philosophy, which privileged methodological approaches focusing on the concrete "cases" of nature.

Biography

Fracastoro was a pupil of Alessandro Achillini, Pietro Trampolin, Alessandro Benedetti, and Pietro Pomponazzi. He studied and earned his doctorate in Padua in 1502, where he remained as a reader in logic and *conciliarius anatomicus* until 1509. Copernicus was also in Padua at this time, and this intellectually stimulating environment was where Fracastoro received a multidisciplinary education, not restricted to the Aristotelian *lectio*, but engaged with the most diverse aspects of ancient philosophy, both Greek and Latin, with the tradition of the Arabic commentators and with the most recent *studia humanitatis*.

After being appointed physician to the Council of Trent in 1545 by Pope Paul III, he chose to move the council seat from Trento to Bologna, after a typhus epidemic broke out in the area. His *Homocentricorum sive De stellis liber unus*,

published in Venice in 1538 along with *De diebus criticis libellus* had been dedicated to the said Pope. Fracastoro moved in the cultural circles of both Padua and Verona and was particularly close to Girolamo, Marco Antonio, and Giambattista Della Torre. He was also in contact with Gaspare Contarini, Gian Matteo Giberti, Marcantonio Flaminio, and Giambattista Ramusio, with whom he exchanged many letters. He was a member of the Accademia Gibertina and the Accademia Pontaniana.

Fracastoro was a multifaceted author whose interests ranged from medicine to astronomy, from philosophy to theology and poetry, and he stands out for the vast number of works he produced, most of which – the *Naugerius sive De Poetica* dialogues, the *Turrius sive De intellectione*, the *Fracastorius sive De anima*, the unfinished poem entitled *Joseph*, the *De vini temperatura sententia*, his *Risposta al crescimento del Nilo* (in answer to Giambattista Ramusio's *Navigazione e Viaggi*) and the *Carmina* – were published posthumously in the Venetian *Opera* (apud Iuntas, 1555). This first edition was followed by many others, including the Paduan edition printed by Giuseppe Comino in 1739. Instead, several of his unpublished works were published by Francesco Pellegrini in 1955. The edition includes the *Controversia theologica veronese*, a treatise on cosmology based on the *Homocentrica* thesis, together with several of his letters. Fracastoro wrote the above-mentioned treatise after 1530 and submitted it to Gaspare Contarini for his opinion, who replied in *De Homocentricis ad Hieronimus Fracastorium*. Also memorable are his *Alcon sive de cura canum venaticorum* and the letter to Alvise Corner about the Venetian lagoon.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Fracastoro's work is characterized by a multiplicity of interests, even though philosophy remains the main intellectual ground for different aspects of his literary output. The various components of his production can be viewed as part of an organic perspective in which, apart from the

eclectic style of his thought, one can see his actual ability to assimilate and provide an original re-elaboration of various cultural legacies. For example, Aristotelian, Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Hermetic traditions and that stemming from Medieval Culture are able to coexist and weld together in a substantially coherent framework.

At the heart of his investigation lies the conception of a universe governed by laws that exclude any supernatural or miraculous explanation. The workings of the universe are attributed to a hierarchy of physical causes, so that the revolutions of the heavens are connected to the earthly cycles and natural and historical events. This same theme is present in *De sympathia et antipathia rerum*, where the use of a completely natural causality does not rule out the Platonic idea of a living cosmos, governed by interactive elementary principles, in which the intelligent acts of the *anima mundi* become manifest.

In *Homocentrica* Fracastoro criticizes the unnatural nature of Ptolemy's astronomical system, which attempts to "save phenomena" and to explain the anomalies of celestial motions by means of the geometric expedients of eccentrics, epicycles, and deferents, which he defines as "monstrous spheres." He designs a new astronomical model which is inspired by both the principles of Aristotle's cosmology and Plato's idea, found in the *Timaeus*, of a living nature or "big animal." Following on from the theories elaborated in Antiquity by Eudoxus and Callipus and the medieval model devised by al-Bitruji (Alpetragius) in *De motibus coelorum*, translated by the Neapolitan Jew Calo Calonimos and printed in 1531 in Venice, Fracastoro proposes a cosmology that is in complete contrast to the Ptolemaic system. By adopting the homocentric sphere theory, he is able to solve problems related to the anomalies of planetary motion by recurring to the Aristotelian cosmological model, using some of the solutions contained in Averroes' *Commentary* on Aristotle's *De Coelo*. The system is based on the principle that the axis of each celestial sphere is perpendicular to the axes of the spheres immediately above or below it. This effectively brings about an increase in the number of spheres (some 79) moved by the *primum mobile* that

communicates the daily motion to the planets. Each of these spheres is assigned five spheres without stars (*sine stellis*), which circulate in the opposite direction to that of the sphere in which the planet is set. These spheres have the function of offsetting or "reacting" to the drag effect caused by the external orbs, ensuring that the system remains perfectly centered on a single point that is the Earth.

Several scholars attempted to reform the astronomy of the *Almagest* in the name of a science that corresponds to the true nature of phenomena without being too contrived or forced and in line with the original Aristotelian doctrine dictation. For example, we can cite Alessandro Achillini in *De orbibus* (1498), or authors such as Agostino Nifo and, especially, Giovanni Battista Della Torre, whose astronomical heritage was taken up by Fracastoro. Another name to be mentioned is that of Giovanni Battista Amico, author of *De motibus corporum coelestium iuxta principia peripatetica sine excentricis et epicyclis*, published in 1536, which provides significant proof of the ever-increasing sense of unease that was being voiced as regards Ptolemy and the need for simplification of the astronomical model. Regardless of the effectiveness of the proposed solutions, the dominant idea in all these authors' works and particularly in Fracastoro's is the perfectly circular orbit of the planets, assumed as one of the tenets of the difference between celestial and earthly physics, but also as a means of maintaining the symmetry of every part of the cosmos. The *sympathia* and the mutual influence between the celestial and the sublunary world set the cycles of an eternal becoming and the contiguity and contact (*nexus*) between the parts (from the upper to the lower ones) create a kind of physical causality that can be reconstructed by the philosopher and traced back to particular natural cases such as those related to the medical practice.

For Fracastoro, logic functions are an essential *instrumentum* for defining a knowledge oriented towards the natural sciences and especially towards the medical art. In *Turrius*, Fracastoro accredits the philosopher with being able to know phenomena by identifying and describing

their causes. The dialogue examines gnoseological problems and the whole cognitive process is made to depend on the sensitive impressions that are retained in the memory in a stable manner. The mind distinguishes and orders the impressions according to the subjective criterion of similarity, producing *subnotiones* by means of an intermediate activity between the senses and the reason.

The entire cognitive process takes place in the soul, the place where both the primary concepts, derived from the outside world, and the secondary ones originating from reflection converge. It is thus essential for Fracastoro to analyze the ways in which, starting from the senses, the mind gains access to knowledge in a series of increasingly certain and sure steps. The cognition of the universe is achieved by the intellect and is the concluding moment of a cognitive process that begins with the senses. This process does not stop with the still confused acquisition of the sensible *species*, but its activities are increased by the *subnotiones*. This is how the systematic and organic ordering of the knowledge produced by experience comes about, but it also allows the universe to be elaborated with no external intervention. The soul is presented as a power that orders the various universals until the "most general" universal is reached and is powerful enough to make every man's soul "divine." The soul is the place or seat of the intellectual species and it is where the "sensitive spirits" are kept. Fracastoro gives an original interpretation to the Aristotelian doctrine of the intellect: the species acquired by the intellect are the same as those already assumed by sense perceptions, which are now presented in a different way. Perception presents them in a confused manner, while the intellect separates them, distinguishes them, and finally turns them into "universals." This power of logic, which had been examined in the first book of the *Turrius*, has strong links with the hermetically inspired exaltation of man that seems to derive from Pico della Mirandola's *Oratio de hominis dignitate*. The true *miraculum* for Fracastoro lies in the intellect's ability to carry out abstract operations, a power that allows man to be assimilated to "Gods," that is, to separate intelligences.

Fracastoro investigates a series of cognitive acts based on the distinction between true and false, between certain, uncertain, and probable, and which essentially represent the ways in which scientific knowledge is defined in relation to other forms of knowledge. Above all, he reflects on instinct, which is ultimately a form of "intelligence," since it allows living beings, including plants and animals, to achieve their own ends in obedience to divine commands.

He also pays much attention to the problem of deceit, which also includes the cases of errors, amphibologies, and ambiguities resulting from a person's dreams or particular altered states, already pointed out by Ficino. What stands out most of all is the fusion between logical-gnoseological and medical interest which, in the second part of *Turrius*, brings Fracastoro to question which parts of the brain are responsible for the different faculties and how they operate. Thus, intellect, like a king, is at the center of the brain, and common sense, imagination, and memory are topically located in the same place. What emerges from this analysis is a picture of a progressive series of operations that, passing from the senses to reason, allow the individual to acquire the sensible species, transform them into universals and, thanks to the faculties of memory and common sense, develop the sciences and arts.

Against every form of innatism, Fracastoro clarifies the importance of the interaction between the different faculties. The soul is thus presented as a principle of unitary knowledge, even though it is endowed with different faculties. This fact is the prerequisite for research and evaluation of the functions that affect higher cognitive processes. The *phantasia* is the faculty that receives sensory data and, in this regard, is certainly a higher level of knowledge than instinct. Thus in Fracastorian gnoseology, errors do not depend on the senses that are "innocent" and never wrong, but rather they are dependent on the imagination that can deceive by transferring erroneous data to the intellect. This position is an element of considerable interest that would leave lasting traces and reemerge at a later time. In fact, what we have here is a preliminary outline of the significant developments in the process of the

“demonization” of the imagination that came about between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Fracastoro’s ideas on the transmission of sensory data, modified by the imagination and permanent or transient alterations to a person’s health, discourage any use of interpretations based on magic, while exacerbating the need for a rational explanation of phenomena, in line with the explanatory model provided by Aristotle’s biological works. In the wake of Aristotelian teaching, sensation is the indispensable basis for knowledge while the functions of the mind make up a unitary whole that does not exist independently from the individual.

In such an explanatory model, the concept of *subnotio* becomes particularly relevant: the term coined by Fracastoro designates a subfunction that can provide the soul with a series of notions that were already contained in a confused manner in the sensitive apprehension of object. This is carried out in a single act of learning that constitutes the prerequisite for the processes of composition, reasoning, and memorization. The *subnotio* thus becomes the first step in the activities of the imagination that deploys its power in the subsequent mental processes. There follows the need to define which mechanisms are involved in memory, not only from a strictly theoretical point of view, but also from the perspective of anatomical and physiological research. Memory is brought about by a movement of the soul that extracts the traces of previously deposited recollections from the sensory organs. *Memoria*, *reminiscentia*, *subnotio* can be distinguished by the fact that storing data in the memory does not in itself entail knowledge. Memory takes time whereas *subnotio* can take place in the act of sensation. Thus, memory seems to operate on things that are already known and clearly distinguished by the subcognition, while *reminiscentia* is a more specialized and complex act that permits an already established set of information to be recovered and is therefore a form of learning. If memory involves a passive element, prior to knowledge, reminiscence instead is something active, incited by stimuli that update previously acquired knowledge.

Fracastoro’s *De anima* revolves around the assumption of universal harmony and represents the significant convergence of different research strands in his work. The idea that the moving souls of the various spheres derive from and receive specific *virtutes* from the soul of the world is of certain Platonic ascendancy. Each sphere, just like the human soul, is therefore governed by a specific nature. The celestial origin of the intellectual soul, endowed with the principle of being and of movement, ensures its immortal destiny, which is not shared by the vegetative and sensuous souls whose connection to the body makes them both corruptible and mortal. In turn, the intellectual soul is linked to the body, which it uses as an instrument, but it also has an independent activity that binds it to the cosmic order. The soul’s participation in the eternal, in virtue of its natural affinity with the celestial intelligences, finds its ultimate confirmation within a theological perspective that attests its immortality in accordance with the Christian message of salvation. As far as this subject is concerned, Fracastoro seems to find the possibility of a link between metaphysics and physics in Ficino and develops this theme by identifying two levels of rationality. The first concerns the *status* of the soul as the principle of organic bodies, while the second refers to the Platonic vision of the cosmos as a large animal.

If it is clear that the soul gives life to the body and produces its movement, one should note that it is also a “vehicle” of a vital principle. Such a principle has nothing to do with humors or bodily spirits, which are unable to regulate such a complex process as life. Despite his use of the Renaissance assimilation of *calor* to the *anima*, with specific references to both Hippocrates and Galen, Fracastoro excludes the possibility that the soul can be identified by the complexion or composition of organic bodies. Bodies may have a material disposition, but their qualities are not substantial forms, and thus a principle of life cannot be detected in the complexion of humors.

The hegemonic function of the soul finds perfect symmetry in the cosmological dimension, that is to say, in relation to the world soul. This thesis is clearly in contrast with the affirmations made by Alexander of Aphrodisias, but connected to the

Neoplatonic teachings of Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda*, where the body of the world is described as that of a living being, animated by the action of the *spiritus mundi* that animates the universe. Just as the soul of the world is spread through its action on the intellectual souls of celestial bodies which have a natural identity with man's soul, the latter is also dependent on the one soul that governs the physical life of the cosmos.

The link with Ficino is particularly striking when we compare the positions of the two authors as regards the concept of *seminaria*. Fracastoro develops his theory of contagion in *De morbo gallico* and *De Contagione*. Although the concept of divine or celestial seeds (*semina*) is traceable to Ficino's Platonic cosmology, Jean Fernel and Paracelso also developed similar theories in the years between 1520 and 1540. In Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium* (1484), ideas, reasons, seeds, and forms come from God and are spread through the universe by light. It is quite possible that Ficino played a role in the fact that the notion of seed came to be used not only in the metaphysical and cosmological sphere but also in the natural and medical one, even though in the *Consiglio contro la pestilenza* (1481) he seems to advance an explanation of the phenomenon based more on astrology than nature.

In *De contagione* Fracastoro remains within a strictly medical context, and although he does not refrain from using elements from Lucretius, Scholasticism – such as the references to *minima naturalia* – and Pomponazzi, he still manages to outline a well-defined and altogether rich and extremely articulate theory. In fact, this is where Fracastoro puts forwards the concept of contagion that was to make him famous and ensure him a lasting place in the history of science and of medicine in particular. The methodological approach used in *Turrius* and the underlying premise of *De sympathia* have a direct effect on *De Contagione*. “Contagion” is included in the list of *mirabilia naturalia* along with many other curious and seemingly inexplicable cases occurring in nature such as attraction and repulsion phenomena, magnetism, the extraordinary powers of some stones, minerals, substances, and animals or again those related to the fascination and suggestions of the imagination or *vis imaginativa*. Fracastoro strives to explain such

singular or “particular” cases by resorting to natural causality, based on the affinities and antipathies occurring in nature, without calling upon any kind of occult powers or the concept of *actio in distans*.

He offers a new kind of explanation for contagion that is completely different from the one proposed by the *proprietates occultae* theorists and the medical astrological theory he had rejected in the *De causis criticorum dierum libellum* pamphlet of 1538. Both theories blamed contagion on the celestial poisons that resulted from the putrefaction or corruption of the air due to astral conjunctions or to the exhalations caused by the passage of a comet. The problem of contagion is now explained within a natural framework, established by the Creator, and is subject to precise laws which – in accordance with Pomponazzi's teachings – strictly determine worldly events. The nature of contagion is explained as an *infectio* that passes from one subject to another and can be spread in three ways: by direct contact, as in the case of consumption or leprosy; by indirect contact through *fomites*, that is by substances or objects that spread the disease; and finally at a distance, that is through the air, as happens with the plague or smallpox. The *seminaria* are the cause of contagion and are nothing like Lucretius' atoms or *semina morbi*. Instead, Fracastoro assimilates them to small, invisible, and active corpuscles, endowed with autonomous movement, which penetrate through the pores of the body and on finding a suitable *pabulum*, feed and multiply, thereby generating infection and disease. Another essential concept in this case is the necessary analogy or affinity between *seminaria* and receptors, in the sense that the *seminaria contagionum* originates when the right conditions are created for the aggregation of the *minimae et insensibiles* particles, such as happens in the case of putrefaction or infection. *Seminaria* therefore need to find conditions similar to the ones in which they originated or derived from, so that the contagion spreads between the *propter analogiam* bodies, in the sense that they are altered particles that go to “nourish” similar healthy particles, thereby conveying the disease.

Fracastoro accurately identifies the various types of pestilential fevers, as well as the etiology of consumption and especially that of syphilis or

the “French disease” which is dealt with in his didactic poem *Syphilis sive De morbo gallico* composed in Latin hexameters. Using myths and fairy tales, Fracastoro uses a splendid poetic form that still manages to accurately describe the symptoms, course, and treatments of the disease that had been brought to Italy by soldiers in the French army at the end of the fifteenth century. Apart from mercury, among the cures he mentions is guaiac wood or *lignum sanctum*, suggested by the nymph America, guardian of the woods.

The *Syphilis* confirms what Fracastoro wrote in the *Naugerius sive de Poetica*, a dialogue that questions the gnoseological value of poetry. Based on Aristotelian indications, with a tendency to return to Platonism filtered through the works of Ficino, poetry allows the perception of beauty to be combined with the intuition of its idea through the mediation of poetic language, in which the divine force of the word is manifest.

The beauty inherent to the harmony of nature can only be fully revealed by the poet's gaze and words, which are capable of merging philosophy and poetry into a *unicum*, to give meaning and value to the continuous flow of events in which he is able to capture the immanence of the divine. The role he assigns to poetry is another example of how Fracastoro seems to be able to strike a balance between the lessons of the ancient philosophers and those of his contemporaries and to offer a picture of an innovative knowledge, devoted to grasping the natural reality *iuxta propria principia*, in all its dynamic vitality, according to an explanatory model which connects the revolutions of the cosmos and the life of the mind in a harmonious whole.

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Frambesarius

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Francisco d'Olanda

- [Holanda, Francisco de](#)

Franciscus

- [Benci, Francesco](#)

Franciscus Connanus

- [Connan, François](#)

Franciscus Duarenus

- [Le Douaren, François](#)

Franck, Sebastian

Born: 20 January 1499 (Donauwörth, Germany)

Died: 1542 (Basel, Switzerland)

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Abstract

Sebastian Franck (1499–1542) was a writer of moral and spiritual treatises and a Christian

theologian during the Reformation. He trained to become a Catholic priest but ultimately became involved in the Protestant movement as an independent thinker and theologian. His unique approach to the central doctrines of Christianity deviated from and criticized Catholic, Lutheran, Anabaptist, and Calvinist teachings and brought him into frequent conflict with religious and civil authorities in several cities in which he lived. His most influential and controversial books were *Chronica*, *Zeitbuch und Geschichtsbibel* (Strassburg, 1531), *Paradoxa* (Ulm, 1534), and *Das Kriegsbüchlein des Friedens* (1539). Franck's theological writing was marked by a radical, independent, and subjectivist perspective in which he attempted to draw universal connections between the believers of all religious traditions and legitimize their faith traditions.

Biography

Sebastian Franck was born in Donauwörth on January 20, 1499. He frequently referred to himself in his writings as F. von Wörd or Francus Wördensis to mark his city of birth, where his parents were weavers. He studied in Ingolstadt and Heidelberg starting in 1515. At the University of Heidelberg, Franck studied the humanities and theology with the Dominican Collegium and took his vows for Catholic priesthood to serve in Augsburg around 1524. Two years later he changed confessions to become a preacher of strict Lutheranism. Soon he broke with Lutheranism as well and found himself in conflict with Anabaptist teachings. He published a short work while living in Nuremberg called “On the Burden of Drunkenness” (1528), in which he complained of a lack of religious communities that shared his perspective.

Franck married Otilie Behaim, the widow of a rich Nuremberger merchant with familial connections to Dürer's studio, in 1528. The family moved to Strassburg in 1529, where Franck had several likeminded colleagues and where he believed he would find a freer religious society for him to develop his ideas. In his new home, he published the *Türkenchronik* [*Turkish Chronical*]

in 1530 and the *Chronica, Zeitbuch und Geschichtsbibel* [Chronical, Book of Time and Biblical History] in 1531. In both books he began to formulate his belief that both the Bible and nature can act as media for divine revelations. At the same time, he started to teach his belief in the “invisible word” and increasingly developed a spiritualist religious worldview. In the process of developing this theology, he criticized in harsh terms every major confession active in Strassburg and Germany. To Franck, the Catholics, Luther, Zwingli, and the Anabaptists had all failed to reveal the truth of God. Even revolutionary and disruptive theological thinkers clashed with Franck’s claims. As a consequence of Franck’s depiction of him as a “good heretic,” for example, Erasmus of Rotterdam personally denounced Franck and his *Chronica*. Erasmus wrote to the Strassburg town council that they should confiscate his *Chronica*, which they did. The Strassburg government subsequently arrested and then evicted Franck and his family from the city in December of 1531, and he was forced to reside in the town of Esslingen and work as a soap maker until he convinced the city of Ulm to grant him first the right to live in the city and then eventually citizenship.

In Ulm, where he had earned the friendship of the mayor and his son, he was preemptively banned from any form of religious public teaching such as preaching, but he was allowed to make a living as a writer and independent citizen. Franck, who in addition to several influential allies in Ulm also had a fervent enemy named Martin Frecht, pushed his luck with the local Lutheran authorities in the summer of 1534 and published the short religious pamphlet *Paradoxa* (Ulm, 1534) and his *Weltbuch* [World Book and Cosmography] (Tübingen, 1534). The *Weltbuch* described all of the known countries, cultures, religions, and habits of the people around the world, including the New World; and the *Paradoxa* was a 280-sentence treatise on German theology and divine philosophy. Despite the efforts of Frecht, who was in close contact with Martin Bucer and Phillip Melancthon, to block Franck from gaining official rights of citizenship in Ulm, the city council granted citizenship in October of 1534 with the explicit warning that he should

not do anything to antagonize the king, the emperor, or the local religious authorities and that he would refrain from publishing any dangerous books. Frecht and Bucer attempted to influence the city council to make Franck take an oath of allegiance to central tenets of Lutheran faith, but the council, which itself declared not to abide by those tenets, refused to force Franck to abandon his own beliefs to smooth the Lutheran’s ruffled feathers. They saw Franck’s pledge to respect the local religious policies as sufficient.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Frecht continued to harass Franck, and Franck simply could not refrain from publishing his radical ideas. Franck’s *Germania* appeared with permission from Frankfurt in 1538, his *Guldin Arch* [Golden Ark] appeared in Augsburg in 1537, and the *Kriegsbüchlein des Friedens* [War Booklet of Peace] and his *Verschlossen Buch* [Locked Book] appeared without a city of publication in 1539. Fed up with his disobedience, and spurred on by Frecht, the city council finally held him in contempt of their agreement. Despite his defense that these books had been published outside of Ulm or had been granted the permission of external authorities or were published without his knowledge, and without regard to his pleas to have mercy on his four young children and his wife who had been critically ill, the city council voted in January of 1539 to kick Franck and his family out of Ulm. Franck and his family, now grown to five children with a newborn arrived in May of 1539, moved to Basel on July 10, 1539, where he remained until his death from the plague in 1542. His first wife Ottilie died in 1540, and he married again in 1541, this time to Margarete Beck, the daughter of book printer. He published his last work in 1541, *Die deutschen Sprichwörter* [German Proverbs] in Frankfurt, and he released a revised edition of *Paradoxa* in 1542.

Franck’s nemesis Frecht remained determined to ruin the man even after he had succeeded in expelling Franck from Ulm; he secured a handwritten and signed condemnation of Franck from Melancthon himself in March of 1540 and brought it back to Ulm as a *coup de grace* for the town council. In a German paraphrase of the condemnation, Melancthon called Franck a “crazed spiritual wreck,” and he continued to

mock Franck in his lectures as a “poisonous enemy of princes and learned men” and his students as “the apostles of Franck’s historical confectionary” (Weinkauff 1878). Luther, for his part, weighed in on Franck’s teachings and character shortly after the radical thinker had died. He wrote that Franck had privileged himself as a judge and master over the letter of the Bible, but he had also strived to think and to be his own master as an independent thinker and free spirit.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Sebastian Franck was an early prominent convert to Lutheranism, but he encountered several conflicts within the Protestant movement because of his determination to critique aspects of all organized religions. His staunch individualism, which grew out of the Lutheran commitment to the believer’s responsibility for reading and understanding the Word of God, pushed beyond *sola scriptura* to conceptualize the Word of God as transcending the written scripture. For Franck, the interaction of the believer with scripture, with nature, and with the teachings of the ancients allowed for the experience of the Word of God as a living revelation accessed by the individual in a dynamic and ongoing way. Franck had trained to become a Dominican priest and also served as a Protestant preacher, and he came to see Luther’s doctrine of scriptural primacy as a substitution of one kind of papacy with another. Belief, for Franck, was not something that one could institutionalize but rather a radically subjective experience of the divine. Although he was clearly entrenched in the Reformation movement, Franck portrayed his views as “unparteiisch” (nonpartisan), and he felt that the true church was not one that could be seen or codified but rather was an imaginary and invisible collective of true believers that transcended man-made religious confessions. Franck’s training in Humanism also gave him a unique perspective on the history of the world, as found in his *Chronica*. Franck saw the history of the world as a tale of institutions that suppressed the true believers who cropped up throughout the ages: most often those who were

labeled as heretics. His historical works, which are mostly compilations, provide a broad perspective on faith and culture from around the world. He portrays religious divisions and blind commitments to doctrine and ritual as destructive social conditions that lead to unnecessary war and violence.

Innovative and Original Aspects and Impact and Legacy

Franck’s rabid individualistic approach to issues of faith, social order, and even language were not especially well received during his lifetime. Dogged by hardline Reformers around Germany, Franck found himself constantly at odds with theologians who preferred dogmatic approaches to faith. Even creative and innovative theologians like Erasmus of Rotterdam and Martin Luther found serious problems with Franck’s subjectivist religious worldview.

Franck’s analysis of the written word served as the foundation of his belief system. His claim that the scripture is not the word of God, but rather the product of men, and his belief that the Book of Nature and the wisdom of the ancients could serve as legitimate media for coming to know God struck at the authority of all Christian faiths. However, this questioning of the primacy of the written word and his claim that there were many ways of knowing resonated with secular debates that were taking place in humanism and natural philosophy, as well. The flaws of human writings suggested that there might be another kind of text that could reveal the truth. For Franck, as he explicates in the *Kronbüchlein* (1534), God’s Word transcends the graphic and phonetic limitations of human language; therefore, the expression of God also lies beyond the realm of human speech. Yet, paradoxically, the scripture – among other kinds of written and unwritten texts – is one of many ways humans come to believe, and it is their responsibility to interact with these texts in a way that reveals the Word of God to them. The theological relevance of Franck’s beliefs about how the written word, namely, scripture, operates cannot be understated. His claim that the individual had sole authority

and responsibility over their encounter with the Divine Word aimed to strip both the Protestant and Catholic Churches alike of their authority to control the beliefs and behaviors of their followers. Franck's conflict with civil and religious authorities in Ulm between 1534 and 1539, in fact, demonstrated in real life exactly what was at stake in his argument. Although he repeatedly claimed to support both the religious and civil authorities of Ulm, and made no claim to his ideological or moral superiority, Franck's radical ideas became the battlefield for a political proxy war between the authority of the secular town council (backed by the mayor Bernard Besserer) and the authority of the local Lutheran religious leaders (whose interest was pressed by Martin Frecht). In addition to his impact on epistemology and theology, then, Franck was embroiled both theoretically and practically in questions of shifting social order. He frequently and vehemently claimed to abhor rebellion and religious strife and did not comment as Luther did on the Peasants' Revolt in 1525, but his writings – both historical and theological treatises – tolerate rather than praise man-made institutions of authority, both religious and secular alike.

Among contemporaries, Franck was fairly alone in his subjectivist theology, although he had several friends and allies who encouraged and supported his work. After his death, leaving behind six children and his new bride Margarete, Franck's ideas gained some traction in Dutch speaking lands, and many of his notions about the "invisible church" resonate in the religious treatises of Hugo Grotius in the seventeenth century. But the most powerful praise and assessment of Franck's legacy comes from Wilhelm Dilthey, who notes that "Franck's ideas have flown into the modern time through a hundred channels" and depicts him as the "precursor and founder of modern religious philosophy" (Dilthey 1957: 85).

Cross-References

- [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)
- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Humanism](#)

- [Luther, Martin](#)
- [Melancthon, Philipp](#)
- [Reformation](#)
- [Subject/Object, Renaissance Concept of](#)

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Franco

- [Burgersdijk, Franco](#)

François

- [Benci, Francesco](#)

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- [Le Douaren, François](#)

Frank

- [Burgersdijk, Franco](#)

Free Choice

- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

Free Decision

- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

Freedom (Political)

- [Liberty in the Renaissance: Political](#)

Freethought

- [Libertines and Libertinism](#)

French Disease

- [Syphilis in Renaissance Medicine](#)

Friendship, Renaissance Understanding of

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Abstract

Friendship in the Renaissance is an intensive bond between men, within the *societas* of humanity, defined most successfully by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. This article rehearses definitions of friendship (and their critique) and gives an account of how these definitions were diffused in early modern culture.

Overview and Definitions

In distinction to later, post-Hobbesian views, and in contrast to the presuppositions of Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532), the consensus in moral philosophy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw human beings as naturally inclined to social living and as naturally benevolent to fellow human beings, on a scale of diminishing intensity from the family to humanity as a whole. The cement of

this benevolent interdependence is the exchange of goods and services, material and otherwise. The classic statement of this natural *societas* of humanity is found in Cicero's *De officiis* (I.vii.22). The social-human bond does not imply equality of partners; in a way, the imparting of duties or services to each other (*officium* or *beneficium*) is predicated on a degree of inequality. The Christian bond of charity (*caritas*, *agape*), in contrast, does imply an equality enabled by the finality that is the love of God; in contrast to friendship, it is thought to be nonspecific and is less articulated in the sphere of moral philosophy itself.

In the Renaissance, the bond of friendship (*amicitia*, *philia*) can be understood first of all as a general category of beneficent voluntary and natural relationships, elements of social cohesion, and in this sense it participates in the *societas* of humanity. This wide-spread loose use of the term is so vast as to frustrate attempts at an exhaustive account. Indeed, various natural "sympathies" – between elements, between species – are sometimes called "friendships" (see Erasmus' colloquy "Amicitia" [1531]). Political and business client relationships can be subsumed under the term as well (see Leon Battista Alberti's *Della famiglia* [begun 1432], and in particular the fourth book); from Plutarch's "How to Distinguish the Friend from the Flatterer" (from his *Moralia*) to Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano* (1528) and the abundant court (and anticourt) literature of the sixteenth century, the term "friend" has a vague sense of someone who wishes you well rather than someone who is merely pursuing his own interests.

Renaissance moral philosophy is concerned, in addition, with a stricter use of the term "friendship," largely following the most common classical sources. These are Cicero's *Laelius de amicitia*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (books VIII and IX) and, to a lesser extent, the *Eudemian Ethics* (book VII), Seneca's *De beneficiis*, and Plato's dialogue *Lysis* (for a discussion of classical friendship in the main sources, see Fraisse 1974; for medieval understanding and transmission especially of Aristotelian notions of friendship, see Sère 2007; for a more elaborate presentation

of Renaissance friendship, see Langer 1994). Reflection on friendship is usually articulated not in the form of arguments for propositions (if one excepts scholastic argument on the relation between charity and friendship, such as Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-2 qu 23); instead, it is centered on some commonly accepted definitions, such as Cicero's *Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio* ("For friendship is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual good will and affection") (*Laelius de amicitia* VI.20). One finds innumerable repetitions and refinements of this definition, insisting, for example, as does Scipion Dupleix, on the voluntary nature of the friendship bond: *[L]'amitié est une conformité des volontez entre deux ou plusieurs personnes, laquelle procedant de la mutuelle cognoissance qu'ils ont de leur vertu et integrité des moeurs les conjoint à une vie honneste* ("Friendship is a conformity of wills among two or more persons, which, deriving from a mutual knowledge that they have of each other's virtue and integrity of conduct, binds them together in a morally honest life") (Dupleix 1994, VII.6.viii, p. 441–442; Montaigne in his *Essais* ["De l'amitié," I.27, 1580, 1588] insists similarly on the voluntary nature of friendship, in contrast to family bonds). Friendship originates in knowledge of the other person, not in physical desire (and thus is, at this level at least, distinguished from love, *amor*, or *eros*, although especially in Platonic contexts the boundary is less clear). Knowledge of another person's virtue assumes knowledge acquired over time, as virtue is not punctual but a *habitus* demonstrated through repeated deliberate action. Hence the requirement that friends spend time with each other, or, as the saying goes, that they have consumed an amount of salt with each other (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII.3.8, 1156b27).

Friendship is divided, after Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII.3.1–4.5, 1156a6–1157a35), into three types, according to its cause: as the Latin tradition formulates it, they are friendship for the sake of pleasure (*propter*

delectabile), for the sake of usefulness (*propter utile*), and for the sake of moral goodness or virtue (*propter honestum*). For example, lovers are thought to be drawn to each other for the pleasure they provide to each other, but also friends who like to drink or eat together. Business partners or thieves are friends because of the usefulness or gain they procure to each other. Virtuous men are friends for “themselves,” that is, for the sake of the choices and habits that they make as persons, in similar fashion. Indeed, all friendship is based on resemblance, not on difference, and if friends are unequal (in wealth, in power, etc.), there has to be some element of resemblance that is the basis of their friendship. Friendship *propter honestum* can subsume the other types, in the sense that virtuous men can derive pleasure and usefulness from their friends, as a complement to their friendship, although pleasure and usefulness will never constitute the finality of their relationship. The most important distinction between virtuous friendship and the two other types is the temporary nature of the latter: when pleasure or usefulness are no longer present, the friendship ceases, whereas virtuous friendship is thought to be long-lasting, as virtue is not a momentary choice but manifested in repeated and quasi-permanent dispositions. A virtuous friend can become as “another self,” hence, also, the relative paucity of such relationships. Having many friends is a sign of the weakness of the relationship (see [Plutarch](#), *On Having Many Friends*, from the *Moralia*) or of their status as friendships per usefulness or pleasure. Virtuous friendship is not always permanent: if the friend becomes a worse person, through his choices, then his friend should attempt, by admonishment, to correct the wayward friend, and if he doesn’t succeed, he can consider that the former friend has become a person “of another sort” (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX.3.3, 1165b14–23) and it is then not unnatural for the friendship to be broken off.

The devotion of such virtuous friends for each other is expressed through a fairly compact series of examples, although Renaissance compilers do their best to add to the list. It is important to note that they are exclusively male; although there are lists of examples of “illustrious women” (the most

evident examples being Boccaccio’s *De claris mulieribus* [1374] and Christine de Pizan’s *Livre de la cité des dames* [1405]), they do not come in pairs of friends, as it were, and neither does one find examples of female–male friendship, although *amicitia* can on occasion become a recommended basis for marriage. The classical examples of (male) friends are the legendary Orestes and Pylades, Achilles and Patroclus, Aeneas and Achates, Euryalus and Nisus, Damon and Phintias (or Pythias), and Jonathan and David. Lucian’s *Toxaris* is a comparison between Greek and Scythian heroic friends. They are ever-present in Renaissance moral exempla literature, and versions of them appear in epic romance (such as Cloridano and Medoro in Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso* [1st version 1516], Books 18 and 19). They demonstrate their commitment to each other in the most extreme situations, such as epic warfare or struggle against tyranny. The duties of such friends to each other include protecting the other’s life, detecting and indicating plots against the other, defending and not abandoning the other in dangerous situations, freeing the other from prison, improving the other’s mores, not revealing the other’s secrets, providing for the other’s children, and regretting the friend’s death (according to the summary in Zwinger 1586, Vol. 18, Lib. 2, p. 3315–3316). As Cicero, quoting Ennius, says it, *amicus certus in re incerta cernitur* (“the true friend is discerned in times of trouble”) (*Laelius de amicitia*, XVII.64; see also [Ovid](#), *Tristia*, I.9.24: *in duris remanentem rebus amicum*, “a friend steadfast in times of stress”).

Diffusion and Reception

The diffusion of notions of friendship in Renaissance intellectual culture is practiced on many levels: first, mostly in academic settings, in commentaries and Latin translations of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, scholastic and humanist (see [Lines 2002](#)). These notions are also absorbed through the Ciceronian moral corpus (usually thought to be compatible with Aristotle), in the study of rhetoric, and generally in the juridical

and, depending on the country, aristocratic milieu of the sixteenth century. On a somewhat less traditional register, intending a wider audience, common notions about friendship are diffused through vernacular translations or adaptations of Aristotelian moral philosophy (such as Alessandro Piccolomini's *Della institutione morale* [1560]) and are elements of the *trattatistica* in early modern Europe. Platonic and neo-Platonic notions of friendship filter in through translations of the *Lysis* and in the dialogue literature of the sixteenth century, in uneasy coexistence with eros.

Second, collections of epistles and the practice itself of epistolary exchange among intellectuals contribute to the availability of classical ideas on friendship. Examples are Seneca's *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, Petrarch's *Epistolae de rebus familiaribus* (1359) (especially 18.8), and the vast correspondence of Erasmus (see Eden 2001).

Third, the memorable notions about friendship are reproduced in concentrated form in the collections of proverbs and apophthegms of the period, most famously by Erasmus who features two proverbs at the beginning of his *Adagia* (1500–1536): *Amicitia aequalitas* and *Amicus alter ipse* ("Friendship is equality" and "The friend is another self," I.i.2). More generally, sections on *amicitia* are de rigueur in the burgeoning literature of "commonplaces," from the *Polyanthea* (1st ed. 1503) by Domenico Nani Mirabelli (which was augmented until well into the seventeenth century), Ravisius Textor's *Officina* (1st ed. 1503), to Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum vitae humanae* (1st ed. 1565) and compendia in dialogue form such as Pierre de la Primaudaye's *Academie françoise* (1st ed. 1577).

Critiques and Development

Finally, perhaps more interestingly, there are critiques of friendship *propter honestum*. First, at the least implicitly, from a theological perspective. As an element of the virtues, or their most complete manifestation, friendship should take a second place to the love of God and charity. Loving

another as an end in itself is not a proper relationship to another human being; only God should be loved for his own sake (see Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, I dist 1 cap 1–3). Then there are isolated cases of paradoxical treatment of friendship: it is taken, apparently for the sake of argument *in utramque partem*, as something to be blamed, not praised. Antoine Hotman, in his *Deux paradoxes de l'amitié et de l'avarice* (in the *Opusculs françoises des Hotmans* [1616]), argues that friendship is an exclusive "passion" taking us away from our social and religious obligations and affections.

Since friendship as a philosophical topic is hardly separable from its representations in the literary culture of the time, a further area to be explored is the motivation for relationships of friendship in literature. Especially newer literary genres such as the novel or the novella step outside the models given to the Renaissance by classical epic friends. A more modern understanding of friendship is hinted at by narrative scenarios that feature friends who are not equals and do not resemble each other. At times, the representation of friendship begins to exclude it from explanation, contrary to classical models, and it becomes an affective sublime (see in particular Montaigne's account, or nonaccount, of his friendship with Etienne de la Boétie, in "De l'amitié").

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Fulfillment

- [Happiness, Renaissance Concept of](#)

G

Gaetano

► [Cajetan, Thomas de Vio](#)

Gaetano da Thiene

Born: 1387, Gaeta, Italy

Died: 1465, Padua, Italy

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Abstract

Gaetano da Thiene was a professor of logic and natural philosophy at the University of Padua from 1422 to 1465. As a student of Paul of Venice and later a teacher of John Argyropoulos and Nicoletto Vernia, Gaetano provides an ideal illustration of the connections between two different generations of Italian Aristotelian thinkers from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Gaetano's works on logic and natural philosophy contributed to the diffusion of fourteenth-century French and English philosophy in Italy. Although influenced by Averroes' philosophy during his university years in Padua, Gaetano was not a committed Averroist. In his works, he rejected both the doctrine of the eternity of

the world and the ingenerability of the intellectual soul. Gaetano's commentaries on Aristotle's logic and physics enjoyed wide circulation from the late fifteenth century up to the first half of the sixteenth.

Biography

Gaetano da Thiene was born in 1387 in Gaeta, a city of Southern Italy where his father was working as a jurist in the entourage of the king of Naples, Ladislao D'Angiò Durazzo. While still very young, he moved to Padua, where he was raised by his paternal grandmother (Gaetano's family originally came from Veneto). In 1418, Gaetano graduated in Arts from the University of Padua, where he had among his professors Paul of Venice, one of the most prominent Aristotelian philosophers of the time. Upon graduation, Gaetano left Padua for a few years, probably to escape the plague. When he came back in 1422, he was appointed professor of logic at the university. While lecturing in Padua, Gaetano also pursued a degree in Medicine, which he completed in 1428. In 1430, he was assigned to the chair of natural philosophy, which he held until his death in 1465. During his 43 years of uninterrupted activity, Gaetano had among his students many prospective illustrious thinkers: Martino Tomitano, Lauro Quirini, John Argyropoulos, and Nicoletto Vernia (who would succeed Gaetano in the chair of natural philosophy in

Padua). Although Gaetano does not seem to ever have taken vows, in 1436, he was appointed canon of the cathedral of Padua by Pope Eugene IV and held important offices in the Paduan Curia for all his life (Da Valsanzibio 1949, 1978; Bernardinello 1984).

Gaetano's literary output originates from his teaching activity, and it reflects his academic trajectory as a professor, first, of logic and, later, of natural philosophy. As for the former field, Gaetano's earliest works are all commentaries on the logical writings of William of Heytesbury, Ralph Strode, and Richard Ferrybridge (da Thiene 1483, 1488). At that time, reading these eminent English logicians' works was mandatory for students in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Padua (Bottin 1983, 125–126). Later on, during his 35 years as a professor of natural philosophy, Gaetano authored sets of commentaries on Aristotle's physical works (*Physics*, *Meteorology*, *De anima*, *De coelo et mundo*), treatises on specific issues of natural philosophy (*Tractatus de reactione*, *Tractatus de intensione et remissione formarum*), as well as sets of *quaestiones* (*Quaestiones duodecim philosophicae*) (da Thiene 1475, 1476a, b, 1481a, b, 1491, 2008). With his works, Gaetano contributed significantly to the spread of English and French philosophical theories in fifteenth-century Italy. While his works on logic proved important for the diffusion of the views put forward in the fourteenth century by the so-called Oxford Calculators, Gaetano's physical treatises and commentaries incorporated doctrines originally presented by eminent French schoolmen from the fourteenth century, such as Jean Buridan and Nicole Oresme (Bottin 1983; Caroti 2006).

Although Gaetano was certainly influenced by Averroes' philosophy during his university years in Padua, as a thinker he can by no means be labeled as "Averroist." While his intellectual contribution lays within the framework provided by Aristotle's philosophy, he cannot be really attached to any philosophical orientation or school in particular. In his works on natural philosophy, for instance, he rejected Aristotle's

doctrine of the eternity of the world, a theory that would become one of the central and most controversial tenets of Averroes' interpretation. In his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, Gaetano refuted another core principle of Averroes' reading of Aristotle, that is the notion that the intellectual soul is ingenerated and incorruptible. At the same time, however, there are places within Gaetano's work where he sees substantial continuity between Averroes and leading Christian thinkers such as Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Giles of Rome (Da Valsanzibio 1949, 199). Gaetano's Aristotelian commentaries are a clear witness both to his outstanding familiarity with the earlier philosophical tradition (both ancient and medieval) and to his capacity to incorporate and critically examine different, and often contrasting, philosophical positions. Gaetano's commentaries were reprinted several times throughout the fifteenth century and well into the sixteenth, a fact that illustrates their wide appreciation from the scholarly community of the time.

Cross-References

- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Argyropoulos, John](#)
- [Universities in the Renaissance](#)
- [Vernia, Nicoletto](#)

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Galateus

- [Ferraris, Antonio de](#)

Galen

- [Galen and Galenism](#)

Galen and Galenism

Born: 129, Pergamum [Asia Minor]

Died: After [?] 216 in an undetermined place

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Abstract

A physician born in 129 in Pergamum (Asia Minor) and educated in Smyrna and Alexandria, Galen started his career as a physician to the gladiators in Pergamum until he was called to Italy by the co-emperors in 168. He then spent most of his career in Rome, taking care of the imperial court and also treating other patients, and died sometime around 216. Thanks to his position, he could devote himself to research and writing, producing an all-encompassing *oeuvre* in addition to assembling a vast library collection. Attracted to philosophy in his early years, he never lost this interest and built a robust medical system that combined accurate observation of facts with rigorous rational analysis. The influence of his *oeuvre*, identified as *Galenism*, was enormous. Whereas his treatises were differently transmitted in Byzantium, several were translated into Syriac in the sixth century CE and into Arabic in the ninth century. Many such Arabic versions and the original works that they generated were translated into Latin in the West from the late eleventh century on, and they gave a new impulse to medicine in the fourteenth century. In the Renaissance, the Galenic *oeuvre* went through three successive phases: the reappropriation of Galen’s method, the recovery of his text in the original language, and the critical analysis of Galen’s data. At the end of the sixteenth century, Galenism arrived to an end, leaving the field of medicine open to a revival of Hippocratism.

Alternate Names

Galen; Galenus; Galenus, Claudius

Biography

Born in 129 to a successful and wealthy architect with broad interests in Pergamum, Galen received a good education in his native town. Early exposed to the theories of the major philosophical schools of his time, he shifted interests after his father had a dream in which Asklepios appeared to him. At age 16 Galen started studying medicine with local teachers and from ca. 149 in Smyrna. Further on, he traveled to Corinth to study with another teacher who, in the meantime, had left the city for Alexandria where he died before Galen could join him. Arrived there sometime around 151, Galen attended the lectures of the school until 157, when he returned to Pergamum. Thanks to his ability as an anatomist, he obtained to be appointed physician to the school of gladiators in the city. In 162, he left Pergamum again, going to Rome where he earned some reputation as a philosopher. His successful treatments gave him access to the upper class. Possibly by fear of the jealousy of his rivals as a result of his spectacular public anatomies or because of an outbreak of plague, he discretely left Rome in 166 and returned to Pergamum. His stay there was brief, however, as he was called in 168 by the co-emperors Marcus Aurelius (reign 161–180) and Lucius Verus (reign 161–169) to join them in Aquileia, in Italy, where they were stationed with the troops. From there, Galen returned to Rome in 169 to become a physician to the imperial court, particularly Marcus Aurelius' son, the young Commodus (161–192). Though attached to the court and treated the emperors and their circle until his death, he also attended other patients. More than anything else, he devoted himself to research and writing, assembling a massive library collection (partially destroyed by the fire that ravaged the city in 191) and producing himself an immense *oeuvre* that

covered all aspects of contemporary medicine. He died at an unknown date, ca. 216.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Through his education and his extensive readings (possibly started in his early years in the rich library of his father), Galen came in contact with all the medical knowledge available in his time, which he perfectly assimilated and brilliantly mastered. Deeply penetrated by Hippocratic medicine, he also had a profound knowledge of the anatomical investigations performed by the physicians of the early-Ptolemaic school of Alexandria among whom Herophilus of Chalcedon (335–280 B.C.) and Erasistratus of Ceos (304–250 B.C.). In addition he exactly knew the theories of the different schools of medical thinking which flourished in previous periods, including the most recent and radical methodism professed by Asclepiades of Bithynia (second/first century B.C.), and assimilated – or had access to – a sheer quantity of information, from the immense *De Materia Medica* compiled by Dioscorides during the first century AD to the innumerable collections of formulae for compound medicines en vogue from the first century AD on.

With extraordinary mastery, Galen dominated all the components of medical knowledge, to which he added his personal experience gained through his activity as a physician to the gladiators in Pergamum and the multiple anatomies performed on animals in Rome, first in public and, subsequently, only privately, to both deepen his knowledge of anatomical structures and discover functional and physiological mechanisms. To that, one must add the travels he made to have a direct knowledge of some *materia medica* typical of specific regions and experiments duly organized on animals and aimed, for example, to determine the lethal and sublethal dosage of toxic substances.

The synthesis Galen made of this immense sum of information was not exempt of bias even regarding his major source of knowledge and inspiration, Hippocrates and the *Hippocratic*

Collection. In his several commentaries on Hippocratic works, Galen appropriated Hippocratism and interpreted it in his way, often trying to attribute to Hippocrates elements that he regarded as fundamental and at the same time exactly reproducing the theories that made the substance of Hippocratism. Of the followers of Erasistratus in Rome, he harshly criticized the theories on sphymology, and, of Asclepiades of Bithynia, he systematically refuted all the theory, almost provoking a *damnatio memoriae* such that none of Asclepiades' work has been preserved. Even if he expressed respect for Dioscorides, he incorrectly contradicted him on some points in lengthy discussions, while, at the same time, he reproduced much of his information without mentioning the source. Similarly, in the treatises on therapeutic, he presented as his – to the very least by default – many formulae for medicines authored by predecessors and contemporaries.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Based on his assimilation, transformation, and also rejection of previous medicine, Galen built a monumental rational edifice which was sustained by a solid conceptual and methodological foundation. Avoiding philosophical debates, he firmly believed that medical knowledge – and, by way of consequence, therapeutic action – had to be based on bodily facts accurately observed with all senses and subsequently decomposed by a rigorous causal analysis relying on a materialistic physics and proceeding according to a strict logic.

Accurate definitions went together with logical divisions and concatenations, measurements, and proportions. Later in his life (possibly circa 193), Galen wrote the treatise traditionally identified as *Ars Medica* according to the medieval translation of its title, although it would probably be best identified by a more exact translation of its Greek title as *Medical Technique*. After a cryptic prologue on three methods of teaching that generated multiple commentaries through the centuries until Leonicensio in the Renaissance (below), Galen made a systematic presentation of pathology possibly aimed at both the neophytes who

were learning medicine and the practicing and experienced physicians for whom the work was a handy synthesis. Proceeding by definitions and divisions resulting in a clear exposition with a solid architecture, Galen compiled a state-of-the-art manual of pathology in which he also synthesized all his thinking in this field. Characteristically enough, he closed the work by including a list of his own treatises, listed according to the organization of medical knowledge that he illustrated in *Ars Medica* itself.

Galen's method is probably well exemplified in sphymology and remedial therapy, besides anatomy. In the analysis of the pulse, Galen introduced a complex system of measurements based on several parameters: in the diastole, dimension (with three axes length, width, and depth), rhythm, and strength, in addition to state of the vessels; in the systole (which was not easily perceptible according to him), the time elapsed between contractions; and the patterns in any sequence of systole and diastole. To describe each of the resulting descriptors of pulse according to these parameters, he coined a vast and expressive lexicon, many items of which are based on metaphors (e.g., the “goaty” pulse, characterized by unpredictable irregularities, like goat's jumps). In remedial therapy, Galen formulated a system of measurement of the properties of materia medica based on the four basic qualities (dry, wet, hot, cold) which he brought together in two couples of opposites. For each of them, he defined four degrees of intensity. In the bi-directional axes created in this way, he introduced a zero value, which is the point where both opposites neutralize each other. Going further, he linked these qualities to the four matters of the world (air, water, earth, and fire), which were present in each materia medica in the form of particles of different shapes and weight in a way reminiscent of the methodism of Asclepiades of Bithynia whose theory he sharply refuted.

For each component of medicine he analyzed, Galen wrote long and deftly articulated demonstrations that left nothing untouched, sometimes returning to arguments previously dealt with. The vastness of his analysis is required in certain cases to synthesize his thinking in shorter and simpler

manuals aimed to novices. Galen's overarching methodological principle, mostly Aristotelian in nature, was not incompatible, however, with a Platonic interpretation of anatomy and a Platonizing concept of the soul, which opened his strict medical system to psychology and ethics.

Impact and Legacy

Through his powerful analytical faculty supported by strict rules of logic, Galen transformed medicine from naturalistic Hippocratism to a systematic discipline ruled by precise methodological procedures coupled with solid reasoning principles. Galen's general approach to medicine was mostly embraced in subsequent centuries – generating what has been rightly called Galenism. In Byzantium, the physicians of the early centuries of the empire successively sought to synthesize and articulate in a coherent set Galen's multifaceted work. These were the encyclopedias of Oribasius (the fourth century) and Aetius (the sixth century) and the more succinct manual of Paul of Aegina (the seventh century), the last representative of the Alexandria medical school before its conquest by the Arabs. Also, a canon of Galenic texts was assembled in the Alexandrian school of medicine, which formed the basis of medical education in the school, with a possible expansion to the West and certainly in the East. As early as the sixth century, some of Galen's treatises were translated into Syriac, and in the ninth century many of them into Arabic. With the possible exception of some of his manuals for students, not much of Galenic medicine was known in the West during the same time. Further on, however, the Arabic version of several of his treatises was translated into Latin, starting with Constantine the African in the late eleventh century. In the following century and until the early fourteenth, new Latin translations were made on the basis of the Greek text. This injection of theoretical thinking provoked a new dynamism in medicine in the West, particularly in such school as Montpellier.

Along this long and sometimes tortuous roads, some of the multiple Galenic treatises were lost, including the original Greek versions.

Furthermore, in this vast odyssey, not all components of the Galenic system were reproduced in the same way along the centuries. In Byzantium, for example, Galen's system of remedial therapy characterized by its materialization of the therapeutic activity was not much followed, contrary to what happened in the Arabic World, where this system was embraced by ibn Sina in his *Qanun of Medicine*. The Byzantine World definitely preferred the holistic system of Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica*, more descriptive in nature. In sphygmology, instead, the complex Galenic system and its vast, yet precise lexicon were abundantly used in Byzantium, including by the physicians of the last century of the empire.

In the Renaissance, Galenism went through three major successive phases from the late fifteenth century to mid sixteenth century. After a first reappropriation of Galen's method, its text was recovered, and further its data were assimilated and submitted to critical analysis.

In the first of such phases, Galen's method, best represented by the *Ars Medica*, was brilliantly brought to light by the Ferrara physician Nicolò Leonicensio (1428–1524), who owned a vast library collection comprising many Galenic medical treatises. In *De tribus doctrinis ordinatis secundum Galeni sententiam* first published in 1508 with several reprints further on, he definitely transformed the interpretation of the treatise – particularly its cryptic prologue on three teaching methods – and he put an end to its medieval readings. In so doing he opened a new era in the reception of Galen's immense opus, the multiplicity and numerous inconsistencies and contradictions of which resulted in uncertainty.

In the second phase, the increased interest in Galen's Greek text promoted by Leonicensio's activity, together with the gradual development of medical humanism, certainly generated the need for an edition that would collect all known treatises of Galen. It was the merit of Aldo Manuzio's successors in Venice to produce such a monumental work in 1525. Multiple new editions and Latin translations followed, which brought back treatises and components of Galenic medicine that had been lost or forgotten through the centuries. These works allowed for a

refoundation of medicine now based on solid philosophical principles. Medical teaching in universities was revitalized, and medieval textbooks – mostly of Arabic origin – were soon replaced by the lecture of, and commentary on, Galenic texts.

Renewed availability of texts, particularly in anatomy, led to the third phase of Renaissance Galenism, characterized by the factual verification of Galen's data. In Padua, the Belgian-born physician Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564) submitted Galenic anatomy to a systematic analysis through dissection of human corpses. Walking in the footsteps of Galen himself, he adopted his methodological precepts, something that made it possible to identify the limitations of Galenic anatomy resulting from the use of apes' bodies (sometimes still living) instead of human corpses, and the inference of structural identities between the animal and the human worlds. Vesalius' work resulted in precise textual analysis of Galen's original treatise and new descriptions visually rendered by fine anatomical drawings. This sum of information was printed in Basel in 1543 and opened a new era in human anatomy that rapidly put an end to Galenism, even though Galen's medicine remained mainstream until the end of the sixteenth century circa, when it was replaced by the Hippocratism that it had eclipsed during the century.

Cross-References

- [Hippocrates and Hippocratism](#)
- [Leonico, Nicolò](#)
- [Manutius, Aldus](#)
- [Vesalius, Andreas](#)

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reprinted in the 20th century (Hildesheim: Olms Verlag) and more recently (Oxford: Oxford University Press). A new edition (with facing French translation) is currently being published in the Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Belles Lettres). Some works are available with an English translation in the Loeb Classical Library, and several treatises have been translated into English during the 20th century on the basis of Kühn's edition. Spanish translations are currently being published by Gredos (Madrid), in the Biblioteca clásica Gredos, and also by the Ediciones Clásicas (Madrid) in the Colección de Autores Griegos.

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Galenus

► Galen and Galenism

Galenus, Claudius

► Galen and Galenism

Galilei, Galileo

Born: 15 February 1564, Pisa

Died: 8 January 1642, Arcetri

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Abstract

One of the most famous scholars of his own time, Galileo Galilei made many contributions to astronomy, mathematics, mechanics, and philosophy, publishing widely and displaying a firm grasp of various Renaissance genres. Galileo aimed to advance mathematics as the discipline best suited to understanding nature and was part of the movement to revive Archimedean mathematics. His telescopic discoveries provided a new impulse to Copernicanism and the debate on heliocentrism. After the trial of 1633, in which the Catholic Church found him guilty of the vehement suspicion of heresy, Galileo published one more work on the sciences of materials and motion.

Biography

Galileo Galilei was born in Pisa in February 1564, to the musician and composer Vincenzo Galilei and Giulia Ammannati. He was the eldest of six children, four of whom survived childhood: Galileo, his brother Michelangelo – who followed in

Vincenzo's footsteps and became a lutenist – and his sisters Virginia and Livia. While never marrying his long-term partner Marina Gamba, Galileo fathered three children, naming them after his sisters and father: Virginia, Livia, and Vincenzo.

Not much is known about Galileo's early years. He studied Latin and other subjects with a teacher called Jacopo Borghini, to then gain further education at the monastery of the Vallombrosan Order near Florence, only to be called back to Pisa by his father in 1578. In 1580, he enrolled at the Pisan *studio* to study medicine. Here, he became acquainted with Aristotelian philosophy, through the lectures of Francesco Buonamici and Girolamo Borro. Each taught Aristotelian physics without following its subsequent interpretation and reworking by Thomas Aquinas, thereby going against the teachings set by the Council of Trent. While Galileo had enrolled at the university to study medicine, he had little interest in the subject and instead applied himself to mathematics, an interest most likely sparked by Ostilio Ricci, who also introduced him to the work of Archimedes. Galileo's father only reluctantly allowed his son to change subjects, having hoped that his son would choose a more lucrative profession (Heilbron 2010; Camerota 2004).

Galileo eventually left the university in 1585 without a degree and for several years explored a variety of topics that shaped his career and would continue to interest him throughout his life. He continued his work in (applied) mathematics, wrote poetry, and scribbled down his commentary on famous works of literature. He also learned how to draw, possibly at the new Accademia del Disegno. In 1589, Galileo obtained a teaching position at the University of Pisa, teaching Euclid and John of Sacrobosco to his mathematics students and astrology to students of medicine. During this period, Galileo further developed his thinking in mathematics as well as philosophy, influenced to some degree by Jacopo Mazzoni, who had joined the Pisan University in 1588 (Heilbron 2010). In 1592, Galileo was appointed the chair of mathematics at the University of Padua. Here, he – most likely – published a work on the comet of 1604 (Freedberg 2002),

which elicited a critical response from Lodovico delle Colombe, who would become an ardent opponent of Galileo's work later on (Biagioli 1993). Galileo supplemented his salary as a professor by offering private teaching and lodging, as well as by developing a mathematical instrument (the geometrical compass) he sold to students (Biagioli 2006). Galileo's dealings with the compass, and later with the telescope, are only two examples of his firm grasp of mathematical knowledge and artisanal practices (Valleriani 2010).

After almost two decades as a professor in Padua, news reached Galileo that a new instrument – one that made things that were far away seem nearby – had been invented in the Low Countries. While Galileo initially dismissed this as fake news, he soon changed his mind, potentially after hearing from his friend Paolo Sarpi. He quickly set to work and within months had developed a relatively high-quality instrument which he offered to the Venetian senate, earning him a pay raise and lifelong appointment to the Paduan university by September 1609 (Westfall 1985). The following January, Galileo aimed his instrument toward the sky, and after only a few months, he published the results of his observations in *Sidereus Nuncius*. The most important claims Galileo advanced in this work were that he had observed four stars orbiting around Jupiter, that the moon's surface was rough and mountainous rather than smooth, and that there were many more stars in the Milky Way than could be observed with the naked eye (Galilei 1610; Van Helden 2008). The work sparked the interest of scholars all over Europe, who fiercely debated its value – an activity complicated by the relative scarcity of telescopes of a sufficient quality. Eventually, however, Galileo's arguments were largely accepted, especially after the (partial) endorsement of the Jesuit scholars at the Collegio Romano, foremost among them Christopher Clavius (Van Helden 1994; Bucciantini et al. 2015). By that time, Galileo had already secured a position at the Florentine court, where Grand Duke Cosimo II granted him the title of First Mathematician and Philosopher, following

Galileo's explicit request (Westfall 1985; Biagioli 1993).

As part of his negotiations over his new position, Galileo had told the grand duke he was planning on publishing various major works. These would be concerned with matters of philosophy, astronomy, geometry, the theory of motion, and mechanics. Over the next decades, Galileo would indeed publish on this wide variety of subjects, using a similarly broad array of genres. Additionally, Galileo relied on the format of the semi-private letter to communicate his findings. Thus, in 1613, he wrote a long letter in which he expanded on his view on heliocentrism to his former student Benedetto Castelli. Galileo again used the format in 1615, this time addressing the Florentine Grand Duchess Dowager Christina of Lorraine (Finocchiaro 1989). The first letter especially circulated also beyond Galileo's personal circles and sparked the interest of various Dominican friars, some of whom took issue with its more outspoken standpoints and denounced Galileo to the Roman Inquisition (Mayer 2015). Following a long and complicated series of events, these complaints eventually led to the banning of Copernicus' work in 1616. In addition, Galileo was given a warning, privately delivered by Roberto Bellarmino, not to hold, teach, or discuss the heliocentric worldview (Finocchiaro 1989; Feldhay 1995).

In the following years, Galileo entered into a polemic regarding the nature of the comets with the Jesuit author Orazio Grassi, which led to two new works. The first of these was published under Galileo's student Mario Guiducci's name (Guiducci 1619); the second, *Il Saggiatore*, appeared under Galileo's own name (Galilei 1623). In this last work, Galileo argued that philosophy should not be approached through scholastic reasoning, but through mathematics. This was the language through which the "book of nature" could be read (Galilei 1623).

Galileo, in close collaboration with his fellow members of the Accademia dei Lincei, dedicated this work to the newly elected Pope Urban VIII (Maffeo Barberini). Galileo and Barberini had met on earlier occasions, and Galileo knew the new Pope to be sympathetic to his ideas. Sensing an

opportunity, during a trip to Rome in 1624, Galileo spoke with Urban VIII on the subject of heliocentrism. From this conversation, he drew the conclusion that the Pope would allow him to publish a work in which he discussed Copernicus' ideas, if hypothetically. While quickly setting to work, Galileo would only publish his findings in 1632, with the famous *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo* (Galilei 1632). As the book made its way to Rome, however, it became clear that Galileo's "hypothetical" discussion of the heliocentric worldview left readers with little doubt as to his true opinions on the subject. Urban VIII ordered distribution of the book to be stopped and all books already sold to be confiscated and in August appointed a panel to investigate whether Galileo should be called before the Holy Office based on his writing. During this initial investigation, it was discovered that Galileo had been given an injunction in 1616 not to discuss, hold, or teach heliocentrism in any way, which only aggravated the accusations against him; it suggested that Galileo purposefully concealed this information from Urban VIII in order to manipulate him into allowing Galileo more freedom on the subject of heliocentrism (Heilbron 2010; Finocchiaro 1989).

Galileo was called to Rome and, on 22 June 1633, found guilty of vehement suspicion of heresy. Galileo abjured, and though the Inquisition absolved him of this specific crime, he was nonetheless punished: his work was prohibited, and he was sentenced to imprisonment and was soon confined to his villa in Arcetri as a form of house arrest. Moreover, to set an example and discourage others from similarly defying the Church's authority, the sentence dictating these measures was widely disseminated throughout Europe, aimed especially at philosophers and mathematicians. Finally, the punishment did not end with Galileo's death: in 1642, the Catholic Church prevented the construction of a funerary monument for Galileo in the Santa Croce church in Florence (Finocchiaro 1989, 2005; Galluzzi 2006).

From his villa in Arcetri, Galileo stayed in touch with scholars in and beyond Italy. His international contacts helped him publish his last work, *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche*

intorno a due nuove scienze, with the Elzevier firm in Leiden (Galilei 1638; Raphael 2012). The work is concerned with four different aspects of physics, which are each discussed over the course of one fictional day spent with the same three interlocutors figuring in Galileo's *Dialogo*. Thus, on the first day, Simplicio, Salviati, and Sagredo discuss Aristotelian physics and mechanics; on the second day, they turn to materials; on the third day, they discuss uniform and naturally accelerated motion; and on the fourth, they discuss projectile motion (Heilbron 2010; Raphael 2017).

Galileo's letters from this period show him lamenting his fate and sharing his hope that his sentence might be lifted or alleviated. Such a change never came about. Galileo did – initially – find solace in the company of his daughters, who lived in a monastery nearby, although the passing of his favorite daughter in 1634 added to his suffering. Slowly turning blind, Galileo was assisted in his work and writing by various younger students who came to stay with him over time, among them Evangelista Torricelli, who would live with Galileo during his last 3 months and succeeded him as Mathematician to the grand duke after Galileo's death in 1642, and Vincenzo Viviani, who would play an instrumental role in collecting Galileo's letters and safeguarding his legacy.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the last decades, Galileo's reputation as "father of modern science" has slowly but surely given way to a much more nuanced view on the scholar. In this view, Galileo is no longer seen as simply breaking with the scholarly traditions of his time but as shaped by and indebted to them. Galileo had a firm interest in humanist debates and was very much at home in discussions about Italian literature; he knew how to draw and corresponded not only with other natural philosophers but also with poets and artists (male and female), offering advice and help when possible (Galilei 1929–1939; Reeves 1997; Hall 2013; Ray 2016).

As a student in Pisa, Galileo had been schooled in Aristotelian philosophy while also being introduced to Archimedean mathematics. He tried to show that mathematical knowledge not only was helpful in an abstract, theoretical way but also yielded real insights into the nature of things: the domain of philosophy. Combining mathematical theory and practical experiments, in his 1612 work *On Floating Bodies*, Galileo published some of the views he had developed in discussions with various opponents who staunchly defended Aristotelian philosophy. The discussions had taken place earlier, at dinner table discussions and during follow-up meetings, and had revolved around the question why some bodies – for instance, a slab of ice – float atop of water while others sink. Galileo took issue with his opponents' Aristotelian point of view, which held that the shape of objects was crucial to their capacity to float or sink in water, as well as with the idea that ice must have greater density than water. Galileo instead relied on Archimedean principles and argued that ice has a lower density than water, as it is rarefied water, and floats for that reason (Galilei 1612).

The episode is important for two reasons. First, Galileo battled various opponents and eventually proposed they solved the matter through experiments – displaying Galileo's appreciation for experiments as a way to explore and explain the laws of nature. However, it also becomes clear that the role of experiments in Galileo's thinking was complicated. Galileo's most important opponent Lodovico delle Colombe met Galileo's challenge with an experiment that contradicted his arguments and confirmed traditional Aristotelian doctrine: he showed that a chip of ebony floats, while a ball of the same material sinks. Galileo tried to worm his way out of this predicament by claiming the real question was whether the chip would also float when wetted first. Second, when he subsequently published his views, he used the opportunity to launch a defense of his particular mathematical-philosophical approach. Here, Galileo built on an already existing tradition of Archimedean mathematics – having by no means been the first to rediscover the ancient mathematician. Yet in doing so, he took Archimedean abstract

mathematical principles into the realm of reality, arguing that mathematical reasoning could furnish knowledge about the real world: Galileo's contribution lay in trying to combine theory with experiments and mathematics with philosophy (Biagioli 1993; Cohen 2010).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Among the most innovative aspects of Galileo's work are his application of the telescope to the heavens, his insistence that mathematics provides real insights into the nature of things, and his work on the laws of motion. With regard to the telescope, Galileo's achievement lies not in the field of theoretical optics but rather in his new and pioneering work with the instrument. Galileo was among the first to turn the new instrument toward the heavens, but it is important to stress that he was not unique in doing so. The Englishman Thomas Harriot and the German Simon Mayr both did so around the same time, with Harriot observing and drawing the moon several months before Galileo did. Galileo's discovery of Jupiter's satellites, which he then named the Medicean stars, was matched almost to the precise date by the German astronomer and mathematician Simon Mayr (Pumfrey 2009; Pasachoff 2015).

Galileo's quick publication of his findings, however, ensured that his name became linked to the new celestial findings. It also gave the ongoing debate on heliocentrism a new impulse. His findings on the moon's rough surface undermined the firm distinction Aristotelian philosophers drew between the perfect heavenly bodies on the one hand and the imperfect, muddy earth on the other. Galileo's understanding of the effect painters called "secondary light" as relevant to the heavenly bodies similarly underlined the relevance of his discoveries for the heliocentric theory. The concept of secondary light was used to describe situations where a bright light hits a surface and is, from that surface, reflected onto another surface. Galileo applied this reasoning to the heavenly bodies, claiming that the earth's surface, under specific circumstances, reflected the light from the sun onto the moon. Again, this argument

threatened the conceptualization of the heavenly bodies and the earth as firmly distinct, as it turned over the idea that the moon was lighter, brighter, and less rugged than the earth (Reeves 1997). These threats to traditional Aristotelian philosophy were only further aggravated by Galileo's description of the Medicean stars – the satellites orbiting Jupiter. If Jupiter had moons, one of the arguments most frequently used against a moving earth – namely, that the moon would, surely, not be able to follow its path – became impossible to maintain. While Galileo in his *Sidereus Nuncius* did not explicitly comment on the importance of his discoveries for the heliocentric debate, most contemporaries quickly grasped their relevance. Copernicus' work had been a theoretical, mathematical exercise that offered a simpler model than the Ptolemaic one, without proving that system to be wrong. Galileo now presented the world with real phenomena that undermined the Aristotelian dichotomy between heaven and earth. It comes as no surprise, then, that very few were immediately willing to accept Galileo's findings (Van Helden 1994, 2008; Westman 2011).

Galileo's own attitude toward heliocentrism is exemplary for the way he often behaved regarding matters of innovation. In 1597, he had told Johannes Kepler that he was a Copernican but then failed to meet Kepler's appeal to openly speak out in favor of the heliocentric theory (Westman 2011). In the *Sidereus Nuncius*, he again avoided taking a direct stance. Only later on, in the *Letters on Sunspots* (a collection of letters addressed to the Jesuit scholar Christoph Scheiner and published in 1613), did he openly – and vehemently – take position in the debate. In this work, he presented his observations on the spots on the sun's surface, thus casting further doubt on the Aristotelian claim that the heavenly bodies – and most of all the sun – were perfect and unblemished. Furthermore, the work also relayed Galileo's findings on the phases of Venus, which indicated that the planet moved around the sun rather than the earth (Galilei 1613; Galilei and Scheiner 2010). As outlined above, in the years immediately following the *Letters on Sunspots*, he also defended heliocentrism via other means, pushing – and failing – to have it

accepted by the Catholic Church. It is one example of a broader pattern: Galileo was not necessarily quick to publicly embrace new ideas, but when he did so, he did it with passion (and a hint of aggression) – and he was always quick to ridicule those who were slower than he had been.

Impact and Legacy

Historians have often called Galileo's last work, *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze*, his most important. They argue that this work, concerned mostly with the “two sciences” of materials and motion, offers the most thorough and detailed discussion of Galileo's views on nature and the methods best suited to study it. Furthermore, they claim this work had the most direct impact on the work of subsequent scholars, among them René Descartes, Christiaan Huygens, and Isaac Newton. Many readers, however, did not approach the work in the same fashion as these figureheads of modern science. Instead, they read it “eclectically,” seeking to reconcile aspects of Galileo's thinking with aspects of Aristotelianism. In this way, Galileo's work became part of the long tradition of Aristotelianism he often sought to oppose (Raphael 2017).

Work in astronomy continued to be carried out in Italy as well as abroad: Giovanni Domenico Cassini and Christiaan Huygens each made crucial discoveries on Saturn's rings, which Galileo had observed in 1610 but could not yet identify as such (Van Helden 1994). Various students of Galileo would continue to work on issues that had interested him, both in applied and in theoretical mathematics. Thus, Benedetto Castelli, Evangelista Torricelli, and Vincenzo Viviani contributed to scholarship by publishing on issues of geometry, physics, optics, and hydraulics, and the latter two each followed into Galileo's footsteps as Florentine court mathematicians. Renewed attention to their work has contradicted the long-held conviction that Italian science came to a standstill with Galileo's trial and subsequent death. Galileo's last students, and Viviani in particular, also played a crucial role in the safeguarding his posthumous glory,

collecting Galileo's letters, pushing for an edition of his collected works, and erecting monuments in his honor (Segre 1991; Galluzzi 2006).

Cross-References

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Galley Slavery

► [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)

Gans, David

Born: 1541, Lippstadt

Died: 1613, Prague

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Abstract

David Gans (1541, Lippstadt – 1613 Prague) was an Ashkenazi Jewish polyhistor active chiefly in Prague at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He is known first and foremost as the author of two books: (1) *Tsemah David*, a Hebrew chronicle describing Jewish history and general history from the

beginnings to the author's days (published in Prague, 1592), and (2) *Nehmad va-na'im* a manual of astronomy based on the Ptolemaic system but quoting some of the opinions of Nicholas Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, and Tycho Brahe (published in Jessnitz, 1743).

Gans was not a cutting-edge historian such as his Italian Jewish contemporary, Azariah de' Rossi, who questioned the historicity of some post-biblical Jewish legends. Neither was he a cutting-edge astronomer as Kepler, who advanced the heliocentric model of the universe. Gans endorsed conservative, traditionalist positions in historical and astronomical questions. Nevertheless, his works were important cultural innovations within the context of early modern Ashkenazi Jewish culture. His books on historiography and astronomy enriched the Ashkenazi Jewish cultural repertoire by introducing subject matters to the Jewish public which were usually ignored in Ashkenazi tradition. Therefore, some scholars consider Gans as a forerunner of modern Jewish culture that began to emerge during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Biography

David ben Shlomo Gans was born in Lippstadt, Westphalia, in 1541. He received education in traditional, religious sciences in Bonn, Frankfurt a. M. and later in Krakow. Natural sciences and philosophy were usually not taught in Jewish schools during this period; nevertheless, Gans studied Euclid's *Elements* on the basis of a medieval Hebrew version of that work which he found in a manuscript in the city of Nordheim (Germany). In Krakow, Gans studied at the yeshiva (religious academy) of Moses Isserles, one of the greatest rabbis of the age. Unlike most Ashkenazi rabbis, Isserles valued scientific knowledge, and he composed some (not very significant) scientific works. It is likely that Isserles encouraged Gans's interest in natural sciences (Neher 1986). Around 1564, Gans moved to Prague, where he became a disciple of R. Judah Löw ben Betsalel, the famous "Maharal of

Prague.” Mordecai Maisel, the leader of Prague Jewry, may have been Gans’ patron around 1592 when he published his first book, *Tsemah David* (Greenblatt 2014). Around 1600, Gans spent few days with Johannes Kepler, Johannes Müller, and Tycho Brahe in the latter’s observatory in Benatek (Benátky nad Jizerou) near Prague. He published a short astronomical treatise entitled *Magen David* in 1612. David Gans passed away on 22 August 1613 in Prague.

Works I: *Tsemah David*

Gans’s most influential work is a Hebrew chronicle entitled *Tsemah David* [also spelled *Zemah David*, *Tzemach David*, Hebrew “Branch of David” cf. Jeremiah 23:5] and printed first in Prague, 1592 (and many more times afterwards). Historiography was not a prestigious literary genre in premodern Jewish culture; in fact, very few historical works had been written by Jews since antiquity (Yerushalmi 1982). This situation changed slightly during the sixteenth century, when a dozen of historical texts, mostly by Sephardi Jews, were written and published. Gans’s chronicle is an exceptional, Ashkenazi instance of the same intellectual trend. It is debated how far Gans’s enterprise was connected to Sephardic precedents (Yerushalmi 1982; Breuer 1983b; Bonfil 1988).

It has been suggested that *Tsemah David* was intended as a response to an Italian Jewish humanist, Azariah de’ Rossi (Breuer 1983b). De’ Rossi wrote a Hebrew book entitled *Me’or ‘enayim* (1575) which critically reassessed ancient Jewish legends (*aggadot*) on the basis of non-Jewish sources (Weinberg 1982, 2001; Veltri 2009). De’ Rossi’s work was heavily criticized by Maharal of Prague (Ruderman 1995; Veltri 2009); perhaps, Gans’s intention was to support Maharal’s criticism by providing a traditionalist narrative of Jewish history (Breuer 1983b). Other scholars underline the specific intellectual and cultural milieu of Rudolphine Prague that encouraged Gans’ endeavor (Greenblatt 2014).

In Gans’s perception, historiography was first and foremost chronography, a discipline of describing and measuring time, and as such it

was closely related to astronomy. Accordingly, Gans’ chronicle offers a chronological outline of the past rather than a continuous narrative of human history. In the introduction of *Tsemah David*, Gans emphasizes that the work was intended for a wide, laic, and uneducated readership. The chronicle itself is divided into two parts: one of them treats general history, whereas the other focuses on events and persons that were especially important for Jews. Since similar divisions between “sacred” and “profane” histories appear in contemporary Christian historical works as well, it has been suggested that the structure of *Tsemah David* may have been inspired by Christian historiography (Greenblatt 2014).

Both parts are organized as long series of brief entries each recording the major events of a single year. The entries are arranged in a linear chronological sequence from the creation of the world to Gans’s own time. Gans’s scientific curiosity is evidenced by his occasional inclusion of scientific materials at the beginning of the book, where the creation of the world is discussed, and at some other places, e.g., an account of a comet that was visible in 1572. Remarkable is the entry on the invention of print which Gans praised enthusiastically. The prominence of Prague-related material in the content of both parts of the chronicle is also conspicuous. *Tsemah David* probably preserves some of the oral histories of Jews living in Prague (Greenblatt 2014).

A critical edition of the Hebrew original has been published by Mordecai Breuer (1983a); an English translation of the work and a study identifying Gans’ sources is under way (Šedinová et al. in preparation). A later edition of *Tsemah David* (Frankfurt a. M., 1692) includes an additional part on historical events from 1592 to 1692. The work has been translated to Yiddish and Latin (see Steinschneider 1852–60, no. 4805/3–8).

Works II: *Nehmad ve-na’im*

A second important work by Gans is a manual of astronomy and related sciences entitled *Nehmad va-na’im*. It includes a section on cosmology, a section on the structure of the celestial spheres, a

section on geography, a section on the measurement of time, and several sections on the movement of the Zodiac, the Sun, and the Moon (Alter 2011 [1958]; cf. Freudenthal 2011). The text is accompanied with illustrations and tables containing geographical and astronomical data.

Gans must have begun writing this book before December 1596 when a scribe copied an early version of it (see below, next section). At this time, the book bore the title *Magen David*, and thus it has often been confused with a later work bearing the same title. Most of the book had been finished by 1600; further sections were added to it in 1610 and 1613 (Alter 2011 [1958]).

The cosmological lore included in the work is based on medieval Jewish Aristotelian and Neoplatonic texts. Gans complains in the book that he was unable to access important medieval Hebrew astronomical texts by Abraham Ibn Ezra (1091/2–1167) and Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides 1288–1344). In astronomy, Gans follows the Ptolemaic model despite the fact that he was personally acquainted with Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler. It has been suggested that Kepler developed his heliocentric model only after Gans finished his work and thus the former could not influence the latter (Neher 1977). Nevertheless, *Nehmad va-na'im* includes reports about Gans's conversations with Brahe, Kepler, and Müller and about their work at the observatory (Alter 2011 [1958]).

The book was printed for the first time as late as 1743 in Jessnitz by R. Joel b. Jekutiel Sachs, rabbi of Austerlitz in Moravia. It also circulated in manuscripts among few Jewish intellectuals, who formed a “scientific subculture” among Ashkenazi Jews during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The printing of Gans's astronomical manual in 1743 is considered an event of some significance in Jewish intellectual history: it was a sign of an increasing interest in sciences and rationalism, a step toward *Haskalah*, a specific Jewish version of enlightenment that was to come during the second half of the eighteenth century (Freudenthal 2007). A critical edition and an in-depth study of *Nehmad ve-na'im* is a desideratum. (For an annotated edition of the introduction, consult Bolag 2008.)

Other Works

In *Nehmad va-na'im*, Gans mentions other scientific works on astronomy, geography, mathematics, geometry, and the Jewish calendar he wrote or planned to write. Only one of them seems to have survived: *Magen David* (Hebrew, “The Shield of David”) is a short introduction to astronomy. It was printed in Prague in 1612; a unique copy has been preserved in the Bodleian Library in Oxford (cf. Steinschneider 1852–60, no. 4805/1). In the introduction, Gans mentions two pupils, one of them being his son, who demanded him to write a book on astronomy. It has been suggested that Gans published this work, because he failed to raise money for the publication of *Nehmad va-na'im* (Neher 1977). *Magen David* is the first printed Hebrew text mentioning Copernicus and summarizing his theory (Neher 1977).

Another astronomical work also entitled *Magen David* but different from the previous one is attested in a manuscript which a scribe copied on 6–9 December 1596 in Bishitz (Byšice, Czech Republic, near Prague) (Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 273; cf. Steinschneider 1878, no. 299; note that the Hebrew date of the manuscript is converted incorrectly in Steinschneider's catalogue). This work seems to be an early version of *Nehmad va-na'im* (cf. Alter 2011 [1958]).

An early modern bibliographer mentions a geographical book entitled *Tsurat ha-arets* (Hebrew: “The forms of the earth”) by David Gans which was supposedly published in Istanbul. No copy of this work is known to have survived (see Steinschneider 1852–60, no. 4805/1 and no. 4965/3).

Cross-References

► Figo, Azariah ben Ephraim

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Gardens, Botanical

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Abstract

A botanical garden (BG), also called botanic garden, is an institution and a piece of land marked off for the cultivation of a systematically ordered collection of living plants. It serves purposes of scientific research, conservation, display, enjoyment, and education. Gardens dedicated specifically to the study of plants go back to antiquity. Nevertheless, the emergence of the BG type as an institution is a Renaissance phenomenon closely linked to the gradual development of the science of botany into a discipline independent from medicine. First BGs as such were founded in association with medical schools of European universities in the sixteenth century. Professors of medicine and apothecaries were the proto-botanists of that time, i.e., specialists of medicinal plants. Being rooted in the humanist culture of the Renaissance demanded new forms of investigating nature and teaching knowledge on plants with the result that gardens increasingly began to serve as additional open-air studies. There species could be directly observed and compared respectively to traditional codified knowledge. A growing number of herb books, collections of plant illustrations, and the invention of the *herbarium* in form of a collection of dried plants accompany this

development and reflect the growing range of specimens cultivated in BG. The scientific approach in ordering these living, dried, and illustrated botanical collections had great impact on the history of botany. It led to a change of interest in plants, studied no longer exclusively for their healing properties but as an independent subject matter. Europe's colonial history bringing more and more new species to the attention of pioneering botanists is another decisive factor for this change. In the seventeenth century, the main interest shifted definitely from medicinal plants to new exotic plant imports. These came first in form of diplomatic gifts from distant empires or as trophies from the European colonies. Parts of princely gardens also displaying botanical collections had often been among the first to display such novelties. Early botanists maintained extensive networks for the exchange of plants to amplify their collections. Along with the increasing success in cultivating foreign species in European climates masses of new material entered BG via laborious collecting expeditions.

Origins

The precursor of the botanical garden (BG) is the medieval medicinal garden, called herb garden or physic garden or garden of simples. "Simples" was used as another word for herbs in medieval and early modern times because herbs constituted the simplest ingredients of medicinal compositions (*remediae compositae*) mixed by apothecaries and physicians. In the Middle Ages, monasteries contained gardens with collections of medicinal herbs and preserved ancient botanical knowledge. Since the fourteenth century, also universities kept such gardens for the use of pharmacists. Herbal manuscripts of antiquity were the most influential reference works on botanical questions. Besides the writings of the Greek physician Galen (second century AD), the *De Materia Medica* of the Roman physician Dioscorides (first century AD), a description of physical and remedial properties of plants written in Greek,

remained the most authoritative book on botany until the seventeenth century. Although the monastic orders in Medieval Europe mainly perpetuated Dioscorides-based knowledge, a change of value in reference to plants and a desire for their observation becomes palpable in the thirteenth century, e.g., with regard to the writings of the Dominican friar and natural philosopher Albertus Magnus (1193/1206–1280). In particular, Arabic physicians made progress in botanic matters. The Andalusian Ibn al-Baytar, (1179–1248) e.g., based his writings on *Materia Medica* not only on Dioscorides and Galen but also on his personal observations of ca. 1,400 plants. Furthermore, Andalusian (Muslim) Spain had ever since been a forerunner in experimenting with the cultivation of exotic plants. When Christian Spain finally reconquered al-Andalus toward the end of the fifteenth century its gardens became famous and better known among the growing number of villa enthusiasts. This may have influenced the gardens and gardening of these humanists in various ways. A renewal of horticulture had followed Pietro de' Crescenzi's (~1230/35–1320) pivotal treatise on agriculture, the *Liber Ruralium Commodorum* (1304–1309), and intensified during the revival of ancient villa culture based on literary knowledge of antiquity in the fifteenth century. The central stage of this movement and cradle of the first BG was the Apennine Peninsula. Gardens of simples were often included within (Italian) Renaissance villa gardens. Princes, physicians, and pharmacists alike became ardent collectors of traditional herbs and new foreign plants in the sixteenth century. In the early founding period of BG, when medicine, pharmacy, and botany were not distinct disciplines yet, there is no clear notional distinction between evolving types of gardens. Thus, BGs were labeled by various names, among others *hortus medicus*, *hortus botanicus*, or *hortus academicus*.

Early Examples

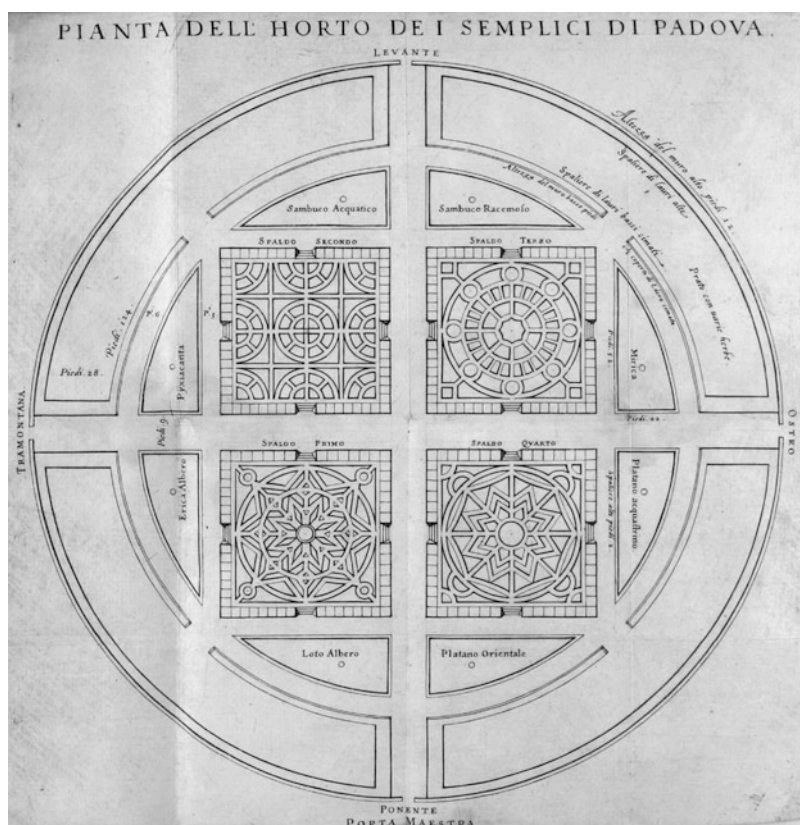
The first BGs were those established in Padua and in Pisa in the early 1540s. Plant identification had then become a pending problem due to conflicting

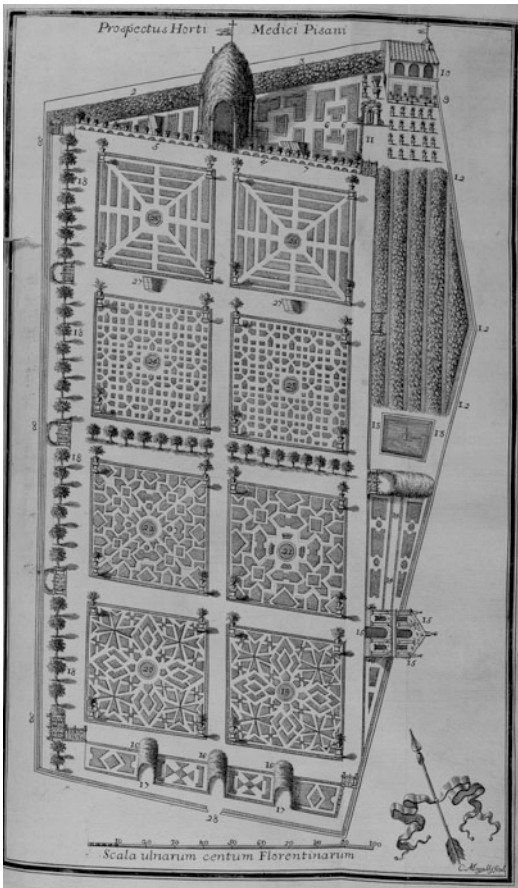
opinions on translating Dioscorides and finding the matching species. At the University of Padua, Francesco Bonafede (1447–1558) had instituted a chair of simples (*lectura simplicium*) in 1533. At the end of the year 1543, he pleaded for the establishment of an associated garden. The Venetian republic supported the proposal, and the desired didactic garden of simples arose in 1545. From then on direct observation of living plants (*ostensio simplicium*) complemented the botanical lessons. Soon exotic species also entered the garden thanks to the Venetian trade relations with the Eastern Mediterranean, and Padua became an important center for the study of botany. The engraver Girolamo Porro published the first guidebook to this BG for the use of students in 1591 (*L'Horto dei semplici di Padova*, including a ground plan, Fig. 1). In Pisa, the Medici princes patronized the development of botanical studies. In 1543, Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–1574) invited Luca Ghini (1490–1556), a

naturalist, herbalist, and physician from Bologna, to give lectures on simples in Pisa. Ghini had just invented a new method for studying simples by starting the first collection of pressed dried plants (*hortus siccus*) in 1540. He could use a garden near the Arsenal for teaching his students in Pisa since 1544. Ghini also chose plantings for another BG that Cosimo I instituted in Florence in 1545. His pupil Andrea Cesalpino (1525–1603) succeeded him in Pisa relocating the BG to the east of town in 1563, but the site proved unsuitable as well. Ferdinand I entrusted Lorenzo Mazzanga, probably a pupil of Cesalpino, and then the Fleming Joseph Goedenhuize (1535–1595), alias Giuseppe Casabona, to create the third and remaining BG next to Pisa's baptistery from 1591 to 1595. Michelangelo Tilli, director of the BG of Pisa since 1683, published an extensive catalogue on the plants cultivated there in 1723 (*Catalogus plantarum horti Pisani*, including a map of the garden, Fig. 2).

Gardens, Botanical,

Fig. 1 Botanical garden of Padua. Engraving from Porro 1591. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Library, A 146.2 Ph. In the public domain, photo: wikimedia commons





Gardens, Botanical, Fig. 2 Botanical garden of Pisa. Engraving from Tilli 1723. Heidelberg University Library, O 3060-4 Folio RES. In the public domain, photo: wikimedia commons

In the later sixteenth century and first half of the seventeenth century followed important new establishments of BG in Bologna, Leiden, Leipzig, Heidelberg, Basel, Montpellier, Oxford, and Paris. In Bologna, Ghini had already wanted to institute a BG. One of his pupils, the influential natural scientist and philosopher Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605), finally realized this idea in 1568. The curators of Leiden University founded the oldest BG in the Netherlands, the *Hortus Academicus Lugduno-Batavus*. Charles de l'Écluse, called Carolus Clusius (1526–1609), the leading botanist of his generation, became its scientific director. Arriving in 1593, he set up the BG of Leiden with the help of Dirck Outgaertsz Cluyt (1546–1598), its first gardener. Clusius

maintained one of the biggest networks for plant exchange and brought with him a large tulip collection becoming the base of the tulip trade in the Netherlands. A first catalogue of this BG appeared as early as 1601 under the direction of the physician and botanist Peter Pauw (1564–1617) heading the management together with Bontius since 1598 (*Hortus Publicus Academiae Lugduno-Bataviae*, including a map of the garden, Fig. 3). German humanist centers had become, after Gutenberg's invention of printing around 1455, important places for the diffusion of early illustrated botanical treatises like Konrad von Megenburg's *Puch der Natur* (Augsburg, 1475), the *Hortus Sanitatis* (Mayence, 1491), or Otto Brunfels' *Herbarium vive eicones* (Strasburg, 1536). BGs comparable to the Italian models, however, came into being only in the later sixteenth century. In Leipzig, Moritz of Saxony (1521–1553) reassigned a secularized monastery garden to the university for didactic purposes as early as 1543, but a proper BG was probably only installed when the mathematician Moritz Steinmetz became the first lecturer of botany in 1580. The University of Heidelberg obtained its first BG thanks to the professor of medicine Henrich Smet (1535/37–1614) in 1593. The eminent physician and natural scientist Conrad Gessner (1516–1565) created a *hortus medicus* in his hometown Zürich in 1556, not continued after his death though. The earliest BG of Switzerland became then the one instituted by Caspar Bauhin (1560–1624) at the University of Basel in 1589. France's oldest BG is the one in Montpellier. Well-known naturalists like Clusius and Lobelius (Matthias de l'Obel) had studied at the University of Montpellier under the popular teacher Guillaume Rondelet (1507–1566) who had a special interest in botany and zoology. A BG following the model of Padua came into being only in 1593 under the surveillance of Pierre Richer de Belleval (1564–1632), professor of botany and anatomy. It inspired the *Jardin du Roi* (later called *Jardin des Plantes*) in Paris. Guy de la Brosse, botanist and physician to King Louis XIII, achieved to found the latter in 1626; it did not open to the public before 1640 though. The royal herbalist Jean Robin (1550–1629) had designed an earlier BG on the

Île de la Cité for the faculty of medicine in 1597. In England, Henry Danvers (1573–1643), later Earl of Danby, patronized the construction of the first BG for the University of Oxford. Founded in 1621, its first prefect became the German botanist Jacob Bobart (1599–1680).

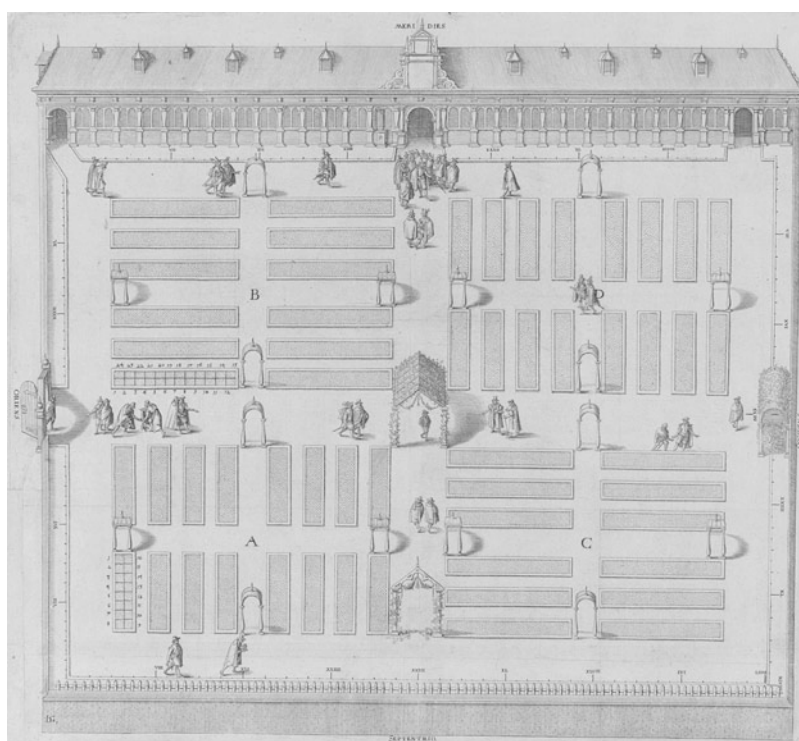
Ordering Structures

Renaissance gardens, especially in the sixteenth century, generally constitute an intricate interplay between art, science, and nature, a complex conceptual system often combining various functions or even types of gardens in metastructures (e.g., villas). In contrast to pleasure gardens or kitchen gardens, the main function of the BG was the study of botany. Therefore, practical and scientific aspects prevailed in designing this type of garden. The basic form used in the Renaissance for BG is that of the quadripartite quadrangle: The space divides into four sectors by two main paths crossing each other. Familiar models of this basic structure are the medieval cloister garden or also

ancient Roman military camps and cities. In addition, the idea of the *chahar bagh*, the “four garden” form in Islamic culture, may have been another factor for adopting the quadripartite quadrangle in the Renaissance BG. Smaller planting units subdivided each sector of the basic square. Margins (of stone or wood) had to surround the compartments because the species needed clear separation. The partitioning of planting beds should rationally display the classification of botanical species so that the students could investigate inherent similarities and differences. In use were simple rectangular beds, e.g., at the BG of Leiden (Figs. 3 and 4), but also complex geometrical patterns, e.g., at the BG of Padua and Pisa (Figs. 1 and 2). Simple rectangular beds had already structured the medieval herb garden as documented in the monastery plan of St. Gall (ninth century). Geometric patterns for flowerbeds appear first in illustrations of Francesco Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499) and in Sebastiano Serlio’s books on architecture (1537); Islamic sources may have inspired them as well. The design of Padua’s BG, devised

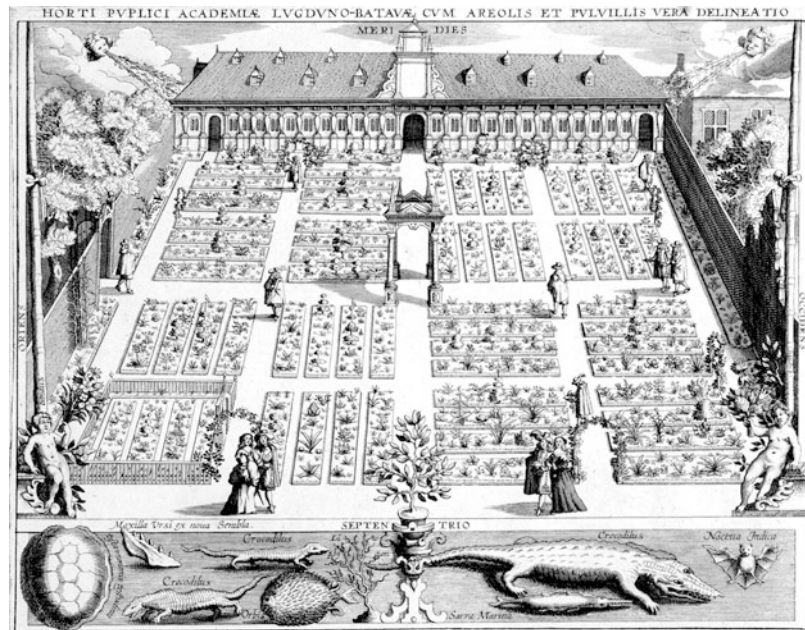
Gardens, Botanical,

Fig. 3 Jacques de Gheyn II, Plan of the Botanic Garden of Leiden University. Engraving from Pauw 1601. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1895-A. In the public domain, photo: wikimedia commons



Gardens, Botanical,**Fig. 4** Willem

Swanenburg after Jan Cornelis. Hortus botanicus Leiden. Engraving. 1610. In the public domain, photo: wikimedia commons



by the Venetian humanist and architectural connoisseur Daniele Barbaro (1513–1570), was an influential role model. Its unique feature is the circular shape of its surrounding wall, putting the usual quadripartite quadrangle within. Handbooks on designs of planting compartments became soon common. When Goedenhuize became director of the third BG in Pisa he used, e.g., such a handbook for the layout of geometrical patterns for the eight squares of his garden (*Libro di compartimenti di giardini di Giuseppe Benincasa*, ms. 464, University Library of Pisa). Circular or octagonal fountains, often situated in the center of a main square, facilitated irrigation.

In addition to the functional aspects, these layouts transported also symbolic significance illustrating the analogical connection of the four elements, the planetary constellations, and the temperaments of the human body. The encyclopedic collecting activity of botanists also stands in the salvific context of naming and classifying God's creation in an attempt to repatriate paradise. In terms of plant classification, early botanists experimented with various possibilities before the binominal nomenclature of Carl Linné (mid-eighteenth century) asserted itself. The associated *herbaria* of BG were important scientific instruments for comparing the affinities and

differences of species and thus establishing order in the plant world. Cesalpino as well as the Bauhin brothers, e.g., made innovative contributions in that respect. Cesalpino stopped grouping plants according to their healing properties and focused on their seeds and fruits instead. Gaspard Bauhin listed 6,000 plants in his *Pinax theatric botanici* (1623) and classified them in genera and species. Printed plant catalogues for the orientation of students document the didactic display of order in the living collections, giving a list of species and their exact location in the garden (e.g., in Leiden). In the BG of Padua, the geographical origin of species seems to have played a role for their display (according to Girolamo Porro's description of 1591).

Vital parts of the structure of early modern BG were also cabinets of curiosities, the precursors of natural history museums. Pisa had a "galleria" with a large natural history collection that attracted many tourists. It displayed cabinets ordered after the proposals of the German physician Samuel Quiccheberg (1529–1567), who wrote the first treatise on museology (*Inscriptiones vel Tituli Theatri Amplissimi*) in 1565 inspired by the ideas of Giulio Camillo Delminio. Glasshouses became common only in the seventeenth century. The first glass house was

supposedly that of the BG in Leiden built in 1599–1600. This prototype still comprised the natural history collection and thus functioned as cabinet of curiosities as well.

Plants

At the end of the fifteenth century, there were around 1,000 different plant species known and cultivated in European gardens, mostly varieties native to the continent. Some exotic species were familiar through travelogues (e.g., of Marco Polo). Thanks to the progress in navigation and the stabilization of routing, the interest in acclimatizing plants from extra-European expeditions started to grow. Among the first to experiment on acclimatizing exotic plants were rich families like the Medici in Florence who tried to cultivate potatoes, mulberry, and pineapple in their gardens as early as the end of the fifteenth century. However, the early founding phase of BG still classifies as “European” with regard to the history of plant imports. Until the mid-sixteenth century, the plant collections consisted almost exclusively of specimens that were already native in Europe at that time, medicinal plants in focus. Important was the cultivation and diffusion of Mediterranean species like lily, peony, laurel, oleander, as well as citrus plants. The following period from 1560 to 1620 is characterized “oriental phase” for the enormous amount of plant influx from the Levant. Notably varieties of tulips, narcissi, hyacinths, lilies, and anemones came via the Apennine peninsula to Europe. Imperial ambassadors at the Sublime Porte in Istanbul played a significant role for bringing about the transfer of plant material. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1522–1592) provided, e.g., the first tulip for the Occident. Imports from South America entered Europe via the botanical gardens of Spain. Of particular historical significance would be economic plants like corn, potato, sunflower, and tobacco. North American plant imports became dominant in the “Canadian phase” after 1620 and were at that time mostly diffused via the *Jardin du Roi* in Paris. Around the mid-seventeenth century, the development of heating techniques for hibernation

architecture would give way to future South African plant imports from the Dutch colonies via the botanical gardens of Leiden and Amsterdam.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alchemy](#)
- ▶ [Camillo Delminio, Giulio](#)
- ▶ [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)
- ▶ [Galen and Galenism](#)
- ▶ [Gardens, Ethics](#)
- ▶ [Scientia in the Renaissance, Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)

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Gardens, Ethics

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Abstract

Gardens were favorite places for discussing ethical problems concerning the relationship of nature and man in the Renaissance. What is more, moral-philosophical aspects accompanied the very idea of the garden. Gardens were supposed to reflect an image of the world, the view of the world as conceived by its creator,

and thus their order shed light on the virtues and character of the latter. The ethical dimension of gardens is closely related to their emblematic identification with paradise found expressed in literature, the visual arts and garden architecture alike. Moral meaning applied to gardens increased according to the growing importance of their representational and didactic function tended to increase.

Tradition

Whereas the idea of paradise in Islamic culture is one of pure pleasure, the Christian tradition connects the earthly paradise, the Garden of Eden, also with the Fall of Man. The latter concept had tremendous influence on the moral perception of Western garden culture. In medieval Europe, the cloister garden developed as a place for contemplation on moral life and metaphysical questions. Its symbolic representation of the earthly paradise refers to the heavenly paradise that may be regained through the grace of God. Therefore, the garden also became an emblematic attribute of the Virgin Mary for her giving birth to Christ whose sacrifice redeemed the original sin. In monastic literature, the garden appears furthermore as a metaphor of the human soul fighting the battle of Virtues and Vices. Garden allegories emerged in profane literature as well. The French poem *Roman de la Rose* (~1230–1275) of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, an allegorical dream vision of love set in a garden, exerted great influence on the imagination of the secular garden as a place for the development of the soul and the quest for happiness. It was highly popular in the Renaissance preceding allegorical poems like Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516–1532), and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575), which cross-fertilized also the creation of actual gardens.

Innovative and Original Aspects

An important innovative element changing the appearance and use of gardens is constituted by

the reference to the ethics of classical antiquity and their combination with Christian teleology. Reviving the ancient ideal of a simple life in the country and following the example of Plato's and Cicero's academies, humanists – the vanguard Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374) and the Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) among the first – fashioned the villa garden as the place *par excellence* for philosophical debate. It was appreciated, in a stoic perspective, for offering peace of mind in contemplation of the fortunes of life – a subject treated in form of villa dialogues, the most notable examples of which are Taegio's *La Villa. Dialogo* (1559) and Gallo's *Vinti Giornate* (1572, preceded by several shorter versions since 1550). Villa idealists of the sixteenth century like Bartolomeo Taegio (~1520–1573) and Agostino Gallo (1499–1570) merged ancient and Christian moral examples to legitimize their growing enthusiasm for the useful pleasures of the garden. Garden laws and moralizing inscriptions henceforth often expressed the humanist attitude of a villa garden's patron. The notion of choice and free will, with regard to the narrative of the Fall of Man as well as to ancient philosophy, became central to the perception of the self in the Renaissance. The associated salvific idea of the repatriation of paradise marked the humanist endeavor of collecting, cultivating, and ordering the world. New garden designs started to reflect these concepts, for example, by integrating labyrinths that offered a choice of paths or by staging the rhetoric of transforming wilderness into civilization. In particular, the rediscovery of the *Tablet of Cebes*, a Socratic philosopher's moral allegory of human life and the path to virtue, influenced the imagination and creation of gardens in the second half of the sixteenth century, popularizing temples of virtue and wisdom.

Impact and Legacy

The academic villa idealism, legitimized by moral-philosophical exaltation, spreads from Italy across Europe promoting gardens as places of *otium philosophicum*, self-improvement, and education. At first reserved to elitist circles of humanist scholars, gardens were increasingly

opened to the public. Particularly during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the didactic impetus and moral meaning of gardens gained in importance. New garden designs became subject of elaborate philosophical interpretation as proves, for example, Francesco de Vieri's exegesis of the Medici garden in Pratolino (*Delle Maravigliose Opere*, 1587). They could also invite to demonstrate one's confession as support, for instance, the descriptions of ideal gardens in Erasmus' *Convivium religiosum* (1522) and Bernard Palissy's *Recepte veritable* (1563). The relationship of man and nature changed profoundly from 1300 to 1650: from an increasingly sensual attitude toward nature via the ethos of improvement to the demonstration of man's dominion over nature.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Action and Contemplation in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Allegory in Renaissance Literature](#)
- ▶ [de' Vieri, Francesco](#)
- ▶ [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- ▶ [Ethics, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Fortune in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Gardens, Botanical](#)
- ▶ [Happiness, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Life in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Teleology in Renaissance Science](#)
- ▶ [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

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Garin, Eugenio

Born: 1909, Rieti

Died: 2004, Florence

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Abstract

Eugenio Garin has been one of the most well-known historians of Renaissance philosophy and culture and among Italy's most celebrated intellectuals in the second half of the twentieth century. After teaching for a quarter century at the University of Florence, he transferred to the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, where he ended his academic career. His bibliography includes thousands of publications on topics ranging from history of

philosophy to medieval and Renaissance intellectual history and from philosophical historiography to history of intellectuals and of scientific culture in the twentieth century.

Biography

Eugenio Garin was an Italian intellectual and philosopher and an historian of Renaissance culture. Before becoming Italy's most celebrated historian of Renaissance culture and one of its foremost intellectuals, he was born in Rieti, in 1909, the son of a high school teacher and Greek philology specialist who died in 1920, when he was not yet 40 years old. Because of his father's premature death, Garin's adolescence was not easy, and he was forced to assume serious responsibilities for his family from a very young age. Although most of Garin's own education took place under the aegis of Giovanni Gentile's Fascist *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, the intellectual climate of Italy during his youth was dominated by Benedetto Croce's version of Hegelian idealism.

Garin, who was to become closely connected with both Croce (1866–1952) and Gentile (1875–1944), resolved early on being both anti-idealist and anti-fascist. In later years, he commented on this decision stating that during the Fascist years, he had to learn how to wear a mask and speak through it.

Furthermore, Garin was deeply influenced by Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), a founding member and one-time leader of the Italian Communist Party imprisoned during the Fascist regime led by Benito Mussolini (1883–1945). As others belonging to the same generation, Garin became familiar with the name of Gramsci by way of the characterization another crucial Italian intellectual, Piero Gobetti (1901–1926), proposed in his *Rivoluzione liberale* (1924). Despite leaning naturally toward the left, Garin decided to reject Marxist dogmatism in favor of the English Enlightenment, which he chose as philosophical creed in his formative years while he was writing his *laurea* thesis on the ethics of Joseph Butler under the supervision

of Ludovico Limentani (1884–1940) at the University of Florence.

After having earned his *laurea* in 1929, Garin worked as a secondary school teacher for two decades: First, until 1931 in the Regio Convitto delle Mantellate, a Catholic school for girls; then, between 1931 and 1934, at the Liceo scientifico Stanislao Cannizzaro in Palermo; and finally at the Liceo scientifico Leonardo da Vinci in Florence. In these years, Garin also shifted his research focus from the Enlightenment to the Renaissance, partly due to Limentani's influence and partly because the debate on the Renaissance had become center stage in a tragic moment in European history, which was witnessing the inexorable surge of Fascism and Nazism. Garin also wrote articles for the recently established (by Gentile) *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, at the time one of Europe's foremost philosophical journals, and was invited by Gentile (assassinated by partisans in 1944) to finish his history of Italian philosophy. First published by Vallardi in 1947, *La filosofia* (not to be mistaken with Garin's 1945 *Storia della filosofia*) was reworked and augmented by Garin to include modern Italian philosophy in a three-volume set to be published in 1966 by Einaudi with a new title: *Storia della filosofia italiana*. Renaissance thought and the history of Italian philosophy as a homogeneous subject will remain central intellectual concerns for him until his death.

By 1937, Garin had already published about four journal articles on Joseph Butler and moral philosophy in the English enlightenment starting in 1929, and in 1937 he published his first book, *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Vita e dottrina*, which established him as a major Renaissance scholar. He was 28 years of age at the time. Working on Pico della Mirandola, Garin had found his lifelong subject, Italian humanism, and in 1947 published, in German, *Der italienische Humanismus*, which in 1952, as *L'Umanesimo italiano. Filosofia e vita civile* became his most successful book (translated into English in 1965 as *Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance*).

Garin was appointed to a full professorship in History of medieval philosophy at the University of Florence in 1952, where he taught for the next quarter century (obtaining in 1955 a chair in History of philosophy), but the 1968 political climate and student protests left him so bitterly disappointed that he considered resigning, and in 1974 transferred to the Scuola Normale Superiore at Pisa, where he held for the chair in History of Renaissance philosophy ("Storia della filosofia del Rinascimento") until his retirement. Here, he felt, communicating with students and continuing his teaching was easier because of the more selected and intimate setting that the Scuola Normale provided. He retired from the Scuola Normale in 1984 and 20 years later, in 2004, died in Florence at the age of 95. He kept publishing until the very end of the twentieth century.

Garin's bibliography includes thousands of publications, and his books range from the philosophical and historical, as *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (1954), *L'educazione in Europa 1400–1600* (1957), *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano* (1961), and *Dal Rinascimento all'Illuminismo* (1970); to the scientific, as *Scienza e vita civile nel Rinascimento italiano* (1965), *Filosofia e scienze nel Novecento* (1978), *Rinascite e rivoluzioni* (1975), and *Aristotelismo veneto e scienza moderna* (1981); to the astrological and hermetic, as *Lo zodiaco della vita* (1976) and *Ermetismo del Rinascimento* (1988); and to the autobiographical, as *La filosofia come sapere storico* (1959), to list but the most important.

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Gartlib, Samuel

- [Hartlib, Samuel](#)

Gaudium

- [Pleasure in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Gaza, Teodoro

- [Gaza, Theodore](#)

Gaza, Theodore

Born: Salonica c.1398/1410/1415

Died: Calabria 1475/1476

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Abstract

Theodore Gaza was a fifteenth-century Byzantine scholar and translator. He was highly respected as an expert on Aristotle. His work influenced Renaissance and early modern scholars interested in Aristotle's biological works. Gaza introduced a new method of translating and editing ancient texts which had great impact among translators and editors. He was associated with some of the most famous and influential Italians.

Synonyms

Gaza, Teodoro; Gazes, Teodorus; Gazis, Theodore

Biography

Theodore Gaza was born in Salonica, as his signature (*Theodorus Graecus Thessalonicensis*) implies. His family was probably well known and influential in the local community. When the Turks invaded his home city, Theodore fled to Italy. According to certain sources, not totally reliable, Gaza, before his trip to Italy, spent a few years in Constantinople, where he entered monastic orders. In Constantinople he befriended Francesco Filelfo (1391–1481) who probably encouraged him to migrate to Italy. Several sources attest Gaza's presence in the Council of Ferrara – Florence (1438–1439), although this is unlikely. Upon his arrival in Italy, he spent a few

years in Pavia (1440–1443) and then he moved to Mantua, where he became a student of the famous humanist Vittorino da Feltre (1378–1446), who in turn improved his Greek under Gaza's guidance. During his stay in Mantua, Gaza studied Medicine and perfected his Latin, while delivering lessons in Greek and translating manuscripts from Greek into Latin. In 1446 he became professor at the University of Ferrara, where he enjoyed high esteem and appreciation from his students. Soon his courses on Greek language became the main attraction of the University. Cosimo de' Medici offered him the chair that had belonged to Manuel Chrysoloras at the University of Florence, but Gaza rejected the offer. By 1449 he was a well-renowned humanist and Pope Nicholas V welcomed him to the Holy See and entrusted him with the translation of several works of Aristotle and other Greek authors into Latin. Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472) encouraged Gaza to move to Rome, since Bessarion was persuaded that Gaza's knowledge and efficiency would be helpful for other scholars who sought to improve the quality of their translations. Gaza's texts were the standard for the translation of scholarly works. During his stay in Rome, he continued his teaching activities. He also engaged with Aristotle's *Libri Naturales*, especially with his biological writings. Gaza devoted many years of the rest of his life to the editions and translations of Aristotle's *Libri de animalibus*, the first version of which was completed by 1458. Before engaging with Aristotle, he had translated Theophrastus' botanical treatises (*Historia plantarum* and *De causis plantarum*). Soon, Pope Nicholas V (1397–1455) acknowledged Gaza's competence in ancient languages and asked him to correct Georgius Trapezuntius' (1395–1472/1473) translations, when the latter fell out with the Pope because of the poor quality of his commentary on Ptolemy's *Almagest* and of his the translation of Aristotle's *Problemata*. After that, Gaza and Trapezuntius became rivals. Cardinal Bessarion, Trapezuntius' main opponent, supported and promoted Gaza's translations to the literate audience of the period. In his translations Gaza used to scorn previous translators and commentators in an attempt to highlight his contribution to classical education. According to

Trapezuntius, Gaza's choice was indicative of his low appreciation for scholastic philosophy and theology. But that was not Gaza's and Trapezuntius' first public dispute. When Gaza arrived in Rome, he attended Trapezuntius' lectures on rhetoric and blamed him of employing false examples and misinterpreting the purpose of oratory. Gaza held that, besides persuasion, the orator ought to aim to beautiful expression. Trapezuntius bitterly remarked that Gaza was simply reproducing Roman sources, especially, Quintilian. After the Pope's death, Gaza moved to Naples, where he continued his work under the patronage of King Alphonso. He translated texts of John Chrysostomos and contributed to the edition of Arrian's *Tactica*. During his stay in Naples, Gaza corresponded with Bessarion and kept him posted about Trapezuntius' activities in the city. In the same period, Trapezuntius published the *In Perversionem Problematum Aristotelis a quodam Theodoro Cage editam et problematice Aristotelis philosophiae protectio*. The work's title is indicative of Trapezuntius' dismissive attitude toward Gaza. Trapezuntius maintained that Gaza had rearranged the structure of the text and did not alert his readers to the fact that he had deviated from the Greek original text on a number of occasions. Gaza also introduced new technical terms, which made the text tricky in certain cases. While Gaza was interested in *bene dicere*, Trapezuntius prioritized scientific precision. Gaza took into account Trapezuntius' remarks and revised his translation. Trapezuntius blamed Bessarion of initiating a plot against him and Gaza was acting as Bessarion's front man. Trapezuntius derided Gaza by misquoting his surname: he called him *Cages* and his admirers *Cagulei*. In addition, he warned king Alphonso of Naples that Gaza and his followers were threatening Christian faith and were allies of the archetypal Antichrist, that is, Pletho (1355–1454). Trapezuntius' accusations were obviously false. It is noteworthy that Gaza, in the early 1450s, felt victim of the accusations of Michael Apostolis (1422–1478), a Greek émigré and Bessarion's protégé. Apostolis argued that Gaza had misinterpreted Pletho's views on substance in an attempt to defend Aristotelian

metaphysics and for that reason, had distorted Pletho's thought. Andronicus Callistus (d.1478), Gaza's relative and student, replied to Apostolis in support of Gaza and Aristotle. Bessarion felt the need to intervene in the dispute and also defended Gaza and Aristotle, as well as Plato. A few years later (1460), Demetrius Chalcocondyles (1423–1511), another student of Gaza, composed an additional defense of his mentor, which elicited a bitter response from Apostolis. The dispute lasted almost a decade. Gaza was a devoted Aristotelian, but he did not downplay the significance and value of Platonic philosophy. In addition, his works display his high esteem for Stoic and Christian philosophy. Despite their disputes, both Gaza and Trapezuntius agreed that Pletho's works threatened Christianity. Gaza refuted Pletho's *De fato* and composed the *De mensibus*, a short treatise in reply to Pletho's *Nomoi*. Yet Gaza's and Trapezuntius' rivalry never ended. Gaza got embroiled in another dispute between Bessarion and Trapezuntius about the purpose of nature. Pletho, after reading Aristotle on nature, concluded that the latter did not hold that God directs the universe, because nature does not deliberate. Gaza, during the period 1455–1458, rejected Pletho's argumentation and supported Aristotle. He urged Bessarion to write a short treatise in order to express his views on the issue. Trapezuntius did not miss the chance and attacked Bessarion on the basis of Aristotelian philosophy. Bessarion replied with his famous treatise *De natura et arte*, in which he attacked Trapezuntius. The latter thought that Gaza was the author of the treatise since he had access to the text before its first publication. As a result, Trapezuntius once again launched a fervent attack on Gaza. After 1458 Cardinal Bessarion offered Gaza a benefice in Calabria, where Gaza resided until his death. In his personal correspondence he confessed to his friends that he was confronted with financial problems, because the Roman Curia was not generous with scholars like him. However, he did not refrain from taking part in philosophical debates. When Bessarion decided to reply to Trapezuntius' *Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis*, he asked Gaza to review the first draft

of the work. Gaza accepted and sent him his comments and views, which in fact influenced the final version of Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis*. A few years before his death, probably just before 1470, Gaza defended Bessarion against John Argyropoulos' (d.1487) criticisms. Argyropoulos did not agree with Bessarion's views about concepts and published a short work, which is no longer extant. Gaza replied with his *Antirrheticon* and held that Argyropoulos had misunderstood Bessarion's argumentation. The truth is that Gaza attempted to justify Bessarion, although Argyropoulos' arguments were accurate. Gaza was buried in the monastery of San Giovanni a Piro. According to several reports, a few years before his death, Pope Sixtus IV (1414–1484) had insulted him when he rewarded Gaza with a small amount of golden coins for his work, probably the translation of *Historia Animalium*. Gaza felt offended and threw the money into the Tiber. Although Gaza felt dissatisfied with Pope Sixtus' ingratitude, the story about the money seems to be false. According to Raffaele Maffei, Gaza also translated Cicero from Latin into Greek, while in his early years in Italy he had translated from Greek into Latin works of Michele Savonarola.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Gaza introduced a new method of translating and editing Aristotle's texts, which influenced subsequent translations and commentaries. He was aware of the fact that ancient and medieval editors and scribes had distorted the original sources. As a result, the primary and most crucial task of the translator and editor was to restore the text to its original form. That required drastic interventions and changes, including the omission of passages or even books and the complete rearrangement of the rest of the text. According to his associates, such as Nicolaus Gupalatinus, Gaza kept himself occupied sometimes for over a year with the restoration of a text before he started the translation. Of special importance was Gaza's *Γραμματική Εισαγωγή*, since it was more popular than similar attempts in the same century.

Impact and Legacy

Gaza was held in high esteem by his fellow humanists for the quality and originality of his works. After his death, Ermolao Barbaro wrote a letter to Pope Sixtus IV praising Gaza. His translations on Aristotle's biological works were by far the most influential ones during the sixteenth century. Despite the fact that Trapezuntius also translated the same works, Gaza's translations were published more than forty times in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The availability of the texts led humanists to study and comment these specific Aristotelian treatises. Gaza evinced interest in biology as well, since he corroborated with Bussi the edition of Pliny's *Historia naturalis*. Gaza's translations were appreciated by almost all key - Renaissance humanists. Aldo Manuzio admitted that Pico della Mirandola, Poliziano, Barbaro, and Donato improved their knowledge of Greek language by studying Gaza's works. Erasmus, Sylburg, Camotius, and Casaubon appreciated his work on *Libri de animalibus* and followed his corrections. Erasmus praised also Gaza's *Grammatica*, which he considered of superior quality to that of Ianus Lascaris (1445–1535). The German mathematician and astronomer Regiomontanus acknowledged Gaza's contribution in his work, since Gaza introduced him to Ptolemy. The famous humanist and logician Rodolphus Agricola (1444–1485) was probably among his students. Andronicus Callistus and Demetrius Chalcocondyles, the influential Greek humanists and translators, were also Gaza's students.

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Generation and Embryology in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Embryology is a study of generation in both plants and animals. The generation of living

beings was one of the most central and difficult problems for natural philosophers in the Renaissance. The complex structure of living bodies and their functions had to be explained from the first stage of their formation. This was the quintessential aspect of embryology. Many factors involved in the phenomenon were invisible and imperceptible to human senses, while the traditional explanatory tools of philosophy and medicine, whether Aristotelian or Galenic, did not provide a satisfying answer. The problem forced physician-philosophers to scrutinize the newly rediscovered texts of the ancients and even craft ideas and concepts not employed elsewhere.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Generation was one of the major problems confronting natural philosophers in the Renaissance and early modern period (Roger 1963, 1997; Duchesneau 1997; Smith 2006). Among many ideas and influences in embryology, the theory of “formative power” (*virtus formativa*) was the focal point of debates carried out by physician-philosophers. Frequently used in medieval embryology, the origin of this theory can be traced back to the Greek physician, Galen (129–ca. 216). For Galen this power could not be reduced to the primary qualities (hot, cold, dry, and wet) of the four elements and was responsible for the complex organization of living bodies.

Nicolò Leonicensio (1428–1524) was prolific in producing widely used translations of Galen's works. He also composed the first “humanist” embryological treatise, *On Formative Power (De virtute formativa)*. There he tried to explain Aristotle's and Galen's views on formative power with the help of newly recovered texts by Aristotle's Greek commentators and Galen. According to Leonicensio, Galen's formative power should be understood as a “faculty” (*facultas*), or power, of the vegetative soul, which is in turn identified with innate heat or a certain temperament of the

body of living beings (Leonicensi 1506; Hirai 2011).

Innovative and Original Aspects

French physician Jean Fernel (1497–1558) rejected Leonicensi's naturalistic interpretation. For him if the soul of living beings was identified as the body's innate heat or temperament, it depended on the four elements, being transient and therefore destructible with the body. This contradicted the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Calling upon Renaissance Platonism developed by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Fernel tried to present another image of Galen that could resonate with Christianity. The chief fruit of his endeavor was the dialogue *On the Hidden Causes of Things* (*De abditis rerum causis*). For Fernel the seed's formative power results from the heavenly realm, that is, from the cosmic mind mentioned by Galen, and the World-Soul held by the Platonists. He qualified this power as celestial and divine, exceeding the order of the four elements and their forces (Fernel 1548; Hirai 2011).

In his embryological work, *On the Plastic Faculty of the Seed* (*De plastica seminis facultate*), Jacob Schegk (1511–1587) advanced that the “formative and plastic faculty” (*facultas formatrix et plastica*) was the most remarkable force of natural things, by which God skillfully preserves the perpetuity of all sublunary species. For Schegk the plastic faculty was a power created by God as His “invisible hand,” something intermediate between actuality and potentiality, that is, between what is animate and what is to be animated (Schegk 1580; Hirai 2011).

Impact and Legacy

In his *Physical Memories* (*Hypomnemata physica*), Daniel Sennert (1572–1637) made a critical assessment of the ideas advanced by his

forerunners. His treatise encompasses the cluster of issues raised in the intersection of matter theories and the life sciences of his time. For him the formative power of the seed is nothing but the soul. It is absurd, he argues, to think that formative power produces such a noble and divine substance as the soul. He concluded that this power cannot be the “faculty of the seed having no soul” but the “faculty of the soul residing in the seed.” He thus rejected the idea that the seed's formative power produces the soul (Sennert 1636). Sennert's discussion exerted a considerable influence on the next generations of natural philosophers, including William Harvey (1578–1657), by disseminating not only his own ideas but also those of Fernel and Schegk (Hirai 2011).

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Generation in Renaissance Sciences

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Abstract

Following ancient authors, generation is seen in the Renaissance as one of the central, characteristic features of living beings. Likewise, during the Renaissance, Aristotelian premises and principles continued to be influential in explaining generation processes. In this respect, many authors made their arguments based on spiritual forces and formative virtues. Such efforts became increasingly concerned with connecting the immaterial forces with the material basis of living things and the simple movements of particles that can be described physically. In the wake of these developments, numerous attempts were made at relating Aristotelianism to mechanistic philosophy as in the understanding of Aristotelian substantial forms as causal principles that can be reconstructed mechanically or in the presumption that there are a number of substantial forms that exist below the level of our perception of things that can be seen with the naked eye. The “technomorphous” model would continue to establish itself as the basis for such explanations. According to the model, life processes can be described based on patterns of technical processes. The displacement of the form-giving forces into the material itself leads to, among other things, depicting an embryo as having much greater autonomy when it comes to creating new lifeforms even to the extent of completely excluding the soul. The milestones set by Renaissance scholars were not merely due to their role in developing the first approaches to alternative, theoretical frameworks for thinking about generation processes (preformation vs. epigenesis), but they were moreover responsible for establishing experimental

methods for the emerging field of embryology.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Latin expression *generatio* is the old technical term for the propagation of organisms. In classical Latin, in the writings of Pliny for example, it is used to refer to animal reproduction and later expands to become a general term in this subject area. Similarly, Aristotle’s writing on the reproductive methods of animals together with his other zoological works were translated into Latin in the early thirteenth century by Michael Scotus from the Arabic and around 1260 by William of Moerbeke from the Greek both under the title *De generatione animalium*.

Since antiquity, a second meaning has been associated with the expression alongside its significance as related to the reproduction of organisms: the portion of individuals in a population that belong to the same age group (cohort). Homer and Herodot were already using the term in this sense, for example, when they claim that a man witnesses the passing of two generations (“γενεαι”) or by dividing a century into three generations.

Throughout the ages, reproduction has served as one of the defining characteristics of living beings alongside the need for nourishment. All living beings, Plato claims, strive for conception and generation. Supposedly, they would even accept hunger and their own death before renouncing reproduction (Plato, *Symposium* 207b). Reproduction enables the prolonged longevity of living beings, indeed even immortality, according to Plato. Aristotle sees it similarly and deems breeding and consuming nutrients as the most natural activities performed by all living beings (*De anima* 415a). Aristotle accords feeding and reproducing their very own part of the soul, the *nutritive soul*, which, in contrast to other psychic faculties like perception and intellect, is also found in plants.

Following Aristotle’s doctrine of the soul, reproduction is often discussed in conjunction with nutrition and growth. For Aristotle,

reproduction consists in “producing another being that is the same” and is a procedure by which a living being incorporates itself into an infinite process. Through reproduction, a living being preserves itself (or at least its organization) in the potentially infinite chain of its offspring and thereby partakes to some extent in the “eternal and divine.” Aristotle differentiates between different forms of procreation. In addition to the sexual reproduction characteristic among sanguiferous land animals, for which the two sexes couple, he also mentions asexual reproduction, which he explains by positing the primal propagation of organisms out of inorganic matter.

Medieval theories of nature, like Aristotle, also saw reproduction as the primary objective of a living being. Avicenna traces reproduction back to a special “generative force” that he describes as the “ultimate goal” among vegetative life and as pertaining to the “priority of the final cause.” The recourse to a reproductive force (“virtus generativa”) is firmly anchored in scholastic philosophy, for example, in the works of Albertus Magnus. For Thomas Aquinas, this force is not limited specifically to living beings because any body that can come into existence and fade from it partakes in propagation (“generatio”). On the other hand, Thomas, following Aristotle, sees reproduction as the ultimate goal of living beings. With this capacity for reproductive force, the vegetative soul gains something of the virtue of the sensitive soul because reproduction means that living beings do not only exist in relationship to their *own* bodies but also in relationship to *others* (1266–73, I, 78, 2). The scholastic philosophers, like Aristotle before them, argue that reproduction allows all living beings access to immortality. Because all movements are ultimately directed towards obtaining perfection and the eternal, and because reproduction has something of this eternity through the infinite sequence of generations, the living being’s struggle to reproduce finds an explanation in the context of this metaphysics of eternity.

Up into the early modern period no one doubted the functional understanding of reproduction as one of the highest goals among various activities conducted by living beings. Accordingly, in 1583

Andrea Cesalpino repeats the conceptualization of life from antiquity, when, in reference to plants, he once again states that the goal of life resides in reproduction (*De plantis* I, vi).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The innovative elements within theories of reproduction from the Renaissance consist in slowly shifting the explanatory framework. A “technomorphous” model established itself as the physiological basis for explanations. Early indications of this development can be found in Thomas Aquinas’ writings, in which he creates analogies between biological creation and concepts taken from technical terminology (Mitterer 1947). In contradistinction to later understandings of the term, Thomas Aquinas considers an actual generation (“generatio”) to occur only when a living substance (i.e., a living thing) produces another living substance from some part of itself that is not living (in humans, for example, that might be the blood of the uterus) (1266–73, I, 114). Because generation always involves a non-living substance giving something life, it is also always a kind of spontaneous creation. When a (new) living substance is produced by its own kind, Thomas considered that development, not generation.

Aristotle’s explanation of substantial forms remained influential during the Renaissance and the early modern period with its emphasis on the efficaciousness of psychic faculties and formative virtues. These immaterial forces would, however, become more and more incorporated into mechanical processes through their recourse to the material basis of living things. Julius Caesar Scaliger’s understanding of Aristotle’s substantial forms as active principles points in this direction: They give shape to a body and can exist multiply, together in one body (*Exotericarum exercitationum liber xv*, 1557). Fortunio Liceti’s theory of imagination and its influence on heredity also includes an attempt to reconcile Aristotelianism and mechanistic philosophy (*De perfecta constitutione hominis in utero*, 1616): Imaginations contain mechanistic elements insofar as

they are conceived of as bodily operations that are especially significant in (abnormal) hereditary processes. His explicit position as part of an Aristotelian tradition can be seen in the extent to which he formulates his premises based on traditional conceptions of the soul, for example, with the idea that the vegetative soul extends throughout the entire body. In spite of himself, Liceti's theory of extension and his materialist theory of the imagination and hereditary characteristics both provide building blocks to help overcome Aristotelian ideas (Smith 2006; Blank 2010). Kenelm Digby's theory of animal reproduction also presents a similar attempt to bring together Aristotelianism and mechanistic philosophy: In Digby's opinion, living beings are made up of tiny parts that maintain their form, as well as existing as individual beings with a cohesive and substantial form that results from the interdependence of their parts (*Two Treatises*, 1644; Cheung 2008; Blank 2010).

Jean Fernel already formulated an extensive mechanistic theory of generation in the mid-sixteenth century. His theory states that male and female seeds are made up of material particles that mix together during fecundation and consequently produce fermentation that enables the ordered movement of the particles necessary for fetal development (*Physiologiae libri VII*, vii, 9, 1554). Fernel's ideas set a precedent insofar as they lend seeds a far-reaching autonomy in terms of constituting life forms. Indeed, he sees them as independent of the soul. The mechanistic philosophers of the seventeenth century, among them most notably Descartes, would adopt these materialist ideas (V. Aucant, in Smith 2006). Descartes' own experimental research into the development of chickens lead him to repeatedly revise his answer to the question as to which organ forms first: from his initial conviction that the lungs and liver come first, his opinion shifts back to the Aristotelian idea that the development of the fetus begins with the heart (*Description du corps humain*, 1648). Putting great faith in the deterministic character behind the process of development, Descartes claims that precise knowledge on the structure of the seed might allow one to "deduce" the structure of the fully developed body and calculate it with

mathematical certainty (1648, p. 277). In this respect, he proves to be an early representative of a theory that proposes that the form of the organism to come is already completely contained within the seed (*preformationism*).

In contrast to Descartes, William Harvey belongs to those authors who continue to formulate their arguments within the framework of Aristotelian substantialism. But unlike Aristotle and his orthodox followers, Harvey accepts that there are a number of substantial forms that exist on a level below those things that are perceptible to the eye ("microsubstantiality," Smith 2006, p. 9). Among these forms, he postulates the existence of eggs from which all higher life forms develop. Harvey thoroughly studied the development of the chicken embryo in its shell using experimental methods. He followed methods used by Aristotle as well as Renaissance scholars such as Ulisse Aldrovandi, Volcher Coiter, and Hieronymus Fabricius: After cracking open chicken eggs at various stages of their development, the successive appearance of organs in the fetus can be observed. The interpretation of such observations was, however, accompanied by a lot of speculation. Fabricius, for instance, postulated that a chick's development starts with its skeletal framework – analogous to the building of a ship (*De formatione ovi et pulli*, 1621).

Increasingly, direct observations would become the standard for evidence used to back up claims: Thus, Harvey assumed that the heart was the first organ to develop in the fetus, because it was the first one that was visible. Even Harvey's opinion that both sexes contributed to the formation of offspring with qualitatively similar contributions had an empirical basis because the offspring resemble both the mother and the father. This ran counter to the old opinion going back to Aristotle, which states that the female part alone provided the matter while the male part provided the form (Cole 1930). Finally, Harvey's argument that all higher-level animals develop from eggs has an experimental basis: In his dissections of mammalian uteruses, he was unable to detect masses of semen and concluded that eggs, therefore, originated in the female. And yet in other concerns Harvey remained loyal to Aristotelian conceptualizations, especially in his

tenacity when it came to the terminology of the soul: He explained the emergence of a new individual as the unification of the vegetative soul (located in the amorphous female egg) with the animal soul (carried by the male sperm), which provided the stimulus and configurational force for the progressive development of the egg into the specific form of that species. Harvey especially emphasized the way that structures in embryos come into existence; namely, they gradually accumulate and create new structures based on other structures (for which Harvey coined the term *epigenesis*). Additionally, Harvey was also aware of another way that forms come to exist, namely, as based upon a preformed material from the start (*Anatomical Exercitationes, Concerning the Generation of Living Creatures*, 1653). Thus, Harvey evokes the Aristotelian idea that the seed is where potentiality resides, while actuality comes about only once the organism is fully developed.

Impact and Legacy

In numerous points, Renaissance scholars prepared the way for later developments in the scientific study of generation. Among them were the establishment of the experimental method, the effort to renounce metaphysical explanatory principles and to instead use mechanistic principles to explain the organic formation of life, as well as the development of alternative theoretical frameworks for thinking about generation processes (preformation vs. epigenesis). Intense debates concerning these explanatory frameworks would dominate discussions on the topic over the centuries to come.

The model that was first favored posits development as based on preformed structures. This perspective gained credence with the introduction of the microscope in studying processes of organic development, for microscopic analysis could provide an image of a surprisingly differentiated embryo in which it appeared that later organs could be seen as miniaturized structures. Another factor that spoke for the preformation theory could be found in the work of Francesco Redi (*Esperienze intorno alla generazione*

degli insetti, 1668), whose experimental research refuted the theory of spontaneous generation. After the spontaneous creation of life from inorganic matter was disproved, the notion that spontaneous differentiation could take place in an undifferentiated seed seemed problematic. The decisive reason, however, as to why preformation theory took hold was due to the fundamental mechanistic orientation of seventeenth-century scientists' approach to research: From a mechanistic standpoint, it made more sense (and caused less difficulties) if the theory presumed the existence of a seed that was already differentiated in the first place rather than to assume that there was a regular regeneration of ordered structures taking place. Another dominant idea (with theological backing) was that nature could not organize itself, or as Charles Perrault states, the soul of animals cannot be created naturally but must be passed on from a seed that precedes it (*Essais de physique*, 1680, vol. 2, pp. 273 ff.).

The lack of adequate models posed a significant problem to the efforts of mechanistic thinkers in the seventeenth century who were trying to explain the formation of structures as part of a theory of life. This lack was responsible for inspiring various people to posit specific organic, immaterial principles and "vitalist" forces as, for example, in the figure of a human master workman, as conceived by Jan Baptist van Helmont, which he termed "archeus faber" (*Ortus medicinae*, 1648). According to van Helmont's theory, the archeus resides within every "seed" and transforms it into a differentiated organism. The life processes of the adult organism are also organized and regulated by a hierarchy established by the archeuses according to this theory. Towards the end of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth many arguments were held between the "vitalists" and those scientists with a stronger leaning toward mechanism regarding the existence and location of a central organizing principle.

Cross-References

- [Life in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Organism in Renaissance Sciences](#)

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Gennadios II Scholarios

► [Scholarios, George](#)

Gentile, Alberico

► [Gentili, Alberico](#)

Gentili, Alberico

Born: 1552, San Ginesio

Dead: 1608, London

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Abstract

Alberico Gentili was an Italian jurist who was exiled to England for *religionis causa*. He had studied law in Perugia and obtained his doctorate in 1572. In 1579, he was forced to flee Italy to escape the Inquisition's persecution, along with his father Matthew and his brother Scipione. Following a lengthy European pilgrimage, Gentili took refuge in London in 1580, where he quickly became a member of the Leicester-Sidney circle, the most influential of the time, in pursuit of a prestigious academic position. His commitment and literary production were vast, intervening in all major political and religious facets of contemporary England. Gentili embraced the Anglican faith, initially siding in favor of the Elizabethan policy and later the James I policy, supporting political autonomy from the jurisprudence of theology. His masterpiece was the *De iure belli*, in which he broke with the medieval tradition of just war and secularized the concept of war, reserving exercise to sovereign states. Gentili theorized the necessity of religious tolerance within the state, entrusting the government responsibility to ensure that there were no acts of violence and to mediate between the parties. His political thought oscillated between Republicanism and absolutism. In *De Legationibus*, Gentili praised Machiavelli as a Republican anti-tyrannical author, while in the later *Regales disputationes*, the jurist sided in favor of Stuart absolutism. This ambiguity was typical of Gentile's thought process, which is characterized by certain underlying tensions between what was useful and honest, between innovation and conservation, and between the

defense of Republican freedom and affirmation of full sovereignty.

Alternate Names

Gentile, Alberico; Gentilis, Albericus; Gentili, Alberigo

Biography

Born during the Pontifical Marcus era, Alberico Gentili grew up in a family context marked by the religious heterodoxy of his father Matthew. Getting closer to the ideas of Zwingli and Vermigli, and after obtaining a law degree in 1572 in Perugia according to the *mos italicus*, in 1579, he was forced, together with his father and younger brother Scipione, to leave Italy to escape the Inquisition, who was preparing people to stand trial for heresy. He took refuge in Carniola and then in Germany, and then went to London in August 1580, where he settled down permanently. Thanks to the relationship between his father Matthew and Giovan Battista Castiglione, an influential member of the Privy Chamber of Elizabeth I, Alberico approached the political and cultural circle of Philip Sidney and the Earl of Leicester. The latter recommended the admission of Alberico at St John's College, Oxford, where, from January 1581, the exiled Italian started teaching civil law. Gentili embraced Anglicanism with conviction, and he particularly appreciated the moderation of the English church and its direct leadership, affording the Anglican religion a sort of "civil faith" (Lavenia 2009) of Machiavellian connotations engaging his reflections on all political, legal, and religious aspects of his time. He was called as a consultant by the British Government during the Mendoza case, and it was his belief that the inviolability of the ambassador was in accordance with the principle of "neque caeditur, neque violatur" (Gentili 1585). On the basis of this experience, Gentili wrote his treatise on diplomacy, *De legationibus*, where, in addition to drawing the paradigm of the perfect diplomat, he formulated a passionate

apology of Machiavelli's *Discourses*, interpreted in a Republican and anti-tyrannical way. He was accused by the Puritans of atheism and religious and Machiavellianism simulation. And it was due to certain statements he had made in favor of *mendacium officiosum* (Lavenia 2015) that Alberico left England for a brief period in 1586. However, in June 1587, thanks to his influential protectors, Gentili was appointed *Regius professor* of civil law at Oxford. He remained in office until 1605, when he left teaching to take up the post of attorney of Spain with the admiralty court. For his strenuous assertion of the autonomy of law and the theology of politics, Gentili clashed long and hard with the Puritans led by theologian John Rainolds. The clash peaked between 1593 and 1594 on the occasion of the dispute on stage-plays. Gentili, in a polemical correspondence with Rainolds, reiterated his conception of law as an autonomous science from theology and as a *Summa Magistra* in the lives of men (Minnucci 2016). Gentili is considered a founding father of international law thanks to his masterpiece, *De iure belli*, published in 1598. The *De iure* marked a break with the legal tradition of the just war. Inspired by the positions of Bodin and *politique* tradition, Gentili secularized the reasons for weapons, while allowing sovereign States equal rights in the international arena, the monopoly of the *ius ad bellum*. In addition, the lawyer entrusted the sovereign power responsibility for ensuring religious tolerance. Gentili supported the unrestrainability of consciousness and the rejection of the violent imposition of faith. According to Gentili, tolerance is an inviolable principle, provided that it does not put the health of the state in any danger. Under the reign of James I Stuart, Alberico published the *Regales disputationes*, where he sketched an idea of an extensive and absolute sovereignty. It was 1605, the year of the Gunpowder Plot, and Gentili was focused entirely on preserving the health of the state, which he considered to be the supreme basis of human social life. The ambiguity of Gentili's thought reflects the age of deep crises and transformation in which the lawyer from San Ginesio lived through. The tensions that animated his thoughts were based on pragmatic and moral

dialectics, such as the conflict between the defense of republican freedom and the affirmation of absolute sovereignty. Gentili died in London in 1608, and his thoughts quickly slipped into a kind of oblivion, primarily as a direct consequence of the close relationship of his work with the contingency of the time. However, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and as a direct result of a triangulation between England, Germany, and Italy, Gentili's ideas experienced a first discovery, a forerunner of the most important renaissance of Gentilian studies that began in the late nineteenth century.

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- [Rainolds, John](#)

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Gentili, Alberigo

- [Gentili, Alberico](#)

Gentilis, Albericus

- [Gentili, Alberico](#)

Gentillet, Innocent

Born: 1532, Vienne, France

Died: 1506, Geneva, Switzerland

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Abstract

Jurist and political writer of Huguenot faith, Innocent Gentillet was born in Vienne (France) around 1532 and died in Geneva in 1588. His most popular work, among contemporaries, was no doubt his *Discours... contre Nicolas Machiavel Florentin*, or *Anti-Machiavel*. Published in Geneva in 1576, his *Anti-Machiavel* was one of the first and most remarkable voices of the antimachiavellian European tradition, maybe the widest and most methodical declaration of the wickedness of the author of *Il Principe*, who was considered a master of deception and a theorist of immorality and despotism. The provocative aim of the author was quite clearly detectable among the Florentine *entourage* that, at court, surrounded Queen Caterina de' Medici; nevertheless the work became really popular also beyond France, and it could count on several reprints and translations into Latin, German, and English.

Biography

Gentillet was born in Vienne, in the Delphinat, around 1532. He worked as a lawyer in his hometown, before he found refuge in Geneva, due to religious reasons, from 1572 – after Saint Bartholomew's massacre – till 1578.

Back in his home country, he followed the Duke François di Lesdiguières, chief of the Protestant front line, and he held the position of chairman of the newly established Parliament of Grenoble. As chairman he met, in August

1579, Queen Caterina de' Medici – who, in her private letters, did not hide her irritation and her mistrust for Gentillet's and for the other Huguenot delegates' behavior. In 1585 he moved again to Geneva, where he died in June 1588 (Stewart 1969).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Beyond some works more strictly linked to his political and religious commitment (e.g., Gentillet 1578), Gentillet's most celebrated work, among contemporaries, was no doubt his *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner et maintenir en bonne paix un royaume ou autre principauté... Contre Nicolas Machiavel Florentin*, also known as *Anti-Machiavel* (Gentillet 1576, 1968, 1974). His *Discours* was printed in 1576 in Geneva, with the permission of the city's authorities, but without typographic indications and without the author's name (which appeared only in its reprint in 1585).

Gentillet's *Anti-Machiavel* was one of the first and most remarkable voices of the antimachiavellian European tradition, maybe the widest and most methodical declaration of the wickedness of the author of *Il Principe*, who was considered a master of deception and a theorist of immorality and despotism. Though not devoid of sharp references to the texts, Gentillet's reading was openly partial and factional. To the connection among machiavellians, Florentines (and Italians) and "atheists" Gentillet opposed a French method, respectful of morality and law, to elaborate politics. The provocative aim of the author was quite clearly detectable among the Florentine *entourage* that, at court, surrounded Queen Caterina de' Medici (Anglo 2005; Lavenia 2014).

Following the stir caused by his strict stance, in May 1576, Gentillet published a *Declaration de l'auteur des discours contre Machiavel, pour satisfaire aux plaintifs d'aucuns Italiens*, which furtherly embittered the souls of the several Italian exiles in Geneva, among whom one – Francesco Lamberti – attacked Gentillet even physically (Carta 2008).

Impact and Legacy

Gentillet's *Anti-Machiavel* became widely popular and was appreciated by authors like Bodin, Montaigne, Pasquier, and La Popelinière. Also outside France, the work could count until the mid-seventeenth century on several reprints and translations into Latin, German, and English (Procacci 1995; Quagliioni 2011).

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- Machiavelli, Niccolò
- Montaigne, Michel de
- Pasquier, Étienne

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Genua, Marco Antonio

Born: 1491, Padua, Italy

Died: 1563, Padua, Italy

Leen Spruit

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Abstract

Marco Antonio Genua (1491–1563), an Italian philosopher, studied arts and philosophy in Padua, where he taught philosophy from 1517 till his death in 1563; in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*, he sought to harmonize Simplicius' psychology with central insights of Averroes' noetics; he left manuscript commentaries on *De Anima*, *Physica*, *De Caelo*, and *De Generatione et Corruptione* as well as a *Disputatio de Intellectus Humani Immortalitate* (1565).

Biography

Marco Antonio Genua was born in 1491 in Padua from the noble family de' Passeri who, having held positions of great prestige in Mantova and Modena, was forced to take refuge in Genoa. They finally settled in Padua. After the stay in Genoa, the family changed also the surname adding "Genua" to the original. Son of Nicholas, a physician, philosopher, and professor of medicine at the University of Padua, Marco Antonio graduated in arts and medicine in 1511/1512 and began his career in 1517, holding the second chair of extraordinary philosophy. In 1518 he became the first professor of extraordinary philosophy, in 1523 he occupied the second ordinary chair of philosophy, and in 1525 he found himself to be a competitor of Marco Antonio Zimara. In 1531 he left this chair to pass to the first chair which he occupied until his death. His education in liberal arts allowed him to deepen the study of the Greek commentators, especially Simplicius. Among his

students are eminent names like Jacopo Zabarella, Bernardino Tomitano, Agostino Valier, and Giovanni Fasolo who translated the commentary of Simplicius in Latin in order to allow for a wider spread. Genua died in Padua in 1563. His production is limited in print, amounting mainly to *De vita tranquilla* (1545), reports from his university lectures on the *De Anima* (published in Aristotle 1574), his commentary on the *De Anima* (1576), and *Naucula Petri opusculum principibus, baronibus, pauperibus, aliisque Christi fidelibus apprimè vtile* (1624). The handwritten production consists of commentaries to the texts of *De Anima*, *Physica*, *De Caelo*, and *De Generatione et Corruptione*, for the most part preserved in the Ambrosian Library and the Vatican Library.

In the *Disputatio de Intellectus Humani Immortalitate* (1565), Genua presented a detailed rebuttal of the views of Pietro Pomponazzi, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and John Duns Scotus. Genua argued for an “analogical” definition of the human soul, drawing an “essential” distinction between the intellect and the senses, viewed as different species. That the intellect is able to know abstract entities, itself, and the separate substances, definitely proofs its immateriality and by consequence its immortality (*Disputatio*, pp. 48–53).

In his commentary on *De Anima* (posthumously published in 1576), Genua sought to harmonize Simplicius’ interpretation of Aristotle’s *De Anima* with central insights of Averroes’ psychology. Genua based himself on the Simplician theses that the essence and cognitive activity of the rational soul should be analyzed in terms of the relation between the separate intellects and sensible reality, and the substance of the soul is essentially one and many (*In de anima*, fol. 23vb). From Averroes he took over the view that the specific nature of man depends on the “*cogitativa*” (*In de anima*, 37ra-va; cf. 139va). The soul, which informs the body, uses this as an organ. Elsewhere, he argued that man knows through the intellectual soul, but he excluded that the (unique) intellect endows man with his specific being (*In de anima*, fol. 132vb). Thus, Genua wanted to bring together Simplicius’ view of a dynamic

rational soul and Averroes’ notion of a unique intellect.

Using the terminology developed by Simplicius, Genua referred to the active and potential intellect as “*intellectus perfectus*” or “*manens*” and “*intellectus progressus*,” respectively (*In de anima*, 146rb, 152vb, and 157vb). Descending toward the “*secundae vitae*,” the unique intellect undergoes essential change (*In de anima*, fol. 127ra). Genua observed that Simplicius’ noetic terminology should be preferred to the traditional denominations of agent and possible intellect. Following Simplicius, the “*intellectus progressus*” was said to have two states, one potential and the other in act (*In de anima*, 157vb). Elsewhere, Genua integrated this dynamical view of the intellect with a somewhat more traditional classification of the cognitive faculties.

Like Averroes, Genua believed that the cognitive act depends on the body as its *conditio sine qua non*. The intellectual soul is not the form of the body, however, but the formal principle by virtue of which man has knowledge (*In de anima*, 132vb and 138rb). In this construction the intellect needs phantasms for its acts (*In de anima*, 135ra). From Simplicius Genua took over the view that the intellect is not completely passive or potential, as appears from the platonizing definition Genua gave of the Aristotelian “*pati*.” Intellectual knowledge does not depend on incoming forms or representations. Indeed, the description of the intellectual soul as a “*locus formarum*” holds only for contents “*a se ipsa fluxa*,” since the idea that intelligibles may penetrate the soul from without involves a contradiction (*In de anima*, 127vb). However, by claiming that the “*intellectus progressus*” as such is dependent on phantasms, Genua expressly departed from Simplicius, who restricted this dependence to the practical intellect.

Genua thought that the rational soul is moved by the “*intentiones imaginatae*” (*In de anima*, 130ra), but he rejected the idea that sensory representational devices may determine the contents of intellectual cognition. When the phantasy forms the phantasm of a stone, for example, this is at best an occasion for the agent intellect to

provide the possible intellect with a “*species lapidis*,” produced by virtue of one of its own ideas (*In de anima*, 145vb-146ra).

On the basis of a detailed analysis of the concept of illumination in Latin, Arab, and Greek commentators, Genua concluded that an intellectual apprehension of natural reality does not presuppose that the (agent) intellect endows sensory representations with a capacity to move the (possible) intellect; it only means that the intellect projects itself onto the material world (*In de anima*, 155rb). Both nature and scope of human cognition are dominated by the agent intellect, which perfects the progressing intellect by virtue of its forms or species, the mental presence of which is compared to that of images in a mirror (*In de anima*, 144vb). The sensory images are just occasional causes for the acquisition of knowledge (*In de anima*, 155rb). Hence, the intellect does not receive anything from the phantasms, nor does it endow them with a special capacity.

Genua developed an innovative view of mental representation which anticipates later occasionalist and innatistic accounts of the acquisition of knowledge. In his cognitive psychology, the intelligible species served as the basis for the connection between the human soul and the separate intellect, as well as for our knowledge of the sensible world. Genua rejected the traditional view of the species as accidental representations originating from perceptual capacities. Since only innate contents (which may be characterized as species, notions, or ideas) ensure intellectual knowledge of material reality, self-knowledge is the source of all empirical knowledge. The role of the phantasms in cognition is nonetheless crucial. The mind needs to be incited to generate actual cognitive representations of material reality; moreover, there is no such thing as an intellectual memory. In sum, then, mental acts consist in the mind’s projecting itself onto sensible reality.

In a continuous polemic with Agostino Nifo and Pietro Pomponazzi, Genua argued that psychology neither belongs to metaphysics nor to natural philosophy and is a *scientia media* in the strict sense of the word, for which he uses the term *scientia animastica* (*In de anima*, f. 4va). On the one hand, the psychologist is supposed to study

the intellectual soul from a natural point of view, insofar as it depends on sensory images. On the other hand, his job is to study the active intellect from a transcendental point of view, as a subsisting and immaterial intelligence (*In de anima*, f. 5rb). Genua attempted to give psychology an independent, intermediary status, but he did not succeed in safeguarding the unity of the *scientia animastica* (Bakker 2007).

Marc Antonio Genua took a special place in the Aristotelian psychological tradition, a position we may call sense-dependent nativism: cognitive acts express innate contents, but they occur only when triggered by sensory representations. The human mind grasps material reality by means of representations; these representations are already present potentially, but they require corresponding phantasms to be actualized. This idea of the human mind as “applying itself” to the capacities of the body will return, in a different context, in Descartes’ psychology of cognition (Spruit 1999).

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Geocentrism

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Abstract

“Geocentrism” refers to a cosmological and planetary theory, in which the Earth occupies the central position of the world system. In antiquity and in the Middle Ages, geocentrism was the most common cosmological view, although some astronomers and philosophical schools embraced alternative visions about worldly order. During the Renaissance, debates following Nicolaus Copernicus’s proposal of a heliocentric planetary theory prompted a reexamination of traditional geocentric (and geostatic) arguments (see “► [Copernicanism](#)” and “► [Astronomy](#)”). This also led to their

reworking and expansion. Aristotle’s and Ptolemy’s arguments were attentively reconsidered. Many scholars deemed them conclusive and therefore stuck to terrestrial centrality even after parallax computation (in the 1580s, especially Tycho Brahe) and telescopic evidence (after 1610, especially Galileo Galilei) demonstrated the impossibility of geocentric paths for Mars and the inferior planets. Geo-heliocentrism thus emerged as the only viable solution. It was a planetary theory according to which all or some of the planets rotate around the Sun, while the Sun remained Earth centered along with the Moon and the fixed stars. The Inquisition prohibition of Copernican astronomy in 1616 gave new impetus to geocentrism, in its geoheliocentric form, among Catholics.

The Aristotelian Legacy

Aristotle’s arguments in favor of terrestrial centrality, especially those in *De coelo* II 12–13, were particularly influential during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. They were especially due to Aristotle’s acknowledged authority and to their integration in a systematic vision of nature. In particular, geocentrism was compatible with the elemental theory according to which the four sub-lunary elements – earth, water, air, and fire – are ordered according to a concentric scheme beneath the sphere of the Moon (the first of the celestial bodies). They were thought to have innate tendencies to move toward their “natural places.” According to this doctrine, the earth, as the “heaviest” element, strives toward the cosmological center, which coincides with the center of gravity.

Against this philosophical backdrop an ad hoc explanation had to account for the fact that the *orbis terrarum* – the three continents, Africa, Asia, and Europe – was not submerged in the water. During the Middle Ages, this explanation was sought in the providential intervention of God at the moment of the Creation. In the sixteenth century, the oceanic explorations and the discovery of continents thus far unknown to the

Europeans – especially the so-called antipodes – undermined traditional cosmography and proved the fundamental unity of the *globus terracquaeus* (the earthly watery globe). This new evidence and its theoretical consequences for geography were a mortal blow to medieval cosmology, as astronomical innovators such as Copernicus stressed. The latter mentioned the epistemic discontinuity in geographical knowledge in his first book of *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (I 3) in order to make his heliocentric theory acceptable in spite of its novelty. Copernicus claimed that astronomy ought to be emended just like geography.

In spite of Copernicus's claim, the Aristotelian tradition lived long after him, as witnessed by the countless editions and commentaries of Sacrobosco's standard textbook, which began with reference to the theory of the elements and the "two-physics" distinction between the sublunary realm of corruption and the quintessentially incorruptible heavenly realm. The most authoritative Renaissance commentary on this book was composed by the Jesuit mathematician Christoph Clavius. It was widely circulated during the Renaissance, especially as a textbook for the teaching of spherical astronomy at Jesuit colleges.

The Ptolemaic Legacy

By far the most important astronomical defense of geocentrism from antiquity is Ptolemy's. The Hellenistic astronomer, who was still regarded as the "prince of astronomy" during the Renaissance, refutes the eccentricity of the Earth in *Almagest* I 5 (standard modern numbering). He bases his objection on considerations of how a hypothetical displacement of the Earth in different directions would alter celestial phenomena. He considers in particular the cases of terrestrial eccentricity on the equatorial plane or along the rotational axis. A "third" case, that the Earth is neither on the axis of the daily rotation nor on the equatorial plane, cumulates the disadvantages of both dislocations. Therefore Ptolemy only mentions it but does not treat it extensively.

Concerning the first case, Ptolemy argues,

If we imagined [the Earth] removed towards the zenith or the nadir of some observer then, if he were at *sphaera recta* [at the equator], he would never experience equinox, since the horizon would always divide the heavens into two unequal parts, one above and one below the Earth; if he were at *sphaera obliqua* [at an arbitrary latitude], either, again, equinox would never occur at all, or [if it did occur], it would not be at a position halfway between summer and winter solstices, since these intervals would necessarily be unequal, because the equator, which is the greatest of all parallel circles drawn about the poles of the [daily] motion, would no longer be bisected by the horizon; instead [the horizon would bisect] one of the circles parallel to the equator, either to the north or to the south of it. (Toomer 1984, p. 41)

Ptolemy additionally observes that, if the Earth were "removed towards the east or west of some observer," the sizes and the distances of the stars would be different at eastern and western horizons. Moreover, the time intervals between rising and culmination and between culmination and setting would be unequal.

In the second case – that the Earth is displaced along the axis toward the north or the south – the plane of the horizon would divide the heavens into unequal parts for any observer (at the equator or at any other latitude). Furthermore, the shadows of sundials would be altered. At equinoxes the shadows of a gnomon at sunrise and at sunset would not form a straight line in a plane parallel to the horizon.

These were the main Ptolemaic arguments for geocentrism based on geometrical reasoning and empirical evidence. According to Ptolemy a displacement of the Earth from the center would not be compatible with the heavenly phenomena. Copernicus and the supporters of the heliocentric system solved these inconveniences by simply assuming that the dimensions of the annual "orbit" of the Earth around the Sun are negligible relative to the distance of the starry heaven, as stated in *De revolutionibus* I 5.

Copernicus's claim about the *immensitas* of the heavens persuaded only a few among his contemporary and immediate followers. Particularly revealing of the post-Copernican endurance of geocentrism is Erasmus Reinhold's edition with commentary of the first book of the *Almagest*

(1549¹). This was a textbook directed to Wittenberg students. In it, Reinhold not only explained and illustrated the Ptolemaic arguments but also expanded and strengthened them. He appreciated Copernicus's mathematics but not his violation of acknowledged physical principles.

Ancient and Medieval Alternative Systems Reassessed

Ancient and medieval scholars also produced cosmologies that were neither geocentric nor geostatic. In *De coelo* II 13, Aristotle reported the Pythagoreans' worldview as one such case. According to them, a "fire" occupies the center of the cosmos. Based on this reference, there was a tendency in the early reception of Copernicus to ascribe his system to Pythagorean forerunners. However, there was no compelling evidence that their "central fire" corresponded to the Sun nor that the terrestrial rotation around the center referred to the annual revolution. Aristotle only reported that the Pythagorean model could account for the same celestial phenomena as geocentrism:

Most of those who hold that the whole Universe is finite say that it lies at its center, but this is contradicted by the thinkers of the Italian school called Pythagorean. These affirm that the center is occupied by fire, and that the Earth is one of the stars, and creates night and day as it travels in a circle about the center. . . . Since the Earth's surface is not in any case the centre, they [the Pythagoreans] do not feel any difficulty in supposing that the phenomena are the same although we do not occupy the centre as they would be if the Earth were in the middle. For even in the current view [that is, geocentrism] there is nothing to show that we are distant from the center by half the Earth's diameter. (Aristotle 1986, p. 217)

A proper heliocentric theory had to wait until the third century BC, when Aristarchus of Samos developed and defended it as a viable astronomical thesis. Archimedes referred to it in *The Sand Reckoner*. He asserted that he could express the number of grains of sand encompassed by Aristarchus's cosmos in a handy manner through a new numerical system solving the major

shortcomings of Greek mathematical symbolism. This reference to Aristarchus's cosmos is a hint at the conspicuous enlargement of the world implied by the passage from a geocentric to a heliocentric theory, as a consequence of the fact that terrestrial revolution produces no observable stellar parallax. Several Renaissance scholars perceived this difficulty as insurmountable. In particular, the "useless" vastness of the space between Saturn and the fixed stars looked impossible to critics of heliocentrism such as Brahe, and this formed part of their criticism against heliocentrism.

It should be stressed that the thesis of the motion of the Earth is not incompatible with geocentrism. Among others, Plato defended geokinetic geocentrism: in *Timaios* 40b–c, he ascribed to the Earth the axial rotation as the cause of the succession of days and nights. In the fifteenth century, Nicholas Cusanus argued for terrestrial motion in the second book of *De docta ignorantia*. In the following centuries, the thesis of terrestrial centrality-cum-mobility was endorsed by several scholars, among whom were the imperial mathematician Nicolaus Raimarus Ursus in *Fundamentum astronomicum* (1588), the Brandenburg mathematician David Origanus in his ephemerides and Brahe's pupil Christian Longomontanus in *Astronomia Danica* (1622).

During the Middle Ages geocentrism was never cast into doubt. It was linked to theological conceptions of divine Providence and Creation, as witnessed in Dante Alighieri's synthesis of late-medieval thought in the *Divina Commedia*. The Earth rested at the center as the place of change and corruption, encircled by the ethereal perfection of the heavenly spheres surrounded by the empyrean heaven, which was the abode of the blessed souls and the contemplating God. Planetary order was less standardized. In the twelfth century Andalusia al-Bitruji argued for the sublunary location of Mercury and the superlunary of Venus in his work of homocentric astronomy, *Book on Astronomy*, which had large dissemination among Jewish and Latin philosophers. Medieval commentaries on Macrobius, Pliny the Elder, Martianus Capella, and Calcidius also displayed qualitative heavenly diagrams in which planetary

motions are not perfectly circular or the two inferior planets encircle the Sun instead of the Earth. The latter model (geocentrism with heliocentric paths for Mercury and Venus), ascribed in antiquity to Herakleides of Pontus, became known as the Capellan system. Copernicus would refer to the diverging opinions of his ancient and medieval forerunners in the beginning of *De revolutionibus* to claim his right to an independent and innovative inquiry into this matter:

Therefore, having obtained the opportunity from these sources, I too began to consider the mobility of the Earth. And even though the idea seemed absurd, nevertheless I knew that others before me had been granted the freedom to imagine any circles whatever for the purpose of explaining the heavenly phenomena. Hence I thought that I too would be readily permitted to ascertain whether explanations sounder than those of my predecessors could be found for the revolution of the celestial spheres on the assumption of some motion of the Earth. (Copernicus 1978)

Post-Copernican Geocentrists

The mathematical reception of Copernicus never implied adherence to heliocentrism as a physical reality. At Wittenberg, one of the most important irradiating centers of his astronomical work, the leading intellectuals opposed this realist option. Martin Luther is reported to have reacted with skepticism to the new system because it was in contrast with the Bible. Philip Melanchthon condemned Copernicus's hypotheses on the basis of natural-philosophical considerations. In his and the philosopher Paul Eber's introduction to physics, *Initia doctrinae physicae* (*Introduction to Physics*, 1549), the Copernican theory was rejected and its teaching was prohibited.

The Wittenberg mathematician Reinhold was enthusiastic about Copernicus's geometrical models, for they respected the so-called astronomical axiom (celestial motions are circular and uniform about their centers). In his manuscript commentary on Copernicus, *Commentarius in opus Revolutionum Copernici*, he hinted at the possibility of accepting his devices without

renouncing geocentrism. However, he could not complete his geocentric revision of Copernican astronomy due to an untimely death.

Reinhold's follower as a professor of mathematics in Wittenberg and Melanchthon's son-in-law, Caspar Peucer continued his "translation" of the Copernican models by showing that his model for the precession and the trepidation of the starry heaven could easily be adapted to a geocentric frame. Far from a conventionalist approach to astronomy, that is to say, an approach only interested in "saving the phenomena" without any consideration about the physical tenability of the models employed by the astronomers, his and his master's efforts bear witness to a shared desire to reconcile physics and mathematical astronomy. Peucer's astronomical hypotheses, or "hypotyposes," published anonymously in Strasbourg in 1568 (as *Hypothypothes*) and then with the author's name in Wittenberg in 1571 (*Hypotheses astronomicae, seu Theoriae planetarum*), exerted a conspicuous influence on the cosmological and philosophical post-Copernican debate at the end of the century. The Strasbourg mathematician Conrad Dasypodius carried out the first anonymous edition. In the preface he ascribed this work to Reinhold reinforcing the conviction, among learned scholars, that the author of the *Prutenicae tabulae* was also the designer of a geocentric revision of Copernicus, the details of which had not yet been developed.

Among those who reworked *De revolutionibus* with a geocentric perspective, the Silesian mathematician Paul Wittich occupies a special place. In two preserved copies of *De revolutionibus*, he developed geometrically equivalent planetary models, which varied Copernicus's theory. In these diagrams he illustrated how to pass from Sun-centered models to equivalent Earth-centered ones. Those displaying the "theory of the three superior [planets] accorded with the immobility of the Earth" are accompanied by a claim for authorship: "I found this new genre of hypotheses on 13 February 1579." Wittich also accommodated the inferior planets within a geocentric (and

geostatic) framework, remarking that “[...] Copernicus’s theory of the two inferior [planets] can be in agreement with the immobility of the Earth, in accordance with Ptolemy’s words.”

Wittich’s geometrical considerations acquired a strong physical meaning a decade later when geoheliocentric systems proliferated, following the seminal publications by Ursus and Brahe, who were both acquainted with the ideas of the talented Silesian mathematician. However Ursus’s and Brahe’s models were slightly different. The former maintained that the central Earth rotates producing the apparent daily rotation of the heavens. In Brahe’s system, the solar and Martian “orbits” intersected. The reason he gave for this intersection was the alleged observation, in 1582, of a Martian parallax larger than that of the Sun. This demonstrated that the planet is closer to the Earth in opposition. Ptolemy could not explain this proximity, as Brahe explained in a writing, *Apologia de cometis* (*Apology on [My Theory of] Comets*), directed to the Scottish mathematician John Craig (1589). He added that only two systems could account for it, namely the Copernican or a geoheliocentric one. The latter, however, presupposed that the heavens are fluid. Hence, Brahe attached great importance to the observation of comets demonstrating that celestial bodies freely traverse cosmic space:

Hence, there is no doubt that Mars is closer to the Earth in opposition than the Sun can ever be. Thus, the ancient Ptolemaic hypotheses, which were accepted up to present, can never agree with reality. By necessity, either the Earth accomplishes an annual revolution and the Sun is immobile at the center of the universe, as Copernicus asserted with conviction in modern times; or—if this appears to be absurd, as it is—there remains no other possible system (*hypothesium conformatio*) than that which we have introduced. [...] From these considerations it is sufficiently clear that I did not reject the reality of the [celestial] spheres with temerity. In fact, if the Earth has to be immobile, [the parallax of] Mars implies this consequence [i.e., the rejection of the solid spheres], so that no impossible penetration of the Solar sphere occurs. (Brahe 1972, p. 475)

These publications of the late 1580s triggered off a polemic over the priority in the “discovery”

of geoheliocentrism that lasted more than one decade. Even Kepler was co-opted by Brahe in his struggle for the recognition of his priority. Brahe required him to write against Ursus as a condition for his appointment in Prague as his assistant in 1600. Brahe was notoriously jealous of his theory and deemed other scholars dealing with it without appropriate reference to his authorship to be plagiarizers. For instance, in 1591, after he was informed that the Scottish mathematician Duncan Liddel was teaching his theory to Rostock and Helmstedt students, he accused him of unduly appropriating his doctrines, as emerges in his correspondence with Kepler (2001, pp. 91-92.).

The geo-heliocentric theory was long lived. In northern Europe, Brahe’s pupils picked it up, in particular Longomontanus who proved one of the most strenuous opponents to Kepler’s heliocentric-and-elliptical planetary theory. After the Inquisition prohibited heliocentrism, geoheliocentrism remained the only system a Catholic astronomer could adhere to. Students of Jesuit Colleges were taught the details of this theory alongside anti-Copernican arguments. A telling document of this anti-heliocentric resistance is the extensive refutation of the Copernican system in the second volume of Giovanni Battista Riccioli’s *Almagestum novum* (*New Almagest*, 1651). The author embraced a hybrid system. According to this Jesuit astronomer, the two inferior planets plus Mars encircle the Earth while the Sun, the Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, and the sphere of the fixed stars turn about the cosmologically central Earth.

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Geography in Renaissance Sciences

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Abstract

Geography in the early modern period is part of cosmography. Geography is defined as a graphical representation of the whole known world, a description of the Earth. In the context of Renaissance, the knowledge about the Earth spreads essentially through cosmographic treaties or cosmographies, maps, and travel accounts. These three genres dialogue, influence each other, and have specific forms of combining different traditions then existing in order to obtain and describe the knowledge about the Earth surface. Three main sources of knowledge are identified: the classical heritage; the Christian tradition; and the information brought by new discoveries. The different ways of understanding and describing the Earth, either from a physical, cosmological, astronomical, and mathematical point of view or as an inhabited world, are articulated throughout the sixteenth century and the result is that the Earth becomes a homogeneous body and a specific object to Geography.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Geography in the early modern period is part of cosmography. This term generally refers to the study of the entire universe, including the central spheres of the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air) as well as the peripheral sphere of the planets and stars or as found in several texts: the earthly world, corruptible and the celestial world, incorruptible.

The conformation of the cosmos in the sixteenth century follows the classical tradition of Aristotle and Ptolemy, based on Geocentrism (Debus 1978; Ptolemy 2000; Dalché 2009). The

Earth is a stationary planet at the center of the universe, surrounded by the orbit of the other planets and the sun and by the spheres of the other three elements: water around the earth, air, and finally fire. The geocentric system is revised by Nicolaus Copernicus (1472–1543), who proposes a heliocentric system, also called Copernican system. The theory is explained in his work *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, published in 1543, year of his death. The sun is at the center of the same system of planetary spheres, in which the Earth takes his place. In this system, the Earth performs a daily rotation in a circular orbit around the stationary sun. The work of Copernicus opened a discussion for alternatives to the classic geocentric worldview, which were developed by Tycho Brahe (1546–1601), Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), and Isaac Newton (1642–1727). However, heliocentrism would only replace the geocentric theory of the universe in the late seventeenth century.

In the context of Renaissance, the knowledge about the Earth spreads essentially through cosmographic treaties or cosmographies, maps, and travel accounts. The cosmographies, written both in Latin and in vernacular languages, have their “golden period” between 1540 and 1575 but continue to be published and reissued throughout the seventeenth century (Lestringant 1991). During the sixteenth century, the two terms – Cosmography and Geography – were often used indiscriminately. Having the work of Ptolemy, the “Prince of cosmographers,” as his primary reference, Pierre Apian, author of one of the first cosmographies of the sixteenth century, *Cosmographie*, which had ten issues between 1529 and 1584, produced an explanation about the differences between “Cosmography,” “Geography,” and “Chorography.” “Cosmography” refers to the system of spheres and the projection of the starry sky onto the earth’s surface, which delineates the earth with the help of celestial coordinates; “Geography” describes the terraquaeus sphere on the basis of larger features such as mountains, seas, and rivers; and “Chorography,” or “Topography,” offers detailed depictions of individual places such as cities, towns, and harbors (Vogel 2006,

470). Apian also proposed an analogy that became famous: Geography, representation of all the Earth, would be the equivalent of the drawing of a head, while Chorography or Topography would be the ear or the nose and would consider only particular places.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries different terms are used to designate Earth, indicating semantical as well as lexical inaccuracy: *terra*, *sphaera*, *orbis*, *orbis terrarum* (Latin translation from the Greek *oikoumenē*), *terra habitabilis*, *mundus*. The diversity of designations is linked to the fact that the knowledge of the Earth does not bind only to the field of Geography but also of Astronomy, Physics, and Theology (Besse 2003).

In addition to the cosmographies, two other genres of documents register and circulate the geographic knowledge: travel accounts and the cartographic production. These three genres dialogue, influence each other, and have specific forms of combining different traditions then existing in order to obtain and describe the knowledge about the land. In the first place is the classical knowledge. From antiquity, according to François Dainville, would come three legacies: one scientific, one literary, and one practical (Dainville 1940).

The scientific or mathematic tradition, based on Ptolemy, has as main objective to determine where the places on Earth are and teaches how to draw maps. The rediscovery of the work of Ptolemy by Christian Europe was fundamental to the organization and expansion of the geographical knowledge of the West in the modern period and the term "Geography" reappears in Europe as a result of the circulation of his work. Ptolemy, a native of Alexandria, active around 140 AD, wrote his major work *Geographia* in eight books. The first two contain principles for the making of maps; and the other six books list the latitude and longitude of about eight thousand locations of the then known world. In 1406 the work is translated into Latin by Jacopo Angelo de Scarperia (Jacobus Angelus), who offers it to Pope Gregory XII and after to Alexander V (Buisseret 2003, 16). The first printed edition containing maps

produced according to the instructions and lists of locations of Ptolemy is made in Bologna, in 1477.

Another tradition, more literary, historical, and descriptive, painted the man and his actions on the surface of the Earth, as Strabo did. His work, entitled *Geographica*, highlighted by educators and travelers, and produced between 7 BC and 18 AD, does not include maps but brings detailed descriptions of countries and cities. The text was known in Europe in late Middle Ages, several copies survived dated since twelfth century and in 1469 appeared the first printed Latin translation. It prioritizes the quality of the described places, the historical and human aspects; it highlights the singularities and has an encyclopedic character. In this same tradition are Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, and his *Natural History* and Solino.

And a third tradition, inherited from the practical thinking of Aristotle and the Stoic philosophers, studied the world according to the four states or elements of matter: earth, water, fire, and air.

The European maritime discoveries and the evidence regarding the possibility to navigate other seas and find inhabitants in all the lands that the ancients did not know reflect in the reorganization of the discipline of Cosmography and Geography. Through travel accounts, written by conquerors, adventurers, missionaries, settlers and merchants, new information arrives in Europe about the land and its inhabitants. Classic knowledge starts to be confronted by experience, characterized by direct observation. These two sources of knowledge – *Auctoritas* and experience – are defined and described in different ways by scholars.

It is in the coexistence of these different influences that the problematic character of definition or of identity of the discipline of Geography in the period between 1450 and 1650 concentrates, characterized by "continuity and change" (Woodward 2007, 3).

In the context of Geography there is, then, in this context, what Jean-Marc Besse called a "system of tensions, but also of articulations, or

even hierarchies, into the same global scientific culture (...), between different epistemic rationalities” (Besse 2003, 13). Put in another way, it refers to two epistemologies that can be simplified in the attitude of two agents: on one side the office cosmographer, erudite humanist, reader of Latin and Greek, devoted and carrying the classic knowledge but attentive to new discoveries; and the traveler, pilot, or explorer who left Europe and used the own eyes as main tool, source of legitimacy of collected knowledge (Bowen 1981). The products of both epistemologies were not necessarily incompatible and the updated maps of chief-cosmographers were also used on board.

Geography associates with History in Renaissance. The two disciplines are considered complementary and very useful. Grown men and women could, through Geography, know the places where history happens; statesmen and administrators could understand the customs and ambitions of their neighbors; and merchants would know where to find the largest consumption goods and exotic products. Many authors take up variations of the phrase of Abraham Ortelius, which synthesizes the interdependence of the two disciplines: “Geography is the eye of History” (*Historiae Oculus Geographia*), inserted in the preface of his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, from 1570, and as the epigraph of his work *Parergon*, in 1592.

The Geography of the sixteenth century was the object of publications which became canonical. The invention of printing was, in this respect, a key factor for the dynamics of information circulation brought from antiquity and those obtained through the most different discoveries. Among the growing number of cosmographers and cartographers throughout the sixteenth century, stand out Sebastian Münster, author of *Geographia*, a reissue of Ptolemy, from 1540, and his own *Cosmographia* from 1544; Abraham Ortelius and his aforementioned monumental *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, from 1570; and Gerard Mercator, creator of the cartographic projection which bears his name and is until today adopted and the introducer of the term “atlas”, in

1595, with the work *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi e fabricati figura*. These editions are fed by the growing volume of news brought by travelers and gathered in editions that translate and compile travel reports. Some became famous in the sixteenth century, such as Fracanzo Montalbodo’s *Paesi novamente ritrovati*, from 1507; Giovanni Battista Ramusio’s *Navigazioni e Viaggi*, from 1556–1606; Richard Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations*, 1589–1600, and Théodore de Bry’s *Grands Voyages*, from 1596. These works were often reissued and added, and at their side a large number of texts and maps of lesser impact arose, evidencing the importance geographic knowledge acquires throughout Renaissance.

The different ways of understanding and describing the Earth, either from a physical, cosmological, astronomical, and mathematical point of view or as an inhabited world, are articulated throughout the sixteenth century. The result is that the Earth becomes a homogeneous body and a specific object to Geography (Besse 2003, 377).

Cross-References

- [Bacon, Francis](#)
- [Cosmography in the Renaissance](#)
- [Geocentrism](#)
- [Heliocentrism](#)
- [Ptolemy in the Renaissance](#)

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George of Trebizond

Born: 1396, Crete, Greece

Died: 1474, Rome, Italy

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Abstract

George of Trebizond (1396–c. 1474) – Greek émigré; Byzantine scholar and polemist; translator of Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek works; and renowned teacher of rhetoric and Latin eloquence – was one of the most enigmatic and controversial humanists of the fifteenth century. In the intellectual history of Western culture, George of Trebizond is best known as one of the major protagonists of the Plato-Aristotle quarrel through his *Comparatio philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis* (1458), a work written against Platonism and its revival at that time. In particular, George was a severe opponent of Gemistus Pletho and – consequently – his student, Cardinal Bessarion. His scholarly interests included rhetoric and logic; and his handbooks in these two disciplines (*Rhetoricorum libri V* and *Isagoge dialectica*) circulated widely in Europe.

Alternate Names

[Trapezuntius](#)

Biography

In the *De Antiscii* (1454), George of Trebizond provides the following autobiographical sketch: “I believe it escapes none of my acquaintances that I am a Greek born in Crete and married to a wife from there and that together with her and the children now for almost 35 years I have wandered unwillingly through alien cities far from my homeland. For who willingly leaves the fatherland where he was born, where he was brought up, from where he married his wife, where he had his children? I left nonetheless forced by the envy of some powerful men and tormented by the severe injuries their arrogance caused me. I departed with my wife and, at the time, one daughter, and hired by the people of Vicenza, I taught school for almost 2 years. Again I was forced to leave because of the conspiracy of some men. I proceeded to Venice where for about 12 years I lived in the fairness and justice of that people longer, I believe, than my innate unhappiness would bear. When I therefore left it as well, I travelled to Bologna where I stayed almost a year and then came to Florence. Three years later, I followed the Curia to Rome” (Monfasani 1976: 9).

George, whose family came originally from Trebizond, a Greek city on the Black Sea, was born in 1396 on the island of Crete. He arrived in Italy around 1416 at the invitation of the Venetian humanist Francesco Barbaro. In Venice George studied Latin at the school of Guarino da Verona. In early 1417 he moved to Padua, where he met Francesco Filelfo and Bishop Pietro Marcello. While there George perfected his knowledge of Latin with Vittorino da Feltre, whom he would later praise as his main teacher of Latin: “But now I call you, Vittorino. Protect and defend what is yours. Whatever Latin I know, I owe to you, my teacher, after God [. . .] You have many witnesses, patricians and good men who as youths studied under you in Venice at that time [. . .] For years it has been well known to everybody that you

considered me not merely your pupil but also your son” (Monfasani 1976: 12). In this period George was both a pupil and an assistant in the Vittorino’s school. He “aided Vittorino in reading the *Gorgias* and corrected the Greek passages in Vittorino’s copy of Nonius Marcellus. Moreover, he introduced Vittorino to the untranslated rhetorical works of Hermogenes of Tarsus. In return, Vittorino molded Trebizond into one of the best Latin stylists of the early and mid-Quattrocento” (Monfasani 1976: 12–13).

Thanks to the good offices of Francesco Barbaro, in 1420 George moved to Vicenza, where he taught for an entire year. From 1421 to 1423, he lived in Venice again, eventually returning to Vicenza in 1423 as a public teacher of Latin. In 1426 George converted to Catholicism, and at the end of 1427, he was expelled from Vicenza for reasons that are still not clear. After a short stay in Crete, in 1431 he resided in Mantua and then returned to Venice in 1433. In 1437 George followed Pope Eugenius IV and his court to Bologna; in a letter to Pietro Barbo (the future Pope Paul II), he wrote: “Therefore, as soon as you left [Venice] for Bologna [to go] to your uncle Eugenius IV of happy memory, I placed all my hope after God in you. Leaving Venice, I came to you at Bologna and by your efforts was honorably appointed to lecture publicly there” (Monfasani 1976: 34). During his sojourn in Bologna, Trebizond wrote a letter to the Byzantine Emperor John Paleologus and the *Oratio de laudibus summi pontificis Eugenii IV*. After the departure of Eugenius IV to Ferrara for the Council of Union, from 1439 to 1440, George and his family moved to Bagno di Romagna, where he found a post in the house of Gherardo Gambacorta as a tutor for his children. Furthermore, Trebizond wrote the *Isagoge dialectica* and dedicated it to Pietro Gambacorta, who was his own pupil and the son of Gherardo.

In 1440 George decided to move to Florence, the new seat of the ecumenical council and the cradle of the *studia humanitatis*. The bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci wrote about his presence and scholarly activity in Florence: “He lectured in the time of the [papal] court, where he was much honored, thought of, and prized. Since the court of

Rome was here at the time, he had a great audience in Florence and lectured in public and in private, in his own house, in several subjects, and in Greek and in Latin, and in logic and in philosophy; he produced a *Dialectics* so that his students could learn [logic] and likewise he produced a *Rhetoric* which was much honored. He used to give his students many exercises. At this time *there was not in Florence a more useful man than he for teaching*, in addition to his learning and eloquence, since he was ‘eloquentissimo.’ He sent his fame throughout all of Florence and in the court of Rome; he was much honored and esteemed by all, and especially for beginning to translate [Greek]” (Monfasani 1976: 41).

In 1443, still during the pontificate of Eugenius IV, George left Florence and relocated to Rome. In the Eternal City, he met the greatest humanists of his age (Lorenzo Valla, Poggio Bracciolini, Nicholas of Cusa, etc.), and he worked in the service of no fewer than five different popes: Eugenius IV (1431–1447), Nicholas V (1447–1455), Calixtus III (1455–1458), Pius II (1458–1464), Paul II (1464–1471), and Sixtus IV (1471–1484). Appointed apostolic secretary in 1444, he maintained the office of *scriptor litterarum apostolicarum* until 1450. His privileged status at the Roman Curia enabled him to devote more time to his studies and translations, including that of Aristotle’s *libri naturales*. Under the papacy of Nicholas V, a patron of Roman humanism, George held the office of lecturer at the Studium Romanum. In addition to Aristotle (*Historia animalium*, *De partibus animalium*, *De generatione animalium*, *Problemata*), he turned his attention to translating other authors: John Chrysostom (*Nonaginta homiliae in Matthaëum*), Eusebius (*De praeparatione evangelica*), Cyril of Alexandria (*In Iohannem*), Ptolemy (*Almagest*), Gregory Nazianzenus (*De laudibus s. Basilii*; *De laudibus s. Athanasii*), and Gregory of Nyssa (*De perfecta hominis vita*).

In 1452, after his fight with Poggio Bracciolini, George resolved to leave the papal curia and move to Naples under the patronage of King Alfonso of Aragon. In his “Neapolitan period,” Trebizond produced Latin translations of Cyril of Alexandria’s *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali trinitate* and of ps.-Ptolemy’s *Centiloquium*. Furthermore,

he wrote two astronomical pamphlets (*Brevis de antiscii tractatus* and *Cur his temporibus astrologorum iudicia fallant*) and probably began his well-known invective *In perversionem Problematum Aristotelis a quodam Theodoro Cage editam et problematice Aristotelis philosophie protectio*. George severely criticized Gaza's translation of Aristotle's *Problemata*. His attack is a defense of both Aristotelianism and the scholastic tradition: "the *Protectio* is George's defense of scholasticism and especially of Dominican scholasticism. [...] Moreover, of all the scholastics, the only ones whose works he specifically quoted by name were Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas [...]. It was not only the profound Aristotelianism of the two Dominican doctors which especially appealed to Trebizond, but even more so their sophisticated attempt to reconcile Aristotle with Christ" (Monfasani 1976: 156).

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, George composed two important treatises in Greek: *On the Truth of the Faith of Christians to the Emir* and *On the Divine Manuel, Shortly to be King of the Whole World*. He addressed these works to the sultan Mehmed II, conqueror of ancient Byzantium, giving him the controversial title of "King of Kings": George "warned Mehmed [...] that God had given him the city of the universal Christian monarch Constantine in order that he might emulate Constantine and unite all men under one scepter and one religion. Trebizond then demonstrated how Islam and Christianity could be reconciled. This amounted to converting Mehmed to Christianity" (Monfasani 1976: 131).

In 1455, following the election of Pope Calixtus III, George returned to Rome and resumed the office of apostolic secretary. In 1458, George completed his most important work, titled *Comparatio philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis*. In 1460, under the pontificate of Pius II, George moved to Venice. After offering his Latin translation of Plato's *Laws* to the Venetian Republic, he was appointed as the teacher of eloquence at the Rialto school. In this regard, the Venetian chronicler Marin Sanudo writes as follows: "In August [1460] Giorgio Trabesonzio came to this land and presented to the Doge Plato's book *The Laws*, translated by him from Greek into Latin. He was

hired to lecture in the city on the humanities with a salary of 150 ducats per annum" (Monfasani 1976: 145). In 1462, after an obscure scandal, George returned to Rome once again, where he remained until 1465. During these years he benefited from extraordinary ecclesiastical patronage. More specifically, he received support from three preeminent clergymen: Cardinal Prospero Colonna, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, and Jean Jouffroy, Bishop of Arras. In return, George dedicated his translation of Aristotle's *Problemata* to Prospero Colonna. In late 1458, Nicholas of Cusa commissioned him to translate Plato's *Parmenides*, the *magnum opus* of the Neoplatonist tradition. Finally, between 1455 and 1459, he dedicated his translation of Aristotle's *Physics* to Jean Jouffroy.

In 1464 Pietro Barbo, Trebizond's pupil, became pope as Paul II. Understandably, George regarded Barbo's election as an extraordinary opportunity. In his preface to the *Questiuncula de vita Ioannis* and the *De questione Hieronymi et Augustini super legalibus*, he addressed the newly elected pope: "A good while back, Most Holy Father, I had decided that in my old age, I would try my meager powers at elucidating some passages in Scripture which seemed especially ambiguous [...] But ill-health, as frequent as it was serious, so depressed and enfeebled me that I gave up the project. But in these days, aroused solely by your assumption to the apostolate, I have written little treatises on two questions [...]" (Monfasani 1976: 179). George dedicated various religious writings to the new pope: a treatise on Jn. 21: 22; *De sanctificatione matris domini ab utero*; *De questione Hieronymi et Augustini super legalibus*; and *De trepidatione domini* (now lost).

In 1465 he left Rome for Constantinople in hopes of convincing Mehmed II "The Conqueror" to make an agreement with the Christian West. After a brief stop in Crete, he reached Constantinople in November. Once there, George wrote the *Isagoge ad Almagestum Ptolomei*: "Mehmed felt no special admiration for Italian humanism. But he was interested in scientific astronomy because of its identification with astrology; and in approaching Mehmed, George stressed his scientific astronomical knowledge as much as his humanistic accomplishments" (Monfasani 1976:

188). Unfortunately, in 1466, Trebizond left Constantinople without having met the Sultan and accomplishing his goals. While sailing from Byzantium, he wrote *On the Eternal Glory of the Autocrat*, which he dedicated to Mehmed II. Then, still during the return voyage, two significant events led him to write two more works. First, while in Corfu George met Nicholas Seminopolios, a Greek priest, and discussed Gregory Nazianzenus' oration *In Theophania* with him. Once back in Rome, Trebizond sent Seminopolios a letter on this theological topic. Second, during this return trip, the boat on which he traveled was caught up in a frightening storm. George then swore that if he survived, he would write a biography of the martyr Andreas of Chios: "in the spring of 1465 at Constantinople, Andreas of Chios had been apprehended, wrongly, he protested, as a renegade Moslem. He endured 10 days of public torture before dying on 29 May 1465" (Monfasani 1976: 189).

In June 1466 George was back in Rome, where a wrathful pope awaited him. After learning of the *Eternal Glory* dedicated to the Sultan Mehmed II, Paul II had the treatise put under investigation. For this reason, concerning the apostolic secretaryship, George activated the right of resignation to his son Andreas that he had received in 1457. In October 1466 George was imprisoned at Castel Sant'Angelo, but was released in February 1467. Once free again, he tried to establish relations with the Hungarian court. To this end, he presented some of his translations to Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, that is, Ptolemy's *Almagest* and St. Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* and *De spiritu sancto*. These two works were sent to John Vitez, archbishop of Gran and Hungarian chancellor, and to Ianus Pannonius, bishop of Pecs, respectively. George "saw in Budapest a waystation on the road to Constantinople. Trebizond hated Islam even more than he admired Mehmed II. Accordingly, he could only applaud Corvinus' resistance to the Turk. Trebizond hoped that Corvinus could hold back the Son of Ishmael until he himself returned once more to Constantinople to convert him" (Monfasani 1976: 199).

In 1471, Cardinal Francesco della Rovere, a Franciscan theologian, was elected pope as Sixtus

IV. George's life came to an end under his pontificate. In his *Elogia veris clarorum virorum litteris illustrium* (1546), Paolo Giovio wrote: "It is said that George reached an extreme (*exacta*) old age, so that he became a child again and almost lost his mind, forgetting a great deal. He used to go about the City by himself in a worn out cloak and cap, supporting his wobbling steps with a badly gnarled staff" (Monfasani 1976: 233). Nevertheless, it was precisely in this period that George's printed works enjoyed great diffusion. Among his most popular writings were his Latin translation of Eusebius' *De praeparatione evangelica*, *Rhetoricorum libri V*, and *De partibus orationis ex Prisciano compendium*.

George of Trebizond died in Rome in 1474. He was buried in the Dominican church of S. Maria sopra Minerva (for further information about George's life and works, see also Monfasani 1984, 2017; Viti 2001; Ganchou 2008; Abenstein 2014; Linde 2017).

Pletho and Trebizond in the Plato-Aristotle Controversy

Consisting of three books, the *Comparatio* was a part of the Plato-Aristotle controversy, which featured Gemistus Pletho (*De differentiis Aristotelis et Platonis*) and Cardinal Bessarion (*In calumniatorem Platonis*) as the main participants. Attacking Pletho's Neoplatonic drift and Bessarion's intellectual circle, George criticizes Plato's philosophy as a dangerous contagion and an enemy of Christian orthodoxy. Also, he upholds Aristotle's philosophical system, praising it for its compatibility with Christian doctrine (Bydén 2013: 147–150; see also Schulz 2010). In Book III he does not hesitate to depict what he considers the Platonic threat using an apocalyptic tone: "Depraved Platonic hedonism corrupted the Roman Empire and in the end brought it to ruin. At the same time, the Platonists had a hand in all the heresies which beset the early Church. Thereafter, a second Plato arose: Muhammed. Muhammed learned his hedonism from a monk who was expelled from Alexandria because of his Platonic ideas and morals [...] and who eventually came across Muhammed in Ethiopia [...]."

However, being much more sensible than the first Plato, Muhammed purged this instruction of its perversions and added practical rules of conduct. Consequently, after the perverse philosophy of the first Plato had enervated Byzantium from within, the devotees of the second and astuter Plato conquered it from without. Now a third Plato has appeared, more sensible than the first and more learned than the second: Gemistus Pletho, the apostle of a revived paganism. His clever books and ideas are now spreading to Europe. If unchecked, they will undermine Latin Christianity. George therefore called upon the Latin clergy and upon all those who honor the Saviour to do their duty. If they do not, he warned, a fourth Plato will come and overpass all previous 'Plato's' in spreading the creed of *volutas*" (Monfasani 1976: 158–159).

Trebizond's Contribution to Natural Philosophy and Astronomy

In his groundbreaking essay *George of Trebizond's Contribution in the Development of Cosmology During the Renaissance*, George Steiris illustrates the historical background, diffusion, and legacy of George of Trebizond's astronomic work through a rigorous and precise synthesis. George Steiris writes that "the contribution of Greek scholars, those who fled to Western Europe in order to escape the advancing Ottomans, was great. These scholars brought manuscripts, until that date mostly unknown in the West, providing the western intellectual circles with new, more accurate translations of the already known ancient literature" (Steiris 2008: 185). In this specific historical context, Trebizond's contribution to natural philosophy and to astronomic studies was particularly significant. He was not only a translator but also a commentator on important scientific works. Among his most important translations are Aristotle's *De generatione et corruptione*, *De caelo*, *De anima*, *De historia animalium*, *De partibus animalium*, and *De generatione animalium*; Ptolemy's *Magna Compositio* (*Almagest*); and ps.-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*. In particular, Trebizond "was confident that" his astronomical works "would correct old mistakes and contribute to the enrichment of cosmological thought" (Steiris 2008: 191).

Trebizond's interest in cosmology probably developed under the influence of Paulus Venetus (1368–1429) (Monfasani 1976: 347; Steiris 2008: 186), and "after the death of Paulus Venetus, George continued to deepen his knowledge in cosmology for several years, before his first attempt to write something of his own" (Steiris 2008: 187). The translation of *Almagest*, commissioned by Nicholas V (1451), was the major contribution of Trebizond to the development of the astronomic studies, and he also dedicated a commentary to the famous Ptolemaic work. This *Commentary*, "which he almost immediately considered his *opus magnus*" (Steiris 2008: 189), consists of two parts: the first part exposes and clarifies some basic concepts; the second part, instead, contains comments (Steiris 2008: 189). Then Trebizond commented also pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*: "in the prologue [...], George claimed that his cosmology was based on Aristotle, while at the same time he gave an account of some of the most basic Aristotelian cosmological views" (Monfasani 1984: 99; Steiris 2008: 193).

In 1465 Trebizond brought his translation and commentary of the *Almagest* to Constantinople, hoping to win the favor of Sultan Mehmed II, but his attempt failed: "having a high interest in Ptolemy the Sultan was displeased realizing that the available text was full of mistakes and omissions" (Steiris 2008: 194). In 1467 Trebizond suffered another failure, this time at the Hungarian court of Matthias Corvinus. Indeed, here Trebizond clashed with the work of Regiomontanus, his great adversary and Bessarion's *protégé*; particularly Cardinal Bessarion fiercely criticized and defamed Trebizond's translation and commentary of the *Almagest*. Regiomontanus continued Peurbach's intellectual heritage by writing a polemical work (hitherto unpublished) against Trebizond's commentary: the *Defensio Theonis contra Trapezuntium*. "Regiomontanus had declared that his plan was to publish his *Defensio* [...], in the hope of exposing George's erroneous beliefs to a larger audience" (Steiris 2008: 196).

Trebizond's astronomic work did not achieve the expected success, but we entirely agree with the conclusion of George Steiris: "Without

George of Trebizond and Regiomontanus, Ptolemy's authentic thought would have probably remained in the darkness, making astronomy and philosophy of nature to follow a totally different course" (Steiris 2008: 197).

Rhetorical Work: Heritage, Innovative Aspects, and Legacy

As is well known, rhetoric and logic were crucial to Trebizond's thought (see, for instance, Lojacono 1985; Classen 1993; Mack 2011; Guerra Caminiti 2004; Calboli Montefusco 2012). The *Rhetoricorum libri V* (on rhetoric) and the *Isagoge dialectica* (on logic) are his major handbooks: "When George of Trebizond arrived in Venice in 1416 at the age of 21, he knew no Latin and very little, if any Italian. Thirty years later he was acknowledged as one of the foremost teachers of Latin eloquence in Italy; and for the next 100 years, that is, until about the mid-sixteenth century, his handbooks in rhetoric and logic enjoyed a European diffusion of enormous proportion" (Monfasani 1976: 241). His work relied on three distinct rhetorical traditions: the Greek and Latin heritage, on the one hand, and Byzantine culture, on the other. Among Greek and Latin authors, the following were particularly important to him: Aristotle, Demosthenes, Hermagoras, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Cicero, Quintilian, Marius Victorinus, and Martianus Capella. With regard to the Byzantine legacy, Hermogenes of Tarsus (A.D. 161–180) stands out as his main source. The revival of the Hermogenean model, largely through George's efforts, played an important role in the development of rhetorical studies in the Latin West. The addition of Hermogenes' corpus proved significant for Renaissance scholars both from a doctrinal and a methodological point of view: "The obvious result of the Byzantine rhetorical tradition was that most educated Byzantine visitors to Renaissance Italy felt an immediate kinship with the style and interests of the Italian humanists. George of Trebizond was a Greek humanist before he became a Latin humanist. The task he eventually set himself was to combine the Byzantine and Latin of rhetoric; and we can trace the development of that plan from George's first opuscula to its final

fruition in the *Rhetoricorum libri V*" (Monfasani 1976: 255). The sincere effort to combine Ciceronianism (i.e., the foundation of Western rhetorical tradition) and Byzantine education underlies George's rhetorical program (see Classen 1993). His originality in rhetoric and logic is not to be found in his breaking away from tradition but in the attempt to bring together different cultural strands: Greek, Byzantine, and Latin (including scholasticism). Paradoxically enough, he was at once a humanist and a passionate defender of medieval scholasticism. The same is true of his writings in logic: the *Isagoge dialectica* "inaugurated the series of humanist Logics. With its formula of a simplified logic put at the service of the *ratio topica*, it served as the model for the manuals of Giorgio Valla, John Caesarius, Melanchthon, Vives, and Ramus" (Monfasani 1976: 316). George considered logical doctrine crucial to any humanist's rhetorical skills. Yet, it is important to note that in this field, he did not try to develop an alternative to scholasticism or carry out any thorough reform of it (Monfasani 1976: 328–329). His respect for that tradition is shown by his reliance on a set of basic principles taken specifically from late scholastic logic.

Major Trebizond's Prefaces, Works, and Translations

Prefaces: Prefaces to King Alfonso of *Rhetoricorum libri V*, *Protectio Aristotelis Problematum*, the translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the translation of Cyril of Alexandria's *Thesaurus*, the translation of Demosthenes' *Oration on the Crown*, the translation of ps.-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*, the commentary on ps.-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*; preface to Andreas Trapezuntius of *De partibus orationis ex Prisciano compendium*; preface to an anonymous addressee of the translation of Demosthenes' *On the Crown*; preface to an unidentified *vir clarus* of the translation of the ps.-Aristotelian *Problemata*; preface to Antonius de Pago of the translation of Aristotle's *Physics*; preface to Cardinal Bessarion of the translations of St. Basil's *Contra Eunomium* and *De spiritu sancto*; preface to Cardinal Domenico Capranica of the translation of Aristotle's *De anima*; preface

to Francesco Barbaro and the Venetian Republic of the translation of Plato's *Laws* and *Epinomis*; preface to Francesco (de Lignamine) de Padua of the translation of Aristotle's *Rhetorica*; preface to Jacopo Antonio Marcello of the commentary on Ptolemy's *Almagest* and the *Comparatio*; preface to Ianus Pannonius of the translation of St. Basil's *De spiritu sancto*; preface to Jean Jouffroy of the translation of Aristotle's *Physics*; preface to Ioannes Vitez of the translation of St. Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*; preface to Cardinal Ludovico Trevisan of the translation of St. Gregory Nyssen's *De vita Moysi*; preface to Mehmed II of the *Isagoge* to Ptolemy's *Almagest*, the translation of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, and the *Comparatio*; preface to King Matthias Corvinus of the commentary on Ptolemy's *Almagest*; prefaces to Pope Nicholas V of the translation of John Chrysostom's *Homiliae* 26–88 in *Matthaeum*, the translation of Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica*, the translation of Cyril of Alexandria's *Super evangelium Iohannis*, the translation of Aristotle's zoological works, the translation of Plato's *Laws* and *Epinomis*, and the translation of two orations of St. Gregory Nazianzenus; preface to Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa of the translation of Plato's *Parmenides*; preface to Pope Paulus II of two theological treatises; preface to Petrus Gambacurta of the *Isagoge dialectica*; preface to Cardinal Prospero Colonna of the translation of Aristotle's *Problemata*; preface to the Reader of the *Rhetoricorum libri V*; preface to the Reader of the translation of Aristotle's *De anima*; preface to the Reader of the second part (*Expositio*) of the commentary on Ptolemy's *Almagest*; preface to Vittorino da Feltre of the commentary on Cicero's *Pro Q. Ligario*.

Speeches: *Oratiuncula* in praise of the Bishop of Padua; *Oratio de laudibus Ciceronis*; *Oratio de laudibus eloquentie*; *Oratio de laudibus summi pontificis Eugenii Quarti*; *Oratiuncula* on King Alfonso of Aragon; *The Response* to Guarino da Verona; *Protectio Aristotelis Problematum* against Theodore Gaza; exhortations to King Alfonso of Aragon and Emperor Frederick III to recover the Holy Land; exhortation to Pope Nicholas V *ad defendenda pro Europa Hellesponti claustra*; funeral oration for Fantino Michiel.

Rhetorical and dialectical works: *Rhetoricorum libri V*; *De artificio Ciceroniane orationis pro Q. Ligario*; scholia to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; *Isagoge dialectica*; *De partibus orationis ex Prisciano compendium*.

Religious works: Prologue to Bk. IV of Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*; scholia to St. Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* and *De spiritu sancto*; scholia to Gregory Nazianzenus' orations *De laudibus S. Basilii* and *De laudibus S. Athanasii*; *On the Truth of the Faith of Christians*; *On the Eternal Glory of the Autocrat*; *On the Divinity of Manuel*; On John 21:22 to Pope Paul II; *De questione Hieronymi et Augustini super legalibus* to Pope Paul II; *De sanctificatione matris domini nostri ab utero* to Pope Paul II; *Martyrologium Beati Andree de Chio*.

Philosophical works: *Comparatio philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis*; scholia to Aristotle's *Physics*; scholia to Aristotle's *De generatione et corruptione*; scholia to Aristotle's *De anima*; scholia to Aristotle's *Historia animalium*, *De partibus animalium*, and *De generatione animalium*; scholia to the Aristotelian *Problemata*; *Notae philosophicae*.

Astronomical-astrological works: *Commentaria ad Claudii Ptolomei Magnam Compositionem*; *Isagoge* to Ptolemy's *Almagest*; commentary on ps.-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*; *Brevis de antiscii tractatus et cur his temporibus astrologorum iudicia fallant*.

Translations: Aristotle's *Rhetorica*, *Physics*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *De caelo*, *De anima*, *De historia animalium*, *De partibus animalium*, *De generatione animalium*; ps.-Aristotle's *Problemata per species collecta*; St. Basil the Great's *Adversus Eunomium* and *De Spiritu Sancto*; Cyril of Alexandria's *Super evangelium Iohannis* and *Thesaurus*; Demosthenes' *Oratio pro Ctesiphonte (De Corona)*; Eusebius Pamphili's *Praeparatio evangelica*; Gregory Nazianzenus' *Oratio de laudibus S. Basilii* and *Oratio de laudibus S. Athanasii*; Gregory Nyssen's *De perfecta hominis vita sive de vita Moysi*; John Chrysostom's *Homiliae XC in Matthaeum*, hom. 26–88; Plato's *Laws*, *Epinomis*, *Parmenides*; Ptolemy's *Magna Compositio (Almagest)*; ps.-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*.

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George Scholarios

► [Scholarios, George](#)

Georgius Graecus de Bosnia

► [Salviati, Giorgio Benigno](#)

Gerardus Magnus

► [Grote, Geert](#)

Gerondi, Nissim

► [Gerondi, Nissim ben Reuben](#)

Gerondi, Nissim ben Reuben

Born: 1310 or a little after, probably in Gerona, though possibly in Barcelona

Died: 1376, Barcelona

Shalom Sadik

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Abstract

Rabbi Nissim Gerondi was the leading Jewish Spanish juridical scholar between 1350 and 1376. He was in fact the spiritual and the juridical leader of the Jewish community of Aragon despite apparently not having an

official position as rabbi of the city but only as head of the local Yeshiva. The huge majority of his works relate to Jewish Law. His major philosophical work was a collection of 12 sermons that address several philosophical and religious questions. His major philosophical impact was with regard to the question of political philosophy. He employed a sharp division between the law of the Torah and the law of the king, with each having distinct religious and practical roles. Rabbi Nissim was also the founder of a specific school within Jewish philosophy which continued until the middle of the fifteenth century. The defining characteristics of this school were its anti-Aristotelian approach and its conservative answers to metaphysical questions.

Alternative Names

Gerondi, Nissim; Rabeinu, Nissim; RaN; HaRaN

Biography

Nissim's family hailed from Cordova in Andalusia. He was probably born between 1310 and 1318 in Gerona, but it is also possible that he was born in Barcelona. He spent most of his life in Barcelona and was the head of the Yeshiva (Jewish school) of the city, one the most prestigious yeshivot in the medieval period. Nissim was also the main spiritual leader of the community and acted as the head of the Jewish tribunal (without having an official position as the chief Rabbi of the city). He was arrested probably due to internal strife within the Jewish community, but we do not know the exact reason for the arrest. His two major students were R. Isaac bar Sheshet (1326–1408) and R. Hasdai Crescas (1340–1410/11).

Works

- I. His main juridical work is a commentary on the *Sefer Hahalakhot* of Rabbi Isaac Alfasi (the RiF), who had based this legal code on his reading of the Talmud. The RaN's

commentary refers to the following 15 Talmudic tractates: *Shabbat*, *Pesahim*, *Bezah*, *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, *Yoma*, *Ta'anit*, *Megillah*, *Sukkah*, *Ketubbot*, *Gittin*, *Kiddushin*, *Shevu'ot*, *Avodah Zarah*, *Hullin*, and *Niddah*. Some other commentaries such as on *Mo'ed Katan* and *Makkot* are attributed to Nissim, but they were actually not written by him. It is possible that the original work did indeed include all of the Talmud's tractates, but only the aforementioned 15 commentaries have survived.

- II. Juridical responsa: We know that Nissim wrote around 1,000 responsa, but of these only some 70 are now extant.
- III. Commentary on the Talmud: Nissim composed a commentary on the Talmud, probably on the majority of the tractates. However, there are currently only published editions of *Nedarin*, *Gittin*, *Niddah*, *Hullin*, *Bava Me'zia*, *Shevu'ot*, *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, *Avodah Zarah*, *Mo'ed Katan*, *Bava Batra*, *Eruvin*, *Pesahim*, and *Sanhedrin*.
- IV. Twelve sermons: Collectively, this is his main philosophical work (Nissim 1996).
- V. Commentary on the Torah: R. Nissim apparently began this project at the end of his life, for there is only his commentary on Genesis up to 22:22, where it abruptly ends (Nissim 1958).

Most Salient Opinion

The most known philosophical idea of Nissim is the distinction between the Law of the Torah and the Law of the king, the latter of which he maintained can at times justifiably go against the strict letter of the Torah. This is the case, according to Nissim, because the Law of the Torah is so completely perfect that in many cases it is highly problematic to act exactly according to this perfect law. Some modern researchers see in Nissim's distinction between divine and royal law the possibility for carving out space for secular law in a religious world. For instance, according to the Law of the Torah, it is almost completely impossible to meet all the prerequisite conditions for giving a death sentence. However, Nissim believed that the death sentence option is crucial for sustaining public order. He therefore argued that the king has the right to put people to death by

decree, even if the decree lies outside the legal parameters laid down by the Torah. So while the Law of the Torah is the representation of the ultimate truth, nonetheless, the practical political situation of human beings requires something less than perfect law.

Impact and Legacy

R. Nissim was the founder of a specific school of thought which continued to exist for more than two generations after his death. The originality of this school lies in its merging of ideas normally viewed as being atypical of the medieval Jewish philosophical tradition, namely, (1) true philosophical inquiry (but not Aristotelian-conformist), (2) a degree of opposition (explicit or not) to the Kabbalah, (3) conservative responses to metaphysical questions, and (4) aspects of Christian scholasticism. The synthesis of these four positions makes Nissim's school not only unique but also distinct from both the philosophical and Kabbalist schools.

The main members of this school were Nissim, his two main students, namely, Hasdai Crescas and Isaac bar Sheshet, and Hasdai's disciples: Josef Albo, Josef Haviva, Zerachia Halevi, Mattathias ha-Yizhari, and Abraham bar Yehuda.

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Gesner, Conrad

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gesner, Konrad

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gesnerus, Conradus

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gessner, Conrad

Born: 16 April 1516, Zurich

Died: 13 December 1565, Zurich

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Abstract

Conrad Gessner numbers among Switzerland's most celebrated polymaths. Best known for his work as a bibliographer and zoologist, Gessner was also a gifted philologist, botanist, and paleontologist, whose contributions to these fields – and many more besides – were widely recognized in his lifetime. As a teacher, scholar, and physician, Gessner's rich network of acquaintances and correspondents made him one of the best-connected intellectuals of early modern Zurich. Gessner's work in both recovering ancient knowledge and advancing contemporary understanding of the natural world made for a remarkable scholarly profile even in the mid-sixteenth century. The reception of Gessner's work and his approach especially in Switzerland established a tradition of natural historical research which extended to figures

such as Johann Jakob Wagner (1641–1695), Johann Jakob Scheuchzer (1672–1723), Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777), and beyond.

Alternate Names

Gessner, Konrad; Gesnerus, Conradus; Gessnerus, Conradus; Gesner, Conrad; Gesner, Konrad; Geßner, Conrad; Geßner, Kûnrat; Gessner, Cûnrat; Gessner, Cûrat; Gessner, Conradt; Gessneros, Thrasyboulos (Pyle 2000).

Biography

Conrad Gessner was born into a humble family. His father was a furrier from Solothurn, while his mother was a niece of Zurich's Grossmünster chaplain Johannes Frick. Gessner went to live with his great uncle at the age of five and it was here that Gessner's education began (Leu 2016). By 1526 Gessner was living in the house of his teacher Oswald Myconius and taking classes from figures belonging to Zurich's intellectual elite, including Thomas Platter, Theodor Bibliander, Johann Jakob Ammann, and Rudolf Collin (Simmler 1566). In 1531, he received a bursary to study under reformer Huldrych Zwingli. The outcome of the Second War of Kappel in the same year was a personal tragedy for Gessner, who lost both his father and his mentor Zwingli among Zurich's dead (Leu 2006; Mähly 1879).

Without further support in Zurich, Gessner – now 16 – embarked on a studentship which saw him travel widely throughout central Europe. He went first to Strasburg and later to the Universities of Bourges and Paris, supported by a stipend from Zwingli's successor Heinrich Bullinger (Leu 2016). Once again in Switzerland, and after 2 years teaching in Zurich, Gessner was made Professor of Greek at the Academy in Lausanne. The 3 years Gessner spent in Lausanne teaching Greek and furthering his botanical interests in the surrounding landscape were happy (Olivier 1951). But by 1540, at the suggestion of his friend Christoph Klauser, Gessner moved first to

Montpellier and a year later Basle to complete his medical degree (Braun 1990; Fischer 1967).

The years following Gessner's qualification as a doctor and his subsequent return to settle in Zurich saw the beginning of his intensive scholarly production. Gessner had already published a number of works, reworking the Greek–Latin dictionary of Guarino Favorino in 1537 and writing a *Libellus de lacte et operibus lactariis*, to which was attached his famous *Epistola de montium admiratione* (1541a), for example. Now, however, he focused on philological studies and especially on lesser-known Greek authors. He made a translation of Michael of Ephesus' commentary on Aristotle (1541b) and the first Latin translation of Stobaeus' *Anthology* (1543), for example, alongside a number of studies and editions of ancient works on medicine, botany, and natural history (Müller 2016). By 1545, the first of Gessner's great encyclopedic projects came to fruition with the publication of his *Bibliotheca universalis* (1545–1549), the first universal bibliography of all Latin, Greek, and Hebrew authors known at Gessner's time, including biographical data for each entry (Gessner 1545; Sabba 2012). This enormous undertaking brought Gessner's name to Europe-wide renown (Fueter 1964; Riedl-Dorn 1989).

The next 12 years saw Gessner appointed to the position of Professor at Zurich's Carolinum (1546), city doctor (1554), and finally to the position of canon at Zurich's Grossmünster (1558), which would provide him with a stable income until his death. Throughout this period Gessner was able to dedicate himself to a number of large-scale projects on an impressive range of subjects. Between 1551 and 1558 he worked on the publication of his *Historia animalium* (Gessner 1551, 1554, 1555a, 1587), the work for which he was best known by his contemporaries (Friedrich 1995; Leu 2016). The project aimed to provide detailed information on all known animals, including woodcut images of each species. The *Mithridates* (1555b) represents the sum of Gessner's linguistic learning. It brings together contemporary knowledge on 110 different languages and dialects – including several languages

from the New World – and attempts explain their interrelationships (Colombat and Peters 2009; Peters 2016). The planned *Historia plantarum* was interrupted by Gessner's death and survived only in his beautifully self-illustrated manuscripts until its eventual publication in the eighteenth century. The work was to constitute Gessner's contribution to the then thriving field of botany, one of his lifelong interests (Leu 1992; Nyffeler 2016).

Gessner succumbed to the plague in 1565. At the time of his death he was recognized internationally as one of Europe's leading polymaths (Wolf 1577). Gessner still enjoys renown as a philologist, bibliographer, zoologist, botanist, and physician, but thanks to the initiatives celebrating 500 years since his birth in 2016, his lesser-known work in the fields of paleontology, mineralogy, and theology (to name but a few) is now being appreciated (Leu et al. 2008; Leu and Ruoss 2016).

Gessner's published works number over a hundred titles, excluding posthumous editions and prints. An attempt was made to compile a comprehensive bibliography of Gessner's publications in 1984 (Wellisch 1984).

Cross-References

► [Aldrovandi, Ulisse](#)

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Geßner, Conrad

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gessner, Conradt

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gessner, Cûnrat

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gessner, Cûrat

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gessner, Konrad

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Geßner, Kûnrat

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gessneros, Thrasyboulos

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gessnerus, Conradus

► [Gessner, Conrad](#)

Gilbert, William

Born: Colchester 1544

Died: London 1603

Monica Ugaglia
University of Florence, Florence, Italy

Abstract

William Gilbert is among the founders of the scientific experimental method. In particular, due to his treatise *De Magnete*, he is regarded as the father of magnetism.

Biography

William Gilbert (or Gilberd) was born on May 24, 1544, at Colchester (Essex, England). In 1558 he moved to Cambridge and entered St. John's College, where he obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1569. Around 1573 he moved to London, where he successfully practiced medicine and was elected president of the Royal College of Physicians. In 1601 he was appointed physician-in-ordinary to Queen Elizabeth I, and on her death in March 1603, he was appointed physician to King James I. He died on December 10 of that year. Of Gilbert we know two scientific works: a treatise on electricity and magnetism – *De Magnete, Magneticisque Corporibus, et de Magno Magnete Tellure* (On the Magnet, Magnetic Bodies, and the Great Magnet Earth), published by the author in 1600, and a collection of minor essays on natural

philosophy, *De Mundo Nostro Sublunari Philosophia Nova* (New Philosophy about our Sublunary World), published in 1651 by Gilbert's half brother.

Impact and Legacy

While *De Mundo Nostro Sublunari* had a very little impact, due to the *De Magnete*, Gilbert became one of the most known scientists of his day, considered by Galileo one of the founders of the experimental method, and went down in the history as the father of magnetism.

In fact, Gilbert's treatise was the first attempt of collecting in a scientific study all the known observations concerning magnetism, which were previously scattered in nautical and medical treatises, books on minerals, and collections of folk tales. Except for the nautical observations, prompted by the need of correctly using the magnetic compass, hardly ever the other available empirical data were scientifically reliable. In medicine, for example, the lodestone – namely, iron oxide – was supposed to indicate whether a woman were cheating or not, but his virtue was impeded by the garlic; books on minerals spoke of various kinds of magnet: one attracting iron and another, also called theamedes, only repelling it. The contrasting action of diamond was considered too. But mythology was the richer reservoir of magnetic facts, like the existence of statues floating on the air by virtue of an underlying magnet or of magnetic islands, which tearing off their nails forced ships to sink.

Gilbert accurately texted the magnetic-related claims, disproving some of them as rumors and trying to give a common explanation for the remaining ones. His final aim was to demonstrate that, like any other celestial body, also the Earth has a magnetic soul, or astral form, that orders and ties together its parts. Connected to the inner form, a magnetic virtue spreads from the geometrical center of the Earth, and spherically distributes around it, like around any lodestone, causing it to attract magnetic and ferrous bodies and arranging them in accordance with it. In this perspective all the known phenomena concerning the power of lodestone are analyzed and differentiated from

the ones due to the amber, which for the first time he calls electrical.

Even if Gilbert is still regarded as the father of magnetism, it is now clear that, as it is often the case, his work on magnetism was not a bolt from the blue. Leaving aside the few ancient observations – Thales of Miletus, for example, knew that magnetite attracts iron and that rubbing amber would make it attract such lightweight objects – and the very important but isolated appearance of the *Epistola de magnete* (Letter on the Magnet), composed in 1269 by Petrus Peregrinus de Maricourt, containing a significant number of scientific magnetic experiments, we got evidence of a widespread scientific debate on magnetism in the years just before the publication of the *De Magnete*. This debate was centered around the figure of the Jesuit Leonardo Garzoni, whose unpublished *Trattati della Calamita*, written around 1580, was well known to Della Porta and through his *Magiae Naturalis* (The Natural Magic, 1589), to Gilbert.

Cross-References

- [Experiment in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Magnetism in Renaissance Science](#)

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Giles of Viterbo

Born: Viterbo 1469

Died: Rome 1532

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Abstract

Giles of Viterbo (1469–1532), prior general of the Augustinian Hermits, cardinal, church reformer, candidate for the papacy during papal Rome's golden age, responded enthusiastically to that age's renewed impulse toward classical and patristic learning. He remains a complex figure for scholars because of the many posts he held and the diverse cultural traits his thought exhibits. Contrasting elements in his life, public and private, active and contemplative, secular and spiritual, competed for his attention. Like many of his contemporaries, Giles had a deep interest in discovering the harmony of Christianity with ancient religious philosophical and traditions, both directly and as mediated through Greek and Latin patristic authors like Origen and Augustine, Ficinian Platonism, and Hebrew mysticism.

Synonyms

Egidio da Viterbo; Aegidius Viterbiensis

Biography

Giles of Viterbo (also known as Egidio da Viterbo or Aegidius Viterbiensis) was born in 1469 in Viterbo, a city at the foot of Mount Cimino in Tuscany. His parents were Lorenzo Antonini and Maria del Testa. Little is known of his youth, but the details offered in Giuseppe Signorelli's biography of Giles have been generally followed, including the suggestion that Augustinian friars were among Giles's early teachers in Viterbo and that a famous Augustinian preacher, Mariano da Genazzano, who visited Viterbo in 1485, influenced Giles to join the Augustinian Hermits in 1488 (Signorelli 1929, 2). In 1489, his discernment year for the order, he was sent to Amelia in Umbria to teach philosophy. The following year he resumed his studies, not in Viterbo but at the college of Saints Philip and James, the Augustinian *studium generale* in Padua, a center of humanism, Averroistic philosophy, and Thomistic theology. Giles did not remain neutral within that philosophical diversity; for while in Padua he published three treatises of Giles of Rome, including *De intellectu possibili contra Averroem*, which has been seen as Giles's first stand against Averroistic Aristotelianism, a position he would hold through the rest of his life (O'Malley 1968, 41). There is no record of precisely when he was ordained to the priesthood.

Giles also attended lectures by Agostino Nifo, the physician and philosopher who taught at the University of Padua from 1492 to 1499. From Nifo he was already learning to develop a broader philosophical outlook by being exposed to Platonic ideas and lore from the mystical teachings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. After Padua, Giles went to study with Marsilio Ficino in Florence, probably during the winter of 1494–1495, and further cultivated Platonic theology against Aristotelianism and Aristotle's Arabic commentator Ibn Rushd (Averroes), whose writings had been translated into Latin in the thirteenth century.

By 1497, Giles's Platonic reading of Christian theology was in evidence at Rome during his examination for the *magisterium*, i.e., teaching license, in theology. His range of experience continued to widen. He rose to prominence as an

orator and in 1498 preached before Pope Alexander VI. He was living in Naples between 1499 and 1501, at first seeking a solitary life but eventually becoming a member of Giovanni Pontano's literary circle, where he also worked to present Christian doctrine to his colleagues by using analogies drawn from classical poetry and mythology and Plato's dialogues. He also composed Italian lyrics and started working on an extended prose work in the vernacular titled *Cyminia*, after the fashion of Masuccio Salernitano's trendsetting *Novellino*, published in 1476. Marc Deramaix (Deramaix 1990a–1991) has shown how Giles influenced the poet Jacopo Sannazaro, also a member of the Pontanian circle.

On witnessing political intrigue in Naples, Giles resolved to return to the north of Italy, staying with the friars of Lecceto near Siena in 1503. He continued to study the classics, decorating his writings with abundant classical quotations. He considered it no detriment to Christian revelation to use classical analogies when illustrating God's dealings with the human race. Giles's modern biographer, Francis Martin, concludes that Giles was firmly committed to expounding the Christian message but wished to express himself through classical images and language (Martin, 1992, 160). Later in 1503, during a retreat on the Martana isle near Viterbo, he studied the *Iliad* and composed his own eclogues modeled after Vergil's pastoral hexameters but treating biblical themes. Over the course of his lifetime, his philosophical studies encompassed Aristotle's philosophy and scholastic theology, Ficinian Platonism, ancient Greek literature and Greek patristics, Hebrew and Aramaic, and Jewish mysticism from Elias Levita and later Baruch of Benevento. At his death in 1532, he was probably the most skilled reader of Hebrew among his European contemporaries.

His diverse interests and keen intellect cultivated in the principal cities of Italy including Rome, Naples, Florence, and Siena may overshadow but should not obscure the considerable part of his life spent in administrative and pastoral service. He was elected prior general of his order three times and served as a papal diplomat. In 1506, after his appointment as vicar general, he

again looked to the Augustinian convent at Lecceto but this time to promote his own reform efforts. His interest in scriptural studies also grew steadily, with his election as prior general in 1507 cited by Francis Martin as bringing about a kind of conversion away from the study of secular literature. When he became prior general, he had to negotiate with Martin Luther during Luther's visit to Rome in 1511.

In 1512, Giles gave the address that opened the Fifth Lateran Council. He was well on the way toward his eventual appointment as cardinal in 1517. Giles served as prior general of the Augustinian Hermits until 1519. In 1523, at the height of the West's re-enchantment with ancient Greek language, letters, thought, and art, Pope Clement VII (1478–1534) awarded Giles the Latin titular patriarchate of Constantinople. It was a solid choice, and while the appointment of a Latin patriarch was something of an affront to Orthodox Christians, Giles was a philhellene in the broadest sense of the term despite his vision for a new Golden Age under Rome. Many considered him *papabilis*, a worthy candidate for the papacy.

Giles of Viterbo is thus a complex figure partly because of the many roles he played and partly because of the diverse traits his life and works exhibit. Francis Martin's description of Giles as "a Renaissance person with none of Erasmus's disdain for relics" (Martin 1992, 61) captures both Giles's modernity and traditionalism. Owing to Italy's cultural climate, Giles was revered by some of his contemporaries for his religious and secular learning and his ability to read Christian teachings into the ancient myths. For others, however, Giles was just another paganizer of the Gospel. Similarly, despite evidence that Giles took interest in practical matters, as when in 1508 he preached to the prostitutes of Rome, he has commonly been cast as a man of ivory-tower abstractions, "a polished priest of Renaissance circles." A zealous reformer who kept his allegiance to papal authority, Giles has nevertheless also suffered from neglect in the past by Catholic historians largely because as prior general from 1511 to 1518, he was Martin Luther's superior. Francis Martin attempted to determine the proper balance among these

images, the one that corresponds closest to the documentary evidence. In any analysis, Giles is seen as a full beneficiary of the intellectual opportunities of High Renaissance Italy; what he made of them is disputed.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Throughout his life Giles's ever-expanding intellectual horizons remained connected to his formative theological training in late medieval scholasticism. "Scholasticism" represents the prevailing method in theology and philosophy in medieval European universities and religious houses of study. Scholastics approached truth through dialectical reasoning and sought to address questions of philosophy and theology systematically and to distinguish truth presented as divine revelation from knowledge derived from human reason. Aristotle's writings generally provided the philosophical foundation; but there was an effort to reconcile his teachings with the pre-Socratics, Plato, and later philosophical schools.

Giles left a record of his use of Aristotle's writings and acceptance of the Stagirate's teachings, but at the same time he expressed overt and often hostile criticism of many "errors." Letters he wrote in 1503, for example, when he was completing his disputations at Rome for the doctorate in theology, show both practices. John Monfasani has recently shown that by 1507, Giles was even preparing for publication an index of the errors of Aristotle where, working from a large miscellany of over 600 folios wherein he had itemized Aristotle's teachings, Giles had appended a topical index of the Philosopher's "errors" on matter, time, and eternity from the works indexed in the collection: *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *De caelo*, and *De generatione and corruptione*. Giles's index project does not address Aristotle's works on the soul, logic, ethics, rhetoric and other topics, and Monfasani suggests that at the time Giles was occupied with the errors in the four works mentioned and then ordered a copy of Cardinal Bessarion's defense of Plato (the *In calumniatorem Platonis*) in preparation for the

publishing of his own *index errorum*. Monfasani then posits that after reading Bessarion, Giles considered his own project redundant and abandoned it.

During this time Giles was also busy writing his commentary on the first book of Peter Lombard's *Libri sententiarum*. His particular interest in Lombard's text, the principal textbook for theology, is also evident in a series of sermons he delivered in 1502, where he followed the division of the four books of the *Sententiae*: Book 1 on the Trinity, providence, good, and evil; Book 2 on creation, angels, demons, and the fall of man; Book 3 on redemption and virtue; and Book 4 on the sacraments and eschatology. The commentary project could have been undertaken as routine, a required academic rite of passage for all professional Catholic theologians, as it had already been for centuries. Instead it became the first of three major works of Giles which can each be considered theological and philosophical at their core. The detail of his treatment of each question is evident in his only having reached the 18th distinction of Book 1, on the Trinity. Giles worked on the *Sentences* commentary intensely from 1506 to 1510. He continued to work on it for another 2 years before administrative duties and other interests but also a general sense of having reached a conclusion of contribution to the theology of the divine Trinity, militated against continuation of that project.

Citing Aristotle as an authority but also openly criticizing him was a practice that accompanied the reintroduction of Aristotle's writings into the West, as Luca Bianchi has shown (Bianchi 1994). If refuting Aristotelianism in its *pagan* dimensions was a lifelong campaign for Giles, his formal theological and philosophical education nevertheless accommodated Aristotelian concepts as mediated chiefly by the writings of Thomas Aquinas and other scholastic theologians. The greater complexity of assessing Giles's philosophy with respect to the Thomistic tradition is evident. As mentioned, early in his theological career, Giles edited three works of Giles of Rome (ca. 1247–1316), a student of Thomas Aquinas who became the first noteworthy theologian of the Augustinian Hermits. Why did Giles of

Viterbo devote himself to Giles of Rome? Eugenio Massa interpreted Giles's intention as "to liberate theology from the systematic foundation it had under medieval Scholasticism and establish a new humanistic theology; and this may have been a factor in Giles's interest in Giles of Rome," since Giles of Rome was not completely subservient to Aquinas, but he did build on his teacher's foundation. Massa, who edited a small portion of Giles's *Sentences* commentary, considered the Viterbian's withdrawal from scholasticism in the period of his writing that treatise as gradual and only partially successful, as he judges from changes in the commentary. Massa suggested that its composition falls into three periods, as he saw reflected in the author's style and works cited. The first period would be that of the first chapters. There Giles is more elliptical, more concerned with scholastic problems. The second and the third periods produce the chapters concerning the processions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, composed between 1509 and 1512. Massa senses an increasing reaction against scholasticism in the commentary as it progresses (Massa 1951, 37–38).

John O'Malley has pointed to Giles's interest in other Augustinian scholastics besides Giles of Rome, including Gregory of Rimini (c. 1300–1358), James of Viterbo (c. 1250 – c. 1307), and Hugolino of Orvieto (c. 1300–1373). O'Malley holds that Giles did not, contrary to what many would expect, "reject the scholastics as too tainted with Aristotle and too rigorously systematized for him to be able to tolerate." Giles, in his *Sentences* commentary and elsewhere, rather "follows in a general way the topics treated by the great scholastics, and, although his manner of argument is different from theirs, his conclusions are not so distinctive as we might have anticipated" (O'Malley 1968, 62). O'Malley even notes what he calls a strange anomaly, that as an administrator, Giles promoted the study of scholastic theology "with an insistence truly remarkable for somebody convinced that the properly Christian philosophy was that of the Ficinian Plato." Giles was sufficiently versed in scholastic categories, method, and terminology early on for it to be a component of all of his

later thought. There is still uncertainty about the degree of Giles's knowledge of the scholastics, owing to the scarcity of citations of a scholastic theologian as an authority and the apparent inability of Giles to distinguish among the detailed teachings of the various writers. Now that the complete text of the *Sentences* commentary has been published (Nodes 2010), scholars are able to search for textual parallels with Aristotle and Aquinas and compare them in detail with the many places where Giles either overtly refutes or seeks to build upon the scholastic tradition.

Here we suggest that Giles's effort was toward a broad and aspirational synthesis that included but was not subservient to scholasticism or even principally interested in it. To illustrate, the synthesis of scholastic and Platonic approaches to theological issues is especially evident in Giles's writings on the soul and its faculties such as sense perception, will, intellection, and memory. By the fourteenth century, philosophers and theologians had in large measure turned their attention away from questions about the soul and its faculties and became more interested in questions about human cognition. Faculty psychology, however, continued to prove useful as an analogy. The reintroduction of Aristotelian psychology in the thirteenth century, with commentaries on Aristotle by Muslim scholars, had brought other images to the forefront for later medieval Christians to consider when presenting the soul's faculties as analogous to the relationship among the persons in the Trinity. Aristotle's *De anima*, II.3, identifies three species or aspects of soul in succession: vegetative, sensitive, and rational, relating them to the ordered progression of numbers and geometric figures from one to the next. Aristotle's distinction among vegetative, sensitive, and rational faculties had been reflected in the writings of Augustine of Hippo but was now reintroduced to the West from a non-Christian context. The three aspects still gave Christian theologians the opportunity to develop the Trinitarian analogy.

In order to exploit the analogy's potential, two questions were mainly discussed. The first asks whether there is any proper ordering among the faculties. The second asks whether one faculty may be said to originate from another faculty.

Using analogies from nature to describe the relation of the persons in the Trinity is of limited value since it risks introducing concepts of superiority and subordination on the one hand, and the introduction of time as a factor on the other hand, thereby failing to represent the doctrine of the Trinitarian persons as coequal and coeternal, yet possessing real distinction and an order of origin among themselves.

The common solution to those limitations was to present several orderings from different perspectives. Thomas Aquinas introduced his account of the ordering of the faculties by repeating the two basic principles of order that Christian doctrine rejects as ways to understand the ordering of the divine persons in the Trinity: namely, ordering the divine persons according to their coming into being “in time” and ordering in terms of a simple causality. When he turns to consider the human faculties, he first acknowledges arguments against ordering based on origin in time, because all of the faculties are simultaneous and present in the soul from its creation. Thomas then acknowledges arguments against their ordering being one of simple causality, since “one faculty is not the subject of another faculty, because an accident cannot be the subject of an accident. Therefore, one faculty does not arise from another.” Then, to explain how their ordering can be properly understood as according to origin, Thomas presents a concept of ordering by development, where each faculty precedes that faculty which it prepares for action. Thus the nutritive powers precede the sensory, and the sensory the rational. Natural ordering, however, reverses that sequence and considers the rational powers before the sensory powers, and the sensory before the nutritive. Each faculty’s domain of influence reverses the pattern again: the domain of the nutritive is the body only and that of the sensory is the body and beyond; then there are rational faculties whose domain is data from the sensory world as well as the metaphysical realm of being. The scheme of showing multiple perspectives lays a foundation for preserving in even greater measure the dynamic aspect of the relation of the persons of the Trinity.

By Giles’s time, scholasticism was increasingly criticized as an exercise in logomachy. Philipp Melanchthon, one of the bitterest critics of scholasticism, for example, summarized the turmoil over the organic faculties responsible for sense perception as *magna et inepta* in his own *Liber de anima* (Melanchthon 1540, 36). But even Melanchthon continued to speak of will, cognition, memory, and judgment as “interior faculties” in that text. The fifteenth-century German Carthusian Gregor Reisch, author of the influential textbook *Margarita philosophica*, was another scholar who voiced the Aristotelian doctrine that “All our knowledge is derived from the senses.” He continued to speak of three sense types in his doctrine of the powers: external (the five senses), internal (serving as a bridge), and intellection (dealing with universals). Giles, like his contemporaries, treats the human faculties not as an issue in itself but insofar as their relationship to one another can serve as an analogy of the relationship among the persons of the Trinity. Particularly in commentaries on the *Sentences*, the ongoing usefulness of the faculties as a way to approach a principal mystery of the Christian faith is evident.

Giles, however, adapts elements from the Platonic myth to the general framing of the questions by Aristotelian scholasticism. He introduces a moral dimension to the discussion and shows the moral significance of a search for ordering among the faculties by invoking Book 4 of Plato’s *Republic*. Where Thomas and Aristotle appealed to logic, Giles (along with Plato) emphasized that learning the correct ordering of the faculties will prevent the soul from suffering harm and experiencing misery, because the soul will know which faculties should rule and which should serve. Plato had compared the relation of the parts of the soul to the functioning of a kingdom. In that analogy, as Giles notes, “Reason is likened to a king, soldiers to self-regard or emotion, and the populace to appetite” (Nodes ed. 2010, 203). But then Giles continues the strategy of presenting alternative orderings. For example, according to ordering of action, the senses are the first to act and they inform reason, and reason in turn stirs the will. After several orderings, Giles adds an

illustration drawn from poetry and myth, as he does at the end of every question he discusses in the commentary. Here he points to Homer's presentation of Venus/Aphrodite as the goddess representing the power of love or the human will "overcome by Athena, wounded by Diomedes, and mocked by Zeus". This reflects the ordering according to externals, which put reason and sense perception above the will. However, in Virgil, Giles writes, the divine ordering according to nature and perfection is observed, since primacy of place and *imperium sine fine* is given to the offspring of Venus, again representing love and will. Giles's main emphasis in connection with the Trinity is well served as he is able to proclaim a natural ordering of the faculties amid a dynamic relationship.

That is how Giles prepared the context to present the second question, one faculty's origin from another. As he notes, in order to reflect the Trinity, the faculties must originate one from the other, as the Son and Spirit originate from the Father. Giles asks "But how will [the faculties] present themselves as an image and likeness of the Trinity, unless one proceed from the other?" (Nodes, ed. 2010, 206). Giles recalls the Aristotelian procession or generation of one number from another and then presents a parallel case of the progression from the good, to knowledge of the good, to the desire for [love of] the good, again recalling Augustine's highest psychological analogies for the Trinity.

Using this pattern of blending Aristotelian and Platonic and scholastic and humanist traditions, Giles enriches the medieval legacy of abstract dialectic on both questions. He begins with scholastic disputation and ends with poetic exegesis. In the final analysis, he does not negate one scheme or another but reinforces a single interpretation of a tradition that connects the human soul and its divine creator amid manifold systems of expression. He also presents an eloquent lesson in happiness that comes by learning the proper ordering of the faculties.

Giles's reserved attachment to the basic structures of scholasticism continued when he wrote the *Historia viginti saeculorum*, his second major

philosophical work, and the *Scechina*, his third and last, in which he sought to reconcile Jewish mysticism with Christianity. Even toward the end of his life when his occupation with the cabbala had diminished his regard for the Latin theological tradition, Giles was still thinking in terms of the traditional scholastic categories. Many of Giles's conclusions are not so different from those derived by the Scholastics and may even have been derived from his Renaissance contemporaries like Ficino. This contributes to findings that have emerged in recent decades, showing more harmony existed between scholastic culture and at least the mid- to late Renaissance environment to which Giles belonged than previously acknowledged.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The divergent views of Giles's life and work stem from his lifelong efforts to discover in Greek myth and Jewish mysticism the same fundamental truths he found in the Bible and Christian doctrine. Giles knew that the work of cultural synthesis in which he participated was an ancient but often controversial tradition. He knew the early Greek allegorizations of Homeric myth. He knew the writings of Jewish and Christian philosophers who, influenced by Neoplatonism, interpreted the biblical account of humanity's creation in God's image as testimony to the rational soul's transcendent nature. He admired Origen's allegorical exegesis of the Bible as well as Ficino's mystical allegories. Yet Giles could not inherit a fully formed and universally accepted interpretive method for scripture, or myth, or mystical writings, for none existed. He was, moreover, a creative enough thinker to give his own interpretations to the material he chose to study. He believed that pre-Christian *arcana* held the universal truths about the human condition which were more fully revealed in the Scriptures.

Giles's *Sentences* commentary, despite its connection to scholastic categories, was nevertheless a reaction to scholasticism in an effort to restore a theology that was literary, alive, and ethical, more

like that of the patron of Giles's order, Augustine of Hippo. And although Eugenio Massa suggested that Giles only gradually became less comfortable with scholasticism late in his commentary project, Giles took a distinct stance from the earliest pages of the commentary. From the first sections of that treatise, there is a conscious application of its title *ad mentem Platonis*, which attests to Giles's commitment to a new method with mystical and poetic dimensions that grow above the dialectical roots.

Giles's voluntarism transcending natural law and his method of interpretation using grammar, myth, and allegory transcending dialectic thus reflect an eclectic humanistic perspective. In that difficult attempt at synthesis, however, there is a dominant element. In the final analysis, the method Giles prefers is literary rather than dialectical and humanistic rather than scholastic. Myth and allegory are preeminent, and Giles concludes every section of the commentary by applying them to the topic under consideration. Giles tried to bring a scholastic theological exercise like writing a *Sentences* commentary into harmony with Platonic philosophical reflection and to introduce classical myths to illustrate those theological truths. While there is some validity in the aforementioned description of Giles as "a man of ivory tower abstractions" motivated partly by a desire to display his erudition in papal court circles, he was even more genuinely a sincere promoter of Plato's philosophical idealism as the closest approximation in the pre-Christian world to Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the redemption, and the soul's natural immortality. Giles labored to inject that theological vision into a revitalized contemporary culture replete with ancient wisdom and thus again made whole (Nodes 2015). While Thomas Aquinas privileged the intellect for its ability to bring the soul to a contemplation of the divine essence which is its end, Giles, true to his Augustinian tradition, privileges the will, since it is what sets the soul in motion toward union with the beatific vision. But Giles goes further; true to his classical humanist worldview, he reads classical Greco-Roman myths in a manner so as to illustrate

what the soul's union with the beatific vision looks like, which both Peter Lombard, the scholastic father of the *Sentences*, and even Augustine, who was critical of pagan culture, would never have done.

"Eclectic" can be used to describe Giles's integrative work, but that both aids understanding and serves as an occasion for disagreement about Giles's project. Whenever that term has been taken as equivalent to "paganizer," Giles has been seen as fusing together several different forms of beliefs and practices into one system of belief. When it is taken as more akin to "harmonizer," Giles's campaign can be seen as revealing the mystery of the Trinitarian Godhead in pagan and Jewish texts. The range resembles C. J. de Vogel's taxonomy of Christianity as related to Platonism (De Vogel 1985), which spans five degrees, from total rejection to fargoing acceptance joined with transformation. In this schema, Giles fits best in the fifth category, as corroborated by Giles's own opinion of Plato as "a philosopher who indeed approaches so very closely to divine matters, so delights in them, so takes our side, that it no longer seems that it should be said about Philo that 'either Philo is speaking like Plato,' but 'either Plato is speaking like a Christian,' or more truly, 'is speaking like Moses'" (Nodes 2010, 274; Borriello-Vitale eds. 2016, 485). In his *Sentences* commentary, Giles validates aspects of ancient Hellenic philosophy's preliminary conceptions of God and God's relation to humanity. He reminds readers, for example, that the Apostle Paul had pointed out how the Greek philosophers had received revelation from God: "Paul, speaking about the Greek philosophers, interprets what God revealed to them. Wherefore what God revealed even to the philosophers was not a departure from the truth, and to those especially whose philosophy was not at odds with the knowledge of the prophets" (Nodes 2010, 112). Acceptance of that relationship does not lead Giles to equate Christian theology and ancient Greek religion but rather to discover elements of Christian meanings in the ancient Greek myths, as Gemistos Plethon had attempted to do.

Giles's syncretism is best seen as an effort to harmonize philosophical and mythical traditions with the Christian mystery, so that they are seen to bear witness to Christian revelation. Giles saw his work as finding the same truths about God, and the human soul expressed in the Bible also reflected in texts of Homer, Plato, and Vergil. As the scholastics harmonize current knowledge about Aristotle with the church fathers, so Giles harmonizes Plato, Homer, and Vergil with them. Giles, however, did not quite go as far as some of his contemporaries like Pico della Mirandola, who sought to harmonize all religious traditions, including Islam. Yet one can speculate that with a longer life and under less-threatening historical circumstances, Giles might also have looked more closely into the Koran and its tradition for those places where there could be discoverable harmony with the message of Christ.

After 1512, when Giles turned from writing the commentary on Peter Lombard, he entered his second large project in 1513, the *Historia viginti saeculorum*, dedicated to Pope Leo X. Again Giles envisaged a major undertaking, in this case a Christian interpretation of human history from beginning to end, divided into 20 periods. The autograph copy of this work (Naples, Bib. Naz., Cod. IX. B. 14) contains the subtitle "per totidem digestis psalma," reflecting Giles's intention to correlate the history of the work of divine providence in each of the ages of mankind with the verses of a psalm. Continuity with scholasticism's categories of God, creation, good and evil, angels, and final things is evident in these later works; yet Giles does not present a scientific or documentary history but rather a compendium of lore studded with moral observations. Marc Deramaix is one of the recent scholars who have shown aspects of the way in which Giles's *Historia* points out the traits of a secret divine knowledge whose truth seems perfectly corroborated by the consistent and parallel revelations he marks out in Plato, Pythagoras, Vergil, and even Etruscan lore. Scholars have long known that the Etruscan matter was culled from false information presented in the *Antiquitates* of Annio da Viterbo. Giles's *Historia*

still awaits a full critical edition although sections of the work where Giles is critical of the worldliness of Alexander VI's and Julius II's pontificates were published in 1854 by K. A. C. Höfler (1854), and extracts are printed in a history of the papacy by M. Creighton in 1887 (Creighton 1887, 279–289).

Giles worked on the *Historia* until 1518, when he turned his attention to this third large project, the *Scechina*. The word is an Italian transliteration of the Hebrew for God's glorious presence to the human race. It is the last of the ten Sefiroth, the emanations within the Godhead culminating in his presence among mankind. Giles derived this knowledge from the Cabbala "tradition," a form of gnosis that is expressed as a series of symbolic reflections on God. The Cabbala had a great influence on Giles, especially for what it was thought to reveal about the divine nature, and the interpretation of the Bible and, to a lesser but still significant degree, the coming of the Messiah. This mysticism stands against the analytical philosophy of medieval Jewish scholars, chief among whom was Maimonides, who worked to reconcile Judaism with Greek philosophy, much as did Gregory Palamas in the Christian Greek East.

Impact and Legacy

John O'Malley pointed out that Giles represented one of the last great figures in the Observantist movement that swept over the mendicant orders in the late Middle Ages. He was a well-regarded preacher and orator. He opened the fifth Lateran Council in 1512 with a maxim that sounded the fundamental norm for church reform: "Men are to be changed by religion, not religion by men" (O'Malley 1968, 14). He was on familiar terms with several High-Renaissance popes, including Leo X, by whom he was raised to the rank of cardinal. Was Giles responsible in part for the iconography of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling or even Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura? The thesis was pioneered by Heinrich Pfeiffer and

embraced by present-day art historians including Meredith Gill and Ingrid Rowland.

For all his intellectual energy and range of talents and interests, however, Giles has remained more of a marginal figure than his deep learning seems to deserve. It could be that his great reach and eclecticism itself had less impact than if he had followed one line of inquiry more consistently. Although he was the most accomplished Western Hebrew scholar in his day, and was personally responsible for introducing the Zohar version of cabbalistic tradition to European attention, he is given less credit than deserved for being a pioneer in Hebrew studies. He practiced the kind of ecumenism with which modern Christians who are comfortable with the relative merits of world religions now take for granted.

Giles worked to bring not only the eponymous founder of his Augustinian order into greater prominence but the early church fathers in general. Giles's leadership of the Augustinian order at the start of the Protestant Reformation as precipitated by Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk himself, was once thought to be a condition for Giles to have influenced Luther's reform theology. Jules Paquier's study in the 1920s, however, found little correspondence between Luther's doctrines and Giles's. In Giles's period, however, Augustine's writings became increasingly available through the publication of printed editions along with Origen, Chrysostom, Lactantius, and other early Christian leaders. And while Roman Catholic theology gradually centered itself on Aquinas and medieval scholasticism, the movement to revive the Eastern and Western fathers, a project in which Giles participated vigorously, also made a keen impact on subsequent directions in theology and practice.

Giles was also a Hellenist in the sense that, although a champion of the Roman papacy, he promoted reform efforts that included a closer study of the Greek Fathers and the theology of the Eastern Church. "That [Greek] nation," he wrote, "in all the world has been either the discoverers or promoters of every kind of branch of learning, and they seem therefore most worthy of protection and defense rather than accusation or

summoning to trial. Further, they have been the preeminent leaders and teachers even of the Latin theological writers" (Nodes 2010, 422).

Because of the many influences and complex crosscurrents of traditions, defining Giles's principal aims and vision remains elusive. While the focus on one person may be thought to open only a small window on the history of Christianity, however, the window in this instance gives view of a larger trend in the Church's complex cultural history through this high cleric's appropriation of Ficinian Platonism and Jewish mysticism into the Roman curia during the High Renaissance and the dawn of the Reformation. Had Giles become pope or been more influential in the curia, or even had his writings been made more widely available, the course of the Protestant Reformation or Catholic efforts at counterreform might have had a different character.

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Allegory in Renaissance Literature](#)
- [Augustinianism](#)
- [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism](#)
- [Melanchthon, Philipp](#)
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Giraldi Cinthio, Giovan Battista

Born: Ferrara, 30 November 1504

Died: Ferrara, 30 December 1573

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Abstract

Giraldi's education was based, as was often the case in the humanist age, on an integral concept of knowledge, a complementarity of philosophical-scientific and rhetorical-literary disciplines, promoted mainly by Guarino Veronese (fifteenth century) in Ferrara. The entire

Giraldian literary production (from tragedy to epic, from tales to treatises) reflects this approach and aims at reconciling classical philosophy (mainly Plato, Aristotle, and Seneca) with Christian and Counter-Reformation thinking. Giraldian cultural activity developed from the 1520s to the year of his death, 1573. This was a period of crucial historical and political events (the Sack of Rome of 1527, the European wars for the conquest of the Italian peninsula, the Lutheran Reformation, and the Counter-Reformation) and of significant literary and linguistic debates, in which Giraldi took an active part, with speeches, epistles, treatises, destined to leave their mark on European literature.

Alternate Names

[Giraldi, Cinzio](#)

Biography

Son of the Ferrarese Cristoforo Giraldi and the Piedmontese Lucia Mombelli, Giraldi graduated on June 20, 1531, from the Faculty of Arts and Medicine of the University of Ferrara. His teachers were Celio Calcagnini (for rhetoric), Soccino Benzi (for dialectics and physics), Niccolò Leonicensi (for moral philosophy) and Giovanni Manardi (for medicine). After his graduation, Giraldi practiced medicine for a while, alongside his teachers, also assisting Ludovico Ariosto during his illness until his death in 1533. In the meantime, he taught philosophy at the Ferrarese university until at least 1541, when he began teaching Rhetoric, replacing Celio Calcagnini, who died that year. Several introductory lectures to his academic courses testify to Giraldi's didactic commitment: the *praelectiones* on Aristotle's *De anima*, on Cicero's *De natura deorum* and on *De oratore* (all preserved in Ferrara, at the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, ms. Cl. I 377). In Ferrara, Giraldi also became a member of the "Accademia degli Elevati" ("Academy of the Elevated") that was founded in Alberto

Lollio's house on May 1, 1540, and dissolved a few years after the death of its main supporter, Celio Calcagnini (Gallo 2013: 312, no. 17). The "Elevati" promoted a fusion of poetry-oratory-philosophy (Gallo 2013: 324–326) that also characterized the project of the "Accademia dei Filareti" ("Academy of the Filareti"), founded by Vincenzo Maggi in 1554 of which Giraldi was also a member (Gallo 2013: 313–314, no. 18). In 1541 Giraldi started his dramatic work in Ferrara, where a vivacious theatrical tradition was well established. His first tragedy (*Orbecche*) was staged in his own home, in 1541, with a sumptuous set (Doglio 2013) and was published later, in 1543 (Giraldi 1543b, 1988) with many successive reprintings during his lifetime. The other eight tragedies (*Altile*, *Antivalomeni*, *Arrenopia*, *Cleopatra*, *Didone*, *Epizia*, *Eufimia*, *Selene*) were published only after Giraldi's death and edited by his son Celso (see Giraldi 1583; modern edition: Giraldi 1985a, 1992, 1996a, 1999a, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008).

On January 20, 1547, Giraldi became ducal secretary of Ercole II of Este. The diplomatic missions carried out by this honorary appointment are testified by speeches in favor of the doges Lorenzo and Girolamo Priuli (unpublished, but to be found in Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, ms. Cl. I 377, 4 and 5), of Marco Antonio Trevisano and Francesco Venier and on the occasion of the death of Francis I king of France (see Giraldi 1553, 1554a). His prestigious role in the Estense court did not stop Giraldi from dedicating himself intensely to literature, elaborating and publishing *Discorsi intorno al comporre de i romanzi, delle comedie e delle tragedie* (Giraldi 1554b; see Giraldi 1999c, 2002). This work presents a remarkable reflection on literary genres, arising from his own experimentation and coeval production. Giraldi's works include almost all genres: tragedy (Giraldi 1583); comedy (*Eudemoni*, unpublished in his lifetime; the autograph copy is in Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, Cl. I 407; see Giraldi 1999b); lyric poetry (composition in Latin – *silvae*, elegies, eclogues, epigrams, etc. – collected in Giraldi 1537, 1540, and vernacular poems collected in *Le fiamme*: Giraldi 1547); epic (the unfinished heroic poem *Ercole*; see

Giraldi 1557); satyr-play (*Egle*: Giraldi (1545); see Giraldi 1985b; Cremante 1988); tales (*Gli Ecatommiti*: Giraldi 1565; see Giraldi 2012); treatises (as well as *Discorsi* mentioned above, *Dialoghi della vita civile* included in *Ecatommiti* – see below – and *Discorso intorno a quello che si conviene a giovane nobile per servire un gran principe*: see Giraldi 1569, 1989); historiography (*Commentariolum* – see Giraldi 1556 – and *Historiae suorum temporum*, unpublished, whose autograph copy is kept in Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, ms. Cl. I. 377); epistolary (private letters, and also many meant for literary circulation; for their contents and forms: see Giraldi 1996b), among which the elegant consolatory letter to Gabriele Ariosto for the death of his son Flaminio, who should have acted in the Giraldian tragedy *Altile*, but was murdered shortly before the play was staged (see Giraldi 1543a, 1996b: 186–196).

After the death of Ercole II Este in 1559, Giraldi's prestigious position at court began to change because the new duke, Alfonso II Este, favored intellectuals of the new generation and in particular Giovan Battista Pigna (1530–1575). In a short time Pigna, who had been Giraldi's pupil, became the ducal secretary, while Giraldi was slowly marginalized, to the point of being forced to move and devote himself to his literary profession elsewhere. After Pigna accused his teacher of plagiarism (Pigna's *I Romanzi* was published at the same time as Giraldi's *Discorso intorno al comporre de i romanzi*: see Pigna 1554, 1997), a controversy was ignited which is still the subject of study among the literary critics (Benedetti 1998; Ferroni 2013; Jossa 2013). In March 1563 Giraldi moved to Mondovì, in Piedmont, where he was invited by Duke Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy to teach rhetoric at the newly established university there. But after a few years in Mondovì, Giraldi was disappointed by the cultural policy of the Duke of Savoy, who favored the teaching of the Jesuits. For this reason and for the severe climate of the region that affected his health, Giraldi moved to Pavia in 1569, where he taught rhetoric at its university and became a member of the town's "Accademia degli Affidati" ("Academy of the Entrusted"). In 1573 he returned to

Ferrara, where he died in December of the same year.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Giraldi's literary work shows a strong theoretical orientation and an experimental tendency linked to a pedagogical concept of literature. Giraldi operated on solid ideological premises and elaborated the theory that literary genres must evolve and change according to the requirements of the historical moment of their authors. The aim was to have an impact on ethical, political and social progress. This concept is the opposite of an idea of literature inspired by rhetorical principles, fixed and universal, as among the neo-Aristotelians. These intellectuals thought that from Aristotle's *Poetics* they could extract immovable norms of poetry, in particular where epic and tragedy are concerned. For this reason, Giraldi's plays were criticized and judged as not conforming to Aristotelian rules; he received harsh criticism for his tragedy *Didone*, written and publicly read in 1541 (see Giraldi 1583, *Didone*: 129–137, 1996b: 153–171). He himself argued with his contemporaries in defense of a literary production relating more to their own time than pedantically loyal to tradition.

Giraldi's theory of tragedy is elaborated in his *Discorso intorno al comporre delle comedie e delle tragedie* (Giraldi 1554b, 2002), entirely built on the idea that a play, whether comic or tragic, has to inculcate moral values through a process of identification of the spectator with the protagonists of the action. Therefore, applying the Aristotelian theory of catharsis implies that the events staged have a high degree of consistency and likelihood and that the themes (be they historical or mythical) have a degree of compatibility with the ethical-political issues of the era of a given author. Thanks to the relativity of poetic norms, and with Aristotle's permission, authors can distance themselves from the literary tradition to guarantee the decorum of the matter in question and the pursuit of pedagogical

objectives. This conception does not concern only tragedy, but all literary genres. An example is the Giraldian defense of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* against the harsh criticism of the neo-Aristotelians, who identified in this poem a lack of adherence to the canons of classical poetry. Regarding this matter, Giraldi wrote a letter to Giovan Battista Pigna (Giraldi 1996b: 226–233) in which he refuted all of the criticism leveled against Ariosto. In particular, Giraldi showed how *Orlando Furioso* belongs to a tradition (French and Spanish chivalric epic) different from classical epic, and he recalled all the innovations introduced by Virgil in his *Aeneid* in comparison with the Homeric poems, thus supporting a theory of the evolution of literary forms. Soon after Giraldi wrote a wider treatise on the issue of epic poetry in all its aspects (the *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi*; see Giraldi 1554b, 2002), broadening the reflections expressed in his letter to Pigna. In this treatise he elaborated a theoretical proposal to reconcile narrative unity and variety, better resolved in a poem with a single hero as protagonist with a great variety of actions, all consistently and strongly connected to the main action. This idea was developed later by Torquato Tasso in *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* (1594; see Tasso 1959, book III: 586–92). Giraldi put his theory into practice in *Ercole*, a poem published in 1557 with 26 *canti* instead of the planned 48 (some of these remaining *canti* are preserved in an unpublished manuscript in Ferrara: Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, Cl. I 406; see Giraldi 2016). The subject here is mythological, with encomiastic and celebratory references to Ercole II d'Este, but this poem is also full of pedagogical elements with respect to the moral implications of the "trials" of Hercules, who, having a choice between the flattery of a vicious life and the rigor of a virtuous life, chooses the latter (see Bruscaagli 1991; Jossa 2008; Villari 2015).

Giraldi's pedagogical project found its greatest expression in the *Ecatommiti*, the collection of tales and various themes that was published in 1565 in Mondovi (by the

Compagnia di Stampa, directed by Leonardo Torrentino), after a long period of elaboration (see Giraldi 2012: Villari, introduction, X–XVI). In this work Giraldi fully explains his idea of literature: the narration of 100 (and more) tales develops within a frame modeled on Boccaccio's *Decameron* and is held together by a very articulate and complex structure also containing a philosophical treatise on civil life (the three *Dialoghi della vita civile* are at the center of the collection, between the fifth and the sixth “decade” of tales). The *Ecatommiti* realizes most of all a fruitful mixture of the novelistic genre and the dialogic treatise, so that the theoretical discussion can rely on the *exempla* offered in the tales. These give the author the opportunity to reflect on the motivations of human behavior, to identify the roots of the societal evils, and to propose apt solutions to guide ordinary men toward proper civic conduct and rulers to the right use of judicial and political power. At the base of this elaboration are the fundamental achievements of ancient wisdom, reworked through the filter of Christian morality. The analysis of human vices and virtues based on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which gives concrete examples of how virtue can be located between two extremes of vice (e.g., liberality is situated in the middle between avarice and prodigality; courage between fear and audacity). The definition of the authentic aims of human life is elaborated by reconciling Platonic and Aristotelian thinking, with the contribution of Seneca's philosophy and Patristic literature: the metaphysical perspective of divine good combines with the secular in the pursuit of “felicità civile” (“civil happiness”), that is the practice of virtue in a social context. Independently from possession of material and ephemeral goods, individuals can realize themselves in civic society only by behaving in a virtuous, godly way. This Good is the specific object in the *Dialoghi* of the civil life: the rational soul aspires to leave the bodily “prison” and his ultimate aim is divine contemplation, but in the meantime he has the opportunity to test his virtues and potentialities on earth, in civil life.

This philosophical concept influences the whole project of educating men and founding a new society, through the research of a perfect equilibrium in the relationships between parents and children, masters and servants, rulers and subjects, and a reconciliation between ethics and the “reason of state” (in contrast to the difference between the political and moral spheres, as in Machiavelli). This learning process implies self-knowledge and knowledge of one's “divine” potential. With regard to this, the elaborations of Renaissance and humanist neo-Platonism (see, particularly, Marsilio Ficino, *Theologia platonica*) join the theories formulated in Aristotle's *De Anima*, revisited through the interpretation by S. Thomas Aquinas. Giraldi supported the thesis of the immortality of the rational soul in a university course dedicated to *De Anima*, whose unpublished inaugural lecture is preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea di Ferrara (ms. Cl. I 377). This thesis, based on Thomistic thought, was the only one accepted by the Church. Such *quaestio* is discussed with renewed vigor in the *Ecatommiti*, in the second dialogue of civil life. This theme, in fact, opened the way to the definition of the role of man and of the relationship between virtue, fortune and providence: endowed with the divine gift of free will, man can follow the instincts dictated by the vegetative and sensorial soul, thus becoming similar to plants and beasts, or allow the guidance of the rational soul to become similar to God. Since Giraldi believed that Evil comes from ignorance, he meant to divulge these philosophical concepts and illustrate them with citations and examples in order to create the premises for the knowledge and the awareness of the authentic aims of human life. Moreover, the structure and narration of Giraldi's tales and tragic *fabulae* highlight human responsibility in the outcome of events: in spite of being attacked by Fortune, individuals can in fact demonstrate their virtue in facing adversities with constancy and courage through remaining faithful to ethical and religious values. According to Giraldi, divine providence's design has no impact on human freedom, but constantly stimulates

mankind to always recognize its own divine potential and the possibility to choose between good and evil.

Giraldi dealt with a number of important issues that became the object of discussion at the Council of Trent, earlier reaching conclusions similar to those of the Council. Among these issues it is worth citing the problem of clandestine marriages and the tradition of dueling, both analyzed in the *Ecatommiti*. But one would be mistaken in thinking of Giraldi as submissive to the Counter-Reformation. On the contrary, he always demonstrated openness to dialogue, often frequenting those of dubious Catholic orthodoxy and dissenting openly about the violent and persecutory methods of the Inquisition (see his letter to Egidio Foscherari, bishop of Modena, in Giraldi 1996b, lett. 101: 370–373; see also Horne 1958; Rozzo 2005: 215–240).

Legacy and Impact

Giraldi's literary output is characterized by consistency and ideological depth, and it deserves further study and research in the service of rectifying the widespread critical misunderstandings and devaluations made about his work in the past. The aim of current criticism is to give back to Giraldi Cinzio the credit of having been, in his own time, among the most authoritative protagonists of the Renaissance cultural scene, and for having significantly influenced subsequent European literature.

There is a vast bibliography on Giraldi, his cultural context, his works, and their influence on Italian and European literature. We only indicate (besides the works cited above) the following contribution for the overall bibliography: *Bibliografia giraldiana "vingt ans après,"* ed. by I. Romera Pintor, Madrid, Fundacion Updea, 2018; for bibliographic updates see the online bibliography at the website of *Studi giraldiani. Letteratura e teatro*: see below. For the cultural context as well as the philosophical and political perspectives discussed here see also: Andrioli et al. (2000), Baldassarri (1982), Brusagli (1983), Cremante (1988),

Giulio (2013), Gundersheimer (1973), Javitch (1991), Jossa (1996, 2002), Mazzacurati (1985), Mazzacurati and Plaisance (1987), Moretti and Salmons (1984), Riccò (2008), Sberlati (2001), and Vasoli and Pissavino (2002).

Interconnections

People

Ludovico Ariosto; Giovanni Boccaccio; Celio Calcagnini; Giovanni Mainardi; Guarino Veronese; Homer; Marsilio Ficino; Niccolò Machiavelli; Tommaso d'Aquino; Seneca; Torquato Tasso; Virgil

Topics

Active and Contemplative Life; Aristotelianism; Catharsis Theory; Council of Trent; Counter-Reformation; Ethics; Fortune; Inquisition; Patristic; Platonism; Poetics; Reason of State; Theories of Soul; Thomism; Vice; Virtue; Will, Free

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Giraldi, Cinzio

► [Giraldi Cinthio, Giovan Battista](#)

Góis, Damião de

Born: Alenquer, Portugal, 1502

Died: Alcobaça, Portugal, 1574

Thomas Earle

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Abstract

Góis's unusual life brought him into contact with remote places as a boy, when he met the Ethiopian ambassador to Portugal. As a young man he worked in the service of the Portuguese king in Antwerp and travelled widely in northern Europe, where he met some of the reformers. For five months in 1534, he lived with Erasmus. After study in Flanders and in Italy, where he published his translation of the book of Ecclesiastes into Portuguese, he returned to Portugal where he spent the rest of his life. His last years were troubled by a trial before the Inquisition.

Góis's best-known work, an account of Ethiopia, written in Latin, was published in 1540. In it the principal speaker is an African. The book expresses Góis's interest in distant lands and his religious tolerance, for many of the practices of Ethiopian Christians were regarded as heretical by orthodox Catholics. The book also calls for the unity of all Christians, Protestant and Catholic as well as those living in Ethiopia and in Lapland, an area of northern Scandinavia which is treated in an

appendix. Góis's translation of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes, which survives only in a single copy, is remarkable for its use of Jewish scholarship. In this Góis goes much further than Erasmus, and he may have been the most tolerant man of his age.

Biography

Góis had an extremely unusual and cosmopolitan life by the standards of sixteenth-century Portugal. He became a page at the royal court of King Manuel at the age of 9, and a few years later, in 1514–1515, he met there the Ethiopian ambassador, Matthew, an event which was to influence his subsequent literary career. In 1523 the new king, João III, appointed him as secretary of the Portuguese factory (trading centre) in Antwerp. He continued to live abroad until 1545. Very few other Portuguese had Góis's experience of life in northern Europe during the Reformation. During this time he met Luther and Melancthon and also studied in the universities of Louvain and Padua. In 1534, he spent five months in Freiburg as a guest of Erasmus, and in 1537, assisted the Italian cardinal Sadoletto in his attempts to reconcile moderate reformers with the Catholic Church. In 1545, he returned to Portugal where he subsequently became royal chronicler. However, the political climate had changed and his contacts with Protestants made him an object of suspicion. In 1571–1572, he was tried by the Inquisition and, although subsequently released, the circumstances of his death have never been entirely explained.

Works

During his years outside Portugal Góis wrote and published a number of historical, geographical, and ethnographical works in Latin. One of these, *Fides, religio, moresque Aethiopum* (The Faith, Religion and Customs of the Ethiopians, 1540) was an international best-seller. He also translated Cicero's *De Senectute* (On Old Age) and the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes into Portuguese

(Venice, 1538). Later, as royal chronicler, he published, in Portuguese, two long historical works, the chronicles of Prince João, subsequently King João II (1567) and of King Manuel (1566–1567).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Góis was not a philosopher. However, his work is of interest to the history of thought because of the remarkable religious and racial tolerance which he expresses, very possibly uniquely in the Europe of his day.

The Portuguese had been in contact with sub-Saharan Africa since the early fifteenth century, and black Africans appear frequently in the poetry and drama of the early modern period, as figures of fun. Góis, however, makes the Ethiopian bishop who succeeded Matthew as ambassador to Portugal the main speaker in his *Fides*. In his account of Ethiopian religious life, expressed in correct humanistic Latin, the bishop describes many practices different from those of orthodox Roman Catholicism, but Góis, always tolerant, makes no comment. The bishop also calls for the unity of all Christians. Although in this he was pursuing a specifically Ethiopian agenda (Aubin 1996), his words undoubtedly struck a chord with Góis, who was deeply committed to the inclusion in the Christian family of people of different races, including the Lapps of Scandinavia (Góis 2006a, b).

Innovation and Original Aspects

His two translations, which were published together, imply equivalence between the wisdom of the Bible and of that of classical antiquity. In that the evidence of Erasmus is evident. However, in the translation of the book of Ecclesiastes, which survives in a single copy, Góis goes much further than Erasmus in his attitude to Jewish Biblical scholarship. Erasmus criticized what he calls "the letter that kills," by which he meant the Jewish failure to understand the deeper meaning of the Old Testament. Góis, on the other hand,

praised unreservedly the Hebrew commentary of Ibn Ezra (1089–c.1165), which he knew probably through personal contact with Italian rabbis (Góis 2014).

Impact and Legacy

Góis's *Fides* was banned in Portugal, partly at least because of the perceived similarity between some aspects of Ethiopian religious life and Jewish practice. However, abroad it achieved enormous success (more than 40 copies, in many different editions, in Oxford and Cambridge alone, Earle 2009). The translation of Ecclesiastes, printed secretly in Italy, disappeared from view entirely until its recent rediscovery. On the other hand, the chronicle of the reign of King Manuel, in which Góis also criticizes royal policy towards the Jews, became the standard history of the Portuguese overseas expansion, in the Latin version prepared by Jerónimo Osório (Lisbon 1571) which was widely read internationally.

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Goueanus, Antonius

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Gouvéa, Antoine

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Gouvea, Antonius

► [de Gouveia, Antonio](#)

Gouveanus, Andreas

► [de Gouveia, André](#)

Government, Renaissance Forms of

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Abstract

The Aristotelian sixfold classification of forms of government became the mainstream classification right after the translation of the *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* into Latin in the thirteenth century, and it largely remained so until the end of the sixteenth century. It was used in a variety of contexts (even with regard to the government of the Church) as well as for propagandistic and descriptive purposes alike. However, upon the Latin translation of both Plato's *Laws* and Book VI of Polybius' *Histories*, and

importantly Machiavelli's use of the latter, authors dealt almost exclusively with the topics of monarchy and republican regime. For the most part, authors conceived these two regimes as a mixture of different forms (monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy) in which one prevails over the others, and hence probed deeply into what came to be known as the "mixed regime." In the sixteenth century, the Aristotelian distinction between good and corrupt forms of government started to fade away, and – after Bodin – what classifies a regime as either good or corrupt is the way in which power is exercised. Irrespective of what form they considered the best, all authors conceded that the establishment of a given form is dependent on the prevailing circumstances and therefore every form, other than tyranny, might be legitimate.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In very broad terms, Renaissance authors still hold to the sixfold classification of forms of government set forth in Aristotle's *Politics* (III.7 and IV.2) and *Nicomachean Ethics* (VIII.10–11). This classification, together with the changes it underwent due to its interpretation by medieval Aristotelians, was not challenged until the sixteenth century. It stipulates three basic good forms of government (monarchy, aristocracy, polity) along with their respective corrupt or degenerated forms (tyranny, oligarchy, democracy). This distinction of regimes is based on objective quantitative and qualitative criteria: the number of rulers (one, a few, or many), the aim of the regime (the common good or only the good of the ones that hold power, e.g., the poor or the wealthy), and the requirement of access to public offices (virtue, property qualification, or freedom). The theoretical underpinning of this typology of forms of government is a hierarchy of (not mutually exclusive) goods: moral virtue over external goods, common over partial goods, as well as stability and the preservation of the social order over dissent and social change. As with any

classification of regimes, it is concurrently normative and descriptive. This means, therefore, that it served both as an axiological structure and support for an author's political agenda. Because this framework was employed in a new historical context, one quite foreign to that of Aristotle, and because it also served to legitimize the contemporary political context and social stratification, medieval and Renaissance authors transformed some of Aristotle's ideas regarding each of the forms of government. Perhaps the most striking instance of a distinct use of this typology is the case of the fifteenth-century ecclesiological debates: whereas conciliarist authors such as John of Segovia extensively employed the notion of aristocracy as well as the Aristotelian arguments in favor of the rule of the many over the rule of the one to defend the supremacy of the council over the pope, the opposing side drew on the arguments used in the Aristotelian tradition in favor of monarchy as the best regime (Black 1970). Moreover, Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson applied the notion of "mixed regime" to the Church, which they considered a monarchical rule with aristocratic and democratic elements.

The notion that medieval and Renaissance authors had of each of the forms of government, and why one of them ranks above the others, did not exactly match that of Aristotle. This can be briefly illustrated by taking into account each of the six forms.

Monarchy was conceived as the rule of one virtuous man and as the best regime in absolute terms, though not under every condition (thus it might not be suited for all peoples). This belief was even shared by authors who were not monarchists, such as Savonarola, Gasparo Contarini, Francesco Guicciardini and Donato Giannotti, all of whom stated that other regimes such as aristocracy and polity were better suited to the specific situation they were writing about (Florence and Venice). However, the idea that monarchy was the best regime and implied the highest standard of virtue for both the ruler and the citizens was used against itself: either because it is hard to find a truly outstanding virtuous man or because the

greater part of the citizens fall short of virtue and cannot abide by the best regime. As a result, a republican regime could, under certain circumstances, be much more expedient. Many of the arguments in favor of monarchy originated in medieval political thought prior to Dante and were still widely used by Renaissance authors, sometimes drawing upon arguments from Dante's *Monarchy* (these arguments are discussed in Lambertini 2001). Such arguments include that monarchy is "the most natural" form of rule because it resembles the arrangement of the universe ruled by one God; the organic analogy (the heart governs all other organs and limbs); the analogy to bees and insects that possess only one ruler; or the argument that monarchy is better at keeping the peace, for individual rule permits less dissension and is less susceptible to corruption than rule by several or many men. These kinds of arguments are found in authors as diverse as Coluccio Salutati, Lippo Brandolini, Giovanni Pontano (in his *De obedientia*), Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (in his *De optimo statu*), Erasmus, Claude de Seyssel, Giannotti, and Georges Buchanan. The concept of monarchy englobed the power of the emperor as well as the pope, and the sacrality of kingship and the idea that the king is a *lex animata* remained all throughout the Renaissance. It comes thus as no surprise that humanists might associate the empire with peace and liberty (Lee 2018). The fifteenth century saw a revival of (Roman) imperial ideology in authors such as Antonio Roselli, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, and Peter von Andlau (Burns 1992), but over time the idea of universal monarchy, which owed much to medieval thought, came to be seen negatively, being employed chiefly in polemical and propagandistic contexts, such as the dispute between France and the House of Habsburg (Bosbach 1988).

Aristocracy, the second-best regime, came to be conceived not simply as the rule of a few virtuous men, as Aristotle understood it, but also as the rule of nobility by birth (nobility was understood as an inherited natural inclination toward moral virtue and thus noblemen were for the most part virtuous) and as the rule of the wealthy (this was grounded on the Aristotelian hint that wealth

is a necessary condition for virtuous action). In this way, aristocracy became a regime associated with specific social groups (aristocracy or an urban patriciate), being commonly identified with Venice and referred to within the context of the so-called "myth of Venice." This form of government was mainly discussed in the context of the "mixed regime" – that is, as a constituent of another form resulting from the blending of two or three different forms (see below). Apart from Venetian authors, very few authors preferred this regime. Perhaps the most notable case is John Calvin, who considered an aristocracy tempered with democracy the best form of rule.

The third-best regime, polity, is for Aristotle a mixture of oligarchy and democracy. It is the regime in which neither the wealthy nor the poor have the upper hand and in which the class formed by the middling citizens (i.e., between the wealthy and the poor) is able to rule. In this regime, owning property is a requirement for holding office. This regime is also defined in the *Politics* (III.7, 1279b2–4) as the regime in which the citizens possess arms. It was referred to under different names: polity (*politia*), as in the medieval translation of the *Politics*; timocracy, as in the *Nicomachean Ethics*; mixed regime (*politia mixta*), given its blended character; and republic (*respublica*), following Leonardo Bruni's translation of the *Politics* according to Ciceronian literary standards. As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, in authors such as Ptolemy of Lucca and Bartolus of Sassoferrato, this regime was associated with the Italian free city-states, and, more importantly, it was regarded as the most suitable form for small political communities, while monarchy was more appropriate for larger populations and tracts of land. This regime was first identified with the Venetian state (which was regarded either as an aristocracy or as an aristocratic republic), later with Florence, and – after the translation of Polybius' *Histories* – with the ancient Roman Republic. Note, however, that the greater part of the Renaissance authors envisaged this form of government not as the mixture of oligarchy and democracy, as Aristotle did, but as a mixture of democracy, aristocracy, and even of monarchy (see below). In the Italian cultural

context, it was also identified with the regime that by definition fostered the most moral and political virtues.

Among the corrupt forms of government, the least bad is democracy: the only requirement to hold public offices is to be a free person (or to possess a very small amount of property). Democracy is a corrupt regime because the equality supposed in the distribution of offices does not take account of the merits and virtue of the recipients. Moreover, the poor rule for their own advantage, and the kind of liberty sought is to do whatever one wants. Sometimes democracy retained an ambivalent character for medieval and Renaissance authors, because in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (I.8) it is listed not as a corrupt regime, but merely as one of the four basic forms (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy and oligarchy). In this way, authors such as Engelbert of Admont and, even more so, the fifteenth-century scholastic Alfonso Madrigal (El Tostado), who nevertheless draws on the *Politics*, regarded democracy in positive terms. He reasoned that it was less dangerous than the other regimes because in this case the majority of the citizens are not excluded from power (Toste 2018). Moreover, after the translation of Book VI of Polybius' *Histories*, democracy began slowly to be seen as a good form of government. This has to do with the fact that Polybius viewed democracy as a good form of rule, whose degeneration is ochlocracy, that is, mob rule. By the end of the sixteenth century, some authors had already used the term democracy to refer to the Aristotelian polity or republican regime (Fabio Albergati and John Case).

A more corrupted form than democracy is oligarchy, where a few wealthy individuals govern for their own sake. This was perhaps the regime to which authors paid the least attention; it was sometimes simply interchanged with aristocracy – the idea being that the virtuous noblemen were also wealthy – and oligarchy was principally mentioned within the discussion of the mixed regime.

Finally, the worst regime is tyranny, in which a single ruler governs for his own private good and against the will of the citizens. That the consensus (or lack thereof) and compliance with law are what distinguish a king from a tyrant are repeated

with increasing frequency in the Renaissance. Given their own political reality, medieval authors paid considerable attention to this regime, and Renaissance authors still drew on Bartolus of Sassoferrato's juridical distinctions regarding the tyrant: the tyrant can be either *ex parte exercitii* (he exercises his power tyrannically) or *ex defectu tituli* (having acquired his power unlawfully, by usurpation). In addition, Bartolus speaks of hidden or disguised ways in which tyranny can occur, but this point proved less influential. Renaissance authors might on occasion still frame tyranny in theological terms, that is, as a divine punishment for the sins of the citizens or the king, but such an idea tended to give way to the notion that tyranny was simply one form of government that might result from the degeneration of political life. The numerous humanist mirrors for princes did not engage in discussions about the definition of tyranny; they mostly concentrated on the qualities (virtues and vices) required of the office and on a normative discourse about kingly power.

Apart from the commentators on the *Politics*, authors did not typically elaborate on what defines a form of government or discuss (causes of) the changes of regimes – at least until the early sixteenth century. The definition of a political regime hinged on two elements: *who* holds the power – and thus has the capacity to distribute offices – and the *end* aimed at by the regime. For medieval authors, these two elements confer unity to the regime; if citizens pursue different ends, then sedition arises. Political unity is thus achieved through concord (concerning the *end*) and “political friendship,” which implies the sharing of the same civic values – this is one of the motifs behind the emphasis on friendship found in many humanist mirrors for princes (Ceron 2011). These ideas went unchallenged until Machiavelli. As to the causes of why a form of government is replaced by another – that is, why revolutions occur – some authors drew on Aristotle and maintained that political change arises from disputes about the conception of justice and from how equality is to be understood (numerical or proportional). But irrespective of how Aristotle's understanding was applied, it was generally accepted that political change originated from disputes between the

two main social groups: when one group felt underrepresented and possessed the means to introduce new procedures or limit/expand access to offices, then a change of the rule could occur, for instance, from *signoria* to *comune* (on this, see Meier 1994).

The classification of forms of government is not limited to the mere assumption that there are six forms. Because not everyone is able to attain the highest standards of virtue, more than one form of rule exists. The institution of a given regime also depends on the social composition of each community (whether there are too many poor or wealthy individuals) and on which faction prevails (the plebs, the wealthy, the virtuous); and it cannot be dissociated from anthropology if we assume that different climates, geographical locations, and the motion of the stars can influence the bodily constitution of men, and in this way affect their mores (this assumption runs all through medieval, Renaissance and early modern political thought, including Bodin and Montesquieu). For these reasons, the institution of a given form depends on the circumstances under which it is established. Medieval authors used Aristotelian hylomorphism to argue that not just any form (of government) could be applied to any matter (the people), but rather that matter and form must be reciprocally appropriate. In his *Della repubblica fiorentina*, Giannotti still uses this idea to state that, given its conditions, Florence can only adopt the republican form of rule (Gaille-Nikodimov 2005, 53). It is within this line of thought that in the *Discourses on Livy* (I.55) Machiavelli states that a kingdom cannot be established if there is too much equality and, likewise, a republic cannot arise if too much inequality prevails. Here, it must be stressed that if the form depends on the conditions to which it is applied, then any form can be legitimate and preserved if certain conditions are met and if the citizens wish it so (the exception to this rule is tyranny, which by definition is against the consent of the citizens). Of course, each form has its own way of being preserved as well as its own specific justice and system of laws, and this is understandable given that democratic justice is different from the kind of justice in an aristocracy. Even a

tyranny can, under certain circumstances, be preserved or at least tempered (given that tyranny is always preferable to the state of anarchy).

Forms of government are also assessed according to their ability to maintain political stability: in this sense, monarchy is usually seen as the most stable regime, since one individual cannot disagree with himself. In contrast, democracy is more stable than oligarchy, because whereas in the former there is dissension between the poor and the wealthy, in the latter there is dissension between the poor and the wealthy as well as amongst the ranks of the wealthy (while this was Aristotle's view, not all Aristotelian authors subscribed to it; see Toste 2018, 296–298). However, because democracy was conceived as the rule of the poor, and thus implied the exclusion of patricians from power, it was often more closely associated with tyranny. Even republican authors, both before and after Machiavelli (Paolo Paruta and Guicciardini, for instance), regarded the plebs as an instable class; this was the reason why many authors preferred a form of rule such as the Venetian regime (or, more generally, the *governo stretto* in which the plebs did not take part in power). It became commonplace to think that the participation of the plebs in power increases the danger of tyranny, or something approaching tyranny (a tyranny of discord) (see Villard 2008, 597–605).

Generally speaking, authors tended to state that the rule of the many guaranteed liberty and participation in civic life, while the rule of the one procured social peace and stability. Things in reality were far more complex: many of the dangers and negative implications typically associated with each of the forms of rule were actually present in the others as well. By the late sixteenth century, the question of the best regime dwindled and regimes were praised insofar as they could foster peace. There was also a sense of ideological or partisan appropriation of Aristotle's classification: it also served as a tool to be used in the most varied contexts and for propagandist or polemical intents. This is clear in the Italian context: the *comuni* were often controlled by an oligarchy, but authors never referred to them using such a term (Ricciardelli 2015). Such an ideological use

also explains why the models taken from classical history were so important in the context of “republicanism”: Venice was often associated with Sparta, while Florence was associated with Athens and later with Rome (Cambiano 2007). Authors used Aristotle’s typology of forms of government very freely, and therefore the use of the typology did not involve any strict adherence to Aristotle’s thought. This can be illustrated by means of three examples: Leonardo Bruni identified the Florentine regime with the mixture of aristocracy and democracy (Dees 1987) and in the *Funeral Oration on Nanni Strozzi* equated monarchy with illegitimate rule; Uberto Decembrio described Florence as an oligarchy and, in contrast, Milan – which was a duchy and often associated with tyranny – as a timocracy, reasoning that there the citizens possess military honor (Komorowski 2012, 54–55); Alfonso de Cartagena viewed the city of Toledo as an aristocracy only capable of turning into its opposite, an oligarchy, and thus incapable of transforming into a democracy, which he associated with mob rule and riots like those that took place in Toledo in 1449 – note that for Aristotle any form may change into any other form and not, as Cartagena maintains, only into its opposite (Toste 2018, 333–337). Likewise, the terms “tyranny” and “tyrannical” were often applied as qualifiers to every unjust government and sometimes even employed for polemical purposes (for instance, in his attack on Coluccio Salutati, Antonio Loschi characterized Florence as a tyranny).

The use of the Aristotelian sixfold classification by an author did not mean that he was necessarily an Aristotelian. Authors could draw on Cicero, Sallust, and Roman law to argue for the republican regime, or draw on metaphysical and theological arguments to claim the supremacy of monarchy over the other regimes or even to justify the occurrence of tyranny. Within the discussion of kingly power and virtues, as well as its negative representation, tyranny, authors made significant use of Xenophon, Seneca, and Plutarch. Moreover, even Aristotle was heavily appropriated by authors defending monarchy (Lippo Brandolini, Giovanni Pontano, Guillaume La Perrière) and the republican regime alike (Lauro Quirini, Contarini,

Giannotti, and Bartolomeo Cavalcanti). And the same appropriation of Aristotle to defend the supremacy of one of these two regimes is found within the Renaissance commentary tradition on the *Politics* (Toste 2011). Aristotle provided the general framework, and within this framework he could be used as a source like any other.

These two forms of government – monarchy and the republican regime – polarized the political discourse both in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and it arose almost as a natural consequence that Machiavelli focused exclusively on these two regimes. They were not seen as opposed and competing regimes, at least not until the second half of the fifteenth century (Hankins 2010; it should be noted, however, that there was a line of advocates of elective government who criticized hereditary succession: this line goes from Marsilius of Padua up to Quirini, Bartolomeo Platina, and Machiavelli, all of whom maintained that succession involves degeneration). There is no trace of what has recently been labeled “republican exclusivism” (cf. Hankins 2010), that is, an anti-monarchical stance maintaining that republics are the only legitimate regime. No author defending the republican regime would deny legitimacy to monarchy and vice-versa, and indeed one and the same author – whether Platina, Francesco Patrizi, or Pier Paolo Vergerio – could write two distinct works, one on the republic and the other on monarchy, outlining the benefits of each form of government. It has been argued that the term “republic” came to signify a regime opposed to monarchy after the reintroduction of Tacitus (Wootton 2006), but such a view has been dismissed (Hankins 2010, 470). Moreover, Renaissance writers would not necessarily have considered a monarchy more authoritarian than a republic; since monarchy was conceived as the most stable rule, it was seen as the regime least susceptible to tumults, securing in this way more freedom for its citizens than a republic (van Gelderen and Skinner 2002, I.3; Blom et al. 2007). In the Renaissance, monarchies and republics continued to be regarded as sharing a number of features: neither majority rule nor the elective principle were unique to a specific regime – the Holy Roman Empire was an elective monarchy –

and republican authors could even argue for the existence of a supreme ruler appointed for life, such as the Doge in Venice or Guicciardini's suggestion of a perpetual gonfalonier. Finally, the terms monarchy and republic were connected with many distinct and sometimes opposing conceptions. Republican authors might favor a more aristocratic regime, such as the one in Venice, or one with more popular leanings – what authors referred to respectively as *governo stretto* and *governo largo*. Likewise, the notion of limited monarchy was very different from that of absolutist monarchy (for an illustration of the manifold notions of monarchy, see Dreitzel 1991). It seems misleading, however, to draw a clear-cut opposition between “absolutists” and “constitutionalists” (the term used to label authors who defended that the government has to be law-abiding): authors on both sides upheld restraining the king's actions – one resting on the king's own will to act in accordance with natural and divine law rather than on institutionally defined limits – and, at the same time, his superiority over any majority (on this, see Jouanna 2013, 24–49, who provides the examples of Guillaume Budé and Seyssel, among other French authors, who have been seen as “absolutists” but also as “constitutionalists”).

Finally, two aspects closely associated with these two forms of government enable us to grasp the continuity as well as the rupture between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. For Aristotle, each form of government can either be merged with another or brought closer to one of the other five forms. This is possible because each form has its own subtypes (for instance, monarchy has five and oligarchy four) and each form can integrate elements from others – it can thus be blended with others (for instance, in II.12 Aristotle presents the view according to which Solon's Athens was a combination of aristocratic, oligarchic, and democratic elements). Moreover, each form can lean toward another form: an oligarchy can tend toward democracy, for it might possess certain democratic features (offices may be more accessible in one subtype of oligarchy than in a simple oligarchy due to a lesser property qualification). It is against this background that we can

understand the crucial notion of “mixed regime,” a notion that was not the same for Aristotle and for his medieval interpreters. While for Aristotle this regime was primarily understood as a blend of democracy with oligarchy, for medieval and Renaissance authors it was rather a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The main sources for this change were the *Politics* II.6, where the Spartan regime is portrayed as the combination of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, and principally Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* Ia–IIae, q. 105, art. 1, where the best regime is identified with a monarchy tempered with aristocracy and democracy. This mixture of three regimes, in which either monarchy or aristocracy could prevail, served to express both the idea that all of the main social classes could participate in power – whether more actively (nobility) or more passively (plebs) – and the idea that principally the conception of a limited or tempered monarchy could avoid the degeneration of monarchy into tyranny (authors tended to emphasize that this degeneration could easily come to pass in a non-tempered monarchy on account of too much power concentrated in one man's hands). In connection with this, another medieval innovation, originating in a misreading of the first chapter of the *Politics*, would prove influential in the following centuries. This is the distinction between *regimen politicum* and *regimen regale*: in opposition to kingly rule, “political rule” was conceived as any political government in which rulers govern in accordance with the law (and, for some authors, where offices are held in turn). This distinction became prominent in the work of Ptolemy of Lucca and can also be found in Coluccio Salutati, Peter von Andlau, and John Fortescue (who nevertheless conceded a rule that was at the same time political and regal).

The idea of a mixed regime as the blend of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy became important in two different contexts. On the one hand, it was employed with regard to the French and English monarchies by authors who wished to stress the restraints upon kingly power and the role of assemblies (for instance, François Hotman in France and Thomas Starkey in England). In many cases, the notion of a mixed regime was

not discussed in depth. This holds true for Thomas Smith's *De republica Anglorum* (1565). However, this notion became so important in England that it was later used (and turned on its head) by King Charles I, in his 1642 *Answer to the Nineteen Propositions*, with the aim to prevent the prominence of parliament. On the other hand, it was used by republican authors as well. Instead of simply following Aristotle, for whom the republican regime resulted from a mixture of democracy with oligarchy, they replaced oligarchy with aristocracy – so that noblemen could be represented in a positive light in this rule – and introduced monarchy – so that it could be applied to Venice, where the Doge held the supreme power, and later to Florence. In fact, the republican mixed regime came to be associated primarily with Venice, at least since the early fourteenth century, thanks to Henry of Rimini and Pier Paolo Vergerio. It was also used outside of Italy, for instance, in the *Tractatus de civitate Ulmensi* by the fifteenth-century Swiss Dominican Felix Fabri. It received its most well-known formulation in the work of the Venetian Gasparo Contarini. He considers the Doge perpetual and thus to represent monarchy, whereas the Senate exemplifies the aristocracy and the Great Council stands for the people (on the mixed regime, see Nippel 1980; Blythe 1992; Gaille-Nikodimov 2005). The use of this model had a further consequence: the Aristotelian reference to a “middle class” was downplayed and is, in fact, absent from Machiavelli's work. However, Machiavelli's reduction of the factions within the state down to two groups (the great and the plebs) was not followed by subsequent authors, many of whom (including Guicciardini, Giannotti, Brucioli, and Bartolomeo Cavalcanti) still mention the “middle class” (*mediocres*). Moreover, although the “mixed regime” denoted the inclusion of democracy and aristocracy into this form of government, not every author drew an exact connection between these two regimes and the social classes typically associated with them – plebs and nobility, respectively. By way of example, and in a very medieval Aristotelian fashion, aristocracy means for Guicciardini the group of prudent and wise men capable of advising the community, and

George of Trebizond, in the introduction to his translation of Plato's *Laws*, suggests that the “people” representing democracy are part of the Venetian lower classes, but are not plebs.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The main changes to the medieval framework came from the Latin translations of both the sixth book of Polybius' *Histories* (not to mention Machiavelli's use thereof) and Plato's *Laws*. In contrast to Aristotle, for whom any form of government may change into any other form, Polybius maintained that there is a cyclical natural order in the forms of government, the so-called anacyclosis. According to this view, a good form of government is always replaced by its corrupt form – an endless alternation between good and bad forms (with the exception of the rule of the one). He established the following sequence: monarchy, kingship (an improved version of monarchy because it ensues from consent and is according to reason), tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and finally ochlocracy. Having completed the cycle, the sequence starts over again and goes back to monarchy. The idea of a progressive degeneration from one best form to the worst is also present in Plato's *Laws* and *Republic*. Clearly, the anacyclosis underscores the instability inherent in all forms of rule, since none of them, whether good or corrupt, is apparently able to last very long. The anacyclosis thesis did not meet with great approval in the Renaissance: authors who made use of Polybius either adapted it (like Seyssel; cf. Sciacca 2005) or underlined that matters were more complicated. This holds true for Cavalcanti and Machiavelli. The latter contended that no reoccurrence of the best form takes place after the conclusion of the worst form (the mob rule); instead, the community is simply conquered by a better-ruled state. While the anacyclosis thesis was not particularly influential, what *did* resonate with Renaissance authors was the idea that no simple form is perpetual, not even the best form. The remedy that Polybius proposes against this is a mixed regime – one made up of the three good forms (monarchy,

aristocracy, and democracy), a form he related to the Roman Republic and, like Aristotle, to Lycurgus' Sparta. While Polybius maintained that the republic of Rome stemmed from the consensus of the different classes, he underlined that Lycurgus' purpose was to find a state of equilibrium between the principles of the three forms of governments and that such an equilibrium was based on the reciprocal fear between the commons, the elders, and the kings (*Histories* VI.10.6–10). Polybius is an important source for Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*, but his ideas are used in a creative way: unlike Polybius, Machiavelli argued that the greatness of Rome was caused not by concord of the body politic, but rather by the tension between the two main classes.

Machiavelli's conception of the forms of government is not constant throughout his works, though he tends to reduce the regimes to two main forms, the republics and the principalities. While Machiavelli does not explicitly distinguish between principality and kingdom, the latter seems to apply to larger territories (Sciaccia 2005, 31–32), and in *The Prince* he never uses the word tyrant – a notion he definitely downplays. Given its aim, *The Prince* focuses on principalities. Compared with previous authors, Machiavelli places more emphasis on the ways in which a prince can acquire his dominion. In this regard, he distinguishes between hereditary and new principalities (in the latter case, a prince gains his dominion through virtue, fortune, violence, or the citizens' consent; a principality can indeed take the place of a republic thanks to the consent by the plebs and the great, in which case it is called "civil principality"). But despite his attention to the ways of acquiring a dominion, Machiavelli pays greater heed to the means by which a regime can endure. For this reason, Machiavelli does not differentiate good from corrupt forms in *The Prince* (although he does so in the *Discourses*); the criterion for assessing the value of the regimes rests rather on the ability of a specific form of rule to endure. In Chapter 9 – where Machiavelli sets forth the principle that the people and the great are the two main political forces, and the tension between them results either in principality, in liberty, or in license (i.e., in anarchy) – he argues that

the prince can rule either with the favor of the people or with the favor of the great. This means that any principality can have popular or aristocratic leanings (something that Aristotle already maintained with respect to any kind of regime). In Machiavelli's view, neither the great nor the people should completely prevail in one regime, though he values far more the people's role and thus regimes, such as the French Kingdom, where the great or the nobility are swayed and the rule of law is real.

In the *Discourses*, Machiavelli emphasizes (more so than Polybius) that even a good regime cannot endure; such regimes are easily corrupted and, therefore, all the simple forms of government are unsafe. Like Polybius, however, Machiavelli praises the mixed regime, which he also identifies with the Roman Republic. This was a perfect regime because it integrated the people and lessened the power of the aristocrats (on Machiavelli and republicanism, see Bock et al. 1990).

Three main novelties emerge in the *Discourses*. First, in contrast with the previous tradition, Machiavelli favors the role of the plebs and a regime in which the plebs can share in power – that is, he prefers the *governo largo* over the *governo stretto*, where only the great hold offices. For Machiavelli, it is more often than not the nobility's ambition to command that leads to tyranny (Najemy 2007); in this regard, Venice and Sparta are negative models because in these two cases power is concentrated in the hands of the nobility. Machiavelli overturns the traditional arguments against the wisdom of the multitude, many of which derived from Book III of the *Politics*.

The second novelty is that the assumption that all regimes (other than tyranny) are installed and preserved through concord and equilibrium between factions (few vs. many, poor vs. wealthy, virtuous vs. wicked) is replaced with the idea that social tension between the great and the plebs is positive and guarantees liberty (the idea being, provided that such tension occurs in a law-abiding political regime, that neither can prevail). A mixed regime is expedient not because it enables a balance between its elements, as previous authors had argued, but insofar as it

originates in a conflict between the social groups (great vs. plebs), restraining the ambitions of both (Pedullà 2018).

The third novelty regards Machiavelli's conception of tyranny. Prior to Machiavelli, the distinction between kingship and tyranny was not totally sharp: Giles of Rome had stated that a king somewhat resembles a tyrant, and that a tyrant is nevertheless a ruler. Moreover, Poggio Bracciolini argued in the *De infelicitate principum* that the distinction between tyrants and kings rests exclusively on the way they exercise power. Nonetheless, authors strove to establish objective criteria in order to distinguish between a tyrant and a king – this explains the lists drawn by Giles of Rome (*De regimine principum* III/2.9) in which he enumerates the qualities of the king and of the tyrant (the list of the tyrant's hallmarks was later spread by Bartolus and reproduced by other authors). Such lists were so important that Althusius still drew on those made by Paride del Pozzo in the fifteenth century detailing the “excesses” of different rulers and magistrates, from the emperor to the lower-level officers. But, for Machiavelli, the definition of tyranny is related neither to the way in which power is acquired nor to the cruelty with which power may be used. The characterization of an act as tyrannical depends on the circumstances at hand; at any rate, this holds when it endangers the preservation of the state, when it involves self-interest against the common interest, or when there is an attempt to restrict the access of citizens to public offices (Giorgini 2008). In exceptional circumstances and times of emergency, the rule of the one may indeed be more expedient than a republic. Nevertheless, he distinguishes between tyranny and dictatorial authority: unlike a tyrant, a dictator remains in office for a limited time and cannot overturn the legal order (Geuna 2017).

Aristotelian authors also valued political regimes according to their ability to remain stable, to endure, and to eschew upheavals – this led Aquinas to argue in the *De regno* that tyranny was more tolerable than a degenerate rule of the many. Starting with Machiavelli, however, a much stronger emphasis was placed on the preservation of regimes. This accentuation is more

prevalent in Guicciardini's later works – who discarded Bartolus' distinctions between forms of tyranny (Marrara 1966) and stated that forms of government are to be valued only with regard to their “effects” – and to an even greater degree in the texts belonging to the genre of “Reason of State.” But such an emphasis on the conservation of regimes does not necessarily constitute a defense of unjust means and unlimited power. The view that a regime, and principally a monarchy, has to abide by the laws and, in so doing, is more likely to persevere is central to sixteenth-century thought, just as it was for Machiavelli. In *Discourses* I.58, he states that principalities and republics alike need laws in order to endure.

For medieval (Aristotelian) authors, adherence to the law was not the main criterion for discerning between good and corrupt forms of government. The best subtype of democracy, itself a corrupt form, was a law-abiding rule, and what defined monarchy and aristocracy was not that they were “constitutional” rules but that in such regimes men who excel others in virtue rule according to the inner law of “right reason.” During the sixteenth century, law became an increasingly important criterion for defining a good government. In many authors, it is still the divine and natural laws that work to restrain the ruler's action, which suggests a subjective element alone – the king's will – and not a formal system of control. Nevertheless, the increasing reliance on law as the century progressed is clear, and it is no coincidence that the expression “fundamental laws” of a regime emerges late in that century (it does not mean a set of laws in the fashion of a constitution, but an order anchored in the legal tradition). Authors also made substantial use of Roman law, and in particular of the *lex regia*, to argue for constraints to the ruler's power – one of the earliest examples is Mario Salamonio's *De principatu*, written between 1512 and 1514 (Straumann 2016, 256–259).

Two different ideas on the relationship between law and ruler come thus to the fore: on the one hand, the affirmation that the prerogative to enact laws pertains exclusively to the king; on the other, the emphasis on the idea that the king is solely a minister of the commonwealth and thus

that in addition to the ruler's power there is the need for effective institutions and procedures. The latter is reflected in the use sixteenth-century authors made of the "mixed regime" and also explains why it was so frequently applied.

The mixed regime, whether employed with regard to the republican regime or to monarchy, no longer represents the social classes – aristocracy denotes the patrician and the wealthy, while democracy signifies the plebs – but is deemed to contain the principles of the different forms of government. Moreover, it is used to state the importance of restraints on power and not so much to affirm popular government. The people's role is rather passive within the theory of the "mixed regime," and *popular government* and *popular sovereignty* should not be confused: it was the latter that was championed by the monarchomachs and their followers. This is evident in François Hotman's works, for whom monarchy has to be blended with aristocracy and democracy, and even more so in those of Claude de Seyssel, who used the "mixed regime" in his *Prohème en la translation de l'Histoire d'Appien* (1510), but not in his *Monarchie de France* (1515), where he instead maintained that the French monarchy needed aristocratic elements and restraints on kingly power. The affirmation with Polybian overtones that every simple form of government tends to degenerate, including the best form (monarchy), is still found in the monarchomachs. More specifically, elements associated with the mixed regime, such as parliament (which was equated with the aristocratic element) and the model of the ephors (seen as the democratic element) came to be widely used by French, Scottish, and English authors (Nippel 1980; for French authors, see Mellet 2007, 409–410, 454–460).

The ephors and other inferior magistrates were also used in the theories of resistance that had sprouted by the late sixteenth century. Although the treatises on the king's deposition employed the terms "tyrant" and "tyranny," the use of these categories had subsided over the course of the sixteenth century, and the contrast between monarchy and despotism instead moved to the fore. Authors increasingly emphasized that tyranny is a

rule imposed on free citizens (against their will) and that a tyrant does not want to be bound by the law. Despotism, on the other hand, is legitimate because it suits those inclined by nature to servitude, like the barbarians and primitive people. Following Aristotle, authors continued to associate despotism with the eastern kingdoms (and on occasion with the Turkish kingdom, as in Machiavelli). Such an association (still found in Bodin and Montesquieu) served as a negative model that permitted to contrast it with the European kingdoms, where citizens were free.

Impact and Legacy

The Aristotelian sixfold typology continued to be used after Machiavelli (for instance, by La Perrière, Louis Le Roy, and the authors of the "Reason of State"), but it was slowly replaced by a more restricted scheme of three main forms: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, precisely those that the majority of the authors thought constituted the "mixed regime." In the wake of Machiavelli, the distinction between good and corrupt forms started to fade away. This is evident in *Les six livres de la République* (Bodin 1576) of Bodin, for whom a regime is bad simply on account of the exercise of power. Bodin drops the category of "tyrant by usurpation": if we suppose that a ruler acquired his domain unlawfully, he could – after the expiration of the statute of limitations – become a perfectly legitimate ruler. For Hobbes, the meaningfulness of the distinction falls away because he considers the distinction between bad and good forms merely subjective (*De cive* VII.2, *Leviathan*, chapter 19).

The sixteenth-century emphasis on the rule of law finds a further development in Bodin. He locates sovereignty in the legislative power and not, as Aristotle did, in the capacity to allocate the magistracies, which is precisely what defines the state. Moreover, sovereignty cannot be shared because it is indivisible. This means that a "mixed regime" is a contradiction in terms, since the different factions have to share power, meaning that citizens would be at one and the same time both the sovereign and the subject. For Bodin,

Venice and the Holy Roman Empire are aristocracies, while Rome was a democracy. This idea came under attack chiefly in the Holy Roman Empire, and, despite Bodin, some authors continued to make use of the notion of “mixed regime” (Keckermann or Burgersdijk, for instance). Moreover, as noted earlier, it remained vital in English thought.

Aristotle’s teleology definitely died out: the regimes were no longer classified according to their purpose, and virtue – at least in the Classical sense – no longer played a role (Montesquieu’s virtue is rather different: it is a feeling, not a moral disposition). By contrast, the medieval and Renaissance view that the institution of a form of government was subject to the prevalent circumstances (climate, territory, or features of the population) and, therefore, that different forms are legitimate was still fully endorsed by Bodin and Montesquieu. This last point is arguably the most important legacy of how medieval and Renaissance authors conceived of the forms of government.

Cross-References

- [Bodin, Jean](#)
- [Law in the Renaissance, Roman](#)
- [Liberty in the Renaissance: Political](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)

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Grace in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Christian teaching on the nature of divine grace and its relationship to human activity is at the core of biblical revelation concerning the salvation of human beings. On the biblical account, humanity is fallen into sin and stands in need of divine aid. Grace is a term for describing this divine aid in its various manifestations. Grounded in the biblical and early church’s teachings about grace, the Middle Ages brought significant conceptual and doctrinal development, which in turn provided the background for continued dispute and development from the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries. During the Reformation era, disputes over grace form a central feature of increasingly defined and identifiable confessional and ecclesial traditions. By the middle of the seventeenth century, clear confessional boundary lines have been established between

Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed traditions, in large part defined by their respective views of the relationship between divine grace and human choice.

Introduction

The Christian doctrines of grace (Latin, *gratia*; Greek, *charis*) were some of the most hotly contested teachings of the Renaissance era (1300–1650). Grace, understood in its most general sense, is divine blessing or favor. Controversy over the understanding of the relationship between human work and divine grace began in the apostolic period and carried through the Patristic era into the Middle Ages. In the late medieval and Reformation eras, these controversies became more developed in terms of their complexity, technicality, and nuance. In addition, positions became increasingly defined along the lines of particular ecclesiastical traditions and confessional communities.

The point of departure for debates over grace in Christian doctrine is usually the teaching of the apostle Paul, and particularly his epistle to the Romans. Paul opens his letter by distinguishing the righteousness of the Jews and that of non-Jews, or Gentiles. Even though Jews had the Mosaic law, and therefore a better understanding of what God's justice requires, Paul concludes "all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin" (Rom 3:9 ESV). Because of the sinfulness of all humanity, divine grace is required for salvation from the consequences of this sin. As Paul puts it, "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23 ESV). One of Paul's primary concerns is to rightly distinguish between human work, which cannot merit eternal life, and the grace that imparts the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ to human beings.

In one sense, this radically relativizes or devalues the role of human work in the divine plan of salvation. There are twin dangers that Paul's teaching is meant to combat, and these appear again and again in later debates over grace. The first is that of *works righteousness*,

that it is through human effort or work that salvation is achieved. Thus Paul writes, "one is justified by faith apart from works of the law" (Rom 3:28 ESV). A second error, however, is that works are so devalued and derogated that they are viewed as entirely dispensable. This is sometimes called *antinomianism*, from the Greek words for "against" and "law." If human beings are saved completely by divine grace which excludes human works in any and every sense, then there is no motivation to try to live in accordance with the law. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!" answers Paul (Rom 6:1–2 ESV).

This dynamic between human righteousness and divine grace would be at the core of later debates and controversy over salvation from sin. The church father Augustine of Hippo (354–480) opposed the teachings of Pelagius (c. 360–418), a British monk who was particularly concerned about licentiousness and lack of virtue among Christians. Pelagius taught that human beings were not affected by sin to such an extent that it was no longer possible for them to do good works worthy of eternal reward. The so-called Pelagian heresy became a watchword of all later theological discussions about grace in the Latin west, from the medieval period through the Renaissance and Reformation era.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Following the patristic era in the Christian west, Augustine's teachings functioned as the basic framework for diverse articulations of divine grace and its relation to human ability. There was great debate about what counted as truly faithful Augustinian teaching, but there was no significant dispute about the authority of the church father and his definitive orthodox opposition to the Pelagian heresy. Late medieval and Renaissance developments on the subject of grace are directly related to the inheritance of the medieval scholastics, so it is necessary to sketch some of these in brief before turning to the controversies of the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries.

Grace in Medieval Scholastic Thought

The Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) examined the relationship between divine grace and human action in a significant treatise, *On Grace and Free Choice* (*De gratia et libero arbitrio*) (Bernard of Clairvaux 1988). In this work, Bernard expounds a fundamentally Augustinian perspective through a framework that distinguishes the state of human beings before the fall into sin, after the fall into sin, in the state of redemption, and in the final state of glorification and consummation. This fourfold framework would continue to be influential for the framing of the question for centuries. For Bernard, humanity was able to sin or not sin before the fall. After the fall, human beings are unable to not sin. But in redemption, the possibility to not sin is again a reality in human life, while in the final consummation, glorified human beings will no longer be able to sin, which is understood as freedom in its highest sense.

The *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (1100–1160) which collated and organized opinions and teachings of the church fathers and other authorities on doctrinal topics was the standard theological text of the schools for more than a half millennium. In his exposition of the relationship between grace, free choice, and human nature, Lombard articulates a distinction between operating grace (*gratia operans*) and cooperating grace (*gratia cooperans*). Operating grace is a fully divinely caused grace that “prepares the will of man to will the good” (Lombard 2007, 2.XXVI.1.1, p. 123). Cooperating grace follows and “accompanies the will which is already good in order to aid it” (Lombard 2007, 2.XXVI.1.2, p. 123).

Following Lombard, major theologians who would exercise great influence on later developments include Bonaventure (1221–1274), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), and John Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308). Bonaventure and Scotus were both Franciscans, meaning that they were members of a religious order founded in 1209 by Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226). Aquinas was a Dominican, an order founded by Dominic of Caleruega (1170–1221) in 1216. The Franciscans and the Dominicans would be two of the dominant schools of ecclesiastical order and theological

thought through the following centuries into the Renaissance.

Scholastic theologians typically wrote commentaries on Lombard’s *Sentences* as part of their academic training, and in this Bonaventure follows the standard route. Bonaventure is known for an integrative theological framework that unites reason and faith, nature and grace in a synthesis formed by divine illumination. After the fall into sin, human beings can merit nothing in an absolute sense of their own power (Cullen 2006, 157). But there is a sense in which according to God’s promise, human beings are able, after the work of operating grace, to perform works that are meritorious in a secondary sense. A key distinction here is between condign merit (*meritum de condigno*) and congruent merit (*meritum de congruo*). The former, condign merit, is a meritorious act performed on the basis of a more generalized divine grace, but within a framework of justice, something that does truly merit a reward on its own. Condign merit is truly and fully deserving of divine reward. The latter, congruent merit, by contrast, is rewarded not on the innate goodness or justice of the act but as a purely gratuitous act of divine mercy, which counts the action as meritorious that otherwise would not have of itself been fully meritorious.

Aquinas develops his theological work not only through his own *Sentences* commentary but also through his major work, the *Summa Theologiae*. Thomas’ *Summa* is organized in a format that under each topic introduces a series of questions that follow from one another. He first provides authorities and reasons for answering the question one way, then provides his own, different answer, and concludes by directly addressing the initial reasons. Thomas elaborates and develops in more detail the distinction between human beings in the natural, primal state before the fall into sin and the situation after the fall into sin. Thus, for instance, when answering “Whether man without grace and by his own natural powers can fulfil the commandments of the Law?” Aquinas writes that “man in the state of perfect nature could fulfil all the commandments of the Law.” However, after the fall into sin, “in the state of corrupted nature man cannot fulfil all the Divine commandments

without healing grace” (Aquinas 1920, I–II.109.4). Grace in its fullest sense is the infusion of virtue back into the life of the human being, a renewal of the power to do good that was originally granted in the primal state, and is understood in this sense as a divinely granted human quality.

The teaching of predestination is closely connected with the doctrines of grace, and an important distinction in this regard is whether God extends grace to those who have fallen into sin on the basis of some foreknown or foreseen quality of or work by that person or whether grace is given without regard to such merit. John Duns Scotus follows the main Augustinian trajectory on this question by denying that God predestines those to salvation on the basis of some foreseen merit (Cross 1999, 107). At the same time, however, Scotus does believe that works of congruent merit are achievable by those who have not yet been regenerated, and that on the basis of those works God deigns to freely and graciously grant the mercy of justifying and sanctifying grace, infusing the virtue of grace into the Christian. This distinction between the grace that is available and active in the state of sin, before conversion and regeneration, is a key dynamic in the late-medieval discussions of grace.

Innovative and Original Aspects

That grace which is understood to precede conversion, the change from the state of fallenness to that of redemption, is called prevenient grace (*gratia praeveniens*). That which follows conversion is subsequent grace (*gratia subsequens*). The nature of these types of grace formed the critical basis for discussion and debate from the fourteenth century onward. Prevenient grace could be understood in a general way as simply preparing the human being for the reception of operating and cooperating grace. This understanding of prevenient grace tended to emphasize the restoration of the human power of free choice to choose either good or evil after the fall into sin and before conversion. This prevenient grace could be resisted, however, and did not necessarily lead to restoration. Other versions of prevenient grace

understood it more as a divine action that inevitably restored a measure of rectitude to the human person on the basis of the merit of Jesus Christ. On the one account then, prevenient grace could be rightly or wrongly used, and on that basis God would either grant further, restorative grace or withhold it. On the other account, prevenient grace inevitably led to restoration, with an emphasis on divine initiative and intention rather than human responsiveness.

Late-Medieval and Early Renaissance Developments

While both emphases were present in the medieval tradition, in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, the view that highlighted the freedom of human response to divine grace achieved a measure of dominance. The Franciscan theologian and philosopher William of Ockham (1287–1347) exercised significant influence and is often understood as the inaugurator of a new scholastic perspective, the so-called *via moderna*, in contrast to the *via antiqua* of Aquinas and Scotus. Whereas the older theologians affirmed the authentic extramental (i.e., outside of the mind) existence of universals in some way, the *via moderna* emphasized the human being’s subjective role in constructing an understanding of reality, and denied or deemphasized the objective, extramental nature of universals.

This approach, often identified as nominalism, was also associated with a soteriological perspective that was relatively optimistic about the capacities of fallen humanity to respond of its own accord and volition to the general, antecedent grace of God. For Ockham, the sacraments impart grace because God had willed them to function in this way. They were not means of grace because of any natural necessity, but simply because God, in his almighty power, ordained them as such (Wood 1999, 357). He could have done otherwise and indeed is not necessarily bound by anything other than his own good pleasure to follow the same course of action in the future.

Ockham is also known for affirming what is called *liberty of indifference* with respect to the relationship of soul’s faculties to human action (Adams 1999, 245). Specifically, this view holds

that the human will has the innate power to assent, deny, or remain indifferent to any particular end, regardless of the conclusions of the intellect or the inclinations of the passions. This view of the will has important implications for the relationship between grace and free choice, because to deny that the will has the power to choose between good and evil, or to refrain from choosing evil, would be to deny the will itself.

The connection between the *via moderna* and more optimistic perspectives of human nature in relation to divine grace is a tendency rather than a necessity, however. Gregory of Rimini (c. 1300–1358) was an Augustinian friar associated with the *via moderna* but whose views on nature and grace strongly emphasized the priority of divine action. He affirmed a strongly Augustinian view of predestination that excluded any divine consideration of human works, in contrast with his contemporary Ockham. Rimini is in this way noteworthy as defending the perspective that apart from special, divine grace no morally good or meritorious action is possible (Leff 1961, 183).

In later generations theologians like Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420) and Gabriel Biel would (1420–1495) continue to explore and develop the late medieval stream of thought that on the one hand both emphasized the absolute power of God over against the created order, and on the other hand affirm the ability of human beings, through divine assistance, to merit divine blessing in some way.

An influential French scholastic and later cardinal of the church, d'Ailly largely followed in the tradition of Ockham in emphasizing the saliency of God's absolute power and the institutional and ordained status of the sacraments as means of grace (Lahey 2011, 515; Courtenay 1971, 110–111). The element holding together divine omnipotence and salvation of sinners is the divinely instituted covenant, which sets out particular signs and instruments of grace. The two most obvious of these are Baptism and the Lord's Supper, ordinances of the church that have been instituted by God to function as channels or ways of communicating grace to the church's members. Nominalists are often accused of affirming a capricious God, who might change his mind at

any moment or decide to no longer use the means he had previously ordained. But d'Ailly's covenantal perspective provides stability and coherence for his theological system, linking what God might do according to his absolute power and what he has deigned to do according to his ordained power (Courtenay 1971, 119). Stability and comfort are to be found in God's promises to dispense grace through the offices and powers of the church.

Gabriel Biel, because of his later significance for the thought of Martin Luther, was to be seen as perhaps the most influential theologian of the latter half of the fifteenth century. Biel was a nominalist, but one who appreciated the older, realist tradition and was able to synthesize these disparate traditions into a masterful theological system. The medieval formula "to do what is in you" (*facere quod in se est*) is typically associated with Biel, and it represents a perspective that emphasizes the divine covenant to grant grace to those who show their worthiness by manifesting what works are possible for them in the fallen state. Even though such works are not intrinsically and fully meritorious, according to God's covenantal promise to count them as worthy according to congruent merit, God will grant his grace to those who perform such works.

Such a position is not straightforwardly Pelagian because it does not affirm, for instance, that human works can be strictly meritorious, or that even those works that are counted as meritorious can be accomplished apart from the assistance of divine grace. But there is a clear departure in emphasis if not in substance from the more strongly Augustinian traditions in the church that speak clearly to the inability of sinful humanity to contribute anything positively toward their righteousness before God. Not only does Biel affirm such positive human activity, he also connects such action with divine predestination (Oberman 2000, 196). That is, God grants sufficient grace to those whom he has foreseen would respond properly to that gift and make appropriate use of it. On this view, God's predestination is not absolute or unconditioned by human factors but is rather in a significant way determined by it.

Impact and Legacy

Through the later middle ages, the *via moderna* developed an alternative account of reality, and with it came the rise of teachings concerning grace that increasingly emphasized human activity in response to and in preparation for the reception of divine grace. This was the situation at the turn of the sixteenth century and the flowering of even more diverse and heated controversy about grace.

The Reformation and Renaissance Humanism

The centrality of sacraments as channels of divine grace placed the church and its offices in a position of great importance in the economy of salvation. Beyond the seven sacraments of the church (baptism, chrismation, the Lord's Supper, confession, extreme unction, holy orders, and marriage), the practice of granting indulgences came to prominence in the medieval era. Technically an indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishments for a sin that has already been committed, confessed, and forgiven. This remission is granted on the basis of the treasury of merit that the church is entrusted with. There are various types and specifications for indulgences and the conditions for receiving them are manifold, but include the giving of alms, in some cases directly to the church.

The sale of indulgences helped to finance the construction of various ecclesiastical structures in the medieval and Renaissance era, including St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (Paulus 1922, 41). Perhaps the most infamous of the preachers of indulgences was the Dominican Johann Tetzel (1465–1519), who labored throughout Germany to raise funds for the construction of St. Peter's. Indulgence preaching of this type often went far beyond the carefully nuanced theological understanding of indulgences, and featured grandiose promises of spiritual delivery from even the grossest of sins (Mullett 1999, 41–43; Graham-Dixon 1999, 207–208).

The influence of this indulgence trade, along with his own experiences of late-medieval penance, led Martin Luther (1483–1546), a young Augustinian friar and professor at Wittenberg, to challenge the theological foundations and

practical applications of indulgences in his 95 *Theses* of 1517, published with the alternative title, *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*. These were primarily intended for academic discussion, but Luther also sent the theses to church and governmental officials for feedback, and very quickly the debate expanded beyond the usual circles of academic debate. Luther's concerns over the theology of grace that was embedded in the sale of indulgences were varied, but they included both spiritual as well as material concerns. From Luther's perspective, the sale of indulgences created kind of spiritual bondage and made grace a commodity for sale, as laypersons were increasingly dependent on the church and its formal structures for any hope of comfort or assurance. Innovations like the indulgence trade served to further the material interests of the church at the expense of its members, who were impoverished both in their spiritual understanding of grace as well as in their material wealth.

In this way, Luther objected both to the abuse of indulgence preaching as well as its theological foundation on papal authority. Luther writes that “most people are necessarily deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of release from penalty” (Thesis 24 in Luther 1955, 31:27), which speaks to the looseness of language used by preachers like Tetzel. At the same time, Luther sought to distinguish the proper use of indulgences, which he considered to be quite narrow indeed, from their more widespread abuse: “Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St. Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep” (Thesis 50 in Luther 1955, 31:30).

Luther's criticisms of indulgences quickly encompassed broader theological and ecclesiastical matters, including papal authority and the entirety of topics related to salvation (soteriology). At the same time, the point of departure for the Reformation really was focused particularly on discussions of divine grace: “It is worth recognizing from the outset that the Reformation altered comparatively few of the major *loci* of theology: the doctrines of

justification, the sacraments, and the church received the greatest emphasis, while the doctrines of God, the trinity, creation, providence, predestination, and the last things were taken over by the magisterial Reformation virtually without alteration” (Muller 2000, 39).

Even though humanists like Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536) acknowledged that the church needed to be reformed in various ways, Luther’s increasingly strident challenges to the church’s teachings and papal authority occasioned significant controversy and alienated a number of otherwise sympathetic figures. A number of theologians took up the polemical cause against Luther, casting him as a brash heretic. Others questioned what they took to be Luther’s extreme views on the status of fallen human nature. A sharp dispute between Erasmus and Luther emerged in the 1520s over the doctrine of the human will and free choice. In 1524, Erasmus challenged Luther’s views in a treatise *On Free Choice* (*De libero arbitrio*). This marked a turning point in the Reformation era, as Erasmus, the preeminent humanist of his generation and who was otherwise disposed toward ecclesial reform, came out in public opposition to Luther, the foremost evangelical theologian of the time. The political as well as the theological implications of this clash were not lost on either party, as the anti-Lutheran elements within the church had been working for some time to enlist Erasmus to their cause (Nestingen 2005, 7). This confrontation dissolved some of the otherwise sympathetic and cooperative relations between those humanists who remained loyal to Rome and those reformers who joined with Luther (Rummel 2000, 9–39).

Erasmus’ 1524 treatise took up the question on Luther’s own terms, specifically the biblical witness concerning the question, as Luther disputed the authority of the church and its traditions to provide adequate warrant for proper doctrinal formulations. Erasmus seeks to cast the question whether human choice is bound or free in the state of sin as open, that is, underdetermined on the basis of scriptural witness alone. Once the weight of the church’s traditional teaching is added to the discussion, however, the argument to be decided in favor of understanding human

choice as Erasmus puts it, “a power of the human will by which man may be able to direct himself towards or turn away from what leads to eternal salvation” (Miller 2012, 6). As Erasmus puts it, “I would remind readers that if Luther and I seem to be evenly matched on the basis of scriptural testimonies and sound arguments, they should then take into consideration the long list of highly learned men approved by the consensus of very many centuries, all the way up to our own day, most of them commended by their exemplary lives as well as by their admirable learning in the Scriptures” (Miller 2012, 1).

Luther’s 1525 response to Erasmus, entitled *On Bound Choice* (*De servo arbitrio*), is thorough and wide-ranging, engaging Erasmus’ understanding of scripture, the authorities from church tradition and history, and human reason. In his conclusion, Luther declares victory over Erasmus’ argument, but praises him for taking on the matter of divine grace and free choice directly, and thereby having attacked the real issue, the essence of the matter in dispute. Likewise, says Luther, Erasmus has “not wearied me with irrelevancies about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and such like trifles (for trifles they are rather than basic issues), with which almost everyone hitherto has gone hunting for me without success. You and you alone have seen the question on which everything hinges, and have aimed at the vital spot” (Luther 1955, 33:294). Erasmus would continue to engage this key question in a two-part further response to Luther, appearing in 1526 and 1527, which finally and fully distinguished the position of the two on grace and free choice and which turned in large part on their differing views about the authority of the church to interpret and apply scripture.

Although Luther and Erasmus were perhaps the two most famous figures to debate these questions, their writings neither settled the issues nor exhausted the debates. Others, including the reformer of Geneva John Calvin (1509–1564) and the Dutch Roman Catholic theologian Albert Pighius (ca. 1490–1542) disputed these matters as well. Calvin treats free choice in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which went through a number of editions in his lifetime. Pighius was

enlisted to respond to Calvin's treatment of the topic in the 1539 edition of the *Institutes*, and does so in a 1542 publication, *Ten Books on Human Free Choice and Divine Grace* (*De libero hominis arbitrio et divina gratia*), to which Calvin had responded by the following year (Calvin 1996, xiii–xiv).

A central point of this debate regards the status of prevenient grace as taught by the medieval church. For Pighius, prevenient grace serves as a preparatory aid by which a human being might freely choose the good and thereby merit the fuller gift of saving grace. For Calvin, prevenient grace is a unilateral divine gift that restores humanity through faith to a relationship with God: "Prevenient grace does not simply make it possible for people to respond. Grace is efficacious and effects conversion. This is true not just of the beginning of the Christian life. Grace is needed at every stage and, in particular, for final perseverance. This is a gift of God, not something that is merited by previous obedience" (Calvin 1996, xx).

By the middle of the sixteenth century, lines of interpretation of scripture and church tradition, particularly Augustine, had begun to more clearly emerge. The following generations continued to deepen and develop these understandings, increasingly along identifiable confessional and denominational lines. Protestants opposed Roman Catholics, but different Protestant confessions differed from one another on particular topics, and Roman Catholics differed as well from other Roman Catholics, often along the lines of church orders or theological traditions.

Confessionalization and Orthodoxy

The period from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century is sometimes identified as a period of "confessionalization," in which different views of the church, papal authority, and doctrines like justification become codified in official doctrinal statements and are institutionalized in academies (Schilling 1992; Rummel 2000). Corresponding to the rise of confessional identity is the phenomenon of confessional orthodoxy. For the Protestants, this meant furthering and deepening the central claims of the Reformation. As Richard A. Muller writes, "the Protestant

orthodox held fast to these Reformation insights and to the confessional norms of Protestantism and, at the same time, moved toward the establishment of an entire body of 'right teaching' in continuity both with the Reformation and with the truths embodied in the whole tradition of Christian doctrine. They recognized that the claim of Protestantism to represent the church could be maintained only if the witness of the Reformation proved to be the key not only to the reform of a series of ecclesiastical abuses but also to the reformulation of the body of Christian doctrine." Contrasting the early and later eras, writes Muller, the "selectivity of the Reformation in its polemic had to be transcended in the direction of a reformed catholicity" (Muller 2003, 1:28).

On the Roman Catholic side, the Council of Trent (1545–1563) set the standard for the papal response to the Protestant Reformation and itself clarified, codified, and reformed official church teaching. Concerning the relationship of free choice and grace, the Council explicitly rejects Pelagian positions holding that human beings are able, whether easily or with difficulty, through the exercise of natural powers to merit salvation apart from divine grace. At the same time, the reality of free choice was affirmed. Canon IV on justification anathematizes the claim "that the free will of man moved and excited by God, by assenting to God exciting and calling, nowise co-operates to the end that it should dispose and prepare itself for obtaining the grace of justification" (Council of Trent 1851, 42–43). Similarly, Canon V, with a position like that of Luther in view, reads of one who holds that since the fall into sin that "the free will of man is lost an extinguished; or, that is a thing with a name only, yea, a title without a reality, a figment, in fine brought into the Church by Satan; let him be anathema" (Council of Trent 1851, 43). While the conclusions of the council would definitively anathematize Lutheran and Reformed articulations of grace, justification, and free choice, it would open up space for continuing intra-catholic disagreement.

The *de Auxiliis* controversy was a dispute between Dominicans and Jesuits in the latter half of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth. The dispute centered around the role of free

choice in connection with divine foreknowledge and predestination. The Jesuit Luis de Molina (1535–1600) articulated a metaphysical grounding for divine predestination in the foreknowledge of future meritorious works. This “middle knowledge” (*scientia media*) was posited as God’s knowledge of what might occur in possible worlds that he did not choose to create. This kind of divine knowledge stood between or in the “middle” of God’s necessary knowledge and his free or contingent knowledge of that which he actually creates. This was a particularly controversial notion that came under consistent criticism by Dominican theologians, including Domingo Báñez (1528–1604). Against middle knowledge Báñez affirmed physical premotion, a prevenient gracious activity of God that worked through the nature of the human person (in accord with the Tridentine canons on free choice) to prepare and dispose a person towards the reception of justifying grace. The *de Auxiliis* controversy is properly understood as part of the longer trajectory of disputes over Augustine and the doctrines of grace, both between Protestants and Roman Catholics as within Roman Catholicism, as the later Jansenist controversy in the seventeenth century would echo many of the same themes (Matava 2016, 17–18).

If *de Auxiliis* was an intra-catholic controversy, the intra-Protestant differences between confessional Lutheran and Reformed views of grace, justification, sanctification, and perseverance also emerged in the latter half of the sixteenth century. The Formula of Concord, which expounded the orthodox Lutheran perspective in 1577, affirmed that “before man is illuminated, converted, reborn, renewed, and drawn by the Holy Spirit, he can do nothing in spiritual things of himself and by his own powers. In his own conversion or regeneration he can as little begin, effect, or cooperate in anything as a stone, a block, or a lump of clay could” (Tappert 1959, 525–526). Here we see a statement intended to oppose that of both the Decrees of Trent and that of the Reformed, who tended to affirm more clearly the reality of the human being *qua* human being

constituted by the faculty of the will in the course of regeneration as well as the grounding of both divine election and reprobation in God’s sovereign will. Moreover, where the Reformed affirmed final perseverance to glorification of those who are justified, Lutherans held that it was possible for those once in a state of grace to fall into condemnation and final judgment.

Reformed confessions, such as the Belgic Confession of 1561, affirmed that man fallen into sin “corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and retained only small remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse” (Dennison 2008, 2:432). Likewise, the Reformed “reject all that is taught repugnant to this concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin” (Dennison 2008, 2:432). Among the Reformed as among the Roman Catholics, however, dispute arose as to the relationship between divine foreknowledge and human works. As Molina defended middle knowledge among the Jesuits, his teaching was influential on Protestants like Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609), a professor at the Reformed university in Leiden. Controversy over the development of Arminian theology rose to an international synod held in the Dutch city of Dordrecht in 1618–1619, which answered the points affirmed by the Remonstrance, a movement largely inspired by Arminius’ theology. The resulting Canons of Dort defined Reformed orthodoxy against Remonstrant theology, and affirmed the election of individuals to salvation without reference to human works, the definite application of Christ’s atoning work to the elect, the comprehensive corruption of humanity resulting from the fall into sin (as articulated in the Belgic Confession above, for example), the absolute efficacy of divine grace in justification, and the full and final perseverance of those justified to consummated glory.

Conclusion

Controversy over divine grace in the Renaissance and Reformation period grew out of longstanding debates over the role of human works and merit in salvation. These disagreements are fundamentally about issues relating to the witness of Scripture itself. The figure of Augustine looms large over all of these debates, from the medieval era onward. Distinctions made by medieval scholastics were taken over into the early modern period, and were variously affirmed, rejected, or refined according to the wisdom of those exploring the doctrines anew.

Disagreement about the nature of the human will and the faculty of free choice was central to ecclesiastical conflict in the early sixteenth century, and fueled the separation of Christendom into confessional parties. Similar dynamics were at play both between and among confessional groups, however. The Reformed and Dominicans emphasized and prioritized divine action in salvific work over against the Arminians and Jesuits, who defended a metaphysical understanding of human free choice as essential to right teaching concerning predestination, grace, and justification (Ballor et al. 2019). The Lutherans too viewed themselves as the legitimate heirs of Augustine's teachings on these matters, as they affirmed a clear disparity between the proximate causes of divine election and reprobation. While these disputes often generated more rhetoric than substance, clear lines of agreement and disagreement are visible. Likewise, amidst the conflict and the diversity of views, some boundaries are clarified and codified, such that even while the question of grace and human freedom might not have been settled in the Reformation and Renaissance eras, the doctrinal cause was undoubtedly advanced and developed.

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Gravitas, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

Traditionally, *gravitas* denotes the inner source of movement towards the center of the universe. In the mediaeval Latin tradition, the chief problem was to fit this notion within a coherent Aristotelian framework. As philosophers in the Renaissance begin to breach the constraints of Aristotelian natural philosophy, we see diverse attempts to conceive *gravitas* as a force also responsible for natural phenomena such as tides and free fall acceleration. The coexistence in the Renaissance of different Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian concepts of *gravitas* makes the latter a polysemic scientific term, whose meaning can be determined only after careful

examination of the context in which it was employed.

Heritage

According to a standard narrative, Aristotle held that heavy bodies fall because of their inner *gravitas*, i.e., weight or heaviness (Pedersen 1974, pp. 120–121; Grant 1996, pp. 60–61). This is a rough simplification. Against it, it may be argued that Aristotle never stated explicitly that downward movement is due to heaviness. This view is made explicit only in later understandings of Aristotle's natural philosophy.

Simplicius (490–560), commenting on the fourth book of the *De caelo*, calls heaviness (*barytes*) Aristotle's reference to the capacity or power (*dynamis*) of heavy bodies to move downwards, i.e., towards the center of the universe, which coincides with the center of the Earth. A body devoid of heaviness, e.g., fire, is incapable of natural movement downwards; hence heaviness, like nature (*physis*), is the source (*arche*) of natural movement in heavy bodies (Simplicius 1894, pp. 676.3–677.30; Simplicius 2009, pp. 67–69). This notion is also used by Simplicius to describe the different view of Plato: the latter, having relativized the meaning of “downward,” thought that all the elements, including fire, have weight (*baros*) in that their motion responds to a desire of like for like (*epheis ekaston pros ton syngenes*) carried by heaviness (*dia barytetos*) (Simplicius 1894, pp. 680.26–681.1; Simplicius 2009, p. 74). Every part has received from creation, or – as translated into Latin by William of Moerbeke (1215–1286) – from the creator, the power to return to its kindred whole, wherever god and nature decided it to be (Simplicius 1894, p. 695.3–5; Simplicius 2009, p. 90; Simplicius 1563, p. 241, col. 2). A 1000 years later, Copernicus (1473–1543) will advance a similar idea of *gravitas* in his *De revolutionibus* (1543) (Copernicus 1974, II, p. 17.29–33, although the resemblance with Simplicius's interpretation of Plato's doctrine has hitherto escaped the attention of Copernican scholars).

It is likely that the association of heaviness with the power of heavy bodies, and its causal involvement in downward movement, was not Simplicius's own fabrication. Probably, it was customary to hold similar interpretations. We can find this reading also in the Arabic reception of Aristotle (Cerami 2017, p. 315; Averroes 1550, p. 150r, col. 2), where the notions of weight (*wazn*) and heaviness (*thiq*) receive a further re-elaboration when related to statics (Rozhanskaya 1996, pp. 278–281; Abbattouy 2008, p. 102). In the mediaeval Latin tradition, the chief problem became to fit *gravitas* within a coherent Aristotelian framework. This gave rise to several issues. The attempts to solve them resulted in a rich array of views on *gravitas*, carefully recorded by Annaliese Maier (Maier 1943, pp. 143–180; Maier 1982, pp. 40–60).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Renaissance philosopher Nicoletto Vernia (1420–1499) considered *gravitas* as “the most serious problem in natural philosophy” (Maier 1943, p. 143; De Bellis 2011, pp. 15–20). For Aristotelian thinkers like him, the issues at stake remained chiefly those already debated in the Middle Ages (Helbing 1989, pp. 154–157). Yet the views on *gravitas* received a further degree of terminological as well as conceptual detailing. The difference between the notions of weight (*pondus*) and *gravitas* was sometimes made explicit. Francesco Buonamici (1533–1603), for instance, thought of weight as due to the dynamic effect of *gravitas* (Buonamici 1591, p. 469B-D: “... Talis ergo est gravitas quam a pondere distinguimus...”), whose motive action (or secondary act) was by other authors expressed through the neologisms *gravitatio*, *gravitare*, or *actus gravitandi* (Helbing 1989, p. 155 n. 27; Galilei 1890–1909, I, pp. 131–132; Conimbricenses 1603, p. 530). In this sense, and in line with a passage of the fourth book of the *De caelo* (307b28–33), weight was often associated with *rhope*, a Greek term that in the Renaissance was translated also as *momentum* (Galluzzi 1979, pp. 89–118). The question of

gravitas began therefore to be treated in connection with the definition of *momentum* (Filalteo 1565, p. 594: “Graece *rhopen* placuit momentum vertere, alij propensionem, alij barbare nimis inclinationem. Censui animadvertendum hoc verbum ob gravem quaestionem, ne videlicet *gravitas*, et *levitas* sint formae et substantiae, an momenta, et facultates, potentiae elementorum...”).

As philosophers in the Renaissance begin to breach the constraints of Aristotelian natural philosophy, we see a new variety of positions on *gravitas*. Copernicus had a major role in this, for he challenged the traditional idea of *gravitas* as a unidirectional tendency towards the center of the universe, thereby providing preliminary conditions for a “decosmologized” analysis of movement (Clavelin 2016, pp. 80–84, 91–92). But Copernican philosophers were not always content with his definition of *gravitas*. Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), for instance, put forth different concepts of *gravitas* more or less indebted to the external effluvia theory advanced by William Gilbert (1544–1603) in the *De magnet* (1600) (Koyré 1965, pp. 173–175; Overmann 1974, pp. 31–53). He was then able to explain tides suggesting the existence of a mutual attraction between the Earth and the Moon. This solution was stigmatized as “occult” by another Copernican, Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), who was also convinced that the ontological understanding of *gravitas* had no bearing on the explanation of natural phenomena such as free fall motion (Galilei 1890–1909, VII, pp. 260–261, 486). But the majority of natural philosophers thought of it otherwise. Mechanical explanations of *gravitas* led some of them, like René Descartes (1596–1650), to the rejection of Galilei's law of free fall; whereas others, like Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) and Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), sought to develop theories in accordance with it (Palmerino 1999; Leijenhorst 2004; Baldin 2017, pp. 150–163). In any case, *gravitas* was no longer conceived as a natural capacity to accomplish an act but rather as a force (*vis*) more and more often associated with phenomena such as tides and free fall acceleration.

Legacy

By the second half of the seventeenth century, *gravitas* was related to a new number of issues. Above all, theories of *gravitas* were now required to rest on a more sophisticated quantitative approach. Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695) worked out a theory that, based on detailed mathematical analyses, was able to account for Galilei's law of free fall without exceeding the chief tenets of mechanical philosophy (Overmann 1974, pp. 152–175). After the publication of his theory in the *Horologium oscillatorium* (1673), qualitative attempts like those put forth by Robert Hooke (1635–1703), although suggestive, became insufficient (Koyré 1965, pp. 180–184; Overmann 1974, pp. 210–241). The definitive solution was provided by Isaac Newton (1642–1727). His law of universal gravitation explains a wide range of natural phenomena, both terrestrial and celestial. Because of this, its validity was granted notwithstanding skepticism about the ontological status of gravity as attractive force. Only more than two centuries after Newton's *Principia mathematica* (1687), the reformation of the classical mechanics space-time framework would cast serious doubts on the conceptualization of gravity as a force (Jammer 1957, pp. 260–264).

Cross-References

- [Force in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Law of Free Fall in Renaissance Science](#)

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Theodoros Metochites (1270–1332). From the outbreak of the Hesychast controversy (around 1341) in Byzantium until his death, he was a staunch anti-Palamite. After becoming monk in 1351, he advanced to the position of a spiritual leader of the anti-Palamite movement. His most important work is his *Romaike Historia* (*Roman History*). He never wrote a treatise dedicated exclusively to philosophical subjects, but a number of his works contain extensive treatment of philosophical questions. In the dialogue *Phlorentios or on Wisdom*, he criticizes the syllogistic *techne* and discusses a number of issues pertaining to Aristotle’s natural philosophy.

G

Gregeta Erculiani, Camilla

► [Erculiani, Camilla](#)

Greggetti Erculiani, Camilla

► [Erculiani, Camilla](#)

Gregoras, Nikephoros

Born: 1291 or 1295, Herakleia Pontike

Died: November 14, 1357 or 1359,
Constantinople

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Abstract

Nikephoros Gregoras was a Byzantine historian and philosopher. A native of Herakleia Pontike on the Black Sea, he moved to Constantinople at a very young age and received there his literary and philosophical education. He was a close friend of and later an intellectual heir to

Biography

Nikephoros Gregoras is a Byzantine polymath, philosopher, and historian. He was born between the summer of 1291 and May 1295 (Beyer 1978, pp. 127–130; Guiland 1926, 1927) in Herakleia Pontike (Karadeniz Ereğli in modern-day Turkey). Before the age of 20, G. moved to Constantinople (Beyer 1978, p. 130). There he received a literary and rhetorical education under Patriarch John XIII Glykys (1315–1319) (PLP 4271, cf. Schopen 1829/1830, I, 270, 20–271, 2) and became acquainted with the statesman, scholar, and patron of the arts Theodoros Metochites (PLP 17982). G. rapidly won Metochites’ confidence and was introduced by him to the study of astronomy and entrusted with the education of his children Nikephoros (PLP 17986) and Irene (PLP 5972). In 1321/1322 (van Dieten 1973/2007, I, 5; Beyer 1978, p. 131) G. was presented to the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328) and quickly acquired a prominent status in the intellectual life of the Byzantine capital. Probably in the same year, the emperor offered G. the office of *chartophylax*, but G. declined the offer (Schopen 1829/1830, I, 339, 22–340, 10). In the following years G. opened a school (Bezdeki 1925, Ep. XXIII, 251, 42–252, 11) and went on a diplomatic mission to Serbia in 1326/1327 (Schreiner 1999/2000, pp. 334–335). After the deposition of Andronikos II by his grandson Andronikos III (1328–1341) on May 24, 1328,

G. found himself in a difficult situation on account of his close ties to both the deposed emperor and his prime minister Theodoros Metochites. G. was virtually banned from participation in the public life of the Byzantine capital. During the same period, G. got embroiled in the bitter dispute between G. and the scholar and theologian Barlaam of Calabria (ca. 1290–1348), which was made public in three pamphlets written by G. himself (“Reply to those who say that there is no humility among human beings,” “Philomates or on insolent people,” and the dialogue “Phlorentios or on wisdom”). G. eventually succeeded in winning the support and friendship of John Kantakouzenos (ca. 1295–1383), a figure of paramount importance in the new regime of Andronikos III and returned to play an important role in the intellectual life of Constantinople, without abandoning his allegiance to his old friends Andronikos II and Metochites. Following the death of Andronikos II on February 13, 1332, and of Metochites on March 13, 1332, G. continued his scholarly activities, residing in the Chora monastery, which Metochites had bequeathed to him. A new period of his life began with the civil war that broke out after the death of Andronikos III on June 15, 1341, and eventually led to the victory of his friend John Kantakouzenos. Kantakouzenos was crowned emperor in Thessalonike on May 21, 1346 and entered Constantinople on February 3, 1347. In the 1340s, G. got involved in the Hesychast controversy, and, after becoming a monk in 1351, he advanced to the position of the spiritual leader of the anti-Palamite movement. The struggle against the Palamites dominated almost all his activities during the last part of his life. After the death of Patriarch Isidore I Boucheras (PLP 3140), probably between 1350 and 1352, G. was offered the office of patriarch on the condition that he would join the Palamite camp, but he declined the offer. Owing to his uncompromising anti-Palamite stance, G. eventually lost the friendship and support of emperor John Kantakouzenos. In 1351 a synod convened by the emperor confirmed Palamas’ teachings and condemned G. In the summer of the same year, G. was placed under arrest in the Chora monastery. The conditions of his confinement became progressively more

adverse during the following 4 years of imprisonment: his servants were taken away from him, and he was denied any contact with the world outside his cell. After Kantakouzenos was forced by John V Palaiologos to abdicate on November 2, 1354, the decision about G.’s arrest was revoked. There is little information about the last years of G.’s life, during which he continued his fight against Palamite theology. Palamas died on November 14, 1357 or 1359 (PLP 21546, Beyer 1978, p. 150), and his enemy G. sometime later, most probably between 1358 and 1361 (Beyer 1978, pp. 153–155).

The most important work of Gregoras is his *Rhomaïke Historia* (Schopen 1829/1930), in 37 books, which covers the period 1204–1359 and presents the material in an annalistic fashion. His literary output was enormous, cf. the list in van Dieten (1973/2007, vol. I, pp. 44–62). It includes treatises on rhetorical, grammatical, musicological, astronomical, and mathematical subjects. G. maintained an extensive correspondence and engaged in doctrinal polemics. He did not author a single treatise dedicated exclusively to a philosophical subject, but a number of his works contain longer passages on philosophical questions. These are:

1. Commentary on Synesius of Cyrene’s *De insomniis* (= Nr. 39 van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. and it. tr. Pietrosanti 1999)
2. Pamphlet “Reply to those who say that there is no humility among human beings” (= Nr. 40 van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. Leone 1970, pp. 480–487)
3. Dialogue “Philomates or on insolent people” (= Nr. 41 van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. Bezdeki 1925, pp. 356–364)
4. Dialogue “Phlorentios or on Wisdom” (= Nr. 42 van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. Leone 1975)
5. Criticism of Senseless Prophecies (= Nr. 43a van Dieten, ed. Guiland 1927, pp. 73–83, written in 1329)
6. Letter to Pepagomenes (= Nr. 43b van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. Guiland 1927, pp. 201–205)
7. Letter to Maximos Magistros (= Nr. 43c van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. Guiland 1927, pp. 195–199)

8. Solutions to Different Problems Posed by Helena Palaiologina (= Nr. 44 van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. Leone 1970, pp. 488–513)
9. On the universal form by itself that is seen only by the Intellect (= Nr. 68a van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. Beyer 1971, p. 183)
10. On the form that is seen together with accidents (= Nr. 68b van Dieten 1973/2007; ed. Beyer 1971, p. 183)

The dialogue “Phlorentios or on Wisdom” offers important insights into G.’s philosophical views. Written sometime after the death of Theodoros Metochites, this text was intended by G. to be an account of a public debate on philosophical subjects between G., Barlaam of Calabria, and an otherwise unknown Latin friar that supposedly took place in the house of John Kantakouzenos. In spite of a quasi-documentary status that G. attributes to this text in his *Rhomaïke Historia* (Schopen 1829/1930, I, 555, 7–556, 14), it probably corresponds closer to what G. wished had happened than to the actual events (Bydén 2003; Mariev 2011; Tinnefeld 2011). In this dialogue, G. demonstrates that the syllogistic *technē* does not constitute science but is merely a tool for the preliminary instruction of weak and inexperienced minds. G.’s stance on the question concerning the status of logic is almost identical with the views expressed by Plotinus on the relationship between dialectic and logic in his treatise *On Dialectics* (Enn. I, 3, 1). Furthermore, G. demonstrates that neither the dialectical nor demonstrative syllogisms constitute science. In the case of the dialectical syllogisms, he points out that for Aristotle himself, their premises are merely “generally admitted” and “ambiguous.” His criticism of the demonstrative syllogisms pursues two objectives. First he shows that the demonstrative science is based on the principles which are not themselves demonstrated but are formulated on the basis of inductive reasoning which has as its starting point the observation of the sensible objects. At the same time, G. points out an inconsistency within Aristotle himself, who criticized the Platonic theory of forms and declared in *AnPo* I 83a 33–35 that the forms are irrelevant for demonstrations. The later part of the dialogue, which portrays a debate between G. and

a Latin friar, targets some points of Aristotle’s natural philosophy. It addresses such issues as which qualities should be assigned to each element and especially whether wetness should be assigned to water or air (Leone 1975, pp. 1060–1061); the question of the origin of large rivers, i.e., whether water is heavier than earth (Leone 1975, pp. 1251–1320); whether or not heaven is in a place (Leone 1975, pp. 1340–1358); and whether the element that constitutes heaven is corporeal or incorporeal (Leone 1975, pp. 1467–1497). The philosophical problems discussed in *Phlorentios* frequently resurface in other texts written by G. For example, his criticism of those who are not able to go beyond a merely discursive reasoning and consider syllogisms to be an art for its own sake is repeated in almost identical terms in G.’s *Letter to Pepagomenes* (Nr. 6 in the list above). G.’s interest in the status of universal concepts is documented in the two chapters “On the Universal Form” and “On the Form That Is Contemplated Together with Accidents.” Similarly, the discussion of various questions of natural philosophy reappears in his letters and in the *Romaïke Historia*. To a certain extent, G. can be considered a forerunner of the Renaissance in the West (Tatakis 1949, p. 295). G.’s philosophical questions show that he was an intellectual heir to Theodoros Metochites (Bydén 2011). His critical attitude toward logic can also be traced back to the early Church Fathers, such as Gregory of Nazianzus (329/30–ca. 390) and Gregory of Nyssa (between 335 and 340 – after 394), and finds interesting parallels in the writings of several of G.’s contemporaries and intellectual adversaries, such as Gregory Palamas and Barlaam of Calabria (Ierodiakonou 2003; Leone 1971/1972; Moschos 1998).

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Grocene

- [Grocyn, William](#)

Grocin

- [Grocyn, William](#)

Grocyn, William

Born: c. 1446, Colerne, Wiltshire (England)

Died: 1519, Maidstone (Kent)

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Abstract

William Grocyn was a cleric and a humanist educated in Oxford, where he was elected Divinity Reader at Magdalen College in 1483. Later he held important positions as canon, prebendary, and rector throughout Britain; his most important appointments were to the vicarship of St Lawrence Jewry in London (1496–1517) and to the mastership of All Saints' College, Maidstone (1506–1519). From 1488 to at least 1490, he was in Italy along with Thomas Linacre, studying Greek and Latin in Florence under Angelo Poliziano and Demetrius Chalcondylas. He was in contact with Aldus Manutius, as it is testified by a letter addressed to the publisher, which is Grocyn's only extant work. His known associates include Desiderius Erasmus Rotterdamus, John Colet, and Thomas More. Grocyn owned a remarkable library of manuscripts and printed books: it contained works by ancient Latin and Greek authors, contemporary authors, and Italian humanists. Grocyn's Greek collection, mostly in the manuscript

form and partly of Italian provenance, was the best in Britain: the scribes of some of his *codices* were Joannes Serbopoulos, Emanuel of Constantinople, Joannes Thessalus Scutariota, and Petros Hypsilas. Most of these books are now kept at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

Synonyms

Crosson; Grocene; Grocin; Grooson; Grosone; Grosson; Grosun; Grosune; Grosyn; Grosyne; Groysine; Groysun

Biography

William Grocyn, cleric and humanist, was born in the middle of the fifteenth century (*c.* 1446: Burrows 1890, 335; *c.* 1449: Lily 1548, fol. 48v) in Colerne (Wiltshire), where his father was a college tenant. He was educated at Winchester College starting from September 1463. He was admitted to New College, Oxford, in 1465 as a scholar and was subsequently elected fellow in 1467. He was the tutor of William Warham, who would later become the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is believed that Grocyn became Master of Arts by 1474, while it is thought that he could have taught for Lincoln College in 1477. He was elected Divinity Reader at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1483, when he successfully opposed Master John Taylor in a disputation held during Richard III's visit. In March 1488, however, he vacated this readership and went to Italy. He returned to Oxford by 4 June 1491 (Weiss 2010, 262 and nn. 35–36); it is now presumed that he privately taught the humanities rather than giving the first Greek public lectures at the university, as it has been commonly postulated (Clough 1977, 22 n. 5; Clough 2000, 106). While Grocyn held important positions as canon, prebendary, and rector throughout Britain, his most important appointments were to the vicarship of St Lawrence Jewry in London (from December 1496 until his resignation in May 1517) and to the mastership of All Saints' (or All Hallows')

College, Maidstone, Kent (from April 1506 until his death). He was disabled by an attack of paralysis in 1518 and died between 2 June and October 1519, after which he was ultimately laid to rest in All Saints' (Emden 1958, 827).

The Italian Trip

In *c.* 1488 Grocyn left Oxford for Italy, where he was said to have studied Greek and Latin in depth. It is not excluded that he had improved on the knowledge of Greek that he had previously acquired in Britain, possibly with the assistance of Cornelio Vitelli, who was *praelector* of New College for 2 years from about January 1485 (Clough 2000, 99), or the Greek scholars and copyists Emanuel of Constantinople and John Serbopoulos (Catto 1992, 780–781). In the dedicatory epistle to Marcus Musurus of a treatise on Greek orthography in Statius' edition, Aldus Manutius remembered that Grocyn, along with Thomas Linacre, had studied Greek in Florence under Demetrius Chalcondylas (Manutius 1502, fol. aiv). Grocyn personally came into contact with Manutius: he addressed a letter to the printer, dated in London on 27 August, plausibly in the year 1499 (Allen 1903, 515), where he thanked him for his extraordinary kindness to Linacre, who had taken part in the work on the Greek Aldine edition of Aristotle in five volumes, which were published between 1495 and 1498. This epistle prefaces Linacre's Latin translation of ps. Proclus' *De sphaera* in the edition of *Astronomici veteres*. Grocyn recalled Linacre's collaboration with Aldus and praised the publisher both for printing in Greek and for releasing an edition of Aristotle instead of Plato. Grocyn presented himself as being pleased to know from Linacre that Aldus was contemplating the printing of the Old Testament in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and of the New Testament in Greek and Latin, urging him to carry on (Grocyn 1499, fols Tiv-Tiir). This epistle is Grocyn's only published work. A tradition connects the names of Linacre, Grocyn, and William Latimer (*c.* 1467–1545) with a project for a joint translation of Aristotle

into Latin. However, except for the translation of the *Meteorologica* in which Linacre seems to have been engaged (Manutius 1499, fol. Tiv), there is no evidence to show that the work was ever seriously undertaken. In a letter to Erasmus, datable to 30 January 1517, Latimer stated that Grocyn and Linacre had studied under Chalcondylas and Angelo Poliziano, the former for a couple of years and the latter for the same amount of time or even longer (Erasmus Roterdamus 1910, 441–442). Latimer's testimony seems to be reliable, at least for Linacre: Latimer had met Linacre in Padua in c. 1498 and had befriended him. Moreover, he was writing while Linacre was still alive. The letter appears in the collection of Erasmus' letters published by Froben (Basel, 1519) and it is not impossible that this was the source for the same statement by the cleric and cosmographer Georgy Lily (†1559), who dedicated a paragraph to both Grocyn and Linacre in his *elogia* of highly distinguished British intellectuals. Lily wrote that Grocyn devoted considerable efforts to Greek and Latin with Chalcondylas and Poliziano after he had learnt the rudiments of these languages in Britain (Lily 1548, fol. 48r). Lily could have also gained insight as to the education of these scholars from his father William (c. 1462–1522/3), who was the godson of Grocyn and was admitted with Linacre to the English Hospice of St Thomas of Canterbury in Rome on 4 November 1490 (Schmitt 1977, 40). Latimer did not discuss the date of Linacre and Grocyn's Italian trip. An autograph note by Poliziano in an incunabulum (now kept in Oxford) testifies that in 1490 Poliziano held a 7-month-long private course on Pliny the Elder for English and Portuguese pupils (Cotton 1937, 394–397). According to sources, even if they are not explicitly mentioned, the English students were Linacre, whose presence at Florence at the end of 1489 can be proved by John Morer's will (Bennet 1968, 90), and Grocyn.

Grocyn's European Network

Visiting England for the first time in 1499, Erasmus found that Grocyn associated with John Colet

and Thomas More. His name, with those of Colet, More, Polydore Vergil, and others, is recorded in the admissions book of Doctors' Commons in London (1508; Logan 1988, 156). In two epistles of c. 1501 and 1504 More defined Grocyn as a tutor and a master (Rogers 1947, 4; 8–9). In the letter datable to 1501 and addressed to John Holt, More related that Grocyn began a lecture series in St Paul's Cathedral in London on the book *De celesti hierarchia* of ps. Dionysius the Areopagite. According to Erasmus, Grocyn initially believed that the author of the work was St Paul's convert (Act. 17:34), but subsequently changed his original opinion (Trapp 1996, 298–302). In the letter datable to 1504 and addressed to Colet, More referred to Grocyn as the sole guide in his life in Colet's absence. More delivered a series of lectures on St Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (whose text does not survive) in Grocyn's church of St Lawrence Jewry (Burrows 1890, 356–357). In a letter from Antwerp to German de Brie, dated 25 June 1520, Erasmus wrote that More had learnt Greek thanks to the teaching of Linacre and Grocyn (Erasmus Roterdamus 1922, 294). Praises of Grocyn are frequent in Erasmus' letters to Aldus, Germain de Brie, Guillaume Budé, Colet, John and Robert Fisher, Latimer, Linacre, Richard Pace, Joost Vroye (Gaverius), and Roger Wentford. At the end of his life, Grocyn was appointed to All Saints' College, Maidstone, where he died in 1519. On 2 June of that year he made his will, which was executed by his executor and residuary legatee Linacre on 20 July 1522 (Burrows 1890, 380).

Works

Grocyn is said to have written: *Tractatus contra hostiolum Jo. Wyclevi* (Wycliffe), *Epistolae ad Erasmum et alios*, *Grammatica*, *Vulgaria puerorum*, *Not. in Terentium*, *Isagogicum quoddam*, and *Epigrammata* (Wood 1813, 31). Although a tradition dating back to Bale's *De scriptoribus Britannicis* attributes a Latin epigram on Julia – who threw a snowball at her lover – to him (Fuller 1811, 297), the poem comes from the *Anthologia Latina* (Riese 1906, 173 nr. 706: a

longer version with some different readings; Hunt 1980, 106). With the exception of the previously cited letter to Aldus, none of his other works appear to have survived to the present day.

Grocyn's Library

Grocyn owned a remarkable library of manuscripts and printed books, reconstructible partly from an inventory made in 1520 by his executor Linacre after his death (Burrows 1890, 321–324; Allen and Garrod 1928, 47 pl. XXVI; Emden 1958, 828–830; Thomson 2015, 522–572, UO25-UO32). St Augustine appears to have been Grocyn's favorite author. Of the Early Fathers, he possessed works by Ambrose, Cyprian, Eusebius, Gregory the Great, and Jerome; writings from the medieval period include Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, Nicholas of Lyra, and William of Ockham. There were also ancient Latin authors on the list, like Apuleius, Aulus Gellius, Caesar, Cicero, Lucretius, Juvenal, Seneca, Persius, Plautus, Pliny the Elder, Suetonius, Tacitus, Livy, Valerius Maximus, and Virgil. One can also find several works of Italian humanists: Ermolao Barbaro, Giovanni Boccaccio, Pietro Crinito, Marsilio Ficino, Francesco Filelfo, Pomponio Leto, Francesco Petrarca, Niccolò Perotti, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, and Lorenzo Valla. Moreover, Erasmus' printed bilingual New Testament and *Adagia* are both listed in the inventory. Grocyn's Greek collection, mostly in the manuscript form and partly of Italian provenance, was the best in Britain: it contained Aristotle (in Greek and in the Latin translations by Gaza and Argyropoulos), St Basil, much St John Chrysostom, ps. Dionysius (also in Latin), Eustrathius, Origen, Plato, Plotinus, Plutarch, Julius Pollux and the Greek lexicon "Suidas," Porphyrius, Proclus, Ptolemy, Simplicius, Theophylact, and Thucydides. The copyists of some manuscripts were the Greek scribes Joannes Serbopoulos (who produced two of them at Reading Abbey in 1495 and 1499), Emanuel of Constantinople, Joannes Thessalus Scutariota, and Petros Hypsilas. Most of these books are now at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

Some were bought by the College upon the request of its first president, John Claymond; others were received by bequest from him (Coxe 1852 pars II; Thomson 2011; Wilson 2011). One manuscript is now at New College (Coxe 1852 pars I, 93 nr. CCLXI) and one in Liverpool (Clough 1983; Kristeller 1989, 51a).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Despite Grocyn's seemingly conservative leanings in religion and philosophy, his achievements in Greek and Latin, the importance of his European network, and the wealth of his library make him one of the most significant of the earliest Tudor humanists.

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Grooson

► [Grocyn, William](#)

Groote, Geert

► [Grote, Geert](#)

Grosone

► [Grocyn, William](#)

Grosson

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Grosun

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Grosune

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Grosyn

► [Grocyn, William](#)

Grosyne

► [Grocyn, William](#)

Grote, Geert

Born: October 1340

Died: 20 August 1384

Rijcklof Hofman

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Abstract

Geert Grote was the founder of the late medieval religious reform movement *Devotio moderna*. He lived in the second half of the fourteenth century and was known especially for his criticism of the higher clergy and his preaching activities which incited his audiences to lead a more sincere religious life. Through the three branches of followers together forming the *Devotio moderna*, he paved the way for a more critical approach to practices in the church during the later Middle Ages and beyond.

Alternate Names

Gerardus Magnus; Groote, Geert

Biography

Geert Grote was born in Deventer, a city in the present-day Netherlands, as the son of a wealthy and influential cloth merchant. At the age of 15, he was sent for further study to the University of Paris, where he was accorded the degree of *magister artium* in 1358. He spent several years in Paris thereafter, but eventually he returned, in or around 1366, to his native city. His attempts to secure a career in the church resulted in the assignment of prebendaryships in Aachen (1368) and Utrecht (1371) (cfr on his career before his conversion Magnus 2016: 38–49). Traditionally, it is maintained on the authority of his biographers that he gave up his active life in the world after a grave illness, probably in 1374, but perhaps somewhat earlier, which led to a conversion to an ascetic and spiritually oriented life, imitating Christ and his first followers. In order to interiorize this new attitude, Grote spent an unspecified period of time (probably 3 years) between 1374 and 1379 in Monnikhuizen, a Carthusian monastery near Arnhem, as a commensal. Grote's biographers also maintain that he started to show a sincere interest in spiritually oriented literature in Monnikhuizen for the first time (Épiney 1970: 36–50; Van Zijl 1963: 72–154), but in fact he was *leg.* acquainted with this sort of literature much earlier already (Hofman 2003). On the advice of the Carthusians, however, he exchanged the secluded life in the charterhouse for a life of preaching in the world, attested from c. 1379 until his death as a victim of the plague on 20 August 1384.

Innovative Aspects

In his sermons, but also in treatises and *consilia*, he summoned his contemporaries, apparently with much success, to give up their secular lifestyle and to start a devout life imitating Christ and his first followers. In addition, he attempted to improve the moral standards of contemporary clergymen. His efforts in this field came down to opposition against two forms of abuse in the

world of the clergy, corruption and incontinence. His views on corrupt practices in ecclesiastical positions can be subdivided in a few closely related topics: firstly, corrupt practices in connection with the acquisition of and functioning in ecclesiastical offices, and, secondly, the widespread custom to require an admission fee from prospective residents in religious institutions. Together with corrupt ordination, these evils were in Grote's days generally together referred to as different forms of simony. Closely related to simoniacal practices in relation with monastic entry is a tolerant attitude toward personal possessions belonging to individual residents in religiously living communities, a custom known as proprietarism (Magnus 2016). He aired his views on priests who shared their life and house with a member of the weaker vessel most convincingly during a sermon delivered during a diocesan synodal assembly, held on 14 August 1383 in Utrecht, the cathedral city of the medieval diocese of the northern Low Countries. He worked out the sermon after its delivery in several treatises varying in length (Magnus 2011). Reactions on the sermon were bound to be vehement. Many focarists (i.e., ordained clerics living together with female partners), among them various high-placed secular canons and prelates who accommodated concubines in their houses, were less than happy with Grote's sermon, as he must have realized in advance. And yet he was taken by surprise when headstrong focarists joined forces with various other groups of his antagonists. In the autumn of 1383, this group of combined opponents presented a formal petition to Floris van Wevelinckhoven, the Bishop of Utrecht (1379–1393) (Magnus 2011: 103–123; Van Zijl 1963: 297–302).

Until then Bishop Floris had supported Grote's efforts to reform abuses in the church, but under pressure he gave in to the opposition. Rather than directly confronting Grote by warning him personally, he preferred a more roundabout course, which may reflect his embarrassment in thwarting his former ally: he issued a decree reserving the permission to preach for priests, taking it away from deacons. Effectively, Grote, who was a

deacon, was forbidden to preach as a result. Less than a year later, on 20 August 1384, Grote died as a victim of the plague.

Impact and Legacy

Alternating with his preaching activities were periods of study and isolation. The single most important and lasting innovation which he carried out in this context is the composition of a book of hours written in vernacular Middle Dutch (Van Wijk 1940). This prayer book was immensely influential since it enabled lay people, most of them women, to develop and keep up their own spirituality without interference from church officials. He spent these periods most often in two rooms in his own house, which he had handed over to the city government shortly after his conversion, in order to accommodate single or widowed women in it. Shortly afterward, this community of women evolved into the Sisters of the Common Life, *leg.* groups of women living a religious life together without taking vows. In close cooperation with his friend and ally Florens Radewijns (1350–1400), a similar lifestyle for men was established in the 1380s, the Brothers of the Common Life. Both forms of religious common life without vows soon spread over Western Europe (Van Engen 2008; Klausmann 2003), while at the same time two other forms of more traditionally monastic life also adopted the principles of an observant, sincere religious lifestyle: Windesheim Regular Canons of St Augustine (Kohl et al. 1976–1984) and regular communities following the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis (Van Engen 2006).

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Grotius, Hugo

Birth: 10 April 1583

Death: 28 August 1645

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Abstract

Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) was a Dutch jurist, humanist, and theologian, whose work resonated with and inspired the political and intellectual issues of his time. Born to a family with a history of local governance and academic excellence, Grotius pushed beyond his family's local political influence to become a diplomat, lawyer, and public intellectual of international prominence. Against the backdrop of escalating political tensions throughout Europe between parties such as Spain and the Netherlands, Sweden and the Holy Roman Empire, as well as France and England, Grotius's writings in law and theology engaged with and broke new ground in debates that would influence the outcome of several political conflicts, from the Dutch Revolt against Spain to the Thirty Years' War. At the same time, Grotius's humanistic writings, especially his translations and philological works, are not to be overlooked for their scholarly and aesthetic contributions to European cultural history. This article narrates Grotius's life and then examines some of his key interventions and legacy in the disciplines of philology, international law, and theology.

Alternate Names

[de Groot, Hugo](#)

Biography

Hugo Grotius (Hugo de Groot, 1583–1645) was born in Delft, Netherlands, to Johan de Groot and

Alida van Overschie on April 10, 1583. He was the first-born son of a patrician family, whose male heirs frequently occupied the mayoral office of that town. His great grandfather, Corneille de Cornets, linked Hugo to a noble Burgundian bloodline, but Corneille surrendered his own namesake to the family name de Groot in a marriage contract to the daughter of the Delft mayor Diederich de Groot at the turn of the century. Hugo Grotius's grandfather, the son of Corneille de Cornets and also named Hugo, was both an exemplary scholar and notable mayor. His sons, Corneille and Johann, followed their father's legacy of superior academic performance. Corneille de Groot (Hugo Grotius's uncle) studied Greek literature and philosophy and later pursued studies in law and took a professorship in jurisprudence at the University of Leyden. Johann de Groot (Hugo Grotius's father) – like his brother and father – excelled at the university. Johann studied at Leyden under Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), absolved a doctorate in law, and then returned to the family business of running the town of Delft while helping to manage the affairs of the University of Leyden, where his brother was a professor.

In his academic training, Hugo Grotius (most often referred to by his Latin *nom de plume*) successfully upheld his family's tradition of exemplary performance in humanistic and in legal studies. The oldest of four children, Grotius attended the University of Leyden at the age of 12 where he studied under the famous scholar Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609), who had succeeded Lipsius at the university. He soon took an opportunity to travel abroad and continue his studies internationally. On this celebrated trip to France, he socialized among some of the most powerful aristocrats and politicians of that country, including – according to his letters – “touching” the hand of the king. Grotius completed his doctoral studies in civil and canon law at the University of Orleans in 1598.

Grotius had by this time already distinguished himself at home and abroad as a learned individual and gifted new Latin poet. Most of his poems, which are celebrated primarily for their themes and his astonishing breadth of references to Roman writers, were frequently dedicated in deep gratitude to his father and often to important

noble houses, princes, diplomats, and military commanders in Europe as well. Notably, his poetic rendering of several psalms and his tragedy *Adamus exul* (1601) became inspirational material for John Milton (1608–1674). In 1617, his younger brother Wilhelm de Groot published a significant collection of his poetry written between 1591 and 1617, but by that point his legal reputation had begun to overshadow his literary and philological output. His works as a mature adult, such as *Christus patiens* (1608) and his reworking of the story of Joseph and his brothers *Sophompaneas* (1632, publ. 1635), won acclaim in addition to his many translations of Greek and Roman authors.

In 1601, at the age of 16, Grotius began his legal career as a lawyer for Holland, Zeeland, and Frisia, based out of the Hague. The political situation in his home country, especially the ongoing conflict in the early 1600s between Spanish and Dutch trade interests, drew his attention away from some of his academic projects to the more practical concerns of diplomacy and law. He was appointed as a public prosecutor under the authority of the Dutch Republic leader Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547–1619) to the province of Holland in 1607 and later as a pensionary, or legal officer, of Rotterdam in 1613. Grotius was a productive legal contributor during the peace talks between Spain and the United Provinces, which began in 1607. In 1608 these talks fell apart over the Spanish demand, in return for a Spanish recognition of Dutch independence, that the Netherlands cease trading in India. With the help of France and England, however, a fragile 12-year truce had been reached in early April of 1609. By then, Grotius had written several important memoranda, one of which was commissioned by the United Dutch East India Company (VOC) and subsequently published as the source for two anonymous pamphlets in support of the Dutch cause and in order to gain French and English support in the peace talks. Grotius was not directly involved in the lobbying, but he seems to have been an important source of legal arguments. At the request of Oldenbarnevelt, for example, who was the chief negotiator in peace talks on behalf of the Dutch, Grotius refrained from publishing the *Mare liberum* until after the conclusion of peace

talks. This work, which became a foundational source of modern maritime law, grew out of a project Grotius had begun much earlier on behalf of the VOC.

Earlier, in 1604, following on the heels of the Dutch capture of the Portuguese merchant ship *Santa Catarina* in the Strait of Singapore in 1603 and the auction of that vessel in the fall of 1604, the United Dutch East India Company (VOC) hired Grotius to pen a formal defense of the Captain Van Meeskerck's capture of the *Santa Catarina*. Grotius's lengthy tome that emerged from this contract with the VOC, *De jure praedae commentarius* (*Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*), defied the company's expectations of brevity. The VOC's interest in a speedy public defense of their captain's actions and their own financial benefit from the sale of the *Santa Catarina* was echoed in a letter to Grotius by his friend Jan ten Grootenhuys, who was also the VOC agent who hired him. Just a month after soliciting Grotius's services, Grootenhuys beseeched that "your apology, begun so felicitously, will be completed in a short while thanks to your attentiveness" (*Briefwisseling*, 1:45; trans. Williams 2006, 547). *De jure praedae* was not published until three centuries after his death, but Grotius capped the formal defense nearly 5 years later with a twelfth chapter, published independently of the others just weeks after the Dutch and Spanish peace talks concluded. That work, *Mare liberum sive de jure quod Batavis competit ad Indicana commercia dissertatio*, was distributed in late April 1609, once again in the service of the VOC, which had commissioned its publication in November 1608.

In his new position at Rotterdam, beginning in 1613, Grotius took up an equally daunting legal project to outline the laws of just war, which had occupied a central position in his argument in *De jure praedae*. In this new position, Grotius also became embroiled in provincial governance as a member of the Estates of Holland. In 1617, he rose to the Estates General, which served as the governing body of the Dutch Republic. In a political power struggle in which Grotius sided with Oldenbarnevelt, Grotius fell into a trap during a political visit to the Hague, and he was arrested for sedition in 1618, alongside Oldenbarnevelt and

some of his partisans, on the orders of *stadtholder* Prince Maurice of Nassau.

Grotius was tried in 1619 and then placed under guard at the castle of Loevenstein, until his wife, Maria von Reigersberch (1589–1653), helped him escape in a chest of books to Gorcum in 1621. After disguising himself as a mason in order to traverse the Netherlands unnoticed and fleeing to Paris, he found himself in a position of fame among fellow expatriates and scholars. The French crown granted Grotius pension of 3,000 livres, and he spent his time in Paris by making a living from his writing and legal reputation. He penned his own legal defense, the *Stobaeus* (1623), as well as lesser-known translations of Greek tragedies and comedies (1626), and in 1625 – of tectonic consequences for seventeenth-century European politics – the *De jure belli ac pacis* (*The Law of War and Peace*). Despite his continuous requests and appeals that his conviction of treason be overturned, he was officially banned for life from the United Provinces by resolution of the Estates General in 1632.

Grotius's seminal work on military law came against the backdrop of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), which was just ending the first phase and entering the period of Swedish intervention. This period of the war began with Gustav Adolf's invasion of Stralsund in 1630 and continued long after the king's death at the battle of Lützen in November of 1632. The so-called Lion of the North, who notoriously carried Grotius's works with him wherever he went, vied with other nations for Grotius to serve as a consultant and agent for Swedish interests. Grotius accepted the Swedish king's offer, which he received in 1634, 2 years after Gustav Adolf's death.

At that point, the Swedish army in Germany was under the command of Axel Oxenstierna, the chancellor of Sweden, with whom Grotius met in Frankfurt in 1634. Oxenstierna soon dispatched Grotius as an envoy to France, where he served as a tireless, but not especially tactful, diplomat. He laid the groundwork for France's intervention in the Thirty Years' War in 1636 – against expectations – on the side of Sweden and the Protestant forces through a combination of diplomatic straight-talk and theological nuance. Grotius's

writings on the law of war had established the principles of “just war” between Christians, but his theological writings during the last 10 years of his life worked to align France's religious and political concerns with those of the Protestant Swedes.

During this decade, Grotius produced his most innovative theological claims in a series of pamphlets. His unique and unorthodox approach to exegesis, which – like his poetic interpretations of Bible stories – employed an intensely detailed philological-historical hermeneutic bolstered by an exceptional and multifaceted foundation in classics and ancient history, both supported and limited Catholic powers and beliefs while also defending and rejecting some Protestant claims, for example, in his writing on faith and good works, *De fide et operibus* (1640), and in his claim in another pamphlet that the Pope was not the Antichrist.

Important among his theological works are his exegetical treatments of the New Testament, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (1641), and the Old Testament, *Annotationes in Vestus Testamentum* (1644), both of which met intense criticism in his own day. They only became obvious for their relevance among scholars in the late eighteenth century. These works made clear his interest to serve not just one particular denomination but rather all Christians, whatever confession they may be.

He requested to be recalled to Sweden, and he traveled via Hamburg and Wismar to Stockholm in 1645. In Stockholm, Queen Christina received him warmly. Yet he felt unwelcome at the court because of rival courtiers. Begging leave, he traveled to Lübeck by ship but never made it. Just 3 years before the end of the Thirty Years' War, the great jurist of international maritime and military law was shipwrecked in Pomerania during his passage over the Baltic Sea. He eventually landed in Rostock, horribly sick and worn out. He died on August 28, 1645, 11 days after leaving Stockholm.

At his death, questions remained as to whether Grotius was really Protestant or whether he was rather a Catholic. The Protestant pastor Johann Quistorp, who tended him on his deathbed,

provided a simply written summary of their final conversation that clarified little on this point. Mid-seventeenth-century European partisan politics in response to his passing, on the other hand, divided along religious lines. Each side attempted to spin his death to their own advantage, including a story that claimed Grotius had been poisoned by the Lutherans. Hugo Grotius's religious confession, however, seems much simpler than the complicated political world of his time made it out to be; he died, writes one biographer, "a faithful Christian." His church was one of the future (*Zukunftskirche*), a unification of all Christians, a hope that he expressed in one of his final works, *Via ad pacem ecclesiasticam* (1642). Quistorp did not try to sway him from this faith in his fellow Christians as he passed.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

As a Dutch intellectual and politician in the age of the Reformation, Grotius was most heavily influenced – intellectually and spiritually – by the traditions of humanism and Protestantism, broadly speaking. His training in classical languages and literatures, as well as philosophy and poetry, is evident in his literary, philological, and theological writings. Because of this combination of humanist training and Protestant faith, Grotius's writings are founded upon references to classical authors and biblical sources.

Moreover, his political philosophy was tied tightly to his theological beliefs. Much of his legal and theological work, therefore, blends the methods of these fields with those of humanism. In *De jure belli ac pacis*, by one count alone, he cited eight classical figures over a hundred times each while also drawing from legal cases and biblical passages (Geddert 2014, 560). His theological stance throughout his writings conveyed a thoroughly irenic and ecumenical position, which joined smoothly to his political and legal discussions regarding natural law, natural rights, and distinctions of justice, especially with regard to war. Thus, Grotius, as many scholars of his work have sought to show, was constantly in conversation with the Bible, Aristotle, Plato, Socrates,

Xenophon, Cicero, Tacitus, Strabo, Irenaeus, contemporary theologians, and political philosophers regardless of whether he was writing about religious or political issues.

His theological works are unique to his time in their intensive application of a historical and philological hermeneutic, one more consistent with the study of classical literature than with theology of his day. His exegetical methodology was also compatible with his vision of a minimal Christian religion, founded on historically verified and self-evident principles that could be shared by all Christian (and, at times, non-Christian) believers. He had hoped that, by crafting shared core beliefs for all Christians, the Church could be unified and the secondary differences in faith could be relegated to "friendly debate" rather than lead to divisive politics and violent conflict (Nellen 2014, 445). Contemporary theologians criticized his views on some of these "secondary" issues, such as the Trinity, good works, and predestination, despite Grotius's proclaimed intention to diminish rather than inflame sectarian violence. At least partly, the French Huguenot Isaac Casaubon's *Exercitationes* (1614) – for which Grotius wrote one of the dedicatory poems – provided the irenic inspiration for such a vision of the Church.

Politically, Grotius's curriculum vitae paralleled a series of national and European political upheavals. These conflicts, such as the Dutch Revolt against Spain and the Thirty Years' War, inspired his treatises on international law and theological issues. Indeed, the powerful United Dutch East India Company (VOC) specifically contracted him repeatedly to write defenses or manuals on their behalf, and his late theological works were written in the political interest of the Swedish government. At the same time, major actors – among them Oldenbarnevelt and Gustav Adolf – in these conflicts were influenced, even driven to action, by the arguments of his legal and theological writings. His *De jure praedae* (1604–1605, 1609), for example, which was his first major legal work, intervened on behalf of the VOC in the ongoing conflict between the rebelling northern Dutch states and the crown of Spain and Portugal. Grotius's *De jure belli ac pacis*

(1625), on the other hand, which drew much of its argument regarding just war and the laws of war from his first major legal treatise, appeared during the first decade of the Thirty Years' War, which – at its conclusion in 1648 – turned out to be one of the most violent and disruptive wars in the history of Europe. Later, he would directly intervene as a political operative in this war as an agent of the Swedish government and envoy to France from 1634 until shortly before his death in 1645.

Innovative and Original Aspects and Impact and Legacy

International Law

The consensus among scholars depicts Hugo Grotius as one of the most important and influential political and legal theorists of the early modern period. In his age, Grotius's thinking inspired statesmen and intellectuals alike and acted as the inspiration, positively and negatively, for other major political theoreticians, such as John Locke (1632–1704), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), and John Selden (1584–1654). His contributions to political theory and international law culminated in his two major works on just war, international relations, and natural right, *Mare liberum* (1609) and *De jure belli ac pacis* (1625). While the political and biographical context of these works has been discussed at length above, this section will focus on the content and intellectual impact of these treatises.

Grotius published *Mare liberum* as a finishing nail for the stipulations of the truce hammered out between the Netherlands and Spain in April 1609. Its conclusions justified the concessions and terms made by the Netherlands in the peace process and certified Dutch sovereignty on legal grounds. The three main points of *Mare liberum* consist of arguments in favor of the freedom of the seas, the freedom of trade, and the freedom, validity, and enforceability of contracts between European and non-European powers. Grotius's principal argument declared the absolute neutrality of the seas and denied – via arguments derived from natural law theory – the legality of states to

declare sovereignty over the seas. This radical position, which drew heavily on the precedence of Roman law and other classical texts, reaped some equally fervent legal and philosophical responses since early modern and medieval states had long exercised sovereignty over their adjacent seas, especially Italy, England, Sweden, and Denmark. Even the Netherlands, contemporaries like John Selden pointed out, had a hypocritical relationship with the idea of *Mare liberum*, which they invoked when it supported their claims and denied when it worked to their disadvantage. The question was not quickly resolved among European powers. Only in 1713, after the Treaties of Utrecht, a tentative agreement held that immediately adjacent waters were within the sovereignty of the coastal nation they abutted to about the distance of a gunshot. The second main argument, the freedom of trade, had long been an accepted practice within Europe, but as European powers and their corporations colonized countries outside of the continent, they sought to monopolize trade within their spheres of influence. Grotius argued “that freedom of navigation and trade was a universal fundamental right which could not be legitimately restrained” (Weindl 2009, 142). Because this claim, to some degree, worked against the interests of the VOC, Grotius also declared the supremacy of *pacta sunt servanda* (contracts must be honored) as a regulating device for the absolute freedom of trade. The third and final argument of *Mare liberum* cemented the validity of the *pacta sunt servanda* clause, even in pacts with non-European peoples. Based in natural law and concepts of sovereignty, Grotius's argument stated that all humans and governments possess sovereignty so long as their rights within the scope of their sovereignty do not impinge upon the rights of others; thus, non-European people could sign legal contracts with Europeans. At the extremes, Grotius's declaration permitted people to sign their lives away into slavery, even if they did not understand the contractual terms that led to their enslavement; furthermore, the illegal breach of a contract could, according to Grotius, be legally punished in brutal fashion. *Mare liberum* had a tremendous influence on debates and treaties surrounding maritime law for over a

century after its publication. Within a few decades of its composition, the work functioned as a dominant text in trade talks involving the English, Dutch, Swedish, French, Danish, and Spanish, and it was critiqued and debated by scholars such as Scottish jurist William Welwood (1578–1622) and the English jurist and philosopher John Selden (1584–1654) on both sides of the English channel on legal and philosophical grounds.

Following on the heels of the *Mare liberum*, and completed while in exile in France, *De jure belli ac pacis* (1625) incorporated many of the unpublished arguments from the first books of *De praedae* (the foundational unpublished chapters of *Mare liberum*). *De jure belli ac pacis* (*On the Law of War and Peace*) consists of three books and a much-cited *Prolegomena*. The *Prolegomena* lays the foundational considerations – legal, theological, and philosophical – for a consideration of the nature of war and peace. Throughout this prologue, Grotius ponders the ideas of Aristotle, Cicero, Plutarch, Plato, Horace, and other classical authors as they relate to the laws of war and justice in general, not to mention the Bible and diverse European Christian theologians. One especially important, but also frequently misinterpreted, quotation regarding human reason’s relationship to law is the *etiamus daremus* clause in paragraph 11 of the *Prolegomena*, in which Grotius claims, “What we have been saying would have a degree of validity even if we should concede that which cannot be conceded without utmost wickedness, that there is no God, or that the affairs of men are of no concern to Him.” His contemporary enemies pointed to this clause as evidence of a heretical vein, and many modern scholars have held the clause up as evidence of his move to secularize law; recent scholarship, though, has been more eager to show that the existence of God is not in doubt in the clause or in any of his works for that matter. In Book I, he then defines his terms carefully, distinguishing especially the meanings of “war” and “law” and between “aptitudes” and “faculties,” “expletive and attributive justice,” and “natural, divine, and human law.” He then goes on to consider the legality of war, especially among Christians, and

he cites biblical and classical examples in order to tease out evidence for the legality of war according to natural law, the law of nations, pagan divine volitional law, and the law of the Gospel. Next, in Chaps. 3 and 4, he evaluates different kinds of war such as public wars and private wars, civil wars, and “wars of subjects against superiors” (rebellions). Book II, also a frequently cited and studied portion of the work, builds on the statement of two legal justifications for war: self-defense and punishment. Defensive war is undertaken to protect or restore any territory or property that is captured or attacked by another sovereign nation. Its justification relies, therefore, on the absolute right of a sovereign nation over held territory, which must be a tangible object. Justice can only be obtained, therefore, by the restoration of that territory to its original status or the capture of territory equal to the violated territory. Justice is restitutional in this argument because it is exactly equal to the harm inflicted. In that sense, it seeks to restore what once was. Punitive war, on the other hand, is a means of shaping the future of a space. It is undertaken not to restore a lost territory or to defend a territory which is being menaced but rather to punish criminals who are acting unjustly, against nature, or against God’s will. What is different from defensive war, Grotius notes, is that punitive war does not seek to remedy a wrong but to satisfy future needs. Thus, the judge (such as a prince or a government) of whether to wage a punitive war must possess prudential reason and situational judgment and must weigh the expenses (both of human and financial resources) of such a war against the potential promise of peace and prosperity that can be gained through military action. Book III handles what is commonly called *jus in bello*, that is, what is permissible in warfare. This book deals with issues such as the killing of enemies and the destruction and looting of property, as well as the punishment suffered by civilians as a result of war. Founded upon hundreds of classical and biblical sources, Grotius’s rules provide – both for modern and many early modern readers – an incredibly brutal range of acceptable practices in warfare.

Not surprisingly, and in consideration of the disastrous violence against civilians witnessed during the Thirty Years' War, which was in a nascent stage while Grotius wrote *De jure belli ac pacis*, he has frequently been portrayed as a villain in some scholarship of the twentieth century (cf. Michael Roberts, *Essays in Swedish History*, 1967) and even by Rousseau in the eighteenth century. Yet Grotius's legal scholarship also became the foundation of the United Nations' guidelines on just war, and scholars who have looked closely at his work tend to read his projects in a generous light. Besides the very concrete impact that his writings had on political pacts and international treaties of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Grotius's writings also inspired the work of subsequent and contemporary renowned political philosophers like Hobbes, Locke, Smith, and Leibniz. As expected from a writer whose books, essays, and correspondence touched on so many issues with such nuance and breadth, Grotius's political theory lent material to the arguments of both absolutist and liberal philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His legal works thus contributed to debates about such issues as private property rights, the social contract and civil liberties, as well as rights of resistance to state authority. Although he is frequently portrayed as a great secularizer of international law and political theory, it is also important to recognize the strictly Christian theological foundation of his political and legal positions.

Theology

In addition to his tremendous contributions to political philosophy, Grotius was famous for his unique approach to thorny theological issues. Grotius's theological works are tied closely to the spiritual debates of Reformation Europe with one major difference from most theologians. Rather than working to bolster a single confessional view, Grotius sought to create common spaces for Christians to agree and to cease fighting one another. Time after time, Grotius's theological treatises such as *Meletius* (1611, published posthumously in 1988), *De imperio summarum*

potestatum circa Sacra (1618), *De veritate religionis Christianae* (1627), and *Via ad pacem ecclesiasticam* (1642), not to mention in his personal correspondence and *Annotationes* of the Old (1644) and New Testaments (1641) and his legal treatises, reveal an interest in reaching an agreement upon a set of central elements of faith in order to eradicate sectarian strife in the Christian church. This principle of "minimal religion" also exposed Grotius and other religious optimists such as Isaac Casaubon to claims of Socinianist heresy, a rejection of the divinity of the Christ and the Trinity founded on the claims of the theologian Fausto Sozzini (Faustus Socinus, 1539–1604).

De veritate, another document hired by the VOC to serve as a guidebook for missionaries, is meant to "benefit all of my countrymen . . . for the propagation of the true Christian religion" and as a refutation of the errors of paganism, Judaism, and Islam (Grotius, *De veritate*, 1–2). Writing while in exile in Paris, Grotius sought to prove the essential tenets of Christian faith in order to "help propagate the Christian faith among unbelievers, pagans, Jews and Muslims" (Nellen 2014, 36). *De veritate* opens with doctrines Grotius believed to be shared by all religions and then proves both by common sense and argument the existence of God. Moving from world religions, in general, to the Christian faith, specifically, he then claimed the superiority of Christianity above other religions.

Grotius's classical training was central to this section of the treatise because his argument for the superiority of the Christian creed relied on Christianity's ability to house the best elements of pagan and Hebrew philosophy, from Aristotle to Moses. He was also an apologist for pagan religious practices, and at various points in *De veritate* and in other writings, he drew comparatively on religious customs among the Jews, Greeks, Romans, Phoenicians, Guineans, and Egyptians as they connected with Christian ritual practices, even ones which he considered superstitious but not contrary to divine law. For Grotius, the perfection of Christianity that made it superior to other religions was Christ's succinct law, "that we love God above all things and our

neighbors as ourselves” (*De veritate*, II, xvi). Ignoring other fairly commonly held Christian beliefs, such as the Incarnation and the Trinity, he held up the Golden Rule as the most essential and minimal element of Christian belief. Both in order to make the manual accessible to various confessions and in order to make it less confusing to converts, Grotius sidestepped many dogmatic distinctions, especially those points most contested by Christians in Europe. Next, he dismissed the notion that disagreements among Christians weakened the value of its doctrines, since such disagreements arise in many human undertakings, even the sciences of mathematics and medicine. Central to all Christians, he claimed, regardless of their beliefs was the endorsement of the Golden Rule. Less important points of faith might lead to disagreements, but all believers accepted this core tenet. In his final book of *De veritate*, Grotius turns to the reasonableness of the Christian faith, pointing especially to the teachings of the New Testament that are consistently and logically applied throughout: that there is one “perfect, powerful God, who cared for his creatures and who would reward them for obeying his commands, especially those exhorting them to live modestly and to love one another” (Nellen 2012, 39). It was only when people imprudently claimed other doctrines beyond these very reasonable beliefs, which can be adduced from the New Testament, as fundamental that conflict and strife arose among Christians. This belief that some doctrinal statements were more important than others led to a great number of personal attacks and criticism. Especially orthodox Calvinists like André Rivet and Claude Sarrau were convinced of his heretical Socinianism and dogged his writings with accusations of dubious and heretical beliefs.

Despite these and other accusations of religious heresy, Grotius’s theological optimism has been the central theme of modern scholarship about his religious works. Having died a devout Christian and renowned international thinker, Grotius and his writings remain vibrantly discussed in the journal *Grotiana*, as well as among political scientists, legal scholars, and theologians.

Cross-References

- [Art of War in the Renaissance](#)
- [Calvinism](#)
- [Casaubon, Isaac](#)
- [Lipsius, Justus](#)
- [Reformation](#)
- [Socinianism](#)

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Groysine

► Grocyn, William

Groysun

► [Grocyn, William](#)

Guarini, Battista

Born: Ferrara 1538

Died: Venice 1612

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Abstract

Battista Guarini has a great importance in the birth of modern literary criticism in the late Renaissance and at the beginning of the Baroque age. His major work, the pastoral drama *Il Pastor fido* ("The Faithful Shepherd") is a milestone in the history of this genre and had a great success in the Europe of the seventeenth century. Being translated in the main languages of the European courts (Spanish, French, and English), he influenced the fashions and tastes of the literate elites, his fame and success lasted until the Enlightenment.

Biography

Battista, the son of Francesco (grandson of the famous Quattrocento humanist Guarino of Verona), studied law in Padua where he became a friend of the great logician Jacopo Zabarella and subsequently was nominated professor of poetic and rhetoric at the university of Ferrara.

In 1564 he was invited to Padua by Scipione Gonzaga and took part in the *Accademia degli Etereî*, one of the numerous poetical Academies that flourished during the Renaissance in Italy.

He soon entered the courtier career at the service of the duke Alfonso d'Este the Second for

whom he executed several diplomatic missions in Venice, Rome, Turin, Cracow, and Warsaw during the 1560s and 1570s.

He started to compose his major work the pastoral drama *Il Pastor fido* ("The Faithful Shepherd") in 1583, left the court of Ferrara for a while and was summoned again by the duke to become his personal secretary from 1585 to 1588.

Tragical family affairs (his daughter Anna was murdered by her husband with the complicity of his second son Girolamo) forced him to move to several different cities: Turin, Mantua, Florence (where he became arch-consul of the famous *Accademia della Crusca*, the main institution in defense of the Italian language, which still exists to this day), and Urbino.

He spent the last years of his life between Rome and Venice where he died.

Impact and Legacy

Besides poetical compositions published in 1598 (*Rime*, Venice, Gio. Battista Ciotti), and the comedy *L'idropica* ("The Dropsical Lady") which was represented in Mantua in 1608, his masterwork is the pastoral tragicomedy *Il Pastor fido* mentioned above.

With this work, he inaugurated a new literary, theatrical, and musical genre that aroused an intense polemic which lasted through the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century in the dominating Aristotelian trend that still ruled in the incipient realm of early modern literary criticism.

Numerous authoritative authors criticized Guarino vehemently for having subverted the strict rules of separation between tragic and comic elements that were clearly stated in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

A famous professor of rhetoric and poetic in the Paduan "Studium," Giason del Nores, had accused him of "monstrosity", for having given birth to a hybrid mixture of drama and comedy. This compelled Guarino to reply harshly to his censor through an auto-apologetic essay entitled *Compendio della poesia tragicomica tratto dai due Verati* (1602), a summary of tragicomical poetry based on the two *Verati* (Verato was the

name of a famous actor of the time who was also a friend of Guarino).

The wide success of the play, which was first represented in the Lombard cities of Crema (1595) and Mantua (1598) and translated into Spanish just after the publication of the final edition in 1602 and successively into French, English, and German, testifies that this work corresponded to the new sensibility of European literary scene in the age of absolutism.

The French philosopher and writer Voltaire, one of the most distinguished intellectual of the Age of Enlightenment with connections to the great monarchs of his times (Frederic the Second of Prussia and Catherine the Great Empress of Russia), highly praised the *Pastor Fido* which, in his words, was popular in Stockholm and St Petersburg while no Shakespearian play had never succeeded to cross the British sea.

The modern critics have recently stressed the innovative philosophical and even theological implications latent in the traditional framework of the play, obviously inspired by the similar work by Torquato Tasso (*L'Aminta*, 1573) and by a very impressive mastery of the classical sources (Sophocles, Seneca the Tragic, Theocritus, and Virgil).

With this subtle blend of existential consciousness of the fate that weighs on human destiny and of aspiration to the delight and pleasure that can be derived from a hedonistic use of all the senses (musicality of the phrase, charm of the forms, and sweetness of the sentiments), the *Pastor fido* constitutes a brilliant introduction to the world of baroque sensibility that will dominate the whole seventeenth century, and, at the same time, a delightful synthesis of the humanistic and Renaissance season of the previous ages. This explains perhaps its enduring success and prominent role in the history of literature and drama of our civilization.

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Guastebled

- Vatable, François

Gučetić, Vitković

► [Gučetić, Nikola Vitov](#)

Gučetić, Nikola Vitov

Born: 1549, Dubrovnik, Croatia

Died: 1610, Dubrovnik, Croatia

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Abstract

Nicolaus Viti Gozzius was one of the most important Croatian Renaissance philosophers, a polymath who actively participated in the public life of Dubrovnik. On several occasions, he was elected Rector. He left behind approximately twenty works, some remaining in manuscript. Although his most important works deal with the issues of aesthetics, he also wrote significant works belonging to the history of the Aristotelian strand of the Renaissance philosophy. Moreover, he was interested in political philosophy. His works were written in Latin and Italian.

Alternate Names

[Gozzius, Nicolaus Viti](#); [di Gozze, Nicolò Vito](#); [di Gozzi, Nicolò Vito](#); [Gučetić, Vitković](#)

Biography

Nikola Vitov Gučetić was born in 1549 in Dubrovnik, where he died in 1610. He was a descendant of a noble family and received his primary humanistic education in Dubrovnik. There is no reliable information on whether he ever studied abroad, yet his erudition is indisputable. Pope Clement VIII awarded him the Doctor of Philosophy and Theology title. Gučetić was a member of several academies in Dubrovnik, as

well as in Italy. In most of his works, he deals with natural philosophy, biblical-theological issues, and with problems of political philosophy. His intellectual development can be divided into several stages. In the first stage, as a follower of Peripatetic tradition, he writes his work *Commentaria in sermonem Averrois Cordubensis de substantia orbis*, an interpretation of Averroes' attitudes towards the movement, the substance, and the size of celestial bodies. In this stage, he also writes some works dedicated to the question of the Aristotelian concept of the soul. He is especially interested in the issue of the immortality of the soul. Gučetić therefore joins in polemics with some of the Aristotle interpreters regarding these issues. His most important works are written in the second, mature stage. In this stage's works, he elaborates on the issue of beauty and love (in the dialogues *Dialogo della bellezza detto antos* and *Dialogo d'amore detto antos*), essentially following Plato and the Renaissance Neoplatonism. His works of sociopolitical nature belong to the late stage, when he mainly relies on Aristotle's political attitudes. Gučetić's permanent preoccupation was the question of the soul. This topic is elaborated in his *Quaestio de immortalitate...*, but also in the treatises *De anima*, in late *Breve compendium in duo prima capita tertii de anima Aristotelis*, and in *Li discorsi della immortalità e felicità humana*. All aforementioned writings remained in manuscript.

Heritage and Break with Tradition

Early Gučetić's works are usually the commentaries on some of the key topics in Aristotle's philosophy. It is often argued that Gučetić is the author of the first Croatian systematic meteorology, elaborated in his work *Discorsi sopra la metheore d'Aristotele*. The work was written in the form of a dialogue, between Gučetić and his colleague, the renowned Dubrovnik philosopher – Miho Monaldi. Referring to certain issues of Aristotelian *Meteorologica*, he often mentions the experience of Dubrovnik seafarers. In the early stage of his life, Gučetić was engrossed in Aristotle's understanding of the soul. Regarding

the problem of the soul, he polemicized with the views of Alexander of Aphrodisia, preferring the views of Averroes. In following Averroes, he advocated attitudes close to the theory of double truth. In his works dedicated to the beauty, Gučetić mostly relies on Platonic or, more precisely, on Neoplatonic tradition, trying to reconcile it with his Christian beliefs. Regarding beauty, his basic attitude is that the physical beauty is merely the expression of spiritual beauty, which includes moral virtues (and is expressed in the ancient concept of *kalokagatia*). In Gučetić's concept of beauty, there is distinctive Neoplatonic affirmation of the relationship between the spiritual and physical. Solely beginning from the physical beauty can we reach the spiritual beauty, with the recognizable influence of Ficino and his attitude about beauty as the radiance of the idea of beautiful, and of God's goodness. Gučetić emphasizes the role of the senses in the experience of beauty. In Neoplatonic manner, Gučetić displays the range of beauty, from God as a source of beauty, to a beauty achieved in matter. Yet, in his concept of beauty there is a certain duality of the spiritual and the material. He reinforces his views on the beauty and the good through the example of his Muse, the beautiful Dubrovnik poet Cvijeta Zuzorić (Flora Zuzorić). According to Gučetić, there are two paths to beauty: knowledge and love. In the dialogue of love, the starting points are Plato's dialogue *Symposium* and Ficino's corresponding commentary. In Gučetić's treatment of beauty and love, a particularly prominent role belongs to music. In his political philosophy, Gučetić mainly relied on Aristotle's attitudes, but in the works on the sociopolitical issues (*Governo della famiglia* and *Dello Stato delle Repubbliche secondo la mente di Aristotle*) his own political experience is also included.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the dialogues on love and beauty, Gučetić notably points out the significance of the female physical beauty. This is recognizable in detailed descriptions of the beauty of a particular woman,

Cvijeta Zuzorić. He writes these dialogues mostly following Plato, but as opposed to Plato, the participants of these dialogues on beauty are women. Although he insists that it is moral beauty to which we should strive, the emphasis of physical beauty is strongly present in dialogues on love and beauty that bring forth detailed descriptions of the female body. His concept of beauty includes some typical Renaissance elements, and the beauty is closely connected to proportions (extensively explained in his *Dialogo della Bellezza*). One of the important features of Gučetić's works is that in addition to his theoretical considerations, they are rich in specific examples from the life of his immediate environment in Dubrovnik.

Impact and Legacy

Gučetić's activity is related to sixteenth century Dubrovnik intellectual circle, where some of the most prominent Croatian Renaissance philosophers are found, such as Antonius Medus, who wrote commentaries on Books XII and VII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; Miho Monaldi, who wrote works in Italian dedicated to beauty; and poets such as Nikola Nalješković, Dinko Ranjina, Damjan Beneša, Ilija Crijević-Cerva, and others. Many of them were included as participants in Gučetić's dialogues. Gučetić's works have major cultural and historical significance, because they provide some specific examples of the lifestyle in his Dubrovnik milieu. The works on family and state governance issues abound in instructions for the proper behaviour in family and public life. The interpreters of Gučetić's work point out that he was the first Croatian author in the field of meteorology, and the first author of pedagogical writings, mainly due to his *Dello governo della famiglia*.

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Guicciardini, Francesco

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Abstract

Strangely, philosophy has not given Francesco Guicciardini the same attention that Niccolò Machiavelli has received, although they both, from different perspectives and diverse backgrounds, focused their work on the very same object: the search for a way to establish in Florence a “well-structured and well-ordered regime that enjoyed genuine liberty” and promote a true political life. Both men thought about this subject from the vantage point of their experiences and their fears. Both belonged to a generation which lived under the constant threat of war, as Machiavelli wrote to Guicciardini (January 3, 1526): “Always, as far back as I can remember, war has either been going on or has been talked about.” Each of them, in his own individual way, was an original scholar and had a great influence on the subsequent philosophical and political tradition. The reason behind Guicciardini’s marginal position in the field of philosophical thought may lie in the posthumous success of his work, due to the late discovery of some of his most influential writings, which included the *Dialogo del reggimento di Firenze* (*Dialogue on the government of Florence*) and the final draft of the *Ricordi* (*Maxims*), both published only in the second half of the nineteenth century. The popularity he gained in the sixteenth century, and which could have indeed affected the history of ideas, was limited to the *Storia d'Italia* (*History of Italy*, 1561) and the partial collection of his *Ricordi* (1576). Nevertheless, these two works did not fail to have a profound impact on political as well as historical and philosophical thought.

Biography

Member of an ancient patrician family, Francesco Tommaso Guicciardini was the third son of Piero Guicciardini and Simona Gianfigliuzzi. He was named Francesco after Francesco de' Nerli and Tommaso, after Thomas Aquinas. Marsilio Ficino, "the leading Platonic philosopher in the world at the time," was chosen to be his godfather, as he wrote in the *Ricordanze*, which is the main source for Guicciardini's biography (1508) along with his letters. His family history and its growing reputation are the subject of his *Memorie* (1508). In all his early works Guicciardini deals frequently with his formative years and his education. For instance, in a brief exhortation, *A se stesso*, written in 1513, we read that according to his father's wishes he was "brought up devoutly" (probably among Savonarola's *fanciulli*). At school he studied humanities: Latin, Greek, and logic, and later law. His legal education, crucial for his diplomatic and political career, and, we might add, also for his historical and theoretical approach, began in November 1498 in Florence. His first professor was Iacopo Modesti da Prato, a pupil of Angelo Poliziano. His teachers included the leading personalities of the republic, such as Francesco Pepi, Ormannozzo Deti, and Giovan Vittorio Soderini. In 1501, due to the great turmoil in the city, his father decided to send him to study in Ferrara. Out of disappointment, after 1 year, Guicciardini moved to Padua where he attended the lessons of Carlo Ruini, Girolamo Botticella, and Cristoforo Alberizio. In Padua, Guicciardini was determined to follow his mentor, Filippo Decio, whom he had already met in Florence: the greatest jurist of his time, as we read in his *History of Italy*. Moreover, in a *consilium*, Decio, who provided him with board and lodging for 2 years, remembered his pupil as "once the sharpest of my pupils in Padua and now a most distinguished doctor." While in Padua, Guicciardini worked on a *Repertorium in iure canonico*, a manuscript completed on 25 March 1505. Decio's teaching was a valuable foundation for his later development as historian and political writer. Back in Florence, he was asked to teach at the Studio Fiorentino. He became doctor in 1505 with a distinguished panel of professors.

He received his doctorate "only in civil law, to avoid the expense of twelve and a half ducats," for it was not important "to get the degree in canon law." At that time begins his career as a lawyer – a detailed overview of this period can be found in the *Ricordi degli onorari* that shows his clientele as well (Cavallar 1988). The connections between his legal cases as either professional lawyer or consultant and his early historical works are important, especially in the case of the *Storie fiorentine* (*Florentine Histories*, 1508–1509), developed during his legal traineeship. In November 1508, Guicciardini married Maria Salviati, the daughter of Alamanno, the chief of the *ottimati* opposing the gonfalonier Piero Soderini. On 17 October 1511, shortly after the conclusion of the Holy League, formed by Pope Julius II against Louis XII, King of France, Guicciardini was named ambassador to King Ferdinand of Aragon, thanks to a law tailored just for him, as he was only 28 years old and was supposed to be in his thirties to be entrusted with such a responsibility. While in Spain, he wrote the *Discorso del modo di ordinare il governo di Firenze* (known as *The Discourse of Logroño*), where he dwelt upon the feasibility of a new institutional architecture for Florence, made up of a senate of wise men with great expertise, capable of tempering the ruling political order that since 1502 had been essentially based on the Great Council and on the lifetime gonfalonier. His ideal relied on the Justinian's dyad "justice and arms" and advised the creation of a civic militia (as Machiavelli). His was an answer to the requests of the *ottimati* put forward during the last years of Piero Soderini's administration. Guicciardini's idea was not so original: something quite similar had already been mentioned in the fifteenth century, after the death of Cosimo, and suggested again in 1501, in a private meeting of 12 citizens, including his father Piero, aiming to challenge the harsh measures of the Great Council. The creation of a lifetime gonfalonier in 1502 was, as a matter of fact, an alternative to the political proposal of setting up a senate (Fubini 2007). As the years went by, his ideal remained more or less unchanged and thus he proposed it again in the *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*, drafted between 1521

and 1524. Returning from Spain in 1513, the Medici had returned to Florence, and so Guicciardini's political experience took place entirely in that context: in 1514 he was appointed one of the Eight of Ward, then one of the Signoria and member of the Lorenzo de' Medici's private council. In the meantime, he carried on his activity as a lawyer and was named Consistorial Advocate by Leo X in 1515. In the following years, his service to the Papal State began: at first as Papal Governor in Modena, with a view to reestablishing justice, then as Governor of Reggio as well as Modena. In 1521, he was General Commissary of the Papal army. With the election of Clement VII in 1523, he was appointed President of the Romagna (1524). From 1526 he was in Rome as counselor of the Pope, who appointed him General Lieutenant of his army, shortly after the conclusion of the League of Cognac. We date back to this very period (1521–1527) the extraordinary correspondence with his friend Niccolò Machiavelli, whom he admired as a man “exceedingly extravagant in your opinions” and “inventor of new and unusual things” (Atkinson and Sices 1996, 339). It deserves to be stressed that in his early *Florentine Histories* (1508), Guicciardini described Machiavelli's militia project as “a new and unusual thing” (Guicciardini 1998, 424): this judgment on his friend remained the same more than 10 years later.

After the sack of Rome in 1527 and the Florentine republicans' suspicions concerning Guicciardini's political behavior, due to his affiliation with the Medici, the first phase of his political activity was destined to end. In his solitude, three fervid literary years commenced, which he conceived as a different way of pursuing his political efforts. The drafts of the *Ricordi* belong to this period. The work represents a collection of thoughts that he started gathering during his mission in Spain. He began to write the *Cose fiorentine*, a history of Florence from 1375 to 1441 with brief accounts of the origins of the city's institutions drawn from historical, literary, and legal sources that he left unfinished. He wrote three orations, the *Consolatoria*, the *Accusatoria*, and the *Defensoria*, in which he set up a trial against himself, picturing the scene before the Quarantia, newly established with the restoration of the republic in 1527.

Especially in the *Accusatoria* and in the incomplete *Defensoria*, the jurist offers an example of his rhetorical skills, his expertise, and his education – e.g., the topic of witnesses' admissibility, or the issues related the administration of criminal justice in a republican framework. He wrote the *Considerazioni intorno ai Discorsi del Machiavelli* (*Considerations on the “Discourses” of Machiavelli*) in which he continued his dialogue and debate over political, historical, and legal issues with his late friend. In 1530, after the fall of the Florentine republic, Guicciardini became one of the Otto di Pratica, summoned to deal with the administration of justice throughout the city. Due to the punishments he inflicted, Florentines called him “Ser Cerrettieri” after Cerrettieri Visdomini, the executioner of the Duke of Athens, the tyrant of Florence during the fourteenth century. Just as Guicciardini was hoping to leave the city in 1531, Clement VII appointed him Vice-Legate and Governor of Bologna. After the death of the pope, with Florence ruled by the Duke Alessandro de' Medici, Guicciardini's fortunes began to fade, along with his hope of restoring a republican form of government to the city. In 1535 as advocate of Alessandro, Guicciardini undertook the task of responding to the republican exiles' complaints to Charles V, in which they called for a reform of the Florentine government to oppose the new tyrannical regime. They described it as illegitimate because of the Duke's misconduct and his lack of any title to rule. As on previous occasions, Guicciardini closely follows the established legal tradition on the topic. In the following years, he avoided political commitments, especially after the murder of Alessandro in 1537 and the rise of Cosimo de' Medici, the new Duke and true Prince of Florence. At this time he wrote his masterpiece (on which he worked until his death on 22 May 1540), the *History of Italy*. The *History* sprang from the *Commentarii della luogotenenza*, a memoir concerning the events which occurred during the period of his Lieutenantcy, in which he recalled his personal experience of the war of 1526–1527. In his *History of Italy* (the only work, together with the *Ricordi*, draft A, printed during the sixteenth century, after 1561), he once again portrayed himself as a doctor of law. In the late Renaissance, European jurists correctly pointed out that the *History of Italy*

was a book written by a legally trained historian, referring to it to shape their ideas upon the State, sovereignty (a word used by Guicciardini in the *History*), the real power of the emperor, and the right of war. In the *History of Italy*, as has been remarked, Guicciardini worked with archival documents in a way entirely new (Ridolfi 1982, 322). This method, as revealed by the footnotes of the *Cose Fiorentine* (a sort of dry run for the more advanced *History of Italy*), was rooted in legal reasoning. We find other examples of this in the *Florentine Histories*, e.g., in his analysis on the tyranny of Lorenzo de' Medici (depicted as a "concealed tyrant") which follows certain ideas taken from Bartolus' *De Tyranno* (Carta 2008, 2012a, b). Guicciardini displays these ideas once again in the *History of Italy*, where he describes Lorenzo as a private citizen, with no title and no jurisdiction but who gained so much power that he ruled the republic as he wished and the city's officials obeyed him as their lord. Thus he was a true concealed tyrant, legally speaking. However, it is the *Ricordi*, which clearly reveal the link between Guicciardini's legal education and his political theory. In dialogue with his friend Machiavelli and challenging his ideal of imitating the ancient *exempla*, Guicciardini underlines the necessity of looking for concrete political rules taken from experience ("These *ricordi* are rules" he writes in *ricordo* A 11) and shapes his book of maxims following the legal method of *regulae iuris*. However, the application of such rules to a specific case which might have different underlying circumstances required the use of discretion. Although in the light of his biographical experiences it might sound that the "imperious vocation to action" led Guicciardini to legal studies, we should not forget "the influence that his legal education had on the political man and author" (Ridolfi 1982, 10). Thus, that is why every attempt to deal with his philosophy and his political theory should begin by investigating his legally trained mind.

Guicciardini in the Philosophy of the Renaissance

Situating Guicciardini in the tradition of Renaissance philosophy is not an easy task. If we are to

identify his main points of reference, we should first note that, since most of his work was not intended for publication (except for the *History of Italy* and, perhaps at first, the *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*) his writings do not include explicit quotations. This does not mean that there are no references to the classical literature which was part of his humanist education: Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Tacitus, Plutarch, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, as well as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio were some of his preferred authors. However, it is not owing to their presence that we can trace the originality of his thought. Recalling these sources is useful in order not to take Guicciardini too seriously when he states that he is not familiar with philosophers. Moreover, we should not forget that Marsilio Ficino was his godfather, and his father Piero was a humanist, follower of Savonarola and Ficino's pupil. Undoubtedly, the aim of distancing himself from philosophy can be read as evidence of his preference for historians and jurists rather than philosophers. To put it succinctly, just as Machiavelli, he did not choose utopia as a method. As he wrote in his *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*, following his friend: "We shouldn't look for an imaginary government that is more likely to appear in books than in practice, perhaps like Plato's republic; instead, after considering the nature, the quality, the conditions, the inclinations – in a word, the humours – of the city and its citizens, we must look for a government that we are reasonably confident could be introduced by persuasion" (Guicciardini 1994c, 96–97). Thus, we might recall that from his very first works, e.g., the *Florentine Histories*, Guicciardini relies constantly on his legal background, which enables him, as an historian, to grasp in a unique way the difficult political and institutional issues of Florence at the beginning of the sixteenth century. As Felix Gilbert has pointed out, "in his very first work [...] Guicciardini already reveals the distinctive traits which persist through the whole of his life [...]; he stands out as the Florentine patrician exhibiting the benefits and limitations of an outlook determined by class, he displays the keen, legally trained mind to which the rich intellectual

heritage of the 15th century was only a useful instrument for practical ends, he shows himself possessed of an exclusive, passionate devotion to the world of history and politics. His mind, in its essential features, is definitely formed" (Gilbert 1939, 263). Therefore, it was his legal education, which underlies his entire political work, which made him capable of understanding in a profound way the emerging tension between the legal tradition and the political experience of states. He does not hesitate to take this perspective to extremes when he pragmatically analyzes political matters according only "to the reasons and practice of states" (Guicciardini 1994c, 159). Undoubtedly, he was led to this approach because of his arguments with Machiavelli – Guicciardini was not only his friend but also his most perceptive reader. Thus, although we might find a great part of Guicciardini's political ideas already in his early works, we should not forget that he attempted to refine and develop them through continuous debate with Machiavelli and his own political experience. As has been written, "for Guicciardini's political ideas did not originate primarily from theoretical study, but from his reaction to the political situations that confronted him" (Rubinstein 1965, 12). The close relation between historical events, political experience, and a theoretical framework clearly appears in his first endeavors, e.g., in the realistic constitutional project included in the *Discourse of Logroño*, written in 1512 while he was ambassador in Spain. In this work he tries to shape all the historical material collected for the *Florentine Histories* into a constitutional proposal. Such a text was conceived as an effort to define a proper republican government for Florence, with a senate along with the gonfalonier and the great council. It was a way of responding to the *ottimati's* aspirations. However, this endeavor was overtaken by events. Just a few days after Guicciardini completed his *Discourse*, the Medici were back in Florence and the republican period was over. This constitutional model was Guicciardini's ideal one, and it is recurrent in his subsequent production. This theoretical framework was based on Aristotle's mixed constitution; at the same time, however, Guicciardini relied much more on actual historical

Florentine experience and on the ongoing political debate connected to it. This model, as Alison Brown has pointed out, discussing its subsequent inclusion in the *Dialogue on the government of Florence*, should not be deemed a defense of a hereditary aristocracy. Thus, we should say that "Guicciardini's preferred government is not a hereditary aristocracy limited to the optimates, as it might appear, but rather a meritocracy" (Brown 1994, XX). In fact, although according to his model a senate of 150 men had the political power, the legislative power lay in the popular Great Council, entitled to appoint individuals to offices. The political power of the senate was curbed by the gonfalonier and furthermore "life membership of the senate was won not by birth but by previous performance in administrative offices and public debates" (Brown 1994, XXI). As Guicciardini wrote in his *Considerations on the Discourses of Machiavelli*: "the optimates must not be drawn always from the same lines and families, but from the whole body of the city." We may understand these ideas more thoroughly by reading one of his *Ricordi*, the collection of rules that he had started writing in 1512 and developed until 1530: "The fruit of liberties and the end for which they were instituted is not government by everyone – for only the able and deserving should govern – but the observance of just laws and order, both of which are more secure in a republic than under the rule of one or few. And therein lies the difficulty that so troubles our city. Men are not satisfied to be free and secure: they also want to govern" (C 109). In the previous draft (B 143) he had added: "this is the reason that ancient wise men and philosophers did not praise free governments more than others but preferred those that best assured the maintenance of law and justice." These ideas had already been discussed in the *Dialogue on the government of Florence*, taking inspiration from some of Ficino's ideas, as presented by Bernardo Del Nero, in an effort to examine the Medici's veiled tyranny. On that occasion as well, Guicciardini relied on juridical frameworks, taken from the *De tyranno* by Bartolus of Sassoferrato, which he had already used in the *Florentine Histories* to sketch his portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici (Carta 2012a). In

this case, however, the problem is presented “simply to open a discussion,” with a reference to the Machiavellian effectual truth where he states: “if it were possible to have an illegitimate regime that was governed as agreeably and well as a loving regime, the fact of its being illegitimate would not alone make it worse than the other [...] I believe that to know which type of government is better or less good, one should consider only its effects” (Guicciardini 1994c, 13). Guicciardini reveals a realistic attitude much more clearly than Machiavelli, since he always indicates the legal or philosophical tradition from which he is departing. An essential element of his theoretical framework is his personal relationship to the classics that have dealt with a particular issue. He always confronts them judging their results according to his own reason and experience. It is this use of reason that can either provide justification for a statement or call it into question. He could have written, just as Machiavelli had done: “I do not judge nor shall I ever judge it to be a defect to defend any opinion with reasons, without wishing to use either authority or force for it” (*Discourses on Livy*, I, 58). See for instance the *ricordo* C 33, in which he tries to explain the saying “a dishonestly acquired fortune is never enjoyed by an heir of the third generation,” relying on reason, and arguing against his father’s interpretation that relies on the authority of Saint Augustine. It is a way of thinking that is also backed by his legal studies and especially by Filippo Decio’s teaching. We have other evidence about this approach in his *ricordo* C 208, devoted to the downfall of the practice of law: “the science of law has come to such a pass,” he wrote, “that if one side of a case present a cogent argument and the other presents the authority of a scholar who has written on the subject, more attention will be paid to the authority.” Accordingly, all the time that should be spent reasoning is wasted in reading, in an effort comparable to a porter’s rather than that of an educated man. The *Ricordi* are his most interesting theoretical work if we want to delve into the ties between reality and tradition, between reason and authority. In this work Guicciardini’s unwillingness to search for a theory which departs from the nature of things as it is in truth is also clear. On many occasions, he

criticizes the astrologers (despite the fact that he had his own written horoscope) because of the mendacity of their predictions, as we read in *ricordo* C 125: “Philosophers and theologians, and all those who investigate the supernatural and the invisible, say thousands of insane things.” This is due to the fact that men are in the dark about such matters, so their investigation appears more as an exercise for the intellect than as really capable of finding the truth. Among the principles that represent “things as they are in fact” there is *ricordo* C 48, where Guicciardini says that every state, apart from the republic, is illegitimate, owing to their violent origins: “You cannot hold states according to conscience. For if you consider their origin, they are all illegitimate, with the exception only of republics ruling their own cities, and nowhere else. Nor do I exempt the Emperor from this rule – and even less priests, for their violence is double, since they force us with temporal weapons and spiritual ones.” This discourse is not based on abstract principles, relying on, say, a legal tradition, but it is backed by clear-cut historical experience, which Guicciardini explains in analyzing the related events in his *Cose fiorentine* and in some censored chapters of the *History of Italy*. Experience was the testing ground for every theory and at the same time the place from which his theory sprung.

No work shows Guicciardini’s method and theory better than the *Ricordi*, a collection of maxims and rules useful for judging political issues. In their various drafts, the *Ricordi* could also be read as a response to the method of imitation of ancient *exempla* devised by Machiavelli. The latter introduced his *Discourses on Livy* as an attempt to present in the form of commentary a body of examples helpful in ruling republics. A commentary, such as the legal ones, would have held its own authority for its contemporaries. If jurisconsults can be taught to judge according to a body of precedents, decisions (“sentenze”), and examples, derived from the history of their profession, why cannot rulers be taught to rule according to a body of examples taken from their history? According to Machiavelli, law, just like medicine, is a discipline that makes a successful use of antiquity. In this connection, the lessons

of history could be successful in politics only if used just like jurists and physicians do with the *exempla* of their own discipline. Guicciardini's *Ricordi*, a collection of *regulae* taken from his own experience, gives an account of the difficulties related to the successful use of Machiavellian method in politics. For instance, in his *ricordo* C 110, he wrote: "How wrong it is to cite the Romans at every turn. For any comparison to be valid, it would be necessary to have a city with conditions like theirs, and then to govern it according to their example. In the case of a city with different qualities, the comparison is as much out of order as it would be to expect a jackass to race like a horse." Guicciardini, referring to his friend Machiavelli, discourages the unconditional application of examples and precedents as a faulty method. Since he was a lawyer, he probably had in mind Justinian's maxim: "non exemplis sed legibus iudicandum est" (C. 7, 45, 13). One is to judge not according to examples, but according to laws and rules. In his *ricordo* C 117, he adds: "To judge by example is very misleading. Unless they are similar in every respect, examples are useless, since every tiny difference in the case may be a cause of great variations in the effects. And to discern these tiny differences takes a good and perspicacious eye." The example is not binding in the judicial process, when it is not considered suitable for the particular case. The necessary condition for relying on an example (or a "precedent" in legal terms) is the complete similarity of circumstances. Therefore, Guicciardini believes that it is not according to examples that one can judge rightly, but only according to rules. As we read in the last chapter of the *Digest*, *De diversis regulis iuris antiqui* (*On various rules from the ancient law*), also commented upon by his mentor Filippo Decio, and whose commentary was printed in a very successful book, "a rule is that which briefly expounds a matter." Legal rules are concise formulations drawn from the law: "the law is not derived from rules, but a rule is derived from the existing law." Therefore, the rule itself does not create law. A rule is derived from the union of several cases, which have the same rationale. It is a "coniunctio rationum," i.e., it is derived from what happens more frequently, in

other words, from what "normally" happens. Its application to a particular case, however, always requires the use of "discretion." The judge will have to see whether a particular rule may or may not be applied to the case in question, using discretion, above all, and passing from the universal rule to the particular case. This was the way of thinking for which a jurist such as Guicciardini received formal training. His *Ricordi* is an attempt to write a body of such carefully-crafted rules. The way Guicciardini tries to decode them and give us a key to the proper interpretation of his work is strictly related to his legal background, despite a still-present tradition of aphoristic writings. He was not simply writing a book of aphorisms, rather he aimed to write a real book of rules, as he revealed in the aforementioned *ricordo* A 11. Referring both to Aristotelian and to legal tradition, in the subsequent draft of the text (C 6) Guicciardini wrote: "It is great error to speak of the things of this world absolutely and indiscriminately and to deal with them, as it were, by the book. In nearly all things one must make distinctions and exceptions because of differences in their circumstances. These circumstances are not covered by one and the same rule. Nor can these distinctions and exceptions be found written in books. They must taught by discretion." The unconditional use of examples, which according to his idea of legal training, Machiavelli wanted to apply to politics, is completely called into question by his friend Guicciardini. Therefore, the debate about the foundations of modern political thought appears essentially as a dispute about the two different ways of applying examples and rules to a particular case. Nevertheless, there is a difference between a judge and a political actor. Indeed a judge, in those cases "which the law cannot determine by a fixed rule" and things are left to his discretion, can count on his *synderesis*, i.e., his conscience, as Guicciardini wrote (C 113), probably recalling Poliziano's philological investigation into these two concepts (Carta 2012b). "After considering all the circumstances and ramifications of the case," a judge must determine "what he thinks is right, according to his conscience, and in such cases, the judge needs answer to no man for his decisions" even if he "must answer to God,

who knows whether he has decided justly.” Nonetheless, as he wrote in his *ricordo* C 48 and his *Dialogue*, there is no place for conscience in ruling a state: a ruler, to be effective, can only judge according to the practice of states. In another *ricordo* (C 111), Guicciardini says that common men find the variety of opinions which exists among lawyers quite reprehensible, but they do not know that it depends on the nature of the subject rather than on a defect in men. Indeed, general rules cannot possibly comprehend all particular cases. Thus, specific cases cannot be decided on the basis of law, but must be dealt with according to the opinions of men, which are not always in harmony. He stresses that the same thing happens to doctors, philosophers, commercial arbitrators, and to “those who govern the state”: in all these cases, there is no less a variety of judgment than among lawyers.

These legal arguments can be found even in Girolamo Savonarola’s sermons, well known to Guicciardini. In a sermon of 7 March 1498, devoted to the proper way to judge and apply a rule, Savonarola said that among physicians and lawyers, some are able to discuss according to the rules and their books, but that they know neither how to rightly judge a case nor how to cure a patient. Some others have a profound judgment and thus know both how to judge and to cure. In short, these physicians come straight to the point, to the case at hand. The same applies to lawyers: they do not have to be able to cite examples and references taken from the legal books, but they do have to know how to judge a particular case rightly. Being able only to discuss without judging means knowing nothing and the same applies to the rulers of the republics. Those who know how to judge say: this rule has to be applied here in this particular case, but not to this other one, and sometimes they leave aside the rule, to judge according to equity, conscience, and discretion. They understand everything and see if a rule was not made for a particular purpose. Briefly, to use the words written by Guicciardini commenting on a saying (C 33): “How different theory is from practice! So many people understand things well but either do not remember or do not know how to put them into practice! The knowledge of such men is

useless. It is like having a treasure stored in a chest without ever being able to take it out.”

Just as Machiavelli, Guicciardini confronts several important humanist themes, such as the relation between fortune and virtue. Some of his *Ricordi* are devoted to this specific topic, e.g., in C 20 he deals with the success or failure of conspiracies, a typical Machiavellian issue. He writes that they are very dangerous, just because Fortune, “who plays such a large role in all matters, becomes angry with those who try to limit her dominion.” In other places he stresses that Fortune has great power over human affairs and these are constantly affected by fortuitous circumstances and accidents men could neither foresee nor avoid. Therefore, although cleverness and care may accomplish many things, they are not enough, because men also need good fortune (C 30). Even if someone attributes everything to prudence and virtue, reducing the power of Fortune, he should at least admit that it is a great gift to be born and to live in a time which prizes highly the virtues and qualities in which he excels. It is his great good fortune that his times need his virtues and qualities, and he adds, echoing a well-known Machiavellian idea: “to be sure, if a man could change his nature to suit the conditions of the times, he would much less dominated by Fortune; but that is most difficult, and perhaps even impossible” (C 31). These maxims, also used in his historical works, display a very accurate and analytical interpretation of Machiavelli’s political thought, together with features of indisputable originality. The extraordinary impact his *History of Italy* had following its early editions testifies that his method broke with a long tradition. He was soon considered the best historian of all time and used to define new and modern legal and political concepts by the most renowned historians, jurists, and philosophers of the late Renaissance, such as Jean Bodin, Alberico Gentili, La Noue, Montaigne, Harvey, or Bacon: *The History of Italy* became the book that any well-educated man should read (Luciani 1949, 223 ss.). Not to mention the importance he had among the religious reformer for those censored passages of his *History* devoted to proving the illegitimate origins of the temporal power of the Pope (alluded to in works by Alberico Gentili or Francesco Pucci, for instance). He was the one

who wrote: “Naturally, I have always wanted to see the ruin of the Papal State, but as fortune would have it, I have been forced to support and work for two popes. Were it not for that, I would love Martin Luther more than myself, in the hope that his sect might demolish, or at least clip the wings, of this wicked tyranny of the priests” (B 124). Furthermore, his *Ricordi* gave birth to a singular way of thinking about politics by means of a new and very imitated literary model. It cannot be denied that Guicciardini deserves to be considered as an eminent character of the “Florentine laboratory” of political thought (Fournel and Zancarini 2009, 9) as well as “one of the most important and challenging writers in the early modern period” (Brown 1994, XXVIII).

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Guillermet, Claudio

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Abstract

Claude Guillermet de Bérigard (1578 or 1590–1663, also known as Claude Beauregard and Claudio Berigardo) was a French philosopher, humanist, mathematician, and astronomer. He held the chairs of philosophy at Pisa and Padua and Venice. His name is mostly connected to the polemic pamphlet *Dubitaciones in dialogum Galilaei Galilaei*

lyncey (1633), one of the first reactions of the academic environment to Galileo's *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo* (1632). The writing met with criticism for his superficial treatment of Galileo's theories. During his appointment in Padua, he authored a philosophical work with which he took critical stances towards Aristotelianism (*Circulus Pisanus de veteri et peripatetica philosophia*, 1647) and defended a form of atomism.

Biography

Claude Guillermet was born on 1578 or 1590 in Moulins, France, then the capital of the province of Bourbonnais. He likely graduated in Aix-en-Provence in 1621. He then moved to Tuscany where, after having being employed at the court as a secretary of Cristina of Lorraine and having been distinguishing himself for his classical erudition and proficiency in mathematics and medicine, was appointed as professor of philosophy at the Studio di Pisa in 1627, appointment that he kept for 12 years. Here he distinguished himself for his knowledge of classic philosophy, but also of natural sciences (he directed for a period the Giardino de' semplici). His biographers also attributed him the invention of a preparation against scurvy. During the Pisan period, his name is mostly connected to the polemic pamphlet *Dubitationes in dialogum Galilaei Galilaei lyncey* (1633), with which he criticized Galileo's *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo* (1632). Galileo never replied to the attack, that on the contrary he judged weak and possibly made at command – a suspect that may be corroborated by the fact that Guillermet obtained tenure in Pisa soon after the publication of the *Dubitationes*. Mersenne intended to draft a reply to the attack, but was dissuaded by Galileo. But apart from this polemic, Guillermet enjoyed high reputation within the intellectual circles. In 1639, Guillermet accepts the offer of a professorship of philosophy in Padua, where he replaces Fortunio Liceti. In 1641, he publishes his main work, *Circulus Pisanus de veteri et peripatetica philosophia*, then reprinted in Padua in 1661. In the same city, he died on April 23, 1663.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The *Dubitationes* is mostly relevant from an historical perspective as it epitomizes the way academic authorities received the publication of Galileo's *Dialogo*. The text is dedicated to Ferdinando II de' Medici, grand duke of Tuscany – a circumstance which might signal the ducal backing to the publication, as an attempt to progressively recant his initial endorsement to the *Dialogo*. Its content displays well Guillermet's erudition, which scholars have understood as a trait of his libertinism. It repeats a series of classical anti-Copernican (and pro-Aristotelian) loci with scarce originality and excitement – as, for instance, the seemingly absurd consequences on the size of the universe, and the skepticism for the use of the telescope. Is worth of note however Guillermet's critique to Galileo's theory of tides – which occupies a good length of the writing – that is centered on the defense of the classical connection with the moon phases.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Circulus Pisanus de veteri et peripatetica philosophia (1647) had on the contrary original aspects. It was published after Guillermet's appointment in Padua, where he could profit from a freer intellectual environment. The "circles" mentioned in the work correspond to the different and consecutive teachings of Aristotelian natural philosophy that a professor had to give to his students (*Physics i-vii*, *Physics viii*, *De coelo*, *De ortu et interitu*, *Meteorology*, *De Anima*). The work is organized as a discourse between the Aristotelian Carilaus and Aristeus, who expounds the opinions of the ancient ones and the experiments of the modern ones. While Guillermet keeps himself at careful distance from theological controversies, he highlights the potentially irreligious aspects of Aristotelism and proposes a form of atomism based on Anaximander's theory of seeds. Guillermet's seeds are endowed with attraction and repulsion; however, he otherwise denies any causation other than the efficient one, thus endorsing a form of mechanism. Interestingly, Guillermet appears also to depart from

the apparent radical anti-Copernicanism of his *Dubitationes*, providing an ambiguous treatment of heliocentric themes such as the fluidity of the heavens, the centrality of the Earth, the solar spots, etc. These themes are always treated by the usual mingling of references to classical sources and modern experiments that characterizes Guillermet's production.

Impact and Legacy

Guillermet was the exponent of an intellectual stance that has been defined "erudite libertinism," which mixed, and often concealed, innovative ideas with classical erudition. In this context, the *Circulus Pisanus* gathered an initial favor among progressive intellectual circles; Mersenne, for instance, is often described as one of the figures who looked favorably at the work. But the second edition (1661) was already superseded by the success of Cartesian mechanism and had scarce impact. Some authors however polemized with the theological content of the work. While Guillermet had professed adhesion to the Church, he remained ambiguous on certain passages of the dialogue concerning themes –such as the creation of the world and God's freedom – that had theological sensitivity. Authors such as Samuel Parker, Pierre de Villemandy, Leibniz, and Bayle interpreted this in various ways – from concealed atheism to Pyrrhonism and Averroism.

Cross-References

- [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- [Liceti, Fortunio](#)

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Guisconi, Anselmo

- [Sansovino, Francesco](#)

Gunpowder in the Renaissance

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Abstract

This entry focuses on the development of gunpowder technology in Europe during the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period (ca. 1300–1700). Also included in this entry is the historiographical debates about gunpowder weapons, especially those debate during the last 50 years of the twentieth century.

Brief History of Use in Europe

Europeans most likely received gunpowder from Asia as an established technology in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Cannons became relatively common in Europe in the 1320s, but the first undisputed use of cannons on

a European battlefield was in the Siege of Cividale (1331). Despite this prevalence, however, cannons remained expensive and difficult to use throughout the fourteenth century due to the high cost of gunpowder and the burden of transporting the massive bombards that were most common at the time. The cost of gunpowder sank in Europe with the growth of petering plantations in the late fourteenth century, but sheer size of the weapons still made them difficult to use in situations other than sieges. Advances in manufacturing gunpowder by 1400 had outpaced the advances in metalworking for ballistic purposes.

Technical and tactical innovations of the fifteenth century allowed gunpowder a broader use in military operations. The Hussite Wars of the early fifteenth century saw the development of the *Wagenburg* a mobile wagon fortress covered with mounted small caliber cannons whose invention has been attributed to the Czech commander of the Hussite forces, Jan Žižka (1360–1424). The combination of light fortification and mobility took advantage of gunpowder weapons' strength (defending fixed fortified positions) and mitigated its shortcomings (difficulty of transport), which resulted in the first decisive deployment of gunpowder weapons in a large-scale armed conflict. Around the same time, the coming and production of powder also improved the transportation and preservation of gunpowder for different kinds of firearms. *Büchsenmeister*, the artillery masters becoming a more frequent part of armies around Europe, were beginning to test and calibrate new grain textures and charges of black powder to adjust burn time and maximize the utility and safety of using both big guns and smaller arms. By the end of the fifteenth century, artilleryists had "sought to create as many different forms of the same basic gun design as it was possible to imagine" (Hall 1997: 91). With this explosion of innovation also came dozens of incompatible and varied versions of guns. Of particular value to soldiers, however, were a few design standards that made guns more tactically effective in field warfare including longer gun barrels (to improve accuracy), cast bronze and forged iron barrels (to keep guns from exploding on their operators), and the development of cast iron shot to replace hewn stone (accuracy and safety).

The final major innovations that would carry gunpowder weapons into a central position on European battlefields were the inventions of match, flint, and wheel locks of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. These devices, which seem to have been invented and standardized by artisans in major trade towns of Italy and Germany, especially Nuremberg, allowed soldiers to more easily transport fire loaded shoulder arms and handguns. By the middle of the sixteenth century, throughout Europe, guns had developed into a technologically and tactically stable element of siege and field warfare. Commanders, writers, and philosophers alike now had to adjust their approaches to warfare in order to account for its ubiquity.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Debates have ricocheted among contemporary historians as to the precise impact that gunpowder technology had on the practice of early modern warfare and "society at large" (Roberts 1967: 196). Of those who weigh in on this debate, two sides have emerged: the military revolution and a material counterargument. Among the historians who have argued for the revolutionary impact of gunpowder technology on the practice of war, Michael Roberts and Geoffrey Parker have been the most recognized for a methodology that combines tactical, cultural, and economic analyses of war in the early modern period. On the other side of the debate, scholars such as Bert Hall, John Lynn, and Kelly DeVries have crafted approaches that contextualize gunpowder within the long history of warfare from the Middle Ages to the origins of the modern state, while relying heavily on the technical and pragmatic limitations of gunpowder weapons on the battlefield and the leadership and innovation of soldiers and commanders wielding those weapons.

The general consensus among both groups of historians is that gunpowder technology became an indispensable part of the military commander's tool kit in the sixteenth century, but that its use had been strategically decisive in only a few large-scale conflicts up to 1500. Among the many aspects of European warfare impacted by gunpowder's entrée onto battlefields were military

law; army size, composition, and social structure; field and siege tactics; fortification design; the training and recruitment of soldiers and officers; the maintenance of standing armies as a part of the nation-state; and the relationship between philosophy, art, literature, and warfare.

Cross-References

- [Art of War in the Renaissance](#)
- [Ballistics in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Dürer, Albrecht](#)
- [Grotius, Hugo](#)
- [Mechanics in Renaissance Science](#)
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H

Haak, Theodore

Born: 25 July 1605, Neuhausen

Died: 5 May 1690, London

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Biography

Theodore Haak, born in Neuhausen in the Palatinate, eventually settled in England in 1638 after a number of earlier academic visits. There he formed an alliance with the intelligencer Samuel Hartlib and the irenicist John Dury. When the exiled Moravian Bishop Jan Amos Comenius arrived in England in the winter of 1641–1642, he was met by a welcoming committee consisting of Hartlib, Dury, Joachim Hübner, John Pell, and Haak himself. In 1645, according to the mathematician John Wallis, it was Haak who instigated the London meetings in experimental philosophy and medicine to which Wallis later traced the origin of the Royal Society of London. Haak served the English state as a diplomat and translator during the interregnum, and after the Restoration he was elected to the Royal Society in 1661, proposed by the President, the mathematician Viscount William Brouncker. He remained prominent and active,

handling and translating foreign correspondence, and communicating books presented to the Royal Society by foreign authors.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Haak was one of the many intellectuals displaced westwards by the Thirty Years War, and his heritage lay in the continental universities; his maternal grandfather had been the Rector of the University of Heidelberg, and Haak attended Heidelberg and Leiden, as well as Oxford, where he studied some mathematics. He represents not so much a rupture with any given tradition as an example of how the ruptures of war forced scholars of different academic traditions into contact and collaboration.

Innovative and Original Aspects

As an experimentalist, Haak was not particularly original. He did propose to the Royal Society “a compendious way of repertory” (probably some kind of data storage system) and a way of “recovering and increasing the attractive power of a magnet.” Magnetism indeed appears to have been an enduring interest, and Haak’s portrait in the Royal Society shows him with what is probably his magnet.

Impact and Legacy

As a scholar, Haak's major impact was as the translator of *The Dutch Annotations upon the Whole Bible*. Commissioned by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, this work appeared in 1657, after years of labor. His other important work was a translation of John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* into German. Although this was unpublished, the first printed German translation, by Ernst von Berge (1682), made use of Haak's manuscript, of which the first three books are extant; they were only published in 1962. But it was Haak's international connections that made him essential to the early Royal Society and a significant figure in the history of early-modern philosophy.

Interconnections

Haak was essential to the English experimentalists because of his international reach. He was also one of the few men who remained at the center of English activities from the earliest days of the Hartlibians right through to the Restoration. In his earlier days, he corresponded regularly with Marin Mersenne, passing on to the Minim friar news of recent research and publications in England; as a septuagenarian, he brokered correspondence between Robert Hooke and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz concerning the viability of an artificial universal language, and indeed Haak remained a constant presence in the diaries of Hooke. Haak's first cousin once removed was Frederick Slare (1646/7-1727), FRS, a physician and chemical experimenter of note, who demonstrated white phosphorus before the society. Haak bequeathed his goods and chattels to Slare, and Haak himself developed a five-branched phosphorus lamp. Above all, then, despite his modest personal contributions to natural philosophy, alongside Henry Oldenburg, Haak was the preeminent "intelligencer" of the first generation of the Royal Society and was also a living link to the pre-Restoration generation of English natural and experimental philosophers.

Cross-References

- [Experiment in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Magnetism in Renaissance Science](#)

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Habit, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

In the Renaissance, habits provided the key-stone for all theories of subjectivity. It is the knowing subject that posits itself out of itself, namely, in what it knows, in order to bring back what it has known into the subjectivity of its mind.

Introduction

Habits have been thematized since the very beginning of philosophy. In ancient philosophy, habit indicates the disposition to certain actions or passions, which can be proper either to the individual

as a ἕξις (which is connected with character and attitude) or to the collective as ἥθος (which is associated with mores and usages). The know-how that is acquired by habit is a possession – whose opposite is privation – that results from repetition and exercise of individual actions, i.e., from experience and practice, which confers stability on human behavior. In this sense, the ἥθος (*habitus*, *consuetudo*) produces a ἕξις (*habitus*), namely, a determined disposition to acting, and constitutes for the human being, as Aristotle says, a second nature. Habits can be of two kinds, namely, the ones that follow the “rational principle in the proper self” and the others that are “obedient to it as a child to its father” (*Eth. Nic.* I,13, 1103a3-5); the former, Aristotle calls intellectual virtues, the latter moral virtues. “Virtues are engendered in us neither by nature nor yet in violation of nature; nature gives us the capacity to receive them, and this capacity is brought about by habit” (*Eth. Nic.* II,1, 1103a24-26).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The first thinker who thematizes habit is Plato. In *Resp.* and *De leg.*, when looking into the issue of educating the philosophers-guardians in the ideal state, he considers the power that good and bad habits exercise on human behavior. Plato considers habits both as “having of cognition” (*Theaet.* 197a) and the capacity of improving one’s dispositions, or abilities, by means of exercise (*Phaedr.* 268e). Given that not even reason can contrast the power habits have once they have been acquired, it is important for the lawgiver to take care that the educational system favors the acquisition by the future philosophers-guardians of good habits of body and soul.

The first extended scientific investigation of habit is provided by Aristotle within practical philosophy. It is the way to knowing ethics and politics, the disciplines that consider human action and its best actualization, which are called practical in as far as they consider what has to be done in the praxis.

Habits have provided the keystone for all theories of subjectivity. It is the knowing subject that posits itself out of itself, namely in what it knows, in order to bring back what it has known into the subjectivity of its mind. If it is true that both Platonism and Aristotelianism have contributed to the genesis of subjectivity, it is important to look more closely into the actual extent of their contribution. A definition of habit has always been seen as twofold: it can be considered as a human ability and is then to be regarded as a mental habit (*ars interna*); it can, however, also be considered as the corpus of doctrines resulting from the use of that ability (*ars externa*) and is, in this case, to be regarded as a system.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The modern understanding of subjectivity was born during the Renaissance out of the relation between habit and system, or, to put in contemporary terms, between psychologism and scientism. Against the Platonic assumption that systems are *extra mentem*, *in rebus*, that they are *realia*, *principia*, and that they apply to things themselves as *primae notiones*, the Renaissance Aristotelians, first and foremost Jacopo Zabarella opposed that every theory presupposes an intellectual habit, which is *in mente*, *a rebus seiunctus*, *instrumentalis* and considers *notiones secundae* (Zabarella 1578, I,5). In *Eth. Nic.* II, habits are dealt with in terms that influence the whole ancient and medieval philosophy. The problem is momentous, for while an intellectual virtue is a ἕξις that is “produced and increased by instruction” and requires, therefore, “experience and time,” moral virtues are “the product of habit,” which in this case is ἥθος (*Eth. Nic.* II,1, 1103a17).

Impact and Legacy

Aquinas distinguishes between habits and potencies and maintains that habituation is possible on potential having: “habits differ from potencies,

because potencies enable us to do something, while habits do not enable us to do something, they make us able or unable to act well or bad. Habits cannot take away from us anything, although we learn through habits to act well or bad” (*Summa contra Gentiles* IV, 77). While Aquinas does not know Eustratius, the latter’s impact is made possible by Robert Grosseteste’s thirteenth-century Latin translation of his *Ethics* commentary. Eustratius makes it clear that habits are spiritual substances ordered in a procession (πρόοδος) towards the νοῦς. For Eustratius, intellectual habits belong to metaphysics, which unifies intellect and science. All other sciences presuppose their principles as known, while metaphysics explains and demonstrates: it is the head of all sciences (CAG 20, 324).

Philipp Melanchthon expands the use of the Greek and Latin term “method” from medicine into philosophy: “the ancients call method a ἔξις of teaching correctly and in an orderly manner” (Melanchthon 1528, fol. Lr-v). According to Melanchthon, method is a ἔξις, a disposition of the intellectual part of the soul that can be predicated on a human being as one of the qualities referred to by the Aristotelian category ἔχειν, *habitus* (Melanchthon 1547, CR 13: 561–63). In fact, students ought to pick up the habit of “relating everything to method” (Melanchthon 1536, CR 11: 281). For method is in itself a habit, “it is a certain habit, or science, or art that makes a way by means of a reason that is certain, i.e., that finds and opens a way through an inaccessible region, which is covered by briers, through the confusion of things, that invents and puts in order things pertaining to what has been proposed” (Melanchthon 1547, CR 13: 573).

Interconnections

Jacopo Zabarella states that logic – the discipline without which no part of philosophy could be construed – lies in the human mind as a *habitus instrumentalis*, which is functional to the acquisition of all other disciplines in its theoretical part (*logica docens*), and which vanishes or rather becomes identified with the individual sciences

once it is applied to the various kinds of knowledge (Zabarella 1578, I,3–8). Zabarella’s stipulations on the definition of science are in themselves an explanation for views concerning (1) practical sciences such as ethics and politics, (2) the arts connected with the narrative and persuasive functions of language, and (3) the productive techniques, which he stamps as *sordidae* – with the consequence that it would be unworthy to force rhetoric and poetics to serve them. Francesco Piccolomini maintains against Zabarella that the order of the disciplines and the way of teaching are similar in part, though they also differ, for the latter is based on the mode of our own cognition, “while the former is based on the nature of the things that are dealt with” (Piccolomini 1601, 5). In fact, Aristotle has meant in *Phys.* I,57, and *De an.* II,34 “in servando ordine nos debere naturam sequi, et ordinis primis.” Also when learning logic, then, we follow an order, “which nature offers us and which we find out in the nature of things” (Ibid.). Piccolomini inspires the first comprehensive treatise on habits of the Italian Renaissance, Andrea Duodo’s *De habitibus intellectus libri sex* (Duodo 1577), which follows Eustratius’s notion of the ascending procession of the habits toward the intellect and precedes by a few years the ample ascending exposition of habits provided by his teacher Francesco Piccolomini in the *Universa philosophia de moribus* (Piccolomini 1583).

Cross-References

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- Zabarella, Jacopo

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Hacı Halife

► [Kâtib Çelebi](#)

Hafiz al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt ‘Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd al-Nasafī

► [Al-Nasafī](#)

Hajji Kalfa

► [Kâtib Çelebi](#)

ha-Levi, Isaac ben Moses

► [Duran, Profiat](#)

haLorki, Yehoshua

► [Lorki, Joshua](#)

Ḥanokh ben Solomon ben Ḥanokh al-Qoṣṭanṭīnī

Born: Unknown

Died: Unknown

fl. before 1384

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Abstract

In his well-preserved and well-transmitted treatise *Mar’ot Elōhīm* (“Visions of God”), the Iberian Neoplatonic philosopher Ḥanokh al-Qoṣṭanṭīnī (fourteenth century) compares and interprets the visions of God by Biblical prophets. His cosmological reflections are one of the bridge stones between the Maimonidean philosophy of the twelfth through the fourteenth century and the later traditions of the fifteenth century, e.g., Ḥasdai Crescas.

Alternate Names

[al-Kostantini](#), [Ḥanokh ben Solomon](#)

Biography

Little is known about Ḥanokh’s biography. He seems to have been a medical doctor and lived in Spain toward the end of the fourteenth century. Since Langermann (2003, p. 184) refers to a manuscript (MS St Petersburg, Russian National Library Evreiskii II A 73) not mentioned by Sirat which is dated Aleppo 1384, he must have finished the work before that date. His father seems to have been Solomon ben Hanokh Al-Qostantini, author of the *Sefer Megalleh Amukot* (The Revealer of Hidden Things), usually dated Burgos 1352 (e.g., Vatican Library, MS ebreo 59, cf. Sirat 1985, p. 445).

His only known work is the *Mar'ot Elōhīm* (Visions of God), an allegorical commentary on (and comparison of) the visions of the Biblical prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zachariah. Usually, he is counted among the Neoplatonic thinkers.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Ḥanokh remains an unoriginal thinker in the Maimonidean tradition. He quotes intensively from Maimonides' *More ha-Nevukhim* (Guide of the Perplexed in Shmuel ibn Tibbon's translation) but also from Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae* (Fountain of Life) in Shem-Tov ben Joseph Falaquera's Hebrew translation. Additionally, he seems to have used Averroistic writings and perhaps even Christian texts translated into Hebrew (Sirat 1985, p. 343).

At one point he seems to correct Maimonides' cosmology in so far that Ḥanokh interprets that the tenth sphere is not empty as was held by him in Guide II, 9. This "correction" might be taken from Moshe Narboni (Altmann 1987, pp. 53–54).

Impact and Legacy

Although we are not informed about a direct impact of his work, it was relatively broadly transmitted. The treatise is preserved in at least 20 manuscripts. He was commented on at least by Menahem b. Jacob Kara (fifteenth century) who wrote a commentary on that work (Suler 1935, 412; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Opp. 585).

Cross-References

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Happiness, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

Renaissance thinkers discussed happiness on the basis of religious and philosophical traditions, which strongly interacted but often discussed the concept at cross-purposes. Whereas Christian notions of happiness centered around God, philosophical discussions usually had in view man's happiness from a more earthly perspective. Yet philosophers did not agree on what constitutes happiness: Aristotle's inclusivist view of happiness (*eudaimonia*) differs sharply, for instance, from that of the Stoics or the Epicureans (who emphasized virtue and pleasure, respectively). Matters were further complicated by the fact that the Greek term *eudaimonia* lacks a direct equivalent in Latin, where it was often translated by *felicitas* or *beatitudo*. Such matters gave rise to a remarkable variety of views in the Renaissance, as interpreters tried to identify

true happiness, often attempting to reconcile these different positions in a way that made sense to Christians who also valued Platonic (or Neo-Platonic) perspectives. This entry mainly focuses on *individual* happiness, but one should be aware that thinkers also often discussed what makes a happy community or political system.

Synonyms

Beatitude; Fulfillment

Introduction

In discussing the Renaissance concept of happiness, one must remember both the semantic range (especially in Latin and Greek) of the term translated into English as “happiness” and the layered traditions surrounding this concept starting with both religious and philosophical circles in antiquity. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that discussions of happiness vary a great deal depending on whether one is thinking about individuals or communities, and whether one has in mind different kinds of beings (ranging from animals even to God).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

As was often the case with other topics, in their discussion of happiness, Renaissance writers and interpreters depended on (and brought together) both biblical and classical sources, as filtered and modified by translations and the commentary tradition.

In classical antiquity, there are no systematic discussions of happiness (although Plato’s *Philebus* and other works often refer to “the good” and the *Gorgias* includes several relevant points; see White 2006, pp. 7–40) until Aristotle’s masterful treatment in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (I.1, I.7–10, I.13; II.3; X.6–8), *Eudemian Ethics*, and *Magna Moralia*. Famously, Aristotle promotes an inclusivist view of happiness or

eudaimonia (best rendered as “flourishing” or “well-being”), which depends in part on the active exercise of virtue; on factors such as wealth, good fortune, good reputation, and health; and in part even on how one’s descendants keep high one’s good name (Annas 1983, Chap. 18). It is the enjoyment of all of these factors (and all the virtues, both moral and intellectual) at once that makes for the truly happy (i.e., fulfilled) individual. Most other pagan writers present models in which a single element predominates: the surviving fragments from Epicurus point to pleasure (both physical and intellectual) as the main element of happiness, whereas the Stoics strongly emphasize the exercise of moral virtue, unaffected by the troubles of the body or the soul (*ataraxia*) and indifferent to the presence or absence of external goods. For the latter position, one of the most developed statements is Seneca’s *De vita beata*, a work that had a remarkable diffusion in the Middle Ages and seemed able to bring together the Christian and pagan positions (Valero Moreno 2015). In particular, the New Testament’s exhortations that believers should remain steadfast when tempted or persecuted could be made to dovetail well with Stoic considerations about accepting fate and adversity. Yet on several occasions, as we shall see, Christian writers condemned Stoic views. As for Epicureanism, in the Renaissance it usually continued to be misrepresented (even by those who should have known better) as an animal-like pursuit of sensual pleasure and was therefore largely dismissed (Lines and Kraye 2013, pp. 32, 37).

Both the Bible and the Church Fathers make numerous references to happiness or, more precisely, to the *vir beatus* (the happy man) and the *vita beata* (the happy life). In the Scriptures, two of the most significant treatments are in the book of Psalms and in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1–12), part of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. The Psalms present the happy man as the one who is righteous, not partaking in the deeds of sinners, but meditating on and walking according to the Law of the Lord (Ps. 1, 118:1). He is the one whose sin is forgiven and not imputed against him (Ps. 31:2, 32:1–2), or who hopes in God (Ps. 33:9, 39:5, 83:6, 13), or whom God claims as His own

(Ps. 39:5, 64:5, 143:15). Likewise, Proverbs presents as happy the man who seeks and listens to wisdom (3:13, 8:34), a point often repeated in Ecclesiasticus (or Sirach: 14:1–2, 25:11–15, 31:8–11). In these passages, happiness is regularly regarded not as an emotion but a state of blessedness deriving directly from contact with God, which is nearly always mentioned in the same verse, suggesting that happiness derives from listening to and following God. Matters are slightly different in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5 (cf. Luke 6:20–23), where the concept of happiness is presented more as a future condition compensating for (or rewarding?) the poverty of spirit, humility, suffering, mercy, peace-making, purity of heart, or persecution experienced by people thirsting after righteousness in the present world. Here the causal link with God is indirect and more subtle.

The theme of a happy life is addressed more directly – although again not systematically – by St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430). In the *Confessions* (X, 20–23), a happy life (*vita beata*) is clearly something strongly associated with God Himself, so much so that the Church Father declares “when I seek Thee, my God, I seek a happy life” (X, 20). As a result, when Augustine comes to discuss enjoyment (*gaudium*), he recognizes that this is something that the godless do not really possess, since its true form is experienced only by those who worship God (X, 22), although when asked, anyone, of course, would reply that he strives for the happy life (X, 21). In his *City of God* (XIX, 4) Augustine mocks the Stoic view of the happy life, which all-too-easily leads to the philosopher’s suicide (an attempt, not to bear but escape life’s trials). Instead, he emphasizes that “the supreme good of the City of God is everlasting and perfect peace,” removed from adversity (XIX, 20). He admits that “a man who makes his life here below a means to that end which he ardently loves and confidently hopes for can even now be reasonably called happy” (*ibid.*). Yet, at the end of the work (XXII, 30), Augustine describes the “full, certain, secure, everlasting felicity” to be enjoyed in the next life by the members of the City of God. Crucially, the resurrected body is no impediment to enjoying

this felicity, although the presence of God and the absence of sin are essential to it (Trinkaus 1965, pp. 21–31).

A similarly influential Christian position on happiness was that of Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) in the *Summa theologiae*, Ia IIae, qq. 2–4 and *Summa contra Gentiles*, III. Although he drew on both Aristotle and Seneca, Thomas’ main interest was in eternal beatitude. Thomas held that “the knowledge of God is man’s last end . . . Now the last end of man and of any intelligent substance is called *happiness* or beatitude . . . Therefore the last beatitude or happiness of any intelligent substance is to know God” (*Summa contra Gentiles*, III, 25 as quoted in Trinkaus 1965, p. 31). It has been noted that, while this position did not ignore earthly affairs, much of the ethical thinking in this period was “oriented towards a monastic mentality of spiritual ascent, in which the heavenly sphere was pre-eminent” (Poppi 2013, p. 245). The final canto of Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy* also points in this direction. But Thomas’ view of happiness has a more speculative and less affective tinge than that of Augustine, partly because it denies that happiness is the result of an act of the will (Trinkaus 1965, pp. 31–36). The tension between these two positions was a common feature of subsequent discussions, and writings on the problem of the will often touched upon happiness (Leinkauf 2017, I, pp. 647–706).

Humanists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries produced a remarkable number of works dealing with happiness or the good (rapid listing in Trinkaus 1965, pp. 42–46, although Trinkaus often confuses happiness with optimism, confidence, and satisfaction), reflecting a bewildering variety of positions (Trinkaus 1965, pp. 141–144, 146–149). Traditional historiography has often seen these works as evidence that Italian humanism strongly disrupted the older Christian view, pointing the attention of learned men and others toward the importance of earthly matters and emphasizing the value of the active (as opposed to the contemplative) life. One certainly notes an expansion of perspective-taking place, expressed through the works of figures such as Leonardo Bruni, Matteo Palmieri,

and Giannozzo Manetti (Leinkauf 2017, I, pp. 856–859). Yet one should not be too quick to dismiss the continuing importance of the Christian heritage and the beatific vision (Poppi 2013, pp. 246–247). Nor should one be too sure of these works' optimism in the possibilities of finding happiness in the present world (Trinkaus 1965, pp. 46, 65–69, 121–40). Petrarch himself was strongly tied, especially after his conversion, to a Christian and Senecan model (Trinkaus 1965, pp. 42, 58, 84–86; 1970, pp. 3–50; Witt 2003, pp. 230–291; Leinkauf 2017, I, pp. 270–76), something reflected also by at least some writings of Coluccio Salutati (von Martin 1913; Lombardo 1982; Witt 2003, pp. 292–337). Poggio Bracciolini observed in his *De infelicitate principum* that even rulers are regularly unhappy (Trinkaus 1965, pp. 53–56, 87–90, 122–26). Lorenzo Valla's *De voluptate ac vero bono* is set up as a dialogue (which complicates interpretations), but nonetheless seems to see happiness less in the secular perspectives of extreme Stoicism or Epicureanism than in the pleasure of Christian enjoyment of God (Nauta 2009, pp. 152–190; cf. Trinkaus 1970, pp. 103–70). Bartolomeo Facio's *De vitae felicitate* and *De hominis excellentia* (both written after, and partly in response to, Valla's *De vero bono*) acknowledge the worth of human talents and activities, but at the same time subordinate these to the ultimate end of contemplating the divine (Trinkaus 1970, pp. 200–229). Donato Acciaiuoli's 1478 publication of the lectures on the *Nicomachean Ethics* by the Greek émigré Johannes Argyropoulos strongly endorse a Christian vision of happiness (Acciaiuoli 1997). And Marsilio Ficino's letter "On Happiness" (Ficino 1990), while similarly drawing strongly on Plato, has other-worldly happiness firmly in view, as do the orations of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Trinkaus 1965, pp. 100–104; Poppi 2013, pp. 258–261; see also Lines and Kraye 2013, pp. 38–40). The Neapolitan historian Tristano Caracciolo (d. 1517?) encourages his contemporaries in his *De varietate fortunae* to avert their gaze from present calamities and misfortunes and pursue instead the joy deriving from following God's commandments (Trinkaus 1965, pp. 129–30).

This Christian slant continues and indeed intensifies during the sixteenth century, given the importance of current theological debates. Writers such as Philipp Melanchthon, one of the most important Lutheran theologians, consider the claims of Aristotelian moral philosophy and to what extent they can be reconciled with those of the Gospel. Clear tensions are outlined between the natural morality, and aims outlined by pagan philosophers and what is expected in the New Testament of individuals whose sinful nature has been transformed by God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit (Melanchthon 1997; Saarinen 2013, pp. 83–89). Others within the tradition of the Catholic Reformation, such as Emmanuel de Goes, author of the Coimbra commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, often remain very close to Thomas Aquinas and his emphasis on the supernatural, other-worldly happiness (Coimbra Jesuits 1997; Poppi 2013, pp. 269–70). In these writers, culminating with the massive *Ethics* commentary of the Jesuit Tarquinio Galluzzi (1632–1645), a long-standing tradition is rather buttressed than challenged (Lines 2002, pp. 374–76).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Although Renaissance thinkers continue to approach the issue of happiness through a Christian lens, they differ from their predecessors, especially in two ways, which often go hand in hand: in a greater attention to earthly matters (though not necessarily to the extent emphasized by Eugenio Garin and Hans Baron) and a different use and combination of ancient sources. But one also sees an interesting extension of discussions of happiness: first of all, these go beyond Latin to embrace the various vernaculars; secondly, some writers give attention to the happiness of human beings versus that of animals; finally, an increasing point of debate is the relationship between happiness of the individual and the community. Within all of these works, a constant tension is whether to view happiness as man's ultimate end or as a state of emotional contentment and satisfaction.

Several of these trends are apparent in the work of Francesco Piccolomini (1523–1607), a professor of philosophy in Padua who produced the most sophisticated and influential Latin work on moral philosophy in sixteenth-century Italy. The *Universa philosophia de moribus* (1583, rev. ed. 1594) is a recasting of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, joined together with and reconciled with the doctrines of Plato and Christianity (Poppi 1997, pp. 49–55, 59–78; Plastina 2002; Kraye 2002). There is a clear understanding of the Christian God as the goal of life; yet, at the same time, Piccolomini also emphasizes that true happiness must include earthly goods and political activity (Poppi 2013, pp. 267–69). Piccolomini also produced a vernacular compendium of this work for the benefit of the Medici Grand Dukes (Lines 2015). By so doing he was actually following an increasing trend, starting especially in the 1540s, to discuss philosophy in the vernacular as well as in Latin, the conventional language of learned men. A key work from this perspective was that of Francesco's Sienese relative Alessandro Piccolomini (1508–1579), who was behind a vast program of turning the whole of Aristotle's philosophy into the vernacular. Particularly significant was Alessandro's *De la institutione di tutta la vita de l'huomo nato nobile e in città libera* (1542), reissued with substantial changes and additions in 1560 as *Della institution morale libri XII*. This work explicitly aims to supplement Aristotle's views of virtue and happiness with those of Plato and considers them both from a strongly Christian perspective (Poppi 1997, pp. 34–37, 42–45). There are also similar indications in Alessandro's natural philosophy (Ellero 2006). It is worth noting that several of these trends, including an interpretation reconciling Aristotelian morals with Christianity and Platonism, had been offered at the end of the fifteenth century by the French scholar Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and his disciple Josse Clichtove (Bianchi 2013, pp. 140–143). Throughout at least the first half of the sixteenth century, French university professors would continue to treat happiness from both a theological and a philosophical perspective, emphasizing the overlaps between Christian and pagan views of happiness.

An influential English writer who significantly expanded the source-base of discussions of happiness (and moral philosophy more generally) was John Case (1540/1?–1600). Active in Oxford during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Case approached philosophy from an Anglican perspective, but was nevertheless also open to Catholic currents and interpretations. His *Speculum questionum moralium* (1585), for instance, is close in various ways to Thomas Aquinas, and in its discussion of happiness holds that “only mental contemplation is complete beatitude” (Case 1997, p. 61). As a consequence, Case tends to place less emphasis than Aristotle does on the importance of earthly goods for happiness, although he does accept that “a moderate and modest amount of wealth” (*ibid.*, p. 63) is useful. Case's position is in any case again strongly eclectic, combining insights from Plato with his direct discussion of and questions on Aristotle's text (Lines and Kraye 2013, pp. 40–42).

Although the writers mentioned above generally dismissed Stoicism as a philosophy unsympathetic to the human condition (notable exceptions included the early works of Salutati and the Florentine philologist Angelo Poliziano), that movement experienced a revival in the second half of the sixteenth century (Kraye 1988, pp. 360–74, 2001; Poppi 2013, pp. 252–57). Among the main architects of the revived fortunes of Stoicism was the Flemish scholar Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), whose *Manuductio* or *Guide to Stoic Philosophy* (1604) was highly influential, as was his edition of Seneca's works the following year. Lipsius argued that Stoicism and Christianity are compatible, partly because both see virtue as being sufficient for happiness, regardless of pain and suffering (*Manuductio* II.20 and III.6; Lipsius 1997, pp. 203–207; Papy 2005). A similar enthusiasm for Stoicism was expressed by the Spanish author Francesco de Quevedo (1580–1645), although he went even further than Lipsius in trying to reconcile Stoic doctrines with Christianity and also, to some extent, with Epicureanism (Rothe 1965; Ettinghausen 1972; Lines and Kraye 2013, pp. 43–47).

Epicureanism also experienced a resurgence of sorts, although it was kept in check by Christian considerations (Kraye 1988, pp. 374–386; Poppi 2013, pp. 247–252). Francesco Filelfo already underlined the potentially positive role of pleasure in a letter to Bartolomeo Fracanzano of 1428 (Filelfo 1997). More important was Cosma Raimondi's letter (c. 1429?) to a certain Ambrogio Tignosi, in which he argued that “a man whose soul is in turmoil cannot be happy”; his focus on tranquillity led him to reject the views of happiness by Academics, Stoics, and Aristotelians (Raimondi 1997; Davies 1987). The Bolognese humanist Gian Battista Pio authored a commentary on Lucretius (1511), emphasizing the links between Epicureanism and the tranquillity of the contemplative life, thus betraying his inclination to mix Epicureanism with Stoicism (Tucker 2003, pp. 124, 147–148). This friendliness toward Epicurus was echoed by Francesco Vimercati, a later royal reader on ethics in Paris (Bianchi 2013, pp. 150–151). But the genuine Epicurean view of happiness generally attracted few whole-hearted adherents until the seventeenth century.

Among others, a question that received a new impulse in the Renaissance concerned the happiness of animals. In antiquity, happiness had usually been regarded as something pertaining to humans alone (although alternative views were put forward by Porphyry and Plutarch). Aristotle saw it as something closely linked to (though not identical with) the active exercise of virtue, and therefore beyond the ken of animals, who lack prudence. Augustine likewise saw it as an eminently human problem (*City of God*, XIX, 14), a point repeated by numerous commentators on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Muratori forthcoming). This position was perhaps voiced most clearly when people acting without virtue were described as beasts rather than humans. This point continued to be made in the Renaissance: indeed, it was a *topos* to view people pursuing pleasure alone as “beasts.” But at times there was some questioning of the human-animal boundary, particularly by Lorenzo Valla (Trinkaus 1970, pp. 132, 153, 203–205) and in the sixteenth century by vernacular writers such as Bernardo Segni, Ciarletta Caracciolo, and Giovan Battista Gelli.

These works reconsider the role of sensation in happiness and – particularly in the case of Gelli's rereading of Plutarch – seem to view true happiness as something attainable only by the few and most fully after death (Muratori forthcoming). One of the most original discussions of animal happiness is in Girolamo Cardano's *De subtilitate*, where he holds that animals (including flies) can be happy (Muratori 2016).

In the Renaissance, another point of debate was the relationship between individual and communal happiness, a matter that overlapped with the vigorous contemporary discussions on the merits of the active versus the contemplative life (Leinkauf 2017, I, pp. 624–27, 856–59) and the relative importance of ethics versus politics. Seen from the communal, rather than the individual, perspective, happiness was secured through morally superior rulers or lawgivers who could educate the youth to follow virtue (considered an essential ingredient for happiness, though not necessarily the only one). This Greco-Roman view, with its associated elitism (for only the more exalted classes could afford to offer their sons a training in virtue), finds at least partial reflection in utopias and other political works of the Renaissance, such as Francesco Patrizi's *La città felice* (1553), where however the author is very conscious that – for the reasons just given – only one part of the city is truly happy (Leinkauf 2017, I, pp. 905–09). In Machiavelli, of course, the relationship between personal virtue and communal well-being is even more complex.

Impact and Legacy

Generally speaking, the views of happiness outlined above tend not to identify happiness with a pleasurable emotional state (as we often do in modern parlance) or merely with the fulfillment of one's desires (unless those desires are clearly of the highest order, such as when one longs for God). To some extent, this perspective began to be challenged in early modern philosophy. René Descartes' moral philosophy is heavily influenced by Stoicism and tends to see happiness in psychological and emotional terms. Pierre

Gassendi espouses various elements of Epicurean philosophy and therefore of pleasure (although not of the merely sensual kind). Thomas Hobbes views felicity as “a continual progress of the desire,” in particular the “perpetual and restless desire of power after power” (*Leviathan*, Chap. 11; see White 2006, pp. 45–46). But other early modern philosophers – Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in particular – continued to have a view of happiness that was strongly influenced by Christian considerations (White 2006, pp. 100–102). White contends that, in early modern philosophy, “empirical and metaphysical-theological considerations were intricately mixed in many people’s thinking about happiness and pleasure” (White 2006, p. 104). Here one can see a powerful aspect of the legacy of earlier conceptions of happiness.

As to animals, this continues to be a topic of discussion well into the middle of the seventeenth century. Of particular interest is the position of the anonymous author of *Theophrastus redivivus* (1659), who depends on previous thinkers such as Cardano and Giulio Cesare Vanini and maintains that humans are even less likely to be happy than animals. The conclusion is arrived at by the kind of analysis of faculties of the soul that so interested early modern philosophers (Muratori 2016). One of these was Gassendi, who in his *Exercitationes* and *Syntagma philosophicum* concluded (in an anti-Aristotelian vein) that animals are rational too.

Finally, the relationship between individual and communal happiness continued to be pertinent for later thinkers. The utilitarian views of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill addressed the evaluation of the happiness of an individual versus that of the community, as they concluded that an important consideration is the happiness of the greater number (White 2006, pp. 55–74; Scarre 2001). Another related problem in early modern philosophy became that of moral obligation, particularly when this might seem to clash with individual happiness. White, following Sidgwick, does not see this as a potent problem within Christian thought, although there had been hints of such tension within Greek philosophy

(White 2006, pp. 120–128). From a strictly biblical perspective this may be true: Jesus stressed the two greatest commandments “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . .” and “Love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 22:37–39). The two were not to be separated (“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”), and the New Testament in effect sees no conflict between faith (the tree) and outward works (its fruit). Yet part of the Renaissance debates about the main two or three ways of life had to do with the worth of civic and political (i.e., altruistic) action versus (potentially more self-fulfilling) contemplation (see entry “► [Cities and Urban Life, Renaissance](#)”). Thus early modern discussions of the issue may have been less original than they seem.

Cross-References

- [Animals in the Renaissance](#)
- [Case, John](#)
- [Lipsius, Justus](#)
- [Piccolomini, Alessandro](#)
- [Piccolomini, Francesco](#)
- [Quevedo, Francisco de](#)

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Harmony, Renaissance Conceptions of

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Abstract

In music, “harmony” usually refers to two or more notes that simultaneously produce a pleasing sound. In ancient Greek music, however, from which the concept and term originate, “harmony” stands for a specific combination or juxtaposition of dissimilar or contrasting elements, for example, a higher and a lower note. By combining these disparate or conflicting elements, a unity or harmony arises (*discordia concors*, i.e., harmonious discord). In a narrower sense, the Greek science of harmonics refers to an extensively developed system of rules that governs relations between musical elements. These rules were intended to control consonance and dissonance, which are fundamental aspects of harmony. In a broader sense, “harmony” was used to explain unity and relationships in all kinds of natural and cultural phenomena by analogy with musical consonances and their proportions. These explanations together constitute the various theories of world harmony that were based on the Pythagorean-Platonic belief in a universe ordered by the same numerical proportions that produce musical consonances, or harmonies. The most powerful statement of this doctrine was found in the realm of cosmology, where the notion of the harmony of the spheres was used to designate the harmonious relationships between the planets governed by the proportionate speeds of their orbits or by their mutual

distances. In the history of Western thought, it was not so much the meaning of the term “harmony” that changed, but the material to which it was applied, resulting in ever-changing explanations of the concept in different cultural contexts.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the frontispiece of his *Musurgia universalis* (1650), a classic in the tradition of the harmony of the spheres, Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) introduces a scheme of world harmony representing a mixture of (neo)Pythagorean, (neo)Platonic, Jewish, and Christian elements, which had crept into this age-old tradition by then (Fig. 1). It depicts a harmonious cosmos, in which planets and angels together are singing the praises of the Creator. The triangle at the top with an eye inside represents the Trinity, which is surrounded by nine angelic choirs, each singing in four voices a 36-part canon by Romano Micheli, echoing the harmony inherent in all creation. The middle section is dominated by a globe of the world, upon which “Musica” is seated, holding the lyre of Apollo and the panpipes of Marsyas: two musical instruments whose ordered strings and pipes are often used as symbols for world harmony. The globe is encircled by the zodiac, indicating that just like the angelic music in the highest realm of the universe, the heavenly bodies of planets and stars make up a cosmic symphony. In this composition, the relationship between the orbits of the six planets (Sun, Venus, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) is expressible in terms of the whole tone and five consonances, which together constitute a musical scale (tone 9:8; third 5:4; fourth 4:3; fifth 3:2; sixth 5:3; and octave 2:1) without the dissonant musical intervals of the second and seventh.

In the bottom left-hand corner of the page sits Pythagoras, who proudly points out with his left hand that he is the discoverer of the secret of the numerical basis of musical harmony. This discovery was based on a comparison of the pitches made by hammers of different weights on an anvil in a blacksmith’s forge. By pointing with



Harmony, Renaissance Conceptions of, Fig. 1 World harmony. Frontispiece to the first volume of Athanasius Kircher’s *Musurgia universalis* (Rome, 1650) (Reproduced with kind permission of Glasgow University Library, Special Collections)

his right hand to his theorem about the mathematical law of triangles, Pythagoras illustrates here that a harmonic master plan underpins the structure and operation of the whole universe (*musica mundana*). The muse on the right may be Polymnia, who appears surrounded by musical instruments of various kinds. She personifies the view that through the imitation of world harmony in earthly music (*musica instrumentalis*) man is able to climb a spiritual ladder (bottom right-hand corner), which will ultimately lead to knowledge of the perfect harmony of God’s creation. This is the case because microcosmic man (*musica humana*), just like the macrocosm, is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27).

In contrast with many of his predecessors, however, Kircher rejected the literal existence of

a music of the planetary spheres “for that which the ancients believed about harmonious order – that an audible harmony rose from the friction of the heavenly bodies – has been generally exploded in these most recent times; for neither the solidity of the heavens [i.e. the Aristotelian crystalline spheres] nor the order of the planets remains as the ancients disposed it” (Kircher 1650, II, 376, trans. Haar 1961, 504). As an admirer of Johannes Kepler, Kircher aimed at formulating his astronomical views not in superseded musical metaphors but in modern scientific terms, which, to his mind, were fully compatible with a Christian belief in the harmony of God’s creation. The sources he quoted in illustration of his view of world harmony include the classical treatment of the topic, as well as the most influential Neoplatonic and Christian interpretations, which will be discussed below.

Among these ancient Greek scholars, Plato (427–347 BCE) figures prominently as the first philosopher who formulated an all-encompassing view of the harmony of the universe. He was clearly inspired by early Pythagoreans, who had discovered that the sound of musical consonances was expressible in numbers, and extrapolated from this that the whole universe was ordered by the same numerical proportions that determine these consonances. In his commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*, the Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) credited Pythagoras with having discovered that the principal musical consonances result from the sounding of proportionate weights of hammers or lengths of a stretched string, so that within the series 1,2,3,4 (the numbers constituting the “first figure of numbers,” i.e., the Pythagorean *tetractys*) simple ratios produce the musical intervals of the octave (2:1), fifth (3:2), and fourth (4:3) (Walker 1958; Prins 2014, 55–67). The key to understanding the whole universe lay for Plato and his commentators in these proportions, and particularly in the mathematical means found in multiples of the duple proportion (arithmetic mean = 2:3:4; geometric mean = 1:2:4; harmonic mean = 3:4:6). Scholars like Ficino based their world view on the discovery of musical laws underpinning the whole world, in which numbers were understood to be quantities with

spatial existence and symbolic value rather than abstractions. Ficino thus argued that Plato was right “that the duple and triple [proportions] and all the other intervals which are described in the first figure of numbers are found in the spheres” (Ficino 1496, 74^r, trans. Prins 2014, 54).

In his *Timaeus*, as Cornford (Plato 1937, 59–72) explains, Plato formulated a comprehensive Pythagorean view of the creation of the universe by the laws of harmony. In the cosmogonic myth included in the dialogue (at *Timaeus* 35 and 36) a Demiurge creates a World-Soul, a model for the physical universe, which is realized through the use of Pythagorean proportions. The World-Soul is envisioned as a band of invisible matter marked with the double and triple proportions of the geometric series, before being split and bent into circles that represent the structure of the planetary system, which resembles an armillary sphere. The structure of the World-Soul consists of Pythagorean proportions made up of the numbers 1-2-3-4-9-8-27, a compound of two geometric series (1-3-9-27 and 2-4-8), which taken together determine the harmony of the cosmos. In the Timaeian cosmogonic myth, Plato subsequently presents a musical scale that connects musical intervals with the spatial intervals between the planets. Within the two geometric series arithmetic and harmonic means are placed, which create proportions of 3:2, 4:3, and (their difference) 9:8. The proportion 4:3 (fourth) is filled in with two proportions of 9:8 (tone) and one of 256:243 (semitone). This results in a musical scale, which laid the foundation for the Greek science of harmonics, the tuning of which became known as the Pythagorean or Timaeian scale. Out of the invisible World-Soul material, the Demiurge then created the physical world, which was set into harmonious motion at the beginning of time and governed by the Demiurge, like a musician starting to play a musical instrument.

In the myth of Er (*Republic*, 617B4–7), moreover, Plato described the universe as a set of nested concentric rings around a spindle on the surface of each of which a Siren sits singing. According to this view, the movement of the planetary orbits (represented by the concentric rings) produces an audible harmonious sound that

consists of the single tones of the Sirens taken together. In the numerous commentaries on the myth, this planetary harmony was often interpreted literally as the music of the spheres (Plato 1937, 87–89). In principle, this heavenly music was audible to mortal human beings, but their souls and ears usually became completely deaf to it after incarnation in a human body. In the commentary tradition, these two Platonic myths offered not only a description of the harmonic structure of the world but also a normative philosophy of life, in which listening to and making music were seen as means to retrieve the music of the spheres. Ficino, for example, followed Plato in arguing that “man is born to contemplate heavenly phenomena or, rather, as far as it is in his power, to imitate the heavenly Mover himself. And what Plato had said about the sense of seeing he says about the sense of hearing as well: it is given to us for the sake of contemplation and learning; and also in order to enable us on the basis of audible harmony to bring the movements of our soul, too, into a harmonious order” (Ficino 1496, 77^v, trans. Prins 2014, 153).

Despite strong and persistent support enduring into the Renaissance for Aristotle’s rejection of a sonorous universe in favor of his own silent spheres (*On the Heavens*, ii.9), as noted by Haar (1973–4, 40), Plato’s ideas about world harmony continued to be influential and long-lasting, whether formulated in terms of harmonics or audible music (Prins and Vanhaelen 2017). These ideas were often read through the lens of sources such as Cicero’s (106–43 BCE) *Dream of Scipio*, which is a dream placed at the end of his *De republica* in direct imitation of Plato’s myth of Er. In his restatement of *musica mundana*, Gioseffo Zarlino (1517–1590), for example, quoted, in his *Institutioni harmoniche* (1558), the answer of Scipio Africanus the Elder, who is asked by the younger in Cicero’s *Dream of Scipio* to report his dream of cosmic harmony: “What is this sound, so loud and beautiful, which reached my ears?” Scipio the elder replies that “It is caused by the impulse and movement of the spheres themselves . . . distinguished by definite proportions. The high sounds mixed with low ones make different harmonies: for so great a motion could

not take place in silence. And Nature has arranged that the extremes of one end should sound low, those of the other end high. Therefore the highest circuit, that of the starry heaven, which has the fastest revolution moves with a higher and louder sound: and the lowest, lunar, one with the deepest sound” (Zarlino 1558, 16, trans. Godwin 1993, 206). Given the universal law of *discordia concors*, the sound of the spheres is presented here as a harmony of carefully proportioned intervals, there being seven tones in all. These seven planetary tones were equated by Macrobius (1952, fl. c. 400) in his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* and later commentators such as Zarlino with the seven numbers of Plato’s geometric series in the *Timaeus*.

Macrobius’s cosmic scale was based on daily planetary motion and ascribes the lowest tone to the Moon with the other planets following in order. Within the tradition of the harmony of the spheres, it was juxtaposed with the opposite one of Nicomachus of Gerasa (c. 60–120), which is based on annual planetary motion and ascribes the lowest tone to Saturn. Like the majority of Renaissance scholars, Ficino discussed these two cosmic scales, but he could not make a definitive choice between them, because, to his mind, the tones of a single scale would reduce the mighty polyphony of the planetary spheres. He was convinced that “we will find that low tones in the heavens are mixed with high [tones], and that the same spheres give out a high tone by the one motion and a low tone by the other, [because] from multiple revolutions are generated tones in an equal multiple proportion” (Ficino 1496, 72^r, trans. Prins 2014, 107). Ficino continued to believe strongly in the existence of a musical universe, yet, instead of the precise nature of the cosmic scale (*musica mundana*), he was far more interested in the concept of *musica humana*, the harmonious makeup and working of the human body and soul and their interaction, and for this purpose, he consulted various sources, including medieval Arab theories about the healing and harmonizing powers of music.

Already in Ptolemy’s (fl. 127–148) *Harmonics*, a distinction was made between cosmic and psychic harmony. This subdivision of “harmony” was

further developed by Boethius (c. 480–525) into *musica mundana*, *humana*, and *instrumentalis*, the latter referring to music played and sung by men on earth (Boethius 1989, Hammerstein 1962, 116–144). Till the end of the Renaissance, this subdivision of the science and art of music was used in academic circles. Yet, the medieval study of music as a branch of the Quadrivium, which was primarily the study of harmonics, that is, of the definitions of musical consonances in terms of their numerical proportions, was criticized by Renaissance Neoplatonists as being too scholastic and too remote from ancient Greek musical reality, which they sought to revive.

For this purpose, these Renaissance scholars consulted sources such as Aristides Quintilianus's (late third–early fourth century) *On Music*, which provided a cosmic explanation of the musical sensitivity of the human soul and body and the role of music in education, not only in childhood but throughout life. During the Middle Ages, the treatise was already regarded by Byzantine and Arab scholars as a basic work, but its importance was generally acknowledged by Renaissance scholars. Man's growth, bodily proportions, and behavior were envisioned by Aristides as a microcosmic mirror of the macrocosm. Everything in a human life, from the proportions of man's body and soul and their interaction, through the human life cycle, until the development of human character and behavior was perceived as governed by analogy with, or dependence upon, celestial harmony (Gersh 1996, 268–273). Aristides formulated his answer to the question of “what coerces the [human] soul to be so readily conquered by melody played on instruments” (Aristides Quintilianus 1983, 151–157) in terms of the Neoplatonic theory of the soul's descent through the planetary spheres before its incarnation at the birth of a human being: “going through the ethereal orbits [of the planetary spheres], the soul partakes of everything so far as it is luminous and adapted for warming and naturally enclosing the body, plaiting certain bonds from these orbits for itself as a sort of latticework by irregular movement of the reciprocal lines among the movement themselves. . . . This is the root of the body, and this they named ‘harmonia.’” This kind of “harmony”

not only explains the influence of the heavenly bodies on a human being, but also formulates the purpose of a human life: during its life on earth, the soul has to strive for a recollection of the heavenly harmony that it heard when it dwelt in heaven and fell through the spheres before becoming embodied. The individual must then draw upon this memory to create a better life for himself and his fellow human beings.

We encounter a similar conception of *musica humana* in many Renaissance sources, for example, in an illustration of harmonious man by the hand of the Limbourg Brothers (Fig. 2). Man is defined here in terms of a harmonious discord (*discordia concors*): composed of the frontal feminine blond figure and the masculine dark figure seen from the back. According to the comments inscribed in the corners of this picture, humanity can be divided into several different categories, which are based on different temperaments, that is, different compositions of the four humors and their elemental qualities: choleric (fire), sanguine (air), phlegmatic (water), and melancholic (earth). Man may be further categorized in relation to the cardinal zodiacal points, which correspond to particular parts of the body and soul. Combinations of these criteria result in four types of people according to their astrological indications: men born under the sign of Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius are hot and dry, choleric, masculine, and oriental; those born under Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn are cold and dry, melancholic, feminine, and occidental; those of the sign of Gemini, Aquarius, and Libra are hot and wet, masculine, sanguine, and meridional; while those of Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces, finally, are cold and wet, phlegmatic, feminine, and nordic.

Ficino's innovative restatement of the doctrine of world harmony is colored by these kinds of astrological ideas about harmony. In his interpretation, the correspondences between different parts of the macrocosm and man were conceptualized in terms of an analogy to musical strings and their vibrations. In order to update the medieval idea of static harmonies produced by the revolutions or distances of the planetary orbs, Ficino used the concept of cosmic sympathetic vibration to account for an ever-changing

Harmonious man. In: The Limbourg Brothers, *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (1400–1416), MS 65, fol. 14v (Reproduced with kind permission of the Musée Condé, Chantilly)



Ficino's idea of man as cocreator of his own harmonic nature is also in line with a conception of human freedom that emerged during the Renaissance. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) gave voice to this idea in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486), where he argued that man with his free will stood apart from the

great chain of being, was given the ability to distinguish between good and bad, and thus to a certain extent was free to choose an edifying harmonious life. Ficino and Pico did not believe that man's destiny was determined for him by his stars but were interested in the question of how man can discover the influence of heavenly bodies on his life. They wanted to employ this knowledge, moreover, to counteract this celestial influence or to use it for the purpose of becoming a more harmonious being. Ficino exploited the scientific possibilities implicit in astrology to the full and employed them in the context of musical ceremonies, which were organized with the purpose of drawing down cosmic harmonizing influences to better life on earth (Ficino 1989, 354–363).

In summary, one of the major Renaissance transformations of the tradition of the harmony of the spheres was the closure of the gap between theories of the harmony of the world and ideas of music's ethical power to affect man's body and soul, via ancient Greek and medieval Islamic writings, which humanists sought to revive (Haar 1961, 328–495; Tomlinson 1993, 67–100). But the aspects of astrology and magic that were necessary to close this gap were not appreciated by all scholars interested in world harmony. Even though there was no real distinction between world harmony and astrology for ancient Neoplatonic, medieval Arabic writers and their Renaissance followers, philosophers such as Marin Mersenne (1588–1648) thought that astrological and magical beliefs threatened the established Christian scholarly belief in the creation of a harmonious world.

Ficino had argued that music produces certain effects on an individual, depending on the constellations with which he was associated, i.e., his horoscope, but Mersenne totally rejected this idea in his *Quaestiones celeberrimae in Genesim* (1623; *Most Frequently asked Questions about Genesis*) (which he wrote before his famous *Harmonie universelle* [1636]) and warned: "He who composes music in the likeness of the heavens will never succeed in restraining madness, either because there are no [harmonies] in the heavens or because, granted there be some, they could never be apprehended by us"

(Mersenne 1623, 1704; transl. Haar 1961, 501). This reaction is symptomatic of the emergence of a new musical reality in which beauty and the complementary idea of celestial harmony were gradually replaced by concepts of expressivity and emotion. This transformation into a form of idealism that is ontologically more subjective than original Pythagorean and Platonic conceptions of "harmony" is expressed clearly in Mersenne's dismissal of Ficino's astrological interpretation of world harmony: "It is completely objectionable that any kind of influence has been drawn down from the stars by singing, for a particular song does not evoke sadness or happiness in us because it is performed under a particular star, as is indicated by the fact that the same song has the same power when heard under various constellations, as experience will confirm" (Mersenne 1623, 1705, my trans.).

Alongside ancient Greek theories, Jewish and Christian beliefs in a harmonious universe shaped Renaissance conceptions of "harmony." As noted by Hammerstein (1962, 119–121) and Gersh (1996, 21–27), for Church Fathers such as Augustine (354–430), Pythagorean and Neoplatonic beliefs could be adopted as long as they were reconcilable with biblical passages concerning the harmony of God's creation. In order to be able to make full use of the Pythagorean doctrine of perfect harmony, Renaissance scholars such as Ficino, Pico, Francesco Giorgi (1466–1540), and Francesco Patrizi (1529–1597) used the narrative of a *prisca theologia* or *pia philosophia*. According to this belief, a single, true, primordial wisdom-religion, which passes through all religions and philosophies, was given by God to enlightened men such as Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, and Moses. This narrative enabled scholars to use pagan texts such as Plato's *Timaeus* to explain vague and obscure passages in the biblical creation story. Pico, for example, drew on sources from the tradition of the harmony of the spheres to demonstrate the universal truth of some of his Pythagorean conclusions, such as "6. The three-fold proportion – Arithmetical, Geometrical, and Harmonic – represents to us the three daughters of Themis [i.e. divine universal law], being the

symbols of judgment, justice, and peace” (Pico 1486, 48, trans. Godwin 1993, 176).

Jewish, Gnostic, and Christian belief in the angelic habitation of the universe, originating from ideas about angelic hierarchies in sources such as Pseudo-Dionysius’s *On the Celestial Hierarchy* (c. late fifth century), led to a belief in a *musica coelestis*, angels in heaven making music in praise of God (Hammerstein 1962, 116–119; Gersh 1996, 199–201). These kinds of ideas of heavenly harmony persisted even in the later Middle Ages, when Pythagorean thinking had to make way in academic circles for Aristotelian thought. Giorgio Anselmi (c. 1386–1440/3), presumably inspired by Dante, formulated an innovative view of *musica celestis* in which a static music of the spheres produced by the individual tones of a musical scale was developed into a dynamic symphony of planetary harmony and angelic song: “The tireless soul of the whole world, indeed, sings with the same [harmony] its ceaseless praises to the eternal, most high and all-beneficent Governor by means of the celestial motions, with which the holy throngs of blessed spirits, sweetly echoing, contend in song and in the ineffable beauty of their rivalling hymns” (Anselmi 1961, 97, trans. Godwin 1993, 146). Even though serious earthly music was seen as an echo of this heavenly harmony, it could be best perceived in moments of ecstasy or divine enlightenment as experienced by St. Cecilia, who is captured by Raphael in a moment of transcendence of the world of broken and unstrung musical instruments (Fig. 3).

Francesco Giorgi, whose knowledge of Pythagorean harmonic proportions was called upon when he was asked for advice on the harmonic proportions for the new church of San Francesco della Vigna in Venice, extended the doctrine of world harmony with Cabbalistic ideas, in which a Christianized form underpins his *Harmonia mundi* (1525). In this enormous work on world harmony, Giorgi dealt with the harmony of the whole creation in terms of the ten “Sefirot,” i.e., attributes through which God manifests himself by emanation in his creation. Giorgi applied Platonic and Cabbalistic number symbolism to this restatement of the doctrine of



Harmony, Renaissance Conceptions of,
Fig. 3 Raphael, *The Ecstasy of St. Cecilia* (c. 1515–1516) (Reproduced with kind permission of the photographic archive of the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna)

perfect harmony, writing in effect a wide-ranging commentary on the biblical creation story. This book in itself was meant to be an echo of the harmony of God’s creation, and the purpose behind the enterprise of writing and reading it was to be reunited with God.

Giorgi, for example, argued along the lines of the *prisca theologia* that Ezekiel, when he wrote that the biblical sentence “The spirit of life was in the wheels” [Ezekiel 1:20] could be understood through the lens of the Timaeon narrative of creation, equating the wheels with the harmonious spheres. Self-knowledge, furthermore, could also lead to insight into God’s archetypal harmony, because: “Man, as the most perfect image of the world, contains all those things which one finds in the macrocosm in the same proportion. . . . In the

human intellect ... one finds a purer order of simpler numbers which corresponds to the nine choirs of angels and to the nine higher *sefirot* [i.e. divine attributes], so that there is within it the whole image of the Angels and of God" (Zorzi [=Giorgi], 2010, 536, my trans.). Giorgi was convinced that due to the divine spark in man's soul, he was capable of knowing world harmony; but the Inquisition was of the opinion that he made man too harmonious and divine, as a result of which Giorgi's occult and mystical work was placed on the *Index of Forbidden Books*.

The concept of "harmony" continued to be elaborated in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Neoplatonic philosophers, theologians, astronomers, astrologers, physicians, music theorists, architects, and poets. In the discipline of music theory, the tuning system outlined in the *Timaeus* became the subject of debate during this period, because it was incompatible with tuning and temperament as used in musical practices. Ficino's *Timaeus* commentary, for example, already evinces a certain awareness of the problem that what started in the Timaeian myth of creation as a system of consonances involving only small whole numbers turns out to be less simple when applied to Renaissance musical performance practice. During the course of the fifteenth century, polyphonic music had started to develop, and in addition to the harmonic use of octaves (2:1), fifths (3:2), and fourths (4:3) – hitherto, the only harmonic intervals generally defined in a music-theoretical treatise – there was a gradual adoption of thirds (81:64) and sixths (27:16), which involve relatively large numbers. The use of these intervals dictated a modification of the Pythagorean tuning in which the major third (81:64) became slightly flattened to 80:64, or 5:4, and the major sixth also became slightly flattened, from 27:16 to 25:15, or 5:3. At the same time, the fourth as a harmonic interval experienced devaluation. These changes were reflected in the musical thought of Ficino's *Timaeus* commentary: while the octave and fifth are still defined as primary consonances, Ficino observed that the fourth "in the sense of hearing is not appreciated as a consonance in its own right." In addition, he recognized the third and the sixth as primary consonances, which, in his opinion, were

present in the diatonic scale to temper "with their more delicate sweetness" the dissonance of the second and seventh tones of the scale" (Ficino 1496, 71^v, trans. Prins 2014, 65).

During the Renaissance, different attempts were undertaken to update the Pythagorean tuning system, inspired by the desire to defend the very foundation of the belief in a harmonic creation. The structural problem that the musical intervals of the Pythagorean tuning system did not quite add up, however, became more and more pressing. The difficulty arises in the relationship between octaves and fifths: 8 octaves do not equal 12 fifths. The series of fifths results in a note which is a little bit higher than the note produced by the octave series, a mathematical difference which is defined as the Pythagorean comma. After Ficino, Zarlino tried to solve this problem by replacing the Pythagorean scale with a new system called just intonation, which attempts to rectify the deficiency of the Pythagorean scale by founding itself upon both pure fifths (3:2) and pure major (5:4) and minor (5:3) thirds. In his *Istitutioni harmoniche* (1558), Zarlino expressed the belief that this adaptation was fully in accord with the Holy Scripture: "as when the Lord speaks to Job, saying: 'Who will tell of your ordinances, O voices of the heavens? And who will make their music sleep?' [Job 38: 137]" (Zarlino 1558, 16, trans. Godwin 1993, 207). Zarlino did whatever it takes to keep "the music of the voice of the heavens" awake in order not to lose the cosmological significance of earthly music. All arguments against the notion of an inaudible music of the spheres were countered by an appeal to reason, which for him as a rationalist was ranked higher than the sense of hearing. But this led to a vehement dispute with Vincenzo Galilei (1520–1591), who demonstrated in his *Discorso intorno alle opera di Gioseffo Zarlino* (1589) that the Pythagorean belief in the expressibility of musical sound in terms of simple numerical proportions was wrong. Galilei decided to repeat the experiments that Pythagoras was supposed to have conducted at home after his discovery of the musical intervals in the smithy (Walker 1978, 23–26). In order to test his hypothesis, as is reported in various sources, Pythagoras tied weights to strings of equal length and found in

the musical tones this produces the same simple numerical proportions that had been revealed in his original discovery with hammers of different sizes: the octave being 2:1, the fifth 3:2 and the fourth 4:3. Based on a repetition of this experiment, Galilei revealed that this was incorrect: in order to get these results, the weights tied to the strings must be in squared, not simple, inverse proportion to the string lengths. Thus, to create the octave-fifth-fourth series, the weight-string relationship would need to be, respectively, 4:1, 9:4, and 16:9; the squares of the simple numbers of Pythagoras's discovery.

In Girolamo Cardano's (1501–1575) account of the sense of hearing, a new concept of harmony emerged which was more subjective than the original doctrine of Pythagorean harmony. Even though he stressed the importance of Pythagorean proportion to distinguish between consonance and dissonance in the sense of hearing, he complemented his definition with far more subjective criteria. Whether we enjoy a harmony or consonance not only depended on its perfect proportions but also on the context within which it was presented to us, because “better things are always pleasing after worse ones, . . . so light pleases after darkness, sweetness after bitterness, oil of roses after dill, and consonant tones after dissonances” (Cardano 1966, III, 572, trans. Miller, 1973, 212).

The debate about the status of Pythagorean proportions also played a role in the context of the philosophy of nature, with far-reaching consequences for arithmetic-driven accounts of harmony (Palisca 1985, Vendrix 2008). For instance, the Italian philosopher Francesco Patrizi argued in his *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591) that the Pythagorean belief that numbers are the ultimate constituents of reality, which is the very foundation of the Pythagorean doctrine of world harmony, was nothing but superstition: “The Ancients based themselves on divination rather than knowing the cause.” As a corrective to these ancient unscientific beliefs about numbers, Patrizi argued that “Continuous quantity [i.e. lines] exists by nature, while [the discrete quantity of] number is the work of the human mind” (Patrizi 1591, 68^r, trans. Prins 2014, 243). Hence, a philosophy of nature, which includes the natural phenomena of sound, could not be based on numbers, because these were

merely conventional constructs. As a consequence, Patrizi abandoned the Pythagorean belief that the universe was ordered by numerical proportions that produce harmonies in earthly music from his philosophy of nature.

During the Renaissance, occasional attempts were undertaken to imitate angelic songs or planetary harmony in earthly music. Apart from some remarks of a few initiates who witnessed Ficino's improvised musico-magical practices, regrettably, they left no material trace. Yet a number of polyphonic compositions similar to the 36-part canon by Romano Micheli (used in Kircher's frontispiece, Fig. 1) survive in print, as does the tableau *L'armonia delle sfere*, which was designed for the Florentine *intermedi* of 1589 – a rendering of Plato's myth of Er – and Stefano Landi's religious opera *San Alessio* (1634).

Other aspects of Renaissance culture were also influenced by the Pythagorean doctrine of “harmony,” however. The use of harmonious proportions in ideas about the architecture of Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) and Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) was fully consistent with the rediscovery of Pythagorean proportions and their sixteenth-century music-theoretical adaptation mentioned above. Just like in music, according to Rudolf Wittkower (1949/1973, 142–154), this development ultimately culminated in a break from the laws of harmonic proportion in favor of a subjective concept of beauty based on the newly discovered laws of perception, already formulated by scholars such as Cardano.

Although a literal belief in the existence of the harmony of the spheres was jeopardized from the sixteenth century onwards by new ideas about the cosmos, man and music, restatements of the belief in world harmony continued to appear. Universal harmony was described in seventeenth-century Italian, French, and especially English poetry, where the evocations of celestial harmony, in the words of John Hollander became “decorative metaphor and mere turns of wit” (Hollander 1961, 19). Yet, ideas from the tradition of the harmony of the spheres, such as the poet as maker of a harmonious microcosm continued to flourish (Heninger 1974, 287–324).

These metaphorical restatements of Pythagorean harmony were paired with drastic revisions

in the field of cosmology, where Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) argued in his *Harmonices mundi* (1619), further developing Ptolemy's view of world harmony, that not only the Pythagorean tuning of the *Timaeus* scale, but that the whole notion of world harmony had to be updated in line with the emerging view of a heliocentric world view (Spitzer 1963; Walker 1978, 34–62). Replacing the earth with the sun meant that the planetary distances and revolutions needed to be revised in a drastic way to save the notion of world harmony. As a solution, Kepler defined the intervals between the Copernican planetary spheres by the five regular solids of Greek geometry and found these new harmonic proportions expressible in the musical terms of an old-fashioned contrapuntal composition, in which the different voices symbolize the movements of the planets which are orbiting the sun.

Like Ficino before him, who in a variation on the dream of Scipio in the form of a letter inspired a political leader of his day to use the doctrine of heavenly harmony as a model for his form of government, Kepler was also convinced that harmony in nature should be used as a point of departure to create a harmonious society. Yet, while he first saw in harmonious nature a coherent unity that might be mimicked in an earthly society adopting one truth, he later emphasized the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of diverse perspectives (Rothman 2012, 18 and 342).

In sharp contrast with the innovative ideas of his contemporary Kepler, Robert Fludd (1574–1637) continued to defend in his *Utriusque cosm... historia* (1617) the absolute truth of the Ptolemaic geocentric view of world harmony. Finally, Athanasius Kircher's *Musurgia universalis* (1650), with which this entry began, was the last great summation of the wide-ranging ideas about "harmony" discussed above, before the subject went into oblivion as a universal theory.

Cross-References

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- ▶ [Alberti, Leon Battista](#)

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Abstract

A political theorist, James Harrington expressed his ideas in his *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), a constitutional utopia through which he drafted institutional and political principles meant to guarantee social and political stability. According to Harrington, political systems are somehow dependent on the distribution of property among people, and if property is in the hands of the many, stability will thus require a republican form of government. Harrington aspiration was to set up the principles of a new "art of lawgiving"

based on the equal and balanced distribution of property, orders, and offices that is deemed to be the true reason of the states.

Biography

A political theorist, James Harrington was born in 1611 in Upton, Northamptonshire, the oldest son and heir of Sir Sapcotes Harrington. Little is known of his life and very few of his papers and documents are left. We can only rely upon the accounts of his life written by John Aubrey, Anthony Wood, and John Toland. In 1629, Harrington entered Trinity College, Oxford, but left 2 years later with no degree. For a short time, he also entered the Middle Temple but he found himself uncomfortable with the study of law. He travelled on the continent, visiting the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Italy. In 1635, he returned to England, upholding republican ideals and Protestantism. Between 1646 and 1649, he served as a gentleman attendant for Charles I, for whom he felt a sincere friendship. Harrington played no significant role during the Civil Wars and the Revolution, and his intellectual and political activities were later devoted to sustaining a stable, namely “equal and balanced,” republican commonwealth. All of his political works were published between 1656 and 1660; among them, the most important is *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), a constitutional utopia through which he expressed his political ideas and drafted institutional and political principles meant to guarantee social and political stability. Later political works represent the attempt to highlight and clarify the principles expressed in *Oceana*, and had a significant impact on the republican debate during the Protectorate and immediately before the Restoration. With the return of the Stuarts, James Harrington was arrested on a charge of conspiring against the government and was jailed in the Tower. Due to the imprisonment, his mental and physical health was greatly weakened. From his release until his death in 1677, he seems to have had no significant

public life. His intellectual activity almost stopped and probably his last effort is the drafting of a treatise of natural philosophy titled *Mechanics of Nature*. A collection of his works was edited in 1699, by John Toland, who could use the writings, papers, and documents in the hands of Elizabeth Ashton, Harrington’s sister.

Political Theory

In the opening lines of his *Commonwealth of Oceana*, Harrington opposes “ancient prudence,” the virtuous knowledge of politics and civic life established in ancient Greece, Rome, and Israel, and “modern prudence,” or “Gothic balance,” the feudal politics based on kingship and aristocracy. The former is the “art whereby a civil society of men is instituted and preserved upon the foundation of common right and interest” (Harrington 1977, 401), while the latter is the rule of one man, or of the few, according to his or their interest. According to Harrington, political systems are somehow dependent on the distribution of property among the people and if property is in the hands of the many, stability will thus require a republican form of government. The political confusions in England are in fact the result of the unbalance between the distribution of property and the political superstructure. In his works, Harrington thus proposed establishing an agrarian law, meant to keep a balance in the distribution of property and thus, preserve the stability of the republic and keep a strong citizen army, necessary to defend the new commonwealth. However, institutions have their own principles and Harrington supported a bicameral legislature, with the representatives being elected by all “who lived off their own” through a secret ballot. In order to set up a balanced political system, Harrington is also convinced that offices must ordinarily rotate. Harrington’s aspiration was therefore to set up the principles of a new “art of lawgiving” based on the equal and balanced distribution of property, orders, and offices. This knowledge is deemed to represent the true *raison d’être* of the states.

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Harriot, Thomas

Born: ca. 1560, Oxford (?)

Died: 2 July 1621, London.

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Abstract

Harriot was an English mathematician and philosopher working in diverse fields of contemporary knowledge such as algebra, astronomy, navigation, cartography, architecture, mechanics, optics, alchemy, linguistics, and biblical chronology. Besides a small book on the New Found Land of Virginia and a posthumously edited work on algebra, his work is handed down to us solely in the form of about 5,200 sheets of working notes, a fact that complicates the appraisal of his achievements.

Synonyms

[Harriot, Thomas](#); [Harriott, Thomas](#)

Biography

The earliest item of the incomplete record of Harriot's life is an entry in the matriculation register of Oxford University, where he, the son of a commoner, began his studies at the age of 17. Sometime after his graduation in 1580, he entered the service of Walter Raleigh for whom he worked as a scientific advisor, working, among other things, on problems of navigation. In 1585, he joined Raleigh's expedition to the New World where he studied the language and habits of the native Algonquians as well as the local geography, flora, and fauna. After his return to Europe in 1586, he spent some time in Ireland, where he was again charged with surveying and map-making. In

the 1590s, Harriot acquired the patronage of Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland, and moved into Syon House on the Thames, where he had his own laboratory and library. In 1621 he died from a nasal ulcer. In the final decades of his life, Harriot's social position was precarious. From the first years of the seventeenth century on and up to the years around his death, both his patrons were imprisoned. Harriot himself was accused of atheism several times and was imprisoned for a couple of weeks in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Harriot was one of the early modern engineerscientists in whose work, as in Galileo's, there is a confluence of traditions of practical mathematics and ancient and medieval (natural) philosophy. The integration of a growing body of practical knowledge eventually leads to ruptures within the philosophical tradition. Thus, based on geometrical diagrams and using his own elaborate algebraic formalism, Harriot developed a theory describing the collision of round bodies and claimed that it was "among the principal elements which lead to the understanding of the inner secrets and mysteries of natural philosophy," obviously subscribing to an atomistic agenda and explicitly breaking with Aristotelianism. Correspondingly, Harriot's astronomical work is known to have been informed by Copernicanism.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The confluence of practical and theoretical traditions implied the use of experiments and mathematics in the systematic treatment of questions of philosophy. Harriot was highly innovative in this context and arrived at many results which were later independently obtained and published by others. Thus, in mechanics, he performed fall experiments and arrived at the law of fall and the insight into the parabolic shape of projectile trajectories. He performed optical experiments and arrived at the law of refraction, today known as Snel's law. He constructed telescopes

independently of and prior to Galileo and used them to observe the moon and the sunspots. He made original contributions to algebra and number theory and invented one of the earliest systematic phonetic alphabets.

Impact and Legacy

While, in his lifetime, Harriot was widely known in England and also on the continent, as his correspondence with Kepler testifies, his failure to publish made him virtually vanish from the later history of science. It is therefore up to modern historians to reconstruct his work from his manuscripts and use it as a means to probe into the field of early modern knowledge and its developmental dynamics.

Cross-References

- [Atomism](#)
- [Copernicanism](#)
- [Galilei, Galileo](#)

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Harriott, Thomas

► [Harriot, Thomas](#)

Hartlib, Samuel

Born: 1596–1600, Elbing (Elbląg) (Prussia, Kingdom of Poland)

Died: 10 March 1662, Westminster, London

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Abstract

The main aim of Samuel Hartlib was to provide an advancement of learning finalized to the amelioration of the material conditions of men and the pursuit of a religious peace, i.e., the unification of the Protestants. To this aim, inspired by Comenius, he devoted his efforts or gathering knowledge by the creation of a society or office of learned men (in technical fields, philosophy, and theology), and by the establishment of a network of correspondents (the Hartlib Circle). The method of discovery underlying his program of advancement of learning was inspired by Bacon's *Novum Organum* and by Jacopo Aconcio's method of analysis, while the categorization and

transmission of knowledge had to be based on commonplace books and artificial languages. His plan of economic improvement, to be fulfilled mainly through the amelioration of husbandry, was motivated by the Puritan Millenarianism to which he adhered.

Alternate Names

[Gartlib, Samuel](#); [Hartlibius, Samuel](#); [Hartlieb, Samuel](#)

Biography

The life of Hartlib is documented mostly by his letters and papers, rediscovered in 1933 (Turnbull 1947; HP). He was born in Elbing around 1600 to a German royal merchant and a half-English woman, whose father was a deputy of the English Company of trade in the Baltic. Hartlib was educated in Brzeg (Silesia) probably until 1621, although in 1614 he matriculated at the University of Königsberg (Turnbull 1920, 5). Between 1621 and 1626 he was in England, where he studied in Cambridge under John Preston. He settled in London from 1628 (Turnbull 1947, 11–15, 34; Dickson 1998, 146), likely under the suggestion of John Dury, minister in Elbing between 1625 and 1630, as part of his efforts to reconcile the Protestants (Turnbull 1920, 7–13). Moreover, he moved to England as a consequence of the Hapsburg and Catholic conquest of the region of Elbing (Trevor-Roper 1967, 231–234). In England Hartlib pursued a program of reform of learning by establishing a school in Chichester, although unsuccessfully (Hartlib 1630). Moreover, he developed a program of reform of all knowledge, having been acquainted with Comenius's *Janua linguarum* (1631) and with the draft of the *Pansophia*, which he published in 1637 and 1639 (Hartlib 1637, 1639; Webster 1970a, 22–25; Čapková 1994, 80–85). This program was the outcome of a movement of reform set by Ramus, Keckermann, and Alsted (Hotson 1994, 2011) and served both the advancement of learning and religious peace (Clucas 1991; Houston 2014, 124–131). To these aims, Hartlib first

envisaged the creation of a “Societas Reformatorem et Correspondency” (1634) - (Dickson 1998, 148–158), and then (together with Dury) of an “Office of Public Address in Spiritual and Temporal matters,” i.e., an institute intended to the gathering of information and to the accomplishment of Bacon’s and Comenius’s scientific and educational programs (Hartlib 1647, 1648; Slack 2015, 102–116). Moreover, he devoted some short treatises to the attempts of unifying the Protestants (Hartlib 1641, 1643) and to recollections of others essays, mainly on husbandry. In developing his project of gathering knowledge, Hartlib the “intelligencer” came to form a Circle, primarily constituted by himself, Dury, and Comenius (Trevor-Roper 1967, 219–271), and involving several experts with whom Hartlib corresponded around 4,718 letters (EMLO). The Hartlib Circle included Robert Boyle, Gabriel Plattes (author of the Utopian dialogue *Macaria*, 1641, 2013), William Petty, John Milton, Theodore Haak, and Henry Oldenburg. Members of the Circle formed in 1646–1647 the “Invisible College” that would later inspire the birth of the Royal Society, although Hartlib did not establish or set the program of either (Turnbull 1953; Webster 1974, 1975, 58). For his writing and projects, he spent all his provisions and obtained from the Government of the Commonwealth a pension in 1647. Still, he died in needy conditions in 1662 (Turnbull 1920, 48–51, 62).

Innovative Aspects and Influences

Hartlib’s program of reform consisted of (1) the gathering of information and observations, and (2) their categorization into a unique body of knowledge (*pansophia*) (Clucas 1991, 35). This program relied on the methodology expounded in Bacon’s *Novum Organum*, in which Hartlib opposes the “systematic” approach of Cartesian and Scholastic philosophy (Yeo 2010, 188–194), and on Jacopo Aconcio’s method, consisting of the analysis of notions and facts as the main source of knowledge in science and religion (Clucas 1994, 58–62). Moreover, Hartlib’s program required a method of teaching, learning, and

transmitting knowledge: accordingly, he appropriated the method of epitomization of John Harrison (Clucas 1994, 64–68; Yeo 2007, 2010) and recommended the use of summaries and commonplace as the most viable means in learning and disseminating knowledge (Hartlib 1654). This method, which in Hartlib’s plans had to be taught to children in order to enhance their memory, would inspire William Petty’s pedagogy (Petty 1647; Yeo 2007, 11–17 and 2010, 190–191). Moreover, Hartlib promoted the use of artificial languages and availed the system of abbreviations of George Dalgarno (Slaughter 1982, 104–116, 120–122; Strasser 1994; Lewis 2005).

Hartlib’s program was aimed to practice: first and foremost, husbandry, as testified to by his collections of technical essays (Hartlib 1651a, b, 1653a, b, 1655, 1659) and by Plattes’s *Macaria* (Webster 1972), expounding advice for the economic improvement of England. Moreover, Hartlib supported the reform of teaching by the creation of new academies centred on technical disciplines, such as those that one can find in John Milton’s *Of Education* (Milton 1644; Raylor 1993, 2010). Husbandry was central to Hartlib’s interests as it allowed him to put into practice his Baconian method; moreover, it was a means for understanding nature, as husbandry was based on the knowledge of alchemical elements (Hartlib 1652; Matei 2012, 2013; Houston 2014, 129–132). Also, it served to the transformation of the world. That was a main ideal of Puritanism, to which Hartlib adhered (Jue 2006, 67–68). In his views, the amelioration of the world would lead to the fulfilment of the providential plan of God and to the beginning of the Millennium (Hartlib 1651c; Webster 1979; Mulsow 2001; Jue 2006, 77–84; Matei 2011; Houston 2014, 125–126). Hartlib even sponsored colonial programs as part of his project, such as those of the Huguenots Hugh L’Amy and Peter Le Pruvost (Irving 2008, 47–68; Leng 2009).

Cross-References

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- Alsted, Johann Heinrich
- Bacon, Francis

- Baconianism
- Chemistry
- Comenius, Jan Amos
- Commonplace
- Commonplace book
- Descartes, René
- Dialogue
- Economics, Renaissance
- Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural
- Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism
- Epistle in the Renaissance
- Experiment in Renaissance Science
- Haak, Theodore
- Keckermann, Bartholomaeus
- Letter in the Renaissance
- Observation in Renaissance Science
- Practical Knowledge
- Puritanism in the Renaissance
- Ramism
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- Scientific Academies in the Renaissance
- Textbook
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Hartlibius, Samuel

► [Hartlib, Samuel](#)

Hartlieb, Samuel

► [Hartlib, Samuel](#)

Harvey, William

Born: 1578, Folkestone

Died: 1657, London

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Abstract

The natural philosopher William Harvey was born in Folkestone on April 1, 1578. He studied at the Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge, and from 1597 he focused his attention on medicine. In 1599 he moved to the University of Padua, where he was enrolled in Medicine. After his graduation on April 25, 1602, he came back to London and obtained the acknowledgment of the title and the professional license in Cambridge. In 1607 he was promoted Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London, and in 1609 he was enrolled as a physician at the St. Bartholomew's Hospital. In 1618, King James I nominated Harvey as his physician. At the Royal College with the Lumleian Lectures, Harvey presented his preliminary ideas on the revolutionary theory of blood circulation that was summarized in the book *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus* (Frankfurt 1628) dedicated to his patron King Charles I. Harvey, aged 71 years, retired from public life and devoted himself entirely to his studies. In 1651 he published *De generatione animalium* where he advanced the theory of epigenesis. On June 3, 1657, at the age of 79, he died of cerebral apoplexy.

Biography

The natural philosopher William Harvey was a country boy from Kent, the first of nine children, seven males and two females, born in Folkestone on April 1, 1578, to Thomas Harvey, a yeoman wealthy merchant. Smart and curious naturalist, he was admitted to the Grammar King's School in Canterbury in 1588, the year of the Spanish "Invincible Armada," which was attacked and destroyed in the Channel just in front of Folkestone on July 29, 1588. In May 1593 William was matriculated as *pensionarius minor* at the Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge with a 6-year bursary (38 sterling per year), the first scholarship in Medicine in England instituted by the Archbishop of Canterbury Mathew Parker.

John Aubrey described William as small diminutive raven-haired, with brown piercing little eyes, pale, olivaster skin, bright, quickly speaking, and choleric (Aubrey 1898) (Fig. 1).

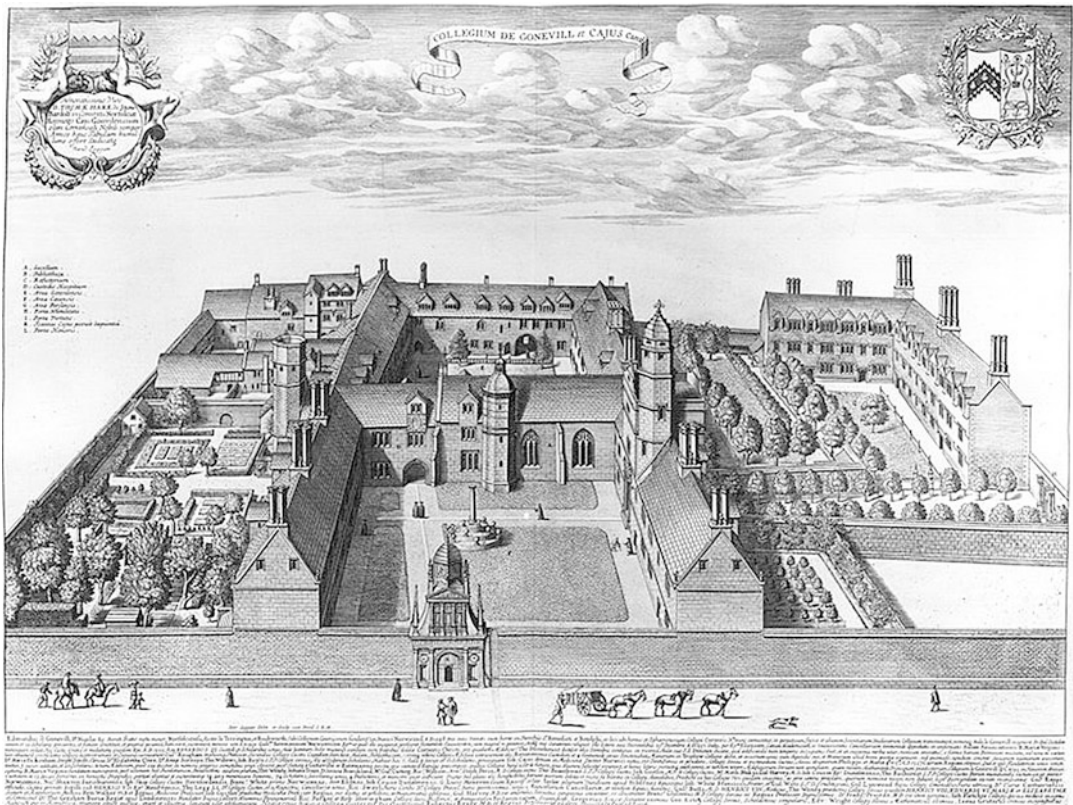
Oddly enough, William was the first-ever Folkestone Harvey to attend university. The first 3 years in Gonville and Caius College (Fig. 2) were devoted to basic knowledge (Latin, Greek, logic, philosophy, maths, astronomy, music), and the second 3 to medicine. He achieved the title of Bachelor of Arts in 1597, thus becoming a grown man. From 1597 he focused attention on medicine, which in Cambridge was still in infancy, since only two human dissections were carried out annually and no hospital was present at that time. In the summer of 1599, he was sick at home, probably with malaria. He left Cambridge heading toward the continent on October 30, 1599. Caius College statute allowed students of medicine to finish their studies abroad, so he cultivated the idea to move to the University of Padua. The story of his journey is intriguing. When Harvey showed his pass in Dover, he was detained by the governor without a special reason. During the early hours of the next day, a terrible storm ensued and all the passengers of the packet ship drowned, making William Harvey the only survivor of the company of students headed for the continent. This happened thanks to the foresight of the governor, who two nights before had seen in a dream a perfect vision of Doctor Harvey coming to pass for Calais, and notice was given to stop him.



Harvey, William, Fig. 1 William Harvey's portrait, J. Houbraken (1698–1780), London, J. and P. Knapton, 1739. This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID cph.3a09912

Harvey often told this story to his acquaintances, ascribing his good fortune to God's providence (Harvey 1875; Wright 2013).

The choice of Padua was not casual and in keeping with the tradition of illustrious members of the Royal College of Physicians, founded in 1518 by Thomas Linacre (1460–1524, graduated in Padua in 1496) upon a commitment of Henry VIII to fight the charlatans. The lure of Padua was ascribable both to the fame of anatomical studies and well-known professors (Andreas Vesalius, Realduus Columbus, Gabriel Fallopius, Hieronymus Fabricius ab Aquapendente) and to the fact that here the Catholic Church had discontinued the prohibition of the practice of human anatomical dissection of Roman memory. Furthermore, in Padua, it was possible to achieve the graduation by Anglicans, Lutherans, and Jews without the profession of



Harvey, William, Fig. 2 The Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, by David Loggan, *Cantabrigia illustrata*, Cambridge 1690. Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

the catholic faith, thanks to the freedom and tolerance guaranteed by the Venice Republic and to the imperial authority given to palatine counts to confer the title. For all these reasons, in Padua, there were more students from foreign and remote nations than in any other university of Christendom. William Harvey arrived in the mid of November 1599 and enrolled in medicine. The course lasted 4 years (3 theoretical and 1 practical), but the first 2 years were acknowledged to Harvey thanks to the bachelorship obtained in Cambridge. The faculty consisted of Cesare Cremonini and Giorgio Raguseo, professors of philosophy, Fabricius ab Aquapendente and Giulio Casseri of surgery and anatomy, Giovanni Tommaso Midano of practical medicine, and Galileo Galilei of mathematics. Harvey did not attend the lessons by Galileo, reserved for students of first–second year. The stay in Padua was entirely supported by his father, Thomas

Harvey, since the bursary of the Canterbury archbishop had expired earlier that year (?). Unlike Cambridge, which was a campus with colleges, William found accommodation with a housekeeper, together with an English colleague. Although there are no records of his university enrollment, because all of that year went lost, there are several proofs supporting the presence of Harvey in Padua. He mentioned his stage in Padua several times, and in his book on embryological topic *De generatione animalium* he acknowledged Fabricius as his guide. There are documents dated August 4, 1600, in which he appears as councilor of both *Iuristarum* and *Artistarum* Universities. For this reason, he got two coats of arms, still hanging in the ancient yard of the University of Padua and identified only in 1893. One coat of arms mimics that of Gonville and Caius College, with two snakes coiled around a candle with flame, recalling the Asclepius



Harvey, William, Fig. 3 One of the two coats of arms of William Harvey, Padova, Palazzo Bo, Cortile Antico. Photograph taken by the authors



Harvey, William, Fig. 4 Diploma of Doctor of Medicine granted by the University of Padua to William Harvey, April 25, 1602, p. 2, Royal College of Physicians, London, with permission

symbol (Fig. 3) (Ongaro 2006). On March 19, 1602, he appears officially witnessing the graduation in medicine of Thomas Herne, colleague and friend, but his attendance at the University of Padua is especially proven by his graduation diploma, signed by Fabricius, Casseri, Midanoi, and Raguseo on April 25, 1602 (Payne 1908; Marrone 2016) (Figs. 4 and 5). The original diploma was left in Harvey's testament to the King's School of Canterbury, to which he felt quite close for the grammar education and for the scholarship established by Archbishop Mathew Parker to attend superior education in the Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge, a fundamental step in his life and career. On July 1764, the original Harvey diploma was donated by the Reverend Osmund Beauvious, Dean of the King's School, to the Royal College of Physicians in London.



Harvey, William, Fig. 5 Osella with William Harvey coined in occasion of the IV centenary of his graduation in Padua

The history of the diploma bestowal to Harvey in Padua deserves some further information. In 1564, Pope Pius IV, at the end of the Trento Council with the Catholic Counter-Reformation, made mandatory the profession of faith of the university students at the time of graduation in front of the Sacred College, a statement that certainly Lutherans, Anglicans, and Jews could not honor. This obligation was bypassed by introducing in 1597 a practice according to which palatine counts, thanks to a feudal right from the time of the Sacred Roman Emperor Frederick “Barbarossa”, had the power to confer the graduation diploma in place of the catholic bishop. The Harvey final examination and disputation occurred on April 25, 1602, at the home of count Sigismondo Capodilista in the presence of the notary Francesco Refatto. Besides the aforementioned professors, the ceremony was attended, and the diploma signed, by Giuseppe Carrara, the rector of artists, a student from Brescia, and witnessed by several English students like Peter Mansell, Richard Willeby, Samuel Fox, Mathew Lister, Anthony Fortescue, and Robert Durcey. To prevent complications by crossing the border, on the same day April 25, 1602, the notary released a document stating that, before the final examination, William Harvey swore faith to the Roman Catholic Church. This avoided the risk of the Inquisition, which quite recently, in February 1600, had sent Giordano Bruno to the stake.

By serendipity, during those years, Fabricius ab Aquapendente (1533–1619) was carrying out observations on venous valves that resulted in the publication of *De venarum ostioliis* in 1603. He first described these tiny anatomical structures in 1574 in large veins, something that was missed by previous anatomists like Andreas Vesalius and Leonardo da Vinci. However, despite the valves being similar to the sigmoid valves at the root of the great arteries, Fabricius erroneously interpreted them as little doors, slowing blood in its centrifugal flow according to the Galen theory. The venous valves were called *ostioli* (small gates), to slow down the tide of the natural spirit (venous blood) from the liver to the periphery, as to avoid excessive congestion in the limbs and deviate blood laterally to favor tissue perfusion.

Harvey pursued an opposite interpretation, namely a role to hinder the backward blood return during its centripetal direction. Harvey, later in his life, confided to his close friend Robert Boyle that, while investigating the blood movement, he was inspired by the venous valves first observed by Fabricius ab Aquapendente (Boyle 1722, vol. 5, 427). This is clear-cut proof that the idea of blood circulation was conceived when Harvey was a student in Padua. By the way, Harvey will publish in his *De motu cordis* an illustration quite similar to that published by Fabricius in *De venarum ostioliis*.

When back to London, the first step was to accomplish the acknowledgment of his Paduan graduation in Cambridge and get his professional license. With the advent of the Royal College of Physicians in 1518, it was also mandatory to be enrolled as a fellow in order to practice medicine in London and its surroundings. The examination was sustained by Harvey on May 4, 1603, and April 2 and August 7, 1604, with the license pursued on October 5, 1604.

In 1607 Harvey was promoted to Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and on February 25, 1609, enrolled as an assistant physician to Dr. Wilkinson at the St. Bartholomew’s Hospital for sick poor people (200 beds) and the year after as a physician. Meanwhile, on November 24, 1604, he had married the daughter of Queen Elizabeth Archiater, Elizabeth Brown, who died in 1645 without children. On February 3, 1618, King James I nominated Harvey as his physician.

At the Royal College, Harvey’s credibility and colleagues’ trust increased with time. On August 4, 1615, he was committed *ad vitam* to deliver Lumleian Lectures, six per year. These lectures had been established in 1582 by Lord Lumley, a surgeon with a huge library. The first three lectures were held by Harvey on April 16, 17, and 18, 1616. He presented his preliminary ideas on the theory of blood circulation, skilled with knives as with words. In the lecture of April 17, 1616, he postulated that the blood goes to the lungs and then to the left ventricle and the aorta in a perpetual movement, clearly accepting the existence of pulmonary blood circulation as advanced by the Spanish Miguel Serveto (1511–1553) and



Harvey, William, Fig. 6 Harvey shows a dissected fawn heart to King Charles I and the young prince James. Painting by Robert Hannah, 1848. Royal College of Physicians, London. Photograph taken by the authors

proved through vivisection by Realdus Columbus (1516–1559) in Padua. With the Lumleian Lectures, Harvey anticipated the fundamental concepts which will be at the base of his theory.

Thanks to vivisection in animals (Fig. 6), Harvey established that (1) with cardiac systole and raising the cardiac apex (*mucronis erectio*) the blood goes from the heart to the arteries, (2) arterial pulse is caused by cardiac systole and not by innate pulsative faculty of the arteries, (3) the diastole of the arteries coincides with the cardiac systole, (4) the pulse begins from the auricles and progresses to the tip of the heart, (5) there is a perpetual blood transit from the vena cava to the aorta through the lungs, and (6) there is a blood-stream from arteries to veins, thus circulation is rendered perpetual.

Harvey repeated Fabricius experiment of ligation of the arm. Ligating his servant's arm to swell the veins, he confirmed that blood was indeed

prevented from flowing downward by little gates, no matter was the pushing he extended with his fingers. Harvey deduced that the *ostiola* must function like valves, encouraging the blood flow within the veins in an upward direction from the extremity to the center, namely, to the heart.

The content of Lumleian Lectures was summarized in the book *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus*, published in 1628 in Frankfurt and dedicated to his patron King Charles I. The book became a cornerstone in the history of science and was several times reprinted in the continent of Europe (Fig. 7). Chapter VIII is very important for the innovative idea of blood circulation. Harvey compares his theory of the blood movement with that of Aristotle of the atmosphere movement: the heart is the origin of the life, the source of the innate heat, and the sun of the microcosm (*cor microcosmi sol*) like the sun is the source of the life and of the

EXERCITATIO,
ANATOMICA DE
MOTU CORDIS ET SAN-
GVINIS IN ANIMALI-
BVS,
GVILIELMI HARVEI ANGLI,
Medici Regii, & Professoris Anatomie in Col-
legio Medicorum Londinensi.



FRANCOFVRTI,
Sumptibus GVILIELMI FITZERI.
ANNO M. DC. XXVIII.

Harvey, William, Fig. 7 William Harvey, *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus*, Frankfurt, Wilhelm Fitzer, 1628, title page. Available at the Royal College Surgeons of Edinburgh

innate heat in the macrocosm (Pagel 1976). These statements recall the words used in the dedicatory letter to Charles I: the heart is the sun of the microcosm as the King is the sun of the kingdom. Since then Charles I was known as “the sun-heart king.” The link with King Charles will become with time tighter and tighter, and they will share a similar fate of decline.

Harvey’s innovative idea was summarized by one of the final statements in Chapter 14: “It is necessary to conclude that there is a circular, perpetual movement of the blood in the animals” (Harvey 1628, 58; Whitteridge 1971; Cunningham 1988; French 1994).

One may wonder why this only 72 pages book written in Latin was published in Frankfurt, already at that time the capital for book printing. Most probably to avoid reactions against his

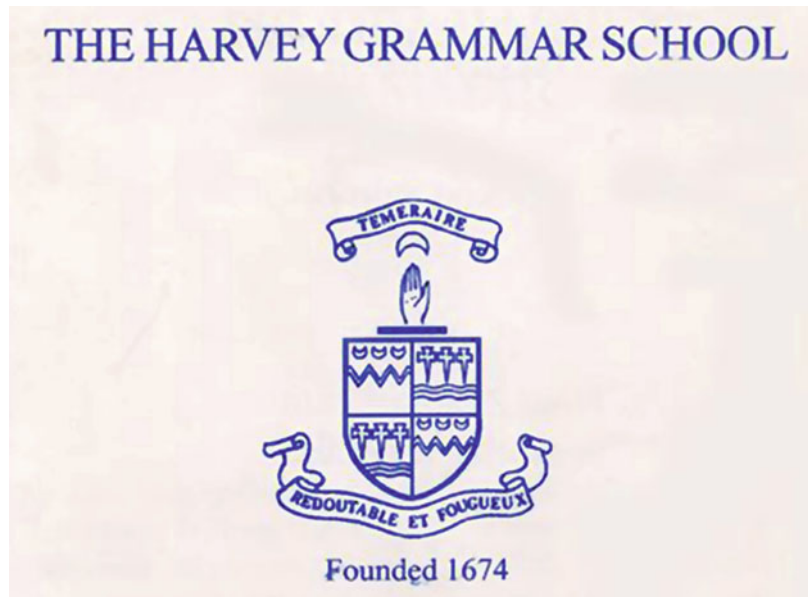
heretic theory, which could negatively influence his profession. He published in the continent not to draw much attention in England and to avoid endorsement of the Royal College so thoroughly conservative and Galenic. The first English version of *De motu cordis* by an anonymous and not very trustworthy translator was published in 1653 by Richard Lowndes.

Anatomists in favor described Harvey’s theory as “elegant,” “neat,” “simple,” uniform,” “consistent,” “harmonious,” “beautiful,” and “make sense” (Wright 2012, 191). However, overall the impact was negative and compromised his reputation as a physician, since he was considered “cracked mind.” Also, the academy in Europe was very critical, in defense of Galen’s omniscience. Harvey had a dense foreign correspondence, which at that time was the equivalent of letters to the editor, and found a lot of hostility in the medical world (Mitchell 1912; Hamburger 1992).

In 1636 Sir Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, organized an official mission in Germany with Harvey. At the University of Altdorf, Harvey performed an autopsy and vivisection in front of the faculty. Professor of Medicine Gaspar Hoffman, a friend and former student with him in Padua, was skeptical of the new theory. The controversy culminated in 1649 when the French physician Jean Riolan (1580–1657), professor of anatomy and dean of the faculty in Paris, who had published in 1648 the book *Encheiridium anatomicum et pathologicum*, rejected the new theory (Riolan 1648). Harvey defended strongly his discovery in a smaller book that was published in Rotterdam in the form of two essays under the title *Exercitationes duae anatomicae de circulatione sanguinis* (Harvey 1649).

Meanwhile, the political situation in England became critical and turbulent and culminated in a civil war, ignited by Oliver Cromwell. The house of Harvey, known as “royalist,” was sacked in Whitehall and his patrimony of books and unpublished notes destroyed, a loss of which Harvey suffered a lot. He lost his position as a physician at the St. Bartholomew’s Hospital and escaped with King Charles I to Oxford, where he

Harvey, William,
Fig. 8 Logo of the Harvey
 Grammar School in
 Folkestone



was nominated dean of the Merton College. Eventually, on June 1645, Oxford surrendered, and Cromwell took over the rule by establishing a sort of republic. King Charles was placed under arrest and condemned to death by decapitation at Whitehall on January 30, 1649.

Harvey, aged 71 years, retired from public life and devoted himself entirely to his studies (Keynes 1966). He had been for years attracted by embryology, a topic that was of particular interest to his mentor Fabricius, who in 1604 had published the book *De formato foetu*. In 1651, at the age of 73, Harvey published *De generatione animalium* where he advanced the revolutionary theory of epigenesis, namely, the gradual development of the embryo from an undifferentiated egg (*ex ovo omnia*, “everything comes from the egg”), questioning the existing theory of preformed embryo since the beginning (Harvey 1651). By the way he questioned the spontaneous generation. However, the fertilization of the egg by male semen remained still unresolved until the invention and use of the microscope (Pagel 1967).

Eventually, in 1653 he was offered the presidency of the Royal College, which he declined,

giving up also the Lumleian Lectures. He asked to be excused from the offices on the grounds of infirmity and age. On June 3, 1657, at the age of 79, Harvey died of cerebral apoplexy, most probably cerebral embolism by atrial fibrillation. He was buried at Hampstead, Essex, in the family chapel of St. Andrew Church, built by the brother Eliah, curator of his testament. Among the various wills, William left a huge grant to set up a grammar school in Folkestone that was opened in 1674. A grammar school was missing at the time of his childhood, and he was forced to move to Canterbury to attend the King’s School at the tender age of 10, far from his family with inherent emotional implications. Since then the school is named the Harvey Grammar School, and it is still in action (Fig. 8).

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Hasištejnský z Lobkovic, Bohuslav

Born: 1461, Hasištejn Castle near Kadaň, Bohemia
Died: 1510, Hasištejn Castle near Kadaň, Bohemia

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Abstract

Bohuslav Hasištejnský of Lobkowitz was a Czech humanist, well-known Latin poet, and philosopher. He spent most of his life in his castle Hasištejn (Hassenstein) in Northern Bohemia where he pursued humanist studies. He wrote several philosophical works, among which *De miseria humana* (Hasištejnský z Lobkovic 1563) is the most significant. Its focus on the immortality of the human soul without reference to resurrection indicates the influence of contemporary Florentine Platonism, specifically Marsilio Ficino's thought. He also assembled a collection of manuscripts and books known as the Bohuslav Hasištejnský of Lobkowitz' Library in his castle. This library was comparable with the best private libraries in Central Europe of that time.

Alternate Names

[Hassensteinius a Lobkowitz](#), [Bohuslaus Baro](#); [Lobkowicz von Hassenstein](#), [Bohuslaus](#)

Biography

A nobleman of the originally Hussite-oriented Lobkowitz family, Bohuslav Hasištejnský studied in Bologna and Ferrara where he became a devout Catholic. In 1482 he became a doctor of Canon Law. Although not a priest, after his return home Bohuslav applied for the position of Bishop of Olomouc and later for the position of auxiliary bishop in Wrocław, although with no determined ambition. He achieved neither position and held no public function until his death, with the exception of his short stay at King Vladislaus's court in Buda. When not traveling (he visited Syria, Palestine, and Egypt), he spent time pursuing humanist studies; his Latin poetry was positively received, even abroad, at that time. He also produced short philosophical tractates dealing mostly with ethical issues. He assembled a collection of manuscripts and books comparable to those held by significant private libraries of his time in Central Europe. Although the castle Hasištejn started turning to ruins quite shortly after Bohuslav's death, his library collection remained preserved. Moreover, it has been recently described and reconstructed by K. Boldan and E. Urbánková so that it now closely corresponds to its original state.

Philosophy

Like many other humanists, Bohuslav Hasištejnský was not specifically concerned with theoretical philosophy. When asked to give his opinion on the philosophical writing *Microcosmos* (now lost), produced by his friend, the Czech nobleman Jan Šlechta ze Všehrd, Bohuslav replied in his letter of 8 May 1501 that theoretical philosophy is a subject inappropriate for a nobleman dealing with state affairs. Bohuslav was partly interested in ethical issues that are included in several of his writings, among which the tractate *De miseria humana* (ed. princeps: Prague, 1563) is the most significant. Here, the author describes the hardships that a man of any status, age, or occupation has to face. Only the eternal life of the immortal soul brings real beatitude, according to the author. From the philosophical perspective, Bohuslav's specific focus on the immortality of

the human soul, as expressed briefly at the end of his *De miseria humana*, seems to indicate the influence of contemporary Florentine Platonism. Several implicit quotations of Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation of Plato's works also indicate Bohuslav's inspiration from this Florentine Platonist (whose writings are, after all, well represented in Bohuslav's library). Similar to Ficino, Bohuslav pays no specific attention to resurrection (without denying it, of course). After its first edition (1563), *De miseria humana* became an esteemed text; nevertheless recognized by Latinists rather than by philosophers or theologians.

Otherwise, *De miseria humana* develops the old theme of human misery popular among numerous Renaissance authors. Bohuslav's influence on later Czech writings dealing with similar themes (N. Vodňanský of Uračov, J. A. Komenský, H. Hirnhaim) is not probable. Vodňanský's work *Theatrum mundi* (Prague, 1605), e.g., relates to Pierre Boaistuau's *Le theatre du monde* (Paris, 1558) rather than to Bohuslav's *De miseria humana*.

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Hassensteinius a Lobkowitz, Bohuslaus Baro

► [Hasištejnský z Lobkovic, Bohuslav](#)

Hayyim ben Israel

► [Israel of Toledo](#)

Heat in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

The term “heat” originates from the Old English word *hætu*, a word of Germanic origin; related to the Dutch “hitte” and German “Hitze.” Today, we distinguish three different meanings of the word “heat.” First, “heat” is understood in colloquial English as “hotness.” There are, in addition, two scientific meanings for “heat.” “Heat” can have the meaning of the portion of energy that changes with a change

in temperature. And finally, “heat” can have the meaning of the transfer of thermal energy from a hotter to a colder system or body.

By contrast, for the Ancients and Scholastics, “heat” was a manifest, real quality of bodies and there was an ontological distinction between biological or innate heat (which was regarded as an innate principle of life for warm-blooded animals) and the physical manifest heat of external objects, which is potentially harmful. During the late Renaissance period, however, both views changed fundamentally and evolved – via the application of physical and mechanical analogies – into the foundations for today’s unified mechanistic theory of heat.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Heat as a Principle of Nature

In the sixteenth century, several innovators began to criticize the Aristotelian philosophy that had dominated the middle ages. Several *novatores* started to criticize hylomorphism and argued that nature had to be explained by its own principles. Heat was considered to be one of these principles. For instance, Bernardino Telesio (2015) launched an attack on mediaeval Aristotelianism and argued, instead of postulating matter and form, that existence is based on matter and force (Boenke 2013). According to the author of *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia* (1565), this force has two opposing, active principles: heat (which expands) and cold (which contracts). These two processes account for all the diverse forms and types of existence. Other *novatores* such as Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) – who was an admirer of Telesio – also distinguished the two contrary forces: heat and cold. Tomasso Campanella (1591) rejected the fundamental Aristotelian principle of hylomorphism (Ernst 2014) and adopted instead Telesio’s understanding of reality in terms of the principles of matter, heat, and cold, which he combined with Neoplatonic ideas derived from Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499).

Innate Heat of Warm-Blooded Animals

For the early Greek medical and philosophical writers, innate heat became the single most

important power in the animal system (Mendelsohn 1964). It was responsible for all essential functions such as generation and growth. For Aristotle, the source of internal warmth is in the heart (or in a corresponding organ in creatures that do not have a heart) and heat is treated as the source of life and of all its powers: nutrition, sensation, movement, and thought. Moreover, the conservation of innate heat coincided with life, and its destruction with death. Plato, however, restricted the influence that vital heat had on life and death. The author of the *Timaeus* made sure that the sphere of the psyche was not affected by the vital heat or lack of it.

For more than 1500 years Claudius Galenus (AD 131 – c. 201/c. 206) (Galenus 1991) dominated Western medical theory. During the renaissance, Vesalius and others translated many of his Greek texts into Latin. For Hippocrates (c. 460 – c. 370 BC) good health was the result of an equilibrium between four *humores*. Galenus (Galenus 1991) linked these *humores*, however, to four basic qualities: heat, cold, moist, and dry. Galen's conception of innate heat shares a great deal with the formulations in the works of other Greek physicians and philosophers. Heat is considered to be inherent in the body, its origin unclear, but closely tied to life itself. Ibn Sina, better known as Avicenna (2014), was strongly influenced by Galen (Siraisi 2016). The author of the *Canon of Medicine* [*Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb*] identified internal heat with vitality and differentiated it from foreign or external heat which is harmful to bodily heat. Likewise, in the early sixteenth century, Jean Fernel (1548) argued that there is a distinction in nature between the innate heat of living organisms and fire. The sphere of the stars was the source of innate heat. Therefore, innate heat was not derived from fire but from quintessence or aether, thus resembling the heat of the sun. Aristotle (Aristotle 1984) had made a similar point in *De generatione animalium*.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, early scientists such as William Harvey, René Descartes, and Jan Baptist van Helmont started to think about biological heat differently as a result of new discoveries. They became more

and more convinced that biological phenomena such as biological heat could be explained by the same theories that concern processes in the nonliving world. This approach had, in a sense, already been anticipated by Galen (Galenus 1991) who compared the production of heat from foods to the process of combustion as it occurs outside the body. However, this vision only reached its definitive breakthrough during the seventeenth century thanks to the emerging science.

In his masterpiece *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (1543), Vesalius (1514–1561) gave a detailed description of the anatomy of a human being. William Harvey (1578–1657) was the first known to describe completely the circulation of blood. During his lifetime, the English physician developed a different vision of the role of heat in living organisms. Harvey no longer considered the heart to be the source of blood's innate heat. Moreover, the author of *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals* (1628) did not truly seek a real explanation or cause for it. The experimental philosopher linked internal heat closely with blood. Heat had no existence apart from blood just as blood without heat is no longer blood. In other words, heat was reduced to one of blood's important properties.

Descartes (1596–1650) supported Harvey's theory (Harvey 1995) of the circulation of blood but differed fundamentally in his view of the motion of the heart. Descartes developed a theory that posits an intense heat in the heart. According to Descartes, the heart is a kind of container in which the blood is heated. The French philosopher argued that blood entering the ventricles of the heart, drop by drop, was caused “to expand and dilate, as liquids usually do when they are allowed to fall drop by drop into some very hot vessel.” Subsequently, the blood expands and rarefies and is driven through the aorta into the arterial system. Descartes (Descartes 1998, 2017) treated the human body as a machine powered by the intense heat maintained in the heart, which he considered to be the motor or source of that heat. Remarkably, the concept of heat utilized by Descartes is similar to the concept of innate heat proposed by Aristotle.

The iatrochemists of the seventeenth century tried to apply chemical theory to various individual phenomena. Jan Baptist van Helmont (1580–1644) for instance, argued that heat is not an inherent quality of the living organism and that consequently heat cannot not be the cause of vital phenomena. The Flemish chemist stated that heat can generate nothing but heat. In his *Oriatrike or Physick Refined* (1662), he asked how cold-blooded animals could live if food was digested by virtue of the body's internal heat? The Flemish chemist, physiologist, and physician claimed that the heat in the heart is caused by a process of fermentation, similar to processes in the non-organic world, and he suggested that digestion was aided by a chemical reagent, or “ferment,” within the body. Consequently, heat became external to the body and the cause of heat was understood in a similar way to other fermentation processes which occur outside the body.

Innovative and Original Aspects

External Heat of Bodies Versus Heat as an Affection

For Galileo (1960), hotness itself was not an observable, manifest quality. On the contrary, as the author of the *Dialogo* (1632) explains in paragraph 48 of his *Assayer* [*Il Saggiatore*] (1623) what we call hotness is an affection or a sensation of the body that the mind senses. In this polemic work, Galileo introduced his well-known distinction between primary properties and secondary qualities such as heat (Buyse 2015). In this work, Galileo defines a body as a piece of matter and he emphasizes that primary properties are closely linked to that matter, thereby rejecting the peripatetic concept based on matter and form as well as all sorts of occult qualities (which were so important for renaissance philosophers). Secondary qualities, by contrast, are not properties of bodies-in-themselves.

Heat was for Galileo the paradigmatic example of a so-called secondary quality. “Heat” was for Galileo not a “real attribute, property, and quality

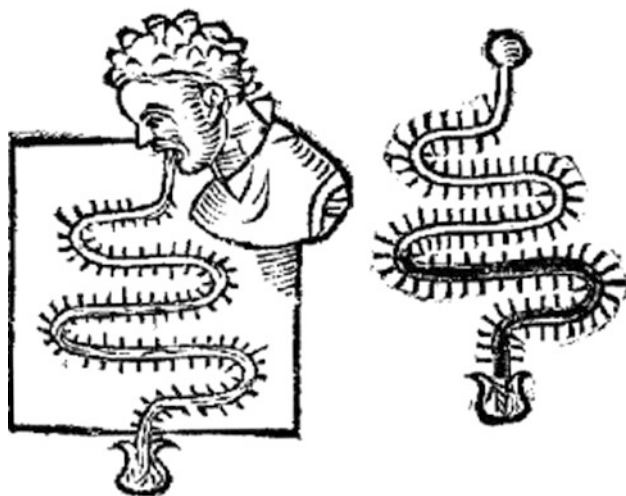
that truly inheres in the material by which we feel warmed.” But, what is the nature of heat then and how is it produced in us? According to the author of the *Discorsi* (1638), secondary qualities such as heat which are “considered to be qualities inherent in external objects, do not really have any existence except in us, and that outside of us they are nothing but names. Now I say that I am inclined to believe that heat is of this kind. The materials which produce heat in us and make us feel it, and which we call by the general name fire, are large collections of tiny corpuscles shaped in such and such manner and moving with such and such a speed; when they meet our body, they penetrate it because of their extremely small size. Their contact, which they make as they pass through our bodily substance and which we feel, is the property we call heat. . . .” Obviously, Galileo's view on heat here bears the influence of atomists such as Epicurus and Lucretius whose work *De Rerum Natura* (Lucretius 2014) had been rediscovered in January 1417 and brought to wide public attention by Poggio Bracciolini (Greenblatt 2012) via a medieval copy.

Heat as a Motion of Parts

Francis Bacon (1996) too defined “heat” in terms of motion: “Heat itself, its essence and quiddity is motion and nothing else.” Later, in 1661, Robert Boyle stated in his definition of Mechanical Philosophy (or Corpuscular Philosophy), which he included in the preface of his *Physiological Essays* (1661), that all natural phenomena had to be explained by means of two general principles: motion and matter. Consequently, very basically, there is no heat in nature. There is only matter and motion. Boyle's definition expressed very well how most of his contemporaries thought about qualities such as heat (Boyle 1675). Generally speaking, atomists as well as Cartesians explained “heat” in terms of the motion of tiny corpuscles. Robert Hooke for instance, wrote: “Heat being nothing else but a brisk and vehement agitation of the parts of a body.” We find similar ideas in Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and other early modern philosophers.

Heat in Renaissance

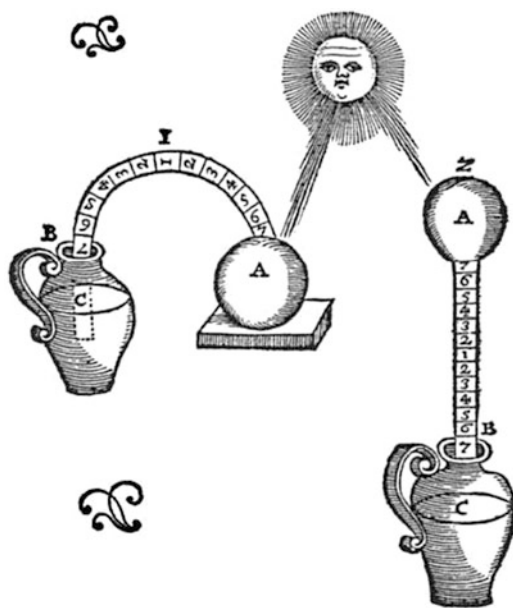
Science, Fig. 1 The Paduan professor and medicine Santorio Santorio adapted his thermometer – which had a scale and a sensor – to his medical practice and used it for measurement of the body temperature of his patients. This illustration is included on page 307–308 of Santorio’s *Opera* (1660)



Qualitative and Quantitative Measurement of Heat

For the Ancients and Scholastics, heat was considered to be a manifest quality opposed to the contrary quality cold and linked to one of the five elements, namely, fire. For Galileo, by contrast, heat is an affection which entails interaction. However, an affection is subjective. Indeed, person A can experience something as being hot while at the same time person B feels it to be cold. How can this problem of subjectivity be overcome? Galileo addressed this problem. Instead of using the affection of a human body in order to study the presence of heat, the Italian physicist used a gas tube (Mach 2013). By observing the effect that an affecting body had on the volume of air in the tube, he could measure the “hotness” of the body with which it was in contact in a much more objective way. Moreover, he could compare it with the “hotness” of other bodies. Galileo’s air thermoscope was a first attempt at what later would become a thermometer used for measuring the temperature of a physical object (Valleriani 2010).

According to several sources (Middleton 1966), Galileo might have invented the thermoscope while he was a professor at Padua. However, other sources argue that rather the physiologist and physician Santorio Santorio (1561–1636) had developed the first thermoscope [*thermoscopium*], which he used for medical



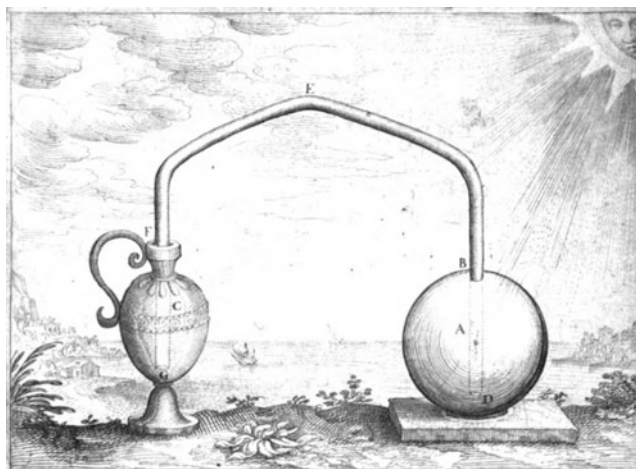
Heat in Renaissance Science, Fig. 2 Fludd’s figure showing on the left Philo’s thermometer and on the right his own thermometer. This illustration is included on the second page of his *Philosophia moysaica* (1638)

diagnoses. It is probably more correct, though, to argue that the invention of the thermoscope was the result of scientific activities which took place around 1610 in Padua (Fig. 1).

However, it is important to notice that other natural philosophers also developed similar thermoscopes for measuring of heat during the same period. For instance, Giuseppe Biancani

Heat in Renaissance

Science, Fig. 3 Fludd's figure of Philo's thermometer, which he included on page 204 of the second volume of his *Utriusque* (1617–1624)



H

(1566–1624) included an illustration of a thermometer in his *Sphaera mundi* (1620). In 1611, there already existed a thermoscope with a scale or a thermometer, designed by Bartolomeo Telioux, which could be used for quantitative instead of qualitative measurements of heat (Chaldecott 1952). And, also Robert Fludd (1574–1637) claimed to have invented the air thermometer. Furthermore, in the seventeenth century, numerous authors regarded Cornelis Drebbel (1572–1633) as the inventor of the thermometer.

The newly designed gasthermometer designed by Galileo, Santorio, and the other contemporaries that have been mentioned were gasthermometers based on a principle that was known at the time and which goes back to Philo of Byzantium (c.280–220 BC) and Hero of Alexandria (c.10 AD–c.70 AD). Hero's *Pneumatica* (Heron 1971) which was known by Santorio and by Galileo. It had appeared in Latin translation in 1575 and in Italian translation in 1589. Furthermore, it is likely that Fludd had access to twelfth- or thirteenth-century manuscripts of Philo's work (Middleton 1966; Taylor 1942). Obviously, Fludd designed his gasthermometer based on Philo's experiment, as his illustrations make clear (Figs. 2 and 3).

Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591–1655), however, in his *Ma'yan Ganim* (1629) compares the gas thermometer, which he learned about as a student at Padua, with another type of thermometer which is closer to the kind thermometer which

we use today: the liquid-in-glass thermometer (Adler 1997). This thermometer was provided with a scale and was designed on the basis of a different principle than Philo's gas thermometer. Interestingly, Galileo's ex-student described this type of thermometer in a text probably written as early as 1621 and published in 1629, even adding an illustration of this type of thermometer. This is more than 30 years before the sealed thermometer designed by Ferdinand II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who is often credited with the invention of this type of thermometer (Adler 1997).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Atomism in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Fludd, Robert](#)
- ▶ [Galenus, Claudius](#)
- ▶ [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- ▶ [Harvey, William](#)
- ▶ [Innate Heat](#)
- ▶ [Life in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Sanctorius](#)
- ▶ [Vesalius, Andreas](#)

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Hebrew into Latin Translations in Renaissance Italy

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Abstract

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a new wave of translations emerged, consisting of Hebrew-into-Latin translations of the Aristotelian commentaries of Averroes. These new translations, produced mostly by Jewish authors who had command of both Hebrew and Latin, were commissioned by renowned Italian patrons. They were bound to improve, replace, or add to the current corpus of Averroes' commentaries available during the Renaissance.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The commentaries of the twelfth-century Muslim philosopher and religious thinker Averroes (*Ibn Rušd*, 1126–1198) on the works of Aristotle were immensely influential during the Middle Ages in the Latin West. In addition to his original philosophical treatises, Averroes wrote commentaries on almost the entire corpus of Aristotle and on themes ranging from logic to physics, metaphysics, and theology. During the Renaissance, especially in Italy, Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle became the focal point of heated debates among philosophers and theologians, particularly regarding Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle's theory of intellect (Renan 2001; Hasse 2004). In certain academic and intellectual circles of the Italian Renaissance, Averroes became the supreme philosophical authority, second only to Aristotle. For others, however, Averroes and his Latin followers (*averroistas*) became coterminous with heretical views, opposed to the true Catholic faith (2007).

A manifestation of Averroes' centrality during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the publication of Aristotle's works accompanied by

Averroes' commentaries, a printing enterprise which began in Italy in 1472 in Padua and continued throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Cranz 1976; Burnett 2013). These editions, which during that period were printed mostly in Venice, contained not only those commentaries of Averroes that were known to the medieval authors but also new translations, commissioned by prominent Renaissance figures such as Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and Domenico Grimani (1461–1523). These new translations were made not from the Arabic source, but from Hebrew versions of Averroes' commentaries, available to Jewish translators in Italy during the Renaissance. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as the Averroist translation movement of the Italian Renaissance (Hasse 2016; Wolfson 1963).

The translation movement was motivated by two factors. First, not all the commentaries by Averroes were translated into Latin during the Middle Ages; hence not all were available to the Latin readership. In addition, many of the Averroes' translations that were produced during the Middle Ages did not satisfy the literary tastes of the Renaissance era, in which, under the growing influence of Humanist literary conventions, hostility was manifested toward the Latin-scholastic style and terminology characteristic of the medieval translations (Hasse 2016, 69–70, 342; Di Donati 2013, 28–29; Wolfson 1963, 89–90). The translators who were involved in this movement included Elijah Del Medigo (1460–1493), Paolo Ricci (1480–1541), Jacob Mantino (1490–1549), Calo Calonymos ben David (1480?–1526), Abraham De Balmes (1460–1523), Giovanni Burana (d. before 1523), Vitalis Nisso (d. ?), and an anonymous translator (who translated middle commentary of Averroes' *De anima*) (Di Donati 2013, 31; Engel 2017; Hasse 2016, 343; Licata 2013). In addition to his commentaries, the translations also translated from Hebrew into Latin original compositions by Averroes on philosophy and religion, as well as some of his medical works. At times, the translators also accompanied their translations with explanatory works (Engel 2017; Licata 2013).

Among the works translated were Averroes' commentaries on the *Physics* (De Balmes, Mantino), *Metaphysics* (Del Medigo, Ricci),

Meteorology (Del Medigo), *On the Soul* (De Balmes), *Posterior Analytics* (De Balmes, Mantino, Burana), *Poetics* (De Balmes), *Rhetoric* (De Balmes), and other commentaries on logic and natural philosophy. Among the original compositions by Averroes translated during the Renaissance were the *Incoherence of the Incoherence* (De Blames), the *Decisive Treatise* (Calonymos), and the *Colliget* (Mantino).

The translation movement involved the activity of printers, university professors, humanist scholars, and other cultural agents (Hasse 2016, 71). Jewish scholars in Italy were thus given a pivotal role as purveyors of philosophical knowledge, neutralized of religious affiliation, based on their linguistic skills and familiarity with the philosophical sources, rather than their religious affiliation (Engel 2017, 5–31).

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Hedone

► [Pleasure in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Heidenheim, Johannes von

► [Trithemius, Johannes](#)

Heliocentrism

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Abstract

In 1543, Nicolas Copernicus published his *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, in which he proposed a radical reordering of the celestial order that put the Sun at the center of planetary motion. The proposal was a profound departure from the prevailing geocentric cosmology in the sixteenth century, which was largely based on Aristotelian physics and Ptolemaic astronomy. While the significance of heliocentrism for the history of science cannot be overstated, astronomy both before and after Copernicus has a long and complex history that provides essential context for understanding the significance of his heliocentric turn.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

For centuries, astronomers had developed and debated different mathematical models that best described the observed motions of the planets, but they had remained firmly committed to the Earth's centrality and immobility. The stationary Earth formed both the literal and metaphorical center of an Aristotelian cosmology. Aristotle's cosmology was based on the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire. These elements were arranged with the heaviest elements placed at the center of the universe and the lighter elements further from the center. The celestial realm was made up of a fifth element, the ether, which was perfect and incorruptible. Motion in the ether by celestial bodies was thus uniform and circular. As a cosmological arrangement, the Earth was at the center of motion and was surrounded by the Sun, then the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Each planet and the two luminaries were embedded in crystalline spheres and moved in perfect circles around the Earth at different speeds from east to west. The sphere of the fixed stars, the outermost sphere, moved from west to east.

In the second century, Claudius Ptolemy developed a series of planetary models that described these motions in great detail. In order to account for these motions, including retrograde motion and variations in speed, Ptolemy introduced a set of mathematical tools. These tools, known as epicycles and eccentrics, were essentially circles dancing around different centers of motion. In his masterwork the *Almagest* and in his *Planetary Hypotheses*, Ptolemy strove to retain Aristotle's central tenet of uniform, perfect circular motion but was not entirely successful. However, the models accounted for planetary motion to a high degree of accuracy and enabled astronomers to construct planetary tables and predict planetary positions.

Ptolemy's models remained intact for centuries, until his Greek texts were translated into Arabic in Baghdad in the eighth and ninth centuries along with several other important

Greek works, including the Aristotelian oeuvre. As Islamic astronomers encountered and reconstructed the great works of Ptolemy and Aristotle, they noticed several incompatibilities of Greek astronomy and cosmology, including many specific problems with Ptolemy's models, and set to work developing new models that sought to reconcile observed planetary motion with a "real," i.e., Aristotelian, description of the physical universe. Islamic astronomers produced several highly sophisticated and novel solutions to the various problems in Ptolemy's models.

One of the main issues Islamic astronomers desired to rectify concerned the notion of uniform, circular motion. Ptolemy had introduced a point, known as the "equant," which served as the center for planetary motion. The equant point was especially problematic because it violated the Aristotelian principle of uniform circular motion. Several Islamic astronomers grappled with this problem and proposed various solutions. These included Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Ibn al-Shatir, and Ali Qushji. Indeed, the astronomical discipline known as "hay'a," often translated as "configuration," centered on the project of producing a celestial configuration that preserved Aristotelian principles. These Islamic astronomers are important because recent scholarship has acknowledged that it was highly likely that Copernicus had come into contact with their work, either in manuscript form or through oral discussion.

In Europe in the fifteenth century, scholars had also been made aware of the problems with Ptolemy's astronomy and in particular its incompatibility with Aristotle's cosmology. For centuries, European scholars had benefitted from the work of Islamic astronomers translated from Arabic into Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By the fifteenth century, European astronomers sought to improve Ptolemy's models but were still very much working within Ptolemy's framework. For example, rather than developing novel models of their own, texts centered on clarifying and resolving Ptolemy's models. Examples include Georg Peurbach's *Theorica novae planetarum* and

Regiomontanus's *Epitome of the Almagest*. In this respect, the Copernican context must acknowledge both the Islamic tradition of *hay'a* and that of European astronomy of the fifteenth century.

Heliocentrism was certainly one of the greatest ruptures in Renaissance thought, but the reasons behind Copernicus's reordering of the planetary order are still debated among scholars. A key element of the fifteenth-century context that very much informed the Copernican context was astrology. Scholars have proposed that Copernicus, while he does not explicitly mention astrological concerns anywhere in his writings, was very much responding to astronomical problems that had been generated by astrological concerns. The need for more accurate astrological predictions and even methods is apparent in the work of Regiomontanus and especially his *Tabulae directionum et projectionum*. The other astrological concern was the question of planetary order, which was of special interest to Copernicus. Whether Copernicus's interest in planetary order was strictly astronomical or had astrological motives is debated, but there is no doubt about his remarkable astronomical innovations.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The humanist reading of classical authors during the Renaissance creates a fine line between heritage and innovation. Certain aspects of "heritage" – such as Ptolemy's models and Aristotle's physics – were called into question, while other aspects of Greek thought were brought to light, especially through an interest in Platonic and Neoplatonic writings. One important example of this phenomenon is the influence of the late Antique author (5th c. CE) Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis philologiae et mercurii* (*On the marriage of Philology and Mercury*) on Copernicus's heliocentrism. Capella presents in his eighth book an astronomical arrangement with the Earth at the center of motion for the moon, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Sun but has Mercury and Venus orbiting the Sun. Copernicus

cites *De nuptiis* in the Book I of *De revolutionibus* and also hints at several of his other motivations. Scholars agree on many of these, which include divinely inspired harmony and symmetry, humanist principles related to Platonism and Neoplatonism.

Several scholars have also concluded that Copernicus was concerned with the problem of the "equant" and its violation of uniform, circular motion and that heliocentrism was a solution to the "equant" problem. Indeed, several sixteenth-century astronomers acknowledged this achievement. However, Islamic astronomers had been able to develop several mathematical models to solve the problem while retaining a geocentric arrangement. For many modern scholars, eliminating the equant is not a sufficient explanation for such a dramatic cosmological rearrangement.

Copernicus first considered the notion of the Earth's motion around the Sun in a manuscript that circulated among his contemporaries known as the *Commentariolus*, which was written about 1510. From an astronomical perspective, Copernicus was very much concerned with Ptolemy's cosmic arrangement of "nested" spheres, i.e., spheres embedded within each other that left no empty space, and the cosmic distances between planets that this spherical arrangement generated.

The planetary distances posed a distinct challenge. Ancient authors, including Vitruvius and Ptolemy, were aware of a period-distance relationship where the periods of motion of the planets were longer the further the planet's distance was from the center of motion, the Earth. This worked for the outer planets, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, but failed for the Sun, Mercury, and Venus, which according to the geocentric system all have the same period. Some scholars have argued that once Copernicus computed the period-distance relationships for Mercury and Venus in a heliocentric system and found that the period for Mercury is less than the period for Venus, he was convinced of the truth. And these assumptions behind the heliocentric turn appear as early as the *Commentariolus*,

even though he is more explicit about them in Book 1, chapter 10 of his *De revolutionibus*.

In his heliocentric arrangement, Copernicus retained the notion of nested spheres but rearranged their order so that the Sun was at the center, followed by the spheres of Mercury and Venus, then the Earth with a sphere that also contained the moon, and then the spheres of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. The period-distance relationship was preserved, and this ordering exemplified the divine plan through the harmony and symmetry of planetary motions and the distances between them. Scholars have used Copernicus's discussion of these points in *De revolutionibus* as evidence that Copernicus was convinced of the truth of the heliocentric arrangement.

However, when *De revolutionibus* was published in 1543, it was not clear to early readers whether Copernicus had proposed heliocentrism as merely a mathematical model or whether he was also proposing a novel cosmology. As he died just as the work was published, this question was left unanswered and was hotly debated. To further complicate matters, Andreas Osiander, who brought the *De revolutionibus* to press, included an unsigned preface that asserted the proposition was a "mathematical hypothesis," and not a new cosmology. Several astronomers took up this notion and used Copernicus's models to compute new planetary tables. This was especially true at the University of Wittenberg, where the earliest of these sets of tables was computed by Erasmus Reinhold in 1551. The Prutenic Tables, as they became known, eventually replaced the medieval Alfonsine Tables in popularity.

Copernicus's colleague, Georg Joachim Rheticus, supported the new heliocentric cosmology in his *Narratio prima*, an introduction to the Copernican thesis which he published in 1540, 3 years before *De revolutionibus*. In one case, Tycho Brahe drew on Copernicus's work to present a Renaissance version of the Capellan model. Other readers also adopted the new cosmology and sought to develop it. These included, most notably, Giordano Bruno, Galileo Galilei, and Johannes Kepler.

Impact and Legacy

In the first 50 years following the publication of *De revolutionibus*, there were just a handful of individuals who accepted heliocentrism. Giordano Bruno was famous for being a Copernican who was burned at the stake for his worldviews. However, it was not for his advocacy for heliocentrism that he was tried but rather for his heretical views on the eternity of the world. Thomas Digges, an English astronomer, astrologer, and mathematician, published in 1576 the first exposition of heliocentrism in English as an appendix to an annual almanac. In Germany, Michael Maestlin taught the heliocentric theory to his advanced students, among whom was Johannes Kepler.

In overturning the Aristotelian cosmos, heliocentrism demanded a new physics to explain, among other things, motion both in the heavens and on Earth. According to Aristotle, falling bodies on Earth moved "down" toward their natural place at its center. Planets moved according to a different natural motion, first introduced by the motion of the prime mover, which was uniform and circular. Early in his career, Galileo Galilei recognized the need for a new physics that accommodated the fundamental shift from an Earth-centered to Sun-centered cosmos. He began observing and describing the motion of falling bodies according to mathematical principles rather than Aristotelian precepts.

At the same time, he turned the telescope toward the heavens to observe planetary motion as well. In doing so, he observed the moons of Jupiter and the phases of Venus. In his *Sidereus Nuncius*, or *Starry Messenger*, published in 1610, he recorded the motions of the four moons of Jupiter, which showed that other planets could also be the center of motion for other celestial bodies. This observation very much challenged the idea that the Earth was the center of all motion in the universe. In the *Sidereus Nuncius*, he also provided detailed drawings of the mountains and valleys on the moon, which tested Aristotle's view of celestial bodies as perfect and uncorrupt. Galileo's

telescopic observations of the moon illustrated that celestial bodies could be imperfect.

Over the course of Galileo's life, various religious figures made objections to the heliocentric worldview and held that it was contrary to the faith. Galileo became involved in these disputes through his famous *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina*. Some scholars have claimed that Galileo transgressed his position by offering theological interpretations of the Bible. These instances led to Galileo receiving a special injunction in 1616 not to "hold, teach, or defend" the Copernican doctrine. However, in 1632, Galileo published his *Discourse Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, in which he presents the geocentric and heliocentric theories together and concludes that the heliocentric theory is superior. In 1633, Galileo was put on trial and found guilty. He was sentenced to house arrest and died in 1642. Most scholars agree that the general public's understanding of the Galileo affair as a case of "religion versus science" is flawed. The important background of the Counter-Reformation, when the Church was reasserting its authority of Catholic doctrine, is essential. While Pope Urban VIII did in fact condemn Galileo and the official opinion of the Catholic Church was that heliocentrism could only be treated as a mathematical hypothesis, not as a real description of the physical universe, several Catholics were sympathetic to the latter view but were not able to publicly express their views due to the associated risks after the death of Bruno and the trial of Galileo.

Putting the Sun at the center of the universe also caused problems for members of the Reformed church. As a solution, Tycho Brahe developed and advocated for the system first proposed by Martianus Capella in the fifth century. The Earth remained the center of motion for all of the planets except Mercury and Venus, which themselves moved around the Sun. Tycho's system was a viable alternative for those convinced by the astronomical problems that the heliocentric system solved but who considered heliocentrism to be at odds with religious truth.

The Tychonic system also provided a favorable solution for many Jesuit astronomers who were receptive to the mathematical consistencies of the heliocentric model but who were prevented from endorsing it due to their Catholic faith. One Jesuit to adopt this model, Giovanni Battista Riccioli, illustrated its superiority in a famous frontispiece to his 1651 work, the *Almagestum novum*, which depicts the geo-heliocentric system literally outweighing the heliocentric system in a balance. Other Jesuits, such as Christopher Clavius, continued to support the geocentric model but still used the Prutenic Tables and Copernican models to reform the calendar under Pope Gregory XIII.

Tycho also desired to create a new set of astronomical tables that far surpassed the Alfonsine and Prutenic Tables, based on his highly sophisticated observations using state-of-the-art instruments. He passed the task on to Johannes Kepler before his death in 1601, who finally published the Rudolphine Tables in 1627. Kepler, however, rejected the Tychonic system and adopted heliocentrism.

Also inspired by the divine harmony and symmetry in the heliocentric arrangement, Johannes Kepler came to believe that the heliocentric system revealed the divine plan for the sizes and distances of the planets based on the five Platonic solids. This theory, which he published in 1597 in the *Mysterium cosmographicum*, takes a central Sun as the starting point for the proposition that the planetary distances are determined by the shapes and sizes of Platonic solids which enclose each planet's movement about the Sun. Later in his life, the problem of sizes, distances, and the real motion of the planets led Kepler to propose what are now known as elliptical orbits, first for Mars in his *Astronomia nova* and then for all planets in his *Epitome astronomiae copernicanae*.

Copernicus's proposal of heliocentrism may certainly be viewed as a product of Renaissance thought. The notions of divine harmony and symmetry inspired by the humanist rereading of classical authors are highly apparent in Copernicus's own writing. At the same time, the novelty of heliocentrism cannot be overstated. It represents a radical shift away from the ancient and medieval

geocentric cosmology and thus also an entirely new perspective on the place of humans in the universe.

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Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism

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Abstract

The so-called philosophical Hermetica were written down in Egypt in the second to third centuries. They are concerned with philosophical and spiritual teachings about how to find salvation through the attainment of suprarational knowledge (gnosis). Western intellectuals during the Middle Ages had access only to the Latin *Asclepius*, and the core teachings of this tradition were no longer understood. They became available again during the second half of the fifteenth century, when manuscripts of the *Corpus Hermeticum* reached Italy from Byzantium and were translated into Latin by Marsilio Ficino (C.H. I–XIV) and Lodovico Lazzarelli (C.H. XVI–XVIII). According to a highly influential but now discredited narrative created by Frances A. Yates in the 1960s, this led to a “Hermetic tradition” represented by major Renaissance intellectuals such as Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Giordano Bruno. In fact, none of these thinkers can be properly described as “Hermeticists” or adherents of a “Hermetic philosophy”: most of them are more appropriately labeled “Platonic Orientalists” with a special interest in ancient

Egyptian, Persian, or Hebrew wisdom (attributed, respectively, to Hermes, Zoroaster, or Moses). The true story of Renaissance Hermetism is considerably more modest but fascinating on its own terms. Its central representative was the relatively unknown poet and humanist Lodovico Lazzarelli, whose work became a major influence on Cornelius Agrippa.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The concept of a “Hermetic tradition” in the Renaissance was placed on the academic agenda by Paul Oskar Kristeller in 1938 and popularized by Frances A. Yates in 1964 (Kristeller 1938; Yates 1964). According to Yates, Marsilio Ficino’s translation of the late Hellenistic *Corpus Hermeticum*, first published in 1471, stood at the origin of a neglected but highly important intellectual tradition that had a great impact on the scientific revolution. Yates’ perspective has remained extremely influential in the academic community and among the wider public and keeps dominating current perceptions of “the Hermetic tradition”; but unfortunately, most of her guiding assumptions have proved to be incorrect. She misidentified important thinkers such as Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Giordano Bruno as “Hermetic philosophers”; she marginalized the actual Hermetic philosophers active in the Renaissance period; and she miscontextualized the *Corpus Hermeticum*, suggesting incorrectly that it was grounded in astral magic and concerned with questions leading up to modern science (Hanegraaff 2015: 180–183). In the wake of Frances Yates’ works, the term “Hermeticism” is still being used as a vaguely defined and highly confusing umbrella term, comprising not only the general belief in an ancient wisdom from the Orient transmitted through the Platonic tradition (Hanegraaff 2012, and see below) but also the general fascination with traditional arts or sciences such as astrology, alchemy, and natural magic.

It is therefore advisable to abandon the popular term “Hermeticism,” as it is burdened with the

Yatesian legacy, and use the alternative “Hermetism” to refer strictly to the religio-philosophical writings attributed to or connected with Hermes Trismegistus (most importantly the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius*) and their commentaries (van den Broek 2005b). As for the much wider domain of traditional arts, theories, and practices concerned with the workings of nature – the so-called occult sciences (see Hanegraaff 2013a) – the fact is that some of the relevant textual materials happened to be attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, while many others were not. This makes it misleading to call such materials “Hermetic” in a general sense. The rest of this entry will therefore focus on the figure of Hermes Trismegistus as an ancient authority in the domains of both spiritual wisdom and the secrets of nature; and, more specifically, on the Renaissance tradition of Hermetism based upon the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius*.

Heritage: Hermetism in Late Antiquity

In the Hellenistic culture of late antiquity, the legendary figure of Hermes Trismegistus (“thrice greatest Hermes”) emerged from a fusion between the Egyptian god Thoth and the Greek Hermes (Fowden 1986). As a semidivine teacher of ancient spiritual wisdom and a supreme authority on the secrets of the universe, his name appears in many textual materials that are either attributed to him directly or were believed to be based upon his knowledge (van den Broek 2005a). In the wake of André-Jean Festugière’s foundational studies of the Hermetic literature of antiquity (Festugière 1950–1954), it has become common practice to distinguish between the “technical Hermetica” (magical, astrological, and alchemical texts that go under the name of Hermes) and the “philosophical Hermetica” (concerned with philosophical and spiritual teachings relevant to the search for a salvational gnosis). During the Middle Ages, a great variety of texts pertaining to the technical Hermetica began to circulate, some in original Latin versions, others in Latin and Arabic translations from Greek originals, and others in Latin translations from the Arabic (Lucentini, Parri & Perrone Compagni 2003). As for the philosophical Hermetica, only the Latin *Asclepius* (based

upon a Greek original of which only a fragment survives) was available to scholars in Western Europe during the Middle Ages.

We do not know how many philosophical Hermetica may once have existed, or in what order they were originally supposed to be read. The collection known today as the *Corpus Hermeticum* was collated in Byzantium during the Middle Ages and seems to have been known in roughly its present form at least since Michael Psellus in the eleventh century. It consists of 17 treatises, numbered rather confusingly as I–XIV and XVI–XVIII since the sixteenth century (the standard numbering derives from the first modern editor of the Greek text, Adrien Turnèbe, who in 1554 included some Hermetic excerpts by Stobaeus as CH XV; later editors retained Turnèbe’s numbering but left out CH XV). It is plausible to assume that the philosophical Hermetica were once part of a spiritual curriculum that began with rational philosophy but should ideally culminate in the attainment of a suprarational gnosis (Fowden 1986; Hanegraaff 2008). The majority of the philosophical Hermetica, including the *Asclepius*, are concerned essentially with standard discussions about the nature of the world, God, and the divine, based upon prevailing Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic perspectives. From a philosophical point of view, these texts are interesting but not particularly original or profound. Known as the “general” and “more specific” discourses (*genikoi logoi* and *exodiakoi logoi*; see Hanegraaff 2008: 136), their chief function seems to have consisted in providing a solid intellectual foundation for those who desired to go beyond philosophy to attain ultimate religious salvation through firsthand experience of and unity with the divine.

The first steps toward that goal are described in C.H. I. The anonymous author (conventionally identified as Hermes) relates how one day, after having pondered philosophical problems for a long time, he fell into a trance-like or altered state of consciousness and found himself in the awe-inspiring presence of Poimandres, “mind of sovereignty,” who offered to answer his questions (CH I 1–2). He answers that he wants to understand the nature of “the things that are” and know

God. He immediately receives an answer to both questions, not through verbal instruction but by means of direct vision. First, he sees the world emerging from the encounter between a frightening mass of dark primal substance (*physis*) and a “holy word” (*logos hagios*) that descends on it from the light above. Having watched the conception and birth of the world in this manner, the protagonist is then instructed to “fix his mind on the light . . . and get to know it,” after which Poimandres holds his gaze for a long time. This episode contains the answer to his second question: the divine light that is Poimandres’ spiritual essence turns out to be identical with the visionary’s own spiritual essence. In other words, while looking into Poimandres’ eyes he is looking at himself, and in watching himself he is watching the divine light that is watching him. In this manner, he receives knowledge not only about the nature of the world and the nature of God but about the nature of man as well: knowledge of God means knowledge of one’s self, and the reverse, because in their ultimate essence, they are both the same uncreated light. The rest of C.H. I is devoted to verbal instructions in which Poimandres discusses and extrapolates upon these mystical visions by means of philosophical discourse.

The “Way of Hermes” is continued in C.H. XIII, the most explicitly initiatic treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Hermes Trismegistus tells his pupil Tat how he has been “born again” into an immortal body that cannot be seen by mortal eyes. His words cause Tat to fall into an ecstatic state of *mania* (divine madness according to Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a–d) that turns out to be the beginning of a similar process of spiritual rebirth. Because Tat’s mode of perception still does not change, Hermes proceeds to invoke 10 “healing powers” of light that expel the 12 irrational “tormentors” of materiality that, as he explains, have been “blocking” Tat’s understanding. These 12 tormentors (personified as demonic entities, linked to the astrological signs, and named “ignorance,” “grief,” “incontinence,” “lust,” “injustice,” “greed,” “deceit,” “envy,” “treachery,” “anger,” “recklessness,” and “malice”) are forced out of Tat’s body and leave “with a flapping of

wings.” As a result of this exorcism, Tat finds that his understanding is indeed unblocked; he now sees external reality not “with the sight of the eyes [but] with the mental energy that comes through the powers” and finds that he is one with the whole of reality: “I am in heaven, in earth, in water, in air; I am in animals and in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb; everywhere” (CH XIII 11). In a parallel passage in CH XI 20, precisely this mode of “cosmic consciousness” is described as what true knowledge of God is all about.

Thus having been “born a god and a child of the One” (CH XIII 14) in a new immortal body, Tat should now be able to rise above the seven planetary spheres of the cosmos and reach the luminous spheres of the eight and the ninth, for “such is the happy end for those who have received gnosis: to become God” (CH I 26). This final ascent is described in a crucial treatise known as “The Ogdoad and the Ennead,” discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945 and therefore unknown to Renaissance readers. Assisted and guided by Hermes, Tat’s soul travels upward toward the eight and the ninth spheres, where he sees “unspeakable depths,” “the beginning of the Power above all Powers . . . who does not himself have a beginning” (NH VI⁶ 57–58). Most of all, in looking at this ultimate divine reality, he finds that he is looking at himself (*ibid.*, cf. NH VI⁶ 60–61). In other words, the final salvation consists not so much in unification with the divine as in the recognition that he has always been one with it.

Transmission: The Middle Ages

This core message of the philosophical Hermetica got lost during the Middle Ages. Most early Christian authors with an African background (notably Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Augustine) were familiar with the Hermetic literature (Mahé 1982, 56–58) and interested in comparing it to the Christian faith. Lactantius saw only a perfect concordance between the teachings of Hermetic and Christian theology, “both as to substance and verbatim” (*Div. Inst.* VI, 25.10); but in a crucial discussion of Platonic thought, Augustine analyzed the passages in *Asclepius* 23–24/37–38 where Hermes praises the Egyptian

practice of animating temple statues, and concluded that Hermes must be condemned as an advocate of idolatry (*De Civ. Dei* VIII, 23–26). The effect of Augustine’s condemnation on medieval discussions was mitigated by a case of mistaken attribution: an anti-Arian tract known as *Adversus quinque Haereses*, attributed to Quodvultdeus since the early twentieth century but previously believed to be by Augustine, contained a positive discussion of Hermes based on Lactantius while making no mention of idolatry. In medieval authors such as Hermann of Carinthia (*De essentiis* 1143), John of Salisbury (*Policraticus* 1159) or Alan of Lille (*Summa quoniam homines* 1.2.31), the positive Lactantian perspective remained dominant; but Augustine’s condemnation made a strong comeback with William of Auvergne (*De legibus* 1228; *De universo*, 1231–6). At this time, Augustine’s perspective was given a new urgency because of its relevance to the potentially idolatrous “science of images,” based upon a range of technical Hermetica concerned with astrology and astral magic that had now become available from Arabic sources (Weill-Parot 2002). Later medieval authorities such as Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Bradwardine, Berthold of Moosburg, and Nicholas of Cusa took different positions between the conflicting Lactantian and Augustinian perspectives (Hanegraaff 2013b; Lucentini et al. 2003), and these intellectual traditions were inherited by the Italian humanists central to the revival of Hermetic literature during the fifteenth century.

Revival: The Platonic-Orientalist Context

The revival of interest in Hermetic literature during the Renaissance should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon. It must be understood within the much broader context of the Platonic revival, based upon some very specific assumptions derived ultimately from Patristic literature, notably Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius, but also Augustine (Hanegraaff 2012, 17–28). First of all, Plato was not just perceived as a philosopher in the modern sense (that is, as a rational thinker whose conclusions are reached through the discursive technique of Socratic dialogue) but, more broadly, as an

inspired teacher who revealed authoritative religious or spiritual wisdom pertaining to the salvation of the soul. Second, the assumption was that this wisdom had not originated with Plato or Socrates himself but had come from much more ancient Oriental teachers of wisdom. This general perspective on the nature of Platonism may be referred to as “Platonic Orientalism” (Walbridge 2001; Hanegraaff 2012, 12–17). It came in several variants, depending on who was identified as the most ancient teacher of wisdom. Depending on whether the sources of Platonism were assumed to be Persian, Hebrew, or Egyptian, we can distinguish between a “Zoroastrian,” a “Mosaic,” and a “Hermetic” interpretation of Platonic Orientalism.

For religious philosophers during the Renaissance, the Platonic-Orientalist framework implied that Christianity was the inheritor of an extremely ancient tradition of universal wisdom that had reached the Christians through Platonic sources, and Christian doctrine could therefore be harmonized with the most profound teachings of pagan philosophy and religion. According to a first perspective, known as *prisca theologia* and represented notably by Marsilio Ficino, the original purity and perfection of the ancient wisdom had been contaminated and lost through a long process of historical degeneration, and a restoration or revival was therefore needed. An alternative perspective, known as *philosophia perennis* and represented notably by Agostino Steuco, placed the emphasis on continuity rather than decline, arguing that the great tradition of true wisdom had always been kept alive and remained available to anyone who needed it. During the Renaissance, the former perspective carried revolutionary implications of religious reform, as it suggested that the Church had lost its connection with the ancient wisdom and needed to be restored to its original purity. The latter perspective was inherently conservative and could be used to highlight the Church of Rome as the divinely appointed institution charged with preserving the ancient and universal tradition of wisdom.

The revival of Platonic Orientalism during the Italian Renaissance can be traced to the Council of Ferrara and Florence of 1437–1438. On this occasion, the Byzantine philosopher George Gemistos

(c. 1355/60–1452), who called himself Plethon, made personal contact with the circles of Italian humanists in Florence and greatly impressed them with his knowledge of Plato and Aristotle (Hanegraaff 2012, 28–41). He had no interest in Hermes and Egypt, but strongly defended a “Zoroastrian” interpretation of Platonic Orientalism, claiming that the true wisdom had originated with Zoroaster in ancient Persia and had been transmitted to Plato and the Platonic tradition from there. Among those present on whom Plethon’s message made a lasting impression was the young Cosimo de’ Medici, the later ruler of Florence and Maecenas of philosophy and the arts. About two decades after the council, around 1460, Cosimo met the young Marsilio Ficino and recognized a golden opportunity to realize Plethon’s dream of restoring the Platonic philosophy. He put Ficino in charge of translating Plato’s complete dialogues into Latin, thereby creating the foundations for the subsequent Renaissance revival of Platonic philosophy, including the “Hermetic” sources from which it was believed to have sprung.

Marsilio Ficino and Hermetic Philosophy

While Ficino was still in the early stages of his Plato translations, a manuscript from Byzantium arrived in Florence that contained the first 14 treatises of what is known today as the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Cosimo ordered Ficino to interrupt his work on Plato to translate the writings of Hermes first, presumably because he wanted to have a chance to read them before his death. From a Platonic-Orientalist perspective, his motivation is easy to understand: it was believed that Hermes Trismegistus had lived much earlier than Plato, and so his writings might be the ultimate Oriental source from which the Platonic wisdom tradition had emerged. Ficino’s translation was finished in 1464 and survives in many different manuscripts (see Campanelli 2011). However, it was not printed until 8 years later – and even that famous first edition of 1471 (to which we will return) was published without Ficino’s knowledge or authorization, as *Liber de Potestate et Sapientia Dei* or *Pimander*. In fact, it would seem that the *Corpus Hermeticum* had not given Ficino and Cosimo

what they had been hoping for. Plato's dialogues turned out to be far more complex and profound; and in fact, Ficino's translation shows that he did not grasp the core message of the Hermetic literature all that well. We can see this from the rather careless way he handles some of the most crucial Hermetic passages about the attainment of gnosis, and his failure to understand the specificity of this terminology as referring to a salvational "knowledge" unattainable by reason (Hanegraaff 2015).

In the oft-quoted "Argumentum" to the *Pimander*, Ficino provided a famous genealogy of six *prisci theologi*: Mercurius (Hermes) Trismegistus, Orpheus, Aglaophemus, Pythagoras, Philolaus, and Plato. Except for Hermes, this list was taken from Proclus' *Theologia Platonica* 1.5. Ficino quoted Augustine's opinion that Trismegistus had lived several generations after Moses, next to the alternative views of Cicero and Lactantius, who had mentioned no fewer than five "Mercuries," the fifth of whom had been Trismegistus. Otherwise than has often been assumed, Ficino expressed no clear opinion of his own. Regardless of how he may have thought of Hermes' relation to Moses, just one year later he seems to have made up his mind once and for all: from 1464 until the end of his life, he highlighted Zoroaster as the most ancient source of wisdom, prior to both Moses and Hermes. Inspired by both Plethon's work and the biblical story of the *Magi* (interpreted as Zoroastrians), he assumed that far before Moses, Abraham had taken the Chaldaean and Persian wisdom with him when he set out from Ur of the Chaldeans in quest of the promised land (Hanegraaff 2012, 45–46).

Ficino, therefore, did not adhere to the "Hermetic" interpretation of Platonic Orientalism (nor to the "Mosaic" one, as done by his contemporary Giovanni Pico della Mirandola) but to a "Zoroastrian" alternative. The *Corpus Hermeticum* does not seem to have had any deep impact on his thinking: in his later work, notably *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, all the attention goes clearly to the notorious "god-making" passages in the *Asclepius* that had been condemned by Augustine and discussed since William of Auvergne (see above). If Ficino paid so much

attention to these passages, this was not because of any deep wish to highlight the wisdom of Hermes but because he needed to counter suspicions that by defending talismanic "images" (with much attention to the medieval *Picatrix*), he might be defending the kind of "Hermetic" idolatry condemned by Augustine.

For these various reasons, it does not make sense to describe Ficino as a "Hermetic philosopher." This interpretation comes from Frances Yates, who consistently overemphasized the god-making passages throughout her famous book of 1964: the *Asclepius* (which, it bears repeating, was nothing new in the fifteenth century) was mentioned at least 80 times, with at least 45 references to *Asclepius* 23–24/37–38, while C.H. I was mentioned about 24 times, and the other treatises were mentioned rarely or not at all (Hanegraaff 2012, 333 n 285).

The Renaissance Transmission of the *Corpus Hermeticum*

Ficino's *Corpus Hermeticum* translation was published almost simultaneously in two different editions: the well-known Treviso edition appeared on 18 December 1471, just 20 days earlier than the largely forgotten Ferrara edition, which came out on the 8th of January 1472. They were based upon two different manuscripts, but although the second edition turns out to be much more reliable, it remained a "stand-alone" version without much further influence. The first edition, on the other hand, became the basis for no less than 9 of the 17 later editions of the C.H. that appeared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Campanelli 2011; summary overview in Hanegraaff 2015, 183–186, with figure on p. 185). The Treviso edition was published by Geraert van der Leye and Francesco Rolandello, without Ficino's authorization, and turns out to be seriously defective: it has been described as nothing less than "an authentic textual disaster" based upon "scandalous negligence" (Campanelli 2011, cx–cxi). As later editors tried to correct these many errors and omissions without having access to the Greek original or Ficino's manuscripts, the predictable result was an ever-increasing range of variant readings and misunderstandings. An

edition based upon a third manuscript appeared in Florence in 1513 and led to two later editions (Basle 1532, edited by Michael Isengrin, and Cracow 1585, edited by Annibale Rosselli with very lengthy commentaries). Finally – not counting vernacular versions – we have three editions independent of Ficino: the Greek original was published by Adrien Turnèbe (Paris 1554), and new Latin translations by François Foix de Candale and Francesco Patrizi came out in Bordeaux in 1574 and Ferrara in 1591, respectively.

None of these editions succeeded in transmitting the original Hermetic doctrine to Renaissance readers. If Hermes was seen as important, this had much less to do with the intrinsic contents of the writings attributed to him than with his traditional authority as an ancient teacher of divine wisdom, a pagan prophet of Christian doctrine, and an expert in the so-called occult sciences. These elements were all based upon the original Christian and medieval reception of the Hermetic writings and owed little to the new materials now available in the *Corpus Hermeticum*. It is only in the works of a few French authors writing in the mid- and later sixteenth century, Gabriel du Préau and François Foix de Candale, that one begins to see signs of a more adequate understanding of the Hermetic message (Hanegraaff 2015, 199–204).

With her usual flair and sense of drama, Frances Yates claimed that when Isaac Casaubon undermined Hermes' great antiquity by dating the *Corpus Hermeticum* to the second or third century (in his *De Rebus Sacris & Ecclesiasticis* of 1614), he killed the Hermetic tradition “at one blow” (Yates 1964, 398). Referring to Casaubon's heavily annotated edition of Turnèbe's Greek edition, she wrote that “holding this little book in one's hand one realises, with a certain awe, that it represents the death of the Hermes Trismegistus of the Renaissance” (ibid., 401). Today we know that Turnèbe's pupils Gilbert Genebrard (1567), Matthieu Béroalde (1575), and Jean van Gorp (1580) had been criticizing the great antiquity of the *Corpus Hermeticum* since 1567 (Mulsow 2002). During the 1580s, Genebrard's pupil Teodoro Angelucci attacked Francesco Patrizi's ideas about Hermes at great length, leading to vehement discussions with Patrizi and his friends

Francesco Muti and Antonio Persio (ibid.). Casaubon, therefore, seems to have been the closing and culminating protagonist in a debate that had started almost half a century earlier. Moreover, that debate was not yet over. Positive interpretations of the C.H. as well as translations into vernacular languages were published by authors such as Heinrich Noll (1617), Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland (Dutch translations, 1643/1652), and John Everard (English translation, 1650/1657); and in his *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth argued that Casaubon's arguments were relevant to only some of the Hermetic treatises – the others, including the *Asclepius*, might still be as ancient as had always been claimed. The first German translation of the C.H. by “Aletophilus” appeared in 1706, followed by Dietrich Tiedemann's in 1781 (for the further debate on Hermetism during the Enlightenment and afterward, see Faivre 2005, 539–543).

Lodovico Lazzarelli and Hermetic Gnosis

When Kristeller placed the Hermetic tradition back on the agenda of Renaissance studies, in his seminal article of 1938, he highlighted two central authors: Marsilio Ficino and Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447–1500). A second milestone publication on Renaissance Hermetism (Garin et al. 1955) likewise placed Lazzarelli in the center of the Hermetic revival. However, Frances Yates marginalized him in her famous book on Bruno, dismissing him in a footnote as “a most enthusiastic and exaggerated Hermetist” and directing all further attention to Ficino, Pico, and Bruno. A whole generation of Renaissance scholars followed in her footsteps and forgot about Lazzarelli. This now turns out to have been a dramatic mistake with far-reaching consequences, for whereas Yates' favorites can hardly be referred to as “Hermetists” at all, Lazzarelli is the clearest and most explicit example of a Hermetic philosopher that one will find in the entire Renaissance period. The real “Hermetic tradition” of the Renaissance has relatively little to do with Ficino and even less with Pico and Bruno. Its crucial representatives were Lazzarelli, his “spiritual master” Giovanni da Correggio (ca. 1451?–after

1503; see below), followed by Frances Yates' *bête noire* Cornelius Agrippa.

Lazzarelli was born in San Severino in 1447 and moved to Rome in the first half of the 1470s. He joined the Roman Academy and hoped to achieve fame as a poet until a fateful day in 1481 when he met the strange apocalyptic prophet Giovanni da Correggio. Correggio's sermons made such an impression that Lazzarelli "left the Parnassian hills and everything else, and right away followed him to Mount Zion – the first of his pupils" (Lazzarelli, *Epistola Enoch* 13.1). In other words, he abandoned profane poetry to pursue a spiritual path. One year later, in 1482, Lazzarelli offered his teacher a beautiful manuscript that contained all the philosophical *Hermetica* in Latin, preceded by Prefaces in prose and poetry. Next to the *Asclepius* and Ficino's *Pimander* (C.H. I–XIV), it also contained C.H. XVI–XVIII, translated by Lazzarelli from an independent manuscript of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, more complete than the one that had been used by Ficino. These so-called *Diffinitiones Hermetici* were published after Lazzarelli's death by Symphorien Champier (1507).

Lazzarelli's prefaces to the philosophical *Hermetica* (see Hanegraaff and Bouthoorn 2005, 151–163; Lazzarelli 2009, 81–85) show his deep admiration for the Hermetic wisdom, which he considers to be the key to the true meaning of the Christian message. Most surprisingly, it appears that Lazzarelli identified his teacher Correggio with no one less than Hermes himself: "Father Mercurius, teacher by fatherly love,/Hail to you, who are like a god to me./You have begotten me anew by ethereal seed,/And taught me to be born again without deceit" (ibid., 159). A later manuscript by Lazzarelli, the *Epistola Enoch*, confirms that – no doubt on Lazzarelli's instigation – by 1484, Correggio had come to think of himself as the "Hermetic Christ." On Palm Sunday that year, he made a spectacular appearance in Rome: sitting on a donkey, dressed as Jesus, and wearing a crown of thorns, he entered the city and announced the coming of the end of times. Above his head, he carried a silver-plated disc shaped like the crescent moon, with a text that

identified him as both Pimander and Jesus Christ (ibid., 107–149).

Sometime in the later 1480s, Lazzarelli moved to Naples, where he tried to gain the attention of King Ferdinand of Aragon and Sicily (known as Ferrante). His most important work, a "Dialogue on the Supreme Dignity of Man, entitled the Way of Christ and the Mixing-Bowl of Hermes" (usually referred to as the *Crater Hermetis*), was written here probably between 1492 and 1494. Modeled closely after the Hermetic dialogues, it casts Lazzarelli himself in the role of a teacher of wisdom who initiates two pupils into the Hermetic mysteries. Those pupils are none else than King Ferrante himself and his Secretary of State, the poet and astrologer Giovanni Pontano. Although Lazzarelli succeeded in gaining an audience with the king to present his large poem *Fasti Christiani Religionis*, we have no evidence that Ferrante ever received or read the *Crater Hermetis*. When Charles VIII took possession of Naples on 21 February 1494, a year after Ferrante's death, Lazzarelli made a half-hearted attempt to replace the name "Ferdinandus" with "Caroli," but his new copy dedicated to the French king was never finished.

The *Crater Hermetis* is a unique and powerful text, impressive for its literary qualities no less than for its extremely original interpretation of the Hermetic message. Lazzarelli argues that Poimandres was no one else than the divine Logos himself, the second person of the Trinity, who thus appeared to Hermes prior to his incarnation as Jesus Christ. This same Poimandres/Christ has now taken residence in Lazzarelli and has illumined his mind, so that he is able to instruct his two pupils about the road toward true felicity through attaining self-knowledge or gnosis. Prompted by the questions of his pupils, Lazzarelli embarks on an allegorical exegesis of various biblical passages, explaining such topics as the meaning of the trees in paradise, the women in Proverbs, the Daughters of Men, and the nature of the Fall. These explanations are full of references to the Hermetic writings and cause his pupils to gradually move toward a state of ecstasy that makes them receptive to the true mystery. Remarkably, that mystery appears to be hidden

precisely in the most controversial passages of the Hermetic literature, the “god-making” passages about the animation of statues. Lazzarelli agrees with Augustine that Hermes Trismegistus did indeed lapse into idolatry; but he proceeds to argue that this happened because, as a pagan living before the Incarnation, he was not yet capable of fully understanding the message that Poimandres/Christ was revealing to him. The Egyptians attracted souls into their temple statues because they did not know the secret by which they could create souls themselves. Only the *Christian* Hermetist is able to attain perfect self-knowledge and knowledge of God, and this allows him to unite with God’s innermost being so completely that he even participates in God’s “fertility” – that is to say, his very power of creation. As a result, he can do what only God can do: create souls. In all likelihood, this doctrine of soul creation comes from Eleazar of Worms’ commentary on the *Sepher Yetzirah* and related interpretations in the school of Abraham Abulafia, which Lazzarelli seems to have found in the writings of Pico della Mirandola’s Jewish teacher Yohanan Alemanno. Of course, Lazzarelli’s pupils Ferrante and Pontano express their desire to be initiated into the supreme knowledge that will allow them to create souls; but Lazzarelli postpones his final revelation to a future time.

The Transmission of Lazzarellian Hermetism

One year after Lazzarelli’s death, in 1501, Giovanni da Correggio appeared in Lyons where he managed to gain an audience with King Louis XII. He offered his own *Exhortationes in Barbaros Thurcos Scijthas* to the king, and “a similar work” to the French ambassador, who passed it on to an Italian manuscript hunter, Pietro Aleandro (Hanegraaff 2005, 40–41). In all likelihood, this was Lazzarelli’s deluxe manuscript of Ficino’s *Pimander* (C.H. I–XIV), the *Asclepius*, and the *Diffinitiones Asclepii* (C.H. XVI–XVIII), with Lazzarelli’s introductions. Aleandro took it to Venice and then to Rome, from where Egidio da Viterbo seems to have brought it to Viterbo, where it is still kept today. Aleandro described how Correggio was disputing with two of the king’s physicians, one of whom can be identified as

Symphorien Champier. Champier would seem to have used the occasion to have a copy made of the *Diffinitiones Asclepii*, which he published in 1507, thereby completing Ficino’s translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* with the final three treatises that were missing from the *Pimander* (Champier 1507).

Correggio’s visit to Lyons thus seems to have been crucial to the subsequent diffusion of the Hermetica from Italy to France and more generally to the French tradition of *prisca theologia* (Walker 1954). Next to Champier’s important publication of 1507, Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples published Lazzarelli’s *Crater Hermetis* together with the other Hermetica, in an equally crucial edition two years earlier (Lefèvre d’Étaples 1505). However, Lefèvre’s edition was edited to purify it of potentially heretical elements and even deleted all references to Giovanni Pontano: the dialogue now seemed to take place between Lazzarelli and Ferrante alone.

Lefèvre d’Étaples’ edition of Lazzarelli’s *Crater* had a very great impact on Cornelius Agrippa during his “Hermetic” and largely Italian period (1509–1518): as it turns out, he was reading the Hermetica entirely through Lazzarelli’s eyes, and at the core of Agrippa’s religious message, we find Lazzarelli’s innovative doctrine that the man who achieves true knowledge is thereby restored to his pre-lapsarian state and comes to participate in God’s own power of creation. As such, the deified human being can literally “do anything” (Agrippa, *De Occulta Philosophia* 2.50). Agrippa concealed this message behind allusive hints, enigmatic statements, and the evocation of secrets “which should not be publicly discussed” (ibid., 3.36); but if he emphasized the supremacy of Christian “faith” in his later work, what he really meant was Lazzarelli’s doctrine of deification through gnosis (Hanegraaff 2009).

Conclusion

We have seen that current notions of an early modern “Hermetic tradition” are grounded in Frances Yates’ grand narrative and find little support in documented evidence. It is more accurate

to speak of a Hermetic interpretation of Platonic Orientalism, in competition with a Zoroastrian and a Mosaic (Christian kabbalistic) interpretation. Interestingly, while Yates' favorites Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola were explicit and consistent in their adherence to these two latter interpretations, the Hermetic option remained little more than a theoretical possibility. The true founder of Christian Hermetism in the Renaissance period, Lodovico Lazzarelli, showed little interest in Plato or later Platonic authors and focused almost exclusively on Hermes and the Bible (with some additional interest in kabbalah). He understood the Hermetic writings better than any of his contemporaries or early modern successors, but his influence remained limited to Lefèvre's edition and the use that Agrippa made of it. In short, while the dissemination of Hermetic texts during the Renaissance caused a lively *dis-course* about Hermes and the Hermetica, we have almost no evidence for a Hermetic *tradition* (Hanegraaff 2015, 205).

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- [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)

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Hermogenes

Born: Tarsus (city in Turkey), late second century
Died: ?, early third century

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Abstract

Hermogenes was a Greek rhetorician, whose work was extremely influential from antiquity to the Renaissance.

Alternate Names

[Hermogenes of Tarsus](#)

Biography

According to legend, Hermogenes of Tarsus was sought out early on by Emperor Marcus Antoninus, who wanted to hear his lessons on rhetoric. Hermogenes, therefore, rose to fame at the age of 15, writing his work before the age of 24, at which time he apparently began to lose his mental capacities. Although he was no longer able to improvise, he continued modestly plying his trade into old age as a professor of eloquence (Hermogenes 1997).

Works

The works of Hermogenes of Tarsus were a great success through the end of the Byzantine era. At the time, they were used to teach the basis of technical and practical rhetoric. The Hermogenian corpus consists of *preliminary rhetorical exercises* (*progymnasmata*, usually used to teach the basic forms of declamation) and four treatises: *On Issues* (which lists the types of cases that the speaker may have to plead), *On the Invention of Arguments* (which explains how to expertly compose an impromptu declamation), *On Types of Style* (his most famous work detailing different types of oratory style, including asperity, solemnity, and beauty), and *On the Method of Speaking Effectively* (a short text listing practical rules on repetition, circumlocution, recognized wrongs, etc.). Hermogenes is also the author of two missing treatises, one on the speeches of Demosthenes and the other on characteristics of the *exordium*.

The works of Hermogenes were rediscovered, thanks to Greek immigrants like George of Trebizond (1396–1472), who introduced them to fifteenth-century Europe (George of Trebizond 1538). In a letter dated December 1426 and

entitled *De suavitate dicendi*, Trebizond listed the specific characteristics of taste identified by Hermogenes in *Stylistic Categories* (George of Trebizond 1984). Trebizond's *Rhetoricorum libri V*, published in Venice in 1433–1434, combined Byzantine rhetoric tradition with Latin tradition for the very first time and was the best introduction to Hermogenian thought for almost a century (Monfasani 1976). During the Renaissance, humanist educator Johannes Sturm actively contributed to spreading Hermogenes' ideas – in particular his approach to stylistic categories – by publishing and commenting on his works. For theorists like Sturm, the Hermogenian approach refined the traditional Latin one, which divided styles into three categories (high, medium, and low), and he considered the two to be perfectly complementary (Sturm 1571a, b). Hermogenes' approach became key during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in debates on how to define characteristics of poetic genres and certain exercises in prose, such as preaching and controversy.

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- [George of Trebizond](#)
- [Sturm, Johann](#)

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Hermogenes of Tarsus

► [Hermogenes](#)

Hermonymus, Georgios

Born: Mystra c. 1440/50

Died: Paris c. 1508/16

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Abstract

Georgios Hermonymos was a Byzantine scribe, translator, and scholar, who worked predominantly as a copyist in Italy, France, and England. Furthermore, he taught ancient Greek to numerous prominent Renaissance scholars, including Erasmus, Budé, Reuchlin, and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. He also engaged in diplomatic activities of the papal Curia during the fifteenth century.

Biography

Georgios Hermonymos was born in Mystra and he was proud of his native land, as he called himself *Spartiates*, although ancient Sparta no longer existed. He was acquainted with the Palaeologus family. In 1473, he lived in Rome

and was Bessarion's protégé. Furthermore, he was appointed by pope Sixtus IV (1414–1484) to negotiate on his behalf. While in Rome, he collaborated with Demetrios Trivolis, Georgios Trivizas, Theodoros Gaza, and Andronikos Kallistos, distinguished members of the Greek scholarly community in Italy. It is probable that he was of the Uniate persuasion. After Bessarion's death (1472), the circle of Greek scholars around him dissolved and most of its members left Rome. The pope entrusted Hermonymos with a diplomatic mission to England in order to contribute to George Neville's, archbishop of York, release from prison. Neville was Bessarion's friend and probably this relation led the pope to choose Hermonymos as his delegate. Against all odds, Hermonymos managed to release Neville. Despite his success, he was accused of espionage and was incarcerated in London for 3 months. Andronikos Kallistos defended him and contributed to his release in 1476. During his stay in England, he taught Greek to prominent members of the English intellectual circles. In 1476 he moved to France, after a short stay in Flanders. He stayed in Paris until his death and became a successful instructor of the Greek language. Some of his students were seminal scholars, as Erasmus, Budé, Reuchlin, David Chambellan of Bourges, and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. Despite the poor comments from some of his students, his work and teaching activity fostered the study of the Greek language in the French capital. He died in Paris, between 1508 and 1516.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Georgios was associated with George of Trebizond, the renowned Renaissance translator and scholar. Georgios admired his work on mathematics and astronomy and contributed to the dissemination of his philosophical ideas in France. He introduced Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples to Trebizond's texts and the latter used them in his treatises. Georgios' courses focused on humanities and mathematics and built on Pletho's tradition.

Impact and Legacy

Jacques Lefèvre D'Étaples appreciated Hermonymos and introduced him to prominent members of the intellectual circles in fifteenth-century Paris. Furthermore, Reuchlin admired his teaching and corresponded with Hermonymos until the latter's death. In contrast, Erasmus and Budé criticized his knowledge of ancient Greek and his teaching skills. In addition to his acquaintance with Bessarion, Hermonymos enjoyed the support of important figures, including George Neville, archbishop of York, John Shirwood, bishop of Durham, and Charles II de Bourbon, archbishop of Lyon. Moreover, Hermonymos copied over a hundred manuscripts. Besides ancient Greek literature and Christian theology, he also copied a number of Byzantine texts. He also translated ethical, religious, and polemical texts into Latin. In some cases, he commented on the texts he had translated or copied.

Cross-References

- [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)
- [Budé, Guillaume](#)
- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [George of Trebizond](#)
- [La Boderie, Guy Lefevre de](#)
- [Reuchlin, Johannes](#)

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Herrera, Hernando Alonso de

Born: around 1460, Talavera de la Reina, Toledo, Spain

Died: around 1527, Salamanca, Spain.

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Abstract

A student of Nebrija (whom he described as “nostrae tempestatis doctissimus”), Hernando Alonso de Herrera taught Rhetoric and Grammar at the Universities of Alcalá de Henares (between 1509 and 1512) and Salamanca (after 1513). He was the author of several treatises on grammar, in which he also disputed aspects of Nebrija’s linguistic methodology. Herrera upheld the humanist against the scholastic approach to philosophy.

Biography

Hernando Alonso de Herrera studied in Salamanca under the famous Antonio de Nebrija (1444–1522), whose textbook on Latin grammar, the *Introductiones latinae* (*Introduction to Latin*) of 1481, was designed to replace the medieval manuals employed at the time at the University. After he graduated, Herrera possibly held a teaching position at Salamanca in the latter years of the fifteenth century. His friendship with the Archbishop of Granada Hernando de Talavera led Herrera and his brother Gabriel – best known for his treatise on agriculture – in 1502 to Granada, where he enjoyed the patronage of Íñigo de Mendoza, Count of Tendilla. Around 1508 Herrera was invited by Cardinal Archbishop Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros to join the University of Alcalá, an institution that applied the program of humanism to its curriculum and to the study of Scripture. While at Alcalá, Herrera produced an

annotated Latin translation of George of Trebison’s *Rethoric* (1511). In 1513 Herrera moved to the University of Salamanca, where he replaced Nebrija and remained until the end of his life. As with his teacher Nebrija, Herrera-produced an adaptation of Lorenzo Valla’s *Elegantiae linguae Latinae* entitled *Expositio Laurentii Vallensis de Elegancia Linguae Latinae*. Published in Salamanca around 1515 and reprinted in Alcalá some 12 years later, Herrera’s extract reduced Valla’s text to its most basic and useful form. Herrera’s most important contribution to philosophy is his treatise *Breve Disputa en ocho levadas contra Aristótil y sus secuaces* (*A brief Disputation in eight debates against Aristotle and his followers*), written in Salamanca around 1517, first composed in Latin and subsequently rendered into the vernacular by Herrera himself. Disguised as a discussion of a minor problem of Aristotelian philosophy, Herrera’s work constitutes a strong attack against nominalism and the philosophical and teaching methods employed by the masters of Arts at the University of Paris, particularly the group of Scottish philosophers led by John Mair, who becomes the target of the acerbic criticism of Herrera. In his defense of Renaissance logic, Herrera advocates for rhetorical argumentation over formal syllogistic reasoning.

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Heylin, Peter

► [Heylyn, Peter](#)

Heylyn, Peter

Born: 1600, Burford, Oxfordshire

Died: May 8, 1662, Westminster, Middlesex

Peter Craft

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Abstract

This encyclopedia entry provides information about the life, heritage, and rupture with the tradition, innovative and original aspects, and impact and legacy of Peter Heylyn, a seventeenth-century theological and geographical historian.

Alternate Names

[Heylin, Peter](#)

Biography

Peter Heylyn (also sometimes spelled “Heylin”) was a royalist geographer, theologian, and historian. Heylyn was born in Oxfordshire, attended Magdalen College, and fathered 11 children. Although Heylyn had a strong interest in

geography, he personally traveled very little. Instead, he relied on extant narratives for his information about other countries. Portions of Richard Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589) were reused in *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (1613), and Heylyn’s *Microcosmos* (1621) and *Cosmographie* (1652, eight editions before 1700). Arguably his masterpiece, Heylyn’s *Cosmographie* is a collection of voyage narratives from sailors, merchants, and Jesuits that represented at least a century of European perceptions of the rest of the world. As such, it provided valuable information for English-speaking seventeenth-century Europeans about the customs, characteristics, and topographical features of the world around them.

While he wrote this work, the House of Commons tried and executed Charles I, Heylyn’s patron and sovereign, to whom he dedicated *Microcosmus*. For Heylyn, this was yet another tragic incident in a long string of misfortunes. A few years earlier, Heylyn joined Charles at Oxford and acted as his historian of the war, which led to Parliament’s decision to strip Heylyn’s house at Alresford of its contents and plunge him into destitution. Under Cromwell’s rule, Heylyn went into hiding and roamed in England in disguise to avoid detection. There was enough popular interest in Heylyn during and immediately after his lifetime that he was the subject of at least two seventeenth-century biographies, one of which was by his son-in-law John Barnard. Heylyn’s works were bestsellers in his lifetime, and luminaries such as Samuel Pepys and Richard Head read them. In fact, Richard Head copied large sections of Heylyn’s work verbatim in his novel *The English Rogue*.

Heylyn’s decision to expand the scope of *Microcosmus* into a *Cosmographie* and to add a religio-historical “General Introduction” assumes added significance when one views it in light of his personal situation in the middle of the seventeenth century. On the local level in England, Cromwell’s army must have seemed large and powerful, much to the royalist Heylyn’s chagrin. From the more universal perspective that Heylyn adopted, however, the

situation was not nearly so bleak. After all, if South Asian empires with hundreds of thousands of troops and seemingly infinite wealth could be subsumed into a biblical master narrative of determinate growth, then the Cromwellian government's comparatively puny forces and finances, which had not even lasted a decade at that point, appeared far less threatening. From Heylyn's royalist perspective, the cycle of history would eventually restore the Stuarts to their rightful throne.

Though on opposite ends of the political spectrum, Heylyn, like his contemporary John Milton, composed some of his most important works when he was almost completely blind, a testament to his extraordinary memory. Although Heylyn was very widely read in his own time, a few scholars consult his works today. In addition to his association with English royalty, Heylyn was a strong champion of the Archbishop of Canterbury: William Laud. Heylyn is of interest primarily for his insight into the complex range of early modern British perceptions of non-European peoples and religious practices. For instance, Heylyn did not find fault with the Muslim religious practices of the South Asian subcontinent, yet he abhorred the polytheistic Hindu rituals of India such as virginal deflowerings by pagods, *sati*, and self-mutilation. Heylyn died at the age of 62 and is buried in Westminster.

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Hilarius of Leitmeritz

Born: ca 1422

Died: 1468

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Abstract

Hilarius of Litoměřice was a Czech humanist, philosopher, anti-Hussite theologian, and one of the rare supporters of Lullism at that time in Central Europe. Originally a supporter of Hussitism who spread Franciscus de Mayronis' views presuming that they were close to those of Johann Wycliff's, he was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities of that time. During his stay in Padua, he acquired several of Raymond Lull's works which he brought to Bohemia. Under the influence of his Padua stay, he became a devout Catholic and accepted the position of administrator of the Prague Archbishopric. Among his writings, the history of the city Plzeň – *Hystoria civitatis Plznensis* – is remarkable.

Alternate Names

[Hilarius of Litoměřice](#)

Biography

As a young man, Hilarius was a supporter of the Hussites. In 1451, he achieved a Master's degree at the University in Prague. In the first half of the 1450s he was sent to study in Padua by Jan Rokycana, the head of Hussite clergy at that time. However, under the Italian influence, Hilarius converted and became a devout Catholic. Since Hilarius had become one of

the leading representatives of the Catholic position, after his return to Prague he could not continue his teaching at the Hussite university. Therefore, in 1461 he began work as the administrator of the Prague Archbishopric which had been vacant for a long period of time, in which position he remained until his death in 1468.

Work

Before his conversion to Catholicism, Hilarius had tried to provide Hussitism with a reliable philosophical grounding at the Prague University. Since Johann Wycliff's teaching, admired by the Hussites, had been rejected by ecclesiastical authorities of that time, Hilarius – together with his colleague Václav of Křižanov – spread the teaching of Parisian doctor Franciscus de Mayronis († ca. 1347), as contained chiefly in Mayronis' tractate *De esse essentiae et existentiae*, presuming that Mayronis' metaphysical views of divine ideas and their relation to divine essence were close to those of Johann Wycliff. In Padua, Hilarius became acquainted with humanist erudition. There, partly through purchasing, partly through making copies, he acquired several of Raymond Lull's works – preserved in Prague to this day (Hejnic, Polívka, p. 38, n. 44) as unique evidence of a very early acceptance of Lullism in the Czech Lands. However, after his return from Italy, Hilarius had no possibility to develop the Lullistic concepts due to his ecclesiastic-political activities. Therefore, the manuscripts brought from Italy remained mostly unnoticed in his time and Lullism only started to spread toward the end of the sixteenth century in the Czech lands. Hilarius was involved in numerous church-political activities, as well as frequent theological controversies with Hussite theologians primarily concerning the topic of the layman's chalice; his main opponent being the head of Hussite party, Jan Rokycana – the archbishop recognized by Hussites, yet never approved by the Roman Curia. Thus far, modern research has paid little attention to the theological content of Hilarius' disputes with Hussites (Urbánek 1921). He also wrote the history of the city of Plzeň (Pilsen) in a humanist manner (*Hystoria civitatis Plznensis*).

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Hilarius of Litoměřice

► Hilarius of Leitmeritz

Hill, Nicholas

Born: 1570, London

Died: c.1610–1620, Rotterdam

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Abstract

Nicholas Hill was one of the most intriguing and particular personalities of England during

the reign of James I. Details of his life are scarce. He is the author of *Philosophia Epicurea Democritiana Theophrastica proposita simpliciter, non edocta* which was first published in Paris in 1601 and appeared posthumously in a “purged” edition in Geneva in 1619 (Hill 2007).

His work was considered one of the first modern philosophical works containing an open discussion of the theories of Democritus and Epicurus and an affirmation of the heliocentric theory. There is also a significant and direct convergence between Hill and Giordano Bruno regarding the dimensions of the universe formulated in *De immenso*. The topics of the *Philosophia Epicurea* are discussed in 509 sentences or aphorisms – as Hill defines them – in which a number of Greek philosophical terms are disseminated. The work is introduced by a preface dedicated to his son and a series of 15 questions. To a hierarchical and subordinate view of reality, he opposes an alternative image of the world that shows strong traces of the complex model of interpretation of reality developed by Paracelsus.

Biography

Nicholas Hill was born in London and died in Rotterdam c. 1610–1620. He was educated at Merchant Taylor’s School and studied at St John’s College in Oxford. Hill matriculated in 1587, graduated, and was elected fellow in 1590, but within a year he had been deprived. According to some historians, above all John Aubrey, biographer and member of the Royal Society, the philosopher was “an intimate acquaintance” of the mathematician and geographer Robert Hues, a member of the Raleigh-Northumberland circle, which included the mathematicians Thomas Harriot and Walter Warner. According to Hues, Hill was in the retinue of Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, patron of science, and natural philosopher, during the 1590s. In 1603 he was involved in an abortive Catholic conspiracy against James I and joined himself with Mr. Basset, who, after Queen Elizabeth’s death,

pretended some right to the crown. After the conspiracy collapsed, the author of the *Philosophia Epicurea* left England and resided in Rotterdam, with his son Laurence. According to an account of Hues, recorded by Obadiah Walker, Master of University College, Oxford, Hill’s son died and he committed suicide. Aubrey reports in his *Brief Lives* that he was not only a natural philosopher and a practitioner of alchemical secrets but also a great Lullianist and a passionate scholar of *ars memoriae*. Ben Jonson refers to the philosopher in one of his epigrams as “an Englishman who maintained Democritus’ opinions,” and, in a quite ironical tone, as the English atomist *par excellence*. In the second section of the second part of the *Anatomy of Melancholy, A Digression of Ayre*, added in 1638, Robert Burton lists the defenders of the earth’s motion, the infinity of space, and the plurality of the worlds: among them there is Hill. In 1622 Tobias Adami in his preface to Tommaso Campanella’s *Apologia pro Galileo* lists the English philosopher among the supporters of the Copernican theory. Following Bruno, Hill maintained the universe is infinite and alive. Space and time are infinite and homogeneous: prime matter is formed of atoms, indivisible, solid particles of various shapes, whose motions and interrelations are governed by a force – vis – which radiates in a manner analogous to light. Atoms in Hill’s scheme are the “end of divine actions in nature” (aph. 116) and the simplest of all truths is: “natura est deus in rebus” or “nature is God in things.” The philosopher is convinced that the infinite creativity of God cannot but express itself in a physical universe that will itself be infinite, since only such a physically infinite and infinitely varied universe suits an infinite creating power. In many passages of the *Philosophia Epicurea*, the judgement pronounced by Hill above all toward Scholastic theology is implacable: it was primarily the conjunction between Aristotelian philosophical theory and the Christian religion that had compromised the understanding not only of the essence of God but also, as a consequence, of the natural world. According to the Paracelsian astronomy, the interior and exterior correspond, and they are considered in the supreme science the expression of the same

substance contained in the unity God-nature. The impressive presence in the *Philosophia Epicurea* of a terminology typical of the original synthesis of Paracelsian medicine, which the Danish Peder Sorensen had already used in *Idea medicinae philosophiae* (1571), indicates a precise choice of field. In his alchemical atomism and in the revival of the great Renaissance philosophical themes by the works of Francesco Patrizi and Giordano Bruno, there is a clue that allows attributing a more precise historical meaning to the philosophical positions expressed in the *Philosophia Epicurea*. According to Trevor-Roper, Hill was probably the author of a second treatise, manuscript, titled *De infinitate et aeternitate mundi*. A part of this manuscript poem in Bodleian library has been published (Plastina and Provvidera 2000) and a new manuscript of 64 pages, in toto, recently found, might be the complete text of Hill's work.

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Hippocrates and Hippocratism

Born: ca. 460, Kos [Greece]

Died: between 375 and 351, Larissa [Greece]

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Abstract

Considered the *father of medicine* according to the historiography of the *Great Figures*, Hippocrates practiced medicine in the Aegean area and in northern Greece during the fifth and early fourth century BC. As the descendent of a family of physicians from the island of Kos, he lived a twofold transformation of medicine and the medical profession, from a hereditary to an open profession and from tradition to observation. Although he did not necessarily write any work (or none of his works has been preserved), he has been credited with the writing of over 60 works of different types on a broad range of medical topics that gradually became what is currently known as the *Hippocratic Corpus* (Jouanna 1999). This collection was transmitted without interruption in Byzantium (though with a differentiated tradition according to the texts), and several treatises were translated into Latin as early as the sixth century AD (Temkin 1932) and into Arabic

mostly during the ninth century. The several Hippocratic works were differently transmitted in the Middle Ages, until they were rediscovered during the Renaissance with several printed editions of Latin translations at the end of the fifteenth century, a complete collection in Latin in 1525 and in Greek in 1526 (Temkin 1979). After it was eclipsed by the *Corpus Galenicum* until the mid-sixteenth century, the *Hippocratic Corpus* became again a major reference among physicians and in medical schools, being commented on by Herman Boerhaave in Leiden in the eighteenth century (Cantor 2002).

Biography

Almost nothing sure is known of Hippocrates' life because of divergences in the biographies that circulated already in antiquity. Born sometime around 460 BC on the Aegean island of Kos to a family of physicians (who identified themselves as Asclepiades, as did all physicians in that time who considered themselves as descendants of the god of medicine Asclepius), Hippocrates learned medicine from his father, got married in the island, and had three children. Hippocrates practiced and taught himself medicine in his native Kos. Soon famous in the Greek world and beyond, as a passage in Plato indicates, he is supposed to have been called to Abdera in northeastern Greece to examine Democritus, accused by his co-citizens to suffer from dementia. Also, he was invited to the court of the Persian king Artaxerxes I (reign 465–424 BC), but he declined. After his parents' death, Hippocrates left Kos for Thessalia, in continental Greece, sometime around 420, possibly to expand his experience by diversifying the areas where he was practicing medicine. From there he seems to have traveled to northern Greece, including the northern Aegean island of Thasos. Whereas the place of Hippocrates' death is known – the city of Larissa in Thessalia – the

date is not and must have been between 375 and 351 BC (Jouanna 1999).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

As the son of a family of physicians claiming to descend from the god of medicine Asclepius, Hippocrates certainly inherited the medical tradition of his time. At the same time, he was living a period of unprecedented scientific developments in the Greek world, which went together with a societal transformation that included a professionalization of intellectual activities. As a consequence, medical education was no longer limited to families of Asclepiades but became open to other members of society through apprenticeship. This transformation is best represented by the *Oath* attributed to Hippocrates, which is in fact a contract between a student and a mentor and does not only define the practice of medicine (for which the *Oath* is most known) but also stipulate the duties of the student to his mentor.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Hippocratic medicine – often defined by opposition to the medicine taught and practiced in the so-called School of Cnidus, supposedly proceeding according to more rigid prescriptions codified in the *Cnidian Sentences* – is characterized by its concept of the body and its method. The human body is considered an assemblage of parts and constituents that interact and are influenced by external factors (including the environment). The body and the bodily processes can be known through observation, correlations between facts (internal and external), and deductions. Health results from the equilibrium of all bodily constituents, whereas disease is provoked by the qualitative or quantitative alteration of any of the bodily elements (including because of environmental imbalances). Hippocratic method is based on the attention to the natural environment of the patients and, as a corollary, the morbidity of

populations (epidemiology); close observation of the signs presented by the patients (clinical analysis) and the comparison of different cases of the same diseases; the notion of the cycle of diseases culminating with the crisis; the identification (diagnosis) and knowledge of diseases (nosology), together with the prevision of their evolution (prognosis); the use of natural resources as therapeutic substances; the attention to nutrition for the maintenance of health and the prevention of diseases; and the use of exercise and physical therapy. Ethics and the regulation of the profession are essential components of Hippocratic medical practice. The whole Hippocratic approach to medicine was best expressed by the *Aphorisms*, each of which crystalizes one component of Hippocratism.

Impact and Legacy

Hippocratic medicine codified in writing the practice of the fifth- and fourth-century health care and provided it with a theoretical corpus in the form of a great variety of treatises that began to be collected as early as the Alexandrine period, while it was still increased with further treatises until the second century AD. The *Hippocratic Collection* was abundantly commented on, and interpreted, by Galen, and these commentaries were studied in Alexandria in late antiquity. A limited number of treatises were translated into Latin, possibly in Ravenna or in North Africa, sometime around the sixth century (Temkin 1932). From Byzantium, where the collection was transmitted in a canonical form and some treatises (e.g., the *Aphorisms*) had wider diffusion, several works were translated into Arabic in the ninth century. In the West, new Latin translations were made from Arabic, focusing on Galen's commentaries. These translations circulated widely and were gradually grouped in a small collection identified as the *Articella*, which was repeatedly printed as early as the late fifteenth century. After new humanistic translations were made on the basis of the Greek text and printed from 1476 on, the

whole collection was printed in Latin in 1525 and for the first time in Greek in 1526, the latter by the Aldine press (Temkin 1979). Hippocratic medicine did not enter university teaching until the mid-sixteenth century. From then on, Hippocratic treatises were commented on in very different ways by numerous physicians who saw Hippocrates as the founder of clinical medicine. This interpretative reappropriation culminated with Hermann Boerhaave (1668–1738) at Leiden, who considered himself the new Hippocrates (Cantor 2002).

Cross-References

- [Anatomy, Renaissance](#)
- [Galen](#)
- [Hebrew into Latin Translations in Renaissance Italy](#)
- [Translatio Studiorum](#)

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The Greek text of the full *Hippocratic Collection* can be found in the critical edition (with French translation) prepared by the French scholar, historian of medicine, and lexicographer Emile Littré and published under the title *Oeuvres complètes d'Hippocrate*, 10 vols. Paris: Baillière, 1839–1861. New editions of the Greek text (respectively, with French and English translations) are currently being published in the Collection des universités de France (Paris: Belles Lettres, 15 vols published) and the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 10 vols published).

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Historia Naturalis

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Abstract

In early modern academic natural philosophy – *philosophia naturalis* or *physica* – the fundamental body of facts was called *historia*, or sometimes *historiae*, histories. Knowledge of the causes qualified the factual knowledge of a phenomenon to be complete knowledge. Both kinds of knowledge were essential parts of the same discipline. According to this interpretation, which is clearly fleshed out by, e.g., Jacobus Zabarella, natural history was, consequently, no science nor a discipline on its own, but belonged to natural philosophy as long as it delivered factual knowledge from nature and “true” premises to the syllogisms of the science natural philosophy.

Synonyms

Natural History in Renaissance Philosophy

Semantic Change

To understand early modern *historia naturalis* or *physica*, it is crucial to grasp classical Greek and Latin concepts of *historia* and the concept *historia naturalis*. We do not only have to reckon with semantic change since that time, but more specifically, we have to pay attention to shifting meanings and nuances by different classical and early modern authors; not the least in the early modern reception and interpretation of the recurrent renaissance of the logic and natural philosophy of Aristotle.

Etymology

The Greek noun “histor” means originally “the one who knows” (Frisk 1960). This explains the old sense of “witness” and “arbitrator” (Snell 1924) and “to have seen” and, consequently, “to know.” We have this meaning in “polyhistor”; i.e., a person who knows much. When Herodotus uses the ionic variant of the word “historia,” it is often translated as “inquiry” (Schepens 2011). Sometimes, though, it suits the context better to translate it as “the result of inquiry” (How and Wells 1912; Snell 1924; Keuck 1934) or even “schriftliche Darlegung der Nachforschung” (Der Neue Pauly, vol. 5, “Historia”). The last step of this semantic journey implies that “historia” signifies, it is asserted, “systematic observation” and is used for “empirische Wissenschaft” (Snell 1924; Meier 1972, 97). I would like to suggest the more specific meaning “experiential or empirical knowledge.”

The Early Greek Exploratory Tradition

Herodotus, called the “father of history” by Cicero, belonged to a Greek tradition of explorers, who traveled widely and wrote down what they had seen and heard (Jacoby 1956a; von Fritz 1967; Stagl 2002). They aimed to describe experiential facts of, e.g., geography and ethnography out of what they had seen, autopsied, or heard from others, who had seen (Jacoby 1956b; Meister 1990). Jacoby even maintains that Herodotus started as a traveler and geographer, inspired by Hecataeus, later wrote ethnography, and became a historian first in Athens, when he, under the influence of the Periclean democracy, was challenged to write about the Persian wars. In writing about politics and war, chronology became a crucial component in describing and explaining not only “facts” but also causes.

The characteristic trait of an ancient Greek historian was not chronological reports, but factual reports (French 1994). The word that Herodotus regularly used for “narrative,” “narration,” “story,” or “history” is “logos,” not “historia.” The meaning of “historia” as “description,”

“chronological description,” or “chronological narrative” stems from an ionic and late interpretation of “historia,” that is after year the 300 (Menge-Güthling 1910).

Jacoby was fully aware that the ancient Greeks did not have “history” as an independent discipline, corresponding to history in our own time. Instead, Jacoby wrote about the “autoptic character of ionic Ιστοριη” and “the old Ιστοριη-character.”

Aristotle and the Concept of “Historia”

Physics or *philosophia naturalis* was the model discipline of Aristotle. In *Parts of Animals*, book 1, a clear division is made between sensory knowledge of φαίνομενα, and causal knowledge, αιτια, of the same phenomena (Kullmann 1974, 2014). For the Philosopher, the experienced knowledge or factual knowledge was inferior and called *historia*. Knowledge of causes or universals in natural philosophy was certain and therefore superior and called *scientia*. In that regard, the methodology was called “scientific,” since the goal was *scientia*. A researcher collects and classifies experienced or transmitted facts in order to establish universals. Statements of these universal truths are then used as premises in the search for causes and universals. This convincing interpretation of “historia” in the works of Aristotle has been presented and explained in a number of works by Wolfgang Kullmann, and before him, Arno Seifert smoothed the way (Seifert 1976).

Aristotle and Natural History

In the methodology of Aristotle, the researcher had to know “that” (oti), and thereafter “why” (dioti). Firsts facts and particulars and then, causes and universals. Natural history was about facts and facts plus their causes were what natural philosophy was all about. Both facts and causes were important parts in natural philosophy. According to this understanding, natural history was,

consequently, no science nor a discipline on its own, but belonged to natural philosophy, and delivered factual knowledge from nature to the discipline of natural philosophy and “true” premises to the syllogisms of the science. Therefore, Aristotle’s work *Historia animalium* (Περὶ Τὰ Ζῷα ἱστοριῶν, note the plural of “histories”) was, intentionally but not actually, all about presenting empirical results about living beings (Kullmann 2007).

The disciple of Aristotle, Theophrastus (370–287 f. Kr.) confirms this methodology in his *Historia plantarum* (Περὶ φυτῶν ἱστορίας) and his *De causis plantarum* (Περὶ φυτῶν αἰτιῶν). The Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder (23–79 e. Kr.) seems to have written *Naturalis historia* in a similar manner, although only the experiential part. It was about knowledge of particulars, *cognitio particularium*, and the knowledge was the result of inquiries. The histories were not chronological stories but essentially factual knowledge. Chronology had no intrinsic part in “historia.” Historia was a form of knowledge, experiential knowledge.

The Early Modern Aristotelian View of Natural History

Even though there was no single and unified Aristotelianism in the early modern epoch, there was an unbroken continuity of Aristotelian philosophy from the Middle Ages, which developed into an academic hegemony. The predominance was reinforced after the reformation and after a short interval of scattered Ramism (Risse 1964; Seifert 1996; Hammerstein 1996; Petersen 1921; Wundt 1939)

This implies that an Aristotelian theory of knowledge formed the basis of the whole academic enterprise. The most influential early modern interpreter of Aristotelian epistemology was, arguably, the Paduan logician and natural philosopher Jacobus Zabarella (1533–1589). He had a crucial role in reemphasizing the two kinds of knowledge and the Aristotelian concept of *historia* and influential Aristotelian scholars,

such as the reformed logician Bartholomäus Keckermann (1572–1608) was instrumental in disseminating it; in his case throughout the Protestant world at the very beginning of the seventeenth century.

What then did Zabarella say about natural history? In sum, Zabarella was careful in explaining that natural history was the deciding factual basis for natural philosophy, and that all disciplines, except metaphysics, had factual knowledge (*historiae*) at its base as a body of experiential knowledge of the external world, which could be experienced. Causal knowledge of the same phenomena was the epistemological goal of the discipline.

In his *De naturalis scientiae constitutione* (1586), Zabarella answers the question of whether books on *historia* constitute a part of *scientia naturalis*, that is, natural science or physics. His answer is both yes and no. Because, if *libri de historia* – Zabarella implies *historia naturalis* – contribute to the books on *scientia naturalis*, and these books, in their turn, assume an understanding of historical works, they constitute a part of *scientia naturalis*. That motivates also, Zabarella explains, the order of the books *De animalibus*, where the first ones are the books on *historia*. But if we only want to include books that are written demonstratively, then the books on *historia* are no part of *scientia naturalis*. Furthermore, in his *De naturalis philosophiae logicae* (*Opera logica* 1578), Zabarella asks the question of whether there could be an *ars historica*, there he declares that *historia* could be a part of logic, in the same way as the art of rhetoric and the art of poetry are. But he writes, “not just Aristotle, but no one else has, so far, written such an *ars historica* work, and perhaps it is not worth it, because it takes too much time.” In the light of his reception of this Aristotelian concept of *historia*, it is not hard to understand the unwillingness of Zabarella to accept an *ars historica*. As an epistemic category, *historia* is something else than a discipline. *Historia* was a fundamental part of all disciplines except one, but it did not constitute a discipline in itself. In practical philosophy, though, actions and events, *res gestae*, in *historia civilis* or *profana*, almost asked for chronology, and there an art could be possible, according to Zabarella, even

if it is, “perhaps not worth it,” because of its nature of being “a simple and naked narration of events.” In the work *De anima*, he concludes that nothing historical can be said about the soul, because the soul is “insensilis.”

This definition and designation of knowledge about *accidental*ia as *historiae* suggests a quite radical change of the picture in our understanding of the structure of early modern Aristotelian epistemology, since *historia* has commonly been understood as some chronological narrative part. But *historia* is obviously a homonym with at least two wholly different meanings. One chronological and one nonchronological.

This interpretation is also confirmed by a long-range of early modern scholars, who wrote in an Aristotelian manner on natural history within the discipline of natural philosophy and on other factual observations, *historiae*, such as anatomical within medicine and other academic disciplines. Suffice it to mention here the contemporary to Zabarella, the magisterial natural historian Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605). His chair though, which he assumed in 1561 at the university of Bologna, was in natural philosophy (Lines 2001; Fantuzzi 1774) and not in natural history. Zabarella’s explanation of this fits the data. Aldrovandi worked with the fundamental part of natural philosophy, observing, assembling, sorting, and publishing the very building blocks, the particular facts of the disciplines Medicine and Natural philosophy. That would also explain all the different titles as well as the compositions of his works or still unpublished manuscripts, which often include the word *historia* in the singular form, such as *Ornithologiae. Hoc est de avibus historiae* (1599) *Libri XII, Quadrupedum omnium bisulcorum historia* (1621), *Monstrorum historia* (1642), etc. There was even a common disdain, transmitted from Aristotle himself, that the necessary fieldwork collecting raw data was unworthy of a full-fledged scientist, who managed syllogisms and necessary truths. A nice early modern example of this is the famous anatomist Gabriele Falloppia, who had his chair in anatomy and surgery at the University of Padua from 1551 to 1562 (Bellorini 2016). He expressed in a letter (Falloppia 1970) that it was unworthy for a natural philosopher to

work only with natural history, since it only dealt with observation, not philosophical speculation, and with that, Falloppia meant working with syllogisms. Philosophical speculation was not just speculation but to track down the causes of all these *historiae* or factual descriptions.

Modern Research on Early Modern Natural History

Some modern researchers perceive natural history as a kind of initial collection of data before the real experimental and scientific work begins. This is the view of several modern scholars. Willhelm Risse does not write much about natural history at all in his standard work on early modern Logic, since he meant that it had nothing to do with logic. *Historia naturalis* of the Baconian fashion was interpreted as “bloss registrierende Naturbeschreibung” (Risse 1964). Lisa Jardine defines a natural history as “an uncritical record of observations of natural phenomena, which corresponds to the store in the memory of primitive sense-perceptions.” (Jardine 1974). Antonio Pérez-Ramos does not realize the importance of the Baconian project of creating a reliable Natural history and he does not problematize the fact that the restoration of Natural history is described by Bacon and others as the most time-consuming part of and the most important prerequisite for the philosophy of nature and the construction of scientific knowledge. The reason is quite clear, I think. Pérez-Ramos does not include Natural history in Francis Bacon’s idea of natural philosophy at all (Pérez-Ramos 1988). To be sure, other scholars even claim that natural history is a science in its own right, and, as such, comparable with other scientific disciplines and even a progenitor of modern natural science (Ogilvie 2006, 2014). What is more, even “invented as a science in the sixteenth century” (Ogilvie 2006) and “a truly encyclopedic science” (Findlen 2006). Peter Harrison classifies natural history as a historical discipline and in *The Bible, Protestantism, and the rise of natural science* Harrison aims “to explain how the systematic study of nature came to be incorporated into the humanities in the first place,

and to document those events which led to its eventual independence” (Harrison 2011). Dan Garber, on the other hand, says about Bacon that “philosophy is something quite distinct from history” and that Natural history “is linked not with natural philosophy, but with the other kinds of history, civil, ecclesiastical, and literary” (Garber 2010). Graham Rees, highlighted the importance of Natural history. The “establishing of facts was a sine qua non of Bacon’s programme,” wrote Rees in his introduction to *Novum Organum*. “Neglect of this,” Rees continued, “and of his writings on natural history is no help to a proper understanding of his enterprise.” Nevertheless, all the histories of Bacon are and Natural history as such is interpreted by Rees as a “starting point” (Rees 2004). In describing the magnificent plan of Bacon’s Great Instauration, part three on the natural and experimental history, *Phaenomena Universi, sive Historia Naturalis, & Experimentalis ad condendam Philosophiam*, was, according to Rees, “destined for his new functionally defined natural history which was the starting point for this new ‘interpretation of nature’.” The establishment of facts rested, according to Rees, on Natural history. Brian Vickers reminded readers in a footnote that “Bacon uses the term *Historia* in its (now obsolete) synchronic sense as” he quotes *Oxford English Dictionary*, 4, “a systematic account (without reference to time) of a set of natural phenomena. . .[cf. the use of *ιστορία* by Aristotle].” Vickers continues in the note that this “non-diachronic sense has nothing to do with historiography” (Vickers 1992). However, Vickers didn’t say anything further about this “synchronic” or “non-diachronic sense.”

In an article on the scientific methodology of Robert Boyle, the authors focused on the manuscript “Designe about Natural History” and they conceived it to be “enormously important” for the understanding of his “Baconian methodology” (Anstey and Hunter 2008). Earlier research from the 1960s and 1970s stressed the differences between the methodologies of Bacon and Boyle. The present authors, however, maintain that the two prominent figures of experimental philosophy basically were on the same track. They agreed on

how to do natural history. In earlier research, it has been said to be quite an uncomplicated and almost naïve activity. Now it is emphasized as something of utmost importance. Moreover, Anstey and Hunter were surprised that, e.g., Boyle's "Baconianism" has been treated by scholars without any reference to natural history. To their amazement, they pinpointed familiar names like Larry Laudan, Margaret Osler, Steven Shapin, Simon Schaffer, and Antonio Pérez-Ramos. No one since Peter Shaw in 1733 has, according to Anstey and Hunter, "mapped the precise contours of Boyle's Baconianism and in particular his articulation of the relation between natural history and natural philosophy."

In this somewhat bewildering disagreement among modern scholars, it might be helpful to tune in early modern scholars, such as Zabarella and Aldrovandi, to clear our understanding of the Aristotelian concept of "historia" and what early modern Natural history was and still is.

Cross-References

- [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)
- [Historia Naturalis](#)
- [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)

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Historical Supernovae

- [Stars in Renaissance Science](#)

Historiography

- [Historiography, Renaissance](#)

Historiography, Renaissance

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Abstract

As scholars and Humanists in the Renaissance were busy rediscovering Classical texts and deepening their awareness of ancient culture, they were also delving into the emerging nuances of historiography. Not only were intellectuals interested in preserving the events and memories of the past, but they were also interested in *how* this was performed. Ancient scholars, along with writers throughout the Middle Ages, certainly contributed to this discussion by placing a value on eye-witness accounts and facts based on human events (as opposed to mythological events).

The rediscovery of such texts by Renaissance intellectuals allowed this discussion of historical methodology to thrive and develop further. It was these scholars, devoted to rhetoric and its utility in creating didactic texts, who gave historiography a platform during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By definition, Historiography concerns itself with the *study* of history – not simply the works produced by historians, but the methodology of said historians as well. What is considered an acceptable source? What would adequate verification of that source look like? Does one use narrative, poetry, a speech or another form of writing to convey the historical subject matter they have in mind? These questions, among others, were tackled by multiple authors during the Renaissance.

This entry seeks to give the reader a general introduction to historiography, as well as the environment which so greatly fostered its development during the Renaissance.

Synonyms

[Historiography](#)

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Historiography plays a very interesting role in the Renaissance and has recently enjoyed a fair amount of attention from scholars. At first glance, it may seem like a small sub-section of other higher-profile topics such as philosophy, literature, and history itself. A closer look, however, will show how it factored into some seminal debates within Renaissance scholarship.

By definition, historiography is the study of history. It examines the products of past scholars who have written about history and have recorded significant events over the years. More importantly, it examines their methodology and practices, their use of sources, and their ideology surrounding the works they produced. How did they define a reliable source of information regarding the past and why? How did they conceptualize past civilizations and how did they interact with the texts and information that came into their possession? What form did they consider optimal for conveying information about the past: narration, genealogies, texts with a universal focus or texts with a specific time period or region in mind? Additionally, what was the *purpose* for writing about history? In recent years, literary theorists and philosophers (as we will see below), have raised skepticisms regarding history as a whole, including epistemological concerns regarding what actually happened in the past versus what the *text* itself purports. Can we really have an accurate idea of what happened in the past and if so, how do we obtain it?

As a discipline, historiography found a congenial environment for growth and development during the Renaissance. The years between 1400 and 1600 were characterized by an obsessive interest in ancient thought, literature, and philosophy since various works from ancient Greece and Rome were rediscovered after years of hiding during the Middle Ages. Given the value Renaissance thinkers placed on the works of Classical scholars, it will be helpful to begin our discussion with an examination of these sources.

While there is a myriad of Classical authors who influenced the Renaissance, we will focus on a handful who specifically shaped the field of history and prompted later Humanist scholars to

expound upon their works. Herodotus (c. 484–425/413 BCE), for example, author of the *Histories*, is known as one of the forerunners of western historical writing, along with Thucydides. Thucydides (c. 460/455–399/398 BCE) wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War* and was only a few years younger than Herodotus. Jeremy D. Popkin's book provides a solid introduction not only to the field of historiography at large, but also to the ancient authors listed here and their early historical contributions (Popkin 2016). As Popkin highlights in his discussion, although Herodotus and Thucydides were only separated by a short period of time, their historical methodologies were quite different and provided a rich starting point for historiographical discussion. Herodotus, for example, did not hesitate to include stories concerning the deities or mythology in his writings about Greek society. Thucydides, on the other hand, focused on recording only the events of which he could be certain – events purported by eye-witnesses and nothing of mythology (Popkin 2016; see also Lloyd 2012 and Mark 2009 for brief introductions to Thucydides and Herodotus, respectively). Thereafter we have Polybius (c. 200–118 BC), known for his keen observations regarding the evolution of various political systems, and Livy (c. 59 BC – 17 AD) with his history of Rome, *Ab urbe condita*. Both of these intellectuals were extremely formative for numerous Renaissance scholars (especially Leonardo Bruni).

Throughout the middle ages, we see a similar emphasis on eye-witness accounts as a result of the difficulty of relying solely on textual sources. Written sources, after all, were somewhat more scarce in the Middle Ages than they were in the Renaissance (and considerably more scarce than what we are accustomed to after the advent of the printing press and the internet). One interesting example is the *Cronica* of the Anonimo Romano, which includes a first chapter wherein the anonymous author states his reasons and methodologies for writing history, emphasizing that some of the events discussed in the work were witnessed firsthand either by himself or his contemporaries (Anonimo Romano 1981). In addition, chronologies and annual records, often maintained in monasteries, were a common medieval form of writing

history, which historians in the Renaissance consulted later on (Cochrane 1981). Many medieval historians also favored a “universal perspective” when composing their works; in other words, they attempted to create a comprehensive history starting from the Creation and working towards their own current position in time. As we will see, while this trend sometimes continued during the Renaissance, there was also a “municipal” aspect, if you will, during the Renaissance, with some histories focusing more on their city, as opposed to this “universal perspective.”

Building upon the scholarship before them, Renaissance intellectuals continued these historical debates and greatly added to the growth and development of historiography as a whole. And while their practice of history may still seem rudimentary and biased to the twenty-first-century eye, their accomplishments should still be analyzed and appreciated within their Renaissance context, as we will see in the following paragraphs.

While there are numerous Renaissance historians to choose from across continental Europe and Britain, we will start with one in particular given the spatial limitations of the current project, especially since many scholars consider him a forerunner of historiographical methodology during the Renaissance, despite the methodological weaknesses that still remained in his works. Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) was a statesman and a scholar in Florence just as the Renaissance was coming into full swing. He was heavily influenced by classical authors such as Livy, Polybius, and Thucydides, to name only a few. One of his more prominent works, the *History of the Florentine People*, was imminently well-received in Florence at the time and has provided a springboard for considerable debate regarding Renaissance historiography among modern scholars.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Both Gary Ianziti and Eric Cochrane point out the strengths and weaknesses of Bruni’s tactics. Some of the more important aspects that Bruni contributed to the historiographical considerations of his time were the fact that he preferred to explain consequential events via rationality – not with

the divine or mythological influences of some historians who preceded him, as mentioned above – but in examining the “...intentions, desires, passions, and personal idiosyncrasies of the individual actors...” (Cochrane 1981, 4). Rationality was a foundational characteristic of history for Bruni (Ianziti 2012, 242).

Bruni also demonstrates a heightened conscientiousness in using his sources for his projects. He consulted Florence’s archives in addition to relying on multiple sources as opposed to just one in order to improve accuracy and lessen any one-sidedness (Cochrane 1981, 4–5). Nonetheless, weaknesses, according to modern standards, are still prevalent in his work. Bruni would often reproduce significant sections of sources and classical authors. Ianziti also points out, in conjunction with the works of Anna Maria Cabrini and Riccardo Fubini, that Bruni was not opposed to manipulating his sources “...to suit his pro-Florentine agenda.” (Ianziti 2012 7–9, 229–30; Cabrini 1990; Fubini 2003).

History for Bruni, was also *useful*. It was to be didactic, with utility, not only for policy makers within the Florentine Republic, but for readers in general. While this was not necessarily a new idea (as Cicero was known for proclaiming history as one of life’s “great teachers”) it was unique in the sense that Bruni was offering his historical production within an immediately political context in Florence, something Niccoló Macchiavelli (1469–1527) would share with him a generation later.

It is important to note here, that another popular element of historiography during the Renaissance were speeches – namely speeches given by the main characters within the text of the historical work itself. Many historians during this time considered speeches as a way of adding to the rhetorical element of their work. Not only was it a way to instill the work with pleasing text for the reader, thereby increasing the text’s efficacy with didacticism, but it was also a way to convey the reasons and explanations for which historical figures acted as they did, as Cochrane points out in his discussion on Bruni: “...most of the speeches contain what for Bruni was the most important ingredient of history as a distinct literary genre: the *ratio*, or causes, of the events

recounted. [...] the causes were most appropriately expounded in the very words that were, or that might have been, pronounced by the agent.” (Cochrane 1981, 4).

Interestingly enough, the inclusion of such speeches within historiographical works produced in the Renaissance was subject to much debate among Renaissance scholars themselves. Anthony Grafton provides an interesting discussion of this in his work *What Was History?* (Grafton 2007). In his first chapter, he describes a scholarly rivalry between Jacob Perizonius (1651–1715) and Jean Le-Clerc (1657–1736), where Perizonius heads up the school supporting a rhetorical approach to history, in which speeches were appreciated and respected as an effective tool for the historian. Le-Clerc, on the other hand, championed a more factually-based approach to history, not necessarily a blind-faith reliance on classical authors, but an examination of one’s sources in order to produce an accurate explanation of the events that took place.

It is interesting to note that this discussion of historiographical methodology mirrored a more general discussion that also took place among Renaissance scholars regarding Latin literature, including Latin language itself, and the extent to which it should be mirrored in the original productions of their generations. Some Renaissance scholars argued that fully adopting a classical style with their Latin (more often based on Ciceronian Latin), would be the pinnacle of scholarly achievement, replicating the reason and elegance of the ancient thinkers they so appreciated. Others vouched for a more moderate approach. Others still (as we saw above in Grafton’s discussion of Le-Clerc) advocated a “modern approach” – moving away from imitation and on towards investigation and innovation. Thus, an important aspect to remember about Renaissance historiography is the varied context in which it evolved. On the one hand, there was an almost obsessive reliance and reverence for classical authors; including their writings (if not completely reproducing them) in one’s work was often favored. On the other, there was a growing pull for a more factually-oriented product.

Impact and Legacy

There were, of course, numerous other Renaissance scholars who participated in these discussions: Niccoló Machiavelli (1469–1527), Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), and Jean Bodin (1529/30–1596), to name only a few. We focused on Leonardo Bruni here in order to provide a survey of the methodological characteristics present within a renowned Renaissance historian.

It is important to note some of the thought and innovation which has recently occurred in historiographical research, as this will greatly effect anyone embarking on research regarding Renaissance historiography – or historiography of any period, for that matter. Towards the middle of the twentieth century, historiographers such as Hayden White (1928–2018) and Quentin Skinner (b. 1940–) have contributed to what is known as the “Linguistic Turn” – a movement within the discipline of historiography (as well as philosophy, literary theory, etc) where the authority of a historical *text* is no longer taken for granted, but questioned. The Linguistic Turn has its roots in analytic philosophy, specifically in the first half of the twentieth century, when philosophers such as Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970) and Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976) (among others including Wittgenstein [1889–1951] and Russell [1872–1970] before them) noted that the language with which we communicate information is very imperfect and susceptible to many weaknesses (Beaney 2014). In other words, these philosophers were questioning the accuracy, efficacy, and authority of language in communicating concepts. A similar distrust of language and the texts with which concepts were communicated manifested itself in the field of Historiography a few decades later with Hayden White’s work entitled *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Popkin 2016). Popkin discusses the Linguistic Turn and its influence within the field of Historiography – specifically White’s critique that historical works are more accurately described as narratives – inseparable from the author’s subjective perspective – as opposed to a treatise relying on objective evidence (Popkin 2016). As Popkin mentions, while *Metahistory*

received its fair share of criticism, “White’s emphasis on the literary character of historical narrative and his insistence that historians represent events rather than simply letting the facts speak for themselves has made members of the discipline more self-conscious about how they use language and shape their accounts.” (Popkin 2016, 136).

As Cochrane and Ianziti showed with Leonardo Bruni, works of history, even by the most respected authors in our western tradition, are susceptible to subjective influences. Facts can be distorted; biases can be taken. Similarly, the Linguistic Turn pointed out how much of the evidence and production of historians rely on information communicated via *language* – a medium highly susceptible to the biases and (sub)conscious influences of its authors and the societies in which they live. Peter Burke’s recent article about the influence of Hayden White’s *Metahistory* provides an insightful evaluation of the effect White’s work has had and its recent reception among current scholars (Burke 2013). Gabrielle Spiegel’s work also provides an examination of medieval historiography (particularly that of France) in the light of these advances in historical scholarship since the Linguistic Turn.

In closing, historiography during the Renaissance was the subject of much debate, development, and conscientious improvement, yet simultaneously prone to carrying on certain traditions, which, to the modern eye, should no longer constitute sound, historical methodology. Similarly, the field of history is under more theoretical scrutiny than it has been in the past, putting one of the main vehicles of recording history, the text itself, to a thorough examination. For further readings and information on the Linguistic Turn, please see the following sources: The Institute of Historical Research (2008), Spiegel (1993), Spiegel (1997), White (1973).

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- Guicciardini, Francesco

- Livy in the Renaissance
- Machiavelli, Niccolò
- Thucydides

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History of Radiation Theory

- Light Theory

History of the Marvelous

► Wonders in the Renaissance

Hobbes, Thomas

Born: 5 April 1588, Malmesbury, England

Died: 3 December 1679, Derbyshire, England

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Abstract

Thomas Hobbes is widely recognized as one of the most important philosophers of all time. He produced work in a variety of fields (including physics and mathematics), but he is best known for his incisive, innovative, and controversial contributions to political philosophy that have had a wide-ranging and lasting impact, especially in the development of contract theory and on theories of sovereignty and the state. Besides his most famous work, *Leviathan*, his major philosophical works include *The Elements of Law*, *De cive*, *De corpore*, and *De homine*.

Biography

Hobbes was born on 5 April 1588 in the parish of Westport, near the town of Malmesbury, in north Wiltshire in England. The period during which he was born was marked by a tumultuous point in the Anglo-Spanish war and just a few months after his birth, in August 1588, the (eventually defeated) Spanish Armada set sail with the purpose of invading England and overthrowing Queen Elizabeth I. Writing about this 84 years later in his verse autobiography, *Vita carmine expressa* (1679), Hobbes remarked that “my mother was filled with such fear that she bore twins, me and together with me fear” (Martinich

1999, 2) – a comment that also points to the central role fear later acquired in Hobbes’s thought and political philosophy. Little else seems to be known about Hobbes’s mother beyond this reference. His father (also called Thomas) was a poorly educated clergyman who served as curate of the nearby parish of Brokenborough. In 1604, he fled from Westport after having been punished with excommunication for exercising verbal and physical violence against the vicar of a neighboring parish, and spent the rest of his life in obscurity.

It is unknown whether Hobbes had the opportunity to see his father again after he fled away and it may perhaps be argued that these events partly sparked the anti-clericalism that became more prominent in his thought later in his life. At any rate, it appears that by the time of his father’s departure from Westport, Hobbes had already been sent to the University of Oxford, possibly with the expectation that as a younger son he would later pursue a career in the church while his elder brother, Edmund, would pursue a career in the cloth-making business. This was a trade practiced with considerable success by various other members of Hobbes’s extended family, including his uncle Francis who supported Hobbes’s education financially and paid for his tuition at Oxford. Besides his uncle Francis, Hobbes was also indebted for his education to Robert Latimer, a young clergyman in Westport who trained Hobbes in his earlier years in Latin and Greek. Latimer, who had studied at Magdalen Hall in Oxford, was an eager classicist. In him, Hobbes found not only an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher but also probably “an intellectual and moral father-figure” (Malcolm 1996, 15–6). Notably, Hobbes too chose to go to Magdalen Hall for his university education at around the age of 14, in 1602 or 1603. Hobbes later expressed criticism for the education he received at Oxford, complaining that the university curriculum was over-dominated by Aristotelian philosophy while excluding other authors and material. Rejecting Oxford’s scholasticism, he also expressed dismay at the fact that he had not been adequately exposed to the sciences, mathematics (especially geometry), but also such fields as astronomy.

Hobbes left Oxford upon completion of his BA, apparently without entertaining any interest in pursuing an ecclesiastical career. Upon the recommendation of the Principal of Magdalen Hall, John Wilkinson, he was immediately hired (probably in early 1608) by William Cavendish (a well-off, influential member of the aristocracy who became the first Earl of Devonshire in 1618) as a tutor to his son (also William). Hobbes, who was just a couple of years older than his pupil, came to serve Cavendish not simply as a tutor but also as a secretary, companion, and friend. Following this point, the Cavendish family provided Hobbes an with important source of patronage that lasted for a great part of his life. His introduction into the family and their connections gave him access to well-stocked libraries (a significant privilege given the high cost of acquiring books), but also numerous opportunities to continue his education, travel, and introduce himself to various formative intellectual circles of the day.

In 1608, Hobbes accompanied Cavendish to Cambridge during his studies at St. John's College and later joined him on a tour of France and Italy – a trip that was once thought to have begun in 1610, though more recent evidence suggests that Hobbes and Cavendish did not embark on this tour before 1614 (Martinich 1999, 29). Even though there is no definitive evidence concerning the date of their departure to the Continent, Hobbes and Cavendish were certainly in Venice in September 1614. While there, both men learned the Italian language; Cavendish exercised his knowledge by undertaking the translation of Francis Bacon's *Essayes* into Italian. On his return to England in 1615, Cavendish – who had previously also published (anonymously) *A Discourse against Flatterie* (1611), a work influenced by Bacon – came into contact with Bacon himself, who had a hand in the revision of his Italian translation of the *Essayes* before it was published in 1618. It was probably during this period, through Cavendish, that Hobbes himself met Bacon, for whom he appears to have done some work as a secretary. Hobbes also helped Bacon with the translation of some of his *Essayes* into Latin. Through Cavendish, who was a member of the Addled Parliament in 1614 and subsequently

of the 1621 parliament, Hobbes was also introduced to various other prominent figures of the day, politicians as well as writers, such as Sir Edwin Sandys and John Selden (with whom Hobbes later developed a friendship). Cavendish became the second Earl of Devonshire after the death of his father in 1626, but his life ended prematurely just 2 years later, in 1628. At about this time, Hobbes was completing his translation of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, an important scholarly achievement that provided the first English translation of Thucydides' text directly from the Greek. Published in 1629 under the title *Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre*, the translation was dedicated to Cavendish's elder son, the third earl of Devonshire.

Having left the service of the Cavendish family after the death of the second earl, Hobbes found employment in the next 2 years as a tutor to the son of the wealthy landowner Sir Gervase Clifton. During this period he undertook his second tour to the Continent, as in 1629–30 he accompanied his young pupil on a visit to France and Switzerland. Evidence suggests that during this trip Hobbes started reading Euclid's *Elements* and grew passionate about the work's deductive method (Malcolm 1996). Even though this in all likelihood was not his first exposure to geometry, this points to his growing passion for this subject that was to provide his “intellectual paradigm for all true philosophy” and “a standard for any discipline that claimed to be a science” (Rogers 2007, 414). Indeed, as has been argued, the significance of geometry for Hobbes's philosophy cannot be adequately stressed: the analytical method of proof, demonstration, and certainty he found there came to inform all other facets of his philosophy (Martinich 1999, 85).

His preoccupation with mathematics and the sciences more broadly continued after his return to England when he resumed his service to the Cavendishes, having been hired in early 1631 by the second earl of Devonshire's widow as a tutor to her son, the third earl, to whom Hobbes had previously dedicated his translation of Thucydides. His strong interest in the sciences continued well into the 1630s. This decade was particularly important for his intellectual development, as

during these years he also started to give shape to his political philosophy. Studies suggest that during this decade he came into contact with a number of prominent figures in England, having developed connections with various members of two important intellectual groups in the country, the so-called Great Tew circle that gathered around Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland (and included such figures as Lord Falkland, Sydney Godolphin, William Chillingworth, and Edward Hyde, first earl of Clarendon), and the so-called Welbeck academy (a group of thinkers with a particular interest in science who gathered around the earl of Newcastle). The latter included such figures as Newcastle's brother, Sir Charles Cavendish, whose interest in mathematics served to stimulate Hobbes's own interest in areas such as geometry, optics, and physics even further.

During this period, Hobbes also came into contact with a number of leading intellectuals on the Continent. This happened during his third tour to the Continent, undertaken with his pupil, the third earl of Devonshire, from 1634 to 1636. Besides sojourns in Rome, Florence, Venice, and Lyon, this tour also included two prolonged stays in Paris, which placed him in the company of such important figures as Marin Mersenne, who had a central position in an extended network of leading intellectuals including René Descartes and Pierre Gassendi. During this tour, he is also believed to have met Galileo in Florence. As has been argued, "Hobbes's speculations about the physical universe took wing during this visit to Europe" (Martinich 1999, 91). Indeed, it is probably during this period that he came to adhere more firmly to some of the most important premises in his philosophy – more specifically, his materialist notion of the universe and the idea that "all that exists, including all human cognitive processes and actions, was nothing but motion" (Martinich 1999, 90).

Hobbes eagerly continued his scientific and philosophical work after his return to England in October 1636. During this period, he began to analyze his materialist notion of the universe in greater depth, developing his ideas around three types of bodies; the three main parts, as he later

argued in his verse autobiography, of "The whole *genus* of philosophy . . . *Corpus, Homo, Civis*, body, man and citizen" (transl. by Skinner, in Skinner 2002, 7). Framed with this notion, he then decided "to write three books on these issues, and started to collect [his] materials every day" (transl. by Skinner, in Skinner 2002, 8). Thus, a great part of his intellectual efforts after his return to England in 1636 concentrated on this tripartite project.

By the end of the 1630s, he produced his earliest surviving scientific treatise, a manuscript called the "Latin Optical MS." Concentrating on optics (which would later be the subject of the first half of Hobbes's book *De homine*, published in 1658), this treatise launched a critique of Descartes's mechanistic physics in the "Dioptrique," the basic premises of which (as, for example, the idea that perception is the product of physical motion) closely resembled Hobbes's own theories. This was followed by an exchange of letters between the two philosophers that soon developed into a cantankerous argument that continued for a great part of their lives over who had advanced these ideas first, with each side even accusing the other of plagiarism.

By May 1640, Hobbes also completed his first major philosophical work, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*. This work, which tackled the third part of Hobbes's tripartite project, was dedicated to his patron, the Earl of Newcastle. The dedicatory epistle was signed shortly after the abrupt dissolution of the Short Parliament of April 1640 which gave voice to many concerns regarding various issues that marked King Charles I's so-called personal rule in the 1630s. This included King Charles's attempts to levy ship-money without parliamentary approval, an issue that raised various questions concerning the limits of sovereign power and the extent to which the power of the king was absolute. Members of the Short Parliament expressed fierce opposition to this notion and by extension to the idea that the king had the right to impose taxes and confiscate his subjects' property without parliamentary approval, or be the judge of what circumstances were exceptional. In *The Elements of Law*, Hobbes developed the reasons why he thought

sovereignty was necessary but also argued that those exact reasons made it necessary for sovereignty to be absolute. Therefore, he held that it was also necessary for all the rights of the subjects, including their rights to private property, to be ceded to the sovereign. While some of the ideas found here would be developed in closer detail in his two later publications, *De cive* and *Leviathan*, *The Elements of Law* contains many of the basic premises of Hobbes's political philosophy.

Even though Hobbes's notion of sovereignty as would later be remodeled in *Leviathan* is not necessarily tied with monarchy, *The Elements of Law* (numerous copies of which circulated in manuscript) was read as a clearly pro-royalist text that advocated the absoluteness of the king's power. Within the tumultuous political context of the period, the reception of his book gave Hobbes good cause to fear for his safety. As he later remarked, *The Elements of Law* "occasioned much talk of the Author; and had not His Majesty dissolved the Parliament, it had brought him into danger of his life" (quoted in Malcolm 1996, 28). The growing intolerance toward pro-royalist polemic in the newly-convened Long Parliament in late 1640 gave him grounds to think that he might be brought to account for his book, so by the end of the year, he fled the country and found refuge in Paris. By this time, he was financially secure enough to venture a long sojourn abroad.

During his self-exile in Paris in the 1640s, Hobbes found himself in an intellectually stimulating community within which he further developed his intellectual pursuits, especially in physics, metaphysics, and theology. Coming back into the company of his old acquaintance Marin Mersenne, he was introduced to a number of leading French philosophers and scientists, including such figures as Pierre Gassendi (with whom he developed a close friendship), Gilles Personne de Roberval, and Abraham du Prat. It was Mersenne who also made the arrangements for the publication in 1642 of Hobbes's *De cive*, a book that developed many of the ideas found in *The Elements of Law*. Subsequently re-issued twice in 1647, *De cive* is the work that served to firmly establish Hobbes's reputation as a political

philosopher in Europe. Following the first publication of the book in 1642, Hobbes turned his attention to the natural sciences and wrote a massive critical response to *De mundo*, a treatise by Thomas White (an English Catholic priest who was also in exile in Paris) that had been published in September 1642. During the 1640s, Hobbes also worked on various drafts of *De corpore*, his major attempt in the fields of logic, metaphysics, and physics. His work on this book (eventually published in 1655) faced various obstacles and interruptions, especially after the arrival in Paris in 1645 of the two brothers, also royalist exiles, Sir Charles Cavendish and the marquis (formerly earl) of Newcastle. It was at the latter's instigation that Hobbes engaged in a debate with the Anglican cleric John Bramhall (who was also exiled in France) over the nature of free will. As part of this disputation, Hobbes wrote a short treatise titled *Of Libertie and Necessitie* (which was published without his permission by John Davies in 1654). Also, in the summer of 1646, Hobbes assumed duties as the mathematical tutor of the young Prince Charles, newly arrived in Paris. While his assumption of this position probably interrupted his work on *De corpore*, it brought him into contact with an even greater circle of royalist exiles (including such figures as Edward Hyde and the poet Sir William Davenant). His old friend, the poet Edmund Waller, also found himself exiled in France after 1644.

It was later in the 1640s that Hobbes's thoughts probably turned more insistently back to England and he started contemplating his return. This was perhaps prompted by the fact that in 1648 he lost the company of two of his closest friends in Paris: Mersenne who died in September of that year, and Gassendi who subsequently left the French metropolis. Hobbes's homeward mood near the end of the 1640s may also be suggested by the fact that he took the trouble to have *Leviathan* (the work he would later become most famous for) printed in London. He probably did not start writing *Leviathan* until later in 1649, but his work progressed rapidly so the book was published in 1651. By that time, the political situation in England had changed drastically since Hobbes's departure. Following the defeat of royalist forces

in the civil wars that started in 1642, the country saw the execution of King Charles I in January 1649 and thereupon the establishment of a republic. Hobbes's powerful analysis of sovereignty in *Leviathan* gains special currency within this historical context. On the basis of his discussion, sovereign power can only be properly sovereign if it remains absolute and undivided. In a poignant comment on the situation in his country, he suggests that the ravages of the civil war – a situation that for Hobbes is akin to the condition he describes as the “state of nature” (a horrifying condition of perpetual war of all against all) might have been avoided in England if people had understood the significance of the indivisibility of sovereign power: “if there had not first been an opinion received of the greatest part of England, that these Powers were divided between the King, and the Lords, and the House of Commons, the people had never been divided, and fallen into this Civill Warre” (Hobbes 1996, 127). As he further notes in the same passage, “a Kingdome divided in it selfe cannot stand” (Hobbes 1996, 127).

Yet, Hobbes's endorsement of absolute sovereignty and his expression of dismay for the fact that England was thrown into the devastating experience of civil war should not be seen as an unequivocal demonstration of support for Stuart monarchy or, more generally, for monarchy as a constitutional form. Ironically, while providing an unmistakable championing of absolute sovereignty, the argument in *Leviathan* was found to be at least distasteful by the royalist camp – especially due to how Hobbes responded to the ideological controversy caused by the so-called Engagement, the oath citizens were required to take after the establishment of the new republic to declare their loyalty to the new order. This was a challenging situation for royalist supporters, many of whom were ejected from their livings due to their refusal to take the oath. In various other cases, royalists (including Hobbes's friends, the earl of Devonshire and Sir Charles Cavendish) had their estates sequestered, with the new authorities insisting that they should “compound” – that is, pay money to the parliamentary government – if they wanted to get them back.

Emphasizing the significance of self-preservation, Hobbes's discussion in *Leviathan* suggests that one's change of allegiance from an old authority to a new one is a rational action. A sovereign, he argues, is no longer sovereign when he fails to protect the population and thereby subjects have no obligation to give obedience to him, but may consent to obey whoever has been invested with sovereign power, such as a conqueror. As becomes clear in this work, Hobbes's discussion of sovereignty concerns not only monarchy as he also refers to the possibility of its being exercised by an assembly of men. On the basis of this theory, the royalists' change of allegiance and their declaration of loyalty to the new Commonwealth should be seen as a rational and fully justified action. A few years later, Hobbes remarked that his book was written for “those many and faithful Servants and Subjects of His Majesty” who had to negotiate with the new authorities; those who “had done their utmost endeavour to perform their obligation to the King, had done all that they could be obliged unto; and were consequently at liberty to seek the safety of their lives and livelihood wheresoever, and without Treachery” (quoted in Malcolm 1996, 32).

While this argument in *Leviathan* might have been welcomed by a number of royalist supporters at the time, it of course displeased Charles II, the son of the executed King Charles I who had been Hobbes's pupil in Paris and to whom Hobbes presented a manuscript copy of the book. It should also come as no surprise that Charles II's Catholic mother, Henrietta Maria, and those around her in the exiled court in Paris, should have been offended by *Leviathan*'s fierce critique of the Catholic church – an element that also put Hobbes into trouble with the Catholic clergy in France. Having been barred from the exiled English court, Hobbes fled from Paris near the end of 1651 and arrived in London early in 1652.

Back in England, Hobbes soon got back in the service of the Earl of Devonshire. His employment probably did not include much more than light secretarial duties, so he had ample time to continue his intellectual pursuits and managed after years of delay to finally publish the two

remaining parts of his tripartite philosophical project, *De corpore* (1655) and *De homine* (1658). He spent a great part of his time in London, so he had the opportunity to enjoy the company of a number of prominent intellectuals of the day, such as the lawyers John Selden and John Vaughan, and the physicians William Harvey and Charles Scarborough. Also, he came back into contact with Sir Charles Cavendish and was acquainted with various more unorthodox circles, such as those around Thomas White (the Catholic Aristotelian philosopher and author of the scientific-theological treatise *De mundo* that Hobbes had refuted in the 1640s in a manuscript that remained unpublished until 1973) and John Davies (whose unauthorized publication of Hobbes's *Of Libertie and Necessitie* in 1654 included a fiercely anti-clerical preface).

At the same time, Hobbes started to attract the enmity of many of his contemporaries due to the publication of *Leviathan*. These included members of the clergy – Anglican, Presbyterian, as well as Catholic – who not only found many of the arguments made in *Leviathan* deeply unorthodox but were also troubled by Hobbes's fierce attack on priestly authority. Further, Hobbes received a hostile treatment by leading scholars at the universities (such as the Oxford scientists Seth Ward and John Wilkins), who were offended by his critique of these institutions in *Leviathan*. This critique “became suddenly topical when a proposal was made in the Barebones Parliament in 1653 to abolish [the universities] altogether” (Malcolm 1996, 34). The enmity of leading scientists of the day probably contributed to Hobbes's exclusion from the Royal Society when it was instituted in 1660, though, as has been suggested, his exclusion was probably due not so much to this factor or indeed to the incompetence of some of Hobbes's mathematical work (especially as found in *De corpore*), but to the fact that “the aura of religious notoriety clinging to Hobbes meant that any public association with him would be a source of embarrassment to the active members of the Royal Society” (Malcolm 1996, 35).

Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, he managed to re-ingratiate himself with

Charles II, who also gave him a generous pension of about £100 per year (albeit temporarily) as well as the privilege of free access to his person. However, in this period Hobbes came to be increasingly attacked by many for allegedly being an amoral atheist who denied the existence of objective moral values and, according to John Aubrey's biography of Hobbes in *Brief Lives*, in the early 1660s “some of the bishops made a motion to have the good old gentleman burn't for a heretique” (quoted in Skinner 2002, 27). In 1666, a committee was set up by Parliament to “receive Informacion toucheing such books as tend to Atheisme Blasphemy or Prophanenesse or against the Essence or Attributed of God. And in perticular . . . the booke of Mr. Hobbs called the *Leuiathan*” (quoted in Malcolm 1996, 37). Thus, much of Hobbes's intellectual energy was spent on defending himself from such charges, and his anxiety over this issue led to the writing of a number of texts, such as his *Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England* (posthumously published in 1681), *Mr. Hobbes Considered* (a short autobiographical text published in 1662), his *Historical Narration Concerning Heresy, and the Punishment Thereof* (posthumously published in 1680), and an appendix to the Latin edition of *Leviathan* (published in 1668), part of which aimed to respond to the charges of heresy and expose the absurdity of seeing heresy as a crime.

Hobbes's writings during this period, however, did not only concentrate on heresy. Besides the texts mentioned above, he also wrote and published various other texts that continued his long-standing contribution to some of his main areas of interest. He did further work on geometry and published in 1666 *De principiis et ratiocinatione geometrarum*. But more importantly, Hobbes continued his contribution to the field of civil science, first with the writing of his four dialogues on the English civil wars titled *Behemoth*. Evidence suggests that a draft of this text was finished in 1666 and that Hobbes revised it for publication in 1668, but failed to have it printed as he did not manage to persuade Charles II to license it. *Behemoth* eventually appeared in a pirated edition in 1679. Hobbes also set his mind

to producing a Latin edition of *Leviathan* (published, as previously mentioned, in 1668). This edition presents a number of significant departures from the English version, especially as it contains various deletions (mainly of points where he had mocked the Christian mysteries) and additions (such as the abovementioned appendix). Immediately after his completion of the Latin *Leviathan* and in response to Bramhall's *The Catching of the Leviathan* (1668), Hobbes wrote *An Answer to a Book Published by Dr. Bramhall*. This text brought to its close an intense period of productivity for Hobbes.

Hobbes's productivity and intellectual vigor during this period appear all the more remarkable, not only because of his advanced age but also because he suffered from the "shaking palsy," a severe disease (probably Parkinson's) that from 1656 onward rendered him unable to write and forced him to have to rely on the services of an amanuensis. The extraordinary force of Hobbes's intellectual achievement in his old age is also testified by the fact that – despite an illness that left him nearly dead in 1668 – he continued being productive until the very end of his life. In the 1670s, he turned his attention back to the humanistic studies that shaped his youthful years. In 1673, he published *The Travels of Ulysses* (a translation in English verse of the last four books of Homer's *Odyssey*), and then in the following year, he produced English versions of the entire *Odyssey* as well as the *Iliad*. Finally, in 1679 he published his autobiography in Latin verse. In October of that year, he fell seriously ill. He died at Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, on 4 December 1679, at the advanced age of 91, having suffered a stroke a week before his death.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

It has often been argued that Hobbes's philosophical thought was shaped by the massive outburst of scientific enquiry that marked the intellectual climate of the seventeenth century. However, as has also been suggested, Hobbes's early intellectual development, before his firm turn to the sciences (natural and moral) in the 1630s, was

shaped by the culture of humanism and humanist studies (see, for instance, Tuck 1989, 1–11). Indeed, a great part of his studies up to that point (i.e., up to his early fifties) was based on what P. O. Kristeller once identified as the five elements of the *studia humanitatis* – grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy (Kristeller 1961, 22). On this basis, Hobbes was not so much "a product of the scientific culture to which he later contributed so extensively, but rather ... a student and exponent of the predominantly literary culture of humanism" (Skinner 2002, 38). Ironically, he was later to repudiate some of the basic tenets of the *studia humanitatis*, and the philosophical ideas for which he would become most well-known would be based on a direct dismissal of classical philosophy, especially of Aristotle.

Hobbes received rigorous training in the *studia humanitatis* early in his life, through the education he acquired as a grammar school boy in Elizabethan England. The classical humanistic syllabus typically concentrated on the two main elements of grammar and rhetoric. According to John Aubrey's biography of the philosopher, Hobbes was given such a remarkable level of proficiency in the classical languages, Greek and Latin, by his schoolmaster Robert Latimer, that "before he went to the University, he had turned Euripidis Medea out of Greeke into Latin iambiques, which he presented to his master" (quoted in Skinner 2002, 39). The syllabus on the second primary element, rhetoric, would typically include the major classical treatises on the art of rhetoric, especially Cicero's *De inventione* and *De oratore*, as well as Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*. These works reflected on the nature of civil science and emphasized the significance of rhetoric in the life of the good citizen. For instance, in *De inventione*, Cicero's examination of the qualities one must possess in order to give advice to his fellow citizens on the matter of how to live together in peace leads him to argue that the ideal citizen must possess two important elements: first, wisdom and the power to reason so as to find out the truth, and then, eloquence so as to persuade others of that truth. In this discussion, wisdom and the power of reason are described as largely

ineffective in the absence of eloquence, thereby establishing rhetoric (i.e., the art of adorning the truth so as to convince others) as an indispensable element, especially for the participation of the citizen in public assemblies and law courts. But, as Quintilian reminded his readers, in assemblies as well as in law-courts, rhetorical arguments could be used “in utramque partem,” that is, “on either side of the case” and in such cases, it is practically impossible to prove beyond question which side is in the right (Skinner 2002, 71). Thus, the ability to “speak on either side of the case” came to be defined by Quintilian as well as Cicero as the highest element in the art of rhetoric. (As we shall see, Hobbes was to launch his own philosophical ideas on civil science by repudiating the basic premises advocated in these classical handbooks on the art of rhetoric.)

Besides grammar and rhetoric, Hobbes’s training in the *studia humanitatis* would also include the other three disciplines of the classical humanistic syllabus, namely history, poetry, and moral philosophy. His preoccupation with all five elements of the *studia humanitatis* continued well after his years as a grammar school boy, more so after his first visit to the Continent with the young Cavendish and his return to England in 1615. He devoted a great part of his time (especially in the 1620s) to the study of classical poetry, reading such poets as Horace, Virgil, and Homer, as well as dramatists like Euripides, Sophocles, Plautus, and Aristophanes. At the same time, he engaged in the study of history: evidence suggests that besides Thucydides – whose history, as already mentioned, he translated directly from the Greek (a translation published in 1629) – he also read such classical historians as Sallust and Plutarch. His studies after his return to England in 1615 were rounded off with an exploration of moral and civil philosophy. His reading in this discipline included such texts as Justus Lipsius’s *De doctrina civili*, but also works produced closer to his own time, such as Thomas More’s *Utopia*, Jean Bodin’s *Six Livres de la République*, and Francis Bacon’s *Essays* (Skinner 2002, 44).

Hobbes’s preoccupation with the *studia humanitatis* continued well into the 1630s, during the years he served as tutor to the young William

Cavendish, third earl of Devonshire. Though it appears to have included some logic, arithmetic, geography, and geometry, the syllabus he devised for the young boy was primarily based on the *studia humanitatis*. So Hobbes himself continued his studies in this field along with his student. Hobbes’s writings during this period also reflect the central position that he gave to humanistic studies. Besides his translation of Thucydides’s history, he also paraphrased in Latin Aristotle’s “*Art*” of *Rhetoric*; an English version of this work was subsequently published (anonymously) as *A Briefe of the Art of Rhetorique* (c. 1637), a work that provided the first printed English version of Aristotle’s “*Art*” of *Rhetoric*.

However, *The Elements of Law* and *De cive* both point to Hobbes’s subsequent repudiation of some of the basic tenets of humanist learning, more specifically of classical notions about rhetoric, in his attempt to establish the unshakeable foundations of civil science. The title Hobbes chose for *The Elements of Law* – which evokes the title of the first English translation of Euclid’s treatise on geometry, namely *The Elements of Geometry* (published in 1571) – is in itself suggestive as it would serve “to associate his own treatise in the minds of his readers with one of the most celebrated works of deductive reasoning ever written” (Skinner 2002, 75). Also, in his dedicatory epistle, Hobbes explicitly challenges the assumptions of such classical theorists as Cicero and Quintilian who argued that reason unaided by rhetoric is ineffective as it does not have the power to persuade, suggesting that his own work lays down the foundations for the establishment of a civil science the conclusions of which cannot be contested as they are based on “the rules and infallibility of reason” (Hobbes 1994, 19). Likewise in *De cive*, the first edition of which appeared 2 years later, he highlights that his own ambition is to persuade his audience “not by any outward display of *oratio* but rather by the firmness of *rationes*” (transl. Skinner, in Skinner 2002, 76).

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes appears to reevaluate his former outright rejection of rhetoric as he comes to acknowledge that people are not always prepared to accept the otherwise infallible conclusions reached by reason. Yet, his critique of

classical political philosophy (or, moral philosophy, as he usually calls it) extends beyond this particular point and in *Leviathan* he continues to denounce some of the most important tenets of classical political philosophy. The traces of this denunciation may be found in *De cive* where Hobbes describes all moral philosophy prior to his own, and more specifically classical philosophy, as the source of conflict, sedition, and ultimately chaos and violence. This description is largely based on classical philosophers' advocacy of the idea that tyrannicide is not only licit but even praiseworthy. Held by many in his own days, this "seditious doctrine," as Hobbes calls it, was advocated "of old . . . by all the philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and the rest of the maintainers of the Greek and Roman anarchies" who believed that it was "not only lawful, but even worthy of the greatest praise" (Hobbes 1991, 246). Hobbes refers to how dangerous he considers this doctrine to be, highlighting his disapproval of the notion that private men should be entitled to judge the justice of the actions of kings as this could easily lead to chaos. As he argues in *Behemoth*, such political teachings ultimately contributed to the eruption of the civil war in England in the 1640s as they led "an exceeding great number of the better sort" who had read "books written by famous men of the ancient Grecian and Roman commonwealths concerning their polity and great actions; in which books the popular government was extolled by the glorious name of liberty, and monarchy disgraced by the name of tyranny" to fall "in love with their forms of government" (Hobbes 1990, 3). Elsewhere in *Behemoth*, reference is made to how "the democratical principles of Aristotle and Cicero," so warmly embraced by many members of the Long Parliament, led to "the rebellion we now talk of" (Hobbes 1990, 43).

As has often been pointed out, Hobbes's denunciation of classical philosophy frequently concentrated on Aristotle (see, for instance, Sorell 1999). Indeed, in many cases, Hobbes refers to the classical philosopher with outright contempt – even though, as has been argued, in some of his works he actually depended strongly on Aristotle (Leijenhorst 2002). His denunciation of Aristotelian philosophy is clearly expressed in *Leviathan*

where he states that "scarce any thing can be more absurdly said in naturall Philosophy, than that which now is called *Aristotles Metaphysiques*; not more repugnant to Government, than much of that hee said in his *Politiques*; not more ignorantly than a great part of his *Ethiques*" (Hobbes 1996, 461–62). Expressing his strong disapproval for the central position given to Aristotelian philosophy in university curricula, he also notes disparagingly that what was taught there was "not properly Philosophy . . . but Aristotelity" (Hobbes 1996, 462). For Hobbes, Aristotelian thought had a detrimental impact, not only with regard to the development of political philosophy in the period that preceded him but also with regard to the political situation in his country as it developed in the 1640s.

One of the most important points in Hobbes's critique of Aristotle concerns the "doctrine of abstract essences" – that is, the theory "according to which there are in the world certain essences separated from bodies and thus beings with an incorporeal existence" (Stauffer 2016, 488). Tracing its origin back to Aristotle, Hobbes launches a sustained attack against this idea. For him, the idea of incorporeal existence was particularly dangerous, especially due to the political danger it entailed. As he argues, belief in the doctrine of abstract essences strengthens the power of religious authorities that "can challenge the temporal power in the name of a higher spiritual kingdom" (Stauffer 2016, 488). Therefore, it serves to deplete subjects' obedience to civil authority. As he suggests in *Leviathan*, in order for political stability to be ensured men should "no longer suffer themselves to be abused, by them, that by this doctrine of *Separated Essences*, built on the Vain Philosophy of Aristotle, would fright them from Obeying the Laws of their Countrey, with empty names" (Hobbes 1996, 465). In response to the doctrine of abstract essences, Hobbes provides a powerful statement of his own belief in materialism, asserting that "The World (I mean not the Earth onely . . . but the *Universe*, that is, the whole masse of all things that are) is Corporeall, that is to say, Body" (Hobbes 1996, 463).

Another important point in Hobbes's critique of Aristotle concentrates on the issue of human nature and the extent to which human beings are

by nature fit for society. Hobbes's discussion of human nature strikingly rejects the idea that man is naturally social – an idea famously expressed by Aristotle in *Politics* where he asserts that man is by nature a political animal. For Hobbes, “the naturall condition of mankind,” namely the condition in which human beings find themselves in the absence of a common power to keep them all under submission (Hobbes 1996, 86), is a condition of “warre, as is of every man, against every man” (Hobbes 1996, 88):

In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things are require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short. (Hobbes 1996, 89)

This largely unappealing view of the state of nature is explained by Hobbes on the basis of his belief in the natural equality of humankind – an idea that he defines in terms of the equal capacity human beings have to destroy and kill each other irrespectively of whatever differences there may be in their physical or mental condition. By implication, Hobbes suggests that human beings are naturally prone to antisocial competition and conflict as the natural equality they have in their capacity for mutual destruction makes them all entertain equal hopes in the pursuit of their ends (Hobbes 1996, 87). As he claims, it is largely due to the fear they feel in this condition, and due to their desire for conveniences they cannot secure in the state of nature, that human beings are prompted to seek peace (Hobbes 1996, 90).

Hobbes further highlights his disagreement with Aristotle's view of human nature by suggesting that in their natural condition men even compare unfavorably with certain kinds of animals such as bees and ants which “Aristotle numbred amongst Politicall creatures” (Hobbes 1996, 119). Launching a comparison between the two, he ultimately concludes that “the agreement of these creatures is Naturall” whereas “that of men, is by Covenant only, which is Artificiall”

(Hobbes 1996, 120). Such a covenant appears to be the only way for human beings to escape the constant war of all against all that defines the state of nature and to safeguard what Hobbes calls the “Right of Nature,” the inalienable right of each individual has to self-preservation (Hobbes 1996, 91). But the constancy and longevity of the agreement can only be achieved by the establishment of “a Common power” that will “keep [the people] in awe, and . . . direct their actions to the Common Benefit” (Hobbes 1996, 120). For Hobbes, such a common power can only be established if people agree “to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will” (Hobbes 1996, 120).

The outcome of this process whereby the multitude unites itself into a single person is the establishment of the Commonwealth: “This is the Generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speake more reverently) of that *Mortall God*, to which wee owe under the *Immortal God*, our peace and defence” (Hobbes 1996, 120). Hobbes's employment of the figure of Leviathan (the biblical sea monster found in such places as the Book of Job) to refer to the commonwealth is in many ways significant. This figure – powerfully represented in the famous frontispiece of Hobbes's book by Abraham Bosse – no doubt evokes the terror Hobbes's sovereign is expected to produce so as to be able to maintain internal peace but also to protect the commonwealth from its external enemies. This also points to one of the greatest ironies in Hobbes's theory of human nature and the state: that in order to avoid the fearful condition in which they find themselves in the state of nature, human beings must live under the greatest terror caused by the Leviathan.

Innovative and Original Aspects

As previously mentioned, Hobbes's career from the 1640s onwards (following the completion of his manuscript treatise on optics, the so-called Latin Optical MS) was marked by “an acrimonious dispute” between him and Descartes “about who had preempted – or even plagiarized – whom” (Malcolm 1996, 26). Hobbes – who

must have been devastated by the fact that some of his own thoughts were “preempted in print” by someone else (Malcolm 1996, 26) – persistently defended his claims to originality by arguing that he was the one who first introduced the idea that “light is a fancy in the minde, caused by motion in the braine, which motion againe is caused by the motion of the parts of such bodies as we call *lucid*” and drawing his readers’ attention to the possibility that, since the same ideas appeared in print by another author, he “might be challenged for building on another man’s [Descartes] ground” (quoted in Rogers 2007, 421).

Yet, the extent of Hobbes’s originality in the field of optics and physics (more specifically on the origin of light and sensation) and the question of whether he owed an intellectual debt to Descartes are rather difficult to ascertain. While an answer might be found in an earlier treatise attributed to Hobbes, the so-called Short Tract, the authorship of this text remains unresolved. No matter what the answer to this question may be, Hobbes appears to have advanced his mechanical account of the universe before he was exposed to Descartes’s work (Rogers 2007, 421–2). Also, a fine yet important distinction between Hobbes’s understanding of motion and the nature of sensation and that of Descartes as well as Galileo points to the originality of his thought: “For Hobbes, it is not just the case the motion is the *cause* of sensation, a position accepted by Galileo and Descartes, but that sensation is itself a motion, a physical change in the brain” (Rogers 2007, 415–16).

Hobbes’s own estimation of his contribution to the field of political philosophy is no less modest than his claims about his contribution to physics. He often reiterates the idea that he is not just “*the* founding father . . . of modern political philosophy but of political philosophy as a genuine science” (Stauffer 2016, 481). For example, in his Epistle Dedicatory to *The Elements of Law*, he claims that his work provides “the true and only foundation of such Science” (Hobbes 1994). Similar claims are made in the *Leviathan* where he sets out to illustrate the benefits of a “Morall and Civill Science” that will enable people to cast aside the “multiplying glasses” they have by nature been invested with (namely, their “Passions

and Selfe-love”) so as “to see a farre off the miseries that hang over them” (Hobbes 1996, 129).

As has been suggested, one could perhaps challenge Hobbes’s estimation of the groundbreaking contribution of his work. For instance, scholars have pointed to the ways in which Machiavelli’s philosophical thought laid the ground for the development of Hobbes’s political philosophy (e.g., Strauss 1953, 177–9). Even so, as has been noted, “it is in Hobbes, more than in any other modern thinker, that we can see the full dimensions of the rejection of the classical tradition and the revolutionary attempt to put political philosophy on a new foundation” (Stauffer 2016, 481). Indeed, Hobbes’s repudiation of the classical tradition (examined in greater detail in the previous section) led to the development of a new science of politics, the innovative aspects of which cannot be discounted. For example, while rejecting the Aristotelian notion of man as a political animal, his take on mankind in the state of nature was also strikingly different “from the prevailing contemporary view,” according to which “in his natural condition man was as created by God and before his corruption by Adam’s sin . . . in scholastic terms, man’s natural condition is that which accords with his natural *telos* or end” (Hoekstra 2007, 111). No doubt, there is a sharp contrast between the portrait of this condition, which many of Hobbes’s contemporaries thought they could regain through religious redemption, and his depiction of the state of nature.

Further, one of Hobbes’s most important contributions in his advancement of a new science of politics concerns his reconceptualization of the state as a purely artificial person who has been authorized to represent the unified body of the people. As he notes in his letter to Francis Godolphin that prefaces *Leviathan*, “I speak not of the men, but (in the Abstract) of the Seat of Power” (Hobbes 1996, 3). Also, as he states in his Introduction to the book, the state or the great Leviathan is “an Artificiall Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which, the *Soveraignty* is an Artificiall *Soul*, as giving life and motion to the whole body”

(Hobbes 1996, 9). The ideas presented here were more fully developed in Chapter 16 of *Leviathan*, entitled *Of Persons, Authors and Things Personated*, where Hobbes advances the concept of authorization, on the basis of which an action performed by a person is validly attributed to another person when the latter (the “author”) has duly authorized and commissioned the former (“the actor”) to perform the said action as his representative (Hobbes 1996, 112).

Discussed as “arguably . . . his most original contribution to the theory of the state” (Skinner 2002, 183), the concept of authorization has a far-reaching significance for Hobbes’s reconceptualization of the artificial person of the state. The important political implications of the discussion of his concept of authorization start becoming clear when he talks about the way in which the multitude is unified into a single person to establish the commonwealth. As Hobbes explains in Chapter 17 of *Leviathan*, this is achieved precisely on such an act of authorization – more specifically, on a covenant that involves simultaneous acts of authorization whereby the people all transfer their rights of governing themselves to a single person. This “Covenant of every man with every man” is of “such manner, as if every man should say to every man, *I Authorize and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorize all his Actions in like manner*” (Hobbes 1996, 120).

The full implications of this description – which provides the basis for Hobbes’s contract theory – are unraveled in the following chapter of *Leviathan*. First, the subjects do not have the right to change the form of government; secondly, sovereign power cannot be forfeited, since the sovereign can never be accused of being in breach of the covenant: “Because the right of bearing the Person of them all, is given to him they make Sovereigne, by Covenant onely of one to another, and not of him to any of them; there can happen no breach of Covenant on the part of the Sovereigne” (Hobbes 1996, 122). Thus, in stark contrast to the neo-republican theory proposed by other seventeenth-century figures who argued that the

power of the sovereign was based on the people’s consent and was therefore revocable, Hobbes describes a social contract that is based on the agreement of the people but is nevertheless irrevocable. Also, as a direct consequence of Hobbes’s theory of authorization, the sovereign cannot be justly accused by his subjects for any of his actions as all of the sovereign’s actions are understood to have been authorized by the subjects (Hobbes 1996, 124). On this basis, the sovereign cannot be punished.

Impact and Legacy

Hobbes’s works had a significant impact on seventeenth-century thinkers, though the attention he received from many of his contemporaries was negative. Indeed, as has been suggested, “Hobbes generated more hostile literature than any other thinker in the seventeenth century” – so much so that “if judged by the number of hostile books and pamphlets he generated, he may well be the most maligned philosopher of all time” (Rogers 2007, 413). Nevertheless, many of his ideas (more prominently his political theory) were so influential for subsequent thinkers that he came to be acknowledged and is still recognized as one of the most important philosophers of all time, on a par with such figures as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, Hegel, Marx, and Mill.

The reception of Hobbes’s philosophy by his contemporaries and near-contemporaries was complex: while admired by some for the intellectual power of his ideas, he was vilified by others as a highly unorthodox and politically dangerous thinker who embraced atheism and moral relativism. His first work to have had an impact on his contemporaries was *The Elements of Law* (1640), a book that made known his views in support of an absolute monarchy, but also led to his being considered by many of his contemporaries as an atheist, especially due to his articulation of materialism therein.

While this work, which circulated only in manuscript at the time, mainly reached an English-speaking audience, Hobbes’s ideas were introduced to a much broader audience with the

publication of *De cive* (especially with the second edition of the book in 1647). This firmly established Hobbes in Continental Europe as one of the leading intellectuals of the day. In Paris, several prominent philosophers (e.g., Pierre Gassendi) recognized him as an important thinker. However, Hobbes fared less well with his fellow-countrymen: while he was acknowledged by some (e.g., Newcastle and Kenelm Digby), he was seen by many others with considerable skepticism and hostility (especially within the exiled court of the English king and his Catholic wife).

This hostility increased after the publication of *Leviathan*. In England, Hobbes found strong opponents especially among the clergy and university teachers, but also among the lawyers (Mintz 1962, 46). The attacks against Hobbes concentrated with ever greater vehemence on such issues as his materialism. The clergy was also greatly offended by his take on religion and his suggestion that ultimate authority on religious matters should belong to the sovereign rather than the church. Many of his opponents also concentrated on his “apparent moral relativism” (Rogers 2007, 418), finding grounds for this charge in his account of human nature in *Leviathan*, where good and evil or justice and injustice are described as relative concepts the meaning of which cannot be defined on the basis of any objective criteria. The criteria for these, Hobbes suggests, can only be fixed upon the establishment of the social contract and a common power that will enforce them (Hobbes 1996, 90). All of these fueled with ever greater urgency the accusation of atheism against Hobbes and a relevant report was made to a parliamentary committee in 1657, though this did not result in any official kind of censure (Parkin 2007, 446). These were only some of the accusations brought against Hobbes, who was also castigated, among other things, for such issues as his legal positivism and his attitude toward the universities. Indeed, as has been pointed out, “one might say that if Hobbes had set out deliberately to offend his fellow countrymen, it is difficult to see how he could have been more successful” (Rogers 2007, 425).

The hostile attitude against Hobbes appears to have intensified after the Restoration of kingship

in 1660 when many of his opponents re-established themselves in positions of power. Following the investigation against him for atheism by Parliament in 1666 (see “[Biography](#)” above), there was also “in 1668 the rumour that the Bishops would not allow *Leviathan* to be printed again” which “sent Samuel Pepys scurrying off to invest in an expensive second-hand copy” (Parkin 2007, 448). A number of books contributed to Hobbes’s vilification during this period, such as Thomas Tenison’s *Creed of Mr. Hobbes Examined* (1670) and John Eachard’s *Mr. Hobbs’s State of Nature Considered* (1672). Thus, gradually Hobbism came to be used as a term of abuse, and Hobbes came to be seen by many as “the Monster of Malmesbury” (Rogers 2007, 426).

Yet Hobbes also had a number of good friends and admirers, including the Cavendish family, which gave him continued support until his death. He also enjoyed the friendship of the lawyer John Vaughan and the antiquary and scientist John Aubrey, who wrote a glowing biography of Hobbes in his *Brief Lives*. Also, the popularity of *Leviathan* kept increasing despite its condemnation by many of its critics, and there was ever greater demand for the book that was published many times, in some cases even secretly (Mintz 1962, 61). Indeed, Hobbes’s work appears to have had a far-reaching influence on many of his contemporaries (although they did not always acknowledge their intellectual debt to him). Also, modern scholarship may have over-emphasized Hobbes’s unpopularity (Skinner 1966, 288; Malcolm 1996, 37). Following the death of Pierre Gassendi in 1655, various Frenchmen (such as Samuel Sorbière, Thomas de Martel, and Abraham du Prat) considered Hobbes “as the greatest living philosopher, and told him in their letters that they eagerly read every new work of his that they could obtain” (Malcolm 1996, 37).

His correspondents also included François du Verdus who set himself down to learn English so as to produce a French translation of *Leviathan* (a project that never came to fruition). Also, Samuel Sorbière published in 1668 a collection of the philosopher’s Latin works (including Hobbes’s Latin *Leviathan*) – an edition that contributed

(together with the various re-printings of *De cive*) to the broader dissemination of Hobbes's philosophy in continental Europe. Also influenced by Hobbes were the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza and the German philosophers Samuel von Pufendorf and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Leibniz in particular during the formative years of his philosophical career in the late 1660s and early 1670s). Hobbes's ideas continued to bear fruit in the development of political philosophy from the late seventeenth century up to the present, especially in the fields of contract theory and theories of sovereignty and the state. Scholars have traced his influence on (among others) John Locke, on the origins of the Enlightenment (e.g., Kraynak 1990), and on twentieth-century theoreticians of sovereignty and the state (e.g., Carl Schmitt).

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Holanda, Francisco de

Born: 6 September 1517/18, Lisbon

Died: 19 June 1584, Lisbon

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Abstract

Francisco de Holanda played a seminal role in the transmission of the humanist discourse on art and architecture to Portugal through both word and image. A key testimony to his entwined artistic practice, literary writing, and intellectual thought is provided by his five extant manuscripts. They underscore how Holanda mastered a range of visual and literary genres of intellectual discourse.

Synonyms

[Francisco d'Olanda](#)

Biography

Francisco de Holanda was trained as an illuminator by his father, António de Holanda. His artistic study was complemented by the humanist education he received as a page at the court of John III in Évora from scholars

including André de Resende, who had studied in Paris, Louvain, and Brussels. Resende's erudition was complemented by Miguel da Silva's extensive knowledge of Italian humanist culture. Da Silva's knowledge of Rome's cultural legacy and scholarly community provided an invaluable stimulus for Holanda's journey to Rome, which provided the culmination of his education.

Holanda left for Rome in early 1538. Da Silva would have provided the youthful Holanda with introductions to key cultural figures, whereby he met Michelangelo and Vittoria Colona. While visiting Venice, he also met Serlio who presented him with his *Regole Generali d'architettura*. Before leaving for Rome, Holanda was commissioned to document the fortifications he saw and this prompted the creation of the collection of 112 watercolor drawings known as the *Antigualhas*. Holanda completed his original commission, but augmented it with depictions of classical architecture, painting, and sculpture as well as allegories of his own invention. In addition to his evident artistic skill, these drawings testify to his understanding of the intellectual significance of both classical and renaissance art and architecture, a theme he addressed in a second manuscript, *Da Pintura Antiga*, written on his return to Portugal in 1540.

Da Silva was living in exile in Rome by then and his name goes unmentioned in *Pintura*, which was dedicated to John III. Nonetheless, Holanda's ideas and literary choices indicate his mentor's influence. Charles Hope has discussed the philosophical dimensions of his treatise, and although the discussion is not that of a "professional philosopher" it highlights both Holanda's intellectual interests and the input of other scholars (Holanda 2013, 57). The second book of his treatise consists of four dialogues emulating Castiglione's *Il Cortigiano*, which Deswarte-Rosa has referred to as his "bedside reading" (Deswarte-Rosa 1989, 179). Although Holanda's dialogues are a fictional conceit for his reflection on diverse aesthetic issues, they testify to his participation in Rome's literary milieu. He also addressed aspects of artistic practice, and subsequently wrote *De tirar polo natural* (1549), a treatise on portraiture.

As his career progressed, Holanda undertook artistic commissions and civic and military

architectural projects. *Da fábrika que falece à cidade de Lisboa*, one of his two final treatises, was intended to promote the continuation of an architectural program for Lisbon he had initiated in the 1540s. *Fábrika* was accompanied by *Da ciência do desenho*, which offers an insight into the diverse tasks he undertook as a courtier and artist. It also signals how his life and ideas were increasingly influenced by the political situation in Portugal following the death of John III in 1557. *Ciência* and *Fábrika*, completed in 1571, sought to remind the young King Sebastian (1554–1578) of the importance of the visual arts. Yet, by that time, the Inquisition was paying closer scrutiny to humanist writing and the seemingly Neoplatonist aspects of *Ciência* were censored. Regrettably, two illuminated poetic works from the regency of the Cardinal Infante Henrique (1512–1580, regent 1562–1568) have been lost, but, a visual representation of his philosophical ideas, as well as his rich literary, theological, and classical knowledge is offered in another celebrated book of drawings, *De aetatibus mundi imagines*.

Aetatibus was completed in two stages: the first in 1551, and then in 1573 he added around one hundred further drawings. The book's Christian theme, signaling the onset of the counter-reformation, reveals a religious dimension of Holanda's humanism. His geometric renderings of the divine realm have been identified as evoking the divine realm of ideal Platonic forms; the use of allegory in a striking series of six drawings emulates representations of Petrarch's *Trionfi*, such as the woodcuts in the 1522 *Il Petrarcha*, dedicated to da Silva; and, his antiquarian rigor underpins his representations of biblical history. *Aetatibus*'s 154 drawings underscore how Holanda's intellectual concerns imbued his artworks, while also highlighting his *savoir faire* as a Renaissance courtier in the face of both his patrons, shifting intellectual and spiritual concerns, and the prospect of political change: once Philip II became king of Portugal in 1581, he presented him with *Aetatibus*, and in return, he received a pension for the final years of his life, whereby he ended his life as both a respected courtier and artist.

Impact and Legacy

The impact of Holanda's writings and artistic and architectural *oeuvre* is hard to gauge. With regard to Portugal *Natural's* fictional dialogue between Holanda and Bras Pereira Brandão signals the circulation of his ideas among his Portuguese peers. The significance of his architectural projects and ideas may be associated with the growing interest in Renaissance ideas signaled by John III's requests that Resende translate Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* and Pedro Nunes Vitruvius's *De architectura*. Holanda's renown spread to Spain; A Spanish translation of *Pintura* was made by Manuel Denis in 1563, and *Antigualhas*, as well as *Aetatibus*, entered the collection of Philip II. Denis's translation seems not to have been widely circulated, although it has been argued that Federico Zuccaro may have read it while working in Spain (Deswarte-Rosa 1992, 224–235). An extant letter of Holanda's addressed to Michelangelo indicates that he maintained contact with the Rome's cultural milieu, and the fact that Michelangelo answered his request for a drawing by sending a drawing of a male nude, today conserved in the Hessisches Landesmuseum (Inv. A.E. 1280), signals the bond between the two artists (Deswarte-Rosa 1992, 138–139). Holanda's original manuscript of *Pintura* is untraced, but a copy made in Portugal in 1790 signals its value was not ignored. The scholarly study of Holanda was pioneered by Joaquim de Vasoncelos at the end of the nineteenth century.

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Holste, Lukas

Born: 1596, Hamburg

Died: 1661, Rome

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Abstract

Considered among the greatest scholars of the seventeenth century, Lucas Holste (L. H.) (lat. Holstenius, it. Luca Holstenio) distinguished himself through his search for and study of manuscript and printed texts during visits and periods of research in the greatest libraries of Italy and Europe. After his conversion to Catholicism, he came to Rome (1627) where he put himself at the service of the Barberini and, in particular, of Cardinal Francesco. He established himself in Baroque Europe with scholarly studies in philology and antiquarianism but also through extensive geographical knowledge and his interest in naturalism.

Alternate Names

Holstenius, Luca; Holstenius, Lucas; Holstenio; Olstenio

Biography

Born in Hamburg on September 27, 1596, into a family of humble origins, he studied first in the city of his birth, then in Rostock and, for around 6 years, in Leiden. At that university, he took an interest in Platonic philosophy. In 1618 he had traveled to Italy with Philipp Clüver, who had published his five-volume *Italia Antiqua* in Leiden in 1622. This experience stimulated his interest in geography and naturalistic studies. L. H. made numerous corrections to Clüver's work, which was published posthumously in 1666. In 1621 he accompanied the senator Kaspar Vosperg on a diplomatic mission to Denmark. Afterward, he spent more than 2 years in England; in London and Oxford, he frequented the most famous libraries, which he appreciated not only for the richness of their collections but also for their openness to scholars. After arriving in Paris, he entered the service of Henry de Mesmes as a librarian. After converting to Catholicism on December 15, 1624, he met Cardinal Francesco Barberini, who was in Paris trying to reach a diplomatic solution to the military and political dispute between France and Spain over Valtellina. L. H.'s conversion has been linked to the presence of Francesco Barberini in Paris, which offered him the opportunity to access the Roman court, erudite culture, and Italian antiquarianism. He arrived in Rome in 1627 and began an ecclesiastical career. He was nominated to the Accademia dei Lincei (1629) and began to play a part in the *famiglia* of Francesco Barberini who appointed him as his librarian (1636). His vast correspondence with figures of libertine erudition such as Nicolas-Claude de Peiresc, Gabriel Naudé, and Jacques and Pierre Dupuy, and with representatives of the seventeenth-century Italian culture, shows that it was not easy for him to adapt himself to the way of life at the Roman court, which he often criticized, even if he did so with cautious

prudence. Urban VIII appointed him protonotary apostolic and Canon of St Peter's and, for his cartographic expertise, entrusted him with the restoration of the paintings in the Gallery of Maps at the Vatican Library. L. H. corrected errors and commissioned more precise representations of ancient and modern Italy (Morello 2007). Innocent X made him the first keeper of the Vatican Library (1653), a role that he retained under Alexander VII. Disappointed with the lack of organization in Italian and Roman libraries, he sought to remodel them as "open libraries," experimenting with this project at the Vatican Library (Vian 2014). He carried out assignments and missions on behalf of the Barberini and Chigi popes: the most famous and celebrated of these is his presence in Innsbruck at the conversion of Queen Christina of Sweden, whom he then accompanied to Rome (1656). He recommended that Alexander VII acquire the library of the Duke of Urbino, which he visited during this journey (Vian 2014). On the death of Gaudenzio Paganini, Leopoldo de' Medici offered him the Chair of Humanities at the Studio di Pisa, but he declined (1648). His activity as a librarian and the frequent assignments entrusted to him by popes reduced the production and, above all, the publication of his works, which often remain incomplete and in manuscript. He died in Rome on February 2, 1666. He is buried in Rome in the Church of Santa Maria dell'Anima. In accordance with his last will and testament, L. H.'s library was left to the Roman Biblioteca Angelica for "public use" (Serrai 2000). Although L. H. did not claim to be a philosopher, thanks to his association with Daniel Heinsius, he was interested in ancient philosophy and Neoplatonism. This can be deduced from both his library and his correspondence with erudite friends. In the work *De vita et scriptis philosophi Porphyrii Dissertatio* (1630 and 1650), he sought to combine the Neoplatonism inherited from Renaissance humanism with the culture of the Counter-Reformation, without its controversialist overtones. In the biography of Porphyry, he presented the Neoplatonist as an independent philosopher and, sometimes, as a critic of Plato. This work contextualized Porphyry's *Contra Christianos*, the principal cause of the negative

reputation of the philosopher whom L. H. wanted to bring back to the attention of seventeenth-century literary culture (Varani 2014).

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Holstenio

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Homocentrism

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Abstract

Homocentrism is that philosophical tendency that centers itself upon man as a finite subject who dominates his own history. According to an influent, albeit antiquate historiographical position which traces back to J. Burckhardt, Renaissance is *the* age of homocentrism and the first individualization of singular personalities with flourishing characters *par excellence*.

Synonyms

[Anthropocentrism](#); [Humanocentrism](#); [Individualism \(Renaissance\)](#); [Self and individual identity](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Commonly contrasted with theocentrism, homocentrism as a tendency of thought and action denominates those philosophical and theological conceptions which are grounded on a preeminent

consideration of men, in reference to whom every theoretical and practical perspective is referred: “homocentrism is that discursive formation which centres itself upon man as a finite subject who dominates his own history” (Lemert 1979, p. 16).

During the Renaissance in particular, the centrality of men as active and transformative force distinctively emerges as never before. Renaissance philosophy on the whole can be said to be *anthropological* as such, since its main interest is always centered on the pivotal role of man, both as individual and as mankind. In what has been often called the “manifesto of the Renaissance,” Pico della Mirandola advocated the human capacity of being *artifex* of own destiny and fortune (*Oratio de hominis dignitate*, 1486; Garin 1994). “Renaissance philosophy... transfers the Promethean power of giving form ever more to the individual subject; the activity of the individual is even juxtaposed to the activity of the Creator and to that of the Saviour” (Cassirer 1927/2000, pp. 108–109, in reference in particular to Boccaccio but also to Pico, Cusano, Ficino, Bruno, and others).

Renaissance has been regarded not only as of the age of emergence of homocentrism but also of the development of the individual character. The historiographical origin of this old conception can be found in the seminal work *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* by Jacob Burckhardt (1860) and in particular in its famous chapter on *The development of the Individual*. He identified the cause of that fortunate conjunction in the deliverance that took place in Italy from the political constraints of the medieval and feudal age, in beneficial patronages of the arts and literary *otia* pursued by the tyrants and lords of the time, and finally in the exceptional nature of men endowed with polyvalent genius and free personality. “In Renaissance Italy – Burckhardt maintained – an objective treatment and consideration of the state and of all the things of this world became possible; the subjective side at the same time asserted itself with corresponding emphasis; man became a spiritual individual [*geistiges Individuum*], and recognized himself as such... then arose the “all-sided man” –

“*l'uomo universale*” – [e.g., Leon Battista Alberti, Benvenuto Cellini, Leonardo da Vinci]. In Italy at the time of the Renaissance, we find artists who in every branch created new and perfect works, and who also made the greatest impression as individual men” (Burckhardt 1860/1878, pp. 70; 73).

Along these lines, according to Federico Chabod, uninhibited “individualism” in practical philosophy (e.g., Machiavelli, Guicciardini) and politics (e.g., Francesco Sforza, Lorenzo de' Medici, Cesare Borgia) should be intended, together with artistic “realism,” as one of the most representative traits of that “reality of the spirit” that we call Renaissance. The discontinuity in respect to the Middle ages on these issues did not regard their presence, common to both periods, but rather the attitude with which they were pursued, now not necessarily religious in their intentions. In fact, “realism and individualism, as love for glory and imitation of ancient culture (Borinski 1919, pp. 20–21), were accepted also in the Medieval life, but just as particular steps for a higher purpose; on the other hand, in the Renaissance times those attitudes were pursued freely, as an end in themselves” (Chabod 1948, p. 79). Renaissance historiography, for example, started to describe the evolution of events neither as the realization of a divine unknown plan nor as the fight against the contrivances of evil but rather as the fruit of the determination of human will, the immediate author of all actions and choices. Also, art and poetry started to be made for the glory of men, *in primis* the poets and artists themselves and possibly their patrons, rather than for the glory of God. The fading away of the previous collective religiosity in favor of a new self-centered humanism was recognized as due to the fact that in European history, between the fourteenth and the fifteenth century, aggregating global forces as papacy and the empire collapsed in favor of the formations of fragmented national states and local feuds. As in Burckhardt's view, it was the political fragmentation that inevitably triggered social individualization.

Other historians have emphasized the inner aspect of Renaissance homocentrism, since apparently “the early Renaissance – again largely

through Petrarch's example and the resuscitation of Augustinian considerations, invents the notion of the inner self" (Kirkpatrick 2002, p. 126). Renaissance homocentrism and the development of an unprecedented notion of the inner self have been related also to the rise of autobiographical writings or private memories in secular literature (coupled with the invention of the printing press), so as to the spread and use of personal mirrors, now possible because of improvements in the glassmaking manufacturing (MacFarlane and Martin 2002, pp. 70–72).

Burckhardt/Chabod's interpretation of Renaissance homocentrism has been criticized at length, as anachronistic, bourgeois, and unaware of the social framework in which the process of individualization actually took place. For example, Baron counter-emphasized the civic involvement and the intellectual engagement in the governmental life that always accompanied those men that were first of all citizens of their epoch and members of political societies (Baron 1969). For others, the Renaissance self should not be taken as the voice of an expressive independent individual but rather as a contingent product of its time, which is always a result of social, economic, and political forces that shape and mold its identity. For, "fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions – family, religion, state – were inseparably intertwined [...] indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society... [being] not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artefact" (Greenblatt 1980, p. 257).

Therefore, from an operational point of view, "the Renaissance self seems suddenly more complex than we might at first suspect. And yet, if we are to understand the Renaissance, we need to know... at least something of how Renaissance men and women viewed themselves; how they constructed, experienced, and understood their identities" (Martin 2004, p. 4).

However, the parabola of Renaissance homocentrism was descending since different issues contributed to its progressive decline. Among the motives for the de-centering of the self-referentiality, we shall certainly count the new

astronomical evidence and in particular the Copernican shift of the Earth (and its inhabitants) from the center of the universe, the unprecedented anatomical-comparative studies that questioned the exceptionality of the human body as such, the explorative intercontinental voyages and the discovery of other-than-Western civilizations, and last but not least the finding of new animal species, and of anthropomorphic primates in particular, that challenged the scholastic fracture in the "chain of being" between human rationality and morality and what was believed as mere animality (Baricalla 2000).

Nonetheless still today, as a Western tendency that in fact roots in the Renaissance and remerged strong during the Age of Enlightenment, "anthropocentrism, the belief that humans enjoy special, central, even cosmic significance, lives as present in everyday thought as an attitude toward other animals and the environment generally" (Butchvarov 2015, p. 1; cf. Guervich 1995).

Cross-References

- [Anatomy, Renaissance](#)
- [Animals in the Renaissance](#)
- [Burckhardt, Jacob](#)
- [Geocentrism](#)
- [Heliocentrism](#)
- [Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Individual, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)

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Hooker, Richard

Born: March 1544, Heavitree

Dead: 3 November 1600, Bishopsbourne

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Abstract

Richard Hooker was the most influential theologian of the late Elizabethan age. He was a student of theology from 1569 in Oxford, and his tutor was the influential Puritan and theologian, John Rainolds. From 1579 Hooker taught Hebrew and was later appointed Master of the Temple in London in 1585, where his sermons emerged as a vision of a religion that was far removed from any radicalism and inspired by the belief in a merciful God. While he was Master of the Temple, he had a long dispute with the Puritan Walter Travers, who accused him of excessive moderation. The most important works of Hooker were the eight books *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*, where the theologian defended the still young Anglican via media of the pressures of the Presbyterian Puritans and the counter-reformed Catholics. The *Lawes* reflect the theological disputes that Hooker had while at the Temple with Travers on soteriology and ecclesiology. In the eight books, Hooker decisively shaped the doctrinal, political, and official profile of Anglicanism: the theologian reaffirmed the principle of the *sola scriptura*, the legitimacy of the episcopate, and of the Anglican liturgical forms adopted in the Church of England. Above all, Richard Hooker argued vigorously in favor of the full legitimacy of the laws which were divided into revelation, reason, and tradition, and they also accounted for the insurmountable limit that the royal power could not exceed. His legacy was changing: from the traditional view of the theoretics of Anglicanism, Hooker's thoughts were interpreted in various ways, through

virtue of the multiplicity of the ideas and theories that pervaded his work so that no category could confirm and contain, once and for all, his thinking which was his major work.

Biography

Richard Hooker studied theology at Corpus Christi College in Oxford, where he was admitted in 1569 thanks to the patronage of John Jewel, and following the latter's death in 1571, of Edwin Sandys. Hooker's tutor was the cultured and influential Puritan theologian John Rainolds. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1574, Hooker became a fellow of the College in 1579, and the same year, he was ordained a deacon, and, thanks to the support of Robert Dudley, he was appointed deputy professor of Hebrew. In 1585, following the recommendation of Sandys, he was appointed Master of the Temple at Church of the Inns Court. His sermons at the Temple did not focus on a deep theological analysis, but, moreover, they tended toward accentuating the interior dimension of faith, through which the soul is approached by a merciful God (Hooker 1612a). For this moderate view of religion, Hooker was attacked at length by the Puritan and preacher of the Temple, Walter Travers, who chided him for his excessive restraint when dealing with religious dissidents. In 1591, Hooker was appointed subdean of Salisbury and left the Temple, and began working on *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*, whose first four books saw the light in 1593, just as Parliament exuded its first action against the Puritans. The works were to be published in their entirety in separate posthumous phases: the fifth time in 1579, while the sixth and the eighth were only published in 1648, and the seventh in 1661.

The *Lawes* were conceived by Hooker as an impressive work in defense of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559 (Collinson 1997). The theologian traced the profile of Anglicanism as midway between the extremes of the Catholic counter-reformation and puritanism (Shagan and Shuger 2016). The spectrum of ideas that inspired Hooker was very large, as well as the scope of his interventions, which included ecclesiology, *adiaphora*, and soteriology, and he even tackled the sensitive

issue of relations between temporal and spiritual power (Hooker 1993–1998). Hooker reaffirmed the principle of *sola scriptura* and defended the emphasis on episcopal authority in Anglicanism – and the hierarchical view of society that was implied – the liturgy was the defense of the principle of royal supremacy over the church. In the eighth book of the *Lawes*, which contrasted with the Puritans, Hooker outlined an inclusive profile of the church in which basically “church” and “commonwealth” coincided (Eppley 2008).

Hooker did not theologically justify the supremacy of the king over the church (Torrance Kirby 1990): this was legitimate as it had been established with the consent of the community and was limited by the laws of God, the kingdom, and the region. Underlying this conception did not involve the merger of church and state but was his peculiar conception of what was right (Lynch 2004). The theologian decided what was law, according to a hierarchy that reflected a Neoplatonic cosmology mold, at the top of which God sat (Torrance Kirby 2008). In this view, laws were divided into divine, natural, and “municipal” (McGrade 2004), a form of territorial law capable of limiting royal powers. Hooker was the only thinker of his time to put such an emphasis, not only on law but also on the “*Lawes whereby we live*” (Hooker 2013) and looked forward to a consensual idea of sovereignty. Hooker's masterpiece was also the first of its kind written in English to deal systematically with theology, politics, and legal philosophy (McGrade 2004).

The richness of the sources and the breadth of his thinking, combined with the delayed edition of the last three books of the *Lawes*, allowed Hooker's luck and interpretation to change. “Drowned in the torrents of Political and Religious confusion” (Brydon 2007), during the English Civil War, in the course of the eighteenth century, Hooker was attributed a smooth double identity, “as Whig and Tory” (McGrade 2004). Universally considered the most important defender of the *via media* (Atkinson 1997), if not the true inventor of Anglicanism (Lake 1988), Hooker was also deemed the precursor of English Enlightenment (Beiser 1996), while in light of manuscripts which resurfaced in recent years, he was confirmed a defender of the most reformed aspects of the Elizabethan church. However, the

depth and breadth of Hooker's thoughts meant that no reading matter was able to defend, so comprehensively, his belief in the doctrine of justification by faith in his most important piece of literature within such a rigid category (MacCulloch 2008).

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Horace in the Renaissance

Born: 8 December 65 BC, Venusia (between Apulia and Lucania, in south-eastern Italy)

Died: 27 November 8 BC, Rome

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Abstract

The Latin poet Horace had a very important role in the early-modern culture. He was seen as a repository of philosophy (mainly ethics, morals, and poetics), a guide to virtuous behavior, as well as a literary authority in terms of style. His ethical and existential thinking as well as his pure literary style were among the elements of his works that appealed to his readership and largely affected, along with his *Art of Poetry*, Horace's legacy throughout the early modern period (and beyond). Accordingly, within the Renaissance period, Horace appears as one of the main protagonists of the

critical and literary scenes, as is shown by the attention that his works received from the point of view of editions, commentaries, and translations, respectively, as well as by the fact that his texts were placed at the center of several literary imitative practices, his example being able to offer the Renaissance one important basis upon which to found part of its new culture.

Alternate Names

Flaccus, Quintus Horatius

Biography and Works

Even though Horace was the son of a freedman, he was educated in Rome and Athens. During the civil war, he sided with Brutus, one of Caesar's murderers, enlisted in his militia, and took part in the battle of Philippi (42 BC) against Octavian and Antonius. After the defeat of the anti-Caesarean army, Horace returned to Italy thanks to a pardon from Octavian. In Rome, he found employment as a secretary in the state treasury and started to write his first Latin poems. Horace's compositions attracted the interest of many, among whom the poets Virgil and Varus, who introduced him to their patron Maecenas (presumably in 38 BC), who admitted Horace to his circle. Free from previous duties thanks to Maecenas's protection, Horace devoted himself to poetry and composed two books of *Satires* (also known as *Sermones*, published in 35 or 34 BC and in 30 BC, respectively), one of *Epodes* (c. 30 BC), his first three books of *Odes* (23 BC; also known as *Carmina*), and his first book of *Epistles* (20 or 19 BC). Horace's close relationship with Maecenas allowed him to become close to Octavian Augustus, who invited the poet to compose the *Carmen saeculare* (17 BC) and the fourth book of the *Odes* (published c. 13 BC), and to whom Horace dedicated his second book of *Epistles* (c. 11 BC). The last work that the poet wrote was the *Letter to the Pisones* (also known as *Ars Poetica*), presumably composed between 10 and 8 BC. Horace died

in 8 BC, a few months after his lifelong friend Maecenas. (For an overview of Horace's biography see Fraenkel 1957; Williams 1972; La Penna 1993; Lyne 1995; Nisbet 1996, 2007; Günther 2012.)

Horace's Philosophy

Philosophy plays an important role in Horace's life and literary production (Hommel 1950; Fraenkel 1957; Grimal 1958; Kytzler 1985; Michel 1997). Yet what the Latin poet is really interested in and values is largely (if not almost exclusively) the ethical dimension of philosophy (Michel 1997, p. 80; Casertano 1997, p. 96). Horace's ethics has two very specific characteristics. First, it is not an ethics *stricto sensu* (i.e., a set of systematic precepts), but it is rather conceived as a series of suggestions on everyday life that help the poet (and those who want to follow his advice) to lead a quiet and serene life (Deschamps 1997; Casertano 1997). Secondly, Horace's ethics cannot be strictly or exclusively connected to any philosophical school of the time, although there is a loose connection with Epicureanism. Indeed, some traits of the poet's philosophy (from his ideas on love to the theme of brevity of time; from the praise of countryside to that of a retired life) echo and derive from Epicurus's precepts (Diano 1961–1962; Büchner 1969; Grilli 1983; Deschamps 1983; Ferrarino 1986, pp. 344–54; Fraschini 1986; Erler 1994, pp. 372–73 and 379–80; Grilli 1997; Michel 1997; Mastandrea 1997), probably mediated by later Epicurean philosophers, such as Philodemus of Gadara, Phaedrus, Siro, and Diogenes of Tarsus, as well as Aristippus of Cyrene (Jones 1989, pp. 62–84; Traina 1991; Michel 1997; Kemp 2010; Armstrong 2004). Horace depicts the “summum bonum” (highest good) with Epicurean tone and form (since, according to the poet, it can be reached only by releasing oneself from the worldly necessities and the anguished quests for superfluous goods and needs – Mastandrea 1997). Nevertheless, Horace's Epicureanism can be defined as “eclectic” (Michel 1997, p. 79 – see also Mastandrea 1997, 88) since the poet does not

follow its principles in an orthodox way. Examples are Horace's idea of friendship, which is quite distant from that of Epicurus (see Grilli 1997) and his morality. In the latter case, Horace relies on inner liberty that either does not have a transcendental solution, or at least does not consider it as one of its essential constituents (La Penna 1993, p. 60). In this sense, Horace's stance is different from Epicurus, though rather close to the precepts of the Cynics. Equally importantly, Horace's Epicureanism was only one of the major classical philosophies (even if an important one), with which the poet was familiar, and from which he drew distinctive material in order to create his own lucid (albeit not consistent) set of ethical answers to address the specific issues that circumstances forced him to face (Battezzato 1997, p. 87).

In his works, Horace explicitly declared himself to be (and exhibited his satisfaction for being) equally far from all philosophical doctrines (see *Epist.* I, 1, 14 – Mastandrea 1997). It is now generally believed that Horace's self-representation as “Epicuri de grege porcum” (a plump hog of the herd of Epicurus – *Epist.* I, 4, 16) is only one of the many literary stances that the poet took in his texts in order to disorient and mock his readers (Deschamps 1997, 87; see also Traglia 1970, p. 41; Battezzato 1997, 84). In fact, in another poem he plays the Stoic (*Epist.* I, 1, 16–17) and, immediately after, the Cyrenaic hedonist (*Epist.* I, 1, 18). Indeed, Horace concretely kept his distance from every dogmatism and specific doctrine (Deschamps 1997; Mastandrea 1997). His philosophy was conceived as a practical and concrete “wisdom” that was put into effect as an art of living well without ever becoming an orthodox set of strict rules (Préaux 1968, p. 33; Casertano 1997; Deschamps 1997).

Horace's moral eclecticism can be seen as both a demonstration of the poet's erudition and a display of the typically Roman practical sense and keenness for liberty (a parallel can be traced with Cicero's similar attitude of never opting for a single philosophical school in his works) (Grimal 1982; Deschamps 1997, p. 87). In any case, Horace provides strong hints of his eclecticism. Indeed, he avowedly admires Socrates, whose philosophical attitude can be paralleled to

that used by Horace in his *Satires* (Deschamps 1997, p. 87). Moreover, in his *Ars Poetica* (line 310), the poet invites a reading of the “Socraticae [...] chartae” (the books inspired by Socrates, probably alluding to Plato's dialogues). But Horace's link with Platonism is not limited to this hint. Scholars have maintained that ode 1, 37 (the poem beginning with the famous line “Nunc est bibendum”), as well as the Roman odes (3, 1–6), the *Carmen Saeculare*, and many poems of the fourth book of *Carmina* have a strong patriotic and social commitment that can be linked to and probably derive from an elaboration of Platonic ideals (insisting upon Plato and the Academics on the importance of the philosopher's political commitment – Gantar 1972, 1997; Bond 1985). Horace seems to recall a Pythagorean concept (the “μηδὲν θαυμάζειν,” marvel at nothing) in his formula “nil admirari” (to be surprised by nothing – Lanternari 1981), even though this thought can be linked to Democritus's ἀθαμβία (imperturbability) and Epicurus's ataraxia (impassiveness/tranquillity) as well (Deschamps 1997, p. 87). The connections with the Stoics and the Cynics are more evident: on the one hand, the themes and practices of the latter are deep-rooted in Horace's *Satires* (Lebek 1981; Fischer 1983; Moreschini 1997; Deschamps 1997; Michel 1997, p. 80), as well as in the absence of (or, more likely, lack of interest in) a transcendental dimension within the poet's morality; on the other hand, Horace follows the Stoic precept of “naturalness” of life as the only criterion to distinguish truth from falsehood (Casertano 1997, 96), even though he warns against and opposes Stoic inflexibility (Mastandrea 1997; Michel 1997). Other links can, instead, be traced between Horace's philosophy and Aristotelianism (Bignone 1937; Brink 1963–1982; Wigodsky 1980; Zielinski 1986; Stabile 1997). Although he never mentions Aristotle or quotes his main works (e.g., the *Physics*, the *Metaphysics*, or the *Organon*), one can detect some elusive echoes of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Poetics* in Horace's production (Coulter 1967; Pöschl 1968; Sbordone 1981; Stabile 1997, 95; Michel 1997). (Horace may have known the *Poetics* indirectly, through the interpretation of

Neoptolemus of Parium.) Finally, although there are superficial similarities between Aristotle's golden mean and Horace's "aurea mediocritas," scholars have pointed out that these two concepts are quite different, since Horace's "mediocritas" is a personal combination of Epicurean elements with others drawn from Panaetius of Rhodes, who, in turn, combined Stoicism with the Peripatetic school (Zielinski 1986, pp. 34–37; Grilli 1987, p. 15, 1997, p. 94; Michel 1997, p. 81).

Impact and Legacy

As pointed out in the previous section, ethical thought and considerations on human existence were central aspects of Horace's works. Accordingly, his reflections on life and his passages on moral behavior, vices, and virtues – often expressed in sentences of great elegance and sharp incisiveness – were among the elements of Horace's works that mainly appealed to his readers and largely affected, along with his *Art of Poetry*, the Latin poet's legacy.

While his whole production was appreciated and received in various ways by many authors of the Roman imperial period (e.g., Quintilian, Juvenal, Persius, Pliny the Elder, Gellius, up to Macrobius and Priscian – Tarrant 2007; see also Hooley 1997; Freudenburg 2001), including Christian poets, who admired and imitated Horace's lyrical texts (e.g., Prudentius, Paulinus of Nola, and Sidonius Apollinaris – Palmer 1989; Piscitelli 1998; Nazzaro 1998c, d; Most 2010, p. 455), the tendency to focus on Horace's moral and gnomic elements became quite evident during late antiquity, above all in works by Christian authors of the fifth and sixth centuries (e.g., Augustine, Jerome, and Boethius – Marin 1993; Nazzaro 1998a, b; Traina 1998). The Middle Ages inherited this tradition and mainly regarded Horace as a satirical chastiser of vices and a gnomic author, as well as a master of poetics (Villa 1984, 1992; Friis-Jensen 1997). Indeed, medieval Latin authors derived from Horace's hexametrical production (the *Satires* and the

Epistles), some material to include in the *Artes dictaminis*, *Artes poeticae*, and *Florilegia* of moral sentences (Quint 1988; Stella 1998; Sivo 1998; Alessio 1998; Lo Monaco 1998; Friis-Jensen 2007). Horace's lyrical texts received renewed attention only with the flourishing of humanism, thanks to Petrarch's sensitivity to them (Dotti 1994; Feo 1998): their existential depth and eloquent expressiveness sustained their *fortuna* throughout the early-modern period. Nonetheless, especially prominent was the legacy of the moral and gnomic Horace.

After Petrarch, early Italian humanists accorded Horace little attention (even though there were a few exceptions, e.g., Niccolò Niccoli, Vittorino da Feltre, Sicco Polenton, Angelo Decembrio, and Battista Guarino – Curcio 1913, pp. 48–50; Grendler 1989, pp. 203–04 and 253; Iurilli 2004, p. 31; Comiati 2019, pp. 96–105). After the early fifteenth century, however, humanist scholars began to devote lectures to Horace's works (see the lectures delivered by Antonio Brognanigo [Broianico] in Verona before 1468, by Antonio Calcillo in Rome during the academic year 1465–1466, and by Martino da Filetino [called Filetico] in Rome in 1470–1471 – Curcio 1913, p. 46; Altamura 1941, pp. 42–46; Gorni 1972; Friis-Jensen 1995; Ottaviani 1998; Pincelli 1998). At the same time, Horace's works were often printed in many Italian centers (see Horace's *princeps*, which appeared in Venice in 1471; the Milan 1474 edition of the poet's works, printed by Antonio Zarotto; Giovanni Alvise Toscani's Rome 1474–1475 edition; the Treviso 1481 edition, printed by Michele Manzolo; the Florence 1482 edition; Alessandro Minuziano's Milan 1486 edition – see Iurilli 2004, 2017). Horace grew so much in importance that, during the sixteenth century, he was completely integrated into (and was a central element of) school and university programs, both lay and religious (Grendler 2002, pp. 236–40). This revival was made possible by the development of a new pedagogical curriculum and thus by new critical attention paid to the Latin poet (Grendler 1989, pp. 133–41). The first significant turning point in this process was the 1482 commentary on Horace written by the Florentine Cristoforo Landino

(Curcio 1913, pp. 57–85; Weinberg 1961, I, pp. 71–81; Niutta 1993, pp. 21–23; Ludwig 1993; Iurilli 2004, pp. 32–34; Moss 1999; Bausi 1998; Nebes 2001; Pieper 2013; Stadeler 2015). This was the first thoroughgoing and insightful analysis of Horace's whole corpus, and Landino emphasized more eloquently than any before him the importance of the Latin poet as an authority to be studied for his wisdom and pure style. After Landino's work, the exegetical interest in Horace increased, and many other commentaries were produced (e.g., Antonio Mancinelli's 1492 exegesis of Horace's lyrical production; Badius Ascensius's commentaries on the hexametrical works [1499] and the whole Horatian corpus [1503]; Giovanni Britannico's comprehensive commentary on the *Epistles*, *Satires*, and *Art of Poetry* [1516] – Weinberg 1961, I, pp. 254–255; Baroncelli 1972; Coppini 1997; Ijsewijn 1998a; Gehl 2008a; Gehl 2008b). These major commentaries were soon printed together in single volumes, often along with the texts of the ancient scholiasts of Horace (i.e., Pseudo-Acro and Porphyry). Following the practice of multiple commentary editions, some editors decided to draw explanations devoted to Horace from the collections of annotations on Latin and Greek antiquity written by several humanists (e.g., Angelo Poliziano, Antonio Sabellico, Celio Rodigino, Giovan Battista Pio, and Pietro Crinito), and to gather them together in new exegetical volumes. This practice proved to be very effective in terms of editorial success and became quite common both throughout Italy (above all among Venetian printers) and abroad. The most complete multiple commentary edition ever published was that of Girolamo Scoto printed in Venice in 1544, which listed seventeen commentators (see Richardson 1994; Nuovo 1998; Maclean 2009; Iurilli 2004; Pettegree 2010; Taylor 2014).

From the 1550s, the main focus of the Italian exegetical attention shifted to Horace's *Ars Poetica* (Weinberg 1961; Grimaldi 1994; Cerasuolo 1995; Hardison and Golden 1995; Golden 2010). This text was not neglected before the mid-sixteenth century, as works by Aulo Giano Parrasio (1531) and Pomponio Gaurico (1531) that dealt uniquely with it testify

(Weinberg 1961, I, pp. 88–90; Tateo 1998; Iurilli 2004, pp. 47–48), but after the revival of the Aristotelian *Poetics* in the late 1530s the *Epistle to the Pisones* was put at the center of many interpretations (Javitch 1999; Schmitt 1983; Leroux 2019; Herrick 1946). In the fourth and fifth decades of the sixteenth century, the commentators, although continuing to analyze the Horatian *Ars* through the lens and categories of rhetoric, generally placed the two works in parallel, on the assumption that their content was the same (Weinberg 1961, I, 122–134; Grimaldi 1994, pp. 61–69; Iurilli 2004, pp. 54–56). Obviously, Horace's *Ars Poetica* (often combined with Aristotle's *Poetics* beginning in the late 1540s) was also used to further the Renaissance discussion about new literary genres and develop new theories about them (see, for instance, the considerations in Bernardino Daniello's *Della poetica* [1536], Julius Caesar Scaliger's *Poetices Libri Septem* [1561], Torquato Tasso's *Discorsi del poema eroico* [1587], and Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* [1595] – Weinberg 1970–1974; Grafton 1983; Selmi 1994). During the last decades of the Cinquecento, the *Ars Poetica* was at the center of further deep and often critically acute investigation, as the works by Tomas Correa (1587), Nicolò Cologno (1587), and Antonio Riccoboni (1591) testify (Frischer 1995, 1996; Carlsmith 2013).

The second half of the sixteenth century saw the production of several exegetical works not only on the *Ars Poetica* but also dealing with the rest of Horace's production. Although some works were still written by Italian exegetes (e.g., Giovanni Paolo Cesario's 1566 commentary on the *Odes*; Gian Michele Bruto's 1566 and Bernardino Partenio's 1584 commentaries on the *Carmina* and *Epodes*; as well as the exegetical accounts of the whole Horatian corpus by Alessandro Piccolomini [1560s], Federico Ceruti [1585–1588], and Giovanni Fabrini [1566] – see Caccamo 1972; Refini 2009, 2011), the new most important philological editions and interpretations of Horace were composed by French and northern-European scholars (see the editions by Henri Etienne [1549], Georg Fabricius [1555], Marc-Antoine Muret [1555], Denys Lambin

[1561], and Jacob Cruquius [1578]; and the commentaries by Adrien Turnèbe [1577] and Ianus Dousa [1580 and 1582]). This trend continued into the following century as well (see the Horatian editions by John Bond [1606], Laevinus Torrentius [1608], and Tanneguy Lefèvre [1671]; and the commentaries by Heinsius [1610], Bond, Faber, and André Dacier [1681–1689] – see Niutta 1993; Rocca 1996; Iurilli 2004, 2017; and Grafton 1983, pp. 71–100).

A strong interest in Horatian works kept flourishing throughout the early modern period, as is testified by the various interpretations, exegeses, imitations (in both Latin and the numerous European vernaculars – Dauvois et al. 2019; Coppini et al. 2019), as well as references to and quotations of Horatian poems in contemporary philosophical works, such as Erasmus's *Adagia*, Montaigne's *Essais*, and Campanella's *Poesie filosofiche* (Schäfer 1970; Phillips 1970; McKinley 1981; Gray 1991; Zoppi 1994; Garavini 1998; Ijsewijn 1998c). Nevertheless, some elements of Horace's texts (namely, those passages that appeared too close to Epicureanism, as well as those related to titillating topics) puzzled Renaissance readers in various ways. The Renaissance inherited a long tradition of hostility towards Epicureanism (Kraye 2014; Palmer 2014), so interpreters attempted to justify, amend, or even remove these controversial sections. In his commentary to *Carmina*, Landino sometimes openly states that Horace was an Epicurean, even though – Landino hastens to say – he never regarded the soul as mortal (see his notes to *Carm.* I, 9 – Roberts 1995, p. 291); at other times Landino removes any Epicurean notion implicit in Horace's lines and connects them with a reassuring and orthodox biblical background (see his note to *Carm.* IV, 7, 16 “pulvis et umbra sumus” [we are dust and shadow]; indeed, he glosses “nam corpus in pulverem redit” [in fact the dead body turns into dust] and quotes Genesis 3:19). Mancinelli goes further in playing down the Epicurean overtones in Horace's poems. His strategies vary, from denying the proximity between Horace and Epicurean doctrine (see his note to *Carm.* I, 9 – Roberts 1995, p. 295), and ignoring certain passages (see his glosses to *Carm.* I, 4), to suggesting links with Stoicism (see his notes to

Carm. II, 3). Badius, instead, follows a completely different approach. Indeed, he chooses to highlight Epicurean passages in Horace's odes and demonstrate similarities between them and Christian doctrine. According to Badius, Christianity shares with Epicureanism a “scorn of procrastination” (De Witt 1954, p. 183) because of the ephemerality of human life (Roberts 1995, pp. 301–05), hence Badius glosses Horace's “carpe diem” formula (*Carm.* I, 11) by paralleling it with Christ's words in Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 25:13). Nevertheless, in some passages Badius explicitly condemns those Epicurean doctrines that are incompatible with Christianity (e.g., the demystification of the supernatural – see his notes to *Carm.* I, 16).

Although Badius's approach was quite ingenious, in the following decades of the sixteenth century other solutions had to be provided to deal with unorthodox passages of classical authors since the cultural and religious climate of the Counter-Reformation led Catholic writers to adopt more cautious solutions. Indeed, even before the Jesuits' *Horatius purgatus* (“purified” from every “obscenity”) appeared in Rome in 1569 – paving the way for many other censored editions of Horace's corpus (e.g., Bernardino de Llanos's *Poeticarum institutionum liber* [1605], Josse Desmaretz's *Horatius ad usum iuventutis accomodatus* [1648], Antoine Golleti's *Horatii puriores odae* [1676], and Joseph de Jouvancy's *Horatius purgatus* [1688]; see Grendler 1977, 1981; Hinz et al. 2004; Black 2013; see also Iurilli 2017) – some interpreters had already aligned themselves with the new cultural climate of increasing control over texts in the early post-Tridentine era. For instance, in his Italian translation of Horace's hexametrical corpus, Ludovico Dolce systematically replaced any passage of prurient subject-matter with highly prudish circumlocutions. He also censored the slightest allusion to any immoral situations (Borsetto 1990, 1994; Grimaldi 1994, pp. 53–88; and Borsetto 1996). It is interesting to note that, in the same years, in his commentary on Horace's works (1555), the Protestant philologist Georg Fabricius not only does not censor problematic passages but even takes them as a starting point for historical examinations (Schäfer 1976; Chiarini 1998).

The various and wide-ranging interests in both Horace, in general, and his ethical texts, in particular, find an echo in another use of the Latin poet that spread throughout the early modern period. It is a creative-imitative re-use of his poems combined with a tendency of receiving his works through an ideological lens. This re-use took two main forms: on the one hand, that of an ethical and gnomic parody of his texts in order to present Horace as a guide to moral and virtuous behavior (*Horatius ethicus*); on the other hand, a literary form of moral-confessional *travestissement*, a literary parody through which Horace is perceived and shown as the champion not only of probity and integrity, but also of an ethics that can be combined with Christian precepts (*Horatius Christianus*). Both forms can be associated with the still influential medieval tradition of assimilating the pagan gnomic with Christian “sapientia,” as well as the request for pedagogical use of Horace in early modern society and culture. The moral-confessional tendency is apparent in works such as Johannes Otho Maianus’s *Horatius Christianus* (1609), Jean Du Four’s *Horatius Christianus* (1629), and Jacques Ladore’s *Horatii Christiani Tripartitus* (1662) (Iurilli 2017). The *Horatius ethicus*, instead, finds expression in various other works: from lyrical books of rhymes (e.g., Pietro Massolo’s *Rime morali* [1583], in which the majority of the poems develop a moral theme drawn from Horace’s texts – Bruscagli 2007, p. 1597) to figurative enterprises (e.g., Otto van Veen’s *Emblemata Horatiana* [1607], in which one hundred and three Horatian moral precepts are paralleled with the same number of images representing them – Ludwig 2013), from scholastic textbooks (e.g., the *Horatii sapientia* [1626], a Dutch anthology of moral Horatian passages) to more traditional moral parodies (Stemplinger 1906; Beckenhaupy 1938; Schäfer 1998; Iurilli 2004, 2017). Although some sixteenth-century works already belong to this last category (e.g., Henri Estienne’s *Parodiae morales* [1575], Heinrich Meibom’s *Parodiae Horatianae* [1588–1589 and 1596], and Philipp Eysel’s *Periculum lyricum, seu parodiae aliquot Horatii natalitiis Christi accomodatae* [1600]), it is mainly during the seventeenth century that this genre reaches its peak. Examples are

Balthasar Exner’s *Ethopoeia Horatiana* (1601), Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski’s *Lyricorum libri IV* (1632), the anthology *Parodiarum ad Horatii Flacci Melpomenen centuria integra*, edited by Caspar Cunrad (1606), Johann Heermann’s *Parodiarum decas* (1609), David Hopp’s *Parodiae* (1634), Gian Battista Mascolo’s *Lyricorum sive Odarum libri XV* (1625–1626), Jacob Balde’s *Lyricorum libri IV. Epodon liber I* (1643), and Charles Bey’s *Odes d’Horace en vers burlesques* (1653) (see Schäfer 1976; Classen 1976; Valentin 1986; Thill 1993; Ijsewijn 1998b; Lefèvre 2002; Urbanski 2014).

Cross-References

- Campanella, Tommaso
- Epicureanism
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Ethics, Renaissance
- Montaigne, Michel de
- Stoicism
- Virgil in the Renaissance

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Household Management

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Abstract

Household management (oeconomics) is the discipline aimed at the head of the family with the purpose of guiding him in the achievement of justice and “prudence” in the domestic sphere. As a doctrine of the *oikos*, it concerns the relations between the people living in a house and all the activities necessary for its management, preservation, and growth. It may also comprehend commercial activities, as these are limited and subordinate to the necessities of the house. From Xenophon and Aristotle to early modern literature of *res familiares*, the essential feature of household management is the capacity of the father to govern the house through the “just” (i.e., “rightful” and/or “most effective”) means. In different historical contexts, however, a number of other issues recurred and were variously discussed: the relation between the *oikos* and the *civitas*, the relation between morality and necessity, and the distinction between administration, government, and oeconomics.

Synonyms

Oeconomics

The Oikonomia

Household management (oeconomics) is the discipline aimed at the head of the family with the purpose of guiding him in the achievement of

justice and “prudence” in the domestic sphere. The Greek word *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία) is in fact composed of the two words *oikos* (household) and *nemein* (management and dispensation). As a doctrine of the *oikos*, it concerns the relations between the people living in a house and all the activities necessary to its management, preservation, and growth. It may also comprehend commercial activities, as these are limited and subordinate to the necessities of the house. In ancient philosophy, oeconomics is a part of ethics and is a form of practical knowledge (Leshem 2016). The most important classic sources for medieval and Renaissance literature on household management are Xenophon’s (c. 430–354 B.C.) *Oeconomicus*, Aristotle’s (c. 384–322 B.C.) first book of the *Politics* (as well as passages of the *Nicomachean Ethics*), and a set of texts for a long time attributed to the Stagyrite and commonly known as *Oeconomica* (Flüeler 1987).

The *Oeconomicus* in Xenophon and Aristotle

The *Oeconomicus* by Xenophon is a dialogue about household management and agriculture (Pomeroy 1994; Strauss 1970). The dialogue concerns the rightful relationship between a husband and wife, the rule of slaves and the government of the servants, the education of the children, the management of the house, and the art of farming. In the opening dialogue between Socrates and Critoboulus, the Greek philosopher equates the wealth of a property with the moderation of its governance and explains that the aim of oeconomics is the pursuit of the good life. Within this “moral framework,” how good household management is to be carried out is described by a gentleman farmer named Ischomachus. He represents the “perfect gentlemen” endowed with all the necessary knowledge to accomplish a good and successful life to keep the *oikos* rich and to provide money for the public sphere. Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* was first translated by Cicero (c. 79–51 B.C.) into Latin, and through this translation, it gained wide popularity during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

A second very important source for medieval and Renaissance household management is Aristotle’s *Politics* (Aristotle 2009). In his treatise, the Stagyrite defines the city as an ensemble of families and, before examining how a city should be governed, he describes the good management of the *oikos*. The first book is thus dedicated to oeconomics with the double aim of explaining why the rule of the father is different from that of the magistrate and setting the moral limits for the enlargement and enrichment of the property. In fact, Aristotle’s oeconomics is, above all, based on practical wisdom (*phrónesis*) guided by rational rules (*téchne*) and the expression of an individual disposition (*héxis*). It can be divided into four parts concerning husband/wife relations, the education of the children, the rule of the servants, and the acquisition of the riches necessary for living well. This last part is termed chrematistics (from *chrēmata*, “riches, goods”) and only partially coincides with oeconomics. In fact, differently from Xenophon, for whom there are no limits to the acquisition of wealth, according to Aristotle the unlimited procurement of riches is both morally reprehensible and “unnatural” (i.e., not finalized to natural living). In this sense, while a “natural” chrematistics is a subordinate part of the oeconomics, both must be distinguished from an unnatural chrematistics, which represents an unlimited striving after wealth and riches.

It is known that Aristotle also wrote a treatise on oeconomics of which we only have two fragments left. In the first of these fragments, he discussed the relations between husband/wife, father/children, lord/servants, and revenues/outflows. In the second, he dealt with what servants owe their masters.

Oeconomica in the Hellenistic Age

A third influential tract is the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*, (Pseudo-Aristotle 1986, 2013; Valente 2011) until recently attributed to Aristotle but probably authored instead by Theophrastus (371–287 B.C.). The first two books are dedicated to exploring the meaning of oeconomics and its many different aspects. Oeconomics must be differentiated from politics as the two differ according to

the number of subjects and rulers involved. The treatise deals at great length with agriculture, which is deemed the most important use of a property, and with the care of the people of the family. The three central features of good household management are deemed to be the duties of the wife in the governance of the estate, the duties *of* and *toward* the slaves, and the knowledge necessary to acquire goods and riches and guard the properties and trade. While book one introduces the basics of any economy (expenditures should never exceed income), book two describes four different types of economies and their own rules. These are the Royal Economy, the Satrapic Economy, the Political Economy, and the Personal Economy. In the second book, the term “oeconomics” is therefore also used to indicate the organized management of wealth in a *polis* (II.1, 1346 a6). The third book, the only one probably by Aristotle, deals with the relationship between a husband and his wife (Laurenti 1968).

Besides the *Oeconomica*, a number of other Hellenistic texts played a significant role in the recovery of household management literature in later ages: among them, the *Oeconomicus* by Filodemo di Gadara (110–35 B.C.), the *Oeconomica* by the neo-Pythagoreans Callicratidas (451–406 B.C., Philodemus 2012) and Brisone (450–390 B.C., Callicratidas 2012), the *Oeconomicus* by Dio Chrysostom (40–120), and the *Oeconomicus* by Hierocles (second century AD ca., Hierocles 1987). In these treatises, oeconomics is variously described as (1) the management of the *oikos* reserved to the wife as distinguished from the management of the public sphere attributed to a man, (2) the rule of property by the householder, and (3) the management of goods and properties by the philosopher. However, the term oeconomics is also used to denote every field in which the capacities of good management can be applied.

Oeconomicus in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

During the Middle Ages, there is no clear-cut definition of oeconomics, but a wide and complex adaptation of this literature to the principles of

Christianity and to feudal society (Lambertini 1985; Todeschini 1977). Relying on Peripatetic sources, Boethius (480 ca.–526) draws a distinction between ethics, politics, and oeconomics, all of which are moral disciplines (Boethius 2000). Ethics is *cura sui* (self-care) and is aimed at the acquisition of virtue, politics is the care of *res publica*, while oeconomics concerns *res familiaris*. A significant reflection on household management is also *De cura rei familiaris*, a letter long attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) (Bernard of Clairvaux 2012). The text is a collection of maxims and quotations in which household management is deemed as a necessary worldly affliction from which the virtuous man should remain spiritually detached (Bernard of Clairvaux 1998). The most important treatise on household management is, however, the *Speculum doctrinale* by Vincent of Beauvais (1190–1264) in which writings by various sources, among them Cicero, Theophrastus, and Augustine (354–430), are merged to compose a broader “cento.” In this treatise, Vincent tries to overcome the separation between household management as the art of governing the persons and oeconomics as the art of acquiring, preserving, and administrating the wealth and riches of the family.

A significant change in the literature on household management occurred starting in the thirteenth century through the Latin translations of Aristotle’s *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* and of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica* (Jackson 2010). Among them, the most significant contributions were by Robert Grosseteste (1175–1253), Durand d’Auvergne (1295–1329), and William of Moerbeke (1215–c. 1286). The most influential lesson (reprised from Eustratius of Nicaea) was that of Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274) who emphasizes ethics, oeconomics, and politics as separate spheres, leading from the individual to the political unit via the family. Another significant work is the *Summa grammatica* of Johannes de Dacia (late thirteenth century circa, Dacus 1955), in which *politica*, *yconomica*, and *monastica* are discussed separately, and *yconomia* is presented as a *scientia dispensandi et regendi propriam familiam* (knowledge of dispensing and

controlling one's own family). Dacus explicitly holds that the correct distinction between politics and oeconomics is not to be found in Cicero's *De Officiis* (Cicero 2001), but in Aristotle's *Politics*.

Within this tradition, one of the most influential treatises on *oeconomica* and politics is *De regimine principis* by Giles of Rome (1246–1316), whose second part is dedicated to household management (Colonna 1502; Briggs 1999). The art of governing the *oikos* is described by the philosopher as a crucial part of a broader *scientia civilis* for the observation of the natural character of the *oikos* is used to justify the expansion of the principles on household management from the relatively narrow space of the court to the whole political community. The continuity between the governing of the self, through the governance of the *oikos*, to the government of the *civitas* or the *regnum* allows Giles to discuss in great detail the *regimen coniugale*, which he equates to his conception of *regimen politicum*, the education of children (resembling his *regimen regale*), and the rule over servants (analogous to his *regimen dispoticum*). Other relevant themes are the management and enlargement of wealth and possessions; Giles therefore renews Aristotle's distinction between oeconomics and chrematistics.

The philosophical and political approach to household management underlined by Giles rests on the idea of continuity between the governance of the house and the administration of the *civitas*. However, an alternative reading emphasized instead the separation between politics and the art of governing the *oikos*. A number of other authors principally commented and reflected upon pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica* and concentrated their attention on the administration of the house (the wife, the children, and the servants) in order to develop a specific art of oeconomics. The most important commentary was that by Nicole Oresme (1325 ca. –1382) in which the art of household management is presented within the framework of Holy Scripture. An important tract was also that by Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), whose *I libri della famiglia* (1433–1440, Paoli 2013) circulated in manuscript form (the work was first printed in the nineteenth

century). Alberti sharply separated the *oikos* and the republic, focusing on household management as the art of taking care of the family as well as the art of managing its riches and goods (*masserizzie*). Oeconomics is fundamentally the art of preserving the peace and wealth of the family from the adverse fortunes of life and commerce. It is important to note that, while Alberti's oeconomics was principally based on Aristotelian themes, it also presented themes that echoed the different literature dedicated to *mercatura* (the art of trade and commerce, Maifreda 2012).

Within the vast production of treatises prompted by the new humanist translations and the reinterpretation of Aristotle and Xenophon – suffice it to mention Leonardo Bruni's translations (Soudek 1976) – the literature on household management expressed a new set of principles and themes, sometimes connected with a new courtier and princely culture (Frigo 1985; Mozzarelli 1988; Kraye 2008). Representative of this new sensibility toward oeconomics is Paolo Caggio's (1520 ca.–?) *Iconomica* (1552), a work in which the governance of the *oikos* is distinguished from the ruling of a principality or of a republic, but, at the same time, the administration of a polity is deemed to be achieved through the same courtesy and attention that should characterize the governing of a household (Caggio 1552).

Later tracts revive the classical conception of household management as a form of practical wisdom, and a number of texts variously discuss oeconomics within the framework offered by the category of "prudence." As an example, in his *Reggimento del padre di famiglia* (1580), Francesco Tommasi (c.1540–?) offers a critical synthesis of classical and medieval tradition on oeconomics derived from Aristotle, Xenophon, and Saint Thomas (Tommasi 1580). Another relevant treatise is *Della economica. Overo disciplina domestica* (Assandri 1616) by Giovanni Battista Assandri, an Italian writer of the early seventeenth century, in which oeconomics is described as "Prudence to make and keep the household happy" (Frigo 1992, 63). Assandri dwells at length on the practical nature of *oeconomica*, addressed to an investigation of things that are "contingent" and linked to

man's active life. The art of managing a household is therefore described as a domestic form of prudence. In the very same way, a few years later, Bartolomeo Frigerio in his *Economus prudente* (1629) defines oeconomics as "a certain prudence with which one governs a family well" (Frigerio 1629; Frigo 1992: 64). A partly different approach is that of Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) who, in the fourth part of his *Philosophia realis* (*De oeconomica* 1623), described the father of the household as a wise administrator and agriculture as a moral activity, since it implies the nurturing and the care of the land being depicted as the "ancient mother." In his *Oeconomica* (Campanella 1623), a significant place is also given to the dignity of labor and to a critique of false nobility and of usury (Ernst 2010).

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the doctrine of household management becomes an autonomous literary genre, not merely addressed to the prince and the court, but to a wider audience: members of the city's aristocracy, landowners, merchants, and members of the clergy. While representing a society divided into different social ranks, for each of these ranks, this literary genre defined the specific rules for private and public behavior. All these writings thus shared "the vision of domestic and 'private' space as an indispensable segment of the civil order" (Frigo 1992: 64).

Within the images of the *oikos* projected by the long-lasting history of oeconomics, two different sets of problems seem to converge, besides that of delimitating the space of the household. The first is related to a doctrine of the authority that is usually implied in governing the *oikos* ("who" has the authority to govern). The second concerns the different ideas on the management and administration of people and goods (how the *oikos* should be governed). The historian Otto Brunner (1950) was the first scholar to focus on how, throughout its history from ancient Greece to modern times, household management has always been characterized by a "seigniorial moment": i.e., the necessity for the householder to rule his domain effectively and with efficacy (see also: Krüger 1964). From Xenophon and Aristotle to early modern literature of *res familiares*, the

essential feature of household management is a father's capacity to govern the household through "just" (i.e., "rightful" and/or "most effective") means. In different historical contexts, however, various other issues recurred and were variously discussed: the relation between *oikos* and *civitas*, the relation between morality and necessity, and the distinction between administration, government, and oeconomics. Throughout its history, oeconomics has always moved between the management of the *oikos* and the governance of the *res publica* and between the moral guidance of the people and the effective management of men, riches, and wealth.

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Household Servants

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Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

The "dignity of man" concerns the human condition and what sets humans apart from other creatures on earth and in the heavens. The idea had origins in ancient Greek and Roman literature and later added the biblical story of creation

from the Old Testament, which became central to the concept in the Renaissance. A number of literary motifs characterize the “dignity of man” such as the idea that man is a microcosm of the universe, the praise of the human body and its parts including the erect posture of humans with the face looking towards the heavens, and the lists of accomplishments or feats of exemplary men and women. The free will or choice that humans have to “shape” or “determine” their nature becomes the most important aspect of the Renaissance dignity of man and woman for humanists in the 1500s and for later generations of scholars, especially after the 1800s.

Synonyms

[Dignity of man and woman](#); [Dignity of the human being](#)

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

The idea of human dignity has become associated with the Renaissance through the *Oration on the Dignity of Man* of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (b. 1463–d. 1494), probably the most famous speech that was never actually delivered before an audience. Written to introduce a public debate, but abandoned and only published after the author’s death, this “most elegant oration” acquired the subtitle *de hominis dignitate* (on human dignity) in a 1504 Strasbourg edition of Pico’s works. (Pico della Mirandola 2012, 8, 33). Pico was not the first Renaissance thinker to consider human dignity, nor the last, but his *Oration* has come to represent a turning point for its Renaissance optimism in human potential.

The tradition of the “dignity of man” stemmed from Greek and Roman origins in classical pagan sources such as Plato (c. 425–347 BC), Aristotle (b. 384–322 BC) in the *De anima* (*On the Soul*) (Aristotle 1907, II, 2–3: 413a–414b) pondering the qualities of each state of being within the world and Cicero (106–43 BC) who emphasized the immortality of the soul. In late antiquity after the spread of Christianity both Greek and Latin

Church fathers such as Gregory of Nyssa (335–c. 395) and Lactantius (240–320) integrated these classical writings on the relationship between the earth and its creatures, humans, the soul, and the universe into their Christian works. In the medieval era human “dignity” stemmed from the creation of man in God’s image and likeness, a notion that circulated in Latin commentaries in the ninth century, the 1200s to 1300s, and was later translated into English in the 1400s. (Lebech and McEvoy 2009, 4–6, 31–2). Human dignity as a theme resurfaced in the writings of Italian humanists such as Bartolomeo Fazio’s *De excellentia ac praestantia hominis* (*On the Excellence and Superiority of Man*) (1448), Giannozzo Manetti *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* (*On the Dignity and Excellence of Man*) (c. 1452), and Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) in his *Platonic Theology* (c. 1474) Ficino (2001–2006). In the fifteenth-century formulations of the “dignity of man,” humans occupied a fixed place in the hierarchy of beings in the universe with God and angels above and the animals, fish, plants, and stones below. Humans were connected to the material world through the body and the spiritual world of the heavens through the soul and their unique situation at the center of the hierarchy of God’s creation conferred dignity.

In Pico’s late fifteenth-century *Oration*, the Creator speaks to Adam in the Garden of Eden to explain the place of humans in the greater world. The Creator explains to Adam that creatures on land in the sea and air were assigned a fixed nature, whereas humans, in God’s words, “were neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal” and could “shape” or “determine” their “form” (Pico della Mirandola 2012, 117; Pico Project). It is this choice – because humans are “constrained by no limits” – that caught the imagination of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars who considered the oration as “one of the noblest bequests” of the Renaissance (Burckhardt 1958, 351–2).

Emerging in the mid- to late-1400s and continuing throughout the 1500s was a parallel literature on the dignity of woman, which argued the case for the excellence of the feminine sex and demonstrated how men and women shaped

human dignity. In Renaissance versions of the “dignity of man” and “dignity of woman” traditions, the creation story offered a number of shared literary motifs and interpretations of man and woman’s place in the world and the heavens beyond. Commonplaces recur in dignity of man and woman literature such as the erect posture of humans looking up towards the heavens, the praise of the human body and all its parts, the idea of man as a microcosm or “little world,” and the examples of the achievements of the illustrious men and women of history compiled from biblical, classical, and contemporary accounts (Warner 2011, 51–70).

In its Greek origins the idea of the *mikros kosmos*, *microcosm* or “little world” meant that humans comprised all the elements in the universe. Eugene Rice stresses the impact of the Greek patristic fathers Gregory of Nyssa, Nemesius of Emesa (late fourth century), and Origen (c. 185–c. 254) who encouraged this classical theme of man as a microcosm and added a Christian veneer that man connected the “physical and intellectual worlds.” Acting as a link or *vinculum mundi* between the heavenly world or macrocosm and the earthly world granted further dignity to humans (Rice 1988, 24; Kraye 1988, 311–12). By the Renaissance, writers supporting human dignity combined the microcosm motif with the biblical creation story. In *The Week or Creation of the World* first published in 1578, Guillaume de Saluste Du Bartas (1544–1590) remarks: “Within us can be seen fire, air, earth and the waves of the sea / In brief, man is nothing but an abridgement of the world” (Du Bartas 1578, 178). The Lyonnais humanist, Maurice Scève (c. 1501–c. 1560), entitled his 1562 poem on the creation of Adam and Eve, the *Microcosm*. This dignity extended to and included woman because as “the last one created of all other creatures” woman was “the final and most perfect accomplishment of all of God’s works and the perfection of the universe” and she “contains all the world” (Lefranc 1530, lxxix^v, xciii^f; Agrippa 1535, B v^v).

The creation story of Adam and Eve allowed an author to exalt human dignity and praise God’s

work by dwelling on the perfection of each human body part. In the *Brief Discourse of the Excellence and Dignity of Man*, published in Paris in 1558, Pierre Boaistuau glorifies the body with “Praise of the excellence of the eyes,” eyebrows, nose, tongue, teeth, beard, ears, and so on. (Boaistuau 1982, 51), but he borrowed these commonplaces from a sixteenth-century French translation of the Church father Lactantius’s *Divine Institutes*, dating to the early fourth century.

To mark the superiority of humans over other creatures, the upright posture praised by Renaissance writers such as Boaistuau, Scève, Du Bartas can be traced as a literary motif as far back as the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid (43 BC–17/18 AD) the Latin poet of the reign of Augustus at the beginning of the Roman empire:

Whereas other animals hang their heads and look at
the ground,
he made man stand erect,
bidding him to look up to heaven,
and lift his head to the stars. (Ovid 1986, I, 84–6).

The erect posture allowed contemplation of the heavens and also established humans as rulers over God’s creatures on earth (Patrides 1982, 85, n. 5, 6; Kraye 1988, 311, n. 55; Sozzi 1970, 186–7, Sozzi 1982). Adam walking “with his head held high” like the “Lord” instilled amazement and fear in the “humble” animals as he became “their master here on earth” (Scève 1976, 151). Dignity stems from this role as a “terrestrial Emperor,” a “second God” or “Lord of this lower world” (Du Bartas 1578, 180–81). This motif emphasizes the idea that God created the world as a dominion available for human exploitation in each of its domains. Man becomes the “sovereign admiral” of the sea or the “great captain” and “great chief general” of the earth and air (Parmentier 1971, 99–100). Again, some writers promoted the dignity of woman with the parallel motif of God introducing Eve as the “the queen of a kingdom already prepared for her,” with “every creature (to) submit to and obey her” (Agrippa 1996, 48).

Another commonplace of the dignity of man and dignity of woman traditions traces the lives of exemplary men and women who achieved

greatness or excellence. Writing in Latin in the mid-fifteenth century, Giannozzo Manetti (b. 1396–d. 1459) was typical of humanists in compiling biographies of the accomplished men of antiquity such as Seneca or Socrates as well as praising the men of his own era such as the Chancellor of Florence Coluccio Salutati in *On Famous Men of Great Age*, 1439 and his later writing on human dignity (Manetti 2003, 2018). Well into the sixteenth century, Renaissance writers continued this tradition to praise the achievements of Alexander the Great, Lysurgus the Spartan lawgiver, Julius and Augustus Caesar, David and Solomon who “by their virtue attained honor and triumph” (Champier 1502, xxv^v). Scholars celebrated the new inventions that demonstrated “the dignity and wit of man” such as the printing press and Leonardo da Vinci’s invention of flying (Boaistuau 1982, 55–62, 65). Similarly, Renaissance writers drew upon the women in the Scriptures such as Judith, or the female exempla in the histories of ancient Greece and Rome such as Aspasia, Lucretia, or Cornelia, and fifteenth- and sixteenth-century learned or royal women such as Christine de Pisan and Marguerite de Navarre to demonstrate the excellence of women in different fields of endeavor (Berriot-Salvadore 1990, 355; Helisenne de Crenne 1986, 100–101; Agrippa 1996, 79–89; Warner 2011, 74–83).

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the mid-fifteenth century, Manetti’s *On the Dignity and Excellence of Man* reflected a common belief that each creature or being possessed specific talents as gifts granted by God: “our human fruits are to be deemed the many operations of intelligence and will. It is these to which man is born by nature just as the tree is born to produce fruit” (Manetti 1966, 92–3). For Manetti or Ficino humans occupied a place of dignity through their place at the center of the hierarchy of creation whereas for Pico della Mirandola and later Renaissance thinkers, such as the French humanist Charles de Bovelles (b. 1479–d. 1553)

or the German humanist Henricus Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (b. 1486–d. 1535), dignity was a potential within humans to be aimed for and earned through force of will.

In Pico’s notion of the human as spoken by the Creator to His creation, this free will is precisely what distinguishes the human from the other creatures. Each human, like Adam, faced a choice “to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish” or to ascend using the “power, in accordance with the judgment of your soul, to be reborn into the higher orders, those that are divine” (Pico della Mirandola 2012, 117; Pico Project).

Charles de Bovelles’ *De Sapientia (Of Wisdom)*, published in Paris in 1511, explains how Nature provides every human (*homines*) with the capacity to exist, live, feel, and understand or reason (*substantia, vita, sensus, ratio*), but some humans never achieve their potential and remain at a lower level of being (Bovelles 1982). In this understanding of the human condition – a development on the thinking of Aristotle, Ramon Lull, Cusa – humans encompass all the lesser states of being – mineral, vegetable, animal but need to apply their reason and intelligence to attain the states of being shared with the divine, the angels, the heavens (Bovelles 1982, 57, 160–61, 165; Ferrari 2011, 262–3, 287, 323). Bovelles, like Pico della Mirandola, adopted the idea of striving for human dignity – that dignity was the potential of humans and equal to all, but not achieved by all (Magnard, 1995).

Similarly, the German humanist Agrippa acknowledges that human accomplishment occurs “according to our capacity” or *secundum capacitatem* (Agrippa 1992, 520; Agrippa 1982, III: 142–3). For Agrippa a wise man seizes his dignity to attain great power and virtue – “*et ipsa est dignificatio homini ad hanc tam sublimem virtutem ac potestatem*” ([“and it is the dignity of man for this so high virtue and authority”]) Agrippa 1992, 407; Agrippa 1982, III: 24–5). This accent on the capacity of the soul resurfaces in Agrippa’s discussion of woman. He emphasizes that the soul – not the body – mirrors the image of God. He insists that man and woman

share the divine spiritual image and asserts that women share the same potential as men. The Lord “gave to woman as to man the same form of soul, utterly without difference. Between these souls could not be found any difference of sex. Woman received equal (capacities of) understanding, reason, speech and language as man.” Agrippa concludes “in both (sexes) is a same liberty of judgment and will and equal dignity” (Agrippa 1535, B^r; Warner 2011, 77).

Impact and Legacy

One of the values we hold as most fundamental in modern life is the dignity of the human condition. The preamble to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights refers to the “inherent dignity” of all humans; its first article states that “[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Dignity as shared by all humans equally, in this twentieth-century definition then, is closer to fifteenth-century Renaissance formulations of inherent dignity because the formulation carries an assumption that “no other species is equal to humanity” in the way that early Renaissance humans drew dignity from their place at the center of the world as beings encompassing all aspects of the universe (Kateb 2011, 6; Niederberger 2015, 513–14).

Over the course of the Renaissance writers such as Pico, Bovelles, or Agrippa outlined how dignity was a quality to be achieved – to be acquired through striving for excellence – a value that perhaps is most evident in a humanist education. Pico’s *Oration* has more resonance with current ideas about the “choice” or “liberty” to act and to “make,” “fashion,” or “determine” one’s self.

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- Ficino, Marsilio
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Human Senses in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Philosophical discussions about senses and perception processes characterized scientific debates during the Renaissance. The inquiry into the nature of the senses in the generation of knowledge, influenced by anthropocentrism that placed the spotlight on human reason, was framed between two positions bequeathed by classical antiquity and reworked during the Middle Ages (Newhauser 2014, 107–126): platonic conception of the hierarchy of the senses and the Aristotelian. During the Renaissance, these positions were criticized in light of the new corpuscular philosophy that aspired to replace the dominant Aristotelian theory of real sensory qualities and sensitive species. In addition, the construction of a metaphysical hierarchy of perceptions began to be developed, in which the vision took a leading place, as well as the way of conceiving the body and its functioning, which gave way to a positive assessment of other senses, such as touch. At the same time, a question began to be about the reliability of the information conveyed by the senses as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries advanced.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Human beings connect with the world, apprehend it and experienced it from their first moments of life through the five senses (Le Breton 2006). That way Sir John Davies explains it in his philosophic poem *Nosce Teipsum*: “By touch, the first pure qualities we learn, / Which quicken all things, hot,

cold, moist and dry;/ By touch, hard, soft, rough, smooth, we do discern;/ By touch, sweet pleasure and sharp pain we try." (Davies 1599, XVI, 45–46). Different cultures, throughout history, have reflected on how to perceive the world and the number of senses used. Attention paid to sensorial issues was of significance in western thought because it was not only a particular topic but it was also a complement to other possible objects of study related to the conduct of man in society. This made it possible to place the *sensation* in a relevant spot in the history of ideas (Newhauser 2010, 6). During the Renaissance, there was a new interest in the perceptual process as a result of a change in the conception of man and the world. Indeed, from the prevailing medieval theocentric mentality, it moved to anthropocentrism, which placed the individual at the center of natural and philosophical exploration. Philosophical inquiry oscillated between the platonic tradition, which considered imperative to exclude the perception of the realm of ideas, and the Aristotelian one, which affirmed that the sensation was directly related to the thought (Aristotle 2007, II, 6–12).

Different ways of perception, and their transmission channels, led various thinkers, from Antiquity to the present day, to question the nature of senses, their role in the generation of knowledge, and their reliability in this creation. This questioning of the sensory issue in the philosophical thought of the Renaissance was synthesized in two movements. On the one hand, the main cognitive faculties (sense, memory, imagination, and comprehension or intellect) were at the centre of the discussion on epistemology and metaphysics (Hatfield 2008, 953). In this context, the theory of the senses became relevant in the discussion, since the new corpuscularian philosophy was intended to replace the dominant Aristotelian theory of real sensorial qualities and sensitive species. On the other hand, the construction of a metaphysical hierarchy of the senses, in which the vision occupied a predominant place, became important (Kambaskovic and Wolfe 2014, 107). However, during these centuries, other sensorial perceptions

participated in the way to conceive the body and its functioning, such as touch.

The conception and classification of the senses have their origins in classical Antiquity. Plato and Aristotle were the ones who established the hierarchy of the senses (Jütte 2005, 61–70, Clements 2014, 115–138) that crystallized in the successive millennia. This development was based on the systematization of the faculties or cognitive powers and their distinction between external and internal senses. The externals were made up of vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, while the internal ones were made up of memory, imagination, common sense, and reflection. Among these, imagination played an important role for two reasons. Firstly, because it received the images of the senses and, secondly, because with this information it originated a representation of the object. In the same way, common sense recognized and compared the discernment of the external senses: for example, it discriminated between blue color and sweet taste.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this philosophical disintegration of cognitive faculties and senses was framed in two predominant lines of thought: platonic and Aristotelian. The two traditions differed mainly in the ontology of the sense, the intellect, and the role that these faculties played in the acquisition of knowledge (Hatfield 2008, 954). For Renaissance platonic authors, the intellect could operate independently with respect to the senses, contemplating intelligible objects that were not available to them, such as God, the soul, or intangible forms. Instead, Aristotelian denied that the soul was a separate substance from the body and that it acted independently of the sensory perceptions. On the contrary, for them, all knowledge arose through the senses, including the understanding of both nature and God. All these discussions about the intervention of the sensorial experience in the process of knowledge led to the questioning of other philosophical and scientific aspects that made a particular imprint on the Renaissance and early modern period (Roodenburg 2014).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The sensory world of the Renaissance was crossed by the traditional practices and beliefs of the ancient and medieval times and, at the same time, by the sensory values that were beginning to be transfigured at the gates of the modern era (Classen 2001, 358). Sensorial elements (sounds, smells, and colors) were estimated as true transforming agents: from health or disease mediators to carriers of planetary energy, became symbols of the social order (Classen 1993). This change took place in line with other mutations in the social and cultural sphere, such as the rise of individualism as a social structure, the emergence of positive and secular rational thinking about nature and birth of a new conception of the body by distinguishing it from the human person. Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564) and Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) were the exponents of this transformation in which the body became the ancillary form of man, able to be examined from a mechanistic perspective (Le Breton 2000, 29–80).

In this context, the sense of sight was the most esteemed within the western sensory hierarchy because its participation in the perception process was performed remotely from the object to be perceived, so it did not involve body experimentation. During the Renaissance, this sense reaffirmed its supremacy not only by perceiving from a distance, but also because of the need for light, becoming the central element of the theorization of optics (Kepler 1968 [1604]) and perspective (Kambaskovic and Wolfe, 2014, 111–112). In general terms, these theories held that objects emitted similarities or replicas of themselves (*species*) that then moved to the brain through the eyes and optic nerves. In this process, the mind had direct access to the precise images of the world. However, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the vision began to arouse uncertainty and unreliability (Clark 2007, 2). Indeed, the legacy of the Renaissance was to introduce doubts about the process of perception and cognition (Pender 2014, 132), still in

the sense of sight, considered, up to that point, as the noblest.

Perceptions began to be revalued by their implications for medical issues, leading to broader philosophical reflection. Renaissance philosophers and doctors devoted great efforts to reading the signs of the living body in its material and spiritual element (Pender 2014, 130). In consequence, they endeavored to know the structure, function, and use of the senses in pursuit of a holistic understanding of their functioning. In this process, touch began to be the subject of observation and subsequent theorization. For the English philosopher and physician John Bulwer (1606–1656), the hand was the spokesman of the body, while touch became the universal language of humanity since their expressions could be understood by any human being (Bulwer 1649). In this way, the hands encouraged a dialectical experimentation since it was impossible to touch without being touched.

William Harvey (1578–1657) and Franciscus Sylvius (1614–1672) also highlighted this distinction of contact in medical knowledge. In both cases, the ability of touch was complemented by the view, granting a superior authority to the tactile in the medical examination over demonstrative reasoning for probable causes and principles (Kambaskovic and Wolfe 2014, 120). In this point, Harvey highlighted the experimental and diagnostic priority of the testimony of sight and touch (Harvey 1653, 68–415), and Sylvius established in a clear way the supremacy of this sensory binomial in the practice of anatomists (Sylvius 1679, IX, 22).

René Descartes (1596–1650), in the context of the discussion of the epistemic problems of knowledge, also questioned the implication of the senses in cognition. In the scientific method's development, he argued that an important step in understanding the procedure was to examine the instruments of knowledge (Cottingham 1992, 1–20). The intellect was the most basic, adding the imagination and the sensory perception. These formulations contributed to the justification of corpuscular philosophy and the enunciation of a

new theory on the senses (Hatfield 2008, 969). For the French philosopher, there was a relationship between the idea and the image of the sense experienced, rejecting, for example, that the light and heat were similar to sensations. Therefore, the Cartesian corpuscular world, of extension and movement, was not given to the senses manifestly. The sensory qualities in the bodies (smells, sounds, flavors, and tactile qualities) consisted of certain arrangements of corpuscles that possessed the properties of size, shape, movement, and position. This raised ruled out that, the Aristotelian formulation of color, as experienced in sensations, was totally analogous to color as a quality of bodies. In this theory, Descartes considered the external sensory perception, imagination, memory, and the pure intellection as different ways of a single power of perception, that is, as basic operations of the intellect. Of these faculties, sensory perception, imagination, and memory depended on the mind-body interaction. Instead, pure intellect could operate without changes in body state (Hatfield 2008, 970).

In this context, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) argued that the senses acted through movement. This thesis was developed over several works – *A Minute or First Draught of the Optiques* (1646) and *Elementorum philosophiae sectio prima De corpore* (1655) – in the research about light, vision, reflection and refraction, and sensory perception (Prins 1996, 145). This approach to sensory issues respected a logical order: it began with light and its reception by the sense of vision and continued with sensation, imagination, and memory. Hobbes explained the vision as a consequence of established movements in the “sense organ,” identified with the optic nerves, the brain, and the heart.

Impact and Legacy

During the Renaissance, different thinkers took up ideas on sensory topics bequeathed to them by the classics and the medieval, in order to be able to explain more concisely the relationship between

sensation and intellect. One of the legacies of this period was to introduce uncertainty about the process of perception and cognition, which created a “sense paradox” (Pender 2014, 132) because, while perceptions were decisive in the body’s research, diagnosis, and treatment, its reliability in the transmission of information began to be questioned. The “sensation” became more suspicious over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As a result, the functions and representations of the inner and external senses began to become more complex, as well as their relationship to each other, along with spirit and cognition. In conclusion, during the Renaissance period, the senses were configured as objects of philosophical inquiry and mechanisms of knowledge of the body, thus fulfilling a fundamental role in debates around the reason and material nature of man.

Cross-References

- [Acoustics in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Intellection, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- [Motion in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Observation in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Senses, Outer](#)
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Humanism

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Abstract

This entry examines the humanist articulation of three key philosophical relations: being and seeming, virtue and fortune, and stasis and mutability. These relations address matters of epistemology (knowing), ethics, and ontology (reality). Humanists, when grappling with these concerns, resorted to alternative approaches. They identified reality on the basis of the stability of reason, which could ground an objective view of things. In this sense, they became *finders* of wisdom. Or, as *seekers* of wisdom, they acknowledged the transience of phenomena, which they confronted in their awareness of illusion and limited vision. If they grounded their role as objective expositors of the truth of things on the traditional concept of the *animal rationale*, they also celebrated the new force of the *homo ludens*, the philosopher at play, who participates in the unveiling of reality through masking and seeming, and also intersubjectively, through conversations with others.

Synonyms

Classical tradition; Dialogue; Learning; Rationalism

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

One of the central puzzles of Renaissance philosophy is its relationship to humanism. The relationship appears more opaque in modern scholarship, which often uses a philosophical vocabulary and conception alien to those of humanists. While scholars have presented diverse viewpoints on the relation between humanism and

philosophy, we may appreciate these viewpoints as two, often conflicting conceptions.

One group of scholars has assessed the humanist philosophical contribution according to its systematic exposition of the fields of epistemology, ethics, and ontology or metaphysics. These include James Hankins (2007), Robert Black (1998), and others, who have followed the lead of Ernst Cassirer (1927) and Paul Oskar Kristeller (1979). By the measure of systemic method, they have found humanists philosophically bereft. Humanist writings were too committed to rhetorical eloquence, too digressive, and too devoted to the study of classical literature. Those Renaissance authors who explicitly discuss matters of metaphysics, such as Nicholas of Cusa or Marsilio Ficino, are recognized as philosophers rather than humanists, even though they shared with humanist colleagues' common ideas, books, and literary genres. For these scholars, the philosophical domain that humanists traversed was in ethics or moral philosophy, though here as well humanists followed earlier thinkers and seldom registered anything original or profound.

Another group of scholars, in contradistinction to the first, has valued the situational, unsystematic features of humanist works as part and parcel of their philosophizing. Among these scholars are Eugenio Garin (2005), Ernesto Grassi (2001), and more recently Nancy Struever (1970), Christopher Celenza (2004), and Lodi Nauta (2009). In their view, humanist works address the historical and experiential dimension of the human condition, whereby philology and rhetoric show the ways that humanity negotiates the meaning of things, in a specific context. Humanity, according to Garin, "discovered itself [in the Renaissance] as the maker of itself and its world" (Garin 2010).

Despite the efforts of this second group, skeptics still consider humanist writings to lack philosophical incisiveness. Those scholars exploring humanism's rhetorical and philological orientation, while underlining its antimetaphysical qualities, nevertheless need to bridge the gap between the history of ideas and history of philosophy, a relation that also embraces the history of literature.

Until this gap is overcome, each side in the debate over humanism's role in the history of philosophy can deny the historicism of the other. The skeptics in the first group can claim that their view of both humanism and philosophy is sounder and more respectful of disciplinary distinctions that help chart historical developments. Their opponents in the second can assert that these disciplines themselves possess no *a priori* or transhistorical value but rather have acquired modern meanings that do not easily square with humanist activities and ideas. If humanists wrote Lucianic satires of the philosophical tradition, does that make them unphilosophical (or, for that matter, philosophical)?

To take on this conundrum, in all its postmodern resonance, we must not simply examine concepts but also weigh images. For the most fruitful moments in humanist philosophizing occurred across the disciplines that the humanists celebrated: rhetoric, history, philosophy, grammar, and poetry. Francis Bacon, at the close of our period, wrote "*poesis doctrinae tanquam somnium*": "poetry is like a dream of philosophic love" (Huizinga 1950, 119). Enchanted by rhetoric and poetry, humanists expressed their philosophical investigations through vibrant language, whereby they resorted as much to imagery as to concepts.

The humanist imagination could therefore be simultaneously artistic and philosophical, just as Renaissance artists portrayed the love of wisdom in their creations. Andrea Pisano created figurations of this desire as *Dialectic* for the Florentine bell-tower as did Agostino di Duccio, when decorating the Franciscan church in Rimini in line with the ideas of Guarino Guarini. Michelangelo expressed the humanist philosophizing most profoundly in his *New Sacristy* at San Lorenzo. In marking the passing of the Medici princes, the Sacristy added mystery to the dimensions of time and space. This mystery achieves personification in the seven statues: the two Medici dukes, the four deities, and the Virgin and Child. Duke Giuliano is seated over the statues of Night and

Day, who display the alternate features of female and male, sleeping and waking, and closed and open postures.



These sculptures have been viewed through a Neoplatonic lens, with the exchanges among them conveying the flow of time that is surmounted only by a turning toward the heavens and divinity. The Dukes, dressed in Roman garb, are turned toward the Virgin, and the visitor is constrained, by the confines of the space, to look upward above the linear pilasters and cornices toward the circular dome and its symbolic eternity.

The abiding impression, however, is one of movement.

Like Michelangelo, humanists “awakened” and adapted classical models to convey philosophical questions. We examine the humanist articulation of three key philosophical relations: being and seeming, virtue and fortune, and stasis and mutability. These three relations have preoccupied thinkers and artists both inside and outside the philosophical tradition. As readers of philosophy, we can associate the humanist relations to matters of epistemology (knowing), ethics, and ontology (reality). These domains, too, are permeated by exchange with one another. For one’s thinking, humanists emphasize, attends one’s way of living, and one’s life submits to the sway of time and history.

Humanists, when grappling with these philosophical concerns, resorted to alternative approaches. They identified reality on the basis

of the stability of reason, which could ground an objective view of things. In this sense, they became *finders* of wisdom. Or, as *seekers* of wisdom, they acknowledged the transience of phenomena, which they confronted in their awareness of illusion and limited vision. In the first approach, as finders, they more directly adapted the doctrines of classical and medieval philosophy. With the second, as seekers, their philosophical activity was concealed from systematic purview; with stylistic ingenuity, humanists posed riddles and employed artifice in order to disclose the nature of reality. If they grounded their role as finders and objective expositors of the truth of things on the traditional concept of the *animal rationale* (the Latin rendering of the Aristotelian ζῷον λόγος ἔχον), they also celebrated as seekers the new force of the *homo ludens*, the philosopher at play, who participates in the unveiling of reality through masking and seeming, and also intersubjectively, through conversations with others.

These two approaches confront us with a basic question: to what extent do the humanists’ obvious discussions of virtue and ethical behavior have deeper dimensions, which we may explore by seeing how they understood reality, and the ways reality became manifest to them? Their investigations of epistemology and ontology, in fact, allow us to appreciate their ethical discussions in a new light.

Being and Seeming (Epistemology)

Cicero’s *De amicitia*, a favorite humanist text, proclaims: “For only the few want *to be* endowed with virtue *rather than to seem* so [*esse quam videri*]” (*De amicitia* 26). The phrase “to be rather than to seem” became a watchword for conducting one’s life in the pursuit of virtue and happiness, an alignment amenable to the humanist reading of Stoics, Epicureans, and Peripatetics. Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger (1406–38), who recorded the humanist commonplaces in his letters, advised the young Roberto Strozzi to

“choose in all things to be rather than to seem” (BAV Ottob.lat. 1677, ep.34). The moral mandate was not easily met, and humanists turned to confront its epistemological challenge. They viewed the world as a shadow play, full of hypocrisy and disguise. In trying to identify the covert intentions of princes and peers, the humanists often wore their own masks, using personae in their quest for sincerity and authenticity. These personifications present their philosophical puzzles, asking readers to decipher authorial meaning. Some humanist writing is relatively “closed” with respect to its hermeneutical latitude, relying on manifest statement (Cox 1992). But humanists frequently dressed their philosophizing in dialogue, using various interlocutors, or in poetry, fables, or novels. When humanists proclaim the nature of “being” or “truth,” in the sense of objectively identifying the nature of things, their readers also encounter personal features of the proclamation, exhibiting features of the moment, circumstance, or mood. If personality occasionally appears transparent and direct, it may at other times seem consciously feigned and more deeply disguised. The spectrum is broad.

Speaking in the first person, Leonardo Bruni (c. 1370–1444) composed his *Oratio in hypocritas* in 1418, inveighing against them as those who strive “not to be, but rather to seem or appear good” (Bruni *Oratio*, 1996, 316). Hypocrites are malevolent players on the cultural stage, who, by wearing false masks [*alienas personas*], delude or play false both God and humanity alike.

In this brief speech, Bruni displays the twofold quality of humanist epistemology, of finding and seeking the truth. First, he employs language in order to unmask hidden reality and reveal its objective nature for the entire world to see. Bruni and other humanists therefore embrace a variation of the correspondence theory of truth, akin to the medieval scholastic conception of “aedequatio rei et intellectus,” i.e., a statement expresses the truth of things insofar as language reflects or corresponds to reality. Second, the *oratio* underlines how language itself is generated out from and speaks to personal relationships between the speaker and his audience. Bruni criticizes the hypocrites in the words of someone

familiar with their treachery. For they, he claims, deceived him, who once trusted them. (Bruni 1996, 310). Through a discursive context, humanist speech illuminates reality and in fact shines a light on its concealment.

Humanist epistemology moves between these two positions. In the first place, by objectively identifying reality, humanists stripped away or exposed the mask of seeming; they consistently espied the mendacity in the world around them. And secondly, by appreciating the dynamic, intersubjective conditions of knowledge, they realized how their given relation to others conditioned their perceptions of the phenomena before them. The tension within their approach to knowledge moved them to adopt the form of dialogue in their inquiries, since this genre brought the two positions to bear on one another. The humanist adaptation of classical dialogue, whether Ciceronian, Platonic, or Lucianic, is indebted to this struggle to confront, in alternate ways, the problem of being and seeming, as it pertains to knowledge.

About 30 years after Bruni’s *Oratio*, his colleague Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) composed the dialogue *Contra hypocritas*. Poggio sets the dialogue in the Florentine library of the Aretine humanist Carlo Marsuppini, in which Poggio himself is present. Marsuppini immediately agrees with Poggio’s indictment of clerical dissimulation, calling the curia a “kingdom of hypocrites” (Bracciolini 2008, 7). Girolamo Aliotti, a humanist abbot, joins the two speakers. Aliotti, similar to Bruni, turns to definitions. Hypocrites would seem better than they actually are (Bracciolini 2008). With sincerity a moral value, the humanist language also appears straightforward and sincere, contrasting and distinguishing what is from what seems to be.

If Poggio’s epistemological challenge first showed itself as obvious – using language to identify deception and unmask the face of seeming – the dialogue raises deeper dimensions of the problem of knowledge. Aliotti broadens the scope of hypocrisy by claiming that people simulate in every trade, including both intelligent and good people. Therefore it is very hard, if not impossible, to discern their true natures behind their personae. The focus shifts from unmasking deceptions

practiced by others to pondering the sincerity expressed by the speaker and examining how genuine or fraudulent his or her expression appears to be. Aliotti emphasizes the depth of people's covert meaning.

This epistemological uncertainty finds its center in the humanists' phenomenological awareness. The filters of personality mask all things; there is a limit, and a finitude, to human insight into the nature of seeming that qualifies all objective assertions. The positions of the humanists too are transitory. Marsuppini changes his viewpoint over time, in the course of the conversation. The humanist dialogue, as a philosophical form of expression, showcases a mobile understanding, in which interlocutors modify their views as they continue to confront their shifting perceptions throughout their conversations with others.

These humanist conversations are akin, in tone and form, to philosophical riddle contests, in which speakers, as agonists, present problems to one another that are illuminated, if not resolved, by the intersubjective exchange. The *homo ludens* provokes the argument that demands a response, even by contemplating hidden meanings. "I consider no honest game completely devoid of edifying purpose," states the Cardinal in Cusa's dialogue *De ludo globi*, as he embarks with his interlocutor to uncover the nature of the universe symbolized by the newly-invented ball game.

Humanist dialogues therefore acknowledge the fact of intersubjectivity, and they convey their philosophical inquiry with historical inflection (Zorzi Pugliese 1995). Following Cicero's practice, humanists could present historical speakers in order to grant certain gravity to the topic under discussion. Yet they could also qualify the authority of these interlocutors through the history of the narrative: narrative time reveals the shifts and vacillations in their viewpoints, as it does with Marsuppini. Interlocutors, and by extension readers, may reconsider their perceptions as they exchange views. Here we may draw a comparison to Platonic dialogues. By inducing *aporia*, Socrates often persuades his interlocutors to abandon, or at least question, their initial positions. These reversals, however, tend to confirm Socrates's

authority. Humanist dialogues, in their most open and nondidactic form, lack this stable point of reference: all interlocutors are subject to question. At polemical moments, humanist dialogues, such as the *De exilio* of Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481) or the *De vero bono* of Lorenzo Valla (1407–57), present their authors' enemies as upholding dubious philosophical positions. Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72), for his part, put forward his own persona, at various stages of life, throughout his work. Deeply engaged with the theory and practice of art, Alberti pondered the presence of appearances, for example, by outlining the system of linear perspective in his treatise on painting.

In Alberti's most famous dialogue, *Della famiglia*, Alberti's uncle Lionardo speaks to "Battista," Alberti's youthful persona, about how their conversations differ from the treatises of "philosophers." Philosophers pursue, he says, every implication of their "most obscure and difficult investigations," whereas the humanist household discussions do not aim for such glory (Alberti 1960, 1:84). Whether or not Battista, or the reader, takes Lionardo at his word strikes at the heart of the humanist's inquiry into the nature of being and seeming. The familial dialogues engage several philosophical subjects, such as friendship or the power of fortune. They include a discursive, witty commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 8, in which family members discuss the nature of friendship by focusing on the relation between being and seeing and on ways of discerning good will from dissembling.

More fundamentally, Lionardo modifies his views intersubjectively, in response to the moment of discourse and his awareness of those present. His knowledge of their way of life affects, he says, how he expresses his point of view. Philosophical inquiry is, by these lights, a type of game, in which Lionardo, and his listeners, come to understand the orientation of others. Therefore Alberti's epistemology, like that of other humanists, does not adhere to a scholastic logical analysis, or to a strict imitation of Ciceronian *disputatio in utramque partem*. Rather it allows for intersubjective play, by accounting for the personalities involved. In this intimate

exchange, the personal becomes a key modality in philosophical thinking. The characters advance their awareness by knowing one another: they carry a sense of other's history, and this history, as it changes, also shapes their shifting thoughts and impressions. Acquiring knowledge is always a problem and a test. Readers of the humanist works must negotiate the meaning of these *personae* as they present themselves in the course of the text, or paratext.

Alberti's Tuscan vernacular associates the verb *parere* ("to seem or appear") with the neo-Latin *videri* as its counterpart. Both convey the sense of seeming and appearing, disguise and disclosure. Writing *Della pittura* prior to the Latin version *De pictura*, he states, "Know that a painted thing will never appear [*parrà/videri*] truthful where there is not a definite distance for seeing it" (Alberti 1973, 3:38–9). When searching for knowledge, humanists strove to unmask what lay before them. The unmasking could entail objectifying and declaring the reality of things; it could also require patient receptivity to the way phenomena unfold over time, as one encounters them in dialogue or in observations that are conditioned by the presence of others.

This Quattrocento epistemology has precedents in the fourteenth century, with the ludic yet serious investigations of Petrarch and Boccaccio. Both humanists used various personae in their works, at times autobiographical (e.g., Petrarch's Silvius in the *Bucolicum carmen* and Franciscus in the *Secretum*). These writers established the basis for the humanist consideration of authority, whereby a speaker, no matter how distinguished, could qualify or even undermine his pronouncements through contradiction or vacillation. Their poetic understanding viewed the world through the prism of personality and also remained alert for reversals of meaning on the basis of changing appearances. Although Quattrocento humanists seldom praised their Trecento forebears, they became a critical medium through which they understood the relation between being and seeming.

Petrarch's dialogues, as well as Boccaccio's *Decameron*, show the mutable use of *personae* in the search for knowledge. The *Secretum*

showcases Augustinus, Petrarch's figure for his beloved St. Augustine of Hippo, guiding the troubled Franciscus through an inquisition into his psychic distress. In his *De remediis utriusque fortune*, Ratio, the disembodied voice of rational certainty, tries to steady the emotions of Metus (Fear), Spes (Hope), Dolor (Sadness), and Gaudium (Joy) as they express reactions to various life situations. Both Augustinus and Ratio would speak with knowledge of moral clarity and reflect Petrarch's devotion to the Christian and classical traditions. This devotion, in which Petrarch engaged until his dying breath, nurtured his creative thinking. The dialogues, like his many letters, seal their authority with the impression of truth: in the *Secretum*, the figure of Veritas (Truth) introduces Augustinus to Franciscus. Yet their sovereign interlocutors are also colored by ambiguities. Augustinus is at times more Stoic than Christian, overlooking the role of grace; he also cites classical authorities when counseling Franciscus to abandon his study of literature. The entire dialogue, too, records Franciscus's own vision and therefore relies on the memory of the imagined author, who is subject to the vagaries of time and poetic embellishment. The *De remediis* appears less problematic and more immediately didactic. But Ratio's truth-telling often resorts to rhetorical suasion, an appeal to emotion while contending with the power of the four passions. Ratio is dumbfounded at one point by Sadness's distress over severe pain, and it modulates its advice to the point of inconsistency, according to the cases it confronts, yielding to religious dogma when facing the fear of death.

With respect to Boccaccio's greatest work, the *Decameron*, humanist readers appreciated its subtle thinking on the complex relation between being and seeming. Deception is the keynote of its many tales, which often target clerical hypocrisy, and there are no less than five stories featuring the con artists/painters Bruno and Buffalmacco, who, like their author, enjoy playing games with people's perceptions. The reader must discern the meaning of the work, whether in whole or part, through the multiple narrative frames: of authorial persona, of the ten storytellers, and within the stories themselves. As

in other humanist dialogues, the storytellers or *brigata* highlight the fact of intersubjectivity, as they respond to one another's intentions and lessons over the course of two weeks' time. They communicate and revise their understanding of philosophical themes – virtue, friendship, fortune – during this time, shifting their perspectives as they come to know each other. Shading all their leisured conversation is their awareness of life's finitude, for the Plague has cost them kinsmen and chased them from their native city.

Both *trecento* humanists advanced their vernacular inquiry by using the verb *parere* as the Tuscan equivalent to *videri*, and set the precedent for later humanists. Connoting illusion, *parere* repeatedly marks the scrupulous and theatrical hypocrisy of Cepparello, who deceives the pious friar confessor (*Dec.* 1.1.36) (Boccaccio 1992); the verb expresses the work of Bruno and Buffalmacco, who, by creating false impressions, persuade the hapless Calendrino that he seems pregnant, in order to relieve him of his inheritance (*Dec.* 9.3.8-15). But Pampinea in the opening of the *Decameron* also uses *parere* in realizing the mortal effects of deadly disease that move her to advise others to leave Florence (*Dec.* 1.Intro.60). Thus *parere* also conveys a moment of disclosure, as when Abraam discovers the wickedness of the Roman clergy, which in turn reveals to him the greatness of the Christian religion, since it has increased its influence despite their duplicity (*Dec.* 1.2.23-26). In this vein, the reader can understand how reality may become clear, when shorn of outward simulation. New knowledge may dawn upon someone as the mists of illusion or confusion dissipate, as he or she learns, through life experience, to perceive the efforts at mystification or seeming. This path of thinking is brightened not so much by forceful ratiocination as by patient apperception, often of the illogical or unexpected, as it presents itself. Abraam recognizes the illogical or unexpected on account of his historicity: the past, in recollection, extends itself into the present, shaping his apperception of his place in the world.

Petrarch's vernacular poetry also concerns itself with these epistemological issues. While his verses identify at times reason's ability to

restrain the passions, in the vein of the *De remediis* (e.g., *Rvf* 97, 140, 141, 189) (Petrarch 1996a), they continually wrestle with the presence of deception. In a sestina, the poet weeps over his lady's concealment by fog and wishes for the sun to disperse it (*Rvf* 66.23, 39). A later canzone elaborates this view, in that his *donna* showed him “pur l'ombra o 'l velo o' panni / talor di sé, ma 'l viso nascondendo [just a shadow, or veil, or garment / or her true self, while hiding her face]” (*Rvf* 119.20-21). In more Neoplatonic fashion, he states that the Po River can transport his *scorza*, his external form, but not the inner spirit (*Rvf* 180.1-3). The turning inward, to see the essence beneath surface appearance, is also, in context of the poet's collection, a turning outward: the poet holds his conversation not merely with himself but also with his lady, with Love, and with the world of his readers. Similar to Boccaccio and other humanists, Petrarch offers the conversation to readers' decipherment, asking them to weave the fragments together in time and over time through memory.

As inwardly directed as Petrarch's poetry tends to be, it shares with the *Decameron* an abiding intersubjectivity, an ongoing exchange with their world in their efforts to discern the real and know the truth of things. His verses locate the encounter with appearances also through the verb *parere*. Thus time seems or appears (*par*) to streak the poet's hair with age (*Rvf* 83.3). A sonnet invents a dialogue between his heart and eyes, with the heart accusing them of false and distorted judgment: “Non son, come a voi par, le ragion pari [the reasons are not of equal standing, as it seems or appears to you]” (*Rvf* 84.9). In another sonnet, the poet himself speaks of the difficulty of seeing the truth, in this case of knowing how genuine the pity may be in Laura's demeanor: “e 'l viso di pietosi color farsi / (non so se vero or falso) mi pareo [her face appeared to me, turning the color of compassion, I do not know whether false or true]” (*Rvf* 90.5-6). The poet recalls Laura in all her beauty, commemorating the ephemeral moment in its elusiveness, and marking it as singular. *Parere*, more meditative and, in this sense, more “philosophical” than in the prose of Boccaccio, attains a contemplative climax in the *Trionfi* where, from

the poet's loftier vantage point, he constantly sees (*veggio*) the passing spectacle before him. Echoing Pindar, he draws the conclusion in the *Triumphus temporis*: "Che più d'un giorno è la vita mortale? / Nubil' e brev' e freddo e pien di noia, / che po bella parer ma nulla vale [How more than a day is mortal life? Fragile and brief, cold and full of pain, it can appear beautiful, but it does not remain]" (61–63) (Petrarch 1996b). Life can have its splendor and can be beautiful at its shining moment. But the moment can also be deceptive; it is fleeting and, because of memory, one and only. In Petrarch's design, time's parade is followed by the triumph of eternity, though this too is seen by earthly lights: "veder mi parve un mondo / novo, in etate immobile ed eterna [a new world appeared before my eyes, one stable and eternal]" (20–21).

Petrarch's final *Triumph* and his dialogues underscore the religious dimension to his inquiry into being and seeming. This dimension often disappears from view among Quattrocento humanists, with notable exceptions such as Antonio da Rho, Ambrogio Traversari, Girolamo Aliotti, and Nicholas of Cusa. By the Cinquecento, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) were understanding simulation as more a practical than moral problem. The prince should be a fox, who uses underlings to execute unpopular measures; the courtier must practice *sprezzatura*, the bearing that makes the artificial seem natural (Castiglione 1987).

The courtier, the painter, and the humanist therefore "are of imagination all compact"; they express things that may not be. The humanist asks about the philosophical meaning of this seeming and masquerade. Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), in his *Stultitiae laus*, has Folly pronounce on various shades of wisdom and foolishness. If we examine these shades in the following section, we focus now on the more self-conscious conundrum that Erasmus poses in this version of the liar's paradox. At the heart of this conundrum stands the figure of Socrates, for he is represented by the Silenus who is outward ugly but inwardly beautiful. Seeming here masks being and reality, so Folly proclaims in her didactic oration. And yet

seeming must be maintained: "What is the whole life of mortals but a type of comedy, in which various actors, disguised by various costumes and masks [*personis*], walk on and play each one his parts, until the manager waves them off the stage?" (Erasmus 1969, 36–7).

We are not far, at this point, from the more tragic conclusion of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Act V, scene 5). But Folly speaks in a comic vein, vividly captured by Pieter Breugel's *Proverbs*. François Rabelais (1494–1553), who wrote at least one letter to Erasmus, displays this humanist awareness with spectacular hybridity. Aware of Inquisitorial censorship, his play with appearances is more explicitly satirical. *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is blistering in its attack on religious hypocrisy. The novel is richly inflected, as Mikhail Bakhtin has noted, with heteroglossic narrative, whereby the expressions of high and low culture are understood through their ongoing exchanges with one another. The prologue to *Gargantua* recalls the Silenus and Socrates, who was "always playing the fool, always dissimulating his divine wisdom" (Rabelais 1994). So too his ribald episodes, the author says, may disclose hidden meaning. But be wary, he adds, of those erudite scholars from Plutarch to Poliziano, who mine allegory in everything Homer and Ovid wrote. With Erasmus and Rabelais, humanist epistemology turns upon itself. Its self-parody simultaneously questions and validates its worth.

Virtue and Fortune (Ethics)

The humanist epistemology directly conditioned their thoughts on ethics. Hypocrisy was, to their way of thinking, a moral problem. They were preoccupied by how one dwelled in the world and one's character (*ethos*) in relation to others. Ethics therefore is often at the center of their philosophizing, as humanists pondered right courses of action and the extent of one's moral freedom to realize them. If the hill of virtue was famously steep – an image they reprised from Hesiod – one made decisions along the way. And what is of greater help in these decisions than philosophy? Bruni writes in his *Isagogicon*

moralis philosophiae that philosophy can disperse the gloom that conceals the true way of living and counter humanity's blindness (Bruni 1928). Matteo Palmieri (1406–75), in his vernacular dialogue *Vita civile*, has the leading interlocutor maintain that philosophy can help inculcate the proper and approved habits and virtues (Palmieri 1982). Both Bruni and Palmieri place their trust in what they called the *honestum*: the moral good, and idea derived from Cicero and the Greek *to kalon*, connoting both inner rectitude and outward reputation. Prudence or right reason (*recta ratio*) is the key virtue guiding their readers' on life's way. Since many philosophical schools stressed the leading role of rationality, humanists from Bruni to Giovanni Pontano (1426–1503) integrated Stoic, Neoplatonic, Peripatetic, even Cynic elements into their ethical thought. In Pontano's dialogue *Charon*, the infernal ferryman discusses these schools with Minos, Mercury, Diogenes, and anonymous shades in order to examine the nature of the moral good, which relies on the superiority of the mind (*animus*) over the body (*corpus*) (Pontano 2012).

Pontano's *Charon* partakes in a long legacy of tales about the ferryman, not only via Dante but also more proximately through humanist translations of Lucian's dialogue and, as we shall see, Alberti's novel *Momus*. That the ferryman philosopher should meditate on the mind's liberty after death is in the spirit of humanist play, a creative conversation rising above its source in Cicero's *Tusculans*: "what, I say, are we to do unless summon the mind to itself, forcing it to be with itself, and with every effort leading it away from the body? To separate the mind from the body: what is that other than to learn how to die?" (1.31.75). By placing the mind outside the body's mortality, humanists, following Cicero, could make death a greater abstraction, even though this detached position is also subject to ludic reversal and commentary.

But certainly the mental focus magnified virtue's rational aspect. Therefore humanists emphasized that one could learn virtue by studious application, especially with respect to past authorities. Pier Paolo Vergerio (1370–1444), in his *De ingenuis moribus*, notes that literature is

particularly helpful to forming virtue. Writing to a young Florentine, Lapo rates the literary training the ancients practiced as the firmest ground for virtue and learning, and in Alberti's dinner piece *Fatum et fortuna*, a philosopher recounts a dream, in which shades employ the liberal arts as a means of navigating the currents of fortune (MS BAV Ott. lat. 1677, ep.1; Alberti 2003a, 41–57). Francesco Filelfo's dialogue *De exilio* calls the virtues *bonae artes*, liberal arts, for these both make and declare men good (2.162) (Filelfo 2013).

The optimistic credo of learning virtue continues into the sixteenth century. In his *Enchiridion militis christianae*, Erasmus urges the reader to follow the Platonists, and likewise his *Institutio principis Christiani*, written 3 years after Machiavelli's *Il principe*, relies on Platonic precepts. Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) prefaced his *De tradendis disciplinis* by stating that the branches of learning [*disciplinae*] restores our humanity and indeed uplifts us toward God (Vives 1551).

These remarks sound the adage that reason liberates the soul from the bondage of the passions, a strain of thinking that the humanists inherited from the classical and also the medieval moral tradition. The truism surfaces in Petrarch's *De remediis*, Coluccio Salutati's *De laboribus herculis*, and in Marsilio Ficino's contemplation of the image of the charioteer in the *Phaedrus*. Plato declares reason a charioteer, he writes to Giovanni Nesi, while the horses represent the force of the heart and liver (letter 4.27) (Ficino 1985).

The virtues may, in this respect, overcome the turbulence of the passions, and indeed, as for Ficino, harness the force of the heart's magnanimity. And so this conception provided humanists with grist for their moral mills. For the humanists, too, the greatest opponent of virtue was not the unruly passions or even vice but fortune. In their conception, she was, like the emotions, unstable, but she embodied the accidents of birth and circumstance. She balances precariously, in Pinturicchio's fresco, on the ship of life, with her arms holding a sail filled by shifting winds. Humanists therefore glimpsed fortune with a

double vision: not only as one's "hap" or accidental condition but also in the sense of the inherent capriciousness and mutability of life itself. Translating Plutarch for Cosimo de' Medici and Nicholas V, both Lapo and Niccolò Perotti (1429–80) maintain the power of reason and virtue in mastering fortune's whims. Rational ethics therefore can find one's proper path in life and guide one toward safe harbor.

But the turns of fortune provide opportunity or *occasio* as well. Virtue, no matter how well-founded on right reason, must contend with existential contingency. In Alberti's *Fatum et fortuna*, fortune's river brings the chance to embrace the humanities that allow an understanding of her currents; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's *Somnium de fortuna*, another dream vision, celebrates Alfonso of Naples, whose virtue allows him to transfix *fortuna / occasio* by seizing her by the hair. The image of fortune therefore connotes temporality and change. Petrarch explores this dimension with the shifting cases and counsel of his *De remediis*, and in his late *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, stresses how *senescunt fortune*: one's fortunes grow old, too, along with one's life (Petrarch 2003).

Both aspects, circumstance and change, are present in Machiavelli's treatment of fortune in *Il principe*. If the bold ruler must beat and bend fortune to his will, that disturbing metaphor is mixed with a second, that of the river god. Here, rulers meet with success in preventing its floods at most half the time (ch. 25) (Machiavelli 2006). Rational virtue or amoral *virtù*, cunning, therefore have their limits. Poggio, more melancholy in his later works, writes in the *De varietate fortunae* that everyone has a role in the "theater" or "game of fortune"; those in power, by disdainning virtue, are first raised and then cast down by fortune, who unmasks their folly (Bracciolini 1993).

In the ethical domain, humanists refer once more to the theater of illusion, with actors misguided about the parts they play. Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), Machiavelli's correspondent, notes that fools often accomplish more than the wise because they rely more on fortune than on reason (Guicciardini 2013). Erasmus's spokesperson Folly proclaims a similar view,

presenting Rhamnusia or Nemesis as the *fortunatrix* of human affairs, who favors bold fools. While the Stoics consider themselves wise and virtuous, they are the most deluded and unaware of the reality of things.

The link between learning and virtue, erudition and ethics, common in many humanist treatises, receives its ironic reversal. Those who think they have learned the way to virtue may in fact be lost. This reversal has its own tradition within humanism, countering and in fact transforming the ethical commonplaces. Boccaccio's *Decameron* recounts comeuppances of not only the powerful, but also the educated, such as the scholar Rinieri (8.7) and Master Simone the physician (8.9); and Petrarch, in the *De ignorantia*, distinguishes between learning and moral wisdom: reading Aristotle's ethical writings increased his erudition without improving his character.

As personified by Poggio's abbot Aliotti, Quattrocento humanists advanced their skepticism toward learning, even while they reinforced erudition's ethical import: such tensions and contradictions inhere in their bifocal epistemology. Life experience challenges what is learned and accepted from books as rules for living well, and in this challenge, life is thought's master. Lapo could praise the ethical teachings of the classics, but in the face of his continued misfortunes, he writes to a friend that he begins to doubt whether his books have been of any value to him (ep.8).

Lapo would regain his equilibrium and his faith in learning, just as Poggio kept his trust, despite fortune's sway, in reason's potency. Alberti for his part continued to question erudition's ethical value, from his early *De commodis et incommodis litterarum*, in which a student's library assails his flagging spirits, to the *Vita Sancti Potiti*, describing the martyrdom of an unlettered youth at the hands of Marcus Aurelius, and then in the *Della famiglia*, where Lionardo's learning yields to Adovardo's experience. The greatest charge is laid by his dinner piece *Defunctus* and his novel *Momus*. In the novel, Momus, the god of fraud, mocks the way philosophers deceive others with a show of goodness. Jupiter, sensing Momus's own rhetorical seeming, says he first thought Momus's character admirable

on account of its erudition, but now realizes the hypocrisy of scholars, who are most deceitful when they strive to appear upstanding (Alberti 2003b, 152). The *Defunctus* takes this learned show one step further. The title character is enveloped in learned self-deception; he cannot see, even from the standpoint of the afterlife, how his studious way of life fed his self-absorption, as well as the enmity of his kin.

Stultitia (folly), *delusio* (delusion), *dementia* (mindlessness), *insania* (deception, self-deception): these neo-Latin terms mark the shortcomings of the bookishly virtuous, who paraded their probity and prudence. Their writings showcase this parody of themselves, a type of inauthenticity, as the desire for fame, advancement, and a power occluded the deeper insight into human frailty. Nicholas of Cusa's dialogues *De idiota* also reveal learned pretense, as the layman confounds both orator and philosopher by drawing analogies from his rustic spoon-making. At the opening of the first dialogue, he tells the orator that his reading has only puffed up his pride.

The anonymous layman serves as a second Socrates in Cusa's dialogue. Erasmus would hide, as we have seen, his Socratic message in Folly's oration. For appreciating this vein of humanist ethical thinking, which places the burden of insight on the individual's life experience, there is perhaps no sixteenth-century writer better suited than Michel de Montaigne (1533–92). Writing "Sur des vers de Virgile," he says, "Learning treats of things too subtly, in a mode too artificial and different from the common and natural one. My page makes love and understands it. Read him [the Neoplatonists] Leon Hebreo [Judah Leon Abravanel] and Ficino: they talk about him, his thoughts and actions, and yet he does not understand a thing in it. I do not recognize in Aristotle most of my ordinary actions: they have been covered up in another robe for the use of the school." (Montaigne 1943, 666).

We encounter again the image and metaphor of masking, one often overlooked for its philosophical significance. In his *La cultura del Rinascimento*, Garin sees this passage as a jest and goes on to stress the elite nature of Renaissance Neoplatonists and their treatises on sublime love:

"without this Platonism, one cannot understand the Renaissance." Montaigne is making a more fundamental philosophical point for the period: that learning has become too often life's accoutrement, if not its hindrance, instead of its guide. Virtue requires a more natural element, which one finds in one's way of life, even though, for the humanists, life is often the plaything of time.

Stasis and Mutability: New Visions of Reality (Ontology)

The term "ontology" was coined after our period, and is often used interchangeably with "metaphysics," the study of that which is beyond *physis* or *natura*, in other words, its ground, the Being of beings. Few humanists speculated directly on this topic; here we may mention Ficino and Cusa, whom some scholars have isolated from humanism. Cristoforo Landino (1424–98), who exchanged letters with Ficino and presented him as a *persona* in his most famous work, speaks of "metaphysicians" and their theories of ultimate reality. But in addition to these specialists, humanists, as we have seen, wrestled with the meaning of reality, and their sense of reality conditioned their awareness of truth. Their ontological standpoint, whether explicit or implicit, informed their epistemology, and both shaped their view of ethics and the moral good. As Filelfo noted in the *De exilio*, the light of God may illuminate and warm the rational spirit both to know the truth and love of the good (2.159) (Filelfo 2013).

For many humanists, the point of departure was how time related to Being: did time rest in Being or an ultimate reality, or did it qualify reality itself, so much so as to make its origin or ground unrecognizable? With regard to the first relation, humanists would conceive being as stable and eternal, as an idea or deity that, in its transcendence, anchored the real and the true, and thus their objective view of things. As the alternative exposition, humanists pondered life's ineluctable finitude and viewed reality through the face of temporality, change, and mortality. This standpoint colored any higher reality and divinity, which appeared not stable, but mutable and

evanescent. The “finders” of philosophical insight could guarantee their vision on the stability of Being; the “seekers” felt themselves more adrift in a contingent universe, with the transcendent outlook more often clouded than illumined. To return to Michelangelo’s Sacristy: one’s view may rest the gaze on the Virgin or the circular dome; someone else may continue to look about, oscillating among the deities Night and Day, Dawn and Dusk. The Sacristy entertains both visitors, or the same one, who responds differently at different times. Humanists appreciated this diversity and vacillation of viewpoint, as they pondered the face of Being.

The humanists in the first group, who conceived of Being in its transcendent stability, often expressed this conception through allegory. The poet, as *vates*, grasped these eternal truths and masked them in images for the humanist to unveil. Boccaccio, in his *De genealogia deorum*, considers Jupiter the *summum bonum* and the source of life (2.2) (Boccaccio 2011). Reading Aeschylus via Cicero’s *Tusculans*, as well as Ovid, Servius, Claudian, and Fulgentius, he weighs the meaning of the figure of Prometheus, declaring the deity to be an apt *persona* for the true god. Prometheus not only creates humankind from clay; he also travels to heaven; from there he gives humanity the flame or brightness of knowledge from its divine origin (4.44).

Boccaccio’s exegesis is neither systematic nor consistent, as it finds a pattern in mythological narrative. Yet Boccaccio revisits the Neoplatonic allegorizing of the classical and medieval traditions, attributing to the divine being the stability, eternity, and rational light that is the source of all beings. Humanity, through rationality and culture, realizes its kinship with the divine and can see things in the light of truth. Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Boccaccio’s friend and correspondent continues this line of allegorizing in the *De laboribus Herculis*. Jupiter, the father of the gods, oversees humanity’s formation from all animate creation. Jupiter himself is the domain of reason, which provides a transformed humanity the light and fire of both reason and virtue (3.23) (Salutati 1951). In other words, Jupiter is the source of all created being, and as such,

grounds human knowing and right action, epistemology, and ethics.

Cristoforo Landino accents other features of philosophical allegory in his *Disputationes camaldulenses*. The title underscores its humanist hybridity: it is a *disputatio* or debate, drawing on the transformation of medieval university tradition; one held at a friary of the Camaldolensian order, whose ranks included the humanist prior Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1429), translator of Diogenes Laertius; and presenting a dialogue with *personae* of people still living, or recently deceased. These include Alberti, one of his Landino’s first patrons; Lorenzo de’ Medici, his current one; and Marsilio Ficino (1433–99). The interlocutors interpret allegory, particularly in their reading of the *Aeneid*, to demonstrate how one advances in knowledge and moral virtue. This moral allegorizing has an ontological foundation. Lorenzo equates Jupiter with the Platonic world soul, to which Alberti assents, declaring that God is the origin of everything (Landino 1980, 32, 42, 88). Ficino for his part proclaims God the “best of everything; Alberti calls God the “good of every good,” and, as a good, is by necessity stable (73, 75, 77–78).

The divine good, personified by Jupiter, is inherently fixed and the source of all other beings. In the dialogue, Alberti voices the scholastic argument that “the metaphysicians have confirmed that whatever is, derives its being from God.” God is both the highest good and the ground of Being. Thus all that is, is good in so far it has Being. Here, in a humanist dialogue, Alberti presents the logic of Thomas Aquinas, among other medieval thinkers (103–104). Landino’s dialogue therefore merges scholastic and humanist ontology in a way that grounds his objective understanding of knowledge and morality. The figure of Alberti consistently contrasts the Biblical sisters Mary and Martha in the traditional reading of the contemplative and active virtues and adds to this the Neoplatonic dimension of ascent.

Landino stages his portrait of Marsilio Ficino in order to complement those of Lorenzo and Alberti in their philosophical exchanges. In Ficino’s own works, he elaborates the humanist Neoplatonic principles of his predecessors and

contemporaries, particularly in his *Theologia platonica*, which he composed in the years just prior to Landino's dialogue. His commentary on Plato's *Philebus*, written also at this time, interprets classical sources for ontological purposes. It notes Plato's reading of Jupiter as the "divine mind" and cites Orphic texts that declare Jupiter the source of all things. As do the other humanists, Ficino conveys the divine being through the light metaphor (Ficino 1975, 238–45). Ficino is able, as an illumined hermeneut, to decipher this allegory and disclose its insights into the nature of reality and truth. The rational mind, if purged of earthly fantasy, may ascend to this more sublime understanding (Ficino 2006, 6.2).

Pico della Mirandola (1463–94), his great colleague, based his own philosophical conceptions on these same premises, as well as on those from other the humanist writings. Scholars have seen his *Oratio de dignitate hominum* (1486) heralding a new chapter in the philosophical thinking about human autonomy and self-fashioning. Yet the very structure of the *Oratio*, announcing a *disputatio* over his 900 theses, also underlines Pico's commitment to discoursing both with tradition and his contemporaries. Even while adding new concepts and sources, Pico shares in the humanist conventions of syncretic thinking and desire for debate. He hearkens to the humanist reading of Prometheus in his most celebrated claim, that humanity as "work of indeterminate form," which "should have joint possession of whatever had been peculiar to each of the different kinds of being" (Pico 2012, §17). Salutati had maintained that the Titan created humanity by taking features from all of animate nature (3.23).

Like his humanist forebears and contemporaries, Pico emphasizes the need to interpret symbols and figures in order to understand the nature of being behind surface appearances. Jacob's ladder from Genesis offers a fitting allegory of human ascent to the divine, from moral philosophy through dialectic to theological contemplation. The mysteries of the Hebrews, to his mind, are kin to those of the Greeks, requiring Pico to draw out their hidden meaning (§§71–81). He proposes, he says, to write a *Poetica theologia*, in order to disclose how Homer concealed

philosophical truth in the travels of Ulysses (§224). This project strikingly resembles Landino's enterprise in his *Disputationes*, of having Alberti reveal the *Aeneid*'s moral meaning.

Pico's ontology, similar to that of Ficino, Salutati, and Boccaccio, is suggested by this idea of disclosure and the symbol of light. As it is for these other writers, the light of being is also the light of knowing. He wishes that the Plato's light of truth might illuminate minds more brightly, like the rising sun (§§192 and 135). In this ascent of being and truth, the mind's eye would perceive the objective nature of things. Pico's optimism, and ambition, is to embark on the upward journey, beyond the thick shadows of earthly existence. If the first sentence of his *Oratio* boldly proclaims that "nothing can be seen more admirable than humankind," a humanist variation on Anselm's "nothing can be thought greater [than God]," Pico qualifies his admiration with a figure of speech: "on this earthly stage" (§1) Pico, like Ficino, claims to see behind the curtain and discern the ontological origins of human agency.

But not every humanist shared in this optimism. Poggio, we have noted, studied the "game" and "theater of fortune" in a more melancholy vein. Humanity has the potential, through virtue and reason, to challenge fortune's role as playwright and stage manager of human destiny, but few people, if any, succeed in realizing their own liberation. This concession to the theater of existence, embracing the whole person, body and mind, conditioned for many humanists the virtue of Stoicism and rationality in general.

Petrarch resorts to Presocratic dicta in challenging the findings of the rational mind. Heraclitus becomes for him a favored authority. Commenting on the epigram, "in the same river we step and do not step," Petrarch sees the river as the flow of time: "The state of one's mind, the ebb and flow of life, and all aspects of existence are such that they seem to have been immersed in the all the rivers of Tartarus" (Petrarch 1958, 58). In the *De remediis*, Heraclitus's saying "everything exists by strife" moves him to contest notions of philosophical harmony and serenity and instead emphasize elemental discord in both the outer and inner worlds.

Lorenzo Valla, Poggio's erstwhile adversary, also maintains this qualification of cosmic tranquility. If Poggio sees human frailty as potentially remediable, Valla suggests that the human condition is existentially limited and benighted; humanity's ontological participation in divine being appears unrecognizable, although to God, all things are possible. His Epicurean interlocutor in the *De vero bono*, Maffeo Vegio, attacks contemplative virtue for pretending to exalt the soul above bodily sensation. He mocks the trope of contemplative ascent, for it pertains little to divinity, which already possesses perfect knowledge and moreover such an effort is wearisome (Valla 1977, 2.28.16). In the dialogue's final book, the Franciscan humanist Antonio da Rho asserts that the divine mysteries impenetrable even to the sharpest minds. Moses veiled his face on Sinai, and human faces remain captive to their corporeal coverings. Humanity, like all other beings, is confined to the earthly stage, as if ontologically apart from the deity. The ways of the divine are incorporeal and beyond corporeal perception (3.19.1). Valla therefore adopts Neoplatonic imagery, and its light-metaphor, but only to heighten the *chorismos* or separation between heaven and earth. When he employs the figure of Jupiter in other writings, as in the *De libero arbitrio*, the allegory challenges the humanist reading furthered elsewhere: his Jupiter is of a different order, who may fashion human character to goodness or to wickedness.

This second sort of humanist, who questioned the ontological consistency between beings and their source, stressed mutability and temporal change. The world is the arena of human vision; it is where, figuratively or literally, gods and humanity encounter one another in and over time. Here truth may surface only within the flow of existence, rather than in atemporal rational certitude that the divine, as the stable, unmoved source of beings, guarantees.

Poggio wrote of the earthly theater run by fortune. To Valla, any philosophical allegorizing about ultimate Being and truth collapses under the earthliness of mortal intelligence: the divine face, or that of its Moses, remains veiled. Cusa and Alberti playfully pick up the humanist theme

of metaphors and masking. The gods, or God, also wear disguises in this time-bound theater. Ontologically, divinity can appear different from humanity; epistemologically, human vision is obscured. To humanists thinking in this vein, Being is not simply, in Neoplatonic fashion, the brilliant source of created beings; it rather shapes the world in the sense of the theater, the stage, and its temporal continuum, dimensions in which beings, including divinity and humanity, may present or conceal themselves. There is therefore no linear ascent to a higher, objective understanding. The supralunary vision is above mortal reckoning, which must glean its insights from the phenomena along life's way. And these phenomena present more puzzles than fixed, logical conclusions.

Cusa's *De visione dei* studies these riddles. Overtly a theological treatise, written to the monks of Tegernsee in 1453, it displays a number of concerns shared with other humanist works, in particular the meaning of appearances and the understanding of symbols. The author meditates on the face (*faciem*) of God, as portrayed in a painted image or icon. He uses a traditional metaphysical vocabulary, describing God an "absolute form" that gives existence to all things. But the Cardinal humanist focuses on the appearance of God, his face, which he also calls, with studied ambiguity, his sight (*visus*), indicating both which sees and is seen (Cusa 1985, 9.35).

Humanity sees only a changing image, since by nature, humanity is mutable. God's constancy is seen, paradoxically, by human inconstancy, for his vision or face remains true to mortal movements (6.20; 9.37). Like other humanists, Cusa's studies shifting perspectives on appearances. The divine communicates its being only through appearances, which are transitory, since "humanity can only assess things in human fashion." Those humanist thinkers who imagined the Neoplatonic notion of ascent sought a higher knowledge beyond the shadows of the cave, illumined by divine being and wisdom. Cusa however remains by the earthly veil: humanity only perceives things in succession, *unum post unum* (6.20; 6.22).

The divine, by contrast, is distinctly other. Symbol or analogy fails because it cannot access

difference, only similarity; Cusa uses analogy, as does Alberti, in order to highlight this failure and the alterity of the divine. The divine face is only seen, or seems, unveiled (*revelate videtur*) by entering into a dark silence beyond all human knowledge or conception. Thus even the “highest spirit of reason” (*spiritus altissimus rationi*), praised by Pico and Ficino, must be vanquished for this vision to become apparent (6.22; 9.39). Cusa’s philosophizing, like that of Valla, marks the limits of traditional metaphysics. Philosophers or humanists, when wondering about ontology and ultimate meaning, have only mortal vision.

Around the same time, while at the papal curia, Alberti ponders these matters of ontology and epistemology in his novel *Momus*. The work, the author declares in its preface, is nothing but a grand allegory in the tradition of the ancient poets and philosophers. His Jupiter should represent reason and virtue, and Alberti alludes to the interpretations of Boccaccio, Salutati, and Ficino. But this representation is *quasi per ironiam*, he adds: he focuses on the playful dissimulation that not only poets and philosophers but also divinity may employ. The allegory’s center does not hold. Jupiter is no less arbitrary and meretricious than other characters, and the central figure, the god Momus, is the god of fraud and deception. The novel delights in Lucianic parodies of philosophers. Apollo eavesdrops on their erudite conversations and finds them incomprehensible. Gelastus, the soul of a philosopher wandering in the afterlife, tries to clarify the ontological nature of the universe to Charon. He first uses Aristotelian, then Neoplatonic conceptions about causes and forms. Charon responds philosophers only render incomprehensible what is otherwise well-known (Alberti 2003b, 304–305).

This play with verbal allegory is not simply subversive in an antiphilosophical sense, but it is deeply philosophical in its own right. Its meaning becomes clear through the exchanges that the novel undertakes with the humanist tradition. The god Momus personifies this ludic seriousness. He is an alter-Prometheus, chased from the heavens on account of his rebellious nature. Landing in Tuscany, he does not create humanity or

provide them the sublime fire of intelligence but instead teaches women to disguise themselves, and show other faces, through the use of cosmetics. In one moment of crisis, the goddess Virtue lends him her veil, allowing him to change his appearance at will. Returning to Olympus, he offends Juno, and she, along with other divinities, castrate and cast him from heaven and chain him, like the Titan, to a rock. Nymphs that had earlier consoled Prometheus lend him aid. Momus persuades these nymphs to spread his black cloud of sighs across the sky and thereby conceal the earth from the vision of the gods.

The novel therefore treats with adroit gamesmanship the humanist Neoplatonic ontology. Momus is a walking, mutable allegory: deceit personified, he may present the face of virtue, while teaching others to dissemble. His divine, puckish element interferes with participation of the heavens in the earthly spectacle. At the novel’s close, humanity stages a performance in the gods’ honor and rings the theatre with their statues. Jupiter and the other deities, whom Momus’s cloud blocks from seeing the earthly spectacle, descend to earth and take the place of their own likenesses. As a result, they are abused by drunks and unruly passersby. One main performer in the spectacle is an actor-philosopher named Oenops (Tipsy). Held prisoner in a cave by thieves, Oenops escapes torture thanks to the statue of Stupor, since the criminals, using torches, are frightened by its sight.

The cave episode, with its Platonic parody, illustrates the confusion among the mortals and the gods. This confusion extends itself to the earthly theater, which is also shrouded in darkness. Statues are mistaken for deities, and the deities, in the theater, are misunderstood as statues. Humanist allegorizing therefore only seems grounded in ontological sureties. In either domain, within or without the cave, earth or heaven, the gods remain hidden. Mortals are left in insecurity and largely focused, like the philosopher Gelastus, on their passage from this world to the next, without clear divine guidance. Apollo, the narrator states, is in love with the goddess Shadow (Umbra), the daughter of Night. Night steals Apollo’s prophecies and hides them in her

statue; in the nocturnal chaos, the prophecies are found by Ambiguity (Ambago).

Night, Shadow, Ambiguity: these deities alter Apollo's insights, or at least the way he communicates them. A reader of Boccaccio, Alberti would have understood Night to be the mother of Deceit (Dolus) and Fraud (Fraus), close relations to Momus. Thus does divinity, as it does for Cusa, partake in obscurity and conceal itself from view. The gods wear disguises, so that it is difficult to discern their role in shaping or founding the reality that people experience. Humanity encounters divinity in the world, which is an arena of unstable, fluctuating interchange, imbued with transience. The philosophical task for Alberti and Cusa is to illuminate this arena as a playground where masks may have meaning, if only in the fundamental sense that meaning is masked. The human experience is one of time-bound, mortal movement.

The contrasting fifteenth-century humanist ontologies left their mark in the early modern period. Cassirer and Garin have stressed how humanists such as Pico and Ficino advanced notions of proto-Cartesian ideas of subjectivity and objectivity, based on the ontological security of knowledge. The Cartesian *cogito* relies on the superiority of the *ratio*, which, for many humanists, has its foundation in the divine mind as the source of Being. With regard to the more reserved strains of Valla, Cusanus, and Alberti, both Martin Luther (1483–1546) and Montaigne elaborated them, in differing ways. Luther cites Valla's support in his polemic against Erasmus over the bondage or freedom of the will. Human reason has no access to the qualities of God; it is a little torch, he writes elsewhere, compared to the divine mid-day sun. God conceals his mercy behind his anger, and his presence by his absence; he demands an experiential, rather than an intellectual engagement: "by living, indeed by dying and being damned does one become a theologian," Luther states, "not by knowing, reading, or speculating" (*Werke*, 1892, 5.163). Montaigne too emphasizes the presumption of rational speculation by both theologians and philosophers in his *Apologie de Raymond Sebond*. His accent is also on the

existential. Citing Plutarch, he affirms that "we have no communication with being, because all human nature is always midway between birth and death, offering only a dim appearance and shadow of itself" (Montaigne 1998, 2.434). While it is true, he says, that philosophy is like poetry, like a veiled image, he breaks with the hermeneutical confidence of Ficino and Pico. This image shines with many false lights, in order to exercise human conjecture. For no existing thing, either we ourselves or what we perceive, remains constant; everything flows and turns without rest. Aristotle is therefore correct to compare our vision of truth with the eye of the owl before the splendor of the sun; this light indicts mortal blindness. Our waking, he concludes, "is more asleep than sleep; our wisdom less wise than our foolishness" (Montaigne 1943, 427).

Returning to Michelangelo's statue of Night with its owl and mask in the Medici tombs, we can round these humanist philosophical reflections in this meditative space. Night, Boccaccio notes, is the parent of Old Age (Senectus) and Death (Mors). And, in his view, death is the ultimate terror, since Aristotle declared it an end; there seems to be nothing else for the dead (Boccaccio 2011, 1.28). In a religious setting, believers confront their fears soteriologically. They may find comfort in the sublime claims of ontological and epistemological securities, which fasten the world's wobbly transience to divine immutability and wisdom. The more concrete message of the Sacristy is that one is entering the grave of the princes. One communes with the dead and becomes aware of their presence in their absence. Time and history connect, yet also separate, the living from the dead, present from past lives. Humanists, in their endeavor to revive the past, awaken it from sleep, as they put it, walked through many tombs, and reconstructed communities from many ruins and remains. This imaginative enterprise was always mortal. By communing with the past, humanists could look over their own finitude. That humanists found their freedom in this finitude, even felt joy when bidding adieu, is one of their prime philosophical accomplishments.

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Humanism, Civic

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Abstract

The following entry provides a brief overview of the concept known as “civic humanism” as popularized by Hans Baron’s 1955 book *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*. Baron’s hypothesis (often simply called the “Baron thesis”) described the union of humanist and republican values that characterized Florence in the early Quattrocento. The success of this synthesis, he stated, was the result of the profound impact the Florentine-Milanese conflict – culminating in the titular “crisis” – had on the Republic’s culture. Since its conception, many have followed in Baron’s footsteps by ascribing the modern virtue of active citizenship to this strand of humanism. Others have opposed the genesis, originality and accuracy of his presentation, discounting its academic worth and recasting Florentine humanism in their own image. Still, all in all, civic humanism has been one of the most influential notions in Renaissance historiography of the past century.

Heritage and Rupture: The Baron Thesis

When the German historian Hans Baron coined the term *Bürgerhumanismus* – usually translated as “civic humanism” – in 1925, he used it with reference to that particular coalescence of

Humanismus and *Bürgerbildung* that permeated the Florentine Republic in the time of two of its most notable chancellors, Coluccio Salutati (1374–1406) and his pupil Leonardo Bruni (1410–1411 and 1427–1444). This “civically marked” humanism of the Quattrocento, he wrote, was built on their classically inspired appreciation of the republic (“*eine lebendige Liebe zur heimischen Respublica*”) and remained prevalent until it was inevitably overcome by the “asocial” tendencies and political conditions that entailed the decay of the *Bürgerrepubliken* it championed (Baron 1925). Baron, much like Jacob Burckhardt before him, endorsed the view of the Renaissance as having brought about a major paradigm shift in Western thinking; but where Burckhardt had seen the emergence of humanism as that of individualism indiscriminately diffused throughout Italy, Baron’s work – similarly to that of Eugenio Garin – envisioned a particular significance for Florence and its republican nature (cf. Baron 1988).

The thesis thus advanced by Baron was part of his inquiry into “the roots and essence of humanism *tout court*,” as Riccardo Fubini points out, “including its Italian and Petrarchan origins and its ‘civic’ Florentine character,” an inquiry which he continued to develop in the following decades (Fubini 1992). It was the main focus of his 1955 *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, subtitled *Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*, and often considered among the most important monographs in Renaissance historiography (cf. Hankins 1995, 2000b). In it, Baron expands on his notion of *Bürgerhumanismus*, tracing the “new type of civic culture” of early Quattrocento Florence back to a specific historical event – namely, the conclusion of the Florentine-Milanese conflict (Baron 1955). In the 1390s, Florence found itself increasingly embroiled in a struggle with the Visconti monarchy of the city-state Milan. Giangaleazzo, the Duke of Milan, came to be viewed as a political threat, one of impending tyranny antithetical to the Florentine tendency towards liberty. As the “never-ceasing expansion of the Milanese empire” grew to envelop many of the old city-states, Baron

explains, Florentines bore the burden of opposition as prime antagonists, further strengthening their tendency to fashion themselves as defenders of political freedom (Baron 1955). Finally, in 1402, when the battle seemed lost and Milanese troops were on the cusp of advancing into Florentine territory, no signal came: Giangaleazzo had succumbed to the plague. Expansion abruptly halted (at least for a time), the enemies he had subdued were quickly restored, and so the “crisis of the early Italian Renaissance” came to a head with a miraculous Florentine victory.

The new *Weltanschauung* of civic humanism was the offspring of this crisis, emerging triumphant in the wake of a decade of ideological warfare. Where previously, as with Petrarch and other “socially irresponsible men of letters” (Baron 1955), the blossoming of the *studiahumanitatis* had remained limited to a contemplative, scholarly context, the humanist circles that had experienced the outcome of the conflict immediately and decisively now felt inspired by the commonwealth’s civic ideals. As a result, notions of public service and popular government, reminiscent of the eternal values of the ancient world, began to circulate heavily among them. “To the humanists, Florence had become the city of freedom” (Rabil 1988b), and their patriotic devotion profoundly shaped their writing. Baron singles out Leonardo Bruni, whose works – the *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis* in particular, which Baron describes as “the most vigorous and most complete expression of the new complex of politico-historical ideas that arose during the struggle against Giangaleazzo” (Baron 1955) – codified, as it were, the new civic sentiment. The resulting “fusion [...] between the humanistic and the civic outlook” (Baron 1955), between “the models of antiquity” and the Republic’s “communal values” (Fubini 1992), although original to the conditions of the Florentine polity, would invariably change the course of the Renaissance as a whole. Indeed, it sowed the seeds of what Baron regards as the period’s lasting contribution to our modern ethos – a shift, that is, in the way in which the individual views himself in relation to his community. “From that time on,” he concludes, “there would exist a kind of Humanism which

endeavored to educate a man as a member of his society and state” (Baron 1955).

The ideology of civic humanism, then, reveals itself in a number of ways. Most obvious is the rejection of the *vita contemplativa* or *solitaria* in favor of the *vita activa* with its tendency towards political engagement; the reinterpretation and reappraisal of the civic qualities of the Roman Republic (qualities to which Florence would have been heir); as well as the defense of the popular vernacular and its literary value, as gleaned from works by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. But it should also be noted that this strand of humanism means the transformation of the Western tradition “by the layman’s spirit” (Baron 1955), or, to cite Garin, “the construction of an earthly city by man” (Garin 1952) – simply put, the positive revaluation of material existence. The acquisition of wealth began to be seen, “not as an impediment to knowledge and salvation, but instead as a resource to be used in the promotion of learning and morality” (Brucker 1969). This is not to say that the civic humanists unequivocally turned away from the teachings of Christianity – in fact, according to some, Baron’s approach entails a “fusion between the civic spirit and Christianity” that spelled the end of the glorification of paganism (Rabil 1988b); however, it does reveal their changed attitude towards Florentine culture in light of the commonwealth’s economic enterprises. It is this attitude that some scholars believe lies at the root of Western secularization (cf. Celenza 2015).

Impact and Legacy

The so-called “Baron thesis” proved hugely successful, offering a productive framework for those looking to investigate the role of civic idealism in the history of ideas. As a result, it has been eagerly adopted by many scholars and given rise to numerous studies aiming to expand the Baronian model or rectify its shortcomings, even as they stretch it to its limits. Notable among these is John G. A. Pocock, whose seminal *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, written 20 years

after Baron's *Crisis*, proposes to theorize the continued development of civic humanism beyond the Renaissance – how it “passed from Renaissance Florence to Oliver Cromwell's England, and thence to colonial America, where it formed the ideological matrix of the American Revolution” (Hankins 2000a). Thus, with Pocock, civic humanism becomes a distinct strand in political history, correspondent with that of “classical republicanism” (Pocock 1975); a strand which, as James Hankins explains, even “passed from the realm of scholarship to that of public policy, where, under the guise of ‘communitarianism,’ it became a rallying point for political theorists” in the 1980s and beyond (Hankins 2000a). Though in some respects distant from Baron's original interpretation, Pocock's civic humanism, centered around the democratic virtue of citizenship as the humanists' essential contribution to Western thinking, remains an authoritative (if controversial) concept in the history of ideas.

This does not mean Baron's findings have been wholly undisputed – on the contrary, as wholesale “Baronianism” has been largely superseded in modern academic discourse, so has the concept of civic humanism received its fair share of criticism (cf. Rabil 1988a; Witt 1996; Hankins 2000b; Baker and Maxson 2015). It would exceed the scope of the present entry to dwell on all such counternarratives; instead, a brief survey of the varying critical strategies will suffice. As John Najemy points out, opposition revolves around three main points of contention: “the genesis, the originality, and the accuracy of the civic humanist representation of republican politics in fifteenth-century Florence” (Najemy 2000). First of all, some have argued that Baron distorts the relationship between ideas and experience by interpreting extensive cultural changes as a sudden, singular response to a political crisis – it is more likely, they say, that the Florentine civic “revolution” was the gradual result of a number of circumstances (cf. Brucker 1969; Brucker 1977; Bloom 2004). Marvin Becker's “statist thesis,” for instance, identifies the establishment of the citizenry's *monte* of public debt as the catalyst for Baronian developments, emphasizing an internal rather than an external reality (Becker 1968).

The “internal” critique of Quentin Skinner is also well known in this regard: Skinner recognizes the medieval-scholastic precursors to Florentine humanism, thereby denying what Baron and Pocock view as its original Aristotelean nature (Skinner 1978; Skinner 1990; Hankins 2000a). Secondly, critics like Eugene Rice and Paul Oskar Kristeller have been quick to point out that the civic dimension of Italian humanism is but one facet of it, and that we would be mistaken in limiting our understanding of its influence on this Florentine strand in view of its monarchical and despotic vestiges (Rice 1958; Kristeller 1965). Kristeller's propositions in particular, departing from his view that the humanists were professional rhetoricians first and foremost, have found a good deal of proponents (Kristeller 1961, 1964, 1965). Andrea Gamberini likewise argued that civic humanism presents an idealized “crystallization,” which detracts from the “rich and varied elaborations of Florentine humanists” (Gamberini and Lazzarini 2012). Lastly, the very essence of Baron's reading of civic humanism has sparked much debate – certainly with Skinner and Kristeller, but also, for instance, with the “class thesis” of Lauro Martines, who affirms that the Florentine Republic was, in essence, an oligarchy and that the humanists' writings reflected this political reality (Martines 1963); and similarly with Najemy, who sees the civic humanists as ideologues buttressing the new hegemony in which the influence of the non-elite guildsmen was limited (Najemy 2000). More recently, Hester Schadee has analyzed Bruni's writings and made a convincing case for looking at his (Ciceronian) humanism in light of his commitment to a Florentine republican-aristocratic system (Schadee 2018). In short, in the century after they were originally stated, Baron's sweeping claims about the nature of Renaissance humanism have been addressed again and again, each rejoinder tuning the meaning of “civic humanism” to some degree and adapting it to fit a new perspective.

Be that as it may, we cannot underestimate the enduring legacy of the Baron thesis. Najemy's claim that it “has enjoyed (and suffered) a degree of attention and controversy that has not abated even now” is still valid, more than three decades

after Baron's death, "in a completely transformed world of historiographical assumptions and practices" (Najemy 2000). In spite of the immediate resistance it met with, Baron's hypothesis has persisted through its permutations to inspire countless scholars in tracing the origins, history, and development of Renaissance humanism. And even though the modern reader should heed to take some of his more outdated conclusions with the inevitable grain of salt, the understanding of civic humanism should help him to better grasp the writings of the Florentine humanists – as well as to appreciate the complex and multifaceted nature of the Renaissance as a whole.

Cross-References

- [Baron, Hans](#)
- [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- [Burckhardt, Jacob](#)
- [Council of Ferrara, Florence, and Basel](#)
- [Government, Renaissance Forms of](#)
- [Historiography, Renaissance](#)
- [Humanism](#)
- [Kristeller, Paul Oskar](#)
- [Salutati, Coluccio](#)

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Humanocentrism

► Homocentrism

Humidum Primigenium

► Radical Moisture

Humidum Radicale

► Radical Moisture

Humours in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

The Renaissance inherited the classical doctrine of the four humours (Greek *chymoi*), the essential fluids of the human body. The

humours were blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. A healthy body was characterized by the balance between the humours. Illness was perceived as an interruption of that balance. The relative disposition of these four humours was believed to determine the physiological health and temperament of humans and animals. The humours formed part of a wider explanatory model of the natural world. They were connected to the four elements, the four temperaments, the four seasons, and the four ages of man. Each humour was governed by a particular bodily organ (Table 1).

Through this series of connections, the humours integrated the human body into a scheme of the wider natural world: in humoral theory, man is intrinsically a part of the natural order, not separate from it. The passions of the mind and aspects of character cannot be meaningfully understood apart from the physical body. Psychological as well as physical conditions are traceable to natural causes. As a materialist approach to diagnosis, humoral theory fits well with the Aristotelian tradition; Platonic interest in the spirit, and astrological and occult explanatory models of physical and emotional states, fall largely outside the theory of humourism (Arikha 2007).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Humoral theory can be traced back to pre-Socratic attempts to understand the fundamental nature of the universe. Detailed accounts of the humours are found in the writings of the Hippocratic corpus, ascribed to Hippocrates (c.460–c.370 BCE), such as *On the Nature of Man*. The theory is based on actual observation, before dissection was permitted. Under such conditions, the fluids taken in and secreted by the body were held to be of particular significance. It is possible that the notion of four humours comes from the appearance of blood clots. From Hippocratic medicine, humoral theory was transmitted through Rome, in particular in the work of Galen (129–c.200/216 CE), and Islamic medicine, into

Humours in Renaissance Philosophy, Table 1 Correspondences

Humour	Temperament	Element	Qualities	Age	Season	Organ
Blood	Sanguine	Air	Warm, moist	Infancy	Spring	Liver
Yellow bile	Choleric	Fire	Warm, dry	Youth	Summer	Spleen
Black bile	Melancholy	Earth	Dry, cold	Adulthood	Autumn	Gallbladder
Phlegm	Phlegmatic	Water	Cold, moist	Old age	Winter	Brain, lungs

the medieval and early modern periods (Conrad et al. 1995).

The theory has important theoretical implications. It presupposes that nature is susceptible to rational investigation, and that phenomena can be explained by natural causation, without reference to supernatural causes. In this way it fell easily into the Aristotelian tradition. Astrological and divine explanations were peripheral to humoristic analysis. Observation also established the principle that each case was different and required individual treatment. The doctrine of the humours is holistic: the microcosm of the human body is attuned to the macrocosm of the world. It presents mind and body as intrinsically linked, a distinctly pre-cartesian model of human nature. The ordering of the body’s internal mechanism is held to be a matter of restoring equilibrium, linking the humours with the inherited Pythagorean schema of balances and correspondences, which make an ordered structure running through nature. An example of such correspondences is the doctrine that an imbalance should be treated with its opposite: a hot fever should be treated with a cool substance, and so on. The purpose of treatment was always to return to the default equilibrium. A patient’s rebalancing had the purpose of restoring the body’s natural heat. This restoration could be assisted by other experiences inducing internal harmony, especially music. With proper exercise, the reason could regain control over disordered emotions (Siraisi 1990; Lindemann 2010).

Of particular interest to renaissance writers was the condition of melancholy, from the Greek for “black bile.” This was closely associated with creativity and inspiration. Montaigne’s essays follow the author’s desire to control a melancholy cast of mind and regain an internal balance through anatomizing his own consciousness. *The Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) by physician Timothy Bright

(c.1549–1615) is a useful guide to – and possible source for – the melancholic characters of Shakespeare. Later came the vast *Anatomy of Melancholy* (first edition 1621) by Robert Burton (1577–1640), the most compendious guide of the period not only to melancholy but also to the other humours and to the whole world of human emotion and thought, as perceived through disciplines including astronomy, astrology, and theology (Jackson 1978, 1986; Lyons 1971).

Impact and Legacy

While it underpinned orthodox medicine for centuries, the theory of the humours came under certain pressures. The Neoplatonists’ fascination with hermetic and magical writings revived an interest in occult, or hidden sources, of physical conditions. Marsilio Ficino’s *De vita* (1480–1489), for example, examines medicine alongside philosophy, magic, and astral influence. Ficino associates melancholy with the God Saturn and is concerned with the source of the *spiritus*, an idea not amenable to material diagnosis. A further problem for humoural thinking came from new diseases such as the English sweat, which did not seem to be explicable by traditional methods. Another point of tension was that between a determinist picture, according to which passions and character were a result of bodily conditions, and the Christian assertion of Free Will. Beyond medical and philosophical writings, the humours provided a valuable source of vocabulary and ideas for vernacular literature, such as the subgenre of “humours comedy,” represented by George Chapman *An Humorous Day’s Mirth* (1597), and Ben Jonson’s *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599). A serious assault on the humours, and received medical

wisdom generally, was provided by Paracelsus (1493–1541), who countered, among other things, the notion that conditions should be treated by their opposites. While humoral theory has faded from Western diagnosis following the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, there are certain parallels with Indian Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine. Its legacy is evident in ordinary language: “complexion” originally referred to the compound of the four humours in an individual; the terms sanguine, splenetic, choleric, melancholic, and even-tempered are still used to describe behavioral types (Porter 1997).

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Hupokeímenon/antikeímenon

► [Subject/Object, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Hus, Jan

Born: ca. 1372, Husinec, Southern Bohemia

Died: 6 July 1415, Constance, Baden-Württemberg

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Abstract

Although Jan Hus gained his reputation mainly as a Bohemian theologian and preacher who advocated for the reform of the late-medieval church, he was also a master and teacher at the Prague faculty of liberal arts. However, since his commentaries on Aristotle are not extant, we may understand his philosophical thought mainly through treatises from the field of philosophical theology, for example, from the first two books of his *Sentences* commentary. We may say on this basis that Hus’s philosophical thought was significantly influenced by John Wyclif’s realist philosophy and, at the same time, by the Augustinian and Platonic branches of Christian thought.

Biography

Jan Hus was born ca. 1372 in the village of Husinec near Prachatice in Southern Bohemia. By 1390 at the latest, he had enrolled in the faculty of arts at the University of Prague. With his enrolment at the university, he became a member of the Bohemian university nation, one of the four national corporations founded on the territorial origins of the masters and students. He became a bachelor of liberal arts in 1393 and a master in 1396.

After becoming a master, Hus taught at the faculty for 2 years to become a regular professor. Already in this period, he most probably belonged to a group of Bohemian students and masters who positively received some of the opinions of the English philosopher and theologian John Wyclif.

The reception of Wyclif's thought, who was condemned by the church as a heretic, marked significantly not only Hus's own doctrinal views but also his life. As a young master at the latest, Hus became thoroughly acquainted with Wyclif's realist philosophy. In 1398, he prepared a copy of Wyclif's treatises *De universalibus*, *De tempore*, *De ideis*, and *De materia et forma*. Around that time, Hus's pedagogical career started to develop promisingly. He was most probably a favored teacher, sought after by students. From 1398 until the end of his activities at the faculty of arts, he acted as the graduation officer for approximately thirty bachelors and masters. In 1401, he served as the dean of the faculty.

Around 1400, Hus was ordained priest and started to preach, while already studying at the faculty of theology in Prague. In 1404–1406, he prepared a commentary on the seven canonical epistles and, subsequently, an exegesis of Psalms 109–118. In 1407 he became a *baccalarius sententiaris* and started to comment on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, finishing his commentary in 1409.

Hus's appointment as a preacher in the Bethlehem chapel in Prague in 1402 was a crucial moment in his life. This chapel, in which the preacher was obliged to preach in the Czech language, was the center of the Bohemian church reform movement and became Hus's home for approximately 10 years. Thanks to his intensive preaching activity in vernacular at this place, which could accommodate up to three thousand people, Hus became an influential preacher in Prague. He also composed several treatises in Czech, although he wrote the majority of his *opera* in Latin.

Until 1408, the reform group of Prague masters could rely on the support of the Archbishop of Prague, Zbyněk of Házmburg. However, because of the complaints of the German masters of the University of Prague at the papal curia, Zbyněk began, in 1408, to proceed strongly against the positive reception of Wyclif's opinions at the University of Prague. At the same time, Stanislav of Znojmo, the leading figure of the reform masters, was forced to leave Prague for Italy, to defend himself at the curia against the claims that he,

like Wyclif, held the doctrine of Eucharistic remanence. On the journey, he was accompanied by Stephen of Pálež, another important master. In consequence, Jan Hus found himself foremost in the reform movement and in the center of the struggles concerning Wyclif's thought in Prague.

Jan Hus supported the change of the ratio of votes among the four university nations at the University of Prague in favor of the Bohemian nation, which was decreed by King Wenceslas IV at Kutná Hora in January 1409. Hus became the first rector of the university elected under the new rules and continued his resistance to the archbishop's bans on studying Wyclif's treatises, measures which escalated in 1410 and were, to a significant degree, supported by papal bulls. The archbishop ordered all manuscripts containing Wyclif's treatises burned, which led to further protests from the party around Hus. The latter defended the reading of Wyclif's works in the treatise *De libris haereticorum legendis*. According to Hus, it should be permitted to own and read books full of truths, even if they also contain heretical elements. He based much of his argument on the notion that, if treated like Wyclif's works, the treatises of Aristotle, Averroes, Lombard, and other books including the Old Testament would have to be condemned and burned as well.

At the same time, Hus decided to appeal against the papal bull that supported the archbishop's bans imposed on Wyclif's treatises. Hus's appeal was a crucial moment in his life, since with this step he himself brought the dispute to the curia and connected it to his name. Thus, one of the consequences of the appeal was the beginning of legal proceedings by the Church against the Prague theologian, which in 1412 led to his excommunication, for not appearing before the curia, and his subsequent withdrawal from Prague. At this time, his ecclesiological opinions began to radicalize and their reform character became more pronounced, being significantly influenced by Wyclif's thought. Especially noteworthy is Hus's treatise *De ecclesia*. One of the signs of the radicalization of Hus's thought, his deep faith, and, at the same time, his distrust of ecclesiastical justice is Hus's appeal to Christ

against the excommunication and his emphasis on the authority of the Divine law in opposition to the authority of the earthly church. Both these points are characteristic of Hus's defiance of the church hierarchy.

Hus decided to defend his opinions before the Council of Constance to which he was invited by the protector of the council, the Roman King Sigismund. The latter provided Hus with a safe-conduct, which was to guarantee a safe passage to the council and back to Bohemia. Hus most probably expected that he would be allowed to clarify his standpoints in an academic disputation before the council. However, instead of such a discussion, Hus was put into prison, and the legal proceedings against him, begun in 1410, continued at the council. Hus was suspected of Wycliffite heresy and could either recant opinions, including ideas that he never held, or decide not to recant and be condemned to death. Since such a recantation was not in conformity with his faith and conscience, he decided not to recant and was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake on the bank of Rhine on 6 July 1415.

Philosophy

Although Hus's commentaries on Aristotle's treatises are not extant, we know thanks to medieval library catalogs that Hus taught at the faculty of arts at least Aristotle's *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *On Soul*, and *On Generation and Corruption*. He also prepared a commentary on the *ars vetus* which included in Prague and elsewhere Porphyry's Introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*, Gilbert de la Porrée's *Book of Six Principles*, Boethius's *Book on Division*, and Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. Hus might also have prepared an extant commentary on Albert of Orlamünde's *Summa naturalium*. His authorship, however, is not securely proved.

It follows from the current state of knowledge that a study of Hus's philosophical thought in the proper sense has to rely mainly on his treatises from the field of philosophical theology. These include Hus's *Sentences* commentary and shorter individual texts, more precisely *Quaestio de*

testimonio fidei christianae, *Quaestio de effectu indesinibili*, *Quaestio de vera felicitate*, *Quaestio de materia prima*, and *Quaestio de optima dispositione universi*. Hus prepared the last *quaestio* as the principal *quaestio* for a quodlibetal disputation over which he presided at the faculty of arts in 1411. As the presiding master, he composed an extensive handbook for the disputation, which testifies to his philosophical erudition.

We may recognize in the abovementioned treatises several philosophical topics which are connected by the theme of universals and theology of creation. These include Divine ideas, first matter and being, the topic of genera and species, and the topic of God understood as a universal.

Hus was a proponent of a multitude of ideas in the Divine mind, understood as universals *ante rem* or *in causando*. In his view, the ideas are caused by God as necessarily as the Divine Persons. The ideas are eternal and as a whole correspond to the archetypal world in which they are distinguished from each other as causes of all created and creatable entities. Hus defines the archetypal world as the eternal intelligible model of the created world. This model represents the exemplary disposition of the universe which is present in the Divine mind. At the same time, the archetypal world is a precondition for a rational organization of the created universe. Since the latter is based on the optimal organization in the Divine mind, it is also organized optimally.

According to Jan Hus, the first entity created outside of the Divine mind (*ad extra*) is the prime matter, which was created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) and contains all creatable things in potentiality. Prime matter serves as the material principle for the production of entities in actual existence. In this actual state of being, matter is always joined by substantial and accidental forms. According to Hus, even God cannot create a corporeal material thing before creating the prime matter as the internal principle of any such thing. Prime matter corresponds also to the absolutely considered being (*esse absolute sumptum*), which is the most general effect that is essentially predicated on all other entities with the exception of God. In consequence, being is a transcendental which is essentially present in all created things.

At the same time, being is the first entity that depends by its essence on God. Since being does not cease to exist, it is in Hus's view to a certain degree eternal or, as Hus writes, perpetual.

As far as universals in the proper sense are concerned, that is, genera and species, in Hus's view they and the entities subordinated to them are essentially identical, the universals being really present in the singulars. For example, in "Socrates," which is a singular, is really present the genus "animal" and the species "man" which both belong to Socrates's quiddity. Individual humans are the universal "man" by participation in this universal and, therefore, share the same specific nature of man, although they represent different singular essences and are really distinct from each other. The universals really present in the subordinated singulars are distinct from the singulars only by means of formal distinction. It follows from Hus's treatises that this distinction is not of a virtual character only.

In a manner similar to Wyclif in his treatise *De universalibus*, Hus understood his own standpoint on the matter of universals as the middle way between two extreme opinions. According to Hus, some scholars say that singulars and their universals are completely the same things that do not differ. At the same time, there are other scholars who are persuaded about essential distinction and distinction by reason between singulars and their universals. The Prague scholar rejects both these possibilities and presents a compromise: while universals and their singulars are essentially the same singular thing, they differ by means of a formal distinction. Hus seems to have had no doubts about the reality of universals, as in one of his *quaestiones* he says that the existence of universals belongs to the subjects of Christian faith. Their existence is also testified by the biblical account of creation (Gen 1:21–25). Because of his realist standpoint, Hus could apply principles from his theory of universals to the Divine Essence and the Trinity of Divine Persons.

Hus's philosophical thought was significantly influenced by a part of John Wyclif's philosophical theology which was to an important extent based on a reinterpretation of several of

Augustine's treatises. In turn, Hus's philosophical theology shows an important Augustinian influence and a more general Christian Platonic influence. Although Hus adopted many philosophical ideas from Wyclif, the Prague theologian limited some of Wyclif's more controversial opinions and sometimes freed them from heterodox theological consequences. Hus's realist philosophy was of limited importance in the context of his whole opus. More important was his theological and reformist thought, which ushered in not only the Hussite movement and the Bohemian Utraquist Reformation but also the German Protestant Reformation, which to a certain degree links to Hus's efforts.

Cross-References

► [Luther, Martin](#)

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Huusman, Roelof

► [Agricola, Rudolph](#)

Hydraulic Engineering

► [Water Culture in the Renaissance](#)

Hydrostatics in Renaissance Sciences

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Abstract

Renaissance hydrostatics developed almost independently from other fields of mechanics. Throughout the Middle Ages and early

Renaissance, only the main results of Archimedes' fundamental work *On Floating Bodies* were known and substantially accepted, with no attention to their theoretical foundations. The gradual rediscovery of Archimedean texts (through apocryphal texts and Latin translations) gave new life to the speculations on the equilibrium of fluids and the laws of flotation. A key figure in Renaissance hydrostatics is Leonardo da Vinci. Although he never accessed Archimedes' treatise, some Archimedean notions can be found in his manuscripts, where a qualitative approach to hydraulic problems led him to a sort of mechanical demonstration of the distribution of hydrostatic pressure on a vertical surface. It was only after the publication of print editions of Archimedes' work that hydrostatics found a new and more sound theoretical framework, with the work of Simon Stevin. His rejection of perpetual motion and the hypothesis of a water "stiffening", which does not affect equilibrium within the liquid body allowed him to generalize Archimedes' law of flotation, demonstrate the hydraulic paradox, and formulate the basic law which describes hydrostatic pressure on a submerged surface.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

While hydrodynamics arose in the seventeenth century as a branch of general mechanics, hydrostatics developed during Renaissance almost entirely in an independent way, without explicit connections with other fields of contemporary mechanics, such as the statics of the rigid bodies, but with direct dependence on the Hellenistic Archimedean tradition (Fassò 1987).

Medieval natural philosophy inherited a vision of the physical world whose bases were set by Aristoteles in the treatise *On the Heavens*, dating from the fourteenth century BC (Clagett 1959).

As stated by Aristoteles, the four elements (earth, water, air, and fire) move according to their innate tendency to occupy their own natural place. The Aristotelian theory states that the natural place of earth and water is the bottom, so

these two elements move downward and are named “heavy.” The natural place of air and fire is instead the top, so they move upward and are designated as “light.” Earth is also considered to be heavier than water, as well as fire is considered to be lighter than air (Leggatt 1995). Aristoteles, however, did not suggest a univocal way for comparing the weights of two different bodies with respect to a common property (such as their volume). With reference to the problem of flotation, he also affirmed that flotation is easier for flat bodies than for edged ones, because it depends on the ability of the body to divide water and penetrate it and that a given body floats more easily in large than in small quantities of water (Arredi 1943; Fassò 1987).

The most likely cause of the main rupture with the Aristotelian tradition in the field of Renaissance hydrostatics has to be found in a Latin text that began to circulate in Europe between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries under the title *Liber Archimedis de insidentibus in humidum* (*Archimedean book of what lie on water*), which was derived from Greek sources ascribable to Archimedes via Arab translations and integrations (Clagett and Moody 1960).

First of all, the book explicitly introduced a concept similar to the present concept of specific weight. Within the *Insidentibus in humidum*, the specific weight of a body (*gravitas secundum speciem*) is clearly defined with respect to a reference volume, while the total weight of the same body (*gravitas secundum numerositatem*) refers to its actual size. Secondly, the treatise contained excerpts from Proposition V of the Book I of the authentic *On Floating Bodies* by Archimedes, which essentially stated that any floating object displaces its own weight of fluid. Last but not least, several passages of the *Insidentibus in humidum* affirmed, in contrast with Aristoteles, that a body is neither heavy nor light when it is surrounded by a substance made of the same element.

The authentic Archimedean tradition in hydrostatics began to spread in European Renaissance after the completion of the first Latin translation of the Archimedean treatise *On Floating Bodies*, which was accomplished at the papal court in

Viterbo by the Flemish monk William of Moerbeke in 1269. Moerbeke’s translation was made from two excellent Greek manuscripts (known as Codices A and B, now disappeared) that gather copies of some works of Archimedes, including *On Floating Bodies*. Some copies of Moerbeke’s work were made in the fourteenth century, but the book became more easily accessible only in 1503, when it was partially edited and printed for the first time by the Italian astrologer and mathematician Luca Gaurico. The translation of *On Floating Bodies*, however, appeared only in later printed editions, namely those edited by Niccolò Tartaglia (1543), Curzio Troiano (1564), and Federico Commandino (1565). Another translation into Latin from Codex A was made by the Italian humanist and mathematician Jacopo da Cremona in 1450. Thanks to German mathematician Johannes Regiomontanus, a reworked version of Jacopo da Cremona’s translation found its way to Germany in 1468. This last book was also the nucleus of the first complete printed collection of the Greek and Latin versions of all Archimedes’ works, the so-called *editio princeps*.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Renaissance hydrostatics, as a consequence, directly sprouted from Archimedes’ results on buoyancy. As pointed out by Arredi, however, Archimedes’ final statement was generally known and accepted during the Middle Ages and in the early Renaissance, but the approach followed by him to get the result, and in particular, his idea of pressure, were systematically ignored (Nordon 1992).

Renaissance philosophy furthermore never took into consideration for a long time the cause of buoyancy, which Archimedes instead identifies with a lift force whose intensity equals precisely the weight of the water displaced by a floating body.

The definition of this force is the celebrated so-called Archimedes’ “principle,” even if, according to Costantino Fassò, it should be called

“theorem” rather than “principle” as Archimedes actually gave a proof of it (Fassò 1987).

Together with the reception of the Archimedean tradition, traces of the Aristotelian mistake of easier flotation of flat bodies can still be found in the fifteenth century in Nicholas of Cusa (Arredi 1943; Fassò 1987). This seems rather strange for a philosopher who is considered to have been the first to lay strong emphasis on the quantitative approach to problems in physics and medicine, based upon extensive use of measurements. A pioneering idea, which represents a remarkable step in the origin of Renaissance science. It is not by chance that Nicholas’ works were known to Leonardo da Vinci, who also directly tried to get hold of two copies of *On Floating Bodies*, probably related to the Latin translations by Moerbeke and Jacopo da Cremona (Duhem 1906–1909; Clagett 1969), as revealed by two notes dating from 1500 to 1502 on folio 968 recto of the Codex Atlanticus and on folio 2 recto of the Manuscript L (Marinoni 1973–1980, Marinoni 1987–1990).

Most Renaissance historians, however, consider that Leonardo did not succeed in his attempt to directly access Archimedes’ masterpiece on hydrostatics. Only one note on folios 413 recto and verso of the Codex Atlanticus quotes indeed a fragment from the Book II of *On Floating Bodies* in the Moerbeke’s translation, but it is not in Leonardo’s handwriting (Pedretti 1978). Leonardo moreover never refers to the force that water exerts on a submerged body using sentences that are identical or equivalent to the Archimedean definition (Fassò 1997). As a consequence, Leonardo probably gets in touch with the Archimedean tradition only through direct or indirect access to the contents of the *De insidentibus in humidum*, a text that is easily available during his lifetime.

Leonardo is, however, a remarkable figure in Renaissance hydrostatics. Although his voluminous notes on the equilibrium of fluids show that in this regard, as in many others, his considerations were mainly qualitative (he made no use of mathematical techniques to buttress his insights), he should be seen primarily as an inspirational transitional figure and as one of the first to

attach importance to “scientific observation” (Devreese and Vanden Berghe 2008). By means of measurements as well as ideal and actual experiments, Leonardo’s theory of weight indeed extends, or at least reinterprets, the Aristotelian concepts of absolute heaviness and lightness in the light of pseudo-Archimedean notions, thus grasping the concepts of specific bodies and neutral buoyancy (Cavagnero and Revelli 2014).

As a technician and an engineer, Leonardo also faced problems that now we relate to the nature of hydrostatic pressure, and his notes give us interesting insights into his original speculations on this subject (Gille 1964). In folio 6 recto of the Codex Leicester, Leonardo wondered about the magnitude of the action that water exerts on a vertical structure, in order to build banks and levees that are strong enough to prevent collapse. Leonardo identified the “level” of water as the only parameter that affects the intensity of water’s action. Water indeed “pushes in the height of the bank, from the surface to the bottom, with varying power”, and this “variation” is actually “caused by the difference, or inequality, of water height [from point to point]” (Pedretti 1987).

As a consequence, since Leonardo correctly deduced that “water gains degrees of power in each degree of its depth”, the bank as well must “increase its resistance from its top to its bottom”, so that the “resistance” of the bank equals the “power” of water. Leonardo did not develop any calculation technique to theoretically determine how the “power” exerted by water varies, but on the same folio 6 recto of the Codex Leicester he sketched one of his most original instruments for measuring the “inequality of this power.”

The instrument is a tank with a wall replaced by a flexible parchment, which is externally supported by some rigid horizontal bands. Each band is kept “in contact with the front edge of the container” by a pair of counterbalancing weights of increasing magnitude, whose sum equals the total “power” acting on the wall. With such an instrument, Leonardo not only could measure the magnitude of the whole action that water exerts on the wall. He indeed could even evaluate the magnitude and distribution of all the actions that water exerts on every single band which compose the

wall. And although these actions, and their resultant as well, are actually forces, it is clear that by performing such a mechanical discretization Leonardo came very close, for the first time in the modern era, to the present representation of the triangular distribution of hydrostatic pressure on a vertical wall (Macagno 1987). So close that the mathematical construction used in 1586 by Simon Stevin in the *De Beghinselen des Waterwichts* (*Principles on the weight of water*) to determine the pressure exerted by water on a vertical surface is conceptually identical to the mechanical one depicted by Leonardo on Codex Leicester.

With reference to the cause of buoyancy, the Venetian mathematician Giovanni Battista Benedetti was one of the first Renaissance scientists to have a clear understanding of the upward force to which an object submerged in water is subject, as described by Archimedes. It was only with the publication of *De Beghinselen des Waterwichts* by the Flemish mathematician and physicist Simon Stevin, however, that a complete theory of the floating bodies and the equilibrium of liquids was formulated. Stevin was the first to make any actual headway in hydrostatics since the time of Archimedes, and indeed he was one of the first to read Archimedes' work in the Latin translation, which as mentioned before was not generally available before the end of the fifteenth century (Dijksterhuis 1987).

Stevin reformulated and further developed hydrostatics introducing two new axioms, different from Archimedes' ones, as starting points:

1. The impossibility of perpetual motion.
2. The new concept of imaginatively "stiffening" a portion of the water volume. This "stiffening" does not affect the equilibrium.

Stevin's contribution to hydrostatics led to a number of important results, the most significant among them was the demonstration of what today we call the "hydrostatic paradox," according to which any quantity of liquid, however small, may be made to support any weight, however large (Devreese and Vanden Berghe 2008).

Another remarkable result of Stevin's approach to hydrostatics was the demonstration

and generalization of Archimedes' principle; using his words from the Proposition 8 of *De Beghinselen des Waterwichts*: "the gravity of any solid body is as much lighter in water than in air as is the gravity of the water having the same volume". According to Ernst Mach, Stevin gave a more satisfactory derivation of Archimedes' principle than that of the Syracusan himself (Mach 1897).

Last but not least, the abovementioned description of the thought experiment by which Stevin calculated the force that a liquid at rest exerts on the bottom and walls of the vessel that contains it led him, together with the hydrostatic paradox, to derive the fundamental law which is nowadays named after Stevin himself: the force exerted by a liquid on a surface of an arbitrary shape and an arbitrary degree of submersion or incline depends only on the area of this surface and the depth of its immersion, not on the volume of the liquid in the vessel.

Impact and Legacy

It is possible to identify two lines in the historical development of hydrostatics after Stevin and in early modern era (Devreese and Vanden Berghe 2008):

1. The Archimedean-Stevian theory, based on postulates specially developed for hydrostatics. Some of the axioms Stevin introduced were different from those of Archimedes, and they enabled him to push forward.
2. The method of Galileo and his school. This was an attempt to describe liquids using concepts from the mechanics of rigid bodies.

The first line, the approach of Archimedes and Stevin, gradually prevailed over the second. This was primarily due to the crucial role that the concept of pressure played in hydrostatics.

The hydrostatics developed by Galileo contained a rudimentary form of the principle of virtual velocity as a basic element and sought to borrow the principles of statics for applying them in hydrostatics. When Galileo studied dynamics

and analyzed water flowing down an incline, for example, he endeavored to adopt the laws that operate when a ball rolls down an incline. At a certain point, he perceived the importance of the fact that, whereas a lead ball may remain motionless on a horizontal surface, a liquid body cannot, because it flows apart. This proved difficult to incorporate into his description. The main reason for the inadequacy of the Galilean tradition was actually its lack of the crucial notion of “pressure” (Arredi 1943). The lack of the notion of “pressure” in the Galilean tradition limited the evolution of hydrostatics in Italy, even if Torricelli was able to make progress in liquid mechanics, deriving the law of efflux directly from classical Galilean mechanics (Munson 2002).

The concept of “pressure” in a liquid instead emerged quite naturally in the Archimedean-Stevian tradition, although pressure was known to Archimedes only indirectly. Stevin was the first to calculate the force exerted by a liquid on the walls or bottom of the vessel containing it. Without actually using the term “pressure” to describe it, that was, nonetheless, what he was calculating. The concept was elaborated later, first in the work of Pascal and Boyle, which built on Stevin’s theories of hydrostatics. The later works on fluid dynamics by Daniel Bernoulli and Leonard Euler, as well as all modern contributions to hydrostatics, are based on mathematical equations in which “pressure” is a key concept. In this sense, they continue the Archimedes-Stevin tradition.

Cross-References

- [Archimedes: Reception in the Renaissance](#)
- [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- [Leonardo da Vinci](#)
- [Mechanics in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Nicholas of Cusa](#)
- [Regiomontanus, Johannes](#)
- [Tartaglia, Niccolò](#)

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Iatrochemistry

► Alchemical Medicine and Distillation

Ibn Kaspi, Joseph

Born: 1280, Provence region, likely in Arles

Died: 1345, Majorca

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Abstract

Josef Ibn Kaspi lived in Provence and traveled in Egypt, Majorca, Aragon, and Castile. He probably made his living through moneylending, with the help of his wife. He wrote more than 25 different books, the majority of which deal with Biblical exegesis, Hebrew grammar, and moral philosophy. He also wrote two commentaries on the *Guide of the Perplexed* and commentaries on Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Ethics*. In terms of philosophy, R. Kaspi was a member of the Averroist trend in Jewish thought. As some other members of this school, R. Kaspi wrote in an "esoteric" way. Moreover, he seemingly contradicted himself on a number of subjects, making it difficult to elicit and understand his true philosophical positions.

Alternate Names

Kaspi, Joseph ben Abba Mari ben Joseph ben Jacob; Kaspi, Joseph; Caspi, Joseph

Biography

R. Kaspi was born in Provence in 1280, probably in Arles. His family name is a Hebraization of his family's ancestral town, Argentière, which was named for its ample silver mines; *kaspi* means *silvery* in Hebrew. R. Kaspi was known for his penchant for traveling. For example, he traveled in Egypt for 5 months between 1313 and 1314. The stated aim of this journey was to learn from the descendants of Maimonides some of the secrets of their illustrious ancestor. However, R. Kaspi found that the descendants of Maimonides were not well-versed in philosophy, and he returned to Provence. Kaspi also made two trips to Spain in the years 1330–1332 and took his last trip to Majorca in 1345, where he died shortly before his intended return to Provence.

Works

R. Kaspi wrote more than 25 works, most of which contained the word *kesef* (silver) in their title, an allusion to his family name. R. Kaspi's works can be divided into five major categories:

- I. Commentary on the Bible. Most of the writings of R. Kaspi are on this subject. In the case of two Biblical books (Proverbs and Job), he composed two commentaries. He wrote the *Matzref le-Kesef* (*Crucible for Silver*), which is a commentary on the Pentateuch, and the *Tirat Kesef* (*Palace of Silver*), which addresses specific questions in the interpretation of the Pentateuch. He wrote also a number of books on a number of important Biblical passages, for example, the *Menorat Kesef* (*Candelabra of Silver*), which interprets the vision of the chariot (Rock 2007).
- II. Books that address theoretical questions related to the exegesis of the Bible. For example, the *Shulchan Kesef* (*Table of Silver*) and *Gevia' ha-Kesef* (1982) (*Mug of Silver*), which also touch on the debate with Christianity.
- III. Books that focus on certain specific topics, such as *Tam ha-Kesef* (*The Silver is finished*), a collection of eight essays on different issues, and his book on ethics, *Sefer Hamusar* (*Book of Morality*).
- IV. Philosophical commentaries. Two commentaries on Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (*Amudei Kesef* (*Pillars of Silver*) and *Maskiyot Kesef* (*Images of Silver*)), a commentary on Maimonides' *Milot ha-Higayon* (*Logical tractate*) and a summary as well as commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics* and Plato's *Republic* according to the commentaries of Averroes on these books (Ibn Kaspi 2016) (*Oblation of Silver*).
- V. Works on Grammar: *Retuqot Kesef* and *Shasherot Kesef* on Biblical lexicography.

Main Philosophical Opinions

In most, R. Kaspi appears as a representative of the Averroist school of thought. For instance, he held a completely naturalistic opinion, though this only becomes apparent after we go beyond the exoterical sentences that he used to conceal his true opinions. The originality of R. Kaspi lies mostly in his various commentaries on the Bible and in particular in his philosophical positions on

certain key issues, with his opinion on natural law being a particularly good example. According to R. Kaspi, there exists in principle some perfect natural law, which is to say the best law for all places and all times. However, due to the different practical circumstances faced by all people across the generations, this law cannot be the constitution of any particular historical state. All societies have some practical considerations that affect the conduct of the population and thus interfere with implementing the perfect law in each society's legislation. For R. Kaspi, even the Law of Moses diverges from the perfect natural law, initially because of the influence of the then surrounding cultures on the Jews when they first came up out of Egypt and later due to the changing situation over the course of Jewish history. The dialectic between the ideal and the reality is the reason that the Law of Moses had to evolve. Nevertheless, these adjustments have to be hidden from the common people, in Kaspi's opinion, for if the masses were to understand that the Law of Moses constantly adjusts to circumstances, they would opt to change the law according to their corporeal temptations. This is the reason that Moses wrote in the *Deteuronomie* (Chap. 4: 2), "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it."

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Ibn Khaldūn

Born: 27 May 1332, Tunis

Died: 17 March 1406, Cairo

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Abstract

Along with Herodotus and Thucydides, Ibn Khaldūn is generally perceived as one of the founding fathers of the social sciences and historiography. He began his life deeply immersed in the political world of his time occupying various governmental posts before eventually withdrawing from public life and penning the work he is perhaps best remembered for, the *Muqqadimah*.

Biography

Along with Herodotus and Thucydides, Ibn Khaldūn is generally perceived as one of the founding fathers of the social sciences and historiography. He was born in a family of high civil servants in Tunis in 1332 and formally educated in theology, Islamic law, grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, and philosophy. He was deeply rooted in his Islamic background, holding several high governmental and diplomatic posts in the service of Muslim rulers across the Maghreb, Spain, Egypt, and Syria over the course of his life. He successfully acted as an advisor to the ruler, a public speaker, a judge of the Maliki rite, a teacher, a professor of jurisprudence, and even a prime minister. He negotiated with Pedro the Cruel of Spain in Sevilla (1365) and Tamerlane on the outskirts of Damascus (1400). He eventually withdrew from political life and left for Egypt where he

was a professor of jurisprudence and spent the rest of his life.

All of Ibn Khaldūn's attempts to guide his community, advise his leaders, and reshape society through a reformed ruler ended in failure. Ibn Khaldūn lived in precarious times when the Almohad Empire in North Africa and Muslim Spain were in decline and convulsed by interne-cine conflicts and rebellions. He regularly found himself at the mercy of the vicissitudes of his time as rulers rose and fell including being imprisoned or forced into exile. This period of turmoil provided him with unique insights in matters of state, political dynamics, and the motives of human action from which he would later draw to formulate his science of culture.

Albeit versed in Islamic philosophy Ibn Khaldūn was critical of the theoretical approaches of the philosophers, in particular of the Neoplatonic brand, whose speculations he felt confined themselves to the ideal and understood reason as all-encompassing. Political philosophy in itself and its promotion of the ideal state (*khilāfa*) were inadequate and needed to be complemented by the study of history. The latter, rather than metaphysics, would provide the concrete causes of Islamic decline.

Ibn Khaldūn's predecessors had merely skimmed the surface of historical events and had "over-looked its inner meaning," which "involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events" (Ibn Khaldūn 1980). Ibn Khaldūn exposed the weaknesses of traditional Islamic historiography with its "incentive for inventing" and set out to develop a new scientific method for distinguishing true from false or erroneous reports (*ḥadīth*).

History was concerned with the nature and causes of actual existence and should penetrate beyond appearances and help discern patterns and general laws. This new science of history would help investigate the nature and causes of culture and social dynamics as they were rather than how they ought to be. Ibn Khaldūn eventually compiled his meditations in his *Muqaddima*, the work he is today foremost remembered for and the

introduction to his great history of the Arabs and the Berbers, the *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, which was divided into a six further books. In this analysis which he penned in Algeria over the course of 4 years from 1375 onward, he came to the conclusion that “social phenomena seem to obey laws which, while not as absolute as those governing natural phenomena, are sufficiently constant to cause social events to follow regular and well-defined patterns and sequences” (Ibn Khaldūn 1980).

In the *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldūn expounded his essentially cyclical view of history and society which included the influence of the environment on social life, man’s basic needs and desires, the economical foundations of power, the forms of rule as well as its relation to religion, and the interconnectedness of material supply and demand. At the heart of Ibn Khaldūn’s analysis lay his study of the nature of society and social change. Human society, according to him, is similar to an organism with a life of its own and, as such, went through a cycle of conquest, growth, peak, and decline. For Ibn Khaldūn, there were two driving forces in human history in every civilization: *ʿasabiya* (sense of community) and *mulk* (state power). *ʿAsabiya* referred to “the affection a man feels for a brother or a neighbour when one of them is treated unjustly or killed” (Ibn Khaldūn 1980). This “group feeling” in particular played a key role in the rise and fall of kingdoms and dynasties and its weakening generally led to the collapse of civilizations.

In his analysis of society, which he called *ʿilm al-ʿumrān*, Ibn Khaldūn distinguished between primitive culture (*ʿumrān badawī*) and civilized culture (*ʿumrān hadarī*) or civilization (*hadāra*). Primitive culture satisfied man’s essential needs and was marked by the frugality of nomadic life as well as violence, courage, self-reliance, and a strong militant spirit of solidarity. Man’s desire for peace and security led him to cooperate with other men and eventually associate with others in society. Through the establishment of the state humans were able to move beyond mere survival, develop their rational abilities, and embrace a life of leisure and luxury. Once the state had achieved peace and prosperity, sciences, arts, and crafts flourished. Urban life however gradually led to

the erosion of tribal virtues and the concentration of power in the hands of an absolute leader whose reliance on mercenaries led to rising expenditure and taxes and resulted in the impoverishment of the population. Spiritual, moral, and intellectual decadence soon set in. The loss of *ʿasabiya* marked the demise of the state and its reversion to primitivism. The cycle had reached its end.

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Ibn Verga, Solomon

Born: before 1492

Died: after 1530

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Abstract

Solomon Ibn Verga lived in Spain when the Jews were expelled in 1492, and lived apparently until around 1530. His only work, entitled in Hebrew *Shevet Yehudah* – variously rendered as “The Staff of Judah,” “The Scourge of Judah,” or “The tribe of Judah” – deals with the history of the Jews, especially in the late medieval period. The author provides specific historical data, but also brings dubious information, following the model employed in one of his works by the Spanish court preacher, Antonio de Guevara (c. 1480–1545). The work also features fictional dialogues and epistles. As such, it reflects the influence of Renaissance modes of writing and at the same time paves the way to Modern Hebrew literature. Ibn Verga develops a comprehensive doctrine of tolerance, disparages both Christian and Jewish popular beliefs, as well as learned theological concepts in the two religious traditions, in which he sees

flights of fancy: religions, he contends, “do not exist but with the imagination.” Having lived in Spain when the Inquisition was founded, he wishes Christians to become open to religious difference. He also thinks that some Jewish rites and beliefs inevitably foster hostility, and calls on Jews to abandon or transform them. He ponders the respective roles of providential and natural causes in history, and some of his ideas have been compared to those of Giambattista Vico (1668–1744).

Biography

Our information on Solomon Ibn Verga's life is scant. We know for sure that he served in different functions in the Jewish community in Castile in the years immediately preceding the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. He was in Portugal in 1506, when a riot broke out in Lisbon against the Jews that had been forcibly converted 9 years earlier. A Hebrew document seems to indicate that he departed the following year for Flanders, but died on the way. Internal evidence in his (only) book, on the other side, manifests the strong influence of a work of the Spanish court preacher, Antonio de Guevara (c. 1480–1545), which was published only in 1529. It is likely that Ibn Verga lived until the 1530s, in circumstances unknown to us, and completed his *Shevet Yehudah* in his later years. His son, Yossef ibn Verga (died c. 1559), published the book, with some additions of his own, in Adrianople (Edirne) in 1554.

Legacy and Rupture with the Tradition

The Hebrew term *shevet* has different meanings, and the title of Ibn Verga's book, *Shevet Yehudah*, may be translated in a number of ways: “The Staff of Judah,” “The Scourge of Judah,” “The Tribe of Judah” (thus alluding, in this last case, to Spanish Jewry, which boasted of hailing from the royal tribe of Judah in Biblical Israel). These diverse renditions of the title point to the various goals that Ibn Verga pursued. He wanted, first of all, to provide information on the history of the Jews

after the loss of their state in Antiquity. His focus is on the circumstances of episodes of persecution and the reasons for the increasing hatred against the Jews in the Late Middle Ages. Although he built on some earlier lists of massacres and banishments, including one apparently drafted by one of his relatives, Ibn Verga evinces a kind of historical interest that, in the context of traditional Jewish culture, is quite new. Secondly, since he does not endorse the view that ascribed exile and persecution to the chastisement of an unfaithful people by divine providence, he seeks to find out the historical and sociological reasons why Jews were hated and sets forth a series of recommendations on how to defuse anti-Jewish sentiments. This line of thought led him to propound views, on a more general theological-philosophical level, that aimed at elucidating how “providence” and “nature” combined in the shaping of history. Finally, Ibn Verga presents his ideas in the garb of fictional dialogues and epistles: he emulates Renaissance secular modes of writing and has rightly been hailed as the founder of Modern Hebrew literature. He was not entirely successful in the integration of the materials respectively corresponding to his historical, literary, and philosophical purposes, and this may account for what seems to be the unfinished character of the work.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Ibn Verga made use of some of the characteristic notions and motifs of Jewish medieval thought, interlaced them with contemporary queries, as these last were discussed on the broader European intellectual scene, and thus bestowed a new significance on inherited questionings and assumptions. There is a “skeptical” moment in Moses Maimonides (c. 1138–1204), as to the possibility of certain knowledge about the “things in the heavens.” A number of Jewish philosophers had compared, in a perspective close to that represented by Averroism, the central beliefs and doctrines of the three monotheistic religions, seen as basically similar, and the teachings of Aristotle. Ibn Verga leveraged these

various themes to put forward a comprehensive doctrine of tolerance. He emphasizes the common core of the three religions by offering a version of the tale of the three rings, that he borrowed, directly or indirectly, from Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) or one of the Italian parallel sources (and not, as some have suggested, from a text of inner Jewish provenance). He castigated both Christian and Jewish popular beliefs, but also learned theological concepts in the two religious traditions, in which he saw flights of fancy: religions, he said, “do not exist but with the imagination.” Having lived in Spain when the Inquisition was founded, he wanted Christians to become open to religious difference. He also thought that some Jewish rites and beliefs inevitably fostered hostility and called on Jews to abandon or transform them.

In likewise manner, Ibn Verga was familiar with the ideas of Maimonides, or some of the Jewish philosophers who saw themselves as being his disciples, as evidenced by his treatment of the historical reasons for the disappearance of the ancient Jewish state. Ibn Verga interlaced them with a new understanding of historical causation that he seems to have borrowed from both Jewish and non-Jewish sources. Moreover, he tried to evaluate the respective roles of providential and natural causes, and some have compared his views to those of Vico.

In his assessment of the hostility towards Jews, Ibn Verga does not view all non-Jews as equally anti-Jewish, and stated a sociologically differentiated view of the exposure to anti-Jewish sentiments. This is to a certain extent new, but at the same time his major distinction, between elites that are well-wishing and lower classes among which animosity towards Jews is particularly pronounced echoes a commonly held view among medieval Jews. It must be emphasized that Ibn Verga was not overconfident in the backing of those holding political power: he warned that in times of crisis authorities may not be willing to run the risk of being denounced as “accomplices” of the Jews if they take action to protect them against physical attacks. Ultimately, Jews have to secure the goodwill of the entire body politic of a given country and cannot content themselves with the aid and support of the rulers.

Impact and Legacy

Ibn Verga was widely read among Jews in the early modern period. Some Jewish thinkers or communal leaders paid attention to his message on the shaping of the relations between Jews and non-Jews or on the natural reading of history. His work was translated into Yiddish for the benefit of those in the Jewish communities who had no Hebrew education, and in such a way that the more traditional features of Ibn Verga's thought and sensitivity were emphasized. It was also translated into Spanish and Latin. Early modern Christian writers on Jews borrow rather extensively from the *Shevet Yehudah*. The overall importance of Ibn Verga's book is that it constitutes a major link between two movements of "Jewish Enlightenment," the first in the medieval period and the second in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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Iconoclasm, Renaissance

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Abstract

Iconoclasm, literally "image breaking," can be defined as the calculated destruction of imagery most commonly associated with religious belief (Boldrick et al. 2014). All religions show visible manifestations of belief; each is a part of a social system enabling adherents to recognize their coreligionists by dress, action, or physical location. Most religions have produced artifacts, frequently images, for use in ritual or in instruction. In paganism, gods were often anthropomorphized and manifested in human form. Christianity, a religion the core belief of which is the incarnation of god in flesh, views its founder as both fully human and fully divine. Christ's image eventually dominated worship. The beginnings of the religion, however, favored the monogram and the symbol as an antithesis to the Roman reliance on images in imperial propaganda as well as worship. By the fourth century, with toleration of the religion under Constantine, Christian imagery greatly developed (St. John Damascene). By the eighth century, the practice was questioned, especially in the Byzantine

Empire (Bryer and Herrin 1977; Brubaker and Haldon 2001). Despite varying positions on the value of imagery, such as the twelfth-century repudiation of monastic use of the image by Bernard of Clairvaux, the employment of sculpture and painting in the service of faith was only seriously challenged in the West during the Reformation. Calvinists in Switzerland and the Low Countries and Lutherans in Germany and Sweden adopted a purged religious service accompanied by an absence of imagery. England, while retaining at first a worship structure close to Catholicism, radically changed the appearance of the Protestant religion, marginalizing imagery. Frequently violent campaigns of destruction accompanied these changes.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Damnatio memoriae, the condemnation of memory, was a recognized aspect of Roman politics when, after death, an individual's name and image was erased from public view. Destruction of cultural monuments, frequently seen in modern wars of ethnic cleansing, can often include the targeted destruction of religious images. Recognizing such issues broadens the scope of iconoclasm well beyond its historical use. We see such contemporary complexity, however, in the Taliban's 2001 attack on the rock-cut images of the Buddha in Bamiyan.

The focus of this essay is restricted to the destruction of Christian images, most frequently by Christians with differing interpretation of the faith. Iconoclasm was first experienced in the Byzantine Empire from about 726 to 787. As with many cataclysmic events, the precise motivations are complex. Scholars have most often associated the decrees of the Emperor Leo III against images to the precedent set by the Umayyad Caliph Yazid II (720–724). Unusual for Muslim regimes in which tolerance of difference was more common, Yazid's attacks on Christian imagery were noted in both Christian and Islamic sources. By 750 Islam had extended its territory from Spain across Northern Africa,

through the Middle East, and to the eastern portion of present-day Turkey. This swift and spectacular success may have encouraged Byzantine rulers to search for reasons to explain God's displeasure. The Christian use of images was thus seen as needing reform. In 754 the Iconoclastic Council held in Constantinople declared:

Supported by the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, we declare unanimously, in the name of the Holy Trinity, that there shall be rejected and removed and cursed out of the Christian Church every likeness which is made out of any material and colour whatever by the evil art of painters. Whoever in future dares to make such a thing, or to venerate it, or set it up in a church, or in a private house, or possesses it in secret, shall, if bishop, presbyter, or deacon, be deposed; if monk or layman, be anathematised, and become liable to be tried by the secular laws as an adversary of God and an enemy of the doctrines handed down by the Fathers. (*The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church* 1955, 543–545)

One of the best-known examples of monumental decoration from this time is found in the church of Hagia Eirene (Holy Peace) in Constantinople. Constantine V (741–775) rebuilt the church after fire and earthquake damage to the early fourth-century building. Rather than the human image, the apse displays a simple black outline of a cross on a gold ground. A second wave of iconoclasm between 814 and 842 was initiated by the Emperor Leo V the Armenian, in all likelihood similarly motivated by Christian military failures (Brubaker and Haldon 2011). An image from the Chludov Psalter, executed shortly after 843, and the triumph of the iconodules (supporters of the veneration of religious icons), depicts John VII, the Patriarch of Constantinople, rubbing out an image of the face of Christ. In a fascinating development, subsequent users of the psalter attacked the face of John, so that its features are now effaced (Kitzinger 1954).

This kind of selective iconoclasm continued sporadically. It is an indication that viewers actually regarded images as maleficent and capable of causing harm. Destruction of earlier Christian imagery in Muslim lands often took the form of scratching out eyes. Numerous surviving images, especially in wall paintings, show destruction focused on the eyes. Examples are found in the

frescoes in the rock-cut monasteries of Gorem (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and in Constantinople's Church of Christ in Chora (Kariye Cami) of the early fourteenth century.

Iconoclasm in continental Europe reappeared during the sixteenth century with the progress of the Protestant Reformation. It was particularly virulent in the Low Countries and Switzerland where there was considerable disagreement within the Protestant camp. Martin Luther (1483–1546) condemned acts of destruction and at first welcomed images illustrating the Bible in his own translation and also for the decoration of church buildings. Andreas Carlstadt (1486–1541), teaching at Wittenberg and well-known to Luther, early condemned imagery. He articulated his reasons in *Von Abtuhung der Bilder* ("On the removal of imagery") of 1521: "That we keep images in church and in God's house is not right and [is] contrary to the First Commandment. . . Deceitful images murder all those who praise and pray to them" (Johnston and Scribner 1993, 82). In 1522 he persuaded Wittenberg's city's council to destroy statues and to whitewash wall paintings in churches. Iconoclastic fury spread rapidly with incidents in Zurich (1523), Geneva (1535), and Augsburg (1537). Indeed, moderates such as Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) were often pressed to advocate caution, seeking to have a regulated and orderly cleansing of the temple. Zwingli, however, also saw imagery as detrimental to faith: "Even if there were no divine command against idols, they have however led to a malformed abuse which should not be tolerated" (Johnston and Schribner, 1993, 85). John Calvin (1509–1564) was also sympathetic to cleansing the church of imagery.

The Low Countries and also France were soon embroiled (Crew 1978; Raguin 2010). As in Switzerland and Germany, protests against imagery were linked to political unrest. Frequently action by private individuals actually preceded exhortations by preachers (Wandel 1955). In 1555 Emperor Charles V transferred rule over the Netherlands to his son Philip II, an act that was seen as handing the country to a Catholic foreigner; and in the summer of 1566, the *Beeldenstorm* began: individuals stormed

churches and pulled down statues, a destruction captured by Franz Hogenburg's 1566 woodcut of the despoliation of the Church of Our Lady in Antwerp (Fig. 1). During the later sixteenth century, which saw the Wars of Religion in France, Huguenot Calvinists caused considerable destruction in churches such as the Cathedral of Auxerre, where they smashed the stained glass windows, reaching as high as they could with their staves.

From the earliest years of Henry VIII's break with Rome, the visible external manifestation of English otherness was the repudiation of devotional images (Gaimster and Gilchrist 2003). Instances of iconoclasm had appeared in both official and transgressive circumstances in England for some time; but the attention that the monarchy brought to this question demonstrates how crucial images became to national policy. Henry focused in 1538 on the image of the twelfth-century saint and martyr Thomas Becket; but all imagery was suspect, especially items associated with pilgrimages and indulgences. The Royal Injunctions cautioned that "feigned images" that are "abused with pilgrimages or offerings of anything made thereunto" must be taken down, and "henceforth no candles, tapers, or images of wax (*ex votos*) be set afore any image or picture" (Gee and Hardy 1896, 277–278). With the ascent of Henry's son Edward VI in 1547, iconoclastic reformers became more influential in official policies toward the visual appearance of the old religion. Royal injunctions were issued, one explicitly mandating reformers to "destroy all shrines . . . pictures, paintings and all other monuments of feigned miracles . . . so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass-windows, or elsewhere within their church or houses" (Injunction 28). Some houses have explicit records of destruction. Norwich, the center of the wool trade of East Anglia, was wealthy enough to destroy rather than whitewash windows. Faded whitewash remains on a fifteenth-century panel showing the symbol of the Trinity in the form of a shield (*scutum fidei*) now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

During the reign of Elizabeth (1588–1603), whose own views were not iconoclastic,



Iconoclasm, Renaissance, Fig. 1 Franz Hogenberg, *The Calvinist Iconoclastic Riot of August 20, 1566* (Church of Our Lady, Antwerp), 1588, engraving, British Museum, London

moderation often prevailed. In 1561, however, she acquiesced to pressure and issued an order against any surviving crucifixes by demanding that rood lofts, also called choir screens, must be striped of images (Aston 1998, 312–313). John Fox published his *Book of Martyrs* in 1563, recording the suffering of Protestants at the hands of Catholics, which included a “well-cleansed” view of a church, images on a bonfire, and “papists packing away their paltry [on] the ship of the Romish Church.” Yet, outright destruction was discouraged. Indeed, many stained glass windows remain intact partially because of the expense of replacement. When repair was essential, however, the windows could then be replaced with clear glass, so that progressive decay was recognized as an efficient means of removing imagery (Duffy 1992; Raguin 2006).

There was considerable divergence in practice over time (Duffy 2001). One need only look at the deeply moving poetry of George Herbert (1593–1633), arguably a committed member of the Reformed Church as a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Public Orator of the university for 7 years. In *The Temple*, published 1633, he praised the English Church, where “beauty . . . takes up her place.” Rome, too, had “long kissed her painted shrines,” while the iconoclastic Protestant church “wholly goes on th’ other side.” The poems are symbolically arranged as ecclesiastical ritual and church furnishings, including porch, altar, floor, tombs, music, lock and key, and particularly windows, where it is clear that he is speaking about storied windows. Man is but a “brittle crazie glasse,” who through the grace of God can “be a window.” Herbert

is referring to traditional kiln-fired, painted windows as he states: “But when thou (God) dost anneal in glasse thy storie, Making thy life to shine within” we are transformed. Herbert suggests that “colours and light . . . When they combine and mingle, bring Doctrine and life” more effectively than simple words that enter the ear but do “not conscience ring.”

Herbert’s verses reflect a brief revival, leading up to the so-called Laudian reform, under James I (r. 1625–1637), although Herbert is clearly distanced from contemporary clergy actually promoting restoration of Roman ties. William Laud became archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, and clergy who shared his views on the centrality of the sacraments and liturgy redecored many churches. Two artist brothers, Bernard and Abraham van Linge, natives of Emden, Holland, were active at this time. They supplied a number of windows, particularly in Oxford Colleges: Queens, 1635; Christ Church, c. 1635; Balliol, 1637; and University, 1641. A panel by Abraham van Linge showing the Deposition from Hampton Court, Herefordshire, displays both pot metal and white glass with enamel paints (Victoria & Albert Museum C.62-1927). It is signed and inscribed: “The truth hereof is historicall devine and not superstistious Anno Domini 1629.” The artist and his patron clearly wanted to distance themselves from any suggestion of popery or false religion (Phillips 1973).

During England’s Civil War and the Commonwealth (1640s–1660), vigorous elimination of imagery was again pursued, especially that recently installed by the Laudian movement (Aston 1998, 93). With the armed conflict, Oliver Cromwell’s troops often engaged in random acts of destruction. The taking of Peterborough resulted in the almost complete destruction of the windows of the cloister and the church of the cathedral. Later, possibly exaggerated, accounts speak of Cromwell himself getting a ladder and breaking a little image of the crucifixion he saw left over high up in the church loft. York was fortunate: when the town was captured by Puritan troops under Sir Thomas Fairfax in July 1644, the

Minster and parish churches were protected from destruction. Yet, more systematic campaigns were prevalent elsewhere. In 1643 laws mandated, again, the destruction of superstitious imagery, including crucifixes and pictures of the Virgin, the Holy Trinity, and the saints. William Dowsing left a journal of his vigorous breaking of windows and other forbidden items such as the inscriptions of sepulchral monuments of “pray for us.” Dowsing had been appointed Parliamentary Visitor entrusted with “demolishing the superstitious pictures and ornaments of churches &c.” in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk between 1643 and 1644. The entry for Clare, Suffolk, states: “We brake down a 1000 pictures superstitious and brake down 200, 3 of God the Father and 3 of Christ, and the Holy Lamb and here of the Holy Ghost like a dove with wings; and the 12 Apostles were carved in wood, on the top of the roof, which we gave order to have taken down; and twenty cherubims to be taken down . . .” (Dowsing 2001, 214).

Iconoclasm has reemerged in modern times in complex forms that included banning and also calculated destruction of images for secular as well as religious motivation. These include, among many manifestations, the National Socialist campaign against degenerate art (*entartete Kunst*), censorship of controversy imagery of a sexual nature, and Islamicist reactions to displays of image of Mohammed.

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Ignatius Loyola

Born: ca. 23 October 1491, Onaz-Loyola (Spain)

Died: 31 July 1556, Rome (Italy)

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Abstract

Born in Onaz-Loyola (Spain) as the minor of the offspring of the Lord of Loyola, Ignatius led a warrior life until he got severely injured in the Battle of Pamplona (1521). After experiencing a call to religious life during the convalescence, he turned to a life of pilgrimage and service to God. After returning to Barcelona from his visit to the Holy Land (1523), he resumed the study of Grammar with his mind in obtaining the mastery in Philosophy and Theology. He attended the universities of Alcalá de Henares and of Paris. In Paris, he met the six people with whom he founded the Society of Jesus (1540). Appointed as the first Superior General of the order, he remained in Rome at the guiding of the Society until his death in 31 July 1556.

Alternate Names

Loiolakoa, Ignazio; de Loyola, Ignacio; de Loyola, Ignatius

Biography

Ignatius was born as Iñigo López de Loyola, though between 1537 and 1542, he changed it to Ignatius for he thought it would be better appreciated in France and Italy.

Ignatius was the youngest of 13 children born to Beltrán Ibáñez de Oñaz, Lord of Loyola, and Marina Sánchez de Licona. Both his parents died in a short time (1506–1507) before Ignatius turned 16. He becomes pageboy to Juan Velázquez de

Cuellar, major bookkeeper of the Kingdom or Kingdom Chancellor. Under the stewardship, Ignatius learnt to read and write, tasks on which he was very esteemed. In 1517, after Juan Velázquez's death, Ignatius was sent by the latter's widow to take up arms for the 2nd Duke of Nájera, Antonio Manrique de Lara. He fought safely in many battles until a French-Navarrese cannonball broke his right leg apart at the Battle of Pamplona in 1521. He was taken back severely injured to his birth house in Loyola, where, after undergoing several surgical operations, he recovered.

During the convalescence, Ignatius, who fancied books of Chivalry, ordered some, but, due to their lack, he was given religious books instead. He got so impressed by the life of Saints, specially by that of Ludolph of Saxony's *The Life of Christ* or *Vita Christi* (1470), that, after a period of inner struggling, he experienced a call to religious life. As soon as he was well recovered as to walk, February of 1522, he departed on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He first stopped at Montserrat (Barcelona) for a general confession and continued to Manresa (Catalonia) where he stayed for 11 months. In February of 1523, he returned back to Barcelona for embarking to Rome. After being received and blessed by Pope Adrian VI, he continued to Jerusalem, where he arrived on the 3rd September 1523. Twenty days later and against his will, he had to flee from the Holy Land. He headed to Barcelona to resume his grammar studies for entering the university. Once prepared, he moved to Alcalá de Henares where he studied Philosophy and Theology (March of 1526 until June of 1527). He decided to finish his formation in the best considered university of the time, so he moved to Paris, where he arrived on the 2nd February 1528. He stayed until the end of 1536 after obtaining a master degree from the University of Paris.

In Paris, he met Francis Xavier, Alfonso Salmeron, Diego Laynez, Nicholas Bobadilla, Peter Faber, and Simão Rodrigues, with whom, on the 15 August 1534, he pronounced the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience giving rise to the *Societas Jesu* (Society of Jesus). In 1537, after realizing that it would be impossible for them to peregrinate to Jerusalem, the seven

headed to Rome for the approval of the Pope Paul III, who, in 1540, officially founded the Society of Jesus.

Ignatius, appointed the first Superior General of the order, lived from that moment on in Rome devoted to the ruling of the Society. He wrote together with Juan Alfonso de Polanco the Constitutions adopted by the Society in 1553. He ruled wisely and discreetly, heeding specially on the obedience, which he considered both a virtue and the main tool for the cohesion and efficacy of the Apostolate. Ignatius died in Rome on 31 July 1556.

He was beatified by Pope Paul V on 27 July 1609 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on 12 March 1622. His feast day is celebrated annually on 31 July. Saint Ignatius is venerated as the patron saint of Catholic soldiers, the Military Ordinariate of the Philippines, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Basque Country, Antwerp, Belo Horizonte, and Junin.

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il Bruciolo

► [Brucioli, Antonio](#)

il Diacceto

► [Cattani da Diacceto, Francesco](#)

il Ghiacceto

► [Cattani da Diacceto, Francesco](#)

il Pagonazzo

► [Cattani da Diacceto, Francesco](#)

Images in Renaissance Science, Function of

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Abstract

Medieval natural philosophy proper, i.e., *philosophia naturalis*, was concerned with understanding natural motion and change, understood in the broadest forms; it was anchored primarily to Aristotle's *Physica*, *De caelo*, *De generatione et corruptione*, and *De animalibus*. These Aristotelian texts and their textual traditions did not relay on graphic arguments or visual representations. Over the course of the Renaissance, the intellectual and cultural boundaries, investigative domain, and methods of natural philosophy were transformed by the expansion of subalternated disciplines, including anatomy, botany, and mechanics. Because these disciplines made

extensive use of illustrations, the epistemic value of visual representation became important and images served both as representations of the evidence and as demonstrations. During the sixteenth century, a second factor that supported a new function for images in science developed from the philosophical controversy about the status of geometrical proofs and mathematical knowledge more generally, known as the *quaestio de certitudine mathematicarum*. The ground for the transformation of natural philosophy during the sixteenth century and the new role to be played by illustrations within it was prepared during the fifteenth century by the rise of what Alexandre Koyré called a *mentalité visuelle*. Specifically, technical drawings and the language of *disegno* acquired currency at court; graphic apparatus were devised for recently recovered and newly edited classical scientific treatises, as epitomized by Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*; finally, mathematical humanists made mathematical sciences fashionable for courtiers, at a time when the printing press canonized illustrations as text, contributing to shaping of a new intellectual culture.

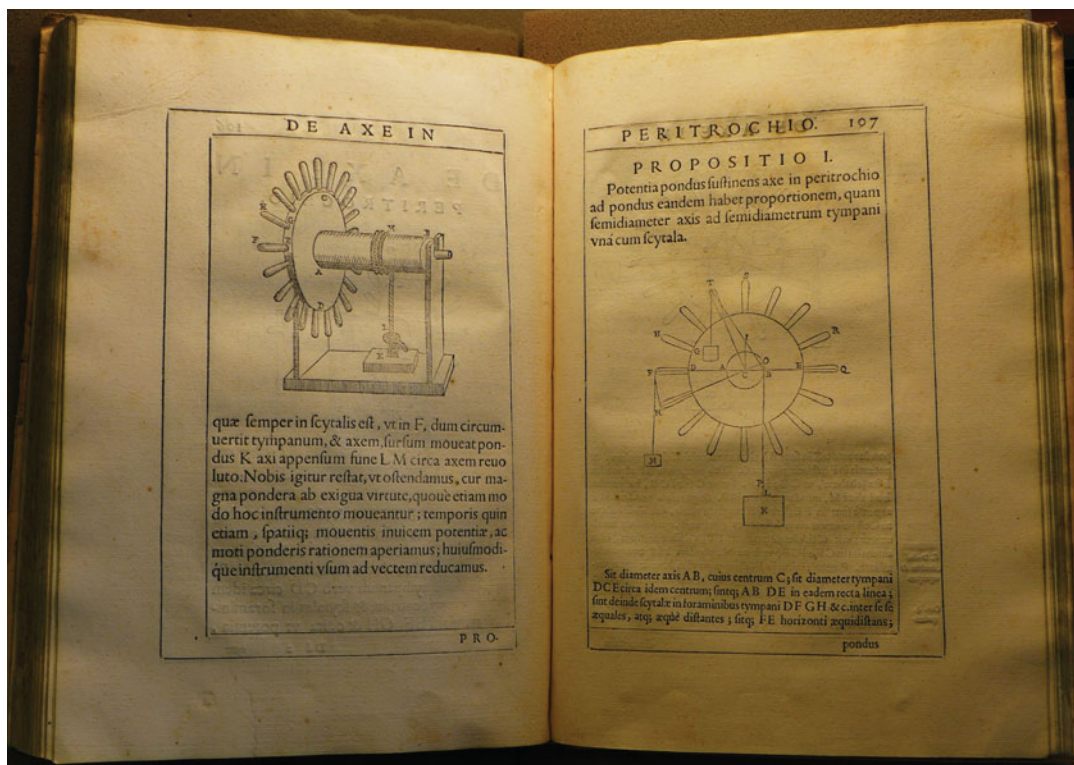
Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Images and visual representation more generally had no role in medieval science proper. Experiments and observation of natural events were at best marginal to the methods of scholastic natural philosophy, an enterprise that was anchored on Aristotelian texts and their commentary traditions, and supported by verbal arguments based on logic. The discoveries about the natural world that came first from the explorations of new lands and environments and then from the heavens, which were relayed by images, did not challenge natural philosophers until the later sixteenth century. However, the transformation of the discipline, including the role of visual representation in it, began in the fifteenth century and it was prompted by the discovery of lost classical texts and the arrival of Greek manuscripts, both understood to be closer in format to the originals than

those extant in the scholastic Latin tradition. An important innovation for the methods of the discipline of logic came from Aristotelian logic texts brought to Italy by Byzantine emigres, which were filled with diagrams and graphic arguments; following the texts and teaching of scholars such as George of Trebizond, figures became common in logic. An earlier similar case is that of the *Geographia* by Ptolemy brought to Florence in 1397 by Manuel Chrysoloras: singlehandedly, this manuscript transformed the study of geography, rendering maps integral to this discipline and identifying visual representation as an essential dimension of classical science to be recovered by humanists. In their hunt for lost manuscripts, humanists found not only famous works such as *De rerum natura* by Lucretius and *De architectura* by Vitruvius – to mention only Poggio Bracciolini's most famous finds – but also texts such as *Atheni Atheniensis mathematici cum picturis instrumentorum* and *De machinis et instrumentis bellicis cum picture expressi*, which, even though they did not enter the canon of high learning, nonetheless had a substantial impact on how images came to be seen. These classical texts on engineering and machines, including chapter X of Vitruvius's *De architectura*, elevated the status of technical drawings: these were no longer simply the sketches used by engineers since the later middle ages to find and convey solutions in the context of architecture, ship building, and military sciences; they became fashionable means of communications between artists/engineers and their patrons and advisers, requiring these intellectuals and noblemen to become familiar with visual and graphic reasoning. Though at court they retained a more illustrative rather than exploratory nature, the circulation of technical drawings in high culture environments not only brought emphasis to their draftsmanship and ennobled the figure of the engineer – role played for instance by Filarete and Leonardo at the Milanese court – but also contributed to the currency of graphic representation as a form of knowing and a form of investigation of natural and artificial processes.

Leon Battista Alberti is one of the fifteenth-century humanists who argued for a solid

theoretical footing to the drawings and visual reasoning by developing and grounding in Euclidean geometry the notion of *disegno* – an umbrella term that encompasses both draftsmanship skills and the ability to reason by graphic means – a notion that will be enshrined as the father of all arts by Giorgio Vasari in the sixteenth century. As the figures in his own manuscript of Euclid's *Elements* suggest (Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. VII, 39, =3271), Alberti's commitment to the epistemic role of visual representation was certainly shaped by his study of geometric diagrams – the efforts of humanists to create correct figures for this text will continue into the sixteenth century and find an illustrious interpreter in Luca Pacioli. The conviction in the power of images and, specifically, of diagrams in science is epitomized by the publishing project undertaken by Johannes Regiomontanus, a friend of Alberti and a protégé of Cardinal Bessarion. In 1472, Regiomontanus became a printer in order to produce correct scientific texts inclusive of diagrams and figures embedded in the text block. His premature death in 1476 prevented the completion of his publishing program that included all major classical and modern scientific authors, from Archimedes, Euclid, and Pappus to Nicholas of Cusa, Puerbach, and Witelo. However, Regiomontanus's idea of printing mathematical and scientific texts with complete and high quality apparatus of figures found another interpreter in Erhard Ratdolt, who has been deemed the most inventive printer after Gutenberg. In 1482, he issued the *Elements*'s first edition in a large print run (likely exceeding 2,000 copies), with over 500 figures printed from type-high metal rule embedded in plaster, an innovative solution that also allowed the insertion of types for the letters. In his preface, Ratdolt makes several points about figures in mathematical and scientific texts worth noting: “[. . .] until now, no one has found a way to make the geometric figures that abound in these works and without which nothing in mathematics can be properly understood [. . .] and I hope that because of my contribution [i.e. the new method to print diagrams], soon the majority of books pertaining to the disciplines the Greeks call ‘mathemata’ as well as the rest of the sciences



Images in Renaissance Science, Function of, Fig. 1 Guidobaldo del Monte, *Mechanicorum Liber* (Pesaro: Hieronymus Concordia, 1577) pp. 106v–107r

will incorporate figures” (Dedicatory Letter to Doge Mocenico, Euclid 1482). His hopes did not materialize quickly, but in the sixteenth century, figures became common in scientific publications and essential tools for the study of the Book of Nature (Fig. 1).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Though growing in presence also in astronomical texts, it was in anatomical and botanical publications that scientific images came to a special prominence over the course of the sixteenth century. The acceptance of their new status is embodied by the question Leonhart Fuchs asked in the Preface of *De historia stirpium* (Paris, 1542): “Who in his right mind would condemn pictures which can communicate information much more clearly than the words of even the most eloquent men?” (Preface, x–xi). Notably, the notion of the

superiority of visual over verbal representation for the purpose of describing natural specimens was invoked already by the end of the fifteenth century, from among others by Leonardo who claimed that words, however eloquent, simply fail to represent a specimen for readers, making drawing and visual representation a necessary. The 518 remarkable woodcuts appearing in the 896 pages of *De historia stirpium* made Fuchs’s question seem rhetorical, but various writers did in fact questioned the value of illustrations, following in the footsteps of the ancients, including Pliny the Elder who had doomed the usefulness of images in science because, in addition to the challenge for scribes and illuminators to make accurate copies, book illustrations cannot reproduce the colors and capture only one state of the specimen’s appearance. Even though the illustrations of *De historia stirpium* and *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) helped botany and anatomy gain prominence while strengthening the connection

between the role of visual representation and the observational/descriptive nature of these sciences, Andreas Vesalius made clear to his readers that the *Fabrica*'s illustrations were not to replace the experience of dissecting bodies, thus confirming also anatomical theaters together with the botanic gardens as important new learning environments. The very form of the images helped the arguments by Fuchs and Vesalius go beyond the descriptive dimension (*historia*) and become causal knowledge (*scientia*): their figures are not "photographic" or *ad vivum* representations, but they generalize the firsthand experience, editing the accidental components of the specimen-subject to ensure an ideal morphological description.

Impact and Legacy

Precisely the challenge of establishing causal, reason knowledge plagued the status and epistemological value of visual representation of natural specimens, a subject discussed extensively at the Accademia dei Lincei. Federico Cesi and other members recognized the value of images to make records of *esperienze* and anomalies, but they admitted their limits for studying the features that explain the workings of the natural world and establish a classification order in it. As exemplified by the pairs of images developed by Guidobaldo del Monte for his *Mechanicorum liber* of 1577 (Fig. 1), the necessary step to endow visual representation with epistemological value was the mathematization of its forms, i.e., the reduction or translation of the visible into diagrammatic forms, which may be studied by geometric analysis. This commitment to this diagrammatic reduction and to geometry as the approach to study the natural world is epitomized by Galileo's statement that "this grand book – I mean the Universe – cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and the characters in which it is written. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures, without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it" (*Il Saggiatore* 1623).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alberti, Leon Battista](#)
- ▶ [Cosmography in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- ▶ [Leonhard Fuchs and Herbals](#)
- ▶ [Regiomontanus, Johannes](#)
- ▶ [Vesalius, Andreas](#)

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Imagination in Renaissance Literature

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Abstract

The concept of poetic imagination began to be a matter of theoretical discussion only during the Renaissance period. The Italian humanist Marsilio Ficino is one of the first thinkers who explicitly links poetry and imagination, ambiguously stressing both the nearly divine

power of poetic creativity and its possible relationship with sophistry. Intersecting the ongoing debate on imitation, the discussion of poetic imagination finds a theoretical peak, in Italy, in the dispute between Jacopo Mazzoni and Torquato Tasso around the notion of the fantastic nature of poetry. In France, Jacques Peletier du Mans, Pontus de Tyard, and Pierre de Ronsard all emphasize, instead, the necessity of the strict control of reason over imagination on the part of the poet. This concern is shared by English poets and critics as well, and Sir Philip Sidney's considerations on poetry are the most relevant attempt, during the Elizabethan Age, to justify the creative power of poetic imagination as ultimately rational.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The notion of imagination began to be consistently discussed in relation to literature only in the sixteenth century, as a result of the innovative approach Renaissance thinkers took in dealing with poetry as form of art. The notion was already present in both antiquity and the Middle Ages, but its discussion was confined to the specific realm of natural philosophy: usually positioned alongside the categories of common sense, fantasy, estimative power, and memory, imagination was one of the internal senses that the Middle Ages inherited, through Avicenna, Averroes, and Albert the Great, from Aristotle's account of the functions of the human mind. Seldom were these categories used to address the topic of the creative process that literature required. On the contrary, in dealing with poetry, medieval thinkers would mostly rely on the ancient tradition of rhetorical theory, considering poetic creation as a matter of selecting and organizing the content (*inventio*), putting it into due order (*dispositio*), and expressing it in agreeable and persuasive language (*elocutio*). The formulation of a theory of the poetic mind was neither available nor needed (Bundy 1927; Cocking 1991; Copeland 1991; Langer 1999).

An early change of perspective emerged in the second half of the fifteenth century with the work

of the Italian humanist Marsilio Ficino. Despite not elaborating any specific aesthetic system, Ficino brought attention to a number of elements that would later be combined or associated with the notion of imagination as the artist's creative faculty. Ficino adds nothing to the traditional Aristotelian idea of imagination, often indistinguishable in his writings from the related faculty of fantasy: imagination, as Neoplatonics, Arabs, and Scholastics had it, is thought of by the Italian thinker as a faculty which mediates between sense and intellect, translating sensations into mental entities and combining their fragments into a unity. Yet, by reducing all the arts (intended as in the Greek term *technai*) under the aegis of imagination, Ficino clearly links this faculty to creativity and, by means of it, to divine creative power. As he states in the *Platonic Theology* (1469–1474), the exercise of the intellectual arts – among which poetry lies – is not only the sign of man's superiority over the animal world but also the way in which man can rise above the dependence on the body and access almost the same genius of the Author of the heavens, understanding His own creation.

Ficino's attitude toward imagination remains, nevertheless, highly ambiguous. Along with the conception of imagination as a faculty which, by mediating between the particular and the universal, helps man in the ascent to divine unity, Ficino also retains a possibly opposite view, namely, the idea of fantasy as the main instrument of the sophistic trickster. Translating Plato's dialogue *Sophist* into Latin, the Italian humanist, in his commentary on the work (1494–1496), traces the distinction made by Plato between "icastic" and "fantastic art" and makes it his own. According to Plato, icastic art, dealing with likenesses, is an imitation of the truth, while fantastic art, dealing with appearances, abandons the truth in order to achieve beauty. The latter, therefore, is also the potential realm of sophistry and, according to Ficino, of the illusory tricks of demons. Imagination, in short, can be deceptive. And if Ficino's conclusions mostly help him to distinguish his own philosophy – which deals with truth – from the distorted reasoning of the sophist who disseminates false

opinions, Renaissance thinkers will not spare time in considering it a matter of the utmost importance for the definition of poetic imagination as such (Garin 1988; Allen 1989; Cocking 1991; Giglioni 2010; Giglioni 2011; Moreschini 2016).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The reinsertion of the issue of the relationship between imagination and truth operated by Ficino is indeed crucial to the development of the discussion about poetic imagination in the Renaissance, particularly when, at the end of the fifteenth century, the deepening of the comprehension of Aristotle's *Poetics* triggered a fierce debate around the questions of aesthetic representation, credibility, and verisimilitude in poetry. In Italy innumerable authors addressed the topic, but the debate reached its peak with Jacopo Mazzoni and Torquato Tasso, who engaged in an elaborate dispute that would have long-lasting consequences on subsequent scholars and poets.

Jacopo Mazzoni published his ideas on poetry in the *Defense of the Comedy of Dante* in 1587. By drawing on both Platonic and Aristotelian theories of artistic imitation, Mazzoni defines poetry as an art whose only object is image-making – an art which is the representation of idols (*idoli*). Having their origin in the imagination, idols may refer to both existing and non-existing things, according to Mazzoni, and, in this sense, relying on the distinction made by Plato in the *Sophist*, icastic imitation would deal with the first category of idols while fantastic imitation with the second one. Yet, the already Platonic division becomes for Mazzoni a clear difference of modes of reproduction and related disciplines: icastic imitation, dealing with likenesses, is considered the most appropriate kind of imitation for the writing of history; fantastic imitation, on the contrary, dealing with appearances, is seen as closer to the nature of poetic invention. Fantasy thus becomes the very essence of poetry.

This does not mean, however, that poetic imagination can be totally disconnected from reality. The importance of belief and believability – together with the notion of poetry's wonder –

is constantly stressed by Mazzoni as the first feature of poetic creation. Rather, the tension created between the innate falsehood of poetic matter and the believability of artistic fabrication is the hallmark of all good poetry: between a believable lie and an unbelievable truth, a real poet, for Mazzoni, should always choose the former. In this sense, poets are sophists, according to the Italian thinker, but the term does not bear the usual negative connotation. Precisely because of their sophistic ability to make the untrue probable, poets have a better sense of what is rational and real than other people, including philosophers. In addition, Mazzoni concludes, to the extent that it stimulates in human beings a natural response to rational assent and belief, poetry may in fact have a lasting impact on the ethical and political dimensions of human life (Weinberg 1961; Scarpati 1987; Giglioni 2010).

Mazzoni's ideas found a ready response in Tasso's re-elaboration of his *Discourses on the Art of Poetry* (1587) under the new title, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem* (1594). Rejecting any association between poetry and sophistry, here Tasso attributes to Mazzoni the fundamental error of having considered the false to be the primary matter of poetic creation. Even conceding that poetry, like sophistic art, creates idols, poets, unlike sophists, work with true actions, according to Tasso: far from being just a matter of believability, poetic verisimilitude has to have a close relationship with truth to be perfect, as the perfect poet has to imitate things that are, were, or may be. The imitation of things that are not and never were – in short, Mazzoni's fantastic imitation – is therefore completely rejected.

Tasso's refusal of Mazzoni's positions, however, comes at the expense of a radical intellectualization of the notion of imagination and its representative powers. The limitation to existing things of a poet's ability to imitate excluded a number of impossibilities and falsities which were, as a matter of fact, imitated. Drawing on Platonic sources, Tasso thus has to maintain that things that are in the genus of being are only the intelligible ones, while visible things are in the genus of not-being. Considering that poetry should imitate things that are, this means

for Tasso that poets should imitate intelligible realities and not the visible ones. Angels, winged lions, eagles, and oxen, to the extent that they are images of the evangelists and therefore intelligible, do not fall within the province of fantastic imitation, but instead are icaastic like any other representation of concrete reality (Scarpati 1987; Russo 2002; Giglioni 2010).

The dispute between Tasso and Mazzoni accounts for a theoretical complexity that was, nonetheless, primarily Italian. In France, the penetration of Aristotle's *Poetics* was slower than in Italy, and, consequently, the debate remained more within the limits of the traditional rhetorical frame, in a continuous confrontation with the poetic rules set by Horace's *Ars poetica*. Especially with the rise of the Pléiade group, the French poets' interest was directed less at theorizing about poetic imagination than at defining the proper way of imitating the admired models of Greek and Latin antiquity. From the classical models, they aimed to derive, after all, both a mediated inspiration and the necessary skills to exploit it.

French thinkers, thus, can generally be seen as sharing a certain mistrust toward the creative power of imagination, claiming, by contrast, that poets should be guided, first of all, by reason. Even though the rhetorical notion of invention increasingly shifts its meaning to encompass some of the characteristics that pertain to imaginative creation, the structure of rhetorical theory is always maintained as seminal, in the French Renaissance, and it consequently maintained its focus on the intellectual rather than on the inventive work of the poet. Pontus de Tyard, for example, writes in his *Solitaire premier* (1552) that poets must not give their approval to all of their own inventions but, after examining them from all sides with the skill of understanding, they must reject those that are frivolous and unnecessary and choose only the good and praiseworthy. Jacques Peletier du Mans in his *Art poétique* (1555) takes the same approach by recommending that, after writing, poets should allow their inventiveness to cool, and then, only when they are refreshed from their labors, should they go back to their work and criticize.

A similar approach can also be found in the theoretical reflections of one of the most important poets of sixteenth-century France, Pierre de Ronsard. In his first preface to the *Franciade* (1572), Ronsard makes the distinction between the true and the verisimilar in poetry, affirming that the poet must be as vivid and realistic as the historian, and must not distort facts or – and here he shows his concerns with how the audience’s imagination will respond to poetry – depart from what is already assumed by general opinion. The guidance of reason, however, is stressed one more time by Ronsard when he talks about the overall disposition of the matter which constitutes the poet’s work. Taking Ludovico Ariosto’s romance *Orlando furioso* as negative example, Ronsard claims that the poet should not feign fantastic poetry: this, as the example of Ariosto shows, would end up in a monstrous delirium, ultimately unrecognizable as poetic. As for Horace, freedom of imagination is allowed, for Ronsard, only within the limits of the probable and the congruous. When, in the *Abrégé de l’art poétique* (1565), he had defined poetic invention as the *proper* natural workings of imagination, Ronsard had the same concept in mind, after all: poets should be aware of the perils of a disordered imagination and follow their inventiveness only when it is appropriate and compliant to their intellect (Cocking 1991; Barron 1992).

Impact and Legacy

The necessity identified by Ronsard of a clear distinction between reasonable poetic imagination and fantastic delirium was likewise central in the English Renaissance. As Francis Bacon put it in his *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), imagination was thought during the Elizabethan Age to be a necessary faculty in man’s acquisition of empirical knowledge and understanding. Still, sharing a commonplace of Renaissance psychology which had been particularly negative for poets, he also pointed out that imagination often has the habit of transcending its proper role and getting out of control: according to a well-known Baconian simile, reason has the same power over imagination as a

magistrate has over a free citizen, who, however, may also come to rule in turn. Poetic inspiration, in this sense, was frequently perceived as one of these cases, which joined, as William Shakespeare admitted, poets’ inventiveness with lovers’ altered consciousness and lunatics’ hallucinations.

Given the general disrepute of the notion of poetic imagination, English poets reacted with a number of writings in defense of their art. Despite drawing upon familiar Renaissance materials, significant views of imaginative creativity evolved as a result. Most of their attempts aimed at stressing the difference between the notion of poetic imagination and the idea of imagination commonly conceived, as George Puttenham made it clear in his *The Art of English Poesy* (1589). As opposed to historians and mere versifiers, feigning was declared the poet’s natural function, and fiction his product. Poetic feigning, however, was defined as the result of a skilled and educated imagination, which in the real poet, far from being free and uncontrolled, is always subject to the higher power of reason. Feigning in poetry is therefore portraying the false but does so according to a purpose that is deliberate, moral, and rational. Poetry’s imaginative creation and its emotional effect are guided by the conscious reason of the author to secure, in turn, directly or indirectly, rational and moral effects.

A decisive formulation of these arguments can be eventually found in Sir Philip Sidney’s *The Defense of Poesy* (1595). Poetry and imagination here are ultimately linked to one another in an inextricable way, and it is exactly this link to imagination that becomes, in Sidney, the crucial point for the supremacy of poetry over all arts and sciences. Governed only by the laws of probability, the poet, for Sidney, is the only one who can abandon historical fact and create a world of more universal and, therefore more neatly perfect, ethical dimensions. As etymology confirms, the poet is indeed a maker, and precisely because of this unique status, he is the only one, unlike the historian and the philosopher, who is capable of persuading to knowledge and virtue through his imaginative ability. Sidney had too little time to demonstrate his theories in practice; and yet the blossoming of the great English literature is in no

small measure a response to Sidney's example, which was to be the theoretical point of departure for the age of Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton (Bundy 1930; Rossky 1958; Trimpi 1999; Mack 2004; Smid 2017).

Cross-References

- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Imagination in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Imitation and Mimesis in the Renaissance](#)
- [Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance](#)
- [Mazzoni, Jacopo](#)
- [Puttenham, George](#)
- [Senses, Internal](#)
- [Sidney, Philip](#)
- [Tyard, Pontus de](#)

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Imagination in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

In the Renaissance, the imagination was considered a crucial mental power which played a key role in the building of knowledge as well as in the individual's relationship with external reality. It was believed to act on the data of sense perception by unifying them into a single representation. This, in turn, would enable the work of reason and, as a result, the mind's procession of the objects of knowledge. Because of its intermediate position, the imagination was also thought to convey the influence of the soul to the body and vice-versa and to account for many psycho-physiological processes, such as falling ill and recovering. It was also thought to be able to act at a distance, a concept that posed no little challenges to many philosophers of the time, from Marsilio Ficino to Francis Bacon.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Renaissance understanding of the imagination is informed and inspired by the Platonic and

the Aristotelian traditions. Platonism strongly advocated the ontological difference between the intelligible and the material worlds, the latter being a mere reflection of the former. According to this metaphysical premise, the embodied soul finds itself in a world of “images” and its epistemological approach must necessarily involve a wide use of the imagination. Aristotle's view that the imagination is a movement which results from an actual exercise of the power of sense (*De anima*, III.3.429a1) and continues when sensation has ceased, as in sleep (*De somno et vigilia*, III.461a), remained a key point of reference in the debate about the powers and limits of the imagination throughout the period. Likewise, his famous claim that the soul never thinks without an image (*De anima*, III.7.431a and III.8.432a) played a chief role in linking the imagination with cognitive activities. Plotinus's reinterpretation of Aristotle's position in a Platonic context, which became available indirectly through many of Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499)'s works as well as directly with the publication of his Latin translation of the *Enneads* in 1492, contributed to consolidate the belief in the cognitive power of the imagination. Plotinus made an important distinction – which will prove highly influential in the Renaissance – between a higher and a lower level of operation of the imagination, the former reaching up to a pre-intellectual level and the latter immediately following sense-perception. Avicenna's *Liber de anima*, which had been widely discussed in the Middle Ages, was fundamental for the belief that images were able to affect external objects (*Liber de anima*, 65). The transitive power of images is a key feature of Renaissance discussions on the imagination. Up to the emergence of modern science in the seventeenth century, images were thought to have the power to modify bodies, causing harm (or good) to them and even reshaping their material structure (Giglioni 2011, 28). Renaissance authors, moreover, emphasized the ontological and epistemological prominence of the imagination, which they saw as a faculty which mediated between different levels of knowledge and reality, enabling the interaction between the body and the intellect, as well as between man and higher beings.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The imagination's transitive power and its ability to bridge different levels of life and knowledge are key aspects of the Renaissance understanding of this faculty, of which Marsilio Ficino gives a representative account. For him, the imagination is the faculty which first enables the de-materialization of the objects of sense-perception by producing an image of them, which will then be processed by reason. He divides the hierarchy of cognitive moments into sensation, imagination, reason, and intellect and claims that the imagination "rises above matter higher than sensation, both because in order to think about bodies it does not need their presence, and also because as one faculty it can do whatever all the five senses do" (Ficino 2002, VIII.1, 263). Following Plotinus, Ficino distinguishes between a lower and a higher imagination, which he calls *imaginatio confusa* and *imaginatio discreta* (or *phantasia*). *Imaginatio*, he says, joins the data individually received by the five external senses into a single representation but is not able to identify its object as a specific substance. It produces only simulacra, i.e., confused images of things. *Phantasia*, by contrast, works on the images put together by *imaginatio* and translates them into mental entities (Kristeller 1943, 234–236; Heitzman 1935). In doing so, it already operates on a pre-intellectual level, in the sense that it is able to produce particular concepts, which "are called, as it were, the incorporeal intentions of bodies" (Ficino 2002, VIII.1, 265). To explain this difference, he gives the following example: when Plato is absent, Socrates thinks about him through his inner imagination: the color and shape which he had seen, the gentle voice he had heard and everything else he had perceived through the five senses. *Imaginatio*, therefore, recreates the visual and auditory representation of Plato when he is not there, but knows nothing about the person to whom the color, shape, and voice belong. When *phantasia* comes into play, Socrates realizes that the colors, shape, and voice belong to Plato, "a fine-looking, good man, and a most cherished disciple" (Ficino 2002, VIII.1, 265; Heitzman 1935). Ficino also convincingly subscribes to the belief in the transitive action of the imagination, which, he says, can become a

pernicious instrument, especially if used against children and others of an impressionable age (Ficino 2004, XIII.1.1, 110). The imagination of a sorcerer, for example, can cause a fever in the tender body of a child (Ficino 2004, XIII.4.8, 193), because "the image of the fever arouses the child's febrile spirits, just as imagining intercourse arouses our seminal spirits and genitalia" (Ficino 2004, XIII.4.8, 193). Likewise, the evil eye can harm and even kill people (Ficino 1989, III.16, 325) and the imagination of a pregnant woman can easily affect the tender body of the fetus with the stamp of what is in her mind (Ficino 2004, XIII.4.1, 111). In love-sickness, the image of the object of love was thought to become impressed in the *spiritus*, the pneumatic substance which was thought to be the organic seat of the imagination, originating in the brain from the heat of the heart and from there flowing throughout the body. From the *spiritus*, the image is transmitted to the blood which "painted with a certain likeness draws the same image in the limbs" (Ficino 1987, 202; Giglioni 2011, 46). The imagination, for Ficino, has also important demonological implications and he provides a complex account of the relationship between this faculty and various types of demonic intervention (See Corrias 2013; Giglioni 2010a, 2011; Allen 1989, and 1992). Intriguingly, he also claimed that after death the unrestrained force of the imagination could cause the soul of the wicked man to see "the heavens crashing on his head or himself being swallowed up in the deep fissures of the earth" (Ficino 2006, VI.18.10, 197). Using the same arguments, he also tried to justify the heterodox belief in the soul's transmigration into animal bodies, advocated by authoritative philosophies such as Pythagoreanism and Platonism (Corrias 2012; Hankins 2005). He argued that when ancient philosophers described human souls being implanted in the body of animals, they were just referring to the contents of their distorted imagination. Taking this position to the extreme, Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) claimed that hell exists only for those souls who produce imaginary pains out of the fear of the tortures which are traditionally promised to the sinners. If during earthly existence the imagination is deeply influenced by the belief in infernal punishments, after death these faculties will cause the soul to experience excruciating sufferings (Klein

1970). In Bruno's theories of bonds (*vincula*), i.e., spiritual influences which enchain and manipulate the soul, the imagination is described as an important gateway for these influences, "the only entrance for all internal feelings," "the bonds of bonds" (Bruno 1998, 141) through which belief is created. Indeed, bonds do not need to be real, i.e., "found in things" (Bruno 1998, 164). In fact, they can be even stronger if they rely on deceptions: "For the imagination of what is not true can truly bind, and by means of such imagination, that which can be bound can be truly bound" (Bruno 1998, 165). The imagination, however, was not only important in theories of knowledge. It had a significant part also in religious experiences, as it could help the soul to visualize some aspects of the divine, which lay beyond the reach of thought. Giovan Francesco Pico della Mirandola (1470–1533) claimed that "imagination is for the most part vain and wandering" (Giovan Francesco Pico della Mirandola 1930, 29), but it can also provide support to faith. By contemplating the image of Christ on the cross, for example, we can gain a certain knowledge of divine nature which can induce in us a natural disposition (*habitus*) to religious life (Giovan Francesco Pico della Mirandola 1497, 36; Mucillo 2007, 19). On the Aristotelian side, the relationship between imagination and belief was widely discussed by Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), who believed that the force of the imagination, when joined with belief, could modify the *spiritus* in such a way that this could evaporate and transmit to the outside world the images which were impressed on it. These mechanism, for him, could explain complex phenomena such as miracles, omens, and apparitions. In a well-known passage from *De incantationibus* (1556), he discusses the apparition of Saint Celestine to a group of worshippers in the Italian city of L'Aquila, after these had prayed intensely for days in the hope to dispel a devastating hailstorm. This apparently miraculous vision, he says, was caused by the *spiritus* of the worshippers which, evaporating from their bodies, impressed the image of the saint in the air (Pomponazzi 1567, 239; Walker 2000, 108). Pomponazzi's focus is both on the physiology of the imagination, which involved bodily processes such as the modification of the blood and of the *spiritus*, and the on psychological aspects, such as

faith and credulity, which put into motion these processes. For him the imagination, inflamed by faith and belief, did not only project its potent effects on the outside, as in the case of apparitions, or on other people's bodies, as with the evil eye. Through a complex mechanism of autosuggestion, the imagination could also affect the believer's own body, as in the case of Saint Francis's stigmata (Pomponazzi 1567, 67). In the *Sylva Silvarum* (1626), Francis Bacon (1561–1626) explores the degree of truth of the idea of a transitive power of the imagination and confirms Pomponazzi's view that imagination and belief, when mutually influenced, can cause autosuggestion and have significant psychosomatic effects. He recounts the story of a juggler – whose imagination was disbelieving and therefore not strong enough to act on other people's imagination – claimed that he could guess the card somebody else was thinking of without seeing it. However, rather than telling the card himself, he whispered it in the ear of an observer, who later repeated it out loud. The reason for this complex system of interactions between the juggler, the participant in the card trick and the observer is to be found in the subtle interplay of imagination, belief, and disbelief which made the trick possible. The juggler was aware of being an impostor and had no belief in his own mind-reading powers but knew that the observer had a strong faith in his alleged competence and ability as a juggler. This faith fed the observer's imagination which grew stronger and became able to bind the other man's imagination, inducing him to reproduce in his mind the image of the same card (Bacon 1857-1874, II, 655; Giglioni 2010b; Yates 1966, 359). In his *Discourse of the Powder of Sympathy*, first published in 1658, Kenelm Digby (1603–1665) describes the human body in terms of a kingdom, in which the animal spirits, or *spiritus*, are the sentinels and the imagination is the general. The *spiritus* brings the information deriving from the sense organs to the imagination, "whereby a man may know and understand what is done without the Kingdom, within the great world" (Digby 1664, 89). However, in Digby we find an attempt to give a scientific explanation of the workings of the imagination (Lobis 2011) and he explains birthmarks with the joint action of the

imagination and atoms coming from the outside world (Digby 1664, 84 and ff.). This position anticipates the approach which became dominant at the end of the seventeenth century. With the emergence of modern science, philosophers sought to identify natural causes for those portents traditionally ascribed to the power of the imagination, which was gradually dethroned from being the queen of mental faculties, banished from theories of knowledge and exiled to the field of aesthetics.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Action at a Distance](#)
- ▶ [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- ▶ [Digby, Kenelm](#)
- ▶ [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- ▶ [Senses, Internal](#)
- ▶ [Senses, Outer](#)
- ▶ [Spirit in Renaissance Medicine](#)
- ▶ [Weapon Salve in the Renaissance](#)

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Imitation and Mimesis in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Numerous debates and epistolary exchanges concerning the imitation of ancient authors flourish in Italy between 1400 and 1530. These disputes are to be read through the lenses of the humanist desire to restore classical Latin. This desire characterizes the period following the rediscovery of ancient texts, such as Cicero's *Epistulae ad Atticum* that Petrarch found in Verona in 1345. The renewed interest in authors and rhetoricians such as Cicero, Seneca, and Quintilian inform humanist discussions regarding style and eloquence in Latin. More specifically, starting from the early Quattrocento, scholars and intellectuals debate over which author to imitate, and many humanists see Cicero as the sole model to follow. Therefore, many quarrels reflect the intense arguments between strict Ciceronians and the supporters of eclectic imitation. This obsession with linguistic purism extends to the vernacular, and Pietro Bembo's *Prose della Volgar Lingua* (1525), where Petrarch and Boccaccio become ideal models for writing in "classical" standard Italian, represents the culmination of this linguistic movement from Latin to the *volgare*.

Heritage

Imitatio deals with the theories and practices of imitating a previous author, who is regarded as a model of stylistic excellence. The concern with imitation and the quest for ideal models to imitate appeared in the fourteenth century when intellectuals rediscovered ancient manuscripts that allow them to have unmediated contact with classical Latinity. As writers attempted to imitate the language and style of classical authors, they engaged in quarrels about style, whose foundational theories drew largely from ancient sources, namely, Cicero and Quintilian. The theories of literary imitation that are analyzed here will shed light on the practices of writing in Latin and in the vernacular during the period 1400–1530 as well as on the rise of Ciceronianism (McLaughlin 1995).

The imitation of models of stylistic eloquence, or "rhetorical imitation" as Martin McLaughlin and G.W. Pigman III define it, is to be distinguished from the imitation of nature, or *mimesis*. The term *mimesis* is originally Greek; it means to imitate, and it is most commonly used to define the imitation or representation of nature in literature and art. The distinction between the two kinds of imitation was not always maintained during the Renaissance, and sometimes the two terms even became interchangeable: for instance, Lodovico Dolce and Alexander Pope claimed that to imitate the greatest authors was another way of imitating nature. Most intellectuals during the Renaissance only addressed the imitation of literary models in their debates and rarely discussed the philosophical implications of reproducing nature in their writings (Greene 1982; McLaughlin 1995).

In classical antiquity, the most notable reference to *mimesis* in literature and, more specifically, poetry was to be found in the tenth book of Plato's *Republic*, where the philosopher defined all artistic creation as a form of imitation of the reality; but, since Plato considered reality itself as merely a *mimesis* of a higher plane of being, the concept usually had pejorative connotation. He believed painting and poetry were unable to imitate ideas and claimed that they simply reproduced the appearance of the phenomenal

form of things. Therefore, *mimesis* was defined as the production of an appearance (Gebauer and Christoph 1995; McLaughlin 1995).

Later, Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, claimed that poetry is *mimesis*. He elaborated the idea of poetic *mimesis* in relation to tragedy and defined the concept both in the sense of producing images and in the sense of creating a fable or a plot. Aristotle emphasized the mimetic aptitude as anthropological constant distinguishing human beings from other animals, and as such they feel the urge from an early age to reproduce reality in the arts. Aristotle used *mimesis* to refer to the representation of life in a work of art and believed that *mimesis* corresponded to the capacity to reproduce resemblance through artistic media (Gebauer and Christoph 1995; McLaughlin 1995; Sörbom 2002).

Regarding rhetorical imitation, Isocrates was the first to apply the concept to literature when he added *imitatio* to the three components of Greek rhetoric: nature, theory, and practice. In classical antiquity, the writers who provided the most extensive commentary on the subject matter were Cicero (*De Oratore* 2.89-90), Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* 10.2), the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (1.2.3), and Seneca (*Epistulae* 84). These authors were widely aware of the negative connotations generally associated with *mimesis*, or with reproducing reality; therefore they most often tended to be cautious when discussing *imitatio* and, particularly, its dangers. Moreover, it is relevant to note that the classical ideas and theories of *imitatio* drastically changed during the Renaissance: in fact, most classical authors were inclined to distance themselves from single-model imitation, a concept which will be widely debated in the Quattrocento and in the Cinquecento (McLaughlin 1995).

Quintilian outlined the motivation and importance of *imitatio* as an essential component of developing any form of art, whether writing, oratory, painting, or others. Imitation alone does not guarantee artistic excellence, and excessive reliance on superficial imitation of the predecessor at the expense of originality and innovation can be dangerous. Quintilian saw in Cicero the foremost model of eloquence, but he never suggested that

one model be used as the exclusive source of eloquence. Additionally, he claimed writers should not hesitate to rely on their own inner talent, or *ingenium* (Della Neva 2007; Fantazzi 2014; Pigman 1980).

Similarly, the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* suggested that *imitatio* was merely one of three principal activities of a good writer, the other two being technical proficiency (*ars*) and practice (*exercitatio*). The author recognized *imitatio* as part of the orator's duty to borrow from the predecessors in such a way as to signal the imitation to the audience, but also to alter in some way the material borrowed (McLaughlin 1995).

The goal of using previous texts to improve one's own writing was expressed by Seneca in his *Epistulae* 84, where he famously employed several metaphors to clarify the process of imitation to explain the relationship between the model and the new text and, also, to describe both proper and improper imitative techniques. G.W. Pigman divides the images largely used in antiquity and in Renaissance debates in three categories of metaphor: transformative, which includes the apian, digestive, and filial metaphors; dissimulative, which refers to camouflaging the relationship to the model; and lastly, eristic, or all those images that underline the competition against the model (Della Neva 2007; Goethals 2015; McLaughlin 1995; Pigman 1980).

Senecan metaphors from this letter will continue to appear in later debates in the Quattrocento and Cinquecento and will shape early modern approaches to the theory and practice of literary imitation; therefore it is important to discuss at this stage the most common images that will be employed in the quarrels here analyzed. The first metaphor is that of a bee taking pollen from various flowers, which it then transforms into its own unique honey. The second analogy is a digestive one where the inspiring models are defined as different kinds of food that need to be digested. A third metaphor explores the relationship between an artistic image and its original model, which should resemble the relationship between a father and his son. Lastly, the imitation should sound like a choir that has produced a unified

note out of multiple voices. There are also several metaphors that underline the failures of the transformative process, such as the images of the crow and the ape (Della Neva 2007; McLaughlin 1995; Pigman 1980).

Innovative and Original Aspects

It was no coincidence that fourteenth-century authors experienced a revived interest in literary imitation once many classical manuscripts on the subject – including Cicero’s *De Oratore* and Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* – were rediscovered in their complete form. In the early modern period, Petrarch (1304–1374) was the writer that most actively engaged with the theory and practice of imitation. Additionally, his letters (especially *Epistolae Familiares* 1.8, 22.2, and 23.19), where he discussed his views on imitative practices, served as a theoretical foundation for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century debates on *imitatio*. Petrarch was widely influenced by classical authors: for instance, his epistolary collection was precisely inspired by his discovery of Cicero’s *Epistulae ad Atticum* in Verona in 1345. Moreover, he owned a manuscript containing Cicero’s rhetorical works and a copy of Quintilian: from Cicero, he learned the importance of avoiding unfamiliar words in one’s narration, while Quintilian taught him not to imitate just one model (Della Neva 2007; McLaughlin 1995).

In *Epistolae Familiares* 1.8, written to Tommaso Caloiro, Petrarch discusses literary imitation and the issue of originality. The letter is a clear illustration of Petrarch’s theories: here the poet wants to avoid verbatim imitation of Seneca’s *Epistulae* 84 and shows his preference for rewriting the substance of his predecessor’s writing using different words. He employs Seneca’s apian metaphor but introduces a critical change: in fact, Petrarch exhorts his correspondent to take the best of his (literary) surroundings, as the bees collect pollen from different flowers to produce honey. However, a young writer should transform what he has collected into something new and original: “Nulla quidem esset apibus gloria, nisi in aliud et in melius inventa converterent”

(“the bees would not be glorious if they did not convert what they found into something different and something better” *Fam.* 1.8.23-24). In the letter Petrarch emphasizes the fundamental role of transformation and insists on the idea of “mellification,” or of something new produced “by a miraculous blending process” (“mirifica quadam permixtione,” *Fam.* 1.8.2) (Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995; Pigman 1980).

In *Epistolae Familiares* 22.2, written in 1359 and addressed to Giovanni Boccaccio, Petrarch’s concern is with the concept of imitation and also practical changes in his own *Bucolicum Carmen*, where he had inadvertently reproduced whole phrases from Virgil, which he now wants to alter. This episode leads Petrarch to discuss his own imitative practices: he underlines the importance of eclecticism and to avoid verbatim repetition: “nisi vel prolato auctore vel mutatione insigni, ut imitatione apium e multis et variis unum fiat” (“unless I either name the author, making it a quotation, or change the phrase significantly, so that like the bee I produce something unified from many and various sources,” *Fam.* 22.2.16). Petrarch claims imitation should strive for *similitudo* rather than *identitas* and, in fact, believes that, even if an author follows a literary model, it is fundamental for the writer to preserve artistic autonomy (McLaughlin 1995).

In *Epistolae Familiares* 23.19, once again addressed to Boccaccio and composed in 1366, Petrarch describes the efforts of Giovanni Malpaghini, who overindulges in imitation but, according to Petrarch, will soon develop a more independent style by imitating the masters. Petrarch expresses his key concepts by using Senecan imagery such as the father/son metaphor. Different from Seneca, the poet believes the resemblance between the new work and the original should be noticeable to the unconscious mechanisms of the intellect: “Sic et nobis providendum ut cum simile aliquid sit, multa sint dissimilia, et id ipsum simile lateat ne deprehendi possit nisi tacita mentis indagine, ut intelligi simile queat potius quam dici” (“So we should ensure that, although some elements are similar, many are not, and that even what is similar should not be obvious, but should only be apprehended by the

silent inquiry of the mind: the similarity should be intuited rather than articulated,” *Fam.* 23.19.13). As such, dissimulation becomes a central factor in Petrarch’s conception of imitation (Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995).

Petrarch’s vernacular poetry reflects his imitative theories and practices in Latin. Martin McLaughlin discusses several examples from *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, specifically *RVF* 216 with regard to verbatim imitation. In fact, the poem presents almost direct translations from Virgil and Cicero, which do not seem to bother the poet because using the vernacular corresponds indeed to use different words from the model. Moreover, *RVF* 321 demonstrates Petrarch’s sensitivity to verbal repetition, which is included in the practice of self-*imitatio*. Ultimately, McLaughlin analyzes Petrarch’s many revisions of his vernacular poems in connection to the poet’s pursuit of clarity and middle elegance in style (McLaughlin 1995).

Lastly, it should be emphasized that, while Petrarch recognized Cicero’s supremacy as a prose stylist in Latin, he did not recommend relying on Cicero as a sole model. He reiterated classical theories according to which a writer should imitate a number of different models and, additionally, that he should penetrate beyond superficial *verbatim* imitation to a reworking that captures the original spirit and significance of the model. Scholars agree that Petrarch was the most influential theorist of *imitatio* for the century that followed his death; and his eclectic practice of imitating classical authors would represent the stylistic foundation for future humanists until the second half of the fifteenth century (McLaughlin 1995).

Impact and Legacy

In the Quattrocento, *imitatio* was an idea and practice that is familiar to all intellectuals, and theoretical debates on the subject matter are present in the treatises and epistles of authors like Poliziano and Leon Battista Alberti to pedagogues such as Antonio da Rho. The cult of Ciceronian style can be interpreted as a consequence of the

increasing sophistication in the study of classical texts at the beginning of the fifteenth century that grew out of the rediscovery of ancient manuscripts from classical antiquity. That led to a desire to emulate classical language and to purify ancient Latin, which could be read as a reaction to the linguistic practices of scholastic Latin usually found in the universities (McLaughlin 1995).

In the early Quattrocento, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406) and Leonardo Bruni (1369–1444) engaged primarily with the theories and practices of imitation in their own written production, and their thoughts on *imitatio* are to be derived from their writings. Salutati expressed his views on imitation in an epistolary exchange with Bruni. In the initial letter, written in November 1405 to Bruni, Salutati addressed the humanist using a classical form and employed several non-classical items throughout the epistle. Bruni later criticized both stylistic choices. Salutati’s response illustrated his ideals on imitation: first, he offered a clear distinction between duplication and imitation. Second, he argued against a slavish imitation of ancient models and suggested that the imitation retained some aspect of modernity (*novitatis*). As Martin McLaughlin points out, Salutati’s attitude toward literary imitation was in line with his consideration of contemporary culture, which admired classical antiquity, but at the same time acknowledged the superiority of the Christian present (Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995).

Similar to Salutati, Leonardo Bruni did not theorize much about imitation because he was so proficient at it in the practice of writing and in his translations. He showed an eclectic aptitude because he not only continued the Ciceronian tradition of the oration, the dialogue, and the letter, but he also inaugurated the most distinctive genres of the Quattrocento, for which he was indebted to a variety of classical authors. For instance, in his historical works, he followed Livy, Sallust, and Caesar’s footsteps, while in his biographical accounts; he was clearly influenced by Plutarch. Throughout his practice, he demonstrated to be a Ciceronian for his concern with elegant style but also imitated a plurality of authors, such as Boethius and the Church Fathers (McLaughlin 1995).

Humanist pedagogues in the Quattrocento dealt with *imitatio* as a pedagogical method: it was analyzed as a set of basic rules of rhetorical training rather than a specific stylistic advice. Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder (1370–1444) was the author of a treatise on education: *De Ingeniis Moribus et Liberalibus Adulescentiae Studiis* (1402–1403); and in a letter of 1396 to Ludovico Buzzacarino, he expressed his views on the practice of *imitatio*. Here the humanist claimed the principle of single-model imitation, and he invited his addressee to imitate only one single model: “sed unum aliquem eundemque optimum habendum esse, quem precipuum imitemur” (“we should choose one single model, one that is the best, whom we should imitate in particular”). Differently from what he stated in his epistolary, Vergerio shows in his educational treatise to be a pluralists, claiming that the young writer should imitate the best authors and teachers (Della Neva 2007; Greene 1982, McLaughlin 1995).

Gasparino Barzizza (1360–1430) was the author of *De Imitatione*, a most likely unfinished work written in an elementary style. The text addresses those who have just graduated from the study of grammar to the art of rhetoric; therefore it develops a basic approach to the *quaestio*. The treatise provides simple advices how to adapt models, and it is widely influenced by major authors such as Quintilian and especially Seneca, as it is confirmed by the presence of many traditional metaphors. He explains imitation can take place in *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio* and that it is divided into four categories: additions, deletions, transpositions, and, lastly, alterations. Moreover, he recommends that the students not borrow passages from the beginnings of letters and speeches since they are the most identifiable parts of a text. The pedestrian nature of this treatise is evident as Barzizza does not underline the importance of imitation in improving the original model, but he simply claims that the imitator should avoid plagiarism at all costs. As G.W. Pigman explains, Barzizza’s major contribution to the theory and practice of imitation consists of specific methods for transforming texts to hide its relations to the original model (McLaughlin 1995; Pigman 1982).

Antonio da Rho (ca. 1398–1450) was Barzizza’s pupil, and he succeeded him as professor of Rhetoric in Milan after Barzizza’s death. He was the author of *De Imitationibus Eloquentiae* (1430–1433), a thesaurus, which presents a lexicon of more than a thousand entries. The entries reveal a more descriptive than normative approach, and, additionally, Antonio shows an indiscriminate attitude toward the authors to imitate. He considers *imitatio* one of the major components of eloquence, along with *natura*, *ars*, and *exercitatio*. Antonio claims that Cicero is the supreme model to follow, but, similarly to other humanists of the time, he believes he is not the only author to be imitated. He uses a floral metaphor to support his eclectic approach to *imitatio*, comparing students of rhetoric to orchards that produce something new and original from the existing authors of classical *florilegium* (McLaughlin 1995).

Guarino Veronese (1374–1460) was a prominent teacher in Northern Italy. In his writings, he made no explicit statements on literary imitation, but he considered the imitation of Ciceronian style as the peak of stylistic eloquence for the intellectuals of the Quattrocento. Although he often equated *studia ciceronis* to *studia humanitatis*, he never restricted himself to a Ciceronian lexicon in his own writing: his Latin remained varied, flexible, and open to outside influences, such as Pliny. In fact, in 1419, Guarino acquired a manuscript containing Pliny’s *Letters*, which he largely imitated in his epistolary, thus offering a good example of the Veronese teacher’s imitative practices. He avoided verbatim imitation, and, although he demonstrated more complex forms of *imitatio*, he most often followed Barzizza’s teachings, such as turning singulars into plurals (and vice versa), using synonyms and, finally, reversing the order of clauses (Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995).

Along with pedagogical practices, issues of proper imitation also emerged in theoretical debates through the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries: one of the most relevant literary debates on *imitatio* in the Quattrocento is the dispute between Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) and Lorenzo Valla (1406–1457). The quarrel, which

took place in 1452, summarized the gap that divided two generations of humanists: on one side Poggio stood for a notional Ciceronianism and defended not only Ciceronian style but also the entire medieval literary and philosophical culture. On the other side Valla – following Quintilian’s advice – did not follow a single model, and he did not restrict himself to a single author (Della Neva 2007; McLaughlin 1995).

The quarrel is divided into four parts, where each part corresponds to an invective that one of the two intellectuals wrote: First, Poggio – after hearing that an intellectual criticized his Latin in the margins of a copy of his letters – composed the *Oratio I*, addressed to Valla, who Poggio suspected was the humanist who condemned his style. There, Poggio attacked Valla’s *Elegantiae*. Second, Valla responded with his *Antidotum Primum. Libri III*; then Poggio reacted by writing a three-book invective, the *Orationes II–IV*, to which Valla finally responded with a second *Antidotum*. Poggio never reacted to the latter work, where Valla presented three different levels of un-ciceronian elements in his adversary’s linguistic style: Poggio’s vulgarisms (words derived from the vernacular) such as “disturbium” and “pasta”; forms derived from late scholastic Latin; and, finally, words derived from classical authors, but not present in Cicero’s writings. The dispute confirmed Valla’s superior knowledge of Latin, which was not limited to the vocabulary and grammar but extended to syntax and morphology (Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995).

It is also worth noting that during the fifteenth century, debates on literary imitation written in the vernacular and that addressed style and eloquence in the *volgare* started to flourish in Italy. For example, Leon Battista Alberti widely discussed the *quaestio* in the *Teogenio* (1440) and in the *Profugiorum ab aerumna libri* (1441–1442). As Martin McLaughlin notes, in the first book Alberti elucidated his pluralistic approach to classical authors: the main character, Genipatro, demonstrates to have a wide taste and knowledge of classical authors and reads Terence, Apuleius, Lucian, Martial, and Plautus but also texts of moral philosophy, educational treatises, and

even agricultural and political writings (McLaughlin 1995).

In the dialogue *Profugiorum ab aerumna libri*, Alberti employs the architectural metaphor of the mosaics, which comes to represent creative and transformative imitation. He compares the artist crafting mosaics from the fragments left over from the construction on the ancient temple of Ephesus to the writer who adorns his works with fragments from the temple of classical literature. The originality that is left to the contemporary author lies in carefully choosing a different variety of classical literary gems and in arranging them in a new context. (Goethals 2015; McLaughlin 1995).

In the Renaissance, the diffusion of early printing technology allowed students of Latin the opportunity to study and imitate a large number of Cicero’s texts, and various intellectuals recommended young writers to only read and imitate Cicero. That led to the flourishing of intense rhetorical debates in Italy, especially in Florence, Venice, and Rome, between strict Ciceronians and supporters of eclectic imitation. The most noteworthy disputes were between Poliziano and Paolo Cortesi (ca. 1485), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Ermolao Barbaro (1485), Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola and Pietro Bembo (1512), and Giambattista Giraldis Cinzio and Celio Calcagnini (1532–1537). Most notably, the *quaestio* went beyond the borders of the Italian peninsula and reached Northern Europe, where Erasmus engaged with the theories of *imitatio* in his *Ciceronianus* (1528). Such classicism extended to the vernacular, and Pietro Bembo published *Prose della Volgar Lingua* (1525), where Boccaccio and Petrarch (similarly to Cicero and Virgil for Latin) served as models of style and eloquence for “classical” standard *volgare* (Della Neva 2007; Fantazzi 2014; Marsh 2013; McLaughlin 1995; Pigman 1980).

The dispute between Paolo Cortesi and Angelo Poliziano was constituted of an epistolary exchange, which was undated, but most likely happened in the mid-1480s. In the letters the two intellectuals explicated the virtues and limitations of establishing Cicero as the only model of eloquence. The exchange began with a collection of Latin epistles that Cortesi sent to Poliziano and

were presumably written in a Ciceronian style. Poliziano, who supported eclecticism in his literary practices, believed an author could find stylistic excellence by following a variety of great models; moreover, he ridiculed the self-imposed limitation of the Ciceronians that he found in Cortesi's letters. In his response, Poliziano made the famous statement about originality: "Non exprimis, inquit aliquis, Ciceronem. Quid tum? Non enim sum Cicero; me tamen, ut opinor, exprimo" ("Someone might object: 'But you do not express yourself like Cicero.' What of it? I am not Cicero. But I think I express my own self") (Della Neva 2007; Fantazzi 2014; Goethals 2015; McLaughlin 1995).

In the remainder of the letter, Poliziano emphasizes the importance of self-expression. He claims it is impossible to reproduce Cicero exactly; therefore he acknowledges the importance for a young writer to develop his own distinctive style. Poliziano urges Cortesi to cultivate his individual expression rather than following someone else's footsteps. Self-expression is accomplished through the reading of various texts, whose individual excellences can be assimilated and forged into a distinctive new style (Della Neva 2007; Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995).

In his epistle, Poliziano shows to be an advocate of pluralism and of original compositions both in theory and, especially, in practice, where he illustrates his literary credo of *docta varietas*. For instance, in the letter to Cortesi, he changes the stock imagery related to literary imitation and introduces the metaphor of the magpie and the parrot, and, instead of presenting the bees as traditional image for sound imitation, he speaks of the bull and the lion, two metaphors that successfully suggest the strength of the individual intellect (Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995).

Poliziano's letter to Cortesi is not the only text where he presents his theories and practices for literary imitation: in fact, his entire production is a testament to his preference for eclecticism. In his 1493 letter to Bartolomeo Scala, Chancellor of Florence, Poliziano argues in favor of a variety of stylistic excellences. Likewise, in his *Oration on Quintilian and Statius*, he states that reading a wide variety of authors prove to be an

essential tool for the aspiring young writer (Della Neva 2007).

Different from Poliziano, Cortesi was a typical Ciceronian, and he exploited the traditional imagery of the debates on *imitatio*. He claimed that true imitation was not the resemblance of an ape to a man but rather the similarity of a son to his father; but he preferred to ape Cicero's style, rather than being the pupil of any other author. Cortesi also used the digestive metaphor to argue against eclecticism and stated that literary "indigestion" resulted from reading and imitating too many authors at the same time. As Martin McLaughlin affirms, through these metaphors, Cortesi recognized the impossibility of reproducing an exact copy of Cicero. Paolo Cortesi's most original contribution to the debate was claiming that literary imitation was linked to the Aristotelian concept of art imitating nature (Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995; Pigman 1980).

The quarrel between Poliziano and Cortesi had a European resonance in the sixteenth century, and it was widely discussed in Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*. The text depicts the conversation between Nosoporus, a Ciceronian devotee who for 7 years has avoided all books except those by his idol, and Bulephorus, who represents the authorial voice and is in favor of eclectic imitation. The latter claims that even Cicero absorbed his entire heritage and imitated no one closely. Additionally, Bulephorus, alias Erasmus, ridicules Cortesi's argument and accuses him of contradicting himself. In fact, at first Cortesi claimed to have no respect for those who wish to ape Cicero but later affirmed that he preferred to ape Cicero rather than be the pupil of any other writer. As Charles Fantazzi explains, in the *Ciceronianus*, Erasmus refers to Ciceronians as a sect, present mainly in Rome, and they initiated a form of neo-paganism under the guise of trying to purify Latin language. When discussing the quarrel between Poliziano and Cortesi, Erasmus understood that Poliziano's criticism was directed against those without any formal training who wished to reproduce Ciceronian stylistic features and were unable to produce something original and self-expressive (Fantazzi 2014; Greene 1982).

Erasmus's stress on the geographical area where Ciceronianism triumphed is relevant and deserves to be clarified. Most Roman humanists were active in the Papal Curia, and their job consisted in writing ecclesiastical documents in a correct and eloquent Latin. Thus, in Rome, the issue of Ciceronianism was a fundamental practical concern and did not simply constitute an intellectual debate. In fact, as JoAnn DellaNeva claims, Roman humanists saw themselves as the descendants of the great Roman authors of classical antiquity and, therefore, believed that the imitation of Ciceronian linguistic style was an essential tool to succeed in their writings (Della Neva 2007).

The debate that concerned Ermolao Barbaro (1453–1493) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) took place in 1485. The exchange dealt with *imitatio*, but it did not enter into discussion on style. The debate is divided into three parts: the initial letter that Barbaro sends Pico, Pico's response, and, finally, Barbaro's second epistle to Pico. The exchange deals with the opposition between *verba* and *res*, or the distance between rhetorical power and philosophical precision. As JoAnn DellaNeva precisely explains, Pico believed in the superiority of *res* over *verba* and stressed the importance of brevity, unadorned lexis, and recondite content: "brevitatem styli, fetam rerum multarum atque magnarum, sub expositis verbis remotissimas sententias" (brevity of style, replete with many great concepts, the recondite ideas lying beneath the clear words). Differently, Barbaro privileged style over substance, and he believed that if style and form were not important, sculptors would only be admired for working with precious material (Della Neva 2007; Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995).

The opposition originated in antiquity, and it was present in the works of Plato and Cicero, who, in his writings referred to the dichotomy of eloquence and wisdom. Pico pushed this opposition further and claimed that stylistic ornamentation could be damaging to the philosopher who wished to seek the truth. Pico's stand reflected the distance between rhetoric and philosophy that characterized the Renaissance, where – as DellaNeva

explains – no author who aspired to excel in style and rhetoric would be flattered to be called a philosopher (Della Neva 2007).

The debate on *imitatio* continued during the Cinquecento, and the most studied quarrel is between Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola (1470–1533), Giovanni Pico's nephew, and Pietro Bembo (1470–1547). Many scholars interpret this debate as a direct continuation of the dispute between Poliziano and Cortesi, where Bembo demonstrated a Ciceronian approach and Pico maintained a position similar to Poliziano's, although his arguments were more firmly based on philosophical speculations. This dispute took place in 1512, and scholars like Martin McLaughlin read it within the larger picture of Renaissance Italy; thus the debate is intended not simply as a personal clash between the two intellectuals, but it rather mirrors the continuing importance of the *quaestio* of literary imitation in the decades of linguistic extremism (Greene 1982; McLaughlin 1995).

In his epistolary exchange with Pietro Bembo, as well as in *Ioannis Pici Mirandulae Vita* (1496), Gianfrancesco defends his uncle, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and his Latin style. He claims that his uncle was more interested in content (*res*) than in words (*verba*) and that he put sacred wisdom above mere verbal embellishment. Moreover, he spoke of the idea of good writing that nature gives to all men: it corresponds to the imitation of the beautiful, which the writer can find in himself and reflected in the writings of other authors, while the rules of rhetoric instill the art of writing (Fantazzi 2014).

Pico fully develops his un-Ciceronian ideals in a previous letter to Ludovico Ricchieri da Rovigo (1469–1525). The letter is modeled after Poliziano's first epistle to Cortesi for its defense of un-ciceronian Latin and for the arguments presented by Pico to support his position. Pico is concerned with originality and variety of styles in his writings. He acknowledges the existence of different styles in Latin, and therefore he privileges an eclectic approach to imitation. He believes that nature, and not imitation, produces any similarity between two authors. Additionally, in the letter, he particularly criticizes those writers

who depend on a specific model so much that, when dealing with a subject that is usually untouched by the model, they appear to be “simiae,” or drawings that are so far from reality that they need a title to indicate what they represent. Similarly to what he will argue later in the letter to Bembo, he claims that the best imitative practice is eclectic and includes the natural instinct of the writer (McLaughlin 1995).

In his first letter to Pietro Bembo, dated 12 September 1512, Pico stresses the importance to imitate from a variety of models and to develop one’s unique style. He once again claims that writers should imitate a variety of authors in order to develop one’s distinct style. Real imitation is not passive, and writers should strive to create something original out of the imitation of their models. Moreover, Pico alerts the danger of anachronism that characterized the Ciceronians since they try to walk in Cicero’s exact footsteps, but they are unlikely to succeed because a modern shoe does not fit exactly these vestigial foot (Fantazzi 2014; Greene 1982; McLaughlin 1995).

Different from the epistle to Ricchieri, Pico claims that a writer’s natural style is based on the Platonic idea of eloquence. Another original element is the exaltation of the *inventio* over *dispositio* and *elocutio*. Pico employs several metaphors to discuss literary *imitatio*, such as the one of the mosaics to define those Ciceronians that only use their master’s vocabulary to build sentences: for instance, they use Cicero’s bricks but are unable to create a *Tullianus paries* (Ciceronian wall). Furthermore, he employs the image of the cloak to describe the variety of tastes in Latin (Fantazzi 2014; McLaughlin 1995).

In his response, dated December 1512, Bembo acknowledges Pico’s affinity to Poliziano; thus he recognizes that the quarrel he is now involved with is a direct continuation of the debate between Poliziano and Cortesi. He begins his letter by criticizing Pico’s idea of an innate eloquence in the individual, because, for Bembo, it only exists in the mind of God. Moreover, he believes Cicero is the only model to follow and argues against eclectic imitation because the confluence of various literary manners in a single work is absurd and also it prevents the formation of a writer’s

individual style. Bembo believes imitation is not a mechanical act, but it is allied to emulation, which he defines as an active creative quality that can inspire an author to surpass the model (Della Neva 2007; Fantazzi 2014; Greene 1982; McLaughlin 1995).

He offers a tripartite structure when defining the imitative process as well as his development as a Latin writer, who will then become a Ciceronian. For instance, he states that imitation is divided into three steps: *imitari*, *assequi*, and *praeterire*. When describing the three phases of his writing career, he believes that, first, he was an eclectic until his lack of consistency in Latin convinced him to abandon that path. Second, he tried to develop an individual style but failed because *inventio* can never be original. Lastly, he decided to follow a single model of eloquence and style. He initially imitated mediocre authors and later realized that he could not transition to imitate the best models. In the epistle, Bembo then claims his lack of success in Latin is due to his work in the vernacular. In fact, he will later transfer the imitative principles of Latin language and style to the vernacular, and, in 1525, he will publish *Prose della Volgar Lingua* where Boccaccio and Petrarch serve as models for written *volgare* and function as the vernacular equivalents to Cicero and Vergil (Della Neva 2007; Fantazzi 2014; Greene 1982; McLaughlin 1995).

Despite their different views about imitative practices and models to follow, Bembo and Pico found an agreement in their interest in striving to actively surpass rather than passively follow the model. Pico claimed that all good authors have reached fame by other means than imitation; they rather have opposed their models and exceeded them. Similarly, Bembo believed that the final goal of a writer should be surpassing a model and that objective could be best accomplished by imitating only a single model (Pigman 1980).

Two decades after the Pico-Bembo debate, Giambattista Giralaldi Cinzio (1504–1573) and Celio Calcagnini (1479–1541) started a new dispute on the theories of Ciceronian imitation. Cinzio took Cortesi and Bembo’s stand in this quarrel and claimed the fundamental importance of imitating one model because he did not

believe in the self-sufficiency of one's *ingenium*. Significantly, he was not a strict Ciceronian and declared that a writer could benefit from the reading of various sources once he has developed an acceptable Ciceronian style. Different from what Bembo and Poliziano had claimed before him, he invited young writers in the early stages of their careers to read only the best authors and then later to widen their repertoire. In his response, Calcagnini agreed with Cinzio that imitation is necessary, especially for Humanist writers who did not speak and write in Latin since infancy and added that a writer should avoid using the vernacular because it could interfere with the development of an eloquent Latin style. Moreover, he criticized those writers who rely on their *ingenium* and do not understand the importance of imitation in the writing process. He also introduced the idea of inspiration, which he considered an ally to *imitation*, and that he defined as a genuine influence from other authors (Della Neva 2007).

The imitation debates continued to exist after 1530 in Italy and in Europe, but in the Italian context, the linguistic question of Latin versus the *volgare* had settled in favor of the latter. Therefore, Latin was not considered appropriate for creative writings anymore, and Italian was to be preferred by the majority of the authors of the period. Consequently, theoretical quarrels on *imitatio* and Latin style and eloquence tended to be largely confined to universities and academies (Della Neva 2007; McLaughlin 1995).

In conclusion, *imitatio*, originally a component in the process of developing a new writer, provides the basis for several important cultural moments in the early modern period. First, it functions as a crucial feature of the humanist enterprise to study and reproduce classical works, and it is considered as an essential component to restore classical Latin. Later, it helped consolidate the newer tradition of vernacular languages. In both cases, imitation first serves as a practical expedient for the production of an apparently appropriate style; as a consequence, imitation also forms the aesthetic basis by which works are judged, as adhering (or not adhering) to models, either as innovative or traditional.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao](#)
- ▶ [Bembo, Pietro](#)
- ▶ [Bracciolini, Poggio](#)
- ▶ [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- ▶ [Calcagnini, Celio](#)
- ▶ [Ciceronianism](#)
- ▶ [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- ▶ [Giraldi Cinthio, Giovan Battista](#)
- ▶ [Humanism](#)
- ▶ [Petrarca, Francesco](#)
- ▶ [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
- ▶ [Poliziano, Angelo](#)
- ▶ [Quintilian](#)
- ▶ [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Salutati, Coluccio](#)
- ▶ [Valla, Lorenzo](#)
- ▶ [Vergerio the Elder, Pier Paolo](#)

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Immanence, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

Immanence in Renaissance philosophy is primarily an epistemological category derived from a reading of Aristotle and the Medieval Aristotelian tradition. Immanent actions are considered operations of the soul which remain in the operating one itself and do not have a cause or effect on external matter. These immanent actions are distinguished from transient actions. The main issue for Renaissance philosophers involved determining which activities of the soul (nutrition, sensation, intellection, will) can be assessed as immanent. Immanence as a metaphysical category only emerged in the seventeenth century with Spinoza's concept of God as *causa immanens* and was later extrapolated by philosophy historians, who were influenced by the philosophy of the Enlightenment and by German idealism, on the description of two originally Neoplatonic ideas: (1) the intrinsicness of the world soul in the world as the immanence of the soul in the world in connection with

panpsychism and (2) the presence of the divine in the world as the immanence of God in the world in connection with pantheism.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Immanence of the Soul's Activities

The meaning of the term “immanence” in Renaissance philosophy is dependent on Medieval Aristotelian tradition. Aristotle in *Metaphysics IX* (1050a 24–29) states that, “in some cases it is the exercise that is final (for example, seeing in the case of sight, and nothing different in addition to this comes to be from sight), but from others there does come to be something (for example, from the building craft a house in addition to the act of building)” (Aristotle 2006). Thomas Aquinas in reference to this passage distinguishes between immanent (*actio manens*, while later Scholastics such as John Duns Scotus use the term *actio immanens*) and transient action (*actio transiens*), where immanent means an action which remains in the one operating itself, while transient is properly “making,” for it passes through into exterior matter (George 2014). Within this Peripatetic tradition, Rudolph Goclenius defines *actiones immanentes* as actions in which a passive one, i.e., *subiectum*, is unchanged, and these operations remain “subjectively” in operating one (Goclenius 1613). The distinction between *actio immanens* and *actio transiens* was used not only by Aristotelian thinkers but was also common for non-Aristotelian philosophers, such as Giordano Bruno, who mentions it in both *Summa terminorum metaphysicorum* (Bruno 1989) and *De monade* (Bruno 2010).

Renaissance philosophers differ in their view as to which actions of the soul can be called immanent. It is unclear in Thomas Aquinas if all actions of the vegetative soul are immanent. Suárez maintains that all vital actions are not immanent, since generation and in addition certain other vital actions, such as eating, are apparently not immanent (Des Chene 2000). Suárez therefore distinguishes between two meanings of immanence. First, immanence in the strong sense

is an action whose term remains in the proximate power that was produced and which can never have been produced by any other subject. In this sense only intellection and will can be immanent. Second, immanence in the weak sense is an action whose term remains in the suppositum that acts. In this sense all vital motion, such as nutrition, growth, and local motions of animals, and natural motion of earth are immanent actions. In summary, sensitive and vegetative actions of the soul, although not all, and even certain natural actions are immanent (Lecón 2013). In opposition to immanence, which is characteristic of operations of growth and nutrition, intrinsicness is a more decisive criterion for sense, intellection, and will (Des Chene 1996).

Opponents of Suárez, such as Pedro da Fonseca, emphasized that immanent actions do not have *termini* – an effect outside the agent. Immanent actions are therefore not actions at all, but qualities of the faculty in which they are: cognition is a quality of intellection; desire is a quality of will (Des Chene 1996, 46). This view is based on the fifteenth-century Thomists, such as Thomas de Vio (Cajetan), who maintained that certain immanent actions of the soul (sensation) are operations only in a grammatical sense, since they are actually qualities (Spruit 2008). The immanence of sensation supports the view of sensation as an active power. If vision, as Zabarella argues, has its cause only in material color, it would be a transitive action. Sense power must therefore be both active and passive (South 2002).

The issue of the immanence of intellection became important in the context of the Averroistic doctrine of the unicity of intellect, if the agent of the intellection is the agent (active) intellect, which is not part of the human soul and is unique for all mankind. And if passive intellect, which becomes all things, is unique and transcendent, the question arises if intellection is still an immanent action of the soul. Pomponazzi, in the context of his critique of Averroism, points out that intellection is an immanent operation in contrast to locomotion, which is transient (Pomponazzi 1999). Simultaneously, at a different point, Pomponazzi considers intellection as an immanent action only in a grammatical sense

(Pomponazzi 2012). Zabarella concludes these discussions with the claim that every intellection is an immanent action, since intellect is *forma hominis*, otherwise one could not speak about humans as having understanding (Zabarella 2016).

It seems that in the Renaissance as well as in the Middle Ages, the word “immanence” was only used in the abovementioned epistemological context. Nevertheless, modern historians of Renaissance philosophy often apply “immanence” as a category interpreting certain metaphysical theories. These interpretations are connected first with the panpsychism, i.e., the immanence of the soul in the world, and second with pantheism, i.e., the immanence of God in the world.

The Immanence of the Soul in the World

The Platonic doctrine of the world soul contains features which lead to a modern exposition of the immanence of the soul in the world. Marsilio Ficino describes the relationship between the world and the world soul as between our body and our soul. The world soul is entirely present in any part of the world, and it binds the universe together, vivifies it, and moves it (Ficino 2001). In modern terminology it could be characterized as immanence although Ficino does not use this expression.

The immanence of the world soul in the world in this sense, i.e., not applying the word immanence, can be consequently found in a number of Renaissance Platonists, who followed Ficino’s works and his translations of Plato, Neoplatonist, and Hermetic corpus, such as Agrippa of Nettesheim. The doctrine of the world soul presents in all things, and vivifying them is a later feature of Giordano Bruno’s metaphysics. Bruno in the dialog *Della causa, principio e uno* distinguishes between the world soul and the universal intellect, which is a faculty intrinsic to the world soul. Bruno calls it an “internal artificer” because it forms matter shaping it from within (Bruno 2002). Thus, we can speak of an immanence of the universal intellect and the world soul in Bruno (Knox 2013). Bruno, however, does not speak explicitly about their “immanence” but

differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic cause. The universal intellect is both extrinsic, for its essence differs from things which it creates, and intrinsic, since it works within matter and not outside it.

The Immanence of God in the World

The immanence of God is a doctrine only connected with Spinoza’s view of God as *causa immanens*, which is labeled as pantheism. The idea became popular during the Enlightenment and the subsequent nineteenth century within the so-called *Pantheismusstreit*. It was soon associated with Giordano Bruno’s metaphysics of his dialog *Della causa* in particular. The question as to whether Bruno held pantheism as the identity of God and the world in the same way as Spinoza is doubtful. It seems more likely that using the word pantheism as a label describing his philosophy is artificial (Kristeller 1964). Bruno speaks about God as both transcendent and immanent. In the *Lampas triginta statutorum*, he describes God as “above all things and inside all things,” i.e., as both extrinsic and intrinsic in things. Bruno uses the same words and expressions as in the case of his doctrine of the world soul and the universal intellect (Knox 2013). Similarly, however, to his doctrine of panpsychism, he does not apply the modern term immanence.

Simultaneous transcendence and immanence of the divine in the world (when using the modern terminology) is one of the central features of Neoplatonic tradition (such as Proclus) focusing on the issue of the relationship between the One and the number. It penetrates Christian thought inspired by Neoplatonism in the Middle Ages (Eriugena, Eckhart). Neoplatonic sources stand behind the immanence of the divine in Renaissance Platonists (O’Meara 1982), beginning with Nicolaus Cusanus who tried to solve the issue by means of a metaphor of enfolding and unfolding (Alfsvåg 2012; Flasch 1998). At the end of the Renaissance, apart from Bruno, the Neoplatonic transcendence and immanence of the divine can be extracted from Francesco Patrizi’s concept of God as *un-omnia* (One-All) as an all-pervading One, which is, but is not, identical with the world emanating gradually from the One and

participating in it (Brickman 1941). Patrizi also describes this relationship by means of traditional terminology enriched by his neologisms with the prefix pan-, not using the term immanence as a metaphysical category.

Impact and Legacy

In modern philosophy, immanence is commonly viewed as a concept derived from Kant's distinction between transcendence and immanence which led to the philosophy of immanence of German idealism and of its followers. Certain twentieth-century philosophers find, however, predecessors of modern immanence already in the Renaissance. Ernst Cassirer considers the first steps to immanence both Nicolaus of Cusa's doctrine on learned ignorance and Renaissance natural philosophy based on the immanence of Platonic ideas in the world (Cassirer 1922). Giovanni Gentile, although placing an emphasis on the modern origin of real immanence, praised Giordano Bruno as its precursor (Rubini 2014). Antonio Gramsci searched for the origins of Marx's materialistic immanence in Giordano Bruno via Spinoza and "Pantheismusstreit" and in Niccolò Machiavelli's immanence in history (Thomas 2009). The modern meaning of immanence as a metaphysical concept connected with idealistic philosophy is, however, alien to a primarily epistemological meaning, which the words immanence and immanent action had in the Renaissance.

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- Bruno, Giordano
- Cajetan, Thomas de Vio
- Ficino, Marsilio
- Nicholas of Cusa
- Panpsychism
- Pantheism, Renaissance
- Pomponazzi, Pietro
- Suárez, Francisco
- Unicity of Intellect
- Zabarella, Jacopo

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Immortality of the Soul, Renaissance Problem of

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Abstract

The immortality of the soul was one of the central problems of Renaissance psychology. At its heart were two closely-connected problems. Was the soul a separable substance, capable of independent existence after corporeal death, or was it merely the abstract *form* of the body? If the former, could its immortality be proved philosophically, or did it have to be accepted on faith alone? Straddling the (often blurred) boundary between philosophy and theology, debates about these questions often trespassed into ontology and epistemology, but were shaped, above all, by the reception of the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Until the thirteenth century, the Christian belief in the immortality of the soul had been refracted primarily through the lens of Platonic philosophy. In *Alcibiades* 1, Plato had defined man as “a soul using a body.” Developing this argument further

in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, he had explained that the soul was a spiritual substance, consisting of three parts (reason, spirit, and appetite). Although it gave life to the body, it was capable of existing independently, and, unlike material things, could never be destroyed (Lorenz 2019). Four arguments were adduced to prove its immortality. The first – known as the “affinity” argument – held that the soul was immortal because it most resembled intelligible, imperishable being; the second that the death of the body presupposed the continued existence of the soul; the third that the soul had life much like fire has heat; and the fourth that the soul was responsible not just for animating the body, but also for imbuing life with its distinctive characteristics (justice, happiness, etc.).

Plato's theory of soul had a profound influence on Augustine. Although, in his youth, Augustine had adhered to the Manichaean view of the soul as a material entity, he later came to describe it as an immaterial substance which was fitted to ruling over the body, but which could nevertheless exist separately and for all time (e.g., Augustine 1954, 19.15; 1986, *De quantitate animae*. 22). In the *Soliloquia*, he attempted to prove its immortality by offering an alternative formulation of Plato's fourth argument. Since truth is not only eternal and unchanging, but also contained within the soul, Augustine argued, it followed that the soul, too, must exist for all time. Perhaps conscious of the limitations of this line of reasoning, however, Augustine subsequently repudiated it, preferring merely to repeat the contention that true happiness depended upon the immortality of the soul (Augustine 1968, 13.9.12). Such a view became a commonplace of later Christian theology and moral philosophy.

The rediscovery and translation of the Aristotelian corpus, however, transformed Christian thinking. In *De anima*, Aristotle had argued that the soul – consisting of nutritive, sensitive, and intellective parts – was not a substance at all, but the *form* of the body (Frede 1992). For Christian readers, this presented a problem. If the soul was indeed a form, then it could have no separate existence. Although an awkwardly worded passage (*De anima* 3.5) held out the possibility that

the intellective soul might endure, this implied that, when the body died, the soul also perished – which they could clearly not accept.

One solution was proposed by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas argued that the soul was both immaterial form and substance (Kenny 1993; Kretzmann 1993). As Aristotle had suggested, it was the actuality of the body; but, since its intellective functions could operate “apart from the body,” it was also self-subsistent – and hence did not depend on the body for its existence (Aquinas 1948–1950, I, q. 75, a. 2). That it was immortal could, moreover, be proved by philosophical means. Corruption, Aquinas argued, occurred when something was separated from its existence. Being a self-subsistent *form*, the soul existed *per se*; and, since it could not be separated from itself, could neither be corrupted nor die (Aquinas 1948–1950, I, q. 75, a. 6).

An alternative solution took inspiration from the writings of Alexander of Aphrodisias (*fl.* 200) and Averroes (1126–1198). Exploiting the ambiguities of *De anima* 3.5, these two philosophers had argued that, while personal immortality was impossible, the intellective soul could nevertheless attain the eternal to one degree or another. Each had adopted a different approach. Alexander had argued that, while the “potential” (human) intellect was inseparable from the body and hence mortal, it could nevertheless partake in the immortality of God when it apprehended the “active” (divine) intellect (Alexander of Aphrodisias 1549; Kessler 2011). Averroes, by contrast, was more daring. Since the intellect perceived material things as intelligible forms, he argued, it had to be both incorporeal and immortal; but since nothing incorporeal could be multiplied or divided, there could only be *one* intellective soul – for all humanity (Averroes 1953; Leaman 1988, 82–119).

Such views proved controversial. The earliest exponents of Latin Averroism at the University of Paris, Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia, were condemned by the bishop, Etienne Tempier, in 1270 and 1277. Yet the teachings of Averroes and Alexander nevertheless received an enthusiastic welcome, particularly at Italian *studia*. Taddeo of Parma (*fl.* 1320), Paul of Venice

(1369/1372–1429) and Niccolò Tignosi (1402–1474) – to name but three – all argued forcefully for the unicity of the immortal intellect.

Marsilio Ficino. Until the mid-fifteenth century, Platonic and Aristotelian traditions had existed more or less in isolation from one another; but after the opening of the Council of Florence (1439), the two were suddenly brought into conflict. The opening shot was fired by the Byzantine Platonist, Georgios Gemistus Pletho (c. 1355/1360–c. 1452/1454). In *De differentiis* – a compendious work intended to correct the “errors” of Aristotle – he attacked the Stagirite’s theory of soul, on the grounds that it had led Alexander of Aphrodisias into heresy (Pletho 1973). This was soon followed by vehement rebuttals from Gennadius Scholarius (c. 1400–c. 1473) and George of Trebizond (1395–1472/3), and an equally violent counter-attack from Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472). Not until the completion of Marsilio Ficino’s *Theologia Platonica* (1482), however, was a through defence of Platonic psychology attempted (Kristeller 1940; Blum 2007, 213–217; Casini 2018, 232–235). Like Plato, Ficino insisted on the intermediate nature of the soul. Though it co-operated with the body in the operation of its faculties, it remained distinct and was hence capable of existing independently. Rejecting Averroes’ belief in a single potential intellect for all humanity, on the grounds that it ran contrary to the order of nature (Ficino 2001–2006, 15.4.4), he argued strongly for personal immortality. This he justified using two principle arguments, each based on an imaginative re-reading of Plato: one from “affinity” (e.g., Ficino 2001–2006, 11.1), the other from “natural desire” (e.g., Ficino 2001–2006, 14.2). According to the latter, the soul had a natural desire for the eternal; and since nothing was created with an appetite that it could not satisfy, it followed that it must be immortal.

Nicoletto Vernia. A few years after Ficino’s defence of Platonic psychology, an attempt was made to rescue Aristotle from Latin Averroism by Nicoletto Vernia (1420–1499). Although, in his youth, he had been convinced that Averroes had been the only true interpreter of Aristotle, he renounced his affection in favour of closer dependence on the commentaries of Themistius and

Simplicius after Bishop Pietro Barozzi of Padua issued a decree forbidding discussion of the unicity of the intellect in 1489 (Nardi 1958, 99–101; Di Napoli 1963, 181–193; Mahoney 1976; Hasse 2004). In *Contra perversam Averrois opinionem*, Vernia argued that Averroes' theory of a single potential intellect could not be true, since, if it were, the soul could not give human beings existence. Much like Aquinas, he then went on to contend that the intellectual soul is a substantial form, which serves as the actuality of the body, but which is nevertheless capable of independent – and immortal – existence. Attributing this latter view directly to Aristotle, Vernia justified it using a series of arguments taken from Albert the Great's *De homine* (Mahoney 1976, 156).

Pietro Pomponazzi. The promulgation of the bull *Apostolici regiminis* at the Fifth Lateran Council (1513) was an effort to settle the dispute once and for all. The teaching of Averroes and Alexander was forbidden; the soul was declared to be the essential form of the body, immortal, and distinct for each individual; and the notion that religious and philosophical truth might have separate domains was condemned (Offelli 1954–1955; Gilbert 1967; Constant 2002).

Rather than quench the fires of controversy, however, the bull only fanned the flames further. Three years later, Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) published *De immortalitate animae* (1516). In this, Pomponazzi argued that, whereas the sensitive and nutritive souls were dependent on the body and hence mortal, the position of the intellectual soul was more complex (Di Napoli 1963, 227–276; Kessler 1988, 500–504; Casini 2007, 2018, 235–239). As Aristotle had noted, the intellect could only function through abstraction. Since it was not a part of the body, it could not perceive things directly, but relied instead on *phantasma*. Since these were ultimately derived from sensory data, however, the intellect was thus dependent on the body for its operation – even when it was contemplating itself. Although Pomponazzi recognised that the intellect was, in a certain sense, still abstract and immaterial, he hence found it impossible to sustain Aquinas' contention that the soul was self-subsistent. He was thus forced to conclude that, while the

immortality of the soul was admirably attested by Scripture and certain philosophers, it was a philosophically irresolvable problem.

Gasparo Contarini and Agostino Nifo. Despite Pomponazzi's qualifications, his treatise was widely regarded as an attack on the immortality of the soul and elicited a torrent of refutations from both Platonists and Aristotelians. Of these, two stand out. The first came from Pomponazzi's former student, Gasparo Contarini (1483–1535). Drawing heavily on Plato, Contarini argued that, while the intellect was indeed reliant on the senses, it was nevertheless far from being merely material; and that the soul's capacity to move itself was a clear indication of immortality (Contarini 1578; Di Napoli 1963, 277–298; Gleason 1993, 77–82). The second challenge came from Vernia's pupil, Agostino Nifo (1469/1470–1538). Adopting a subtly different approach to that of his teacher, Nifo began by observing that, according to Aristotle, the soul, being incapable of existence apart from the body, was indeed mortal (Nifo 1518, 1559; Mahoney 1968). But he then confounded expectations by postulating that, since the faculty of cognition could, in theory, still function if separated from the body – that is, without receiving any additional *phantasma* – the intellect was capable of living on.

Impact and Legacy

Renaissance debates about the immortality of the soul were never satisfactorily resolved. In one form or another, the controversy rumbled on with wearying insistence throughout the sixteenth century in the writings of Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533), Giovanni Crisostomo Javelli (c. 1470–1538), Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540), and Agostino Steuco (1497/1498–1548), amongst others. Yet its legacy was nevertheless positive. For while the soul's nature remained as mysterious as ever, the fruitless quest for a solution bequeathed to future generations a keener awareness both of the issues at stake, and of the philosophical methods which could be used to tackle them. And though no greater certainty was to be acquired in centuries to come, this

clarity of focus and method paved the way not only for the metaphysical speculations of Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), but also for the ultimately inconclusive meditations of René Descartes (1596–1650).

Cross-References

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- Augustinianism
- Averroism, Renaissance
- Bessarion, Cardinal
- Contarini, Gasparo
- Descartes, René
- Ficino, Marsilio
- George of Trebizond
- Javelli, Giovanni Crisostomo
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- Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
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- Steuco, Agostino
- Suárez, Francisco
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Impetus, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

The concept of impetus denoted the transmission of a power from the mover to the object moved. Many authors resorted to this concept

to explain why a projectile keeps on moving when no longer in contact with its initial mover. But its application went further, as impetus was also appealed to in attempts to explain the acceleration of falling bodies or the motion of the heavens. It was widely applied in Renaissance natural philosophy, but it also raised a number of ontological questions concerning its precise nature.

Introduction

First formulated in late antiquity, the concept of impetus denoted the transmission of a power, a force (*vis impressa*), or a motive quality, from the mover to the object moved. Many authors resorted to this concept to explain why a projectile keeps on moving when no longer in contact with its initial mover. But its application went further, as impetus was also appealed to in attempts to explain the acceleration of falling bodies or the motion of the heavens.

Ever since Pierre Duhem drew attention to the importance of the concept for scholastic natural philosophy, it has occupied a central role in historiographic debates on the roots of the scientific revolution (Duhem 1906). Anneliese Maier's seminal studies convincingly demonstrated the difference separating the scholastic concept of impetus from Newtonian inertia (see especially Maier 1982), but it could still be seen as the starting point for a revolution that marked the distance from Aristotle and led to Copernicus and Galileo (Blumenberg 1975; Koyré 1939). In general, two opposing views can be singled out (with many options in between): (1) on the one hand, the concept of impetus is conceived as central to a specific, non-Aristotelian manner of understanding the causal order of nature, which starts with Philoponus and lasts until Galileo and Descartes (Wolff 1978); (2) on the other hand, it has been claimed that a single shared concept of impetus does not exist, that there is rather an array of different and mostly ad hoc attempts to solve natural philosophical problems within the Aristotelian tradition by resorting to impetus (Sarnowsky 2008). Rather than trying to endorse

one of these views, in what follows we will recall and put in context some of the main views on impetus and their fate in the Renaissance.

Heritage

Aristotle

Aristotle only dealt with projectile motion in passing, when discussing other matters: the question of motion in the void (*Physics* IV.8), the manner in which the first mover causes the eternal motion of the heavens (*Physics* VIII.10), and the existence of natural motions (*On the Heavens* III.2). Even if it was only peripheral to his main interests, Aristotle still needed to offer an explanation for its continuing motion that was consistent with the rest of his natural philosophy. The crucial constraints were the principles that scholastic philosophy would translate as *omne quod movetur ab alio movetur*, meaning that everything that is moved is moved by another, and *movens et motum sunt simul*, according to which the mover of a body must be in contact with the latter to generate motion. Aristotle preferred the explanation according to which the projected body is moved by the surrounding air once it has left the hand of the projector. The air is not simply put into motion together with the body, but it also acquires a moving force which it then imparts both to the body and to neighboring parts of the air. This process is repeated until the force is completely exhausted (Sarnowsky 2008, pp. 123–124). As careful medieval and renaissance readers would later point out, this can be taken to imply that Aristotle did not doubt the idea of an impressed force, but primarily disagreed on its localization (Maier 1940).

There is another place in the Aristotelian corpus where projectile motion is discussed, although in very inconclusive terms: questions 32–34 of the *Mechanical Questions* (Anders 2013) argues that these show that Aristotle or his immediate pupils were not completely satisfied with the account offered in the *Physics* and *On the Heavens*. It was only in the Renaissance that these passages would be linked to the concept of impetus (first by Alessandro Piccolomini and later

by commentators such as Bernardino Baldi (Baldi 2010, pp. 363, 365, 414–417).

Late Antiquity and Arab Philosophy

The first occurrence of the concept of impetus can be found in sixth-century commentaries devoted to Aristotle's *On the Heavens* and *Physics*. Since the beginning, it was not only exploited to explain the continuation of projectile motion but also to describe the acceleration of falling bodies as well as the motion of the heavens.

Simplicius (490–560), in his commentary on *On the Heavens*, said that according to Hipparchus (an astronomer of the second century BC), a piece of earth that is thrown upwards continues its upward motion as long as the force impressed in it by the thrower is able to counteract the natural inclination to fall. When it starts to fall down, the earth still retains part of the impressed force, which gradually diminishes until it has completely disappeared, giving rise to the phenomenon of acceleration (Sorabij 2005, p. 349).

Another commentator, John Philoponus (490–570), opposed Aristotle on the explanation of projectile motion. In his view, the motive force is transmitted directly from the mover to the body moved. As a result, Philoponus held forced motion in the void to be possible, but he claimed that the impressed force will be extinguished after some time (Wolff 2010, p. 130). Philoponus also stated that God implanted a motive power in the heavenly bodies in the same way that he implanted in the elementary bodies an inclination to move towards their proper places. Impetus is thus extended by Philoponus to the heavenly realm (Sorabij 2005, pp. 351–355).

It is very likely that the Arab philosophers became acquainted with Philoponus' theory of impetus (Clagett 1959, pp. 510–514). Avicenna, who was probably the most influential author, identified three kinds of inclination (*mayl*): (1) psychic (*mayl nafsānī*); (2) natural (*mayl tabī'ī*); (3) unnatural or violent (*mayl qasrī*). The third genre of *mayl* intervenes when a body is thrown by force. For Avicenna, there cannot be more than one *mayl* in the same body at the same time. In this regard, his theory of impetus differs from the one Simplicius ascribed to Hipparchus. It

differs also from Philoponus' view, for Avicenna holds that the *mayl* would last indefinitely if there were no medium opposing resistance. This seems to have been intended in the first place to show the nonexistence of the void, since he also adds that this infinite motion does not occur in nature (Clagett 1959, p. 513).

Medieval Scholasticism

Philoponus had already highlighted the empirical implausibility of the role that Aristotle assigned to the medium. Still, there were good reasons within Aristotle's natural philosophy to defend this explanation, as stressed by Thomas of Aquinas (1225–1274). According to Thomas, the projectile cannot receive an intrinsic principle of motion: if this was the case, then the projectile motion would become natural rather than violent (Clagett 1959, pp. 516–517; Weisheipl 1981).

The introduction of the impetus concept in scholastic philosophy is traditionally ascribed to Francis of Marchia (first half of fourteenth century), who held the Franciscan chair of theology in Paris, but recent scholarship has shown that there were some thirteenth-century predecessors (Schabel 2006). Marchia's much more extensive discussion appears in his commentary on the *Sentences* when treating the question of sacramental causality: should we assume that there is some kind of instrumental force present in the sacrament, or does God work directly? In discussing the general problem of instrumental causality, he introduced the example of projectile motion as a crucial example, appealing to the idea that a *virtus derelicta* is left behind in the body (Maier 1940, pp. 45–77). Marchia also tried to determine to what kind of quality this *virtus* belongs, qualifying it as a form that is “not simply permanent, nor simply fluent, but almost medial,” staying for some time in the body, but then fading away (Clagett 1959, p. 529). Clearly, he tried to circumvent the worry raised by Thomas by assigning the impressed force an ontological category of its own. In a further comment, Marchia suggested that this same *virtus* could also be used to explain how the angelic intelligences move the celestial spheres (Maier 1940, pp. 67–73).

Jean Buridan (1295–1363) formulated what has been called the “classical” concept of impetus (Sarnowsky 2008, p. 134). He quoted several empirical reasons to support the concept of impetus and he also gave some proportional indications about how it relates to factors such as the amount of matter that is put into motion (Clagett 1959, pp. 521–523). Contrary to Marchia, he claimed that the impetus was “a thing of permanent nature” (Clagett 1959, p. 537). His main reason for making this claim seem to have been the need to sharply distinguish the impetus from the motion it caused (Maier 1982, pp. 86–87). The difference with Marchia's self-expending impetus had no real natural philosophical consequences, since Buridan assumed that all earthly bodies have an intrinsic tendency towards rest, which will gradually destroy the impetus and cause all violent motion to come to an end (see especially Maier 1982, pp. 89–95). Just as Marchia, Buridan also appealed to impetus in treating celestial motion, and he added acceleration as a further phenomenon that could be explained by it (Clagett 1959, pp. 524–525). In the latter case, impetus is not only the cause but also the effect of motion, as Buridan assumed that the body gradually acquires more impetus as it falls. Buridan's direct successors, Nicole Oresme (1320–1382), Albert of Saxony (1320–1390), and Marsilius of Inghen (1340–1396), further took up the concept and offered treatments that afterwards spread over Europe from Paris (Maier 1940, pp. 100–153; Sarnowsky 2008, pp. 136–137).

Innovation

Impetus as Aristotelian Doctrine

The sixteenth century saw an increased attention to the concept of impetus after a relative stagnation in the preceding century. It now came to be seen as part of the proper “Aristotelian” position, with many authors going as far as ascribing the idea to Aristotle himself (Maier 1940, p. 156). They could exploit the fact that Aristotle had used the idea of impressed force, while explaining away his limitation to the medium as carrier of the force (see Maier 1940, pp. 156–164, for

examples, including Domingo de Soto and Francisco Suarez). The idea that the impetus was present both in the medium and the projectile, a position already held by Marchia, was also regularly defended by authors who did not ascribe this idea directly to Aristotle (e.g., the Coimbra commentators: Maier 1940, p. 163). Notwithstanding its popularity, there were also some sixteenth century authors who denied the legitimacy of the concept of impetus, maybe most prominently the Jesuit Benedict Pereira in his *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principiis* from 1576 (Maier 1981, p. 325).

Almost all authors seem to have upheld the idea that impetus was a self-expending quality, but its precise ontological status received further subtle elaborations, e.g., in the work of the professors of the Jesuit *Collegio Romano* (Maier 1981). Among the latter, the fullest exposition was given by Paulus Valla, whose characterization of impetus was summarized by Anneliese Maier as “an imperfect quality after the fashion of an intensional or spiritual form, somewhat like light and color, and as such has no contrary in first act although it has a contrary in second act” (Maier 1981, p. 331). The analogy with light and color was already present in Philoponus and Marchia and helped understand its peculiar ontological status as a cause of motion that is not natural but need not be directed against the object’s nature either (Sorabij 2005, p. 352; Zanin 2006, p. 93).

Thomist philosophers proposed another elaboration which consisted in the articulation of the relation between the role of gravity in natural motion and that of impetus in violent motion. Thomas had already denied that gravity was the mover of the natural motion and had claimed that it should rather be considered the instrument of the true mover, which was the generator of the body (Weisheipl 1981). Similarly, one could understand the impetus as in the first place a passive instrument of the proper efficient cause, the projector (cf. de Soto in Maier 1940, p. 163). This line of thought can be seen as a rather natural development of Marchia’s introduction of the impetus concept in the context of discussing the nature of instrumental causality. Suarez, who

offered an elaborate classification of instruments, characterized impetus as an instrument that is neither spatially nor causally in conjunction with its user, meaning that it operates without direct spatial contact and without the need for the user to continue exerting his force (Fritsche 2011, 23–24).

Impetus in Anti-Aristotelian Natural Philosophy

In the same period that impetus became to be widely seen as part of the accepted Aristotelian doctrine, it was also used as a central element in attempts at constructing an alternative anti-Aristotelian natural philosophy. The most famous examples are Benedetti’s *Diversarum speculationum mathematicarum et physicarum liber* (1585) and Galileo’s *De motu antiquiora* (probably written between 1589 and 1592) (Drake and Drabkin 1969). Both authors developed a general framework based on Archimedean hydrostatics that did away with the Aristotelian concept of lightness and stressed the absolute nature of gravity. They were also keen on pointing out that Aristotle’s own “theory” of projectile motions was defective and they stressed the need to correct him by introducing an impressed force. In this way impetus became associated with a more far-reaching attempt to rethink Aristotelean natural philosophy. Galileo’s original explanation of *virtus impressa* as a *privatio gravitatis* further stressed its relation to the Archimedean framework that privileged gravity as the primary physical property of bodies. Galileo also followed Hipparchus’ explanation of acceleration due to a gradual loss of an earlier impressed force. The Latin translation of Simplicius’ commentary on *De Caelo* (Venice, 1584) had made this explanation widely available, and it was also reported in Perera’s *De communibus* from 1576, a work that had vast circulation in Italy (Guerrini 2014).

One striking difference between Benedetti’s and Galileo’s way of talking about impetus and that of their Aristotelian contemporaries is the almost complete disappearance of ontological subtleties. Many of the earlier discussions concerning impetus were trying to carve out an acceptable place for it within the Aristotelian framework which imposed many constraints and

ensuing challenges. For these explicitly anti-Aristotelian authors, it could function in the first place as an intuitive notion that could be directly appealed to explain a number of phenomena of motion.

Legacy

Seventeenth century authors frequently engaged in talk about impetus, but this covered a wide array of meanings.

Galileo kept on using the term after *De motu antiquiora*, but he seemed to use it in a way that is at least noncommittal to the question whether it is a cause or only an effect of motion (Koyré 1939). The tendency to transfer the term from denoting a cause to an effect can be noticed throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century (Sarnowsky 2008, pp. 142–143). This shift is connected to the development of a form of mathematical physics in the Galilean tradition in which conservation of motion became one of the crucial principles. The challenges of finding mathematical structure in empirical phenomena of motion, such as falling or projected bodies, pointed towards the fruitfulness of assuming this conservation as a basic fact of nature, which thus did not necessarily need further explanation (Van Dyck 2018).

In parallel with these developments within what was sometimes called physicomathematics, some philosophers were also directly rethinking the ontology of motion and force. Most famous was Descartes' sparse ontology in which motion becomes a state of a body that does not need a cause for its perseverance. The questions concerning the relation between motion and force that had given rise to the inclusion of impetus within the Aristotelian framework thus received very different answers in this radical alternative (Koyré 1939).

Whereas an author like Galileo exploited the flexibility of the term impetus to explore different ways to establish mathematical laws of motion, and Descartes presented an alternative ontological framework in which it no longer could find a place, authors within the Aristotelian tradition

kept using and rethinking the concept as developed in scholastic philosophy. Maybe the most striking case is that of the Jesuit Honoré Fabri. In response to the work of both Descartes and Galileo, he attempted to find a place for some of their new ideas within the constraints of (a very broadly construed) Aristotelian philosophy, in which he gave the concept of impetus an absolutely central place but reconceived it as a formal rather than efficient or instrumental cause of motion (Elazar 2011).

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Imprint

- [Book, Renaissance](#)

Inclination

- [Appetite, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Incontinence

- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Weakness of](#)

Incunable

- [Book, Renaissance](#)

Index of Prohibited Books

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Abstract

The *Index of Prohibited Books* was one of the main instruments through which institutions – primarily the Church of Rome – sought to implement a widespread censorship and prevent printing, selling, reading, and simple possession of books deemed to be dangerous for the faith or morals. While the first official Roman *Index* dates to 1559, the idea of compiling lists of books to avoid or prohibit was not new. The Roman *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum* in force from 1559 to 1966 had a deep historical importance. They were not exclusively lists of prohibited works: they contained both the ecclesiastical legislation on censorship and the rules for the prohibition of books, and the lists, which constituted the second and most substantial part of the regulations entitled *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. It should be emphasized that the validity of the *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum* – despite the universal intentions – was defined on a territorial basis and was linked to acceptance or not of the list by the governments of individual states. In fact, despite being calling universal and the weight of moral condemnation they represented being widely perceived, from the legal point of view their validity was in substance almost limited to the Italian territory only: even in Catholic Europe, France never received them, while Spain and Portugal – despite considering them – drew up their own tools with the help of their national Inquisitions. The last edition of the *Index laws* was published in 1948, and on 14 June 1966 the *Index* itself was abolished.

History and Original Aspects

The *Index of Prohibited Books* was one of the main instruments through which institutions –

primarily the Church of Rome – sought to implement a widespread censorship and prevent printing, selling, reading, and simple possession of books deemed to be dangerous for the faith or morals. While the first official Roman *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* dates to 1559, the idea of compiling lists of books to avoid or prohibit was not new. As early as 405 a.d. Pope Innocent I listed a number of apocryphal writings *non solum repudianda sed etiam damnanda*, and in 496 Gelasius I issued a decree that contained far more extensive lists of recommended and prohibited books. With the invention of the printing press, the situation changed, and the advent of the Reformation after 1517 required new and more refined tools to combat the Lutheran threat, considered a plague whose epidemic spread was due to books. To counter it Church authorities acted, but universities and the secular power also intervened decisively. If Rome decreed in 1521, the burning of all Luther's books following the condemnations expressed by the universities of Leuven, Cologne, and Paris, precisely from the latter university came, in 1544, the first printed *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. It contained a list of 230 books in Latin and French, which gradually increased in the next six editions, until 1550. The last, in 1556, contained 528 forbidden texts, mostly theological treatises or in any case works related to the Reformation. Three more catalogues were issued by the University of Leuven on the orders of Charles V and Philip II, in the years 1546, 1550, and 1558, condemning some 500 works of Lutheran orientation, particularly small volumes intended for popular reading. Meanwhile similar *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* had been published in Portugal (in 1547 and in 1551) and Spain (in 1551). On the whole they roughly followed Leuven catalogues, to which – in the case of Portugal – they added a substantial amount of works from Conrad Gesner's *Bibliotheca Universalis*, a vast and comfortable repertoire, given the unfeasibility of inspecting all the works.

The main directives of the Catholic censorship that would mark the following centuries, therefore, were produced in the sixteenth century. The first *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* to

be published in Italy was the Venetian one of 1549, the work of the nuncio Della Casa and the result of collaboration with the local inquisitor and the *Savi all'Eresia* – a Venetian secular judiciary that flanked and controlled the work of the inquisitor in the Holy Office. The catalogue comprised 150 interdictions, 50 of which concerned the entire production of an author. Although commissioned by the Venetian government, it was immediately withdrawn because of the strong opposition from printers and booksellers – as well as from the Senate – toward an instrument that would lead to substantial limitations in the book trade. In 1554 in Venice itself, and also in Milan and Florence, a far larger *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was issued, which in the Venetian version counted 600 prohibitions, mostly coming from the Roman curia. More than half concerned the entire production of an author, for the rest it was individual works, either anonymous or identified. This too was short-lived, and in 1555 its publication was annulled.

Such works – local initiatives not claiming universality – responded to the practical need to rely on repositories as complete as possible in which to immediately identify a forbidden text. On the other hand, the Roman *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum* in force from 1559 to 1666 gained much more depth and historical importance. They were not exclusively lists of prohibited works: they contained both the ecclesiastical legislation on censorship and the rules for the prohibition of books, and the lists, which constituted the second and most substantial part of the regulations entitled *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. It should be emphasized that the validity of the *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum* – despite the universal intentions – was defined on a territorial basis and was linked to acceptance or not of the list by the governments of individual states. In fact, despite being calling universal and the weight of moral condemnation they represented being widely perceived, from the legal point of view their validity was in substance almost limited to the Italian territory only: even in Catholic Europe, France never received them, while Spain and Portugal – despite considering them – drew up their

own tools with the help of their national Inquisitions.

The first universal *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was promulgated in 1559 (actually on 30 December 1558), although in 1557 it had come out in a sort of printed anticipation, which never circulated. It was the result of a decade of work by the Roman Inquisition and of the determined repressive will of the rigorous former inquisitor Pope Paul IV. Convictions – 1107 in all – were harsh, according to a criterion of division of forbidden books in 3 classes that would remain in place until the middle of the next century: the first collected the entire production of 603 non-Catholic authors (or no longer so) even if the individual works did not include references to religion nor elements that, by themselves, would have provoked condemnation. The second class consisted of 126 titles by 117 authors and 332 anonymous works. It was followed by two appendices: a list of 45 Bibles and New Testaments prohibited and 61 printers – all foreigners with the exception of the Brucioli brothers, active in Venice – whose output was prohibited in its entirety. Lastly, the third class was about *libri omnes*, that is, fulminated cumulative condemnations to entire categories of books: those that did not bear on the title page either the author's or the printer's name or generally typographical notes, those published without permission of ecclesiastical authority, and those published by heretic printers. Also all the works of magic and astrology, as well as vernacular Bibles, the reading of which was subject to a special license granted by the Holy Office, and in any case not to women or to those who could not read Latin. The action against the vernacular Bible had precedents in the prohibitions implemented in Spain in 1492 – also valid in the whole of southern Italy – and in France in 1526. However, the official acceptance within the Roman *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* started a controversial debate, which marked the second half of the sixteenth century and led to the disappearance of vernacular Bibles from the list of permitted readings, at least on Italian and Spanish soil. They would reappear only in 1758, thanks to Pope Benedict XIV.

Prohibitions, however, did not only concern works of religious or doctrinal matter but invested all written production, of which the Inquisition became sole judge, since the secular authorization was losing importance. So Aretino and Rabelais could be condemned for their obscenity, Machiavelli for anticurialism, the *Decameron* as immoral, and so on with Pulci, Della Casa, and much of the sixteenth-century vernacular production, especially burlesque. Ultimately, any work that could somehow arouse intellectual restlessness or offend morality was identified as dangerous, even though only 2 years earlier, in 1557, the same uncompromising future Pope Michele Ghislieri had written: “to prohibit Orlando, Orlandino and Cento Novelle [respectively Boiardo and Ariosto, Folengo, Boccaccio] and other similar books would provoke laughter more than anything else, because such books are not read as things to which you should believe, but rather as fables, in the way one also reads many pagan books.” The consequences of this blockade of vernacular, and in particular popular, literature were enormous. The reaction of booksellers, writers, and governments was deceive and even led to riots and damage to the headquarters of the Inquisition. While locally some inquisitors decided to suspend its application, in Rome in the same 1559 and then in 1561, two decrees of the Holy Office intervened to mitigate the extent of the prohibitions. Thus the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in the Italian territory was accepted, albeit with partial adjustments and sometimes after bitter tensions that took place mainly in the Venetian land. However, once Paul IV died in August of the same 1559, the application of the catalogue was quietly abandoned. The more moderate Pius IV – Gian Angelo de' Medici – immediately showed his intention to review it and to limit condemnations only to heretical books, as well as to contain the Holy Office.

In 1564 the Tridentine *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was promulgated, drafted by a committee of bishops appointed within the Council of Trent. The new instrument was characterized by some mildness: although the prohibitions remained more or less the same, the overall

picture changed, and ten prohibition rules were established. These would essentially characterize the Catholic censorship for the next four centuries; only in 1897 they replaced by Pope Leo XIII's constitution *Officiorum ac munerum*. All heretical or superstitious texts had to be prohibited, together with obscene books – with the exception of ancient classics – and all New Testament editions made by heretics. While the division into three classes remained, some authors, including Erasmus, passed from the first to the second, that is, no longer banned for their full work but only for particular writings. Even the condemnation of heretic authors only hits the works of religious character and faith and no longer indiscriminately all of them. Complete prohibition was reserved, however, to heresiarchs. The reading of vernacular Bibles was still permitted under license, which now could also be issued to women and to those who could not read Latin. The vernacular works of controversy could be authorized at the discretion of the bishop or inquisitor, and also translations of Catholic or not prohibited authors made by heretics could circulate, provided that they did not contain anything against Catholic doctrine. Booksellers should not sell anyone this kind of material, or rather, they would have to constantly update a list of books for sale, in order to ensure a rapid and complete control. Also, the possibility of partial expurgation was contemplated for some texts to allow them free circulation again, and the provisions of the Fifth Lateran Council of 1515 on the need for prior censorship reiterated. The attempt to limit the inquisitorial initiative by grading it at the same level as that of the bishops was to be interpreted in the spirit of the Fifth Lateran Council. The punishment for those who read or possessed forbidden works of heretical character or suspected of heresy was excommunication. If it was a book forbidden for other reasons, however, the sentence was to be determined at the discretion of the bishop.

Because of the flexibility it demonstrated, the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was accepted without major reserves by Italian states and, if anything, made more strict in Portugal, in Bavaria, and in the Spanish Netherlands, while in France

during the Wars of Religion, like the other Tridentine decrees, it was not applied. In Spain, where the Inquisition was autonomous from the Roman one, a few months after the promulgation of the Roman *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a considerably different list of banned books was issued. About 700 sentences, divided by language, which essentially reinstated the Louvain, Paris, and Portuguese *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* for the works in Latin, French, Portuguese, German, and Flemish, while for the Castilian section 175 prohibitions were the result of an autonomous work of the Spanish Inquisition, which especially hit texts of devotion and works of mystics, of Erasmus, and related to superstitious practices. Subsequent Spanish *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum* would maintain these characteristics, as well as a much greater propensity than that demonstrated in Rome for textual expurgation.

The Tridentine *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was reprinted several times and formally remained in force until 1596, although its application often lacked interest and certainly uniformity. However since 1565, with the election of Pius V, the situation changed. The new pope, Michele Ghislieri, had been commissioner general of the Congregation of the Holy Office and was also involved in the drafting of *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* of 1559. The rapprochement to that spirit was already marked in 1567 by the definitive prohibition of the printing of editions of the vernacular Bible, temporarily resumed after the Council. A new tool that recovered and possibly exceeded the severity of that of 1559, or at least was adjourned, looked increasingly in need. From this perspective the inquisitors of Parma (in 1580) and other cities (between 1574 and 1587) had compiled catalogues for their own use; the Archbishop of Naples had done so in 1583. In 1571 a special congregation was instituted by Pope Pius V, in order to draft a new catalogue. The following year the Congregation of the Index was formalized, and in 1596 Clement VIII could promulgate the new *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, probably the most substantial effort deployed by Rome to fight the spread of books deemed dangerous. Unlike the previous

two, the first compiled by the Inquisition and the second by a special congregation of bishops appointed by the Council of Trent, the Clementine catalogue was the result of the labors of the newly established congregation, at first assisted by the Holy Office and by the Master of the Sacred Palace. The Congregation had worked at it among many contrasts for 25 years, taking into account the experience of half a century of censoring practice, and had had unsuccessful anticipations. Two other already printed *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum* were in fact withdrawn shortly before the promulgation, possibly because of disagreements with the Holy Office: the Sistine of 1590 and the Sixto-Clementine of 1593. The Clementine of 1596 too was temporarily suspended in 1596 after promulgation, due to the inquisitorial intervention. Likewise, its acceptance was opposed by some states, particularly by Savoy and Venice. In particular in the territories of the Republic, it was received only after lengthy diplomatic negotiations, which resulted in an agreement, which safeguarded to some extent the Venetian jurisdictionalism and the printing industry. In general, however, Rome pursued the purpose of a general application on the Italian territory with determination and considerable diplomatic effort, by mobilizing their official representatives to the individual courts. The operation succeeded particularly well in Central and Northern Italy, where a certain rigor led to prompt destructions of books; conversely a lack of diligence found in the Viceroyalty of Naples and even in some areas of the Papal States determined limited results.

The Clementine *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, while presented almost as a supplement to that of 1564, returned to the severity and the spirit of 1559, to which he added an appendix containing the prohibition of the complete work of 682 authors, 185 identified works and 276 anonymous. Some of these were banned provisionally, pending expurgation, which in some cases replaced the absolute ban expressed in the previous *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. Works published after 1564 were included, and to the ten rules of the Tridentine Council some guidelines were added for the prohibition,

correction, and printing of books. These, gathered in an *Instructio*, articulated, reiterated, or made clearer earlier ones and, except for some amendments, would guide the Catholic censorship for subsequent *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum*. Elements of generosity, especially regarding the indications for expurgation, were balanced by a series of rather harsh requirements, in particular that which required that booksellers swore allegiance to the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* before the bishop or the inquisitor, and promised not to accept suspect heretics in the art. Thus booksellers and printers, having to take an oath to an authority that was not secular, became de facto papal subjects. In addition, the *Instruction* contained a strict clarification of previous prohibitions, including those toward the astrological literature, the *Talmud* and Hebrew texts in general, as well as the vernacular Bible. Immediately after the promulgation, however, nuncios were granted a certain flexibility in the prohibition of the vernacular Bible, especially in those areas – such as Bohemia, Poland, Dalmatia, and so on – in which Catholics were living in close contact with Protestants.

With the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* of 1596, the peak of the Roman attempt to discipline the faithful's consciousness through the prohibition of the book was reached, marking a turning point with respect to the editorial production. The orientations of the Catholic censors were now defined, and the problem moved to their practical application. First, the question was territorial: in Spain, the catalogues that followed that of 1559 and of Quiroga (1583–1584) had swung between moderation and rigor - if, for example, the 1667 *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* showed some caution, allowing a wide use of textual expurgation, in 1707 the previous rigidity returned, tripling the number of forbidden authors and works. Similarly in Portugal lists (1561, 1564, 1581, 1597) tended to be more restrictive than the Roman, but they were still determined independently from Rome, compiled by the local Inquisition until 1624, the year of the last edition. The margins of independence in other Catholic countries, primarily France, were such as to make room for neither the acceptance nor the

application of Roman *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum*. Moreover, the Catholic Church itself was aware of the problem since, in the 1596 *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, it ordered bishops and universities outside Italy to draw up and enact autonomously catalogues, which should still be sent to Rome. Italy in sum represented the last bastion.

Nevertheless, the Congregation of the Index, the Holy Office, and the Master of the Sacred Palace all continued to issue decrees containing new prohibitions, in addition to those in the catalogue. These decrees were collected into smaller *Indices Librorum Prohibitorum*, almost supplements to that of Clement VIII. Only in 1664, with Alexander VII, by order of the Congregation a new official *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was produced, which differed from all the previous in its form and abandoned the division into classes on the Tridentine model, in favor of a simple and agile alphabetical order that contemplated all prohibitions from 1596 to 1664. A second Alexandrian *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was published the following year, in 1665, introduced by the papal brief *Speculatores*, which reiterated the Tridentine rules that governed censorship. The awareness that the catalogues were to be elastic tools no longer exhaustive was also determined by the increase in the generic classes of prohibition under the headline *libri omnes et quicunque libelli*. If the Clementine *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* had just entered their works of magic and astrology, the seventeenth-century ones added the writings that could have to do with mystical tendencies (Jansenism, Molinism, and quietism), or which concerned hot scientific matter such as heliocentrism, or simply dealt with political and religious disputes: undefined areas, on which the inquisitor could apply his ability to judge the specific case. In this way, especially since the second half of the seventeenth century, the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* would evolve more and more into an instrument whose use had to be adjusted at the discretion of the individual inquisitors, particularly since the growing number of condemnations made them more and more cumbersome.

Benedict XIV's catalogue of 1758 marked a dramatic change: the titles were sorted alphabetically as it had now become usual, but with a reference to each prohibiting decree; many inaccuracies stratified over the years were corrected, which made it the most accurate and philologically correct tool before the twentieth-century catalogues; many interdictions were reviewed, while others, related to titles no longer in circulation, were abolished. Classes of generically prohibited books were grouped at the beginning, in four paragraphs, and included works of controversy on issues such as the Immaculate Conception, the theory of grace, or the Chinese rites. Reading the Bible in the vernacular was again permitted. Although this did mark a turnaround in the attitude of the Church, the context had changed: the prohibitions continued to exist, but in practice they were much less feared than in the two previous centuries.

By now, however, the weight of ecclesiastical prohibitions was in decline, whereas the times and spaces in which it was possible to evade bans were in the rise. The last edition of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was published in 1948, and on 14 June 1966, the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* itself was abolished. In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, even the Holy Office had been dismantled and replaced by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* loses its ecclesiastical law value while remaining morally binding for the faithful and Catholic publishers, on whose maturity the Church decided to rely.

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Individual, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

Although the individual as a concept had significant purchase on the cultural imagination long before the early modern period and was certainly a key concept in Christian thought in the west, it became a matter of keen and ongoing social, cultural, and artistic concern in Renaissance Italy in a manner that would

have a profound, and in some instances innovative, impact on the rest of Europe.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

In his landmark *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Jacob Burckhardt famously articulated a notion that would prove to be enduring but controversial. In roughly the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the top half of the Italic peninsula – an engine of dynamic economic growth, technological invention, humanistic learning, and artistic, political, and diplomatic innovation – witnessed, according to Burckhardt, the birth of the distinctly “modern” individual. This autonomous, rational, calculating, self-serving, and often innovative entity was “born,” in Burckhardt’s conception of things, from the corporate, communal, and, as he poetically imagined it, dark, veiled, slumbering period of the Middle Ages. Moreover, this modern individual was conceived – like Burckhardt’s notion of the “state” – as a “work of art.” Collectively these new, intrepid individuals, whom Burckhardt characteristically identified as men, were the great heroes of the Renaissance in Italy and the driving, powerful agents of historical change. Paradigmatic was the illegitimate son of a Florentine patrician family: the mid-fifteenth century humanist, sometime architect, and theorist of the visual arts Leon Battista Alberti. Indeed, the very fact that Alberti was illegitimate was of no small importance: the rise of the individual for Burckhardt had much to do with an energetic, primarily masculine need to acquire and demonstrate legitimacy in the vibrant urban societies ruled largely by wealthy merchant patricians and autocratic despots in their aggressively expanding republics and principalities.

Intellectual historians have suggested that Burckhardt’s not entirely positive conception of the wealthy, civic-minded burgher of his own native nineteenth-century Switzerland underpins and largely colors his understanding of the birth and rise of the modern individual in Renaissance Italy. More to the point, historians in general have debunked a variety of Burckhardt’s powerful assertions, particularly in the last few decades. Social historians dedicated to studying large-

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scale demographic and family patterns, interactions, and movements have repeatedly shown, for instance, that Renaissance Italy was hardly composed of free, unfettered, atomized individuals separating themselves off from extended households, close-knit neighborhoods, parishes, guilds, and the like. On the contrary, Renaissance Italy was as corporate in its social structure as was medieval Italy – perhaps in some respects even more so. And cultural, literary, art, and political historians have repeatedly reminded us that the concept of the individual preceded the Italian Renaissance. Its “invention” or “discovery” was hardly just a Renaissance achievement: indeed, it has been argued that it found its fiercest early advocate, philosophically speaking, in Paul and its most powerful early expression in Christian, as opposed to secular, thought – in everything from Paul’s seminal letters to medieval saints’ lives. For that matter, the so-called New-Historicists – a variety of literary-trained, theory-driven, Anglo-American scholars whose concept of self-fashioning has been as influential as it has been misunderstood – have consistently argued that Renaissance men and women had absolutely no conception of the individual to begin with. As evidence that there was indeed no such thing as the individual in the period, some scholars call attention to the fact that there existed no specific word for the modern notion of the individual until roughly the seventeenth century. Before then the word “individual,” in English as in the Romance languages, meant “indivisible” and thus denoted not a person’s autonomy and separation from a community, a sodality, a larger corporate structure but, instead, a deep, long-lasting, and necessary connection to it.

True, the term and concept of “individualism” (as opposed to “individual”) would have been absolutely foreign to anyone in the Renaissance, much less in the classical period or Middle Ages. No one would have conceived of the individual as having certain inalienable rights – rights, that is to say, that a person cannot possibly relinquish even if he or she wishes to do so, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And no one would have conceived of the individual as the basic, underlying unit of economic, social, and political

organization. The Renaissance world was arranged and governed vertically, with one social order and gender ruling hierarchically over another (lords over peasants, men over women), and people took their identity in large measure from corporate privileges and structures. The state was hardly in a position to guarantee equality to all under the law. And even if the state could do so through some set of juridical mechanisms and procedures, the very notion that individuals were equal within the overall social order, albeit ontologically endowed by their divine creator as spiritual equals in the grand, Christian cosmic scheme of things, would have been completely alien to both the elite and nonelite alike in both practical and philosophical terms. Men and women in the Italian Renaissance followed codes of conduct governed by accepted rank, place, and status. Their social world was not our world, their notion of the individual not our notion. Individualism and all the rights, obligations, and privileges associated with that concept today – especially as they relate to the slow, grinding emancipation of various peoples in western thought and practice over time – derive from the very end of the early modern period: namely, the European Enlightenment. Just as alien to the Renaissance mindset would have most certainly been the modern notions of liberal individualism (sometimes called *laissez-faire* individualism) as they have been explored in political, social, and economic theory in the social sciences.

Innovative and Original Aspects

At the same time, even if there existed no single word in the Renaissance that could be used to identify individuals as people seeking to separate themselves off from the various communities in which they were deeply embedded, that in itself does not mean the concept of the individual as a person who stood out from others, viewed in both favorable and unfavorable terms, did not in fact exist. Language, after all, should by no means be construed as deterministic: a “signified” can certainly exist in the cultural imaginary without a designated “signifier” as a placeholder there to

articulate it. And, to be sure, time and again a variety of (above all) men belonging to, or seeking to belong to, the cultural elite in Renaissance Italy used the visual and verbal means at their disposal to give expression to notions of themselves as compelling, singular individuals within the communities to which they were bound and that furnished them with identities. Perhaps most significantly they did so by asserting their own remarkable inimitability within the context of their professional lives. Issues of this sort were explored in edifying treatises authored by practitioners of various arts in the Italian Renaissance, including treatises dedicated to describing and defining the professions of the secretary, ambassador, courtier, physician, surgeon, soldier, painter, sculptor, metallurgist, goldsmith, steward, cook, and architect. And in many respects, those treatises composed by practitioners can and should be conceived not just as writings that served to define and give shape to a professional group identity but also as writings that served to give voice to individuals constructing ego documents in a period that witnessed throughout Europe the rise of artisanal autobiographies.

On the one hand, for instance, there was a profound, widespread, and persistent conviction in the Italian Renaissance, which only intensified in the sixteenth century, that one could uncover universal rules – the “deep structures” – that underlie the arts as forms of specialized knowledge, or, to use a key term of ancient Greek thought, a *techne*. Those rules could be taught, learned, and mastered, often through the very process of imitation itself. Practitioners were thus collectively defined by and through those rules, “fashioned” by them, as they exercised a profession grounded in an art, a *techne*. In this respect, these sometimes more descriptive than prescriptive treatises about various aspects of professional expertise were establishing a group identity defined by an exemplary practice grounded in rational, determinate, rule-bound, communicable, and reliable knowledge. On the other hand, a number of the practitioners who turned to authorship were keenly aware that some people will be good at acquiring an art and some people will not,

so that no matter how hard or diligently they work at it, an innate magical something, the mysterious raw talent of “*ingenium*,” was ultimately required to allow those people to make that mysterious leap from being dutiful learners to becoming remarkable practitioners of a profession. Moreover, one finds expressed every now and then in these discourses a desire on the part of the writer-practitioners to have someone stand out from that group of professionals and be viewed as a wondrously unique, inimitable individual. Try as one might (and indeed one is often invited or seduced by such author practitioners into trying to do so with all one’s might), one simply cannot do what the brilliant individual practitioner author can do, or what someone else of spectacular talent identified in the discourse about the art can individually do, or, for that matter, what even a very small elite circle of individual experts can masterfully do.

Now, practitioners writing about the nature of professional expertise and professional life were certainly not the only ones to explore in innovative ways the dynamic connections that linked the community and the individual dialectically in Renaissance Italy. Visual artists in general and painters in particular often enough gave expression to the importance of the individual in the context of broader communal concerns, particularly when it came to capturing the cultural elite in the new, popular art form of portraiture. To be sure, portraits of the period concretely rooted men and women in broader communal contexts. Time and again they represented them as they were inextricably bound to and constrained within a highly stratified social order: by virtue of the very clothes they wore, the fashions they followed, the postures they adopted, the objects they tellingly surrounded themselves with, and the calculated spaces in which they were ensconced, all of which defined their place, purpose, and position in both local and broader cultures. But the attention to credible, accurate likeness in the period also mattered to those being captured in portraits. The men and women being represented, both realistically and idealistically, clearly wanted themselves to be viewed just so, with a gaze or smile or gesture that would

register visually the nature of who they were not just as members of all-encompassing and overlapping communities – such as households, guilds, confraternities, or political and religious orders – but also as individuals, with their own distinctive features and their own singular “motions of the mind,” to use Leonardo da Vinci’s phrase.

Impact and Legacy

Burckhardt was thus both right and wrong. He was wrong to imagine that the individual suddenly emerged out of the slumbering darkness of the Middle Ages as a sort of bright, shining light leading the way forward in an onward and uplifting manner from the Italian Renaissance to the modern era – or at least to the bourgeois individual of Burckhardt’s nineteenth-century Europe. The concept of the individual clearly existed both before and after the Italian Renaissance, although it remains a matter of ongoing scholarly debate how the evolution of the concept of the individual actually unfolded over time in the west, from ancient Greece to, say, modern America, with its still deep and sometimes crass investment in the mythology of rugged individualism, as well as how it unfolded from being a key feature of Christian dogma in the religious writings of Paul, for instance, to becoming, conversely, a key feature of modern secular thought and western liberalism. But Burckhardt correctly intuited that something new was afoot in the Italian Renaissance with regard to the changing importance attributed to the value of the individual in the community. And he was certainly correct to recognize that the story of the individual is an important feature of the larger narrative that forms the complex cultural and intellectual history of how various notions of selfhood evolved in the west.

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Individualism (Renaissance)

► Homocentrism

Inductio

► Induction, Philosophical Conceptions of

Induction, Philosophical Conceptions of

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Abstract

How induction was understood took a substantial turn during the Renaissance. At the beginning, induction was understood as it had been

throughout the medieval period, as a kind of propositional inference that is stronger the more it approximates deduction. During the Renaissance, an older understanding, one prevalent in antiquity, was rediscovered and adopted. By this understanding, induction identifies defining characteristics using a process of comparing and contrasting.

Important participants in the change were Jean Buridan, humanists such as Lorenzo Valla and Rudolph Agricola, Paduan Aristotelians such as Agostino Nifo, Jacopo Zabarella, and members of the medical faculty, writers on philosophy of mind such as the Englishman John Case, writers of reasoning handbooks, and Francis Bacon.

Synonyms

epagōgē; *inductio*

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

An understanding of the earlier history of induction is essential to understanding induction in the Renaissance, for the story of induction in the Renaissance is the story of a slow rediscovery of an earlier – and to us unfamiliar – conception.

Aristotle said that what induction is, is obvious (*Topics*, 157a8). It is a proceeding from particulars to a universal (*Topics*, 105a13–4). But there is an ambiguity here. Does Aristotle mean particular and universal statements? Or does he mean particular things (or kinds of things) and universal concepts? Nowadays we presume the first, but Socrates, who Aristotle says introduced induction (*epagōgē*), thought the second. In Plato's *Ion* (540b–d), Socrates considered the helmsman, doctor, cowherd, wool-maker, and military general, and concluded that the master of any craft is one who knows its subject best. This was some sort of induction but not an inference from a complete or even incomplete enumeration. This was a compare-and-contrast process of determining what it means to say someone is a master. Once the process is completed, there is no worry

that the next master will not know the craft well, for we have discovered that this is part of what it means to be a master. If a man does not know his material well, he is not a master. The universal claim is true by definition. But the definition is not arbitrary or stipulative. It is the conclusion of an inductive inquiry. (It is what Immanuel Kant said cannot exist, an analytic *a posteriori*.) When Aristotle said Socrates gets credit for inductive reasoning and universal definitions, Aristotle was listing not two unrelated discoveries but two perspectives on one cognitive operation. Aristotle's own methods for identifying formal cause, as in Book V of the *Topics*, are methods of Socratic induction. If Aristotle's *Prior Analytics* is about deduction, his *Posterior Analytics* is about induction, and induction of the Socratic sort. Cicero's view on induction, too, was Socratic. It was Cicero who coined the Latin term *in-ductio*, on the model of the Greek *epa-gōgē*. He would have a large influence on induction in the Renaissance. Others in the ancient world agreed with Aristotle and Cicero. Indeed, the Socratic understanding of what induction is was conventional all through Greek, Hellenistic, and early Roman antiquity.

This understanding got switched around by the Neoplatonists of late antiquity. They read Aristotle's particulars and universals as about particular and universal statements, not particular things and universal concepts. The change started with Clement of Alexandria in the second century. He said that a definition is a summation and therefore that induction obtains force not by comparing and contrasting but by completely enumerating components. In Alexandria, around 500 AD, Ammonius Hermiae and his students Simplicius and John Philoponus incorporated Clement's view into their comprehensive reworking of Aristotle. In their Neoplatonic synthesis, induction can be reduced to a kind of deduction. The deduction has the form of a syllogism with a minor premise suppressed. The minor premise is the presumption that all particulars have been enumerated. The proposal found support in Aristotle's *Prior Analytics* B 23, but only because the Alexandrians read that difficult chapter in a new way. All other mentions in Aristotle's corpus indicate Aristotle had a Socratic conception.

The Alexandrian, Neoplatonic, non-Socratic understanding of induction was transmitted through the medieval period in both Latin and Arabic. In this conception, induction is a kind of propositional inference. That is, the particulars are not particular concepts or things but particular statements (e.g., this magnet attracts iron; that magnet attracts iron; the other magnet attracts iron) and the universals are universal statements (e.g., all magnets attract iron). And unless the enumeration is complete, the conclusion cannot be certain. While nowadays we use white swans and an Australian black swan to demonstrate the fragility of such induction, Scholastics used the jaws of animals: This animal chews by moving the lower jaw; that animal does; the other animal does. If we conclude that all animals chew by moving the lower jaw, the conclusion will be overturned when we discover the Nile crocodile, for it moves the upper jaw.

For an example of a reliable induction, Ockham (c. 1287–1347) used the Holy Trinity: What is true of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is true of God. The enumeration is complete. Scholastics recognized that an incomplete enumeration could be made complete by adding *et cetera* to the list of particulars. Formally, this allowed the induction to be rendered as a deduction, but in practice of course it does not do much. Whether that *et cetera* is exhaustive is the very question at hand. (Ockham, *Summa logicae*, III.3.31–7)

In the Renaissance, the established, Alexandrian, Scholastic conception of induction was increasingly questioned.

Ockham's younger contemporary Jean Buridan (before 1300–c. 1360) claimed that with or without the *et cetera*, an induction by enumeration of particular statements is not really an induction at all, or at most it is just a special case. He espied in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* B 19 a completely different conception of induction. Here induction seems to be the process of coming to know universals in a hierarchical process of combining sensations to form memories, memories to form experiences, and experiences to form universals. By this we come to know that every fire is hot, that every magnet attracts iron, that all rhubarb purges bile, that everything that

comes to be in nature comes to be from some preexisting subject, and so on for many other indemonstrable principles. These are known true not by extending a sufficiently long list of observation statements, but by discovering the very nature of fire, magnets, rhubarb, natural subjects, and so on. To make his point, Buridan used Socrates' example of the master in a discipline. (Buridan, *Summulae*, 6.1.4, 6.1.5, and 8.5.4)

Buridan had discovered the alternate conception of induction in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* but the conception is even plainer and more pervasive in Aristotle's *Topics*, the foundational text for a Renaissance approach to reasoning that scholars now call topics-logic. The humanists Lorenzo Valla (c. 1406–1457) and Rudolph Agricola (1443/4–1485) were influential advocates of this approach.

In induction, Valla mocked any attempt to get around a limited enumeration by adding *et cetera* or the like; indeed he mocked any attempt to treat induction as a defective sort of deduction. He insisted on returning to the views of induction advocated by Cicero and Socrates. Valla said Boethius (d. c. 526 AD), who had advocated the Neoplatonic Alexandrian conception, was like someone who has stolen a horse and tries to hide the theft by cutting and dyeing the horse's hair. What Boethius was peddling, Valla said, was simply not true induction. (Valla, *Repastinatio*, 3.16)

While Valla was dismissive, Agricola was accommodating. He sought a taxonomy that offered a place to both the Scholastic convention and the rediscovered ancient. He proposed to call the conventional inference *enumeratio* and to use *inductio* for the ancient, open-ended procedure. For the second, he treated Socrates, Cicero, and Aristotle's *Topics* as the authorities. (Agricola, *De Inventione Dialectica*, 2.18)

Innovative and Original Aspects

Buridan, Valla, Agricola, and other challengers did not immediately unseat the conventional understanding of induction. Buridan's writings on the subject barely circulated and were never printed. Although Valla criticized the

conventional view of induction, he did not have much to say on the alternative. He died in 1457. Agricola died in 1485, his *De Inventione Dialectica* not yet printed. Into the 1480s, 30 years after the invention of printing, almost everything one would read on induction still presented the conventional Scholastic account whereby induction is a defective kind of syllogism made good by complete enumeration, actual or presumed.

But during the 1480s newly published texts began to undermine that account. In 1484, all of the Socratic dialogues became available in Marsilio Ficino's new Latin translation. It thus became easier to see what Aristotle meant when he said Socrates introduced induction. In the 1490s, commentaries on Aristotle became more comprehensive. New attention to the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Topics* disrupted long-held views of what Aristotle had thought about induction. Editions of Cicero's *Topics*, with its plainly Socratic view of induction, were frequently printed. Valla's *Repastinatio Dialectice et Philosophie* came into print. Agricola's *De Inventione* was published in 1515. By the 1540s, students of induction were faced with multiple traditions and inconsistent interpretations. While Aristotle had said that what induction is, is obvious, the Renaissance Paduan Agostino Nifo, in a commentary on the *Topics* published in 1535 and several times thereafter, disagreed. He noted that the very nature of induction was now in dispute (Nifo, 1.68).

The tension is evident in logic textbooks in England. Since Peter of Spain's *Tractatus* of the mid-thirteenth century, induction had a conventional place in logic textbooks. It was treated briefly, as a derivative of deduction, along with enthymeme and example. After extended treatment of the syllogism, induction would get a few short paragraphs, maybe one page. John Seton's *Dialectica*, first published in London in 1545 was different. The treatment of induction was three pages long, wide-ranging, and eclectic. Seton began conventionally enough but then introduced newer examples, one that the Protestant Philipp Melancthon (1497–1560) had recently used. Seton added the requirement that in a valid

induction, no counter examples be observed. He compared induction to deduction in ways Aristotle had. He echoed remarks Agricola had made and reported on Agricola's proposal to use the word *enumeratio*. He brought in the new topics-logic and cited Cicero and Plato. Nearly all the traditions and subtraditions on induction made an appearance in this one place, but Seton made no attempt to integrate them. (Seton, "De Inductione," *Dialectica*)

Thomas Wilson tried. His *Rule of Reason* was the first logic textbook in English. The first edition was published in London in 1551 and except for characteristically Protestant examples and use of some of Agricola's language, what Wilson said about induction in that edition was not particularly unusual. This changed, however, with the second edition, "newly corrected," printed only 1 year later, in 1552. In its treatment of induction, Wilson added a second section, larger than all of his original treatment, on what he said is another kind of induction, one that the learned call Socrates' induction. The presentation, while not particularly insightful, echoes Agricola and tries to incorporate the developing enthusiasm for the new alternative to Scholastic induction. (Wilson *Rule of Reason*, 1551, "Inductio"; in the edition of 1552, "Inductio" fol. 66.)

Such enthusiasm was growing in Padua among the medical faculty. William Harvey, a student at Padua in 1600, called the medical faculty's new method *regula Socratis*, the rule of Socrates. His teachers understood it as a revival of ideas Aristotle had developed in his biological works and in the *Posterior Analytics*. Using this method, one formed universal statements by identifying the essence of something, and in the case of anatomical organs, this essence was the organ's function. Such essence was discovered by careful dissection and experimentation and a thoroughly Socratic process of comparing and contrasting. (Cunningham 1985)

An opponent of this new inductive science was Jacopo Zabarella, professor of natural philosophy and Padua's most distinguished logician. In the early twentieth century, Ernst Cassirer and then John Herman Randall proposed that Zabarella's so-called regressus theory included an influential

new theory of induction. A recently published modern edition and English translation of Zabarella's relevant works shows that induction played no significant role in regressus theory and what Zabarella had to say about induction was in fact designed to thwart advance of the new conception. (Zabarella 2014)

In England, the new thinking on induction was bolstered by John Case in his logic textbook *Summa veterum interpretum* of 1584 and in his treatise *Lapis Philosophicus* of 1599. In the first, he brings Aristotle's four causes, including the formal cause (central to Socratic induction), into the discussion of induction, even if only perfunctorily. In the second, he explores the Aristotelian idea that abstract ideas are known at first only confusedly (*confuse*) and then, after sufficient cogitation, come to be known distinctly (*distincte*). What is important about Case's presentation is not the content, but the terminology. *Notio* (and its cognate *notitia*) are used more frequently than in the past. The term will be central for Bacon. Furthermore, Case calls the ill-formed abstractions known only confusedly "abstract phantasms" or "idols," another concept central for Bacon. (Case, 1584, 1.19; 1599, 1.1, 2.1.3)

Francis Bacon (1561–1626), one of the most influential writers on induction and scientific method in Western philosophy, entered a conversation that was already underway. His *Novum Organum* (1620) was cast in the language of that conversation. His contribution was to systematize and fully revive Socratic induction. In doing so, he brought to maturity the Renaissance reconceptualization of induction.

Bacon came to induction late and indirectly, for his initial interest was not primarily epistemological but practical. He sought some method by which someone could confidently make things that had never been made before. The method would need to ensure two things, what he called certainty and liberty. The first, Bacon thought, was easy, if one ignores the second. It takes no great genius or much method, for example, to know that heat melts butter (not Bacon's example; his involved making something white). The next dollop thrown on the skillet will melt. We can continue doing what we have always done, and we know what will happen. But what of cheese?

What about wax? Clay? Will they behave the same? What about a new artificial material, envisioned but not yet produced? As we exercise our liberty, as we try things increasingly dissimilar, we lose our certainty – at least without a proper method. Bacon wanted a method that would allow liberty without sacrificing certainty.

To solve his problem Bacon turned to Aristotle's concepts of *kata pantos* and *katholou proton*. A property that is true *kata pantos* is true for all members of a class. But a property that is true *katholou proton* is true of all and only all members of a class. Thus a proposition predicating a *katholou proton* property is convertible; that is, subject and predicate can be swapped. All triangles have angles that sum to 180° , and any polygon whose angles sum to 180° is a triangle. This suggests a rule: If you want a polygon whose angles sum to 180° , make a triangle. But even if the properties are *katholou proton*, the rule may not be useful. Having a flat surface, feeling smooth, appearing bright, and being able to see your face in it may all be *katholou proton* properties of a metal, but to make a metal all of these, you need to know which causes the others, or, to use Bacon's term, which is more "original." It is not enough to know that properties "cluster and concur"; it is important to identify which is the cause. But which cause? Bacon considers Aristotle's four. He dismisses the final cause as inapplicable in cases outside of human actions. And he thinks knowing just the material and efficient causes can provide certainty but not liberty. That knowledge helps only to "achieve new discoveries in material which is fairly similar." What is needed, Bacon says, is to identify the "form or formal cause." The formal cause is what makes something the kind of thing it is; it identifies the Socratic essence. Bacon says that "Aristotle's school" – by which he meant Scholastic advocates of the Neoplatonic Alexandrian Aristotelianism – was right "that there is no true knowledge but by causes, no true cause but the form, no true form known except one." But Aristotle's school misunderstood the form and consequently – and wrongly – regarded its discovery as hopeless. (Bacon 1857, 325)

A form, Bacon says, is merely a particular arrangement and motion of (frequently

imperceptible) physical components. In Book 2 of the *Novum Organum*, Bacon presents a method for identifying that arrangement and motion. He says the search should begin with a comprehensive inventory of observed instances, related absences, and related variations. He offers 27 kinds of observations (“prerogatives”) that are particularly valuable for discovering the essence or formal cause of something. When he uses his method to discover the formal cause of heat, he concludes that heat is a particular kind of motion of imperceptible particles. He then makes the remarkable claim:

If in any body you can arouse a motion . . . [of this certain kind], you will certainly generate heat. It is irrelevant whether the body is elementary (so-called) or imbued with heavenly substances; whether luminous or opaque; whether rare or dense; whether spatially expanded or contained within the bounds of its first size; whether tending toward dissolution or in a steady state; whether animal, vegetable or mineral, or water, oil or air, or any other substance whatsoever. (Bacon 2000, book 2, aphorism 20, following Bacon’s highlighting.)

From an analysis of particulars, Bacon came to a tremendously universal conclusion, one of both certainty and liberty. He came to call his method a kind of induction.

Bacon stresses that this particular kind of motion is not the efficient cause of heat, that is, it is not the case that there is one thing, the motion, that produces another thing, the heat. Rather the particular kind of motion is what heat is. If you can produce this kind of motion, you produce heat, because the motion and the heat are the same thing. Motion (the genus) and the particular kind of it (the species) define heat, but the definition is discovered not stipulated. Inductive science becomes the search for universal statements warranted by concepts properly defined by essential characteristics. Baconian “idols” are ill formed and poorly defined abstractions. Induction (of the Socratic type) provides the needed remedy.

For Bacon an induction is warranted not by positive instances that confirm, but by comparisons that contribute to the definition of the predicate. Finding that definition by this process of compare-and-contrast is the essence of Socratic induction. It was this to which Bacon referred

when he said, “[The correct procedure] has not yet been done, nor even certainly tried except only by Plato, who certainly makes use of this form of induction to some extent in settling on definitions and ideas” (Bacon 2000, book 1, aphorism 105).

Impact and Legacy

Baconian induction became canonical in natural philosophy. An important early practitioner was Robert Boyle (1627–91), a candidate for the title of first modern chemist. He said the use of experimental induction to find the formal cause of chemical properties was the “noblest” and “most important” part of natural philosophy. In 1837, William Whewell looked back on 200 years of scientific progress and gave Baconian induction the credit. Even David Hume accepted the Baconian conception. He never used “induction” to name the object of his epistemological doubts. That is a recent attribution. It was only after John Stuart Mill’s *System of Logic* (1843) that the Scholastic conception returned and again became standard. (Ducheyne and McCaskey 2014)

Writers on induction in the Renaissance were not trying to solve the “problem of induction” that we talk about. If anything went by that name in Renaissance philosophy, it was merely the problem of how to form good abstractions and to define by essentials. The Renaissance project finished with Bacon’s proposal on how to do so.

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Infinite, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

Reflection upon the infinite (*apeiron* in Greek, *infinitum* in Latin) crosses the whole history of thought and involves several fields of

knowledge: philosophy itself, theology, cosmology, and logic-mathematics. The Greek term *apeiron* stands for something that possesses neither physical limitations nor determined qualities, an entity lacking a conceptual determination defining it (see Anaximander). During Antiquity, only few philosophers allowed for the existence of actual infinite reality; rather, Aristotle's view of a merely potential existence of the infinite was what prevailed. From the sixteenth century onwards, astronomical discoveries challenged the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmological system: the estimated distance between the center of the Earth and the last sphere grew progressively larger. This scientific advancement was joined in theology-philosophy by the thought that God, who is infinite in act, infinitely good, and the origin of the created universe, does not create finite reality. Rather, He manifests his infinite power by creating an infinite cosmos (this assumption is shared by Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno).

Synonyms

Unlimited

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Greek concept of the infinite deeply influenced Medieval and Renaissance thought and cosmology in particular, it being founded upon the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic system. Except for a few instances, Antiquity displayed a profound *horror infiniti*: as a matter of fact, any lack of boundaries caused bewilderment among the Greeks. Ontological perfection was thus believed to be only found in the finite: through its inherent boundaries, it was deemed to encompass the wholeness of being and exhaust any likelihood of becoming.

However, reflections upon the infinite can indeed be found in some ancient naturalist philosophers, namely, Anaximander, the Eleatics, and the Pythagoreans. In a strictly astronomical sense, many narratives depict a man standing at the

extreme boundaries of the universe: with a hand or arrow, he crosses the limit of the last sphere – that of fixed stars – thereby opening a gap within the infinity of the cosmos. This image is found in Archytas (see fr. 47 A 24 DK), Lucretius (*De rerum natura*, I, 968 ss.), and Cicero (*De natura deorum*, I, 20–54). It then reaches the Renaissance cosmological debate with Giordano Bruno (*De l'infinito, universo e mondi*, “Proemiale epistola”) and John Locke (*An Essay on Human Understanding*, II, 17).

However, the Renaissance will mostly be concerned with Aristotelian and Thomistic views. In *Physics*, III, Aristotle wonders about the very essence of the infinite, claiming that an infinitely large body cannot exist in actuality, since infinity is only allowed in potentiality, that is, in a processual sense. The concept of the infinite is indeed linked to that of continuity; thus the *apeiron* is not something that is indefinitely spread, rather an entity that is infinitely divisible. The act is thus reiterated without limits, but the object to which the division process is applied is not indefinite. Aristotle allows for a potential infinity, mainly by articulating it in infinite division and indefinite subtraction; thus, the infinite tends to smallness, but it does not reach a minimum limit. Rather, it continues the logical reduction process of a given magnitude. The philosopher also denies increase, thus rejecting the possibility whereby an object can increase its size endlessly; on the other hand, he deems the cosmos's limits as the maximum possible magnitude a body can increase toward. Surpassing the universe's magnitude is therefore physically impossible for both an actual entity and a potential one, since its dimension is the measure of the whole (*Physics*, IV). Therefore, unlike ancient philosophers, who asserted the cosmos was infinite, Aristotle sees the *apeiron* in a negative manner. Outside it there is no void; rather, something always exists beyond it. Therefore, it can be likened to indefiniteness.

During the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas reworded the alternative between actuality and potentiality and their application to the limitless. The theologian reconsidered the potential infinite as syncategorematic, by giving way to the unlimited process of logical-mathematical repetitions of

the finite. On the other hand, categorematic infinity is always the relative property of something which surpasses any actual finite measure. Since Medieval interpretation of the potential infinite requires a shift toward actual infinity, this somehow resolves the opposition between potency and act, thus contemplating the idea of the unlimited. Thomas can be likened to Aristotle in the latter's denial of actual infinity and the idea according to which only finite things are perfect. However, Aquinas narrows these arguments to the field of created reality, the reflection of God, which is perfect overall because it is finite. In God, rather, infinity and perfection coincide: the former also includes the property of perfection, since form finds perfection in its infiniteness while matter within its limits. Therefore, it is only in the Subsistent Being, the pure act, that infinity becomes actual while still being impossible in created reality (*Summa theologiae*, I, q. 7).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Renaissance saw an evolution in the concept of infinity which not only prevailed in metaphysics and theology but also in physics and cosmology, to the detriment of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic system. Thus, the scientific revolution tackled the infinite in both a strictly philosophical manner (namely, by the likes of Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno) but also from an astronomical point of view. This resulted in the failing of Medieval cosmology: heliocentrism replaced the geocentric system and its celestial spheres (which made up and supported the universe by revolving around the Earth). This new astronomical model did not include the last sphere that of the fixed stars; rather, it was replaced by the idea of an infinite universe and the homogeneity of the matter of which it was made, thus departing from the traditional separation between the lunar and sub-lunar worlds.

The pioneer of Renaissance theories on the infinite was Nicholas of Cusa, as recognized by Bruno, Kepler, and Descartes. In his *De docta ignorantia*, Nicholas states that human knowledge is only conjecture; therefore, the mind cannot fully apprehend God, according to a

gnoseological thesis that always preserved the transcendence of the creating principle. At the same time, the universe too is impossible to grasp, since it is an *explicatio* in space and time of the divine *complicatio*. Though he maintained a clear ontological separation between the One (God) and multiplicity (His sensitive *contractio*), Nicholas found that both are impossible to apprehend and, most importantly, infinite. The divine cause is, in its nature, infinite; therefore, there cannot be but a plurality of worlds. The space around them, it too a reflection of the One-Whole, must necessarily be infinite: an infinite universe populated by infinite worlds. Therefore, the primary infinite cause – the efficient cause – matches the effect's infinity. The various means of divine contraction into the world are the sign of *coincidentia oppositorum*, when the infinite coincides with the finite and the maximum with the minimum. However, there still remained a substantial difference between infinity in the Divine and in creatures, something that profoundly marked Cusa's and Bruno's systems, though the former maintained God's transcendence. For Nicholas of Cusa, God alone is the absence of all limits – thus a *negative* infinite – since He Himself is the fullness of all possibility. In the case of creatures, on the other hand, their infinity is a *privative* one connected to the concept of the indeterminate.

According to Giordano Bruno, too, the need for an infinite universe made up of infinite worlds is justified by a specific theological assumption: the overflowing and limitless power of the first principle generates an equally inexhaustible effect. Since God is the Act, the world – which is His reflection – is the manifestation of all possible forms; hence, matter is made up of a plurality of entities which through vicissitude follow the process of cosmic development. Deeming the infinite as actual is what sets Bruno apart from Aristotelian-Scholastic philosophy. Unlike Cusanus, however, Bruno honors a naturalist view that is strongly immanentist by asserting that divine infinity and material infinity actually coincide: God is thus both *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. On a cosmological level, Bruno accepts the Copernican heliocentric model

endowing the notion of infinity with both a quantitative and a qualitative value; the Copernican-quantitative dimension of limitless space is joined by the qualitative dimension of reality, which according to hermetic tradition is ruled by a vitalistic principle that eludes geometry and mathematics. On the topic, Bruno's Italian dialogues on cosmology are an excellent read: *La cena de le Ceneri*, *De la causa principio et uno*, and *De l'infinito universo e mondi*.

On the other hand, Renaissance astronomical discoveries gradually made the Ptolemaic system fail, whereas the possibility of an infinite universe was increasingly welcomed. Bruno himself accepted the Copernican heliocentric system and praised the Polish scientist for having stood out in astronomy much more than Ptolemy, Hipparchus, or Eudoxius (see *La cena de le Ceneri*, I). Copernicus also recognized the need to move the universe's last sphere and he maintained that the universe is *immensum* in its indefinite extension. In the same way, even though he did not accept infinite space, astronomer Christoph Scheiner stated that the distance between Earth and the fixed stars is equal to an enormously large figure compared to what the Scholastics had calculated; nor did Nicolaus Mercator (Nikolaus Kauffmann) mention the size of the last sky in his tables of fixed stars longitudes. Therefore, the shift between an enclosed and limited dimension to an "indeterminate" magnitude marked an important milestone in the affirmation of an infinitely large universe.

As for Galileo, one must distinguish an astronomical and a strictly mathematical level in his writings. In the *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo*, Galileo states that the universe has no center, the fixed stars being other suns or other centers. However, he does not affirm the universe's infinity: in his opinion, this is a metaphysical issue that must not be tackled by astronomers. In mathematics, on the other hand, Galileo stated that a line segment can be divided into an infinite number of parts which are not further divisible; since they are an infinite quantity, they must necessarily lack size, for even a small size would necessarily make up a line segment that includes a finite number of parts.

Therefore, with Galileo, the debate over the existence of actual infinity seemed to reach a crucial point: for the first time and on a metaphysical level at least, cosmological infinity and the possibility of dividing matter into infinite parts with an infinitely small size both became possible (the argument was subsequently reexamined by Newton in an astronomical way).

Impact and Legacy

The Renaissance debate over infinity had a great impact on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to Descartes, the concept of infinity was functional in proving God's existence and was thus both metaphysically and theologically crucial. Thanks to the *cogito*, mankind acquires clear and evident knowledge of the innate idea of God, mainly by underlining His infinity. In proving God's existence, based on the assumption that the cause of an idea must be at least as real as the idea itself, Descartes claims that the idea of the infinite does belong to humans but is not caused by them alone; mankind is corruptible, therefore finite. Thus, since humans can feel a sense of their own limit and finiteness, there must necessarily exist a primary cause (superior to mankind), which carries the same sense of infinity humans experience with deprivation, whose highest manifestation is methodical doubt. Descartes also believes that the concept of indefinite is reserved for contingency – thus for humans, too – while the concept of the positive infinite is only reserved for God (see *Principia Philosophiae*, I, 27).

Again, in metaphysics, Spinoza built a markedly immanentistic system by strongly drawing on Giordano Bruno's theories. Like Bruno, he believed that the modes of the infinite substance proceed in an infinite way through its infinite attributes: an argument that significantly involved the subject of freedom in divine action.

Leibniz, on the other hand, viewed the world as an organic entity whose substance is made up of infinite monads interacting with each other within the body that contains them (the physical world). Substance is thus guided by its very own finalism, which human knowledge can grasp through

mathematics; through it, one can investigate the mechanism regulating mutual actions and interactions between the parts of corpuscular matter. Therefore, Leibniz accepted the actuality of the infinitely small in a qualitative sense by denying the potential infinite of the geometrical continuum.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Astronomy](#)
- ▶ [Copernicanism](#)
- ▶ [Copernicus, Nicolaus](#)
- ▶ [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- ▶ [Geocentrism](#)
- ▶ [Heliocentrism](#)
- ▶ [Ptolemy in the Renaissance](#)

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Innate Heat

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Abstract

Innate heat is a fundamental concept in Galenic medicine, referring to a physiological heat proper to living beings. Originating in the heart, it takes part in the vital and organic functions of the human body. As instrument of the soul, it animates the body in a similar way to a bodily flame. Its nature and role is bound up with the definition of life within a theoretical framework combining natural philosophy and medicine. Consequently, physiological debates on innate heat often converged on cosmological, chymical, and embryological considerations on the origin, composition, and transmission of life.

In Renaissance Galenism, innate heat is traditionally described as a bodily substance of a subtle nature, transported by the spirit, and transmitted at birth through the seed. It is also related to the radical moisture, so that the *calidum innatum* often refers to the vital substance formed by the spirit, the innate heat, and the radical moisture. Within the human body, the innate heat is sourced in the heart and cooled down by the inspiration of air in the lungs during breathing. At the same time, it is spread through the whole body to operate the

vital functions. In particular, it is the instrument of the vegetative soul in order to achieve the physiological operations of generation, growth, and nutrition – mainly digestion and coction. It is also in charge of forming the vital spirit in the left ventricle of the heart.

Synonyms

[Calidum innatum](#); [Calor innatus](#); [Calor Nativus](#); [Calor vitalis](#); [Vital heat](#)

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Galen systematized the notion of heat in his medical theory built upon Hippocratic, pre-Socratic, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic philosophies (Solmsen 1957). In this respect, the Galenic physiological system owes a significant debt to Aristotelian biology, which theorized the nutritive functions of the innate heat (Freudenthal 1995). It is also rooted in the Stoic *pneuma* responsible for the sensory and motive functions (Debru 1996).

The Galenic definition of innate heat was transformed by Fernel's physiology, influenced by Ficinian Platonism (Fernel 1567). Fernel developed a medical theory of spirit and innate heat grounded in the Aristotelian definition of vital heat as a substance analogous to the element of the stars and contained in the foamy part of the seed (Aristotle 736b30). While the Galenic interpretation suggested innate heat as an elemental substance, Fernel defined it as non-elemental and akin to solar heat. It is then transported by a celestial resident spirit (*spiritus insitus*), which is distinct from the three Galenic flowing spirits and plays the role of a bond between soul and body. This spirit is composed of ether – the Aristotelian fifth element – whose subtle nature allows it to host the bodily heat and to be the soul's first instrument performing the physiological functions. In addition, it is connected with the total substance of the living body, whose properties are occult and cosmological (Fernel 1548).

Fernel's theory of innate heat sparked long-lasting debates in late Renaissance Galenic medicine (Walker 1958). Moreover, the discussion of

the existence of a cosmic innate heat often slid into the nature and role of the spirit *insitus*, initiating further medical debates on the generation of living beings and the plastic virtue of the seed (Hirai 2011). By contrast, Paracelsian medicine disregarded the concept of innate heat, whose subtle nature and physiological functions were attributed to the animal or vital “balsam” protecting the body from putrefaction (Severinus 1571; Hirai 2005; Bianchi 1982).

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Renaissance concept of innate heat was challenged as to the chymical and physiological aspects of its vital status and nutritive function. Harvey called into question the physiological triad of the spirit-heat-moisture by disqualifying Fernel’s definition of spirit and by minimizing the role of the heart (Harvey 1628). Only vital heat and radical moisture remained as mere properties of the blood, which in turn took the role of the vital substance inherent to the seed and analogous to the stellar element (Bono 1990). Later on, the concept of innate heat would be reshaped by mechanistic and chymical theories of combustion and fermentation, illustrated by Descartes and van Helmont (Mendelsohn 1964).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)
- ▶ [Fernel, Jean](#)
- ▶ [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- ▶ [Galen and Galenism](#)
- ▶ [Generation and Embryology in Renaissance Science](#)
- ▶ [Harvey, William](#)
- ▶ [Radical Moisture](#)
- ▶ [Stoicism](#)

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Institution des Lecteurs Royaux

- ▶ [Collège de France](#)

Intellect, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

Following the medieval tradition, Renaissance philosophy approaches the intellect against the background of a twofold perspective, viz., an

ontological and an epistemological perspective. These very problems, therefore, formulated during the Renaissance are to a great extent “medieval.” The ontological perspective focuses on the intellect’s state of being, e.g., what is the intellect and what is its relation to the human soul? The epistemological perspective concentrates on the intellect’s function or operation, e.g., how does the intellect work in order to render understanding possible? Both of these approaches are inextricably interwoven with one another. The solutions offered to these problems make use of familiar medieval currents, such as Aristotelianism, Averroism, (Neo-)platonism, Thomism, Scotism, etc. – without being, however, exclusively bound to one of them. Renaissance philosophy, moreover, considers all of these currents in order to offer a coherent picture of the intellect. Some of the main problems discussed include, among others, whether the intellect belongs to the individual soul or whether it is supra-individual; whether the soul perishes with the body or is immortal; whether intelligible species are required for understanding. Regardless of the so-called “eclectic” approaches in Renaissance philosophy, the discussions are notably shaped by the Averroist interpretation of Aristotle’s psychology.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In line with the medieval tradition that preceded it, Renaissance philosophy approaches the theme of the intellect against the background of a twofold perspective, viz., an ontological perspective on the one hand, and, on the other, an epistemological perspective. Thus, the very problems formulated during the Renaissance are to a great extent “medieval.” The ontological perspective focuses on the intellect’s state of being. Some persisting questions include the following: does the intellect belong completely to the individual and thus is mortal? Alternatively, is the intellect – at least to some extent – supra-individual and thus immortal? Is the intellect (or, the rational soul) the unique substantial form of man, or simply one

among others? On the other hand, is the intellect itself a substantial form in the first place? Does the traditional distinction between the agent and possible intellect remain consistent if many substantial forms or souls are granted? Inextricably interwoven with the ontological approach to the intellect is the epistemological perspective, which concentrates on the function of the intellect: how does the intellect operate in order to render understanding possible? Is the distinction between possible and agent intellect necessary? Are universals abstracted by the intellect or does the intellect in some way participate in a supra-individual process of cognition? Although both of these broad perspectives were discussed, Renaissance philosophers generally are more interested in the ontological questions; to put it in another way, they do “theory of knowledge for anthropological or cosmological reasons” (Keßler 1988, 533; for the discussion of intelligible species in Renaissance philosophy, cf. Spruit 1995).

The centers of Renaissance psychology were the Universities of Bologna and Padua. The first generation of scholars there was strongly influenced by the medieval paradigm. For example, Biagio Pelacani da Parma († 1416) first taught at Paris, then in Bologna, Florence, and Padua. He was highly influenced by John Buridan († after 1358). Paul of Venice († 1429) studied in Oxford and was influenced by Oxford logicians and nominalism (Kuksewicz 1995). When it comes to psychology, Jean of Jandun († 1328) was one of the notable “transmitters” of Averroism from Northern Europe to Italy (Hankins 2007; Brenet 2003; Brenet 2008), and another was likely Taddeo da Parma (Vanni Rovighi 1951; Vitali 1981; Michael 1993, p. 68; Kuksewicz 1995, p. 376).

At Bologna and Padua, we find present nearly every position with respect to the intellect. There is the Averroism of the High Middle Ages as well as (late ancient) Alexandrism; we find vigorous defenses of Church doctrine, as well as the Aristotelianisms of the Thomist, Scotist, and Ockhamist varieties. As opposed to what we find in Northern Europe, the use of these various positions here does not usually signify any adherence to a certain school. On the contrary, bits and pieces of the divergent traditions are used in an “eclectic”

manner (Kärkkäinen and Lagerlund 2009; Schmitt 1983, 99–103); or, better, the varying positions are employed in order to offer a coherent picture over and beyond the disagreement of the schools (cf., e.g., Hasse 2004, 137).

With regard to the ontological perspective, there are many different views on the status of the intellect (for the following, Keßler 1988, 488–507; Keßler 2008, 139–183). For instance, Paul of Venice and Nicoletto Vernia († 1499) championed the Averroistic idea that man's highest individual form is the cogitative soul (*anima cogitativa*), and not the rational soul or intellect. Vernia, for instance, presents the Averroistic position as the genuine Aristotelian one. Averroes assumes that the intellect is one single entity and common to all men and thus is supra-individual. The medieval tradition posits an agent intellect as the part of the intellect that abstracts the universal notion from the singular phantasm by preparing an intelligible species. This species then informs the possible intellect by which cognition takes place. In Averroes's interpretation there is no such distinction, both "intellects" are the same and exist as a single, supra-individual entity. This interpretation does well to explain how cognition is possible (especially the knowledge of universals); however, it does not easily explain the relationship between the single and universal intellect and the individual who is supposedly cognizing. When it comes to the relation between the supra-individual intellect and the human (cogitative) soul, various positions can be found in Renaissance philosophy: Paul of Venice views the intellect as an informing form (*forma informans*), while Alessandro Achillini († 1512) describes it as an informing and assisting form. Achillini, like Agostino Nifo († after 1538), believes that the intellect together with the cogitative soul comprise the one substantial form of man. This position is indeed reminiscent of Siger of Brabant († ca. 1284), who, in his *De intellectu*, held the substantial form of the human being to be the (possible) intellect together with the cogitative soul (Nifo 2011, 345–347; Nardi 1945, 13–29). Gaetano da Thiene († 1465) defended Averroism; however, he combined it with the Latin tradition,

mostly by integrating it with the positions of Albert the Great. In this sense, he attempted to give an Averroistic account of Church doctrine.

The Alexandristic interpretation – going back to Alexander of Aphrodisias (second/third century CE) – held that the soul is a form educed from matter and hence is generated and perishes with the body; this view was defended, for instance, by Pietro Pomponazzi († 1525) and Simone Porzio († 1554), at least on the grounds of purely natural or philosophical reasoning (Keßler 1988, 519–521). Both emphasize thus the individualistic perspective: the soul or intellect is an individualized human capacity. It is this man who cognizes, and thus the soul must also cease when her subject ceases to be.

Philipp Melanchthon († 1560) develops a "Protestant" Aristotelian psychology. He takes up the traditional distinction between the agent and possible intellect and develops it further. He presents the agent intellect as the faculty of *ingenium* or invention, while the possible intellect is the faculty of reception (Keßler 1988, 516–518). Melanchthon's reinterpretation displays well his Renaissance background, in which the idea of invention or creativity is strongly emphasized. The notion of *ingenium* then plays an important role in J. C. Scaliger († 1558), A. Persio († 1610), and G. Bruno († 1600), and its traces are found in R. Descartes († 1650) and F. Bacon († 1626) (Leinkauf 2001).

A Neoplatonic approach is present already in the late Nifo. He makes use of the Neoplatonic conception of metaphysical participation and, in particular, the distinction between different forms in order to distinguish between the unity of the universal intellect and the individual intellects proper to particular men. He differentiates between three agent intellects: (i) God, (ii) the principle in the individual soul (i.e., the traditional agent intellect), and (iii) the "prime notions [...] through which, as a mere instrument, God illuminates the human soul" (Keßler 1988, 498). Thereby, he shifts the emphasis from an active agent intellect that prepares the phantasm to a "passive" intellect that takes part in God's knowledge of things. The "real breakthrough," however,

of Neoplatonism into Renaissance psychology was witnessed only with Marcantonio Genua (Keßler 1988, 524). In Genua, Aristotle is read through the lens of Simplicius: the human soul is examined as part of the cosmological hierarchy, a middle sort of being between the immaterial and material realm.

Turning to the epistemological perspective in particular, the operations of the intellect are of prime concern. Here, the two extremes of the medieval tradition regarding the acquisition of knowledge are also present: on the one hand, the (Neo-)platonic conception of innate principles or ideas, and, on the other, the Aristotelian process of abstracting the universal from the particular. Marcantonio Genua († 1563), for instance, followed the Platonic tradition, understanding cognition as “mere reception of the universal forms emanating from the agent intellect,” while Porzio considers it to be a “mere reception of the intelligible *species* impressed by the illuminated *phantasma*.” Francesco Piccolomini († 1607) holds a middle position between both extremes: the process of cognition is “a true operation of the soul, through which the intellect produced the content of intellection by reasoning and judging the material image” (Keßler 1988, 528). Accordingly, Piccolomini assumes that the agent intellect, the faculty responsible for abstraction, is part of the human soul. Giacomo Zabarella († 1589), who opposes Piccolomini’s account and follows Genua, understands the agent intellect to be the divine cause of cognition and denies it any activity. Zabarella then assigns the active part of intellection to the possible intellect (Keßler 1988, 530–534). Another middle position between the Aristotelian and (Neo-)platonic approach is Melanchthon’s idea of innate principles within an Aristotelian conception of cognition. Melanchthon starts with the nominalistic differentiation between intuitive and abstractive cognition and with a preference concerning the immediate cognition of the singular. To support the intuition of singulars, he assumes the existence of innate ideas that render superfluous an abstractive function of the intellect. The agent intellect instead is the capacity for creativity (see above).

Innovative and Original Aspects

One of the best known and perhaps the most innovative aspect of these discussions is to be found in the “immortality debate.” To be sure, even this discussion has medieval roots (cf., e.g., Siger of Brabant’s revision of his *De intellectu*), but in the Renaissance its force is considerably stronger (for the following, Blum 2007; Casini 2007). The debate began with Georgios Gemistos Pletho’s († 1452) observation that there is present in Aristotle an inconsistency: in the *De anima*, the human mind seems to be immortal, while in the *Ethics* it is not. Pletho thus assumed that Alexander’s view that the human intellect is mortal is the correct interpretation of Aristotle. The ensuing debate concerned the correct interpretation of Aristotle, and then how this interpretation relates to Christian faith or Church doctrine. Marsilio Ficino († 1499) initiated this debate with the observation that there are two “sects,” namely, the Alexandrian interpretation that views the soul to be mortal since it is educed from matter and the Averroistic interpretation, according to which the intellect is immortal qua supra-individual while the individual soul is mortal. Both interpretations, according to Ficino, stand against the teaching of the Church and are dangerous to the faith (Ficino 1959, vol. 2, 1537). These positions were discussed extensively in Padua, at least until 1489, the year in which bishop Pietro Barozzi’s decree prohibited any discussion concerning the unity of the intellect. Barozzi explicitly praises Antonio Trombetta’s refutation of the Averroists, which he published some years later. Nicoletto Vernia, a fervent Averroist before, now became an anti-Averroist. In 1492, following Ficino and Albert the Great, Vernia now assumes a plurality of intellects against the Averroists and maintains that the opinion of the Church converges with the perspective of natural philosophy (Vernia 1998, esp. 56–57). The bull *Apostolici regiminis* of the Fifth Lateran Council (1513), which decreed that natural philosophers must uphold the immortality of the soul, follows the same line of reasoning. Nevertheless, in 1516, Pietro Pomponazzi published his famous *De immortalitate animae*, in which he argued for a twofold nature of man, his intellect, and his soul, viz., a mortal and an

immortal one. He made use of the scholastic distinction between the absolute consideration of something (*simpliciter*) and a relative one (*secundum quid*) (Pomponazzi 1990, 6, 10). The human intellect “is free of body as subject but relies upon body as its object (i.e. it relies on corporeal experience as its object)” (Blum 2007, 220), or, put differently, the intellect is material in its existence and immaterial in its function (Cassirer 1999, 92–93), which means that it is, *simpliciter*, perishable (viz., in its being), and immortal *secundum quid* (viz., in its function). For Pomponazzi, this perspective follows according to a purely philosophical point of view (for Pomponazzi’s epistemology, cf. Rubini 2015). From the point of view of faith, however, the immortality of the soul is still possible. Pomponazzi thus argues for the Averroistic double truth, i.e., that there are two truths according to two epistemological realms: that of philosophy and that of faith. In the end, the immortality of the soul is, for Pomponazzi, an unsolvable problem (*neutrum problema*) (Pomponazzi 1990, 228). Against the background of the bull of 1513, Pomponazzi met harsh criticism, especially from Gasparo Contarini († 1542), Bartolomeo Spina († 1546), Ambrogio Fiandino († 1532), Nifo, and Crisostomo Javelli († ca. 1538), who defended the traditional position of the Church concerning the immortality of the soul considered also from a purely philosophical point of view (Blum 2007, 223–227).

Impact and Legacy

The various medieval and Renaissance approaches to the intellect were picked up and further elaborated especially in Hispanic (or Second) Scholasticism and were thus transferred to Descartes and the Early Modern period. Descartes’s *Meditations*, especially, must be understood precisely against the background of the immortality debate of the Renaissance (Blum 2007, 227–229). The precise causal relationships or influences existing between Renaissance and Early Modern psychology must still be determined by future research.

Cross-References

- [Intellection, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- [Species, Intelligible](#)
- [Unicity of Intellect](#)

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Intellection, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

From the point of view of Aristotelian psychology, intellection is the culmination of a complex and multifarious process in which all

the powers linked to knowledge intervene, from sense perception to the intellect. This process has been the subject of a multitude of discussions and an endless number of works focused, in the majority of the cases, on the commentary of Aristotle's texts. Into this field, several questions concerning intellection have been dealt with, among which the relation between sensible forms and the so-called intelligible species was of particular importance. Also, the implications of our own intellectual activity for the debate over the immortality have been explored with great attention during the Renaissance. In this sense, many authors have discussed whether intellection must be understood as the product of a faculty essentially independent from the body and immortal or as a mere abstraction which is impossible without the presence of sensible data. Moreover, from a specific epistemological point of view, the logical mechanisms of reasoning were studied by many Renaissance philosophers. In this case, the point of departure was the significance of intellection as the direct apprehension of the first principles and the most general concepts of each science.

Heritage and New Approaches

From an Aristotelian perspective, intellection must be understood as the culmination of the process that leads from the perception of the sensitive image to the apprehension of the intelligible form (essence or universal concept) of a given object in a specific scientific field. This process, enormously complex and discussed, has been the object of study by Renaissance philosophers just as it had been by many medieval authors (Spruit 1995, 3–17). The Renaissance views of this question have been diverse (Kessler 1988, 485–534), but in general they can be included in two broad interpretative lines that are, nevertheless, interdependent. One of them was placed within what an Aristotelian considered a branch of natural philosophy, that is, the psychological study of the gnoseological faculties which are present in the human being (Zabarella 2016, 171–178). The other was in the field of method and logic from

where some authors tried to unravel the procedures that constituted the most important achievement of the act of thought, that is, science.

The large and multifarious number of interpretations made of Aristotle's *De anima* throughout history shows that the texts of the Master in this area, far from offering a closed and definitive doctrine, have left many problems unresolved (Perrone Compagni 1999, viii–xviii). However, it is undeniable that those texts have always been a constant stimulus for reflection which has compensated for Aristotle's lack of concreteness and the ambiguity in dealing with the topic of the intellective soul. For him, if the intellect is called to receive the intelligible form, just as the senses receive the sensitive one, it must have no previous form that hinders such a reception (Zimara 1562, 188). Hence, it is said in *De anima* III, 4, that the intellect "has no other nature except its capacity to receive." A little lower, Aristotle defines the act of thinking as a kind of identification between the subject of this act, that is, the intellect, and its object, that is, the intelligible, since "theoretical knowledge and its object are identical." But, even if the intellect lacks a concrete nature, in *De anima* III, 5, it is said that we can find in it a passive principle, which is capable of becoming all things, and an active principle capable of making all of them. The Aristotelian authors, especially since Alexander of Aphrodisias, have spoken of a patient or material intellect and an agent intellect (Nifo 2011, 385–439). The interrelation of these two intellects, their differentiated or undifferentiated substances, as well as their presence in the human soul have been questions constantly debated by many Renaissance thinkers. Moreover, the impact of these questions on the controversy about the immortality of the soul was enormous (Di Napoli 1963, 7–20). In this case, the proliferation of opinions has fluctuated between that of those who maintained that the intellectual faculty has no autonomous entity beyond being just a mere development of sense perception and that of those who have underlined, in many different ways, its substantial character and its separation from the body. In this sense, the sensitive dependence of the intellective act, which Aristotle clearly affirmed in more than one passage, always involved an objection addressed against the

independence and autonomy of human thought. In spite of it, some Renaissance Aristotelians affirmed that the sensitive images are by themselves incapable of becoming those intelligible species that our mind contemplates, so it is necessary to postulate a higher faculty which possesses the power to extract an intelligible and immaterial nature from what is singular and linked to matter. To do it, this faculty has to be intelligible and immaterial by itself, existing as a separable, unmixed, and imperishable substance.

Otherwise, from a methodological point of view, the logical and empirical procedure that leads from singular data to universal concepts has been approached with great zeal throughout the sixteenth century, particularly in the area of the University of Padua (Poppi 1970). In this case, the syllogistic structure of scientific thought has been studied, as well as the nature of that intuitive act of intellection that is capable of capturing the first principles of each science.

Cross-References

- [Intellect, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- [Species, Intelligible](#)

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Interest of State

► Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of

Intuition, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

From Nicholas of Cusa to Spinoza, intuition is regarded as a form of superior knowledge or direct insight, whose peculiar object of understanding is usually intended as some universal concept and even as some holistic, divine truth, usually with mystical flavor. In this framework, Cartesian intuitions stand out, since they are regarded as just dependent on the simple and evident nature of their elementary objects, whenever considered under the enlightening power of the human mind and evaluated through methodical doubt.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Many different elements contributed to shape the Renaissance concept of intuition: first of all the Platonic and Neoplatonic notion of intellect (*noûs*) as different from propositional reason (*dianoia*); secondly the Christian idea of intuition as mystical “vision of God” (objective and subjective genitive), mediated by the Augustinian idea of “*intueor*” as a form of intimate insight or inner contemplation; and finally many influences in this regard came from Gnostic-Hermetic, Orphic, and even Cabalistic texts, which intended intuition as a sort of direct glance on the infinite whole of the universe (Pozzi 2012a, 81). At the same time, the idea of intuition as an acute and quick way of understanding clear-cut concepts starts to find its epistemological role within proto-scientific methodologies.

For Nicholas of Cusa, intuition (*intuitio* or *visio intellectualis*) is the highest level of knowledge. It is provided by the faculty of intellect (*intellectus*), which is regarded as superior even in comparison to propositional reason (*ratio*) because – as he stated in his *De coniecturis* – only in virtue of the former all the contradictions can be simultaneously embraced as one and understood as unified. As a result, even logical opposites are grasped as overlapping within the intellect (the so-called *coincidentia oppositorum*). For him intuition should not be understood as “passive contemplation” (Cassirer 1927, 14) but as the active work of the most prominent part of the human mind, well beyond its power of conceptualization. All the other cognitive faculties can provide some true knowledge only in reference to the intellect, because only the latter partakes of the divine. Lastly, only God’s insight of us parallels the power of human intuitive understanding, since, as it is stated in his *De Visione Dei*, these two acts are reciprocal.

For Marsilio Ficino, intuition always depends on divine perpetual illumination (*perpetuo lumine*), which is constant upon human mind (*mens*). Since our minds depend on the divine mind, the intuitive content that each created mind can grasp is fundamentally God himself, present at a deep level as immanent truth. So human *mens* constantly mirrors the divine truth by its activity of inner contemplation and noetic self-reflection, which can even be unconscious and unintentional. It is just the faculty of *ratio* which later attributes awareness to our intuitions, but the intuitive activity of *mens* can be “even substantial and unaware” knowledge (Kristeller 1988, 410–412) of intelligible realities. Finally, Ficino merges together Platonic *eros* and Christian *agape* within the activity of *mens*, where the love for the world is sublimated into the love for God (*De Amore*, IV).

On his turn, Giordano Bruno provided some original images for explaining what he means for *cognitio intuitiva*: it is a sort of internal reading voice which allows us to understand directly what reason can only explain through discursive argumentations; it is a sort of a living mirror, which has and receive in itself the objects of its

own reflection; it is a naked eye viewing of the sun (“*sicut oculos circa solem*”). Our insight can have a total view of the whole just once it has glimpsed the first source of light and visibility (*Summa Terminorum Metaphysicorum*, s.v. *cognitio*).

For Tommaso Campanella intuitive knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*) is a form of contemplation up to the point of identification and unification with its object. So the intuitive act is a joint interpenetration (*intrinsecatio*) of the intuitive subject and of the intuited object where both of them become one another (*unum fit aliud*), mutually transforming their nature. The intuitive identification can reach its completion in a mystical union with the entire universe and, at its most, it ends with the pure vision of God.

According to Descartes’ *Regulae ad Directionem Ingenii*, intuition (*intuitus*) is, together with rational deduction, the most fundamental cognitive act, being the most certain and infallible, and even more important than deduction, because intuition is more antecedent and basic in its respect. For, every deductive moment (both each step and each inferential connection) is firstly understood as such by the intuitive way. In one of his *letters to Mersenne* (16 October 1639), he equals intuition with our mental “natural light” (*lumen naturale*) “which alone ... one should really trust” (II, 59). Intuition stays as a separate faculty from the others, and it deals just with pure conceptualization (*conceptum mentis purae*) of non-mediated truths. So, e.g., “that I think” (*cogito*) is a truth intuitively understood, so as it is “that I exist,” as well as it is so the inference that from the self-awareness of being thinking leads to the certainty of existing (as this latter, some truths can be understood both by intuition and by deduction). In *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes refers to intuition as a form of preexisting knowledge gained through attentive contemplation. For him, intuitive comprehension is possible because of the *simple* and *evident* nature of the basic elements of its understanding, which can never be the source of error or wrong in themselves. More specifically, intuition has the power to reduce and simplify complex objects of knowledge into their

constitutive elements, perceiving immediately their essential factors as true (Mursell 1919, 395). Nonetheless, intuitions too should be inspected through the examination of methodic doubt in order to gain our rational assent (Van de Pitte and Frédérick 1988, 460–1).

For Spinoza, *intuitive science* is the third and most important level of cognitive understanding, over perception and reason. It entails the immediate and simultaneous knowledge of particular essences (*res singulares*) and the relevant substantial attributes of God or nature (*Deus sive natura*). Spinoza’s intuition plays a fundamental scientific role in the process of knowledge (Cristofolini 2009), because it provides the knowledge of particulars within their whole framework, and the truths that it can attain are self-evident so that the mind can be independent from God in regard of their right assessment. From this sort of comprehension arises the eternal intellectual love of God (“sub specie aeternitatis,” *Ethica*, V, 31–32). Finally, Spinoza’s conception of intuition maintains also Hebrew and oriental elements, since for him intuition was not just a matter of unmetaphorical “seeing” but also of “hearing” (as the Abrahamic tradition said), and, secondly, the intuitive knower ends up with dematerializing himself into the known object and vice versa (as Pierre Bayle first noted in his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1740⁵) about the Spinozian idea of intuitive emptiness perhaps borrowed from the Chinese philosophical sect of Foe Kiao).

Cross-References

- [Intellect, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- [Intuition, Renaissance Idea of](#)

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Invention, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

The recovery of ancient rhetorical sources which took place in fifteenth-century Italy went hand in hand with humanists' concern for social and political issues. Consequently, humanists' reappropriation of such authors as Cicero and Quintilian came to broaden Aristotle's main achievements on rhetoric. Similarly to other practical-oriented disciplines (such as law, medicine, and moral

philosophy), rhetoric provided a model for teaching and discussing. Humanists dealt with the most appropriate use of *inventio* as a tool for building up persuasive discourses. In doing so, they could not eschew from challenging the traditional rhetorical scheme put forward by the leading lights of classical oratory.

Later on, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reflection on method emphasized the eminently epistemological nature of *inventio*, by connecting it to the inductive type of knowledge.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The origin of the term “invention” has to be traced back to the Latin word *inventio*. Originally, the term was referred to the mental process responsible for finding compelling arguments to support discourses (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*). In the traditional Aristotelian scheme, *inventio* was the first part of rhetoric, its aim being to set forth rhetorical syllogisms, the so-called *entimemata*. Later on, Aristotle's scheme was also endorsed by Cicero (*De Oratore*, *Orator*, *Brutus*) and Quintilian, who clearly resided upon his *Rhetoric* while unfolding their own view on the different parts of discourse. According to this view, *inventio* still occupied the foremost position; however, Cicero and Quintilian set out to enrich Aristotle's scheme by adding *memoria* and *actio* to *dispositio* and *elocutio*. Moreover, the relation between rhetoric and politics (that is to say, the dimension of persuasion) is dealt with by early Christian mind with a clear religious meaning. The writings of such authors as Tacitus (*De oratoribus*), Pseudo Longinus (*Peri h ypsous*), and Augustine of Hippo (*De Doctrina Christiana*; *Pseudo-Augustine, Principia Rhetorices*), while presenting the very same goals as classical oratory – i.e., *docere* or *probare*, *dilectare*, *movere* –, looked at rhetoric as an instrument enabling them to attain the true knowledge of God.

When humanists began to be committed with the recovery of classical heritage, they also began to consider the Greek-Latin rhetorical scheme as a system of teaching and discussing. Quintilian's

Institutio Oratoria became a central source within the new pedagogical program, and *inventio* turned out to be an essential part of pupils' civic education. Humanists such as Lorenzo Valla (*Elegantiae Linguae Latinae, Dialecticae Disputationes*) and Rudolph Agricola (*De inventione dialectica*) dealt extensively with *inventio* as a tool for selecting argument. They considered *entimema*, *exemplum*, and induction as essential logical components of any discourse on knowledge. The realm of truth was no longer restricted to demonstrative logic only (as in Aristotle's *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*), for this "new" rhetoric was meant to include also the sphere of probable and possible knowledge. Dealing with the traditional catalogue of liberal arts, such humanists as Agricola, Angelo Poliziano (*Silvae, Lamia*), and Giorgio Valla (*De expedita ratione argumentandi Libellus*), claimed that the arts of *trivium* – grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics – might play as example for other human arts, such as medicine, law, and moral philosophy (Vasoli 2002). Like these disciplines, rhetoric has to do with changeable and uncertain matters: the rhetor has therefore to take into account a sheer number of elements if he wishes to achieve persuasion (Cicero, *De inventione*). Accordingly, while considering ancient topical works as an indispensable tool for building persuasive discourses, *inventio* must go in quest of unexplored *loci*: the *selva oscura* of knowledge needs to transform into a tidy *hortus* in order to make *inventio*'s job easier. *Topica* and *inventio* may be compared to the tags on ampoules helping physicians to distinguish and combine the different remedies correctly (Vasoli 2002). Humanists did not deny their preference for Cicero's *Topics* over Aristotle's, being the former work more systematic and rooted in the real experience of rhetor and lawyer (Vasoli 2007).

The interrelation between rhetoric and dialectics becomes all the more evident in the reflection on method taking place in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, a reflection which led to a general reassessment of such notions as induction and deduction (Gilbert 1960). Unsurprisingly, in Petrus Ramus' work (in *Dialecticae*

Istitutiones first and in *La Dialectique* later), *inventio* turned away from the merely rhetorical sphere as it came to be absorbed by dialectics (a move which is consistent with the view once held by Agricola).

Ramus located *inventio* much closer to the syllogism, being that too involved in the search for the middle term. In order to avoid all the earlier discussions about categories and predication, Ramus assigned a very general meaning to the term *loci* (as simply "arguments") and provided an eminently topical orientation to logic (Ong 1958). The renewal of logic and the employment of *inventio* are evoked by Francis Bacon in his analysis of method. In *The Advancement of Learning* (then *De Augmentis Scientiarum*), Bacon made a sharp distinction between *inventio* of arguments and *inventio* of experiments, a distinction which in his opinion may contribute to the "advancement of learning." The "new organon" is a new logic which gets back to the original meaning of *inventio* (as "investigation"), while stressing at the same time the experimental-oriented nature of this notion.

Cross-References

- [Ciceronianism](#)
- [Commonplace](#)
- [Dialectic in the Renaissance](#)
- [Induction, Philosophical Conceptions of](#)
- [Topics in the Renaissance](#)
- [Translatio Studiorum](#)
- [Tropes in Renaissance Rhetoric](#)

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Irony, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

During the Renaissance, irony was seen as a macro-textual figure that could run through an entire discourse and/or as a trope (or microtextual figure), with irony being built on a succession of tropes. This classification issue – already present in Quintilian's work – also appears in Antoine Fouquelin's *La rhétorique française* (1555; French Rhetoric); while irony is among the tropes analyzed, the author also identifies a type of “extended” irony (Fouquelin 1990).

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Synonyms

Dissimulatio

Inherited Definitions

The tropes constituting irony are extremely diverse. Fabri's *Le grand et vrai art de pleine rhétorique* (1521; The Great and True Art of Rhetoric) is based on a classification system that has been used since antiquity (Quintilian 1932), differentiating between antiphrasis (which may be based on preterition), praise (simulated), "repugnance" (the speaker concedes a fact to discredit their opponent), "non-injurious" confession (or concession), permission (to agree at the right moment on certain incriminating facts), and mockery (Fabri 1969). Like Quintilian, Melanchthon, and Soarez (1569), Mosellanus examines irony and antiphrasis as specific types of allegory in his *Tabulae de schematibus et tropi* (1516). This "odd" classification (Le Guern 1976) is the result of allegory being commonly seen as inversion, a device that presents a meaning different from what is expressed on the surface. Verbal types of allegory include enigma, irony, sarcasm, proverbs, urbanity (*astysmus*), antiphrasis, and artfully veiled insults (*charientismus*) (Mosellanus 1533). In *Thesaurus rhetoricae* (1599), Bernardo cites numerous techniques mentioned above, adding a trope introduced by Rufinianus in *De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis: chleuasmos*, or *epicertomesis*, a "verbal act of self-accusation" that must deceive the listener or reader (Molinié 1992).

The wide range of linguistic processes is further enhanced by gestures. Melanchthon evokes a form of criticism expressed by *mycterismos* (Quintilian 1932), a movement of the nostrils (Melanchthon 1532) that is both hostile and opposed to any restraint.

Irony is thus a category encompassing multiple figures with different meanings and effects, depending on the context in which they are used. Wecker's *Artis oratoriae praecepta* (1582) clearly recognizes the ambivalence of the concept. Wecker examines *ironia*, or *dissimulatio*, identifying two categories: urban irony and hostile

irony. While hostile irony is thoroughly explored in the essay, Wecker only cites two processes for urban irony: *asteismos*, which aims only to please and is linked to urbanity and playfulness, and *charientismus*, which is associated with euphemism (Wecker 1582).

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- Melanchthon, Philipp
- Quintilian

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Israel of Toledo

Flourished: 13th century, Toledo, Spain.

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Abstract

Hayyim ben Israel was a Spanish Jewish philosopher and author who lived in Toledo in the thirteenth century. He is a descendent of the well-known Israeli family from which came a number of distinguished scientists. Hayyim ben Israel wrote three works, but only one survives: the *Ma'amar Gan-Eden* or *Treatise on the Paradise*. In the book, Hayyim ben Israel discusses the physical location of the Paradise, widely drawing from Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (the *Book of Healing*). He is one of the few Jewish scholars who consistently and decidedly took Avicenna's side over Averroes.

Alternate Names

[Hayyim ben Israel](#)

Biography

Very little is known about Hayyim (often spelled Hajjim) or Chaiim ben Israel's life, Jewish philosopher and scholar who lived in Toledo in the second half of the thirteenth century. He hailed from the prominent Israel family, a well-known family of copyists whose name appears in several manuscripts copied in Toledo in the thirteenth century. Hayyim ben Israel was a relative of Isaac Israeli ben Joseph, author of the astronomical treatise *Yesod 'Olam* (*The foundation of the World*), considered the best contribution on this subject to Hebrew literature.

Hayyim ben Israel was a copyist himself and transcribed, in 1277, the *Parma's Bible* (Ms. parm. 2668 of the Biblioteca Palatina). Pietro

Perreau, an Italian scholar who was the first to study Hayyim ben Israel, attributes to his hand also "a codex 26 of Paris" copied in 1272 for a "Moses ben Josef" (Perreau 1884, 141).

Modern scholars of medieval Jewish philosophy (Sirat 1985; Freudenthal and Zonta 2013; Schwartz 2005) date Hayyim ben Israel's philosophical writings to the second decade of the fourteenth century. He is known to have composed at least three scientific treatises, but only one, *Ma'amar Gan-Eden* (*Treatise on the Paradise*) is extant. Hayyim ben Israel is probably the translator into Hebrew of Avicenna's *Urjuzah fi l-tibb* (*The canon of medicine*), a iambic poem on medicine.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Hayyim ben Israel's only surviving work, the *Treatise on the Paradise*, is a comment on a biblical commentary written in the eleventh century by the philosopher, exegete, and astronomer Abraham Ibn Ezra. The treatise consists of an introduction followed by eleven chapters in which Hayyim ben Israel discusses the location of the Paradise, often explicitly drawing from Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (*Book of Healing*). Hayyim ben Israel refers to the Muslim philosopher's distinction between First Cause and First Mover. He juxtaposes to the scholars that read in the movements of the celestial spheres proof of the existence of God, Avicenna's position, according to which the Creator is the cause of the First Mover, not the First Mover itself. In a successive chapter, Hayyim ben Israel reformulates Avicenna's theory, taken from the astronomical section of the *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, that the equator is the most balanced region of the earth. He, moreover, mentions Avicenna's account, presented in the meteorological section, of the dry land.

Hayyim ben Israel not only reports Avicenna's views, but he also juxtaposes them to Averroes' one, firmly taking the former's side. According to the Jewish philosopher, Averroes lacked the necessary training in both natural philosophy and astronomy to fully understand these astronomical issues. Although his work is not

influential, Hayyim ben Israel is, together with Samuel Ibn Tibbon and Moses ha-Levi, one of the few scholars who, in a panorama of general Averroist's consensus, consistently sides with Avicenna. He embraces Avicenna's opinion asserting that his naturalistic account perfectly coincides with what is affirmed in the *Torah*.

Hayyim ben Israel's enthusiastic admiration for Avicenna seems to support the hypothesis that he was behind the translation of the *Urjuzah fi l-tibb* (*The canon of medicine*).

Avicenna is not the only Muslim philosopher that influenced the *Treatise on Paradise*. Hayyim ben Israel's theory of the intellect elaborates and combines al-Kindi and al-Farabi's quadripartite division of the intellect.

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Ivani, Antonio

Born: 1430, Sarzana

Died: 1482, Pistoia

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Abstract

Humanist and politician, Antonio Ivani was born in 1430 near Sarzana and died in Pistoia in 1482. His fame is mainly due to his work as historian and particularly to his *Historia de Volaterrana Calamitate*, yet Ivani's historical interests can be explained in a broader context of cultural curiosity shown in his rich collection of Latin letters. Besides several reflections about the contemporary political world – with particular attention toward Turkish expansion – in Ivani's letters can be found some important reference to the Florentine myth, to the rediscovery of the Etruscan antiquities, and to the coeval philosophical trends, toward which the interest of the author was devoted in particular to Hermeticism and to Marsilio Ficino's production.

Biography

Humanist and politician, Antonio Ivani was born in 1430 near Sarzana, a small town at the boundaries of Liguria, Tuscany, and Emilia, contended, in those years, by the Republic of Genoa and by the Medicean Florence. After a bureaucratic and scholarly education that led him to Narni, as a public chancellor, and to Ferrara, where he attended the lessons of the by then old Guarino Veronese, he worked as a public notary in his hometown, before passing in 1461 at the service of the Doge of Genoa Ludovico Fregoso.

The important diplomatic missions of those years led him to Florence and Milan, where he became friend to Cicco Simonetta. Thanks to the

Milanese recommendation, in 1466 he gained, for Piero De Medici's wish, the mandate of chancellor of Volterra which he held until 1471, when he was forced to quit following some bribery charges.

The defeat of the pro-Florentine faction in Volterra led in 1472 to the siege and raid of the small town by the military force of Federico da Montefeltro, hired by Lorenzo de' Medici. In the following year, Ivani finished the composition of the *Historia de Volaterrana Calamitate* (Ivani 1913), whose literary and descriptive qualities were appreciated by historiography, even though a certain factiousness in favor of the Medici family could be detected. And it was just for Lorenzo's recommendation that Ivani was elected in 1477 chancellor of Pistoia, a role that he held until his death, which occurred in 1482 (Simonetta 2004).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The character of Ivani – whose political commitment was in large part devoted to smooth out the contrasts, in the Tuscany of the fifteenth century, between the central power and the local self-rules – can rightly enter the tradition of civil humanism. In particular, we can find an original usage of the terms “useful” and “honest,” within the ambit of a theorization of the decline of the communal self-rules, in the *De temperamento victoriae et moderatione animorum*, written in January 1479, in the middle of the violent political crisis following the Pazzi conspiracy (Fubini 1994; Simonetta 2004).

Yet the fame of the humanist from Sarzana is mainly due to his work as a historian: a work that did not confine itself to the popular history of the ruin of Volterra. He also proved himself to be skillful also in several other minor writings (*Expugnatio Constantinopolitana*, *Historia de excidio Lunae*, *De Nigropontis expugnatione*, and others), at last available also in critical edition (Ivani 2006).

Ivani's historical interests can be explained in a broader context of cultural curiosity shown in his Latin collection of letters, about 700 pieces and still only partly published (Altamura 1956; Ferrari

1965; Landucci Ruffo 1965). Besides several reflections about the contemporary political world – with particular attention toward Turkish expansion – in Ivani's letters can be found some important reference to the Florentine myth, to the rediscovery of the Etruscan antiquities, and, after the failure of the Volterra's experience, also to the coeval philosophical trends, toward which the interest of the author was devoted in particular to Hermeticism and to Marsilio Ficino's production.

With Ficino himself, celebrated as *fons Platonis*, Ivani was in close contact during the years he spent in Pistoia: while in a letter to Rosso di Matteo Cerretani, the humanist hinted, against every mechanistic interpretation of the universe, at the hermetic doctrines, placing peculiar emphasis on moral life and on the exaltation of the soul, defined as divine form of the material body, completely free from the stars and from Fortune's influences (Altamura 1956; Landucci Ruffo 1965).

Finally, in the letters, there are some critical hints to superstition and to the supernatural phenomena of the time, toward which the author shows, nevertheless, a certain interest. And it is also in the light of his responsiveness toward the Turkish menace that we can explain Ivani's apocalyptic interests, hence the passionate reading of *Pronosticum super Antechristi adventu Iudeorumque Messiae* by Iohannes of Lübeck (1474) – a text not devoid of analogies with Ficino's prophecy *Deus ubi vult spirat* (Landucci Ruffo 1965).

Cross-References

- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Humanism, Civic](#)

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Jack, Gilbert

Born: Aberdeen, 1578

Died: Leiden, 18 April 1628

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Abstract

Gilbert Jack was a sixteenth-century philosopher and physician who was born in Scotland but eventually attained celebrity in the Netherlands as one of the Low Countries' most famous metaphysicians.

Biography

Gilbert Jack (Jacchaeus) (Aberdeen, 1578–Leiden, 18 April 1628) was a reformed Scottish philosopher (Schmutz) who left a lasting mark on Dutch thought. Both a physician and metaphysician, Jack began his studies in Aberdeen and then continued his education at Marischal College under the direction of Robert Howie (Pyle, 463). Jack completed his education at Marischal in 1597 and in the following year moved to Germany to pursue further education at the University of Helmstedt in 1598 (ibid.). With his philosophical course of studies completed, in 1603, Jack moved to the Netherlands and enrolled at the University of Leiden, where, like his mentor Howie, the

Scotsman took up theology (ibid.). Leiden would eventually become Jack's academic home, and he was first appointed as a *Professor Extraordinarius* of logic in 1605. This was followed in 1617 by an appointment to a chair in physics, which he held until his death in 1628 (ibid.). At Leiden, Jack counted among his students Cartesians and anti-Cartesians alike, including Heidanus, Renneri, Voetius, and Burgersdijk (Schmutz).

Jack's first work was his 1614 *Institutiones physicae*. The volume opens with a prefatory treatment of the nature of philosophy in general (c. 1), which, because of man's own faculties of intellect and will, is subject to division within itself (fols. 1, 2); the division of philosophy into natural, moral, and rational or, what is the same, the more familiar speculative and practical philosophy (c. 2); the nature of "contemplative philosophy," which he subdivided into metaphysics, physics, and mathematics (c. 3); and, finally, the constitution of natural philosophy or physics (c. 4), which has as its main consideration motion and pursues the principle of motion that all natural things have in themselves (fol. 7).

The first book of the treatise *De corporis naturalis principiis internis*, as its title suggests, explores at length the nature of the principles of corporeal things. It begins with a discussion of the nature of a principle in general (c. 1) before taking up in succession the three Aristotelian principles of motion: (prime) matter (c. 2), form (c. 3), and privation (c. 4). Book two of the *Institutiones physicae* addresses the concept of "nature," its definition, activities and passivity, distinctions

from art, and causality. The third book treats of motion, while the fourth book explores the nature of time. The fifth book offers Jack's astronomical thinking and discusses the movements of the heavens and celestial orbits. Book six concerns "mixed bodies" (*de corpore misto*) and contains discussions of the number of and nature of the elements, "first qualities," alteration, generation, corruption, and even putrefaction. Book seven contains Jack's meteorology in which there is discussion of meteors, thunder, rain, comets, the *Via Lactea* or Milky Way (c. 8), wind, rainbows, etc. In the eighth and final book, Jack addresses the nature of the soul. Here, Jack discusses embryonic gestation vis-à-vis vegetative, sensitive, and rational ensoulment.

Ten years later, in 1624, Jack authored his final treatise, a medical tract that explores a variety of topics related to the medical arts across six books. As is to be expected, the opening book addresses the nature of medicine in general, which he identifies in a threefold manner, namely, the "subject. . . division, and end" (fol. 1). Also unsurprisingly, Jack identifies the cure of the human body as the subject of medicine (*ibid.*). Thus, he says, while it is certainly the case that the human is considered within ethics, physics, and theology, in none of those sciences is the human being considered in relation to health (fol. 2). Subordinate to physics as a lower science and drawing its principles from the conclusions of physics, medicine pertains not only to the human body but also to the instruments (e.g., plants, metals, etc.) that produce health (fol. 2). The end of medicine is equally as obvious as its subject, namely, health and its preservation if it is already present or its restoration if it is absent (fol. 3). The remainder of the work addresses various illnesses (book 2), different kinds of symptoms and their causes (book 3), physiological signs of health (e.g., pulse, urine) and disease (book 4), the application of medication and medical treatments (book 5), and nourishment (book 6).

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Javelli, Giovanni Crisostomo

Born: ca. 1470, Canavese, Italy

Died: ca. 1538, Piacenza, Italy

Leen Spruit

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Abstract

Giovanni Crisostomo Javelli (ca. 1470–ca. 1538) studied theology under Tommaso de Vio (Cajetan); he was involved in the Pomponazzi controversy; he wrote extensive commentaries on the works of Plato and of Aristotle and composed numerous treatises in theology.

Alternate Names

Canapicius; da Casale, Crisostomo; Casale, Crisostomo da

Biography

Giovanni Crisostomo Javelli was born in 1470 (or 1472) in the Italian region of Canavese, possibly in San Giorgio (now San Giorgio Canavese). He entered the Order of the Dominicans in 1485, studied philosophy, and in August 1495 started to study theology in the school of Bologna. Then, he taught logic and natural philosophy there. Probably in these years, he elaborated his teachings in

Logicae compendium peripateticae (1540; 30 editions till 1629) and *Epitome super totam naturalem philosophiam Metaphysicam Aristotelis: necnon subtilissima enucleatio propositionum omnium in Librum de causis* (Javelli 1547). In 1507 he was assigned by the chapter of his Order to the school of Bologna, where he remained till 1512, when he moved to Milan. From 1513 to 1516, he taught again in Bologna. He graduated in theology on February 18, 1516, at the University of Bologna. From 1518 to 1521, he was regent of the school in Bologna and composed his commentaries of the introductory treatise of the first part of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* (published for the first time in the 1596 Venice edition of Aquinas's *Summa*) (Giacon 1944; Lohr 1988; Tavuzzi 1990–1991).

He participated in the contemporary philosophical and theological disputes, in particular in the controversy raised by Pomponazzi's *Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul* (1516). He was asked by Pomponazzi himself to write a confutation of the arguments sustaining the mortality of the soul, published as *Solutiones rationum animae mortalitatem probantium* in the 1519 edition of the *Treatise*, as well as appendix in Pomponazzi's *Defensorium* against Agostino Nifo which appeared in the same year. Javelli returned to discuss this issue in *Tractatus de animae humanae indeficientia* (1536) (Gilson 1961). His interest in Plato's philosophy is witnessed by *Epitome in Ethicen, hoc est, moralem Platonis philosophiam* and *Epitome in Politicam, hoc est civilem Platonis philosophiam* (both: 1536), while his *Philosophia civilis Christiana* (1540) reveals the influence of Ficino. The fifth part of this book is devoted to the confutation of Luther's *De captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae praeludium* (1520).

Javelli moved to Piacenza in 1523, where he published commentaries of Aristotle's natural philosophy. In 1532 he moved to Cremona, where he finished his comment on the *Metaphysics* and the *Politics* (1534 and 1536). In 1534 he also published his commentaries on *Physics* and *De anima* (Javelli 1555; Rhodes 1972).

In the controversy over the annulment of Henry VIII's marriage with Catherina of

Aragon, he defended Henry VIII, in contrast to his fellow friars of the Bologna school. He died probably in 1538 in Piacenza. His complete works, issued in 1568–1574, ran through four reprints until 1580.

Cross-References

► [Pomponazzi, Pietro](#)

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Jerónimo de Santa Fe

► [Lorki, Joshua](#)

Jesenský, Jan

► [Jessenius a Jessen, Johannes](#)

Jessenius a Jessen, Johannes

Born: 27 December 1566, Wrocław

Died: 21 June 1621, Prague

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Abstract

Johannes Jessenius was a physician, anatomist, philosopher, and politician. He introduced the anatomical concepts of the late Renaissance to Central Europe and promoted Italian Renaissance philosophy, in particular, that of Francesco Piccolomini, Francesco Patrizi, and Girolamo Savonarola, in the Central-European region.

Alternate Names

[Jesenský, Jan](#)

Biography

Jessenius studied at universities in Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Padua where he was tutored by the anatomist Girolamo Fabrici ab Aquapendente and the philosopher Francesco Piccolomini. He taught anatomy and surgery in Wittenberg starting in 1593. Jessenius hosted Tycho Brahe for 6 months in Wittenberg in 1599 and later played the role of moderator in the conflict between Brahe and his assistant Johannes Kepler. Jessenius moved to Rudolfin Prague in 1602 where he performed the first public dissection as early as 1600. He entered into the services of King Matthias of Habsburg in Vienna in 1608. He returned to Bohemia in 1617 and was elected rector of the University in Prague; as such, he undertook diplomatic missions in support of the Bohemian Estates revolting against the Habsburgs. Following the

Battle of White Mountain, where the revolt was suppressed, Jessenius was arrested and eventually executed.

Philosophical Works

Apart from a number of medical treatises (Pick 1926), Jessenius was the author of several philosophical books. His Leipzig dissertation (Jessenius 1618) deals with the immortality of the soul in the Aristotelian and Thomistic manner (Sousedík 2009). In his Paduan philosophical dissertation, Jessenius follows the Aristotelianism of his teacher Francesco Piccolomini and made a distinction between metaphysics and natural philosophy and between their different subjects and methods.

After his return from Padua to Silesia and Saxony, Jessenius published the book entitled *Zoroaster* (Jessenius 1593) in Wittenberg which is an excerpt from Francesco Patrizi's work *Nova de universis philosophia*. Jessenius does not mention, however, the actual source of his book and recommends this anti-Aristotelian work to the Saxonian Duke as consisting of Chaldean wisdoms of Zoroaster. In contrast with Patrizi's work, Jessenius omitted Patrizi's "Panaugia," shortened the remaining text, and changed the order of the books of "Panarchia," "Pancosmia," and "Panpsychia."

Jessenius published an edition of Girolamo Savonarola's *Universae philosophiae epitome* in 1596. In the dedication to the Saxonian Duke, he advocated a project derived from the works of his teacher Francesco Piccolomini involving establishing harmony between Plato and Aristotle with the help of Hermetic texts. Jessenius consequently attempted to fulfill this program of concord philosophy in the book *On the Soul and the Body of the Universe* (Jessenius 1605) combining Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy in an eclectic way (Nejeschleba 2014).

Jessenius was partially influenced by Tycho Brahe's thought in the treatise *On the Causes of Sympathy and Antipathy* (Jessenius 1599) which was a disquisition defended in Wittenberg by his pupil Daniel Sennert. Despite Brahe's Paracelsian influence, Jessenius explained the causes of

sympathy and antipathy rather naturalistically with a reference to Italian Aristotelianism and by means of the similarities and dissimilarities of manifest qualities.

As a political thinker, Jessenius published a treatise entitled *Pro vindiciis contra tyrannos* in which he defended the people's right to revolt against a tyrant (Jessenius 1620). The treatise paraphrases older works of “monarchomachs,” in particular *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, and made Jessenius the “ideologist of the Bohemian revolt” (Sousedík 1995).

Cross-References

- [Piccolomini, Francesco](#)
- [Savonarola, Girolamo](#)
- [Sennert, Daniel](#)

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Jesuit Aristotelianism of Coimbra

- [Conimbricense, Collegium](#)

Jesuit Commentaries of Coimbra on Aristotle

- [Conimbricense, Collegium](#)

Jesuits in the Early Modern Period

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Abstract

The Society of Jesus is a religious order founded by Ignatius of Loyola and officially approved by Pope Paul III on 27 September 1540 with the bull *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae*. The structure of the Society of Jesus was regulated by the *Formula vivendi* and the *Constitutions*. It was an order of “clerics regular,” similar to those founded in the Tridentine age, but with a strong vocation for militant action in defense of the

Church. In order to make this objective concrete, the Society decided to renounce community life and prayer in chorus, so as to make possible the mobility necessary to satisfy the apostolic and missionary commitment for which the Society was founded. From the earliest years following their official recognition, alongside missionary activity the Society distinguished itself through its efforts in the field of education, opening numerous schools and colleges in the early 1550s. Education as a central activity in the life of the Society was more precisely defined during the course of the sixteenth century. The pedagogical system developed within the Society underwent continuous evolution, until a stable program was achieved in 1599 with the publication of the *Ratio studiorum Societatis Iesu*. This document, alongside the *Constitutions*, set out the regulation of studies of the Society. Thanks to the Society's educational activities, in the early modern age its colleges became important places of intellectual advancement in the theological, philosophical, and scientific fields.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Foundation of the Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus is a religious order founded by Ignatius of Loyola and officially approved by Pope Paul III on 27 September 1540 with the bull *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae* (O'Malley 1995). Ignatius, who was baptized with the name Iñigo, was the son of a cadet branch of the nobility of the Spanish Basque country. He was born around 1491 and was educated in the principles of chivalry. In 1521, when conflict broke out between the Valois King Francis I and Spain, ruled by the Habsburg Emperor Charles V, Iñigo entered the Spanish army and took part in the defense of the city of Pamplona when it was besieged by French troops. In the conflict he suffered a serious leg injury; and during the long period of recovery, following many operations, he began a series of readings on themes such as the life of Christ, which greatly influenced his religious sensibility. Converted to a life of faith, Iñigo decided to

embark on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he arrived in 1523. Returning to Europe, after a short time, he traveled to the most important universities of Spain, including Alcalá de Henares and Salamanca. Persecuted by the Spanish Inquisition for his alleged closeness to the Alumbrados movement, whose followers practiced a mystical form of Christianity, Iñigo decided to move to Paris, the main European center for the study of theology. In February 1528 he enrolled at the Collège de Montaigu and in 1529 at the Collège de Saint-Barbe. In Paris the original nucleus of companions forming the Society of Jesus took shape. Next to Iñigo, who from this moment began to call himself Ignatius, were two other figures: Pierre Favre (1506–1546) and Francis Xavier (1506–1552). They were later joined by Simão Rodriguez (1510–1579), Diego Laínez (1512–1565), Alfonso Salmerón (1515–1585), and Nicolás Bobadilla (1511–1590). On August 15, 1534, on the hill of Montmartre in Paris, the seven companions pronounced the vows that bound them to each other. After their initial idea of leaving for Jerusalem, they promised to make themselves available to the pope and to go wherever he might send them.

In 1539 the companions moved to Rome to discuss the future of their association. To set out the characteristics of the order, they wrote the *Formula vivendi*, the document which, as the “plan of life” of the association, was submitted to the pope's scrutiny. The religious experience originating from the union of the seven companions was officially recognized in 1540 by Paul III with the bull *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae*. In accordance with the pope's indications, the following year the members of the Society elected Ignatius as superior general. Subsequently, the *Formula vivendi* was adopted. From this commitment the *Constitutions*, which Ignatius wrote in Rome, took shape. Among other things, the *Constitutions* regulated the organization of the Society. It was an order of “clerics regular,” similar to those founded in the Tridentine age, but with a strong vocation for militant action in defense of the Church and the pope.

During the sixteenth century, the Society assumed the structure that characterized it until the suppression (1773) and again after the

restoration (1814). The degrees of Jesuit formation were organized in stages, beginning with 2 years of novitiate, at the end of which the aspiring Jesuits, called scholastics, would pronounce three simple and perpetual vows. Then came 2 years of classical and scientific studies, followed by 3 years of philosophy, at the end of which the scholastic would receive priestly ordination. Next generally came 4 years of theological studies. The formation process concluded with another year of novitiate, called the “third probation,” at the end of which the Jesuit pronounced the three solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, becoming a professed member of the Society, and the fourth vow of special obedience to the pontiff. Alongside the professed members, there were other figures in the Society: spiritual coadjutors, who pronounced only the three simple vows, and temporal coadjutors, normally employed in temporal tasks.

Education in the Society of Jesus

From the earliest years following their official recognition, alongside missionary activity, the Society distinguished itself for its efforts in the field of education. In the early 1550s, the Jesuits began to open numerous schools. Education as a central activity in the life of the Society was more precisely defined during the course of the sixteenth century. In 1560, Juan Alfonso de Polanco, the secretary of Ignatius, wrote a missive to all the superiors of the Order, in which he discussed the methods necessary to help others. He dealt with the education of the young in letters, in doctrine, and in Christian life as a fundamental ministry that defined Jesuit identity (Casalini 2018).

During the sixteenth century, as a result of the Society’s expansion, the problem of guaranteeing that future members of the Order received an adequate education emerged. The *Formula vivendi* prescribed the establishment of institutions alongside the universities for training members of the Order. The Jesuit colleges took shape from the application of this disposition. These structures, initially dedicated to the formation of clerics, were subsequently opened to young people who did not intend to take vows. The colleges hosted the scholastics who were attending classes

at the university. In 1544 there were seven colleges of this type: Paris, Leuven, Cologne, Padua, Alcalá, Valencia, and Coimbra (Grendler 2017; Mattei and Casalini 2016; Maryks 2012; Brizzi and Greci 2001; Giard 1995).

In response to the requests of the wife of the Viceroy of Sicily, in 1548, Ignatius sent some of the leading Jesuits to Messina in order to establish a college. A group of them, including Jeronimo Nadal and Pietro Canisio, were sent to Messina to teach disciplines such as theology, casuistry, the arts, rhetoric, and grammar. The commitment made by the most influential aristocratic families to the foundation of the college of Messina was aimed at ensuring that their children could receive a high-level education. That this college was open to young people who were not destined to enter the Society of Jesus distinguished it from the educational institutions previously founded by the Society. On the basis of its success in Messina, the dignitaries of the city of Palermo asked Ignatius to establish a college in their city, a request to which he willingly agreed.

In 1551 the Collegio Romano (Roman College) was opened and was later elevated to the rank of a university. The Collegio Romano soon became a model for all the other educational institutions established by the Society. Its success was based on excellent teachers and excellent teaching techniques. Some of the most important Jesuits of the early modern age taught there: Francisco de Toledo from 1559, Juan de Mariana from 1561, and the German mathematician Christopher Clavius from 1564. Important theologians were also active at the Collegio Romano such as Gregorio de Valencia, Francesco Bellarmino, Benet Perera, Francisco Suárez, and Athanasius Kircher (Casalini and Sander 2017; Casalini and Pavur 2016; Sander 2014; Ponzio 2014). Many of these teachers had themselves been among the early students there, including Clavius, Bellarmino, and Perera.

The pedagogical system developed by the Society from its origins and adopted at the Collegio Romano was based on the *modus Parisiensis*, which Ignatius himself had experienced during his time at the Collège de Montaigu in Paris. It provided a detailed program of lessons, culminating in the study of theology, that were

carried out in parallel with the tutorials, repetitions, and discussions in which the students were involved. The importance of the *modus Parisiensis* in the formation of the Jesuit teaching method emerges clearly from the words of Ignatius's secretary, Polanco: speculating on benefits that instituting this pedagogical system in the Collegio Romano could bring, he wrote that "it will be a wonderful help in Italy, where two things are missing especially in schools: a well-ordered program of lessons and exercises to ensure the assimilation of materials. We therefore hope that diligent students will benefit more from a short time with us than in long periods spent elsewhere; and perhaps other schools will improve, inspired by our example."

In 1552, Jeronimo Nadal, dean of the new College of Messina, wrote *De studii generalis dispositione et ordine* (On the Arrangement and Order of the Studium Generale), one of the first scholastic regulations of the Society. The pedagogical system developed within the Society underwent continuous evolution, until a stable program was achieved in 1599 with the publication of the *Ratio studiorum Societatis Iesu* (Rule of Studies of the Society of Jesus) (Gilbert 2014; Bianchini 2014; Forlivesi 2010; Pavur 2005; Nelles 2004; Padberg 2000; Brizzi 1981). This document, alongside the *Constitutions*, represented the Society's regimen of studies.

The didactic organization designed by Ignatius excluded elementary education. It was important to dedicate time to the teaching of the rudiments of literacy, but only those who had a minimum level of preparation could be accepted into the schools of the Society. This first phase of education was called "Lower Grammar" (*Infima Grammatica*) and generally consisted of only 1 year; though, in some cases, it was spread over 2 years. The second and third courses, called "Middle and Upper Grammar" (*Media et Suprema Grammatica*), respectively, completed the first cycle of studies, necessary to provide students with an in-depth knowledge of Latin. The second cycle of studies was called "Humanist Disciplines" (*Humanitas*) and consisted of two classes: poetry and rhetoric. These first two cycles of studies composed the so-called Lower Studies (Codina Mir 1968). Over time, to provide

students with an ever higher standard of education, the Society organized a university-level education system, based primarily on the teaching of theology, philosophy, science, and mathematics (De Aldama 1989).

Despite the prescriptions established in the *Constitutions* and in other documents concerning education, the activities offered in the colleges of the Society were not always uniform. In many cases the Jesuits had to adapt their educational program to contingencies, placing greater emphasis on certain subjects to the detriment of others. During the seventeenth century, for example, many of the Society's schools limited themselves to teaching the so-called Minor Disciplines: 3 years of grammar, a year of poetry and history, and another year of rhetoric. In other cases, as for example in the Collegio Romano, the program included, along with the Minor Disciplines, the teaching of university subjects, the so-called Higher Disciplines, a course of studies that culminated in theology. The Society integrated the *modus Parisiensis* with Aristotelian philosophy, humanist disciplines, and Thomist theology. Before embarking on the course of philosophy, preparatory to the study of theology, students were required to have attended 2 years of rhetoric, the subject at the basis of the humanist disciplines.

During the sixteenth century, in order to implement concretely the intentions developed in the *Ratio studiorum*, the Jesuits began to write manuals and texts for teaching, which were gradually adopted in the colleges of the Society and which remained in fashion until the eighteenth century. Within a few years, the Society's colleges were opened throughout Europe and in the territories where the Jesuits were engaged in missions. On Ignatius's death, in 1556, it administered more than 30 colleges, of which 19 were located in Italy. Following the diffusion of the colleges, the Society needed to define precisely the Jesuits' commitment to the field of education. Since the *Formula vivendi* did not specify anything concerning this aspect of the Society's work, the role of the educational ministry in its life was defined in the *Constitutions*. The *Constitutions* offered the normative framework within which the Society's pedagogical activity was to take

place, regulating the order in which the disciplines were to be taught, the method to be used in teaching them, and the texts which the students were to study. Furthermore, the *Constitutions* expressed two fundamental principles: first, that each educational institution of the Society should finance itself; secondly, that the students of the colleges should study for free. This second principle, however, did not translate into education addressed exclusively to the poor. The Society's colleges maintained a close relationship with the most influential European families, who sought to give their children the high standard of education provided by the Jesuits. This led to the creation of "Schools for Nobles" (*Seminaria nobilem*), institutions dedicated to the formation of young people of the ruling classes.

Philosophy in Jesuit Education

In the educational system based on the *modus Parisiensis*, theology was at the top of the pyramid of the disciplines to be taught, with all other disciplines considered as preparatory to its study. Among the Higher Disciplines taught at university level, philosophy nevertheless occupied a place of great importance (Casalini 2019; Schmutz 2010). As early as 1547, Ignatius had assigned to the Society the task of teaching not only theology but also philosophy, mathematics, and the natural sciences.

At the University of Paris, where Ignatius and his first companions had studied, the philosophy course included the teaching of various disciplines, such as logic, dialectics, physics, astronomy, metaphysics, and ethics. Following the foundation of its first universities, the Society adopted the program of Higher Studies used at the university colleges in Paris.

Just as theology was taught in the light of the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, the study of philosophy was conducted on the basis of the works of Aristotle (Casalini 2017; Blackwell 1999; Simmons 1999; Lohr 1976). The importance of these two authorities, Thomas and Aristotle, was explicitly stated in the fourth part of the *Constitutions*. The central role of Thomas in Christian theology was sanctioned by the Fifth Lateran Council in 1513 with the bull *Regiminis Apostolici*

and reiterated in 1567 with the bull *Mirabilis Deus*. Assigning the role of *Doctor Ecclesiae* to Thomas was a response to the teaching of the natural philosophy, especially at the University of Padua, inspired by the commentaries of Averroes and based on the separation of reason and faith (Hellyer 2005). By contrast, the Society's choice of Thomas's doctrine was based on the doctrine of the compatibility of reason and revelation, between nature and grace. According to Jesuit theology, which had important repercussions on the theological anthropology developed by the Society since the time of Ignatius, grace was not the only instrument necessary for salvation, but it was also a fundamental means to bring man's nature to fulfillment. In this way, alongside the grace bestowed freely by God, man had to rely on free will, thus taking part in his own salvation. Essential to the philosophical system of the Society was the harmonization of Aristotle's teachings with Christian principles, in particular with Thomist doctrine. The centrality of Thomas in the construction of the theological and philosophical system of the Society did not, however, prevent some Jesuits from taking account of other positions such as Scotism. This "eclectic" attitude led to many criticisms of the Society and accusations against it.

The Collegio Romano, where some of its most important professors taught, was one of the main places where, through numerous and at times very heated debates, a shared philosophical and theological vision took shape over time within the Society (Gilbert 2006; Villoslada 1954). These debates, besides contributing to the construction of a uniform pedagogical system, had a leading role in the formation of the Society's identity, in the fields of both philosophy and theology. In order to standardize the course of studies in its colleges and the method of teaching the various disciplines, in 1599, during Claudio Acquaviva's generalship of the Order, the *Ratio studiorum* was drafted. This document, which formally established the rules regarding the education of Jesuits, was the result of the efforts of numerous academics in the Society and had important consequences for the teaching of philosophy. One aspect that emerges clearly from the *Ratio studiorum*: the study of philosophy was conceived

as preparatory to the study of theology. Nadal summarized this concept, which was then taken up and formalized in the *Ratio studiorum*: “The liberal arts and the natural sciences prepare the intellect for the study of theology and enable the proper understanding of it and its employment, and of themselves tend toward the same end.” The idea that knowledge of philosophy was instrumental to the study of theology influenced the way that the philosophical disciplines were taught within the Society.

Different disciplines were placed under the heading “philosophy,” according to the division proposed by Aristotle: natural sciences, psychology, moral philosophy, and metaphysics. The study of these disciplines was conducted on the basis of the works of Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition: logic was taught from the *Organon*; natural sciences from the *Physics*, *De caelo*, the *Parva naturalia*, and the *Meteorology*; psychology from *De anima*; and moral philosophy from the *Ethics*. The philosophy course lasted three and a half years. Philosophical subjects were studied one at a time, starting with logic, moving on to natural philosophy, and finishing with metaphysics and psychology. Little space was reserved for moral philosophy, but many topics dealt with in this subject were addressed in subsequent courses in theology.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Aristotle and the Teaching of Metaphysics in the Society of Jesus

In the field of philosophy, the transition from the medieval to the early modern period, via the Renaissance and the rise of humanism, constitutes a moment of discontinuity, of critical recovery, and of redefining concepts developed in the Middle Ages. In philosophy, the authority of Aristotle, which, together with the theology of Thomas, was the foundation on which scholasticism had taken shape and which the Church had assumed as its own theological-philosophical system, was called into question. The translation of Plato’s dialogues into Latin, together with new astronomical discoveries, weakened the grip of Aristotelianism, and consequently of scholasticism, on philosophers.

Despite these developments, the importance of scholasticism as the Church’s theological-philosophical system was confirmed, and Aristotelian teachings continued to play an authoritative role in Catholic theology. The *Metaphysics*, the work that Aristotle composed in his maturity, was still regarded as the best introduction to the study of theology. In this regard, the Dominican Order had a leading part. In Dominican schools, the theology of Thomas was taught in parallel with the philosophy of Aristotle. This teaching strategy was an attempt to counter various currents that had developed, in the first place in the Order of Friars Minor, within scholasticism during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, based on the thought of John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.

The Council of Trent (1545–1563), primarily as a response to the Protestant Reformation, reaffirmed the role of scholasticism as the foundation for the teaching of theology. Yet, while this remained the general framework within which the Catholic Church developed its thinking on the relationship between philosophy and theology, Aristotelian philosophy nevertheless underwent a process of re-elaboration in the Catholic world. The rigid doctrines of Aristotelian philosophy were ill suited to the new currents that emerged in the sixteenth century. It was felt necessary to deal with philosophical themes more freely, even though the place that Aristotle had occupied during the Middle Ages was defended.

In this process, which began in Italy and achieved its most important results in the Iberian peninsula, the Society’s theologians took the lead. Following the Protestant Reformation, some Jesuit theologians undertook a rethinking of the relationship between reason and the supernatural, coming up with new interpretations that led to a reformulation of Aristotelian metaphysics independent of divine revelation. Of great importance for the evolution of the Society’s theological and philosophical thought were the writings of Benet Perera (1535–1610), a professor of Sacred Scripture at the Roman College (Lamanna 2014a, b, 2019; Casalini 2017; Casalini and Pavur 2016; Carvalho 2014; Gilbert 2014; Ventimiglia 2014). Perera, who was also active in the field of natural

philosophy, grasped the spirit with which in 1547 Ignatius had assigned the task of teaching to the Society and engaged in the study of the relationship between philosophy, mathematics, and natural sciences. In a series of works seeking to reconcile Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy, Perera supported the value of philosophical freedom, affirming the primacy of reason to the detriment of the authority of philosophers in the scientific disciplines. This idea, which implied the concept of a twofold truth – of faith and of reason – led to accusations of Averroism from some teachers at the Collegio Romano, such as Achille Gagliardi, a professor of scholastic theology, and Giovanni Pietro Maffei and Benedetto Giustiniani, professors of rhetoric. Diego de Ledesma, who held the chair of “Theological Controversies,” also took a stand against Perera’s philosophical theses (Sander 2014). Gagliardi, criticizing the work of General Évrard Mercurian, who in his opinion had not opposed Perera’s theses, sought support from Gregory XIII. The pope, in order to mend a breach that could have undermined the Society’s unity, decided to condemn Gagliardi, Maffei, and Giustiniani to a month in prison and to suspend them *a divinis* for a year (Sander 2014; Blum 2012: 141–147; Henrici 2006).

In his treatise *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principijs et affectionibus* (On the Common Principles and Properties of All Natural Things), published in 1576, Perera also promoted the idea that experience is the essential basis of philosophical investigation. He argued that, unlike natural philosophy, mathematics and geometry cannot be considered perfect sciences, as they do not concern the causes that determine the nature of things. Natural philosophy, the perfect science by definition, uses mathematics and geometry only for the purpose of explaining the data of experience. For these reasons, Perera’s work was cited and appreciated by Galileo.

Alongside Perera stands the figure of the Portuguese Jesuit Pedro de Fonseca (1528–1599) (Martins 2019; Dvorák 2009; Martins 1994). From 1571 until his death, Fonseca worked on his *In libros Metaphysicorum*, one of the first modern commentaries on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. The

method adopted by Fonseca in his commentary represented an innovation in the panorama of studies on Aristotelian philosophy. The commentary was placed next to the original Greek text and was flanked by the Latin translation and references to the main texts of the ancient and medieval tradition. Obeying an assignment received from the Superior General Acquaviva, in the early 1590s, Fonseca began the collection entitled *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis* (Commentaries of the College of Coimbra), also known as the *Conimbricenses*. This work, to which many professors of the College of Coimbra made contributions, had a remarkable diffusion over many editions and was adopted as the main manual of philosophy in the colleges of the Society. Between 1592 and 1606 five volumes in the series of *Commentarii* were published, including commentaries on the *Physics*, *Ethics*, *De anima*, and the writings on logic and natural philosophy of Aristotle. In 1668, taking up the tradition inaugurated by Fonseca in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Silvestro Mauro, a professor at the Collegio Romano, published his *Aristotelis Opera omnia* (Aristotle’s Complete Works), a commentary on all the works of Aristotle, with Greek text and Latin translation.

A fundamental role in the development of the Second Scholastic was played by the theologian Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), a professor at the Collegio Romano and later at the universities of Coimbra, Salamanca, and Alcalá (Hill 2019; Maryks and Senet de Frutos 2019; Fink 2015; Darge 2014; Gordley 2012; Heider 2007). After devoting himself to studying and commenting on Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, Suárez undertook the revitalization of the scholastic tradition by adapting its language to the context of the Spanish Counter-Reformation.

Later, Suárez concentrated on metaphysics, in order to offer theology students a necessary manual for their education. In 1594 his *Disputationes metaphysicae* (Metaphysical Disputations) were published, a significant innovation in the panorama of philosophical studies. Suárez’s teachings, departing from a tradition which had developed in the Middle Ages, was not a simple commentary on Aristotle’s metaphysics but instead a systematic treatise on being, God, and creatures in

general, based on a critical analysis of numerous ancient and contemporary authors. The *Disputationes*, which became a fundamental text on metaphysics, adopted in many courses of philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was divided into two parts. The first, in which Suárez writes of being as such, its properties, and its causes, and the second, dedicated to the study of particular beings, for example the infinite entity, God, and finite beings, creatures. Going beyond Thomist thinking based on the analogy of being – the idea that being in general and God coincide – Suárez supported the uniqueness of being. Being is unique and incorporates in itself many beings, even including God, the infinite being but still less than being in general (Ashworth 2008).

The impact of Suárez's teachings on seventeenth-century philosophy was remarkable. His thought was so influential that it gave rise to a philosophical current called "Suarezismus," which found its *raison d'être* in the melding of scholastic doctrine and empirical investigation, with particular attention to problems arising in late sixteenth-century society. During the seventeenth century the teachings of Suárez became the foundation for philosophical studies in the Society's colleges. The study of philosophy by means of the systematic method was the basis of the work of various Jesuit philosophers, such as the Spaniard Gabriel Vázquez (1549–1604), the author of the *Disputationes metaphysicae*, published posthumously in 1618, and Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, a professor of Pamplona, who published his *Disputationes de universa philosophia* (Disputations on Universal Philosophy) in 1632 (Caruso 1979). The *Summa totius philosophiae* (Summary of All Philosophy) and *Divi Thomae doctrina* (The Doctrine of St. Thomas), published from 1618 to 1623, philosophy courses based on the lectures held at the College of Brera in Milan by Cosimo Alamanni (1559–1634), became celebrated.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the scholastic model, grounded in the authority of Aristotle and Thomas, on which the Society had built its philosophical and theological system, entered a period of crisis. Among the multiple

factors that brought about this situation were the intellectual debates at the turn of the seventeenth century featuring rationalist ideas, empirical philosophies, astronomical discoveries, and especially Cartesian thought, which highlighted the insufficiency of scholasticism as a means of understanding reality. Some Jesuits proved open to dialogue with the new seventeenth-century philosophical ideas, committing themselves to a critical re-interpretation of the traditional foundations of scholasticism in the light of the ideas of René Descartes, Nicolas de Malebranche, Pierre Gassendi, John Locke, and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz. This attitude, which affected numerous colleges of the Society, especially in France, generated criticism from the superiors of the Order, because openness to Cartesian philosophical ideas might cast doubt on the scholastic model, on which the Society had constructed its theological and philosophical teachings.

In order to remedy this situation, in 1651 Francesco Piccolomini, the Society's Superior General, prohibited the teaching of 65 philosophical propositions. The Superior General Michelangelo Tamburini did likewise in 1706, prohibiting 30 propositions from the texts of Descartes, Malebranche, Locke, and Leibniz. Despite the position taken by the superior generals of the Society, some Jesuits were committed to demonstrating the compatibility between the principles of scholastic doctrine and seventeenth-century scientific discoveries. Honoré Fabri, a professor in Lyon, was a spokesman for this position, while distancing himself, in his *Philosophia universa* (Universal Philosophy), of 1646, from Cartesian thought. The same line of reasoning was taken up by Giovanni Battista Tolomei, the author of *Philosophia mentis et sensuum* (Philosophy of the Mind and of the Senses), published in 1696.

The Relationship Between Grace and Free Will: Jesuit Theological Anthropology

To counter the idea of predestination formulated by Protestant theologians during the sixteenth century, the gathering of churchmen in the Council of Trent affirmed that the sin of Adam, although transmitted to all mankind, did not entail the extinction of free will, but only its weakening.

Human nature, therefore, was wounded but not irremediably corrupted by original sin. On the basis of the decrees formulated by the Council of Trent and the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina (1535–1600) supported the idea that grace confirms, rather than eliminates, humankind's freedom. According to Molina, God knows from eternity those who are damned and those who are saved not by predestination but by his prediction of human merits or demerits. In 1584 Molina retired to Lisbon, where he composed some of his most important works. Among these was his *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratie donis* (The Concord of Free Will and the Gifts of Grace), published in 1588, in which he argued that, although human freedom cannot be regarded as free in itself, divine grace nevertheless does not pre-determine human actions, because they are based on free will. Molina's ideas, from which the current of thought called "Molinism" was born, generated an important debate in the Society on theological anthropology (Aichele 2013, 2019; Brett 2014; Cruz 2014; Perszyk 2013; Costello 1974).

Francisco de Toledo (1532–1596), a professor of metaphysics and scholastic theology at the Collegio Romano, developed his thought along the same lines as Molina (Tropia 2019; Dvorák 2009). Writing on the theme of predestination, which became central to theological reflection following the Protestant Reformation, Toledo supported the theory of predestination *post praevisa merita*, which was founded on the idea that God gives effective grace and perseverance to those whom he recognizes as capable of responding positively to it. This theory was initially criticized by the other professors at the Collegio Romano, because it was considered a novelty with respect to the traditional doctrine. Over time, however, the theory of predestination developed by Toledo was widely accepted in the Society.

The theological anthropology elaborated by Molina not only attracted criticism from within the Society. Outside it as well, Molina's theories provoked intense debates. The primary critics of his teachings were Dominican theologians, such

as Domingo Bañez (1528–1604), a professor at the University of Salamanca. Dominican theologians accused Molina and the Jesuit theologians in general of proclaiming a sort of "Pelagianism," aimed at extolling man's free will to the detriment of the role of divine grace in salvation. In turn, the Jesuits accused the Dominican theologians, who, in their opinion, tended to attribute excessive importance to divine prescience and thus to eliminate the role of human merit, of "Calvinism."

Francisco Suárez participated in this dispute and promoted an intermediate and conciliatory position between the opposing sides. In 1599, he published some *Opuscula theologica*, in which he developed his theological anthropology. The two most important points of Suárez's thought were, firstly, that divine predestination does not annul free will, and, secondly, that divine grace is not distributed according to the prediction of human merits, as some Jesuits, including Molina, thought, but instead prior to it. This second assumption guaranteed the completely free and equal character of the divine act of distribution of grace. Of particular importance among his *Opuscula theologica* is the treatise *De concursu et efficaci auxilio Dei ad actus liberi arbitrii necessario* (On the Necessary Combination and Efficacious Help of God with the Act of Free Will), in which Suárez argued that human will has in itself the power necessary for its own determination. In other words, the intervention of divine grace is essential for the good use of free will, but at the same time, it is necessary for human will to accept grace and put it to good use. In this way, the position supported by the theologians close to the Molina and the opposing position supported by the Dominicans were reconciled by Suárez through teachings that were to leave a profound impression on the anthropological vision of the Society. The divine action of giving grace, an action which cannot be understood by humans because their nature is limited, attains its fullest meaning in the light of human freedom. Moreover, free will is necessary to understand that, in the absence of supernatural intervention, humans cannot achieve salvation (Esposito 2014; Courtine 1990; Giacon 1944). It was on the basis of this position that the distinction between "sufficient" and "effective" grace took shape: sufficient grace,

once given to a human being, makes freedom of will potentially active; effective grace allows freedom of will to fulfill itself effectively.

A leading role in the dispute concerning the relationship between grace and free will was played by Roberto Bellarmino (1542–1621), a professor at the Collegio Romano. Bellarmino, trying to mediate between the two opposing positions, did not propose to resolve the dispute through a doctrinal definition, but rather sought to promote the dispute for constructive purposes, leaving the debate open to different currents of thought. This orientation aimed to avoid mutual condemnations which could have weakened Catholic thought to the advantage of Protestant denominations. For Bellarmino, from the doctrinal point of view, accepting one of the two positions would have resulted in the condemnation of the opposing position, provoking a clear and incurable fracture between grace and free will. Drawing on the courses on “Theological Controversies” that he held at the Collegio Romano between 1586 and 1593, Bellarmino published *Disputazioni sulle controversie della fede cristiana con gli eretici del nostro tempo* (Disputations on the Controversies of the Christian Faith with the Heretics of Our Time), in which he gave systematic form to his proposal for mediating between the controversies that had arisen in the Catholic world.

To calm down a dispute that could have caused an irredeemable rupture within Catholicism, in 1602 Clement VIII established the *Congregazione de auxiliis divinae gratiae* (Congregation on the Help of Divine Grace), initially composed of eight theologians, predominantly Dominicans. The congregation decided to condemn 60 theses extracted from the Molina’s *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratie donis*, which were reduced to 20 following the entry of two Jesuit theologians into the congregation. In 1607 Paul V ordered the dissolution of the congregation and officially stated that there were no heretical propositions in Molina’s treatise. This pronouncement, which exonerated Molina’s teachings from the accusation of heresy, left open the dispute between the two opposing sides: those who exalted the role of grace and those who also wanted to value the role of human free will in salvation.

The lack of a definitive pronouncement by the Roman Church on the dispute *De auxiliis* meant that during the seventeenth century, the theme of the relationship between grace and free will again split Catholic thought. Controversies concerning predestination returned to the center of the Catholic theological-doctrinal debate on the basis of the ideas supported by the theologian Michel De Bay, a professor at the University of Leuven, who exalted the role of divine grace to the detriment of human free will in salvation.

Equally important was the Synod of Dordrecht, convened by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1618 in order to heal the fracture produced within the Dutch church following the ideas advocated by the Remonstrants, who, basing themselves on the teachings of Jacob Arminius, affirmed, in opposition to the traditional Calvinist doctrine, that human beings are able to resist grace and that divine election was founded on the divine prediction of human merit. The Synod of Dordrecht ended in 1619 with the rejection of the Remonstrants’ thesis, reestablishing traditional Calvinist doctrine.

Even more significant for the discussion of the relationship between grace and free will was the publication in 1640 of the treatise *Augustinus*, composed by the bishop of Ypres, Cornelis Jansen (1585–1638), and published 2 years after his death. Trained at the University of Leuven, Jansen, in his *Augustinus*, relying on the doctrine of Augustine, affirmed that Christ had not died for all of humanity and that, therefore, divine grace was not given to all humankind, but only to a part of them, who were saved independently of the divine prediction of their merits. The publication of Jansen’s treatise, which was an immediate success, widened the controversy that had opened following the publication of Molina’s writings in the late sixteenth century. Jesuit theologians, advocating the thesis that free will is fundamental to salvation, were at the forefront of the opposition to the Jansenist doctrine, giving rise to a controversy which, despite repeated condemnations of Jansenism by the Church of Rome, left a profound mark on the identity of European Catholicism throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The theological anthropology elaborated in the Society of Jesus also had important consequences on Jesuit moral theology, a field of study that, between the sixteenth and seventeenth century, became a subject in itself. Starting from the idea that human nature is not irreparably corrupted by original sin, the Jesuits developed an optimistic attitude towards the life of man in society. This orientation in the field of morality, called “probabilism” (Maryks 2008; Schmitz 1990), together with the development of the “casuistry”, that is, the study of the single cases that challenged the conscience of the faithful, was strongly criticized by the rigorist and Jansenist currents (Ginzburg and Biasori 2018; Quantin 2001). The role of the Jesuits in the development of probabilism and “casuistry” was decisive. For example, the *Ratio studiorum* foresaw the teaching of cases of conscience, and in 1600, Giovanni Azor (1535–1603), professor of the Roman College, inaugurated the literary genre of “Moral Institutions,” which provided priests with information about the practice of confession. Some Jesuits distinguished themselves in the field of moral theology, such as Suárez, Gabriel Vasquez (1549–1604) and Antonio Escobar y Mendoza (1589–1669).

Natural Law, Positive Law: The Relationship Between the Church and Temporal Power

In the field of natural law and positive law, important innovations occurred during the period of humanism and the Renaissance. The discovery of the New World, which revealed the existence of previously unknown populations, and the formation of nation states in a manner that was increasingly independent of the power of the Church of Rome, stirred up a vigorous debate concerning the nature of human beings and their rights, on the one hand, and the nature of sovereign power and the relationship between church and state, on the other. In this context, the scholastic theological-philosophical system began to be regarded as inadequate for understanding a rapidly changing reality. Some intellectuals began to rethink traditional ideas according to new perspectives that were better suited to the analysis of the social, political, and economic

developments that affected the world during the sixteenth century. Among these intellectuals, the Spanish Jesuits, together with the Dominicans, played a leading role (Nelson 2005; Höpfl 2004).

Based on the teachings of Francisco de Vitoria, a Dominican professor at the University of Salamanca, Suárez made a significant contribution to the study of natural law (Coujou 2015; Courtine 1999; Ferraro 1990). In 1612, he published *De legibus* (On the Laws), a systematic treatise on moral philosophy and law, in which, referring to the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, he reflected on the nature and significance of law in the formation of civil society. There are two types of law according to Suárez. On the one hand, there is natural law, which is inherent in every human being and which is capable of acting on free will to accomplish good; this law constitutes the reflection of divine law in humankind. On the other hand, there is positive law, which is promulgated by a body possessing legislative power and which, therefore, is not inherent to humankind, but is instead imposed by God or by human beings. Once again, referring to what de Vitoria had said about the law of nations, Suárez maintained that the *ius gentium* (law of nations) belongs to the category of positive law but has a character of universality that brings it closer to natural law. For Suárez, law would make no sense without the Thomist concept of the hierarchy of laws.

Suárez's views on natural and positive law had immediate consequences for the idea of the nature of the state and the formation of political society. Adopting a Thomist perspective, he regarded human beings as social animals, who therefore naturally aspire to live in contact with other humans. In order for civil society to be balanced and orderly, the presence of a sovereign authority, which derives its mandate and its legitimacy directly from God, is indispensable. It is God who recognizes the authority of the community as an organic body. Subsequently, power is transferred completely and irrevocably from the community to the prince, intended as an instrument delegated to the political command of society. According to Suárez's thesis, legislative activity is the responsibility of the legitimate authority and

must conform to natural law. If this does not happen, the community, while not being able to resort to tyrannicide, is entitled to use force for defensive purposes, so as to impose respect for natural law on authority. The relationship between Christian authority and constituted authority was an issue of considerable importance in the debates that arose in the modern age within the Society.

The position of Juan de Mariana (1563–1624), professor of exegesis at the Collegio Romano from 1561 and later of theology in Paris, was important in this regard. In 1599 Mariana published *De rege et regis institutione* (On the King and the Education of the King), in which he supported the legitimacy of tyrannicide in cases where the prince does not respect religion and the common good. Mariana's writing generated a powerful debate both within and without the Society. In the face of the many criticisms which Mariana's views received, General Claudio Acquaviva condemned his treatise (Braun 2007).

The relationship between natural law and positive law also had important implications as regards the relationship between temporal authority and ecclesiastical power. Once again, Suárez's views, in *De legibus*, in particular, and those of the theologians of the Second Scholastic, in general, played a leading role. Suárez recognized the separation between spiritual authority, which belongs to ecclesiastical powers, and political authority, which pertains to secular powers. Moreover, while denying the right to wage war for territorial expansion, he supported, on the basis of Thomas Aquinas's writings, the right to wage a just war where necessary to repair violations of the law of nations. In theory there is no need for an authority to proclaim this right because it is inherent in the *ius gentium*. In order for a defensive war to be considered legitimate, however, it must be declared by a constituted and legitimate authority.

Debate within the Society on natural and positive law assumed a particular relevance following the discovery of the New World (Catto et al. 2010; Clossey 2008; Broggio 2004). These geographical discoveries led to a dispute between jurists, theologians, and missionaries concerning the natural rights of the indigenous peoples of America. At first, it was asked whether these populations

had the right of individual liberty, whether they were entitled to possess the land on which they were born, and whether the king of Spain had direct dominion over them. These questions led to the dispute of Valladolid, held between 1550 and 1551, in which the central question concerned the right of the Spanish king to wage war against the American Indians before their conversion. The Jesuits made a very important contribution to this controversy, in which the foundations of modern international law were laid and which involved some of the best-known jurists and theologians active in the second half of the sixteenth century. Because of their missionary commitment, which brought them into direct contact with the indigenous peoples of Central America, members of the Society, as well as the Dominicans, began to reflect on the problems arising from the geographical discoveries. Some Jesuits, at least in the initial phase of colonization and evangelization of the Americas, were in favor of the conversion of the Indians by means of coercion. Others, however, openly criticized this method and engaged in the gradual conversion of indigenous peoples. For example, there were Jesuits who devoted themselves to the study of the history of the Incas in order to find possible links between indigenous devotional practices and the Christian religion.

The figure of José de Acosta (1540–1600), a Jesuit active in missions in Peru and Mexico, is particularly important in this regard. In 1571 Acosta published *De procuranda indorum salute* (On Providing Salvation for the Indians), in which, defending Native Americans on the basis of a natural right inherent in human beings, he criticized those who claimed that they could not achieve eternal salvation. In 1589, he reiterated these ideas in *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Natural and Moral History of the Indies). Acosta himself, however, acting as the spokesman for a view shared by many Jesuits, opposed the ordination of Jesuits of cross-bred parentage, supporting this position on the grounds that the religious and civil rights of Native Americans were idolatrous. This stance was criticized by Blas Valera (1546–1596), a Jesuit born to a Peruvian mother and a Spanish father (Mattei and Casalini 2013), who entered the Society in 1568 and in 1573 was

ordained a priest in the diocese of Lima. A number of works on grammar, history, and anthropology are attributed to him; however, whether or not he wrote them has been called into question. Nevertheless, the treatise *De las costumbres antiguas de los naturales del Pirú* (On the Ancient Customs of the Indigenous Peoples of Peru), published in the 1690s, is certainly his.

Other Jesuits active in the Americas, such as Miguel Fuentes and Luis Lopez, openly censured the violence perpetrated by the Spanish against the indigenous peoples and criticized the idea of their forced evangelization. The criticism by Acosta and Valera of the brutal treatment of Native Americans by the Spanish conquistadors and the defense of the rights of the Peruvian natives resulted in strong tensions between the Spanish crown and the Society. In an effort not to exacerbate an already very tense climate, made even worse by accusations of intimate relations between Valera and an Inca woman, General Claudio Acquaviva recalled the Jesuits active in Peru to Europe. The case of the mission in Peru is emblematic of the complex context in which, even after the intervention of the political authority, discussions on the nature and rights of indigenous peoples took place within the Society.

Science and Philosophy

The Society promoted the study of mathematics in the educational syllabus of its colleges. Like philosophy, mathematics, even though it was the basis of every applied science, including physics and cosmology, was considered instrumental to the study of theology. From the seventeenth century onwards, however, with the coming of the scientific age, mathematics, in particular, and science, in general, assumed an increasingly important role within the Society (Feingold 2003; O'Malley et al. 1999; Baldini 1992).

The study of science in the Society was constructed on a theological-metaphysical foundation. The fusion of the philosophical-doctrinal premises of an Aristotelian-Thomist approach with science and, especially, mathematics determined the distinctive scientific journey on which the Jesuits embarked. This fusion was not, however, without conflict: some traditional

assumptions were abandoned or at least revised in the study of different fields of science, for example, optics, magnetology and cosmology.

The Collegio Romano was home to some of the most important Jesuit scientists, and, among these, Christoph Clavius (1538–1612) occupied a prominent place. After studying at the Jesuit College of Coimbra, he moved to the Collegio Romano to study theology. There he continued the studies of mathematics and astronomy he had begun in Coimbra and taught these disciplines at the Collegio from 1564 until the end of his life. Clavius's commitment to the reform of the Julian calendar was particularly important. In order to avoid the continuous slippage of the dates of the equinoxes, in 1579 he was commissioned to chair a panel of mathematicians deputed to reform the Julian calendar in use since 46 BCE. The reforms were implemented starting from 1582, during the pontificate of Gregory XIII; hence, the name "Gregorian" by which the new calendar is known. Clavius also distinguished himself in the teaching of mathematics. In 1574, he published a commentary on the *Elements* of Euclid, and in 1608, he composed his *Algebra*. These texts were widely read and were used as study manuals by successive generations of students.

The Society's interest in science grew noticeably during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the study of experimental philosophy allowed room for comparison with the scientific discoveries of Galileo Galilei, Robert Boyle, and Isaac Newton. Of considerable importance for the evolution of scientific thought in the Society was the encounter with the theories of Galileo. During his Pisan period, the young Galileo had close relations with some important members of the Society, above all Clavius, whom he met following his visit to Rome in 1587. Public recognition of his scientific and mathematical skills brought Galileo closer to the academic circle of the Collegio Romano, where increasing tensions between the natural philosophy of Aristotle and the new scientific discoveries were beginning to be felt. Relations between Galileo and the Society were facilitated by the freedom of research existing within the Collegio Romano, which, although within the limits imposed by the Jesuit

discipline, made it one of the main centers of scientific debate in the late sixteenth century.

Historians of science have long debated the sources used by Galileo for the construction of his scientific and astronomical system. Some studies have highlighted the continuity between Galilean thinking and the doctrines of certain members of the Society, especially those who taught at the Collegio Romano, while others have questioned this thesis, arguing for the need to interpret the role of Jesuit sources in the evolution of Galileo's thought with greater caution (Dollo 2003a; Feldhay 1995; Wallace 1984).

Following the publication in 1576 of Perera's *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principijs et affectionibus*, the cosmological theories developed in the Collegio Romano underwent a rapid evolution in response to Galileo's theses. Despite the diversity of views and opinions that characterized scientific research in the Society, the common denominator of Jesuit cosmology was geocentrism. The theory of geocentrism was defended in the Jesuit world for several reasons. Some members of the Society supported it for theological reasons, basing their arguments on the historical value of the Holy Scriptures: for example, Emmanuel de Sa, who defended the literal meaning of the Bible in his *Notationes in Totam Scripturam Sacram* (Annotations on All of Sacred Scripture); Mariana, who dedicated his *Scholia in Vetus et Novum Testamentum* (Scholia on the Old and New Testament) of 1619 to Bellarmino; Perera, whose *Commentaria et disputationes in Genesim* (Commentary and Disputations on Genesis) casts an interesting light on the exegetical practices of the Collegio Romano; and Jean de Lorin (1559–1634). Other Jesuits supported the geocentric theory for physical reasons, including Muzio Vitelleschi (1563–1645), in his unpublished *In libros De coelo disputationes* (Disputations on *De caelo*) (Dollo 2003b), and Gerolamo Piccolomini, in his *Quaestio tertia de accidentibus coeli* (Third Question on the Accidents of the Heavens) (Dollo 2003b). Still others, such as Clavius, criticized the theory of Copernican heliocentrism, drawing on mathematical, as well as physical and scriptural, arguments.

The publication in 1610 of Galileo's *Sidereus nuncius* (Starry Messenger), containing the astronomical research that he carried out with a telescope, sparked a debate over his revolutionary theses. To demonstrate his esteem for the Collegio Romano as a prestigious seat of learning, Galileo decided to present his scientific discoveries there. He was ceremoniously greeted by Paul V and by the highest prelates of the Roman curia; and he was also granted membership of the Accademia dei Lincei. The importance, however, of Galileo's scientific innovations, first of all the satellites of Jupiter and the theory of heliocentrism, and the awareness of the consequences that such theories could have on the traditional Catholic theological-philosophical system, began to generate suspicions in the Roman ecclesiastical environment, as well as within the Collegio Romano. Bellarmino commissioned mathematicians to prepare a report on the scientific discoveries of Galileo. Clavius, using a telescope, verified the accuracy of Galileo's observations, which he realized were in conflict with the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic theory that he had accepted throughout his life. On the basis of these findings, in the last edition of his *In Sphaeram Ioannis de Sacro Bosco commentarius* (Commentary on John of Sacrobosco's *De sphaera*), Clavius opened up a dialogue between the Ptolemaic theory and the astronomical innovations brought about by Galileo's research.

The debate around Galileo's theories became even more acute in 1612, following the publication of his *Discorso intorno alle cose che stanno in su l'acqua, o che in quella si muovono* (Discourse on Bodies that Float on Water or that Move in It). In this work, Galileo touched on the theme of sunspots. Contrary to the theories of the Jesuit Christoph Scheiner (1573–1650), who claimed that the sunspots were made up of swarms of stars rotating around the sun, Galileo demonstrated that these solar formations were generated by the movement of fluid matter on the surface of the sun caused by its rotation. This thesis was a further demonstration of the heliocentric theory. This theory obviously contradicted the account in Genesis; but, for Galileo, who followed the principle of separation between philosophy and

science, metaphorical expressions were used in the Bible for topics unrelated to salvation. This principle involved a clear distinction between, on the one hand, salvation, which was the concern of theologians, and, on the other, experience and science, which was dealt with by scientists. Following accusations from ecclesiastical circles, the pope decided to entrust the examination of the case of Galileo to the Congregation of the Holy Office. On the basis of an opinion given by Bellarmino, the pope resorted to a private warning, which would preserve Galileo's good name (Baldini 1984).

After a long silence, Galileo, following the ascent to the papal throne of Urban VIII, who was a supporter of his, published *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo, tolemaico e copernicano* (Dialogue on the Two Great Systems of the World, the Ptolemaic and the Copernican). On the basis of Copernicus's discoveries, Galileo reaffirmed his thesis concerning the motion of the earth. After the publication of the *Dialogo* in Florence in 1632, Galileo was summoned to Rome in 1633 and, on June 22, 1633, he was charged with suspicion of heresy on account of his presentation of the Copernican system.

The tendency to favor a dialogue between the Aristotelian-Thomist system and the new scientific discoveries suffered a setback following the ecclesiastical censorship of the Copernican system. Yet, over time, Copernicanism gained more and more approval, even among some members of the Society. This was the case of Jacob Zallinger (1735–1813), a professor at Munich, who supported the conformity between the Scriptures and the cosmological system as developed by Copernicus. Another Jesuit, Berthold Hauser (1713–1762), in his *Elementa philosophiae ad rationis et experientiae ductum conscripta atque usibus scholasticis accomodata* (Elements of Philosophy Written according to Reason and Experience and Accommodated to the Use of Students), published between 1755 and 1764, while grounding his work in the scholastic system, still emphasized the value of new scientific discoveries, commented on in the language of mathematics.

In 1731, during the 16th General Congregation of the Society, the importance of science and

mathematics in the Jesuit colleges was reiterated. It was nevertheless decided that the scholastic system should remain the model on which all mathematical and scientific analysis was based. This decision led to the condemnation in 1732, by the Superior General Franz Retz (1673–1750), of all propositions contrary to hylomorphism. The orientation of the highest levels of the Society during the eighteenth century hindered the full expression of the scientific potential of Jesuit colleges. This did not, however, prevent the development of highly original positions within the Society during the second half of the eighteenth century. The most important figure in this period was Rudjer Josip Bošković (1711–1787), a professor at the Roman College and later at the University of Pavia. Bošković was the author of *Philosophiae naturalis theoria redacta in unicam legem virium in natura existentem* (Theory of the Philosophy of Nature Reduced to One Law of Powers Existing in Nature), published in 1758, in which he supported an original physical-mathematical interpretation of the naturalness of matter, which he called “dynamism.” His theory of dynamism, which included among other ideas that of the immateriality of the soul originated directly by God, enjoyed great success both inside and outside the Society.

Impact and Legacy

The Evolution of the Society of Jesus in the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Centuries. Expulsions and Suppression

The influence exerted by the Society in the fields of education, theology, and philosophy began to be questioned in the early eighteenth century. In spite of the originality of the philosophical ideas of some Jesuits, in general the Society was unable to establish a dialogue with eighteenth-century developments in philosophy and political thought. The Society's lack of openness to philosophical innovations led it to condemn the Enlightenment as a whole, without grasping the substantial differences existing within this intellectual current. It was this recalcitrant attitude which was at the root of the conflict that began in the early eighteenth

century between the Society, public opinion, and some representatives of the main European monarchies, placing the privileged relationship that the Society had established with the pope since its foundation in peril.

There were differing reasons for the widespread hostility towards the Society. Alongside the controversies provoked by the Jesuit reductions, or settlements for indigenous peoples, in South America, the question of Chinese and Malabar rites (Mungello 2016), the Society's theological-doctrinal and political battles with Jansenism and Gallicanism, and its opposition to every idea associated with the Enlightenment, were troubles that had been brewing within the Order itself. During the seventeenth century, there had been heated discussions about the correct attitude to be assumed toward the Society's ministries. One faction, which defended the missionary and apostolic vocation of the Society, was opposed to another faction of "zealots," which supported the need for a more contemplative style. Under the generalship of Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615) and then of Muzio Vitelleschi (1615–1645), the party favorable to the missionary and apostolic model prevailed. This helped place at the center of the Jesuit life that same activism which, during the eighteenth century, led many to criticize the Society. The debate over the Society's system of government was added to another concerning its nature. The increasingly strong centralization and the promulgation of stricter rules for the recruitment of candidates, in addition to a very difficult economic and financial situation, caused a decrease in the number of Jesuits, after constant growth for almost a century. Other difficulties for the Society arose regarding the vow of poverty. The discrepancy between the austerity required of the members of the Order, the great wealth administered by the Society, and the bond that many Jesuits had with the main European courts contributed to criticism from the public. Paradoxically, the field in which the Society had achieved its greatest success, education, also attracted the strongest criticism of the Order. The great diffusion of Jesuit colleges throughout the world and the fact that students studied for free were the most evident

signs of the Society's wealth, which was perceived from the outside as in conflict with the vow of poverty professed by its members.

The tension that arose from the mid-seventeenth century between the Society and public opinion in Europe reached its highest level in France. Here, by the end of the sixteenth century, the Jesuits had served as advisors to the king, and the colleges of the Society were the place where most of the national élites were formed, in the fields of both culture and politics. For example, Molière, Voltaire, Diderot, and Robespierre attended the Louis-le-Grand College, and Descartes studied in the college of La Flèche. Jesuits were involved in the dispute between the Louis XIV and the Church of Rome concerning the powers of the pope and the rights and freedoms of the French Church. The confrontation between the king of France and the Roman Church, which had arisen in the fourteenth century at the time of the schism of Avignon (1378–1417) and had worsened with the publication of the Pragmatic Sanction of Burges of 1438, was only partially resolved by the Concordat of Bologna between Francis I and Leo X in 1516. In 1682, Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, tutor of the Dauphin of France, published the *Four Gallican Articles*. According to this document, which is the basis of Gallican ecclesiology, secular power was independent in temporal affairs and had the full right to exercise its control over ecclesiastical matters concerning the national church. Moreover, it was affirmed that the authority of the ecumenical council was superior to that of the pope. Faced with the strong conflict between the king of France and the pope, the French Jesuits tried to maintain a position of impartiality. Precisely this attitude, oscillating between fidelity to the French crown and obedience to the pope, provoked attacks on the Society, primarily from Enlightenment thinkers. Intellectual problems were added to these political issues. The Society in France was criticized because of its inability to change with the times and to renew its system of philosophical and theological thought. In the first place, the effectiveness of the *Ratio studiorum* was questioned more than two centuries after its composition. Criticisms of the document on

which the Society's educational system was founded focused on two main issues: the centrality of the Greek and Latin classics and, consequently, the use of the Latin language; and Aristotelianism, a philosophical system that was considered obsolete after the scientific discoveries of Galileo and Newton.

In order to respond to these criticisms, during the 17th General Congregation of 1751, the Society reaffirmed the centrality of Aristotle's authority in the teaching of metaphysics, logic, and physics. The problems in the relations between the Society, public opinion, and the main European monarchies reached their peak during the generalship of Lorenzo Ricci (1758–1773), the seventeenth superior general of the Society. In 1759, the Society was expelled from Portugal, in 1762 from France, in 1767 from Spain, in 1768 from Malta and from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and in 1769 from Parma. These measures taken by European courts were followed by the suppression of the Society, decreed on July 21, 1773 by Clement XIV with the publication of the brief *Dominus ac Redemptor*. At that time, the Society had 49 provinces, divided into 6 assistances, 61 novitiates, 669 colleges, 24 professed houses, 340 residences, 171 seminaries, 1542 churches, 271 missions, and about 24,000 members. In Prussia and Russia, Clement XIV's brief of suppression was not implemented, so the Society was able to survive. Only in 1814, with the bull *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* issued by Pius VII, was the Society reestablished.

Cross-References

- [Alumbrados](#)
- [Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition](#)
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Jewish Averroism in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Jewish Averroism (see Renan 1925; Hayoun 1991) was a trend that played an important role in Jewish philosophy from the end of the thirteenth to the end of the fifteenth century. This school of thought flourished primarily in Spain, Provence, and Italy and counted among its adherents many important rabbis, such as Isaac Albalag, Isaac Pulgar, Joseph Ibn Kaspi, Levi ben Avraham, Nissim of Marseille, Moses of Narbonne, and Elia del Medigo. These rabbi-philosophers wrote essentially philosophical (or theological – the distinction does not exist in Jewish philosophy) books and supercommentaries on Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle. They also wrote Bible commentaries as well as books that explain the art of biblical exegesis, though none wrote books on Jewish Law (*Halacha*).

Perhaps the most striking feature of Jewish Averroism is its radicalism. This trend in Jewish thought advanced an extreme philosophical and naturalist interpretation of Judaism and its canonical texts. The radicalism of Jewish Averroism can be seen, for example, in its being the only medieval movement in Jewish thought to completely deny the existence of any kind of life after death. One of the movement's qualities that evinces its radicalism is the willingness of its proponents to expose their radical opinions in a much more explicit and hence comprehensible way than, say, a Maimonides. Interestingly, it was this very openness that allowed the Jewish Averroists to have some influence on the Latin Averroists, who initially found Averroes' writings (including those of dubious attribution) to be

mostly inaccessible until Hebrew translations of the original Arabic were made available for secondary translation into Latin.

Definition

We can define Jewish Averroism using two distinct methods. The first method is to describe the main shared opinions of its adherents. The second method is to describe the main texts and sources that the Jewish Averroists read, cited, and commented on, including their own written interactions. Using the first method, Jewish Averroists will be defined as those Jewish philosophers who held certain radical, naturalistic positions (which we will examine in more depth in the next part of the article), such as belief in the eternity of the world, rejection of supernatural miracles, the reduction of prophecy to being a kind of intellectual perception (albeit it with the help of the imagination), and seeing Jewish Law as essentially a political and social tool for the welfare of society.

By contrast, according to the second method, it turns out that Jewish Averroists are those Jewish philosophers who were mainly influenced by two principal authoritative philosophical sources: Maimonides and Averroes. This is not at all to say that Jewish Averroists accepted every statement of the two philosophers. There were criticisms of Maimonides, such as that of R. Albalag on the question of the eternity of the world in the 30th chapter of his *Tikun HaDeot*, and even criticism of Averroes, whose determinism was unacceptable to his Jewish readers. Nonetheless, all of the Jewish Averroists took these two philosophers (and through them, Aristotle) very seriously, quoting frequently from their works and in many cases interpreting the one according to the opinion of the other. More precisely, Jewish Averroists tended to interpret critical questions like the eternity of the world according to the esoteric position of Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed*, which they saw as identical with the philosophy of Averroes.

These two definitions include essentially the same philosophers. However, there are some

instances of philosophers who fit one definition better than the other. For example, Shem-Tov ibn Falaquera made extensive use of the writings of Maimonides and Averroes, but did not share their more radical opinions.

Some interpreters of Maimonides (and firstly the Averroists themselves) saw him as embracing the same radical positions as the Averroist philosophers. Nevertheless, there are a number of very clear differences that make the Averroists more radical than Maimonides. First, Maimonides expressed his more radical opinions in an esoteric manner, such that anyone reading *The Guide for the Perplexed* without a proper philosophical background might think that the book is not so radical. By contrast, the Averroist philosophers generally shared their radical opinions in an explicit manner. And even when some did use the esoteric stratagem in an attempt to conceal their radical opinions, they tended to either contradict themselves or else claim to believe in the religious conservative position alongside their less-than-conservative philosophical opinion. However, their esoteric subterfuge is much easier to see through in comparison with Maimonides' writing. One giveaway is that in general they do not provide any philosophical explanations for their traditional opinions, basing them solely on the authority of tradition. So when we see a given philosopher reveals a radical opinion based on philosophical argumentation and generally also interprets the Bible according to this radical opinion, but elsewhere claims to be a good traditional Jew who believes traditional tenets of the faith, then we can very easily see that this philosopher does not truly believe in the traditional tenets but only says so pro forma probably only out of political considerations. Philosophers understand the need for arguments to establish belief, and that religious belief cannot go against philosophical truth. Conversely, no philosopher who thinks that certain religious beliefs are opposed or differ from philosophical truth will be influenced by this stratagem. They will see the Averroist writer as a good believer who controls his (evil) inclination to indulge in philosophical argumentation by making the right choice to continue to

believe in the religion's tenets despite his philosophical inquiry. Good examples of this kind of writing are Note 30 of R. Albalag's *Tikune Hade'ot* (on the eternity of the world) and Chapters 5 and 6 of the first part of R. Pulgar's *Ezer Hadat* (on the possibility of the rebirth of Jewish independence).

Philosophical Opinions

Common positions: All the Jewish Averroists held a very radical naturalistic opinion. According to these philosophers, the will of God cannot change, because the supreme perfection of God necessitates total constancy inasmuch as change implies either improvement or degradation, both of which contradict an existing perfection. Nature is the consequence of God's will, which creates nature according to His eternal essence. The conclusion of these propositions is that nature cannot change. This position has some crucial implications for the religious philosophy of the Jewish Averroists, especially regarding prophecy, creation, miracles, and law (Halacha). For example, according to the Averroist opinion, God cannot initiate the granting of prophecy to prophets, for this would imply that God had undergone a change from silence to transmitting of prophetic words. For the Averroists, prophecy is the discovery of eternal truth by the intellect and that truth's practical interpretation by the imagination. In other words, proper use of the intellect and imagination renders one a prophet.

The Averroists also posit that God cannot have created the world after a theoretical state of non-existence as this would have constituted a forbidden change in His will. This is one of the reasons that the Averroists universally adopted belief in the eternity of the world. Similarly, miracles cannot be the result of a new creation, i.e., change in God's will, so they are viewed as the utilization of natural law by the (true) prophets for the purpose of impressing the ignorant masses and making them believe in some true or good opinions. This interpretation obviously negates the traditional religious and philosophical import of miracles,

which are reduced to a mere pedagogical or practical utilization of natural law by the prophets.

As noted above, even the purpose of Jewish Law (Halacha) is strongly affected by the Averroist assumptions regarding the perfection and immutability of God. For the Averroists, Halacha concerns only the perfection of human ethics and society. The practices of the law do not earn any metaphysical or supernatural reward or punishment but only natural benefits, including the establishing of a healthy society, the building of strong family ties, affording humans the wherewithal to dominate their corporeal inclinations, and in general engendering good habits among the Halacha's adherents.

Their negation of life after death comes from Averroes's interpretation of the third chapter of *De anima*. According to this chapter, the only part of human beings that can survive after the death of the body is the knowledge of eternal entity (like a natural law). According to Averroes (and the Averroists), each human knows the same eternal entity – the knowledge of this entity is like a reflection in a mirror. Human knowledge doesn't change the eternal entity or multiply it; after the death of the body the reflection of this knowledge in human brain disappears as the brain that is a part of the body. Against this radical interpretation, there is another explanation of Aristotle that can be adapted with religion easier. The easiest opinion is that of Tomas Aquinas that concludes that the intellectual potential only is enough to get individual immortality.

The Jewish Averroists share also a common manner of interpretation of the Bible (that comes from Maimonides). If some passages (and there are a lot of them) contradict their philosophical opinions, they interpret these passages as speaking to the masses of the people for some political and pedagogical aim. By the extreme utilization of this method, the Averroists succeeded in completely changing the meaning of the Bible, which, they argued, conforms – albeit esoterically – to their philosophical opinions.

Divergent opinions: While sharing the common, defining views described above, the Jewish Averroists were also original philosophers who

consequently had some major points of divergence. This fact is very important because the common image of Jewish Averroism even among some scholars is the image of a very monolithic trend of non-original thinkers who essentially used and developed in the same way the positions of Maimonides and Averroes.

An excellent example of this divergence is their opinion on the subject of natural law, which varies greatly from one Jewish Averroist to the next. According to R. Albalag, for instance, natural law is very basic, and all religions (including most pagan religions) adhere to these very basic criteria. As opposed to the basic natural law, all other laws are not natural and can change according to the historical and social context of the different religions. On the other hand, R. Pulgar held a diametrically opposed position: The Law of Moses is the natural Law, and any law that deviates from the Law of Moses is inherently not part of the only true natural law. According to R. Pulgar, social and historical contexts have no influence whatsoever on the natural law, which is immutable and constant in all political and social contexts. R. Levi and R. Kaspi take a middle position but arrive at it in two distinct ways. Both try to make a bridge between the perfection of the Mosaic Law and the Maimonidean opinion that the Law of Moses comes to fulfill the historical needs of the Jews at a very specific time of their history (*Guide of the Perplexed* III 29–30). But here they diverge. According to R. Levi, due to having exemplary forefathers, the Jews have a better nature than the other nations. For this reason, the best law for the Jews is the best law for all humankind. By contrast, R. Kaspi held that natural law is too perfect to accord with any one specific historical context. The superiority of the Law of Moses derives from its very capacity to adapt according to historical context.

This philosophical divergence on the question of natural law has several philosophical and political implications. For example, given R. Albalag's understanding that all basic religious ideas fall within the rubric of natural law, it follows that we cannot make a moral comparison between different religions or even between different

religious trends within one religion because a very basic upshot of the ubiquitous aspect of natural law is that all religious positions are legitimate. By contrast, according to all the other Averroists, for every religious question, we can analyze what is the best option using an objective moral point of view.

On the question of the possibility of a Jewish return to the Land of Israel and the restoration of Jewish independence, we find significant divergence of opinions here as well. R. Kaspi, near the end of his book *Tam Hakesef*, speaks very positively of the possibility of the return of Jewish independence in the Land of Israel. However, R. Pulgar, in the first part of *Ezer Hadat* (especially chapter five), explains that the existence of an independent state can only be attained through immoral actions and therefore preferred life in exile over returning the Jewish people to the sphere of political independence.

Another example of their divergence is their relation to astrology. R. Pulgar was one of the most outspoken opponents of astrology and devoted the third part of his book *Ezer Hadat* to a critique of astrology. In the view of Pulgar, the stars have no significant influence on the human will or even on human nature. By contrast, most of the On Jewish Averroism in Provence (see Kreisel 2015), including R. Levi ben Abraham and R. Nissim of Marseille, believed that stars have some kind of influence on human nature, and this influence also has some impact on human volition. None of these Averroists supported a completely determinist opinion. However, they maintained a very different opinion from Pulgar on the question of the influence of the stars.

Double truth theory: One of the opinions commonly attributed to the Averroists (Jewish Averroists included) is the theory of double truth. According to this theory, the religious philosopher lives in a sort of quantum state of superimposition, wherein as a philosopher he holds certain specific opinions, while as a religious believer he holds completely opposite opinions. For example, as a philosopher, he can assume that the proofs of Averroes and Aristotle are true and

the world is eternal. Nevertheless, as a believer he need not put any importance on the philosophical arguments and can continue to believe in the creation of the world.

Two Jewish Averroists who used the double-truth theory and conceded that their beliefs contradict their philosophical opinions were R. Isaac Albalag (in the introduction and note 30 of *Tikun Hadeot*) and R. Elia del Medigo (in *Bechinat Hadat*). The question of whether some Christian Averroists also believed in some kind of double truth is beyond the scope of this article. Nonetheless, in the case of these two Jewish Averroists, in the view of this writer, it is very clear that they did not actually believe in this theory but only used it as a kind of esoteric position to help them to conceal their truly philosophical opinions. In the case of R. Albalag, this contention is palpable, for it is quite easy to read note 30 of *Tikun Hadeot* in a fluid manner without the passages that speak about the author's conservative belief (here, in the creation of the world). Therefore, it is probable that R. Albalag added these passages only after composing the first draft of this note in order to make his philosophical opinion (here, in the eternity of the world) more difficult to understand.

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Jewish Philosophy, Renaissance

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Abstract

The turning point of Western thought and philosophy is, as is well known, the early modern period. Firstly, during this era, philosophy changes its focus from the (meta)physically centered study of establishing the existence and essence of sub- and superlunary worlds and of matter and form to an epistemological preoccupation with questioning the consistency, truth, and falsity of our knowledge through, beyond, and even without the senses. Also, a new consciousness was introduced in the perception of Jewish philosophy, namely, to reduce the vision of the mystery of creation in Jewish narrative philosophy (*arcana mundi*) to a simple account of rites and symbols called religion, a demythization of the Jewish tradition. It was precisely this period which gave birth to the denomination of Jewish philosophy (*Philosophia Hebraeorum*) and Jewish religion (*Religio Hebraeorum* or *Iudaeorum*), which some time later, in the nineteenth century, were summarized in German countries as *Jüdische Philosophie*, defining the history of the Jewish pursuit of philosophy and the history of mysticism, called Jewish wisdom.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Despite the enthusiasm animating the scholarship of the past 50 years, early modern Judaism can still be considered a field of study that has remained largely untitled. Let me recall two general obstacles that also affect the study of the history of Jewish science and philosophy. A large number of literary works from the period spanning the two centuries from 1450 to 1650 are still available only in

manuscript form, incunabula, or in rare printed editions scattered throughout the world. This situation is due, among other things, to the numerous burnings of Jewish books and documents, the censorship of the Inquisition, and the practice of unscrupulous librarians who used folios of Jewish manuscripts to construct the covers of Christian volumes. To this day, there is no catalogue of European Hebrew manuscripts comparable to Kristeller's *Iter Italicum* (1963, 1967). As other scholars have already noted, we cannot seriously discuss Jewish attitudes to the sciences without an analysis of the material at our disposal, which implies, in the main, the charting of a map of all extant manuscripts and prints, including such secondary sources as Christian notices, Inquisitorial acts, the *Index librorum prohibitorum*.

The focal question, however, is whether we can even speak of Jewish Humanism, or a Jewish Renaissance, at all. If we define Renaissance culture in Romantic terms – that is, if we allow ourselves to be guided by the idealistic conclusions of Jacob Burckhardt (1860) and, similarly, of Cecil Roth (1959) concerning the Humanist spirit of freedom, the origins of individualism, and the birth of the sciences – we run smack up against the obvious reality: the Jews of the Renaissance were neither freer nor more individualistic than in earlier centuries; then, as before, they constituted an alien minority. If, on the contrary, we define the spirit of the Renaissance as a more or less autonomous reflection on the sources of knowledge (the Bible, science, classical sources), embodied in a cult of letters and scholarship, we find in Judaism a timid but nevertheless demonstrable affinity, shrouded though it may sometimes be in the traditional “orthodoxy” of the fathers. Perhaps one of the most evident expressions of the new spirit was, as Ruderman (1995) has remarked, the rise of a new group of intellectuals that grew out of the large number of Jewish students who studied medicine together at university during this period. Cross-pollination between the scattered Jewish communities and Christian environment was greatly furthered with the help of Jewish physicians (and their itinerant lifestyles) and Jewish intellectuals who served as advisers to publishing houses and scholars.

Although initially very hesitant and infrequent visitors to the *respublica litteraria et philosophica*, Jewish intellectuals contributed to, or at least mirrored, some of the ideas, concepts, and movements that came to serve as the coordinates of European philosophical maps in this “new” era. Among these concepts, ideas, and intellectual discourses are the inclusion of rhetoric (and poetry) in the philosophical discourse, conceptions of history and historical truth, the challenges of modern geography, the new sciences and scientific discovery, political philosophy, the debates on the immortality of the soul, and the legal definition of religion and religious ceremonies. All of these find their reflection in Jewish intellectual discourse on the eve of so-called modernity.

Neoplatonism is the first movement to be traced in Jewish philosophical literature. Leone Ebreo (1460[?]-1535) deserves to be mentioned here, taking part in the first stage of the reception of Plato in the context of the Jewish Renaissance.

Tendencies toward Aristotelianism and Averroism show considerable continuity with the medieval Jewish tradition; nevertheless, some philosophers explored particular topics, such as the immortality of the soul, revealing the roots of the modern sciences.

Skepticism is a concept and practice with numerous facets; in this sense, Jewish skepticism is mainly concerned with historical developments in skeptical concepts, modes of learning, and social manifestations of refusal or acceptance, as well as their integration into philosophical, literary, and social aspects of Jewish culture.

Jewish attitudes toward the place of the “sciences” in the curriculum are guided by a pragmatic mentality and approach; in the Renaissance, the study of foreign sciences was considered a challenge and a fulfillment of pragmatic purposes for the Jewish community.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Neoplatonism (Leone Ebreo)

Leone Ebreo is considered the preeminent Jewish thinker of the sixteenth century, well acquainted, indeed imbued with the Neoplatonic conceptions,

ideas, and expressions then current in the Italian Renaissance. His *Dialoghi d'amore* (*Dialogues of Love*), a composition whose form was quite common in the Humanist period, is a celebration of cosmic love as the relationship between God, the universe, and man as the *intellectus agens* in and of this world. Julius Guttman maintained that Leone should be regarded as the “only truly Jewish Renaissance philosopher” (Guttman 1933).

In this view, the *Dialoghi* is to be classified as a work of general philosophy, in the same category as such philosophical disquisitions as Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* (ca. 1049), which was renowned in the medieval Christian world as a work of both a Christian and a Muslim character.

This, however, was not the case with Leone, a thinker who never concealed his Jewishness in his writings (*Dialoghi*, III, 125b). This was a fact acknowledged both by his contemporaries and by later readers; it is arguable, in fact, that this Jewish consciousness was the very premise and essence of the philosophy that permeates his work. Here, Guttman was correct in stressing the Jewish aspect of a philosophy outwardly clothed in the garment of Renaissance ideology, a product of the Humanist premise inherent in all philosophy of the time. In the Christian world, however, Leone was regarded not as a Jewish philosopher but rather as a skilled physician and author of courtly literature (a kind of a *letterato cortese*). It was only in the Jewish community that he was considered a profound expert on Aristotelian philosophy.

The discussion as to where Leone should be located within the spectrum of Renaissance philosophy surfaces as early as the sixteenth century in mentions of his work. Amatus Lusitanus (1511–1568), a Portuguese physician, refers to him as a “Platonic philosopher” (*philosophus Platonicus*) “who left for us, in writing, divine dialogues on love” (*qui nobis divinos de amore dialogos scriptos reliquit*). Lusitanus had met Leone's grandson, who also bore the name Judah Abravanel, in Saloniki in 1560. According to his account, a manuscript of a lost work by Leone, *De Harmonia mundi* (*On the Harmony of the World*), was in his grandson's possession, and it was this work that had been the subject of

their philosophical discussions. Lusitanus (1620) maintained that the work had been expressly composed for Pico della Mirandola (*divini Mirandulensis Pici precibus composuerat*). The historical evidence is unclear as to whether Leone actually had contact with Pico and whether he wrote a composition on the harmony of the universe, conceivably as the third part of the *Dialoghi*. Carl Gebhardt was of the opinion that Leone mentions the work in his *Dialoghi*. The main difficulty lies in the content of the text. The quotation in Leone's *Dialoghi* that allegedly stems from this lost work deals with astrological matters. If we suppose that the *Harmonia* really was written as a separate composition, then it would have to have been a tractate on the harmony of the world that was in *opposition* to Pico's theses, for Pico did not endorse astrological speculation. On the other hand, Lusitanus' note about it being "but written in a scholastic style" would tend to support the view that we are dealing with a separate composition, since the *Dialoghi* is not a scholastic treatise. At the same time, if Leone really was a *philosophus Platonicus*, it would seem quite strange that he should compose a work in a scholastic Aristotelian style.

Perhaps Lusitanus' expression needs to be interpreted differently. It is of course possible to postulate an intellectual kinship between Pico and Leone and to deduce from that a personal acquaintanceship. Both were concerned with harmonizing of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies, although tending, admittedly, in divergent anthropological directions. Harmonizing Plato with Aristotle was a project that had already been dreamt of in antiquity and been pursued throughout the Middle Ages down to the Renaissance (*philosophia perennis*). Nevertheless, Jewish philosophers, Leone among them, saw in Aristotle Plato's "bad disciple" who had contributed to the corruption of that wisdom which the ancient sages of Greece had learned from the Jews in Egypt. The harmonization of Aristotle and Plato is thus nothing more than a correction of Aristotle, a *reductio ad Platonem*. To sum up Lusitanus' testimony, indirectly, he provides a pointed description of the nature of Leone's philosophy, which consisted in a

hesitation between Plato and Aristotle. To put it in Leone's own terms, for these philosophers, it was a hesitation between "the physician who was the healer of (ancient philosophical) illness by means of excess" (i.e., Plato) and "the physician who preserves the state of health already produced by Plato, by means of temperance" (*Dialoghi*, III, 117a). It is, of course, not by chance that both Plato and Aristotle are referred to as "physicians," since Leone was himself a distinguished member of the profession, celebrated as such in Naples, Rome, and Venice.

The problem in determining Leone's position among Renaissance intellectuals is not the "Jewishness" of his speculations but the literary and philosophical value of his writings. The reception of his work, which went through 25 editions between 1535 and 1607 and saw various translations into French, Latin, Spanish, and Hebrew between 1551 and 1660, is due precisely to its popular appeal, namely, as an entertaining, nonacademic disquisition on Platonic-Aristotelian doctrines, clothed in mystical, astrological raiment. The quotations from the *Dialoghi* found in Cervantes' *Galatea* and *Don Quijote* and the inclusion of the Latin version in Pistorius' *Ars cabalistica* would tend to support this interpretation. The fact that Leone stressed the Jewish origins of philosophy in general was no obstacle to the reception of his work in Christian circles. Such accents were typical of Christian pansophic philosophies.

Although the first and second Aldine editions (1541 and 1545) of the *Dialoghi* disseminated the story of his alleged conversion to Christianity (*Leone Medico, di Natione hebreo, et dipoi fatto Cristiano*), Leone himself made no secret of his Jewishness and even traced the origins of wisdom (*sophia*) to the religion of Moses. He viewed Jewish scholarship, and himself, as links in the chain of the tradition of ancient wisdom, the origins of which he saw as being Jewish.

It is significant in this context that in citing Jewish authors or personalities, Leone qualifies them with the possessive "our." Among Aristotelian commentators, he mentions "our Rabbi Moses of Egypt" (*Dialoghi*, II, 69b), i.e., Maimonides; he refers to Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*

as a Jewish work, mentioning specifically “our Albenzubron,” a name known in Christian circles (*Dialoghi*, III, 51a); Moses and Aaron are termed “our saints” (*Dialoghi*, III, 5b). Finally, Leone follows the traditional dating of the Jewish calendar, based on a counting of years beginning with the Creation (*Dialoghi*, III, 50b). There was, however, nothing in these avowals of Jewishness that touched on points of controversy between Christian and Jews. The statements were not considered contentious, since they were historically evident. Rabbi Moses of Egypt and the *Fons Vitae* had, to a certain extent, been canonized at Christian universities and in Christian philosophical treatises, not least because they had been quoted by Thomas Aquinas. The existence of a *computum hebraicum*, with a computation of years different from that of the Christian calendar and originating in the Masoretic tradition of the Bible, had been known at least as far back as Augustine. Leone mentions nothing that could provoke the criticism of his Christian contemporaries (Nelson 1963; Guidi 2011).

This includes his discussion of the creation of the world, which, in spite of its obvious divergence from Aristotelian philosophy, was not a *terra incognita*. Leone states that the idea of time being infinite is in accordance with the teachings of the ancient philosophers but in contradiction with Jewish tradition (*Dialoghi*, III, 65b). As interpreted by most Jewish scholars, the Torah proclaims the absolute beginning of the world (Gen.1:1): “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In discussing the theories of the world’s creation, Leone makes explicit reference to the historical superiority of Mosaic theology over Greek philosophy. At the ancient school of Jewish philosophers in Egypt, he states, Plato studied the “hidden wisdom” (*sapientia ascosa*) (Idel 1985); this is the “second principle,” which is dependent on the first, that is, God. Although he was a disciple of Plato, Aristotle denied what he could not see and made the second principle (wisdom) the first principle of the universe, God.

It is in this context that Leone mentions Plato’s dependence on the Jewish elders of his time (Veltri 1992). In order to acquire the highest

wisdom, however, more was needed than Plato’s affinity with Jewish literature and tradition. In Leone’s words, “But Plato, who had learned from the elders in Egypt, could ‘hear’ [a Hebraism for ‘learn’] further than others, although this was not enough to enable him to see the hidden principle of the highest wisdom” (*Dialoghi*, III, 125b). The source of this statement is purely Christian, since it is only Christian tradition that speaks of an obstacle that, “providentially,” Plato could not have avoided in his contact with the Egyptian Jews: he could not admit the unity of God, for fear of “ending up being executed like Socrates,” according to the testimony of Pseudo-Justin. This tradition was known in the Renaissance. A later contemporary of Leone and a member of the Florentine Academy, Francesco de’ Vieri (1524–1591), wrote a *Compendio della dottrina di Platone in quello, che è conforme con la Fede nostra* (A compendium of Platonic doctrine in accordance with our Belief, 1577) defending Plato’s ignorance of the unity of God. In the face of the evidence that “Plato did not sufficiently recognize that God is one in nature and essence,” he affirms: “In defence of Plato, I say that although he was wise in terms of human wisdom and although he may have read the Old Testament, where these mysteries are unfolded and adumbrated, he deserves to be pardoned [for his inaccuracies] – because the mysteries were not explained to him by any member of God’s elect. The same can be said of Aristotle, who held God to be one in essence and person” (Monfasani 1997).

It is, therefore, not surprising that Leone introduces his discussion of the difference between Plato and Aristotle within the context of his treatment of the creation of the world and the origins of wisdom and (prime) matter. He considers the divinity to be one in essence, but triune in the prism of human perception, in the process of knowledge. A very similar expression can be found in the Preface to Marsilio Ficino’s *Theologia Platonica*.

As is evident from this text and from an analysis of the third dialogue, Leone’s conception of knowledge owes a great deal to Marsilio Ficino. In explaining the process of knowledge in the

context of the unity of God, he draws on the example of light, the sun, and the mirror. Ficino did the same in his tractate entitled *Orphica comparatio Solis ad Deum*, written in 1449, and later in a book, *De Sole* (Kristeller 1953). The symbolic images of the sun, the mirror, and light also play a significant role in the process of knowledge and in Ficino's theodicy: the *Oratio ad Deum* begins with the verse "*Lumen immensum sine fine lucens | Te videns in te speculansque cuncta.*" Leone dedicated several pages of the third dialogue to a comparison between the sun and God. Leone, like Ficino, refers to the theory of the unity of knowledge, starting from God and reaching plurality in man. In this context, he makes use of the triune form of knowledge, again precisely like Ficino. Finally, he speaks of the triune nature of God as lover, beloved, and love, here too in the footsteps of Ficino.

It is not new to find Jewish authors accepting, even if only epistemologically, the triune nature of God. The first to note Jewish readiness to speak about this topic was Nicholas of Cusa, in dealing with the theory of divine names. The postulate that the sensible signs of the name of God change can be seen in passages such as those of the *Excitationes I* (Guttmann 1902), where Nicholas of Cusa speaks of an *interpretatio judaica* of the Trinity. In his view, the Jews had interpreted the dogma of the Trinity in terms of a triad of divine attributes. The novelty of Leone's statement is his claim that the doctrine of divine wisdom as a unique divinity known in triune form is of Jewish origin, like the process of knowledge, which his contemporaries considered a Christian doctrine. The fact that Leone does not explicitly mention his Christian counterparts anywhere – while making unacknowledged use of Christian doctrines and writings – underlines his subtly polemical attitude toward the academies of his time: in his view, the philosophy of love was plagiarized from genuine Jewish traditions.

On the other hand, this could also be a tacit comment on the impossibility of having an open and conclusive confrontation with his "adversaries." If we consult Jewish and Christian testimonies on Leone, it comes as a surprise to find that there are no Christian writers specifically

interested in his philosophy (Leone 1929). The reception of his work among Italian, Spanish, and French authors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is limited to its treatment of the subject of love rather than philosophical themes. Only Jewish authors pointed out that Leone was indeed a Jewish philosopher. The exceptional reception of his work was due not to the fact that it was a specifically Jewish work on love but simply to the fact that it presented Platonic philosophy in a pleasant poetic style, functioning as a handbook of ideas then current throughout the Renaissance Humanist world. Its handbook-like character is stressed by Alessandro Piccolomini (1508–1579) in the dedication to his *Dell'Istitutione di tutta la vita dell'huomo nato nobile* (On the Institution of the whole life of the Nobleman) in 1540. Piccolomini states that he is planning to write the fourth part of the *Dialoghi* on the effects of love. The *Dialoghi* was recommended as the best book on love composed in the genre of courtly literature. Giuseppe Betussi, Tullia d'Aragona, Benedetto Varchi, and Anton Francesco Doni were among the members of the Italian intellectual circles who evinced interest in Leone's work. His profession of Judaism posed no problem for the reception of the *Dialoghi* in Italy, Spain, Portugal, or France. Even as late as the turn of the eighteenth century, after two centuries of oblivion, the entertaining and educational character of the *Dialoghi* received only praise from the German poet Friedrich Schiller.

In conclusion, the *Dialoghi* is not a philosophical treatise but a vulgarization of philosophical ideas departing from a distinctively Jewish point of view. This was not an approach that was open to debate in Humanistic and Renaissance circles, for it was the alchemical *pietra filosofale*, the philosopher's stone that made it possible to convert all philosophies into the *philosophia perennis*. Seen in this way, Leone's writing was not a major departure and could thus even be welcomed for its poetic style. Leone made philosophical ideas understandable, a task at which Ficino had failed completely. Cosmic love, as emanated in the world of creation, is nothing but the kiss of the lover and the beloved,

a kiss which leads back to the Godhead with the death of a human being – something like Moses and Aaron, who died kissing God. It was for this reason that the *Dialoghi* was destined to become a bestseller in the cultural world of the Renaissance, in spite of its Jewish origin, as Tullia d'Aragona affirms (1547).

Aristotelianism/Averroism

The Renaissance period was also characterized by another particular historical phenomenon, which can be identified as a “Hebrew Scholasticism” (Zonta 2006). On a broader level, if Aristotelianism in the Renaissance survived only in particular intellectual and scholarly circles (such as the University of Padua), it is therefore right to speak of a “Renaissance” of Aristotle (Schmitt 1973; Bianchi 2007). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Jewish authors compiled philosophical treatises in which they discussed the same questions and used the same methods as contemporary Christian philosophers (Zonta 2006). This tendency seems to be in continuity with Averroes’s interpretation of Aristotle, which had characterized the medieval period. Jewish philosophers, Averroists among them, represent a bridge between the old philosophy and the new learning (Ivry 1983).

The Jewish intellectual élite were exposed to an educational program very similar to Christian instruction. This was the case for Judah ben Jehiel Messer Leon’s academy, in which the classical Jewish religious teachings (*Halakhah* and *Aggadah*) were combined with the study of the liberal arts, consisting of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometric, music, and astronomy).

Judah Messer Leon (ca. 1422–ca. 1498), one of the most important representatives of Hebrew Scholasticism, is well known as the author of a treatise on the art of rhetoric, the *Sefer Nofet Sufim* (*Book of the Honeycomb’s Flow*, ed. Rabinowitz 1983), but he also wrote commentaries on logic and natural science, namely, a supercommentary on Averroes’s *Middle Commentaries* on the *Isagoge*, the *Categories*, and the *De Interpretatione*; a supercommentary on Averroes’s *Middle Commentaries* on the *Prior*

Analytics and the *Posterior Analytics*; and a commentary on Averroes’s *Middle* and *Long Commentaries* on the first three books of the *Physics* (Zonta 2002).

The particular activity of a Jewish intellectual scholar during the Renaissance does not only include original productions. A further important aspect of his work is characterized by the practice of translation. An attitude of envisaging a new interpretation of ancient philosophers, with special reference to Aristotle and the Peripatetic tradition, may therefore be ascribed to this general translation movement. The *Corpus Aristotelicum* recovers much of the material unknown in the Middle Ages, with the gradual introduction of Greek, Latin, and Arabic commentators. As Ivry (1983) has remarked, Averroism was a major vehicle of expression in Renaissance philosophy, and Jewish scholars and translators worked in the shadow of Averroes. Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is possible to identify a first wave of translation (Hasse 2006); notable among these great scholars engaged in the translation of Averroian/Averroist works and other Peripatetic commentators were Elijah Del Medigo (d. 1493); Calonymos ben David, called Calo Calonimo (ca. 1476–1518); Abraham ben Meir de Balmes (ca. 1460–1523); Jacob Mantino (d. 1549); Moses Alatino (1529–ca. 1605); and Moses Finzi (active in 1558). A particular case that deserves to be mentioned here is ‘Ovadyah Sforno (ca. 1475–1550).

A new element emerges compared to previous medieval translations. The interest of these “new” scholars turned toward a particular aspect of the Renaissance tradition. During the Middle Ages, translations of Aristotle were overwhelmingly in the realm of logic and natural science, while in the sixteenth century, philosophers’ speculations revolved around questions about the nature of the intellect and the soul. Despite the topic of the immortality of the soul, suggested by Averroes, being inherited from medieval Scholasticism, no other Arabic philosophical theory received a similar amount of attention in the Renaissance (Hasse 2006). Concerning the commentary on the *De Anima*, we are aware of a translation from Arabic into Latin of Averroes’s *Long Commentary*,

usually ascribed to Michael Scot (ca. 1220), an Arabic-into-Hebrew version of this treatise translated in Rome (1284) by Zerahyah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Hen (Zonta 2011), a Latin-into-Hebrew translation made by Abraham di Benevento in the late fifteenth century (Zonta 2004), and the Giunta edition of an alternative version of Book Three by Jacob Mantino published in 1562.

In addition to these translations of the book of the *De Anima*, many other philosophical works about the unity of the intellect and the immortality of the soul were translated and noted by the aforementioned Jewish scholars. Calo Calonimo translated the *Libellus seu epistola de connexione intellectus abstracti cum homine* (1527) and Abraham de Balmes translated Al-Farabi's treatise *De intellectu et intellegibili* (1522–ca.1523) and Averroes's *Epitome De Anima* (1552). The most interesting interpretation of Aristotelianism and Averroist theories is offered by Elijah Del Medigo, who should be considered the most important Jewish Averroist in Italy. Del Medigo was commissioned to translate works about logic, physics, psychology, and metaphysics for his Christian patrons (Engel 2017), and he translated Averroes' *Epitome De Anima* for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. However, Del Medigo also wrote two Averroist treatises (1482), originally in Latin, which were subsequently translated into Hebrew (Bland 1995). The first treatise concerns the unicity of the material intellect and the possibility of conjunction with the active intellect, and the second concerns the immortality of the soul, explaining in detail the incongruence of Averroes's positions between his *Epitome* and his *Long Commentary on the De Anima* part III, 36.

'Ovadyah Sforno is considered the last Jewish scholastic authority (Zonta 2006). He published only one philosophical work, entitled *Or 'Ammim* (1537), which he made available to the Christian Humanist readership through his own translation into Latin under the title *Lumen Gentium* (1548). The most important chapter of this pamphlet (XII) is devoted to the immortality of the soul; in this case, Sforno's position is in marked contrast to that of his predecessors.

The topic of the immortality of the soul was a highly explosive subject at the time, not only for Judaism but also, and in particular, within Christianity. Sara Copia Sullam, an Italian poetess from the Venetian Ghetto, deserves to be mentioned here as a representative of the great Renaissance of Jewish culture in the early modern period concerning the debates on the immortality of the soul. Born about 1590, Sullam was educated in the court culture of her time. She is known to have been able to read Latin, Ancient Greek, Spanish, and Hebrew at a young age, also displaying a remarkable talent for music and poetry (Roth 1930). She cultivated her passion for poetry under the guidance of the poet and man of letters Numidio Paluzzi. Thanks to Sullam's erudition and social graces, her father's house became a literary salon, a regular meeting place for both Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals in Venice – among them Leone Modena – which was also attended by members of the nobility of Treviso, Padua, and Vicenza (Boccatto 1974). The archdeacon of Treviso, Baldassarre Bonifacio, was a participant in Sara's learned salon. Until recently, it was only known that Sara had written him a letter in which she expressed her doubts about the immortality of the soul. In response, Bonifacio published a small tractate pillorying her heretical views. Sara answered this attack with a *Manifesto*, in which she sought to remove any doubt about her "orthodoxy."

After Sara's debate with the priests, the topics of the immortality of the soul and eternal damnation were discussed with greater vehemence among the Jews, not only in Venice but also in Amsterdam. In 1622–1623, the Jewish physician Samuel da Silva published his *Tratado da imortalidade da alma*, a polemic against the now-lost tractate of Uriel da Costa (1585–1640), a Portuguese Jew who had converted to Christianity and then returned to Judaism, entitled *Sobre a mortalidade de alma do homem* (*On the immortality of the human soul*). In 1623, da Costa replied with the tractate *Exame das tradições farisaicas conferidas com a lei escripta, contra a immortalidade da alma* (Amsterdam, 1623–1624), in which he denied the immortality of the soul. The question was further discussed

by Manasseh ben Israel (*Nismat Hayyim*), Saul Levi Morteira, Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, and Moses Raphael d'Aguilar. This was not just a theological-philosophical discussion; it was also relevant for the question of the rehabilitation of the crypto-Jews, who had been forced to convert to Christianity (Veltri 2009).

Skepticism

In the last century, the study of skepticism enjoyed a spirited academic interest and enthusiastic popularity. Ancient Eastern and Western schools of skeptical thought and philosophy were the subjects of numerous tractates, books, articles, and *prises de position*; furthermore, historical Pyrrhonian philosophy and the classical academies were analyzed and described, and trends in the use of the skeptical method/skeptical methodologies in the Middle Ages and the early modern period were also the objects of substantial investigation.

Moreover, much secondary interest has been devoted to the study of ancient, medieval, and early modern Jewish skepticism. Alvin J. Reines's entry in the old and new editions of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* refers only to the fideist question of the unreliability of reason, and he quotes Judah Halevy and Ḥasdai Crescas on the inadequacy of Neoplatonic and Aristotelian physics and metaphysics as naturally acquired knowledge. However – he comments – “in their refutations of Neoplatonic Aristotelianism, Judah Halevy and Crescas relied on reason and assumed the validity of empirical knowledge” (Reines 2007). Consequently, skepticism is seen here only as an argument for reinforcing divine revelation.

With some rare exceptions concerned mainly with Uriel da Costa, Aaron d'Antan, and Salomon Maimon or with the everlasting question of whether and how the biblical book of Qohelet should be included in the history of skepticism (Crenshaw 1980), there is little on Jewish skeptical thought on academic shelves. In the learned book on skepticism and irreligion edited by Richard Popkin (1996), the famous specialist in the history of skepticism, there is no contribution on Jewish thought at all (Popkin and Vanderjagt

1993), as though the question had never been dealt with by Jewish academies or scholarship. Only Aryeh Botwinik (1997) has dealt with the topic by emphasizing the role of negative theology on the development of skeptical thought. In his book, Botwinik presents an ideal line which links the negative theology of Maimonides with the negative vision of the Godhead in Nietzsche. He interprets monotheism as criticism and as a skeptical attitude to knowledge based on the negative process of understanding. This is nothing but an apophatic theology aimed at sharpening the philosopher's skeptical sense in approaching the incomprehensibility of God. Negative theology and monotheism above all else are indeed components of Jewish skeptical thought. However, the main question of skepticism is neither negative theology nor the validity and consistency of reason and/or revelation but the controversy in and about authority. According to the philological meaning of *auctoritas*, the term faces and puts into epistemologically questions sources of knowledge (reason, revelation) or people who embody authority – people such as prophets, wise men, philosophers, and messiahs.

The first station for the skeptical train is therefore not primarily Maimonides but Judah Halevy, together with Ḥasdai Crescas and Joseph Albo. They opposed the authority of reason, the intellect's capacity to reach a state of perfect knowledge, and the attainment of perfection via the human sciences. However, we are entangled in a dangerous vicious circle, for only by using reason and empirical methods can we test their validity. We have no other method of criticism apart from criticisms of the source of knowledge. As is well known, the critics do not reach a perfect agreement *per se*, as they deal only with opinion. This is the problem with ancient and modern philosophy in relation to other sources of knowledge such as revelation, which *per definitionem* does not seek to present an opinion but advances the claim of absolute truth. Claims of absolute truth and consciousness of the weakness of human reason are the main points of the “crisis” of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Judah Moscato (1530–1593) is known as the author of a collection of sermons called *Nefusot*

Yehudah (*The Dispersed of Judah*) and of a commentary on Judah Halevi's *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, entitled *Qol Yehudah*. *Nefusot Yehudah* belongs to the very core of his important oeuvre. Composed in Mantua and published in Venice in 1589, the collection of 52 sermons addresses the subject of Jewish festivals as a kind of liturgical platform for addressing issues in philosophy, theology, mysticism, culture, history, and other arguments important for the speaker and his audience. Moscato's philosophical positions stem from the rabbinical tradition, classical and contemporary authors, and Neoplatonic thought. He does not disdain to quote non-Jewish authorities, predominantly when they seem to confirm his position. This is the case for Heraclitus' sermon (*Sermon XIV: 86*) on the validity of the sciences, a topic of Renaissance philosophy and skepticism.

Moscato follows a perfectly constructed stylistic and rhetorical scheme which consists of constantly repeating a thesis as a refrain by adding more elements which should confirm it. He quotes the Babylonian Talmud to underscore the view that if man relies only on himself, he cannot attain true knowledge. The latter is, of course, to be achieved by means of one's study of the Torah (*Sermon XIV: 34*).

The *philosophia prima* or *divina* as a denomination of metaphysics goes back to the division of the sciences proposed, for example, among the Arabic and Latin schools (Avicenna and Thomas). As a representative member of Western philosophy, it is useful here to recall Roger Bacon, who speaks of the *metaphysica* as *divina scientia*, *sapientia*, and *philosophia prima*. Moscato is of the opinion that the human sciences, because they were produced by human thought, cannot grasp the divine without conjunction with the divine intellect, an axiomatic position, whose truth is notoriously taken for granted. The almost deductive conclusion is that they cannot *per definitionem* attain the truth. The sciences historically collect their knowledge from generation to generation (*Sermon XIV: 78*), as a mirror of the natural order of nature, created in 7 days by God. Two elements of their nature speak against the seven arts as "(divine) science," for they are contingent (the factor of time) and related to the

natura creata (the factor of space/matter in creation). Speaking of the created nature (*natura creata*), it is obvious that he is here discussing the trustfulness of the organs of perception, the senses, a chief argument of skepticism, dealt with some decades later by Simone Luzzatto (1580–1663).

Luzzatto's book is a deconstruction *ante litteram* of the whole construction of empirical knowledge. He assumed that all knowledge, tested by the intellect, is a product of the senses; these are of course not devoid of error. Luzzatto's book is a skeptical approach to ancient and modern epistemology, not a treatise on theology. His intention, as Ruderman rightly stresses following Luzzatto's own words, is to subvert "human knowledge," adopting a mode of reflection that is "tentative, skeptical, and doubting" rather than "dogmatic and assertive" (Ruderman 1995). Some time later, Spinoza used the same method for analyzing "divine" knowledge, the theology of the Hebrew and Latin traditions. In the introduction to the *benigno lettore*, Luzzatto is unmistakably clear: "Socrates confutes human, not inspired knowledge, infused by a superior mind" (*Socrate*, 1). It is difficult to know whether he was aware that the same skeptical method could be used when examining "divine" knowledge. Although the distance from rational to theological skepticism is small, the existing difference between them should be maintained (Veltri 1995). The problem he is trying to resolve is very different from Moscato's division of profane and holy sciences. While Moscato belittled the importance of the sciences, he did not completely reject them. The sciences' main sin is not to search for agreement with the Torah, although their claim is very similar to that of religion, namely, to attain the perfection of God. They are clearly on the false path to obtain it.

In Venice in 1638, Rabbi Simcha (Simone) Luzzatto published a short, apologetic, but highly valuable book on the status of the Jews, the *Discorso circa il stato de gl'Hebrei et in particolar dimoranti nell'inclita città di Venetia* (Discourse on the Jews of Venice). It was an absolute novelty in the history of Jewish political thought: the Rabbi defines the forces which

shaped the function of the Jewish minority in the economy of the *Serenissima* and mapped its scattered geography, its number and traditions, and the stratification of the Jewish population in the diaspora. In this treatise, the Rabbi of the “Scuola Grande Tedesca,” the Great German Synagogue, introduces a non-Jewish audience to the intellectual subdivisions of the Jewish academics, enumerating among the élite the Rabbis, the philosopher-theologians, and the cabbalists.

In a small passage of his *Discorso*, Luzzatto refers to two different controversies: the question of the authority of ancient traditions and a question regarding authority in general. The first question focuses on the problem of the authority of the ancient sages whose sayings and pronouncements are dependent upon the doctrines of their time (i.e., conformity with “the generally held doctrines”). Here, Luzzatto cryptically refers to the opinion of some Rabbis and philosophers that the opinion of the sages and the (scientific) evidence *cannot* be opposed (“they firmly hold that the truths do not contradict each other and that the simple opinion of the ancient sages should not oppose the evidence”). The reader cannot overlook Luzzatto’s commitment to the *obligation* of the theological and dogmatic view according to which revelation cannot be imperfect although it may be opposed to (the scientific or historical) evidence.

The second and consequent question is the priority of the authority of the sages, or revelation, over human reason if “deficient and defective of power, it does not attain it with its argument.” With this expression, he introduces his later treatise on the failure of human reason, his aforementioned book *Socrate overo dell’humano sapere esercizio seriogiocoso di Simone Luzzatto Hebreo Venetiano opera nella quale si dimostra quanto sia imbecile l’humano intendimento, mentre non è diretto dalla divina rivelatione* (*Socrates or on Human Knowledge. The Serious-Playful Exercise of Simone Luzzatto, Venetian Jew. A Work that Shows how Feeble Human Intelligence can be When it is not Led by Divine Revelation*) (1651), where he denies the authority of the sciences, the knowledge of the senses, and logical inference, appealing for systematic doubt.

This can be considered his major work, a very important milestone in modern skepticism (Popkin 1979; Schmitt 1983), and his detailed introduction to the question of human knowledge is a major document of the Venetian reception of European scholarship (Veltri 2011). Luzzatto’s treatise *Socrate* is a little-known book. There are few copies of the original and no translation exists in any modern European language (Luzzatto 2013). There are some allusions to Luzzatto’s *Socrate* in the world of scholarship, but no scholars have addressed the work in its entirety or at length. With few exceptions regarding the acknowledgment of the value of Luzzatto’s works (Bergmann 1936), the first to note the importance of the book was David Ruderman (1995), who summarized its contents and focused on the difficult problem of Luzzatto’s sources and his place in the world of early modern and Jewish scholarship. Mention should also be made of the dissertation by Ariel Viterbo at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1997). Viterbo discusses with the book, describing its contents, and promises to present it within a broader context in the future. In his dissertation, he proposes to view and thus interpret the *Socrate* as an intellectual biography of Luzzatto.

The aim of Luzzatto’s book remains to date a strange puzzle because of its entirely “non-Jewish” content, while his earlier contribution, the *Discorso*, is a typical apologia for Judaism. According to Ruderman (1995), even the book’s title is misleading, since Luzzatto does not deal with God and providence. Ruderman’s conclusion on Luzzatto’s position departs from the path traced by Bernard Septimus, who, taking only the *Discorso* into account, sees Luzzatto as a “Maimonides” of the seventeenth century. In this way, he tries to locate Luzzatto’s attempt to weaken and even subvert human knowledge by applying a radical skepticism lying within the process of skeptical philosophy and theology which sees Spinoza as the culmination of this attempt (Veltri 2008).

The Venetian Rabbi gives a very short summary at the beginning of the book (*Socrate*, 3–4). In its assembly in the Apolline temple, the academy of Delphi is deciding whether to proceed

against Socrates, indicted for trying to deny the validity of the human sciences (*Socrate*, 3). In his defense, Socrates enumerates the cause which led him to suspect that the human disciplines lacked certainty. His doubts about their reliability originated in the controversial opinions of wise men on the principles of objects in nature. First, he states that he believed that his uncertainty originated from the different prevailing *opinions* about the senses, objects, intellects, and knowledge, but he later comes to the conclusion that the unreliability of knowledge lies in the *objects* of discussion themselves. The analysis of the external and internal senses (common sense, imagination, and memory) induced him to suspect their validity as sources of knowledge because they were partly erroneous.

Examining knowledge itself, he questions whether there is a doctrine about human affairs. In questioning prudence, he reaches the conclusion that it is better to suspend judgment (*Socrate*, 13), although he admits that it can be harmful to civil life. Hippias advises him not to let his conclusions be known and shows him some civil and political teachings drawn from the observation of the natural world. Timon urges him to adduce proof of the weakness of human knowledge. He attacks captious philosophy: in its curiosity, it affirms an agenda of examining the primordial virtues, concluding with the vices. Socrates tends toward Timon's opinion, praising the person who follows probability.

After Socrates' defense (or explanation of his convictions), the assembly, called to proceed against him, cannot make up its mind whether to pass judgment for trying to deny the validity of the human sciences or to pronounce him innocent. Plato convinces the members of the academy to postpone judgment until a far more opportune time.

The suspension of judgment, the avoidance of agreement, and a sincere following of the probable are Luzzatto's "dogmata" originating in his skeptical thought. The accusation against Socrates, in Luzzatto's view, shows that the opinion of human beings is of such certitude (*Socrate*, 14) that it does not surrender to the torments of "importune discourse." The accused can be

questioned on the basis of the same principle that the prosecutor used against Socrates: use of the "importune discourse," namely, logic. Only with the aid of logic can he convince others that a judgment is not possible: because we do not have certain truths, there is no evidence beyond doubt. The method of proving the uncertainty of human knowledge is of course motivated by the discoveries of his time; it was, obviously, attacked by some churchmen and intellectuals. Luzzatto's argumentation is likewise awkward, encumbered by *loca communia* and vicious circle argumentation.

The Venetian Rabbi deals with visual art in the debate about the validity of sense perception. After the examination of taste and its defects, Socrates takes a close look at sight (*Socrate*, 94). He does not deny its excellent qualities (*egregie qualità*), not only in its function as a mediator between human achievements and events but also in bringing human beings closer to the celestial bodies, even though they remain distant. Allusion is made here to the technical discovery of the telescope, which "proved the mistakes and defects which antiquity, following human discourse, retained as true and sincere doctrines" (*Socrate*, 94).

Some centuries later, a descendant of the Luzzattos, Shmuel David Luzzatto, commonly called Shadal, wrote some notes on their genealogical tree, with reference to Simone's *Socrate*. There, he tries to justify his ancestor's skeptical tendency, referring to the era of Descartes, to the crisis of Aristotelianism and therefore of the Scholastics, and to the genesis of ancient Greek philosophy. Against the background of a skeptical approach to salutary beliefs (*salutari credenze*), Luzzatto, erudite "philosopher and at the same time a religious man" – as Shadal put it – considered it to be profitable to belief and useful to society to lighten the uncertainty of human speculation. Shadal considered the *Socrate* to be an apologetic work designed to humiliate false philosophers for their temerity, supplying the believers with an apologetic arsenal against their attacks.

There is much truth to this. However, if on the one hand Luzzatto argues against the defects of

knowledge gained through the senses and therefore of all knowledge based on this, on the other, he did not “absolve” his *Socrate* of the accusation of having attacked authority. Perhaps he was aware that every method used against the human sciences can also be used against religion.

Luzzatto seems to reject a priori the authority of sciences, the knowledge of the senses, and logical inference, instead advocating systematic doubt. Only doubt can preserve humans from being condemned by the agora, for the agora seeks to preserve truth and accepted moral customs. The deviation is not completely desirable, but it is socially and philosophically necessary.

Science

Jewish attitudes toward the role and place of the “sciences” in the curriculum are guided, in the main, by a pragmatic mentality and approach. In Rabbinic times, the academies officially allowed only a certain élite to engage in the study of the *hokhma yewwanit* (Greek wisdom), which included the so-called sciences, with the primary intent of understanding, or even influencing, imperial decisions regarding the Jews. In his *Moreh Nevukhim*, Maimonides explains interest in the foreign sciences as a reappropriation of wisdom that other peoples and scholars had stolen from Jewish sources (*Moreh Nevukhim*, I:71). In the Renaissance, the study of foreign sciences was considered both a challenge for the present, in completing the curriculum of a *vir doctus* (*hakham kolel*), and a fulfillment of pragmatic purposes for the Jewish community.

One of the initial steps of pedagogical importance was a project put forward by Abraham Provenzali in his proposal to create a new academy (*waad*) in Mantua in 1564. In his view, the Jewish people were running the risk of losing their scholars, while the number of Christian experts in the sciences and technology was constantly increasing. Among the disciplines to be taught in such a college, he listed the study of the Torah, philosophy, Hebrew grammar, Latin, arithmetic, geometry, geography, and astrology (Miletto 2004a).

A pragmatic but purely skeptical attitude is also to be found in R. Yehiel Nissim (Vitale) da

Pisa’s *Minḥat Kena’ot* (Guetta 1999). For him, the natural sciences, such as geometry and medicine, constitute wisdom, whereas knowledge beyond nature (namely, metaphysics), which seeks to explain all phenomena through logical argumentation, is subject to doubt and arrives at false conclusions. Intense scholarly debates took place about the world of the Torah and its connection to the theoretical and practical sciences, as the development of antiquarian and encyclopedic works proves.

The encyclopedic and antiquarian tendency of Humanistic scholarship has also been studied from the perspective of *ars memoriae*, the art of memorizing the world of wisdom and sciences, as a technique that aimed at acquiring knowledge by constructing a harmonic and self-referential world of signs and symbols. Judaism adopts the genre of the encyclopedic organization of the universe of wisdom and sciences as an apologetic need, a fence around the Torah. Jewish scholars wrote to provide their fellow Jews who had been attracted by the non-Jewish environment with a modern, i.e., Humanist, garment in which to clothe accepted Jewish religious ideas and traditions – and, above all, to reappropriate traditions now believed to be of Christian or general origin. That is the case in antiquarian works like Azaria de’ Rossi’s *Meor Enayim* and of encyclopedias like the physician Abraham Portaleone’s *Shilṭe ha-gibborim* (Miletto 2004b). Azaria’s collection of articles on different questions of Jewish antiquities tries to incorporate foreign sources into the evaluation of Rabbinic *realia*. His work is interesting for the history of the Jewish sciences as a first attempt to establish the truth by comparing Jewish and non-Jewish sources, seeking to deconstruct Rabbinic traditions on scientific observations as irrelevant for the modern sciences.

In the case of Portaleone’s encyclopedic work, the scholar’s primary aim is to comprehend the universe of knowledge, already encrypted in the word of the written Torah. Abraham tried to resolve the conflict between science and religion by deriving all aspects of knowledge, even recent technical advances and discoveries such as gunpowder (Miletto 2003), “philologically” from the

Bible – an extreme consequence of the principle that all wisdom belongs to Israel, a notion also expressed by Maimonides (Veltri 1995). That is also the opinion of Simone Luzzatto, developed in his *Socrate*, in which he expressly raises the question of the validity of knowledge in general. Luzzatto presents here the most common achievements of the new sciences, negating their absolute validity.

Impact and Legacy

The Renaissance and the early modern period marked a decisive historical turning point in the history of Jewish thought. Although the works of these scholars cannot really be considered as original intellectual productions, the intellectual history of Humanistic Jewry in Italy was the driving force in modern philosophy. Jewish Renaissance thought reveals the roots of the *Haskalah*, the “German Jewish Enlightenment,” and lays the foundation for a critical and methodological study of Judaism, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* showed a particular interest in the cultural history of Humanism, a tendency probably best interpreted as an attempt by its adherents to discover a foundational act for the emergence of the new “critical” sciences in the arsenal of their own history. In this sense, Azaria de’ Rossi can be considered as the father of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. An authentic thinker of the “Jewish Enlightenment” *ante litteram*, he is mentioned in the introduction to Moses Mendelssohn’s translation of the Bible (1783), and he was the subject of the Leopold Zunz’s monograph work *Toledot le-R’ Azarya min ha-Adummin* (1843).

Azaria de’ Rossi does not represent an isolated case: two other biographies, those of Elijah del Medigo and Moses Zacuto, are published in *Ha-Me’assef* (1784 and 1785). The list of Jewish philosophers and thinkers can be extended – as is the case of Isaac Abravanel (Carmoly 1857; Buxtorf 1652; Majus and Bischoff 1708), Leone Ebreo (Zimmels 1886), Elia Levita (Buber 1856; Kahana 1883–1884; Levy 1888; Bacher 1892,

1893), and Salamone Rossi (Birnbaum 1893) – but it is certainly not complete, and we should focus on every single aspect of the *Haskalah* and the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to comprehend the deeper meaning of those sciences.

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Johannes de Segovia

► [Juan de Segovia](#)

Juan Alfonso González de Segovia

► [Juan de Segovia](#)

Juan de Segovia

Born: ca. 1393, probably Segovia

Died: 1458, Aiton

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Abstract

Juan de Segovia was a Spanish theologian, best known for his role at the Council of Basel, as

well as for his thoughts on a peaceful, rational resolution to the conflict between Christianity and Islam.

Synonyms

[Johannes de Segovia](#); [Juan Alfonso González de Segovia](#); [Segovianus](#)

Biography

Little is known about Juan de Segovia's early life. He began his studies at the University of Salamanca in 1407 and graduated with a *baccalaureus* from the Faculty of Arts in 1418. He was then appointed to a chair, most likely to interpret the scriptures. The title of *magister in sacra pagina* was bestowed upon him in 1422, and in 1432 he became *magister in artibus*. To confirm new statutes, he represented the University in 1421 before the Pope, and in 1427/1428 he became a papal *referendarius* in Rome. As part of the entourage of Juan II of Castile and León, he arrived in Medina del Campo in 1431, where he had a formative conversation with the Muslim ambassador of the Emir of Granada about Christians and Muslims. His time at the Council of Basel, where he was appointed in his own right in 1433, then in 1434 as a representative of the University of Salamanca, was a significant period in his life. He died in 1458 in Aiton as Titular Archbishop of Caesarea.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

At the Council, he mainly represented the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary and devoted himself to theological issues associated with the Hussites and the Orthodox Church.

Later on, he began work on a monumental history of the Council and wrote ecclesiological works, including the *Liber de magna auctoritate episcoporum in concilio generali*, in which he considers the episcopal college as a mediating authority between the papacy and the Council.

Due to the question of superiority between the Council and the Pope in Basel, de Segovia endorsed the election of Felix V as antipope. He argued for the Church as a *corpus mysticum*, whose head is Christ.

Motivated in particular by the fall of Constantinople, de Segovia dealt intensively with Islam from 1453 onwards. Opposing to the idea of Crusades, his important work *De gladio divini spiritus in corda mittendo Saracenorum* is an expression of his policy of a *via pacis et doctrinae* for mediating with non-Christians. Although he accuses the Saracens of having a false image of Christianity, particularly because they charged Christians with idol worship and polytheism, de Segovia recognizes some true teachings in the Quran, noting that there are commonalities between the religions. On this basis, as well as due to his experiences in Spain, de Segovia pleads for intellectual discussions among scholars.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In his portrayal of Islam, de Segovia draws on many medieval elements, reproaching Islam in particular with an affinity for violence, a lax sexual morality, and the promise of a sensual paradise. In addition to further developing these arguments, he bases his reflections solely on the Quran, using no other sources, and clearly separates his argumentation into description, analysis, and refutation (*De gladio*, ed. Roth 2012). For this purpose, he studied Islam with great care and even had a trilingual edition of the Quran made in Arabic, Castilian, and Latin (which is now lost).

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Justice in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

The classical ideal of justice remained vibrant in the Middle Ages because it was embodied in the surviving texts of Roman law, the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. From there, it entered canon law, where it gained strength from its association with the divine giver of justice. Justice in the classical tradition was an ideal of distributive justice, a socially fair allocation of things, rendering to each his due. It was an ideal ostensibly linked to outcomes, independent of process. Ideal and practice were never necessarily coincident, however, and it was along that fissure that humanist critiques of law and its practitioners, beginning with Petrarch (20 July 1304–19 July 1374), launched largely ethical arguments. Justice, itself an ethical construct, was being lost, said humanists, in

procedural delays and cascades of citations and references, and in bad Latin, that seemingly served only to line the pockets of lawyers, judges, and notaries. By the sixteenth century, the ethical arguments had spilled over into epistemological attacks as well. The quasi-sacred quality of the classical legal texts was confronted by a more thoroughly historical construction of those texts, most frequently associated with the Italian jurist Andrea Alciato (8 May 1492–12 January 1550). This gave birth to such a different method of reading the texts of the Corpus that it came to be called the *mos gallicus*, in contrast to the older *mos italicus*, associated in many minds with the fourteenth-century jurist Bartolus of Sassoferrato (1313–1357). Against the assertion that no professional jurist could operate in any other fashion (*nemo iurista nisi bartolista*), lay the argument that justice lays in appropriate laws that served a people in their peculiar historical context. The legislator (most prominently a king, such as that of France), rather than the academically educated interpreter, was looked to as the font of justice. Justice could thus be reconceived, as it was by figures, such as Jean Bodin (1530–June 1596) and John Locke (29 August 1632–28 October 1704), in terms of a particular state and its ruler and its people, and natural law became unhinged from the realm of objective patterns of behavior and bound to subjective rights instead.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The medieval ideal of justice derived from Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 5) and Cicero (*De Officiis*, Book 1). It was encapsulated in the great compendium of Roman jurisprudence, the *Digest*, assembled on the orders of the emperor Justinian I (c. 482–565) in the sixth century, and in the law school text, the *Institutes*, composed at the same time. The latter begins with the statement that “justice is an unswerving and perpetual determination to acknowledge all men’s rights” (“Iustitia est constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum cuique tribuens”: Justinian 1987). The

corresponding passage in the *Digest* added, from the jurist Ulpian, “the precepts of the law are these: live honorably, do not harm another, render to each what is his” (“iuris praecepta sunt haec: honeste vivere, alterum non laedere, suum cuique tribuere”: Mommsen et al., D. 1.1.10). The ideal was a form of distributive justice appropriate to civil law, as opposed to retributive justice typical of criminal law.

Aristotle had treated justice under two headings, general and particular. By the first, a just man deals fairly with all others; by the second, he renders what is due (proportional) to their merit and worth. Both are distributive. Both leave ample room for justice to vary by social status, gender, age, or any other form of discrimination of persons enshrined in law. Cicero added an emphasis on the natural law basis to justice, which could then be determined by the rational human being. He formulated it as *suum cuique tribuere*, which was then picked up by the later jurist Ulpian (d. 228) and thence found its way into the *Corpus*. It did so because the law (*ius* in Latin) was such because it was just (*iustum*); its source was justice. Justice belonged in the realm of the sacred as a moral science, and its interpreters were to consider justice as something more than the simple certainty of application of particular rules or customs. In that regard, in the welter of laws and customs across medieval Europe, it was the *ius civile* that was considered to have claim to being in fact *iustum*, to being justice, rendered in writing (*ratio scripta*). As a whole and in its many institutions and provisions, Roman civil law became the standard by which all others were supposed to be measured.

From its privileged position in the texts of civil law, the Ulpianic ideal of justice entered into canon law. Gratian’s pivotal twelfth-century *Decretum* (Dist. 1 c. 2) agreed that law (*ius*) was such because it was just (*iustum*: Gratian 1993). The power of this vision in the medieval world rested on the fact that, in the words of one eminent historian of law, “medieval society was legal, because it was described and preserved by law, its most profound constitution was legal, and there stood its essential aspect, there stood its ultimate worth” (Grossi 1995, 14).

The medieval ideal was a thoroughly ethical vision of justice, as a movement of the will (*voluntas*). Justice was generally classified as one of the four cardinal virtues, along with prudence, temperance, and fortitude. The location of justice in the will (Quagliioni 2004), with a subjective habit of the soul (*habitus animi*) (Cortese 2000), inserted ethical concerns into any discussion of law. It was also a vision that posited a tension between the effects of laws and their ability to mirror transcendent justice. Gratian's treatment of *ius* as *iustum* immediately raised the distinction between the legal and the equitable.

A recurrent object of discussions of justice was the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1–16), as their equal pay over a workday of different lengths raised the issue. Justice in that case emerged only on an allegorical reading of divine law. But were justice to be considered purely in the realm of human law, then the “constant” and “perpetual” nature of justice, as emphasized by Gratian, became problematic. Against the unchanging ideal of justice lay the malleable and elastic nature of human laws, and so discussions of justice easily turned to equity and the problem of making just resolutions of cases.

Law, of course, came in different types. The central distinction was between divine and human law. St. Augustine (13 November 354–28 August 430) drew up the model by which divine law, most certainly just, sat on top; natural law, as divine law manifest in nature, came next; and beneath those laws was human positive law, legitimate if not in conflict with the other two (Janin 2004). Justice was the source of law, not vice versa. Law's function was to bring justice to bear in human society (Cortese 2000). Natural law had, by this account, an objective quality as a creation of God. It could be known through observation of behavioral patterns, and norms could be known as grounded in the acquired nature of longstanding habit and custom. Written laws could give precision to such norms, but they also carried the danger of removing them from their origin in the natural.

The chief structural complication to the realization of earthly justice lays in the confusing and overlapping array of positive laws: canon law, Roman civil law, statutes, and other written

enactments of political entities ranging from kingdoms to small principalities and cities, rules of corporate bodies such as guilds or universities, and local customs taken as normative. These were an amalgam of resources to hand whenever there was conflict or doubt as to what was *suum* and to whom as *cuique*. Canon and civil law pretended to universality, and in conjunction with some other elements, chiefly as taught in the law schools, beginning with Bologna in the twelfth century, came to be seen as a “common law” (*ius commune*: Bellomo 1995). These then most closely approximated a standard of justice, and their texts were read as such, as *ratio scripta*. But canon law had its system of courts within the church, culminating (in appellate but also in precedential terms) in papal Rome. Civil law had no system of courts but was variously allowed as a basis to norms and/or a standard of reasoning and justice in local courts (Venice, e.g., notoriously excluded academic jurisprudence from its civic courts, though she had to accept the traditions of its use in its terra firma empire). In such a legal situation, the need for interpretation of norms in relation to case facts and social practices was continuous and often pressing.

The Aristotelian notion of justice treated it as a corrective, commutative process to remove imbalances and disproportions, which derived from inevitable defects in law from its universality or rigor (Berman 1983). To make any given law just (*ius dicere*) applied equally to drawing up written rules as to pronouncing sentence (Bellabarba 2008). Thomas Aquinas (1225–7 March 1274), in elaborating on Aristotle and the *suum cuique tribuere*, saw justice in relation to practices such as the voluntary exchanges of the marketplace (Shaffern 2009). Justice was a virtue that ordered the interpersonal and social, even if it at times resulted in inequity. Aquinas took cognizance of the linguistic and conceptual distinction between law as a system, the objective of justice (*ius*), and law as a way to rationalize (*ratio*) that justice (*lex*). He found as well that one-dimensional senses of law always ran into problems: a concern to write down and fix law would come to difficulties when there was need for change, whereas every sense of a norm would come to a need to fix it in writing

(Quagliani 2004). The two virtues, *ratio* and *aequitas*, mitigated the rigor of written law and underwrote the medieval image of justice (Bellabarba 2008).

The two greatest civilian jurists of the fourteenth century thus took different approaches to the texts about justice. Bartolus of Sassoferrato (1313–1357) focused his discussion of the definition of *iustitia* on the term *constans*. He noted that another text dealing with a mother's remarriage entertained differing senses of what was just. The parable of the workers in the vineyard being paid the same whether they began work in the morning or evening was something to be taken "mystically" and "figuratively," but it led to the conclusion that humans were not by definition "constant" but had a limited possibility of being so (Bartolus 1560, to D. 1.1.10). The law made up for this limitation by being a systematic form of wisdom, arming the best of all the professions (*artes*) whose practitioners could ferret out false sentences and arguments. Bartolus' illustrious successor, a man noted for his philosophical approach to law, Baldo degli Ubaldi (1325–1400), gave *iustitia* a different twist. Justice could be taken as "perpetual and eternal wisdom" ("perpetua et immortalis sapientia"). Justice by this account was a type of perfection of the immortal soul that inhered in the conscience. It was not mere opinion, which necessarily contained an element of doubt, and which was not in accord with *aequitas rationum*. But in reality, a judge was best advised to follow the law of the court, not his own conscience. What was needed was the judgment of a *bonus vir* who did for another what he would do for himself in the circumstances. "He is a good man who is furnished with innocence of counsel" ("Est autem bonus vir ille qui innocentia consilii pollet": Baldo 1585, to D. 1.1.10). Thus both jurists, Bartolus and Baldo, by different routes, drew attention to the variance between absolute justice and what humans at their best might be able to do.

Judges were the ones in the position of interpreting the laws, but unless their roles were long term and at least quasi-professional (as the justices of the royal courts in England), they were

not in fact usually well versed in the laws. Academically trained jurists were, to the contrary, well equipped to serve as the "priests" of the law, upholders of the principle of justice (Quagliani 2004). To them jurisprudence was a *vera philosophia* for a proper civil society (Quagliani 2004; Kelley 1976). Doctors of law had great authority and an easy involvement in civil political affairs (Ascheri 1999; Kirshner 1999). The outstanding exception to that rule was Venice, which began from a basis of Byzantine law but without a scholastic apparatus to train judges. In Venice, judges were laymen who were expected to use discretion in reaching judgments and settling conflicts (Shaw 2006).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The elevation of law, of justice, as civil science, put it in the crosshairs of anyone discontent with that order and justice. None, it seems, were more discontent in the Trecento than Petrarch, himself a refugee (traitor was his term for it) from the formal study of law in Montpellier and Bologna. His criticisms were of law, not of justice. His sense of justice remained profoundly moral and conservative, as one might expect from an admirer of Cicero. Petrarch decried the failures of law's practitioners, those pretentious jurists, to be eloquent in their writings and just in their judgments. He accused them of prolonging cases with arcane arguments to wrest more fees and burnish their authority. Deflating the standing of jurists and questioning the functioning of law was not to question the notion of justice, but it was to make it central to discussion.

Subsequent to Petrarch, notably so with the Florentine chancellor Coluccio Salutati (16 February 1331–4 May 1406), law and medicine came to figure in what has been called the *disputa delle arti*. The *disputa* was about justice, as it ostensibly gravitated around arguments concerning the relative superiority of law or medicine. Salutati, himself a notary whose productions in that earlier phase of his life conformed with the very unclassical vocabulary and forms of legal Latin, penned a doctoral oration that invoked

Ciceronian themes of law as the fount of *amor bene vivendi*, an “expression of the participation of the human race in divine reason and as the basis of the *forma et ratio vivendi*, that is of the political constitution” (Quaglioni 2004). Salutati was no different on the divine origins of justice than the jurists he rubbed shoulders with in the streets and civic buildings of Florence. He expected the active assistance of trained jurists in framing laws. But he stressed the equitable function of law, its application to changing circumstances (Krantz 1971; Manzin 1994). He would be the first major figure in what became a Florentine humanistic tradition of criticism of existing laws and courts against an the ideal of civic (and ancient) justice.

Subsequent Florentine chancellors, Leonardo Bruni (1369–4 March 1444) and Poggio Bracciolini (11 February 1380–30 October 1459) brought to law a historicizing vision, less concerned with changes in law but with context and equity. They criticized well-known jurists, such as Cino da Pistoia (d. 1336–1337) and Dino del Mugello (d. 1303) for knowing only law (not a fair assessment of Cino, a poet among other things). The necessity for dealing with change seemed to reduce the claims of academic legal sciences to any sort of superior eternal truth. Humanists read away the professional apparatus of textual glosses, arguing in contrast for reading the texts of law themselves. Bracciolini complained about the mercenary nature of legal practice and the plethora of conflicting interpretations, in contrast to the serene detachment of the classical scholar. The role of the legislator in meeting that need of shifting cases was at least as important as that of the academic interpreter, perhaps more, as the legislator arguably knew the immediate local context, in contrast to the aloof standards of the texts of civil law. It is also worth noting that university-trained lawyers were the chief rivals of humanists for intellectual and cultural prestige in civic contexts. The lawyers enjoyed the institutionalized advantages of the law schools and guilds of jurists. The humanists had whatever prestige their pens and social connections could earn them, and targeting lawyers was aiming at low-hanging fruit.

The critiques of Lorenzo Valla (1405–1 August 1457) were different, more grammatical and epistemological. Valla took on Bartolus directly, denouncing him for ignorance of historical meanings and for barbarous Latin style. Valla, however, was not in a position to anticipate real legal change. He could mount an acerbic attack on the iconic figure of Bartolus without having to look to the implications for practice and legislation.

One element that made the critiques by humanists so telling was the fact that many had studied law, at least for a while, and worked in close association with notaries, attorneys, judges, and legislators. Perhaps a most telling critique, but one less well known for lack (until recently) of a modern critical edition, was that of Leon Battista Alberti (14 February 1404–20 April 1472) in his *De iure* of 1437. Written supposedly at the request of a friend who was a judge in nearby Prato, *De iure* proceeds to examine a judge’s role through the verbal exchanges of the figures in this typical humanist dialogue. The verbal exchanges studded with classical references poke sarcastically at the number of books jurists used. They also are denounced for reducing the law to its dimension as a lucrative profession, marked by ignorance of the function of law in disputes. As opposed to aiming at a science of knowledge and at the application of first principles, jurists put forth needlessly complex opinions. Alberti, himself the holder of a law degree, suggested to reduce the influence of lawyers in proceedings and to increase that of judges. Judicial discretion was needed to quell doubt where controversy had arisen or to bridge the apparent gap between positive and natural law.

The later Florentine chancellor, Bartolomeo Scala (1430–1497), described in contemporary records as *doctor* and *iurisconsulens*, in his *De legibus et iudiciis* (1483), employed dialogic figures, including Bernardo Machiavelli, father to the political theoretician Niccolò, to explore the problems of resolving disputes in the face of lawyers’ interminable arguments and piles of books. The law as practiced lacked certainty, and that meant it lacked justice. But the fault was not with the law, Scala concluded, it was with the misguided interpreters of it. “With

nature leading and pointing the way, everyone could arrive at truth using his own wits; but when arguments are piled up to demonstrate or refute conflicting claims, no one can distinguish the truth” (Scala 2008, 179). A natural and rational ethical standard could be lost behind written laws.

Such concerns may have been raised more consistently, not to say eloquently, in Florence due to the visibility of the city’s humanists and their ability to find an influential audience, as well as to the parallel issues thrown up by the Arno city’s turbulent politics and increasing (and largely extralegal) dominance of the Medici. But other cities faced similar issues, and people there generated their own debates and keyed in on those of Florence. *Novelle*, as humorous stories, reaching back to Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) in the mid-Trecento, crafted narratives around the particular justice due to their characters, which invariably contrasted to the rigors of law. These tales were correctives of sorts to the law and to philosophical and theological notions of an absolute and unchanging justice (Langer 1999). One historian has drawn a similar contrast between a textually fixed (though revisable) state law and a justice negotiated on a local scale (Sbriccoli 2001). The reality of court cases was that litigants had to be wary of the processes and of the rules. As one scholar of litigation has remarked, “they feared the beginning of a penal case, an expensive affair, laden with risks and uncertain in results, beyond a possible motive for retaliation: it was required then to be prudent and proceed to a denunciation [to a court] only in cases in which there was no other remedy to pressure an adversary save abandoning the legal action undertaken, as was indicated by the small share of proceedings that were concluded with a formal sentence in the old regime” (Bellabarba 2008, 83). The types of procedures employed, accusatory or inquisitorial, and the availability of less formal, more abbreviated processes, had something to do with the confidence to take a case to court and to see it through (Vallerani 2012; Cerutti 1995). Even then, the judicial conclusion might only become a condition for the opening of the next phase of conflict resolution intent on a

negotiated settlement, in which each party might more likely see something like his due.

Yet, alongside all these criticisms, there endured also a positive image of law and the legal professional. “The jurist was the very model of the secular intellectual” (Kelley 1988), and the ideal of the perfect jurist would animate thinkers up to and including Leibniz (1 July 1646–14 November 1716). It was an ideal that suited a Platonist approach to justice, merely replacing the philosopher-king with the philosopher-jurist, whose wisdom resided in his knowledge of canonical texts on a wide variety of subjects. By the sixteenth century, this image would be set in the outpouring of treatises, which appeared in a number of languages, prescribing the education of the perfect jurist who was equipped to seek and dispense justice.

Impact and Legacy

By the end of the fifteenth century, the epistemological status of the texts of Roman civil law was under question, among others by Angelo Poliziano (14 July 1454–24 September 1494) in Florence (Krantz 1971). The capture by Florentines of the *litera pisana*, an older copy of Justinian’s *corpus* that had some significant variations from the vulgate version disseminated from Bologna since the twelfth century, had a powerful impact in historicizing the law. Poliziano was able to study it firsthand (part of the irony of that text’s removal, at the behest of Lorenzo de’ Medici, from Pisa, where the Florentine law school was relocated, to Florence, where the humanistic arts curriculum and its teachers remained). Poliziano’s account of the law as historical artifact, along with his questioning of certain passages and their meaning, had an effect on those rulers or ruling bodies looking for a way and a justification around certain limitations of the law as practiced. But the historical account of law had limited effect on practices, especially in politically fragmented Italy, where the traditions of academic jurisprudence and the social prestige of its experts were entrenched.

The Milanese jurist Andrea Alciato was one who brought a historical perspective into

teaching. He could and did raise distinctions between Roman legal institutions and what those areas of law had become in the light of scholastic legal reasoning and prevailing practices. Alciato's advisory *consilia*, however, as professional interpretations for actual cases, continued to conform to prevailing methods and styles of argument, which were largely unhistorical and unclassical. Still, his academic perspective, rolled out at a time of rapid political change for the states of war-torn Italy, including in spectacular fashion in Milan, gave credence to broad shifts in laws worked out by conquering princes.

That the events of the Italian Wars (1494–1559) presented all sorts of problems for formulating a consistent view of justice is perhaps best seen in the works of the foremost analyst of the political turmoil, the Florentine Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), himself the son of a modest doctor of laws. Justice or its lack was linked with force in his thought. The language of jurisprudence was the language of power. Machiavelli's contemporary, Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), holder of a law degree who practiced in Florence in his younger days, easily transposed the professional language he had learned into his later political and historical writings. But it was a different world than that of his youth. He himself acknowledged that the princes were not as they should be but simply what they were. The language of jurisprudence (such as the public discourse of *pro-et-contra* disputations) gave new reflection to manifestations of absolutism, to a power that no longer pretended to stand beneath the law. Guicciardini remained the jurist and looked to jurists for justice, but no longer as a certain science of the right. As one historian has said, "discretion for Guicciardini is practical reason, the correct judgment of the jurist, which takes his unique knowledge as *sapientia* [wisdom] and *prudencia* and not as *scientia*, because he knows that the legal rule, unable to discipline every particular aspect of reality, always has need of interpretation and of the interpreter" (Quaglianone 2004, 118). The way to put that interpreter into the position where discretion mattered was to make the doctor of law also the judge. The Florentine Ruota of 1502, itself an

imitation of the Roman court of the same name, was just one example of this new trend, as was the German imperial Reichskammergericht in 1495. But now what made the interpreter effective was less his systematic education as a doctor of law than his experience as interpreter of situations, motives, and possibilities in relation to the law (Prodi 2000).

Jean Bodin, in a context of lively discussion of the sources of law and the power of the royal legislator, and in the context of a France riven by sectarian conflict, employed the tools of the humanistic jurists and arrived at the point of contesting the definition of justice and natural law of Ulpian that graced the Roman texts. He arrived instead at the idea of founding positive law in natural reason and the justice of royal legislation for a particular realm that was not necessarily applicable everywhere. Now natural law began to figure as a set of rights each Frenchman held (varying by legal status). These rights were subjective and deduced a priori. Justice itself was a matter of tempering rules to cases, especially in terms of the status of the persons involved – a combination of law and equity. Any sense of precedent remained weak. Where natural law had once been a matter of custom, precedent, and the reason written into Roman law, it was now in transcendent principles that demonstrated the deficiencies of the older views. Positive law was to conform to those principles. But that would also leave justice enmeshed in positive law, not to be questioned, unless it were possible for someone to claim superior understanding of those transcendent principles. The royal claims could easily become transcendent themselves, as they seemed to be in Bodin's elevated sense of the sovereign. It would not be until well into the eighteenth century that some plausible critiques of royal laws and justice could emerge.

It was the Dutchman Hugo Grotius (10 April 1583–20 August 1645) who postulated a basis for positive law in a natural law that was not the same as divine law and yet was not reduced to positive law as the will of a legislator. Grotius's natural law, however, was not based on reason per se but on the observable contracts among peoples that

formed the basis of an international law beyond the whims of any one sovereign in any one place. His *De iure belli ac pacis* (1625) rested on a secularized sense of natural law, as he wrote from the midst of the last great spasm of religious warfare in Europe. He examined the issue of justice in going to war (*ad bellum*) and in its conduct (*in bello*) without an eye to matters of sin and divine law.

With John Locke, who based government on the consent of the governed – the same consent (will) that made justice a virtue – justice became a matter of rendering to each his rights. Subjective rights, inhering in individuals by natural law, had more than ethical status. They gained a full social and political dimension, as people tied their rights to life and their labor to a social contract with others. And a figure like Leibniz, who was drawn to conventional images of jurisprudence, also contributed powerfully to the new method of natural philosophy, which left no room for the conventional jurist. The new ideal of a naturalistic social and political theory looked to legislation and codification, rather than interpretation, to locate justice.

Interconnections

When the US Declaration of Independence asserted that king and parliament had been unjust, had transgressed natural law, and had deprived colonists of natural, God-given rights, the notion of justice had come a long way from *suum cuique tribuere*. There was no weighing of what the colonists, in turn, might have owed the mother country. There was an absolute balance to be taken into account. It is the same absolute justice that is supposedly achieved by a trial verdict, a justice weighed in terms of the political unit, and not in terms of compensation for victims of criminal or wrongful acts, for example. From the social, ethical, ideal of justice in classical and medieval terms, through a historicizing examination initiated by humanists, justice came back to an ideal that now ignores, or at best assumes, the social.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alberti, Leon Battista](#)
- ▶ [Bartolus of Saxoferrato](#)
- ▶ [Bodin, Jean](#)
- ▶ [Bracciolini, Poggio](#)
- ▶ [Ethics, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Law in the Renaissance, Roman](#)

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time. Martin Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone individualized salvation thereby depriving the papacy of all authority, and eventually abolishing purgatory. For Protestants, eternity, heaven or hell, was determined at a specific point in the Christian’s life when he or she accepted God’s grace and his promises in the Gospels. Thus, the true Church was a priesthood of believers justified by faith alone. For Catholics, justification was a process during and after life, but in the debates of the early sixteenth century the Catholic conception of a fearful, physical purgatory was transformed into a happy spiritual state of love. For Catholics, Luther’s doctrine broke the intertwined theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Given the health-care crisis of the early sixteenth century, Catholic scholars worked to achieve a compromise with Luther by making charity, a subset of “works,” essential for justification. This “double justification” was rejected during the Council of Trent contributing significantly to the permanent religious schism. Philosophically, the justification debates of the early sixteenth century altered conceptions of time in both Catholic and Protestant theologies.

Justification, Renaissance Conception of

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Abstract

Traditionally, justification, i.e., eternal Christian salvation, was a lifelong and afterlife process. Most Christians expected to spend time in purgatory, a painful, physical space for sins not “satisfied” on earth. Prayers of the living, masses for the dead, and after 1476, indulgences for the dead could reduce purgatorial

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

The Renaissance debate about “Justification” began before Martin Luther’s *Ninety-Five Thesis* appeared in 1517. The *Ninety-Five Thesis* questioned papal authority to release souls from purgatory, with subsequent debates leading to Luther’s appearance before Emperor Charles V at the 1521 Diet of Worms. However, humanists in Charles’ court also questioned papal authority to grant indulgences and the physical reality of purgatory. In 1522, Luther translated Erasmus’ 1516 Greek *New Testament* into German and inserted “alone” to Romans 3:28, thus, establishing Luther’s doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone which nullified all papal authority. Logically such a doctrine precluded the existence

of purgatory, but Luther went back and forth on the topic and did not clearly and completely reject purgatory until 1530 in his *Revocation of Purgatory*. The debate about justification could be surmised as a Protestant view of a onetime experience of receiving God's grace based on believing in Christ's death and resurrection to wash away all sin, versus the Catholic view of justification as a life and afterlife process of purification of sin in which the living could aid the dead. The Renaissance debate about justification was rooted in the doctrine of purgatory.

Originally vague and abstract, the doctrine of purgatory became concrete in the High Middle Ages. By the thirteenth century, most theologians and lay Christians believed in three overlapping chronologies: temporal, purgatorial, and eternal. Temporal, earth time began with creation some five to six thousand years earlier and would end with Christ's second coming. During that span each Christian entered into and departed from the physical world whereupon most expected their souls to enter purgatorial time in a defined space near hell, a truly demonic and frightful residence where each sin not sufficiently satisfied on earth merited a sentence measured in thousands of years. Sooner or later all souls entered the third chronology, eternity: hell for souls stained with unsatisfied mortal sin at death, and heaven mostly populated by souls who had endured thousands of purgatorial years (Eire, 2010; Le Goff, 1986).

Humanists had joked about purgatory years before Luther. In his 1508 *In Praise of Folly*, Erasmus ridiculed those who attempted with mathematical precision to count their centuries, years, months, and minutes in purgatory for their worldly shortcomings. While Erasmus joked about the doctrine, civic-minded humanists in Italy began to view the doctrine as a danger due to the syphilis epidemic that began in Italy in 1493. Combined with the recurrence of plague locally every 20 or so years, a health crisis gripped Europe in the early sixteenth century leading many Christians to question the relation between charity and purgatory, specifically indiscriminate giving of alms to beggars because of the risk of

contagion. When the syphilis epidemic hit Genoa in the 1490s, Caterina Fieschi Adorno checked the Grim Reaper's scythe with all her physical and spiritual might. Catherine, a laywoman, served as rector of the city's General Hospital (L'Ospedale di Pammonte) and was later canonized for her work. St. Catherine's experience and devotional practice led her to claim to have seen purgatory, and her conception of it was close to the eventual Tridentine doctrine. Catherine saw that souls in purgatory were happy and their pain spiritual. Implicitly Christians could, like Catherine, purge themselves in life with the cleansing act of charity engendered by a burning love of God. She had been "illuminated," purified by the fiery furnace of rational and institutional charity.

Her admirer and spiritual disciple, Ettore Vernazza founded the confraternity of the Oratory of Divine Love and established the first Hospital for Incurables, i.e., specifically for syphilitics, adjacent to Catherine's hospital. He went on to help establish Hospitals for Incurables in Rome and Naples, and confraternities to serve them. The Oratory represented a new type of confraternity dedicated to the urban common good rather than the corporate self-interest of the members. The Oratory's membership and activities were kept secret following Christ's injunction not to give alms for praise. The Genoese Oratory limited membership to 36 laypersons and 4 priests who were specifically charged with maintaining the Hospital for Incurables. Other confraternities imitated the Oratory emphasizing support of hospitals rather than alms given individually and indiscriminately to beggars who were blamed for spreading disease, especially syphilis (Carpaneto da Langosco, 2007).

The Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives's 1526 *On Assistance to the Poor* built on these initiatives to compose the blueprint for health-care reform throughout Europe.

Expansion of hospitals and their role in disease control was central to Vives's rational plan for confining the contagious and providing work training for poor children to prevent their begging. Throughout the work, Vives blamed vagrant beggars for spreading disease.

Impact and Legacy

The first complete Protestant attack on purgatory came from the English reformer Simon Fish's 1528 *Supplication of Beggars*. According to Fish, purgatory was a fictional scare tactic designed by the Catholic Church to enrich its clergy. With lots of money, free time, and unable to marry, clerics purchased innumerable concubines and prostitutes thereby making them the primary cause of the syphilis epidemic. Fish's accusations should not be ignored as entirely polemical as clerical sexual promiscuity was widely recognized in literature and historical records. Since the medical community tied syphilis to poverty, prostitution, and vagrant beggars, Fish implied that confiscating Church property to aid the poor, and ending the prohibition of marriage for clergy, would halt the syphilis epidemic. A year after Fish's work, Luther finally shut the door between the living and the dead denying any interaction between the two (Fish [n.d](#)).

Meanwhile Catholic reformers who served hospitals adopted doctrines similar to St. Catherine and Vernazza. The three processors brought against Ignatius of Loyola by the Spanish Inquisition while he attended the University of Alcalá reveal connections with lust, disease, and purgatory. In 1526, Loyola arrived in the university town and often taught in hospitals where his audience included former prostitutes who may have been receiving treatment for syphilis. In fact, a former prostitute provided the most damaging testimony against him stating that Loyola claimed to have taken a vow of chastity and could lie in bed with a young woman without committing a sin. For Loyola, focusing on the love of God could strengthen the will to avoid sin, especially lust. Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* includes considerable meditation on hell, but not purgatory. In fact, the "purgative way" is a positive choice in the first week of exercises, as is the "illuminative way" in the second week (Fita, [1898](#); Loyola, [2000](#)).

In the 1530s, Catholic leaders in Italy like Cardinal Gasparo Contarini tried to find a compromise position on justification. At the 1541 Diet of Regensburg, Contarini succeeded in getting unanimous agreement of Catholic and Protestant representatives to a doctrine of "double justification." The

core of the doctrine was the inextricable nature of love and faith. Christ's crucifixion imputes righteousness to those who have faith in God's promises. This leads to Christian love and charity, i.e., inherent righteousness, through which Christians partake in the divine nature. John Calvin attended the diet and accepted the doctrine, but Luther and Pope Paul III did not. The doctrine was condemned at the first convocation of the Council of Trent, though until final ratifications of all decrees in 1563 the doctrine could have been reopened (Gleason, [1993](#)).

Ultimately, the Council of Trent defined purgatory as a spiritual state in which detained souls could be helped by prayers, and it was to be preached carefully to eliminate any connection to venality and superstitious beliefs. Purgatory shifted from a fearful physical place with a set chronology, to a spiritual state of divine love. In regards to health care, both Catholic and Protestant cities adopted measures similar to Vives's blueprint by building specialized hospitals and using quarantines with secular and religious authorities jointly involved (O'Malley, [2013](#)).

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K

Kabasilas Chamaetos, Nicholas

► [Kavasilas, Nikolaos](#)

Kabasilas, Neilos

Born: 1300

Died: 1363

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Abstract

Neilos Kabasilas was born in Thessaloniki. He was a supporter of hesychasm, and he was the first to attempt to disprove the Thomistic scholastic theology. He was established as the greatest “polemic” writer, while his treatises on Holy Ghost illustrate his profound knowledge of the clerical tradition and his skills in articulating philosophical syllogisms.

Alternate Names

[Cabasilas, Neilos](#); [Kabasilas, Nicholas](#) (not to be confused with his nephew, also an author and theologian)

Biography

Kabasilas was an ecclesiastical author who was born in Thessaloniki at the end of the thirteenth century (1285) and died around 1363. He was a bishop, and he succeeded Gregory Palamas as archbishop of Thessalonica (1361–1363) and leader of the hesychast movement. Kabasilas was one of Demetrios Cydones’ teachers and one of the great theologians who opposed the alienation of the Orthodox dogma and Greek culture.

He has often been conflated with his nephew, Nicholas Kabasilas, who was also a theologian. Neilos descended from a noble family in Constantinople, studied classical Greek, and became a prominent professor of Greek studies.

During the religious and political crisis which took place in 1341, on a theological level, Kabasilas advocated the hesychast movement, after a period of skepticism toward hesychasm, and supported Ioannis VI Kantakouzenos on a political level. Kabasilas was mentioned in Ioannis VI’s memoirs entitled *Historiai*, as an interlocutor of the emperor in the fictive correspondence presented in the first book. Kabasilas’ theological and philosophical learning was highly respected even by his intellectual opponents, as he was extremely eloquent in the presentation of his philosophical thinking and he had a profound knowledge of patriarchal tradition. Demetrios Cydones commented on Neilos Kabasilas’

erudition stating that *he is inferior to none of those who are perfect in wisdom*.

A staunch advocate of Palamas' ideas, he wrote a famous work related to the session of the council in 1351, which took place at the Monastery of Vlachernai. During this specific session, the council took issue with the views expressed by the theologians Barlaam of Calabria and Gregory Akindynos, who endorsed Western theology, as well as Nikiforos Gregoras against whom Kabasilas wrote the so-called *Antigramma*.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Most of Kabasilas' writings that discuss ecclesiastical matters pertain to the great issues that separated the two Churches. Various sources mention that Kabasilas befriended Barlaam of Calabria. His relation with Barlaam enabled him to become acquainted with Western theological and philosophical thinking. Of particular interest are those of his writings which criticize the Latin tradition, especially those that discuss the reasons behind the disputes within the Church, as well as the supremacy of the Pope, which was considered by Neilos Kabasilas as the reason for both the schism between the two Churches, and the so-called purgatory fire. Kabasilas rejected the Latins' claims that Rome was the only apostolic home and dismissed the Pope's right to summon ecumenical councils: the Pope should not be designated as Peter's successor, and it is the king or the emperor who is allowed to convene an ecumenical council. Furthermore, he examines 49 Latin phrases which he directly contradicts one by one. He also wrote other works which were translated into Latin and Slavic languages. Kabasilas refuted the primacy of Rome by emphasizing the chronological priority of the mother of all Churches – that of Jerusalem – without specifying *de facto* or *de jure* the practical value of this fact. He also stated that Jesus Christ was the first and absolute head of the Church and that ecclesiastical conflicts

should be resolved only by general ecumenical councils.

Neilos Kabasilas' originality lies in the fact that he was the first who opposed to the Byzantine Thomists. More specifically, he sought to refute the following excerpts from the writing of Thomas Aquinas: three articles from the first chapter of the first part of *Summa Theologiae*, eleven chapters of the first and the fourth book of *Summa contra Gentiles*, and the entire second chapter from *De rationibus fidei contra Saracenos, Graecos et Armenos ad Cantorem Antiochenum*. Neilos raised objections to the Latin claim that the essence of God is identified with His energies and supported the view that God's essence is beyond knowledge, while divine energies are the sole way to God. Kabasilas attempted to defend traditional orthodox theology and monastic spirituality, which was founded on the belief that divine essence is inaccessible and cannot be experienced, while divine energies are reachable and thus potentially communicable. He sought to elucidate the distinction between revealed knowledge and human knowledge, as this problem had not been discussed extensively in patristic literature. According to Thomas Aquinas, human intellect and divine revelation are the same, in the sense that they both emanate from the same source – God. This was a bond that was not ruptured in spite of the original sin, as the "image" (*kat' eikona*), which is intellect and free will, remained intact. On the other hand, Kabasilas contends that the original sin obliterated man's natural resemblance to the Creator and deformed the essence of the meaning of "image." This is the reason why intellect is a human feature and it is not related to God who expelled man from paradise. Kabasilas utilized the teachings of Basil the Great and Ioannis Chrysostomus in order to point out that faith and syllogisms are not compatible. With regard to the origin of the Holy Spirit, he notes that Aquinas did take into consideration neither the definitions of ecumenical councils nor the texts of the Scriptures; instead, he developed arbitrary and unfounded

reasoning, stating that the Holy Spirit appears as love and the Son as intellect. Therefore, the Holy Spirit emanates from the Son (*filioque*), in the same way that love emanates from intellect, as what is loved is first conceived by intelligence. Kabasilas' aim was to disprove Thomas Aquinas' scholastic line of thinking, which extrapolated dogmatic truths through reflection. Kabasilas opposed Latins' position that reason and love were considered as emerging from Son's birth rather than as a projection of the Spirit, as these distorted views were dissenting from the content of Scriptures. Kabasilas' contribution to hesychasm lies in the analysis of the concept of divine light and, more specifically, in the analysis of the terms "divine nature", common substance of the three hypostases, and "natural idioms". He sought to prove that the teachings of Akindynos, as well as those of his followers, were misunderstood and were incompatible with the Orthodox dogma. Furthermore, he tried to shed light on the issue of the source of the Holy Spirit. Kabasilas' teachings related to the Holy Spirit are based on Holy Scripture, the imparting religious knowledge of the clergy, the definitions of ecumenical councils, as well as Palamas' teachings about the distinction between God's essence and energies. In his work *Peri ekporeuseos tou Agiou pneumatos kata Latinon*, which could be described as a holistic system of theological teaching, he remarkably enlightened and emphasized the fact that the mystery of God cannot be conceived through logical argument, but through experience. Kabasilas' works can be classified into three categories: a) against the Latins, *Apantisis pros Latinous* or *Egcheiridion to isagonizomenis pros Latinous*, *Peri tis Agias Oikoumenikis Synodou*, *Peri tis arhistou Papa*, *Peri kathartiriou Pyros*, and *Logos apodeiknisto tis diastaseos ton Latinon Ekklesias kai imon*; b) in favor of the followers of Palamas, *Logos sintomos pros tin kakos eklamvanomenin fonin para ton airetikon Akindynianon* and *Synodikos tomos kata Barlaam kai Akindynoutou 1351*; and c) speeches, letters, and correspondence with his

nephew Nicholas Kabasilas and Demetrios and Prochoros Cydones.

Impact and Legacy

Neilos Kabasilas exerted influence not only on major intellectuals and theologians of his time, namely, Demetrios Chrysoloras, the orator Nikiforos Houmnos, and lay theologian and nephew of his Nicholas Kabasilas, but also later generations Callistos Angelicoudis, Patriarch George Gennadios-Scholarios, as well as the writer of the proceedings of the Council of Ferrara-Florence Silvestros Syropoulos.

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Kabasilas, Nicholas

► [Kabasilas, Neilos](#)

Kabasilas, Nikolaos

► [Kavasilas, Nikolaos](#)

Kabbalah, Renaissance

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Abstract

The term Kabbalah commonly refers to a complex of mystical and esoteric doctrines in the Jewish tradition. However, Kabbalah is a multifaceted phenomenon and differs according to the tradition it refers to. Modern scholarship asserts the complexity of Kabbalah because it embraces many multiplicities of history and literature. Furthermore in the Renaissance, a Christian Kabbalah started to be shaped offering different ideological systems, among them also a magical-talismanic model.

Kabbalah and Rupture to the Tradition

Kabbalah, or Cabala from the Hebrew קַבָּלָה, means “that which has been received” (Idel and Ostow 2011, p. 22) or “reception.” Despite its reconnection to a very ancient time in relation to Moses’ teaching, Kabbalah emerged at the end of the twelfth century in Provence, South of France. Kabbalistic production in the Languedoc region was narrow and “theosophies related to details of Jewish liturgy” (Idel and Ostow 2011, p. 27). Indeed it was in Spain where the most significant phase of medieval Kabbalah flourished. A theosophical-theurgical approach developed in Catalonia, in particular in the cities of Gerona and Barcelona. Idel (Idel and Ostow 1998) underlines that these Kabbalists were probably followers of the Provençal Isaac the Blind (1160–1235), who is thought to be in relation to the production of the *Sefer ah-Bahir* and the *Sefer Yezirah* (Book of Creation). In these books, the system of the *sefirot* is theorized. The essence of the *sefirot* (*Keter*, crown, *Binah*, understanding, *Hokham*, wisdom, *Gevurah*, judgment, *Gedulah*, mercy, *Tiferet*, splendor, *Hod*, majesty, *Netzah*, eternity) vary

according to the different Kabbalistic schools. Some Kabbalists consider them divine powers; others God emanations; others channels through which it is possible salvation-redemption-return to the original; others the presence of God into the world. R. Azriel of Gerona (1160–1238) integrated in his theoretical system the Neoplatonic theory of the emanation and mythical elements, and R. Moshe ben Nahman, known as Nahmanides (1197–1270) established his own particular Kabbalistic school. Furthermore, in Castile, many other Kabbalistic writings flourished, among them the important *Sefer ha-Zohar* (Book of splendour). The *Zohar* offers a fourfold exegetical model to approach the Torah. This is what is called PARDES, from the initial of the four layers of interpretation. The first is *peshat*, which in Hebrew means “simple”; it means the literal meaning. The second is *remez*, which in Hebrew means “hint/s”; it refers to an allegorical or allusive meaning. The third is *derash*, which in Hebrew means “inquire” or “seek”; it connects to the *midrashic*, the rabbinic meaning, the inner references to the holy scriptures or verses. The fourth is *Sod*, which in Hebrew means “secret” or “mystery”; it links to an inner and esoteric meaning. This is the theurgical component that characterizes this branch of Kabbalah.

Another approach, named ecstatic or prophetic, evolved in Sicily with the speculations of Abraham Abulafia (ca. 1240–ca. 1291) whose main writings were composed while he was in the Italian peninsula and Sicily. Abulafia elaborated a system of meditation whose focus was the invocation of “divine names” obtained with the endless permutations and combinations of Hebrew letters. He wrote many commentaries, particularly important was those on *The Sefer Yetzirah*, a book that was fundamental for both theosophical and ecstatic Kabbalah.

Idel and Ostow (2011) distinguished three main currents in the Kabbalah. An earlier theosophical-theurgical one, whose focus was the divinity understood as a complex and dynamic system and the impact of human rituals on that. One of his representatives outside Spain was R. Menahem Recanati (1250–1310). An ecstatic-prophetic one, whose attention was directed to individual’s spiritual experiences toward

redemption and prophecy through the power given by the letters of the divine names. Its principal exponent was the above mentioned Abraham Abulafia who had many followers. A later Kabbalah developed in Italy during the Renaissance with strong philosophical components, and it was sometimes associated to Platonism. Renaissance thinkers found in Kabbalistic literature a concurrence with certain aspects of ancient philosophy, and making it a new intellectual trend, and from these some thinkers developed a magical-talismanic movement.

Ecstatic and Theosophical-Theurgical Kabbalah and Astromagical and Talismanic Kabbalah in the Renaissance

In Italy, the dominant model of Kabbalah was the ecstatic, extremely connected to the teachings of Abulafia, and Gikantilla (1248–after 1305) and his followers. The theosophical tradition was mainly developed in Spain, and only few examples can be found in Italy (i.e., R. Menahem Recanati). After the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula (1492), many Kabbalists moved to Italy and to the Ottoman Empire, among them are R. Yitzhaq Mor Hayyim, R. Yehudah Hayyat, R. Joseph ibn Shraga, R. Joseph Alqastiel, R. Abraham ben Eliczer ha-Levi, and R. Yitzahaq ben Hayyim ha-Kehen. R. Yehudah Hayyat’s *Sefer Ma’arekhet ha-’Elohut Minhat Yehudah* is particularly important because it shows the deep differences between Safedian and Italian approaches to Kabbalah (Idel and Ostow 2011). The book is important also because it introduces the *Zohar* to a new readership. “Several types of kabbalah existed in Italy in the generation of the expulsion [from Spain in 1492] operating on different levels and different ways. Whereas Spanish Kabbalah was particularist, antiphilosophical, and conservative, Italian Kabbalah, both Jewish and Christian was much more universalist, more inclined to magic, and subject to interpretation through the use of a variety of philosophical trends” (Idel and Ostow 2011, p. 218). Therefore, it occurred that the Safedian Kabbalah interested a great number of

intellectuals, who were mostly Christians, because the affinity with Platonism, and ancient hermetic philosophy. Christian readers were eager to read more, and they were looking for Latin translations, and recruited Jewish scholars to teach them Hebrew and to help them to understand the hidden meaning of the holy writings. Many Jewish intellectuals acted as intermediaries. A separation between different models of Kabbalah never occurred. Indeed many forms of Judaism contain magical motifs. “Jewish magic in the first stages of Jewish mysticism, the Heikhalot literature and its reverberations, including its repercussions in southern Italy from the tenth to twelfth century, and in Ashkenazi esoteric literatures emphasized mainly the linguistic aspects of magic, namely letters, names, seals, prayers, and incantations” (Idel and Ostow 2011, p. 269). Furthermore, there was a great influence of the Greek thought and culture into Jewish thinkers, especially regarding Hermetic texts. This was the case of R. Abraham ibn Ezra (1089–1167) and R. Yehudah ha-Levi (1075–1141), and some Spanish Jewish authors, who followed them, were interested in astral magic. A book that was influential for astromagical aspect was Ibn Zarza’s *Meqor Hayyim*, written by a fourteenth century Jewish author from Castile. This book was then published in Mantua in 1559. This book was read by Alemanno and by many thinkers of Ficino’s group. As remarked by Idel and Ostow (2011) “magical literature of both Arabic and Jewish extraction, linguistic, alchemical, and astromagical, entered into strong interactions that produced the Florentine Jewish and Christian synthetic systems in the late fifteenth century, with the eclectic mode becoming more and more pronounced in the sixteenth-century occultist writing in Europe” (p. 286).

Philosophical and Christian Kabbalah in the Renaissance

Yohanan Alemanno (1435–1504) was an important intellectual figure and had a strong influence

on Giovanni Pico della Mirandola’s thought. He was born in Mantua, but lived best part of his life in Florence. Many of his works arrived to us in manuscript form, among them a commentary of the “Song of Songs” *Hesheq Shelomoh* (Solomon’s Desire), a treatise *Hay ha-‘Olamim* (*The Immortal*), a commentary on the Genesis *‘Ene ha-‘Edah*, and an autograph notebook (*Liqqutim*) containing his Kabbalistic sources.

R. Elijah Hayyim ben Benjamin of Genazzano was another later fifteenth century Italian Kabbalist who wanted to connect Kabbalah to other traditions, and aligned it to Zorostranism and Pythagoreanism.

Leone Ebreo, Yehudah Abravanel (1463–before 1530) was considered a Kabbalist by Joannes Pistorius. Indeed, the *Dialoghi D’Amore* Latin translation made by Joannes Carolus Saracenus (1564) is located into Pistorius’ collections of treatises on Kabbalah.

In the Renaissance, Kabbalah attracted the attention of many Christian intellectuals, which started collecting and studying Kabbalistic texts. Pioneers of Christian Kabbalah were Arnould of Villanova (1240–1311) and Ramon Llull (1232–1315).

Ludovico Lazzarelli (1447–1500) deals with some Kabbalistic material in his *Crater Hermetis* written in the early 1490 but published in 1505 in *Pimander Mercurii Trismegisti liber de sapientia et potestate Dei. Asclepius eiusdem Mercurii liber de voluntate divina. Item Crater Hermetis a Lazarelo Septempedano*. Lazzarelli searched in some commentaries of the *Sefer Yetzirah* the secret magic formulas of the Hebrew combination of letters of the Tetragrammaton in relation to the Golem.

Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), whose sources were mainly Recanati and Gikantilla, wrote *De verbo mirifico* (1494) and *De arte cabalistica* (1516).

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1464) studied Kabbalistic texts assisted by different Jewish teachers, among them Samuel ben Nissim Abulfaraj, Yohanan Alemanno, and Raymond Moncada, known as Flavius Mithridates, a Jew converted to Christianity. Pico’s Kabbalistic

speculations can be found in his *Nine Hundreds Theses* (published in 1486), in its *Oration On Man's Dignity* (1486) and *Heptaplus* (1489) that was a commentary on the first 26 verses of the Genesis. Ogren (2015) observed that also Nahmanides' works are important as a background for Pico's studies on Kabbalah.

Petrus Galatinus (or Pietro Colonna Galatino) (ca.1460–ca.1540) wrote his *De Arcanis catholicae veritatis: contra obstinatissimum Judaeorum nostrae tempestatis perfidiam* (1518) in twelve volumes, where it is possible to find passages from the *Zohar*.

Francesco Zorzi or Giorgi (1466–1540) was a Venetian Franciscan friar, and author of the work *De harmonia mundi totius* (published 1525). He was born to a noble Venetian family, and although he became a Franciscan, he continued for the rest of his life to be in contact with the political elites of Venice, from whom he was always respected and admired despite of his not orthodox position. Giorgi was truly interested in the Kabbalah. He believed, as well as Pico, that Kabbalah encapsulate deeper truths that proved the veracity of Christianity. He believed that the knowledge of the Holy language, Hebrew, was supreme, and he became proficient in that language, together with Latin, and Greek. Giorgi also published the (pseudo-)Aristotelian work *Problemata* in 1536 where many references are from the book of the *Zohar*.

Giles of Viterbo (1469–1535) collected many Hebrew texts in his library in Rome. He wrote two Kabbalistic works, *Libellus de litteris hebraicis* (Book on the Hebrew Letters) and *Scechina*. His *Libellus de litteris hebraicis* was influenced by the *Sefer ha-Temurah* (book of figures of the Hebrew letters), which comes from Gerona's school. In the *Scechina*, Giles reads the Kabbalah in a total revealing mode, where the "Schekinah" is understood as the ground where the Divine Law is brought into actuality.

Agostino Giustiniani (1470–1536) was a noble from Genua, a scholar in Greek and Hebrew, he wrote *Psalterium hebraeum, graecum, arabicum, et chaldeum, cum thribus Latinis interpretationibus et glossis* (*The Psalter of*

Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Chaldean, with three Latin interpretations and glosses) where there are some original Hebrew texts and their translation into Latin from the works of R. Isaac ibn Avi Salulah and Abulafia.

Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486 ca–1535) wrote in three books the *De Occulta Philosophia* (*Three books of Occult Philosophy*), where Kabbalah is exposed in book 3. Agrippa's focus is placed in Kabbalah's esoteric powers.

Phillipus Theophrastus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim, known as Paracelsus (1493–1541) with his *Alchemical Writings*, relates Kabbalah to astrological and magical practices.

Paul Riccius (1506–1541) wrote *De Coelesti Agricultura* and *Pauli Ricii in cabalistorum eurditionem isagoge*, Augsburg 1515.

Jean Thénau (ca 1480–1542) wrote *La sainte et tres cretienne cabala* (*The Holy and Very Christian Kabbalah*) and the *Traité de la cabale* (*Treatise on the Kabbalah*, 1521) that are surveys of the main studies about Kabbalah by Pico, Reichlin, Agrippa, Ricci, and Giorgi.

Giulio Camillo (1480–1544) discloses his hermetic-Kabbalistic tradition in *L'idea del teatro* (1550), famous as *Memory Theatre*.

Guillame Postel (1510–181) translated into Latin the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the *Bahir* and part of the *Bereshit Rabbah* (a commentary of the Book of Genesis).

Jean Bodin (1530–1596) wrote the *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis* (1588) where many Jewish authorities and the *Zohar* are considered.

Johannes Pistorious (1546–1608) wrote his *Artes Cabalisticæ* (1587).

Many Christian thinkers, like Zorzi and Giles of Viterbo, searched also from the New Easter Jewish material, which lead them to elaborate their thought. Indeed, Safed (today in Israel) offered the majority of contribution in Kabbalist production after 1530. "Between approximately 1530 and 1590 the kabbalists of Safed developed a theological world view and a religious way of life that were highly distinctive, even while they appropriated much of earlier Kabbalah. At the

center of this a new religious outlook was a synthesis between mysticism and messianic aspirations” (Holtz 1984, p. 342). Important representatives of the kabbalists of Safed were Moses ben Jacob Cordovero (1522–1570) with his writings *Pardes Rimmonim*, *Elimah Rabbati*, and many commentaries on the *Zohar*. R. Isaac Luria (1534–1572), considered by scholars as the father of contemporary Kabbalah, elaborated a system named “Lurianic Kabbalah” from a huge portion of the book of the *Zohar*. Another Kabbalist who belonged to that group was Elijah de Vida (1518–1592). The book of the *Zohar* was published in Mantua in 1558.

Studies and Scholars on Renaissance Kabbalah

In addition to the classic studies of Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), François Secret (1911–2003), Joseph Dan (1935), and Moshe Idel (1947), here is a list of important scholars who studied Renaissance Kabbalah: Joseph Leon Blau (1909–1986) who wrote *Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (1944); Frances Amelia Yates (1899–1981) with her *Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (1979), *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964), *The Art of Memory* (1966), *Theatre of the World* (1969), *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (1972); Daniel Pickering Walker (1914–1985) with his *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (1958), *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from Fifteen to Eighteenth Century* (1972); Philip Beithman *Alchemy of the World: Cabala of the Renaissance* (1998); Brian Ogren, *Renaissance and Rebirth*.

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Kadıẓâde

Born: 1582, Balıkesir

Died: 1635, Istanbul

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Abstract

Kadıẓâde Mehmed Efendi, son of Mustafa (Balıkesir 1582–Istanbul 1635), was a highly influential Ottoman preacher whose revivalist ideas initiated a strong movement named after him, the Kadıẓadeli; he advocated the abolishment of innovations, especially those favored by dervish orders, and the return to the precepts of the Islamic Holy Law.

Biography

Son of a provincial judge, Kadıẓade Mehmed Efendi took his first training in his native town, Balıkesir, before moving to the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, where he became a mosque preacher. Initially, he was under the influence of a sheikh of the Halveti order of dervishes; however, he then reverted to an austere fundamentalist attitude. He served as a preacher in various mosques, beginning from the early 1620s, and his career culminated in 1631, after his appointment as the preacher of the imperial mosque of Ayasofya (St. Sophia). In his highly popular and eloquent sermons, he attacked vehemently the dervish practices and confronted in particular with the

Halveti sheikh Abdülmecid Sivasî Efendi (1563–1639). Apart from oral sermons, he was the author of several treatises in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic. His teachings drew a lot of supporters and influenced Sultan Murad IV's harsh policies. Kadızade even joined Murad's campaign against Iran in 1635; however, he fell ill and had to return to the capital, where he died a little later.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Kadızade's ideas influenced deeply Ottoman politics throughout the seventeenth century. They have often been characterized as “fundamentalist” or “revivalist,” as they emphasized the need for a moral and social redressing of the Ottoman Empire through a return to what he considered strictly Islamic values and the abolition of as many innovating aspects of everyday life as possible. Indeed, the main characteristics of Kadızade's ideology were the opposition to any innovation (*bid'at*), as opposed to the way of life in the time of Prophet Muhammad, and especially the violent struggle against the dervish brotherhoods and more specifically, the Halvetis. His forerunner was Birgivî Mehmed b. Pir Ali (1523–1573), an eminent theologian who had reacted against Ebussuud's interpretation of the *Sharia* and whose books were widely read by both the people and the ulema. Birgivî had written two highly influential treatises in the form of catechism brochures, stressing among others the dangers of innovation (*bid'at*) from pious foundations based on cash to the dancing ceremonies of the Sufis and the payment of religious functionaries. In a wider context, both Birgivî and Kadızade may be viewed as influenced by medieval Salafist philosophy (itself the precursor of nineteenth-century Wahhabism), notably Ibn Hanbal (d. 855) and Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), who stressed the need for unity of belief among the faithful and attacked what they considered pantheistic and extremist doctrines of most Sufis. Like the Salafists, moreover, Kadızade tended to understand the Koranic verses literally, denying any altering of their content by logical interpretation.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Kadızade turned Birgivî's teachings into an activist movement, the Kadızadeli (meaning Kadızade's followers), a movement which dominated the political and ideological scene of the Ottoman Empire throughout the seventeenth century. Activism was justified due to the old Islamic obligation for “commanding right and forbidding wrong” (*emr-i ma'rûf ve nehy-i münker*), i.e., the obligation of a believer to impose righteous behavior and to act against impious practices. While the application of this duty is generally considered as incumbent upon the ruler, Birgivî had extended it to every Muslim, and his followers tended to consider themselves entitled to practice this obligation even by force. Kadızade himself was more of a preacher and advisor than an activist leader, but his successors in the following decades did launch anti-dervish pogroms and took an active part to the political turmoil of the era.

Moreover, Kadızade and his disciples adopted a much more uncompromising stance against innovations, taking them literally to be every practice that did not exist in the time of the prophets. A negative attitude against innovation (*bid'at*) is inherent in Islamic thought, but then the concept of “good innovation” (such as the building of minarets or the compilation of books, for instance) had been developed, and the traditional view rejected only innovations in matters of belief and worship. What constituted such an innovation, however, could still be a matter of dispute, and Kadızade tended to expand the field of “bad innovation” as much as he could. Not all the issues he brought under dispute were unprecedented in Islamic history, and some were already discussed by Birgivî; however, their grouping as a set of “evil innovations” which had to be fought against seems to have been a policy initiated by Kadızade in his struggle against the Halveti dervishes and especially against Sivasî Efendi. A first group of these issues, indeed, was related to dervishes, condemning their religious practices and especially their use of music and dance. A second group had to do with social life, from the use of coffee and tobacco to the practice of shaking hands or bowing, while quite a few of issues were related to various religious beliefs and

issues, such as visiting tombs of dervishes or saints (a practice Kadıẓade and his followers condemned), or whether the Pharaoh or the Prophet's parents died in Allah's faith and so forth.

Kadıẓade was also known to despise philosophy and logicians in favor of canonical jurisprudence and Koranic commentary. He stressed the importance of catechism and religious sciences, arguing that "all other sciences are like medicine which should be taken only when necessary" (Çavuşoğlu, 272). One of the issues in dispute between the Kadıẓadelis and their opponents concerned Shaikh Mühıyiddin Ibn Arabi (1165–1240) and his theory on the "unity of being" (*vahdetü'l-vücûd*), i.e., the belief that all things existent share the same essence, being all part of a varied yet congruent totality that reflects God's existence, the latter being the only true reality. Although he does not name Ibn Arabi, Kadıẓade explicitly attacks his theory: he argues that it would mean that canonical lawfulness or divine punishment is just an imagination and that it blurs the borders between worshipped and worshipper, creator and creature. On the contrary, he states, the existence of the creation is real and from it God's existence may be inferred.

Impact and Legacy

Murad IV did not adopt the Kadıẓadeli program against the Sufis and had close relations with Sivasî as well; however, it seems that he used Kadıẓade's ideas and popularity in order to promote his own measures for public order and enhancement of the state power. The ban on tobacco and the closing down of coffeehouses by Murad were, at least in theory, based on these ideas. A second Kadıẓadeli wave, which seems to have been the most popular and massive one, appeared under the leadership of Üstüvanî Mehmed (d. 1661). In the turmoil of the years after the deposition of İbrahim and during the first years of Mehmed IV's reign, the Kadıẓadelis attracted large masses of the Istanbul populace, targeting what they perceived as the corruption of society and the state due to irreligious innovations and especially the dervish orders, mainly the

Halvetis, until the suppression of the movement by the grand vizier Mehmed Köprülü in 1656.

Finally, during the grand vizierates of Mehmed Köprülü's son Fazıl Ahmed (1661–1676) and his successors, the Kadıẓadeli movement had its third major wave of influence under the preacher Mehmed b. Bistam Vanî Mehmed (d. 1685). Here again, as in Murad IV's time, the influence of the movement was a result of its leader's personal relations rather than mass participation. Vanî Efendi was very close to Fazıl Ahmed and his successors and succeeded in implementing part of the Kadıẓadeli program. He managed to ban taverns and dervish congregations, while in 1666 the ban came to include the ritual dances (*sema*) of the dervishes and especially the Mevlevîs. It seems that this time, fundamentalist ideas influenced more deeply the state apparatus; the "classical" Ottoman legal synthesis, which balanced holy and secular law, tilted toward the former, while regulations based on customary law were abolished. However, after the failure of the Vienna campaign (1683), which had been incited by him, Vanî Efendi was exiled and the "fundamentalist" movement waned away. Nonetheless, various reforms instituted later on continued to be legitimized in terms of a return to the foundations of the holy law, while individual Kadıẓadelis were still mentioned in the Ottoman provinces well into the eighteenth century.

The Kadıẓadeli movement played a predominant role in the shaping of Ottoman ideas and policies throughout the seventeenth and well into the eighteenth century. Traditionally seen as a "fundamentalist" versus Sufism conflict, it has recently been the object of several studies, focusing on the fluidity of this distinction, the social and political context of the conflict, or the role that career opportunities for preachers and dervishes played in its development. At any rate, its influence was evident to various measures and reforms effectuated from the late seventeenth century onward in what has been viewed as a gradual abandonment of the Ottoman state law statutes (*kanun*) in favor of a more rigid compliance to the Islamic legal precepts (*seriat*), especially in landholding and tax law, but also in penal issues or the regulation of prices; the incentives for these reforms have been the object of scholarly debate,

but it is sure that their justification leaned heavily on the Kadızadeli ideas.

Cross-References

- [Ebu's-su'ud](#)
- [Kâtib Çelebi](#)

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Kamariotis

- [Camariotes, Matthaïos](#)

Kara, Avigdor

Born: Unknown

Died: 1439, Prague

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Abstract

Avigdor ben Yitzhak Kara (?–1439, Prague) was an important rabbi, mystic, poet, and philosopher in Prague during the last decades of

the fourteenth and the first decades of the fifteenth centuries. Since philosophy and Kabbalah arose almost no interest among Ashkenazi Jews during the Middle Ages, the interest Kara took in these subjects was exceptional though not unparalleled: Kara belonged to a small circle of philosophers in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Prague. Avigdor Kara together with other members of that circle (Yom-Tov Lipmann-Mühlhausen, Menahem Shalem) can be considered a forerunner of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Jewish renaissance of Prague.

Biography

Avigdor Kara passed away in Prague on 25 April 1439 according to the inscription on his tomb in the old cemetery of Prague (Muneles 1988). His birthplace and date is not known; he was probably born in the 1360s. His family may have migrated to Prague from the region of Erfurt; in one of his works, he relates an oral tradition about the persecutions following upon the Black Death of 1348/1349 that took place in Erfurt and its vicinity. In 1389 he witnessed a massacre of Jews in Prague and wrote a famous elegy about it in Hebrew, which is recited in liturgical commemoration of that event in Prague until today. In 1409 he spent some time in Regensburg and wrote a mystical commentary on Psalm 150 there. In 1413 he was a member of the rabbinic court of justice of Prague together with Menahem Shalem and Yom-Tov Lipmann Mühlhausen (Seibt and Tischler 1995). Some Latin documents from Prague dated to the 1420s and 1430s refer to Avigdor Kara as *magister Victor* (Muneles 1988).

He sometimes refers to Menahem Shalem as "my brother." However, this phrase is not to be taken literally, the two had different fathers and there is no reason to believe that they were related in any way. A fifteenth-century chronicle claims that Avigdor Kara secretly taught the Czech king Wenceslaus IV the principles of Judaism, and John Hus' teachings were also influenced by Kara (Yuval 1989). These claims are entirely baseless. There is no palpable connection between

Avigdor Kara on the one hand and John Hus and his followers on the other hand. A German literary text entitled *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* composed in Bohemia around 1400 contains an enigmatic dedication to a certain “Victor the Jew” (*victori judeo*). It is possible that Avigdor Kara was meant, although it is far from being certain (Hausmann 2003).

Works

Avigdor Kara's extant works include Hebrew poems, such as the aforementioned elegy on the massacre in Prague, 1389, a poetic resume of Jewish faith on the basis of Moses Maimonides's (1138–1204) 13 articles of faith (this poem circulated in Yiddish translation as well), and few more liturgical compositions. He wrote a long mystical explanation of Psalm 150, a collection of responses to theological and philosophical questions, and a treatise on Hebrew grammar entitled *Midbar sin*. Some fragments about interpreting several biblical verses also survive in manuscripts. A writing in which he reconciled philosophy and Kabbalah is no longer extant. Contrary to the assumption of some scholars from the previous century, the kabbalistic work *Sefer hapliah* was not authored by Kara but by a Byzantine Jew (Ta-Shma 2005). Most of Kara's exegetical, mystical, and philosophical works have not been edited yet (but cf. Hershkovitz 2007).

Legacy

Kara was one of the first known Jewish intellectual in Central Europe who experimented with philosophical and kabbalistic ideas (Kupfer 1972). In his days Prague became the first veritable center of philosophical studies among Ashkenazi Jewish communities (Visi 2009). A disputed question among scholars belonging to the Prague circle was the relationship between philosophy and Kabbalah: Avigdor Kara, just as Yom-Tov Lipmann Mühlhausen, believed that Kabbalah and philosophy harmonized in all essential points,

whereas for Menahem Shalem, they were diametrically opposed intellectual traditions. By disseminating philosophical and kabbalistic ideas, Kara prepared the way for early modern Jewish intellectuals who were to write more extensively on philosophical, theological, mystical, and scientific topics in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Prague.

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Kaspi, Joseph

► [Ibn Kaspi, Joseph](#)

Kaspi, Joseph ben Abba Mari ben Joseph ben Jacob

► [Ibn Kaspi, Joseph](#)

Kâtib Çelebi

Born: February 1609

Died: 6 October 1657

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Abstract

Mustafa son of Abdullah, known as Kâtib Çelebi or Hacı Halife (Hajji Kalfa) (Istanbul, 1609–Istanbul, 6 October 1657), was an Ottoman encyclopaedist, historian, and geographer who is generally credited with the introduction of European-style scientific geography and more generally with a major attempt to rationalize Ottoman science and world view.

Alternate Names

[Hacı Halife](#); [Hajji Kalfa](#)

Biography

Son of a high-rank financial scribe and soldier, Kâtib Çelebi became his father's apprentice and accompanied him in a series of imperial campaigns to the East from 1624 onwards. After his father's death, he returned to Istanbul and took courses under Kadızade Mehmed Efendi (q.v.), whose legalist and literal reading of the Koran impressed Kâtib Çelebi without making him adhere to his revivalist ideas. While studying, he took part to three more campaigns, all against Iran; from 1635 he settled permanently in

Istanbul and continued with his studies with various teachers, making himself a well-trained scholar in most topics of the *medrese* (i.e., the jurisprudence school) curriculum, including astronomy, mathematics, and languages (his own books are written in both Ottoman Turkish and Arabic, and he used sources in Persian as well). Meanwhile he continued working in the imperial chancery, hence his proonym (Kâtib Çelebi, the “Master Scribe,” or Hacı Halife [the Hajji Kalfa of Western sources], “the Pilgrim Clerk”), while at the same time spending his mother's considerable inheritance in buying books. By 1642 he had started giving lessons himself, and he was acquainted with both the intellectual elite of Istanbul and Western scholars residing in the Istanbul embassies. He died peacefully in 1657.

A prolific writer, Kâtib Çelebi was one of the first Ottoman scholars to have used Western sources: he had European renegades translate for him various chronicles and geographies, which he then annotated and published, or else used for his own works. Among his works, one should note: *Keşfü'z-zünûn 'an esâmî'l-kütûb ve'l-fünûn* (“Discovery of the opinions by the names of books and sciences”), an alphabetical bibliographical dictionary in Arabic which is still appreciated as a reference, especially in regard with works that are not extant; *Takvîmü't-tevârih* (“Chronicle of histories”), a series of chronological tables of world history; *Fezleke-i tevârih* (“Summary of histories”), an Ottoman history covering the years 1592–1654; *Cihânnümâ* (“Mirror of the world”), an ambitious effort of universal geography, begun twice, the second time with extensive use of European geographical works translated for him by a French renegade; *Düstûrü'l-'amel li-islâhi'l-halel* (“Course of measures to redress the situation”), a reworking of a memorandum Kâtib Çelebi wrote for a meeting studying the fiscal crisis in 1653, where he summarizes his views on society and political reform; and *Mîzânü'l-hakk fi ihtiyâri'l-ahakk* (“The balance of truth for selecting the right path”), a treatise on the various points of dispute between Kadızade (q.v.) and Sivasî Efendi as for the abolishment of

various “innovations,” containing also an autobiographical note. Moreover, with the help of his convert friends, Kâtib Çelebi prepared a series of translations of European works, mainly from Latin, among them *Atlas Minor* (a redaction of Gerard Mercator’s *Atlas Major*) and chronicles of Byzantine and European history.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

One of the major aspects of Kâtib Çelebi’s work is his impressively extensive knowledge of a vast array of the previous Islamic scientific literature. A bibliophile and polymath, he had assembled what in his lifetime may have been the largest private library in Istanbul, and his bibliographical compendium contains summaries of more than 14,000 books in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish, while its introduction is a classification of sciences based on Taşköprüzade’s (q.v.) and Ibn Khaldun’s works.

Moreover, in an age where “rational sciences” (e.g., logic or mathematics) had already started to decline in favor of “transmitted” ones (i.e., theology, grammar, and law) in the *medrese* curriculum, Kâtib Çelebi emphasized the need and utility of natural sciences, with an emphasis to geography and astronomy. In the introduction of his polemical work against the Kadızadeli revivalists, *Mizânü’l-hakk*, Kâtib Çelebi advocates the value of the rational sciences, which pertain to matter, either only from the external reality, like mathematics, or both from external reality and from the intellect, like natural science. However, one must not overestimate Kâtib Çelebi’s rationalism: he surely was a product of his tradition, entrenched in the transmitted way of thinking inasmuch he was prone to relate unquestionably traditions or practices that would nowadays sound quite irrational. The innovation brought about by Kâtib Çelebi was a quest for unambiguity and a widening of the sources used, upon which the traditional textual critique tools are applied. The translations of the *Atlas Minor* and of similar Western European texts

served as an enlargement of the tradition, an enrichment with a new source and, all the more so, a more authoritative one.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Kâtib Çelebi was not the first Ottoman scholar to use Western sources; almost simultaneously with him, the historian İbrahim Peçuyulu (Peçevi, d. 1650) had made use of historical sources in Western languages, while a history of France or an account of the discovery of America had been translated in the late sixteenth century. However, Kâtib Çelebi was the first to have sought in so systematic a way a deep acquaintance with European science, especially history and geography. Apart from his translations and adaptations, he stressed in various works the need for an unprejudiced approach to European science and for the application of scientific and rational methods, e.g., in navigation.

In the field of political philosophy, Kâtib Çelebi may be credited with the first solid introduction of Ibn Khaldun’s philosophy of history in Ottoman letters; this is done in both *Düstûrü’l-‘amel li-islâhi’l-halel* and the introduction to his chronological tables, *Takvîmü’l-tevârîh*. First of all, he uses a definition of his own for the term *devlet* (Ar. *dawla*), which for Ibn Khaldun meant “dynasty” but which Kâtib Çelebi takes for the human society as a whole. Then he argues that the social condition of man resembles the individual. An individual’s life is naturally divided into three stages, namely, growth, standstill, and physical decline; the coming of each age, in its turn, depends on the disposition of the individual, so that a strong man comes to his old age later than a weak one. Similarly, now, runs the social state of man, i.e., society. Thus, Kâtib Çelebi reduces Ibn Khaldun’s five stages to three while maintaining the usual time span of a society (or dynasty in Ibn Khaldun’s original) as three generations or 120 years. He stresses that those officials who try to mend such problems of the decline in the same way they would do it in the

standstill or middle period are bound to fail, since each period requires its own measures. However, God is all-powerful and may allow its surpassing. For one thing, a dynasty that forgets its just laws and turns to tyranny will fall to decline earlier than the usual time span (just like a sick man that takes poison instead of medicine), and a dynasty that takes wise measures and uses insightful statesmen as doctors can extend its days, the same as an old man can live till the end of his days in good health.

Kâtib Çelebi takes further the simile of society with the human body, drawing on the Galenic medicine and earlier Persian tradition. According to his analysis, society is constituted by four “pillars,” namely, the ulema (jurists), the military, the merchants, and the peasants, which correspond to the four humors of the human body (blood, phlegm, yellow, and black bile – note that his Persian and Ottoman predecessors would rather speak of the four elements, namely, fire, air, water, and earth). Just as the four humors must be kept in equilibrium, with none exceeding its defined limits in the expense of the others, so must these four social classes profit from each other and coexist in moderation and temperance.

His solid political propositions differ from previous Ottoman efforts in that he does not argue for a total return to the institutions of an idealized “Golden Age” (usually localized in the first half of the sixteenth century), but rather advocates a gradual decrease in the number of soldiers under the leadership of a strong vizier, a “man of the sword.” In other parts of his work, Kâtib Çelebi adopts a balanced stance against political and ideological fractions, arguing that what a wise man should do is to get to know the beliefs and tenets of every class of people in every country, rather to try to impose his own. He declares straightforwardly that there is no point in trying to abolish innovations, even bad ones, once established in a community. What is necessary for the rulers is only to protect the order of the Muslim people and the principles of Islam among the community, but not to force people to comply.

Impact and Legacy

Kâtib Çelebi seems to have enjoyed a reputation of a polymath during his lifetime, and he was acquainted personally with Hüseyin Hezârfen (1600–1678/1679), who may be said to have succeeded him in both his wide array of interests and the friendly relations with European scholars of Istanbul. His works continued to be read long after his death: the historian Mustafa Nâ'imâ (ca. 1665–1716) copied large sections of Kâtib Çelebi's chronicle in his own history of the Ottoman Empire (including its pathbreaking introduction, where he used and expanded Kâtib Çelebi's Ibn Khaldunist theories), while his geographical material passed on (through the geographer Ebû Bekr Behrâm al-Dimişkî, d. 1691) to İbrahim Müteferrika (ca. 1674–1745), the founder of the first Ottoman printing house, who supplied the second version of Kâtib Çelebi's *Cihânnümâ* with maps and published it in 1732.

Cross-References

- [Kadıızâde](#)
- [Tāshkubrī'zādah, Aḥmad ibn Muşṭafā](#)

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Kavasilas, Nikolaos

Born: 1319–1323, Thessalonica

Died: 1397–1399, Constantinople

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Abstract

Nikolaos Kavasilas was a notable lay theologian of the Greek Orthodox Church. He is regarded as one of the most profound Byzantine theologians of the fourteenth century and one of the foremost Marian theologians in the Greek patristic tradition. He was an original exponent of anthropocentric Mariology and Christocentric theology. A prolific author renowned for his liturgical and sacramental writings, but also concerned with social and political issues. He lived in a period of political strife and theological controversy. He was a younger contemporary of Gregorios Palamas, a close friend of Demetrius Cydones and an advisor to the Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus.

Alternate Names

Kabasilas, Nikolaos; Cabasilas, Nikolaus;
Cabasilas, Nicolas; Cabasilas, Nicholas;
Kabasilas Chamaetos, Nicholas

Biography

Nikolaos Kavasilas was born in Thessalonica into a noble Byzantine family. His full name was Nikolaos Kavasilas Chamaetos and occurs in many manuscripts, albeit he adopted his mother's noble family name of Kavasilas, well-known in the intellectual and ecclesiastical life of Thessalonica, in preference to his father's family name of Chamaetos. Kavasilas' exact date of birth is unknown. Older sources place his birth

in 1300 or even earlier. Nowadays, it is commonly accepted that he was born between 1319 and 1323. In addition, 1322 has often been suggested as the most probable year of his birth, based on the fact that in a letter addressed to the Empress Anna Palaiologina, also known under the name Anna of Savoy, around 1351/1352 Kavasilas admitted that he had not yet reached the age of 30.

Kavasilas received his early education in Thessalonica. His teacher was his uncle from his mother's side, Neilos Kavasilas, a distinguished scholar, one of the most active Palamites, and the future Archbishop of Thessalonica (1361). Nikolaos Kavasilas was also given spiritual guidance by the future ecumenical Patriarch Isidore Boucheiras (1347–1350) who was directing the hesychastic circles of Thessalonica. In these circles Kavasilas first met Saint Gregorios Palamas (1296–1359), the leader of the fourteenth century movement of Hesychasm (a form of monastic asceticism popular on Mount Athos that introduced a particular psychosomatic method of prayer through which the deification is achieved). Kavasilas continued his training in Constantinople, probably from 1335 to 1340, where he studied classical Greek literature, rhetoric, philosophy, theology, mathematics, astronomy, and law.

When Kavasilas returned to Thessalonica in 1341/1342, he found himself in the midst of the Byzantine civil war between the Cantacuzenes and the Paleologans (1341–1347). As evidenced by his personal correspondence, Kavasilas was a devoted adherent and a close friend of the Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus; hence in the rivalry between the emperors John V Palaeologus and John VI Cantacuzenus, Kavasilas sided with the last one, and he engaged in several diplomatic missions. Indeed, in the period 1345–1354, Kavasilas served as advisor to the Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus. Several writings of Kavasilas, mainly eulogies and his correspondence, as well as his treatises on various issues related to Byzantine society, date from that period (see below for details). In 1345 Kavasilas was one of the two ambassadors sent by the city of Thessalonica to negotiate with

Manuel Cantacuzenus, the governor of Veroia and the future Despot of Morea (1349–1380). In 1347 he accompanied the newly ordained Bishop of Thessalonica Gregorios Palamas to Thessalonica. When the Zealots (a group of anti-aristocratic revolutionaries who established a regime in Thessalonica during 1342–1349) did not allow Palamas to enter the city, both Palamas and Kavasilas went to Mount Athos where they stayed for 1 year. In 1349 Kavasilas and his close friend Demetrius Cydones were planning to accompany the Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus to a monastery, where the last one wanted to become a monk. For unknown reasons, that plan did not materialize. In spite of being a layman, Kavasilas was among the candidates for the new Patriarch of Constantinople in 1353, but he was not elected. In February 1354 he delivered the ceremonial oration at the coronation of Matthew Cantacuzenus, and probably at the same year, he wrote a eulogy for the Empress Anna Palaiologina. Later that year, in December 1354, John VI Cantacuzenus was forced to abdicate, and then he retired to the monastery of Saint George in Mangana, where he finally embraced the monastic life under the name Joasaph. Because of Cantacuzenus' abdication, Kavasilas' political life, which had lasted almost a decade, came to an end, and presumably at the age of 32, he withdrew from public life. Kavasilas spent the rest of his life working on his most influential theological treatises: *The Life in Christ*, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, and three homilies in honor of the Mother of God (see below for details). After 1354, almost nothing is known about Kavasilas' life, apart from the fact that in 1363 he returned to Thessalonica for the funeral both of his beloved father and uncle Neilos Kavasilas. Nevertheless, it is without doubt that Nikolaos Kavasilas did not attain high ecclesiastical office but he remained a lay theologian until his death, as evidenced by the letters of Manuel II Palaeologus in 1387 and 1391 and Joseph Vryennios (ca. 1350–1431/32–38) around 1390–1396 addressed to him as a layman. Therefore, the common view held by many scholars in the past that Nikolaos Kavasilas, toward the end of his life, succeeded

his uncle Neilos Kavasilas as Archbishop of Thessalonica is rejected by modern scholarship.

Kavasilas' precise date of death is dubious. Older sources place his death in 1371, but this is a view no longer accepted by modern scholars who place his death after 1391 in Constantinople based on the chronology of Kavasilas' correspondence, according to which Kavasilas had been receiving letters from Demetrius Cydones after 1379, from the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (1387, 1391) and from Joseph Vryennios (1390–1396). It has also been suggested by Congourdeau (see Cabasilas 1989, p. 16, 2010, p. XVIII) that Kavasilas died either in the same period in which Cydones died (1397/1398) or shortly after Cydones' death, in 1399. Congourdeau points out that even though Kavasilas and Cydones were close friends, none of them seemed to be informed about the death of the other.

On June 1983, Nikolaos Kavasilas was canonized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the request of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece on June 3, 1982. Nikolaos Kavasilas' feast day is celebrated on June 20.

Writings

Kavasilas was a prolific author who composed more than 30 works of which many of them are available in modern editions. Kavasilas' corpus is highly diversified and includes theological and philosophical treatises, legal and social writings, encomiastic works, homilies, poems, epistles, two eulogies (one for Matthew Kantakouzenos and the other for the Empress Anna Palaiologina), and one commentary on the third book of Ptolemy's astronomical *Almagest* (*Μαθηματικὴ Σύνταξις*). The following list provides a part of his wide-ranging writings, and thus it is far from being complete.

In addition to theological works mentioned above (*The Life in Christ*, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, and the three Marian homilies), Kavasilas' theological writings feature homilies on the passion and ascension of Christ, encomia and homilies on saints (Saint Nicholas, Saint

Demetrius, Saint Andrew the Young of Jerusalem, and Saint Theodora), three exegetical treatises on the vision of Ezekiel, and an encomium to the Three Hierarchs of Eastern Christianity (Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom). A brief treatise entitled *Κατὰ τῶν τοῦ Γρηγοῤῥᾶ ληρημάτων λόγος* should be also included in Kavasilas' theological works. It is a polemic treatise against the anti-Palamite Nikephoros Gregoras, in which Kavasilas defends the teaching of Saint Gregorios Palamas. Its value lies in the fact that it is considered as the only work where Kavasilas clearly took sides as a supporter of Palamas in the second phase of the Hesychast controversy (1341–1347). It is worth mentioning, however, that Kavasilas did not deal with the theory of the divine light, also known as the theory of the uncreated light (whether the Tabor light, experienced by Hesychasts through ascetical practices, is created or not) which was one of the central questions in the Hesychast controversy. In general, Kavasilas' involvement in the Hesychast controversy still remains a debatable point among scholars.

Kavasilas' philosophical works include three treatises. In his treatise on the value of reason entitled *Λόγοι τῶν βουλομένων ἀποδεικνύειν, ὅτι ἡ περὶ τὸν λόγον σοφία μάταιον* (1970, Angelopoulos' edition), Kavasilas deals with the problem of secular education. His argumentation can be divided into two parts: in the first part he provides five arguments against the value of right reason (*ὀρθός λόγος*) drawing on Palamas' *Triads*, where, among others, the uselessness of secular education is underlined; and in the second part, Kavasilas rejects all these arguments, supporting the usefulness of secular education for a Christian. The same structure is found in his treatise *Κατὰ τῶν λεγομένων περὶ τοῦ κριτηρίου τῆς ἀληθείας, εἴ ἔστι, παρὰ Πύρρωνα τοῦ καταράτου* (1999, Demetracopoulos' edition, according to which the title runs as follows: *Against those things which are said on the criterion of truth, whether it exists, by the accursed Pyrrho*). As the title indicates, Kavasilas composed a series of refutations of skeptical arguments against the existence of a criterion of

truth. In the first part, he presents one proof in favor of the position held, and in the second part, he offers and refutes four skeptical proofs against the existence of a criterion of truth. His line of argumentation, however, is mainly based on Sextus Empiricus' exposition of dogmatic arguments found in his works *Πυρρώνειοι ὑποτυπώσεις* (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*) and *Πρὸς λογικοὺς* (*Against the Logicians*). It has been argued that the aforementioned treatise is a piece of polemic against Nikephoros Gregoras' epistemology, but the identity of Kavasilas' opponent is still under discussion in modern scholarship. The unedited and unpublished *Περὶ συλλογισμοῦ* (*On Syllogisms*) is spurious and possibly should be ascribed to his uncle Neilos Kavasilas, whereas the other two short treatises (89 lines each in Angelopoulos' and Demetracopoulos' edition, respectively, see Kavasilas 1970, 1999) are available in modern editions.

Moreover, Nikolaos Kavasilas wrote four discourses that reveal the social, political, financial, and legal problems of Byzantine society. In his *Τῇ εὐσεβεστάτῃ Αὐγούστῃ περὶ τόκου* (*Address to Anne of Savoy on Usury*), distinguished for its rhetorical style, and in his *Λόγος κατὰ τοκιζόντων* (*Against Usurers*), both dating from the late 1340s or early 1350s, Kavasilas condemns the practice of usury and suggests an equitable system of taxation. In his *Λόγος περὶ τῶν παρανόμως τοῖς ἄρχουσι ἐπὶ τοῖς ἱεροῖς τολμωμένων* (*Discourse concerning illegal acts of officials committed against things sacred*), a lengthy treatise of legal argumentation, Kavasilas criticizes the confiscation of monastic property in order to finance the military needs of state, such as restoration of fortifications, recruitment of soldiers, and so on. And lastly, in his *Ἀθηναίοις περὶ τοῦ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐλέου βωμοῦ*, he condemns the abuse of asylum in churches.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The originality of Kavasilas' thought lies in his Christocentric sacramental doctrines presented in

his two main spiritual theological works, *The Life in Christ* (Περὶ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς) and *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (Ἑρμηνεία τῆς θείας λειτουργίας), which were written during the last years of his life. Both works constitute a profound exposition of the sacramental and liturgical life of the Orthodox Church. In his *The Life in Christ* (divided into seven books), Kavasilas criticizes the anchorite life and defines a spiritual life for the ordinary Christian that is grounded in the participation to the sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist (Cabasilas 1974, 1989–1990). Providing an in-depth interpretation of the sacraments, Kavasilas establishes the sacraments as the means by which Christians participate in Christ's life. For Kavasilas, the life in Christ begins in the present life, namely, the union with Christ is real and mediated by the grace of the sacraments. In the same sense, Kavasilas in his *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (divided into 53 chapters) provides a detailed analysis of the symbolism of the liturgical prayers and particularly of the Eucharist which he regards as the completion of all sacraments (Cabasilas 2002).

Furthermore, Kavasilas (1974) wrote three homilies in honor of the Mother of God: *On the Nativity* (Εἰς τὴν γέννησιν), *On the Annunciation* (Εἰς τὸν εὐαγγελισμόν), and *On the Dormition* (Εἰς τὴν κοίμησιν) of Virgin Mary. His homilies are profoundly theological, albeit they do not constitute a systematic treatise, given that they are sermons, and as such they were written in order to be delivered in a congregation. Kavasilas' three Marian homilies are considered not only as the major source of his own Mariology but also as one of the most fundamental works on anthropocentric Mariology. In the first homily, Kavasilas deals with Virgin Mary's holiness; in the second homily, Kavasilas focuses on Virgin Mary's role in the divine plan of salvation; and in the third homily, Kavasilas elaborates the theory that Virgin Mary is at the summit of creation. The Christocentric and anthropocentric significance of Virgin Mary are fundamental to Kavasilas' Marian theology. His views can be summarized as follows: (1) Virgin Mary is glorified in terms of her relationship to Christ, because

she is Theotokos, Birthgiver of God; (2) being the Daughter of Israel and the Mother of Christ, Virgin Mary is the bond of union between the Old and the New Testament; (3) Virgin Mary was sinless but nevertheless inherited fallen human nature (Kavasilas refutes the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception); (4) although Virgin Mary was chosen by God to be the Mother of Christ, she exercised her free will at the Annunciation, and thus her sanctity is the fruit of divine grace and free will; (5) Virgin Mary experienced physical death, and then she was assumed, body and soul together, into heaven (Kavasilas supports the Bodily Assumption of Virgin Mary); and (6) Virgin Mary is the supreme exemplar of the ultimate potentialities of humankind.

Impact and Legacy

Kavasilas' spiritual and theological writings are a significant contribution to Orthodox religious thought. His *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* is one of the greatest explanations of the Orthodox Liturgy, and his *The Life in Christ* is one of the foremost treatises on sacramental Christology. By virtue of his three Marian homilies, Kavasilas is regarded as one of the Orthodox theologians who established the anthropocentric Mariology. Kavasilas' correspondence is a substantial biographical and historical source for the latter half of the fourteenth century, given that he engaged in extensive correspondence (18 extant letters listed in Cabasilas 2010) with many of his contemporaries, eminent ecclesiastical and political figures, including Demetrius Cydones, Gregorios Akindynos, the Empress Anna Palaiologina, the Patriarch of Constantinople Philotheos Kokkinos, and the Byzantine emperors, John VI Cantacuzenus and Manuel II Palaeologus.

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- Manuel II Palaeologus

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Keckermann, Bartholomaeus

Born: Danzig (Gdańsk) in 1571, 1572, or 1573

Died: Danzig, 25 July 1609

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Abstract

Bartholomaeus Keckermann (d. 1609) was a Reformed Protestant who taught at the University of Heidelberg and thereafter at the Gymnasium Athenaeum in Danzig (Gdańsk). Innovative was the publication of his writings on logic in multiple formats and his use of the concept of the systematic textbook (*systema*). Although he did not publish an encyclopedia, his publications cover a very wide range of subject matters; most of his monograph-length publications are included within two separate two-volume collections (1613 and 1614) of his publications as well as a separate collection (1617) of his publications falling within the parameters of mathematics. Keckermann's writings were widely read for many decades after his death.

Biography and Publications

Bartholomaeus Keckermann was born in Danzig (Gdańsk) in 1571, 1572, or 1573 to German Reformed Protestant parents. He attended the Gymnasium Athenaeum in Danzig (enrolling there in August of 1587). He then studied briefly at the Universities of Wittenberg (enrolling in May 1590) and Leipzig (enrolling in the spring of 1592) prior to moving to the University of Heidelberg, where he enrolled as a student on October 22, 1592.

Keckermann received his Master of Arts degree at Heidelberg on February 27, 1595. He then became assistant supervisor (*regens secundus*) at

the *contubernium* (student) dormitory there on April 23, 1595, and its principal supervisor (*regens primus*) on October 9, 1595. He resigned that position on August 10, 1596, in order to take a teaching position (third grade) at the *paedagogium*, at a university preparatory school in Heidelberg. In 1597 he then moved to become a teacher at the Collegium Sapientiae, a theological academy in Heidelberg under the auspices of the Palatine Electoral Prince; Keckermann continued to teach there after he became the Professor of Hebrew in the University of Heidelberg Philosophy Faculty on February 4, 1600.

He was considered but rejected for a professorship in theology at the University of Heidelberg in the year 1599. He received Licentiate of Theology degree there on March 23, 1602. In 1602 Keckermann left Heidelberg to become Professor of Philosophy at the Gymnasium Athenaeum in Danzig, where he remained until his death on July 25, 1609.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Bartholomaeus Keckermann utilized a wide range of authorities in his writings on logic, rhetoric, ecclesiastical rhetoric, Hebrew grammar, practical philosophy, ethics, family life (*oeconomica*), metaphysics, physics, mathematics (geometry, astronomy, optical, “naval mathematics” (*nautica*), geography, arithmetic), history, theology, and an introduction to the study of Cicero’s writings. Keckermann was among those authors at the beginning of the seventeenth century that published encyclopedic philosophical writings or published a wide range of works which – when taken together – constituted the same. While Keckermann profusely praises Aristotle, he also notes that Aristotle’s writings must be read and studied within the context of recent authors.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Exceptional were the multiple formats of his textbooks on logic. These include a prolegomena to logic (*Praecognitorum logicorum tractatus III*,

1599 ff. containing a history of logic and an outline of his full-length textbook on logic (*Systema logicae, tribus libris adornatum*, 1600 ff). He also published an abbreviated version of that full-length textbook (*Systema logicae, compendiosae methodo adornatum*, 1601 ff. and a treatise on applied logic (*Gymnasium logicum*, 1605 ff). Rudolph Goclenius published a tabular summary (84 tables on 46 pages) of Keckermann’s full-length textbook on logic (*Resolutio systematis logici maioris in tabellas pleniores, quam quae antehac fuerunt*). His writings on logic were able to be utilized for logic instruction at many academic levels.

Unusual was Keckermann’s treatise on practical philosophy, his *Apparatus Practicus* (1609). While according to its title it discusses ethics, family life (*oeconomica*), and politics, it also discusses history and logic, and it focuses primarily on politics and history. This treatise was intended to serve as a practical handbook for those students who were preparing for careers in public life.

Very worthy is Keckermann’s treatise on history. Although he claims that history is not an academic discipline, his work raises a number of important points pertaining to this subject matter. Very interesting is his systematic presentation of the subcategories of history, including the history of disciplines (individual academic disciplines as well as the history of books and libraries) and genres of historical writings. The treatise concludes with a lengthy, annotated, and well-organized commentary and bibliography of ancient, medieval, and recent historical writings.

Impact and Legacy

Keckermann’s writings had a substantial impact during his lifetime and for at least a half a century following his death. One factor contributing thereto was that many of Keckermann’s writings were published posthumously with the assistance of his Danzig students. Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638), who also made substantial use of Keckermann’s writings, edited a two-volume collection of Keckermann’s writings published in the year 1613.

A second two-volume collection of Keckermann's writings was published in 1614; a collection of his writings on mathematics was published in 1617. Most of Keckermann's writings were reprinted two or more times; the last known published imprint was his collected writings on mathematics in the year 1661.

It was Keckermann's writings on logic – followed by his writings on rhetoric – that appear to have had the largest impact. A number of commentaries on Keckermann's logic and rhetoric were published during the three decades following his death. Attacks directed specifically against Keckermann were published – as monographs and disputations – beginning in 1599 and continuing for the following four decades; Keckermann's writings on logic and his views on theology were the principal foci of these attacks.

Keckermann used the term *systema* – in the title of his full-length textbook on logic in the year 1600. This apparently was the first use of the term *systema* in the title of a published monograph. The term *systema* was frequently used in the titles of monograph-length publications during the seventeenth century.

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Khunrad

► [Khunrath, Heinrich](#)

Khunrath, Heinrich

Born: 1560, Leipzig

Died: 9 September 1605, Leipzig/Dresden

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Abstract

Heinrich Khunrath was a German Paracelsian physician and theosopher who was the author of

a series of esoteric works promoting various kinds of alchemy and magic, as well as a particularly Christian form of Kabbalah around the turn of the seventeenth century. His most influential work, the baroquely illustrated *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (Amphitheater of Eternal Wisdom) was first published in a very limited high-status edition in Hamburg in 1595, later reissued in a more widely available edition in Hanau in 1609. In the expanded 1609 edition, Khunrath intimates – and occasionally elaborates – on the complex interconnections between physico-chemistry, Christian Cabala, and Divine magic, in the context of theosophical reflections on 365 scriptural verses drawn mainly from the Solomonic books of the Old Testament. The *Amphitheatre* is famed in occult circles for its inauguration of a “theosophy of the image” (Faivre 1993, 2000), whereby the author explores interconnections, parallels, and harmonies between different levels of existence through four complex circular “hieroglyphic” and five rectangular “theosophical” figures, the best-known of which emphasizes the necessary relations between the Christian Cabalist oratory and the physico-chemical laboratory (Töllner 1991).

Alternate Names

Chunradt; Churad; Conrad; Conrathus; Cunrad; Cunradius; Cunraht; Cunrath; Kuhnrat, Henricus; Khunrad; Thrasybulus Ricens; Ricens, Thrasybulus

Biography

Heinrich Khunrath was born in 1560, the fourth of eleven brothers and sisters in the city of Leipzig, son of the merchant Sebastian Khunrath and Anna Meier (Humberg 2006). He enrolled at the University of Leipzig in the winter of 1570; following his studies in Leipzig, he completed

his medical training at the University of Basel, where he graduated with highest honors in 1588, defending theses *De Signatura Rerum* (*On the Signatures of Natural Things*), influenced by the works of Paracelsus and Giambattista Della Porta (Forshaw 2008). The following year, Khunrath met the English alchemist, mathematician, and magus, John Dee (1527–1608/9) in Bremen. Two years later, Khunrath was employed as personal physician to Dee's former patron, the Bohemian magnate Count Vilém Rožmberk (1535–1592), spending time with him in Prague (Gilly 2002). Following Vilém's death, Khunrath subsequently worked as a physician in North and Central Germany, with periods in Berlin, Hamburg, Magdeburg, and Gera.

His first publication, *Zebelis Regis et Sapientis Arabum vetustissimi . . . observationes accuratissimae* (*The most accurate observations of the ancient Arabian King and Sage Zebel*, 1592) was a fairly standard astrological work listing the physical affects to be expected when the moon progresses through the signs of the zodiac. More representative of his oeuvre, however, are the publications concerning alchemy, with works ranging from *chyrosopoeia*, or transmutational gold-making, to *chymiatría* and *spagyria* dealing with chemical medicine, and theo-alchemy (Telle 1988; Forshaw 2007a; Principe 2012; Tilton 2013), touching on the relation between alchemy and religion, with intimations of a spiritual alchemy of self-purgation, transformation, and rebirth. Khunrath's most comprehensive work on the laboratory art of *alchemy* is *Von hylealischen . . . Chaos* (*On Primaterial Chaos*, 1597a), in which he discusses the primal matter of the philosophers' stone. He develops his alchemical philosophy further in the *Symbolum Physico-Chymicum* (*Physical-Chemical Testament*, 1598), in which he interleaves spiritual and material notions of alchemy, including a short "philosophical song on the embodiment of the Spirit of the Lord in Salt," inspired by an alchemical reading of Genesis 1:2. In *Magnesia Catholica Philosophorum*

(*Universal Magnesia of the Philosophers*, 1599), he distinguishes between *magnesia*, or universal primal matter, and *chaos*, the primal matter of metals. In the same year, he publishes his *Warhafftiger Bericht von Philosophischen Athanor* (*Truthful Report concerning the Philosophical Athanor*, 1597b), in which he describes the alchemical furnace that he himself has invented. Not to be neglected are his posthumous publications: *Quaestiones Tres Perutiles* (*Three Highly Useful Questions*, 1607), the most iatrochemical of his works, in which he discusses cures for the Tartarean ailments of gout, calculus, and kidney stones, and *De Igne Magorum Philosophorumque* (*On the Fire of the Mages and Philosophers*, 1608), where he emphasizes that the philosophers' stone cannot be perfected without solar fire, as used by wise men and philosophers in antiquity for their supernatural magic and alchemy, claiming that the sun is God's fiery instrument in the macrocosmic laboratory. Further insights into Khunrath's magic are found in his manuscripts, particularly the *Consilium de Vulcani magica fabrefactione armorum Achillis* (*Counsel concerning Vulcan's Magical Fashioning of the Armor of Achilles*, Tilton 2006; Forshaw 2011).

Such notions earned Khunrath the censure of the Minim friar Marin Mersenne (1588–1648), friend of Descartes, and condemnation of the *Amphitheater* by the Sorbonne in 1625, as well as rejection by more orthodox Lutherans, Andreas Libavius and Johann Valentin Andreae (Forshaw 2007b). Khunrath's work nevertheless won the enthusiastic interest of generations of occult practitioners and esoteric thinkers, from the Pietist Johann Arndt (1555–1621), Rosicrucians Daniel Mögling (1596–1635) and Benedictus Figulus (b. 1567), the Boehmist Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652), the hermetic philosopher Robert Fludd, (1574–1637) to the English Mesmerist and spiritual alchemist Mary Anne Atwood (1817–1910), the French magus Éliphas Lévi (1810–1875), the Grand Master of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Arthur Edward Waite (1857–1942), and the Swiss

psychiatrist and pioneer of Depth Psychology
Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961).

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Kınalızade Ali Çelebi

Born: 1510, İsparta

Died: 22 January 1572, Edirne

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Abstract

Kınalızade Ali Çelebi (1510–1572) was an Ottoman judge and scholar, who wrote the most comprehensive Ottoman ethical philosophical treatise, the *Ahlâk-ı Alâî*, closely following the *akhlâq* tradition.

Biography

Kınalızade Ali Çelebi was the son of a judge and poet. He studied in Istanbul and became an assistant to the *şeyhülislam* (chief mufti, 1539–1541) Çivizade (d. 1547). He taught in various colleges (*medreses*) in Edirne, Bursa, Kütahya, and finally Istanbul, before embarking on a judicial career. In 1563 he was sent as a judge to Damascus, then to Cairo, Bursa, and Edirne; in 1570 he was appointed judge of Istanbul and next year Anadolu *kazaskeri*, i.e., chief military judge of Anatolia. His son, Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi, was the author of a famous collection of poets' biographies.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Kınalızade wrote various treatises on jurisprudence, history, correspondence, and Holy Law (*shari'a*). His most important work is the *Ahlâk-ı Alâî* ("Sublime Ethics" or "Ali's Ethics," a pun with the author's name), which he composed in 1563–1565 in Damascus. This work, which constitutes an ambitious project to encompass a full view of ethics, became quite popular throughout the whole Ottoman period well into the eighteenth century.

Kınalızade's *Ahlâk-ı Alâî* builds on the legacy of Ottoman authors who translated or adapted into Ottoman Turkish the moral and political philosophy of the Islamic *falasifa* tradition, itself an adaptation of al-Fārābī (d. ca. 950), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 1037), and Ibn Rushd's (Averroes, d. 1198) philosophy. It presents thus a combination of an Aristotelian analysis of the human soul with Plato's notion of the ideal city, as elaborated by Naşîr al-Dīn Ẓūşî (d. 1274) and his continuator Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī (d. 1502). The human condition is conceived as a continuum, from the human soul to society; Kınalızade's moral vision is in fact a study in government, in three escalating levels: from the individual morality, i.e., governing the self, to the family and household maintenance, i.e., what the ancient Greeks called economics (*οικονομία*: "the regulation or management of the household"), and, ultimately, to political theory, i.e., the governance of society. In all three levels, he employs the same analytical tools: the division of entities to components and the quest for the mean and for equilibrium which can lead to harmony and order. The notion of the four cardinal virtues (wisdom, justice, honesty, and courage) and their subvirtues, with the respective vices, is central to Kınalızade's moral philosophy. Kınalızade's political ideas are based on al-Fārābī's neo-Aristotelian division of political communities and Ẓūşî's concept of a society consisting of four categories of people ("men of the pen," "men of the sword," merchants and craftsmen, and farmers). These segments correspond to the four elements and have to be kept at equilibrium through sultanic justice.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Kınalızade follows his model, Dawwānī's *Akhlaq-e Jalālī*, very closely, often almost verbatim. This permits us to follow exactly the few points where he chose to deviate from his model. In two instances he seems to have read and used Ibn Khaldūn's (1332–1406) *Muqqadima*, while in another two, he emphasizes the role of Sharī'a over that of Sultanic law or *kanun*, attacking thus the legal synthesis of the chief jurisconsult

Ebussu'ud (1490[?]-1574), under Süleyman the Magnificent (1494-1566, r. 1520-1566).

Impact and Legacy

Kınalızade's voluminous treatise remained a classic for the centuries to come; notions, such as the "circle of equity (or justice)" or the division of society into four major classes, were to dominate or at least to be present in almost every Ottoman treatise of political advice composed from the mid-sixteenth century onward. On the other hand, however, his political ideas became more and more marginalized. Already in his time, Dawwānī's fashion had waned in favor of Kashifī's popularization, which privileged concrete ethical and political advice over philosophical reflection. What is more important, in Kınalızade's times the characteristically Ottoman "mirror for princes" *genre*, with its stress on specific advice and on institutions rather than the personal qualities, had already been inaugurated. In spite of its tremendous popularity, thus, *Ahlāk-ı Alâî* was the swan song rather than the beginning of a tradition.

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► [Ebu's-su'ud](#)

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Kircher, Athanasius

Born: 2 May 1601/1602? Geisa near Fulda

Died: 27 November 1680, Rome

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Abstract

Athanasius Kircher was a Jesuit, a Baroque polymath, and an author of more than 30 works on various subjects ranging from hieroglyphics, time measurement, magnetism, music, and optics through astronomy, history, and the cultures of China and Egypt to universal language, Noah's Ark, and the Tower of Babel. He is often described as "the last man who knew everything" (Findlen 2004), as "the master of hundred arts", and as a Baroque polymath standing between Renaissance and modern episteme, but also as a "man of misconceptions". He published not only experiments and observations which were progressive and new in his time but also some theories that are considered false by today's

science and were considered false already by many of his contemporaries. In a search for universal knowledge leading back to *prisca sapientia* and hermetic writings, Kircher believed that deciphering hieroglyphs and finding the basis of all languages and cultures would prove the existence of only one original universal religion and therefore support the return of Protestant Churches to the Roman Catholic Church. Kircher's writings and theories were a mixture of Aristotelian natural philosophy, Renaissance Platonism, and Corpus Hermeticum with a specific addition of Lullian combinatorial art. Kircher also drew heavily from the work of Nicholas of Cusa (1401 – 1464), especially in his astronomical work, although without acknowledging it. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006). Kircher's celebrated museum attracted many visitors from across Europe, and Kircher sustained a large correspondence based not only on personal encounters but also on utilizing the Jesuit communication network. He was supported by emperors, popes and a number of nobles, and leading church figures and scholars, and his books were published in numerous editions and print runs. However, he was generally either forgotten or considered to be an eccentric fool for about 300 years. The new interest of scholars in the borders of modern science and its rise, as well as their interest in the communication strategies and practice of Early Modern scholars, has now turned Athanasius Kircher into one of the most studied Early Modern figures of the last few decades. Athanasius Kircher also appears in popular culture, due to the similarities between his eclecticism and the postmodernist movement.

Biography

The most important (though biased) source for Kircher's biography is his autobiography published by advocate in Augsburg, Hieronymus Ambrosius Langenmantel (1641 – 1718), toward the end of Kircher's life (Kircher 1684; Seng 1901; Totaro 2009; Louthan 1999; Fletcher 2011). Kircher was

born on 2 May 1602 in Geisa, near Fulda, to the reeve Johann Kircher and his wife Anna née Gansek as their ninth and youngest child (Jäger 2002). The year of his birth is uncertain and may be 1601 (Fletcher 1988). Kircher studied at the Jesuit gymnasium in Fulda from 1614 to 1618 and entered the Jesuit order in Paderborn in 1618. He studied philosophy and logic after the end of his 2-year novitiate. The Jesuit college in Paderborn then had to be closed due to the 30-year war, and Kircher fled Paderborn on 23 January 1622. He finished his studies of philosophy and natural philosophy in Cologne (Köln am Rhein) and was sent to Koblenz to study mathematics and languages in 1623. Soon afterward, however, he was sent to Heiligenstadt to teach Greek grammar. From there Kircher was called in by the Archbishop and Elector of Mainz, Johann Schweikhard (1553 – 1626), to Aschaffenburg to measure a new hilly road to Heidelberg in 1624. It was before Schweikhard's death at the beginning of 1625, not afterward, as he himself asserted in his autobiography, that Kircher returned to Mainz to study theology (Wittstadt 2002). He was ordained a priest in 1629 and passed the third probation year in Speyer, where he encountered a book describing obelisks erected in Rome by Pope Sixtus V (1521 – 1590). This book started Kircher's lifelong interest in the hieroglyphs and culture of ancient Egypt. Kircher was called to Würzburg to teach moral philosophy, mathematics, Syriac, and Hebrew, most likely in the year 1630 (Siebert 2008). There he met his student and lifelong friend and collaborator Kaspar Schott (1608 – 1666), and in 1631 published his first book *Ars magnesia* (Vollrath 2007). Kircher fled from Mainz to Speyer shortly before the troops of Gustav Adolf (1594 – 1632) entered the city on 15th December 1631. From there he was sent to France, like many of his confrères (Siebert 2008). After a short stop at colleges in Dôle and Lyon, he settled in Avignon where he is believed to have taught mathematics, philosophy, and oriental languages. There, he became acquainted with the major figures of the Republic of Letters: Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580 – 1637), Pierre Gassendi (1592 – 1655), and Johannes Hevelius (1611 – 1687). At the same time, he entered into contact with the astronomer Christoph Scheiner (1573 – 1650). His second

work, *Primitiae gnomonicae catoptriace*, was published in Avignon in 1635. Kircher left Avignon in the autumn of 1633 heading for Vienna; however, he became a professor of mathematics and Oriental languages at Collegio Romano in Rome. Kircher was to continue work on the decipherment of hieroglyphs under the patronage of Peiresc's friend Francesco Barberini (1597 – 1679) and his uncle Maffeo Barberini (1568 – 1644), who was Pope Urban VIII at that time (Siebert 2008). With the exception of 2 years between 1637 and 1638, when Kircher was traveling to Malta and Sicily as a companion to the new convert Friedrich of Hesse-Darmstadt (1616 – 1682), he never left Rome from November 1633 until the end of his life. On this trip Kircher experienced an earthquake in Calabria, the eruption of Etna and Stromboli, and even lowered himself to the crater of Vesuvius. Inspired by these experiences, he published work on geological processes and the underground world *Mundus subterraneus* later in 1664–1665. In the years following his arrival in Rome, Kircher published the first Coptic grammar in a European language (*Prodromus coptus sive aegyptiacus*, 1636) and vocabulary of Coptic, Arabic, and Latin (*Lingua aegyptiaca restituta*, 1643). He continued to explore the idea of universal magnetism in a work titled *Magnes sive de arte magnetica* (1641). *Magnes* was the first work dedicated to the emperor Ferdinand III (1608 – 1657), who supported Kircher by paying him a yearly pension until the end of his life in 1657. Kircher became a consultant to a cardinal commission for the translation of the Bible into Arabic in 1644, and 2 years later was released from his duties of mathematics professor at the Collegio Romano so he could concentrate on his scholarly activities and writing (Findlen 2004). He published a work dealing mostly with comets, optics, sundials, and the nature of colors, titled *Ars magna lucis et umbrae* (1645). In 1650 he published the *Musurgia universalis* – a work on the theory and history of music and also on musical instruments and automata. The book was printed in 1500 copies, which was a considerable number for that time. In 1651 Alfonso Donnini (– 1651) donated his vast collection of antiquities to the Collegio Romano, and Kircher became custodian of this collection. From this and his own private

collection, Kircher created a museum which became a popular stop for travelers to Rome, including Christina, Queen of Sweden (1626 – 1689), Marin Mersenne (1588 – 1648), Leopoldo de' Medici (1617 – 1675), Robert Southwell (1608 – 1677), and many others (De Sepi 1678; Casciato et al. 1986; Findlen 1994; Gorman 2001; Wadell 2015). Among various exhibits were 12 volumes of Kircher's international correspondence, which is an invaluable source of information on Kircher's work and life, as well as on patronage strategies, distribution of books, collection of information for his books and communication practices (Gorman and Wilding 2003; Gorman and Sutherland-Duchacek 2011; Malcolm 2004). Kircher's former student from Würzburg, Kaspar Schott (1608 – 1677), was called to Rome in 1652 to help Kircher correct and publish the work on the geography and history of Egypt: *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1652–1654). In subsequent years, Kircher also published an astronomical work – the fictional journey of the angel Comiel and Kircher's alter ego Theodidactus to the universe, introducing a semi-tychonic model of the universe, *Itinerarium extaticum* (1656), and a continuation *Iter extaticum II* (1657), which was the fictional journey of the angel Hydriel to the underground world and to the bottom of the oceans. This work served as a preview to *Mundus subterraneus* (1664–1665). His book on the cause of plague *Scrutinium pestis* (1658) was one of the first to suggest the cause of plague to be microorganisms and not astrological influence or moral depravation, which were the usual explanations. He also refused to accept supernatural causes in the case of crosses that appeared on people's clothes after the eruption of Vesuvius and explained the phenomenon in his work *Diatriba de prodigiosis crucibus* (1661) as the special weaving of fabric. At this time Kircher's discovery of the dilapidated church of St. Eustace, built by emperor Constantinus in Mentorella close to Tivoli, had a major impact on his life. Kircher raised money for the restoration of the church from his numerous supporters and through the publication of *Historia Eustachio-Mariana* (1665b). In the same year Kircher published the work on mathematics *Arithmologia sive de abditis numerorum mysteriis* (1665c) as well as the previously mentioned *Mundus subterraneus* (1664–1665).

However, his most translated work was *China illustrata* (1667a), where Kircher gathered information on the geography, history, and culture of China from Jesuit missionaries. Kircher published his method for the creation of a basis for all sciences in *Ars magna sciendi* in 1669. The last decade of Kircher's life was marked by increased criticism of his work, especially of his ignorance of the region after the publishing of *Latium* (1671). Kircher withdrew to Mentorella in 1674, trying to find an escape from the constant flow of correspondence and visitors. Before the end of his life in 1675, he published *Archa Noë* dealing with the size and organization of Noah's Ark, as well as with possible crossbreeding of animals (Breidbach and Ghiselin 2006). He continued this attack against skepticism with *Turris Babel* (1679b), a work discussing the population of the world after the deluge and the diversification of languages from the original Hebrew. In 1676 Kircher published an interpretation of inscriptions on the mummies imported to Europe around that time titled, *Sphinx mystagoga sive Diatribe hieroglyphica* (1676). Kircher's health slowly deteriorated. He took the last rites as early as the summer of 1679 and died on 27 November 1680 on the same day as his friend, the sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598 – 1680). According to his wishes, his body was buried in the church Il Gesù and his heart in the church of St. Eustace in Mentorella.

Kircher's autobiography describes his miraculous escapes from dangers of various kinds. Kircher survived a fall under the hooves of racing horses, another through the ice of the frozen Rhine while crossing it, and another fall into a water mill, an encounter with Protestant soldiers who forced him to take off his habit, and a plague in Rome. The emphasis on these miraculous survivals in his autobiography may be credited to Kircher's self-styling into the role of saint-scholar (Louthan 1999).

Kircher managed to draw the attention of powerful patrons throughout his life. Among his supporters were the emperors Ferdinand III and Leopold I (1640 – 1705), Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614 – 1662), the popes Innocent X (1574 – 1655), Alexander VII (1599 – 1667), and Clement X (1590 – 1676), and a number of major European nobles and church figures. While his contacts with Central Europe and Italy were

outstanding, as were those with some of the Protestant princes in the Empire such as Duke August the Younger of Wolfenbüttel (1579 – 1666), he did not create strong ties to the scholarship of the Royal Society with the exception of his correspondence with Robert Moray (1608 – 1683).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

While striving for universal knowledge, Kircher also strived for universality of Catholic religion. Kircher's works gained special reception in Catholic countries, especially in the Habsburg Empire. There, their universalist claims resonated well with the educated Catholicism which was a distinctive Central European amalgam (Evans 1979). As he never left Rome, he had to believe the news and observations from other parts of the world, misrepresented as they often were. He considered Chinese, Mayan, or Inca culture to be the proof of an original unity of mankind and the perfect knowledge before the deluge and confusion of languages. Kircher's thesis seemed to be supported by the similarity between the hieroglyphic, Mayan, and Chinese scripts. News and observations from these parts of the world, originating from traditional knowledge, were equal to a travel through time for him. What was remote in place was also remote in time. All this encouraged Kircher in his search for *prisca sapientia*, the perfect knowledge contained in hermetic treatises that was fundamental to all religions and philosophy. He never doubted their authenticity and antiquity, in spite of Isaac Casaubon's (1559 – 1614) early seventeenth century evidence to the contrary. Kircher's works, especially *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, should have helped to find this ancient knowledge and the one and only true religion, as this was according to him the key argument against Protestant Churches and should have led to their union with the Roman Catholic Church (Stolzenberg 2013).

Hence, Kircher and his work can be considered interesting evidence of the importance of hermetic and magic reasoning for the establishment of modern science. Mechanistic philosophy developed partially from the attempt to explain occult qualities such as acting at a distance (magnetism,

gravitation). Athanasius Kircher used the interpretative frame of Renaissance Platonism to account for these phenomena. Kircher also propounded universal magnetism (Gorman 2004) and the spontaneous generation of plants and animals, as he believed in *panspermia rerum* – an emanating force filling the universe and giving life to everything in it (Rowland 2004). Kircher believed in palingenesis – the growth of plants from their ashes – as well as in astrological influence on human health, mermaids, griffins, and dragons. While his works often collected up-to-date information, they also contained superstition and fables, which mirrored his naiveté as well as a necessity to believe reports he was not able to verify on his own. All knowledge was, according to Kircher, unified in the idea of the *mathesis universalis*, which is best described as universal magnetism integrating the organic as well as the inorganic world. Kircher described the attraction between the sexes as well as the attractive force in the universe by this universal magnetism. Magnetism as a principle of unity of contradictions became an explanative model for phenomena in particular sciences – light and shadow in optics or consonance and dissonance in music. Kircher, like many of his contemporaries, was interested in mechanical instruments and toys of all kinds. He constructed, for example, a *laterna magica*, Aeolian harp, speaking trumpet, sunflower clock and talking statues. Among the mechanisms were also the mathematical or musical organs – instruments which combinatorially generated mathematical problems and their solutions or musical themes (Vollrath 2002a, b). His universal language, which would have been not only a tool for understanding but also for exact research, was inspired by the work of Ramón Llull and his combinatorial art (*Ars magna sciendi*, 1669). As Kircher was considered to be an expert in steganography and coding, in 1666 he received from his long-time correspondent physician Johannes Marcus Marci (1595 – 1667) from Prague the so-called Voynich manuscript – a medieval botanical treatise written in an unknown cipher script – in the hope that Kircher would be able to decipher it. However, this has not been decoded up until today (Neal 2016; Zandbergen 2016).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Thanks to his broad range of interests, Kircher is often regarded as a founder of newly established scientific disciplines. Kircher published in his *China illustrata* botanical, zoological, anthropological, and historical observations of Jesuit missionaries in China (Kircher 1987; Hsia 2004). While drawing a link between Chinese script and hieroglyphs, which resulted from his thesis of *prisca sapientia* as a common source of all religions and knowledge, Kircher stressed the presence of Nestorian Christians in Chinese history. The first description of Potala Palace in Lhasa and the first Chinese dictionary and grammar of Sanskrit can also be found in *China illustrata*.

Kircher is sometimes considered to be the founder of Egyptology by publishing the first Coptic grammar in the European language and the first vocabulary of Coptic, Arabic, and Latin in parallel columns, which later helped Champollion (1790 – 1832) to decipher the Rosetta stone. Kircher established the connection between Greek, Coptic, and Ancient Egyptian as well as the relationship between hieratic and hieroglyphic script. He also recognized the phonetic value of hieroglyphs. However, he considered hieroglyphs to be occult symbols containing ancient knowledge of *prisca sapientia* and spoken by Hermes Trismegistus or Moses, which caused his translations to be false (Stolzenberg 2013). His credit in this field is mainly in collecting and describing the Egyptian monuments of his day.

As a founder of geology (*Mundus subterraneus*) he was one of the first to study the Earth as a whole and offered a theory of the geological processes as being governed by a self-regulating equilibrium of water and fire (Okrusch and Kelber 2002). According to this theory, the oceanic waters fall through a gigantic maelstrom at the North Pole through the Earth's interior to emerge at the South Pole. The seas are connected through underground channels in the same manner as the central fire travels through subterranean routes.

While he remained true to the theory of sympathetic substances in explaining the effectiveness of snakestone for curing poisonings (Baldwin 1995), he suggested the cause of plague to be a

microorganism instead of astrological influence or moral depravation. Even though he was using a microscope for his study, he could not see the true plague agent but rather red and white blood cells (Baldwin 2004). Nevertheless, he suggested hygienic measures to prevent the spread of the disease. In case of the miraculous crosses that appeared on the clothing of people after the eruption of Vesuvius, he offered as a natural explanation the special weaving of the fabric. Kircher often supported his arguments by experiments that were later selected and published by Johann Stephan Kestler (*Physiologia Kircheriana experimentalis*, 1680).

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Komenský, Jan Amos

► [Comenius, Jan Amos](#)

Konteleon

► [Konteleon, Christophoros](#)

Kontoleon, Christophoros

Born: Late Fifteenth Century, Monemvasia

Died: Mid Sixteenth Century

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Abstract

Biographical information about Christophoros Konteleon, a Greek-speaking humanist active

mainly in the first half of the sixteenth century, is scarce. The few things that are known about him, however, paint a picture of someone who was one way or another associated with major figures, Greek, Italian, and French, in the religious, political, and intellectual scene of the period. Ranging from Biblical and Homeric exegesis to religious tracts and from Aristotelian commentaries to political theory, his works are not without interest, especially as they exhibit a tendency toward original thinking while combining Christian and classical ideals as well as Aristotelian and Platonic worldviews.

Alternate Names

[Konteleon](#); [Kontoleos](#)

Biography

Not much is known for sure about the life and activities of Christophoros Kontoleon (also attested as Konteleon and Kontoleos). He was born in Monemvasia in the Peloponnese, most likely toward the end of the fifteenth century, and died at some point after the middle of the sixteenth century. He was a low-ranking cleric, who made a living, mainly in Italy, as a manuscript copyist and perhaps as a teacher and scholar (Meschini 1973). There is no information as to how and when he found his way to Italy, but it was possibly with the help of Arsenios Apostolis (ca.1465–1535), the Catholic bishop of Monemvasia, who also engaged him as a copyist in the *scriptorium* that operated under his direction, probably in Florence, at least from 1519 to 1521 (Cataldi Palau 1986b). Kontoleon was also in the service of Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi (1501–1550), Pope Leo X's nephew, together with other Greeks, such as Nikolaos Sofianos (ca.1500–1550) and Matthaïos Devaris (ca.1505–1581), who, among other things, compiled a catalog of the cardinal's celebrated library (Muratore 2009). Within that context, he may have been involved in the four-volume *editio princeps* of Eustathios of

Thessaloniki's commentaries on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Rome, 1542–1550).

Other than that, the basic source of information regarding Kontoleon and the circles he moved in is a letter written in Rome in August 1536 by Guillaume Pellicier (ca.1490–1568), bishop of Maguellone and later ambassador of France to Venice. Pellicier had travelled to Rome in 1534 to obtain the pope's permission to transfer the seat of his bishopric to Montpellier. He stayed there until 1536, during which time he immersed himself in the study of antiquity and the intellectual life of the city. The letter in question (published in Dorez 1894) is addressed to Cardinal Jean du Bellay (1492–1560), who had been bishop of Paris since 1532. Kontoleon, who had copied one of his own works for Pellicier (Cataldi Palau 1986a), is mentioned by name in the letter. Pellicier identifies his place of birth and confirms his association with Niccolò Ridolfi, although without specifying his role in the cardinal's household. More importantly, he reminds his addressee that Kontoleon had been at the French court with them three years earlier, at which point du Bellay had interceded "very favorably" with the king, Francis I (1515–1547), to have him naturalized as French. Now Pellicier pleads with him on Kontoleon's behalf to pursue the issue urgently. Cardinal Ridolfi had already written to the Parisian bishop twice about it and Pellicier had also contacted Jean Chapelain, one of the king's physicians, who had formed a liking for Kontoleon during his sojourn in France. There is no way to know why Kontoleon wanted to become French and what opportunities he thought worth exploring as such, but it seems that, despite active patron support, that plan never materialized: his name is nowhere to be found in the registers of Francis I's acts.

Works

Apart from an epigram published in the 1517 *editio princeps* of Libanius' *Orations* in Ferrara, all of Kontoleon's writings remained in manuscript form during his life and for a long time

thereafter. His output – more than 30 works in total – could be roughly classified into four groups: (1) Biblical exegesis, focusing on themes or passages from the Old and New Testament, (2) Homeric exegesis, consisting mainly of moral or allegorical interpretations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, (3) Philosophical works ranging from Aristotelian commentaries, mostly on *Categories*, to original texts on a variety of topics, such as the immortality of the soul, impermanence, happiness, law, statecraft, and aristocracy, (4) Miscellanea: two more original epigrams, one of them dedicated to the Ferrarese humanist and diplomat Celio Calcagnini (1479–1541); an unfinished commentary on the epigrams of Ianos Laskaris (ca.1445–1534); a piece on Euclid; a paradoxical praise of hypocrisy; a letter to Pope Paul III (1534–1549) advocating the revitalization of the study of Greek and Latin; and two propagandistic texts promoting the union of the Churches and Papal primacy against Lutherans, respectively. Three of these works are missing. Of the rest, the following are currently available in modern editions: the treatise *Περὶ ἀθανασίας ψυχῆς*, the Libanius epigram, the preface to the commentary of Laskaris' epigrams, and the letter to Pope Paul III (Meschini 1973); the dialogue *Περὶ ἀρχῆς* (Meschini 1977); the other two epigrams and the two propagandistic tracts (Pontani 1988); and the six Homeric writings (Piasentin and Pontani 2018).

In secondary literature, Kontoleon emerges as an author whose systematic study would most likely yield interesting results, especially if more of his works were readily available. He has been regarded as the first Greek born after the fall of Constantinople to have delved into issues and questions of a philosophical nature (Papadopoulos 1988). At the very least, it has been shown that his writings on the Homeric epics (Pontani 2018; Piasentin and Pontani 2018), on politics (Meschini 1977; Takourli 2003), and the immortality of the soul (Meschini 1973; Marazopoulos 2003; Psimmenos 2003) merit consideration both per se and in relation to the scholarly production of the period. In these works, Kontoleon appears invested in harmonizing ancient wisdom with Christian standards. At the same time, an incipient

emancipation from Aristotle's authority seems to have influenced, if only slightly, his analytical approach. Although the Stagirite was clearly Kontoleon's main frame of reference, as expected at that point (Psimmenos 1988), he did not hesitate to distance himself from Aristotelian views when deemed necessary, foregrounding instead his own ideas and definitions or seeking viable alternatives in Plato and the Neoplatonic tradition. His two published philosophical endeavors are characteristic in that respect.

The treatise *On the Immortality of the Soul* (*Περὶ ἀθανασίας ψυχῆς*) does not lend itself easily to classification based on standard typologies of post-Byzantine philosophical or theological inquiry. Moving within the parameters of Christian doctrine, Kontoleon generally follows Aristotle's discussion in *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*, starting already with the latter's assertion that research into the essence and properties of the soul is an instrumental kind of study as it contributes greatly to the understanding of nature. Nevertheless, he also introduces an anti-theoretical tension by rejecting or calling into question key aspects of the Aristotelian conception of the soul as the driving force of all living organisms. The space opened up by this detachment from Peripatetic authority enables Kontoleon to offer his own original explications, on issues ranging from ontology to the soul's incorruptibility, locomotive capacities, and relation to intellect and the material body. He also explores Platonic insights, as elaborated in the *Phaedo*, for instance, or in Plotinus' *Enneads* and Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, which he adopts and incorporates in his exposition, though without explicit attribution. Having set out to prove the immortality of the soul as convincingly and comprehensively as possible, Kontoleon engages in an analysis that, among other things, borders on pantheism. In that context, not only is the life force known as soul treated as a premium mediator between the physical and the metaphysical, but is also invested with concrete ethical dimensions as it is linked with an instinctive awareness and fear of God, primary substance and supreme judge of all, on the one hand, while also being related to the pursuit of happiness

(*εὐδαιμονία*), the elusive reward for virtuous existence, on the other.

Dedicated to the duke of Florence Alessandro de' Medici (1531–1537), the dialogue *On Rule* (*Περὶ ἀρχῆς*) has an exceptional place in sixteenth-century Greek philosophical production, both in terms of its political relevance and in terms of its unapologetic Platonism. Worlds apart from Machiavellian *Realpolitik*, Kontoleon's discussion of the abilities, skills, and duties that being in charge of a state entails is inscribed within a tradition of political idealism and virtue ethics that clearly has its roots in Plato's *Republic*. Although in the course of the dialogue he does not refrain from modifying or refining certain aspects of Platonic theory, he leaves no doubt as to the basic tenets of his political vision: he is promoting the ideal of a philosopher king who is able to achieve a smooth, creative balance between abstraction and praxis; is amply endowed with key royal virtues; and rules over a body politic that observes, both in character and in function, the tripartite division of the human soul. Once again, what is interesting here is that Kontoleon's embracement of Platonic thought and method feels rather unconventional in a period marked by a predominance of Aristotelianism at the expense of the vigorous Platonic revival that had been cultivated by Georgios Gemistos Plethon (ca.1355–1452) and his disciples or supporters. Although steeped in the Aristotelian canon, Kontoleon was also open to, and well versed in, Plato and Neoplatonism, which may have been, at least partially, a result of his stay in Florence, a stronghold of Platonic studies since Leonardo Bruni (ca.1370–1444) and especially after Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499). Whatever the cause, it is this access to the Platonic tradition, in conjunction with personal quests and inclinations, that seems to have provided a vital platform for his preoccupation with issues and questions of political scope and interest, a preoccupation sustained enough to be regarded as unique among Greek-speaking intellectuals of the period. Indeed, other than the *Περὶ ἀρχῆς*, also of Platonic inspiration is Kontoleon's *On Laws* (*Περὶ νόμων*) as well as his works on aristocracy as the best constitution.

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Apostolis, Arsenios](#)
- [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Laskaris, Ianos](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- [Pantheism, Renaissance](#)
- [Proclus in the Renaissance](#)

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Kontoleos

- [Kontoleon, Christophoros](#)

Kopernigk, Niklas

- [Copernicus, Nicolaus](#)

Korinthios, Manuel

Born: probably Corinth, Peloponnesus, circa 1460

Died: Constantinople (Istanbul) around 1530/1531 (or 1551)

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Abstract

Manuel (Emmanuel) from Corinth was a post-Byzantine theologian, a Grand Orator of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a hymnographer of the Orthodox Church (c. 1460–c. 1530/1531), and the Director of the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople. In addition to his hymnographical and rhetorical work and his teaching activity, Manuel pursued two-pronged theological project: (a) to refute what he considered as Plethon’s Platonism and

Pagan polytheism and to show the alleged impiety of two major late Byzantine thinkers (Plethon and Bessarion) and (b) to point out the several points of divergence of the Latin Church from the Orthodox faith and to argue for the purity of the latter, by continuing the doctrinal tradition of Gregory Palamas and Hesychasm. In the long Byzantine controversy between Platonists and Aristotelians, Manuel took the part of Scholarios (Gennadios II), and thanks to his institutional role, he reaffirmed the domination of Aristotelianism during the first centuries of post-Byzantine and Modern Greek intellectual life.

Biography

Manuel (or Emmanuel) was born perhaps in Corinth, in the Peloponnese in the mid-fifteenth century (circa 1460). Little is known about his life (Patrinelis 1962; Trapp 1997). He studied under Matthaios Kamariotes, the first Director of the Patriarchal Academy of Constantinople (the so-called Great School of the Nation) that Scholarios had established just after the Fall of the Byzantine capital for the education of the Christian clergy. From his youth (1484 onward), Manuel served as a priest in several offices in the Patriarchate, as a grammarian, as the personal secretary (*Hartophylax*) of three successive patriarchs (1505–1521), and as a “great orator” of the Church (from 1504 probably until his death). He was appointed Director of the Patriarchal Academy, and he taught there for several years (1505–1521?); the school curriculum must have included philosophy (Aristotelian logic) and rhetoric (based on Hermogenes). After a long and esteemed career, he was considered at his times as “most wise and outstanding in theology.” He died in Constantinople (Istanbul) around 1530/1531 (or 1551).

Given the dramatic intellectual situation just few decades after the Fall, Manuel’s effort was remarkable. He wrote numerous services, canons, hymns, hagiographies, and other liturgical texts, funeral and didactic orations, letters, as well as theological and philosophical treatises; the major

part of them remains unpublished. During his early years at the Academy, Manuel copied a manuscript of Origen’s *Against Celsus* and the four volumes of the great 1484/1485 Constantinopolitan edition of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* (Förstel 1999).

Manuel’s theological treatises are mostly anti-Latin: *That there is no purgative fire after death* (before 1511), *Apology and refutation of some chapters of the Dominican Francesco* (1523), *Against two Latin syllogisms on the procession of the Holy Spirit*, and *On the time of deification of Jesus’ body*. Of philosophical interest are two other polemical treatises: *Discourse on Markos the Holy Metropolitan of Ephesus and the Council of Florence, against Gemistos (Plethon) and Bessarion, and rejection of their impious writings* (before 1511), and *Against Plethon’s writing on the procession of the Holy Spirit*.

Philosophical and Theological Ideas

To understand the intellectual setting of the late fifteenth and sixteenth century, we must take into account that after the Fall of the Byzantine Empire, Greeks and other Orthodox people had become subjects of a non-Christian empire. Thus, the conservation of their religious identity was an absolute priority for the only Christian institution permitted, the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. Since the majority of Greek scholars had already fled to the West, the main concern of the few remaining intellectuals (and Manuel among them) and the upper Orthodox clergy was to ensure the knowledge of the “divine and sacred letters.”

The Academy played a decisive role for the theological and intellectual education of the future Christian officials in the Ottoman Empire, and Manuel’s contribution cannot be underrated. His manifold activity and its acceptance in the ecclesiastic circles made him a man of influence and authority. Manuel was involved even in the composition of a “mirror for princes” that is attributed to Neagoe Basarab and is regarded as one of the foundational sources of Romanian moral and political thought of that period.

One of the Manuel's main theological aims as a Patriarchate official was to understand the Latin Church, point out the several points of its divergence from the Orthodox faith, and argue for the purity of the latter. To achieve this he totally endorsed the doctrinal tradition of Gregory Palamas and Hesychasm. His anti-Latin attitude was built on the forceful trend of anti-unionists that prevailed in Constantinople before the Fall, but nevertheless it would be welcome by the new Ottoman rule. In his theological writings, Manuel draws a clear line between the two churches and discusses their differences on the *Filioque*, the existence of Purgatory, the unleavened bread, the divine contemplation of the saints, and the Pape's primatum. He refutes the argumentation of the Latins in a moderate style and with references to Augustine, Hieronym, and other Latin Fathers. It is noteworthy that he ascribed to Origen the introduction of the doctrine of the purgative fire (Förstel 1999) merging Catholic Purgatory and the *apokatastasis* theory of the early Father. However, in a more personal tone, Manuel does not hesitate to distort and misinterpret Bessarion's texts only to present him as "fighting against God," probably because the Greek theologian and philosopher abandoned Orthodoxy and became a Cardinal (*Discourse on Markos* 1923/1977; Psimmenos 2007).

Complementary to Manuel's critique of Latin theology was his concern to reinforce Aristotelianism as more appropriate to the Christian faith. The dispute between late Byzantine Platonists and Aristotelians, intensified by Plethon, was not anymore a historical-philosophical problem. Plethon combined Plato's supremacy over Aristotle with a return to pre-Christian Greek forms of life – as a part of the solution of the difficult political situation. After the Fall Greek scholars in the West reframed the dispute within the philosophical and cultural Renaissance interest to classical antiquity and especially to Plato. But for those who remained in the East Platonism was too closely connected to (Plethon's) paganism; thus Aristotelianism prevailed completely. Manuel felt obliged to revisit the dispute and reject Plethon's Platonism and Pagan polytheism and to show the alleged impiety of two major late Byzantine thinkers (Plethon and

Bessarion) who are accused to have Proclus as their guide (Mamoni 1986, 1990).

What is philosophically intriguing is that Manuel while falsely accusing Bessarion for polytheism, he developed subtle theological argumentation concerning the Orthodox dogma that involve philosophy and many references to or quotations from Platonic, Aristotelian, and Proclean texts. Philosophy once again is enlisted to serve theology.

Through his activity at the Patriarchal Academy (an institution that remained a point of reference for the intellectual life of the Orthodox people for centuries), Manuel reaffirmed the domination of Aristotelianism in Renaissance and Modern Greek philosophy –until the Enlightenment. Manuel was the first anti-Latin Eastern theologian of the new era, perhaps the most notable Greek scholar left home in the period between 1480 and 1530 and can also be regarded as one of the first Modern Greek thinkers.

Cross-References

- Bessarion, Cardinal
- Scholarios, George

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Kortesios, George

► [Scholarios, George](#)

Korydaleus, Theophilos

Born: Athens 1574

Died: Athens 1646

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Abstract

Theophilos Korydaleus is a seminal Greek scholar of the seventeenth century. He was a key figure in the so-called Neohellenic philosophy. He was a Neo-Aristotelianist, and his

philosophical works include commentaries on Aristotle's treatises but also original treatises, letters, and speeches. Besides his scholarly activities, he served as a monk and Archbishop of Nafpaktos and Arta. He taught philosophy at various schools in Europe and Greece, while he contributed decisively to the renewal of philosophical studies at the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople.

Alternate Names

[Corydaleus, Theophilos](#); [Corydaleus, Theophilus](#); [Corydalleus, Theophilos](#); [Corydalleus, Theophilus](#); [Korydaleus, Theophilus](#); [Korydalleus, Theophilos](#); [Korydalleus, Theophilus](#)

Biography

His original surname was Skordalos, or Korydalides, as it was written in the records of the Greek College in Rome Sant'Atanasio (Pontificio Collegio Greco), founded by Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585). Most probably, he adopted the name Korydaleus from his birthplace, Korydallos, a suburb of Athens. Korydaleus studied philosophy and theology in the Greek College in Rome from 1604 to 1608. After his studies at the Greek College in Rome, he attended courses (1609–1613) at the University of Padua, as a student of the Neo-Aristotelian philosopher Cesare Cremonini (1550–1631).

After his appointment as Director of the Academy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate by Patriarch Cyril in 1622, he introduced and implemented a new educational program (1622, 1625–1628, 1636–1640) focusing on the teaching of philosophy and not on grammatical lessons or theology.

He served as a teacher of philosophy in the most famous Greek schools of his time: apart from the Academy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople (1622, 1625–1628, 1636–1640), he taught in the Greek School in Venice (1608–1609), in Athens (1613–1619, 1642–1646), Kefalonia (1619–1621), and Zakynthos (1621, 1622, 1623, 1628–1634).

For a few years, he served as a monk. His revolutionary ideas were manifested in a speech he gave at Constantinople, on the occasion of the enthronement of the new Patriarch. The audience was outraged by the content of the speech, because the attendees thought that he expressed heretical views. He was obliged to seek asylum in the house of Demetrios Ioulianos. In 1640 he rejoined the clergy and became Archbishop of Nafpaktos and Arta. Finally, he retired to Athens, where he continued to teach until his death in 1645.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Korydaleus is a key figure in Neohellenic philosophy (modern Greek philosophy) due to his reappraisal of Aristotle. He transferred to Greece the Paduan Neo-Aristotelian, particularly Cesare Cremonini's approach (1550–1631).

In particular, Korydaleas perceives physical science as independent from metaphysics or theology, based on its own principles and oriented toward the understanding of passions. Actually, the philosophy of science is opposed to theology, because it is not based on religious faith or revelation but on human reason. This distinction is based on the doctrine of double truth, according to which there are two kinds of truths, who exist independently of each other. The theological truth concerns things supernatural, things which are not subject to generation and destruction, while the philosophical truth concerns natural things and their causes. Korydaleus' Neo-Aristotelian view of creation is opposed to the conservative theological doctrines, according to which philosophy of science is ancilla of the Christian faith. Thereby Korydaleus attempted to liberate philosophy from theology and natural philosophy from metaphysics. He refused to subjugate his Neo-Aristotelianism to theology and defended it from the attacks of conservative scholars.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Theophilos Korydaleus is well-known as a proponent Neo-Aristotelianism. Philosophy, according

to Korydaleus, is not equivalent to metaphysics or first philosophy; it includes all the sciences in general. Therefore, it is divided into many fields, constituting a variety of sciences.

Korydaleus defended a moderate Aristotelianism, which he defines as knowledge of things divine and human, as the perfection of human mind, and as the cause of happiness. His work includes commentaries on Aristotelian texts and original philosophical treatises. Actually, Korydaleus' reputation, especially for his commentaries on Aristotle, stems from his attempt to explicate complex philosophical views to teachers and students. He published the *Prooimion eis apasan tin tes Logikis Pragmateian* (*Introduction to the whole Treatise on Logic*) dialogue, addressing all the potential lovers of philosophy. Following in the footsteps of the long-lasting tradition of Greek commentators of Aristotle, he opened new paths. His philosophical stance was progressive, given that he lived in a world where religion dominated the intellectual circles. Korydaleus' double break with the Scholastic readings of Aristotle is reflected in his philosophical method. In his commentary on *Meta ta Physica* (*Metaphysics*), he followed the tradition of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Simplicius, and others by commenting on every line of the text. On the other hand, in his commentary on *Physica* (*Physics*) entitled *Eisodos Physicis Acroaseos kat' Aristotelin* (*Access to Physics according Aristotle*), he adopted a less traditional method, according to late Renaissance taste.

The Orthodox reception of Korydaleus' commentaries on Aristotle (*Meta ta Physica*, *Peri geneseos kai fthoras*, *Peri Ouranou*, *Peri Psychis*) (*Metaphysics*, *On Generation and Corruption*, *On the Heavens*, *On the Soul*) was ambiguous. For a long period, they were used as the main texts in the Greek Church schools, whereas Korydaleus' main goal was philosophy's emancipation from scholasticism. Apart from Korydaleus' commentaries on Aristotle in his works include the Aristotelian-directed *Ekthesis kat' epitomin logikes pragmateias* (*Compendium on Logic*), *Ekthesis Rhetorikes* (*Rhetoric's Composition*), and *Diairesis tes Poiitikes kai ta meri tes* (*Divisions of Poetics Ars Poetica and its Parts*). Furthermore, he composed

Epistoles on the Procession of the Holy Spirit only from the Father and *Eulogies* (*Epikideioi Logoi*).

Of particular interest are his *Synopsis eis Geographian* (*Synopsis on Geography*), *Peri Astrolavou* (*On Astrolabe*), *Apokrisis pros tous zetesantas ten prognosin tou aeros* (*Response to those who asked for the Air Forecast*), and *Peri gnoseos ton mellonton* (*On knowing the Future Events*). His treatises on geography and astronomy derive from his Ptolemaic studies in Italy (Padua). Although Ptolemaic cosmology was supported by the Catholic and Orthodox Church due to its geocentrism, which amplified the significance of God's presence on Earth, his aforementioned works on geography and astrology proved the extent of Paduan influence.

Impact and Legacy

Korydaleus' contribution lies in the renewal of Aristotelianism, in such an extent that his Neo-Aristotelianism is called in Greece Korydallism. The work of the Greek philosopher influenced education for at least 150 years. Korydaleus' innovative approach of natural philosophy contributed to the separation of philosophy from theology and to the development of a secular scientific research.

Therefore, the philosophical and educational innovations of Korydaleus contributed to the reconstruction of Aristotelian thought. The intentional return to the direct study of Aristotelian texts contributed to the enrichment of Neohellenic philosophy.

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Korydaleus, Theophilus

► [Korydaleus, Theophilus](#)

Korydalleus, Theophilus

► [Korydalleus, Theophilus](#)

Korydalleus, Theophilus

► [Korydaleus, Theophilus](#)

Kottounios, Ioannis

► [Kottunios, John](#)

Kottunios, John

Born: 1572, Verroia

Died: 1657, Padua

Angela Falcetta
Princeton, NJ, USA

Abstract

John Kottunios, Doctor of Medicine, Philosophy, and Theology, was a late Renaissance scholar. He was actively committed to the philosophical and scientific debates of his time as well as to the humanist educational ideal. An exponent of late Scholasticism, he distinguished himself as translator and commentator of Aristotle. In his writings, he was particularly engaged in harmonizing Aristotelian and Catholic ethics and in discussing novel astronomical knowledge.

Alternate Names

[Cottunio, Giovanni](#); [Kottounios, Ioannis](#)

Biography

Born into a noble family in Macedonia, Kottunios moved to Italy at a young age. In 1605 he was admitted to the College of St. Athanasios in Rome, where he received a degree in philosophy and theology (Tsirpanles

1971). Kottunios then became a teacher of Greek grammar in the same institution while establishing relations with other scholars like Leon Allatios (1586–1669) and Leonardo Philaras (1595–1673). Beginning in 1613 he begun studying medicine in Padua and in 1615 was promoted to doctor. Shortly afterward Kottunios moved to Bologna to take up the chair of Greek letters (1616–1629). In 1628 he had his first work printed, *De triplici statu animae rationalis* (On the triple state of the rational soul); from 1629 to 1632, while he was a lecturer in philosophy, Kottunios published the *Lectiones Ioannis Cottuni Verensis* (...) in *primum Aristotelis librum de Meteoris* (John Kottunios' lessons from Verroia in Aristotle's first book on Meteors, 1631). In 1632 he was appointed professor of philosophy at the *Studium Patavinum*, the most renowned center of Aristotelianism alongside the Bologna University. Until his death in 1657, Kottunios composed four peripatetic *Commentarii* (1648–1657), a collection of Greek epigrams with Latin translations (1653), and a treatise on the epigram composition (1632), along with other minor works (two treatises for educational proposes, 1635/posthumous, 1669; three *Orationes*, 1638). In 1653, he founded a seminar for the education of Greek pupils, the Kottunian College.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

During the late Renaissance, the interpretation of Aristotelian psychology continued to be controversial, though it evolved in increasingly syncretizing directions. Drawing on fine philological reasoning, Kottunios contributed to this long-standing philosophical debate. In *De triplici statu anima rationalis*, where he upholds the thesis of the immortality of the soul, he advocates an in-depth philological analysis of Aristotle. In the Greek College of St. Athanasios, home to many pupils from the Greek East, he cultivated a firm adherence to the Catholic doctrine and Thomistic philosophy. Thus, distancing himself from Zabarella's and

Pomponazzi's views, in his peripatetic writings, he also proved to be an advocate of Thomism, a philosophical system which enabled the synthesis of Aristotelianism and Christian principles. Theological and philosophical concerns led Kottunios to counter novel cosmology, which he examined extensively in his *Lectiones* (Guerrini 2008).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Long neglected by scholarship, recent studies have revalued the role of Kottunios as humanist, at "the forefront of European humanism in its later stages" (Karamanolis 2003), and as "original translator and commentator" of Aristotle (Fyrigos 2001). Latest reappraisals of Kottunios' work have been centered around its political content (Syros 2010).

Impact and Legacy

In the eyes of the proponents of the novel experimental science, Kottunios epitomized traditional knowledge, coincident at that time with peripatetic and biblical thought. In a letter addressed to Galileo, the mathematician Bonaventura Cavalieri described Kottunios as a "simple peripatetic philosopher" (Campori 1881). Modern scholarship on Renaissance philosophy is aligned with this evaluation. However, to the extent that "his work was integrated into Paduan Aristotelianism" (Karamanolis 2003), he became interested into new scientific views cultivated in Padua *Studium*, thus reflecting, in many respects, the spirit of his time (Bovo 2015). While Kottunios critically discussed and disseminated new ideas through his writings, Galileo proved to be eager to learn from Kottunios' work. Kottunios' legacy is characterized by the foundation of the Greek College as well as by his contribution to late Scholasticism. Some commentaries were translated into Arabic by Es'ad Yanyavī (d. 1722) in the decades following his death (El-Rouayheb 2008, 205).

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Koursoulas, Nikolaos

Born: ci. 1602

Died: 1652

Dimitrios Paradoulakis
Hamburg, Germany

Abstract

Greek Orthodox monk and commentator of Aristotle, immune and uninfluenced from the philosophical thought of Theophilos Corydaleus and his disciples.

Biography

Born in Zakynthos around 1602, Nikolaos Koursoulas studied in 1616 at the Pontifical Greek College of Saint Athanasius (Podskalsky 2005: 311–313). Having signed in 1622 as a student of the College a confession of faith to Roman Catholicism – which he later denounced – he attended a 3-year course in philosophy and theology at the University of Padua obtaining the title of the Doctor of Sciences (philosophy and theology) in 1625. He immediately returned to his homeland and was ordained a monk. During his lifetime, Koursoulas made two attempts, both of which proved abortive, to occupy higher ecclesiastical offices. The first took place in 1636 when he claimed the throne of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, but he was undermined by the Dutch representatives of the city; the latter demanded that the Zakynthian cleric accepts the Calvinist doctrine, something that Koursoulas opposed to. In January 1637 he was appointed for a year as a teacher of the Latin language in Corfu, an occupation which he followed again in 1645, this time in the neighboring town of Ioannina. His second attempt to occupy a supreme ecclesiastical office took place a year later (1646) when he put candidacy for the archdiocesan throne of Zakynthos and Cephalonia, without again achieving his goal. Dejected he retired to Mount Athos, where he died in 1652.

Impact and Legacy

The writing production of Nikolaos Koursoulas is concentrated on philosophy and included four treatises on the Aristotelian corpus (Legrand 1896: 261–268). They all followed the established in the author's time commentary tradition and were related to Stageirites' teaching on Physics (*Physica*, *De Caelo*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *De Anima*). Koursoulas repudiated the materialist interpretation of Aristotle from the School of Padua. He appeared vertically opposed to the Renaissance philosophers known as the *Alessandristi*, the supporters of the philosophical theses by Alexander of Aphrodisias, and their efforts for the disengagement of the Aristotelian philosophy from the medieval – Scholastic tradition. In the introductions to his philosophical treatises, Koursoulas accused Alexander of Aphrodisias of rejecting the immortality of the soul and of questioning the doctrine later accepted by the Church on the creation of the universe. The Zakynthian cleric proposed as an alternative interpretation of Aristotle the one promoted by the Neoplatonist Simplicius. Although Simplicius was also presented as a defender of “pagan traditions,” Koursoulas considered him more correct than Alexander and the other commentators of Aristotle, as his philosophical teaching did not collide with Koursoulas' religious beliefs regarding the immortality of the soul and the creation of the universe. As a result, in his commentaries on Aristotle, Koursoulas created a conscientious counterweight to the parallel work of Theophilos Corydaleus and the School of Cesare Cremonini. His fundamental difference from Corydaleus was his persistence and credence to his religious principles and teaching, in comparison to the latter's radical Paduan Aristotelianism. The Zakynthian cleric did not appreciate the effort of the Athenian philosopher and his followers to the genuine interpretation of the Aristotelian texts and denied the Corydalan thesis in favor of a strict separation of philosophy and theology. At the same time, he stood against the rejection of the Scholastic commentary tradition, as he supported in his unique theological

treatise entitled *Synopsis of the Holy Theology Composed for the Benefit of the Orthodox Intellectuals* (Σύνοψις τῆς ἱερᾶς θεολογίας φιλοπονηθεῖσα εἰς ὠφέλειαν τῶν ὀρθοδόξων φιλομαθῶν). In the latter, Koursoulas characterized the Scholastic theology and its various schools as not necessary but useful, and he praised their logically structured and gradually evolving method. In contradiction with Corydalleus, Koursoulas did not accept the belief of the “double truth” (*doppia verità*), and by remaining a tenacious follower of the doctrines of the Church, he resulted in subverting the philosophical reasoning into the Christian faith. Being a staunch supporter of the Greek Orthodox faith, Koursoulas defined the Christian teaching as the only possible framework in order for someone to philosophize. In his writings he promoted the truth of Christian thought and the obligation of philosophy to serve it.

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Kourtesis, George

► [Scholarios, George](#)

Kourtesios, George

► [Scholarios, George](#)

Kristeller, Paul Oskar

Born: May 22, 1905 (Berlin)

Died: June 7, 1999 (New York City)

Brian Jeffrey Maxson

East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, USA

Abstract

This entry briefly examines the major contributions of Paul Oskar Kristeller to the intellectual history of the Italian Renaissance. It focuses on Kristeller’s two most significant cataloguing and editorial projects in addition to the continuing impact of Kristeller’s own scholarship on the history of Renaissance thought.

Biography

Paul Oskar Kristeller fled Germany and then Italy for the safety of the United States in the late 1930s. In 1939, Kristeller found an academic home at Columbia University where he oversaw multitudinous major research projects and graduate students over a 60-year career (Monfasani 2016). His highly influential work focused on the intellectual history of the Italian Renaissance.

Kristeller’s most significant contributions were to the study of the classical tradition and of Renaissance humanism. In both areas, Kristeller argued that the lack of good editions of even major works by major writers from the period impeded the ability of historians to accurately assess the contributions of Renaissance thinkers. Thus, in addition to numerous investigations and editions of the writings of Renaissance authors, Kristeller spearheaded two major projects aimed at cataloguing what exactly remained from these authors in archives and library special collections. The first of these projects, the ongoing and collaborative *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum*, continues to publish extensive

entries on the history of commentaries, editions, and translations of Ancient Greek and Latin authors published between the end of Antiquity and the end of the early modern period (Kristeller et al. 1960–). The second massive project, the *Iter Italicum*, catalogued thousands of manuscripts and their contents pertinent to the study of late medieval and Renaissance humanism and philosophy (Kristeller 1963–1992).

Beyond these highly influential editorial and catalogue projects, Kristeller's articles and monographs have shaped the intellectual history of the Italian Renaissance and beyond. Kristeller began his scholarly career as an historian of Marsilio Ficino, writing an influential first book on the fifteenth-century's premiere Platonist (Kristeller 1943). But it was undoubtedly in his article-length works, many of which have been republished numerous times in book-length essay collections, that he made his greatest contributions. Kristeller argued against the idea that Renaissance humanists were philosophers with a coherent set of teachings or ideas. Instead, Kristeller argued that the term "humanist" was shorthand used to describe teachers of a quite specific range of subjects – history, poetry, grammar, rhetoric, and moral philosophy. Humanists often sparred with their disciplinary rivals in philosophy, rather than offering a well-defined program to replace their teachings. Although the Renaissance had long been associated with the fifteenth-century revival in Platonic thought, Kristeller demonstrated that Renaissance Platonism coexisted with Renaissance humanism and various philosophical schools. In particular, Kristeller showed that Aristotelianism and the related scholastic tradition continued unabated through the fifteenth century and beyond (Kristeller 1979).

Kristeller's editorial projects and original writings have shaped the intellectual history of the Italian Renaissance for over a half a century. His *Catalogus* project has inspired two generations of, in many cases, the first ever studies of the reception of classical authors in the period between the fall of Rome and the classicists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It has also brought about similar projects in Italy,

such as the "Il Ritorno dei Classici nell'Umanesimo" project (Albanese et al. 2015). Originally published in six volumes, the *Iter Italicum* project has since been digitized and, without question, remains the foundation for the current explosion of critical editions of Renaissance writings, particularly those originally written in Latin. Kristeller's ideas about Renaissance humanism and philosophy continue to be cited and are largely accepted in the historiography. Only recently have scholars begun to revisit some of Kristeller's many theses. For example, recent scholars have suggested that it may be possible to broaden Kristeller's conception of philosophy outside of narrow metaphysical terms or soften distinctions between vernacular and Latin writings during the period (Celenza 2004; Maxson 2014). But such observations are small in number, and without question Kristeller's writing, cataloguing, and editorial projects have created the modern field of study on Renaissance thought and letters.

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Kritoboulos, Michael

Born: Imbros 1400–1410

Died: Constantinople After 1468

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Abstract

Late Byzantine author, scribe, and scholar. He held the position of governor of Imbros in the period 1456–1466 ca. His main work is a historiographical narrative of the years 1451–1467 (*Εὐγγραφή Ἱστοριῶν*); minor works include a prayer to Christ and verses to Saint Augustine. Imitation (*mimesis*) of ancient writers such as Thucydides, Herodotus, Xenophon, Flavius Josephus, Aelius Aristides, and Arrian is combined with a choice of compromise with and accommodation to Ottoman rule and elaborated through a new synthesis of notions regarding history and its evolution.

Alternate Names

[Kritopoulos, Michael](#)

Biography

Late Byzantine author, scribe, and scholar who lived before and after the events of 1453 (Trapp et al. 1976–1996, no. 13817). He was born on the island of Imbros most probably in the first decade of the fifteenth century. He descended from an aristocratic family of the island; he considered Imbros as his fatherland and subsequently called himself *Ἰμβριος* or – in a vernacular version – *Ἰμβριώτης*. Sometimes he also identified himself as an islander: *νησιώτης*. (Andriotes 1929; Talbot 1991; Reinsch 2003)

His family name was *Kritopoulos*, which he changed into *Kritoboulos*, following a fashionable classicizing tendency of the Byzantine Quattrocento. Perhaps that choice was also influenced by the literary personage of appearing in works of ancient historian Xenophon (*Oeconomicus* and *Symposium*), whom he studied and imitated. His literary activity shows that he must have received a good and extensive literary education, most probably in Constantinople. The school in which he studied cannot be firmly established.

Kritoboulos was in friendly terms with a circle of renowned and influential learned men of his era, such as Georgios-Gennadios Scholarios, Ioannes Eugenikos, Georgios Amoiroutzes, and Theodoros Agallianos (Theophanes of Medeia). His contact with the two latter scholars is clearly indicated by a letter of Georgios Amoiroutzes, called “the philosopher,” sent to him around 1470 asking that he passed a critical letter to Agallianos on his work *On Providence* (*Περί Προνοίας*), after making any corrections he thought necessary (Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1884–1888, 24; Eustratiades 1925, 412–413). That testimony attests to the central role that Kritoboulos played within a circle of scholars who operated in early Ottoman Empire, having realized the entirely different situation and having made the critical decision for an accommodation and understanding toward the Ottoman rule (Reinsch 2003).

In late September 1444, Cyriacus of Ancona (Ciriaco de’ Pizziccolli) visited Kritoboulos during a travel on Imbros in search of ancient Greek antiquities. He refers to him by the name “Hermodorus

Michael Critobulus” or simply “Michael Critobulus” and describes him as “a learned man and nobleman from Imbros” (*vir doctus et Imbriota nobilis*) (Bodnar and Foss 2013, 92–93); in a letter to Georgios Scholarios, he refers to Kritoboulos as “your good friend, the most learned of the Imbriotes” (*vir tuus amicissimus et Imbriotum doctissimus*) (letter 17; Bodnar and Foss 2013, 96–97). Most probably the term “Hermodorus,” used only once by Cyriacus, does not reflect an alternative name of Kritoboulos. Rather, it is to be seen as an expression of enthusiasm on behalf of the antiquarian traveller.

Shortly after the Fall of Constantinople, in the summer of 1453, Kritoboulos sent embassies to Hamza Beg, governor of Gallipoli and admiral of the Ottoman fleet, and to the Sultan Mehmed II in Adrianople and arranged for a peaceful surrender of the islands of Imbros, Lemnos, and Thasos, in order to prevent their capture by force. Imbros and Lemnos temporarily came into the hands of the Gattilusio by grants made by Mehmed (Wright 2014).

But in 1456 the Turkish navy intervened, and Mehmed appointed Kritoboulos as governor of Imbros; 4 years later, with the help of Kritoboulos, Ainos, Imbros, Lemnos, Samothrace, and Thasos were granted to Demetrios Palaiologos, vassal of the sultan, whereas Kritoboulos remained in that position most probably until the summer of 1466. At that time, he had to flee to Constantinople after the Venetian occupation of his fatherland. He survived the great plague of the following year, which he was able to describe in his historiographical work, showing an interest – and perhaps an expertise – in knowledge. The last trace is the aforementioned letter which Amiroutzes wrote to him; it can be dated in 1468. Kritoboulos must have died either in the course of that year or afterward.

Kritoboulos’s main work is a historiographical synthesis entitled *Εννῆραφῇ Ἱστοριῶν* (Tomadakes 1953; Reinsch 2003; Neville 2018; Ottenheim 2019), which constitutes a partial account of Mehmed II’s reign (1451–1481). The *codex unicus* which preserves the work is an autograph (cod. *Topkapı Palace Library*, G. İ. 3). It begins with the reign of Mehmed II and is

dedicated to him; it covers the events of the years 1451–1467 and mostly focuses on the Ottomans of the time and their leader. Kritoboulos throughout the *Ενγγραφή* provides a highly positive portrait of the sultan; he praises him for his virtues and compares his deeds even with those of Alexander the Great; as a result, he states that he thought appropriate that his great victories and achievements would be “presented to the Greeks in Greek (*ἐλληνικῶς εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐκδοθῆναι*)” and thus were transmitted to the next generations (Reinsch 1983, 4; Tóth 2016).

Kritoboulos also presents the Ottoman sultan as a successor of the Byzantine emperors who ruled in Constantinople, attributes to him the traditional virtues and accomplishments of a Byzantine emperor, and uses the traditional terms *βασιλεὺς* and *αὐτοκράτωρ* when he refers him as “supreme emperor, king of the kings, lord of land and sea by the will of God” (*αὐτοκράτορι μεγίστῳ, [...] βασιλεῖ βασιλέων Μεχμέτει [...] κυρίῳ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης θεοῦ θελήματι*) (Reinsch 1983, 3). The Ottoman sultan is thus presented as a ruler who has genuinely and effectively inherited and embodies the crucial virtues and skills of the Byzantine emperors, among which the ecumenical character of his *basileia* and the consent by God to the dominance of his power (Koski 2013).

While writing that work, Kritoboulos sought to imitate ancient Greek writers, mostly historians. Thucydides’ work functioned as an important model for him (Mastrodemetres 1961; Reinsch 1983, 48*–54*); not only did he borrow the title of the work (*Ενγγραφή*), and numerous words and expressions, but he also imitated the narrative style of the ancient Greek historian. Furthermore, he followed the main principles of his model in terms of the organization of the historical material. A manuscript with Thucydides’s history which we know that was owned by Kritoboulos has come down to us; it is *Parisinus graecus* 1636, which also bears a small epigram drawn from the *Anthologia Palatina* written by his hands (f. Iv: *κριτοβούλ(ον) γράμμ(α)τ(α)*).

Other Greek and Roman historians, such as Herodotus (Reinsch 1983, 54*–55*), Xenophon

(Reinsch 1983, 55*–56*), Aelius Aristides (Reinsch 1983, 66*–67*), Flavius Josephus (Reinsch 1983, 56*–58*; Kampianaki 2018, 222–227), and Arrian (Reinsch 1983, 58*–66*), were also used as sources and imitated by Kritoboulos, through forms of expression, words, and concepts. Kritoboulos’s strong interest in those ancient authors which he used as models is also indicated by manuscripts copied by him that preserve their texts: cod. *Laurentianus* 70, 32 which preserves the *Histories* of Herodotus; cod. *National Library of Greece* 1064 which preserves Aelius Aristides’s *Panathinaikos* (copied in 1466 or slightly earlier); and cod. *Topkapi Palace Library*, G. I 16, a testimony of Arrian’s work (copied in 1463).

Kritoboulos also wrote minor works which could contribute to a more comprehensive sketch of his intellectual personality: (a) *Prayer to Jesus Christ* (*εὐχὴ Κριτοπούλου τοῦ Ἰμβρίου*; Reinsch 1983, 12*–15*) and (b) *Twelve-syllable verses to saint Augustine* (*στίχοι Κριτοπούλου Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Ἰμβρίου*; Reinsch 1983, 16*). Those verses are perhaps to be seen in connection with Michael’s education and to the interests and priorities of his intellectual circle.

Two works of his are no longer extant: (a) a *Homily in the Passion of Christ* and (b) a *Letter*. Kritoboulos himself also informs us in his text *Ενγγραφή* that he planned to write a special historiographical work on the sultans who exercised power before Mehmed, whose deeds had gradually weakened and conquered the Byzantine territory (Reinsch 1983, 13). It seems that he had not finally had the time to do so.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Kritoboulos was educated according to the traditional Byzantine intellectual scheme; he thus extensively practiced the method of *Imitatio* of glorious ancient authors, mostly historians, both of the classical and postclassical antiquity. He nevertheless had to operate in an entirely different political, social, and intellectual environment after 1453, which led him to a choice of compromise between Byzantine values and Ottoman ambitions

and realities. His philosophy of history deviates from the traditional Byzantine concept of history as being governed by God's providence.

In addition to divine will, which keeps playing an important role, there is the variable of *τύχη* (luck, good, or bad alike), which according to Kritoboulos's view contributes to the evolution of the historical events (Tóth 2015). In order to explain, and perhaps justify, the Fall of Constantinople and of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans, Kritoboulos often employs the idea of *translatio imperii*. In combination with that, the concept of determination of history is also occasionally applied as an explanation of described events. This set of secular ideas functions at a different level of thought, which supplements the metaphysical aspect with the notion of temporality of states and empires in history; that very notion in fact rationalizes and justifies the *translatio imperii* (Moustakas 2011).

Overall, Kritoboulos did not see the Fall of Constantinople as an event which was to be explained as a punishment sent by God to the Byzantines because of their sins; such a concept could not serve the effort made by him – and other scholars – to cooperate with the new rulers of the former Byzantine lands. Kritoboulos opted instead to construe that event as a succession which was fully justified by the concepts of luck, will of God, and *translatio imperii*. The Ottoman sultan was subsequently praised as a legitimate and powerful successor to the most glorious Byzantine emperors; but he was also considered and presented as the heir of many great political leaders of the past, including Alexander the Great.

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Synonyms

Cabinet de curiosité, Curiosity cabinet, Schatzkammer, Studiolo, Theatrum sapientiae, Wunderkammer

Kritopoulos, Michael

► [Kritoboulos, Michael](#)

Kuhnrat, Henricus

► [Khunrath, Heinrich](#)

Kunstkammer

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Abstract

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the *Kunstkammer*, a new form of knowledge-based, encyclopedic collection, emerged in Europe. Although most commonly associated with princely courts, these collections first appeared in the context of German merchant bankers such as the Fuggers of Augsburg and minor nobility such as Wilhelm Werner von Zimmern; the term is also associated with the collections of scholars, naturalists, and physicians such as Conrad Gessner, Olaus Worm, and Bernardus Paludanus. While the contents of individual collections varied widely, *Kunstkammern* typically contained a combination of natural specimens, crafted objects and works of art, technology, and historical and ethnographic materials.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The origins of the Renaissance *Kunstkammer* were diverse, including both ecclesiastical treasuries (*thesauri*) and secular treasuries (*Schatzkammer*), mercantile collections, and scholarly studies. In addition to ecclesiastical materials—liturgical and other sacred vessels made from precious metals and gems, vestments, illuminated manuscripts, and especially relics and the reliquaries that held them—medieval church treasuries also held historical and rare natural materials, including narwal tusks, ostrich eggs, and coconut shells. Functionally, they served as reserves of economic and spiritual value. In this, they differed little from courtly secular treasuries, which held very similar materials—precious metals in the form of plate, bullion and minted coins, gemstones, coronation and other regalia, and sacred religious materials. Both secular and sacred treasuries were secure spaces containing compact forms of wealth that could be used for ostentatious display but that also could be liquidated when the need arose. Merchants and scholars also required secure spaces for archiving legal and financial documents, as well as securely storing valuables. Originating as lockboxes, these spaces developed into small, securely lockable rooms in the most private areas of a mercantile, scholarly or princely residence (*studioli*), as described by Leon Battista Alberti (1969). These *studioli* or studies, which were utilized for business management and for writing family and personal histories, also held rare objects deemed worthy of safekeeping and contemplation, thus drawing the connection between collections and knowledge production.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Just as the *studiolo* emerged in Italy in connection with urban merchants such as the Alberti of Florence, the transalpine *Kunstkammer* makes its earliest appearance with the merchant bankers of Augsburg in Germany; the first known use of the term *Kunstkammer* (1546) refers to the collections of Raimund Fugger of Augsburg (Meadow 2002). Minor nobility in Southern Germany, including Wilhelm Werner von Zimmern, Ulrich von Montfort, and Wilhelm von Laubenberg, were also important early exponents of the *Kunstkammer* tradition. In the 1550–1560s, great princely houses such as the Bavarian Wittelsbachs, the Austrian Habsburgs, and the Saxon Wettins established *Kunstkammern* as formal institutions (Impey 1985). Showplaces of wealth, knowledge, and power, *Kunstkammern* functioned as forms of princely representation (Kaufmann 1978). In the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the phenomenon became more widespread, reaching Spain, France, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, England, and, eventually, Russia, among other places.

From the time of its adoption by the great princely houses, the *Kunstkammer* is distinguished by several features: the construction of dedicated storage and display facilities; a greater degree of permanence through designating certain materials as inalienable; efforts toward systematic organization by material, form, and function; linkages between the collections and practical workshop spaces for alchemical distillation, metalworking, glassblowing, or woodturning; and, more generally, the production of practical knowledge. In 1565, the Flemish physician Samuel Quiccheberg wrote a treatise on *Kunstkammern*, the *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi*, which proposes that the *Kunstkammer* assists in the state administration of the economy, the military, religion, and scholarship (Meadow and Robertson 2013). Quiccheberg defines the *Kunstkammer* as an aid to the ruler's *prudentia* (Aristotelian *phronesis*) or practical knowledge.

Impact and Legacy

The *Kunstkammer* as an institution of research and learning is recognizable in both Francis Bacon's *Salomon's House* (Bacon 2002) and Gottfried Leibniz's *Theatrum naturae et artium* (Bredekamp 2004). Although *Kunstkammern* persisted into the eighteenth century, their functions as research and educational facilities were eventually ceded to public museums and universities. Indeed, former *Kunstkammern* often established the core collections of modern universities, including Oxford University and Humboldt University. Similarly, the heterogeneous collections of *Kunstkammern* formed the basis of many modern museums of art, natural history, ethnography, and technology.

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Kydones, Demetrios

► [Cydones, Demetrius](#)

Kyminites, Sevastos

Born: 1632

Died: 1702

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Abstract

Eminent teacher and Aristotelian commentator active in the Ottoman Empire of the late seventeenth century.

Biography

Born in 1632 in the village of Chotzi or Kymina, Sevastos Kyminites was taught his first letters in his hometown of Trabzon, Asia Minor. He then proceeded to higher studies at the Patriarchal Academy of Constantinople under the famous

scholar Ioannis Karyofyllis, director of the school for the period 1641–1665, and the prominent physician and later Dragoman of the Porte Alexander Mavrocordatos (1636–1709) (Karanasios 2001; Mitsoglou 2007). During his studies in Constantinople, Kyminites perfected his knowledge in philology, philosophy, epistolography, and dogmatic theology. In 1671 he succeeded Mavrocordatos in the direction of the Academy, where he taught grammar, rhetoric, Aristotelian philosophy, and theology until his resignation in 1682. Being continually attacked by the conservative circles of Constantinople because of the relationship with his teacher but intellectually controversial Karyofyllis, Kyminites rejected an invitation to become the director of the Greek School of Moscow (Mitsoglou 2007). Instead, he decided to return to his hometown of Trabzon, where he was appointed in September 1682 a schoolteacher of the newly established *Phrontisterion*. Remaining in his post until 1689, he contributed due to his well-founded philological and philosophical training to the evolution of the institution to a school of high intellectual standards. At the same time, he developed intense pro-Orthodox activity, successfully tackling the efforts of the Catholic missionaries to convert the local population to Roman Catholicism (Kollia 1977–1978, 280–306). After the invitation by the Prince of Wallachia Constantin Brâncoveanu (1654–1714), Kyminites left Trabzon at the end of 1689 to settle in Bucharest and be appointed director of the local Princely Academy (Academia Domnească de la București). As a scholar of recognized educational abilities, he worked with perseverance for the pedagogical revival of the Greek studies. During his stay in Bucharest, he put at the disposal of the ruler texts that would enable him to come into contact with both the ancient Greek and Byzantine thought. In this context he composed treatises of political instruction (speeches and encomiums), always aiming at indicating to Brâncoveanu the characteristics of the fair Prince and the correct way of exercising power. Alongside, he placed his intellectual interests in the expectations and the purposes of the Church, being considered a profound authority of the Greek Orthodox literature and

ecclesiastical tradition (Mitsoglou 2007). Sevastos Kyminites served as the director of the Academy of Bucharest for 13 years until his death in 1702.

Impact and Legacy

The extensive educational and writing production of Sevastos Kyminites is divided into six categories based on their content: grammatical, rhetorical, philosophical, theological, homiletics, and correspondence. Concerning his lessons on the art of rhetorics (secular and ecclesiastical), the scholar from Trabzon proceeded to its systematical teaching based on the Aristotelian doctrines and the corresponding commentaries by contemporary early modern Greek scholars, mainly Gerasimos Vlachos, Georgios Sougdouris, and Alexander Mavrocordatos. A large amount of his writings (a total of 17 works) belong to the field of logic and philosophy. Kyminites composed introductions and paraphrases: (a) in the Aristotelian corpus (*Organon*, *Physica*, *De Caelo*, *De Anima*, *Metaphysica* and *Ethica Nicomachea*), (b) in Alexander's of Aphrodisias *On Topics*, and (c) in Theophilus Corydaleus' *On the Soul* and *On Generation and Corruption*. Most of his philosophical production derived from his teaching courses at the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople since his philosophical method was influenced by the system of Corydaleus, Karyofyllis, and Mavrocordatos. During the 11 years of his stay as

a teacher in the Ottoman capital, he followed a 3-year philosophical curriculum: in the first year he taught Logic, in the second year Natural Philosophy and lessons on the Soul, and in the third year Metaphysics. Kyminites followed on a first level the model of Corydaleus in distinguishing his philosophical and theological knowledge, and on a second level he proceeded to the recombination of the two perceptions (secular and religious), with his ultimate goal to be a modern balanced teaching of the classic and Christian literature (Podskalsky 1988, 344–350; Karanasios 2001; Mitsoglou 2007).

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L'Alemant, Adrien

Born: Sorcy-sur-Meuse (France), 1527

Died: Paris, 1559

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Abstract

Adrien L'Alemant was a doctor, translator, and author of medical texts (theoretical and practical) living in Paris in the early sixteenth century.

Alternate Names

[Alemanus, Adrianus](#)

Biography

Adrien L'Alemant studied medicine in Paris, where he received the doctor's cap under Jean de Gorris. From 1558 to 1559, he represented the nation of Germany in the medical college of Paris's Faculty of Medicine, which was responsible for voting for and appointing the dean (Concasty [1964](#)).

Works

Well-versed in Latin and Greek, Adrien L'Alemant published two treatises by Hippocrates in 1557 in bilingual editions (with the Greek text opposite the Latin translation) (Hippocrate [1557a, b](#)).

He also wrote several books on logic, like *De optimo disputandi genere libri III* (Paris, Jacques Gazeau, [1546](#)) and *Ars parva* (Paris, Thomas Richard, [1549](#)), which is the Latin translation of his *Dialectique en François pour les barbiers et les chirurgiens, composée par maistre Adrian l'Alemant docteur en medecine à Paris* (published by Thomas Richard in [1553](#)).

Following the recommendations of Galen, whose influence – in particular his methodological approach to science – remained significant in the Renaissance, Adrien L'Alemant emphatically argues in his Latin and French dialectics that mastering logic is essential for a man of science who wants to build a valid argument.

His *Dialectique en françois* is part of a close paradigm of works on medical logic written in the vernacular; the title of the book and the introduction to the text, which addresses the reader, clearly demonstrate this choice. This corpus of works helped spread the idea of method in France – a concept that was theorized by Petrus Ramus and would later lead to Descartes's approaches. Adrien L'Alemant's *Dialectique* – like *La philosophie rationale, vulgairement appelée*

Dialectique pour les chirurgiens françois et autres amateurs de la langue françoise by Jean Eusèbe (1566) and *Dialectique françoise pour en peu de temps et avec grande facilité apprendre l'art et science de bien disputer: en la faveur et grace des compaignons chirurgiens et autres studieux de ladicte science* by Pierre Bertrand (1571) – marks an epistemological turning point in this “prescientific” era (Bachelard 2004; Montagne 2015).

Adrien L'Alemant also wrote *Traicté de l'origine, cause, signes, preservation et curation de la peste*, now lost, which was published without a date by Jean Ruelle, who was active in Paris from 1538 to 1571. It is part of a body of works on the dreaded plague epidemic, which, as early as the mid-1550s, were characterized by a logical method of presenting data, with the definitional approach at the center.

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La Boderie, Guy Lefevre de

Born: Sainte-Honorine-la-Chardonne, August 09, 1541

Died: Sainte-Honorine-la-Chardonne, June 10, 1598

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Abstract

Guy Lefèvre de La Boderie was a renowned orientalist philologist, a translator of ancient and modern languages, an expert in mystical and especially cabalistic doctrines, and a poet. His works were crucial to the spread of Neoplatonic and cabalistic motifs within French Renaissance culture. Influenced by Guillaume Postel, he fostered peaceful dialogue and gradual integration of all religious creeds in light of a cabalistic interpretation of Catholicism.

Alternate Names

[Boderianus, Guido Fabricius](#)

Biography

Guy was born and died in his family estate in Normandy. After studying philosophy and mathematics at the University of Caen (1556–1561), Guy moved to Paris and learnt Hebrew at the Collège Trilingue. Guy also started studying ancient Syriac as an autodidact, and he considered his achievements on this matter to be God-given. He became acquainted with the philologist and cabalist Guillaume Postel, whose

influence on Guy's work is unanimously recognized by scholars. Although a precise date has not been established, the two probably met for the first time in Paris in 1553 (Secret 1969). In 1566, Guy worked on an edition of the Syriac New Testament. Thanks to Postel (Wilkinson 2007), he came into contact with printer Christophe Plantin and was included as a contributor in the Antwerp Polyglot Bible project financed by Philip II of Spain. At that time Guy also completed a Syriac dictionary. In 1571, his first poetical work, *l'Encyclie des secrets de l'éternité*, was released. The poem constituted a peculiar case within the French genre of *poésie scientifique* that flourished during the late sixteenth century (Gorris 2014): to demonstrate the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, Guy illustrated the natural world in light of a divine truth attainable through cabalistic principles.

After spending a brief period in Louvain, in 1572, Guy returned to Paris, thus witnessing a particularly difficult phase of the French Wars of Religion. He became secretary and interpreter of the Duke of Alençon, a prominent figure within the *politiques* faction, whose aim was to guarantee national unity by prioritizing civic prosperity over religious matters. Guy's host in Paris was Jean Desprez, probably a member of the *Familia Charitatis* (such as the printer Plantin). This religious congregation intended to reduce religious conflicts by bringing Christian faith back to some universally valid *fundamentalia* (Vasoli 2009). Although his religious views differed from those of both *politiques* and familists, Guy shared with them the purpose of overcoming religious disagreements to achieve nonviolent coexistence. In 1578, Guy released his translations of Marsilio Ficino's *De christiana religione* and Giovanni Pico's *Oratio de hominis dignitate*. He also translated into French Ficino's *De amore* and Francesco Zorzi's *De harmonia mundi*. In 1581, translations of Ficino's *De vita libri tres* and Cicero's *De natura deorum* were published. Thus, Guy definitely contributed to promoting Neoplatonism and Christian Cabalism among French intellectuals. These philosophical and spiritual sources influenced Guy's poetical works, such as *Diverses meslanges*

poetiques, *Hymnes ecclésiastiques*, and especially *La Galliade*, all published in 1578. After working within the royal court for several years, in 1583, he retired to Normandy.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Guy appears to have shared some of Postel's prophetic and eschatological ideas, namely, that the end of times was approaching and that soon universal restitution would take place. The variety of the world would thus return to its primal perfection and rejoin its divine unity. In Guy's view, the unification and reconciliation of all beings had to be initiated by men in the present time through the practice of arts, sciences, and, most of all, the study of language. A careful search for the Jewish etymologies of modern and ancient words could restore the pristine transparency of human expression (Roudaut 1992; La Boderie 1994). A comparative analysis of the languages of the sacred texts was a crucial step toward this end. Guy stressed the relevance of the French people and culture within the process of universal reunification.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In his poems, and especially *La Galliade*, Guy argued that the French Catholic monarchy should pursue, promote, and accomplish all humankind's political and religious unification. While illustrating a circular and yet progressive conception of history, he attempted to show that France is the true heir of the ancient Jews. After the fall of Babel, they kept using the language of Adam, capable of expressing the truth directly. Renaissance France appeared to be the ultimate expression of a long sapiential tradition originated by Noah, passed on to the Gauls, and transmitted through the work of the humanists. In the dedicatory epistle of the 1584 edition of the Syriac *Novum Testamentum*, Guy invited the king of France to support an Arabic edition of the Bible, so to encourage nonviolent

conversions to Catholicism (Wilkinson 2007). In 1574, he had translated into French (following an Italian version) the *Confusión de la secta Mahoméctica* by Juan Andrés (1515).

Cross-References

- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
- [Postel, Guillaume](#)
- [Zorzi, Francesco](#)

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La Boétie, Étienne de

Born: 1530, Sarlat

Died: 1563, Germignan

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Abstract

Born in 1530 to a family of wealthy merchants in Sarlat, Périgord, Étienne de La Boétie was

trained in the humanities and law and became a councilor in the Parlement of Bordeaux, where he met Michel de Montaigne, who was to become his closest friend. He died in 1563 near Bordeaux, at the age of 33. His famous *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*, probably completed around 1554, was only published in 1574, in a Protestant collection of anti-monarchical essays. However, the critical analysis of domination developed by the *Discourse* does not concern the sole French Catholic monarchy: La Boétie rather expands the classical analysis of tyranny and applies it to any form of individual power. This political radicalism defined the way La Boétie was to be read and published from the sixteenth century to the present: the *Discourse* offers a model to link the rejection of any kind of servitude with the constant reminder of the part the subjects themselves always take in it. Indeed, by forging the concept of “voluntary servitude,” La Boétie underlines that no individual may ever reduce any people to servitude without their active consent. He then endeavors to understand the root of this actual corruption of human nature: “custom” is the force that led humanity to forget its native impetus toward freedom, and friendship seems to be the only antidote against the habituation to servitude.

Biography

His father Antoine de La Boétie, a civil magistrate from a wealthy family of merchants of the Périgord, had married Philippe de Calvimont, whose father and brother had both been appointed as presidents of the Parlement of Bordeaux. Their son Étienne was born in Sarlat in 1530; he was trained in the humanities in Sarlat and, maybe, in a Parisian college, before receiving his law degree at the University of Orléans, in 1553. A brilliant student, he became a councilor in the Parlement of Bordeaux as early as 1554, and the same year he married Marguerite de Carle, a young widow

from a family of noblemen and magistrates. In Bordeaux, he developed a close friendship with a young colleague, Michel de Montaigne, who was later to celebrate his friendship with La Boétie in his *Essays*. Beyond his career as a legal officer in Bordeaux, La Boétie took part in several diplomatic negotiations between Catholics and Protestants in Périgord and Guyenne during the early 1560s. In 1563 he died in Germignan, near Bordeaux, from sudden dysentery. Montaigne relates his friend's last days in a letter to his father.

Étienne de La Boétie is the author of several pieces of French and Latin poetry and of a *Mémoire sur la pacification des troubles* (*Report on the pacification of the disorders*). He also translated Xenophon's *Œconomicos* (*La Mesnagerie de Xénophon*) and Plutarch's *Marriage Advice* (*Les Règles du Mariage*). But La Boétie is best known for his *Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* (*Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*), maybe written as early as 1548 (according to Montaigne), but obviously completed in 1553–1554, when his dedicatee Guillaume de Lur left Bordeaux to Paris, offering to La Boétie the opportunity to take his seat at the Parlement of Bordeaux.

While the *Discourse* could be read as one of the many anti-tyrannical treatises produced during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, La Boétie actually breaks up with this tradition: his point is not against tyranny in a classical sense, but against any kind of individual domination among men. Abandoning the classical debate about the best political regime, La Boétie deems them all corrupted, as they all proceed from a corruption of men's natural freedom. But this corruption would be impossible without the cooperation of the people themselves: they may be subject to domination if and only if they willingly adhere to their own servitude. The first aim of the *Discourse* is to evidence this scandal of voluntary servitude; its second aim is to understand the cause of this situation. After having rejected many of the classical causes of servitude and domination (Aristotle's natural hierarchy as well as Augustine's original sin), La Boétie eventually discovers the one power

that causes humans to get used to servitude, which is “la coutume” (custom).

After a thorough analysis of the way custom operates and ruins the desire for freedom which can be observed in any living creature, the *Discourse* ends up with a clever and precise condemnation of the “chain of tyranny”: the domination is indeed never based upon a single individual, as smart or strong as he may be. Around the tyrant lay circles of relatives, servants, and councilors, who act as relays and transmit the power of tyranny to a continuous chain of subjects. Thus, the chain of tyranny holds a whole society that lends its collective power to one man alone. But the purpose of the *Discourse* is not to incite revolt against the power, but rather to challenge us, its readers: are we able to resist the power of custom and to refuse to take part in the mechanism of tyranny? Are we able to recall our native freedom and build upon it uncorrupted moral and social links among us?

Though he originally intended to publish his friend’s *Discourse* in the center of the first book of his *Essays*, following the essay I, 28 “On friendship,” Montaigne eventually abandoned this project, as the Protestants had seized upon the *Discourse* and published it in two collections of anti-monarchical texts, in 1573 and 1574. From then on, the *Discourse* has constantly been published in highly ideological contexts, continuously demonstrating its strength as a keen and virulent critic against any kind of political domination.

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La Framboisière, Nicolas Abraham de

Born: 1560, in Guise

Died: 1636, in Reims

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Abstract

Nicolas Abraham de la Framboisière was one of French King Henry IV's physicians and advisers. Along with other doctors at the French court, among whom Joseph du Chesne, he defended a moderate form of Paracelsian medicine rooted in the Hippocratic-Galenic tradition. He also penned a number of philosophical texts, from his first years as a student onward.

Alternate Names

[Frambesarius](#)

Biography

Son of a surgeon (Hector Abraham – Abraham being his real name, as Stefen Bamforth explains (Bamforth 2010)), de La Framboisière studied medicine with Gourmelen and Riolan between 1582 and 1585, in Paris, where he seems to have established himself as early as 1579. In 1587 or 1588, he qualified as a medical doctor at the faculty of medicine in Reims. He became one of French King Henry IV's doctors in 1600, and went on to officiate under Louis XIII, before becoming a Professor at the Collège Royal and professor and doyen of the Faculty of Medicine at Reims University. He devoted also an important part of his career to military medicine and became “premier des

Bendes de France” (Chief Medical Officer) in 1610 (Bamforth 2010).

Works

De La Framboisière was a physician first and foremost, and the vast majority of his work comprises medical texts, but he also studied philosophy. His interest in philosophy, especially in ethics, sprang from his conception of medicine as surpassing a purely medical framework. Hence, his first book, published in 1587, was a philosophical treatise: *Methodicae institutiones Philosophiae rationalis, naturalis, moralis*. Medicine was an integral part of his general overview of man, a stance to which the internal organization of his *Œuvres complètes*, published in French in 1613, bears ample witness (he wrote only in Latin until 1595). His works are classed in such a way as to reflect the political structure of society: “principality” (*Principautez de l'homme*: “principality of Man”). “Government” (*Le gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé*, – a branch of health), “Laws” (*Les loix de la médecine* – “The Laws of Medicine”), “Ordinances,” “Crown,” “State”. . . . La Framboisière adopts ideas also prevalent in the work of Joseph Du Chesne and the Paracelsian physicians in general. He firmly believes that all physicians should receive proper training in philosophy and defends a universal vision of medicine in which the physician, an expert in a variety of disciplines, also cares for the soul (*L'Estat des vertus desquelles doit estre ornée l'ame chrestienne pour vivre eternellement bienheureuse. Avec l'estat des parties du corps*). He was also very interested in logic (see for example : *Idea Frambesarianae Academiae, in qua celebrentur scholiae artium ad humanitatem excolendam pertinentium, dialecticae, rhetoricae, grammaticae, scholae philosophicae, cum ethicæ*) and dialectic, and more generally in questions about the order and method to be employed in the arts and sciences (see the titles of his books: *Les Canons requis pour practiquer methodiquement la chirurgie*, *Canonum medicinalium libri tres. Quibus aphoristica methodus medendi*

affectibus corporis partium, primo animalium, secundo vitalium, tertio naturalium continetur, Les loix de medecine pour proceder methodiquement à la guarison des maladies, Ordonnances sur la composition des medicamens, que les apothicaires doivent dispenser en leurs boutique, etc.), in medical education (*L’etat des parties du corps humain, methodiquement dressé en faveur des estudians en medecine et chirurgie*), and in education in general (*La Principauté de l’homme, où la Grammaire, la logique et la physique sont methodiquement descriptes en françois, pour apprendre aisement et en peu de temps les langues principales, l’usage de raison et l’histoire du monde*). Stephen Bamforth’s research clearly demonstrates the influence of Ramus on his work (Bamforth 2008).

Cross-References

► [Ramus, Petrus](#)

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Laqānī, ‘Abd al-Salām

Born: Late 16th/early 17th century

Died: 1668

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Abstract

The son of a famous jurisprudent, ‘Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī was a seventeenth-century theologian and Mālikite jurisprudent who taught at al-Azhar in Cairo.

Alternate Names

Nāṣir al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Ibrāhīm al-Laḳānī al-Mālikī

Biography

The son of an al-Azhar professor, the conservative Ash‘arite theologian, and the Mālikite jurisprudential authority Ibrāhīm Burhān al-Dīn al-Laḳānī (d. 1631), ‘Abd al-Salām al-Laḳānī followed his father’s career, eventually succeeding him in the teaching position at the prominent institution in Cairo. He died in 1668.

Al-Laḳānī wrote two commentaries on his father’s popular verse form creed *Jawhara al-tawhīd* as well as on his autocommentary *Hidāya al-murīd*, respectively titled *Ithāf al-murīd*, *Irshād al-murīd*, and *Hadīya al-murīd*. The two first works were subject to further commentaries at least down to the late nineteenth century. They, like the elder Laḳānī’s original, represent a phase of conservative Ash‘arism that departs from the tradition of philosophically ambitious *summae* and commentaries that reaches from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī to ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. In al-Laḳānī’s works, the extended discussion of systematic metaphysical and epistemological questions gives way to an emphasis on an orthodox treatment of traditional theological topics, such as God’s unity and its relation to His attributes, prophecy, human agency, and responsibility (the question of *iktisāb*), key moments of early Sunnī history, and various revealed doctrines, with general questions on the nature of existence or on the debate over atoms emerging only sporadically for somewhat superficial treatment.

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Las Casas, Bartolomé de

Born: 1484, Sevilla

Died: 18 July 1566, Madrid

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Abstract

Well known for his militant struggle in defense of the Native Americans, in his writings Las Casas offered relevant insights into relevant theoretical fields – such as rights theory, “just war” theory and its critique, the question of the exploitation of labor – and showed a pioneering capability to acknowledge cultural differences. Las Casas’s thought was framed by the Aristotelian-Thomistic paradigm and Canon Law, but re-elaborating that heritage he was able to open seminal paths to modern political theory.

Biography

Born in Seville – the European terminal of the conquest – Las Casas was from childhood

connected to Spain's involvement in America. When he was 18 years old he arrived at Hispaniola, where he managed the family farm and joined the expedition to repress the Indian uprising in Higüey. After returning to Europe, where he was ordained priest and possibly graduated in Canon law, he went back to Hispaniola where he started his own business. Appointed as Chaplain of the militarily enforced "pacification" of Cuba, Las Casas witnessed the awful violence by the *conquistadores* and the extreme exploitation of the natives. He gained appreciation from the indigenous people by attempting to save lives and peacefully convert souls. Despite this, the Spanish colonial government rewarded him by allowing indigenous people in *repartimiento* to work as servants in his *encomienda*, which was the typical form of forced labor recently institutionalized. But in 1514, at the time of his "first conversion," he redirected his energy to the cause of the Indians, deciding to denounce the illegitimacy and the sinfulness of the detention of natives and to restitute his servants to the governor. As his claims were ineffective, he crossed the Atlantic to Castile in order to denounce the conquest and to advocate for the Indians in court. There he was strongly opposed by the bishop Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca who was delegated to manage the Indian affairs but gradually the cleric gained support from Cardinal Cisneros. Then, after the death of King Ferdinand in 1516, the cleric's proposals were favorably received by Adrian of Utrecht, the future Pope Adrian VI, who started to reform the colonial system, designating three Hieronymite friars to implement the proposals. Las Casas was deeply involved and was appointed with the official status of "Protector of the Indians," but the project got no further. Back in Spain, he gradually succeeded in gaining the trust of the Flemish entourage in the court of Charles V. He was authorized to attempt an experiment of peaceful colonization over 260 leagues of the continental coast. Confronting the establishment opposition in Hispaniola, in 1521 he agreed to include prominent colonists in the enterprise. Such a "bargain with the devil" ended in a catastrophe: when Las Casas was absent, the natives attacked his fellows, killing four of them.

This was probably the gloomiest moment in Las Casas's life. He began to distrust the very idea of his mission and decided to join the Dominican order (his "second conversion"). During more than a decade of retirement and meditation, he deepened his theological studies and started to write theoretical and historical works. In 1534 he came out to battle, convincing the cacique Enriquillo to end his rebellion. Then Las Casas transferred to central America, where, either fighting against the governors or earning their support, he contributed to the peaceful evangelization of Tuzutlán and to the drafting of statements in favor of the Indians by the local ecclesiastical hierarchy. Back in Spain in 1540, his treatises and pamphlets (including the *Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias*, destined for international reception in the following decades) gave impetus to the proclamation in 1542 by Charles V of the *Leyes Nuevas*: a quite radical reform that remained ineffective and was revoked for the most part. From 1543 to 1547, Las Casas was back in America, as bishop of Chiapas. There the colonists' opposition to his intransigent attempts to enforce the *Lejes Nuevas* escalated to physical threats. Back in Spain, in 1551–1552 he contested the legitimacy of the conquest in the Valladolid *congregación* convened by the king, confronting the humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573). The last two decades of the friar's life were spent writing his works, which expressed progressively more radical thought, recruiting missionaries, fighting battles against the charge of heresy on the bishop Bartolomé Carranza, and against the attempt by the Peruvian colonists to transform the *encomiendas* in hereditary feuds (Clayton 2012, Ortega 2007, Rand Parish and Weidman 1992).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Las Casas's thought was framed by the Aristotelian-Thomistic paradigm and honored the *auctoritates* of medieval thinking. He was inclined to trust the assumptions of ancient natural philosophy and even traditional superstitions,

e.g., on celestial influences and witchcraft, but nevertheless showed some openness to empiricism. His legal competence was sound; he adopted the concepts and style of the canonists (Cárdenas Bunsen 2011) and suggested some theoretical innovations in legal theory, especially in the field of rights theory (Beuchot 1994, Tierney 1997). Belonging fully to the “revival of Thomism” (Skinner 1978), his consonance with Aquinas’ approach to the relationship between faith and rational knowledge is evident (e.g., OC2, pp. 24–70). Though some elements of novelty in his theological thought have been emphasized (Gutiérrez 1992), the chief originality in Las Casas’s thought is to be found mainly in political theory.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Illegitimacy of the Conquest. Las Casas’ position on the legitimacy of the conquest changed over the years. His 1516 *Memorial de remedios* proposed a sort of refurbishment of the *encomienda* system. In his proposal, the displacement of natives, their work together with virtuous Spanish farmers, and even the limits to the length and the harshness of their labor, were integral to a disciplinary model whose end was the “civilization” of the Indians and the rational exploitation of their work and natural resources. After his second conversion, Las Casas stated that *the only way* to convert the infidels was by peaceful means (OC 2). Nonetheless, in the early writing of his *Historia de las Indias*, Columbus is depicted as a providential hero who opened the gates of the Ocean to Christianity and consequently the possibility of salvation for millions of souls (OC 3, pp. 353–365, 494–495). In the following years, his criticism of the two causes of the destruction of the Indies – the cruel and unjust wars of conquest and extreme exploitation – became more and more radical. During his episcopacy in Chiapas, Las Casas stressed the superiority of ecclesiastical power over the secular one in order to bring back the Indians qua “poor people” under the protection of the bishops. In any case, when accused of

jeopardizing the Spanish Empire in the Indies, he theorized that its legitimacy depended on the vicar of Christ’s mandate to Christianize (OC 10, pp. 197–214, 391–543): he maximized the role and the power of the crown in order to downsize the pretensions of the settlers and to grant the political autonomy of natives’ communities. But in the following years, one can see a further radicalization: the pope’s investiture conferred to the kings of Castile a mere *ius ad rem*, i.e., a jurisdiction *in habitu*. In *De Thesauris* (OC 11.1) only the explicit consensus by the people and their natural rulers, stated in a formal treatise, could transform it into an *ius in re*, an actual (*in actu*) jurisdiction. Only at this point could the Spanish king assume a “sort” of imperial role which would not revoke the free enjoyment of rights and powers by native kings and peoples. Moreover, in the *Doce Dudas* (OC 11.2), Las Casas argued in favor of the restitution of his kingdom to the descendants of the Inca. The diagnosis of the illegitimacy of the conquest is ruthless: “Todos los reynos de las Indias tenemos usurpados” (OC 11.2, p. 217).

Just War. Las Casas adopted the “just war” theory in the version elaborated by Francisco de Vitoria (1483? – 1546): the only just cause for war is an *iniuria*, i.e., the violation of a *ius*, a basic right. But according to Las Casas, the just cause belonged only and always to the Indians: “they had, from the very beginning, every right to wage war on the Christians, while the Christians never had just cause” (OC 10, p. 40). In his historical works, Las Casas offers a horrifying phenomenology of the terrorist violence perpetrated during the conquest of the different areas of the Americas. He contested the supposed just causes on the side of the Spaniards (such as the natural slavery of the “barbarians,” evangelization, anthropophagy, or human sacrifices) and turned Vitoria’s theory upside down. Vitoria proclaimed a series of universal natural rights relating to communication, commerce, the appropriation of common goods, and the freedom to announce the Gospel, suggesting that their violation by the “barbarians” constituted an *iniuria* and consequently a just cause. Contrarily, Las Casas emphasizes the right of the legitimate political communities to

defend their borders, protect their jurisdictions, and even resist the preaching of Christianity (OC 9, p. 350).

In some texts, the very theory of just war appears to be nearly abandoned. War is defined “multorum homicidium commune et latrocinium” (OC 2, p. 380), and it is shown to be difficult to save the innocent. Moreover, the similarity between war and legal trial is contested. In his last works, however, Las Casas came back to the theory and radicalized it to extreme effect. To be entitled by the just cause gives to the Indians the right to resistance, vengeance, and punishment of the Spaniards, who can be reduced to slavery according to the *ius gentium*. If the just war theory was born in Late Antiquity in order to legitimize the recourse to war by Christians, its imperialistic function was jeopardized by Las Casas’ arguments.

Slavery and Forced Labor. In the sixteenth century, the *ius gentium* justification of slavery – based on an exchange between life and freedom on the part of a defeated enemy in a just war – was generally accepted, but Las Casas, negating the legitimacy of *all* conquests, declared invalid *every* reduction to slavery of prisoners. In some cases, the slaves were purchased from other natives: Las Casas contested the legality of such purchases. The Aristotelian theory of natural slavery – based on the idea of lesser rationality, and consequently *humanitas*, of the “barbarians” – is deconstructed by distinguishing between different meanings of “barbarian” and arguing that “barbarian” in a proper sense refers only to wild and idiotic individuals who live in isolation, and this category cannot be applied to the Indians (OC 9, pp. 76–124). Some years later, in *De regia potestate*, Las Casas de facto revoked entirely the Aristotelian theory, stating that the natural freedom of human beings is a function of their rationality (OC 12, pp. 34–36).

During his “reformist” period, Las Casas proposed on several occasions the use of African slaves in order to replace the Indians, and his detractors accused him of being the first theoretician of the slave trade. Actually, in the fifties, he wrote a bitter self-criticism on this

point (OC 5, p. 2324) in which he considered the slavery of the Africans to be as bad as the forced labor of the Indians (Pérez Fernández 1995).

Las Casas showed the consequences of the exploitation system, which consumed its servants to death and induced a state of profound depression: “they forget to be humans” (OC 4, p. 1287). The *encomienda* was a devilish, “intrinsically evil” institution, which destroyed the policies of the Indians (OC 13, p. 290) and inhibited the exercise of rational faculties and even the Christian faith (p. 288). The overturning of the Aristotelian theory is clear: it is not insufficient rationality that makes the barbarians natural slaves; it is rather a slavery that blocks the development of rationality.

Anthropology. Las Casas is considered a forerunner of cultural anthropology (Hanke 1951; Pagden 1982). In the *Apologetica historia sumaria*, the ways of life, religions, political institutions, and legal systems of American peoples are compared to ancient ones in order to show that the former match the Aristotelian test of human rationality and political virtue and also obtain equal or even better scores than ancient Jewish, Greek, and Roman systems. Las Casas’s goal is evidently to refute the charges of barbarity, lesser rationality, or even ferocity that were adduced in the first reports on the Indians, and their alleged incapacity to govern themselves. In doing so, he assumes one specific model of humanity and rationality. On this basis, Las Casas has been accused of being co-responsible for the “spiritual conquest” of America, the imposition of the “Christian” way of life by the “ecclesiastical imperialism” if not of “cultural genocide” (Subirats 1994; Castro 2007).

Nonetheless, Las Casas evaluated the beliefs, rituals, and sacrifices in the Indies as being more rational and virtuous than several of the ancient ones and emphasized the natives’ devotion, acknowledging the dignity of the indigenous faiths. The *experimentum crucis* of Las Casas’ strategy is the issue of human sacrifice. Las Casas attributed to this practice a literally devilish origin (OC 7, p. 686), but he stated that the Christian princes,

and even the pope, lacked the jurisdiction to prohibit them. Moreover, on the one hand, he argued, human sacrifices are an immemorial custom and are recommended by their leaders and the men whom they consider the wisest: it is impossible to extirpate them by war. On the other hand, to sacrifice to God is mandatory by natural law, but it is the positive law that establishes what and how to sacrifice. In the absence of divine revelation, it is rational to sacrifice what has the higher value, i.e., human life.

Political Theory (Queraltó Moreno 1976). In Las Casas' political theory, every human being is entitled to *dominium* and consequently, infidels have property rights just as Christians do. Beyond the private law field, also the power and the jurisdictions of the infidels are justified by natural law (OC 10, pp. 550–54). There are indeed different levels of jurisdiction: the imperial one of the kings of Castile is compatible with the actual power of the native leaders and the autonomous government of the communities (OC 11.1, p. 112). The Aristotelian political theory, by which the submission of the Indians was largely justified, is reversed by Las Casas to affirm the legitimacy of their “natural rulers.” In any case, Roman law and Thomist philosophy offer arguments for defining the natural liberty of individuals and people as inherent, universal, and original natural rights (OC 13, p. 127). Consequently, the consensus of individuals and peoples is necessary to institute political power (OC 12, pp. 34–60); if this idea had been and will be used in order to legitimize absolute sovereignty, according to Las Casas there is no consensus that this should remain the case once and for all. The sovereign must govern for the common good and under the rule of law: “in this way the citizens remain free and do not obey to a man but to the law” (OC 12, p. 84). Every transfer, assignment, and gift of jurisdiction has no legal force in absence of the consensus by the ruled (OC 12, pp. 146–148). Here the reference to the projected institution of the perpetual *encomienda* is clear. Moreover, Las Casas qualifies the actual Spanish rule in America as tyranny, and reminds the reader that against the

tyrant, “plague of the republic” (OC 9, p. 412), rebellion and even killing are a right and even a duty (OC 8, p. 1452, OC 10, p. 560 11.2, pp. 130–132). In general, “wherever justice is missing, the oppressed and the humiliated can take it into their own hands” (OC 5, p. 2307).

Impact and Legacy

Las Casas has been evaluated in radically different ways, from being demonized to being uncritically defended. His contemporary adversaries accused him of betraying the civilizing mission entrusted to the Spanish nation, a charge that was again used during Francisco Franco's dictatorship. Las Casas' influence on policymakers was significant, and in the following epoch, his thought was used within the Protestant milieu in order to supply arguments for the so-called *Leyenda negra*, to whom the “White Legend” would later respond in constructing a Hispanophile counter-narrative. Las Casas has been both analyzed as a dual-personality psychopathic (Menéndez Pidal 1963) and exalted as the Apostle and Prophet of the Americas (André-Vincent 1980). Recently, he has been considered, on the one side, as the founder of humanitarian anticolonialism, and, on the other side, as a supporter of imperialism (Young 2001, Todorov 1982, Castro 2007, Mora Rodríguez 2012). Beyond direct political influence, his interpreters have emphasized the theoretical relevance of Las Casas' work: its seminal insights on issues such as human rights discourse, the foundation of International Law, and popular sovereignty (Baccelli 2016).

Cross-References

- [Law, Renaissance Idea of Natural](#)
- [School of Salamanca](#)
- [Sepúlveda, Juan Ginés de](#)
- [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)
- [Soto, Domingo de](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Vitoria, Francisco de](#)

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Lascari, Costantino

Born: 1433–34, Costantinopoli

Died: 1501, Messina

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Abstract

The scholar Constantine Lascaris was born in Constantinople and arrived in Italy following the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. After a period spent in Milan, where he held the position of Greek teacher to Ippolita Sforza, he traveled to Ferrara, Florence, and Naples before settling in Messina, where he opened a school to teach Greek. The school achieved national fame, and great intellectuals including Giorgio Valla and Pietro Bembo traveled to Sicily to study Greek. Traces of his Sicilian experience can also be found in *Vitae illustrium philosophorum Siculorum et Calabrorum* (1499), one of the few printed works by Lascaris, which includes biographies of Sicilian and Calabrian philosophers.

He is also remembered for his activity as a prolific copyist and for the discovery of the *Gigantomachia*, a Greek work by the Latin poet Claudiano.

Biography

Constantine Lascaris was born in Constantinople and arrived in Italy after escaping imprisonment by the Turks following the fall of Constantinople (1453). Before arriving in Italy, he traveled to Greece via Phrae, Rhodes, and Crete. He settled in Milan, where he became the Greek teacher for Ippolita, the daughter of Francesco I Sforza (Motta 1893). He went on to live in various cities, teaching Greek, probably in Ferrara and certainly in Florence and Naples, where Ferdinando I of Aragon appointed him a professor of rhetoric. Lascaris was perhaps also in Naples to follow Ippolita Sforza, who had married the Duke of Calabria (Wilson 1992).

In 1466 he suddenly left Naples, where he had made a substantial contribution to the development of Greek studies in the city. With the intention of returning to Greece and leaving Italy, Lascaris went to Messina, but following Ludovico Saccano's insistence, he decided to stay, as it was one of the last cities where Greek was still being taught (Lipari 2013). After some initial difficulties, the intellectual integrated into local life and remained in Messina until his death (Concetta 1988, Perroni 1902; Russo 2003–2004; Harris 1995).

Shortly before Lascaris' death, in 1499, one of his few printed works was published: *Vitae illustrium philosophorum Siculorum et Calabrorum*, which included biographies of Sicilian and Calabrian philosophers. The work, which Lascaris labored on for a long time, aimed to recover a great cultural tradition that was fading into neglect and abandonment.

The marginalization that Lascaris suffered, with regard to the great humanistic cultural circles, allowed him to devote himself to philological activity and above all to make use, for his research, of the impressive amount of Greek codices represented by the public and private book collections of southern Italy and by the manuscripts. Lascaris' Greek school achieved national fame, and, among others, Giorgio Valla and Pietro Bembo went to Sicily to take his lessons (Evola 1959–1960; Nicosia 2014). As a sign of gratitude to Sicily, which had welcomed him, Lascaris donated his library to the Senate and the people of Messina around 1494. His codices remained in Messina for 200 years and were later transferred to Palermo and then again to Madrid, where they are kept at the Biblioteca Nacional de España. In August 1501 Lascaris contracted the plague, dying shortly afterward, and was buried in the Carmelite church of Messina (Ceresa 2004; De Rosalia 1957–1958; Martínez 1994).

Innovative and Original Aspects

His greatest work is the Greek grammar, called *Erotémata*, begun during his stay in Milan and

was published for the first time in 1476. This was the first book printed in Greek characters after the invention of typography and represents a basic grammar for learning the Greek language, consisting of pure rules. It is divided into three books and, following numerous stages of creation, had several editions between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. This was a very widely used grammar until the nineteenth century.

Lascaris' work has served as a model for all Greek grammars. An unusual testimony to his fame is the fact that it is mentioned by Thomas More in *Utopia*, where it is listed together with the great classics that Raffaele Itlodeo brings to the inhabitants of Utopia so they can learn Greek.

Impact and Legacy

The humanist owes his fame in particular to the discovery of the *Gigantomachia*, the Greek work by the Latin poet Claudiano.

Lascaris found and copied 77 verses, including a gap of 68 verses that he intended to fill himself thanks to finding a fragment of the work in some manuscripts given to him. The discovery of this fragment is recorded in a letter Pietro Bembo wrote to Poliziano in 1493, in which he says that Lascaris had received as a gift some manuscripts in very bad condition, and among these, he had discovered the fragment of the work. This document attests to the humanist world's great interest in the work. Lascaris' main undertaking was defending the classical texts that he saw increasingly at risk of being forgotten after the decline of the Byzantine Empire. Lascaris worked on putting together collections of authors with similar characteristics and formed bodies of rhetoricians, epistolographers, poets, and individual authors. His Greek and Latin works are collected in *Migne, Patrol. Lat.*, CLXI, coll. 913–970.

Shortly before his death, Lascaris saw the publication of one of his few printed works, the aforementioned *Vitae illustrium philosophorum Siculorum et Calabrorum*, which was published in Messina. The work included biographies of 66 Sicilian and 35 Calabrian philosophers.

Besides being an esteemed Greek teacher, Laskaris is known as a copyist. There was a lack of expert copyists, and at the time he was working, most copyists did not know Greek and were limited to copying the characters. Thanks to the efforts of Laskaris and other humanists, the ancient Greek language began to acquire an important role in classical education.

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Laskaris, Ianos

Born: ca. 1445, Constantinople

Died: 1534, Rome

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Abstract

Ianos Laskaris (ca. 1445–1534) was a prominent figure in the intellectual life of Italy and France in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He was a humanist, a scholar, and a diplomat, who has contributed to the Italian Renaissance and French Humanism and the transmission of Greek learning to Western Europe. Laskaris is also known as a manuscript collector and a librarian, an editor, a publisher, a translator, and a teacher. He was a Byzantine émigré and a representative of the Byzantine tradition, worked for the revival of classical studies in the West, and was devoted to the cause of the liberation of Greek lands from the Ottoman Turks. Ianos has been rightfully characterized as “an ambassador of Hellenism.”

Biography

Ianos Laskaris' name is also spelled as Janus Lascaris, his real name being Ioannis (Giovio [1577](#); Vast [1878](#); Pontani [1992b](#)). He is known also as Rhyndakinos or Rhyndacenus, an agnomen himself uses most possibly to indicate his family's place of origin, Rhyndacos in Asia Minor. Ianos was considered to be a descendant of the Byzantine imperial family of Laskaris and his contemporaries often addressed him as “Byzantius” or “Constantinopolitanus,”

emphasizing thus his Byzantine origin (Legrand 1885a; Knös 1945). Information about Laskaris' early years is scarce. He was born around 1445, and after the Fall of Constantinople (1453), he and his father found refuge in the Peloponnese, at the time still under the Palaeologans. From there he left for the Venetian-occupied Crete and later for Venice. In Italy, the young Ianos was most possibly under the patronage of the scholar and philosopher Cardinal Basil Bessarion (ca. 1400/08–72) and later went to the University of Padua to study Greek and Latin. He was taught by Demetrios Chalkokondyles (1423–1511), who held the chair of Greek studies (1463–1472). Sometime between the years 1472 and 1475, after Bessarion's death (1472) and at the time of the assumption of the chair of the Florentine *Studium* by Chalkokondyles (1475), Laskaris moved to Florence. There he became acquainted with members of the House of Medici and other prominent figures of the Italian Renaissance and worked together with Demetrios Chalkokondyles. Ianos entered the service of Lorenzo de' Medici (1478–1492), a supporter of Greek studies, who aspired to enrich the library with the purchase, collection, and copying of Greek manuscripts and assigned Laskaris with those tasks.

It has been suggested that it was due to his Byzantine and noble origin and his outstanding scholarly and literary abilities that Lorenzo entrusted him with such a role (Speake 1993). Ianos was successful, and his efforts, especially in the Ottoman occupied areas, were facilitated by the fact that he acted as an official envoy of Lorenzo and had recommendation letters addressed to sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512). Laskaris was sent on two missions, in 1490 and 1491, during which he visited libraries of monasteries and private collections, in Italy (Ferrara, Verona, Venice, Padua, Apulia, Corigliano, Monte Sardo), Constantinople, Sozopolis, and former Byzantine provinces in Greece (Corfu, Arta, Thessalonike, Mount Athos, Crete), and procured Greek manuscripts. The notebook in which Laskaris listed the manuscripts he was planning to acquire and those he managed to locate, which survives in codex *Vaticanus graecus* 1412, is proof that his efforts were successful

(Trapp 1980; Speake 1993). Laskaris brought with him more than 200 Greek manuscripts, which were deposited in the Laurentian Library in Florence (Legrand 1885b; Gentile 1994). His journeys also served a political aim, i.e., to gather information concerning the political and military situation in the Ottoman-occupied areas.

While Ianos was in Crete, Lorenzo died (1492). Laskaris remained in the favor of Lorenzo's son and successor, Piero de' Medici (1492–1494). He returned to Florence and retained his position as a librarian at the Laurentian library. He was also appointed at the Florentine *Studium* (1492–1496) and taught Greek philosophy and poetry, Sophocles and Thucydides, Demosthenes, and Greek epigrams (Müllner 1899; Meschini 1983; Lauxtermann 2009). At that time, a dispute about matters concerning mostly the Greek language and teaching practices arose between Laskaris and Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) (Legrand 1885a; Wilson 1992; Lauxtermann 2009). In a speech composed in Latin, which he delivered while he was in the Florentine *Studium*, Laskaris declared the superiority of the Greek language and literature over Latin (Meschini 1983; Lamers 2015).

While in Florence, Ianos produced a number of editions. Laskaris remained in Florence until the invasion of Italy by the French King Charles VIII (1483–1498). Although Charles' plans failed, the subsequent exile of the Medici from the city in 1494, and the assumption of authority by Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498), a Dominican reformer, forced Laskaris to look for a new patron (Legrand 1885a). Thus, at the invitation of Charles VIII, whom he met in Florence, and with whom he shared the hope of the liberation of the Ottoman-occupied areas in the East, Ianos came to France (1496). He entered the king's court, acting, namely, as his adviser in scholarly matters.

In France, Laskaris was well received and pursued his literary activities, taught Greek, and translated and edited Greek texts, thus contributing to the revival of Greek letters in France. He became attached to French humanists, as Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1460–1536) and Robert Gaguin (1433–1501), and befriended the

humanist Guillaume Budé (1468–1540). Of significance was also the connection Laskaris established with the scholar cardinal Georges d'Amboise (1460–1510), the king's advisor in foreign affairs. Together with d'Amboise Laskaris participated in diplomatic missions sent by Charles VIII's successor, King Louis XII (1498–1515). In 1500 he joined the king's embassy to Milan. In 1503 Laskaris acted as the king's delegate in Venice and in 1504 was appointed as ambassador of France to the Italian city, where he remained until 1509. In Venice, a center of humanism and printing, Laskaris found his former student and friend Marcus Musurus (1470–1517) (Geanakoplos 1962) and came in close connection with Aldus Manutius (1449–1515), becoming also a member of the latter's "New Academy."

Laskaris went to Rome in 1513, the year when Giovanni de' Medici ascended to the papal throne as Pope Leo X (1513–21). The two learned men shared a passion for classical studies and harbored the hope of the revival of Greek letters in Rome. They also wished to create an educational center where, in addition to Italian students, Greek émigrés from the Ottoman-occupied Greece would be given the opportunity to study Greek and Latin. Laskaris founded the Greek School of Rome, which began its function in 1514 and attracted students from Greece (Legrand 1885b). The teaching of Greek was assigned to Laskaris, Zacharias Kallierges (1473–1524), and Marcus Musurus, and of Latin to Giovanni Benedetto Lampridio (1478–1539).

In 1518 Laskaris went to France where he contributed to the establishment of a College under the auspices of the French King Francis I (1515–47). During the years 1520–1525, he worked on the creation of a Greek School in Milan. Yet his efforts bore no fruit due to financial and political obstacles. On his return to Rome in 1525, the newly elected Pope Clemens VII (1523–34) assigned to Laskaris a diplomatic mission. After the defeat of the French in the battle of Pavia (1525), King Francis I was held in captivity by King Charles V (1519–1556), and Ianos was given the task to engineer a reconciliation between the two kings. In order to achieve this,

Laskaris met with Charles V in Madrid. Although the mission failed, Ianos delivered an impressive speech prompting Charles to undertake a crusade against the Ottomans (Legrand 1885a; Whittaker 1977; Nikas 1995).

Laskaris returned to Paris, to leave a few years later (1530) for Rome, where he spent the final years of his life, pursuing, despite his old age and ill health, his literary tasks and continuing his didactic and copying activities. Ianos Laskaris died on December 7, 1534 (Mercati 1910) at the age of 90 and was buried in the church of Saint Agatha in Rome.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Laskaris is considered one of the most influential figures active in Italy and France in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ianos was not involved in philosophical controversies and the adoption of new approaches to Platonic and Aristotelian theories that occurred especially during the period he was active in the Florentine *Studium*, but rather confined himself to the promotion of the study of Greek texts (Knös 1945). Nevertheless, following the intellectual tradition of Byzantine émigrés, and more specifically of those who were adept in Latin, he sought to synthesize elements from the Byzantine tradition and education, as it evolved during the Palaeologan Renaissance, and from the Italian Renaissance (Geanakoplos 1989). Laskaris purchased and copied a significant number of Greek manuscripts. Thanks to his efforts, many Greek codices found their way into libraries, and several texts became accessible to scholars in the West. Laskaris also possessed a large private library that included ca. 200 manuscripts (Papatriantaphyllou 1988; Mondrain 2000).

Applying the editorial practices of his fellow Byzantines (Legrand 1885a; Staikos and Sklavenitis 2001), Ianos devoted himself to the dissemination of printed books. His editorial and typographical initiatives show that Laskaris was aware of the importance of the edition of texts, especially with scholia, and of printing as a means of promoting and spreading Greek letters, realizing at the same time the increasing interest of the

Italian humanists in Greek texts (Geanakoplos 1989). As Laskaris himself declares in the *Prologue* of the edition of Plutarch's *De liberis educandis* (*Paidagogos*), his aim is to provide "people with essential school handbooks, so that the ecumenical character of the ancient spirit will not be lost" (Staikos and Sklavenitis 2001). It could be therefore suggested that Ianos had an editorial and a publishing philosophy, which becomes evident even in his use of capital letterforms in his editions, which were designed in a classicized manner (Pontani 1992a; Staikos and Sklavenitis 2001). During his stay in Florence (1494–1495), Laskaris published several books: the *Anthology of Various Epigrams*, that is the *Planudean Anthology* (1494), four tragedies by Euripides (*Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Alcestis*, *Andromache*), the *Hymns* of Callimachus with scholia and Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* (1496) accompanied with scholia, Lucian's *Dialogues* (1496), the *Adages* (*Gnōmai*) from *Various Poets*, the edition of the *Erotemata* (*Questions*) of Manuel Chrysoloras, as well as the edition of the *Table* of Cebes (1495) together with Basil of Caesarea *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature* and Plutarch's *De liberis educandis* (*Paidagogos*), which were printed to be used primarily for educational purposes. Although not all of the aforementioned works were included in the Byzantine curriculum (Wilson 1992), the *editio princeps* of the *Greek Anthology* (1494), a work widely used in Byzantine education, further supports Laskaris' characterization as a representative of the philosophy of Byzantine émigrés, who aspired to transmit the Byzantine literary tradition to the West (Harris 1995; Lauxtermann 2009). In the *Prologue* to the *Anthology*, Laskaris addresses a plea to the Muses to conserve the glory and heritage of Greece which will spread to the West through books (Laskaris 1494; Legrand 1885a). Laskaris was engaged in printing and editorial activities in the press house of the Greek School of Rome and produced five editions, a *Commentary on Homer's Iliad* (1517), *Porphyry's Homeric Questions on the Iliad* (1518), *Commentaries on Seven Tragedies by Sophocles* with scholia (1518), the *Philosophical and Rhetorical Miscellany* (1519), *Apophthegms of Philosophers*

and *Generals* (1519), and most possibly Isocrates' *Speeches* (1520). Following the tendency of his times, Ianos produced a number of *Epigrams* (Laskaris 1976) which he addressed to his contemporaries. Of importance are also his translations of Greek texts into Latin. Translations of Proclus' *Hymns*, the *Orphic Hymns*, and the *Chaldaean Oracles* are attributed to Laskaris (Vast 1878; Manousakas and Staikos 1986, Pontani 1992b).

Impact and Legacy

The importance and value of Ianos' editorial legacy become evident in Marcus Musurus' dedicatory letter to Laskaris in the *Prologue* of his edition of *Pausanias* (Musurus 1516). There, Ianos is praised for his contribution to the propagation of Greek culture through editions, an example of this being the *Greek Anthology*, since Laskaris' "form of the text was adopted by all subsequent editors until the second half of the eighteenth century" (Wilson 1992). In the same epistle, emphasis is placed on Laskaris' impact on printing activities in Italy, particularly his influence on the Venetian printer and publisher Aldus Manutius, as well as on the Florentine publishing house of the Giunti (Legrand 1885a). His contribution to French intellectual life was also of importance, since Laskaris was a pioneer in the systematic teaching of Greek in the country (Geanakoplos 1962).

In general, Laskaris had a profound influence on Italian Renaissance and French Humanism and is considered to have been one of the most influential Byzantine scholars acting in the West. Laskaris has been "a patron of all the Greeks everywhere, supporting as nobody else before the liberation of the Greeks" from the Ottoman Turks, who solicited the support of European rulers and promoted the idea of a crusade against the Ottomans. The crusade signified for Laskaris also a struggle for the preservation and expansion of the Greek heritage, culture, and language. Musurus mentions that Laskaris was greatly concerned with "the indescribable desolation the piteous Greeks were suffering" and the fact

that they lacked autonomy and had been deprived of their country, which he hoped they would regain with support from the West, through Greek-oriented education and the rediscovery of their true identity (Legrand 1885a). Musurus' statement attests to the fact that Laskaris was "universally venerated and admired" (Geanakoplos 1962) and instrumental in the propagation of the idea about the continuity of Greek culture and identity.

Ianos promoted his ideas through his teachings, works, and political missions. He appears to have always remained a generous patron of the Greek émigrés in the West, a representative of the Byzantine tradition with a profound commitment to the Renaissance ideals and values.

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Latin in the Renaissance

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Abstract

During the fifteenth century, the supremacy of humanism led to the adoption of Latin as the language of culture. While the use of written vernacular expanded in the commercial, religious, and administrative areas, high-literary culture was expressed in Latin. In this period two particular linguistic experiments were born, spanning both Latin and the vernacular: macaronic Latin and pedantic jargon. However, the 1520s and 1530s saw the progressive establishment of the vernacular, and a century later, with Galileo Galilei's *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo*, it also became the language of science.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the fifteenth century, the rediscovery of the classics and the affirmation of humanism led to

the rise of Latin as the language of culture, to the detriment of the vernacular. While the use of vernacular writing expanded in religious, commercial, and administrative circles, literary culture was expressed in Latin. Only in Florence, thanks to its fourteenth-century vernacular tradition boasting Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio as its most important exponents, there was also a notable humanist trend in the vernacular, whose protagonists were Leon Battista Alberti in the 1430s and Angelo Poliziano and Cristoforo Landino in the 1470s and 1480s. In this period, several peculiar linguistic experiments arose spanning Latin and the vernacular: macaronic Latin and pedantic jargon (Petrucci 1993; Richardson 1999; Waquet 1998).

Macaronic poetry originated in Padua in the late fifteenth century and is characterized by a mixture of vernacular and dialect vocabulary and Latin morphosyntactic forms: low words, even in dialect, are inserted prosodically in Latin hexameters (Paccagnella 1979). The greatest connoisseur of macaronic poetry in the 1500s was Teofilo Folengo, who, with his mixture of Latin and spurious elements, proposed a “third way” between Latin and the vernacular, as far from the uncritical acceptance of popularizing elements as it was from the revival of classical Latin. Noteworthy for its particular traits is the Latin used by philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi in his university lectures (Paoli 1959).

The rediscovery of the *reportationes* of Pomponazzi's courses has in fact displayed a language akin to Folengo's macaronic language: Pomponazzi's Latin has frequent vernacular and dialectal inserts and features a convoluted and ponderous syntax. It is a mode of communication similar to that of the macaronic poet, seeking to show that philosophy could also be discussed in the vernacular of Mantua, because first and foremost it is the content, the *res*, and not the *verba*, linguistic preciousness. It is essential to emphasize that for both authors, albeit in different fields, the *contaminatio* between Latin and the vernacular had mainly a pedagogical value: in their view, such a linguistic vehicle was appropriate for representing reality free of the enfeebling constraints of tradition.

Instead, pedantic language is the *latinorum* of the pedants of comedy: it is a facade Latin, in which a hodge-podge of Latin words is transposed into a morphosyntactic vernacular framework. It is an irreverent parody of a linguistic medium, by now completely divorced from reality and its phenomena, reduced to a slavish repetition of terms that have lost their original meaning (Stäuble 1991).

Beginning in the 1520s and 1530s, there occurred a steady decline of Latin and the ascendancy of the vernacular. However, even during the sixteenth century, there were various supporters of the primacy of Latin, such as Romulus Amaseo, who in his 1529 treatise *De latinae linguae usu retinendo* asserted that the vernacular was merely a corrupt variety of Latin, without any real linguistic identity (Amaseo 1580). Ascendant humanistic positions such as that of Amaseo, which, following Aristotelian teachings, were based on the idea that all languages are historical products and therefore conventional, were attacked by advocates of the vernacular who had a “vitalist” approach, such as Benedetto Varchi, according to whom language consists of the spoken, the only truly “natural” situation, and as such it must also inspire written language.

However, it should be emphasized that despite the establishment of the vernacular, the sixteenth-century proponents of Latin such as Amaseo often possessed a historical intelligence that was much more profound than that of their opponents: it is clear, in fact, that the idea of the conventionality of language was more truthful and consistent than the “naturalism” of the vernacularists (Vitale 1960).

Throughout the fifteenth century, the language of scientific theories was Latin; however, since the 1520s the vernacular, previously used only by artists and craftsmen for drafting their technical manuals, also began to be used for scientific treatises, and there were numerous vernacularizations – i.e., transpositions in the vernacular – of scientific texts previously circulating in Latin. An emblematic case is that of Cesare Rao who, in *Meteorì*, published in 1582, set out to expound and comment on the Aristotelian *Meteorologica* in the vernacular (Rao 1582). The process of

establishing the vernacular as the language of science culminated with the 1632 publication of *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo* by Galileo Galilei, who abandoned any discussion in Latin and demonstrated the full potential of scientific argument in the vernacular (Galilei 1998). A peculiar position within the framework we have outlined was taken by Giordano Bruno. A fierce critic of pedantic *latinorum* – derided in the figure of the pedagogue Manfurio in *Candelaio*, his 1582 comedy – he wrote most of his works in Latin (Bruno 1993). However, his Latin – anti-classical, anti-medieval, and anti-humanistic – was the result of inexhaustible experimentation, aimed at creating a philosophical vocabulary that could truly represent the reality of things, including through the use of neologisms (Carotti 2014). Bruno’s position was isolated and had no followers, but it clearly shows how the brightest Renaissance intellectuals perceived the need for a profound linguistic renewal.

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traditionally spoken of a divergence between the traditional jurisprudence of Southern Europe (the *mos italicus*) and the humanist jurisprudence of France, Germany, and the Low Countries (the *mos gallicus*). Although this is a compelling and often helpful schematic, the steady diffusion and predominance of traditional works (like the *opera omnia* of Bartolus) in France and Germany until the end of the sixteenth century speak to a much more complex picture. The appeal of Roman law was largely founded upon its perceived rationality and universality. The traditional practice of Roman law embodied a set of philosophical principles (built upon scholastic dialectic and topical logic) that furnished lawyers with tools for administration and dispute resolution. And humanist-oriented jurisprudence contributed in profound ways to the creation of advanced scholarly, philological, and historiographical techniques.

Law in the Renaissance, Roman

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Abstract

Although the penetration, prominence, and authority of Roman law in practice varied across Europe, the academic study of jurisprudence, which spread with the gradual foundation of universities in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, nearly everywhere entailed the mastery of Roman legal texts, terms, and ideas. Local legislation and customs were written and interpreted by Roman lawyers using Roman law principles, and Romano-canonical procedures gained purchase in both civil and criminal matters well beyond the traditional, hegemonic centers of Roman law in North-Central Italy and South-Western France. The Renaissance witnessed both the large-scale reception of Roman law across Europe and the application of humanist practices to Roman legal sources. Scholars have

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The jurisprudence of Rome never entirely disappeared in Europe. Influences and fragments of it survived from the sixth to the eleventh century, chiefly but not only in Northern Italy, in legislation, customs, and institutions, as well as in various facets of public life, rhetorical practice, and notarial culture (Witt 2012). The project of freshly unraveling and expounding the doctrines of the massive body of Roman civil law, in the form of Justinian's sixth-century Byzantine codifications (*Corpus iuris civilis*), proceeded by fits and starts, chiefly in the second half of the eleventh century. By the beginning of the twelfth century, the Bolognese teacher known as Irnerius (d. after 1119) was familiar with the whole text of the *Digest*, an enormous compilation of excerpts from the works of Roman jurists like Ulpian and Paulus, that formed (and still forms) the core of the Roman legal learning (Spagnesi 1970). By the middle of the twelfth century, when Frederick Barbarossa (1122–1190) granted special privileges to foreign students in Bologna, the groundwork for the intensive academic study of Roman

law had been laid (Kirshner 2008). In the thirteenth century, universities, with law faculties capable of testing and conferring doctorates upon ambitious young men who had completed a strenuous course of study, became central to legal education and to the creation of a professional identity for jurists, be they civilians (Roman lawyers), canonists, or doctors *utriusque iuris* (of both laws). Even if canonists like Gratian (d. ca. 1145) before the mid-twelfth century still had minimal familiarity with Roman law texts (Winroth 2000), a century later the two laws were symbiotically intertwined and had long been developing side-by-side, together forming the *ius commune* (common law) of Western Christendom (Bellomo 1995).

The rapid expansion of canon law teaching and practice can be easily explained by the truly pervasive influence of the Church, of its courts and procedures, and by the associated possibility of advancement and enrichment along ecclesiastical career paths. The explosion of Roman law depended, instead, and in the first instance, on qualities intrinsic to the texts of classical and post-classical Roman law. The *Corpus iuris* provided persuasive and increasingly authoritative judgments on private law issues of consequence to everyday life, such as inheritance and contracts, and on public law issues of urban, imperial, and royal governance. As a result, the mastery of these texts endowed scholars with expertise and thus with prestige, with honors, and with choice positions in courtly and civic life. More importantly, though, mastery of Roman law provided scholars with a particular mind-set, a way of thinking founded on a specialized conceptual vocabulary and a whole toolkit of textual and philosophical techniques. It is telling in this respect that Roman law was characterized as *ratio scripta* (written reason) and that it could, in the vernacular of Italy, be indicated simply with the word *ragione* (reason) (Fiorelli 2008). And thus can one make sense of the medieval proverb which held that “a Roman lawyer without canon law is worth little, but a canonist without Roman law is worth nothing”; the omnipresence of Church affairs meant that practicing civilians needed a firm grounding in canon law, but being a lawyer in its most basic sense meant

being familiar with Roman law rules, institutions, and ideas. Or, as another proverb put it, “the Church lives by Roman law” (Merzbacher 1967; Brundage 2008).

The earliest work of medieval Roman law jurists took the form of systematic annotations or glosses that sought to reconcile contradictory “laws” (*leges*, the smallest subdivisions of the *corpus iuris*) and to indicate parallel or analogous ones. As a result, and notwithstanding the profusion of other literary and pedagogical forms (like lectures, *summae*, questions, distinctions, and collections of legal rules or brocards), these scholars are often classed as “glossators” (Brugi 1936). The generations of jurists who followed Irnerius grappled with basic problems of legal philosophy, staking out positions all along an interpretational spectrum bounded by equity and the “spirit of the law” (*mens* or *ratio legis*) on one end and the rigorous application of the “letter of the law” (*ius strictum*) on the other (Grossi 2006). Glossatorial works were widely distributed and could, like the *Summa Codicis* of Azo (d. 1220/29), find considerable audiences both inside and outside the classroom (Koschaker 1953). Of particular importance was the so-called *magna glossa* or “great gloss” of Accursius (d. ca. 1260), completed by the mid-thirteenth century, which was based on the work of earlier glossators and which would become the central vehicle of the medieval mediation of the Justinianic texts by fixing meanings and solidifying relationships between terms and would remain so for almost three centuries (Diurni 1991). Although jurists like Dinus (Dino Rossini da Mugello, d. ca. 1303) continued to build upon the work of Accursius, the resounding success of the *magna glossa* and a gradual decline in the vibrancy of the jurisprudential culture that had produced it also suggested the need for new, freer, and more analytical approaches to the texts of Roman law, approaches associated with the School of Orleans and its luminaries Jacobus de Ravanis (Jacques de Révigny, d. 1296) and Petrus de Bellapertica (Pierre de Belleperche, d. 1308), as well as with Cinus (Cino Sinibuldi da Pistoia, 1270–1336) who brought their techniques to Italy (Paradisi 1987; Bezemer 2005).

Two genres, *consilia* and commentaries, dominated later medieval Roman law writing and their dominance speaks to the increasing relevance (especially direct and pervasive in the cities of North-Central Italy) of jurisprudence to contemporary issues and real-world institutions, practices, and disputes. *Consilia* were opinions dealing with particular cases, written by consulting jurists either on behalf of clients party to disputes or in their capacity as impartial experts (*sapientes*) in the employ of judges, magistracies, and institutions. These opinions transcended their ad hoc origins, were gathered and distributed as collections, and the reasoning and legal findings contained in them were commonly used to establish juridical consensus (Ascheri et al. 1999). The greatest consultant of the fourteenth century was Baldus (Baldo degli Ubaldi, 1327–1400), who wrote more than 2,500 *consilia* (Canning 1987). Baldus's *consilia* were continually reprinted well into the early seventeenth century, and they formed an essential part of every Roman law library in the Renaissance, as to a lesser degree did the *consilia* collections of other famed consultants of the fifteenth century like Paolo da Castro, Bartolomeo Cipolla, and Alessandro Tartagni of Imola. Commentaries summarized and analyzed entire sections of the *Corpus iuris civilis*, raising and resolving problems, using the Accursian gloss and the lectures and opinions of other jurists as springboards for explanatory digressions and novel jurisprudential doctrines. Just as the gloss gave its name to an entire era of jurisprudence, the traditional jurists of the fourteenth to early sixteenth century are routinely called “commentators,” even when they worked predominantly in other genres. The most prominent commentator (and writer of treatises) of this era was Bartolus (Bartolo da Sassoferrato, 1313–1357), whose doctrines became central to Roman law practice in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Cortese 1995; Calasso 1959). Scholarly consensus once held that the fourteenth century was the golden age of the commentators (chiefly Bartolus and his student Baldus, but also giants like Alberico da Rosate, 1290–1360; Luca da Penne, d. ca. 1390; and Bartolomeo da Saliceto, 1330–1412) and that the “Bartolist” (as a later derogatory term put it)

orthodoxy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries transformed traditional jurisprudence into sterile linguistic acrobatics and hackneyed recapitulations of authority, but the creative (and often vast) works of fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century jurists (including Mariano and Bartolomeo Sozzini, 1401–1467 and 1436–1506; Bartolomeo Cipolla, ca. 1420–1475; Alessandro Tartagni, 1424–1477; Giasone del Maino, 1435–1519; Filippo Decio, 1454–1535; and others) stunningly refute this.

Lawyers of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance were often responsible for producing the statutes of self-governing cities and principalities, and they were tasked, by both governments and private clients, with navigating the often treacherous waters of the relationship between the *ius commune* and the statutes and customs of localities (*ius proprium*). University jurists in their learned works facilitated this act of interpretation, the bedrock upon which the entire edifice of Roman legal practice in the period was built and the backdrop against which the period's practical jurisprudence must be understood (Sbriccoli 1969; and, e.g., Tanzini 2004). The most widely read scholarship, especially in the Anglophone world and outside a tightly circumscribed world of specialists, has focused on the contribution of Italian lawyers like Bartolus to grand questions of political theory (comparative forms of government; the nature of and relationships among empire, papacy, kingship, and free cities; assemblies, representation, and consent) (Pennington 1993; Woolf 1913; Ryan 2000), but it was other issues that truly preoccupied the commentators and “Bartolists” and constituted the bulk of their works. Then as now the practice of law most often meant dealing with property: matters of inheritance and succession, including gifts, legacies, and trusts, predominated; and more likely than not they were inevitably entangled with issues of ownership and lesser rights to property, like leases and usufructs, as well as forms of real security; with debtor-creditor relations and interest; with contracts, especially for buying and selling; with family matters like paternal power, marriage, legitimacy, dowries, and guardianship (Kuehn 2017); with questions of citizenship and domicile

(Kirshner 2015), and with matters of government finance like taxation and public debt (Armstrong 2003). As a result of this, Roman law played an essential role (both substantively and procedurally) in litigation and civil trials, as well as in formal and informal dispute resolution and obviation; and it circumscribed and informed a ubiquitous notariate which, in advising and drawing up property-related instruments, was interposed between the world of university jurisprudence and that of everyday life. Roman law also had considerable influence on the development and practice of criminal law and procedure, with jurists devoting an abundance of works to crimes like homicide and theft, punishments like banishment, and to the knottiest elements of inquisition procedure like witness testimony, judicial torture, confession, and proof. This is not to suggest that Roman lawyers were uninterested in theoretical or philosophical questions. On the contrary, Roman law and its manifestation within the *ius commune* represented a multifaceted and profound philosophical system in and of itself. At the heart of this system, erected upon a latticework forged from the traditional techniques of scholastic dialectic and subtler expressions of topical logic, lay a whole set of sophisticated tools for defining rules and exceptions, for interpreting and discerning meaning, for devising and weighing arguments, for employing salubrious fictions and arriving at probable truths (Maclean 1992; Piano Mortari 1978).

Innovative and Original Aspects

By the end of the sixteenth century, the unity of the *ius commune*, to whatever extent such a thing had ever truly existed in a pan-European context, was fractured and dissolving. The dominance of earlier Italian works (the *opera omnia* of Bartolus chief among them), which had overshadowed the remainder of the production of Europe's major publishing centers (Venice, Lyon, Cologne, and Frankfurt) from the birth of print, was finally dwindling. Traditional forms and practices would continue to prevail in Italy and Spain, and to persist everywhere (even if in increasingly limited and recondite ways), but the jurisprudence of

early modern Europe came to be defined by the emergence and concretion of regional academic styles and *Rechtsräume*, with the Germano-Dutch and French spheres exerting the strongest influence. This protracted process of fragmentation and differentiation had many causes, but, within the context of Renaissance philosophical thought, none has loomed larger in legal-historical scholarship than the appearance of what is called "legal humanism" and its challenge to traditional jurisprudence. The earliest seeds of humanism found fertile soil in the lay notarial culture of medieval northern Italy, which was suffused with Roman law ideas, but, by the time of Petrarch (1304–1374), who famously abandoned his youthful legal studies and reviled lawyers for greedily selling their learning, humanism's relationship with the law had come to be marked by antagonism and competition for prestige (Manzin 1994). The vilification of lawyers was nothing new, but an original and distinct humanist critique of jurisprudence rapidly emerged in the middle decades of the fifteenth century. These criticisms could be directed at Justinian's compilation itself (as in the scathing attack on Tribonian's editorial work for the *Digest* mounted by Maffeo Vegio, 1406–1458), but they were more often aimed at perceived defects in the medieval legal tradition. Representative of the earliest stages of this movement was Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457), who infamously berated Bartolus for his barbarous Latin and for misunderstanding the law in a 1433 letter to Pier Candido Decembrio (1392–1477) (Cavallar et al., 1995); he also mounted a wider attack on the legists in his *Elegantiae*, a paean to classical style. Valla's own interest in law was passing at best, but, by the start of the next century, an *avant garde* of European jurists had begun in earnest the process of the philological restoration, historical contextualization, and philosophical reconceptualization of the *Corpus iuris* (Maffei 1956; Troje 1993). The first fruits of this project have come to be associated, above all, with the work of three men: Ulrich Zasius (1461–1536), Guillaume Budé (1467/8–1540), and Andrea Alciato (1492–1550), whose influence on French humanist jurisprudence (chiefly through his teaching at Bourges) was foundational. At its

core, legal humanism sought to excise later corruptions from the texts of Roman law and to eliminate or streamline the unwieldy and convoluted interpretations that had accumulated over the centuries; to return to the language, texts, and themes of classical jurisprudence. Legal humanists saw Roman law as a peerless witness to the thought and culture of antiquity, and they emphasized their own awareness (which they cast as novel) of the caesura between pre- and post-Justinianic law (*ius vetus* and *ius novum*). This emphasis and the techniques of historicization that it inspired and entailed were crucial to the development of the “science of history” and allow us to see legal humanism as a precursor to modern textual and scholarly practices (Kelley 1970).

The slow evolution of the text of the *Digest* represents one of the greatest triumphs of legal humanist textual practice, and its story is exemplary. Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) began the process of collating the traditional vulgate *Digest* (the so-called *littera bononiensis*) with a unique, sixth-century codex of the *Digest* (the *littera florentina*), which had been held in Pisa from the twelfth to the early fifteenth century before being brought to Florence as priceless war booty. Poliziano’s unfinished work was taken up unsuccessfully by jurists like Pio Antonio Bartolini (d. early 1500s) and Lodovico Bolognini (1446–1508), and incompletely by Antonio Agustín (1517–1586, along with his friend and secretary Jean Matal, ca. 1517–1597), before Lelio Torelli (1489–1576) published an edition of the Pisan *Digest* in 1553 under the auspices of Cosimo I de’ Medici (1519–1574). Agustín and Torelli showed that every manuscript of the vulgate tradition ultimately derived from the Pisan manuscript, and readings from it would go on to be included in later printings of the *Corpus iuris*, including the influential and oft-reprinted 1583 edition of Denys Godefroy (1549–1622). Godefroy’s *Digest* was based, in part, on the dedicated work of legal humanists over the preceding century but, tellingly, nonetheless incorporated the marginal apparatus of the medieval tradition.

Legal historical scholarship often speaks of two inconsistent, if not entirely antithetical, methods of teaching law: the long-lived,

traditional *mos italicus* (Italian approach) and the new, humanist *mos gallicus* (French approach), so-called from the presence of a number of celebrated legal humanists (among them Eguinaire François known as Baro, ca. 1495–1550; Charles Du Moulin, 1500–1566; Jean Coras, 1513–1572; François Connan, 1508–1551; François Douaren, 1509–1559; François Baudouin, 1520–1573; Jacques Cujas, 1522–1590; and Hugues Doneau, 1527–1591) and the prominence of their techniques in French schools (Rossi 2008). This distinction, only cemented in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, remains a potent way of thinking about the development of legal scholarship. Through it sense can be easily made of the polemics waged by legal humanists against the most fundamental aspects of traditional practice, like the infamous attacks of Alciato against the publication of *consilia* and of Zasius against the system of juridical consensus (*communis opinio doctorum*); and of those waged by traditionalists against what they saw as the useless fripperies of the humanists, as in the sometimes scathing 1582 dialogues *De iuris interpretibus* of Alberico Gentili (1552–1590) (Gentili 1582), a Protestant émigré from Italy and Regius professor of civil law at Oxford (Astuti 1937). Yet the reality of sixteenth-century developments was more complex than a strict or simple *italicus-gallicus* division suggests, with humanist approaches gaining traction and influencing the practical jurisprudence of Italy and traditional ones enduring or being freshly implanted beyond the Alps. Indeed, the most intense and widest-scale acceptance of Roman law across Europe occurred precisely in this period of scholarly ferment, nowhere more notably than in Germany where its *Rezeption*, although met with some resistance, was thorough and profound and, outside of the university, usually much closer in spirit to the traditions of the *mos italicus* than to humanist philology (Coing 1939; Bender 1979). The allure of Roman law had always been intertwined with its rationality, and some legal humanists (like Connan and Doneau) dedicated themselves to its restatement in a more systematic and “scientific” form. At the same time, and notwithstanding the fact that Roman law practice

nowhere meant the wholesale overthrow of local custom and legislation, legal humanism's emphasis on the linkage between Roman culture in a long-lost historical epoch and its law eroded Roman law's claims to universal validity and encouraged jurists to aggrandize the status of custom and its own claims to authority, as in the celebrated 1573 *Francogallia* of François Hotman (1524–1590) and his earlier (though only published posthumously) and evocatively-titled *Antitribonianus*.

Impact and Legacy

Although Early Modernity would bring more radical changes, Renaissance *mos italicus* jurists and their more traditional and practically-minded ultramontane colleagues, largely unaffected by the challenge and promise of juridical humanism, went on manning influential courts and tribunals, teaching in important university faculties, and training generations of professional lawyers to administer institutions, perform justice, and conduct affairs of state (Martines 1968; Belloni 1986). And Roman law ideas went on to shape and influence an imponderable range of human activities and institutions. Much of the world today lives with legal systems that evolved directly (as in the nearly 150 “civil law” countries) or indirectly under the influence of Roman law, and this fact does not even begin to adumbrate Roman law's deepest resonances (as often chthonic and unspoken as discernable and openly acknowledged) in the imagination of the Western and wider world. Few if any distinct systems of thought have ever been farther-reaching or more influential in human history. The Renaissance in Europe powerfully shaped the process, begun in the Middle Ages, by which the law of Rome transcended its origins and historical bounds, and Rome's law in turn powerfully shaped the Renaissance in Europe.

Cross-References

► [Justice in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Law of Free Fall in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

The formulation of the laws of free fall and projectile motion is usually regarded as Galileo's most important scientific achievement. The new science of motion was however met with skepticism not only by Aristotelians but also by mechanical philosophers. After the publication of the *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo* (1632) and the *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze* (1638), interesting discussions took place in Europe concerning the validity of the law of fall. The issues that were mostly debated were (a) the possibility of deriving that law from a causal explanation of gravity, (b) Galileo's views concerning the composition of continuous magnitudes, and (c) the alleged lack of empirical support in favor of the law.

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Introduction

The first published formulation of Galileo's law of free fall is found in the *Dialogo sopra i due*

massimi sistemi del mondo (1632). On the second day of the work, Galileo claims that, in a naturally accelerated motion, the speed grows in proportion with the time elapsed and that the falling body acquires a new degree of speed in each of the infinite instants that compose a finite interval of time. Starting from these principles, Galileo formulates a law of fall which is valid in the void for all bodies, independently of their weight and material. The law states that the spaces traversed by a falling body are to each other as the squares of the times elapsed ($s_1:s_2 = t_1^2:t_2^2$) or, which amounts to the same, that the distances covered by a falling body in equal and successive intervals of time grow according to the series of the odd numbers starting from one (1, 3, 5, ...). Galileo claims that there is a “most purely mathematical proof of this statement” (Galilei 1967, 222), but he does not produce it. It is only in his last work, the *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze* (1638), that he offers a mathematical derivation of the law of free fall and of the semi-parabolic trajectory of projectiles.

Galileo’s new science of motion is rooted in a thorough criticism of some of the fundamental tenets of scholastic natural philosophy, such as the theory of natural places and the ensuing distinction between heavy and light bodies, the view that a force is needed to keep bodies in motion, the dichotomy between natural and violent motion, the idea that motion in the void is impossible, and the assumption that the speed of fall is proportional to the weight of the falling body.

Galileo’s derivation of the law of fall and of the parabolic trajectory of projectiles can certainly be regarded as a crucial episode in the process of mathematization of nature that took place in the seventeenth century. It is however important to point out that Galileo’s science of motion was met with skepticism not only by Aristotelian natural philosophers but also by some representatives of the mechanical philosophy. Following the publication of the *Dialogo* and the *Discorsi*, interesting discussions took place concerning the validity of the law of fall. The issues that were mostly debated were the possibility of deriving

that law from a causal explanation of gravity, Galileo’s views concerning the composition of continuous magnitudes, and the alleged lack of empirical support in favor of the law.

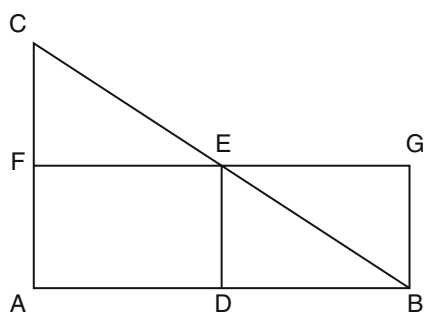
In this entry we shall first provide an account of Galileo’s discovery of the law of fall and then describe its impact and legacy.

Galileo’s Law of Free Fall: Heritage, Original Aspects, and Rupture with the Tradition

Galileo’s law of fall is often translated in the equation: $s = \frac{1}{2} gt^2$. This formula is, however, anachronistic, as Galileo relied on the medieval theory of proportions, which only permits the expression of ratios between homogeneous magnitudes (Giusti 1990, xxix; Damerow et al. 2004, 254–256). This explains the resemblance between the diagrams accompanying Galileo’s demonstrations and those used in the fourteenth century by Nicholas Oresme to describe the uniform variation of qualities (Palmerino 2010b).

In his *Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum*, Oresme offered a diagrammatic representation of the theory of the intension and remission of intensive qualities (such as color, sound, heat, and velocity) which had been developed by the *Calculatores* at Merton College, Oxford (Maier 1949; Sylla 1986; Damerow et al. 2004, 17–21).

In Fig. 1, which represents the so-called mean speed theorem, Oresme compares a motion of

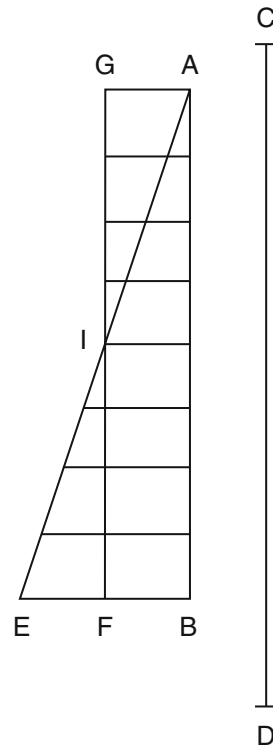


Law of Free Fall in Renaissance Science, Fig. 1 Oresme’s representation of the “Mean Speed Theorem”

uniformly changing speed (CAB) with a uniform motion (FGBA). The horizontal line AB stands for the duration of the two motions, the vertical lines (perpendicular to AB) represent the intensity of the velocity at the various instants of time, whereas the areas of the two figures stand for the “total velocity,” which coincides with the space traversed (Oresme 1968, 279). Given that the areas of the figures CAB and FGBA are equal, Oresme concludes that the two motions under comparison traverse equal spaces at equal times.

The mean speed theorem plays a crucial role in the *Discorsi*. As noted by Richard Arthur, Galileo “appropriates the idea initiated by the Merton School that a motion has a certain intensity at any given instant” and that all the “degrees of velocity” add up to the overall velocity of the motion of fall (Arthur 2016, 89). In the *Discorsi*, Galileo defines naturally accelerated motion as one “which, abandoning rest, adds on to itself equal momenta of swiftness in equal times” (Galilei 1989, 162). This definition is followed by a postulate and by a number of propositions that are “proven demonstratively” (Galilei 1989, 165). Proposition I, Theorem I is precisely the Mean Speed Theorem, which Galileo demonstrates with the help of Fig. 2 above. Here the vertical line AB represents the time of fall, the horizontal lines EB and FB the final speeds of the accelerated and uniform motion respectively, and the lines parallel to EB stand for the degrees of speed. The areas of the triangle and of the rectangle are identified by Galileo with the total speed, which is proportional to the space traversed, represented by the separate line CD (Damerow et al. 2004, 238–242).

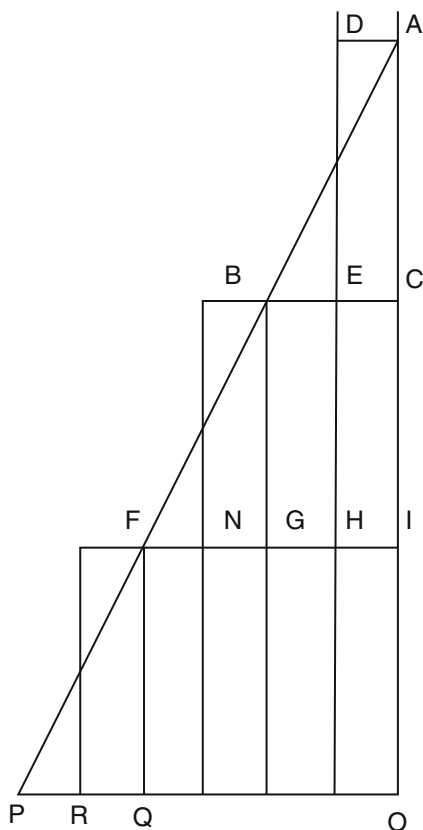
The mean speed theorem lies at the basis of Galileo’s demonstration of the time-squared law in Proposition II, Theorem II, and the odd numbers law in Corollary I (Fig. 3). In order to persuade his interlocutors that the law of fall, demonstrated in Theorem 2, is not only valid in abstracto but also applies to the real world, Salviati describes the result of the famous inclined plane experiment which “repeated a full hundred times,” always showed the spaces “to be to one another as the squares of the times” (Galilei 1989, 170).



Law of Free Fall in Renaissance Science, Fig. 2 Galileo’s representation of the “Mean Speed Theorem”

We know that Galileo had discovered the time-squared law as early as 1604. In a letter to Paolo Sarpi written in October of that year, he curiously derived that law from the false assumption that the speed of fall grows in proportion to the space traversed, rather than to the time elapsed. Scholars have provided different interpretations of Galileo’s mistake and of the way in which he managed to recognize and correct it (Drake 1974; Galluzzi 1979, 272; Mahoney 1985, 206–207; Giusti 1990, xxv–xxvi; Blay and Festa 1998, 75–76; Damerow et al. 2004, 165–175; Palmerino 2010b, 419–425; Arthur 2016, 90–91).

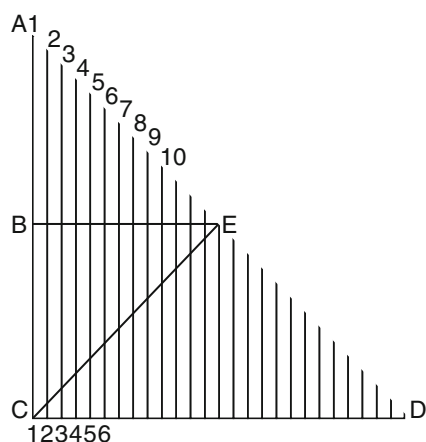
It is interesting to point out that a similar mistake was made by René Descartes, who in 1618 explored the issue of free-fall together with Isaac Beeckman. In a letter to Mersenne, dated 13 November 1629, Descartes maintained that falling bodies are impelled downward by gravity, which adds to them a new impetus in each



Law of Free Fall in Renaissance Science, Fig. 3 Galileo's representation of the odd numbers law

successive moment of time (Mersenne 1945–1988, 2: 316–317; Descartes 1964–1974, 1: 71–72).

Descartes illustrated this principle by means of Fig. 4, in which the vertical lines 1, 2, 3, 4 . . . stand for the forces acquired in successive moments of time by a body falling from A to C. By comparing the areas of the triangle ABE and the trapezium BCDE, which represent the increase of speed over the distances AB and BC, respectively, Descartes concluded that the time required to cross the distance AB was three times longer than the time required for BC. This conclusion was based on a rule valid for uniform motion, according to which for equal spaces velocities are inversely proportional to the time elapsed (Damerow et al. 2004, 61). When Descartes first read the *Dialogue*, in 1634, he did not perceive the difference between the law he had formulated in



Law of Free Fall in Renaissance Science, Fig. 4 Descartes' representation of the law of fall

1629 and Galileo's law. In a letter to Mersenne dated 14 August 1634, Descartes declared that he had recognized in the *Dialogue* "some of his own thoughts," such as that "if a ball employs three moments to descent from A to B, it will employ only one moment to fall from B to C" (Mersenne 1945–1988, 4: 298; Descartes 1964–1974, 1: 304–305). Descartes did not realize that while in his own figure the vertical line AC represents the distance fallen, and the spaces AB and AC are supposed to be traversed in times that are to each other in a proportion of 3 to 4, in Galileo's triangle of speeds the vertical line is taken to represent time, and the spaces traversed are supposed to be in the same proportion as the squares of the times elapsed (Damerow et al. 2004, 37; Jullien and Charrak 2002, 147–148).

But what is especially interesting from our point of view is the fact that by 1634, Descartes had lost interest in the formulation of a law of free fall. As we will see in the following section, he believed, like other contemporaries, that a causal analysis of free-fall should be given priority above the mathematical description of the phenomenon.

Impact and Legacy of Galileo's Law of Fall

In 1633, Marin Mersenne published a short pamphlet entitled *Traité des mouvements, et de la*

cheute des corps pesans in which he presented some “veritable experiences” (*expériences véritables*) in support of Galileo’s law of free fall (Mersenne 1633, 2). Having measured the time employed by a laden ball falling from different heights, Mersenne had verified that the spaces grow as the squares of the times (Dear 1984, 136–137; Dear 1995, 129–132; Palmerino 2010a).

The last pages of the *Traité* are devoted to exploring the nature of gravity. Mersenne takes into account three possible causes of free fall, notably “positive and real heaviness,” the pressure of the air on the falling object, and terrestrial attraction, all of which seem however incompatible with Galileo’s law of free fall. Mersenne concludes that “it is sufficient to explain the phenomena of nature, since the human spirit is not capable of possessing its causes and principles” (Mersenne 1633, 21–24). This stance was in agreement with that of Galileo, who in the *Dialogue* had confessed his ignorance concerning the nature of gravity (Galilei 1967, 234).

Mersenne’s attitude toward Galileo’s law of free fall was to shift over the years, from “pragmatic adoption” (Dear 1984, 215) to skepticism. In the *Novarum observationum ... tomus III*, published in 1647, Mersenne still stressed that bodies dropped from modest altitudes appeared to follow the odd number law but pointed out that the validity of that law could not be demonstrated as long as the true cause of gravity remained unknown (Mersenne 1647, 133).

Mersenne’s change of mind can only be understood against the background of the debate concerning Galileo’s science of motion that took place in Europe after the publication of the *Dialogo* and the *Discorsi*. An important actor in this debate was Pierre Gassendi, who between 1640 and 1646 wrote six Latin letters, the *Epistolae de motu impresso a motore translato* (1642) and the *Epistolae de proportionibus quae gravia decidentia accelerantur* (1646), in which he adduced new experimental evidence in favor of Galileo’s science of motion and attempted to show how the *vis attrahens* of the earth could produce an acceleration according to the law of the odd numbers (Galluzzi 2000; Palmerino 2004).

Contrary to Gassendi, René Descartes believed that Galileo’s law of fall was incompatible with a mechanistic explanation of gravity. According to the theory presented in the posthumously published *Le Monde* and in the *Principia philosophiae* (1644), bodies were pushed downward by the particles of subtle matter contained in the terrestrial vortex. Descartes confessed his incapacity to translate this complex mechanism into an exact mathematical law, but expressed the conviction that the clashes between subtle matter and falling bodies produced an acceleration in jumps, rather than a uniform and continuous acceleration (Palmerino 1999; Jullien and Charrak 2002).

Between 1644 and 1646, three authors tried to formulate an alternative to Galileo’s law of fall.

In 1645 the Jesuit Pierre Le Cazre reacted to Gassendi’s *Epistolae de motu* with a *Physica demonstratio*, in which he claimed to have verified experimentally that the speed of fall grew in proportion to space. On the basis of an incoherent piece of mathematical reasoning, Cazre concluded that the distances covered by a falling body in equal and successive intervals of time grew according to the series of ever-doubling numbers (1, 2, 4, 8, ...) (Palmerino 2003).

A more coherent and interesting account of free fall was proposed by another Jesuit, Honoré Fabri. In the *Tractatus physicus de motu locali*, published in 1646 by his pupil Pierre Mousnier, Fabri identified the cause of free fall in the impetus produced by gravity. Fabri explained that while gravity remained constant, a new degree of impetus, and hence a new degree of speed, was acquired in each of the finite instants composing time. According to Fabri’s “discretist” account of free fall, each new degree of speed is enough to traverse a new minimum of space, which means that the spaces traversed in equal and successive instants of time grow according to the series of natural numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) (Palmerino 2003; Elazar 2011; Arthur 2016).

Giovan Battista Baliani reached a similar conclusion in the second edition of his *De motu*, which was also published in 1646. While in the first edition (1638) he had subscribed to the

Galilean law of free fall, he now argued, like Fabri, that gravity adds to falling bodies a new impetus in each successive finite instant of time and that the acceleration of fall takes place according to the series of the natural numbers (Baliani 1998).

But what about the experiments that seemed to confirm the validity of Galileo's law? To Mersenne, who asked this question, Fabri answered that in order to obtain empirical confirmation of the law of natural numbers one should have taken as one's unit of measure a minimum of time. Given that "in actual experience one can but take a part which contains several instants of time (...) one should not be surprised if the proportion found by experience corresponds more or less to that of Galileo" (Mersenne 1945–1988, 12: 289).

Fabri's answer shed light on a peculiar characteristic of Galileo's law of free fall, notably the fact that it was valid irrespective of the unit chosen to measure time. Interestingly, precisely this property was regarded by some as proof of the superiority of Galileo's law over its rivals. In their letters to Mersenne, Theodore Deschamps, Evangelista Torricelli, and the young Christiaan Huygens stressed the fact that the odd number law was the only one to possess the property of scalar invariance (Palmerino 1999). But this argument was not enough to convince Mersenne. What was at stake in the debate was the continuity of acceleration, and the odd numbers law was invariant precisely because it described a continuous acceleration.

Many of the difficulties which Galileo had encountered in the derivation of the law of free fall were superseded by the invention of the infinitesimal calculus. In the *Principia* (1687) Newton successfully applied the new method to the study of accelerated motion and managed to "avoid long and tiresomely rigorous demonstrations in the style of the ancients, as well as the traps posed by indivisibles" (Blay 1998, 59). This, however, did not put an end to the debate concerning the cause of free fall. As is well known, Leibniz as well as Descartes' followers rejected Newton's theory of gravity, which involved action at a distance, for

being incompatible with the principles of mechanical philosophy.

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Law, Renaissance Idea of Natural

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Abstract

The introduction of laws of nature is often seen as one of the hallmarks of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. The new sciences are thought to have introduced the revolutionary idea that explanations of natural phenomena have to be grounded in exceptionless regularities of universal scope, i.e., laws of nature. The use of legal terminology to talk about natural regularities has a longer history, though. This article traces these earlier uses.

Introduction

The introduction of laws of nature is often seen as one of the hallmarks of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. Aristotelian natural philosophy ascribed specific forms to the different kinds of things in nature to explain their behavior. For example, the form “oak tree” explains why a particular oak tree loses its leaves in autumn, by inhering in it as an intrinsic power. The new sciences are thought to have introduced the revolutionary idea that there are exceptionless regularities of universal scope that are doing the main explanatory work (possibly with the

additional claim that these regularities are mathematical in nature). These explanations assume a much greater material homogeneity in nature and do not ground explanations in natural kinds that would themselves be directly observable. The paradigmatic formulation of this ideal is found in Descartes' *Principia Philosophiae* from 1644, where Descartes introduced three laws of nature, grounded in the unchanging nature of God, that govern the behavior of all material bodies. Starting from these laws, one supposedly can deduce a number of consequences (central among the mathematical rules characterizing the collision between bodies) which in turn help explain a whole array of natural phenomena.

In investigating the history of the idea of laws of nature, a number of distinctions have to be drawn. It is one thing to search for a certain kind of regularities, such as Galileo's "law" of free fall (never so-called by him), and possibly quite another to interpret these regularities as being laws of nature. It is again one thing to call a natural regularity a "law" or a "law of nature" and possibly quite another to use this terminology to refer to a precise philosophical concept, such as Descartes'. And it is open to debate to what extent Descartes' writings even came close to capturing the core of an idea that was effective in shaping the new sciences of the seventeenth century – even if Newton seems to have thought so in calling the axioms of his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* "laws of motion." (See Steinle 1995 and especially Roux 2001 for further reflections and a useful overview of the different uses of the terminology in the seventeenth century. Daston and Stolleis 2008, Hartbecke and Schütte 2006, and Watkins 2013 are recent collections that offer excellent entry points to many facets of the history of the idea.) The search for the "origins of laws of nature" (once a popular topic in historiography Milton 1981; Oakley 1961; Ruby 1986; Zilsel 1942) is consequently fraught with difficulties and possibly ill-conceived (but see Henry 2004; Schnepf 2006 for recent contributions to this debate). In what follows we will start with a more simple task: to trace the use of legal terminology to refer to different aspects of natural regularity before the seventeenth century.

Heritage

Ancient Philosophy

Apart from a passing remark in the *Timaeus* (Zilsel 1942, p. 250), legal terminology was not used by Plato or Aristotle to talk about natural regularities (though it is worth pointing out that the whole creation story in the *Timaeus* unfolds within a political context, a connection not missed by Francisco Suárez in the sixteenth century (see Armogathe 2008, pp. 271–272). The most extensive use is found in Lucretius' *De Rerum Naturae*. Lucretius repeatedly talked about "foedera naturae," "treaties of nature," as a kind of mutually constraining relationships between things in nature that set inviolable limits to their respective powers (Asmis 2008b). These treaties allow each kind of thing to flourish in its own way, within its own domain, and "without participation by the gods" (quoted in Asmis 2008b, p. 147). Strikingly different from Lucretius, the Stoics stressed that all order in nature is the result of Divine governance that has imposed a rational structure upon it. They also extensively used legal talk to characterize order in nature, but only when discussing the moral realm, with "natural law" the commanding rational force that guides human beings in their moral behavior. It has even been pointed out that from a Stoic perspective the addition "of nature" to "law" is strictly speaking redundant (Asmis 2008a, p. 3).

Talk about "laws of nature" to refer to natural regularities seems not to have gathered much momentum in antiquity, but it was not completely uncommon either. Latin authors did speak about the "laws" or "laws of nature" according to which certain geographical locations allow the growth of particular crops (Vergil), by which the stars move (Ovid, Manilius), according to which rivers flow downhill (Ovid), or that govern the regularity of the winds (Pliny) (Lehoux 2006, pp. 537–538).

Early Christianity

The Stoic idea of Divine governance was Christianized by early Christian authors, but they also included natural regularities under this Divine legal administration (Crombie 1996, pp. 70–75 for Philo of Alexandria and Augustine,

Wilson 2008, p. 19 for Lactantius, Chesnut 1986, pp. 43–44 for Eusebius). In doing this, they were not only following the example set by authors like Ovid and Pliny, but more importantly that of biblical passages, such as one from the book of Job where it is stated that “God made a decree for the rain” (Armogathe 2008, pp. 274–276). The following quote from Augustine’s *De Genesi ad litteram* nicely sums up his view: “The most customary course of all this nature has certain natural laws of its own according to which both the spirit of life, which is in a creature, has in some way certain settled desires of its own, which even malevolence cannot overcome, and the elements of this corporeal world have their settled power and quality, what any of them may or may not effect and what may or may not come from what” (Quoted in Crombie 1996, p. 73). Augustine furthermore used the expression of God’s “eternal law” as the Divine “ratio or will” by which the conservation of the natural order is decreed, and its disturbance forbidden, introducing crucial ideas that would shape scholastic discussions (Specht 2001, p. 67).

The Medieval Scholastics

In Thomas of Aquino we find the most elaborate treatment of the idea that God ordered the whole of nature by an “eternal law.” Insofar as this law can be understood by a rational creature in whose mind it is inscribed, it constitutes “natural law” that provides the creature with normative reasons for acting; nonrational creatures can only be said to participate in eternal law analogically, through the causal dispositions that have been imprinted in them (Adams 2013, pp. 9–10). In opposition to Thomas, Scotus and Ockham limited the application of law terminology to voluntary agents and saw no place for the analogical extension to the rest of nature (Adams 2013, p. 24). More generally, the Scotist tradition doubted whether it made sense to speak of an eternal law, which is somehow in God (Armogathe 2008, pp. 266–269).

A closely related topic was the distinction between God’s absolute power and his ordained power, the former his unlimited power considered in abstraction from his will, the latter his power as it expresses itself in the order given to the world.

Considered as ordained, God freely chooses to limit his power, binding himself to the order he has willed for the world. The distinction between both aspects of Divine power was also increasingly understood in legal terms from Scotus onward, by linking it with the distinction between acting according to the law (ordained power) and God’s ability to act apart from the law (absolute power) (Courtenay 1985, pp. 251–254; Funkenstein 1986, pp. 132–133). In this way the order established through God’s ordained power can again be understood as having the nature of law, this time a law to which God has freely bound himself rather than one in which nonrational entities “participate” (Crombie 1996, pp. 80–81).

Another distinction that could be expressed using legal terminology was the difference between particular and universal nature. This distinction, which was regularly appealed to from the thirteenth century onward, was used to explain many phenomena in nature where a thing’s particular nature is constrained or overturned by the broader frame of “universal nature” to guarantee that the thing’s behavior contributes to the order of the whole of nature (e.g., Roger Bacon uses it to explain why the water in a clepsydra rises in order to avoid the formation of a vacuum, contrary to its particular tendency toward downward motion, and Albertus Magnus uses it to explain why all natural beings will perish even if their particular nature does not aim at corruption) (Manzo 2013). Bacon, who attributed the distinction to Avicenna, explicitly talked about the “law of universal nature” that overturns the bodies’ particular nature (Schramm 1981, p. 203).

The Mathematical Tradition

It was not uncommon for medieval authors to designate general rules of a discipline as “laws,” e.g., the *lex contradictionis* for the principle of noncontradiction. It has been suggested that this lies at the origin of Roger Bacon’s consistent use of *lex* to express the regularities established in his optics, such as the laws of reflection and refraction (Ruby 1986, p. 349). Interestingly, Bacon also connected this more restricted use of the terminology to the distinction between laws of particular and of universal nature in a passage where the

geometrically demonstrated “law of refraction,” a “common law of nature,” is overturned once the optical species reaches the optic nerve, “so that it should not transgress the laws which nature keeps in the bodies of the world” (Crombie 1996, p. 76).

Innovation

Laws for Nonrational Entities

The question of whether nonrational entities can properly be said to operate according to laws remained a contentious one within late scholastic philosophy. For Francisco Suárez, e.g., the situation was clear from the point of view of philosophy of law: this could only be stated in a “metaphorical” way (surely not to be conflated with Aquino’s analogical participation), as true laws required both a command and a capacity to obey (Courtine 1999, pp. 106–107). At the same time, when discussing metaphysical issues, he abundantly used law-talk in describing God’s establishment and maintenance of order in the natural world through his permanent “concursus” (Specht 1987). This can be understood following the earlier mentioned association of the distinction between ordained and absolute power with acting according to law and acting apart from law: the lawful behavior in the natural world is in the first place God’s who has freely chosen to bind himself to law, to uphold his “promise” toward natural entities to continually assist them in carrying out their established roles in the system of the world (Specht 2001, pp. 70–71).

Suárez also discussed (without endorsing) a different model on which the natural world could be seen as law-governed: by making the distinction between two kinds of law, *lex morum* and *lex artificiorum*. He explained “all that God does relates to God as an artifact does to its artisan. In the same way that the idea of the artisan can be called a law which imposes itself to produce artifacts that conform to that idea, this eternal law is the idea by which God as supreme artisan decides how to establish all things for all of eternity.” (As quoted in Armogathe 2008, p. 274, see also Courtine 1999, p. 109 for the context of this quote.)

Other authors saw no problem in talking about nonrational entities observing laws, as the example of Richard Hooker shows “Whereas therefore things naturall which are not in the number of voluntarie agents . . . do so necessarily observe their certaine lawes, that as long as they keepe those formes which give them their being, they cannot possible be apt or inclinable to do otherwise than they do” (as quoted in Milton 2012, p. 681). Hooker’s text dropped Thomas’ careful reference to “analogical participation,” and it also testifies to a further terminological shift, as he called the collection of these laws “natures law” and “law of nature” while he reserved “law of reason” for what most of the tradition called *lex naturalis* (Hooker 1593, pp. 51–52). But when Hooker explained “what that is which keepeth nature in obedience to her owne law,” we have to return to God, since “those things which nature is said to do, are by divine arte performed, using nature as an instrument,” coming very close to the option discussed but discarded by Suárez (Hooker 1593, pp. 53–54).

The discussions in Suárez and Hooker testify to the continual shifting between “law” as that “rule of working which superior authority imposeth,” which necessarily implies notions of command and obedience, and “law” as also being applicable to “any kind of rule or Canon whereby actions are framed” (Hooker 1593, p. 51). But as Hooker’s example shows, laws of nature as regularities in the behavior of nonrational entities were also firmly anchored in (or “framed by”) Divine agency.

The Necessity of Universal Laws

Laws were often called “certa,” “infallibilis” (see, e.g., the examples in Suárez quoted in (Specht 1987, p. 419), or “necessary” (see the quote by Hooker given above). At the same time, Aristotelian natural philosophy did allow for exceptions to regular natural behavior. This shows the relative distance between the metaphysical notion of law-governed behavior (whether God’s or natural entities’) and the explanations based on natural kinds in natural philosophy that had to take into account the variety of natural circumstances under which particular

phenomena take place (which could conceivably lead to an oak tree losing its leaves in summer rather than in autumn).

Renaissance authors were often keen to distinguish between different kinds of necessity that accrue to different kinds of causes, which also involved the distinction between universal and particular nature. The Wittenberg philosopher Bernhadi Velcurio, e.g., distinguished between fate “as a perpetual order of causes and events, depending on the providence of God as a primary cause, imposing inevitable necessity on fatal things” and nature “as the principle and cause of motion and rest in things that have that principle in themselves *per se* and not *per accidens*” (quoted in Kusakawa 2008, p. 108). At the level of the natural world, “physical fate” shows itself in the general principle of universal nature that dictates the conservation of species, which mirrors the perpetual motion of the heavens (Kusakawa 2008, p. 110). It is at the level of these general principles rather than that of particular behavior guided by internal natures that strict necessity can be found. These ideas were by no means limited to a protestant context, as shown by Jacopo Zabarella, who used explicitly legal language to express this distinction, defining fate as a “law laid down by the universal nature for every thing to be generated and corrupted,” a law “which cannot be set aside” (quoted in Manzo 2013, p. 27, p. 26). Zabarella’s language in turn found its way in Goclenius the Elder’s *Philosophicum Lexicon* from 1613 (Kusakawa 2008, pp. 119–120).

The operation of universal nature was usually thought to be mediated by the celestial realm, a position also upheld by Suárez (Manzo 2013, p. 24). This dovetailed nicely with the higher degree of necessity that could be observed in celestial motions. It has also been pointed out that, possibly, for this reason, Philip Melancthon reserved the language of laws to describe celestial regularities, whereas he used “regula” for sublunary regularities (Kusakawa 2008, pp. 114–115).

The Mathematical Tradition

It is very common to find law-talk in sixteenth-century mathematical astronomy, which can be

linked to the etymological explanation of astronomy as the study of the *lex astrorum* (Ruby 1986, pp. 352–357; Roux 2001, pp. 548–550). The example set by an author like Manilius may have played a further role, but the frequent characterization of laws as being “certa” and “unchanging” or “perpetual” also suggests a philosophical inspiration. One also finds astronomers talking about the “laws of motion” of planets (Copernicus, Peucer). In optics, we find Kepler using designations like “law of reflection,” “law of propagation,” and more generally “optical laws” frequently (Ruby 1986, p. 351; Roux 2001, p. 549). In mechanics, the situation is different. Sixteenth-century authors seem not to have talked about, e.g., the “law of the lever,” although Kepler talks about the lever as providing the “*exemplum*” for the “laws” that characterize the speed and slowness of planets (Roux 2001, p. 549, fn. 57). The fact that mechanical instruments allow humans to constrain heavy bodies to move against their nature by using only a small force is most commonly expressed by calling these effects “*praeter naturam*” or “*contra natura*,” but sometimes they are also called “*praeter naturae legem*,” or it is stated that “*ars naturae transgressa leges*” (Festa and Roux 2001, p. 243).

Legacy

Using legal terminology to talk about natural order was not unexceptional in antiquity and the middle ages. It could present itself both as a rather natural way of speaking, without necessarily involving many metaphysical subtleties (as testified by the Latin authors and also partly by the patristic tradition), and as part of a highly developed metaphysical framework (as testified by the scholastics). Renaissance thinkers picked up on both these strands.

The astronomers’ frequent use of “law” probably played a role in the attractiveness of this terminology for the *novatores* of the seventeenth century, who were fascinated by the possibility of describing natural order in mathematical terms. The late scholastic discussions also left their marks, though. The mathematicians’ use of

“law” often limited the scope of a law to, e.g., the planet of which it was the law (Roux 2001, pp. 548–549), whereas the universal scope of early modern “laws of nature” seems more closely related to the focus on “the law of universal nature” that characterizes many late scholastic discussions. It is the latter stress on universal lawfulness that involves the more far-reaching reconfiguration of Aristotelian philosophy. In this respect, it is suggestive to point out that the law of universal nature of late scholastic philosophy could be formulated as a conservation principle, as were Descartes’ laws of nature. The nature of that which is conserved is of course crucially different in both cases because of the complete disappearance of specific forms in Descartes, with far-reaching consequences for the question of where to locate causal activity in the world – putting a much greater explanatory burden on the universal laws (which are now even characterized as “particular” causes by Descartes in distinction from the “universal” and primary cause, God’s immutability, see Chene 2000, pp. 152–153 for some comments). But as pointed out in the introduction, there is no reason why we should take Descartes as the final word on the matter. Throughout the seventeenth century, authors frequently keep on using “law” in a more restricted, specific – and often biblical – sense (see Wilson 2008, pp. 21–22 for just some examples: Charleton, Culverwel, Locke). Laws of restricted scope could also be formulated in terms of abstract, mathematical parameters, closer in spirit to the mathematical usage we found in Roger Bacon and Kepler than to the biblical law of the winds and the seas. The hierarchical relation between particular and universal laws also recurs, e.g., in Boyle’s distinction between specific, “municipal” laws and “fundamental” ones which can overturn the former (Steinle 1995, pp. 337–338).

The puzzle concerning the applicability of legal terminology to talk about natural order also kept on recurring. Suárez’s explicit denial of its validity was echoed by Boyle (Crombie 1996, p. 85), who just like Suárez went on to use it nonetheless. As we saw, the tendency to interpret the law-governed behavior as being ultimately God’s, either as linked to his concurrent action

implied by his ordained power or to his instrumental use of nature, had become more or less commonplace in the Renaissance. Again, both approaches would endure in the seventeenth century (see Crombie 1996; Oakley 1961; Specht 2001).

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Le Douaren, François

Born: 1509, Moncontour

Died: 1559, Bourges

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Abstract

François Le Douaren, a French jurist of the sixteenth century, is one of the greatest representatives of legal humanism. In his books (four volumes in folio for his *opera omnia*), he applies a systematic method in which criticizes the structure of the *Corpus Juris Civilis* and breaks with the scholastic method of medieval jurisprudence.

Synonyms

Franciscus Duarenus; François Duaren

Biography

François Le Douaren was a French jurist of the sixteenth century, born in 1509 in Moncontour (Brittany) and died in 1559 in Bourges (Berry). His father – a judge in Brittany – was linked with Guillaume Budé, one of the greatest figures of humanism in France, who had a huge influence on Le Douaren. Thanks to him, he studied in Paris, but it is not known where he learned law. After his studies, he taught in Paris, where he was notably the master of the sons of his famous

protector. From 1538, he was a professor of civil law at the prestigious University of Bourges, which was however less brilliant since the departure of Andrea Alciato. François Le Douaren contributed to rebuilding the faculty as the center of the legal studies reform. Indeed, Marguerite de Navarre, Duchess of Berry, tried to draw to Bourges the best humanist jurists. Nonetheless, the harmony with each other was often disturbed, due to methodological and personal disagreements. Thus, Le Douaren quarreled with his colleague, Éguiner Baron, who led him to leave the university in 1547. He became then a lawyer in Paris, but he came back to Bourges in 1550 after Baron's death. Then, he came quickly into conflict with another humanist, François Baudouin, who had replaced him two years before. This time, his opponent left, but Le Douaren opposed the new professor, namely, Jacques Cujas. So, Cujas resigned himself to leave in 1557, two years after his appointment. Le Douaren ended his career at Bourges, renowned in Europe as one of the greatest jurists of the time.

In his works, François Le Douaren applies humanist principles to legal studies. Consequently, he breaks with the scholastic method of medieval jurisprudence. He wants to come back to the sources of Roman law. But, according to him, the *Corpus Juris Civilis* presents the sources in an incoherent way. He criticizes Justinian's compilations and tries, in his writings, to study Roman law following a rational method. So, he appears as one of the greatest representatives of the systematist current of legal humanism. This current was influenced by the famous passage "*jus ad artem redigere*" by Cicero. Its upholders, such as Le Douaren, wanted to expound the law in a logical order according to a deductive approach. Thus, the French humanist considers that law has to be studied and taught from general to specific.

Among the humanist features of Le Douaren's works, his search for a perfect "classical" Latin should be noted. He reproaches his predecessors, i.e. the glossators and commentators, for their poor knowledge of the language, which led to misunderstanding the sense of the Roman texts. In a humanist manner, he also uses Greek sources. The systematist approach is indeed coupled with a critical analysis

of the sources in order to find the true sense of the texts of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*. The method of Le Douaren explains also the importance given to the *Institutes of Justinian*. For instance, he wants to improve their teaching. According to him, the knowledge of the *Institutes* is an essential prerequisite for the study of the *Digest* and the *Code*.

The prolific works of François Le Douaren (four volumes in folio in the edition of 1765–1768) are recognized, during his life, as innovative and very erudite. After his death, his *opera omnia* has been reprinted numerous times, which proves their spreading through Europe. Moreover, his method has been improved by his pupil Hugues Doneau, who has influenced Grotius. Consequently, Le Douaren had a legacy in the European legal orders of modern times thanks to the school of natural law.

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Le Fèvre, Tanneguy

Born: 1615, Caen

Died: Sept. 12, 1672, Saumur

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Abstract

Father of the celebrated French scholar Madame Dacier, Tanneguy Le Fèvre was a

professor of Greek and a classical scholar at the Protestant Academy in Saumur, France. He published and translated several Greek and Latin works and proposed bold emendations to Greek and Latin texts. He also wrote essays, of which the *Lives of the Greek Poets* became notorious for his tentative to defend Sappho's morals was attacked by a Saumur theologian.

Alternate Names

Faber; Lefebvre; Lefèvre; Tanaguidus; Tanaquil; Tanaquillus

Biography

Tanneguy Le Fèvre was born in Caen in the year 1615, the exact date being unknown (Bourchenin 1882; Hemmerdinger 2009), in the parish of Saint Jean (Segrais 1723; Hemmerdinger 2009). The son of a grave digger, he had the opportunity to study under the supervision of an uncle of his, a highly educated churchman. Le Fèvre was only trained in music until the age of twelve; he was then taught Latin, which he quickly learned to a good proficiency, and pretended he learned ancient Greek alone (Weiss 1819; Itti 2012). Thus, Le Fèvre was admitted at the demanding Jesuit school "Collège de La Flèche." His professors, his father, and his uncle would have him stay in La Flèche and become a churchman, in vain (Weiss 1819); according to other sources, Le Fèvre spent some time as a clergyman in Caen's Saint Jean parish (Huet 1702).

Thanks to a friend of his, François Sublet de Noyers, a higher civil servant, Le Fèvre was introduced to Cardinal Richelieu, who appointed him at the Louvre printing works as a "general editor" (Graverol 1686; Weiss 1819; Itti 2012), maybe a low-level task (Ribard 2008). However, after Richelieu's death (1642), Le Fèvre went to Langres, following a new patron, the Marquis of Francières, and became a Huguenot (Weiss 1819; Bury 1991).

The Saumur Protestant Academy offered him to be a professor. There he taught ancient Greek, published several Greek and Latin editions and translations, wrote original essays (see list in Weiss 1819), and attended to the education of the children he had from his marriage with Marie Olivier. The most famous and brilliant of them is Anne Le Fèvre, the future Madame Dacier. Tanneguy Le Fèvre died from a severe fever on Sept. 12, 1672, aged 57, and while considering whether to move to Heidelberg, since he was offered a chair at the local Academy by the Elector of the Palatinate (Huet 1702; Hemmerdinger 2009).

Posterity remembers various aspects of Le Fèvre's legacy. His controversial defense of Sappho's morals published in his *Les Vies des poètes grecs* (Le Fèvre 1665b) was attacked by an Academy of Saumur theologian (Rüdiger 1933), but it has to be regarded as a pioneer effort to understand ancient Greek way of life and literature. Le Fèvre successfully translated Machiavelli's comedy *Le Mariage de Belphegor* (Le Fèvre 1665b; Le Fèvre et al. 1969). His bold emendations to Greek and Latin texts were discussed by letter (Le Fèvre 1659, 1665a) and through literary revues during his lifetime (Weiss 1819) and still convinced such great a scholar as Richard Bentley (Hemmerdinger 2009). Le Fèvre's most celebrated successor is his daughter Anne, who chose many of her scholarly subjects from his father's work (Itti 2012).

Cross-References

- [Ethics, Renaissance](#)
- [Politics, Renaissance](#)
- [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)

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Le Loyer, Pierre

Born: 24th November 1550, Huil  (Anjou)

Died: 27th January 1634, Angers

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Abstract

French lawyer, demonographer, and scholar Le Loyer intends to build a real encyclopedia of the apparitions, based on the old, medieval, and contemporary texts. To this syncretism, he adds a legal doctrine. His contribution to demonology consists mainly in the efforts to explore its phenomena scientifically. Thus, the witches, specters, ghosts, and demons take on in his writings an epistemological value.

Biography

After completing his higher education, he undertakes law studies in Paris where he lives for 5 years, then moves on to Toulouse. Back in his province, he is commissioned to be the king’s councilor at the Angers Court of Justice. Author of many poems – *Erotopegne ou Passe-temps d’amour* (1576) and *Œuvres et m langes po tiques* (1579) – of a comedy *Le Muet insens * (1576) and a singular writing *l’Edom, ou les Colonies idum enes, en l’Asie et en l’Europe* (1620/1623) to prove that the Anjou inhabitants originate from Esau, he is mostly famous for his *Discours des Spectres* (Bayle 1720; Barbier 1829).

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Imposing work of around 900 pages – *in quarto*, the *Discours* was published in three different versions: first in 1568, with the title *IV livres des Spectres*; they reappeared in 1605 in a new amplified version; and then in 1608, titled *Discours des Spectres ou vision et apparition d’esprits*. The primary intention of the *Discours* is therefore obviously polemical; it is part of the development of the Reformation debates and embraces the Counter-Reformation. But, beyond the Council of Trent, the belief in the Purgatory and in the apparitions of the souls of the deceased, the practice of exorcism, and the respect of the dead’s cult, find, in Le Loyer’s writings, opportunities in a real encyclopedia of apparitions, based on the old, medieval, contemporary as well as Hebraic, Greek, and Latin texts (Dubois 1991; Toussaint 2001). Most of all, Le Loyer grounds the certainty of his science on a natural order guaranteed by the divine power, against those he calls the Atheists and the “Sadducees,” deniers of the demons’ existence. To this syncretism, he adds a legal doctrine: through the study of the trials for possession and apparitions and with what he deems to be experimental evidence, testimonies of experiences from his own contemporaries. If, for Bodin, these narratives aim at emphasizing the punishments by

which the protagonists of the encounters with these demons were chastised, and their necessity, in Le Loyer's reflection, the attention to the demons represents an element of the devil's expression like the others. His demonology does not exclude the judicial severity that he sometimes invokes against the Atheists, but it is more general and does not intend to wear out a specific enemy. It shows a rather demonological vision of the world.

Innovative and Original Aspects of *Discours des Spectres* and Pierre Le Loyer's Demonology

For the author, the main point is not about indicating the dividing line between natural and supernatural, but understanding the occult links, far from any intention of a "scientific demystification," in order to seize a truth proper to the science of the specters. In the profusion of the content encompassed by the science of the specters, demons and spirits occupy an essential function that deserves to be scientifically studied because they guarantee in negative the coherence of the world. The recovery, valuation, and reinterpretation of a whole heterogeneous tradition accompany his activity as a polemist relentlessly. Faced with the now complicit natural magic of atheism and skeptical Protestantism, Pierre Le Loyer pursues his controversy beyond the political and religious spheres, leaving a work that goes further than the anthologies of the extraordinary and occult events in his time, enabling us to foresee a new approach with regard to the unexplained: the elaboration of a *sui generis* science (Miglietta 2019).

Cross-References

- [Angels and Demons in the Renaissance](#)
- [Bodin, Jean](#)
- [Council of Trent](#)

- [Counter-Reformation](#)
- [Reformation](#)
- [Witchcraft, Renaissance Idea of](#)

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Demonology, Ghosts, Spectres, Witch Hunt, Neoplatonism, Renaissance Magic, Inquisition, Reformation, Counter-Reformation

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Indications on Pierre Le Loyer's Life

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Le Roy, Loys

Born: Coutance 151

Died: Paris 1577

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Abstract

Translator and classicist at the Collège Royal, jurist, propagandist, and theorist of history, Loys Le Roy (1510–1577), also known as Regius, was an academic whose role at the Parisian court in the second half of the XVI century is still to be clarified. In 1568, in Paris, as a member of Michel de Vascosan's workshop, the humanist published a commented translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, which was due to become, in France, the reference text for the Aristotelian *ars politica* until the end of the eighteenth century. In 1575, the academic from Coutance printed for Pierre l'Huilier's press the treatise titled *De la vicissitude ou variété des choses en l'univers*, one of the most well-known *histoires de la civilisation* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Through unprecedented use of an analysis of history grounded on facts, the development of the concept of *veritas filia temporis*, the *querelle* focusing on the relationship between ancient and modern times, the myth of the so-called Noble Savage and the Golden Age, and the theory of the natural differences between people, developed in a broader view of people's characteristics as related to the variety of climates, down to the idea of a global Republic of Nations, Le Roy became the herald of a new interpretation of history stemming from his instinctual optimism and faith, which were bound to pave the way for the cultural revolution of the following century.

Biography

Born in Coutances, Normandy, to a poor family of very humble circumstances, the young humanist

studied at the Collège Norman d'Harcourt in Paris, thanks to the support of Bishop Philippe de Cossé, one of the leading figures at the court of Francis I. In 1530, under the guidance of Pierre Danès and Jacques Toussain, he started studying the Latin and Greek classics; in Toulouse, he was taught Law by François Conan and developed an enthusiasm for the subject. In 1540 he returned to Paris, where he had his biography of Budé published by Roigny; this biography was dedicated to the French Chancellor Guillaume Poyet and earned him a well-deserved reputation as a Latinist, allowing him to access the Parisian intellectual and cultural scene of the time. His role in the court also led him to travel throughout Europe: he spent some time in Melun, Rambouillet, Reims, Fontainebleau, and also in Italy, in Turin, as Mr. Errault's secretary. In October 1550, he moved to England, where he was met by Lord William Paget, Edward VI counselor. Le Roy viewed the practice of *affaires* and deep knowledge of people as the essence of science. And it was thanks to his personal experiences – in addition to the knowledge of Machiavelli and Guicciardini's works – that he developed the theory according to which studying politics also required a deep experience of the things of the world: "knowledge and experience together" was his motto, echoing Aristotle. While he carried out his tasks at court, he continued to pursue his aim of translating into French the most important Greek authors such as Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Demosthenes. But Regius was not only interested in the past but also in his own troublesome time, characterized by the drama of the failing monarchy, by a strong, multifaceted contestation against religion, by the furious wars and violent riots that were undermining the solidity of France at the end of the century. In the restless and bloody European scenario of the time, characterized by civil and religious conflicts, an intense political debate spread across the country featuring the strongest of monarchies, following the identification of a new source of balance, the *Politiques's party*, and the definition of new cultural models that would lead to the development of the theory of the modern state: *Des differens troubles advenants entre les hommes*

par la diversité des opinions en la religion; Dessein du Royaume de France, Exhortation aux Français pour vivre en concorde et jouir du bien de la paix (1562) and the unfinished *Traité de la Monarchie* (1570) are the titles of the pamphlets in which Le Roy discusses politics. Regius's professional expectations were all oriented toward the court but were due to be disappointed owing to the aloofness and indifference of the majority of his patrons. The Cardinal of Lorraine, the Duke of Guise, and the Duke and the Duchess of Savoy, Perrenot; the Bishop of Arras, Pietro Strozzi; Marshall of France, Jean de Monluc; Bishop of Valencia, François Olivier and Michel de l'Hôpital; and the Queen herself flattered him with promises that would never be kept. In 1572 he finally received his long-expected reward and was appointed to the office of royal lecturer of Greek at the Collège de France, under circumstances that have not yet been clarified. From then on, he published several books each year: in 1574 he translated from Latin into French the *Oration du seigneur Jean Zamoscie* upon the election of the Duke of Anjou to the throne of Poland; in the same year, he wrote the essay entitled *Excellence du gouvernement royal*; in 1575 he published the 12 books of the *De la vicissitude*; finally, in the last years of his life, he followed the preparation of a new edition of Aristotle's *Politica* and some new translations of the *Timaeus* and the *Republic* by Plato (Becker 1896; Gundersheimer 1962; Sciacca 2007).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In 1568 Le Roy published a new edition in French of the *Politics* at the printshop of Michel de Vascosan in Paris. With a dedication to the king's brother, this version, provided with ample commentary, was to enjoy considerable popularity and for two centuries remained the standard French translation of Aristotle's work. As well as addressing specific concerns of the court, Le Roy's editorial operation also fulfilled the declared aim of injecting new life into political science. In translation, the work was able to penetrate beyond the academic circles restricted to Latinists. The translation with commentary is prefaced by a

dedicatory letter to Henry Duke of Anjou and a general introduction to the work and the figure of Aristotle. Here, in addition to extolling the different characters of the various peoples as evidence of the variety of human nature, Le Roy also alludes to the relation between natural attitudes and providence, underscoring the importance of virtuous education, namely, the exercise designed to guide natural inclination toward true perfection. In Aristotelian terms, the *habitus* represents the result of the *inclinatio naturalis* and of *consuetudo*. The law applies indiscriminately (*communiter*) to all the components of a State, but since not all are virtuous, it is up to the law to mould the legislative provisions to fit the various natures of men. However, the spheres of ethics and of politics are separate: reiterating the political function of the laws and the distinction between *vir bonus* and *civis bonus*, Le Roy recognizes that ethics and politics each have their own sphere, although they remain disciplines of moral philosophy. In the brief overview that follows the dedication of the 1568 edition, entitled *D'Aristote et ses oeuvres*, the translator emphasizes the fact that Aristotle's work contains numerous examples and arguments conducted with method and elegance. Consequently, in his own commentary, he will faithfully follow the pattern used by the philosopher, alternating and juxtaposing examples and explanations. The commentator thus appears to be among the first to grasp and appreciate the peculiar character of the work, which proceeds by short-circuiting between theory and practice, on the one hand supporting the arguments with particular examples drawn from history and, on the other, giving theoretical dignity to the specific events adopted as demonstrations. As well as describing the method, Le Roy also explains the reasons behind his work, declaring that he has decided to offer Aristotle's work to the reader because he considers it extremely useful for the prince. Therefore, in the courtly circles within which the French scholar operates, the text acquires instructional value in the political education of the duke who is preparing to become a good sovereign (Gaille-Nikodimov 2006). The preface concludes with several observations regarding the variety of human nature which prefigure the concerns of Le Roy's last

work *De la vicissitude ou variété des choses en l'univers*. Here, perfecting the method already experimented with in the commentary on the *Politics*, the scholar puts into practice the procedure of comparing politics and law which was to be theorized and applied by Jean Bodin (1530–1596). Indeed, in the *Politiques d'Aristote*, each book is introduced by an *Argument* which is a sort of introduction to the topics dealt with, broken down into paragraphs, and accompanied by an extensive commentary full of references and comparisons with biblical sources, the works of Aristotle and those of Plato. Le Roy's commentary is not restricted by respect for tradition and subjection to the classics, but engages actively with the text, adding to it ancient and modern examples to clarify the theoretical controversies raised by Aristotle and also introducing extensive comparative descriptions of the customs and institutions of modern peoples, including those of the East and of the New World. In terms of sources, Le Roy consults a vast number of works; this explains the enormous variety of the subjects and nuances of the commentary, as well as his extraordinary capacity for synthesizing and reworking the writers he has read and translated. Compared to the medieval commentators, Regius brings Aristotle's text to life, adding historical examples to the typically scholastic skeleton of structural analysis. The narrative style was reviled by medieval scholars, who preferred a demonstrative, scientific, logical-deductive approach. On the contrary, the humanist Le Roy enhances it through a commentary lavish in notes and references to the most disparate sources. The medieval commentaries attempted to apply a scientific method to the reading of the *Politics*, leveraging the Aristotelian notions with which they were already familiar from the logical, physical, and metaphysical texts. Unlike these, Le Roy's commentary is characterized by a great richness and variety of historical, geographical, and ethnological references, which make up the connective tissue in which the political theories take shape. Particular facts and events acquire meaning and value in the light of the general theory; the general theory in turn is materialized in the individual events. However, what strikes the modern reader most is the recourse to Machiavelli. There are numerous references to the work of the

Florentine secretary, who according to Regius had drawn the fundamental principles of his book on the prince from the *Politics* (Severini 2014). If, on the one hand, Machiavelli clarifies Aristotle, rendering his thought valid for the present, on the other hand, in the theories of the ancient philosopher we can discern the foundations of the modern theory of the prince (Céard 2004; Severini 2011a, b, 2013a, b; De Smet 2013).

The dialogue between past and present returns in his masterpiece, the treaty *De la vicissitude* in which Le Roy integrates a cyclical conception of time with the notion of the evolution of civilization. While admitting a providential design, the treatise on vicissitude does not neglect the significance of the reciprocity of action between man and nature, between responsibility and necessity, and between human reason and destiny, revealing the complex interaction between individual existence and universal history. The first four books are an accurate display of ancient knowledge gathered all over the world: the natural and scientific concepts match the linguistic-literary, military, political, and institutional ones. Several, different layers of knowledge are addressed both from a synchronic point of view (according to which nature and culture are analyzed in their various manifestations such as writing and the organization of *ars militaris*) and a diachronic one, implying the observation of the evolution of such subjects over time and across different populations. Books V–VII present an overview of Greek and Latin classics and civilizations compared to all other ancient populations on the basis of their theoretical and practical cultures with the aim of defining an actual theory of the classic civilization in clear opposition to the barbaric one: the comparative analysis carried out by Le Roy juxtaposes Greek people and Latin people – the western world and the rest of humanity. Books VIII and IX are entirely dedicated to the Arabic-Muslim culture, compared with all other ancient civilizations in an attempt to corroborate the opposition between the Western (Christian and pagan) world and the Muslim one. Finally, books X–XII focus on his contemporary society, analyzed according to three different logics: book X addresses the theme of the present time at

different latitudes, from Europe to Asia and Africa; book XI, instead, describes the relationship between present and past and the chances that a deep crisis and decadence might threaten to dramatically affect historical events; and book XII is a leap into the future, with a thorough description of the path to be followed. For European culture, the message that the erudite Frenchman entrusted to the final chapters of the treatise has a dual significance (Céard 1977; Duport 2010a, b, 2011).

Innovative and Original Aspects

On the one hand, it takes up the legacy of the European thinkers whose theories reveal the encounter between an element of identity, the constant schema of passions and desires that induce men to repeat the same behavior in different contexts and situations, and an element of difference, the *hic et nunc* in which on every occasion each individual finds himself acting in a new and unrepeatable manner. From the reading of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, Le Roy derives both the historian's characteristic attention to the *événementielle* dimension – which attributes dignity to specific cases through the *exempla* – and the general definitions and universal rules inherited from Aristotelian political science (Sciacca 2005). On the other hand, supplying sources and suggestions, Le Roy's vicissitudes converge with the ontological revolution of the new philosophy of Giordano Bruno (1548–1660), which reveals in the tension between time and eternity the manifold facets of a single universal substance, undermining – in the passage from the *unum* to the *varietas* – the opposition between ideal and real, universal and particular, and tradition and innovation (Severini 2017).

Impact and Legacy

In 1585, 10 years after the *princeps*, the Venetian workshop of Aldo Manuzio published an Italian translation of *De la vicissitude*, entitled *La vicissitudine o mutabile varietà delle cose*, made

by Ercole Cato (1538–1606), a scholar from Ferrara who was among the founders of that city's "Accademia degli Intrepidi" and was famous for his translation of Bodin's *Demonomania*. The Italian version of the book was to become quite popular in Italy, as shown by the presence in the national libraries of a relevant number of copies of both its original and translated versions (Severini 2014). The book was also translated into English, by Robert Ashley, in 1594. Le Roy's writings had a huge, overnight success in England and triggered the interest of many authors such as Edmund Spenser, John Norden, Christopher Marlowe, George Hakewill, Gabriel Harvey, and Francis Bacon. Among the first promoters of the modern idea of progress as we intend it, Regius's writings are to be deemed as an important source to better understand the development of some of the most renowned European writers of his time, such as Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Bruno, Montaigne, and Bacon. In addition to the introduction of the comparative analysis to be applied to both politics and law, immediately exploited by his contemporary Bodin, Le Roy's works reflect on some of the most crucial points dealt with in Europe during the sixteenth century.

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► [Versoris, Johannes](#)

Learning

► [Humanism](#)

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► [Torrentino, Lorenzo](#)

Lefebvre

► [Le Fèvre, Tanneguy](#)

Lefèvre

► [Le Fèvre, Tanneguy](#)

Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques

Born: c. 1460

Died: 1536

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Abstract

Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Latinized *Jacobus Faber Stapulensis*) was a professor of Arts at the University of Paris and a Biblical scholar active during the late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries. Heavily influenced by Italian humanists such as Ermolao Barbaro and Pico della Mirandola, Lefèvre became one of the first Northern European proponents of what is nowadays referred to as Renaissance Aristotelianism: he wrote a number of influential textbooks on the various branches of Aristotelian philosophy and significantly contributed to the spread of new translations of the Stagirate's oeuvre through his editorial activities. Lefèvre combined this fondness for Aristotelian philosophy with a keen interest in Neoplatonism and late medieval mysticism, as found in the oeuvre of Nicholas of Cusa, Ramon Lull, or Marsilio Ficino, whose works he also saw to the press. Thus his oeuvre was of paramount importance in introducing the ideas of Neoplatonic mysticism and Renaissance Aristotelianism to Northern Europe, in a period when late scholastic philosophy still dominated the Northern intellectual scene.

Alternate Names

[Faber Stapulensis, Jacobus](#)

Biography

Information on Lefèvre's earliest years is scarce. He studied Arts in Paris, probably during the late 1470s, although the exact dates of his matriculation and graduation are uncertain. In the early 1490s, he acted as a professor of philosophy at the Paris Collège of Cardinal Lemoine, a position he would hold until 1508 (Graf 1842). Here Charles de Bovelles and Josse Clichtove figured among his students. During the two decades in which he was teaching at the Arts, he repeatedly journeyed to Italy (in 1491, 1500, and 1507), where he made the acquaintance of Marsilio Ficino, Ermolao Barbaro, Pico della Mirandola, and Angelo Poliziano, among others. These Italian sojourns exerted a decisive influence on his intellectual profile: he became adept at Neoplatonism and was introduced to the new humanist approach to Aristotle as developed in the philosophical circles in Florence, Venice, and Rome. Having resigned from his professoriate of Arts, Lefèvre's main interest shifted to Biblical studies. A major proponent of Biblical humanism, he published a translation of the Psalms (1509), edited the Pauline epistles (1512), and translated the New Testament into French (1530), but eventually got dragged into multiple controversies concerning the Catholic orthodoxy of his thought (On Lefèvre's theological oeuvre, see Barnaud 1900; Bedouelle 1976, 1979, 2008; Hughes 1984; Pernot 1995; Porrer 2009; Spiess 1930). He died in 1536.

Lefèvre's interest in Aristotelian philosophy, a consequence of his teaching duties, revealed itself most prominently in the numerous translations of, and introductions to, the *corpus Aristotelicum* he authored and edited during the 1490s and 1500s. Inspired by the hermeneutical principles of Ermolao Barbaro and Angelo Poliziano, Lefèvre was convinced that a restoration of Aristotle could only be effected once new, reliable translations of Aristotle's works were available in print and had supplanted the word-for-word renderings of scholasticism. Hence, having returned to France in 1492, he devoted himself to the publication of the stylistically polished translations of the Aristotelian corpus by Italian Quattrocento humanists (e.g., Leonardo Bruni's version of the *Ethica*

Nicomachea, *Politica*, and *Economica*, published in 1497 and 1506, respectively; Argyropoulos's translation of the *Metaphysica* was published in 1515, Giorgio Valla's rendering of the *Magna moralia*, 1497). Parallel to these editions, Lefèvre himself wrote for the benefit of his students a number of highly successful introductions to nearly the entire *corpus Aristotelicum* (Lefèvre 1492, 1494a, 1494c, 1495, 1496; see also Lefèvre 1508). In his own day, his reputation as a philosopher mainly rested upon these basic manuals. Lefèvre was convinced of the value of the study of Aristotle's writings for the intellectual maturing of youngsters, provided that such a study was propaedeutic. Hence, rather than composing commentaries in the form of the then-common scholastic *quaestio disputata*, he consistently epitomized and paraphrased Aristotle's text, thus compiling abridgements of the Aristotelian corpus that present a lucid and general overview of the Stagirite's lines. By so doing Lefèvre avoided quarrelling over the text's most obscure points, a standard aspect of most scholastic commentaries so detested by the humanist movement (Bianchi 2000; Kessler 1999; Lines 2007; Minio-Paluello 1952; Rice 1970; Vasoli 1959).

Lefèvre combined this enthusiasm for Aristotelian philosophy with a keen interest in Neoplatonism and late medieval mysticism. Soon after his first trip to Italy (and possibly as early as 1493), he authored his (still unpublished) *De magia naturali*, a treatise on magic reminiscent of Ficino's *De triplici vita*, and equally indebted to the traditions of Lullism and Cabalism (Kieckhefer 2007; Llinares 1973; Mandosio 2013; Rice 1976; Veenstra 2009; Victor 1975). This fondness for Neoplatonic mysticism becomes further apparent in his editions of Ficino's *Pimander* (1494b), the works of Dionysius the Areopagite (1499b) and Ramon Lull (1499a, 1505, 1516), and the *Opera omnia* of Nicholas of Cusa (1514). Following in the footsteps of, among others, Ficino and Pico, Lefèvre was convinced of the essential harmony of all types of philosophical and religious wisdom. As a consequence, he did not see a discrepancy between Aristotle, Plato, and the Christian faith (Rice 1969; Roulier 1991). Lefèvre considered the

study of Aristotle's writings a necessary step on the road leading toward the contemplation of God. As the Stagirite's teachings "purified the mind" (Lefèvre 1506: ff. 123v–124r), they enabled the intellect to move upward, in an ascent reminiscent of Platonic dialectic, from the cognition of sensible species to the cognition of their intelligible counterpart. Once well-versed in the basic principles of Aristotelian philosophy, one should continue with the study of mystic authors, such as Nicholas of Cusa and Pseudo-Dionysius, in order to be instructed in contemplation (Copenhaver 1977; de Gandillac 1973; Oosterhoff 2014; Pantin 1988; Rice 1971).

As one of the proponents of the first generations of Northern philosophers who were influenced by the humanist movement, Lefèvre was of paramount importance in spreading Renaissance Aristotelianism and Neoplatonic mysticism throughout Northern Europe. Today, however, Lefèvre is far better known as a Biblical scholar than as a philosopher, his philosophical production not yet having received the scholarly attention it deserves.

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- Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao
- Bruni, Leonardo
- Ficino, Marsilio
- Humanism
- Mysticism in the Renaissance
- Nicholas of Cusa
- Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
- Universities in the Renaissance

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Lenses in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Lenses – curved pieces of glass that can focus light to create magnified images of objects – must be included among those essential and irreplaceable instruments whose use helped to view reality in an unprecedented way. For example, lenticular artifacts such as telescopes, microscopes, and eyeglasses, literally allowed to focus a new image of the world, up to persuade mankind on an optical basis that – as Shakespeare's Hamlet said – “there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Lenses had a fundamental role in the progress of scientific knowledge, and particularly in the period of a scientific revolution, their instrumental contribution cannot be underestimated by any means. In fact, such apparently simple devices helped so much for the advancement of visual understanding of the surrounding world, from the macroscopic to the microscopic level, not to mention their innovative support as external prosthesis for reading. Telescopes, microscopes, and proper eyeglasses were among the main Renaissance inventions, and all of these were constituted by aptly worked and assembled lenses, thanks to an unparalleled mix of long-trained craftsmanship, optical research, and practical experimentation in glassmaking, glass-grinding, and glass-polishing.

Pre-Renaissance origins of lens production should be searched in the re-elaborated reception of Greek and Roman optical knowledge as mediated by the Arab culture of the Middle Ages and, from the practical point of view, in the advanced technical know-how developed in some Italian centers of glass production (namely, Florence,

Altare, and, above all, the island of Murano, Venice).

Besides their skilled mastery of optical tools such as reflecting planes, parabolic mirrors, light-dispersing prisms, burning glasses, and even some sort of pinhole *camerae obscurae*, the Arab scholars made use of water-filled glass spheres for obtaining some magnifying effect – some rudimentary zoom that already Seneca and Pliny the Elder mentioned in their writings. Once translated into Latin, Ibn al-Haytham's *Perspectiva (De Aspectibus)* became the standard reference treatise on optics and lenses for all the next developments on the matter. Studying optical geometry and the reflecting properties of light through transparent media, philosophers such as Grosseteste and Bacon predicted the enormous potentialities of optical glass once the suitable technology for actually making it would have been reached.

However, “from their invention in the late thirteenth century until well into the sixteenth century, lenses were mentioned only rarely in the philosophical literature. They remained craft items which did not attract the attention of writers on optics, because these scholars worked within the classical Greek tradition of dealing with refraction through entire spheres. [...] the fact remains that scholars showed little or no interest in lenses until the sixteenth century” (van Helden 1977).

In fact, although transparent stones such as pure quartz or white crystals already available in nature were engraved and used as lenses since Babylonian and Egyptian times, among the earliest simple tools of visual enlargement that should be recorded in early modern Europe, there were just small magnifying glasses (usually capable of about 6× enlargements or slightly more) and were used for inspecting tiny insects such as fleas; hence these early magnifiers were called “flea glasses.” Even before, “reading stones” (hemispherical-cut transparent rocks, like polished quartz) were in use since medieval times in some monks' *scriptoria* as an aid for reading and coping tiny-illuminated manuscripts, until they were replaced by the use of more

practical glass spectacles. The name “lens” itself, meaning any glass apt to regulate light rays, spread and found spoken use in this period – from the Latin word *lens*, “a lentil,” by analogy with the double-convex shape that they mostly had.

The first prototype of glass spectacles was probably “invented” in Pisa around the end of the thirteenth century, and their use spread quickly, benefitting the increasing number of weak eyes, especially after the invention of the printing press. However, as it has been recognized, spectacles “were not really an invention per se but instead a bright idea or ‘adaptation’ of something used earlier – the simple rock-crystal stone magnifier which had evolved into the single hand-held low-power dioptric vision aid. Two similar glass discs came from the ingenious idea of blowing small glass balls and then punching out round pieces using a cool copper pipe. Each glass was first ground on its back surface and then surrounded by a crude frame and given a handle. Technically, glasses were formed when two of these were connected together at the ends of their handles by a rivet, creating the world's first glasses” (Fleishman et al. 2016).

By the end of the fourteenth century, Venice, Florence, and then the Low Countries were the main headquarters of glassmaking and lens-making in Europe. Other centers of production like Germany, France, and the Netherlands were mentioned more frequently in the sources only by the sixteenth century. The first mention of Bohemian eyeglass lens production at local glassworks comes to us from the 1600s, when Bohemian crystal increasingly became famous throughout continental Europe and put also the Italian articles, previously reckoned to be the best one, into the shade. However, around the middle of the fifteenth century, Florence was the leading manufacturer of good-quality spectacles for eyesight, producing in large quantities not only convex lenses for presbyopes but also innovative concave lenses for myopes (Ilardi 1993, 2007). Such profitable leadership in the field of glassmaking had to be soon shared and then entirely left to the Republic of Venice's monopoly, where, in addition to any sort of refined glassware,

“roidi da ogli” or “vetri da occhi” (literally, “disks for the eyes”) were produced and commercialized as well.

As much as techniques of glass production evolved, treatises on the subject were increasingly published: important works as the anonymous *Ricettario Darduin* (beginning of the seventeenth century), Antonio Neri’s *Ars Vitraria experimentalis* (1612), and Carlo Antonio Manzini’s *L’occhiale all’occhio, dioptrica pratica* (1660) contributed to spreading the Venetian proficiency in the field. At that time Venice was one of the most advanced centers of the glass industry; its crystal glass was so famous, precious, and desired that imitations “a la Façon de Venise” started to be attempted all over Europe.

It was in this context that Galileo heard of the invention of a Dutch spyglass, something that he reproduced in his workshop and even improved. Grinding his own lenses, testing different optical arrays, and finally aligning an objective-convex lens with a concave eyepiece, he managed to create what turned out to be a magnifying instrument capable of 3×, 8×, and, a bit later, 30× enlargements: as soon as pointed toward the heavens, Galileo’s “cannocchiale” famously changed the history of astronomy.

In parallel, during the 1590s, Hans Lippershey, or more probably Hans and Zacharias Jansen – two Dutch spectacle-makers – managed to build the first prototype of a handheld microscope, aligning a biconvex ocular lens with a plano-convex objective lens in a draw tube. In 1609 also Galileo Galilei developed a compound microscopical “occhialino” with a convex and a concave lens, along the lines of his telescope, and, by 1624, he had arranged one model with three biconvex lenses, capable of 30× magnification. Such a skilled use of optical lenses opened the doors of the microworld, and the previously unseen results of that show were not late to come.

Before groundbreaking studies in this field as Robert Hooke’s *Micrographia* (1665) and Anton van Leeuwenhoek’s microscopical observations, it should be mentioned the work of the naturalist Giambattista Odierna, who gave the first detailed account of the interior construction of living tissue

(a fly’s eye) based on the use of a microscope in his *L’occhio della mosca* (1644) and, later, from the 1660s, the work of the physician Marcelo Malpighi, who began the microscopic analysis of biological structures, and who that de facto inaugurated the field of microscopical histology.

It is not exaggerated to state that without such a learned and wise mastery of glassmaking and intelligent use of optical glass in particular, “it is difficult to see how that vast revolution which we call the Renaissance could have occurred” (MacFarlane-Martin 2002: 76).

Cross-References

- [Optics](#)
- [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)
- [Spectacle in Renaissance Theater](#)
- [Telescope in Renaissance Science](#)

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León, Fray Luis de

Born: 1527/1528, Belmonte (Cuenca)

Died: August 23, 1591, Madrigal de las Altas Torres (Ávila)

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Abstract

The Spanish Augustinian friar Fray Luis de León was a professor of biblical and theological studies at the University of Salamanca. He authored theological treatises, scriptural commentaries and translations, as well as a noteworthy corpus of classicizing lyric poetry in Castilian vernacular. Due to his interpretation of the Scriptures, he suffered imprisonment and trial by the Inquisition.

Biography

Fray Luis de León enters the Augustinian convent in Salamanca probably in 1543. He makes a profession in the order in 1544. Between 1544 and 1546, he studies Arts in the convent and, with professors Melchor Cano and Domingo de Soto, theology at the University of Salamanca, off and on between 1546 and 1560. In 1551, he begins teaching in one of the convents of the order. He spends at least the 1556–1557 academic year studying theology at the University of Alcalá, where he meets the Cistercian professor of biblical studies Cipriano de la Huerca. Scholasticism was strong in the University of Salamanca, whereas the theology taught in Alcalá was rather founded on biblical studies. Fray Luis's acquaintance with de la Huerca in Alcalá would be a crucial formative experience for him, as well as for several other fellow students close to the Augustinian friar, including Hebraists Benito Arias Montano and one of his colleagues later in the University Salamanca, Martín Martínez Cantalapiedra. De la Huerca was a disciple of

Dionisio Vázquez, an Erasmian professor of biblical studies at Alcalá. De la Huerca's university lectures explained the literal sense of the Scripture on the basis of not the Vulgate but the Hebrew and Greek texts. In his rhetorically amplified commentaries, he used classical authors as sources of authority, as well as – though to a lesser extent – the work of rabbis, cabalists, and the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Seeking to balance allegory and literality, his allegorical interpretations often resorted to the Greek fathers. Fray Luis's biblical commentaries, like Arias Montano's scriptural scholarship, continue these scholarly practices, as becomes evident from the authors' knowledge of Hebrew and their use of the rabbinic tradition of biblical exegesis.

By 1558 Fray Luis has graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Toledo. In 1560, he consecutively obtains the degrees of licentiate and master in theology from the University of Salamanca, where he begins teaching that same year. In Salamanca, he would develop his entire academic career. During his tenure, Fray Luis holds the chair of Saint Thomas (1562–1565), the chair of Durandus (1565–1572), a special chair of theological studies (1577–1578), the chair of moral philosophy (1578–1579), and, eventually, the Bible chair, which he occupies until his death (1579–1591). The only serious interruption in his university duties, before the last 2 years of his life, occurred between March 1572 and December 1576, when he was imprisoned and tried by the Inquisition.

In 1561 Fray Luis translates but does not publish, the *Song of songs*. The text, nonetheless, would circulate handwritten. His Castilian rendition is accompanied by a commentary on the literal meaning of the text. His gloss delves into the passions of human love and only occasionally tackles the spiritual sense of the Scripture. To clarify the literal sense of the text, Fray Luis uses secular writings on love, from Petrarchist to Neoplatonic works. In line with Arias Montano's and de la Huerca's interpretations of the book, Fray Luis claims that it belongs to the pastoral genre. For his gloss, he also draws from rabbinic commentaries and Sephardic vernacular translations

of the Scriptures, on which his own rendition is actually based. In 1580, he publishes a reworked Latin version of his commentary, to which he adds an allegorical interpretation. This new gloss is centered on the moral progress of the human soul searching for the love of God. In 1589, he further expands his commentary with another allegorical, now ecclesiological, explanation of the text.

In December 1569, Fray Luis is appointed to a committee of theologians created to examine the hermeneutical notes of the Vatable Bible, which was to be printed by Gaspar de Portonariis. The committee is chaired by Francisco Sancho and includes Fray Luis's colleagues at the university, León de Castro, Martín Martínez de Cantalapiedra, and Gaspar de Grajal. In January 1571, the committee completes the task. In March of 1572, de Grajal, Martínez, and Fray Luis are arrested, imprisoned in Valladolid, and subsequently tried by the Inquisition. The main accusers in the Inquisitorial processes are León de Castro and Bartolomé Medina, both faculty members at Salamanca. The imprisonment of Fray Luis and his colleagues only to a certain extent follows from the discussions that occurred during the review of the Vatable Bible. The three independent Inquisitorial processes belonged to an ongoing struggle, on the part of the Inquisition, the Dominican order, and some professors at the University of Salamanca, to counter a trend of theological studies that sought to philologically examine the Bible in view of its Greek and Hebrew sources and traditions of scholarship. The charges against de Grajal, Martínez, and Fray Luis, in essence, concern four questions: (1) considering the *Song of songs* love poetry, not unlike Ovid's *Amores*, and explaining it in Castilian; (2) considering that the text of the Vulgate can be corrected and improved; (3) considering that Jewish interpretations of the Bible are preferable to those of theologians and the Church Fathers, since the literal sense of the text takes precedence over the allegorical; and (4) considering that many biblical texts can be understood, not against but, regardless of their traditional interpretation deriving from the teachings of the Church Fathers. The beginning of the process against Fray

Luis owes more to his friendship and common intellectual views with Grajal and Martínez, who have already been enduring Inquisitorial harassment, than to his own writings. The Jewish ancestry of all three scholars is taken as an additional cause for suspicion. Fray Luis's translation and commentary of the *Song of songs*, in fact, contravenes the Spanish Inquisition's strict interpretation of the less clear Trentine decrees regarding the translation and commentary of the Scriptures in the vernacular. Fray Luis's insistence on the multiple senses of the Scripture harms him as well. He spends almost 4 years in jail, where he writes a number of texts for his defense and perhaps some of the works he would later publish. In November 1576, the Valladolid tribunal declares him guilty, but the supreme council in Madrid does not ratify the verdict. On December 1576, Fray Luis is absolved. He receives a recommendation to be moderate and prudent regarding the issues dealt with in the trial and his vernacular translation of the *Song of songs* is seized. He then triumphantly returns to Salamanca. On June 1577, Martínez is set free. De Grajal died in prison in 1575 and would not be acquitted of all charges until 1578. Fray Luis would be denounced again to the Inquisition in 1582, this time regarding his opinions on predestination, but he would not go to jail. He is acquitted of all charges in 1584.

In December 1577, the provincial superior of the Augustinians in Spain, Pedro Suárez, requests that Fray Luis begin publishing his works. The first book Fray Luis sees printed contains his Latin commentaries on the *Song of songs* and on Psalm 26 (1580). He also publishes commentaries on the Book of Obadiah (1589), Paul's epistle to the Galatians (1589), fragmentary glosses on a few Psalms, and, posthumously, a full commentary on Psalm 51 (1607). Most of his theological treatises and exegetical works deriving from his university lectures were not printed until the edition of his *Opera* (1891–95). In the Castilian language, in addition to editing the works of Theresa of Ávila (1588), he publishes two prose works that are considered a model of Renaissance eloquence: a guide for married women and moral commentary on the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs (*La*

perfecta casada, 1583b) and *De los nombres de Cristo* (1583a), a dialogue on the interpretation of the names of Christ in the Scripture. His commentary on the Book of Job (*Exposición del Libro de Job*), which he completed only in 1591, was not printed until 1779. In his exegetical works, Fray Luis glosses the text by drawing on a wide variety of sources, from classical authors and the Church Fathers to contemporary theologians and humanists, from Stoic and Neoplatonic authorities to cabalistic writings. In his interpretations, he moves from comparing translations and examining the original words of scriptural passages to establishing the literal meaning of the text and then tackling its allegorical and anagogical senses while bringing up a varying range of sources at his command. His emphasis on the literal clarification of the texts is perhaps the most notable feature of his eclectic, Humanistic exegesis.

Not only does Fray Luis devote his education in *litterae humaniores* to biblical commentary. His corpus of vernacular poetry and verse translations is, in fact, his best-known and most thoroughly researched literary legacy. Fray Luis is the first humanistic poet in Castilian vernacular or, as has been alternatively formulated, the first Neolatin poet in Castilian. He follows the themes and own imitative techniques of his Greek and Latin sources, seeking to adapt even the original metrical forms into the vernacular. Fray Luis never saw his poetry printed. It circulated profusely in manuscripts until, and well beyond, Francisco de Quevedo's edition of 1631. With the only notable exception of Garcilaso de la Vega's works, he sets aside the Castilian literary tradition and labors on references from classical authors, also in his religious poetry, and particularly from the works of Virgil and Horace, whom he too translates. His poetry, thus, shows the influence of Tibullus, Propertius, Cicero, Seneca, and Boethius, while he translates into Castilian poems by Horace, Virgil, Tibullus, Pindar, Euripides, and Seneca. The psalms, some of which he paraphrased in the vernacular, left a mark in his vernacular poetry. He translates some too, as well as a chapter of the Book of Proverbs and, in terza rima, the entire Book of Job.

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Leonardo da Vinci

Born: Vinci, 15 April 1452

Died: Amboise, 2 May 1519

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Biography

After spending his childhood in the village of Vinci where, under the guidance of his

grandfather Antonio and his uncle Francesco, he had received primary education, in the early 1460s, Leonardo moved with his father to Florence to enter into an apprenticeship at Andrea del Verrocchio's (1435–1488) workshop. It was here that Leonardo had his first lessons in drawing and painting as well as in the minor arts: carpentry, chemistry, metallurgy, carpentry, and modeling; that is, those practices which constituted the substratum of technical knowledge essential for every artist. The beginning of the 1470s saw his first pictorial activity and his oldest manuscripts date back to that time from which his technical-scientific interests already clearly emerge. Very important, for this period, are the optical studies related both to graphic representation and to naturalistic phenomena such as the propagation of light and the transmission of heat with concave mirrors but also the attempts to apply the Aristotelian theory of the four elements in Metallurgy and in Mechanical Engineering with the design of ovens, cranes, and automata. In 1482, Leonardo left Florence for Milan where he started working as a painter at the court of Ludovico Sforza called il Moro (1452–1508). While trying to stand out as an engineer, his profession remained in this period mainly that of an artist – he dedicated himself to painting (Virgin of the Rocks, Musician, Madonna Litta, Lady with an Ermine, Belle Ferronnière, the Last Supper, Lucrezia Crivelli portrait). He worked on the equestrian monument to Francesco Sforza (1401–1466), which was the most daring technology ever commissioned; an unprecedented challenge because it consisted of realizing with a single casting the pouring of a 7.20-m high horse with over 60 tons of bronze. Leonardo did not manage to cast the monument but the works and research in the metallurgical field which lasted about 10 years led him to contemplate new and futuristic technological problems.

Leonardo's writings during this period showed his propensity to acquire technological solutions and to invent mechanical devices of his own conception to improve efficiency. The Milanese period constituted the most important training and professional development phase of Leonardo's career. While studying the techniques for the Sforza monument cast, he also followed

the expansion and conservation of urban and suburban canals, even if there are no testimonies of his actual involvement in the works. Very interesting are the studies on the automation of operating machines that attempt to develop serial and automatic thought processes. The studies which particularly stand out are the use of the mill as an engine and those for metal carpentry designed by Leonardo in order to integrate up to six work stations with a single feeding system. The most innovative technological studies both for the futuristic solutions adopted and for the completeness of the projects are, however, those dedicated to textile machines. A series of detailed tables and sketches propose the use of machines in order to automate all the processing phases, from spinning to weaving including carding and topping in the case of wool.

While Leonardo carried out these studies he also began a personal research in Natural Philosophy and Physics. He deepened the study of the four elements (earth, water, air, and fire), both in their naturalistic aspects and in their engineering applications. For Leonardo, the elements were the materialization of the fundamental powers of physics on which all natural and artificial phenomena depend. Leonardo undertook these studies, thanks also to his relationships with some Milanese scholars including Fazio Cardano (1444–1524), Girolamo and Piero Andrea who are sons of Giovanni Marliani (1420–1483), Marco Antonio della Torre (1481–1511), and, in particular, from the mid-1490s with the Tuscan mathematician Luca Pacioli (1445–1517). Together with the latter, Leonardo delved into the study of the *treatise of Elements* by Euclid (sec. III a. C.) and the texts of the medieval tradition of Statics (*De ponderibus*) attributable to Giordano Nemorarius's (d. 1237) writings.

The result of this theoretical study was the innovative proposal of renovation of the principles of medieval physics because it was not applicable for practical purposes. In light of these reflections, he, therefore, designed a treatise dedicated to mechanics in order to combine the empirical dimension of machines and the geometric dimension of Kinematics. At the end of the 1490s, Leonardo had acquired considerable

autonomy in engineering, physics, and philosophy of nature, and he continued to study and experiment by following autonomous paths.

With the French occupation of Milan in 1499, Leonardo decided to leave the city after a short stay in Venice and Friuli where he was consulted for a military engineering project to face the advance of the Turkish army. During this period, Leonardo's life took a singular turn when he took into consideration the possibility of moving to Istanbul to the court of the Sultan Bejazid the Second (1481–1512) who was looking for engineers to realize an important urban project in his state. There is a letter written by Leonardo to the Sultan and some projects dating back to this period related to the realization of some devices such as a windmill, a floating bridge, a pump, and, above all, a bridge for the Bosphorus (Ms. L, f. 66r). This leads us to think that Leonardo had seriously considered this possibility. However, he did not go and in the summer of 1502 Leonardo was already in the service of Cesare Borgia (1476–1512), for whom he mainly dealt with urban and territorial reorganization as well as military strategy. During this period, Leonardo realized several maps relating to the territories of central Italy for the armies of Borgia and the Florentine republic. Very interesting are the studies on the Arno valley and Tuscany, realized as a support for the project to build an artificial channel that should have connected the city of Florence with the Tyrrhenian sea. After this brief and intense experience as a military engineer, Leonardo lived in Florence and Milan. In the Tuscan city, he had the opportunity to deepen the feasibility studies of the Arno canalization project and was involved in the war against Pisa precisely to study a way to divert the river upstream of the city with the intent of depriving it of water and thus inducing its capitulation. During this period, between 1504 and 1508, he returned to the study of Hydrology and Geology starting to write a treatise dedicated to these themes whose preliminary version can be seen in the Codex Leicester, in which Leonardo began to gather his observations on these themes; physics of water and engineering are the most technologically relevant topics in all of Leonardo's studies, those to which he was to devote more attention. Also in Milan, where he also dealt

with architectural issues for the regent of the French monarchy Charles d'Amboise (1473–1511), he soon returned to hydraulic engineering, looking for a solution to divert the course of the Adda river to make it navigable and thus put in communication Milan with the lake of Como. Marshal Giangiacomo Trivulzio (1441–1518) commissioned an equestrian monument that Leonardo intended to create with the same casting technique developed for the Monument to Francesco Sforza, but also in this case the project was not completed.

In 1513 following Giuliano dei Medici (1479–1516), he moved to Rome where he had the opportunity to be involved with some engineering projects that concerned the interests of the Medici family, the most important being the project for the drainage of the Pontine plains and the urban reorganization of the harbor of Civitavecchia. Of particular interest for this period were the studies on burning mirrors, a highly sought-after technology at the time because it allowed the power of the sun's rays to be controlled, by converting them into the element of fire. Leonardo elaborated several studies on the geometry of the "ignia," the parabolic curve that determined the focus of the mirror, the metallurgical process, and the carpentry techniques necessary to build it.

Finally, in 1517 Leonardo moved to France, in the service of Francesco I di Valois (1494–1547), who hosted him in the Clou Luce castle in Amboise where, although he was involved in engineering projects for the city of Romorantin, the king left him all the time he needed to cultivate his research and organize his writing. After his death on May 2, 1519, all his manuscripts were inherited by the disciple Francesco Melzi (1491 or 1493–1570), who selected and transcribed the notes dedicated to drawing and painting to assemble the painting book, a version of which would be published in Paris in 1561.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition, Innovative and Original Aspects, Impact, and Legacy

Evaluating the originality of the contribution and impact of Leonardo's studies on scientific

engineering culture is not easy. With regards to painting and drawing, important historical evidence has remained and its influence on the history of art can be assessed; however, in the case of engineering and science, it is different because there is no material evidence and documentation of his involvement in architectural and engineering projects that go beyond recording payments for consultancy. However, if Leonardo's professional profile in addition to that of a painter remains rather nuanced, the fact remains that he is the only one of the Renaissance artist-engineers to have left us a legacy of manuscripts that exceeds 6000 sheets, most of which are dedicated to engineering projects and scientific studies. This is a clear evidence of his full involvement in the engineers' sociocultural contest and in the civil and military projects of the courts and city judiciary of the time. The manuscript corpus consists of a series of 21 notebooks and various loose sheets kept in several Libraries and institutions in Europe and the United States, and 3 conspicuous miscellaneous collections, two of which (*Codex Atlanticus* and *Windsor Manuscript*) were created posthumously by the sculptor Pompeo Leoni (1533–1608) who dismembered and cut out many of Leonardo's notebooks to form large thematically organized albums and the last one (*Codex Arundel*) assembled by Leonardo himself. The main difficulty in fully evaluating the contents of these manuscripts in addition to the paleographic aspects follows mainly from the fact that they are mostly notes written for personal use and not designed for disclosure, but which, however, once reordered and recomposed, allow you to follow the evolution of his thought, his projects, and his interests, throughout all his career.

The notebooks of the fifteenth-century engineers are a very rare source, and in many cases, they are not as explanatory and clear as their artifacts are, from which today we try to reconstruct the techniques used in their realization. The value of Leonardo's manuscripts lies in having transmitted to us, in addition to his projects and ideas, also unknown important information about the technology of his time through detailed drawings and verbal descriptions. The studies on

flying machines as well as those on textile machines, for instance, are original research that reflects Leonardo's highest level in technological research and mechanical design. However, for the history of technology, his studies on artillery are no less important. Alongside imaginative elaborations of strong and suggestive graphic impact, he presents a precise recording of the phases of the technique for their production that he had observed in the foundries and which today seems to be the oldest source in our possession on this type of processing. At the same time, fascinated by the new war technology that seemed capable of controlling the power of the element of fire, he carried out external and internal ballistics experiments to try to understand its functioning and potential, in addition to the attempt to give a plausible explanation on the physical plane of the phenomenon the explosion and the generation of the driving force. For these reasons, Leonardo's manuscripts, if considered from a historical perspective and not detached from their context, constitute an important source for medieval and Renaissance technology, a window on many techniques that we would otherwise only know in a deductive way starting from archaeological finds.

If for historians Leonardo's manuscripts could be considered a kind of not an organized encyclopedia of Renaissance techniques and sciences in which to find references and descriptions of processes, structures, and materials, it is more difficult to evaluate their effective impact on Leonardo's contemporaries. After his death, in fact, these did not have immediate circulation and it is difficult to say to what extent they were known. However, in the seventeenth century, starting from the manuscripts kept in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan, a collection of hydraulic studies was compiled by the Dominican Luigi Maria Arconati (born 1605?) and circulated in Rome in the second half of the century; while in 1767 two partial copies of the *Codex Leicester*, which retrieved Leonardo's observations and reflections in particular on geology and hydrology, were also made in Florence. The rediscovery of Leonardo's engineering, however, would take place in the late nineteenth century, when, after

the first publications of the facsimiles of his notebooks, his designs of wings and flying machines were found to be the subject of debate among the pioneers of flight experiments. Later, starting in the 1930s, in particular after Leonardo's first exhibition dedicated to engineering, which took place in Milan in 1939, his machines and mechanical writings became the subject of study by historians, engineers, and scientists.

In the corpus of his manuscripts a place of significant importance, which marks a turning point with tradition are the studies of anatomy which starting from an artistic approach aimed at representing the body transformed into a pathognomic, physiognomic, and physiological research area through which Leonardo tried to understand the structure and functioning of the human body, including the generation of emotions; the so-called movements of the soul. By means of representation techniques, drawing became for Leonardo an investigative tool developed in the study of machines and then applied, using the same graphic expedients, to the analysis of the human body. The novelty of Leonardo's studies on anatomy concerns both the artistic representation and, primarily, the scientific representation of the body; his drawings are characterized precisely by being the result of this coexistence of art and science. Furthermore, Leonardo conceives embryology and physiognomy as two chapters of anatomical research. The human body is a structure that changes form over time by carrying out a somatic forming action first induced by the maternal soul and which continues even after birth, shaping the shape of the body until old age. The most innovative aspect of this research is the invention of an iconographic code for physiognomy, previously completely absent. Leonardo's manuscript became a sort of virtual laboratory for his graphical investigation of both natural and artificial processes. The physical principles that regulate the functioning of machines are the same that regulate the functioning of the human body and natural phenomena. Leonardo guided by the analogy between natural and artificial phenomena engaged in the analysis of the human body to explore and graphically reconstruct its anatomical complexity, up to the point

of designing mechanical prostheses of parts of the human body such as the arms and legs conceiving anthropomorphic and zoomorphic automata that reproduced the movements of natural bodies.

Leonardo's final goal was to become an author of treatises dealing with epistemology and technoscience. He elaborated several drafting and detailed indices of the topics to be treated the most ambitious of which was certainly that one for the mechanics' reform. After moving to Milan, in the late 1480s, Leonardo began to deepen his knowledge of geometry and physics using drawing as a heuristic tool through which to explore the anatomy of machines; he visually defined motion transmission and transformation engineering problems and virtually explored solutions that sometimes went beyond the technical capabilities of his time.

During the second half of the 1490s, under the guidance of Luca Pacioli, Leonardo studied mechanics and in his manuscripts (Codes H and M, Forster I and II, and in many sheets of the Arundel and Atlanticus Codex), there are explicit references to propositions and theorems contained in the treatise on the elements of statics by Giordano Nemorarius (*De ponderibus*), in the mechanics of Archimedes (287–212 B.C.) (*Balance of the planes*), in the *Elements of Geometry* by Euclid, and in the pseudo-Aristotelian tradition of simple machines.

The studies of dynamics are extremely interesting also, but difficult to evaluate. In his notes, Leonardo developed and presented the limits of the traditional notions of force, speed, acceleration, gravity, as well as that of movement, still classified as natural and violent. The concept of motion is particularly important because he comes to propose multiple definitions through which, although he is unable to elaborate a unitary and synthetic theory, he takes into consideration the studies elaborated in ancient and medieval Scholastic traditions. Through the work of Albert of Saxony, Leonardo learns the concept of *impetus*, introduced and developed in the school of Johan Buridan, and with it, he tries to explain the velocity and acceleration of falling bodies. Leonardo shows that he knows the quantitative analysis of

the physical categories developed by the Oxoniense philosophical school, the so-called *Calculatores*, by borrowing and trying to apply their terminology as “degree of speed” and “uniformly unformed motion” (*moto uniformemente disforme*) in his studies, including engineering, as well as their geometric representation by means of the triangle which made it possible to quantify intensity and extent of physical quantities with a scheme. His studies which he carried out with experimentation on machines also led him to become aware of the limits of traditional mechanics which did not apply to engineering purposes because the former did not take into account the materiality of the moving organs. Any mechanical device was subject to being worn down by passive forces such as friction and it was precisely by trying to determine a compensation coefficient of this force that he would develop his proposal to renew mechanics. The result of this research was the design of the *Treatise on the mechanical elements*, to which Leonardo refers several times in his manuscripts and of which we find the most complete version in the manuscript 8937 preserved today in the National Library of Spain. Medieval Physics was characterized by a predominantly geometric-mathematical approach that did not address in any way the problems that arose from the actual construction and then from the actual functioning of the machines, such as, for example, the action of the friction force that deformed the mobile axle of couplings to the point of compromising its functioning. For Leonardo, Mechanics was primarily an experimental discipline, a “sensitive science,” as he later affirmed in the late *Manuscript E* (f. 54r); for example, it had to take into account the different technical characteristics of the materials used in the construction of the machines. Leonardo’s method is based on the physical or image reconstruction of natural processes; for this reason, the study of the powers of nature in terms of mechanical elements had to be placed before the study of the human body and more generally to all philosophy of nature. The possibility of representing and building mechanical devices and exploring their various application possibilities through the strictness of geometry constituted a fundamental

step in Leonardo’s studies because these techniques became the main tool for the study of both the macrocosm (nature) and the microcosm (man). Machines and technological processes in fact provided models to understand and reproduce natural phenomena, and it is precisely in this analogy between technological and natural processes that, during the 1490s, Leonardo would define the products of technology as if they were a “second nature.” For Leonardo, these were objects built in imitation of the natural ones but which remained distinct from them even if they were subordinate to them: the mechanical arts were not in fact able to reproduce natural objects, but only to create their simulacra. The powers of gravity, force, motion, and percussion, which for Leonardo were the four fundamental principles of physics on whose action all natural phenomena depended, were also entities that could be generated and controlled artificially by means of the mechanical arts. If in nature, therefore, the substrate through which these powers manifest themselves was made up of the four Aristotelian elements of earth, water, air, and fire and their compounds, in the world of artificiality these same powers were materialized through the “machine elements” which constituted the basic components for the construction of the machines and the implementation of the operational processes. The categories of forces acting in the world of natural elements were therefore the same as those acting in the artificial world. Placed in this process of rethinking physics and natural philosophy in mechanistic terms, the study of machines provided the patterns and models for interpreting, understanding, and controlling the structures and processes of transformation of nature, while offering tools to try to reproduce them artificially.

One of the most profitable engineering fields on the techno-scientific level determined by Leonardo’s epistemology is certainly what we would now call aeronautical engineering in which crossed researches of engineering, physics, and anatomy intersected. Leonardo approached the theme of flying machines by following wing movement issues in the context of theatrical scenography. Over the years, the reciprocating

motion mechanism for the wings flapping became a reason for an in-depth anatomical study in an attempt to reproduce the natural kinematics of the wings through the use of mechanical elements (cranks and pedals) operated by the pilot. Leonardo moved on to two lines of research. On the one hand, the spacecraft, that is, the propulsion system that tried to optimize the energy produced by the muscles of the human body used as a motor, and, on the other hand, the study of the wings, a real biomorphism research which took into consideration the morphology of various insects, the bat, and large birds of prey. Leonardo's studies on flight are traditionally divided into two parts: those focused on mechanical wing-flapping developed during the 1490s and those on gliding, which Leonardo would have taken into consideration after having reported the impossibility of engineering the first solution, especially starting from the sixteenth century. Flight studies led Leonardo to question the material nature of the air and experiment with its compressibility and resistance to motion, while observing the flight of birds and their anatomical dissection led him to design articulated wings that sought to replicate natural ones. In these comparative studies of natural philosophy, anatomy, and engineering, Leonardo came to conceive the idea that in the air considered a material body comparable to the fluid body of water it was possible to move by exploiting the spiraling movements of vortices, thus conceiving the idea of a propeller machine able to screw into the air (*Il manoscritto B*, f. 83v). The braking impact of the air, however, which was experienced with sails, led him to also develop the idea of the parachute, already presented by other engineers of the time, proposing a large umbrella device (*Codice Atlantico* 1058v).

The experimentation on the elements conducted between the late 1490s and the beginning of the following century led Leonardo to question himself on their nature and to return critically to the concept of an element which in the traditional vision was defined on the basis of the qualitative principles of heat, cold, dry, and wet but without any quantitative correspondence with the actual material transformation phenomena. In the technical processes, in

fact, the elements showed a nature of a corpuscular type, which the Aristotelian speculative explanation did not consider. Leonardo's reflections and experiments on the theory of matter represent one of the highest moments of his research and speculation in natural philosophy which culminated in an attempt to define an alternative element to that of the Aristotelian tradition. In fact, Leonardo tried to give a characterization of the elements on the basis of quantitative parameters such as density, shape, and elasticity, overcoming the qualitative vision of the elements typical of the Aristotelian tradition which did not allow a quantitative explanation in terms of parts of the compounds and chemical mixtures. On a speculative level, Leonardo went beyond the problems related to the experimental adherence to the structure of matter by developing a metaphysics that found expression in the concept of form as a synthesis between geometric space and physical dimension.

Leonardo's reflections start from the concept of geometric space, the space of the painter, as it was defined by Euclid in his *Elements* and also in the treatises of Renaissance artists such as Piero della Francesca (1416–1492) and Leon Battista (1404–1472) Alberti: the point generates the line, the line generates the plane and the plane generates the space. Starting from these principles it is possible to reproduce the shapes that define reality in the geometric space. Leonardo shifts his reflection to the philosophical level and questions the relationship that point, line, and geometric shapes have with physical reality. His notes remain fragmented and incomplete, but it is interesting that, in addition to the mathematical-geometric point, he also took into account the moment, that is, the time point and the atom, namely, the material point, thus bringing the generation of spatial dimensions back to the point, thunderstorms and materials. These reflections constitute the most abstract speculations that Leonardo attained and are symptomatic of the peculiarity of his thought. That is, how geometric categories designed for graphic representation become philosophical instances presupposed for a quantitative interpretation of phenomenal reality. It is in this dimension straddling geometry and physics that Leonardo placed the category of the powers of nature, those forces that have no body but have

energy and act on the physical plane. This dimension which Leonardo significantly calls being of nothingness (*essere del nulla*), due to its liminal condition between the material plane and the ideal plane, was a common causal instance for all the chemical and physical transformations of nature and technology. An important example of how these powers act in the world of the elements is that of the ignition of the flame with the burning mirrors; these convey the percussive energy of the sun's rays to a single point where this power translates into heat and therefore into fire, triggering a process of material transformation that leads to the consumption of physical bodies.

Leonardo believes nature was constantly changing due to the "chemical-physical" action induced in mixed bodies and elements by the natural powers. By investigating the structure of matter and its changes, he arrived to make interesting observations and develop concepts and theories which, in this case too, stand out for their modernity. The studies of hydrology and geology informed by traditional texts, such as the vulgarization of Aristotelian *Meteorology* and the medieval comments of Aristotle's *De Coelo et Mundo*, in particular those of Albertus Magnus and Albert of Saxony, but also extracts of Aristotle's natural philosophy in the vernacular, such as *Il libro della composizione del mondo* (The book of the composition of the World) by Ristoro d'Arezzo and calls Giovanni Sacrobosco's *Sphaera*, Claudius Ptolemy's *Geography* together with the observations made on the many voyages through Northern and Central Italy, lead him to imagine the Earth as a dynamic system that changes state, thanks to the constant imbalance between the elements that generate changes in the mineral and vegetable kingdom. In the *Codex Leicester*, written at a mature age, a mechanistic view of the Earth and the Universe, Leonardo makes hydrogeological reflections also for the Moon; it clearly emerges among more than 900 hydrology assertions that make up this notebook. For every depression in the earth's crust, Leonardo always corresponds to an opposite protrusion which allows the earth's water system to remain in balance. With each change induced by erosions, rearrangements are caused in which the masses

tend to balance themselves again around the center of the world. Observing the surface fractures of the earth's crust, Leonardo proposes a theory of change similar to the modern plate tectonics explanation and he also realizes that the age of our planet must have been moved much further back than the approximately 6000 years imposed by biblical chronology. Moreover, observing the orography and the distribution of fossils especially in the Arno valley of the interior of Tuscany and in the Po valley, Leonardo concludes that the earth had undergone strong changes over the centuries and sees in this reason the explanation of why shell fossils are found even hundreds of kilometers from the sea in hilly areas.

Leonardo did not manage to develop his natural philosophy in a systematic way. However, his thoughts are testimony of the degree of cultural autonomy he had reached, the highest expression on the level of theoretical elaboration in the context of the mechanical arts in which he autonomously worked with the processes of transformation of substances; and dialoguing with theories traditional questions were asked and answers given which intended to bring about a radical renewal in science and engineering.

Cross-References

- [Archimedes: Reception in the Renaissance](#)
- [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)
- [Euclid: Reception in the Renaissance](#)
- [Metallurgy in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Pacioli, Luca](#)
- [Ptolemy in the Renaissance](#)

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Leone, Ambrogio

Born: Nola, 1458/59

Died: Nola, 6 March 1525

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Abstract

Ambrogio Leone (1458/1459–1525), Italian humanist and physician, friend to Erasmus of Rotterdam, studied in Padua where he graduated in philosophy and medicine, and then returned to Nola; his most important works are a historical treatise about his place of birth (*De Nola*, 1514) and a polemical work against Averroes (*Castigationes in Averroem*, first edition 1517).

Biography

Ambrogio Leone (Nola, 1458/1459–Nola, 6 March 1525), son of Marino and Marchisella Balletta, was educated in one of the monasteries of Nola or by a private teacher. In 1477 he moved to Padua, where he studied medicine and philosophy with Nicoletto Vernia and Agostino Nifo and where he graduated in both in 1484. After his return to Nola, he practiced as a physician in villa Schivacura (near Mount Cicala), which soon became a meeting place for men of science and letters. He became acquainted with Gioviano Pontano, whom he hosted during the plague in 1493. Nearly nothing is known about his life between 1490 and 1498, with an exception made for his love story with Beatrice de Notariis, who died in 1491 and whom he intended to honor with a collective poem (involving E. Strozzi, A. Tebaldeo, G. F. Caracciolo, and J. Sannazaro), entitled *Beatricium*, never published. Between the

end of 1499 and the beginning of 1500, he moved to Padua, where he attended the home and the coterie of friends of Aldo Manuzio. Before 1504 he returned to Nola, but in 1505 he settled in Venice, where he practiced medicine and started to study Greek, gaining a reputation with the members of the Aldine Academy and Erasmus, with whom he had befriended when he supervised the printing of the *Adagia* in Venice in 1508.

In 1514 he published *De Nola*, which, based on ancient rather than on recent sources, was the first product of Neapolitan humanist historiography. In 1517 Leone published the *Castigationes in Averroem*, in a first edition of 30 books (then followed two editions: in 1524 of the third part only and an integral edition in 1532), containing a long list of abuses. In his critique Leone combines two principal anti-Averroist responses: humanist historicism and pristine Aristotelianism. His agenda is both rhetorical and metaphysical. In the dedicatory letter to Leo X, he presents Averroes as a liar, an unreliable interpreter, a corruptor of epistemological and ethical norms, a defiler of the truth, impious, a weak logician, an uncouth philosopher, and a braggart. But worse of all was that Averroes hoped to make a name for himself in philosophy by ridiculing all religion.

On July 19, 1518, he wrote a long letter to Erasmus, in which he mocked his friend for his tireless and multifaceted activity, calling him a novel Proteus and reviving Ulysses. In the same year, he published an edition of the works in prose of Gioviano Pontano and published a translation of Johannes Actuarius' *De urinis*. At the end of 1519, he received a letter from Erasmus who congratulated him for the publication of the works, particularly the one against Averroes. In August of 1523, he published the ponderous *Opus Quaestionum seu problematum*, where he discussed, in addition to ethical issues, physiological and medical questions, including problems in physics, geometry, optics, and music. His last published work in life was *De nobilitate rerum dialogus* (Venice 1525). From information about some unpublished works, we know that Leone also carried out research on antidotes against the poison of serpents and in the care of nephrology, diseases of the kidney, and meteorological issues. The dedicatory letter of *De nobilitate rerum* informs about manuscript works,

including “Libellus de Bisexto,” “De vi ridendi,” “Lucubrationes in VI Methaphisices,” “Libellus de signis pluviarum et ventorum,” and “Adnotationes in theriacam.” On the evening of March 6, 1525, after 2 days of agony, he died, hit by a stroke.

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Leonhard Fuchs and Herbals

Born: 1501, Wemding [Bavaria]

Died: 10 May 1566, Tübingen

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Abstract

A learned physician, Leonhard Fuchs is mostly known for his illustrated herbal entitled *De historia stirpium*, first published in 1542.

With this work (which preceded by one year *De humani corporis fabrica* of Andreas Vesalius), he is believed to have renewed the typically medieval genre of the herbal, although he also played a major role in other sectors of Renaissance medical production, including the revision of contemporary scientific (especially medical) literature on the basis of Greek classical texts in the way of Nicolao Leniceno. Nevertheless, his most significant contribution was his herbal and its illustrations, the text of which is in fact an assemblage of pieces translated from Greek and Latin classical literature on botany and materia medica (plants used for therapeutic uses) and the illustration drawings made on the basis of specimina collected in nature.

Biography

Born in the town of Wemding in Bavaria, on an unknown date in 1501, Leonhard Fuchs graduated in arts at age 16 (1516–1517) and enrolled at the medical school of the university of Ingolstadt in 1519 where he obtained the title of *Magister artium* in 1521 and of *Medicinae doctor* in 1524. After a couple of years as a practitioner physician and, further on, as a teacher, he accepted a position as the personal physician of the Margrave of Brandenburg in Ansbach. Though successful, he renounced this position in 1535 for a chair of medicine at the University of Tübingen, with the mission to reform the university. Immediately appointed dean of the medical school, Fuchs became a rector of the university the following year (1536) and wrote new statutes as early as 1538. Several times confirmed as rector until 1565, he nevertheless devoted himself to the study of botany and materia medica, producing in 1542 the richly illustrated *Historia stirpium* (Fuchs 1542), which he further revised in the form of the German *New Kreüterbuch* published in 1543 and aimed at a wider audience (Fuchs 1543). Although he pursued his research to expand *Historia stirpium* with three more volumes completed in manuscript form in 1563/1564 (including the illustrations), he could not find the necessary resources to publish it. He died in 1566, not only sick but also

discouraged by this failure, in addition to being probably depressed by the death of his wife in 1563 (Brinkhus and Pachnicke 2001).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Historia stirpium is the direct heir of a line of transformation of the botanico-therapeutic genre of the herbal, typical of western medical literature (in Byzantium, this genre did not develop so markedly as botanico-medical literature was limited to Dioscorides, *De materia medica*). The renewal of the genre started by Otto Brunfels (1588–1534), author of an illustrated *Herbarium* first published in 1530. In it Brunfels departed for the first time from the medieval tradition both in the description of the plants (made of excerpts from classical literature) and the illustrations (no longer schematic, but aiming at naturalism). Like Brunfels, Fuchs compiled information from classical Greek and Latin sources, mostly Theophrastus, Dioscorides, Pliny, and Galen. Contrary to Brunfels, however, who exactly reproduced the individuals he obtained from the field, Fuchs extracted the concept of the plants he was studying, thus producing a visualization of the botanical characteristics allowing for exact identification.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Fuchs' innovative activity went beyond and started well before the publication of the *Historia*. A Hellenist walking in the footsteps of Ferrara physician Nicolao Leonicensi (1428–1524) (Samoggia 1964), Fuchs screened the medical literature of his time, denouncing in a typically Renaissance fashion what contemporary classicizing scientists and physicians considered mistakes. As early as 1530 he published a small book the title of which was a manifesto: *Errata recentiorum medicorum* (*Errors of modern physicians*). The moderns were not only Fuchs' contemporaries as Otto Brunfels, accused to have sometimes misidentified the plants he described because he did not really know them, but also – and mostly – the Arabic physicians, harshly – and sometimes incorrectly – criticized for having deformed Greek medicine (Harig 1966).

Impact and Legacy

On these premises, Fuchs transformed the medical curriculum at Tübingen University. Not only did he eliminate the Arabic texts (studied in the form of their medieval Latin translations) from the program, but also he introduced the practice of didactic *herborisation*, that is, expeditions in the field to collect the plants traditionally used at that time for therapeutic purposes. Typically enough, *herborisation* was also introduced at the same time at two famous medieval medical schools, those of Padua and Montpellier, being supplemented in 1542 at Padua by a botanic garden aimed to provide plants on a more permanent basis. Together with related teaching, *herborisation* allowed for direct knowledge of the plants by the students, making it possible to avoid the confusion (potentially harmful) resulting from the uncertainty of nomenclature in medieval literature. The specimina collected in nature were also used by the artists working to illustrate *Historia stirpium*, as the full-page illustration included in the volume makes clear, being a further manifesto of Fuch's self-identity as a reformer (Kusukawa 2012). In the upper part, the artist (Albrecht Meyer) reproduces a plant in front of him, while another in front of him (Albrecht Füllmauer) transfers the drawing to a woodblock. Below, in the lower part of the page (a position that might be significant), a third personage (Veit Rudolph Speckle) is represented without any sign of his activity, which consisted in carving the blocks. The translation of the work into German, together with its adaptation for a larger use, is no less typical of Fuchs' *modernism* with a shift from Latin as the lingua of science, to the vernacular.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Dioscorides and Greek Herbals](#)
- ▶ [Hebrew into Latin Translations in Renaissance Italy](#)
- ▶ [Leonicensi, Nicolò](#)
- ▶ [Pharmacology in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Universities in the Renaissance](#)

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Leonicenso, Nicolò

Born: 1428, Vicenza

Died: 1524, Ferrara

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Abstract

A major humanist physician and Hellenist, owner of a conspicuous library, translator of Galen, editor of Dioscorides in Greek, and

promoter of a new scientific epistemology, Leonicenso was also a teacher at Ferrara University. He is most known for the so-called *Pliniana controversio*, which has traditionally been analyzed as a *quarrel of Ancients and Moderns*, the Ancients being the Latinists and scholars of Pliny, while the Moderns were the Hellenists and readers of Hippocrates, Dioscorides, and Galen. Leonicenso's contribution went beyond as it transformed the early humanistic approach to classical Greek and Latin scientific literature into an epistemologically sound and scientific analysis of ancient medical texts. Though laying down the basis of a method for a deeply renewed appropriation of ancient scientific literature, his proposals provoked a stasis in Renaissance science and scientific literature which lasted a quarter of a century.

Biography

Born to a noble family of Vicenza in northern Italy, Nicolò Leonicenso received in Vicenza a solid classical education under the direction of the first-generation humanist Ognibene de' Bonisoli (1412–1474). With perfect knowledge of classical Greek and Latin, he enrolled at age 18 at the nearby famous medieval university of Padua, where he graduated in arts and medicine sometimes around 1453. After some years of travel (mostly to England but possibly also to Holland), he seems to have taught at his Alma mater in 1462–1464. In any case, in 1464, he moved to Ferrara where he spent his entire life, with the exception of two teaching stays in Bologna (1483 and 1508–1509) and occasional brief visits to other cities in northern and central Italy. Appointed professor at the University of Ferrara, he might also have been a physician to the local court in the 1470s. During the years 1470–1490, he translated several works of classical Greek and Latin literature unrelated to his scientific interests, perhaps upon request of the court. Leonicenso was in contact with most of the leading intellectuals of his time, including the printer and publisher Aldo Manuzio (ca. 1450–1515) established in Venice. He actively participated in the printing of the monumental Aldina edition of *Aristotelis Opera*

omnia (5 volumes, 1495–1498), among others by lending his own manuscript copies of some works, and he probably prepared the edition of the Greek text of Dioscorides, *De materia medica* published by Manuzio (1499). Besides Latin translations and critical editions of Greek scientific texts, Leonicenso wrote original works, including the first treatise on syphilis (*De morbo gallico*), published in 1497 by Aldo Manuzio. Giovanni Manardi (1462–1536) (Premuda 1963, Samoggia 1963, and Carrara 1994) and Antonio Musa Brasavola (1500–1555) were among his students in Ferrara. Leonicenso died there in 1524 (Carrara 1978).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

An assiduous reader of Greek and Latin classical literature – particularly philosophical and scientific –, Leonicenso assembled a conspicuous library (possibly containing 3000 volumes), the catalog of which was rediscovered only recently. Although he translated literary texts, he was mostly interested in ancient philosophical, scientific, and medical literature, with a particular focus on Galen in addition to Hippocrates and Dioscorides.

Of Galen, he translated into Latin (in chronological order of publication, all having been reprinted several times): *Ars medicinalis* (1508); *In Hippocratis Aphorismos* (1509); *De arte curativa ad Glauconem*, *De crisis*, *De differentiis morborum*, and *De inaequali intemperatura* (1514); *De differentiis februm* (1516); *De morborum differentiis et causis* (1522 [?]); *De motu musculorum* (1522); *De naturalibus facultatibus* (1524); *De elementis secundum Hippocratem* (1541–1542; posthumous). Also, he procured Greek manuscripts of *Methodus medendi* and *Ad Glauconem* to the publishers of the first printed Greek edition of Galen, the Greeks Zacharias Kallierges (ca. 1433–after 1524) and Nikolaos Vlastos (fifteenth/sixteenth century), who printed these texts in 1500 in Venice. As a complement to – and defense of – his translations, he published works such as *Praefatio communis in libros Galeni a graeca in latinam linguam a se*

translatos (1508), *Contra suarum translationum detractores apologia* (1522), and *In suam ac Teodori Gazae defensionem contra Adversarium Libellus* (compiled between 1513 and 1528 and unpublished). Based also on his study of Galen's works and his translations (particularly the *Ars medica*), Leonicenso compiled a methodological essay on medical method first published in 1508 and several times reprinted (*De tribus doctrinis ordinatis secundum Galeni sententiam*).

Through his production, Leonicenso advocated reading Greek medical literature rather than the medieval treatises in Latin (Nutton 1993, 1997a), most of which resulted from the translation of Arabic texts into Latin. This was particularly the case for Galen's *Ars medica*, the interpretation of which in the late Middle Ages was dominated by the Aristotelo-Averroist reading diffused and confirmed among late-medieval philosophers and physicians by Pietro d'Abano (ca. 1250–1315 or 1316) in his *Conciliator differentiarum philosophorum et praecipue medicorum*. Leonicenso was interested in defining *method* as a philosophical concept allowing for a logical structuration of the entire field of science.

In *Ars medica* (which he compiled late in his life, 1493), Galen made a systematic exposition of pathology starting with a general definition of medicine and proceeding by further divisions and definitions. The work opens with a short prologue on three methods for teaching differentiated by their starting point: the whole and the aim (the whole body), which is subsequently analyzed; the sum (synthesis) of the data resulting from analysis; and the successive divisions of definitions (which is the method followed by Galen in *Ars medica*) (Boudon 2000). Following Galen, rather than Aristotle and his medieval commentators, Leonicenso proposed clear definitions of such fundamental scientific concepts as *definition*, *demonstration*, *division*, and *resolution* (Edwards 1976 and Carrara 1983). With these concepts, he aimed to rebuild science on a solid basis.

A clear application of this new epistemological strategy was medical botany and remedial therapy. According to Leonicenso, the medieval texts (particularly the Latin translations of Arabic

treatises resulting themselves from the translation of Greek originals into Arabic) misinterpreted numerous technical terms. The massive operation of translation from Arabic into Latin during the Middle Ages generated a great lexical variety of plant and medicinal names, particularly because of the process of transliterating Arabic terms into Latin alphabet, instead of properly translating such terms. Scribal mistakes in manuscript copies added to this vast lexicon. As a result, lexica such as Simo of Genua's *Clavis sanationis* compiled in the late thirteenth century, collected all such terms, also providing explanations and equivalents for their correct understanding. This lexical uncertainty was crucial in the field of therapeutics, where incorrect identification of plants and, consequently, administration of other plants than the ones recommended for the treatment of a medical condition, could be noxious, if not lethal.

In a time when apothecaries were accused of selling adulterated or even wrong drugs, Leonicens started working on plant lexicology. In 1492, he published a small pamphlet entitled *De Plinii et plurium aliorum in medicina erroribus liber* (Premuda 1958). The colophon is indicative of the actual content of the work: *Plinii ac plurium aliorum acutorum qui de simplicibus medicaminibus scripserunt. Errores notati ...* The multiple cases collected in this booklet aimed to demonstrate the superiority of Greek texts over classical Latin and medieval ones, the latter including mostly the canonical textbooks of medieval medical schools made of Latin translations of Arabic works. Classicizing scholars – most of them being Latinists–viewed this pamphlet as an attack against the authority of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, which had been used in the Middle Ages as a reference in multiple scientific fields, whereas Leonicens's work mostly targeted the *Arabici auctores* and *Arabicae translationes*, accused of having deformed the Greek heritage. A virulent polemic led by Pandolfo Collenuccio (1444–1504) followed (Santoro 1956). Collenuccio authored a *Pliniana defensio ... adversus Nicolai Leonicensi accusationem* published in Leonicens's own city, Ferrara, without date, but probably in 1493. Although

Collenuccio brilliantly defended the *Naturalis Historia*, Leonicens was able to demonstrate the validity of his thesis, putting soon an end to the polemic (Castiglioni 1953). Notwithstanding, Leonicens pursued his reflection on scientific lexicology.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Leonicens's work in this field took the form of five other booklets published between 1493 and 1529, to which we should probably add the critical edition of the Greek text of Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, printed in 1499 by Aldo Manuzio. Though published anonymously, this edition might have been prepared by Leonicens who wished to provide with it the necessary material to demonstrate the validity of his thesis on the superiority of Greek, over Latin and medieval scientific literature.

In Leonicens's reflection on the proper identification of the natural substances to be used for the preparation of medicines, the flesh of snakes to be mixed in the preparation of theriaca was a significant case. On this topic, Leonicens wrote the small tract *De Tiro seu vipera* printed sometimes between 1497 and 1499, possibly by Aldo Manuzio. He returned to this question in 1503, in a letter to a physician who interrogated him about the identity of several medicinal substances. There Leonicens reached the contradictory conclusion that the naming of things might not be as important as he initially thought, provided the objects identified by the names (whatever these names might have been) were properly identified. This paradoxical conclusion, fundamentally lexicologically agnostic if not anti-lexicological, was encapsulated in Leonicens's formula "*Loquantur ipsi ut velint ... modo quis serpens sit tirus... non ignorant*" (Touwaide 2000).

Impact and Legacy

Leonicens's program of control of the substances to be used in the preparation of medicine might

have inspired the preparation of what can be considered an early Pharmacopoeia in Florence. Toward the end of the fifteenth century, the civil authority of Tuscany commissioned a group of *doctores* to revise the formulae for medicines prepared by apothecaries in the duchy. The work of this commission resulted in the compilation and publication of the so-called *Ricettario fiorentino* (1501), which listed all the formulae for compound medicines considered safe and consequently approved and guaranteed as efficacious by the Florentine medical authority.

Leonicensi's criticism of medical literature, be it medieval or contemporary, was reproduced in the German world by Leonhard Fuchs (1501–1566) who authored the *Errata recentiorum medicorum* (1530) in which he screened contemporary production searching for lexical and medical mistakes (Samoggia 1963, 1964).

However promising Leonicensi's method might have seemed for a refund of therapeutic practice (Bruni 1995), it acted in the opposite direction after having generated a first application, possibly with the *Ricettario fiorentino* and certainly with Fuchs' *Errata*. No new work was published for 30 years and, in any case, new works were slow to appear. In 1530, the German botanist Otto Brunfels (1488–1534) published his *Herbarum vivae eicones* with illustrations of plants by Hans Weiditz, with a second volume in 1532 and a German edition in two volumes in 1532–1537 (*Kreüterbuch Contrafayt*). No other work appeared until 1542, when Leonhard Fuchs published his *Historia stirpium*.

At around the same time (the early 1540s), lexicological exactness in the way of Leonicensi returned to the pharmaceutical analysis recalling the *Ricettario fiorentino*. Antonio Musa Brasavola, a student of Leonicensi, visited Italian pharmacies to inspect the materia medica used for the preparation of medicines and verify the formulae of medicines. Upon completion of his inspections, Brasavola published a series of small volumes listing the correct ingredients for the preparation of medicines and describing the formulae for medicines. Interestingly enough, after a review of the ingredients (*Examen*

omnium Simplicium medicamentorum, quorum in officinis usus est, 1536), he proceeded by pharmaceutical types or therapeutic activity, with the syrups (*Examen omnium syruporum, quorum publicus usus est*, 1540), trochiscs, unguents, cerats, emplasters, cataplasms, and collyria (*Examen omnium trochiscorum unguentorum ceratorum emplaforum cataplasmatumque & Collyriorum quorum apud Ferrarienses pharmacopolas usus est* ..., 1541), pills (*Examen omnium Catapotiorum, uel pilularum, quarum apud Pharmacopolas usus est*, 1543), electuaries, powders and cathartics (*Examen omnium electuariorum, pulverum, et confectionum. catharticum*, 1548), and lochs, powders, waters, decoctions, and oils (*Examen omnium Loch, idest Linctuum, Suffuf, idest Puluerum, Aquarum, Decoctionum, Oleorum, quorum apud Ferrarienses pharmacopolas usus est*, 1553). All works were abundantly republished during the 1540s and 1550s.

Shortly afterward, the center of gravity of this methodological refund of medical botany and pharmaceutical practice shifted from Ferrara and Leonicensi's sphere of influence (Castelli 1997 and Nutton 1997b) to Padua, at the university of which a chair in medical botany (*lectura simplicium*) was created in 1533. Students could acquire a direct knowledge of plants through herborization in the field during the spring term, and, during the winter term, through the botanical garden created in 1545. This model had been further reproduced in Montpellier thanks to the bishop of Maguelone, Guillaume Pelicier (1498 or 1499–1568), who stayed in Venice during the years 1539–1542 as Ambassador of the French king to the Serenissima and took advantage of his presence in the Veneto to acquire a collection of books that included editions and translations of natural history works among which Dioscorides, *De materia medica*.

Leonicensi's work, which probably contributed to the development of these new initiatives in the methodology for the study of medical botany, became obsolete and moved from the making of humanistic science to the history of humanism in science.

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Leonico Tomeo, Niccolò

Born: 1456, Venice

Died: 1531, Padua

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Abstract

Niccolò Leonico Tomeo was a Paduan humanist who devoted his long life to classical scholarship. Excellent connoisseur of the Greek language, he studied and translated Plato and Aristotle directly from the original texts, refusing to resort to scholasticism and medieval annotators. Tomeo amassed a vast library of

Greek philosophers and scientists and surrounded himself with young men who went to Padua from all over Europe to follow his lessons. After lecturing on Aristotle in Padua and Venice until 1509, he privately taught Plato because – as other humanists were – he was persuaded that Platonic and peripatetic theories had to be conciliated against the spreading Averroism. This perspective is well-shown by his major philosophical work, the *Dialogi*.

Biography

Son of Biagio and Polissena, Niccolò was born in Venice in 1456 and moved to Padua with his brother Bartolomeo, called Fusco; his surname must be probably retraced to his family's place of origin, which was the town Ithomi in Messenia. When he was young, he learned Greek in Florence with Demetrios Chalkondyles and afterwards completed his education in Padua, with a degree *in artibus* on 7th May 1485. In this period, he shared the goliardic life of Padua with his friends Tifi Odasi and Domizio Parenzo. Then he turned to ancient medicine and philosophy, becoming quickly very expert; from 1497 to 1509, he held the lectureship of Aristotle on the Greek text in Padua. From 1504 to 1506, he taught Greek and Latin in Venice, after winning Marcus Musurus in the competition. When he came back to Padua, he went on teaching privately to foreign intellectuals who met in his house: William Latimer, Thomas Linacre, Thomas Lupset, Richard Pace, Reginald Pole, and Cuthbert Tunstall. The Italian Pietro Bembo, Lazzaro Bonamico, Paolo Canale, Giovanni Benedetto Lampridio, and Giovanni Calturnio frequented him too. Relationships with them are known, thanks to the collection of Tomeo's letters, testified by the ms. Vat. Ross. lat. 997, related to the years 1521–1531. Erasmus of Rotterdam knew and appreciated him. In 1519, his sister Agostina with her children Magno, Paolo, Angelo, and Laura joined Leonico in Padua. He died there in 1531, when he was 75 years old, and was buried in S. Francesco church (De Bellis 1980; Geanakoplos 1985;

Russo 2005). His nephew Magno inherited his library and kept it until the beginning of the 1540s. Pietro Bembo, who had known Tomeo as a master and a friend, acquired almost the whole collection. Later on his death (1547), Torquato Bembo sold it together with the library of his father, and several collectors like Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, Fulvio Orsini, and Jean-Jacques and Henri de Mesmes bought some portions. Tomeo's manuscripts are therefore today dispersed in libraries all around the world, such as the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, the Vatican library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the Burgerbibliothek in Bern. About 50 exemplars have been found so far (Gamba 2014).

Works and Themes

The most famous works by Tomeo are his Latin translations of Aristotelian treatises, which he chose among those not yet available to the Latin world or not studied neither at a university level. Although he had been making them since he was young, most were published in the last decade of his lifetime, when his friends persuaded him to do so. Their value resides in Tomeo's wide knowledge of Greek and his philological and philosophical accuracy, which are also the reasons for his success.

In 1523 was published the *Parva naturalia*, destined to become the edition used in school teaching and to have several reprints in the succeeding centuries. In the preface, he stated that he had decided to imitate ancient commentators and ignore medieval and contemporary ones (Kraye 2002).

In 1525, he collected various works under the title *Opuscula*: the translations of three Aristotelian treatises, on zoology (*De animalium motione* and *De animalium incessu*) and physics (*Mechanica*); a translation of Plato's *Timaeus* with Proclus' commentary (*De animorum generatione, cum explicatione et digressione Procli Lytii [sic]*), which shows Tomeo's attraction to Neoplatonic metaphysical theories; and *Quaestiones amatoriae* and *Quaestiones naturales*, two original works inspired by the

peripatetic tradition and focused on the etiology of lovers' behavior and problems about zoology, human physiology and anatomy, botany, and mineralogy (De Bellis 1975).

Two other less known translations are the astronomic Ptolemaic treatise *Inerrantium stellarum significationes* (1516) and the *De puero epileptico* by Galenus, edited posthumously in 1541, which testify Tomeo's passion for scientific topics.

In 1531 was published a juvenile miscellaneous and erudite work, *De varia historia*. Tomeo collected in it mythological episodes, etymologies of geographical names, and other curios he found in ancient authors, so that the work seems more an adaptation and translation of excerpts than a genuine product of his pen.

After his death, his nephew Magno Tomeo found a manuscript with Leonico's Latin translation of the first book of the Aristotelian *De partibus animalium* and had it published in 1540. Tomeo wrote it in the late 1520s, with the declared purpose of doing a complete translation of the zoological work that Pietro Pomponazzi had previously begun to gloss on behalf of Ercole Gonzaga, but had left incomplete because of his death (Perfetti 2004). Tomeo too died before finishing the work and we nowadays can read only his version of the first book: *Conversio atque explanatio primi libri*. It is a translation with commentary, very graceful in its Latin style, which paraphrases and sums up the Aristotelian argumentations and clarifies the line of reasoning when it seems too tortuous. Tomeo tried to act as an ancient commentator, dealing directly with the Greek text and refusing to use either the scholastic jargon or its fixed formulas of textual exposition (Perfetti 1999); his authorities were just Theodorus Gaza, who had made a good humanistic translation of the same text, and Alexander of Aphrodisias. Besides, he reflected upon the methodological foundations of this zoological work, which follows an inductive logic according to his genre, and noted that it was different from the deductive method that Aristotle supported in his *Analytics*. Even

though he was always very careful in referring to Aristotle's thought, he contaminated some passages with Platonic elements (Perfetti 2000).

Among his original works, it is worth mentioning the *Dialogi*, a collection of dialogues of Ciceronian-Platonic form on several topics, published in 1524. Their guiding thread is Tomeo's effort to prove that Plato and Aristotle agree about the major philosophical matters, as many other humanists did. Some dialogues deal with the soul and reveal Tomeo's closeness to the Neoplatonic positions developed in Florence, above all, those by Marsilio Ficino (De Bellis 1979): in *Bembus, sive de animorum immortalitate*, for example, he used the Platonic *Phaedrus*' arguments to show that Plato's and Aristotle's seeming contradiction about the soul's immortality was just terminological. In *Alverotus, sive de tribus animorum vehiculis*, he discussed the afterlife, vehicles of the soul, the possibility to expiate sins, and the existence of fate (De Bellis 1981). *Trophonius, sive de divinatione* and *Sadoletus, sive de precibus* are about religious matters. In the first one, the last ancient oracle, visited and described by Pausanias, is the pretext to talk about divination, which is thought to be an expression of natural religiousness, because the divine issues directly from earth disguised as the spirit (Carabelli 2002). The second one compared anthropomorphic paganism with Christian providence and discussed how human prayers could influence divine will (D'Ascia 1990). Interesting themes touched on the dialogues are also: the naturalness of language; the conflict with contemporary philosophers, who are similar to the Sophists and sell their knowledge; the logical relation of a relative term and its correlative; and the role of grammarians.

Tomeo's contribution to the history of the culture is also linked to some editions of classical authors, which were prepared with manuscripts belonging to his vast library. This is the case of Aldine editions of Aristotle and Theophrastus (1495–1498), John Philoponus (1504), Plutarch (1509), Pedanius Dioscorides (1518), and Galen (1525), of the Aristotle published by the Giunta typographers (1527) and Plutarchan *Moralia* by

Froben (1542). Before the printing of the aforementioned Plutarch of 1509, Tomeo helped the editors Marcus Musurus and Demetrios Doukas in revising the Greek text. Besides, his corrections of the Greek text of *Moralia* were well known in the Italian Renaissance, because circulated in manuscript form; his autograph emendations written in the margins of his 1509 edition (now detected as the Ambrosian exemplar press-marked S R 67) were copied in many other editions, such as those belonging to Donato Giannotti and Fulvio Orsini (Martinelli Tempesta 2004).

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Letter in the Renaissance

► Epistle in the Renaissance

Libertinage

► Libertines and Libertinism

Libertinage érudit

► Libertines and Libertinism

Libertines and Libertinism

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Abstract

Libertinism designates a movement of intellectual pursuit and moral attitude that manifested itself intensely between 1620 and 1640 and that, for diverse reasons, can be seen as preparatory to the enlightenment. Libertinism

continued and evolved well beyond these decades. However, the attitude of doubt and skepticism that are identified as its core ingredients emerged earlier on. For its first uses in history, “libertinism” refers us to Calvin (1544 and 1545), who launched an attack against the Anabaptists as a sect of unbelievers. Henceforth, throughout the sixteenth century, *libertinus* reemerges in polemical literature signifying, depreciatingly, an unbeliever. Yet, not all unbelievers or non-Christians were libertines. Polemics of the seventeenth century show the complexity and multifaceted nature of libertine writing and *status quo*. Unsurprisingly, libertinism poses the problem of categorization of thought from a historical perspective. Categories are conditioned by a unifying thought and theme, by coherence and more or less conscious structuring of ideas among a specific group of thinkers and writers. However, ideology is bound to affect classifications, and approaches to the historiographical phenomenon of libertinism have long been determined by historians’ own morality and Christian worldview. The word “libertine” continued to be used in the pejorative sense by historians from the end of the nineteenth century until well into the twentieth century. See, for example, Lucien Febvre’s *Le problème de l’incroyance* (Febvre 1942) and the influential work by René Pintard (1943). However, subsequent decennia, and especially from the 1970s on, demolished significantly this approach that was marked by a Christian moralistic mindset and referentiality (in part *Le problème de l’incroyance* (Schneider [1970] and, recently, Cavaillé’s publications, 2001, 2011, esp. 2002). The early modern *libertinus* – in Roman Antiquity, a freed, liberated slave – has since been revalued and reappraised as the one who dares to put into question established dogmata, a freethinker who reasons unstrained by theological principles, religious ethics, or any type of systematic belief. This cannot be entirely dissociated from the implications free thought bears in favor of *liberté des mœurs*, announcing eighteenth-century sexual libertinism.

Synonyms

Esprits forts; Freethought; *Libertinage érudit*; *Libertinage*

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Resulting from a specific reading culture and an intellectual cum ethical attitude – that of almost tireless criticism toward (*en*)*doxa*, credulity, and political power in place – libertine thought was first shared within a network primordially active in France and Italy, then followed by others and well into the eighteenth century. While pre-1950 studies attempted to frame the first decennia of the seventeenth century as a period of crisis of consciousness, Gregory (1981) situated libertinism back in its historical and cultural reality by reconstructing it. This did not withhold Charles-Daubert (1998) from distinguishing as a main structuring theme the intellectual desire for distinction: a distancing from the superstitious and credulous crowd and Christian morality on the one hand, and, on the other, detachment from theology and the foundations of power. Bianchi (1996) states that libertine thought is principally characterized by a wish to desacralize. Similarly, Cavaillé (2007) states that, fundamentally, *libertinage* equals religious criticism. However, much the domain of study evolved, Pintard’s seminal work is still cited today, especially for the rich repertoire it contains of biographies and primary sources located in sundry, principally French, archives and libraries. However, while the period in-between Renaissance, modern science, and mechanistic philosophy was occupied by what Pintard defined as *libertinage érudit*, this does not imply that libertines’ erudition by definition contradicted or retarded scientific thought, as suggested by Pintard (1943/ 2000), Spini (1950), Febvre (1942), Lenoble (1943). Nor does libertinism’s indebtedness to sixteenth-century critical philology and naturalism signify that it was just their Cartesian continuation.

In general terms, skeptical thought does not exclude conformism in the individual’s relation to the external world. As for the cleavage between

public and private life, scholarship of libertinism often makes a direct link with Michel de Montaigne's reflections on that matter in his *Essais* (Montaigne 2007). On account of the skeptical, and more precisely Pyrrhonian, characteristics of some major tenets in his work, the French philosopher is often seen as one of the main, if not the chief, precursors of early seventeenth-century libertine thought. Although it has been shown that Montaigne was read by some libertines, thus probably influencing certain among them, it could also be argued that that generation of libertines was chiefly prepared by a whole set of pre-Descartes figures and worked within a current of rationalism and science, critically evaluating sources and experiments, as well as questioning the religious worldview and the religious and political entanglement.

There is an interrelatedness of different approaches internal to libertinism: rationalist criticism (Naudé), skepticism (La Mothe Le Vayer), and radical atheistic naturalism (*Theophrastus redivivus*), all concurred in a redefinition of the ancient historical order based on a providential model. Together with anti-magical and anti-astrological criticism, they built a new valuation of human behavior and another consideration and reconstruction of past events. This mosaic of attitudes would later converge in Pierre Bayle's 1697 *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (Bianchi 1996).

Reformation, Philology, History

The beginnings of libertinism have often been identified with that of reformation thought and the movement that put into question, through philological approaches, the Catholic Church's institutional authority, and dogmata. Recognizing that the Mosaic Law was a text with its own history, not absolute and itself subject to discussion, emendation, and revision, implied a distinction between the religious and theological discourse on the one hand and, on the other, nature and human perception, experience, and discovery. Even before Erasmus and Rabelais, in particular through philosophers like Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino, late fifteenth-century Italian and especially Florentine

Renaissance had foregrounded the (re)discovery of non-Christian sources, the kernel of validation of non-Christian truth systems. This intellectual attitude combined with the discovery of the New World would also be at the origin of anthropology, and Montaigne, as well as La Mothe Le Vayer's curiosity for other, non-Christian cultures and beliefs, relativized divine revelation.

No writer or philosopher of the early Reformation was a free-floating neutron and their writings often had a readership that extended beyond their contemporary milieu to intellectual posterity. The popularity of Erasmus, for example, among the members of an elaborate network of French and Italian Protestants and anti-papists active during the 1550s through the early 1570s, has been extensively demonstrated (see especially Seidel Menchi 1974, 1987). In fact, from these decades on, intense exchanges between French and Italian networks would continue well into the seventeenth century and determine much of the libertine movement.

Ancient Philosophy of Nature

Harking back to the Classics as examples of free-thinking was common among libertines. But these sources also needed to be unstrapped from the Christian veil of interpretation they had received over centuries. Italians like Cesare Cremonini, Galileo, and Tommaso Campanella put into question science based on Aristotelian ideas as validated by Thomistic (theological) reasoning. It is not surprising to see libertinism linked to sixteenth-century Epicureanism and to Paracelsian thought (polymaths like Girolamo Cardano, Giordano Bruno, Machiavelli, Marin Mersenne, etc.). In his 1635 paradoxical praise of Nothing, Luigi Manzini (also a member of the Venetian *Accademia degli Incogniti*) breaks away from tradition by considering Nothing as an absolute value outside the created world and combining elements of Lucretian cosmology with theories of atomism and a plea for freedom of conscience (Ossola 2007). See the ERP article by Palmer on Epicureanism and Palmer 2017, on Renaissance reception of Epicurean ideas such as atomist physics and materialist models of nature on the one hand – ideas discovered through Cicero,

Lucretius, and Diogenes Laertius – on the one hand, and, on the other, their negative stigmatization as signs of heresy, atheism, and hedonism of all sorts, in the context of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. A materialistic tendency can be traced among philosophers of nature such as Gassendi, Ismaël Boulliau, Giambattista Vico, and Francis Glisson, but the representation of the work of Gassendi or even Vico as entirely materialistic has created caricatures.

On the meta-scientific level, the libertine questioning shared among all those figures – be it primarily philologists or principally philosophers of nature or scientists – is indebted to the debates on double truth and future contingents that took place by the end of the Middle Ages (Bianchi 2008; Landucci 2006; Bianchi and Randi 1993; Maier 1955) and pushes them further down the path of scientific discovery and historical criticism.

Networks: Public Versus Private

The mid-sixteenth century intellectual upheaval and revaluation of orthodoxy had as one of its consequences the Christian Inquisition's censoring of books as well as persecution and murdering of dissidents. This not only increased the circulation of clandestine literature, but also led to the development of libertine literature as the "art of clair-obscur" (Moreau 2007). Elusive, perplexing, and encoded language thrived especially in North-Italian private circles organized as sixteenth-century academies, but one should be aware that not each academy was a priori a circle of controversial thinkers. In those academies, the literary genre of the *impresa* (which held its origins partly in heraldry and court culture) developed into an expression of truth by reference, not to a monastic ideal or to the proclamation of One True Church, but to the worldly lives of individuals (Chayes 2019). During the first half of the seventeenth century, libertine networks were characterized by the splits of individuals who, on the one hand, were integrated parts of institutional power and, on the other hand, screened the privacy of their circles and literary cum philosophical expressions and exchanges. As focal points of networks between France and Italy one can mention the

dwelling of the Dupuy brothers in Paris and the *Accademia degli Incogniti* in Venice in the house of Gianfrancesco Loredano (Infelise 1997; Miato 1998). Nor cautious screening of private opinion from the public nor encoded language could prevent persecution, death penalties, and censorship to be exerted. Among those who were not spared were people like Giulio Cesare Vanini, burnt on the stake in 1619, Tommaso Campanella, imprisoned several times and sentenced to life imprisonment, and Ferrante Pallavicino, beheaded in Avignon in 1644.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Without reference to an extraneous, absolute, immovable truth, early seventeenth-century libertinism embraced nature's paradoxes, infinite possibilities and meanings, as well as human ignorance. In many cases, this meant the endorsement of ambiguous composition that encrypted private opinions. Although certainly driven by a desire to polemicize, the authors had the double aim to avoid the "vulgarization" of their thought and escape censorship and persecution. Historical discourse was stimulated in an innovative way by the absence (or desire thereof), within libertine critical discourse, of reference to any theological authority or religious framework.

A turning point in historical attitudes toward tyranny and democracy can be traced in Etienne de la Boétie's *Discours de la servitude volontaire* (La Boétie 2016), printed in French in 1576. According to Scévole de Sainte-Marthe in his *Eloge de la Boétie*, this treatise contained "matières un peu trop chatouilleuses et trop délicates [...] conçues avec un peu plus de liberté que la saison ne pouvait souffrir." During the eighteenth century, the Protestant Pierre Coste republished the work. A century earlier, the Venetian rabbi and skeptic Simone Luzzatto had advanced arguments against the rule of the tyrant and that of the populace in his *Socrate* (1651). A friend of the French Ambassador to Venice and a rabbinic teacher of Charles de Valliquerville, Simone Luzzatto was closely related to the libertine network that included Gabriel Naudé, Ismaël

Boulliau, Ferrante Pallavicino, and Giovanni Francesco Loredano. The *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland* (1714) by the freethinker John Toland was indebted to Luzzatto's other treatise, *Discourse on the Jews of Venice* (1638).

Impact and Legacy

The impact some libertines had on contemporary and posterior readers can be studied through the example of Paolo Sarpi. His prohibited *History of the Council of Trent* (London 1619) defends a free press and a separation between Church and State: despite its prohibition, its impact on Reformed Europe has been called “explosive” (Barbierato 2015). Sarpi had a considerable readership during the Seventeenth century: he was read, for example, by Thomas Hobbes, and from 1673 on, Arconati Lamberti and Gregorio Leti (Protestants who fled Italy) rekindled considerably the interest in Sarpi (Leti 1661–1662 and 1668; Infelise 2009). His thought inspired intellectuals and statesmen well beyond the Eighteenth century, as is illustrated through John Adams' famous citation in a letter to Thomas Jefferson. Metlica pointed out how the Italian libertines Pallavicino, Leti, and Marana influenced French Enlightenment authors (Montesquieu, Charles Guidon, Alain René Lesage) and how the libertine pamphlet announced the *conte philosophique* (Metlica 2011, 2013).

For the definition of libertinism, some see a Protestant-biased descent from the pamphleteer Gregorio Leti to Pierre Bayle. Leti left us *La strage dei riformati innocenti*, which was translated into French as *Le putanisme de Rome ou le conclave général des putains de cette cour* (1668). Others attribute an ancestry of the construction of libertine's image as object of controversy to the work of the Jesuit François Garasse, *La Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps, ou prétendus tels* (1623; see Moreau 2007).

Cavaillé (2007) emphasizes modern scholarship's impossibility to subtract itself from libertinism's polemical quintessence. He analyzed the nineteenth-century bias that spilled over well into

the twentieth century. In fact, for his appreciation of libertinage and libertinism, Pintard weighed heavily on his nineteenth-century precursors, the first to take up the topic of libertinism as a historiographical category. But they did so with a teleological aim: to prove this seventeenth-century movement as precursory to the Enlightenment, they judged negatively the (seemingly) ambivalence of those libertines who rejected religion and political authority while being infatuated or otherwise involved with religious topics and political institutions.

Over half a century after Pintard, Sergio Zoli (1997) produced a henceforth-indispensable guide to sources on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century libertine Europe for those working on movements of freethinking of this period. Besides offering a deconstruction of different historiographical approaches that became too entangled and enmeshed with moral thought, Cavaillé (2019a, b) still contributes to the field with a bibliography on the topic from Zoli (1997) until the present day.

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intertwined. The deepest roots of such contributions can be found in Greek authors, such as Aristides, Aristotle, Plato, Polybius, and Xenophon, as well as in Roman ones, such as Cicero and Livy. More recent roots can be found in Cola di Rienzo and Francis Petrarch. Liberty is conceived as city-state autonomy, and a free people is one that is *sibi princeps*, i.e., not under the jurisdiction of foreign powers and is living under its own laws. To maintain its freedom, a community needs to defend itself from foreign enemies. Salutati and Bruni defend Florence by celebrating its liberty and virtue as heir of the Roman republic. Liberty must be defended also from domestic enemies, i.e., from tyrants. Their works and those of others point to an intense Renaissance discussion of what a tyrant is and whether it is right to kill him. Within the discussion on liberty, an important role was played by Machiavelli. For Machiavelli, liberty consists in the ability of the people to make their own laws and to consent to government policy, promoting the common good. Liberty occurs within a republic, but not necessarily, and should be preserved at all costs.

Synonyms

Freedom (political); Self-determination (political)

Liberty in the Renaissance: Political

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Abstract

Liberty is an important issue in Renaissance political thinking, yet it often remains implicit in the texts or, when explicit, is not addressed directly. The main contributions on this topic are those by Coluccio Salutati, Leonardo Bruni, Alamanno Rinuccini, Étienne de La Boétie, and, above all, Niccolò Machiavelli. These contributions are developed in works where history, politics, and literature are

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Renaissance authors consider liberty an important issue; nevertheless, the topic is usually implicit in their texts or, when explicit, it is treated in connection with other issues. For their contributions on the topic, one should mention at least Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), Alamanno Rinuccini (1426–1499), Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498), Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), Étienne de La Boétie (1530–1563), and, above all, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). In their works, history, politics, and literature are intertwined. For this reason, one cannot find a straightforward philosophical approach to liberty

in Renaissance authors. Philosophy of politics is a discipline that has some of its modern roots in Machiavelli's texts, yet not even there its focused expression.

As is known, Greek and Roman classics are the sources of inspiration for Renaissance authors. For instance, Salutati quotes from Latin (especially Cicero) and Greek authors, but it is noticeable that he uses unusual sources for his time, such as Plutarch and Ptolemy. Bruni translated (and was influenced by) Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* and some of Plato's dialogues, such as the *Apology*. His knowledge of the ancient city-states of Greece led him to consider Florence as a new Athens. His *Laudatio* of Florence is inspired by the *Panathenaic Oration* of Aelius Aristides. Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum* (see V, I, 34), as well as Aristotle's discussion of the republic in the *Politics* are important sources for Rinuccini's discussion of liberty. Machiavelli's works show a deep influence from Aristotle, Plutarch, Polybius, Frontinus, and Vegetius, among others. Livy holds a special place. Indeed, Machiavelli openly refers to Livy in his *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, a commentary where one finds almost all his ideas on liberty. In writing his masterpiece, *De principatibus* (or *Il principe*), Machiavelli uses a literary genre of political writing that has its most famous example in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia: The Education of Cyrus* and many instantiations during the Middle Ages. This genre of mirrors or advice books for rulers (*principum specula*) contains examples of what to do or what to avoid. If these are the deepest roots grounding Renaissance authors' thought, there are some others that are less deep and yet not less important. They can be found at least in Cola di Rienzo (1313–1354) and his dream to ensure the freedom of the Italian cities through the *Romana libertas* and in Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), who strongly influenced Salutati and Bruni.

In Italy, the pressing political events of the age placed liberty at the top of the agenda. It is in fact the central concern of the Italian states to preserve their liberty, i.e., the city-state autonomy. In this sense, a city is considered free if it is *sibi princeps*, because it lives under its own laws and not under

the jurisdiction of foreign powers. The danger comes, from time to time, from the other (city-) states or from the Empire or, more generally, from the feudal order. Important antecedents can be found in the fall of the Duke of Athens (1343), a ruler of Florence considered a tyrant, and in the war of the Eight Saints (1375–1378), fought under the motto "*Libertas*." Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that the most important Renaissance studies on liberty are by Italian authors or were deeply influenced by their writings. The *Discours de la servitude volontaire* (1576), written by Étienne de La Boétie, a close friend of Michel de Montaigne, may seem an exception but only if one does not consider that the young Étienne entered in contact with Italian humanism, probably through the influence of the Florentine Niccolò Gaddi. When considering the authors outside this tradition, it is easier to discuss why liberty is not on their agenda rather than to find their implicit positive contents on the topic. This could be done, for example, with Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) or with Jean Bodin's discussion of sovereignty (*Six Books of the Commonwealth*, 1576).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The fight for liberty during the Renaissance period had two fronts. The first concerned the threat from outside and consisted mostly of the conflict between the city-states of Italy, although it often also involved powers like France, Spain, and the Empire. Giangaleazzo Visconti's politics has been particularly studied: during the last decade of the fourteenth century, Giangaleazzo expanded Milan's domains, threatening Florentine freedom. Only the unexpected death of the "tyrant" (1402), as Florence called him, saved the city. This was the time of Coluccio Salutati who, in his letters as chancellor of Florence, celebrates the freedom and virtue of Florence, heir of the Roman republic. His position stresses the value of the republic but uses this word in the Latin sense of "*res publica*," which does not necessarily mean the republican form of the government. Close to Salutati, but presenting Florence as a republican city, was Leonardo Bruni (see his

Laudatio Florentinae urbis). Freedom consists for him in the equality of the citizens before the law and in their participation in public office. The two authors consider Florence as a bulwark of the *libertas Italiae*. This, at least, is the perspective to fully understand their engagement for the *Florentina libertas*. Their works are central to Hans Baron's influential *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (1955). The book gave rise to a wide discussion, stressing the importance of the Visconti's failed attempt to extend the power of Milan to Florence. Baron identified the year 1402 as a turning point for the development of civic humanism in Florence. Even though many of the conclusions of the book are controversial and have been rebutted, Baron's idea that civic humanism inspired modern democratic values still stimulates scholarship.

The second front of the fight for liberty is internal to the city-state. It regards the need to prevent a single citizen from gaining so much power as to become a new tyrant. Historical examples of such a struggle for power in Italy can be easily found in Francesco Sforza and Cesare Borgia. A different path was taken by Lorenzo il Magnifico and more generally the Medici family, at least up until the end of the fifteenth century. Lorenzo formally preserved the Florentine Republic while at the same time maintaining de facto full political control. On the topic of the tyrant, the aging Salutati writes his famous *De tyranno* (1400), considered by many a "problematic book." It is in fact still a matter of debate how the defender of the freedom of Florence and the promoter of the republican propaganda of his city against the "tyrant" of Milan could defend the damnation of Brutus and Cassius, guilty of tyrannicide. This, at least, is their fate in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* (*Inf.* XXXIV, 61–67). Furthermore, Salutati rejects Cicero's critical opinions about Caesar. The author distinguishes between the origin of the name "tyrant," which is neutral, and its later association with an oppressive way of ruling and abusing the power. Salutati discusses Gregory the Great's definition of a tyrant as someone ruling a commonwealth without right. He adds that the tyrant either has taken possession of the commonwealth without any

title, or rules unjustly, disregarding laws and rights. Starting from this definition and on the basis of some historical justifications, Salutati does not consider Caesar as a tyrant because, apart from how he gained power, he was a just man in many aspects. Therefore, Salutati condemns Brutus and Cassius, whose acts were unjust and driven by pride and the desire for their own glory. Salutati also states that "there is no greater liberty than obedience to the just commands of a virtuous prince" (IV, 16), so that principality and liberty do not seem incompatible.

Very distant from Salutati's line of reasoning is Alamanno Rinuccini's *Dialogus de libertate* (1479). This work, written against Lorenzo de' Medici, accused him of being a tyrant. It must be noted that Rinuccini had fallen in disgrace with the Medici and was excluded from the political life of his city. The dialogue presents and discusses a definition of liberty as the power to live freely within the limits set by law and custom. He insists: to obey the law is the highest freedom. He uses this premise to take a stance against Lorenzo, seen as one who sets himself above (and against) the law, abolishing political equality and free speech.

While Rinuccini was a victim of the Medici family, Girolamo Savonarola was its mortal enemy. A charismatic Dominican friar, Savonarola combined republican fervor with the call for moral and spiritual reform. His sermons present freedom as the outcome of moral reform in the direction of Christian life. But Savonarola's terrible fate (he was tortured and burnt at the stake) put an end to the idealistic way of thinking about politics.

The Dominican's fall was followed by the political fortune of Niccolò Machiavelli. *Il principe*, however, came after and probably because of its author's later political misfortune, when the Medici family returned to Florence in 1512. This work is not a literary exercise, a Utopian phantasy, or a moral reflection. It is rather based, in the author's intentions, on the observation of human behavior. He studies the contemporary political reality and learns lessons from the wisdom of the observers of the past. His method – a mixture of rules of thumb, observation, historical knowledge, and general

sagacity – and his tone are empirical. His conclusions have a cynical, distrustful, and pessimistic tone. Liberty is often identified by Machiavelli with republican institutions, in antithesis to tyranny (see the *Discorsi* and the *Istorie fiorentine*). It consists of the ability of people to make their own laws and to consent to government policy promoting the common good (*Discorsi*, II, 2, 12). A free city is very dynamic economically and politically, much more than an oppressed one (*Discorsi*, I, 58, 30; II, 2). Liberty should be preserved at all costs, whether or not it involves justice or injustice, pity or cruelty, and praise or blame (*Discorsi*, III, 41). Machiavelli stresses this point, claiming that Brutus was right to kill his own children to save liberty in Rome (*Discorsi*, III, 3, 2). To defend liberty, one needs good armies, competent generals, and appropriate strategies. These can and must be used also to gain and control the domains that allow internal freedom (*Discorsi*, I, 1, 15). It is much better if the army is composed of citizens (rather than mercenaries), as this will reinforce civic virtue. At the same time, the martial spirit of the army will be strengthened. Inner moral strength, loyalty, public spirit, civic sense, and dedication to state security are needed for the peace and the glory of the *patria*. These are the virtues of a secular, humanistic, naturalistic morality. A corrupt state, on the contrary, cannot remain free for long (*Discorsi*, I, 16 and 17). Besides, citizen armies are more motivated and loyal than mercenaries or troops led by foreign generals. In order to maintain its stability, a republic also needs good orders, i.e., good constitutions, laws, institutions, and good methods of governance (*Discorsi*, I, 49). They must preempt or punish calumnies, honor those who are deserving, and limit the power of individuals in charge, for example, by fixing a time limit for their exercise of power. Also, guardians and institutions are needed to check if there are citizens attempting to jeopardize freedom. Public accusations and popular verdicts will stop ill-disposed citizens from threatening the state. This will help to maintain peace, controlling the mood of the people, which could otherwise result in violence and riots (*Discorsi*, I, 7). Religion is also very important (*Discorsi*, I, 11), so much so that, as he writes, “there can be no greater indication of the ruin of a state than to see a disregard for its divine worship” (*Discorsi*, I,

12). Here Machiavelli shows that he has accepted and made his own one of Savonarola’s ideas, the connection between religion and liberty. Of course, the general background of the two is profoundly different. Indeed, Machiavelli thinks that religion is important only because it gives the citizens reasons to place the common good before their own interests.

In most cases, the existence of factions is an internal enemy of freedom for Machiavelli. In fact, factions usually bring about internal weakness and corruption. But divisions are not necessarily negative. For example, the division between patricians and plebeians in ancient Rome gave rise to the laws in favor of liberty, so that in the end even the tumults between the two groups can be considered positive and should not be condemned uncritically (*Discorsi*, I, 4). The constitution must be flexible enough to allow conflict between opposing social forces, wherein each part can find a proper compensation. Machiavelli’s praise of divisions has often been considered one of his major contributions. This, at least, is the line of the “republican” Machiavelli, especially in his *Discorsi* and, to a lesser extent, in *Dell’arte della guerra*.

However, as some authors underline, Machiavelli’s thinking on liberty cannot be simply equated with republicanism. He connects liberty with “certain personal rights and community benefits that characterize free states regardless of their constitution” (Colish 1971, 345–46). The compatibility depends on a notion of liberty as protection of private rights. And yet there are limitations: it is difficult to have liberty in a monarchy because monarchy tends to be despotic and tyrannical. There are rare exceptions, for example, if the ruler has popular support or establishes good laws, promoting harmony and welfare. Few men desire freedom to wield power: most people desire freedom to gain security (*Discorsi*, I, 16). For this reason, if a prince can control and give honors to the first kind of men and security to the others, it will be easy for him to maintain power. People tend to be conservative and are inclined to maintain institutions and customs they are used to. The consequence is that a people used to live under a prince will find it difficult to maintain their

freedom if it is suddenly set free. Regarding the tyrant, Machiavelli disagrees with Salutati: Brutus is the “father of the Roman liberty” (e.g., *Discorsi*, III, 1), the liberator of his people. On this line, La Boétie, in his *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, considers Brutus and Cassius defenders of freedom, brave as very few. He stresses, in fact, the responsibilities of the people, usually passive and weak in letting the tyrant rule for his own advantage and for the people’s misery.

Impact and Legacy

The *fortuna* of Machiavelli’s ideas on liberty is deeply bound up with the *fortuna* of Machiavelli’s thought *tout court*. He has been studied and discussed, criticized, or appreciated by politicians (e.g., Frederik the Great’s *Anti-Machiavel* and Benito Mussolini’s “Preludio al Principe”), historians (see, e.g., Pocock’s monumental *The Machiavellian Moment* and his idea of an “Atlantic republican tradition” or Skinner’s *Liberty before Liberalism*), and political philosophers (e.g., Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Fichte, Hegel). The idea of “*Florentina libertas*,” conceived as a republican form of government, ends with the mature Francesco Guicciardini. Against the republican thought of authors such as Bruni, Guicciardini opposes a disenchanting view: “I have often pondered on the fact that this word ‘liberty’ is frequently used more as a disguise and an excuse by those who want to conceal their cupidity and ambition than because men in fact have a natural desire for it” (*Dialogue on the Government of Florence*, 35). Furthermore, Guicciardini, (who was so close to the Medici family that he served as Alessandro’s adviser), defends principality as a form of liberty, since Florence is ruled by the Medici family, that is, by the Florentines.

Cross-References

- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- [Salutati, Coluccio](#)
- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

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Liberum Arbitrium

► [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

Liceti, Fortunio

Born: 1577, Rapallo

Died: 1657, Padua

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Abstract

Liceti is the last of the great Paduan Aristotelians. His extensive works cover all areas of

natural philosophy, and while Liceti is always careful to give full expositions of the diverging strands of Aristotle's interpretation on any given subject, he does not hesitate to use traditional conceptual frameworks to develop innovative theories. One example of this is his conception of rational souls as immaterial but quantitative, extended beings. To explicate this conception, he uses an analogy between rational souls and the theory of light developed by the eclectic medieval natural philosopher Albert the Great, who argued that the dependence of light on a source from which it arises through emanative causation renders light existentially independent from the medium that it illuminates. Another innovative aspect of Liceti's thought can be found in his version of the traditional theory of spontaneous generation. Unlike any thinker before him, he held that the substantial forms of living beings arising through spontaneous generation could be understood as material structures that arise through the completing of previously existing, but essentially different material structures.

Biography

Fortunio Liceti is an eclectic Aristotelian natural philosopher who held professorships in philosophy at the Universities of Pisa (from 1605), Padua (from 1609), and Bologna (from 1637) and took up a chair in theoretical medicine at the University of Padua in 1645. His intellectual autobiography (Liceti 1634) lists 24 published books, some of them very extensive, as well as 25 unpublished book manuscripts, some of which were published afterwards (see Lohr 1978, 540–541; Ongaro 2005). His writings cover all fields of natural philosophy, with a particular emphasis on biological and medical issues (for overviews, see Ongaro 1964, 1965). In particular, he is the author of a widely cited work on monsters (Liceti 1616b; see Céard 1977, 442–447, 451–456; Hanafi 2000, 34–47). From a philosophical point of view, two of his most original contributions relate to the theory of spontaneous generation (see Castellani

1968; Hirai 2007, sect. 3, 2011) and the metaphysics of immaterial extension (see Blank 2013). With respect to the former issue, he proposes an analysis of the notion of substantial form of spontaneously generated living beings in terms of material structures that are in a rudimentary way present in inanimate objects and only require completion through external causes. With respect to the latter issue, he can be seen as a precursor of Henry More's famous view that immaterial beings are extended but indivisible.

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Liceti interprets Aristotle's conception of the soul as implying a dualistic conception of the human soul. He maintains that in the operation of the vegetative and sensitive parts of the human soul nothing immaterial or supernatural is involved. "For me, a human being is a natural and material body; hence, it is subject to natural passions arising out of matter, to generation and death; its soul, therefore, is generated out of matter, and is mortal . . ." (Liceti 1602, 301). At the same time, he accepts Aristotle's view that the rational soul is divine and enters from the outside (see Aristotle, *De gen. an.* II, 3, 736b27–29). Consequently, he understands the human soul as a composite being: "The intellect is not the form of the entire human nature but a part of such a form, which is the human soul, having a composite nature constituted by intellect, vegetative soul, and sensitive soul . . ." (ibid., 300). Liceti maintains that material souls and organic bodies stand in a relation that he calls "co-extension." For instance, with respect to nutrition, he argues that the vegetative soul is where the operations occur, of which the soul is the primary efficient cause since, according to Aristotle, all physical action is by contact; moreover, everything that is nourished is nourished with respect to the smallest part of its body (Liceti 1616a, 12; see Aristotle, *Aristotle, Phys.*, VII, 10–12; VIII, 33; *De an.*, II, 3–4). Likewise, the sensitive soul must be coextensive with the organism because the proper functioning of the vegetative soul depends on the proper functioning of the sensitive soul (Liceti 1607,

137–138; for the role of material souls in Liceti's theory of sexual generation, see Blank 2010).

However, Liceti deviates from the traditional view that takes immaterial beings to be non-quantitative. Rather, he maintains that the rational soul, too, is coextensive with the body that it animates. This is so, he argues, because the proper functioning of the vegetative and sensitive parts of the human soul depends on the proper functioning of the rational faculties (Liceti 1616a, 40). Still, he takes immaterial souls, in contrast to material souls, to be indivisible. To explain why this is so, he invokes an analogy between immaterial souls and light (for his later theory of light, see Zoubov 1936). The relevant analogy makes use of a combination of ideas that Liceti derives from Albert the Great: (1) the view that light can be understood as a quality inherent in the source of light (*lux*) and (2) the view that light can be understood as a quality that derives by means of emanative causation from *lux* and is present in an illuminated medium (*lumen*) (see Liceti 1607, 68–69; Liceti 1640, 115–116). *Lumen* is an immaterial being that is extended without being divisible: "Since *lumen* in the perspicuous body is not there as an indivisible point but rather is coextensive with every dimension of the perspicuous body" (Liceti 1616a, 54). Still, due to the emanation relation between *lux* and *lumen*, *lumen* is existentially independent of the perspicuous body: "[*L*]umen is said to be external to the air whose assisting form it is since it does not depend on the air, even though it actualizes the innermost parts of the air" (Liceti 1629, 151). This is why *lumen* is not moved "through the motion of the body, and is not corrupted through the corruption of the body . . ." (ibid., 167). Consequently, it also cannot be divided through the division of the illuminated body. Likewise, mental operations can be understood as emanating from the mind and, therefore, as being independent of the changes in the body that they animate.

Innovative and Original Aspects

While Liceti's conception of immaterial extension thus can be understood as a creative application of

existing theories of light to the analysis of the quantitative nature of the rational soul, Liceti's version of the theory of spontaneous generation was seen by his contemporaries as a more radical departure from all existing theories in this field. Liceti's theory of spontaneous generation shares with many other Aristotelian positions the view that a composite substance is constituted by an organic body and a substantial form that functions as the principle of unity of the organic body. At the same time, in contrast to what everyone else held, Liceti believes that a substantial form allows for a kind of composition: "Nevertheless it does not have a simply simple nature; rather, as all souls, so the forms of mixed bodies on earth have a nature that is composed out of different essential part; . . . such that every form is essentially constituted by its genus and a specific difference . . ." (Liceti 1618, 267). He suggests that such a conception of the composition of a substantial form makes it possible to understand substantial forms as the outcome of a kind of augmentation. He argues that in matter there are "rudiments of form" that contain the generic nature of individual forms but that lack the specific differences characteristic of individual forms. As he puts it, "in matter there pre-exists a rudiment of the future form, which is the generic nature of this form, subsisting under a privation opposed to the form; the efficient cause of the form that adds the specific difference of form is said both to constitute form and to bring about generation" (ibid., 266). Liceti is careful to point out that "[t]his rudiment of form is not truly a form but rather its generic nature" (ibid.). In Liceti's view, the task of the efficient cause of spontaneous generation is only to add the specific difference to constitute an individual substantial form. Thus, Liceti understands what is potentially in matter as being neither a mere accident nor a complete form. Rather, he takes it to be a material structure that needs to be completed in order to be capable of acting as a substantial form. Also, the transition from the generic rudiment of form to the fully individualized form of a living being involves the occurrence of something genuinely new, thus accounting for the intuition that spontaneous generation is something other than the development

of some preexisting composite that remains the same individual.

Cross-References

- [Light Theory](#)
- [Monsters in Renaissance Science](#)

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Liddel, Duncan

Born: 1561, Aberdeen, Scotland

Died: 17 December 1613, Aberdeen, Scotland

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Abstract

The Scottish polymath Duncan Liddel has received significant recent attention for his international scholarly career. Trained after the humanist model, Liddel interested himself in contemporary developments in mathematics and astronomy. He is considered the first to have taught the astronomical systems of Tycho Brahe and Nicolaus Copernicus alongside the older Ptolemaic system. Involved in the Helmstedt *Hofmannstreit*, he influenced the development of Germany's Melancthonian inheritance. He published many successful medical texts, and his library is still held by the University of Aberdeen.

Biography

After his early studies in Aberdeen, Duncan Liddel traveled to Frankfurt an der Oder by way of Gdańsk. There he met his countryman John Craig, who provided him with the means for his further education and who remained a lifelong friend. Liddel studied in Frankfurt and Breslau, where he learned the Copernican system from Paul Wittich, before turning his attention to teaching. Following a brief time in Frankfurt, he began teaching mathematics and astronomy at Rostock University, becoming close friends with the renowned humanist Johann Caselius. During this time, he met Tycho Brahe and learned of his astronomical hypotheses. Through the influence of Caselius, Liddel obtained a position teaching mathematics at Helmstedt University in 1591. Having pursued an interest in medicine throughout his academic career, Liddel finally received a doctor of

medicine degree from Helmstedt University in 1596 and became a professor of medicine in 1600. He was dean of the philosophy faculty in 1599 and became prorector of the university in 1604. Having accumulated a comfortable fortune, Liddel returned to his homeland in 1607. Before his death, he bestowed substantial grants upon the University of Aberdeen and Marischal College.

Though relatively unknown today, Liddel was in his time a renowned professor of mathematics and of medicine. Having pursued his academic career in Germany rather than his native Scotland, Liddel is seen as an example of the scholarly networks that extended between Scotland and the continent in the late sixteenth century. As a polymath, Liddel represents the connections and conflicts between the various emerging sciences of the late Renaissance, especially astronomy and medicine, as well as the traditional sciences of theology and philosophy. A foreigner seeking his fortune in Northern Germany, Liddel's career also highlights the political and economic nature of scholarly activity, including teaching, publishing, and patronage.

With his broad quotation of Aristotle, Galen, and Hippocrates, as well as of Latin and Greek literature, Liddel places himself solidly within the humanist tradition, but he also maintained an eager interest in the innovative astronomy and mathematics of his time. According to a letter written by Caselius, Liddel was the first to teach Copernicus and Brahe alongside Ptolemy in his astronomy lectures. He even mixed these newer ideas with his own hypotheses, which led to a charge by Brahe that Liddel was stealing credit for Brahe's work. Liddel seems to have been interested in these systems primarily on a theoretical rather than practical level. He taught astronomy as a branch of mathematics and considered the various cosmological schemes from a mathematical perspective, not according to their physical tenability.

Liddel became involved in the *Hofmannstreit* at Helmstedt University, a debate over the relationship between philosophy and theology. Through his writings on that controversy, Liddel contributed to the development of Germany's

Melanchthonian inheritance, especially with regard to the role of natural light in philosophy and the central importance of mathematics among the disciplines. His medical works were very successful, reprinted in many editions, and highly regarded long after his death. He never subscribed to the innovative and popular ideas of Paracelsus, though he owned and carefully annotated several of his works, and he put forward the traditional ideas of Galenism.

Liddel is remembered at Aberdeen by a bronze plaque in St. Nicholas Kirk. The University of Aberdeen holds his personal library, which contains one of the three surviving copies of Copernicus's *Commentariolus*, transcribed by Liddel himself.

Cross-References

- [Astronomy](#)
- [Copernicanism](#)
- [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Geocentrism](#)
- [Martini, Cornelius](#)
- [Melanchthon, Philipp](#)

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Life in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

The concept of life has always served as an idea integrating thoughts on this world and the afterlife, on the physical and the spiritual existence. Thus, it has been a subject in the humanities as well as in the natural sciences. As a consequence, the term has always been ambiguous. For the natural sciences, Aristotle laid the foundation by identifying functions such as nutrition, growth, reproduction, and perception as criteria for the definition of life, while recognizing that this plurality of criteria resulted in “being alive”, meaning different things to different beings (thus turning the term into a “homonym”). In the Middle Ages, the concept was integrated into Christian theological thought and took on a strongly dualistic meaning: the “real” or “true life” was now the eternal life, while the “mortal life” of animals and nonbelievers became a second, lesser category. Consequently, Christian thinkers showed little interest in the efforts to explain the phenomena of life through the natural sciences. This situation changed in the twelfth century with translations of Aristotle’s works into Latin which brought attention back to the organic aspects of life. Scholars opened their minds to the

knowledge of craftsmen and artisans such that the concept of life developed within a complex network of communication between individuals from theoretical and more practical backgrounds. By this movement, physiology was gradually taken out of theological and medical contexts and considered in its own right. With the emergence of the natural sciences in the early seventeenth century, mechanistic and quantitative analyses were introduced into the study of living beings. While trying to explain the processes of life mechanically, most authors of the time retained the Aristotelian idea of living beings as substantial forms.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The concept of life has a long-standing tradition of gathering and absorbing many disparate aspects of (human) existence. It is a subject of the natural sciences as much as of philosophy, history, and religious thought. Since Antiquity, “life” has been a well-established category in the natural sciences, and, at the same time, a widely used concept for the description of individual human biographies as a unity connected to aspirations and values. Aristotle, for example, already touched on the descriptive-evaluative ambiguity of the concept when he claimed in his *Politics* that “there is some element of value contained even in the mere state of being alive” (*Politics* 1278b26). This value was expressed, according to Aristotle, in the fact that in their desire for life, humans were willing to suffer as if life in and of itself included some kind of happiness. Thus, Aristotle attaches value not only to an individual course of life (*bios*) but to sheer life itself (*zoe*). Within the natural sciences, the concept carries further ambiguities, describing, for example, a general mode of being (a form of existence depending on the activities of the existing entity), a state of an individual being (alive vs. dead), or a sum of actions and experiences (the life of X).

The Renaissance concept of life draws heavily on Aristotelian thought. In *De anima*, Aristotle

established living beings as a distinct ontological category – they were not conceived as bodies with the accidental property of being alive, rather “life” was their essence, or irreducible mode of being. Therefore, inanimate machines and man-made automata could not serve as explanatory models for living beings. Aristotle generally agreed with Plato in that the ability to move was a key sign of life, and that movement and therefore life was made possible by the soul. However, the soul is not life itself, it rather is the principle that moves the body and thus makes life possible; its relation to the body, as Aristotle wrote, is like the relation of a wax figure’s shape to the wax which gives expression to the shape without actually being the shape. The life of a being was described as not existing independently of the bodily functions but as anchored in them in an analogous way in which seeing is connected to the eye (*De anima* 412b10). Thus, the soul of a living being has been interpreted as to its organization or organizing principle (Quarantotto 2010).

Furthermore, Aristotle determined certain bodily functions such as nutrition, growth, reproduction, and perception as criteria for a definition of life. Since animals and plants do not share all the life functions – for example, plants were not seen to have perception – life means something different to different beings. To Aristotle, the concept of life was fundamentally heterogeneous, and he explicitly called the term “homonymous” (*Topics* 148a).

In the Middle Ages, this heterogeneous concept was integrated into Christian theological thought and took on a strongly dualistic meaning: the “real” or “true life” was now the life in God, the eternal life, while the “mortal life” of animals and nonbelievers became a second, lesser category, that meant solely being alive without the hope of salvation (also called the “life of the flesh” in Christian texts). This devaluation of earthly existence led some Medieval thinkers such as Meister Eckhart to even deny “true life” to all earthly creatures because their origin and purpose were external to them (due to the act of creation by God), whereas true vitality was conceived to be self-sufficient, with cause and effect within itself. Thus, the concept of “life” as derived

by Aristotle from the vital functions of the body dissolves into the idea of a Christian soul and divine principle. This subtraction of the organic functions has been called “divinization” or, in a secular context, even “depletion” of the concept of life (Ingensiep 2001, p. 141).

This shift towards the divine sphere is remarkable because it means that the concept no longer serves to describe actual objects in nature – living beings – but has gained a strong evaluative aspect; life was seen as a divine gift rather than an explanatory principle. This may help to understand why earlier Christian thinkers showed little interest in the efforts to explain the phenomena of life by the natural sciences.

Innovative and Original Aspects

From the twelfth century onwards, Latin translations of Aristotle’s works led to a long period of philological and philosophic debate on Aristotelian thought. This brought attention back to the organic aspects of life and paved the way for a new type of thinking more interested in the secular workings of the world. Scholars opened their minds to the knowledge of craftsmen and artisans organized in guilds who traditionally passed on their knowledge orally. At the same time, those confronted with the practical side of the medical faculties, namely pharmacists and surgeons, began writing encyclopedic treatises, first of all on herbs and anatomy. Now, the concept of life developed within a complex network of communication between individuals from theoretical as well as more hands-on backgrounds. From this exchange of knowledge and ideas between “practitioners” and academics emerged new models to explain the functioning of living beings.

By 1500, this combination of practical needs and scientific accuracy resulted in a new figure, the scientist-artist, with Leonardo da Vinci as a prime example. The detailed, almost technical drawings he made of the internal organs which he studied by actually dissecting human bodies set a precedent for an empirically tested and precisely described anatomy, which provided the basis for calling traditional physiology into question.

A milestone in this critical revision was Andreas Vesalius’ illustrated anatomy book *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543). Drawing on his hands-on experience as a dissector and anatomist at the University of Padua, he found and corrected hundreds of errors in the anatomical teachings of the antique authority Galen. Antique tradition, however, held such a sway over European learning that Vesalius did not initially dare to doubt Galen’s description of blood passing through the septum of the heart, although he could not find any passageways. Only in the second edition of the *Fabrica*, 1555, did he privilege his own observation before tradition even in such an important matter.

In general, the classical Greek concept of life lost some of its importance during the Renaissance. Self-preservation was now seen as the main characteristic of all living beings. Paracelsus, for example, called life a “certain embalming substance” (*mumia balsamita*) that keeps the body from deteriorating (*De vita longa*, 1526–1527, p. 249). Thus, the individual body itself is not alive as such, but retains life as something which resides and grows in the body and is eventually passed on. This notion of life not as an organized structure or as a property, but as matter, like a chemical substance, was widespread during the sixteenth century. It formed the basis for the thinking in analogies and harmonies, which meant that the human body was a “microcosm” that corresponded with the whole of the universe, the “macrocosm,” since both were made from the same substance and were governed by the same laws.

Early in the seventeenth century, physiology was taken out of theological and medical contexts and considered in its own right. Galileo’s friend Santorio Santorio was the first to introduce quantitative methods into the study of human physiological processes (*De medicina statica*, 1614). William Harvey followed his lead by measuring the amount of blood flowing within the body, which led him to discover the circulation of blood in humans and animals (*Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus*, 1628). This revolutionary new idea was confirmed by Marcello Malpighi by the use of

a new piece of technology, the microscope, enabling him to see and describe red blood cells and capillary vessels (*De pulmonibus*, 1661).

Consequently, seventeenth-century physiology became dominated by a mechanistic interpretation of the processes of life, programmatically formulated by René Descartes. By comparing physiological processes with simple mechanical and hydraulic devices such as levers, gears, pipes, and pumps, he replaced the idea of life as substance with the image of life as clockwork. Thus, living beings could be analyzed just like any other material body. Descartes explicitly declared in his posthumously published *Traité de l'homme* that organic functions are the result of the disposition of the organs the same way the movement of a clock or machine results from the arrangement of its cogs and wheels (1632, p. 202). This also meant that living beings were no longer regarded as a unified body or entity, but as a structured system with distinct parts working hand in hand to sustain the functioning of the system. As a consequence, the concept of life as an ontological category or an irreducible mode of being, in this mechanistic view, disappears from the natural sciences.

Impact and Legacy

Descartes' renunciation of the soul as an explanation for life was immensely fertile as it liberated the scientific research of life from the obstacles of the traditional metaphysics of the soul. During the seventeenth century, the idea that it is the reciprocal relationship between the parts of the organic body that really constitutes life processes gained popularity. Matter was considered alive only in as much as it was well-organized like an automaton. The analogy between living beings and machines was not necessarily meant to be deprecatory, as it was also used to point out the admirable smooth cooperation between the various parts of the living body. In 1644, Kenelm Digby marveled at the "variety [that] should be in one thing; whose unity and being what it is, should depend on the harmony of the severall differing partes, and should be destroyed by their separation." He stresses the

necessity of the parts to "conspire together" in order to uphold the complex functions of the living body as a whole (1644, pp. 205, 208). All in all, this is an analysis that works without a central life principle, such as the soul, because life is not an effect of the workings of a higher power but of a causality distributed across the components of a system.

However, the functional organization of different parts of a machine-like system was not the ultimate condition of life for all seventeenth-century authors. In 1659, Henry More, a Platonist from Cambridge, emphasized the role of specifically predisposed physical matter in the generation of life. The "plastical power," as More called the vivifying principle, needs "duly-prepared Matter" in order to organize it into life (1659, p. 46).

Late seventeenth-century post-Cartesians searched for a middle ground between Descartes' mechanical reductionism and the Aristotelian substantial dualism of living and nonliving beings. Charles Perrault, for example, in his *Mécanique des animaux* (1683) explained the animals' life functions in a mechanistic way, but explicitly separated animals from mere machine as beings with emotions and a soul – a soul that drives the animal machine and enables it to function as a living being (1683, p. 329). Thus, by retaining the idea of living beings as essential substances, the dualism of the living and the nonliving was maintained on an ontological level, while it has been given up on the level of explaining the processes of life.

For much of the Middle and early-modern ages, the position of the concept of life either as an object of the natural sciences or a qualitative value in a religious or cultural view remained undecided. Johannes Clauberg in his *Logica vetus et nova* (1654) calls the concept explicitly "vague" and "uncertain" (1654, p. 877). He cautions his readers to examine the term critically as it did not differentiate accurately between a physical and spiritual or intellectual dimension; it was applied to too many heterogeneous phenomena and did not suit the Cartesian ideal of clear and precise cognition. In general, it can be observed that the concept of life underwent an increasing secularization during the seventeenth century: its

religious and transcendent aspects lost momentum and seemed to disappear behind the rise of a purely natural scientific meaning of the term. However, there was also an increasing secular use of the term in its former theological sense as can be seen in Clauberg when he calls the act of thinking “life” (1656, p. 679) – as do other authors such as Spinoza who defines intelligence as the “life of the mind” (1677, IV, App. c. 5).

Cross-References

- [Generation in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Organism in Renaissance Sciences](#)

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Light Theory

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Abstract

Renaissance advancements in light theory were grounded in innovative approaches to optics and ray theory by both scientists of the Arabic-speaking world as well as the great Scholastic philosophers who incorporated their discoveries into the edifice of Western proto-science. Heavenly lights – stars, planets, the sun, and virtually any body that transited the sky – were slowly evolving from religious phenomena to objects of natural philosophy. An arc can be followed from Classical and Neoplatonic philosophy to that of Medieval Arabic and Scholastic philosophy that increasingly views light (and other forms of radiation, whether or not they were visible), in new material and predictable terms. These advancements in knowledge about the properties of light led to the development of new ways in which humanity manipulated and interacted with light in the Renaissance.

Synonyms

History of radiation theory; Optics; Ray theory

Impact and Legacy

Ideas about vision and optics from the ancient world were a critical component within the framework of how celestial radiation, most evidently vis-à-vis light but not necessarily restricted to visible light, was understood and imagined. A critical revolution in how man conceived of his place in the cosmos was the relation of the celestial rays, and all that they were believed to bring, to the action, properties, and reception of light. Vision evolved from its perception as a threshold to an intellectual understanding of the heavens towards a physical channel for celestial rays (either directly from the heavens or the secondary radiation perceived to be emitted from astral images) through the eyes to the soul. For Aristotle, images entered into the eyes immaterially, preserving only their qualities. Other ancient philosophers advanced a more active participation of vision with the material world, a theory known generally as extromission. Plato, Galen, and others subscribed to the idea that eyes emitted their own rays which, diffused into the material world along with the all-present rays of Spiritus (as understood by Platonists and the Stoics), made contact with the visible surfaces of objects and brought information back on its return to the eyes. One theory conceptualized the force of vision rays from the eyes being enough to occasion a vibration in the materials they contacted, which stimulated their own emission of rays in turn, which proceeded to transmit their information to the eye (versus the “bounce-back” model of the eye’s original rays). In a model that would be adopted and promoted later by the scholastic philosophers of the Middle Ages, these light rays were believed to be in a continuous state of transmitting to the eye a mathematically exact copy of the original object, the image, whether or not they happened to be illuminated. Ancient atomist theories of Democritus and Lucretius imagined a

very material process by which this took place: material, atom-thin copies physically peeled off the original and traveled along the ray, physically entering the eye.

Light also was perceived as a divine presence, indeed the ongoing evidence of the first divine act of creation in Biblical accounts. Therefore, light continued its associations with the divine through the history of Latin Christendom, and Gothic architecture and stained glass have come to be symbols of this significance. The strict separation of heaven and earth built into the Aristotelian model of the element was later eroded by Neoplatonic emanation theories, which permitted constructs in which light, as well as physical rays from both the sun and other heavenly bodies, could penetrate the terrestrial sphere and effect changes therein. Al-Kindi and Al-Hazen refined this largely metaphysical conception of how this process was achieved, establishing laws for the behavior of light and rays which brought light’s understanding closer to the realm of natural philosophy than before. Scholastic thinking linked the brightness and splendor of light to divine, intellectual, and spiritual illumination, and the movements’ great philosophers undertook fundamentally new ways by which light was understood. Renaissance philosophers and artists built upon this tradition by pioneering advances in light manipulation which would characterize the era: Galileo’s telescope, Kepler’s pinhole camera, and Snell’s law of refraction, to name a few which paved the way for further advances in the Enlightenment.

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Lilly, William

Born: 1 May 1602 Diseworth, Leicestershire

Died: 9 June 1681, Hersham, Surrey

William Burns

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Abstract

William Lilly was the best-known astrologer of seventeenth-century England. He published a popular almanac series, a textbook, and pamphlets focusing on events of the day both political and celestial. Lilly saw astrology as a unified tradition stemming from Ptolemy and invoked the authority of ancient, Islamic, medieval, Renaissance, and contemporary astrologers without excluding any particular group or school.

Biography

Lilly was born into a family of yeomen. Frustrated their early ambitions of attending

university, he moved to London, where he married a wealthy widow. After his wife's death in 1633, he devoted himself to astrology, a subject in which he was largely self-taught. Lilly supported the Parliament against King Charles I in the British Civil Wars (1642–1649), although it took some time for him to fully commit to the Parliamentary side. The first edition of his almanac, *Merlinus Anglicus Junior*, appeared in 1644 when Lilly was still moderate, hoping for reconciliation between King and Parliament. Lilly moved toward the Parliamentary side in the following months and years, producing horoscopes that hinted at the death of the King – a very risky move. Lilly's *England's Prophetical Merline* (1644) used the recent great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in 1642/1643 and the comet of 1618 to argue that a change of dynasty in Britain was imminent, along with a great disaster to the house of Stuart, although Lilly did not flatly assert that the king's death would be soon. He attracted much admiration with his prediction of Parliamentary victory at the Battle of Naseby in 1645, one of the turning points of the Civil War – a prediction that appeared the morning of the battle itself.

Lilly also denounced people on the Parliament's side, including greedy, tax-raising politicians and power-grubbing Presbyterian ministers. He was even briefly imprisoned by the Rump Parliament, England's rulers after the execution of Charles I in 1649, when he denounced them in an almanac. Lilly's almanac, *Merlinus Anglicus Junior*, continued to dominate the market throughout the interregnum period (1649–1660), reaching a peak in sales of approximately 30,000 copies a year.

Lilly was the target of much anti-astrological mockery, particularly when he failed to predict the restoration of King Charles II, in 1660. Although he suffered the confiscation of some of his property and a brief spell of imprisonment, Lilly got away comparatively lightly – partly because he had stayed friends with influential Royalists like fellow-astrologer Elias Ashmole. Lilly continued to produce almanacs, although their sales dropped considerably after the

Restoration. He abjured politics except for the obligatory profuse expressions of loyalty to the King. Lilly spent the last few years of his life in country retirement, although he continued to produce an almanac.

As a working astrologer, Lilly was known for his mastery of horary astrology, answering questions based on the position of the celestial bodies when he was asked. His skill gave him a thriving practice as an astrological consultant independent of his almanacs and political work. Lilly's most influential text in astrology was *Christian Astrology* (1647), a book that influences astrologers in the English-speaking tradition to the present day. It is partially based on the work of the French astrologer and physician Claude Dariot (1533–1594), whose work had appeared in English translation as *The Judgements of the Starres* (1598) as well as other continental authors.

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Lipsius, Justus

Born: 18 October 1547, Overijse

Died: 23 March 1606, Leuven

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Abstract

Mostly known for his studies on Seneca and Tacitus and his extraordinary philological achievements, the humanist and classical scholar Justus Lipsius was also the founder of Neostoicism. His new philosophy, based on his readings of the Roman historian Tacitus and the Roman philosopher Seneca, aimed at Christianizing Roman Stoicism so as to make it acceptable and usable for his own time, which was blighted by bloody religious wars and civil strife. Lipsius's use of antiquity was both scholarly and practical. His edition of Tacitus (1574) not only was a groundbreaking philological monument but also inspired a new political movement, Tacitism, represented by his treatise *Politica* (1589). His edition of Seneca's prose writings was a landmark, but it was Lipsius's own *De constantia*, a Senecan dialogue written and published in 1583/1584, which became a Neostoic bestseller: printed more than eighty times and translated into various vernacular languages, Lipsius's consolatory dialogue was highly influential among Europe's elite and served as an inspiration for Baroque theater. His studies on the history and doctrines of ancient Stoicism, especially his two fundamental monographs published in 1604, marked a new start in the correct understanding of the Stoic philosophical system, which remained influential for over a century and a half.

Lips, Joost

► [Lipsius, Justus](#)

Alternate Names

[Lips, Joost](#)

Biography

Lipsius's biography has been reduced time and time again to his changes of religious allegiance. Already in his own time, the promoter of Stoic constancy was criticized for his extreme inconstancy (Morford 1991). This dubious reputation has lasted until our own day, even though the biographical facts and historical context demand more nuance.

Lipsius was born in Overijse (between Brussels and Leuven) to a Catholic family in October 1547. His father sent him to the Kapellesschool in Brussels for his primary education (1553–1557) and then to the Latin School of Ath (1557–1559), after which he enrolled in the Jesuit Bursa Nova Tricoronata in Cologne (1559–1564), but contrary to what has been repeated by some of his biographers, Lipsius never took Jesuit vows. In August 1564, he returned to Leuven to study law (Kluyskens 1973). In the following years, he also attended courses at the Leuven Collegium Trilingue, a humanist institution founded and inspired by Erasmus. As a young philological prodigy, he composed three books of textual comments and emendations, the *Variae lectiones*, which were published by Christophe Plantin in Antwerp in 1569. Immediately afterward, he embarked on an academic journey to Italy. In Rome, he was the private secretary to Cardinal Granvelle and made the acquaintance of leading humanists such as Marc-Antoine Muret, Fulvio Orsini, and Paolo Manuzio.

In 1570, Lipsius returned to Leuven to continue his legal studies. The conflicts in the Low Countries, however, compelled him to flee to Liège, where he encountered Carolus Langius, who would later be cast as Lipsius's guide to Stoic philosophy in the dialogue *De constantia*.

In the spring of 1572, Lipsius moved to Emperor Maximilian II's court in Vienna. In October, he was appointed professor of history at the Lutheran University of Jena. In this period, he also completed his edition of Tacitus, which he dedicated to Maximilian. In 1573, Lipsius married Anna van den Calstere in Cologne. One year later, he left Jena and returned to Overijse and Leuven. In September 1577, Lipsius was invited by Janus Dousa to the Calvinist University of Leiden, where he remained from 1578 to 1591, even

becoming rector of the newly founded university. During these years, he published his *De constantia* and the *Politica*, which immediately provoked bitter controversies due to Lipsius's views on freedom, predestination, and the right of rebellion. He decided to return to the Catholic Southern Low Countries, and after a short stay in Spa and Liège (1591–1592), he moved to Leuven in August 1592. There, he held the chair of history at the university and the chair of Latin at the Collegium Trilingue until his death in March 1606.

In this final period of his life, Lipsius published his major edition of Seneca (Papy 2002; Morford 2006) and his historical-philosophical treatises on Stoic doctrines and physics. In addition to books on classical scholarship and antiquarian treatises on the cross, the Roman army, Roman fortifications and armaments, ancient libraries, the Roman goddess Vesta, and the Vestal virgins, Lipsius also published on political philosophy. His *Monita et exempla politica* (1605), crammed with historical and philosophical examples, was intended as a sequel to his *Politica* (De Bom et al. 2011). Appointed royal historiographer in 1595 by the Archdukes of the Spanish Netherlands Albert and Isabella, Lipsius was also asked to write on local history and to produce devotional tracts in honor of the Holy Virgin. Lipsius was heavily criticized by his former friends and colleagues in the Northern Low Countries for supporting the Counter-Reformation agenda of the archdukes. He defended himself on various occasions and especially in his humanist letter collections of *Centuriae* (since each contained 100 epistles). In his published letters, Lipsius sought to showcase his central position in the Republic of Letters, his philological genius, his unparalleled historical knowledge of antiquity, and his commitment to the Neostoic program (Morford 1991; Laureys et al. 1998).

Classical Scholarship and Neostoic Philosophy

On Constancy (1584)

During his stay in Rome, Lipsius was introduced to Roman Stoicism by Marc-Antoine Muret

(Kraye 2001–2002). In the face of civic unrest, as well as the religious and political struggles of the Netherlands, Lipsius wrote his first Christian-Stoic work, *De constantia in publicis malis* (“On Constancy in Times of Public Calamity”) in 1583/1584. Here, Lipsius wanted to offer practical consolation to his contemporaries, helping them to cope with the difficulties of the civil and religious wars (Lagrée 1994). From Seneca, Lipsius took the guiding principle that “we are born into a kingdom where obedience to God is true liberty” (*De constantia* I.14, a quotation from Seneca, *De vita beata*, 15.8). Presenting a new account of the hierarchy of God, providence, and fate, Lipsius reestablished the leading role of necessity (*necessitas*): everything which is governed by fate happens by necessity (*De constantia* I.19) (Sellars 2014). It was inevitable that all temporal things would decay and be destroyed, so an attitude of constancy in the midst of *divinae clades* (divinely sanctioned disasters such as earthquakes, pestilence, war, and tyranny) was the only wise option. Divine punishment was part of God’s plan and necessary to preserve and improve the entire world (*De constantia* I.15–16). The truly wise man was therefore expected to accept the law of necessity (*lex necessitatis*) with steadfastness and mental strength. The virtues of *constantia* – “the upright and immovable mental strength, which is neither lifted up nor depressed by external or accidental circumstances” (*De constantia* I.4) – and patience must be governed by reason (*ratio*). The wise man (*sapiens*) will follow reason “to steel his mind and so temper it that he may achieve peace in the midst of turmoil and tranquility in the midst of conflict” (*De constantia* I.1). If reason conquers passions and false opinions, humankind will be able to confront public and private evils with true constancy. Three emotions must be extirpated – deception (*simulatio*), patriotism (*pietas*), and pity (*miseratio*) – since they are all harmful to peace. Once mastery over the emotions by reason has been achieved, humans can detach themselves from all feelings which might lead to any sort of emotional involvement in political and religious wars. In this way, Lipsius redefined Stoic *apatheia* or emotionlessness. The Neostoic wise man,

moreover, should not withdraw from public affairs or retreat into private life: he should instead be a cosmopolitan who submits to God’s plan and to the immutable power of (Christian divine) providence (Beuth 1990; Papy 2019).

Lipsius’s *De constantia* was a manual for wise living, a book of consolation, and a guide to practical psychology (Beuth 1990). Its success was immense: more than eighty editions between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries were published throughout Europe – more than forty in the original Latin and the rest in translations into several modern European languages (Bireley 1990; McCreia 1997). Lipsius’s dialogue, containing both themes from Calvinism and views on free will propagated by the Jesuits, became the common cultural property of scholars, poets, and artists from the Baroque period to the Enlightenment (Spanneut 1973; Carabin 2004).

Politica (1589)

Intended as a sequel to *De constantia*, Lipsius’s *Politicorum sive Civilis doctrinae libri sex* (“Six Books on Politics or Civil Doctrine”) was published in 1589. Just as the citizen had to follow reason (*ratio*), so, too, the ruler had to use reason and political virtue in governing his state. While invoking a wide range of classical thinkers and especially the Roman historian Tacitus, the humanist Lipsius wanted to be practical without, however, offering any concrete and contemporary applications of the general principles he expounded.

The *Politica*, divided into six books, is not a monograph but a commonplace book, in which Lipsius ordered his thoughts by drawing on ancient, medieval, and contemporary political thinkers. Montaigne described it as “a learned and carefully woven fabric” (ed. Lipsius 2004, p. 8). Nevertheless, the *Politica* is far more than a compendium of quotations: the order imposed on the quotations reflected Lipsius’s own thought. Moreover, Lipsius not only referred to classical writers but also discussed medieval and Renaissance political philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas, Niccolò Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, and the late Spanish scholastics.

The main aim of the *Politica* was to construct civil life and the state in an ethical context. The

politician needs to have virtue (*virtus*), which requires piety and goodness, and also prudence (*prudentia*). Civil concord was a central issue for Lipsius. To achieve this end, everyone had to submit to the will of the ruler, provided the ruler displayed both virtue and prudence. A distinctive virtue of the prince was political prudence (*prudentia civilis*). The study of history and sound advice (from officials, councilors, and military commanders) were both essential to a good ruler. Civil prudence concerns divine matters and human affairs. Lipsius's chapters on the difficult relationship of the state to the church and on religious toleration were controversial for both Protestants and the Roman Inquisition, since he argued that peace and unity could only be achieved if only one religion was allowed in any political community. In addition, the prince had no "rights in sacred matters" (*ius in sacra*; *Politica*, IV.2), so he must not intervene in the internal affairs of the church. Because religious discord inevitably led to civil war, religious dissidents deserved no mercy: "Burn, cut – for the whole body [of the state] is of greater value than some of its limbs" (Lipsius, in fact, was quoting a medical metaphor from Cicero); however, dissidents who practiced their faith quietly and peacefully should be tolerated.

In composing his *Politica*, Lipsius endeavored to produce a synthesis between the traditional mirror of princes and Machiavelli's *Prince*. While he supported monarchy and a moderate form of absolutism, he emphasized that this form of government should be based on Stoic virtues, and if the monarch abused his power, he was not to be killed but to be educated. Lipsius's monarchy was not grounded in the amoral despotism of Machiavelli but instead in Neostoic moral philosophy, which was the foundation of sound government: its precepts and doctrines would ensure that reason was always in control (Sénellart 1994).

It has been claimed that Lipsius's *Politica* "launched the anti-Machiavellian tradition of the Counter-Reformation" (Bireley 1990, p. 99). Certainly, the treatise was widely read and met with overwhelming success. Yet, it also provoked fierce attacks, from both Protestant and Catholic circles, and after returning to the Catholic

Southern Low Countries, Lipsius rewrote the *Politica* in order to meet the criticisms of the Roman Church. Lipsius's *Politica* was well-received: fifteen editions of the Latin original appeared in the first 10 years, from 1589 to 1599, and in the same period, it was translated into Dutch, French, English, Polish, and German. In 1604, Spanish and Italian translations followed, and in 1641, a Hungarian version was published. Up to the start of the Thirty Years' War, a new edition of the *Politica* was issued almost every year. The so-called Lipsian paradigm (McCrea 1997) – consisting of strong political views on discipline and order, absolutist monarchy, and on the unity of the state – inspired new and upcoming nations in the seventeenth century, including Germany, Spain, England, and Sweden (Oestreich 1982, 1989; Bireley 1990; Sénellart 1994).

Stoic Treatises (1604) and Seneca Edition (1605)

Lipsius worked on his major edition of Seneca's prose writings for many years (Papy 2002). A running commentary composed of short philological annotations and historical explanations guided the reader. A philosophical commentary would have been too complex for such brief notes, so Lipsius, at the end of 1602, decided to publish two monographs setting out a proper understanding of Seneca's Stoic philosophy and a clear historical and philosophical reconstruction of the Stoic school (Papy 2017b). Both works were published in Antwerp in 1604: the *Manuductio ad Stoicam philosophiam* ("Guide to Stoic Philosophy"), introducing the history and doctrines of the Stoic sect, and *Physiologia Stoicorum* ("Physical Theory of the Stoics"), dealing with its physics and cosmology. Lipsius planned, but never completed, a third work, to be entitled *Ethica* (Papy 2005).

Guide to Stoic Philosophy

In typical humanist style, Lipsius first meticulously collected and studied all the ancient Stoic sources available to him: Seneca, Epictetus, Cicero, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, Plato, Philo of

Alexandria, Apuleius, (pseudo-)Hermes Trismegistus, Sextus Empiricus, the Greek and Latin Church Fathers (above all, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Lactantius, Eusebius, and St. Augustine), and later Christian writers such as Orosius and Isidore of Seville (Saunders 1955). He not only excerpted historical and philosophical material and doctrines but also demonstrated how Stoic philosophy had been present throughout the ages (Kraye 2007).

Lipsius began with a history of the most important philosophical schools of antiquity and then proceeded to discuss the origin and succession of the various Stoic schools, together with their different views on the definition and parts of philosophy (Isnardi Parente 1986). This led him to the definition of the wise man (*sapiens*): “he knows in a sense all the instances that fall under the universal” (*Manuductio* II.8). Following the view of the Greek Stoic Panaetius, Lipsius maintained that the wise man was a *proficiens*, that is, he was in a state of progress; as such, he studied physical phenomena and their causes, since, by paying attention to the laws of nature, it was possible to deduce the rules of conduct and the nature of good and evil. After the study of physics, moral training was essential: ethical precepts led to wisdom, but they needed to be reinforced by general doctrines. Lipsius did not accept the Stoic view that reason was the appropriate vehicle to comprehend God and nature. In line with Platonic thought and also more suitable for Christians, Lipsius stated that the capacity to understand God and his work (s) was a divine gift. Nevertheless, the road to wisdom was to be found by following the rules of conduct exemplified in nature. A good life is based on reason and virtue: reason understands the world and the supreme good; to live happily is to live according to nature and, therefore, to live according to virtue (*Manuductio* II.15). To Christianize this view, Lipsius drew on Seneca and Epictetus, concluding that it implied living according to the right reason or God (*Manuductio* II.16). The wise man obeyed God, and following his Christianized Seneca, Lipsius maintained that “we are born into a kingdom where obedience to God is true liberty” (*Manuductio* III.12). In a similar Christianizing

mode, Lipsius replaced the Stoic *logos* with the Christian *logos* or, as St. John had defined it, the “Word of God.” This identification of the Stoic *logos* with the Christian God paved the way for Lipsius’s important conclusion, echoing both Cicero and Clement of Alexandria: the Stoic supreme good was equivalent to faith in God and the right attitude toward God (*Manuductio* II.19). And since the *summum bonum* was located in God, the good did not exist in man until both he and his reason were perfected by virtue (*Manuductio* II.22). Still, the supreme good should also be *honestum* or morally virtuous. The image of Seneca’s *sapiens* was important to Lipsius: the wise man had control over himself (by the use of reason) and chose external things only when they were in accordance with nature and thus morally virtuous (Lagrée 1994; Papy 2019).

In his *Manuductio*, Lipsius gave an eclectic account of Stoic moral philosophy (Kraye 2001–2002, 2008). When required by the authorities of the Church, he cut and trimmed the message of the ancient Stoics; since not all their teachings were compatible with Christianity, he, for instance, discarded the Stoic doctrine of ethically indifferent actions (*Manuductio* II.23). Lipsius endorsed some Stoic paradoxes, especially those which could be easily adapted to Christian virtues such as humility: “that a kingdom should please the wise man no more than slavery” (*Manuductio* III.12). Others, however, such as the Stoic view that the wise man was, at his own decision, free to take his own life, were by definition unacceptable. Here, Lipsius invoked St. Augustine in order to Christianize harsh Stoic precepts (*Manuductio* III.22–23) (Papy 2001–2002).

Physical Theory of the Stoics

In line with Stoic doctrine, Lipsius regarded ethics and physics as inseparable: to live one’s life in accordance with nature was impossible without full knowledge of nature. In his *Physiologia Stoicorum*, Lipsius’s goal was twofold: to reconstruct Stoic views, within the framework of the doxographical tradition, on natural philosophy and to demonstrate the importance of natural philosophy for ethics and theology. Again, Lipsius

sought to harmonize the physical doctrines of the Stoics with Christian thought: by interpreting it allegorically, elucidating similarities between Stoic physics and Christianity, and by adopting a Neoplatonic “correction” to Stoic doctrines. Moreover, the investigation of issues such as the nature of God and the universal laws of nature was an ideal antidote to indulging in worldly quarrels, in which reason evaporated into nothingness (Hirai and Papy 2011).

Drawing on Stobaeus, who was quoting Aetius, Lipsius defined nature: “God is a craftsman- like fire proceeding methodically to create the world and containing within itself all the seminal reasons; then, in accordance with these, everything is constructed by fate” (*Physiologia* I.6). While the first part of Lipsius’s definition is fully Stoic, the second part, asserting that fire or God contains the seminal reasons (*rationes seminales*), ideas, or forms of all existing things, is derived from the Neoplatonic and Christian traditions. In a characteristically Neostoic interpretation, Lipsius compared this fire to Moses seeing the light glowing in the bush (Exod. 3:2) and the pillar of fire that leads the Israelites through the wilderness (Exod. 14:19). He even compared it to the burning tongues of the Apostles (Acts 2:3; *Physiologia* I.6) (Steuer 1901).

In like manner, Lipsius cited the *Corpus Hermeticum* when discussing Platonic “ideas” and their relationship to God: God was not only the divine fire of the Stoics but also the *spiritus igneus* (“fiery breath”) described by Posidonius and Hermes Trismegistus. Christianity, as Lipsius argued, had a similar idea: although God cannot be seen, everyone sees God daily in all things (*Physiologia Stoicorum* I.7, with reference to *Corpus Hermeticum* XI.16). The Stoics’ pantheistic equation of God with the world and their belief that the divine principle was corporeal were incompatible with Christianity and therefore not acceptable to Lipsius (Joly 1996).

God, as the world soul, permeated every living thing, and fate was God’s providential reason (Hirai 2009, 2012). Once again, Lipsius invoked St. Augustine to maintain that fate did not conflict

with God’s free will (*Physiologia* I.8–12). Fate caused everything, but not every action was a direct result of it. Moral liberty was thus safeguarded. Responsibility lay in the sphere of *causae secundae* (“secondary causes”). To resolve the problem of evil, Lipsius combined Christianity with Aristotle: even though the world was created by a benevolent God, deformed creatures and monstrosities – though seemingly contrary to nature – were in accordance with the overall plan of nature and divine providence (*Physiologia* I.13, with reference to *De generatione animalium* 769a–773a). In this way, Stoic conceptions of matter, body, and God – all of them incompatible with Christianity – were forced into Lipsius’s Neostoic framework. Yet, Lipsius did violence to Christian teachings when he defended the Stoic view of the soul as a vital *pneuma* (“spirit” or “breath”; *Physiologia* III.9). His humanist program, based on Christian ethics and Stoic doctrines, demanded inventive adaptations: in a world of religious wars and civic unrest, Lipsius promoted a philosophy of virtue, free will, and social engagement in order to achieve a Christianized *humanitas* which, though pagan in origin, would be acceptable to his contemporaries as well as practicable.

Lipsius’s Impact as a Historian of Philosophy

Lipsius’s two manuals on Stoic ethics and physics were first and foremost meant as an introduction to Seneca. Yet, his new synthesis of the doctrines elaborated by the Stoic school went further. Not intending to offer a new philosophy himself, Lipsius’s study of Roman Stoicism put on the table ancient concepts which remained usable: freedom, nature, reason, providence, and God. Europeans, seeking a new view of the world, rational behavior, and individual free will, eagerly adopted Lipsius’s Neostoic philosophy. Prominent writers were inspired by his Stoic studies: Guillaume du Vair, Montesquieu, and Pierre Bayle in France; Francis Bacon and Joseph Hall in England; and Francisco de Quevedo and Juan de Vera y Figueroa in Spain (Ettinghausen 1972; Carabin 2004; Lagrée 2010). Lipsius’s *Manuductio* and *Physiologia Stoicorum* immediately became classic works of Stoicism and remained authoritative for more than a century.

The most important histories of philosophy – Georg Horn, Thomas Stanley, Gerardus Johannes Vossius, Joannes Jonsius, Henning Witte, Johannes Franciscus Buddeus, Burckhard Gotthelf Struve, Christoph August Heumann, and Johann Jakob Brucker – all drew heavily on Lipsius's Stoic manuals, taking over their historical details, their wealth of ancient source material, and their acute philosophical analysis. In addition, Lipsius's treatises were in the libraries of Spinoza, Descartes, Leibniz, and Locke (Papy 2017a).

Cross-References

- [Causality, Renaissance](#)
- [Ethics, Renaissance](#)
- [Government, Renaissance Forms of](#)
- [Providence, Renaissance Idea of](#)
- [Stoicism](#)
- [Tacitus and Tacitism](#)
- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

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Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb

Born: Loja, 1313 AD

Died: Fez, 1374 AD

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Abstract

The era of Abdul Rahman II in Cordoba (792 AD–852 AD) represents a pivotal stage in the history of Andalusian identity. It is in this era that Andalusians sought to move beyond the quest for stability and turned to the issue of self (essence) in an attempt to create a distinct Andalusian character independent of its Eastern counterpart. To showcase this mission, a general openness to knowledge and an increased veneration of the original sources of radiation in the East were seen as key prerequisites not only for reproducing this Eastern influence on the Andalusian character but rather to build upon it and transcend it. It was envisioned that this formula would create an Andalusian personality that is aware of its routes in the East but also constantly in pursuit of intellectual independence.

On the issue of openness to general and outside knowledge, a key turning point was the introduction of widespread and cross-continental translation endeavors that brought

foreign and often epistemic diverse cultures into contact. Central among these was the arrival of Greek philosophical knowledge, which proved attractive to certain key intellectuals. Despite the widespread acceptance of philosophical knowledge in Andalusia, not all those concerned in the evolution of the Andalusian intellectual history are acknowledged equally. This short entry is going to discuss the life and works of one of the often-neglected intellectuals whose philosophical works deserve attention. The entry will look at the life of Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (Loja 1313–Fez 1374 AD). Specifically, Ibn al-Khaṭīb should be sought for his works in political philosophy, which is not surprising given that he was a statesman and ambassador. A brief account of his philosophical mysticism will also be provided before concluding.

Biography

Lisān al-Dīn Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Said Ibn al-Khaṭīb was born in Loja, one of the provinces of the city of Granada, which Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself described as “the girl of Granada” (Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1978). His father was a friend of the Nasrid family, and his family was one of the influential families in the city with its history going back to the beginnings of the Umayyad dynasty in Cordoba. He moved, when he was a child, to Granada and began his scientific career in its vicinity taking full advantage of the intellectual ambiance, which resulted from the fleeing of many Andalusians into Granada from the surrounding cities, which fell to the Christian armies. The galaxy of scientists and intellectuals who flooded Granada allowed Ibn al-Khaṭīb a diversity of intellectual sources from which he could draw inspiration. His studies and intellectual pursuits included religious, literary, linguistic, historical, and philosophical knowledge – making this century (the fourteenth century) the Golden Age of Bani Nasr (Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1978; Lirola Delgado 2004).

It is possible to discern two main strands in Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s philosophical thought: political and

mystic. Through these two, we can form a general picture of his philosophical knowledge at the intellectual and social levels.

Introduction

From Andalusia, we can talk about some who departed to the East and gained special Islamic knowledge regarding the controversy of philosophical knowledge, and the most important of these is Ibn Masarraḥ Al-Jabaly (883–931 AD). Al-Jabaly is considered by some as the leading Andalusian philosopher and one of the most prominent missionaries of the philosophical attitude in the new environment on the Iberian Peninsula. Sources point to the fact that his thoughts are informed by the principle of the *Itisal* (Contact God) and that these represented Gnostic tendencies, which led to the adoption of philosophical internist thought (Guerrero and Garrido Clemente 2006). It should be noted that the Andalusian philosophical thought – taking advantage of the Eastern experience – was open to the issues of governance, ethics, and behavioral aspects, all of which were covered by a religious dress hosted in an Islamic medium. This medium saw religion as the basis for understanding the universe. Additionally, religion was seen as the core tool to direct every aspect of life and human conduct, whether this received a pleasingly religious acknowledgment or was censored. In fact, rarely did philosophy win or come up favorably on this censorship or religious guardianship. Sound religious edicts were used like swords on the necks of philosophers. This at times took a literal sense, and those who didn’t lose their lives saw their lifetime works destroyed. Even in the latter times of the Andalusian era, prominent figures such as Ibn Rushd (1126–1198 AD) suffered from religious censors which led to the burning of his books and his eventual explosion from the grounds of the **Almohad**. Despite these persecutions, philosophical interchange and cross-continental influences continued to be demonstrated by Muslim scholars. We can provide an example with regard to this awareness of Andalusian/Eastern philosophy and Greek heritage influences. We refer to the

famous scholar Ibn Hazm (994–1064 AD) for whom the ideas of philosophy embodied his overall writings. Among these, the most important is the *Tawq Al-Hamama* (Dove Collar) in which Platonic love sentiments are clearly illustrated (Ibn Hazm 1967).

After that, and in spite of the persecution suffered by the philosophers in sporadic stages, the Andalusian characters' interest in the subject of philosophy increased; for example, Ismail Al-Ruayni (S.11 AD), Ibn Al-Arif (1088–1141 AD), Ibn Borjan (1078–1141 AD), Ibn Bajja (1139 AD) until Ibn Tufail (1185 AD), and Ibn Rushd (1126–1198 AD) all gained prominence. In particular, Ibn Rushd became one of the greatest commentators and assimilators of Aristotle's thoughts. Given the influence of Sufism, philosophy in Andalusia was frequently associated with mysticism, especially on the side of philosophical mysticism. Here, Ibn Arabi (1165–1240 AD) is considered to be the most prominent name. Furthermore, since Ibn Arabi, discussions around philosophical mysticism have been seen as coterminous with Philosophy proper and can no longer be separated from one another.

However, many of those who study Andalusian philosophy do not look beyond the thirteenth century, in the belief that it is a stage of general cultural decline with which no philosophical thought can be imagined to have existed – the assumption being that philosophy does not grow in the fall of civilizations. However, a contemplated pause for that stage accepted historically as the time of Bani Nasr (1232–1492 AD) may lead to change in this belief through the information about the knowledge of this era and its prominent names. This is especially so in the last 100 years (Arie 1973).

Of the most important of these recent names, Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb (Loja 1313–Féz 1374 AD) appears as the polymath scholar that many people do not know. One of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's main tributaries of knowledge is a philosophy that can be drawn from his accomplishments, especially his political philosophy specifically, which is not surprising given that he was a statesman and ambassador. He produced multiple works which reflect his political knowledge, including poetry

and prose, which are the essence of his scientific and intellectual experiences. However, his oeuvre is not confined to or solely dependent on political philosophy but extends to the existential and religious philosophy as can be seen in his famous dialectical work *Rawdat al-tarif* (Garden of Definition), which blended Western philosophy with Eastern mysticism.

Ibn al-Khaṭīb has left a legacy of political ideas representing a careful digest of previous experiences and sincere contemplation of the surrounding atmosphere and environment imposed by the tense situation in Andalusia in its latter era which had entailed catching the middle of the stick with regard to diplomacy with the Christian neighbor in the north and the Muslim neighbor to the south. Also, growing up in surroundings in which the ideas of mysticism and philosophical mysticism had spread shaped special philosophical insights within his mind. This is especially so in the realm of his existentialism, human, and religious philosophy. It can be argued that it is perhaps this marrying of variant ideas that made him a victim, leading his name to be added to the names of the victims of thought and, specifically, religious thought. In the following passages, an attempt will be made to sum up his life and works as permitted by the allocated space.

Political Thought

As regards the political side of Al-Khaṭīb's philosophy, there is no doubt that the circumstances surrounding the variant members of the Kingdom of Nasrid necessitated the adoption of special and accurate policies toward the Christian neighbor and toward the brotherly Muslims of North Africa. Additionally, the need to adhere to these policies even in the case of the Nasrid House itself had a great impact on the steadfastness of the remaining parts of this Kingdom two and a half centuries before its collapse by the Reconquista at the end of the fifteenth century AD.

When Ibn al-Khaṭīb became a prominent statesman, he had inherited various political traditions preceded by the ministers of Bani Nasr and of Andalusia in general. These theoretical

inheritances either went back to the politics of the Islamic Eastern beneficiary clearly from its counterpart in Greek or were resultant of practical experience shaped by circumstances and events in Andalusia.

There is no doubt that Ibn al-Khatib, being a well-known versed encyclopedic scholar and because of the sensitivity of his position as a minister, must have received solid training in Islamic philosophy as part of his intellectual training. It is also natural for him to have been well versed in the heritage of Muslim philosophers such as Al-Farabi (874–950 AD), Ibn Sina (980–1037 AD), and philosophers who have imbibed the Greek philosophical heritage, especially in the spheres of government and the management of political affairs. This can be drawn from his writings, although nothing has survived from his works that help us to form an accurate picture of his initial sources in this regard, and if we would have in our hands his book *Bustan al-Duwal* (Orchard of the States) on, for example, arts of policy, justice, war, crafts, and public classes, we would be able to better understand his wider influences (Inan 1968).

On the practical side, there is no doubt that Ibn al-Khatib carefully studied the history, including the date of the neighboring Christian kingdoms that formed his political experience. He must have had a particularly acute understanding of Andalusian culture, in which he lived in its last stages and arguably most dangerous times. These experiences have been demonstrated in his works, and I may refer only to his collections of poetry, which listed the date of the Islamic policy, such as his long poem *Raqm al-hulal* (Garment Inscription) (Inan 1968).

Politically, there are many figures who can be counted among Ibn al-Khatib's influences and role models. However, chief among these and probably the most influential to Ibn al-Khatib's thoughts and political behavior is Al-Hajib Radwan Nasri (1359 AD), who was originally a captive boy from the Christian lands. During his captivity, he received his religious and political education in Granada. Excelling and proving himself a true intellectual, he grew prominent and began to be mentioned as a leader and military

expert. Specifically, as a military leader, he made the point that the most important means for the protection of the state lies in strengthening the defense aspects and strategic work. With this in mind, he worked on a very large fortification of the immediate grounds of the Nasrid Kingdom, which impressed Ibn Al-Khatib and influenced his own ways and thoughts. This reverence for Al-Hajib was indicated by the intensity of Ibn al-Khatib's deep sorrow on his death in the famous coup against Mohammed V (1391 AD). Members of the Nasri household who found Radwan's political prowess and influence particularly threatening carried out the coup itself. Ousting and killing him was a sure way to end what was feared to be his eventual takeover (Ibn al-Khatib 1985). The character of Al-Hajib can be counted, from my point of view, as the most important example of a practical politician that influenced Ibn al-Khatib in his ministry of Bani-Al-Ahmar.

Due to the lack of space allotted for this article, I will try to address the most prominent lightening points in the political philosophy of Ibn al-Khatib and link them with their causes, on the one hand, and, on the other, their sources with the aid of his texts that reveal his political thinking and behavior.

Balance Policy

This addresses the position that was taken by Granada as regards her Muslim and Christian neighbors alike. Granada's position as a small kingdom with limited military capabilities forced it to stand at the same distance from the neighboring powers (Torres Delgado 1974). The reader of the history of this kingdom may find that at times, Granada pursued policies of convergence and, at others, policies that secluded it from her neighbors, as required by its own interests. This said, Granada rarely in history stood alone without allies of the Christians or Muslims. But what matters here is to highlight the viewpoint of Ibn al-Khatib about these issues.

When Ibn al-Khatib became an important figure in the Nasri royal court, which started at the beginning of the second half of the fourteenth century, Granada was suffering the brunt of

Castile, ruled by King Alfonso XI (1311–1350 AD). Toward this imminent danger, Ibn al-Khatib made several visits to al-Magreb to solicit the sympathy of the Marinid state to stand with Granada against this king. And because the danger at hand was seen as one of the prominent propositions, Ibn al-Khatib as Granada's ambassador used the most effective means to influence the king of al-Magreb and grab his support. To do this, it was enough for him to recite his poem, which he delivered in front of the Sultan Abū Annān as he addressed him before giving the reason for the visit:

Oh Khalifa of Allah, may destiny help your glory
whenever the moon shines in the darkness

At that point, the Sultan granted his request before even mentioning it (Ibn al-Khatib 1989a; Ibn Khaldun 1996).

The impetus of Ibn al-Khatib was to be fully biased toward the Muslim neighbor, whom he saw as having a duty to respond given the circumstance of relative religiousness of the danger posed by King Alfonso. Ibn al-Khatib's saying in his book *Riḥanat al-kuttab* (Writers Basil) illustrates to what extent this policy was employed:

While the infidel nations crumbling for their falsehood religion,
to whom then shall we resort, but to the people
of that country [al-Magreb]. (Ibn al-Khatib 1980a)

But when Alfonso XI died and was succeeded by his son, Pedro I, we find that the policy of Granada is moving toward reconciliation with Castile, and that is why the Nasri ministers and elites sent candles and condolences to Pedro at the death of his father. The rulers in al-Magreb did not respond well to this, and Fez criticized Granada's stance in paying tribute to Pedro. When this happened, Ibn al-Khatib defended Granada without losing Fez's alliance with his wisely chosen words:

we are just paying it as a tradition to protect ourselves from evil. (Ibn al-Khatib 1980a)

The policy adopted by Ibn al-Khatib resulted in a strong alliance with Castile, and fame to the Minister of Granada in Spanish sources, and among Christian ambassadors. With Ibn al-Khatib frequenting the homes of all the

prominent emissaries and ambassadors, he was, in essence, the *de facto* ruler in Granada politics, and he was really the most competent person to work with a balanced policy with all parties (Simonet 1872; al-Abbadi 1973). The balanced policy of Ibn al-Khatib helped to return the deposed Sultan to his throne by King Pedro and helped him to build a strong friendship with Castile. This can be tracked and proved through the writings of Ibn al-Khatib while singing praises and prayers for Pedro (Ibn al-Khatib 1989b).

The balance mastered by Ibn al-Khatib with all parties pushed Mohammed V to insist on Ibn al-Khatib's presence out of exile to assume the ministry after he had gone into hermitage in al-Magreb. This is evidenced by the accounts narrated by himself in *Nufadat al-Jirab* (Residual of the Sadlebag), while the second coup took place in Granada, where he speaks of how he helped in the discussion with the revolutionists to put down the revolt. Mohammed V asked his advice when insurgents besieged and made him tremble. Ibn al-Khatib's advice was to stay at Alhambra and stay away from the rebels and their discussion – leaving them all to him (Ibn al-Khatib 1985). All of this falls under his policy of balancing that Ibn al-Khatib used to come to the correct position after examining all sides and forces around him (Ibn al-Khatib 1989b, 1980a).

Granting Legitimacy to the Sultan

As noted above, the conditions of emergency inside the Kingdom of Granada and its political position filled politicians with many fears. It is not only the external enemy that the Alhambra sultans feared, there was also a fear of its subjects. The Kingdom of Granada suffered a lot of internal conflicts, which continued and caused the eventual fall of Granada. Although there are many reasons and causes that inspire revolutions against the ruler, in the case of great weakness experienced by Granada, it seemed as if the most important of these reasons that deprive the rulers of their legitimacy is their failure as protectors of Islam. This topic had already been addressed by Ibn al-Khatib in the history of the wider Andalusia, but he sensed its danger particularly in the Granada stage for the reasons that we have

mentioned, such as their weaknesses in fulfilling their Islamic duties.

Ibn al-Khatib saw the ruler as Khalifa of God and a shield of Islam against God's enemies. In this regard, specifically, we will find that al-Khatib presents Castile as an enemy of religion in the first place and that the conflict with him is – although it is in fact a conflict of political interests not a clash of religions – a conflict between Islam and Christianity. For him, the image of the ruler is the image of the defender of religion and thereby mobilizer of public support for its defense. And terms such as “cross,” “Cross-worship,” “fetishes worshipers,” “infidels,” “Christ and Mary worshipers,” “filth,” etc. abound in the writings of Ibn al-Khatib and his mass speeches. Additionally, this sort of discourse helped a lot in conferring an aura of sanctity and legitimacy to the Nasri ruler. Examples of this discourse are sayings such as “Our prayers on the Prophet Muhammad, in whom we hope to win over the servants of the Cross” (Ibn al-Khatib 1980a) and: “We ask God to unite the word of Islam against the fetishes worshipers” (Ibn al-Khatib 1980a).

The Policy of Internal Governance

The subject of domestic politics and the art of governing the people are the key topics that greatly concerned the Andalusians and Orientals policymakers. Having inherited great precedence from the thoughts of ancient oriental philosophies and Greek philosophy, especially the idea of utopia, civil policy became widespread among Muslim philosophers especially Andalusians in their latter times. As we will see shortly, Ibn al-Khatib in this particular aspect excelled over his contemporaries. Among his texts, which showcase this, is the famous political advice poem that he wrote for Sultan Mohammed V upon his return to the throne after the coup that briefly deposed him. The poem included advice on the best way he should govern, push and pull policy, and how he should conduct himself with his ministers and others. An extract reads as follows:

If you need to consult, speak with the wise,
because talking with the ignorant is not
recommended
If you punished someone once

Replace him with others
Accept the advice of those who come to you.
Thank him even if he is a liar and a fraud
Don't show humility in adversity if they come
As much as shown, people don't respect you.

(Ibn al-Khatib 1989a)

The second text through which we can see something of the political thought of our minister is the text of his speech on politics. The topic of this speech is the insomnia of Caliph Harun al-Rashid and his request to bring him whomever they find in the streets, and they brought an old man of Persian origin with a simple appearance, but wise. The Caliph starts by asking him about governance, and the old man (*Sheikh*) offers his view of political art. Al-Khatib ends his tale comically, in which the old man plays a recital of music, while the Caliph and his Counsel sleep. The old man then unsheathes himself and leaves. It is obvious that in this *maqama* (prose story based on the rhyme and irony style) Ibn al-Khatib is influenced by Iranian philosophy. Additionally, he clearly takes inspiration from Caliph Harun al-Rashid character and holds that under his rule, the Abbasid state had reached the height of cultural production, which is clearly illustrated by the myths and stereotypes that were transmitted to us in the stories of *A Thousand and One Nights*. Furthermore, the fact that the hero of Ibn al-Khatib's speech was an old simple Persian and not a simple Arabian, indicates his appreciation of the Persians and their philosophy of governance, which is justified in view of the Persian civilization that prospered before the civilization of Islam and their (the Persians) role in the establishment of the Islamic state.

There is no doubt that the selection of a template of *maqama* potentially bears several things, including being an endeared template for the education of governance and delivery of significance, where repeated assonance and narrative template are attracting factors that help to spread the idea and education as opposed to abstract philosophical reasoning. From the ideas of Ibn al-Khatib in his work, it can be concluded that the political agent must make himself fit for the task at hand and purifies his soul before reforming his subjects. For Ibn al-Khatib, the

Sultan needs to take special care to rectify imperfections, leading by example. The appointment of Ministers with good character and from respectable backgrounds is also seen as key. Additionally, a special assignment is allocated to some whose role is to keep an eye on these ministers gauging their usefulness to the Sultan and the state as a whole. Ibn al-Khatib also thought that the Educational Policy of the Sultan's sons must be geared toward developing rigor. This was in opposition to the encouragement of over companionate mercifulness which he believed would lead to poor and lazy educational outcomes. Rigor and even fear, in his mind, were seen as sure ways to attain good discipline breeding (Ibn al-Khatib 1980a).

It is also worth pointing to another source of Ibn al-Khatib's political thought, his work entitled *Al-Ishara ila adab al-siyasa wa l-wizara* (Reference to the art of Politics and Ministry). This work imitates *Kalila and Dimna* or *The Fables of Bidpai*, which is a famous work attributed to Ibn al-Moqaffa in which he passed many political pearls of wisdom, taking animals as a symbol for that. We are not in the process of comparing this work with that of *Kalila and Dimna* or the art of *maqama*, but we can identify some of the political outlooks which are justified by our minister. Ibn al-Khatib titled his work with *adab* which means "principles." There are some books that contain the word *adab*, such as "*adab* of writer" and "*adab* of writers." These are understood to be works written by experts in the fields, which means that Ibn al-Khatib saw his position as a teacher of the art of politics. It also relates to his role as minister, and this is a feature of the importance of his position with regard to politics. The ministry in one way or another means the actual governance of the state (Ibn al-Khatib 1980a).

In his famous fable *On the Tongue of the Tiger* (in this fable a tiger talks), we see Ibn al-Khatib passing a lot of his ideas, such as recipes of successful ministerial conduct and what one can bequeath his ministry. Here Ibn al-Khatib conveys a story about ministers of Greece and how each one of them was choosing an intelligent woman to procreate with, and after specific

rituals for her to give birth to an intelligent son who could be his heir and take over the affairs of his ministry. For Ibn al-Khatib this was one of the bases of ruling because he saw the good minister as one of the foundations of a well-organized good state even when the ruler is weak. It can be argued that this insight derives from a firsthand experience, which Ibn al-Khatib gained in his capacity as a minister. Here Ibn al-Khatib has been monitoring the six pillars of the underlying commandment of a ministry, such as dealing with the Kings, according to the nature of each and every one of them. He also refers to certain qualities that can be found in the King but not in the minister. These, for him, included things such as chastity, and the concern for the wellbeing of the state.

The Policy of Self-Interest

This section on the policies of Ibn al-Khatib is very broad and contains many texts. The primary reason goes back to his position as a statesman who found himself surrounded by rivals and competitors, prompting him to take care to maintain his personal interest. This sense of self-interest toward an end made our minister follow the Machiavellian principle that the end justifies the means; he sometimes followed non-ethical means to get those interests. Of the many examples that can be viewed in this regard, is his position toward the sultanate of Beni Marin in al-Magreb. Ibn al-Khatib was close to Sultan Abu Salem (1359–1361 AD), who was credited with the extraction of Ibn al-Khatib from prison in Granada after the coup against his king. Sultan Abu Salem was also credited with the recovery of his money and gave him exceptional hospitality in al-Magreb. When the Sultan was killed and al-Magreb was taken over by a new sultan we find that Ibn al-Khatib heading to the new ruler, congratulating him and disparaging the Sultan Abu Salem. Although this can be seen as unethical and not justified, it can be better understood as the logic of personal interests in the policies of Ibn al-Khatib, who knew very well that he might come to need the new sultan in the near future (Ibn al-Khatib 1985).

Spiritual Philosophy

The second field in which we can find Ibn al-Khatib playing a key role is that of philosophy of mysticism. When we connect philosophy with Sufism, this is a way of mentioning the particular after the general. That is, the philosophy of mysticism is part of the philosophy generally, and it is in al-Andalus, especially in later times. In these times, society was directed to look at many aspects of life with the knowledge that, as we have said previously, religious thought was generally dyed or intermingled with the philosophical position of the Muslim community, who saw religion as an integral component of all types of philosophy and its branches.

Therefore, when dealing with the philosophical mysticism of Ibn al-Khatib, we are actually touching on his philosophy in general, especially the headwaters of the philosophy he has – Sufism and others – almost one assemblage between Greek and Islamic heritage. In a nutshell, we cannot do justice to all of his philosophical thoughts on and of Sufism, since it is a wide topic, but we will try to give a general idea of some of the most important elements of his ideology.

The legacy of Lisān-Dīn Ibn al-Khatib is a great reflection of his knowledge of mysticism and philosophy at several levels. In his production of poetry and prose writings in general, and in different cultural contexts, one often finds signs of his mysticism. In this regard, we cannot lose sight of the popularity of his famous book *Rawdat al-tarīf*, which is the most important source for us to see his philosophical questions on existentialism. It has also to be said that this is the book that brought about his trial and eventual death under the pretext of heresy.

The *Rawdat al-tarīf* book was in response to the book *Diwan Al-Sababa (Diwan of the Love)* of Ibn Abi Hajalah (1375 AD). This was a book on earthly love, in which Ibn al-Khatib wanted, and was asked, to emulate and oppose a book about mystic love. The theme of mystic love is a core issue in his book, which led him to talk about other philosophical issues that had been a cause

of resentment to him. The issue of supreme love makes him sympathize with those philosophers and mystics such as the “Mu’tazila”:

Love drives them to each argument
and love put them on hell razor. (Ibn al-Khatib
1989a, 1968)

In this poetic verse, the poet tries to vindicate their position and say that they may have been motivated by supreme love – which in turn put them in a banned category. Ibn al-Khatib leaves judgment for others and seems to suggest that perhaps the likes of the Mu’tazila may have been wrongly judged. With this justification, and throughout the book in question, we find Ibn al-Khatib attacking those who claim that some of the philosophical ideas contrary to the Islamic faith, such as pantheism, have no basis, but are rather directed and come from what he calls “roots [that are] malicious” (Ibn al-Khatib 1968). But reading one sentence of his writings proved otherwise because he believed these thoughts. Let’s, for example, read about the divine self, which smells of pantheism:

There are many words but the meaning is one
All became single that was passed by double.
(Ibn al-Khatib 1989a, 1968)

He then goes on to say, while commenting on the above verses: “If this was proven, then what use of multiplicity in words and why it fills up much of the ink?” (Ibn al-Khatib 1968).

In my opinion, interpretation is what resolves the contradiction in his writings, that is, Ibn al-Khatib sets forth a different interpretation of these ideas from what is understood by the public and the clergy. This difference is a matter of both form and content and is a significant philosophical matter we find with many of his countrymen such as Ibn-Sabien (1270 AD) and Ibn al-Arabi and others who justified the issue of love for them, as noted above. This dualism in the philosophical thought is old and goes as far as philosophy itself and is present in the thought of Ibn al-Khatib. It is a complex but perfect idea that looks at existence in a fundamental way. We can find manifestations of this idea in many of the writings of Ibn al-Khatib and in different

contexts, including his saying about his friend's disease: "Good of souls is a corruption of the body."

Conclusion

At the conclusion of this quick overview of the philosophical thoughts of Ibn al-Khatib, we can say it is an abstract of Andalusian and the philosophical thought of it in particular. He certainly took full advantage of his inheritance of the Eastern and Western traditions, which is reflected in his vision of his surroundings, religious works, political undertakings, and own conduct throughout his life.

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Listarchos, Michael Hermodoros

Born: ca. 1500/1505, Zante
Died: ca. 1570/1577, Chios?

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Abstract

Michael Hermodoros Listarchos (ca. 1500/1505–1570/1577) was a prominent post-Byzantine intellectual figure. His greater

contribution is considered to be the education of young men who later became distinguished scholars in Western Europe. In his teaching, he appears to have promoted philosophical learning and new approaches to various philosophical theories. He emphasized the importance of philosophy in a period when intellectual activities and philosophical studies in the Greek-speaking Ottoman-occupied world were following a more traditional direction in comparison to Western European trends.

Biography

Michael Hermodoros Listarchos hailed from Zante (Zakynthos), a Greek island in the Ionian Sea, his father's name was Philippos, and he had two brothers, Andreas and Peter. His date of birth is placed between 1500 and 1505. The surname Listarchos, which in the Greek language means the "leader of robbers," caused Theodosios Zygomalas to ask "Is [Listarchos] the leader of robbers?" before he proceeds to explain that he has rightfully received the agnomen, for "he was a robber and a destroyer of vice and ignorance" of young men, referring to his teaching activity (Crusius 1584; Legrand 1885a). Yet it appears that Listarchos was in fact his family name (Mustoxidis 1847; Mpoupoulides 1959a). His first name was Michael, and Hermodoros was a name he adopted at a later stage in his life. "Hermodoros" is most probably an allusion to the Greek god Hermes, the protector of robbers (Mustoxidis 1847). Information about his life is scarce. At an early age, he left for Italy to study (ca. 1514–1521) at the Greek School of Rome under Ianos Laskaris (ca. 1445–1534), and then to Ferrara to study medicine. After the end of his studies, he returned to Greece and decided to settle down on Chios (Legrand 1885a, b). There, he practiced medicine and periodically served as a teacher to the youth of the Aegean islands (1533–1564). While he was in Chios (1539), Listarchos sent a letter to the humanist Guillaume Budé (1468–1540) praising him for his interest in classical Greek (Budé 1574). He

left Chios for Italy for a few years (1534–1539? and 1543–1546). He went to Rome (1544) and then to Ferrara, where he taught Greek at a local school. He was urged by Ecumenical Patriarch Dionysius II (1546–1556) to leave Italy in order to teach at the newly established Patriarchal school in Constantinople. Listarchos refused, but went to Constantinople a few years later at the behest of Patriarch Ioasaf II (1556–1565), for whom he was acting as a physician and advisor. It is possible that he taught at the Patriarchal school (Gritsopoulos 1966). Listarchos returned to Chios in about 1560, where he possibly remained until his death, although no specific information exists about him after 1564. His death is placed between 1570 and 1577 and before 1581, according to evidence found in epistles (Mpoupoulides 1959a).

Chios was an important educational and cultural center. Listarchos contributed with his teaching activities to its advancement in the sixteenth century and produced a number of students. His extensive correspondence attests to his relations with students and other intellectuals, such as the scholar, teacher, manuscript copyist, and *megas rhetor* of the Patriarchate of Constantinople Ioannes Zygomalas (1498–1584) and his son the scholar Theodosios Zygomalas (1544–1607) (Rhoby 2009). Listarchos was well versed in classical, patristic, and Christian literature and wrote a number of texts dealing with several subjects, in both Greek and Latin. In a hortatory epistle (1562) addressed "To those clever and noble youths who partake in and are taught Greek lessons" (*Tois ta Hellenōn metiousi kai didaskomenois mathēmata neois eyfyesi te kai eygenesin*), Listarchos emphasized the importance of wisdom, truth, knowledge, and faith as means of moral and intellectual improvement. The epistle was written at the request of Ioannes Zygomalas, it was later altered by Theodosios Zygomalas and sent to the humanist Martinus Crusius (1526–1607) (Crusius 1584; Mpoupoulides 1959a; Gritsopoulos 1966). Listarchos was interested in philosophical learning, and as he states "true philosophy is the only medicine [that can cure] passions" (Listarchos

1963). No philosophical works by Listarchos are known. His letters, and especially those he exchanged with the Peloponnesian clergyman and *megas rhetor* of the Patriarchate of Constantinople Theophanis Eleavoukos (d. 1560), are a valuable source of information about the study of philosophy in Greece in the sixteenth century. Eleavoukos criticized Listarchos' ideas and teaching methods in a discourse entitled *Reproach of those who are uninstructed in the use of reasoning or against Hermodoros* (*Elechos kata tōn apaideutōs xrōmenōn tois logois ē kat' Hermodorou*) (Eleavoukos 1981–82). There he offers an evaluation of philosophical studies in Greece and expresses his disapproval of philosophers-teachers, because, as he notes, they had partial knowledge of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy and were a threat to the Christian faith. In light of Eleavoukos' accusations, it could be assumed that Listarchos most possibly adopted in his teachings novel approaches to Aristotelian philosophy which at that time were flourishing in the West. Listarchos, therefore, appears to have followed the intellectual tendencies of Renaissance scholars, at a time characterized by “the insistence of the vast majority of the Greek scholars to remain faithful to the traditional approaches in philosophy” (Steiris 2009). Thanks to his contacts with the West, Listarchos also facilitated the acquisition of books that were difficult to find in the East (Rhoby 2009).

The impact and legacy of Listarchos' teachings are evidenced by the fact that his students became distinguished scholars, “wise men, doctors and teachers” as Theodosios Zygomalas states (Legrand 1889). The success of Listarchos' students, many of whom engaged in the study of philosophy, indicates that he has provided them with high-level education in Greek letters and philosophy, at a time when education in Greece focused on scriptural teachings (cf. Crusius 1584; Steiris 2009). Listarchos was a purveyor of new philosophical approaches, especially of Neo-Aristotelianism, and paved the way for the new directions philosophy would take in Greece in the seventeenth century with Theophilos Corydalleus.

Cross-References

► [Zygomalas, John and Theodosius](#)

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Literary Societies Outside Italy, Renaissance

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Abstract

Traditionally, the rise of a formalized academic culture in Europe, that is, of a culture of the arts

and sciences practiced in voluntary associations outside the universities, has been traced back to informal assemblies of Italian humanists in the later fifteenth century. However, throughout the urbanized zones of Western Europe, from Spain in the South to the Low Countries in the North, forms of organized literary sociability preceded the rise of the formal Italian academies in the 1520s, sometimes by as much as two centuries. The study of these older associations, often strongly agonistic and modeled on literary performances in public feasts and private banquets, reveals various organizational clusters typical of certain regions and cultural zones. These clusters, which sometimes interacted with each other, differed significantly in detail, but they had in common that they were formal organizations of (regional) cultures dedicated to the liberal arts (and sciences). Far from the learned associations that furthered erudite work or scholarly training, these organizations were dedicated first and foremost to literary performances as exercises in personal virtue in a way that was reminiscent of the "spiritual exercises" of antiquity. According to Caradonna (2012), the eighteenth-century French academies had borrowed their practice of prize questions from the *Jòcs Florals* (Floral Games), organized by the *Consistori del Gay Saber* of Toulouse, established in 1323, which was reconstituted as the *Académie des jeux floraux* in 1694. This fact underscores the need to include these "proto-academies" (with the performative literary culture they shared with most of the Italian academies), as a form of vernacular, everyday philosophical life, in the history of Renaissance philosophy.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

"Academic" or Convivial Practice Before 1600

"Academy" is a modern term of reference used in the history of philosophy and philosophical culture to characterize forms of philosophical sociability. The term is employed so widely that, from the viewpoint of social and cultural history, it has

become quite meaningless. It has been, and is still, used in relation to universities and their culture: For example, it has been argued, through a critical study of the sources, that Marsilio Ficino's famous Neoplatonic academy equated the Florentine Studio or university or at least its scholarly community (Hankins 1991). The term is also attached to assemblies of scholars and *literati* outside the university. Often, these groups have been awarded a role in the history of science and philosophy, as sites where humanists and later the proponents of the new science congregated to discuss novel ideas and perform experiments, in opposition to the supposedly sclerotic, noncollaborative scholastic world of the universities (see however De Ridder-Symoens 1996). A similar historiographical tradition developed regarding the third important use of the term academy, referring to the new groupings of artists, outside of the rigid system of the guilds, which helped to raise the visual and performative arts to a philosophical status through their association with the liberal arts, as opposed to the mechanical arts and manual labor status of the guilds. The fourth use of the term academy occurred in the context of the training of gentlemen, in the new military schools of the early modern world (see Garber and Wismann 1996 for these various usages).

From the Royal Society and the French royal academies to the numerous national, provincial, or local academies and societies engaged in promoting the arts and sciences (including the military arts), the origins of these forms of learning or education have been traced back to Italy and its Renaissance academies. As a result, most scholars adhere to an established genealogy, moving from the revival of ancient philosophical practices of the *convivium* among late-fifteenth-century Italian humanists (in particular, Ficino and his legendary academy), to the first institutionalizations of vernacular *literati* cultures in the early sixteenth century, from humanist academies to those of the new science, and from the Italian academies to those of France and to the academies and learned societies of the rest of Europe. Academy, as a term, has been used generically, even though many of these organizations or groups (from the Italian humanist circles to the Royal Society, and many others), in

particular outside the Romance-speaking world, did not call themselves academies, preferring instead a vernacular or Latin variant such as "society," "company," or "college." While the term academy has been liberally applied, suggesting a single genealogy for a large variety of groups and institutions, most of the organizations involved in literary culture in the vernacular outside of Italy, before 1500 and often even before 1400, were never called academies. These organizations have also been regarded as medieval and, more often than not, omitted from the canon of Renaissance culture. The more we learn about these "older" forms, however, and the more we study them from a European, comparative perspective, the less convincing the existing genealogy becomes (Van Dixhoorn and Sutch 2008; cf. Garber and Wismann 1996; Clark 2001; Everson et al. 2016).

This is not to say that Italian academies did not play a leading role in shaping a novel "academic" experience in Europe by providing a new model for learned and educational institutionalization. Yet, while some Italian academies (especially in cultural capitals like Padua, Venice, Florence, and Rome) certainly did play such a role, the early academies of the 1520s and 1530s, as well as most of the later ones, followed a different model that was similar to the "older" forms of other European regions. Despite a lack of a systematic comparison of the practices of all local Italian academies, it has been firmly established that the sixteenth-century literary, scientific, and artistic academies in Italy were commonly defined by various forms of conviviality or philosophical sociability (Cochrane 1961; Samuels 1976; Bryce 1995; van Dixhoorn and Sutch 2008). Rather than this being an invention of Renaissance Italy, these academies must be seen from a pan-European perspective, as forming part of the larger history of symposium-like practices, which also include the many earlier and contemporary non-Italian forms of conviviality (Jeanneret 1991). It has also long been established that the rise of the prototypical scientific academies around 1600 poses a new problem in the study of a *longue durée* of early modern conviviality, which, it can now be argued, extended from the 1200s through

the 1600s (van Dixhoorn and Sutch 2008; McClellan III 1985; Caradonna 2012).

Within these chronological limits, the question should then be: What forms of conviviality can be identified, and what are their historiographical traditions? To what extent and how can they be related or made comparable? How can these forms be positioned in a European history of everyday philosophical sociability? To what extent, and how, does such a study nuance existing Italy-focused interpretations of the origins of “academic” culture in Europe at large? And in order to do justice to the current themes in historiography: Why were some Italian academies given such a prominent role while others and particularly other non-Italian regional clusters were sidelined? Or, to put it differently, why has the history of European conviviality before 1600 not received attention in the study of European late medieval, and early modern philosophical culture that (some of) the Italian academies have? And what exactly changed when the older “festive” forms of conviviality were reduced, marginalized, or simply eradicated in favor of a new, more “scholarly” model? (Beam 2007; Werner 2008; Baldriga 2008; Van Dixhoorn 2009). What were the models for the change and to what extent were Italian experiences influential? These are questions to be answered in the future; but at present, the role of the *litterati* cultures in Europe outside of Italy needs to be established before the emergence and dominance of the new model can be understood.

Forms of institutionalized conviviality other than Italian academies have had no place in any history of medieval or Renaissance philosophy until very recently. To be sure, the place of the academies, apart from a few famous examples, in such history also remains unstable. What is more, with few exceptions, the history of the Italian academy as a social and cultural movement and as the institutionalized form of cultural practices remains largely untold, with the focus still largely local or at best regional (with Florence and Tuscany as the most famous examples) (Maylender 1626–1930; Yates 1983; Garber and Wismann 1996; Testa 2015; Everson et al. 2016). Given their rich historiography, the Italian academies

warrant a separate treatment, and comparison will only make sense after their European predecessors (not necessarily their ancestors) have been established as a topic in the history of Renaissance philosophy. This will not be an easy task, given the pivotal role awarded to Italy in any history of the Renaissance as a form of cultural upheaval.

One of the problems facing such an integration is the lack of interest in the content of texts that were produced by these forms of conviviality. The reason is simple: there can be no doubt that the individual items that have survived pale against the texts of the great philosophers or philosophical traditions. Very much like the works of most Italian academies, these texts only become interesting when they are seen as forms of practice, not as carriers of fascinating philosophical content. In other words, they represent “little traditions,” rather than the “great traditions” of philosophy (Burke 2009). They represent a “playful” culture (Lavéant 2011; O’Callaghan 2007; Winston 2016), a culture that was also largely vernacular and everyday. No doubt these forms of conviviality created a “second life” (Bakhtin 1984), but one that was fully integrated into the lives of its participants and audiences in its civic, mostly urban, settings. Its playfulness shows in the ceremonial, ritualistic, agonistic, often also festive and comical, or farcical, and always performative nature of these assemblies, mostly enacted by and for “ordinary people,” rather than for powerful patrons by professional *litterati* and/or performers. At the same time, these assemblies and their ordinary patrons were deadly serious about the identification of their exercises with traditions of learning, wisdom, or arts and sciences. In that sense, they can be seen as perpetuating or perhaps more accurately rejuvenating and adapting the ancient traditions of philosophy as a way of life, through “spiritual exercises” or “therapies” (see in a different context Nussbaum 1994; Hadot 1995; Jones 2006). Hence, in this entry, the focus is not on philosophies, but on everyday philosophical exercises, in the context of vernacular institutions and assemblies, outside Italy, between 1200 and 1600 (the 400 years of urban revival, and two cultural Renaissances in Europe). Given the state of comparative research into these earlier

“academic” traditions, the ideas presented here are preliminary, and the claim to philosophical relevance is controversial (van Dixhoorn and Sutch 2008; Van Dixhoorn 2018).

Since conviviality largely takes place in small group settings, the fundamental problem facing any history of sociability applies: Face-to-face meetings normally leave few archival traces. In the context of the history of conviviality, record keeping of meetings might be limited, but since philosophical sociability requires forms of speech, transcripts of spoken interventions, especially by memorable members or of memorable events, might survive. With respect to premodern European conviviality, the more elevated forms of speech during meetings were delivered in poetic form (using rhyme, rhythm, music, and dialogue). These poetic speech forms were often scripted, and in theory, such literary texts could survive as records of the meetings for which they were prepared and set down in writing. Yet, the survival of such records of ephemeral literature is strongly contingent on either the record-keeping of the poet (personal manuscripts) and his or her family, and/or the communal record-keeping practices of the group. The likelihood of the survival of such records is much higher if the group continued in existence after the demise of its founders and was interested in establishing an internal and sometimes external memory of its legacy. In other words, the chances of finding sources for convivial practices in premodern Europe are higher when they took place in institutionalized communities or formal organizations.

Institutional forms of conviviality can also be expected to be more likely to engage in record keeping in general, to come into contact with the law, and to engage with larger audiences. A public, relatively open, institution, as opposed to a private, relatively closed, group also stimulated further internal record-keeping practices and recording in a wider web of related institutions. They were also more likely to become a topic of interest for chroniclers. Finally, members of institutionalized communities were more inclined to keep records of their own contributions and to manage their legacy for future generations. Consequently, the study of the more institutionalized

forms of conviviality is likely to reveal the most comprehensive understanding of premodern conviviality. Such forms are the obvious object of study and transregional and cross-cultural comparison. Yet, they also only represent the most sophisticated expression of a much larger phenomenon.

Cultural Zones, Regional Clusters

If, in defining the object of study, we apply the set of criteria of associations of nonprofessionals engaging regularly in literary and theatrical performances in (private) playful meetings or on (public) festive occasions and often organizing regular contests, we can identify a few cultural zones and regional clusters across south-western Europe. To a large extent, these clusters and zones overlap with vernacular regional communities rather than with modern nation-states. They seem to have developed from older, professional vernacular literary practices, often connected to the courts. Hence, the *trouvère* culture of the northern *langue d’oïl*, the troubadours of the *langue d’oc*, and the *Meistersinger* of southern German-speaking courts were appropriated in the new, civic, and virtuoso institutions, either directly (through personal contact) or indirectly (based on interpretations of collections of texts or the cultural memory of oral transmission). As a result, the early literary associations also continued features of the older, professional cultures: links with (clerical) traditions of learning, social critique, musical culture, and a taste for competition (van Dixhoorn and Sutch 2008 and the references below).

The oldest regional cluster – the poetic contests of the *Puy* (i.e., podium) – originated between 1200 and 1400 in the linguistic zone of the *langue d’oïl*, which geographically includes today’s Walloon region of Belgium, northern France as far south as Burgundy, and (Anglo-Norman) England. The *Puys* have not yet been studied from a transregional perspective; no historian has undertaken an in-depth study of the history and function of these institutions, their practices, discursive traditions, and their members’ (literary) careers and networks. Consequently, what is known about them (largely) comes from literary

scholarship, which lacks historical precision regarding the institutional and cultural context. Nevertheless, it seems safe to assume that the first confraternity of the *Puy*, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, was founded in the city of Arras at the time of Adam de la Halle. A citizen of Arras, servant of the counts of Artois and Anjou, cosmopolitan diplomat, scholar, *trouvère*, poet, and playwright, he lived in the second half of the thirteenth century and can be considered the founder of the northern French civic literary, musical, and theatrical tradition. When around 1300 the short-lived London *Puy* (Sutton 1992) was founded, it was modeled on the *Puy d'Arras*; ironically, the first statutes of a *Puy* that have survived are those of the London *Puy*. Most other *Puys* are of a later date, largely from the late fourteenth century, including the famous *Puy d'Amiens*, founded in 1388. Between 1300 and 1600, foundations of confraternities of the *Puy* have been attested in Arras, London, Dieppe, Caen, Paris, Amiens, Rouen, Beauvais, Lille, Douai, Évreux, and Valenciennes; some of them were short-lived, and others created long-standing traditions and important cultural legacies that have survived in churches, archives, libraries, and museums (Gros 1992; Hüe 2002; Reid 2008; Symes 2007). Some of the French confraternities were turned into academies in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Caradonna 2012).

The second regional cluster, which is even more difficult to locate geographically, can be found in the linguistic zone of the *langue d'oc*. At its origin and center is the famous and well-documented *Consistori del Gay Saber* of Toulouse, founded in 1323, whose long-term history remains understudied from an institutional and socio-cultural perspective. This institution with its annual contest of the Floral Games and its theory of rhetorical practice became highly influential: Its theory of rhetorical practice was a discursive model in the northern French-speaking literary cultures, and its annual contest was an organizational model in the Occitan-speaking world as far south as Barcelona (in 1393 Juan I of Aragon is reported to have established a *Consistori de la Gaya Ciencia*) and Valencia

(where around that year the first poetic contest in Occitan was held, possibly related to another *Consistori*). The histories of the consistories of Barcelona and Valencia have been ignored (possibly because of a lack of sources) even more than the Toulouse model, which is relatively well known, although fragmentary, and compartmentalized in the traditional periodization between medievalists and early modernists. Whereas we can deduce that the northern traditions must have been inspired by the older *trouvère* culture, the Toulouse consistory explicitly appropriates three traditions existing within the city: the intellectual realm of the university, the political realm of the city, and the literary realm of Occitan troubadour culture. It is also the institution which is most explicit about its claim to create a vernacular convivial tradition based on a love of knowledge. In creating its discourse of the *seconde rhétorique*, as the vernacular equivalent to the ancient traditions, the Toulouse consistory clearly influenced the philosophical ambitions of the entangled literary institutions and cultures of the French – and the Flemish-speaking north (Kendrick 1988, 2008; Schneider 1989; Dauvois 2006). According to Caradonna (2012), the French academies adopted their practice of prize-questions from the Floral Games.

The third regional cluster was, again, located in the linguistic zone of the *langue d'oïl*, where it partly overlapped with the *Puy*. While the *Puy* was focused on poetical competition and performance, the *compagnie joyeuse*, as described by literary historian Katell Lavéant (2011), was focused on theatrical and ceremonial performance and competition in the context of public festivities such as during processions and Carnival. Between the mid-fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, these two clusters inhabited and cocreated a northern cultural zone in which the *seconde rhétorique*, appropriated from the southern city of Toulouse, began to flourish, in close conjunction with the Franco-Flemish musical culture of the cities and courts of France and Burgundy in the area. The rhetorical culture of the *compagnie joyeuse* was strongly farcical in nature and exerted considerable influence on Rabelais. This rhetorical culture

has long been misread by Bakhtin and others as a form of authentic folk culture (before the early modern great division between *élite* and popular culture), largely because of its farcical and festive nature (cf. Beam 2007). A study of the social background and intellectual claims of this culture shows, however, that, if the popular-*élite* distinction should be applied at all, given its intellectual (tongue-in-cheek) nature, it should be positioned close to the *élite* side of the equation. Both the *Puy* and the *compagnie joyeuse* were sophisticated, carefully constructed cultures, with philosophical ambitions (as expressed in their claims to embrace rhetoric), and embedded in, and connected to clerical and textual traditions (in manuscript and later also in print). While Lavéant focused on the *compagnies joyeuses* in the Burgundian-Habsburg realm, the scattered evidence suggests that these theatrical companies may have existed as far south-west as Bordeaux and as far south-east as Lyon and Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne in Savoy (linking the northern world of the *langue d'oïl* with the southern world of the Franco-Provençal) (Chappaz-Wirthner 1995; Tuailon 2008; Krumenacker 2009).

What is interesting about them, and has been so confusing to historians, is that they need to be studied from the perspective of the rise of the vernaculars as intellectual languages, and at the same time cannot be separated from their embedding in the world of practice through their role in festive meetings in more or less restricted public spaces. In the case of the *Puy*, the public competitions were sponsored by confraternities which were founded for that purpose (and, given their level of institutionalization, have left traces other than literary manuscripts in archives, libraries, museums, and public buildings). The *Puy* confraternities also supported more private literary cultures in their corporate meetings and at banquets in honor of the Prince of the *Puy*, for example. That private, more informal side remains more obscure for the *compagnie joyeuse*, due to the lack of sources, which either have not yet been identified and studied or were destroyed in the wars that, from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, ravaged much of this area in Europe.

A fourth cluster emerged in the Flemish-Dutch-speaking areas south of the river Rhine and Meuse in the Low Countries. The southernmost part of this region was integrated into the geographically extensive cultural zone of the *seconde rhétorique*, institutionally shaped by the *compagnies joyeuses* and the confraternities of the *Puy*, with their agonistic public festive and performative practices. The first Flemish-Dutch regional cluster seems to have been modeled on, and integrated in, the world of the *compagnie joyeuse* and its theatrical competitions. Like the *compagnie joyeuse*, this early theatrical world of the Flemish-Dutch-speaking Low Countries has received little attention, partly due to a lack of sources (the result of a lack of institutionalization). The more institutionalized these companies became, the more they left traces in the archival record, for example, through recorded subsidies in city accounts. Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (2008) was the first to uncover the existence of a more institutionalized group of companies, termed the *titels*, largely active in the south west of the County of Flanders. It had long been known that from the late fourteenth century onward so-called *esbattement* players were active in the region. These groups become visible to historians in the record since they often visited processions or other festivals in neighboring towns. Possibly created for the occasion, they would engage in theatrical performances of a comical or playful nature, in the vein of the *compagnie joyeuse*. Such groups would also take part in competitions in the French-speaking south, or they would hold competitions of their own in the context of the many shooting contests organized by the militia guilds of the area, which were also attended by French-speaking groups. They may often have been institutionally related to these guilds. The notion of *esbattement* reveals the rising influence of French as a reference culture in the Flemish-Dutch-speaking area in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

A few other sources register the shaping of a different, more poetical, type of literary culture which may have been equivalent to the Parisian *court amoureuse*. This type of literary culture was related to a more private world, which could be connected to religious confraternities, as in Bruges, to an aristocratic household, or to a militia

guild. The existence of this literary culture remains difficult to trace since its private nature did not call for public record-keeping. Here the performance of literary texts, largely poems or songs, would take place at festive banquets, sometimes in an agonistic, sometimes in a conversational spirit. The little evidence that exists (a cluster of related literary manuscripts) indicates a strong link to the upper echelons of society, with aristocrats and clergy playing leading roles. The evidence also suggests a powerful connection to the flourishing musical culture of the area and to the regional courts of Bruges, Brussels, and (until the 1420s) The Hague. This culture of literary banqueting might have become relatively institutionalized as well, with the term *gezelschap van genuchte*, or joyful company, as a Flemish-Dutch equivalent of the *compagnie joyeuse*.

The evidence, limited as it is, allows us to speculate that these private meetings were related to the theatrical culture of local public festivals. What is much less clear is whether these groups might have provided the structure for the less regular *esbattement* players or the West-Flemish *titels*. Whatever the case, these public and private associations were part of a cultural zone connecting the French-speaking north to the Flemish-Dutch-speaking south, resulting in an intensification of cultural exchange. It is no accident that this cultural zone was also being integrated politically. This happened first in the two dynastic complexes of Hainault-Holland and Burgundy-Flanders, which then continued in the Burgundian composite state, comprising most of the area: from Burgundy itself in the deep south, to Hainault, Artois, Flanders, Brabant, Holland, and Zealand in the north. The competition between the two Valois states, France and Burgundy, added extra pressure to the development of a highly integrated cultural zone stretching from Caen in Bretagne in the southwest to Alkmaar in Holland in the north-west, and from Lyon in the south-east to Bois-le-Duc in the north-east of Brabant. One of the most evident signs of the intensified integration of this zone is the rise of a fifth highly institutionalized regional cluster, blending elements from the earlier theatrical groups and banquet meetings with agonistic and ceremonial

practices of the *compagnie joyeuse* and the *Puy*. Even more significantly, the new Flemish-Dutch institutions appropriated many of the literary genres, practices, and discourses of the *seconde rhétorique*; in doing so, they also created a new, hybrid, highly rhetorical literary language, full of French and Latin loan words. As if to claim the Romance literary legacies, these new Flemish-Dutch institutions were not only called chambers or companies of rhetoric, but they also identified themselves with the older *gezelschap van genuchte*, or joyful company (Van Bruaene 2006, 2008; Van Dixhoorn 2009). As a result of this development, by 1500, the French literary culture of the north had become a reference culture of its own, competing with Latin (and Italian), from Toulouse to Leiden, in a world of regional institutional clusters struggling to revive ancient rhetorical practices. In turn, Flemish-Dutch rhetorical culture became a culture of reference in the Burgundian world.

With French becoming the language of the kingdom of France in the sixteenth century, the Toulouse *Consistori* was renamed a *Collège de l'Art et Science de Rhétorique* in 1513, with reference to the French rhetorical culture of the north. From the mid-fifteenth century, most of the Flemish-Dutch chambers of rhetoric adopted a flower as a symbol or name for their company, a nomenclature which may have been inspired by the Toulouse Floral Games. The evidence is mounting that cultural zones and regional clusters interacted over large distances, influenced one another, and at the same time developed distinct regional features. The regional model of simultaneous convergence (inspiration) and divergence (identity-formation) was repeated on the local and subregional levels. These processes were much less organic than has often been believed, and institution building was a highly conscious form of "invention of tradition," with a deliberate and sophisticated reconfiguration of details taken from elsewhere and blended with local "material" to create a uniquely positioned institution, representative at the same time of both the literary model and of local and regional traditions.

The sixth regional cluster, the Spanish *Justa*, may well have been inspired by the Floral Games.

Yet, if so, it was clearly differentiated into a uniquely regional institution. Its historians, often locally oriented or from the (national) philological tradition, have largely ignored the similarities or have failed to recognize them, so that they are often not even seen as regional but rather merely as local phenomena. The regional clusters discussed here together, as expressions of one complex phenomenon, have until very recently been seen as too local to be compared and related effectively. This is not made easier by a lack of precise knowledge about the origins and developments of these institutions and their networks.

The apparently small amount of evidence documenting the rise of the first cluster of institutions of performative literature in present-day Spain points to a continuity with the Occitan tradition in the Kingdom of Aragon (Álvarez et al. 2008). The city of Valencia seems to have been a real center, with at least four literary contests attested – c. 1330, c. 1390, 1440, and 1456 – with contributions in a hybrid of Occitan and Catalan. Then, between 1474 and 1532, 15 poetry contests were held in the city, most (but not all) of them in honor of the Virgin Mary. Remarkably, given the highly oral and performative nature of these contests, 6 out of 15 are known through printed volumes, beginning in 1474 with the first literary work to be printed in Catalan. The Valencian culture of contests seems to have been interrupted after 1532. Apparently, the poetic contests celebrated from the end of the century onward (1591) were held in Castilian and were similar to those of other Spanish cities. While the available literature on the *Justa* is not entirely clear as to the origin of this typically Spanish (Castilian) institution, its features are at least partly modeled on the poetry contests of Valencia, in which poets from Castilian, Catalanian, and Balearic towns also took part. At the very moment that the Valencian tradition came to an end in 1531, the first *Justas* were celebrated in Seville. A regional cluster of *Justas* took off from the end of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century, with contests held from Madrid, Salamanca, Valladolid, Cordoba, Zaragoza, and Seville, to Toledo and Granada in 1614 and 1615. The proceedings of at least five of these

local contests were printed, attesting (again) to the close relationship between the Spanish contests and literary culture at large through the medium of print. While the spatial and temporal extension of the *Justa* is difficult to establish, it is clear that it became a pan-Spanish phenomenon that lasted at least until the end of the seventeenth century. By then, however, the *Justa* as an autochthonous institution was in competition and had become entangled with a Castilian-style academic culture which originated in the *Nocturnos* of Valencia in the 1590s through the influence of the *Accademia degli Intronati* of Siena. On the other hand, the Aragonese tradition of poetic contests allegedly had some influence on poetic competitions in southern Italy, before the rise of the paradigmatic *accademia* (in practice and as a term) in the early sixteenth century (Álvarez et al. 2008; Bouza 2004; Bernal and Jaime 2006).

Like the pre-1532 Valencian tradition, the *Justa* of early modern Spain had a regional impact and influence not only because of the spread of the institution itself, but also and especially because these contests invited and attracted a wider (inter) regional group of contestants. Unlike the Italian-style academies, these *Justas*, strongly linked to festive events, were open and highly public in nature (often celebrated at the end of a communal festive event in churches or monasteries, and organized by institutions related to these places such as religious orders, brotherhoods, or guilds). The Spanish-style academies, on the other hand, were (relatively informal) associations, organizing internal contests in a farcical tradition, largely open to members or at least regular participants only. They also relied much more on textual improvisation than the more doctrinal contributions to the (religiously themed) *Justas*.

During the same period in which the Valencian Catalan and the first Sevillian poetry contests were held (1474–1532), several cities in the High German cultural zone of today's Germany, France, Austria, and Poland also established a seventh cluster of highly typical literary associations. Again, an exact dating of the origins, rise, and development of the cluster is problematic due to a lack of studies focused on these institutions and their relations. For a long time, the dating of

this type of literary institution has been hampered by its inclusion in the field of philology with its highly technical text-focused disciplinary traditions. Up until the present, and despite the influence of the historicizing and contextualizing trends in literary history which have led to a greater interest in those genres and forms of literary culture that were marginalized in the nineteenth-century canon, these guilds or schools of *Meistersinger* (*Meistersingerzünfte*, *Singschulen*) have largely remained only a secondary topic of research in German philology or a primary topic of interest in studies of local urban culture. These two fields have only intersected in the study of the literary culture of the Bavarian city of Nuremberg and largely out of an interest in the famous *Meistersinger*, polygraph, and artisan, Hans Sachs. The dating problem relates to a misreading of the invention of the *Meistersinger* tradition. Instead of making inter-regional, synchronic, comparisons, German philologists have emphasized a diachronic comparison within the High German cultural zone that has caused much confusion. They have thus largely taken seriously the *Meistersinger* genealogy which formally traces the origins of the *Singschule* to a line of 12 original *Meistersinger*, beginning with the Bavarian aristocrat Wolfgang of Eschenbach (c. 1160/80–1220) (Nagel 1971; Merzbacher 1987; Kästner 1998; Brunner and Wachinger 1986–2007; Egidi et al. 2004; Baldzuhn 2008).

This claim of origin, a (highly successful) invention of tradition, is similar to the appropriation of troubadour culture by the Toulouse *Consistori*, which claimed to have been established by 12 original troubadours. The established line of tradition between the urban institution of the *Singschule* and the early *Meistersinger*, whose work survives in dozens of often high-quality manuscripts must be broken (Baldzuhn 2008). The difference between the courtly practices and legacies of professional writers of the (minstrel) lyric and epic poetry of the *Minnesinger* of the Middle High German *Sangspruch* tradition and the later, early modern, urban tradition of amateur *Meistersinger*, often from artisanal backgrounds, is *fundamental*. The genealogy, strongly ingrained in the practice of

the later tradition, is only practical in an inspirational sense: The claim rests on a clear appropriation of aspects of the older tradition in a new world (Baldzuhn 2008).

Four important aspects of the appropriation should be emphasized as key elements in the self-stylization of the new *Meistersinger*: the musical tradition in the reuse of “original” (i.e., traditional) tunes; the importance of inventing new tunes in order to achieve true *Meistersinger* status; the references to the learned status of the “original” *Meistersinger*; and the claim to an autochthonous, unbroken tradition of learning in the High German language and to an unbroken continuity with antiquity. Yet, these influences are only indirect, not direct, and the result of an original creation that blended interpretations of previous traditions with contemporary appropriations and inspirations that remain to be studied. The differences between the courtly-aristocratic *Sangspruch* tradition and the urban *Meistersinger* tradition are manifold. An interesting difference is that the older tradition would establish a link to antiquity through the reference and use of ancient epic traditions, the new *Meistersinger* lyric would reference and use the Hebrew Scriptures, the Psalms, in particular. More significant still, the *Meistersinger* were organized in urban associations that held regular private and public contests for members and would-be-members only. In what might be a nod to the older tradition, *Meistersinger* would only publish individual works in print, never proceedings of contests. The texts related most closely to their oral and performative practice survive in manuscripts, often miscellanea of the most famous *Meistersinger* from various towns.

Only if the historical distinction between *Meistersinger* culture and the earlier *Sangspruch* is made, can a clear chronology of the *Meistersinger* movement, in comparison with other regional clusters of literary associations, be established. Only then can the discussion of mutual exchanges and influences can begin. The evidence, then, points to the making of the new tradition in the imperial city of Nuremberg in the 1470s, with the mythical number of 12 founders. The Nuremberg college of *Meistersinger* seems to have been

incorporated before 1496. It is not entirely clear whether Nuremberg also invented the *Singschule* as a permanent institution, given that, in the imperial city of Strasbourg in 1492, 16 *Liebhaber der Kunst* joined to form a *Singschule* as a formal association. It seems therefore safe to conclude that the institution of the *Singschule* was created at the end of the fifteenth century in competition between two imperial cities that were soon joined by the city of Freiburg in Breisgau in 1513 and Ulm in 1517. If this genealogy is correct, we must also conclude that in the century between 1470 and 1570 from Castilian-speaking Spain and the French-speaking Toulouse in the south, to French-Picardian and Flemish-Dutch-speaking areas up north, or from the French-speaking city of Rouen westward to the High-German-speaking city of Nuremberg eastward, several distinct clusters of regional literary traditions, institutions, and associations emerged, sometimes, but not always, grounded in early developments and institutions dating back to the thirteenth century. In exactly the same time span, the first Italian academies of Rome and Siena emerged (1520s and 1530s) (Samuels 1976; Bryce 1995; Chambers and Quiviger 1995; De Beer 2008; Werner 2008; Testa 2015; Everson et al. 2016). Their cultural design was clearly marked by very similar oral and performative practices in ways that are reminiscent of the *compagnies joyeuses* and the law clerks of the *Basoche* of France (Bouhaïk-Gironès 2007, 2008) or the lawyers of the Inns of Court of London (O'Callaghan 2007; Sobocki 2015; Winston 2016).

Beyond the many features that make these traditions look so different and distinct, their institutions and associations share at least one defining characteristic. They all sponsor regional traditions of performative literature in oral, often highly ceremonial and/or festive, settings. They are all located on a continuum from private to public and from informal to formal. The geographical span of these types of clusters and the depth of their regional integration (for the Hanseatic cities of the north, see, the *Zirkelbruderschaft* in Lübeck) remains an open question that can only be answered imprecisely. Yet the intensification between 1470 and 1530, for example, in the entire

cultural zone of South-Western Europe, which roughly equates to the urbanized zone, but also the early zones of print culture, is evident. The periodization of these institutions is at odds with the medieval-Renaissance divide, stretching from 1200 to 1900 (from the earliest to last surviving examples), or from the end of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century (from the period of greatest flourishing, rise and spread of the regional clusters to cultural prominence, and early demise as cultural references in the vernacular world). Italian academies were not the first to institutionalize an oral, performative, and agonistic literary culture in the vernacular; they were the last cluster to emerge. By 1500, the urban networks of Western Europe were brimming with forms of public and private, formal and informal literary sociability dating back to the 1200s.

Innovative and Original Aspects

While the institutional clusters of literary sociability in premodern Europe can be easily identified on the basis of the central role of performative practices, their internal organization and external positioning exhibited tremendous variety. The first category of organizational principles to be discussed relate to the position of these clusters on the continuum from informal to formal. At the very beginning of every initiative and project must have been an informal gathering of enthusiasts, inspired by an idea and in search of a model. The models for a more formal organization of sociability in Europe, ensuring a form of continuity, social status, and regulation of behavior within a mixed company, were, on the one hand, the corporation and, on the other, courtly and communal feasts. At the basis of recreational sociability in both cases were the banquet, the procession, ceremonial events, and Carnival. In aristocratic, clerical, and scholarly circles, festive events would be accompanied by music, dancing, spectacle, and the performance of epic, lyrical, or farcical poetry (by a professional minstrel or by the youngsters: students and apprentices). An informal group that sought to consolidate a form of literary sociability would take up a few of these

means and blend them into a set of practices carried out regularly. They could take their example from anywhere to which they had access, and once they became successfully established, they could in turn become the inspirational model for another group, elsewhere, to create a similar form of sociability (van Dixhoorn and Sutch 2008).

They then faced at least two choices: either to copy the model and appropriate it to local circumstances or to use it as an inspiration for the creation of a new blend by adding and subtracting elements and integrating them into local practices. When the initiators decided to copy an existing model, the transfer of practices and ideas resulted in the shaping of a network, a regional cluster. When, on the other hand, the elements of the cluster were appropriated from a preexisting regional performative culture, the regional cluster and the cultural zone together began to produce cultural specificities. In some cases, two or more regional clusters inhabited and together created one cultural zone, as happened in France, the French-speaking Low Countries, and Spain. The Dutch-speaking chambers of rhetoric inhabited a highly homogenous cultural zone, but they were so closely entangled with the French-speaking world that it could be argued, at least in the southern Low Countries, that they inhabited the same, bilingual (or trilingual, if we also count Latin) zone, a region dense with cultural transfers between communities. Like the Flemish-Dutch chambers of rhetoric, the regional cluster of the *Singschule* inhabited a zone of its own, whose particular blend of performative culture remained largely unchallenged by alternatives.

The literary practices of the clusters that represent the institutional zenith of premodern literary sociability can be distinguished from the recreational settings in which performative literature was an important focus, but not the main emphasis. In the gatherings and meetings of these institutions, which took place at regular intervals, literary performance was the defining element, and banqueting and drinking were reduced to secondary importance. The two basic organizational principles of the corporation and the (communal) feast were blended in a remarkable

variety of ways to sustain forms of literary sociability. Some of the clusters were modeled more on the corporation, others more on the feast, and some blended elements of the two models. The *Puy*, the *Consistori*, and the *Justa* provide examples of one type of blend: They were based on the model of an open literary contest organized by a corporation. In the case of the *Puy* and the *Consistori*, the corporation was created for the purpose of sponsoring such an event regularly. The confraternities of the *Puy* organized *Puys*, poetic contests, often in a secluded space such as a church or a chapel, open to anyone who wished to attend. The *Consistori*, too, organized regular contests, the famous Floral Games, which anyone could attend. Members of the *Consistori* were then recruited from among the winners of the contest, whose career expressed in titles resembled that of a university student (from bachelor to doctor). This seems not to have been the case in the *Puy*, and the *Justa* model also did not have a specific confraternity to sponsor the event. The contests of the *Puy*, *Justa*, and *Consistori* drew from a local as well as a regional field of contestants.

The *compagnie joyeuse*, on the other hand, followed an entirely different model, that of the feast. These companies most likely resembled an informal group of people (with some level of organization, administration, and leadership) rather than a formal corporation (with all the rules and regulations, privileges, property, and social status that such a group might accrue). Instead, while they may have been supported by the local government or a local guild, or a network of local leaders, the *compagnie joyeuse*, it seems, was organized loosely around one or a few leading figures. Whereas the *Consistori*, the *Justas*, and the *Puy* focused on lyrical performances, the *compagnies joyeuses* were strongly connected to public ceremonies and processions. Their performances followed a more festive, more theatrical, and more farcical logic. Unlike the contests of *Consistori*, *Puy*, and *Justa*, whose invited participants were individuals, in the areas that formed the French-Flemish cultural zone, the companies organized festive contests to which they would

invite other *compagnies joyeuses*. The main genre in which these companies competed seems to have been theatrical: The answers presented at these rhetorical contests to the prize question would take the form of plays. The model of contests open only to members of a collective may have inspired the chambers of rhetoric in their particular regional blend.

Unlike the *compagnie joyeuse*, the chambers of rhetoric (or most of them), heavily inspired by the models provided by the rhetorical culture of the French-speaking zone, were closer to the corporate model, but they also extensively borrowed from the model of the feast. They organized a culture of literary sociability that took elements from the *Puy* and from the *compagnie joyeuses* and blended them with others taken from an urban aristocratic banqueting culture that had been developing in the cities of Flanders and Brabant, and may also have been partly inspired by the *court amoureuse* of Paris, a form of literary sociability that was fashionable around 1400. The chamber of rhetoric was organized according to the corporate model, with a formal board and regulations, and the ability to acquire rights and properties, very much like the *Consistori* or a confraternity of the *Puy*. Yet, in contrast to these institutions that sponsored the literary activity of others, members of the chambers formed the pool of participants in the literary practices they organized, very much like the *compagnies joyeuses*. Yet, differing from these models, the focus of the chamber of rhetoric was on private gatherings and contests, open only to its members. At the same time, at regular intervals, the chambers took part in public festivals and organized contests to which they invited other chambers, not individuals. These contests often combined theatrical and lyrical genres and, more like those of the *compagnies joyeuses* than of the *Puy*, were accompanied by extensive use of spectacle and of ceremonial practices. The *Puy* of Amiens, in particular, may have inspired the chambers of rhetoric to create a highly visual culture (Scaillièrez 2017). In the *Puy* of Amiens, the Prince of the Puy would donate to the cathedral a painting illustrating the annual theme of the contest. The chambers of

rhetoric focused their visual culture on the *tableau vivant* and the *blazon*, that is, a panel painting representing a flower, motto, patron saint, and the name of the chamber or, in a contest, visualizing a theme in return for a prize (Ramakers 1996; Vandommele 2011).

The private gatherings and contests for members only, on the one hand, and the highly institutionalized regional contests for chambers only, on the other, were the hallmarks of the chambers of rhetoric. Elements of all the different clusters discussed here appear in a unique way again in the *Singschule*, which most closely resembles the model of the chamber of rhetoric. The *Singschule*, too, was a company of participants, the *Meistersinger*, organized in the form of a brotherhood. The members, apprentice singers, and master singers were the only ones allowed to take part in private literary performances and contests. Unlike the chambers of rhetoric, the *Singschule* network remained informal and did not organize regional contests. The *Singschule* also engaged in theatrical culture, which from the seventeenth century became the norm; however, the basic features of the *Meistersinger* tradition were focused on the recital of lyrical poetry, texts versified and performed by a *Meistersinger* and set to his own tune or to a standard one, with the Psalm as the ancient genre of reference. Whereas the chambers of rhetoric did not provide a clear career path for members, the *Singschule* began with an apprenticeship, including participation in contests, which was concluded by formal acceptance into the company of *Meister*, who explicitly claimed to be continuing the tradition of the original *Meistersinger*, similar to the way in which the early *Consistori* claimed to perpetuate the tradition of the Occitan troubadours.

Impact and Legacy

The rise of these regional clusters simultaneously helped to fix, shape, and produce regional literary traditions. The way in which these clusters engaged with literary culture was highly self-conscious, with traditions being revived,

reinvented, and drafted into specific forms. A deliberate positioning is apparent from the simultaneous building on and appropriation of older forms (sometimes extinguished in practice) or forms from other cultural or linguistic zones, crafting new and regionally or locally specific practices, while also referring to universal or ancient examples. This is not only visible in the deeper structural relations of these institutions with their environments (local culture, cultural zone, regional cluster) and the types of their activities, but also, with reference to Lévi-Strauss (1962), the groups involved in tinkering with available material to shape the structures of performative literary culture into local and regional molds were *bricolaging*. This was, after all, a world of (oral) practice.

This is also visible in elements that became typical of mainstream Western European literary sociability: the mimicking of existing structures, institutions, and authorities in the use of titles. For example, the ceremonial leader of the confraternity of the *Puy* was called the prince, and the *compagnies joyeuses* (which used military, aristocratic, and clerical titles for their leading members) also had their “Prince des Sots” (see also the Inns of Court of London: O’Callaghan 2007; Winston 2016). With the introduction of an entire set of ideas and practices from the French culture of rhetoric of the mid-fifteenth century, the title of prince also became standard for the ceremonial leader of the Flemish-Dutch chambers of rhetoric. Some of them would also have “kings” or “emperors” (Holland), while other titles adopted by Flemish-Dutch rhetoricians referred to those used in local guilds and confraternities. The *Consistori* used bachelor and doctor for its types of members. The “mantenedor” (jury member) in the *Justa* contests might be a reference to the *Consistori* (Kendrick 2008; Álvarez et al. 2008). The “Meister” in the German *Singschule* has always been interpreted as a reference to the guild system, partly because of their guild-like apprentice system. It should be noted, however, that the “mythical” genealogy of the *Meistersinger* did not refer to artisans but rather to men of great learning and secret cunning, at least one of whom was claimed to have been an alumnus

(a master) of the University of Paris. The use of such references from the “world outside” suggests a strong link between the majority of these traditions and the “world turned upside down” of (clerical, then urban) festive culture. In other words, literary sociability at its heart, even at its most ceremonial and religious (that is, in the *Puy*, *Consistori*, *Justa*, and the *Singschule*), almost always retained or even cherished a playful, often carnivalesque, core. The carnivalesque was most visible in the *compagnies joyeuses* and, to a lesser extent, in the chambers of rhetoric. It also determined the character of the very first Italian academies and most of their offspring (whose ceremonial leader was called “Principe”) in the Italian peninsula and in Sicily; it was strongly present as well in the Spanish academies that spread quickly, alongside and sometimes entangled with the *Justa*, from late sixteenth-century Valencia onward (Robbins 1997; Álvarez et al. 2008).

The use of titles and deeper structural principles in *bricolaging* a new regional type or a local version was paralleled in the way in which literary genres were appropriated to form regional traditions. Most of these genres became typical of their clusters and were strongly linked to the performative practices of meetings, contests, and festive events. The provenance of similar texts in manuscript or print (or inscribed on panels or stones) that have no apparent link to any of the institutions of a cluster or of its members or participants can still be seen as indicating a likely connection to the activities of an institution in the cluster. In any case, of course, genres related to institutions of performative literary culture were entangled with private *convivia* or public festivals and with the private or public competitions. Since they had to respond to a set prize question, texts written for such occasions were more ephemeral than other types of text. Nevertheless, many of them have survived in manuscript collections and in print because of the prestige that this culture attached to these events and genres.

The *chant royal*, for example, became typical of the *Puy*, while the *ballade* and various sorts of mock-genres became typical of the *compagnie joyeuse*. The Flemish-Dutch tradition was

strongly inspired by the French rhetorical zone, taking elements such as complicated rhyme structures, elevated and abundant language, or the use of a stanza dedicated to the Prince or of the “refrain,” the typical *sententia* of each stanza of the ballade and chant royal. The *refrain* gave its name to the entire Flemish-Dutch genre of the *refrein*, with its *stock-regel* (the French *refrain*). The Flemish-Dutch *refrein* became the core genre of rhetorical sociability. From exchanges with the French traditions, Flemish-Dutch rhetorical culture also developed theatrical genres (the comical *esbattement* and *cluchte*) and also more distinctive genres such as the banquet play (*tafelspel*), often a witty dialogue between a few personified concepts, intended for performance at banquets, and a rhetoricized *moralité*, the *zinnespel* (or *spel van zinne*). The *zinnespel* (combining serious allegorical dialogue with farcical, musical, and visual elements discussing a *questio*) was the most prestigious of Flemish-Dutch rhetorician genres; it became the core genre of the public performances and the rhetorician contests (Spies 1990; Ramakers 1996; Moser 2001; Keßler 2013; Mareel 2013). Like the French *chant royal*, *farce*, *sottie*, and *moralité*, the Dutch *refrein*, *lied* (song), *clucht* and *zinnespel*, *Consistori*, *Justa*, and *Singschule* had agonistic genres. Along similar lines, the Italian academies would develop the sonnet, and the Spanish academies the farcical *vejamen*, a lyrical genre focused on the mockery of a person’s facial features. The sonnet and *vejamen* were also connected with *convivia* and agonistic practices. These regional traditions did not become immutable and impermeable once they had been established as the regional culture of reference. Ongoing interactions and transformations continued well into the seventeenth century, when the number of clusters and new types of literary and learned institutions in the (vernacular and Latin) world of practice was growing rapidly, not only in France, Spain, and Italy, but also in Germany, the Low Countries, and Britain; a more modern “academic” movement was born that in time marginalized the older culture (van Dixhoorn and Sutch 2008; for competition and genre development Armstrong 2012).

With their focus on vernaculars, their strong link to the corporate and festive type of sociability, and their preference for orality, performance, live interaction, and exercise, these institutions clearly mediated between the literary world and the world of practice. Yet, this does not reveal much about the pool of participants from which they recruited members or about their organizational and intellectual leadership. After all, to a certain extent at least, universities were also mediators between the world of literature and the world of practice. Universities, however, were centers of scholarly learning that had strong administrative structures and that left behind an abundance of sources, whereas most of these institutions were much more informal and much less strongly integrated with the realms of power. Since they were run with limited resources by lay amateurs, these civic institutions of literary culture have also left behind fewer enrollments or financial registers. As a result, it is at times difficult or impossible to know how exactly they were run on a daily basis, or who their members or participants were from year to year. Frequently only the names of some of the more prominent members or participants survive.

A few preliminary conclusions about memberships can be drawn. The first is that both in Flemish-Dutch rhetorical and in German musical (*Singschule*) culture artisans played a prominent, if not leading, role. It is enough to mention Hans Sachs, a shoemaker from Nuremberg who was one of the most famous, even paradigmatic, of the *Meistersinger*, a culture that seems to have been grounded predominantly in artisanal circles. The Flemish-Dutch rhetoricians also recruited strongly from among artisans, especially painters, printers, and others working in the luxury arts; they also attracted traders, teachers, priests, and members of the local patriciate and lower nobility. The most famous rhetorician, Anthonis de Roovere of Bruges, was a mason. Prominent scholarly figures such as Hans Sachs were exceptional among the German *Meistersinger*, as well as among the rhetoricians, who were strongly integrated with local vernacular (and humanist) cultures of learning, through the many less eminent scholars such as De Roovere that they

increasingly produced; but we know much more about the membership of the chambers of rhetoric than about the *Singschule*. The French *Puy* seems to have attracted a similarly broad field of participants, also recruiting mainly from among artisans, as well as clergymen, but with strong support from local officials and patricians (often through membership of the confraternity that patronized the *Puy*). Given their far more informal structures and, consequently, lack of institutional archives, the membership of *compagnies joyeuses* is even more difficult to track down. The limited evidence about participants and leadership indicates at least the participation of patrician and clerical circles; on the other hand, that the printers of Lyon established their own *compagnie* suggests an artisanal presence, too. The proximity of the Toulouse *Consistori* to the university and the *Parlement* suggests a strong university-trained presence, possibly lawyers, in particular, making the *Consistori* similar in its recruitment to the *Basoches* (Bouhaïk-Gironès 2007, 2008). This professional corporation of law clerks attached to the French *Parlement* was so powerfully engaged in French rhetorical culture that it can be considered another institutional cluster of performative literature. The *Justa* of Spain, linked to religious institutions (monasteries and brotherhoods), seems to have recruited among clergymen and scholars, but the wider field of contestants remains difficult to assess. The Spanish academies appear to have recruited in circles of aristocrats, patricians, and professional *literati*. This is reminiscent of the Italian academies that, however, socially seem to have cast their net much more widely.

Finally, unlike the more informal *convivia* that permeated the social fabric of early modern cities and courts, the more institutionalized structures were dominated by men. They provided the leadership, the penmanship, and the actors and participants in contests. Women were an exceptional presence. One such was the Antwerp teacher Anna Bijns, daughter of a well-to-do artisan; between 1528 and 1567 she had three volumes of rhetorical poetry (mostly in the *refrein* genre) published with the support of the local Franciscans, and the evidence of her printed work and the

surviving manuscripts indicates that she was also active in circles of rhetoricians (Keßler 2013). Ironically, she became the most famous rhetorician of all. Although she was not the only one taking part in rhetorician culture, most women who can be connected to it were members of the supporting corporations that organized the devotional culture of the company of rhetoricians in a church or chapel. Most chambers explicitly excluded women from the rhetorical exercises and only allowed them to be present in non-rhetorical settings. This exclusion of women seems to have been a standard feature of these institutions, making the culture strongly masculine. There was a world of young men, directed by a small number of long-standing older members. This dominance of young men may also have been the case in the *compagnie joyeuse*, the *Singschule*, the *Puy*, the *Consistori*, the *Justa*, and the academies of Spain and Italy. The strong presence of young men underscores the pedagogical role in the training of their members in rhetorical skills, often before they embarked upon their literary, learned, or civic careers.

Cross-References

► [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)

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Livy in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The Renaissance saw the study of Livy flourish. Whether harnessed as a stylistic model worthy of emulation or as a textbook of statecraft and governance, Livy's *History of Rome* found perennial favor among his Renaissance readers, contributing significantly to the development of humanist and political thought.

Impact and Legacy

Livy's (64 BC–12 AD) history of Rome, the *Ab Urbe Condita*, thrived during the Renaissance. From debates over the rights of women to questions concerning the ideal republic, his *History* played a central role in the period's political, cultural, and literary achievements.

Livy was born in Patavium, modern Padua, and began writing his vast *History of Rome* between 27 and 25 BC. Of an original 142 books, only 34 now survive (books 1–10 and 21–45) along with a few other fragments. Interest in Livy was piqued during the Renaissance by the tantalizing prospect of discovering the lost books. This anticipation was rewarded by two major discoveries in 1518 and 1527, which saw the recovery of just over five books of the *History* from monastic libraries in Germany.

Livy was received with enthusiasm in the Italian Renaissance. For Dante (1265–1321) he was “Livio [...] che non erra” (“Livy who does not err”), while Petrarch (1304–74), whose annotated copy of Livy is now preserved at the British Library, played a key role in his textual transmission. Boccaccio (1313–75) relied on Livy for the *De Mulieribus Claris*, his collection of famous women, and is commonly identified as the author of a fourteenth-century translation of the *History*. It was from an Italian press that Livy first appeared in print, published in Rome by Konrad Sweinheim and Arnold Pannartz in 1469. Following the publication of the editio princeps, Livy swiftly became a popular choice among European printers for well over a century, appearing in the major publishing houses of Rome, Florence, Venice, Cologne, Paris, and Basle. Livy was subsequently translated multiple times into the vernacular languages of Europe. Between 1469 and 1600, more than a hundred such translations were printed across the continent.

Throughout the Renaissance, Livy was seen as a treasure trove of political examples which could be readily applied to contemporary statecraft. It was to this end that Machiavelli (1469–1527) composed the *Discorsi* (printed 1531), a series of topics inspired by his reading of the first decade which combed the history for examples of governance to be replicated or avoided. This politicized reading of Livy is also demonstrated by the annotations left by the English scholar Gabriel Harvey (1552/3–1631) on his copy of the *Ab Urbe Condita* (preserved at Princeton University Library), which homes in on examples of diplomatic excellence and political shrewdness. Livy's account of Rome's transition from a monarchy to a republic, as recounted in the first and second books, proved to be of special interest in this regard and was frequently cited in works critiquing absolute monarchy.

One of the strongest patterns surrounding Livy's Renaissance reception concerns his depiction of extraordinary women. Repeatedly his accounts of remarkable women (Lucretia, Verginia, the Sabine Women) were tied to literary and philosophical debates concerning women's

worth. This tradition was particularly strong in Italy, where Livy was yoked to debates over sumptuary legislation by (among others) Nicolosa Sanuti (*fl.* 1453) and the celebrated educator Guarino Veronese (1374–1460). This way of reading Livy's history spread from Italy and was taken up by authors in western and northern Europe for the *querelle des femmes*, the literary debate over the status and nature of womankind.

The most popular sections of the *Ab Urbe Condita* for Livy's Renaissance readers were undoubtedly Livy's descriptions of Rome's legendary past (Book 1–5) and the war with Hannibal (Books 21–30). Authors of prose fiction and drama harnessed the narrative potential of these sections, not least of all William Shakespeare (1564–1616), who drew on the first pentad for *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), *Macbeth* (1606), and *Coriolanus* (c.1608). Livy also proved popular as a stylistic model, especially in respect to the speeches he puts into the mouths of Rome's most celebrated generals and politicians. From as early as 1509, the orations were being cropped from Livy's *History* and reproduced in smaller volumes, frequently marketed as rhetorical exemplars.

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Loadstone

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Lodestone

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Loiolakoa, Ignazio

► [Ignatius Loyola](#)

Lomazzo, Gian Paolo

Born: 26 April 1538, Milan

Died: 1592, Milan

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Abstract

The painter and writer Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo wrote two of the most complex treatises on art in sixteenth-century Italy: The

Trattato dell'Arte della Pittura (1584) and the *Idea del Tempio della Pittura* (1590), both published in Milan by Paolo Gottardo Pontio. Defined by Schlosser as “the bible of Mannerism,” the *Trattato* is divided into seven books dedicated to the seven parts of painting, namely proportion, movement, light, color, perspective, *storie* of painting, and the practice of painting. It is one of the most complete attempts to give painting a defined theoretical structure.

Alternate Names

Lomazzo, Giovanni Paolo; Compà Lomazz, Compà Zarvagna

Biography

The best biographer of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo is undoubtedly himself. As we read in the autobiography written at the end of the *Rime* (1587), the artist describes his birth and early years thus:

In the year of our Lord, 1538, on the 26th of April, on a day sacred to Cytherea, I was born in Milan, at five o'clock. Growing up I always had my mind focused on drawing, so I was sent to a master when I was ten years old, who taught me to write and to count, to handle books, and then to draw. With these beginnings I started to paint under a follower of Gaudenzio Ferrari, a respectable painter named Giovanni Battista della Cerva. He encouraged me, seeing that I was prepared for success in this art. So at that time I executed various works: paintings, caprices, *storie*, friezes, grotesques and various decorations with cartouches, trophies, landscapes and fruits, which I painted in the three styles. (Lomazzo 1587)

He was the son of Giovanni Antonio Lomazzo and Lucia Mozzanica, and he lived in Milan in the parish of Santa Maria Beltrade. Painter, writer, and academician, Lomazzo is one of the prominent figures of the artistic scene in Milan in the second half of the sixteenth century. He was part of the cultural life of the city, and he was elected chief of the *Accademia de la Val di Blenio* in 1568, an informal “burlesque” academy which was distinguished by the heterogeneous character of its

members (artists, men of letters, astrologers, and musicians, among others), as well as by the language spoken there, the so-called “bleniese” dialect. This fictitious language was created by the members, and it was inspired by the figure of the humble porter who brought wine and food to Milan. The main literary achievement that testifies to the activities of this academy is the collection of poems *Rabisch* (“Arabesque”) published in 1589. On his activity as a painter not much remains, as the artist supposedly became blind at the age of thirty-three and had to give up his painting career. Among his pictorial works, worth mentioning are the self-portrait as Abbot of the Val di Blenio (Brera), the Foppa chapel in San Marco, and a copy of the last supper of Leonardo in S. Maria della Pace now lost.

Lomazzo's writings, the *Trattato dell'Arte* (1584) and the *Idea del Tempio della Pittura* (1590), along with the short *libello* dedicated to duke Ferdinando de' Medici entitled *Della Forma delle Muse* (1591), constitute his major achievements regarding his “art theoretical” production. Other writings such as the *Libro de' Sogni* (1563 unpublished), the *Rime* (1587), and the *Rabisch* (1589) do not have painting as their main subject, although they should still be taken into consideration in order to understand the artist's literary background and his views on different topics beyond art (Isella 1993; Bora 1989; Bora et al. 1998).

The *Trattato dell'Arte* and the *Idea del Tempio della Pittura*, which were probably intended to be published together, have been considered one of the most complete attempts to define the structure of a painting, following the Neo-Platonist approach and the new concept of *Idea* (Ackerman 1967). The treatise had three editions in 1584 and one in the following year, in 1585. Though until recently regarded as an editorial failure, there is evidence that artists such as Leone Leoni, Daniele Crespi, Giulio Cesare Procaccini, Pellegrino Tibaldi, and Jacopo Ligozzi owned a copy of the book. In some cases, it was donated by the author himself, who was a good self-promoter. The first five books were translated into early-modern English at the end of the sixteenth century by the scholar from Oxford Richard Haydocke, who

gave it the title *A Tracte Containing the Art of Curiose Painting* (1598).

A critical edition of all Lomazzo's writings was published by Roberto Paolo Ciardi (1973).

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► [Lomazzo, Gian Paolo](#)

Longinus

► [Peri Hypsous, On the Sublime](#)

Longinus, Cassius

► [Peri Hypsous, On the Sublime](#)

Longinus, Dionysius

► [Peri Hypsous, On the Sublime](#)

Lord Verulam, Francis Bacon

► [Bacon, Francis](#)

Lorki, Joshua

Born: Unknown; born perhaps in Alcañiz, Kingdom of Aragon;

Died: between 1417–1419, place unknown

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Abstract

Aragonese Jewish intellectual and physician born in Alcañiz prior to 1370. HaLorki enters the historical record as the author of a Hebrew letter to Pablo de Santa María, the erstwhile Shlomo haLevi, rabbi of Burgos. Yehoshua also penned an Arabic medical tract entitled in Hebrew, Gerem haMa'alot, on the therapeutic value of foods and medicines.

Around 1411, Yehoshua haLorki converted to Christianity and took the name Jerónimo de Santa Fe. Thereupon, Avignon Pope Benedict XIII, at the end of February 1412, declared Jerónimo to be his personal physician and a member of his court. In August 1412, Jerónimo presented Pope Benedict with a treatise – *Ad convincendum perfidiam Judaeorum*, in which he argued that the messiah had already come, and in the personhood of Jesus. In August of the following year, Jerónimo wrote another polemic against the Jews, *De Iudaicis erroribus ex Talmut* in which he demonstrated, among other things, that the truth of Christianity was attested to in the corpus of rabbinic literature.

The first of these writings functioned as source material for Jerónimo as the chief representative of Christianity in a disputation that Benedict convened in the city of Tortosa with the representative of Jews from the Crown of Aragon. This 62-session debate began in February 1413 and came to an end in April 1414. The second essay was essential for Jerónimo when a second disputation was launched in San Mateo in June 1414, which lasted for 7 sessions. After this debate, Jerónimo participated in conversionary activities and devoted much energy to the separation of Jews from Christians. Documents from 1419 indicate that Hieronymus de Sancta Fide, the former Yehoshua haLorki, was already deceased.

Alternate Names

haLorki, Yehoshua; Jerónimo de Santa Fe

Biography

Aragonese Jewish intellectual and physician born most likely in Alcañiz prior to 1370. His family probably hailed from Lorca in the Kingdom of Castile. His father, Yosef ibn Vives, was a poet, philosopher, and physician, who translated Arabic works into Hebrew.

HaLorki first enters the historical record as the author of a Hebrew letter to Pablo de Santa María, the erstwhile Shlomo haLevi, rabbi of Burgos, who converted to Christianity sometime around 1391—most likely before the anti-Jewish riots that engulfed the Kingdom of Castile and the Crown of Aragon. In this letter, in which HaLorki appears to move in distinguished Jewish intellectual and political circles, Yehoshua refers to the erstwhile Shlomo as his teacher, perhaps metaphorically. In his desire to know the reasons for his teacher's change of faith, he explores haLevi's hedonistic and opportunistic inclinations, his despair at God's rejection of the Jewish people in favor of the Christians, and his possible epiphany regarding Christian truth. Most of the letter is devoted to

standard forms of Jewish polemical arguments against the truth of Christianity.

Yehoshua also, at the request of a member of the Jewish intelligentsia, penned an Arabic medical tract known by its title in its Hebrew translation, *Gerem haMa'alot*, on the therapeutic value of foods — plants, herbs and spices, and medicines.

Most likely, it was this Yehoshua haLorki who, around 1411, converted to Christianity and took the name Hieronymus de Sancta Fide, Jerónimo de Santa Fe. As Jerónimo, the Avignon Pope Benedict XIII, at the end of February 1412, declared him to be his personal physician and a member of the papal court. He also may well have served as a physician — alongside another Jewish convert to Christianity, evaluating the mental health of one of Valencia's representatives at the negotiations in Caspe, also in 1412, that resulted in the compromise that resolved the succession to the throne of the Crown of Aragon.

In August 1412, probably at the behest of Pope Benedict XIII, Jerónimo presented him with a treatise — *Ad convincendum perfidiam Judaeorum*, Refutation of the Jewish Perfidy, written in Latin and Hebrew, in which the erstwhile Yehoshua followed a long-line of Christian anti-Jewish polemics, by arguing that the messiah had already come, and in the personhood of Jesus. Jerónimo intended the treatise to serve as a foundational work for a planned disputation between himself and the Jewish community of his hometown of Alcañiz. In August of the following year, Hieronymus produced another polemic against the Jews, *De Iudaicis erroribus ex Talmut*, in which he demonstrated to his satisfaction that the truth of Christianity was attested to in the corpus of rabbinic literature and that the Talmud was filled with troubling comments about humanity and contrary to reason, errors contrary to a true understanding of God, arguments in opposition to the Old Testament, and hostility toward Christians and the teachings of Christianity.

The first of these writings apparently functioned as source material for Jerónimo as the chief representative of Christianity in a disputation that Benedict convened in the city of Tortosa in Catalonia with the representative of Jews from

the Crown of Aragon, which began in February 1413 and lasted for 62 sessions until it came to an end in April 1414. The second essay was essential for Hieronymus when a second debate was launched in San Mateo in June 1414 and lasted 7 sessions.

After the disputation, Jerónimo participated in conversionary activities and devoted much energy to the separation of Jews from Christians. While accused of financial extortion by Jewish communities, King Fernando I in 1416 thanked Hieronymus for his conversionary efforts and ordered Jews in a variety of localities to attend his sermons. Jerónimo's success and that of his entourage, in encouraging Jews to leave Judaism and embrace Christianity, and their dedication to royal and pontifical policies that were similarly directed, were rewarded with financial emoluments. Documents from 1419 indicate that Hieronymus de Sancta Fide, the former Yehoshua haLorki, was already deceased.

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Love in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

The philosophical discussion of love during the Renaissance was strongly shaped by the reception of the Platonic theory of love, which became known to the Latin West through the translations of Plato's works by Marsilio Ficino. Plato's conception of love, found in his *Symposium* and *Phaedros*, initiated a lively debate that flourished in humanistic circles, princely courts, and the newly founded academies. Gradually, the writings about love constituted a specific genre, the so-called *trattati d'amore*, a movement that provoked also critical responses, as can be found in the *contra-amores* treatises. From a philosophical perspective, the works by Marsilio Ficino, Leone Ebreo (Judah Abrabanel), and Giordano Bruno are the most relevant and original. Ficino emphasizes the metaphysical notion of love as a binding principle of the cosmos, as well as love's impact on the striving for self-perfection of the individual. Leone Ebreo and Giordano Bruno both put the focus on the metaphorical use of the language of love to explain the operations of the mind while searching for truth and knowledge. Although the two characteristic features of the philosophical debate of love during the Renaissance, namely, the literary writing style and the glorification of love, went out of fashion in early modern philosophy, we can still find some traces of the Renaissance speculation about love in later thought, from Spinoza to the early romantic period in Germany.

Synonyms

Amor; Amore; Eros

New Impulses: The Reception of Plato's Theory of Love

The philosophical discussion of love during the Renaissance was strongly shaped by the reception of the Platonic theory of love, which became known to the Latin West through the translations of Plato's works by Marsilio Ficino (Hankins 1990). Plato's conception of love, found in his *Symposium* and *Phaedros*, initiated a lively debate that flourished in humanistic circles, princely courts, and the newly founded academies. Although several famous Renaissance philosophers contributed to the debate on love, it was not part of the university teaching, nor was it limited to philosophical analysis. Rather, it was related to the larger intellectual public. The Platonic theory, which related originally to homoerotic relationships, was applied to new contexts, and hence transformed, and served to shape the civil conduct of men and women in private and public relationships, such as in Pietro Bembo's *Gli Asolani* (1505) or in Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* (1528). Gradually, the writings about love came to constitute a specific genre, the so-called *trattati d'amore* (Zonta 1912), provoking also critical responses, as can be found in the contra-*amores* treatises, such as that of Bartholomeo Sacchi (1540) or Battista Fregoso (1581) and (Ciavolella 1976).

The Philosophical Interest of the Writings on Love

From a philosophical perspective, the works by Marsilio Ficino, Leone Ebreo (Judah Abrabanel), and Giordano Bruno are the most relevant and original. Ficino provided an influential interpretation of the Platonic concept of love in his commentary on the *Symposium* (Ficino 2002). Ficino's commentary, written in the literary form of a representation of a *Symposium* in Florence with friends of Ficino, makes use of Neo-Platonic and Christian thought and draws on medical and magical traditions as well on the genres of interpreting love poems. Ficino emphasizes the metaphysical notion of love as a binding principle of the cosmos (*copula mundi*, Ficino 1944, 152),

as well as love's impact on the striving for self-perfection of the individual. Ficino is also following Plato when he states that what humans truly love is beautiful, which is understood as splendor and a spiritual gift (Ficino 1944, 169, 173). And like Plato, Ficino sees the paradigmatic relationship for true love as that between two men. However, Ficino introduces a specific qualification, which became very influential: beauty can be perceived only through our minds, eyes, and ears. Thus, also true love should be restricted to these senses.

Although Ficino's Neo-Platonic approach, which was taken up by his student Francesco Cattani da Diacceto (1561), marks the beginning of the philosophical debate on love during the Renaissance, it does not define the scope of this debate. Also, other philosophers contributed with writings on love inspired by alternative philosophical thought, such as the Aristotelian Agostino Nifo (1531) or Francesco Patrizi da Cherso (1963). Leone Ebreo and Giordano Bruno each provided original interpretations of the concept of love inspired by, but not limited to, the Platonic heritage.

Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore* (1535), although written in dialog form, resembles a comprehensive *Summa* of the philosophical investigations of Love, covering all the relevant conceptual aspects of love. Relying on Jewish traditions, Leone challenges the paradigm of love as desire for what one is lacking, prominent in the Platonic tradition. Instead, Leone focuses on the joy of the union with the beloved. Repeatedly he defines love as "desire to enjoy in union an object recognized as good" (Ebreo 1937, 49, 54, and 242).

The intention of Giordano Bruno's work *Degli eroici furori* (1585), written as a combination of the dialog form with that of commentaries to love poems, is "to present divine contemplation, and [...] the furors not of ordinary but of heroic love" (Bruno 2002, 936). Bruno emphasizes that what distinguishes the heroic lover is his excessive desire for truth and knowledge. Leone Ebreo and Giordano Bruno both put the focus on the metaphorical use of the language of love to explain the operations of the mind while searching for truth and knowledge (Ebbesmeyer 2012).

Impact and Legacy

The writings about love generated in Florence, spread during the sixteenth century throughout Italy (Ebbersmeyer 2002; Nelson 1958) and had also a major impact on French literature (Festugière 1941). Although the two characteristic features of the philosophical debate of love during the Renaissance, namely, the literary writing style and the glorification of love, went out of fashion in philosophy in the early modern period, we can still find some traces of the Renaissance speculation about love in later thought, from Spinoza (Gallicet Calvetti 1982) to the early romantic period in Germany (Matuschek 2002).

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Lübben

- [Lubinus, Eilhard](#)

Lubin

- [Lubinus, Eilhard](#)

Lubinus, Eilhard

Born: 24 March 1565, Westerstede (Oldenburg)

Died: 2 June 1621, Rostock

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Abstract

The classicist, cartographer, and Lutheran theologian Eilhard Lubinus taught classical

poetry and theology at the University of Rostock. In his philosophical work *Phosphorus* (Lubinus 1596), Lubinus was influenced by Platonism and Neoplatonism when he formulated a conception of theodicy based on the identification of evil with the nothing from which the world was created. Lubinus's theory was accused of Manichean dualism considering being and the nothing, and consequently good and evil, as two primordial principles, although Lubinus refutes this interpretation by means of a negative specification of evil. His conception forms a background for Leibniz's theory of theodicy.

Alternate Names

[Eilert](#); [Eilhardus](#); [Lübben](#); [Lubin](#)

Biography

Lubinus started his university studies in Leipzig and continued at Lutheran universities in Köln, Helmstedt, Strasbourg, Jena, and Marburg. He finished his education in Rostock, where he obtained a master's degree in 1591. Lubinus spent the rest of his academic career at the University of Rostock. In 1595, Lubinus became a professor of poetry there and, consequently, as a classicist, published commentaries and paraphrases on Persius, Juvenal, and Horace, a Latin translation of Anacreon, and an anthology of Greek letters. His dictionaries of Classical Greek *Antiquarius sive priscorum vocabularum interpretatio* (Lubinus 1594) and *Clavis Graecae linguae* (Lubinus 1609) became very popular and were republished multiple times. In 1605, Lubinus was nominated professor of theology at the University of Rostock in spite of earlier accusations of Crypto-Calvinism and Manicheism -being formulated during controversies around his philosophical book *Phosphorus* (1596, 1601)-, because of its dependence on the Calvinist theologian Duplessis-Mornay. In Rostock, Lubinus also presided over, and later

published, a series of disputations on Mornay's *De veritate religionis christianae* (1601–1602). In the realm of theology, Lubinus published commentaries on the New Testament, especially on the Epistles of the Apostles, and an influential trilingual edition of the New Testament. In the first two decades of the seventeenth century, Lubinus was further elected a dean of the theological faculty and a chancellor of the University of Rostock. In this period, he also became known as a cartographer due to his maps of the island Rügen and of Pomerania (Skrycki 2013).

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition, Innovative Aspects

In the book entitled *Phosphorus* (Lubinus 1596, 1601), Lubinus follows St. Augustine, Plato, Platonism, and Neoplatonism in general (Leinkauf 2009). He was also influenced by Philippe de Mornay's critique of Aristotelian scholasticism (Schmidt-Biggemann 1973) and by his idea that the Supreme Being is opposed by the nothing as a source of evil, in a concordance with the Augustinian conception of evil as the absence of good (Schmidt-Biggemann 1987).

Lubinus creates an ontological system in which the Supreme Being as infinite power, identified with good, rests on the highest level, while the nothing and evil – as an infinite deficiency – is posited on the lowest level. This conception can be called the “ontology of opposite” for the nothing is considered an absolute opposite of the being. It has a substantial impact on Lubinus' theology and anthropology as well, since the nothing and evil can be viewed as the precognition of existence, knowledge, and salvation (Leinkauf 2009).

As a consequence of his critique of Aristotelianism, Lubinus held in the realm of natural philosophy so-called metaphysical atomism considering space, time, and motion as consisting of indivisible minima (Meier-Oeser 2001).

Impact and Legacy

Apart from influential maps of Pomerania, which were reprinted many times, Lubinus' edition of the New Testament had a strong impact on Jan Amos Comenius. In his textbook *Orbis pictus*, Comenius adopted from the Lubinus' edition the idea of multilingual presentation of topics for pedagogical purposes.

Lubinus' philosophical work *Phosphorus* was attacked by the Lutheran theologian Albert Grauer, who accused him of Crypto-Calvinism and Manicheistic heresy. Grauer warned against Platonism, as well as against philosophy leading to dualism, and advocated for Aristotelianism as a philosophy in concord with Christianity. Lubinus' conception was positively accepted by the reformed theologian Bartholomaeus Keckermann but later was again refuted by Leibniz (Hübener 1985) and in the eighteenth century by Jean Paul (Schmidt-Biggemann 1973).

Cross-References

- [Comenius, Jan Amos](#)
- [Duplessis-Mornay](#)
- [Horace in the Renaissance](#)
- [Keckermann, Bartholomaeus](#)

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Lucas, Margaret

- [Cavendish, Margaret](#)

Lucifer

- [Devil, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Luck

- [Fortune in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Lucretianism

- [Epicureanism](#)
- [Lucretius](#)

Lucretius

Born: c. 99–93 BCE, Rome

Died: Before February 54 BCE, Rome

Ada Palmer

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Abstract

Lucretius was a first-century BCE Roman poet whose didactic epic poem *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*) is the longest surviving ancient treatment of Epicurean philosophy (Hankins and Palmer 2008). In addition to valuable rustic Latin language, the poem contains details on Epicurean materialism, atomism, and pleasure-centered ethics, as well as rejection of Providence, divine action, and the immortality of the soul. It strongly influenced Renaissance literary language, political theory, ethics, science, and medicine. The poem stopped circulating after the ninth-century CE but was rediscovered in 1417 and disseminated rapidly. It survives in 54 Renaissance manuscripts, and 30 editions were printed before 1600. In the fifteenth century, it was primarily studied in Florence, Venice, Rome, Naples, and Spain. Its impact in France increased in the mid-sixteenth century and in England in the seventeenth century. Long before its recovery, the poem carried a stigma thanks to Epicureanism's association with atheism, sensuality, and sin. This increased as its materialism, radical theology and ethics came to be associated with such infamous figures as Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. Renaissance figures

influenced by Lucretius include Bartolomeo Scala, Pomponio Leto, Marsilio Ficino, Poliziano, Marcello Adriani, Machiavelli, Edmund Spenser, Girolamo Fracastoro, Michel de Montaigne, Francis Bacon, Pierre Gassendi, John Donne, John Milton, Thomas Hobbes, Lucy Hutchinson, and Margaret Cavendish. Lucretius's Renaissance rediscovery is frequently discussed in histories of heterodoxy, atheism, and radical belief, particularly since Lucretius holds several beliefs which are now associated with modern secular humanism.

Synonyms

De rerum natura; Lucretianism; Titus Lucretius Carus

Introduction

The epic poem *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*), by the Roman Epicurean Titus Lucretius Carus (c. 99–c. 55 BCE), is by far the longest treatment of Epicurean philosophy surviving from antiquity and one of the best surviving examples of rustic or archaic Latin style. It seems to have had few readers in antiquity or late antiquity (Butterfield 2016, 46) and stopped circulating after the ninth century, but returned abruptly when the Florentine humanist Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) brought a complete manuscript to Florence in 1417. Since Epicureanism had long been associated with irreligion and hedonism, the poem was sometimes a subject of criticism or censorship, but it was received eagerly by scholars, who produced 54 Latin manuscripts and 30 print editions by 1600.

The *De rerum natura* describes the Epicurean position that pleasure is the highest good. It claims that the gods are real but do nothing and are unaware of prayers, and it rejects any idea of divinely ordered creation or Providence. It advocates materialism; ascribes all Earthly phenomena to the interactions of atoms; offers atomist explanations for many natural phenomena, such as disease and magnets; and describes the natural

development over time of animal species and human societies, beliefs, and institutions. It rejects the immortality of the soul, removes the divine completely from the realm of ethics, and fiercely criticizes the “superstition” of Roman religion. Many of these doctrines are frequently compared to modern-day secular humanism and scientific atheism. Consequently, in addition to exerting considerable influence on literature, poetry, and science, Lucretius is often discussed in histories of heterodoxy and debates over the Renaissance's place in the development of modern thought (Del Lucchese et al. 2011; Paladini 2011; Piazzzi 2009; Wilson 2008).

Biography

Little is known of Lucretius's life. He was educated, a Roman, and on intimate terms with Sulla's son-in-law Gaius Memmius, to whom he dedicated and addressed the *De rerum natura*. Renaissance scholars credited the dubious statement in Jerome's translation of Eusebius that Lucretius went mad from drinking a love potion, wrote the poem in lucid intervals between mad fits, and eventually killed himself, and that his work was posthumously edited by Cicero (*Chronicon* a. Abr. 1923–4, 149 Helm). Jerome dates the suicide to 51–50 BCE and Lucretius's birth to 94 BCE, while Donatus places Lucretius's death (he does not mention suicide) on the day Virgil assumed the *toga virilis*, in 55 BCE (*Vita Virg.* 6). Since an unfinished work is unlikely to have circulated during a poet's life, Lucretius's death can be more reliably dated to before Cicero read the poem, which he discussed in a letter to his brother Quintus dated February 54 BCE.

Heritage: Pre-Renaissance Knowledge of Lucretius

The *De rerum natura* was both famous and infamous in Europe well before the poem's return in 1417. Three ninth-century manuscripts – the Codex Oblongus, Codex Quadratus, and fragmentary Schedae – testify to a Carolingian effort

to circulate the poem (Butterfield in Norbrook et al. 2016, 47–50). In the later Middle Ages, Lucretius was known through references in other authors. He was praised by Ovid (*Amores* 1.15.23–24) and Cicero (*Epist. ad Q. fr.* 14.2.9) and recommended by Quintilian (X.1.87). Quotations from the poem were available to medieval scholars in the works of Pliny the Younger, Macrobius (through whom Lucretius was known to Petrarch and Boccaccio), Aelius Donatus, Aulus Gellius, Servius, Priscian, and others (Palmer 2014a; Butterfield 2013). Lucretius was ferociously criticized by the Christian apologist Lactantius, who called him the most worthless poet (*poeta inanissimus*) in his attacks on Epicureanism (*Divinae inst.* 3). Lucretius's reputation was tied to that of the Epicurean school, so improved by positive discussions in Cicero and Seneca and tarnished by negative ones in Arnobius and Ambrose. Brief references to Lucretius in Italian, French, German, and English writings from the later Middle Ages show that these fragmentary sources spread Lucretius's name widely (Solaro 2000).

Heritage: Recovery

The complete *De rerum natura* was one of the many manuscripts Poggio Bracciolini discovered while searching remote libraries after his time at the Council of Constance (1414–1418), when the deposition of his patron antipope John XXIII (1370–1419) left the former apostolic secretary jobless. Poggio's letters do not name the monastery where he found the poem, nor is it certain what manuscript he found, though it was likely a tenth-century copy of the Codex Oblongus (Butterfield 2016, 50). Poggio sent his transcription of the poem to the Florentine book collector Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437). Increasingly plaintive letters composed over 17 years testify to Poggio's unsuccessful efforts to retrieve his Lucretius from Niccolò or even extract a copy (Gordan 1974). Poggio also recovered other works with references to Lucretius, including Statius (*Silvae* 2.7.76), Cornelius Nepos (*Atticus* 12.4), the remainder of Quintilian (1.4.4–5), and

Tertullian, with his ferocious attacks on Epicureanism; these circulated for several years before the *De rerum natura* was liberated by Niccolò's death in 1437. Humanist readers of the poem quickly identified lines which had been copied from Lucretius by Virgil and read Virgil's interest in Lucretius as a powerful endorsement.

Heritage: Manuscript Dissemination

Renaissance manuscript production maps out Lucretius's initial reception (Fleischmann 1960; Palmer 2014a). Florence was the epicenter. Three illuminated manuscripts were produced for the Medici family and others for Medici bank manager Francesco Sassetti (1421–1490), the Pazzi family, and Piero Vettori (1499–1585). Another was sent from Florence to King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (1443–1490). Paper manuscripts produced in Florence include one used by Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494), another associated with Marcello Adriani (1464–1521; Brown 2010), and a third transcribed by Machiavelli (1469–1527). Lucretian ideas appear in the surviving works of Florentine statesman Bartolomeo Scala (1430–1497). Scala's daughter Alessandra – herself a poet and Greek expert – married the Greek-born scholar-poet Michael Tarchaniota Marullus (1458–1500), who undertook a set of much celebrated annotations on Lucretius, which were never published due to his death by drowning during the campaign against Cesare Borgia. Venice was another Lucretian center (Davidson 2016). Two manuscripts were owned by Venetian patrician bishops of Padua, Pietro Barozzi (1441–1507) and Jacopo Zeno (1460–1481), and Padua was also the origin of the manuscript created for John Tiptoft Earl of Worcester (1427–1470) which in 1461 was the first Lucretius manuscript to enter England (Butterfield 2016, 51). Venetian territories also produced all four incunabular print editions of Lucretius. In Rome, Lucretius was studied extensively by Pomponio Leto (1428–1498) and his circle (Dixon 2011). Leto's student Giovanni Sulpizio da Veroli (Verolano; active c. 1470–1490) transcribed two complete manuscripts, and many of

Leto's annotations were reproduced in a manuscript belonging to the Swiss jurist and humanist Bonifacius Amerbach (1495–1562). Lucretius manuscripts were also owned by Pius II (1405–1464), Sixtus IV (1414–1484), Fulvio Orsini (1529–1600), and Francesco Marescalchi of Ferrara – a correspondent of Poggio, Ficino, and Leto's teacher Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457). Outside Italy, Lucretius diffused fastest in Spain, thanks largely to connections with Naples (Vera 2009). One lavish manuscript was created for Ferdinand I of Naples (1424–1494), another bears the arms of Aragon, and a third bears the arms of the Neapolitan condottiero Andrea Matteo Acquaviva (1456–1528). Two other manuscripts were sent to Spain, a further two created in Spanish-controlled Neapolitan territory, and another used by Antonio Beccadelli (Panormita; 1394–1471) while he was in the service of Alfonso V.

Heritage: Printing and Translation

The Brescia *editio princeps* (c. 1473) was riddled with errors, as were the 1486 Verona and 1495 Venice incunables, which were all superseded by a corrected Aldine quarto edited by Hieronymus Avancius (Venice, 1500). In 1511 in Bologna, Johannes Baptista Pius (1460–1540) produced the first annotated edition (Nicoli 2015). The 1515 Aldine octavo, edited by Aldus's son-in-law Andrea Navagero (1483–1529), was the last in Aldus's revolutionary series of pocket-sized classics, produced in the year of the great printer's death, but it was undercut by Florence's Giuntine press, which produced an octavo Lucretius in 1512 in a format imitating Aldus's. The 1515 Aldine was the last Lucretius printed in Italy for 132 years. The general northward migration of printing to new centers in France (La Renaissance de Lucrèce 2010) and the low countries coincided with a ban on teaching Lucretius and other "licentious" literature issued by Florence in 1517 (Palmer 2014a). French reprints of Navagero's text dominated through the 1550s, including a flurry of tiny pocket copies printed in the 1540s (Sacré 1994). In 1563, Parisian Aristotelian

Denys Lambin (1520–1572) published a corrected text accompanied by a massive 300,000-word commentary (Tsakirópoula-Summers 2001, 32). Lambin's text dominated until the eighteenth century, rivaled only by the practical classroom editions of his hated rival Gifanius (Hubert van Giffen, 1534–1604, first printed 1565–1566).

Vernacular translation of Lucretius started with the 1650 French translation by abbot Michel de Marolles (1600–1681) (Fleischmann 1960). Shortly thereafter Lucy Hutchinson (1620–1681) completed the first English verse translation, a work she never published and undertook – she said – in order to understand Lucretius's ideas fully enough to reject them (Barbour and Norbrook 2012). An anonymous prose translation of the same period (Bodl. MS. Rawl. D. 314) rivals her claim to be Lucretius's first English translator. John Evelyn (1620–1706) published Book I of his complete verse translation in 1656, but the edition was so botched by the press that he refused to publish more. In 1669 Alessandro Marchetti (1633–1714) – professor of mathematics at Pisa – completed an Italian verse translation, but was denied permission to publish in 1670 by the newly crowned Grand Duke Cosimo III of Florence. The translation was nonetheless extremely popular, circulating widely in manuscript, after it was printed posthumously in a 1717 edition with no printer's name and "Londra" (London) on the title page – almost certainly a clandestine Italian product. In 1682 Thomas Creech (1659–1700) published a complete English translation, lacking only the Book IV sex scene, which was among the Lucretian excerpts translated by John Dryden (1631–1700) in his 1685 *Sylvae*. De Wit's Dutch edition appeared in 1701, a German version in 1784, and other vernaculars in the nineteenth century (Gordon 1985).

Reception: Radicalism and Censorship

The idea of Lucretius's Renaissance recovery as a cause or epicenter of radical heterodoxy was reignited in 2012 when Stephen Greenblatt's

account of Poggio's discovery of Lucretius, *The Swerve*, received the Pulitzer Prize (Greenblatt 2009). Many who read the poem did indeed hold radical views, or had run-ins with the Church and other authorities, but many of their unorthodox beliefs bear little similarity to the modern secular humanism so often linked to Lucretius. The Florentine Christian Platonist Marsilio Ficino self-censored his Lucretianism, burning in horror his youthful writings on Lucretius and rebutting Lucretius's arguments against the immortality of the soul in his *Theologia Platonica* (Gentile 2017; Hankins 2017). Early editions of Lucretius consistently state in introductions and paratexts that the poem's "absurd" Epicurean "errors" will not be dangerous to the learned reader. Some scholars read these comments as dissimulation, adopted as self-defense by closet radicals (Brown 2010, Prosperi 2007), while others read them as sincere indifference to the poem's radical content on the part of scholars interested primarily in the epic's language and information about the ancient world (Palmer 2014a; Davidson 2016). Lucretius's name is virtually absent from Inquisitorial archives, and Lucretius was not added to the Roman *Index* of banned books until Marchetti's Italian translation threatened to expose Italy's less learned readers to Lucretian content at the beginning of the eighteenth century. A 1557 letter of Michele Ghislieri (Pope Pius V, 1504–1572) – a formative figure in the history of the Roman Inquisition – warned that the *Index* must be careful not to target harmless literary fables such as Lucian, Lucretius, *Orlando Furioso*, and the *Decameron* (Palmer 2014a, 37, 274–5 n 108).

Thanks to Lactantius and others, Epicureanism had long been associated with wickedness, sensuality, and sodomy. Such associations may have contributed to Pomponio Leto's 1466 imprisonment in Venice on sodomy charges and the prosecution of his academy by Pope Paul II. The language of the 1517 Florentine ban on teaching Lucretius lumped the poem in with "licentious" materials, which may reflect association with sodomy or may refer to the passage in Book IV – often omitted by early translators – where Lucretius describes sexual intercourse, fertility, and contraception (Goldberg 2009). In 1575 Paduan

poet Sperone Speroni (1500–1588) was denounced to the Inquisition partly because of the licentiousness of his *Dialogo d'amore*, which used Lucretian sexual imagery (Prosperi 2007). During the Reformation, two Italian imitators of Lucretius were prosecuted for Protestant sympathies. The head of the Neapolitan Accademia Pontaniana, Scipione Capece (1480–1551) – who later accepted voluntary exile from Naples because of his Lutheran sympathies – imitated Lucretius's verses but argued against his materialism in his 1535 *De principiis rerum*. Aonio Paleario (1503–1570), a courtier of Leo X and professor of Greek and Hebrew, who was burned at the stake for pro-Protestant heresies in 1570, composed a verse defense of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul styled on Lucretius, titled *De immortalitate animorum* (1536). At the end of the sixteenth century, Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), who held Epicurean-influenced views including atomism, was burned at the stake for heresy, yet Bruno's trial records indicate that Inquisitors associated his heresies with Aristotle rather than Lucretius (Davidson 2016). Lucretius's connections with later radicals are more solid. Michel de Montaigne (1533–92) engaged very deeply with Lucretius, especially his ethics (Screech 1998). Through Montaigne's influence, Lucretius became popular with French radical *libertins* of the seventeenth century, such as Cyrano de Bergerac (1619–55), and later with radical *philosophes* of the eighteenth century, such as Voltaire and Baron d'Holbach (Kors 2016). Lucretius also gained infamy through association with Machiavelli and the materialism of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679).

Innovative Impact: Poetry and Art

The *De rerum natura* was eagerly studied by students of Latin poetry and style. Poliziano used Lucretian imagery of the gods in his *Stanze per la Giostra* (1475–8) composed for Giuliano de' Medici (1453–1478). The poem's opening image of Mars napping on the lap of Venus influenced Botticelli's "Mars and Venus," while Lucretius 5.735–50 has been suggested as a

source of Botticelli's "Primavera" (Lane-Spollen 2015). Lucretian images appear in the *Apologium* of Florentine statesman and Medici ally Bartolomeo Scala (1430–1497) and also in the paintings in the Scala family palazzo (Prosperi 2007). Lucretius's prayer to Venus excited interest as early as Pomponio Leto's annotations and was imitated by Matteo Maria Boiardo (c. 1434–1494), Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556), Francesco Berni (c. 1497–1535), Bernardo Tasso (1493–1565) in his *L'Amadigi* (Prosperi 2004), his son Torquato Tasso (1544–1595) in his *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), and Edmund Spenser (c. 1552–1599) in *The Faerie Queene*. Perhaps the most famous image in the poem is the comparison of a poet disguising difficult ideas in sweet verses to a doctor smearing honey around the rim of a cup of bitter wormwood medicine to trick a child into drinking it. This image was known from other classical sources, but Lucretius's suggestion that poetry could honey-coat much-feared Epicurean ideas threatened humanist claims that the beautiful language of antiquity would teach true things, never false. The passage was of particular interest to Machiavelli (Palmer 2014a).

Lucretius influenced many French poets, especially from the 1540s, when Paris and other French printing centers poured out a flurry of Latin editions. In the sixteenth century, snippets from Lucretius were employed by associates of the poetic group *le Pléiade* including Jean-Antoine de Baïf (1532–89), Remy Belleau (1528–77), Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas (1544–99), and especially Pierre de Ronsard (1524–85; Ford 2007). Through Latin editions and Marolles's French translation, Lucretius was widely known in England well before the first English translations. Lucretius was referenced by Ben Johnson (1572–1637), George Sandys (1577–1644), John Donne (1573–1631), John Milton (1608–1674), and many other lights of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature (Hardie 2009). Shakespeare (1564–1616) frequently deployed atomic imagery in similes, clearly expecting atomism to be familiar to his audience (Passannante 2011). Lucretius's impact in Spain was also substantial and is only beginning to be explored (Vera 2009; Durin 2013).

Innovative Impact: Politics and Ethics

The *De rerum natura* repeats many commonplaces of classical eudaimonist moral advice, paralleling Stoic admonitions about the dangers of love, the pain caused by strong emotion, and the value of tranquility (Palmer 2014a). Such passages were enthusiastically received by humanists and fit well with syncretic efforts to depict the schools of ancient philosophy as fundamentally compatible with each other and Christianity. Many figures attempted to rehabilitate Epicurus's ethics while rejecting his views on the soul and the divine, as in the cases of Capece, Paleario, the self-proclaimed "Christian Epicurean" Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655), and the *Discours de Morale sur Épicure* of Jean-François Sarasin, composed in 1655–6, which states that pious Christians are the best Epicureans because, through austerity and refraining from sin, they achieve eternal pleasure after death. Far more radical was the Earthly focus of Epicurean ethics. Unlike Stoics and Platonists, Epicureans framed an ethics concerned exclusively with this world, pleasure, pain, and the consequences of actions during an individual's life. Before the return of Lucretius, the idea of such a pleasure-centered ethics was of interest to Lorenzo Valla, but the first figure to employ a similarly Earth-centered moral system was Machiavelli in his revolutionary consequentialist ethics (Rahe 2007).

Machiavelli also made use of Lucretian politics. Book V of the *De rerum natura* contains a developmental account of the origin of human society, religion, and government, describing how humans once lived simply, like beasts, but gradually developed cities, property, government, law, and religion. This passage provided a radical alternative to the dominant political understanding of states as divine creations, and Machiavelli employed it in several of his works. Both through Machiavelli and directly, this passage influenced the political theories of Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Thomas Hobbes, and powerfully affected European attempts to understand the societies they encountered in the New World. Both Lucy Hutchinson and Thomas Creech, in

translating the passage, used Lucretius's ideas of the natural evolution of states to frame and come to terms with the tumults of the English Civil Wars, especially the regicide (Norbrook 2016).

Innovative Impact: Science and Natural Philosophy

Scientific engagement with Lucretius lagged behind poetic engagement. Lucretius's description of the Athenian plague in Book VI had strong medical appeal, and, along with Lucretius's descriptions of epilepsy and drunkenness, it was frequently excerpted or annotated by readers with medical interests. It was a physician, the Florentine Giovanni Nardi, who in 1647 produced the first edition of Lucretius printed in Italy in 132 years, containing his short commentary, *Paraphrastica explanatio*. Lucretius was also used as a model for the composition of scientific poetry, often by authors who rejected his ideas but wanted to use his techniques to honey-coat their own, as in the cases of Paleario, Capece, the scientific works of the French poet Maurice Scève (c. 1500–c. 1560), and *The Anatomy of Melancholy* of Robert Burton (1577–1640). Girolamo Fracchetta's 1589 vernacular *Breve spositione di tutta l'opera di Lucretio* focused on illustrating where Lucretius commits "errors" by differing from Aristotle. In 1745 Cardinal Melchior de Polignac (1661–1742) published *Anti-Lucretius*, a Latin verse epic based on rebutting what the cardinal saw as Lucretius's central errors.

Positive scientific engagement with Lucretius's Epicurean ideas was extremely rare before the seventeenth century. The physician Girolamo Fracastoro (c. 1476–1553) followed Lucretius in ideas as well as form in his epic poem *Syphilis sive morbus gallicus* (1530), which presented Fracastoro's revolutionary contagion theory of disease (Goddard 2003; Maurette 2014). In it Fracastoro used atomist elements, Lucretius's rejection of immaterial causes, and Lucretius's developmental models of nature and animal species. After the execution of Giordano Bruno, an English admirer of his work, Nicholas

Hill (1570–c. 1610), published *Philosophia Epicurea* in Paris in 1601 (Gillespie 2007). The first self-labeled Renaissance Epicurean was Pierre Gassendi, who advanced a theologically orthodox modified atomism as an alternative to Aristotelianism, which, by the early seventeenth century, was losing credibility thanks to new discoveries. In England, Lucretius influenced the scientific thought of Bacon, Hobbes, and Walter Raleigh (c. 1554–1618), as well as Henry Percy Earl of Northumberland (1564–1632) and the scientists he supported, including Thomas Hariot (1560–1621), Robert Hues (1553–1632), Walter Warner (1563–1643), and Nathaniel Torperley (1564–1632; Gillespie 2007). Lucretian ideas featured in the natural philosophy of Margaret Cavendish (1623–1673) and of her correspondent the physician and anatomist Walter Charleton (1619–1707). A friend of Hobbes, Charleton, translated Gassendi and voiced naturalist and atomist theories in his own *Epicurus's Morals* in 1656. In the later seventeenth century, anxiety about Hobbes's materialism dominated discussions of Lucretius and apologetic projects like those of Creech and Charleton aimed to counter attacks such as that of Ralph Cudworth, who lumped Lucretius, Epicurus, and Hobbes together as supreme atheists.

Cross-References

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Luther, Martin

Born: 10 November 1483, Eisleben

Died: 18 February 1546, Eisleben

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Abstract

Known as one of the greatest Christian theologians of the XVI century and as one of the most important figures in the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther not only offered a concrete answer to the spirit of renovation of his age, but he also set the agenda for many subsequent philosophical and theological problems. His theological proposal, in spite of having been mainly inspired by St. Augustine of Hippo and Ockham's Nominalism, prompted a new understanding of mankind and of Grace,

which can be consequently seen in his theory of justification and his theology of the cross. For Luther, indeed, nothing in mankind is free from sin. Hence, justification cannot be found in human righteousness but in God's righteousness: salvation is not something to be earned but something to be received. Before the Augustinian conception of man, according to which human beings are *partim bonum, partim malum*, Luther upheld the position that man is *simul iustus et peccator*. Given this peculiar condition of humankind, it follows that all human action is the fruit of a sinful desire and that, therefore, only God's grace justifies the sinner. The emphasis is not placed so much on that which the agent does or fails to do externally, but on the faith that moves him, i.e., the inner subject. With this in mind, Luther contributes to laying the foundations for the Cartesian *cogito*.

Biography

Martin Luther was born on November 10th, 1483, in Eisleben, a village in Saxony, and he was christened the next morning after St. Martin of Tours, following the tradition at the time. His family would soon move from Eisleben to Mansfeld, where his father, Hans Luther, would gain a relative success as the lessee of some mines and a copper smith, the reason why Luther would display a very early devotion for St. Anne. From a very young age, Luther was raised in a very strict manner both at home and at school, focusing on the fear of God and the reverence for the Church (Bainton 1978). In addition to this, his father longed to see Luther become, under all circumstances, a lawyer, the reason why his initial education was spent studying Latin grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Hence, he studied in three different places: Mansfeld, Madeburg, and Eisenach.

In accordance with his father's desires, Luther would enroll at the University of Erfurt in 1501, where he would take the basic courses to obtain a Master's degree in liberal arts, and, subsequently, he would enroll at the Faculty of Law in Erfurt. In July 1505, however, he abdicated his studies in

order to become an Augustinian monk, a decision that would later be attributed to a vow made on July 2nd of that year during an electric storm: "Save me, St. Anna, and I shall become a monk" (Brecht 1985). Beyond the mere fear of dying hit by lightning, this vow and its firm resolution of becoming a monk answer the constant afflictions – *Anfechtungen* – that tormented him about his own salvation. During this first stage of his life, Luther would constantly seek in vain confession: "He confessed frequently, often daily, and for as long as six hours on a single occasion" (Bainton 1978).

After having been ordained priest in 1507, Luther would obtain a Bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies, on March 9th, 1508, and another one in 1509 related to the study of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. In 1510, he would travel to Rome as part of a delegation of his monastery in order to be part of the negotiation of the Augustinian order. When he came back, he was transferred from Erfurt to Wittenberg, where he received, in 1512, the title of Doctor of Theology. After this event, Luther took Johann von Staupitz's teaching position as a professor of Biblical Theology (Hendrix 2015). Through the influence of the latter, who was Vicar-General of the Augustinian order and superior of an Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg, Luther would begin his first lectures on the Palms in 1513 and his commentary on Romans in 1515. In addition to having presented a significant part of his theory of justification, these comprise some of his first criticisms of the theology of his age.

These criticisms would take force, especially between 1513 and 1515, particularly through his lectures on St. Paul – Romans and Galatians – and the constant sermons against indulgences and the collection of relics associated with this practice (Bainton 1978). Being tired of the abuses generated by the sale of indulgences and the accompanying political interests (e.g., Albert of Brandenburg's archiepiscopate, member of the house of Hohenzollern), Luther wrote his famous *Ninety-Five Theses*. In Bainton's (1978) opinion, this text contains three fundamental criticisms: "an objection to the avowed object of the expenditure, a denial of the powers of the pope over purgatory, and a consideration of the welfare of

the sinner". Even though at the beginning it was a text whose sole objective was to generate an academic confrontation and not a harsh rupture with Rome, its prompt translation from Latin into German and its wide diffusion, first in Germany and then throughout Europe, contributed to its consideration as a direct attack to the Papacy.

While some theologians like Sylvester Mazzolini were declaring Luther's proposal as heretical, Luther was assisting his order in Heidelberg, where he would later polish his position (Whitford 2001). Later, in October 1518, Luther would appear before Cardinal Cajetano, who was the Papal Legacy at the time. Cajetano's mission was simple: to either make Luther recant his position or to arrest him and take him to Rome, a task which he would not undertake (Mullett 2004). For this reason, in 1519 Pope Leo X assigned Karl von Miltitz, Papal harbinger, to gain the approval of Fredrick the Wise, Luther's main protector. He, nonetheless, would reject the Pope's gifts – a golden rose – and would appeal to his just crowned nephew Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in order to get an audience for Luther and safe-conduct that would warrant his safety during the audience.

In 1520, thus, three significant events took place: first of all, the Papal Bull *Exsurge Domini* on July 15th, where the threat of excommunication had become evident if Luther did not recant his position; second, the writing of three important texts for his theology – *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, *On The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *On the Freedom of a Christian*; and finally, Luther's public burning of the Papal Bull. All of this would culminate in Luther's excommunication through the Bull *Decet Romanum Pontificem*, published on January 3rd, 1521, and the Diet of Worms, an event that Charles V would offer to the audience at Fredrick the Wise's request. During the latter, Luther would refuse one more time to retract his position with the following words: "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God.

I neither can nor will retract anything, for it is neither safe nor honest to go against one's conscience" (Brecht 1985).

After having obtained the support of four out of six electors, Charles V would sign the Edict of Worms, which would generate nonconformity in various regions of Germany where Luther's influence was remarkable. Fredrick the Wise, after having learned of the Imperial Prohibition, would hide Luther in the Castle of Wartburg, in spite of the fact that Luther opposed his plan. During his stay at Wartburg, Luther would devote himself to translating the *New Testament* from Greek into German: although his translation was not the first translation into vernacular language, it would fit perfectly with the spirit of the age. After going back to Wittenberg in 1522, not only would Luther face the challenges endemic to the Reformation itself, but also, he would face the violence generated by some radical reformers who wanted to turn the Protestant Reformation into social reform. These radical movements would culminate in 1525 after losing Luther's support and the Battle of Frankenhausen. That same year, Luther would marry Katharina von Bora, one of the twelve nuns that would abandon the Cistercian monastery. Finally, Luther died in Eisleben on February 18th, 1546, after a series of ailments like dizziness, tinnitus, arthritis, and angina pectoris.

Heritage and Rupture Within the Tradition

Luther's heritage and rupture within the tradition can be appreciated in his conception of sacraments, an aspect of his theology that requires historical context. His theology of the sacraments was made in reaction to his context and has a polemical emphasis. Luther saw himself, in this regard, as a virtuous middle point between the Anabaptists and Zwingli on one side and the Roman Catholic doctrine on the other side. However, Luther's theology has some distinctive features that are consistent with his other theological ideas and surpass the polemical tone.

Luther numbered the sacraments in two: baptism and the Lord's Supper. For Luther, there are

only two sacraments because he believed that these two were the ones that are “promises which have signs attached to them” (Luther 1970). He excluded the other traditional sacraments as allegories. Sacraments are defined by Luther’s theological principles: “Sola fides, sola Scriptura, sola gratia” the signs and the word help the faith make visible the signs of God’s work and thus translate into acting grace. The Augsburg Confession, fully approved by Luther, states: “there are two parts to a sacrament, the sign and the Word. In the New Testament the Word is the added promise of grace” (Skevington Wood 1960). However, Luther differs from the Roman Catholic doctrine that the sacrament dispenses grace *ex opere operato*, i.e., in an objective way that does not imply the faith of the recipient. For Luther the sacrament is inactive if there is no faith involved: “Since we are indeed justified by faith, it follows that the sacraments are not efficacious except through faith” (Luther, M. 1883–2009; 44:719).

Luther defended, against the Anabaptists and Zwingli, that Baptism is essential for salvation, but he differed from the Roman Catholic belief that the grace of baptism operates even when there is no conscious faith in whom receives it. For the Catholic belief, the faith is there, even in an a posteriori and not fully conscious manner. This topic is, however, open to debate, as Luther accepted that faith might not necessarily be conscious, and still God is always free to act. Another aspect of Luther’s emphasis on the necessity of baptism is the fact that mankind is condemned in sin, and only the radical cleansing of baptism can put humans in the way of justification.

In the case of the Lord’s Supper, Luther’s theology preserves the belief in the “real presence of Christ” in the sacrament. However, in the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, he rejects the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, which for Luther is a pernicious influence of the “Aristotelian Church” (Luther 1970, 144). Luther’s explanation of the real presence is explained in terms of “consubstantiation,” the Eucharistic species are there with their accidents, but the presence of Christ is there too. Luther thinks this is the simplest and straightforward way of understanding the Lord’s words, and he applies a nominalist

interpretation of the presence: individual bread and individual person cohabitate in space and time through the sacrament.

Innovation and Original Aspects

A relevant innovation in his thought involves the rethinking of anthropology in terms of a new theological approach. Luther’s early theology was greatly influenced by the epistemological Nominalism and the *pactum*-theology of the *via moderna*, which was extremely prevalent during his day and age (McGrath 2011). The *via moderna* along with a much deeper comprehension of the Epistle of Romans and St. Augustine’s theology laid the foundation for Luther’s doctrine of justification, which was formed on the basis of a covenantal, rather than an ontological, understanding of the nature of righteousness. For Luther, this article of justification was the one doctrine upon which the Church would stand or fall.

Previous to Luther’s theology, most theologians understood righteousness as something *infused* in the believer. After this infusion took place, it was necessary to make a habit of virtue through which one would grow in righteousness. Therefore, the believer’s righteousness was seen as something belonging to his nature. This understanding of the process of justification was related to St. Thomas Aquinas theological insights, which incorporate the Aristotelian notion of the habit of virtue. For this reason, when Luther writes his *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology* (1517), he states in his 41st thesis, “Virtually the entire *Ethics* of Aristotle is the worst enemy of grace. This is in opposition to the scholastics” (Luther 1955–1986, LW 31). Consequently, Luther advocates for a return to the Holy Scripture and to the early church fathers, the former having preeminence over the latter. This reaction was prompted by what Luther thought was an important deviation from the right doctrine of justification. This deviation was the doctrine of infused righteousness.

Nevertheless, Luther’s radically new understanding of righteousness involves the fact that

the *iustitia Dei* was externally *imputed*, i.e., justification is a forensic declaration that the believer is righteous, which amounts to a change of *status*, not a change of man's *nature* (McGrath 2000). Hence, Luther sees the believer as a sinner, whose nature is sinful, but also as a sinner who has been fully justified by God's grace. In this sense, Luther would never allow righteousness to be something within the believer but alien and external to him. This Pauline concept of "imputed righteousness," as understood by Luther, amounts to a significantly new interpretation of righteousness established within an Augustinian soteriological framework (McGrath 2000). This new interpretation is so important that the Reformation doctrine of justification, in general, becomes unintelligible apart from this interpretation.

As a result, Luther's view of man is quite different from that understood by Thomism in general and the *via moderna* in particular. On the one hand, for the late medieval theologians following Aquinas, there were at least four soteriological factors that were implied in the teachings of justification. First, there was the infusion of grace; this means that God makes (merely) the first move. Second, there is the movement of free will towards God in faith, i.e., humans have free will and can move towards God by the use thereof. Third, the movement of free will takes effect in recoil from sin. Fourth, there is remission of sin through this process, and humans' will is part of this process. To Luther, these points represent the theology of glory. In his 21st thesis of the *Heidelberg Disputation Theological Theses* (1518) he states, "A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the things what it actually is" (Luther 1955–1986, LW 31).

Luther teaches something radically different from Thomistic teaching. First, there is no infusion of righteousness; rather, there is a non-imputation of sins or an imputation of righteousness, i.e., *iustitia Christi aliena* understands that God does not merely make the first move but he does everything, from beginning to end. Second, free will is nonexistent when one talks about the things "above man," i.e., even though humans can

freely make choices in their daily lives, when one talks about matters of salvation, human beings have no will in virtue of being creatures (Packer 1999). Hence, in the 39th thesis of his *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology* Luther states, "We are not masters of our actions, from beginning to end, but servants. This is in opposition to the philosophers" (Luther 1955–1986, LW 31). Even though Luther cannot, strictly speaking, be considered to be a determinist in the same way as Thomas Hobbes because it does not involve all human action, he did believe that there is no free will when talking about salvation. This is a vital point if one wants to understand the *theologia crucis* in general and the conflict with Erasmus in particular. While Erasmus saw the issue of the will as somewhat trivial and peripheral, Luther saw this issue as pivotal for soteriology (Packer 1999). Given human's sinful nature, humans can only act according to their will, which in turn will act according to its nature. Therefore, without God's grace there is nothing good that can be done. Even those virtues that one considers good from an external point of view are evil, because they do not acknowledge God's grace and are attempts at earning grace. In his *Heidelberg Disputation Theological Theses* Luther explains, "Although the works of man always appear attractive and good, they are nevertheless likely to be mortal sins" (Luther 1955–1986, LW 31). Third, when humans realize that they are unable to do anything good out of their sinful, bound will, the real recoil takes place, and this is also the work of God. Finally, the remission of sin is not something that humans have any say in, not even faith saves them per se, i.e., justification is *propter Christum* not *propter fidem* (McGrath 2000).

Consequently, Luther's emphasis on God's sovereignty cannot be overlooked when one looks at both his anthropology and his theology. However, even though Luther seems to be belligerent towards philosophy and reason at some points, he simply believes – like many of the medieval theologians and philosophers – that theology and philosophy are two quite different realms, and, thus, they should not interfere with each other's matters of study. When reason takes its proper place, it is good. As Luther states in his

fourth thesis of the *Disputation Concerning Man* (1536), “And it is certainly true that reason is the most important and the highest in rank among all things and, in comparison with other things of his life, the best and something divine” (Luther 1955–1986, LW 34). However, if reason is not subservient to God and the Scriptures, then the one who uses it is a theologian of glory, and he has “wisdom which sees the invisible things of God in works as perceived by man [and] is completely puffed up, blinded and hardened” (ibidem).

Cross-References

- ▶ Counter-Reformation
- ▶ Erasmus, Desiderius
- ▶ Hus, Jan
- ▶ Melancthon, Philipp
- ▶ Reformation

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Luzzatto, Simone

Born: 1583?, Venice

Died: 1663, Venice

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Abstract

Simone Luzzatto was the chief rabbi of the Jewish community of Venice and a renowned scientist whose works were highly praised among scholars and colleagues of his time. His fame increased during his rabbinate, as he became the author of several critical texts and contributor to the debates about Jewish law (*Halakha*), which constitute his works in Hebrew. His immense erudition ranged from the natural sciences to the humanities: rabbi and intellectual, he had a scholarly talent for classical Latin and Greek culture and also was a passionate reader of medieval and contemporary Italian authors. Luzzatto's main works are written in Italian. In 1638, he published the *Discorso circa il stato degli Hebrei*, a small apologetic treatise written with the goal to show the social, political, and economic importance and usefulness of Jews for Venetian welfare. It is his first and most known work and has

been thoroughly examined by various Jewish and Christian scholars, thus leaving a still lasting impact on the following of Jewish thought. His second work, *Socrate overo dell'humano sapere*, printed in 1651, is a philosophical work in the tradition of skeptic thought, which still remains quite enigmatic. The political and philosophical thinking of the rabbi explores the relations between the Republic of Venice and the ghetto, contributing to a new concept of Jewish identity and its social and cultural role within Christian society.

Biography

A wide range of modern and contemporary sources helped to paint a more complete picture of the rabbi's life, not least because his own writings don't reveal much information aside from short allusions. Only in 2011, the discovery of his last will and testament dating back to 1662, provided some new information concerning his family and his material possessions. Simone Luzzatto was born in Venice between 1580 and 1590. He descended from a very rich and well-known Venetian family of great cultural and economic prestige, also proven by the fact that Luzzatto's family members married exponents of the most prominent Jewish families of Venice. This is also confirmed by the rich heritage he left to his grandchild Moisè Luzzatto in his last will. The Luzzatto family originally came from the Lausitz region in the northeast of Germany (S. D. Luzzatto 1878); therefore, it was probably part of the Ashkenazi Jews who populated the ghetto of Venice in 1516. According to some sources, he received his ordination at the age of 24 (Luzzatto S. 1950/1951) and he acted as rabbi of the synagogue of the "Scuola Grande Tedesca," in attendance of the Jewish-German community, until the end of his life. Documents of Inquisition's processes mention him as having been rabbi until 1661 (Ioly Zorattini 1980/1997). We know from a letter of the rabbi and writer Isaac Cantarini to the Christian Hebraist, Christoph Theophil Unger, that he died in 1663 (Wolfius 1727) and also contains an anecdote about how his too heavy

gravestone submerged into the ground of Venice's Lido cemetery.

Writings in the Hebrew Language

In accordance with his position as a rabbi, Luzzatto was the author of a considerable number of Halakhic responses about issues concerning the Jewish law (*responsa*), which constitute the corpus of his Hebrew works, but his name also appears in several documents as *poseq* (who has decisional power concerning rabbinic laws issues), as *maskin* (someone who granted the *nihil obstat*), or as a wedding witness (his sign was found on some marriage contracts). He signed several approvals for Jewish book publications. Some of his contemporaries referred to him as the author of some other works (Delmedigo 1629) that unfortunately were never found.

Mish'an mayim (Venice, 1606)

The *Mish'an mayim* ("The water support") constitutes his most important religious-legal response. It is part of a collection of texts printed in the volume *Mashbit milchamot* ("End of the virulent discussions") in Venice in 1606 as the result of a difficult Halakhic dispute about the purity of a *miqwe* (a bath for ritual washing) in Rovigo. Luzzatto's opinion comes as the last of seven responses written by different Venetian rabbis. The *Mish'an mayim* is a well-structured text divided into three parts and introduced by a detailed index of the topics, in which the rabbi argues in favor of the adequacy of the place of ritual.

Responsa

Five very short of Luzzatto's responses are collected in the volume *Nachalat Ya'aqov* ("Ya'aqov's heritage"), put together by the rabbi Ya'aqov Heilbronn, whose disciple Luzzatto was. Each response starts with a dedication to rabbi Heilbronn and debates different topics, such as transporting a dead body on Saturdays, the issue of extramarital relationships, and financial issues, especially concerning usury. One of the shortest responses, but at the same time very important to

the rabbi, examines the controversy between rabbi Heilbronn and other rabbis, who accused him to be a follower of the Kabbalah, disapproved by the majority of the Italian rabbis of early modernity. The last religious-legal opinion deals with an economic argument between two brothers, Shim'on and Re'uven. Most of Luzzatto's responses concerning civil, family, inheritance, and ritual law were discovered in manuscripts of different origins (Luzzatto S. 2013).

Introduction to the Commentary of Ecclesiastes and Job's Books

Although Luzzatto hasn't left us any biblical and Talmudic commentary, a short introduction to a commentary of Ecclesiastes and Job's Books was discovered. This introduction was published in 1656 in *Tzafnat pa'neach* ("The revelation of secrets") by Samuele ha-Cohen from Pisa. Though it is a very short text, here Luzzatto debates the very controversial topic of Job's intentional denial of the resurrection of the dead. By examining the biblical and Talmudic passages, Luzzatto argues in favor of Job's protest against God, showing it to be a manifestation of the human freedom to criticize mankind's condition in this world.

Writings in Italian Language

Discorso circa il stato degli Hebrei (Venice, 1638)

Luzzatto's political thought is expressed in a short treatise, *Discorso circa il stato degli Hebrei et in particolare dimoranti nell'inclita Città di Venetia* (Discourse on the condition of the Jews with particular reference to the Jews dwelling in the noble city of Venice), printed in 1638 in Venice by Giovanni Calleani. This book is a refined apology of the Jewish Venetian community and a request for tolerance probably written as a response to the crisis which broke out in 1636 after a robbery committed also by some Jews of the ghetto (Shulvass 1949). A pending threat of expulsion of the Jews seems to be one of the reasons for Luzzatto's commitment to this work. The rabbi seeks to describe and justify the role of the Jewish

community within Christian society. By arguing in favor and giving examples of the socio-economic value of the Jewish presence in Venice, but implicitly also of broader Christian society, Luzzatto moves beyond a mere *petitio* and starts a real political discourse based on utilitarian conceptions. The *Discorso* is divided into 18 chapters called "*considerazioni*" (considerations) and comprises two separate sections. In the first one (consideration I to X), Luzzatto claims the highly developed economic skills of the Jews to be necessary presuppositions for the commercial activity in Venice, defending the importance of their role in Venetian economy. He deals extensively with issues such as trade, moneylending, collective wealth, and the role of the Jewish community in the city of Venice and thereby underlines the remarkable aptitudes Jews show in increasing the wealth of the city. Reading these passages, it becomes evident how proud and satisfied the rabbi was with the excellent level of economic and social achievement of the Venetian Jews. The second section (consideration XI to XVIII) centers on the topic of a possible expulsion of the entire Jewish community as punishment for the crimes of a few single individuals and seeks to avoid it. To this end, he proceeds to systematically refute all arguments, referring to the Bible or to Christian and political criticism, in favor of expelling Jewish communities from European cities. Luzzatto also praises the notable intellectual engagement of the Jewish community, describing its active participation in the philosophical debates of the time. In conclusion, one could say that Luzzatto proposes and defends in his treatise a political message of the trustworthiness of the Jews, confirmed by their long history of loyal respect for the Venetian constitution.

Socrate overo dell'humano sapere (Venice, 1651)

Luzzatto published his major work, *Socrate overo dell'humano sapere. Esercizio seriogiocoso di Simone Luzzatto hebreo venetiano. Opera nella quale si dimostra quanto sia imbecile l'humano intendimento, mentre non è diretto dalla divina rivelatione* "Socrates or on human knowledge. The serious-playful exercise of Simone Luzzatto,

Venetian Jew. A work that shows how imbecilic human intelligence can be, when it is not led by divine revelation), in Venice in 1651 at the Tomasini's printing house. The book comprises 316 pages of text, followed by a list of the discussed topics. The text is divided neither into chapters nor into paragraphs. However, there are some margin annotations, which somehow act as guidelines pointing out changes in topic, interlocutors, and the transition from direct to indirect speech.

The purpose of this later treatise is to show the weakness of human knowledge by systematically employing the method of skeptic doubt. However, it is a kind of theological skepticism, which only concerns human cognition, exempting divine knowledge and revelation from this concept of skeptic doubt. Luzzatto defines divine revelation as the only trustworthy knowledge and denies the authority of sciences and the reliability of the instruments of human cognition. The rabbi entrusts Socrates and many other philosophers and known figures of classical Greek thought with the task to conduct this inquiry into human knowledge in order to show that the only acceptable consequence, because it is not dogmatic, of this thought is the suspension of judgment. The entire book is designed as a new fictional apology by Socrates, who had been accused of trying to devalue human sciences. He defends himself by enumerating the reasons which led him to suspect that human scientific discipline lacked certainty. He claims that the controversial opinions of scholars on principles, objects, instruments, and functions of knowledge are at the origin of his doubts about the reliability of the human sciences. By adopting the method and developing the main concepts of ancient and modern skeptic philosophy, this work represents a refined proof of the Venetian Jewish reception of the skeptic modern tendencies of the early modernity in Europe.

Reputation and Cultural Legacy

The political thinking of the Venetian rabbi was well received and also criticized by his followers and indirect disciples. The originality of his

apologetic treatise consists of a new approach to the issue of the place of the Jewish community within Christian society. Luzzatto adopted the Machiavellian concept of *utilitas* and *necessitas* to strengthen and highlight the economic role and social position of Jews in society (Veltri 2011a). His ideas and arguments played a significant role in the thinking of some Jewish and Christian authors. Luzzatto's *Discorso* was a source of inspiration to Menasseh ben Israel, who implicitly adopted it in his *De fidelitate et utilitate Judaicae gentis libellus anglicus* (Ravid 1982), but also for Spinoza, who indirectly criticized his political thinking (Veltri 2008). A certain proof of the influence of Luzzatto's book is given by the deist John Toland who read it and planned to translate it into English. Considering the interest that Toland and Menasseh ben Israel showed in the political thinking of Luzzatto, it is probable that Moses Mendelssohn was influenced by the *Discorso* for his *Jerusalem*. It's important to mention Johann Friederich Herder among the voices that express a direct acknowledgment of Luzzatto's theory (Veltri 2013).

The legacy of Luzzatto's skeptic thinking is more difficult to trace: *Socrate overo dell'humano sapere* is not very well known, since there exist only very few copies of the original book and it was republished again only in 2013, after its last publication in 1651. There are some allusions to Luzzatto's *Socrate* in the world of scholarship, but no scholars have referred to this work in its entirety. Among the first who paid attention to Luzzatto's thinking was the historian Henrich Graetz. He examined the rabbi's philosophical work in an attempt to show the necessity of reason and revelation to complement one another (Graetz 1998), recalling the traditional doctrine of the equilibrium between *fides* and *ratio*. Also, Shmuel David Luzzatto proposed a summary of the *Socrate* dealing just in passing with the topic of his skepticism (Luzzatto S.D. 1878). There exist only three more recent contributions to the study of Luzzatto's *Socrate*: David Ruderman in his *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* summarized *Socrate*'s contents, focusing on the difficult problem of Luzzatto's sources and his place in the context of

modern thinking and Jewish scholarship. The dissertation of Ariel Viterbo, partly published in Italian in 1997, should also be considered because it deals with the book by describing its contents and proposing to interpret the *Socrate* as an intellectual biography of Luzzatto. The last contributions to the research also on this still a rather enigmatic book were edited by Giuseppe Veltri, who (S. Luzzatto 2013; Veltri 2015) suggests considering this work as a unique Jewish contribution concerning the skeptic tendencies of European early modernity. This interpretation invites the recipient to evaluate *Socrate* as proof of the Jewish participation in the philosophical debate of the time and thus the Jewish active role in building the modern European culture.

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Lyly, John

Born: 1554, Rochester or Canterbury, England

Died: 1606, London, England

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Abstract

John Lyly was a writer, playwright, and courtier in the service of Elizabeth I.

Biography

Lyly was educated at Oxford University (BA, 1573; MA, 1575) and had aspirations of returning to Oxford as a fellow at Magdalen College. His first two works, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580), were written to display his humanist credentials and promote his ambitions as a university scholar. After the *Euphues* duology and letters to Lord Burghley failed to secure him an academic position, Lyly went on to pursue a career in London, eventually turning to court service and writing plays. The dedication of *Euphues and His England* to the Earl of Oxford led to a patronage relationship which supported Lyly's court plays: *Campaspe* (1584), *Sapho and Phao* (1584), *Gallathea* (1588), and *Endymion* (1591). His last three plays, *Midas* (1591), *Mother Bombie* (1594), and *The Woman in the Moon* (1597) – the only Lyly play written in blank verse – stand apart from the earlier plays, especially in their treatment of servants who dominate the action. Of the additional works that have sometimes been attributed to Lyly, only *Love's Metamorphosis* is reliably credited to him; although believed to be Lyly's first play, it was not printed until 1591. During the last years of his life and even after the death of Elizabeth, Lyly only wrote "begging letters," in which he famously complained about a lack of reward for his royal service. He left London briefly

(1562–1565) for financial reasons near the end of his life but returned and remained there until his death in 1606.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Lyly is often associated with humanism, which his grandfather William Lily was partly responsible for bringing to England and popularizing through his grammar textbook and founding role in St. Paul's School. The extent of the younger Lyly's continuation of his scholarly inheritance and commitment to humanism are debated among scholars, as is the degree of sycophancy in Lyly's early court plays. Far from seeing Lyly's dual identifications as mutually exclusive, some critics have argued that his "humanist ideals" and "appeal for royal patronage" are related, complementary sources of motivation (Alwes 2000).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Lyly's first two works were written in an ornate literary style that came to be known as Euphuism. This unique style quickly made him one of the most fashionable writers in England and gained prominent followers including Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge, and Thomas Nashe.

Impact and Legacy

By 1590, Euphuism had largely died out. The reaction against Lyly's excessive mannerism was first expressed in Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) and later parodied as Italianate and pedantic in such works as William Shakespeare's *Love's Labor Lost* (1598). Although *Euphues* continued to be reprinted after the 1590s, by then its literary clout and popularity had already diminished considerably.

After giving up on his prospects for a university career, Lyly found only partial success advancing to the royal court, not least because of

his connection to the Earl of Oxford, who both brought Lyly closer to his goal and threatened it with his own troubled relationship to the Queen. Lyly's court career remained vexed and financially unsatisfying throughout most of his life; he was given numerous titular honors without stipends. Although Lyly clung to the hope of becoming Master of Revels at Gray's Inn, his connections to the Earl of Oxford and Martin Marprelate put him at odds with powerful political factions and ordinances which likely precluded his advancement.

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► [Humanism](#)

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Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The study of Renaissance lyric poetry cannot be separated from the linguistic hegemony of Latin in the fifteenth century and the gradual establishment of the vernacular in the sixteenth century. In fact, in the fifteenth century, vernacular lyric poetry flourished side by side with Latin lyric poetry, in which the revival of the classical poets interacted with vernacular sources and most of all with Petrarch. However, by the sixteenth century, vernacular lyric poetry was firmly established, divided into two opposing trends: the petrarchist, which found its highest expression in the theories of Pietro Bembo, and the anticlassicist and antipetrarchist.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The pre-eminence of Humanism in the fifteenth century marked the success of Latin, and Latin poetry also flourished in the field of lyric poetry, flanking the revival of the classics with a profound interaction with vernacular sources and especially with Petrarch's *Canzoniere*. The poetry of intellectuals such as Angelo Poliziano, Giovanni Pontano, Jacopo Sannazzaro, and Michele Marullo combined classical forms and motifs with the expression of an existential reality that had been the focus of Petrarch's poetry. Poliziano is the paradigmatic case: author of some of the best-known humanist Latin lyric poems, such as the elegies *In Lalagen* and *In violas*, he also devoted himself to vernacular poetry with the composition of *Stanze*, in which classical linguistic and mythological elements merge with vernacular echoes; the atmosphere in which the poet's

alter ego Julius lovingly contemplates Simonetta is rendered through elaborate stylistic preciosity.

By the sixteenth century, literature in the vernacular was well established, and petrarchist lyric poetry – proposing the styles and themes of Petrarch – contrasted with antipetrarchist poetry, which often displayed comic elements in its attempt to overthrow classical forms stylistically and linguistically as well as in content. It was Pietro Bembo whose precise dictates codified Petrarch in the role of model for poetry in *Prose della volgar lingua* in 1525, in which he opposed the *flamboyante* drift of much of late fifteenth-century petrarchism and proposed a “return to Petrarch.” Concrete examples of precepts set forth in *Prose* are Bembo's *Rime* published in 1530, characterized by a uniform style in clear imitation of Petrarch, and the revival of the themes of the *Canzoniere*, albeit lacking their intensely dramatic quality and reinterpreted in the light of Renaissance Neoplatonism and its devaluation of the sphere of the body in the *furor amoris*.

The greatest representatives of Renaissance antipetrarchism, characterized by the revival of comic and obscene elements parodically aiming to overthrow the traditional *topoi*, were Pietro Aretino, Nicholas Franco, and Francesco Berni. Franco's *Priapea* (1541), a collection of ribald anticlerical poems, and Aretino's *Sonetti lussuriosi* (composed between 1525 and 1527) constitute anti-*Canzoniere*, in which obscenity and bodily references take the place of Petrarch's disembodied yearnings for the beloved. But the contrast was not only thematic: also from a stylistic and linguistic point of view the overturning of petrarchist “fashion” can be seen, clearly illustrated by Franco in his 1539 dialogue *Il petrarchista* and by Berni in his playful rhymes, where Petrarch's stylistic elements and language are parodied, arousing in the reader a sense of estrangement.

In the course of the century, petrarchism became a true literary phenomenon, crossing the Italian border to arrive throughout the rest of Europe: poets such as Pierre de Ronsard and even Philip Sidney and William Shakespeare, albeit in an original and complex manner, felt his influence.

Ronsard, who aspired to revive lyrical poetry in France, made Petrarch one of his most important sources and used his stylistic elements and images in a creative way, merging them with those of classical authors such as Horace. It emerges that in this case, Petrarch's poetry became an expressive "alphabet" to which he was drawn, constantly renewing it and combining it with other sources.

In England, petrarchism had a great following and left deep traces in the works of prominent poets such as Philip Sidney and William Shakespeare. Astrophil, the lover in Sidney's collection of poems *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), is depicted as the Petrarchist lover par excellence, desperate in his hopeless yearning to possess an intractable woman. Sidney, however, is not a mere imitator of Petrarch; he inserts into the collection a major structural novelty, which allows him to bestow on Petrarchism a renewed introspective feeling. This novelty consists in the paroxysmal accentuation of the metapoetic element: in addition to telling a love story, the collection is a reflection on the writing of love poetry itself, and Stella is also evoked as a reader of the poet/lover's compositions. Within the context of this meta-reflection, any criticism of the particular euphuistic flavor of the poems in the collection is paradoxical. In this way, Sidney succeeds in creating a fundamental imbalance between his expressed theoretical position and his convoluted and Bembesque practice, displaying a possible strategy of overcoming *ab interno* the Petrarchian code of love that, in the repetitions of his imitators, had lost all reflective momentum. Shakespeare's approach to Petrarchism also exhibits remarkable originality; subject to sarcastic criticism in many theatrical works, the Petrarchist code undergoes a radical reversal in the section of the *Sonnets* dedicated to the Dark Lady. In direct opposition to the neoplatonizing concept of disincarnate love, his tone not dissimilar to that adopted in 1585 by Giordano Bruno in the *Eroici furori* (edited in London), Shakespeare places the erotic and physical force of a promiscuous woman in the very foreground.

The petrarchist "revolution" also arrived in Spain, with poets like Garcilaso de la Vega and

Lope de Vega. If the former's poems are characterized by the balance they maintain between the desire for originality and imitation, creating a personal synthesis of reason and feeling, in the complex works of Lope de Vega his adhesion to Petrarchism coexists with its parody. In fact, the *Rimas humanas* is a Petrarchist collection, especially remarkable for its many formal variations and the presence of other themes besides love (classical, mythological, biblical, artistic), and the *Rimas sacras* are a reproposal of the collection in the Petrarchist manner – where, however, the object of love is not a woman but God. On the other hand, the *Rimas humanas y divinas del licenciado Tomé de Burguillos* are a parody of Petrarchist *topoi*, pilloried in ways not unlike those adopted by Italian antipetrarchism.

In conclusion, we can state that the "Petrarch factor" played an indispensable role in the poetry of the Renaissance, and the poets of the time compared themselves with the poet from Arezzo, in imitation or parody.

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- [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- [Latin in the Renaissance](#)
- [Love in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Petrarca, Francesco](#)
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M

Maccovius

Born: 1588 in Lobzenic, Poland

Died: 1644 in Franeker, The Netherlands

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Abstract

Maccovius was a Reformed theologian, who made extensive use of scholastic methods for polemical purposes.

Alternate Names

Maccowius; Makkovius; Makkowski; Makousky;
Makovski; Makowsky

Biography

Johannes Maccovius was born in Poland near Poznan and belonged to the Polish aristocracy. He studied liberal arts at Gdansk under the tutelage of the rector Bartholomaeus Keckermann. As tutor of two young noblemen, Maccovius went to the Netherlands, where he received his doctorate at Franeker University. In 1616 he became professor there, both in theology and physics. In 1618 he came in conflict

with his fellow professor Sybrand Lubbertus, who accused Maccovius of 50 errors, and brought these accusations to the national Synod of Dordt (1618–1619). A committee of six theologians declared Maccovius free of heresy, but admonished him “to speak with the Prophets, Christ, and the Apostles, rather than with Bellarmine, Suarez, and the like”. During his lifetime, Maccovius married three times. His first wife was Antje Ulenborgh, sister of Saskia, Rembrandt’s wife. Possibly, Rembrandt had Maccovius in mind when painting his “Portrait of a Polish Rider.”

Writings

Maccovius’ publications originated from his lectures. His most popular work is *Distinctiones et regulae theologicae ac philosophicae*, posthumously published ten times in the seventeenth century and translated into Dutch (1658) and English (2009). It was a classroom book for students trained in the *artes* faculty and starting their theological education. The distinctions are thought to be helpful for understanding and defending Christian doctrines. So, Maccovius promoted conceptual analysis in order to gain as much clarity as possible.

Key Ideas

Unlike many of his Reformed colleagues, Maccovius never was a preacher. His focus was

strongly on academic theology. Thanks to his thorough training in philosophy, he was an able polemicist. This brought him to a rigorous application of philosophical instruments to the field of elenctic theology. More than most of his Reformed contemporaries, Maccovius made use of medieval concepts and distinctions. For example, Maccovius, defined reprobation as twofold – negative and positive – identifying God’s will as the cause of negative, human sin as the cause of positive reprobation. The first means that somebody is not elected, the second that he is ordained to punishment.

Legacy

For a long time, Maccovius had a bad name in the historiography of Reformed Theology. One cause was that in later Remonstrant historiography (the Remonstrants were those who were expelled from the Synod of Dordt), the Maccovius affair was used to criticize the Reformed view on predestination. Another cause was the incorrect thought that the Reformation was intrinsically anti-scholastic, so that Maccovius’ use of scholastic methodology was a betrayal of the Reformational Theology. Thanks to new research in Reformed Scholasticism (with Willem van Asselt and Richard Muller as main authors), there arises more sympathy for Maccovius’ work. All recent studies on Maccovius belong to this new approach.

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Maccowius

► [Maccovius](#)

Machiavegli

► [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)

Machiavelli, Niccolò

Born: 3 May 1469, Florence
Died: 21 June 1527, Florence

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Abstract

During his successful career as second chancellor of the Florentine Republic following the

expulsion of the Medici from the city (1494), Machiavelli had the chance to meet famous Italian lords and foreign rulers, as well as to observe their political conduct closely. When the Medici were restored to power in 1512, he was removed from his position and banished from Florence. It was in this moment of failure and despair that Machiavelli combined his past experience as secretary with the study of the classical authors to write those masterpieces (*Il principe*, *Discorsi*, *Mandragola*, *Istorie fiorentine*) that made him the best-known author of Renaissance Florence. Whether defined as a statesman, a humanist, a historian, or a philosopher, Machiavelli fits all these descriptions in a unique way. Although he is today remembered chiefly for his advice, contained in the treatise *Il principe*, to disregard ethics while pursuing or preserving power, his thought and output are much more complex than this but have been obscured by the negative reception his political works received in the aftermath of his death. Far from any systematic investigation, Machiavelli rejects any doctrine based on traditional and Christian values and strives to find the constant laws of politics by examining current events through a comparison of these with ancient history.

Alternate Names

[Machiavegli](#); [Machiavellus](#), [Nicolaus](#)

Biography

Over the past 20 years, several biographies of Machiavelli have been published perfecting the more rigorous approach first adopted by Ridolfi half a century earlier (Ridolfi 1954). Mention is made of these in the present section, which is above all indebted to the accurate and detailed entry in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Inglese 2006a).

Little is known about Machiavelli's childhood and early youth. Born to Bernardo di Niccolò di

Buoninsegna, who was a moderately successful doctor of law, and Bartolomea de' Nelli, he had two elder sisters, Primavera and Margherita, and a younger brother, Totto. His father's diary, *Libro di ricordi* (Olschki 1954), which spans the years 1474–1487, records the early stages of Machiavelli's study of Latin grammar (at the age of 7) and of arithmetic (at 11), as well as in Latin translation under the tutelage of Ser Paolo Sasso da Ronciglione (from 1481). In this diary, one can find a list of the books that were in the Machiavelli household, including historical works by Livy, Marcus Junianus Justinus, and Flavio Biondo, as well as rhetorical and philosophical writings by Cicero (*Philippics*, *On the Orator*, *On Moral Duties*) (Ridolfi 1954). At the time of the savage reprisals perpetrated by Lorenzo de' Medici against the instigators of the Pazzi conspiracy, in which Lorenzo's brother, Giuliano, was assassinated, Machiavelli was only 9 years old (Viroli 2000). Unfortunately, in contemporary documents there is no trace of Machiavelli's later studies. It is probable that in his youth he transcribed Lucretius' *De rerum natura* and Terence's *Eunuch* and attended the tutorials or lectures of Marcello Virgilio Adriani, who taught poetics and rhetoric at the university, the Florentine Studio, from 1494. However, it is clear from his first writings that, along with a sound knowledge of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Tuscan literary tradition, he had a solid humanist education (Black 2013). There is no evidence for his knowledge of ancient Greek: allusions to Greek authors found in his writings may derive either from translations into Latin or from oral communication with experts.

During the years of the republic established after the expulsion of the Medici in 1494, Machiavelli was drawn toward the oligarchic faction in opposition to the leadership of the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola. This association might explain his election as secretary of the second chancery on 19 June 1498, just 1 month after Savonarola's execution (23 May). As second chancellor he was in charge of the administration of the city's relations with its subject territories, while foreign affairs were handled by the first chancery under the direction of Virgilio Adriani.

From 14 July Machiavelli was also appointed secretary to the magistracy of the Dieci (Ten) dealing with military and policy matters. The tasks entrusted to him included carrying out informal embassies, gleaning information, and dealing with minor problems prior to the arrival of the official ambassadors (chosen from members of elite families). It was during his governmental career (1498–1512) that Machiavelli had the chance to meet Italian lords and foreign rulers and acquire the experience that was to shape his political thought. His job as envoy is well documented in the extant letters and dispatches sent to the Ten and to the Signoria, the republic's chief executive magistracy (Machiavelli 2001–: v). In this correspondence Machiavelli already gives proof of his intellectual acuity in analyzing political matters. Some of the letters exchanged with his assistants (most notably Agostino Vespucci and Biagio Buonaccorsi) also document a jovial aspect of his personality (Chabod 1993).

Machiavelli's minor political works are also connected to this period. In 1499, he wrote the *Discorso sopra Pisa*, on how to reconquer the city that had rebelled against Florence after Charles VIII's descent into Italy (1494). Subsequently, he was at the court of Caterina Sforza Riario, countess of Imola and Forlì, working to secure her military and political support. After the Swiss and Gascon mercenary troops failed to regain Pisa in July 1500, Machiavelli was sent to the French court with Francesco della Casa (in support of the official ambassadors), in order to discuss the outcome of the battle. On this occasion, he met George d'Amboise, cardinal of Rouen and the King's prime minister. During this 6-month mission (from July 1500 to January 1501), Machiavelli followed the itinerant court of Louis XII observing and studying both the character of the French people and the political and military organization of their monarchy. His reflections on this experience are expressed in the brief essay *De natura Gallorum* (which was revised until 1503).

With regard to his private life, in the autumn of 1501, Machiavelli married Marietta Corsini who gave him seven children: two daughters, Primerana and Bartolomea called Baccia (the

mother of Giuliano de' Ricci), and five sons (Bernardo, Ludovico, Guido, Piero, and Totto).

In the following year, new concerns for the Florentine government came from the actions of Cesare Borgia, Duke of Valentinois, the illegitimate son of Pope Alexander VI. After occupying the Romagna, Borgia invaded Florentine territory. As a consequence, Arezzo and Valdichiana revolted with the support of Vitellozzo Vitelli, the duke's lieutenant. It was the first time Machiavelli, accompanying the ambassador Francesco Soderini, bishop of Volterra, met Borgia. These events inspired the speech *Del modo di trattare i popoli della Valdichiana ribellati* (July 1503), in which the uncertain approach of the Florentine government to handling the situation of Arezzo is bitterly compared to the wise conduct used by the ancient Romans against the rebellious Latin peoples.

The election of Piero Soderini as lifetime *gonfaloniere* (standard-bearer of justice), on 20 September 1502, was intended to provide the republic with greater stability. Soderini would soon give his leadership a popular imprint in opposition to the oligarchs, making Machiavelli his right-hand man. In the following decade, Machiavelli's prestige increased as would not have been possible for any secretary of the second chancery.

During his second legation to Duke Valentino (October 1502–January 1503), Machiavelli witnessed him trapping and killing his rebellious lieutenants in Senigallia (31 December). This episode was subsequently recorded in *Il modo che tenne il Duca Valentino per ammazzare Vitellozzo, Oliverotto da Fermo, il signor Paolo e il Duca di Gravina Orsini in Senigaglia* (1514–1517). From 26 October to 18 December 1503, Machiavelli attended the conclave in Rome that resulted in the election of Giuliano della Rovere as Pope Julius II. Cesare Borgia, whom Machiavelli blamed for having favored his enemy's ascent, was imprisoned by the Pope while attempting to leave Rome.

At the end of 1504, after a short legation to the French court, Machiavelli composed the *Decennale* or *Compendium rerum decennio in Italia gestarum*, a historical poem in tercets

relating the chief events of the past decade. His purpose was to support Soderini's politics as well as to promote the formation of a Florentine army in order to face the contemporary political crisis. First dedicated to the nobleman Alamanno Salviati, it was subsequently addressed to the Florentine citizens by Agostino Vespucci in his introductory letter accompanying the publication in February 1506. The removal of the original dedication proves Soderini's and Machiavelli's change of disposition toward Salviati. Written in a colloquial style, which emphasizes the bond between the author and his readers, the poem produces a comic effect through animal puns on onomastics and heraldry (Matucci 1978; Bárberi Squarotti 1987; Cabrini 1993).

In 1505 minor missions took Machiavelli to the Lord of Perugia Gian Paolo Baglioni, to the Marquis of Mantua Giovan Francesco Gonzaga, and to the Lord of Siena Pandolfo Petrucci. In the ongoing conflict with Pisa, the failure of the mercenary troops to capture the enemy persuaded Machiavelli even more about the importance of having a homegrown militia. Soderini allowed him to recruit the infantry from Florentine territory defying the opposition of the oligarchs who feared that such an army might increase the *gonfaloniere's* personal power. From the end of August to the end of October 1506, Machiavelli followed Julius II on his journey from Rome to Bologna where the Pope aimed to overthrow Giovanni II Bentivoglio and restore the overlordship of the Church. Arriving in Perugia on 13 September, the Pope did not hesitate to enter the city alone and almost unarmed. Machiavelli's musings on Julius II's boldness and Baglioni's cowardly surrender are contained in one of his most important letters, the epistle to Giovan Battista Soderini (nephew of the *gonfaloniere*) dated 13–21 September, known as *Ghiribizzi al Soderino*.

In January 1507 Machiavelli was appointed as secretary of the Nine, the newly created magistracy in charge of managing the army. After the rumor of an imminent descent of Emperor Maximilian I spread in June 1507, he was allowed to join the ambassador Francesco Vettori on a mission to the imperial court only at the end of the

year. On his return in June 1508, Machiavelli wrote the *Rapporto di cose della Magna* in which he recorded Maximilian's character flaws as a leader, as well as the strengths (based on the "abundance of men, money, and arms") and weaknesses (lack of central power, disunity between emperor, princes, and cities) of the German state. These matters were subsequently examined in the *Discorso sopra le cose della Magna e sopra l'imperatore* (1509) and the broader *Ritratto delle cose della Magna* (1512).

Until June 1509 Machiavelli was busy with the Pisan military campaign and drafted an action plan for the reconquest of the city (*Provvedimenti per la riconquista di Pisa*). Pisa's final surrender was acknowledged by his friends as a success for the militia he had organized.

Meanwhile, major events had upset the political situation in the rest of Italy. On 14 May 1509, the troops of the League of Cambrai promoted by the Pope defeated the Venetians at Agnadello taking possession of most of their territories. In the last months of the year, Machiavelli was first at the court of the Marchioness Isabella d'Este in Mantua and then in Verona to handle minor matters relating to the emperor's descent into Italy.

Two more missions to the French court took place in 1510 and 1511. Machiavelli's report, *Ritratto di cose di Francia*, revised and amplified in different phases until April 1512, underlines the strengths of the French state (in particular its centrality and wealth) as well as its faults including the employment of a weak infantry. After the French were overcome by the troops of the Holy League (formed by the papacy, Spain and Venice) in the Battle of Ravenna (11 April 1512), the Hispano-papal forces entered Tuscany and plundered Prato defeating the Florentine infantry effortlessly. Pier Soderini, persuaded by a few oligarchs to abdicate, fled to Siena by night on 31 August. His behavior in the crucial last days of the Florentine Republic is blamed as cowardly by Machiavelli in the famous and sarcastic epitaph *La notte che morì Pier Soderini* (Carrai 1985–86). On the other hand, the restoration of the Medici is described in positive terms in Machiavelli's letter (without date) sent to an illustrious unknown noblewoman (likely to be identified with the

Marchioness of Mantua unless it should be regarded as a fictitious text). Similarly, in his short memorandum *Ai Palleschi* (as the supporters of the Medici were called) written between October and November 1512, Machiavelli welcomes the return of the Medici encouraging them to continue Soderini's anti-oligarchic politics. Despite his efforts to win their favor, he was soon removed from his position and condemned to banishment within Florentine territory as well as to the payment of bail in the amount of a thousand gold florins. In February 1513 he was imprisoned and tortured after his name was linked to the conspiracy hatched by Pietro Paolo Boscoli and Agostino Capponi against the Medici family. In such desperate circumstances, Machiavelli sought help from Giuliano de' Medici to whom he addressed two burlesque sonnets: *Io ho, Giuliano, in gamba un paio di geti* and *In questa notte, pregando le Muse*. The first ironically describes the awful conditions of his incarceration; the second contains a playful reprimand to one of the muses who has mistaken him for the mediocre poet Andrea Dazzi. Longing to return to work, in another sonnet composed a little later during his banishment (*Io vi mando, Giuliano, alquanti tordi*), he would encourage Giuliano to be wary of those who may speak ill of him.

Eventually released, thanks to the general amnesty following the election of Giovanni de' Medici as Pope Leo X on 11 March 1513, Machiavelli began his famous correspondence with Francesco Vettori, who was then ambassador at the papal court. But the hope that his friend might succeed in finding him employment with the new rulers was thwarted. When everything was lost (*post res perditas*, as Machiavelli put it), he retired to the Albergaccio, his modest property in Sant'Andrea in Percussina, near San Casciano. The letter to Vettori dated 10 December 1513 contains a tragicomic description of his daily life on the farm and the first evidence of the composition of *Il principe*. In reply to his friend's complaint about meaningless tasks in Rome, Machiavelli ironically lists his demanding occupations: farm work, reading poetry, going to the inn, and playing games with the local people. The style of the letter becomes more solemn in the

second part, where Machiavelli relates that in the evening he wears "royal and courtly clothes" and enters into conversation with the ancient authors. *Il principe* is here referred to as a small work *de principatibus* ("on principalities"), which is still being enlarged and revised. After his return to Florence in February 1514, Machiavelli attended the meetings in the gardens of the Rucellai family (known as *Orti Oricellari*), in Via della Scala. There is no consensus about the exact time he began those visits, whether in 1513 – since even during the banishment he went back to Florence for short periods – or a few years later (Stoppelli 2005). At these meetings, members of the Florentine elite (including Luigi Alamanni, Zanobi Buondelmonti, and Lorenzo Strozzi) gathered around the young owner Cosimo Rucellai to discuss literature, history, and politics. The composition of the *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* is linked closely to that period and that environment, as shown by the dedication to Buondelmonti and Rucellai. In those years of forced inactivity (1513–1520), Machiavelli also explored other literary genres: from theater (*Mandragola*) to narrative (*Belfagor*) and from poetry (*L'asino*) to military theory (*Arte della guerra*).

Even though republican ideals were probably debated in the Rucellai gardens, it would be wrong to consider them as a forum for opponents of the Medici. Indeed, friends from the *Orti* favored Machiavelli's reconciliation with the ruling family so that he was entrusted again with some tasks. In the summer of 1520, he was sent to Lucca to solve a delicate situation involving a few Florentine merchants who had claims against the insolvent Michele di Giovanni Guinigi from that city. During that time Machiavelli wrote the *Vita di Castruccio Castracani da Lucca*, a short biography of the Lord of Lucca and leader of the Tuscan Ghibellines (1281–1328), who was often engaged in conflicts against the Florentines. The presence of several inaccuracies and mistakes has made scholars doubt the specific nature of this work (Brakkee 1986; Inglese 1991; Frazier 2013). Nevertheless, as a result of this piece of writing, in November Machiavelli obtained from Cardinal Giulio de' Medici the official

commission to narrate the history of Florence. The following year he was in Carpi dealing with some administrative matters concerning the Franciscan convents in Florentine territory as well as searching for a good preacher for the following Lent on behalf of the consuls of the wool guild. This episode is attested by Machiavelli's witty correspondence with Francesco Guicciardini, at that time governor of Modena. Back in Florence, Machiavelli devoted himself to writing the *Istorie fiorentine*, which would be presented to Giulio de' Medici, now Pope Clemens VII, in May 1525.

A new anti-Medici conspiracy spearheaded by Alamanni, Buondelmonti, and other attendants at the Rucellai gatherings was discovered in 1522, but there was no evidence of Machiavelli's involvement. His love for the young singer Barbara Raffacani Salutati (whom he met in the property of Jacopo Falconetti known as Jacopo Fornaciaio) is treated with self-irony in the play *Clizia* composed for the carnival 1525. Based on Plautus' *Casina*, the comedy was successfully performed on 13 January in the presence of a large audience including the most illustrious citizens of Florence. Despite its controversial authorship, the *Discorso o dialogo intorno alla nostra lingua*, in which Machiavelli advocates the use of the modern Florentine as literary language against archaic or pedantic tendencies, is generally also dated to this period (Trovato 1982).

The political climate had meanwhile become alarming. After Charles V defeated and captured the French King Francis I in Pavia (on 24 February 1525), Machiavelli was sent by Pope Clement VII to Faenza to discuss his views on the organization of a territorial militia with Francesco Guicciardini (now papal president of the Romagna) but failed to impress him. When the League of Cognac was formed to oppose the emperor (May 1526), Machiavelli was involved in the defense of Florentine territory. In November the imperial forces descended into Italy: Giovanni de' Medici (known as Giovanni dalle Bande Nere), in whom Machiavelli had placed great hopes, was mortally wounded and his troops defeated in the territory of Mantua. After invading Tuscany, the imperial Landsknechts headed for Rome, sacking the city on 6 May 1527. A few

days later, the Medici were expelled from Florence, and the Great Council and the republican institutions were restored. Now unpopular with the new governors because of his recent services to the Medici, Machiavelli was not offered any employment in the second chancery. He died on 21 June (probably of peritonitis) and was buried the following day in Santa Croce. A story has it that on his deathbed, Machiavelli had a dream, in which he met two different groups of men, the first consisting of miserable people on their way to paradise and the second including the damned souls of distinguished thinkers like Plato, Plutarch, and Tacitus. Sharing his dream with his friends, Machiavelli confessed that he would prefer to discuss politics in hell rather than be bored to death in paradise (Ridolfi 1954).

Main Works

Machiavelli's ideas are not expressed systematically as one expects from philosophers, although consistent themes can be found in all his works. His thought rests on a few postulates which are not explained but presented as the foundation for any further political discourse. His view on human nature is pessimistic: men are essentially evil, greedy, ready to overlook the loss of their fathers but not of their property, and ready to do something good only if urged by necessity. Such corruption is not to be improved by human progress but stands as an ontological condition, which those ruling a state (either a principality or a republic) should keep in mind if they intend to preserve and confer benefits on it. The related postulate that men and universal orders have always been the same since time began permits one to identify general laws controlling human existence. Machiavelli's originality lies in transferring the humanist concept of imitation from the artistic and scientific fields to politics. Thus it becomes necessary to examine models of the past in combination with an attentive analysis of contemporary events in order to prevent a state from being ruined. However, other areas of Machiavelli's thought are not so limpid but are liable to different interpretations that continue to inflame controversies among scholars. Machiavelli's evolution from *Il principe* to the

Discorsi, i.e., from a monarchic to a republican phase, has been argued in the past (Baron 1961), but this transition is only apparent, as the two works seem to develop different sides of a more complex political discussion (Inglese 2006b). The conception of politics as the ambition to expand one's own dominion does not belong to Machiavelli's writings either: for him, politics is a continuous effort to preserve the common good limiting the possible damages caused by fortune (Ferroni 2003).

Il principe

The traditional view that *Il principe* was written hurriedly between July and December 1513 (Chabod 1993; Cutinelli-Rèndina 1999; Dotti 2003) has been discredited by other critics who postpone its completion to spring 1514 (Sasso 1987–1997; Inglese 2006b) or even to 1517–1518 (Machiavelli 2001–: 1.1; Bausi 2005). In opposition to the generally consolidated opinion, Martelli argues that Machiavelli has been overestimated both as a political thinker and a humanist since several inaccuracies can be found in the treatise. In his view it reflects the author's subordination to the Medicean government after the downfall of the Florentine Republic (Machiavelli 2001–: 1.1). On the other hand, Inglese firmly believes that the text in the form it has reached us represents a finished work in which innovative political ideas are expressed in an original and effective style (Inglese 2006b).

No autograph manuscripts have survived. It is believed that the Latin titles of the 26 chapters comprising the treatise were also used in the original form, whereas the chapter numbers were added later. *Il principe* was printed posthumously first by the Roman editor Blado and subsequently by the Florentine Giunti in 1532. However, manuscript copies (some made by Biagio Buonaccorsi himself or at his initiative) were already in circulation when the author was still alive. Certain sections of the treatise were used (if not plagiarized) by the philosopher Agostino Nifo in his *De regnandi peritia* (1523).

The chapters are preceded by a dedicatory letter in which, according to the humanist tradition, the author acknowledges his own unworthiness to

offer political advice and praises the patron's greatness. The original dedicatee, Giuliano de' Medici, was subsequently replaced (not necessarily following his death in March 1516) by Lorenzo de' Medici whom Pope Leo X had entrusted with the leadership of Florence in 1513. In this dedication, Machiavelli also proudly underlines the original method of his approach to politics based on the combination of long experience in modern affairs with the continuous study of antiquity. Such political realism reinforced by theoretical reflection prevented him from lapsing into mere empiricism or abstract thought. Another claim to originality concerns his writing style, which rejected unnecessary ornamentation and the florid language typical of contemporary works. The argumentation is based on a series of antithetical descriptions introduced by the disjunctive conjunctions *either/or* that makes Machiavelli's writing particularly forceful and straightforward ("All states [...] are either republics or principalities; principalities are either hereditary [...] or they are new. The new ones are either completely new or they are like appendages [...]", etc.). Between the two alternatives (a third option is not taken into consideration), Machiavelli dissects the one relevant to his current discourse until each matter has been thoroughly investigated.

The main purpose of the treatise is to identify the best type among the possible principalities (hereditary, new, mixed, civil, and ecclesiastic) that may suit the Florentine political situation in the immediate present, as well as the ways of acquiring and maintaining it. Machiavelli intentionally excludes republics, which he asserts he has treated at length elsewhere, probably referring to a previous work subsequently merged with the *Discorsi*. After discussing the hereditary principalities like the long-established rule of the Este family, whose preservation is guaranteed by the continuity of their ancient customs, Machiavelli focuses on the instance of a prince adding new territories to his dominion (mixed principality). The negative experience of King Louis XII serves as an admonition on how not to act: after occupying the Duchy of Milan twice, wrong political decisions made him lose it on both occasions

(in 1500 and 1512). With regard to the ecclesiastical principalities, Machiavelli cannot hide his bewilderment, as they appear to be governed by principles that surpass human comprehension: they have states that they do not defend, subjects whom they do not rule. But if investigating the spiritual power of the Church can be deemed presumptuous, an explanation for its temporal authority is to be found in the suppression of the aristocratic factions opposing the pope in Rome. The much-debated concept of “civil principality” is introduced by Machiavelli to define a monarchic type of government formally maintaining republican institutions (Bausi 2005). Such a political constitution seems to fit the peculiar case of Florence where the Medici, having ruled *de facto* from 1434 to 1494, came again to power in 1512 after a short republican parenthesis. If this is the case, there are crucial matters on which Machiavelli needs to advise the new Florentine prince with urgency. Where should he find support? How should he maintain power? What public image should he project? In order to be as persuasive as possible, he examines these questions in each and every aspect. Between the two different “humors,” populace and nobility, that are found in any body politic, it is easier for the prince to keep the former under control rather than the latter. Whereas commoners are governed by the sole need not to be oppressed, nobles are ultimately driven by the ambition to prevail. Thus, entrusting magistracies to them is particularly dangerous as the prince’s authority would entirely depend on their loyalty toward him.

By looking at the recent and exemplary rise of Cesare Borgia, it is possible to understand how newly acquired power can only be maintained by one’s own troops and skills. Machiavelli uses the word *virtù* in its original Latin meaning to encompass the qualities of military strength (unavoidably connected to the use of a homegrown militia), boldness, and shrewdness that a prince needs to possess. However, another decisive element is necessary for him to succeed: he must be given an opportunity (*occasione*) by fortune. “Opportunity” is understood by Machiavelli as a critical political situation that enables the prince to display his *virtù* and establish a new

state for the benefit of his people. A homegrown militia contributes remarkably to political cohesion since it encourages citizens’ attachment to institutions and strengthens the relationship between a prince and his subjects. On the other hand, the employment of mercenary and auxiliary troops is condemned as the principal reason why modern Italian states are unable to prevent the invasion of foreign armies. These ideas are conveyed in a much more passionate tone at the end of the treatise, where Machiavelli urges Lorenzo de’ Medici to provide evidence of his *virtù* by seizing the opportunity offered by the present circumstances and liberate Italy from the invaders.

Chapters xv–xix contain a shocking survey of the qualities that a prince should possess or pretend to possess, in contrast with the ideal of the good prince inherited from the medieval tradition of the *specula principis* (“mirrors for princes”) as well as from humanist treatises offering instructions about how to rule. Machiavelli here rejects the moralistic description of unreal republics and principalities, asserting what was to become the foundation of modern politics: the necessity to search after “the effectual truth of the matter.” A realistic analysis of current events shows that, by following behaviors that are commonly regarded as morally praiseworthy (loyalty, liberality, piety), a prince can lead his state into ruin rather than safety, whereas by adopting measures typically considered blameworthy (treachery, malice, cruelty), he can maintain and consolidate his power. It is better in fact for him to be feared rather than loved because men, who are believed to be inherently bad, will not disrespect him as long as the threat of being punished never deserts them. However, a prince must abstain from offensive behavior that may make him too intolerable and hated. At the same time, he need not keep his promises if these are detrimental to his achievements. Since politics requires the use of certain animal-like skills to repel and deceive one’s enemies, Machiavelli counsels the prince to act as both a strong lion and, above all, a cunning fox. For when circumstances require actions contrary to mercy as well as trust, humanity, and religion, a prince should nevertheless be shrewd enough to show himself merciful, trustworthy, humane, and

pious. This goal can be achieved effortlessly because people readily allow themselves to be deceived.

The role fortune plays in men's actions is analyzed in chapter xxv. Machiavelli's first considerations of fortune are found in the letter *Ghiribizzi al Soderino* (1506) where he manifests his astonishment about Julius II's victory over the lord of Perugia, Gian Paolo Baglioni. This episode makes him reflect on the impossibility of establishing fixed rules about political behavior since it appears that the same (military) ends may be achieved by using different means (by being cruel or kind, armed or unarmed, whether through the construction of fortresses or not). Machiavelli asserts that it was only by chance that the unprotected pope could enter the city successfully without finding any opposition. His reasoning is based on the assumption that men are shortsighted, unable to understand constantly mutable circumstances and to change their nature accordingly. In such pessimistic vision, it is not possible for anyone to control the fickleness of fortune. Thus a ruler's success is only fortuitous, as it depends on the perfect match between his character and the times in which he lives (Brown 2010). Similar considerations are contained in the (likely contemporary) poem *Di fortuna*, addressed to the same Giovan Battista Soderini (Machiavelli 2001–: III.2). According to a common image in Renaissance art and literature, fortune is personified as a two-faced, cruel, and violent goddess, who inflicts harsh blows upon men, unless an extraordinary *virtù* is able to vanquish her. In her palace, she holds as many turning wheels (symbolizing her constant state of change) as there are different ways by which men may attain their ends. The only possibility for men to control fortune and be successful would be to leap from wheel to wheel, if only they were able to adapt their nature to a way of conduct different from their own. Through an effective simile, fortune is figured as a rapid and swollen torrent that upsets human affairs in its course.

All these elements of both the letter and the poem are adjusted to the political purposes of *Il principe*, where contradictions are nonetheless far from being solved. At first, asserting that human

actions depend partly on fortune and partly on the *virtù*, Machiavelli again compares fortune to a flooding river that washes everything away. Unable to oppose its overcoming force, men can only build dikes and dams in advance to limit the damage. A different metaphor though is provided at the end of the chapter where Machiavelli depicts fortune as a fickle and whimsical woman whom only impetuous and bold young men are able to subjugate.

The opposition between *virtù* and fortune raises questions on the limits of human action in controlling the unpredictable course of events to such an extent that one may even consider the figure of the prince utopian. But in Machiavelli's eyes, the formation of an Italian state able to resist foreign invasions was still possible; unfortunately, there was no prince whose *virtù* matched the critical situation of those times.

Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio

In the case of the *Discorsi* too, the date of composition is a matter of scholarly debate. It is probable that Machiavelli used and revised material he had previously written on the same subject, including the work on the republics mentioned in the second chapter of *Il principe*. However, according to Vivanti the likelihood that the text of the *Discorsi*, as we know it, was drafted in the years 1517–1518 is very strong (Machiavelli 1997–2005: I). And in this form, it must also have been circulating among the friends of the Rucellai gardens before the posthumous publication by both Blado and Giunti in 1531. The different length of the three books into which it is divided (60, 33, and 49 chapters, respectively), the lack of a clear organization of subjects, and the presence of inaccuracies and mistakes suggest that Machiavelli did not revise the whole work with a view to publishing it. Roughly, the first book deals with Rome's internal politics that guaranteed its prosperity for so many centuries; in the second the city's expansionism is examined through the discussion of its military organization; the third book focuses on the glorious undertakings of Roman heroes but also includes other political issues such as the conspiracies that are treated at great length in the sixth chapter.

The *Discorsi* has long been considered Machiavelli's expression of republican ideals in contrast with the absolutist theories of *Il principe*, but such an interpretation would be limited and only partially true. The more relaxed style of the *Discorsi* enables him to address old and new issues extensively. Republics and principalities are only two of the forms of government subject to instability and mutability. From the classical tradition (Plato, Aristotle, and especially Polybius), Machiavelli draws the cyclical theory of political evolution (*anacyclosis*) according to which benign forms of government (monarchy, aristocracy, and popular government) easily degenerate into their corrupt counterparts (tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy) (*Discourses* I 2). In order to rule well, the imitation of excellent examples among the ancients, which pursued in different fields (sculpture, law, and medicine), needs to be adopted in politics too. By postulating the fixity of human nature, Machiavelli argues that it is easy for those who carefully compare the present to past events to predict the course of history and find political remedies. Despite the risk of idealizing ancient models without considering their negative aspects, a laudatory approach cannot, however, be blamed if one lives in times in which any *virtù* is extinguished. The Roman republic is regarded as a positive example in several respects: political, military, and religious. The internal conflicts between the senatorial nobility and the plebs were not detrimental to the state (as was the strife between the *ottimati* and the populace in Florence). Indeed, they introduced new orders like the institution of the tribunes of the people which, by protecting the poor from the abuses of the wealthy, regulated civil life and ensured a certain degree of liberty (Najemy 2010). In Machiavelli's view, commoners should be allowed to participate in government because they prove not to be wrong if they are asked to evaluate specific situations and make decisions. He praises the moderation and discernment shown by the Roman plebeians in appointing four tribunes among the nobles because of their competence rather than among themselves (*Discorsi*, I 47). In comparison to the military organization of the Romans, the weakness of modern states depending

on the lack of strong armies, employment of mercenary and auxiliary troops, erroneous tactics, and overestimation of cavalry, artillery, and fortresses is roundly condemned, not without irony, by Machiavelli. In particular, the scant consideration given to infantry units by the Italian princes is regarded as one of the chief causes for their surrendering to foreign domination. Moreover, Machiavelli blames the replacement of regular forces by captains of fortune who have turned to the less onerous cavalry service in the attempt to enhance their reputation as much as possible.

Religion is another fundamental element in any republic or principality because reverence for the gods strengthens the bond between people and state as the Roman example teaches: it was during the reign of Numa Pompilius that Rome consolidated its power. However, in the case of the Christian religion, the corruption of the Church represents a negative model for people and is responsible for their moral and political ruin. Christianity has introduced a way of living that, unlike the pagan religion of the ancient Romans, makes people effeminate and incapable of defending their freedom. Machiavelli criticizes the alleged benefit religion brings to humankind by banning any use of arms and attacks those who have developed such an interpretation of the Holy Scriptures according to Christian principles. In a passage of the *Discorsi*, he observes that even Moses was able to establish new laws and institutions only by resorting to force (III 30). As far as the political body of the Church is concerned, Machiavelli's judgment is also negative: it was not powerful enough to rule Italy on its own, but it supported foreign allies to prevent any of the rival Italian states from taking possession of the country.

***Mandragola* and Other Plays**

The political principles expressed in *Il principe* have always seemed to scholars to find application in the micro-context of the *Mandragola*. The play is traditionally dated to 1517–1518 as suggested by the reference in the third act to the fear of a Turkish invasion, which was particularly widespread in many Italian cities in 1518. Nonetheless, such fear could have been an occasion for laughter

even later. The only extant manuscript of the comedy (Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Redi, 129) is dated 1519; thus it could have been written within the period 25 March 1519–24 March 1520 according to the Florentine calendar (Inglese 2006b). It is likely that the first performance took place in Florence shortly thereafter, followed by a second one in Rome for Pope Leo X as we may infer from the reference in Giovanni Battista Della Palla's letter to Machiavelli of 26 April 1520. More recently the case has been made for an earlier date, however not prior to 1515 (Black 2013). The earliest editions (the first published in Florence, without indication of printer or date, the second in Venice, by Alessandro Bindoni in 1522) were titled *Comedia di Callimaco e Lucrezia*, whereas, in Machiavelli's correspondence, the comedy is referred to by the name of the cuckold *Nicia*. The title *Mandragola* only appeared in the third edition printed by Francesco Minizio Calvo in Rome in 1524. In this way, attention was shifted to the device used in the plot by the parasite Ligurio to help his young master Callimaco satisfy his desire for Lucrezia, the beautiful young wife of the foolish Messer Nicia (Aquilecchia 1971). Like other Renaissance playwrights, Machiavelli draws on Boccaccio's *Decameron* for the plot of the play: in particular, on two stories of adultery, one featuring Lodovico, Madonna Beatrice, and Egano de' Galli as its main characters (*Dec.*, VII 7) and the other Ricciardo Minutolo, Catella, and Filippello Sighinolfo (*Dec.*, III 6). Although the influence of Aristophanes on the play was maintained in the past (Raimondi 1972), there has recently been unanimous agreement on its derivation from the Terentian model (Stoppelli 2005). However, despite some divergences in the identification of the characters, a few scholars have defended an allegorical and political interpretation of the comedy (Sumberg 1961; Bausi 2005). According to the most prevalent view, the Duke of Urbino, Lorenzo de' Medici, is recognizable to a Florentine audience in the guise of Callimaco; Lucrezia would be an allegory of the Florentine Republic, while through the negative portrait of Nicia, unable to satisfy his young wife's needs, Machiavelli could be referring either

to Pier Soderini, who yielded up the city to the Medici, or to the old Florentine oligarchy hostile to the populace. Continuing the allegory, friar Timoteo might represent either Pope Leo X or the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who helped Lorenzo in his political career, and it would also be possible to identify Machiavelli himself as the cunning servant Ligurio. His help to Callimaco would mirror the assistance that the author of *Il principe* thought of offering to Lorenzo. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the grotesque world of the play in which all the characters are moved by deceit and are intent on obtaining their personal goals shows connections with the unscrupulous laws illustrated in the political treatise (Fleischer 1966).

There is some limited evidence that in addition to the *Mandragola* and the later *Clizia* (1525), in which the routine of an ordinary family is temporarily upset by the infatuation of the elderly Nicomaco (clearly a play on the author's full name) for a young girl, Machiavelli wrote two other plays. According to both his grandson Giuliano de' Ricci and the writer Anton Francesco Grazzini, one was an imitation of Plautus' *Aulularia*, entitled *La Sporta* and subsequently plagiarized by Giambattista Gelli, whereas the other play, the *Maschere*, was probably derived from Aristophanes' *Clouds*, although the content, date of composition, and form (whether a comedy or a satire) have not been established (Davico 2001). Machiavelli's interest in theater is also proved by his activity as a copyist and translator. Apart from the early transcription of Terence's *Eunuch*, he copied the *Commedia in versi* (perhaps written in 1516) of his friend Lorenzo Strozzi, which from its first edition in 1769 until 1892 (when its correct authorship was demonstrated) was published under Machiavelli's name. Nonetheless, the role Machiavelli played in this work is not completely clear, and the question regarding his influence remains unresolved (Cutinelli-Rèndina 2005). Two extant versions of Machiavelli's translation (in prose) of Terence's *Andria* have also reached us (Martelli 1968): the rough draft, whose traditional date of composition 1517–1518, has been recently questioned (Stoppelli 2005) and the final version (1520).

L'asino and Belfagor arcidiavolo

Scholars recognize political and satirical intents in the other two literary works by Machiavelli. In the autobiographical poem *L'asino*, inspired by Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* (c. 1517), which was left unfinished at the end of the eighth chapter, the author parodying Dante in hell imagines finding himself in a dreadful forest and luckily meeting a beautiful herdsman who takes him to the palace of her mistress, the sorceress Circe. There she tells him that he will have to turn into an ass and wander through the world in that guise before his misfortunes may come to an end. After a night of love with her, he is taken to see the beasts in her charge and exhorted to guess who they were in their previous human life. It is commonly believed that Machiavelli's intention was to offer a satirical portrait of his contemporaries. Several hypotheses have been advanced as far as the identity of the beasts is concerned: either men of letters, clergymen, or politicians. Likewise, there is no unanimous interpretation regarding the single animals of the poem (cat, fox, dog, etc.): it has been suggested that the ass and the deer could be identified, respectively, as Luigi Guicciardini and Piero Soderini, whereas the pig, who asserts the superiority of the animal condition, would be a mask for either Francesco Vettori or another friend of Machiavelli, Filippo Casavecchia (Bausi 2005). Because of such a comic dimension, *L'asino* has been regarded in the past as an expression of Bakhtin's grotesque realism (Anselmi and Fazio 1984). This particular approach emphasizes the connection between the poem and the political works on the basis of the animal instincts rooted in any human behavior (suffice it to think of the metaphors of the lion and the fox in *Il principe*). In the fifth chapter dedicated to the main character's reflections on the ruin of states, Machiavelli also hints at political matters that are more extensively developed in the *Discorsi* such as the negative role of people's ambition in the government and the necessity of good laws and orders.

The other literary work regarded by scholars to be relevant to Machiavelli's political discourse is the short story *Favola*, commonly known as *Belfagor arcidiavolo*. The traditional date of its composition (1519–1520) has been recently

postponed to the last years of the author's life (Stoppelli 2007). The devil Belfagor is sent to earth, where he gets married to prove whether women are as terrible as described by their partners arriving in hell, or not. However, after experiencing life among dishonest, greedy, and sly human beings, he prefers to return to the better-ruled kingdom of Pluto. Several topoi, which have their sources in the medieval tradition of *exempla* and oriental short stories, are present in this story: the anti-uxorial and misogyny theme, the character of the devil who gets married and makes an agreement with the peasant Gianmatteo, the anticlerical satire, and the representation of a topsy-turvy world. Echoes of Dante and Boccaccio are also found in the *Favola* belonging to the Florentine tradition of individual short stories (*spicciolate*) such as the anonymous *Grasso legnaiuolo* and *Bianco Alfani* (Chirumbolo 2003; Grazzini 1990). Machiavelli's assumption regarding the evil nature of people is paradoxically experienced by a devil; on the other hand, Gianmatteo's shrewdness emerges as a positive example of *virtù* since it enables him to adapt to unexpected circumstances and successfully escape from the dreadful situation in which he finds himself trapped.

Dell'arte della guerra

Military issues had been treated by Machiavelli in *Il principe* and the *Discorsi* but also in other minor writings. Between 1519 and 1520, he wrote a specific treatise on this subject, *Dell'arte della guerra*, which underwent a long revision before being published by Giunti in August 1521. Dedicated to Lorenzo Strozzi, one of the attendants at the meetings in the *Orti Oricellari* on close terms with the Medici, the treatise consisting of seven books has the form of a humanist dialogue, set in the pleasant frame of the gardens themselves in 1516. The main interlocutor, the condottiero Fabrizio Colonna, represented in his old age, discusses technical matters with the host Cosimo Rucellai and the other guests, Luigi Alamanni, Zanobi Buondelmonti, and Battista Della Palla. Ignoring the recent works on the art of war by Roberto Valturio (*De re militari* 1472 in Latin prose) and Antonio Cornazzano (*De re militari*

1494, reprinted in 1520, in Italian tercets), Machiavelli mainly drew on classical sources (Livy, Frontinus, and Vegetius) for the examination of different aspects of warfare: the recruitment and training of the soldiers as well as their equipment, the formation and disposition of the army, and the use of fortresses. The negative behavior of contemporary armies is strongly criticized through constant comparison with the proper way of fighting shown by the Romans. Only by imitating the ancient model would the Italian leaders be able to oppose the foreign invasions. Some key points of Machiavelli's thought are treated in more depth: the condemnation of mercenary troops, the preference accorded to infantry over cavalry, the obstinate distrust of modern artillery, and the leader's skills in encouraging his soldiers and instructing them through discipline and exemplary punishments. Apart from the analysis of technical aspects, the treatise confirms the bond between the art of war and politics as well as the subordination of military to civil power (Sasso 1993: i).

Istorie fiorentine

Like *Il principe* and the *Discorsi*, the *Istorie* too was published posthumously in 1532. Writing the official history of Florence was an arduous task for Machiavelli, since he had to deal with events occurring during the controversial rule of the Medici as a continuation of the humanist histories compiled by Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini. However, in the preface, Machiavelli criticizes the two historians for having disregarded the civil conflicts that afflicted Florence in the past. Whether those events were too insignificant or offensive toward certain families to be related, they should nonetheless have been included in the narration as they were fundamental to the historical analysis. Accordingly, half of the eight books comprising the *Istorie* were dedicated to filling that gap after an opening excursus on the Italian and European history following the fall of the Roman empire. The second part (books v-viii) contains a more detailed analysis of Florentine history in the years that intervened between Cosimo de' Medici's rise to power in 1434 and the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492. Focusing on specific sources (Biondo,

Villani, Capponi, Cavalcanti, Giovanni di Carlo) for the composition of the single books (Hatfield 1972; Cabrini 1985, 1990; Bausi 2005), Machiavelli was not much concerned with factual accuracy. He was rather interested in investigating the social and political factors that might be useful to provide an insightful interpretation of the historical events. His narration is conditioned by a negative approach to the recent history of Florence as well as of the other Italian powers concerning non-heroic characters and deeds, as a consequence of constant comparison with Rome's illustrious past (Matucci 1991; Cabrini 1998). Ironic effects derive from such a juxtaposition that emphasizes the shortcomings and failures of modern states (Di Maria 1992; Quint 2003).

Machiavelli's views are more openly expressed in the introductions prefixed to the books where he develops the political themes underlying the events subsequently reported. Other comments are spread across the narration, but these either consist of isolated sentences or are concealed under the direct or indirect speeches of the historical characters. In regard to foreign policy and military matters, Machiavelli observes that modern states are unable to preserve newly conquered territories and strengthen their power because they do not pursue the ancient practice of founding colonies (ii 1). Contemporary conflicts in which bloodshed and destruction are mostly avoided should be better described as skirmishes rather than wars (v 1). Whereas well-ordered republics of the past used to fill the treasury with war booty and granted awards to the populace by paying off their debts and organizing public entertainments, contemporary rulers empty the treasury either to equip the mercenary soldiers or to remunerate them for their service so that onerous military expenses are imposed on the people (vi 1).

Particular attention is paid to the comparison between the internal conflicts of Rome and Florence that resulted in completely different scenarios. In Rome, the disunity of nobility and plebs had positive consequences on political, military, and social life, whereas in Florence civil strife only caused the weakening of magistracies and martial virtues (iii 1). In opposition to ancient republics that made use of good laws and

institutions, the lack of upright governments makes modern states pass from a condition of servitude (when they are ruled by the rich) to one of license (when commoners are in power) and vice versa in a vicious circle. Indeed laws that might mitigate the social conflicts between the two groups are seldom established. Internal divisions can be advantageous for republics only if these are not at the mercy of factions that arise when individuals place their personal ambition over the public good (vii 1). By asserting that Florence's history has always been infected by such a plague, Machiavelli avoids directing specific criticisms against the Medici's rule, which can be regarded as the final part of a long-standing political degeneration.

Reception

There is little evidence about how Machiavelli's political and historical ideas were received initially. The above-mentioned *De regnandi peritia* (1523) by Agostino Nifo, far from the political realism of *Il principe*, obliterates any outrageous assertion and, according to tradition, offers an Aristotelian analysis of the forms of government extolling the figure of the good Christian prince. In his *Considerazioni intorno ai "Discorsi" del Machiavelli* (1529), Francesco Guicciardini disagrees with Machiavelli's principle of imitating the Roman model in modern times, his preference for a democratic government over an oligarchic one, and his peremptory way of arguing and drawing conclusions.

In the decades immediately following his death, his major works were translated (into Latin and various vernacular languages) and spread across Europe, attracting few supporters and many more detractors. It was in particular the reading of *Il principe* as a work instigating a prince to violence, deception, and disrespect of Christian values that contributed to Machiavelli's reputation as the devil. In his *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum* (1539), the English Cardinal Reginald Pole asserted that the political treatise was *Satanae digito scriptum* ("written by Satan's finger"). The Portuguese bishop Jeronimo Osorio (*De nobilitate christiana*, 1542) and the Dominican friar Ambrogio Catarino Politi (*De libris a*

christiano detestandis et a christianismo penitus eliminandis, 1552) condemned Machiavelli for his vilification of the church. Unsurprisingly, in 1559 Machiavelli's works were included in the papal *Index of Forbidden Books*. In the climate of repression fostered by the Counter-Reformation, new attacks were made not only by Jesuits (Antonio Possevino and Pedro de Ribadeneyra) but also by their opponents. In his *Discours contre Nicolas Machiavel* (1576), the Huguenot Innocent Gentillet argued that the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of French Protestants was caused by the diffusion of Machiavellian ideas at the court of Catherine de' Medici. Such hostility also affected thinkers like the French philosopher Jean Bodin, who in his *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1566) had shown appreciation for Machiavelli's new political ideas and in his subsequent *Livres de la République* (1576) rejected the impiety of his doctrine. By the end of the sixteenth century, Machiavelli had become a byword for the use of unscrupulous means in politics (Machiavellianism) regardless of whether his works were read or not. Thus, Possevino appears to condemn Machiavelli in his *Iudicium [...] de Nicolai Machiavelli quibusdam scriptis* (1592), borrowing his attack from Gentillet. At the same time, Machiavelli's ideas served as a stimulus to political thinking, and an effort was made to domesticate his thought and bring it in line with Aristotelian tenets, even while translating it, for instance, in France (Fournel 2019).

Despite this widespread anti-Machiavellianism, the new concept of politics as a science separated from morality, whose ultimate goal was the pursuit of the common good through a realistic analysis of the present circumstances, had penetrated the consciousness of sixteenth-century philosophers. However, they found ways to either disguise or conciliate this influence (not without contradictions) with their religious belief. In his *Politiorum libri sex* (1589), the Flemish scholar Justus Lipsius concealed his adherence to Machiavelli's ideas by drawing upon quotations and maxims from classical sources, in particular the Latin historian Tacitus (such a phenomenon, which in subsequent years was to become

common, is referred to as Tacitism). On the other hand, Giovanni Botero's *Della Ragion di stato* (1589) attempted to conciliate reason of state – understood as the knowledge of the means for the substantial preservation of the state – with Christian religion by making faith an inalienable virtue of the prince.

At the beginning of the following century, a new product of anti-Machiavellianism was the *Atheismus triumphatus* (written in 1605 but published later in 1631) by Tommaso Campanella, who defined Machiavelli as a “heretic” and “pseudo-politician” alongside Calvin. A different interpretation was advanced by the satirist Traiano Boccalini in his work *Ragguagli di Parnaso* (1612–13), according to which the covert purpose of *Il principe* was to unveil the evil side of tyranny.

In Elizabethan England, where the “Machiavel” had captured the popular imagination by entering the stage as the character of the utterly amoral and cunning villain through the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare, Machiavelli's original contribution to modern political thought was first acknowledged by Walter Raleigh and Francis Bacon. In the years of the English Revolution (1640–1660), the reading of the *Discorsi* instigated James Harrington's interpretation of Machiavelli as a defender of republicanism, which was very influential afterward and would also provide the cultural basis for American independence from Britain a century later. In his utopian work *Oceana* (1656), Harrington encouraged Oliver Cromwell to act as the Machiavellian legislator in using the prudence of the ancient Romans to provide the country with new political orders and laws. Such a republican dimension of Machiavelli's thought is also found in Dutch works, including Baruch Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) in which it is suggested that even *Il principe* can be read as “an implicit defense of republicanism”, given that it reveals the prince's wickedness for the benefit of the multitude's freedom (Kahn 2010). This interpretation, already advanced by Boccalini, prevailed in the age of the Enlightenment underpinning Diderot's entry *Machiavelisme* in the *Encyclopédie* as well as Rousseau's view of

Machiavelli that “under the pretence of instructing kings, he has taught important lessons to the people” (*Du contrat social*, 1765) and the preface to the Florentine edition of all his works by Gaetano Cambiagi (1782). It was nevertheless possible to read attacks against the evil doctrines exposed in *Il principe*, for instance, in the essay *Anti-Machiavel* (1740) written by Frederick II of Prussia with the collaboration of Voltaire.

Following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, a new historical perspective to the study of Machiavelli's works was attempted by the German philosophers during the rise of Romantic nationalism. In his essay on the German constitution (*Die Verfassung Deutschlands* written between 1798 and 1802 but published posthumously in 1893), Hegel compared the political fragmentation of Germany to that of Renaissance Italy, advocating Machiavelli's realism and sharing his yearning for national unification. Likewise, Fichte emphasized the unity of *Il principe* and the *Discorsi* and urged the need to both unify the country under a powerful ruler and organize a warlike state based on the law and participation of the people (*Über Machiavelli als Schriftsteller*, 1807).

In Italy, it was above all through the pages of Francesco De Sanctis' *Storia della letteratura italiana* (Napoli 1870–1871) that Machiavelli was established as the founder of modernity and the precursor of Italy's Risorgimento. At the beginning of the following century, apart from shallow interpretations aiming at defending particular ideologies (as in the case of Fascism), original contributions to the understanding of Machiavelli's thought were made by the Italian thinkers Benedetto Croce and Antonio Gramsci, as well as by the German historian Friedrich Meinecke. Within the framework of his philosophy of the Spirit, Croce regarded Machiavelli as a philosopher of politics who did not disparage ethics while asserting the autonomy of politics but acknowledged the independence of both fields without feeling the urge to make a connection between them. Gramsci's Marxist view, focusing on *Il principe*, transferred the abstraction of “new prince” to the modern historical context, identifying him with the revolutionary party whose mission was to implement a new intellectual and

moral reform within civil society. A new modern reconsideration of Machiavellianism and reason of state was advanced by Meinecke in his *Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (1924). In the aftermath of World War I, he questioned the pursuit of absolute power shorn of any ethical dimension, resorting to Machiavelli's pagan *virtù* as a solution to the long-standing philosophical conundrum. Influenced by both Croce's idealism and Meinecke's teaching, Federico Chabod offered a more complex profile of Machiavelli: he explained the contradictions of his works and the unsolved monarchy-republic question as a reflection of the political crisis raging in Italy between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

From the second half of the twentieth century, with the exception of isolated anachronistic anti-Machiavellian views such as Leo Strauss' *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (1953), a number of specific works (Baron 1961; Pocock 1975; Skinner 1978) have reinstated Machiavelli in the current political debate, often marginalizing those controversial elements in his thought that seem to invalidate the substantial republicanism (Barthas 2010). However, a more thorough understanding of Machiavelli's work has been made possible by the insights of Felix Gilbert, Nicolai Rubinstein, and Carlo Dionisotti into the historical and cultural context of Renaissance Florence. More recent contributions provide new readings that challenge such an entrenched approach. In her *Machiavelli's Ethics* (2009), Erica Benner aims at presenting Machiavelli as a moral philosopher in line with the interpretation offered by readers like Bacon and Rousseau. Emphasizing the influence of the ancient Greek authors on Machiavelli's thought, she argues that the ironic expression of his political ideas in *Il principe* inspired by the Socratic tradition testifies to the republicanism based on the principle of justice evident in his other works (Black 2012). John McCormick's *Machiavellian Democracy* (2011) points to the ways in which Machiavelli envisages popular participation in politics as a solution to flaws in contemporary democracies. The risk of a government entrusted to an elite group can be warded off only through suitable institutions conferring political power on the common people.

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Machine in Renaissance Sciences

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Abstract

This entry on Renaissance culture of the machine proposes a definition of the subject that accounts for both its continuity and

variability from the late sixteenth century onward. In philosophical, scientific, and literary texts we see the term *machine* employed in ways that stretch its frame of reference to extend from individual organisms to the entire universe. Machines occupy a space that falls between artisanal knowledge and the outer reaches of mathematical physics, a liminal position that merges practice with theory. Similarly, the mechanical arts become contiguous with principles of an emergent mechanist philosophy in a relationship of mutual sustenance. René Descartes exemplifies the logic of interaction among branches of knowledge when he equates the laws of mechanics with nature itself and suggests that we regard bodies as machines crafted by the hand of God. Engineering, art, and philosophy all underwrite the burgeoning success of a type of book known as the theater of machines, beginning with the publication of Jacques Besson's *Theatrum instrumentorum et machinarum* (1578) and Agostino Ramelli's *Le diverse et artificiose machine* (1588). Machines (especially fountains, clocks, and automatons) become integral to the culture of the Renaissance because they supplied a blank slate on which various theories, mythologies, and commitments get inscribed. They appear across different forms of seventeenth-century writing, including verse, because they encode meanings that operate on multiple levels. Changes in the material and intellectual life of Europe brought about a steady ascent of the machine to the apex of power and visibility.

Introduction

In modern European languages, the word *machine* carries a wide range of meanings and connotations. Among its synonyms in English are apparatus, appliance, artifice, contraption, contrivance, device, engine, gadget, instrument, invention, and tool. One could easily enlarge that list. In Shakespeare, Hamlet subscribes himself in a letter to Ophelia as “Thine evermore, most dear lady,

whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet" (2.2.123–24), using the term, presumably, to refer to his own mortal body. With this odd expression, Hamlet might intend to parody conventions of love letters, or might have a darker purpose, to invoke a demystifying materialism that advances a view of human beings as bundles of reflexes, embodied machines. Hamlet's closing, his valediction, offers a roundabout way of saying "As long as I may live." Yet it harbors other implications just below the surface. To define a *machine* as "a device engineered to perform some kind of work by applying force" delimits the word's meaning, but perhaps too rigorously. Viewed from the perspective of the history of early technology, machines look like systems for the conversion of input into output for the performance of specific tasks. One historian of technology in the Renaissance puts it succinctly: "In practice the word *machine* seems to have been applied to any instrument interposing a certain number of moving parts between driving-force and acting-part" (Gille 629). Viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, however, we could say that machines are structures, either simple or complex, that transfer or transform energy.

Four centuries after *Hamlet*, *machine* has enlarged to encompass information and computer technologies and now comprehends nanotechnology and systems assembled from biological components. Both brains and bodies in their constituent parts, such as living cells, seem to us machinelike in a way that early modern mechanical philosophy could only intuit. What Hamlet hints at, with his ironic phrase, reflects on a breakdown of boundaries between human and non-human realms that begins in the Renaissance and extends to the present. Descartes (1984–1985) offers a famous formulation of the idea in Part 5 of the *Discourse on the Method*, where he equates the laws of mechanics with the laws of nature and suggests that the body be regarded "comme une machine qui, ayant été faite des mains de Dieu, est incomparablement mieux ordonnée...qu'aucune de celles...inventées par les hommes" ("as a machine which, having been made by the hands of God, is incomparably better ordered than any machine that can be devised by

man") (Descartes 1:139). In other words, the body, subjected to dissection and other forms of analysis, shares much in common with automata, which Descartes treated as relatively simple specimens of the incomparably superior divine engineering we see in animal bodies.

If, in Hamlet's lexicon, the individual organism figures as an apparatus of sorts, at the opposite end of the spectrum the entire creation also would seem to exhibit mechanical properties. "La machine ronde" is a phrase used in the sonnets of Jean de La Ceppède (1550?–1622) to describe the Earth in relation to the rest of the universe (sonnet 29, "Jusqu'au Ciel voirement"). For the poet, the cross is an axle-tree that stretches to the heavens: "c'est dans le centre du monde/Que cet Arbre est planté, pour marque que son fruit/Est pour tous les bourgeois de la machine ronde" ("this Tree is planted clean/In the world's centre, showing that its fruit / Is for all commons of the round machine"). Read theologically, the tree/cross that sits at the world's center, offering up its fruit, represents an allegory of the crucifixion. We can also interpret the cross astronomically, as a spindle attached to a revolving globe on which "les bourgeois de la machine ronde" glimpse the cosmos and the mysteries of planetary motion. The unexpected appearance in this otherworldly setting of bourgeoisie, inhabitants of towns and cities, invokes conditions of manufacture that played a vital role in the development of technology. The mechanical arts form a bridge between mathematics and other branches of knowledge. To cite one famous example, improvements in ballistics associated with Niccolò Tartaglia (1506–57) and Galileo Galilei (1564–42) derive from a reappraisal of the Aristotelian theory of motion along with formulae used to calculate the paths of projectiles. Renaissance machines occupy a space that falls somewhere between two poles, with practical bodies of knowledge such as hydraulics and anatomy at one end and mathematical physics at the other. The term *machine* engrosses everything from Hamlet's body to the entire globe. As artisan-engineers acquire new social capital and associate their art with ancient mechanics and modern natural philosophy, machines cross a threshold between practice and theory. The *artes*

mechanicae, the mechanical crafts of design and production, henceforth will proceed under the tutelage of the *artes humanitatis* and vice versa.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The history of machines in the West begins, not surprisingly, with the Greeks and Romans. The philosopher Gerald Raunig, in a book that builds on Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze's view of the machine as a convergence of social, technical, and bodily components, reads the Latin term *machina* and Greek *machanê* philologically, underlining how in antiquity the words had applications both in the arts of peace and the science of war. Raunig, who hopes to undermine the binarism that makes the gap between human beings and machines unbridgeable, sees the word's dual meanings as mutually reinforcing: "On the one hand there was the military use as an apparatus for besieging, conquering or defending cities, in other words as a war machine, while on the other hand it was also used as a comprehensive term for the machinery of the ancient theater" – specifically, the *deus ex machina*, which lofted actors above the stage to create an illusion of airborne divine omnipotence. More generally, Raunig takes note of the distinctive logic behind the bundling together of technical innovation and warfare in the dual-purpose word (36–37). Gods suspended on ropes above a stage (and contrivances of plot in resolving dramatic tensions) fell out of favor, but they did not vanish altogether. Instead, they assumed new guises. Artifice now demanded the effort of cloaking theatrical illusion and deploying improved stage machinery to create realistic effects: "The cloud machines of the Italian baroque theater, for instance, had not only the function of transporting and illuminating deities, but also and especially of masking the technical apparatuses" (41). Machines, we could say, enter Western culture in the service of theatricality and illusion. "It seems," according to Bertrand Gille, "that machinery was first used in drama in 427 B.C., but it is impossible to decide whether the winch and pulley were employed first in the theater or in ships and ship-building" (Gille 630).

We cannot with any degree of certainty assign dates to the invention of many common machines, including water mills, treadmills, and presses, but we have ample evidence of their antiquity. Mills, for example, turn up in the ruins of Pompeii and ancient Ostia (Gille 639). The mechanical arts of the early modern period, despite the prestige and influence of classical precedents, set on a new course under the guidance of mathematics and philosophy.

Older historians of early modern science sometimes treated the mechanical philosophy as part of a revolution in thinking that broke with Aristotle and scholastic philosophy to point the way forward to the experimental science of the seventeenth century. In accounts adopting this narrative, the revival of Greek atomism in the late sixteenth century stays central to the history of science because those responsible for it "prepared the ground for the development of a true physical atomism, one that could and would explain the physical properties of bodies by means of the characteristics of the component particles... They served to create a climate of opinion in which the mechanical philosophy could develop along purely physical lines, relatively unhindered by the more metaphysical problems of atomism" (Boas 433). Mechanical philosophy, however, does not reduce to atomism nor does it necessarily repudiate Aristotelianism. It does invoke an explanatory principle that looks no further than motion, shape, and size to explain phenomena and takes machines as the soundest basis for modeling the material world. Daniel Garber prefers to make distinctions in sorting through the usual lists of "mechanists" and not lump together thinkers who have less in common than might appear at first blush. He distinguishes, for example, the mechanical philosophy from mechanics on the basis of their having different objects of study: "Natural philosophy, physics, treats *natural things*, things that have internal principles of motion and rest. Mechanics, on the other hand, treats *machines*, *artificial things*, things that *lack* nature, properly speaking" (Garber 21, 22). Garber offers a useful caveat in encouraging us to avoid applying "mechanist" indiscriminately, especially in the earlier part of

the seventeenth century. From the analyst's point of view, not every philosopher brought under the rubric of mechanist philosophy fits the bill when measured against a consistent standard. "Mechanical philosophers," with the exception of Descartes, Gassendi, and a few others, were no such thing. Despite Gerber's hesitation about *mechanical* as an actor's category (a term that sociologists of science use to describe historical viewpoints), we find it and related terms stamped all over the culture of the period. It continues to carry water in the history and philosophy of science because it suggests affinities, both inside and outside the discourse of natural philosophy, to which we have our attention called in writings by the actors themselves. Again, much depends on how we define key terms. Dennis Des Chene argues that "'machine,' like other concepts in its neighborhood – nature and art, the organic and the inert, animate and inanimate – is better thought of as a variable, or a zone of variations impinged on by others, than as an essence." Des Chene proposes that we distinguish among *mechanical philosophy*, "a more or less tight-knit bundle of methodological precepts, schemes of explanation, and ontological claims, associated with an ideology of knowledge and control through making," *machines*, and *mechanisms* (Des Chene 2005: 66, 68). All these terms, however, tend towards elasticity, with the last applying equally to living organisms. Brought into being by machines and encouraging their use in turn, we find a reductionism that transforms all matter and all life into a type of featureless substance. Mechanist philosophers regarded the nascent life sciences as an extension of physics and the body as a machine. The agenda they embraced held that living bodies have no properties to distinguish them from non-living bodies, apart from the consciousness Descartes considered the unique possession of human beings (Des Chene 2001: 2–3).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Renaissance machine operated not only in the thin atmosphere of mechanist theory but also in a down-to-earth dimension of pumps, camshafts,

levers, winches, rollers, and weights. Key areas of technological development include the crank and connecting rod, gear trains, hydraulic power, and wind power. Descartes took a keen interest in the details of mechanical systems. In 1631 he traveled in the company of his friend and correspondent Étienne de Villebressieu, a medical doctor involved in land reclamation and water management projects, to Denmark to observe the operation of hydraulic machinery. In books such as Vittorio Zonca's *Teatro Nuovo di Machine et Edificii* (Padua 1607), Heinrich Zeising's *Theatrum machinarum* (Leipzig 1629), and Georg Andreas Böckler's *Theatrum machinarum novum* (Nuremberg 1673), machines enter the orbit of a late Renaissance genre called the "theater of machines," in which lines between experiment and spectacle blur in a sequence of technological performances. To spend time in rare-book collections studying the original engraved plates in such volumes (for example, the Dibner Library of the Smithsonian, in Washington, D.C.) is to enter an arena of aesthetic experience. These volumes in their original states provide examples of objects at once beautiful and useful. Some of the devices depicted in the plates are mills or military engines; some assist in the lifting or pulling of burdens; some approach the perennial problem of moving water. More industrial installations than "machines" in a strict sense, many employ intricate Rube-Goldberg designs that certainly do not look as if they would work (but some, reportedly, do). A. G. Keller quotes Zonca on the ingenuity of a spinning mill (Keller 36–39) and applies Zonca's tone of transported admiration to a fanciful depiction of an elaborate and enormous pump with an endless chain operated by a single hard-pressed laborer: "Zonca says of the silk spinner: 'Here are so many movements of wheels, shafts, pulleys and other sorts of timbers, that the eye is dazzled at thinking how human wits have been able to understand such a variety of things, so many contrary motions, moved by a single wheel.'" One end of the pump resembles a traditional irrigation system, using buckets to raise water from a pool below. Above, however, we see a laborer operating a treadwheel, which "turns the pinion, which

engages the spur-gear, which turns the second pinion, which turns the crown-wheel, which turns the big pinion (immediately below the fly-wheel), which turns the fourth pinion. All this, of course, has little function except to dazzle the onlooker with the inventor's ingenuity, and to provide space for an extra flywheel" (Keller 105). Ostensibly designed for the express purpose of lifting water, the pump serves more as a study of motion and counter-motion, of the abstract possibilities of linking wheels and gears in complex ensembles. The "unfortunate labourer," as Keller describes the operator, seems more machine than machinist, literally a cog in the wheel of ceaseless and possibly pointless production. The plate sets forth a set of instructions but also revels in the beauty of technological possibility and machine-age aesthetics.

Two well-known books, familiar from facsimiles and frequent reproduction, are Jacques Besson's *Theatrum instrumentorum et machinarum* (1578) and Agostino Ramelli's *Le diverse et artificiose machine* (1588). Besson, the earlier of the two author-engineers, dedicated a 1569 manuscript that featured his inventions to Charles IX, in which he aligned his work with a program of social improvement intended for the benefit of "geometers, mariners, merchants, artisans, and gentlemen, in brief for rich and poor, who wish to understand all that for the conservation, utility and maintenance of the commonweal" (Heller 107). The first edition appeared in 1571/1572, and a posthumous second edition in 1578, prepared for the press by François Berauld, with the evocative word "theater" asserted in its title. Translated into several European languages, the book went into multiple editions by the end of the century. Henry Heller, whose commentary I follow here, points out that Besson knew his way around the literature on mechanics, marrying theory and practice in a mixture that reveals his grounding in physics. His utilitarian goals, however, in no way precluded "a sense of playfulness and imagination" (Heller 107). With the publication in the vernacular of his *Theatre des instrvments mathematiques & mechaniques*, he secured a place for a genre very much in vogue for two centuries after 1570. Theaters of

machines, as two French scholars summarize the form, are "books printed in folio that contain an engraved frontispiece, a dedication to some illustrious person, and a forward that states the author's intentions, as well a summary of ideas found in the text." Following the front matter, we find "a series of full-page engravings of various instruments or machines accompanied by a brief description of their functions" (Dolza and Vérin; my translation). These treatises appeared throughout Europe but had a special currency in Italy, France, and Germany. Besson's book covers a varied assortment of contrivances, not only the usual mills, pumps, and presses but also a perpetual motion clock and a fire engine (possibly the first). Some of his machines draw on ancient models while others have modern sources. As Heller comments, "Besson's machines are a mixture of serious technical inventions and fantastical contraptions" (109), a generalization that holds for most books of this type. Besson serves Heller to illustrate the dynamism of the French economy at a time when intellectual curiosity found outlets in the areas of technology, manufacture, and science. His success attests to the central role played by technical concerns in French culture at large, including the economy. Another commentator finds in illustrations of hydraulic works and other inventions the source of later developments in science and philosophy: the work of the engravers profoundly influenced the young Galileo, Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), Descartes, and others whose education coincided with the publication of illustrated technical books such as Besson's (Edgerton 185–192). Printed books on mechanical subjects loom large since drawings of machines in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – most famously those of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) – remained in manuscript and did not reach large audiences.

Remembered today for his fanciful revolving book-wheel (supposedly a precursor of information culture), Ramelli (1531–ca.1600) also designed military hardware, including lifting devices and weapons for hurling projectiles or breaking through defenses. Among his inventions for use by non-combatants were the usual mills and pumps, as well as excavators, fountains,

cofferdams, and so forth. The dual-language *Diverse et Artificiose Machine*, in Italian and French, seems geared to a broad and polite audience. Describing it as “a coffee-table book par excellence” (Edgerton 187) scarcely does justice to how the arts of illustration, papermaking, printing, and engraving combine in this work of art. The book’s almost 200 illustrations, which cast the facing commentary in the shade, make it an outstanding example of early modern book production, a technical triumph in its own right. A revolving bookcase seems only appropriate to the undertaking, given the bibliographic significance of the volume in which it appears. Ramelli presents his designs as more than just ingenious solutions to engineering problems but as objects of admiration, human inventions capable of initiating readers into the mysteries of the natural world. No contemporary, to the best of our knowledge, thought to build any of his projects. In his preface to the reader, he entreats “every noble mind to read and reread this work carefully, not stopping at the rough exterior of the writing but penetrating with subtle perception into the deepest and most hidden secrets which to his great astonishment will continually be set before him” (Gnudi translation, 55). What the book sets before our eyes, is the collaboration of nature, art, and technical ingenuity. Ramelli ushers us into a theater of wonders, and, unlike Zonca, who celebrates the state of the mechanical arts in his day, Ramelli prefers to speculate and predict. Pumps are of particular interest to him, and he improvises many variations on what might first appear as a conventional theme. His medium is more visual than verbal, but as Jonathan Sawday argues, the machines on display serve as readable texts as much as blueprints for production. Such books present riveting spectacles of the interaction of men and machines, displaying engineering as a theater of masterful and impressive effects (Sawday 108–109). Sawday’s primary interest in Renaissance machine books focuses on how mechanization transforms the logic of labor, how, for example, the printing press, the Renaissance machine par excellence, promotes a labor-saving method of intellectual endeavor, or how the *perpetuum mobile* might simulate God’s

creative work. Sawday quotes from a treatise on estate management, Cyprian Lucar’s *Lucarsole* (1590), which refers in one passage to the various machines it mentions as “strange engines and instruments, not only for private pleasure but also for sundrie purposes in the commonwealth,” suggesting that Renaissance technology aimed at goals beyond simple utility (Sawday 111). Behind the creation of these theaters, we find motives more often associated with art than technology: play, fantasy, and enjoyment. Viewers could expect to find beauty and pleasure in their experience of machines in spite of their daunting complexity. They appear on the page as “engines of the imagination,” in Sawday’s phrase, replete with symbolism and myth, designed to entertain as much as to save labor.

Sawday takes note of an issue discussed above, the maddening difficulty of working through a satisfactory definition of *machine*. To describe all machines as “force-transmitting devices”, as one historian of technology proposes, lands us squarely in a web of Newtonian physics (indeed, a newton is a unit that measures force). If the word *machine* resists simple explanation, *mechanics* underwent a parallel drift in meaning in the late Renaissance. “Traditionally, mechanics had dealt with the mathematical science of simple machines and the equilibrium of bodies. In the second half of the seventeenth century, however, mechanics became increasingly associated with the science of motion” (Meli 632). Once the province of early modern engineers, the field expanded to absorb portions of natural philosophy and attracted attention from a range of scholarly and scientific disciplines. Descartes’s philosophy, together with writings by Pierre Gassendi and Galileo, provides a tripodal stool on which mechanical philosophy rests. Philosophers sometimes equate the mechanical philosophy with atomism, but we cannot call every mechanist an atomist by strict definition. Descartes’s commitment to mechanism ran deep. His argument that particles of matter reduce to smaller particles of matter, however, seems rather weak tea in comparison with the bolder claims of atomic theory. Descartes “aimed at creating a new worldview where a mathematical description of nature, and especially motion, was joined to a

physical causal explanation. The key to this link was the microworld of corpuscles and subtle fluids responsible for physical phenomena” (Meli 654). Descartes explains various phenomena, from the motion of the blood to planetary motion, according to a mechanical model; physical nature, on his account, depends from top to bottom on the interaction of discrete particles in motion.

Dennis Des Chene proposes that we cleave the Cartesian mechanical philosophy in two, with one part committed to an ontology that reduces nature to various mechanical properties and the other that deploys mechanism as a mode of explanation. One can produce intelligible accounts of the natural world without assistance from a mechanistic ontology, and in the work of scientists such as Giovanni Alfonso Borelli and Charles Perrault we see the two roads diverging (Des Chene 2005). Descartes does not shy away from touting the power of his model across fields of inquiry, however, suggesting broad applicability. His techniques apply to “all the phenomena of nature,” and are “sufficient for application in ordinary life, since medicine and mechanics, and all the other arts which can be fully developed with the help of physics, are directed only towards items that can be perceived by the senses and are therefore to be counted among the phenomena of nature” (Descartes 1:289). In this passage, Descartes grapples with the problem of producing explanations of things not present to the senses, which would seem to entail putting all knowledge of the natural world within the domain of physics. Descartes and his contemporaries well understood that most physiological functions, including digestion and reproduction, depended very little or not at all on human will, and seem fascinated with autonomism, involuntary reactions where the body takes on a life of its own. The human body seemed to them a machine artfully contrived for the performance of complex functions, some of which operate independently of conscious control. Although no existing clock or automaton could compare to the wonderfully subtle operations of a limb, all bodies obeyed the same principles of figure, size, and motion. According to the Cartesian view,

living bodies have no properties and include no entity that would distinguish them from the non-living, apart from the consciousness uniquely enjoyed by human beings (Des Chene 2001). Recognizing the very real difficulty of reconciling the intangibility of thought and feeling with the hard materiality of everything else, they drove a wedge between the two.

Impact and Legacy

Machines (fountains, clocks, and automatons in particular) became integral to the culture of the Renaissance because they intermingled myth with science and technology. In 1577, the astronomer Tycho Brahe recruited the bronze founder Georg Labenwolf to construct a hydraulic system at his observatory, Uraniborg in Denmark. Incorporating various mythological and allegorical motifs, Labenwolf’s fountain of Hippocrene (the source of poetic inspiration) featured the figure of Aquarius (the water carrier), rotated and brought to life by jets of water (Christianson 308, 66–67). Astrological and mythological associations aside, the figure of a man pouring water from a jug helped direct visitors’ attention to the observatory’s sanitary facilities and the supply of running water piped throughout the building. It also linked the labor of the observatory – which deployed a large staff to operate a printing press and other machinery handy for the production and dissemination of astronomical data – to aesthetic and literary concerns. In Tycho’s centralized research facility, hygiene and managerial efficiency intersect with astronomical observation and plumbing with the hierarchies of knowledge production. Tycho’s commissioned fountain does double duty as an engine of industrial labor and as a work of art. Renaissance machines accommodate many meanings and provide a blank slate on which various theories, mythologies, and commitments get inscribed. Designing and fabricating machinery often meant producing complex hybrids of this type.

A late seventeenth-century book on clock-making includes a history, which covers hourglasses, sundials, and water watches, but finds

interest in “Horological Machines” at low ebb until “the last Age,” when “Clock-work was revived, or wholly invented anew in *Germany*, as is generally thought” (Derham 1696; 84, 91). Clocks had become fashionable in polite society no less than in artisanal and intellectual circles. These worlds interacted with each other with tangible results. The astronomer and mathematician Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695) constructed a pendulum clock in 1657, a device that exemplified mechanistic principles such as motion and acceleration and also achieved new levels of precision. (He also worked on fountains at Versailles.) To Galileo, horologists owe the discovery of isochronism in pendular oscillations, but in putting the theory to work for regulating clocks his successors discovered gaps that needed filling. Huygens’s construction of a watch operated by a balance spring contributed to chronometry by achieving the practical end of improving accuracy by a significant factor. It also represented a scientific coup, a prestigious prize for which he and other scientists vied for credit. The impurity of early modern scientific and literate culture, its hybridity, remains one of its notable features. Experts in the mechanical arts readily adopted the assumptions and procedures of mathematics, and mathematicians shored up their own discipline by utilizing various instruments, including “those adapted to astronomy, navigation, surveying, warfare, and other practical activities of this sort.” Jim Bennett follows up this observation by concluding that “rendering a new technique accessible through designing an instrument was part of what it meant to do mathematics in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century Europe” (Bennett 675). Machines presented practitioners of different arts and sciences both with cutting-edge tools and new means for demonstrating difficult theories.

Fountains and clocks appear across different forms of seventeenth-century writing, including religious verse, and articulate meanings that signify on multiple levels. “Will God pretend to make a watch, and leave out the spring?” the poet and preacher John Donne (1572–1631) asks in the *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (Donne 1959: 10). And in “A Funeral Elegy” he

likens the lifeless body of a young woman, before her resurrection, to “a sundered clock” (2010; lines 37–40). The editorial annotation of this last phrase notes that the use of clocks as poetic analogy had various precedents, and conjectures that Donne’s interest in clocks here and elsewhere could owe to his acquiring one. Readers could easily fall into the temptation of speculating on the design of the timepieces Donne had in mind. Is the spring-driven watch worn around the neck? Does it maintain isochronism (uniform intervals of time) by using a fusee (a conical pulley), invented in the sixteenth century, or some other kind of movement? Of the various types of escapement, which were available to a buyer in London? What parts got broken and how? Such unanswerable interrogations of a densely allusive text pull us outside the boundaries of the knowable and rather miss the point. Better to say that the appearance of clocks in Donne and his contemporaries supplies evidence that clock-making assumed an importance that went beyond their value as luxury items. Chronometers of different types played significant roles in the development of astronomy, navigation, measurement, and meteorology. Mechanical clocks, which had a history in western Europe dating from the late Middle Ages when they first appeared, exemplified technological success and experimentation across new fields of knowledge. As they became available to widening circles of people, they reached into their daily lives in ways nobody could anticipate. Donne gestures towards this in the two passages and shapes the meaning of machines for audiences well versed in theology and at least curious about natural philosophy. Above all, in their failing to function, as much as in their identification with human bodies, Donne’s timepieces invite us to consider the relation between machines and sentient life.

Jessica Riskin takes the title of her book *The Restless Clock* from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, to whom she attributes an “active-mechanist view of natural machinery, and even of artificial machinery such as clocks” against the passive-mechanist model of Descartes and others. Leibniz describes clocks and people as ill at ease and perpetually in

motion: “As Leibniz saw it, the balance of a clock was in a constant state of agitated motion, and so too were human bodies. To be clocklike, to Leibniz, was to be responsive, agitated, and restless. In Leibniz’s alternative notion of machinery and mechanist science, however, machinelike meant forceful, restless, purposeful, sentient, perceptive. Mechanical meant lifelike, and vice versa: living beings were the most mechanical things in the universe” (Riskin). Riskin tells the story of the banishment of agency from explanations of nature, particularly in the life sciences, and of the contrary, active view. She attempts to recover a scientific principle that went into eclipse, overwhelmed by a victorious competitor, with the goal of charting how agency theories also contributed to the growth of knowledge. Positing the presence of active and restless clockwork naturalized the creation and demanded a counter-tradition of mechanist thought that could account for living beings in all their restless, purposeful, mechanical glory.

A mechanistic reductionism helped spur reconsideration of physiology and anatomy and the traffic between the mechanical philosophy and medicine flowed in a bidirectional channel deep into the eighteenth century and beyond. Emphases begin to shift by the time Marcello Malpighi (1628–94) came on the stage. Malpighi, a microscopic anatomist, conceived of the animal body not as a single system but an assemblage of minute machines:

The machines of our body. . . form the basis of medicine: for these are composed of threads, of filaments, of joists, of levers, of webs, of stagnant fluids, of tanks, of canals, of filters, of sieves, and other like machines. In examining these parts with the help of anatomy, philosophy, and mechanics, man is made the possessor of their structure and their function. (quoted in Smith 98)

Justin E. H. Smith, who quotes this passage, identifies a tectonic shift after Malpighi in Leibniz’s conception of animal bodies, no longer regarded as an agglomeration of little machines but instead as an *infinitude* of little machines. Leibniz draws a bright line between natural and artificial bodies, according to Smith. He explains the numberless machines that constitute the bodies of animals not by analogy to levers,

sieves, tanks, and so forth, in the manner of iatromechanics, but as animals themselves. In other words, Leibniz “takes his model for the composition and structure of animal bodies not from clocks or water pumps, but from more basic animal bodies” (Smith 99). A mechanist with a difference, Leibniz puts a new spin on his account of living bodies, without resorting to the old hydraulic and pneumatic explanations of animal motion.

However, Leibniz and others adjust the theory, clock and water-pump metaphors, and the entire horological-hydraulic-hydrostatic complex of ideas that underpin them do not pass from existence after the seventeenth century. Rather we see mechanical discourses retooled and repurposed. The doctrine of the “world machine,” a theory meant to impart a sense of dignity to the human confrontation with a vast and seemingly indifferent universe, gathers speed in the eighteenth century. Flexible and endlessly adaptable to new needs, including theology and literature, machinery and mechanics reside close to the heart of humanist culture and help shape the concepts of artifice and invention, which artists held dear (Wolfe 2004). Far-reaching changes in the material life of Europe brought about the “rise of the machine” in the Renaissance (Sawday 2007), a development with world-historical consequences. To this day the pace of this mechanization of culture in Europe and the rest of the world shows little sign of deceleration.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Atomism](#)
- ▶ [Clocks, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Descartes, René](#)
- ▶ [Engineer](#)
- ▶ [Mechanics in Renaissance Science](#)

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Macrocosm in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

After their introduction in ancient philosophical doctrines, the concepts of macrocosm and microcosm obtained new life in the Latin West and in the Renaissance. Initially interpreted within the tradition of Christian theology, macrocosm then became an important element of magical and astrological teaching. Although several Renaissance and early modern scholars approached the macrocosm concept from a philosophical point of view, in that age it belonged basically to magic.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The concept of macrocosm and its relation to that of microcosm date back to antiquity, when two approaches to the problem were developed. The first argument, *ad* microcosm, states that every human being has nothing *in se* besides cosmological elements, and thus macrocosm descends and reflects itself in the image of microcosm. Another approach, *ad* macrocosm, insists on the existence of a cosmic soul, which has the immanent God as its prototype. This doctrine, widely presented in the writings of Plato, Plotinus, and other Neoplatonists, was later accepted by the Christian theological tradition. Commenting on a biblical passage on the creation of man in accordance with God's image and likeness, early Christian theologians used the philosophical argument in order to reveal a special position of man in the universe.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the macrocosm and microcosm concepts received their magical dimension. For medieval astrologers, different parts of the human body corresponded to zodiacal signs, thus making the former subordinate to the latter. This idea reveals itself in one famous illumination from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* manuscript. It represents a woman with 12 zodiacal signs placed on her body, depending on the parts of the body they govern upon. This approach was also largely accepted within medieval and Renaissance astro-medical practice.

In the Renaissance, the trends were similar. Being still loyal to religious interpretations of macrocosm-microcosm, Renaissance scholars extensively adapted a magical reading of the concepts in question. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola is a good example. In his *Oratio* (later supplemented with the *De hominis dignitate*), Pico combined both approaches creating a legendary dialogue between Adam and God on the position of man in the universe (Pico della Mirandola, 2003: 8–10, 12). Pico's interpretation of the relation between macrocosm and microcosm deeply influenced the

subsequent tradition marking a turn to a more magically orientated view. For the sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century scholars, such as Robert Fludd, macrocosm became an important part of their magical theories and was often associated with the source from which positive astrological or other occult impulses should be acquired in order to either cure the soul or the body or cognize the essence of the world structures. The Renaissance and early modern intellectual culture have a number of significant examples of using the macrocosm-microcosm doctrine in philosophy. It includes Leibniz whose monads refer to the first being or the One and have its attributes *in se*. Luca Pacioli in his *De divina proportionem* and Leonardo da Vinci with his *Vitruvian Man* reproduced the same idea with the use of mathematical arguments and without referring to magic. However, from the sixteenth century onward, macrocosm belonged to magic, with the Rosicrucian Enlightenment as the peak of its magical interpretation.

M

Cross-References

- [Microcosm and Macrocosm in the Renaissance](#)

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Maestro Leone

► [Abravanel, Leon](#)

Maestro Vidal Blasom

► [Moses of Narbonne](#)

Maggi, Vincenzo

Born: 1498, Brescia

Died: 1564, Ferrara

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Abstract

In an intellectual climate, in which natural philosophy was to operate as a separate discipline and its assumptions only on rational criteria, Maggi built his original writings. He is the son of a time in which Aristotle had to defend his right to coherently explain the empirical phenomena only on the basis on rational and philosophical principles, without using theological arguments. Following this specific teaching, Vincenzo Maggi is famous for his Latin Commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, published in 1550 in Venice. The exegesis of the Greek text can clearly be integrated with a broader context of the first attempts of translation and analysis of Aristotle's thought, up to the production of Paolo Beni in 1613. Specific criteria adopted by the Brescian philosopher are at the origins of modern hermeneutics centered on the analysis of the subject of imitation, essential in the poetic theory of Aristotle, and the purpose and moral function of poetry.

Biography

Vincenzo Maggi, philosopher and humanist, was born into an aristocratic family in Brescia, where his parents were landowners and ran a pharmaceutical store. Thanks to the information that Maggi himself provides in *Praefatio* to Aristotle's *Poetics*, we know that his first teacher was his father Francesco, who taught him the cultural legacy of the brilliant philologist and lexicographer Gasparino Barzizza. In particular, Barzizza was the promoter of the general spirit of renewal that animated Italian humanism. The literary works of the ancient express the desire to assimilate the spirit, in order to create a new ethical way of life which is *humanitas*. Maggi's formation is completed with university courses promoted by the University of Padua when, in 1528, he was nominated *doctor artium et medicinae*. In the same period, Bernardino Telesio was in Padua, and probably, in 1528–1529 there was their first encounter. Telesio, at that time, was a young philosopher who attended the *Studium*'s environment of Padua until 1529, when his uncle Antonio Telesio decided to return to Calabria. The University of Padua, as well as Bologna and Pavia, was the driving force behind Aristotelian studies. Since the end of the thirteenth century and through the Renaissance up to the sixteenth century, the *Studium* is dominated by a specific Aristotelian approach, which will prevail the Alexander of Aphrodisias's line. Maggi taught in Padua from 1528 to 1543, and then in Ferrara from 1543 to 1557, he had an Alessandrian orientation embodied, which pushed Bernardino Telesio to submit in 1563 the *De natura iuxta propria principia, liber primus et secundus*, for getting advice and comfort. This illuminating encounter will be remembered by Telesio in the preface of the first edition in 1565. In 1540, Maggi becomes a member of the Academy of Inflammati in the most intense years of the debate about the classification of knowledge, logic and rhetoric, and the language issue. We must not forget those who animated the scientific debate: illustrious generations of writers such as Alessandro Piccolomini, Sperone Speroni, Daniele Barbato, Leone Orsini, and Pietro Aretino. In Padua, philosophy was

gradually considered a discipline linked to the faculty of medicine and not as a higher preparatory faculty of theology. Following these specific aspects, Maggi's commentary shows that the ethics of poetic construct was built on the relationship with the *Ars poetica* by Horace, which highlights the social utility of poetry and Aristotle's *Poetics*, in which he devotes considerable space to human passions. Where Aristotle locates in pity and terror the passions that the tragic exercise should purge; Maggi notes that the tragedy will not purge the soul with pity and terror, but with the feelings that are caused to each other, like anger and lust. The work conducted by Vincenzo Maggi will not be a mere translation of Aristotle's text, but an interpretation and analysis, in other words, a piece of work that was at the same time philosophical and philological. He held the post of *magister* up to 1543 as an excellent commentator of Aristotelian texts, which sought clarification on the latest debate of logical-physical speculation and rhetoric. In the same year, following the post of tutor to Prince Alfonso d'Este, Vincenzo Maggi moved to Ferrara. This period marked a turning point in his intellectual and personal life. In fact, this change is reflected in the notes of his lessons on *Poetics* held from 1546 to 1547, written by his disciple Alessandro Sardi. We can understand the decision to publish in 1550 in Venice, along with the comments of Aristotle's *Poetics*, a work dedicated to Horace, *De ridiculis*. It shows the ratio of hermeneutics and the method as a desire to integrate *Aristotelis cum Horatio*. The *Brieve Trattato* presents a rigorous clarity of form, and the arguments are conducted with scientific rigor, offering right from the start three groups of tests that would be able to demonstrate not only the excellence of women but also their superiority.

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Magistros, Thomas

Born: c. Thessaloniki 1275

Died: c. Thessaloniki 1350/51

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Abstract

Thomas Magistros was a Byzantine scholar of the fourteenth century. He was one of the most ardent and perhaps the most significant classicist of his era. Due to his natural love for knowledge, he was bestowed with great success as an orator and a scholar.

Biography

Thomas Magistros was born in Thessaloniki, around 1275 (Skalistis 1984, p. 27), but the exact year of his birth remains unknown. He came from a wealthy family and obtained high education. At that time Thessaloniki, following Constantinople, was the largest center in trade, arts, and literature, and such conditions formed an ideal atmosphere that contributed to the appearance of a strong

spiritual movement with many well-known representatives such as Thomas Magistros. He was commissioned as Grandmaster of the Court before becoming a monk. Although it is not known to which monastery Magistros retreated as a monk, it is highly probable that it was in the area of Thessaloniki. While a monk, he adopted the name “Theodoulos.” He established (Skalistis 1984, p. 217) his own school with students who were later supposed to play a significant role in the Byzantine Empire’s life: Grigorios Akindynos, Philotheos Kokkinos, and Demetrios Triklinios to name a few. He also held contact with well-known figures of that period such as Theodoros Metochitis, Nikiforos Grigoras, Aggelos Palaiologos, Ioannis Katakouzinos, and many others (Laourdas 1960) that became actively involved in numerous crucial events (Τριαντάρη-Μαρά Σωτηρία, *Η πολιτική σκέψη στη Θεσσαλονίκη του 14^{ου} αιώνα – Θωμά Μαγίστρου τοις Θεσσαλονικέσι περί Ομολοίας, Βυζαντινά κείμενα, Ηρόδοτος σελ. 28–37.*). He died in Thessaloniki around 1350/1351.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Thomas Magistros embraced quietism, and his quietistic inclination is shown in his whole work, in which an erotic approach toward knowledge is prominent. At the same time, he condemned political instability, violence, and opposition toward legitimacy however defined. Furthermore, he praised the benefits of concord, an important democratic element the states should have. His work consists of various speeches (epideictic rhetorical speeches), letters to influential people of his era, rhetorical practices, and treatises.

Impact and Legacy

Thomas Magistros gained great acknowledgment in and out of Thessaloniki, and his work had a huge impact on Byzantine society before and after his death. His most important treatises on *the Kingship* and the *State* highlighted the relations (Lenz 1963) between authorities and people, or even among themselves, along with the effects of

power in common life. Furthermore, he introduced the concept of concord as a prerequisite for a prosperous and democratic state. His dictionary “*Selection of Attic names*” offered a useful tool to the students of the Attic language for a better understanding and learning acquisition. On top of this, his speeches contributed to fourteenth-century rhetoric.

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Magnanimity

- [Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Magnet

- [Magnetism in Renaissance Science](#)

Magnetic Attraction

- [Magnetism in Renaissance Science](#)

Magnetic Cure

- [Weapon Salve in the Renaissance](#)

Magnetic Unguent

- [Weapon Salve in the Renaissance](#)

Magnetism in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

The study of magnetism was an important field of Renaissance natural philosophy and the practical sciences. Scholars examined the powers of the magnet (i.e., the lodestone or loadstone) by experiments and observed the magnetic properties of the Earth, for example, the direction and declination of the compass needle, by means of instruments and long-term observations. In 1600, William Gilbert published the first extensive study on magnetism (*De magnete*) and claimed the Earth was

a giant magnet. While most philosophers rooted in medieval Scholasticism and Galenism deemed it impossible to analyze the physical causes of magnetic phenomena, several Renaissance philosophers attempted to explain the powers of the magnet within a range of different philosophical frameworks. Philosophers such as Pierre Gassendi and René Descartes imagined particles being emitted by a magnet, while others attributed animal-like behavior to it. Aside from this type of investigation, magnetism also figured as an explanatory principle or as an analogy in various contexts. The very term *magnetismus*, for example, was coined by Andreas Libavius in a 1597 work on alchemy. During the seventeenth century, a controversy emerged around Gilbert's "magnetic philosophy," which accounted for the diurnal rotation of the Earth by its magnetic power. Johannes Kepler even considered certain planetary movements as caused by the magnetism of the sun.

Synonyms

Loadstone; Lodestone; Magnet; Magnetic attraction; Magnetite

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The majority of Latin sources from Antiquity up to the Renaissance refer to the magnet or lodestone (which is a naturally magnetized piece of the mineral magnetite) by the Latin word "lapis magnes" (from the Greek word "λίθος μάγνης"). The Latin expression *magnetismus* however was coined only in the late sixteenth century and did at first not refer specifically to the magnet or to its power of attracting iron, but to attractive forces in general. The word "magnes" was also occasionally used to refer to particular minerals which were not magnetic in the modern sense, such as manganese. Moreover, scholars spoke of minerals such as the "theamedes" which they described as having the magnetic power of repulsion

(in the modern sense) (Sander 2017). Despite this complicated terminological situation, for the sake of simplicity, the words "magnet" and "magnetism" will throughout this article denote the mineral magnetite and its physical powers.

Sixteenth-century scholarship inherited much of its knowledge about magnetism from earlier periods. While Aristotle hardly mentioned the magnet, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* provided a brief account of ancient mineralogical knowledge about the magnet (Radl 1988). Philosophers such as Alexander of Aphrodisias, Lucretius, Galen, and many others discussed the question of how magnetic powers are to be explained. The thirteenth-century scholar Petrus Peregrinus wrote the first surviving study in Western science (*Epistola de magnete*) describing magnetic powers systematically and on the basis of experiments. It included the first detailed account of a magnetic compass (Smith 1992; Petrus Peregrinus 1995).

Renaissance authors showed increasing interest in the study of magnetism. In particular, the English physician William Gilbert claimed in *De magnete* (1600) to have established a novel "magnetic science" (*magnetica disciplina*) that was purely based on experiments and solid reasons. This claim was explicitly directed against traditional Aristotelian natural philosophy, matter theory, and cosmology, and their supposedly "bookish" approach.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Overall, the original aspects of the Renaissance study of magnetism can be divided into three, partly interconnected research programs: (1) the observation of magnetism: What are the magnet's powers and properties and how can they be discovered? (2) the explanation of magnetism: How can we account for magnetic phenomena (e.g., attracting iron) in terms of natural philosophy? and (3) the comparison with other phenomena: What other (e.g., medical or astronomical) phenomena can be compared to, or even be explained by, magnetism? Of course, several authors contributed to more than one of these research

programs, for example, by using experiments to arrive at conclusions about the causes of magnetic phenomena. Gilbert intertwined all three programs to build his “magnetic philosophy.” However, the majority of sources focused on one of these three programs.

Observing Magnetism: Experiments, Discoveries, and Research

The historical knowledge of magnetic phenomena can be inferred from four types of sources: (1) Important sixteenth-century publications on the magnet (monographic studies or book chapters) include Peregrinus’s *Epistola* (Lullus 1520; Petrus Peregrinus 1558; Taisnier 1562), Gerolamo Cardano’s *De subtilitate* (Cardano 2004 [1550]), Robert Norman’s *The new attractive* (Norman 1581), and Giambattista Della Porta’s *Magia naturalis* (Porta 1589). The most important extensive (printed) study on the magnet is William Gilbert’s *De magnete* (Gilbert 1600), which was in due time followed by two monographs by Jesuit authors, Niccolò Cabeo’s *Philosophia magnetica* and Athanasius Kircher’s *Magnes* (Cabeo 1629; Kircher 1641). (2) A particularly important manuscript on magnetism (*Tratatti della calamita*) was written by the Jesuit Leonardo Garzoni around 1580 (Garzoni 2005; Sander 2016). His work was partly incorporated into Della Porta’s *Magia*, was known to Fra Paolo Sarpi, and was reworked by Cabeo. (3) Several authors, including Johannes Kepler, Marin Mersenne, and Galileo Galilei, discussed the topic of magnetism frequently in their respective correspondence with often less known contemporary scholars. These sources often report recent discoveries but remained mostly unpublished. (4) Few surviving scientific objects, such as the so-called armed magnets (see below) and magnetic instruments (like nautical compasses or sundials with magnetic needles), also bear witness to their makers’ knowledge of magnetic phenomena. Maps or globes furthermore bear witness to the acquaintance with geomagnetic phenomena, for example, by locating magnetic poles on the earth.

It can be inferred from these sources that sixteenth-century authors discovered many magnetic phenomena that had been unknown before. This increase in knowledge partly derived from the fact that the use of the magnetic compass became much more important, especially for intercontinental voyages of discovery. Moreover, it can be observed that the experimental approach to magnetism, which is already found in some medieval works on the topic, gained momentum in the Renaissance, mirroring a novel understanding of nature and a new methodological approach to natural philosophy.

Peregrinus and his late-medieval contemporaries had already known that a magnetic iron needle pivoted in a compass points north. Sundials with magnetic needles fabricated around 1450 testify to their makers’ knowledge that the needle’s southward direction deviated from the true astronomical south (which was called “magnetic declination” or “variation”) (Hellmann 1897; Balmer 1956; Jonkers 2003). Navigators of the late fifteenth century were moreover aware of the fact that this declination changed with geographical longitude, giving rise to the hope of finding longitude positions by means of specific patterns of magnetic declination. In 1544, Georg Hartmann first described how a magnetic needle aligns itself vertically (“magnetic inclination” or “magnetic dip”) (Hellmann 1898, 65–66). Robert Norman assumed that the angle of inclination varied according to geographical position. In 1634, the Englishman Henry Gellibrand pointed out that local variation also changed at a given place over time (“secular variation”) (Pumfrey 1989). Most of these geomagnetic discoveries and research studies were conducted by instrument makers or scholars from the nautical or geographical sciences.

Scholars also examined the properties and powers of the magnet itself, for example, its two poles, the ways these poles can be found, and how a magnet is able to communicate its powers to a piece of iron. Peregrinus and Gilbert experimented with spherical magnets or magnets floating on wooden vessels on water. Other scholars attempted to measure the strength of the magnetic attractive power and tried to find out how this power could be increased or decreased

by means of chemical experiments, for example, by putting a magnet in garlic juice, quicksilver, iron fillings, or fire. Gilbert invented the so-called “armed magnet,” a magnet capped with iron plates to enlarge its power to lift a piece of iron.

Explaining Magnetism: Causal Theories in Natural Philosophy

The magnet’s power of attracting and repelling iron and its power of aligning along a north-south axis posed serious explanatory difficulties to theories seeking a causal explanation of these phenomena. While ancient natural philosophers only dealt with explanations of magnetic attraction, medieval authors were aware of the directive force of a compass needle and reasoned about the celestial cause of this alignment to the north (Weill-Parot 2013). Renaissance authors developed a variety of causal theories for both phenomena – attraction/repulsion and north-pointing – which often followed ancient or medieval ideas but were elaborated in much greater detail (Daujat 1945).

Natural philosophers influenced by Galenic medicine and Aristotelian medieval scholasticism considered it impossible to explain the magnet’s powers by its elementary qualities, such as “heat” or “dryness.” They, therefore, assumed an unperceivable “occult power” that causes the magnet to attract iron or point north (Weill-Parot 2013, 27–136). Many Renaissance philosophers were unsatisfied with this assumption, feeling that “occult qualities” or “powers” provided no satisfying explanation at all. Instead, they proposed various alternative accounts, such as the following:

(1) Gerolamo Fracastoro and others assumed the emission of immaterial yet substantial “species” to account for magnetic phenomena, which they took to be an instance of natural “sympathy” (Fracastoro 2008, 29–39). (2) Cardano and others held that a magnet sought iron as an animal seeks food (Cardano 2004, 664–77). Thereby, magnets were considered to be endowed with basic animal faculties and even a soul. (3) Aristotelian philosophers such as Garzoni and Cabeo used and

modified Aristotelian principles (hylemorphism) to account for magnetic phenomena by assuming a particular “magnetic quality.” (4) Corpuscularian philosophers such as Isaac Beeckman or Pierre Gassendi imagined that tiny particles were emitted from a magnet, travelled through the air, and entered the iron. René Descartes even hypothesized in his *Principia philosophiae* (1644) that magnetic particles possessed a screw shape and that all magnetic bodies had fitting threads that allowed these specific particles to enter them (Descartes 1964, VIII: 275–311).

Different hypotheses were also formulated to explain the north-pointing of the magnetic needle. Most medieval authors assumed a celestial cause, for example, the astral influence of the pole star. In the sixteenth century, Fracastoro and Gerhard Mercator thought that a magnetic needle pointed to magnetic mountains located on the Earth. The foundation of a geomagnetic theory was laid by Gilbert who argued that the Earth itself was a giant magnet (Roller 1959; Pumfrey 1987). Gilbert tried to demonstrate this theory by experiments with spherical magnets he called “little earth” (*terrella*) which he presumed to possess the same magnetic properties and powers as the Earth itself. In Gilbert’s view, the irregularities of the Earth’s crust are the cause of the local magnetic variation (see section “[Observing Magnetism: Experiments, Discoveries and Research](#)”). As for the cause of this earthly magnetic power, Gilbert thought that the Earth was endowed with a soul (Henry 2001).

These debates on the causes of magnetic phenomena reflect the broader development of natural philosophy in the early-modern period, particularly the polemics against Aristotelian natural philosophy and the emergence of a mechanical, corpuscularian philosophy.

Comparisons: Magnetic Power as Analogy or Explanatory Principle

In Renaissance philosophy and science, magnetism was also used as an analogue or explanatory principle in order to account for a range of natural

phenomena. The most important disciplines, topics, or research contexts in which magnetism played a pivotal role include (1) cosmology, (2) medicine, and (3) alchemy – leaving aside its frequent use in theology, astrology, and natural magic.

1. Because of the supposed similarity between a spherical magnet and the celestial sphere, already Peregrinus had claimed that a spherical magnet would rotate around its own axis in keeping with the movement of the heavens. Gilbert, whose starting point was his geomagnetic hypothesis combined with an idiosyncratic theory of matter (Freudenthal 1983), argued that the rotation of a spherical magnet, when it aligns itself with the poles of the Earth, resembles the latter's diurnal rotation. He thereby tried to account for the geodynamic hypothesis proposed by Nicolaus Copernicus in 1543. Johannes Kepler adopted Gilbert's idea of magnetic powers of the Earth and developed a full-fledged magnetic cosmology, with the sun being a giant magnet that caused and directed the movements of the planets (Krafft 2010). Both Gilbert's and Kepler's magnetic cosmologies were harshly criticized, especially by Catholic authors who were fighting against physical Copernicanism (Baldwin 1985) and proposed their own geostatic magnetic cosmology (Grandami 1645).
2. Magnetic attraction was already used as an analogue in ancient and medieval medicine. The attractive power of some organs (e.g., the liver), faculties (e.g., nutrition), or purgative drugs (e.g., rhubarb) seemed to resemble the magnet's attraction of iron. In the early-modern period, this kind of analogy was further fleshed out. The philosopher and physician Paracelsus described the curative power of some drugs as magnetic (Rutschow 1965). He also believed that man himself was a magnet attracting healthful or harmful influences from his environment. This idea led to the invention of an obscure cadaveric substance called "mumia" that was considered to

magnetically retrieve harmful substances or "influences" of a sick person. In the early seventeenth century, these ideas merged with the so-called "weapon salve," an unguent that was to be applied to the weapon instead of the wound which it had inflicted (Poma 2009). Rudolph Goclenius (jr.), Jan Baptist van Helmont, and Robert Fludd argued that this healing process worked at a distance by magnetism.

3. In 1597, Andreas Libavius coined the Latin expression *magnetismus* in his handbook of alchemy (Libavius 1597, 86). He did not apply this expression to the powers of the magnet in particular but more generally to the attractive powers of specific minerals or chemical substances. This generalizing notion led to the idea that attractive powers could also be transferred (from one body to another, such as when iron was magnetized). In the alchemical works ascribed to Basilus Valentinus or those by Michael Sendivogius, the expression "magnet" denotes various substances that show a particular chemical affinity to other substances or are attractive in one way or another (e.g., Basilus Valentinus 1603, 85–86; Sędziwój 1604, 64).

The most comprehensive account of the various "magnetisms" of nature can be found in Athanasius Kircher's *Magnes* (Kircher 1641; Baldwin 1987). Kircher discusses the magnetic faculties of plants, elements, animals, the Earth, and many other things. He also synthesized and extended the use of the magnet in tricks and gadgets of natural magic such as a magnet-driven sunflower clock. He inclined to the view that magnetism is a principal and irreducible power governing various aspects of nature.

Cross-References

- Copernicanism
- Della Porta, Giambattista
- Gilbert, William
- Occult Properties in the Renaissance
- Weapon Salve in the Renaissance

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Magnetite

► Magnetism in Renaissance Science

Magni, Valerian

Born: 1586, Milan

Died: 29 July 1661, Salzburg

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Abstract

Valerian Magni was a member of the Capuchin Order, a diplomat, and an ecclesiastical politician. He was a keen opponent of Aristotelianism, Jesuit Scholasticism, and the Jesuits. In his philosophical writings, he followed the tradition of Augustinianism and the philosophy of St. Bonaventure, which he attempted to elaborate into a system with certain aspects of modern subjectivist philosophy. He also advocated certain elements of new Galilean science, first and foremost the existence of the void, which he demonstrated experimentally.

Orthodox Church. His irenic efforts culminated with the preparation of the so-called Colloquium Charitativum which took place in Thorn in 1645 but at which Magni was eventually not present (Louthan 2004). After the condemnation of Galileo Galilei, Magni unsuccessfully attempted to publish his *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze*. He conducted an experiment proving the existence of vacuum, in all probability independently of Torricelli and Pascal, in 1647 in Warsaw. The publication of the description of the experiment (Magni 1647), which was the first printed text describing an experiment with a vacuum, aroused a polemic not only with the Aristotelians but also with scholars who admitted to the existence of the void but were concerned with the authorship of the experiment, such as Gilles de Roberval and Blaise Pascal. At the end of his life, Valerian continued with his polemics and confessional disputations. He intensified his attacks on Aristotelian scholasticism and on the Jesuits (Magni 1660), whom he considered the root of every falseness in the Catholic Church. He was arrested in Vienna and sent to see the Pope in 1661. He died in Salzburg on the way to Rome.

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Biography

As a young man, Magni entered the Capuchin order in Prague where he received the order name Valerian. After his studies at the Capuchin monasteries in Vienna and Prague, he worked as a diplomat, superior, and professor of philosophy at the monasteries in Linz, Vienna, and Prague. He later (from 1624) served as an advisor to the Prague Archbishop Cardinal Harrach and as a legate of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (from 1629). He was involved in contemporary polemics concerning the re-catholization of the Czech Lands, where he advocated nonviolent methods and controversies concerning the organization of Prague University. He was a keen opponent of the Jesuits in both cases. Valerian can often be found at the court of the Polish King Vladislav IV, for instance, in 1633, when he worked on creating a union between Catholics and the

Magni's Philosophy

Magni published his first philosophical fruit at the age of 56 (Magni 1642). He continued with the intellectual tradition of the Capuchin order following the philosophy and theology based on the authority of St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure, which he tried to elaborate into a scholastic system. This elaboration, although professing a dependence on medieval sources, has a tendency toward a modern subjectivist approach, as a philosophy starting from the philosopher's own mind, from "the ego," but also revealing traces of Renaissance Platonism.

The concept of light plays a central point in Magni's philosophy. Light has a crucial epistemological function as a condition of visual perception and analogically in rational cognition, which is not possible without the aid of mental light. Light also has an ontological function, for every

existing being in the realm of existing objects is dependent upon being in the mental light, which is the perfect being and is identical to God. Magni conducted his experiments in vacuum within this context. These reveal that light, which is visible in the void, is not dependent on any material subject, thus the priority of light is demonstrated (Magni 1647).

Magni denounces Aristotelian scholasticism as atheistic philosophy which is not in concord with Christianity. He also criticizes its inner inconsistency from the philosophical point of view and its incompatibility with new science. He later tended to accept Galileo's heliocentric cosmology (Cygan 1969). His last philosophical work (Magni 1661) began with a long description of Aristotle's philosophy and its refutation and proceeds with a presentation of Magni's own philosophy of consciousness based on introspection (Blum 1998), which seems to anticipate Immanuel Kant's a priori pure forms of intuition (Sousedik 1982, 2009).

Magni did not have any direct followers. Apart from contemporary debates and polemics, his works were later read by N. Malebranche, G. W. Leibniz, and Ch. Wolf.

Cross-References

- Galilei, Galileo
- Jesuits in the Early Modern Period
- Vacuum in Renaissance Science

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Magnidecentia

► Magnificence in Renaissance Philosophy

Magnificence in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

Magnificence has become a significant subject in discussions of Italian Renaissance art, particularly architecture, since it came to widespread attention in the early 1960s as a justification for large-scale architectural, urbanistic, and artistic patronage, and other forms of prominent display, for which it is now often used as a synonym.

Aristotle described magnificence as a moral virtue comprising the decorous expenditure of significant wealth on public display. In this form, it was the subject of brief but influential discussions by Cicero and treated at length by Thomas Aquinas. In descriptions of patronage, the concept emerged in the mid-fourteenth century; in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it appeared in works of moral philosophy and household management, and conduct books, as well as panegyrics and eulogies.

Magnificence provided a means of working out the role in politics and society of architecture and other forms of lavish expenditure. Fifteenth-century texts often contest the appropriateness of magnificent expenditure in particular arenas (the communal versus the familial) and in different political contexts (republics versus courts). An especially rich cluster of texts centered on Florence in the period c. 1400–1465, contrasting with texts produced in courtly cultures.

Magnificence can be related to, and in some cases may have provided the impetus for, significant building campaigns by oligarchs and aristocrats. We can deduce from the texts a set of critical categories for assessing the magnificence of architecture (scale and quantity, materials, decoration, and architectural articulation, the *all'antica* style, and comforts and amenities). In the sixteenth century, the importance of decorum in magnificent display led to ever subtler distinctions between the aesthetic and material qualities of objects.

Synonyms

magnidecentia; *magnificentia*; *magnificenza*

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Renaissance discussions of magnificence are as much about heritage as they are about rupture. Three concepts of magnificence had evolved by late antiquity: rhetorical, relating to the “grand

style”; theological, relating to the soul’s divinity; and moral, the virtue of spending large sums of money on public display (Jaeger, Rossi Monto and Dillon in Jaeger 2010). The last of these was seized on by Renaissance commentators interested in the correct use of money and the duties of rulers. As a virtue, magnificence is an epithet applied to people (almost always men), but from antiquity onwards, it has also been applied to the magnificent man’s expenditure and its fruits (Binski and Williamson in Jaeger 2010).

Aristotle provided the enduring definition of moral magnificence, *megaloprepeia*, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (II.vii and IV.ii): it is a moral virtue in its own right and consists of spending great amounts of money on a large scale on suitable but grand and stylish things. It is a mean between shabbiness and vulgarity, and related to liberality, but on a larger scale and concerned only with expenditure. The results obtained will be suited to the spender, the quantity spent, and its object, but will be more impressive than merely liberal expenditure of the same amount: magnificence is judged not on an absolute scale, but in relation to its context. Nonetheless, it is restricted to the rich and powerful, as only they can afford to sustain that level of expenditure; equally, it befits only people of their status. Suitable objects of magnificent expenditure are primarily religious (offerings, buildings, sacrifices) and public (paying for a chorus or a ship, public entertainments), but also private occasions that occur once (e.g., weddings) or benefit the city (the welcome and valediction of foreign guests, exchanges of gifts, furnishing one’s house). The notion of fittingness and decorum (*prepon*) contained in the Greek *megaloprepeia* pervades later discussions, although it is lost in the usual Latin translation, *magnificentia*, which instead emphasizes making (*facio*).

Renaissance commentators frequently referred to Cicero, whose attitude was more ambivalent. In his youth, he defined magnificence straightforwardly as a virtue, considering it to be a form of fortitude (*De inventione* II.liv.163); he later adopted a less straightforward attitude, criticizing magnificent display but at the same time acknowledging that magnificent entertainments were

expected of the aediles by the public (*De officiis* II.xvi.56–57). This ambivalence is encapsulated in his dictum that “the Roman people hate private luxury, but love private magnificence” (*Pro Murena* xxvi.76), and the statement, not specifically referring to magnificence but often quoted in discussions of the virtue, that “the owner should bring honour to his house, not the house to its owner” (*De officiis* I.xxxix.139).

The most significant medieval author on the subject – particularly given the number of renaissance Dominicans who discussed it – was Thomas Aquinas, in both his commentary on the *Ethics* and his *Summa theologiae* (Thomas Aquinas 1964b, II.viii and IV.vi–vii; Thomas Aquinas 1964a, 2a2æ, art. 134). He differs from Aristotle in considering magnificence to be a subsidiary form of fortitude (it does not deal with physical threats) and in his emphasis on the direction of magnificent expenditure to religious objects, placing these above the communal good. He also stated in his *Summa* that magnificence need not be restricted to the rich and powerful: the poor, too, have the potential to be magnificent, even if they lack the necessary resources. In his commentary on the *Ethics*, he added a further example of magnificent expenditure: military service.

We find Aristotle, not Thomas Aquinas, cited directly in the Dominican Galvano Fiamma’s account of Azzo Visconti’s funding of festivals, public works, and particularly buildings and their decoration, written in the early 1340s (Fiamma 1938, xv–xx, xxiii–xxv and xxvii–xxix; cf. Green 1990; Marina 2010). Fiamma emphasized that it is a prince’s duty to spend magnificently; among the benefits is the intimidation of a restless populace, dumbfounded by such magnificent display. Unlike his more analytical predecessors, he described the fruits of Visconti’s expenditure at length, giving as much space to his palace in Milan as to the palace chapel: he was interested in the objects of magnificence, not their nature.

Fiamma was followed by a series of Renaissance eulogists and panegyrists, who used descriptions of buildings, festivities, and other displays of the fruits of expenditure, explicitly characterized as magnificent, to praise either cities or patrons, beginning with Leonardo Bruni’s

panegyric of Florence in his *Laudatio* of the city, written c. 1403 (Bruni 1968, pp. 232–243), the first of a cluster of texts originating in Florence from the early 1400s to the 1460s.

Those writers who analyzed magnificence produced definitions little different from the Aristotelian/Thomist position: in Florence, Bruni again, in his *Isagogicon moralis disciplinae*, written 1421–1424 (Bruni 1928, p. 32 ll 5–17), and the Dominican Antonino Pierozzi, later canonized as St Antoninus, in his *Summa theologica* (Antoninus 1740, I.i.3 §2 and IV.iii.4–6; the main section reprinted in Howard 2012). Antoninus began compiling the work in the late 1420s; the section on magnificence was completed by 1450, but had been taken verbatim from Henry of Rimini’s *De quattuor virtutibus cardinalibus*, written shortly after 1297. Although Marsilio Ficino’s fundamental definition of magnificence in *De virtutibus moralibus* of 1457 (sometimes called *De magnificentia*) differed little from that of his contemporaries, he was unusual in framing it with a discussion of the definitions of virtue in the various ancient schools of philosophy, considering it pre-eminent among the virtues classed as *modestia* by the Platonists (Ficino 1937).

Some writers combined analysis with eulogy: Timoteo Maffei accompanied a brief encomium of Cosimo de’ Medici’s buildings with a justification of his magnificence in the form of a dialogue, using the arguments of Aristotle, Cicero, and Thomas Aquinas, in his *In magnificentiae Cosmi Medicei detractores libellus* of c. 1454–1456 (cf. Gombrich 1966; Fraser Jenkins 1970; published in Maffei 2012). This was followed by Alberto Avogadro’s hyperbolic account *De religione et magnificentia . . . Cosmi Medices* of the early 1460s (Avogadro 1736, pp. 117–149; corrected version of pp. 127–139 in Gombrich 1962). Cristoforo Landino, writing *De vera nobilitate* after 1487, broke magnificence down into four components: glory, scale (*amplitudo*), inclination (*studium*), and execution (Landino 1970, pp. 70–71).

Magnificence was also discussed outside Florence, but still within a broadly republican context, by the Venetian Giovanni Caldiera, who, in *De virtutibus moralibus et theologicis* of c. 1464,

considered it among the virtues practiced by individuals (Caldiera 1464a, fols 38v–40r; cf. King 1975) and by Alessandro Piccolomini, in *De la institutione di tutta la vita de l'huomo nato nobile e in città libera*, dedicated in 1540 (Piccolomini 1543, V.v). The republican eulogies culminate in Benedetto Varchi's account of the fabric of Florence and its territories as they were in 1527 (and earlier) in his *Storia fiorentina* of c. 1545 (Varchi 1963, IX.xxxiii–xxxiv and xxxviii–xli).

From the 1440s, however, we see a growing interest in magnificence in Italian court circles. Unusually, Francesco Filelfo used the more literal *magnidecentia* for the Greek *megaloprepeia* in his *Convivia mediolanensia* of 1443 (Filelfo 1537, pp. 78–82). Giannozzo Manetti praised Alfonso I of Naples's magnificence in orations of 1445 and 1452 (Manetti 1445, fol. 2v; Manetti 1452, fols 10r and 11r), and Nicholas V's in his extensive account of the pope's building projects in his *Vita Nicolai V*, composed 1455–1458 (Manetti 1958). Panormita, too, lauded Alfonso I's magnificence when writing about his words and deeds in 1455 (Panormita 1538, I.23, I.35, I.39, I.61, IV.3, and IV.4). Staying with Naples, Giuniano Maio gave a fairly thorough summary of the traditional position on magnificence, drawn from Aristotle and Cicero, in the chapter on magnificence in his treatise *De maiestate* (1492). He associated it principally with kings, in particular Ferdinand I of Naples, and gave five examples of Ferdinand's magnificence, three of which are lost due to a lacuna in the sole surviving manuscript. The remaining examples are atypical: Ferdinand's appearance while riding and his hunting (Maio 1956). The elder Filippo Beroaldo combined brief descriptions of the virtue with praise of the aspiring despot Giovanni II Bentivoglio in his commentary on Suetonius's *De vita Caesarum* and in his *De optimo statu* (Suetonius 1493, fol. 229r–v; Beroaldo 1497, sig. C.viii v). The culmination of the courtly eulogies is perhaps Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti's long and detailed account of Ercole I d'Este's architectural and religious patronage in *De triumphis religionis*, written in 1497 in Italian, its Latin title notwithstanding (Arienti 1972, pp. 50–79 and 111–112).

By far the most extensive Renaissance discussion of magnificence is that in Giovanni Gioviano Pontano's treatise *De magnificentia*, written over a long period from the 1460s until its publication in 1498 (Pontano 1999a). While Pontano's fundamental definitions are not surprising, he included some innovations. He proposed that magnificent expenditure differs from liberality in often being directed to public pleasure. Magnificence is always disinterested, not considering the practical ends of expenditure, but focusing on the nobility of the result. It should not use ill-gotten funds. He provided a more detailed analysis of precisely what makes an object magnificent, identifying ornament, scale, quality of materials, and durability. Pontano's text also contains extensive examples of magnificent (and unmagnificent) behavior and works drawn from antiquity and living memory; these include a form of magnificence previously ignored in analyses and mentioned only by eulogists such as Fiamma: the keeping of animals, whether horses, hounds and hawks, or more exotic specimens.

Magnificence also appeared in treatises on the ideal forms of public and private behavior: Matteo Palmieri's *Della vita civile*, written between 1430 and 1438 (Palmieri 1982, III.207–210 and IV.213–218), and Platina's *De optimo cive* of 1474 (Platina 1944, pp. 207–208 and 229–230), a tradition which continued into the seventeenth century in household treatises such as Giovanni Battista Assandri's *Della economica ovvero disciplina domestica* (Assandri 1616, IV.xiv, pp. 305–306). Building on the courtly tradition which emerged over the second half of the fifteenth century, discussions of magnificence also appear in manuals of court management, such as Sigismondo Sigismondi's *Prattica cortigiana* (Sigismondi 1604, p. 23).

Apart from Palmieri's *Della vita civile*, magnificence was not discussed at any length in the vernacular until Maio and Arienti in the 1490s; yet by the 1560s, it was considered a suitable subject for discussion in the framing narrative of a set of *novelle*, Sebastiano Erizzo's *Sei giornate* of 1567 (Erizzo 1977, IV.xxii.4–15 and 17).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The significant number of texts on magnificence which originated in Florence is not surprising when we consider that one of the most contentious aspects of magnificence during the Renaissance was where it should most suitably be displayed. From Aristotle onwards, it was accepted that the most fitting objects of magnificent expenditure were religious: building and equipping temples, churches, and monasteries; funding religious celebrations and festivities; and accommodating pilgrims and the disadvantaged. Unsurprisingly, this aspect of magnificence was emphasized by Thomas Aquinas; and we find it, with varying degrees of emphasis, in all the texts mentioned so far, except for Landino, Beroaldo on Suetonius, and Assandri, while its omission by Sigismondi is perhaps explained by the fact that he was discussing the administration of a cardinal's court.

Next in suitability for Aristotle was magnificent expenditure directed to the common good, displayed in equipping of choruses or ships, and public banquets; and so we find public expenditure either specified as magnificent explicitly or implicitly in the lists of examples provided by the eulogists. Fiamma, keen to identify the virtue's political benefits, noted that it was the most visible form of the virtue. Communally directed expenditure also appears in Bruni's *Laudatio* and his commentary on the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomics* (Aristotle 1542, fols 273r–285v, re I.vi, 1844b, on fols 280v–281r) and in St Antoninus's *Summa*. Poggio Bracciolini, in a letter to Francesco Bianchi de Velate of 1427, emphatically stated that magnificence consists in communal expenses (Bracciolini 1832, pp. 232–237). Palmieri, Manetti (*Vita Nicolai V*), Panormita, Caldiera (*De virtutibus*), Platina, Landino, Maio, Beraoldo (*De optimo statu*), Arienti, Pontano, and Erizzo all specify or describe communal displays of magnificence. Piccolomini repeated Pontano's characterization that magnificent expenditure could be directed towards one's city, one's friends or oneself – but it must always be disinterested.

By the time Pontano warned princes and kings to pay regard to public utility as well as beauty in

their magnificent projects, Aristotle's list of public works had been massively extended to include ports, piers, baths, aqueducts, theatres, loggias and porticoes, widening and paving streets, bridges, city walls, sewers, libraries, draining swamps, flood defenses, jousts, triumphs, weddings, funerals, hunts, gifts of money or in kind, and the reception of guests.

Aristotle also allowed that magnificent expenditure might be made on the celebration of unique occasions which arouse public interest such as weddings, the welcome and valediction of important foreign guests, and the exchange of (diplomatic) gifts, and on permanent objects, his sole example being the provision of a house for oneself. But the importance of decorum in displays of magnificence raised a problem in the case of expenditure on personal – or, in Renaissance terms, familial or dynastic – objects: if a magnificent building was matched to its owner's status, what was the owner claiming when his building was bigger than anyone else's?

The lists of texts in which we find familial magnificence – which Pontano saw embodied in palaces, loggias and porticoes, villas, towers, and tombs – are illuminating: those by Fiamma, Filelfo, Manetti (*Vita Nicolai V*), Panormita, Maio, Arienti, and Pontano, all writing in, or for, courts. Indeed, Maio stated explicitly that magnificence was most fitting for princes and kings and consequently made no distinction between the communal and the familial. The attitude which one took to magnificent expenditure on familial objects depended on the political context in which one was writing.

In Florence, therefore, where a series of factions – most successfully the Medici – tried to secure control of a nominally republican regime, magnificent expenditure which might seem directed to familial advantage was potentially suspect. Like Maio later in the century, Manetti and Maffei associated magnificence with princes; and Cavalcanti explicitly linked criticism of the patronage of Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici to its magnificence (Cavalcanti 1839, xxxiii) – despite the religious nature of many of Cosimo's projects. And so Maffei, one of Cosimo's most emphatic apologists, argued for the virtuousness of familial,

communal, and religious expenditure. In emphasizing the communal benefits of potentially familial expenditure, he was following a long line of Florentines: Bruni (*Laudatio*), Antoninus, Bracciolini in *De avaritia* of 1428/9 (Bracciolini 1994, xii.6 and xiv.7), and Palmieri. The unquestioning praise of an extravagant version of Cosimo's buildings by Avogadro, writing in Vercelli in the Duchy of Savoy, remains exceptional.

Aristotle's examples of private magnificence thus became communal, something we also find beyond Florence: Caldiera, having mentioned the preparation of one's home in *De virtutibus*, returned to the subject in his accompanying treatise on economic and domestic life, *De iconomia* (Caldiera 1464b, fol. 91), emphasizing that a magnificent palace was an ornament to the city and a communal benefit, a point also made by Platina. Indeed, Pontano claimed that Cosimo de' Medici was the first person since antiquity to have devoted private money to the public good. The association of familial expenditure with the common good continued into the sixteenth century in Varchi's descriptions of magnificent palaces in Florence and Erizzo's *Sei giornate*.

The practical implications of the association of magnificence with political ambition were played out in Bologna, where Beroaldo had stated in *De optimo statu* that it behooves a prince to be magnificent, and where another oligarch, Giovanni II Bentivoglio, tried with partial success to obtain power over his city: following his effective expulsion from Bologna, his palace, called magnificent by Beroaldo, was destroyed by a mob in 1507.

Although he accepted that private display could be magnificent, Pontano developed the distinction between public and private further than other commentators by explicitly restricting magnificence to what was publicly visible – in other words, the exteriors of buildings. He called the corresponding virtue of expenditure on interiors, furnishings, and domestic goods “splendour” (*splendor*) (Pontano 1999b). According to Welch (2002), this innovation enabled the display of taste and discernment by wealthy commoners without impinging on the magnificence that was proper to royalty.

Impact and Legacy

Justification and Encouragement of Building

Fiamma stated that Azzo Visconti “conceived the intention of making a glorious house for himself, for the Philosopher says in the Fourth Book of Ethics that it is the duty of a magnificent man to make ready a decorous house” (Fiamma 1938; tr. Marina 2010), implying that his understanding of the theory of magnificence led him to build. While the rich and powerful have long shown a desire to spend their money on public displays, magnificence was used in the Renaissance both as a justification for such display and, it seems, as an impetus to magnificent behavior. The concept of decorum is again important: because magnificent display accords with the patron's status, by building magnificently, one displays one's virtue.

As early as 1371, the Signoria of Florence justified an extension to their palace “because it is customarily praiseworthy to decorate the city with the magnificence of buildings” (Spilner 1993); almost a century later, Avogadro claimed that Maffei's *In magnificentiae Cosmi Medicei detractores libellus* was the cause of Cosimo de' Medici's patronage of the Badia at Fiesole (text in Gombrich 1962). Recent discussions of the Florentine texts on magnificence have therefore examined them in terms of the use of wealth and the justification of large-scale expenditure on building in a republican context.

Similarly, the texts eulogizing rulers – Azzo Visconti (Fiamma), Pope Nicholas V (Manetti), Alfonso I of Naples (Manetti, Panormita), Ferdinand I of Naples (Maio), and Ercole I d'Este (Arienti) – treat magnificence as behavior expected of rulers. The buildings, projects, and events listed in their encomia show how far their subjects shared those expectations and behaved accordingly, to the extent that the eulogies have become important sources for the buildings themselves and their development.

Clarke (1999) has associated Giovanni II Bentivoglio's support for a series of improvements to the fabric of Bologna in the last 15 years of the fifteenth century, and his development of a vast palace and tower in the city, with

Beroaldo's descriptions of his magnificence, which seem in turn to have encouraged Giovanni to build further. It has also been suggested that magnificence provided the impetus for a boom in building in the other Italian courts in the second half of the fifteenth century, but the exact strength of the virtue's influence has still to be investigated (Fraser Jenkins 1970).

Social Distinction and Household Management

Guerzoni (1999), considering magnificence within the broader context of debates on liberality, luxury, and expenditure on domestic goods, has shown that it evolved in the sixteenth century from an aristocratic to a royal virtue. At the same time, as domestic goods became more widely available and affordable, so the lower classes' patterns of consumption and display increasingly ran the risk of emulating those of their social superiors, who in turn were in danger of needing to acquire ever more lavishly to embody their elevated position. This led to an increase in devices such as sumptuary laws for limiting the lower classes' display and to a series of ever nicer distinctions regarding the quality of goods being made in court accounting, and eventually more broadly, so that everything purchased could be matched as closely as possible to the rank of its consumer. Thus, even magnificent expenditure became the result of careful assessment and calculation.

Critical Vocabulary

Although strictly speaking an epithet applied to people, throughout the Renaissance "magnificent" was also applied to the fruits of their expenditure, especially buildings. Precise definitions such as Pontano's, that magnificence lies in ornament, scale, excellence of materials, and durability (Pontano 1999a), are few and far between; but the eulogistic texts, in particular, often describe buildings at great length, and the details of their descriptions, which emphasize certain aspects of the buildings, allow us to deduce with some precision what aspects of a building would imply its patron's magnificence. The most informative texts are those by Fiamma, Manetti (*Vita Nicolai V*), Maffei, Avogadro, Pontano, and Arienti.

Taking Pontano's first criterion, ornament included three- and two-dimensional carvings, external architectural polychromy, a great many mural paintings (primarily of secular subjects), mosaics, and carved ceilings. Related to this are architectural elaboration and sophistication: the use of vaults and cupolas, colonnades, and arcades. When Arienti referred to architectural features, they were classicizing, and Pontano specifically mentioned the revival of the antique style in the magnificent Palazzo Medici.

Scale is displayed both in absolute dimensions and in quantities: numbers of rooms or columns, for example. The most magnificent materials used in construction are polished stones such as marble and porphyry, and after that, other dressed stones (ashlar); even brick is praised on occasion. Of the metals, gold, silver, and bronze are singled out for attention; as is the use of gilding, blue pigments (i.e., presumably ultramarine), intarsia, and ivory.

Magnificent buildings may be notable for the extent of the accommodation that they provide, as well as comforts such as glazed windows, shutters, fireplaces, loggias, and lavatories. Amenities include even breezes and views and, outside, gardens, fountains, fishponds, and hunting grounds. Technical innovation, in the form of clocks, and in churches and monasteries, the paraphernalia required for religious celebrations also contribute to a patron's magnificence.

Historiography

Magnificence's most recent legacy, therefore, is its use as a concept that helps us to understand Renaissance culture. It first appeared in the secondary literature on Renaissance patronage in 1960, in Gombrich's influential article on the early Medici as patrons of art (Gombrich 1966). Since then, it has become a synonym for large-scale architectural, urbanistic, and artistic patronage, with works ostensibly about magnificence often leaving the term itself unexamined (Williamson 2010).

Subsequent examinations have pushed the introduction of the concept further back in time than Florence and the debates of the mid-fifteenth century regarding Cosimo de' Medici's patronage

described by Gombrich. In Florence, Howard has emphasized its development from the 1420s by St Antoninus (Howard 2008; Howard 2012), and Spilner identified its limited use in official Florentine documents from 1300 (Spilner 1993). But Green had already identified the deployment of magnificence to justify patronage as early as the 1340s and Fiamma's account of Azzo Visconti's patronage in Milan (Green 1990), and Marina has subsequently suggested that a concept of magnificent architectural patronage existed de facto in northern Italy in the thirteenth century (Marina 2010).

Over the last two decades, the discussion has expanded to include the context in which magnificence was displayed: Goldthwaite (1993, pp. 128, 204–210 and 214–224) and Guerzoni (1999) discussed magnificence in the broader framework of attitudes to wealth and consumption, Guerzoni emphasizing that the history of “conspicuous consumption” lies in Western thought. Welch (2002) and Lindow (2007) detailed the ways in which magnificence might be applied to the interiors and furnishings of buildings, and Shepherd has been concerned with the critical vocabulary implicit in descriptions of magnificent buildings (1998) and its relation to politics (2007).

Cross-References

- [Architecture and Renaissance](#)
- [Bracciolini, Poggio](#)
- [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- [Cities and Urban Life, Renaissance](#)
- [Court Philosophy, Renaissance](#)
- [Ethics, Renaissance](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Filelfo, Francesco](#)
- [Household Management](#)
- [Manetti, Giannozzo](#)
- [Nobility, Renaissance](#)
- [Palmieri, Matteo](#)
- [Piccolomini, Alessandro](#)
- [Pierozzi, Antonino](#)
- [Pontano, Giovanni](#)
- [Sacchi, Bartolomeo, Detto il Platina](#)

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Magnificentia

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Maimonideanism in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Moses Maimonides is probably the most important, certainly the most influential,

Jewish philosopher of all times. Both his philosophical and juridical works became fundamental references to the Jewish culture already in his lifetime, but they also underwent several sharp critiques. During the Renaissance, his philosophical masterpiece, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, was either read according to the platonic orientation of the time or criticized as the main expression of an extreme rationalistic attitude; in both cases, it was universally admired and quoted. This is true also for the representatives of the so-called Jewish Averroism during the Renaissance; in fact, these authors were Maimonidean-Averroists.

The prestige of Maimonides was great among Christian scholars, too. His philosophy inspired some important Christian cabalists, and the *Guide* was translated into Latin and considered a work important for religious thought in general, which was exceptional, in a period of widespread rebuttal of the Jewish postbiblical doctrines, seen as false and vane. The *Mishneh Torah*, the main juridical work by Maimonides, was also partially translated into Latin, when the curiosity for Jewish laws and rites grew in the Christian world.

The Reception of Maimonides' Work in Different Ages

Moses Maimonides (Cordova 1238–Fustat, Egypt, 1204; in Hebrew Moshe ben Maimon, in Arabic Musa ibn Maimun) is unquestionably the most important author in the history of Jewish philosophy, as witnessed by the continued interest in the most important of his works throughout the ages, i.e., *The Guide for the Perplexed* (Arabic: *Dalalat al-hairin*; Hebrew: *More nevu'ukhim*, completed 1190), as well as by the multitude of reactions that this work has aroused. Although it is true that Maimonides was already being criticized during his lifetime for what was considered excessive rationalism, which implicitly denied the validity of certain beliefs deemed to be tenets of religion (such as the resurrection of the dead), it is also true that the *Guide* was immediately

translated from Arabic into Hebrew by Shemuel ibn Tibbon from Lunel in Southern France, with the collaboration of the author himself: this alone is a proof of the prestige enjoyed by his work among the non-Arabic-speaking Jews, who wished to read it as soon as they could.

This philosophical work became the pivot around which revolved, during the thirteenth century, all judgments in favor of or against the study of philosophy, which agitated the Jewish communities in Southern France and Catalonia and ended up with a series of excommunications and counter-excommunications and even with the burning of some of Maimonides' writings by the Christian authorities.

Commentaries on the *Guide* have been numerous and emerged quite early on: some appeared already in the thirteenth century, in Spain and Italy (Shem Tov ibn Falaquera, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, "Guide to the Guide", Moshe of Salerno, Zerahiah Hen); they reached further elaboration in the fourteenth century in Southern France and Catalonia (Yosef ibn Kaspi, Moshe Narboni, Profiat Duran also called Efodi) and then reached an apex in the fifteenth century, in Castile and Catalonia (Asher Crescas, Yitzḥaq ibn Shem Tov, Yitzḥaq Abravanel). During the same period, several commentaries were written by Arab-speaking Jews, especially in Yemen.

Maimonides established, on the one hand, what will be considered the fundamental topics of the subsequent Jewish thought up until the modern era, and, on the other, he inspired the methods to approach them.

Virtually all later authors, no matter whether in accordance with his stance or dissociating themselves from it, or even harshly criticizing it, will refer to Maimonides, whom they name *ha-Moreh* after the title of his chief work because they consider him as the master par excellence.

Even among the cabalists, a priori far from being keen on Maimonidean rationalism, his prestige and influence were profound. Avraham Abulafia (1240–after 1291) was clearly inspired by certain aspects of Maimonides' thought when developing what has been defined as "ecstatic and prophetic qabbalah," and the question that generations of cabalists have been asking themselves

was: if the *qabbalah* represents the authentic Jewish doctrine, which stems from Sinai's revelation, why a master of Maimonides' stature does not even mention it? There is a variety of answers in this regard: there is even an account of his late conversion to *qabbalah*.

Maimonides' work unfolds in accordance with the tenets of Aristotelianism as transmitted through Arabic philosophic literature: it shares with it a common background in logic, psychology, physics, cosmology, and metaphysics. In accordance with what his Muslim contemporaries thought, Aristotle was considered by Maimonides as the quintessential philosopher, the one who represented the highest point that could ever be reached by human intellect. The Bible and the Aristotelian philosophy, according to Maimonides, agree on essential matters, which they express through different languages. In this light, it is understandable why, during the age of the reorganization of Jewish thought (from the second half of the sixteenth century until the middle of the eighteenth century) following the decline of Aristotelianism, Maimonides' work goes through a period of relative eclipse.

During this period, the thought of Yehuda ha-Levi (1075–1141), which expressed suspicion toward philosophical rationalism but also toward certain forms of Neoplatonism and especially toward the *qabbalah* in its various versions, constituted the main theological and philosophical benchmarks of the Jewish world. But, although the centrality of the Maimonidean thought declined, its prestige remained unscathed: the *Moreh* continued to be studied, quoted, and even translated (by the Italian Yedidiyah Rimini, at the end of the sixteenth century: *Erudizione de' confusi*, the first vernacular translation after the Spanish one, in the early fifteenth century), and Maimonides' dogmatic theology (as defined in other works of his) continued to be considered an essential, even "popular," touchstone for Jews belonging to different communities; Moshe Ḥayyim Luzzatto (1707–1746), a cabalist of systematic spirit, explicitly referred to Maimonides several times throughout his work.

The same can be said of the status of Maimonides as a juridical authority. Although in the

course of the sixteenth century the importance of his summa *Mishneh Torah* declined as a source of authority in the Italian Jewish communities, the book continued to be studied, as its many editions of this period attest.

The new printing of the *Moreh* (1742, near Dessau, Germany), occurred after an over-two-century-long gap (the previous publication was in Sabbioneta, Italy, 1553, which followed the printing in Rome, before 1480), ushered in a new phase of the reception of Maimonides' philosophical work, which took place mainly within the Ashkenazi world, i.e., in Germany and Poland.

An important author of the stature of Moses Mendelssohn, for instance, was clearly inspired by Maimonides in his philosophical articulation between revelation and reason/Jewish particular and human universal. Salomon Maimon (1753–1800), the philosopher critic of Kant, composed a commentary on the *Guide* (*Givath ha-moreh*). For the *maskilim*, the Jewish scholars who aimed at achieving the traditional Jewish knowledge through modern culture, Maimonides inherently represented an example to be followed, due to his harmonization of religion and science. Within the range of historical and philological research, which begins with the nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and spans until the contemporary university practices, the quantity of studies on Maimonides is incomparably greater than the number of studies on other authors.

In more recent years, a great number of biographies, monographs, reading guides, conference papers, and articles have been published in numerous languages.

Also in the Christian world, the reception of Maimonides has been significant, especially when taking into account the widespread suspicion toward the Jewish culture.

We will see how, during the Renaissance, various Christian thinkers and scholars read, translated, and made use of vast sections of Maimonides' works – of both philosophical and juridical nature – and expressed a positive judgment on them. The *Moreh* had already been translated into Latin toward the middle of the thirteenth century (with the title *Dux neutrorum*), and it had

been explicitly used by authors of the stature of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.

It is important here to mention how, for Baruch (Bento, Benedictus) Spinoza, one of the first “modern” authors, who voluntarily kept himself far from any religious creed, Maimonides constituted an essential reference point. On the one hand, Spinoza harshly criticized him, but, on the other, he adopted some of his basic assumptions – such as the one regarding prophecy and the relation between imagination and intellect – adapting them to his own system.

Maimonides in the Renaissance Within the Context of the Jewish Culture

Aspects of Maimonides' Work That Have Been Used in Various Manners

Before being a philosopher, Maimonides was a jurist, one of the most important ones throughout the history of Jewish religious jurisprudence. In his *Mishneh Torah*, written in Hebrew, he gathered the vast array of juridical Talmudic material, and, in a more complete and radical manner compared to his predecessors, he gave it an order. Actually, the *Mishneh Torah* aimed at replacing the Talmud for those who did not possess the skills to study it – an attitude for which he was harshly criticized. In accordance with what was customary during the Almohad era, Maimonides started his juridical code with a section dedicated to the “rules of belief” (*Hilkhoth De'oth*), of a theological nature, where various subjects that will be dealt with later on in his *The Guide for the Perplexed* were exposed in a “popular” manner.

The ground for the *Mishneh Torah* had already been prepared by a commentary, in Arabic, on the *Mishnah* – the body of laws that constitutes the *Talmud*'s own starting point. Also in this text, there are some sections of a philosophical character, dealing in particular with the conduct that man should follow as well as with the destiny of the intellectual soul after physical death.

His philosophical opus magnum, i.e., his *The Guide for the Perplexed*, is a complex work that, stemming from an absolute condemnation of

anthropomorphism – the conception of God as endowed with physical, psychological, or moral characteristics typical of the human being – deals with a great number of topics in a deliberately nonsystematic manner, leaving them also, in some cases, purposely unfinished.

The juridical component of Maimonides' work has been of great significance not only for all generations of Jews but also for the Christian Hebraists from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century and beyond; as for its philosophical component, it has generated a variety of conceptions that are rather different from one another. Below, we list some of Maimonides' ideas that were further developed during the age of the Renaissance:

1. Philosophy should be intended for an intellectual elite in possession of scientific knowledge, besides the religious one, as well as speculative capabilities. The mere expert of religious law (a simple Talmudist with no scientific education) has no access to "the king's palace," i.e., to the knowledge of God, in the limits within which such knowledge is attainable.
2. There is a reason behind every divine commandment since it would be absurd to think that God can issue nonsensical orders. When read correctly (i.e., allegorically), the *Torah* contains the truths of physics and metaphysics, while in its outward and literal aspect, it contains several useful precepts of individual good conduct as well as rules for the correct functioning of society.
3. Some commandments, particularly the ones related to the sacrifices at the Temple of Jerusalem, have a historical/educational purpose. Idolatrous peoples were accustomed to offering sacrifices to their gods in any place: by limiting and focusing the sacrificial practice only in one place, God meant to educate the Jews in unitary worship. Since the highest service of God lies in the knowledge of Him and this, on its ultimate level, coincides with silent meditation, sacrifices implicitly represent only one stage in the development of divine worship.
4. "One serves God to the extent to which one comprehends Him," writes Maimonides in his *Guide*. This intellectualistic stance entails an

outcome that is mystical in nature. The man who raises himself intellectually is able to reach the level of the love of God, a passionate love (*hesheq* in Hebrew, *'ishq* in Arabic) which allows him to passively detach himself from any bodily or worldly bonds. Moses, prophet and philosopher par excellence, died by the "kiss of God," i.e., the union between his own individual intellect and the divine agent intellect.

Maimonides in the Time of Averroism

From the end of the fifteenth century and throughout several decades of the sixteenth century, Averroes became an essential author for Christian thought. His importance is due to his philosophical writings as well as his commentaries on Aristotle which, at that time, were considered the essential framework for understanding the thought of the Stagirite. Averroes' work, however, had to face also plenty of opponents, who pointed out the dangerous and potentially heretical nature of what was called a "twofold path" to reach the truth, the path of reason and the one of faith (or that of revelation or prophecy). This traditional theory of the "twofold path to the truth" might also lead to a theory of the "twofold truth": a concept credited to the Arab philosopher, not without stretching the interpretation of his thought. The Jews had been early readers of Averroes: they systematically translated his writings into Hebrew, and, in some cases, they were directly inspired by the Arab thinker when formulating the theory of a "double path" that can become that of a "double truth," giving more relevance to the path of reason than to that of revelation. Thanks to such an exceptional knowledge of Averroes' work, the Jewish scholars were an outstanding channel for the dissemination of his thought throughout the Latin-Christian world between the end of the fifteenth and the first decades of the sixteenth century, by means of translating (from Hebrew into Latin) his original writings.

The distinctive trait of the "Jewish Averroism" of that period, as well as of earlier periods, is that it largely developed within a Maimonidean frame of reference. The most prominent figure who

represents this trend is **Elijah** del Medigo from Crete (ca. 1455–1492/1493), a scholar who was close to relevant personalities such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Domenico Grimani, author of philosophical writings in Latin and Hebrew as well as of several translations of Averroes. His treatise *Behinath ha-dath* (*The Examination of Religion*) analyzed the fundamental issues of religion from a rational point of view. This brief writing owed much to ibn Rushd's *Fasl al-maqāl* (*The Decisive Treatise*) and contained whole excerpts from the latter. Del Medigo shows an "Averroist" approach when it comes to his sharp distinction between the recipients for whom the revealed scriptures are meant and those who are capable of reading philosophical texts. Maimonides too had conceived such a distinction; however, he had also postulated the identity of contents between philosophy and revealed scripture, whose "secrets" are disclosed by religious reading. Del Medigo openly criticized such a position that remains halfway between theology and philosophy: even though both the *Torah* and philosophy agree in their conclusions – as happens in almost all cases – the two paths should be kept distinct from one another to avoid a situation whereby the former would depend from the latter, which could lead to erroneous results. In spite of this strong critique, Maimonides, the "excellent man," is nonetheless justified by del Medigo, and his doctrines are clearly followed by him, when it comes to the radical negation of divine anthropomorphism and the ceremonial prescriptions of the *Torah* as a means for the enhancement of the soul (through the expression of correct opinions) as well as of the body (through the proper functioning of society). Therefore, the divine commandments do have a purpose; "otherwise they would be like the actions of a madman, which are purposeless," as del Medigo wrote, paraphrasing Maimonides. In light of this, it can be said that the most important Jewish Averroist of the Renaissance was also a Maimonidean, notwithstanding some important distinctions. Indeed, it would have appeared impossible for a Jewish philosopher not to refer to the writings and the solutions of the "great eagle," as Maimonides was called, as the true glory of Jewish thought.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note how, throughout the works of an author who may be considered the last exponent of the Jewish medieval thought, 'Ovadia Sforza (1475?–1550), basically there is no mention whatsoever of Maimonides, even when he approaches certain subjects that would evidently lend themselves to it. This important biblical commentator and philosopher, who lived in Rome and Bologna and was one of Johannes Reuchlin's teachers of Hebrew, wrote a philosophical work in Hebrew, *Or 'Ammym* (Bologna 1537), which he translated himself into Latin with several amendments (*Lumen Gentium*, 1548) and which deals with fundamental metaphysical and theological topics. If, on the one hand, this work shows a dialectical structure (it analyzes two opposite theses with their respective rationales, and then both of them are contested and a synthesis is found), on the other hand, the content of the book is influenced by an approach that is characteristic of the Renaissance: the world, according to Sforza, has been created for a purpose and man is the ultimate purpose of creation. Maimonides, who had denied such finalism, is here criticized without being explicitly referred to. What is most surprising is that, apart from Aristotle, Sforza's main point of reference is Averroes, whose commentaries and writings are mentioned with great frequency, even when resorting to Maimonides would have been obvious for a Jewish author: as is the case with the discussion about the relation between God's knowledge and human knowledge, which are mere "homonyms," i.e., they have nothing in common but the name and are totally different in their essence.

This book was meant to demonstrate to the Jews as well as to the non-Jews that the idea of election of the former is rational in character. As Sforza writes, the Jews are possessors, through the *Torah*, of a set of philosophical truths, and it is their mission to spread them to the world. Probably it wouldn't have been appropriate to support his demonstrations by quoting another Jewish author, who could have been considered non-convincing and dismissed as biased.

However, notwithstanding the almost complete absence of Maimonides in Sforza's

pages, which makes him a philosopher who is perfectly in line with the Averroistic tendency of his time, the rationalistic structure of the *Lumen Gentium* is undoubtedly of Maimonidean inspiration.

This is most apparent in his description of the fundamental relation between knowledge and love/fear of God but also in some sections clearly inspired by the *Guide* (even though the latter is never mentioned), for instance, the chapter about the origin of evil. According to Sforza as well as to Maimonides, one can love and fear God in a manner that is directly proportional to the knowledge of Him; true faith derives from knowledge: without the latter, faith ceases to be an act of free will and is, therefore, impossible.

Maimonides in the Time of Neoplatonism

Even among those Jewish thinkers of the Renaissance who lean toward Neoplatonism, the influence of Maimonides' teachings is present, especially, but not only, for what concerns the aspiration to union with the Divine that constitutes the highest level of human existence. The most interesting example is that of Yehudah Abravanel (Spain, ca.1465; Italy, ca.1523), known in the Christian world as Leo Hebraeus or Leone Ebreo, who blended in a unique manner in his *Dialoghi d'amore* (*Dialogues of Love*) Neoplatonic, cabalistic, and Maimonidean motives. The worship of God, according to both Leo and Maimonides, reaches its apex in the activity of intellectual love which, through the union with the Divine, grants the worshipper's soul with immortality. As far as other aspects are concerned, Leone is inspired by Maimonides but comes to different conclusions. Leone Ebreo paraphrased Maimonides when exposing several possible theories about the creation of the world, but then he opted in favor of a solution – the attribution of forms to matter, like in Plato's conception – that differs from the creation *ex nihilo* as indicated by Maimonides. In his *Guide* (3.8), Maimonides had compared matter to an adulterous woman: just as the latter is in constant need of a man and, being unfaithful, she keeps on changing partner, so matter, which cannot exist without form, keeps on moving, getting rid of one form to take up another

one. By using this simile, Maimonides meant to highlight the unstable nature of matter and its essential condition of deprivation. Leo literally resorted to the same simile, but he did so in order to exalt the beauty of mundane creation, which presents a wonderful variety of forms. This shift from a "medieval" view, characterized by an intellectualistic and negative approach toward matter, to a Renaissance approach, whereby aesthetics play a pivotal role and matter reflects the beauty that radiates throughout the universe, is also apparent in their two different conceptions of imagination. According to Maimonides' thought – as well as that of other contemporary or previous Islamic thinkers – this human capacity has a negative value: the original sin determined the fall of man from the world of certainty, in which the option is either true or false, to a world where man can only choose between good and evil, beauty and hideousness, that is the sphere of opinions. According to him, the faculty of imagination is pretty much developed among the prophets – although this is not the case with the most important among them, Moses "the philosopher," who does not need it – as it is necessary in order to transform the communications from the divine world into perceivable, intelligible data; this is the only way in which the masses of nonphilosophers will be able to comprehend a higher plane of reality. On the contrary, according to Leone, imagination is that faculty that allows man to comprehend the intellectual beauty of the cosmos, a systematic whole whose binding agent is exactly the universal beauty.

The perception of beauty – the aesthetics – therefore becomes in Leone Ebreo the path that leads to man's elevation toward God and no longer the only way forward for those who are not capable of elaborating intellectual concepts purified from material impurities.

The intellectual path of union with God – that *amor dei intellectualis* which will, later on, represent, for Spinoza, the goal man should strive for – has also been a central theme in the works of later and less-known Jewish authors.

In around 1575, the Italian rabbi Lazzaro da Viterbo from Rome (in Hebrew: Eliezer Matzliaḥ ha-Kohen) wrote a work in Latin with the title

Tractatus de Anno Jubilaei, addressed to Pope Gregory XIII on the occasion of the Jubilee proclaimed by the latter pontiff. Lazzaro, in his writing, goes back to the Jewish origin of the institution of the Jubilee, pointing out its intellectual and spiritual value. The true liberation – which the biblical liberation of slaves on a 50-year basis alludes to – is the liberation of the senses, such that the soul can rise to the sublime heights of divinity. The commandments of the Bible, according to Lazzaro, encourage man to engage in speculation about the most elevated intellectual subjects. By getting inspiration from the process performed by Moses, man should enhance his knowledge, which is the only means through which one can aspire to enter into conjunction with the Divine.

From this brief description, it can be seen that the Jewish thinkers of the Renaissance, those of Averroistic tendency as well as those of Neoplatonic inspiration, referred to Maimonides by utilizing different aspects of his thought: the centrality of the intellectual activity and the “outward” ceremonial laws, considered as being instrumental in achieving the true happiness of society, the separation between the ordinary public and the philosophers, and the conjunction with God as a result of such activity; furthermore, one can find some other common fundamental notions – such as the dogmatic theology – and matters of great importance, such as the issue of evil.

The centrality of Maimonides is confirmed by the writings of one of his most popular critics, the Spaniard Yitzḥaq Abravanel (1437–1508), Yehudah’s father. Yitzḥaq, one of the most prestigious biblical commentators and thinkers of his time, openly criticized Maimonides on many aspects of his philosophical work and particularly regarding his (fundamental) conception of prophecy. For Maimonides, the prophet must be a philosopher, and, moreover, he must possess a strong imagination in order to receive and communicate to the wider public those intellectual notions that are objects of the prophecy. According to Abravanel, such an interpretation is, first of all, violence done to the literal meaning of the biblical text: it is unheard of that the prophets were

philosophers and, on the other hand, no great philosopher has ever been a prophet. Prophecy and philosophy follow two different paths, the former characterized by an intuitive and “a priori” nature and the latter by a consequential, “a posteriori” approach. Prophecy depends on God’s will and addresses everyone; it does not entail a philosophical training of those who communicate it nor of those who receive it. Although he distanced himself from Maimonides in this respect, Abravanel conceived a great deal of his work as a development of Maimonides’ positions, which constantly and explicitly constitute his starting point as well as his frame of reference.

Another important Spanish author, Yitzḥaq Arama (ca. 1420–1494), whose sermons collected under the title *‘Aqedath Yitzḥaq* had a deep influence on the Jewish culture of the fifteenth century, built his religious, anti-intellectualistic vision of the relationship between reason and revelation on Maimonides’ conceptions systematically refuted.

Other well-known Spanish authors, like Avraham Bibago (ca. 1420–1488/1489) and Avraham Shalom (d. 1492), though not sharing the extreme rationalistic position of Maimonides, consider him the absolute reference of Jewish religious thought, defend him against his philosophical adversaries, and see themselves as his disciples.

The Use of Maimonides’ Rationalism in the Conflict with *qabbalah*

As a consequence of the gradual change of the intellectual reference points in different fields of knowledge – such as in the fields of physics, cosmology, and logic – also Maimonideanism, which depended on such reference points, suffered from a relative decline within the Jewish culture. The *Guide* continued to be read, studied, and even translated, but there aren’t in this period any intellectual elaborations that are fully or even partly based on Maimonides’ thought.

In Safed, an important center for the production of cabalistic literature, Maimonides was worshipped mainly as the great codifier of Jewish jurisprudence. Yosef Caro (1488–1575) with his

famous *Shulhan 'arukh* aimed at creating a new *Mishneh Torah*: as if he were “Maimonides redivivus,” Yosef Caro considered himself an authority capable of unifying the religious laws of the various Jewish communities, and his attitude betrayed Messianic ambitions.

During the seventeenth century, *qabbalah* took on the role of dominant cultural stream within the Jewish world, filling the void left by the crisis of philosophy. However, the rise of *qabbalah* was opposed by some intellectuals of rationalistic inspiration. One of these is the Italian polymath Leone (Yehudah Aryeh) Modena (1571–1648), who attacked the “new” cabalistic culture by stemming from Maimonides’ work, which enjoyed undisputed prestige in all streams of the Jewish thought.

In his *Ary Nohem* (A Roaring Lion), the Venetian rabbi addressed his disciple Yosef Hamitz, who was moving away from the rationalistic orientation in order to embrace *qabbalah*. Modena and Hamitz had read the *Guide* together, and it is actually through the *Guide* that some crucial points of the Jewish esoteric doctrine are criticized. First of all, the cabalists state that the revealed doctrine cannot be subject to discussions or, least of all, demonstrations, while Maimonides had clearly indicated, right at the end of his *Guide*, that the truths transmitted by prophetic means can and should be studied through the use of reason: thus, *qabbalah*, according to Modena, is far from being a science. Furthermore, the cabalists state that their doctrine represents the true Jewish esoteric tradition, i.e., the *Sitrei Torah* (Secrets of the Torah), even though it is clear that, as categorically stated by Maimonides, such secrets went lost due to the exile and decadence of the Jewish people. There is no other way but to try to reconstruct, by means of reason, those lost truths – as Maimonides himself tried to do – and in any case, the association of the *qabbalah* with those truths would be arrogant and untruthful.

Modena is neither an Averroist nor a Neoplatonist: he does not point out the possibility of double truth, as the former do, nor does he think of the conjunction with the divinity as the final scope of intellectual activity, as held by the latter.

His rationalism is moderate in nature, and it aims at finding reasons behind the data of revelation, in which he believes, avoiding any sort of irrational dogmatism. His opposition to *qabbalah* stems from an outlook on Judaism as a revealed religion that is also rational or, at least, reasonable. Therefore, Maimonideanism characterizes itself – in this period as well as later on – both as a call to reasonableness and the refusal of a form of religion that exalts an undisputable tradition, minimizing the value of science.

Maimonides in the Renaissance Within the Context of the Christian Culture

Maimonides from the Viewpoint of “Christian Cabalists”

Also, some important Christian cabalists read Maimonides’ philosophical work and used it for their own theoretical elaborations. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) considered Maimonides a cabalist, but this judgment depends on the presentation of the doctrine of the cabalist Avraham Abulafia made by Pico’s translator, Flavius Mithridates.

The important humanist and “Christian cabalist” Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522) has probably been the first Christian reader of *The Guide for the Perplexed* in its Hebrew version. He quotes from this book explicitly and implicitly in several works of his, not only of cabalistic nature; but it is *De arte cabalistica* (1517) which contains a great number of references to the *Guide*, in several contexts: the doctrine of creation as emanation, the theory of knowledge as union between passive (i.e., human) and active (i.e., divine) intellect, and the criticism of magic and theurgy. Maimonides is often – even if not always – quoted by Reuchlin not under his name but, anonymously, as a cabalist and as such as a representative of the philosophia perennis, in contrast with the Talmudists. We can speak, in the case of Reuchlin’s reading, of Maimonides in a cabalistic and Neoplatonic garb.

However, Maimonides’ presence is even more relevant in the theological conception of

Paulus Ricius (1480–1541), a converted Jew from Trento who spent his life between Italy and Germany.

In his *Sal foederis* (1507) and *Statuta prudentum* (1530), Ricius refers to the Maimonidean idea of Jewish ceremonial laws (the *mitzwoth*) considering them as guidelines issued by the divine wisdom for the sake of keeping man away from idolatry, but then he goes further, postulating that such laws should now be considered as obsolete – and this was something that Maimonides, of course, had never written – and should be replaced by moral laws which are eternally engraved in the human reason: these are, according to him, the “Secrets of the Torah” which the philosopher from Cordova repeatedly alluded to and which should now be disclosed, since humanity is mature enough to understand their truth. Christianity embodies and conveys such eternal rational laws that coincide with *qabbalah*, the philosophical core of esoteric Judaism as well as the archaic tradition of philosophical Christianity.

If it is true that rational and spiritual Christianity transcends Judaism, the latter, on the other hand, presents an important aspect that the true religion, founded upon the love of God as well as the intention of the believer irrespective of his ritual practices, should preserve: the aversion to images. Also, in this case, Ricius follows Maimonides: images might have been helpful to those men who were not capable of conceptual capacity in getting them to formulate some religious notions; however, their function, just as that of the commandments, has a merely historical value. Therefore, authentic Christianity, for Ricius, is a philosophical religion, indifferent to the positive commandments, and without images (this latter position led his critics to accuse him of being protestant and iconoclast). The thirteen fundamental beliefs of Judaism as enunciated by Maimonides, according to Ricius, can be accepted without reserve by the Christians, apart from the one relating to Messianism, which after all will start being omitted in the dogmatic prescriptions of later Jewish authors.

The philosophic inspiration of religion as postulated by Maimonides and his outlook on

the ceremonial laws as conducive to the intellectual activity and, in some cases, with a historical and pedagogical function, all contributed to the inspiration of this “Christian cabalist.” Maimonides’ work provided him with the prerequisites for the formulation of a universal and rational religion, which might probably be seen as the trigger of his conversion to Christianity.

Maimonides’ Work as an Outstanding Means to Access Jewish Thought and Jurisprudence

A Latin translation (from the Hebrew version) of *The Guide for the Perplexed* (titled *Dux neutrorum*) existed from the middle of the thirteenth century (around the year 1240), and it had provided some of the protagonists of Scholasticism, such as Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, with important philosophical topics of reflection.

In the context of a new interest in the Jewish culture during the Renaissance, the abovementioned version was printed, in 1520 in Paris, by the humanist and Hebraist Agostino Giustiniani, a Dominican, bishop of Nebbio (Corsica), and editor of an important polyglot *Psalterium*.

Giustiniani published this text with the title *Dux seu director dubitantium aut perplexorum*, affirming that in it “many philosophical reasons that lead to the comprehension of the Sacred Scripture are exposed and demonstrated.” The author’s great merit, according to Giustiniani, lies in not being “superstitious” at all but, on the contrary, in being sincere and truth-loving, unlike most more recent Jewish authors.

One century later, when Hebraic studies in the Christian world had reached a phase of maturity, Johannes Buxtorf II published a new Latin version of the Hebrew text of the *Guide*, with the title *Doctor perplexorum* (Basel, 1629). The praise for Maimonides in his book was motivated by the same reasons as Giustiniani’s, which are taken further by Buxtorf: according to the latter, this Jewish author is far from the “Talmudic fables, on the contrary he warns us against wasting too much time studying the *Talmud*”

(which was far from the real intentions of Maimonides who, as a great Talmudist, had simply criticized the study of the *Talmud* when not associated to the study of the sciences and philosophy). Maimonides, according to Buxtorf, had gotten his ideas “from the scripture, from philosophy and from sound reason” and was different, in all respects, from his coreligionists, who were devoted to cabalistic and Talmudic superstitions.

The translator admitted that some of the ideas contained in this book were contrary to the principles of the Christian religion; nonetheless, as a true humanist-philologist, he did not want to censure them: “I didn’t want to castrate the author.”

Other prestigious Hebraists, such as Josephus Scaliger and Isaac Casaubon, admired the *Guide*, which they defined as “a divine work,” “which one cannot praise enough, rich in good ideas and extremely useful to Christian theology.” In reality, notwithstanding the admiration aroused in its Christian readers, the reading of the *Guide* played a more important role in disseminating knowledge about the Jewish religious thought rather than in stimulating any original reflections – apart from the examples mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The Latin translations of Maimonides’ theological and juridical writings were actually of great importance for the comprehension of the Jewish culture. Such translations were done in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and beyond, mostly in Calvinist and Lutheran contexts, up until the eighteenth century.

One of the most important sixteenth-century Hebraists, the German Sebastian Münster, published in Basel in 1527 the translation of Shemuel ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew version of Maimonides’ *Logic*, i.e., the *Logica Sapientis Rabbi Simeonis* (sic) and then, 2 years later, in Worms, the *Tredecim Articuli Fidei Judaeorum*, extracted from the Hebrew translation of the commentary on the *Mishnah*. The latter articles were approached again in 1569 by the French Gilbert Genebrard, who translated the *Laws Concerning Kings* (*Hilkhoth melahim* 1572) from the *Mishneh Torah*, as well as the list of 613 commandments (1584). These commandments had already

been translated by Paulus Ricius in his *Opuscula Varia* (1515). At a later stage, the *Mishneh Torah* – a cornerstone book of any Jewish library – became the text privileged by Latino-Christian translators.

Especially in the Netherlands, during the eighteenth century, some parts of the *Mishneh Torah* were translated, in particular, *Hilkhoth Avodah Zarah* (Dionysius Vossius, *De Idolatria...*), *Hilkhoth Yesodey ha-Torah* (Guglielmus Vorstius, *Constitutiones de Fundamentis Legis*, Amsterdam 1638), and the opening section of this work, which is of a theological nature, i.e., the *Hilkhoth De’oth* (Georgius Gentius, *Canones Ethici*).

All the abovementioned translations were performed by the disciples of the rabbi of Amsterdam Menasseh ben Israel, who played a role in mediation between the Jewish culture and the Christian one. Such mediation revolved – once again – around the work of Maimonides, who was considered, essentially, the main codifier of the Jewish jurisprudence.

Thanks to the richness and complexity of his work, rabbi Moses ben Maimon has not only prompted reflection among the Jews, which is evident in the variety of commentaries throughout the Renaissance as well as at the beginning of the modern era but also within the Christian culture: through his works as a theologian and jurist, he allowed the Christians to get to know and better appreciate the thought and rules of life of their Jewish neighbors.

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Mainardi, Giovanni

Born: 24 February 1462, Ferrara

Died: 7 March 1536, Ferrara

Concetta Pennuto

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Abstract

This article is a short biography of the Italian Renaissance physician and philosopher Giovanni Mainardi (Ferrara 1462–1536). The article includes the following sections: biography, heritage and rupture with the tradition, innovative and original aspects, and impact and legacy. The latest section of the article is the bibliography, which includes the bibliographical references and some other bibliographical data.

Mainardi was a professor of medicine at the Studium of Ferrara; he also practiced medicine at the court of Buda in Hungary, as a physician to kings Ladislas II and Ludovicus, and at the court of Ferrara, as a physician to the d'Este family, namely to Cardinal Ippolito d'Este and Duke Alfonso I.

The medical works by Mainardi are not numerous. Nevertheless, Mainardi left an important legacy to subsequent physicians. He participated in a famous dispute on French pox, demonstrating that astrology is not necessary in order to explain the origins and transmission of the disease. But his major contributions to medical knowledge are his letters, which inaugurated a new way of writing on medicine, as well as a new style both in reasoning and in medical practice. Mainardi also worked on pharmacy and medical diagnosis, correcting what he deemed the many errors contained in medieval pharmacology and in Medieval and Renaissance commentaries on Galen's *Ars parva*.

Alternate names

[Manardi, Giovanni](#); [Manardo, Giovanni](#)

Biography

Giovanni Mainardi (Fig. 1) was born in Ferrara, on the 24th of February 1462; his first name was Giovanni Giacomo. He studied at the Studium of Ferrara, where he graduated *in artibus et medicina* on the 17th of October 1482 (Mugnai Carrara 2006). At the Studium of Ferrara, Mainardi studied *studia humanitatis* with Battista Guarino and medicine with Francesco Benzi, and maybe also with Palmarino Anguissola (Mugnai Carrara 2006; Mugnai Carrara 2005). Secondary literature discusses Mainardi's scholarship with the famous humanist physician Niccolò Leonicensi (1428–1524). Nevertheless, during a lesson on Galen's *Ars parva* (1546–1547), the humanist physician Giambattista Da Monte (1498–1551) spoke of Mainardi, saying that he had been Leonicensi's pupil (Monte ms n. 1760, 14r–v).

After a period of teaching at the Studium of Ferrara, in 1493 Mainardi moved to Mirandola, where he was the personal physician of Gianfrancesco Pico (1469–1533), the nephew of

Giovanni Pico. As Mugnai Carrara states, Mainardi was Pico's teacher of philosophy, and probably also had diplomatic tasks. One of the most important outcomes of Mainardi's collaboration with Gianfrancesco Pico is the posthumous publication of the latter's *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (Pico 1496) (Fig. 2).

During his stay in Mirandola (1493–1502), Mainardi participated in a quarrel about the origin of the *morbus Gallicus*, the French pox, i.e., syphilis. In 1502, Mainardi moved to Carpi and Ferrara. As one can grasp from his own writings, Mainardi taught at the Studium of Ferrara between ca. 1507 and 1513, when he left Ferrara to move to Hungary. There, he became the personal physician of King Ladislas II and, after his death, of his brother, Ludovicus (Mugnai Carrara 2006). Before 1518, Mainardi's son, Timoteo, who had become a physician in 1514, joined his father in Buda. During his stay in Hungary, Mainardi worked on the publication of his commentary on the first book of Galen's *Ars parva*, where he collected the results of his previous teachings at the University of Ferrara and which was first published in Rome in 1525 (Mainardi 1525). He also worked on his first book of medical letters (books I–VI), which were eventually published in Ferrara in 1521.

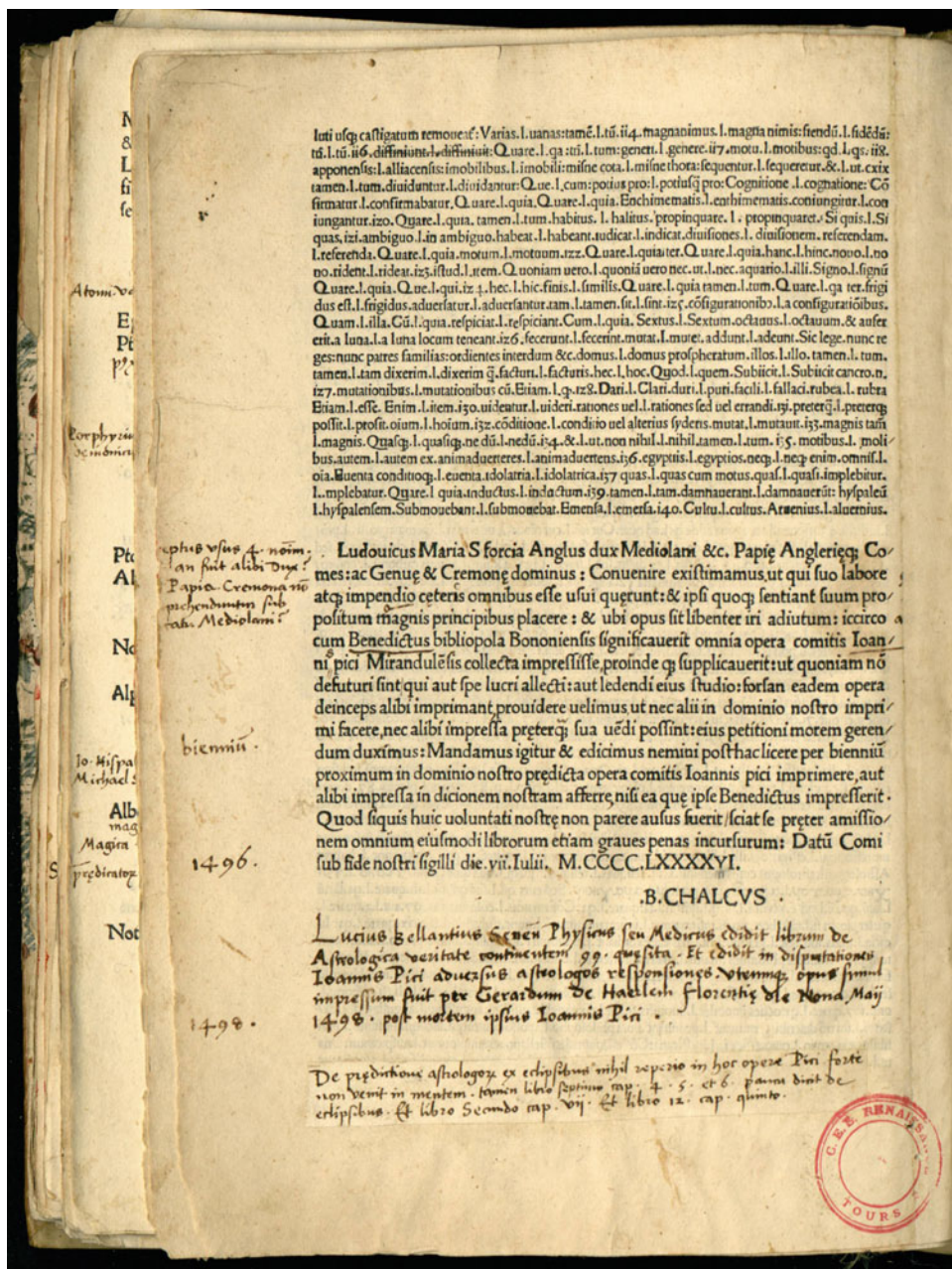
Back in Ferrara in 1518, Mainardi's reputation of being a brilliant physician was evidenced by his presence in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (Fig. 3). Mainardi practiced medicine at Este's family court, as a physician to the Cardinal Ippolito d'Este and Duke Alfonso I. He was also appointed first professor of medicine at the University of Ferrara, where he died on the 7th March 1536.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In 1501, Mainardi published his first work. In fact, in 1500 Mainardi entered the quarrel on the origins of the French pox, which started in 1496 at the University of Lipsia. The main actors were Simon Pistoris and Martin Pollich von Mellerstadt: the dispute was about the influence of the stars on the origins and transmission of the disease. According to Pollich, the disease was



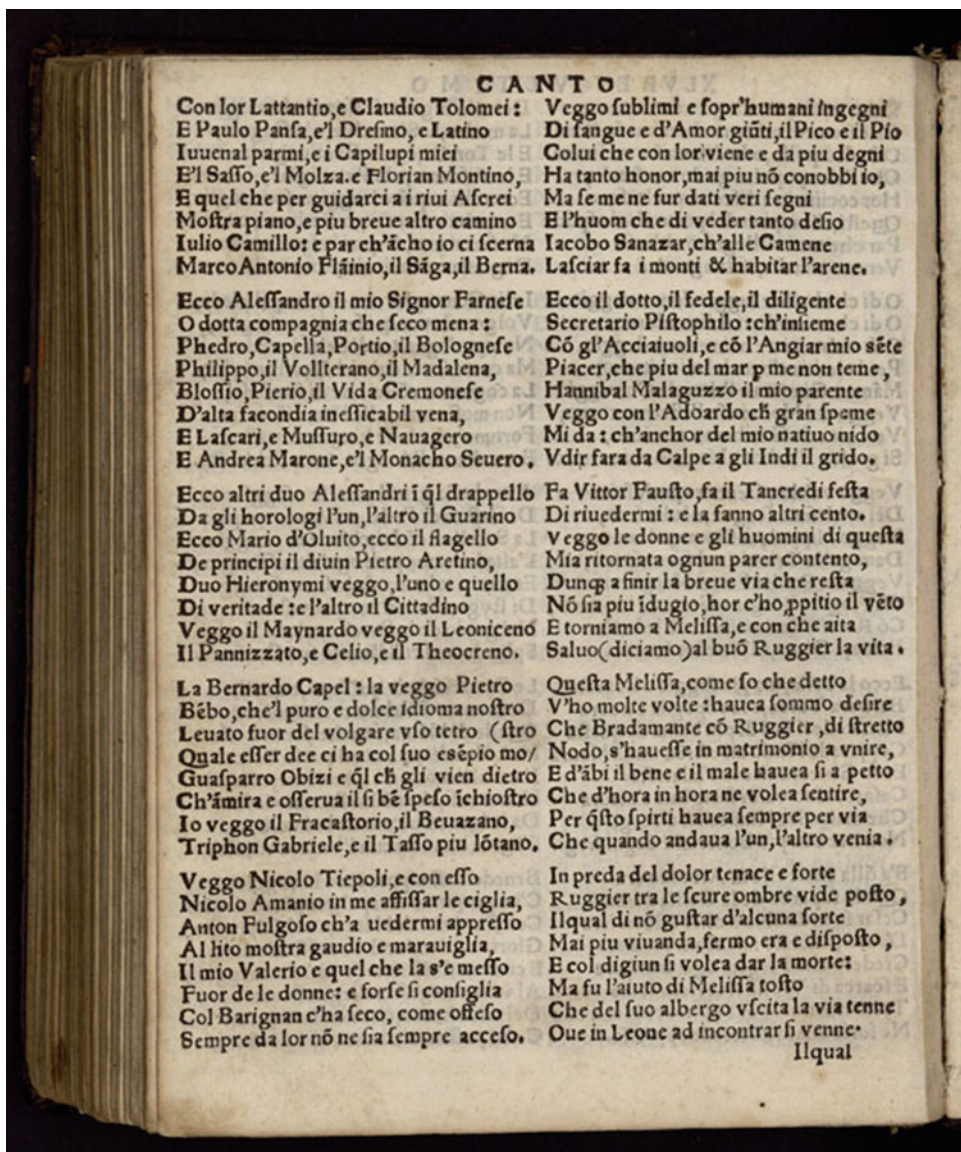
Mainardi, Giovanni, Fig. 1 P. Giovio 1577 Basel, *Elogia virorum literis illustrium*, Mainardi's portrait. <http://ihm.nlm.nih.gov/luna/servlet/view/search?q=B018586>



Mainardi, Giovanni, Fig. 2 G. Pico 1496 Bologna, *Disputationes*, colophon with manuscript annotations (Tours, CESR-BVH)

related to the corruption of the air (Pollich 1496, 43); on the contrary, Pistoris believed the disease originated from the astrological influence of the stars (Pistoris 1498, 129–130). In his works, Pistoris attacked Pollich and also Leonicensio, who had published his *De epidemia* in 1497,

where he had stated that French pox was an epidemic disease originated that from corrupted air and humors (Leonicensio 1497, d3r). In 1500, Mainardi wrote a letter against Pistoris, where he attacked astrological medicine, since, as Giovanni Pico had shown, medicine must be cleared from



Mainardi, Giovanni, Fig. 3 L. Ariosto 1532 Ferrara, *Orlando Furioso*, Mainardi's presence (Tours, BM Bourges, CESR-BVH)

astrology. Mainardi explained that the medical methods of diagnosis and therapy are not based on astrology: Hippocrates and Avicenna did not use astrology in their medicine (Mainardi 1501; Zambelli 1965). This letter became the first of the second book of *Epistolae medicinales*, first published in 1521 (Mainardi 1521, II 1, 9v–16v).

Mainardi's medical letters were very successful. The first volume was published again in 1528

(Mainardi 1528) and in 1529 (Mainardi 1529; this edition is quite well known because Erasmus participated in the diffusion of the text). The second volume of letters, books VII–XII, was first published in Bologna in 1531 (Mainardi 1531), then in Lyon in 1532 (Mainardi 1532). François Rabelais (1494–1553) edited this text, dedicating the volume to the jurist André Tiraqueau (Céard 2006). In 1535, the last edition was published in

Basel, when Mainardi was still alive (Mainardi 1535a). Eighteen books of letters were contained in this edition. Many other editions followed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: since the 1540 edition (Mainardi 1540), the books of letters had become 20.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The first letter of the *Epistolae medicales* starts with the vindication of a new way of writing medicine, namely, the epistolary genre (Mainardi 1521, I 1, 1). Mainardi presents himself as a *homo novus* (new man), since writing medical letters is a gesture of opposition to medical authority and tradition, normally based on treatises. This gesture was accompanied by the search for the correction of medical errors in medicine and in the study of nature. According to Mainardi, who was following the scientific and humanistic path of his teacher Leoniceno, these errors were the result of the lack of critical analysis of sources, and of the oblivion of ancient Greek and Latin texts, in favor of Medieval Latin translations and Arabic medicine. Physicians should read “the original” ancient texts by Hippocrates and Galen, that is, they should search for the good lesson from ancient manuscripts and the real object described by ancient texts. Philology becomes a tool of medicine, useful in the inquiry on diseases and body parts, as well as to give the right diagnosis and choose the good therapy.

One of the most important letters in Mainardi’s collection is the celebrated second letter of the seventh book. This deals with diseases of the external parts of the body. It is addressed to the surgeon Michaelis Sanctanna, who, in 1525, asked Mainardi to remove from the scientific milieu the confusion of names of diseases. This confusion, Mainardi says, is due to the illiteracy of the physicians, who do not grasp the names of the diseases. As a matter of fact, physicians do not know exactly the way Greek, Latin, and Arabian physicians called diseases. Consequently, they cannot find the disease they are looking up in the medical literature. At the same time, communication with other physicians and surgeons is

hindered, since there is no agreement on the medical language. A good physician speaks a simple medical language, where the right word matches the right thing. A good physician does not repeat by heart ancient texts, but is able to use them, together with natural philosophy, to search for the cause of the disease (Mainardi 1535a, VII 2, 96–97).

This was one of the most important points in Galenic teaching, as Mainardi knew by his reading of Galen’s *Ars parva*, also known as *Ars medicinalis*. As already said, Mainardi published his commentary on the first book of Galen’s *Ars parva* in 1525. The work was dedicated to his son and dated 1515: Mainardi considered *Ars parva* as a scholarly book of medicine. His commentary is an explanation for his son, who studied medicine and could not follow his father’s teachings on the subject (Mainardi 1525, A2r). *Ars parva* gave physicians the right method to practice medicine, namely a method based on the search for the cause and signs of diseases and things of Nature.

The principles of this new method of practicing medicine by Mainardi were also applied to pharmaceuticals, as showed by his annotations on the works on remedies by Mesue (died 857). Mainardi’s annotations were dated 1521 and were published in the 1535 edition of the medical letters (Mainardi 1535b). As one can read in the preface of the annotations, truth (*veritas*) of medicine and pharmacy can be obtained by explaining unclear passages, developing the too concise texts, filling in omissions as well as correcting errors (Mainardi 1535b, 405).

Impact and Legacy

Giovanni Mainardi’s letters left quite an important legacy to medical practice and literature. During the sixteenth century, as well as during the following centuries, many physicians wrote medical letters on medicine, botany, pharmacy, surgery, and so on, following Mainardi’s (McLean 2008; Siraisi 2013; Van Miert 2013).

Another important legacy of Mainardi’s teaching is the criticism of his predecessors in order to

correct the many errors of medicine. Mainardi showed how to apply philology to medicine, in order to clarify medical literature, and especially to the identification of the meaning of medical works. This search for the good and real meaning of medical words was fundamental, according to Mainardi, in order to allow good communication between physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries, in the interests of patients and medicine itself, as shown by the French translation of the famous medical letters VII 2 (Mainardi 1555).

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Mair, John

Born: 1467/68

Died: 1 May 1550

John T. Slotemaker

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Abstract

John Mair was a Scottish-born philosopher and theologian who taught at the Universities of Paris, Glasgow, and St. Andrews. He made significant contributions to logic and theology and wrote the first history of Great Britain.

Biography

John Mair was born in Gleghornie, Scotland in 1467. His primary education was in Haddington, and he enrolled in Cambridge University in 1490. He resided in God's House College, later to become Christ's Church. In 1491 or 1492, he enrolled in the Collège Sainte-Barbe at the University of Paris where he earned his licentiate in arts in 1494 and the Master of Arts in 1495. Mair studied the liberal arts under John Bolu, Thomas Briscot, and Gerónimo Pardo and theology under John Standonck and Noël Beda at the Collège de Montaigu. Mair received his doctorate on November 12, 1506 and remained in Paris until 1518, when he returned to Scotland to serve as the principal regent of the University of Glasgow until 1523 at which point he took a position at the University of St. Andrews. He remained there until 1526 when he returned to Paris to teach both logic and theology. Late in 1530 or 1531, Mair returned to Scotland and took a position at St. Andrews serving as provost beginning in 1533. He died on May 1, 1550 [On Mair's life see J.K. Farge in (Slotemaker and Witt 2015), 13–22].

Mair published extensively between 1499 and 1530. The majority of his early works were in logic and published between 1499 and 1508. Between

1509 and 1530, the majority of his publishing was dedicated to his massive theological commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Mair also published several biblical commentaries and a history of Great Britain; he also edited several scholastic treatises, including Adam Wodeham's commentary on the *Sentences* (i.e., his commentary on the *Abbreviatio* of Henry Totting of Oyta), and John Duns Scotus's *Reportatio* on the *Sentences*.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Mair's early logical works are grounded in a nominalist logic that is intimately engaged with works of late medieval scholasticism. Thus, Mair's earliest logical works rely upon an interpretation of Aristotelian philosophy that predominated in the late medieval period in works such as Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales* (Broadie 1985, 2009). In his later logical works, however, Mair breaks with a strict nominalist approach and begins to rework his logical texts with an eye to Aristotle's texts themselves. In this regard, while it is accurate to consider Mair a nominalist logician, he represents a complicated case given that his nominalist approach is not strictly synonymous with the nominalists of the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries (Slotemaker and Witt 2015, 241–287). Further, Mair often attempts to reconcile the various competing schools of the so-called *Wegestreit* (e.g., the *nominales* and *reales*) as well as a strict scholastic methodology with a humanist informed method. This complicated methodology is found not only in Mair's logical works but is also a significant aspect of his greatest work, his massive commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.

The first indication that Mair's commentary on the *Sentences* is not a *traditional* work is the introductory dialogue with which Mair begins the 1510 edition of his commentary on book I. Here Mair includes a dialogue – “on the subject matter that should be investigated by a theologian” – between two of his students, Gavin Douglas and David Cranston (Slotemaker and Witt 2015, 25–40). Douglas presents a critique of scholastic method and even quotes the humanist Lorenzo Valla, while Cranston defends

scholasticism. And, what is odd is that the dialogue has no resolution. Mair leaves the question open – his response is his massive commentary that follows. And, while it is easy to read the work as the last dying breath of scholastic theology at the beginning of the sixteenth century, what one realizes is that Mair attempts in this work to seek a *via media* between the various theological positions defended by the nominalists and realists and also the distinct positions and methods of the humanists. In this regard, Mair's massive theological commentary is similar to his late logical works that seek to find some common ground between the various schools of thought. In this respect, Mair is a complex thinker who warrants further study both as a philosopher and a theologian.

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Makkovius

- [Maccovius](#)

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Makovski

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Makowsky

► [Maccovius](#)

Maksim Grek

► [Maximus the Greek](#)

Manardi, Giovanni

► [Mainardi, Giovanni](#)

Manardo, Giovanni

► [Mainardi, Giovanni](#)

Manetti, Giannozzo

Born: 1396, Florence

Died: 1459, Naples

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Abstract

The Florentine merchant and humanist Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459) combined a successful career as a businessman, civic official, and diplomat with extraordinary intellectual achievements that included a vast library (now in the Vatican), a knowledge of both

classics and Hebrew, and a vast array of compositions in Italian and Latin – orations, treatises, dialogues, and translations of Aristotle, the Psalms, and the New Testament. Like his contemporaries, Manetti principally devoted himself to the field of ethics, from Peripatetic moral tracts to the consolatory literature of the Greeks, and argued for a new positive vision of humankind in stark contrast to the pessimism of medieval thought. Yet he was deeply devout and composed ten books of Christian apology *Adversus Iudaeos et Gentes* [*Against the Jews and Gentiles*], in which he rejects the beliefs and practices of pagan religion and Pentateuchal legislation, and he exalts the teaching of Christ. Together with Lorenzo Valla, he is significant as a precursor of Renaissance philology for his insistence on applying textual criticism to the most “sacred” texts of the Western tradition, Aristotle, and the Bible.

Biography

Giannozzo Manetti (Florence, June 5, 1396, to Naples, October 27, 1459) is one of the most remarkable figures of Florentine humanism in the fifteenth century – an opulent merchant, an active statesman, a profound scholar, a secular philosopher and theologian, and a learned Christian Hebraist. Although we have little record of his extraordinary success in business, his numerous activities both public and private, are amply documented throughout his long career. As an official representative of the Florentine republic, he has left funeral orations for Leonardo Bruni and Giannozzo Pandolfini, as well as a considerable corpus of public speeches in both Latin and Italian. As a humanist scholar, he wrote important dialogues and treatises, including the celebrated *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* [*On Human Worth and Excellence*], which many consider a central manifesto of the new Renaissance philosophy. As a secular philosopher, he undertook the translation (or at least the critical revision) of Aristotle’s ethical treatises; and as a precursor of Protestant theology, he translated the Greek text of the New Testament into Latin. Finally, he

studied and mastered Hebrew, and not only evaluated texts central to the Judeo-Christian tradition but also translated the Psalms into Latin – a layman scholar’s response to the canonic work of St. Jerome.

Born into a wealthy family in the Florentine district of Santo Spirito, Manetti took part in the family business, but also studied philosophy and theology at the Florentine Studium. By 1425, he was a member of the bankers’ guild, and from 1429 until his exile in 1453 he held numerous important public offices both at home and abroad.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Manetti learned Latin and Greek in circles that encouraged both traditional Aristotelian and humanistic currents, but he also resolved to learn Hebrew, and to that end boarded converted Jews in his household. In contrast to Leonardo Bruni, in many respects his role model, who rejected the study of Hebrew as unimportant, Manetti believed that the “errors” of the Jews could only be refuted on the basis of the Old Testament read in the original Hebrew.

As a humanist thinker, Manetti employed three characteristic genres: the treatise *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* [*On Human Worth and Excellence*], 1450–1452, dedicated to Alphonse of Aragon; *Adversus Iudaeos et Gentes* [*Against the Jews and Gentiles*], 1448–1458; the neo-Ciceronian dialogue (*Dialogus consolatorius de morte filii* [*Consolatory Dialogue*], 1438; *Dialogo consolatorio* [*Consolatory Dialogue*], 1439 [in Italian]; *Dialogus in symposio* [*Banquet Dialogue*], 1448), and biography (*Vitae Socratis et Seneca* [*Lives of Socrates and Seneca*], 1441; *Vitae Dantis, Francisci Petrarchae, Ioannis Boccacii* [*Lives of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio*]; *De vita ac gestis Nicolai Quinti summi pontificis*, 1455 [*Life and Deeds of Pope Nicholas V*]).

Innovative and Original Aspects

While many of Manetti’s writings appear to be merely ambitious compilations, there are a few currents of original thought. Based on his

knowledge of Aristotle and Cicero, he offers surveys of ancient Greek philosophy in two works. Book 1 of *Adversus Iudaeos et Gentes* offers a fairly detailed account of ancient philosophy. By contrast, there are briefer comments on classical thought in *De dignitate et excellentia hominis*, whose title is drawn from a phrase in Cicero’s *De officiis* [*On Duties*] 1.107 – “hominis excellentia et dignitas” [man’s excellence and dignity] – which presumably translates a concept found in the Stoic philosopher Panaetius, the principal model for the Roman treatise (Cancik 2002, 20). Both treatises add a new dimension to humanist thought by adducing insights from the Jewish tradition. Manetti writes as the first Christian apologist of the Renaissance to study Hebrew and the Judaic tradition. In this, he is the first to insist on a trilingual basis for humanist learning and piety: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

Composed at the request of Alfonso of Aragon, the humanist king of Naples, Manetti’s most famous work was written in response to two Latin works on the human condition (edition in Manetti 1975). The proximate cause was a treatise dedicated in 1450 to Pope Nicholas V by Bartolomeo Facio (c.1400–1457), *De excellentia ac praestantia hominis* [*On the Excellence and Eminence of Man*]. Facio in turn had been inspired by a work on the same topic dedicated to him by Antonio da Barga, prior of the great Olivetan convent in Naples, in which Manetti would be buried in 1459. But a more authoritative, if more remote, provocation was furnished by the quintessentially medieval treatise *De miseria humane conditionis* [*On the Misery of the Human Condition*] written by the Roman nobleman and cardinal Lotario dei Conti di Segni, who later became Pope Innocent III (1198–1216). This powerful cleric had composed a tract to curb mankind’s propensity to sins like pride and avarice, but he had also proposed to write a complementary treatise on the dignity of the human condition, a work that was presumably forestalled by the author’s subsequent promotion and its attendant duties.

In replying to Lotario dei Segni, Manetti situates his treatise in an ongoing dialogue of humanists across the centuries. As Oliver Glaap has shown, there is a succession of Renaissance responses to the *De miseria*. About a century

and a half later, Petrarch refuted the cleric's arguments in his *De remediis utriusque fortune* (*On the Remedies for Good and Bad Fortune*) (ca. 1360). In *De remediis* 2.93, titled "De tristitia et miseria" (*On Sadness and Misery*), Petrarch advances two arguments against *De miseria*. First, he redefines wretchedness as a mental condition subject to the individual's control. Second, he chops logic and discounts our present earthly suffering by stressing future heavenly bliss. In 1447, the Olivetan monk Antonio da Barga, long resident at San Miniato al Monte in Florence and a friend of Manetti, wrote an epistle to Bartolomeo Facio, a humanist from La Spezia in Liguria who served at the court of Alfonso of Aragon in Naples. Having read Innocent's treatise, Antonio entreated Facio to compose the complementary work promised by the medieval cleric – a treatise on the dignity of man – and outlined the topics that the humanist might employ: he recommends Cicero and Lactantius for their celebration of the human body and, like Petrarch, stresses the joys of the afterlife – enumerated as 12 blessings and 6 joys.

In the event, Facio composed a work along these lines, which he dedicated to Pope Nicholas V. Without citing Antonio da Barga, Facio offers a series of arguments on human excellence that rely on Christian beliefs: man created in the image and likeness of God, the immortality of the soul, and the benefits enjoyed by blessed souls in heaven. Among his friends, Manetti counted Antonio da Barga – as well as Nicholas V – and he was perhaps distressed at Facio's failure to cite the Olivetan monk in his treatise. Alfonso of Aragon may well have wondered why his official historiographer had dedicated his work to the Pope rather than to his Neapolitan patron. In any event, Alfonso asked Manetti to compose his own treatise on the subject.

As noted above, in selecting the title for his work, Manetti adopted a phrase found in Cicero's *De officiis*. He also cites the *locus classicus* of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 1.84–86, which exalts man for his upright stature and gaze – verses quoted earlier by Petrarch in his *Remedia* (Glaap 1994, 68, 124). The fame and fortune of the work are not hard to explain. In the Renaissance, it was the only work by Manetti to be published in print, in an edition that appeared in Basel in 1532

(Basileae, apud Andream Cratandrum, Anno MDXXXII). In the twentieth century, the work's fourth book was printed in the influential anthology of Eugenio Garin, *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento* [*Latin Prose of the Quattrocento*] (1952), no doubt because it offered an exemplary humanistic refutation of the medieval conception of humankind offered in Lotario dei Segni's *De miseria*.

In Book 1, Manetti writes about the human body, celebrating its wonderful structure in passages that echo Cicero and Lactantius – authors who had been endorsed by Antonio da Barga. According to Christoph Dröge, Manetti's treatise is indebted to Lorenzo Valla's dialogue *De vero bono* [*On the True Good*], both for its appeal to the legitimacy of man's natural instincts and for its rejection of damnation as a primary ethical motivation (Dröge 1987, 108, 110). In Book 2, Manetti discusses the human soul – its divine creation in God's image and its excellence. To the divine aspects of the soul, Manetti adds the humanistic achievements of man's mental abilities, and extols his intelligence, memory, and will (Trinkaus 1970, 242). As evidence of man's creative intelligence, he adduces arts such as navigation from the Argonauts to recent Portuguese explorers, architecture and building from Noah to Brunelleschi, and art from the antiquities named by Pliny to the contemporary goldsmith Lorenzo Ghiberti. In a lengthy catalogue of human arts and sciences, Manetti also praises poetry, the humanities, jurisprudence, medicine, astrology, and theology (Dröge 1987, 112–115). Book 3 begins by discussing the relation between man's body and soul, a topic treated by Antonio da Barga early in his tract. While acknowledging concepts found in Aristotle and Cicero, Manetti attributes human existence to God's plan for the world. Manetti next describes man's admirable gifts – beauty, ingenuity, and wisdom – and portrays humankind as creators who share the divine nature of their Creator. Like Augustine, Manetti suggests that the pagan gods were merely the divinely inspired inventors of useful arts, a thesis that strikingly anticipates the Enlightenment views of Giambattista Vico's *Scienza nuova* (*The New Science*) (1725–1744). Manetti insists on the anthropocentric nature of the world: all things were

created for humankind, an assertion that echoes Paul “omnia enim vestra sunt” (“all things are yours”) (1 Cor. 3:22–23; cf. Trinkaus 1970, 247). Man’s function is to act and understand (*agere et intelligere*, echoing Cicero, *De finibus* [*On Moral Ends*] 2.40). Book 4, which reads as a sort of afterthought, offers a methodical rebuttal of Lotario Segni’s *De miseria*. Manetti’s arguments are drawn from a wide range of sources: the writings of Aristotle and Cicero, the Bible (with comments on the Hebrew of the Old Testament), and the Hermetic corpus. Paradoxically, while Manetti today suffers from a reputation for orthodoxy, he made his name by advancing ideas that often ran counter to contemporary ecclesiastical thought, as Pico della Mirandola would later do in his *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* [*On Human Worth and Excellence*], and in 1583 Manetti’s treatise was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books.

Impact and Legacy

Initially, Manetti’s influence seemed limited in Florence to a few admirers like Donato Acciaiuoli and Vespasiano da Bisticci. There were exceptions. In his *Italia Illustrata* [*Italy Illuminated*], dedicated to Pope Nicholas V in 1453, Biondo Flavio included Manetti (who had just joined the Curia) among the illustrious Tuscans of his day (Biondo 2005, 74: “Ianoctus Manectus, litterarum Graecarum Latinarumque peritia atque eloquentia... patriam exorna[n]t” [Giannozzo Manetti honored his homeland by his learning and elquence in Greek and Latin letters]). Later, the Spanish nobleman Nuño de Guzmán, whom the humanist had befriended during the Council of Florence, made a Castilian version of Manetti’s 1453 oration for Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta (Lawrance 1989, 193–228). Next, the Florentine Cristoforo Landino paid tribute to Manetti in his Italian commentary on Dante’s *Commedia* (Landino 1974, 1:130):

Et hoggi vivono non pochi, e quali o già perfecti o no, o nel corso che guida ad perfectione tanto progressi, che saranno in gran nome ne’ futuri secoli appresso di quegli che dopo noi verranno.

Optimo phisico et methaphisico, et in tre lingue externe docto vedemo ne’ tempi nostri Iannoctio Manetto. Traduxe di greco. Traduxe d’hebreo non pochi libri, et molto utili. Scripse chose morali et naturali.

[Today there live many men who have either attained perfection or are so advanced on the way to perfections that they will enjoy renown in the future generations that come after us. In our time, we witnessed in Giannozzo Manetti an excellent student of physics and metaphysics, who was learned in three foreign languages. He translated several books from Greek and Hebrew that were very useful, and wrote about ethics and natural science.]

In his 1490 dialogue *De hominibus doctis* (*On Learned Men*), Paolo Cortesi praised Manetti together with Leon Battista Alberti, but wondered why Manetti was not celebrated as much as he deserved (Cortesi 1973, 32):

Sed multum duo doctrina praestiterunt Jannotius Manettius et Baptista Albertus, quorum alter unus omnium doctissimum putabatur, alter etiam in architectura disertus fuit. Sed in Jannotio admirabile quoddam stadium omnium doctrinarum fuit; sed nescio quo pacto sit huius summi viri quam aliorum paulo ante dictorum nomen obscurius.

[In learning, two men stood out by far – Giannozzo Manetti and Battista Alberti. The former was considered the most learned of all, while the latter was also eloquent in the field of architecture. Now, Giannozzo possessed an amazing passion for all fields of learning, but for some reason the reputation of this great man is more obscure than that of others I have mentioned.]

In the field of scriptural studies, John Monfasani characterizes Manetti as “in fact, if not in influence, a more revolutionary biblical scholar than Valla” (Monfasani 2008, 30). As for his philosophical works, none circulated widely, although Manetti’s concept of human dignity seems to have influenced Pérez de Oliva (1492–1533) in Spain and Pierre Boiastuau (c. 1520–1566) in France (Schmeisser 2006). But after the treatise was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books in Spain in 1583, the censure was extended in 1590 in all Catholic lands, presumably because of its attacks on Pope Innocent III. In the early 1600s, German scholars, perhaps moved by his funeral oration on Leonardo Bruni, printed a few of Manetti’s Latin orations (Dröge 1998).

Meanwhile, in the mid-sixteenth century, the humanist’s vast library of Latin, Greek, and

Hebrew manuscripts was acquired piecemeal after 1529 by the rich merchant Ulrich Fugger of Augsburg. The collection then passed to Heidelberg, and following the conquest of that city in 1623, it was transferred to the Vatican Library in the so-called Palatine *fondi* that took their name from the Elector who ruled Heidelberg.

In the nineteenth century, Georg Voigt dedicated only some five pages to a summary biography of Manetti (Voigt 1893, 1:322–326) but elsewhere noted his presence and production throughout an illustrious career.

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- [Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Mannucci, Aldo

► [Manutius, Aldus](#)

Mantino ben Samuel, Jacob

Born: Late fifteenth century, Tortosa?

Died: 1549, Damascus

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Abstract

Jacob Mantino was one of the most important Jews in the sixteenth century who spent his life working for Christian patrons, teaching in Christian institutions, and translating philosophical and medical texts in Latin for the advancement of those subjects among his Christian, Latin-reading, audience. His key role was in providing clear and up-to-date translations of the principal Arabic/Islamic authorities on philosophy and medicine, Averroes and Avicenna.

Biography

Jacob Mantino's parents originated from Tortosa in Spain, where he may have been born. He states that he studied medicine and possibly the arts at the University of Padua. He practiced as a doctor in Bologna and became an intimate of Pope Leo X, to whom he dedicated a translation of the Middle Commentary on Aristotle's *On Animals* in 1521. In the same year, he dedicated his translation of the Compendium (Epitome) of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* to another patron, Ercole Gonzaga, bishop of Mantua. This marks the beginning of a lifetime devoted to the translation of Averroes (both his philosophical commentaries and his medical work, the *Colliget*) and Avicenna. At the time of the Fall of Rome (1527), Mantino moved

to Verona, where he continued to be held in high esteem. The new pope, Clement VII, consulted him concerning Henry VIII's appeal to Rome concerning the legality of his marriage to Catherine, in which Mantino quoted the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud to claim that Henry should not have divorced his queen (Katz). Mantino returned to Rome to be the personal physician of Pope Paul III (Alessandro Farnese; 1534–1549). At the same time, he played an important role in the Jewish community there and taught at La Sapienza University. He was consulted by Jews on legal matters and showed off his linguistic knowledge by deriving the pope's name from Etruscan, which he claimed was the same as Syriac, in which "pharnes" means "shepherd." In 1544 Mantino left Rome to return to Venice. Several documents survive which renew the permission given to him to wear the black beret of the scholar rather than the yellow Jewish cap, although he continued to live in the Jewish ghetto there. Already when he was in Bologna, he had shown an interest in learning Arabic. He obtained the collaboration of Leo Africanus (al-Hasan al-Wazzan) to draw up an Arabic vocabulary for which he started to find the equivalents in Hebrew and Latin (Davis). In 1549 he arranged to accompany the Venetian ambassador to Damascus, as his doctor, in pursuit of Arabic texts. But, unfortunately, he died soon after he arrived.

In the preface to his translation of Averroes's Epitome on the *Physics*, Mantino promised Ercole Gonzaga that, when he had finished translating a collection of medical works (first the *Colliget* of Averroes and then the paraphrases of several works of Galen, made by Iohannitius – Hunayn ibn Ishaq), he would "obtain all those commentaries of Averroes which are in the Hebrew language and, with God's leadership, and your favour, translate them into the Latin idiom." His motivation for doing this was that the earlier translations into Latin (usually directly from Arabic) were written in such a barbarous style that they were impossible to understand, and people blamed Averroes for doctrines that he did not hold. When the Giunta brothers undertook to publish "all the works of Aristotle with all the commentaries on those works that have come down to

us” in Venice in 1550, they mentioned, already on the title page in capital letters, that “some of these <commentaries>, having never been seen by the Latins before, have recently been translated by Jacob Mantino, while others have been more clearly and faithfully translated by him than ever before.” The fact that the editors could only include the first four books of the Middle Commentary on the *Topics* is an indication that this was as far as Mantino could reach before he died in Damascus. Both Mantino and his admirers emphasize the clarity of his Latin translations, in spite of their having been written by a Jew. Sometimes he only translated the most important and/or controversial parts of works, such as the 3rd and 56th chapter of Averroes’s commentary on the third book of Aristotle’s *On the Soul*, which propose the unity of the possible intellect, and the three parts (“fen”) of the *Canon of Medicine* of Avicenna that were most studied in the schools of medicine. Mantino regarded Aristotle as being indisputably the greatest philosopher but it was not possible to understand Aristotle without his commentator Averroes. Hence, it was very necessary to present Averroes’s words correctly. Similarly, Avicenna was “first in renown among the Arabs in the art of medicine” (Mantino did not pay attention to Avicenna’s philosophical works) and, again, had to be understood correctly. In turn, in a Jewish document from Rome, Mantino is called “the prince of the physicians”, and the editor of the 1562 printing of the Giunta edition of Aristotle-Averroes calls his translation “golden” (“aurea translatio”: vol. I, fol. 319r). In addition to translating works by Aristotle and Averroes, he translated an ethical work by Maimonides (*Eight Chapters on Ethics* dedicated to Guido Rangoni) as well as the “supercommentaries” on Averroes’s Middle Commentaries on Aristotelian logic by Levi ben Gerson.

Significance

Unlike other Jews of the Renaissance, Mantino, as far as we know, did not write works in Hebrew for his coreligionists. His significance is that he was consulted by Christian scholars as a repository of Jewish learning and as someone who could reveal to Latin readers the works of

Arabic/Islamic authorities in philosophy and medicine that had been preserved in Hebrew translations, as well as to improve, through these same Hebrew sources, the existing Latin translations of these Arabic texts. He was held in the greatest esteem by Christian scholars, for the study of Averroes in particular. His translations held a key position in the interpretation of Averroes of the mid- to late-sixteenth century, at a time when Averroes’s interpretation of Aristotle was most in vogue.

Works

MSS: There are no manuscripts of any works by Mantino.

Printed Works

Translations of Averroes (most of the following texts are included in Aristotelis Stagiritae’s *Omnia Quae extant opera. . . Averrois Cordubensis in ea opera omnes qui ad nos pervenere Commentarii. . . Quorum aliqui . . . nuper a Iacob Mantino sunt conversi. . . Venetiis apud Iuntas, 1550–1552*):

- Paraphrase (Middle Commentary) of Aristotle’s *On the Parts of Animals* (four books) and *On the Generation of Animals* (five books) (dedicated to Pope Leo X), Rome, 1521.
- Compendium (Epitome) of the *Metaphysics*, Rome, 1521; Bologna, 1523; Venice, 1542; Venice, 1550/2
- Middle Commentaries on the Peripatetic logical corpus: Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, Aristotle’s *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Topics* (books one to four only), and *Poetics*, Venice, 1550/2
- Middle Commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics* (first three books), Venice, 1550/2
- Paraphrase (Middle Commentary) of Plato’s *Republic* (dedicated to Pope Paul III) Rome 1539.
- Proemium to the Long Commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics*, Venice, 1550/2
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- Proemium to book 12 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*
- The Long Commentary to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (the first 150 comments of the first book), Venice, 1562.
- Proemium to the Long Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Venice, 1550/2
- *Colliget*, Venice, 1550/2
- Supercommentaries of Levi ben Gerson on Averroes's Middle Commentaries on Aristotelian logic, Venice, 1550/2

Translation of Avicenna:

- Avicenna, *Canon of Medicine*, Book I, fen 1, and Book IV, fen 1 (possibly also Book I, fen 4 and other parts of the *Canon*), Paris, 1538.

Translation of Maimonides:

- *Eight Chapters on Ethics*, Bologna, 1526.

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Manuel II Palaeologus

Born: Constantinople, 27 June 1350

Died: Constantinople, 21 July 1425

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Abstract

Manuel II Palaeologus was one of the most learned and distinguished emperors of Byzantium. An enlightened statesman and a skilled diplomat, Manuel reigned in a critical period for the Empire (1391–1425) when its unity and survival were threatened by internal divisions and external menaces. His cautious policy towards the union of the Churches was dictated by the political realities and his own experiences. Under constant pressure, Manuel found solace in his studies. Surrounded by a circle of scholars and theologians, time and official duties permitting, he pursued his interests in literature and theology. Humane ruler and a thinker in the eyes of his contemporaries, Manuel embodied the ideal of the Platonic philosopher-king.

Alternate Names

[Palaiologos](#)

Biography

Manuel was the second son of Emperor John V Palaeologus (1341–1376, 1379–1391) and Empress Helena Cantacuzene (1333–1396), the

youngest daughter of Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus (1347–1354). Having received his early education from his learned mother, Manuel was subsequently taught by Demetrius Cydones (ca. 1324–ca. 1398), to whom he repeatedly expressed his respect and admiration. Unable to devote himself entirely to his studies, however, as he had to be trained in various skills and disciplines proper to a young prince, Manuel considered his early education inadequate. The civil war that followed the usurpation of the throne by his elder brother Andronicus IV Palaeologus (1376–1379) prevented Manuel from continuing his studies. His imprisonment, together with his father and younger brother Theodore, by Andronicus in the tower of Anemas in Constantinople (1376–1379), where Andronicus and his son John VII (1390) had been previously incarcerated by John V (1373), proved instrumental in this respect, for it allowed him to concentrate on his studies. Despite his inadequate progress, due to the absence of proper guidance and instruction by a teacher under the circumstances, Manuel was animated by a passion for learning that was to last for the rest of his life.

Following John V's restoration and recognition of Andronicus IV as the legitimate successor, Manuel ruled as a despot in Thessalonica (1382). There he established his own court, which included friends who shared his own cultural and literary interests. Adopting an independent stance towards the Ottomans, Manuel initially managed to restore some territories to the Empire. In response, the city of Thessalonica was besieged by Murad I's (1362–1389) general, Hayreddin Pasha. It was in this period (1383–1386) that Manuel wrote his first rhetorical work, the *Counsel to the Thessalonians when they were besieged* (Συμβουλευτικὸς πρὸς τοὺς Θεσσαλονικεῖς ἡνίκα ἐπολιορκοῦντο) urging them to resist the enemy and fight for freedom. His failure to secure help from Venice and Pope Urban VI (1378–1389) resulted in the fall of the city (1387). Banned by his father to the island of Lemnos (1387–1389), with his future uncertain, Manuel found once more refuge in his studies. After his reconciliation with John V, Manuel succeeded him on the imperial throne (1391).

Compelled to accompany Murad I's successor, Bayezid I (1389–1402), as his vassal in the Ottoman campaign in Asia Minor, Manuel spent the early winter of 1391 in the vicinity of Ankara. There he met a Muslim Sufi teacher (possibly Hacı Bayram Velî [1352–1430]), with whom he held a series of conversations on Christianity and Islam. These Manuel later elaborated in his first major theological work, his lengthy *Dialogues with the Persian* (Διάλογος ὃν ἐποιήσατο μετὰ τινος Πέρσου τὴν ἀξίαν Μοντερίζη ἐν Ἀγκύρᾳ τῆς Γαλατίας . . .), in which he discusses primarily the conflicting beliefs of Islam and Christianity. Manuel's love for theology became a source of criticism by an anonymous person (most probably the Latinophrone teacher and theologian Manuel Calecas [d. 1410]), on the grounds that he had not received proper theological and philosophical training and that his official duties hardly allowed him to seriously study theology. Manuel responded to these criticisms in his long *Epistolary discourse on theology addressed to Alexius Iagoup* (Τῷ κυρῷ Ἀλεξίῳ τῷ Ἰαγούπ). Though Manuel acknowledged these facts, he stressed that for him they are not sufficient reasons to abstain from discussing theological subjects, provided that one is aware of the proper use and limits of philosophical reasoning in investigating divine truths, a view that reflects the dominant stance among certain Orthodox circles towards Western scholasticism. In addition, his position as emperor made it his duty to study theology in order to defend the Orthodox doctrines and the Church, which gave him also the right to intervene, when necessary, in ecclesiastical affairs. Manuel's determination to exercise his imperial authority and privileges over the Church, whose jurisdiction extended to Orthodox lands well beyond Byzantine imperial territory, did not remain unchallenged.

Manuel's theological pursuits and involvement in Church affairs were combined with his negotiations with the papacy over the Church union. After the defeat of the Christian coalition by the Ottomans at Nicopolis (1396) and with Constantinople being under siege (1394–1402), Manuel approached the Roman Pope Boniface IX (1389–1404), who issued a bull (1398) urging the Christian potentates to offer military aid. The

expedition led by the French Marshal Jean le Meingre, also known as Boucicaut (1366–1421), in 1399 had limited success. Boucicaut convinced Manuel that the only way to attract serious attention of Western monarchs to his cause would be by personally visiting them at their courts in Europe. After he appointed Andronicus' son, John VII, as his regent in Constantinople, Manuel sailed to Venice in December 1399, stopping at the Morea, where he left his wife and children for safety with his brother Theodore. At that point, he had already started composing his *Precepts on the Education of an Emperor* (Ὑποθήκαι βασιλικῆς ἀγωγῆς), which he reworked during and after his voyage to the West. This work, composed as a *royal speech* in the form of a hundred chapters, epitomizes Manuel's vision of statesmanship and the virtuous ruler. He subsequently elaborated on the major themes in his *Seven Ethico-political Orations*, Manuel's moral testament, which expounds on the principles and virtues that lead man closer to God and to true happiness. Both these works are addressed to John VIII, foregrounding Manuel's concern for the legitimacy of his son's succession to the throne.

From Venice, Manuel crossed Italy, through Padua, Vicenza, Pavia, and Milan, where he was cordially received by the Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351–1402). There Manuel was joined by Manuel Chrysoloras (1355–1415), his close friend, scholar, and ambassador, who had been teaching Greek in Florence. The Emperor continued to Paris where he was ceremoniously received by King Charles VI (1380–1422) and his court in the presence of the people of Paris (3 June 1400). A description of the royal reception and the deep impression Manuel made is recorded by the anonymous Religious of Saint Denys. During his stay in Paris, Manuel resided at the old louver, where, inspired by a dyed woven hanging tapestry representing scenes of Spring, he composed a short prose work, the *Depiction of Spring in a Dyed, Woven Hanging* (Ἐαρος εἰκὼν ἐν ὑφαντῷ παραπετάσματι ῥηγικῷ), which differs from similar Byzantine *ekphraseis* of Spring, showing an appreciation of art as an image of reality and life. At the same time, Manuel continued his diplomatic contacts and negotiations with other

Western potentates through his ambassadors, who travelled to Margaret I, Queen of Denmark, Sweden and Norway (1387–1412), as well as to King Martin I of Aragon (1396–1410), King Henry III of Castile (1390–1406), and King Charles III of Navarre (1387–1404). Manuel also personally visited King Henry IV (1399–1413) in England (December 1400–mid-February 1401), whose kindness and generous hospitality were much appreciated by the Emperor, though his assurances for financial and military assistance, which raised Manuel's hopes, were never materialized.

During his sojourn in Paris, Manuel was also presented with a theological tract by an anonymous Latin theologian, most probably a Benedictine, which defended the Latin doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son in the form of a syllogism (Λατίνου τινὸς ἀσκοῦντος ἐν τοῖς προαστείοις τοῦ Παρυσίου, πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Ρωμαίων Μανουὴλ τὸν Παλαιολόγον, ἀπόδημον ὄντα ἐν ταῖς Γαλίαις, ἐν σχήματι συλλογισμοῦ κεφαλαιώδης ἐπιτομὴ περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκπορεύσεως). Manuel responded by composing a lengthy treatise *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* (Τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος τῶν Ρωμαίων Μανουὴλ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου πρὸς ταῦτα λόγος ἀπολογητικός), in which he refuted the Latin views on the *Filioque* by presenting the Orthodox teachings on the procession of the Holy Spirit, in the sense of the eternal hypostatic emanation, from the Father alone. Manuel expounded on the Orthodox perception of the Trinity, stressing the unique and unconfused attributes of the three consubstantial hypostases, the distinction between the divine essence and the divine energy, the different terms and prepositions used by the saints to denote the eternal emanation and the temporal manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and finally examining the question over the nature of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. The treatise is appended by a short discourse *On the Order in the Trinity* (Ὅτι ὑπὲρ τάξιν ἡ Τριάς, καὶ τὸ θεῖον ἀσημάτιστον, καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἢ ἐν αὐτῇ τάξις δεικνύται πραγμάτων τε καὶ παραδειγμάτων), in which Manuel provides further arguments in defense of the Orthodox views

on the procession of the Holy Spirit. Through his own studies and his close association with eminent theologians, notably Joseph Bryennius (1340/50–1431), Nicholas Cabasilas (1319/23–1392) and Demetrius Cydones, Manuel was well acquainted with the Greek and Latin teachings. Albeit not original in his approach and argumentation, Manuel proved himself a competent theologian, showing a profound understanding of the main issues that lie behind the doctrinal and ecclesiastical divergence between the two traditions, and expressed his wish for union, under certain conditions.

Comments in the treatise *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* show that Manuel was informed of the controversies within the Latin Church and events concerning the Western Schism at the time, namely, the rivalry between the Pope in Rome and the Pope in Avignon, and their efforts to secure the allegiance of cardinals and sovereigns, as well as the dispute between the Dominicans and the Franciscans over the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Manuel contacted Pope Benedict XIII (1394–1423) at Avignon and probably visited Pope Boniface IX in Rome in person. It is possible that these diplomatic contacts were sanctioned by Charles VI, who was eager to convene a general council which would put an end to the Western Schism (1378–1418). According to Macarius Metropolitan of Ancyra (1397–1405), who accompanied Manuel on his journey, the Emperor held discussions also with representatives of King Charles on the prospects of an ecumenical council to end the Schism between the Greek and the Latin Churches. Manuel seems to have provisionally consented to this plan, in order to promote his cause. His cautious attitude towards Church union, however, is reflected in the personal advice he gave to John VIII (1425–1448), during the negotiations with the papacy in 1422, which was recorded by the courtier and historian George Sphrantzes (1401–ca. 1477) who was present at this meeting. Aware of the political complexities, Manuel advised his son always to discuss union with the Latins to keep the Ottomans at bay, but never bring it about for this would widen the division in the Byzantine Church and society thus exposing the Empire to the Ottomans. His

judgment, which was not duly appreciated by his son, proved wise in the end, as the union proclaimed later on in Florence under John VIII (1439) was short-lived and never truly materialized in the face of the strong opposition of the Orthodox Church and people.

Meanwhile, the defeat of the Ottoman army and the imprisonment of Bayezid by Timur (1370–1405) in the battle of Ankara (28 July 1402) were considered a God-sent by Manuel, who composed two short rhetorical works, a hymn in the form of a Psalm on the occasion of Bayezid's defeat, and an *ethopoiea*, a fictional address by Timur to Bayezid. Leaving Paris (23 November 1402), Manuel traveled to Genoa, possibly Florence, and Ferrara and reached Venice (March 1403). From there, he sailed to the Morea, where he rejoined his family and returned to Constantinople (June 1403).

Before he left for the West, Manuel commissioned the copying of the works he had composed thus far. This edition is preserved in codex *Parisinus graecus* 3041. Paleographical and codicological evidence shows that apart from the works that Manuel had written before he left Constantinople (1399), this manuscript contains, in addition, several other works he wrote during his stay in the West and after his return to Constantinople, including his selected correspondence (dated prior to 1417), added to the manuscript at a later stage. Some of these works remain unpublished. More importantly, the manuscript bears extensive revisions by the hand of the Emperor in several works, including Manuel's *Moral dialogue with the Empress-Mother or On marriage* (*Διάλογος πρὸς τὴν κυρίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ δέσποιναν καὶ μητέρα, ἢ περὶ γάμου*), composed after his marriage in 1392 with the Serbian princess Helena Dragaš (b. 1372–d. 1450), which reflects the uncertainty over dynastic succession in the early years of his reign (1394–1396/7).

Manuel's habit of revising his own writings, many of which were copied by his chief scribe Isidore of Kiev (1385–1463), and sending drafts to members of his literary circle before publication is attested in a number of his works, including his treatise *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, sections of which were revised by the

theologian Macarius Macres (1382/3–1431), the *Confession addressed to his spiritual father on the occasion of his own recovery from a serious illness* (Πρὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πνευματικόν, ὑπὲρ τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν μετὰ τὸ ραῖσαι τῆς δεινῶς κατασκηψάσης αὐτῷ χαλεπωτάτης νόσου), a draft of which was presented in Thessalonica to the monks David and Damian of Vatopedi, and his *Funeral Oration on his Brother Theodore* (Λόγος ἐπιτάφιος εἰς τὸν αὐτάδελφον αὐτοῦ δεσπότην πορφυρογέννητον κῦριν Θεόδωρον Παλαιολόγον ῥηθεὶς ἐπιδημήσαντος εἰς Πελοπόννησον τοῦ βασιλέως), which was revised several times. Composed on the occasion of Theodore I's death (24 June 1407), apart from its literary value, reflecting Manuel's elegance of style and sensitivity, the *Funeral Oration* is an important historical source of Byzantine policy in the Morea under Theodore. The lengthy epitaph is preceded by a number of *protheoriae*, among which one by the philosopher George Gemistos (Plethon) (1355–1452), who later presented Manuel with a *Memorandum* expressing his proposals in response to the political and socio-economic crisis in the Peloponnese and the Empire at the time (1418). The *Funeral Oration* was subsequently sent with an accompanying letter to Manuel Chrysoloras, in which the Emperor requested his friend to make changes and revisions. Chrysoloras responded with a long epistolary discourse (which survives in the autograph manuscript Meteora, Monastery of Transfiguration, cod. 154), praising the Emperor for this composition and urging him to continue his patronage of education, expressing his concern for Greek literature being neglected in Byzantium while studied by Italian humanists. Similarly, a version of the *Funeral Oration* was sent to Manuel Chrysoloras' humanist disciples Guarino dei Guarini of Verona (1374–1460), who was requested by the Emperor to translate it into Latin or Italian, and Ambrosio Traversari (1386–1439). Guarino was the first humanist to travel to Constantinople to learn Greek. After his return to Italy, he taught Greek in Florence, Venice, Verona, and Ferrara and played an important role in humanist circles. His fellow Florentine Camaldolese scholar and theologian Ambrosio

Traversari shared Guarino's love for Greek language and tradition, translated a number of classical and patristic Greek works, and took an active part in the negotiations over the union of the Churches, which he fervently supported. Another Italian humanist, Rinuccio d'Arezzo (1395–1459), dedicated his translation of Plato's *Crito* to the Emperor.

Information about Manuel's intellectual pursuits and activities is included in his correspondence with scholars and theologians, including his mentor Demetrius Cydones, Manuel Chrysoloras, the theologian Demetrius Chrysoloras (ca. 1360–post 1440), the mystic Nicholas Cabasilas, and others, with some of whom he collaborated on joint projects, for example, Isidore Glabas Metropolitan of Thessalonica (1397–1418), with whom he co-operated over the composition of Manuel's sermon *On Sin and Penance* or *On Saint Mary of Egypt* (Λόγος ὅτι ἡ μὲν ἁμαρτία τὸ πάντων χεῖριστον, δεῖ δὲ μηδένα ἀπογινώσκειν ...), and the then priest and later Patriarch of Constantinople Euthymius II (1410–1416), who contributed together with Manuel to a clarification on the debate between Demetrius Chrysoloras and Antonio d'Ascoli (Σαφηνεῖά τις τῶν εἰρημένων ἐξ ἑκατέρου τῶν ἤδη διαλεχθέντων ...) on the philosophical question *If it is better to be than not to be, how could Christ say of Judas that it would be better for him if he had never been born?* (cf. Matth. 26:24).

Despite his official duties and pressure, Manuel always found time to pursue his intellectual pursuits, which he resembled as his coach training him for his contest with *Tyche*. His works demonstrate a range of literary interests. Apart from epistolography, ethico-political and philosophical discourses, and theological treatises, he composed homilies *On the Nativity of the Lord*, *On the Dormition of the Mother of God*, *On Saint John the Baptist*; a number of rhetorical works including the *Panegyric on the recovery of his father from illness*, *Declamation on a drunkard*, *Response of Antenor to Odysseus*, *Oration as from a benevolent ruler to his well-disposed subjects in a critical time*, verses, *Sixteen lines in anacreontic verse addressed to a completely ignorant and most garrulous person*; and spiritual compositions,

liturgical canons, prayers and hymns, comprising *Chapters of compunction* or *Prayer before Holy Communion*, *Morning prayers*, and *Prayer for those buffeted by storm or simply at sea adapted from the Psalms*. Some of these works remain hitherto unpublished.

After a stroke that left him partly paralyzed (1422), Manuel retired from active political life having passed on the administration of state affairs to John VIII, and according to the historian Ducas (ca. 1400–post 1462), he devoted his last years in his theological studies. Following the example of his grandfather, John Cantacuzenus, Manuel assumed the monastic habit under the name of Matthew. On 21 July 1425, Manuel died at the age of 75. Monodies and funeral orations were composed and delivered by members of his circle, including Macarius Macres and Bessarion (1403–1472), paying tribute to the remarkable and learned Emperor, who through his life and work embodied the ideal of the Platonic philosopher-king.

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Manuscript

► [Book, Renaissance](#)

Manuscript in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

The shift from manuscript to printed book occurred slowly. Renaissance writers preserved a good deal of the format and intellectual habits inherited from the manuscript tradition.

A considerable amount of philosophical work of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries exists in manuscripts, which contain significant variants and redactions erased by the homogeneity of printed books. Manuscript study clarifies the wider picture of the tastes, intellectual enthusiasms, institutional needs, and diffusion of ideas in the Renaissance period.

Heritage and Rupture Within the Tradition

Western philosophy was given a new dynamic in the fifteenth century by the invention of printing. Nevertheless, the shift from manuscript to book was a gradual one (D'Amico 1988). Printed texts owed much to the form established by manuscript exemplars, and important work continued to be produced and circulated in manuscript form over the sixteenth century. Manuscripts provided an important link between the medieval heritage and the new thinking characteristic of the Renaissance period. Copies of ancient and medieval authors circulated, and new texts were composed, in manuscript form. Important works exist in manuscript by major figures such as Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Nicholas of Cusa, Erasmus, and Giordano Bruno (Richardson 2014).

In the early medieval period, the main producer of books was the monastic scriptorium. Monastic libraries were not chiefly intended as repositories of knowledge, but as working resources serving the liturgical and contemplative needs of their communities. Philosophical study, as an activity distinct from spiritual exercises, was not a high priority for monastic institutions, though the mendicant Dominican and Franciscan orders housed substantial collections serving the *studia generalia* in which some philosophical works were preserved.

From the thirteenth century, new means of reaching the growing secular reading public developed: the production of books was centralized in workshops which could provide a diverse range of titles to buyers near cities. Output was

facilitated by improving technologies of paper production. A book dealer like Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421–1498) could call on professional scribes who were able to write in Greek and Hebrew. When printing was introduced, the same workshops produced both manuscripts and printed works, which helps to explain why early printed books copied so closely the format of manuscript work: in philosophical texts, this typically involved a commentary, with an apparatus of glosses, cross-references, indexing, chapter, and paragraph divisions all based on manuscript precedent. Over time, changes to book design and structure emerged: humanist script replaced the Gothic hand, pagination was introduced, and the *oratio* and *praefatio* sections displayed the influence of humanist rhetoric. Printers simplified the complex system of shorthand abbreviations employed by medieval scribes.

Besides commercial book dealers, a principal source for philosophical texts was the university. Philosophy manuscripts reflected the pedagogic need for copies of canonical texts, such as Aristotle, and for commentaries on them, with book design evolving to integrate the two. Commercial stationers or *stationarii* were commissioned to produce sufficient copies for students, using the *pecia* system, whereby texts were broken down into short sections (*peciae*), to be copied by separate scribes. The base texts of printed books can often be traced back to this system, which was used by eleven universities. From these school texts would spread copies of copies, and a second-hand trade created a natural diffusion of books carried by students across Europe. Texts traceable to Oxford have been found in Italy, and conversely, Italian humanist texts have been found in manuscript copies in Spain, England, and Germany. A vigorous pattern of dissemination of ideas was already in existence before the printing revolution (Kristeller 1963–1992).

Impact and Legacy

Different kinds of public and private repositories developed for increasing manuscript production:

by the middle of the fourteenth century, the Sorbonne in Paris had some 2,000 books; in the fifteenth century, important libraries serving individual scholars included San Marco, Venice (functioning by 1444) and the Vatican (operating by 1475), notable for its holdings of Greek texts and Latin translations of Greek. Here, scholars were able to compile *florilegia*, excerpts culled from major works.

From these sources, Renaissance writers produced manuscript work of various kinds. First, and most traditionally, were copies of texts such as Aristotle and his major medieval commentators, Aquinas and Averroes. The primacy of the commentary was a major continuing strand from earlier book production. New works included Greek texts (especially following the fall of Constantinople in 1453) and fresh translations from them: humanist scholars were critical of the scholastic reliance on Latin versions and preferred to return to the original languages in their study of Platonic, Neoplatonic, and other rediscovered texts. They were also, of course, avid collectors of manuscripts (D'Amico 1992).

Other types of manuscript include copies of printed works, necessary when these were only given small print runs. Distinctive instances occur: copies of Machiavelli's *Il Principe* were made after its prohibition, far into the sixteenth century. Authorial drafts, lecture notes, and letters add to the manuscript stock of the Renaissance period (Kristeller 1982). Some technical work involving illustration was beyond the capacities of printing presses and could only be encountered through manuscript. A manuscript might wait for many years before being printed, and even where early printed copies of a work exist, the study of manuscript sources can bring important findings. Early prints tended to use a single base text and eschew collating manuscripts. As a result, important drafts and variants may be overlooked. Kristeller (1976) cites the example of earlier works of Ficino discovered in manuscript, which indicate him to be closer at that period to scholastic habits of thought than was previously realized.

Beyond the elucidation of individual writers and works, a bibliographic study is vital for yielding a full and correct version of the sociology of

philosophical ideas: scholarly study of textual transmission suggests patterns of institutional need, personal taste, coterie cultures, and the circulation of ideas. Kristeller (1976) argues that the field is neglected: historians prefer to study archive material; classicists are less interested in later texts, and literary scholars prefer the study of vernacular and non-technical texts. These objections do not yet seem redundant, with manuscript study of poetry and other nonphilosophical texts still in the ascendant over philosophical manuscripts, where much work remains to be done.

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Manutius, Aldus

Born: Bassiano, ca. 1452

Died: Venice, 6 February 1515

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Abstract

Aldus Manutius was perhaps the greatest humanist printer of the Italian Renaissance.

After a professional start as a teacher, he undertook the publication of fine editions of the Greek classics in partnership with Andrea Torresano and Pierfrancesco Barbarigo in Venice. During his years of activity, Aldus produced more first editions in Greek than any competitor. As these texts required a significant commitment of funds and resources, the Greek texts were soon accompanied by the faster-selling Latin and Italian classics. This shift in the business came with the innovative *enchiridia*, Aldus' pocket-size editions, the first series of books proper. Across his printed output, Aldus managed to make an impressive number of innovations, which in turn marked a shift in the reading experience. Many of these (for example, his innovations in the use of punctuation) have had a long-term impact and are still part of how we experience books and reading today.

Alternate Names

[Aldo](#); [Mannucci, Aldo](#); [Manuzio, Aldo](#); [Manuzio, Aldo Pio](#); [Romano, Aldo](#); [Aldus](#)

Biography

Much of the scarce biographical information we have about the life of Aldus Manutius is available through indirect sources, such as the printed dedications he signed in his editions, letters in which he looked back at his earlier life, and accounts compiled by others. Very little documentary evidence remains, especially for the earlier periods. Studies by H. George Fletcher (1988) and Martin Lowry (1979) have made the most of such evidence. Edited primary sources such as the inventory of published and unpublished letters (Pastorello 1957, 1960) and the collective edition of prefaces and dedications by Aldus (Orlandi 1975) constitute a cornerstone for research in the field of Aldine studies, alongside the bibliographical work carried out by Antoine-Augustine Renouard (1834). The study by Martin Davies remains to date the best and most insightful

summary of Aldine scholarship, as well as an excellent first reading for anyone approaching the topic for the first time (Davies 1995); this has recently been revised and expanded for publication in Italian (Davies 2019).

The paucity of documentary evidence, and the clear importance of the material element for our understanding of Aldus and his work have prompted a stream of pioneering studies in bibliography, exploring the materiality of the editions jointly with textual evidence. Some of the best among these are Nicolas Barker's work on the Aldine Greek types (Barker 1992); Conor Fahy's examination of paper evidence (Fahy 1995, 2001, 2005/2006); the work by Neil Harris on the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Harris 2004, 2006); and the more recent investigation by Randall McLeod into the birth of Aldus' italics (McLeod 2015). The importance of the materiality of Aldine editions, both for edition-specific and copy-specific information, is the reason why so much scholarship in the field also draws upon exhibition catalogues and auction or booksellers' catalogues. The list here would be too long, but many such instances can be found by following up on the bibliographic references at the end of this entry.

Aldus Manutius was born in Bassiano, in the Lazio region, around 1452 (Fletcher 1988). He was a student of Domizio Calderini and Gaspare da Verona in Rome (Lowry 1979); around 1475 he moved to Ferrara, where he became a student of the humanist Battista Guarini. From 1480 onwards, Aldus himself became a teacher, undertaking the tuition of the princes Alberto and Lionello Pio of Carpi. During the 1480s, he developed his own teaching handbooks; his Latin grammar was to undergo several editions throughout Europe in decades to come and was remarkably successful considering the conservative approach of the genre (Jensen 1998). Aldus also cultivated his connections with the great humanists of the day, such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (uncle of Alberto and Lionello Pio) and Angelo Poliziano. His relationship with the Pio family was to be an inspiration and a source of patronage for many years, even when Aldus moved to Venice around 1489–1490. After

moving to Venice, Aldus continued to work as a teacher. However, the new circumstances brought him, one may say, to the right place at the right time. His profession exposed him to the frustration of the inadequacies of texts for students. The printing of Greek texts in particular was very underdeveloped at this time, and in this, he must have seen a niche in the marketplace of print. Aldus claims that for some 6 years prior to the beginning of the printing operations, he was busy securing financial backing, editorial support, and good manuscripts (Davies 1995, 2019).

Aldus set up his own press near Sant'Agostino (Fletcher 1988), an established called *Thermae*, but his true success came through partnership. The encounter between Aldus and Andrea Torresano sealed the beginning of a most prolific collaboration for the publication of the great classics. Aldus contributed the concept, Torresano the funds and the physical location for the business, as well as an existing distribution network. As a former employee of Nicolas Jenson, Andrea Torresano had received solid business training (Davies 1995, 2019). A third partner, the Venetian patrician Pierfrancesco Barbarigo, contributed funding worth 50% of the entire venture. Aldus' own financial share, amounting to just 10%, was negligible compared to that of the other two. It is possible that the Pio family may have provided some of these funds; the numerous dedications offered to various members of the family in years to come would seem to support this (Orlandi 1975). In 1505, Aldus further sealed his partnership with the Torresano family by marrying Andrea's daughter, Maria. It was around the time of his marriage that Aldus moved in with the Torresano family in San Paternian, near St Mark's square. During the 10 years of their marriage, Maria bore him 3 sons (Marco Manuzio, Antonio, and Paolo) and 2 daughters (Alda and Letizia).

During the following years, Aldus was occasionally ill; he also travelled much, searching manuscripts for his editions and broadening his network of collaborators and patrons (Lowry 1979). These practical circumstances, followed by a personal incident – Aldus was arrested on the unfounded suspicion of robbery in July 1506, and taken from Asola to Mantua where he was

imprisoned – meant that the printing operations waned in the following couple of years. Nonetheless, we know that this continued to be an exceptionally busy time for Aldus, through the testimony of Erasmus who was to be a guest in the house of Andrea Torresano for nearly a whole year in 1507–1508 (Braidia 2015). This visit culminated with the publication of Erasmus' *Adagia*, produced in a significantly enlarged version than the earlier Parisian edition. This particular venture, prompted at Erasmus' own initiative, is suggestive of the international stature attained by this time by the Aldine press in general, and Aldus in particular.

Erasmus' dialogue *Opulentia sordida* (Braidia 2015) is a colorful account of life at the Aldine press, describing the meagre hospitality of Andrea Torresano but also Aldus' exceptional commitment to his work, and the generous help received by Erasmus from members of the Aldine humanist network in Venice. It seems that Aldus had the ambition to turn this informal network of friends and collaborators – his *Neakademia* – into something more formal and institutionalized. The printed document known as *Lex Neacademiae*, as well as contemporary correspondence, stand witness to this “academic dream” (Lowry 1979; Davies 1995, 2019) and lend the venture more credibility than it has been acknowledged by an eminent scholar like Carlo Dionisotti (1995). While this ambition never quite took shape as Aldus may have wished, the Aldine press certainly did succeed in gathering a cohesive group of similarly minded scholars.

Aldus' later years were marked by difficulties of various sorts. Aldus himself was absent from Venice between 1509 and 1512, during the years of the League of Cambrai. Fears for how his status as a Roman citizen might affect his property in Venice prompted this decision, as well as the compilation of formal documents for the cession of Aldus' own share in the printing venture to Torresano alone, and Aldus' second will. Printing resumed in late 1512 and culminated with the production of the 1513 Plato; other scholarly Greek editions followed in the same years. Despite this last spur of activity, Aldus himself was fatigued by his long labors, and in 1514, he

fell ill again. He made his third and last will in January 1515, and he died on 6 February that year (Fletcher 1988).

Innovative and Original Aspects

In a truly entrepreneurial fashion, Aldus Manutius identified a gap in the market for high-quality editions of the classics. During the 20 years or so of his printing activity, Aldus surpassed all his competitors in producing *editiones principes* of Greek authors (Sandys 1903–1908). Aldus accomplished this by relying on a network of scholars, both for the editorial work in the printing shop and to secure manuscripts to be used as models. He had a keen perception of the importance of this publishing venture, as is demonstrated by the form of the various privileges requested for the protection of intellectual property. Several new typefaces were designed by typesetter Francesco Griffo, including the new Greek font, which could be set with the correct accents and spirits; three more Greeks would follow as part of this collaboration. The document dated 25 February 1496 (*more Veneto*) indicated that the new typeface, “of the utmost beauty,” would allow making substantial earnings by printing text in Greek that will look even better than handwriting; a venture that will be “of the highest honour, gain and use to this great city.” The text requested that the investment should be protected by preventing the publication or the import of books printed in Greek (or translated from Greek) for 20 years (Barker 1992). This document, alongside later privileges (namely the one protecting the Aldine italics), shows how very clearly Aldus understood his predicament – both in the importance and value of his idea, and the danger of its repeatability.

The five-volume Aristotle, published between 1495 and 1498, was the most remarkable and demanding venture among Aldus’ Greek editions. Martin Davies has deservedly defined this “the greatest publishing venture of the fifteenth century,” despite its being incomplete (the *Organon* and some of the philosophical works were present, but the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* were still

missing at the time), and the many errors that continued to affect the text (Davies 1995, 2019). Through his extensive work on the Aldine Greek editions, Martin Sicherl determined that the Aristotle and its corollary texts were far from philologically correct, with erroneous readings, silent corrections, and the collation of far fewer manuscripts than the Aldine paratexts would generally seem to indicate (Sicherl 1997). Contemporary scholars were well aware of these problems with the text, and Aldus must have been, too, although, as he declared in the preface to the works of Theophrastus (in fact, the second volume of the 1495–1498 Aristotle), “to have something is better than to have nothing” (Davies 1995, 2019). Aldus’ effort was really aimed at offering a universal companion to Aristotle, as he set out to publish the full canon accompanied by its early Greek commentators, printed as separate editions (Sellars 2004). Aldus himself only managed to publish some Aristotelian commentators, including Ammonius, Johannes Philoponus, and Psellos, while others were issued by his heirs.

As the printing of the first five volumes of Aristotle drew to an end, Aldus and his partners must have realized the urgency of shifting some of the copies to recoup costs. As part of the sale strategies devised to this end, the Aldine press was the first to issue formal retail catalogues to its customers. The first catalogue of Aldine editions was produced in 1498 and featured a lengthy explanation of the Greek texts printed until that point, as well as the retail price for an unbound and unadorned copy. The studies by Orlandi and Dionisotti (Orlandi 1975, Dionisotti 1995) both contain full photographic reproductions of the three Aldine catalogues of 1498, 1503, and 1513, from the Ms Grec 3064 in the French National Library. The complete manuscript is now freely accessible online via Gallica.fr. The Aldine catalogues are also reproduced in the recent volume by Martin Davies and Neil Harris (2019), with the difference that for the 1513 catalogue they reproduce the copy at the Municipal Library in Udine. This copy is pretty much unknown but made particularly important by the presence of contemporary annotations and integrations.

The Greek editions obviously required vast funds and a significant commitment of resources in the round. It soon transpired that these alone would hardly make for a sustainable business. Aldus took on occasional projects on commission, some of which are among his most iconic publications (the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, is a case in point). But a shift was necessary for the entire business model if the venture was to survive. The Aldine press took to publishing Latin classics and even a few texts in the Italian vernacular, including the works of Petrarch, Dante, and Jacopo Sannazzaro. Most of these texts were produced following a significantly different editorial format: the *enchiridion*, or pocket-size book. Through his collaboration with Griffo, Aldus commissioned the first italic type, designed specifically to suit the smaller octavos. Randall McLeod has shown that this typeface was slowly refined and perfected, in particular by following the use of typographic ligatures to reflect the correct etymology of compound prepositions (McLeod 2015). McLeod's work, focusing on the less visible elements of the printed page such as the ligatures or the blind impressions, is producing groundbreaking results for our understanding of the firm's practices and their ongoing revision processes.

Aldus did not, as it has been claimed by mainstream literature, invent small-format books. He did, however, create the ideal specimen by combining the use of the small format with extra-thin paper and the new italics (Harris 2016a, 2019a). The results were a series of very compact, highly portable books. His *enchiridia* were innovative in using small formats to print classical texts (Infelise 2007), while their traditional form had been the large folio, or the quarto for editions aimed at students. The thin, handy appearance of the volumes made them suitable to be used in a different context than reading at the desk. Like all the Aldine editions, these texts were devoid of commentary and illustrations, privileging instead generous white margins. In rejecting the traditional form of the classical text, surrounded by commentary and glosses, Aldus set up an important typographical model, as well as marking a shift in the history of reading. The Aldine Petrarch

edited by Pietro Bembo (1501) brought about several innovations. For the first time, the new punctuation marks typical of Greek texts were applied to the vernacular. The text used a particularly good manuscript as a model and was corrected by Bembo according to pioneering linguistic theories (Trovato 1991). The Aldine experience was key in building Bembo's future work on the codification of the Italian language, and it was part of his broader program, as was the edition of Dante that followed in 1502. Indeed, the publication of Dante was announced at the end of the Petrarch edition, making the links between the two texts as explicit as they possibly could be.

The introduction of Latin and Italian-language texts into the Aldine output was strongly criticized by some of Aldus' acquaintances and friends, such as Janus Lascaris (Nolhac 1888; Lowry 1979). Nonetheless, the compromise of producing these wider-appealing editions alongside the scholarly Greek texts is in all likelihood what allowed the Aldine venture to stay afloat financially. The lack of Aldine "reprints" of the Greek texts, and their continued availability in the firm's catalogues for the following decades certainly confirms their status as slow-sellers. Many of the Latin and Italian texts, on the other hand, were soon printed again. Despite being prized at the high-end of the market and produced in large print runs, even as high as 3,000 copies (Fletcher 1988), they sold out at a sustained pace. Vergil, Lucan, Valerius Maximus, and Petrarch were all printed at least twice between 1501 and 1515, and often by Aldus' heirs soon after. The second Aldine catalogue appeared in 1503, and it listed the *enchiridia* as separate items. The pocket-size books were advertised for their portability: "*Libelli portatiles in formam enchiridii*," suggesting that the materiality of these volumes was the determining criterion for their marketability (Graheli 2016).

Aldus pioneered paratextual elements for the navigation of the book, for example, the index (Vecce 1998). His innovations in the use of punctuation have been briefly mentioned with regard to the 1501 Petrarch. Aldus made important contributions to the modern use of paragraphematic signs; he introduced the semicolon, and he was

the first to use the comma in Latin and Italian texts as it is still used today (Harris 2016a, 2019a). In the effort to improve legibility, Aldus also established the systematic use of double quotation marks to identify textual quotes, as well as adopting the apostrophe and accented letters (Harris 2016a, 2019a). Many of these graphic expedients were drawn from the Greek-language tradition. Given Aldus' commitment to printing the great classics, this serves perhaps as an explanation of why these innovations or consolidations of use into Latin and the Italian vernacular were made by him. They were later disseminated into the other European vernaculars. He was very attentive to the material aspects of the book through the design of fonts and to a visually pleasing *mise-en-page*. Aldine editions also made use of high-quality printing supports, starting from the standard copies in paper, but also including copies printed on large paper, vellum, and blue paper. Indeed, as recently investigated by Paolo Sachet, Aldus was the first to introduce the use of blue paper as printing support (Sachet 2019). He used illustration sparsely, although what is perhaps his most famous edition, the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, is itself an illustrated book (this was in fact a commission, and not part of Aldus' own editorial program).

From 1502 onwards, Aldine editions were distinctly recognizable thanks to the use of the iconic dolphin and anchor printer's device. This had the effect of creating a strong commercial brand (Lowry 1998), as well as marking the editions with a sign that identified them as originals. As early as 1501, Aldine editions made the object of counterfeit, most notably in Lyon (Shaw 1993; Kemp 1997): a sign of their widespread success, as acknowledged by Aldus' competitors. Other imitations included the printing types so carefully sourced and developed by Aldus, which were reproduced by major competitors, for example, in Paris and Florence (Barker 1974; Kemp 1991), as well as by the Lyon printers responsible for the counterfeits.

The innovations of Aldus' venture were not limited to the materiality of the individual books but extended to his entire production. His most remarkable idea was probably the creation of

editorial series (Graheli 2016, Harris 2016a, 2019a), a marketing strategy that remains in use to this day. The Greek titles represented a unit of production in themselves, made uniform through their linguistic cohesion. They also include smaller clusters such as the Greek Aristotle, printed as five separate parts but clearly intended as a coherent series (Davies 1995, 2019). However, in terms of publishing history, it was the *enchiridia* or pocket-size books that were truly groundbreaking. A consistent appearance characterized these volumes, subtly suggesting that while they were separate texts, the editorial unit was not represented by the individual book but by the series itself. In fact, such editorial strategy has nothing to envy from modern consumer perception theory and had pretty much the same effect.

Impact and Legacy

Aldus created a strong and recognizable trademark that was a synonym with high quality, not unlike Apple and Chanel today (Lowry 1998; Graheli 2016). The price of his editions reflected the idea behind his brand; he was extremely successful in configuring the printed book as an object of consumption. At the same time, many of his editions made the great Greek (and, to a lesser extent, Latin) classics available in print. Some of these continued to be used as the authoritative edition well into the nineteenth century. Aldine editions were openly situated at the high-end of the market, a notion that was reflected in their starting retail price (Lowry 1979; Harris 2016b, 2019a, b) and in the various possibilities for custom-made copies. Imitations followed throughout Europe – either as fully-fledged counterfeits, or new impressions that reproduced the Aldine edition down to the dedication or preface signed by Aldus. The scholarly rigor of many of these texts has since been questioned, but their prestige and status cannot be overstated.

Aldus' marketing expedients, such as the publication of titles in series, and his use of the anchor and dolphin printer's device were highly innovative and left a durable mark on the book

trade. A list of his remarkable achievements and innovations has recently been published by Neil Harris demonstrating to what extent his venture impacted the world of the hand-press book (Harris 2016a; Harris 2019a). The way we still experience books and the act of reading today owes much to his contribution to the materiality of typography and publishing.

Cross-References

- [Aldine Press](#)
- [Humanism](#)
- [Pio, Alberto III](#)
- [Poliziano, Angelo](#)
- [Printing Technique, Renaissance](#)

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Manuzio, Aldo

► [Manutius, Aldus](#)

Manuzio, Aldo Pio

► [Manutius, Aldus](#)

Manzoli, Pier Angelo

► [Palingenio Stellato, Marcello](#)

Manzoli, Pier Angelo

► [Palingenio Stellato, Marcello](#)

Marci, Johannes Marcus

Born: 1595

Died: 1667

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Abstract

Marcus Marci was a Czech physician (the personal physician of the emperor Ferdinand III) and polymath who significantly contributed to medicine, mechanics, optics, and chiefly to philosophy. As a physician he supported Paracelsian views; he contributed to medicine through his studies on the nature of epilepsy and its treatment. In mathematics, he was attempting (without remarkable success) to deal with the quadrature of a circle. More important are his two writings on natural philosophy *Idearum operatricium idea* (Prague 1635) and *Pán en pantōn sive Philosophia vetus restituta* (Prague 1662, 2. ed. Leipzig 1676) in which he defended hylozoism against the Jesuit scholastics of his time. Although hylozoism was not an exceptional conception in Renaissance philosophy, due to his Prague scholastic opponent Arriaga, Marcus formulated and justified this teaching with greater conceptual accuracy than was usual among other hylozoists of this time.

Biography

Marcus Marci studied philosophy and theology at Jesuit schools in Olomouc, and then medicine at

the Medical Faculty reestablished after 1620 by Jesuits in Prague, becoming its first professor. He was appointed the personal physician of the emperor Ferdinand III who also made him an honorary nobleman. Following his wife's death toward the very end of his life, Marcus entered the Jesuit order, despite his earlier disagreement with the Jesuit standpoints on several church-political and mostly philosophical issues. As a physician he supported Paracelsian views; he contributed significantly to medicine through his studies on the nature of epilepsy and its treatment. In the field of mechanics, he was one of the first to deal with the impact of elastic spheres. His optical treatise on the nature of rainbows later attracted the attention of J. W. Goethe, who mentioned the work in his *Farbenlehre*. In mathematics, he was attempting (without remarkable success) to deal with the quadrature of a circle. He remained in contact with significant scholars of his time; fragments of his correspondence with Juan Caramuel de Lobkowitz have been preserved as well as his letter to Galileo Galilei.

Philosophy

In agreement with Peripatetics, in his treatise *Idearum operatricium idea*, Marcus held that bodies consist of passive matter (which is, nevertheless, able to exist separately, in his view) and the substantial form. To explain how the substantial form can become the formal cause of living substances that are nonhomogenous, he presumed that various "ideas" emanate from the substantial form to shape various parts of a living substance. This disagrees with Peripatetic teaching, of course. Marcus' "ideas" are sort of partial substantial forms emanating from the original substantial form in living substance, and shaping its individual parts.

The primary goal of Marcus' other philosophical writing *Philosophia vetus restituta* was to defend his doctrine against objections raised by the Jesuit philosopher and theologian Rodrigo de Arriaga, Marcus' Prague University colleague. A further aim was to correct the erroneous interpretation of his views found (in Marcus' opinion) in F. M. Van Helmont's works. But in addition to

this, Marcus' original theory dealt with individual substances from which, in Marcus' former view, the material world consisted. Now, in *Philosophia vetus restituta*, Marcus abandoned this pluralistic conviction, asserting that the whole world is only one sole living substance (hylozoism). This substance consists of a continual matter and only one substantial form (named "world soul" at times). Following the Christian form of creationism (as well as Hermetic books in part, specifically the so-called *Poimandros*), Marcus depicted the history of the world in a manner calling to mind the Big Bang Theory to a certain extent. In the beginning, God created the "Chaos" i.e., a dimensionless being, consisting of matter and form (soul), a sort of a "semen" which had become the starting point of the whole consequent development of the cosmos. This development happened through the gradual emanation of ideas, the formal causality of which made the world gain quantity, grow, and differentiate into various parts resulting in its current form. The world is thus similar to a huge living organism, a massive plant. Since such a "plant" is provided as the sole specimen, its development cannot be known by experience but solely from Scripture (from the Moses hexaemeron etc.). On these grounds, Marcus further developed his astronomical (astrological) theories, his anthropology, as well as the principles of his medicine.

Although hylozoism was not an exceptional conception in Renaissance philosophy, due to his Prague scholastic opponent Arriaga who had declared this doctrine absurd, Marcus formulated and justified his teaching with greater accuracy than was usual among other hylozoists of this time. The second posthumous edition of Marcus' *Philosophia vetus* in Leipzig (1676) shows the interest that there was in his work, even abroad. Dunin Borkowski (*Der junge Spinoza*, München 1910, p. 353) stressed partial similarities between Marcus' and Spinoza's views. Nevertheless, in this respect, it should be taken into account that Marcus, unlike Spinoza, was a dualist distinguishing between the created world and its creator. Also, he was able to incorporate into his conception the teaching of the immortal soul in the form of the human body and even of

transubstantiation. Therefore, he remained all his life in accordance with the ecclesiastic authorities, and his thought was also positively reflected by several of Prague's monastic scholars.

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Marco Antonio

- [De Dominis, Marc'Antonio](#)

Margounios

- [Margunios, Maximus](#)

Marguerite d'Angoulême

- [Navarre, Marguerite of](#)

Margunios, Maximus

Born: Candia 1549

Died: Candia 1602

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Abstract

Maximus Margunios was a sixteenth-century Greek scholar. He devoted his life to Church and got engaged in the intense debate between the supporters and the opponents of the unification of the Greek Orthodox and the Catholic Church, resulting in his prosecution by the Venetian authorities. He also worked as an editor and teacher in Italy and Greece.

Synonyms

[Margounios](#)

Biography

Margunios was born in Candia. His father was a merchant and spent most of his time in Venice. His mother was a member of the Colona family, one of the most prominent Roman families. Margunios studied Greek language and letters in the school of the monastery of St. Catherine of Sinai at Candia. In addition, Gaspare Viviani taught him Latin. In 1568 he moved to Venice and studied philosophy, theology, medicine, and law at the University of Padua. His studies and his personal readings inclined him toward Aristotelian philosophy. In Venice, he associated with Gabriel Severus, Daniel Rourlanos, and Meletios Pegas. Jeremias II, the Patriarch of Constantinople, called Margunios and Severos in Constantinople and assigned them the task of reorganizing Greek education. Margunios rejected the offer,

returned to Crete, and got embroiled in disputes about the Christian dogma. In Crete, he wrote a treatise on the filioque in which he expressed conciliatory views. In 1584 Jeremias II nominated him bishop of Cythera. The local authorities did not accept his nomination, and Margunios had to return to Crete. He attempted to negotiate a solution with the Venetians and traveled to Venice. In 1586, the Venetian government gave him permission to stay in Venice and teach Greek and Latin, he was refused once again to go to Cythera to practice his duties. During that period, he was accused by his former friend Severos of supporting the positions of the Catholic Church concerning the filioque. Margunios held that the two Churches could comply if they managed to overcome their differences. Jeremias II and Meletios Pegas mediated between the two men and the dispute ended. In 1591 Margunios was charged by the Roman Inquisition as a result of his contacts with the Lutherans. Around 1600 he returned to Crete.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Margunios edited and published numerous theological and humanist treatises. He was also a great admirer of Cardinal Bessarion. Margunios studied thoroughly the works of St. Augustine and became his chief admirer and commentator in the sixteenth-century Greek-speaking world. In his conciliatory texts, he usually draws on St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas in order to vindicate the rightness of filioque. Margunios argued that Augustine was the only that achieved to incorporate Platonic insights into Christian theology. Margunios blamed Scholarios and Marcus Eugenikos for misinterpreting Augustine and creating confusion for their readers.

Impact and Legacy

Margunios, like John and Theodosius Zygomalas, corresponded with Martin Crusius and contributed to the spread of Greek thought in Western Europe. Despite Severos' hostility, the

reprobation of his views from conservative theologians, and the persecutions from the Catholic Church, Margunios was highly esteemed by his colleagues.

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Mariana, Juan de

Born: Talavera de la Reina, Spain 1536

Died: Toledo, Spain 1624

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Abstract

The Jesuit theologian Juan de Mariana was the leading historian and one of the most distinguished political and economic theorists of

early modern Spain. His political and historiographical work earned him fame, even notoriety already during his lifetime. His intellectual legacy is characterized by its endurance and complexity.

Mariana's political writings – *De rege et regis institutione libri III* (1599) and some of the essays collected in *Tractatus VII* (1609) – probe, challenge, and widen contemporary notions of monarchical authority, political ethics, economic policy, and Spanish identity. *De rege* stands out as a prime example of Spanish literature of reason of state, especially for the way in which the Jesuit blends scholastic legal and constitutional theory into a language of political prudence. The short treatise *De monetæ mutatione* (printed in *Tractatus VII*) presents an incisive critique of the monetary policies of the Spanish government during the early 1600s. Mariana did not hesitate to speak his mind and did not spare his own order either, as testified by a critique of the government of the Society of Jesus first published posthumously in French in 1625. His monumental work of historiography – *Historiæ de rebus Hispaniæ* (1592) – was much less controversial and immediately acknowledged as a major milestone in Spanish historiography. Translated and published in the vernacular in 1601, it made him a household name in Spain and a principal authority on Spanish history well into the eighteenth century.

The Jesuit combines great insight and integrative understanding of a wide range of subject matters with sharp political analysis and often acerbic critique of governing elites. The political thinker, historian, economist, theologian, and philologist in Mariana cannot easily be separated from one another. He straddles different fields of knowledge and deliberately intertwines and evolves scholastic and humanist traditions, terminologies, and modes of enquiry. Mariana is the contemporary of Giovanni Botero, Jean Bodin, and Justus Lipsius as much as Luis de Molina and Francisco Suárez and can no longer simply be aligned as a member of the so-called School of Salamanca.

Biography

Juan de Mariana was born in Talavera de la Reina, Castile, in 1536, the illegitimate son of Juan Martínez, latterly dean and canon of the collegiate church of Talavera, and Bernardina Rodríguez. We know no more about his childhood and youth than what we can glean from Mariana's own sparse remarks. He went to study at Alcalá de Henares, joined the Society of Jesus in 1554, and was ordained in 1561. Jesuit superiors quickly picked up on his sharp intellect and pedagogical talent and sent him to teach at the Jesuit colleges in Rome, Loreto, Messina, and Paris. The time in Paris, where he witnessed the “miserable spectacle” (Mariana 1599) of the St Bartholomew Night's Massacre (1572), was in many ways formative for his view on issues such as courtly politics, religious toleration, and the importance of reputation and personal conduct in a ruler. In 1574, he successfully engineered his return to Toledo. Ill health, a desire to dedicate himself to study, and flagrant tensions between French and Spanish Jesuits as a result of Spanish intervention in the French Wars of Religion provided pressing motives.

Mariana spent the remaining 50 years of his life in Toledo, continuously engaged in study and writing, a highly respected member of the Toledan intellectual and cultural scene. He already enjoyed a growing reputation as a historian and biblical scholar by the time he arrived back in Spain. In 1577, he delivered a judgement for the Inquisition on the Polyglot Bible published under the direction of Benito Arias Montano (1572). While in many ways critical of the philological standards and the team assembled by Arias Montano, Mariana saw no conflict with Catholic doctrine and approved of the polyglot. The detailed critique cum defense of Arias Montano's bible (printed in *Tractatus VII* as *Pro Editione Vulgata*) showed the depth of his philological and theological scholarship. Soon, the Jesuit was extensively involved in the preparation of the new Indices of prohibited and expurgated books published by the Inquisitor General Gaspar de Quiroga in 1583 and 1584. Somewhat paradoxically, Mariana never finished his two great projects in ecclesiastical

history – a history of the Spanish church from the beginnings down to the present day and an edition of the works of Isidore of Seville.

His expertise introduced him to the *contubernium* of scholars gathered by García de Loaysa Girón (1541–1599), canon of the cathedral chapter and later archbishop of Toledo, the most influential ecclesiastical advisor of Philip II of Spain and tutor to his son, the future Philip III. Members of the group shared a strong interest in Spanish history, especially the history of the church of Spain, and were dedicated to the documentation and defense of Toledo's contested claim to the title of Spain's primate see. Loaysa became a constant and generous patron of Mariana's scholarship and made possible the initial publication of the *Historiae de rebus Hispaniae*. The work is the result of Mariana's conviction that Spain lacked a Latin history that would familiarize European readers with "the beginnings, then the ways, by which [Spain] achieved the grandeur it has today" (Mariana, *Historiae*, prologue). It is indeed Mariana's "monumental achievement" (Kagan 2009) to have provided just that.

Loaysa also persuaded the Jesuit to write and publish *De rege et regis institutione*. The treatise betrays its didactic origin, the fact that it was originally conceived as a mirror of princes to assist Loaysa in preparing the future Philip III for the business of government. Mariana understands learning – in particular learning about the "superhuman challenge" of ruling the monarchy of Spain – as a necessarily strenuous exercise. The treatise confronts readers with hard, sometimes unpalatable truths about monarchs and the institution of monarchy, past and present. His comments about the damaging influence of a royal favorite on the reputation of a king and the quality of government aimed squarely at the relationship between King Philip III and the Duke of Lerma.

Mariana's relationship with the government in Madrid took a further blow with the publication of his essay *De monetæ mutatione* as part of *Tractatus VII* in 1609. The trenchant and convincing critique of Lerma's fiscal policies earned Mariana a charge of *lèse majesté*, brief incarceration at a Franciscan convent, and the attention of economic historians ever since. It is not clear

whether the trial was ever brought to a conclusion. Mariana appears to have escaped without much more than a stern reproach for publishing his forthright thoughts abroad. Already a cause of discomfort for the Jesuits in Madrid and Rome, the treatise and trial got Mariana into further trouble with his order. A search of his quarters led to the discovery of a treatise highly critical of the government of the Society of Jesus. Originally composed in the context of the stormy General Congregation of 1593, the treatise was possibly never intended for publication. One of Mariana's major criticisms of the Jesuit General Aquaviva was the use of "purity-of-blood" legislation as a means to silence and exclude Spanish Jesuits critical of his government. Ironically, the decree – a shadow over the lives of Jesuits of *converso* or *morisco* origin – had been rescinded by the time Mariana's room was rifled. The treatise was first published posthumously in a French translation as *Discours du Père Jean Mariana Iesuite Espagnol, des grands défauts qui sont en la forme du gouvernement des Jesuites* (1625) and much exploited in the service of anti-Jesuit polemics.

Mariana's final years saw the completion of his main contribution to humanist theology and biblical exegesis – the *Scholia in Vetus et Novum Testamentum* (1620) – but no further controversy. He died a highly respected member of the Society of Jesus and the European republic of letters at the house of the order in Toledo on 17 February 1624.

Heritage, Innovation, and Originality

Mariana's *Historiae de rebus Hispaniae* is the first work to unite the separate histories of the various Spanish kingdoms into one consolidated and altogether coherent narrative. It successfully competed with the many existing histories of individual Iberian kingdoms such as the one by Jerónimo Zurita (1512–1580) for his native Aragon. It was clearly the kind of history of Spanish identity and greatness that Philip II and prominent members of the Royal Council of Castile had been hoping to see published for some time.

Mariana is open about his intention to integrate the many existing, separate histories of the Iberian

kingdoms into a more comprehensive and more holistic fabric of historical interpretation. Yet, as the title suggests, he does not amalgamate and elide the histories of the many communities and peoples of the Iberian Peninsula. He discusses and compares the distinct political and constitutional traditions of individual kingdoms and, for instance, shows patent sympathy for the laws of Aragon and how they restricted the power of kings. The *Historiae* are not an artificial projection of “Spain” as only ever “one nation.” Rather than concocting a fusion of Iberian history that would neither have reflected contemporary political consciousness nor stood up to scholarly scrutiny, the Jesuit conceptualized Iberian history as sacred or messianic history.

The 25 volumes of the *Historiae* read as a history of sin and redemption from sin, a story that stretches from pagan Spain to conversion to Christianity, and from the failings and fall of the last of the Visigothic kings and Moorish occupation to the eventual completion of the *Reconquista* under the Catholic Monarchs and Spanish global hegemony under their great-grandson Philip II. The Spain of the *Historiae* is an imagined community of communities that already existed in Roman times. With the conversion to Christianity, it set itself on a rocky path to greatness and glory. It is a history as rich in deviation and setbacks – such as the loss of the first Armada in 1588, which Mariana acknowledges almost in passing – as it is in achievements. The first edition (1592) ends with the conquest of Granada, the Columbian encounter, and the restoration of “good government” in Spain during the rule of the Catholic Monarchs, Isabella I of Castile, and Ferdinand II of Aragon.

The work reaches deep into a complex past but points to the present and future, too. While generally hesitant to address contemporary issues directly, Mariana clearly considers the recent annexation of the kingdom of Portugal by Philip II (1580) a point of reference. Philip’s accession to the Portuguese throne is an act of divine providence: the unification of the whole of the Iberian Peninsula under one Catholic prince. Like his contemporary, the Italian ex-Jesuit Giovanni Botero in his *Relationi Universali*, though less

explicitly, Mariana puts the Spain of Philip II in the vanguard of the defense and eventual triumph of universal Catholicism.

The successful completion of such a compendious work had a methodological price tag. Fellow historians like Pedro Mantuano and Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas pointed out that Mariana had included historical conjecture such as the fabrications of Annius of Viterbo. Mariana in turn readily confessed to shortcomings of his work and the fact that it contained regrettable errors – not always corrected in his own later editions – as a result of the need to rely in several instances on the works of his predecessors. In a letter from 1596, he justified himself, explaining that he could not but accept what other historians had said “without verifying all of the details, for otherwise I might never have finished” (Cirot 1905, p. 433). The work nonetheless enjoyed overall success at court and in scholarly circles, which led to royal support for the publication of a revised and extended Latin version (1596) as well as a translation into the vernacular by the author himself (1601), further extended and republished in 1623. The translation gained the work a much wider readership and made the *Historia general de España* a staple on bookshelves from Madrid to the far reaches of the Habsburg empire.

History remained the vantage point of Mariana’s intellectual endeavor, including his *De rege et regis institutione libri III* (1599) dedicated to King Philip III of Spain. Mariana established the correlation between his treatise on kingship and the reading of history in the preface of the *Historia general de España*. *De rege* provided a theoretical discussion of “all the precepts, counsels and rules” (Mariana 1601, preface, p. 3) that ought to govern the decisions of a good king. Historical *exempla* – some included already in *De rege*, even more in his history of Spain – showed how maxims of political prudence had actually worked in the political arena.

Though topical, the appeal to history as *magistra vitae* points to one of Mariana’s major contributions to Spanish political thought. *De rege* anchors the discussion of many themes familiar from Renaissance and early modern mirrors-of-princes literature in the history of

Spain. Alongside a host of classical and Christian authors, history (and Spanish history in particular) is the inspiration for a decidedly pragmatic political ethics for the preservation of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy and the Catholic faith in Spain. The treatise also includes strident critiques of what the author perceived as the ills of Spanish government and society as well as his proposals for moral and political reform.

De rege is part of a wider European literature on reason of state as well as a Spanish debate on the state of Habsburg Spain at the turn of the century and her future under a young and inexperienced king. Other significant and paradigmatic participants in that debate – at either side of a highly differentiated spectrum – include the veteran diplomat Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos (1555–1640) (*Discurso político* 1990/1598; *Tácito español* 1614) and the Jesuit theologian Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526–1611) (*Tratado* 1597). While indebted to scholastic moral theology, the treatise is in the “Tacitist” camp – alongside authors such as Álamos de Barrientos, Giovanni Botero, or Justus Lipsius – as long as “Tacitism” is understood in a general sense as the acknowledgement of the sombre reality of early modern politics and the compromising need to negotiate between moral ideals and political necessity.

Mariana approaches the moral predicaments and salient issues in political ethics in ways that are didactically and rhetorically effective as well as innovative with regard to the use of intellectual traditions. One example is the discussion of human nature and the origins of civil society that introduces and underpins the argument of *De rege* as a whole. Mariana describes civil society – with private ownership and political power in its wake – as the result of the Fall of Adam and as invariably affected by human corruption. The Jesuit does not share the Thomist-Aristotelian view that secular authority is rooted in natural law largely unscathed by original sin. Elegant humanist prose and creative use of Aristotelian terminology sometimes conceal an incisive neo-Augustinian critique of major tenets of Thomist political philosophy, setting Mariana apart from the majority of theologians commonly subsumed under the “School of Salamanca.” This pessimistic political anthropology determines an appraisal of monarchy, especially

hereditary monarchy, as a manifestation of human corruption in history and, at the same time, as the only form of government able to contain and correct human depravity.

Another closely related example and hallmark of *De rege* is the blending of scholastic and humanist traditions, terminologies, and modes of reasoning. The brief discussion of tyrannicide in book one of *De rege* – the part which has received the most attention from historians of political thought – is one example. It is cast not in terms of natural or positive law but of prudence. Mariana states that monarchical authority historically derived from the people and turns on rulers who aspire to seize “supreme and maximum authority without limits” (de Mariana 1599, p. 90). While a body politic can freely transfer “full and unlimited authority to a prince,” this is likely to set prince and people on the road to tyranny. A prince deaf to the precepts of political prudence and blind to the dangers of tyranny will always be able to bend or ignore the law. Yet lack of respect for his subjects and the lessons from history might well lead to rebellion, foreign invasion, and violent removal from power, even assassination (as in the case of Henry III of France). Mariana is deeply aware of tyrannicide as a complex constitutional problem, and the argument is rich in references to scholastic legal concepts and formulae. Yet these are presented no longer as binding juridical principles but as maxims of political prudence. Mariana considers laws more of a menace to the liberty of subjects than a safeguard. The peace and protection of the commonwealth do not depend on legal-constitutional frameworks but on the prudence of the prince and his ability to handle major political stakeholders effectively.

Personal experience and historical reflection invested Mariana with doubts about the ability of monarchs, laws, and parliaments to preserve peace and stability. He is even more suspicious of the nobility, which he sees as a permanent threat to the internal balance of power. His views are reflected in the last chapters of each of the three books of *De rege*, where he extols the role of religion as “the sinews that hold society together” and of the Castilian episcopate as the only real “guardians of the realm.” Mariana’s proposals for a much greater role of the Church of Castile in imperial government alone still justify

Cirot's description of *De rege* as "the most remarkable and boldest of books in Spanish political literature" (Cirot 1905, p. 35).

Impact and Legacy

Mariana is generally acknowledged as the principal historian of the peninsular realms – the Americas hardly feature in any of his work – during the reigns of Philip II and Philip III of Spain. The 1596 Latin edition and especially the 1601 vernacular edition were reprinted throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including translations into French and English. Considerably expanded versions of the *Historia* were published in Madrid and Barcelona as late as 1820 and 1839, respectively. The most extensive study is still Cirot (1905). Kagan (2009) and Olds (2015) embed Mariana in the context of Spanish official historiography from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

De rege has enjoyed the most turbulent and complex reception among Mariana's works by far. In Spain, the treatise became a frequent point of reference for authors participating in the wider debate on the reform of the monarchy until the nineteenth century. In France, on the other hand, Catholic and Calvinist *politiques* read it as a confirmation of Jesuit intentions to secure a Spanish succession to the French throne. Mariana was accused of propagating a radical doctrine of popular sovereignty including the right of any private individual to kill a legitimate king perceived as a tyrant, a way of thinking seemingly akin to that of the so-called French Monarchomachs. This interpretation was largely based on a few, frequently distorted citations from chapter 6 of book 1 of *De rege* and reflects anti-Jesuit feelings rather than Mariana's intentions or what he wrote. Regardless, *De rege* continued to be a byword for regicide and anti-monarchical subversion and a liability to the reputation of the Society of Jesus well into the twentieth century.

Modern historians of political thought in turn saw the treatise as part of the "embryology of modern politics" (Figgis 1907, p. 34) and a milestone in the development of medieval scholastic constitutionalism toward parliamentary democracy

(Lewy 1960). Gradually, the picture became more differentiated. The modern critical edition and translation of *De rege* into Spanish still identifies Mariana as a "humanist precursor of constitutionalism" (Sánchez-Agosta 1981, title page) but also identifies modes of reasoning not familiar from neo-scholastic contemporaries. Others highlight neo-Stoic themes that invite comparison with Justus Lipsius (Oestreich 1989) or single out "anti-Tacitist" (Skinner 1978) and "imperialist-Tacitist" (Tuck 1993) themes, respectively. More recent and detailed studies situate Mariana ever more firmly and sensitively within his actual discursive environment – the early modern European debate on reason of state, the mirror-of-princes literature, scholastic moral theology and Jesuit political-theological debate, and especially the Iberian and Castilian political and cultural environment which largely inspired his writing (Braun 2007, 2013; Höpfl 2004; Merle 2014; Reinhardt 2007; Truman 1999).

There is a rich, mostly Spanish literature on Mariana's philological and biblical work (Ferraro 1982), especially the *censura* on the Polyglot Bible (Bujanda 1993; Wilkinson 2007). Mariana's treatise *De monetarum mutatione* and respective contribution to the development of liberal economic theory has received considerable attention since the beginning of the twentieth century (Laures 1928) and continues to be the matter of a constantly evolving debate. This is perhaps the area of Mariana studies in most urgent need of further attention.

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- Lipsius, Justus
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Marinella, Lucrezia

Born: Venice, 1571

Died: Venice, 1653

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Abstract

Lucrezia Marinella was a prolific Venetian author and poet notable for her contribution to the *querelle des femmes*, the debate on the status of women. In particular, she argued for the superiority of women drawing from both

the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, as well as historical, literary, and scriptural examples.

Alternate Names

Marinelli, Lucrezia

Biography

Lucrezia Marinella was born in Venice in 1571 to Giovanni Marinelli, a physician, humanist, and author, who was likely responsible for her thorough education (Cox 2008). In her lifetime, Marinella was praised by contemporaries for her literary prowess, philosophical knowledge, and musical talent (Zaja 2008). She died in Venice in 1653. Although she is now primarily known for her treatise in defense of women, *Della nobiltà, et l'eccellenza delle donne, co' difetti et mancamenti de gli huomini* (1600, 1601), she was highly prolific (Cox 2011). Her works span many genres: from religious and hagiographic poetry, such as *La Colomba sacra* (1595) the *Vita del serafico e glorioso s. Francesco* (1602), and the *Rime sacre* (1603) to the pastoral novel, *Arcadia felice* (1998), and epic poetry, *L'Enrico, overo Bisantio acquistato* (1635), to name a but a few.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

It has been suggested that Marinella had close ties to the Second Venetian Academy (Zaja 2008; Kolsky 2001). In particular, *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne* may have been commissioned by the one of the academy's members and its official printer, Giovan Battista Ciotti, as part of the institution's response to the publication of a controversial misogynist work, *I donneschi difetti* (1599), by Giuseppe Passi. Since the latter argued that women had no intellectual worth, it would have been a very effective polemical strategy to publish works by women in defense of their gender (Kolsky 2001). In the same year, another academician, Giovanni Doglioni, published the late Moderata Fonte's dialogue, *Il merito delle*

donne (1600). Moreover, Marinella's treatise is an explicit response to Passi's work, both in its content and structure. Although it is one of the first philogynous works by women, it can be inserted into a broader debate on the status of women, often called the *querelle des femmes*, starting around the end of the fifteenth century in Italy. This debate includes works by Bartolomeo Goggio, Mario Equicola, Agostino Strozzi, Galeazzo Capra, Domenico Bruni, Lodovico Domenichi, Alessandro Piccolomini, and others.

Impact and Legacy

Marinella's treatise *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne* contains her most important philosophical contribution: a developed argument for the superiority of women over men. Participants in the *querelle des femmes* typically argued for the superiority of one sex over the other, but Marinella stands out among pro-woman authors for asserting that both women's souls and their bodies are nobler than men's.

In order to maintain that women and men constitute a single human species, she allows that God, the productive cause of all created beings, permits diversity in the souls of individuals of a species. In Marinella's view, the idea of woman in the mind of God is nobler in the sense that her purpose is superior to that of man. The purpose or final cause of woman is superior because her intellect is less troubled by passions and her desires more moderate insofar as they are determined by reason.

In her argument for the superiority of women's bodies over men's, Marinella makes use of both the Platonic (through Ficino and Leone Ebreo) and the Aristotelian traditions. She asserts (uncontroversially, at the time) that women are more beautiful than men, and that beauty in a human body is an effect of grace that proceeds from the soul; the soul is the origin of physical beauty. So the beauty of women is a manifestation of the superiority of their souls (Deslauriers 2012). At the same time, it is the mark of the greater divinity of women. The reason, then, that men are drawn to women is that they desire to possess the divine. So Marinella construes men's

sexual pursuit of women as an admission of the superiority of women.

At the same time, she argues that the relative coldness of a woman's body (a fact she takes to be established by Aristotle) makes it a better instrument for both intellectual and moral operations of the soul. Against Aristotle, she argues that women are not cold in absolute terms, but rather moderate in temperature (Deslauriers 2016). The temperate nature of a woman's body allows her soul to operate with sufficient force but without excessive passion. The result is that women are more virtuous, less inclined to both anger and appetite, and better able to form stable intellectual concepts.

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Marinelli, Lucrezia

- [Marinella, Lucrezia](#)

Mark of Ephesus

- [Eugenikos, Marc](#)

Markantun

- [De Dominis, Marc'Antonio](#)

Martini, Cornelius

Born: 1568, Antwerp

Died: 17 December 1621, Helmstedt

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Abstract

The Lutheran philosopher Cornelius Martini is considered to be the first to teach Aristotelian metaphysics at a Protestant university. The absence of a *metaphysica specialis* including natural Theology is a prominent feature in Martini's metaphysical outlook as well as his doctrine of the angels and separated souls. Over the question of the relationship between philosophy and theology, he came into dispute with his Helmstedt colleague Daniel Hofmann, a supporter of the double-truth thesis. Among his most important students were Georg Calixtus, Jacob Martini, and Henning Arnisaeus.

Biography

The Lutheran philosopher C. Martini was born 1567/8 in Antwerp. He studied in Rostock with David Chytraeus and John Caselius. He was appointed Professor of Logic in 1591 in Helmstedt where he worked until his death in 1621. As an authority in Italian Aristotelianism, he began his fight against Peter Ramus. Ramus had heavily polemicized against Aristotelian philosophy, especially against logic and metaphysics. Martini defended Aristotelianism, which he found to be compatible with the Christian religion and its teachings.

Over the question of the relationship between philosophy and theology, he later came into dispute with his Helmstedt colleague Daniel Hofmann, a supporter of the double-truth thesis. A few years later, Martini was in trouble with the Wittenberg theologian Balthasar Meisner. The question was whether theological arguments should be given in a syllogistic form or not. In his definition of logic, Martini followed Jacopo Zabarella, the prime representative of Renaissance Paduan Aristotelianism: Logics is an intellectual habit using terms of the secondary order. Logic is concerned with concepts derived from the first order – which includes the natural and contingent things – to structure thinking and reach the right propositions.

Martini is known as the first to teach Aristotelian metaphysics at a Protestant university. The lecture took place from November 1597 until October 1599 in Helmstedt. This was an important innovation of late Humanism, a movement that was still dominated by Melanchthon's anti-metaphysical sentiment. Martini's groundbreaking lecture ensured his legacy as the founder of Protestant academic Metaphysics in Germany. His lecture was distributed throughout numerous manuscripts. Unlike Ramus, Martini stressed the need for a philosophical science based on realism, and that was the task of Metaphysics. He defined the *ens qua ens*, the being qua being, as that which exists independently of the mind (*ens reale* or mind-independent being). The part of being that only exists in the mind (*ens rationis*, being of

reason), a chimera, for example, is therefore not a part of metaphysics. To support his case, Martini pointed to the fact that being is the first thing really known (*primum cognitum*). Every human cognition, be it ever so vague, takes its initial step from the first thing.

Martini's *Metaphysica Commentatio* starts with an introduction to Aristotle's metaphysics, even before Martini develops the concept of being. The transcendentals *one, true and good, act and potency, whole and part, and the like* are described in detail. The absence of *metaphysica specialis* including natural Theology is a prominent feature in Martini's metaphysical outlook, as well as his doctrine of the angels and separated souls (*animae separatae*). Here, Martini followed Benito Pereira's distinction between first philosophy as the science of being (later labeled ontology) and metaphysics as the science of God. A student of Martini published the lecture in 1605 and labeled it *Metaphysica Commentatio*. In addition to logic and metaphysics, Martini also taught physics and ethics. The disputation series was only published posthumously. Among his most important students were Georg Calixtus, Jacob Martini, and Henning Arnisaeus.

M

Cross-References

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Martini, Jakob

Born: 16 October 1570, Langenstein (near Halberstadt)

Died: 30 May 1649, Wittenberg

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Abstract

Jakob Martini is one of the most famous German Lutheran philosophers and theologians of the seventeenth century. His books on logic and

metaphysics were very important for the new Lutheran style of Aristotelian Philosophy. Martini was, oddly enough, influenced by the content and methodology of the Philosophy of the Jesuits. He wrote also one of the first philosophical works in the German language to fight against a radical group of anti-philosophers.

Biography

After he had finished his school education in Halberstadt and Aschersleben, the German Lutheran philosopher and theologian Jakob Martini began studying philosophy in Helmstedt and Wittenberg in 1590. Cornelius Martini and Daniel Cramer were his teachers. They were firmly rooted in the late humanistic, Aristotelian tradition. After teaching at Wittenberg and working as a rector at the Gymnasium in Norden (East Friesland), Martini became a professor of logic in Wittenberg in 1602.

As early as 1603, he published his first collection of disputations on logic. Martini adopted Jacopo Zabarella's recently established understanding of logic as an intellectual and instrumental habit for all scientific disciplines (including theology), against Ramistic and semi-Ramistic tendencies on the part of the Reformed. He also opposed efforts to establish a "Christian logic."

Martini did not regard logic as an invention of the Holy Spirit. He rather considered it to be a natural capability of the human mind to distinguish the truth from what is false by a syllogistic process. Nevertheless, there is the need, in theological contexts, to modify natural logic in order to adapt it to the "holy things."

Martini prepared the way for his student Balthasar Meisner, who established a "logic of mystical predications" to solve particular Christological problems. In Wittenberg, during the same year, 1603, Martini gave a lecture on metaphysics. This collection, published under the title *Theorematum Metaphysicorum Exercitationes*, is the first one in which the direct influence upon the content and methodology of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* of the Jesuit Francisco Suárez, which was published in a second edition in Mainz in 1600, can be noted.

Martini's division of metaphysics into a *Metaphysica generalis* on the one hand and a *Metaphysica specialis* on the other had a long-term influence on Lutheranism. In a collection of disputations from 1611, he tried to give metaphysics a specifically Lutheran character. Martini vehemently rejected the attempt of the Reformed Philosopher Clemens Timpler to make not-being (*non ens, nihil*) a subject matter of metaphysics. According to Martini, it is neither intelligible nor anything at all.

Within a short time, he published other books on ethics, psychology, and physics. Thus, he became the leading head of the Lutheran high schools and universities. His writings replaced textbooks of Melancthon, which appeared outmoded at that time. The philosopher Martini also had an impact on theology, particularly in his fight for what he considered to be the right relationship between philosophy and theology. The religious opponents were not only the Catholics and the Calvinists but also the anti-Trinitarians and Socinians, whom he accused of an unreflective use of reason in theological questions.

Also significant is his *Vernunftspiegel* (*Mirror of reason*), published in 1618, one of the first philosophical works in the German language; it was directed against the "enthusiastic fighters against reason," especially Wenzeslaus Schilling and Johann Angelius von Werdenhagen. He campaigned for prudent philosophizing, preserving the peculiarities of theology. Georg Gutke, Balthasar Meisner, and Johannes Scharf were among his most important students.

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- [Jesuits in the Early Modern Period](#)
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- [Timpler, Clemens](#)

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Marulić Splićanin, Marko

- [Marulić, Marko](#)

Marulić, Marko

Born: 1450, Split, Croatia

Died: 1524, Split, Croatia

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Abstract

Marko Marulić was the most important Croatian writer in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who wrote in Latin, Croatian, and Italian. He was a poet, prose writer, and translator, who left behind some 50 works, most of which were published. Some of his writings are known only by their titles. He is known as the “father of Croatian literature.”

Alternate Names

Marulić Splićanin, Marko; Marulus Spalatensis, Marcus; Pečenić, Marko; Marulus Dalmata, Marcus

Biography

Marko Marulić, born in Split in 1450, was a humanist, philosopher, poet, the founder of Croatian literature, and the most prominent representative of Humanism. He was a descendant of the old aristocratic family of Pečenić (Pecinić) from Split. He received his primary education in Split and then went to Italy to study law. After he had finished his studies abroad, he returned to Croatia and worked in his hometown. This humanistic Latinist and great erudite was actively engaged in the public life of his town. He died in Split in 1524.

He is the author of the epic *Davidias* (1516–1517?; first edition 1954), the Biblical epic *Judita* in Croatian (published in Venice in 1521), epics *Suzana* (*Susannah*), *Molitva suprotiva Turkom* (*Prayer Against the Turks*), and others. He wrote in Latin, Italian, and Croatian. Many of his works remained only in handwriting and many of them got lost. He is notable for his translation of the work by Thomas à Kempis *De Imitatione*

Christi (about 1500). He was also the first to translate *Dante and Petrarch* into Croatian.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

From a philosophical point of view, his most important works are *Evangelistarium* (first known edition 1516), in which he discusses the fundamentals of Christian ethics; *De institutione bene vivendi per exempla sanctorum* (the first known edition 1506–1507 in Venice), in which he glorifies Christian virtues; and the collection of parables *Quinquaginta parabola*. His work *De institutione* had several editions and was translated into several European languages during his lifetime. In these works, he discusses the fundamental moral issues with continual reference to real-life situations. This reveals his sense of subtle psychological analyses. The principal preoccupation of M. was *spiritual revival*. He belonged to a very important European movement *the Devotio Moderna*. He saw the potential for spiritual revival primarily in the restoration of the basic Christian virtues. In promoting the practice of these virtues in his work *De institutione*, he often favors the ascetic tradition. M. does not deal with virtues in theory, but gives practical instructions for life, referring to the saints from the Bible as role models. Due to his humanist education and knowledge of classical traditions, he often contrasts classical and Christian moral principles, opting for the latter, deeply convinced that only Christianity can provide a solid foundation for a moral life. He rejects any form of moral relativism and puts religion above any philosophical debate on moral issues. Although the starting point in the elaboration of moral questions is his Christian worldview, he advocates the genuine Christian doctrine urging the restoration of Christianity. Comparing the differences in Greco-Roman and Christian morality, he acknowledges some of the Stoic postulates, attempting to bring them into line with the Christian ones.

His zeal in defending Christian moral principles was provoked by the political-historical circumstances of his time, with most of Bosnia and Croatia under Turkish rule. The political alternative for the Croatian people of the time was either Islam or Christianity. M. advocated for “*unio et*

pax omnium Christianorum.” He appealed to the European nations to join their forces and support his nation which formed the first line of defense in the battle against the Turks.

Innovative and Original Aspects

He represents the generation of Croatian writers who were forced into bilingualism. M. writes in the universal language of the time, Latin, to address the European scientific community, while in his poetic works on moral topics he addresses a wide audience of readers in his national language. Although deeply immersed in Christian worldview thinking, M. can be considered a Renaissance thinker, primarily because he promoted the idea of individualism.

Impact and Legacy

Marulić influenced many Croatian poets from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. His writings, translated into many European languages, were very popular, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were read by distinguished European intellectuals (St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis de Sales, Thomas More, Francisco de Quevedo, Pierre Bayle, and others).

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Marulus Dalmata, Marcus

- [Marulić, Marko](#)

Marulus Spalatensis, Marcus

- [Marulić, Marko](#)

Marvell, Andrew

Born: Winestead, England, March 31, 1621
Died: London, England, August 18, 1678

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Abstract

A major poet of the Late English Renaissance, Marvell was recognized as such only in the

nineteenth century, as his political activity and satiric writings had overshadowed his value as a poet in the Neoplatonic tradition. His lyrical poetry uniquely draws upon both the Metaphysical poets in exuberant logical wit, passion, and sensuousness and on the Cavaliers in polished elegance and certain stock motifs.

Biography

Marvell was educated at Hull Grammar School (1629–1633) and at Trinity College, Cambridge (1633–1641), and he worked for most of the next two decades tutoring in England and on the Continent. He spent the remainder of his life after the Restoration on state business both at home and abroad. Whereas the few poems published in his lifetime are of occasional character, the 1681 *Miscellaneous Poems* reveal an incomparably broader spectrum of ideas, motifs, and stylistic virtuosity.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition, Innovative and Original Aspects, Impact, and Legacy

Like Shakespeare and Jonson, Marvell was a derivative lyrical poet, relying on the existent poetic practice accumulated over the ages, producing superb examples of various types of Renaissance poetry in his finest accomplishments.

He could easily have absorbed a number of Neoplatonic ideas in his college days and come into contact with the major philosophers or theologians of the Cambridge school. The ambivalent Christian view of nature as both the handiwork of God and man's prison gradually became more complicated through a fusion with Plotinus' interpretation of the world as inert and evil matter, not only an imitation of ultimate reality (Adkins 1974, 77).

Marvell accepted the belief that the battle of flesh and spirit required a constant renewal, and "A Dialogue Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure" reveals his awareness of the senses as a means not only to pleasure but also to a

perception essential to a higher vision of the mind and the soul. The soul in Plotinus occupies a central position between the phenomenal world and the world of spirit, serving as the point of all converging and diverging lines. Joan Adkins views the poems "On a Drop of Dew" and "The Garden" as models of "two major Neoplatonic concepts: (1) the emanation and the return and (2) the mystic flight of the soul" (80). In the body of texts represented by these three poems, the endings remain more or less firmly Platonist, as in the soul's liberation from the flesh. The drop of dew suggests flawless physical circularity, yet the soul strives toward transcendence, since it is a ray "of the clear fountain of eternal day" (ll. 19–20), desiring to escape the impurities of natural environment.

However, Marvell's poetry does not pull only in the exclusive direction of dissolved natural images transformed into intangible ideas – "The Garden" ends on the note of the subject's earnest regret at the disappearance of the Edenic state of physical nature's purity. He does not strictly follow the historiographic line of perception from Genesis to the Apocalypse, but is instead curious to see what turns and reversals are still possible before the subjects' earthly time runs out. The enclosed garden is situated in the midst of a busy world, but even inside, it offers both movement and repose, as the soul bird spends time combing and singing (Tolliver 1980, 188).

The dialectic between engagement and withdrawal is also noticeable in Marvell's longest and most complex lyric poem, "Upon Appleton House," where he both employs and rejects aspects of a mannerist aesthetic, setting aside its most extreme and artificial forms in favor of English "naturalness" (Whitaker 1999, 308), producing an elaborate allegory of the estate as "heaven's center, nature's lap, and paradise's only map" (ll. 767–8). Perhaps the most vital *carpe diem* poem in English literature, "To His Coy Mistress," situates the speaker in an act of persuading a hesitant lady to yield to his advances. Joseph Moldenhauer maintains that structurally it resembles a syllogism whose first section is a suppositional premise, the second a premise of refutation, and the concluding third part functions as a necessary deduction

(Moldenhauer 1968, 195). Stylistically, it parodies Petrarch and the genre of the blazon in cataloguing ludicrously hyperbolic images of the mistress, so that it negates romantic pretensions of sincerity in a striking contrast between the impossible spatiotemporal categories and the gruesomeness of death.

Cross-References

- [Allegory in Renaissance Literature](#)
- [Human Senses in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Immortality of the Soul, Renaissance Problem of](#)
- [Love in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Marvels

- [Wonders in the Renaissance](#)

Mas, Diego

Born: 1553, Villarreal

Died: 1608, Valencia

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Abstract

A Spanish theologian and philosopher, now partially forgotten, he was a pupil of Bañez and Medina, among the greatest representatives of the so-called Salamanca School, and one of the main intellectuals of the Spanish Counter-Reformation. A great expert on Medieval and Renaissance scholastic thought, he took a strong stand against the decline of scholasticism and set out to restore Aristotelian philosophy in line with the interpretation of it given by Thomas Aquinas. In 1587 he published his *Metaphysica Disputatio de Ente et eius proprietatibus*, where he deals in a detailed and systematic way with the main problems of Aristotelian metaphysics.

Biography

Born in Villarreal in 1553 and died in Valencia in 1608, he began studying philosophy at the University of Valencia in 1566, gaining his bachelor's degree in 1568. In Valencia he then continued his studies in theology for five more years under the supervision of Joan Teres i Borrull, gaining the title of Doctor of Arts and Qualified Theologian in 1573. In 1574 he joined the Salamanca Order of Preachers. He was ordained a priest in 1579. In the meantime, from 1575 to 1577 he attended the school of theology of the University of Salamanca. His teachers there included the Dominicans Domingo Bañez and Bartolomé de Medina. After qualifying as a Master of Arts, he returned to Valencia, where he taught philosophy. From 1589 until his death, he held the Thomas Aquinas Professorship of Theology. In 1582 he founded an Aquinas Academy with the approval of Pope

Gregory XIII in order to continue Aquinas's teaching and promote intellectual training. In the last years of his life, he became remarkably influential, even politically. In 1606 he was appointed Prior of the Monastery of Valencia and in 1607 Vicar General of the Province of Aragon.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In his deep knowledge of Medieval and Renaissance scholastic thought, Mas was deeply influenced by the Salamanca intellectual world and by Thomas Aquinas's thought (Robles 1983). He took a strong stand against the decline of scholasticism. Mas's aim was to restore Aristotelian philosophy through a doctrinal renewal of Aquinas's thought (Gallego Salvadores 1970; Bastit 2004). Accordingly, in 1587 he published his *Metaphysica Disputatio de Ente et eius proprietatibus* (Mas 1587), where he looks back to the *Tractatus de Transcendentibus* by the Dominican Crisostomo Javelli and to Pico della Mirandola's *De Ente et Uno* (Di Vona 1968). In 1599 he published some of his *Commentaria in Universam philosophiam Aristotelis* (Mas 1599a, 1599b), which came several years before the work by Suárez and the Combricensi (Gallego Salvadores 1970, 1973) and which take their place alongside other works of his such as his comments on Porfirius and Aristotle's logic of 1592–1594 (Mas 1592). These are works that contemporary history of philosophy tends to pay little attention to, but they seem to have been quite influential in their time.

In the five books of his *Metaphysica disputatio de ente et eius proprietatibus*, Mas deals, in order, with the (1) problems of the being and its divisions, analogy, and the very concept of a being; (2) question of the distinction between essence and existence; (3) oneness; (4) truth; and (5) good (Wundt 1939; Di Vona 1968). In particular concerning the distinction between essence and existence, Mas, like Thomas, defines essence as "what acts by being," whereas existence is said to be "the first act performed by God on any created being, with which at a first it [the being] is placed, beyond the power of its causes," which means that, according

to Mas, created beings are able to create other beings only in a secondary sense, whereas God is the real first cause of every being. Also, while form is preeminent in the physical world, Mas held that in metaphysics individuals should be considered preeminent: both essence and form come after existence. Mas also held that existence is logically incidental, since it is something more than the essence of a thing rather than being an essential part of the thing's definition or one of its essential attributes. Existence is actually "the reason why the thing is what it is," and therefore it is not an extra characteristic independent of the created thing, but always something created together with it. Like Bañez, Mas argued that perfection coincides not only with good but also with the purpose of anything, and he considered it nobler than essence. Existence is the characteristic most commonly found in things, and it is an act of perfecting whatever receives it. Like Thomas, Mas believed that the distinction between existence and essence is real and not just a way of thinking or a modality, as many other theologians believed. Thus, Mas set himself apart from the doctrine of the modal distinction accepted by Duns Scotus and by the Jesuits, but at the same time, he stayed short of the excesses of the doctrine of a real distinction as supported by Egidio Romano.

Cross-References

► Suárez, Francisco

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Masson, Jean Papire

Born: 6 May 1544

Died: 9 January 1611

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Abstract

Jean Papire Masson is a French humanist born in 1544 and died in 1611. His works embrace numerous areas of knowledge, especially history, law, geography, and poetry. He is notably renowned for his historical books and his biographies.

Synonyms

Massonus, Johannes Papirius; Namossius

Biography

Jean Masson, known as Papire Masson, was a French humanist, historian, geographer, and jurist of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

He was born at Saint-Germain-Laval (Forez) on the sixth of May 1544, in a family of merchants. He studied in Billom (Auvergne), where the first Jesuit college of France was founded in 1556. In 1562, Masson became himself a member of the Society of Jesus. He travelled in Italy between 1563 and 1567, where he greatly enriched his humanist knowledge. Then, he taught in Parisian colleges, before leaving the Society of Jesus in 1569. He then befriended the jurist François Baudouin, who became his master in the University of Angers in 1571. Masson graduated as *doctor utriusque juris* (doctor of canon and civil law) and was elected rector of the university. Nevertheless, he left Angers for Paris, where he became the secretary of Philippe Hurault, who was then the chancellor of the Duke of Anjou. Consequently, he was close to the circle of Catherine de Medici. In 1576, he became a lawyer at the Parliament of Paris and, eight years later, a surrogate of the attorney general. He died in Paris on the ninth of January 1611.

Jean Papire Masson appears as one of the figures of the second part of the sixteenth century in France, due to both his career and his writings. The variety of his works reflects his extensive culture. Masson is a real humanist, who embraces numerous areas of knowledge. First, he is renowned for his historical books and his biographies. He has written about forty *elogia* and *vita*, which relate to the life of some of the great names of the Renaissance (Masson 1638). They concern state dignitaries (Charles IX of France (Bourgeon 1996), Pomponne de Bellièvre, Sebastian I and Henry I of Portugal, Lorenzo de Medici, etc.), poets (Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio, Pierre de Ronsard, etc.), religious men (Charles Cardinal of Lorraine, John Calvin, Charles II of Bourbon-Vendôme, etc.), or also jurists (his master François Baudouin, Jacques Cujas, Pierre Pithou, Charles Du Moulin, etc.). His most famous historical book is the *Annales Francorum*, which sums up the French history from the Franks to Francis I (Masson 1577). Masson tries to implement a precise historical method, avoiding medieval legends.

Second, Masson is the author of legal and political works. If his legal books (mainly historical)

present a minor interest (Masson 1588), his response to François Hotman has to be mentioned (Masson 1575). Masson defends the institutions of the French monarchy against the monarchomach theories of the *Franco-Gallia*. He especially supports the prerogatives of the Parliament.

Third, Masson edited several ancient and medieval texts. For instance, he published ninety-one letters of Fulbert of Chartres and one hundred and twenty-seven of Lupus Servatus. He also published in Greek and Latin a text by Synesius. Among other editions, the *Histoire de Louis II de Bourbon* illustrates the wide range of his interests.

He wrote also poetic pieces, geographic descriptions (Masson 1618), and speeches. Even if some of his books were first published after his death, an important part of his works stays manuscript. Finally, Jean Papire Masson appears as an accomplished humanist, influenced by Italian thought. That is why he has been described as an “Italianate humanist” (Ronzy 1924a, b). If his work is not flawless, it is impressive due to its diversity and its historical significance.

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Massonus, Johannes Papirius

► [Masson, Jean Papire](#)

Mastri, Bartolomeo

Born: 7 December 1602

Died: 11 January 1673

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Abstract

Among the seventeenth-century promoters of Scotism, Bartolomeo Mastri (1602–1673) was conspicuous for the scope of his work, his knowledge of the authors and debates of his time, and for his refined interpretations of the philosophy and theology of John Duns Scotus. These qualities make him a precious source for an accurate understanding of seventeenth-century university thought. They have also made him an important, though not always explicitly mentioned, point of reference for more than a few modern readers of Scotus.

Biography

Bartolomeo Mastri was born in Meldola, near Forlì, Italy, on 7 December 1602 into a family belonging to the town’s minor nobility. We only have general information about his life and studies as a child. In one of his works, he wrote that he came to learn about the doctrine of John Duns Scotus even before he entered the Order of Minor Conventuals. His younger confrère Giovanni Franchini from Modena, who knew Mastri personally, reports that at the time of his investiture, Mastri had already concluded his studies on grammar, rhetoric, and poetry.

Mastri entered the Order of Minor Conventuals in about 1616. The following year he was transferred to the Order's *studium* in Bologna, where he attended all the courses on philosophy and some of those on theology. From 1621 to 1623 he was in the Order's *studium* in Naples. Here he studied theology under the guidance of his confrère Giuseppe La Napola (or Napoli) Jr. from Trapani; it was from La Napola that he acquired the systematic view of Scotism and the rudiments of the style he was to adopt in his own works. In November 1623, he was appointed Master of Studies (i.e., lector of logic) in Parma and in October of the following year Master of Studies in Bologna. In 1625, he was assigned as a student to the Collegio di S. Bonaventura in Rome. Here he struck up a lasting friendship with his confrère Bonaventura Belluto from Catania, with whom he was to share both his career and his published works for the next 13 years. Mastri and Belluto graduated from the Collegio di S. Bonaventura in 1628, with doctorate degrees and the plan to write a systematic course on Scotist philosophy.

From 1628 to 1631, Mastri and Belluto were regents of the Order's *studium* in the convent of St. Francis in Cesena, where they taught physics and metaphysics. From 1631 to 1638, they were regents of the Order's *studium* in Perugia, where they taught theology. In 1638, they were appointed regents at the Collegio di S. Antonio, in Padua, after a bitter clash for the control of these chairs between the highest authorities of the Order and two other members of the Order, Matteo Frée from Veglia (today Krk) and Francesco Maria Vaccari from San Giovanni in Persiceto, supported by some of the Veneto Senate. Mastri and Belluto kept these posts until 1641, when each returned to the convent of his hometown. After a few months, Mastri became private theologian to Cardinal Luigi Capponi in Ravenna. In 1645, Capponi left Ravenna to settle definitively in Rome, and Mastri returned to Meldola. In 1646, he ran the risk of being exiled from his hometown following a political clash he had become involved in, but the storm passed that year. In 1647, he was elected minister provincial for the province of Bologna. From 1650, the year that marked the end of his mandate, to 1659, he

was – as he himself writes in the preface to one of his later works – “almost a second Diogenes” in Meldola.

His frustrated longing for offices and honors was partly satisfied after Giacomo Fabretti from Ravenna, a friend of many years, was elected minister general of the Order at the end of May 1659. During Fabretti's generalate, Mastri often spent time in Rome. In the same year, he succeeded in personally offering the pope, Alexander VII, his most recent volume. In the second half of 1662, during a prolonged absence on the part of Fabretti, who was visiting the central European convents of the Order, Mastri became the minister general's vicar for Italy and the nearby islands for several months. In 1665, he did not succeed in having himself elected as the Order's minister general: Andrea Bini from Spello edged his way in between Mastri, supported by the fathers from Ravenna, and Lelio Spada, supported by the fathers from Faenza, and became the winning candidate. Bitter about the lost election, Mastri returned to Meldola. Here he worked on the completion of his last work and on the restructuring of the convent. He died in Meldola on 11 January 1673.

Works

Mastri was the author of four works. The first, in order of publication, was a *cursus* on Scotist philosophy articulated into logic, physics, anthropology, and metaphysics. It was planned and, to a great extent, drawn up together with his colleague, Bonaventura Belluto, from 1628 to 1646. It was published, divided by subject, in seven volumes in 4° from 1637 to 1647 and partly republished from 1644 to 1652 with integrations by Mastri alone. After the death of its authors, it was reprinted several times with the general title of *Philosophiae ad mentem Scoti cursus integer*. A second work, written in collaboration with his confrère and friend Ottaviano Camerani Jr. from Ravenna and directed against Matteo Frée, was published in 1650 in a single volume in 4° entitled *Scotus et scotistae Bellutus et Mastrius expurgati a probrosis querelis ferchianis*. A third work,

formally on theology but rich in philosophical elements, was published in four volumes *in folio* from 1655 to 1664. On the basis of some elements in the text, it is correct to indicate this work by the general title of *Disputationes theologicae in quatuor libros Sententiarum*. The last work published by Mastri is an extensive *Theologia Moralis*, printed in a single *in-folio* volume in 1671.

Philosophical and Theological Thought

Mastri intended to be a follower of John Duns Scotus and he undoubtedly was, to the extent that he can be held to be one of the most refined champions of *Doctor Subtilis* in the baroque age. Nonetheless, it would be incorrect to take his works as a simple exposition of Scotus' doctrine. Being a Scotist in the seventeenth century did not simply mean repeating and propagating the medieval master's doctrines. First of all, Mastri inherited a whole set of standpoints that were the outcome of three centuries of friction between Latin Aristotelians, nominalists, Scotists, and Thomists. In Mastri's day, there was a long history of the effects of Scotus' theories, and Mastri repeatedly recalls the long series of "interpreters" that had come before him. Moreover, what he proposed was fully immersed in the debate of his time within the context of the university, a debate that actively involved a great number of highly innovative authors, many of whom Jesuits, who cannot be traced back to a single traditional school. Lastly, Mastri was also well informed about the sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century developments in empirical scientific research. He presented and evaluated these developments on the basis of the flimsy physical doctrines which were part of his own tradition and were acceptable to the Roman curia and Catholic theologians, but he also perceived with honesty that they were the results of competencies and instrumental abilities that he did not possess.

Mastri's vast work ranges from logic to metaphysics and from ethics to supernatural theology. On the whole, he created a synthesis of the views

of a minority line of Scotism – a line that dated back at least to Antonio Trombetta – and the positions of Francisco Suárez, elaborating it by means of a careful reading of Scotus' works and an extensive knowledge of the doctrines advanced by university-level thinkers, especially those from the first decades of the seventeenth century.

Following Zaccaria Pasqualigo's developments of a theory formulated by Peter Auriol, Mastri distinguishes between knowledge (be it a concept, a judgment, or a science) as a real state of the cognitive faculties and knowledge as cognitive content. Knowledge in the first sense is a real being (an accident, in the case of a finite cognitive faculty) and therefore can be more or less similar to the real being, or the set of real beings, to which it possibly refers. Truth consists precisely in this similarity. Knowledge in the second sense is what one bears in mind and considers. Actually, knowledge as a cognitive content is not something real: it is a representation, a pure "known," whose entire reality lies in the state of a cognitive faculty and in the extramental basis of this state. Between a state of a cognitive faculty and what consequently appears to it, there is a biunique and necessary connection; thus, the correspondence between knowledge taken as a real state of the cognitive faculties and knowledge taken as cognitive content occurs anyway and is always perfect. Moreover, this correspondence is not a similarity between two (or more) real things. Consequently, it is not what is called "truth" (be it the truth of a concept, of a proposition, or of a science). Due to the fact that a cognitive content is not a real being, no direct comparison can be established between it and the object that is known; conversely, the relationship between cognitive content and the object of which it is supposed to be the representation is mediated by the actual state of the cognitive faculties. Mastri does not consider the detachment of cognitive contents from the things as a simple limitation of the mind; indeed, he also considers it as an expression of the strength of the cognitive faculties, i.e., the mind's power to besiege and capture somehow the real beings it is confronted with.

As far as the nature of concepts (taken as cognitive contents) is concerned, Mastri

distinguishes between predicamental concepts (“finite being” included) and transcendental concepts (first of all, “being” taken as common to God and creatures). Mastri’s distinction is traditional, but his treatment of it is not. According to Mastri, predicamental concepts regard things not radically different from one another and such as can be made up of a potential principle and an active principle. This means that they always concern finite things. Consequently, predicamental concepts are adequate concepts, i.e., they are founded on a distinction endowed with reality independently of the work of the mind, and they can represent things as these things actually are. By contrast, transcendental concepts regard things radically different from one another of which at least one is infinite. This means that they always concern things of which at least one cannot be made up of a potential principle and an active principle. Consequently, transcendental concepts are inadequate concepts, i.e., they are founded on a simple embryonic likeness, which is conceived by the mind in the form of a conceptual content which appears as common to different things exclusively through the work of the intellect itself. In other words, transcendental concepts – and the concepts contracting them – are the objectified expression to the mind of the work performed by the mind itself in order also to grasp something that a finite mind cannot grasp as it is in reality. From a historical point of view, Mastri’s theory of transcendental concepts is an endeavor to identify a subtle middle way between nominalism, Thomism, and the Scotism professed by most of Scotus’ followers, in a field already crowded with attempts at mediation. As regards the formation of the *ratio entis* (i.e., the cognitive content “being”) and its contraction to infinite being and finite being, Mastri, against most Scotists, maintains that the *ratio entis* is formed not by the grasping of a *formalitas* (i.e., something real and possibly common to several individuals; in this case, something real and common to God and creatures), but rather by confusing abstraction; against the nominalists, he maintains that such abstraction takes place not by reasoning reason (i.e., by means of the sole work of the mind), but rather by reasoned reason (i.e., by means of a

work of the mind that is founded in reality); against both the nominalists and the Thomists (even the eclectic ones, like Francisco Suárez), he maintains that the *ratio entis* is contracted not by explicitation, but rather by composition; finally, against most Scotists he maintains that the composition in question is not a real one, but rather a composition of reasoned reason. Indeed neither transcendental being nor the modes contracting it, i.e., infinity and finitude, are representations of something existing as such in reality; nonetheless, the transcendental being, the mode of infinity, that of finitude, and the compositions of the former with the latter are the manifestations to the mind of the work with which the mind itself grasps reality, i.e., the infinite being, the finite being, and their actual likeness and difference. Consequently, being is neither perfectly univocal nor simply analogical. Mastri rejects the Thomistic theory of the analogy of being, i.e., the theory according to which, since the created being has a dependence on the supreme being, the human intelligence grasps that dependence, albeit in a confused way, as soon as it conceives being. According to Mastri, on the other hand, being is an absolute concept that also extends to God but in itself does not include an actual reference to God any more than it includes an actual reference to the creature. Thus, Mastri maintains that being is both univocal and analogical: it is univocal because, taken as distinct from its inferiors, its contractors do not induce any inequality in it; notwithstanding, it is analogical because, even if it is taken in a state of abstraction, it is intrinsically – although only potentially – orientated to being contracted to inferiors that are unequal in perfection and disposed according to a certain order. A final remark has to be made. Mastri distinguishes between extrinsic modes and intrinsic modes. Extrinsic modes are, actually, accidents; intrinsic modes are not accidents, and the distinction between intrinsic modes and what they modify is weaker than the distinction between extrinsic modes and what they modify. Notwithstanding, a clarification concerning intrinsic modes also has to be made. Intrinsic modes have the same nature as what they modify: if they modify something represented by a predicamental concept, they are

endowed with reality independently of the work of the mind; if they modify something represented by a transcendental concept, they are only manifestations to the mind of the work with which the mind grasps the difference between the things that are referred to by that transcendental concept.

In order to appraise Mastri's theory on being, his statements concerning the nature of the reality of real being should also be taken into consideration. Real being does not simply refer to existence and is not the same as actual being; in fact, it is the same as possible being. However, Mastri maintains that the possibility of possible being can be considered from two different points of view: as far as the rationale of possible being is concerned, possible being is possible just because of itself, whereas far as the foundation of possible being is concerned, possible being is possible only because it is grounded in God's science.

A well-known divergence between nominalists, Scotists, and Thomists concerns the nature of freedom. As far as the metaphysical side of this subject is concerned, Mastri – following his master, Giuseppe La Napola Jr. – rejects both Domingo Báñez's Thomistic theory and Luis de Molina's Ockhamist doctrine: the contingency of contingent futures is founded neither on God's almightiness nor on God's sublime knowledge; it is founded on the supereminent freedom of God's will, which virtually holds and renders all possible created acts of free will. As far as the anthropological side of freedom is concerned, Mastri states that it consists of the dominion of the will over one's acts. This dominion exists both with respect to the intellect, which has a merely advisory power, and with respect to the object, which is merely the extrinsic formal cause of the choice. Indeed, the will dominates the very exercise of its act. This, writes Mastri, explains the fundamental reason for rejecting the Thomists' attempt to demonstrate a priori the freedom of the will on the basis of the fact that some objects are such as not to attract it necessarily: no object is such as to attract the will necessarily; hence, freedom can be demonstrated only a posteriori.

As far as the nature of morality is concerned, Mastri writes that moral goodness consists in the conformity between rational nature and the object

of a certain act. A few considerations must be added to this definition, however. First of all, the object in question is one of the extremes of the relation of conformity not for what that object is in reality, but rather for what it is in the mind; secondly, the moral quality of an object is decided not simply by its own nature, but rather with reference (i.e., subordinately) to a rule, that is, a law. By means of this doctrine, Mastri attempts to take into account the multiple moments of moral activity that do not simply mirror real connections. The object whose conformity to the norm must be judged is a cognitive content; moreover, the judgment on the conformity between norm and object is also the work of the mind, which, when judging, has to take into account a plurality of factors and the concrete possibility of making a mistake. Furthermore, Mastri holds that at least some norms – including some divine norms – are arbitrary or conventional. These considerations do not lead Mastri to deny the existence of a connection between obligation, rational nature, and the nature of things; nevertheless, he puts forward a refined conception of the connection in question. Firstly, the metaphysical concept of "end" can be employed to found morality only to the extent to which it becomes a "duty," a step that requires the introduction of the concept of law. Secondly, he transposes the scheme that he uses regarding the distinction between nature and foundation of possible beings to possible moral objects: the rationale of the goodness of objects that are good depends on the objects themselves, but the foundation of that goodness lies in God's law.

As far as supernatural theology is concerned, Mastri denies that, for the *viator*, theology is a science: its principles are not evident to the theologian; thus, it lacks one essential requirement for science. Notwithstanding, he also denies that theology is a form of opinion. Theology, Mastri argues, is explicit faith; but faith is certain and is a constant and reasonable state of man; therefore, theology also possesses the same degree of certainty and reasonableness as faith. To this must be added the fact that theology does not coincide, even partially, with philosophy: even though some theological truths are materially identical to some philosophical truths, the reason for assent

is, in the two cases, formally different. Mastri's theory on the nature of theology clearly opposes the Thomistic one, and indeed we can find the same opposition on a number of other issues. According to Mastri – and to Scotists in general – justification consists of a state of friendship between man and God. According to the Thomists, grace is an accident whose very physical nature makes it capable of uniting man to God. Like all Scotists, Mastri holds such a thesis to be untenable: as a created accident, grace has no connection in its being with God; hence, grace is not able, of itself, to produce any real unifying effect. It follows from this that the reason for the effectiveness of grace lies elsewhere. Grace unites God and man not because of what it is in its being, but rather because of a free divine decision: the decision to accept as a friend he who possesses that quality. Nonetheless, the presence of this quality is both insufficient and, absolutely speaking, unnecessary.

Impact and Legacy

Although at the present state of research it seems that, outside the Catholic clerical milieu, the work of Mastri and Belluto enjoyed little fame, inside that environment its diffusion was significant and long-lasting. In the 1660s and 1670s, the Sicilian Capuchin Illuminato Oddo declared his allegiance to them. After Mastri's and Belluto's death, their *Philosophiae ad mentem Scoti cursus integer* was reprinted six times, Mastri's *Disputationes theologicae in quatuor libros Sententiarum* was reprinted six times too, and Mastri's *Theologia moralis* even saw seven reprints. As late as 1750, Veremund Gufl, a Bavarian Thomist Benedictine, though rejecting Scotism, presented this school relying on Mastri and Belluto's work. However, one should not believe that Mastri's interpretation of Scotus' thought was accepted without opposition. As stated above, this interpretation was a synthesis of the views of a minority line of Scotism and the positions of Francisco Suárez. Already during his lifetime, Mastri was attacked both by "orthodox" Scotists such as the Conventual Franciscan friars Francesco Pontelongo, Alessandro Rossi, and

Bonaventure Columbi and by the conceptualist Recollect Franciscan John Punch. After his death, Mastri was once again criticized by the Spanish Observant Franciscan Manuel Pérez de Quiroga, who published his works in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and, in the 30s and 40s of the same century, by the Austrian Reformed Franciscan Crescentius Krisper. Nevertheless, within the Conventual Franciscan Order, Mastri's thought met with increasing approval, reaching the height of its fame in the 1750s.

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Ficino, Bernardino Telesio, Giordano Bruno, and Tommaso Campanella.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Like any time in the history of philosophy, the Renaissance is a period rich with speculations about the nature of matter, the function it performs in natural changes, and whether it can be known directly, if at all. During the Renaissance, philosophers from diverse traditions generally embraced a hylomorphic framework based on the writings of Aristotle, along with the passive role it assigns to matter. But there was no, of course, universal agreement about the nature of matter, and Renaissance philosophers modified long-standing views. The revival and rediscovery of new ancient philosophical sources – in particular, Plato’s natural philosophical dialogue *Timaeus* and Lucretius’ Epicurean poem *On the Nature of Things* – further complicated traditional theories of matter, and this resulted in criticisms and revisions of hylomorphism, as well as the development of rival frameworks for thinking about matter and physical bodies.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, philosophers conceived of primary substances along broadly hylomorphic lines, and this is true of both Platonists and Aristotelians. According to hylomorphism, primary substances are composed of three basic principles – matter, form, and privation. Matter is the passive substratum of form. Form is the active principle that makes something what it is, renders it knowable, and is responsible for a substance’s powers. Privation is what a substance could reasonably become when a change occurs. Prime matter is without any form whatsoever, whereas secondary matter is not without form, but is the substratum relative to the level of organization under consideration. While there was widespread consensus regarding these basic principles from antiquity to the Renaissance, philosophers disagreed for a long time over significant metaphysical and epistemological details. Some held that matter is nothing in itself beyond pure potentiality, while others assigned a degree

Matter in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

During the Renaissance, philosophers inherited and modified traditional hylomorphic views on matter. Others were harsh critics of the hylomorphic tradition and proposed entirely new theories of matter. This article considers the theories of matter of Marsilio

of reality to matter in itself. Further, some held that matter can only be known indirectly, while others claimed that it is, at least in principle, knowable. Dominican philosophers, following the work of Thomas Aquinas, generally held that matter is entirely parasitic on form for its existence and that it is entirely unknowable in and of itself. Franciscans like Duns Scotus maintained that matter has a robust existence that is independent of form and further that matter can be known, at least in principle. In addition, philosophers, drawing on elements of Stoicism and the writings of Augustine, argued that matter itself is a seedbed that contains seminal reasons of all things.

Renaissance philosophers inherited these ancient and medieval debates, contributed to them, and in time diverged widely from traditional hylomorphic views. The Florentine Platonist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) generally assumes the basic elements of hylomorphism, but he makes some unique modifications that are rooted in his Platonism. Ficino holds a robust or thick view of matter according to which prime matter possesses “absolute existence” that is independent of form because it is created directly by God and that matter is at least in principle knowable, if only to God. In this way, prime matter is more real than the secondary matter that composes ordinary objects. Further, Ficino also argues that matter itself contains the forms of all things in some inchoate form, and he frequently describes matter as pregnant and fermenting with forms. Ficino argues that natural changes happen “from within” matter, rather than being imposed on it from the outside. Genuine causation, according to Ficino, occurs from within matter itself, while apparent causation occurs from the outside. Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588) was a critic of traditional Aristotelian views of matter, and he argues for the return to a more empirically grounded metaphysics. Telesio argues that all of the natural world is the result of two principles – passive matter and active force – which he identifies with heat and cold. Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) inherits some of Ficino’s ideas on matter but goes further in his criticism of Aristotle

and his revision of traditional hylomorphic views, especially regarding matter’s passivity. In his early works, Bruno engages with atomistic speculations about the nature of matter. Bruno argues that ordinary physical objects are aggregates of atomic particles that are themselves simple and immutable. Atoms require the animating force of soul and the ordering design of mind. In later works, Bruno holds that matter itself is active, and like Ficino he argues that matter contains within itself the forms of all things, both material and incorporeal. Bruno was also attracted to elements of materialism. Like Telesio and Bruno, Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) is a critic of traditional Aristotelian views of matter. However, Campanella diverges from earlier Renaissance thinkers insofar as he denies a robust existence of primary matter and instead identifies matter with body. Furthermore, Campanella stresses the general passivity of matter and that it receives forms from external causes.

Cross-References

► [Ficino, Marsilio](#)

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Matthaïos

► [Camariotes, Matthaïos](#)

Matthiolus, Petrus Andrea

► [Mattioli, Pietro Andrea](#)

Mattioli, Pietro Andrea

Born: Siena, 1501

Died: Trento, 1578

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Abstract

Pietro Andrea Mattioli was a physician known for his abundant activity of translation of, and commentary on, the most important work on medical botany and materia medica of classical antiquity, *De materia medica* by the Greek Dioscorides (first century AD). After a first, modest, translation of the work into Italian, he rendered it into Latin in 1554 and compiled a commentary that he constantly expanded, producing repeated augmented editions. In 1555, he added small illustrations into the work, which he transformed into large ones covering most of the pages in 1562. His work was translated into Czech and German and was constantly expanded until Mattioli's death. After a further posthumous edition in 1598 (*Opera omnia*), the work became obsolete. Mattioli's method consisted not only in constantly deepening the analysis of the text with particular attention to the identification of Dioscorides' plants, but also in aggregating plants not described by Dioscorides to those present in *De materia medica*. To this end, he proceeded by similarity in the general appearance of the plants. However productive it might have been, this method resulted in obscuring the classification system adopted by Dioscorides, to the collapse of which Mattioli's work contributed in a paradoxical way.

Alternate Names

[Matthiolus, Petrus Andrea](#).

Biography

Pietro Andrea Mattioli was born in 1501 in Siena. Together with his family, he moved to Venice where his father practiced medicine. He was sent to Padua, to study first classical languages (Greek and Latin) and, further on, medicine. After he graduated in 1523, he returned to Siena and practiced medicine, first in Perugia where he made some surgery, and, afterward, in Rome, where he devoted much attention to treat patients suffering from syphilis. On the basis of this experience, in 1528 he wrote a small book on syphilis which he published in 1533 in Bologna (*De morbi gallici curandi ratione*). In 1527, he left Rome and went to northern Italy where he practiced medicine. He first stayed in Trento until 1539, moving then to Gorizia where he remained until 1554. He was then called to Prague to become a physician to the court, first under Ferdinand I (emperor 1558–1564) and then under Maximilian II (emperor 1564–1576). In 1570, Mattioli left the imperial city and returned to Trento, where he died of plague in 1578 (Ferri [1997](#) and Fausti [2004](#)).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Mattioli devoted most of his life to studying, translating, and commenting on the most important work on materia medica compiled in antiquity, the treatise traditionally identified as *De materia medica* by the Greek Dioscorides (first century AD). This is a vast encyclopedia of all the natural substances (plants, minerals, animals and their parts, as well as some handmade products) used as ingredients for the preparation of medicines.

In Mattioli's time, the work was fashionable. Whereas the Late Middle Ages knew only the Latin translation made by Pietro d'Abano (ca. 1250–1315 or 1316) in which the materia

medica were ordered according to the alphabetical sequence of their name, the Renaissance returned to its Greek text. Ermolao Barbaro (1453–1493), who owned at least one Greek manuscript of the work and consulted others, translated it into Latin, and abundantly commented on it. However, he could not publish the work, which remained in manuscript form until 1516. In 1499, Aldo Manuzio (ca. 1450–1515) published the first printed edition of Dioscorides' text in Greek, most probably in collaboration with Nicolò Leonicensio (1428–1524). The text of this Aldina edition was translated into Latin by the French naturalist Jean du Ruel (1474–1537), who published it in 1516 in Paris. The same year Ermolao Barbaro's nephews (who were also his heirs) published their uncle's translation, irritated by Ruel's translation which deprived Barbaro of the merit of being the author of the first Latin translation of Dioscorides made on the basis of the Greek text. Two years later (1518), the heirs of Aldo Manuzio published the so-called second Aldina of *De materia medica*, and, the same year, Marcello Virgilio Adriani (1464–1521), successor of Poliziano in Florence, published another Latin translation of *De materia medica* in prose that reminded that of Celsus. In 1529, the study and publishing works on Dioscorides moved northward. The German erudite Johannes Heyl (better known as Soter) published the Greek text of *De materia medica* together with Adriani's translation in Cologne, while in Basel, Janus Haynpoel (who Latinized his name in Cornarius) (ca. 1500–1558) published another Greek text of Dioscorides. During these years, Ruel's translation was frequently reprinted.

In this climate of abundant production and sharp competition, Mattioli translated *De materia medica* into Italian, publishing the first version of this translation in 1544. With it, he moved the epicenter of Dioscoridean studies back to Italy, as the book was produced in Venice and it was not in Latin, the international language of science, but in Italian. Although a modest work, this translation drew much attention and triggered a series of mechanisms that Mattioli deftly exploited, transforming a scientific endeavor into a profitable business (Pesenti 1985).

Impact and Legacy

The success of the 1544 Italian translation apparently came as a surprise. Mattioli reprinted the work in 1547 and published a second edition in 1548, which was followed by a third as early as 1550. Interestingly, the first edition (1544) was reproduced in an unauthorized printing in 1549, and the third was reprinted as early as 1551. Mattioli transformed soon this initial work into a scientific enterprise that kept him busy for his whole life. In 1554, he translated *De materia medica* into Latin, with a substantial commentary. Possibly walking in the footsteps of the German botanists and publishers who specialized early in the production of illustrated herbals, Mattioli added small representations of the plants for the production of which he hired the Italian illustrator Giorgio Liberale of Udine (1527–ca. 1579).

From Gorizia and, further on, Prague, Mattioli requested plants and seeds or, in absence of those, information from all botanists, physicians, and scientists, inundating Europe with his letters and actively animating the Repubblica delle Lettere instead of herborising according to the Padua model, or traveling as other botanists started doing. In letters also, he attacked his colleagues who dared to criticize his identifications of the plants mentioned by Dioscorides, often accusing them of plagiarizing him and profusely insulting them in virulent missives aimed to defend his own theses *coûte que coûte*.

As a result of this extensive search, Mattioli regularly published augmented editions of the translation and the commentary, which constantly generated a demand. The success of the work also generated a French translation as early as 1561 and, further on, multiple unauthorized editions, mostly in Lyon.

Probably encouraged by the success of the work and certainly supported by funding provided at the imperial court in Prague, Mattioli transformed again the enterprise by adding large illustrations of the plants that covered almost all the surface of the pages. The artist was again Giorgio Liberale and the cutter Wolfgang Meyerpeck

(1505–1578). These new illustrations were first used in the Czech version of Mattioli's work published in 1562 (which was in fact a translation of Mattioli's Latin into Czech), followed by a version in German in 1563 and in 1564 a Latin version. Several editions and reprints, including unauthorized ones, followed (an accurate census and analysis of which is still lacking), even after Mattioli's death, with a cumulative edition of all Mattioli's works in his *Opera quae extant omnia* edited by Caspar Bauhin (1560–1624) and published in Frankfurt in 1598.

In constantly adding new information and also introducing new plants in his commentaries Mattioli faced a crucial taxonomical problem since several of the plants he mentioned were not present in Dioscorides' work. Mattioli proceeded by general similarities (grouping, for example, the banana tree with the palm tree on the basis of the similarity of their leaves stressed by the illustration). However apparently botanically sound and, in any case, productive this method might have been, it obscured the structure of Dioscorides' taxonomy. In the preface of *De materia medica*, Dioscorides specified that he wished to depart from the traditional usage of classifying plants according to the alphabetical order of their name; instead, he used a classification (*taxis* in Greek), of which however he did not specify the exact nature. Analysis of the text brings to light a classificatory system combining different parameters, mainly a hierarchical scale (cosmological in nature) based on the values attributed to the plants, the types of plants, their therapeutic action, and also possible structural characteristics and similarities. By introducing similar species into such a complex system, Mattioli obscured Dioscorides' system, all the more because such a system was not easily perceptible. Although he expanded Dioscorides' work, Mattioli collapsed its taxonomical system, contributing to making Dioscorides obsolete as early as the end of the sixteenth century. Significantly enough both the first edition of Mattioli's *opera omnia* and the last Renaissance edition of *De materia medica* were published in 1598, closing a century of humanistic science and relegating both Dioscorides and Mattioli's works to the history of science.

Cross-References

- [Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao](#)
- [Dioscorides and Greek Herbals](#)
- [Manutius, Aldus](#)

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Maximos the Hagiorite

- [Maximus the Greek](#)

Maximus the Greek

Born: Arta c.1470/1475

Died: Sergiyev Posad 1556

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Abstract

Maximus the Greek was a monk, theologian, scholar, and translator active in Greece and Russia. He is considered a pioneer of Greek

letters after the fall of Constantinople. He dedicated his life to the promotion of theology and education in the Slavic territories. He was associated with some of the most famous and influential Italian humanists of his time. He suffered persecutions from ecclesiastical and secular authorities because of his views and his work. After his death, the Eastern Orthodox Church proclaimed him a saint and he is commemorated on January 21.

Synonyms

[Maksim Grek](#); [Maximos the Hagiorite](#); [Trivoles](#), [Michael](#)

Biography

Maximus was born as Michael Trivoles in Arta. His family came probably from Mystras, in Southern Greece. It is indicative that he signed his works as Maximus Grecus Lakedaimon, e.g., from Lakonia, the era around ancient Sparta. In his youth, after the Turkish invasion of Epirus, he moved to Corfu. His first teacher was John Moschos, a scholar known for his hostility to the Catholic Church. He continued his studies in Italy, namely, Padua, Vercelli, Bologna, and Florence. In Florence, he studied for 3 years under Ianos Lascaris. At the same time, he was associated with Marsilio Ficino and took part in the activities of the so-called Platonic Academy. For a short period of time, he worked for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola who was interested in classical and patristic Greek texts. Among Maximus' acquaintances were the famous humanists Angelo Poliziano, Scipio Callerges, and Aldo Manutius. While he was staying in Florence, Maximus fell under the influence of the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola, who shook Florence from 1494 to 1498. Maximus admires the friar's preaching and ascetic lifestyle. Throughout his life, Maximus showed his deep respect for Savonarola and attempted to promote his ideals and views about indigence. After Savonarola's death, Maximus worked for Aldo Manutius copying and editing texts. In 1502, with the encouragement of

the cardinal Oliviero Carafa, Maximus entered the Dominican order and became a cadet monk in the monastery of San Marco. In 1503 or 1504, he left the Dominicans, and in 1505 he chose to move to the monastery of Vatopedi at Mount Athos. He took the monastic vows and was named Maximus. His decision marked a shift in his interests and priorities. He adopted the ideals of Athonic monasticism and opposed classical Greek and humanitarian letters, despite his former education. Maximus studied carefully the Greek Patristic tradition. When Tsar Basil III asked for a translator of the Holy Bible and the Patristic literature, Maximus was chosen, even though he did not know any Slavonic language, but because he was esteemed for his theological and philosophical background. Moreover, monk Sabas, an expert on Slavonic languages, refused to go to Russia because he was too old. Maximus went to Constantinople and in 1518 he arrived in Moscow. Because he did not speak any Russian, he translated everything from Greek into Latin, and his associates would then translate that into Russian, a language that was not rich and fully articulated so as to render in highly sophisticated texts. As a result, Maximus' translations were not accurate. Furthermore, Maximus supported the coenobitic monastic life and indigence. Because Russian church authorities showed a tendency toward luxury, Maximus became the leading figure of a group of monks who intended to reform the Russian Church and threatened its autonomy. His writings and actions provoked the hostility of the leading figures of the Russian Church. Maximus was prosecuted and condemned in 1525 and 1531. The authorities accused him of heresy, magic, and treason. Maximus replied that the mistakes and misinterpretations in his works were the outcome of his poor knowledge of Russian. As for magic, in his works he repeatedly wrote against astrology and magic. Maximus supported that the Russian Patriarchate should come under the Patriarchate of Constantinople and disapproved of the politics of friendship between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Despite the pleas of several Orthodox Patriarchs to the Russian ecclesiastical and political authorities, Maximus was never allowed to return to Mount Athos. In the last years of his life, he received permission to study and write.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Maximus could not accept Russian Church's voluntary alienation from the Byzantine Orthodox tradition. When he was called to Russia, he intended to revive the Byzantine tradition and bring together the Greek-speaking Orthodox and the Russian people in order to confront the Ottoman threat. His work is vast and includes 365 treatises. His polemical works, against the Latins, prove his disapproval of nominalism. Instead, Maximus preferred to study the Christian dogma based on the Holy Bible and the Patristic texts. Maximus blamed the Latins that they care excessively for philosophy and rational syllogism. They taught Plato and Aristotle almost exclusively, and they did not accept anything that did not comply with Aristotelian logic. They were prone even to adjust and paraphrase the Christian dogma in order to be consistent with science. Maximus expressed his annoyance at the fact that in Western universities some professors instructed their students in Averroism, namely, the mortality of the personal soul. Maximus did not reject totally science and philosophy. He admitted that they serve as a preparatory stage for the study of theology, and they offer their vocabulary, which is indispensable for the right wording of the Christian truths. Philosophy has value per se, but it should not be connected to the core of the Christian dogma. Representative of his views is his treatise "Against the Errors of the Hellenes." Maximus was still under the influence of Savonarola's ideas. He was afraid that Renaissance classicism would affect Russia and would alienate Orthodoxy. Despite his studies in philosophy, he did not accept to be called philosopher by his contemporaries. Instead, he preferred to identify himself as a monk. Philosophical theology was not appealing to Maximus. Moreover, he remained faithful to the Greek tradition and did not approve *disputatio* as the most effective educational method. Instead, he argued in favor of the Platonic method, which consists of questions and answers between teacher and students. At the same time, Maximus rejected the attempt of certain scholars, like Pletho and his followers, to Hellenize Greek culture. He equated Hellenization with idolatry. Maximus disapproved of the attempts to

compromise the Orthodox and Catholic Church on the thorny issue of the filioque. This is the main reason for his harsh critique of Augustine, whom he considered the main cause of the problem. We have to admit that his arguments are poor; he mainly insisted that the theologians should rest only on the positions of the Holy Fathers. Despite the contacts of Greek Orthodox and Lutherans, which were cordial in the sixteenth century as a result of their opposition to the Pope, Maximus was the first Greek theologian who argued against the Lutherans, although his goals and intentions are not easily discernible. In his works concerning political thought, he supported the primacy of the spiritual over secular authorities.

Impact and Legacy

Maximus' work was not really influential in its totality. Besides his circa hundred translations, he wrote some 250 treatises on philology, ethics, theology, politics, and social questions. He was a distinguished ethicist and not a theologian. He supported Greek theology from everything he considered a threat. His familiarity with three different cultures and traditions, namely, Greek, Russian, and Slavonic, enhanced his reputation in a large part of Europe. He gave primacy to Greek culture and frequently criticized the other two.

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Mazzoni, Jacopo

Born: 1548, Cesena

Died: 1598, Cesena

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Abstract

Jacopo Mazzoni was an Italian philosopher, humanist, and astronomer. He held the chair

of philosophy in Macerata, Pisa, Rome, Ferrara, and Venice. He is mostly remembered for his defense of Dante Alighieri (*Della difesa della Comedia di Dante*, Cesena, 1587), which was the occasion to expound his reflection on poetics and aesthetics. Mainly inspired by Aristotle and Plato, his philosophy is motivated by a conciliatory project. He also authored a comparative study on the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, defending Aristotelian geocentrism (*In universam Platonis et Aristotelis philosophiam preludea*, Venice, 1597). Upon the publication of this work, he exchanged letters with Galileo Galilei, whom he had met during his appointment in Pisa. Galileo's letter to Mazzoni of May 30, 1597 represents the earliest attestation of Galileo's engagement with Copernicanism.

Biography

Mazzoni was born on November 17, 1548, in Cesena, from Battista, senator, and Innocenza Masini. He carried out his studies in Padua (1563) with the Aristotelian philosopher Federico Pendasio. Having come back to Cesena after the death of his father to take care of the interests of the family (1637), he frequented the Accademia dei Riformati. In 1672, he published in Cesena his first work, *Discorso de' dittonghi*, responding to a polemic on the pronunciation of ancient diphthong. In the same year, he published, under a pseudonym, and the year after (1673), under his own name, the *Discorso in difesa della Comedia del divino poeta Dante*. This work was a response to a criticism of Dante Alighieri's *Comedy* (*Discorso di M. Ridolfo Castravilla nel quale si mostra l'imperfezione della "Commedia" di Dante contro al "Dialogo delle lingue" del Varchi*), written by a Ridolfo Castravilla, probably the pseudonym of a yet unidentified author, whose manuscript was handed to Mazzoni by Tranquillo Venturelli, to be then published only in 1608. In 1574, Mazzoni was invited at Urbino by Bourbon Del Monte, where he met Torquato Tasso, who then mentioned the conversation he had with Mazzoni in his *Apologia in difesa della sua*

Gierusalemme liberata (Ferrara, 1585). Back in Cesena in 1574, Mazzoni started to give substance to his all-encompassing and conciliatory philosophical program with the publication of *De triplici hominum vita, activa nempè, contemplativa, et religiosa methodi tres, quaestionibus quinque millibus, centum et nonagintaseptem distinctae. In quibus omnes Platonis, et Aristotelis, multae vero aliorum Graecorum, Arabum et Latinorum in universo scientiarum orbe discordiae componuntur* (Cesena, 1576), where he addressed 5197 philosophical questions. For the discussion of the theses, which took place in Bologna in 1577, Mazzoni had to take a degree in theology (1577). In the following years, Mazzoni engaged in a project of commentary on Plato's *Republic* and became a member of Congregazione dell'Indice. As his previous *Discorso* in defense of Dante was triggering a debate, especially with the writings of (Alessandro Cariero, 1582) and (Bellisario Bulgarini, 1583) Mazzoni composed, starting from 1583, a defense of Dante (*Della difesa della Comedia di Dante. Distinta in sette libri. Nella quale si risponde alle opposizioni fatte al Discorso di m. Iacopo M., e si tratta pienamente dell'arte poetica e di molt'altre cose pertinenti alla philosophia, et alle belle lettere*), which also witness his more general engagement with poetics and aesthetic theory. Mazzoni managed to publish only three of the seven volumes he had planned in 1587 in Cesena, while the whole work will only be published in 1688. He then taught philosophy in Macerata (1587), and then Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy in Pisa (1588–1597), where he was invited by the grand duke Ferdinando de' Medici. His studies on Aristotle and Plato brought to the publication of *In universam Platonis et Aristotelis philosophiam praeludia, sive de comparatione Platonis, et Aristotelis liber primus* (Venezia, 1597). This work triggered the interest of a young Galileo, first a student, then a professor in Pisa, who wrote him a letter (May 30, 1597) in defense of the Copernican system. Appointed professor in Rome at *La Sapienza* by Clement VIII, he was then appointed by the Pope as ambassador in the attempt, carried on by the Papal States, to reconquer Ferrara and gain the neutrality of the

Venice Republic in the conflict. He was then appointed reformer of the University of Ferrara. Stroke by a disease, Mazzoni died in Cesena on April 10, 1598.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Though containing elements of originality, Mazzoni's thought was well-grounded in the themes and controversies of his time. His *De triplici hominum* reveals his engagement with a conciliatory vision of the philosophical endeavor, which finds reference in thinkers such as Pico della Mirandola and Nicolas of Cusa. It is innovative his approach to the comparison of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle in *In universam Platonis et Aristotelis philosophiam praeludia*, where, on philological basis, Mazzoni argued for a Platonic phase in the development of Aristotle's philosophy and theorized the application of mathematical tools to the study of physics – which arguably triggered the interest of Galileo.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Particularly originals are also his works on Dante's poetic. In the *Discorso*, Mazzoni defended poetry as a topic for philosophical discussion. He also endeavored to show, against Castravilla, that Dante's *Commedia* could be framed within the prescriptions of Aristotle's aesthetics. On this basis, he described Dante as a comic poet, and not, contra Castravilla, as a satirist. In the *Della difesa della Comedia di Dante*, in addition to defending Dante, Mazzoni developed his own view on aesthetics and poetics, drawing not only from Plato and Aristotle but also from ancient rhetoric. He claimed that arts are distinguished into three kinds, according to the objects they refer to: "ideas," proper of "commanding arts"; "works," characterizing craft, and "idols," proper of "imitating arts." Mazzoni individuated the subject of arts not in the truth, but in what is "believable," thus arguing that poetry, insofar as it fabricates its own subject shall be understood as part of sophistic, whereas, if it judges its subject

without inventing it, it is poetry properly said, and, as such, part of the “commanding arts.” On these bases, he argued that Aristotle’s *Poetics* is to be understood as the last book of his *Politics*.

Impact and Legacy

The interest of the young Galileo for Mazzoni’s approach in the mathematization of physics (along with his disagreement with geocentrism) has been already mentioned. In *universam Platonis et Aristotelis philosophiam praeludia* shall probably be accounted as an important source for the formation of Galileo’s later thoughts. But it is surely Mazzoni’s poetics and aesthetics, as well as his interpretation and defense of Dante’s work, that exerted a lasting influence, as evidenced by the number of editions and reprints of his *Discorso* and *Della difesa della Comedia di Dante* up to the nineteenth century.

Cross-References

- [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- [Pendasio, Federico](#)

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Mechanic

► [Architect, Renaissance](#)

Mechanics in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

The modern science of mechanics – a mathematical discipline – appeared during the sixteenth century at the crossroads of the increasing transformation of the mechanical arts and the humanist recovery of ancient and medieval textual traditions. Unlike other mixed-mathematical sciences such as astronomy and optics extensively developed during the medieval Latin West, the science of mechanics did not have clear medieval precedents. Consequently, intense debates and controversies forged mechanics as a mathematical science by borrowing elements from conflicting textual traditions, the expansion and transformation of the mechanical arts, the reconfiguration of disciplinary boundaries in mathematics and natural philosophy, and the possibility of incorporating this science of machines into existing taxonomies of knowledge – including their institutions (monasteries, universities, courts). By the sixteenth century, the science of mechanics was often portrayed as formulating the mathematical principles of the design and construction of machines, thereby dealing with artificial objects whose operation run against natural order to satisfy human needs. Mechanics was therefore seen as compatible with Aristotelian divisions of sciences. However, by the second

half of the seventeenth century, the vast expansion of mechanics had reached themes and problems considered for centuries as territory of natural philosophy, particularly the motion of bodies whose explanation then became increasingly intertwined with emerging mathematical techniques – from infinitesimals to calculus. Mechanics then acquired a more general dimension as a mathematical science of motion. During the seventeenth, the codification and adaptation of mechanics into a mathematical science of motion provided materials for and stimulus to new cosmologies which attempted to replace Scholastic natural philosophies and naturalistic cosmologies of the Renaissance.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

The expression “science of mechanics” may suggest that during the Renaissance, mechanics was a consolidated discipline similar to natural philosophy or astronomy, with continuous traditions going back to ancient writings through medieval elaborations, integrated into institutions of learning and teaching, including doctrines and procedures shared by networks of mathematicians. But the ancient trends in mechanics did not last for long; during the middle ages, mechanics did not have a community of practitioners or an institutional place in the medieval structures of knowledge (Clagett 1964). It was in sixteenth-century Italy that the classical meaning of mechanics – as a mathematical knowledge of the properties and functions of machines – was revived following ancient and medieval trends, during debates on the nature and scope of mechanics, mostly driven by interests in explaining the success of the mechanical arts.

This recovered meaning of mechanics as science was different from but emerged in close connection with a widely extended but vague use of the term to make reference to the *mechanical arts* – practical or manual activities, such as architecture, hydraulics, gunnery, surveying, among others (Bennett 2006). Most of these mechanical arts gained a considerable social

reputation since the fifteenth century, especially in Italy, where the possession of war engines and the fortification of cities could tip the balance in the conflicts that spread over the peninsula in the so-called Italian wars (Wolfe 2004). At the same time, changes associated with the growth of urban centers and the exploration of territories unknown by Europeans put considerable pressure on the manual activities and their practitioners (Feldhay 2018). In other sixteenth-century centers of power, such as Spain, the concerns with navigation, cartography, nautical astronomy, and engineering, central to the colonization of the “New World,” were institutionalized in the Academy of Mathematics of Madrid with considerable royal support (Navarro-Brotos 2008). Furthermore, the possession and exhibition of curious artefacts, such as theatrical machines, automata, fountains, or monumental clocks, increased the prestige of the competitive rulers and aristocrats and, therefore, skillful artists and engineers were progressively demanded and relocated from one court to the other all over Europe (Galluzzi 1996; Biagioli 1993).

It was the introduction and spectacular development of the printing press – a mechanical technology – that rendered ancient and medieval textual traditions on mechanics and motion widely available (Laird 1986; Richardson 1994). The recovery, translation, and appropriation of these sources, in the light of the practical concerns of humanists, engineers, and mathematicians, originated the modern science of mechanics. Four traditions – Aristotelian, Archimedean, Alexandrian, and the *scientia de ponderibus* – provided elements for debating the nature and scope of theoretical knowledge of machines and equilibrium. Because mechanics came to deal with motion as well, it is worth mentioning some medieval elaborations that involved natural philosophy, mathematics, and logic in the study of motion during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These traditions became influential for the emergence of the science mechanics, although they were formulated in the context of natural philosophy (Murdoch and Sylla 1978).

The Aristotelian tradition goes back to the *Mechanical Problems*, attributed to Aristotle

(384–322 BCE) but now widely considered a product of his followers (Van Leeuwen 2016). The text is made up of an introduction, noticeably discussed in the Renaissance, and 35 problems; some are daily-life puzzles, while others are more theoretical in nature. The work claims that the geometrical properties of the circle explain the operation of the balance, considered as rotating around its fulcrum. This analysis of the balance is then used for establishing the doctrine of the lever, whereby the author solves some of the 35 problems, including how the operation of specific machines may be reduced to the geometrical properties of the circle. The work presents questions and solutions, not a systematic treatment of mechanics, and the remarks on the nature of mechanical knowledge are general and open to multiple interpretations –as Renaissance scholars found out. Two aspects of the *Mechanical Problems* were notorious in the Renaissance revival of the work: the causal character of its solutions, which provided a theoretical pattern for solving mechanical questions emerging in the Renaissance, and the inclusion of motion in the geometrical account of machines (Schiefky 2009). At the end of the fifteenth century, the text became extensively available as part of the edition of Aristotle’s works by Aldus Manutius; in the next two centuries, the text was edited, commented on, and translated into different languages (Rose and Drake 1971).

The second ancient tradition comes from the works of Archimedes on mechanics (287–212 BCE). In *On the Equilibrium of Planes*, Archimedes presented an axiomatic theory of the balance and provided proof of the law of the lever based on the notion of center of gravity –that is, in terms of equilibrium, not of motion. In *On Floating Bodies*, he stated the principles of hydrostatics and examined the behavior of bodies in fluids. This treatise also contains the famous “Archimedes principle,” whereby a body in a fluid receives an upward thrust equal to the weight of the volume of the displaced fluid (Bertoloni Meli 2006). Although some works of Archimedes were known to the Arabs and the Byzantines in the middle ages, he was mostly reputed as a builder of machines (Laird and Roux 2008).

However, the translation and circulation of Archimedes' mechanical treatises offered the Renaissance humanists and practitioners a more systematic and mathematical approach to the science of mechanics than *Mechanical Problems*. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these mechanical treatises were initially published by Niccolò Tartaglia and subsequently improved by Federico Commandino and Guidobaldo del Monte.

The Alexandrian tradition was known through Pappus' *Mathematical Collections* (third century CE), a work that attempted to arrange the existing knowledge on mathematics, including Pappus' own developments and insertions in order to provide an organized view (Laird 2001). Pappus' work received significant attention during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; it was seen as a source containing vestiges and clues of valuable earlier knowledge lost. The Book VIII of the *Mathematical Collections* deals with mechanics. Pappus incorporated some extracts of a lost treatise on mechanics by Heron concerning the five simple machines (lever, wheel and axle, pulley, inclined plane, wedge, screw). There, he also offered a definition of center of gravity – lacking in Archimedes – and, following Heron, considered all machines as reducible to the five simple machines which, at their time, could all be explained by the geometrical analysis of the lever. This reductionist view of machines encouraged a programmatic orientation in some Renaissance scholars and practitioners, notably in Guidobaldo, who supervised the edition of Commandino's translation of Pappus in 1588 (Bertoloni Meli 1992).

The last textual tradition concerning mechanics was the *Scientia de ponderibus* or "The Science of Weights" in medieval Europe. This tradition emerged in the thirteenth century from Greek and Arabic sources and provided mathematical analyses of the balance and the lever, mainly concerned with equilibrium – although some proofs included postulates on motion. The tradition followed the deductive, mathematical order of geometry – although different in style of Archimedes or the Alexandrians. One of the

few names preserved in this tradition is that of Jordanus de Nemore, the author of some mathematical treatises and the *Book on Weights*, which was discussed in different manuscript trends during the following centuries (Moody and Clagett 1952). While this tradition was mostly concerned with the lever, it provided important results in the demonstration of the law of the inclined plane (Roux and Festa 2008). The texts of this tradition were initially published by Peter Apian in Nuremberg in 1533, but a later edition was produced in Italy in 1565 from the manuscripts of Tartaglia – who had already relied on this tradition in his published works (Drake and Drabkin 1969).

Apart from these ancient and medieval traditions dealing with mechanics, some commentary traditions to Aristotle's *Physics* produced elements that were subsequently involved in the Renaissance science of mechanics. In some passages of *Physics*, Aristotle dealt with the motion of projectiles and provided a set of rules to determine the speed and times of things moved in connection with their movers. Aristotle explained the movement of the projectiles in this way: the air was moved backwards by the projected body, in such a way that the same air, at the back of the body, pushed the body forward, thus explaining the continuation of motion. The double function assigned to the air appeared as problematic since the earlier Alexandrian comments by Philoponus (490–570 CE). The most influential alternative came from Jean Buridan (1295–1361), who formulated the theory of *impetus* explaining the motion of the projectiles by a property in the body which was activated when it was pushed by the mover. Aristotle's rules of motion were widely discussed in ancient and medieval traditions; in the fourteenth century, Thomas Bradwardine (c.1300–1349) offered an original variant of them by drawing on the medieval theory of proportion. This approach was also adopted by Nicolas Oresme (1320–1382) who produced a set of works involving mathematical explanations for a wide range of phenomena of motion, including mathematical rules for local motion (Clagett 1959).

Innovation and Original Aspects

The Renaissance science of mechanics emerged to a large extent as an answer to the interests of scholars and practitioners in explaining the spectacular achievements of the mechanical arts during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Valleriani 2009). In different ways, mechanical arts, particularly architecture, had incorporated mathematics, in order to codify their rules for training new practitioners, to improve the efficacy of their results, or even to find a way to expose their projects to their patrons (Bennett 2006). Aristotle's *Mechanical Problems* offered a set of concepts and problems on which humanists, mathematicians, and craftsmen relied to shape their understanding of the science of mechanics. Other texts on mechanics coming from different traditions also circulated during the period, as we have seen; but *Mechanical Problems* was initially influential because it addresses the nature of mechanics as causal knowledge, aligned with the dominant Scholastic views (Laird 2001). The introduction of the text outlined mechanics as a theoretical science and its outcomes, matching in certainty those of other traditional developed mixed sciences (astronomy and optics). The mechanical arts may be the practice of mechanicians, but the knowledge involved in their practice – explaining the construction and operation of machines – is a science. The text claimed that this science derived its way of proceeding from mathematics, but their subject was provided by physics (Aristotle 1936).

In the light of the Aristotelian tradition, the science of mechanics was firstly shaped as a science of machines, concerned with the mathematical principles of design and construction of devices – deeply influenced by the machinery employed in large-scale construction projects. Because of this, the Vitruvian definition of machine, contained in his *De Architectura* (c.30–15 BCE), was a constant resource during the sixteenth century (Rose 1975). However, as the practitioners involved other traditions of mechanics and extended the scope of the mechanical explanations by tackling specific problems

from a variety of other practical fields, the science moved toward a more general explanation of motion. This led to debates on the specific mathematical resources that were seen as valid and the mathematical structure that the science should follow.

The reception of the Aristotelian tradition provided an initial framework for the science of mechanics which evolved as different actors brought in elements from other traditions – sometimes in sharp tension – and according to their backgrounds and interests.

The first translations and commentaries that circulated were those of the humanists and philologists, being the most influential Niccolò Tomeo's (1525). His interests included the articulation of the text with other Aristotelian works and harmonizing the science of mechanics with dominant classifications of knowledge (Rose and Drake 1971). A different perspective emerged from the interpretations and use that mathematicians and engineers made of the Aristotelian text. Niccolò Tartaglia (1499–1557) edited, used, and translated diverse mechanical and mathematical sources, such as those of the “science of weights,” Euclid and Archimedes. However, Tartaglia's background and inspiration came mostly from practical fields, particularly gunnery and artillery (Pisano and Capecchi 2016). His view and practice of mechanics were inspired by Archimedes but extended beyond the concerns with equilibrium and involved the determination of the trajectory of projectiles shot at different angles and the proportion of bodies falling in water according to their specific heaviness. In some cases, he aligned with the medieval tradition of the science of weights against the Aristotelian, arguing that the *Mechanical Problems* relied on physical arguments that may be proved false by the science of weights (Drake and Drabkin 1969).

In contrast with Tartaglia, Guidobaldo del Monte (1545–1607) presented in his *Mechanicorum Liber* (1577) a project of mechanics inspired by Pappus' theory of machines and following the Archimedean focus on equilibrium, rejecting the science of weight as imprecise for involving the consideration of motion and

inelegant mathematics. In his view, all the vicissitudes to which motion was subject made it an inadequate subject for mathematical treatment, and therefore motion should not be considered in mechanics (Drake and Drabkin 1969). The project of the *Mechanicorum Liber* aimed at establishing the foundations of the science of mechanics – the science of equilibrium – on mathematical principles by reducing the properties of all machines to the operation of the lever which could be explained by the properties of the balance. In this way, any machine could be analyzed as arrangements of balances ultimately explained by the same mathematical principles. Guidobaldo's influential book advanced on how the simple machines could be reduced in terms of equilibrium, although his treatment of the wedge hinted at some proportions involving motion (Bertoloni Meli 1992).

Guidobaldo's integration of different traditions in a project portraying an organized mathematical science of mechanics concerned with equilibrium indicates that, by the end of the sixteenth century, the systematization of this science was crystallizing. Disputes about the nature of this project did not extend to the next generation, including figures such as Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), Evangelista Torricelli (1608–1647), or Gilles de Roberval (1602–1675).

These mathematicians and engineers did not direct their efforts toward replacing the principles of the “science of weights” or those of the *Mechanical Problems* in order to find a better foundation for mechanics; their approach was instead to postulate principles in order to solve specific problems, following the practice attributed to Archimedes. In other words, this generation was more interested in extending mechanics than in systematizing its achievements, although both ideals were not mutually exclusive (Palmieri 2008).

Galileo combined elements from ancient and medieval traditions with sixteenth-century developments in function of his background, particularly influenced by his training in practical fields (Valleriani 2010). In tension with Guidobaldo, Galileo mobilized elements of the

science of machines and of hydrostatics in order to tackle problems of local motion – a subject traditionally considered by natural philosophy. In his early works, Galileo considered motion as generated by the difference between the specific gravity of the body and the medium. The image of bodies sinking or floating on the Earth according to their specific gravities allowed him to mobilize resources of mechanics by considering motion as a case of equilibrium (Galilei 1898). This way of considering natural phenomena under restricted conditions and then explaining them by resource to mathematical-mechanical constructions led Galileo to the formulation of the law of free fall or the determination of the parabolic trajectory of projectiles in later works (Shea 1977). Galileo also formulated the science of the resistance of materials which he developed from mechanics: his thoughts on the topic seem to have grown from his engagement with the practical problem of constructing larger galleys, and the foundation of his science is the doctrine of the lever (Valleriani 2010; Bertoloni Meli 2006).

Impact and Legacy

The development of mechanics during the sixteenth century produced sophisticated ways to deal mathematically with physical objects (machines). During the seventeenth century, a growing distrust in the sources of explanation of natural phenomena – Aristotle, Scholastics, and naturalistic philosophies of the Renaissance – led some mathematicians and natural philosophers to find inspiration in the developments of mechanics to formulate alternative natural philosophies and cosmologies. The idea that the universe may be considered a machine goes back at least to the twelfth century. However, at the turn of the seventeenth century, the notion of machine had acquired a new dimension, tied to mathematics, that made it possible to endow the metaphor of the universe machine with new contents. This inspiration in mechanics to formulate new natural philosophies took many different forms during the seventeenth century but became extremely

popular all over Europe, particularly in England, the Dutch Republic, and France. The most influential mechanical philosophy of the early seventeenth century was René Descartes (1596–1650). In his *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), he offered an explanation of the universe in which all change was the outcome of collisions of particles moving according to laws of nature, such as the operation of machines was the result of pieces moving by contact, according to the laws of mechanics.

The mathematical science of mechanics of the Renaissance consolidated into a general science of motion during the seventeenth century. Although disagreements on the nature of the methods persisted, the idea that mechanics was restricted to machines in equilibrium was replaced by the motion of bodies as a general subject. Isaac Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1687) was presented by his author as the reconstitution of “rational mechanics,” which involved the mathematical explanation of *any* motion as generated by forces. Newton explicitly recognized his work as the continuation of ancient traditions in mechanics, particularly that of Pappus and the Alexandrians. By the eighteenth century, mechanics had grown in mathematical complexity and had reached more areas of natural philosophy (Bertoloni Meli 2006), following a pattern that started in the early sixteenth century with the attempts to explain the wonders of and produced by machines.

Cross-References

- [Archimedes: Reception in the Renaissance](#)
- [Architecture and Renaissance](#)
- [Arithmetic in the Renaissance](#)
- [Astronomy](#)
- [Ballistics in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Del Monte, Guidobaldo](#)
- [Epistemology, Artisanal](#)
- [Euclid: Reception in the Renaissance](#)
- [Experiment in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Force in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Hydrostatics in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Impetus, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- [Law of Free Fall in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Lenses in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Machine in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Metallurgy in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Motion in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Scientia in the Renaissance, Concept of](#)

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Melancholy in Renaissance Medicine

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Abstract

In the Renaissance, melancholy was understood as a pathological condition resulting from an excess of black bile, one of the four humors (Babb 1951; Brann 2002; Radden 2002; Schleiner 1991). This view had its roots in the writing of Hippocrates and Galen, but Arabic, as well as Latin Medieval sources, contributed to shaping the concept of a malady that caused, among other symptoms, sullenness, sorrow, obsessive thinking, delusions, and deliria. It was perceived as an epidemic disease, and scientific discussions about its different causes and treatments can be found in many works of medical theory. However, concerns with the topic extended beyond the disciplinary boundaries of medicine and natural philosophy, as melancholy was often discussed in theological context and in connection with spiritual suffering and sin. Renaissance philosophy also developed the association between black bile and geniality, first established by the pseudo-Aristotelian problem XXX.1. Marsilio Ficino plays a signal role in identifying the physiological causes of this association. The most accurate and comprehensive account of Renaissance thinking about melancholy can be found in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), which also surveys ancient and Medieval sources and remains a point of reference for scholars working on the subject.

Medices, Augustinus

► Nifo, Agostino

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Melancholy, from the ancient Greek μελαγχολία, i.e., “black bile,” is a medical concept which indicates a condition of sadness, fear, and sorrow and which was thought to have significant consequences on the body. The Renaissance understanding of melancholy is not only grounded in humoral medicine and relies mainly on the teachings of Hippocrates (460–370 CE) and Galen (130–210 CE) but was also influenced by the works of Rufus of Ephesus (c. 80–150 CE) as well as by Arabic sources, including Avicenna and Averroes, and Latin medieval treatises on lovesickness (Gowland 2012, 229–30). Medical theory described melancholy as a form of madness caused by an excess of black bile, one of the four humors (the others being yellow bile, blood, and phlegm) which were deemed to constitute the psycho-physiological makeup of the individual and whose imbalance compromised mental and physical well-being. Apart from the emotional disturbances noted above, melancholy yielded many diverse symptoms which included hallucinations – caused by the vapors produced by overheated black bile and which were thought to cloud the mind (Clark 2007, 59) – ravings, and deliria, in which the melancholics believed that they were kings or animals and even that they were made of glass. Physical symptoms included, among others, fever, flatulence, stomachache, palpitations, and singing in the ears. In France, André du Laurens (c. 1560–1609), court physician to King Henry IV, wrote the oft-quoted *Melancholike Diseases* (1599), in which he discussed the different forms and degrees of this condition and regarded melancholic delusions as a product of the deluded’s ill imagination. Melancholy was widely discussed not only by physicians, philosophers, and literary men, but also by theologians (Gowland 2012, 239–241). In the *Treatise of Melancholie* (1586), the English divine and physician Timothie Bright emphasized the interdependence of body and soul as well as the need to distinguish between melancholy as a natural condition and form of spiritual affliction deriving from sin. Following the famous question in the pseudo-Aristotelian Problem: “Why is it

that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly melancholics, and some of them to such an extent as to be affected by diseases caused by black bile?” (*Problemata* XXX. 1953a, 10–14), melancholy was traditionally associated with exceptional intellectual powers and shrewd thinking. This connection was richly developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In fact, the concept of “melancholic genius” can be seen as an element of originality in the Renaissance understanding of melancholy and Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499)’s view that astral influences acting on the black bile could cause episodes of divine frenzy, and extraordinary accomplishments in different disciplines had a great deal of responsibility in the building of this concept. Ficino discusses melancholy as the physiological cause of genius (Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl 1964), and the sixth chapter of Book I of his *Three Books on Life*, first published in 1489, is entitled “How Black Bile Makes People Intelligent.” Here, Ficino argues that black bile makes the *spiritus* – i.e., the vaporous substance which originates in the brain from the heat of the heart and from there flows throughout the body – subtler, hotter, and quicker (Allen 2010, 15–16). “Supported by such compliance,” he says “our mind explores eagerly and perseveres in the investigation longer” (Ficino 1989, 121). The connection between melancholy and geniality influenced philosophers as well as artists and found its most famous representation in Albrecht Dürer’s engraving *Melencolia I* (1514). However, the majority of scholars agree that the most detailed, accurate, and influential Renaissance work on melancholy is Robert Burton (1577–1640)’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, first published in 1621. Burton defines melancholy as “a habit, a *morbus soticus*, or *chronicus*, a chronic or continue disease, a settled humour” (Burton, 1638, 13; Gowland 2006, 71), and his approach is manifold, including medical theory, psychology, literary rhetoric, philosophy, and theology. Burton was a self-diagnosed melancholic, and the main aim of his study was to “to prescribe means how to prevent and cure so universall a malady, an Epidemicall disease, that so often, so much crucifies the body and

minde.” (Burton 1638, 76). As possible cures to this condition, Burton suggested that the melancholics kept themselves busy, enjoyed the pastoral care of a priest, and the company of friends. In the seventeenth century, there was a gradual shift from humoral theories to physiological causes which involved the body’s and brain’s functions. The English physician Thomas Willis (1621–1675), for example, proposed malfunctions of the spleen and the nervous system as the most likely sources of melancholy (Willis 1685, 311). Nevertheless, despite this shift toward modern etiologies, the seventeenth-century thinking of melancholy remained grounded in humoral medicine.

Cross-References

- [Burton, Robert](#)
- [Complexion, Temperament, and Four Humor Theory in the Renaissance](#)
- [Humors in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Spirit in Renaissance Medicine](#)

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Melanchthon, Philipp

Born: 16 February 1497, Bretten

Died: 19 April 1560, Wittenberg

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Abstract

Melanchthon delivered commentaries on almost all contemporary philosophical disciplines with the exception of Aristotle’s metaphysics besides his achievements in theology, church politics, and school reforms. Although he was known as an Aristotelian, he drew heavily on Plato, Neoplatonism, Cicero, and the humanists to advocate a “Christian philosophy.” He was influential through his discussion of the academic disciplines, scientific method, and epistemology. His rediscovery as a philosopher began with Wilhelm Dilthey and

Hans-Georg Gadamer. Within the last three decades, the interest increased in examinations of Melanchthon's writings in the history of science.

Alternate Names

Schwarzerdt, Philipp

Biography

Philipp Schwarzerdt was born on 16 February 1497 in the town of Bretten in the German region of Palatinate. After his father's death, his mother moved to Pforzheim with her children. There, Melanchthon attended Latin school, learning Greek from Georg Simler, who was the first professor of Greek at the University of Leipzig from 1515 onward, and also from Johann Hildebrandt. Reuchlin, Melanchthon's uncle, supported his young relative and awarded him with the humanist name Melanchthon (μέλαν-χρόνος) on 15 March 1509. On 14 October 1509, he enrolled at the University of Heidelberg, graduating 3 years later with a bachelor's in the "artes liberales." During his studies, he read poems by Conrad Celtis, while the theologian and rector Pallas Spangel introduced him to the thinking and the œuvre of Rudolf Agricola. In 1512, after Spangel's death, Melanchthon continued his studies at the University of Tübingen. On 25 January 1514, he graduated as "magister artium." In Tübingen, Melanchthon studied philosophy under Georg Simler and discovered his interest in Aristotle's original writings. Johannes Stöffler introduced him to astronomy and the study of the calendar. Together with Franciscus Stadian, professor of philosophy, and with the participation of Reuchlin, Willibald Pirckheimer, Georg Simler, and others (MBW 17), Melanchthon decided to provide a paraphrase of Aristotle's original text. His first academic accomplishments included the Terenz-edition, a Greek grammar that appeared in May 1518 and received much acclaim, as well as

his speech *De artibus liberalibus* (CR 11, 5–14) which bears importance for his early philosophical understanding. With this, he strived toward a reform of the traditional canon of subjects of the liberal arts, complemented by literature and history.

Relayed through Reuchlin, Melanchthon received a call to the newly established Greek chair at the University of Wittenberg, which he accepted by moving there on 25 August 1518. With that, a diverse academic field opened up to him. At the same time, he came within the sphere of influence of Martin Luther and his theological reformation ideas. This showed not least in certain philosophical critics, for which Melanchthon received renown during his first years in Wittenberg. However, this aspect should not be overestimated. With Melanchthon's annotation on the Epistle to the Colossians in 1527 (MSA 4, 209–303), the critical philosophical motives came to an end causing a great sensation and led to several reprints and a German translation by Johan Agricola. The commentary, in which an elaborate excursion to Col 2, 8 ("See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy [...]") can be found (MSA 4, 230–243), is a plea for philosophy as long as it is separated from (revelation) theology. Especially the declamation *De Philosophia* from 1536 was programmatic for Melanchthon's own philosophical understanding.

Within the years from 1521 to 1536, he worked as a church reformer in the Electorate of Saxony. Melanchthon – ultimately unsuccessfully – took over the role of the leading commissioner at the Diets and theological disputes in Speyer and Marburg (1529), as well as in Augsburg (1530). Moreover, he wrote important evangelical confessions like the first confessional document *Confessio Augustana* from 1530. In all the talks and negotiations, Melanchthon proved to be a much sought-after and nimble negotiating partner in the religious disputes of his time. In 1535 the French king Franz I invited him to mediate the French religious disputes, although this was in vain. King Henry VIII wanted to offer Melanchthon a chair in

England as well. The call to the University of Cambridge that he received some years later in 1553 however got refused. Having written curricula and schoolbooks, Melanchthon's importance for schools and universities cannot be overestimated. So, he was also personally present at the opening of the first Protestant grammar school in 1526 in Nuremberg, which was being led by his close friend Joachim Camararius. But other cities, such as Magdeburg and Eisleben, also sought his advice. Melanchthon was of great influence on the reform of Wittenberg University which had suffered from the consequences of Luther's appearance. From 1522 onward, the number of students and graduations had decreased drastically. As a rector in the winter semester of 1523/1524, he reformed the study guidelines, reduced the traditional disputations, and established obligatory declamations. These exercises were not only meant to encourage formal logical thinking but, more in general, to advance the ability to give a persuasive speech about a specific topic. On special occasions, Melanchthon himself used these declamations to rise to speak. However, significantly more speeches are known from others (Koehn 1985). In 1533 Melanchthon wrote statutes for the theological faculty and in 1545 for the theological and the philosophical faculty and the entire university. Moreover, he participated personally in the reforms of the universities of Tübingen and Heidelberg as well as in the Königsberg, Marburg, and Jena. Through his students, his influence also showed at the universities of Rostock and Greifswald.

Considering all these diverse religious, clerical, scholarly, and university activities, the amount of Melanchthon's writings is remarkable. They most often emanated from his lectures that were – partly by himself – reviewed, edited, and reedited. Although he held the chair for Greek in Wittenberg and in spite of his degree “*baccalaureus biblicus*,” his writings also comprise topics from the higher faculties' theology, medicine, and jurisprudence. They can be found at many European universities and they have had – despite all contemporary polemics – an impact across all confessions. This also holds true for Melanchthon's theological writings. His diverse

annotations to biblical texts are worth mentioning besides his manifold confessional documents that gained confessional character in the *Corpus Doctrinae* from 1560 (MSA 6, 5–377) followed by the so-called *Book of Concord*. Besides the commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians, especially the excursus to Col 2, 8, his two commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans from 1532 to 1540 are crucial for his philosophical perspective (Wengert 1997: 106–148, especially 133–139). There, in line with the tradition of philosophical theology, a discussion can be found about the classical topic of natural notion and a philosophical proof for God's existence (Rom 1, 19 f., CR 15, 564–568; 831–833). This also holds true for his main theological writings in 1521 called *Loci communes rerum theologicarum seu hypotyposes theologicae* and since the second edition in 1535 *Loci theologici* (the third edition initially appeared in 1543). The first main theological writing from 1521 was still biblical hermeneutics, i.e., an instruction to the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures oriented toward the reformatory theology from Erasmus' fundamental concepts. The later main theological writings can rather be depicted as a sum of theologies. There once again, apart from creation theology, it is the philosophical notion of God and the arguments of natural theology that are important for his philosophical perspective (CR 21, 351–370; 607–643). Moreover, the systematic versions of the theory of free will have to be mentioned that Melanchthon had elaborated on an intense debate between Luther and Erasmus (CR 21, 274–282; 373–378; 652–665).

With the exception of metaphysics in the sense of the Aristotelian onto-theology, Melanchthon wrote about all philosophical disciplines of his time. The Greek (1518 and 1520) and Latin (1525) grammar have often been reprinted. His rhetorics, which had their origins in Tübingen, were revised in 1521 until their final version in 1531. It is the corpus of Aristotelian writings that belonged to the most important fields that Melanchthon handed down through his own paraphrases and commentaries. It is crucial for this teaching tradition that Melanchthon took off the burden of the theological problem of a fusion of

theology and philosophy (in the Aristotelian ethics and politics, the goal εὐδαιμονία of the inner world) through dividing between law and Gospels. He did this to secure the autonomy of revelation theology and soteriology. Aristotle's ethics had been revised from 1529 onward, and edited to extended versions until they eventually took shape in the big tractates *Philosophiae Moralis Epitome* from 1538 and *Ethicae Doctrinae Elementa* from 1550. First, Melanchthon's interest in Aristotelian physics led to the short *Commentarius de Anima* in 1540 which was completely revised and published with complements in the *De Anima* from 1553. Moreover, in 1549 the textbook *Initia Doctrinae Physicae* about Aristotelian philosophy of nature was published together with his coauthor Paul Eber. His writings about Cicero's texts and other classical authors are numerous and he was devoted to these all of his life. From 1532, when he began revising the chronicles of the astrologer Johann Carion, he first started giving talks about world history before the *Chronicon Carionis* was published, one of the most important history books of his time, continued by his son-in-law Caspar Peucer after his death. It has to be stressed that Luther never criticized his philosophical efforts. From time to time, however, he accused Melanchthon of "his philosophy" (WA Br 5, 399, 16; 406, 56 ff.; 412, 51 ff.).

With Luther's death in 1546, Melanchthon became more and more mixed up in the internal Protestant teaching disputes, which – besides his university duties – characterized the last period of his life. Struck by the enormous controversies, Melanchthon awaited to be freed from "theologian contentiousness" (*rabies theologorum*) to be able to see the divine secrets (CR 9, 1098). Melanchthon died on 19 April 1560 as a result of a feverish cold that he had caught on a journey from Leipzig.

Melanchthon's Philosophical Concept

In a letter to Veit Dietrich in Nuremberg on 22 June 1537 (MBW.T 1914, 16–18), Melanchthon said about himself to be seen as Peripatetic

(*homo peripateticus*). Undoubtedly, this has led to the Aristotelian interpretation of his philosophy that prevails in research. The didactic lessons in his philosophical œuvre following the Platonic and Ciceronian traditions were considered too. It often happened that this type of philosophy was characterized as eclectic (about this difficulty, cf. Frank 1995, 15–29). The question about how philosophy is to be understood according to Melanchthon can only be answered internally by asking how he himself understood it. In general, three concepts of philosophy can be determined in Melanchthon's writings: (for the following see Frank 2012, 1–10)

Philosophy in the Sense of Erasmus as "Philosophia Christi" or as "Philosophia Christiana"

In Melanchthon's Pauline texts of the early 1920s, we find the Erasmian idea of a "Christian philosophy" (CR 11, 276–278; here: 276), also described as "Pauline" (CR 11, 34), "sacrosanct" (CR 11, 36), or "holy" (CR 1, 22). This notion of the "philosophia christiana" was limited to the first few years of the second decade of the sixteenth century. It was determined by Erasmus' idea of a religious ethics life of all Christians as well as by an aggravation of the theological doctrine of justification in the Pauline theology.

The Philosophical Concept in the Sense of Melanchthonian Humanism

Melanchthon presented his reform program of the classical *artes liberales* in his speech *De Artibus Liberalibus* in Tübingen in 1517 (MSA 3, 17–28) and also in his inaugural lecture *De Corrigendis Adolescentiae* in Wittenberg on 28 August 1518 (MSA 3, 29–42). There, he also clearly formulated his idea of an extensive philosophical canon. Apart from the subject of the trivium (grammar, dialectics, rhetorics) and the quadrivium (arithmetics, geometry, music, astronomy) relating to seven out of nine muses, the canon is complemented by the literary figures Klio and Kalliope. Melanchthon, in line with the tradition from Hesiod onward but especially in line with the Italian humanists, identified these two with historiography and poetry (MSA 3, 26). The canon of

subjects of the *artes liberales* was the same in his inaugural speech at Wittenberg in 1518. Here, too, the subjects of the trivium and the quadrivium that Melanchthon described as either *disciplinae humanae* or philosophy, respectively, were complemented by Greek and Latin literature (Poetry, MSA 3, 38), as well as historiography (MSA 3, 39). Although this philosophical concept was important in Melanchthon's first academic years, since the publications of the 1530s, it has become clear that his concept of philosophy did not only comprise an extension of subjects of the artistic faculty by adding poetry and history. His idea was to reach the higher faculties of medicine and jurisprudence as well. As long as philosophical theories were discussed in theology, such as a philosophical concept of God, a philosophical proof of God's existence, and the Aristotelian doctrine about the world's eternity and free will, such a concept of philosophy would also stretch out to theology.

The Universal Scientific Concept of Philosophy

In the substantial philosophical writings of this œuvre, philosophy can be understood as a universal scientific concept. It goes beyond the canon of subjects of the *artes liberales* and characterizes Melanchthon's rather productive œuvre since the 1530s. He had programmatically formulated such a universal scientific program in his speech *De Philosophia* from 1536 and thus had laid its foundation (CR 11, 278–284). Here, philosophy does not only comprise knowledge of the grammar (i.e., the trivium of the *artes liberales*) but also that of the science (*scientia*) of philosophy and a lot of other arts. Philosophy of nature and moral philosophy are as important to this comprehensive science of philosophy as a scientific methodology (dialectics) and rhetorics (CR 11, 280) with a whole field of sciences being interconnected and referring to each other. Apart from the humanist subjects of the *artes liberales*, psychology, moral philosophy, and philosophy of law are also significant. Aristotle's metaphysics, however, is excluded from this universal scientific concept of philosophy. Even if a multitude of philosophical lessons (the concept of God, the immortality of

the soul, etc.) must be treated in theological discourse, according to Melanchthon, he nevertheless drew a clear line between philosophy and theology as long as he motivates theology with biblical revelation, i.e., theology being either a scriptural interpretation or essentially argumentatively based on the Holy Scriptures. The strict division of theology and philosophy is expressed in the lexical differentiation of Gospel and law.

Philosophy of Mind and Epistemology

The Neoplatonic philosophy of the mind is the center of the universal scientific understanding of philosophy developed in Melanchthon's *Liber de Anima*. Moreover, it is also fundamental to ethics and politics (for more information, see Frank 1995, 86–95). This becomes clear from Melanchthon's description of the soul. Contrary to Aristotle's ἐντελέχεια, he depicts it in line with Cicero's diction following Plato as ἐνδελείχεια (CR 13, 12–14, cf. Salatowsky 2006, 91–103). Firstly, this definition exposes the Aristotelian hylomorphism in which the soul is related to the physical body. Secondly, it lays the foundation for the independent and immortal soul (more about the philosophical line of reasoning of the immortality of the soul can be found in Frank 1993 [*195]). In the context of the theological doctrine of God's own likeness, the relation between the divine mind and the human mind is interpreted as Platonic exemplarism. That means that the human being participates with his mind and especially with the epistemological principles (*notitiae naturales*) that are inherent to it in the divine mind (CR 13, 5; 11, 941) and also in his reign over the world (CR 11, 942). Melanchthon's classification of the properties of the soul only superficially follows an Aristotelian-Thomasian position. In addition to the three levels of the soul, the vegetative, sensitive, and rational powers, the soul possesses five properties: *potentia vegetativa*, *sentiens*, *apetitiva*, *loco motiva*, and *rationalis*. It is the *potentia rationalis*, the soul's highest property, that Melanchthon explicitly identifies with the human mind (*mens*). What is

specific about this idea of the mind is the connection between the traditional philosophical term of the soul and the epistemological principles (*notitiae naturales*, cf. the chapter *De potentia rationali seu Mente*, CR 13, 137–142). Melanchthon's theory of these epistemological principles given to the human mind through creation has its terminological origin in Epicure's experiential epistemology (πρόληψις) and in Stoicism (κοινὰ ἐννοίαι). These epistemological theories are connected with both the notion of a preconception and the mutual terms implicating an experiential realism. Cicero and Boethius had already interpreted them in an a priori new-platonic way (Horsley 1978; Frank 2008). They can also be found in Melanchthon's review of certain passages in the text of the Ciceronian topics with a commentary by Boethius (CR 16, 820 f.). Melanchthon attributes a polyvalent function to the theory of the *notitiae naturales* that is crucial for his philosophizing. First of all, this theory is about elements from the philosophy of the mind. The epistemological principles are the concrete place at which the human mind participates with the divine mind; they are "rays of divine wisdom" (CR 13, 138) in the human mind. Moreover, these epistemological principles form the *cognitive psychological noetic aspect of epistemology*. In the disputes about the origin of all understanding between Plato and Aristotle, to which Melanchthon refers here (CR 13, 143 f.), he chooses the Platonic epistemological apriorism. Since these principles are the a priori basis of all understanding, "all sciences originate in the understanding of the soul" (CR 13, 167). Consequently, Melanchthon reflects the Aristotelian epistemological realism in his premise, "nothing is in the intellect that is not in the mind before." The *notitiae naturales* exist independently from perception and are thus a prerequisite of all understanding (CR 13, 144). At the same time, they are criteria of certainty of knowledge and thus form the *epistemological aspect of his theory of science*. This is not only about geometrical principles like "The whole is greater than any of its parts," but it is also about principles of formal rationality prerequisites like "Something is or is not." As such, the criteria of certainty do not only provide

the basis for anthropology (CR 13, 149–153), philosophy of nature (CR 13, 185–190), and moral philosophy (MSA 3, 158 f.). They are equally important for theology that finds another criterion of certainty in the divine revelation that a human being had to acknowledge even if revelation differed from judgment by reason (CR 13, 650). This is the fourth *gnoseological aspect* of the theory of the *notitiae naturales*. These principles will find proof only in relation to the theory of the *lumen naturale*, the natural light of the human mind through knowledge. The epistemological principles are inherent and evident because of this light and are in fact in accordance with the divine mind (CR 13, 648 f.).

Dialectics, Rhetorics, Epistemology, and Scientific Theory

Dialectics as Fundamental Science and Rhetoric

For Melanchthon, dialectics is connected with the claim of fundamental science. This is in line with Petrus Hispanus and against Rudolph Agricola's program. "Dialectic is the science of all sciences (ars artium, scientia scientiarum) [...], since here the path to the principles to all methods can be found" (CR 13, 515). The fundamental scientific claim has two perspectives: on the one hand, it refers to dealing with all topics and questions about which human beings must be apprised and on the other hand, dialectics offers a general method for the examination of all objects (CR 13, 514 f.). As in other humanist dialectics, here too, it is the dialogue (colloquium), the argumentation where dialectics takes place so that Melanchthon's translation of διαλέγομαι consequently is "unterredkunst" (the art of speaking) or "unterrichtkunst" (the art of teaching). This pragmatic argumentative interpretation of dialectics makes clear that it naturally forms the other part of rhetorics. While "Dialectics is concerned with all matter and depicts the highest of all things without any embellishment," "Rhetorics adorns substance with the jewellery of oration" (CR 13, 515). This classic positional description is just one superficial aspect between rhetorics and

dialectics. At the same time, Melanchthon considers rhetorics as a method that ensures comprehension (of texts from classical authors, the Holy Scriptures) and moves rhetorics more into the direction of hermeneutics (Knappe 1999). Dialectics can then be integrated into rhetorics as a method for textbooks wherever specific factual questions in the former are raised and one cannot do without the latter. In addition to the classical genres of the *genus demonstrativum*, *deliberativum*, and *iudicale*, Melanchthon introduces in his rhetorical system the *genus didascalikón* (*didacticum*) as the most important innovation. Its goal is the transfer of knowledge, i.e., how the knowledge that is inherent in a text can reach the listener. J. Knappe appropriately defined this rhetorical concept as a text-theoretical double perspective combining traditional rhetorics (aiming at production) with Melanchthon's rhetorics (aiming at reception). This is according to the humanist goal according to which texts do not consist of dead language or mere theory but are rather understood as something that has to be reanimated.

The Two Parts of the Dialectics: Iudicative Analysis and Topical Invention (*Loci Communes*)

In the first version of the *dialectics* dated 1520, Melanchthon still mainly follows the methodological concept of Agricola's art of finding, the *inventio* and the *iudicium* (CR 20, 749). In the main dialectical text of 1547, the methodological steps are reversed. Here, the iudicative analysis is applied first before invention, which can be ascribed to topics, takes place. Iudicative analysis serves the evaluation of terms in syllogisms or other argumentative figures, while invention belongs to the finding of things and is thus subject to the doctrine of the *loci* (CR 13, 641). The reversion of the methodological steps in the dialectic procedures emphasizes its redefinition. According to Agricola, topical invention is no longer an art of finding as such, but an evaluation and explication of all things, it is subordinated to *iudicium*, the first step in the justification of knowledge. Melanchthon's dialectics as a general theory of science can be seen as topically

extended analytics, with as formal evidence as demonstrative, dialectic, and sophistic syllogism, as well as the enthymeme as developed in Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*.

While the first part of the dialectic forms the analytical procedure with which an evaluation of terms and propositions in syllogisms and other argumentative forms is possible, the second part of the *loci* doctrine offers an index of all things that can be discovered and selected. Here too, Melanchthon's statement (cf. CR 20, 698) holds that these *loci* are not found arbitrarily but made up of places closest to nature ("ex intimis naturae sedibus"). Melanchthon's understanding of *loci* shows three different meanings (cf. Mertner 1956; Wiedenhofer 1976, Vol. 1, 373–376): Primarily, *loci* are seen as *sedes argumentorum*, i.e., the place where arguments are found. Secondly, the notion *loci* is used as general understanding of general thoughts. Thirdly, being especially interesting, they bear a content-related significance since they refer to the relevant fundamental concepts of all sciences. Especially on this level of meaning, it becomes clear that *loci* are not merely arbitrary terms and citations as Melanchthon stresses in this rhetorics in 1531 (CR 13, 451–454). They are, in a modern way of speaking, semantic substrates obtained from the abstraction of a text (such as the Bible or history). As an example of this extraction from a narrative text, Melanchthon mentions Cicero's *Oratio pro Milone* (CR 13, 451). There, Cicero narrates that God has punished Clodius for his crimes against religion. From that, it may be concluded that God exists and reigns over the world. "It is thus about a semantic-analytical procedure where propositions are extracted from texts and consolidated categorically" (translation of Knappe 1999, 130). As such, *loci communes* are prominent elements (*praecipua capita*) of all sciences.

The Importance of the Criteria of Certainty for the Philosophy of Science

The formal evidence of syllogism is found in the criteria of certainty of all knowledge. Melanchthon regularly taught three criteria of understanding certainty: general experience, the epistemological principles (*notitiae naturales*), and the realization

of a syllogism consistency (more detailed in the *Dialectics*, CR 13, 647 f.). However, Melanchthon does not account for the systematic difficulty arising through such a theory of principles of certainty of knowledge, i.e., of how to mediate between the prerequisite of knowledge that is related to experience and aprioristic as laid out in the epistemological principles of the *notitiae naturales*. Melanchthon's own solution, developed thoroughly in the doctrine of intellect of his psychology, however, is clear. In opposition to the position of the epistemological realism that he discusses with respect to the Aristotelian dictum "Nothing is in the intellect that is not given in the sensory experience before," he stresses that the epistemological principles as aprioristic prerequisites of all understanding are rather not to be found in sensory experience. Both philosophy of the mind and an epistemological theory corresponding to this theory, make clear that all knowledge is a conceptualization from the perspective of the human mind in consequence of the a priori given epistemological principles (*notitiae naturales*).

Geometrical Mathematical Ideal of Methods: Synthesis and Analysis

To Melanchthon, the method is a *habitus*, i.e., the science or the art of finding a way of presenting things in an ordered way. Its formal evidence is a twofold syllogism: the understanding that is drawn on the basis of known principles or general experience in an ordered process of drawing conclusions or, as Melanchthon briefly notes, the method that develops from a reversed process, i.e., it is reducible to the principles from the consequences (CR 13, 652). Melanchthon himself calls these two methodological procedures *compositio* or synthesis referring to geometry and *resolutio* or analysis, respectively. His methodological claim follows exactly that of the ideal geometrical methods: Firstly, the method of synthesis, the procedure that brings proofs from the principles to the conclusions. Secondly, he also uses the method of analysis as the deduction from the conclusions to the principles, where these principles (of geometry, philosophy of nature, and moral philosophy) claim to be free of reason and evidence and to be independent of a specific

revelation (CR 13, 654). This explains why Melanchthon chose Aristotle from all the available authorities. He empathically calls him the "one and only builder of method" (CR 11, 348 f.).

Melanchthon's ideal geometrical method must be seen in the historical context of Proclus' edition of the commentary on Euclid. In 1533, Melanchthon's friend Simon Grynaeus published it in Basel (CR 2, 815). Melanchthon was fulsome in his praise of his friend because of this œuvre and other editions. Such a methodology free of metaphysics, as applied in Euclid's *Elementa*, immediately suggested itself, especially since Melanchthon's writings reflect a rejection of Aristotle's onto-theology. Here, Melanchthon realized that the origins of all sciences lie in the ideal methodology of geometry (CR 11, 291). He explicated this realization in his *Praefatio in Geometriam* from August 1536 (CR 3, 107–114). In line with this ideal, knowledge in sciences is motivated on the basis of primary and evident sentences that are free of reasoning. The procedure of gaining evidence from geometry is generally considered a model for a scientific procedure of taking evidence (CR 3, 108). In the sixteenth century, it was right this reception of these classical mathematical methodological models that had had a deep impact on the discussions about the methods until the Enlightenment as Engfer's study of 1982 (esp. 72–88) shows.

Practical Philosophy and Law of Nature

Despite all critical remarks that Luther expressed about the Aristotelian ethics, it was Melanchthon who effectively established his ethics and politics in Protestantism with the central concepts of reformatory theology. In line with his topic procedures, which are characteristic of scientific disciplines, Melanchthon's writings about Aristotelian ethics and politics are paraphrases of selected lessons. He illustrates these with the classical scientific consensus and explicates them in the context of contemporary practical questions. This is reflected in the fact that he never revisited all texts about ethics and theology. His paraphrases are determined by *topoi* or central concepts of

reformatory theology. By means of the inherent dialectic between law and Gospel and under consideration of the theological concepts of *finis hominis*, *virtus*, and *iustitia*, he discusses fundamental ethical and political questions. It is theology that shapes ethics and politics and especially Luther's dialectic of law and Gospel that Melanchthon applied to all scientific disciplines. To Melanchthon, the structural principle, developed out of this dialectic, which refers to whatever a human being ethically or politically wants to or can do is without any soteriological importance.

The central theological perspective of practical philosophy also illustrates the determination of the purpose of human life, i.e., the question of the Aristotelian εὐδαιμονία. In the chapter "Quis est finis hominis?" of his *Moral Philosophy* of 1538, Melanchthon differentiates between the *finis principalis*, the goal found in the knowledge of God and the obedience to Him, and the *finis minus principales* being the subordinated goals that can be achieved through acts of virtue (CR 16, 30 f.). In order to understand the *finis minus principales* with respect to the human acts of virtue, it is important to know that Melanchthon – in a supposed Aristotelian manner – relates them to the law of nature (cf. chapter "Quae est ratio sententiae Aristotelicae?" CR 16, 31). Similarities to the law of nature can indeed be found here. Central in his ethos, however, is the way of habituation. Although – as Melanchthon admits – ethical reasoning in Aristotle is obtained from the principles of the philosophy of nature, the argumentation has to follow these true and solid principles of the philosophy of nature that are constituted in the divine mandate: the law of God. This is nothing else than laws of nature (*leges naturae*) than divine laws (*leges divinae*), and thus the practical principles established by God's order in nature (CR 16, 31). Therefore, natural law theory has a prominent role in the establishment of practical philosophy. Melanchthon's attempt is thus one out of several in the sixteenth century trying to newly establish a law of nature. As Scattola's study on Melanchthon has shown, what all these efforts have in common is that they explicate the "law of nature as doctrine

of natural law and its integration in a general understanding of a cosmic order." Moreover, the law of nature is understood as an *objective norm* and "valid for all human beings to which it is innate, obtaining its validity from God's will" (translation from Scattola 1999, 37). The law of nature is justified – and thus the concept of a law of nature cannot be secularized – by the *lex dei* and the *lex divina* or as their manifestations the *leges divinae*, respectively, as passed on in the books of Moses and in the Gospel. Melanchthon calls these *leges divinae leges mosaicae* and divides them into three groups: the *leges morales*, unfolding most clearly in the decalogue; the *leges iudicales* or *forenses*, referring to positive laws such as marriage, claims of ownership, and punishment; and the *leges ceremoniales*, meaning cultural and ritual rules (Melanchthon's natural law theory is elaborated in the two *loci theologici* in 1535 [CR 21, 388–406] and 1543 [CR 21, 685–719]). Melanchthon's schoolbook on books I–III of Aristotelian politics shows the same topic procedure that also characterized his writings on ethics. It deals with paraphrases of particular lessons that he discusses under the guideline of theology and with respect to contemporary political events. Here it is Wycliff's rise, the Anabaptists, and several theologians from Switzerland and Strasbourg that are worth mentioning. Melanchthon accuses them of not differentiating clearly between state and Gospel (CR 16, 419). Fundamental to his understanding of the state is its basis in the law of nature. Thus, as Melanchthon stresses, "the *Politica* deals with the civil society and the duties stretched out over society whereby the reasons for society are derived from nature" (CR 16, 421 f.). Like all scientific disciplines, politics, too, originates in the primary, most general principles inherent in nature. Primary political principles are the following: the human being is naturally made to live in a community, with the first community as the lawful association between man and woman (CR 16, 423). From these principles, others could be obtained. Melanchthon – in line with the justification of the state according to the law of nature – identifies these general principles of politics with the law of nature that he equates with the divine law (*ius divinum*). It is

remarkable that Melanchthon reveals the traditional determination of the human aim as εὐδαιμονία in general and that of politics as *utilitas*. “Since the state is,” as Melanchthon defines it, “a lawfully built community of citizens with the goal of having mutual benefits, most essentially with the aim to defend” (CR 16, 435). With this, he unambiguously avoids the theological problem of how to bring in harmony the εὐδαιμονία as the state’s aim, as understood by Aristotle, with the goal of revelation theory that the human being cannot achieve himself but that it is given to him through belief.

Philosophy of Nature, Theology of Nature, and Natural Theology

Melanchthon’s *Initia Doctrinae Physicae* (1549) consists of paraphrases about the natural philosophy that are explicated by means of the central concepts (*loci*) loaned from the topics. Moreover, central concepts from anthropology (the doctrine of intellect) and ethics (*de fine hominis*) also have to be included in the *loci* (CR 13, 195–197). However, the philosophy of nature is separated from revelation theology along the lines of the law-Gospel dialectic. Although natural philosophy opens with the lesson of philosophical knowledge of God and philosophical proofs of the existence of God, Melanchthon stresses that natural philosophical knowledge of God means knowledge of the law and not of the Gospels (*esse Legis notitiam, non Evangelii*), and that these – being the dialectic’s scope – are without any importance for soteriology (CR 13, 198). Melanchthon himself claims his natural philosophy to be Aristotelian (CR 13, 183 f.), an evaluation that has only a limited scope of application. It is tightly connected with what recent research has shown (Kusukawa 1995; Frank 1998; Bellucci 1998; Groh 2003): natural philosophy has to be looked at in the light of the transformation process from late scholasticism toward early modern natural philosophy. Melanchthon specifically reformulates the central philosophical categories of the Aristotelian philosophy of nature against the background of classical and medieval

discussions. According to Aristotle, the notion of motion comprises a distinction between accidental motion and substantial motion where the latter does originate in itself while the former does not. Melanchthon reduces the notion to accidental motion that he identifies with “entelechy,” the Aristotelian term modified by Cicero, and that he understands as the principle of motion as such (for Melanchthon’s discussion about the notion of motion, see CR 13, 354–361). This reformulation of the motion term aims at visualizing the world as a continuous causal nexus that can be seen as qualities in the motion itself. Besides, the transcendental principle of motion does not follow the Aristotelian interpretation of the “prime mover” but the platonic meaning as being created by an architectural mind (*mens architectatrix*, CR 13, 373). The different versions of the proof of God’s existence of the “causa prima efficiens” show that the causal concept is also formulated theologically and identified with the concept of God as such. Finally, his discussion of the final causation as the immanent teleology of nature shows that he eliminates this causation as an ontological fundamental category (CR 13, 307 f.) relocating it in the transcendent, goal-setting mind. The organizing mind thinks the “fines,” toward with things strive naturally then (CR 13, 346 f.). That means that only a God-given inclination (*inclinatio*) into the body remains from the entelechian structure of nature (CR 13, 349). Therefore, the teleology of nature eventually does not eventuate in its entelechian structure but in a transcendental, goal-setting mind or, in short: the teleology of nature becomes the theology of nature. All in all, Melanchthon’s view of nature boils down to a metaphysical optimistic view of the world, exhibiting three aspects: (1) the idea of a continuous causal nexus of nature, with the human mind as its counterpart that can make true statements about nature, (2) the idea of a world machine (*machina mundi, universa machina*, CR 13, 206; 294) as the achievement of ordering and intelligent reason, and (3) the idea that results in theological anthropocentrism insofar as the whole nature is made for the human benefit (CR 13, 204 f.; 213 f.). Although Melanchthon differentiates between law and Gospel and

thus clearly delineates the philosophy of nature from revelation theology and soteriology, a certain tension is built up between creation theology and the theology of salvation since, according to Melanchthon, outside of revelation, nature too is a book or mirror in which God manifests Himself (CR 13, 198).

That Melanchthon's philosophy of nature is ultimately a theology of nature, prefiguring the early modern tradition of the *theologia naturalis* also becomes clear since the independent treatise *de deo* precedes it. There, the specific implications of the philosophy of the mind in his own philosophy also gain importance for a theory of God within the philosophy of nature. There, too, it is the Platonic concept of God that Melanchthon borrowed from Plato's *Timaios* and that he explicitly prefers over the Aristotelian foundation of philosophy of nature (CR 13, 195): "God is an eternal mind, the cause of all good things in nature," (CR 13, 199). As with the Pythagorean *Timaios* who described the world's composition in terms of mathematical numbers, in line with Plato, Melanchthon talks about God as a geometrician who exhibits the divine architect's wisdom (CR 12, 246 f.). These numeral metaphysical considerations, which in the following are also reflected in the respective proof of God, unmistakably correspond to the importance of the geometric mathematical method as a model for a general methodology as postulated for all sciences by Melanchthon.

The philosophical concept of God, however, does not result from the knowledge of being based on ontology, but it is an epistemological principle (*notitia*) inherent to the human being. It is not just proof of God's existence as the world's designer but also the attributes of his being: wisdom, benevolence, justice, and others (more detailed in CR 13, 198). Melanchthon teaches nine proofs of God's existence that can be divided only superficially into cosmology and anthropology (CR 13, 200–202; commentary to the Epistle to the Romans dated 1540: CR 15, 564–568, cf. Frank 1995, 227–333). Eventually, all proofs of God's existence result from the intellect's activity on the basis of inherent epistemological principles

(*notitiae naturales*, πρόληψις): causality, motion, and finality; the "ordo naturae" and the numbers, providence, astronomy, and astrology; the human mind; the ability to distinguish between good and bad; and conscience.

Influence on Modern Thought

When regarding the size and the distribution of Melanchthon's philosophical oeuvre of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe, the fact that his philosophy has mostly been disregarded in philosophical historiography calls for an explanation. The reason for the neglect that basically still holds true today lies in the duographical perspective "Luther and Melanchthon." Although already present in Melanchthon's theology, it was especially fatal for his philosophy. This perspective was formulated as early as the eighteenth century when Melanchthon received renown as Protestant Aristotelian in the big philosophically historiographical oeuvres. In 1743 the law professor Johann Gottlieb Heineccius from Halle claimed with regard to Melanchthon's philosophical ambitions: "Lutherus surely did notice this and used to say: I push scholastic philosophy out of the front door and Philippum lets it in through the back door again" (the difficulty is elaborated in Schneider 2003 [MSB, Vol. 7, 11–131; here: 112]). It is unclear when this perspective in its consequence came up for Melanchthon's philosophy. According to Sparr (1976, 206) it is a product of the "pietistic conception of history." However, it is already historically present in the well-known Hoffmann's dispute from 1593 to 1600 at Helmstedt University (Frank 2003, 79 f.). Daniel Hoffmann and his scholar Caspar Pfaffrad, drawing on Luther's doctrine of the double truth and with respect to Melanchthon's philosophical theology, let themselves get carried away in this controversy. It culminated in Hoffmann's work *Pro Duplici Veritate Lutheri* in which they claimed that "philosophers" were the "fathers of all heresies." It is at least there where Melanchthon's philosophy starts being discussed in relation to the "legitimate matter" of reformation.

In the nineteenth century, Melanchthon almost entirely became the subject of the history of dogma and of ecclesiastical history. Even if he was discussed in relation to the criticism of scholastic philosophy that he himself supported, this criticism – according to Hegel – refers “more to the literary, to the history of education, of religion than to the history of philosophy” (translation of Schneider 2003 [MSB Vol. 7, 112, *An Melanchthon* 2]). To Schelling, too, according to whom “Reformation which left open the discussion about the speculative dogmas as passed on by church [...]” that has shifted “preferably to the side of the inner process” (translation of Schelling’s *System der Weltzeitalter XIV*, 333; cf. MSB Vol. 7, 133–145), Melanchthon’s philosophical sources of knowledge at most are evidence for a “natural, also just as little free knowledge”. With Dilthey’s attempts to found a methodological basis for humanities, Melanchthon received attention again for the development of a natural system of humanities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (1892/1893).

Although in the twentieth century some monographic studies about Melanchthon’s philosophical understanding exist (Petersen 1921; Wundt 1939; Ratschow 1964–1966), they did not have a great impact on research of the history of philosophy. Even the intensified research from the second half of the twentieth century about the philosophy of humanism and renaissance – for example in the *Institut für Geistesgeschichte und Philosophie* in Munich – Melanchthon’s philosophy is treated more as a side issue. It was not until the last three decades that his philosophy again received more attention in research.

Natural Theology

Research on Melanchthon’s importance for the formation of natural theology in the early modern age resulted from a controversial theological difficulty of the twentieth century. It was Karl Barth, an influential theologian, who made the claim “of the church-dividing character of natural theology”

(Kraus 1987, here: 19). According to him, natural theology was church specific and thus non-Protestant as the dogmatization of a natural, i.e., philosophical knowledge of God at Vatican I in 1870 showed (DS 3004). Contrary to Barth’s prominent thesis, K. Feiereis’ studies pointed the way by revealing that until the Enlightenment the early modern tradition of natural theology, neo-logy, and theology of physics referred to the late medieval predecessors Raimund of Sabunde (*Theologia naturalis sive liber creaturarum*, 1496) and the Jesuit Benedictus Pererius (*Physicorum sive de principiis rerum naturalium*, 1562), being an influential tradition in the late reformatory Protestant and reformed theology. Only through I. Kant’s critic this tradition was overcome before being transformed eventually into philosophy of religion. It was Melanchthon then who was fundamental to the natural theological tradition in Protestantism (Frank 1995). With his distinction between law and Gospel, he provided the opportunity of a, though beneath the level of revealed theology, theologically insufficient but philosophically legitimate *theologia naturalis*. With the late differentiation of the *notitia dei naturalis* as *innata* or *aquisita*, respectively, as prevalent in Protestant orthodoxy, his theory made it possible to integrate the natural knowledge of God as a philosophical element both into Lutheran and reformed dogmatics (Ratschow 1964–1966). Melanchthon still strictly separated the theory of the *theologia naturalis* from the theology of revelation. However, this theory paved the way for deism and the eighteenth-century idea of a religion of reason. It ultimately resulted from a systematic difficulty that Melanchthon himself did not solve. Since philosophy cannot function as a rational understanding of religious truths (such as Trinity or soteriology) – being the essence of the criticism on medieval metaphysics as well as the result of the Protestant scriptural principle – philosophy and theology complement each other (more detailed in Frank 2003, 79–87). Its concrete philosophical explication was due to the emphasis that the theology of revelation was given in each case. Therefore, Melanchthon’s philosophical theology, to the exclusion of the theology of revelation,

could become the basis of a natural concept of religion in Anglican deism.

Innatism

In this context the epistemological status of the epistemological principles, as Melanchthon adopted it in the Platonizing, a priori manner of Cicero and Boethius (*notitiae naturales*, κοινὰ ἐννοίαι, πρόληψις), plays an important role for the foundation of philosophy. In Melanchthon, these general epistemological principles are seen as natural, inherent to the human mind, and an a priori condition of all knowledge. In research, such a position is denoted unflatteringly as “innatism.” The theory of the “*notitiae naturales*” figured prominently in the second half of the seventeenth century in the discussions about the metaphysics of ideas (Nicolas Malebranche: *Recherche de la vérité*, Paris 1674–75; Antoine Arnauld: *Des vrayes et des fausses idées*, Cologne 1683). Under the term “common notions,” they also played a role in Herbert Cherbury’s philosophy of religion as well as in the philosophical foundation of the so-called Cambridge Platonists (Frank 2003, 221–260). They were also used by Descartes as such axioms or eternal truths being immediately certain from the intuition of the “*lumen natural*” (*Principia philosophica* I, 49 f.). In the meantime, attempts were found to transform the natural and thus naive uncritical innatism into a dispositional one. In the metaphysics of ideas, the English Platonist Ralph Cudworth did precisely this in his main writing *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London 1678) where he tried to explicate ideas as human consciousness on the basis of a priori given abilities against the background of his Platonism (Frank 2003, esp. 281–292). John Locke’s main epistemological text *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London 1689) meant a radical criticism of this tradition. In his criticism of innatism, he developed an empiristic doctrine of forms so that all a priori epistemological theories became obsolete. In response to Locke’s empiristic doctrine of forms, Leibniz’s continuous commentaries, published in 1765 as *Nouveaux essais sur*

l’entendement humain, tried to renew the metaphysics of ideas with his theory claiming that ideas were structural factors of consciousness itself. Due to the so-called critical turn in Kant’s philosophy in 1769, philosophical interest had changed fundamentally in this later publication.

Rhetorical Topics/Loci Communes and the History of Science

A specific program of the understanding of science is connected with Melanchthon’s “loci” theory. Especially the third meaning of the “loci communes,” which exceeds the interpretation as “*sedes argumentorum*” as already present in Agricola, means a radical change of the notion of “loci.” According to this, “loci communes” do not denote the notion found through invention but are content-related and subject-related guiding concepts of every science (“in omni doctrinae genere praecipua capita”), this being the reason why the *iudicium* is to be preferred over the *inventio*. Interestingly, they are treated in the rhetorics and not in the dialectics (CR 13, 451–454, cf. also the separate writing *De locis communibus*, CR 20, 695–698). Moreover, since they are subject-related conditions they are also discipline-related. Thus, as Melanchthon stresses, different guiding concepts and fundamental concepts hold true for theology compared to philosophy (CR 13, 453 f.). Therefore, the “loci communes” lose the formal traces of their roots in the topics (more detailed in Schmidt-Biggemann 1983, 19 f.). However, since in rhetorics they are treated as epistemological, subject-related formal central concepts constituting single sciences, they receive a primary, categorical status again. In the early modern age, such a model of equal sciences, based on subject-related central concepts according to each discipline, had had a great impact. Before Melanchthon’s death, Johannes Nysaeus (†1599), a scholar from the German region of Baden, published his *Tabulae Locorum Communium Theologicorum Philippi Melanchthonis* in 1560 that Melanchthon himself had authorized through having written the text’s prologue. In this work, Melanchthon’s whole

theology is depicted in tables of “definitions” and “distributions” according to the loci method.

For some time now, the scientific historical status of this understanding of science, oriented at the rhetorical topics, has been brought up in early modern research. The comprehensive study *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* by E. R. Curtius in 1948 tended toward the claim of understanding occidental culture as a process in which topics itself is part of the history of science. That means that the rhetoric topical knowledge management is to be understood as the central criterion of scientificity. The alteration of knowledge from the Middle Ages to the early modern age can be described with the aid of this (Frank et al. 2007). Against the background of an Aristotelian conception of science that is not about the collection of “topoi” of knowledge but more about a general analytical conceptualization, this process of making science rhetorical is not undisputed. This is shown in the thesis of the humanists’ “loci communes” tractates: the possibilities of statements in the single disciplines depend on specific “topoi” and they firstly constitute them as such. Besides this topical tradition of understanding science, Aristotelianism remained the predominant scientific concept at the European universities of the early modern age.

Hermeneutics

Recent research is increasingly interested in Melanchthon’s importance for the development of (early modern) hermeneutics. W. Dilthey (1900) and H. G. Gadamer (1976, esp. 148 f.) considered sixteenth-century Protestant theology to be the origin of hermeneutics as the art or science of text interpretation. Subsequent to Dilthey the hermeneutic problem is interpreted as a consequence of a realignment of theological dogma originating in the so-called Protestant scriptural principle or the “sola scriptura” principle. It resulted from Luther’s insight that the Holy Scriptures were “their own interpreter” (*sui ipsius interpres*). In his essay *Rhetorik und Hermeneutik*, Gadamer, in connection with this not undisputed assumption that the early history of hermeneutics eventually resulted

from the theological controversies about the scriptural principle in the sixteenth century, had renewed Dilthey’s approach. He interpreted the “history of hermeneutic theory [...] as resistance of the anti-reformationist, Tridentine attack on Lutheranism” (translation of Gadamer 1976, 149). Although recent research on hermeneutics extensively made corrections and more precise statements of the paradigm, it becomes obvious that Melanchthon’s theory of rhetorics has a special status. As pointed out by Gadamer, this concerns especially the most important realignment of his rhetoric theory: the introduction of the “genus didaskalicum” as a lecture (newer studies can be found in Knappe 1999).

In his so-called chapter on hermeneutics in the *Tübinger Rhetorik* (1519), Melanchthon already developed an extensive theory of the understanding of texts in the chapter On Interpreting Genus (De Enerratorio Genere). As its dual procedure, he had proposed the explication of the text’s content as well as that of the genre’s specifics (for more detail, see Knappe 1999, esp. 125–129). While the first technique is about the paraphrasing of the text’s contents, the second one is described as “method of commenting” (*de commentandi ratione*). Melanchthon assigns four types of texts to this procedure: expository for didactic explaining, narrative-historical for narrating, rhetoric-argumentative for persuading, and poetical encoding for allegorizing. In line with J. Knappe (1999, 129), the analysis of the four text types and of the respective procedures of interpretation can correctly be described as Melanchthon’s procedure of a hermeneutical topic. According to this, the comprehension of texts depends on the analysis of the respective purpose of the speech (CR 13, 423: *intentio, scopus orationis*) as well as on the context of the respective text (CR 13, 468: *quaerendae circumstantiae*). Undoubtedly, Melanchthon later used this hermeneutic topic procedure for the interpretation of biblical and theological texts, as well as for his homiletics. Historiographically it is important that he applied this procedure, which he developed during his time in Tübingen, to his first Protestant dogmatic *loci communes* in 1521. In a letter to his friend Johannes Heß (MBW.T

84, 70–74) on 27 April 1520, Melanchthon admits to having borrowed from the rhetorics while working on this systematic theology. For the early history of hermeneutics, this note and the fact that the so-called Tübinger rhetorics was not printed until January 1519 implies that it had basically been completed before Melanchthon moved to Wittenberg in August 1518 and before he came into contact with Luther's theological ideas. This means that the early history of hermeneutics is not just due to the impulse of the Protestant scriptural principle but to the new concept of Melanchthon's rhetorics, which was unmistakably suitable to explicate the scriptural principle scientifically. Melanchthon's theory of rhetorics was highly popular, both among his students and especially also beyond the boundaries of the developing confessions.

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Melchior Canus

► [Cano, Melchor](#)

Melville, Andrew

Born: 1545

Died: 1622

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Abstract

A major figure of the Scottish Reformation, a founder of Presbyterianism, and intellectual

force behind educational reforms at the Universities of Glasgow, St Andrews, and Sedan, Andrew Melville was a fierce defender of the independence of the church from government control in Scotland. His reputation as a scholar of languages, the Bible, Aristotle, and critic of royal encroachments on the church led him into direct interaction with famous theologians like Theodore Beza and into confrontation with King James VI of Scotland (James I of England). His replacement of bishops with local presbyteries established a new norm of church governance in Scotland that continues to the present day and impacted church structure throughout a wide range of Protestant movements.

Biography

Born in the Scottish village of Baldovie in 1545, Andrew Melville was orphaned at an early age and raised by his elder brother Richard. At a young age, he studied at the grammar school in nearby Montrose and gained knowledge of Latin before going on to further study of Greek. Upon his arrival at the University of St Andrews, he astonished his teachers with his ability to quote Aristotle directly from the Greek, which was a mark of great distinction at that time. Later, he studied in France under Peter Ramus, learning a system of logic which was to prove influential in his later educational reforms, before moving on to his first teaching post in Poitiers. After 3 years, Melville left France to go to Geneva, which was much safer for Protestant ideas and thinkers at that time, where he met the Calvinist theologian Theodore Beza. Beza ensured that Andrew Melville was gainfully employed at the academy, and during his 5 years there, Melville taught and further widened his knowledge of languages. Melville returned to Scotland where he was an enormously influential force in higher education and the Church of Scotland for over 30 years.

From the age of 29 until his imprisonment in the Tower of London when he was 61, Melville served as Principal of the University of Glasgow, helped reform teaching at the University of Aberdeen, was Principal of St Mary's College at the University of St

Andrews, and was further influential in the ideas that established the University of Edinburgh. Although the logic of Peter Ramus has not remained an influential field of philosophical study, his influence on Melville had substantial implications for higher education in Scotland. Rather than relying on rote learning, this logical system was engaged with Aristotle with a critical eye to peeling back layers of Scholastic accretion to try to find the true essential Aristotle as seen in his primary texts. As it was ministers in particular whom Andrew Melville was interested in training, this new approach to education in Scottish universities quite naturally filtered into the Church of Scotland via the high number of its ministers who were trained in institutions that were fundamentally shaped by Melville's pedagogy.

The juxtaposition of Melville as a philosopher and educational figure with his role as a theologian and leader of the Scottish church is one which necessarily recognizes the overlapping roles that state, educational, and clerical institutions had at this time. Quite famously, this overlap of roles got Melville into considerable legal difficulty as he refused to moderate his positions on church independence in the light of perceived abuses on the part of King James VI (King James I of England). As related by his nephew James, Melville spoke so freely to the king that he even called him "God's sillie vassal." Whether due to impertinence or his continuing opposition to the king's attempt to reassert control over the Scottish church through the reintroduction of bishops, Melville was ultimately summoned to London in 1606 to assist the king in bringing peace between church and state. After a word leaked of a Latin poem he composed mocking the worship practices at Hampton Court, he was imprisoned in the Tower of London for 4 years, after which he was released to take up a position at the Academy of Sedan in France. Melville remained there for the remainder of his life.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

In theological terms, Melville remained largely within the Calvinism espoused by his famous

predecessor John Knox. This theology was tempered, however, with a cosmopolitan, humanist, and critical Aristotelian background that made his work as an educator and university administrator far more original. Furthermore, his political context brought him into constant collision with the emergent British state as James VI (I) tried to bring his Scottish and English kingdoms into a more unified religious and political coexistence. Here Melville embraces the idea of a salvational role for Britain and its king as a land free from domination of the Catholic Church practicing true Christian religion and spreading this good news to its empire. However, this theoretical godly kingdom of Britannia frequently ran up against the reality of a king who was glad to adopt the more English idea of monarchical supremacy over the church. The relative egalitarianism of Scottish Presbyterianism was as essential to Melville as it was repulsive to King James.

Impact and Legacy

Andrew Melville's impact, as stated previously, is most widely expressed in the development of the Calvinist kirk of John Knox into the Presbyterian Church that retains the belief in the supremacy of Scripture, but combines it with an egalitarian vision of self-government within the church. His ability to read the Bible in its original languages and to engage with Greek thought led him to radically alter the type of education provided in Scottish universities over the course of his lengthy career. Rote memory and didactic instruction were replaced with exegesis and critical analysis. Scotland's ancient universities and its church remain deeply indebted to his commitment to logic, education, and equality before God.

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- [Arminius, Jacobus](#)
- [Calvinism](#)
- [Humanism, Civic](#)
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Memory in the Renaissance, Art of

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Abstract

The art of memory derives its name from the Greek myth of Mnemonise, daughter of Uranus and Gaea. It aims to allow individuals to remember things, words, and concepts. It is based on a use of places and images easily identifiable by the imagination.

In the Renaissance, this art has an extraordinary impact. In the fifteenth century, the best-known book of the art of memory is *Phoenix seu artificiosa memoria* by Peter Tommai of Ravenna, a book published in Venice in 1491. This book greatly influences the treatises of this kind throughout the Renaissance and assumes an important role also in the reflection of Giordano Bruno. Peter Tommai’s text is built on the tradition of Cicero. More than on searching for “places,” he insists on the role played by the images.

Especially in the sixteenth century, the function and the significance of the art of memory begin to mutate. After meeting with the tradition of Lullism (which had known great success in the Middle Ages, especially in the Franciscan order), the art of memory becomes primarily a “clavis universalis” of reality. It aims to decipher the world as a whole and penetrates its secrets. The art of memory becomes, therefore, a “cosmology.”

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the original purpose of the techniques of artificial memory is completely mutated. On the one hand, the art of memory loses all contact with the dialectic, rhetoric, and medicine, becoming a “pansophia”: a universal knowledge that can

Memoranda Book

► [Commonplace Book](#)

decipher the “alphabet of the world”; an “encyclopedic” theatre that has the ambition to be the “mirror” of reality. On the other hand, already starting from intellectual experiences of Ramo, Bacon, and Descartes, the original meaning of this art radically changes, making his entrance into the context of modern logic.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The art of memory derives its name from the Greek myth of Mnemonise, daughter of Uranus and Gaea. It aims to allow individuals to remember things, words, and concepts. It is based on a use of places and images easily identifiable by the imagination. One must create in the mind, through the *vis imaginativa*, “images-places” that replicate real-world environments. Subsequently, the “images-symbols” should be placed in these “images-places” (Cambi 2016).

From antiquity to the Renaissance, the art of memory is widely practiced. Among his most celebrated theorists in the ancient world are Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. In the Renaissance, the art of memory has an extraordinary impact. However, there are also influential critics of this art. Erasmus believes that the techniques of this art take away space for memory. Montaigne believes that the art of memory produces false knowledge. In Chapter 10 of the *De vanitate scientiarum*, Cornelius Agrippa condemns it as a vain art (Yates 1966).

In the fifteenth century, the best-known book on the art of memory is *Phoenix seu artificiosa memoria* by Peter Tommai of Ravenna, a book published in Venice in 1491 (Tommai 1491). A law professor in Bologna, Ferrara, Pavia, Pistoia, and Padua, Peter is helping to spread the interest in the art of memory in Italy. He “secularizes” this art, emphasizing its purely technical aspect (Yates 1966). His book greatly influences the treatises of this kind throughout the Renaissance and assumes an important role also in the reflection of Giordano Bruno. Peter Tommai’s text is built on the tradition of Cicero. In particular, he insists on the role played by the images (Tommai 1491).

Some texts, written in the fifteenth century, are inspired by the Aristotelian tradition. These treatises attempt to derive some rules of artificial memory directly from the lessons of Aristotle. Typical in this regard is the *De nutrienda memoria* published in Naples in 1476 by Domenico De Carpanis, who aims to present the doctrines of Aristotle’s *De memoria et reminiscencia* (Rossi 1960). The authority of Thomas Aquinas is very important in the sixteenth century. Johannes Romberch is the author of the *Congestorium artificiosae memoriae* (1520), a work in which he uses several authors including Thomas Aquinas, Petrarch, Peter Tommai, and others.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Especially in the sixteenth century, the function and the significance of the art of memory begin to mutate. After meeting with the tradition of Lullism (which had known great success in the Middle Ages, especially in the Franciscan order), the art of memory becomes primarily a “clavis universalis” of reality. It aims to decipher the world as a whole and penetrates its secrets. Therefore, the art of memory becomes a “cosmology” (Rossi 1960). In this regard, the intellectual experiences of authors such as Camillo and Giordano Bruno are significant (Bruno 2009; Camillo 2015). The *ars memoriae*, which was considered mostly a rhetorical tool in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – useful to preachers, politicians, scholars, and practitioners – becomes the means by which the secret of reality can be identified. The legacy of the *Ars notoria* merges with that of the hermetic texts, by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino. The clarity of the pages of Cicero, Quintilliano, and Peter Tommai, is replaced by the Baroque taste for hieroglyphics, alphabets, symbols, images, and allegories. In Agrippa’s magic, this art takes the connotations of a *clavis* of reality (Rossi 1960). Out of these same bases, Camillo can turn the “places” of memory into “eternal” places of Hermetic wisdom. He bases his memory system on the root causes, the Sephiroth, and the Ideas: These are the “everlasting places” of his memory (Yates

1966). Meanwhile, Giordano Bruno, commentator of Lullo and innovator of *ars memoriae*, considers it as derived from the theology of Scotus Eriugena, the mysteries of Cusano, and the medicine of Paracelsus (Rossi 1960).

In Bruno's reflection, the art of memory acquires metaphysical connotations. According to Bruno, there is full correspondence between symbols and things, between the "shadows" of the mind and the world of ideas, between the mnemonic "seals" and the structures of causes and effect in the physical world (Rossi 1960). This setting does not prevent the art of memory from also playing practical and educational functions. Bruno's reform plans to greatly expand the ability of man to exercise its dominance. This is possible thanks to a "total system" that puts an end to the fragmentation of the individual science (Yates 1966; Rossi 1960).

The art of memory of the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Della Porta (1535–1615) has different characteristics from those of Bruno and Camillo (Yates 1966; Maggi 2012; Verardi 2017, 2018). For Della Porta, this art neither has the function of *clavis universalis* of reality nor aims to contribute to the encyclopedic or magical knowledge. Della Porta publishes his *Art of remembering* in 1566, that is, 8 years after the successful edition in four books of the *Magia naturalis* (1558). The art of memory is linked to the humble role of mnemotechnics, based on the classical tradition of Cicero and Quintilian. The art of memory must, in fact, remember things, words, and concepts. This is made possible through places and images. Della Porta invites the reader to "see" the text, to transpose it into images, creating a true "mental theater," a painting created by *vis imaginativa* on the canvas of the memory (Della Porta 1566, 1602, 2012). In line with the Baroque sensibility of his time, Della Porta does not hesitate to recommend the use of hieroglyphics (Maggi 2012; Cambi 2016).

Impact and Legacy

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the original purpose of the techniques of artificial

memory is now completely mutated. On the one hand, the art of memory loses all contact with the dialectic, rhetoric, and medicine, becoming a "pansophia": a universal knowledge that can decipher the "alphabet of the world"; an "encyclopedic" theatre that has the ambition to be the "mirror" of reality. On the other hand, already starting from the intellectual experiences of Ramo, Francis Bacon, and Descartes, the original meaning of this art radically changes, making his entrance in the context of modern logic. The art of memory is inserted in the context of a doctrine of scientific method. Referring to a "logical calculus" and mathematical "symbolism", Leibniz gives a fatal blow to those "symbols" construed as "animated paintings produced by imagination." With Leibniz and his works, an entire world disappears (Rossi 1960, 1991).

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- Bruno, Giordano
- Camillo Delminio, Giulio
- Della Porta, Giambattista

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M. studied in a Talmud Torah, and in 1622, he became a Rabbi of the synagogue Neve Shalom. In 1627, he opened the first Hebrew press in Amsterdam. Among his main works are the *Conciliador* (1632–1651), where he tries to rectify the inconsistencies of the sacred text using his Talmudic, Midrashic, and Kabbalistic knowledge. In 1651, he wrote an open letter to Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), asking him to readmit the Jews to England. In 1655, he moved to England in order to plead in defense of the Jewish settlement there.

Menasseh ben Israel

Born: 1604

Died: 1657

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Abstract

Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657) was born into a Marrano family and is usually remembered for his commitment to the cause of the readmission of the Jews in England. His works played a pivotal role in debates about Jewish emancipation in the Enlightenment period in Germany.

Biography

Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657) was born in Lisbon into a Marrano family. He was baptized and bore a Christian name, Manuel Dias Soeiro. In the wake of the Inquisition's persecutions, the whole family moved to Amsterdam where they got involved in the Jewish life of the city.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Menasseh ben Israel is usually remembered for his commitment to the cause of the readmission of the Jews in England. This commitment possibly stemmed from his messianic speculations. He was convinced that the ten lost tribes of Israel were located in the newly discovered America. He also thought that redemption would finally come only when the dispersion of the Jews would affect the whole earth. These two elements play an essential role in his *Humble Addresses* and in his *The Hope of Israel*. In his *Humble Addresses* to Oliver Cromwell, he argues that in allowing the return of the Jews to England, the English people will participate in the divine blessing bestowed upon Israel and that they will contribute to hastening the redemption by supporting the Jewish dispersion in the world. Nonetheless, Menasseh ben Israel also paid attention to the earthly economical dimension of his pleading. In fact, he borrowed some of the economic ideas and arguments that Rabbi Simone Luzzatto (1583?–1663) had previously articulated in his *Discorso circa lo stato degli Hebrei et in particular dimoranti nell'inclita città di Venezia* (1638), namely, that the Jews can contribute to the English economy with their skills and talents (Ravid 1982). His devotion to the Jewish cause was not exhausted yet. In his *Vindiciae Judaeorum* (*Vindications of the Jews*, 1656), he defended the Jews against false and superstitious accusations, such as blood libels, and against other prejudices such as those of

practicing idolatry during the religious service in the synagogues and cursing the Christians while praying.

Menasseh ben Israel's work enjoyed great appreciation in the following centuries. It influenced John Toland's *Reasons for Naturalising the Jews* (1714) (Bernardini 1998, 79–78). In 1782, Moses Mendelssohn translated the *Vindications of the Jews* into German and wrote an introduction to it (Sorkin 1987, 68–69). The text played a pivotal role in debates about Jewish emancipation in the Enlightenment period in Germany.

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Mendoza, Hurtado de

Born: 1578, Valmaseda

Died: 10 November 1641, Madrid

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Abstract

Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, S.J., was a Spanish Jesuit philosopher who lived and worked in Spain. He joined the Society of Jesus at a relatively early age and took his studies at the University of Salamanca. After his ordination, Hurtado taught philosophy at Pamplona for a couple of years before moving to Salamanca where he taught theology for nearly 30 years. During his time as a theology professor, in 1615 Hurtado published his principal work, the *Disputationes a summulis ad metaphysicam*. This work would undergo two revisions, and was republished in 1624 as *Universa philosophia*. Later in his career, Hurtado focused on moral issues and even found himself in a dispute with the moral extravagances of the theater. In 1631 Hurtado published his *Disputationes morales et scholasticae de fide*. Around 10 years later, Hurtado died in Madrid in 1641.

Biography

Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, S.J. (1578, Valmaseda–10 November 1641, Madrid), was born in Valmaseda, about 30 km from Bilbao, Spain, in 1578. Given his birth locale, Hurtado was referred to as “Valmasedano,” whose title accompanies his name in certain printings of his works. He remained in his hometown until 1595 when, only 17 years old, he joined the Society of Jesus at Salamanca on the 12th of November. Hurtado was ordained also a priest in Salamanca in 1607 (Heider 2014, 87) but made his Jesuit profession of four vows on 5 February 1612 in Valladolid (Schmutz 2014).

Early in his career, Hurtado studied at the Jesuit College of Salamanca, but then from 1608 to 1611, he taught philosophy at the College of Pamplona. After his stint as a professor of philosophy, Hurtado taught theology for the next 30 years at Salamanca and simultaneously worked for the Holy Office (or Inquisition) as a censor. During his time as a professor of theology (around 1615), Hurtado published a complete course on philosophy, the *Disputationes a summulis ad metaphysicam*, which addressed various philosophical topics ranging from logic to metaphysics. The work underwent several editions and had a profound impact on the Protestant world, more so even than Francisco Suárez, whose influence upon Protestant scholastics is no small matter (Schmutz 2014). Two years later, in 1617, Hurtado published a second edition of this work called the *Disputationes universa philosophia* in Lyon (Heider 2014, 87). Finally, in 1624 the last edition was published in Lyon as *Universa philosophia* (Solana 1940).

Over his lengthy teaching career, Hurtado had several important students who would become famous Jesuit philosophers in their own right, namely, Richardus Lynch, Antonio Pérez, and Rodrigo Arriaga, to name a few (Schmutz). In 1631 Hurtado published his *Disputationes morales et scholasticae de fide* in which, interestingly, he attacked the permissive moral attitudes that were on display in theatrical performances of his time. This work generated some controversy between the Jesuits, who sided with Hurtado, and apologists of theatrical communities (Schmutz 2014).

Universa Philosophia

Hurtado's *Universa philosophia*, composed of three tomes, is comprehensive in scope. The first tome contains his own *Tractatus de summulis* – running over five disputations – and his logic which is composed of 11 disputations. In the *Tractatus de summulis*, Hurtado explores the nature of the terms of a proposition as well as their union (disp. 1), the properties of terms such as supposition and appellation (disp. 2),

oration (disp. 3), propositions and their character (disp. 4), and the mode of knowing in which are treated various forms of argument and syllogism (disp. 5).

In the disputations devoted to Hurtado's logic, not unlike other scholastics such as Soto, Poinset, etc., the Jesuit identifies beings of reason as the proper object of logic (*Logica*, d. 1, 1, 45–52; fol. 52). Hurtado's theory of *entia rationis* represents a significant development in Baroque scholasticism in general and over Suárez in particular. Hurtado claims that some *entia rationis* can be actualized in reality, for example, those beings of reason that result from a false judgment not implying a contradiction. To this claim, he also adds, somewhat counterintuitively, that those beings that are contradictory yet serve as truth-makers in a proposition (e.g., square-circles in the proposition "Square-circles do not exist") are not in fact beings of reason, for the reason that they presuppose "false judgments." These judgments pertain to contradictory being through which some sort of being or reality is attributed to the contradictory being (Novotný 2013, pp. 116–117). Developing his position further, Hurtado holds that those *entia rationis* that stem from erroneous affirmations of contingently false judgments only have a verbally significative value (ibid., pp. 132–333). The heart of Hurtado's position consists, then, in his claim that *entia rationis* ultimately result from the human intellect's "fallibility."

Regarding analogy, Hurtado agrees with Suárez in many respects and thinks that it is better to forsake analogy than lose the unity of the concept of being (*Logica*, d. 9, s. 3.34; fol. 115). Of course, neither alternative needs to be sacrificed, and so in disagreement with Gabriel Vázquez but, again, in agreement with Suárez, Hurtado denies that the concept of being is univocal. Hurtado holds that there is one concept of being that is abstracted from its inferior, viz., from a substance, accidents, God, and creatures (ibid., 3.41; fol. 116). This abstraction from its inferior is crucial in order that the concept of being may be common to all particular beings (ibid.). Nevertheless, Hurtado denies that the concept of being is univocal and instead identifies it as analogical. Here, the Jesuit advances reasons similar to Suárez, who

maintains that the concept of being results from a "confused" cognition of being. That is, the particular *rationes* of various beings are not really distinct from being itself; nevertheless, these *rationes* are not directly grasped themselves when one apprehends being confused. So, for example, just as when one views an animal at a distance, Hurtado explains, one cannot yet distinguish whether that animal is a man or a mere brute animal. Neither specific difference (i.e., rational or irrational) is explicitly entertained nor is it expressly denied. Similarly, in conceiving "being," Hurtado thinks that one only "conceives an aptitude to being [*concupere aptitudinem ad essendum*]" and not the distinct *rationes* of substance or accident.

As Hurtado sees it, "the concept of being is not outside of [extra] the concept of substance in the way that rational is outside the concept of animal" (ibid., 5.75; fol. 119). Accordingly, continues Hurtado, there are not two concepts in the concept of substance (viz., the concept of being and the proper concept of substance) but one concept. But the concept of being as abstracted from the concept of a substance is unequal to that as drawn from an accident, for the former is superior to the latter (ibid.). This difference, according to Hurtado, constitutes the essence of transcendental analogy, for, as he says, this transcendental concept (of being) is not entirely the same nor entirely different. When the concept of being is conceived according to a common character, it is the same since "no dissimilitude appears," but when it is conceived from its inferior, there is some dissimilarity that arises, for the concept of being as taken from a substance is superior that drawn from an accident (ibid., 5.76; fol. 120).

The second tome of Hurtado's *Universa philosophia*, by far the longest, is spread out across four subsections in which the gamut of Hurtado's natural philosophy is presented. The first section pertains to corporeal substances in general and particular; the second – and briefest – section (composed of only three disputations) concerns incorruptible substances (or the heavens); the third section treats the generation and corruption of substances; and, finally, the

fourth section deals with animate beings. The first subsection explores the basic principles of nature such as prime matter (disp. 2), privation (disp. 3), substantial forms (disp. 4), the union of form and matter (disp. 5), composition (disp. 6), causes in general (disp. 8), efficient creative causes (disp. 9), and the first cause (disp. 10). The remaining disputations explore the themes raised in the final books of the *Physics* – such as motion, action, passion (disp. 11), infinitude (disp. 13), and place (disp. 14) – together with the properly Christian theme of creation (disp. 12). Hurtado finds it appropriate to discuss creation within the context of his philosophy of nature since “it is the proper causality of the first cause” (*Phys.*, d. 12. prol.; fol. 297).

In his discussion of the nature of creation, Hurtado follows Thomas in holding that creation is the “production of being from nothing [*ex nihilo*]” (ibid., 12.1.1; fol. 297), but, for Hurtado, the question here is: What is the meaning of *ex nihilo*? The Jesuit disagrees with the “common” opinion that it means repugnance or non-repugnance. It is not repugnant that something should be made, he says, nor is non-repugnance, Hurtado holds in agreement with Vázquez, since non-repugnance remains regardless of whether something’s being created or not. Additionally, *nihilo* is something more than the mere “non-actuality” or “nonexistence” of a thing. He concludes therefore that *ex nihilo* signifies producing being without some concurrent subject or intrinsic form of something (ibid.). The metaphysical status of the being prior to its creation is a concern Hurtado will address in his discussion on possibility in the metaphysical portion of his *Universa philosophia*.

In the third and last tome of his *Universa philosophia*, Hurtado develops his metaphysics in a study of “transnatural being,” those beings distinguished from the objects studied in the philosophy of matter through their abstraction from matter. This discussion runs throughout 20 disputations. Perhaps one of the most interesting features of Hurtado’s metaphysics is his understanding of creaturely possibility, which he

unfolds in his discussion of the relationship between essence and existence in Disputation 8 (Coombs 2003, 19ff). First, he explains that *essentia* is “an objective concept which is apprehended by us, when we form a concept of some thing” (*Metaph.*, d. 8, prol., § 1; fols. 826–27). Then, he notes that *existentia*, “drawn from the word *existo*, is the same as essence . . . for *existere* and *esse* are synonymous” (ibid., fol. 827). In raising the topic of the relationship between *essentia* and *existentia*, Hurtado first inquires what it means for a creature to be possible (sec. 1). To unfold the question, he considers two kinds of possible creatures: first, an actually existing creature – Peter, to use his example – who though he exists need not have been, and, second, an angel – again, to use Hurtado’s example – who “is not created, was not created, and never will be created” but for whom, nevertheless, it is possible for God to create (ibid., 8.1.2; fol. 827). One might inquire into what that creature’s possibility stems? Hurtado answers that “the denomination ‘possible’ is taken formally from God’s omnipotence” (ibid., 8.1.3; fol. 827). Possibility, then, would seem to be something extrinsic to the creature itself and a matter of God’s own creative power. Yet, Hurtado complicates his account when he adds that the possibility of a creature is in a thing “really distinct from God” (ibid., 8.1.5; fol. 827). Hurtado’s concern here is to differentiate himself from Jan Hus (c. 1369–1415) and John Wycliffe (1320–1384), who were condemned as heretics for holding that “all being is God” (*Metaph.* 8.1.5; fol. 827). If God is not all things, then all must be distinct from the divine being (and power), even those beings whose being is merely that of possibility (Coombs 2003, 213–15). The power to produce something physically (e.g., God’s omnipotence) is directed to something other than and really distinct from itself, explains Hurtado, since “it is in the definition or character of ‘having-been-made’ [*ratio factivae*] that it stand in relation to that which is able to be made [*respicit id quod potest fieri*]” (*Metaph.* 8.1.5; fol. 827). Divine omnipotence, concludes Hurtado, is precisely such a power to create, and thus it is referred to something

makeable (*factibilie*) as something really distinct from itself (*ibid.*).

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cognitive processes governing speculative activity in a non-discursive way. Mind is always distinguished from reason, which indicates the reworking process of the sensitive species provided by the senses and of the *Fantasmata* provided by the imagination. Some Platonic scholars use the term “mind” as a synonym for “intellect,” while for the Averroist ones, it stands for the unity of the intellectual faculties. During this period Augustine’s notion of mind-soul has been philosophically reworked along with an effort at combining it with the Aristotelian model (intellectual powers). Some Renaissance philosophers have rejected Augustine’s notion to devise new original conceptions of mind-soul, reworking the late ancient philosophy, such as the Alessandrinites. Averroist philosophers from the Universities of Paris, Padua, and Bologna have also affirmed the doctrine of the mortality of mind-soul.

Term

In Renaissance philosophy, the term “mind” is mostly used to indicate the unity of the cognitive processes governing speculative activity in a non-discursive way. However, its use is not homogeneous in this age. Some Platonic scholars use the term “mind” as a synonym for “intellect,” while for Averroists, it stands for the unity of the intellectual faculties, i.e., reason, potential intellect, and agent intellect.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Augustine of Hippo translates Origen’s *nous* into Latin as *mens*. Thereby he affects the Middle Ages philosophical vocabulary. Augustine identifies three kinds of mind, i.e., divine, angelic, and human, and infers the human mind immortality from its being *imago Dei*. Such a view has dominated the Middle Ages and still in the Renaissance Girolamo Seripando and Giles of Viterbo talk of “mind” in Augustine’s sense. However, in

Mens

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Abstract

In Renaissance philosophy, the term “mind” is mostly used to indicate the unity of the

the thirteenth century, Augustine's model goes into crisis because of the dissemination within the University of Paris of Aristotle's *De anima* and its interpretations by Averroes and his Latin epigones. The Averroists defend a materialist conception of the intellectual process, claim the mortality of the mind, and reject Augustine's view of man as image of God. Their ideas take root also in the Renaissance (Martin 2013). Among the fifteenth-century Aristotelians, similar doctrines are found in George of Trebizond's writings (Monfasani 1976). In particular, in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century universities, the mortality of mind is acknowledged by the Averroists from Padua, such as Nicoletto Vernia, Paul of Venice, Cajetan of Thiene, and Agostino Nifo (Spruit 2013). Yet Pietro Pomponazzi develops the hierarchy of minds doctrine in line with the Augustinian tradition (Pomponazzi 1516). Pomponazzi's Averroism is also mitigated by its reference to Thomas Aquinas' psychology (Valverde 2012; Perrone Compagni 2005). A third group of philosophers, among whom Nicholas of Cusa, Marsilio Ficino, and Pico della Mirandola, rework Augustine's notion of mind relating to the doctrine of man as "second God," borrowed from Hermes Trismegistus' *Asclepius*. Such pagan and hermetic revision of the concept of mind breaks in some respects the continuity with Averroism (Allen 2010).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Renaissance philosophy of mind has mostly developed along the lines of the medieval tradition, drawing from the Augustinian, the Aristotelian-Averroist, and the Alessandrinish school. Augustinism is mainly endorsed by religious orders and Roman humanists, whereas Averroism and Alessandrinishism are preferred in the universities, where, in the sixteenth century, they reach their apogee (Forlivesi 2013). Innovation and originality are mostly owed to authors who do not belong to any religious order or university. In *De mente*, Nicholas of Cusa provides an original interpretation

of Augustine's notion of mind. On the one hand, Nicholas of Cusa belongs to the Medieval Tradition, since he argues that our mind is an image of God; on the other hand, he pursues innovation, since he claims that our mind is able to create notional entities, which do not occur in nature, just as God creates real entities. Human mind creations are culture, institutions and arts. Cusanus states that the ability to create notional entities makes man a "second God" (Pico della Mirandola 1486). In this doctrine the influence of Hermes Trismegistus' *Asclepius* is clear. Similarly to Nicholas of Cusa, in the *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, Pico della Mirandola claims that the gnosiological capacities of mind can make man a second God (Flasch 1980). In the Renaissance, there are also attempts at redefining the term "mind" in relation to Aristotelian psychology. Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and Giordano Bruno formulate several numbers of doctrines on the relation between mind and other faculties, such as reason and senses, and with powers such as imagination, fantasy, and memory (Ficino 1484; Bruno 1582; Ciliberto 1996; Tirinnanzi 2000; Rabassini 2007).

Impact and Legacy

In the wake of Cartesian dualism, in the modern age, this kind of debate on mind loses its philosophical appeal. Only a few single Renaissance issues survived, such as the relationship between rationality and discursive thought or between mind and corporeal perception, but they are mostly reformulated according to the Cartesian model, which construes mind as *res cogitans* and reopens the problem of dualism. Nevertheless, the Renaissance debate leaves to the modern age a rich philosophical heritage. Nicholas of Cusa's concept of mind has influenced Charles Bovelles' and Leibniz's philosophy (Meier-Oeser 1989). Some historians of philosophy have even argued that the Renaissance hermetic reworking of the notion of mind has a role in the constitution of the German Enlightenment (Mulsow 2002).

Cross-References

- [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Nicholas of Cusa](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
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Mephistopheles

- [Devil, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Messer Leon, Judah b. Jehiel

Born: Montecchio, Italy, ~1420–1425

Died: Either Naples or around Monastir, Macedonia, ~1497–1498

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Abstract

Judah Messer Leon was probably fifteenth-century Italy's best Jewish exemplar of a *hakham kolel* or *homo universalis*. He was a

rabbi, halakhic decisor, teacher, academy head, doctor, and author. He may have been the most decorated Jew in Italy, receiving not only the title “Messer” but also a doctorate. His written works include poetry, prayers, medical treatises, treatises on grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and commentaries on Aristotle, Averroes, Maimonides, and the Bible. His treatise on rhetoric, *Nofet şufim* (*The Honeycomb’s Flow*), which combined the “old rhetoric” of Aristotle and Averroes, the “new rhetoric” of Cicero, and interpretations of Biblical texts as rhetoric, was an important precursor to the interest in rhetoric among Italian humanists. His philosophical commentaries critiqued older interpretations of Aristotle by Gersonides in favor of scholastic interpretations and then current at the University of Padua. Taken together, his works sought to portray a unified Judaism in which ritual and scripture were understood to cohere with a philosophical approach to knowledge of the world. In his academies, he promoted the view, probably influenced by Paduan scholasticism, that students should engage in the study of both religious and philosophical texts, though only combining these ideas at the very end of their studies when turning to Maimonides, Jedaiah Bedersi, and others. His greatest influence was probably through his son, David, whose writings became prominent in the Ottoman lands, and his students, the most famous of whom was Yohanan Alemanno, Hebrew tutor to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

Alternate Names

Leone di Vitale

Biography

Little is known about the life of Messer Leon, which was apparently spent in various cities throughout Italy. It is not clear whether he was born in the Montecchio of the Le Marche region or in Montecchio Maggiore. He lived, studied,

and taught in Ancona, Bologna, Padua, Venice, Mantua, and Naples. He was ordained as a rabbi in his 20s and likely received a medical degree at a university in the same decade. Before turning 30, he seems to have already been appointed the head of the Jewish *yeshivah* in Ancona, where he wrote his first two books, *Libnat ha-sappir* (*Sapphire Stone*) and *Mikhlal yofi* (*The Perfection of Beauty*). He probably received the title “Messer” from the German emperor Fredrick III (1415–1493) on his visit to Italy in 1452. The title was apparently a source of pride for Leon; he mentions it in Hebrew transliteration at the opening of all of his works, though he tempers it somewhat by also adding to his name the epithet “the lowly servant, the faithful lover” (*ha-‘ebed ha-qatan ha-’oheb ha-ne’eman*). By the late 1450s, Messer Leon had moved to Bologna, where he was again head of a *yeshivah* and also began to write Hebrew commentaries on Aristotle. The subsequent decade saw him in Padua, where in 1469 he received the title “Doctor,” and along with it the knighthood and its concomitant titles of *miles*, *dignitas*, and *nobilitas* from the Emperor at the University of Padua. The University had already then informally opened its doors to noncitizens, even though it would not formally do so until 1517, when it reopened after the Venetian conquest of the area in 1509. Messer Leon apparently did not refer to himself with these titles in his Hebrew writings. Nevertheless, this status permitted Messer Leon not only to treat Christian patients but also to award his own doctoral degrees. Accordingly, he conferred such degrees on his students, e.g., John Alemanno and Baruch de Galis, as early as 1470. After a few years in Venice, he moved to Mantua before 1473, where he again headed a *yeshivah* and continued to write Hebrew commentaries on Aristotle as well as his best known work, *Nofet şufim* (*The Honeycomb’s Flow*). There he also taught Abraham Farissol (1451–ca. 1528), author of the geographical work, *Iggeret Orhot Olam* (first printed in Ferrara in 1524), which is the first Hebrew work to discuss the New World in detail. By the early 1480s, Messer Leon moved to head an academy in Naples, probably drawn by King Ferdinand I’s encouraging Jews to settle there.

However, in 1495 Charles VIII, King of France, conquered Naples, resulting in the destruction of the Jewish community there. Judah Messer Leon either died from this destruction or else fled with his son, David, to Monastir, Macedonia, then under the Ottoman Empire, where he died before 1499.

Why did Messer Leon lead such an itinerant life? Some of his relocations may be due to his pursuit of learning in Latin and the small, frequently shifting number of places where such learning would be permitted to Jews. Additionally, frequent wars and changes in the rights of Jews, especially those practicing medicine, also encouraged these moves, which were probably accompanied by students and perhaps their families. Yet he was also involved in a number of disputes within the Jewish community that may have encouraged his relocations. These were likely due to his own efforts to establish his authority over Italian Jewry, which included not only Italian Jews but also German and French Ashkenazim as well as Sephardim who were arriving from Spain throughout his lifetime. Messer Leon's approach was to encourage the adoption of Ashkenazic customs and *halakhah* while viciously disputing Ashkenazic and French philosophical and theological views. Not only was Messer Leon opposed to the Kabbalah, he even decreed a ban against studying Gersonides' commentary on the Bible, which was popular among Ashkenazic Jews in North Italy. He also dismissed a Sephardic teacher of Narboni's commentary on Ghazali from his academy in Mantua and subsequently defamed him for heretical teachings. Another account has Messer Leon in a dispute with the *halakhic* decisor and exegete, Joseph Colon Trabotto (ca. 1420–1480), called *Maharik* and known primarily for his responsa, regarding appropriate dress that resulted in the expulsion of both of the disputants from Mantua by order of the Duke, but the accuracy of this account is questionable. In any case, such disputes along with the changing status of Italian Jews not only contributed to Messer Leon's itinerant life but also likely prohibited him from establishing an enduring academy of learning.

Works and Themes

Much of Messer Leon's prolific writing was likely directed at students in his academies. Messer Leon himself frequently refers to students and takes pains to present his work as following the proper order of learning. No program of study from any of Messer Leon's academies survives, but a recommended program of study of his student, Yohanan Alemanno (1435/8–after 1504), is extant, and it is possible to gain a fairly comprehensive understanding of the education of Messer Leon's son, David. From these one can see the great importance attached to the *trivium*, the study of grammar, logic, and rhetoric; the much smaller attention given to the *quadrivium*, the study of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (Alemanno, e.g., recommends studying these subjects only 2 months a year for about 7 years); and the turn to Aristotelian philosophy after these topics, followed by the subsequent reexamination of Scripture in light of philosophy. Messer Leon's writings similarly emphasize the *trivium*. His three independent Hebrew treatises, the *Libnat ha-sappir* (*Sapphire Stone*), *Mikhlah yofi* (*The Perfection of Beauty*), and *Nofet sufim* (*The Honeycomb's Flow*), are textbooks on grammar, logic, and rhetoric, respectively. Moreover, he wrote commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, and *Posterior Analytics*. He does not seem to have written on any of the topics of the *quadrivium*. However, he did write commentaries on Aristotle's core philosophical texts, *Physics*, *On the Soul*, *Metaphysics*, and *Ethics*, the last three of which have not survived. Additionally, he wrote commentaries on the Bible and books of legal decisions which are not extant but were presumably for use in his academy in Naples. He also wrote a commentary on parts of Avicenna's medical *Canon* and various questions on physics and other topics, again probably with an eye to training students. Another salient feature in the advanced stages of both Alemanno's program and David's education was a strong focus on Maimonides' *Guide* and other theoretical approaches to Judaism and philosophy.

Messer Leon seems to have written commentaries on the *Guide* and on Jedaiah Bedersi's *Behinat ha-dat*.

Messer Leon's writings are all in the eclectic style popular in the Renaissance, composed largely of quotes from numerous works. Even his three independent treatises are greatly dependent on other works. The *Libnat ha-sappir* draws heavily on Abraham Ibn Ezra's grammatical works, and the *Mikhlah yofi* is mostly excerpts from various scholastic logical works, especially those of Paul of Venice (1369–1429), a scholastic thinker who taught at the University of Padua and whose logical works continued to be studied there after his death. Similarly, Messer Leon's extant commentaries on Aristotle, which like other Hebrew commentaries of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, take Averroes' Middle Commentaries as the text of Aristotle, engage extensively with Walter Burley, Radulphus Bruto, Gaetano de Thiene, Paul of Venice, and numerous other Latin writers studied at the University of Padua. In fact, Messer Leon is highly critical of the fourteenth-century commentary tradition, especially its lead proponent Gersonides, and refuting Gersonides' commentaries on Aristotle is a central goal of his own commentaries.

Even *Nofet şufim*, which Messer Leon recognized as his most important work and which was the first Hebrew book to be printed in the lifetime of its author, is heavily reliant on other sources. The first three books of *Nofet şufim* are structured around the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and the final book is built off of Averroes' *Middle Commentary* on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the Hebrew translation of ʿTodoros ʿTodorosi. To be sure, *Nofet şufim* also drew heavily on other sources, including the pseudo-Aristotelian *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, Cicero's *De invention*, and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*. *Nofet şufim* thus made available to a Hebrew audience rhetorical concepts and classifications that had previously been accessible only in Latin. One reason for its influence was the increasing popularity of the study of rhetoric with the advent of Renaissance Humanism. *Nofet şufim* is, in fact, set apart from its sources by its most radical feature: its use of examples from the

Bible and its explicit claim that the Hebrew Scriptures constitute the highest form of rhetoric. God Himself, according to this view, is an Orator, developing His claims through rhetorical methods and convincing the people to adopt correct opinions and to live in the best possible way.

One important theme that comes up in Messer Leon's introductions to his various works is that of a unity of knowledge, i.e., of philosophy and Scriptural truths. This may be based on an Averroism picked up in Padua. Yet, Messer Leon draws on medieval Jewish sources, especially Maimonides, for the legend of an ancient, comprehensive understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures that derived from them a complete understanding of philosophy in all of its fields. The many travails suffered by Jews have caused this understanding to be lost, and Messer Leon thus turns to non-Jewish sources, especially Aristotle, Averroes, Cicero, and the Christian scholastics, to extrapolate this knowledge. Once this knowledge has been gained, according to Messer Leon, one can reread the Bible and discover that, in fact, it was there all along. In this way, Messer Leon justifies teaching non-Jewish philosophy in his *yeshivah* and even using it to better understand the Bible. Such an account allows for manifold ways of studying what is ultimately a unified, divine knowledge. It thus may be seen as a kind of *Prisca Theologia*, even without the mystical and magical elements so important to Marsilio Ficino.

Impact and Legacy

If Messer Leon's life's work was to construct a Judaism that harmonized philosophy and religion and to promote the study of philosophical works and an understanding of Hebrew Scriptures in light of those philosophical inquiries, then it was largely a failure. Subsequent generations generally turned away from this approach in favor of kabbalistic interpretations of Judaism. Even his son, David, brought in the Kabbalah to his accounts of Judaism. Indeed, later Jewish thinkers slowly turned away from Aristotelian philosophy as a source of reasoned truth, in favor of the

kabbalah, renaissance Platonism, or new scientific methods. Messer Leon's lengthy and detailed interpretations of Aristotle and Averroes in light of scholastic writings, which made up the bulk of his literary output, were in a sense the apex of the Hebrew commentary tradition. Yet that tradition petered out in the generation after Messer Leon's death, and the production of Hebrew commentaries on Aristotelian texts ceased entirely in the second half of the sixteenth century. At the same time, Messer Leon's work on rhetoric was of increasing interest as Jewish thinkers became interested in humanism and Platonism. Even later, his work may have been influential in the reexamination of the Bible beginning with Spinoza who envisioned the prophets as orators with political goals.

Although his academies apparently had no lasting influence, Messer Leon was influential through his students. His son, David, was quite prolific and influential on Jewish thought in the Ottoman lands. His most important student, though, was probably Yohanan Alemanno, whose approach to a unified intellectual understanding of Judaism and philosophy is greatly indebted to Messer Leon. Alemanno is best known as the Hebrew and Jewish thought teacher of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and it is through Alemanno that Messer Leon's scholarship reached a non-Jewish audience and participated to some extent in the development of the Italian Renaissance.

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Mestre Vidal Bellshom

► [Moses of Narbonne](#)

Metallurgy in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

The fourteenth century is characterized by the consolidation of the iron and steel industries. The return to the widespread use of other metals in goldsmiths and sculpture, with the development of military and civil engineering, encourages the renovation of mining, metallurgical techniques, and metal working that will lead, especially in central Europe, to the renewal and upgrading of the metallurgical mining industry. This process of renewal is accompanied by the birth and consolidation of literature dedicated to metallurgy and mining, which will mark the transition from an alchemical and artisanal dimension to the art of metal, to that of a specific field of study that finds an application in industrial activity.

Innovative and Original Aspect

Between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Europe was the scenario of a progressive return to the use of metals. The urban development of cities and the consolidation of court life led to an increase in the artworks of goldsmiths, tools for daily use, and in particular military equipment. Iron was used for the construction of weapons, as parts of siege machines such as crossbows and iron rims, in shoeing horses, as agricultural tools for working the earth, and in the architecture of chains, sticks, nails, brackets, and hinges. New mines were opened in Europe, and thanks to a more efficient drainage system, it was also possible to exploit existing mines.

In Saxony and then in Bohemia, Harz, and Southern Bavaria, even more efficient water-lifting machines were experimented. Engines were driven by animal traction and where the

presence of watercourses enabled it, with powerful hydraulic motors also.

The combination of hydraulic energy and water-lifting machine signed a very important turning point in mining technology that reached its peak in the fifteenth-century Germany mining areas. Thanks to hydraulic power, it was possible to develop more efficient and powerful plants for washing and crushing minerals as well as melting furnaces.

Massive investments for the development of metallurgical activity were in the lead-silver mines of Saxony, also extended to the Trentino and Tyrolean Alpine areas, in Styria, Carinthia, Lorraine, and the Dolphinarium. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, these mining areas were already operating double-bellow pumping systems able to feed the ovens with constant airflow, and new foundry apparatus began to replace the old ferries.

For the production of iron with direct method, there was the spread of the Catalan furnaces, which, despite having ancient origins, were introduced in several parts of Europe during the late Middle Ages. The direct method, or Bloomery process, did not reach the iron melting temperatures (1538°) and separated metal from its mineral in the state of spongy and pasty forms. This product, called bloom, had to be submitted to the repeated hammering section at the forge in order to remove slag and transform it into wrought iron. Then it could also be cemented and tempered to harden its surface. The most important innovation in the steel industry was, however, the introduction of larger ovens such as the Scandinavian Osmund and the German Stückofen, cylindrical or square section ovens with a double or triple height development compared to commonly sized sleeve furnaces that barely reached 2 m.

The greater height of the ovens with a constant airflow guaranteed by the powerful hydraulic bellows favored oxidation reactions that led to the fusion of iron ore producing cast iron, an alloy which had only been obtained until then by chance, and considered low-quality iron. In the Alpine valleys, especially in Bergamo and Brescia areas, there is evidence of this kind of work dating from the thirteenth century, and this is where the

indirect method of steel production probably developed. The so-called Brescian method to obtain steel with an indirect method was based on the cast iron decarburization by repeatedly and alternately heating sessions in melted cast iron baths and hammering.

Metallurgical techniques for the separation and refinement of nonferrous metals were also developed and renewed, favoring the development of more efficient copper and silver production processes. The cupellation process, based on lead oxidation that turned it into litharge, was used for separating silver from silver-lead minerals such as galena.

During the fourteenth century in the Nuremberg area, the process of liquation was introduced (Saiger process), melting silver minerals with lead, extracting metals from the minerals and alloying together with lead, and then finally separating silver by cupellation. Another method of separation to purify precious metals is the amalgamation process with mercury. It was introduced at the beginning of the sixteenth century probably in the Venetian mining areas and spread throughout Europe. This method was based on the mercury property to pass in a liquid solution with silver, from which it was then separated again by evaporating mercury.

Along with iron, copper, especially its alloys like bronze, was increasingly applied in both artistic and military casting products; cast iron did not offer enough technological guarantees, and until the middle of the sixteenth century, the majority of artilleries were cast in bronze. This alloy changed its characteristics according to the amount of tin alloyed with copper. The so-called bell alloy had up to about 20% of tin concentration: it was more fragile, and used to cast bells because of its sonority, while the “bombarda alloy” had a low tenor of tin, about 6%, and due to its greater resistance capacity was used to cast artillery.

The development of metallurgy was also accompanied by foundry technique renewal. Air blowing systems powered by hydraulic motors were also combined with the reverberation furnaces used for the castings, leading to an increase in efficiency and productivity, which made it

possible to produce larger and more complex forms of casting.

During the fifteenth century, the indirect casting method was invented or rediscovered from antiquity. This method made it possible to produce lighter and reproducible castings. The progress in the metallurgical process and casting methods led to the creation of important arsenals able to cast a big number of artillery pieces all over Europe.

Expansion and development of genuine industrial poles for mineral extraction and production of metals facilitated the introduction of a bureaucratic apparatus for the logistics, economic, and fiscal management of mining areas. In this context, the figure of Bergmaister, a public official with the task of enforcing state regulations in the management of mines, even if they were very limited areas, was in charge of administration. This figure of the “technical officer” played a very important role in the emergence of the metallurgical literature which at the beginning of the sixteenth century saw the first two published works in the *Bergbüchlein* and the *Probierebüchlein*. The oldest *Bergbüchlein* edition seems to date back to the period between 1505 and 1510, while the *Probierebüchlein* seems to be no earlier than 1520. The *Bergbüchlein*, attributed to Ulrich von Claw, latinized Calbus Fribergius, is a general introduction to the mineral geology based on the embryological theory of minerals dating back to the stoic philosophy and the alchemist tradition. *Probierebüchlein*, instead, was an anonymous metallurgical manual in which separation techniques and metal refining methods which were known in the late fifteenth century, were compiled. During the same period, the so-called *Kunstbüchlein*, including the first book dedicated to the metallurgy of steel, *Von Stahel und Eysen*, was published in the main printing houses of Germany. These works, written in German, were remarkably successful among workmen and were reprinted several times during the first half of the sixteenth century. In this nascent literary tradition, also the works by the German naturalist and physician Georg Bauer, better known by the Latinized name of Georgio Agricola (1494–1555), have to be placed. In 1530 in Basel, his first mineralogy work titled *Bermannus* was

published. This is an important publication characterized by a historical-humanistic approach in which in a dialogical form, the result of philological research on the metallurgical and mining terminology used by the ancients is illustrated. This preliminary work culminated in 1556 with the main Agricola publication *De Re metallica*, a Latin treatise on the art of metals which had a considerable diffusion and influence among scholars and learned people as well as mining technicians and workmen, thanks also to the German translation (*Vom Bergkwerk*) that was published in Basel in 1557. In this tradition that, thanks to Agricola’s works, reaches a European dimension, two other important authors such as Vannoccio Biringuccio (1480–1539?) and Lazarus Ercker (1528–1592) have also to be considered. The first published *De la pirotechnia*, printed posthumously in 1540 in Venice. A book, written in Italian, but published twice in French before the end of the sixteenth century, and copied by several authors, was a treatise dedicated to the description of minerals, from theories and technical experiences, and it may be the most completely analytical presentation of metallurgical technology from an engineering perspective. Ercker published the *Beschreibung allerfürnemisten mineralischen Ertzt* in Prague in 1574 and compiled all the techniques for the essay, the separation, and refining of metals. The works of Ercker, Agricola, and Biringuccio were the main books dedicated to the study and to the engineering of mineralogy, metallurgy, and casting process that were the basis for these kinds of studies and professional activity for almost all the following two centuries.

Cross-References

► [Biringuccio, Vannoccio](#)

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Metaphysics in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The Renaissance is undoubtedly a crucial moment in the history of metaphysics. The

reasons for this centrality are obviously numerous. Among them, however, two are particularly relevant. On the one hand, Renaissance authors are the first who tried to elaborate an overall synthesis of the medieval metaphysical tradition, and to organize in a systematic way a very complex and articulated matter. On the other hand, they had the merit of deeply renewing the interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and fixing the peculiarities that will characterize metaphysics throughout the following centuries. The tradition inaugurated by Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which had already spread widely during the Middle Ages, will never cease to exert a great fascination on the philosophers and theologians active between the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Particularly relevant, in this perspective, are the contributions of some members of the Franciscan, Dominican, and Jesuit order, among which stand out Antonio Trombetta, Giacomino Malafossa, Nicholas of Orvaux, Gabriele Zerbi, Dominic of Flanders, Paolo Barbo (Soncinas), Giovanni Cristostomo Javelli Benito Pereira, Pedro Fonseca, and Francisco Suárez. Renaissance metaphysics involves such a wide variety of themes and issues that it is impossible to make any exhaustive synthesis. Among the most frequently debated topics, the so-called *quaestio de subiecto metaphysicae* and the inquiry about the relationship between God, separate substances, and finite being are the most fundamental.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The interest in metaphysical topics holds a prominent place within the philosophical debate of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – not only concerning the commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* but also by reference to a series of other textbooks and treatises that cannot immediately relate to the traditional form of commentary.

From a historical-genetic perspective, the Renaissance treatment of metaphysical issues presents a twofold characterization. On the one hand, it offers a synthesis of the scholastic interpretation

of Aristotle's thought – as is evident, for example, in Francisco Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae*. On the other hand, it develops the grounding principles of the science that in the seventeenth century was referred to as ontology, as is shown by the fact that during the Renaissance a wide-ranging discussion took place about the status and the subject matter of metaphysical science (in general, on this topic, cf. Forlivesi 2009).

Concerning metaphysics, accordingly, the Renaissance is undoubtedly decisive: it summarizes the acquisitions of the Medieval tradition, at the same time initiating the doctrinal evolution that would have led, in about a century, to the birth of "modern ontology." (Ferrater Mora 1963; Zimmermann 1998)

In this regard, however, a crucial point should not be overlooked. The term "ontology" first appeared in the *Ogdoas scholastica* (1606) by Jakob Lohrard (Lamanna 2006, pp. 560–561), when the Renaissance thought was moving only the first steps toward the constitution of that "general science of being" which will be codified by seventeenth- to eighteenth-century authors. Strictly speaking, therefore, Renaissance metaphysics is still carried out within the framework of the exegesis of a "text" – that is, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* – and does not address many of the issues that will become specific to modern ontology. This, however, does not mean that "Renaissance metaphysics" is not original. On closer inspection, in fact, its originality also imposes itself at a textual level. Starting from the fifteenth century, metaphysical topics are no longer dealt with solely in the context of the commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but begin to constitute the proper subject of treatises and other kinds of writings in which the form of the commentary leaves room for a systematic presentation of Aristotle's teaching.

The Renaissance treatment of metaphysics essentially refers to three main issues or conceptual nodes.

Node n. 1 – Renaissance authors try to formulate innovatively the classical opposition between Avicenna and Averroes' perspectives. Reworking the main acquisitions of Medieval thought, they face the determination of the subject matter of

metaphysics starting from an opposition between the "ontological" paradigm developed by Avicenna and the "theological" interpretative model commonly attributed to Averroes. According to Renaissance authors, the alternative between these *auctoritates* coincides with the alternative between two different ways of understanding the main operator of ontology, that is, its subject matter. In this regard, Avicenna states that this operator can only be *ens inquantum ens*. In his opinion, if one were to admit that the subject of metaphysics is God, one would also have to assert that God's existence cannot be demonstrated by this science. Indeed, for Aristotle, the existence of the subject of a science is either something presupposed or should be demonstrated by another science. Consequently, no science can demonstrate the existence of its subject matter (*An. Post. A*, 10, 76b11–16).

According to Avicenna, however, this is not the case for metaphysics. He attributes to this science the task of demonstrating the existence of God, with the consequence that God and his being can in no way constitute its subject matter.

Diametrically opposed to Avicenna's opinion, but for equally well-founded reasons, is the thesis approved by Averroes. In his view, it is possible and entirely legitimate to consider God and separate substances as the proper subject matter of metaphysics. Since Aristotle places the demonstration of their existence in *Physics*, it is possible, according to Averroes, to assure without any contradiction that God and separate substances are the subject matter of metaphysical science. In metaphysics, as Aristotle states, their existence is a mere prerequisite, since its demonstration is ultimately concerned with physics or natural philosophy (*Phys.* VIII, 1–3). This is, hence, the principal alternative faced by Renaissance authors who dealt with metaphysical issues. The varying forms of solving this ambivalence constitute, in fact, the different ways in which they have sought to interpret the unity of metaphysical science.

Node n. 2 – The Renaissance treatment of ontological issues poses a second alternative, which concerns the interpretation of the relationship between God and the being that is the proper subject of metaphysics (given that, as we know,

the prevailing paradigm will be the “ontological” one elaborated by Avicenna). There were two permissible interpretations in this regard: on the one hand, the thesis that God is the cause (and not a part) of the subject matter of metaphysics. This opinion was supported, for example, by Thomas Aquinas in a crucial passage of his commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. For this reason, some interpreters of Aquinas considered this position as a typical thomist assumption. In reality, as is well known, Aquinas is also the author of some texts that consider God, like any other object, as included under the concept of being (*ens*). Regardless of the identification of the theses defended or opposed by Thomas Aquinas, there is no doubt that Renaissance authors had to confront the claim according to which the subject of metaphysics does not include God, but necessarily presupposes him as an extrinsic principle. This does not mean, however, that God does not fall within the scope of metaphysics: like any other being, God is fully considered by metaphysics, but it is not for this reason that he constitutes a true inferior of its subject matter. During the Renaissance, this opinion stood in opposition to another, according to which God is not simply the extrinsic cause of the subject of metaphysics, but is himself part of the subject as a true inferior. Under this interpretation, the notion of being includes both God and finite/categorical beings equally. This assumption was widely shared by scholastic philosophers and theologians; beginning from the thirteenth century, the relocation of God within the category of being had become almost commonplace. The “ontological” interpretation of metaphysical science and the affirmation of its transcendental nature thus became widespread.

This factor, however, did not at all compromise the possibility of alternative readings: during the Renaissance, in fact, many authors elaborated theoretical solutions aiming to succeed in ensuring the unity of metaphysics without sacrificing the primacy commonly assigned to the divine being.

Node n. 3 – The main difficulty that the commentators of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* faced was the need to guarantee the unity that Aristotle had repeatedly identified as a prominent property of

the *subiectum scientiae*. The problem that Renaissance authors dealt with was the following: given that the subject of metaphysics is being *qua* being, how is it possible to assure its essential unity to this science if the instances that it includes are so different from each other? The *casus belli*, so to speak, was here constituted by the divine being. In this regard, the principal issue was the following: what kind of relationship must exist between the different *inferiora entis* to ensure both the unity of being and the irreducible individuality that is proper to the instances it includes?

From a historical point of view, the theory of analogical predication qualifies as a possible response to this issue. A large part of critical literature generally places this theory in the framework of theological discussions. The analogy is usually interpreted as an answer to a theological problem: how can human conceptuality and language legitimately define God’s being and properties? Indeed, the theory of analogy also has another function, distinct from and perhaps more consistent with the essential inspiration of Aristotle’s philosophical teaching. Placed in a metaphysical context, the theory of analogy assumes a rigorous ontological function. In fact, it allows to satisfy a twofold requirement: on the one hand, the need to include in the *ratio entis* not only categorial and material entities, but also God and separate substances; on the other hand, the need to prevent the subject of metaphysics from losing the unity that Aristotle considered a necessary condition for the existence of any *subiectum scientiae*.

Given that metaphysics presupposes an ontological inspiration (node n. 1) and that its subject also includes God and separate substances (node n. 2), it is necessary to admit that the relations existing between the particular beings can ground the unity of being without compromising divine transcendence. Considered from this perspective, the doctrine of analogy appears closely linked to the determination of the subject of metaphysics. This is perhaps the reason why Medieval and Renaissance authors largely investigated the relations existing between God and categorial beings. The justification of the unity of metaphysics and its subject, in fact, depends largely on this investigation.

In this sense, the opposition between univocity and analogy constitutes the theoretical framework within which Renaissance authors move. Consequently, the investigation about the unity of the subject of metaphysics (node n. 3) is not rooted, as one would expect, in the text of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, nor does it refer to the Arabic peripatetic tradition (with particular reference to al-Fārabi, Avicenna, and Averroes). It is preferably the effect of the influence that theology has exerted on metaphysics and other sciences. Born within the framework of the Medieval discussion about the legitimacy of theological discourse, the alternative between univocity and analogy radically involves the problem concerning the unity of the subject matter of metaphysics. If one admits that God, like any other entity, has to be included under the reason of being, ontology cannot avoid addressing the problem of the relationship existing between God and categorical entities under the concept of being.

In this regard, it is not pointless to observe that the problem of the unity of the subject of metaphysics has its roots in scholastic philosophy and originates, precisely, from the opposition between the analogical models developed during the thirteenth century and the univocal one that John Duns Scotus formulated in his commentaries on the *Sentences*. For that purpose, it is quite undeniable that the spread of Scotism was a decisive factor. The insistence of Duns Scotus on the need to include God and separate substances in the subject of metaphysics and to interpret its unity as a univocal one strongly influenced the way the authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries dealt with metaphysics. Starting from the mid-fourteenth century and at least until the mid-eighteenth century, the theoretical framework within which ontological issues were confronted was effectively the one developed by John Duns Scotus. All philosophers and theologians, even those who adopted more traditional positions, ended up codifying their views using the lexicon and conceptuality developed for the first time by the Scottish theologian. Duns Scotus's irruption into the philosophical scene marked a real revolution in the development of the modern science of being.

From what has been said, it is quite evident that Renaissance thought implies a deep renewal of metaphysical issues. Aristotle's *Metaphysics* became available to Renaissance thinkers after having been interpreted in the context of different traditions, and starting from divergent approaches and methods. In the preceding pages, we have limited ourselves to broadly recalling the tradition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Much, nonetheless, should be said about Neoplatonic contaminations and their impact on ontological issues during the Renaissance period. It is almost self-evident, however, that the consideration of such a tradition would excessively expand the corpus of texts and the range of problems and solutions to be considered. As a result, we will limit ourselves below to giving an account of those Renaissance authors who were concerned with the general science of being since its Aristotelian origin, and who consequently placed themselves in that "direct" tradition of Aristotelianism of which we are trying to trace here a synthetic profile.

From the classical and Medieval tradition, Renaissance authors inherit three fundamental questions.

1. Does metaphysics deal with God and separate substances (thesis commonly attributed to Averroes) or with being *qua* being (thesis commonly attributed to Avicenna)? Should the subject of metaphysics be identified with the noblest kind of being or with that common being in which all beings seem to agree?
2. What is the place of the divine being in this framework? Does God constitute the extrinsic principle of being *qua* being or, like any other entity, is he a simple part of the subject of metaphysics?
3. If metaphysics deals with common being, what kind of relationship should be posited between God and other entities to guarantee the unity of its subject as well as the transcendence and the perfection of the divine being?

Renaissance commentaries and treatises devoted to metaphysics replicate these issues and formulate different solutions through the discussion of complex sets of arguments. In this

synoptic presentation, it will not be possible to evoke in detail the complex set of these discussions. Therefore, the contribution of the most influential authors will be briefly presented to offer the reader a brief account of the impact of ontological topics during the Renaissance.

Metaphysics: Theology – Ontology

The Problem of a General Science of Being During the Renaissance

The Scotist Franciscan Tradition

There is no doubt that Duns Scotus's thought exerted a significant influence on the treatment of ontological issues during the Renaissance period. Not only did he introduce some themes of primary importance in the philosophical and theological discussions, but he also profoundly transformed the vocabulary of metaphysics, thus opening the way to the birth of modern ontology.

For this reason, it is perhaps appropriate to take as a starting point the synthesis developed by some Scotists during the Renaissance. The consideration of their works represents the best way to properly acknowledge the importance of Duns Scotus's influence on modern philosophy.

From the 1330s onwards, Duns Scotus's philosophy began to spread massively throughout Europe, when some of his students started to organize the contents of his teaching in a systematic form and to edit his most influential works. In a first phase, the success of Duns Scotus's philosophy was closely linked to the diffusion of the writings of some of his pupils and followers. This was the case of his metaphysical thought, the spread of which was essentially linked to the success of the *Quaestiones super duodecim libros Metaphysicae Aristotelis* by Antonio Andrés (ca. 1280–ca. 1320). The version of Duns Scotus's metaphysical thought most widely used by late Scholastics and Renaissance authors was precisely that developed by Antonio Andrés (cf. Forlivesi 2008, pp. 242–248).

Together with Antonio Andrés' *Quaestiones*, another important contribution to the spread of Duns Scotus's thought was the birth of the Scotist

School in Padua and Paris. In Padua, in particular, the Scotist tradition was dominated by the Franciscan Antonio Trombetta (1436–1517), professor of metaphysics since 1467 and main opponent of the Dominican Thomas de Vio Cajetan (cf. Poppi 1962).

Trombetta stood within the philosophical tradition of his time as one of the most important heirs of Duns Scotus. He accepted the thesis, already valued by Antonio Andrés, according to which the subject of metaphysics is being *qua* being, that is, being insofar it is common to God and creatures. Like almost all Duns Scotus's supporters, Trombetta embraced the Scotist interpretation of metaphysics as a *scientia transcendens*, that is, as a science capable of including in its subject not only categorial entities (like creatures and finite material beings in general) but also God and separate substances (Trombetta 1502a, I, q. 9, f. 10ra-b).

Trombetta poses the problem of the subject of metaphysics in a transversal way (cf. Forlivesi 2008, pp. 265–276 and Forlivesi 2014, pp. 29–35). He does not inquire if the subject of metaphysics also includes God. As an orthodox supporter of Duns Scotus's thought, he considers this statement an acquired fact. The question he poses in his *Quaestiones metaphysicales* is another: how does metaphysics deal with the parts of its subject? And again: does the metaphysician consider the quiddities included under the concept of being in a universal way (*in universali*) or in a particular one (*in particulari*)? These questions, which are only apparently unimportant, have the purpose of explaining how metaphysics can deal with its objects without invading the respective fields of particular sciences (Trombetta 1502a, ff. 8vb–11ra).

Without entering here into the complex series of arguments elaborated by Trombetta, one can summarize his view as follows. Metaphysics is concerned with being *qua* being, that is, being insofar as it includes not only categorial entities but also God and separate substances. The metaphysician deals diversely with the different kinds of quiddities that fall under his consideration. He can take into account material quiddities in a “universal” way or a “particular” one. The

metaphysician deals with material quiddities in a universal way when he considers them insofar as they include the notion of being *qua* being (which is precisely the subject of metaphysics). Instead, he deals with material quiddities in a particular way when it considers their proper concept, but always with reference to the fact that these quiddities include being *qua* being. In this sense, the metaphysician deals with quiddities *in particulari* only in a relative way, that is, referring to the *modus considerandi* that is proper to the metaphysical habitus (Trombetta 1502a, f. 10rb).

Metaphysics, on the other hand, is concerned with separate substances (including God) not only *in universali* (insofar as they include, like material quiddities, the notion of being), but also *absolute* and *in particulari*. This particular knowledge of separate substances, however, is not attained by an intuitive concept (only possible within a theological framework), but through a proper concept that the mind elaborates by aggregating the notions that metaphysics takes into account (i.e., the concepts of body, necessity, simplicity, independence, and substance) (Trombetta 1502a, ff. 9vb-10ra).

So, what does metaphysics deal with in the theoretical framework developed by Antonio Trombetta? It deals with being *qua* being, that is, being insofar as it also includes God and separate substances.

During the Renaissance and the Early Modern Age, the supporters of Duns Scotus's thought commonly accepted Trombetta's approach. It is no coincidence, in this regard, that seventeenth-century textbooks and treatises often mention the Paduan Franciscan (together with Antonio Andrés) in order to clarify some Scotist positions. Even in the case of some disagreements concerning arguments and demonstrations, Renaissance authors considered Antonio Trombetta as a true authority. A similar treatment, in the same years, was also reserved for Pierre Tartaret (d. 1522), a Scotist philosopher active in the second half of the fifteenth century. His *Clarissima singularisque totius philosophiae necnon metaphysice Aristotelis [...] expositio*, reprinted several times since 1498, is also concerned with ontological issues (Tartaret 1498,

1514, 1614). In his commentaries, Tartaret devoted little space to the question of the subject of metaphysics. Its position, however, is clear and defined. Like Duns Scotus and his early followers, Tartaret partakes the "ontological" view developed by Avicenna, and rejects instead the "theological" framework commonly attributed to Averroes. According to his view, the subject of metaphysics is being *qua* being, that is, being insofar as it also includes God and separate substances. Although God and separate substances constitute the noblest objects taken into account by the metaphysician, they are considered in metaphysics only *sub ratione entis*, that is, as true inferiors of the concept of being (Tartaret 1498, ff. 130vb-131ra).

Another important representative of the Scotist tradition in Padua is Giacomino Malafossa (ca. 1481–1563). Born in Barge, in the province of Cuneo, Malafossa held the chair of metaphysics *in via Scoti* at the Faculty of Arts of Padua between 1518 and 1564. The contents of his teaching concerning metaphysical issues are condensed in his *Exactissima enarratio et absolutissima expositio super Primum Sententiarum Doctoris Subtilis* and primarily in his *Quaestio de subiecto metaphysicae*, published in Padua in 1553 and then reprinted in 1581, 1591, and 1613. In his *Quaestio de subiecto metaphysicae* Malafossa deals with two distinct yet interconnected issues: in the first section, as announced by the title, he ponders the subject of metaphysics; in the second one, instead, he addresses the question of its scientific statute (cf. Poppi 2009, *passim*).

Concerning the *quaestio de subiecto metaphysicae*, Malafossa discusses extensively the interpretation elaborated by Averroes, partly the one of Avicenna, and diffusely the positions of some contemporary Scotists. Following Duns Scotus, Malafossa adopts the "ontological" interpretation commonly attributed to Avicenna but integrates it into the framework of the scholastic debate. In his view, the subject of metaphysics is being as such, that is, being insofar as it equally includes God and creatures. Neither a super-transcendental being (including beings of reason) nor the most perfect being (God) can constitute

the adequate subject of metaphysical science (Poppi 2009, pp. 112–115). In metaphysics, according to Malafossa, God can only qualify as the “principal” subject according to an order of perfection, but in no case, however, can he constitute its subject according to an order of adequation (Malafossa, 1553, f. 2v; Andersen 2009, p. 448).

Finally, among the Scotists active during the Renaissance, we must not forget Nicholas of Orvaux and Gabriele Zerbi. Concerning Nicholas of Orvaux (1400 ca.–1475 ca.), little biographical information is available today. He joined the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance and taught at the Universities of Paris, Poitiers, and Angers. Having acquired a deep knowledge of Duns Scotus’s thought, he committed himself to spreading his teaching among his contemporaries. His commentaries on the *Sentences* (*Super Sententias compendium perutile*) and *Metaphysics* (*Compendiosa et optima expositio duodecim librorum metaphysicae Aristotelis secundum viam Scoti*), reprinted several times between 1495 and 1520, can be interpreted as the result of this intense activity. The views supported by Nicholas of Orvaux are consistent with the teaching of Duns Scotus. Like Duns Scotus, Nicholas of Orvaux assigns a sharp “ontological” characterization to metaphysics. Following the view commonly attributed to Avicenna, he argues that being *qua* being is to be considered as the adequate subject of metaphysical science. God and separate substances are instead the principles and the causes of that subject, as widely admitted by an influential and consistent tradition. According to Nicholas of Orvaux, who partakes Duns Scotus’s opinion, the causal function assigned to God and separate substances does not imply that the subject of metaphysics does not subsume them. According to him, even if God and separate substances are principles and causes of categorial beings, they are to be considered, in any case, as parts of the subject of metaphysics, that is, as its *partes subiectivae* (Nicolaus de Orbellis 1485, ff. unnumbered).

Gabriele Zerbi (1445–1505) studied at the University of Padua and became a professor at the University of Bologna in the last quarter of the

fifteenth century. Although he was mainly interested in natural philosophy and medicine, Zerbi also dealt in-depth with metaphysics. His *Quaestiones metaphysicae*, printed for the first time in Bologna in 1482, are quite remarkable in this regard. Zerbi’s interpretation of metaphysics is deeply influenced by Duns Scotus’s thought. Like the Scottish theologian, Zerbi partakes the “ontological” model developed by Avicenna (which he welcomes, however, without denying the “theological” interpretation supported by Averroes). In his mind, the subject of metaphysics is being *qua* being (*ens inquantum ens*): the ontological nature of metaphysical investigation is beyond any doubt for him. Equally unquestionable, in his eyes, is also another thesis generally accepted within the Scotistic school: being *qua* being includes not only categorial entities but also God and separate substances (cf. Forlivesi 2008, pp. 257–263). In Zerbi’s *Quaestiones*, however, the nature of this inclusion is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, Zerbi underlines that the relationship between God and being *qua* being is to be understood in a causal sense: according to his interpretation, God is the principle or cause of the subject of metaphysics. On the other hand, Zerbi resolutely states that God constitutes a part of that subject. Probably, the ambiguity just detected is only verbal because Zerbi firmly reaffirms, on several occasions, the inclusion of God under the subject of metaphysics (Zerbi 1482, I, q. 2, ff. unnumbered). However, the fact remains that it is difficult, under Zerbi’s interpretation, to keep these two conflicting statements together. A partial justification for this attitude, which actually runs through the entire body of his *Quaestiones*, can be found in the fact that Zerbi’s commentary has a marked syncretistic characterization: while agreeing in general to the Scotist approach, Zerbi often tries to show the compatibility between the teaching of Duns Scotus and some fundamental assumptions of the Dominican tradition (with a particular reference to Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas). In this attempt to reconcile divergent doctrines, however, the risk of confusing positions that are not entirely organic and consistent is always high: Zerbi often considers equivalent some

assumptions belonging to theoretical contexts that are profoundly different and in some ways incompatible.

Regarding the unity of metaphysical science, the supporters of Duns Scotus admit, with few exceptions, the univocity of being. In their opinion, the unity of metaphysics can only be guaranteed by conceding that the concept of being is univocal and that all its inferiors (including God) relate to its objective content according to an identical *ratio substantiae*.

In this general agreement that characterizes the Scotistic school can be identified, however, as a front of disagreement and discussion. While some Scotists assigned to the *communitas entis* an essentially logical nature (which involves only the sphere of predication), others attributed it with an authentic ontological value (such as to imply a *communitas* subsisting beyond mere mental representation). During the Renaissance, and until the middle of the seventeenth century, this involvement was one of the themes most addressed by the *formalistae* or *formalizantes*, supporters of a Scotism sensitive to the influence of Renaissance Platonism. Starting from the teaching of Antonio Trombetta, authors such as Giovanni Vallone and Francesco Pitigiani d'Arezzo (followed later by some influential Scotists of the seventeenth century) questioned the "reality" (*realitas*) of the *conceptus entis*, affirming the existence of a real commonness (*communitas realis*) as a ground for the legitimation of the univocal predication (Vallone 1588; Pitigiani 1606).

From a historical point of view, the coherence of the Scotist thought has helped to impose an interpretation of metaphysics as a transcendental science, that is, as a general science including finite and infinite beings, material and immaterial ones. This approach not only marked the Franciscan front, substantially faithful to the teaching of Duns Scotus, but also the Dominican one. The doctrines elaborated by the followers of Duns Scotus ended up deeply influencing even those authors who moved from different doctrinal frameworks. Even the supporters of alternative approaches were now arguing using the vocabulary and conceptuality that Duns Scotus and his

followers had developed and helped to spread. Accordingly, the lexicon elaborated within the Scotistic school became the new vocabulary of philosophy, with a particular reference to metaphysics, within a few years.

The Dominican Tradition

During the Renaissance, an alternative to Scotist thought was constituted by the positions of some Dominican authors principally influenced by Thomas Aquinas. Among these, Dominic of Flanders, Paolo Barbo Soncinas, Thomas de Vio Cajetan, and Giovanni Crisostomo Javelli are the most important and influential (cf. Ruffinengo 2009).

Dominic of Flanders (1425–1479) was a leading member of the Dominican Order during the Renaissance. He studied in Paris and Bologna under the guidance of John Versor and Peter of Bergamo. Afterward, he taught for a long time in Bologna, Florence, and Pisa. Dominic of Flanders is the author of a very important commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* – *In duodecim libros Metaphysicae Aristotelis secundum expositionem eiusdem Angelici Doctoris* – first published in Venice in 1499 and then reprinted in Cologne in 1621 (Mahieu 1942; Marrone 2015 and 2016). In his commentary, the Dominican Friar deals extensively with the *quaestio de subiecto metaphysicae*, examining the different answers developed by his predecessors and contemporaries. The first opinion taken into account considers God and separate substances as the true subject of metaphysics. According to Dominic, however, this opinion is inadmissible since it entails a series of consequences that contradict the principles and the text of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Dominicus de Flandria 1621, pp. 7–9). The second opinion taken into account affirms indeed that the subject of metaphysics includes only substance insofar as it is substance. This opinion, however, presupposes as many contradictions: if one accepts it, one has to admit that many properties of being do not fall within the consideration of metaphysics. Like the first, this second opinion excessively narrows the scope of metaphysics (Dominicus de Flandria 1621, pp. 9–10).

Given these critical issues, all that remains is to assert that the subject of metaphysics is being *qua* being (*ens inquantum ens*). However, it is precisely by reference to this thesis, generally accepted during the Renaissance period that Dominic of Flanders distanced himself from his contemporaries. He denied that the being with which metaphysics deals is common to God and creatures. If one admits the thesis according to which science is nothing but an inquiry about the causes of its subject, one is obliged to affirm that the subject of metaphysics is not common to God and creatures. The self-evident reason for this impossibility is that God cannot have any cause. Moreover, according to Dominic of Flanders, if one assumes that being is common to God and creatures, there would be no argument to oppose the opinion that being as such can also include beings of reason. In his opinion, if one attributes a transcendental function to the concept of being, it becomes necessary to attribute to this concept the widest generality, consequently asserting the possibility that it also includes beings of reason (Dominicus de Flandria 1621, pp. 10–11).

Rising from these premises, the only admissible opinion is that the subject of metaphysics coincides with the categorial being, that is, the being as divided among the categories. Dominic of Flanders, accordingly, restricts the scope of metaphysics to finite beings only, thus expelling God from the domain of metaphysical science (Dominicus de Flandria 1621, pp. 11–14).

The thesis held by Dominic of Flanders qualifies as eccentric in the framework of Renaissance metaphysics. His position indeed remained a minority one. Almost all authors, even among the Dominicans and the Jesuits, affirmed without hesitation that the subject of metaphysics is being insofar as it is common to God and creatures. It is perhaps for this reason that the Flemish Dominican admitted the possibility of considering, albeit improperly and in a broad sense, the transcendental being as the adequate subject of metaphysics.

After taking into consideration the possibility that substance is the subject of metaphysics, Dominic of Flanders evoked a distinction that he originally referred to Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. In his view, it is indeed possible to

distinguish, concerning metaphysics, the most common subject (*subiectum communissimum*), the common subject (*subiectum commune*), and the special subject (*subiectum speciale*, that is, *subiectum adequationis* or *attributionis*). The most common subject of metaphysics is the transcendental being, which indifferently includes God and creatures. The common subject – that is, the adequate subject (*subiectum adequationis*) or the subject of attribution (*subiectum attributionis*) – is indeed the being that is divided into the ten categories. Finally, the special subject of metaphysical science is substance as such (Dominicus de Flandria 1621, p. 9).

However, this distinction is unable to make Dominic of Flanders' view equivocal. As already stated, he firmly believed that the proper subject of metaphysics (i.e., its *subiectum attributionis*) coincides with the categorial and finite being. The distinction that Dominic of Flanders formulates here seems therefore to have a threefold purpose: first, it represents an attempt to systematically organize the different accounts provided by his contemporaries for the question about the subject matter of metaphysics; second, it tries to reconcile the different claims that it was possible to find in the text itself of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; and third, it aims to legitimize Dominic of Flanders' opinion about a doctrinal framework which is at least ambiguous.

Moreover, the absence of a common interpretative framework is something evident within the Dominican Order. Domenic of Flanders' solution was soon denied, for example, by his brethren, Paolo Barbo and Giovanni Crisostomo Javelli. Paolo Barbo Soncinas (1458 ca. – 1495) entered the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) in 1472 and studied at the Dominican studium in Bologna. After 1485 he began his teaching career, which took him first to Milan and then back to Bologna (cf. Jindráček 2008, *passim* and in part. pp. 80–87). Among the writings of Paolo Barbo, central are undoubtedly his *Acutissime quaestiones metaphysicales*, published posthumously in Venice in 1498 (and then reprinted several times between 1505 and 1622). Concerning the determination of the subject matter of metaphysics, Paolo Barbo partakes the “ontological” interpretation developed

by Avicenna. In his view, metaphysical science is concerned with being as such, that is, being insofar as it includes God and creatures (cf. Jindráček 2008 and 2017; see also Ruffinengo 2009, pp. 150–153). Starting from the same principles and authorities taken into account by Dominic of Flanders, he reached the opposite conclusion. In his view, the proper subject matter of metaphysics is being as such, that is, being insofar as it includes not only categorial beings but also God and separate substances (Paulus de Soncino 1588, p. 16b). According to Paolo Barbo, metaphysics is concerned with the divine being as a part of its subject matter. Consequently, it considers God not only as a principle or a cause but also by reference to its partially knowable nature. In this same perspective, after all, Paolo Barbo interpreted some of Thomas Aquinas' main arguments. In his eyes, while always affirming the exceptionality of the divine being, Thomas Aquinas did not bring arguments that could justify the exclusion of God from the subject of metaphysics (Paulus de Soncino 1588, p. 17a).

From a strictly metaphysical perspective – which Paolo Barbo made his own – the divine being shares the most relevant characteristics of being as such, and it is for this reason that it can undoubtedly fall under its concept. The fact that the metaphysician can also qualify God as the principle or cause of the subject matter of metaphysical science does not exclude that metaphysics considers God as an inferior to the concept of being. A crucial consequence of this approach is that the transcendental nature of metaphysics neutralizes all causal links by reconnecting the diversity of its objects to the unity of the subject matter of metaphysical science. The analogical relationship existing between the divine being and the categorial being, understood in terms of causality and attribution, is placed within a unitary subject, which extrinsically guarantees the unity of metaphysical science. In this way, Paolo Barbo asserted without contradiction two seemingly conflicting theses: on the one hand, he affirmed the unity of metaphysics by grounding it on the unity of its subject matter; on the other hand, he interpreted this essential unity as analogical.

Duns Scotus's thought greatly influenced the theological and metaphysical debate. Moreover, the vocabulary and conceptuality that he developed quickly spread not only among his students and followers but also within the Dominican Order. Even more than in Paolo Barbo, in fact, Duns Scotus's influence is manifest in Giovanni Crisostomo Javelli (ca. 1470–ca. 1538). Having joined the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) in 1485, Javelli studied philosophy and theology in Bologna. After completing his theological and philosophical studies, he started an important career as a master. He began teaching in Bologna, Milan, Piacenza, and Cremona in 1507. Concerning metaphysics (cf. D'Ettore 2015), Javelli is the author of two important writings: the *Epitome in libros Metaphysicae Aristotelis*, published for the first time in 1531, and the *Quaestiones super duodecim Metaphysices Aristotelis libros ad mentem Aristotelis et sancti Thomae*, printed for the first time in 1534. In his *Quaestiones*, Javelli discusses the subject of metaphysics in the opening of the *Prologue*. Before declaring his view, the Dominican theologian evokes the most popular opinions between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. In this regard, Javelli distinguishes three main positions. According to the first of these positions, commonly attributed to Averroes, God and separate substances constitute the subject matter of metaphysics. While rejecting this position, however, Javelli points out that it does not coincide perfectly with what Averroes asserts in his commentaries. If it is true that the Commentator seems at times to legitimize a theological interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, it is undeniable that he often states that the object that ontology deals with is being *qua* being, and not, precisely, its causes or principles (Javelli 1555b, p. 2rv). Javelli then evokes Dominic of Flanders' opinion, according to which categorial or finite being is the subject matter of metaphysics. Javelli rejects this view by systematically responding to all the reasons provided by Dominic of Flanders (Javelli 1555b, pp. 2v–3r). Finally, after rejecting these arguments, he presents his position. In his opinion, the subject matter of metaphysics is “real being” insofar as it includes

God and creatures, the finite and the infinite, created and uncreated entities (cf. Ruffinengo 2009, pp. 160–164). Taking up this thesis, Javelli believes he is part of an interpretative tradition that incorporates authorities such as Averroes, Avicenna, Algazel, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus. In his mind, neither categorial being (which is divided by the ten categories) nor supertranscendental being (which also includes beings of reason) could constitute the subject matter of metaphysics. Unlike real being, indeed, a being of reason does not entail any unity which can allow it to be the true subject of a real science (Javelli 1555b, p. 3r sqq.).

The Jesuit Tradition

During the Renaissance, a significant part of the reflection on metaphysical issues was due to the contribution of some major Jesuit philosophers and theologians such as Benito Pereira, Pedro Fonseca, and Francisco Suárez. Each one in his way and with different levels of depth directed the history of metaphysics toward the ontological science that philosophers could acknowledge in seventeenth-century textbooks.

Born near Valencia, Benito Pereira (1535–1610) joined the Society of Jesus in 1552. After completing his first degree in Spain, he moved to Rome, where he achieved his studies and then taught grammar, rhetoric, theology, logic, and metaphysics (cf. Blum 2006). The work in which Pereira is particularly concerned with metaphysical issues is his *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principiis et affectionibus*, published for the first time in Rome in 1576 and then reprinted several times between 1579 and 1618 (Lamanna 2009, pp. 326–340).

In his *De communibus*, Pereira relates the question of the subject of metaphysics to the traditional enumeration of speculative sciences developed by Aristotle. Within the framework of this discussion, Pereira asserts that any science must deal with the principles, the properties, and, finally, the species of its subject. Starting from this general indication, the Spanish Jesuit affirms that the subject matter of metaphysics is being *qua* being, and distinguishes three parts in it: a first part that deals with the highest and noblest beings (God

and separate substances); a second part that deals with transcendental notions (one, true, good, act, and potency); and, finally, a last part that investigates the categories and the beings that belong to the categorial domain (Pereira 1576, pp. 13–14). In this complex framework, metaphysics is understood as a universal science in which converge, albeit diversely, beings that are different in nature and dignity. This does not mean, however, that metaphysics is not a unitary science. In any case, indeed, its unity is guaranteed by the fact that the inferiors of being refer to substance according to the traditional model of analogical attribution (*attributio ad unum*). In his *De communibus*, however, Pereira returns a second time to the question of the subject and the status of metaphysics, proposing a new explanatory model. This new version of his position presupposes three distinct but related statements. First statement – There is a science of being that deals with transcendentals, categories, and all parts of being. According to Pereira, this statement is unquestionable: if any of the particular sciences were to deal with being as metaphysics does, it would go beyond the limits imposed by its subject. It is necessary, therefore, to affirm the existence of a universal science of being entirely distinct from particular sciences. Second statement – This universal science should not deal with separate substances *per se*, understood as parts of being, but only, perhaps, insofar as they constitute the general principles and the universal causes of all beings. If the universal science were to deal with the species of being considered as such (*absolute*), it would cease to be a universal science and would fall into the fragmentary domain of particular sciences. Third statement – Starting from the previous assertions, it is necessary, according to Pereira, to postulate the existence of two distinct sciences: a first philosophy (*prima philosophia*) dealing with the transcendental notions and the most universal things (and perhaps with separate substances understood as causes or principles); and a metaphysical or theological science (*metaphysica/theologia*), which on the contrary deals with separate beings understood as the true subjects of the first science (Pereira 1576, pp. 14–16).

Although it is not without ambiguities and uncertainties, the idea that arises from Pereira's *De communibus* is quite clear. Metaphysics can preserve its unity only if it divides into two distinct sciences: a general science of being, which Pereira names *prima philosophia*, and a science of separate beings, whose name is instead metaphysics, theology, or divine science. After Pereira, as it is here evident, the structure of modern ontology is definitively well outlined.

In the same years in which Pereira wrote his masterpiece, another Jesuit, Pedro Fonseca, worked on what is perhaps the first attempt at systematic elaboration of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Having joined the Society of Jesus in 1548, Pedro Fonseca (1528–1599) studied at the University of Evora, where he later started his career as a teacher. His teaching then continued at the University of Coimbra (1555–1561), where he actively participated in the elaboration and drafting of the *Cursus conimbricensis*. Among Fonseca's most famous writings, there is also an impressive commentary on *Metaphysics* – *In libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae* –, published in four volumes between 1577 and 1612 (Fonseca 1577, 1589, 1604, 1612). Fonseca's commentary arises from an idea that was spreading in his day. Its purpose, in this regard, was primarily to quit the traditional form of commentary and to develop a systematic exposition of metaphysical issues. After providing the reader with the Greek text, the Latin translation, and a first literal explanation, Fonseca re-elaborates Aristotle's metaphysical teaching into self-sufficient questions. This original approach has an obvious consequence: the reader has no longer a simple explication of the texts, but a complex interpretative model that allows the reader to place Aristotle's teaching in the framework of a living debate (cf. Martins 2019).

Concerning the contents, Fonseca does not distance himself from the thesis commonly accepted by his predecessors and contemporaries. He states in fact that the subject matter of metaphysics is *ens inquantum ens*, that is, being insofar as it includes not only categorical entities and creatures but also God and separate substances (cf.

Martins 1982). Adopting this interpretation, Fonseca intentionally placed himself within a consistent tradition: authors such as Averroes, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, John Duns Scotus, and Paolo Barbo had indeed already developed the interpretation that he now supported (Fonseca 1577, pp. 497–498). Fonseca, however, not only roots his thesis in the opinions of his predecessors and contemporaries but also provides precise reasons and grounds to demonstrate its legitimacy. Fonseca's argumentation is a response to a classic objection. According to this objection, God cannot be a part of the subject of metaphysics for two essential reasons: first, because he shares nothing real with creatures; and, second, because he cannot be known *naturaliter lumine*. In Fonseca's view, these arguments are not able to exclude, as they would claim to do, the inclusion of God and separate substances in the domain of being *qua* being. According to the Portuguese Jesuit, God and some creatures share a series of passions and general properties (*unum, bonum, verum*) that can be demonstrated by resorting to the natural light of human reason. However limited, natural knowledge of God is, therefore, possible: nothing prevents the metaphysician from considering God, like creatures and with creatures, *sub ratione entis*. In Fonseca's reading, hence, metaphysics does not limit itself to considering God as a simple cause or a principle of being, but as a true part of its proper subject. Accordingly, metaphysics can consider God *absolute*, that is, separately and regardless of any causal link. If this were not the case, metaphysics would not differ from natural and moral philosophy, which instead respectively consider God as the first mover and the ultimate goal of action (Fonseca 1577, pp. 498–499). This does not mean, of course, that God does not exercise a causal function, but only that he exercises it without placing himself beyond being. Within the subject of metaphysics (*ens inquantum ens*), therefore, there is space for all the causal and analogical relationships that constitute the texture of being.

The same tendency to systematicity that characterizes Fonseca's approach appears again, in an

even more radical form, in the thought of Francisco Suárez (1548–1617). Like Fonseca, Suárez definitively abandoned the form of commentary to attempt a reorganization of metaphysical issues under the framework of a systematic elaboration. After entering the Society of Jesus in 1564, Suárez studied philosophy and theology in Salamanca between 1566 and 1570. During his teaching in Rome, Alcalà, and Salamanca, Suárez dealt with law, philosophy, theology, and metaphysics. In 1597 he published his *Disputationes metaphysicae*, an authentic masterpiece that deeply influenced the modern interpretation of metaphysics as ontology. In the history of the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Suárez represents a true point of no return. Even behind the contents, he renewed the method of metaphysics and developed an interpretative model that spread widely during the Modern Age. The Spanish Jesuit, therefore, proposes a systematic approach to metaphysics: to do this, he definitively abandons the form of commentary and reorganizes the entire conceptual matter covered by metaphysics. Suárez aimed to replace the multitude of commentaries on *Metaphysics* with a new synthesis that would provide the reader with a complete exposition of Aristotle's teaching and, at the same time, a detailed discussion of the most authoritative interpretations. Suárez then elaborates a real modern textbook, sufficient in itself to provide the reader (mainly the students of the colleges) with all the information necessary to achieve complete training in the field of metaphysics. Suárez's contribution, on the other hand, is not only concerned with the method, the form, and the style of exposition. The renewal process that he inaugurated also concerned the contents of metaphysical science. In the opening of his *Disputationes metaphysicae*, following a well-established tradition, Suárez ponders the subject of metaphysics. In the treatment of this fundamental issue, he proceeds as Fonseca did: he takes into account the most accredited opinions and, after discussion, he finally proposes his own solution. The Suarezian synthesis, however, is far-reaching both from a quantitative and a methodological point of view. From a quantitative point of view, Suárez

considers a large number of opinions with a mastery that was absent in Fonseca's commentary. From a methodological point of view, however, the reference to the opinions held by his antecedents and contemporaries has not a simple doxographic function: Suárez takes into account views supported by other commentators to show the reader in advance the legitimacy of the thesis that he will formulate in the end. In his inquiry about the *quaestio de subiecto metaphysicae*, Suárez discards the opinions that excessively widen or restrict the subject of metaphysics. Consequently, he refutes both the view that includes beings of reason and beings per accidens within the domain of real being, and the one which narrows the subject of metaphysics to God, to separate substances alone, to substance *tout court* or, finally, to categorial being (Suárez 1597, pp. 2–8; Suárez 1861, pp. 2–11). Suárez opposes these views with a thesis already widespread in his time, but he deeply renews it by clarifying the nature of the being with which metaphysics deals. According to the Jesuit theologian, the subject of metaphysics is being as “real being” (*ens inquantum ens reale*). This statement, according to the Spanish Jesuit, is generally accepted by philosophers and theologians such as Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Avicenna, Averroes, Alexander of Hales, Giles of Rome, John Duns Scotus, and Paolo Barbo Soncinas. Understood as a real being, the subject of metaphysics includes not only categorial or finite being but also God, separate substances, and real accidents (Suárez 1597, pp. 8–9; Suárez 1861, pp. 11–12). According to Suárez, consequently, metaphysics deals with the totality of being. It can do it, however, since the totality of being can constitute the proper object of a conceptual determination (*conceptus obiectivus entis*). The immediate object of metaphysical knowledge is, therefore, the concept that represents the *ratio entis* by abstracting it from the individual instances in which it subsists. In this sense, particular essences (material and immaterial ones) are undoubtedly included in the consideration of metaphysics, but metaphysics, for its part, understands them only by reference to the real being in which they agree

(cf. Darge 2014, *passim* and in part. pp. 98–100; Forlivesi 2006, *passim* and in part. pp. 576–584; on the unity of metaphysical science, cf. Heider 2009). In this view, the objective concept of being (*conceptus obiectivus entis*) is simply the principle by which the intellect conceives individual beings and essences as parts of a unified subject (Suárez 1597, pp. 48, 53–54; Suárez 1861, pp. 64–65 and 72–74). The *conceptus entis*, moreover, does not imply a generic identity, which is both real and numerical, but rather a formal and fundamental one. Particular beings, indeed, do not include a common entity in which they agree as in a *genus* or a *species*. What they imply is only a grounding principle, that is, an indeterminate *aliquid* by which they can share the same *ratio entis* (Suárez 1597, p. 55; Suárez 1861, p. 75).

In Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae*, the interpretation of the *realitas entis* in terms of possibility is then evident. According to Suárez, indeed, real being does not designate either the being-in-act or the being-in-potency, but that kind of (possible) being which is capable of receiving existence. From this doctrinal perspective, the "reality" of being consists precisely in this *aptitudo ad existendum*, which constitutes its primary sense. In Suárez's view, accordingly, real being is nothing but the possible. At the same time, however, it is self-evident that the possible itself should not be understood as the simple object of divine power, but rather as a particular item to which existence is not repugnant (Suárez 1597, p. 65; Suárez 1861, pp. 89–90). "Reality" is said of all real beings because of a possibility that belongs to them, notwithstanding the creative power of God. In other words, the possibility/reality of being coincides with the absence of contradiction (*non-repugnantia*) and with the true capacity to receive existential being as an accident (*aptitudo ad existendum*). On the one hand, therefore, ontology has here to do mainly with the possibility/reality of the possibles, which includes the existential being as a quasi-species. On the other hand, possibility is understood in such a way as to link the creative operation of God to the logical possibility of beings (Suárez 1597, pp. 64–67; Suárez 1861, pp. 89–91).

Now, it is more than self-evident that the advent of Suárez's thought introduced significant novelties within the history of metaphysics. The subordination of the *quaestio de subiecto metaphysicae* to the doctrine of *conceptus obiectivus*, the interpretation of being as a possible reality, and, finally, the understanding of reality in terms of possibility significantly widened the domain commonly assigned to metaphysics. From 1597, the year of publication of Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae*, almost no one substantially questioned the theoretical characterization that he imposed on metaphysics. Many were those who criticized Suárez on some points of detail, but no one dared to deprive metaphysics of the transcendental perspective that the Jesuit theologian himself impressed on it. The history of metaphysics in the Modern Age moves from Suárez's thought as well as from its main authority. Suárez introduces metaphysics into a conceptual-historical dimension in which it is no longer a question of interpreting Aristotle's teaching more or less faithfully, but of elaborating from the beginning a new science of being – a science to which modern authors will attribute, as is well known, the name of ontology.

Cross-References

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- Javelli, Giovanni Crisostomo
- Pereira, Benito
- Scotism
- Soncino, Paolo Barbo
- Suárez, Francisco
- Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy
- Transcendentals in the Renaissance
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Meteorology in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Meteorology was a central part of natural philosophy during the Renaissance. It largely followed an Aristotelian framework as established in medieval universities. During the Renaissance, in universities and beyond, scholars wrote hundreds of works based on Aristotle's *Meteorology* in both Latin and the vernacular. Inquiry was primarily causal in character, rather than predictive, although a few scholars sought to develop systemic observations that they hoped would lead to better forecasting. The field was based on the idea that meteorological phenomena were imperfect mixtures that resulted from the combinations, transformations, and motions of two exhalations that flowed through the air in the sublunary region and beneath the earth. Scholars gave much attention to explaining rare and extraordinary events, which some considered to be prodigies or signs of God's will. Many natural philosophers held that a number of their theories were provisional and probable, leading them to revise existing theories that did not conform to observed events. Changes in the field resulted from a broadening of ancient sources, new experiences, and experiments – including European voyages of discovery, Lutheran emphases on providence, and the growth of mineralogy and alchemy. There was great continuity between meteorology of the Renaissance and of the seventeenth century, although the emergence of heliocentric cosmology, new conceptions of air and void, and refinements in chemical theories led to general distancing from the Aristotelianism of the Renaissance.

Metaxoloulos

► Eugenikos, Ioannis

Introduction

During the Renaissance, meteorology was considered a philosophical field, forming part of natural philosophy. Consequently, meteorology was part of the arts curriculum in most Renaissance universities. Just as for many of the philosophical subjects taught at universities, courses on meteorology followed Aristotle's writings on the topic; and Aristotelian concepts formed its theoretical foundations.

As such, Renaissance meteorology does not neatly match modern definitions of the field. Most prominently, during the Renaissance, the topic was almost exclusively concerned with giving causal accounts, eschewing, for the most part, predictions and forecasting, which were mostly part of astrology (Jenks 1983). These causal accounts followed the Aristotelian understanding of four causes (material, efficient, formal, final) and emphasized the first two, namely, material and efficient causes. The emphasis on these two causes derived from the definition of most meteorological phenomena as being imperfect mixtures, meaning that they are composed of the four elements (earth, water, air, fire) but have not been sufficiently transformed into a new substance that possesses its own essence or substantial form. Consequently, meteorological phenomena, in contrast to living beings and their parts, were seen as imperfect and not in possession of their own intrinsic purposes, limiting final causes to being anthropomorphic, providential, or cosmic in nature. While Aristotle's *Meteorology* did not in fact discuss the final causes of meteorological phenomena (Wilson 2013, 102–4), some Renaissance commentators proposed their own. Nevertheless, discussions of purpose and ends were fewer and far briefer than considerations of the material and efficient causes of meteorological phenomena, especially in writings produced in Italian universities.

Another important way that the definition of Renaissance meteorology differs from modern conceptions of meteorology stems from its link to Aristotelian conceptions of the earth's place in the cosmos. According to Aristotelian cosmology, the earth rests in the center of the universe, with the stars and planets rotating in their orbs in

circular, infinite paths. The heavenly bodies, including the sun and moon, composed of ether or quintessence, are distinct from the bodies made up of the four elements that occupy the area below the moon. Unlike the perfect, static celestial matter, the sublunary elements constantly change and transform into each other. Premodern meteorology examined these sublunary elemental transformations. Thus, meteorology equated itself with the transient, episodic, and relatively disorderly sublunary world, while astronomy and cosmology were occupied with the more regular movements of stars and planets. Accordingly, many topics of Renaissance meteorology are not considered to be part of meteorology today. These include transformations of the elements beneath the earth, which produce earthquakes, hot springs, rivers, and even the formation of metals and stones.

The general explanatory schema for most meteorological phenomena depended on the interactions and motions of two exhalations, one vaporous, predominately water, and the other hot and smoky. The power of these exhalations corresponds to the elements that compose them. Vapor, when heated by the sun, breaks into smaller parts and rises. After the wet exhalation has reached a significant height, the cold air turns the misty vapor into a liquid and it falls, forming hail, snow, or rain, depending on the coldness of the surrounding air. Aristotle did not consider vapor to be of a single kind of species. Similarly, the dry exhalation, which was linked to smoke, fire, and wind, had a variety of subspecies. In general, the dry exhalation, fiery in nature, rises to the upper levels of air, where it at times bursts into flames, causing shooting stars, comets, and other fires in the sky. Most Renaissance natural philosophers understood that the motions of the dual exhalations resulted in an aerial region, lying between the surface of the earth and the moon's sphere, which was divided into three parts. The lower part, near the earth's surface, contained warm air, heated by the reflections of celestial heat from the earth; the middle region, where clouds typically reside, was cold, while the highest region, near the moon's sphere, was hot, because of its proximity to the moving sun and the presence of the hot, dry exhalations that tend toward that region.

Another important distinction between pre-modern and modern meteorology is that some phenomena now considered to take place beyond the moon were considered to be sublunary and therefore meteorological. The most prominent examples are comets, which were largely held to be sublunary, conforming with their seemingly irregular periodicity. Aristotle also held that the Milky Way was also sublunary, although this idea was rejected already in antiquity as well as during the Middle Ages, by eminent Aristotelian scholars including John Philoponus (c. 490–570) and Albertus Magnus (c. 1200–1280). Meteors, shooting stars, and similar phenomena, believed to be the result of fires burning in the upper region of the air, close to the sphere of the moon, also held important places in Renaissance meteorology.

Finally, following Aristotle, Renaissance works on meteorology distinguished between optical meteorological phenomena and those composed of imperfect mixtures. The latter were actual bodies and resulted in phenomena that include weather events, such as rain, hail, snow, and rare fires and lights in the sky, like comets and meteors. In contrast, the former were not bodies per se but were the product of light's interaction with meteorological conditions, such as fog or mist. The most commonly discussed example of optical meteorology is the rainbow; other examples include haloes around the sun and moon and the appearance of double suns. Because optics was a discipline that mixed mathematical and physical accounts, Aristotle gave a mathematical explanation of rainbows as did many Renaissance scholars (Boyer 1959).

Medieval Heritage

Like other parts of natural philosophy, meteorology during the Renaissance shared great continuity with the medieval scholastic tradition. Numerous professors at medieval universities lectured on Aristotle's *Meteorology*, and their commentaries and quaestiones are preserved in hundreds if not thousands of manuscripts. The subject was far from marginal to the intellectual activities of medieval universities. Many of

the most famed medieval scholars, including Albertus Magnus (c. 1200–1280), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), and Jean Buridan (1295–1353), wrote on meteorology. In some universities, such as Prague, the important annual ceremonial quodlibetal disputations included meteorological subjects (Kocánová 2017). Meteorological writings produced in Renaissance universities frequently maintained the forms of writing developed in the Middle Ages, such as commentaries that expounded on each passage of Aristotle's text and groups of *quaestiones* that investigated specific issues. Renaissance authors regularly cited their medieval predecessors. In particular works by Averroes (1126–1198), Albertus Magnus, and Peter of Auvergne (c. 1240–1304) were influential. Many concepts, such as perfect and imperfect mixtures and substantial forms, that originated in medieval scholastic discussions were crucial to Renaissance meteorological thought. Moreover, the Latin translation of Aristotle's *Meteorology* made by William of Moerbeke (c. 1215–1286) remained standard throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, despite the proliferation of a number of new Renaissance translations.

Continuity between medieval and Renaissance meteorological writings in universities is extremely evident, as are links between medieval and Renaissance writings in vernacular languages. Mahieu Le Vilain translated Aristotle's *Meteorology* into French in the 1270s, an early example of the vernacularization of natural philosophical knowledge (Ducos 1998). In the fourteenth century, an anonymous translation of passages from Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas appeared in the Florentine dialect (Librandi 1995). Similarly, in the sixteenth century, there were numerous vernacular meteorological writings, especially in Italian, based on Aristotle's writings (Martin 2011, 60–79; Verardi 2012; Dal Prete 2014; Ray 2015, 77–88, 104–6; Dal Prete 2016; Gilson 2016). The widespread translation and composition of meteorological writings in vernacular languages reflect the belief in the utility of the subject for agriculture and for traveling merchants (Refini 2013) in addition to the broad attractiveness of explanations of many

marvelous natural phenomena and its relevance to natural disasters.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Like so many areas of Renaissance culture, discussions of meteorology distinguished themselves from the medieval tradition by their attempts to recover and replicate the ancient world. For meteorology, as for many fields influenced by humanism, this attempt entailed the recognition of a greater number of ancient writings as well as a deeper engagement with them. The recovery and translation of ancient commentaries on Aristotle by Alexander of Aphrodisias (c. 2nd and third century AD), Olympiodorus (c. 500–570), and Philoponus affected the content of university lectures and commentaries during the sixteenth century. Some Renaissance commentators, such as Agostino Nifo (c. 1470–1538), prized the ancient commentators because their temporal proximity to Aristotle conferred authority and their discussions in ancient Greek clarified Aristotle’s actual words. As a result, Nifo’s commentary on the *Meteorology* cites Alexander of Aphrodisias and the meaning of Greek words after nearly every passage. Indeed, a number of the most important Renaissance commentators on the *Meteorology*, including Francesco Vimercato (1512–1571) and Giacomo Zabarella (1533–1589), were more than capable philologists, who used their reading, or in the case of Vimercato his own translation, of Aristotle in the original language to inform their views. Alternatively, the famed and controversial professor at Padua and Bologna, Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), seemingly remained content with his interpretations that did not incorporate these newly gained linguistic skills.

Beyond Aristotle’s writings, a range of ancient texts became more prominent sources of authority during the sixteenth century. In the 1530s and 1540s, Jakob Ziegler (c. 1470–1549) and Jakob Millich (1501–1559) wrote commentaries on the second book of Pliny’s *Natural History* in an attempt to find a replacement for Aristotle. Seneca’s *Natural Questions* offered Pomponazzi

material for thinking about final causes and the moral significance of natural disasters (Martin 2011, 45–47). For some, Stoicism bolstered the view that weather is providential in nature. Vimercato quoted long passages Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* about earthquakes and thunder in his commentary on the *Meteorology*. Even if he did not accept Epicurean atomism, Lucretius’s literary and cultural importance was relevant to expounding Aristotle (Vimercato 1556, 248–249, 273–281). Later, in baroque humanist fashion, Giambattista della Porta (c. 1535–1615) peppered his *De aeris transmutationibus* (*On the transmutations of the air*) with citations and discussions of vast number of ancient authors, finding the writings of Homer, Cicero, Aratus, Virgil, Theophrastus, Plutarch, Pliny, Hesiod, among others necessary for his exposition on the nature of air and its transformations (Della Porta 1617).

Beyond the innovations in textual investigations of meteorology, an important practice for Renaissance natural philosophy, a number of scholars presented new conceptual understandings of meteorology, which at times deviated from Aristotle’s texts or the medieval interpretative tradition. Since Aristotle scarcely mentioned teleology in the *Meteorology*, few medieval works engaged deeply with the topic. Taking up the subject, Pietro Pomponazzi expressed doubt that final causes could be discovered by the human intellect if they indeed exist (Martin 2010). After the Lutheran Reformation, however, scholars, particularly Lutherans based in German lands, such as Caspar Peucer (1525–1602), Markus Frytsche, Johannes Garcaeus (1530–1574), Wolfgang Meurer (1513–1585), and Michel Stanhuf (d. 1608), exhaustively catalogued the presumed final causes of meteorology, understanding the field as a “science of signs,” by which God’s will could be interpreted (Vermij 2010). The introduction of final causes in this manner reflected the reforms that Philip Melancthon (1497–1560) wished to introduce to natural philosophy. In particular, he held that such studies should focus on the providential character of nature. Accordingly, these Lutheran natural philosophers held that through meteorology, students could discover the world’s harmony. This

harmony entailed God's indicating future events through rare meteorological events that were considered prodigies that connect the human with the divine. According to this view, God sends earthquakes and lightning to punish and frighten sinners, while the rainbow announces God's pleasure and goodwill toward his creation. Moreover, cataloguing the historical record, as Frytsche and Garcaeus did, for example, was thought to demonstrate the relation between the appearance of comets and subsequent plagues, droughts, and political revolutions (Martin 2011, 51–59).

While Lutheran philosophers emphasized providence and teleology, other inquiries sought to revise understandings of the material and efficient causes. Many Aristotelian natural philosophers held that understandings of meteorology were not complete. The episodic, imperfect, and often distant character of many meteorological phenomena rendered human accounts of them provisional and probable (in the rhetorical sense). Agostino Nifo, for example, argued that meteorological theories should “save the appearances” a term that also astronomers used to describe their limited theories. Precise, certain, and complete knowledge, therefore, was considered elusive. Accordingly, Aristotle's views should not be taken as the final word on the subject. Pomponazzi argued that in many passages, he put forth only rhetorical arguments that lack the certainty of syllogistic demonstration (Martin 2009).

The indeterminate epistemological status of Aristotelian meteorology meant that many of the theories were open to revision, prompting a number of sixteenth-century natural philosophers to use experience and experiments as means to modify existing theories. Experiential considerations of meteorology were widespread during the early modern period. Renaissance natural philosophers considered experience to be a broad term that encompassed others' experiences taken from books, firsthand experiences, contrived testing and assaying, and regular observation. All such categories of experience applied to meteorology. The French intellectual Jean Bodin (1529–1496) is a superb example of a practitioner of bookish methods of experience. His *Universae naturae*

theatrum performed the functions of a commonplace book, collecting the theories and experiences of both ancient authorities, whether sacred or profane, and accounts found in more recent works of history (Blair 1992).

The Holy Roman Empire witnessed the growth, if not the beginning, of systematic record-keeping of meteorological observations that were used for ephemerides (Pfister et al. 1999). In Italy, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) reported tracking the weather for 130 days, learning that its changes did not seem to correspond to what astrologers supposedly taught they should be (Pico della Mirandola 1557, 446–447). Consequently, he advocated using the natural, non-celestial forms of divination of the weather possessed by farmers, sailors, and physicians in order to develop empirical knowledge that could lead to accurate forecasting (Mandosio 2013).

In keeping with Aristotelian theories of knowledge that promoted the role of experience in the formation of knowledge, Renaissance natural philosophers used personal experiences to revise Aristotelian accounts of meteorology, even principles that were fundamental to the field. Giacomo Zabarella, a professor at Padova, recounted his experience on a mountain outside of the city on a day when it rained on the plains below but not on the mountain top. This experience led him to conclude that the clouds were lower than the peak and to doubt whether the Aristotelian conception of the middle, nebulous region of air was in fact true (Schmitt 1969). Simone Porzio (1487–1554), who taught at Pisa, used his knowledge of the soil of the Neapolitan region and borrowed from the emerging field of mineralogy to theorize that the bituminous character of the earth was at times ignited by the hot and dry subterranean exhalation. Such a conflagration in turn was responsible for a massive eruption in the *Campi Flegrei* in 1538 (Cocco 2012, 50–51; Martin 2011, 93–95). Similarly, after Ferrara was jolted by earthquakes from 1570 to 1571, Lucio Maggio, a gentleman courtier, observed that the terrain of Ferrara, which he concluded was exceptionally porous, and recent hot and dry weather combined to make the Po Valley susceptible to tremors created by dry winds coursing through

veins underneath the earth. Thus, he concluded that the recent cataclysm conformed to the dictates of natural philosophy, even if at first appearance it did not fit with Aristotle's descriptions of earthquakes occurring close to rough seas and simultaneously with eclipses and the appearance of thin clouds (Martin 2011, 60–79).

The observations and experiences of European travelers to the Americans and beyond prompted revisions to Aristotelian and other classical theories about meteorology and climate. Aristotle had hypothesized that a band of land around the equator, called the torrid zone, was too hot for human habitation, just as the areas near the poles were too cold. Applying this theory, Augustine maintained that there were no people who lived in the southern hemisphere, because the descendants of Adam and Eve would not have been able to travel there by passing through the scalding heat of this equatorial torrid zone. As European voyages of exploration frequently encountered highly populous regions in what had been considered uninhabitable, natural philosophers quickly rejected the concept, replacing it with more nuanced understandings of climate based on a multitude of factors, including winds and terrain, rather than simply latitude (Martin 2006; White 2015). Encounters with oceanic trade winds, not described by ancient sources, offered another avenue for innovation. Josè de Acosta (1539–1600), a Jesuit who traveled to the Americans, devised a new theory for the prevailing winds of the Atlantic, by which they were created by the pulling motions of the celestial bodies coupled with the expansion of vapors in the tropics caused by the excessive heat found there (White 2015, 552–553).

While the dual exhalations enjoyed an extremely long life, natural philosophers debated what they were composed of, importing Paracelsian ideas and alchemical theories to explain the explosiveness of both aerial and subterranean phenomena. Investigations into balneology, by Michele Savonarola (c. 1384–1462), and into mineralogy more generally by Georg Agricola (1494–1555) and Vannoccio Biringuccio (c. 1480–1539) help spread the idea that sulfur, salniter, and bitumen were the material causes of

fiery meteorological phenomena. Moreover, the effects of gun powder, harquebuses, canons, pyrotechnics, and siege mines became artificial analogies for lightning and earthquakes. Giambattista della Porta argued that there was a bituminous region of the air close to the moon, and thunder is created by volatile fuel closed up in clouds igniting, in an identical manner to artificially created explosions in cannons. Thus, new experiences and trials with the artificial altered perceptions of the natural (Martin 2011, 88–98). Della Porta also described experiments that he conducted with an inverted glass that contained water and when he heated allowed the expansion of the water to be visualized. These experiments followed upon the explanation of the Venetian mathematician Giovanni Battista Benedetti (1530–1590) that wind derived from the periodic rarefaction and condensation of air, caused by the sun's heat. Considerations such as these, although not offering a complete alternative to the Aristotelian framework, nonetheless influenced seventeenth-century figures, such as Cornelis Drebbel, a Dutch projector and courtier, who built a weatherglass that he thought replicated the transformations and interactions of air, water, and fire, demonstrating the links between microcosm and macrocosm (Borrelli 2008; Keller 2010)

Legacy and Influence

Seventeenth-century meteorology reveals strong continuities with its Renaissance predecessors in addition to stark differences. Perhaps most obvious is the emergence of chemical understandings of air that sought to investigate its composition and in particular the role of aerial niter particles in the formation of meteorological phenomena. Paracelsian alchemy grew in prominence during the first decades of the seventeenth century, and even scholars at universities, such as Daniel Sennert (1572–1637), a professor of medicine at Wittenberg, combined Aristotelian and alchemical corpuscularism in his explanations of meteorology. The Jesuit scholar Niccolò Cabeo (1586–1650) used an original reading of Aristotle's *Meteorology* as a basis for a chemical

and experimental philosophy that eschewed metaphysics. In the following generation, as alchemical ideas spread and transformed, John Mayow (1641–1679), a member of the Royal Society, was one of the greatest proponents of the presence of aerial niter. His views were sympathetically considered by other members of the Royal Society, who conducted experiments that attempted to identify the characteristics of these nitrous particles (Debus 1977, 492–499).

Renaissance approaches to meteorology resonated in other ways in the seventeenth century. *Les Météores* of René Descartes (1596–1650) mirrored the topics treated in the Coimbra commentary on Aristotle (Gilson 1951). Like his Aristotelian predecessors, Descartes employed the exhalations, and some of his accounts are directly parallel to Aristotle, such as his account of cycles of evaporation and rain (Wilson 2013, 162–163). Descartes hoped that his accounts would reduce the amount of stupefying wonder rare meteorological provoked. While Descartes naturalized the atmospheric prodigies that formed the subject of discussion in many sixteenth-century writings, these extraordinary events remained central to many scholars during the seventeenth century who reported, described, and explained exceptional and rare meteorological phenomena (Jankovic 2000).

The persistence of the employment of exhalations as the main cause of meteorological phenomena and of inquiries into the unusual and wondrous continued during the seventeenth century, despite the eventual rejection of the cosmology that underpinned Aristotelian meteorology. As heliocentric models displaced Ptolemaic cosmology, comets were no longer considered part of the subject. Moreover, the rejection of traditional cosmology and the idea of the immutability of the heavens allowed some, such as Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), to apply meteorological sciences to celestial matters (Boner 2006). Additionally, while exhalations and vapors remained part of meteorological theory, conceptions of the air deviated from traditional accounts, as the atmosphere was increasingly seen as composed of a mix of particles moving about in a void, and air pressure was increasingly used to explain variations in winds and weather.

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Microcosm and Macrocosm in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The idea of a microcosm-macrocosm correspondence is fundamental in the Renaissance interpretation of the world. To reach a better

understanding of Renaissance natural philosophy, but also astrology, medicine, and in general the strong relation between many different sciences, is important to know how microcosm, plants, minerals, and animals; and macrocosm, planets, and stars, are related. In medicine, in particular, the human body is considered a microcosm in its own right, and knowing the correspondence between its parts and macrocosm was a fundamental requirement for the healing process.

Introduction

The idea of a correspondence between the celestial world and the elements on Earth is really important in Renaissance philosophy. This kind of relation is traced between two ordered and complex systems, two *cosmoi*, one very big and one very small, a *Macrocosm* and a *Microcosm*, and between the similarities that can be found in them. Usually, Earth is considered a microcosm related to the rest of the universe, the macrocosm; but in many cases also man can be depicted as a microcosm in its own right, connected with the rest of the universe, including the Earth.

Heritage and Continuity with the Tradition

The Chaldean-Babylonians were probably the first to formulate this idea: the skies, the stars, and planets, their position and their movements are strictly connected to the movements and the life of everything on Earth. However, the most important connection for the Chaldeans was that between the movements of the stars and the planets and the human life; that's why they are conventionally known as the fathers of astrology.

Indeed, the idea behind astrology is a correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm: the life of the universe is mirrored in the life of the human being, an independent microcosm to all effects that gathers in itself the influences from stars and planets. Starting from this way of conceiving the universe, the study of celestial bodies' movements is the most relevant tool to reach a better understanding of the life and the destinies of

men. From the Chaldeans' age to the Middle age, during the whole Renaissance and much of the Modern age, astrology was acknowledged as one of the most important sciences and that's because of the idea of a precise correspondence between the life of the universe and the life of the microcosm human being (Titley 1937).

Another important science is rooted in the macrocosm/microcosm correspondence: alchemy. In the Emerald Tablet, attributed to the mythical founder of alchemy, Hermes Trismegistus, is written: "What is below resembles that which is above." "Below" is the sublunary world, saying it with Aristotelian words, and "above" is the celestial world. This is one of the fundamental teachings for the alchemist apprentice, because he had to understand the connections that go across the whole universe before being able to dominate its elements. Alchemy's origins are more various and composed than those of astrology: the technical and scientific notions enshrined by Egyptian priests for centuries have been enriched with elements from Greek and Hebrew culture. It is through the biblical book of *Genesis* that the idea of macrocosm-microcosm correspondence became acceptable and then important in the Christian Western culture: the universe is mirrored in terrestrial nature just like the image of God is mirrored in the human being and it is because of the development of God's project in the process of creation (Partington 1961).

Impact and Legacy

During the Renaissance, the idea of macrocosm-microcosm correspondence became even more important. Philosophy of Nature in the Renaissance is different from that inherited from Aristotle because a clear and unbridgeable distinction cannot always be found between the celestial and sublunar worlds. For a Renaissance philosopher, the key to the secrets of Nature and the dominion over it lies in the connections that bond together earth and sky, in the laws that regulate both. The ability to see the analogy between what is big and what is small is fundamental for the astrologer, for the alchemist, but also for the physician, and that is one of the reasons why, in the Renaissance, it was necessary to be a good philosopher to be an effective scientist, in every field of

science. To properly understand and profit from, say, the healing powers of a plant, the physician had to know which was the relationship of the plant to a certain planet or star, and also the relationship between the same planet or star and a part of the human body. The physician could only then connect properly the plant to the human body's part.

The invention of the telescope at the beginning of 1600 has been one of the most important scientific inventions of the Modern Age. It changed radically the relationship between the macrocosm and its observer and was fundamental to reaching a better and more detailed understanding of it. The same can be said for the later invention of the microscope. For the scholars of the Renaissance and the Modern Age, a more detailed knowledge of both the macrocosm and the microcosm was necessary to understand the entire world. The invention of the telescope and the microscope was a great help for this type of Nature researchers but also a consequence of their way of thinking (Turner 1985).

The medical philosophy of Theophrastus Paracelsus (1493–1541) is an important step in the development of modern medicine. One of the main ideas behind it is the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm. Paracelsus conceived an idea of medicine, as opposed to iatrochemist Galenic medicine, considered a new type of alchemy with the aim of preparing medicines, and above all, a different way of thinking of man. Man is a copy of the macrocosm: in his body, each part of the entire universe is represented somehow. Speaking in these terms, the human being turns out to be the culmination of all creation and the most important and complete subject of study. Thus, it should be known how minerals grow in order to understand how illnesses spread into the human body and how to face them; and also the correspondence between stars and planets, minerals; plants and human body's parts to combine ingredients in a medicine effectively. According to Paracelsus, medicine is one of the most important sciences, because its aim is the health of the human race but also because it collects and unites in itself the knowledge of the other sciences, studying the human being, mirror of the whole universe (Pagel 1982).

The idea of macrocosm-microcosm correspondence in the interpretation and analysis of the

world pervades Renaissance philosophy and is behind the interdisciplinarity that characterizes the Renaissance philosophers: to fully understand an interconnected world, a philosopher is required who may analyze every field of science, and who can interpret the interconnections that run through every item of the universe.

Cross-References

- [Alchemy](#)
- [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism](#)
- [Telescope in Renaissance Science](#)

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mi-Modena, Yehudah Aryeh

- [Modena, Leon](#)

Minturno, Antonio

Born: Traetto 1500?

Died: 1573?

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Abstract

Poet, critic, and theorist, Minturno had a prominent role in his own times (and one that was certainly greater than that attributed

to him in the last few centuries) in the birth and consolidation of poetic thought in the second half of the sixteenth century. His work is characterized by a particular interest in the vernacular tradition, posited in the direct line of descent from the Latin tradition; a highlight of the doctrinal dimension of poetic writing, constantly brought back to the philosophical and speculative field; a distancing from the chivalric genre (the romance), aimed at basing the structure of epic poetry on Aristotelian principles; and a constant recourse to historical perspective in literary inquiry, in particular to the entire trajectory of vernacular poetry from its origins, from the Provençal writers and the Sicilian school up to Dante. Such passages in M.'s reflections constitute a prefiguring of the poetic thought of Torquato Tasso, who most likely read and reflected on his most important treatise, the *Arte poetica* (Venice, 1564), during his formative period in Padua.

Alternate Names

[Sebastiani, Antonio](#)

Biography

Antonio Sebastiani (named Minturno) was probably born in Traetto (now Minturno) in 1500. He studied with Agostino Nifo and then he created a literary academy in Naples. In 1559, he published his *De poeta*, and in the same year, he was appointed bishop of Ugento. Between 1562 and 1563, while he was ending his *Arte poetica*, he attended Tridentine Council works. He probably died in 1570–1574 in Crotone.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Minturno claims the converging of the Classical and Christian tradition on the moral terrain: he attributes to the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* a speculative depth that starts from Agostino, Cicerone, and Boezio.

He supports Petrarch's position to the point of assigning him the key player role (*auctoritas*) of the heroic style, alongside Homer and Virgil. By starting from *Tr. Cup.* III, 79–80, he criticizes Ariosto's approach: the epic poems should be centered on a story with a single subject, with episodes aimed to confer magnificence to the narration. Much more: he elevates the sonnet to the greatness of the heroic poem's sublime style. In his opinion, Petrarch could even teach how to achieve Aristotelian dictates of mimesis in epic narration, as he is the poet who writes the story "non qual avvenne, ma come possibil fu" (*Arte poetica*, p. 34).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Thanks to Petrarch's literary prominence, Minturno releases the vernacular language from the subordination to Latin. He regrets the decay and ruin in which vernacular tradition has fallen and aspires to discover in the new vernacular language all the rhetorical expedients useful to touch and to delight.

We can say that Minturno wrote the first systematic treatise about vernacular lyric as he attributed to poetry agnoseological unequivocal power by defining the poetry itself as "arte d'Iddio, con la qual'egli non pur tutto creò [...]. Ma insegnò ancora, come le cose divine in voce spiegar si dovessero" (*Arte poetica*, p. 2).

Impact and Legacy

Beginning with his first work, (the *Dialogo dell'Accademia*), lost during the plague of Naples, but able to be reconstructed in part through his friend Giovanni Andrea Gesualdo's contemporaneous commentary on the *Canzoniere* and the *Trionfi*, Minturno centered his reflection on the pivotal Petrarchan work, read as a shining example of the vernacular as a vehicle of the "prima sapienza [...] che fu la poesia." Here the need to highlight his intellectual weight (*dottrina e ingegno, dottrina e scienza, filosofia*) and the rhetorical wisdom of poetic writing, in the didactic as

well as literary sense, emerges forcefully. Reconstructing (with the aid of Gesualdo's commentary) certain sections of the *Accademia* means retracing the outline of the later *Arte poetica* and illuminating the precocity and grasp of many of the insights developed within it, dating back to the years very close to the publication of the *Prose della volgar lingua*. Thus, the old Minturnian dialogue comes to represent the evidence of a particular interest in vernacular poetry, present in his work at least at the same time as (if not before) the interest in Latin literature, and to map out the framework within which several poetic solutions that were destined to become crucial in the course of the sixteenth century developed, not least of these the converging of the Classical tradition and Christianity on the moral terrain.

From the dedicatory epistle of the *Arte poetica*, written by Minturno, then bishop of Ugento, while he was taking part in the Council of Trent in September 1563, the author's intention to allow scriptural references and Aristotelian principles (the marvels narrated in verse belong to the realm of the possible), and the Classical and Judeo-Christian traditions to interact, is apparent. This approach transpires from the first book, dedicated to epic poetry, which systematically consolidates Petrarch's position to the point of assigning him the role of *auctoritas* of the heroic style, alongside Homer and Virgil. This explains why, from the first argument, Minturno draws on the lively reference of *Triumphus cupidinis* III 79–80 to criticize the vice of the "romances," of chivalric poetry in the Ariostian manner, lost in numerous plots by the lack of aim at a single ending: "Laonde quelle favole sono pessime riputate; nelle quali né verisimilmente, né per necessità veruna intraposte molte cose veggiamo. Quali communemente sono queste, che *di sogni empion le carte*".

According to Minturno's vision – which can be said to be shared by Tassian theoretical reflections – the epic poem should be centered on a story with a single subject, but should nevertheless lack none of the richness and spirit of the episodes (as long as they are in the service of the plot), which are aimed at conferring magnificence and wonder on the narration without disturbing

the proportion, dignity, and appropriate size of the work. To this is tied the need to specify – again following in the wake of Aristotle’s *Poetics* III, 2 – the difference between the “Poet,” who writes the story “non qual avvenne, ma come possibil fu” and the “Historian,” who “narra le cose come sono avvenute,” according to a distinction aimed at pointing out the philosophical nature of poetry and destined to lay the foundations of Tasso’s great theoretical framework.

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Mir Damad, Muhammad Bāqir

Born: 1561, Astarābād

Died: 1631, Najaf

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Abstract

Mīr Dāmād was a leading theologian and jurist in early seventeenth century Persia, a context characterized by the staunch Shī‘ite cultural policy of the Ṣafavid state. As one of the most prominent Iranian philosophers in the early modern era, he drew on the heritage of Avicenna and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī but was not satisfied with merely appending to it by way of commentary. Mīr Dāmād is especially known for his original analysis of the concepts of time and eternity, as well as for having held the controversial doctrine of the metaphysical primacy of essence as opposed to existence. He was a mentor and close friend of Mullā Ṣadrā, whose fame would later outshine that of the older colleague.

Alternate Names

al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Astarābādī, Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir ibn Mīr Shams; the epithet “Dāmād” (“son-in-law”) derives from his father who was married to a daughter of the prominent cleric ‘Alī Karakī.

Biography

Born in Astarābād in 1561 as the son of a notable jurist who had married a daughter of ‘Alī Karakī, one of the most powerful clerics of the early Ṣafavid era, Mīr Dāmād received his early education in Mashhad from his maternal uncle ‘Abd al-‘Ālī ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn and Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Abī al-Ḥasan ‘Āmilī, the son of Zayn al-Dīn ‘Āmilī, another highly venerated scholar and a martyr of the Shī‘ite cause. Thus, Mīr Dāmād was most intimately related by both birth and educational lineage to the highest elite of the Shī‘ite scholars of his time. Around the turn of the 1570s, he moved to Isfahan where he studied with Fakhr al-Dīn Astarābādī, a student of the Shīrāzī philosopher Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī. In the Ṣafavid capital, Mīr Dāmād rose to prominence as one of the city’s leading scholars in theology, jurisprudence, and philosophy. In spite of criticism from more traditionalistically inclined jurisprudents, he remained intimately affiliated to the Ṣafavid court throughout his life, serving in the very prominent position of *shaykh al-Islām* from 1621 until his death in 1631 in Najaf where he was also buried. In addition to his scholarly activities, Mīr Dāmād was well known for his passion and gift for mystically inclined poetry.

About 50 works survive of Mīr Dāmād’s *oeuvre*. Philosophically the most important of these is the *Qabasāt ḥaqq al-yaqīn fī ḥudūth al-‘ālam*, completed during the last decade of his life. The book builds heavily on the Avicennian tradition (for instance, the novel notion of *ḥudūth dahrī* is introduced as a natural outcome of the close analysis of Avicennian texts) but with a strong *ishrāqī* bent. Notoriously obscure, the work has been the subject of several commentaries. Two earlier and incomplete works that develop the theme of time and eternity are *al-Ṣirāt al-mustaqīm* and *al-Ufuq al-mubīn*, while the respective positions of Aristotle and Plato on the question are assessed in a Fārābīan fashion in *Risāla fī madhhab Arisṭātālīs*. Questions related to God and His creation are also dealt with in shorter treatises, such as *Taqwīm al-īmān fī mabḥath wājib al-wujūd wa taqdīsīhi wa tamjīdīhi*, *al-‘Imādāt wa al-tashrīfāt fī mas’ala ḥudūth al-‘ālam wa qidamihi*, and

al-Īqāḍāt fī khalq al-a‘māl wa af‘āl al-‘ibād. Mīr Dāmād’s critical evaluation of Avicennian philosophy, especially the theory of emanation, from a Suhrawardīan point of view is shown in *Jadhavāt va mavāqīt*, a treatise composed in Persian at the behest of the Ṣafavid Shāh ‘Abbās I. Apart from these and other original treatises, he also composed commentaries on selected philosophical and theological texts, including works by Avicenna, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and Sa‘d ibn Manṣūr ibn Kammūna. Apart from philosophy, Mīr Dāmād wrote profusely in jurisprudence, a field in which he represented the strongly rationalistic school championed by his grandfather ‘Alī Karakī, as clearly evidenced in his jurisprudential *magnum opus al-Sab‘al-shadād* as well as in minor treatises. He also wrote commentaries on Shī‘ite *ahādīth* and biographies. Under the pseudonym “Ishrāq,” Mīr Dāmād composed a volume of mystical poetry that is collected in a *mathnawī* entitled *Mashriq al-anwār*.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In philosophy, Mīr Dāmād’s ambition was to develop a “Yemenite” philosophy that would replace the old Greek paradigm which was notoriously difficult to reconcile with such basic Qur’ānic doctrines as the creation *ex nihilo*. This new approach was to be developed by combining aspects from existing intellectual paradigms – most notably the mainstream of Avicennian Peripateticism, the Sufi doctrine of the school of Ibn ‘Arabī, and the *ishrāqī* doctrine initiated by Suhrawardī – and critically evaluating them in the light of reason and mystically revealed intuition. This is a procedure that shows considerable similarities with Suhrawardī’s description of his chosen method in the preface to the *Hikma al-ishrāq*, and it is nowhere manifested as clearly as in Mīr Dāmād’s famous attempt at solving the problem of how to reconcile God’s immutable eternity with His allegedly temporal act of creating the world.

One of the more obvious sore points in interpreting the monotheistic concept of creation in terms derived from Greek philosophy is due to

the philosophical doctrine of the eternity of the world. Of course, since the philosophers conceded that God alone exists necessarily, they too held that He was ontologically necessary for the world's existence, and this allowed them to interpret the revealed account of creation as a metaphorical version of the same truth. However, there is little room for any kind of free or voluntary act of creation in a conception of the Creator as a mere necessary condition of an eternal world. Thus, the philosophical doctrine could easily be seen to compromise the monotheistically central idea of God's freedom and omnipotence, that is, the idea that had He so preferred, God could just as well have left the world uncreated, or have created it different in kind or at a different instant. An extended theological critique of the philosophers' doctrine along these lines had of course been voiced already by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, but prior to Mīr Dāmād this particular tension between philosophy and religion seems not to have provided enough of an impact for philosophers to revise their concept of creation into one more readily reconciled with revelation.

Mīr Dāmād's solution takes its cue from a close analysis of the Avicennian distinction between the different senses of coming to be (*ḥudūth*). By means of an array of texts, he characterizes these senses as, first, coming to be in the sense that an essence owes its existence to another (*ḥudūth dhātī*); second, coming to be in the sense that an entity has privation or nonexistence as its metaphysical counterpart that needs to be overcome in order that the entity can exist (*ḥudūth dahrī*); and, third, coming to be in a given moment of time that is preceded by other moments of time (*ḥudūth zamānī*). He then explicates these three types of coming to be as entailing three hierarchically related realms of existence that are distinct in their relation to motion and the measure of motion, that is, time. The highest of these realms is that of eternity (*sarmad*), and it is a type of atemporality that is unique to the absolute immovability of God. Below eternity and ontologically dependent on it, Mīr Dāmād posits another atemporal realm which he calls "perpetuity" (*dahr*) and which consists of the separate intellects and the

essences of worldly things considered as static atemporal entities. Finally, the essences existing in the level of perpetuity are found to unfold in time (*zamān*), the realm of physical entities that are subject to motion and thereby exist in time. Conceived in this way, the realm of perpetuity can be said to bring temporal entities to be and to govern their development in time according to the Neoplatonic principles of origination (*mabda'*) and return (*ma'ād*), albeit not absolutely, for the perpetual entities themselves owe their existence to the sole eternal existent, God.

Under a schematic description, Mīr Dāmād's threefold analysis may appear as strikingly derivative, spiced perhaps with a slightly renewed terminology. Indeed, it can duly be claimed that his description of existence within and without time is a rephrasing of the Neoplatonic theory of the three hypostases, with *sarmad* corresponding to the One, *dahr* to the Intellect, and *zamān* to the level of Soul. Mīr Dāmād's novelty, if there is one, is in his sustained attempt to conceive of the relation between the two superior levels in terms of genuine *ḥudūth*, instead of mere logical dependence. Despite the fact that in themselves and in their relation to God, the perpetual intellects and essences are atemporal and unchanging, Mīr Dāmād insists that they *have been* created and *have come* to be from Him, only this coming to be is *dahrī* and not situated in time.

The question then is, of course, how the central notion *ḥudūth dahrī* is to be understood. The notion may not be entirely devoid of conceptual mysticism, for Mīr Dāmād himself openly admits that this pivot of his attempted solution is particularly prone to escape the grasp of our reason. It is clear, however, that he is trying to substantiate a distinction between two senses of eternal existence, one proper to God, the other to the world, as well as to elucidate the relation between the two ways in which we can consider the world, namely, as a collection of entities that are *in* time (in the sense of existing in the past, present, and future tenses) and as an atemporal whole that contains, but is itself not in, time. Indeed, it has been suggested that Mīr Dāmād's *dahr* should be understood as something akin to McTaggart's famous concept of the B-series of time, that is,

as a whole containing all the created entities in their various relations to each other, or the line of the entire “world history” considered from an atemporal perspective (Rahman 1980). Understood in this way, the realm of *dahr* can mediate between the absolute atemporality of God and the temporality of worldly entities precisely by combining the two aspects – atemporality in its own mode of existence and temporality in its internal structure which then gets unfolded in time. On such a basis, Mīr Dāmād can say that the initial problem of the eternity of the world vanishes once we disequivocate the two senses of “eternal”: the world is “eternal” in the sense that the flow of time has neither beginning nor end, but this does not mitigate the fact that the world as an atemporal whole in the realm of *dahr*, as the very principle of all temporal existence, can only exist because God has undone its nonexistence by creating it.

It has been noted that Mīr Dāmād’s solution to the problem of the world’s eternity is intimately connected with other traditional questions, such as those of God’s knowledge of particular things and of the relation between His omniscience and future contingency. Frustratingly, though, Mīr Dāmād leaves many of these implications undeveloped, a fact which may in part explain why the theory was not received with as high acclaim as Mullā Ṣadrā’s alternative theory of the God-world relationship founded on an analysis of existence.

Apart from his analysis of time and eternity, Mīr Dāmād is famous (or notorious) for having held the metaphysical theory of “primacy of essence” (*aṣāla al-wujūd*). This theory, heavily criticized by Mullā Ṣadrā, is motivated by the Avicennian distinction between the essence and existence of contingent entities. Mīr Dāmād argues that although we can make a distinction in analysis between these two constituents of the contingent thing, they cannot be really separated from each other. But since the contingent thing is evidently a unitary whole, and since it is inconceivable that both concepts – that is, “essence” and “existence” – are mere fictions introduced in the analysis, one of the two constituents must be primary and independent of the analysis. According to Mīr Dāmād, who here seems to be following Suhrawardī’s critical discussion of the

concept of existence in the *Ḥikma al-ishrāq*, the primary constituent is essence. It is interesting, however, that he differs from Suhrawardī in the closely related debate over Platonic forms, holding that the forms are not eternal self-subsistent entities but rather structural principles of creation subsisting in God’s mind.

Impact and Legacy

Venerated as the “Third Teacher” (after Aristotle and al-Fārābī), Mīr Dāmād wielded considerable influence in subsequent Persian philosophy through his students, the most important of whom was without doubt Mullā Ṣadrā. Although Ṣadrā departs from his mentor in a number of key questions and would later overshadow him in renown, this was not always the case, and for some time Mīr Dāmād’s philosophy was considered superior to that of his younger colleague. Especially the *Qabasāt* was favored by commentators, such as Mīr Dāmād’s students Sayyid Aḥmad ‘Alawī ‘Āmilī and Mullā Shamsā Gīlānī, not least because of the notorious difficulty of the text. His works, especially *al-Ufuq al-mubīn*, were also widely studied in India.

Cross-References

- [Mullā Ṣadrā](#)
- [Philosophy in Safavid Persia](#)

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Mirandolano, Antonio

- [Bernardi, Antonio](#)

Mirandulanus, Antonius

- [Bernardi, Antonio](#)

Miscellany

- [Commonplace Book](#)

Modena, Leon

Born: 1571, Venice

Died: 1648, Venice

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Abstract

In early modern Hebrew usage, the verb *leha-atik* means to translate, to copy, or to transfer. Leon Modena used the verb regularly to describe his activities, which represented the Renaissance ideal of *translatio studiorum*, i.e., the transfer of culture across both time, and space and also among various groups. Through out his life and work, Modena used his position at the center of the Venetian Empire to transfer Jewish culture between Jewish centers in Italy, elsewhere in eastern and western Europe, and the Ottoman Empire; from Greek, Latin, Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim culture to Jews; and from Jewish tradition to Christians, including major scholars in Venice and abroad, who in turn incorporated his work into their Latin works. Modena also transformed Jewish culture as he engaged in critiques of tradition and current practice, created new vehicles of Jewish cultural creativity, reclaimed the past and made it accessible, and developed methods of conveying Jewish culture to Christians and to Jews of all levels of education. Modena was neither typical of Renaissance rabbis nor was he unique, but he was talented and prolific.

Alternative Names

[mi-Modena](#), [Yehudah Aryeh](#); [Mutinensis](#), [Leonis](#); [da Modena](#), [Leone](#)

Biography

Modena’s life is highly documented. He wrote an autobiography, the first Hebrew autobiography

(*Hayyei yehudah*), unpublished in its entirety until the twentieth century and recently translated into English and Italian with introductions and notes (Modena 1984b, 1988; Min-Halleviyyim 1985). In it, he presents a synoptic survey and assessment of his life and work, which provides valuable insights into the development of his self-consciousness in the context of his family, the Jewish community, and the Christian circles of early modern Venice. Further documentation is to be found in his letters, rabbinic responsa, and introductions to poems, as well as in the writings of his contemporaries and in the Venetian archives (Modena 1907, 1984a). Born in Venice, Modena spent his youth in smaller towns in the region, where he was a precocious student of traditional rabbinic learning and of secular subjects, such as poetry, letter writing, music, dancing, Latin, and Italian. Because of increasing restrictions placed on ordination, Modena had to wait until he was almost forty before he could function as a rabbi, cantor, and community official in Venice. Until then, he created his own opportunities for income and creative expression by serving as a teacher, preacher, correspondent, translator, publisher, editor, commentator, polemicist, and poet. His life was also marred by many family tragedies, including the loss of most of his children, physical illness, depression, poverty, and gambling, for which, unfortunately, he is often the best known.

Heritage

Modena's work involved the preservation of the Jewish heritage by creating a rupture within it. Such was his legacy of innovation, although modern scholars, not fully aware of his own context but only of theirs, mistook his originality for subversion. Modena was fully fluent in all of traditional biblical and rabbinic literature and able to produce vigorous, sometimes witty, Hebrew prose and poetry that integrated all stages in the development of Hebrew. He edited commentaries (*Mikra gedolah*), anthologies (*Bet yehudah*), and indices (*Bet lehem yehudah*) of classic rabbinic materials.

He also published prayers (*Tzori lanefesh* and *Tefilat yesharim*). His sermons, which he modeled on classical forms of rhetoric and recent developments in Christian preaching, attracted hundreds each week, including Jews and Christians (*Midbar yehudah*). Modena became a respected rabbinic authority in Venice and beyond whose decisions were frequently solicited on major issues as well as on minor points of law (*Ziknei yehudah*) (Modena 1956). However, only small traces of his work appear in Jewish canonical texts, such as his commentary, *Haboneh*, in the rabbinic compendium *Ein Yaakov* and his liturgical prayer *Yom zeh yehi mishkal* in the prayer book. He taught advanced Jewish students and, to his chagrin, children, as well as Christians. His educational innovations included using memory techniques (*Lev ha-aryeh*), a dialogue on gambling (*Sur mera*), and riddles and magic formulas (*Sod yesharim*).

Several works stand out as a contribution to *translatio studiorum*. In his Hebrew translation of the popular collection of classical ethical wisdom, *Fior di virtù*, he removed the blatant Christian passages, or at least dropped the Christian attributions, and added biblical and rabbinic sayings (*Tzemah tzadik*). He translated classical works, sections of the Italian romance classic *Orlando furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto into Hebrew and the Passover Haggadah into Italian. Because the Church did not allow the vernacular translation of the Bible, Modena produced grammars and parallel vocabulary lists of Hebrew and Italian that followed the order of the biblical text (*Galut yehudah*), which he later expanded with rabbinic vocabulary lists (*Pi aryeh*). Indeed, Modena's turn to the earliest levels of Hebrew texts and Hebrew grammar represented a return to the bedrock of Hebrew intertextuality. His program for renewal of the classics is what his contemporaries would designate *renovatio*.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Modena further developed Jewish culture in a way that attracted Jews and Christians but aroused the ire of some traditional Jews, whom he called

mithasedim, i.e., those who present themselves as pious. His innovations, actually imitations of the surrounding culture, included Hebrew art music and a method for publishing the words and the notes, which run in opposite directions, an accommodation of Jewish innovation with secular culture (*Shir hashirim asher lishlomo*). He established a Jewish musical academy in Venice, which was invited to join a Christian musical academy (Roth 1928). Modena's involvement with contemporaneous theater included writing and producing plays on biblical themes (*L'Ester*). His rabbinic writings included traditional approaches to controversial practices within the Jewish community, such as going about bareheaded, playing tennis on the Sabbath, using an hourglass to time sermons, and gambling. His Hebrew poetry drew on the religious traditions of synagogue poetry, on secular themes in medieval Hebrew literature, and on contemporaneous Italian verse styles and themes, such as wine, food, and panegyric. He also wrote Italian poetry and made a major contribution to the *traditio studiorum* with his *Kinah shemorah* or *Chi nasce muor*, a macaronic poem that translates itself because it reads equally in Hebrew or Italian (Modena 1932).

Impact and Legacy

Although most of the books he published during his lifetime have been republished, they remained ephemeral, despite their significance for understanding his contribution to the transfer of culture in the Renaissance. Modena's major works remained in manuscript, so while they were known among antiquarians and bibliophiles, it was not until the nineteenth century that these works began to appear in print. Modena's major unpublished works deal with defining and defending Jewish tradition from three challenges to it. He saw the arrival of a new wave of Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah, especially Lurianic Kabbalah from Safed in Palestine to Italy, and the use to which Christians put it to convert Jews, as a threat to Jewish tradition.

Kabbalah literally means tradition, so Modena's writings against Kabbalah and transmigration of souls dealt with the question of what constituted the true tradition of Judaism. To defend rabbinic tradition and authority, he invoked the seminal Jewish philosophers of the middle ages, such as Saadia and Maimonides, and he used historical criticism to challenge the legitimacy of kabbalistic tradition (*Ari nohem*, *Magen veherev*, and *Ben david*) (Modena 1929, 1960). Nevertheless, as much as he opposed Lurianic Kabbalah, he himself engaged with kabbalists, Jewish and Christian, and wrote, taught, and preached kabbalistic-inspired materials.

Another challenge to rabbinic legitimacy came from crypto-Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, especially those in the growing Sephardic diaspora in the European port cities. Their challenges reflect the breakdown of traditional Judaism influenced by the anti-Jewish Catholic environment and by the disruption of rabbinic authority under the Inquisition. Modena copied two Hebrew manuscripts challenging rabbinic authority, each of which also contains a counter-polemic in a defense of rabbinic Judaism (*Magen vetzinah* and *Kol sakhal – Sha-agat Aryeh*) (Modena 1852, 1856). A major aspect of understanding Modena's attitude to rabbinic Judaism involves the controversial question of whether he was the author of the tracts or of the defenses, or of both, or of neither, highlighting his role in transmitting defense of rabbinic authority as well as a critique of it.

Christianity continued to pose a challenge to the legitimacy of Judaism and the presence of Jews. In his responses, Modena engaged in the usual apologetics and polemics to vindicate Judaism, but his innovations included conveying a nuanced understanding of Judaism to Christians and of Christianity to Jews (Ancona 1963–1964; Roth 1929, 1951–1952; Sonne 1948). On the one hand, he wrote *Historia de riti Hebraici*, the first systematic vernacular presentation of Judaism for the reading public by a Jew. The *Riti* was republished many times and translated from Italian into many European languages as well as Yiddish and Hebrew for Jews.

On the other hand, he referred to Jesus as a good man (*uomo da bene*). Modena's relationships with Christians, which included teaching, speaking, exchanging books, writing poems, corresponding, and debating, brought him into contact with members of the major intellectual circles of Europe, especially those involved with the *accademie*, i.e., intellectual societies that emerged as part of the international Republic of Letters. These interactions introduced him to the growing skeptical movement in Europe, and his writings and his commonplace books include references to Galileo and Cesare Cremonini, among others. The thinking of these circles is reflected in his writings about Aristotle, the immortality of the soul, the eternality of the world, heliocentrism, and *ragion di stato* as he engaged in the transfer of culture between early modern Jews and Christians, between ancients and his contemporaries, and between the ghetto and Europe. While interacting with Christians and Jewish dissenters beyond the ghetto, as well as inside, he was able to contribute to a meaningful exchange of culture while at the same time remain a staunch defender of Judaism, a paradoxical relationship of imitation and competition.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Bible, Editions, and Translations in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Dialogue](#)
- ▶ [Hebrew into Latin Translations in Renaissance Italy](#)
- ▶ [Heliocentrism](#)
- ▶ [Immortality of the Soul, Renaissance Problem of](#)
- ▶ [Kabbalah, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Maimonideanism in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Memory in the Renaissance, Art of](#)
- ▶ [Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Theaters, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Translatio studiorum](#)

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Molati

- [Moletti, Giuseppe](#)

Moleta

- [Moletti, Giuseppe](#)

Moleti

- [Moletti, Giuseppe](#)

Moletius, Josephus

- [Moletti, Giuseppe](#)

Moleto, Giuseppe

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- [Moletti, Giuseppe](#)

Moletti, Giuseppe

Born: 1 May 1531, Messina

Died: 25 March 1588, Padua

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Abstract

Giuseppe Moletti was a nobleman, born in Messina, Sicily, in 1531. He was a renowned mathematician, cosmographer, and geographer during his lifetime and is best known for his

Dialogo intorno alla Meccanica (Dialogue on Mechanics) (1576). He lived in Venice (1560–1570) practicing medicine, was the tutor of the Duke of Mantua Guglielmo Gonzaga's son for 7 years (1570–1577), and, finally, until his death, he held the Chair of Mathematics at the University of Padua (1577–1588), following Pietro Catena and preceding Galileo Galilei. During his time in Padua, Moletti was connected with many of the major scholars of his time and was a pivotal figure in the transformation of Aristotelian mechanics into a mathematical science in the generation before Galileo Galilei. He also compiled *Ephemerides* (astronomic tables) and was appointed, by the Senate of Venice and Pope Gregory XIII, to be one of the reformers of the new ecclesiastical calendar. He died in Padua in 1588 and was buried in the Church of Saint Francis, close to the University.

Alternate Names

Moletto, Gioseppe; Moletto, Giuseppe; Moletius, Josephus; Molati; Moleta; Moleti

Biography

Giuseppe Moletti was born in Messina, in 1531, into a fallen noble family. He studied at the Collegio of the Society of Jesus in Messina, where he was a student of Francesco Maurolico. Before 1560, he left Sicily for Padua, where he probably received his first academic degree studying with Pietro Catena and Francesco Barozzi. After a brief stay in Verona, where he taught as a private geometry and astronomy tutor, he moved to Venice, where he practiced as a doctor and devoted his time to teaching and researching. During this time in Venice, he published his first works on geography, astronomy and geometry. In 1561, he published for the first time, as an appendix to Girolmo Ruscelli's Italian translation of Ptolemy's *Geography*, his *Discorso universale . . . nel qual son raccolti e dichiarati tutti i termini*

e tutte le regole appartenenti alla Geografia. In 1562, he published a new edition of W. Pirkheimer's Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Geography*, dedicated to the Cardinal Alvise Cornaro (Corner). In 1563 he began the publication of the *Ephemerides* (astronomic tables), written in Italian vernacular and compiled until 1580. All three works were published in Venice by Vincenzo Valgrisi. A Latin edition of his *Ephemerides*, instead, covering the years from 1564 to 1584, was published in Venice by Francesco Francischio. The Italian version of the *Ephemerides* was introduced by a long dedication to Giovanni Battista Fagnano and Nicolò Primo (two of Moletti's friends) in which Moletti presented his understanding of Astronomy as divided into proper Astronomy (the physical phenomena) and Astrology (the effects on the Earth and its inhabitants) (see Dollo 1988; Favino 2011; Ferrari 1943; Nappo and Noto 2002).

After recovering from a serious disease, in 1570, Moletti moved to Mantua, where he served as a tutor of the Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga's son for 7 years. Here, in 1576, he started composing *Dialogo intorno alla Meccanica* (Dialogue on Mechanics), the work he is best known for. It was a praise of the science of mechanics written in vernacular and addressed to a non-academic audience with the purpose of legitimizing it as a proper Science. The *Dialogue* is divided into 2 days. On the first day, Moletti discusses the fundamentals of Mechanics. Grounding his discourse on Archytas' (Pseudo-Aristotle's) *Quaestiones mechanicae*, Moletti tries to determine the geometrical principles of Aristotelian mechanics. On the second day, he tries to extend Mechanics to the realm of Natural Philosophy. Elaborating on Aristotle's *De motu animalium*, Moletti tries to explain all motions through the analysis of their forces and resistances, and discusses the speed and acceleration of falling bodies anticipating some of Galileo Galilei's future experiments on the same topic. The *Dialogue* was left unfinished when, in 1577, Moletti left the Gonzaga court to move to Padua, where the Republic of Venice offered him the Chair of Mathematics at the University of Padua, left vacant by

the death of Pietro Catena. Moletti held the position until his death in 1588 (see Favaro 1894; Favino 2011; Laird 1986, 1987, 2000; Lohr 1978).

During his time in Padua, Moletti was connected with many of the major scholars of his time. He was a close friend of the humanist Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, host of a circle of humanists from all over Europe, including the young Galileo Galilei. He was a pivotal figure in the formation of the new science of Mechanics in Italy and his unfinished *Mechanics* offers a perfect look at the transformation of Aristotelian mechanics into a mathematical science in the generation before Galileo. Appointed by the Senate of Venice and by Pope Gregory XIII, Moletti also worked towards the reform of the ecclesiastical calendar publishing the treatise *De corrigendo ecclesiastico calendario* as an appendix to his astronomical tables (*Tabulae Gregorianae*). He calculated his *Tabulae* using the Copernican system and argued in favor of using the real movements of the stars to calculate the calendar, but the commission, in the end, preferred to use the traditional way (see Laird 1986; Carugo 1984; Coyne 1983; Favaro 1894; Favino 2011; Rose 1976; Tomasini 1630, 1654; Venturi 1818).

His manuscripts and the documents from the University of Padua, today preserved at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, demonstrate the extent of his interests. He taught courses on Euclid's *Elements* and on Aristotle's *Mechanics*, on the sphere, optics, perspective, cosmography, geography, anemography, and hydrography. He was also a prolific writer, though many of his works remain unpublished. His unpublished notes contain commentaries on Euclid's *Elements*, Archimedes' *Sphere* and *Cylinder*, Alhazen's *Optics*, Sacrobosco's *Tractatus de Sphaera*, Archytas' (Pseudo-Aristotles') *Mechanika* and Copernicus' *De revolutionibus* (see Padadopoli 1726; Rivolta 1933; Tomasini 1630, 1654).

Moletti died in Padua, in 1588, while he was still teaching at the University of Padua and was buried in the Church of Saint Francis, close to the University. His position, teaching Mathematics at the University of Padua, was filled by Galileo Galilei.

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Molina, Luis de

Born: September 1535

Died: 12 October 1600

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Abstract

Luis de Molina, S.J., was a Spanish Jesuit philosopher-theologian who was a prominent figure in the second scholasticism that flourished in the Iberian Peninsula in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Born in Cuenca in 1535, Molina eventually studied at some of the most prominent universities in Spain: Salamanca and Alcalá. He is perhaps most famous for his *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione Concordia*, a work that sought to reconcile human freedom with divine grace and foreknowledge. The work was fiercely contested by a number of theologians, mostly Dominicans, who accused its Jesuit author of Pelagianism. The dispute played into the *de Auxiliis* controversy that was only settled through papal intervention. In addition to his work on grace and freedom, Molina also authored a commentary on the prima pars of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* as well as a vast work devoted to law and moral theology, the *De iustitia et iure*. Molina died in Madrid in 1600 before the latter work could be completed.

Biography

Luis de Molina, S.J. (September 1535, Cuenca–12 October 1600, Madrid), was a Jesuit

philosopher-theologian who is most famous for his role in the fierce *de Auxiliis* controversy that raged over issues concerning the relationship between grace, human freedom, and divine foreknowledge. He was born in Cuenca, located in central Spain, in September 1535 to Diego de Orejón y Muela Hidalgo and Doña Ana García de Molina (Solana 1940, 401). As a youth, Molina began his studies in Cuenca, where he studied Latin for 4 years, but in 1551 he continued his education at the University of Salamanca, where he studied law (Kaufmann and Aichele 2014, xiv). Molina remained in Salamanca for only about 1 year before moving to Alcalá where he studied logic (*ibid.*).

While studying the logical *Summulae* that were an element of the curriculum at Alcalá, Molina answered a call to religious life (Solana 1940, 401). Aged only 13 years, on 10 August 1553 the future Spanish theologian joined the fledgling Society of Jesus, which had just been founded in 1540 (Kaufmann and Aichele 2014, xiv). Molina left Spain for Coimbra by foot and begged along the way as would be expected of a young man for whom religious poverty would be a way of life (Solana 1940, 401). Molina continued his studies as a novice at the University of Coimbra, where he studied philosophy between 1554 and 1558 (Kaufmann and Aichele 2014, xv). There is some disagreement about whom Molina may have studied under at Coimbra; some hold that he had as his teacher none other than Pedro da Fonseca, the “Portuguese Aristotle” (Solana 1940, 401), while others deny this and insist that Molina had Sebastian Morales as his mentor (Kaufmann and Aichele 2014, xv). Whether it was Fonseca, Morales, or even Ignatius Martins (*ibid.*), what cannot be doubted is the outlook of Molina's philosophical education which would have been thoroughly Aristotelian. He was at Coimbra, after all, whose association with the Conimbricenses, commentaries devoted to almost the entire *corpus Aristotelicum* – ranging from logic to the philosophy of nature, metaphysics, and ethics – is legendary. Molina completed his philosophical formation in 1558 and immediately began his theological studies. At last, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1561 (*ibid.*, xv).

While still in the midst of his theological studies, Molina would, from time to time, teach philosophy at Coimbra, a responsibility that was formalized as a professorship there between 1563 and 1567 (ibid.).

Meanwhile, Cardinal Infante Don Enrique, who would later become the king of Portugal, was busy establishing a university in Évora located in south-central Portugal. As part of Cardinal Enrique's plans were to promote Portuguese interests within the Catholic Church and draw the Jesuits deeper into Portugal, in 1559, he transferred control of the University of Évora to the Society of Jesus (ibid.). Later, Enrique petitioned the Society of Jesus to send Molina as a professor, which summons Molina who answered and accepted a position teaching theology at the University of Évora from 1568 until his retirement in 1583 (ibid.). So successful was Molina's tenure at the university that he eventually attained the title "Doctor of Évora" (Solana 1940, 402). Though most of his philosophical and theological texts had been written during his career at Évora, it was not until his retirement from teaching that Molina was able to seek their formal publication (Kaufmann and Aichele 2014, xvi), a task that was beset with difficulties and controversy. He published his *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis* first in Lisbon in 1588 followed by a second edition which responded to several critiques in Antwerp in 1595. In 1592 Molina published his commentary on the first part of Thomas's *Summa theologiae* in Cuenca. Finally, between 1593 and (posthumously) 1613, he published his *De iustitia et iure* (ibid.). A disagreement with the chancellor of the University of Évora sometime between 1584 and 1586 prompted Molina's departure and return to Lisbon, where he continued to work on his publications (ibid.). In 1591 Molina returned to Spain and once again took up residence in his native Cuenca; here, he was able to bring to publication, as noted above, several volumes of his *De iustitia et iure*, a second edition of the *Concordia*, and his *Commentaria in primam divi Thomae partem* (ibid.). Finally, in 1600 he was to teach moral theology at the Colegio Imperial de Madrid, but shortly after

taking up his appointment, the Jesuit died on 12 October 1600 (Solana 1940, 402).

Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis

Perhaps one of the most fiercely contested and studied works of all time (Freddoso 1988, viii; Solana 1940, 402), Molina's work on human freedom and divine grace, known often simply as the *Concordia*, unfolds in seven parts mainly as a commentary on several key articles from the *prima pars* of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* – more specifically q. 14, aa. 8, 13; q. 19, q. 6; q. 22, aa. 1–4; q. 23, aa. 1–5 – as well as a series of disputed questions that follow. The first part of the *Concordia* raises questions on the power of free choice; the second part discusses God's concurrence; the third part addresses the assistance of divine grace; the fourth part takes up the vexing question of divine foreknowledge and is the locus of Molina's discussions on middle knowledge; the fifth part takes up the divine will; the sixth part wrestles with providence; and the final part deals with predestination and reprobation (Freddoso 1988, x). Though commentaries on the *Summa* were a standard academic practice of Iberian scholasticism, Molina's work was no mere commentary and it was opposed from the very beginning by those who took Thomas Aquinas as their philosophical and theological standard: the Dominicans. Be that as it may, if Molina's work set off a massive conflagration that consumed some of the brightest intellects in the Catholic Church – principally among the members of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) and of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) – it is because conditions for such a firestorm had already been set in place not only with Lutheran and Calvinist interventions on the subjects of grace, freedom, and predestination but also with controversies surrounding Jesuit teachings on grace in Louvain between Michael Baius and the Jesuit Leonard Lessius. The Council of Trent had already addressed doctrines concerning justification in reacting to Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism. But, as Pope Paul V noted in an address to the legate of King Philip III, the Council of Trent, though it affirmed that human freedom can assent or dissent

from the assistance of divine grace, does not explain exactly “how grace works” (Denzinger 2012).

Molina intended to provide this explanation of just “how grace works” with the *Concordia*. But despite its irenic title and purpose, it succeeded only in pitting Dominicans – following the banner of Domingo Báñez who pushed the “Thomist” account in the fray – against Jesuits, who sought to exonerate their confrere from the charges of heresy laid at his feet. At the time of the publication of the first edition of the *Concordia* – 1588 – the Society of Jesus, having been established less than 50 years earlier, was relatively young and it was no surprise that accusations of theological novelty should be hurled at Molina’s teaching. Difficulties began as soon as Molina attempted to seek approval for the publication of his manuscript. Having received the approval of his Jesuit superiors for its publication, Molina next had to seek permission from the Portuguese Inquisition, which handed the manuscript over to their censor, the Dominican Bartolomé Ferreira (Solana 1940, 402). From Ferreira the Dominicans learned of some of the claims made in the *Concordia* and judged them to contain significant errors and tried to have their Dominican confrere in the Inquisition prohibit the volume’s publication. Ferreira, however, was of a different mind and permitted the publication of the *Concordia*, which went to press in Lisbon in 1588 and was even dedicated to the Archduke Cardinal Albert of Austria who was the governor of Lusitania and chief inquisitor (ibid., 403). The Dominicans, however, appealed to Cardinal Albert himself to halt the publication of the work until an investigation could be made into whether the *Concordia* maintained opinions that the Spanish Inquisition had prohibited from being taught in the schools. Molina’s own communications to Cardinal Albert and assurances of orthodoxy disarmed the situation, and publication of the volume proceeded without obstacle (ibid.).

Even with the *Concordia*’s publication, the matter was far from settled and questions about Molina’s orthodoxy were raised by the Dominicans. The Spanish Inquisition was forced to enter the controversy, but the situation got so out of hand that it required an intervention by the pope himself, Clement VIII, to restore a relative peace

(ibid., 403). In November 1597, the pope convened the *Congregatio de Auxiliis* – a commission established in Rome to examine the theological doctrines in question so that clarity could be attained and, along with it, finally some resolution to the ongoing dispute – which convened on 2 January 1598 (Vansteenberghe 1929, col. 2154). Fundamentally at issue was the question of how human freedom could be preserved while recognizing that divine grace is the cause of any meritorious action whereby one’s salvation could be attained. Complicating the matter further was the issue of how divine foreknowledge, which surely encompasses one’s future free contingent choices, is compatible with freedom, which the latter, as far as disputants in the matter were concerned, is firmly established scripturally. As history recounts, Molina’s effort to give each aspect of dilemma its own due generated his notion of divine “middle knowledge” (*scientia media*), that is to say, the knowledge that God has of future contingents (*futuribilia*).

For the Dominicans as well as the Jesuits, grace was absolutely necessary for man’s justification. But the Dominicans were adamant in prioritizing God’s grace above all such that it functions as a kind of cause of human freedom, that is to say, grace operates with a kind of “physical predetermination” (*praedeterminatio physica*) in bringing about a certain free action (Denzinger 2012). To the Jesuits, however, the Dominican position appeared Calvinistic insofar as it seemed to undermine and even negate human freedom. Molina sought to reconcile the two (grace and freedom), which he did on the basis of his larger metaphysical vision of the causal relationship between God and creation. God is an absolutely necessary being who is the source of all being. What is more, God creates, not out of any necessity but freely, giving being to creatures that are themselves entirely contingent. Creation’s contingency does not eviscerate its own efficacy and ability to act, for, in producing a creature, God thereby gives creatures their own proper natures through which not only do they have being but also through which they exercise their own proper agency or causal efficacy (*Concordia*, II, d. 25–28). One might say, then, that in exercising its own causal efficacy, the

creature imitates in a particular way the absolute and universal causality that God exercises.

For Molina, then, both God and creatures are real – the former necessary and the latter contingent – and both communicate their being causally, God as a universal cause and creatures as particular causes. Though their causation can be distinguished, they cannot be separated entirely for the reason that no creature can exercise its own causality without the simultaneous sustaining causality of God. Molina describes God's causal role in creation as a kind of *concursum generalis* (ibid., I, q. 14, a. 13). Yet, creaturely secondary causality has its own nature and logic such that the effects stemming from secondary causes receive their own nature and the powers to act attendant upon that nature, not immediately from God, but from their immediate particular, secondary causes (ibid., IV, d. 47, 11–12). So, for example, two human parents act with their own causal efficacy that stems from the various orders of causality proper to their natures in begetting offspring and communicate their own human nature to their offspring. God's general *concursum* is of course operative throughout the parents' begetting their child insofar as the parents would have no reality whereby to exercise their causal efficacy if God did not sustain them in being. Nevertheless, the nature the child (effect) has stems immediately from the parents' nature itself. What is more, any defect within a secondary cause can also have an impact on its effects. Parents with congenital defects, for example, can pass hereditary diseases on to their children. In this case, just as God was not the immediate cause of the effect brought about through secondary causality, He likewise is not the immediate cause of any defect which might result from secondary causation. In this latter case, Molina explains that God's causal efficacy is always "sufficient" even if not always "efficacious" (Freddoso 1988, 38–42).

What distinguishes Molina from his Báñezian Thomist opponents, however, is what constitutes the nature of the difference between "sufficient" and "efficacious" grace in the area of moral action. When it comes to free secondary causes, their actions, when considered from the perspective of divine providence, are either intended by God or

merely permitted by God. God concurs with the moral (or immoral) actions that free secondary causes produce in the sense described above, and any immoral action perpetrated by free creatures, like any creaturely defect, is traceable immediately not to God but to the moral agent itself. Now, when it comes to humans, given the Christian doctrine of original sin and the fall of human nature, there is an inclination toward evil actions, yet one can overcome that inclination with, and only with, the assistance of divine grace, especially as mediated through the merits of Christ's death and resurrection. Nevertheless, because humans are free creatures, they can either choose to cooperate (assent) with that grace or resist it. In the first case, both Molina and Báñez would agree that the grace free creatures are offered and have accented to is "efficacious," which is to say, the grace produces the intended result that God's providence ordained. When one resists God's grace, however, though that grace was present and freely offered, it was only "sufficient," which is to say, the grace was sufficient for the person to perform some good act but it was inefficacious since the moral agent rejected the grace in acting for some inauthentic or immoral end. In both circumstances, secondary agents' moral or immoral actions, God functions as a concurrent cause, for without that causality, the moral agent would have no being with which to exercise any kind of moral action whether good or evil (ibid.). But, any defect in the actions caused by a secondary agent – here a free or moral secondary agent – is still not attributable to God but instead to a defect within the secondary agent itself (ibid., 17). God's grace – at least with respect to free secondary causes – is the constant, but the question is what renders that grace "sufficient" or "efficacious"? Is there a real metaphysical distinction between the two, which would stem from God's own creative initiative, or is the distinction a consequence of the moral agent who received the grace?

For the Dominicans, the difference between efficacious and sufficient grace was a real distinction between two different kinds of grace. For Molina, however, the distinction is relative to the free will of the moral agent. That is to say, grace in

itself is neither intrinsically efficacious nor sufficient but is “neutral” (ibid., 18); if the moral agent cooperates with grace, then it becomes efficacious; if, however, the agent resists it, then that grace is only sufficient. The deciding factor here is the free will of the moral agent. To the Dominicans’ eyes, Molina’s positions must have reeked of Pelagianism because it seemed to elevate human freedom above divine grace. Of course, to the Molinists and those within the Society of Jesus who supported Molina, the Dominican position must have seemed tantamount to a sort of Calvinist predeterminism. But a theoretical problem existed for Molina as well. If God’s grace was not in itself efficacious and relied on the contingency of the human will, how could God be said to have foreknowledge about what contingent actions would result from God’s offer of grace to free moral agents? Molina’s solution to this problem was his theory of “middle knowledge.”

To speak of “middle knowledge” here is to locate such knowledge between God’s natural knowledge and free or volitional knowledge. Both Thomists and Molina agree that God’s knowledge is not dependent upon exterior beings or states of affairs as is the case with humans whose knowledge stands in potency with respect to the actual existence of some knowable object. Molina’s *Concordia* opens precisely with this issue in mind when he expands upon Thomas’s *Summa theologiae* I, q. 14, a. 8 wherein it is asked whether God’s knowledge is the cause of things. Thomas’s answer of course is “yes,” which accommodates rather nicely the Báñezian theory of *praedeterminatio physica* in which God’s grace functions as the cause of human liberty. But for Molina, God’s (fore)knowledge vis-à-vis His creative causality must be nuanced. On one hand, there is God’s natural knowledge or, as some have called it, His pre-volitional knowledge (ibid., 3). This is the knowledge that God has of Himself and of all metaphysically necessary truths including what is entailed in logical possibilities (i.e., possible worlds). Included in this knowledge is God’s awareness of all (logically) possible states of affairs that He could freely choose to create. On the other hand, God has “volitional knowledge” or “knowledge of vision,” which

results from His choosing to bring about one of the states of affairs of which He has pre-volitional knowledge, that is, of things as they actually do in fact exist (ibid.). Between these two forms of knowledge is the *scientia media* which regards *futuribilia*, that is, metaphysically contingent truths or counterfactuals. With such middle knowledge, God knows what choice(s) a moral agent would elect if given a certain set of circumstances or antecedent state of affairs. In other words, as Molina sees it, God, in addition to knowing metaphysically necessary truths (pre-volitional knowledge) and what is actually the case or what has been created (volitional knowledge), also knows contingency itself or conditional truths.

These three moments of divine cognition can be understood along the lines of *modus ponens*. In the conditional proposition “if *p*, then *q*,” God’s pre-volitional knowledge would correspond to the antecedent (*p*), and His middle knowledge would correspond to the consequent (*q*). The proposition is itself entirely contingent for it is merely conditional and God need not realize or create “*p*.” Instead, given His absolute freedom, God could choose any number of antecedent conditions, and since He is omniscient, God knows every possible antecedent. What is more, since God is provident and acts with foresight, He knows all the consequences that would follow upon all possible antecedents. Then, through God’s volitional knowledge, He knows “*p*” (because He has chosen “*p*” from among a number of possible antecedents) from which “*q*” conditionally or contingently results. Freddoso gives a helpful example to describe the situation explained above: “By His natural knowledge God knows that it is metaphysically possible but not metaphysically necessary that Adam will sin if placed in the garden; by His free knowledge He knows that Adam will in fact be placed in the garden and will in fact sin. What He knows by His middle knowledge, on the other hand is something stronger than the former but weaker than the latter, namely, that Adam will sin on the occasion that he be placed in the garden” (Freddoso 1988, 47). Thus, with respect to the difference between “efficacious” and “sufficient” grace, on Molina’s

account, one sees that God knows what set of circumstances would result in a moral agent's freely choosing to act in one way or another (ibid., 66). Thus, God foreknows what circumstances would result in a moral agent's acting for the good or those circumstances in which he would act contrary to what is good; that is to say, God knows in what circumstances His grace would be efficacious and in what circumstances it would remain merely sufficient.

Eventually, the *Congregatio de Auxiliis* condemned Molina's work, but Clement VIII was not pleased with the hasty manner in which the commission's conclusions were reached. When the congregation considered the matter again but with haste, in 1599 Clement ordered that theologians from both religious orders present their arguments in his presence in a series of conferences (Solana 1940, 403–404). The first debate occurred in the pope's presence on 20 March 1602 (Vansteenberghe 1929, col. 2159). A series of debates, some 67 in total, occurred between 1602 and 1605 (ibid., col. 2126) in which the Dominicans, especially Diego Alvarez y Tomás de Lemos, attacked Molina's position and the Jesuits, namely, Gregory of Valencia, Pedro de Arrúbal, and Fernando de la Bastida, defended their confrere (Solana 1940, 404). By this time, Molina had been dead for a number of years and Clement VIII went to join him, passing into eternity on 5 March 1605. After the brief monthlong reign of Leo XI, Paul V ascended to the papal throne and it fell to him to put an end to the controversy. Finally, on 28 August 1607, nearly 20 years after Molina's first publication of the *Concordia*, Paul V concluded the commission set up to resolve the thorny question (Solana 1940, 405). No resolution was reached in terms of who held the authentic Catholic position on grace and free will and who held a heretical view for, according to Paul, both Dominicans and Jesuits were in perfect accord with Catholic teaching. In essence, there could be no resolution because there was no conflict with orthodoxy. Each religious order could maintain its own proper teaching, and Paul insisted that neither should accuse the other of heresy (Denzinger 2012).

Commentaria in primam divi Thomae partem

In 1592 Molina published a commentary on the first part of Thomas's *Summa theologiae*. Like other commentaries on the *Summa* from this time, Molina's commentary offers an analysis of each article but also takes the occasion to include his *Concordia* in the salient sections of the commentary, namely, in the midst of his commentary on question 14. Yet, what constitutes a unique element of Molina's own thought is, as some have pointed out, his understanding of the relationship between "personhood" and "nature" (Solana 1940, 419).

Insofar as a significant element is Thomas's account of the Trinity in the *prima pars* which is the notion of personhood or, as Thomas puts it, three subsistent relations within the single nature and being of the Godhead, it is not surprising that Molina would have the occasion to develop his own ideas in this context. The question he asks, one raised by a number of other scholastics, especially within the Dominican tradition, is whether or not "person" adds anything to, or over and above, nature. Both Capreolus (*Defensiones*, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 1) and Cajetan (cf. *In ST III*, q. 4, a. 2, II) had insisted that personhood did in fact add an incommunicable element over nature and that this was simply Thomas's own teaching on the matter too. These Thomists stood in opposition to others, such as Bonaventure and Durandus, who maintained that nature and personhood were actually identical but only rationally distinct (Solana 1940, 419). For Molina, "person" formally and concretely signifies a rational nature precisely as incommunicable. The Jesuit argues that this is simply what Boethius and Richard of St. Victor – whom he regards as authoritative in this matter – had maintained in their own definitions of person. Boethius, Molina notes, holds that a person "is an individual substance of a rational nature," and Richard explains that a person "is a rational nature of incommunicable existence." These two definitions amount to the same thing for Molina, since, as he says, Boethius understands by "substance" simply that which is incommunicable (*In prim.*, q. 29, d. 1; fols. 447–48). But since incommunicability, on Molina's reckoning, is a negation insofar as it

pertains to something's indivision from itself but division from others, one may say that it is not so much that "person" "adds" something, as the Thomists were wont to say, but that it is a negation or denial of dividedness or communicability (Solana 1940, 420), for, according to the Jesuit, hypostasis or subsistence is a "certain kind of negation" (ibid.). Molina further adds that "person," as it is said of human, angelic, and divine beings, properly signifies something subsisting incommunicably and also that by which it is distinct from other persons that may share an identical nature (*In prim.*, q. 29, d. 2; fol. 448). With respect to the Godhead, Molina seems to follow Thomas's claim that "person" formally signifies a relation in virtue of which each subsists incommunicably and also obliquely signifies the divine essence itself (ibid.; fol. 449).

De iustitia et iure

Molina's political thought is found most explicitly in his *De iustitia et iure*, a vast work of several volumes, many of which were published posthumously. In all, the work runs through six volumes – at least six were originally projected; Molina died before the final volume could be completed (Solana 1940, 423). The first volume (published in 1593) deals with justice in general as well as its parts; the second volume (published in 1597) explores commutative justice in relation to extrinsic goods, whereas the third volume (published in 1600) deals with commutative justice in relation to bodily goods and persons who are related to one another. The remaining posthumous treat spiritual goods, including honor and fame (fourth volume), and justice and its exercise by the public authority (fifth volume) (Solana 1940, 422–23).

In many ways, owing to its scope, contents, and meticulous attention to the details of various arguments and their implications, Molina's *De iustitia et iure* seems to be parallel to Suárez's *De legibus ac deo legislatore*. Some have argued that the moral reasoning contained in the *De iustitia et iure* develops in a manner somewhat different from that of Thomas Aquinas as well as contemporary theories, such that the work "is neither medieval, nor modern" (Alonso-Lasheras 2011, 53). In discussing the nature of justice in general in the opening volume of his *De iustitia et*

iure, Molina explains that justice has a twofold – but interrelated – meaning as we know from Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, book 5) and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* II–II, q. 58, aa. 5, 6). The first sense of justice, says Molina, pertains to any act of virtue not insofar as it is this or that virtue, but simply insofar as it is ordained to the common good of many to which that virtuous action pertains as a part (*De iust.*, I, disp. 1; fol. 2). Or justice can also pertain to that which emanates from man, not insofar as he is a certain single person, but insofar as he is a part of a republic toward the total good of which one's actions are optimally directed (ibid.). Additionally, Molina holds that justice is likened to and also must ultimately be referred to charity, for although it is a particular virtue, through charity, the just man refers all of his actions to God, on account of which charity has a universal character. Likewise, though justice is a particular virtue, it refers to all of one's actions for the common good of the republic (ibid.). When it comes to law (*ius*), Molina, like Suárez (*De leg.*, 1.2), defines it relative to justice as its object since "when a *habitus*, act, and power are defined it is through their [proper] object" (*De iust.*, I, disp. 2; fol. 4). Thus, because law (*ius*) has as its object justice, Molina disagrees with Ulpianus and Soto who suggest that justice is so-called (*iustitia-ius*) on account of its being derived from law, and maintains, instead, that law stems from justice (ibid.).

Having mentioned "law," Molina goes into further detail and notes divisions of various kinds of law: natural, positive, canon, and civil (ibid., I, disp. 3; fol. 5). Interestingly, Molina holds that the natural and positive laws divide divine law as the latter's subsets. God is the author of nature which He has "optimally and maximally" instituted. That recognition of the natural order (i.e., the "natural law") is "impressed upon our minds," says the Jesuit, whereby one can discern good from evil in evaluating one's own experience (ibid.). In sum, as Molina sees it, law (*ius*) is divided as follows: first, it is divided into divine and human. The divine law is then subdivided into natural and positive laws. Human law, which the Jesuit holds is entirely positive, is itself divided into the *ius gentium*, civil law, and canon law (ibid.; fol. 6).

A matter of sore political contention at the time and reaching well back into the late fifteenth century were moral and political issues surrounding the colonization of the New World, especially on the part of Spain and Portugal. The Dominican Francisco de Vitoria had already weighed into the controversy with his *De indis* and *De iure belli*, in which works he came to the basic conclusion that the conquest of the New World and the despoiling of native peoples of their “dominion” by the Europeans were largely immoral. Molina himself had a similar outlook. The Jesuit thought that a loss of dominion could only be had as a punishment deriving from a “just war” (*De iust.*, II, tr. 2, disp. 98). Needless to say, this raises the question, for Molina: what counts as just war, what are its conditions? The Jesuit considers the claim that it is always unlawful for the Christian to wage war (*ibid.*, II, tr. 2, disp. 99; col. 404), but finds that such a position is contrary to what is found in the Christian tradition itself – especially that articulated by Augustine – and that, moreover, there may be occasions in which not to wage war would be a “mortal sin” (*ibid.*; col. 405). Here, Molina has in mind more than simply repelling force with force, that is to say, a defensive war; he also thinks that there is justification for an offensive war (*ibid.*; col. 406).

According to Molina, the first condition for a just war is that it should be waged by one who has the “proper authority” (*ibid.*, II, tr. 2, disp. 100; cols. 409–10). The authority to declare a war justly falls only to a republic, more specifically, the prince who has no superior over himself because of the “self-sufficiency” he possesses (*ibid.*; col. 410). Thus, in the Jesuit’s eyes, those who have jurisdiction over only a part of the republic lack the authority to wage war justly because they can appeal to their superiors to redress any injuries they may have suffered (*ibid.*; col. 411). No such possibility of appeal exists with sovereigns, however, precisely because of their supremacy. According to Molina, those who wage war without proper authority are obliged to make restitution for any injuries suffered (*ibid.*, disp. 101; cols. 413–14). The second condition of a just war is that there be “sufficient cause” for it (*ibid.*, II, tr. 2, disp. 102). Here, Molina has in mind having some sort of injury

inflicted upon a republic or to recover some good that has been wrongfully taken from the republic (*ibid.*; col. 416–17). Furthermore, no war is to be entered rashly or without due consideration. It is necessary that the case for war be carefully weighed by the prince, in consultation with men of prudence, to determine whether the conditions of a just war exist (*ibid.*, disp. 103). Molina then identifies seven particular conditions that may be grounds for a just war as indicated within the scripture itself: (1) when what is owed a prince cannot be attained other than through war, (2) to put down an unlawful rebellion, (3) to redress a notable insult or injury against the prince, (4) to render aid to a republic who has had a war unjustly waged against it, (5) to bring justice to convicted criminals who are being sheltered by another republic, (6) the violation of a significant treaty, and (7) the denial of certain rights accorded by the *ius gentium*, for example, unimpeded travel (*ibid.*, disp. 104; cols. 426–27).

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Molinet, Jean

Born: 1435, Desvres

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Abstract

Jean Molinet was a remarkably versatile and prolific author, who distinguished himself not only as a court poet and chronicler, but also for his plays, his treatise on poetry, and his clever parodies. Witness to the agony of the once glorious Burgundian dynasty, Molinet came into contact with the great personages and events of what Huizinga called the Autumn of the Middle Ages, which was also the dawn of the Northern European Renaissance.

Biography

The details of Molinet's life can be pieced together from poetic testimony and archival documents, but little is known of his early days. Molinet did his studies in Paris where he earned the diploma of master of arts before serving as secretary of the College of Cardinal Lemoine.

Sometime after 1461 he left Paris and began an itinerant course that eventually led him into the service of the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good. Molinet's earliest poetry, from 1463 and following, celebrates the House of Burgundy and thus anticipates, if it does not already confirm, some kind of official position at court. From around 1465 the poet established residence in Valenciennes where he began a literary apprenticeship with Georges Chastellain, the official chronicler of the Burgundian dynasty. Among his early occasional poetry, Molinet composed an elaborate verse epitaph known as the *Throne of Honor* on the occasion of the death of Duke Philip in 1467. When Chastellain died in 1475, Molinet succeeded him as *indiciaire* or official court historian for the reigning duke, Charles the Bold (Devaux 1996; Frieden 2013). Molinet inherited his new post just in time to witness the fall of the House of Burgundy and the triumph of their arch enemy, Louis XI King of France. Upon the death of Charles in the Battle of Nancy in 1477, Molinet passed into the service of Charles' daughter Mary of Burgundy, who then married Maximilian of Austria. Molinet continued his duties as chronicler in their service and eventually in Maximilian's service after Mary fell off her horse and died in 1482. By 1485 Molinet had been named Canon of the church of Notre Dame de la Salle in Valenciennes, and his loyalty earned him a generous pension as well as other emoluments. Succeeding his father Frederick III as Holy Roman Emperor in 1494, Maximilian named his own son Philip the Fair Duke of Burgundy, and Molinet continued his chronicle in the service of the new duke, whose death in 1506 is the last event recorded by Molinet, who only survived his patron by 1 year (Molinet 1935–1937).

Heritage and Tradition

Molinet belongs to the school of French poets known as the *Grands Rhétoriciens* active in Northern France and Burgundy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. His literary accomplishments include his treatise on poetry entitled *l'Art de rhétorique* and his prose adaptation of the medieval *Romance of the Rose*. He is even credited

with having invented the genre of the *pro-
nostication joyeuse*, which parodies the cryptic
anxiety of more serious prophecies (Molinet
1998; Thiry 1997, 119). The *rhétoriciens* con-
ceived of poetry as the second rhetoric, after
prose rhetoric, but they also inherited a conception
of poetry as a form of music, natural music in
contrast to the artificial music of instruments.
Molinet voices both of these ideas in the opening
phrase of his treatise which defines vernacular rhe-
toric, presumably poetry and prose, as a kind of
rhythmic music or music ruled by number and
consonance (Molinet 2015, 219). This definition
evokes the venerable tradition, associated with
Pythagoras, that poetry captures the music of the
spheres and that the poem functions as a micro-
cosm of timeless celestial harmony. Molinet enacts
this theory in his Royal Ballad on Terpander, inven-
tor of the seven-stringed cithara, a poem which
features prominently in his *Art*.

Impact and Legacy

Celebrated by his immediate successors, Jean
Lemaire de Belges and Clément Marot, Molinet
exercised a possible influence on the work of
François Rabelais, author of prognostications and
rhétoriqueur-style poems, before sinking into last-
ing oblivion, from which he was finally rescued by
the editorial efforts of Noël Dupire in the 1930s
(Molinet 1936–1939). Judging Molinet’s verse by
turns banal, illegible, curious, and obscene (Dupire
1932, 142), Dupire left a large scope for the reha-
bilitation of his subject by French literary criticism
of the 1970s working under the spell of structural
linguistics (Zumthor 1978). Perhaps Molinet’s
most creative legacy can be felt in the verbal exper-
imentations, some seemingly lifted directly from
the pages of the *Art de rhétorique*, of OULIPO, a
French acronym for the laboratory of potential
literature cofounded by Raymond Queneau.

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Molinism in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

Molinism is a theological and philosophical
theory developed during the late sixteenth cen-
tury by Luis de Molina. In particular, Molinism
tries to explain the relation between God’s
foreknowledge and human free will, thanks to
the elaboration of the so-called middle knowl-
edge, by means of which God foreknows what
each man would do in any possible condition,
but conserves the logical possibility of doing
the opposite of what God has foreknown.
Therefore, Molinism promotes a conception
of synchronic contingency according to
which something could logically be or not be
in the same moment in God’s mind before his
voluntary act of creation. This approach should
therefore guarantee the importance of human

free will in the economy of salvation together with God's sovereign decision. However, it was harshly criticized by both the Thomist and the Augustinian-minded Catholic traditions. This entry will first provide a historical introduction, in which attention will be paid to the so-called *De auxiliis* Controversy between the Dominicans and Jesuits concerning the relationship between divine grace and free will. Secondly, it will consider the theoretical premise of Molinism: John Duns Scotus' synchronic contingency and its difference from diachronic contingency. Finally, it will address Molina's development of a threefold conception of divine knowledge, paying particular attention to "middle knowledge," the central notion of Molinism.

Introduction

Molinism is a theological and philosophical theory, developed during the sixteenth century, which takes its name from the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina (Cuenca, 1535 – Madrid 1600). In particular, Molinism finds its elaboration in Molina's *De liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providential, praedestinatione et reprobatione Concordia* [The Compatibility of Free Choice with the Gifts of Grace, Divine Foreknowledge, Providence, Predestination and Reprobation] first published in Lisbon in 1588. As the title of this work already reveals, Molina was proposing a theory capable of including God's foreknowledge, predestination, and human free will together in the economy of salvation. The terms of the question are clear and ancient: if God knows everything, how could men be free in their actions? If He created this world, are human works useful for salvation, or does He simply determine the destiny of each person, whether salvation or damnation? These questions were not original; they had been the concern of Christian theologians beginning at least with the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius in the fourth and fifth centuries. Very briefly, the former stressed God's election, while the latter stressed free will, considering human good

works to be the sole condition for obtaining eternal life. A similar debate was elaborated during the Reformation era between Protestant and Catholic theologians and also between various factions within these groups. On the one hand, Luther affirmed that grace and faith alone save people, while Calvin maintained a doctrine of double predestination, according to which God predestines some men to salvation and others to eternal death (Calvin 1962: III.21.5). In other words, Protestant theologians were disowning the importance of human choice in the economy of salvation. On the other hand, the Tridentine fathers affirmed the necessity of both causes in order to be saved: God's grace, which has ontological priority, and human free will. However, in the decree on justification, issued during the sixth session (Jan. 13, 1547), the Council did not explain the relationship between God's predestination and human actions, leaving Catholic theologians with the difficult task of solving this problem. This led to the constitution of three schools of thought: the Thomist-Bañezian school in Spain; the radical anti-Pelagian Augustinian school in the Spanish Netherlands; and the school of Luis de Molina. The first two schools stressed God's grace, while the third focused more upon human free will. Molinism has its roots in the publication of the *Concordia* in 1588. This text was the beginning of a harsh debate between the Spanish Dominican friars Domingo Bañez (Mondragón, 1527 – Medina del Campo, 1604) and Diego Álvarez (... – Trani, 1635), who maintained a Thomist position concerning grace, and the Jesuits Molina and Francisco Suárez (Granada, 1548 – Lisbon 1617), who elaborated the so-called theory of "middle knowledge." To counter the criticism of Bañez, Molina later attached an appendix to the second edition of his *Concordia*. This debate was not restricted to Spain. A concomitant dispute also occurred in the Spanish Netherlands, with the fiery controversy between Michael de Bay (Meslin-l'Évêque, 1513 – Leuven 1589) and the Flemish Jesuit Leonard Lessius (Brecht, 1554 – Leuven, 1623). To illustrate the harshness of this debate, the former accused the latter of being "semi-Pelagian" (Van Eijl 1994). In 1597, Clement VIII constituted

the *Congregatio de auxiliis* (“Congregation on [Grace’s] aids”) with the intention of resolving this debate and thereby preventing it from producing another fracture within the Church. This was seen as a real danger, since the Dominicans were calling the Jesuits “Pelagians,” and the Jesuits were calling the Dominicans “Calvinists” (Craig 1988: 170). Finally, in 1607, Paul V interrupted this discussion, accepting both views as legitimate and forbidding the opponents to define each other as heretics. Thereafter, Molinism was considered to be a sound Catholic doctrine. However, the differences between both Thomist and Augustinian-minded positions still remained, and the question was left unresolved. The Pope eventually declared that the question would be taken up again “at an opportune time,” but this “opportune” time has yet to arrive (Molina 1988: VIII). Later, Cornelius Jansenius bishop of Ypres (Acquoy, 1585 – Ypres, 1638) tried to solve the question in his *Augustinus*, essentially reasserting the ideas of Michel de Bay, stressing too much God’s grace. His work was posthumously published in 1640, and it was condemned as heretical by the Catholic Church in 1643.

Molina and Scotus

To comprehend Molina’s theory of middle knowledge, it is useful to begin with the distinction between “diachronic contingency” and “synchronic contingency” as drawn by John Duns Scotus (1265/6–1308), since this provides the key theoretical premise of Molina’s theory (Duns Scotus 1994: 24–28). Aristotle considers time as an infinite dimension: it has no beginning or end. Moreover, he maintains the principles of identity and noncontradiction. Two consequences follow from these positions: (1) Something could not “be” and at the same time “not be.” For instance, at the moment $t1$ it could be a or $-a$, but not a and $-a$ together. (2) Thanks to change and to the infinity of the time, every potency will be actualized. This is referred to as “diachronic contingency,” since any potency is actualized through time, by means of change. However, John Duns Scotus conceived of another model, defined as

“synchronic contingency,” which distinguishes between logical possibility and factual reality. In short, when something exists, the logical possibility of the existence of its opposite in the same moment is conserved. This is taken to be “an irreducible ontological quality of the things themselves” (Duns Scotus 1994: 30). Recalling the previous example, if a thing is a at moment $t1$, it could also have been $-a$. Applying this principle to theology, we could say that by means of his creation, God actualizes a particular potency, but what is created still maintains the logical possibility of being opposite to itself. Therefore, the factual world that was created is just one of many possible worlds, and this factual world might even have never been created. Therefore, according to Scotus, though God’s knowledge is determinate, immutable, and infallible, it does not limit the logical possibility of something either being or not being. Molina “show[s] some familiarity with Scotus’ innovative theory of synchronic contingency,” but he seems not to have “managed to incorporate the metaphysical framework belonging to the theory” (Dekker 1995: 453). In any case, the Spanish Jesuit maintains a view similar to that of Scotus; for instance, he affirms that two opposite propositions are not contradictory when thought in eternity, although in time they could be true only at different times (Molina 1595: q. 48, 204–205). Moreover, Molina maintained that eternity does not include the future, since the future has yet to come (Craig 1988: 172). Therefore, God’s foreknowledge of the future is contingent, precisely because the future does not exist, and on Molina’s account “when things are produced in time, they are simultaneously produced in eternity; therefore, things cannot exist in eternity before they exist in time” (Craig 1988: 171).

Molina and “Middle Knowledge”

The problem is, therefore, declared: if God knows human acts from eternity, how could man be free in his choice and responsible for his actions, considering that God first knows and only then creates the world? To stress the importance of

human acts, Molina had to find a way to conserve human free will, despite God's foreknowledge. Therefore, he focused on foreknowledge for elaborating a short "oasis" in God's knowledge that could allow men to be free in their voluntary acts. This oasis is the so-called middle knowledge. As the Spanish Jesuit explains in his *Concordia*, God has a threefold knowledge (*scientia*): natural, middle, and free. These three different orders of knowledge are acts of the intellect anterior to creation, and therefore they are from all eternity. In other words, they are not to be thought as chronologically ordered. Rather, they are logically ordered, beginning with knowledge of wide focus – "natural knowledge" – to a more restricted knowledge – "free knowledge." Between these two, Molina inserts the "middle knowledge," aimed precisely at conserving human free will (Gerace 2016). More specifically:

1. "Natural knowledge" (*scientia naturalis*) is that through which God knows all potencies, both those that will be actualized and those that will remain in potency. So natural knowledge is addressed to all logical possibilities, independently of their future necessity (as with the laws of nature) or future contingency (as with human actions). This knowledge is natural since it is anterior to any act of God's will, prior to any intervention of his will into acts of choosing what should be created or not. Technically, it is said to be "pre-volitional," and it is somehow constitutive of God's own being (Molina 1988: 47).
2. "Middle knowledge" (*scientia media*) is foreknowledge of future contingents. It logically follows natural knowledge, having a more restricted object of focus. In fact, by means of it, God does not know all potencies. He has certain foreknowledge only of those events that would actually occur in the future, even though their existence is not necessary. It is directed not toward potencies *simpliciter*, but only toward those potencies that would be actualized. Also, this knowledge is pre-volitional, since it intervenes prior to any act of God's will. Through it, He knows a particular event, even though He has not (yet) decided

whether He will create it or not or, more accurately, whether He will actualize it or not (Molina 1988: 168). Thanks to middle knowledge, God knows "what each created free agent would do in any situation in which that agent might be placed" (Gaskin 1993: 412–413). However, the agent maintains the logical possibility of acting differently from what God has foreknown because God has not yet created that particular order of things. For instance, God foreknows that *A* would freely do act *x*, but *A* still conserves the freedom to do $\neg x$.

3. "Free knowledge" (*scientia libera*) is knowledge of "all *actual* or *absolute* future contingents" (Molina 1988: 47). This knowledge has a more restricted focus than the middle knowledge, being centered only on those potencies that *will* (not *would*) be actualized. This knowledge is free precisely because it depends only on God's voluntary act of choice, without external conditioning. Thus, "free knowledge" logically follows the voluntary act of actualizing (or not actualizing) a particular potency. In contrast with "natural knowledge" and "middle knowledge," "free knowledge" is post-volitional. In any case, the prefixes *pre* and *post* are not to be understood chronologically, but logically.

In sum, in a logical – not in a temporal – order, God (a) knows all possible potencies through his "natural knowledge"; (b) foreknows those potencies that *would* be actualized, even though they would also be differently actualized, through his "middle knowledge"; and (c) knows the potencies that *will* be actualized with his "free knowledge," after having decided which potency has to be created.

Cross-References

- [Augustinianism](#)
- [Báñez, Domingo](#)
- [Foreknowledge in Renaissance Philosophy: Divine](#)
- [Molina, Luis de](#)
- [Predestination](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Monograph

- [Book, Renaissance](#)

Monopsychism

- [Unicity of Intellect](#)

Monsters in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

The English word “monster” encapsulates a variety of distinct prodigious, medical, and natural phenomena. Prodigious, portentous, or miraculous monsters could provide the people of Europe with evidence of God’s will, warning, or wrath, when read emblematically by a contemporary expert. Monstrous births (physically abnormal humans and animals born to anatomically normal parents) might be interpreted as evidence of God’s ineffable variety or Nature’s mistakes or alternately in a political vein. If an entire human society were composed of such unusual individuals, all of whom shared the same physical or behavioral abnormality, they would constitute one of the monstrous peoples who lived far beyond the margins of civilized society. Similarly, fabulous beasts such as unicorns, griffins, dragons, and sea monsters were believed to populate the far ends of the earth and were interpreted as both warnings of the dangers of the unknown and representations of actual living animals. Monsters were reproduced in a variety of media, from lavishly illustrated maps and manuscript bestiaries, to Latin medical and wonder treatises, to cheaply printed pamphlets and broadsides in the vernacular. Despite their differences, such works repeated the same examples, often accompanied by the same woodcut illustrations; indeed, once printed in either Latin or the vernacular, a book about monsters

was likely to be both translated and reprinted in multiple editions.

Synonyms

Monstres; Monstrous births; Monstrous peoples; *Wunders*

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The English word “monster” developed out of the French “mostre” or Latin “monstrum” (a portent, prodigy, or monstrous creature) and the Latin “monere” (to warn) and encapsulated a variety of distinct prodigious, medical, and natural phenomena, with considerable overlap between the categories.

Prodigious, portentous, or miraculous monsters could provide the people of Europe with evidence of God’s will, warning, or wrath, when read emblematically by a contemporary expert. The quintessential examples of this type are the Papal Ass (a strange creature that washed up on the banks of the Tiber in Rome in 1496) and the Monk Calf (a deformed cow born in Freiberg in 1522). Polemically analyzed in a pamphlet by Philipp Melanchthon and Martin Luther, this pair of monsters was read as signs of God’s judgment against the Catholic Church (Melanchthon and Luther 1523); for example, the calf’s apparent cowl (a large flap of skin behind its neck) was interpreted as signifying the stubbornness of monks (Spinks 2009, 59–79).

In a broader context, monsters such as the deformed Monk Calf fit into the medical category of monstrous births: physically abnormal humans and animals born to anatomically normal parents. From conjoined twins to headless infants to apparent human-animal hybrids, these unusual creatures were interpreted as evidence of God’s ineffable variety or Nature’s mistakes or alternately in a prodigious vein. Such monsters could also be read politically, as when, during the English Civil War, a woman criticized the Parliamentary Roundheads and subsequently gave birth to a headless infant (noticeably lacking a round head); this occurrence was interpreted in a

Parliamentarian pamphlet as testimony of God’s displeasure against the woman’s political views (Crawford 2005, 134–144).

If an entire human society were composed of such unusual individuals, all of whom shared the same physical or behavioral abnormality, they would constitute one of the monstrous peoples. Believed to live beyond the margins of civilized society (generally in the Far East or Africa but after 1492 in the New World, as well), these peoples owed their medieval and Renaissance survival to the Greco-Roman tradition and specifically to Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History* (first century CE). Some of the most recognizable monstrous peoples include the cynocephalic or dog-headed people who bark instead of talking and by some accounts practice cannibalism, the applesmellers who have no mouths and survive on pleasant smells (though strong odors will kill them), and abnormally short pygmies who wage perpetual war on the cranes that threaten to overrun their land (Friedman 2000, 9–21).

Similarly, fabulous beasts such as unicorns, griffins, dragons, and sea monsters were believed to populate the far ends of the earth and only occasionally come into contact with humans. Depicted on lavish maps such as Olaus Magnus’s 1539 *Carta Marina*, these creatures were interpreted as both warnings of the dangers of the unknown and representations of actual living animals (Nigg 2013, 8). Periodic cases of whales or giant squid washing up on Europe’s beaches, occasional disappearances of trading and exploratory vessels, and even taxidermy creations such as Fiji mermaids (fish tails sewn onto monkey torsos, an eighteenth-century example of which survives in the British Museum’s Enlightenment Gallery) provided concrete evidence of such marine monsters.

Impact and Legacy

Europe’s populace learned about monsters through a variety of media, from lavish (and expensive) illustrated maps and manuscript bestiaries, to Latin medical and wonder treatises such as those of Conrad Lycosthenes (1557) and Pierre Boaistuau (1560), to cheaply printed pamphlets

and broadsides in the vernacular. Despite their differences, such works repeated the same examples, often accompanied by the same woodcut illustrations (Daston and Park 2001, 191), and so socioeconomic status did not drastically affect knowledge about the monstrous. Nor was printing about monsters regionally limited, as such works were published throughout both Catholic and Protestant regions; indeed, once printed in either Latin or the vernacular, a book about monsters was likely to be both translated and reprinted in multiple editions.

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Monstrous Births

► [Monsters in Renaissance Science](#)

Monstrous Peoples

► [Monsters in Renaissance Science](#)

Montaigne, Michel de

Born: 28 February 1533, Saint-Michel-de-Montaigne

Died: 13 September 1592, Saint-Michel-de-Montaigne

Carlo Cappa

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Abstract

At the end of the Renaissance, during the multifaceted and tragic sixteenth century, a delicate historical moment for France and Europe, Michel de Montaigne and his major work, the *Essays*, had enormous importance, both for their contemporaries and for their legacy in European culture. Montaigne's thought was rooted in a specific context, but the mirror of the *Essays* was able to elaborate and transform its background in an original way: the result is a true *livre de chevet*, an essential masterpiece for understanding the development of our culture in various fields of knowledge. The French philosopher spent his life mainly in France, with the important exception of a long journey in different countries, among which Italy was especially relevant. Between political activity, the claim of his nobility, and the careful portrait as an erudite person, Montaigne's life shows the complexity of a century during which the European identity developed. Herein lies the

Monstres

► [Monsters in Renaissance Science](#)

difficulty in portraying a single picture of this personality. The images of Montaigne changed throughout the following centuries and even today we can easily observe a plurality of interpretations; this diversity is related to the different elements chosen by scholars as key aspects in reading his work. Of course, the variety of interpretations is due to the wealth of the *Essays*, a classic of our literature and our philosophy, but it is produced also by the tangle of autobiographical purposes and accurate creations of the idea of the *homme accompli*. The human being that emerges from the pages of Montaigne is an innovative interpretation of Renaissance heritage, a transformation of the lesson of the *Cortegiano* by Baldassarre Castiglione (1528) fraught with the anxiety caused by the end of the previous humanistic faith in a new age grounded in the rebirth of an ancient legacy. In the treasure chest of Montaigne's work, we see the presence of relevant topics of the Renaissance proposed in French, in search of a new manner of expression between *sprezzatura*, refined culture, and political grasp.

Alternate Names

[de Montaigne, Michel Eyquem](#)

Biography

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne was born in Saint-Michel-de-Montaigne in the Montaigne Family Chateau (Bordeaux) on February 28, 1533, and died in Saint-Michel-de-Montaigne in the Montaigne Family Chateau (Bordeaux) on September 13, 1592. Following the common usage among the French aristocracy, his family stored his heart in the church of Saint-Michel de Montaigne and buried his body in Bordeaux.

During the sixteenth century, France was a country through which humanistic culture, fully matured in Italy, spread building new ways of thinking and new institutions. Among the latter, it is important to remember the Collège royal

(1530), the first name of the Collège de France, founded by Francis I (François d'Orléans, Comte d'Angoulême, Cognac 1494–Rambouillet 1547), and with the important contribution of Guillaume Budé (1468–1540), a scholar who brought about a revival of classical studies, thanks to a strong collaboration with his King attested also by the Preface of *Commentarii linguae graecae* (1529). This new institution is a perfect example of a culture which wants to differentiate itself from the previous ones: Scholasticism and one of its most important institutions, the Sorbonne University. The Collège royal was created for cultivating branches of knowledge which were secondary in the university framework; among these disciplines, a special position was acquired by Greek, Hebrew, and other oriental languages. This choice was rooted in the new attention given to philology as a critical tool for reading texts and Scripture. The growing importance of philology was clear evidence of the influence of Italian culture and, particularly, of authors such as Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) and Agnolo Poliziano (1454–1494). Before the birth of Michel de Montaigne, Italy was the center of a new approach to life and culture, the true crossroads of different traditions, and, with its numerous cities (Burke 1998), the hub from which many voices of Humanism spread Renaissance' thought through Europe.

The importance of Florence, Padua, Venice – with Aldo Manuzio – and Rome, among other places, for the history of Europe is closely linked to a tragic moment for the Italian peninsula, the period of the Italian Wars (1494–1559). During these decades, under the kingdoms of Charles VIII, Louis XII, and Francis I, France fought important battles for the conquest of different cities: the Battle of Marignano (1516) and the following peace, the Treaty of Cambrai (1529), and the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) were significant events in this troubled period, when, after the beginning of the sixteenth century, France and Europe were undergoing the crisis of Western Christianity. The Lutheran Reformation (1517) and the response by the Catholic Church with a Counter-Reformation, initiated by the Council of Trent in 1545, formed a traumatic

rupture in the history of Europe, which had important consequences for Michel de Montaigne's biography (Desan 2014).

The relevance of this philosopher to our tradition is clearly shown by the rich bibliography devoted to him and to his thought: over the centuries, Montaigne's image has changed, following the various interpretations offered by his readers. Among the most famous ones, we may recall that he has been portrayed as one of the most refined authors of French literature, near to the Pléiade (Joachim du Bellay, 1522–1560; Jacques Peletier du Mans, 1517–1582; Remy Belleau, 1528–1577, and Pierre de Ronsard, 1524–1588); the heir to the great Humanists, such as Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1467–1536); the father of the rebirth of skepticism in Early Modernity; a successor of François Rabelais (1493/4–1553) as the desecrating writer against the dogmatism of the Sorbonne University; an elegant political thinker, like Etienne de La Boétie (1530–1563) and Jean Bodin (1529–1596); or one of the initiators of the Libertine approach to life and tradition. This complexity is not derived from the plurality of interpretations only but is rooted in the very architecture of his book, the *Essays*. We will highlight only some of these evocative images, but it is really important to be aware of the changing profile of Michel de Montaigne, especially because, in the presentation of his biography and in a brief illustration of his thought, we will use different interpretations, often in conflict one with another.

Michel's biography is really important for an understanding of his book for two significant reasons: (1) the presence of frequent references to well-known events of his time in the pages of the *Essays*; (2) right from the introductory letter *Au lecteur*, Montaigne highlights that "Thus gentle Reader my selfe am the ground worke of my booke" (Montaigne 1603), a sentence rich in meaning which does not refer only to mere actions in public life but also involves the author's own thoughts. The history of Michel de Montaigne's family is a good representation of the tensions and ambitions harbored by the "new" French aristocracy: his great-grandfather, Ramon Eyquem (1402–1478), was a bourgeois in the salted fish and wine trades; during his life, he had increased

the family's wealth, accumulating land and properties, among which the noble houses of Montaigne and Belbeys in the barony of Montravel, acquired at the end of his life, in 1477. These purchases made it possible for him to change the family name from Eyquem to Montaigne. Michel's grandfather was Grimon, born around 1450, the eldest son of the marriage between Ramon and Isabeau de Ferraigues, and heir, with his brother, to great wealth; between business and responsibilities in Bordeaux's civic life as *jurat*, juror (1490), and provost of Bordeaux (1503), Grimon married Jeanne Dufour in 1490: they had three daughters and five sons, the eldest of whom was Pierre Eyquem de Montaigne, Michel's father, born on September 20, 1495. The transition from the bourgeoisie to nobility was made by Grimon over the next 20 years, but the change was completely accomplished by Pierre Eyquem, who embraced the military profession and took part in the Italian Wars as an archer in the company of Odet de Foix (1515). After Grimon's death, his estate was split up, and the noble house of Montaigne was given to Pierre. His marriage (January 15, 1529) to Antoinette de Louppes is a complex balance between the aspirations of the two families involved. Antoinette was the daughter of Pierre de Louppes of Toulouse and probably the niece of Antoine de Louppes de Villeneuve, a Spanish merchant. Her father belonged to the Bordeaux bourgeoisie, but it is possible that the origins of the family were rooted among the Jews converted to Christianity, the *Marranos*, or new Christians. The marriage to Pierre Eyquem was an opportunity to link the newfound wealth of Antoninette's family to the new nobility of a man who had recently achieved military glory. Like his father, Pierre Eyquem was a *jurat* and provost of Bordeaux (1530) but was now in possession of a noble title. He lived in the Montaignes' castle, without forgetting his obligations to civic life and offering hospitality to scholars and strangers during their journeys in the region; in 1536, he was elected deputy mayor, *sous-maire* of Bordeaux. His first surviving child – two previous children died in infancy – was Michel Eyquem de Montaigne: from this moment, we have different documents and, as is

well known, some information given by Michel himself, who wrote many fragments of his life in the *Essays*. After Michel, Thomas (1534–1602), Pierre (1535–1595), Jeanne (1536–1597), Arnaud (1541–1569), and Marie (1555–1580) were born to Pierre and Antoinette.

Michel's life started in the most traditional way, but his father chose to educate him according to the rules of humanism to model him as a noble and ensure the transformation of the family. It is suggestive that the year of Michel's birth is also that of the foundation of the Guyenne Collège, until 1534 under the direction of Jean de Tartas, when André Gouvea took on that role. After a first period of about 2 years with a wet nurse in Papessus, a village near Bordeaux, Michel returned to the family's noble house, where his father established an important rule: the native tongue of Michel was to be Latin. His first tutor, Horstanus, was German without any competence in French; in his work, the boy was helped by other tutors, among whom were Guillaume Guérente and George Buchanan. At 7 years of age, Michel went to Guyenne Collège, where some of his tutors were teachers; he remained in this new institution for 6 years and, during this important experience, he had the opportunity of acting in a version of *Medea* translated into Latin by Buchanan. Between 1542 and 1546, Pierre Bunel was at Montaigne and he gave the boy a copy of *Liber creaturarum sive Theologia naturalis* written by Raymond Sebond. Between 1548 and 1550, Michel was probably in Toulouse studying law, and from 1551 to 1554 in Paris, where he attended the courses given by Adrien Turnèbe and Sylvius (Jacques Dubois). During this period, his father was elected mayor of Bordeaux (1554) and Etienne de La Boétie, after his studies in Orléans, became *conseiller* in the parliament of Bordeaux (1553). In 1534, after the promulgation of the Edict of Fontainebleau, La Boétie probably wrote the second version of *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, addressed to Guillaume de Lur. In the same year, Michel became councilor in the Cour des Aides of Périgueux, and, in 1557, he was enrolled in the Parliament of Bordeaux, where, in 1558, he met La Boétie.

The growing importance of political commitment in Michel's life is a characteristic of these years: in 1559, he went to Paris, to the Court, where he also returned the following year until 1563; in October of the same year, he followed the royal army to Rouen, where he met the three natives from Brazil, an experience narrated in the famous chapter *Des cannibales* (I, xxxi). In the next few years, Michel did different activities in the Parliament in Paris, also against the venality of public offices. The same period saw the end of certain unrest in Bordeaux: the mayor and the *jurats* of this city regained their full political powers. These civil affairs did not interrupt his intellectual activities: in 1565, after some important reading, including the *De rerum natura* by Lucretius (1564), he started the translation of *Theologia naturalis*, a work requested by his father, who was to die on June 18, 1568. Michel thus became *Seigneur de Montaigne*. In 1553, La Boétie died, and, bearing witness to their strong friendship, Michel took on the responsibility for part of his works and library; he published some of these works in 1570 for the publisher Frédéric Morel, in Paris. A year previously, again in Paris, Michel had completed the most classical part of his training as a humanist with a translation from Latin into French of the book *Theologie naturelle de Raymond Sebond docteur excellent entre les modernes*, published by Gilles Gourbin, Guillaume Chaudière, and Michel Sonnius. This is the framework of Montaigne's famous *retraite*, the retreat which started on June 21, 1571, a day marked by an inscription testifying to his wish to remain "dans le sein des doctes vierges," "retired to the bosom of the learned Virgins" (Legros 2000): from this moment, an important part of his life would be devoted to his book, the *Essays*. The original inscription in the *cabinet* is in Latin; an adaptation in French is present in chapter VIII of book I, a chapter often identified as a previous introduction of the *Essais*. In the same year, his first daughter, Léonor, was born from his marriage to Françoise de la Chassaigne (1565). On October 18, less than 2 years after ending his career as a magistrate, Montaigne received a letter from Charles IX granting him the extraordinary honor of being named a Knight of the Order of Saint

Michael. 1572 was the year of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, an event that marked the history of the French Renaissance and of Michel's thought, but it was also the year of the publication of the *Parallel Lives* by Plutarch in the French translation by Jacques Amyot. Michel's retreat was interrupted several times by his duty as a politician, especially when the religious conflict against the Huguenots involved Bordeaux, and also in 1577 for the negotiations between the Duke of Montpensier and the Parliament of Bordeaux. In November of the same year, probably thanks to the intervention of the Foix family, Montaigne was appointed a gentleman of the chamber of King Henry of Navarre.

Two years later, in 1579, Montaigne obtained the *privilege de Roy* for his *Essays*: in 1580, in Bordeaux for Simon Millanges, the book was published in two volumes and many chapters, and with the letter *Au lecteur* dated March 1; after three months, on June 22, the author left Bordeaux for Paris and in July his book was given to Henry III. From this moment, Montaigne's biography is interwoven with the editorial adventures of his book: during the next 13 years the author was to work on it constantly and many experiences were to appear in the pages of the *Essays*. In September, with his brother Bertrand, his brother-in-law Bertrand de Cazalis, Charles de Madaillan d'Estissac, and Georges du Hautoy, Montaigne started the journey chronicled in his diary, the *Journal* (XXXXX), through Baden and Hall, near Innsbruck, to arrive in Bolzano on October 28, 1580, from where the journey into Italy began. At the end of November, he was in Rome, having spent some days in Ferrara welcomed by the Duke Alfonso II d'Este. During this leg of the journey, Montaigne met le Tasse, already interned in the Sant'Anna hospital. Montaigne stayed in Rome for several months, and on April 3, 1582, he received the papal edict which granted him citizenship as a Gentleman of Rome. In order to understand certain changes in the *Essays*, it is important to remember that as required by the Rome Customs, Montaigne left his book for an analysis by the Catholic Church authority, and only on March 20, 1581, did the Maestro del Sacro Palazzo, Sisto Fabbri, give him

back the *Essays* and some detailed notes for emending it. Due to a kidney stone problem, he visited towns well known for their thermal waters such as Lucca; during this journey, Montaigne received a letter from Tausin with news of his election as mayor of Bordeaux. After a second stay in Rome, on December 30, 1581, Montaigne, therefore, returned to his hometown to take up his new political role.

In 1582, there was the second edition of the *Essays*; there are few changes, but the journey in Italy had had some consequences: the addition of citations from *La Gerusalemme liberata* and a critical reception of the remarks made by the Roman Censors. Two years passed, during which his name became well known among the members of the *Respublica litteraria*, and he was re-elected as mayor of Bordeaux. During this period, Montaigne welcomed the King of Navarre as a guest in his castle. Regarding the increasing fame of the *Essays*, we have some important hints: letters from other philosophers, among whom Justus Lipsius (1583), the first projects for their translation, for example in Holland (1585), and the hospitality in his castle offered to many philosophers, such as Pierre Charron (1586). 1588 was a really important year: we know that his intellectual friendship with Marie Le Jars de Gournay, his "fille d'alliance," started that winter, and in June came the publication of a new edition of the *Essays*, in Paris for Abel L'Angelier. This new edition presents relevant novelties: first of all, a new third volume was added; but also the first and second volumes underwent complex rewriting with about six hundred additions. During the summer, Montaigne was the guest of Marie de Gournay, who, after his visit, wrote *Proumenoir de M. de Montaigne* (1588), recalling their walks together. In 1589, after the assassination of Henry III, Henry of Navarre was acclaimed as his legitimate successor. On November 30, the new King called Montaigne to his service. Michel, however, was sick and, while proclaiming his loyalty, remained at his castle. At the end of 1591, the first Italian translation of the *Essays* by Girolamo Naselli was published in Ferrara for Mamarello; this translation was of the 1567 edition, before the addition of the third book. On September

12, 1592, after a long illness, Montaigne passed away. It is important to remember that Abel l'Angelier, the publisher of the 1588 edition of the *Essays* possessed the rights (*privilège*) on the book for 9 years. After Montaigne's death, two counterfeited editions were published, but, meanwhile, Marie de Gournay received a 1588 copy with a wealth of notes by the author from Montaigne's family. In 1595, again for Abel l'Angelier, de Gournay realized a new edition with numerous additions: the length of the book increased by one third. In the next few years, it was this edition that spread through Europe, thanks to relations between Marie de Gournay and Justus Lipsius, to whom she gave a copy. Five different editions had been published by Abel l'Angelier by 1604: the first three were realized with the collaboration of de Gournay who wrote two different prefaces (1595 and 1598). In 1603, the first English translation by John Florio appeared in London for E. Blount. In 1635, a new edition was published in Paris by Jean Camusat, under the patronage of Cardinal de Richelieu, and was dedicated to Marie de Gournay.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition and Innovative and Original Aspects

The *Essays* is a fascinating labyrinth: the reader is left to find his own way on a personal journey through Montaigne's legacy, tasting the flavor of the novelties he offers. In Stefan Zweig's beautiful and tragic biography (Zweig 1960), Montaigne is described as a writer who discloses his complexity only to a mature reader, a reader aware of life's uncertainties yet not disillusioned. This recommendation is a good entry point to navigate the "work in progress" realized by Montaigne, an architecture that is also a conceptual choice for shaping his cultural proposal. The sources of the *Essays* were rooted in the classical Greek and Latin heritage and in the more recent humanistic tradition. A first important reference to get an idea of the wealth of references deployed in the pages of the book is the work by Pierre Villey (1908). This relevant contribution to the studies on Montaigne has been the constant reference for over a

century; nowadays, some assumptions and results are questioned by scholars, but the two parts of Villey's works, the first focused on the *Essays*' sources and chronology and the second on the evolution of the book, remain a benchmark in the historiography of the field. The *Essays* are structured in three books with chapters of different lengths: the first book has 57 chapters; the second, 38; and the third, 13. Generally speaking, the third book is notable for its lengthier chapters, but the longest chapter of all is the 12th of the first book: the *Apology for Raymond Sebond*. This is a true "book within the book," where Montaigne does battle with the dogmatic approach to knowledge and to the human being. Sebond's book, which he translated in 1569, is more than a pretext for a treatise on the skepticism which embraces every aspect of reality: presenting a history of this philosophical approach, Montaigne defines his position and his criticism. In appearance, the *Essays* are in the framework of the Renaissance treatises: almost every page is enriched with classical or coeval citations or references. In this sense, it is easy to think of them as a charming florilegium with erudite comments by Montaigne. Of course, this image is insufficient to grasp the originality of Montaigne's masterpiece. If the general approach is in line with that elaborated by the Renaissance moralists, an approach also justified by the subjects discussed, the singularity of the author sets his unprecedented stamp on the entire book. The relation with tradition is a key theme for the whole of Early Modernity, therefore it is hardly surprising that it is a central topic in the *Essays* too, a book that never ceases to question itself and its author.

Because of his erudition and the structure of his book, Montaigne was aware that he ran the risk of seeming a "writer of books," but he stressed that: "Je suis moins faiseur de livres que de nulle autre besogne" (I, xxxvii): the supremacy of life over a pedantic culture and the identity of *gentilhomme* are aspects embedded in different chapters of the *Essays* and are useful for understanding the novel features of the book. Montaigne disseminated his thoughts about tradition in two different groups of chapters: the first one directly regards his relations with books; the second one, more fragmentary, is

devoted to the approach to heritage and writing, involving the creation of the *Essais* themselves. In the first group, we find chapter x of Book II, *Des livres, On books*, and chapter III of Book III, *Des trois commerces, On Three Kinds of Social Inter-course*: books are ammunition for facing the uncertainty of life and company in loneliness during necessary *otium* and in old age, when the vigor of the body is weaker. In the second group, we find chapters not directly linked to the issue by their titles or by their main topics: *Du pédantisme* (I, xxv), *De l'institution des enfants* (I, xxvi), and *De la ressemblance des enfants aux pères* (I, xxxvii): in these chapters, Montaigne describes his approach to writing and some characteristics of his book. Here, the fracture with previous traditions is noticeable, and there is an original elaboration of some aspects contained in Italian and European humanism: the book is compared to a son, a testimony of the singularity of its author who exists thanks to the book itself. The *authoritas* of the classical tradition and philological tools are now used to create a personal approach to reality, to express the changing positions of the author. This framework rejects any dogmatic method and proposes a critical examination of the sources utilized for "saying" his own position: Montaigne creates many cross-references between himself, the book, and his educational proposals, in order to establish a true mirror where we can easily see the exercise of judgment. The role of doubt is crucial: the choice between the different positions analyzed is not forced: his reader, the pupils, the author can suspend their judgment, because: "Il n'y a que le fols certains et résolus non men che saper dubbiar m'aggrada" (I, xxvi). It is important to stress that this attitude towards doubt is a major key of the *Essais*, because the title itself means precisely the exercise of judgment on the living material of life through the subjectivity of the author. The French word *essai*, in fact, is related to the concept of *test*, to explain the manner in which any idea is challenged. Nevertheless, in the book, the classical epoché (ποχή) of skepticism does not have the last say in every context: in the trouble of civic life, to take a stance is a social and ethical responsibility, as stressed many times by Montaigne.

From the interweaving of the critical approach to previous traditions and the role of doubt, it is possible to explain two other relevant aspects of the *Essais*: the centrality of the "distingo" and the transformation of the book over the years. If in the mirror of Montaigne's writing the world and opinions are investigated and the judgments on them follow the different assumptions chosen each time, what is the main approach elected by the author? "*Distingo* est le plus universel membre de ma Logique" (II, i): this statement derives from the urge to find a mode of writing capable of pursuing the changing reality of the world, without preconceptions, to embrace ongoing research and continuous discovery. This approach permeates many chapters and combines skepticism and a profound fascination with the human condition. As is well known, in Montaigne this openness to becoming is often accompanied by ironic detachment, but this *recul*, this critical distancing is a relativization of different points of view and never becomes ostentatious indifference. The idea that the difference between two single elements is far more important than the common traits is a key concept in the *Essais*, not only often detailed but also put into practice thanks to a changing style in writing. And this is the framework to understand the previously mentioned stratification of the book: in the various editions of the *Essais*, the work realized by Montaigne was devoted to a true representation of the changing mobility of his thought. Of course, we can find some "adjustments," but the main direction followed by the author was to maintain the differences between his convictions, differences derived from deductions rooted in dissimilar assumptions, or differences gained over the years thanks to new considerations and new experiences.

Between 1580 and 1588, in the edition that added the third book, and from then on until his death, Montaigne continued to be committed in a conversation with his book, because "Les autres forment l'homme, Je le récite, et en représente un particulier, bien mal formé [. . .] Or les traits de ma peinture ne fourvoient point, quoiqu'ils se changent et diversifient. [. . .] Je ne peins pas l'être. Je peins le passage: Non un passage d'âge en autre, ou comme dit le peuple de sept en sept

ans: mais de jour en jour, de minute en minute. Il faut accommoder mon histoire à l'heure" "Others form man; I only report him: and represent a particular one, ill fashioned enough [...] Now, though the features of my picture alter and change, 'tis not, however, unlike [...] I do not paint the being. I paint its passage; not a passing from one age to another, or, as the people say, from seven to seven years, but from day to day, from minute to minute, I must accommodate my history to the hour" (III, II). These passages are taken from the opening of the chapter *Du repentir*, and they are famous because in them the author consciously clarifies his project; his opinions, like the entire world, are at the mercy of mutation, therefore any nondogmatic writing must follow the movement of its subjects, groping through structural uncertainty to find temporary truths and to adjust the author's behavior. This is one of the reasons why reading and interpreting the *Essais* is so complex and fascinating: in their pages, we observe different portraits of Montaigne: his features change but coexist, giving an idea of *perpetuum mobile*, without losing an overriding consistency within a wider project. Thanks to the writing of this work, the author is involved in the reality that he analyzes, subject and object at once, establishing a pact with the reader, who is required to witness an open process of transformation and refinement. This approach is the answer Montaigne elaborated to face the uncertainty of his time. The overpowering irruption of complexity in every aspect of life and the resulting inadequacy of the strict respect of lessons received from the past, are characteristics already present in the Italian context of the first part of the sixteenth century. If the insufficiency of the moral tradition for an effective grasp of political thought is one of the aspects of Machiavelli's works, in Guicciardini it is easy to see an awareness of the need to test every assumption with the litmus test of experience in a changing world. In the celebrated chapter VI of his *Ricordi*, Guicciardini uses juridical terminology, vocabulary derived from his studies in law – another aspect that links him to Montaigne – to shape the concept of *discrezione*. This idea indicates the potential of judgment rooted in culture's previous teaching

yet capable of analyzing reality: only the experience in the book of the world can refine a judgment so that it can perceive the differences and the exceptions as the only constant in the human condition. This is an attitude that encompasses both knowledge and behavior, finding a precise application in political life; its echoes are present in Italy, in authors such as Giovanni Botero, *Della ragion di stato* (1598), and Traiano Boccalini, *De' ragguagli di Parnaso* (1612), and in France, in Jean Bodin among others. In the *Essais*, the impact of this approach is a powerful one: every aspect of reality is canvassed, from the habits of society to the manners of life in the French colonies, from political alliances to religious precepts, stressing that the author's outlook on this fluctuating world is always that of a humanist. By means of the description of a mobile writing as a tool for his judgment, Montaigne also proposes himself as a knowledgeable gentleman, presenting himself on the French political scene. The intention to captivate the reader's attention by his ability to manage many aspects of the *varietas mundi* is a relevant feature of the rhetoric deployed in the *Essais*. Nevertheless, this inclination for promoting himself as a noble politician is only one aspect, undoubtedly considerable, in the wider mosaic of the book. To propose a judgment with such characteristics is also a statement towards the changing reality of the world, a judgment in which knowledge and political skills are interwoven with an ethical attitude: if dissimilarity is always more significant than similarity, the bet on *discrezione* is the best way to render full dignity to each difference in reality, avoiding any limitation or unification applied as a violent imposition. The fight against dogmatism reveals itself as the more human choice for understanding ourselves and the others and for finding a gyroscope in the ever-changing map of the world.

As we have seen, all these elements are frequently found in the pages of the *Essais* and their importance increases or decreases according to the topic addressed by the author. Among these topics, one plays a significant role in giving a deeper insight into the heritage present throughout the book and the novelties proposed by it: education. When Montaigne started writing the *Essais*,

Renaissance educational thought was already fully developed and the necessary coexistence of a specific culture and a specific educational proposal was assumed as the cornerstone of humanism. The Italian tradition, from Petrarch to Leon Battista Alberti and Enea Silvio Piccolomini, from Poliziano to Baldassare Castiglione, from Giovanni della Casa to Alessandro Piccolomini and Stefano Guazzo, was a necessary reference for the French philosophers. Of course, in the *Essais* we immediately identify the rich contribution from Erasmus, the Prince of humanists and a constant benchmark for Montaigne himself, and François Rabelais. Like other topics in the *Essais*, the educational proposal elaborated by Montaigne is also structured in two different ways: two chapters focus on education, *Du pédantisme* (I, xxv), and *De l'institution des enfants* (I, xxvi), both already mentioned; and many other passages are found in different chapters, where this topic is not the most relevant, but where the author develops some related issues such as journeys, experiences, history, language, and conversation. For his educational proposal, therefore, Montaigne carries out an argumentative strategy in order to avoid strict observance of the classical discourse codified by the tradition of the Renaissance treatise, but this strategy is not a radical betrayal of the previous works. The dialogue with tradition is always constant and remarkable; at the same time, the *Essais* find lines of flight to depict a new type of education, combining classical aspects elaborated by humanism with the uncertainties coming to light towards the end of the Renaissance.

Therefore, in the argumentative framework utilized by Montaigne to illustrate his educational proposal, we admire the elegant consistency of complex writing often chosen by the author to ponder upon the many topics addressed in his book. The link between I, xxv and I, xxvi is grounded not only in their proximity but also in Montaigne's own explicit clarification to introduce his dedication of *De l'institution des enfants* to Diane de Foix and her son: the *pars contruens* after the *pars destruens* of a true essay on education, a movement between the manner to teach, learn and the substance of culture. In *Du*

pédantisme, the focus is on the accurate, ironic criticism of *magister*; Montaigne plays on two different levels: he analyzes the separation between culture and life, stressing that, in his time, knowledge was often useless erudition, tinsel exhibited to be considered cultivated without having any practical consequence; therefore the cultural transmission by teachers was unable to transform pupils. These considerations had long been traditional, but in the *Essais* they are addressed to teaching and to the author himself because the refusal of a bookish culture is first and foremost applied in writing: in this sense, the book shows the very idea of culture proposed by its author. This aspect clarifies the importance given to the manner in which knowledge is learned and lived, and it is the topic of the first pages of the following chapter; Montaigne chooses to open I, xxvi with many considerations on his relations with tradition, creating continuity between writing, education, the book considered as a child, and the criticism of pedantry. This is the framework wherein the dedication to Diane de Foix is placed: the gesture of addressing an educational proposal to a specific person is another link with tradition, but, once again, Montaigne takes the opportunity to reinvent the classical structure of the treatise. The core of his discourse is the profile of the preceptor and, as in the previous chapter, his manner of teaching, an approach to culture that is exactly the same as that used by the author himself in writing his book. Many elements proposed as key features of the preceptor are already present in the Italian context and in Erasmus: kindness. And the ability to adjust his work according to the pupil's capability, the refusal of corporal punishment, and the attention to language and education of the body. In the *Essais*, however, all these aspects are transformed thanks to the global approach focused on shaping judgment; the method proposed involves the pupil actively and avoids any dogmatic transmission of knowledge, in order to open the widest horizon of possibilities. The *cursus studiorum* is devoted to learning the *varietas mundi* and to maintaining a free judgment, without, at the same time, refusing a complete adhesion to his own time. The troubles of the sixteenth century find an educational answer in an

atypical, risky proposal: the *homme accompli* born from Montaigne's pages lives within his own society, but with critical detachment. The recommendations addressed to the preceptor always point in this direction: the pupil must enjoy *varietas* thanks to journeys and history, finding differences in space and time, in order to apply and refine his knowledge through experience. "Ce grand monde, que les uns multiplient encore comme espèces sous un genre, c'est le miroir où il nous faut regarder, pour nous connaître de bon biais. Somme, je veux que ce soit le livre de mon écolier" (I, xxvi): as in Guicciardini, in order to teach *discrezione*, in Montaigne's judgment, the best book proves to be the world. To balance the vertigo of *varietas* without losing his orientation, the pupil's education starts with philosophy; the fine pages dedicated to this *magistra vitae* present a gentle image, a study aiming to govern himself at self-government in uncertainty, and the reference to Alcibiades is a powerful suggestion confirming a noble ideal of the human being. The game of mirrors involving the educational proposal, the author, and the book is stressed in the last pages of the chapter wherein Montaigne describes his own education, also mentioning his experience as an actor during his studies at Guyenne Collège.

The important role of education arises from the main purpose of the *Essais*: the creation of a captivating portrait of the *gentilhomme* is rooted in many aspects directly linked to this moment of life. Therefore, other relevant chapters could be interpreted as an extension of the briefer assumptions already presented in *De l'institution des enfants*. In this chapter, journeys to foreign countries are a tool in shaping the judgment thanks to a comparison with the culture of others "pour froter et limer notre cervelle contre celle d'autrui" (I, xxvi); in the chapter *De la vanité* (III, ix), we find a longer reflection on the habit of traveling but this time focused on the author. Montaigne describes how he travels, stressing his desire to experience the differences offered by other countries and other languages. This image of the journey has two relevant aspects: (1) the encounter with what is different is a classical instrument of skepticism, because it breaks the uniformity of the

habitual context. In this sense, traveling is a way to cultivate doubt. (2) Yet traveling offers the chance to escape from daily obligations and find critical detachment. In III, ix, Montaigne juxtaposes the duties of running his household and the temporary freedom of the journey. The openness towards the world and its differences, a warm sociality for learning lessons from others, is also an opportunity for the traveler to see himself in a different way, profiting from a situation when the grip of his social role is less powerful. There is also a critical detachment from his habitual identity, and this is close to another topic of the *Essais*: loneliness. This topic is thematized in the chapter *De la solitude* (I, xxxix): here we meet the famous passage dedicated to the *arrière-boutique*, a back room where we can establish "our true freedom." Between civic engagement and private retirement, the gentleman of the *Essais* searches for a proper distance from the tumult of his time, without forgetting his duties towards society and himself. Public life is mostly arranged thanks to the relationship created by language, consequently, conversation has an important role in Montaigne's book; in I, xxvi the author's discourse is a balance between the educational proposal and his own approach: "Non pédantesque, non fratesque, non plaideresque, mais plutôt soldatesque." The development of this theme is carried forward in III, viii, *De l'art de conférer*, *The art of conversation*: the topic is one of the most distinctive of the sixteenth century, thanks to Italian tradition and contributions by Castiglione, Guazzo, and Tasso. In France, the debate on conversation is also linked to considerations about the language, especially after the publication of Joachim du Bellay's work, *Défense et illustration de la langue française* (1549), a book inspired by Sperone Speroni, *Dialogo delle lingue* (1542).

Like the journey theory, the ideal conversation proposed by Montaigne in I, xxvi and III, viii combines some elements derived from the previous tradition with original nuances; kindness and politeness are already codified for describing the Italian *cortegiano* and, with specific attention to education, they are elaborated by Erasmus, especially in the *Institutio principis christiani* (1515) and in the *Colloquia familiaria* (1518). In

Montaigne's thought, the art of conversation takes its cue from these models and from Guazzo (Panichi 1995), but it mostly becomes an occasion for exercising the reader and the author in relation to others; this is why the literary elegance of the dialogue is less important than liveliness and courteous sincerity. The confrontation with others aims to search for the truth, a truth that could be temporary and a starting point for further conversation, but which implies honesty and order, avoiding dogmatism and conflicts. In an age of fanaticism, the public word is sustained by critical respect for diversities, and, once again, it is an art for shaping judgment. With the same rhetorical strategy utilized for the journey, the elements and the competencies required for an appropriate conversation are outlined as key characteristics of the educational proposal, of the author's writing, and of the ideal *homme accompli*. Living in the world means choosing conversation as a paradigm for exploring the *varietas*; Montaigne is driven by his *honnête curiosité*, an approach that leads him from history to his own time, from classical philosophers such as Seneca, Plutarch, and Lucretius to Bodin and Charron, constantly with the desire of self-discovery through the medium of otherness. But this urge towards the possibilities of reality, this insatiable curiosity is never without personal participation: knowledge and ethics are never apart; when Montaigne's pen describes the native populations of the Americas, in *Des cannibales* (I, xxxi) and *Des coches* (III, vi), this ethical propensity is evident (Montaleone 2011). The strangeness of others is a subject for judgment, but, at the same time, it is a means for criticizing our certainties: the lesson of skepticism is carefully applied for self-orientation without losing our interior freedom.

This coexistence of doubt and ethics, of participation in society and intimate detachment, is at the core and represents an original balance of the complex outcome of the *Essais*: a human being to be a model for the centuries to come in Europe, a gentleman wise in judgment and capable of living in his society without getting captured by the worst tendencies of his changing world. This is an ideal that finds its fulfillment in the notion of *experience*. This concept is widely present in

many chapters, but it is fully developed in the last one, *De l'expérience* (III, xiii), a beautiful rhapsody of Montaigne's approach to knowledge and to life, the final point to understand the relation between the *Essais* and the skepticism of Sextus Empiricus. If the world is the best book for exercising judgment, then our life is always in training; this attitude is perfectly described in the *Apology for Raymond Sebond*, where Montaigne proposed the distinction between philosophical schools already present in *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* by Sextus Empiricus: "Quiconque cherche quelque chose, il en vient à ce point, ou qu'il dit qu'il l'a trouvée, ou qu'elle ne se peut trouver, ou qu'il en est encore en quête." Of the three approaches of classical philosophies, the first attributed to dogmatism, the second to the New Academy, it is the last, derived from Pyrrhonism, that seems to be the one chosen by Montaigne because it encompasses human weakness, often seen in comparison with the senses of animals, and the natural aspiration to knowledge. This assumption is also an antidote against a twofold risk: being certain of the truth and leading a life totally different from the norm, or else collapsing into deadly inertia. The possibility offered by Sextus Empiricus is to have a constant attitude of research, a choice stressed by the motto engraved on Montaigne's medallion: "Que sais-je?". On many subjects, the analysis carried out in the *Essais* seems to result in an endless alternation of different positions, because reality is "infini en matière" and "infini en diversité," but this point of arrival, in a critical dialogue with Pyrrhonism, is in fact only a gnoseological step presented in the *Apology*, and it opens out onto relevant consequences if we look at the final chapter, *De l'expérience*. Here, in a fascinating journey among different fields of study, Montaigne describes a way of life where the role of doubt and the awareness of the tragedy of the human condition find a challenging balance for portraying adequate conduct, a complete acceptance of our being. Starting from the desire for knowledge and the weakness of human reason, Montaigne utilizes the key of experience to question medicine, the law, and every dogmatic assumption in ethics, to erode every general rule

with the power of the exceptions rooted in every personal experience. Through this prism, however, the duty of the gentleman is to live accepting his condition: “La grandeur de l’âme n’est pas tant tirer amont et tirer avant, comme savoir se ranger et circonscrire [. . .] Il n’est rien si beau et légitime que de faire bien l’homme et dûment” (III, XIII). A complete acceptance of our condition also signifies the possibility to choose between the different options faced in everyday life, as required by social obligations within the public context. Of course, this is not an easy task, as stressed on the last page of the *Essais*: by introducing a brief sentence, Montaigne qualified this aspiration verging on the extreme of human capacity: “C’est une absolue perfection, et comme divine, de savoir jouir loyalement de son être.” Absolute perfection, almost divine, these are unusual terms for Montaigne’s writing, in which the classical metaphysic has always been criticized, but this passage is impeccably inscribed in a proposal in which the balance between normality and the possible, knowledge and unknowledge, heroism and beastliness are all elements of the human condition, coexisting in a living tension.

There is a last important aspect for an understanding of the originality of the *Essais*: the pivotal role of friendship. Montaigne analyzes this theme in an important chapter, *De l’Amitié* (I, XXVIII), a chapter dedicated to his friend, Etienne de La Boétie, who is praised as a wise man and the perfect companion to share a part of his life. In the first edition of the *Essais* with only two books, the place reserved for this chapter was highly significant, because it was also used by the author to introduce some poetical works by La Boétie, which constituted the following chapter. The sonnets by this ideal friend were then placed in the mathematical center of the first book, which was composed of 57 chapters; this choice is justified with a significant analogy: like a painter who places his masterpiece in the center of a wall and fills the free spaces around it with *grotesche*, so Montaigne merely depicts similar capricious representations in order to leave his friend the place of honor. In the following edition, this tribute was removed as the result of certain editorial issues and, probably, because Montaigne reconsidered whether this publication was advisable. The

discourse about friendship proposed in these pages is an opportunity to celebrate La Boétie as well as suggest the role of friendship as a dimension of freedom for a gentleman. Montaigne distinguishes true friendship and other social relations in public and social life: family ties, marriage, and political ties. These types of relations are not completely free, because the parties involved are conditioned in their choice by some other reasons, such as family interests or social advantages. True friendship is placed under the mark of freedom: in dialectical tension with the idea of *varietas*, friendship finds its profile thanks to the similarity of the parties who establish a relation where social duties are suspended and common interests justify an intimate conversation. In this sense, friendship is the cornerstone of the *Respublica litteraria* and the reference to La Boétie assumes a wider importance for an understanding of the whole book. From the very beginning of the *Essais*, Montaigne defines his work as a “livre de bonne foi” (*Au lecteur*), a “well-meaning” book, but we must interpret this honesty in the framework of friendship. The book is addressed to a *suffisant* reader, because “C’est l’indiligent lecteur qui perd mon sujet, non pas moi” (III, IX). The author adopts a rhetoric that searches out its readers in order to create with them a relationship focused on complicity, exactly as in friendship. This approach involves the reader of the *Essais* in a conversation with the author deployed at different levels: the book is demanding, because it requires its reader to manage irony, elisions, and ellipses, but this rhetoric is the perfect representation of the exercise of judgment as an original form of sociality. In a famous passage describing his book, Montaigne writes: “Tant y a qu’en ces mémoires, si on y regarde, on trouvera que j’ai tout dit, ou tout désigné. Ce que je ne puis exprimer, je le montre au doigt” (III, IX): this strategy is rooted in a complicity which allows the author to analyze problematic topics, such as the immortality of the soul, torture or the role of religion in morality; at the same time, the search for a reader who is also a friend features a smaller society within society, a group of peers bound by *sodalitas* and unfettered by conflicts of fanaticism. The portrait of Montaigne, indistinguishable from the *homme accompli* proposed

by the *Essais*, “Je n’ai pas plus fait mon livre que mon livre m’a fait. Livre consubstantiel à son auteur” (II, XVIII), is a fragmented mosaic which portrays with ink on paper an original interpretation of the *Man with a Glove* by Titian (1523), an ideal of nonchalance and *sprezzatura*, conscious of the tragic human condition, but obstinately intrigued by the book of the world and its possibilities.

Impact and Legacy

The impact of the *Essais* on Western culture is a broad theme; here we can only offer brief notes and indicate some excellent recent works for further information. During the last 20 years, the studies on Montaigne and his book have increased; the results are diversification of analyzed topics and of the approach used. Among the important references for obtaining an idea of Montaigne’s impact and legacy, we would like to mention the *Dictionnaire Montaigne* and *The Oxford Handbook of Montaigne*, both edited by Philippe Desan (2016, 2018). Part II of the second book is addressed to the *Reception of Montaigne* and it consists of four chapters: *Montaigne in the World* by Paul J. Smith, *Montaigne in England and America* by Warren Boutcher, *Montaigne and Shakespeare* by William M. Hamlin, *Montaigne and Descartes* by Michel Moriarty; these works clearly demonstrate the diffusion and influence of the *Essais* in our philosophy and, more generally, in our culture. As we have seen in Montaigne’s biography, moreover, his importance was already recognized in his own time, since he was an important member of the *Respublica litteraria*, both as a philosopher and as a magistrate, and thanks to the rapid spread of the *Essais* in France and abroad. Montaigne’s thought was an original answer to the crisis of his society, but his lesson, however deeply rooted in its historical context, has been heard across the centuries. Echoes of the *Essais* are present in French skepticism, Pierre Charron and François de La Mothe Le Vayer, and Montaigne’s doubt is the driving force behind the *Discours de la Méthode* by René Descartes (1637); the bold idea of a gentleman was at the core of the early works by Baltasar Gracián and of

Les Maximes by François VI de La Rochefoucauld (1665) and it is still a reference for *Les Caractères ou les Mœurs de ce siècle* by Jean de La Bruyère (1688). Also, the ideas on education elaborated by Montaigne have been a reference point, especially for his focus on life and for the role assigned to experience, for example, in two authors as different as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It is important to stress, however, that over time the *Essais* have changed many times: the most widely read edition before the nineteenth century is different from the current reference edition. After Montaigne’s death, Marie de Gournay’s interventions for the 1595 edition had modified many passages of the *Essais*; the 1635 edition, based on that posthumous edition, was later the reference for the successive French editions and foreign-language translations. It was only in 1802, after the discovery of a copy of the 1588 edition annotated by Montaigne himself, the so-called *Bordeaux Copy*, that we had a first edition based on where these modifications are registered, published in Paris for the Imprimerie de P. et F. Didot. Since then, scholars have been querying which edition of the *Essais* provides the last work realized by Montaigne between 1588 and 1592; both sides have valid reasons and two important French editions (Montaigne, 1998; 2007) have made opposite choices. In brief, the 1595 edition has the advantage of tradition, being the version of the *Essais* read for two centuries that created the reputation of the book; the editions based on the *Bordeaux Copy* are more recent, but it is certainly Montaigne’s last work. Still today, the most characteristic feature of the *Essais* seems to be the movement (Starobinski 1982), and our responsibility remains to follow Montaigne’s words: “Plutôt difficile qu’ennuyeux. Eloigné d’affectation: Dérégulé, décousu, et hardi: Chaque lopin y fasse son corps” (I, xxvi).

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Montanari, Geminiano

Born: 1633, Modena

Died: 1687, Padua

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Abstract

Geminiano Montanari was an Italian mathematician and astronomer. He is mostly remembered for the discovery of the star Algol in the constellation of Perseus and his cometary observation of 1667, also quoted by Newton. Trained as a lawyer in Florence, he then devoted himself to the study of physics and mathematics. He started his career as an astronomical observer at the observatory of Panzano. From 1664 on, he held the professorship of mathematics in Bologna and then of astronomy and meteorology in Padua. He wrote on diverse topics, ranging from ballistics, hydraulics, astronomy, and monetary theory. Recent scholarship has also emphasized his epistemological reflections on the experimental method as an example of theorization of the experimental practice in continental Europe.

Biography

Montanari was born on June 1, 1633, in Modena. He moved to Florence in 1653, where he studied law under the direction of the lawyer Iacopo Federici. In 1656, he moved to Salzburg where he obtained a binational doctorate in law. He then studied mathematics in Vienna under the supervision of the Florentine mathematician Paolo Del Buono, a disciple of Galileo. In 1657 and 1658, he visited the mines of the provinces (and especially of Hungary) under the mandate of the emperor. In the same year, he came back to Florence where he started his legal practice. In 1661 he was in Ferrara at the court of Alfonso IV d'Este (1634–1662), where he held the title of ducal philosopher and mathematician. At his behest, he assisted to astronomical observations and computed calculations of ephemerides and then published them with the marquess Cornelio Malvasia (1603–1664). After the death of Alfonso, he moved to Cornelio Malvasia's villa in Panzano, endowed with an observatory. With Malvasia, Montanari performed astronomical observations during the years 1662 and 1663 and contributes to the publication of *Ephemerides Novissimae* (1662). Through Malvasia, he met Domenico Cassini and Giovanni Battista Riccioli in Bologna. At the death of Malvasia in 1664, he obtained the chair in mathematics in Bologna, which he held for 14 years. He supported the institution of an observatory and collaborated with Cassini, now in Paris. With Carlo Antonio Sampieri, he established the Accademia della Treccia (affiliated with the Accademia del Cimento), leading research on fluid dynamics. Through the Accademia della Treccia, he also entered in contact with the Royal Society of London. In the 1670s, he was involved in a public polemic with the Livornese logician Donato Rossetti (1633–1686) on the nature of tempered glasses. In 1678, he was called by the Venetian senate to read at the University of Padua, where a chair of astronomy and meteorology was established specifically for him. After 6 years in Padua, he obtained the *ricondotta* from the Venetian senate. During

his stay in Venice, he also engaged in works of public utility – especially connected with mining, hydraulics, and coinage. Of overweight constitution and weighed down by the frequent trips that he had undertaken to supervise public hydraulic works, he was caught by a stroke in 1783, losing the sight of one eye and suffering impediments in speech and ambulation. Having to stop his services as an engineer, he drafted treatises on water and money, which will be published posthumously. Also *Le forze d'Eolo: dialogo fisico-matematico sopra gli effetti del vortice* will be published posthumously in 1694. He died on October 13, 1687, in Padua of a recrudescence of his disease.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Montanari was educated by Paolo Del Buono, a pupil of Galileo. In this regard, he followed this example of a scholar who was prone to direct observation (especially astronomical) and could apply his mathematical knowledge to different fields – from astronomy to hydraulic, from money theory to mechanics, as well as to the solution of practical engineering problems, and from the construction of mines to hydraulic public works. Proof of this is, for instance, his publication on ballistics (*Manualetto de bombisti*, 1682b), which was designed for practical use. At the same time, Montanari has been recognized as part of a broader intellectual community that theorized the methodology of the experimental practice and actively pursued the public good as the ultimate goal of the scientific inquiry (see Vanzo 2016). This is also testified by his activity as a founder of institutions: in addition to the Accademia della Treccia, Montanari also favored the establishment of a number of astronomical observatories in Bologna and Veneto. His public commitment is also testified by his lifelong engagement against astrology which culminated in the publication of *L'astrologia convinta di falso col mezzo di nuove esperienze* (1685).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Montanari is now mostly remembered for his observation of the second brightest star (called Algol) in the constellation of Perseus which varied in brightness (*Il Discorso astronomico sopra la sparizione d'alcune stelle*, 1671a). This publication had not only an observational goal, but also a theoretical one: it meant to disprove the Aristotelian thesis of the incorruptibility of heavens. His early publications dealt especially with the compilation of ephemerides (Malvasia et al. 1662) and astronomical observations (Montanari 1665b). *Pensieri fisico-matematici* (1667) collected a series of experiments and observations conducted at the Accademia della Treccia, especially addressed to the study of the phenomena of capillarity. Montanari's experiments are underpinned by a corpuscularian understanding of matter. *Pensieri fisico-matematici* (1667) ensued a harsh polemic with Donato Rossetti (1633–1686), a pupil of Borrelli's and then professor of logic in Pisa (and after in Turin). While Montanari explained the problem of capillarity through the concept of viscosity, Rossetti argued that atoms had the power to attract and repel each other in a vacuum. The polemic later involved other issues, as, for instance, the question of equilibrium (*Prostasi fisico-matematica*, 1669) of tempered glasses (*Speculazioni fisiche*, 1671b). Gomez Lopez (1997) has framed this controversy as an example of the fragmented positions sustained by the Galilean school in seventeenth-century Italy.

Impact and Legacy

Montanari had surely a great impact on the establishment of an experimental tradition in Italy during the post-Galilean period. His activity as an astronomical observer was known outside the Italian peninsula, to the extent that his observation of the great comet of 1680 (*Copia di lettera scritta all' Illmo. Signore Antonio Magliabecchi: bibliotecario del serenissimo Gran Duca di Toscana, sopra i moti, i le apparenze della comet ultimamente apparsa sul fine di Novembre*

1680) is quoted twice in Newton's *Principia mathematica* (1687). A crater on the moon is named after Montanari.

Cross-References

► Galilei, Galileo

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Moon, Renaissance Image of the

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Abstract

The history of modern selenography, i.e., the study of the surface and astrophysical features of the Moon, can find its beginning with the neglected contribution of William Gilbert at the start of the seventeenth century and its conventional end with the work by Giambattista Riccioli and Francesco Maria Grimaldi 50 years later, with the inevitable mention to the revolutionary telescopic discoveries by Galileo and to the milestone published on the subject by Johannes Hevelius in between. The interest regarding Earth's unique satellite and its conformation, however, is certainly more ancient, and it was undoubtedly kept alive and brought forth also thanks to the contribution of many other unnamed observers besides the greatest astronomers of the Western tradition, e.g., for meteorological, astrological, and religious reasons that the scientific surveys of the Moon usually did not take account of. In Renaissance time, in particular, the Moon was not only at the center of the astronomical horizon but also became a sort of speculative battlefield between different scientific, technological, and political accounts that were raging across a troubled Europe that somehow was there mirroring his inner hopes and daydreaming expectations.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The history of modern selenography, i.e., the study of the surface and astrophysical features of the Moon, can find its beginning with the neglected contribution of William Gilbert at the start of the seventeenth century and its conventional end with the work by Giambattista Riccioli and Francesco Maria Grimaldi 50 years later, with

the inevitable mention to the revolutionary telescopic discoveries by Galileo and to the milestone published on the subject by Johannes Hevelius in between. The interest regarding Earth's unique satellite and its conformation, however, is certainly more ancient, and it was undoubtedly kept alive and brought forth also thanks to the contribution of many other unnamed observers besides the greatest astronomers of the Western tradition, e.g., for meteorological, astrological, and religious reasons that the scientific surveys of the Moon usually did not take account of.

William Gilbert studied the lunar orb and drew a naked-eye map of the Moon. It was not published until 1651 with the title of *De mundo nostro sublunari Philosophia nova*, although the original manuscript dates back to end of the sixteenth century. Gilbert's purpose there was threefold: (1) looking for a proof that the Moon has its own unbound orbit around the Earth and was not moved passively as embedded in a solid geocentric sphere; (2) detecting changes in the appearance of the lunar disc in order to shed light on its apparent oscillation (a phenomenon known as "libration," i.e., the small but notable apparent movement of the moon in its monthly orbit, that seems to happen in longitude and in latitude, which he noticed, without a telescope, 40 years before Galileo); and (3) accumulating observational evidence for solving through its reference the urgent problem of determining longitude during navigation (Pumfrey 2009, 2011). Moreover, he gave the first geographical nomenclature to some regions of the Moon (an onomastic schema that somehow reminded British imperialism of that age), since Gilbert thought that the satellite was not entirely constituted by water, but also of extensive lands, that were waiting to be colonized.

Before him just Leonardo da Vinci drew naked-eye sketches of the Moon, being convinced that "the part of the Moon that shines consists of water" and that its spots were shadows caused by the Moon's clouds on its oceans (and not, as it was thought, mirror-like reflections of the Earth on Moon's surface). Perhaps Girolamo Fracastoro had a more clear idea of the Moon's appearance before them, because, as he wrote in his

Homocentrica (1538), he had the chance to observe it through a magnifying glass (van Helden 1977, pp. 17, 28).

However, it was the British mathematician Thomas Harriot that made the first known *telescopic* sketch of the Moon in July 1609, albeit unpublished at that time. After his reading of Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius*, Harriot pursued an even better prospect of the satellite with the help of his friend William Lower. In fact, among his notes, there is an annotated drawing of the full moon face, as a result of his 1611–1612 observations, although very poor in detail (probably because of the rudimentary 6x telescope he used).

On the 30th of November, 1609, Galileo turned his own built telescope – an instrument capable of 20-power magnification – toward the satellite, noticing with great excitement that, as he wrote, "the Moon is by no means endowed with a smooth and polished surface, but is rough and uneven and, just as the face of the Earth itself, crowded everywhere with vast prominences, deep chasms, and convolutions." What have been called for centuries "*maculae*" or "lunar spots" revealed themselves as actual horographic features for the first time, and the Moon no longer appeared at his eyes as a polished, translucent crystalline sphere. Thus Galileo drew his famous sepia ink-wash watercolors in order to show how progressed the pattern of illumination and the shadow line (or "terminator") as the angle of incidence of solar light was changing there. It has been recognized how much Galileo's drawings of the Moon bear signs of Renaissance pictorial techniques (shading, perspective, etc.) and awareness of coeval map-making conventions (marked coastlines, darkened lakes, etc.). Those illustrations remained the unsurpassed standard for nearly 20 years, both for scientists (Scheiner, Malapert, Biancani, Borri) and for artists (Cigoli, Elsheimer). Also in the original four copperplate engravings from the first edition of *Sidereus Nuncius*, it can be appreciated the esthetic quality and the detail, e.g., the typical light-and-shade pattern produced by obliquely illuminated craters, then lost in the subsequent prints. However Galileo altered many lunar details in order to reach a higher explanatory effect, stylizing or exaggerating the size of lunar

features, and that happened “because they were meant as illustrations of his verbal arguments about the Moon’s nature” (Winkler and Van Helden 1992, p. 107) and not as neutral, objective depictions (this in part explains some macroscopic omissions remarked by his successors and critics, such as *Mare serenitatis*, from the final renderings). In 1632, after reiterated observations, Galileo was aware of lunar libration too. Despite Galileo’s discoveries, scholastic theologians were at first neither ready nor available to accept any revision of the traditional aristotelian-avverroistic theory, since they maintained that those discoveries were not sufficient to invalidate secular strongholds, such as Moon’s essential incorruptibility and its facing the sublunar world as the cause of its one-side imperfection (Ariew 1984, 2001; Wilson 2001).

The Jesuit Christophorus Clavius rather tried to restore the traditional view recovering the thesis of different density in lunar material as the reason for the detectable spots, since in medieval times Averroes, as Avenatha (Ibn Ezra) before him, linked the nature of the Moon with that of the Earth and believed that the Moon was constituted by more or less dense parts of incorruptible substance, which consequently receive the light of the sun and release it with a sort of fluorescence with different intensity – and that is because they retained that spots could be seen on its surface (Duhem 1985, pp. 481–482).

Well before the beginning of telescopic astronomy, Kepler conjectured that the Moon was a celestial body similar to the Earth. In fact, noticing the evolving irregular patterns of light and shadow on the surface of the Moon, Kepler reached the same conclusion as Galileo’s, albeit speculatively, in his *Astronomia pars optica* (1604). Moreover, in his *Dissertatio cum Nuncio Sidereo* (1610), he underlined that many results among Galileo’s conclusions had been anticipated by previous astronomers and in part by himself too. For instance, he said the idea that the Moon’s superficial conformation is similar to the Earth’s surface could be traced back to the second century AD, when Plutarch wrote his treatise *On the Face which appears on the Orb of the Moon*.

Some perplexities were raised by Galileo’s discovery of the so-called secondary light of the Moon, which he noticed as detectable during lunar eclipses. On this issue, in 1626 Bartholomew Amicus maintained, again with Averroes, that the Moon receives its light from the Sun and “incorporates” it within its own smooth body, making that light its own light. The following year Raphael Aversa thought on the contrary that the Moon lacked an innate light since it cannot acquire solar light because its surface was considered perfectly transparent, albeit with more or less opaque zones. Aversa also disregarded Galileo’s theory of the “secondary light” of the Moon as solar light reflected on the satellite by the Earth. For him, as for many other seventeenth-century scholastic authors, “Moon’s secondary light... comes from the surrounding parts of the heavens, seemingly from sunlight reflected to the Moon from other celestial bodies,” Earth excluded (Grant 1994, p. 406).

Galilean observations gained a wide echo also in arts, as it is emblematic in the fresco *The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* depicted with great license by Lodovico Cigoli on the Cappella Paolina in the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore (1610–1612), since it shows a cratered and maculate Moon, much as it appeared in Galileo’s drawings (Ostrow 1996). However, it was in the field of literature that the Moon as a new object of discovery and daydreaming phantasies gained the larger space. For, fictional accounts of imaginary travel to the Moon, whose archetypal model was Lucian’s *Alēthē diēgēmata* (*True Stories*) dating back to the second century AD, were so numerous in the Renaissance that can only be listed here, starting with the famous XXXIV canto of Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (1532), to subsequent other contributions as Ben Jonson’s *Newes from the New World Discover’d in the Moone* (1620); Kepler’s *Somnium* (posthumous publ. in 1634, but composed in 1609), Francis Godwin’s *The Man in the Moone, or a Discourse of a Voyage Thither by Domingo Gonsales, the Speedy Messenger* (1638), Cyrano de Bergerac’s *L’autre Monde: Les Etats et Empires de la Lune* (1649), Pantaleón de Ribera’s satirical *Vexamen de la Luna* (1626),

John Wilkins's *The Discovery of a World in the Moon* (1638, where, as in *Somnium*, it was imagined that the Moon was inhabited), etc. (cf. Nicolson 1948; Romm 1989; de Armas 1999; Bezzola Lambert 2002; Chen-Morris 2005; Houston 2010).

Between January 1637 and December 1638, working on Kepler's hypotheses on planetary motion, a 20-year-old Jeremiah Horrocks was the first to demonstrate that the Moon moved in an elliptical path around the Earth by analogy to the motions of a conical pendulum, and on this issue he also anticipated Isaac Newton in suggesting the gravitational influence of the Sun, as well as the one of the Earth, on the Moon's orbit (Wilson 1987a, b).

Between 1628 and 1637, Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc e Pierre Gassendi, with the help of the painter Claude Mellan, undertook a major project of accurate depiction of the lunar face as an aid for determining the precise longitude of the Earth in its reference. The project was partially completed with three engravings that were undoubtedly successful from the artistic point of view but in a way that was almost useless for the astronomical needs that it was planned for.

In order to solve the same problem, the cosmographer and map-maker Michael Florent van Langren produced what is generally regarded as "the first true map of the Moon" (Whitaker 1999, p. 128), whose first version was completed in 1645 with an entire new set of nomenclature for the depicted lunar topography, denominated after the names of eminent people – "the basic scheme of nomenclature that is used to this day" (ibid., p. 129). No matter how remarkable, this result was soon superseded by Hevelius' groundbreaking map.

In fact, the real game-changer in the field was the publication of Johannes Hevelius' *Selenographia: sive Lunae Descriptio* (1647), which really rose the bar in Moon observation and depiction thanks to his own built 40x telescope that did not suffer from spherical nor chromatic aberration. "*Selenographia* remained the standard work of reference on the subject for well over a century" (Whitaker 1989, p. 134), being "truly one of the greatest publications in

all seventeenth-century European astronomy" (Montgomery 1999, p. 173). There Hevelius showed the entire lunar face, also comprehensive of the libration zones, with no shadows, as if it were homogeneously enlightened from a unique source of light. From observation to the printing of the engravings, everything was under his control, as unprecedented guarantee of reliability of the visual evidence provided to the readers. The esthetic quality of his scientific illustrations was impressive, even though the baroque size of his plates struggled to preserve the precision of details for necessary longitude measurements. He proposed new names for lunar features inspired by classical characters and figures on the basis of presumed and idealized similarities with respective areas of the Earth. He even thought that certain areas were inhabited, while others were regions of volcanic activity.

In 1649 Eustachio Divini arranged a broadsheet of a full Moon, correcting and improving a bit Hevelius' work. The following year, Gerolamo Sersale offered another large image of the lunar face, adding new details to Hevelius' map and thus improving on his turn the topographical knowledge in that regard. But it was only when another Jesuit – Giambattista Riccioli – contributed to the research by providing what would have been a new, monumental classic on the subject, namely, the ambitious *Almagestum Novum* (1651), that a new reference text came on the market raising the selenographical standard to an unprecedented level. Riccioli's work was equipped with new and more precise maps of the satellite provided by his assistant Francesco Maria Grimaldi, correcting many errors of almost all their predecessors and restoring an expanded version of van Langren's naming schema. The positive reception of this achievement was so wide that it finally imposed its naming over Hevelius' one, after a long period in which the two works were used as a parallel reference.

Finally, while in his *Questions on De caelo* (1657) the German Jesuit Melchior Cornäus rejected the existence of lunar epicycles and assumed that the Moon moves through a fluid medium, the fact that the Moon always exhibits the same face to earthly observers was explained

by Otto von Guericke in his *Experimenta nova* (1672) rejecting the superseded epicycles theory with the idea of an attractive force emanating from the Earth which holds the Moon in its orbit so that the same face is always the one seen.

Cross-References

- [Astronomy](#)
- [Clavius, Christophorus](#)
- [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- [Telescope in Renaissance Science](#)

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Moral Weakness

► [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Weakness of](#)

Morales, Ambrosio de

Born: 1513, Cordoba

Died: 1591, Cordoba

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Abstract

Ambrosio de Morales (1513–91) was a Castilian humanist historian, antiquarian, and teacher of rhetoric at the University of Alcalá.

Best known for his *General Chronicle of Spain* (1574–86) and its companion volume, *The Antiquities of the Cities of Spain* (1575), Morales also wrote historical commentaries and literary and moral essays. Although he made no truly original contributions to philosophy, he is an important representative of a Catholic humanist tradition that sought to synthesize elements of Erasmian humanism with neo-Thomist moral theology and Tridentine doctrines of ecclesiastical authority. He transmitted these ideas mainly through his historical writings. As a historian he was both methodologically and culturally conservative. He asserted the ethnic essentialism of the Spanish nation, as well as the central role of Roman Catholic Christianity in Hispanic identity. While he advocated critical humanist methods for historical research, he was also a deeply committed counter-Reformation Catholic who strove to reinvigorate the cult of the saints by reviving hagiographical and martyrological traditions and defending pious historical legends against skeptical critics. Morales exerted a lasting influence on Spanish historical thought. Although his literary and moral essays were less widely read, his *Chronicle* was regarded for more than two centuries as one of the most thorough and reliable narratives of Spanish history, especially ecclesiastical history, and as a model of judicious critical historiography.

Biography

Morales was born in Cordoba in 1513 to Mencia de Oliva and Antonio (Antón García) de Morales, a medical doctor who held the first chair of metaphysics and philosophy at the newly founded University of Alcalá. Ambrosio was raised in aristocratic circles in Cordoba, learning Latin and elementary theology from private tutors. He began his formal studies at the University of Salamanca in 1526 under the tutelage of his maternal uncle, the humanist Hernán Pérez de Oliva. He left Salamanca and returned to Cordoba shortly after his uncle's premature death in 1531. The next year he entered the Jeronymite Order, taking

his vows in 1533 at San Jerónimo de Valparaíso, a fifteenth-century monastery overlooking the ruins of the caliphal city of Madinat al-Zahra outside Cordoba. His self-castration two years later led to his abrupt departure (perhaps expulsion) from the order, followed by a dark phase of almost a decade, of which no records survive. He resumed his university studies at the University of Alcalá de Henares around 1543, studying both theology and rhetoric. No longer in religious orders, he now lived as a secular cleric and maintained a keen interest in religious matters. By 1548 (possibly earlier), he held Alcalá's chair of "rhetoric and humanities." While this required him to lecture on Latin rhetoric, his main scholarly interests began to shift towards history and antiquities. He expanded his home into a luxurious student residence, mentoring and training a cadre of noble pupils in rhetoric, antiquities, and historical studies. His protégés, whom he remembered warmly in his writings, included Alfonso Chacón, Diego de Guevara y Haro, Juan Fernández Franco, the painter Pablo de Céspedes, and King Philip II's illegitimate half-brother, Don Juan de Austria (Redel 1909).

In 1563, Morales was named royal chronicler and charged with continuing Florián de Ocampo's unfinished *General Chronicle of Spain*. He continued the *General Chronicle* in three distinct parts (1574, 1577, 1586), which won critical acclaim. In 1575 he published a companion volume entitled *The Antiquities of the Cities of Spain*, a topographical survey of the geography, architecture, and history of about seventy Spanish cities mentioned in the *Chronicle*. Between 1563 and 1588 Morales advised the Spanish monarchy on numerous matters relating to Christian scholarship and history, including the provision of books and manuscripts for the library at the new royal palace in El Escorial, and the veneration of ancient and modern saints. In this period he also wrote more than a dozen lesser works, including a defense of the work of fellow chronicler Jerónimo de Zurita against criticisms by royal officials (1563; published in Zurita 1610); a life of Fray Diego de Alcalá (who in 1588 would become the first saint canonized since 1523) (1567; published in 1793b); a hagiographical account of the

Roman-era martyrs Justo and Pastor of Alcalá (1568); a Latin hexameter poem celebrating the Battle of Lepanto (1571; published in Morales 1987); an account of his own travels to northern Castile to examine relics, royal tombs, and manuscripts for Philip II (1573; published in Morales 1765); an edition of the works of the ninth-century Saint Eulogius of Cordoba (1574); and a life of the twelfth-century Countess Matilda of Canossa (1588; published in Morales 1793b).

In 1578, Morales moved to Toledo to serve as vicar and administrator of the Hospitals of Puente del Arzobispo. In 1582, he returned to his native Cordoba, where he completed the third volume of his *Chronicle*, advised the cathedral chapter on local hagiography, and died in 1591, aged 78.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

As a young philosophy student in the late 1520s, Morales articulated a Christian humanist ethic that would inform much of his later thinking. His first known work, written before 1531, was a translation and brief commentary on the *Tablet of Cebes*, a Hellenistic Greek dialogue (attributed to a student of Socrates but probably from the second century A.D.). The dialogue describes an allegorical tablet in the temple of Kronos in Athens depicting "Life" and the moral journey toward the good, in which the traveler must find his way toward Happiness by exercising Virtue and avoiding Deceit, Riches, Lust, and other temptations along the way. Morales's commentary, probably written as a student exercise and inspired by his uncle Pérez de Oliva's teaching, asserted the consistency of this Neoplatonist teaching with Christian moral doctrine. Morales finally published the work much later, in 1586, together with a collection of Pérez de Oliva's works and fifteen "moral discourses" of his own, written around 1580. These didactic moral essays propounded an ecumenical Christian humanism that harmonized Stoic, Platonist, Aristotelian, and patristic moral teachings. It emphasized that every human being was capable of knowing and doing the good, insisted on the importance of moral instruction for the young, and asserted that

the differences between various ethical schools were less important than the similarities. These simple convictions, broadly characteristic of the Erasmian humanism that was popular in Spain in the 1520s, also appeared in many of Morales's other works. But apart from these very early and late writings, Morales rarely wrote about moral philosophy directly. The increasing mistrust of Erasmus by the Spanish Inquisition from the 1520s onward may explain why Erasmian ideas became more muted in Morales's work. After mid-century, Morales also became more firmly committed to post-Tridentine Catholic causes such as the cult of the saints that were somewhat at odds with Erasmian teaching.

Morales's interests turned toward languages and history in the 1540s, after he established himself at the University of Alcalá. Although he had mastered both Greek and Latin, his first published work, the *Discourse on the Castilian Language* (1546), was a spirited defense of the equality of Castilian with Latin as a literary language, taking its cue from Italian writers like Dante and Bembo who had made a similar case for the Tuscan vernacular. This work (which Morales reprinted in 1586) inspired similar apologies for the vernacular by Fray Luis de León and Fernando de Herrera.

The Castilian cultural pride expressed in the *Discourse* found fuller expression in Morales's historical writings. His interest in historical research and writing may be traced to his childhood in Cordoba, where his father, one of a growing number of amateur antiquarians, collected local antiquities and displayed them in the family home. Ambrosio's humanist-antiquarian colleagues in Alcalá's rhetoric faculty reawakened and deepened these childhood interests. Although history was not a formal academic subject, the required texts for Greek rhetoric included Herodotus and Thucydides, and the university's rhetoric lecturers, beginning with the great humanist Antonio de Nebrija (Alcalá's principal lecturer in rhetoric 1514–1522), regularly wrote histories and antiquarian works alongside rhetorical and grammatical ones. From the 1540s, Morales pursued his own part-time antiquarian research into Roman and pre-Roman monuments and

geography, in collaboration with both colleagues and students.

Morales turned to writing national history after the death of Florián de Ocampo in 1555. Ocampo, a onetime student of Nebrija, had labored for almost two decades on a *General Chronicle of Spain* that aspired to narrate the history of the Iberian Peninsula from its first settlement by a grandson of Noah down to the present day, in 80 books. It was loosely modeled on the *Estoria de Espanna* (*Primera crónica general*), the historical chronicle compiled in the 1280s by Alfonso X of Castile. Throughout the 1540s Morales hesitated to compete with Ocampo by writing his own history, despite his keen interest in the subject. But when Ocampo died in 1555, he had completed only five of his projected 80 books, ending with the Second Punic War (c. 206 B.C.), and Morales welcomed the invitation to take over the project. From the early 1560s until the mid-1580s he made this his main scholarly undertaking. He would add seven more books to Ocampo's five, taking the *Chronicle* from c. 200 B.C. down to c. 1030 A.D.

Morales shared many of Ocampo's approaches to Spanish antiquity, including a passion for classical authors, a belief in an essential continuity of Hispanic identity from ancient to modern times, and an ambivalence toward the ancient Romans: while he revered the Romans as cultural ancestors, he also treated them as unjust foreign invaders on Spanish soil. He adopted Ocampo's label "our Spaniards" (*nuestros españoles*) for the subjects of his history, and like Ocampo he paid tribute to the cultural diversity of pre-Roman Spain by highlighting regional differences in language, religion, and social organization. (Alvarez-Junco 2011; García Cárcel 2011) Even more overtly than Ocampo, Morales oriented his whole history toward the coming of Christianity, arguing that true Hispanic unity and identity were only achieved with the establishment of the Catholic Church. He wholeheartedly endorsed the medieval historiographical paradigm in which the Muslim conquest and ensuing "destruction of Spain" in the eighth century were the greatest misfortune in all of Spanish history and the ensuing "restoration" of Christian Spain (later to be called the

“reconquest”) the greatest blessing (Ríos Saloma 2011). In this paradigm, the Visigoths created the first unified Spanish Christian monarchy, and the Asturian-Leonese-Castilian kings who expanded their Christian territories from the ninth century onward were the Visigoths’ biological and spiritual heirs, passing the Visigothic inheritance on to medieval Castile and to the Habsburg monarchs of the sixteenth century.

Like the medieval chroniclers whose vision of medieval history he closely followed, Morales was pious and moralistic and firmly committed to an Augustinian notion of providence. He regularly pronounced moral judgment on his historical subjects, and he interpreted Spain’s misfortunes as divine punishment for rulers’ unethical conduct and successes as divine reward for sincere faith and virtuous living. He understood all historical events to be guided by providence and believed that the saints played a special role in carrying out God’s plans in history. He gave extensive treatment to the lives of saints, which he asserted should be one of the four principal themes of national history.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Morales combined his moralism with his patriotic essentialism by highlighting both the virtues of the early “Spaniards” as a people and the moral failings of certain rulers in their history. He contrasted the savagery of Spain’s Roman conquerors with the loyalty and decency of the early Iberians, which seemed to foreshadow Christian morals. The most vivid example of such contrast appears in his account of the Numantian War and the brutal Roman siege of Numantia (133 B.C.). This may have been intended as a warning to contemporary readers about the moral dangers of imperial conquest, in harmony with the teachings of Dominican theologians of the School of Salamanca, Bartolomé de las Casas and Melchor Cano. Cano had taught theology to Morales at Alcalá around 1543 (Lupher 2003). But the ideological thrust of the *Chronicle* as a whole was not to undermine Spanish imperialism; it was rather to justify imperial conquest undertaken by virtuous

monarchs for the purpose of Christian evangelization. Nor was Morales consistently anti-Roman. He praised the moral virtues of many Roman rulers and suggested that the Spanish character was deeply indebted to Roman teaching and to the secular virtues taught and practiced by pagan philosophers like the Spanish-born Seneca.

Melchor Cano’s influence may also be seen in Morales’s critical method, often regarded as the most distinctive characteristic of his historical writing. Morales presented himself as a judicious, critical-minded humanist who scrupulously evaluated his sources for “verisimilitude” (a concept Cano had emphasized in his *Loci theologicorum libri XII*). He punctuated both the *Chronicle* and the *Antiquities* with extensive reflections on source selection and evaluation, comparing the value of different kinds of evidence and offering guidelines for evaluating both textual and artifact sources (Binotti 2009). He denounced “fabulous” sources such as the medieval *Codex Calixtinus*, the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus of Voragine, and the forged “Berosus” commentaries of Anniius of Viterbo (1498) which Florián de Ocampo had used as a principal source for the pre-Roman period. Morales made more extensive use of numismatic and archeological evidence than any Spanish historian before him, much of it based on his own personal travels, transcriptions, and collecting (Sánchez Madrid 2002; Binotti 2012).

Morales’s critical spirit was firmly anchored, however, to his prior commitment to Catholic ecclesiastical authority and his desire to defend and augment the Counter-Reformation cult of the saints. He followed Cano in arguing that historical knowledge differed fundamentally from theological knowledge; while theology could offer certainty, history could only offer degrees of “probability” and must therefore remain subservient to theology and to Church teaching. Morales remained deeply respectful of medieval historiographical and devotional traditions and incorporated into his *Chronicle* many hagiographic traditions now considered legendary that he took from earlier chronicles and from liturgical sources, including the legends that the Apostles Paul and James had evangelized Spain in the first

century. Although he recognized the fallibility of oral tradition, he affirmed that popular memory alone could sometimes serve as an adequate source for a hagiographic tradition when written evidence failed. Here, too, Morales faithfully followed Melchor Cano, whose *Loci* honored both humanist critical principles and the strictly orthodox decrees of the Council of Trent; both men insisted that Catholic writers must affirm historical traditions that were supported by ecclesiastical authority, even in the face of critical doubts. For Morales, humanist criticism must serve the cause of defending the orthodox Catholic faith, which indeed he saw as one of the larger purposes of writing national history (Van Liere 2006, 2012).

Impact and Legacy

Morales's *Chronicle*, although somewhat too erudite to engage a wide audience, served as an invaluable historical source for generations of other scholars and literary writers. It informed much later history writing, as well as historical fiction such as Miguel de Cervantes's drama *Numantia* (c. 1585) (De Armas 1998). The *Chronicle* was particularly valuable to ecclesiastical historians, including forgers who enhanced Morales's account of Christian Spain with new legendary material of their own invention and critical humanists who sought to debunk such forgeries (Olds 2015). The Jesuit Juan de Mariana's *History of Spain*, the first national history of Spain written for a popular audience (Latin edition 1592, Spanish 1601), also used Morales as a principal source. The superior literary quality of Mariana's *History* made it much more popular than Morales's *Chronicle*, which soon went out of print, despite its greater erudition. Morales's work enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in the eighteenth century, when Enlightened scholars Augustinian Henrique Flórez and Benito Cano rediscovered and published his works, including many previously unpublished manuscripts, and hailed him (justly, albeit with some exaggeration) as the father of critical historiography in Spain.

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More, Henry

Born: 12 October 1614, Grantham, Lincolnshire
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Abstract

Henry More was an expounder of Cambridge Platonism, as he largely relied on a Platonic-inspired standpoint in pursuing his aims: the demonstration of the immortality of the soul, the critique of atheism, and religious enthusiasm. He maintains that the soul emanates from

God (being therefore not created and pre-existing body) and argues for the existence of a spirit of nature as means to explain natural phenomena, which cannot be accounted for only in mechanical terms. Moreover, he argues for the extended nature of God and spirits, as only in this way they can act on the world. Accordingly, More rejects Descartes's theory of immaterial substance, but relies on his ontological argument to provide a demonstration of the existence of God. His critique of enthusiasm (especially that one characterizing Neoplatonic mysticism) is medical, as he distinguishes between a rational, religious inspiration, and a melancholic one.

Alternate Names

[Morus, Henricus](#)

Biography

Henry More was born in 1614 in Grantham to a Calvinist family. He attended the local grammar school, before studying at Eton (1628) and from 1631 at the Christ's College of Cambridge. He took his BA in 1636 and his MA in 1639 and became a fellow of the College in the same year. He was acquainted with Platonism from 1635 by reading the *Theologia germanica* (Crocker 1997, 2003, 4–5), and in 1642 he composed his *Psychodia Platonica*. As he became interested in natural philosophy he started to study Descartes's philosophy and, prompted by Samuel Hartlib, he entered in correspondence with the Frenchman (Descartes 1903, 235–647, Descartes 1991, 360–382). In 1650–1651 he quarrelled with Thomas Vaughan (who had embraced Neoplatonism and mysticism), as More accused him of religious enthusiasm (Crocker 2003, 45–61). In 1650, More started a correspondence with the half-sister of his pupil John Finch, Anne (later Conway), which would last until 1677 (Nicolson 1992; Hutton 2004, 73–93). During the Interregnum (1653–1659), More published his main philosophical works: *An antidote against atheism* (1655), *Conjectura Cabbalistica* (1653),

Enthusiasmus triumphatus (1656), and *Immortality of the soul* (1659). After the Interregnum he mainly published apologetic treatises, such as the *Grand Mystery of Godliness* (1660), since, with the Declaration of Breda (1660), Charles II had promised more religious toleration (Gabbey 1982, 222–230). In 1663, he fell off with theologians Joseph Beaumont and Samuel Parker, who accused him of being a latitudinarian for his anti-Calvinist positions. More received support from Lord Conway, Anne's husband (Crocker 2003, 69–110). From 1670, More distanced himself from Lady Conway, as he rejected the mystical Kabbalah of Isaac Luria, to which Anne had been introduced by Francis van Helmont, and her Quakerism, which More considered a form of religious enthusiasm (Crocker 2003, 183–198; Coudert 1992; Fouke 1997, 152–156). In 1681–1682, he entered into another theological dispute, this time with Richard Baxter, who criticized his anti-voluntarism (Crocker 2003, 167–181). More died in 1687. (Crocker 1990a; Ward 2000; Henry 2012).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The main objectives of More were theological, as he aimed to (1) demonstrate the immortality of the soul, (2) refute atheism, and (3) explain and eradicate religious enthusiasm (More 1660, v–vi, 1662, Preface, 6; Gabbey 1982, 222–226; Hutton 2015, 144). In pursuing these objectives, he adopted Platonic-inspired arguments (being, therefore, a main expounder of the “Cambridge Platonism”) and confronted the philosophy of René Descartes.

The first concern of More was with the notion of the individual soul, which he characterizes as incorporeal and pre-existing to the bodies. According to his Neoplatonic (i.e., Plotinian and Ficinian) and Origenian conception (Jacob 1985, 1991), souls become individuated from a unique world soul (which is a hypostasis of God) and degrade from their original perfection as they are joined to three elements (ethereal, aerial, and terrestrial); therefore, souls cannot have been created by God, as this would imply that He is responsible for their degradation. Consequently, souls

pre-exist bodies and, as they ultimately emanate from God, are immortal (More 1642, 1987, 1998; Jacob 1987, i–lxxxviii; Crocker 2001; Reid 2012, 349–381). More's main target in his account of the soul is Hobbes's materialism, which he rejects since ratiocination, free will, and apparitions (Coudert 1990) cannot be explained by matter and mechanism alone. Also, More opposes Calvinist voluntarism, as God is bounded by absolute goodness (More 1668; Crocker 2001; Henry 2012). This position underlies his moral philosophy, in which he demonstrates that good and evil are absolute values, and pursued by a “boniform faculty” which includes both reason and sensation (More 1667; Henry 2012; Hutton 2015, 13–14).

In his critique of atheism (which he relates to materialism and mechanism), More uses Descartes's ontological argument for the existence of God (More 1655; Gabbey 1982, 199–204) and adopts Descartes's vortex theory to defend Mosaic cosmogony, in accordance with the tradition of the Christian Kabbalah (More 1653; Gabbey 1982, 204–205; Popkin 1990; Coudert 1992; Henry 2012). In dealing with the notion of soul, however, More comes to criticize Descartes's account of the motion of animals by matter alone (which is passive) and postulates that such motion is given by immaterial souls coextended with matter. Even God, in order to act on the world, has to be extended. As extension can be immaterial and void, More argues for the existence of an absolute, infinite space (More 1668, dialogue 1, 1995; Hall 1990b, 202–223; Henry 1986; Reid 2003, 2007, 2008, 2012, 185–236; Agostini 2011). The idea of an extended immaterial substance is elaborated into that of “spirit of nature” or “hylarchic principle” which is the inferior part of the world soul and serves to account for material causality and for gravitation. This principle explains also the experiments with the air pump performed by Robert Boyle (Boyle 1672; More 1987, book 3, Chap. 12; Hall 1990a, c; Gabbey 1982, 219–222, 1990; Reid 2012, 279–348), who however rejected More's theological use of them (Boyle 2000; Henry 1990).

Thirdly, More assumed enthusiasm among his objectives, as he distanced himself from the Platonism of Vaughan, who turned to mysticism (Crocker 1990b; Fouke 1997, 50–95), and from

Quakerism (centred on the notion of “inner light”). More mainly focused on the physiological causes of enthusiasm, such as melancholy, to which he opposed an illumination identifiable by its sobriety, rationality, and adherence to Scripture (More 1656; Burnham 1974; Heyd 1995, 92–108; Fouke 1997, 156–174).

Cross-References

- ▶ Academy, Platonic
- ▶ Animals in the Renaissance
- ▶ Causality, Renaissance
- ▶ Conway, Anne
- ▶ Descartes, René
- ▶ Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural
- ▶ Ethics, Renaissance
- ▶ Experiment in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Ficino, Marsilio
- ▶ Gravititas, Renaissance Concept of
- ▶ Historia Naturalis
- ▶ Hobbes, Thomas
- ▶ Immanence, Renaissance Idea of
- ▶ Immortality of the Soul, Renaissance Problem of
- ▶ Infinite, Renaissance Idea of
- ▶ Life in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Matter in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Metaphysics in the Renaissance
- ▶ Motion in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Mysticism in the Renaissance
- ▶ Origenes in the Renaissance
- ▶ Pampsychism
- ▶ Spirit in Renaissance Medicine
- ▶ Theology, Renaissance
- ▶ Vacuum in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free
- ▶ Witchcraft, Renaissance Idea of

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More, Thomas

Born: 1478, London

Died: 1535, London

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Abstract

Sir Thomas More is one of the luminaries of Tudor England. His fame rests on several pillars: his saintly character, first attested in the

letters and biographies of his contemporaries; his best-known work, *Utopia*; and his imprisonment and eventual martyrdom for refusing to take an oath legitimizing the divorce of Henry VIII from Katharine of Aragon.

More was a lawyer, poet, and humanist. He was pivotal to the revival of Greek studies in England. He belonged to a circle of English humanists including William Grocyn, John Colet, William Lily, and Thomas Linacre and was also a close friend of Desiderius Erasmus. More was a busy and successful lawyer, and subsequently a statesman, serving as Lord Chancellor under Henry VIII. On a domestic level, More was also a significant educational reformer: his household was run as an academy, balancing piety with humane letters. He believed in women's capacity for academic education, and his daughter Margaret was celebrated for her intellectual accomplishments.

More stands at the threshold between the medieval and early modern age. His career embraces scholasticism and the new learning, inherited Christendom and the radical break of the Reformation. Intellectually, he belonged to a medieval world shaped by the *trivium* of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. These disciplines were absorbed at an early age and polished through study, conversation, writing, lectures, and legal argument. More's own rhetoric is directed to varying ends, from epigrammatic verse in English and Latin, to the sophisticated wit of *Utopia*, the intensity of his anti-Lutheran polemics and the devotional character of his prison writings in the Tower of London. Underlying this diverse body of work is the conviction that human order rests in the great impersonal structures sanctioned by tradition, chief among them the body of canonical and common law, and the teachings of the Church. It is this conviction that led to More's downfall. He could not approve Henry's declaration that his marriage to Katherine of Aragon had been void, since to do so would have admitted division into the Church and put man's word over God's law.

Biography

Childhood

Thomas More was born in Milk Street, Cripplegate, London on 7 February 1478 (though 7 Feb 1477, and 6 Feb 1478 are also possible), the son of John More (c.1451–1530), a barrister, and his wife Agnes. He attended London's leading grammar school, St. Anthony's in Threadneedle Street (c.1482–89), where he was trained in Latin grammar and the foundations of classical rhetoric. Through the offices of his father, More then entered the household of Archbishop John Morton at Lambeth Palace (c.1489–92), where he imbibed courtly manners in his service as a page. Morton was at that time Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor, and he appears in *Utopia* as a model of sage authority. More's duties allowed time for further formal lessons and for participation in the dramatic entertainments. According to the first biography, by his son-in-law William Roper, the young More's improvisatory skill in drama struck visitors to the palace, while Morton predicted that More would "prove a marvelous man" (Roper and Harpsfield 1963).

University

Morton sent More to Oxford (c. 1492; college uncertain). There he would probably have become acquainted with the *trivium*, the curriculum of the liberal arts, comprising grammar, rhetoric, and logic. After 2 years at Oxford, he returned to London. According to a letter by Erasmus, More was dragged away from Oxford by his father to train as a lawyer. But there is no firm evidence for this story, which suits Erasmus's own preference for unworldly scholarship, and such short stays in Oxford were common. More studied law first at New Inn (c. 1494) and then Lincoln's Inn (1496) (Ackroyd 1998; House 2004).

Legal Studies, Humanism, and the Charterhouse

The years after Oxford were a time of intense intellectual activity. More came into contact with leading scholars of the new learning, John Colet, William Grocyn, and Thomas Linacre, and

through them with wider European intellectual life. All these men had travelled to Italy and come into contact with the revival of Greek studies. A common pursuit was renovation of theology through the recovery of original texts of the scriptures and patristic writings. The English humanists were equally committed to the application of study to practical affairs, demonstrated in John Colet's foundation of St. Paul's School (1508–12) and Linacre's work as a physician.

An important addition to this circle was Erasmus, who met More on his first visit to England in 1499. The two became lasting friends. It is a mark of More's connections at the highest level that he was able to take Erasmus to visit the royal children at Eltham Palace. Stimulated by such academic company, More learned Greek, wrote poetry, and lectured in 1501 on St. Augustine's *City of God* in Grocyn's church of St. Lawrence Jewry. His legal career was equally busy; in 1500, he lectured on English Law at Furnivall's Inn and in 1501 qualified as a barrister.

As well as intense study of classical letters, and a busy legal career, More was also drawn to the spiritual life. From about 1500, he lodged in or near the Charterhouse, home to the Carthusian order. According to Erasmus, More considered the monastic vocation himself, only to find fleshly urgings for married life too strong. Whatever the truth of this account, More clearly responded to the pieties of the Carthusians: even after his marriage, he wore a penitential hairshirt. In this period, he sought balance between the active and the contemplative life. One answer lay in the writings of the medieval spiritual writer Walter Hilton (c.1340–1396). In his *Mixed Life*, Hilton explains how an inner life of prayer, study, and devotion can support practical business in the world, where this is directed towards the better governance of the public realm. This model of lay piety helps explain More's direction of his own life and household (Kenny 1983).

1504–1515

More's own practical business included his first appearance as a Member of Parliament in 1504. The next year, he married Jane Colt and they

settled in the Old Barge, Bucklersbury. A daughter, Margaret (1505–44), was soon followed by two other daughters and a son (Guy 2008). In 1505–06, the household was visited by Erasmus. The two men worked on a translation into Latin of the satires of the second-century Greek satirist Lucian. Both More and Erasmus were attracted by Lucian's ironical mode, his puncturing of self-deception and superstition, and his use of dialogue. The resulting volume was published in Paris in 1506. The example of Lucian was an important influence on Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* and More's *Utopia*.

In 1509, Henry VII died, and Henry VIII acceded to the English throne. Erasmus and others greeted the cultivated young monarch as a friend of learning. More's own commemorative verses on the coronation were presented to the king. In the same year, More was admitted as a member of the Mercers' guild, whom he was able to advise as an expert in commercial law. In 1510, More published a translation into English of a Latin biography of the Florentine philosopher Pico della Mirandola, by Pico's nephew Gianfrancesco, *The Life of John Picus Earl of Mirandola* (Cousins and Grace 2009, ch. 5). As a pious layman who did not take monastic vows, Pico spoke to More's own spiritual history; as a scholar withdrawn from worldly concerns, he represented a path More did not take and has something in common with the fictional Raphael Hythloday, visitor to Utopia. In the same year of 1510, More was also the dedicatee of one of the most famous Renaissance works, Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*. Work on this was started in More's own house in 1509, and its original Latin title, *Encomium Moriae*, plays on his name. This work's ironic tone, vivid style, and vision for ecclesiastical reform echoes the conversation of the two men and their circle of humanist friends.

In 1511, More's wife Jane died. Within a month, compelled by the practical needs of a busy household, More married Alice Middleton, widow of John, a London merchant. His life over the succeeding years brought experiences which inform *Utopia*. As undersheriff of London he presided over the sheriff's court. This gave him a

direct insight into London's social problems (later to be anatomized in *Utopia* Part One). Meanwhile, the king disappointed early promises of a cultural dawn. Inspired by his forebear Henry V, he was now in ardent pursuit of martial glory and invaded France in 1513. This belligerent act prompted Erasmus's antiwar tract *Dulce bellum inexpertis* ("how sweet war is to the inexperienced") and antimilitaristic epigrams by More himself.

In c. 1513, More started his *History of Richard III*. This was composed in Latin and English (the versions are not identical). The author's purpose in writing it is not clear, though it is clearly moral in intent and ornately rhetorical in composition. While the subject is historical, the treatment is not. *Richard III* presents a deeply pessimistic portrait of power and corruption. It is written in the register of classical historians, with set-piece speeches in the manner of Thucydides, Tacitus, and Sallust, and has attained a particular significance as an influence on Shakespeare's play, depicting Richard as a physically and morally deformed child-killing monster. More continued to work on this until c.1519, when it was left unfinished. Perhaps in its picture of recent history, it was too incendiary for publication. More's *Richard III* was started at the same time that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* (though the latter was not published until 1532). Both portray a modern political world in which the ancient Christian and classical virtues are under severe strain (Logan 2011, ch. 8; Wegemer 2011).

1515–1516: Utopia

In May 1515, More was sent to Bruges to negotiate trade with the Flemish. His companions in the delegation included Oxford contemporary, churchman, and administrator Cuthbert Tunstall. In July, a lull in the proceedings allowed More to travel. In Antwerp, he met the learned town clerk Peter Giles and started work on *Utopia* – or, in More's title, *Nusquama*.

From Erasmus's account, accepted by scholars, the second part of *Utopia* was written first. This is the description of the island of Utopia itself, as described by the traveler Raphael Hythloday. The journey to the island (which some early readers took to be real) supposedly took place following

Amerigo Vespucci's fourth voyage in 1504, and More's *Utopia* is inflected by contemporary ideas of how a society might evolve under natural law, without the elaborations of European society. Utopia, "No-where," is characterized by what it is not. It is a society which is untouched by the sins of pride, flattery, and deception – vices which provide the source of evil in *Richard III*. Here, without any acquisitive sense, the inhabitants inhabit identical houses and work for the common good for 6 hours a day, devoting the rest to the leisure pursuits of the ideal humanist – reading and attending lectures before breakfast. Work and leisure are pursued by men and women on equal terms. Craft and industry are honored, agricultural work is done by rotation of city dwellers spending time in the countryside, and, most strikingly of all, there is no private property. All goods are held in common. Money does not exist. Gold is held in contempt as a useless metal, and used for prisoner's chains and chamber pots. All utopians wear plain working clothes. Through a system of representative government, the just rule of a philosopher-king is assured. Indeed, it was under the enlightened dictatorship of the first ruler, Utopus, that a channel was dug separating the island from the mainland and assuring its rapid evolution untainted by contact with the wider world. In its crescent shape and size, Utopia resembles Britain. Its language, of which we are given an example in prefatory material, is similar to Greek.

Utopia raises one immediate question: does the author mean us to admire the land Hythloday describes? Is Utopia More's picture of the ideal state? The title page, *De optimo reipublicae statu deque nova insula Utopia* (On the best state of a republic and the island Utopia), announces the theme unambiguously. But More distances himself from direct endorsement of Utopia's arrangements by putting the description in the mouth of Hythloday and placing himself in the work as a skeptical listener. At the conclusion, "Morus" states "When Raphael had finished his account, I was left with the sense that not a few of the practices which arose from Utopian laws and customs were patently absurd" (*Utopia* 2012, 122). But he does not expand on this critique, leaving

readers to continue the dialogue among themselves.

Nonetheless, *Utopia* reflects important aspects of More's thinking. It represents a society in which private virtue is integrated with the political life. The Utopian state provides a vehicle for the enactment of philosophical ideals in the public sphere. The mixed life commended by Hilton is embodied in a people who pursue with equal zeal the cultivation of the mind and the good of the wider community. The Utopians are also remarkably keen on Greek, which Hythloday introduces them to, and as model humanists are less interested in the niceties of abstruse logic. Though they have not yet received the truth of Christian revelation, they have intimations of a divine presence and are enthusiastic to learn more about Christianity from Hythloday and his companions. In their diligent search for truth, they seem to be depicted as superior to the Europeans, whose profession of Christian piety and charity is pure hypocrisy. The state of Utopia stands as a satire of the European love of profit and the high status accorded to magnificent and practically useless individuals.

At the same time, Utopia is open to criticism. More's training as lawyer and rhetorician involved being able to argue both sides of a case convincingly, and there is a potential critique of Utopia embedded within the ostensibly enthusiastic description. Its name, whether Latin *Nusquama* or Greek *Utopia* (which seems to have been added by Erasmus), stresses it as a nonentity. It is "nowhere," its river "Anydrus" means "no water" and Hythloday's name suggests "distributor of nonsense" (a response, perhaps, to the narration of Folly in Erasmus *Praise of Folly*). The strain of classical wordplay acts as a reminder of the impossibility of this fantastical island. There are aspects of Utopia which More the author cannot have approved of, such as a general philosophy of hedonism, the relative ease of divorce, the sanctioning of euthanasia, and, as noted above, a remarkable tolerance in religious beliefs. These have been attributed to the Utopians' quasi-prelapsarian state of nature, before Christian revelation. Certain aspects are comically bizarre, such as the inclusion of entire families on the frontline in war, while the absence of lawyers –

in a likely in-joke by lawyer More, the Utopians prefer to plead for themselves – leaves unexplained how the complicated system is enforced. Utopia is sometimes held up as a liberal paradise in contrast to the intolerance of More's religious polemics. Yet it represents more clearly the triumph of collective order: the inhabitants of Utopia have no privacy, dress alike, and have no semblance of personal identity. All is subordinated to the march of the collective will.

A second question which has prompted debate over *Utopia* is: how seriously are we to take it? Those closer to More's time described it as a "iollye invention" (Harspfield, in Roper and Harspfield 1963) and as an example of "feined narrations and wittie invented matters" (Thomas Wilson; see Lewis 1954, 167). Yet More was not given elsewhere in his work to write for mere diversion: rhetoric may be delightful but it is directed towards the end of improvement. Some early critics, such as the socialist Kautsky, saw in Utopia an argument for a communist state as an answer to the ills of the modern "developed" world, and a recent study views it as a seriously intended contribution to social reform (see Wilde 2016). *Utopia* might be described as a kind of serious play. It employs humanist devices of irony, wordplay, the pleasant inventions of invented maps and alphabets. The mode of satire points this verbal play towards the moral purpose of identifying the ills of modern European society, which More as undersheriff knew at first hand. *Utopia* exemplifies in lucid prose the author's belief in the duty of scholars to use literature to urge reform on political and spiritual levels.

Soon after writing the description of Utopia itself, More added what is now presented as the first book, the so-called "Dialogue of Counsel," in which a figure "More" meets Hythloday, who expounds to him a conversation he had at Morton's court regarding the punishment of thieves: hanging, argues Hythloday, is both ineffective – the problem of robbery continues – and unjust, since it ignores the social causes of crime. The economy, Hythloday points out, is burdened by ex-soldiers and useless former retainers; and formerly common land has been greedily enclosed by the rich, taken out of production for

the pasture of “man-eating” sheep, which are sold at artificially high prices for private profit. Destitute farmers are forced into robbery as the only means of support left to them. This astute analysis of contemporary ills leads More to entreat Hythloday to put his counsel at the service of a king. But, in a *locus classicus* for More and other humanist scholars (see Skinner 1987), Hythloday prefers to retain his independence as a seeker after truth rather than to have his ideals compromised in the world of political affairs. More himself follows Cicero in espousing the duty of the intellectual to advise, even where that means accepting that ideals will be compromised and the task becomes one of influencing policy so that at least it does the least possible harm. In an image borrowed from Cicero’s *De officiis*, he argues that the actor must suit himself to the part provided. Hythloday rejects this advice, and Book Two ends similarly, with “More” unconvinced by Utopia. In particular, he questions the absence of money, which deprives public life of ceremony and magnificence (Skinner 1987; Baker-Smith 2014).

1517–1519: Defense of Humanism

More completed *Utopia* in London, in the spare moments he could find after his return from the Netherlands, and sent the manuscript to Erasmus in September. After Erasmus had added his own editorial touches – including the title – it was published, with illustrations and an apparatus of letters and verses, in December 1516 by the printer Thierry Martens in Louvain. A second edition followed in 1517 (Paris), a third in 1518 (Basle), and two further prints in 1519 (Venice, Basle). In 1516, Erasmus published his own treatise on education and statecraft, *Institutio principis Christiani* (On the Education of a Christian Prince). Both texts seek to integrate the philosophy of antiquity and Christian ethics, and assert the value of training in classical rhetoric as a grounding for ethical conduct and the management of practical affairs.

To this period belongs the first in a series of letters in which More writes in support of the study of Greek and the humanist project in general. The immediate occasion for this was the publication in 1516 of Erasmus’s *Novum*

instrumentum, his edition of the New Testament, correcting St. Jerome’s Vulgate text against a study of the original Greek. This work aroused a strong reaction from theologians, among them Martin van Dorp of Louvain, who criticized Erasmus’s irreverent treatment of St. Jerome and his apparent elevation of philology over the higher truths of theology. These criticisms were put in the form of a letter to Erasmus and, having been shown their correspondence, More wrote his own in response.

The *Letter to Martin Dorp* is a defense of humanism, in the sense of a diligent study of classical and Christian texts (the scriptures and the patristic writings of the Church Fathers), in the original languages, with close attention to details of spelling and grammar. In the humanistic program, the scholar should also imitate the style of original authors and so embody their spirit. Through this return to the original text, earlier translations like Jerome’s, and much intervening commentary, could be seen to be in error; the reader could meet the great texts face to face rather than through second-hand glosses and scraps in compilations. A key principle was that private study has an ethical benefit; as Seneca formulated it, the liberal arts prepare the soul for virtue, and hence to good works in the public realm (as it does in Utopia) (Skinner 1988).

For More, the scholastic theology represented by Dorp (who was not without humanist sympathies) clouds this key issue of personal and social reform. The scholastic tradition has put too much weight on dialectic in the trivium. It has trained the intellect with its “supersophistical scholarship” (Works 15.27) and in so doing has created a hermetic language of rarefied subtleties which turns the mind away from the world. More argues for a greater emphasis on rhetoric: as a form of language directed towards persuasion, rhetoric goes out into the world. It seeks to address the will as well as the intellect and to move the listener to ethical action. The student of rhetoric will find it not only in academic texts but in the whole field of humane letters, including history and oratory, all of which provide instruction in the nature of man. Without rhetoric, scholastic theology becomes an arid exercise for its own adepts, of

no benefit to pastoral care or virtuous conduct. Unlike scholasticism, rhetoric is grounded in common language and thus in the experience of human history. Defending Erasmus's correction of Jerome, More argues that while a single Church Father may be liable to error, the Fathers as a whole represent a collective authority for the body of the whole Church. Philology and rhetoric recover the original meanings of the classical authors and Fathers, integrate classical and Christian teaching, and elevate the student to the virtuous life. These principles of humanism, which were ultimately accepted by van Dorp, are rehearsed in other letters: to the University of Oxford, supporting Greek studies (1518), to Edward Lee, and to "a Monk" (identified as John Batmanson) in 1519–1520.

1518–1529: Royal Councillor: Anti-Reformation Polemics

In *Utopia*, the fictional More urges the skeptical Hythloday to become a councillor and adopt a practical philosophy "which knows its stage and adapts itself to the play in hand" (*Utopia* 2012, 49). In 1518, the real More put his abilities at the service of the crown, through admission to the King's Council. The council was run directly by Cardinal Wolsey from Westminster Hall. More himself spent most of his time attending on the king and was so popular with the royal couple that he rarely had time to see his family. He was also heavily involved in framing responses to the heresy, as he saw it, of the Lutheran Reformation (Wegemer and Smith 2004, ch. 5; Baumann 2015). In 1521, he played an editorial role in Henry VIII's *Defence of the Seven Sacraments* against Luther. Luther's response to this was so indecorously combative that the king could not with dignity reply directly. This was left to More, who wrote *Responsio ad Lutherum* (1523), combining the highly personal attacks characteristic of religious polemic with a demolition of Luther's doctrine of *sola scriptura* and defense of the validity of the Church authority deriving from tradition. The aggressive tone of the polemics arguably points to a weakness in More's adherence to humanist rhetoric. Rhetoric carries with it no moral compass and directs itself emotionally as

much as intellectually at the audience. While dispensing with the dry logic of scholasticism, it also casts itself adrift from the academic courtesies within which scholastic argument was framed. Without the impersonality of logical structures, polemic finds itself in *ad hominem* attacks.

The argument continued with the *Letter in Reply to Martin Luther* (1526). In 1528, More was licensed by Cuthbert Tunstall, now Bishop of London, to read heretical tracts for the purposes of confuting them, a mission which yielded *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529). This is more agreeable to the modern reader; in it, More returns to the dialogue form and has an older speaker expound orthodox doctrine to a sincere young interlocutor, "the Messenger," who reports Lutheran doctrines only to have them sagely refuted. Besides Luther, another adversary of More's was William Tyndale, who started printing his English translation of the New Testament in 1525, copies of which started arriving in England in 1526. In 1532 and 1533, More published in two parts *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*.

As well as writing polemics in defense of Catholic teaching, More played an active part in attempting to stop the flow of books of reformation theology and to extirpate the Lutheran "heresy." He was closely involved in the arrest of six heretics and in the execution of three of them. This, and the violent language of much of the polemical writing, is the most controversial aspect of his career today. More certainly acted on conviction. He believed the ideas of Luther posed a mortal challenge to Christendom and the social order on which it relied. The Church included saints and sinners, the living and dead, and represented a *consensus fidelium*. Guidance came from the Holy Spirit working on this body as a whole, through the frail vehicle of its members as a communality. Luther's position that the Spirit could work on the individual believer, outside the community of the Church in time, represented an attack on that community. More also argued against the doctrine of predestination, asserting that it was effectively a license for the individual to behave as he pleased; the Peasants' Revolt of 1525 and Sack of Rome of 1527 heightened the fear that the further proselytizing of

reformist ideas in England would lead to social breakdown. The polemics have not been regarded as novel or significant by theologians. Biographers have pointed out that they were commissioned works, written in an often coarse vernacular in order to reach an uneducated readership. The persecution and execution of heretics, for which More himself was unapologetic, have been interpreted as rigorous but within the law; others have described More as far more actively zealous than his predecessor Lord Chancellor Wolsey (see Ridley 1982; Guy 2000).

1534–1535. Last Years: Devotional Writings

In July–August 1529, More was present at the Treaty of Cambrai, a peace treaty between France, Spain, England, and the Holy Roman Empire. In October, Wolsey was dismissed as Lord Chancellor, for his failure to provide Henry with his desired divorce. More was appointed to this office, in which he sought to effect reforms of legal practice, and exemplified in his own judgments a strict impartiality. In 1531, Henry VIII required the Convocation of Canterbury to grant him the title of “Supreme Head of the English Church,” with the qualifying clause “as far as the law of Christ allows.” In 1532, More resigned the Chancellorship pleading ill health but evidently feeling ill-fitted to serve the king in the break from Rome. After his resignation, he continued to expend effort on further anti-Reformation polemics (the Letter against Frith, on transubstantiation (1532–1533); the *Apology* (1533), *Debellation of Salem and Byzance* (1533), and *Answer to the Poisoned Book* (1533)). The Submission of the Clergy in 1532 saw effective government of ecclesiastical matters in England pass to the crown. The central issue for which More went to his death was the Act of Succession (1534). In this, the king’s marriage to Katharine (formerly married to his brother Arthur) was declared null. But since this marriage had been made possible by a papal dispensation, the undoing of that dispensation amounted to a declaration that the secular monarch had the power to overrule papal authority, in which, as More held, God’s law was invested. Equally, the king had no power to proclaim himself Head of the Church in England,

a position Henry now insisted on without the saving clause mentioned earlier. More declined to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn in 1533.

Having refused to take the oath now demanded in support of the Act of Succession, More was sent to the Tower of London on 17 April 1534. There he wrote the devotional works *Treatise on the Passion*, *De tristitia Christi* (On the sadness of Christ), and *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*. This latter book, his most popular after *Utopia*, is set in Hungary in the years 1527–1528. An elder man (Antony) and a younger (Vincent) await persecution by the Ottomans who have invaded their country. In this projection of his own situation, More voices through Antony the acceptance of suffering for a higher good, in the face of the doubts of the younger man (More must himself have contemplated torture and the living disembowelment meted out to the king’s enemies) (Logan 2011).

Through this work, and his final correspondence, More examines the issue of personal conscience. He was himself accused – by his wife Alice among others – of being proudly scrupulous in his refusal to take an oath to which many other wise churchmen had subscribed. For More, conscience was an instrument for the discernment of God’s law. Conscience may be mistaken, and so must be continually informed by reading, study, and reflection. For More’s conscience, the king’s over-ruling of Church law was an impossibility: the secular realm cannot legislate above the sacred. The body of the Catholic Church is indivisible. He admits other men’s consciences may guide them differently, but matters of conscience cannot be decided by popular vote. As a lawyer, he never gave in public his reasons for refusing to swear: to do so would be treason, while silence under the law implies consent. Furthermore, a deliberate act inviting condemnation could be seen as suicidal, and martyrdom, he believed, should not be actively sought: God, not man, chooses the end of a life. These were the grounds set out in his trial at Westminster Hall on 1 July, at which he was convicted of treason. The usual punishment of hanging, drawing and quartering was commuted by the king to beheading on the grounds of More’s noble status (he had been

knighted in 1521). Sir Thomas More was executed on Tower Hill on 6 July (Chambers 1935; Ackroyd 1998; Guy 2000, 2017).

Heritage and Rupture Within the Tradition

More's thinking follows medieval traditions. The poignancy of his life lies in the fact that he defended the old order at a time when it was being unsettled from different directions: Columbus's travels in 1492; the geopolitical unrest caused by the newly asserted powers of France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire; and the radical break of the Reformation.

In his spiritual life, More was devoted to the Catholic Church of medieval Christendom. While conscious of the venal aspects of the ecclesiastical establishment, More believed the community of the Church was the vehicle for the Holy Spirit on earth, one which might be reformed from within but would be broken from without by Luther's attack on the sacraments. Reform from within was to be aided by the "positive theology," which took the direct words of Christ and the Fathers as the most reliable guide for Christian practice and pastoral care. While he confuted Tyndale, More was sympathetic to the idea of a translation of the Bible but believed it should be distributed by the Church to those best fitted to interpret its teachings properly – a conception of humanism operating under the management of a suitably educated elite.

More's religious polemics, in their zealous defense of orthodox dogmas, convey an attitude at odds with the common notion of "Renaissance." He regarded Reformation ideas in the same way an educated person would regard racist bigotry today: a disordering of the will and a threat to civilized society. More's final defense of papal authority should not be confused with the veneration of the personal figure of the pope which is common today. His allegiance was to the office, rather than the person.

In his professional life, More's heritage was the common law of England. As Lord Chancellor, he accelerated the hearing of cases and urged judges

to exercise care and discretion in their rulings, not simply to rely on a strict interpretation of legal precedent. The first part of *Utopia* addresses the issue of a legal system unfitted to deal with the social problems of the time. His most evident rupture with intellectual tradition lies in the letters defending Erasmian humanism, and the emphasis on classical rhetoric over scholastic logic. The liberal arts were regarded not as subjects of interest for their own sake but as a valuable tool in the exercise of public affairs.

Innovation and Original Aspects

Along with scholars like John Colet and Thomas Elyot, More reinvigorated England's intellectual life through the establishment of Greek studies and the application of "the new learning" of humanism. More was also innovative in his belief in the value of women's education, as practiced in his own large household at Chelsea (memorably depicted by Hans Holbein). As a stylist in English, More has also been regarded as innovative; his best English writings combine the embellishments of rhetoric with concrete and earthy colloquial phrases to achieve a memorable voice.

Undoubtedly, it is *Utopia* which stands as More's most original work, though it, too, belongs to a classical tradition of works on political philosophy going back to Plato. Scholars have placed it in a tradition of humanist treatises on good government. In its first part, *Utopia* presents an account of crime as having social causes, for which a socially effective solution is necessary – a challenge to notions of justice grounded on precedent rather than attention to the particular case. Through the character "More" the author argues that thinkers should serve as councillors, a principle of civic humanism cruelly ironic in the light of his own fate. The description of *Utopia* itself draws on current thinking about the state of nature, stimulated by discoveries in the New World, and achieves an exhilarating speculative freedom in its survey of a number of social and political concerns. The treatment of these ideas through ironic and playful dialogue, rather than

earnest and schematic argument, has made the work perennially popular.

Impact and Legacy

More's death made an immediate impact on the rest of Europe. According to Roper's biography, the Emperor Charles V told the English ambassador Thomas Elyot of the execution before Elyot knew of it himself and said "We would rather have lost the best city of our dominions than have lost such a worthy councillor" (Roper 1963, 50). On the continent, More was soon recognized as a martyr, while the early biographies of Roper and Harpsfield, circulated privately, enlarged the picture of the brilliant and saintly More, the man praised by Erasmus as "man for all seasons" (*vir omnium horarum, Praise of Folly*). This phrase was taken up by Robert Whittington in a Latin Grammar of 1520: "A man of angel's wit and singular learning: I know not his fellow. For where is the man of that gentle-ness, lowliness and affability? And as time requireth a man of marvellous mirth and pastimes: and sometimes of as sad gravity. A man for all seasons." The image of the saintly More was imprinted on popular consciousness in the play *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt (1960; filmed in 1966). This picture edits out More's committed persecution of heretics. A different portrait is given in Hilary Mantel's novel *Wolf Hall* (2009). Here More is portrayed as a humorless fanatic. Both modern renderings highlight the problem of recovering the inner person of someone even his family found frustratingly enigmatic; they also highlight the distance between the modern picture of conscience as a kind of irreducible personal will, and More's own conception of it as a deliberative instrument for the discernment of divine law. More was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1935 and pronounced patron saint of politicians by Pope John Paul II in 2000 (Guy 2000).

More's writings were published on the continent while they were still suppressed in England. Among them, *Utopia* has had by far the greatest legacy. As a work of utopianism, it lies behind later exercises in the genre like William Morris's

News From Nowhere (1890). As a work of satirical fiction, it points to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), and in its picture of identical clothes, houses, and collective routines of work, it could even be compared to the depersonalized dystopia of Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921). While scholars are able to place *Utopia* in a context of classical and humanist writings, in popular perception the book fits most comfortably into the satirical utopian/dystopian genre. It is appropriate that an edition commemorating the 500th anniversary of its publication carried an introduction by the science fiction writer China Miéville and essays by the fantasy novelist Ursula le Guin (London: Verso, 2016). As a blueprint for society, *Utopia* is striking but too fantastical to be credible; as a satirical mirror to the vices of More's Europe, it still carries force, and as a work of the imagination, it is a book for all seasons.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Conscience, Renaissance Understanding Of](#)
- ▶ [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- ▶ [Grocyn, William](#)
- ▶ [Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Luther, Martin](#)
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- ▶ [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)

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Morus, Henricus

► [More, Henry](#)

Moscato, Judah

Born: Osimo, 1532 or 1533

Died: Mantua, 20 September 1590

Yehuda Halper

Jewish Thought, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel

Abstract

Judah Moscato was a Jewish Renaissance philosopher, whose writings combine the richness of the Jewish tradition of Bible, Talmud, philosophy-theology, and Kabbalah with neo-Platonic imagery then popular in Italy, especially in Florence. While his works treat numerous themes, including music, rhetoric, Jewish holidays, among many others drawn from Jewish texts, he saw himself primarily as a philosopher striving for intellectual perfection by uncovering elusive Platonic ideas from under various kinds of imagery. Like Marsilio Ficino and Georgio Veneto before him, Moscato used such neo-Platonic imagery to treat a vast number of subjects, including especially the mythologies of Jewish literature, as philosophical subjects with hidden intellectual meaning. Moscato also seems to have been influenced by Ficino's notion of a *prisca theologia*, reflections of which appear in various traditions. Indeed, his meandering writing style that moves seamlessly between Jewish and classical Greek, Latin, and Italian sources

reflects an openness to receiving truth from diverse sources. His interest in and promotion of Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* helped propel that book, which is itself heavily Platonic, to the forefront of Jewish learning for hundreds of years to come.

Alternate Names

Aryeh ben Joseph, Judah; de Moscati Hebreo, Leon; Moscato, Leon; Moscato, Leone

Biography

Moscato is known as a communal leader, preacher, Rabbi, and scholar of Mantua prominent in the Jewish community during the years 1564–1590. Little is known about his early years, but he must have acquired a broad education in Jewish texts of all periods as well as classical philosophy, music, rhetoric, and literature. His rise to eminence in Mantua came after his flight from the Ancona region in the wake of persecution of Jews. In Mantua, he was taken in by the family of a Mantuan banker, Salvatore Joshua Minzi-Berettaro, whose son, Samuel, he befriended, perhaps tutored, and whose daughter he married. Moscato also entered into various business ventures with his father-in-law, through which he attained financial independence. It is not clear whether Moscato held an official, paid Rabbinic position in Mantua or an honorific title allowing him intellectual and legal independence from the Jewish communal offices. He seems to have held an official title of “Our Teacher and Rabbi” from 1587 and to have headed an academy, probably a gathering of senior scholars rather than a *yeshibah* for youth, known as the *wa'ad haḥakhamim* of Mantua. Moscato's esteem in the eyes of the community and quite possibly his personal wealth allowed him to assume positions of leadership, such as guaranteeing monetary transactions through the Jewish courts and advocating on behalf of Jews before Italian government officials. In one case, Moscato was part of a group of prominent Jewish figures who

successfully convinced the duke of Mantua, Guglielmo Gonzaga, not to enforce Pope Gregory XIII's 1581 bull prohibiting, *inter alia*, Jewish physicians from treating Christian patients. However, Moscato's dealings with Duke Guglielmo were not entirely positive. In 1587, Moscato was jailed for his role in persuading a prominent Jewish court musician known as Abramino dell'Arpa (also known as Abramino Levi) not to convert to Christianity. Abramino, along with his uncle, did convert, apparently under torture, but Moscato held fast under intense psychological pressure. Moscato was released a few months later when the duke died. Moscato apparently spent his remaining years preparing his two major works *Nefuṣot Yehudah* and *Qol Yehudah* for publication. The former was printed about a year before Moscato's death and was accompanied by elaborate, innovative indices and followed by a list of corrigenda, reluctantly included by the printer at Moscato's insistence. Moscato did not live to see his *Qol Yehudah* in print and the subsequent revival of interest in Halevi's *Kuzari* that it brought about.

Works and Themes

Moscato wrote two major works: *Nefuṣot Yehudah* (“The Dispersed of Judah”) and *Qol Yehudah* (“The Voice of Judah”). *Nefuṣot Yehudah* is a collection of 52 sermons in elaborate Hebrew each of which treats one major theme but meanders into numerous subthemes dealing with both Jewish and classical notions and texts. A typical sermon begins with a quote from the Bible, usually from the Pentateuch, and then relates an apparently unrelated midrashic passage. The greater part of the sermon will bring more passages and more Biblical or Talmudic images, occasionally and irregularly referring back to the initial quotes, interpreting and reinterpreting them in light of other insights. These insights generally also take the form of interpretations of other passages or images that appear in canonical Jewish or classical works. Moscato moves fluidly and seamlessly from image to image, from passage to passage, all the while drawing on any materials that

can conceivably be lent to support his interpretations. While Moscato sometimes disagrees with and even criticizes his sources, his work is for the most part free from polemics; his use of sources is to support his ends, rather than to attack enemies. Accordingly, even the non-Jews who appear in the book speak with a Judaized voice. Thus, Plato, Aristotle, and even Seneca speak in Hebrew phrases taken from the Bible. Indeed, their words are taken to explain the Bible or the Talmud. So too can the words of the Talmudic sages be explained by appeal to treatises on rhetoric by Quintilian and Cicero. Moscato's sermons thus implicitly assume a kind of unity of knowledge which can be expressed by either Jews or non-Jews, but which sees its completion in a Jewish context, even a context of Jewish canonical texts. This knowledge takes the form of literary allusions (*remezim*) to intelligible ones that remain beyond the description of the text of the sermon itself. *Nefuṣot Yehudah* is very carefully written but nevertheless does not purport to be a written work but a spoken work. These lectures are, however, in a Hebrew that is so erudite and intricate that it is impossible to imagine a community learned enough to listen to them. (We might also note that a good number of them are exceedingly long.) These lectures thus straddle the fence dividing writing from speech, interspersing lengthy and intricate discussions that seem suited only for writing, with references to communal and personal events that seem suited only for speaking. This method of writing may reflect a Platonic understanding of an ideal form of oratory that can better lead souls to wisdom than writing alone. Since the intelligible ones that Moscato seeks to point out often defy description, Moscato's ambiguities in speech/writing highlight the inadequacy of both to pure thought.

Moscato's *Qol Yehudah*, published 4 years after Moscato's death, is a lengthy line-by-line commentary on Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* that is the best known and most commonly printed Hebrew commentary on the *Kuzari*. Indeed, it was the only Hebrew commentary on the *Kuzari* in print until the end of the eighteenth century. Halevi's *Kuzari* is an account of a conversation between an ancient king of the Khazzars and a Jewish scholar, during

the course of which the king converts to Judaism. The conversation opens with a visit from a mythical philosopher whose positions continue to challenge the interlocutors even after the king dismisses him after two relatively short speeches. As in *Nefuṣot Yehudah*, Moscato emphasizes the importance of intellect and theorization throughout the *Qol Yehudah* and apparently views the work as an elucidation of the comprehensive philosophy contained throughout the work and in Judaism as a whole. *Qol Yehudah* is encyclopedic in scope, if not in organization, and Moscato uses Halevi's many and diverse topics as a springboard for detailed examinations and wide-ranging accounts of other opinions. In *Qol Yehudah* Moscato cites at least 140 authorities, including Jewish, classical, and renaissance Italian thinkers. The dialogue *Kuzari* is quite Platonic in character and thus provides many opportunities for Moscato to present his Neoplatonism. This is especially evident in his discussions of the role of religious imagery and the human as a microcosm reflected in the Temple service.

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Moscato, Leon

- [Moscato, Judah](#)

Moscato, Leone

- [Moscato, Judah](#)

Mosè di Gaio

- [Moses of Rieti](#)

Moses Ben Joshua

- [Moses of Narbonne](#)

Moses of Narbonne

Born: Perpignan, Around 1300

Died: Perpignan, 1362 or a Little Be After

Shalom Sadik

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Abstract

Rabbi Moses of Narbonne (frequently referred to as Moses Narboni or the Narboni) was a Jewish Averroist philosopher. He was most known for his radical naturalist position, especially his belief in the eternity of the world and

his metaphorical interpretations of various Biblical passages. The bulk of his works are commentaries on philosophical writings of other philosophers. His most important philosophical book was his commentary on Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*.

Alternate Names

Moses Ben Joshua; Mestre Vidal Bellshom; Maestro Vidal Blasom

Biography

Not much is known about the biographical details of Narboni. He was born in Perpignan in the Kingdom of Majorca. He probably made his living as a doctor. He traveled around the Kingdom of Aragon during the late 1340s and early 1350s and later in Northern Castile. He returned to his city of birth, Perpignan, at the beginning of the 1360s, where he passed away a few years later.

Works: Narboni was a prolific writer. Most of his writings are commentaries on the philosophical writings of other philosophers (or supercommentaries on the commentaries of Averroes on Aristotle). These can be classified into five distinct categories:

- I. Personal treatises or commentaries on the Bible and midrashim: *Pirkei Moshe* (Sirat 1970) and *Ma'amar bi-Behirah* (Treatise on Free Will) are philosophical tracts, as are two commentaries on Lamentations and on *Shi'ur Qomah* (Altmann 1967), an esoteric piece of Hekhalot literature that discusses secret divine names and so-called measurements of the divine body. However, this latter commentary, that done with the definition of divinity, was in fact more a supercommentary on R. Ibn Ezra's commentary on Exodus than an independent work.
- II. Supercommentaries on a number of Averroes' commentaries, including Averroes': abridged ("middle") commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*; commentary and paraphrase of the *Organon*; commentary on the *De Caelo et Mundo*; commentary on Alexander of Aphrodisias' analysis of the intellect; and abridged commentary on the *Metaphysics*. It should be noted that although his book *Shelemut ha-Nefesh* (Perfection of the Soul) was written as a treatise, it draws heavily upon Aristotle's and Averroes' views on the soul.
- III. Commentaries on the works of other philosophers: Averroes' astronomical text *De Substantia Orbis*, *Treatise on the Hylic Intellect* (describing its conjunction with the Active Intellect) (Bland 1982), and his *Dissertation on Physics*; Avicenna's *Canon* (part four); Ghazali's *Maqasid al-Falasifah* (The Opinion of the Philosopher); Ibn Tufail's philosophical novel *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*; and Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary on Genesis 11:2.
- IV. Commentaries on Maimonides: one on the *Guide of the Perplexed* as well as a lexicon to the *Guide* called *Peirush mi-Millot ha-Higgayon* (Various commentaries on Maimonides 1961).
- V. Medical works: *Orah Hayyim* (The Way of Life).

The majority of his supercommentaries are extant only in manuscript. Because most of Narboni's writings are commentaries or supercommentaries, and not original thought per se, it can be challenging to discern when he is explaining his own opinion and when he is only explaining the beliefs of a philosopher whom he is commenting on.

Philosophical Opinions (Hayoun 1982): Narboni was well known for his radical naturalistic positions, i.e., his belief in the eternity of the world and his metaphorical interpretation of some of the most important stories of the Bible. He reveals his opinion most clearly in what is arguably his most important philosophical work, his commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*, wherein he interprets Maimonides as a very radical naturalist thinker. For example, as against the literal interpretation of the *Guide*, he interprets Maimonides as rejecting the creation of the world. According to Narboni, Maimonides said that he believed in creation for purely political and pedagogical reasons. Narboni even contends that

Maimonides was an unbeliever in the revelation at Sinai who in reality understood this particular Biblical story as a parable for the intellectual perfection of Moses.

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Moses of Rieti

Born: Rieti, 1388

Died: Rome, before 1466

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Abstract

Moshe ben Yitzḥaq (in Italian Mosè di Gaio) of Rieti (1388–before 1466) was a poet, philosopher, and physician. His main work is *Miqdash me'at* (*Little Sanctuary*), a Hebrew poem of about 5000 verses explicitly inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy* for its metrical structure and for the description of a supernatural journey. The poem is at once an encyclopedia

of Jewish and secular sciences, a description of the "Jewish Paradise" and a history of Jewish literature, from the Bible to the author's time. *Miqdash me'at* is organized according to the three sections of the Temple of Jerusalem, of which it aims at being a poetic substitute.

Probably influenced by the school of the Roman philosopher Yehuda Romano (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries), Moshe of Rieti complains, in *Miqdash me'at* and other works, both in Hebrew and Italian, for the loss of the knowledge of religious truths and invokes a divine illumination in order to restore that knowledge. His writings reflect the transition between the so-called "medieval" world (his authorities are Aristotle and Maimonides) and different perspectives expressed with neoplatonic and cabbalistic concepts.

Very popular among Italian Jews until the beginning of the seventeenth century, he was subsequently almost completely forgotten until the rediscovery of the Jewish philologists in the nineteenth century.

Alternate Names

Moshe ben Yitzḥaq of Rieti; Mosè di Gaio; di Gaio, Mosè

Biography

Moshe da Rieti was active in many professions: he was a doctor (an activity for which, as a Jew, he received a special authorization from the Pope), a banker, and a merchant (Esposito 2012); but, most importantly, he was a philosopher and a poet (Guetta 2002). He lived in the regions of central Italy, between Umbria and Lazio, where he was the director of *yeshivot* (advanced schools for Jewish education) in the various places where he lived.

His main work, *Miqdash me'at* (*Little Sanctuary*, Rieti 1851; Bregman et al. 2003), is a poem of about 5000 Hebrew verses in *terza rima* (the meter used in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, to which

the author makes a number of explicit references) with religious, scientific, and philosophical content.

Using a subdivision that corresponds to the different areas of the Temple of Jerusalem, Rieti expounds in the first place the profane or “external” sciences, that is, those of the medieval *trivium* and *quadrivium*. He specifically refers to various ancient Greek thinkers, such as Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy, and Porphyry, and Arab (al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī, Avicenna, and, especially, Averroes) and Jewish (Gersonides) philosophers. But his principal point of reference is Maimonides, the one who – he writes – delimited and “purified” the profane sciences by reconciling them with the *Torah*, thus making them legitimate for the Jews. Among all disciplines, poetry occupies a special place, as it allows the author’s desire (*hesheq*, love of intellectual contemplation) to express itself fully.

Another section of the work includes a description of the Hebrew Paradise, which is reminiscent of Dante in the general inspiration but also in the use of elements drawn from Jewish literary tradition: the souls of the Blessed are those of the prophets and the great masters of the past, in addition to martyrs and children who died before they sinned; his guide to the heavenly journey is his father and master, who is acknowledged only at the end of the encounter. As for the “City of God,” the ideal form perceived in a vision, its houses are the different books of the Bible, and the waters that flow through it are those of oral tradition.

Rieti’s work reflects the transition between the so-called “medieval” world and different perspectives expressed with neoplatonic and cabalistic concepts, mystical visions, but also by an intellectual turmoil that pervades all his writings. Among these writings, two must be pointed out: the remarkable *Ya’ar ha-Levanon* (*Forest of Lebanon*) (Guetta 2005) – a lyrical Hebrew poem written in an experimental meter – and a brief treatise in Italian (but written in Hebrew characters) on physical and metaphysical themes, to which the modern editor has given the title of *Filosofia naturale e fatti de Dio* (*Natural Philosophy and Facts of God*) (Rieti 1989).

Whether due to human frailty (because of his limited nature, especially after Adam’s fall) or to the difficulties encountered by Jews in their state of exile, the knowledge of the higher truths is, if not lost definitely, certainly obscured, “as if between me and the light/a cloud functions like a screen” (Guetta 2004). In this aspect, he was probably influenced by the school of the philosopher Yehuda Romano (Rothschild 2018).

The responses through which Rieti seeks to alleviate his intellectual discomfort are of a prophetic-allegorical nature – such as the vision of the Heavenly Temple and its metaphysical connotations – or they consist in the reconstitution of the Jewish intellectual history, from the era of the Talmud up to his own time. This section has a special historical value, in that the author describes the “ideal” library of an Italian Jewish scholar of the fifteenth century, sometimes mentioning authors otherwise unknown.

Rieti’s poetry is historically important also from a formal point of view, in that it broke with the quantitative meter modeled after the Arab poetry and embraced the syllabic system of Italian versification.

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Moshe ben Yitzḥaq of Rieti

► [Moses of Rieti](#)

Motion in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Aristotle’s ideas, and interpretations of them, dominated theorizing about motion during the Middle Ages. However, local motion [*motus localis*] or locomotion was, according to the “philosopher” and his followers, only one of four types of change. In addition to change in location, the Peripatetics distinguished change in substance, in quality, and in quantity. Within these four domains of change, change always requires the existence of a potentiality which can be actualized. During the late Renaissance, however, the peripatetic views on motion were variously criticized, adapted, rejected, and replaced (Bodnar 2016). Generally speaking, the different kinds of change were all reduced to local motion, and one of the key ideas of the new theory of motion was the principle of inertia. First versions of this concept were introduced by Galileo (1564–1642) and later developed by René Descartes (1596–1650) and Isaac Newton (1643–1727). The seeds of this (r)evolution, though, had already been

planted by philosophers such as Johannes Buridanus (c. 1300–1358) during the late Middle Ages, who was himself inspired by the work of John Philoponus (c.490–c.570).

In the geocentric cosmos as conceived of by Aristotle (384–322 BC) and Ptolemy (c.100–c.170), there was a strict, ontological distinction between the sublunary world of change and the celestial world of perfect bodies making perfect, circular motions. However, in 1543, Copernicus (1473–1543) published his *De revolutionibus* which presented a heliocentric model of the universe, supported by Galileo’s telescopic observations. The collapse of the traditional worldview was completed when Newton introduced his notion of universal gravitation.

Heritage and Rupture with Traditions

Toward a New Science of Motion of Bodies

According to Aristotle (1984) and his followers, all bodies move spontaneously toward their natural place. On this view, there are different kinds of natural motion, linked to the different elements of the sublunary sphere. For the elements earth and water, that place is the center of the (geocentric) universe. The natural place of water, however, is a concentric layer around the earth because earth is heavier; it sinks in water. Likewise, the natural place of air is a concentric sphere surrounding that of water; bubbles rise in water. Finally, the natural place of fire is higher than that of air but below the innermost celestial sphere carrying the Moon.

The Peripatetics differentiated natural motions from violent motions, which were determined by causes external to the body. According to Aristotle’s doctrine of motion – which corresponds very well to everyday experience – you not only need a force external to the body to set that body in motion, but you also need an external force to maintain its state of motion. For example, consider a throw after the stone has left your hand. According to this common-sense view, without an external force, there simply would not be any (violent) motion. In that case the body would

move spontaneously toward its natural state: the state of rest.

By contrast, according to the new view on motion – which emerged during the first half of the seventeenth century – there is only displacement or local motion [*locus motalis*], and bodies in motion do not need any external forces to maintain their state of motion. On the contrary, Galileo (1564–1642) gave in his *On Sunspots* (1612) and later in his *Dialogue* (1632) early versions of what later would be known as the principle of inertia (Galileo 1890–1909). More precisely, in his second letter (1612) to Mark Welser (1558–1614), he writes that “if we remove all external impediments, a heavy body on a spherical surface concentric with the earth will be indifferent to rest and motion towards any part of the horizon, and it will remain in that state in which it has been replaced; that is, if it is placed in a state of rest, it will remain at rest, and if it is placed in motion (e.g., towards the west), it will remain in that motion.” However, in this passage, the idea of inertia is applied to rotating bodies and heavy bodies moving freely upon smooth spheres concentric with the earth. In the *Second Day* of the *Dialogue* (1632), by contrast, Galileo applied this idea to the motion of a spherical body on a horizontal plane. In this passage, he explains that a ball in motion which arrives on a horizontal plane will not increase nor decrease its velocity. Neither will it change its direction on the condition that all “external and accidental impediments” are removed. In other words, the moving ball will maintain its uniform motion on condition that there are no external forces exerted on it (Galileo 1890–1909). In conclusion, motion on a horizontal plane is blind motion which is only determined by external instead of internal causes.

However, it is important to note that before Galileo, Simon Stevin (1548–1620) and his student Isaac Beeckman (1588–1637) had already anticipated the Galilean theory of motion. The engineer-scientist Simon Stevens had already carried out experiments with falling bodies and with moving objects on inclined planes (Devreese and Vanden Berghe 2003; Cohen 1992; Stevin 1955–1956). Furthermore, the atomist Beeckman had already formulated in his scientific diary, his

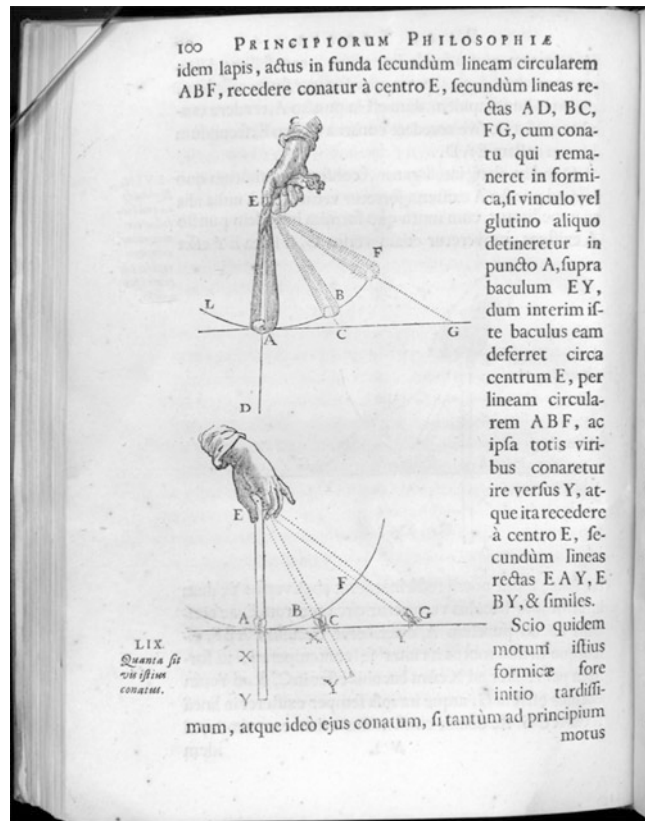
(Beeckman 1939–1953) *Journal*, an early version of the principle of inertia – although he seems to not distinguish between circular and rectilinear motion. However, some of Beeckman’s views on motion (Beeckman 1939–1953; Van Berkel 2013) were transmitted via Descartes who lived for more than 30 years in Holland, where he met Beeckman in November 1618 in Breda. Beeckman also introduced to him Galileo’s new theory of motion.

Six years after Galileo’s *Two New Sciences* (1638) had been published in Leyden, René Descartes (1596–1650) defined in paragraph 25 of the second part of his *Principia philosophiae* (1644) “motion in the strict sense of the term” which he opposed to motion “in the ordinary sense of the term” (Garber 1992). Furthermore, according to Descartes, rest was not just a privation of motion but exactly as motion a relative, positive state. The influential French philosopher defined motion as “The transporting of one part of matter or of one body from the vicinity of those bodies that are in immediate contact with it, or with regards as at rest, to the vicinity of other bodies.” And, in paragraph 37 of the same part of his *Principia philosophiae* (1644), Descartes states – as the first of his three laws of nature – that a body tends to maintain its motion once it is in motion. Furthermore, in paragraph 39 of the same part, he emphasizes in his second law of nature that the motion which is maintained is a rectilinear motion since “all motion is in itself rectilinear” (Descartes 1897).

Isaac Newton (1643–1727) incorporated the Galilean/Cartesian principle of inertia as the first of his three laws of motion in his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687): “Every body perseveres in its state of being at rest or of moving uniformly straight forward, except insofar as it is compelled to change its state by forces impressed.” Consequently, and against the peripatetic view, an external cause is not necessary to maintain a motion. On the contrary, once a body is in motion (or at rest), it continues to be in motion (or at rest) on the condition that there is no external force exerting an influence on the body in motion (or at rest). Furthermore, the motion is not goal-directed anymore as in Aristotle’s physics. There is no *telos*, no final cause. Indeed, the

Motion in Renaissance Science, Fig. 1

This is a page from Descartes's *Principia philosophiae* (Amstelodami: Apud Ludovicum Elzevirium, 1644) showing the relation between rectilinear inertia and centrifugal tendency



motion itself is blind and solely determined by external causes (Fig. 1).

Medieval and Ancient Seeds of the New Theory of Motion of Bodies

The new theory of the motion of bodies broke through during the seventeenth century. However, the seeds of this new theory – with the principle of inertia as its fundamental new idea – may have been planted in the late Middle Ages by the “impetus theorists,” of whom Buridan (c.1300–1358) was the most popular (Buridani 1970).

In the traditional view, there are two kinds of motions: natural motions and violent motions. For instance, the natural motion of a stone is to fall downward toward the center of the earth. When you throw a stone, by contrast, the stone gets a violent motion caused by a cause which is external to the stone (e.g., your hand). During this motion, the stone does not directly fall downward. Why not? According to the Peripatetics, it is the motion of the air which keeps the

stone moving. During the fourteenth century, however, a new explanation, the theory of impressed force, was defended first by the Franciscan theologian Franciscus de Marchia and subsequently by Jean Buridan (Lindberg 2007). The Frenchman Jean Buridan contested the Aristotelian theory. He argued that it was not the external medium (the air) that was responsible for the persistence of the motion but a property which was imparted in the body and acted as an internal cause at the moment that it was set in motion. Buridan named this property *impetus* and extended this idea to circular motion in the celestial spheres (Weinberg 2015; Heilbron 2015). According to the French priest, the *impetus* was proportionate to the “quantity of matter” and the velocity of the moving body. Consequently, the concept of *impetus* is close to what we understand today as *momentum* (Weinberg 2015). Importantly, according to Buridan, the *impetus* did not diminish spontaneously but only as a result of external factors such as the

motions of the air and gravity, which might oppose the *impetus*. Obviously, the concept of impetus was the first step toward the modern concept of inertia.

In his views on motion, Buridan was inspired by John Philoponus (c.490–c.570) – also known as John the Grammarian or John of Alexandria (Philoponus 1987) – whose work circulated in Greek and Latin translations in Europe. Philoponus’ rejection of Aristotle’s physics (Sorabji 2010) was also a major influence on Galileo. The Neoplatonists rejected Aristotle’s physics and argued that an object continues to move because of incorporeal motive energy [*ἐνέργεια ἀσώματος κινητική*] imparted in it by the mover and ceases the mover when it is exhausted.

Innovative and Original Aspects

New Elements of the New Theory of Motion

Besides the principle of *inertia*, a few other innovative elements were introduced via the new theory of motion. First of all, Galileo introduced the concept of the superposition of two independent motions (Clavelin 1974) when he discussed the motion of projectiles in his *Two New Sciences* (1638). In the *Fourth Day* of this scientific testament, the Italian physicist argued that a projection of a projectile (e.g., a stone) is a combination of two independent motions occurring at the same time, producing a parabolic curve: the vertical, continuously accelerated motion toward the center of the earth and the horizontal, uniform motion.

Secondly, there is the idea of the Galilean relativity of motion (Caffarelli 2009). The consequence of this definition of local motion is that motion is understood as relative toward other bodies or a frame of reference. Consequently, a physical object can be in motion relative to object B but at rest relative to object C. Moreover, it becomes impossible to determine whether a body is in motion or at rest in an absolute sense of the word, because there is always the possibility that the frame or point of reference might be in uniform motion.

Thirdly, Galileo discovered the principle of isochronism. According to legend, the author of

the *Dialogo* (1632) discovered in the cathedral of Pisa that not the mass but the length of a pendulum determines its oscillating time. Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695) found later (Huygens 1986), based on Galileo’s concept of isochronism, the pendulum law. And, in 1665, Huygens discovered the phenomenon of synchronization (Buyse 2017) of the motions of pendulum clocks (Huygens 1888–1950).

The New Theory of Motion of Celestial Bodies

In the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic Cosmos, there were two distinct worlds: the world of the perfect, celestial bodies making perfect circular motions around the center of the earth and the sublunary, corruptible material world (Ptolemy 1984; Copernicus 1978). As the term “cosmos” suggests, the world as it was understood in the Middle Ages was perfectly well ordered with several layers around the earth which stood in the center of that closed cosmos. In 1543, however, Copernicus’ book *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* was published (Copernicus 1978). This book proposed a heliocentric model of the universe, presented in the form of a mathematical hypothesis. Tycho Brahe (1546–1601), in contrast, proposed a geoheliocentric system in which the earth remained at the center of the cosmos. This conformed to the dictates of the Roman Church that the earth must be located at the center of the universe – but the planets were then assumed to move around the sun as their center of motion, while the sun orbited the earth. In 1609, Galileo completed telescopic observations which supported Copernicanism with his enhanced “Hollandsche Kijker.” However, Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) contested the idea that the planets moved according to circular orbits around the sun and argued that these orbits were ellipses with the sun at one of the two foci. Based on his own measurements and those of Brahe, Kepler discovered his three laws describing the motion of planets around the sun.

Motion and Matter

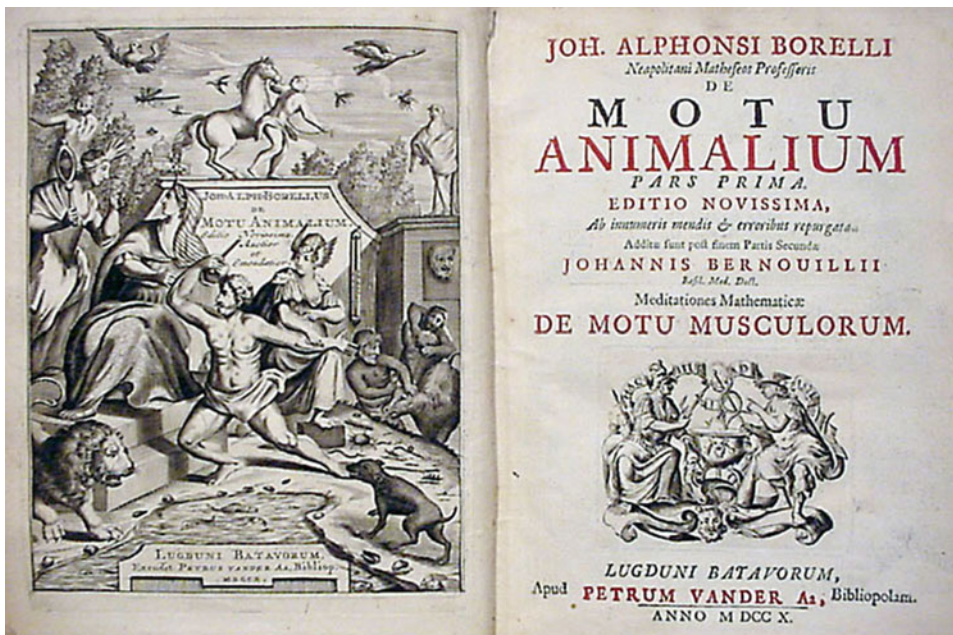
Robert Boyle (Boyle 1999) gave in the preface of *Some specimens* (1661) a definition of Mechanical Philosophy (or Corpuscular Philosophy) which – generally speaking – reflects very well

how most of his contemporaries thought about motion and matter. In this definition, he stated that (local) motion and passive matter are the only and most general or “Catholic” principles of nature. Consequently, for atomists as well as for Cartesians, all natural phenomena had to be explained in terms of local motion of corpuscles which compose matter.

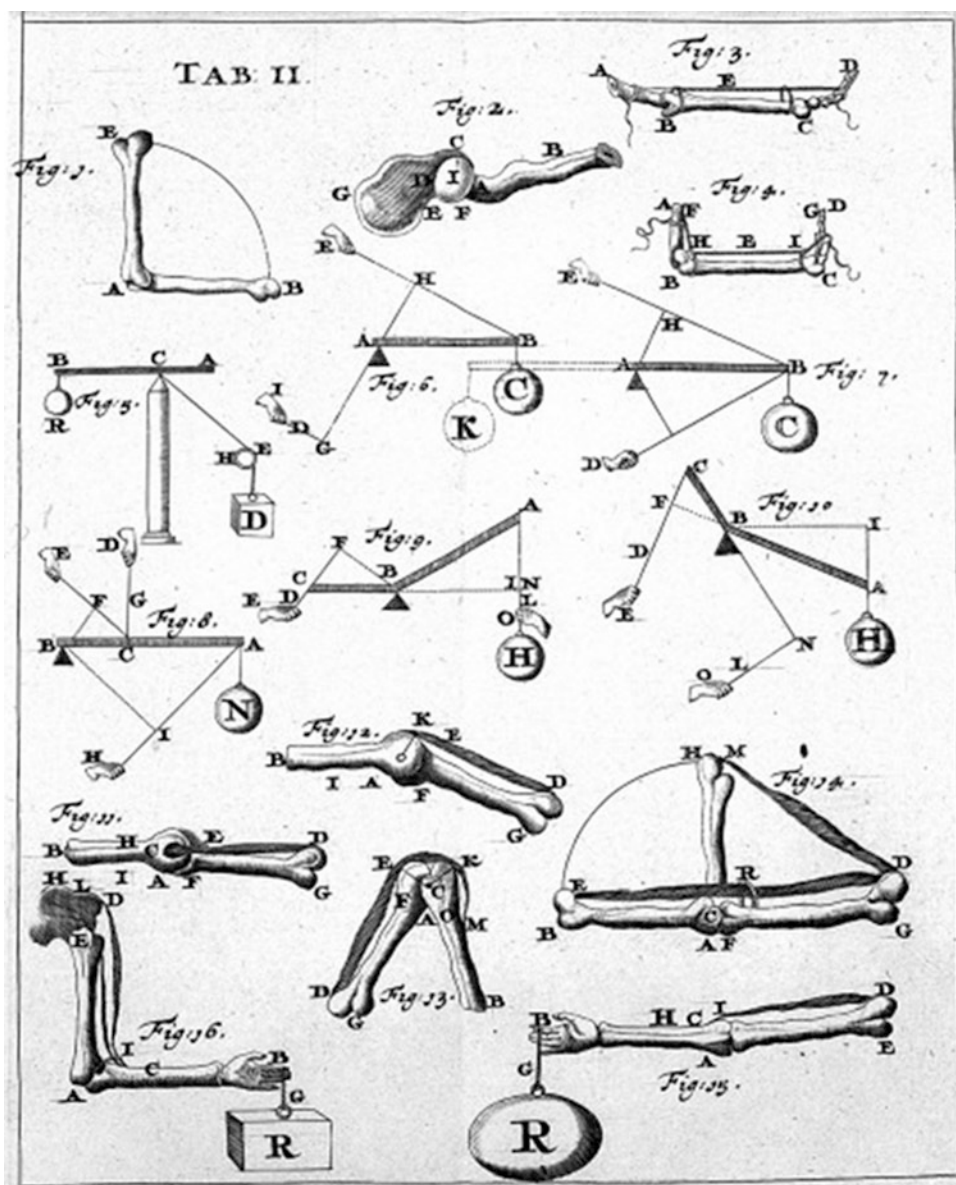
Before Boyle, Galileo had made clear in the *Assayer* [*Il Saggiatore*] (1623) that a body in itself is a piece of universal matter with only a limited set of so-called primary or mechanical qualities such as figure, relative position, size, and motion. Furthermore, Descartes had defined a body as an extended thing. Consequently, animal bodies, human bodies, vegetative bodies, and non-animated bodies and their motions could – in principle – all be analyzed and discussed in the same way: in the mathematical language of primary qualities. Therefore, as suggested in Boyle’s definition, it became possible to use manmade machines as mechanical analogies for the study of all sorts of motions, including motion generated by nature. Hence, the fundamental distinction between the artificial and the natural – which was

so important in Aristotelian philosophy – disappeared. Inspired by Galilean physics, Giovanni Borelli (1608–1679) applied the new theory of motion to living animals (Borelli 1685). In his *De Motu Animalium*, borrowing the title from the Aristotelian treatise, he relates animals to machines and utilizes mathematics to prove his theories. Therefore, he can be considered the father of biomechanics.

The new theory of motion didn’t only have an important impact on natural philosophy. Obviously, renaissance artists such as Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510), Lodovico Cigoli (1559–1613), and Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) were affected and inspired by this new movement. The new theory also challenged many early modern philosophers to invent a new metaphysics to ground this new physics. Early modern philosophers were challenged to address questions such as: how motion was introduced in the world, whether miraculous motions were possible, whether there existed laws of motion, etc. Moreover, many of these early modern philosophers, such as Hobbes (1588–1679) and Spinoza (1632–1677), were obviously inspired



Motion in Renaissance Science, Fig. 2 The title page from G. Borelli’s posthumously published *Motu Animalium*



Motion in Renaissance Science, Fig. 3 Illustration from Borelli's *Motu Animalium* showing how the Italian physicist applied the Galilean theory of motion to living systems

in their philosophies by the new theory of motion and its Euclidean geometrization (Figs. 2 and 3).

The Homogenization of the Motions of the Universe

Galileo defined in his *Il Saggiatore* (1623) a body as a piece of universal and eternal matter with

primary qualities that reside in that piece of matter such as size, motion, etc. Importantly, gravity was, according to Galileo, a property inherent to matter, as he makes clear in the second day of his *Discorsi* (Clavelin 1974). Consequently, all bodies were heavy bodies which, by definition, fall toward the center of the earth. Galileo studied falling objects and contested Aristotle's view. For instance,

Aristotle was convinced that motion was impossible in a void. One of his arguments was that the speed of motion is dependent on the density of the medium through which it falls. Consequently, objects would fall in a void with infinite speed. According to Aristotle, this is absurd since it would imply that an object could be in two places at the same time (Lindberg 2007). Galileo, however, contested this theory and defended the idea that falling bodies fall equally fast in a void (Galileo 1960). Moreover, he discovered a relation which is today known as the law of falling bodies.

However, in Galileo's universe there were still basically two kinds of motion: the motion of bodies on earth and the motion of the planets moving, by contrast, in circular orbits around the sun. Johann Kepler (1571–1630) corrected Galileo's views by arguing that these orbits were not circular but elliptical. Isaac Newton, however, unified both motions with the introduction of the universal force of gravitation, arguing that the force which lets an apple fall downward is the same force that is responsible for the motion of the planets around the sun. Newton (2016) also showed that relationships such as Kepler's laws would apply in the Solar System, as a consequence of his own laws of motion and the law of universal gravitation (Kepler 1995).

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- Galilei, Galileo
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Muḥammad ibn As'ad Jālāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī al-Kāzīrūnī al-Ṣiddīqī

► [Dawānī](#)

Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā al-Qawāmī al-Shīrāzī

► [Mullā Ṣadrā](#)

Mühlhausen, Yomtov Lippmann

Born: unknown, ca. 1360

Died: 1421, Erfurt

Tamás Visi

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Abstract

Yomtov Lippmann ben Shlomo Mühlhausen (?–1421) was an influential rabbi in Central and Eastern Europe. He authored a polemical treatise against Christianity entitled *Sefer ha-Nitsahon* (“Book of Victory”) which was widely read by Jews in Europe and known to Christians as well. During the seventeenth century, it was partly translated to Latin, printed, read, and answered by Christian polemicists, who generated a subgenre of polemic literature called “Antilipmanniana.” Mühlhausen was a central figure of a circle of Jewish philosophers who were active chiefly in early fifteenth-century Prague. He was one of the first

Ashkenazi intellectuals who combined Maimonidean philosophy with Kabbalah.

Biography

Only a few details of his biography can be reconstructed. At the end of *Sefer ha-Nitsahon*, Mühlhausen relates a public debate he had with a Jewish convert to Christianity called Peter in 1399/1400. The controversy was followed by a serious persecution: some 80 Jews were murdered according to Mühlhausen's account. The location of this persecution cannot be identified with certainty: some scholars assume it took place in Prague (Kaufmann 1927), others suggest Poland or Lithuania (Breuer 1995), and yet another opinion is that it must have occurred in Bohemia, but perhaps outside of Prague (Limor and Yuval 2004). In 1413 Mühlhausen signed a rabbinic document as a member of the rabbinical court of justice (*beit din*) of Prague. Other members of this court were Menahem Shalem and Avigdor Kara, two other important Jewish philosophers. In 1417 Mühlhausen was in Jena; from 1418 to 1421, he resided in Erfurt. A fifteenth-century Christian source claims that Mühlhausen visited Cracow in 1420 (Kaufmann 1927). He passed away in the summer of 1421 in Erfurt (Yuval 1989).

Works

Mühlhausen's most influential work, the *Sefer ha-Nitsahon*, includes a brief summary of Jewish faith and a detailed refutation of Christian biblical exegesis in the form of a commentary on the books of the Hebrew Bible. In addition to defending Jewish faith, Mühlhausen argued against Christian teachings, such as the doctrine of transubstantiation (Lasker 1984). He utilized philosophical arguments taken from medieval Jewish Aristotelian texts (Lasker 1996). Other works include *Sefer ha-Eshkol* ("Book of the Cluster"), an explanation of the creation story and the vision of Ezekiel on the basis of Maimonidean philosophy and Kabbalah; *Kavvanot ha-Tefillah* ("The Intentions of the Prayer"), a spiritual interpretation of prayer; and *Sefer ha-Brit* ("The Book of the

Covenant"), a kabbalistic commentary on divine attributes. Remarkable is that Mühlhausen endorsed the Pythagorean thesis about the sounds produced by the celestial bodies in spite of the Aristotelian refutation of that doctrine which he encountered in Moses Narboni (ca. 1300–1362)'s commentary on Maimonides' *The Guide for the Perplexed* (Elior 2013).

Legacy

Sefer ha-Nitsahon was widely copied and read among Ashkenazi Jews in the Late Middle and Early Modern Ages. An abridged version forms the kernel of Eizik Tirna's polemical work composed in Brno in the middle of the 1420s (David 2011). The first known Christian response to Mühlhausen's work is a Latin treatise by Stephan Bodeker (1421–1459) of Brandenburg (Kaufmann 1927). After some further references to it during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it caught the attention of Christian polemicists during the seventeenth century. The Hebrew text was printed by a Lutheran theologian Theodor Hackspan (1607–1659), professor of Hebrew at the University of Altdorf in 1644. Some of Hackspan's students published extracts from the work in Latin translation (Kaufmann 1927). A detailed response to Mühlhausen was published by the Calvinist theologian Christian Schotan (1603–1671) in 1659. His "Antilipmanniana" was followed by a number of similar works during the later half of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries (Kaufmann 1927).

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theology of his time, drawing equally from both Sunnī and Shī'ite theology, both Peripatetic and *ishrāqī* philosophy, and the tradition of theoretical Sufism. Ṣadrā's eclectic use of sources did not prevent him from treating his material in a systematical and conceptually rigorous fashion; indeed, he is a true synthesizer of the most important currents of thought of his time in the sense that his synthesis is a new system of philosophy that would subsequently overshadow the preceding schools in importance. The most prominent doctrinal features of Ṣadrā's philosophy are the theory of the foundationality of existence which entails a reductive explanation of our intellectual grasp of quiddities or essences, and the theory of substantial motion which holds, *pace* the Peripatetic tradition, that motion primarily takes place in the category of substance. These two theories, the composite of which has been characterized as a form of process philosophy, also entail a new concept of the identity of concrete entities, which bears an intriguing resemblance to contemporary four-dimensionalist theories of substance. After a period of more meager influence, Ṣadrā's philosophy was revived by some of the most important philosophers of the Qājār period in the nineteenth century. Today, it provides the foundation for the philosophical curriculum in the Shī'ite seminaries in Qum.

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Mullā Ṣadrā

Born: 1571/1572, Shīrāz

Died: 1635/1636, Başra

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Abstract

Mullā Ṣadrā is arguably the most important philosopher of Ṣafavid Persia. He wrote extensively on all key topics of the philosophy and

Alternate Names

His full name is **Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yahyā al-Qawāmī al-Shīrāzī**, also known by the honorific epithets Ṣadr al-Dīn and Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn.

Biography

Born in 1571/1572 to a family that belonged to the scholarly and political elite of Shīrāz, Mullā Ṣadrā enjoyed the best early education his hometown could offer. In addition to the traditional Islamic sciences and the Arabic and Persian languages, this involved the study of the rational

sciences of logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. But although Shīrāz was famous for its thriving philosophical and theological scene in the previous two centuries, by Ṣadrā's time the students of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries masters Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 1502) and the two Dashtakīs, the father Ṣadr al-Dīn (d. 1497/1498) and the son Ghiyāth al-Dīn (d. 1542), seem to have dispersed. It is therefore likely that for much of his early philosophical instruction, he was an autodidact, thus following the almost topical example Avicenna had set in his autobiography.

At the beginning of the 1590s, Ṣadrā moved first to Qazvīn and then to the new Ṣafavid capital in Iṣfahān, in order to further pursue his studies under the guidance of more capable teachers. This brought him into the circle of the so-called school of Iṣfahān, that is, the famous jurispudent Bahā' al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1621), with whom he studied jurisprudence, Qurʾānic exegesis, and the Shīʿite traditions, and the venerated philosopher Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631), who instructed him in theology and both Peripatetic and *ishrāqī* philosophy. Ṣadrā seems to have been particularly affectionate toward the latter, whom he praises lavishly even after the major philosophical differences, most notably on the question of metaphysical primacy of essence and existence, had erupted between the two.

After his studies, Ṣadrā returned to his native Shīrāz in 1601/1602, only to encounter the vehement opposition and criticism of the intellectual hegemony of the city. In the face of this adversity, he opted for a retreat to the small village of Kahak near the city of Qum, a sojourn that would be prolonged for 6 years. Ṣadrā himself describes this period as a self-imposed isolation of extended ascetic contemplation, clearly modeled on the Sufi retreat introduced into the philosophical practice by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191), that helped him to clarify the central philosophical insights underlying his magnum opus, *al-Hikma al-mutaʿāliya fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliya al-arbaʿa* ("The Supreme Wisdom in Four Intellectual Journeys"). He began writing this monumental work in 1606, toward the end of his retreat at Kahak, and finished it 22 years later in the midst of an

active teaching period in Qum. During this time, Ṣadrā led a migrant existence between his native Shīrāz, the increasingly dear Qum that was home to a successful teaching career, and the capital Iṣfahān.

In 1630/1631, Ṣadrā settled in Shīrāz to accept a teaching position in the recently established *madrasa* of Imamquli Khan (d. 1633), the powerful governor of the province of Fars and possibly an erstwhile student of Ṣadrā's. During this last period of his life, Ṣadrā is also likely to have acted as a jurisprudential consultant. He died in Baṣra in 1635/1636, on the way to a seventh pilgrimage to Mecca.

Mullā Ṣadrā had six children that survived. His three sons studied with him and became scholars in their own right, although what little is known of their activity suggests that they did not share their father's passion for the rational sciences. Ṣadrā's three daughters were also married to his students, but there is no evidence of him having envisaged his progeny as a dynasty of scholars.

Works

The Ṣadrian corpus consists of more than 45 works, which range from multivolume philosophical summae to brief treatises on strictly defined topics. His output can be roughly divided into two main classes.

On the one hand, Ṣadrā wrote a number of works in the so-called Islamic sciences, that is, Qurʾānic exegesis, the Shīʿite traditions, and theological ethics. Among the most important are his four exegetical works, the *Asrār al-āyāt wa anwār al-bayyināt* and the *Mutashābihāt al-Qurʾān* ("The Secrets of Verses/Signs and the Lights of Evidence" and "The Ambiguous Verses of the Qurʾān," both completed between 1631 and 1634), the methodological *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* ("Keys to the Unseen," completed in 1632), and his incomplete *Tafsīr*. Ṣadrā also composed a voluminous but incomplete commentary on al-Kulaynī's (d. 941) classical *ḥadīth* collection *al-Kāfī*. An interesting perspective on the intellectual polemics of the time is provided by *Kaṣr aṣnām al-jāhiliya fī dhamm al-mutaṣawwifīn*

(“Breaking the Idols of Ignorance, on the Admonition of Sufis,” completed in 1618).

The second class of texts consists of Ṣadrā’s philosophical works. Among these, the uncontested pride of place belongs to the immense *al-Ḥikma al-muta’āliya fī al-asfār al-‘aqlīya al-arba’a* composed between 1606 and 1628. Although its broad scope is modeled on earlier philosophical summae, *al-Asfār* deviates from the classical Peripatetic model by its decisive emphasis on metaphysics and eschatology at the cost of logic and the natural sciences. Moreover, its account of the system of philosophical knowledge is constructed along the lines of four journeys (an ascent to God, a journey in God, a descent from God to creation, and a journey in creation informed by the prior theological and metaphysical ascent), which begin from theology and metaphysics and proceed to natural philosophy and ethics on their basis – in the mirror image of the Peripatetic model that was founded on logic and proceeded from natural philosophy to metaphysics as its crowning effort.

More abridged summae are *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiya fī al-manāhij al-sulūkīya* (“Divine Testimonies on Trodden Paths,” completed before 1631), the predominantly eschatological *al-Ḥikma al-‘arshīya* (“Wisdom of the Throne,” completed between 1631 and 1634), and *al-Mabda’ wa al-ma’ād* (“The Origin and the Return,” completed in 1606), an early treatise that shows a decisive influence by the Avicennian work bearing the same title and is structured in accordance with its predecessor’s Neoplatonic model of the origination of the cosmos from God and its return to Him. An important philosophical treatise is also the *Kitāb al-mashā’ir* (“The Book of Penetrations,” completed after 1628), a concise work on Ṣadrā’s novel concept of existence. Apart from these original texts as well as a number of minor treatises on assorted philosophical and theological topics such as the nature of knowledge, the relationship between essence and existence, resurrection, and the classical questions of whether the world is eternal or created in time and whether human acts are performed freely or created by God, Ṣadrā composed a number of perspicacious philosophical commentaries. These

include works on the metaphysical section of Avicenna’s *Shifā’*, on Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī’s (d. 1264) Peripatetic epitome *al-Hidāya*, and on a number of treatises by Mīr Dāmād, as well as a supercommentary on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī’s (d. 1311) commentary on Suhrawardī’s *Ḥikma al-ishrāq*, which is witness to Ṣadrā’s full mastery of the *ishrāqī* tradition. Among his philosophical works, we can also classify expositions of philosophy that adopt a more literary style, such as *al-Maẓāhir al-ilāhiya fī asrār al-‘ulūm al-kamālīya* (“Divine Appearances on the Secrets of Perfect Sciences”), as well as more mystically oriented works, such as the *Iksīr al-‘ārīfīn fī ma’rifat tarīq al-ḥaqq wa al-yaqīn* (“The Elixir of Knowers, on Knowing the Way of Truth and Certainty,” completed by 1621), which is based on an earlier treatise by Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. 1214), and the Persian *Risāla-yi siḥ aṣl* (“Treatise on the Three Principles,” composed in the early 1620s).

This heuristic classification notwithstanding (indeed, there are texts that are difficult to fit into either category, most notably Ṣadrā’s surviving poetry and the moralistic treatises directed at the shortcomings of some of the pious people of his day), it is clear that Ṣadrā considered both types of works as constitutive of a single intellectual effort. Although scholarship on his exegetical works and religious commentaries is still in its infancy, it seems evident that they contain plenty of philosophically interesting material.

Heritage and Departure

Ṣadrā is adequately described as having performed the greatest intellectual synthesis of his time, perhaps indeed one of the greatest in all time, from the existing philosophical, theological, and mystical currents of thought. There is nothing unheard of in his eclectic method of drawing equally from both Sunnī and Shī’ite theology (especially prominent are Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī [d. 1111], Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī [d. 1210], and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī [d. 1274]), both Peripatetic and *ishrāqī* philosophy, and the theoretical Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240) and his followers, though,

in fact, an unprejudiced approach to the entire range of Islamic intellectual endeavor was quite characteristic of the protagonists of Shīrāzī philosophy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such as al-Dawānī and the Dashtakīs, with all of whose work Ṣadrā was thoroughly familiar. But Ṣadrā is quite unique in the depth of the conceptual revisions he was driven to make by his heterogeneous sources. Two points in particular bear worth mentioning here, that is, the doctrines of (1) the primacy of existence and (2) substantial motion.

1. The term “primacy of existence” (*aṣāla al-wujūd*) captures Ṣadrā’s unique stand in the debate about which of the two Avicennian principles, quiddity or existence, is foundational for the other. The question does not come from Avicenna, who had introduced the distinction between quiddity and existence merely in order to make sense of the difference between God and His creation in terms of their respective modality of existence; whereas all created things are essences or quiddities that are merely possible in themselves and that require a cause that makes their existence necessary, God’s very essence entails His existence, which means that He is necessary by Himself and not in need of any cause of existence. The later tradition, however, raised the question of whether the two principles are both primitive or whether we can reductively explain one in terms of the other.

In brief, Ṣadrā’s theory of the fundamentality of existence holds that the reality of each individual thing should be described as a unique instantiation of existence, not as an essence *having* existence. The temporal variation of its attributes notwithstanding, the creature is one, not because it has an unchanging essence but because its existence is a single continuity. But existence comes in degrees, and in concrete acts of existence, there are always certain deficiencies or privations which vary through the duration of the act and distinguish them from the pure and perfect existence that belongs to God alone. Our intellects can grasp these deficiencies by

abstracting them from the unity of the original act of existence, thereby translating them to essential and accidental quidditative features, out of which an existing thing is then conceived to be composed. In reality, however, the act and its degree are inseparable, and it is the act of intellectual abstraction that makes a manifold composite out of what is absolutely one. Moreover, it does this by means of universal concepts which can by definition be true of more than one particular act of existence, and this is possible only by neglecting certain aspects of the unique individual act of existence under consideration. In the end, all of the above boils down to the claim that we can reductively explain quiddities as features introduced in the intellectual consideration of metaphysically primitive acts of existence.

Ṣadrā’s arguments for the fundamentality of existence include an interesting analysis of identity conceived in temporal change. If we consider a certain moment in an individual act of existence, it may be perfectly legitimate to conceive that individual, this horse here, say, as a horse of particular color, height, gait, capacities, and breed – as long as one bears in mind that this involves subsuming it under a certain bundle of universals. But what is more, Ṣadrā claims that I can grasp the horse thereby presently conceived as being identical to the colt I encountered 5 years earlier only by abstracting from some of the features in the two respective acts of existence – a clear sign of cognition by means of universal concepts. This is not to say that the identification of the horse with the colt is unwarranted or dependent on the intellectual operation I perform; the point is that the basis of the identity, that is, the continuity of the creature’s existence, will elude my narrow intellectual grasp.

In the debate of metaphysical fundamentality, Ṣadrā’s theory is often pitted against Suhrawardī who had criticized the Avicennian concept of existence for being a conceptual addition introduced in the human intellect’s consideration of the way in which concrete essences appear to it. It is true that in arguing for the fundamentality of existence,

Ṣadrā spends a great deal of effort on the Suhrawardīan discussion of the “intellectual considerations” (*i’tibārāt ‘aqlīya*), but his more immediate opponent was his erstwhile mentor Mīr Dāmād, who explicitly held the theory of the foundationality of quiddity (*aṣāla al-māhīya*) and whom Ṣadrā himself followed earlier in his career. This he asserts explicitly in his mature works, and the early treatise *Risāla fī sarayān wujūd al-ḥaqq* is witness to his arguing at some length in favor of Mīr Dāmād’s view.

The theory of the foundationality of existence is sometimes argued to entail nominalism. The debate concerning realism and nominalism does not seem to be a major question for Ṣadrā, but there is an element in his concept of existence that makes it difficult to label him as a straightforward nominalist. This is the idea that existence comes in degrees, or entails what has been variously translated as “modulation” or “systematic ambiguity” (*tashkīk*), and that the differences in the degree of existence respective to each thing determine which quiddities are applicable to them. Since he takes quiddities to be based on gradations of existence, Ṣadrā explicitly denies that existence can be conceptualized arbitrarily. Yet the point about metaphysical primacy stands: the gradation of existence is independent of the quiddities that are applied on its basis, but not the other way round. It is in this sense that quiddities are less real than existence, for they first come to be in an intellectual consideration of existence and its gradations.

2. Substantial motion (*ḥaraka jawharīya*) is another idea of Ṣadrā’s invention. According to it, motion takes place not only in the Aristotelian categories of quality, quantity, place, and position but also, and indeed primarily, in the category of substance. He thus stands in polar opposition to the Peripatetic paradigm, according to which stability in the category of substance is a necessary condition for the apprehension of any kind of motion, motion being apprehensible only as the variation in the attributes of an unchanging substantial essence. However, this departure from the

tradition is motivated by an orthodox conviction, for Ṣadrā’s aim in introducing the concept of substantial motion is to make sense of the teleology underlying all natural processes, that is, of the notion that all existents strive by their very nature to exist *well*, each pursuing the perfection proper to it. These teleological processes were traditionally conceived as evolution within the set of the concomitant accidents of substances, with the substances themselves remaining static. Ṣadrā counters this by arguing that lest the teleology be merely fortuitous, it must concern the very essence of the beings under development. In other words, it must be the substance itself that develops and thereby comes to exist more perfectly. Ṣadrā also conceives of this development as a gradual increase in the being’s uniqueness as it acquires new degrees of perfection which, by being founded upon the earlier, encompass them within themselves.

To illustrate the process of substantial development, let us briefly consider Ṣadrā’s favorite example, the human being. We first come to the world as material forms of the embryos in our mothers’ wombs. Once our cognitive organs have reached a sufficient stage of development, we begin to actually perceive, which entails an ascent to a new level of mental existence. Our newly acquired actuality as immaterial mental substances is, however, but an initiation into a considerably more grandiose development within the sphere of mental existence. We first ascend from perception to imagination, which amounts to an increased independence from the material constraints of the sublunary world. Imagination in turn contains the potency for intellection, the final ascent in the substantial motion of human being. In this process, no substantial core of our being will remain immutable through the successive steps from lower to higher levels of existence. The motion concerns the human substance, our very selves, and distinct stages in the process cannot be unqualifiedly identified with each other. As we already saw in our brief discussion of the theory of the foundationality of existence, Ṣadrā thus

subscribes to what we can call a perdurance theory of identity: considered as momentary entities, the infant John and the adult John are two different entities; they are identical only when considered as phases of a single continuity of existence or derivatively by means of a suitable concept. As has been noted by various commentators, this bears a number of similarities to the so-called four-dimensionalist theories of substance proposed in contemporary analytic philosophy.

The theory of substantial motion is thus intimately intertwined with the primacy of existence, and their combination has quite aptly been characterized as a form of process philosophy. But focus on substantial notion does bring out an important feature in the metaphysically primitive notion of continuous existence, that is, its being directed by an internal teleological principle. This principle is the Ṣadrīan equivalent of the Peripatetic concept of substance in the sense that like the concept of substance, it provides the foundation for the identity in change of the individual existent. But unlike the Peripatetic substance, it does not endure unchanged but can only exist as the infinitely rich continuity of motion. As a result, it cannot be abstracted from any particular phase in that continuity, for even if the abstraction were an adequate representation of the phase it is derived from, it cannot adequately represent the whole to which the phase belongs.

Another departure from the Avicennian Peripatetic paradigm is Ṣadrā's subscription to the idea that cognition consists in a unity in the act of existence between the cognizing subject and the cognized object. Although the idea can be read as a reasonable interpretation of Aristotle's theory of cognition in the *De Anima*, it was vehemently criticized by Avicenna, a fact that Ṣadrā was well aware of. In fact, he clearly thinks that his rehabilitation of this venerable doctrine is the sole plausible solution to a number of problems he perceived in Avicenna's cognitive psychology. At the same time, he clearly thought that the theory of cognitive unity is closely connected to the broader themes

of the foundationality of existence and substantial motion, as becomes clear from his reply to Avicenna's refutation of the theory.

According to Avicenna whose cognitive psychology was based on the idea of the cognized forms being impressed in the cognitive organs (in the case of sub-intellectual cognition) or in the soul (in the case of intellection), the theory of cognitive unity violates our intuitions of our stability as cognitive subjects aware of a variety of objects; if I as a subject really were identical with the object I am aware of, then when I shift my regard from perceiving a dog to thinking about my groceries, I actually become a different thing – having been a dog, I am now a bunch of edible substances. Granting that this is a genuine problem for a metaphysics based on the notion of a substance that endures intact through the change of its attributes, Ṣadrā clearly thinks that the problem vanishes when the idea of substantial change is introduced. If any entity subject to change has an identity only in the sense of perduring for a certain period of time, and if the change from me as perceiving the dog to me as thinking about the groceries is understood in a sufficiently nuanced way that enables us to locate a number of common features and causal connections between the two temporal phases, we can save the intuition and do away with Avicenna's refutation. In other words, if the two instances of perceiving the dog and thinking about the groceries are considered as such, then there really are two corresponding subjects. But once the two cognitions are conceived as belonging to a single continuity of mental existence, the subject is one, namely, the continuous mental existence as a whole.

One final topic of importance in which Ṣadrā departs from his predecessors is related to his sustained interest in eschatological questions. In this field, he is witness to an interesting development of the Avicennian and Suhrawardīan theories of an imaginary afterlife as the lot of those human souls that have been insufficiently developed to enjoy the sort of contemplative bliss proper to members of the

human species but have nevertheless developed a set of moral virtues or vices and therefore deserve a certain type of pleasure or pain in the afterlife. Since both Avicenna and Suhrawardī held imagination to be a faculty whose activity is dependent on a corporeal organ, they had to face the question of how we can imagine after the demise of the body and its cognitive organ, the brain. As a solution, they located an *ersatz* organ in the celestial spheres, which the moderately developed souls could allegedly use in imagining their respective deserts. This was an uneasy appendix at best in Avicenna, who had elsewhere conceived of the connection of the soul and its unique body in more intimate terms which the ad hoc solution to eschatology was prone to violate. In the *Ḥikma al-ishrāq*, Suhrawardī makes a number of conceptual moves that mitigate the tension, but the idea of imaginary afterlife nevertheless remained on the level of somewhat undeveloped remarks. Ṣadrā, however, employs the idea as the basis of a full-blown theory of quasi-corporeally felt but fully immaterial reward and punishment in the afterlife. This is possible because, in his psychological theory, he had separated the functioning of the Avicennian internal senses (common sense, formative faculty, imagination, estimation, and memory) from their corporeal organs, treating them dualistically as so many modifications of immaterial mental existence. But although imagination thereby no longer needs the brain as the instrument of its operation, its contents retain their corporeal appearance for Ṣadrā. Hence, we do not need a body to imagine bodies, that is, three-dimensional objects located in space and time. What is more, we do not need the body to experience ourselves as embodied, for even the experience of one's own body can be produced in the incorporeal imagination. Relying on this idea, Ṣadrā attempts to do justice to the full array of the concrete descriptions of the afterlife found in the Qur'ān. This does not mean that he gives up the philosophical idea of pure contemplation as the best lot available to the human elect,

but clearly, he felt the need to address the theological criticism, initiated by al-Ghazālī in the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, according to which the philosophers' dualism is incompatible with true Muhammadan revelation.

In broad terms, Ṣadrā subscribes to the traditional conception of philosophy as the perfection of the human soul through the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. This is compatible with the revealed goal of the human species, for knowledge alone can elevate us above material indigency and thereby render us as like to God (*ta'alluh*) as is possible for a created entity. But it is important to notice how broadly Ṣadrā defines knowledge; in particular, it cannot be restricted to a series of syllogistical inferences from first premises but must include intuitive modes and methods as equally valid. Furthermore, Ṣadrā holds that the proper cultivation of our cognitive capacities is dependent on a rigorous process of ascetic and religious discipline, as is evident in his own understanding of the importance of the period of seclusion in Kahak for his philosophical thinking. In his conception of philosophy as a special type of unity of theory and practice, Ṣadrā continues the project sketched out in Suhrawardī's preface to the *Ḥikma al-ishrāq*. This conception also provides the motivation for his eclectic use of sources and the basis for the breadth of his intellectual endeavors.

Impact and Legacy

As a teacher, Mullā Ṣadrā was responsible for the training of a number of the most significant philosophers of the later Ṣafavid period, two of the most important of whom were his sons-in-law, Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1680) and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī (d. 1661/1662), who developed Ṣadrā's philosophy in a more mystical vein. Other notable students included Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Riḍā Aghājānī (d. 1660/1661), the author of a massive commentary on Mīr Dāmād's *al-Qabasāt*, and Shaykh Ḥusayn Tunikābunī

(d. 1690 or 1694), the initiator of a chain of scholars extending as far as the nineteenth century. Their work, together with that of subsequent Iranian philosophers, ensured the transmission of Ṣadrā's philosophical legacy through times adverse to philosophy, until his thought was revived by his Qājār era followers, especially Mullā 'Alī Nūrī (d. 1836) and Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī (d. 1873). Since the nineteenth-century renaissance, Ṣadrā's works have been at the forefront of Islamic philosophical study in Iran, and through the sustained effort of 'Allāma Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1981) in the face of theological opposition, they have secured a place in the philosophical curriculum of the Shī'ite *madāris* of Qum. This was certainly facilitated by the breadth of Ṣadrā's intellectual outlook which perceived philosophy to be inseparable from the more traditional sciences of theology, exegesis, and jurisprudence, as well as his adherence to ascetic religious discipline as a necessary constituent of the philosophical practice. Indeed, Ṭabāṭabā'ī is still revered for having exemplified this unity of the traditional, the philosophical, and the mystical. Many of the protagonists of the Islamic revolution in Iran, most notably Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini (d. 1989) and Morteza Moṭahhari (d. 1979), were also strongly influenced by Ṣadrā's thought.

Cross-References

- Dawānī
- Mīr Damad, Muhammad Bāqir
- Philosophy in Safavid Persia

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Müntzer, Thomas

Born: 1488/c. 1489?, Stolberg

Died: May 27, 1525, Mühlhausen

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Abstract

Thomas Müntzer was one of the most controversial figures of the dawning years of the Reformation in Germany and an important figurehead in the 1525 German Peasants' War in Thuringia and Saxony (Bloch 1969; Gritsch 2006; La Rocca 1988; Martinuzzi 2016; Matheson 2012; Politi 2011). Theologian; deeply rooted in German Medieval mysticism; humanist scholar; learned in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; Biblicist; reformer; pastor; prophet; and revolutionary, Müntzer's turbulent life has inspired the work of philosophers, artists, and writers but also political movements and individual thinkers. As a contemporary of Luther, he took part in the great transformation of the Church, started in 1517 in Wittenberg, by seeking his own shade of reform based on the notion of direct revelation of God and the active role played by man in his own salvation, in sharp contrast with Luther's fundamental ideas of *sola Scriptura* and *sola fide*. In the first half of the 1520s, the two reformers competed for the political support of the dukes of the Electorate of Saxony. When it became clear that the authorities would stand aside Luther's Reformation, Müntzer joined the peasant and burger revolts in Thuringia and Saxony. After the 1525 massacre of Frankenhausen, Müntzer was captured, tortured, and then executed alongside other leaders of the so-called peasant revolution.

Biography

Thomas Müntzer was born in the small town of Stolberg in the Harz mountains of central

Germany. The exact birthdate is unknown, but it is generally believed to be around the late 1480s. Dating back from his first appointment as priest in Brunswick in 1514, historians have estimated that he must have been born no later than 1491, since the customary ordination age was 24. Müntzer is supposed to have studied in Leipzig from 1506 and then moved to Frankfurt an der Oder in 1512 for his master's degree in theology (Bubenheimer 1989). Between 1514 and possibly 1521, Müntzer received a stipend from his position as priest, but did not reside often in the small town of Brunswick. From 1515 he also served as provost of a convent near the town of Aschersleben. During these early years, he began to study Johann Tauler and to question Catholic teachings before even meeting Luther and without the recourse to his writings against indulgences (Scott 1989: 9). In the autumn of 1517, Müntzer was in Wittenberg where he attended the lectures of the humanist Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus and met with Luther, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, and Philip Melancthon. With these reformers, he would maintain epistolary connections up until 1524. In Wittenberg Müntzer's studies focused on German mysticism, Plato, and possibly Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*.

From Wittenberg, he travelled to the village of Orlamünde, where he had been invited by Karlstadt, and from there back to Leipzig to attend the disputation between Luther and Eck in 1519. Between the end of 1519 and the spring of 1520, Müntzer was appointed as confessor of a Cistercian nunnery in Beuditz, where he would find ample time to reflect on the Church fathers and continue to study German mystics, such as Tauler and Heinrich Suso.

In May 1520, thanks to a recommendation by Luther himself, Müntzer received his first assignment as preacher in the Church of St. Mary in the town of Zwickau, close to the bohemian border, where he temporarily took the place of the humanist and reformer Johannes Sylvius Egranus. In the Saxon town, Müntzer encountered the inspirational views of Nikolas Storch, Thomas Drechsel, and his friend Markus Stübner (or Badstübner), later defined by Luther as the "Zwickau Prophets." Though Storch was

only a weaver and a self-taught master of Scripture, the influences between him and Müntzer were manifold and mutual: the two discussed themes such as the criticism of infant baptism and the idea of illumination or direct revelation by God (Kaufmann 2010). In Zwickau, Müntzer achieved a certain following among the cloth workers, miners, and the members of the City Council, despite his forceful polemics with the Franciscans and later on with Egranus himself. When the latter resumed his position at St. Mary's in October 1520, the Council, eager to keep him in town, appointed Müntzer the permanent post of preacher of the Church of St. Catherine. Nonetheless, as a consequence of their theological differences, which climaxed in the printing of defamatory pamphlets and sporadic episodes of intimidatory actions by their respective followers, Müntzer was formally dismissed from his post on April 16, 1521.

After having visited the town of Žatec, Müntzer and his friend Markus Stübner reached the Bohemian capital, Prague, in June 1521. Greeted as a follower of Luther, Müntzer soon preached in many chapels and churches in town. Despite his warm welcoming, Müntzer's mystical approach to faith and his stressing the role of the living Word of God as opposed to the dead letter of Scripture did not find much following among the biblical devotion of the Utraquists and of the Bohemian Brethren. In Prague Müntzer wrote his first complete theological treatise, though never published during his lifetime: the *Protestation Concerning the Situation in Bohemia* (wrongfully known as the *Prague Manifesto*) (Kohnle et al. 2017: 411; Franz et al. 1968: 491; Matheson 1994: 357; Müntzer 2003: 57; Müntzer 2017: 187). It exists in four different versions, two in German, one in Latin, and a Czech translation; and circulated as a manuscript from the late Autumn of 1521. Though sometimes seen as a deeply apocalyptic piece of literature (Goertz 2015; Friesen 1990; Riedl 2014), the *Protestation* focuses much more on anticlerical stances and mystical themes, such as man's tribulation on earth as the only path to true faith, and the moral corruption of the clergy. Because of his ideas, that not only diverged from those of the Church, but

also from Luther's theology, Müntzer was expelled from Prague in December 1521.

Sources about Müntzer become scarce for the period between December 1521 and the spring of 1523. After leaving Prague he was invited to teach in the monastery of St. Peter's in Erfurt. From the Thuringian town, in March 1522 Müntzer sent an important letter to Philip Melanchthon in which he addressed his main concerns regarding Luther's Reformation, especially the notion of direct revelation that the latter so drastically opposed (Bräuer et al. 2010: 127). During these months Müntzer wrote to other important reformers such as Andreas Karlstadt, with whom he shared spiritualist ideas (Bräuer 2010: 150). In the spring of 1522, Müntzer was shortly in his hometown in Stolberg and then in Nordhausen, Sooden, and Weimar, where he met with the reformer and court preacher, Jacob Strauss. In December 1522 he became chaplain in the Cistercian convent of St. George in Glaucha, near the town of Halle, where in secret he preached reformed sermons. For this reason, he was expelled in March 1523, finding refuge in the Thuringian town of Allstedt, where he would settle for more than a year (Martinuzzi 2017).

During his stay in Allstedt, Müntzer wrote most of his liturgical works and religious pamphlets. With the support of the City Council, the electoral intendant, Hans Zeiss, and of the local preacher, Simon Haferitz, he published the first reformed liturgy in the German language and composed the music to go with it. In Allstedt he also published his most controversial works, such as the *Protestation and Proposition* (January 1524) and *On Counterfeit Faith* (July 1524), and the famous interpretation of the second chapter of Daniel, simply known as the *Sermon to the Princes* (August 1524) (Baylor 1993; Betzinger et al. 1990; Franz 1968; Kohnle et al. 2017; Matheson 1994; Müntzer 2017). In spring 1524 Müntzer married a former nun, Otilie von Gersen, who would later give birth to a son. During this time, the reformer tried to seek the support and protection of local authorities and of the Saxon princes but found increasing antagonism from the Catholic lords of the surrounding regions, namely, Ernst von Mansfeld. Despite Luther's ill-feeling

and the complaint of the Catholic lords, the Electors of Saxony granted Müntzer a number of hearings both in Weimar and in Allstedt itself. In the spring of 1524, as a result of the growing religious and social tensions in town, a Marian chapel in Mallerbach was looted and burned down. Though he denied being involved in the matter, Müntzer was accused of having caused the destruction of the chapel through his inflammatory sermons (Bräuer et al. 2010: 507). Moreover, Luther, who saw in Müntzer a threat to his leadership, wrote to the Saxon princes asking them to remove him from his post and called him "the Satan in Allstedt" (Held et al. 2004: 139). As a result, Frederick the Wise and his brother John closed Müntzer's printing press in Allstedt, but did not banish him from their lands as Luther would have wanted. Nonetheless, finding his position compromised, on the night of August 7, 1524, Müntzer left Allstedt (abandoning his wife and son) and made it to the city of Mühlhausen (Müller 2004).

In the Imperial Free City, Müntzer found fertile soil for his preaching and soon published the longest and most radical of his tracts: *A Manifest Exposé of False Faith* (Kohnle et al. 2017: 322; Matheson 1994: 260). In it, his mystical thought found an apex in the Eckhartian notion of the *homo divinus*: through Christ's example of suffering, man (that in his heart had a spark of God) had to become a divine figure on earth. At the end of September 1524, the reformer was involved in a civic rebellion that was led by the local preacher Heinrich Pfeiffer (who would be executed with Müntzer after the Battle of Frankenhausen) (Vogler 2003). When the revolt was placated, Pfeiffer and Müntzer were forced to leave the city.

In October 1524 Müntzer was in Nuremberg where he would meet with his followers Hans Hut and Hans Denck. In the Bavarian town, under the shadow of Willibald Pirkheimer and Albrecht Dürer, the most dangerous and radical works of the Reformation circulated among humanists and merchants alike, creating a fertile soil for Müntzer's predication. In Nuremberg Müntzer had the chance to finish one of his most fiercely anti-Lutheran tract: the *Vindication and Refutation*, printed by Hieronymus Hölzel (Kohnle et al.

2017: 376; Matheson 1994: 327). Reportedly 500 copies of the pamphlet were printed and spread across town and sent to Augsburg. When the City Council discovered the nature of the pamphlet, all the copies found were burned.

Müntzer fled to the south toward the alpine region from where the echoes of the peasants' revolts were growing higher. In the Klettgau region, the peasants had already torched the land since the summer of 1524, and it is not hard to imagine that Müntzer's preaching could have found strong support in the area (Scott et al. 1991). There is little if any documentation on Müntzer's journey through southwest Germany and of his involvement with the local upheavals. In his final confession, however, the reformer admitted under torture that he "had discussed with the peasants of Klettgau and Hegau near Basel whether they wanted to join forces with him at Mühlhausen" and that in the region, "he had issued some articles drawn from the Gospel, on how one should govern, from which, later on, other articles were devised" (Matheson 1994: 434).

In February 1525 Müntzer returned to Mühlhausen having been appointed (through a popular vote) as preacher in the Church of St. Mary. In the weeks that had preceded Müntzer's return, Pfeiffer had managed to take control over the city. In March the citizens were called to elect an "Eternal Council" that would substitute the existing City Council. Müntzer contributed by drafting what are known as the *Eleven Articles of Mühlhausen* (Bräuer et al. 2010: 373; Müntzer 2017: 298). Soon after the whole of Thuringia was up in arms, and Mühlhausen stood as the main stronghold of the peasants and burgers' revolt.

In the months that preceded the famous Battle of Frankenhausen of May 1525, Müntzer's pen became an essential element in transforming the single and separate revolts in the region into a large, widespread, and coherent upheaval that sometimes has gone by the name of "revolution of the common man" (Blickle 1981; Fleischauer 2010; Wolgast 2006). Müntzer's correspondence clearly shows how he played very little, if no part at all, in the military organization of the revolts in Thuringia. Differently from other leaders of the

Peasants' War, he gave the movement an ideological basis on which to stand, a whole new German reformed liturgy to be practiced. His pen and his preaching served him more than the sword with which he is often remembered. On May 11, after having received a desperate letter from the rebels there, Müntzer and several hundred followers made camp in the small town of Frankenhausen. At the same time, an army led by Catholic and Protestant princes alike was moving toward the town. On May 15, 1525, the two armies joined battle. Before the first canon was fired, a halo appeared around the sun: Müntzer and the peasants, supposedly, interpreted it as a sign that God was on their side. When the battle was over, several thousand rebels had been killed, and many more were executed the following days. After a short escape, Müntzer was caught and imprisoned in the castle of Heldrungen. On May 27, after long tortures, confession, and recantation, Müntzer was executed outside the walls of Mühlhausen. His head and limbs were set on spikes and remained there for years as a warning to others who intended to rebel.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Müntzer's theological ideas strongly diverged from those of Luther, in particular in regard to the notions of *sola fide* and *sola Scriptura*. Through the study of German mystics such as Meister Eckhart, and Johannes Tauler and the *Theologia Deutsch*, Müntzer underlined the importance of man's active role (through a path of tribulation) in finding true faith and undermined the role of Scripture as a source of revelation. Indeed, he believed that God revealed himself directly in man's heart through the Holy Ghost. In his early years, Müntzer studied the Church fathers Tertullian, Cyprian, Eusebius, and Hegesippus but might have also been influenced by the humanist Marsilio Ficino.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In 1523 Müntzer published three tracts (the *German Church Service* book, the *German*

Evangelical Mass, and the *Order and Explanation*) that composed the first German reformed liturgy, which focused on the role of the congregation (that would worship through singing) and the pastor (that would have to preach only in German) and would set an example for all the following liturgical works of the Reformation (Bräuer 1974; Kohnle et al. 2017: 1–266). Müntzer was also the first Saxon reformer to openly write against the sacrament of infant baptism. He did so in his 1524 *Protestation or Proposition* where he stated that baptism represented the mystical union between God and man: a unification that would only come to pass after the believer had followed the path of suffering set before him by God (Stayer 1981). Therefore, the physical rite of aspersion of the waters over the child's forehead, as well as that of full immersion advocated by Luther, lost all meaning in Müntzer's thought. The *Rechte tauffe* could not be given by a minister of God or a priest through a rite but only be achieved through personal suffering and the real experience of faith.

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Museum, Renaissance

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Abstract

The concept museum was rediscovered in the Renaissance. In the ancient world, museums had been used as cultural institutions, not necessarily for hosting collections. From the fifteenth century onward, however, the “place of the Muses” became a space where objects were stored and knowledge was spread through the activity of scholars and visitors, opening the way to the modern idea of the museum.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The word “museum,” from the Greek *mouseion*, literally means a place devoted to the Muses, the goddesses of the liberal arts. The Museum of Alexandria, for example, was a research center, with a great library where scholars lived and studied. The word was almost unknown in the Middle Ages and was rediscovered in the Renaissance. From the fourteenth century onward, the intellectual movement known as humanism, which spread over Europe between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, focused on the study of ancient culture,

which was regarded as model for the present day: men of letters re-entered the realm of the Muses (Findlen 1989). The effort of analyzing classical literature and art led scholars to go beyond the written page and to pay attention to the remains of ancient civilization: ruins and antiquities; and museums began to house both books and objects collected by scholars. Collecting and studying in the Renaissance was also a private activity. A large number of museums (called also by other names, such as gallery, *studiolo*, *Wunderkammer*) appeared all over Europe; these cabinets of curiosities were varied in content and dimensions, and they included both the works of nature (*naturalia*: fossils, animals, stones, etc.) and of men (*artificialia*: antiquities, paintings, instruments, etc.). The strong link between collecting and studying made Renaissance museums more than an accumulation of wonders, as in the Middle Ages: they were places where objects were displayed according to an intellectual project that aimed to show their meaning and relations (Bredekamp 1996; Lugli 2005; Evans 2006).

Innovative and Original Aspects

This idea of museum is best exemplified by the “Museo Gioviano,” built by Paolo Giovio between 1537 and 1543. He chose the word *musaeum* in order to indicate a direct connection to the ancient world, with regard both to the place (believed to be the location of a Roman villa described by Pliny the Younger near Como) and to the function of the building, which housed Giovio's collection of portraits of “famous men,” ancient exemplars of virtue; as an introduction to the visit, the first room was decorated with images of Apollon and the Muses. Giovio published a book with a description of the museum and texts in praise of each famous man portrayed there; his collection was therefore not only accessible to selected visitors but also known through his book (Giovio 1999).

In 1471 Pope Sixtus IV donated some ancient bronzes from the papal treasures to the people of Rome; these sculptures were placed in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill, the seat of the municipal government. The example set by the Capitoline collection, which is the oldest

attempt to start a public museum, was not followed for two centuries. Nevertheless, it was possible to visit many collections: for example, Ulisse Aldrovandi's natural history museum in Bologna was described as full of scholars, of whom Aldrovandi kept a list, and was donated to the Bolognese Senate in 1603. Cabinets of curiosities were not "public" museums, but instead private collections, which played a social and cultural role, increasing the prestige of the owner and contributing to the wellbeing of the community. Objects sometimes moved from private rooms to semi-public galleries: the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Francesco I, commissioned Giorgio Vasari to decorate a private space for meditation, full of treasures, the *studiolo* in the Palazzo Vecchio, built from 1570 to 1572; starting in 1574, however, some of the works were transferred to the Tribuna of the Uffizi, a monumental room near the Galleria, a space open to visitors (Bredekamp 1996; Grinke 2006; Brugnoli 2010).

In Renaissance museums, objects were exhibited according to classification schemes which we know through printed catalogues. The *Inscriptiones vel tituli teatri amplissimi* (1565), by Samuel Von Quicchenberg, is the first treatise about the organization of museums, a practical guide to the "theater" where artworks were on display. Quicchenberg produced a scheme divided into classes and subclasses, enabling a place to be found for any item in a collection. Many collectors published catalogues of their treasures, which both explained and classified objects. Aldrovandi described his collection in the *Teatro della natura*, which became a standard work in natural history for centuries; similar books were produced by Konrad Gessner, Ferrante Imperato, and many others.

Impact and Legacy

The term museum could also be applied to non-physical spaces where knowledge was stored: The "paper museum" of Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588–1657) is a collection of archaeological and natural history drawings classified by typology: like a "real" museum, it was studied by artists and scientists.

It was during the Renaissance that the modern idea of the museum was conceived: an organized space, hosting a collection, meant to be shown to visitors. This concept developed in the eighteenth century with the opening of many public museums, most notably the British Museum and the Vatican Museums (Vercelloni 2007; Simmons 2016).

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Musso, Cornelio

Born: 1511, Piacenza

Died: 1574, Rome

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Abstract

Cornelio Musso was a Franciscan preacher, bishop, and a conciliar father. He completed his philosophical-theological and humanistic

studies at the University of Padua in 1533. In those same years, he began his commitment as a preacher in Italian, which continued throughout his life from many Italian pulpits, though mainly in Rome, since he was called by Pope Paul III in 1538, who would later appoint him Bishop of Bitonto. Still confident in the reunification of the Church, Musso participated in the Council of Trent and worked to promote an authentic reform of the Roman Church. The central theme of his preaching is the necessity of personal and interior conversion, reachable through the imitation of Christ. This moral change is regarded as an indispensable premise for a reform of the ecclesiastical institution. His preaching relied on a few key elements, such as Humanist culture, Franciscan spirituality, and Augustinian inspiration. These combined intellectual sources had an impact on the characterizing aspects of his praying, in particular on the moral content, the Christocentric religiosity, and on the emotional tension to move the feelings and the will of the believers. Confident in the power of the word, rhetorically elevated, Musso's sermons were inspired by the great models of classical and patristic rhetoric, leaving behind forms of medieval preaching. His sermons paved the way for the modern history of sacred eloquence and inspired Musso's most famous successor, Francesco Panigarola, as well as representatives of the flourishing seventeenth-century literary and religious scenes.

Alternative Names

Vescovo di Bitonto

Biography

Cornelio Musso, a native of Piacenza, entered the city monastery of San Francesco of the Frati Minori when he was still almost a child. He was trained under the guidance of Padre Giacomo Rosa da Randazzo, showing precocious and

remarkable skills in preaching. In 1522 he moved to Padua, where he remained until 1534, perfecting his philosophical-theological education at the Convento di Sant'Antonio and at the University of Padua. He gained his doctorate in 1533. He was immediately co-opted into the College of theologians and began teaching philosophy. Between 1527 and 1529 he attended the humanistic environment around Pietro Bembo, studied Greek with Benedetto Lampridio, and devoted himself to the learning of Hebrew and Aramaic, which will continue during his next stay in Bologna. He also came into contact with notorious poets, such as Giovanni Della Casa and Bernardo Tasso, and established a lasting friendship with Bernardino Tomitano and Alvisé (Luigi) Corner, the author of the well-known *Discorso sulla vita sobria* (1558). In the 1530s, he began the exercise of preaching in Padua and Venice. Throughout his existence, he devoted himself to delivering sermons and preaching in numerous Italian cities.

In 1534 he moved to Milan, called by Duke Francesco II Sforza, who appointed him as preacher of the city and as Lecturer of Metaphysics at the University of Pavia. Following the Duke's death and the upheavals in the State of Milan, Musso moved to Bologna in 1537. He became lecturer *Ad lecturam Sacrosanctae Theologiae evangelicae* at the local university and held public lectures of sacred Scripture on Sundays, commenting on the *Epistole to the Romans* of the Apostle Paul. The monumental commentary of Musso on the Pauline letter (*Epistula ad Romanos absolutissima Comentariorum [...] animadversa*) originates from these lectures; it will be published posthumously in 1588 (Musso 1588). Due to the fierce controversies aroused in Bologna on Musso's lectures on the Pauline lectures, probably evoked by a friar of heterodox tendencies, the Franciscan preacher relocated to Rome in 1538. He entered into the service of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, who named him ordinary preacher in San Lorenzo in Damaso. Next year, he gave his first collection of Lenten sermons (Musso 1586) and began public lectures on the Pauline lectures in the presence of Pope Paolo III Farnese. Of all the sermons given in San

Lorenzo, survive 127 in printed form, including three cycles of Lenten sermons. From 1541 to 1545, Musso undertook the task of apostolic preacher of the Sala di Constantino, delivering more than 300 Latin sermons in front of the Pope and pre-Tridentine Church reformers, such as Gasparo Contarini, Jacopo Sadoletto, Reginald Pole, and Pietro Bembo.

He was elected bishop in 1541. His first see was Bertinoro-Forlì, but later changed, in 1544, for the more prestigious Bitonto, in Southern Italy's region of Apulia. Although willing to take possession of his allocated see, Musso could not reach Bitonto because he was urged by Paul III to head to Trent, where the Council was set up. On 13 December 1545, he gave the inaugural speech (*Oratio R.P.D. Cornelii Episcopi Bitontini [...] in Concilio Tridentino habita*), printed by the end of the year (Musso 1545). He took an active part in the conciliar work as a member of the committee engaged in the subject of the "doctrine of justification"; he also delivered several sermons at the time of the second convocation of the Council in Trent: in these sermons, Musso stated the need to maintain a close relationship between Church and Emperor to destroy the heresies and safeguard the unity of Christian Europe.

At the end of 1549, Musso was able to reach Bitonto. He soon abandoned his see to return to Rome, where he was appointed domestic prelate by the newly elected Pope Julius III. His new task allowed him to resume his activity as a preacher, particularly in the early 1550s. In the spring of 1554, he returned to Bitonto, where he stayed almost 6 years during which he was committed to implementing the conciliar orientations in his diocese notwithstanding poverty, abuses, and tensions with local powers. Following the ascension of Giovanni Angelo Medici to the pontifical throne with the name of Pius IV, Musso was recalled to Rome to serve again as apostolic prelate. In the papal curia, he joined numerous exponents of humanistic culture, many of Padua's formation, and even the nephew of the pontiff, Carlo Borromeo. The sermons delivered in Rome in the early 1560s and in Vienna in the presence of Emperor Ferdinand and King of

Bohemia Massimiliano, along with the exchange of letters with Cardinal Farnese, document Musso's renewed commitment to the implementation of an effective reform of the Church, in the lingering hope of its reunification.

With the end of the Council of Trent, in March 1564, Musso returned to Bitonto where he spent 9 years devoting himself to pastoral ministry, preaching, studying, and stimulating the process of reform. This pace of reform emerges in his works, such as the *Synodus bituntina*, published posthumously (Musso 1579b), and the theological work *Divina historia libri tres*, begun in 1549, during a Padua stay, and remained unfinished (Musso 1587). Musso died in January 1574 in Rome, where he had arrived less than 2 years before to offer his services to the new pope, Gregory XIII.

Three books of sermons, many of which had already been published individually, were printed before his death (Musso 1554, 1562a, 1562b, 1565). His posthumous works include two other books (Musso 1579a, 1582, 1584), and two collections of Lenten sermons, given in San Lorenzo in Damaso between 1539 and 1542 (Musso 1586, 1590).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, humanistic culture began to exert a profound influence in the field of sacred oratory and vulgar preaching. The impact of Humanism stimulated a process to go beyond the *sermo modernus*, that is the medieval kind of preaching, in the attempt to provide a synthesis between Christian preaching and classical rhetoric. The *sermo modernus* (also known as *modus scholasticus*) was based on scholastic philosophy and was so named in opposition to the *antiquus modus* of the Church Fathers. This renewed sacred oratory, aimed to reconcile Humanism with Christian religiosity, was inspired by the pattern of the eloquence provided by Greek and Latin Church Fathers and the normative framework offered in the *De doctrina christiana* by St. Augustine. The aim was to shape a modern oratory style, which Erasmus would have theorized in the *Ecclesiastes* (1535), and which post-

conciliar rhetorics would have eventually promoted.

Musso's vernacular preaching contributed decisively to the modern development of that genre and was recognized by his contemporaries as "a new style of sacred eloquence" (Tesaurò 2000, p. 103; see also Borromeo 1632, pp. 23–28). His intention of renovating the genre of preaching is clearly expressed in his letter sent to Bernardino Tomitano and published in 1554 in the first book of *Prediche* (Musso 1554). In this letter, Musso states that he wants to follow the great pattern of eloquence and doctrine offered by the Church Fathers in order to ennoble and dignify the vulgar preaching from a stylistic and linguistic point of view.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The combination between Humanism, Franciscan tradition, and Augustinian inspiration provides the most meaningful indices of novelty in Musso's sermons. On the formal level, they are structured around a single topic, whose development is then divided into two, three, or at most, four sections, and preceded by a foreword. Musso's extended forewords display a clear convergence between preaching and literature, which is one of the most decisive factors in the modern sacred oratory. His writings are characterized by an emphasis on the New and Old Testament of the Holy Scriptures and by a richness of Biblical quotations; yet, they distance themselves from that tendency of contemporary vernacular preaching, which used to offer disorganized centos of biblical verses.

Two additional crucial factors characterize Musso's preaching. Firstly, these sermons clearly express a moral-oriented content. His sermons deal with Christian vices and virtues, material life and the spiritual, perdition and salvation, the happiness of Christian experience, the call for Christ's imitation. These dominant topics outline the moral background, within which doctrinal issues and controversial arguments are also discussed. Among them, the burning topic of the value of works regularly recurs in the sermons

composed around the years of the first convocation of the Council (in 1545) and of Musso's service under the Farnese family. Musso emphasizes on one hand the nature of the faith, conceived as an act of the intellect, which also includes the will, and he stresses, on the other hand, the value of the works as the fulfillment of the faith itself (Poppi 1966b, pp. 240–251). He also considers the relationship between grace and free will as an interaction between the merciful gift of grace, *initium salutis*, and the acceptance of that gift, which is entirely in the free will of man; he similarly conceives the relationship between Sanctifying grace, belonging to God, and perseverance, that is the achievement of human will supported by divine aid (Mouchel 2001, pp. 250–282). Musso discusses these issues, also addressed in the *Comentaria* on the *Lettera ai Romani*, underlining – humanistically – the section reserved for human being and the power of his/her free will in the dynamic of salvation.

The second essential element in Musso's preaching is the emphasis assigned to the function of moving (Lat. *movere*); hence Musso shows a preference for psychological rhetoric, aimed at triggering an emotional before a rational response, and focused on will before intellect. In accordance with the Augustinian and Franciscan conceptions, Musso's sacred oratory firstly relies on the emotional power of the word. Firmly convinced of the seductive strength of the verbose style, he, therefore, adopts an Asiatic style, that is, florid, bombastic, colored with rhetorical devices, and distinguished by the use of prose rhythm. Musso and humanistic Popes Paul III and Pius IV, who had him at their service, recognized this style of preaching as the most suitable to spread the message of the Church. In those troubled times of the Council, the Roman Church had to face the crucial challenge of establishing itself as the guardian of the truth and beauty of the Christian faith (Mouchel 2001, pp. 256–257).

In order to preserve the primacy of the Roman Church and to effectively combat the heresies, Musso addresses the need for reform of the Catholic Church, which, however, could only be realized as a result of genuine conversion.

Therefore, Musso incites with starry vehemence the ecclesiastics and then the believers to undertake a dramatic change of heart and of personal life, pointing to the imitation of Christ as the only way to reach it. The recurring topic of the Cross, which pervades his writings, is the more evidently imbued with Franciscan's principles. This is the main topic of *Terzo libro delle prediche*, dedicated to Carlo Borromeo (Musso 1562b, 1565), which contains some of the sermons given in front of Pope Pio IV and of his nephew Carlo Borromeo, during the Lent of 1562. Musso provides with this book, and the fourth and last one, dedicated to the earthly life of Christ, a portrait of a "fully live painted" Christ (Musso 1565, 5n.n.). He recounts the history of Salvation, from the first Advent to the end of times, through the model of the "perfect man," that is, the historical, therefore imitable, figure of Christ.

This project of "fully live painted Christ," illustrated to Carlo Borromeo in the dedicatory letter of the *Terzo libro*, seals the path started around 20 years ago in Rome in the service of Paolo III, specifically in *Quaresimale* on *Simbolo degli Apostoli* of 1542, defined *Istituzione christiana* (Musso 1590). Through these sermons, Musso intended to gather the believers "at the school of Christ" and lead them to the principles of Christiane doctrine and teach them "the accomplished art of good living". Only the "school of Christ" can pass on this teaching, since it is able to provide human beings with the definitive answers, always and vainly invoked by philosophers: the whole knowledge can find its accomplishment only in Christ, "author of every philosophy." Hence the great cultural program of the *Istituzione christiana* originates: it is an effort "to accord the philosophy of Christ with what ethically good moral philosophers said" (Musso 1590, pp. 1–17). In order to translate it into practice, Musso considers the relationships between faith and reasoning, and between theology and philosophy. According to St. Augustine, Musso states that faith or the authority of Christ comes before; then intellect comes, whose aim is to show the truth of what has been believed. Addressing theology, Musso defines it as the accomplishment of good philosophy, whose aim is the truth and not

the misleading confusion (the latter is an allusion to the Averroist rationalism, well represented at the Padua University, where Musso himself had studied). Musso remarks supreme accordance between good philosophy and theology because the former is the expression of natural reason and the latter of the reason illuminated by faith. This accordance between human and divine knowledge is attested in the whole corpus of Musso's sermons, in which a vast collection of philosophical, literary, and poetic culture is evoked to support the catechesis and becomes a basis for comparison with Christian teaching and the Sacred Scriptures. Musso and coeval learned people still consider the Classical-Christian synthesis as possible and productive.

Impact and Legacy

From the second half of the sixteenth century, Musso's sermons obtained a great publishing success, firstly in Italy, with an impressive number of editions and reprints, then in Europe, until the middle of the seventeenth century. Thanks especially to the French translations of Gabriel Chappuys, from 1584, they were included among the great readings of the Christocentric spirituality that stretched from Luis de Granada to Bérulle (De Rosa 1987, p. 397). The new *modus oratorius* inaugurated by Musso, modeled on classical and patristic eloquence, and aimed at "moving hearts," will be the basis of the Borromaic and sixteenth-seventeenth century rhetorics inspired by St. Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. These, however, distanced themselves from Musso's oratory on the stylistic level, opting for more austere sobriety and formal simplicity. The Asiatic and ornate style of the Bishop of Bitonto was, instead, inherited by Francesco Panigarola and was appreciated by the main theorists of Baroque poetics, such as Emanuele Tesauro.

Cross-References

- [Augustinianism](#)
- [Bembo, Pietro](#)

- Contarini, Gasparo
- Council of Trent
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Justification, Renaissance Conception of
- Pole, Reginald
- Tomitano, Bernardino

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Mutinensis, Leonis

- Modena, Leon

Mysticism in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Mysticism refers to a religious philosophical approach emphasizing a deep, direct connection between the divine and a believer, achieved by faith and manifested through inspiration and illumination. The word finds its origin in ancient Greek, referring to the term for “to conceal.” Similarly, individuals participating in mystery religions are referred to as *mystae*. Medieval mysticism and inspired forms of Christian faith influenced subsequent religious movements across Europe, such as the Protestant Reformation (especially its radical branch) and the so-called Counter-Reformation. During the Renaissance and the Reformation, mystical thought played a major role in the many attempts to reform the Church. Women, in particular, were instrumental in the diffusion of mystical ideas and practices in both the Middle Ages and in early modernity.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In late medieval Europe, mystical thought and practice coincided with the threefold notion of the term “mystikos” first introduced by the Church Fathers to indicate the relationship between the allegorical interpretations of Scripture, the liturgical mystery of the Lord’s Supper, and the contemplative character of prayer: a theological system that envisioned an experiential path to the knowledge of God. Renaissance mysticism was influenced by Neoplatonism and the study of figures such as the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (late fifth to early sixth century), author of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* (McGinn 2006). This work had strong impact on the German theologian and mystical thinker Meister Eckhart (1260–1328), especially in the theological separation between God and the notion of Godhead (the Holy Spirit)

(Eckhart 2009). Through the works of his disciples Henry Suso (1295–1366) and Johannes Tauler (1300–1361) (D’Anna 2006; Morgan 2013; Tauler 1985), Eckhart’s ideas would reach as far as the Reformation and influence such figures as Thomas Müntzer (1489–1525) and Martin Luther (1483–1546): the former centered his entire theology on Tauler’s doctrine of mystical suffering in life as the only path to true faith (an experience-based faith) and illumination (Matheson 1994); the latter, who generally opposed mystical ideas that promoted a direct form of revelation, that undermined scriptural revelation drew many of his early considerations from a fourteenth-century anonymous tract known as *Theologia Germanica* (or *Theologia Deutsch*). This mystical work (Blamires 2003) that Luther himself edited and published in 1516 also gained great prestige among many radical reformers and supporters of the emerging idea of religious tolerance, such as Hans Denck (1498–1527), Hans Hut (1490–1527), Sebastian Franck (1499–1543), and Sebastian Castellio (1515–1563). Indeed, the mystical ideas of the late Middle Ages gave way to a parallel Reformation in the sixteenth century; one that would not argue in favor of *sola Scriptura* (scriptural revelation in the Bible) and for a gratuitous justification based on *sola fide* (faith alone) but for an inspirational and direct form of revelation and illumination, as well as for an experiential faith achieved through the imitation of Christ’s tribulation in life (*imitatio Christi*). These radical reformers believed in a mystical theology of the spirit that contemplated a positive view over man as a perfect creation of God: an idea that radically distanced them from the negative outlook on the sinful successors of Adam presented by most early reformers, sometimes (namely, in the case of Thomas Müntzer) creating a tangible bridge with humanism and the mystical idea of the *homo divinus* theorized by Eckhart (Eckhart 2009; Packull 1977; Roth et al. 2007). In this perspective, man’s soul could reach such a degree of perfection that it could be elevated, in life, to a semidivine status. Nonetheless, even John Calvin, who rejected many forms of medieval mysticism, was inspired by a movement for religious reform known as *Devotio moderna*. This northern European group emphasized piety and pious

practices as the only true method of spiritual growth. Its highest literary expression can be found in the work of the German theologian Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471), *The Imitation of Christ*, one of the most published works of Christian devotion. By stressing the importance of a personal connection to God, this book defined the teachings of “Modern Devotion” and influenced future figures such as Thérèse of Lisieux (1873–1897). The movement, sometimes known as *Brethren of the Common Life*, was practiced by Beguines and Beghards and was strongly opposed by mendicant orders who accused it of going against the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council prohibition to create new religious orders. Moreover, mystical thought and practices were often condemned by the Church and later by reformed churches: Meister Eckhart, for one, was accused of heresy and tried by Pope John XXII; visionary theology and inspirationism would find strong opposition in established and orthodox belief systems. Mysticism did not only influence part of the Reformation but also the so-called Counter-Reformation and other early modern attempts to reform the Catholic Church from within. In Spain, a group known as *Spanish Mystics* attempted to promote a spiritual renewal of the Church (Hamilton 1992). Its most prominent figure was Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), founder of the Society of Jesus, who in 1522–1524 composed a set of prayers, practices, and meditations known as *Spiritual Exercises* (Loyola 1991; O’Malley 1993). This work was aimed at helping believers to discern God’s will in their own lives, defining the first steps that would lead to the full fellowship with Christ. The Spanish borne Juan de Valdés (of *Marrano* origins), forced to leave Spain for fear of persecution by the inquisition, would be seen as the spiritual father of many Italian radical and spiritualist thinkers, such as Bernardino Ochino (1487–1564), Pietro Carnesecchi (1508–1567), and Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562), as well as influential noblewomen, such as Vittoria Colonna (1492–1547) and Giulia Gonzaga (1513–1566). In his *Alfabeto Christiano* (1536), Valdés promoted a gradualist and intrinsically mystical idea of faith that he himself had

learned from Spanish *Alumbradismo*, a fifteenth- and sixteenth-century religious movement that was strongly persecuted by the Inquisition (Firpo 2016). The *alumbrados*, as well as Valdés himself, held the belief that external rituals and sacraments were superfluous to reach true faith and the full unity with God. Scripture itself was undermined and only seen as a feeble candle used for initial guidance, because revelation would be received through gradual and direct illumination. Other forms of mysticism that fell within the orthodox boundaries of the Catholic Church in Italy can be seen in the works of Lorenzo Scupoli (1530–1610), a member of the Theatine order, and especially in his tract *The Spiritual Combat*. In England and in the German states, mystical ideas would emerge in both Catholic and Protestant milieus (Davies 1988). In the former case, figures such as John Donne (1573–1631) and Thomas Browne (1605–1682) created a link between Anglicanism, mysticism, and scientific thought (Fanous and Gillespie 2011): this is particularly true for Browne’s works *The Garden of Cyrus* and the *Religio Medici*. In the German-speaking world, mystical ideas later influenced the Pietists movement and figures such as Philipp Spener (1635–1705), known as the “father of Pietism,” and Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714), who developed an original form of Lutheran mysticism in the work *Geheimnis der göttlichen Sophia*. In France, mystical ideas were developed by many religious figures: Francis de Sales (1567–1622), Bishop of Geneva, was the author of many letters of spiritual directions that focused on the notion of pure love that resulted from spiritual practice; Brother Lawrence (1614–1691), a lay brother in a Carmelite monastery, described his personal and intimate relationship with God in the posthumous work, *The Practice of the Presence of God*. These spiritualist attitudes played a part in forming the so-called “Quietist heresy” in France, a Christian movement that sought union with God through mystical prayer and contemplation (that, in turn, would influence the early Quaker movement and its founder, George Fox). Quietist ideas emerged in the work of French mystic Jeanne Guyon (1648–1717), especially in the book *A Short and*

Easy Method of Prayer, for which she would suffer many years of imprisonment (Mallet-Joris 1978).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The role of women in the diffusion and theorization of mystical ideas was particularly important during the late Middle Ages and in early modern Europe. Typically, women mystics spent their life seeking spiritual unity with God through different stages, imitating the suffering of Christ, and envisioning an experience-based faith. They often lived ascetic lives, receiving visions and falling into raptures and ecstasies; in some cases, they actively played a role in public life by acting as councilors for political authorities. In Northern Europe, between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, a significant contribution to the development of future belief systems was given by Beguines, such as Mechthild of Magdeburg (1207–1282/1294) and Hadewijch of Antwerp. This lay religious order stressed the importance of the *imitatio Christi* through poverty, religious devotion, and the care of the sick and the poor, often following the teaching of Francis of Assisi. Similarly, Catherine of Siena (1347–1380), an Italian tertiary of the Dominican Order, affirmed to be in personal contact with Christ, experienced miraculous visions, and said to have been united in marriage with Jesus (Catherine of Siena 1980; Emling 2016). Moreover, Catherine exercised influence over significant political figures of the time, such as Pope Gregory XI and Pope Urban VI, and acted as ambassador of the Republic of Florence. Julian of Norwich (1342–1416), an English anchoress, was said to have had experienced numerous revelations including witnessing the Crucifixion and having a dialogue with Christ himself. Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582), a prominent Spanish mystic and reformer in the Carmelite Order, named (as was Catherine of Siena) Doctor of the Church, believed in the ascent of the human soul in four mystical stages: these comprehended contemplative prayer, the surrender to the will of God, the absorption in God, and, finally, the full devotion through ecstasies (Rodriguez et al. 1980; Du Boulay 2004).

Cross-References

- ▶ Anabaptism
- ▶ Ignatius Loyola
- ▶ Luther, Martin
- ▶ Müntzer, Thomas
- ▶ Theology, Renaissance
- ▶ Valdés, Juan de

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N

Namossius

► [Masson, Jean Papire](#)

Napier, John

Born: 1550, Edinburgh

Died: 1617, Edinburgh

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Abstract

Scot inventor of logarithms.

Biography

Napier was a member of an old nobility family (Napier 1634) and lived at Merchiston Castle, now owned by Napier University in Edinburgh. Little is known of Napier's formative years. He most likely studied abroad but came back to Scotland in 1571. He must have taken an interest in astronomy and calculations probably in the 1570s. In the 1580s, Napier was involved in the study of the Book of Revelation, and in 1593, he published *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of*

St. John where he predicted the Apocalypse (Napier 1593).

From ca. 1594 to 1614, Napier developed the notion of logarithms, for the simplification of trigonometrical calculations (Napier 1614, 1619).

Napier also devised what became known as "Napier rods," simple rods embodying multiplication tables and making it easy to perform larger multiplications. These rods were described in the posthumous *Rabdologiæ seu Numerationis per Virgulas libri duo* (Napier 1617).

Finally, Napier also worked on arithmetic and algebra and devised a general method for the extraction of roots of equations. His manuscript *De arte logistica* was, however, only published in 1839 (Napier 1839).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Napier lived at a time when more and more astronomical data were accumulated and the computations were still cumbersome. Napier had probably heard from the method of prosthaphæresis for the simplification of trigonometric computations through the astronomer John Craig who had himself learned it from Paul Wittich in Frankfurt at the end of the 1570s. Craig corresponded with Tycho Brahe, and Wittich also influenced Brahe and Jost Bürgi. It is in this context that Napier introduced his new ideas.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Napier had conceived the general principles of logarithms in 1594 or before and he spent the next twenty years developing their theory (Hobson 1914; Horsburgh 1914; Havil 2014; Knott 1915; Rice 2017). The new numbers introduced by Napier were initially called “artificial numbers.” This name is only used in his *Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Constructio*, published in 1619, but which had been written long before the *Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio* which made the logarithms known to the world in 1614. In the latter work, Napier coined the word logarithm, from the Greek roots λόγος (ratio) and ἀριθμός (number). Logarithm merely signifies “ratio-number” or “number connected with ratio.” It is possible that Napier found that expression in Archimedes’ *Sand Reckoner*, as it is known that Napier was a good Greek scholar and a number of princeps editions of Archimedes’ book were available in England by the early seventeenth century. In any case, Napier meant to provide an arithmetic measure of a (geometric) ratio, or at least to define a continuous correspondence between two progressions.

Impact and Legacy

Napier’s *Descriptio* was published in Latin in Edinburgh and was considered “one of the very greatest scientific discoveries that the world has seen.” Several mathematicians had anticipated properties of the correspondence between an arithmetic and a geometric progression, but only Napier and Jost Bürgi (1552–1632) constructed tables for the purpose of simplifying the calculations. Bürgi’s work was however only published in incomplete form in 1620, six years after Napier’s *Descriptio*. Napier’s work was quickly translated into English by the mathematician and cartographer Edward Wright (1561–1615) and published posthumously in 1616. A second edition appeared in 1618. The details of Napier’s construction of the logarithms were published posthumously in 1619 in his *Constructio*. Both the *Descriptio* and the *Constructio* have had several editions.

It should be stressed that Napier’s logarithms were not the logarithms known today as Neperian (or natural, or hyperbolic) logarithms, but a related construction made at a time when the integral and differential calculus did not yet exist. Napier’s construction was wholly geometrical and based on the theory of proportions.

Logarithms became ubiquitous in the 1620s, thanks to the work of Henry Briggs (1561–1631), a friend of Wright. Briggs had paid visits to Napier in 1615 and 1616 and he published the first table of decimal logarithms in 1617. These tables of logarithms continued to be used until the advent of calculating machines and computers. But the logarithmic functions also became fundamental functions in mathematical analysis, and as such are more alive than ever.

Cross-References

► Briggs, Henry

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Nardi, Bruno

Born: 24 June 1884, Spianate di Altopascio (Lucca, Italy)

Died: 9 July 1968, Rome

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Abstract

Bruno Nardi was a distinguished and influential scholar on Dante's works and medieval and Renaissance philosophy. Born in Tuscany in 1884, Nardi studied in Belgium (Leuven) and Italy, where he taught in high school and university. In his extensive and often pioneering research, Nardi reevaluated Dante's relationship with his philosophical sources (especially Siger of Brabant and Thomas Aquinas), reassessed the development of Aristotelian tradition(s) between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and revealed and carefully analyzed unknown manuscript sources.

Biography

Bruno Nardi was the first-born child in a large Tuscan family. He entered the seminary at Pescia in 1902 and was ordained as a priest in March 1907. The following year he went to the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium). He graduated in 1911 with a thesis illustrating the presence of philosopher Siger of Brabant in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Back in Italy, Nardi faced an acute spiritual crisis and returned to secular life in 1914. Two

years later, he moved to Mantua, where he worked as a high school teacher of history and philosophy. Thanks to Giovanni Gentile, in 1938 Nardi was appointed to teach medieval philosophy at the Sapienza University of Rome. His promotion to Full Professor was once blocked by the Vatican in 1941 and was eventually secured in 1955. In 1964, at the time of his eightieth birthday, Nardi received an honorary doctorate from Oxford University. He died in Rome in 1968.

His intellectual endeavor, chiefly characterized by polemic ardor, focused on Dante's philosophical thought. Even his later works on sixteenth-century philosophy can be considered as further developments of his original research on Dante's works. His encounter with Dante took place at an early age. His thesis *Siger de Brabant dans la 'Divine Comédie' et les sources de la philosophie de Dante* (published in 1912) challenged the prevailing opinion that Dante welcomed Siger of Brabant into the paradise because he was not informed of his thought. The dissertation showed that Dante was not – as generally believed – a strict Thomist and that he admitted the philosopher into heaven precisely because of Siger's thinking. Nardi's second related interest lay in the development of Aristotelian philosophical tradition in medieval and Renaissance Europe (often still in connection with Dante). This task took place in a series of contributions (Nardi 1942, 1945, 1958, 1960), which claim the continuity of some central themes between the medieval and Renaissance philosophy and shed new light on more obscure aspects of this tradition. In the last years, he devoted his attention to Pietro Pomponazzi. In his monograph *Studi su Pietro Pomponazzi* (Nardi 1965), where he collected many of his previous essays on Pomponazzi, Nardi revealed new biographical evidence and concentrated on texts previously overlooked by scholars.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In addition to a profound reassessment of Dante's philosophical position and political thought, Nardi's work dramatically contributed to the rethinking of “the history . . . of thirteenth and fourteenth century

western philosophy” (Dronke 1998, XVI). Against contemporary Neo-Scholasticism, he refused the simplistic identification of Aquinas’s doctrine as the summit of the whole Christian philosophy. This assumption compelled Nardi to carefully investigate heterodox doctrines and reevaluate the individuality of other and less studied Aristotelian currents, such as the Averroism.

Impact and Legacy

Nardi’s method implied a philological study of the original, often unpublished, sources. His investigation was complemented by a careful exploration of the historical and geographical factors of the philosophers and institutions that shaped their positions. His extensive research on Aristotelianism led to a broader understanding of the metaphysical and ontological doctrines, which he traced back to their medieval roots; his legacy played, however, a less dominant role on themes, such as the evolution of logic and the humanistic analysis of texts, that Nardi felt more detached from his interests.

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Nāṣir al-Dīn 'Abd al-Salām ibn Ibrāhīm al-Laḡānī al-Mālīkī

► [Laḡānī, 'Abd al-Salām](#)

Natural History in Renaissance Philosophy

► [Historia Naturalis](#)

Natural Magic in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Natural magic (*magia naturalis*), understood within the learned traditions of Renaissance Europe, referred to active endeavors that were reliant upon or directed toward forces or mechanisms in nature whose causation or manner of operation were occult (*occultus*) – that is, hidden, or distinctly obscured from an empirical understanding of nature. Natural magic may be distinguished from magic in general by its emphasis on strictly natural objects and operations, crucially distinct from the power of spiritual intelligences identified with demonic magic. Thus natural magic was also characterized variously as the manipulation or application of higher (celestial) influences in the terrestrial world or as the active or applied aspect of natural philosophy, involving the knowledge and manipulation of occult

properties, especially sympathetic correspondences in nature. Understood in this sense, natural magic can be seen to inform many diverse ideas and practices including chemistry, medicine, and mechanics.

Within the multivalent magical tradition that flourished in the Renaissance, natural magic received heightened rhetorical attention in the face of mounting condemnation as a tolerated – if not licit – category of magical theory and practice closely associated with natural philosophy and its academic milieu. Within learned discourse, natural magic became part of epistemological debates through its engagement with the knowledge and manipulation of imperceptible phenomena. This emphasis on occult operations in nature demanded a constant reevaluation of the boundaries of nature and, by extension, the limitations of human influence over nature that would be crucial to the development of scientific thought in the late Renaissance.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Historiographical Notes

Before discussing natural magic, it is necessary to acknowledge that “magic” is a fundamentally problematic category lacking historical cohesiveness or continuity. In addition, the term is plagued by connotations that denigrate associated ideas and practices as irrational or demonic, and its long-standing status as a pejorative largely eclipses any potentially natural taxonomy of magic by grouping together disparate and often conflicting theories and practices according to their identification as heterodox, esoteric, or forbidden. “Magic” in many ways is, as Wouter Hanegraaff has argued, a “tainted term”. For historians, however, no accepted solution has yet to emerge, and the category of natural magic, in particular, remains useful and largely necessary when discussing those theories and practices engaged with imperceptible influences in nature. In this context, one must consider the historical perspectives of both critics and proponents of *magia* as well as the works that by nature of their content place themselves within the same

conceptual territory in spite of avoiding its terminology. It then becomes apparent that in spite of its difficulties, magic includes a significant grouping of theories and practices that must be considered if the intellectual, political, and cultural shifts of the Renaissance are to be understood holistically (Hanegraaff 2012; Walker 1958; Thorndike 1923–1958).

Natural magic specifically was a crucial part of natural philosophy in the Renaissance, in particular for addressing insensible aspects of the physical world. The ideas and practices of natural magic were undeniably participant in the philosophical upheaval of the Early Modern period, contributing to the epistemological reevaluation of the senses and of human reason, from which experimental philosophy would eventually develop. In addition, the breadth of its influence can be found in many interdisciplinary contexts, both theoretical and practical. A more nuanced understanding of natural magic and its role in Renaissance philosophy is emergent in the surge of recent historical studies in magic, and for scholars navigating these and related works, this article seeks to provide a useful if necessarily limited introduction to this important category.

N

Medieval Origins

Natural magic in the Renaissance must be considered in light of the medieval context that shaped its emergence as a category and defined the circumstances, theological and otherwise, under which it would become a necessary part of the careful rhetorical hedging of magical theory and practice in the face of mounting condemnation. Following the rise of the university and the translation of texts from Arabic in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Latin West faced the considerable task of accounting for not only newly received texts of Classical origin but also a number of Arabic texts – primarily works of astrological magic such as al-Kindi’s *De radiis stellarum* and the *Picatrix* – that introduced magical theories and practices into learned discourse. These newly received works demanded the reevaluation of magic as an intellectual category (Jolly et al. 2001; Kieckhefer 2000; Copenhagen 2015).

William of Auvergne (Bishop of Paris 1228–1249) offered one of the earliest medieval

attempts to comprehensively categorize magical texts in the wake of these inflowing manuscripts. In his *De legibus* (1228–1230) and later in *De universo* (1231–1236), William sought largely to identify characteristics of magical practices that were unambiguously condemned in patristic texts and further opposed during the establishment and spread of Inquisitorial reform beginning in the thirteenth century. Of these categories of forbidden magic, the most clearly condemned was ritual magic, which explicitly invoked spiritual intelligences to be commanded to various ends – the magical practices out of which the “clerical underground” of demonic ritual magic or necromancy would eventually emerge. Also condemned were related practices including all forms of divination (among them “judicial” astrology) and image magic, which purported to manipulate celestial forces – themselves potentially demonic – through powerful words, symbols, or likenesses (Láng 2008; Kieckhefer 1997).

In addition to these multifarious and often overlapping categories of forbidden magic, William introduced the category “natural magic” (*magia naturalis* or *magica naturalis*) to describe the relatively benign manipulation of natural “hidden powers and forces” (*vires et potentiae occultae*) or occult properties. Such properties – which could not be understood in the usual terms of elemental composition – were commonly attributed to the natural influence of celestial motions, manifesting in sympathetic correspondences among plants, minerals, and animals, such as heliotropism or the healing power of medicinal herbs. William often referred to natural magic interchangeably as natural science (*scientia naturalis*), describing this category as a discipline within natural philosophy. Natural magic encompassed the knowledge and manipulation of natural wonders or *mira* and the imperceptible properties responsible for these perceptible phenomena (Láng 2008; William of Auvergne 1674).

In addition to William’s seminal definition, the scope of natural magic can be educed from the contents of three texts widely read in the medieval period: *Speculum astronomiae* (ca. 1260s), an anonymous index of astrological and astronomical texts, both licit and illicit; *Experimenta*

(or *Secreta Alberti*), a book of secrets falsely attributed to Albertus Magnus (ca. 1200–1280); and *Secretum secretorum*, a pseudo-Aristotelian text of Arabic origin that received its first complete translation into Latin within William’s lifetime. These texts cover diverse topics ranging from political advice to herbal medicine, finding a common rhetorical framework in expounding the secrets of nature, be they astrological influences over the human body or sympathetic relationships in nature. This eclectic scope indicates the broad scholastic appeal of natural magic, with potential ends as diverse as they were ambitious. To the larger and more secular communities of formally educated individuals in the late Middle Ages, natural magic offered a highly attractive promise of substantial power over nature through privileged knowledge of its secrets – the occult or hidden properties that natural magic presented for study and exploitation (Láng 2008; Kieckhefer 2000; Page 2013).

The meaning of the term “natural magic,” however, would remain unstable. The occult properties that natural magic claimed to manipulate were commonly understood as arising from the influence of natural, celestial motions or “higher principles” (*altiora principia*) as Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274) himself asserted in his letter *De operationibus occultis naturae*. Nevertheless, associated astrological practices could implicate spiritual intelligences and therefore demonic magic, and from the perspective of the uninitiated, natural magic could appear to claim command over supernatural influences properly reserved for the divine (Aquinas 1976).

Understandably, many scholars avoided the term “magic” entirely. The Franciscan scholar Roger Bacon (ca. 1214–1292) attributed considerable value to the promises of the *Secretum secretorum* but identified the content of this text and his own work as “experiential science” (*scientia experimentalis*) in explicit opposition to magic, which he associated with illusions and demonic power. His experiential science instead emphasized the primacy of mathematical knowledge, including a geometrical analysis of light that conceptualized its emanation as rays of self-propagating *species* – an imperceptible property

that could account for characteristically occult “action over distance” or remote action, including celestial influences. Bacon emphasized the high status of his secret knowledge and the power it could grant over nature, distancing himself from the magician’s reliance on supernatural powers. Ironically, Bacon would become famed as a magician and potential conjurer among later generations, but his understanding of magic as inherently demonic had a traditional precedent that would be reflected in many hardline demonological texts accompanying the criminalization of magic in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance (Eamon 1983; Láng 2008; Power 2006).

Bacon’s self-conscious aversion to the term “magic” reflects its long-standing status as a term of abuse. Alongside growing academic interest in the promises of natural magic persisted increasingly focused efforts to oppose any potentially demonic form of magic, which in turn propagated apprehension among intellectuals. The uncertain boundaries of natural magic often expanded to include practices commonly considered suspect or contracted to consciously exclude such practices, such that distinctions between, for example, natural magic and image magic – or between natural magic and the mechanical arts – are impossible to consistently establish with an acceptable degree of certainty.

By the end of the fourteenth century, the rise of the Inquisition resulted in a broadening rash of condemnations of magical practices and a tendency to proscribe all forms of magic as suspect of collusion with demons – a stance clearly exhibited by the 1398 *Conclusio* issued by the faculty of theology at the University of Paris, which condemned magic as *superstitio* and *idolatria*. The spread of inquisitorial pressure received added momentum with the Council of Constance (1414–1418), which united Catholic orthodoxy under the Roman papacy and fueled reform efforts that broadly targeted magical theories and practices in their myriad forms. By the fifteenth century, magic came to be seen as a very real and widespread diabolical threat against Christendom, while simultaneously becoming more accessible to an increasingly literate population, both in manuscript and in print. It is,

perhaps, no coincidence that the height of learned magic in the sixteenth century coincided with the apogee of polemical demonology. In the resulting intellectual climate, natural magic would become an important rhetorical category for scholars attempting to establish distance from criminalized magical practices (Hansen 1978; Kieckhefer 1997; Jolly et al. 2001; Peters 1978).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Recent scholarship has revealed the fundamental continuity between Renaissance and medieval magical practices, which share an emphasis on image magic (that purports to manipulate celestial influences by means of symbolic figures) and ritual magic (that focuses explicitly on initiating contact and communication with spiritual intelligences). Nevertheless, the status of the uniquely Renaissance magician or *magus* is one self-consciously distanced from medieval magic. Fifteenth-century natural magic sought legitimacy in part from ancient authority, drawing not only from Greek philosophers such as Plotinus and the imagined Egyptian antiquity of Hermes Trismegistus but also from the ecclesiastical authority of figures such as Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. This heightened religiosity and *ad fontes* approach to texts elevated magical endeavors with an ancient genealogy reaching back to the *prisca sapientia*, incorporating gnostic elements from Neoplatonism and Jewish Cabala in order to distinguish a newly reformed magical tradition (Klaassen 2013; Ankarloo et al. 2002; Clark 1997; Weill-Parot 2002).

Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), a scholar and physician in the employ of the Florentine Medici, produced and translated seminal works for this Renaissance transformation of magic. The famed corpus of Hermes Trismegistus, as well as crucial texts by Plato and Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Iamblichus, were introduced to the Latin West through Ficino’s translations. In addition, Ficino explicated his own theory of magic in his medical treatise *De vita libri tres* (1489), a text that would receive nearly 30 editions by the mid-seventeenth century. In *De vita*, Ficino explicitly contrasted

his own work with illicit magic, identifying natural magic as “subjecting natural materials to natural causes” (*naturales materias opportune causis subiciunt naturalibus*), referring chiefly to the medicinal application of celestial influences over sympathetic correspondences in nature. He identified the natural means of this celestial power as *spiritus*, a subtle medium between body and soul that existed not only in human beings but in fact inundated all of creation, providing an analogical link between the human microcosm and the macrocosm of the world at large, as well as a conduit to divinity, significantly elaborating natural operations beyond the elemental qualities and manifest and occult causes of Scholastic Aristotelian natural philosophy. Although Ficino incorporated a considerable amount of material easily identifiable with the medieval natural magic of astrological medicine and even talismanic image magic (largely derived from al-Kindi’s *De radiis stellarum* and the *Picatrix*), he also borrowed liberally from Neoplatonic philosophy to elevate his magical medicine with the transcendental ambitions and vitalist correspondences of a Neoplatonic worldview (Ficino 1989; Copenhaver 2015).

Ficino’s student Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) diverged from the astrological foundations of his teacher’s work with a more religiously oriented theory of magic that is nevertheless notable in this context for its remarks on natural magic. In his 900 *Conclusiones* of 1486/1487, wherein he proposed an epistemic syncretism derived from magical tradition, Pico briefly describes natural magic as “licit and not prohibited” (*licita et non prohibita*) and furthermore as the “practical part of natural science” (*pars practica scientiae naturalis*), ultimately reflective of the highest, Cabalistic magic fundamental to all knowledge. His sentiments in many ways characterize the early reform of magic in the Renaissance, when the legitimacy of natural magic was established not only by its claim to purely natural causation but also by its derivation from and service to higher religious wisdom (Farmer and Mirandola 1998; Copenhaver 2015; Zambelli 2007).

The work of the learned Renaissance magicians cannot be separated from this struggle over legitimacy, where the magician must determine what strictly distinguished benign forms of magic from a contentious legacy of demonic magic. In his *De vita*, Ficino expressed his sensitivity to the possibility that his own talismanic medicine could potentially operate through demonic power and thus, though natural, be mistakenly identified with clearly illicit demonic magic. In fact, Ficino’s *De vita* appeared shortly after the publication of Heinrich Kramer’s and Jacob Sprenger’s renowned *Malleus maleficarum* in 1486–1487, and the *apologiae* issued by Ficino and Pico in 1487 and 1489 speak to the threat of such anti-magical sentiment as articulated in the *Malleus* (Ficino 1989; Copenhaver 1984).

Nevertheless, within its new Neoplatonic context, natural magic became popular in learned circles at least in part as a framework ancillary or alternative to Scholastic Aristotelian natural philosophy, allowing immaterial mechanisms and occult causation to undergird natural operations. In the sixteenth century, this new natural magic flourishing in Italy would spread north through the works of Benedictine abbot Johannes Trithemius (1483–1505) and, more significantly, the works of his pupil Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535). Agrippa’s *De occulta philosophia libri tres* (1533) presented a more fully conceived theory of magic that expanded and refined Ficino’s categories. Agrippa was also sensitive to the unsavory connotations of the term “magic,” and in fact he consciously avoided using it in the book’s title, opting instead for the “less dangerous” (*minus infenso*) title *On the occult philosophy*. Nevertheless, he described a much-expanded program of licit magic in which natural magic comprised only one part of a tripartite hierarchy consisting of natural, celestial, and divine magic. Encyclopedic in its sources yet iconoclastic in its regard for them, Agrippa’s philosophy exhibited an incipient fideistic skepticism that ultimately turned to divine knowledge in response to the inadequacy of human reason and experience. Agrippa thus emphasized the necessity of divine insight, but he also distinguished his

natural magic from illicit magical practices by restricting it to natural operations, which he did not seek to contravene or supersede (Lehrich 2003; Nauert 1965; Nettesheim 1992).

Following Agrippa, characteristic features of Renaissance magic include the suffusion of an active world-soul in passive matter, the hierarchical connection reaching between physical matter and divinity, the operative power of the imagination, and the sympathetic correspondences indicative of the relationship between the human microcosm and the external macrocosm that it reflected. In this context, late sixteenth-century texts published on natural magic shifted notably from the emphatically theosophical magical programs espoused by Ficino, Agrippa, and their intellectual contemporaries to ones more focused on investigation into natural operations and the naturalization of occult causes. In this shifting context, naturalizing magic was an important part of both establishing distance from disreputable magical practices and emphasizing the material relevance of the power that magic promised. Thus, while perpetuating these elevated theories of magic, scholars also increasingly emphasized the practical dimension of natural magic.

This emphasis on the practical captured the diverse interests of Neapolitan scholar Giambattista della Porta (1535–1615), who first published his encyclopedic *Magia naturalis* in four books when he was only 15, expanding the work to 20 by its 1589 publication. He insisted that natural magic was nothing less than the “study of nature in its entirety” (*universae Naturae contemplatio*), offering a comprehensive understanding of nature and all its secret operations; it perfected natural philosophy, in strict opposition to demonic magic and the unnatural knowledge upon which it depended, sounding here much like Pico’s philosophy. However, in his considerable work, della Porta devoted only two books to the prestige of higher knowledge, instead dedicating the greater part to recipes, curiosities, and parlor tricks that appealed as courtly spectacle. His emphasis on amusing manipulations of nature seems distant from the lofty ambitions of Agrippa’s high magic, but della Porta’s focus on natural *mira* emphasized the potential to

understand nature more fundamentally through its preternatural states (Eamon 1994; Della Porta 1589).

This ambition to increase human influence over nature through artificial manipulation also recalled the considerable if distorted legacy of Roger Bacon, invoked by no less a personality than the famous magician John Dee (1527–1609), who similarly emphasized the primacy of mathematics in perfecting natural knowledge to grand effect. Similar priorities were echoed in other practices related to natural magic, including the rise of chymical medicine with the iconoclastic works of German physician Paracelsus (1493–1541) and his successors, especially Petrus Severinus (1540/1542–1602) and Jan Baptista van Helmont (1579/1580–1644). Paracelsus posited an ontological theory of disease dependent upon the occult action of invisible *semina* or seeds of disease, forming only a small part of a new chemical philosophy. In the broadest sense, the pervasive influence of natural magic within both Platonic/Neoplatonic and Aristotelian frameworks of natural philosophy encouraged the investigation and naturalization of hidden operations in nature. A contemporary of della Porta, Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576), is an important representative of this approach. An astrologer and physician with highly diversified expertise, he saw the potential to comprehensively expand the purview of human knowledge through unbounded inquiry into the secrets of nature, recommending diverse heuristic approaches both rational and empirical (Eamon 1994; Debus 2001; Eamon 1983; Pagel 1958; Power 2006; Webster 1982).

Impact and Legacy

Magic with ambitious theosophical conceits would continue to attract proponents and detractors into the Early Modern period, notably with the works of the Dominicans Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) and Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639), who would both meet legal woes of varying severity. By the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, demonological polemic

against magical practices – such as the Jesuit scholar Martin Delrio's *Disquisitionum magicarum* (1599–1600) – distinguished natural magic as by definition acceptable; however, potential conflation with demonic power ensured its unstable status in natural philosophy. Largely concerned with the knowledge and manipulation of imperceptible forces, natural magic became ancillary to broader epistemological questions concerning the human potential to comprehend what the senses cannot apprehend. In addition, a characteristic optimism concerning the potential of natural magic to empower human enterprise would defy traditional opposition to magical knowledge as heretical curiosity, reflecting an emerging ambition for unbounded human potential. In seeking to submit imperceptible operations to natural causes, the relationship between natural magic and experimental practice would continue to strengthen through the sixteenth century (Delrio 1608; Thomas 1978; Clark 1997).

By the seventeenth century, the rising skepticism accompanying the mechanical philosophy – reflected in the works of men like Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) and Rene Descartes (1596–1650) – rejected the possibility of immaterial mechanisms in nature along with the hylemorphic metaphysics of the increasingly outmoded Scholastic Aristotelianism. Nevertheless, rejecting the occult through the possibility of rendering manifest these poorly understood mechanisms also recalled the heuristic empiricism of a magical tradition accustomed to seeking knowledge of the insensible. Thus, in the philosophical reform proposed by Francis Bacon (1561–1626) – whose seminal influence the Royal Society of London would claim in their manifesto – natural magic is addressed as severely corrupted yet epistemically promising. In Bacon's appetitive matter theory, sympathetic relationships in nature – distinctly dependent upon a subtle physical *spiritus* – recalled an important role for the magical perspective in his ambition to reveal and manipulate the fundamental operations of nature and to apply this knowledge to the benefit of mankind (Weeks 2007; Rossi 1968; Hutchison 1982).

In the 1960s, it was famously argued by Francis Yates that the Hermetic tradition introduced to the Latin West by Marsilio Ficino and fully realized in the works of Giordano Bruno provided a fundamental intellectual contribution to the development of modern science and technology through its formative influence on experimental philosophy and the mathematization of nature. Subsequent scholarship – including an increased emphasis on Neoplatonic influences – has revealed the inadequacy of assuming this level of cohesiveness in Renaissance magic. Nevertheless, Yates' emphasis on the importance of Hermeticism in the development of Renaissance philosophy was significant in reorienting the historian's perspective to include the undeniable participation of magical thought in the rise of Early Modern science. It is now clear that in fields as diverse as medicine and mechanics, the epistemic and epistemological challenges faced by proponents of natural magic often encouraged aggressively active approaches to natural investigation that complemented the empirical priorities of experimental natural philosophy. Thus, while acknowledging that "magic" is inherently polythetic, we must yet recognize the formative influence of the category of natural magic on the priorities of Early Modern natural philosophers, encouraging active investigation into the boundaries of nature and challenging the limitations of the human capacity to understand and influence natural operations (Yates 1964).

Cross-References

- [Alchemy](#)
- [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Occult Properties in the Renaissance](#)

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Naudé, Gabriel

Born: 2 or 3 February 1600, Paris

Died: 29 July 1653, Abbeville (France)

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Abstract

Gabriel Naudé was a French physician, librarian, and natural philosopher whose reputation today rests on three pillars. Naudé's early work in systematizing librarianship continues to interest historians of libraries. His relentlessly skeptical scientific and political rationalism and his combined fondness for preserving the state and for the thought of Machiavelli are still cited by historians of thought and politics. Finally, his association with the group of freethinkers led by Pierre Gassendi, a group criticized by René Pintard for what he called their "libertinage érudit" (Pintard 1943), makes of Naudé an important figure in the history of religious dissidence in the early modern era. These three domains are by no means arbitrary: as Damien (2006) and others have emphasized, Naudé's thoughts in all three areas were developing at a time when the intellectual edifice of classical and medieval thought systems – from Aristotle and Pliny to Thomas Aquinas – and of the Christian religion was increasingly being questioned. It was no accident that Naudé, a precocious and brilliant student, should have been attracted to the rational systematization of human knowledge and to the construction of thought systems that could persuasively lay claim to occupying the epistemological space vacated by those classical and medieval predecessors. In a polemical climate in which many French authors, the poet Théophile de Viau being perhaps the best-known example, came under attack from conservative thinkers, it was perhaps inevitable that Naudé himself,

after his death, should become the target of the Capucin polemicist Jacques de Chevanes (Autun 1671).

Biography

Born in Paris (a citation in the parish register quoted by Jack A. Clarke makes 3 February 1600 more probable than the frequently cited previous day (Clarke 1969, 331, n. 1)). In addition to Clarke's very readable summary of Naudé's early life (331–33), René Pintard (1943, 156–173 and *passim*) is still worth consulting. The child of parents of modest means, Naudé was by all accounts a brilliant student who very quickly developed a passion for books and knowledge; while a student at the Collège de Navarre, he came under the influence of the skeptic Claude Belurgey, and skeptical rationalism would remain the core of his intellectual makeup for the rest of his life. Encouraged at first by his family to study theology following completion of his master's degree in 1620, he instead turned to medicine, being more interested, even as a very young man, in natural and human phenomena than in religion and the supernatural. A turning point in Naudé's life came in 1622, when he accepted a position as a librarian to Henri de Mesmes, the owner of an extraordinary collection of some 8000 volumes, which for many years, unlike almost all private libraries, had been open for consultation to the public, and where Naudé came to know many kindred spirits, including the brothers Pierre and Jacques Dupuy, whose circle of scholars would later play a central role in his intellectual life.

Traveling to Italy in 1620, Naudé experienced firsthand the *Bibliotheca Ambrosiana*, which reinforced his enthusiasm for open public libraries. Returning to France the following year, he published his thoughts on the correct constitution and organization of libraries in the influential treatise *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* (Naudé 1627), addressed to Henri de Mesmes. Thanks to the good offices of Pierre Dupuy, who was responsible for the library of Jacques August de Thou, President of the Parlement de Paris, Naudé was

able to return to Italy in 1630 and spent the next decade in that country before being summoned back to France in 1642 by Richelieu to take charge of his own library. After Richelieu's death later that same year, Naudé was charged by Mazarin with the task of constructing a library to rival the best in Europe, a mission to which he would essentially devote the remainder of his life. Often purchasing books by the bale without any consideration of whether the authors were luminaries or unknowns and of whether the purchases duplicated works already in the collection, Naudé ransacked not only the many booksellers of Paris but those of all the neighboring countries of France, often purchasing entire collections as they came to market. His success was truly remarkable; as Jack A. Clarke writes, "By the end of December 1647, Naudé had purchased more than 40,000 printed books and 850 volumes of manuscripts at a cost of 65,000 francs—a prodigious sum in those days even for a cardinal" (Clarke 1969, 339). Naudé was also successful in having Mazarin's library opened to scholars so that it could indeed become the jewel that the Cardinal had wished it to be, but the events of the Fronde, and the fall of Mazarin, brought catastrophe: the library was broken up, and dispersed across Europe. In despair, Naudé went into voluntary exile in 1652, taking a position as royal librarian at the court of Queen Christina of Sweden, before returning to France the following year, apparently with the intention of endeavoring to rebuild Mazarin's storied collection. Falling ill en route, however, he died at Abbeville in July 1653; he was interred in the church of St. George, but his tomb vanished when the church was destroyed during the Revolution (Prarond 1871, 312 ff.).

Impact and Legacy

Naudé's reputation today is primarily buttressed by his intellectual activity and his publications in three core areas, the first of which is indeed that of his contribution to early modern librarianship. Naudé's (1627) *Advis* remains a foundational work in this regard, one that Robert Damien has called *un des actes de naissance de la modernité*

["a birth certificate of the modern era"] (Damien 1995, 32). To read the *Advis* today is to be struck by the extent of Naudé's determination, in creating the ideal library, to provide to the curious and learned man unrestricted access to the whole sum of human knowledge: "Tout ce qui est, qui fut, et qui peut estre,/En terre, en mer, au plus caché des Cieux" (Naudé 1627, 23). As Damien has suggested, Naudé is relentless in his insistence on the primacy not of human thought, but of human knowledge ("On pourrait presque dire qu'il n'y a plus pour Naudé de pensée mais des savoirs qui donnent des idées utiles et communicables sur un réel infiniment singulier" [One might almost say that for Naudé it is no longer a question of thought but of knowledge, which provides useful and communicable ideas about an infinitely singular real world]) (Damien 2006, 21). The indiscriminate nature of this drive does much to explain Naudé's insistence on bulk buying: if the ideal library is to encompass the whole of human knowledge, the most obscure authors acquire an importance that in some other schemas they would not have. It also helps to explain Naudé's refusal to include works of fiction in his collecting: like Plato, he believed that writers of fiction provide no understanding of the world as it is.

Naudé devotes an important chapter of his *Advis* (Naudé 1627, 129 ff.) to the question of how the library should be organized: without due attention to the proper principles of taxonomy, he writes, even a collection of 50,000 volumes could no more be called a proper library than a mob of 30,000 men could properly be called an army (Naudé 1627, 130). His insistence on organizational principles is entirely characteristic of his time and recalls, among others, the tireless and minutely detailed work of the Jesuit Claude-François Ménéstrier in iconology and iconography. To read Naudé today is to be made acutely aware of the extent to which taxonomies are reflective of the culture and knowledge: while the principles of order and hierarchy he espouses remain valid, the details of the organization he proposes often strike the modern reader as quaint and antiquated. Naudé concludes his treatise with an appeal to his patron on behalf of the principle of opening libraries to the learned public;

unsurprisingly, he includes a plea to appoint some learned man, steeped in the tradition of books, to take on the task of administering the library (Naudé 1627, 157). This is surely self-serving, but it seems clear that Naudé's real plea is lodged on behalf of the library as a foundational organizing element in the rational construction and preservation of humanity. As Robert Damien has written, "Organiser les savoirs acquis, les cataloguer, les inventorier et les rendre ainsi disponibles et utilisables, c'est conserver une rationalité active qui fut fabriquée et peut être refaite ou parfaite" [To organize the knowledge one has gathered, to catalogue it, to compile an inventory of it and thus make it available and useable, is to preserve an active rationality that has been constructed and that can be reconstructed or perfected] (Damien 2006, 23).

This "active rationality" was to guide Naudé's political and philosophical thought throughout his life, and the *Advis* is in this regard emblematic of his work as a whole. As Anne Kupiec has written, Naudé's work on making books and knowledge accessible takes place in a secular political context which leads him time and again to think about the connections between knowledge and power (Kupiec 1999, 11). In his insistence on opening up the library to the public (not to some vulgar populace, of course, but to the learned lay public), Naudé was acting in a way that many of his conservative contemporaries rightly believed to be subversive. Just as the rigorously ordered structure of the library simultaneously preserves and makes accessible the sum of human knowledge, both keeping it safe and opening it for critical examination, so does the structure of the state play a vital role in providing a bulwark to resist the ever-shifting buffets of fortune. For Naudé, the link between theories of the library and theories of the state thus seems to have been an entirely natural and logical one. His *Bibliographie politique contenant les livres et la méthode nécessaires à étudier la politique* of 1633 (Naudé 1642) and *Considérations politiques sur les coups d'état* of 1639 (Naudé 1639 [1667]) provide clear and abundant evidence of this tendency. For Naudé, the power of the state is to

human politics what the library is to human knowledge, and the two stand in counterpoise: "Face à la souveraineté du pouvoir, au Léviathan, la souveraineté du savoir, la bibliothèque universelle" (Damien 1995; quoted by Kupiec 1999, 16; see also Cavaillé 1998). Like the library, the state is grounded in reason and rationality and thus represents the stability of the wise and learned in contrast to the chaotic and uneducated mob. Like the state, the library thus becomes a thoroughly political entity in the service of human reason.

This insistence on human rationality, coupled with his lengthy and intimate association with a number of early modern French intellectual luminaries deemed by René Pintard to have been "learned libertines" (*libertins érudits*) or free-thinkers, has made Naudé a somewhat controversial figure in the history of ideas. In France, the trial and conviction of the Epicurean satirical poet Théophile de Viau for immorality and blasphemy in the early 1620s had instilled new habits of caution among his freethinking contemporaries and successors. Having as a young man gravitated to the circle of Pierre Gassendi, Naudé soon became closely associated with the freethinkers who gathered under Gassendi's auspices and those of the Dupuy brothers to debate philosophy and theology. One of his first published works, the *Instruction à la France sur la vérité de l'histoire des frères de la Roze-Croix* (Naudé 1623), as Peter Donaldson has emphasized, dwells at length on the need to free oneself from the superstitious habits of the masses and to become what Naudé calls "déniaisé." Donaldson correctly adds that "just how far *déniaissement* is supposed to extend, and whether the attack on superstition is at the same time a guarded assault on Christianity itself, is a debated matter" (Donaldson 1988, 143). Naudé's *Instruction* was published in 1623, the very year in which the incomparably polemical Jesuit François Garasse issued his thunderous demolition of the freethinking *beaux esprits* (Garasse and Salem 2009): coupled with the condemnation of the *Parnasse satyrique* anthology, which had appeared the year before, Garasse's treatise signaled the determination of

the ecclesiastical authorities to eradicate all publications deemed to endanger the moral or political order.

As Jean-Pierre Cavaillé has pointed out (Cavaillé 2011, 2), analysis – both philosophical and psychological – and moral sanction go hand in hand for René Pintard, whose *Libertinage érudit* (1943) was scathing and unequivocal about its subjects. For Pintard, the true scandal of the published work of the “libertins érudits” and the foursome known as the “Tétrade” (Gassendi, Naudé, Elie Diodati, and François de La Mothe le Vayer) was what he viewed as their concerted and systematic effort to mislead the authorities and the naïve. Their discourse was thus largely one in which their irreligious tendencies would be clear to those in the know but sufficiently veiled to escape the dreadful fate that had befallen such heretical freethinkers as Lucilio Vanini and Giordano Bruno. “[Ils] tissent au-dessus de toutes leurs actions une trame transparente aux initiés, mais qui trompera les profanes. Ils s’accoutument à s’entendre à demi-mot, à parler entre eux un langage intelligible à eux seuls. . . .” [Over all their actions, they weave a cloth that is transparent to those in the know, but that will fool the uninitiated. They are accustomed to making themselves understood through hints, to speaking among themselves in a language intelligible to them and them alone] (Pintard 1943, 1:146; cited by Kupiec 1999, 21).

Few scholars have written more in this century on the subject of “libertinage érudit” and on Naudé’s place in that context than Jean-Pierre Cavaillé (see, e.g., Cavaillé 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016). His very substantial critical review (Cavaillé 2011) of Isabelle Moreau’s study of the rhetorical strategies deployed by the *libertins* (Moreau 2007) provides a very useful overview of Naudé’s rhetoric in comparison to that of his contemporaries. Cavaillé, like Moreau and other authors, emphasizes the extent to which Naudé, like La Mothe le Vayer, was adept at using his pen in the service of those in power, taking advantage of their implicit protection to disseminate views that might very well have provoked trouble for him otherwise, though the expressed views of the

Tétrade seem far less inflammatory now than when Pintard published *Le libertinage érudit*. Debate continues about the sincerity of the repeated professions of faith to be found in the works of Naudé and of La Mothe le Vayer, in light of the rationalist and skeptical views they so frequently expressed, but the attention of modern scholars is more frequently drawn to assessing their role in constructing a foundation for their rationalist successors. As many scholars have emphasized, Naudé’s thought is less anti-Christian than anti-superstitious. His influential early satirical treatise, the *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont été fausement soupçonnés de magie* (Naudé 1625), remains a cornerstone of his legacy in this regard. Written in response to an outbreak of witchcraft phobia in Burgundy during 1644–1645, Chevanes’s violently polemical tract on “learned unbelief” seems, ironically, to have resulted in additional reprints of Naudé’s book, a trend that continued for more than a century after his death and that probably cemented his legacy as a key figure in the development of French rationalism (see Horowitz 2002, 62).

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Navarre, Marguerite of

Born: 11 April 1492 at the Castle of Cognac, near Angoulême

Died: 21 December 1549 at the Castle of Odos in the Pyrenees

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Abstract

Daughter of Charles, Count of Angoulême and Louise of Savoy; sister of the King of France, Francis I; wife of Charles, Duke of Alençon, and after his death, wife of Henry II, King of Navarre; grandmother of Henry of Navarre, future Henry IV, King of France. Marguerite is a key figure of the French Renaissance: a skilled politician, a fervent advocate of spiritual reform of the Catholic Church, a patroness of monastic congregations and literary circles, an eminent mystical poetess, and the first French woman to commit her writings to print.

Synonyms

Marguerite d'Angoulême

Biography

Being a princess of royal blood and a peer of France (an honor usually reserved for men), Marguerite was fully engaged in diplomatic relations with the papacy and the main European chancelleries, especially during the crisis caused by the imprisonment of Francis I following his defeat at the Battle of Pavia in 1525. As Queen of Navarre, she also tried to promote the interests of her small kingdom, situated between France and Spain. Receptive to the early writings of Luther, she

helped the young Calvin flee from France, only to be later criticized by him for not admitting her alleged Protestantism. Nonetheless, her fidelity to Catholicism was not merely dictated by political expediency, but was, most of all, consistent with her spirituality and, indeed, her philosophy, which never took the form of a system of thought but rather permeated her poetry, prose, and theater.

Despite her bold decision to allow her poetry to be made available in print, Marguerite de Navarre's literary output was mainly destined for her own aristocratic milieu. Hence, her body of work displays a particular interest in ethical questions she and other courtiers faced (Langer 1999, 2013). Nonetheless, the queen was first and foremost a spiritual writer. The key concept underlying Marguerite's writings is faith, understood not as a professed doctrine, but as trust (*fiance*) in the other. When trust becomes confidence, it may easily turn into a sinful expression of human pride and self-assurance (*cuyder*). Such blindness is exposed in many novellas of Marguerite's *Heptameron*, her unfinished, highly original, and deeply spiritual response to Boccaccio's *Decameron*. To avoid such sinful overconfidence, one has to open the "eye of faith" which is illuminated by intentionality directed at the union with God and His Word. Yet human intentions can never be clearly perceived and understood, especially because they tend to remain hidden under layers of self-justification and disguises, some of which seem at the first sight pious and saintly, while in fact, covering up human nothingness. Only the mantle of God's unmerited grace can truly protect and sanctify the human soul. Such redemption is never assured and can only be hoped for through faith, which is, in fact, hope. Its precondition is the annihilation of our ego in the face of God's transcendent Being. Or rather, in conformity with the tradition of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and Nicolas of Cusa – whose radical metaphysics was conveyed to Marguerite through her correspondence with the bishop of Meaux, Guillaume Briçonnet – God's Being transcends any being and, indeed, Being itself. As a "suprasubstantial" Being, God is therefore in fact the Non-Being.

However, God's Nothingness is not an ontological status but rather an act: the act of infinite love through which God voluntarily annihilates Himself on the cross. This act of God's entrusting Himself to Man is also an act of faith "working through charity." God's trust calls for a reciprocal act of loving trust on the part of the human being. Indeed, God's annihilation challenges us to look into the abysmal void of our own nothingness, stripped of any hypocritical self-confidence. It is only when we face our own nothingness, only when we annihilate ourselves by aspiring to be united with the Divine Totality, that we will, hopefully, imitate Christ and, possibly, achieve in turn faith "working through charity."

All of Marguerite's thinking stems from such mystic spirituality and metaphysics, which drastically radicalizes the Neoplatonic *doxa* commonly accepted during her times. This especially is the philosophical basis of her writings which, regardless of genre, be it allegorical poetry, chansons, novellas, or theatrical "sotties," is by and large of dialogic nature. This dialogic form of writing is indeed the best enactment of Marguerite's philosophical stance. As a writer, Marguerite never assumes the position of a master lecturing the reader. On the contrary, through specific stylistic and rhetorical devices, she annihilates her auctorial agency in order to entrust the spiritual and ethical transformation of the readers to the mysterious operation of God's grace.

Before the ideological divide between Rome and Geneva became irremediable, Marguerite of Navarre served as the centerpiece of the "Evangelical network" (Reid 2009) of clerics and laymen, intellectuals and poets, philologists and preachers, that attempted to spiritually revitalize the Catholic Church in the 1520s and early 1530s; during this same time, she exerted tremendous, yet subtle, influence on the most illustrious French Christian humanists and writers, such as François Rabelais, Clément Marot, and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. Her 1531 poem, published anonymously, *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* was translated by the future Queen of England, Elizabeth I. Although the project of spiritual renewal underlying French "Evangelism" ultimately fell victim to the increased theological and political

polarization which led to the Wars of Religion in France, the impact of the movement to which Marguerite contributed, continued in the late Renaissance, in the political thought of Michel de l'Hospital, and in the fideism and skepticism of Michel de Montaigne.

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- [Calvin, Jean](#)
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- [Humanism](#)
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- [Luther, Martin](#)
- [Negative Theology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Nicholas of Cusa](#)
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Negative Theology in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The term “negative theology” refers to any discourse or examination that goes in search of God by negation (via *negationis*). Negative theology is sometimes used by theologians who deny the possibility of human intellect knowing God. This is why negative theology is also called apophatic theology. Negative theology in the Renaissance is present most of all in the fifteenth century, mentioned by authors such as Nicholas of Cusa, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Marsilio Ficino, and Lefèvre d'Étaples. From the sixteenth century onward, owing to a doctrine hardening in the aftermath of the Council of Trent, negative theology was less mentioned and only by following the classical interpretation of Thomas Aquinas.

Term

The term “negative theology” refers to any discourse or examination that goes in search of God by negation (via *negationis*). Positive theology defines the names or properties of God. On the contrary, negative theology denies any possibility of predication referred to God because of his transcendence. Thereby, negative theology aims at completing and improving positive theology. Negative theology is sometimes used to underline the impossibility of knowing God. This is why negative theology is also called apophatic theology (Vannier 2011).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Renaissance philosophy inherits the negative theology model from the Middle Ages as it is put

forward by Dionysius Areopagite in *De divinis nominibus* and *De mystica theologia* (Gersh 1978; Ruh 1990). Medieval commentators were convinced that the author of these works was the same Dionysius who is mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles* 17, 34. However, the history of negative theology dates back to the interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* (Steel 2003; Franke 2013). In the Middle Ages, Dionysius's writings inspired academic *Quaestiones* on God's name and provided subjects for scholastic debates. Robert Grosseteste, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, and Meister Eckhart have commented on Dionysius's negative theology based on different keys of interpretation (Wéber 1995; Ruh 1996). In the Renaissance, negative theology is often used to undermine the Aristotelian Scholastic's method and affirm a new Platonic model (Senger 2000). Cardinal Bessarion (1457–1458) in *In calumniatorem Platonis*, Nicholas of Cusa (1449) in the *Apologia docta ignorantia*, and Marsilio Ficino in *De sole* assess the dependence of Dionysius' negative theology on Plato's doctrines (Luscombe 1997). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Dionysius's method influenced Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Charles de Bovelles, and others. In the same years, Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Joseph Justus Scaliger, and Isaac Casaubon argue that Dionysius was not a follower of St. Paul, but rather a sixth-century A.D. author (Leinkauf 1997).

Innovative and Original Aspects

In *De docta ignorantia*, Nicholas of Cusa argues that negative theology is to be completed by a positive one in a circular theology. In the dialogue *De non aliud*, Nicholas of Cusa has a character say that God is not in mere negation but rather in negation of negation. The expression *negatio negationis* is borrowed from Meister Eckhart, but it is originally used by Proclus in *Platonic theology*. Lefèvre d'Étaples tries to expel Dionysius from Neoplatonism and interprets negative theology in line with Augustine and Scholasticism (Santinello 1969). Marsilio Ficino, in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*, states that the principle is beyond all, entity and discourse. The

same neoplatonic doctrine is defended by Pico della Mirandola in the *De ente et uno* (Ficino 1952, 1964–1970; Pico della Mirandola 2010). Both Ficino and Pico privilege the *via negationis* to God (Luscombe 1997). However, Ficino’s originality compared to Nicholas of Cusa, and Pico lies in his revision of Dionysius’ negative theology which results in an irenic philosophy. Ficino integrates Dionysius’ traditional discourse on the divine names with astral symbols from Zoroastrian, Pythagorean, and Hermetic works (Leinkauf 1997; Toussaint 1999; Celenza 1999). Elements of Ficino’s interpretation of Dionysius are also present in the second part of Giordano Bruno’s *De gli eroici furori*.

Impact and Legacy

From the sixteenth century onward, philosophers almost completely cease applying negative theology owing to a doctrine hardening in the aftermath of the Council of Trent (Casarella 2012). However, it is documented that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several negative theology treaties were commonly used in the monastic milieu, especially among Franciscans, Carmelites, and Cistercians (Leinkauf 1997). John of the Cross uses negative theology as a way to reach God. Unlike Renaissance philosophers, he returns to the Medieval Dionysius’s model, and privileges the mystical union through will. In the seventeenth century, Scholasticism resumes applying negative philosophy following Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on Dionysius’s *De divinis nominibus*.

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Neo-Latin Epic

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Abstract

While vernacular epic poetry is a comparatively well-studied field, the following entry will focus on Neo-Latin epic poetry from the early modern period. In general, epic poetry was a thriving literary genre throughout the early modern period, understood here as the period from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, and this was the case not only in terms of quantity: In contemporary poetical treatises, epic maintained supremacy over all other poetic genres. It was used regularly to praise rulers and noble families, cities, or institutions. The main function of these panegyric poems was to legitimize and ennoble their hero and develop a universally valid narrative for them. The authors of these texts often also used them as a means to seek patronage. While at the outset of the Renaissance, epic poems were written in Latin, from the later fifteenth century onwards heroic poetry was also composed in different vernacular languages, and formed the basis for a rich vernacular tradition. The subjects of these poems were historical, mythical, and religious. Formally there exists a wide

variety within the genre ranging from extensive poems consisting of several books to short epics and from supplements to centos. By using the special features of epic (e.g., similes, speeches, catalogs), the poets made themselves part of the epic tradition. This tradition in itself had a considerable impact on the way in which a specific depiction was realized: Many heroic figures are constructed on the model of Aeneas, heroines after Dido and formidable opponents exhibit features of Turnus – just to stress the comparison with Virgil's *Aeneid*. After the eighteenth century, other literary forms took over the function of epic poetry, which became obsolete because of social and political changes.

Introduction

Among the numerous poetic genres we find in the early modern period from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, epic poetry held a prominent position: The father of Italian humanism, Francesco Petrarca (1304–74), not only composed an extensive Latin epic poem – his *Africa* deals with Rome's fight against Hannibal in the Second Punic War – he even conceded a special place to this work in his complete oeuvre. After all, the *Africa* was the very reason that Petrarch was given the poetic laurel at the Capitol Hill in Rome (Warner 2005, 1–50). By the end of the eighteenth century, a huge number of epic poems had been composed, and offshoots of this tradition can be found as late as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: The last large-scale Latin epic is the seven-book *In beatam Mariam Virginem a Pio XI pontifice maximo sine labe originis proclamatum* written by the Jesuit Innocentius Polcari (1818–1908) and published in 1905 in Benevent (IJsewijn 1998, 30).

Impact and Legacy

That epic poetry in the early modern period was a widespread and popular genre, is not only evident from the enormous number of texts produced (see

below), but also from a number of metapoetic statements to be found in contemporary writing on literary theory. A few examples will serve to illustrate this assertion: In the 24th book of his *Epistolae familiares* (Petrarch 1999), Petrarch addresses famous authors from classical antiquity. In the title of his letter to Virgil (24.11) Petrarch emphasizes that Virgil as an epic poet was the first of all Roman poets (*Ad P. Vergilium Maronem, heroycum poetam et latinorum principem poetarum*); in the letter, Petrarch writes about the success of the *Aeneid*, still read and appreciated by readers in the early Renaissance (*Ut tuus Eneas vivit totumque per orbem / et placet et canitur*, 24, 11, 55–56). More than a century later, Giovanni Pontano (1429–1503) discusses epic poetry in his dialogue *Actius* (1499) on literary theory. Here one of its interlocutors, Bembo, calls epic “*heroica poesis, quae est omnium regina*” (2,7). In a later example of praise for epic poetry, Marco Girolamo Vida (1485–1566) goes even further: Vida’s didactic poem *De arte poetica* (1527) declares the *Aeneid* the standard for all types of poetry (Rolfes 2001, 146). Again, in 1561, Julius Caesar Scaliger’s (1484–1558) *Poetices libri VII* were published, and he calls epic poetry “*omnium est princeps*” (1.3). Moving on to the next question, a definition of epic poetry, we can refer to a quote from the Jesuit Jacobus Pontanus (1542–1626), who in his poetics (1594) deduces the importance of epic from the deeds of the heroes, who are celebrated in these texts: *illustres illustrium actiones* (famous deeds of famous men).

Definition and Models

It was a difficult task even for the contemporary readership to define what exactly epic poetry was. Whatever features one describes as common and characteristic of this particular genre, some fringe texts always remain which do not fit into the definition proposed. But most commonly, epic poems are long narrative pieces of high style, written in a specific meter typical for the genre (in Latin epic poetry, the dactylic hexameter is the typical verse). Epics are narrative texts dealing with historical, biblical, or mythological events. They are often

modeled on classical prototypes, especially the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or Virgil’s *Aeneid*, but also on later texts such as Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, Silius Italicus’ *Punica*, or the poems by Statius, i.e., the *Thebaid* and the *Achilleid*. Very frequently, Latin Renaissance epic poems have titles ending in *-eis* or *-ias* and consist of 12 books in imitation of the *Aeneid*. The late antique poet Claudianus served as an important example of how to use Virgil’s *Aeneid* in order to meet panegyric aims and to celebrate contemporary politicians in Virgilian style. Next to classical models, some medieval texts also exercised a certain degree of influence: Walter of Châtillon’s *Alexandreid*, for instance, was a text read at Italian humanist schools, and we, therefore, find traces of creative transformation in Renaissance epic (Haye 2009, 121).

Corpus

The corpus of epic poetry from the Renaissance is enormous (Borinski 1886): Traditionally, Francesco Petrarca stands at the beginning of this period, and his Neo-Latin epic *Africa* ranks as the first epic poem of the Renaissance. The *Africa* remained unfinished and Petrarch wished it to be burned after his death in 1374. But just as with Virgil, who wanted the unfinished *Aeneid* to meet a similar end, Petrarch’s wish was not fulfilled. The *Africa* was published and very widely read. From this starting point, numerous epics were composed, especially in fifteenth-century Italy (Lippincott 1989), in order to celebrate the origins of cities and their ruling families. The *Sfortiad* by Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481) is an example of one such text. Filelfo, who worked at several different Italian universities throughout his career, celebrates Francesco Sforza (1401–66), then duke of Milan in his poem (De Keyser 2015). The *Sfortiad* is a good example of the many contexts relevant for epic poetry in the fifteenth century: the court culture of aspiring rulers, panegyric by poets looking for patronage, *aemulatio* of the most prestigious genre of ancient literature, and so on. In the sixteenth century, the Latin production of epic poetry continued unabated: In 1590, William Alabaster, for example, began his *Elisaeis*, an (unfinished) poem on

Queen Elisabeth I (Binns 1997, 293). But by now a large number of vernacular poems were also being composed which would become models for a huge vernacular production: In France, Pierre de Ronsard (1524–85) portrayed in his *La Franciade* (1572) the legendary founder of the Frankish Empire, Francus. In Italy, Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533) wrote his *Orlando furioso* (first version 1516) picking up where Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441–94) had left off in his *Orlando innamorato* (1495) and later Torquato Tasso (1544–94) his *La Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), both of which became classics of Italian epic. In Spain and its colonies Alonso de Ercilla (1533–94) wrote an epic poem, *La Araucana* (first version 1569), on the wars during the Spanish colonization of Chile to which the author was an eyewitness. For Portugal, Luís de Camões (1525–80) in his poem *Os Lusíadas* (1572) treated the Portuguese explorations and colonizations in Asia. All these vernacular poems were modeled, like their Latin counterparts, on the original classical models of antiquity. But they were also open to other influences such as the French medieval *chansons de geste*. All in all, the production of epic poetry had reached an impressive rate, both in Latin and the vernaculars. After the eighteenth century, due to the radical changes in society and a new concept of literature, epic was superseded and other literary forms took over its place in the literary scene.

Distribution

In order to get an overview of this vast corpus of epic poetry (Belloni 1912), several approaches have been proposed: Epic poems can be categorized, for example, by topics (e.g., Hofmann 2001). According to this method, the largest group would contain poems dealing with historical topics (Murrin 1994), either by taking a long view of history (e.g., Pantaleon Candidus who describes in his *Gotiberis*, Strasbourg 1587, the empire of the Visigoths in Spain up to the Arabic invasion in the eighth century, cf. Pantaleon 2008), or shorter contemporary events (such as Michael Capellarius who celebrates Queen Christina of Sweden in his *Christinaiis*, printed in

Venice in 1700 – interestingly, one of the few epics with a heroine at its center). Alongside historical poems, epics with religious content were also very popular. We might take as an example Giovan Battista Marino's poem *La strage degli innocenti* (1632) on the Slaughter of the Innocents. Other important topics include mythology, the world of chivalric orders, and the extensive field of didactic poetry which cannot be discussed here, but must also be seen in the context of epic poetry.

An alternative way of categorizing the genre examines the literary form of the poems: There are poems, for example, that compete in length and structure with their classical forebears (e.g., poems in 12 books on the model of Virgil's *Aeneid*). At the other end of the spectrum, there exist innumerable shorter poems, often called *epyllia*, consisting of only a few hundred lines, which nonetheless clearly belong in the epic tradition on account of their style and their use of epic features. There are also special forms like supplements, which attempt to complete some of antiquity's unfinished epic poems (e.g., Lucan's *Pharsalia* or Claudianus' *De raptu Proserpinae*). Ludwig Neumann (1726–77) in his *Supplementum ad librum VI. Aeneidos* (1768) extends Aeneas' glance into the future of his line in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* as far as the Habsburg rulers of his own time (Klecker 2002, 242–47). Centos can be considered another such special form. Here, epic poems are stitched together out of the linguistic material provided by other authors. In 1634, Alexander Ross (1590–1654) published the 13 books of his *Vigilius Evangelizatus sive Historia Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* in London, in which he tells the biblical story from the founding of Jerusalem until Christ's Ascension, using exclusively verses taken from Vergil.

Literary Level

On the literary level, poets attempted to position themselves within the epic tradition. To this end, they used special features of presentation, the so-called type scenes of epic. These literary structures established connections between earlier epic poems, where the same features appeared in

comparable situations, and the new author's own text. One of the most popular examples of such features is the epic simile. By way of a simile, the poet has the opportunity to open a window on a totally different world, to leave the world of politics and war, and to plunge his reader into everyday life, for example, or into particular spaces in his contemporary world. In the third book of Ubertino Carrara's (1642–1716) poem *Columbus* (1715), a comparison is drawn between the busy work of craftsmen and artists and the frenetic activities at the arsenal in Venice (*Columbus* 3.437–47). The liberty that similes permit authors, to integrate ideas from completely different areas of life, was employed by Renaissance poets to embed mythological, biblical, or historical topics: A heavy storm, for example, in the *Xaverius Viator* (1721) of Niccolò Parthenio Giannettasio can be compared to the thunderbolts that Moses heard when he received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (*Xaverius* 6.802–8). Or, in Naldo Naldi's *Volaterrais* (1474) the resolution of a period of turmoil is compared to Neptune who raises his head out of the sea and calls a halt to the winds (*Volaterrais* 3.227–31). Also other types of epic “type scenes” allow direct intertextual allusions to previous poems, including speeches, prayers, scenes where characters are dressed in armor, *aristeias*, shield descriptions, *ekphraseis* in general, games and contests, *concilia deorum*, catalogues, *sphrageis* to name but a handful. When Nicodemus Musnicki in 1805 in his poem *De Christi ab inferis reditu* (2.314–17) describes the shield of the Devil, the passage evokes a number of earlier descriptions and places the new text firmly inside the epic tradition. By and large, the rewriting of scenes taken from classical models was an important technique for epic poets, inviting readers not only to compare the two texts, but ennobling and charging the modern text with intertextual meaning.

Characters

What has been said about epic features in general also holds true for the central characters of Renaissance epic: The heroes who stand at the center of a poem and in whom the origin of important ruling families can be located and later celebrated, invite

comparison with Virgil's Aeneas. In many cases, such a hero will even be depicted like an *alter Aeneas* and his virtues as a ruler will be modeled after the Roman *dux*. Imposing enemies, like Solimano in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* or Caupolicán in Ercilla's *Araucana*, often take on characteristics of Turnus (*Aeneid*) or Hannibal (*Punica*), and the hero's love interest or warrior maidens will be portrayed as Dido or Camilla.

Structure

The structure of Renaissance epics can be explained with reference to a combination of formal and functional aspects: Many poems, dealing with historical events, avoid a chronological arrangement, but rather chose to find their beginnings *medias in res* and to build in earlier elements of the story later on by way of flashbacks among other techniques commonly found, too, in classical poems. On the other hand, many Renaissance epics head for a clear narrative destination (Kallendorf 2007); a final battle, where the hero emerges victorious; a final victory parade where the hero is celebrated; or even an *apotheosis* where the hero is accepted amongst the saints. This teleological aspect of epic poetry, already mentioned at the beginning, is often expressed throughout the poem's overall structure.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Panegyric epic poetry was for centuries the literary form of power *par excellence*. It appeared most frequently in contexts of political or religious power centers and managed to fulfill the particular aims of all the figures involved: Rulers had a clear interest in having themselves and their families celebrated in the highest literary form. In analogy with the Virgilian model, they became a second emperor Augustus whose reign became a model for many aspects of early modern monarchic systems. For the figures around the ruler, an epic poem creates a guiding narrative, a story that builds community and identity, which praises the reign of the hero, legitimizes and ennobles it, and which, in many cases, proclaims the ruler's power along teleological lines according to

the will of God. This normative character of epic poetry is not only visible in the early production of the Italian Quattrocento, where even dubious characters are sometimes lifted up into a noble light, but also, for example, in the time after 1773 when the Jesuit order was suppressed and a number of now ex-Jesuits tried to redeem their prolific and valuable labors by constructing a normative narrative for their order. The poet, finally, anticipated patronage from the ruler or the institution he celebrated in his text. This relationship to power becomes particularly evident when one examines the splendid manuscripts presented to rulers that aimed to make a luxurious display of the importance of their content. In his seminal study *Epic and Empire* from 1993, David Quint could show that Renaissance epic poetry not only presents the voice of power – even if this voice is always louder – but the part of the losers is also portrayed, and thus we appreciate the lot of the underdogs who must suffer under the ruler’s power. This aspect of epic poetry, which allows us to hear the problems of the native peoples in South America in Ercilla’s *Araucana*, for instance, stands in the tradition of Lucan’s *Pharsalia* and safeguards the genre from functioning as mere propaganda.

On a functional level, many epic poems attempt to align themselves with their intended readership by creating a clear opposition between a positive “We,” dominated by the hero, and a dark and negative otherness. This polarization between positive and negative forces, accompanied by the integration of the reader into the positive side, helps the genre to create a sense and identity for its targeted groups. Various levels of the narrative are instrumentalized for this process: Alongside the human story, we often find the sphere of the gods who support the mortal figures: Positive forces, such as God himself (often depicted in the mold of ancient Jupiter), support the hero, while negative forces, like Discordia, the personification of war, back his enemy. This authoritative divine plot allows the poet to expand his perspective into the future: Just as in the first book of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, where Venus addresses her father Jupiter and discovers the future fate of her son Aeneas, whose reign will have no end (*imperium sine fine*, Aen. 1.279), the epic poets of the Renaissance used the same technique to predict a magnificent future for their heroes.

State of the Art

Vernacular epic poetry has been studied by modern scholars – at least in some cases – intensively (Hardie 1993), as helpful overviews and case studies testify (e.g., Borris 2000 for English, Jossa 2002, Sacchi 2006 and Faini 2015 for Italian, Maskell 1973, Usher 2014 for French epic poetry). There exists no comprehensive overview of the Neo-Latin epic poetry of the Renaissance, and critical editions, translations, and commentaries of only a few important texts have been published. The tides, however, are changing and with every case study, our picture of the phenomenon becomes clearer and more subtle.

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Nesi, Giovanni

Born: 1456, Florence

Died: 1506, Florence

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Abstract

Giovanni Nesi was born in Florence in January 1456 and died in the same town in 1506. He mirrors the troubling sequence of a generation of Florentine intellectuals that saw Plato and Platonism undermine Aristotle and merge with the Hermetic tradition, and that spanned the

ideological and political trim of Lorenzo the Magnificent's age, to later participate in the great reforming hope of the Savonarola's years, to be overwhelmed, again, by the defeat of Savonarola in 1498, and finally to attend at the beginning of the new century to the definitive crisis of Florentine society.

Biography

Giovanni Nesi was born in Florence in January 1456. The wealth of his family allowed him to devote himself to his studies without worries of economic nature and, even if we ignore from whom he got his primary education, we know that he followed very soon Donato Acciaiuoli, of whom he can be considered a disciple. In his youth, he underwent the influence of the Aristotelianism of Acciaiuoli, as well as the one of Cristoforo Landino and the civic tradition of Florentine humanism.

Between 1472 and 1486 he delivered a series of sacred sermons in the secular confraternities that enlivened the religious and cultural life of the city. His first work, still unpublished, dates back to 1484: it is the dialogue in four books, *De moribus*, dedicated to Piero de' Medici, son of Lorenzo. The first three books can be considered a summary of the *Etica nicomachea*, whereas the fourth shows a clear Neoplatonic influence.

Two years later, in March 1486, at the renowned Compagnia dei Magi, particularly linked to the Medici family, he delivered a speech *De charitate*, where platonic and Hermetic themes were displayed with a metaphorical language very close to Ficino's one: but already in *De moribus*, indeed, Nesi had celebrated Ficino as his master.

From 1485 until his death, he held in Florence various political missions, both before and after the event that very deeply marked his personality: his support – although rather eccentric – to Savonarola's movement. Nesi's work that best mirrors this support is the *Oraculum de novo saeculo*, dedicated firstly to Giorgio Benigno Salviati, and then published in May 1497 with a dedication to Gianfrancesco Pico (Nesi 1497; Vasoli 1977). In the *Oraculum* he heralds, with a great abundance of astrological and cabalistic

references, the forthcoming in Florence, the New Jerusalem, of the moral revival predicted by Savonarola – the *Ferrariensis Socrates* – and expected by Giovanni Pico.

The Hermetic and neo-Pythagorean symbols that occur in the work were explained by Nesi in his *Symbolum*, dedicated to the Camaldolese Paolo Orlandini (Celenza 2001). The same versatility, ready to unify the Neoplatonic tradition – that besides Plato's works, was comprehensive also of Hermetic, Orphic and Pythagorean works, and Suggestions by Savonarola – can be found in Nesi's poetic production, that is, in his *Canzoniere* and his unfinished *Poema*, in terza rima (Ponsiglione 2012; Zanini 2014).

In the second half of 1505, Nesi was appointed podestà in Prato. He died in Florence the following year, between November and December, and was buried in the church of Santa Croce (Tortelli 2013).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Just because of his unbridled versatility, Nesi is an important witness of the cultural and religious ferment and of the unrest of the Florence of his time, that saw Plato and Platonism undermine Aristotle and merge with the Hermetic tradition, before even trying to find a common ground with the *renovatio* preached by Savonarola. In 1484, when he composed the dialogue *De moribus*, he was by the time more than halfway on his intellectual path, and, from his interest in the secular function of the Aristotelian ethics, he had already come to some Neoplatonic stance (Garfagnini 2007). As all the unoriginal personalities, yet capable of reinterpreting in an independent way the ideals and the expectations of his own environment, Nesi mirrors the troubling sequence of a generation of intellectuals who spanned in less than half a century the secular ideals and the ideological and political trim of Lorenzo the Magnificent's age, to later participate in the great reforming hope of Savonarola's years, to be overwhelmed, again, by the defeat of Savonarola in 1498, and finally to attend at the beginning of the new century the definitive crisis of Florentine society (Vasoli 1977).

Cross-References

- ▶ Acciaiuoli, Donato
- ▶ Astrology in the Renaissance
- ▶ Ficino, Marsilio
- ▶ Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
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Niccoli, Niccolò

Born: Firenze, 1365

Died: Firenze, February 3, 1437

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Abstract

Niccolò Niccoli (Firenze, 1365 – Firenze, February 3, 1437) played an important role as

a merchant and political man in Florence in the early fifteenth century: he assembled a large library that later formed the core of the first public library: that of the Dominicans of St. Mark, built by Cosimo de' Medici on the project of Melozzo da Forlì.

Biography

Niccolò continued with his brothers the work of his father Bartolomeo, who practiced the art of wool. There is no news about his formation: it is presumed that he had been in contact with Luigi Marsili since 1382, when Marsili returned to Florence from Paris, as well as with Coluccio Salutati. He shared with Salutati not only the attendance with Manuele Crisolora, Leonardo Bruni, Iacopo Angeli, and Poggio Bracciolini, but also common interests, such as the project about an edition of the *Africa* by Petrarch, and above all, a passion for books to be read, annotated and transcribed. Drawing on the profits of the merchant's work, he began to collect manuscripts for his library, with tenacity and dedication, as emerges from Bracciolini's *Epistolae* (the first book is entirely devoted to the correspondence with Niccoli: Bracciolini 1984), from Leonardo's Bruni *Epistolae* (Bruni 2007) and also from Ambrogio Traversari's (Favi 2004), where we can find requests for transcription, purchase, and loan of the manuscripts for Niccoli and his friends. The passion for books also pushed Niccoli to arrange in 1408, at his own expense, the library of Boccaccio, which had been deposited in the Convent of Santo Spirito at Florence.

At Bruni's suggestion, and using his economic resources, Niccoli agreed to pay a private wage to Guarino Veronese, who in March 1410 moved to Florence to teach Greek but in 1414 was drawn from the city perhaps because of the clashes with Niccoli. At the same time, driven by an ever-growing admiration for the study of classics and, consequently, by the devaluation of poetry in vernaculars, he contrasted with Cino Rinuccini, who

wrote the *Invectiva contro a cierti caluniatori di Dante e di messer Francesco Petrarca e di messer Boccacci i nomi de quali per onestà si tacciono di questo*. In 1414, Niccoli was named among the officers of the reopened Studium of Florence, confirming the prestige now reached in the city. In 1415, with the dedication of Bruni's *Cicero novus*, he was finally consecrated as the flag of the new culture, politically "invented" and ideologically linked to the imitation of the ancients. In 1417, Cristoforo Buondelmonti also dedicated to him the first editorial of the *Descriptio Insulae Cretae*; also in the same year, at Pisa, where he had fled to avoid the plague, Niccoli purchased from Giovanni Aurispa a Greek manuscript of Thucydides. In the exquisite adventure of the discovery of ancient manuscripts, Poggio Bracciolini was conducting on his many trips to ancient monasteries of Switzerland, Germany, and France at the Council of Constance, Niccoli played a decisive role, probably as a travel lender, but above all a careful and firm reference to the new "discoveries": in fact, as it clearly emerges from the letter of Bracciolini of 16 December 1416 describing to Guarino the discovery of an integral Quintilian in the monastery of St. Gallus, it was Niccoli, next to Bruni, who, verifying the texts transcribed by Bracciolini or the indexes of the manuscripts found, checked and recognized the novelty of the text "uncovered." The exchange with Bracciolini, always woven of news concerning texts and books, continued in the following years, in a relationship of friendship that remained firm until his death.

If Niccoli maintained friendly relations with Bracciolini, he was the protagonist of numerous clashes and controversies: Around 1420, Lorenzo di Marco Benvenuti wrote an *Oratio in Nicolaum Nicolum*, where he challenged Niccoli's private life and urged him to flee from Florence to take refuge in that so-admired Greece of his. But the most traumatic break was that of Bruni, who wrote against Niccoli the *Oratio in nebulonem maleficum*.

The attention to new discoveries of manuscripts never declined in Niccoli: In 1423,

Giovanni Corvini, during an embassy in Florence, brought to Niccoli a codex with the *Orator* and the *Brutus* of Cicero, texts which had recently been founded at the Cathedral of Lodi. Moreover, Niccoli was interested in the transmission of Cicero's *Philippicae*; he had in his hands Tacitus's *Germania*, intervened on the manuscript of Ammian Marcellin smithy discovered in Fulda (current Vat. Lat. 1873), on a Valerio Flacco manuscript, and also on the text of the 12 comedies of Plauto, which were discovered by the young Nicholas of Cusa. In 1431, he wrote a *Commentarium in peregrinatione Germaniae* (Sabbadini 1972, 7–9), that is, a memorandum delivered to the Cardinals Giuliano Cesarini and Niccolò Albergati who departed for the Council of Basel: in this paper, Niccoli listed the manuscripts to search in the monasteries of Germany (Frontino, Tacito, Cicero, and Livio). They were books that had been described by Bracciolini himself. He was also a passionate collector of antiquities, sculptures, and gems, among which the most famous is a chalcedony representing Palladio's abduction; Leonardo Bruni had promised him an ancient stone-carved Narcissus reflecting in the water (Luiso 1980, 30); Ciriaco d'Ancona sent him an “antiquissimum phoenicibus characteribus epigramma”; Traversari sent him from Venice a golden coin representing Berenice (Weiss 1989). As Vespasiano da Bisticci tells, he was in friendship relations with Filippo Brunelleschi, Donatello, Luca Della Robbia, and Lorenzo Ghiberti (Vespasiano da Bisticci 1976, 225–242).

Niccoli had the intention to go to Palestine, according to a Traversari's *epistola* of 1420, as well as to Greece, according to Poggio Bracciolini in February 1421. It was only in 1424 that he arrived in Rome, where he wished to travel from 1406. To welcome him in the months between February and July 1424, there was Bracciolini, enthusiastic about the arrival of his friend to whom he would show the ruins and relics of antiquity. A second trip to Rome in 1426, at the time of Bruni's embassy to Pope Martino V, was unlikely, since it was deduced only from the dialogue of *De*

voluptate by Lorenzo Valla. However, it is also true that in the Catasto of 1427 the name Niccoli did not appear, an element that would benefit his absence from Florence.

In 1430, together with the Medici family and Carlo Marsuppini, Niccoli left Florence because of the plague. Before leaving, on June 11, he had made a will in which he left his library at the Camaldolese monastery of S. Maria degli Angeli, where his good friend Traversari lived. He headed to Verona, where he appreciated the wealth of libraries. Afterward, he made a trip to Venice and then returned to Verona, where, as Traversari tells (Zippel [1891]: 1979, 120), he met Vittorino da Feltre and transcribed some manuscripts. The desire to increase his book collection did not diminish in his last years: In 1433, Alberto da Sarteano wrote to him about some Greek and Latin books in Naples.

He was always attached to the Medici family: on November 4, 1434, he was appointed among the Officers of the Studium.

On January 14, 1437, Niccoli wrote his second testament (also published in Ullman-Stadter 1972, 295–299), which included sixteen testamentary beneficiaries (including Traversari, Bracciolini, Bruni, and Marsuppini), being Cosimo de' Medici the first one, who was entrusted with the task of allocating his library, rich in Greek and Latin codes, “ad communem utilitatem” in the form that would be most suitable. His books constituted the core of the famous library of the Dominican Convent of St. Mark erected by Michelozzo Michelozzi for will of Cosimo himself, remaining in many cases recognizable by the note on the “ex hereditate Nicolai Nicoli.”

Except for two vernacular letters, addressed to Cosimo de' Medici, no letters to his interlocutors, such as Traversari, Poggio, and Bruni, are preserved. It seems that he has written only one work, the *Orthographia*, according to Giuseppe Brivio and the Guarino, which is lost or not traced. From the paleographical point of view, Berthold Louis Ullman and Albinia de la Mare have highlighted Niccoli's decisive role in the recovery of *littera antiquae forme*, with the discovery by de

la Mare, to whom Teresa de Robertis had added some important remarks, of his textual hand.

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Nicholas Mahin of Kotor, Bishop of Modruš

► [Nicholas of Modruš](#)

Nicholas of Cusa

Born: 1401, Kues (Germany)

Died: 1464, Todi (Italy)

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Abstract

Nicholas of Cusa was born in Kues (Germany) in 1401 and died in 1464 in Todi (Italy); he studied canon law and pursued a career in the Church, eventually becoming Cardinal. In his philosophical work, he covered philosophical theology, mathematical theory, mysticism, philosophical anthropology, and philosophy of religion. His philosophical theology shifted the perspective from dogmatic approaches to epistemology so that the quest for knowing God was rephrased as the problem of consciously knowing that the transcendent is unknowable. For this, he developed the concept of coincidence of opposites that occurs on the level of the absolute and the minimal. This

insight is exercised in and illustrated by mathematical studies, most prominently the squaring of circles. At this juncture, mathematics meets mysticism, since both address the dependence of the finite on the absolute. Mysticism, however, was for Cusanus always also a pastoral effort communicated to ordinary believers. Mystical experience opens the anthropological idea that aiming for the supernatural is essential to being human and prefigured in the dual nature of Christ. One foundation of Nicholas' thinking is the mutual implication of oneness and diversity (as implied in the idea of coincidence); applying this to the question of diversity of religions he suggests that all of them, including Islam, compete with one another in worship one and the same God so that religious war is a contradiction in terms. Cusanus was received as a model of rational mysticism but also as the first modern philosopher to emphasize the power of the human mind.

Biography

Nicholas of Cusa was born in 1401 in the town of Kues (Latin: Cusa) on the river Moselle in Germany, diocese of Trier. His father was a ship owner and merchant by the name Hennen Kryfftz (= Johann Krebs), meaning crayfish; hence Nicholas later had a crayfish as his heraldic animal. It is advisable to avoid mistaking the place of origin, Cusa, to be the person's last name; appropriate names are Cusanus ("the Cusanian") or Nicholas. Cusanus studied liberal arts in Heidelberg (1416–17) and law in Padua (1417–23); in 1425, he enrolled at the University of Cologne as a specialist in canon law and met the theologian Heymericus de Campo, a Platonizing scholastic who introduced him to the thoughts of Albert the Great and Raymond Llull (Fiamma 2016a).

Working in the interest of the archbishop, who had conflicts with the Pope, Nicholas went in 1432 to the Council of Basel (operating since 1431) and engaged in debates with Hussites and the conflict regarding the supremacy of the council over the pope. This occasioned his first major

work *Catholic Concordance* (*De concordantia catholica*, 1434), in which he laid out the unity in diversity of the Church as both the religious authority and the community of believers. After being ordained a priest and changing his affiliation toward the supporters of the papal primacy, he left the Council in 1437 and, by the order of Pope Eugen IV and Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, he traveled to Byzantium. The Eastern Church was under the assault of the Ottoman empire and was seeking support from Western Christianity. Therefore, the Council of Basel continued in Ferrara and Florence (1438–39), and the Byzantines negotiated a union of the two Christian Churches (Nicholas, however, was not involved in those negotiations; cf. the entry ► “Byzantine Philosophy, Renaissance”). Cusanus was assigned to receive the delegates in Constantinople and escort them to Ferrara. During the time spent in Constantinople, he studied ancient and medieval Greek philosophy and theology.

According to his own testimony, the journey by ship and the conversations with the Greek scholars inspired him to his major work *On Learned Ignorance* (*De docta ignorantia*, 1440). The fundamental insight was that the human mind has to rise to such simplicity that contradictory ideas coincide. In the 1540s Nicholas wrote sequels to the *Learned Ignorance*, for instance, *On Conjectures*, *The Hidden God*, *Searching for God*, *On Being a Son of God*, *The Gift of the Father of Light* (*De coniecturis*, *De Deo abscondito*, *De quaerendo Deum*, *De filiatione Dei*, *De dato Patris luminum*). He also started research in geometry, which aimed at finding rational solutions to apparently irrational problems, such as the squaring of circles; some of those treatises are *De geometricis transmutationibus*, *De arithmetici complementis*, *De circuli quadratura*, to which he added a “theological complement” (*Complementum theologicum*) (Albertson 2014; Murawski 2019). In 1450 he produced a trilogy of dialogues with a layperson (in Latin, *idiot*): *Idiota de sapientia*, *Idiota de mente*, *Idiota de staticis experimentis*, in which the speculation on human understanding is tested with a person without philosophical sophistication while avoiding terms and tricks of the

theological trade. Due to his advocacy for the community of non-professional believers and his sermons, a legend became popular according to which Cusanus had been educated in Deventer by the Brethren of the Common Life or *Devotio moderna* movement (Bocken 2004, part I; 2012).

During those years Nicholas also lobbied for the authority of Pope Eugen, which earned him the label “Hercules of the Eugenians,” coined by Ennea Silvio Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II. In 1448 he was nominated Cardinal (assigned to the church San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome), and in 1450 he became prince-bishop of Brixen (Italian: Bressanone, in South Tyrol). As administrator of the diocese, he ran into conflict with the worldly power Sigismund, Duke of Austria. He also strove to reform the Christian community and religiosity of the area and continued personally delivering sermons, which was unusual for a bishop at that time. In 1458, after many quarrels with Sigismund of Tyrol, he left his diocese and transferred to Rome entering the service of Pope Pius II (his friend, the humanist Ennea Silvio Piccolomini) where he worked on the management of the curia and the diocese of Rome.

Nicholas’ personal and political expertise was shaken by the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. He wrote a book on *Peace of Religion* (*De pace fidei*), a manifesto of toleration. At the same time, he dedicated an almost mystical treatise to a monastery, *De visione Dei*, suggesting that the human vision of God is ensured by His seeing humanity. He continued writing philosophical works that take up the earlier speculations: *De beryllo* (spectacles as a metaphor of speculation), followed by *De aequalitate* and *De principio*. During those years Nicholas wrote three more momentous treatises that display his effort to dismantle common approaches to natural theology and metaphysics: *De posset* contracts the words “can” and “is” to “can-is,” that is, God *is* His power and His creation realizes that while still remaining suspended in the realm of possibility. *De li non aliud* (On the non-other) unfolds the otherness of God: God is distinct from creation and hence “the other”, but that is God’s identity that can humanly be known and insofar He is not unattainable; God is positive as being a double

negation: God is “non-other” than the other. *De venatione sapientia* pursues wisdom as a goal that keeps being hunted so that wisdom achieves the insight that the hunt never will be completed. Once again, Cusanus employs mathematical speculation in order to persuade the reader that the human understanding knows what precision might mean without ever reaching perfection – this is the theme of *De ludo globi*, in which an asymmetric ball that only haphazardly hits the mark represents the approximating effort of the mind.

Once more Nicholas addressed the question of diverging religions when he “scrutinized the Qur’an” (*Cribratio Alcorani*) in a detailed commentary that both criticizes Islam and offers paths toward community. During the last year of his life, he produced two summaries of his thinking, aptly titled *Compendium* and *De apice theoriae* (*The peak of speculation*).

In 1458, Cusanus founded, together with his family, a hospital in his hometown Kues, an infirmary for thirty-three elderly single men of all strata, which is still in operation. The design of the building followed mathematical rules (for instance, the cloister has $1 + 2 + 3 + 4$ windows). It also accommodates the library of manuscripts that he collected over his lifetime. His last travel was intended to meet Pope Pius II in Ancona and embark on a new crusade. He died while in Todi (Umbria) in 1464 and was buried in the church San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome, but his heart was transferred to the hospital in Kues.

Heritage and Tradition

As a philosopher and theologian, Nicholas of Cusa was well versed in the late scholastic methods and patterns. He strives to undo the technical school terminology and, with it, the patterns of argumentation that can be largely related to Aristotelian logic and ontology; and he does so by starting with *Learned Ignorance* (Vimercati and Zaffino 2020). For instance, he opens this work with the statement that in the same way that hunger indicates natural self-preservation, the intellect works to perfect itself, since intelligence and being are the same (Dedication to

Giuliano Cesarini). To a reader trained in scholasticism, this must have been a provocation because it parallels bodily desire with speculation and, while defining the mind as a substance, undoes such ontology by emphasizing the dynamic process of thought.

Another intellectual climate that influenced Cusanus was Renaissance humanism (Secchi 2018). This is evident in the literary forms he adapted, especially fictional dialogues. He also uses personal letters to discuss matters of universal importance, and frequently he opens a work with a personal reminiscence (e.g., *De pace fidei*, *De visione Dei*). Moreover, he shows historical awareness both respecting the changes of mindsets over time and the importance of historical documentation. In his *Catholic Concordance* (bk. 3, ch. 2), he proved with close reference to historical sources that the so-called Donation of Constantine, that is, the transfer of worldly power from Emperor Constantine to the Roman Pontiff, is not supported by any documentation. In this, he paralleled Lorenzo Valla, who also debunked the main document as a forgery, among others, on philological grounds. Cusanus later expressly recommended Valla’s philological expertise (Casarella 1992, 437–39). Cusanus opens this work by admitting to being aware of a humanist style but unable to comply for reasons of accuracy, which was a frequent dilemma in the humanist debates about eloquence and elegance. At the same time, he insists that any interpretation, legal or theological, has to be based on an accurate reading of original sources. Nicholas’s admiration for the ancients was encouraged by his encounters with Greek scholars: he maintained scholarly contact with Cardinal Basilios Bessarion, and throughout his life he collected manuscripts. Platonic and Neo-Platonic sources caught his attention as they became mainstream in Renaissance philosophy.

Among the late medieval influences, Raymond Llull’s work was outstanding. Reading and commenting on manuscripts provided Cusanus with the analogical method, present in most of his work, according to which there is a correlation between the creative activity of God and the properties of creation, which make understanding the world and, by inscrutable analogy, any

speculation of the divine logically possible (Blum 2018, 91–105). He also knew mystical, Platonizing, and natural philosophical trends in medieval philosophy, for instance, Albert the Great and Thierry of Chartres (Albertson 2014; Fiamma 2016b), while Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli, whom he befriended in Padua, might have introduced him to mathematical methods.

Philosophy

Philosophical Theology

Nicholas of Cusa achieved an important advancement in philosophical theology. Inspired by Raymond Llull who had designed his new method with the aim of finding rational arguments that might convert Muslims to Christianity, Nicholas addressed the question of the very relationship between human reason and divine wisdom. Instead of over-relying on the power of the intellect, he laid bare the weaknesses and limitations of the human mind. Every investigation, he said, aims at the unknown; hence, ignorance is the driving force of understanding. God is the greatest possible unknown and coming to understand God means maximal ignorance. Consequently, Cusanus speculates about the meaning of maximum and minimum as those extremes that exceed reason. In being beyond limits they coincide. This is how the treatise on *Learned Ignorance* unfolds. In book 1, he explains why the Trinity as oneness is incomprehensible and applies mathematics as a paradigm for reasoning in terms of approximation and proportion. He transfers this method to metaphysics because, in patterns of Platonism, every being is what it is by way of proportionate participation in the absolute. Book 2 then argues that everything can be seen as a proportionate manifestation of the absolute to the extent that the universe is an image and a vestige of the Trinity; and as such it is also a sign that refers back to the Creator. This also applies to the finite world, which is indefinite insofar as God is its center and circumference. In this context, Cusanus anticipates the reasoning of Nicholas Copernicus assuming that the earth is not at the center of the planetary

system but a planet among others (II 12). After having argued for the presence of the absolute in the proportional finite, book 3 lays out a philosophical anthropology, according to which the coincidence of the absolute and the concrete (“contracted” in Cusanus’ terminology) is realizable only in human existence (Webb 2020). Paradigmatic is the case of Jesus who, in Christian creed, is both human and God, that is, a concrete being and the absolute. With reference to scholastic discussions about the question, in which sense the statement “In Christ, God is man” is true, Nicholas defines Jesus as the instance, in which God is in equal unity with maximal humanity (III 4). In his concluding letter to Giuliano Cesarini, the method is summarized as: “in learned ignorance we gather the incomprehensible in incomprehensible ways,” so that the quest itself remains the essence of human endeavor. The novelty of this philosophical theology is documented by the critique of a contemporary theologian, Johannes Wenck, who identified the work as anti-Aristotelian, mystic, and making Creator and creation coincide, in modern terms: pantheistic. Nicholas responded to the pamphlet titled *On ignorance of literature* with an *Apology of Learned Ignorance* (Wenck de Herrenberg 1910; Nicholas of Cusa 1988; Ziebart 2014, 53–163). The philosophical difficulty of Cusanus’ method is his persistent changing between epistemological and metaphysical approaches; no statement is plainly factual nor merely methodological; the perspective deliberately conjoins that of the absolute divine and that of the human experience and strife. Therefore, at the same time as working on *Learned Ignorance* he also wrote a treatise with the telling title *On Conjectures* (*De coniecturis*). Conjectures may be surmises, guesses, inferences from given knowledge, or even dreams, that have in common the purpose to gather as far as possible something unknown. The unity of the truth that per se is unattainable can be known, but only by presuming that it is other than anything known, which otherness is what can humanly be known. Conjectures are one of the human creative potentials that reflect God’s fecundity (*De coniecturis* 2 and 3). Nicholas illustrates that with examples from mathematics.

Mathematics

Unity and otherness, for instance, may not be taken to be utterly opposed; rather, reality is a seamless floating between these extremes. Since neither of these extremes has tangible reality, Cusanus depicts them with a geometrical figure of two pyramids, like a simile or paradigm, in which one pyramid has Unity as its base, the other has Otherness as its base (*De coniecturis* I 11, figura P); these two intersect and penetrate each other in such a way that the peak of each pyramid touches the base of the other. In this image, the least degree of unity coincides with utmost otherness, while the least degree of otherness transcends into unity. Spread out between these two, utter oneness and utter difference, is the reality of the world and heavens. Mathematics, namely geometry, has some advantages in philosophical argumentation. First, it is not entangled with material reality which, by definition, is changeable and uncertain; then, it may refer to absolutes like Zero and All without any expectation of handy availability, as can be seen in the extremes of unity and otherness. The third, and eventually most important feature of geometry, is its reliance on the mind: eventually, it turns out that mathematics is paradigmatic for the creativity of the mind that construes its ideas (Floss 2020; Murawski 2019; Albertson 2014; Counet 2004). In his dialogue *Idiota de mente* (II), he mentions a person who crafts a wooden spoon by transferring the shape of the ideal spoon into a piece of wood as a proportionate image of the ideal. This is possible, he explains, because the mind creates proportions and differences in things. It is the mind that produces point, line, plane, and body, as well as number, multitude, and magnitude. Mind is defined as that which measures (*mens – mensura*) (*Idiota de mente* IX and I–II). Given that the source of understanding things lies in the mind as such, and given that mathematics is a pure intellectual activity that builds the foundation of lofty speculation, performing mathematical operations reveals first and foremost the very nature of the human mind. The “objects” of speculation are within the thinking subject: whatever the mind sees, it sees it in itself (*Complementum theologicum* II).

In his *Compendium*, Cusanus turns this insight into the nature of measuring and calculating into a theory of signification. He likens the philosopher to a geographer designing a map of the whole world. Locked in his study he sends out his scouts, the five senses, who report to him the sensible world. Then he dismisses them, shuts all gates, and draws a map in the right proportion. Now he reflects upon his agency as a geographer: as the map is the product of his experience, which is reproduced proportionately in order to signify the external world, so God creates the world in order to signify proportionately his power of creation. This is just one example of how Nicholas alternates between human reasoning and mind-transcending theology.

Mysticism

Cusanus is mostly concerned about the relation between humans, God, and the world in such a way that positive statements are not the immediate goal but, rather and akin to negative theology, reflections on the impossibility and desirability of certitude. In this sense, his philosophy and theology resonate with mysticism. In his *De visione Dei* Nicholas offers a philosophical explanation of the difference between rational theology and trans-rational vision. The text is a response to criticism of his philosophy – including political implications – in the form of a letter to the brethren of the monastery in Tegernsee in Bavaria (Ziebart 2014, 137–96). Its most prominent feature is the description of an icon of the all-seeing God. Every single viewer of the image feels like being watched while looking at it from any angle. From this, Cusanus develops a theory of mystical contemplation that aims beyond the sensual and intellectual, and yet can be deliberately initiated by the faithful who is intent on leaving rationality behind. This transition is metaphorically described (*De visione* IX) as finding God behind the “wall of paradise” where opposites coincide, and which is guarded by the “highest spirit of reason” that must be overwhelmed in order to gain access. Remarkably, the human condition remains the valid point of departure: considering concrete humanity leads to absolute humanity,

which is God who is the ultimate paradigm of all humans or humans in absolute essence.

Anthropology

Nicholas of Cusa shared with the humanists and the mystics a keen interest in the meaning of being human. Not only was the human condition of immediate urgency for any philosophical or religious activity, and it was not just an anthropocentric turn in an intellectual climate that was losing confidence in biblical and positive dogmatic theology; rather, as for contemporaries like Lorenzo Valla, Marsilio Ficino, or Giovanni Pico della Mirandola but also in the footsteps of Augustine of Hippo (Secchi 2017), insight into the specificity of the human perspective was deemed to be the key to understanding as such, namely, relating to the natural world and the divine. Unsurprisingly, many of the *Sermons* explained humanity to the pious audience. For instance, *Sermo* 284 emphasized the twofold nature of Christ as confirmation of the resurrection of mortal humans, for every single person shares with Christ, who exemplified the essence of humanity, the same human nature. Not only was Christ a man but also God “inhabited” immortality in Christ. Cusanus concludes his *De coniecturis* with chapter II 17 “On Self-knowledge”. This is one of the sections that appear to anticipate modern rationalism. The intellect pursues the art of understanding, reason exercises its procedures, and senses operate their experience; and they all do so for the sake of preservation, nutrition, and adornment. However, they are equipped to operate only because they participate in the oneness, equality, and the connection of both that is bestowed on humans by the trinitarian God. Therefore again, understanding the workings of the human mind uncovers a glimpse of the divine while, at the same time, making methodical conjectures about the transcendence of God unpacks the essence of being human. Cusanus’ anthropology elaborates on the nature of being human as stretched out between the basic bodily life, including nutrition, and divine transcendence: being an image of God is not a vague promise or consolation for the misery on earth, it is the reality of human life that always

wavers between shortcoming and redemption. In two preceding chapters “On Humans” (II 14–15: *de homine*) Cusanus describes the variety of human behavior and achievements as a pendulum and comparable to rivers that keep flowing and yet never stay the same way, at times turbulent, at times calm, rising, and ebbing (Floss 2020, 147–66). The corporeal, sensual, rational, and intellectual are in cooperation. Moreover, the various peoples include some more spiritual and equally some more animalistic versions of humanity. One instance of this diversity within the one humanity is religion, which he describes even in terms of geography.

Religion

Religion only comes in diversity – this is the main message of *De pace fidei*. People live in diverse parts of the world with diverse traditions and necessarily with many individual leaders and prophets. God created humanity this way. Inevitably, societies tend to conflate truth and longstanding customs and despise others; eventually, cultures can turn to fanaticism. The task of a philosophy of religion is to show the way back to true faith and veneration (I). Willing people are in need of “manuduction” (being led by hand) toward concord (Bakos 2011). The author stages this human condition and the aim of restoring true worship of God as a conversation in heaven of representatives of many denominations and religions (among others a Byzantine, a Muslim, a Jew, and a Bohemian) with Saints Peter and Paul. The result is twofold, political and theological. Every nation is entitled to its peculiar tradition – as long as both faith and peace are preserved (XIX). The theological result is the claim that “there is no single religion, except in a variety of rites” (I). This, however, is the main assumption that is being corroborated in the entire debate and, consequently, its presupposition is the epistemological aspect of religion: all rites and cultures exist only because they do “presuppose” there being a God. Since Cusanus had always reiterated that access to the absolute depends on conjectural approaches, this also applies to the very existence of religion in all its instantiations. Religious war, it

turns out, is a contradiction in terms. Thus, Nicholas laid the basis of modern religious toleration. While in his *Catholic Concordance V* he had already remarked that the unity of faith is what ties diverging opinions together, he extended that to the human drive for truth and transcendence. The formula of “one religion – variety of rites” was inspired by reading the *Qur'an* and related sources (Pim Valkenberg in Levy et al. 2014). Therefore, in the *Scrutiny of the Qur'an*, he maintained – despite his critique of Mohammed – that a benevolent reading would find the truth of the Gospel in the *Qur'an* because there are many ways to pursue the good, which is one (Valkenberg 2019), so that it can be shown that what the Gospel teaches is confirmed in that book (*Cribratio Alcorani*, Prologue).

Impact and Legacy

Nicholas of Cusa had an impact on early modern mysticism but later his epistemology was in the foreground of studies. He was read by Renaissance authors, and particularly his “coincidence of opposites” was taken up when expressing the dialectics of finitude and infinity, Creator and creation, truth and method, and thus was welcome in a number of innovative or non-scholastic currents, including Christian Kabbala (Meier-Oeser 1989). The edition of Cusanus’ *Opera* (Paris 1514) by the humanist Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples was paradigmatic of the appreciation of Cusanus among humanist mystics, including Charles de Bovelles (Emery 1984; Oosterhoff 2019; Yelena Matusevich in Izbicki and Bellitto 2002). The preface praised Cusanus’ humanist erudition and style in combination with his practical sense and mathematical achievements and their import on piety. Juan Luis Vives emulated Cusanus’ anthropology (Senger 2002, chap. 15).

Giordano Bruno adapted, among others, *De beryllo* and its geometrical examples, as well as the application of trinitarian theology to cosmology (Secchi 2006; Blum 2018; 2010, chap. 2). Nicholas’ *Sermons* were extensively appropriated in a book on number mysticism, the *Numerorum*

mysteria of 1599 (Bongo 1983; Blum 2010, 21–28). Also in a mystical context and serving the interests of religious groups, the *De visione Dei* and the *Idiota* dialogues were published in various English translations in the mid-seventeenth century (Blum 2018, 107–24). During the same time, the Bohemian philosopher and educator Jan Amos Comenius adapted Cusanian methods of mathematics and infinity in debates with Christian dissidents and took Cusanus as an inspiration for a non-substantialist interpretation of reality (Floss 2020, chap. IV; Petr Pavlas and Simon J. G. Burton in Burton et al. 2019). Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz took many inspirations for Cusanus regarding potentiality (including possible worlds) and philosophical theology (Dall’Igna and Roberi 2013).

In 1730, the Jesuit Caspar Hartzheim published the first monograph on Cusanus, obviously meant to flatter the local authorities in Trier, Cusanus’ diocese; this study highlighted the mathematical and the political areas of his life. Other Jesuits were critical of Cusanus because, as it appears, his reflections on the end of the world and their implications for Christology and ecclesiology were supposed to be endorsed by the Jansenists in France (*Memoirs pour l’histoire des sciences et des beaux arts* [Journal de Trevoux], Mars 1715, 420–31, Oct. 1715, 2153–54, and Jan. 1734, 1–34). In the eighteenth century, interest in Nicholas of Cusa was triggered through the reception of Giordano Bruno: Bruno was supposed to be a forerunner of Baruch Spinoza, deemed to be an atheist. Readers like Johann Georg Hamann noticed the concept of coincidence of opposites in Bruno and searched for the sources in Cusanus (Volzhin 2018). The Enlightenment Protestant theologian Johann Salomo Semler published in 1787 a German translation of *De pace fidei* with the intent to overcome tensions between Protestant and Catholic denominations based on freedom of conscience (Nicholas of Cusa 1787).

In 1847, a Catholic opponent of modernism, Franz Jakob Clemens, presented Cusanus and Bruno as contrasting philosophers: Cusanus as the continuation of good medieval philosophy

and Bruno as a forerunner of Hegel (Clemens 2000). Analogously, about a century later in 1966, Hans Blumenberg used Nicholas and Bruno as contrasting figures to shed light on the threshold toward modernity from the theocentric to the anthropocentric, self-asserting mindset, the one before and the other after the passing of the threshold (Blumenberg 1983). Between Clemens and Blumenberg, Richard Falckenberg, in 1880, emphasized the modernity of Cusanus with a special interest in epistemology (Fiamma 2016b). Following him, Ernst Cassirer presented Cusanus as the first modern thinker because he transformed the tension between the finite and the infinite from dogmatic statements into the condition of human understanding as such. In one and the same move, Cusanus served in this book by Cassirer, “The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy”, as the vehicle to convey the author’s distancing from Neo-Kantianism (Cassirer 2010). The German first edition in 1927 included the texts of Cusanus, *Idiota de mente*, and Charles de Bovelles, *De sapiente*. While these works appropriated Nicholas for the sake of a reassessment of the history of modern philosophy, Russian philosopher Simon Frank, in the 1930s, endorsed his philosophy systematically and claimed Cusanus to be his only teacher in his own attempt to overcome pragmatism and relativism by restoring the tradition of Christian Platonism. His book “The Unknowable” (German original version: *Das Unergründliche*) even features a chapter on ► “Docta Ignorantia” that profits from various formulas in Cusanus that bridge the gap between the concrete and the transcending, foundational otherness (Frank 1995; Frank 1983).

Cross-References

- Albertism
- Bruno, Giordano
- Byzantine Philosophy, Renaissance
- Comenius, Jan Amos
- Copernicanism
- Docta Ignorantia

- Ficino, Marsilio
- George of Trebizond
- Infinite, Renaissance Idea of
- Lefèvre d’Étaples, Jacques
- Mens
- Mysticism in the Renaissance
- Negative Theology in the Renaissance
- Pantheism, Renaissance

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Nicholas of Modruš

Born: ca. 1425, Kotor

Died: 1480, Rome

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Abstract

Nicholas of Modruš was a Croatian bishop and intellectual, who after rising through the ranks in Croatia and Hungary spent the major part of his career in the Papal State. During his life, he authored at least eight works on various topics. Although initially he wanted to establish his name as a theologian and philosopher, he later developed a stronger interest in humanist rhetoric and historiography.

Alternate Names

[Nicholas Mahin of Kotor, Bishop of Modruš](#)

Biography

Nicholas was born around 1425 in Kotor, Venetian Dalmatia, into a well-off, though non-noble, family that drew origin from the Mahin clan based in the immediate hinterland. After presumably finishing elementary and secondary education in his hometown, he moved to Venice to pursue philosophical studies in the Scuola di Rialto under Paul of Pergola. He seems to have studied with Pergola from about 1448 until 1454/1455. His rapid rise began after his move to Croatia in 1456, where in 1461 he became bishop of Modruš, the most important bishopric of northern Croatia, and from where he came to enjoy regular contact with the Hungarian intellectual circle centered around John Vitez. After serving as papal legate in Bosnia and Hungary from 1463 to 1464, he relocated permanently to the papal curia. Over the next 16 years, until his death in 1480, he established himself as the chief representative of

the Illyrian national community, dividing his time between Rome and the provincial cities of the Papal State where he often served as governor. In Rome, he immediately formed close connections with Cardinal Marco Barbo and Pope Paul II, as well as with Cardinal Bessarion and his intellectual circle, while later he became one of the intimates of Pope Sixtus IV (Mercati 1937; Neralić 2003). During his career, he authored at least eight works on various topics, from philosophical treatises to speeches and works of history.

His first two works are philosophical-theological treatises written during the period he divided his time between Croatia and Hungary. His first known work, *Dialogue on the Happiness of Mortals* (*Dialogus de mortalium foelicitate*, 1462), is a dialogue set in the Scuola di Rialto with his teacher Paul of Pergola and two of his former fellow students, Domenico Bragadin and Giovanni Cesarini, acting as interlocutors. The dialogue, which was based in fact on the discussions that took place in Vitez's palace in Nagyvárad (Oradea), treats the question of whether a man can achieve his happiness in the mortal world through natural reason or only through divine revelation (Lepori 1987; Lepori 1980; Schiffler 1992; Banić-Pajnić 1998). The other of his first two works, *Peter's Barge* (*Navicula Petri*), was more modest in ambition. Written in 1463 in the form of an epistle, it explores the problem of physical evil, with Nicholas analyzing what he sees are five reasons why God incurs evil on humans. The prologue implicitly places the work in the context of the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia, which Nicholas, the last papal legate in the kingdom, barely escaped with his life (Špoljarić 2015a).

After his move to the papal curia in 1464, Nicholas continued to pursue philosophical topics in his works, at least initially. In 1465/1466 he finished *De consolatione* (*On Consolation*), which discusses the question of sorrow and methods of consoling (Jovanović 2002). The work blends Christian and Stoic ideas and is praised today as an important chapter in the history of writing about grief (McClure 1987; Jovanović 1999; Baltussen 2015). Nicholas's

next work, *On Humility* (*De humilitate*, 1470), is more enigmatic. It was dedicated to a woman who had taken religious vows, most probably Franciscan ones, but today is preserved only in manuscript fragments, which discuss nourishments, companion virtues, and fruits of humility.

Although the marginal notes in the books that belonged to his library show that he still continued to occupy himself with theological and philosophical questions in the privacy of his study (Špoljarić 2012), from the early 1470s Nicholas began writing about other topics. His later works include *On the Wars of the Goths* (*De bellis Gothorum*, 1472/1473), a history of the Gothic wars of late antiquity; the funerary oration for Cardinal Pietro Riario (1474) (Nicolaus Episcopus Modrusiensis 1474); a short treatise on the authors and themes of psalms (1476/1477); and an anti-Medicean propaganda piece, *Defense of Ecclesiastical Liberty* (*Defensio ecclesiasticae libertatis*, 1480). One should also mention here his Latin translations of Isocrates's orations *To Nicocles* and *To Demonicus* (after 1468), although these were in fact redactions of already existing translations (Špoljarić 2015b); he studied Greek with Bessarion's scribe Andronico Callisto, but he never seems to have developed anything more than an elementary knowledge of the language.

Although many of Nicholas's works often offer unique perspectives on the questions they address, they seem to have exerted little influence on contemporaries. Apart from his funerary oration for Pietro Riario, which owing to papal support became the most printed funerary oration of the fifteenth century, no work of Nicholas was printed during his lifetime, and most are today preserved in one or two manuscripts, usually either presentation copies or his own.

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Nicodemism

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Abstract

Nicodemism can be generally defined as the practice of religious (dis)simulation in contexts of more or less open persecution. "Nicodemite" was the name that the sixteenth-century French reformer John Calvin gave to Protestants living in Catholic countries who chose to conceal their faith out of a concern for personal safety. In the 1540s and 1550s, the legitimacy of such behavior was at the center of a heated controversy stretching from Calvinist Geneva to nearby countries such as Italy, Germany, Holland, and France. While supporters of religious dissimulation invoked a range of scriptural and rational arguments in their own defense – including the illustrious precedent of the Roman Nicodemus, who believed in Christ but visited him only by night out of fear – prominent reformers such as Calvin denounced Nicodemism as morally inexcusable and strategically ruinous for the long-term development of Reformed churches. Historically, the emergence of Nicodemism as a particular form of religious dissimulation buttressed by scriptural and rational arguments is inextricably tied to the specific circumstances of religious life in the Reformed and philo-Reformed milieus of mid-sixteenth-century Europe. Modern historiographical discourse, however, has often stretched the term Nicodemism well beyond its context of origin, in ways that have not failed to raise debate and

that ultimately reflect underlying disagreements about the meaning and essence of Nicodemism itself.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The term “Nicodemism” derives from the word “Nicodemite,” one of several labels used in sixteenth-century Europe to designate religious dissemblers, particularly Protestants who lived in Catholic countries and chose to keep their faith secret in order to escape persecution. The earliest documented instance of the term “Nicodemite” is found in a 1544 tract by the French reformer John Calvin, *Excuse à Messieurs les Nicodemites*, which was later translated into Latin by Calvin himself (*Excusatio ad pseudo nicodemos*, in Calvin 1549) and into Italian by Lodovico Domenichi (*Escusazione a’ Nicodemiti*, in Calvin 1550) (on these translations, see Garavelli 2004; Zuliani 2015).

In the *Excuse*, as in other writings from around the same period, Calvin censured the behavior of all those “lukewarm” Christians who would rather bury their faith deep in their hearts than put their life, freedom, or fortune in danger. What was even worse in Calvin’s eyes was the fact that such disingenuous “crypto-Reformed” sought to justify their position on the level of principle, by invoking a range of scriptural and rational arguments in defense of religious dissimulation – including the illustrious precedent of the Roman Nicodemus, who believed in Christ but visited him only by night out of fear (John 3:1–15). It was indeed their appropriation of Nicodemus’s example that earned them Calvin’s scornful (and not entirely unproblematic) nickname of “Nicodemites” (Zuliani 2015).

In a series of writings later collected under the title of *De vitandis superstitionibus* (“On Avoiding Superstitions”, 1549), Calvin debunked the Nicodemites’ arguments for religious dissimulation one by one. To their adiaphoristic spiritualism, which played down the importance of outward ceremonies and doctrinal complexities in favor of a simplified form of inner faith, Calvin opposed a powerful “either with us or against us”

narrative that ruled out the possibility of any compromise between Roman idolatry and the true faith of the “people of God.” Strongly condemning dissimulation as duplicitous behavior unworthy of a true Christian, Calvin called on all persecuted Protestants to either take the route of exile or steadfastly embrace a martyr’s death (Eire 1986; Shepardson 2007).

While the exact polemical targets of Calvin are difficult to identify with any certainty, the work of several generations of scholars has revealed that they may have included a range of heterogeneous groups rooted in different geographical contexts and animated by different motives: French evangelicals and *moyenneurs* (Turchetti 1984; Causse 1986; Wanegffelen 1995, 1997); Italian heretics (Caponetto 1974; Simoncelli 1979; Firpo 1984; Turchetti 1987; Cantimori 1992; Garavelli 2004; Firpo 2007); Dutch spirituals (Eire 1986); and also (though to a lesser extent) German Protestants (Eire 1986). In Germany, Calvin’s work intersected with that of homegrown Protestant leaders such as Wolfgang Musculus, whose 1549 polemical dialogue *Prosaerus* – written in the aftermath of the Augsburg Interim of 1548 and rapidly translated into French (*Le temporiseur*, 1550) and English (*The Temporisour*, 1555) – addressed issues of compromise and dissimulation much in the same vein as Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings did (Ginzburg 1970).

Innovative and Original Aspects

One aspect that has come to the fore thanks to the aforementioned studies is the Europe-wide significance that Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings were intended to have – and did in fact have. Looking at the Nicodemite controversy from a transnational perspective sheds some helpful light on the long-debated question of Nicodemism’s origins, a question that has traditionally been addressed from a national (not to say nationalistic) perspective. For the Italian scholar Delio Cantimori, whose groundbreaking studies contributed to creating Nicodemism as an object of study in the mid-twentieth century (Cantimori

1959a, b, 1992), Nicodemism was an essentially Italian phenomenon, tied to the particular conditions of religious life in the peninsula during and after the Council of Trent (1545–1563). While Cantimori's position was subsequently adopted and developed by a number of scholars (Rotondò 1967; Caponetto 1974; Simoncelli 1979), it did not encounter unanimous consensus. Alternative views included Albert Autin's franco-centric narrative (1910), also followed by Eugénie Droz (1970–1976) and Maurice Causse (1986) and Carlo Ginzburg's ingenious thesis of a German birth of Nicodemism, expounded in a field-changing monograph of 1970. Here Ginzburg argued that something very close to the theoretically justified dissembling behavior denounced by Calvin in the 1540s had already taken shape among the German Anabaptists in the aftermath of their crushing defeat in the Peasants' War of 1524–1525. According to Ginzburg, at the origins of the Nicodemite movement was a German botanist of heretical inclinations named Otto Brunfels. Brunfels's writings contain references to the same scriptural passages on which the later generation of Nicodemites targeted by Calvin allegedly based its defense of religious dissimulation – including the notorious episode of Nicodemus in John 3:1–15, as well as various passages from the Old Testament and from Paul's Epistles.

Ginzburg's approach was to some extent a continuation of that of Cantimori, in that it similarly implied the rejection of Calvin's identification of the Nicodemites with the crypto-Reformed and replaced it with a counter-genealogy that emphasized the heretical matrix of Nicodemism. Like Cantimori, Ginzburg portrayed Nicodemism as a conduct typically adopted by nonconformist groups pursuing heterodox forms of religious spirituality that made them unwelcome to the established churches on both sides – the Roman Catholic as well as the Protestant in its many forms. By shifting the focus from Italy to Germany, however, Ginzburg was not simply replacing one national narrative with another, as previous scholars had generally done; he was also moving past it, highlighting the

existence of deeper commonalities between Italian and German heretical movements tied to the history of religious dissimulation (1970: 159–181), as well as suggesting possible links with the French side of the story (1970: 182–205).

Ginzburg's thesis has since been criticized on many levels (Biondi 1974; Eire 1979, 1986). One particularly penetrating critique (Bietenholz 1990) has taken issue with Ginzburg's adoption of selected elements from Calvin's portrait of the Nicodemite (viz., the use of specific scriptural passages as arguments for religious dissimulation) as a heuristic framework for identifying Nicodemite tendencies *before* Calvin. In addition to flagging this retroactive fallacy, Bietenholz raises crucial methodological questions regarding the legitimacy of relying on negative descriptions derived from polemical sources (such as Calvin's portrait of the Nicodemite in his anti-Nicodemite writings) for modern historiographical work.

Other aspects of Ginzburg's work on Nicodemism proved more fruitful and long-lived. His 1970 monograph, in particular, paved the way to a “transnational turn” in the study of Nicodemism, which encouraged later investigations of Nicodemism as a unified, though far from monolithic, pan-European phenomenon – one whose geographical and chronological boundaries far exceed the span of the original Nicodemite controversy of the 1540s–1550s (Biondi 1974; Bietenholz 1990; Cavaillé 2012b; Wanegffelen 2013). As a result of these new research trends, the last few decades have seen a deep transformation of the scholarly debate on Nicodemism. In the last 20 to 30 years, scholars have stretched the term Nicodemism well beyond its context of origin, in ways that ultimately reflect underlying disagreements about the meaning and essence of Nicodemism itself. Nicodemite attitudes have been ascribed to a number of individuals and groups active in different historical contexts, such as Catholics in Elizabethan England (Pettegree 1996; Tutino 2006), Marranos and Moriscos in early modern Spain (Firpo 1994; Schwartz 2008), and religiously heterodox thinkers such as Jean Bodin and Isaac Newton

(Quaglioni 1984; Snobelen 1999). In some cases, the very notion of Nicodemite has been thoroughly reconceptualized so as to include not only strategic dissemblers waiting for more favorable circumstances to declare their true faith but also a wide range of non-aligned religious groups permanently resisting confessional polarization in the so-called age of confessionalization. Following up on earlier work by Carlo Ginzburg (1970) and Mario Turchetti (1984), both of whom identified connections between Nicodemite practice and a certain penchant for adiaphorism, irenicism, and religious compromise, some scholars have proposed to use Nicodemism as an umbrella concept for all those who “chose not to choose” in a world characterized by increasing religious tension and polarization (Wanegffelen 1997, 2013; Cavaillé 2012b). In its most radical form, this approach changes the very essence of what we mean by Nicodemism: in this view, what defines Nicodemism in the first instance is not so much the practice of religious dissimulation (whether theoretically informed or not) but rather a particular understanding of the Christian faith (already advanced by thinkers like Erasmus, Juan de Valdés, and Martin Luther) that places more importance on interiority than exteriority, thus reducing the importance of rites and other forms of public display of one’s faith (Belladonna 1980a; Bietenholz 1990; Firpo 1990).

Impact and Legacy

One consequence of the semantic expansion of Nicodemism in recent scholarship is that the term can now be used to think cohesively about the many forms of (and disputes about) dissimulation and nonconformity that arose in various places and at various times in early modern Europe. While the extent to which the term Nicodemism may legitimately be generalized beyond its context of origin remains an open question (Biondi 1974), reappraising the Nicodemite phenomenon as part of broader

debates about secrecy, (dis)simulation, and “ways of lying” (Zagorin 1990, Pettegree 1996; Cavaillé 2009; Snyder 2009; Eliav-Feldov 2012) – as well as part of a general reaction to institutional attempts at disciplining the inner life of individuals (Prosperi 2009) – has enabled scholars to better appreciate the place of Nicodemism in early modern European culture at large. (For a rich, though not exhaustive, bibliography of scholarship on Nicodemism, see Cavaillé 2012a.)

Such broader, contextual approach to Nicodemism is not only heuristically productive but can also be defended on historical grounds. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, dissimulation was a topic debated in a number of fields, ranging from religion to politics, ethics, and aesthetics (Belladonna 1975, 1980b; Ascoli 1999). While it is certainly important to determine what (if anything) sets Nicodemism apart from other forms of dissimulation, it must also be acknowledged that a clear distinction between different types or degrees of dissembling behavior was not always made in the early modern period. At times of intensified civil tension, such distinctions were often deliberately obscured for polemical purposes: during the French civil wars of the later sixteenth century, for instance, Huguenot and Catholic pamphleteers took turns conflating classic anti-Nicodemite commonplaces with a harsh condemnation of “Machiavellian” simulation (Battista 1962; Vivanti 1963).

More attention to the ways in which dissimulation was appropriated as a polemical weapon in contexts that were simultaneously political and religious would shed much-needed light on the afterlife of the Nicodemite controversy in the latter half of the sixteenth century – and beyond. One way to do this would be to examine how the reception of (in)famous texts such as Machiavelli’s *Prince* or Tacitus’s *Annals* (both of which discussed dissimulation as an essential component of statecraft) may have overlapped and interacted with the later circulation of Calvin’s and Musculus’s anti-Nicodemite texts. More generally, reception is an angle from which such debates have rarely been

studied, and we can expect significant progress in this area in the future.

Cross-References

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- [Calvin, Jean](#)
- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Luther, Martin](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- [Reformation](#)
- [Spirit in Renaissance Medicine](#)
- [Tacitus and Tacitism](#)
- [Theology, Renaissance](#)
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Nifo, Agostino

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Abstract

Agostino Nifo is one of the few philosophers who have commented on all the logical works of Aristotle and one of the philosophers who have commented on the largest number of works of the Stagirite.

Nifo's reflection marked him in Renaissance thought as an important exponent of Aristotelianism, which he interpreted in an eclectic manner according to the principles of Averroism, Thomism, and Neoplatonism.

In his 56 works, he made a fundamental contribution to sixteenth-century philosophy in the fields of logic, methodology, the doctrine of knowledge, the theory of the immortality of the soul, metaphysics, astrology, meteorology, natural philosophy, medicine, morals, and politics. He compared his ideas on these issues to those of some of the major thinkers of his time such as Pietro Pomponazzi, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Niccolò Machiavelli.

Alternate Names

da Sessa, Agostino; Niphus, Augustinus Eutychius; Medices, Augustinus; Niphus, Augustinus; Niphus Medices, Augustinus; Eutychus Nyphus, Augustinus Philoteus; Suessanus, Augustinus

Biography

Regarding the reconstruction of the life of Agostino Nifo, it is essential to remember that no credible evidence regarding the years prior to his arrival in Padua has been found.

Reliable information about his life after this event has been obtained mainly from the archives of the universities in which he carried out his academic activity: Padua, Salerno, Naples, Rome, and Pisa. The first documented information can only be found in the records of the registers of the *Sacrum Collegium Artistarum Medicorum*.

Agostino Nifo was probably born in Sessa Aurunca in 1469, even if the only evidence of this, that has come down to us, is in biographies, published, or manuscripts, in which reference is made to documents of which there is no longer any trace. Tommaso De Masi declared that he examined the notarial deeds and the property

registers which revealed the structure of the Nifo family, whose offspring includes, in addition to Agostino, a sister named Beatrice and a brother named Vincenzo (De Masi del Pezzo 1761, pp. 105–107).

Little is known about Nifo's youth. According to biographical reconstructions, he was first taught by a tutor named Antonio Calcidio, also from Sessa, a humanist renowned for his knowledge of classical literature (Minieri Riccio 1844, p. 69).

The date when Nifo obtained his degree is unknown because in the register of degrees, in record number 317, which attests the doctoral exams taken at the University of Padua from August 1489 to November 21, 1492, there is no sign of any exams taken by Nifo (Sacrum Collegium 1492), nor does his name appear in the exams reported in the previous record, number 316, which contains all previous documents from 1488 (Sacrum Collegium 1489).

The first indication of Nifo's academic activity can be found in record number 649 relating to the year 1492, in which, on *folio* 269, it is reported that Nifo is a Professor *secundi loci* of *Philosophia Naturalis* (Sacrum Collegium 1499b, f. 269).

Nifo held this position until October 9, 1495, when he became Full Professor *secundi loci* of *Philosophia Naturalis*. This step is indicated on *folio* 386 of record number 648, in which it is specified that in 3 years between 1492 and 1495, he never left the University of Padua (Sacrum Collegium 1499a, f. 386).

In 1496, another important event in Nifo's academic career took place, as Pietro Pomponazzi gave up *lectura ordinaria* and left his place to Nifo who became Full Professor *primi loci*. His *concurrans* was Antonio Fracanzano who directly became Full Professor *primi loci* in 1497 when Nifo left Padua (Sacrum Collegium 1499a, f. 388).

Therefore, it can be affirmed with some degree of certainty that Nifo was a professor at the University of Padua from 1492 to 1497 without interruption. A note on a small sheet of paper, bound between *folio* 269 and *folio* 270 of

record number 649 of the Ancient Archive of the University, contains the information that on April 17, 1497, he certainly still held the position of Full Professor of *Philosophia Naturalis* (Sacrum Collegium 1499b, ff. 269–270). However, the following year he probably left the teaching position.

Regarding the dates of completion of the works, the first written work completed by Nifo is *De animae beatitudine*, completed in Padua on May 14, 1492. Also in *Patavino Studio*, on August 26, 1492, he completed *De intellectu*. Nifo's first published work, *Destructiones destructionum*, was also written in Padua, begun in 1494 and completed on January 22, 1497, and printed for the first time in Venice by the publisher Boneto Locatelli, commissioned by Ottaviano Scoto, on March 1, 1497. *Quaestio de sensu agente* was completed in Padua on May 15, 1495, and printed along with *Destructiones destructionum*. Moreover, the first edition of *De anima* can also be attributed to the Paduan period, though it was finished in Sessa on September 12, 1498, and printed in Venice by Pietro de Querengis, commissioned by Alessandro Calcedonio, on May 10, 1503. In the same year, *De intellectu* was also printed along with *De demonibus* in Venice, by Pietro de Querengis on August 3, 1503.

However, we should remember that, while the chronology of the printed editions of Nifo's works can be established with certainty, it is less easy to define the precise order of the drafting of his texts, especially regarding the production of his early years at the University of Padua, since Nifo may have felt the need to backdate the composition of some of his writings to dispel any suspicion of heresy following the warning issued by Pietro Barozzi.

Nifo made his debut in the cultural scene of his time as an orthodox follower of Nicoletto Vernia's Averroism and, as an Averroist, was involved in the warning issued on May 6, 1489, by Pietro Barozzi, the Bishop of Padua, who, in agreement with the inquisitor Fra' Martino of Lendinara, forbade any public discussion on the subject of the unity of the intellect, the central theory of Averroistic psychology.

In his commentary on *Destructiones destructionum Algazelis* by Averroes, Nifo sought to find matching features of Plato's reflection and that of Averroes, in tune with the dominant approach in Italian philosophical meditation between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that aimed at reconciling different philosophical doctrines.

The subject of the dispute was the attribution of the theory of the unity of the intellect to Plato by Al-Gazali. This theory opened a small controversial door to the possibility of reconciling the theory of the unity of the soul with that of the multiplicity of souls. According to Nifo's account, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola fully shared Al-Gazali's interpretation and gives an example to support his position. Pico recalls that a scaffold is necessary in order to construct an arch; the scaffold is removed once the work has been completed after it has contributed to giving shape to the arch. In the same way, there is only one form, which is the same for all souls and which supports the growth of individual bodies; this is the unique intellect, and, after the completion of human development, it leaves only a shadow of itself that is the individual soul (Nifo 1497, cc. 20r–21v).

On the other hand, Aristotelianism itself, especially Averroism, does not exclude the influences of Platonic thought. At the University of Padua, it was Nifo himself who introduced Sigerian doctrine, and it was his reflection that led to the deepening of this thought by Pico.

The prevalence of Averroistic doctrines within the University of Padua led Paduan scholars, including Nifo, to address much-discussed issues such as the debate on the veracity of the theory that the intellectual soul is a substantial form of the human body.

According to the Averroistic doctrine, the active intellect, which completes the cognitive process, and the potential intellect, which is the highest of the cognitive faculties of man, enjoy a separate existence; this attributes to the soul an eternal but impersonal existence and therefore appears to the exponents of Thomism as extremely risky on the ethical level. In fact, it excludes the possibility that the earthly behavior

of man may have repercussions on receiving reward or punishment in the afterlife, to which the soul would have access exclusively on the basis of the acquisition of the universal principles of human knowledge.

However, taking up the thought of Thomas Aquinas, the Thomists reaffirmed, as is well-known, that the intellectual soul is a substantial form of the body and this involves both individual immortality and responsibility on the ethical level of conduct.

Nifo, for his part, believed that the Sigerian doctrine could be an effective mediation between the theory of Averroes and the doctrine of Thomas.

Indeed, Nifo was the most important exponent of Sigerian doctrine of the sixteenth century. He was the only one who knew some of the fundamental texts of Siger of Brabant and still today, represents the main source to whom one must turn for the reconstruction of the fortunes of Siger in the sixteenth century.

It follows that, despite the fact that Siger of Brabant was the objective of Thomas's criticism of Averroism, Nifo found in Sigerian doctrine a thought that was versatile and appropriate to the solution of the complex issues that animated the psychology of his time. He supported the Sigerian doctrine according to which the intellect, though separate, remains as a form of the human body, and, to defend this position, he identified and distinguished two functions present in the cognitive process: the intellect and the *cogitativa*. According to this theory, the potential intellect remains unique for the whole human species, but, in order to make its potentiality an actuality, it needs to be united at all times with each individual who puts it in contact with the universals of the *species sensibiles*. The *cogitativa*, on the other hand, guarantees the union between the potential intellect and the *species sensibiles* because it is the highest faculty of the sensitive soul and is responsible for ensuring the potential intellect the right conditions to make its cognitive potentiality an actuality. It follows that the *cogitativa* establishes the cognitive act, abstracting the *species sensibiles* from sensations and preparing the conditions for the intervention of the intellect

that, passing from potentiality to actuality, completes the cognitive process. According to Nifo, the potential intellect, on the one hand, participates in individual cognitive acts and multiplies its interventions by the number of individuals and their processes of knowledge of the conceptual universals, and on the other hand, remains separate while retaining its uniqueness and individuality. It is in this that the mediation between Averroism and Thomism is realized, given that the intellect remains unique, indivisible, and immutable, according to Averroistic doctrine and, at the same time, participates in the cognitive process as a form of the human body, guaranteeing the individuality of the intellectual act as prescribed by Christian orthodoxy and Thomistic doctrine (Nifo 1503a, cc. 64r–70r).

Nifo supports the theory that the union of the intellect with individuals makes the intellectual soul become a substantial form inherent in man and not just an assistant form. On the other hand, the moment when the potential intellect is activated both by these forms that have become intelligible and by the systematic study of the sciences in which the intelligible forms are articulated in specific contents, the human soul reaches the divine bliss that consists in the conjunction of the human intellect with the active intellect (Nifo 1522, cc. 159r–v).

Moreover, Nifo points out that a logical-gnoseological procedure like the one implemented by human knowledge also has important consequences on the metaphysical level. At the very moment of human beatitude, God becomes the form of the blissful intellect which is, in turn, the form of the human body. It follows that a predominantly cognitive process creates the spread of divine beatitude that propagates, by means of man, throughout the earthly world (Nifo 1508b, c. 20r).

Nifo spent the period from 1500 to 1507 between Sessa and the University of Naples. He taught at the University of Naples from April 1, 1504, to December 31, 1505 (Cannavale 1895, p. 270).

In 1503, the town of Sessa was besieged by a terrible plague. Nifo describes this terrible episode of his life in *De nostrorum calamitatum*

causis, which he completed in Sessa on July 20, 1504; it was printed in Venice by Ottaviano Scoto on April 3, 1505. In the work, the author focuses on analyzing the causes of the epidemic and concludes that the responsibility for the infection lay with the Spanish army, which camped for 40 days near the city and spread the disease throughout the region. Almost all the events of the Franco-Spanish conflict are described in detail in many of its phases in *De nostrarum calamitatum causis*, also with reference to the astral influences that could have determined them (Nifo 1505b, c. 2r).

Moreover, in Sessa on February 22, 1504, Nifo completed another work dealing with astrological matters, *De diebus criticis seu decretoriis*, printed in Venice by Alessandro Calcedonio on October 15, 1504.

In both works, the author confirms his confidence in the reliability of astrology, thus conforming to the trend prevailing in the scientific culture of his time (Nifo 1504, cc. 14v–15r).

The main criticism Nifo made of horoscope writers highlights the fact that they venture into risky predictions without following the guidance of the first of the masters of the science of the sky, Ptolemy, to whom he dedicated a work entitled *Ad apotelesmata Ptolomei eruditiones*, which was printed in Naples, by Pietro Maria de Richis on April 23, 1513 (Nifo 1513).

On November 17, 1504, in Sessa, Nifo also completed *Quaestio de infinitate primi motoris*, the central theme of which was the relationship between God and the universe. In this text, Nifo compares the physical laws governed by God and His divine essence and makes a clear distinction between the Prime Mover as an aim, on the one hand, and as a form and an agent cause, on the other. He comes to the conclusion that, since the Prime Mover is only an aim, He has no quantity, either as substance or concept, since He is clearly distinct and separate from the universe. Rather, since God is the form and cause agent of the universe, He must be considered finite because the universe moved by Him is finite and, consequently, the action exerted on it is also finite (Nifo 1526c, cc. 109r–113r).

On August 13, 1505, in Venice, Alessandro Calcedonio printed the work entitled *In duodecimum metaphysices Aristotelis et Averrois. On April 3, 1505, in Venice, Averrois de mixtione defensio* was printed by Ottaviano Scoto.

From December 31, 1505, until 1507, Nifo stayed in Sessa again. It was here that on May 15, 1506, he completed the *Aristotelis physicarum acroasum*, and on August 22, 1507, he placed the *explicit* to *De substantia orbis*.

In 1507, Nifo began teaching at the University of Salerno, where he remained until 1510 (Nifo 1511, c. 444) and where he started writing *Metaphysicarum disputationum dilucidarium* commissioned by Prince Robert II Sanseverino. On November 28, 1507, in Venice, *Aristotelis perihermenias hoc est de interpretatione* was printed by Ottaviano Scoto, and the following year three works were printed in Venice by Ottaviano Scoto: *De animae beatitudine* on December 23, 1508, *Aristotelis physicarum acroasum* on August 26, 1508, and *De substantia orbis* on December 29, 1508.

In the years between 1510 and 1514, it is very probable that Nifo stayed in Sessa again but that he also moved to Rome. In this city, on August 20, 1510, he began to write *De figuris stellarum helionoricis*, while in Sessa he wrote the *explicit* on February 4, 1511. In the same year, on September 1, Sigismondo Mayr printed *Metaphysicarum disputationum dilucidarium* in Naples, which had been completed in Naples on March 27, 1510.

The following year, on June 12, 1512, Nifo completed, in Sessa, *De divinatione naturali, artificiosa et de prophetia* which is the tenth work of the *Parva naturalia*, a *collectanea* that would be completed almost 10 years later. On October 15, 1514, in Sessa, Nifo also completed *De coelo et mundo*, which was printed in Naples by Sigismondo Mayr on March 23, 1517.

In 1514, Nifo taught at the University of Rome, where he was Full Professor *primi loci* of *Philosophia* and where he stayed until 1519, when he went to teach at the University of Pisa (Renazzi 1803, I, p. 45).

On October 27, 1518, with *De immortalitate animae*, printed in Venice by the heirs of

Ottaviano Scoto, Nifo returned to participate in the philosophical discussions, at the invitation of Pope Leo X, this time setting himself as a prestigious antagonist of Pietro Pomponazzi.

The famous dispute over the nature and destination of the human soul began, as is well-known, with the publication of Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate animae*, which was published in Bologna on November 6, 1516. The author chose an Alexandrist interpretation of Aristotle's *De anima* and went as far as to propose a naturalistic ethic in harmony with a general mechanistic vision of nature. However, a consequence of this interpretation is also an implicit adherence to the theory of the mortality of the soul and, therefore, to an anthropology based on the recognition of values that are entirely earthly.

Nifo's reply, on the other hand, was more nuanced and fluctuated between Averroism, Platonism, and Thomism. He knew very well that the contrast between Alexandrism and Averroism was less clear than it may have seemed at first sight, also because both doctrines supported an interpretation of Aristotle that was free from theology and speculative metaphysics, toward which, instead, the Thomistic tradition inclined. Therefore, Nifo started from an eclectic position in defense of Catholic orthodoxy and, in response to Pomponazzi's objections to Thomas Aquinas, made use of the well-known Platonic argument on the soul, according to which if the soul is similar to the idea, it is not possible to bind it to matter.

Pomponazzi also went as far as to support an ethic that was completely free from metaphysical conditioning. He countered the objection that denial of the immortality of the soul would have repercussions on the moral life, inasmuch as it would make the belief in the reward or punishment of the afterlife disappear, with the argument that virtue and vice bring their reward or their punishment in themselves. By making human beings happy, virtue compensates them for the efforts they have made to pursue it; vice, on the other hand, brings with it the breaking of the harmony of the soul and, therefore, the punishment of unhappiness. Pomponazzi's criticism was directed precisely at the Platonists who,

while sustaining the dignity of human beings then deprive them of their prerogatives, since they put forward a theory according to which the perfection of moral action depends on a transcendent reality (Pomponazzi 1516).

Instead, Nifo used Platonism in his refutation of Pomponazzi in that he reiterated that, while it is true that looking for good is beautiful and heroic, it is in this yearning to sublimate oneself that one can see the most reliable testimony of the presence of the transcendent in human nature. By forming man, God lifted his gaze from the ground so that, through the observation of the sublime, he could reach the contemplation of his Maker (Nifo 1518, c. 20v).

In 1519, Nifo finished teaching in Rome and began at the University of Pisa, where he taught as a Full Professor of *Physica* until 1522 (Fabroni 1791, I, pp. 313–319).

He participated immediately in the discussions of the time that took place in the Tuscan academic circles. Europe and Italy, and Florence in particular, were involved in a heated dispute over the astrological argument because the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces, forecast for February 1524, was interpreted by most astrologers as the prediction of an imminent universal flood.

The dispute between astrologers, philosophers, doctors, and various men of culture seems to have originated in a booklet of 1512 by the Italian physician and mathematician Luca Gaurico, who arrived at the flood hypothesis by analyzing some points of the ephemeris (Gaurico 1512).

A few years later, in *De falsa diluvii prognosticatione. Quae ex conventu omnium planetarum, qui in piscibus continget anno 1524, divulgata est*, printed in Naples by Giovanni Pasqueto on December 24, 1519, Nifo affirms that belief in the flood was already widespread among the masses but concludes that the only concrete possibility is that of modest floods of a local nature (Nifo 1519).

On May 1, 1520, in Pisa, Nifo completed the second edition of *De anima*. On July 17, 1520, Leo X gave Nifo the privilege of including the insignia of the Medici family in his family coat of

arms and of joining his surname to that of the Medici. In August 1520, *Dialectica ludicra* was printed in Florence by the heirs of Filippo Giunta.

On January 28, 1521, in Pisa, Nifo completed the first edition of *Epitomata rethorica ludicra*. On April 3, 1521, in Pisa, *De generatione et corruptione* was completed and printed, together with *Quaestio de infinitate primi motoris*, in Venice, by the heirs of Ottaviano Scoto, on April 28, 1526. On April 3, 1521, in Florence, the heirs of Filippo Giunta printed *De his quae ab optimis principibus agenda sunt*. On October 23, 1521, the first edition of *Epitomata rethorica ludicra* was printed in Venice by Filippo Pincio.

In the same year, 1521, the works included in the *Parva naturalia* were completed in Pisa and printed in Venice by the heirs of Ottaviano Scoto on March 2, 1523. On April 25, 1521, he finished *De iuventute et senectute*, which is the fourth work of the *Parva naturalia*; on May 3, 1521, he completed *De animalium motu*, which is the second work of the *Parva naturalia*; on May 14, 1521, he finished the *De respiratione*, which is the fifth work of the *Parva naturalia*; on May 27, 1521, he finished *De memoria et reminiscencia* which is the seventh work of *Parva naturalia*; on May 28, 1521, he completed *De morte et vita* which is the sixth work of *Parva naturalia*; and on December 10, 1521, in Sessa, he completed *Physiognomicorum libri* which is the first work of *Parva naturalia*. On April 15, 1522, in Pisa, *De longitudine et brevitate vitae*, the third work of the *Parva naturalia*, was completed. *De somno et vigilia* which is the eighth work of the *Parva naturalia* and *De insomniis*, which is the ninth work of *Parva naturalia* have no completion date.

On May 13, 1522, the second edition of *De anima* was printed in Venice by the heirs of Ottaviano Scoto.

In the same years, between 1521 and 1522, Nifo wrote three political works: the cited *De his quae ab optimis principibus agenda sunt*; *De regnandi peritia*, which was completed on October 3, 1522 in Sessa and printed on March 26, 1523, in Naples by Caterina De Silvestro; and, finally, *De rege et tyranno*, which was printed

on January 23, 1526, in Naples by Evangelista Papiense.

De his quae ab optimis principibus agenda sunt belongs to the genre of precepts, widely used in the Renaissance, which gives guidance on the training, behavior, practical, and moral skills that the prince should possess. The ideal image proposed is that of a strong and refined prince, trained in physical stamina by hunting and gymnastics and inclined to good taste through literature, painting, and music (Nifo 1521b, p. 27).

De regnandi peritia is known to critics as plagiarism of the more famous *Il principe* by Niccolò Machiavelli, although it should be noted that Machiavelli's work was printed long afterwards, in 1532 (Machiavelli 1532a).

De regnandi peritia is written in Latin and, from the point of view of plagiarism, on careful reading, it emerges that it should be considered as a revision of the theories proposed by Machiavelli through Aristotelian doctrine until a recovery of the ethical dimension in opposition to the radical realism of Machiavelli's reflection is reached. Therefore, Nifo indicates the rules that a good prince must follow in the government of the state. He must distinguish himself from the tyrant and must be a Christian prince, since Nifo censors Machiavellian expressions that are contrary to or disrespectful of religious precepts. Moreover, *De regnandi peritia* is also a treatise on forms of government that privilege Aristotelian doctrine over the historical and military reality highlighted by Machiavelli. It ends with a clear opposition between the kingdom and tyranny, thus supporting an ethical vision of politics (Nifo 1523a).

In 1522, Nifo finished teaching at the University of Pisa and moved back to Salerno.

In the same period, in Sessa, he completed his commentary on *Posteriora analytica* on April 18, 1522, while the work was printed in Naples on January 3, 1523, by Caterina, wife of Sigismondo Mayr. With this text and the commentary on the *Priora analytica*, completed in Salerno on March 27, 1524, and printed on March 14, 1526, in Naples, by Evangelista Papiense, Nifo made the final arrangement to his logical doctrine.

Moreover, Nifo reaffirmed the excellence of the analytics in that only the demonstration, set up as a strictly scientific syllogistic procedure, can follow the laws of causal inference which guarantee the scientific nature of the investigation beyond any contingency and accidentality.

As is well-known, the causal connection can be reconstructed by resolutive means, i.e., by rising from the effect to the cause, or by compositional means, i.e., by going down from the cause to the effect. If we use the resolutive method, proceeding from the particular toward the universal, we carry out the analytical procedure typical of the *demonstratio quia*. If we use the compositive method, proceeding from the universal to the particular, we realize the synthetic procedure typical of the *demonstratio propter quid* (Nifo 1523b, c. 41r).

Nifo underlines the need for a method in which the connection of the two demonstrations is realized through the conversion of their medium terms, and this procedure takes the name of *regressus demonstrativus*. In *regressus* the *demonstratio quia* and the *demonstratio propter quid* bind together, thanks to the conversion of the medium term that takes on the role first of effect and then of cause and allows a concatenation of the *ordo mentalis* with the *ordo realis* to be created.

We should remember that the *regressus demonstrativus* also carries out the conciliation of *prius nobis* and *prius naturae*. Indeed, what appears first in knowledge does not in itself coincide with what is more certain, since natural phenomena occur in a succession in which the effect arises from its cause; consequently, according to the natural order, it is the effect that always presupposes the cause. However, this order of cause and effect is overturned for the person who knows, to whom the effects appear first, followed by the causes (Nifo 1523b, c. 13r).

For this reason, according to Nifo, the *negotiatio intellectus* has a central role, in which the intellect grasps the cause regardless of the data coming from the senses and evaluates it exclusively on the basis of its rational foundation

in order to insert it effectively in the sphere of scientific syllogism.

On April 5, 1523, in Salerno, Nifo completed *In libris Aristotelis meteorologicis* and *De mistis* which was printed in Venice, by the heirs of Ottaviano Scoto, on October 26, 1531.

On January 11, 1524, in Salerno, he completed *De auguriis*, which was printed in Bologna by the heirs of Girolamo De Benedictis in 1531.

Subsequently, on August 3, 1525, in Sessa, Nifo completed *De armorum literarumque comparatione* and *Apologia Socratis et Aristotelis*. On May 8, 1526, *De armorum literarumque comparatione*, *De inimicitiarum lucro*, and *Apologia Socratis et Aristotelis* were printed in Naples by Evangelista Papiense. On May 12, 1526, *De figuris stellarum helionoricis* was printed in Naples by Giovanni Pasqueto. On August 8, 1526, in Sessa, *De verissimis temporum signis* was completed.

On July 16, 1528, in Sessa, Nifo completed the work *De ratione medendi*. This text is particularly important because it summarizes his medical practice which is based on the fact that the treatment of the disease cannot be separated from the identification of its causes, and, in order to be able to trace what caused certain effects, we must know how to recognize the symptoms. In this perspective, the symptoms are to be found exclusively in the internal nature of the patient, that is, in the individual disposition to the disease. Therefore, diagnosis of the disease must be achieved essentially by identifying the internal causes and signs that characterize it (Nifo 1551, cc. 9r–v).

In 1525, Nifo taught at the University of Salerno under the protection of Prince Sanseverino (Sinno 1921).

In 1528, he received honorary citizenship of the city of Naples and in 1531 he resumed teaching at the University of Naples as the chair of Medicine and Philosophy where he remained until June 12, 1532 (Cannavale 1895, pp. 63, 183).

During this period, Nifo completed other works. On November 3, 1529, in Sessa, he

finished *De pulchro et de amore*, printed in Rome by Antonio Blado in 1529.

Subsequently, Nifo completed the five works included in the *collectanea* entitled *Prima pars opusculorum in quinque libros divisa secundum varietatem tractandorum*, printed in Venice by Ottaviano Scoto in 1535. On September 19, 1530, in Naples, he completed *De vera vivendi libertate*; on August 6, 1531, in Sessa, he completed *De divitiis*; on September 8, 1531, in Sessa, he completed *De his qui in solitudine apte vivere possunt*; on October 21, 1531, in Sessa, he completed *De sanctitate et prophanitate*; on July 5, 1533, he finished *De misericordia*.

On April 9, 1533, in Sessa, Nifo finished *De sophisticis elenchis* that was printed in Venice by Octaviano Scoto in 1534.

On April 24, 1534, in Salerno, Nifo finished *De re aulica* which was printed in Naples by Giovanni Antonio de Caneto on July 24, 1534.

De re aulica comes within the scope of treatises on the court. Most of this production, however, is of a clearly Platonic mold, as are the other two fundamental texts on this subject, *Il Galateo* by Giovanni Della Casa and *Il cortegiano* by Baldassar Castiglione. In this context, Nifo's *De re aulica* outlines a figure of the courtier that is quite different from the models belonging to the philosophy of the court proposed by Castiglione and Della Casa, based on simple adulation, and the models of a political nature, proposed by Niccolò Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini, which were based on private interest. The figure of the courtesan of Nifo is completely original, both because he uses the tools of rhetoric not out of personal interest but to pursue a public good, consisting of the proper political and economic management of the kingdom, and because he applies the Aristotelian criterion of the right means as a guide to his suggestions to the sovereign (Nifo 1534a).

On June 13, 1534, Nifo finished *De generatione animalium* in Salerno. This work was subsequently published together with *De historia animalium* and *De partibus animalium et earum causis*, which have no completion date.

On August 20, 1534, in Sessa, Nifo completed the second edition of *Epitomata rethorica ludicra*.

Nifo's final work is *Topica inventio*, which was finished on August 10, 1535, in Sessa and printed in Venice by Ottaviano Scoto in 1535.

In order to understand the content of this work, it may be useful to remember that, at this time, Italian Aristotelianism was influenced by the growing interest in new scientific methods that were spreading in European universities where the suggestions of Platonic dialectics were accepted and the rhetoric of Cicero and Quintilian had been rediscovered (Nifo 1535b, c. 2r).

Nifo tried to reconcile Aristotelian doctrine and *inventio dialectica* instead of replacing the former with the latter. He was firmly convinced that, on the one hand, the objective of research was to define an order that could not be continually challenged by contingency and, on the other hand, that the cognitive process could not be stopped every time truth could not be learned through the demonstration method (Nifo 1535b, cc. 2r–3r).

Therefore, Nifo's concept of dialectics was not affected by Platonic influences because he did not see dialectics from a metaphysical point of view as the way to access the knowledge of the supreme ideal and intelligible forms; instead, he interpreted it only from a methodological and philological point of view that is therefore mainly useful for research.

Agostino Nifo died in Sessa on January 18, 1538.

At the time of his death, unpublished works remained and would be published later. The first work to be published posthumously was the second edition of *Epitomata rethorica ludicra*, printed in Venice by Ottaviano Scoto in 1538. The second work published posthumously was *De verissimis temporum signis*, printed in Venice by Girolamo Scoto in 1540. The title of the third work published posthumously is *De historia animalium. De partibus animalium et earum causis. De generatione animalium*, printed in Venice by Girolamo Scoto in 1546. The last work to be published posthumously is *De ratione*

medendi, printed in Naples by Mattia Cancer in 1551.

It is useful to remember that, included in the lists of the works of Nifo, two other works have always been mentioned. The title of the first work, whose author is Galeazzo Florimonte, is *I ragionamenti di M. Agostino da Sessa all'illustrissimo S. Principe di Salerno sopra la filosofia morale d'Aristotele*; it was printed in Venice, by Plinio Pietrasanta in 1554 (Bianchi 2016, pp. 43–45). The title of the second work, which is attributed to Gabriel Naudé, is *Augustini Niphi sua tempestate philosophi omnium celeberrimi opuscula moralia et politica. Cum Gabrielis Naudaei de eodem auctore iudicio*; it was printed in Paris by Roletus le Duc in 1645.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Nifo expounds and develops the doctrine of the soul, especially in *De intellectu* and *De anima*.

He also proposes original solutions as in the case of the interpretation of the role of the *cogitativa* (Nifo 1503a, cc. 64r–70r). The *cogitativa* can be considered both a separate faculty and an integral part of the human soul. However, if the second thesis is chosen, it follows that it should be recognized that the soul has more than one form and this leads us outside orthodoxy. Therefore, Nifo proposes the theory of *semi-animae*: the *cogitativa* and the potential intellect constitute two distinct parts of the same soul, two *semi-animae*, which together constitute the only form that is the rational soul, whose task is to give human beings their condition as reasoning animals (Nifo 1522, cc. 159r–v). It follows that a theory that contemplates the possibility of the division of a single form into several parts cannot be considered heterodox with regard to Christianity.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The controversy between Pomponazzi and Nifo concerning the destiny of the soul continued with the reply that Pomponazzi addressed to Nifo in

his *Defensorium sive responsiones ad ea quae A. Niphus Suessanus adversus ipsum scripsit de immortalitate animae*, completed in Bologna on March 4, 1519, and printed in Bologna by Giustiniano De Ruberia on May 18, 1519. With regard to this reply, it is important to underline the fact that, although he was attacked by many distinguished opponents, Pomponazzi decided to dedicate a paper to defend himself expressly against the arguments of Nifo.

Among all Pomponazzi's publications, this one against Nifo is the only one he produced in response to a single thinker. It can be deduced that Nifo was certainly highly esteemed by Pomponazzi and that his prestige already placed him on a par with the most famous European thinkers of the time.

However, it must also be said, that in his *Defensorium*, Pomponazzi is more concerned with reiterating his theories than with bringing further original contributions to the discussion.

Impact and Legacy

One of the most well-known aspects of Nifo's work is certainly the alleged plagiarism of *Il principe* by Niccolò Machiavelli in the work *De regnandi peritia*, although it is important to point out the fact that Machiavelli's work was printed many years after that of Nifo, in 1532, on January 4 in Rome by Antonio Blado and again on May 8 in Florence by Bernardo Giunta (Machiavelli 1532b).

The two most interesting theories on the enigma of this alleged act of plagiarism were expounded by the nineteenth-century critics Luigi Settembrini and Francesco Fiorentino.

Settembrini suggested that there was no imitation either on the part of Nifo or Machiavelli, but that both were inspired by Isocrat's speeches to Philip of Macedon, through which the author exhorted the sovereign to intervene to bring peace to Greece (Settembrini 1890, II, p. 171).

Fiorentino, on the other hand, states that there is no continuity between the themes previously dealt with by Nifo and those of *De regnandi peritia*, while the subjects dealt with in

Il principe belong to the same genre normally dealt with by Machiavelli, who also adds numerous references to his own personal experiences (Fiorentino 1879).

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition](#)
- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Castiglione, Baldassare](#)
- [Ciceronianism](#)
- [Guicciardini, Francesco](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- [Naudé, Gabriel](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
- [Pomponazzi, Pietro](#)
- [Ptolemy in the Renaissance](#)
- [Quintilian](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Vernia, Nicoletto](#)

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Nobility, Renaissance

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Abstract

After detailing crucial social realities of the Renaissance elite to provide a basic foundation, this article explores philosophical debates surrounding the concept of nobility. It particularly studies Poggio Bracciolini's *De nobilitate* (c. 1440) and its impact before turning to Baldassar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* of almost a century later. Central to those debates was the question of whether nobility derived from birth, as had been largely accepted in ancient Greece and Rome, or virtue, defined in a variety of ways. By the end of the Renaissance, the concept of birth nobility came to predominate.

Synonyms

[Aristocracy](#)

Sociocultural Foundations

Great in influence, though small in numbers, ranging from around 1% in parts of western and central Europe to around 10% in places further east, the nobility dominated Renaissance society (for basic overviews, see Dewald 1996; Scott 2007). Arguing they possessed qualities of virtue and leadership to a greater degree than others, nobles held high military, state, and church offices. They controlled vast economic resources. Through their patronage, nobles played a critical role in the development of Renaissance art and culture. In crucial respects, the nobility enjoyed what Dewald has called a truly European history (Dewald 1996, 3). However, the nobility was far

from homogeneous, in part because of the great variety of political entities across Europe, ranging from aristocratic urban republics like Venice to small principalities to large kingdoms like France. In addition, few laws existed to define nobility in precise terms and economic differences also caused distinctions within the nobility. These differences helped inform Renaissance philosophical debates regarding nobility as a social group and as a concept.

Quattrocento Debates and Classical Inheritances

Among other debates, Quattrocento humanists discussed whether to define nobility as a quality primarily acquired through birth and lineage or one primarily acquired through virtues gained from humanist education put into worldly practice (for a useful collection of contemporary texts, see Rabil Jr 1991; for modern scholarly discussions, see Castelnuevo 2009; Finzi 2010). Ancient works, including, for one major example, Aristotle's *Politics* (Aristotle 2013), informed those later Renaissance discussions. Classical texts revealed the widespread ancient, particularly Roman, view that birth provided a defining characteristic of nobility, even if this view was critiqued at times by satirists like Juvenal (1998, 62–70). Although they began earlier, philosophical debates over the concept of nobility in Renaissance Italy intensified over the first half of the fifteenth century, a time leading up to the Peace of Lodi (1454) that witnessed major political transformations, from the self-governing urban communes of the Middle Ages towards the principalities of later years.

A vital trigger for this intensified debate came around 1440 with the appearance of Florentine humanist Poggio Bracciolini's *De nobilitate* (For the text, see Rabil Jr 1991 and for analysis of the work, see Castelnuevo 2009; Finzi 2010). Forty copies of the tract survive, testifying to its impact (Castelnuevo 2009, 2). Bracciolini's treatise takes the form of a dialogue he supposedly hosted

between Florentine man of politics Lorenzo de' Medici, brother of Cosimo de' Medici, and Florentine man of letters Niccolò Niccoli, who functions in the work as a mouthpiece for Bracciolini's own views. Niccolò stresses a stoic sense of absolute virtue as defining nobility (Finzi 2010, 343, 346). Moreover, throughout the treatise, Bracciolini suggests that true nobility is to be found in urban settings, like Florence, rather than in rural areas. He also critiques the concept and practice of ennoblement and the connections between nobility and martial functions and values (Castelnuovo 2009, 6). In making these points, Bracciolini surveyed other models of nobility from across Italy and the rest of Europe, comparing these other models unfavorably to Florence (Castelnuovo 2009, 4–6). He went so far as to refer to the Venetian aristocracy as a *factio* and not a true nobility because of its basis on birth nobility (Finzi 2010, 347). Bracciolini's contentions prompted a vigorous response from other Italian humanists. Notably, Venetian Lauro Quirini composed three treatises refuting Bracciolini (Quirini 1977; Rabil Jr 1991). While not rejecting outright linkages between nobility and virtue, Quirini stressed the role of lineage (Finzi 2010, 354–364).

Castiglione and the Impact of the Courtier

In the following century, Baldassar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) profoundly shaped European understandings of nobility. The work appeared in the wake of the sack of Rome (1527) as outside powers increasingly dominated Italian affairs. Early on in his work, Castiglione explores nobility through a dialogue between Count Ludovico de Canossa, who defends birth nobility, and Gaspar Pallavicino, who takes the opposite side, less out of conviction than out of a desire to prolong the ongoing discussions about what makes for the perfect courtier (Castiglione 1959, 26–35). Castiglione allows Ludovico to control the discussion. Summing up his arguments, Ludovico declares that “I deem necessary to have [the Courtier] be of noble birth, not only

for many other reasons, but also because of that public opinion which immediately sides with nobility (Castiglione 1959, 31).” This view, which contrasts with Bracciolini's earlier arguments, proved influential as Castiglione's work was reprinted multiple times and translated into a variety of European languages (Burke 1995). Thus, Castiglione's vision formed a crucial basis for European conceptions of nobility moving forward. At the same time, the rural kingdoms of northern Europe, France in particular, also saw shifting understandings of nobility for sociopolitical as well as intellectual reasons. These understandings shifted from medieval understandings of nobility deriving from virtue gained through the profession of arms to a more classical sense of birth nobility by the end of the sixteenth century (Schalk 1986). In short, by the end of the Renaissance, birth and lineage came to define nobility across much of Europe.

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Notebook

► [Commonplace Book](#)

Nunes, Pedro

Born: 1502 in Alcácer do Sal, Portugal

Died: 11 August 1578 in Coimbra, Portugal

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Abstract

Pedro Nunes or Nunez was one of the greatest mathematicians that Portugal has ever produced and one of the most significant scientists of the sixteenth century. He is best known for his contributions to navigation and cartography. He invented the idea of the rhumb line or loxodrome, eventually perfected by Mercator, and developed a method of making more accurate measurements with an astrolabe that eventually led to the Vernier scale.

Biography

Pedro Nunes or Nunez wrote under the Latin name of *Petrus Nonius Salaciensis* (after the Latin name of the city of his birth). Nothing is known of his parents, but they were certainly of the Jewish

religion since he himself was registered as a “new Christian.” Nunes traveled to Spain around 1517 and studied at the University of Salamanca and graduated in 1523.

By 1527 he had returned to Portugal and was employed as a tutor to the brother of King John III. He began teaching moral philosophy at the University of Lisbon and was then appointed to the Chair of Logic before moving to the Chair of Metaphysics in 1532. During this period, however, Nunes was working toward a doctorate in medicine. He was awarded his doctorate in 1523 and gave up public teaching.

Nunes moved to the University of Coimbra to take up the Chair of Mathematics in 1544, a post he held until 1562, although he spent 4 years away from the University living in Lisbon during the period 1557–1561. While at Coimbra, Nunes taught Christopher Clavius, who was the mathematician eventually employed by Pope Gregory to reform the calendar. The Chair of Mathematics was a new post in the University of Coimbra, and it was set up to provide instruction in the technical requirements for navigation, clearly a topic of great importance in Portugal at this period when control of sea trade was the chief source of Portuguese wealth. Nunes had been appointed Royal Cosmographer in 1529 and was promoted to Chief Royal Cosmographer in 1547. He held this post until his death.

The first of Nunes books to be published was *Tratado da Sphera* in 1537 (Nunes 1537). This contains his methods for solving spherical triangles. His next published work was *De Crepusculis* (1542) in which he addressed a problem posed to him by one of his pupils: “Which day has the shortest twilight.” His knowledge of spherical geometry enabled him to solve this without the use of calculus.

In 1546, soon after moving to Coimbra, Nunes published *De erratis Orontii Finaei* (1546b). This book was written to show that Oronce Fine’s attempts to solve the three classical problems of squaring the circle, trisecting an arbitrary angle, and doubling the cube were incorrect.

Nunes work on navigation is what he is best known for. He advocated charts in which lines of latitude and longitude would be represented by

straight lines. Around 1550 he investigated the loxodrome or, to use the name that Nunes coined, the rhumb line. This is the path followed by a ship sailing on a fixed compass bearing. Nunes was one of the first to realize how such a curve differs from a great circle route. In the Mercator projection (invented more than a century later), rhumb lines became straight lines. It was Willebrord Snellius who named Nunes' rhumb line the loxodrome.

He had begun writing his *Libro de Algebra* in 1534 before he went to Coimbra and it was eventually published in 1567. This work deals with, among other subjects, the solution of quadratic and cubic equations, describing the state of knowledge on that subject at the time. In 1571 he put together two of his previously published texts, *De Crepusculis* and *De erratis Orontii Finaei*, bringing them out in a single volume.

Nunes invented a clever method of improving the accuracy of measuring angles in astronomical observations. It consisted of a set of circles drawn on the face of a quadrant or astrolabe and then subdivided so that fractions of a degree could be estimated. This system he called the “*nonius*.” It was later refined and simplified first by Clavius and eventually by Vernier. In some countries, the Vernier scale is still called a *nonius*.

In 1472 Nunes was called to court to preside over the reform of weights and measures. He stayed in Lisbon for two years before finally returning to Coimbra.

Outside mathematics, he worked in geography, physics, and cosmology and he wrote poetry.

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Nunes' collected works were published under the title *Petri Nonii Opera* (Basle, 1592).

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Observation in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Following the ancient Greek tradition, Renaissance authors subsumed the notion of observation under that of experience. Nonetheless, observation in the Renaissance played a crucial role in the making of modern science, when astronomers and physicians began observing the world systematically. The invention of the printing press, the discovery of the Americas, the introduction of perspective shaped the way Renaissance actors observed the world.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Observation was not an autonomous philosophical category in Ancient and Medieval philosophy. This fact does not mean, of course, that people did not observe the world, but rather that observation played a different conceptual role in the process of knowledge acquisition and validation. The Greeks incorporated observation under the category of experience. The historians were the firsts who remarked the limits of observation and the problems it raised. Herodotus argued that direct observation was always to be preferred over

indirect observation in the production of historical knowledge (Herodotus 2003). Yet, Thucydides remarked the limits of the *autopsia* stressing that he could not be sure even of what he directly observed and that correct historical explanation was rather matter of interpretation of the events and of the intentions of the actors that were not always explicitly uttered in their speeches (Thucydides 1972, 1, 21; Nenci 1953; Hartog 1988). Plato was rather critical on the possibility of acquiring reliable knowledge even on the human events by means of simple observation. In his *Theaetetus*, he criticized the identification between “seeing” and “knowing,” a distinction that Renaissance authors kept in mind. At the beginning of the dialogue, Euclid asks Terpsion to tell him the conversation between Socrates and Theaetetus he listened to sometime before. Terpsion explains that he wrote down the dialogue after having witnessed it. When he went back home, he started writing it and, whenever he went to Athens, he asked Socrates about what he did not remember. So, the dialogue between Theaetetus and Socrates is a *post hoc* reconstruction, which is moreover going to be read by a slave (Nenci 1953; Canfora 2014; Plato 1997). Aristotle by contrasts relied on observation for the acquisition of knowledge of nature, but he did not put emphasis on it in his theory of knowledge. In his naturalistic and biological writings, indeed, he described several observations, but he also thought over the difficulty of acquiring knowledge by observation. For instance, in his

Historia Animalium, he explained that: “Now, as the nature of blood and the veins have all the appearance of being fundamental, we must discuss their properties first of all, and all the more as some previous writers have treated them very unsatisfactorily. And the cause of the ignorance is the extreme difficulty experienced in the way of observation. For in the dead bodies of animals the nature of the chief veins is undiscoverable, owing to the fact that they in particular collapse at once when the blood leaves them” (Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, 511b trans. by A. W. Thompson in 1995, pp. 812–813). Nonetheless, Aristotle too focused on the notions of experience and perception, rather than on that of observation (*teresis*) as a philosophical category. In the *Posterior Analytics*, he explained that perception is required for induction (Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 81b trans. by J. Barnes in 1995, pp. 132–133). However, he deemed that induction is a form of justifying knowledge inferior to deduction. Scientific knowledge ought to be organized in a deductive structure showing causal connections from abstract and logically prior principles. It was such philosophical view that prevailed in the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Aristotelianism and Aristotle’s natural philosophy was rather considered “empiricism without observation” in Renaissance. Galen was concerned with the limits of direct observation too. He extrapolated, indeed, most of his anatomical observations on the human body from dissection on animals, and he thought that observation was fundamental in the process of healing, which, however, also required gaining the patient’s confidence (Nutton 2004).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Consequently, it is not surprising that observation did not play an autonomous role in Renaissance philosophy either and that most of the reflections of historians of early modern science and philosophy deal rather with the notion of experience (see Kuhn 1977; Dear 1995). Renaissance scholars were aware of the reflections on observation in ancient Greek culture. Nonetheless, observation

became a central category of scientific investigation since the Renaissance, mainly due to the work of astronomers and physicians. As astronomical phenomena show a regularity that other natural phenomena do not display, astronomical knowledge has developed in many cultures. It was, however, only in the second half of the sixteenth century, when astronomers started observing the heavens systematically and not only during certain particular astronomical events, such as equinoxes, conjunctions, eclipses, and comets, that observation acquired crucial importance for modern science (Kuhn 1962; Park 2011; Brahe 1913; Regiomontanus 1544). In doing so, they mutated the habits of scholars working on phenomena that did not display the same regularity, such as meteorologists who had to observe natural phenomena systematically, although with lesser predictive success than nonsystematic astronomical observers (Park 2011; Siraisi 2007). By the end of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the following one, some scholars aimed to go beyond the systematic observation of astronomic phenomena and looked for theoretical principles that could drive observation. In his *Mysterium Cosmographicum*, Kepler claimed he wanted to deduce the mathematical pattern of planetary motions a priori, and from the causes. Borelli aimed to study Galileo’s Medicean Stars by means of a theory describing a priori the periodic motion of planets and of their moons under certain data and physical limitations (Koyré 1973; Borelli 1666; Kepler 1981). Terminology in the writings of astronomers started changing too. Renaissance astronomers began using the plural term *observationes*. In 1544, Johannes Schöner published a book, where he summed up observations of a number of astronomers of the previous generations, among which there were Peurbach and Regiomontanus (Pomata 2011; Regiomontanus et al. 1544). By contrast, in classic Latin *observatio* was mostly used in the sense of observance, usually referring to the “respecting or obeying laws or customs,” whereas in the Middle Ages only in few cases it appears to refer to astronomical observation (Pomata 2011).

In the same years when astronomers began observing systematically the heavens, European

anatomists and physicians started observing in detail the human body. Disciplinary boundaries were not strict. The physician relied on astrological consideration for the diagnosis, and many astronomers were also interested in medicine. Physicians began also explaining arguments by referring to cases they have directly observed and not to cases described by classical authors. As stressed by Gianna Pomata, most of the physicians who described their own observations instead of classical examples were practitioners, town doctors, itinerant doctors, or court physicians. Therefore, they were somehow promoting their abilities to their potential customers (Pomata 2011). In his *De humani corporis fabrica*, Vesalius carefully reported and illustrated the results of his observations on the human body carried out by the practice of corpses' dissection, which was prohibited in Galen time (Vesalius 1543). The latter's observations on the human body were mainly extrapolated by dissection of monkeys. Systematic and detailed observation in anatomy was also likely eased by the spread of printed books. Every manuscript was a unique piece often carefully illustrated by an artist, whereas Vesalius' detailed anatomical descriptions required uniformity in all the copies that only a printed book could assure. It is not therefore surprising that authors hitherto preferred relying on observations they found in classic texts, which were familiar to the audience, rather than to cases they had directly observed. Likewise, it was useless to describe animals and plants if the reader could not identify them. In 1530 the first volume of Otto Brunfels' *Herbarum icones ad naturae imitationem effigiatae*, possibly one of the first illustrated florae, came out, and in the following years books describing plants and animals were widely published (Febre and Martin 1958). Nonetheless, observation did not become a category for natural philosophers who were working along the lines of the Greek category of experience. In Goclenius' *Lexicon philosophicum*, published in 1613, there was no entry for observation (Goclenius 1980). But even chemists, alchemists, and natural magicians performing direct observations relied on the category of experience.

Impact and Legacy

It was only in the twentieth century that observation became central in the historical and philosophical analysis of science. Yet, it is worth noting that historians and philosophers of science studied it extensively also by reflecting on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scientific Revolution. Hanson remarked that observation is always theory-laden: how people observe the world depend on their background knowledge, on their prejudices, and on their expectations (Hanson 1958). Hanson drew on Ludwig Wittgenstein's distinction between "seeing" and "seeing how" (Wittgenstein 1991).

Observation in Renaissance, rather than as a philosophical category, can be studied, observation in the Renaissance can be studied by considering how changed the way changed in which different social actors (astronomers, anatomists, naturalists, collectors, artists, craftsmen, merchants, travelers, peasants, etc.) experienced and represented the world. Three elements can be taken into account to analyze *Renaissance* ways of observation. The first element is the encounter between ancient texts and new worlds (Grafton 1995). Analyzing such relationship entails shedding light on how the Europeans adapted their knowledge to the new peoples, places, animals, plants, and objects they found in the Americas. The second is the way in which artists portrayed the world. The third is the evolution of the worldview of lower strata of *Renaissance* society, which constituted the largest part of European societies, but whose written production was scarce. In the last few decades, historians of early modern science and culture have remarked that the cosmos of merchants, travelers, sailors, and astronomers became more similar in the Renaissance. The experience of the merchant and of the scholar somehow molded, when the knowledge of ancient text such as Ptolemy's *Geography* was transmitted through three-dimensional representations in metal globes and translated in the Vernacular (Grafton 1995). Since the seventeenth century metal globes became consumerism object as clocks (De Vries 2008). By contrast, the worldview of the lower strata of European societies was

affected differently by the Age of discoveries and by the invention of the moveable types printing press and servants were unable to elaborate a systematic, coherent system of beliefs: they absorbed various elements and arranged them “within the mosaic of tradition” (Gramsci 1991).

The discovery of the Americas affected the way Europeans observed the world and the way they formed their beliefs from the interaction between their background knowledge and their observations in a number of facets. Firstly, travelers realized that their own personal observations often contradicted their knowledge mostly derived from ancient texts, especially from Aristotle’s work. Secondly, Europeans came face to face with different ways of observing and of deriving knowledge from observation. In his *Historia general y natural de las Indias* Oviedo reported that Antilles natives tried to understand empirically whether the Europeans were mortal by sinking prisoners and observing whether their corpses putrefied, whereas the Europeans sent commissions to investigate whether the Amerindians had souls (Lévi-Strauss 1987; Viveiros de Castro 2014; Oviedo 1535). The discovery of people, plants, animal, and atmospheric phenomena that contradicted the European system of beliefs led the Europeans to revise them adapting their beliefs to what they observed. They adapted their knowledge through translations, popularizations, and material representation. Some of these changes worked in depth in European mentality and affected it above all in the seventeenth century. In his *Apologia pro Galileo* (1622), Tommaso Campanella invited the Catholic Church to revise the Holy Scripture passages concerning the motion of the Earth and that of the Sun arguing that after all the Church accepted to revise those passages concerning the impossibility that the Southern hemisphere could be inhabited after the observation reported by travelers and explorers (Campanella 2001). In a letter to Paolo Foscarini, Cardinal Bellarmine argued that Galileo’s observations could lead to think that we do not properly understand the Scripture, only if Copernicans would be able to provide evidence for their claims. Thus, Bellarmine implicitly stated that observations of travelers in

their reports were of a different kind from that Galileo performed by telescope (Blackwell 1991). The observation of human beings, a definitive closer object than celestial bodies, performed by naked eye, and validated by the collective assent of sailors and travelers, was more certain than the observation performed by few trained scholars by means of an instrument whose reliability could be questioned. In his *Novum Organum*, Francis Bacon described a way of acquiring knowledge centered on the experiment, as a middle term between the reason and the senses. Bacon, however, did not distinguish between experiment and experience, following the Roman and Medieval usage. In the *New Atlantis*, he incorporated both the observation of nature by means of the reproduction of natural phenomena and that of the novelties of the New World into a collective state-ruled system of knowledge production (Bacon 1962–89).

Nonetheless, during Renaissance observation of new people was often explained in terms of familiar observation. The English and the Spaniards often described the “other” they met in the New World by referring to the “other” they had known for centuries, respectively the Moors and the Irish. The English and the Spanish tried to implement the same segregation policy with the American natives that they had adopted with the Irish and the Moors, respectively (Elliott 2006). The incorporation of the observation of novelties found in the New World into the European systems of beliefs was eased by the publication of a number of treatises apt to teach the eye of the traveler to observe (Rubiès 2007). It is worth noting that, in many cases, the authors of these writings had traveled little. Such was the case of Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485–1557), who undertook a large project of collecting and publishing the writings of travelers and sailors (Rubiès 2007; Ramusio 1550).

Observation of novelties was also organized along the lines of known patterns. The questionnaires sent out by Philip II administration to collect information on the New World, which according to Barrera-Osorio constituted the Spanish empirical way of understanding the world as opposed the Scientific Revolution empiricism

centered on the notion of experiment and inspired by Francis Bacon, were written according to Peter Ramus' *Locii Communes* (Barrera-Osorio 2006; Rubiès 2007).

During the Renaissance, the way in which artists looked at the world evolved too. The painting became the primary object of artistic production. Since the mid-1430s in Italy artists represented the world by means of the geometrical rules of perspectives, whereas in the Netherlands they aimed at representing the world as perceived by their audience (Belting 2010). By the introduction of the mathematical perspective in art, Humanist and Renaissance painters, architects, and engineers transformed the cities and the way their contemporaries saw them. A painting constructed by the rules of perspective is a unitarian organized space. As remarked by Erwin Panofsky, perspective subjected visual perception to geometrical rule, but at the same time it stressed that observation depends on the point of view (Panofsky 1991; Foucault 1966; Arnheim 1974; Gombrich 1960). Although perspective was the work of both humanist intellectuals, painters, engineers, and architects, there was a certain difference in the way a humanist intellectual and a Florentine craftsman observed the world; both were informed observers, but their background knowledge was different. The former was, indeed, aware of Euclid geometry, optics, the subtleties of humanist debates on logic and rhetoric, whereas the latter was the repository of know-how orally transmitted. It is not, therefore, surprising that Leon Battista Alberti's vernacular writings on painting differed substantially from those composed in Latin (Alberti 1991; Baxandall 1977; Grafton 2000).

Renaissance painters mediated their visual experience by means of instruments, such as those built by Dürer. The artist David Hockney and the physicist Charles M. Falco have also argued that realism in Renaissance authors derived from the use of the *camera obscura*, which was described by Leon Battista Alberti in 1437. Their hypothesis, known as the Hockney-Falco thesis, is not grounded in textual evidence, but is inferred from the observation of some Renaissance paintings (Hockney 2006; Dupré 2005; Schechner 2005).

The lower strata of European society observed the world in a nonsystematic way by definition. Nonetheless, it also evolved during the Renaissance, mainly as a consequence of the age of discoveries and of the invention of the printing press. While the elites could spread their ideas thanks to the printing press and, therefore, their observations, the way the subaltern observed the world was shaped by elements from the popular books they read (and by the illustrations they found in them), among which are the tales of travelers. Della Porta, Bruno, Campanella incorporated their observations into natural magic, while Menocchio and the Benandanti incorporated them into a magical worldview shaped by their readings (De Martino 2013; Ginzburg 1976, 1983; Rossi 2007).

Cross-References

- ▶ Alberti, Leon Battista
- ▶ Art of War in the Renaissance
- ▶ Astronomy
- ▶ Bacon, Francis
- ▶ Bellarmino, Roberto
- ▶ Book, Renaissance
- ▶ Campanella, Tommaso
- ▶ Copernicus, Nicolaus
- ▶ Cosmography in the Renaissance
- ▶ Dürer, Albrecht
- ▶ Experiment in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Meteorology in Renaissance Science
- ▶ Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy
- ▶ Ramus, Petrus
- ▶ Regiomontanus, Johannes
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- ▶ Thucydides
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Occult Properties in the Renaissance

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Abstract

In Renaissance natural philosophy, occult properties – from the Latin *occultus* meaning “hidden” – referred to properties producing manifest effects such as magnetism and heliotropism that could not be causally linked to normal elemental mixture and their manifest qualities (such as the primary dichotomies of hot, cold, wet, and dry). Often termed “occult qualities” or “occult virtues,” occult properties were typically considered natural but acting in a manner that could not be empirically understood. Because occult properties existed beyond sensory perception, they were likewise considered potentially beyond intellectual comprehension, which ensured their central position in epistemological debates throughout the Renaissance.

Synonyms

Occult qualities; Occult virtues

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Following the works of Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274), occult properties were

accommodated within the Aristotelian context as products of an object’s substantial or specific form. In this interpretation, occult properties in individuals of a certain species could arise from the formal influence of celestial motion on natural generation. Attributing the effects of occult properties to form rather than matter likewise accounted for the characteristically disproportionate efficacy of occult action, owing to the higher potency of form (Aquinas 1976; Copenhaver 1984; Eamon 1994).

The potency of occult properties also ensured this category’s significance for natural magic, which sought to identify and manipulate them to powerful effect. In this context, occult properties indicated a formal reality beyond sensory experience that usually required epistemological approaches remote from traditional reason. For instance, in his famed *De occulta philosophia* (1533), Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535) emphasized divine knowledge against the unreliability of sensory experience. Agrippa’s natural philosophy and others like it also attempted to compensate for the inherent epistemological difficulties of occult properties by utilizing theories of symbolic correspondence, such as the microcosm-macrocosm analogy (Agrippa 1992; Copenhaver 1984; Daston and Park 1998; Henry 2008).

In general, the epistemic status of occult properties hinged on whether or not the insensible was likewise unintelligible. Once it was granted that such properties were causally obscured but not unintelligible, various epistemological stances could be taken. Philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition, such as Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), would attempt to provide a reasoned, causal explanation of occult properties in order to bring them into scientific discourse. However, alternate epistemological approaches increasingly focused instead on understanding occult properties through their manifest effects. In this vein, the chymical physician Daniel Sennert (1572–1637) emphasized the potential to understand occult properties through investigation into the material in which they resided. Likewise, it was these manifest effects that Francis Bacon (1561–1626) would place at the foundation of his inductive approach (Rossi

1968; Hutchison 1982; Millen 1985; Eamon 1994; Newman 2006).

Impact and Legacy

In the seventeenth century, the mechanical philosophy – especially in its Cartesian form – recast occult properties as a temporary manifestation of human ignorance stemming from the inadequacies of the senses, rather than accepting them as unintelligible by their very nature. This skeptical attitude toward the epistemic power of the senses rendered all qualities fundamentally occult but likewise equally capable of being rendered manifest. In this context, the category of occult properties met with increasing derision from natural philosophers who considered them to be at best a passive excuse for ignorance. Even within works on natural philosophy that firmly adopted a magical perspective, occult properties became a target for investigative effort that emphasized clarification (Hutchison 1982; Millen 1985; Henry 1986; Copenhaver 1998).

In the late seventeenth century, the negative status of occult properties as a category would not prevent their persisting epistemological influence. Following the publication of his *Principia*, Isaac Newton (1643–1727) fell under criticism for what the Cartesians identified as the workings of occult properties in his theory of gravitation. While Newton deliberately distanced himself from the implications of the term “occult,” his willingness to eschew a causal explanation of gravitation in favor of focusing on its manifest effects reveals the creative potential of this long-standing category and its heuristic utility for scientific knowledge (McGuire and Rattansi 1966; Hutchison 1982; Henry 1986; Copenhaver 1998; Henry 2008).

Cross-References

- [Action at a Distance](#)
- [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Force in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Magnetism in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Natural Magic in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Optics](#)
- [Seed Concept in the Renaissance](#)

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Occult Qualities

- [Occult Properties in the Renaissance](#)

Occult Virtues

- [Occult Properties in the Renaissance](#)

Ochino da Siena, Bernardino

► [Ochino, Bernardino](#)

Ochino, Bernardino

Born: Siena, 1487

Died: Slavkov, Moravia, 1564

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Abstract

Defined as “the Savonarola of the 16th century” (Bainton 1940) and as “one of the fathers of scepticism” (Gotor 2013), Bernardino Ochino is undoubtedly one of the most representative historical figures of the Italian history of the reformation due to his charming and fascinating preaching, as well as his doctrines concerning the sacraments, predestination, and salvation. Banished since 1542, Ochino was forced to move across Europe for the rest of his life because of the radicality of his ideas (Benrath 1892). Many important studies have been devoted to Ochino, and Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) also dedicated one article of his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* to the Senese preacher.

Alternate Names

[Ochino da Siena, Bernardino](#); [Tommasini, Bernardino](#)

Life and Works

Bernardino Tommasini “Ochino” was born in Siena in 1487. On the origins of his name, different

hypotheses have been formulated: for some, such as Aonio Paleario, the nickname “Ochino” depends on the physical features of Bernardino, such as his beauty or tiny sharp eyes; others thought that “Ochino” could refer to the *contrada* of the city of Siena where he was born (*contrada dell’Oca*) or simply be a family name. We have little information about his childhood but know quite a lot about him after 1503/1504, when Ochino took the Franciscan habit in the famous Senese convent of “la Capriola”: it was built on the ruins of Bernardino da Siena’s shelter, thanks to the interest of Pandolfo Petrucci (1452–1512). Ochino spent a few years in Perugia, where he studied medicine and may have known Giulio de’ Medici, the future Pope Clement VII (1478–1534).

Ochino, a Capuchin Friar

Between the end of the 1520s and the 1530s, Ochino entered the newborn order “della vita heremitica” friars of Saint Francis, the so-called Capuchins, due to the shape of the habit worn by Matteo Bascio (1495–1552) (Gotor 2008), one of the founders of the new order: on 3 July 1528, with the bull *Religionis zelus*, Pope Clement VII formally approved the new congregation, oriented to a stricter rule, compared to the Franciscan rule. Matteo, elected in 1529 general vicar of the Capuchins, decided to leave the new congregation and return to the Observant Franciscan. Ludovico of Fossombrone (1490–post 1555) followed Bascio in the new congregation, but he had difficulties handling the new shape that the order was assuming. There was a real exodus of Observant friars and, for this reason, the Franciscan asked the Pope to banish the new Franciscan family, between 1529 and 1534 (Gotor 2005).

With the protection of the Pope and support of influential personalities such as Caterina Cybo (1501–1557), the new order continued to evolve and expand: also Ochino, during these years, entered the *Cappuccini*, wishing – like many others – to distance himself from the internal fighting that affected the *Franciscan observant* congregation. The entrance of Franciscan observant theologians and preachers among the

Capuchins gave to the new order a particular shape, with the focus mainly on study and preaching: Ochino was the most important exponent of this new trend, and in 1535, he requested and obtained the summon of the general chapter of the order, with the support of Vittoria Colonna (1490–1547) and Pope Paul III Farnese (1534–1549). This move placed him in sharp contrast with Ludovico of Fossombrone who, shortly afterward, left the order (Camaioni 2015; Busolini 2006). The chapter of Saint Eufemia was held in 1536 and ratified the success of Ochino's side. In 1538, he was elected general vicar of the Capuchins and so for Ochino began a period of intense preaching activity all over the Italian peninsula: his sermons had elements drawn from the Franciscan and Bonaventurian context, especially with regard to the condemnation of vice, sin, and luxury. Between 1538 and 1542, he visited Rome, Florence, Perugia, Bologna, Milan, Venice, and Naples, among other places (Camaioni 2009; Gotor 2013): in Naples in 1536, when Ochino arrived for the first time, the Theatines – the religious order founded by Gian Pietro Carafa (1476–1559) and Gaetano di Tiene (1480–1547) in 1524 – were already active and criticized Ochino's approach to religion. From 1535, Juan de Valdès (1509–1541) visited Naples and Ochino was strongly influenced by his spirituality, characterized by charity and the mystical experience of the presence of God inside the human soul: Ochino joined the circle, later called the “spirituali” around Valdès, as is clearly understandable from the works *Dialoghi quattro* (Ochino 1540) and *Dialoghi sette* (Ochino 1985). He deepened his relationship with the cardinals Gasparo Contarini and Reginald Pole; in 1541, in Venice, he published his *Prediche nove* including a series of sermons held in Lucca (Ochino 1541). As early in Naples, in Venice, the Theatines attempted on several occasions to obstruct Ochino's preaching, who enjoyed the protection of Pope Paul III and the cardinals (Fagnito 1972), at least for a time: in 1542, while in Verona, Ochino was invited to Rome by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. From this moment, his situation changed irrevocably: Pietro Martire Vermigli (1499–1562) received a communication

too, and in Rome, six new cardinals were designated for the newborn “Santo Uffizio.” Ochino received a second letter, this time containing a peremptory summons, and for the two theologians, it was clear that, in the Roman Curia, the balance had definitely changed: the harmonization of reformist tendencies with the Catholic tradition was now no longer an option. During his trip to Rome, Ochino visited Bologna to attend the sickbed of Cardinal Contarini, and shortly afterward, in Florence, he met Vermigli who convinced him to flee from Italy (Solmi 1908; Fagnito 1972).

The Escape of 1542 and the Exile

Ochino decided to run away to Switzerland: both during his escape and afterward, when he was safely in Geneva, Bernardino wrote several letters to his Italian friends to explain the reasons why he left (Ochino 1985). He wrote to Vittoria Colonna on 22 August 1542, clearly stating his intention to avoid the tribunal of the Inquisition. With regret, Ochino describes how much he misses Vittoria and Reginald Pole's advice. The marquise did not write back to Bernardino and instead showed the letter to the inquisitor Matteo Cervini, the future Pope Marcello II (1501–1555) (Fagnito 1972). The protectors of Ochino, intellectuals, nobles, and exponents of the Roman Curia, felt threatened by his escape and by the letters he kept sending them, because this correspondence represented evidence of their personal connection with Ochino. During this Swiss period, the preacher engaged in theological disputes with Ambrogio Catarino Politi and Girolamo Papini (Prosperi 2003), among others, and published many of his works: in 1542, in Geneva, the *Imagine de Antechristo* (Ochino 1542a) and a collection of 20 *Prediche* (Ochino 1542b), sermons in which the author melded Calvinism, Valdesian spirituality, and Joachimitic millenarism, and, in 1545, the *Sermones* and the *Expositione sopra la epistola di san Paulo alli Romani*, all included on the List of Prohibited Books. In Geneva, the integration of Ochino into the local community of Calvinists was dissatisfactory, but he managed to

have a family by marrying an Italian woman in exile from Lucca (Tuscany), where Ochino had preached a few years before, who bore him several children. Still, in 1545, Ochino visited Basel and Augusta and published the *Espositione sopra la epistola di san Paulo alli Galati* and the *Risposta alle false calumnie et impie biastemie di frate Ambrosio Catharino* (Ochino 1546; Firpo 2001). After the defeat of the Schmalkaldic League by Emperor Charles V, who *had listened to Ochino's sermons several years before in Naples*, Ochino was compelled to move – again – and went to Strasbourg.

Ochino and Vermigli in England

In Strasbourg, Ochino met Pietro Martire Vermigli, but they both left the city because of the harsh conditions imposed by the emperor on religious life, and went to England, responding to the invitation of *Thomas Cranmer*, Archbishop of Canterbury: they touched English soil on the night of 20 December 1547 (Overell 2008). Preceded by his reputation as a major preacher, Ochino soon became the core of the Italian community in London, with a salary and a vicarage. Princess Elisabeth, the future Queen Elisabeth I, had a special interest in Bernardino's theological production, and she translated from Italian into Latin his *Sermo di Christo* (Gabrieli 1983). In 1549, Ochino published two works: the *Dialogus de regis et populi* and the *Tragoedia or dialogue of the iniuste usurped primacie of the Bishop of Rome* (Ochino 1549), a controversial text, translated into English – and published only in English – by John Ponet. The *Tragoedia* consists of nine dialogues between 18 speakers, including Lucifer and Beelzebub, who are the main characters of dialogues I and VI. This work was entirely conceived and written in London, with characters and a context of English inspiration: no clue remained of the original manuscript of the *Tragoedia*, which was supposedly in Italian rather than Latin as stated on the frontispiece of the *editio princeps*. Among the sources of the *Tragoedia*, scholars have easily recognized the *Tragoedia nova Pammachius*, written by Thomas

Kirchenmeier called Naogergus (1508–1563): the work also had a Polish version, which was considerably modified (McNair 1991). Later, in 1555, with the restoration of the Catholic Maria Tudor, Ochino's books were prohibited in England (McNair 1991), but their memory remained alive, as the first book of *Paradise Lost* by John Milton proves: Milton was probably inspired by the *Dialogus de polygamia* of Bernardino, especially in outlining the character of Beelzebub.

The other English work of Ochino, the *Dialogus de regi et populi*, was translated into English from Latin in 1657 by an anonymous translator defined as “a person of quality” in the frontispiece; Ochino remained in England until 1553, when he returned to Switzerland, passing through Strasbourg where he left his family.

The Works of the Last Decades Between Geneva and Austerlitz

In Switzerland, Ochino found the situation more complex than had been the case in 1547 when he left: in Geneva, he watched Michel Servet being burned at the stake and, before leaving for Chiavenna and Basel, managed to publish a work that remains one of the most interesting of his writings, the *Apologi* (Ochino 2012): by means of sketches and brief tales, Ochino mocks clerics, bishops, and the ecclesiastical environment, roughly criticizing the Petrine primacy and the papal authority, a critique that culminates in the figure of the Pope Antichrist (Pierno 2007).

In 1556, Ochino published more works in Zurich, where he was shepherd of the Italian community of refugees: the *Dialogo del purgatorio* and the *Syncerae et verae doctrinae de Coena Domini expositio*, concernig the dispute between Zwingli and the Lutherans on the Eucharist and, in 1561 in Basel, the *Disputa intorno alla presenza del corpo di Giesù Christo nel Sacramento della cena*, the *Catechismo o Institutione Christiana*, and the *Laberinti del libero arbitrio* (Ochino 2004). Printed in Basel and translated into Latin by Sebastiano Castellione (1515–1563), the sermons of the *Laberinti* show a strong influence of spiritualism and several contemporary authors.

They are 19 sermons, 16 of which can be matched, since to every “labyrinth” or problem in the first part (sermons 1–8) corresponds a solution in the second part of the work (sermons 9–18). Eight questions on free will and enslaved will (*de libero arbitrio, de servo arbitrio*) have corresponding solutions, but these solutions are often labyrinths and the last sermon (19) expresses plainly the Ochinian concept of salvation, followed by all the doubts that make it difficult to find a genuine solution. Such a skeptical vision does not question the moral obligation to lead a right and decent life. The *Laberinti*, strongly influenced by the *De fato* of Pietro Pomponazzi, shows the impossibility of finding a simple solution to the free will question and leads the way to a skeptical attitude toward the theological discussion that, through Valla, Giovanfrancesco Pico and Lelio Sozzini will find its climax in the *Ars dubitandi et confidendi* of Castellione (Ochino 2004; Bracali 2000; Cantimori 1929).

The religious authority of Zurich could not tolerate the position expressed by Ochino, which contrasted with the doctrine of absolute predestination of the protestants (Taplin 2003); with the publication of the *Dialogi XXX* by Ochino in 1563, the situation collapsed and he fled. Because of certain statements in the *Dialogi*, Bernardino was accused of defending polygamy but also his claim against the execution of Michel Servet and the Anabaptists in Zurich, the discussion on tolerance, on the freedom of thought and religion, which came from the valdesian and franciscan root of the primacy of interior inspiration. Basically, the impossibility of reducing Ochino to a defined and unique religious and theological context made him what we may refer to as a free-thinker (Gotor 2013; Firpo 2001).

Banished from Zurich, Ochino went to Basel and Nuremberg, where he published the *Dialogo autoapologetico*, a self-defensive treatise in which he discussed the accusations issued against him. After other transfers – some of his children died from the plague during the travels – Ochino arrived in Austerlitz, and here he died between the end of 1564 and the beginning of 1565, leaving behind a veil of mystery about the circumstances of his death: a few years later, Marcantonio

Varotta, an Italian Calvinist who took refuge in Austerlitz, affirmed that Ochino burned to death while sleeping lying on a stove.

The Relationship with the “Spirituali” Between Valdès and Pole

The relationship with Valdès and his influence on Ochino started in Naples in 1536 (Firpo 2015). As Delio Cantimori (Cantimori 1929, 1939) has already noticed, several representatives of the Italian spiritualism shared a common thought about the possibility of integrating the reformation and continuity with Catholicism (Firpo 2001; Gotor 2013; Camaioni 2015). It is certain that Ochino had in mind the *Alfabeto cristiano* of Valdès during his preaching of the 30s, even if later he referred to Valdès’ preaching as “predicar Christo mascarato in gergo,” i.e., cautious and careful preaching, rhetorically structured to be persuasive and to hide strong theological positions. Later, in 1542, with the death of Cardinal Contarini, the hopes of a resolution between the need for reformation and the Catholic tradition also died.

With the papal bull *Licet ab initio* and the constitution of the Inquisition, Cardinal Carafa obtained permission from Pope Paul III to carry out a policy of repression of the unconventional doctrines, with the help of the control measures of the Theatines. Ochino and Vermigli were among the first targets: Contarini stressed the possibility of a peaceful settlement and protected Ochino until his death. He wrote a letter to Bishop Matteo Giberti in which he stated that Contarini, on his deathbed, warned him about the Roman summons in 1542; Giberti himself waited a few days before telling Cardinal Carafa of Ochino’s escape, so that he could reach safety in Switzerland.

The relationship between Ochino and Contarini is described in the sermons published in 1542 in Geneva, where everything hinges around the Bolognese meeting at Contarini’s house. The *Spirituali*, members of the so-called *Ecclesia Viterbiensis* of Reginald Pole, did not suffer any consequences due to Ochino’s escape but, in the

following years, something changed. Pietro Carnesecchi, for example, during summer 1546, had to face a trial that fortunately ended well, thanks to the intervention of Cardinal Reginald Pole and Paolo Farnese. Others, such as Vittoria Colonna – who was very close to Ochino both intellectually (Bardazzi 2001) and by giving him material support – distanced themselves from the preacher and changed their orientation. Undoubtedly, the pope did not spare any effort to protect the Viterbese group, composed of many relevant personalities – also ecclesiastical – whom he had supported in the previous years (Fragnito 1972).

Preaching and Social Reforms

Ochino began his activity as a preacher in the 1530s and visited many Italian cities: some stops on his itinerary were particularly important to him, such as Naples. Here, the theme of predestination arises in his sermons, especially between 1539 and 1540 (Gotor 2013). During this time, the doctrine of the justification by faith was not officially condemned (until 1547), but the preaching of Ochino was enough for the Theatins to doubt deeply his thought's orthodoxy. In Venice, where he went for the first time in 1539, the Venetian branch of the Theatins attacked Ochino, questioning the rightness of his religious beliefs, but he continued to preach and defend himself from the pulpit, inspiring immense passion among his followers (Bainton 1951). In Perugia, his sermons focused on the condemnation of the iniquity and tyrannical impositions of the rulers, a preaching characterized by apocalyptic and evangelical tones, that influenced the political balance of the city and caused the reaction of Perusian people against Paul III Farnese, the so-called "Salt War" (1540), because of the salt tax imposed by Pope Farnese (da Campagnola 1993). After all, as shown by Camaioni (2013), the *Constitutions* of the Capuchin order of 1536 envisaged a close cooperation between the friars and the civil and religious authorities, often expressed in charities and, sometimes, in social and political reactions. During his regency of the Capuchin Order, Ochino promoted

several charity initiatives, in line with the Observant Franciscan tradition, also in order to place his preaching in line with Bernardino da Siena and Girolamo Savonarola's actions. In 1535, Ochino convinced Pope Paul III to create a shelter for unmarried women in Rome; in Perugia and Bologna, Ochino established and promoted the foundation of charities for orphans and women; in Ferrara, with the help of Vittoria Colonna, he founded a convent of the Order of Saint Claire; in Mantua, Lucca, and Venice, he preached in favour of hospitals and assistance for the poor. In 1540, Ochino organized in Siena the liturgy of the Forty Hours' Devotion or *Quarantore* (devotional exercise of continuous prayer that celebrates the time between death resurrection of Jesus Christ), linking it to the citizens' service at the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala (Gotor 2013).

The complete list of Ochino's works is given in Benrath (1874), Nicolini (1939), and Tedeschi et al. (2000).

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Ockhamism

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Abstract

“Ockhamism” is a concept used to label positions or persons who adopt or are said to adopt the teachings of William of Ockham at Oxford. In contrast to earlier scholarship, recent studies have modified both the view of Ockhamism as a single and monolithic school and the assumption that Ockhamism was one of the strongest currents in later medieval philosophy. Historically, Ockhamism has often been identified with nominalism. Yet, current scholarship attempts to distinguish between Ockham's own positions, Ockhamist teachings (that is, later adaptations of Ockham's positions), and genuine nominalist approaches (Beckmann 2010, p. 172). One means of doing this is to differentiate between the extrinsic and the intrinsic perspective. The extrinsic perspective regards theologians or philosophers as Ockhamists when others have described them as such,

while the intrinsic perspective, mostly favored nowadays, starts with the self-assessment of theologians and philosophers, considering whether they understood themselves to be followers of Ockham or not. In the past, scholars first and foremost started with Ockham's own positions and looked for philosophers and theologians who held the same positions, labeling them Ockhamists. This approach does not, however, reflect the rather loose concept of school traditions in the late Middle Ages, especially in the Ockhamist tradition. Even Ockham's most prominent disciples, Adam Wodeham and Robert Holcot, were influenced by his teachings without, however, following him in all doctrinal matters.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

"Ockhamism" as a concept goes back to the nineteenth century (Hallam 1837, p. 256; Werner 1859, p. 125; Prantl 1870, p. 2). As early as 1339–1341, however, the statutes and acts of the faculty of arts at the University of Paris referred to *doctrina/scientia Okannica*, the *errores Ockanici*, and *Occhanistae* (Hübener and Schepers 1984).

Parisian Scotists (followers of John Duns Scotus) in the late fourteenth century characterized Ockhamists as ungainly (*rudes*) and as terminists (*terministae*). The edict that King Louis XI issued against tendencies at the University of Paris in 1474 established the label "nominales." In contrast, however, to what Ritter (1921) and Ehrle (1925) have assumed, the names listed in the edict were not described as "nominalists," but rather as "renovating doctors" who figured as inspirational sources for later nominalists and terminists; Ockham was listed among these doctors, along with John Buridan, Marsilius of Inghen, Albert of Saxony, and John Dorp (Gilbert 1974; Courtenay 1995). The nominalists who were attacked, in defending themselves against the charges in the edict, accepted Ockham as their master but refused to make his teaching the basis of their own. Later, Antonio Coronel, a pupil of John Major and a teacher of John Calvin (Coronel 1528, f. 40r), confirmed this disjunction

by stating that nominalists do not follow Ockham but only the truth.

This should provide an indication that the concept of Ockhamism ("*secta Occanica*," etc.) was less a school in the strict sense (as, to a great extent, Thomism was) than a label for a new movement in philosophy and theology, or even for a new scientific culture (Bottin 1982, pp. 17–18). In the fifteenth-century *Wegestreit* (conflict between the *viae*), this movement was called *via nominalium*, and it was opposed to the realist way of doing philosophy and theology, which was associated with the names of Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus.

This new way (*via moderna*) brought together several features, which went back to Ockham and developed his views further. These features all stood in strong opposition to the old way (*via antiqua*) of the *reales* (Bottin 1982, pp. 24–25): (1) it allowed for divine interference *ex potentia Dei*; (2) it gave preference to the cognition of the singular (intuitive cognition); (3) scientific problems were not treated metaphysically but logically and analytically; (4) it established a linguistic theory (of supposition); (5) simpler explanations were preferred ("Ockham's razor"). These positions, however, were often misunderstood in the following centuries. Contemporaries wrongly accused Ockhamists of denying theology as a science or of making science as such impossible. Misinterpretations with regard to the *potentia Dei* circulated in Lutheran environments. "Ockham's razor" was summarized as "entities are not to be multiplied," which was not the formulation of Ockham himself. All this shows that Ockham was used as a proxy for nominalist or "new" positions (Beckmann 2010).

Innovative and Original Aspects/Impact and Legacy

In early twentieth-century scholarship, there was an overemphasis on Ockhamism in Ritter and others. When these historians of philosophy began to study Ockham, they tended to credit him with far more influence than he ever had, especially

in assuming the existence of an influential Ockhamist school (Roest 2000, pp. 176–177; see Ritter 1921, 1922, 1926–1927). In this vein of modern scholarship, Ockhamism and with it nominalism, terminism, and the *via moderna* (which were often identified with each other) were portrayed as an innovative and trendsetting development, while other currents (Thomism, Scotism) represented the decline of late medieval philosophy and theology. More recent scholarship (at least since Oberman 1963) has tried to correct this exaggerated perception of the influence of Ockhamism.

Earlier scholarship also used an extrinsic perspective to identify Ockhamists: after establishing criteria for Ockhamism, they skimmed through the decades looking for theologians and philosophers who fit those criteria. Historians of medieval philosophy now adopt an intrinsic perspective, looking instead for theologians and philosophers who regarded themselves as Ockhamists or followers of Ockham. An interesting test case of this strategy is Gabriel Biel, who “proves to be a true disciple of Occam, and a faithful preserver of the impressively coherent structure of the Occamistic system” (Oberman 1963, p. 424). Starting from Biel, one gets a different picture of Ockhamism. Moreover, the intrinsic perspective is apt to identify “Ockhamisms” rather than one single and monolithic Ockhamism, assumed in older scholarship. Thus, Courtenay (1995, p. 270) believes that there is no “continuous stream that we can call Ockhamism from 1330 to 1530,” but instead different implementations of Ockham’s thought. In northern Italy, there was a lack of Ockhamists, since universities there had no faculties of theology but only colleges, that is, organizational bodies for doctoral students (Monfasani 1993). Since Ockham’s influence was especially strong in theology, his ideas were most likely to be found among “secular masters of theology in northern universities” (Monfasani 1993, p. 257), such as Peter of Ailly, Marsilius of Inghen, and Albert of Saxony, as well as among German Augustinian Friars such as Luther, John Nethin, and Bartholomew Arnoldi of Usingen. This, however, does not mean that Ockhamist positions were absent outside an institutional setting in places such as

northern Italy. Moreover, as Beckmann (1998) points out, Ockhamism needs to be distinguished from Ockham’s thought or “system.”

Ockhamists, that is, philosophers and theologians strongly influenced by Ockham’s positions, include

Adam Wodeham (disciple), Robert Holcot (disciple), Nicholas of Autrecourt, John of Mirecourt, Gregory of Rimini, John Buridan, Albert of Saxony, Peter of Ailly, Gabriel Biel, Walter Chatton, and William Crathorn (Beckmann 2001, col. 1190).

Cross-References

- [Scotism](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Oikonomia

► [Economics, Renaissance](#)

Oliveira, Fernando de

► [Oliveira, Fernão de](#)

Oliveira, Fernão de

Born: 1507

Died: 1581

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Abstract

Fernão de Oliveira (1507– c. 1581) was a Portuguese humanist and cleric, best known for being the author of the first grammar of Portuguese language. He was also a distinguished nautical engineer, naval warfare theoretician and pilot, as well as historian and translator.

Alternate Names

[de Oliveira, Fernando](#); [Oliveira, Fernando de](#)

Biography

Born in Aveiro, Portugal, in 1507, Fernão de Oliveira started his studies at the Dominican Convent of his hometown, having later transferred to the Dominican Convent of Évora, Portugal, in 1520. There, he is said to have studied under the humanist André de Resende. He left this convent for Spain around 1532: there, he became a secular clergyman, developed an interest in shipbuilding,

and devoted his time to the study of Spanish language, namely through Antonio de Nebrija's *Grammatica de la lengua Española* (1492), a Portuguese translation of which he left incomplete in manuscript form (c. 1579–80c). Oliveira returned to Portugal around 1536, the year in which his descriptive grammar of Portuguese language for a modern critical edition, see (*Gramática da Linguagem Portuguesa*, 2012) was published in Lisbon – this remains his most famous work.

Around 1541, Oliveira left the country bound for Genoa, for unknown reasons, although some historians sustain that he was involved in the secret negotiations concerning the New Christian community involving the Portuguese king, John III, and the Holy See. In 1543, upon his return to Portugal, Oliveira was denounced to the Inquisition and fled to France, having set aside his religious life, and embraced the military life. He served France in the war against England, having enlisted in the navy, under the command of the Baron Saint Blancard in 1545. His ship having been taken by the English, Oliveira acted as an intermediary in the negotiations for the liberation of the crew in London, and he became known at court, namely by Henry VIII: his successor, Edward VI, entrusted him with a letter to King John III. Oliveira spent approximately a year at the English court, and upon returning to Portugal in March 1547, he once again attracted the attention of the Inquisition, having openly commended Henry VIII for his heretic sympathies - he spent 3 years imprisoned, until the brother of the King of Portugal and Inquisitor, Cardinal Henry, granted him freedom (on condition of not leaving the country without his permission, given that Oliveira had once fled the country). In 1552, he embarked on a mission to Morocco as chaplain to the Portuguese fleet that was sent to aid the King of Velez, allied to the King of Portugal, and he was taken hostage by the Ottoman Turks. Upon his return to Portugal, he was appointed typographical proofreader at the printing house of the University of Coimbra, where he also taught courses on Quintilian.

In 1555, the oldest treatise on maritime strategy was completed by Oliveira: his *Arte da*

guerra do mar was published in Coimbra (critically edited in 2008). This book, made up of two parts of 15 chapters each is broad in scope and engages with issues such as theories of just war and strategy, logistics and shipbuilding, and intelligence. It is likely that it was some of Oliveira's outspoken views on the transatlantic slave trade and the unjust wars expressed in this work that landed him in trouble with the Inquisition once again. He was imprisoned between 1555 and 1557, after which he left Portugal, most likely for France, where he devoted the rest of his life to composing a varied range of works, some of which were left in manuscript form: his *Ars Nautica* (c. 1579–1580d), an encyclopaedic work in Latin, which applied practical science to shipbuilding and navigation comprises three parts: on navigation, cartography, and meteorology (Part One); naval construction (Part Two); and naval logistics (Part Three). The techniques and science of ship building was explored in detail in another work left in manuscript form, the *Livro da Fábrica das Naus* (finished c. 1580, available in the 1898 [1991] edition by Lopes de Mendonça).

Before his death (probably in 1581), Oliveira was very involved with the political life of Portugal, which had been annexed by the Spanish Crown in 1580, under Phillip II: Oliveira left us two historiographical works in manuscript form, both destined to demonstrate that Portugal had long been an independent nation from Spain: *Liuro da Antiguidade, Nobreza, Liberdade e Imunidade do Reino de Portugal* [Book of the Antiquity, Nobility, Liberty and Immunity of the Kingdom of Portugal] (c. 1579–1580a) and *Historia de Portugal* (incomplete, c. 1579–1580b, critically edited in 2006).

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Olstenio

► [Holste, Lukas](#)

Omnia in Omnibus

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Abstract

Omnia in omnibus (“everything in everything” or “all in all”) is a Neoplatonic principle used to indicate that all things are in all things, but in each thing according to its proper nature. Renaissance philosophers invoke the principle to express the idea that everything – be it an intelligible Form, a sensible object, or an ontological level of reality – represents the totality of things in its own proper way. In Antiquity, the principle was anticipated by Anaxagoras and Plotinus, before being fully developed and canonized in the writings of Porphyry

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(*Sent.* 10) and Proclus (*Elements of Theology*, prop. 103). Via Proclus, it found its way to the works of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, although, here as elsewhere, the theological meaning of 1 *Corinthians* 15:28 (*ut Deus sit omnia in omnibus*) should be taken into account as well. In the fifteenth century, Nicolaus Cusanus adopts the principle in his doctrine of *quodlibet in quolibet*, which states that each thing is a contraction of the entire universe. The notion occupies a central place in Marsilio Ficino's commentary on the *Timaeus*, where it is applied to the multilayered existence of the four elements. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola restates the principle in his *Conclusiones secundum Proclum* and gives it a key role in his biblical hermeneutics. Finally, Giordano Bruno integrates the various meanings of *omnia in omnibus* into a comprehensive view of the cosmos as simultaneously one and many.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

As we learn from Aristotle (*Phys.* III, 4, 203a19 ff. and I, 4, 187a20 ff.), the idea that everything is in everything is already found in the natural philosophy of Anaxagoras. In this context, the maxim πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν refers to the omnipresence of the material ingredients of the cosmos (e.g., bone, flesh, wet, dry, hot, cold, etc.). According to Anaxagoras, everything is a mixture of all the basic constituents of reality.

The application of the principle to the realm of intelligible objects is ascribed by Syrianus (*In metaph.* 82, 1) to the Pythagoreans, and by Iamblichus (*ap. Stobaeus Ecl.* I. xlix. 31) to Numenius in particular (Dodds 1964: 254). This “metaphysical” interpretation is further developed in the Neoplatonic tradition. Plotinus, for example, explicitly rejects Anaxagoras' materialistic interpretation of the principle (*Enn.* II.4.7) and instead applies it to the intelligible world (*Enn.* V.8.4). For Plotinus, the Intellect is simultaneously one and many: it is the one undivided whole of the many Forms. In the Intellect, each form is identical with both itself

and the Intellect, and, as a result, with all other forms. In the Intellect, all intelligibles are everywhere “for light is transparent to light” (*Enn.* V.8.4).

The formula *everything in everything* is canonized by Plotinus' student Porphyry. Starting from the writings of his master, he arrives at an original and full-fledged thesis (D'Ancona 2005: 189): “everything is in everything, but in a way that is appropriate to the essence of each thing” (*Sent.* 10). According to Porphyry, all things are in the Intellect intellectually (νοερώς); in the soul rationally (νοερώς); in plants in the manner of seeds (σπερματικῶς); in bodies in the manner of images (εἰδωλικῶς); and in the First Principle super-intellectually and super-essentially (ἀνεγνωτός τε καὶ ὑπερουσίως).

This Neoplatonic “law” is echoed almost verbatim by Proclus in proposition 103 of his *Elements of Theology*, although here its range appears to be limited to the triad Being-Life-Intellect – three aspect of the same entity. Proclus asserts that on the level of Being, Life and Intellect exist essentially (ὄντως); on the level of Intellect, Being and Life exist intellectually (νοερώς); and on the level of Life, Being and Intellect exist vitally (ζωτικῶς) (*El. Theol.* prop. 103). Proclus makes use of the principle in other contexts as well, e.g., to explain the Platonic concept of the community and correlation (κοινωνία) of Forms (*In Parm.* 751 ff.), with respect to theurgy in his *De sacrificio et magia*, and with regard to the four material elements (Dodds 1964: 254). In his commentary on the *Timaeus*, Proclus states that the sensible cosmos, since it imitates the intelligible cosmos where all things are in all, also has everything with respect to all its parts, e.g., fire, insofar as it is tangible, participates in earth, whereas earth, insofar as it is visible, participates in fire (*In Tim.* II, 26, 24–29).

Finally, pseudo-Dionysius adopts the Neoplatonic formula in his *De divinis nominibus* (Dodds 1964: 254). However, in the Christian tradition, 1 *Corinthians* 15:28 – where God is said to be all in all (*omnia in omnibus*) – is also of considerable importance, and often merges with the Neoplatonic principle.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the Renaissance, the principle *omnia in omnibus* is explicitly invoked by Nicolaus Cusanus, Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Giordano Bruno.

In the fifth chapter of the second book of Nicolaus Cusanus' *De docta ignorantia* (1440), a section entirely devoted to the doctrine of *quodlibet in quolibet* ("each thing is in each thing"), the idea that everything is in everything (*omnia in omnibus*) is traced back to Anaxagoras (*De doct. ign.* II, 5). Nonetheless, Cusanus takes a Neoplatonic approach to Anaxagoras' theory (Aquilecchia 1973: 77). In Cusanus' interpretation of the principle, the universe is in each individual thing because each thing is a contraction (*contractio*) of the entire universe (Hopkins 1978: 36). Cusanus gives the example of the concept of humanity. Just as humanity is neither Plato nor Socrates, but in Plato is Plato and in Socrates is Socrates, so is the universe in relation to each individual thing (*De doct. ign.* II, 4). In its own proper way, namely, as a contraction and particularization, each individual thing represents the unity and interconnectedness of all things, i.e., the universe (Miller 2003: 52). Additionally, in chapter 17 of *De venatione sapientiae* (1463) Cusanus appears to allude to the Porphyrean and Proclean version of the principle, although he names Plato as his source (*De ven. sap.* 17). Here, he uses the formula to express the idea that all things exist on all levels of reality, but on each level according to its proper mode of being (*suo modo*): in the intellect, for example, all things exist in accordance with the intellect's mode of being, i.e., in an intellectual way (*intellectualiter*), in a conceptual way (*notionaliter*), or in a knowable way (*cognoscibiliter*). In the seventeenth century, Cusanus' treatment of the principle had a profound influence on Athanasius Kircher (Leinkauf 1993: 84–85).

Marsilio Ficino makes ample use of the Neoplatonic golden rule that "all is in all, but appropriately." In chapter XXIV of his *Compendium in Timaeum* (1496), he first describes how the four elements exist in the Demiurge by way of their ideas, in the World Soul by way of their reasons,

in the heavens by way of their powers, and beneath the heavens by way of their forms (Allen 1987: 419–420 and Hankins 2004: 170). At the end of the chapter, Ficino paraphrases and translates various passages from Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus* (*In Tim.* II, 26 ff.). He writes, for example, that, just as in the archetypal cosmos all things are in all things (*omnia in omnibus*), so in the sensible world all are in all, but according to the nature of the receiver (*pro natura suscipientium*). This leads him to conclude that in the elements celestial things are elemental, whereas in celestial things the elements are celestial (*Comp. in Tim.* XXIV). And, like Proclus, Ficino refers to the participation of fire in earth and vice versa (cf. *supra*). This section of Ficino's *Compendium* seems to have been the source of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* I.3 (Leinkauf 1993: 89). In chapter 50 of his commentary on the *Timaeus*, Ficino claims that each world sphere is, as it were, the whole cosmos and embraces all things according to its own property (*cuncta sua quadam proprietate complectens*), a statement that is followed by the Plotinian observation that in the archetypal cosmos all Forms are held within each individual Form (*Comp. in Tim.* XL). Ficino, like Proclus, applies the idea of *omnia in omnibus* to the total structure of reality (Leinkauf 2005: 371). It also deserves mentioning that the same formula occurs in Ficino's translation of Proclus' *De sacrificio et magia* – where it functions as a theurgic principle – and in his translation of and commentary on pseudo-Dionysius' *De divinis nominibus* 1.7 – where it is used as a synonym for God (cf. 1 *Corinthians* 15:28).

The 17th thesis of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Conclusiones secundum Proclum* – in his famous *Conclusiones sive theses DCCCC* (1486) – clearly echoes proposition 103 of the *Elements of Theology* in asserting that, although the divine hierarchies are distinct, everything is in everything in its own proper way (*omnia in omnibus esse suo modo*) (Kristeller 1987: 208). The principle reappears in Pico's *Heptaplus* (1489), a commentary on the creation narrative of *Genesis* 1. In the second proem, Pico attributes the origin of the idea to Anaxagoras and says that

it was adopted later on by the Pythagoreans and Platonists. The maxim plays a pivotal role in Pico's theory of the three worlds – the angelic, celestial, and sublunary world (Black 2006: 159–160). According to Pico – again in the second proem of the *Heptaplus* – these three worlds are one, not only because they derive from one principle but also because whatever is in all worlds (*quicquid in omnibus est mundis*), is also held in each of them individually (*id et in singulis continetur*). It is important to note that the principle thus acquires a complementary, allegorical function that is crucial to Pico's interpretation of the Bible: from the perspective of the divine hierarchies, the same word or name yields different meanings and interpretations (Black 2006: 161).

In *De la causa, principio et uno* (1584), Giordano Bruno uses the notion that all is in all as a representation of the unity of the cosmos, which, as a perfect whole consisting of different parts, is both one and many (Beierwaltes 1980: 192–193). In the second dialogue of the work, the principle that everything is in everything (*ogni cosa essere in ogni cosa*) is applied to the soul and ascribed to Anaxagoras. Additionally, in the opening pages of the fifth dialogue, the dictum that everything is in everything in its own proper way (*tutto essere in tutto, ma non totalmente et omnimodamente in ciascuno*) is linked to the universe and is a free translation of the Neoplatonic version of the same principle. Similarly, in his Latin works – e.g., *Sigillus sigillorum* (1583), *Lampas triginta statuarum* (1587), and *De innumerabilibus, immenso et infigurabili* (1591) – Bruno follows Cusanus in combining the Neoplatonic and Anaxagorean interpretation of the principle (Aquilecchia 1973: 77), and the expression *omnia in omnibus* often occurs in the context of the elements (e.g., *De immenso* V.1 and V.9). For Bruno, as for Proclus, “metaphysically and physically everything is in everything” (Whittaker 1918: 277).

Generally, it can be said that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Anaxagorean-physical, the Neoplatonic-metaphysical, and the Christian-theological interpretation of *omnia in omnibus* are closely interwoven, to the extent that the different

layers of meaning created by various traditions can no longer be clearly separated. In the universe of Cusanus, Ficino, Pico, and Bruno, literally everything is in everything.

Cross-References

- [Nicholas of Cusa](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
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Opitius, Martinus

► [Opitz, Martin](#)

Opitz von Boberfeld, Martin

► [Opitz, Martin](#)

Opitz, Martin

Born: 23 December 1597, Bunzlau in Silesia

Died: 20 August 1639, Danzig (Gdąnsk)

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Abstract

Martin Opitz, regarded as the “Father of German Poetry” (Garber 1976), was a pioneer in establishing a national German literature by creating a reform of vernacular poetry and introducing foreign literary models.

Alternate Names

[Opitz von Boberfeld, Martin](#); [Opitius, Martinus](#)

Biography

Opitz, the son of a prosperous butcher in Bunzlau, Silesia, received his early education at the Gymnasium (grammar school) of his native town. In 1617 he attended the “Schonaichianum” at Beuthen. During his studies at Frankfurt an der Oder (1618/1619), he published his first important essay *Aristarchus; Sive, de Contemptu Linguae Teutonicae*, a patriotic apologia of the vernacular (Robert 2007). This essay can be regarded as the nucleus of his subsequent poetological reform. In 1619, Opitz went to Heidelberg, the center of German Calvinism, where he attended university (Garber 1976, Robert 2013). He became a member of a circle of poets trying to develop a new German humanistic poetry was meant to be coequal with other European literature. After the Battle of White Mountain (1620), Heidelberg was conquered by Emperor Ferdinand's troops. Opitz had to go into exile and moved to Leiden in the Netherlands where he met the Dutch “national poet” Heinsius. In 1622 he followed the invitation of Gabriel Bethlen, the Duke of Transylvania, who needed

scholars for his newly founded gymnasium. After a wandering life in the service of various nobles, he was appointed councillor to the Duke Georg Rudolf of Liegnitz and Brieg in 1624. Two years later he became secretary to the Catholic Duke Hannibal von Dohna and soon was in charge of diplomatic missions. In 1627 he was crowned *poeta laureatus* by Emperor Ferdinand II in Vienna and later was ennobled (“von Boberfeld”). The most important German literary society, the “Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft,” appointed him member in 1629. During a diplomatic mission to Paris in 1630, he met Hugo Grotius. Finally, Opitz became historiographer and secretary to King Władysław IV of Poland and settled in Danzig in 1636. In 1639 he died of the plague.

Heritage and Rupture of Tradition

Opitz’s theoretical main work, the *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey* (The Book of German Poetics, 1624), is a milestone concerning standardizing and establishing the German vernacular (Becker-Cantarino 1982). It is deeply inspired by Renaissance humanism (J. C. Scaliger, Heinsius, Ronsard). This treatise as well as Opitz’s poetical oeuvre modernized German poetry, successfully bringing the literary Renaissance, which Romanic countries and the Netherlands had already experienced, to the German literary scene. By presenting translations and adaptations, not only the ancient *genera* become vernacularized (*Trost-Gedichte*, *Vesuvius*, *Lob des Feldlebens*) but also modern forms like the sonnet (i.e., *imitationes* of Petrarca, Vittoria Gambara, Rosard), the odes (i.e., *imitationes* of Heinsius), as well as opera and romance. In addition to this, he left behind a comprehensive neo-Latin oeuvre (Marschall and Seidel 2009–2011).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The “heart” of Opitz’s program is a prosodic and metrical reform: German verse was to consist of alternating stressed and unstressed syllables

unlike Romanic and Latin metrical principles. By this natural speech, rhythm and metrical declamation were meant to coincide. The innovative aspect of his own extensive work is that Opitz wrote in accordance with his newly established poetical principles and offered a wide range of exemplary German poetry by imitating foreign, especially contemporary, literature (Borgstedt 2002). In 1625, he published the epoch-making *Acht Bücher deutscher Poematum*. Further important works are the opera *Dafne* (1627; music by Heinrich Schütz), a pastoral novel (*Schäfferey von der Nymfen Hercinie*, 1630), the irenic poem *Trost-Gedichte in widerwertigkeit des Krieges* (1633), the didactic poem *Vesuvius* (1633) which combines ancient form traditions with aspects of natural science, the multilingual experiment *Florilegium variorum epigrammatum* (1639), the translation of drama by Seneca (*Die Trojannerinnen*, 1625) and Sophocles (*Antigone*, 1636) and of the *Song of Songs* (1627), and the *Huguenot Psalter* (1637).

Impact and Legacy

Opitz’s immediate impact on the evolution of German literature was indeed deep and far-reaching. His reform consisting of poetological essays as well as ambitious exemplary poetry is acknowledged as the seed for the blossoming of seventeenth-century German poetry. His contemporaries already regarded Opitz as the greatest German poet of the time and his reform as a new beginning. Nearly all important poets of the next generation, like Paul Fleming or Andreas Gryphius, felt encouraged by Opitz. As a result, the reevaluation of the German vernacular as a literary language was established during the seventeenth century.

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Optics

► Light Theory

Optics, Renaissance

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Abstract

Optics, the mathematical science of vision, went through revolutionary changes in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These were driven by multiple factors, such as: the discovery of texts and new mathematical techniques; the development and investigation of new optical technologies; advances in the anatomy of the eye; and participation in the incipient culture of experimentation. This period also saw the resolution of a problem that had been a puzzle since antiquity: the mathematical law governing the refraction of light. The end result was transformation of optics from the geometrical study of the subjective phenomena of vision, to a mathematical science of the objective behavior of light, which could be assimilated into the new

mathematical physics of the seventeenth century. Philosophically, the human observer was no longer an active participant in vision but the passive recipient of physical stimuli from the outside world.

Synonyms

[Catoptrics](#); [Perspective](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Optics was the mathematical science of vision (and, secondarily, of light). The earliest extant works on optics were written by Euclid: *Optics*, concerning direct vision, which is extant in two slightly different versions; and *Catoptrics*, concerning reflected vision in mirrors, flat and curved. Some four centuries later, the great astronomer Ptolemy wrote a much more ambitious *Optics*. While Euclid's works consisted of tersely stated propositions and demonstrations, Ptolemy wrote much more expansively about the nature of direct and indirect vision, while also formally setting out propositions. He covered direct vision, reflection, and even refraction in a single work, and, perhaps most importantly, described in detail the construction and use of experimental optical apparatuses. He recorded the results of his own experiments in measuring refraction between air, water, and glass, and inserted into the work a table of refractive angles, at 10° increments of angle of incidence, which were both quite accurate, and would have a significant influence on later optics (Smith 1999).

Euclid and Ptolemy both assumed that vision occurred by the emission of rays of sight from the eyes ("extramission"). Arabic philosophers and mathematicians sought to reconcile this mathematical theory of vision with Aristotle's account of sight, in which the eye played a more passive role. The culmination of this effort was in the *Optics* of ibn al-Haytham (Alhacen or Alhazen), which greatly extended the mathematical analysis of direct, reflected, and refracted vision of Ptolemy's *Optics*, on the basis of an eye that

received light from objects (“intromission”), which it filtered and ordered by refraction.

The Latin “Perspectivist” writers of the thirteenth century elaborated an optical theory that drew heavily on Arabic mathematicians, while bringing in other ancient and contemporary sources. The work of the Polish mathematician Witelo was particularly important for the Renaissance. His *Optics* encompassed the whole of Alhazen’s *Optics*, which he augmented by mixing into it theorems from Euclid, Ptolemy, Hero of Alexandria (from a work of optical marvels often falsely attributed to Ptolemy), as well as theorems from the medieval optical tradition. He also drew on the mathematics of Archimedes and Apollonius, whose works, like many of the ancient optical writings as well, he knew through his collaboration with the translator William of Moerbeke. In setting out his *Optics*, Witelo was concerned to enforce a distinction between the mathematical and the natural philosophical, often demonstrating a theorem first purely geometrically, and only later applying it to light and vision. As a result, his work could be prolix and repetitive; it is nearly twice as long as Alhazen’s work on which it was based. Nevertheless, Witelo’s attention to this distinction, and the self-contained nature of his geometrical teaching, as well as the encyclopedic reach of the whole work, helped to make Witelo’s work popular at the medieval universities, where it was often assigned as a geometrical text in place of Euclid’s *Elements*.

Witelo’s centrality in the Renaissance was cemented by the publication of his work in 1572 in a compendium with Alhazen’s *Optics*, edited by Friedrich Risner, a protégé of Petrus Ramus. It was this volume (Alhazen and Witelo 1572) that served as the fundamental textbook for innovators in optics around the turn of the seventeenth century: Giambattista della Porta, Johannes Kepler, Thomas Harriot, and Willebrord Snell, for example. Kepler’s first great work on optics, published in 1604, arguably formed the foundation of an entirely new kind of optics; yet it took Witelo’s work as a critical starting point and bore the deceptively anodyne title *Supplements to Witelo (Ad Vitellionem Paralipomena)*.

Despite the dominance of Witelo, there was also a revival of interest in ancient optics, particularly in the works of Euclid, in the later sixteenth century. Jean Pena (another protégé of Ramus) published an edition and Latin translation of Euclid’s *Optics* and *Catoptrics*. Pena’s preface to this work, which was widely read and even published separately, defended a Stoic physics in which he rejected, on optical grounds, the Aristotelian separation between the sublunar and celestial realms and the reality of the planetary spheres. This work influenced the astronomers Christoph Rothmann and Tycho Brahe, thereby playing an important role in the development of the new astronomy (Barker 1985). In 1573, Egnazio Danti published an Italian version of Pena’s Latin translation, also summarizing without acknowledgement Pena’s preface in his own introduction (Frangenberg 1988).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Eyeglasses with convex lenses had been manufactured in Europe since the thirteenth century (Rosen 1956). Such spectacles corrected farsightedness and presbyopia. Concave lenses in eyeglasses, to correct myopia, began to be widely used only in the sixteenth century (Ilardi 2007). Lenses thus started to become common objects in Europe at roughly the same time that Perspectivist writers, such as Witelo, were writing their treatises. Yet the two developments seem to have been entirely independent, and Perspectivist authors (like their ancient and Arabic predecessors) paid no attention to the properties of lenses. But the appearance of convex eyeglasses seems to have stimulated an interest in the properties of lenses, which in turn contributed to a new concern with refraction itself. Francesco Maurolico (d. 1575) wrote a treatise on optics, *Photismi de lumine*, which was very likely the first to attempt to explain the action of lenses (though it was published only much later, in 1611). In the second edition of his *Magia naturalis* (1589), Giambattista della Porta coined the term “lens” and described some of the marvels that could be performed with eyeglasses. He did not explain

there how lenses worked, though attempted to do so in his very odd work *De refractione* published 4 years later. The first successful analysis of lenses was provided by Kepler, in his *Dioptrice* of 1611. Another stimulus to the study of refraction was an interest in atmospheric refraction and how it affected the observations that underlay the revival of astronomy.

In his 1604 work on optics, Kepler unsuccessfully sought a general rule to relate the angle of incidence of light to its angle after refraction through glass or water, a law of refraction (*lex refractionis*) which had been postulated to exist (even if unknown) since at least the thirteenth century in the work of Roger Bacon (Ruby 1986). The problem of refraction had arisen in antiquity. The relation between the angle of incidence of light (or sight) and its angle of reflection from a mirror was well known – they were equal. Was there a similar relationship between the angles of incidence and refraction at an interface between two different transparent media? In his *Optics*, Ptolemy had set out a table of refractions at 10° intervals, between air and water, air and glass, and glass and water but was unable to state any general rule for the relationship (Smith 1982). Witelo included Ptolemy's table, with modifications, in his *Optics*; from its publication in 1572, these figures provided the primary experimental data for optical theorists and a standard against which experimenters measured their results – sometimes with unhappy consequences (Lohne 1968). The sine law of refraction (whereby the sines of the angles of incidence and refraction are in a constant proportion, for a given pair of media) was discovered independently at least three times in the first decades of the seventeenth century. Thomas Harriot discovered the law in 1601; Willebrord Snell discovered it in the early 1620s; and René Descartes and Claude Mydorge found it a few years later, in 1626 according to Descartes' later recollection (Sabra 1981). All four men had studied the accounts of refraction in Alhazen and Witelo; they were inspired by the kinematic models of light and the theories of image location found in those texts to formulate a general mathematical account of refraction.

The optical tradition from Alhazen and the Latin Perspectivists had employed a rhetoric of experimentation. That is, they supported their statements about direct, reflected, and refracted light with descriptions of elaborate experiments, which they very likely did not actually perform. Witelo, for instance, described in detail the method by which he measured refraction angles. But he made no improvement on Ptolemy's experimental values and also constructed a priori tables in the opposite direction to Ptolemy's (from water to air, for example, to complement Ptolemy's table from air to water) which were in fact nonsensical, as any actual experimentation would have revealed. In clear distinction, optical theorists in the Renaissance performed the experiments that their predecessors had for the most part only described and then went beyond them. This experimental turn must be connected with the larger role that experiment began to play in general during this period. But it also was conditioned by the ready availability of optical objects for experimentation: lenses, as already noted, but also crystal spheres and prisms of great clarity, sold as toys and curiosities, and highly reflective plane and curved mirrors, found either in household use or (in the case of large concave mirrors) as luxury objects in cabinets of curiosity (Dupré 2008). The telescope, invented in 1608 using practical craft knowledge rather than mathematical optics, both stimulated research in optics and challenged the Perspectivist tradition, whose methods were wholly inadequate to explain the instrument's magnification (van Helden 1977).

Another optical object was invented in this period which was less heralded than the telescope but had consequences for optics that were hardly less momentous. Witelo and other medieval optical writers had experimented with refraction and the production of colors from white light using the naturally occurring hexagonal quartz crystal. The multiple internal reflections in the crystal made a systematic investigation of color very difficult; Witelo had only partially simplified the phenomenon by obscuring some facets with opaque wax. In the 1530s and 1540s, jewelers in Italy and France began making the now familiar *triangular* prism, by cutting quartz crystals longitudinally

into six parts. They were originally sold as toys to look through, in order to view the world inverted and fringed with colors, or as lusters to hang from lamps and in windows (Gage 2000, Chap. 8). Optical experimenters eventually discovered their utility for investigating color, beginning with della Porta in his 1593 *De refractione*. Thomas Harriot and Willebrord Snell both used triangular prisms in their experiments, as most famously did Newton – though even then prisms (which he may have purchased at a fair) were still amusements or novelties rather than common scientific instruments (Schaffer 1989).

Ancient optics had treated the eye as an active source of radiation, producing visual rays that were entirely responsible for sight. The eye itself was not treated at all as an optical object, in the sense that it might affect the passage of light. Alhazen and the Perspectivist writers, in contrast, were committed to an intromissive theory of vision, in which light carried the appearances of objects into the eye. The refractive properties of the eye itself were crucial to their theory. Only light that was perpendicular to the cornea could pass through unrefracted and thus (they argued) be strong enough to register in vision; thus the chaos of incoherent, multidirectional light reflected from objects in the outside world was filtered into a coherent visual cone, where precisely one ray from each point in the visual field would be admitted perpendicularly into the eye. Alhazen and his successors imagined that this coherent picture of the world was assembled onto the anterior surface of the crystalline humor (what we call the “lens”), which was the sensitive part of the eye. But this humor was also itself a refractive object, which concentrated the picture into a narrow beam, focused directly into the hollow optic nerve at the back of the eye. The retina played no role in vision but was thought to nourish the vitreous and crystalline humors (Lindberg 1976, 35, 71–85).

A combination of factors in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries led to a complete reassessment of the role of the eye in vision. In general, anatomy was in a process of transformation, through a new emphasis on dissection and

autopsy. The structure of the eye was much more precisely described; in particular, the crystalline humor was found to be not in the center of the eye and of perfectly spherical shape (as Perspectivist optics had claimed) but towards the front of the eye and flattened on its anterior surface. The anatomical study of the eye, and the recognition of the refractive role of the lens, culminated in 1583 with the brilliant work of Felix Platter (Lindberg 1976, 168–177). In addition, several authors in this period began to compare the eye to the newly popular *camera obscura*. Most famously, della Porta in 1589 described an improved design of the *camera obscura*, in which the aperture contained a convex lens, with a concave mirror at the very center to project the vivid, enlarged, and upright image onto the screen. He compared this marvel with the eye, likening the lens in the aperture to the refractive surface of the cornea, and the concave mirror at the center to the crystalline humor. A few years earlier, the engineer Giovanni Battista Benedetti had suggested that the eye was like a *camera obscura*, in which the image was projected onto the retina. He noted that the image would be inverted in the *camera obscura*; however, some intervening refractive humors in the eye worked to turn the image back up the right way (Frangenberg 1988). Benedetti’s work was far less well-known than della Porta’s best-selling *Magia naturalis*, but it did find one receptive reader in Kepler. In his 1604 optical work, Kepler correctly described the optics of the eye, this time reconciling himself to the inverted image on the retina. His work prepared the way for Descartes’ *Dioptrique* of 1637, in which the eye is an entirely passive optical object. If Aristotle had insisted that a dead eye, unable to perform its active function, was not really an eye at all (*Parts of Animals* 641a5), Descartes showed that an eye plucked from a body was in all respects still an eye, insofar as it was still a refractive instrument that could form optical images.

At the same time, the mathematical rules for image-location, unquestioned since Euclid, came under scrutiny. Ancient optics located the image

of an object, after reflection or refraction, by a simple geometrical rule. Improvements in optical objects, and the study of lenses, showed that this rule was sometimes false; moreover, it had no physical reason to be true. From the 1580s, mathematicians and optical theorists began to consider the role of binocular vision in the location of images, whether direct, reflected, or refracted. For ancient and medieval optics, the presence of two eyes merely extended the visual field, while also showing nature's sagacity in providing a second eye, should one be damaged. The connection between binocularism and depth-perception seems to have been made first by Benedetti, and then more famously by Kepler (Goulding 2018).

Advances in mathematics also affected the science of optics. Mathematicians in the sixteenth century had recovered and then surpassed the Greek mathematical legacy from antiquity. The theory of conics and other curves reached its highest point since antiquity, and was used to investigate burning mirrors and lenses, and the nature of refraction itself. The calculational shortcuts of prostaphaeresis and logarithms, developed between 1580 and 1620, greatly reduced the tedium of multiplying and dividing long numbers (such as the sines of angles), and made it possible for optical theorists to investigate optical objects mathematically and to construct tables.

Beginning with Euclid, traditional optics had preserved a small space for the theory of burning mirrors. Euclid and some of his successors had attempted, unsuccessfully, to describe the action of the concave spherical mirror. Diocles wrote a short treatise that accurately described the optics of both the spherical and the parabolic burning mirror (Rashed 2002). This treatise, lost in the original Greek, circulated in Arabic translation and was incorporated into works by Alhazen and others, which influenced the medieval Latin understanding of conic sections (Clagett 1964–1984). Drawing on this older tradition, as well as recently rediscovered Greek texts, Renaissance optical writers became ever more interested in the possibility of marvelous burning

mirrors. The apocryphal story of Archimedes burning the ships at Syracuse became a commonplace of prefaces to optical works, often explicitly directed at princely patrons who might be attracted to this military technology. At the same time, the crafts of glass and metal working now put these legendary deeds within reach. Experiments with concave mirrors led to two complementary developments. On the one hand, interest in such mirrors as burning instruments, which produced objective effects independent of any observer, helped to shift the center of attention in optics from its traditional concern with sight to light itself. But on the other, the visual space of the concave mirror was explored by makers and users of finely constructed mirrors, and was carefully mapped by the Venetian Ettore Ausonio, who graphically catalogued the visual phenomena of the mirror. His discovery of the “point of inversion” of the concave mirror and his careful description from direct experience of magnification and distortion at varying distances, both quite unpredicted by medieval Perspectivist optics, greatly influenced the thought of della Porta, Galileo, and other practically minded opticians (Dupré 2005).

Finally, mention must be made of the perfecting of perspectival representation in Renaissance art. There is some controversy about the degree to which ancient and medieval optics affected, or *could* affect the discovery of linear perspective, even if fundamental perspectival constructions were justified by optical reasoning (Brownson 1981; Frangenberg 1986; Knorr 1991). But however it was discovered perspectival representation affected the study of optics itself. The fact that a painting could perfectly mimic the visual field, so that one could not distinguish between looking at a work of art or through a window, aided the development of the notion of the real optical image (or *pictura*), in contrast to the older idea of a *species*. Moreover, familiarity with perspectival images may have assisted Galileo in interpreting the images of the moon he saw through his telescope as representing heights and depressions (Edgerton 2009).

Impact and Legacy

The changes in optics in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were arguably as revolutionary as those that took place in astronomy in the same period, and had a similarly broad effect. The subject of the mathematical science of optics was finally transformed from sight to light itself (Smith 2014). The eye, which had retained an active role throughout medieval optics (even if diminished from antiquity) finally became an entirely passive machine in the philosophy of Descartes. This was appropriate for a philosophy that drew a clear distinction between the mechanical and deterministic physical world and the activity of the mind; moreover, Descartes' optical experimentation and theorizing may have been a significant impetus in the formation of his philosophy (Schuster 2013).

As light, rather than the eye, became the active principle in Renaissance optics, practitioners focused their attention on the nature of light itself. A crucial part of the legacy of Renaissance optics is a new concern with causation, by which optics was both assimilated into and shaped the new study of physics. For medieval optics, it did not matter what light actually was. It was a mathematical science, concerned with rays of light as lines *qua* physical, to use Aristotle's formulation (*Physics* II.219a10). Alhazen avoided discussing the actual substance of light; his medieval successors postulated *species* carried by light but were vague about the constitution of the either the *species* or their vehicle. In contrast, Kepler began his *Optics* with an attempt to describe the nature of light, from which its properties would be derived. So too (though very differently) did Descartes. Newton and Huygens established the two models of light that would be in tension with each other until the twentieth century, particles and wave, from which each managed to build a causal account of optics. The mathematician Fermat began from the nature of light – that it was something that travelled through space, and the more slowly through a denser medium – and thence derived a *reason* for the sine law of refraction.

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Oracles in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The idea that prophetic predictions provided by oracles and inspired by the gods could be adopted in proving Christian dogmas dates back to Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. In the Renaissance, the discourse significantly enlarged because of previously unknown sources and new interpretations.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In Antiquity, an oracle was considered to be a person able to predict the future through divine inspiration. As oracles were thought to acquire the divine words and transmit them to people, in ancient sources they were often pictured in a frenzied state. The two most famous oracles of Greek Antiquity were Pythia, the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, and the oracle at Dodona in Epirus. According to the ancients, other mythical figures, such as sibyls, provided similar forms of divination. These women, through whose lips, as was believed, the gods spoke to the audience, were described in a number of influential ancient sources. The most significant one was Virgil's *Eclogue IV* (Virgil 1999). Part of his *Eclogues*, also known as the *Bucolics*, written around 40 BC, during a time of temporary political stability after the second triumvirate deal, this fragment describes the birth of a boy who is expected to become divine and will eventually rule over the world. In the *Eclogue*, this prediction is associated with the Cumaean sibyl. Although the fragment in question seems to have had a political dimension, early Christian writers reinterpreted the whole *Eclogue IV* to be about the birth of Jesus Christ.

This Christianized vision of Virgil's *Eclogue* formed an important trend in interpreting the place of ancient oracles and sibyls within Christian theological tradition. Totally denying any kind of pagan or magical elements, Christian thinkers, however, accepted the idea of *philosophia perennis* ("perennial philosophy") – a doctrine claiming that a single true theology exists, which manifests itself within different societies. Besides, for many medieval scholars, Virgil did not only predict the birth of Christ, he obtained the fame of a pre-Christian prophet. Such a Christian interpretation of *Eclogue IV* explains the fact that Virgil accompanied Dante in the two first parts of the *Divine Comedy* (*Hell* and *Purgatory*) (Alighieri 2008), while Michelangelo pictured the Cumaean sibyl on the ceiling painting of the Sistine Chapel.

The myth of oracles or sibyls who had predicted the birth of Christ before Christ received one more justification in the fifteenth century with the transmission of the so-called pseudo-Zoroastrian oracles into the West (Majercik 1989). In the classical period, Zoroaster was considered to be the creator of magic, the founder of astrology, and the author of numerous works on philosophy, magic, alchemy, and astrology. His biography, though short and often confusing and erroneous, was object of interest for some influential ancient authors such as Pliny, Porphyry, Origen, Arnobius, and others. Plato's interest in Zoroaster and Persia is evident from several dialogues. In the *First Alcibiades*, the magic of Zoroaster is seen as being nothing but the service of the gods in which the Persian kings instructed their sons. Plato's disciples including Hermodorus, Eudoxus, and Heraclides Ponticus followed their teacher in exploring Zoroastrianism. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle called the Persian magi, the followers of Zoroaster, the earliest forerunners of Plato. The *Oracula Chaldaica* made up of Neoplatonic, Pythagorean, Stoic, Gnostic, and Persian sources were compiled in the second century AD by a certain Julian. Proclus is supposed to have been working on a commentary, now lost, on the *Oracula*. The Byzantine scholar Michael Psellus gathered the

fragments of the *Oracula* and wrote commentaries and expositions on the Chaldean theurgy. In the West, Petrarch described Zoroaster as the founder of magical arts in the *Trionfo della fama*, which marked the trend to definitely associate the name of Zoroaster with the *Oracula Chaldaica*. The Renaissance interest in the pseudo-Zoroastrian oracles was primarily due to Georgius Gemistus, also known as Plethon, one of the most influential Byzantine *émigrés*. Plethon was the first to infer that Zoroaster was the source for the *Oracula Chaldaica*. Along with bringing its manuscript to the West, Plethon introduced Zoroaster as the first (and the most important) among *prisci theologi*. The *prisca theologia* ("ancient theology") concept, another form of the *philosophia perennis* doctrine, became popular among Renaissance thinkers of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Although Marsilio Ficino did not meet Plethon in person, he was definitely under his influence. He read a manuscript with Plethon's writings, now kept in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence, and even added his own translation of the Zoroastrian oracles to the body of his fundamental *Theologia platonica de immortalitate animorum* (Ficino 2001–2006). In the chronology of *prisca theologia* described in the *De religione christiana*, Ficino named Zoroaster the first *priscus theologus* who influenced Hermes, Orpheus, Plato, and other pre-Christian theologians. Due to this, Zoroaster and the *Oracula* took an honorable and unique place within Renaissance philosophical agenda. Zoroaster also contributed to the legend of pre-Christian oracles.

Impact and Legacy

Along with another source, the *Sibylline Oracles*, a collection of oracular utterances written in Greek hexameters and ascribed to the sibyls, the *Oracula Chaldaica* played an important role in the diffusion of the *prisca theologia* doctrine and pseudo-ancient theurgical practices. Pico della Mirandola, Ficino's younger contemporary,

accepted the Zoroastrian oracles as an authentic Oriental doctrine. In a letter to Ficino, he claimed:

I was forcibly taken off from other things and instigated to the Arabic and Chaldaic learning by certain books in both those languages, which came to my hands, not accidentally, but doubtless by the disposal of God, in favour of my studies. Hear the inscriptions, and you will believe it. The Chaldaic books (if they are books and not rather treasures) are the oracles of Esra, Zoroaster, and Melchior, Magi; in which those things which are faulty and defective in the Greek, are perfect and entire. There is also an exposition of the Chaldean wise men upon these oracles, short and knotty, but full of mysteries. There is also a book of the doctrines of the Chaldean theology, and upon it a divine and copious discourse of the Persians, Greeks, and Chaldeans.

The Zoroastrian oracles appeared in a number of Pico's early writings including the famous *Oratio de hominis dignitate* and the *900 Conclusiones*, as a crucial source for reconstructing ancient wisdom. However, in his later treatises, particularly in the *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, Pico rejected Zoroaster and the whole *prisca theologia* accusing them of legitimating astrology and other magical arts.

Starting with Ficino and Pico, two approaches to the oracles were dominant. The first group of scholars accepted Ficino's and early Pico's association of Zoroaster with the Christian tradition. Their opponents condemned the *Oracula* as spurious and not "ancient," since written already after Christ. Many learned scholars in Italy and Europe followed Ficino and Pico in their attempts of reconstructing the *prisca theologia* doctrine with the use of Zoroaster. The Aristotelian philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi, who usually opposed the Florentine philosophers, cited Zoroaster in support of the resurrection in his *De naturalium effectuum causis sive de incantationibus*. In attempting to deduce all philosophical and religious doctrines from Zoroaster and to achieve a concordance between them and expressions in the Gospels, Agostino Steuco drew on the *Oracula*. In his *De perenni philosophia*, he remained loyal to Ficino and named Zoroaster the most ancient theologian whose views were followed by the Greeks. Zoroaster was also cited in Francesco Patrizi's and Giordano Bruno's works. Patrizi

went on to publish a Latin translation of the text in the appendix to his *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591).

The views of Ficino and Pico on the *prisca theologia* doctrine and the Zoroastrian oracles spread across Europe. They received support in France, for instance, in the writings of Symphorien Champier whose use of Zoroaster and the *Oracula* could be seen in the *De quadruplici vita* published in 1507. The French Protestant writer Philippe de Mornay finds much in Zoroaster to substantiate with the Christian religion. In his *De la vérité de la religion chrétienne contre les athées, épicuriens, payens, juifs, mahométans et autres infidèles*, published in 1581 in Antwerp, he even used Zoroastrian teaching to prove the essential Christian dogmas such as the Trinity.

The first printed editions of the *Oracula* appeared in France. In 1538, Jean Loys (Johannes Lodovicus Tiletanus) published in Paris the *editio princeps* of the Greek oracles. In the following year, Jacques de Sainte Marthe (Jacobus Marthanus Pictaviensis) prepared and published a Latin translation, without the Greek version, under the title *Magica Zoroastri oracula*; he supplemented this text with his Latin translation of Plethon's Greek commentary on the *Oracula*. The Latin and Greek versions of the *Oracula*, along with Plethon's commentary, were republished more than once throughout the whole sixteenth century. The first vernacular (French) translation was published in Paris in 1556 by François Habert.

In other European countries, the *Oracula* were also widespread. Johann Reuchlin, Michael Servetus, Cornelius Agrippa, and Cornelius Gemma acknowledged the importance of the Zoroastrian oracles in the formation of ancient philosophy and Christian religion. In 1593, the physician Johann Jessenius even published in Wittenberg a book specifically devoted to Zoroaster entitled *Zoroaster. Nova brevis veraque de universo philosophia*. The Cambridge Platonists, namely, Ralph Cudworth and Henry More, accepted the oracles as valid and authentic.

On the other hand, in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, opposition to Zoroaster's

authority significantly raised. The Calvinist theologian Theodore Beza was one of the first who condemned the oracles as erroneous. While a few scholars insisted on the authenticity of the oracles, others like Petrus Lambecius, Theophilus Spizelius, Johann Heinrich Ursinus, and Thomas Burnet ascribed the *Oracula* to Greek Platonists in the period after Christ. This supposition became dominant in the second half of the seventeenth century. Eighteenth-century scholars, including Johannes Franciscus Buddeus, Isaac de Beausobre, and Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, unconditionally condemned the oracles as being counterfeit. Thus, in the early modern period, the *Oracula*, not unlike the *Corpus Hermeticum* and other treatises of the same genre, eventually lost their influence, and the concept of pre-Christian oracles was radically reconsidered and then rejected.

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Organism in Renaissance Sciences

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Abstract

Since antiquity, living beings have been defined as organic bodies able to perform certain complex activities, including nourishment, growth, and reproduction. These activities, or basic organic functions, were attributed to the soul and its parts. According to ancient physiological theory, the soul is linked to the organization of the body, but is not a direct cause or result of it. Renaissance authors adopted this view of the soul as the principle of life. In various instances they emphasized the interaction and interdependence of the organic parts as the precondition for the performance of typical activities. Such an explanation was often achieved by comparing the body of a living being with the cosmic order, complex artifacts, man-made constructions, or the interaction between individuals in social groups. By stressing the interdependence of parts as well as the resulting functional closure as the scientific foundation of understanding and explaining organic systems, Renaissance conceptual models have paved the way for a materialistic and at the same time holistic understanding of living beings as organisms, which was then consolidated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In ancient philosophy, a clear-cut model of the organism as a system of interdependent parts did not exist. There was, however, a concept of the *living being* in Aristotle's writings. It was established as a particular ontological category defined by the possession of a soul and by the capacity for particular activities such as

nourishment, growth, reproduction, and, to a certain extent, locomotion and perception (following Aristotle, *De anima* 412a). But these faculties were not analyzed or explained in terms of an “organism,” i.e., as the organization of the body as a decentralized structure whose unity relies on the interdependence of its parts.

This nonorganismic view of living beings is especially true for Aristotle. The term “organic body,” as introduced by Aristotle, should not be translated (as is often the case) as a “body endowed with organs,” but should be understood in the sense of an “instrumental body” (Bos 2003), for in all other contexts where the expression “organic” appears in Aristotle’s writings, it is used in lieu of “instrumental.” The living body, according to Aristotle, is essentially characterized as an instrument for the soul; in his thinking the soul alone is the life-bearing principle. The modern understanding of “organic body,” meaning a body consisting of diverse functional parts, appeared in late Antiquity (e.g., with John Philoponus in the sixth century). But it was not until scholastic times that it acquired the status of a technical term. In the writings of Thomas Aquinas, the term holds a special place and is defined with the aid of an incorrect interpretation of Aristotle’s writings as “a body having a diversity of organs” (*Commentarius in libros de anima II et III* 2, 1, 20; No. 230).

There were, however, some ideas in ancient thought that were conceptually related to the modern view of living beings as systems of interdependent parts. This applies especially to the analogy of organisms and societies. Organisms and human societies consist of a multitude of diverse components, but their interactions result in homogeneous outcomes, such as the preservation and propagation of the whole system (in the case of the organism). Following the principle of the division of labor, the stomach and hands, for example, bear a relationship of interdependence in an analogous way as the classes of a society depend on each other – this being the message of the famous fable of Menenius Agrippa (Livius, *Ab urbe condita* II, 32). This comparison laid the foundation for viewing living beings as complex and organized systems; but the basic principle of these systems – the

interdependence of parts – never acquired a key position in the definition of living beings. It was the possession of a soul that made living beings what they were, not their internal composition.

The conception of living beings as organisms only emerged later through the rise of physiological knowledge and the use of metaphors from the human sphere. Thus, the Roman physician Galen, who probably possessed the best knowledge of human physiology in the ancient world, described the relationship between the parts of the human body as *sympathy* (Galen, *De usu partium corporis humani* I, 8) and compared the body to a *symphony* (Galen, *De methodo medendi*, ed. Kühn X, p. 643). Thinking about physiological processes also provided a functional understanding of the soul as being diffuse and possessing diverse interacting parts. By connecting it to physiological knowledge, the concept of the soul gradually transformed in such a way that it could be identified with the functional organization of the body – its parts depending on the influence of other parts (Siegel 1973, p. 129).

Since late medieval times, the organic body has increasingly been understood as a system of organs whose complex functions resulted from the interaction of their parts. In his discussion of Aristotle, Marsilius of Padua describes living bodies as composed of distinct parts that stand in a definite relation to each other and whose functions result from their communication with one another as well as with the whole system (1324, I, 1, §3). Marsilius applied this model to both living bodies and societies.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The most innovative development by Renaissance scientists was their systematic practice of empirical investigation combined with systematic description. A prime example of this dual movement is typified in the work of the scientist-artist Leonardo da Vinci. After dissecting many human corpses, he provided detailed drawings of the inner organs and their anatomical connectivity. In these visual representations, every organ was

shown as an integral part of the body, suggesting that the body is a functionally closed system or a whole comprised of interacting parts. Leonardo explained the functioning of the organs through reference to mechanical models such as pillars, levers, and pulleys. The aim was to integrate the anatomical observations into a physiological model of the body's system. A similar approach, systematically extended to all parts of the human body, is evident in Andreas Vesalius's monumental *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543).

From a theoretical perspective, one of the challenges faced by Renaissance philosophy was how to adapt traditional metaphysics to the mechanistic thinking of the emerging experimental sciences. On the one hand, there was the Aristotelian conception of living beings as substantial forms unified and individuated by the influence of particular souls. On the other hand, there were materialistic approaches for which every composed substance, including living beings, had to be explained beginning from their atomic parts while abiding to the universal laws of motion. The theoretical challenge involved for many authors was how to reconcile these two perspectives with regard to living beings.

One innovative approach put forth in the middle of the sixteenth century by Girolamo Fracastoro (1550) and Julius Caesar Scaliger (1557) sought to combine the medieval theory of *minima naturalia* with a theory of natural mixture. According to this view, complex bodies are composed of a multitude of minute material bodies, but these natural minima retain their form even if they surrender their boundaries within the complex whole. Thus, they combine corpuscularian and non-corpuscularian properties (Blank 2010). Scaliger also stresses the immaterial character of the substantial forms by conceiving them as effective powers that can constitute living bodies. Even the "transmutation" of living organisms from one biological species to another, which Scaliger supposes to be possible, is explained within the framework of his conception of substantial forms. His idea was that transmutation occurs through a shift in the power relation between the various substantial forms within one organism. By allowing for a plural and variable combination of

substantial forms as elementary bodies of an organism, Scaliger combined the Aristotelian metaphysical framework of substantial forms with atomistic elements. Aristotle's substantialism for visible living creatures is thus transformed into a "microsubstantiality" (Smith 2006, p. 9) with a diversity of microsubstances on a level below visible objects.

With regard to these microsubstances, living beings were not necessarily seen to differ from nonliving composite bodies. In the mechanistic framework that was emerging at the time, the specificity of living organisms was increasingly derived from their internal structure, particularly the interaction of their parts. However, until the mid-seventeenth century, the concept of the organism was most often used as a model for human society or the cosmos as a whole without studying its internal structure in its own right. One example is provided by Marsilio Ficino, who in 1469 proposed to interpret the friendly interaction of our body parts as a model for the world because "in us" the inner organs "draw something from each other, and help each other, and sympathize with any one of them when it suffers" (Ficino 1469, VI, 10; pp. 81r–82r) – as do the parts of the world.

This conceptualization of organic bodies as mere models for the cosmos changed with the establishment of mechanistic philosophy and the natural sciences in the seventeenth century. A key element of this approach was to explain the processes and activities in living beings through mechanistic laws and by reducing them to the elementary movements of organic parts. The aim was to replace the soul as an unexplained principle that could not be embedded within the mechanistic program with concepts like "composition," "structure," or "organization."

Replacing the soul with these concepts resulted in a decentralized picture of the causal structure in living systems. In 1628, William Harvey made an important contribution to this picture, when he described the cyclical movement of blood in the body. Although Harvey imagined the heart as the central part of the body and compared it to a sun which governed all vital processes, his model of cyclical movement emphasized the important role of the other body parts as well. It is in line with this

view that Harvey conceived of the movements of animals not as the result of a central governing agent such as the soul or the brain, but as an interaction of diverse components of the body (Harvey 1628).

Mechanical laws were not the only explanatory principles within this program – emphasis was also placed on their interaction and the functional unity of causal systems. Even for mechanistic thinkers like René Descartes, living beings were not just mechanisms. Thus, Descartes stressed the unity and correlation of the parts within them. For him “the body [...] is one and in some manner indivisible”, and he explicitly stated that it is the arrangement or “disposition of the organs” on which the functions of life depend (Descartes 1649, p. 351; 1632, p. 202). Therefore, Descartes also had a kind of holistic conception of living beings as systems of interdependent parts.

In his mechanistic understanding of living beings, Descartes mainly aims at an explanation of organismic movements. In this approach he follows classical authors. But, in contrast to ancient accounts, he does not explain the capacity of living beings to move by themselves with reference to the powers of a soul. Instead, he uses the mechanical and hydraulic devices of his time, such as clocks, mills, and fountains, as models for explaining self-movement. In this view the organism appears as a complex hydromechanical system of springs, tubes, openings, and pulleys. In their interaction, these devices generate the movement of the whole system, and in their interdependence they form one coherent body.

Taking their lead from Descartes, many early natural scientists used the model of the machine to express the interdependence of parts in living beings as organized systems. For example, Kenelm Digby applied this analogy explicitly in 1644 – with the aim of not only reducing vital phenomena to the mechanical level but also emphasizing the interdependence of their parts and the integrity of the whole. Digby simultaneously emphasizes the heterogeneity of the parts in a living being along with their unity and harmony. He explicitly mentions the reciprocity of the parts that establishes this unity. The identity of the whole and of the parts will be destroyed if

one part is removed, he explains. Digby calls this the “correspondence” of the parts and writes “the one [part] not being able to subsist without the other, from whom he deriveth what is needefull for him; and again being so usefull unto that other and having its action and motion so fitting and necessary for it, as without it that other can not be” (Digby 1644, p. 205). The machine model allowed Digby to conceptualize the organism as a harmonious unity of diverse parts contributing – or “conspiring,” as he calls it – toward a common goal. So, instead of one unitary soul as a regulatory center, we have, in this model, dispersed control by heterogeneous parts.

It comes as no surprise that materialist thought played a large role in developing early models of the organism as a concept. Dispensing with the concept of the soul as the central principle for organizing and regulating living beings, they were forced to explain complex life functions through an intricate interaction of body parts. Terminologically, this is demonstrated by an influx of vocabulary from the field of architecture and the realms of industry and craftwork. Talking about the body of a living animal, for example, Giordano Bruno, at the end of the sixteenth century, uses an architectural metaphor (“*composizione d’uno animale*”; “*architettura*”; “*edificio*”; Bruno 1584, p. 23). In the seventeenth century, the watch and clockwork became another leading metaphor to describe life processes (Descartes 1632, p. 202; Locke 1689, p. 331), after having been already used by Thomas Aquinas (1266–1273, II/I, 13, 2).

With the metaphor of the clock and other technical devices, organic processes were not only explained on the basis of mechanistic thinking – for example, self-movement as a result of stored energy – the integration of these systems also provided a model for the functional closure and unity of living beings. During the seventeenth century, “organization” gradually became the central term for specifying the arrangement of matter characteristic of living beings. This was done to the point of identifying “life” with “organization”: In 1662, the botanist Joachim Jungius explicitly replaced “soul” with “organization” as the central principle in explaining life functions. With the

explanatory principle of “organization,” the soul becomes superfluous: “true organization alone suffices,” as he writes (Jungius 1662, part. 2, Sect. 3, Fragm. 5).

Impact and Legacy

During the seventeenth century, the principle of mutual dependence had become central to most definitions of living beings as organisms. One prominent example is Nicolas Malebranche’s definition of an “organic body” as a whole consisting of infinite parts “that mutually depend on each other” (1675, p. 75). In this conception it is the mutual dependence of the parts that is responsible for the system’s unity and closure. The common principle is based upon the *unity of a complex by the interdependence of its parts*. In this way it was possible to reconstruct living beings as intrinsic units of nature on a mechanistic basis. Accordingly, the function of the soul as lending a natural body complex capacities and unity is fulfilled by the principle of interaction and interdependence. By the end of the seventeenth century, Georg Ernst Stahl and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz were calling such a system of mutually dependent parts an *organism*. Indeed, Stahl was the first to do so in 1684 (Cheung 2006).

Cross-References

- [Generation in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Life in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Origenes in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The study of Origen’s legacy is a fundamental investigation into the history of Renaissance philosophy and theology. Indeed, two of the most

characterizing cleavages in Renaissance culture (Pico's *Oratio de hominis dignitate* and Erasmus' *Free Will*) are strongly related with Origen's thought; more generally his presence extensively influenced many authors and innervated many debates (particularly on religious hermeneutics, on freedom of investigations, and on afterlife justice). Moreover, Origen assumed peculiar relevance in those calculations devoted to unveil the concord of all the traditions, including Hermeticism and Kabbalah.

Origen of Alexandria: Doctrines and Legacy

Origen of Alexandria was a Greek church father (184/185–254), a pivotal exegete of the Bible and the author of the first complete attempt to reconcile Christianity and Platonism, in the *De principiis* (whose original Greek text was partially lost). His principal apologetic work, the *Contra Celsum*, was a defense of the Christian doctrine against the thesis of the philosopher Celsus. According to Porphyry (*Life of Plotinus*, 3.20–38), the special competence of Origen in philosophy arises from the fact he was, along with Plotinus, a disciple of Ammonius. The large corpus of his *Commentaries* and *Homilies* on biblical texts, characterized by the awareness of the four-fold sense of the Scriptures (*De principiis*. 4.3.5), leaves a patrimony of interpretations that innervated Christian hermeneutics. Particular mention has to be reserved also to his *Hexapla*, a crucial biblical edition with six versions of the holy texts in parallel columns (Eusebius, *Church History* 6.1).

Origen's theological theory was grounded in the confidence in divine mercy and in the absolute man's free will. In *De Principiis*, Origen proposed a doctrine of the preexistence of the soul. Furthermore, he seemed to carry forth the idea of the flow of successive worlds and the final restoration of living beings in God (*apocatastasis*). For these reasons, according to a long-established (but harshly disputed) interpretation of his books, Origen was accused of denying eternal penances and supporting metempsychosis. Doctrines ascribed

to Origen of Alexandria on Trinity and eschatology were condemned in 553, though his influence as an allegorical exegete still remained very powerful. The legacy of Origen remained a debated question: Jerome, Augustine, Ambrosius, and Aquinas frequently referred to him, trying to harmonize his blessed exegesis and his wicked ideas on free will, predestination, afterlife, and Trinity. Both sides – the exegetical and the theological, even if suspected – left deep footprints in Western Christianity.

The name of Origen has conveyed, in the Christian sphere, the dissent toward the idea of the eternal penances. Thus, by “origenism” we mean first of all a robust theological optimism, which puts the emphasis on the mercy of God, coupled with the radical defense of human freedom; second, the allegorical reading of the holy texts, that often goes along with the comparison with the Platonic and Jewish tradition; and third, the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit to God.

Historiography

The centrality of Origen in works of theology, philosophy, and iconography of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was shown in a seminal article by Edgar Wind (1954). Daniel P. Walker, in the footsteps of Wind, studied the influence of Origen in sixteenth-century France as well as the wide diffusion of Origenistic themes in the English philosophical debate (Walker 1959, 1964). In more recent years, several scholars have mapped the “invisible omnipresence” (von Balthasar 1984, 2) of Origen in the theological and philosophical culture of the Renaissance (Godin 1982; Lettieri 2000; Scheck 2008; Terracciano 2012).

Origen in 1400

Starting from the middle of the fifteenth century, the circulation of the books of Origen witnessed a new spring, especially in Rome, in Venice and, above all, in neoplatonic Florence. The scrutiny in

the syncretic tradition and in the possible harmony of Moses and Plato contributes to explain the enthusiasm in his books. Marsilio Ficino, in *De Christiana religione* as well as in *Theologia Platonica*, relates enthusiastically Origen's engagement to the Platonic tradition. Origen was usually introduced as "a most noble Platonist" (*platonicus nobilissimus*) whose life and doctrine were admirable (Ficino *Theologia Platonica* V, 13; *De voluptate* [Ficino 1561 p. 994]; *De Christiana religione* [Ficino 1561 72]). Ficino was obviously also aware of Origen's complicated collocation at the boundaries of orthodoxy. The dangers of Origen's theological calculations – who seemed to adapt the words of Christ to those of Plato – were also denounced by Cardinal Bessarion (who, nevertheless, possessed several manuscripts from the Alexandrian Church Father) (Bessarion 1923 II, 5: 8).

A crucial date for the revival of Origen was 1481, when the *Contra Celsum* was printed in Rome. The printing was, to some extent, an ideological operation aimed to exalt the apologetic roots of Christianity, in the context of the difficult relationship with the Turks (Villani 2013), but it also testified to the growing interest in patristic culture. The printing of the *Contra Celsum* had an immediate impact on the Florentine culture. Ficino promptly used the doctrine of naming exposed in *Contra Celsum* in his *Argumentum in Cratylum*, in his *Philebus Commentary*, and in his *De Christiana religione* (Bacchelli 2001; Bartolucci 2008), to enforce his doctrine of divine names, according to the idea that the link between words and their meaning, on determinate conditions, is natural and not conventional. This doctrine was received by Pico in his *Question de Magia naturalis et de Cabala* and from then flow in the general account of the Christian Cabala.

However, the impact of Origen's thesis in Pico goes far beyond this element (Terracciano 2018). The similarity between the anthropology exposed in Pico's *Oratio* and the doctrine of the Church Father Origen of Alexandria, who preached the existence of the same soul for angels, devils, and man, whose movements were governed by the free will, has been supposed by a large scholarship. Edgar Wind wrote: "Although his doctrine is

not identical with Origen's in any detail, they have in common the assumption that man's place in the universe is not fixed, that he is able to move freely, up and down, between the angelic and the animal spheres, belonging to both and bound to neither" Wind (1954, 414). So, the Alexandrian arises, in some way, in a central position for a critical evaluation of Pico's doctrines, also because one of his *Conclusiones* disapproved by the Church in 1486 deals with Origen's afterlife destiny. The longest section of Pico's *Apology* is focused on the thesis that is "more rational to believe that Origen is saved, than to believe he is damned" (*Rationalibus est credere Origenem esse saluum quam credere ipsum esse damnatum*, Pico 2010, VII). The Pichian defense of Origen is centered on the idea that it is not possible to damn a man for ideas condemned after his death. Pico argued that even if Origen had suggested fallacious ideas, they concerned doctrines without definite evidence in the holy books or ones not included in the official credo, during his life. He states, in addition, that Origen had never written neither dogmatically or assertively but only in an inquiring spirit. On the contrary, the definition of heresy involves "pertinacity," which is an implausible allegation for his case. To explain the most unacceptable issues of Origen's doctrine, Pico returned to the traditional argument that proposed that the writings of the Father were corrupted by successive heretics (Crouzel 1965; Fürst and Hengstermann 2015; Mahoney 1994; Mariani 2014).

The debate exceeded the single Origen's case, involving the sovereignty of the Church on the afterlife and the definition of the dogma. It was stopped by papal censorship, and the theologian Pedro Garcia was charged with replying to the Pico's argument (Crouzel 1977). However, the Pichian defense represents a turning point for the Renaissance legacy of Origen and remained one of the pillars of the standard defense of the legitimacy of reading Origen.

The Sixteenth Century

In the sixteenth century, there was a massive spread of the Origenian works that had different

editions, principally in Venice (Manuzio, Lazaro de Soardis) and in Paris. In 1512 J. Merlin published the *Opera Omnia* of Origen, and he carries it with an *Apology* pro Origen. A few years later, the Sorbonne mounted an attack against Merlin, through the works of Christian Masseeuw and Noel Beda, which ended in the condemnation of Merlin's work (Schär 1979). One of the principal aims of the attack of Beda was indeed Erasmus of Rotterdam, who was getting ready to edit a new edition of the *Origenis opera omnia* that will be published, posthumously, in 1536. Erasmus was an enthusiastical admirer of the Church Father, to the point that by writing that one page of Origen could teach him more than ten pages of Augustine (III, Ep. 844, 337, p. 252–254). Erasmus, with his commitment to the idea that faith is a continuous progress and that hermeneutics needs philology and allegory, with his purpose to restore faith in God's mercy and man's freedom, was the champion of Renaissance Origenism; indeed according to Febvre, "*c'est qu'entre temps, Origène était devenu Erasmién, ou Erasme origéniste*" (Febvre 1942). He was deeply indebted to Origen's interpretations: the *Dialogue on the Free will* is strongly based on Origen's *De Principis* and on *Commentary on Romans* in dealing with the crucial exegesis of the Pauline sentences on grace (Godin 1982; Scheck 2008; Terracciano 2012). From his point of view, Luther totally rejects the interpretations of Origen, considered by him an absolutely unreliable and misleading commentator. In fact, the tenacious refusal of allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, which Origen was among the first to adopt, is added to the condemnation of the specific doctrines. For this reason, also Melanchthon identified in the *Origenica aetas* (the period from the II to the III century) the age of the initial distortion of Christianity and the beginning of the decline with respect to the initial Pauline spirituality. This was the view of the most part of the reformers on Origen, with the partial exclusion of Zwingli and Butzer (Terracciano 2012; Fallica 2016).

Origen's fortune was not only confined to the debate on free will. Bonaventure des Périers, in

Cymbalum Mundi, uses the *Contra Celsum* as a doxographic work, in order to find the arguments for his anti-Christian satire (Febvre 1942). For Francesco Zorzi, the interest in Origen derives conversely from his role as cultural broker of the different ancient wisdoms. Specifically, following the path of Giovanni Pico's interpretation, he considered Origen the Christian exegete most familiar with the secret philosophical doctrines of the Jews. In the same way, Jean Bodin used it extensively in his *Colloquium heptaplomeres*.

Origen was also a fundamental author for Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella. Bruno's dialogue with Origen develops along three axes: doxographic, hermeneutic, and eschatological (Terracciano 2014). Origen is the Father of the Church who most often appears (at least according to direct occurrences) in the Brunian corpus, associated with some images and doctrines that are well established in the tradition: a hermeneutical tendency based on the search for allegorical meanings (Bruno 2000a, 687); the doctrine of universal vicissitude, an element that is linked to metempsychosis (Bruno 2000a, 770, *De minimo* I, 3, p. 143); the demonological vision, also not separated from heterodox visions of the destiny of souls (Bruno 2000b 43); and the conceptual closeness, derived from the elements mentioned, with the Pythagorean and Cabalist doctrines (Bruno 2000a, 770). Campanella, in the *Ethica*, compares Origen to Columbus and Galileo, for his craving for knowledge, and, furthermore, he extensively used the author of *De Principiis* to make modern philosophical-scientific progress compatible with his view of the Catholic tradition (Lettieri 2000).

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Osiander, Andreas

Born: 19 December 1498, Gunzenhausen (Bavaria)

Died: 17 October 1552, Königsberg (Prussia)

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Abstract

Andreas Osiander was a Lutheran theologian of the first generation of reformers. He was a preacher and worked as a teacher of Hebrew in Nuremberg. He is renowned in theology due to his polemics with Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon concerning the doctrine of justification, which seems to be influenced by Paracelsus and Renaissance Neoplatonism. In his exegetical works, Osiander followed the cabalistic techniques of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin. His editorial works are the most famous. Osiander prepared the first edition of Nicolaus Copernicus's *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* (1543) which he anonymously introduced with a preface suggesting that the work was more of a mathematical model than a description of reality. Due to this he has been called either the enemy of science or the founder of an instrumentalism in the philosophy of science. Osiander's edition of Girolamo Cardano's mathematical work *Ars Magna* (1545) also attracted particular attention.

Biography

Andreas Osiander studied at the university in Ingolstadt where he was influenced by the humanistic principle of exegesis. He never finished his university studies but did leave with an ongoing interest in mathematics and Hebrew, including the Kabbalah. In 1519 Osiander moved to Nuremberg where he taught Hebrew and became an ardent

proponent of Martin Luther's reformation. As an acclaimed preacher, he had a substantial influence on the city council. Osiander took part in important theological negotiations of his time: at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529 and at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. Due to his resistance to the Augsburg Interim in 1548, which reestablished the imperial and papal authority over certain imperial cities, Osiander was forced to leave Nuremberg and settled in Prussian Königsberg. He died in the midst of his sharp polemics with Lutheran orthodoxy and Philipp Melanchthon.

Humanism and Christian Kabbalah

Osiander adhered to the humanistic maxim "back to the sources" (*ad fontes*) and praised Erasmus of Rotterdam as the most important humanist of his time. In order to facilitate the exegesis of Holy Scripture, he emphasized the importance of understanding Hebrew. Influenced by his Ingolstadt teacher of Hebrew, Johannes Böschenstein, and partially also by the Christian cabalist Johannes Reuchlin, Osiander used cabalistic techniques, such as tetragrammaton, gematria, and notarikon in his theological work *Harmonica Evangelica* (1537) (Schubert 2014). In this book Osiander applied a musical theoretical concept of harmony on exegetical problematic seeking of the harmony between gospels.

Osiander followed Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's conception of the ancient wisdom (*prisca sapientia*). He quotes Pico's work *Conclusiones* and his theses on Kabbalah in particular. Osiander, however, did not develop Pico's syncretic philosophy. Christian Kabbalah and quotations from Pico helped him to improve the exegesis of the Scripture and to determine events in the future, so-called conjectures. In the book on conjectures (*Coniecturae de Ultimis Temporibus ac de Fine Mundi*, 1544), he may have been influenced by Pico and by Nicolaus of Cusa concerning the title of the work. Unlike Pico's emphasis on anthropocentrism, Osiander rethought the Cusanus' notion of the "coincidence of opposites" in a theocentric and Christocentric way. He rejected a spatial center of the universe

and stressed its temporal center in the historical-eschatological interpretation of Cusanus' principle (Wrightsmann 1975).

Editorial Work: Copernicus and Cardano

Entrusted by Nicolaus Copernicus and his pupil Johannes Rheticus, Osiander edited in Nuremberg Copernicus' fundamental work *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium* (1543). According to an older interpretation, Osiander's work on the edition was connected with his astrological interests (Hirsch 1919). This interpretation was later denied (Seebass 1967), and his mathematical motivation with a theological goal is instead suggested as the reason for his involvement. A better mathematical model as constructed by Copernicus could lead to a more accurate calendar which could help to specify exact conjectures of future events (Wrightsmann 1975).

Osiander published Copernicus' book together with his own but anonymous introduction *Ad Lectorem*. Herein Osiander interprets Copernicus' heliocentric model as a mathematical hypothesis whose aim is only the prediction of phenomena. This view is based on the understanding of mathematical astronomy aiming to "save the appearances" (Duhem 1969). A mathematical model can be constructed freely since the goal of astronomy is not the description of the world as real but only the prediction of future events. Osiander created a hierarchy of sciences according to the certitude of knowledge. Astronomy (mathematics) occupied a lower position as it was based on observations and thought not to be able to attain knowledge of real causes. Natural philosophy was assigned to the second level as a probable knowledge of its cause could be ascertained. Only theology stemming from revelation was deemed to be able to provide knowledge with an absolute degree of certitude.

Following the "saving appearances" hypothesis, Copernicus' heliocentric theory therefore should be put on the same level of credibility as the mathematical astronomy of Ptolemy. Copernicus' heliocentrism, however, seems to be more appropriate for astronomical predictions according to Osiander. This view on heliocentrism

provoked a disagreement with Johann Rheticus, who was initially asked to edit the book of Copernicus and held a realistic position concerning heliocentrism. The debate around Osiander's short *Ad Lectorem* flamed up at the end of the sixteenth century and still continues today.

In 1545 Osiander edited *Ars Magna*, a mathematical work by Girolamo Cardano, where the solution of cubic equations was formulated. Cardano held Osiander in high esteem as a mathematician and praised the emendations he made to his text. In addition, Osiander and Cardano allegedly exchanged horoscopes and astrological notions (Hirsch 1919) although this is not evidenced in Osiander's correspondence (Osiander 1975–1997).

New Alchemistic Theology

In theology Osiander was an unorthodox follower of Martin Luther and often polemicized with the central reformation figures. The biggest controversy surrounding Osiander arose from his theory of justification. Osiander refuted the "forensic" justification of sinful man by means of grace and coined an "effective" justification by means of the indwelling of God's word in man. The doctrine of Christification and divinization of man is based on the alchemistic ideas of transformation and perfection of human nature and displays a similarity with Paracelsus (Goldammer 1972). It was probably formulated by Osiander independently from Paracelsus although they did share some of the common fundamentals present in Neoplatonic philosophy. One influence could have come from his positive attitude to the tradition of *Prisca sapientia* which also shares universalistic tendencies with Raymundus Lullus in the identity between God's power and God's justice (Hirsch 1919).

Legacy

Osiander's theological views advocated by so-called Osiandrists were condemned by Lutheran orthodoxy after his death, and the author

and his follower were connected with Paracelsian alchemistic theology and with Weigelianian heresy.

His methodological approach to Copernicus was initially accepted by Lutherans in the so-called Melancthon circle (Westman 1975). Later, Giordano Bruno sharply denounced Osiander's view on Copernicus in his dialogue *Ash Wednesday Supper* not knowing the authorship of the preface. The identity of Osiander as the author of *Ad Lectorem* was first uncovered by Johannes Kepler who advocated the realistic meaning of Copernicus' heliocentrism. From the correspondence between Osiander, Rheticus, and Copernicus quoted by Kepler (Jardine 1988), it could be deduced that Osiander's reason to introduce Copernicus using the preface was to prevent condemnation by theologians and Aristotelians (Duhem 1969). From the beginning of the seventeenth century, Osiander was often viewed as an enemy of heliocentrism and of science as such. However, in the philosophy of science of the twentieth century, Osiander became a significant figure due to his so-called instrumentalistic or fictionalistic attitude to scientific theories opposing the realistic position. According to instrumentalists a theory provides only a device for computing and for predictions of phenomena, while realists consider a theory as a statement reflecting reality. In this sense Osiander was included by Pierre Duhem into the movement of the "savers of phenomena" (Duhem 1969). At the same time, Duhem also considers Osiander's approach as being common in modern science (Gingerich 1973; Graubard 1964). Concerning the philosophy of science, Osiander's initial role in the birth of instrumentalism was emphasized by Karl Raimund Popper, who advocates realism and considers instrumentalism as a dogma stemming from Osiander, Bellarmine, and George Berkeley (Popper 1965). Instrumentalism was on the other hand advocated by Paul Feyerabend with a reference to Osiander (Feyerabend 1999). Despite of the importance of Copernicus and Osiander's preface to his work, the application of modern concepts of instrumentalism and realism to the sixteenth-century philosophy and science is viewed as anachronistic (Barker and Goldstein 1998).

Cross-References

- ▶ Copernicanism
- ▶ Copernicus, Nicolaus
- ▶ Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
- ▶ Rheticus, Georg Joachim

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Osório, Jerónimo

Born: Portugal, 1514

Died: Tavira, Portugal, 1580

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Abstract

Easily the best-known Portuguese writer in sixteenth-century Europe, Osório engineered wide exposure for his many books, on a variety of topics, but all of them in Latin. He was educated outside Portugal, including a particularly formative period in Bologna, but most of his life was spent in his own country, where for more than 20 years he was bishop of the Algarve.

Though not an original thinker, Osório's ability to convey orthodox Catholic beliefs in elegant Latin prose brought him many readers, including in the Protestant world. His early works of the 1540s, *On Civil and Christian Nobility* and *On Glory*, show him to have been a Christian humanist, with an unusual (for Portugal) interest in and knowledge of the work of Homer. However, he could not accept the work of the classical philosophers because it was not based on revealed religion. He was also profoundly critical of Machiavelli, on the grounds of his hostility to Christianity.

Osório was also well known, especially in England, for his open letter to Queen Elizabeth, who he tried to persuade to return to the faith of her ancestors. It led to a polemic with Anglican theologians which lasted for many years. His writings about kingship do not move very far from the ideas of St Thomas Aquinas.

Biography

After early studies in Salamanca and Paris, Osório spent two formative years in Bologna (1540–1542) where he met the Spaniard Antonio Agustín and the Frenchman Jean Matal, contacts of great value to him as he became an internationally famous writer. Apart from a year in Rome (1576–1577), the rest of his life was spent in Portugal, at first in court circles, and from 1564 in Silves and in Faro, as bishop of the Algarve.

Works

Osório wrote almost exclusively in Latin. His early works, *De nobilitate civili et christiana* (*On Civil and Christian Nobility*, 1542) and *De Gloria* (*On Glory*, 1549), are concerned with social and political questions. He also wrote works of: (1) religious polemic, most notably his letter to Elizabeth I of England, in which he tried to persuade her to return to the Catholic faith (1563) and *De Religione* (*On Religion*, 1567), which is a reply to Walter Haddon's defense of the queen; (2) a contribution to the theory of kingship, *De regis institutione* (*On the Institution of the King*, 1571–1572); (3) a famous history of the Portuguese discoveries (1571), essentially an adaptation of Damião de Góis's *Crónica de D. Manuel*; and, towards the end of his life, (4) works of Biblical scholarship, most easily consulted in his *Opera Omnia* (Rome, 1592).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In his controversies with the English Protestants, Osório maintains a strictly orthodox position with regard to such issues as the supremacy of the Pope, the importance of the religious orders, the necessity of good works, the doctrine of purgatory, the cult of the saints, etc. (Pinto 2006). Except insofar as he supported the doctrines of the Council of Trent, which had only been very recently formulated, it is difficult to see him as breaking with tradition.

Innovation and Original Aspects

Osório's two works of the 1540s on nobility and glory show him to have been a Christian humanist. Unusually for a Portuguese writer he has a good knowledge of Homer, and he can see a poetic truth in Homer's heroes, despite or even because of their mythological origin as the offspring of the pagan gods (Osório 1996). However, he is less tolerant of ancient philosophy which he condemns for its failure to acknowledge the truth of revealed religion (Osório 2005). It is in the name of religion also that he attacks Machiavelli, whose *Discorsi* on the first decade of Livy's History of Rome he seems to have known (Osório 1996). The more liberal side of humanism appears in his attitude to nobility which, since it is ultimately based in virtue, can be acquired by anyone.

Osório's theory of kingship is based on Aquinas's *De regimine principum*, though in deference to Portuguese tradition, he does not favor the election of the monarch. In *De regis institutione*, Osório also shows a concern for the contemporary political reality in Portugal, which was ruled by the youthful and inexperienced King Sebastião (Soares 1994).

Impact and Legacy

Outside Portugal, Osório was easily the best known Portuguese writer of the Renaissance. His ability to give voice to orthodox and mainline Catholic opinion in elegant Latin prose brought him many admirers, even in Protestant Europe. There are a great many editions of his books, mostly printed in Catholic centers like Cologne and Lyon. He was already known in England before his famous controversy with Queen Elizabeth, and Cardinal Pole, the last English cardinal before the Reformation, hoped to see *De nobilitate civili et christiana* translated into English. A translation appeared in 1576, many years after Pole's death in 1558. The book, usually in its original Latin, and the accompanying *De Gloria* can be found even in the libraries of English undergraduates of the period. However, the book which best stood the test of time was the history of the discoveries, an adaptation of a chronicle by

Damião de Góis which, either in Latin or in the French translation of 1581, still found readers in the eighteenth century (Earle 2009).

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Ottoman Philosophy

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Abstract

Modern scholarship on the history of Ottoman philosophy is in its early stages. For much of the twentieth century, the dominant

presumption was that there was little to study. Philosophy, it was believed, had been repudiated by mainstream Sunni Islam in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and henceforth only survived among the Shiites and enjoyed a silver age in Safavid Iran (1502–1722). Specialists have now largely challenged this view. Admittedly, there were few who openly identified as “philosophers” (*falāsifa*) in the Sunni Islamic world after the thirteenth century. But this was largely because *falsafa* tended to be understood as a school of thought rather than a specific discipline. The *falāsifa* were those who adhered to Neo-Platonism or Neo-Platonized Aristotelianism. They upheld the theologically problematic theses of the eternity of the world, that God does not possess knowledge of material particulars in the sublunary world, and the denial of bodily resurrection. Philosophy in the sense of a discipline committed to the rational discussion of metaphysics, physics, logic, and ethics continued unabated in later centuries.

The present article will begin with a brief historical introduction, followed by an outline of Ottoman scholarship in these four subdisciplines. The survey will be mainly historical and bibliographic. Given the early state of research, it is simply not feasible to structure the presentation on the basis of the ways in which Ottoman contributions to the rational sciences were or were not innovative.

Historical Context

The Ottomans emerged in the course of the fourteenth century as the most powerful of the many Turkish polities (*beyliks*) that emerged after the fall of the Seljuk Sultanate of Anatolia. It attracted numerous scholars in search of positions and patronage, especially from Persia and Central Asia. Until the mid-fifteenth century, ambitious Ottoman students often went to Cairo, then under Mamluk rule. For these reasons, scholarship within the early Ottoman realm was continuous with those of the wider Islamic world, and it is difficult to speak of a distinct Ottoman tradition of philosophy prior to the second half of the fifteenth

century. During the reign of Meḥmed II (1451–1481), this began to change. The Sultan established the “Eight Schools” (*Ṣaḥn-i Themān*) in Istanbul and discouraged scholars of his realm from studying in Cairo. The emergence of the Safavid dynasty in Persia in 1502 also contributed to the formation of a distinctive Ottoman scholarly tradition. In the short term, the ascendance of the Shiite Safavids led even more Persian scholars – Sunnis fleeing persecution – to come to the Ottoman lands. In the longer term, it resulted in the severance of scholarly ties and put an end to the stream of Persian immigrant scholars. After the sixteenth century, scholarly relations with Iran were negligible. The Iranian philosophers Mīr Dāmād (d.1631) and Mullā Ṣadrā (d.1635), for example, were not nearly as influential in the Ottoman environment as they were in Iran and the Indian subcontinent.

This does not mean that the study of philosophy was adversely affected. An older view among some Ottomanists held that the cultivation of the rational sciences ceased after the sixteenth century as a consequence of the rise of the “fanatical” *Ḳāḏīzādeli* movement in the early seventeenth century. Recent scholarship has rejected this view. Although the *Ḳāḏīzādelis* were vigorously opposed to Sufi theosophy, popular syncretic practices, and general religious laxity, it is not clear that they were systematically opposed to the rational sciences. In any case they remained a minority even among the class of Ottoman religious scholars (*ulema*). The rational and philosophical sciences continued to be cultivated until the downfall of the Ottoman Empire.

Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy in the *Madrasas*

The study of metaphysics and natural philosophy took place in a number of contexts. One was the colleges (*madrasas*) in which Ottoman students were trained in a range of scholarly disciplines, usually on the basis of handbooks written in Arabic by thirteenth and fourteenth-century scholars active in Persia and Central Asia. Two handbooks of rational theology (*kalām*) that were extensively studied in Ottoman madrasas were the *Tajrīd*

al-i'tiqād by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d.1274) and the *al-Mawāqif* by ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d.1355). Both works and the standard commentaries on them dedicated considerable attention to philosophical preliminaries. Both included an early section on “*metaphysica generalis*” (*umūr ʿamma*) that dealt with existence, essence, and causality. A section on substances and attributes (*jawāhir wa aʿrād*) followed, including a discussion of the Aristotelian categories. These philosophical sections elicited numerous glosses by Ottoman scholars, for instance, Ḥasan Çelebī Fenārī (d.1481) and Ḥaṭībzāde (d.1495). Some of the issues raised also became the subjects of independent treatises. The Ottoman scholar Ṭāşköprüzāde (d.1561), for example, produced treatises on the four Aristotelian causes, on the problem of universals, and on mental existence (*wujūddhihnī*).

Not all *madrasa* handbooks that covered metaphysics and natural philosophy were formally works on theology. The *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* by Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d.1265) was an introduction to logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. Especially the section on natural philosophy was studied intensively, along with the commentary of the Persian scholar Qāḍī Mīr al-Maybudī (d.1504) and the gloss of the Persian-born Ottoman scholar Muşliḥ al-Dīn al-Lārī (d.1571). The commentary and gloss became the subject of numerous super-glosses by later Ottoman scholars, for example, Ẹara Ḥalīl (d.1711), Meḥmed Kefevī (d.1754), and Ismāʿīl Gelenbevī (d.1791). These discussed at length issues such as atomism, hylomorphism, space, void, motion, and time.

The intensive scrutiny of metaphysics and natural philosophy did not lead Ottoman scholars to depart from mainstream condemnations of what they called *falsafa*. At the behest of Sultan Meḥmed II (1451–1481), Ḥōcazāde (d.1488) and ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d.1482) wrote works assessing – on the basis of rational argumentation – the classic attack on the *falāsifa* by the theologian al-Ghazālī (d.1111). Though they expressed disagreement on various points of detail with al-Ghazālī and with each other, they both firmly refuted the theses that the world is eternal, that only the soul survives death, and that God’s knowledge is limited to unchanging universals.

Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy Outside the Madrasas

Alongside this madrasa tradition, there were two further important contexts in which metaphysics and natural philosophy were discussed. One was in works belonging to the tradition of Sufi theosophy going back to the Andalusian mystic Ibn ʿArabī (d.1240) and his disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d.1274). Especially the former’s *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* was studied in Ottoman mystical circles and elicited numerous commentaries, for example, by Bālī Efendī (d.1552) and ʿAbdullāh Bōsnavī (d.1644). Among the Mevlevī Sufi order, there was also interest in the anti-Peripatetic Neo-Platonism of al-Suhrawardī (d.1191). A Turkish commentary on his *Ḥayākil al-nūr* was written by Ismāʿīl Anḳaravī (d.1631).

In the seventeenth century, there was some interest in European learning, especially in circles close to the Ottoman court. The *Basilica Chymica* of the Paracelsian physician and alchemist Crollius (d.1609) was translated into Arabic by Ṣālīḥ Ibn Sallūm (d.1670), a court physician to Meḥmed IV (r. 1648–1687). The *Atlas minor* of Hondius (d.1612) was translated into Ottoman Turkish by Kātib Çelebī (d.1657), and an Ottoman translation of Blaeu’s (d.1638) *Atlas maior* was produced by Ebū Bekr Dimaşķī (d.1691). The *Physics* of Aristotle was retranslated into Arabic by Esʿad Yānyavī (d.1731), along with the commentary of the Greek-born, Paduan Aristotelian Johannes Cottunius (d.1657).

Logic

The study of logic was a key component of the curriculum of the Ottoman *madrasas*. The handbooks that were studied all belonged to a broadly “post-Avicennan” tradition, in the sense that they took their departure in the (Arabic) works of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Persian logicians who were deeply influenced by – though not uncritical of – Avicenna (d.1037). The basic organizing principle of those works was to divide their presentation into two main sections: the first, on “conceptions” (*taṣawwurāt*), dealt with linguistic preliminaries, the five universals, and

definition, and the second, on “assents” (*taṣdīqāt*), was concerned with propositions, their immediate implications, and the syllogism. Little or no attention was given to the Aristotelian categories or the “matter” of the syllogism (demonstration, rhetoric, topics, poetics, sophisms).

A widely used introductory handbook was the *Īsāghūjī* by al-Abharī (d.1265), the above-mentioned author of *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*. The Ottoman scholar Meḥmed Fenārī (d.1431) wrote a much-studied and much-glossed commentary on this work. A more advanced handbook was the *Risāla al-Shamsiyya* by Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d.1276), which gave an extensive presentation of modal logic. Commentaries on it were written by the Ottoman scholars ‘Allāmek Bōsnavī (d.1636) and Muṣṭafā Mōstārī (d.1707).

In the course of the seventeenth century, the *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* by Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d.1390) also came to be studied, along with the commentary of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d.1502) and the gloss of Mīr Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Ardabīlī (d.1568). The focus was on the early sections of the work dealing with the definition of knowledge, its division into conception and assent, the division of each into evident and acquired, and the purpose and subject matter of logic. A number of Ottoman scholars, such as Kara Ḥalīl (d.1711) and Ismā’īl Gelenbevī (d.1791), wrote extensive super-glosses that delved into such topics.

In the eighteenth century, two esteemed handbooks on logic were written by Ottoman scholars: the *‘Arā’is al-nafā’is* by Ebū Sa’īd Ḥādīmī (d.1762) and *al-Burhān* by Ismā’īl Gelenbevī (d.1791). Both include, among other things, innovative discussions of categorical syllogisms with more than three terms, such as the following inferences:

This is a rational animal
Every animal breathes
 This breathes

This is the slave of a man
Every man is human
 This is the slave of a human

Ethics

Ethics was, unlike metaphysics natural philosophy and logic, not a standard *madrassa* discipline. Perhaps the major Ottoman contribution to the field was the *Aḥlāk-i ‘Alā’* by Ḳınālızāde (d.1571), written in Turkish and dedicated to an Ottoman governor of Damascus. This was influenced by earlier Persian works on ethics by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī). Also influential was a short treatise in Arabic by ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d.1355), which elicited commentaries by the aforementioned Ṭāṣköprüzāde (d.1561) and Aḥmed Münecimbāşı (d.1702).

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centuries. Like its equivalent in Western historiography, however, the term “Renaissance” in Ottoman history has multiple, overlapping and sometimes contradictory meanings that vary widely depending on context. Also in common with its Western equivalent, the term is anachronistic in the sense that it has been applied only retrospectively to the Ottoman period by modern scholars. While the roughly analogous concept of *tejdīd* or “renewal” did play a role in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Ottoman depictions of their own age, the term “Renaissance” per se was unknown among Ottoman intellectuals until the nineteenth century.

At a conceptual level, the Ottoman Renaissance is therefore analogous to many other moments of cultural vibrancy and rediscovery that modern scholars have chosen to describe with similar language, such as the “Carolingian Renaissance,” the “Bengal Renaissance,” or the “Harlem Renaissance” (Goody 2010). However, unlike such strictly comparative uses of “Renaissance,” the Ottoman case is unique in that the Ottomans were both contemporaries and neighbors of Renaissance Europeans, with whom they remained in constant contact throughout their history. As a result, it is in exploring the possibilities of dialogue and mutual influence between Ottoman and European intellectuals, artists and patrons – or, alternatively, in the denial of such dialogue or influence – that modern scholars have found it most useful to speak of the Renaissance with reference to the Ottomans.

Ottoman, Renaissance

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Abstract

The Ottoman Renaissance refers to the period of Ottoman history coinciding with the European Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth

Innovative and Original Aspects

Since the Ottoman Renaissance is a historiographical as much as a historical phenomenon, the question of its innovative and original aspects is best approached through a discussion of the various ways it has been employed in modern scholarship. For the sake of clarity, these have been divided into three dominant scholarly paradigms that are each described separately below. It should be emphasized,

however, that these descriptions are intended as only rough approximations of an evolving body of scholarship that is in reality a great deal more varied and dialogic than the summary presented here.

Paradigm #1: The Ottoman Renaissance as “Anti-Renaissance”

The most traditional way to understand the Ottomans’ relationship to the Renaissance is to describe their role in essentially negative terms: not as participants in the Renaissance per se, but rather as powerful agents who shaped its contours from without through their military expansiveness and their implacable hostility to European culture and to Western Christianity. For many generations of scholars, for example, it seemed self-evident that Ottoman advances into Byzantine territory, culminating with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, did not simply coincide with the flourishing of Italian humanism but were in fact its proximate cause – forcing the flower of Byzantium’s intelligentsia into Italian exile at precisely the moment in which an interest in Greek learning had begun to take root there (Geanakoplos 1989).

In more recent decades, scholars have become less likely to assert such a direct, functional link between Ottoman conquests and the rise of the Renaissance in Italy. But a newer readaptation of this paradigm can be observed in the burgeoning rise of scholarly interest in Renaissance “representations” of the Ottomans in realms as varied as history, literature, art, and political theory. A common aim of such scholarship, despite the considerable diversity of its subject matter, is to reassert the Ottomans’ negative role in the formulation of certain key aspects of Renaissance intellectual life by providing Europeans with a concrete example of a neighboring society that was familiar yet somehow lacked the essential characteristics of Western civilization. In other words, only by looking at themselves through the lens of the Ottoman “other,” it is argued, could the elites of Renaissance Europe consolidate a collective identity based on reverence for Greco-Roman antiquity, membership in the Republic of Letters, respect for the traditions of

classical philosophy, and other aspects of a nascent European sense of self that went beyond simple adherence to Christianity (e.g., Meserve 2008; Bisaha 2004; Valensi 1987).

Paradigm #2: The Ottoman Sultan as “Renaissance Despot”

A second and quite distinct understanding of the Ottoman Renaissance characterizes the Ottomans not as external antagonists but rather as active participants in Renaissance intellectual life, with a particular emphasis on the Ottoman court as a center of literary and artistic patronage. In its origins, this idea can be traced back to the foundational nineteenth-century historian Jacob Burckhardt, who had posited an Islamic ancestry for certain aspects of “Renaissance Despotism,” his term for the characteristic political culture of fifteenth-century Italy (Burckhardt 1860; Makdisi 1990). By the twentieth century, elements of Burckhardt’s thesis became a part of Ottoman historiography as well, notably in the work of the Orientalist Franz Babinger. In his authoritative biography of Sultan Mehmed “the Conqueror” (r. 1451–1481), for example, Babinger openly invoked Burckhardt in his portrayal of Mehmed and directly compared the Sultan to Ferrante of Naples, Caesar Borgia, and other contemporary “despots” of Renaissance Italy (Babinger 1953).

Admittedly, Babinger’s interest in making such comparisons was primarily to explain Mehmed’s reputed lack of religious scruples and his easy recourse to violence. But an expanding body of scholarship in more recent decades has focused instead on the cultural aspects of Mehmed’s “despotism.” As a result, Mehmed’s record as a patron of the arts and letters is now understood, at least in part, as a self-conscious attempt to use the language and the symbolism of the Renaissance to present himself as a latter-day Roman emperor (*Kaysar-ı Rûm* in Turkish) capable of restoring Constantinople to its rightful place as “the New Rome.”

Even as a child, in fact, it is now known that Mehmed had instruction in both Greek and Latin, and this early training continued to shape his patronage throughout his later life. Following his conquest of Constantinople, the numerous Greek

manuscripts known to have been commissioned for his personal library include the *Iliad*, Arrian's *Anabasis*, and Ptolemy's *Geographia*. And as his reputation as a patron grew, he also became the focus of a number of classicizing, eulogistic texts composed by literati in the hopes of securing his favor. These include Kritovoulos of Imbros's *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, a Greek text in which Mehmed is described as "philhellene" in the model of Alexander the Great, and Giovanni Maria Filelfo's similarly conceived *Amyris*, a 4,000-verse Latin poem that compared Mehmed to Hannibal and Cyrus. Meanwhile, an analogous set of "humanistic" sensibilities characterized many other areas of cultural production during Mehmed's reign, ranging from the visual arts to architecture (Raby 1983; Brotton and Jardine 2000; Necipoğlu 2012).

After Mehmed's death, his two immediate successors to the throne, Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512) and Selim I "the Grim" (r. 1512–1520), seem to have been comparatively less interested in styling themselves as "Caesars," such that the glorification of Greco-Roman antiquity in the mode of contemporary Italian art and literature became a much less prominent feature of Ottoman court culture during their reigns. But a noteworthy revival of this style of imperial patronage took place following the accession to the throne of Mehmed's great-grandson Suleiman "the Magnificent" (r. 1520–1566), a movement spearheaded by Suleiman's supremely powerful grand vizier, Ibrahim Pasha (d. 1536).

Born a subject of Venice in the eastern Adriatic, Ibrahim's efforts to associate both himself and his sovereign with Constantinople's rebirth as the "New Rome" were perhaps even more overtly shaped by Italianate ideals of the Renaissance than those of Sultan Mehmed. He was aided in this project by Alvise Gritti (d. 1534), the illegitimate son of the Venetian Doge Andrea Gritti (r. 1523–1538), who had sired Alvise while stationed in Constantinople as a diplomat. With Ibrahim's encouragement, Alvise's residence in the Ottoman capital became something of an Italian Humanist court in miniature, frequented by figures such as Tranquillo Andronico, the brothers Agostino and Giuseppe

Museo, and Francesco della Valle. And as had been the case in Mehmed's reign, such patronage was matched in other realms of cultural production as well. Among Ibrahim's most visible public gestures as a builder, for example, was to construct a grand personal residence at the Hippodrome, the long-neglected site of the Emperor Constantine's own imperial palace, whose garden he decorated with bronze statues of Hercules, Apollo, and Diana captured from the Hungarian royal palace in Buda (Finlay 1984; Turan 2007).

Subsequently, for reasons that continue to be debated by historians, Ibrahim Pasha fell precipitously out of favor and was executed by the Sultan in 1536. Although some lingering effects of his influence would continue to be felt, the Ottoman court's role as an important center of patronage for artistic, literary, and scholarly projects directly inspired by the ideals of Western humanism gradually came to an end. But even in Ibrahim's absence, Ottoman Constantinople would continue to be the center of an entirely different "Renaissance," rooted in the intellectual traditions of Islam rather than the Greco-Roman world.

Paradigm #3: The Ottoman Renaissance as "Islamic Renaissance"

It is only comparatively recently that scholars have begun to question the essentially "Islamic" character of Ottoman society, which was long assumed to have been a constant throughout Ottoman history (at least until the nineteenth century). Far from enjoying a seamless continuity with the intellectual traditions of the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258 C.E.), however, it has become increasingly apparent to specialists in the field that the Ottomans were in fact surprisingly unfamiliar with many aspects of Islam's classical literary corpus until comparatively late in their empire's rise to power. As a result, Ottoman learned elites are now understood to have "rediscovered" this classical corpus and to have systematically appropriated it as their own through a process of reproduction, translation, canonization, and emulation that mirrors Italian Renaissance humanism in several important respects.

The origins of this Islamic Renaissance can be traced to the mid-fifteenth century, and

significantly, the sultan most closely connected with its early promotion was once again Mehmed the Conqueror. A surviving inventory of Mehmed's personal library, for example, features over 8,000 manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, and other eastern languages and includes an especially large number of titles related to the life of Alexander the Great, to philosophy and political theory in the Arabo-Aristotelian tradition, and to related works in the fields of geography and cosmography. As such, the list reveals a body of interests that are largely complementary to the numerous Latin and Greek texts that Mehmed collected or commissioned during the same period, and should be understood as the product of a wider, self-consciously "cosmopolitan" pattern of patronage that sought to combine Eastern and Western literary and artistic traditions in a new imperial synthesis. Broadly in keeping with these cultural ideals, it should also be noted that Mehmed showed a consistent preference for "classical" languages. As such, he showed comparatively little interest in works in the Turkish vernacular, and even when commissioning translations of Greek and Latin texts, he requested translations into Arabic rather than Turkish (Necipoğlu 2012; Raby 1983).

Importantly, Mehmed seems to have used this "cosmopolitan" pattern of patronage to both reflect and legitimize his larger administrative practices, particularly his controversial policy of reserving top government postings for former Byzantine converts, Western renegades, Iranian immigrants, and other "outsiders" at the expense of freeborn Turkish-speaking Muslims (Babinger 1953). But in the decades after Mehmed's death, a new cadre of *madrassa*-trained, urban, Turkish-speaking literati began to flex their collective muscles in opposition to such policies. By the middle of the sixteenth century, they succeeded in establishing Turkish not only as the primary administrative language of the empire but also, for the first time in history, as a major medium of literature and scholarship (Kuru 2012).

Several aspects of this development have striking resonance with the trajectory of the European Renaissance. Firstly, although the members of this new imperial elite used eloquence in Ottoman

Turkish as a central marker of their collective identity, the moniker that they chose for themselves was not "Turkish" but rather "Roman" (lit. *Rūmī*). As such, they by no means rejected the idea, originally championed by Mehmed, that the Ottoman state was the New Rome and the Sultan its new Emperor. Instead, they presented an alternative chronology and taxonomy for this succession, inspired by the Quranic depiction of Arabs (*'Arab*), Persians (*'Acem*), and Romans (*Rūm*) as the three principle peoples of the world. From this starting point, they constructed a new meta-narrative of civilization that divided history into three primary ages, the first being the age of the Arabs (i.e., Classical Islam), the second being the age of the Persians (i.e., the medieval period), and the third being the age of the Romans (i.e., the Ottomans' own age of dominance). This third "Roman" age, in a manner remarkably evocative of Western humanism, was typically described in terms of "renewal" (*tejdīd*) and was linked to a program of remodeling society based on the standards of ethics, aesthetics, and good governance inherited from Islam's classical age – to which the *Rūmī* intellectuals, thanks to their *madrassa* education and their impeccable knowledge of Arabic and Persian, had privileged access (Andrews 2006; Kafadar 2007).

To this end, the *Rūmīs* were greatly aided by the sweeping Ottoman conquests of Syria, Egypt, and Iraq between 1516 and 1536, victories that provided Ottoman literati with unprecedented opportunities to travel to the ancient centers of Islamic learning and return home with Arabic and Persian manuscripts. By the middle decades of the sixteenth century, hundreds of previously unknown titles had been brought to Istanbul and translated into Turkish for the first time, and through such translations Turkish itself was transformed into a language of high imperial culture that reflected the vocabulary, rhetoric, and poetic inflection of a reputed Islamic golden age (Kuru 2012).

Finally, and perhaps most fascinatingly, as these "Ottoman humanists" embraced the project of remodeling their society based on classical precedents, they did so by developing many of the same genres as their Western counterparts:

biographical dictionaries that glorified the great artists, poets, and scholars of the past and present; histories that placed the Ottoman Empire at the apex of a triumphant story of Islamic expansion, decline, and renewal; reformist tracts that offered cures for the ills of society based on models from an Islamic golden age; and so forth. Eventually, these became the foundations of an entirely reconstituted cannon of literature and history that permanently redefined the contours of Ottoman elite society (Fleischer 1986). Thereafter, it would become almost impossible to imagine that the Ottoman Empire had ever been anything other than an essentially Turcophone and Muslim state, in much the same way that the European Renaissance made it impossible to imagine early modern Europe as anything other than the unique heir to Greco-Roman antiquity.

Impact and Legacy

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the Ottoman Renaissance's long-term legacy is found not in the literary arts but rather in the field of architecture. Over the course of the sixteenth century, the celebrated master architect Mimar Sinan (d. 1588) developed an innovative style of Ottoman mosque based on a cascading series of half-domes surrounding a central vault. The style was explicitly designed to reproduce, in an Islamic guise, the imperial grandeur of the Hagia Sophia, and in a well-known passage from his autobiography, Sinan even boasted of having *surpassed* the splendor of the Hagia Sophia's majestic dome with his buildings, thereby succeeding where contemporary Italian architects had failed (Necipoglu 2005).

The style proved so architecturally powerful that it was reproduced at countless locations and on varying scales throughout the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, it became the most universally recognizable symbol of Ottoman Islam, to the extent that its original association with *Romanitas* and Christianity became almost totally obscure (Kafesçioğlu 2009). As a result, among the most common reactions today of naïve first-time visitors to the Hagia Sophia is to remark that it “looks like a mosque.”

In a similar way, scholars have been just as powerfully influenced by the Ottoman Renaissance, which continues to shape – albeit in ways that are all too rarely acknowledged – our contemporary understandings of Islam, classical antiquity, the Greco-Roman legacy, and the basic contours of Western civilization.

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Ottomans, Renaissance Image of

- [Turks, Renaissance Image of](#)

Ouastebled, François

- [Vatable, François](#)

Oughtred, William

Born: 5 March 1575? Eton College

Died: 13 June 1660, Albury, Surrey

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Abstract

The Reverend William Oughtred was one of the foremost mathematical writers and instrument-makers in seventeenth-century England. The mathematical library he built at his rectory of Albury in Surrey attracted visitors and pupils from far away and even the Continent. It was particularly important given the limited circulation of Continental mathematical books

in England. He took mathematical pupils at the rectory, and, like many seventeenth-century mathematicians, practiced astrology.

Biography

English mathematician William Oughtred was educated at Eton School and King's College of Cambridge University, although he was largely self-taught in mathematics. He was ordained as a minister in the Church of England in 1603. In 1606, he married Christgift Caryll, who bore him either 12 or 13 children.

Oughtred's most influential textbook was *Clavis Mathematicae* (1631), published in Latin. It was one of the first mathematical books in England to incorporate the X sign for multiplication and also discussed the recently introduced decimal fractions. Oughtred believed symbols were essential to mathematics and employed many, including the X and four dots (::) to indicate ratios. *Clavis Mathematicae* was extremely concise, and the book's small size made it relatively inexpensive. Oughtred played an important role in bringing modern algebra, principally developed by French and Italian mathematicians, to England. Readers and admirers of *Clavis Mathematicae* included the young Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, and John Locke. Edmond Halley contributed a preface to an English translation that appeared in 1694. Oughtred's last major work was *Trigonometrie* (1657). Like *Clavis Mathematicae*, it was extremely short, reflecting Oughtred's condensed style and use of symbols and abbreviations rather than writing out operations.

Much of Oughtred's reputation was based on his invention of mathematical instruments. Oughtred was an inventor of the circular slide rule, or "Circle of Proportion," based on the recently invented logarithmic scale and building on the work of Edmund Gunter. He was one of the earliest mathematicians to be aware of John Napier's work on logarithms. Oughtred described the slide rule in *The Circles of Proportion and the Horizontal Instrument* (1632). Historians have dated Oughtred's invention of the circular slide rule to 1622, long before he described it in print.

Oughtred also developed a linear slide rule with two moving rods, essentially two of the logarithmic rods devised by Gunter put together. He described the device in *An Addition unto the Use of the Instrument called the Circles of Proportion* (1633). Another instrument Oughtred invented was the planisphere, described in *The Solution of All Sphaerical Triangles by the Planisphere* (1651) although Oughtred had devised it about 40 years earlier. The planisphere was a device for measuring triangles on the surface of a sphere, saving the labor of trigonometric calculations.

Despite Oughtred's own creativity in devising new mathematical instruments, he was suspicious of the role of instruments in mathematical instruction. He argued that there was too much emphasis placed on using instruments as opposed to understanding mathematics. Oughtred believed that students should know the abstract and theoretical part of mathematics before engaging with mathematical instruments, when others, particularly among the professional mathematics teaching community of London, believed instruments should be introduced early in mathematical instruction. Oughtred believed that instruments

should only be introduced once the student understood their theoretical basis.

Oughtred took a royalist stance during the English Civil War, but received enough protection from patrons to keep his clerical position. A legend spread after Oughtred's death was that it had been caused by excessive joy in celebration of the Restoration of Charles II, although several days intervened between when Oughtred would have learned of the Restoration and the day of his death.

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P

Pacioli, Luca

Born: October 1446–October 1448, Borgo San Sepolcro (Sansepolcro)

Died: April–July 1517?

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Abstract

Brother Luca Pacioli was one of the leading mathematicians of his day. Drawing upon the works of Fibonacci, Giovanni Sacrobosco, Giordano Nemorario, and Prosdócimo de' Beldomandi, he composed a *Summa* of the mathematical knowledge acquired in the West since the thirteenth century. In the field of arithmetic and algebra, his work often served as a starting point for the more advanced research conducted by later mathematicians. Also noteworthy are his relations with Piero della Francesca and Leonardo da Vinci.

Biography

Pacioli was born into a family long settled in Borgo San Sepolcro and chiefly engaged in farming and animal husbandry. Orphaned at a young age, he was probably entrusted to the care of a wealthy family from his home town: the Bifolci (Ulivi 2009). Nothing is known about his

education, which must have begun in Borgo San Sepolcro and which then continued in Venice, where Pacioli entered into the service of merchant Antonio Rompiasi. In the lagoon city, Pacioli took mathematics lessons from Domenico Bragadin, while in turn tutoring Rompiasi's three sons, to whom in 1470 he dedicated an arithmetic and algebra volume that is now lost (Pacioli 1494).

For a short time between 1470 and 1471, Pacioli was Leon Battista Alberti's guest in Rome (Pacioli 1509a). He must have moved back to his home town shortly afterwards, as he is mentioned there as the witness to some notary deeds drawn up between February 1471 and 1473. These documents refer to him for the first time as Brother Luca (Ulivi 2009). Entry into the Order of St Francis did not lead Pacioli to quit his mathematical studies, and between 1477 and 1480 he taught mathematics at Perugia University. This teaching probably lies at the basis of his *Tractatus mathematicus ad discipulos perusinos*, preserved by mss Vaticano 3129 (Pacioli 1996).

In 1481, Pacioli travelled to Zara, where he composed a new arithmetic and algebra volume, also lost (Pacioli 1494). In this period, he applied himself to the study of theology, earning the title of *magister sacrae paginae* (Ulivi 2009). After spending some time in Florence, in 1487–1488 Pacioli was once more invited to teach at Perugia; then the following year he moved to the University of Rome (Pacioli 1494). In subsequent years, Pacioli often stayed at the Franciscan monastery in his home town, but in 1494 he was in Venice,

where he closely collaborated with the publisher of his most important work: the *Summa de arithmetica geometria proportioni et proportionalità* (Pacioli 1494). This became a reference text for practically all sixteenth-century mathematicians working on algebra, including Niccolò Tartaglia and Girolamo Cardano, who took it as their starting point in the search for a general formula to solve third-degree equations.

Between 1496 and 1499, Pacioli was at Ludovico Maria Sforza's court in Milan. Here he established a close friendship with Leonardo da Vinci, who drew the many figures of solid bodies featured in a collection of Pacioli's works bearing the general title of *Divina proportione* (Pacioli 1509a). Published in 1509, this collection also included the *Libellus in tres partiales tractatus divisus quinque corporum regularium dependentium*, which directly drew upon a text by Pacioli's illustrious fellow citizen Piero della Francesca. This is only one of the many "borrowings" from the great painter's œuvre to be found in the works of Pacioli, who was therefore openly charged with plagiarism by Giorgio Vasari in his life of Piero della Francesca (Vasari 1550).

Having fled Milan together with Leonardo after Ludovico's fall, Pacioli moved to Florence, where he taught until 1505. In 1508, he was back in Venice, where he gave a lecture on Book 5 of Euclid's *Elements* (Pacioli 1509b). Here, again in 1508, Pacioli requested a privilege in order to publish some of his works. These included the *Divina proportione* and Euclid's *Elements*, which were personally edited by him and went to press the following year (Boncompagni 1879). By contrast, his *De viribus quantitatis*, preserved in codex 250 of the Bologna University Library (Pacioli 2009), and *De ludo scachorum*, recently rediscovered in the library of the Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Foundation in Gorizia (Pacioli 2007), remained unpublished.

Between 1508 and 1511, Pacioli drew up no fewer than three wills (Ulivi 2009). Meanwhile, he continued to teach, albeit less frequently, returning to Perugia in 1510 and to Rome in 1514. Perhaps in the latter city, or perhaps in his home town Borgo San Sepolcro, Pacioli breathed his last in 1517.

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Paideia

- [Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism](#)

Palaiologos

- [Manuel II Palaeologus](#)

Paleari, Antonio

- [Paleario, Aonio](#)

Paleario, Aonio

Born: 1503, Veroli

Died: 3 July 1570, Rome

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Abstract

Aonio Paleario is known as an exponent of the Italian reformation movement of the sixteenth century. His major work is the *Actio in Romanos pontifices*, published about 30 years after his death in 1600. He was born in Veroli, in central-southern Italy, and during his entire life was in contact with major Italian intellectuals; his philosophical poem *De animorum immortalitate* put him at the core of the sixteenth-century discussion on the immortality of the soul. Admired by his contemporaries for the elegance of his Latin, Paleario got close to concepts and ideas of the evangelical movement: Martin Luther, Zwingli, and the Conciliarist movement. He was accused of heresy for the first time in 1542 but was released from the charge; thereafter, in 1567, he was again charged with heresy and was arrested in Milan. He refused to deny his faith and was executed in Rome in 1570.

Alternate Names

della Pagliara, Antonio; Paleari, Antonio

Life and Works

From Veroli to Padua

Antonio della Pagliara, son of Matteo della Pagliara and Clara Jannarilli, was born in Veroli (now in the province of Frosinone, south of

Rome), in 1503 or 1504. The Latin version of his name, “Aonio Paleario,” was adopted by the author following the humanistic fashion. His father was a craftsman, but Aonio’s mother came from a wealthy family, and her patrimony allowed their son to have a proper humanistic education, first in Veroli – by a local notary – then in Rome, where he remained for 9 years, from 1520 to 1529. Several documents concerning the Pagliara family and their property are still preserved in the local archive of Veroli (D’Onorio and Gabriele 2008). We have little information about his Roman stay, but it is known that starting from 1525, he attended classes by Ludovico Boccadiferro, who was engaged in a dispute over the immortality of the soul, arguing against the position expressed by Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525). Later, Paleario shall stress this topic, by composing a poem on the immortality of the soul. In Rome, he met Bernardino Maffei, who would assist him when he was charged with heresy for the first time. After a short stay in Perugia, Paleario went to Siena, where he got in touch with important families, such as the Spannocchi, Tolomei, and Bellanti. Aonio became a tutor to Antonio Bellanti’s children, and when their father was prosecuted, Paleario composed an oration, *Pro Bellante* (1533), through which he became known in the cultural circles of Siena.

Although based in Siena, Paleario continued to travel throughout Italy. From 1532 to 1536, he was in Padua (returning for a while to Siena for Bellanti’s trial), a city where he met Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) and Benedetto Lampridio (1478–1540) and started his itinerary through the ideals of the reformation. Paleario dedicated himself to the learning of Erasmus, Luther, and Melancton. He wrote a letter addressed to Erasmus on 5 December 1534, which showed how deeply he admired Erasmus’ work, especially his *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine facultatis Parisiensis*; Paleario hoped for a general council summons after the election of Alessandro Farnese as Pope Paolo III (1534), which would spark a genuine reformation of the whole Church (Caponetto 1979, 211–214). In the following years, Paleario intensified his relationships with Venetian intellectuals: Marcantonio

Flaminio (1498–1550), Alvisi Priuli (early 16thc. –1560), and in a roundabout way, Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500–1558). During this period, Paleario composed his three-book poem, *De animorum immortalitate*, which was published for the first time in 1535 without any indication of the printer and, later, in 1552, in Lyon, thanks to the support of Iacopo Sadoletto (1477–1547), Bishop of Carpentras (Paleario 1552, 1992). The most relevant characteristic of this work is its deeply anti-Lucretian, antimaterialistic attitude: Paleario stands in sharp contrast to the idea that the immortality of the soul cannot be harmonized with Aristotelian philosophy, as Pomponazzi did in his *De immortalitate animae* (1516). Echoes of Lutheran and Erasmian lectures are easily recognizable too (Gallina 1989, II, 96–121).

From 1537 to 1567

Back in Siena, Paleario married Marietta Guidotti in 1537. In the following years, he grew closer to the Florentine environment, where he was already known for the excellence of his Latin. His life fluctuated between Siena and Florence, and his activity in the sense of the reformation was increasing. In 1542, indeed, while Paleario was in Rome, charged with heresy, he was able to defend himself thanks to the intervention of his old friends, Bernardino Maffei, Pietro Bembo, Reginald Pole, and Iacopo Sadoletto. After this, Paleario wrote the oration *Pro se ipso* (1543 or 1544), in which he recalls his experience, stressing the ideas of freedom of thought and religion. In the text, Paleario mentioned the summons of Bernardino Ochino to Rome and the attack on Sadoletto's works, as examples of the abuse of power by the Roman Church. With this suspicious mood, Paleario still had hopes for the general council call, and as he did in 1534 with Erasmus, he wrote a letter to Luther, outlining his wishes. His opinions on the reformation impeded his career in the Studium of Siena, and in 1546, he decided to accept a job as a teacher in Lucca, where he remained until 1555. In Lucca, he wrote the *Dialogo intitolato il grammatico, ovvero delle false essercitationi delle scuole* (Venezia, F. Franceschini 1567, Paleario 1726) and several orations. Once back in Siena, Paleario composed a

vernacular work entitled *Dell'economia o vero governo della casa*, where he engaged with several female issues, especially education and marriage.

Milan and the Second Trial

Without a stable occupation, Paleario continued to seek jobs and protection. He was called to Milan to teach humanities, but these Milanese years are most significant for his relationships with Celio Secondo Curione (1503–1569), Theodor Zwinger, and several printers from Basel. Paleario was charged with heresy for a second time during his Milanese sojourn, in 1559, but the accusation was again dropped. He realized, though, that he was in danger and the increasing repression of the ecclesiastical authority, especially after the end of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), pushed him to hide his last work, the *Actio in Romanos pontifices*. Paleario gave custody of his work to Zwinger who kept it for the rest of his life. The *Actio* was published for the first time only 30 years after Paleario's death, in 1600. Paleario's fear had solid grounds. In 1567, he was arrested and forced to go to Rome. He refused to defend himself or to deny his religious and personal beliefs. For these reasons, he was executed in Rome on 3 July 1570 (Quaranta 2014).

Paleario and the Tuscan Reformation Movement

With the end of the second Savonarolian republic in 1530, Florence came back under the government of the Medici party and the hopes of an approaching reform required another form of expression. The Lutheran movement and the reformation movement found fertile ground in the city of Florence, as testified by works such as *Storia in dialogo della mutazione di Firenze* by Bartolomeo Cerretani (1475–1524). Moreover, Valdesianism started to grow: this was a religious tendency inspired by the theologian and reformer Juan de Valdès (1505–1541), who stressed the importance of the Gospel in Christian life. From 1533, Valdès was in Naples, where he raised a circle of intellectual reformers, among whom was

Bernardino Ochino, who took part in the diffusion of Valdesianism in Tuscany in Paleario's time. Among the works blooming in Naples, we can mention the famous *Trattato del Beneficio di Cristo* by fra Benedetto da Mantova, attributed at an early stage to Paleario. The *Beneficio* was published anonymously and on the title page was written "you should care more about the content, than the importance of the author" ("più la cosa vi muova che l'autorità dell'autore"). Florentine intellectuals, although reassured by the patronage of Cosimo I, continued to consider their Savonarolian heritage. It would be an exaggeration to assert that every academic in Florence had a Lutheran attitude, but we can say with no doubt that many of them were looking for religious and intimate freedom, as a possible counterbalance to their lost political freedom. It is important to point out that Paleario was not a follower of Valdesianism, even if he was close to many Valdesians. He shared with them a firm belief in the basic importance of the Gospel but was convinced that the intervention of the imperial authority was necessary to realize a true reformation of the Church, as he stated in the *Actio*. During his Florentine years (from 1538 to 1546), Aonio established several friendships and cooperative relationships. In Florence, he was preceded by his reputation as a great Latin poet, so that the members of the cultural circles linked to Cosimo I admired him. More important was his friendship with Pier Vettori (1499–1585) – interpreter of Aristotle and author of a famous commentary on *Ethics* – Francesco Verino il Vecchio, and Bartolomeo Panciatichi (1507–1582), a wealthy Florentine merchant, with cultural and religious interests, who publicly declared his Calvinistic faith (Caponetto 1979).

The "querelle des femmes" and the Governo della casa

An interesting vernacular work by Aonio Paleario is the dialogue *Dell'economia overo del governo della casa* (Paleario 1983). It was finished in 1555 in Colle Valdelsa and is the second part of a bigger work, the first part of

which was *Del governo delle città*. Paleario wanted to dedicate this two-part work to men and women: the government of the cities for men and the government of the house for women. Unfortunately, the first part was lost during the conflicts in which the city of Siena was involved at that time. The dialogue takes place in 1531, in the fortress of Aiole, where many women discuss the domestic environment, without the presence of men. The topics raised in the *Del governo della casa* are keen and unusual, mostly because Paleario focused on the specific role of the wife in the marriage and the education of young women. We can recall here the figure of Cassandra Spannocchi, wife of the aforementioned Antonio Bellanti, and Porzia Petrucci, the Erasmian character of the dialogue. Porzia talks about her cultural interests and also leads a severe critique of masculine behavior: selfish, ruthless men do not feel affection, they just act in order to achieve money and power. Paleario demonstrated through this work a remarkable modernity, especially stressing the subordinate role that the Church reserved for women by preventing them from gaining a proper education. In any case, several preceding authors dealt with the feminine issue: Francesco Barbaro in the *De re uxoria*, Leon Battista Alberti in the *Libri di famiglia*, and Agrippa of Nettesheim in the *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexu*, a text printed in Venice in 1545.

The *Actio in Romanos pontifices*

The *Actio in Romanos pontifices* is the most important work by Aonio Paleario, at least with regard to the history of the reformation in Italy. The title and intention of the author recalls Cicero's *Actio in Verrem*. The text is divided into 20 chapters or theses, through which Paleario aims to demonstrate that the Roman Popes are responsible for the corruption of the Catholic Church. He started to work on the *Actio* in 1536 and decided to give custody of it to Theodor Zwinger, well aware of the danger and the risk he was running. This is what the preface to the first Latin edition states (Paleario 1600), where we can

read that the work was discovered in 1596, almost 30 years after Paleario's death. He also begged his friend to deliver – somehow – his work and his message to Emperor Charles V, convinced that the emperor and the German princes should be involved in the reformation process. The preface to the 1861 edition (Paleario 1861), provides interesting evidence of the durability of Paleario's image throughout the centuries. Aonio is placed in an imaginary line of continuity with other enemies of the corruption of the Catholic Church, such as Dante, Machiavelli, and Campanella. Then, the editor mentions several authors who stressed the importance of the Gospel in Christians' lives: Pietro Carnesecchi, Pietro Martire Vermigli, Celio Secondo Curione, and Girolamo Savonarola.

The *corpus* of Paleario's works was edited in 1626 and 1728 (Paleario 1728).

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Palingenio Stellato, Marcello

Born: Second half of 15th century, date unknown, Southern Italy

Died: Between 1537 and 1551, date unknown, probably Forlì, Cesena or Verucchio

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Abstract

Marcello Palingenio Stellato is an Italian author known for writing the poem *Zodiacus Vitae*, printed in Venice by Bernardino dei Vitali. Despite the enormous diffusion of the work between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries (counting 59 editions), there is very little biographical information in our possession on the author.

Alternate Names

Manzolini, Pier Angelo; Manzoli, Pier Angelo

Biography

Very little is known about Marcello Palingenio Stellato, the author of the *Zodiacus Vitae*, the didactic poem in Latin whose *editio princeps* was printed in Venice in 1536. His date and place of birth are unknown. It is not even sure if the name of the author is his actual name at birth or simply a pseudonym. In 1725, the Italian scholar Facciolati extended the idea – which is still widely accepted in modern scholarship – that the enigmatic name is an anagram of Pier Angelo Manzolini, who was native to Stellata (Facciolati 1765). At the basis of Facciolati's assertion rests the hypothesis, which circulated within Protestant circles and was accepted by his German correspondents Fabricius and Heumann, that Marcello Palingenio was actually a fictitious name. In particular, the *nomen Palingenius*, that is, “Renatus,” was interpreted as a sign on Stellatus' part to please Renée of France. She was the wife of Hercules II d'Este, the dedicatee of the *Zodiacus Vitae*. After having hosted Calvin in Ferrara in 1535, the Duchess became a fervent Calvinist. The *cognomen Stellatus* was interpreted as an adjective derived from the name of a small village near Ferrara, Stellata, which was believed to be the author's city of origin. The proximity to Ferrarese culture, therefore, was ascertained from the dedication to Hercules II d'Este and the revealing, in the epistle premises at the poem, of a certain familiarity with Antonio M. Brasavola, archiater of the Duke.

Facciolati's conjecture, devoid of any true confirmation, was recently confuted by Bacchelli. Starting from the permission for the first Venetian print of the *Zodiacus*, obtained in 1535, in which Palingenius is clearly indicated as “Neapolitanus,” the scholar was able to establish that the poet's origins rest in the Campania region of Italy (he was probably born near Capua). More importantly, he was able to show that the poet's name is not a pseudonym. The name Marcello

Stellato, in fact, already appeared – with the addition of the *nomen Palingenius* in reference to spiritual qualities – in two prints edited between 1522 and 1524 in Rome and Naples (Bacchelli 1985, 2008).

The stylistic and rhetorical devices found within the *Zodiacus*, with the evident fifteenth-century characteristics, suggest that Palingenio was formally educated in the south of Italy at the end of the fifteenth century. The extreme scarcity of information regarding Palingenio is due to the marginality and relative isolation in which the author lived, working as a teacher of *grammatica* or perhaps as a doctor, the latter being the more unlikely of the two professions (Palumbo 2007). Following the confirmation of his probable presence in Rome in 1522 and in Naples in 1524, the poem itself provides other biographical information. In *Sagittarius* 996–1017, the poet's stay in cities in the Romagna region is mentioned. His time in Verucchio, during the meeting between Clement VII and Carlo V in Bologna (1530), particularly stands out. During his stay in Venice to obtain printing permission (1534–1535), Palingenio had already started the application procedure for becoming *magistrum humanarum litterarum* in the city of Forlì (Bacchelli 1999, 2008). From the acts of the City Council, we learn that the last payment for his services is from 26 October 1537.

It was in the Romagna region, probably in Forlì, Cesena or Verrucchio, that Palingenio died. While the precise date of death is unknown, widely known is the information passed down by the contemporary Lilio Gregorio Giraldi in his *De poetis suorum temporum dialogi duo* (Ferrariensis Gyraldi 1551). Therein, the posthumous exhumation and burning of Stellato's bones “ob impietatis crimen” is recounted. The accusation of heresy and the successive fury towards the corpse were confirmed by other sources. In the Cod. Vat. Lat. 6207, containing documents relative to the congregation of the *Index Librorum*, at f. 232v, we find a report, probably dating to 1558, that Palingenio “nihil credens neque divinitatem Christi Cesenae perfidus mortuus est” (Bacchelli 1990). A letter from the same year, addressed to the General of the Campaign Laynez from the

Jesuit Francesco Palmio, more precisely recounts that the body of Palingenius, a teacher in Forlì, was posthumously disinterred and burned due to “certi libri heretici che lui havea composti” (Borgiani 1912).

Impact and Legacy

The only known work of Palingenio remains the *Zodiacus Vitae*, a didactic poem divided into 12 books, each one entitled with a different zodiac sign. The first edition of the poem, published in Venice by Bernardino dei Vitali, is undated. As the permission to print is from February 1535 and the first edition outside of Italy is from September 1537, it was probably released in 1536. While the poem went virtually unnoticed in Italy, it enjoyed considerable success abroad: there are, from 1537 to 1599, 31 editions, 2 integral translations (English and German), and a paraphrased version in Polish.

After the *damnatio* of the author came, in Catholic circles, that of the work: it was added to the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* by Pope Paul IV (1559). The bitter polemics with the clergy and the Roman Church present in the *Zodiacus* determined the success of the work in Protestant settings. However, despite the overwhelming distrust of all of the religious orders, the poem does not directly treat issues particular to the Protestant Reformation. Luther himself is mentioned only once, in the *Capricornus* 821–827.

The distance between the ideas contained within the *Zodiacus* and Christian doctrines is manifest. In the work, in which Ficino’s Neoplatonism, ideas from radical Aristotelianism, and theories on the relationship between religion and politics all intertwine, Palingenio strongly supports the spatial infinity of the universe, God, and the cosmos (Moreschini 2013, p. 103). According to the author, the celestial spheres are inserted into an infinite space of light where God, angels, and infinite archetypes dwell. The divine luminosity, which contains the ideas, penetrates through the last sphere, illuminating the skies and giving origin to the beings that populate the seven planets. Next, the archetypes – perfect exemplars

of all things – are fully realized in the “vera” planetaria they embody. The greater the distance of separation between the divine source, the more the luminosity that sustains the planetary essences becomes weak and imperfect. Collocated at the maximum degree of distance from God and the archetypes, the Earth, the darkest part of the universe, becomes a true hell in which imperfection and evil live. Combining Neo-Platonic and Lucretian suggestions, therefore, Palingenio’s cosmos is characterized by a marked dualism in which the perfection and eternity of the heavens are put into direct opposition with the corruption and temporality of the sublunary sphere (Koyrè 1957; Garin 1976, p. 121). For Palingenio, the border that separates the two worlds, the “medium mundi,” is established by the Moon, the last true world in which the court of the souls is based (*Sagittarius*, vv. 150–163).

Also of probable Lucretian influence is the idea that the cosmos are strictly defined and not created for man. In his discussion, in the book of *Leo*, of the fundamental problem “An mundus sit hominis causa factum,” the author strongly underlines that the universe originates from the necessity and desire of God, who generated things alone and solely “propter se ipsum id est ad sui laudem et gloriam” (*Leo*, vv. 169–220). Rigidly determining the functioning of the universe, the divine will establish the mechanisms that regulate it according to modalities that man cannot understand. In such an organism, therefore, every human pretense to be at the center of the universe disappears and every moral distinction between good and evil is annulled as our actions fall within the project that God designed for himself within the great theatre of the cosmos. Thanks to a new reading in a Christian light the suggestions from the coeval analysis of Luther (*De servo arbitrio*) and Pomponazzi (*De fato*), Palingenio comes to negate every pretext regarding the freedom of human will.

In the verses of *Zodiacus vitae*, Palingenio – the first in all of Italian Renaissance – presents the description of a cosmos penetrated and traversed by a universal “spiritus,” in which Pantheism and Pan-determinism coincide. God is infinitely needed by himself, and in him,

will and wisdom perfectly coincide with power. As these three expressions of divinity are themselves infinite, Palingenio arrives by deduction at admitting that the universe must be eternal and infinite in size. Palingenio's treatise on the infinity of the cosmos was appreciated and re-examined a few years later by Giordano Bruno, who discussed some verses of the *Zodiacus vitae* in his *De immenso*.

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Palmieri, Matteo

Born: 13 January 1406, Florence

Died: 13 April 1475, Florence

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Abstract

The Florentine apothecary Matteo Palmieri (1406–1475) benefited from a humanistic education, which inspired him to compose several works of learning. In Latin, he wrote three historical tracts – a chronicle of his times, an account of the 1406 subjugation of Pisa, and a biography of Niccolò Acciaiuoli – and in Italian two philosophical works with chiasitic titles, the Ciceronian dialogue *Della vita civile* and the cosmological poem *Città di vita*. As a philosopher, Palmieri is scarcely original. His dialogue presents eminent Florentines expounding ethical doctrines that are largely derived from Cicero, while his poem in *terza rima* portrays Dante and the Cumaean Sibyl as they observe the fate of human souls after death. All the same, Palmieri is important as a lay representative of that strain of Florentine humanism that embraced both the classical heritage and the vernacular tradition of Tuscan poetry and piety.

Introduction and Biographical Section

Matteo Palmieri, who trained as an apothecary, belonged to the *Arte dei Medici e Speziali*, and like his father Marco, he served in various public offices (Martines 1963, pp. 191–198). He also received a humanistic education, studying with Marsuppini and Filelfo. In Latin, he composed a chronicle *De temporibus*, an account of the 1406 defeat of Pisa called *De captivitate Pisarum* (Palmieri 1995), and a biography of Niccolò Acciaiuoli (1310–1365; Palmieri 2001). In Italian, he composed the dialogue *Della vita civile* (1433–1436; Palmieri 1982) and a poem in Dantean tercets, *Città di vita* (1455–1464; Palmieri 1927–1928), which was condemned by the church. Like Giannozzo Manetti, he served as an ambassador for Florence, promoted the learned use of Italian, and was included in the series of lives composed by Vespasiano da Bisticci. There is a portrait bust of him by Antonio Rossellino in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Palmieri's most important philosophical work is his dialogue *Della vita civile* (Mita Ferraro 2005; Palmieri 1997; Tanturli 1996). Dedicated to the Florentine magistrate Alessandro degli Alessandri (1391–1460), the work consists of four books that discuss the principles of the good life. Its subject and format resemble those of the contemporary *Della Famiglia* of Leon Battista Alberti, and Palmieri's spokesman Agnolo Pandolfini also appears in Alberti's Italian dialogue *Profugia ab erumna* (Mita Ferraro 2005, pp. 298–299). In several passages of the work, Palmieri writes that his purpose is to offer his readers "the precepts of the ancient philosophers." His central model is Cicero, who had similarly expounded Greek philosophy to Roman readers, and he draws heavily on the Roman orator, especially the *De inventione*, *De officiis*, and *Tusculan Disputations*. While adopting concepts from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which had

recently been translated into Latin by Leonardo Bruni (1417), Palmieri also draws upon the Latin authors Aulus Gellius, Sallust, Valerius Maximus, and Macrobius and the poets Plautus, Terence, and Virgil. Book 1 treats the education of children; Book 2, the three cardinal virtues of prudence, moderation, and fortitude; Book 3, the fourth virtue, justice; and Book 4, the contrast between what is useful and what is honorable. The work ends with a *Somnium Dantis*, in imitation of the conclusions of the *Republics* of Plato and Cicero: in it, the poet Dante beholds a vision of souls after death, including noble pagans. Following Origen's theory of the preexistence of souls, Palmieri asserts that human souls descend to the earth from heaven and after three incarnations end in either salvation or damnation. In between these incarnations, the souls travel through the spheres of heaven and wait in the Elysian Fields.

Innovative and Original Aspects

While Palmieri is essentially a compiler, there is an element of innovation in his ethical thought. Whereas in Books 2 and 3 of *Della vita civile* he expounds the traditional categories of the cardinal virtues, in Book 4 he departs from Cicero's *De officiis*. Noting that he writes for a popular audience, Palmieri rejects the notion that utility (*l'utile*) and honorability (*l'onesto*) necessarily coincide (Palmieri 1982, p. 151). Instead, he outlines and sanctions various categories of what is useful, including Renaissance values such as magnificence (Mita Ferraro 2005, pp. 294–295).

Palmieri makes another contribution to Renaissance philosophy in his poem *City of Life* (*Città di vita*). Like Dante's *Comedy*, the work consists of 100 cantos in tercets that narrate the poet's tour of the afterlife in the company of the Cumaean Sibyl, who acts as the poem's Virgilian guide. (The work was supposedly inspired by dreams that appeared to Palmieri during embassies to Pescia and Naples in the 1450s.) The three parts of the poem offer a cosmological account of the universe, a

description of hell, and a vision of heaven. Palmieri's scheme of the heavens follows the Ptolemaic spheres described in Dante's *Purgatorio*, but in reverse order, that is, descending from the empyrean to earth. The description of hell in Book 2 offers reflections on the seven deadly sins. The vision of heaven in Book 3 surveys the cardinal virtues treated earlier in *Della vita civile*, establishing a system of rewards for these virtues viewed in two aspects: civic and purgatorial. A few characters featured in Dante reappear, but in general, the work reads like a rather colorless cento of the *Comedy*. One new character is Hermes Trismegistus, who appears in heaven as a prophet (3.26).

Even though the author had his poem corrected by Leonardo Dati, the bishop of Massa Marittima, suggestions of Pythagorean metempsychosis and Origen's preexistence of souls evidently caused Palmieri's readers some discomfort. Indeed, rumors circulated posthumously that the poet had been condemned and even burned by the church (Mita Ferraro 2005, pp. 419–432).

The source of the suspicion is found in Canto 5 of Palmieri's Book 1, which narrates the lot of God's original angels. After Satan's rebellion, his partisans were forever condemned to hell, while his opponents remained in heaven (Freccero 1958). The neutral angels remained between heaven and hell to furnish souls for human beings, who would later be assigned redemption or damnation (*City of Life* 1.5.34–53, a passage echoing Dante's *Inferno* 34–42.)

Impact and Legacy

In the Quattrocento, Palmieri's *Della vita civile* enjoyed a certain popularity: some eighteen manuscripts survive. The first printed editions date from 1529 (Florence: Eredi di Filippo Giunti and an anonymous publication), while the next four editions date from the nineteenth century. Vespasiano di Bisticci considered Palmieri important enough to include him in his *Lives*, but the rumors of his heresy led to a *damnatio*

memoriae that lasted several centuries (Mita Ferraro 2005, pp. 299–304). In the nineteenth century, Georg Voigt could write that Palmieri's writings were never known in wider circles (Voigt 1893, 1:291).

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- [Manetti, Giannozzo](#)

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Pampsychism

- [Panpsychism](#)

Panpsychism

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Abstract

The term “panpsychism” is derived from Francesco Patrizi’s neologism “pampsychia” created from the Greek words “pan,” that is, “all,” and “psyche,” which is “soul.” Patrizi describes, by means of this term, the central part of his work *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591). The panpsychic doctrine on the mind as the fundamental quality of all things in the universe has its origin, however, back in the pre-socratics and was developed first in ancient and then in Renaissance philosophies. Renaissance panpsychic doctrines are usually formulated in opposition to Aristotelianism and are connected with the Platonic concept of the world soul animating the world; the stoic notion of *pneuma*, the spirit penetrating the universe; and the Empedoclean two animate and opposing forces of the world – attraction and repulsion. Although certain signs of panpsychism can be found in Marsilio Ficino’s thought, only Girolamo Cardano and Bernardino Telesio elaborated on a genuine panpsychic philosophy. While Cardano follows the theories of the world soul and the hot spirit, Telesio considers all things in the world to be sentient, and, therefore, his doctrine can be called pansensism. Panpsychism was held in three different forms at the end of the sixteenth century. Francesco Patrizi develops the Neoplatonic doctrine of the hierarchical universe where the soul occupies the central position. Giordano Bruno uses panpsychism in his cosmological ideas, and Tommaso Campanella follows both Telesio’s pansensualism and the platonic doctrine of the world soul and incorporates panpsychism into his metaphysics and epistemology.

Synonyms

Pampsychism; Pansensism

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Elements of panpsychism can already be found in the works of early Greek philosophers (Skrbina 2005). Beginning with Thales’ sentences quoted by Aristotle, “all things are full of gods” (*De anima*, 411a19) and “the lodestone has a soul because it moves iron” (*De anima*, 411a19), certain panpsychic thoughts emerge in a number of pre-socratics, such as Empedocles, who states that “the soul is composed of all the elements and that each of them actually is a soul,” as Aristotle refers (*De anima*, 404b11). Allusions to early panpsychism appear in Plato in his theory of the world soul (*Philebos*, 30a) and the concept of the cosmos as a living thing (*Timaios*, 31a). The panpsychic reading of Plato was underlined by Plotinos. According to him, “Plato says there is soul in everything of this [earthly] sphere” (*Ennead* VI, 7, 11). The stoic doctrine of *pneuma* is another source of Renaissance and early modern panpsychism. *Pneuma* (the spirit) as creative fire penetrates the entire cosmos and animates the world. Thus, Diogenes Laertius refers to the stoic cosmos as “. . . mind penetrates every part of it just as soul does us,” (*Vitae philosophorum*, II, 7, 138), and Cicero asserts that “the parts of the cosmos contain the power of sense-perception and reason” (*De natura deorum*, II, 39). Although certain panpsychic thoughts are even incorporated in Aristotle’s philosophy stating that “all things are full of soul” (*De gen. anim.* 762a18), Aristotelian hylemorphism was viewed in the Renaissance as a philosophy attributing the soul to only a limited amount of substances. Thus, Renaissance philosophers holding certain panpsychic positions formulate their doctrines in opposition to Aristotelianism and follow Platonic, pre-socratic (Empedoclean), or stoic philosophies or combine these traditions.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Girolamo Cardano is often considered the first Renaissance philosopher elaborating panpsychism (Skrbina 2005, 2009). In the *De subtilitate*, Cardano distinguishes five principles of reality: matter, form, motion, place, and soul. He refuses to identify soul with form because then it would not be an independent principle (Cardano 2013, p. 124). Later on in the *De uno*, he accepts the concept of the world soul for it enables him to consider the world as a unity. In the *De natura*, where his anti-aristotelianism is more explicit (Fierz 1983), Cardano criticizes the Aristotelian theory of elements by means of the concept of the world soul which is close to the stoic identification of pneuma with fire. Soul and body are the fundamental principles, and heat and humidity are the functional instruments of the soul (Cardano 1663, p. 285). Cardano then describes nature as “an impression of soul into the body” and considers nature primarily as soul for in nature everything “is dependent on the soul” (Cardano 1663, p. 286).

Cardano borrowed the concept of the world soul from Marsilio Ficino, who identified it with the third of Plotinus’ hypostasis (Allen 1987). Although the concept of the world soul does not simply imply panpsychism, Ficino’s philosophy could be viewed as a starting point for later panpsychic doctrines. Ficino determines the relationship between the world soul and the world as between our soul and body in the platonic theology. This means that the world soul is “present in its entirety in any given part of the world” (Ficino 2001, p. 286). Although Ficino speaks here of the universal soul and universal body, at another point he ascribes the soul to the elements of water and air (Ficino 2001, p. 248). Ficino’s world soul is not present in things as such but creates forms in matter by means of seeds, which are impressed into matter. The world soul has a mediating role. It corresponds upward with ideas in the intellect and downward with seeds of reason in matter. In the *Three Books on Life*, the concept of the world soul enables Ficino to consider the entire

world as animated through the spirit, which is a subtle substance responsible for generation in the world (Ficino 1989, p. 254).

Ficino’s speculation on the world soul had an influence on a number of Renaissance astrologers and Paracelsians. Paracelsus himself works with both the concept of the world soul and the seeds. His three principles (sulfur, salt, and mercury) have a spiritual character and are connected with seeds. Paracelsus finds seeds in matter carrying intelligence (Pagel 1982). Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim also borrowed the concept of the world soul and coined the concept of the world spirit, by means of which the upper intelligences infused their occult qualities into stones, plants, and animals (Agrippa von Nettesheim 1992, I. 14).

Ficino also influenced Girolamo Cardano and had a partial influence on Bernardino Telesio as well. With respect to panpsychism, however, Telesio follows Empedoclean principles of heat and cold, which he views as active and adds a passive principle matter. Opposite principles have to sense themselves and each other in order to know what is contradicting their conservation and what is not. Since everything is composed of these principles, everything must therefore be sentient (Telesio 2013). It would consequently be better to call Telesio’s concept “pansensism.” Telesio does not need the mediating role of the soul as a bridge between the intellectual and the extensional, for everything is both sentient and extended (Walker 2000). Telesio works with the concept of the soul, which he views as infused by God and as only proper for man. The spirit, in contrast, which is produced from the seed and is a kind of subtle body, has sensation as awareness of changes caused by external things and of the passions that these changes affect (Kristeller 1964).

The author of the term “panpsychism,” or precisely “panpsychia,” was probably Francesco Patrizi, who divided his book *Nova de universis philosophia* into four sections: Panaugia, Panarchia, Panpsychia, and Pancosmia. Panpsychia as a doctrine on the all-soul plays a central role connecting the world of ideas Panarchia and the corporeal world Pancosmia. Patrizi speaks about the soul (animus) as a central

hypostasis in the Neoplatonic hierarchy and distinguishes between animus and anima, while the former is ascribed to all things except man and the latter only to man. The soul (animus) placed into the hierarchy of being cannot exist without the universality of the higher grade (Blum 2014). It is therefore both one, universal, and incorporeal and many and corporeal; thus, it is incorporeal-corporeal (Brickman 1941). Patrizi criticizes Aristotle for the selective distribution of the soul and argues that there is no reason to deny the soul to the entire world and the elements. He develops an argument against emergence: nothing can give what it does not have. How could the world give the soul, if it does not have it (Patrizi 1591, *Pampsychia* 4, fol. 56ra)? Patrizi even denies the existence of the nonrational soul.

Giordano Bruno elaborates panpsychism in the dialogue *Della causa, principio e uno* (Bruno 2002) by following the concept of the world soul. When he distinguishes between principles and causes, he identifies the efficient cause with the universal intellect, which is the highest faculty of the world soul. The world soul forms the material world creatively by means of the intellect. Forms are thereby created by the soul and are in a certain sense identical to it. Bruno also uses the concept of souls as principles of movement in his cosmology. In the dialogue *La cena de le ceneri*, he speaks about the souls of stars as sentient and more rational than humans are. Bruno's emphasis on the entire world and all its parts being animated can be read in three different ways. In the monistic way, he would accept only one substance, which exists composed of the matter and soul as its form. In the dualistic manner, he would consider both principles as independent substances, and even Bruno could also be interpreted in a pluralistic way, for he shifts the atomistic level. According to Bruno in *Della causa*, everything has a part of the spiritual substance, the spirit is in everything, and there is no minimal body which is not animated.

Tommaso Campanella in his panpsychic thoughts follows both the Platonic and Empedoclean traditions. In the *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* (disp. IV, pp. 322–323),

which is a defense of Telesio, he uses the concept of the world soul and cites a passage from Ficino's commentary to *Enneads*, where he describes it as a vital and sensual breath penetrating the entire cosmos. The animal spirit springs from the world soul, and as fire vivifies and nourishes the world, and thus the heavens are in the world as a breath of the heavenly spirit (Campanella 1992; Ernst 2010). In *Del senso delle cose e della Magia*, Campanella follows Telesio's pansensism from the very beginning. He emphasizes that everything is sentient and argues in favor of panpsychism by means of an argument against the emergence: what is in the effect, must be in the cause. The elements are therefore sentient, although different entities have a different level of sensation (Campanella 1925; Ernst 2010). Campanella later connects panpsychic thought with his doctrine of primalities (potentia, sapientia, amor), provided that the middle primality "sapientia" can be considered as the development of the doctrine of universal sensation. All things are endowed with a certain sensation which was infused into them by wisdom (Headley 1997). According to Ernst Cassirer, Campanella's theory of knowledge, in particular, is from the very beginning panpsychic: the subject can perceive the object provided both have the same nature; meaning we feel the same life that is given to us (Cassirer 2000).

Impact and Legacy

Renaissance panpsychism created the philosophical framework of William Gilbert's theory of magnetism (Gilbert 1958), and the influence on seventeenth-century philosophy and science, in particular on Spinoza, Leibniz, Henry More, and Newton, has been discussed (Skrbina 2005). Panpsychism is sometimes wrongly confused with pantheism, both terms being associated with Giordano Bruno's impact on Baruch Spinoza. Among modern panpsychic philosophers (William James, Charles Hartshorne, Thomas Nagel, etc.), Gustav Fechner admired Marsilio Ficino and Paracelsus due to their panpsychic thoughts.

Cross-References

- [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- [Campanella, Tommaso](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Gilbert, William](#)
- [Telesio, Bernardino](#)

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Pansensism

- [Panpsychism](#)

Pansophy

- [Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism](#)

Pantheism, Renaissance

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Abstract

The term “pantheism” only emerged at the end of the seventeenth century and was connected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a specific interpretation of Baruch Spinoza’s philosophy. Nevertheless, already in this so-called Pantheismusstreit, Giordano Bruno was labeled the predecessor of modern pantheistic thought. Nicolaus of Cusa, as a follower of Meister Eckhart, also later began to be viewed as a pantheist, as he was suspected of holding a similar heresy as Eckhart and the medieval philosophers Amaury of Bene and David of Dinant. Provided pantheism is defined in the strict sense as the identity of God and nature, as the etymology of the word indicates (pan, all; theos, God), it would seem that this “crude” pantheism was unfamiliar to Renaissance philosophers. Both Nicolaus of Cusa and Giordano Bruno advocated in a certain sense the immanence of the divine in the world but also simultaneously viewed a difference between God and nature and ascribed transcendence or at least transcendental aspects to God.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Three different philosophical concepts were formulated, which were recognized as heresy in the Middle Ages and later labeled as pantheism. Amaury of Bene followed the metaphysics of Johannes Scotus Eriugena at the beginning of the thirteenth century and was condemned for holding a doctrine about God as the form of everything (*Deus est forma omnium*). Shortly thereafter David of Dinant was condemned

because of the identification of God with matter (*Deus est materia omnium*). Meister Eckhart was accused of heresy in the fourteenth century apart from other things because he identified God’s essence with his own essence. The statements of Amaury of Bene, David of Dinant, and Meister Eckhart seem to be in conflict with the orthodox position as it was formulated by Alexander of Hales in the thirteenth century that in God all things are identical with God’s essence (*omnia sunt in ipsa divina essentia*). All these medieval accusations appeared once again in the accusation of heresy directed against Nicolaus of Cusa in the fifteenth century.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Nicolaus of Cusa was attacked by the Heidelberg theologian Johannes Wenck in his work *De ignota literatura*, which is a reaction to Cusanus’ work *De docta ignorantia*. Wenck animadverted Cusanus that he considered God to be a creature (God is a stone) and man and God as identical (Hopkins 1981). Cusanus indeed speaks in the *De docta ignorantia* (I, xxiii, 70) about God as a form of forms (Hopkins 1985). In the *Apologia doctae ignorantiae* (30), however, which he wrote as an apology against Wenck’s accusation, Cusanus explicitly rejects Amaury’s heresy. He defends himself by means of a reference to his own metaphysics, especially to the principles of learned ignorance.

The metaphysical framework of Cusanus’ philosophy is derived from the Neoplatonism of John Scotus Eriugena and Dionysius Areopagite. (Moran 1990) Cusanus borrowed the concept of the world as God’s self-manifestation from these thinkers on the one hand and the concept of negative theology on the other hand. This means that he uses the idea of emanation of reality from One as the first principle and its return to it, which could lead to an identity of God and the creature. He also, however, promoted the concept of a God who is radically different standing above affirmations and negations in the sense of negative theology. It enables Cusanus to claim both that God is the being of all things

and that he transcends all things. Cusanus elaborates this Neoplatonic tradition with the help of the concept of *explicatio/complicatio* (*De docta ignorantia* I, III, 111): “God is the enfolding (*explicatio*) and unfolding (*complicatio*) of all things, in so far as he is enfolding, in Him all things are Himself. . . in so far as he is unfolding, in all things He is that which they are” (Hopkins 1985). In a certain sense, as the coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*), it can even be stated that the stone is God and that God is stone. God is thus the absolute being of everything, and all things have their perfect reality only in God. In God they are nothing else but God. This leads Wenck to accuse Cusanus of heresy: if God is the absolute essence of all things, all things have the same essence. This is also why Wilhelm Dilthey considers Cusanus the creator of modern pantheism (Dilthey 1921a).

Cusanus, however, escapes from pantheism, for he created a language which enables him to describe God’s transcendence more precisely than Meister Eckhart (Dupré 2006), especially by means of the doctrine of contraction (Moran 1990). Only God is absolute, whilst all other things are contracted (*De docta ignorantia*, III, IX, 150) (Hopkins 1985). It is not possible to put an identity between God and creature due to this distinction. All things have their own contracted essence due to which they differ from one other. God as the absolute essence is the absolute essence of all things, but the ontological difference between God and the creature still remains, and God’s transcendence is confirmed.

Giordano Bruno followed Nicolaus of Cusa and can also be in a certain sense labeled as a pantheist, for several signs of pantheistic thought, and in an even larger degree than with Cusanus, can be found in his work (Dilthey 1921b). Bruno’s philosophy, however, can be read in a way which questions the pantheistic interpretation (Lechner 2014). In the dialogue *Della causa, principio e uno*, Bruno elaborates the panpsychic doctrine of the universal soul penetrating and animating the entire world and its parts by means of the universal intellect (Bruno 1958). The universal intellect is the efficient cause of the world, but there is no evidence that he

identifies it with God (Kristeller 1964). When Bruno speaks of substance, at a later point, he means the only one substance, which is God, and everything else is its accident. In addition, he considers the universe as a substance, which is one and infinite, and all multiplicity is only the multiplicity of its appearances. It seems therefore that the distinction between the world and God disappears in Bruno’s thought. Nevertheless, Bruno simultaneously makes a difference between the physical universe and the universe of archetypes.

God as an internal principal is immanent in the world, thus we can find divinity in every part of the universe, states Teofilo in the dialogue *Della causa*. At the same time, God as the prime cause differs from the world as the cause differs from its effect. For this reason, Bruno refers to the universe as the image of the first cause. It seems therefore that Bruno still holds a difference between God in nature and God the creator, as between the immanent and transcendent God (Eusterschulte 1997).

Another sign of pantheism is Bruno’s concept of the infinite universe. Bruno creates an equivalence between possibility and reality in God, of absolute power and its object. The infinite object of his action must therefore be equivalent to its active omnipotence. This can imply the identity of the infinite God and the infinite universe (Pisarek 2003). It can be interpreted in a different way, however, as the manifestation of infinite God in the infinite universe, but this does not mean that the infinite world is strictly identical to God. The world is concrete whilst divinity is abstract and absolute (Blum 2012).

In the dialogue *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* (Bruno 1958), Bruno refers to the veneration of gods in animals, plants, etc., and subsequently formulates the pantheistic sentence “nature is God in things” (Bruno 1958). “One” as the principle responsible for the variety of its manifestations on a cosmological level plays a similar role in the philosophy of religion as it justifies the multiplicity of its representations in religious behaviors (Blum 2010). The crucial point with respect to pantheism lies in the fact that God as unity manifests itself in plurality, and

therefore the difference between God and nature is underlined (Blum 2010).

The indefiniteness of Bruno's philosophical approach with respect to pantheism and the impossibility to judge if he was a pantheist or a Neoplatonic dualist could indicate that the application of the modern concept of pantheism to Renaissance authors is artificial (Kristeller 1964).

Impact and Legacy

The terms "pantheist" and "pantheism" were only created at the end of the seventeenth century and were connected with the interpretation of Spinoza's philosophy. In 1789, as Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi published his book *On the Doctrine of Spinoza, in Letters to Mendelssohn* (Scholz 2004), pantheism was explicitly associated with Giordano Bruno's philosophy, for as the first appendix, Jacobi added an excerpt from Bruno's dialogue *Della causa* to his book and praised it as the purest and the most beautiful sketch of pantheism. The view of Bruno as a predecessor of modern pantheism subsequently disseminated in the period of the Enlightenment. Friedrich Schelling made out of Bruno the speaker for his own pantheistic system, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel paid attention to Bruno's Spinozist pantheism in his *History of Philosophy*. The English Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge drew his pantheistic notions from Jacobi's excerpt of Bruno, as well as from German mysticism (McFarland 1969), and thanks to him the knowledge of Bruno and pantheism spread in Britain (Gatti 2011). The view of Bruno as a pantheist was also popular in Italy, for instance, in the work of Vincenzo Gioberti who celebrated Bruno as an exponent of true, healthy, and moral pantheism (Garin 2008).

Ludwig Feuerbach was also influenced by Hegel and Jacobi's readings of Bruno (Gooch 2013). Following Feuerbach, Marxist historiography differentiated between so-called materialistic pantheism derived from Bruno and Spinoza and idealistic pantheism connected with German mysticism starting from Meister Eckhart up until

Jacob Boehme. German mystics focused, however, on the unity of the soul and God than on the pantheistic identification of the world with God (Wollgast 1972, 1988).

The interpretation of Renaissance pantheism in the nineteenth century was completed by Wilhelm Dilthey in his analysis of European pantheism. Dilthey praised two Renaissance thinkers crucial for this phenomenon. In his view, Nicolaus of Cusa created the basic concepts of the new pantheistic worldview, and Giordano Bruno developed them for the new modern image of the world (Dilthey 1921a).

Contemporary authors dealing with pantheism try to define and differentiate its various forms (Levine 1994, Mander 2012) but are unambiguous in the assessment of Renaissance pantheists. Both Cusanus and Bruno are viewed more as "panentheists" than "pantheists" following the concept of Karl Krause. Panentheism is defined as the theistic form of pantheism substituting the identity of God and the world with the catchword "everything is in God." Since both the immanence of God in the world and its transcendence are held simultaneously, this concept corresponds better to Bruno's and Cusanus' philosophies.

Cross-References

- Bruno, Giordano
- Immanence, Renaissance Idea of
- Nicholas of Cusa
- Panpsychism

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Paradox in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

This entry explores paradoxes from their origin in classical antiquity to their dissemination in the Renaissance, defining the nature of paradoxes and attempting to explain the reason for their success in the Renaissance.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Paradox, from the Greek *para doxa* (literally, “contrary to common opinion”) is a mode of expression in which opposites can coexist, and that can be true and false at the same time. The purpose of paradoxes is to be deliberately provocative, forcing the audience to reconsider notions that may have been taken for granted as true. The term can be applied to several categories of knowledge – to the point of appearing multifaceted, ambiguous, or even indecipherable (Genovese 1992, p. 9). The most common form of paradox – and the most widespread in Renaissance thought – was the so-called rhetorical paradox: a formal defense (written according to the rhetorical rules of a defense or a praise speech) of something that was not considered deserving of being praised or defended.

Paradoxes were central to Stoic philosophy, and were employed to express moral topics that contradicted common opinion (only the wise man, even when poor, is really rich, etc.). It was precisely thanks to Stoicism that the rhetorical genre

known as paradoxical encomium, where a speaker will develop praise of something considered unworthy of praise, was developed. The form was considered a way for a speaker to showcase his skills, allowing him to impress the audience with a eulogy of a subject considered impossible to ever describe in positive terms. A well-known paradoxical encomium was Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* (paradoxical since it praised the woman considered responsible for the Trojan war).

In Roman antiquity, paradoxes were the subject of an influential work by Cicero titled *Paradoxa Stoicorum*. Cicero's piece of work is noteworthy precisely because it mentions the notion that Stoics called "paradoxes" all things that are "remarkable" and "contrary to everybody's opinion" (*admirabilia contraque opinionem omnium*).

The rediscovery of classical culture in the Renaissance, and the following vogue for classical forms, was at the origin of the stunning popularity that paradoxes enjoyed in the Renaissance (Colie 1966; Figorilli 2008). Paradoxes became so popular that the scholar Rosalie Colie has compared the dissemination of paradoxes in the early modern period to an epidemic (Colie 1966, p. 33). Colie sees paradoxes as typical of periods characterized by active intellectual speculation. As a consequence, she has identified the main reason for the success of the paradoxical form in the intense intellectual activity of the Renaissance, which often saw many contradictory ideas and systems compete or intertwine. The paradoxical mode offered an easy, readily available instrument to explore complex ideas, and, most importantly, to challenge assumptions and to fuel with new life a variety of fields of knowledge. In addition, in a refined culture that delighted itself in the practice of *serio ludere*, rhetorical paradoxes were the ideal instrument to delight audiences with a display of wit and erudition. Colie also underlines how paradoxes always exploit competing value systems, thus challenging orthodoxy. As such, they become an indirect criticism of any absolutism (Colie 1966, p. 10).

The best-known example of paradoxical encomium of the Renaissance is most likely Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* (1511), where the author uses the stratagem of Folly praising her impact on the world as a way to express a bitter satire of the society of his times, criticizing especially the corruption of the Church. One more influential piece of work was Ortensio Lando's *Paradossi* (1543), a collection of thirty paradoxical theses, ranging from poverty being preferable to riches, to demonstrations of Aristotle's and Cicero's ignorance. Like Erasmus's text, Lando's work has a strong Christian undertone, related to the intrinsically paradoxical nature of Christianity, that teaches that the humble will be exalted, the persecuted will be rewarded, and that the poor are the real rich (Corsaro 2000, pp. 23–25). In a period of tense religious debates, and where the Church was increasingly seen as corrupt and in need of reverting to its original simplicity, paradoxes became also a way to express potentially controversial opinions without excessively exposing oneself.

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Paré, Ambroise

Born: 1510, Bourg-Hersent

Died: 20 December 1590, Paris

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Abstract

Among the greatest surgeons of his time, Ambroise Paré is universally considered the

founder of French surgery and of modern surgery generally. He was one of the most influential figures in the development of modern surgery. He reintroduced surgery on the cleft lip, which had already been pioneered by the Arabs, and worked on the designing of various prostheses to replace amputated limbs. His most famous book is *Des Monstres et Prodiges*, dedicated to monstrous births.

Biography

A physician, philosopher, and writer. Born in Bourg-Hersent (Laval) in 1510. Died in Paris on 20 December 1590. Among the greatest surgeons of his time, Ambroise Paré is universally considered the founder of French surgery and modern surgery generally. Of humble origins (his father seems to have been a barber-surgeon and his mother a prostitute), Paré began his training as an apprentice barber-surgeon in the late 1520s and served in the French army as a barber-surgeon from around 1533. His military position gave him the chance to travel in Europe, but above all to gain comparative experience, which would be decisive for developing his empirical and pragmatic method of diagnosis. From this point of view, his battlefield experiences during the Piedmont war in Francois I's army were particularly significant. Running out of oil, which in those days was used boiling on wounds, Paré had started using simple bandaging and noticed that that way the wounds healed more quickly. Rejecting the predominant medical tradition of his time, rooted in an anthropological and metaphysical framework, Paré began promoting a pragmatic and simple approach to surgery, modernizing its practices and even the theorizing behind them. On returning to Paris he gained membership in the Barbers' Corporation and began practicing as a surgeon. In 1552 he served in the army again and was the first to practice the ligation of the arteries in leg amputations. In later life, he was greatly honored but

also contested. He became Henri II's surgeon and from 1554 was the Master of the St. Cosma College of Surgeons. In this role, however, he had frequent disagreements with professors at the Sorbonne. Later he was Chamber Surgeon to François II and Charles IX and then First Surgeon to Henri III.

Innovative Aspects

Dedicated to real-life experimentation and direct surgical practice, Paré was not a man of letters, and that contributed to his sharp break with the medico-anthropological tradition of his time. He was one of the greatest innovators and one of the most influential figures in the development of modern surgery. He excelled in obstetrics and introduced the crown drill. He also reintroduced surgery on the cleft lip, which had already been pioneered by the Arabs, and worked on the designing of various prostheses to replace amputated limbs (Poirier 2005; Delacomptée 2007). His first publication, in 1545, was entitled *La méthode de traicter les playes faictes par flèches, dards et semblables*. In 1572 he published his *Cinq Livres de Chirurgie*.

Teratology

His most famous book, and the one that was most philosophically influential, was undoubtedly *Des Monstres et Prodiges*, of 1573 (Paré 1971). Here Paré distinguishes "monsters" from mere "wonders." Wonders come about in nature only in a passive way, whereas "monsters" are natural but unusual phenomena, occurring beyond but not against the normal course of nature. Often, however, they foretell sinister events, since they have significance as "signs." In an innovative etiological approach to the theme of "monsters" (which highlights the consolidation in the late sixteenth century of specific attention to "second causes"), Paré recognized various types of causes: supernatural and divine causes, i.e., the glory or the anger of God, who

used monsters for His own purposes, which included punishing mankind, and natural causes, such as too much seed or not enough, the imagination, the narrowness of the womb, an unsuitable position of the mother during pregnancy, falls or knocks during pregnancy, hereditary illnesses, and deterioration or mixing of the seed. To be added to these were the tricks of charlatans, sorcerers, and the Devil (Céard 1971, 1977; Kappler 1980).

Cross-References

- [Fernel, Jean](#)
- [Galen and Galenism](#)
- [Vesalius, Andreas](#)

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Parker, Henry

Born: 1640, Rutton (Sussex)

Died: 1652

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Abstract

A political theorist and pamphleteer during the 1640s, Henry Parker was the most influential defender of the Parliamentary cause during the Civil Wars and the early years of the Long Parliament. His theories of popular sovereignty, political representation, and Parliamentary absolutism constitute an original and innovative contribution to the early modern political philosophy.

Biography

A political theorist and pamphleteer defending the Parliamentary cause during the 1640s, Henry Parker was born in 1604 in Rutton, Sussex, the fifth son of Sir Nicholas Parker, a respected gentleman of a country gentry family who served as deputy lieutenant, sheriff, and shire knight. Henry was educated in a Protestant family, far from religious or political radicalism. He got his BA in St. Edmund Hall in 1625 and his MA 3 years later. In 1638, he was called as a barrister having entered Lincoln's Inn in 1630. From this date to his first pamphlet in 1640 (the *Case of Shipmony*), very little is known. Writing for private interests was among his activities during the 1640s, a period in which he was also employed by William Fiennes, Viscount Saye and Sele, his uncle and patron, as a secretary. Between 1641 and 1642, he wrote a long apologia on behalf of the Vintners' Company, and in 1643 he was engaged by the Stationer's Company. In 1646 he was into the service of the Merchant

Adventurers in Hamburg, and on their request, he wrote in 1648 the book *Of a Free Trade* in which he attacked the ideas of unlimited competition and defended the privileges of incorporated merchants. Despite their occasional nature, in all his commissioned writings, Henry Parker linked the interests of private parties with the common interest of the English nation, showing an original vision of politics and economics.

Political Theory

His most important writing, the *Case of Shipmony*, is a defense of mixed constitution and of the role of the Parliament in taxation, based on *salus populi* and necessity claims. This volume had a relevant impact on contemporary debates on extraordinary taxation and the role of the Parliament and is today regarded among the most important pamphlets of the pre-revolutionary years. He also published several important pamphlets on religious issues, such as *The Question Concerning the Divine Right of Episcopacie* (1641), *The Grounds of Ecclesiastical Regiment* (1641), and *A Discourse Concerning Puritans*, all of which were printed in support of Lord Say against his enemies and in favor of the supremacy of the public magistrate in settling religious disagreements. In 1642 he published his *Observations upon His Majesties Late Answer and Expresses* in which, responding to Charles' declarations, he rebutted godly monarchical power and placed absolute power in the hands of Parliament in all extraordinary cases. The relevance of Parker's treatise relies on its clear-cut expression of Parliamentary absolutism based on the representative nature of the Parliament. These principles will be further expressed in his *Jus Populi*, published in 1644, in which he developed his theory of the representative nature of the English Parliament and its popular sovereignty. However, he was a fierce opponent of the Levellers and of any radical movement. In 1642 he was appointed secretary to the Parliamentary Army and in 1645 secretary

to the House of Commons. He was also at the service, as secretary, of Robert Devereux, third Earl of Essex, a prominent military leader for the Parliamentarians. In the following years, he served for Henry Ireton, and in 1649, he was secretary to Oliver Cromwell's army. Henry Parker died in 1652.

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Parthenopaeus

► [Flandino, Ambrogio](#)

Paruta, Paolo

Born: 14 May 1540, Venice

Died: 6 December 1598, Venice

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Abstract

Paolo Paruta (Venice 1550–1598) was the mouthpiece of the Venetian political system in the Age of Lepanto (end of the sixteenth century). Born in Venice to a family of the low nobility, he studied at the University of Padua, the main center of Italian Aristotelianism. In his first book, the dialogue *Della perfettione della vita politica* (first edition: 1579), Paruta uses the Aristotelian structure of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to set up a dialogue among Venetian laymen and churchmen at the Council of Trent (1563), in order to revamp the choice for the active life in the service of the Venetian State, seen as the historical embodiment of the ideal republic. In the posthumous *Discorsi politici* (1599), Paruta left behind this idealistic and traditional vision of politics, in order to dialogue with the Florentine sixteenth-century tradition (Machiavelli and, above all, Guicciardini): the Myth of Venice is not dismissed, but it needs to come to terms with the power of history. In these 25 texts, Paruta tries to defend his beloved Republic (he was the historiographer of state), justifying it in all her political and military choices (i.e., neutrality), because of her quality of adaptation to historical conditions – *prudenza* is the most important political virtue, for this author. In his *Soliloquio* (1599) Paruta shows all the anguish suffered from his choice of the *vita activa*: in this sort of counter-text of *Della perfettione della vita politica*, the Venetian author reconsiders critically the choice that he has taken.

Alternate Names

[Paruta, Polo](#)

Biography

Paolo Paruta was born in Venice to a family of the low nobility and of Luccan roots: from 1558 to 1561, he studied philosophy and rhetoric at the University of Padua, among the main centers of Italian Aristotelianism. During the first part of 1560s Paruta was also involved in Venetian literary life: he founded a minor *academia* hosted in his own house, and he was part of the city's poetic circle ruled by the old Domenico Venier (heir of the movement of Petrarchism, planted in Venice by Pietro Bembo) (Benzoni [2014](#)).

In December 1562 Paruta began his political career, being accepted before ordinary time in the *Maggior Consiglio* (the assembly of Venetian noblemen). Between 1563 and 1564, he had his first diplomatic experience, joining the mission of Venetian ambassadors Michele Surian and Giovanni da Lezze at the Imperial Court in Vienna. Surian was a great political leader of the Republic: he introduced his young *protégé* to the praxis and the values of Venetian diplomacy. On their return trip (1563), the two Venetian ambassadors stopped in Trent, where the Council of the Catholic Church was ending: here they joined Venetians (many of them laymen and above all churchmen) such as Nicolò da Ponte and Matteo Dandolo (Ambassador of the Republic of Venice at the Council, both laymen), Giovanni Grimani and Daniele Barbaro (Patriarch of Aquileia, and his successor), Filippo Mocenigo (Archbishop of Nicosia), and Agostino Valier (Bishop of Verona). This community would become the setting of the philosophical discussions contained in the *Della perfettione della vita politica*, the first book published by Paruta several years later (1579), in which all the fictional characters would take the stance of their real equivalents (Mocenigo plays the stoic philosopher, Barbaro the clerical humanist, Surian and Da Ponte the supporters of the political way of life) (Candeloro [1936b](#); Curcio

1969; Benzoni 2014; Paruta 1852; Benzoni and Zanato 1982).

The success of the *Perfettione* is witnessed not only by the three editions during the author's lifetime (1579, 1582, 1586), but above all by the fact that in 1580 a marginal writer, such as he was at that time (he has only published, in 1572, a funeral oration for the Venetian fallen in the battle of Lepanto), was chosen by the *Consiglio dei Dieci* (the ruling assembly of the *Serenissima*) as the new *Storico Pubblico* (the Official Historiographer of State). In fact, he was the right man to write the history of Venice in a way that would please the patrician ruling class. With his privileged access to the secret state archives, Paruta started his enterprise in 1580. At his death, the work was still incomplete, but the 12 books of his *Historia Vinetiana* were published in Venice in 1605. Although his charge was to write the Official History of the Republic in Latin like his predecessors, Paruta decided to write it in Italian, as he would do for the rest of his literary production (Candeloro 1936a; Zanato 1981; Cozzi 1997).

In the second part of his political and literary life (1580–1598), Paruta reached the upper part of Venetian State *cursus honorum*: from 1592 to 1595 he was sent to Rome as Ambassador at the Papal Court of Clement VIII. On the other hand, he left the philosophical and rhetorical celebration of the traditional Myth of Venice to move into the more dangerous field of historiography, where he wished to justify the perfection of the *Serenissima* and her deeds (Wars of Italy, War of Cyprus and Battle of Lepanto, *Pax Asbrugica* and subsequent Venetian neutrality in late sixteenth-century Italy). Adding to his *Historia Venetiana*, Paruta composed numerous *Discorsi politici*, upon several classical and modern historical themes, 25 of them were published after his death (1599), in Venice, by his sons (Benzoni 2014).

During his last years in Venice (1595–1598), Paruta devoted himself not only to politics and historiography: according to Valerio Marcellini's dialogue *Il Paruta ovvero dell'immortalità dell'anima* (still unpublished, written probably in 1601 but set before 1598), he joined some Aristotelian discussions in Venice with the poet Celio

Magno, Francesco da Molin, Girolamo Cappello, Orsatto Giustinian, Paolo Loredan, and Giacomo Barozzi (Carpané 2007).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

At the *Studio* of Padua, Paruta attended some humanistic courses, such as those of the Aristotelian Marcantonio Passeri (also known as "Genua") in philosophy and of Adriano Beretti (also known as "Valentico") in theology and Holy Scripture. Valentico was a Dominican friar commentator of St. Paul, then Inquisitor of Venice. He may also have attended the courses of Bernardino Tomitano (logic), Francesco Robortello (humanities and rhetoric), Carlo Sigonio (humanities and history), and Marco Mantova Benavides (law). During his stay in Padua (1558–1561), he may have met cultural personalities such as Sperone Speroni, Daniele Barbaro, Agostino Valier, and Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (Candeloro 1936a).

Paruta had a strong Aristotelian heritage, as witnessed by the structure of *Perfettione*: the discussion of the virtues (in book two) follows the scheme of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Like his university masters, Paruta's Aristotelianism is not dogmatic, but eclectic: Aristotelian issues are combined with Platonism, Stoicism, and scholastic features. Paruta follows Genua and Gasparo Contarini in fighting against the thesis of the mortality of the soul (still discussed in Padua thanks to the living legacy of Pietro Pomponazzi) not only in his *Perfettione della vita politica* but also as a character in Valerio Marcellini's dialogue (Sgarbi 2016). Paruta departed from this university heritage, not in terms of its contents, but its aims: as Francesco da Molin (one of the author's mouthpieces, together with Michele Surian, Daniele Barbaro, and Matteo Dandolo) declares, the young Venetian nobles did not agree with their professors about the preference for the *vita contemplativa*, instead, they wished to be taught about the *vita activa*; furthermore, rather than trusting classical authorities such as Aristotle and Plato, they wished to test them through their own experience.

Paruta's philosophical works include, in addition to the *Perfettione*, the 25 *Discorsi politici* and his *Soliloquio*, a sort of examination of conscience written during his difficult embassy in Rome but published after his death, in 1599, at the end of the first edition of *Discorsi politici* (Paruta 1852; Paruta 1990). These works point to a second, clear heritage – the Venetian tradition. Paruta was the real heir of Gasparo Contarini not only in continuing to spread the Myth of Venice (Contarini, as recalled by Matteo Dandolo, explains the theory of mixed state at the end of Book Three of *Della perfettione*) but also in believing that the option for the *vita activa* had a religious value.

Written during the early 1570s, the three books of *Della perfettione* seem to be, at a first sight, just a simple transcription of the 3 days of dialogue in Trent in 1563; indeed, this work is not just a Venetian rewriting of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* but a strong political and literary operation (Benzoni 2005). Coming from the lower nobility, the young Paruta introduces himself as the mouthpiece of the Venetian patriciate revamping all the values of the patrician class (see, for instance, the numerous discussions about civic virtues such as nobility, magnificence, wealth) in the second part of the sixteenth century, when many young noblemen started to reject the wealthy but also demanding life of a Venetian ruler (Pompeati 1905; Cozzi 1961; Bouwsma 1968; Nuccio 1992; Sperling 1999). Paruta proposes again the old philosophical discussion about *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* (stating his support for the former) because he wants every young nobleman to spend his personal life in the service of the state. After all, Venice is the perfect historical realization on earth of the ideal republic that the classical philosophers could only imagine in their books (Ulvioni 1981). Even the last and most famous part of *Perfettione* (the discussion at the end of book three of mixed government, based on Aristotle and Plutarch and the tradition of Venetian republicanism) should be read within this broader setting: the government of the *Serenissima* has not only a formal perfection lacking in the ancient

republics of Rome, Athens, and Sparta but provides the complete and concrete answer to fundamental human needs. Indeed, it represents the realization of the personal search for a fully happy life, of the classical and humanistic search for a perfect government, and of the Catholic search for a religious-oriented state after Machiavelli's political thought. In fact, in the last pages of the dialogue, Paruta depicts God himself blessing the rulers of the *Serenissima*, defenders of the true faith, without the intermediation of the Roman Catholic Church. Of course, this religious feature of the perfect state of Paruta's *Perfettione* was problematic in the Age of the Counter-Reformation: but, thanks also to the author's caution (i.e., the setting during the Council of Trent, not after it), the book encountered no problems with Catholic censorship (Benzoni 1999). Indeed, the three books of the *Perfettione* clearly reveal both their Renaissance values and their traditional Venetian ones (i.e., personal service to the state, the mixing between spiritual and political power its religious value, the Caesaropapism), in a sort of intentional anachronism that deliberately ignores both Machiavelli and Luther and was meant to inspire Paruta's fellow citizens.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The 25 *Discorsi politici* are no doubt the most original political work by Paruta. These single-topic political texts, dealing with ancient (above all, Roman) and modern history, enabled Paruta to discuss some theoretical problems brought up by historical facts – they were composed in the same years when Paruta was involved as ambassador in the main political events of his age and was writing his *Historia Vinetiana*.

Although Paruta is equally distant from the anti-Machiavellism and of Tacitism and *Ragione di Stato* literature, in the *Discorsi politici* he decided to fight his personal ideological battle against Machiavelli (the structure and often the topic are the same as Machiavelli's *Discorsi sopra*

la Prima Deca di Tito Livio) in a very original way (Curcio 1969; Baiocchi 1975/1976; Cervelli 1986; Comparato 2002). Instead of just condemning the Florentine author as a heretic, Paruta made use of his linguistic expressions and above all their political meanings (i.e., *stato* is not just an idealistic republic of wise men, but a territorial entity made up of land), while also discarding Machiavelli's depiction of the Republic of Venice as the worst state ever (Giani 2010/2011, 2016a, b). Paruta considers the Republic of Venice as surpassing the ancient Roman Republic so beloved by Machiavelli not in the field of the myth, but of history: only the *Serenissima* has saved its own independence and civil orders across the centuries (Rossi 2014). In the *Discorsi politici*, Paruta abandoned the traditional view of the Venetian political system he had used in the *Perfettione* (Venturelli 2013): in this work, the Republic of Venice still has a mixed government, whose leanings are more aristocratic than popular. This perfect *repubblica degli ottimati* is guided not by a monarch or a leader but by the anonymous class of *prudenterissimi senatori*, the wisest senators capable to use their *prudenza* (the ability to choose righteously, according to all historical circumstances). The aim of such a republic is not the same as Machiavelli's: Venice did not seek war and territorial conquest, but internal and international peace and the conservation of the state. So in his *Discorsi politici*, Paruta became the theorist of Venetian neutrality (Baiocchi 1975/1976; Silvano 1993).

In this book and his several historical works also, the contact with Guicciardini (praised in the *Perfettione*) is evident, especially in some key ideas such as the relevance of *accidenti*, or the criticism of the exemplariness of history.

The first part of *Soliloquio* is traditional and innovative at the same time. On the one hand, Paruta's condemnation of the vanity of political life recalls the old *querelle* between Pietro Querini, Paolo Giustinian, and Gasparo Contarini about the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. On the other hand, those pages are a surprising overturning of the whole of *Perfettione*'s political

ideology: in Paruta's pained self-examination, every honor and every energy spent for the Republic seems to be nothing compared with the soul's thirst for an absolute God. Despite the pacifying end of *Soliloquio* (where a more balanced equilibrium between secular and religious needs seems to be reached), this distressing text is the witness of a proto-Baroque feature in the last years of Paruta's life.

Impact and Legacy

Paruta had no direct disciples: not only because of his shy personality but also because in the decade after his death, the harsh political and ideological struggle (see the Papal *Interdetto*, 1606–1607) between the Roman Church and the Republic of Venice left no place for the political equilibrium Paruta had tried so hard to find between Rome and Venice. Paolo Sarpi, the champion of Venetian jurisdictionalism, became the new mouthpiece of the *Serenissima* (Benzoni 2008): Paruta was welcomed in the Venetian literary tradition, but his figure had no significant legacy.

Outside Venice, Paruta's political thought was fundamentally misunderstood and reduced by his seventeenth-century readers to *Ragion di Stato* issues, dismissing his Renaissance roots (Giani 2014): Traiano Boccalini, in his *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, depicts Paruta as a defender of the state ruler against the interests of his subjects (the living Venetian *prudenza* has turned into a defense of the status quo and in an absolute form of moderatism). In the second half of the sixteenth century, Paruta (whose work had been translated into French during his lifetime) had a small *fortuna* in northern Europe, as witnessed by the German and English translations of his political works (Cervelli 1967).

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Paruta, Polo

► Paruta, Paolo

Pasquier, Étienne

Born: Paris 1529

Died: Paris 1615

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Abstract

A jurist, humanist, and historian, a precursor of modern historiography, Etienne Pasquier studies the past to furnish practical responses to contemporary crises. In the *Recherches de la France* (1560–1621), Pasquier applies a marked national sentiment to his exploration of the origins of French history: his aim is to demonstrate to the French the glory of their history and their national institutions, without lapsing into fanatic patriotism.

Biography

Pasquier studied in Paris, Toulouse, and Bologna under illustrious teachers such as Hotman, Bau-douin, Cujas, and Alciato. He was a lawyer in the French Parliament, an office which led him to take part in the Estates General of Blois in 1588. In Antoine Loisel's *Dialogue des avocats*, he was defined as the ideal model of lawyer, on a par with Guillaume du Vair. He was a counselor first to Henry III and later to Henry IV, taking up ranks against the League on behalf of the latter. He distinguished himself in particular for the part played in the trial between the Jesuits and the University of Paris, which refused to accept them. In 1557 he married a wealthy young widow whom he had defended in court. Wishing to contribute to the reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics during the wars of religion, he engaged in a reconstruction of the historic origins of the unity of the French nation, going back to the country's pre-Christian past. In 1560 he fell ill as a result of accidental poisoning and withdrew to convalesce in Amboise and Cognac, where he began to work on the ten volumes of the

Recherches de la France (1560–1621); this was his most important work, which continued to occupy him for the next 40 years. Whereas the first generation of humanists had spent all its eloquence on the glorification of antiquity, showering contempt on the literary attempts of French writers, Pasquier in the *Recherches de la France* instead applies a marked national sentiment to his exploration of the origins of French history. His is indeed a veritable apologia for France, operating on three levels. Firstly, he claims that the French language has equal merit with Latin and more than Italian. Secondly, he argues that the French church succeeded in withstanding the Reformation and Papal imperialism. Thirdly and finally, he argues that in the French constitution, royal power and moderate parliamentarism are harmoniously complementary.

The *Recherches* is a work of history in the fullest sense: Pasquier consults original sources, court documents, and chronicles of the period. His aim is to demonstrate to the French the glory of their history and their national institutions, without lapsing into fanatic patriotism. A precursor of modern historiography, he studies the past to furnish practical responses to contemporary crises.

Pasquier also wrote a book called *L'Interprétation des Institutes de Justinien* (which was not published until 1847), in which he analyzes both French law and Roman law. He devoted the last years of his life to biblical exegesis. He also wrote some minor poems in the style of *La Pléiade* and some excellent pieces of literary criticism. He was also known for the amorous dialogue entitled *Le Monophile* (1554) and for several political works including the *Anti-Martire* (1590), a pamphlet in which he attacked those who saw the assassination of Henry III as martyrdom, and *Autorità regale* (1615), an essay in defense of the political rights of the king. His correspondence, which reads almost like a diary of the events of the time, was published in 1619 and offers a vivid commentary on the political and military episodes of the wars of religion (1562–1598) as well as extensive discussions of historic and literary matters.

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Patronage in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The patronage system of early modern Europe decided appointments to offices in church and state and was a dominant force in cultural life. Patronage started with the prince and spread downward through courtiers to their own circle of dependents. Grants, patents, offices, and financial rewards flowed through interlocking networks of personal relationships: patrons were often themselves intermediary figures, bestowing favors while at the same time serving as the clients of those higher in the hierarchy. So ubiquitous is patronage in the Renaissance world that the term has been stretched to embrace disparate practices. A patron might be an individual (monarch, prince, aristocrat, cardinal), a family, or a

corporation (guild, monastery, confraternity, city council), with multiple overlaps between these types. Acts of patronage cover arrangements from the nepotistic assignment of government contracts to the commissioning of altarpieces and the provision of time and opportunity for the exercise of scholarly labors. Motives and perceived benefits for the patron were varied. Instances of patronage in the cultural field range from a relatively simple contracted job to long-drawn-out personal relationships involving familial proximity, political allegiance, and binding customs such as ritual gift exchange.

The arrangements of patronage certainly influenced cultural production and social behavior. In order to win favor from their superiors, aspirants to patronage often emulated courtly manners, cultivating the appropriate fashions, tastes, and mannerisms. An artist or intellectual patronized by a court thereby obtained a certain status and a connection to peers, and these arrangements could flow back into the work. At the same time, a patron might be a useful bulwark behind which dangerous ideas could be explored (as in the case of Hobbes; Sarasohn 1999). Writers sought individual patrons to reward their works, and patrons gained prestige through association with virtuosic artistic and intellectual achievements. Works of art and books took on significance as material objects, signifying the qualities of their owner and signaling subtle messages of power and prestige. Patrons may have operated for their own political interests, but could equally exercise taste and discernment, taking a part in the creative process itself. Through patronage, philosophy remained closely tied to civic and political life; even if desired, the ivory tower removed from worldly activity was rarely available to the Renaissance philosopher.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Renaissance patronage inherited an older tradition, locked into feudal relations. Wealth and

power were personally invested in great families and individuals, which were distributed to clients. Patronage could operate at several removes: a local dignitary might put in a word on a client's behalf with someone low in the court, who could pass the request to someone higher up, and so on. Political life was perceived as a pattern of social relationships. A client applied for a post or favor through personal networks, while a patron could accumulate personal and political capital through sponsoring work of a high quality. In the Middle Ages, the chief sources of patronage were the court and the church (which might operate through multiple agents, such as monastic houses and eminent individuals). With the rise of cities and the city-state, other sponsors such as guilds and merchant bankers of the *popolo grosso* families took on a role as patrons of art and scholarship (Asch and Birke 1991; Cooper 1996).

Innovation and Original Aspects

The nature of the patron's role and the motivations behind it were shaped by a number of cultural forces. Civic humanism encouraged the contribution of the wealthy and powerful to public service and the common good. The active exercise of virtue – which included patronage – was praised over the idea of inherited nobility. The concept of *magnificenza*, the generosity of spirit and action first praised by Plato as a quality of the philosopher-king, was taken to include the financing of great works of art and architecture: this was praised as a virtue by Leon Battista Alberti (*De re aedificatoria*, 1443–52) and analyzed by the Neapolitan humanist Giovanni Pontano (*De magnificentia*, 1498). Courtesy books like Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* (1508–28) endorsed the picture of the cultivated noble, skilled in appreciation of the arts. Church strictures against usury have been related to the patronage of religious art perceived as an act of piety. Motives need not have been entirely self-interested and may frequently have been mixed: a commission may be at once an act of piety, civic philanthropy, and political self-advertisement. Renaissance patronage offered scope for the patron to exhibit

connoisseurship and is related to the rising status of the artist and writer (Constantinidou 2010; Gilbert 1998).

Patronage could range from the commission of a single work to a client living in his patron's household and thus taking on a certain social status with the lifestyle to match. The Florentine Medici, as well as being patrons of the visual arts, present a notable example of a great family with interests in philosophy, working in the spirit of humanist revival of the colloquies of antiquity. Cosimo de Medici founded the Platonic Academy, led by Marsilio Ficino. Lorenzo de Medici sponsored Ficino's translations of Plato from Greek into Latin and was patron to Pico della Mirandola. The gatherings at the Medici court brought philosophers, poets, and artists close together, encouraging a symbiosis of image and idea, expressed, for example, in the allegorical paintings of Botticelli (Kent and Simons 1987). Such associations provided a model for other countries (Knecht 2008). The variety of patron-client relations make generalizations difficult, and the subject has been most fruitfully approached at a microhistorical level: case studies of intellectuals and their patrons include work on Machiavelli (Landon 2013); the Valori family and their relation to Savonarola, Ficino, and Machiavelli (Jurdjevic 2008); Galileo and the political networks of Rome (Biagioli 1993); and the relations of Thomas Hobbes and William Cavendish, the Earl of Newcastle (Sarasohn 1999). Detailed studies have also been made on the shaping of literary careers and expression in the period (Lytle and Orgel 1982).

Some general points may, however, be ventured. One is the trace left in the language and form of written productions. Verbally, the habits of deference and supplication created a language based on the terms of love and friendship. Dedicatory epistles are characterized by effusive flattery and a claim to intimacy that may not have existed; thus the Petrarchanism of the sixteenth century, with its codes of adoration and humility, provided a useful rhetoric for systems of patronage. These codes could be misunderstood at the time and are hard to interpret today. Cultural

products like books were presented as gifts, and were reciprocated with material objects, or posts such as tutor and household secretary. A book was both ornament and commodity. Writers without their own means were dependent on patrons for a livelihood; without copyright, even books with a relatively large readership generated little income. Since philosophy seldom operates successfully in the open market, some form of sponsorship and patronage has always been necessary for its production. In later centuries this has more usually been the corporate university rather than the single individual. But the role of benefactor, the successful individual as patron of the arts and learning, remains today and owes much to Renaissance precedent.

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Paul of Soncinas

► [Soncino, Paolo Barbo](#)

Paul of Soncino

► [Soncino, Paolo Barbo](#)

Pázmány, Péter

Born: Oradea (Várad), 4 October 1570

Died: Bratislava (Pozsony), 19 March 1637

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Abstract

Péter Pázmány (Oradea, 4 October 1570–Bratislava, 19 March 1637) was a Jesuit, Archbishop of Esztergom, cardinal, Hungarian writer, theologian, politician, university founder, and church organizer. He studied in Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, 1583–1588), Poland (Krakow, Jaroslaw, 1588–1590), Austria (Vienna, 1590–1593), and Italy (Rome, 1593–1597). He was professor of philosophy and theology at Graz University (1597–1607). His philosophy lectures survived in manuscripts (published in the nineteenth century). He moved back to Hungary in 1607 and lived in Trnava and Bratislava since the medieval

archbishopric of Esztergom was under Turkish control. He visited Rome several times, in 1632 as Ferdinand II's official ambassador to Pope Urban VIII. As Archbishop of Esztergom (from 1616), then cardinal (from 1629), he played a mediating role between the papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, the Hungarian estates, the Protestants, and the Turks. More than 1200 letters of his, written in Hungarian, Latin, German, and Italian, survived (Pázmány 1910–1911). He founded several ecclesiastical institutions, the most important among them was the Jesuit university in Trnava (1635), which moved to Buda in 1777. Its legal successors today are Eötvös Loránd University and Pázmány Péter Catholic University, both in Budapest. Pázmány did significant work in proselytization; he personally converted several noble families to the Catholic faith, thus Hungary, mostly Protestant at the end of the sixteenth century, started to become a country with a Catholic majority. His literary work is diverse and prolific, containing some 40 works in Hungarian and Latin language, about 12,000 pages altogether (Pázmány 1894–1904a), Pázmány (1894–1904b). Most of them are controversial writings against the Protestants. In 1605 he published the first Hungarian text about the Islamic empire. He composed the first surviving Catholic prayer book in the Hungarian language (it was printed four times in his life: 1606, 1610, 1625, 1631); he translated *De imitatione Christi* by Thomas à Kempis (1624), and he published his collected sermons (1636). His main work is *Igazsággra vezérlő Kalauz* (Guide to Truth; 1613, 1623, 1637), a synthesis of Catholic theology and apologetics in more than 1000 pages.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Concerning tradition, Pázmány emphasized the importance of continuity in his works. He stated that he did not want to invent new things, but he would take after his predecessors (he used the

example of the bee and the spider). This is why his Hungarian works contain thousands of Latin quotations, with precise source references. Various layers of earlier cultural tradition can be traced in his philosophical and controversial writings, sermons, and great synthesis, the *Kalauz*: the Bible, ancient Greek and Roman erudition, the Church Fathers, Saint Thomas Aquinas, all the significant works of controversial literature from the sixteenth and seventeenth century as well as decrees of Catholic councils. He cited contemporary Catholic theologians such as Martin Azpilcueta, Luis Molina, Petrus Navarrus, Domingo Soto, Francisco Suarez, Gregor Valencia, and Gabriel Vasquez frequently. Roberto Bellarmino, with whom he corresponded, is an important referential basis in *Kalauz*, and two of Pázmány's controversial writings were connected to Bellarmino's controversies: *De ecclesiastica libertate circa causam Veneti interdicti* (1606, Paolo Sarpi and the Venice conflict) and *Diatriba theologica* (1605, against William Whitaker). In 1627 he defended his *Kalauz* against Wittenberg theologian Fridericus Balduinus. His university lectures held in Graz, which survived because he planned to print them as a philosophy textbook, are typical works of Jesuit school philosophy. Pázmány intended to be objective, e.g., he did not miss reviewing the theory by Copernicus. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, he was reprimanded by the Jesuits because of his views on the doctrine of grace.

Pázmány taught for 3 years in Graz Pázmány (2003), and some of his lectures survived: extensive texts on dialectic and physics and a shorter one on metaphysics. These works meet the requirements of school philosophy and the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* (1586, 1599). He quotes authors from antiquity to his own time, mostly from original editions, and not from florilegia. His curriculum is not just a reproduction of a contemporary philosophy coursebook but is elaborated by himself. In each case, he discusses and quotes every important earlier standpoint in detail, and he states his opinion about

them based on rational arguments. He thinks philosophy is important from the point of view of theology (*philosophia est ancilla theologiae*). Sometimes, he takes stands against Aristotle and even Saint Thomas Aquinas. He refers to Saint Thomas many times in his *Dialectica*, less in his *Physica*. He follows mostly the Jesuit school of Coimbra, especially Fonseca, and he refers to his student, Molina, several times. In his *Dialectica*, Thomism is dominant (there are many references to Cajetanus), among the Salamanca theologians he prefers the works of Soto, Canus, Báñez, and Medina. He mentions the works of the Jesuit Toletus many times. However, he never calls himself a Thomist. In his *Physica* he pays attention to Renaissance philosophers, as well; he delineates their works mostly when discussing questions of natural sciences. He refers to Zabarella, Cardanus, Fracastoro, Alessandro, and Francesco Piccolomini many times. He knows the works of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Bessarion, and Marsilio Ficino. He presents the views of Copernicus in detail. Of later authors, he mentions Lipsius's book about Rome. He rarely refers to Plato, it cannot be proved that he had a comprehensive knowledge of his works, obviously, the Aristotelian thinking is determining for him. Out of the Jesuit scholastics, two works by Francisco Suárez are the most important in Pázmány's philosophical works, the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, which is one of the most important references in Pázmány's *Physica*, and Suárez's commentary on Aquinas's *Summa*. All in all, Pázmány quotes about 200 authors and 280 works. In philosophy, Pázmány seeks final verification in rational acceptability, and not in authorities. He presents the different standpoints with strong critical sense; his decision about their acceptability is based on his personal consideration and the arguments and proofs brought up. He is characterized by eclecticism and some sort of voluntarism. His originality and individuality reside in his method of treating the subject matter.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Pázmány's writings are best characterized as scientifically well established. This applies to the richness of sources used by him as well as the syllogistic way of thinking in his controversies. He synthesized his earlier works in *Kalauz*. He was an outstanding philologist: in order to create a perfect text and also to insert his new writings, he constantly rewrote his works and published them in new editions. Primarily he used rational arguments, but he also took advantage of the devices of emotional effects. He often quoted proverbs from live language in his Hungarian works.

Impact and Legacy

Pázmány's first – schematic – biography was written by a contemporary Jesuit in Munich, Jeremias Drexel. The Jesuit lexicon by Alegambe (1643) contains his name and work. His influence on Hungarian literature is very significant. His prayer book and his Kempis translation were published many times in the following centuries. The text of his sermons was quoted by lots of preachers in their own sermons until the end of the eighteenth century.

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Pečenić, Marko

► [Marulić, Marko](#)

Pendasio, Federico

Born: ca. 1525, Mantua, Italy

Died: 19 December 1603, Bologna

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Abstract

Pendasio taught natural philosophy at the universities of Padua and Bologna. He commented on Aristotle's works on physics but also on the books of *De Anima*, in which he followed Alexander of Aphrodisias. The peculiarity of Pendasio's commentaries lies in his textual exegesis of *De Anima*, which on the one hand complied with the restrictive directions of the bull *Apostolici regiminis* (1513) and which on the other hand was open toward an innovative empirical investigation of the human body. In particular, his interpretation of the material intellect promoted the study of the human brain, which obtained remarkable results through the work of the young anatomist Costanzo Varolio on the origin of the optic nerve.

Biography

Federico Pendasio of Mantua was born around 1525. As a colleague of Jacopo Zabarella, he was one of the most influential Aristotelians in Padua during the second half of the sixteenth century, despite having published practically any printed works. Pendasio's renown was most of all based upon his teaching philosophy as a professor at the universities of Padua and Bologna, but it was also rooted in his relationship to the Mantuan House of Gonzaga, especially to the later Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga. Prior to studying philosophy under Ludovico Buccadiferro in Bologna (before 1545), he underwent his initial training in Mantua, home also to Pomponazzi. In 1548, he obtained his *doctor philosophiae* in Mantua. At the age of

23, he already taught logic in Pavia, and in 1552/1553, he was accepted at the Mantua *Collegium Physicum*. He also taught at Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga's court in Mantua, where he served in the diplomatic corps, when the Cardinal unsuccessfully tried to advocate comprehensive clerical reforms at the ecumenical Council of Trent (1562). From 1564 to 1565, Pendasio held the second Chair of Philosophy at Padua (on equal terms with Francesco Piccolomini) and was subsequently – once more as competitor to Piccolomini – appointed first Chair of Philosophy (1565–1571), following Marc' Antonio Genova. During those years, Jacopo Zabarella was teaching logic in Padua, while Girolamo Capodivacca (a follower of Galen's) lectured practical medicine, and Girolamo Fabrici d'Acquapendente taught surgery and anatomy. Between 1571 and 1603, Pendasio was Professor of Philosophy at Bologna University (counting Cesare Cremonini among his students). In Bologna, he also fostered the study of anatomy. This was coherent with his interpretation of Aristotle's theory of the soul, in which he followed Alexander of Aphrodisias. Pendasio died on 19 December 1603 in Bologna.

Teachings and Impact

At the end of the sixteenth century, lecturing philosophy at Padua, primarily meant teaching natural philosophy, also because the discipline was becoming increasingly specialized and was no longer taught in conjunction with medicine. Thus, Pendasio most notably commented on Aristotle's works on physics – *De coelo*, *Meteorologica*, and *De generatione et corruptione* – but also on the books of *De Anima*, which Paduan students read in the 3rd year of the *cursus artium* in the context of Aristotle's *Parva Naturalia*, i.e., his writings on the psychology of the senses.

The philosophical and historico-cultural significance of Pendasio's commentaries lies in his textual exegesis of *De Anima*, which on the one hand complied with the restrictive directions of the bull *Apostolici regiminis* (1513) and which on the other hand was open toward an innovative

empirical investigation of the human body. The Paduan “theory of the twofold (i.e. philosophical and theological) truth” (Baldini 1998, p. 624) therefore results in a specific practice of textual exegesis, which Pendasio – in the eyes of the theologians and judges of the *Sanctum Officium* – exemplified in his commentaries on Aristotle (Poppi 1993, p. 101): In accordance with the abovementioned bull, it was neither permitted to teach the mortality of the individual soul (following Alexander of Aphrodisias) nor the notion that the *anima intellectiva* was a single one in all human beings (as Averroes claims, who adopted the neo-platonic interpretation provided by Themistios in his famous commentary on *De Anima*). Thus, the respective passages of Pendasio’s *Lectiones de anima* point out that Aristotle was mistaken and that his opinion was not in accordance with the Christian truth, therefore needing to be corrected. However, this did not hinder Pendasio from interpreting Aristotle’s *De Anima* along the lines of Alexander, who set forth a naturalist theory of the *intellectus materialis* or *intellectus possibilis*. Pendasio’s *Lectiones de anima* of 1566–1567, which have been preserved as manuscripts, explicitly verify this practice of interpretation.

The core element of Pendasio’s Alexander exegesis is the theory concerning the form of “simple” and “complex” bodies put forward in *Lectio* 28. This theory of Alexander, based on the combination of as well as the interaction of forces between matter and the primary qualities (“warm,” “cold,” “moist,” and “dry”), does not only explain how the entire corporeal world of minerals, metals, and even more complex organisms pertaining to the fauna and flora came into existence; it also provides an explanation of the emergence of intellectual capability. As opposed to the Platonists, Alexander advocates the thesis that the soul does not exceed the body’s capabilities and powers (*dynamis*). Pendasio’s commentary also significantly deviates from the commentary of Averroes, who criticized Alexander’s theory of form and interpreted the *intellectus materialis* as a “simple substance” or pure potentiality detached from matter. Other than Averroes, who discusses Alexander’s thesis of the

emergence of material intellect from the body’s complexity by referencing another passage from Alexander’s *De intellectu* and who thus adheres to the textual level of the commentary, Pendasio points beyond the textual level toward the practice of dissecting the body, which had been established in Padua since Vesalius: According to Pendasio – who directly paraphrases Alexander’s repeatedly edited treatise *De Anima* (1495, 1538) – those who want to gain understanding of the material intellect have to practice the anatomy of the human body (Alexander of Aphrodisias 1538, p. 8). This indicates a notable change in the method as to how knowledge claims were generated, which also illustrates the close relationship that existed in Padua between the study of anatomy and the Aristotelian theory of the soul: The students who attended Pendasio’s lectures on *De Anima* and possibly also Fabrici d’Acquapendente’s lectures on anatomy indeed possessed well-founded knowledge of the soul (De Angelis 2008).

Pendasio starts discussing *De intellectu* only in *Lectio* 29, where he characterizes Alexander’s concept of the *vis intellectiva* as a faculty of the material intellect which is able to integrate intellectual forms (*species intelligibilis*) and which also has a physiological substratum that is natural warmth (*calor naturalis*). Thus Pendasio embeds thinking processes into a more comprehensive organicist concept, since, according to Aristotle’s *de Juventute et Senectute, Vita et Morte*, preserving or destructing the *calor naturalis* leads to the general preservation or destruction of organic life. At the same time, Alexander in *De intellectu* also clarifies the instrumental character of the material intellect. He understands it as a mere reservoir for the intelligible forms (*eideis*) which enter the human intellect via mental processing of sensory data. He considers the actual acts of thinking to be performed by the *intellectus agens* which, however, he (as opposed to Aristotle in *De Generatione Animalium* II, 3) does not consider as coming from “the outside” or as Divine intellect. Due to its capacity of being active (*poietikós*), the *intellectus agens*, in Alexander’s view, rather belongs to the human intellect itself. It is against this backdrop that Pendasio can dismiss Averroes’s critique of Alexander and has his students consider

that “Averroès non intelligit Alexandrum” (Pendasio, Ms 1264, f. 449). This is because Averroes alleged that Alexander had subsumed the *intellectus materialis* under the Aristotelian definition of the soul (*anima*) as an *actus corporis organici* and that he had attributed active properties to the material intellect which, however, it cannot possess according to Alexander’s theory of the intellect (which defines the material intellect as *pura potentia*, i.e., as a mere disposition for perceiving intelligible forms) (ibid. f. 446).

To the same extent as he presents himself as exegete of the Aristotelian text in these instances, favoring Alexander’s naturalist reading over the Averroesian Neoplatonist one, Pendasio is also convinced that Aristotle’s philosophy does not present the whole truth, but only that part of it in which the Stagirite was able to comprehend as a natural philosopher who analyzes phenomena by taking sensual perception as his starting point. In the third lecture cycle on *De animae immortalitate*, Pendasio thus switches to the argumentative mode of scholastic Aristotelianism which had been renewed at the beginning of the sixteenth century by Dominican theologians Tommaso de Vio and Crisostomo Javelli, and the aim of it was to re-Christianize the theory of the soul. Central concepts of the “re-Christianized” Aristotle were, firstly, the *creatio nova*, which explained the recreation of the individual human soul as a creationist act of God and which caused the biological part of the body’s generation (*generatio*) to be transcended; the context of this creationist logic, secondly, sustained the idea of a mode of thinking which relinquishes the notion of mental images and is thus dissociated from the body: “*ut possit separata a corpore sine phantasmate intelligere*.” By that, it also became possible to argue in favor of the intellectual soul’s immortality. However, as Pendasio points out at the end of his lecture, such a line of argumentation is better suited for a theologian than for a philosopher (De Angelis 2010, pp. 120–122).

Contrary to what older scholarship occasionally suggests, Pendasio considering the naturalist and scholastic lines of reasoning to be on a par is

by no means contradictory. Rather it gives expression to rules of exegesis and commenting practices applied to the theory of the soul – *secundum theologos* and *secundum philosophos* – which Pendasio exercises in both directions. Yet, these practices also reflect the two prevailing schemes in the Italian educational system of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: academic Aristotelianism at the universities and scholastic Aristotelianism at the monastic schools (Baldini 1998). In this context, it appears plausible to suppose that Aristotelianism suffered the most severe damage from within, through the discrepancy between those two discordant forms of Aristotelianism (Gaukroger 2002, p. 48). However, looking back at the many years of Pendasio’s professorship of natural philosophy in Padua and then in Bologna, they were most notably the lectures on *De Anima*, in which he reasoned *secundum philosophos*, that took the strongest effect in the 1570s. In Bologna, the young anatomist Costanzo Varolio (1543–1575) was to particularly profit from Pendasio’s authority: Since the Bolognese anatomists doubted their younger colleague’s knowledge claim, instead of giving a lecture on Aristotle, Pendasio had a brain dissection conducted in his lecture hall, during which Varolio was able to demonstrate to the assembled academic audience that he had discovered the origin of the optic nerve in the rear part of the spinal cord (Varolio 1573, f. 14v; De Angelis 2011, p. 254). What this significant episode finally shows is that this sort of “proof,” which is considered to be “the standard of proof” at the London Royal Society, e.g., in Robert Boyle’s experimental philosophy, already existed at the sixteenth-century Italian universities in the context of anatomical practice (De Angelis 2010, p. 255).

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Pereira, Benito

Born: Ruzafa, 1535

Died: Rome, 6 March 1610

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Abstract

Benito Pereira, S.J., was a Spanish Jesuit philosopher who lived during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. While still in his teens, Pereira joined the Society of Jesus, for which religious order he would hold a number of educational responsibilities. After helping to establish a college in San Pablo, Spain, Pereira left for Italy. He eventually found his way to the Jesuit Collegium Romanum where he held a chair teaching scripture. In addition to his several scripture commentaries, Pereira also authored the *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principium*, which, like many of the *cursus* at the time, was expansive in scope and detail. The Jesuit died in Rome in 1610.

Biography

Benito Pereira (Pererius), S.J. (Ruzafa, 1535–Rome, 6 March 1610), was born on the east coast of Spain in Ruzafa, a community near Valencia. Pereira came to be familiar with the Society of Jesus through his interactions with the Jesuit priest Juan Jerónimo Domenech (1516–1592), who had been tasked with the responsibility of founding the College of San Pablo (Solana 1940, 373). Pereira entered the Society of Jesus in 1552 while still in his teens. Domenech left San Pablo and Spain altogether and headed for Sicily and eventually, beyond that, to Rome. Pereira followed Domenech throughout all these moves and finally stayed in Rome, where he spent his entire life teaching and

writing. He was a professor of many disciplines and arts including grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, theology, and scripture. On at least two occasions, he taught the entire 3-year course of philosophy which consisted of logic, physics, and metaphysics (Blum 2006, 280). What is more, if Pereira had his way, he would have extended the 3-year cycle by half a year to allow more time for the study of metaphysics (ibid., 281). In addition to metaphysics, Pereira developed a reputation as an excellent teacher of logic (ibid., 282). Beyond his skill in philosophy, Pereira mastered many biblical languages – including Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean, and Syriac – which made him particularly outstanding in scriptural studies and led to his attainment of the chair of sacred scripture in the Jesuit Collegium Romanum. Pereira died on 6 March 1610 (ibid.).

Given Pereira's diverse teaching interests, one is hardly surprised to find that his writings cover a large spectrum of subjects ranging from scriptural commentaries (e.g., his *Commentariorum in Daniele Prophetam*, *Commentariorum et disputationem in Genesim*, and *Selectarum disputationum in Sacram Scripturam*), polemical theological treatises (e.g., *Adversus fallaces et superstitiosas artes*), and, of course, philosophy (viz., *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principiis et affectionibus*). Relatively few of Pereira's works reached publication and so there are quite a few texts that are available only in manuscripts. Though Pereira's philosophical ideas can be found throughout all of his texts – for instance, he addresses the nature and creation of the rational soul in his commentary on Genesis – his principal work that addressed explicitly philosophical issues is his *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principium* (*De comm. omn.*). Its title alone, as some have suggested, indicates that Pereira intends to engage critically Renaissance – and oftentimes anti-Aristotelian – natural philosophers whose volumes (e.g., Telesio's *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia*, Pomponazzi's *De naturalium effectuum causis*, and Portius's *De rerum naturalium principiis*) intended to give an exhaustive account of nature and its principles (Blum 2006, 279).

Pereira's treatise, first published in Rome in 1562, is expansive in length – extending to 15 books in total – and in the issues it addresses. Pereira divides his work into two principal parts. The first, containing books one through nine, pertains to the principles and causes of things. In the second part, containing the remaining six books, the general properties of all natural things such as quantity, location, time, and motion are explained (*De comm. omn.*, *praefatio*, fol. 2). Though Pereira's treatment of the philosophy of nature shares many points of continuity with the broader scholastic Aristotelian tradition, there are some points made in his work unique to the Jesuit himself (Solana 1940, 386–97). Perhaps his most significant methodological uniqueness is a distinction Pereira draws within metaphysics, that most universal science treats the transcendentals and general features of being as being (*ens ut ens*), between two distinct sciences. First, there is that science that treats the transcendentals and the most universal things. Second, there is that science that deals with the highest kind of beings, namely, the intelligences (*De comm. omn.*, lib. 1, c. 7, fol. 23). In addition to this distinction that Pereira draws in metaphysics, I shall consider only two further noteworthy examples of his originality, viz., his thinking on individuation and the relationship between *essentia* and *esse*.

Pereira explores at length but ultimately rejects the Scotist and Thomistic claims that individuation follows upon haecceitas (*De comm. omn.*, lib. 6, c. 10) and signate matter (ibid., lib. 6, c. 11), respectively (cf. Solana 1940, 386). The Jesuit, in contrast, thinks that the principle of individuation stems from both matter and form. Some have suggested that, in a way, Pereira anticipated the position of later Jesuits, such as Francisco Suárez, who held that, since being and unity are convertible, the principle of individuation is simply the entity of a thing itself (Solana 1940, 386). Still, for Pereira, since among the principles of a thing's entity form holds pride of place as act over potentiality, he views individuation as following chiefly upon a thing's form (*De comm. omn.*, lib. 6, c. 12). Pereira's theory leads to the obvious question: if form is that which serves to individuate things, how can it also serve as a source of community

wherein things are grouped according to the same species or genus (Solana 1940, 387)? Put another way, one may ask: is a form universal or particular, for it would seem incapable of functioning in both capacities? Pereira's answer, somewhat reminiscent of Avicenna's essence per se, is that forms are neither: "Form per se is neither universal nor singular," Pereira writes, "for if it were universal, there would never be a singular thing" (*De comm. omn.*, lib. 6, c. 12). But, as Pereira points out, if there were no singular thing, there would be no generation or corruption – which obviously runs counter to our experience – since it is the singular that is generated or corrupted (*ibid.*). Nor can forms per se simply be singulars for if that were the case, one could never have a science since science always pertains to that which is universal (*ibid.*). Rather, the form's supposed universality results, Pereira holds, solely from the intellect's abstractive agency, whereas particularity resides extrinsically in the productive agent's power to bring about a particular effect with its own attendant formal determination (Solana 1940, 387).

Beyond the issue of individuation, Pereira also held unique theories about the distinction between *existentia* and *essentia*. As had been the case with individuation, the Jesuit rejected the Thomist teaching – in particular, its position on the real distinction and maintained, again in a fashion similar to other Jesuit philosophers such as Suárez, that there is only a distinction of reason (Solana 1940a, 388). For Pereira, the principal argument used to establish the identity between a creature's essence and *esse* stems from Aristotle's own insight in *Metaphysics* 4.2 that being and unity are the same (*De comm. omn.*, lib. 6, c. 15, fol. 379). What is more, Pereira notes, even for Thomas himself, that "being [*ens*] is imposed. . . to signify essence in the order of existence." Since to exist (*existere*) is transcendent, the Jesuit adds, existence is necessarily either the same as being (*ens*) or some transcendental attribute of being or a *passio entis*. But existence is not a *passio entis*; therefore, Pereira concludes that it is the same as being itself (*ibid.*).

Much of Pereira's argument for the identity between *existentia* and *essentia* consists in a sustained critique of the Thomist position which

advocates a real distinction. Pereira offers several noteworthy arguments for the identity of *existentia* and *essentia* of which I shall only discuss two. I discuss these two because they represent Pereira's direct engagement with and critique of Thomistic metaphysics in the establishment of his own doctrine. In one argument Pereira notes that for the Thomists, *existentia* is understood in terms of act. But, as the Jesuit points out, act must be understood in terms of first or second act. If it is first act, then it is identical to the being's form; if it is a second act, then it is merely an operation in which case *existentia* would not in fact be an act (*ibid.*, fol. 380). Pereira leaves the reader to conclude that if *existentia* is not an act distinct from form or a being's essential determination, then *existentia* and *essentia* are not really distinct but instead identical.

In another argument Pereira points out that, for the Thomists, *essentia* supposedly stands in a relation of potency to *existentia*. But, as he also notes, potency is either essential or accidental. Now essence cannot stand in an order of essential potency to *existentia* since that would imply that the essence would not, of itself, be complete since it would need its complement of *existentia*. But to hold that essence is incomplete is inconsistent with what the Thomists themselves teach. Nor does essence have a kind of accidental potency for the reason that "existence [*existentia*] is not an accident" (*ibid.*). Thus, Pereira concludes: *existentia* and *essentia* are not really distinct. Rather, if a distinction is to be found between the two, it can only be a distinction of reason (*ibid.*, c. 16; fol. 382). In defining his position, Pereira meets the objection that if *existentia* and *essentia* were identical in creatures, then creation would have no need of God as its creative cause. He denies the conclusion and notes that, if anything, maintaining some sort of *distinctio in re* between the two would seem to imply the undesirable consequence of creaturely coeternity. Here, Pereira cites Henry of Ghent who maintains that creatures have *esse essentia* from eternity but only receive *esse existentiae* upon God's decision to create them in *rerum natura*. Pereira rejects Henry's teaching and maintains instead that when God creates man, for example, He brings

man into being together with his essence simultaneously and not from a coeternal *esse essentiae* (ibid., fol. 383).

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Alternate Names

Longinus, Cassius; Longinus, Dionysius; Longinus

Date and Authorship

The oldest extant copy of *Peri hypsous*, a tenth-century manuscript of Byzantine origin (Bibliothèque National de France ms. Parisinus Graecus 2036; Mazzucchi 1989), presents several conjectures about the authorship of *Peri hypsous*. The table of contents on fol. 1v attributes the work to “Dionysius or Longinus,” while the heading of the work on fol. 178v ascribes it to “Dionysius Longinus.” Following these scribal speculations, the author of the treatise was called “Longinus” or “Dionysius Longinus” throughout the early modern period and was often identified with the third-century rhetorician and philosopher Cassius Longinus (213–273 AD). In the nineteenth century, this identification has been rejected (Russell 1964; Heath 1999). The anonymous author is nowadays conventionally called Longinus or Pseudo-Longinus, and the treatise is usually situated in the intellectual context of the Augustan period (Mazzucchi 2010; De Jonge 2012) or the first century AD (Russell 1964; Porter 2016).

Peri Hypsous

Pseudo-Longinus’ treatise *Peri hypsous* aims to illustrate the effects of “the sublime” (*hypsos*) in literature and to demonstrate how it can be attained. According to Pseudo-Longinus, the sublime incites wonder and amazement (*ekplêxis*) in readers or listeners. The greater part of the treatise is dedicated to a discussion of the five sources that may lead to sublimity, which for Pseudo-Longinus are “greatness of thought,” “emotion,” “figures of speech,” “diction,” and “word arrangement.” Pseudo-Longinus’ prime examples of sublimity are Homer, Demosthenes, and Plato, and in general *Peri hypsous* takes its

Peri Hypsous, On the Sublime

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Abstract

Pseudo-Longinus is the author of the Greek treatise *Peri hypsous* (*On the sublime*), which was rediscovered in the fifteenth century and which played an important role in early modern literary theory.

illustrations from the classical Greek canon, with the notable exceptions of Genesis and Cicero. In a lengthy digression (33–36), Pseudo-Longinus expresses his preference for writers whose greatness causes them to make mistakes, over flawless mediocrity. The final chapter of the treatise laments the loss of true sublimity in the author's time.

Rediscovery and Dissemination

After a period of almost complete obscurity in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the codex containing *Peri hypsous* surfaced around 1468 in the circle of Cardinal Basilios Bessarion. About a dozen manuscript copies were produced in Italy in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (Mazzucchi 1989). The *editio princeps* of *Peri hypsous* was prepared by Francesco Robortello and published in 1554 by Joannes Oporinus in Basel. Up to 1650 ten editions of Pseudo-Longinus' treatise were published across Europe, including several translations in Latin and Italian (Weinberg 1950).

Reception

Pseudo-Longinus' treatise exerted its greatest impact on early modern critical thought through the publication of a French translation of the work in 1674 by the French critic Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux. Already in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, the treatise had found its way into theories of rhetoric, poetics, and the visual arts, as well as classical and biblical scholarship. *Peri hypsous* was occasionally mentioned in general works on rhetorical theory, such as Antonius Lullus' *De oratione libri septem* (1558), Pedro Juan Nuñez' *Institutionum rhetoricarum libri quinque* (1593), and Gerardus Joannes Vossius' *Oratoriarum Institutionum libri sex* (1606). In the 1580s Francesco Patrizi reflected on poetic wonder in Longinian terms in his *Della Poetica* (Weinberg 1961). Franciscus

Junius F.F. applied Pseudo-Longinus' ideas to the visual arts in his *De pictura veterum* (1637) (Nativel 2016). The treatise also attracted the attention of classical and biblical philologists, whose interest was sparked by the many citations that Pseudo-Longinus' treatise preserved. Marc-Antoine Muret was able to identify Catullus' *Carmen* 51 as a Latin adaptation of Sappho's fragment 31, after having discovered Sappho's poem in *Peri hypsous* (Aulotte 1958). Scholars like Isaac Casaubon, Daniel Chamier, Hugo Grotius, and Nicolas Caussin were in turn fascinated by Pseudo-Longinus' paraphrase of Genesis 1.3–9 in *Peri hypsous* 9.9 (Declercq 1994; Till 2006; Ossa-Richardson 2014; Lazarus 2019). Pseudo-Longinus' treatise moreover played an important role in the works of literary critics such as Daniel Heinsius (Meter 1984; Jansen 2016), Guez de Balzac (Hache 2000; Gilby 2016), and Leone Allacci (Fumaroli 1986). In the Renaissance, Pseudo-Longinus did not become part of “mainstream” poetics and art theory, but his treatise did play a significant role in select early modern scholarly discussions about literature and aesthetics (Fumaroli 1986).

Cross-References

► [Sublime](#)

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Perkins, William

Born: 1558, Marston Jabbett (England)

Died: 1602, Cambridge (England)

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Abstract

William Perkins was a prominent theologian and Puritan preacher. After completing his studies at the University of Cambridge, he devoted himself to writing works on biblical exegesis and casuistry, to which he consistently applied the method of dichotomous bipartition characteristic of Ramus' dialectic. Frances Yates also identified Perkins as an intellectual who sustained a bitter controversy against Alexander Dicson, author of a treatise on mnemonics influenced by Bruno.

Biography

William Perkins was born in 1558 to Thomas and Hannah Perkins in the village of Marston Jabbett in Warwickshire. In 1557 he was admitted to the University of Cambridge, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1581 and a master's degree in 1584. After a troubled and turbulent youth, he came to the faith and became a devout Puritan. From an intellectual point of view, meeting Laurence Chaderton, who became his mentor, was decisive. Chaderton introduced Perkins to the teachings of Petrus Ramus, the French philosopher who had developed a new type of logic that followed the natural pace of human thought and fled from schematics and Aristotelian formalism.

From 1584 until his death, Perkins carried out his pastoral and teaching activities at the University of Cambridge. In 1595 he married a young widow, with whom he had several children, and died 7 years later.

A fervent preacher, Perkins wrote about 50 treatises, which enjoyed 11 editions after his death: subjects included exegeses of biblical passages, texts on predestination, salvation, justification by faith alone, the errors of Catholicism, and cases of conscience. In all his works, he rigidly followed the literal interpretation of the sacred text, and their peculiarity lies in the fact that in order to present his definitions and arguments, Perkins often used Ramus' method of proceeding by dichotomous partitions. Of particular importance are *The Art of Prophesying* and two works on casuistry, *A Discourse of Conscience* and *The Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience* (Perkins 1970).

In the first of these works, Perkins sets up guidelines for the way preaching itself should be structured and organized: he illustrates his method of reading and interpreting the Bible, lists principles to follow in its explanation, and presents various expository methods to be used according to the type of listener (e.g., ignorant unbeliever, undecided, believer). But Perkins was noted especially for his work on casuistry, a branch of moral theology that examines situations in which there is a conflict between the moral norm and individual will. In *A Discourse of Conscience*, Perkins approaches the topic from a theoretical point of view, while in *The Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience*, he analyzes many cases of moral dilemmas that a Christian may encounter and proposes practical solutions, oriented toward the skillful recourse to prudence, understood as a competence in particular situations and adroit handling of the circumstances.

Perkins' influence on Puritan theologians was profound, both in England and among those who emigrated to New England, and his works were translated into several languages (Beeke and Pederson 2006).

In the multifaceted figure of this Puritan preacher, Frances Yates convincingly identified the author of four polemic short works against Alexander Dicson (Perkins 1997; Yates 1966), expert on the art of memory who in 1583

published a treatise on mnemonics inspired by the teachings of Giordano Bruno, entitled *De umbra rationis et iudicii, sive de memoriae virtute Prosopopoeia* (Yates 1966; Ruisi 1998; Brotto 2014). In two polemical texts – the *Libellus de memoria verissimaque bene recordandi scientia* and *Admonitiuncula ad Alexandrum Dicsonum [sic] de artificiosae memoriae, quam publice proficitur* – Perkins bitterly criticized Dicson both from a technical point of view, insisting on the value of Ramus' dialectic, and for the hermetic atmosphere of his text, unacceptable for a rigid Puritan. Reacting to the Scottish intellectual's response in *Heii Scepsii Defensio pro Alexandro Dicsono Arelio adversus quendam G. P. Cantabrigiensem*, he composed two other pamphlets – *Antidicsonus cuiusdam Cantabrigiensis G. P. and Libellus in quo dilucide explicatur impia Dicsoni artificiosa memoria* – in which his explicit attack on Bruno showed that he knew Bruno's works and wanted to demonstrate their theoretical inconsistency (Carotti 2014).

Thus the figure of Perkins not only played a prominent role in the theoretical elaboration of Puritan theology but was also an important link in the knowledge of Bruno's doctrines in England.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- ▶ [Memory in the Renaissance, Art of](#)
- ▶ [Puritanism in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Ramism](#)
- ▶ [Ramus, Petrus](#)

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Persio, Antonio

Born: 17 May 1542, Matera

Died: 11 February 1612, Rome

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Abstract

Persio, Antonio – scholar and philosopher, a pupil of Telesio, and publisher of some Telesian treatises on natural philosophy; he wrote several (largely unpublished) works defending and clarifying the master's thought. Published works include *Tractatus novarum positionum in rhetoricis, dialecticis, ethicis ... adversus Aristotelem* (1575), *Trattato dell'ingegno dell'huomo* [Treatise on Human Intelligence] (1576), and *Del beber caldo, costumato dagli antichi Romani* [Of drinking warm, used by the ancient Romans] (1593). Persio analyzes and develops the concept of *spiritus* in master Telesio and places it in a Neoplatonic perspective (Garin 1989).

The author contributes to spreading the thought of his philosopher master while accentuating some particular aspects that end up bringing it within a Platonic tradition, only marginal in the original texts of Telesio (Fiorentino 1814).

Biography

Son of sculptor Altobello and Beatrice Goffredo, he is the first of five brothers.

Between the ages of 5 and 10, he suffers from a sort of paralysis of the limbs. Cured of the disease, he has a restless adolescence with disputes, injuries, and a brief period of imprisonment. He studies with the help of his uncle, humanist Leonardo Goffredo, and his stimulating family environment encourages his philosophical interests. His brother Antonio was to become abbot and Lincean and a faithful friend of Tommaso Campanella (Firpo 1940; Padula and Motta 1992). Persio continues his studies in the Franciscan monastery of Matera and later leaves the city due to differences with his father. He goes to Naples in 1560 where he becomes a priest and is appointed as tutor to the Orsini brothers and where he is ordained.

He meets Bernardino Telesio and becomes his friend and pupil, to the point that the philosopher wants to discuss with him the second edition of *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia*. The friendship with Telesio influences Persio who becomes a popularizer of the master's thought and subsequently elaborates his philosophy from a rereading of his doctrine.

In 1570, after having been in Rome for a period, he follows the Orsini brothers, to whom he is a tutor, to Perugia where he takes part in many local disputes and where he bonds with the Caetani brothers. Thanks to Camillo Caetani, he comes into contact with Paolo and Aldo Manuzio in anticipation of his transfer to Venice, which then takes place in the second half of 1572 (Carotti 2015).

During the Venetian period, Persio is tutor to Andrea Correr and will be until 1576.

In 1576 he moves to Padua where he becomes a parish priest and publishes *Trattato dell'ingegno dell'huomo*, in which he continued the Telesian theory of *spiritus* (Artese 1999). In 1590 he moves to Rome, first under the protection of Don Lelio Orsini, and later in the court of Cardinal Enrico Caetani. In Rome, he meets Tommaso Campanella and Galileo Galilei who, after his death, becomes promoter of the publication –

never completed – of his writings by the Accademia dei Lincei (Gomez 2013). In Rome, Persio publishes a medical treatise, *Del beber caldo, costumato dagli antichi Romani*. He dies in Rome in 1612 and, to crown a prominent intellectual path, is admitted to the Accademia dei Lincei the day after his death (Gabrieli 1933).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Persio's most famous work, published by Aldo Manuzio in 1576, is *Trattato dell'ingegno dell'huomo*, in which the author develops eclectic themes derived from Aristotelianism, Neoplatonism, and Stoicism (Wolfe 2004). In particular, Persio offers some methodological reflections on the importance of the senses and analyzes the most complex concept of Telesio's thought, *the spiritus*, the principle of body animation – movement, intelligence, and life – which operates and gradually organizes itself in matter (Walker 2000). Unlike other vernacular sixteenth-century logics, Persio tries to develop a physiology of knowledge based on the concept of “ingegno” (intelligence): “that part of the spirit by means of which we are able to understand things” (Persio 1999, 27). As Sgarbi says in his essay *The Italian mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy*, “generally all operations may be reduced to various movements of the spirit, its states, and its temperament. Thus, in Persio's view, no real distinction between invention and judgment is possible, intelligence itself being the capacity to discover and judge, since they reside in the spirit” (Sgarbi 2014, 227). This logic distances itself from the traditional humanist vision and is more similar to a Neoplatonic perspective. In the treatise, Persio develops this concept, and, through a large number of Telesian and Ficinian citations, he places it within the broader framework of Renaissance Neoplatonism. He is so clearly inspired by Ficino that, according to the opinion of some scholars, we can reach the point of talking about plagiarism (Maggi 2010). In the text, Persio recognizes a fundamental unity and continuity in nature, and through this, a parallelism is made between the spirit of every animal – including man – and the

universal spirit (*anima mundi*), even though Persio cautiously maintains the principle according to which the human mind is formed directly by God and not by the universal spirit (Brann 2002).

The work *Del beber caldo costumato dagli antichi romani*, published in Venice, is from 1593. It is a particularly well-known text because, through it, Persio is part of a lively discussion that interweaves medical analysis with scholarly interests, seeking to establish whether the Romans used to mix wine with hot or cold water.

Supporting the warm nature of water means, in fact, supporting the Telesian idea that the only *spiritus* with which man is endowed and whose primary characteristic is heat, it must assume (to be maintained) elements similar to itself. This theory is in clear contrast with the theory of the supporters of the theory of humors and the presence of a plurality of spirits that must be balanced through opposing elements. Persio's treatise, which had the merit of placing the thematic nuclei of the debate within a broad theoretical framework, made the dispute even more animated: Flemish philosopher Giusto Lipsio and Tommaso Campanella intervened in his favor. The treatise is widely disseminated at the end of the 1500s and occupies a significant position within the complex cultural phenomenon that is Telesianism in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Impact and Legacy

The period that Persio spends in Venice is fruitful from the point of view of output.

In *De numero et qualitate elementorum*, Persio lashes out against Sebastiano Augeni's comment on *De natura humana* by Hippocrates. It is indirectly a critique of Aristotelian physics and a defense of Eleaticism and the affirmation of the warm nature of water, an element that is part of the thought of Telesio (Bolzoni 1992).

In 1572 with *L'Apologia pro Bernardino Telesio adversus Franciscum Patritium* (Florence, National Library, Magl., XII.39), Persio enters into the discussion between Telesio and Francesco Patrizi. In fact, it is Persio who fosters an

exchange of letters between the two authors during which confrontation is ignited on crucial aspects of Telesio's thought, such as the relationship between the senses and reason. In 1574 he writes *Disputatio habita in domo Iosephi Salviati cum Octavio Amaltheo, in qua tenet primum orbem non moveri a Deo effective* (Rome, Corsinian Library, Mss. Lincei, I), while the following year, *Liber novarum positionum* is published by the Giacomo Simbeni publishing house, in which Persio refers to a dispute on Telesian philosophy that took place in Perugia (Persio 1575). In the text, permeated by traces of Ramist dialectic, many opinions of the philosophical tradition are examined to subject them to critical scrutiny and offer a renewed encyclopedia of knowledge (Artese 1981, 1986, 1987). The public debate that involves this text arouses interest in the Cosentina Academy which, through Andrea Aletino, had an account of these discussions printed in Florence in 1576, entitled *Disputationes libri novarum positionum Antonii Persii, triduo habitae Venetii anno MDLXXV, mense Maio*.

The work of Persio is also distinguished by some writings to clarify the thought of Telesio and for the collection and curation of writings by the master such as *Varii de naturalibus rebus libelli* by Telesio (1590) which contains nine pamphlets on physical and medical-physiological subjects (Garin 1971, 1979).

In the Roman period, Persio writes three works of great importance. The first is *De recta ratione philosophandi*, a text of logical argument of which only the index is known, obtained through *Index capitum librorum Antonii Persii Lyncei Materani Civ. Rom. I.V.C. philosophi theologi praestantissimi. De ratione recte philosophandi et de natura ignis et caloris*, written by the will of the Accademia dei Lincei after his death by Giovanni Bartolini and published in Rome in 1615 by Giacomo Mascardi. The text also contains a list of numerous currently lost works by Persio. In *De natura ignis*, he maintained that heat was "an extremely rarefied substance or body" and included, in the end, a chapter about light. As Susana Gómez underlines, through Prince Cesi, Galileo was acquainted with Persio's work

and the Accademia's editorial project. It is possible that those ideas in that period strongly influenced Galileo's ideas on light and heat (Gomez 2013).

The second is *De natura ignis*, the manuscript of which is preserved in Rome, Corsinian Library, Arch. Linc., VI–VII, and *Del bever caldo costumato dagli antichi Romani*, published in Venice in 1593.

In the final part of his life, Persio returns to dedicating himself to juridical subjects and writes a work which, although unpublished, nevertheless has an extraordinary diffusion: *Trattato dei portamenti della signoria di Venezia verso Santa Chiesa e quante volte sia stata scomunicata*.

The work refers to the conflict that broke out in 1606 between the Republic of Venice and the Papal State, which was triggered by the arrest in Venice of two Catholic priests accused of common crimes and the adoption by Venice of a series of laws intended for the containment of ecclesiastical property. Following this crisis, the Pope inflicts excommunication on the Venetian Senate and the interdict – or prohibition of celebrating religious offices – throughout the Republic.

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- Galilei, Galileo
- Telesio, Bernardino

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Perspective

► Optics, Renaissance

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

The term “perspective,” deriving from the Latin *perspicere* (to see distinctly), indicates a technique of graphic representation whose rules were established mainly by the artists and mathematicians of the Renaissance. The term is a vernacular form of the noun *perspectiva*, which in Medieval Latin designated the science of vision, translating the Greek *optiké*. The philosophers of “perspective,” devoted to the study of vision from the ninth to the fourteenth century, investigated both physiological aspects, especially in the Arab world, and mathematical ones, retaining the ancient threefold division of the discipline into “optics” (direct vision), “catoptrics” (reflected vision), and “dioptrics” (refracted vision). This science, called *perspectiva naturalis* or *communis*, dealt with the visual and light rays propagating in a straight line, as established by a fundamental axiom of Euclidean optics (Euclid 2007, *Catoptrics*, postulates I and II). The artists and mathematicians of the Renaissance applied its principles to the representation of the visible world, codifying the rules for a science of drawing that profoundly influenced the development of the applied arts and sciences in the modern age. Lorenzo Ghiberti described it as “a part of perspective pertaining to painting,” Piero della Francesca called it *prospettiva pingendi* (painting perspective), Jean Pelerin *perspectiva artificialis* (artificial perspective),

and Daniele Barbaro *perspectiva pratica* (practical perspective): all these definitions converge on the basic concept of the practical application of optical laws to pictorial representation of the visible world.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Optiké: Optics in the Ancient World

In the ancient world, the theory of vision was debated mainly between two schools of thought: Democritus's atomistic theory, holding that vision resulted from the imprinting on the eye of images emanating from bodies (*èidola*), and the Pythagorean mathematical theory, which maintained on the contrary that a focus emitted from the eye under the form of rays went out to strike the surface of objects (Lindberg 1976, pp. 1–17; Ronchi 1983; Wilde 1990). A third hypothesis, postulated by Empedocles and Plato (*Timaeus*, 45b–c, 67e–68b; *Theaetetus*, 156 d–e), attributed the phenomenon of vision to two flows meeting inside the eye, coming from both inside and outside of it. For Aristotle, however, no rays were emitted from the eye or from any object; instead, there was a modification of the medium interposed between the eye and the object, the diaphanous matter that is potential in the dark and active in the light (*De sensu et sensibili*, 2, 438a; *De anima*, B 418a 26–31).

In spite of Aristotle's authority, it was the concept of the emission of rays that determined developments in optics and its scientific applications, in both the "intromissive" hypothesis of the atomists and the "extromissive" concept of the Pythagorean school. As reported by Alexander of Aphrodisias in his commentary on *De sensu* (438a 25), the mathematicians of the Pythagorean school "maintained that we see by means of rays that depart from the eyes and extend as far as the objects viewed." This idea was to be concretely expressed in the geometric formulation of Euclid, who elaborated a model of vision that remained basically unchanged up to the modern era. Imagining the visual rays as extending in a straight line under the form of a cone whose vertex is in the eye and whose base is in the object (Fig. 1), Euclid

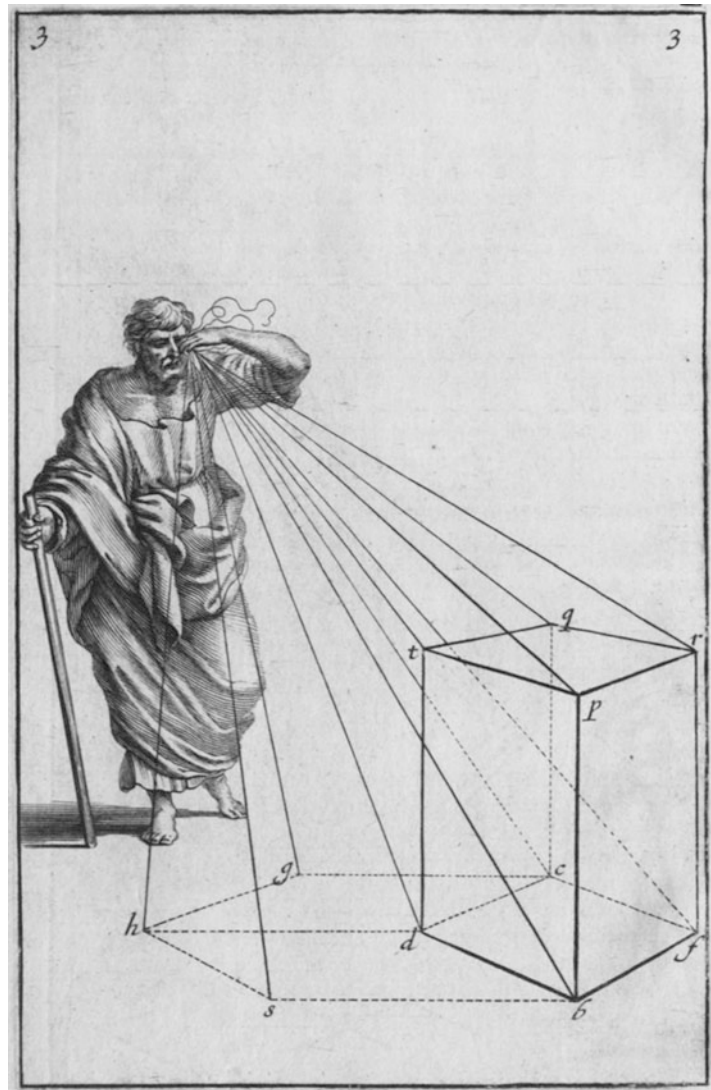
attributed to the immaterial nature of visual and light rays a measurable form that made it possible to study the relations between apparent sizes and real dimensions, thus laying the foundation for a new mathematical science called geometric optics.

In the Roman world of the first century BC, these two main theories of vision were sustained by the greatest commentators on Greek philosophy: Lucretius and Cicero. In his *De rerum natura* (IV.46–89), Lucretius embraced the atomist doctrine, stating that images – which he called "membranes" or "rinds" – penetrate into our eyes after having been detached from bodies, whose shapes and color they retain. Cicero, on the contrary, sustained the validity of the mathematical hypothesis of rays emitted by the eye (*Letters to Atticus*, II.3.2) and believed that things appear other than what they really are, basically subordinating the perception of objects to the judgment of the eye (*Academics*, II.7.19). Cicero's considerations had a precise theoretical basis in the classification of the sciences elaborated by Geminus – like him, a pupil of Posidonius – which included among the sections on optics the so-called *skenographia*, a discipline that governed the application of the laws of vision to architecture and the figurative arts (Fig. 2).

Perspectiva Naturalis: Optics in the Middle Ages

The ancient world's knowledge of optics was assimilated in the Latin Middle Ages through the mediation of Islamic science, which proposed an original and critical interpretation of Euclidean optics. Through the Arab translators, the Latin Middle Ages discovered the founding texts of modern scientific thought, such as Euclid's *Elements* and *Optics* and Ptolemy's *Almagest* and *Optics* (Smith 1999). Euclid's *Optics* survived in both the Greek version, often confused with Theon of Alexandria's *Commentary* (fourth century), and the Arab version, the basis for the subsequent Latin translations. Fundamentally important for the resumption of optical studies, starting from the tenth century, was the acquisition of new anatomical knowledge resulting from the development of Arab medicine. And the fruitful combination of

**Perspective in
Renaissance Philosophy,**
Fig. 1 Abraham Bosse,
Manière universelle de
Mr. Girard Desargues, pour
pratiquer la perspective par
petit-pied, comme le
geometral, Paris 1648,
Pl. 3: the optical cone



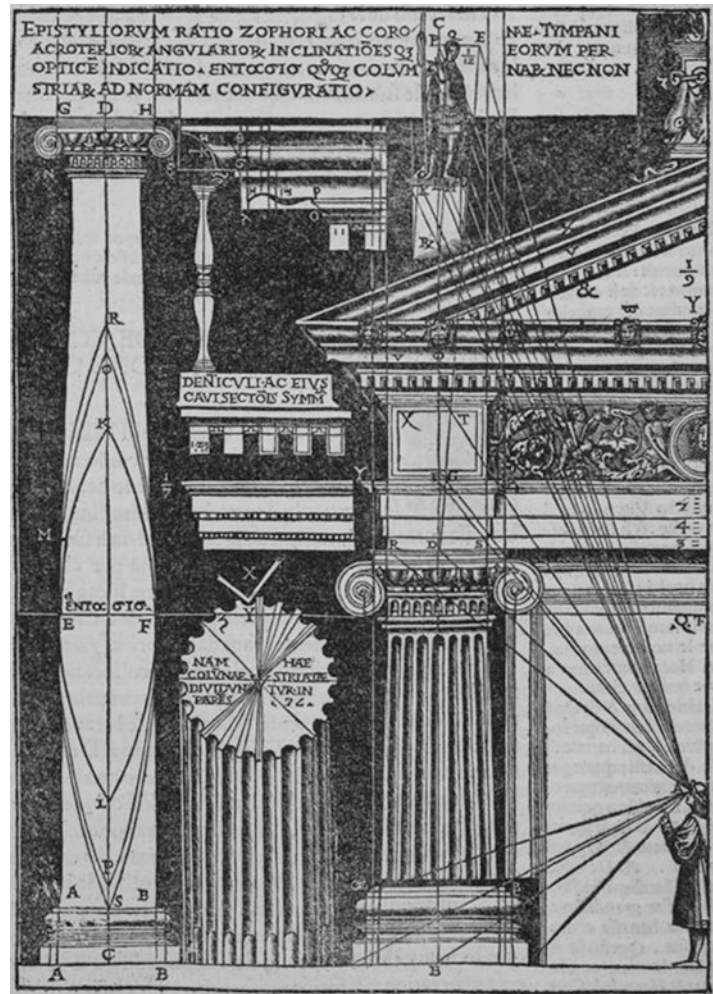
optical knowledge and epistemological doctrines, notably those of Avicenna and Averroes, with the most advanced achievements of geometric optics, resulted in a theory of vision formulated by Alhazen (965–1039) that remained a fixed reference point throughout the Middle Ages.

Up to the development of modern optics, Alhazen was famous for his doctrine of vision as the phenomenon of refraction of light rays inside the eye. In the *Kitāb al-Manāzīr* (Book of optics), or *De aspectibus* in the Latin translation, Alhazen devoted the first book entirely to description of the eye (Fig. 3), explaining that, in the visual organ,

all the rays but one deviate through refraction; the central one, instead, proceeds in a straight line, bringing with it a distinct image of things (Alhazen 1572, II.8, 1989, 2001).

The pyramidal arrangement of the rays is thought to have allowed two types of vision, always interconnected: the one called *aspectus*, generated by all the rays in the pyramid, and the one identified as *intuitio*, more distinct and certain, generated only by the central visual ray (Alhazen 1572, II.65). Vision “by intuition” was at the same time a sensitive and rational act, revealing the qualitative and quantitative aspects

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,
Fig. 2 Cesare Cesariano,
Di Lucio Vitruuio Pollione
De architectura libri
decem. . ., Como 1521,
 Book III, fol. LX:
 application of the laws of
 vision to architecture



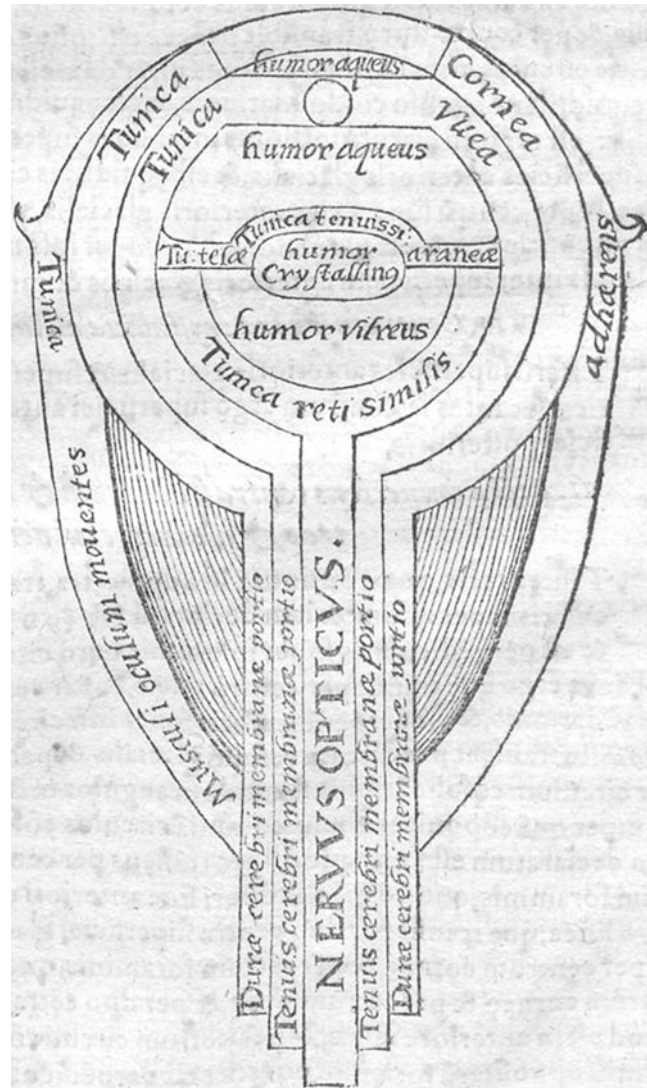
of all things, that is, color, form, and size. This rational comprehension passed through mathematical reasoning that utilized the central ray of the visual pyramid to calculate the distances of things. Alhazen's work was translated into Latin in the twelfth century, perhaps by Gerard of Cremona, and its dissemination was crucial to the resumption of optical studies in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Witelo (1230–1279) wrote a paraphrase of it for William of Moerbeke, who had translated Hero's *Catoptrics*. An anonymous Venetian translated it into the vernacular already in the late fourteenth century (Federici Vescovini 1965a, pp. 17–49). And in 1572, it came out in print, along with Witelo's *Perspectiva*, in the Latin edition edited by

Frederic Risner (Fig. 4). The hypothesis that images were formed in the crystalline lens through the intromission of light and deviation of its rays inspired a number of studies in the thirteenth century that sanctioned the birth of *perspectiva* as a philosophical science in the Latin world.

In the humanist classification of the arts, *perspectiva* was a discipline ranking lower than the so-called arts of the *quadrivium*: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Its purpose was that of studying the phenomenon of vision as a physical fact, from both the geometric and epistemological points of view. These theoretical issues were developed primarily by the doctors of Oxford (Raynaud 1998): the Bishop of Lincoln,

**Perspective in
Renaissance Philosophy,**

Fig. 3 Alhazen (Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Haytham), *Opticae Thesaurus*, Basel 1572, Book I, chap. iv: the anatomical structure of the eye

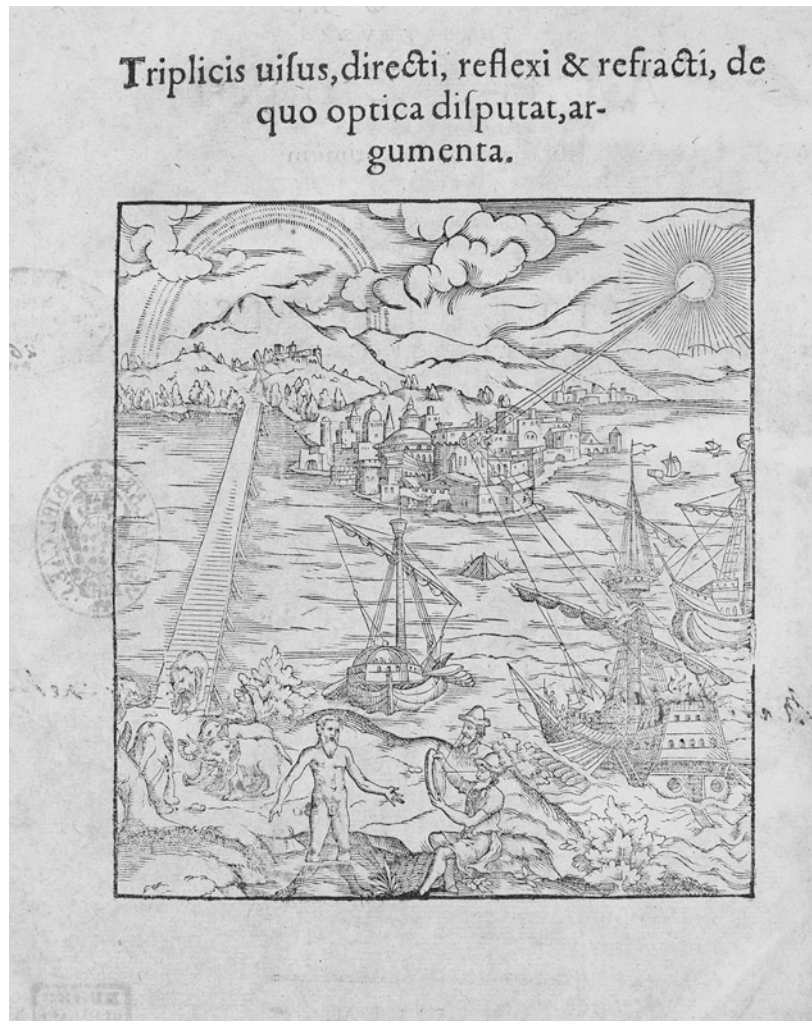


Robert Grosseteste (1168–1253), and the Franciscans Roger Bacon (1214–1294) and John Peckham (1230–1292). Peckham’s *Perspectiva communis* (General Optics), in particular, was very widely known throughout the sixteenth century, when it was published in print in a Latin edition and an Italian translation by Giovanni Paolo Gallucci. This famous treatise was composed while Peckham was engaged as a lecturer at the Apostolic Palace at Viterbo from 1277 to 1279, in the same place, then, and almost during the same years in which Witelo composed his equally famous *Perspectiva*.

Alhazen’s psychological-perceptive interpretation, which added knowledge of distance to knowledge of the optic angle (Euclid) as a necessary condition for determining the size of things, was consolidated by Witelo and the other *perspectivi* to the point of definitively sanctioning the field of action of vision as a perceptible, rational act. Seeing came to assume two meanings: “feeling with sight,” when it is only a perceptible appearance, and “discerning through sight,” when it is a rational act in which the intellect distinguishes sizes and distances as they appear (Federici Vescovini 1965b, pp. 223–237).

**Perspective in
Renaissance Philosophy,**

Fig. 4 Alhazen (Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Haytham), *Opticae thesaurus*, Basel 1572, frontispiece



These subjects were central to the theorizing about perspective of Biagio Pelacani from Parma, who in the late fourteenth century masterfully took up the heritage of Alhazen. In the *Quaestiones perspectivae* (Questions on optics), as in his commentaries on *De anima* and *Meteora*, Pelacani declared that vision did not perceive substantial forms or pure light, as was believed in the Neoplatonic tradition, but rather corporeal forms, which could be either superficial or solid (Federici Vescovini 1960, 1965a, pp. 240–267). The former were perceived as “sizes” through measurement of their length and width. The latter were perceived as “depth,” by measuring the distance between the eye and the object.

The Euclidean proposition that established variation in sizes with variation in the optical angle was considered useful only for the perception of superficial figures. To understand forms in their corporeality, knowledge of the third dimension was also necessary, that is, the depth or distance, measured by the central axis of the visual pyramid.

Biagio Pelacani’s optical theory probably contributed to reviving interest in Alhazen’s *De aspectibus*, which, after its Latin translation by Gerard of Cremona and Witelo’s paraphrase, was translated into the vernacular in the fourteenth century (see above) for a public that must have been broader and more diversified than that of the

university. This vernacular version was utilized, for instance, by Lorenzo Ghiberti in compiling his third *Commentary* (Federici Vescovini 1980, II, pp. 349–387). The scientific works translated into the vernacular up to that time had been mainly arithmetical and geometrical texts, which were commonly used for teaching purposes in the abacus schools. For example, Euclid’s *Elements* and Leonardo Fibonacci’s *Liber abaci* (Abacus book) were translated or compiled in the vernacular. We know, however, that in the abacus schools, *perspectiva* was also a subject of interest, and one abacus master in particular, the Augustinian Grazia de’ Castellani, is known to us for having composed a treatise on optics, *De visu*, of which an abstract devoted to measurement by sight remains (Arrighi 1967, 1968). It is probable that the reason for translating *De aspectibus* into Italian had to do with interests cultivated by the abacus masters, who in their schools experimented on the practical level with the “certified” principle of vision, developing the ancient methods of measuring by sight that Euclid himself had set out among the theorems of his *Optics* (Fig. 5).

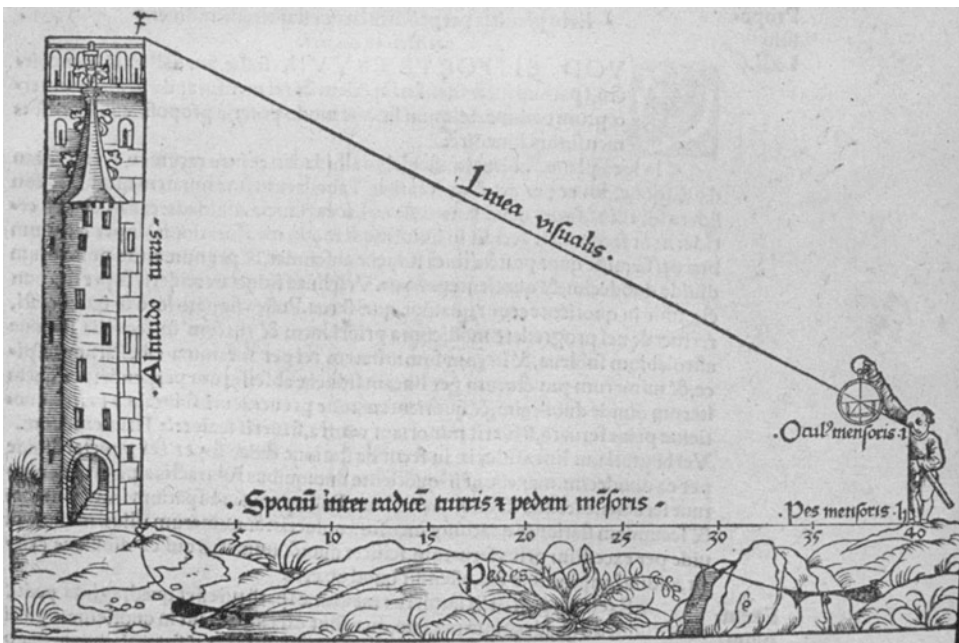
Innovative and Original Aspects

Perspectiva Artificialis: The Invention of Linear Perspective

In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, *perspectiva*, or perspective, was explored in Florence on the highest levels. It was studied as the science of vision, thanks to the presence in the Studio Fiorentino (University of Florence) of Biagio Pelacani. It was treated as a geometric discipline for measuring by sight, thanks to the abacus masters who served as a bridge between philosophical speculation and the practical applications of optical science; and it began to be discussed as a technique of representation, thanks to experimentation in painting conducted by the school of Giotto.

Filippo Brunelleschi

Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) was the first artist to earn the epithet of *perspettivo*, usually reserved for philosophers. He was called “perspectivo” by the Italian poet Ser Domenico da Prato in 1413, presumably because of the fame of the experiments in perspective conducted by



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 5 Johannes Stoeffler, *Elucidatio fabricae ususque astrolabii*, Mainz 1535, p. 74: measuring a tower using similar triangles

him and reported by the sources (Tanturli 1980, pp. 125–144). We do not know exactly when the two famous “panels” that traditionally mark the birth of modern perspective were invented. His biographer Antonio di Tuccio Manetti dates them to the years of Brunelleschi’s youth, around the beginning of the century; but the critics have never agreed on this matter. The “panels” were two optical devices that confronted pictorial imitation with visual reality by depicting two places emblematic of the city of Florence: the Baptistery of San Giovanni and Piazza della Signoria. The baptistery panel was designed to be observed reflected in a mirror, standing behind the painting and looking at it through a hole drilled at the main vanishing point (Fig. 6). The demonstration took place in front of the baptistery, with the panel placed a few steps inside the central door of the cathedral and turned toward the baptistery so that, by removing the mirror, the observer could also see the real building through the hole. With the mirror partially outside of the field of vision, placed at the right distance from the eye, the observer could note the perfect coincidence between the real scene and its painted image. The panel depicting Piazza della Signoria with the Loggia dei Lanzi was instead looked at directly; but, unlike an ordinary painting, it was

shaped along the top to match the upper profile of the buildings (Fig. 7). With his gaze, the observer was prompted to align the shaped border of the painting with the corresponding profile of the real scene. As in the case of the first panel, Brunelleschi could prove by this experiment that the painted image and the real one coincided perfectly from a single observation point.

We do not know why Brunelleschi actually performed these optical demonstrations; but his purpose was, it seems, to demonstrate tangibly the basic perspective principle of the distance of observation, that is, the principle of “certified” vision maintained by Alhazen and Biagio Pelacani. This would surely have entitled him to a place among the ranks of the *perspettivi*, although his was a *perspectiva pratica* (practical perspective) to be used in representing things: an art derived from the theoretical *perspectiva* described by Manetti as “a part of that science [optics], which consists in effect of explaining well and with reasons the diminution and enlargement appearing to the eyes of men in things either far away or nearby . . . of the measurement that pertains to that distance where they appear furthest away” (Manetti 1976, pp. 55–56). That experience was based on the application of a graphic rule thought to have been invented by Brunelleschi (“and he implemented, he himself – writes Manetti – what the painters today call perspective”). According to Giorgio Vasari, the first to make an explicit pronouncement on this subject, the rule consisted of drawing a perspective view “with the plane and profile and by means of intersection” (Vasari 1973, II, p. 332). Brunelleschi would thus have invented what the sixteenth-century codifiers called the “first rule of perspective” (Fig. 8), that is, the procedure through which, given the plan and elevation of any object, and having traced the visual pyramid in both projections, the perspective image could be determined with extreme precision, by intersecting the visual rays with a plane corresponding to the painter’s picture. Since this is a procedure typical of architectural drawing (projections in plane and elevation), modern critics have substantially embraced this thesis, defining Brunelleschi’s method as



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,
Fig. 6 Reconstruction of Brunelleschi’s first perspective panel (by F. Camerota, Museo Galileo)

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,

Fig. 7 Reconstruction of Brunelleschi's second perspective panel (by F. Camerota, Museo Galileo)



“legitimate construction” (Ludwig 1882; Panofsky 1927, pp. 258–330).

In reality, we do not know exactly what “Filippo’s rule” was. We can only hypothesize that its theoretical and practical basis was the principle of intersection of the visual pyramid that had already for some time been applied by the abacus masters as a method for measuring distances; a rod interposed between the eye and object could be used to measure a proportional segment of the distance or size in question. An instrument described by the abacus master Grazia de’ Castellani to measure where “the eye went with the line of sight” is entirely similar to the one illustrated later by Francesco di Giorgio Martini to show the principle of linear perspective; the geometric laws that could be applied to measure the distance of a point were the same that could be used to represent its perspective image. Brunelleschi probably had the idea of replacing the rod with a transparent plane that allowed measurement of the apparent diminution of things in relation to their distance from the eye, anticipating a concept that was later masterfully expressed by Leon Battista Alberti. In *De pictura* – the first

treatise on perspective painting, dedicated not by chance to Brunelleschi – Alberti compared the artist’s painting to “an open window through which I look at what will be painted there” (I.19) (Fig. 9). Modern perspective painting thus resulted from a geometric operation that consisted of intersecting the visual pyramid.

Leon Battista Alberti

To Alberti (1404–1472), we owe the first attempt to establish rules and principles for geometric drawing. Between 1435 and 1436, he composed two works, closely linked and addressed primarily to painters: the *Elementa picturae* (Elements of painting) and the *De pictura* (On painting). The title of the first book explicitly recalls the important treatise by Euclid, the *Elementa geometriae* (Elements of geometry), which since the Middle Ages had been the chief reference point for mathematical studies, both in the universities and in the abacus schools. During the fourteenth century, the abacus schools underwent notable development, especially in Florence, and among the pupils were youths destined to become architects, painters, goldsmiths, or sculptors. Filippo Brunelleschi

understanding of *De pictura*, where the themes dealt with, explains Alberti, “will be easily understood by the geometer. But he who is ignorant of geometry will understand neither these nor any other discussion on painting” (*De pictura*, III.53).

De pictura is more conceptual than practical. Apart from his explanations of the method for constructing a floor in perspective and for using an instrument for drawing from life – called “velo” or “intersection” – Alberti was mainly interested in defining the optical-geometric principles that govern the plane representation of three-dimensional space. The practical procedures were, in fact, already familiar to painters, and Alberti had been stimulated to write on this subject expressly by the perspective skill of artists such as Brunelleschi, Masaccio, Ghiberti, and Donatello. On the plaster underlying the *Trinity* in Santa Maria Novella, for instance, Masaccio had left incised a practical but impeccable method for drawing the perspective of a foreshortened circle within a square, while in the *Nativity* of San Martino alla Scala, Paolo Uccello had left a fine example of what is today termed “distance point construction.” What was lacking was a text allowing artists to explain the reasons for their mode of operation, an “entirely mathematical” book – stated Alberti – which would explain the abstract concepts of geometry through the language of painters. Since the painter “studies only how to counterfeit what he sees” (I.2), Alberti was concerned with explaining the manner in which

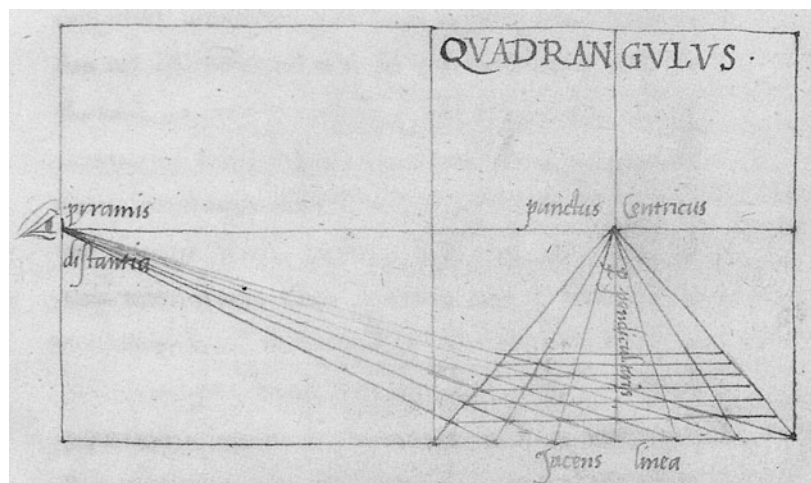
the eye perceives the reality around it, how the lines of sight measure sizes “almost like a pair of compasses” (I.5–6), how the Euclidean theory of similar triangles explains the relationship between real and apparent size (I.14), how in order to construct similar triangles it is necessary to cut the lines of sight (I.13), and how, in the final analysis, “painting is none other than the intersection of the visual pyramid” (I.12).

The way in which these concepts could be usefully transformed into a method of representation is explained by Alberti through a procedure that critics have always interpreted as an abridged form of the more laborious construction attributed to Brunelleschi (Fig. 10). Basically, Alberti developed a method through which perspective could be drawn directly on the painting, thus avoiding the long architects’ procedure that called for the use of preliminary drawings in plan and elevation. With Alberti’s method, the principle of intersection of the visual pyramid could be applied to the construction of the flooring alone, which, being conceived as a modular grid, furnished the measurements for all of the objects appearing within the depth of the perspective field.

The Florentine Workshops

The lesson taught by Alberti was immediately adopted and transmitted by some of the artists in contact with him: Antonio Averlino, known as Filarete, for example, who in his *Trattato di architettura* (Treatise on architecture) presented

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,
Fig. 10 Leon Battista Alberti, *De pictura*, 1518, Lucca, Biblioteca Statale, MS 1448, fol. 23



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,

Fig. 11 Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano, detail of the Studiolo of Federico da Montefeltro in Urbino, Ducal Palace



precepts and rules taken from *De pictura* and *Elementa picturae*, and Lorenzo Ghiberti, who in his *Commentaries* clearly expressed his desire to play the role of the “erudite” artist called for by Alberti. The subject of perspective is dealt with by Ghiberti in his *Third commentary*, which in the form that survives to our day is a collection of passages taken from texts on optics by medieval philosophers. The work, however, remained unfinished; and it is probable that, after having instructed artists on the science of vision, Ghiberti intended to explain the rules of the art in which the great masters of antiquity excelled, that is “that part of perspective [i.e., optics] pertaining to the art of painting.”

In the Florentine art workshops, perspective was practiced with great skill, in both painting and sculpture. Donatello had invented a new bas-relief technique, called *stiacciato* (flattened), expressly for the representation of space in perspective. Paolo Uccello was famous for the long studies on perspective he conducted for his paintings. And one category of artist, that of wooden inlayers, earned the specific title of “masters of perspective” precisely for the superb skill they displayed in creating complex perspective

compositions. One of the masterpieces of this Renaissance perspective *tarsia*, the panels of Federico da Montefeltro’s Studiolo in Urbino (Fig. 11), was produced by the Florentine workshop of the brothers Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano. And it was just at the time that the famous Studiolo was being built (1475–1476) that Piero della Francesca composed at the court of Urbino the first true manual of perspective drawing: *De prospectiva pingendi* (On perspective for painting).

Piero della Francesca

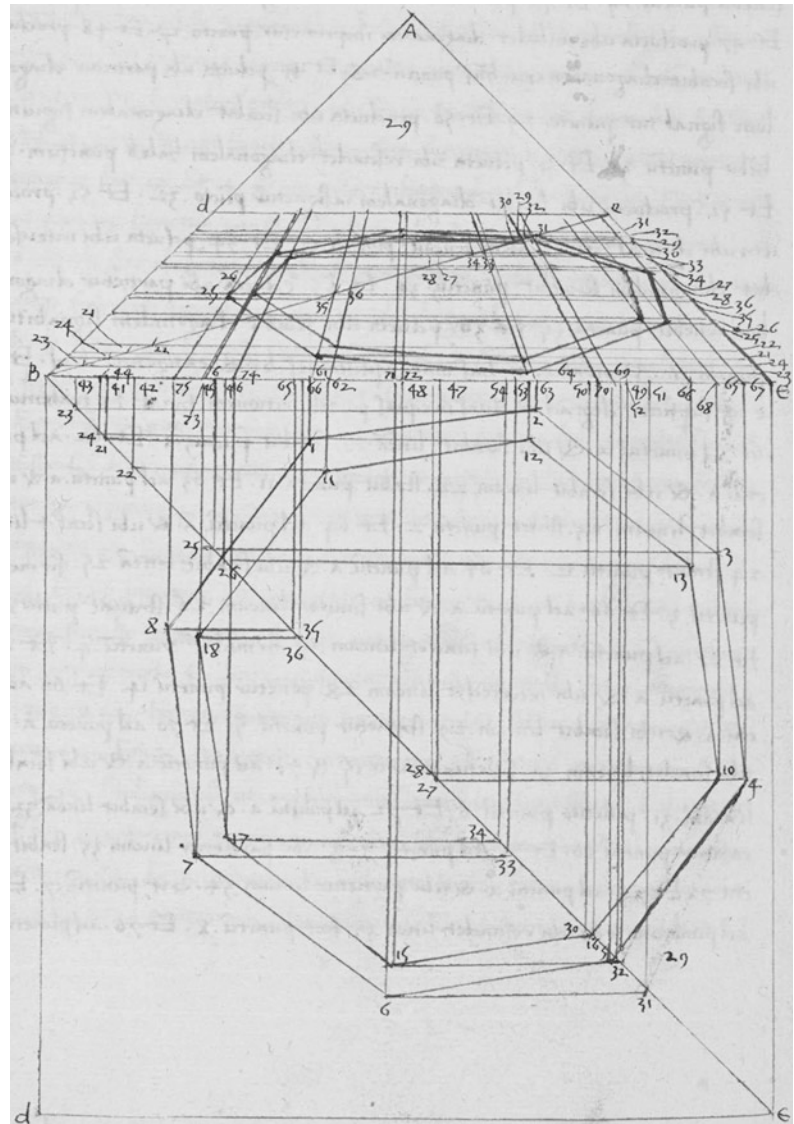
An exceptionally refined painter and mathematician, Piero della Francesca (c. 1416–1492), accompanied his famous paintings with three important mathematical texts: an abacus book, a work on Plato’s five regular bodies, and a manual of pictorial perspective. The manual marked a fundamental stage in codifying the rules of perspective. Although it remained unpublished, the treatise circulated through various manuscript copies, inspiring the later writings of Albrecht Dürer, Daniele Barbaro, and other sixteenth-century authors (Camerota et al. 2015).

Piero was the first to write specifically for artists. While Alberti was concerned with laying

the theoretical foundations of the new pictorial discipline, Piero concentrated firmly on rules for drawing. *Prospettiva* taught how to “commensurate,” that is, how to represent things at the correct size on the surface of the painting. To measure the apparent size of things and replicate them, Piero devised drawing procedures that painters could adopt depending on the complexity of the object to be represented. The first “way” (Fig. 12), applied to the representation of geometrically simple objects, consisted of drawing a foreshortened

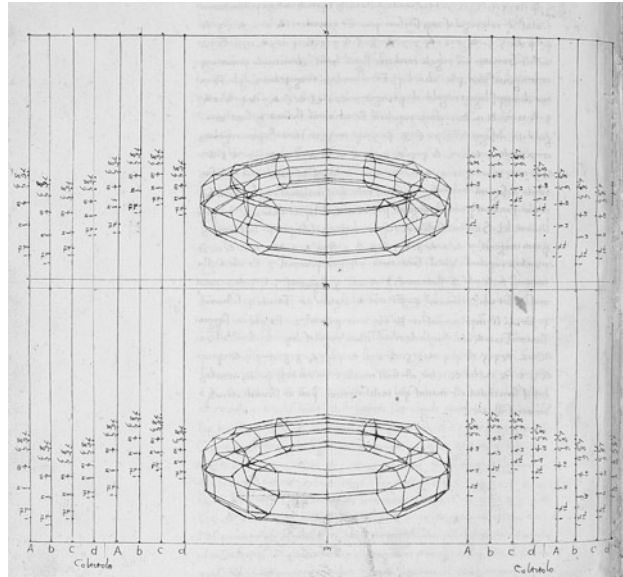
square destined to contain the object or objects to be depicted. The front of the foreshortened square coincided with the upper side of the square in true form that contained the plane of the object. Having traced the diagonal of the square in true form and that of the foreshortened square, the procedure called for a series of operations used to transfer the points of an object from the plan in “its own form” to the “degraded” plane. The second “way” (Fig. 13) consisted of the methodical use of the plan and elevation views as in the

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,
Fig. 12 Piero della Francesca, *De prospectiva pingendi*, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS 1576, fol. 9r



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,

Fig. 13 Piero della Francesca, *De prospectiva pingendi*, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS 1576, fol. 41v



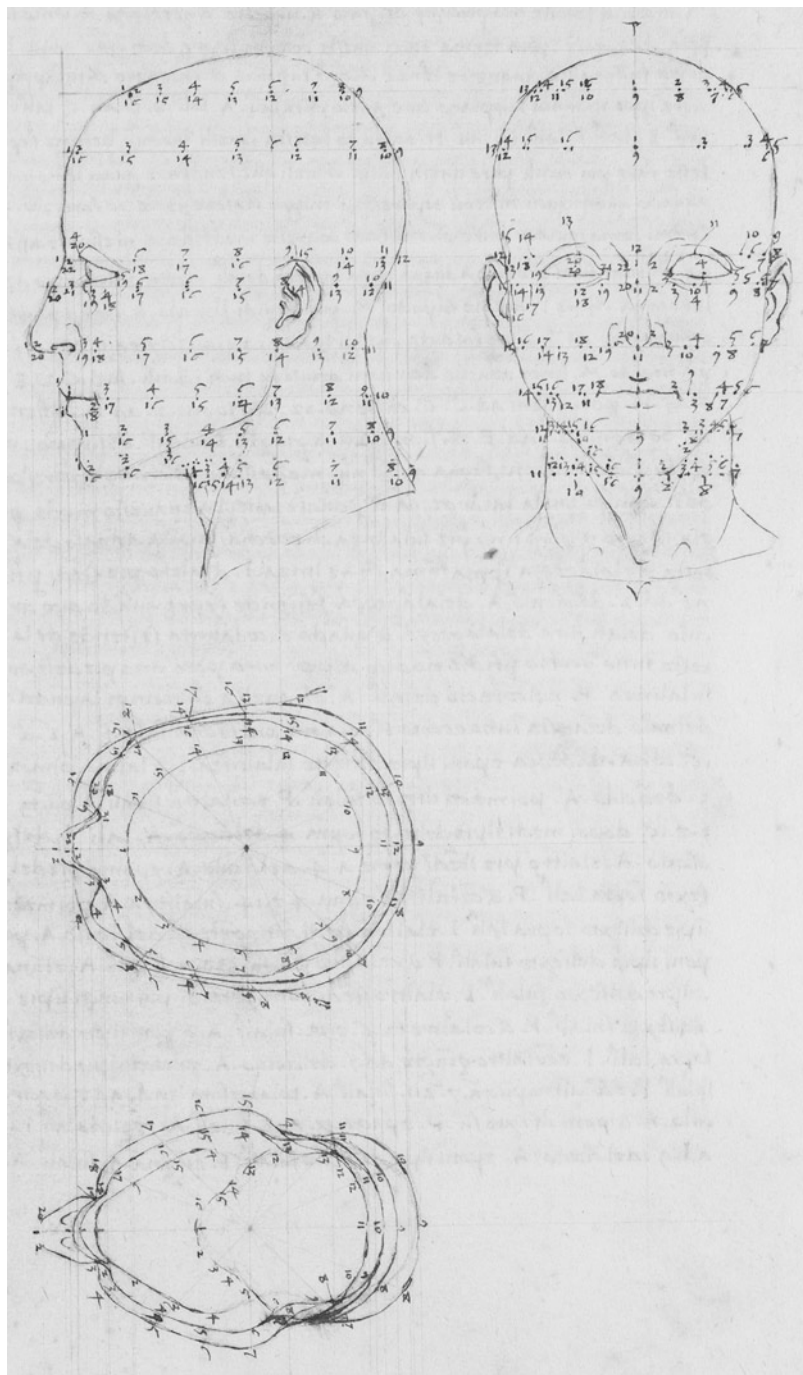
abovementioned procedure attributed to Brunelleschi. That procedure was necessary for a correct representation of the most complex objects such as vaults, capitals, mazzocchi (toroidal-shaped headgears), and even the human head, which Piero geometricized with meridians and parallels, almost as if it were a terrestrial globe (Fig. 14).

Leonardo da Vinci

Piero's great geometric expertise won him the title of "monarch" of the masters of perspective. This is recalled by Luca Pacioli in his *Divina proportione* (Divine proportion), reporting a compendium by him, now lost, of *De prospectiva pingendi* (*Trattato dell'architettura*, fol. 23r). Pacioli's work of dissemination contributed to circulating Piero della Francesca's among the painters of his time, in particular Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), who drew splendid tables of Plato's polyhedrons in perspective for Pacioli's *Divina proportione*. Leonardo, too, began to compose a treatise on perspective; but, as with his technical-scientific compositions, his writings remained sparse and fragmented. His *Libro di pittura* (Treatise on painting) is a posthumous compilation by Francesco Melzi, one of his favorite pupils, who rearranged the numerous entries scattered throughout his master's notebooks. Leonardo

had been interested in perspective since his time as an apprentice in the workshop of Verrocchio (Fig. 15); but his studies were consolidated during the first years of his stay in Milan, when he began to study Euclid and the medieval authors of optical texts, notably John Peckham and Witelo (*Codex Atlanticus*, fol. 203ra). His project for a treatise on perspective may date from the 1480s, but Leonardo undoubtedly worked on it in various stages up to his last years in France. A "discourse on perspective" copied "from one by the great Lionardo da Vinci" was purchased in France in 1542 by Benvenuto Cellini, who called it "the most beautiful that had ever been found by any other man in the world, because . . . said Leonardo found the rules, and he explained them with such great ease and order that any man who saw them was able to apply them" (Leonardo da Vinci 1995, pp. 27–28). Although the loss of this manuscript makes it impossible to verify Cellini's description, it is probable that some of the rules for foreshortening figures are the ones transcribed by Carlo Urbino da Crema in the so-called *Codex Huygens* (Fig. 16), the document most representative of Leonardo's studies on foreshortening, the proportions of the human figure, and the so-called curvilinear perspective (Panofsky 1940).

**Perspective in
Renaissance Philosophy,**
Fig. 14 Piero della
Francesca, *De prospectiva
pingendi*, Parma, Biblioteca
Palatina, MS 1576, fol. 61r



Impact and Legacy

Early Perspective Treatises

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the artists' science began to be disseminated in

printing, which led to rapid and progressive maturation. The first printed work dates from 1505: *De artificiali perspectiva* by the Bishop of Toul, Jean Pélerin (Viator), who described the methodical use of the so-called tiers point, two lateral



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 15 Leonardo da Vinci, *Annunciazione*, 1472–1475, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

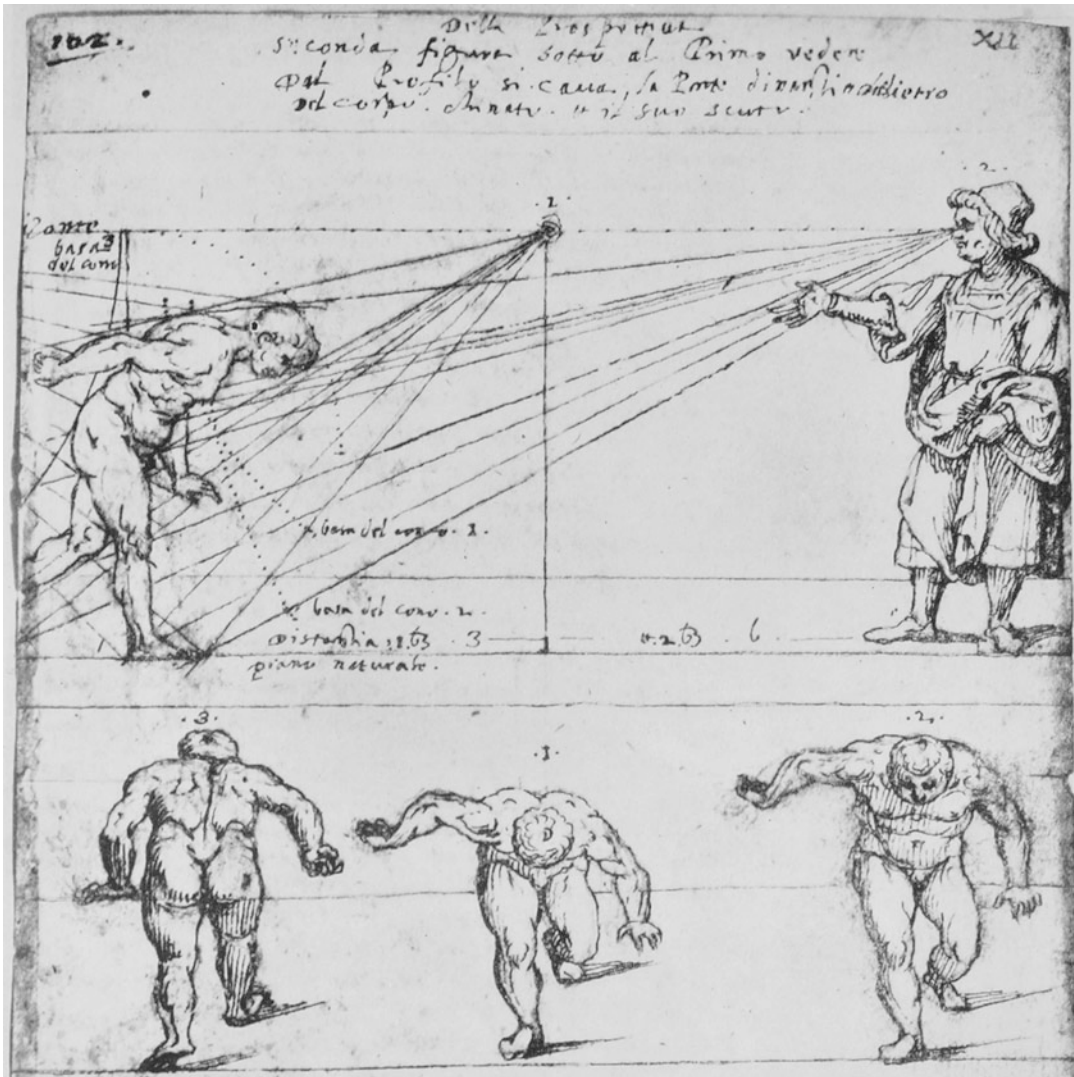
points similar to those used in architecture to draw the curve of a pointed arch. The “third point” was to be more appropriately termed the “distance point” only in the writings of the great codifiers of the sixteenth century.

Albrecht Dürer

When the fully illustrated booklet of Viator came out, the German painter Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) started the geometrical studies that led him to compose one of the most successful manuals on geometric drawing ever written, the *Underweysung der Messung mit dem Zirkel und Richtscheyt, in Linien, Ebenen, und ganzen Corporen* (Instructions for measuring with compass and rule, in lines, planes and whole bodies), first published in Nuremberg in 1525. The book was intended to educate young German painters in the secrets of the art “rediscovered by the Italians” (Dürer 1525, dedication): those secrets that he had learned in Bologna, from an unknown master, in 1506. Dürer stayed in Bologna for only 8 days. On returning to Venice, where he had been living for nearly a year, he bought the very recent Latin translation of the works of Euclid edited by Bartolomeo Zamberti (1505) and began the studies in geometry that would lead him to compile the *Underweysung der Messung*. The treatise was designed to furnish the necessary geometrical

instructions not only to painters but also to “goldsmiths, sculptors, stonemasons, woodworkers, and others who base their art on the correctness of drawing.” The themes dealt with range from conic sections to the drawing of letters, from the proportioning of architectural elements to the design of sundials, and from measuring techniques to perspective drawing. Each subject is illustrated with drawings of exemplary clarity, which made a decisive contribution to the dissemination of the orthogonal projections (plan, elevation, and section or lateral elevation). The potential value of those drawings, above all to architecture, is fully demonstrated by the refined illustrations in the subsequent treatise on fortifications, published in 1527: *Etliche underricht, zu befestigung der Stett, Schloss, und Flecken* (Various instructions for the fortification of cities, castles and strongholds).

The most extraordinary applications of orthogonal projection are found in Dürer’s treatise, published posthumously in 1528, on the proportions of the human body: *Hieirin sind begriffen vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion* (Four books on the proportions of the human figure). Here his refinement is expressed through a series of multiple projections conceived to provide geometric control even over the various positions of the human body (Fig. 17). Piero della Francesca’s



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 16 Carlo Urbino, *Codex Huygens*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.A. 1139, fol. 111

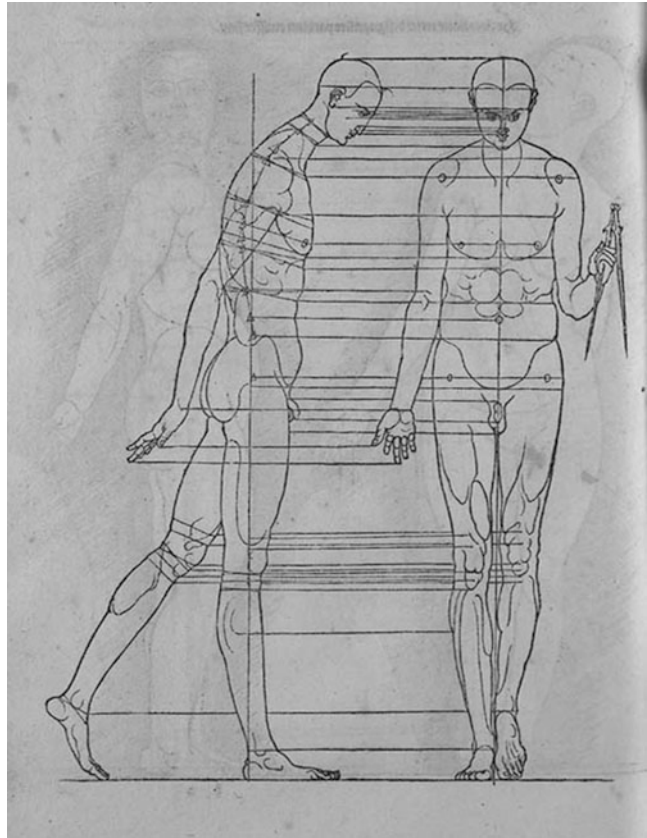
attempt to demonstrate that it was possible to geometricize even a geometrically undefined body such as the human head was developed by Dürer into a methodical system, subjecting the infinite variations of nature to the control of geometry. In these drawings appear orthogonal projections of bodies not only in frontal but also in oblique view, seen from below or above: skillful stereometries of human torsos, limbs, and heads. Educated in a family of goldsmiths, Dürer

possessed the expertise to dominate almost entirely the field of geometric constructions; but he himself stated that this type of drawing originated in a precise professional context, that of the stonemasons (Dürer 1528, dedication to Willibald Pirchheimer).

Dürer's *Underweysung der Messung* concluded with descriptions of the rules of perspective and an instrument for drawing from life which expressed the concept that the perspective

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,

Fig. 17 Albrecht Dürer, *De symmetria partium in rectis formis humanorum corporum: libri in latino conversi*, Nuremberg 1532, fol. 121v

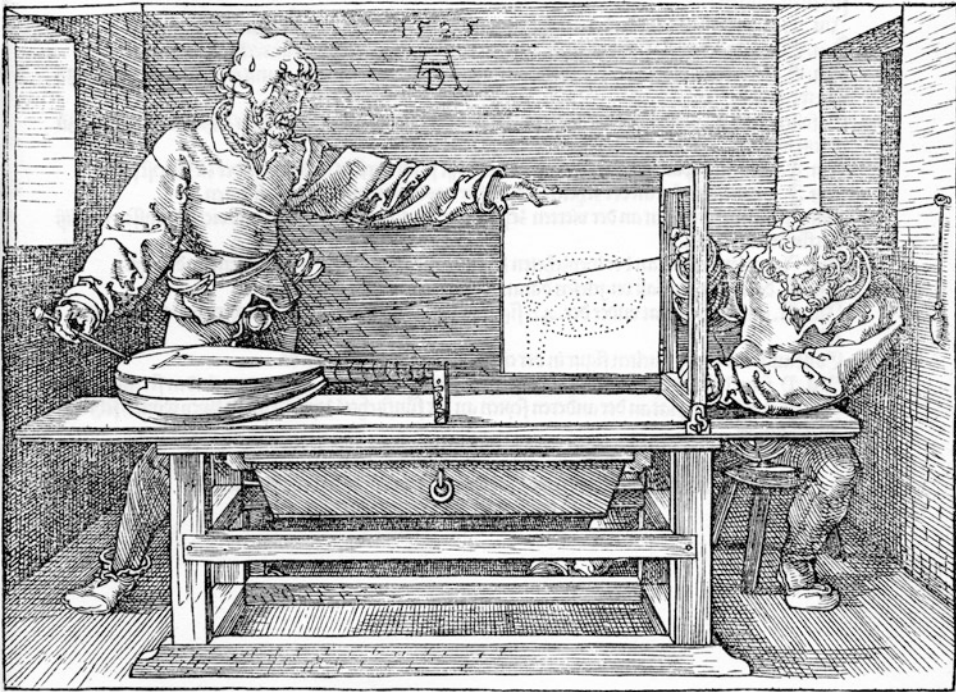


position of a point could be measured by two coordinates, just as was done by cartographers in defining the topographic position of a place. The “small door” (Fig. 18), as the instrument was called by Dürer (“türlein”), represents a constant reference point in the literature on perspective of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Egnazio Danti cited it in his commentaries on Vignola’s perspective treatise (see section “[Egnazio Danti and Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola](#)”) expressly to explain “what the foundation of perspective consists of,” since with it “we will see distinctly both the visual cone and the plane that cuts it.” The line of sight is, in fact, visualized by a thread tied to a nail which serves as an eye. The point at which this thread traverses the frame, which marks the pictorial surface, is identified by two orthogonal threads that measure its “longitude” and “latitude.” The intersection of the threads is then transferred on to the drawing sheet once the “small door” has been closed.

The success of the treatise when it was published – two editions in German and no less than four in Latin over a span of 30 years – produced the effect intended by Dürer. Artists, technicians, and mathematicians in the German area paid due attention to the rules of representation, producing, in turn, little manuals of practical use and, at times, beautiful art books consisting of collections of extraordinary perspective compositions. Outstanding among these books, known as *Kunstbüchlein*, is the *Perspectiva* by the Nuremberg goldsmith Wenzel Jamnitzer, with a text of only three pages and a series of splendid copper etchings depicting complex compositions of regular and irregular bodies, perfectly drawn in perspective (Fig. 19).

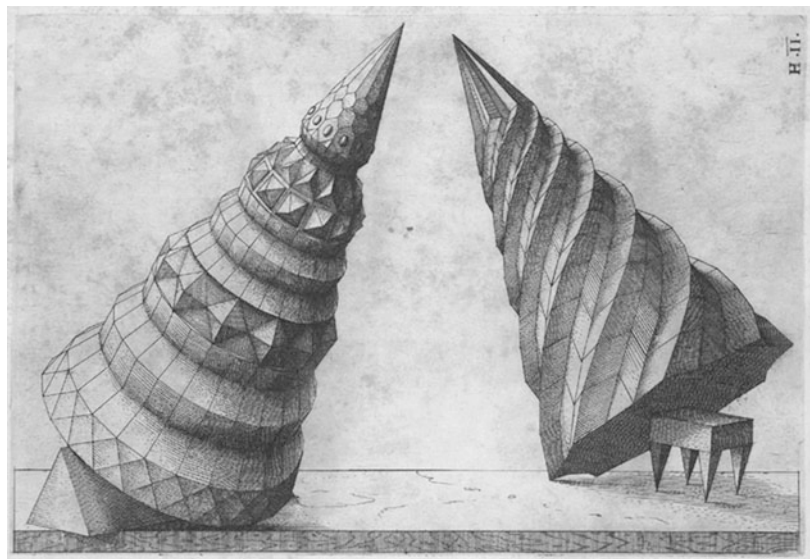
Sebastiano Serlio

The European dissemination of Dürer’s treatise was ensured mainly by Joachim Camerarius’s



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 18 Albrecht Dürer, *Underweysung der Messung*, Nuremberg 1525, Book IV: the “türlein” (small door)

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 19 Wenzel Jamnitzer, *Perpsectiva corporum regularium*, Nuremberg 1568



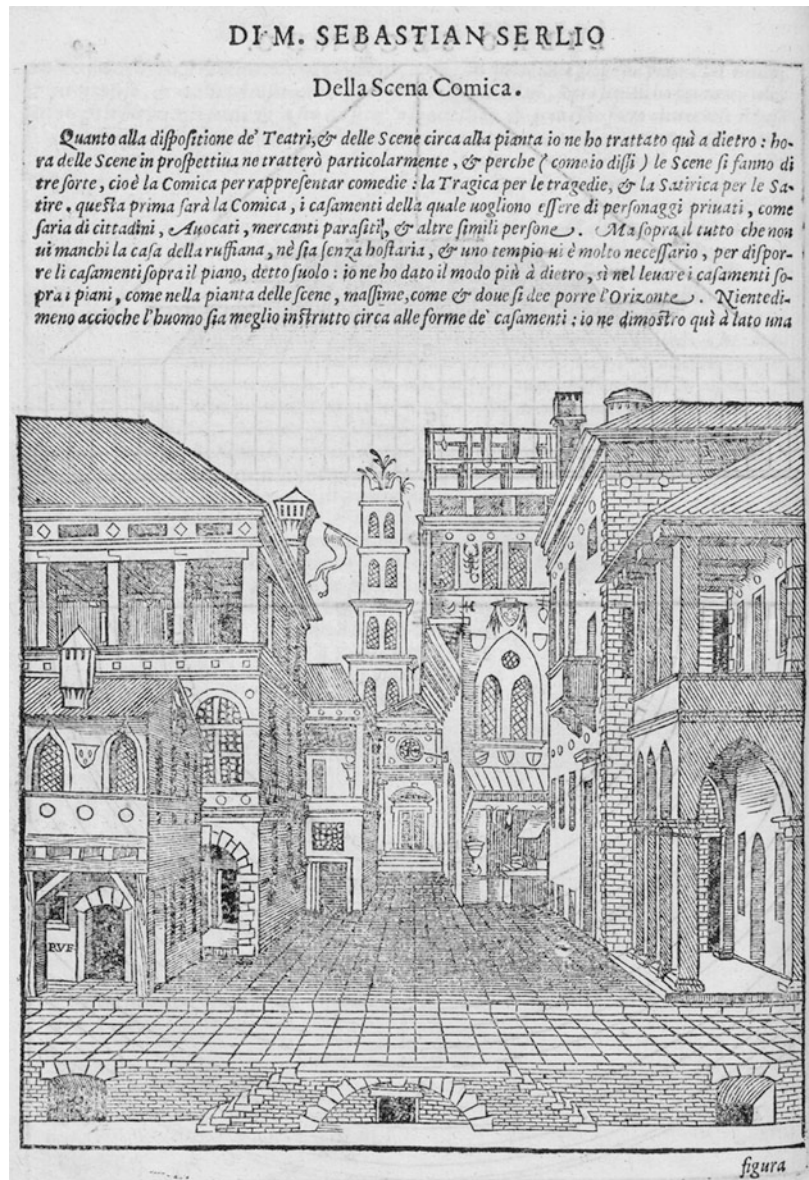
Latin translation, published in Paris in 1532 under the title *Institutiones geometricae* (Geometrical instructions). It was constantly referred to by later treatise writers, starting with Sebastiano

Serlio (1475–1554), who in 1545 published in Paris the first and second of his *Sette libri di architettura* (Seven books on architecture). The two books were dedicated to geometry and to

perspective and were the fruit of knowledge acquired through contact with two of the most refined perspective artists of the time, Girolamo Genga and Baldassarre Peruzzi. Undoubtedly deriving from their teachings as consummate set designers is the importance given to theatrical scenography as the perspective art *par excellence*, a decisive aspect that explicitly placed perspective among the themes of Vitruvian studies (Fig. 20). The construction of stage settings was

contemplated in Vitruvius's *De architectura* as an art dependent on the laws of *scaenographia*, which in its most common Renaissance interpretation was synonymous with *prospettiva*. The authority of Vitruvius legitimated the decision to include the treatise on perspective among books on architecture, leading Serlio to consider as inseparable the skills of the architect and those of the perspective artist: "Perspective will do nothing without architecture, nor architecture

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,
Fig. 20 Sebastiano Serlio,
Il secondo libro. Di
Perspettiva, Paris, 1545, II,
 p. 67: comic scene



without perspective” (Serlio 1545, *Secondo libro*, fol. 25v).

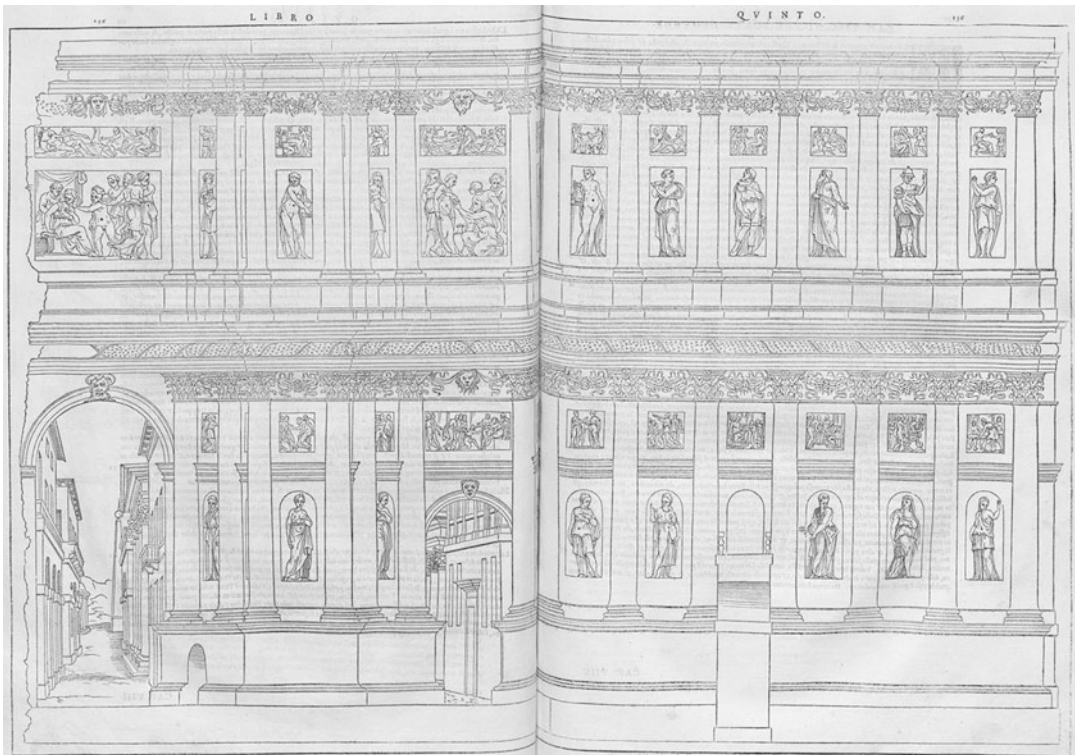
Scaenographia: Perspective in the Vitruvian Tradition

Serlio’s *Secondo libro* posed for the first time, in a treatise of this kind, the problem of identifying perspective with Vitruvius’s *scaenographia*, inspiring the subsequent and more profound reflections of Daniele Barbaro, who published in Venice in 1568 one of the sixteenth century’s most important treatises on perspective, *La pratica della perspettiva* (Practical perspective).

Daniele Barbaro

The idea of writing this treatise came to the mind of Daniele Barbaro (1514–1570) while he was working on the first edition of *I dieci libri dell’architettura di M. Vitruvio* (Vitruvius’s Ten books on architecture), published in Venice in 1556. His purpose was to fill a gap in Vitruvius’s

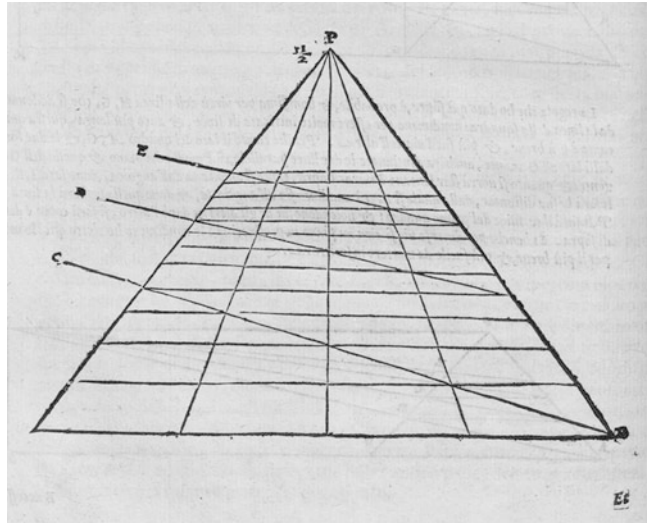
text concerning the techniques required to construct the theatrical scenes mentioned in Chapter VIII of the fifth book. Vitruvius had limited himself to describing the typology of the scenes according to the different nature of tragedy, comedy, and satirical drama (Fig. 21); but modern commentators turn to that chapter to indicate the field of application of the third type of *dispositio*: *scaenographia*. In his commentary on that chapter, Barbaro announced that he was compiling a treatise on perspective in five books dealing with geometric principles, with the drawing of plane figures (what Vitruvius called *ichnographia*), the drawing of solids (*orthographia*), the perspective representation of buildings (*scaenographia*), and various other perspective themes, such as the projection of shadows (derived from Dürer), the description of instruments for drawing from life, and the anamorphic deformation of images already anticipated by Piero della Francesca. Piero’s treatise was, in fact, one of the sources



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 21 Daniele Barbaro, *I dieci libri dell’architettura di M. Vitruvio*, Venice 1556, Book V, chap. viii: the tragic scene as interpreted by Andrea Palladio

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,

Fig. 23 Sebastiano Serlio, *Tutte l'opere d'architettura ...*, Venice 1584, *Il secondo libro di prospettiva*, fol. 19v



sufficient to construct the architectural features of paintings in frontal view (Fig. 23). For the construction of theatrical scenes, instead, it was useful to have other vanishing points available, as many as were the objective directions of the straight lines and the planes. Scamozzi called them “horizontal” because they all stayed on the horizon line; later, the mathematicians Egnazio Danti and Guidobaldo del Monte called them, respectively, *punti coadiutori* (assisting points) and *punti di concorso* (converging points) (Del Monte 1600).

Artists and Mathematicians: Art Academies and the Teaching of Perspective

The contribution of mathematicians to the codifying of perspective was intensified in the second half of the sixteenth century, starting from Commandino’s abovementioned commentary on Ptolemy’s planisphere. The contribution of Giovanni Battista Benedetti in *De rationibus operationum perspectivae* (The rules of perspective operations, 1574) was not particularly influential, reaching neither the great public of artists nor that of the academies. The work of Egnazio Danti was, by contrast, decisive; it developed precisely from the direct relationship with the teaching activity conducted in the academies of art.

Egnazio Danti and Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola

In 1573 Egnazio Danti (1536–1586) published the *Prospettiva di Euclide* (Euclid’s optics), the first Italian translation of Euclid’s *Optika kai katoptrika* (Optics and catoptrics). Danti dedicated it to the “Academicians of Drawing” in Perugia, his birthplace, in the awareness that artists had been responsible for keeping interest in optical studies alive; interest, in his opinion, abated “in the schools of the philosophers” where optics had been nearly “banned” (dedication). Optical studies had, in effect, been interrupted in the late fourteenth century, and only around 1520 was the long silence broken by the first work of theoretical commitment: the *Photismi de lumine et umbra ad perspectivam et radiorum indiciem facientes* (Radiation of light and shadow, concerning perspective and the incidence of rays) by Francesco Maurolico which, however, remained unpublished until 1611. This work focused mainly on the phenomenon of refraction already discussed by Alhazen, and it explained for the first time the phenomenon of the formation of images on the retina. In the early seventeenth century, the subject was taken up again by Johannes Kepler in his “additions” to Witelo’s treatise (*Ad Vitellionem paralipomena*, 1604) and in the *Dioptrice* (1610), the two works that laid the foundations of modern geometric optics.

Among the mathematicians who worked on optics and perspective, Egnazio Danti was the one most attentive to practical applications and dissemination of this discipline in the artists' schools. His teaching of mathematics at the Academy of Drawing in Florence was decisive in this sense. It was for his students that he first translated Euclid's *Optics*, convinced that this science was necessary to philosophers, to cosmographers and to artists: to the first, for the study of natural philosophy, to the second for cartography and astronomical observations, and to the third for the ever more refined applications that were being made in architecture and in "all the other arts of drawing." To teach the rules of perspective as a drawing discipline, Danti used the treatise, still unpublished, of Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola (1507–1573), which he published years later with an ample commentary, leaving us one of the richest sources of technical, scientific, and historiographical information. *Le due regole della prospettiva pratica di M. Iacomo Barozzi da Vignola* (The two rules of practical perspective of M. Iacomo Barozzi da Vignola) was published in Rome in 1583, richly illustrated with fine copper etchings. The very clear, concise text of Vignola was alternated with the extensive technical and theoretical considerations of Egnazio Danti, identified by a smaller typographical font and illustrated by woodcuts. The two rules mentioned in the title were the method for intersecting the visual pyramid in plan and elevation and the method of construction with a distance point – rules whose most lucid and complete codification is found here (Fig. 24).

In the late sixteenth century, we observe the emergence of a professional figure who moved easily among the figurative arts and technical problems. Painting, map-making, architecture, fortifications, and the construction of machines were skills frequently found in one person, whose mathematical training was increasingly assisted by schools closely linked to the artists' workshops. In the second half of the sixteenth century, there are at least four cases in which the relationship between the arts and the mathematical sciences is clearly expressed through educational programs: two private schools at the Medici

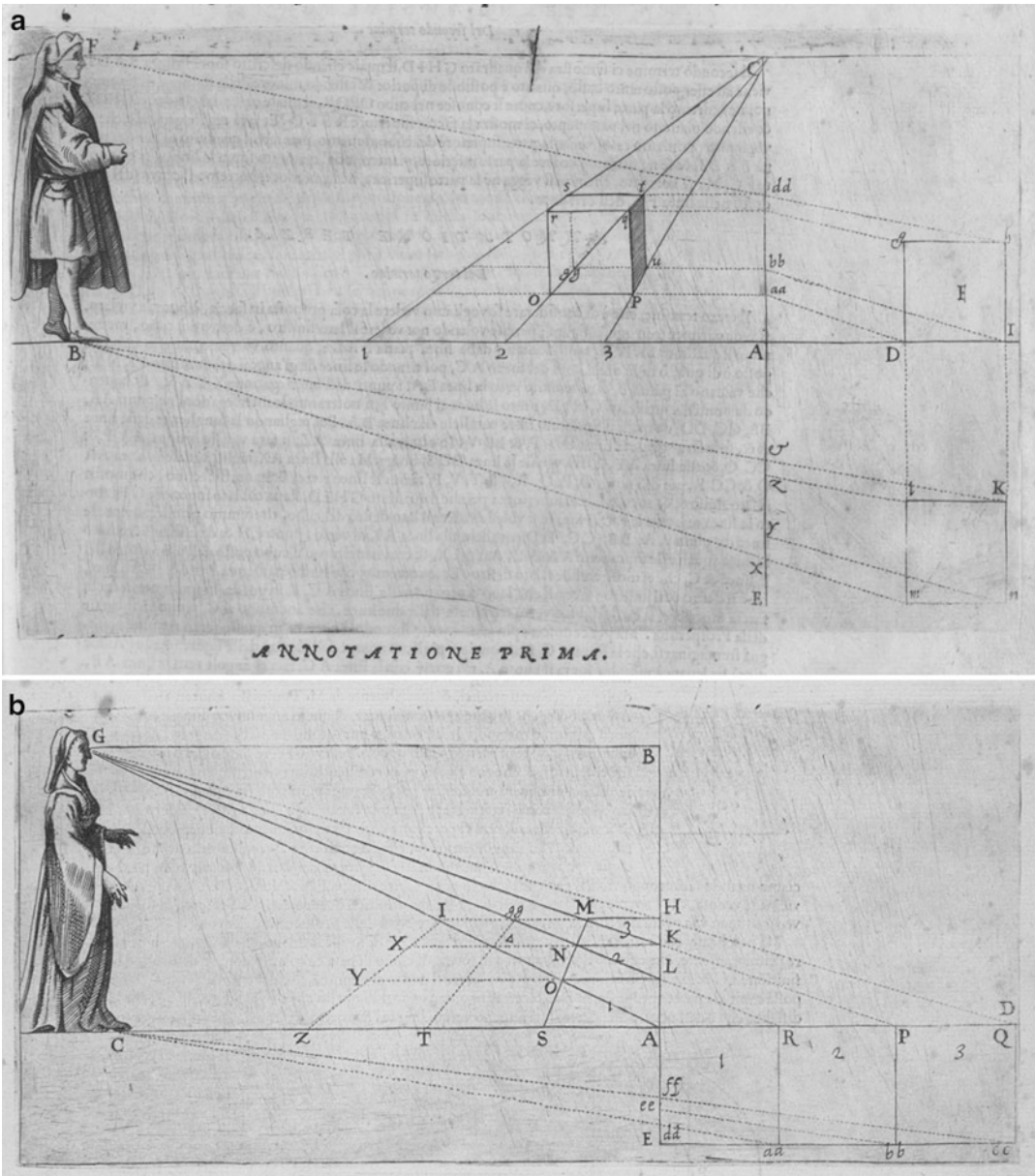
court, directed by Ostilio Ricci and by Giulio Parigi, the Florentine Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, an art academy, and the Paduan Accademia Delia, a military academy. Ostilio Ricci, the master of Galileo, taught geometry and perspective at the home of Bernardo Buontalenti, where some of the pupils were his young apprentices, including Ludovico Cigoli, Don Giovanni de' Medici, and probably Giulio Parigi, who, in 1603, became "Mathematician to the Pages," a position entrusted for the first time to an artist. Following the example of Ostilio Ricci, Parigi opened a private school frequented by youths from the Medici family and the Florentine nobility. According to Filippo Baldinucci, who called this school an "academy," Parigi:

read Euclid, taught mechanics, perspective, civil and military architecture and a fine new way of drawing most admirable landscapes. This academy was not only frequented by his own sons . . . and by all of the Florentine nobility, but was already so famous throughout Europe that princes and great knights from Italy and abroad came purposely for it, and stayed in our city, to learn there those noble sciences and disciplines. (Baldinucci 1975, IV, p. 141)

The schools of Ostilio Ricci and Giulio Parigi represent a symptomatic evolution of the Renaissance artists' workshop toward the model represented by the Accademia del Disegno, where the teaching of mathematics became the necessary component that welded the figurative arts to the geometric disciplines. The "men of drawing, that is, architects, sculptors, painters, etc." were asked to broaden their technical and scientific knowledge by studying anatomy, mathematics, mechanics, architecture, hydraulic engineering, perspective, music, and Euclidean geometry.

Lodovico Cigoli

Two of the most important treatises of the early seventeenth century were addressed to the "men of drawing": the *Prospettiva pratica* by the painter Lodovico Cardi Cigoli (1559–1613) and *Lo inganno degli occhi* (The deception of the eyes) by the mathematician Pietro Accolti. Remaining unpublished due to the untimely death of its author in 1613, Cigoli's treatise is outstanding

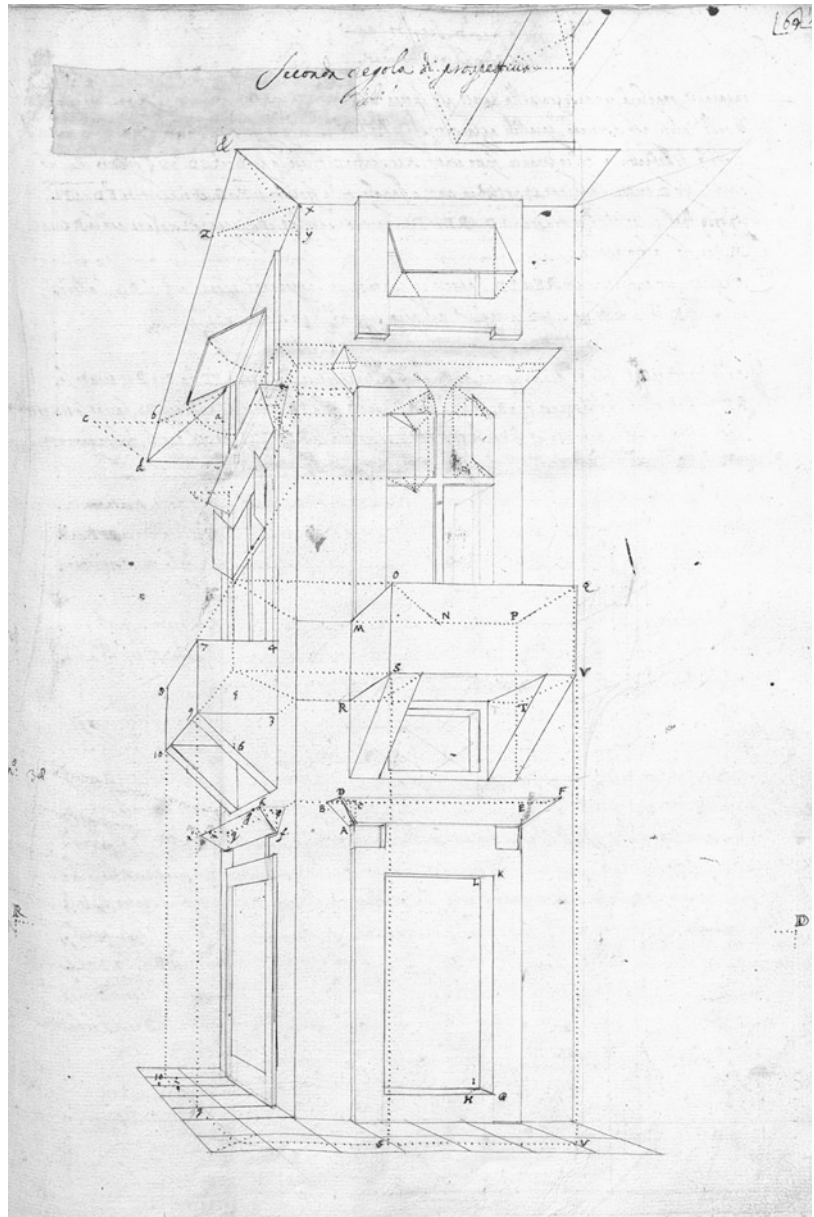


Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 24 Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola, *Le due regole della prospettiva pratica*, Rome 1583: first and second rules of perspective

for the clarity and completeness of the subjects treated. Especially noteworthy are the sections on geometric drawing (orthographic projections), on the rules of perspective (the first and second rule, and the method with convergence points), on stage set design (the geometry for creating theatrical illusions, Fig. 25), and the final section on

instruments for drawing from life, which takes account of the importance attributed to the mechanical representation of nature in the Florentine milieu. Not by chance, Cigoli was one of the artists most interested in using the telescope as a perspective tool. To him, we owe some of the most methodical perspective views of sunspots,

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,
Fig. 25 Lodovico Cardi Cigoli, *Prospettiva pratica*, c. 1610, Firenze, Uffizi Gallery, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, 2660 A, fol. 64r: perspective construction of a building for a stage set design



specially done to back up the observations carried out by his friend Galileo in 1612. And to him, we also owe the first telescopic portrait of the moon still visible under the feet of the Virgin in the fresco of the Cappella Paolina in Santa Maria Maggiore (Fig. 26).

The Perspective of Shadows

Cigoli's interest in the telescope as a perspective tool was not an isolated case. Already in the late

sixteenth century, a "perspective tube" for terrestrial use had interested several English mathematicians for its applications to topography and landscape painting (Van Helden 1977). Kepler had further developed the Galilean telescope for surveying purposes, equipping it with a third lens and a drawing table to be used in a *camera obscura*; and Galileo himself realized that the best way to describe and measure the new celestial world was that of drawing what he saw through



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,
Fig. 26 Lodovico Cardi Cigoli, *Immacolata concezione*, affresco, 1612, Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore, dome of the Cappella Paolina: the moon as seen through the telescope

the lenses, using the telescope as a painter would have used a perspective instrument.

The spread of the telescope had renewed scientific interest in the problems of optics and perspective. In the years immediately after Galileo's first observations (1609), Kepler's *Dioptrice*, Maurolico's *Photismi*, and the *Opticorum libri sex* (Six books on optics) by the Jesuit François d'Auguillon were published. The latter was a weighty treatise on optics illustrated by Peter Paul Rubens, which examined the science of vision in its manifold aspects, physiological, psychological, and geometric (Aguilonius 1613). Galileo's explanations of the results of his observations in the *Sidereus nuncius* were often based on perspective, viewed as both the science of vision and a technique of representation. It was for this reason that Cigoli considered Galileo his true master of perspective, turning to him even for such a strictly academic question as to the age-old debate on the superiority of the different arts.

Galileo's opinion on the superiority of painting is expressed in a famous letter to Cigoli where the scientist described painting as "the faculty that with lightness and darkness imitates nature" (Panofsky 1956, 1978, pp. 81–102). Chiaroscuro was the technique used to imitate relief, a dimension of nature that is perceived only thanks to the contrast between light and shadow. Where there is

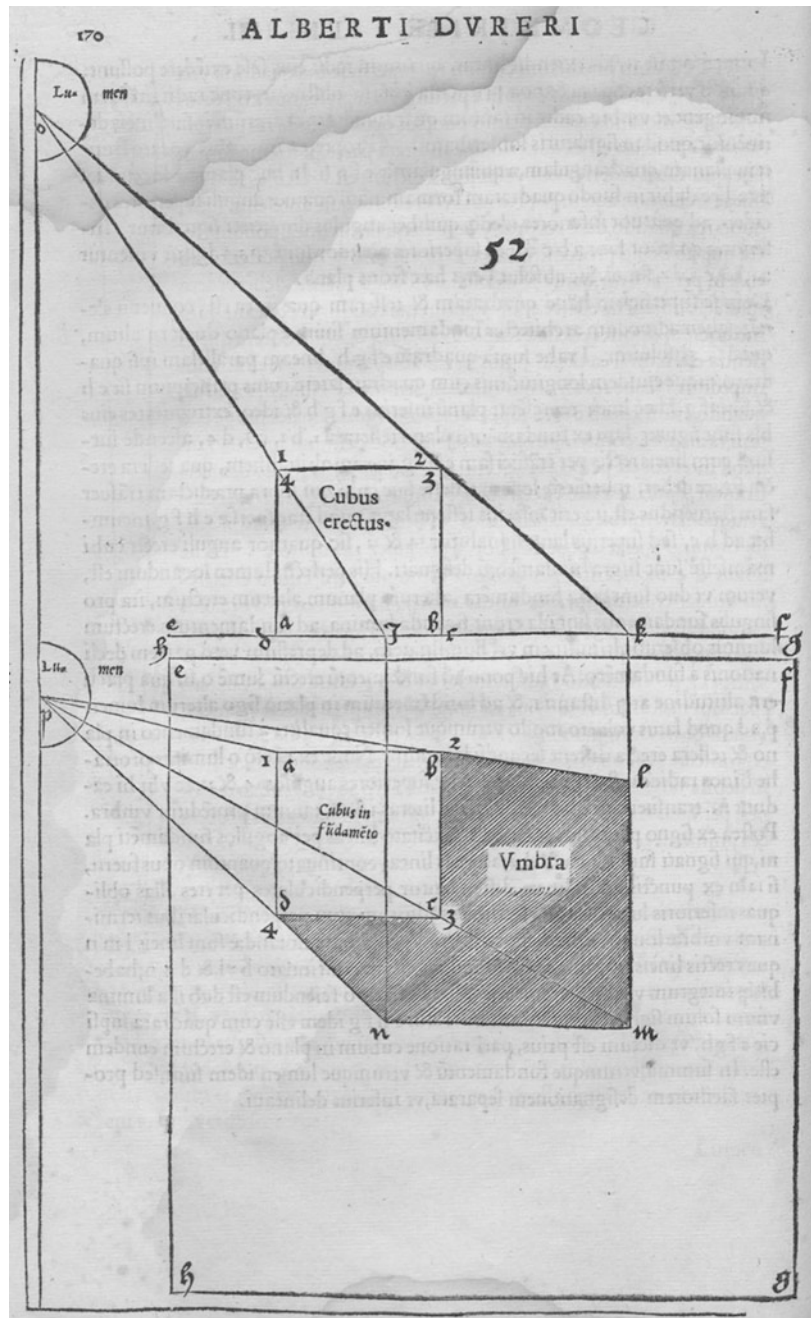
no contrast, explained Galileo, there is no visible relief, and even a sculpture would appear as a flat surface if not appropriately lighted. To prove this point, Galileo proposed an experiment, which seems to have circulated in the academic milieu disguised as an ancient anecdote in the style of Pliny the Elder, perhaps to make it more authoritative. Pietro Accolti presented it in this way, mentioning a competition between Apelles and Praxiteles that is not registered in any ancient source. To demonstrate the superiority of his own art, according to the fabricated anecdote, Apelles is said to have transformed his rival's statue into a flat surface by painting the lighted areas dark and those in shadow light, exactly as suggested by Galileo.

Pietro Accolti

Like Galileo, Accolti (1579–1642) declared that no painted object could ever have appeared different from what it was, that is, a flat surface, without the skilled use of lights and shadows. Among his most original contributions is, in fact, the representation of shadows, including the specific case of shadows projected by sunlight.

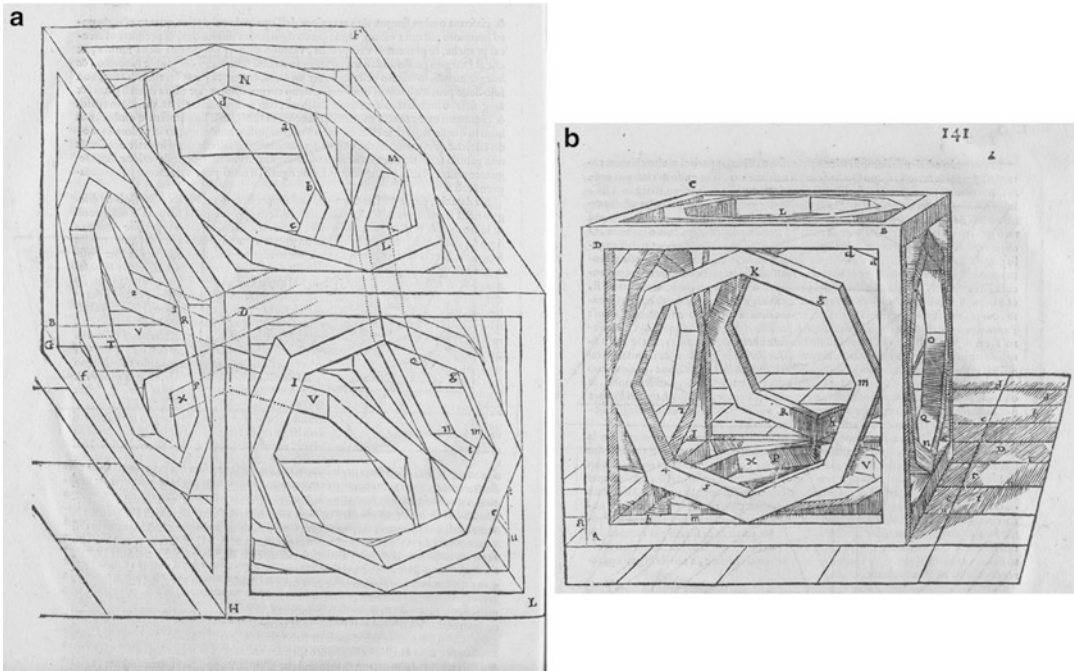
The innovative practice of representing shadows geometrically was introduced by Dürer in the *Underweysung der Messung*, where he demonstrated the principle of projecting shadows with a point source of light: a lamp or a candle (Fig. 27). Dürer's scheme was to be proposed again, without substantial modifications, at least up to Aguilonius's *Opticorum libri sex* (1613), where we find it specified that "those things lighted by lamps ... should be expressed *scaenographicae*, that is in perspective," while those "that are exposed to the direct rays of the sun should be presented *orthographicae*, that is, in orthographic projection." Accolti concentrated on this second case, following Galileo's argument on the orographic nature of the moon. According to Galileo, the clearest proof that the moon had a mountainous surface similar to that of the earth was the craggy profile of the terminator, the line of separation between light and shadow. We do not perceive the mountain peaks in the illuminated area because there, only the lighted part could be seen. If we imagine an irregular surface lit up by

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy,
Fig. 27 Albrecht Dürer,
Underweysung der
Messung, Nuremberg 1525,
 Book IV: cast shadow of
 a cube



the sun, explains Galileo, “the sun, or one who might stand in its place, absolutely would not see any of the shadowy parts, but only those that are lit up; because in this case the lines of sight and of

illumination proceed along the same straight paths.” To see the shadows, it would be necessary for “the line of sight to rise above said surface more than the solar ray,” that is, for the eye to look



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 28 Pietro Accolti, *Lo inganno de gl'occhi*, Florence 1625, pp. 140–1

at the object from another point of view, as happens when we see the terminator.

With similar arguments, Accolti proposed a way of drawing the shadows cast by the solar light by comparing two different views of the same body: a hollow cube (Fig. 28). In the first view, the cube is seen by the eye of man and thus drawn in perspective, with the foreshortened sides converging toward a vanishing point. In the second view, the cube is seen by “the eye of the sun” and consequently drawn in orthographic projection, with the foreshortened sides parallel, that is, “not concurring at any point in perspective.” Since the sun is at the same time both the seeing eye and the source of light, the second cube appears free of shadows, or rather the shadows are concealed by the parts of the object which produce them. In order to see the shadows, the eye would have to be shifted to another position, as in the cube drawn in perspective, where the shadows are produced by simply transferring from the orthographic cube the points where that which lies in front is superimposed on that which

lies behind. For this reason, the orthographic drawing is called “ombrifero” or generator of shadows. Although Accolti’s objective was to describe an alternative way of representing shadows in perspective, the drawing called “ombrifero” contained all of the elements which, with Girard Desargues, were to lead to the definition of the ideal point in projective geometry. The cube appears to us as if we were looking at it from the position of the sun, that is, from a viewpoint at infinite distance.

Perspective “à la cavalière”: The Military Practice of Drawing

Accolti’s “shadowy” drawing is what we now call “axonometry,” a representation in “parallel” perspective known at that time as “soldiers’ perspective” since it was commonly used in the military field. This kind of perspective without foreshortening, widespread since antiquity, had been the perspective of mathematicians throughout the Middle Ages. In treatises on practical geometry, as in the earlier land-surveying

treatises, geometric solids were represented in precisely this manner, according to a practice that was to remain in vogue throughout the Renaissance, even among the greatest theoreticians of linear perspective. Piero della Francesca, for instance, utilized it in both his abacus book and his booklet on the five regular bodies, in order to lay emphasis on the geometric characteristics of bodies rather than on their apparent image. Leonardo employed it superbly to represent machines and mechanical elements; Dürer and Jean Cousin showed how it could be used to draw the foreshortening of a human figure; and Juan de Rojas Sarmiento used the method to draw a new kind of astrolabe where the points of the sphere were transferred on to the plane according to what Aguilonius was to call “orthographic projection.”

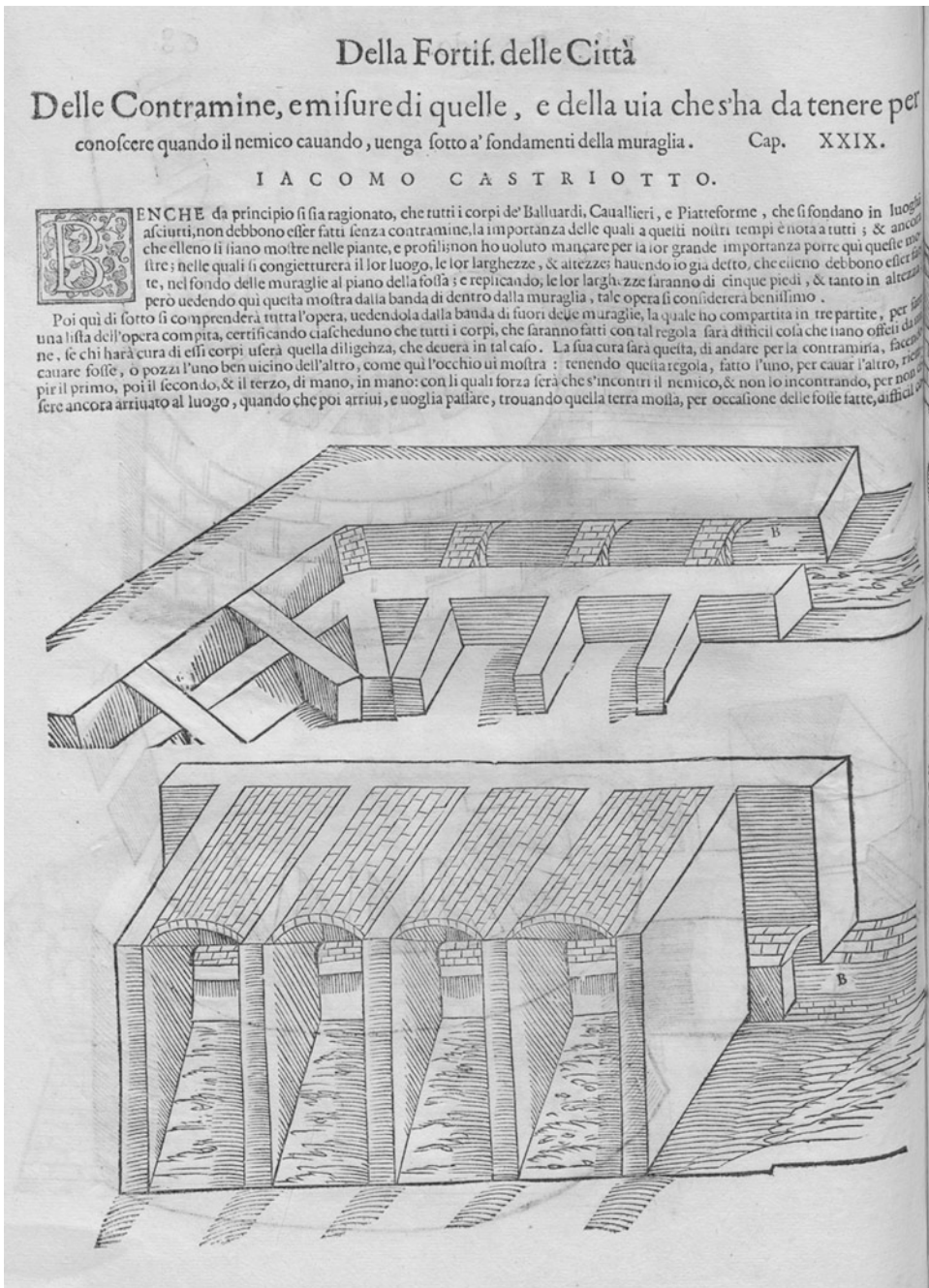
The need to have a drawing that was both “pictorial” and measurable had favored the dissemination of a practical, rapid system of “perspective” through which the geometric characteristics of the object represented could be retained unaltered. Girolamo Maggi, who in 1564 published the treatise *Della fortificatione delle città* (On the fortification of cities) explicitly mentions the use of this type of representation as specific to military architecture: “Let no one think to see in these drawings of mine either methods or rules for perspective, firstly because, not being a soldier’s technique, I would not know how to do it, and then because, due to the foreshortening, too much of the plan would be lost. These drawings serve instead expressly to show the plans, and this is called soldierly perspective” (Fig. 29). The drawing proposed by Maggi is what is now called “military axonometry,” retaining a term which indicates its origin or at least its predominant usage in fortified architecture. Bonaiuto Lorini calls it “the most common perspective,” Bartolomeo Romano “spherical perspective,” and Giovanni Battista Bellucci “perspective that serves for practical uses,” and again in the nineteenth century, the first codifier of this method, William Farish, was to call it “isometric perspective.” Among French soldiers and mathematicians, it took the name

“perspective à la cavalière,” where “à la cavalière” meant “informal,” “casual,” “rapid,” “without the hindrance of the geometric rules”: a simpler perspective conceived for the specific use of the military men (Ozanam 1691).

A “War” Between Artists and Mathematicians: The French Perspectivists

Although applied mainly to the problems of artists and thus consisting of practical procedures, perspective was by tradition a mathematical science. Christopher Clavius had included it in the curriculum of Jesuit schools, and its applications had been studied by some of the Society of Jesus’s illustrious mathematicians, such as Christoph Scheiner, inventor of the pantograph; Mario Bettini and Christoph Grienberger, inventors of new perspective instruments inspired by the pantograph; Athanasius Kircher and Gaspard Schott, visionary creators of magic optical tricks; and Jean Dubreuil, one of the leading figures in the heated debate that accompanied the development of projective geometry in France.

The bitter academic quarrel had been unwittingly triggered by Dubreuil himself. In his *La Perspective pratique*, a text widely disseminated and not only in Jesuit schools, he had presented, with some variants, the perspective method developed a few years before by the architect and mathematician Girard Desargues, who, between 1636 and 1640, published three important contributions on perspective (1636), on conic sections (1639), and on stereotomy (1640), proposing a radical renewal of the methods used for geometric representation. The treatise on conic sections contained the theoretical principles for a new geometry destined to become the common foundation of the arts based on the concepts of projection and section. The definitions essential to the development of this science of drawing included those required for a perfect codification of the geometry of solar shadows and the geometry of axonometry, that is, the point at infinity, called “objective,” (*but*) conceived as the meeting place of parallel lines, and the straight line at infinity, called “axes” (*essieux*), seen as the meeting place of parallel planes. For perspective drawing,

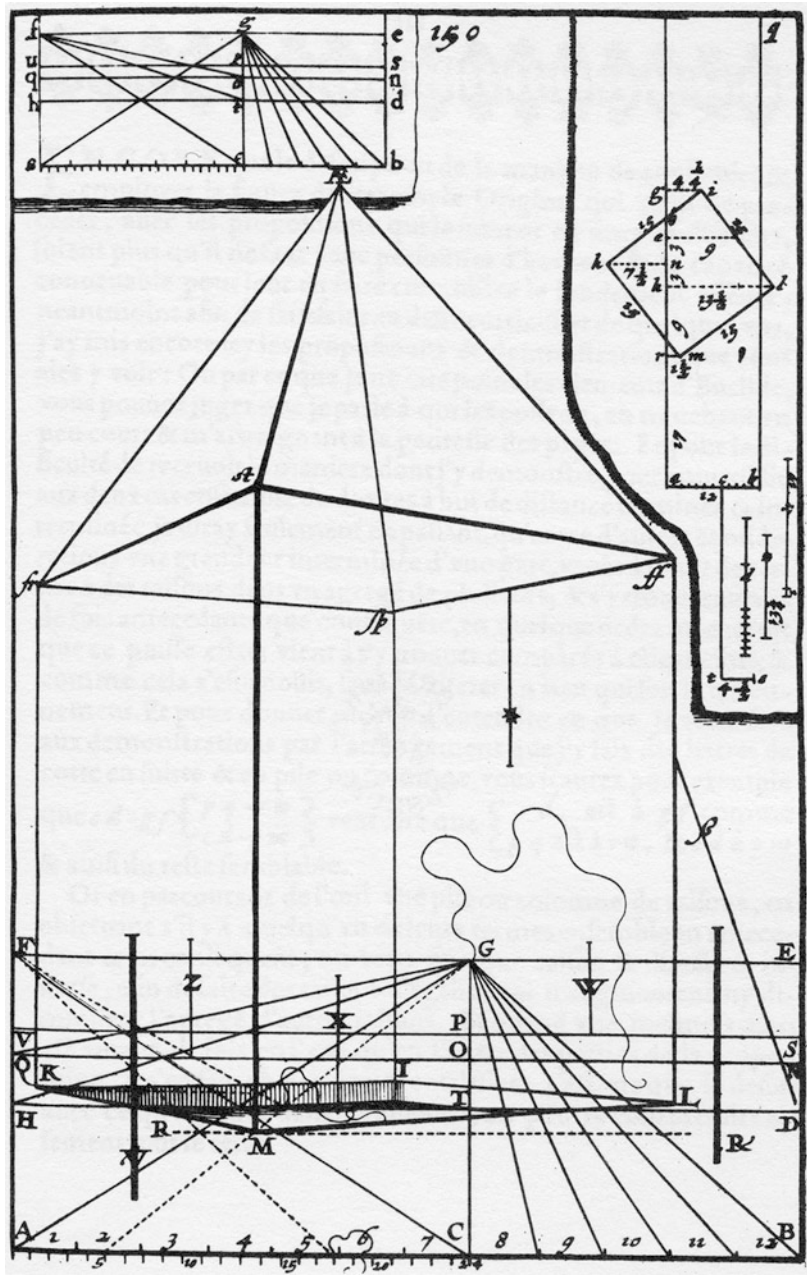


Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 29 Girolamo Maggi and Iacomo Castriotto, *Della fortificatione delle città ... libri III*, Venice 1583, fol. 68v

Desargues proposed the use of proportional scales, which made it possible to operate always and in any case within the painting surface

(Fig. 30). His method tended to eliminate any complication derived from the use of “convergence points,” including the particular case of

**Perspective in
Renaissance Philosophy,**
Fig. 30 Girard Desargues,
*Exemple d'une manière
universelle ... touchant la
pratique de la perspective*,
Paris 1636



the distance point, often situated outside of the painting, and so increasing the probability of error. The proportional scales should be “for the artist a tool similar to the proportional compass,” the Galilean instrument that Desargues and other French mathematicians of his time transformed

into a “compas optique ou de perspective” (Aleaume 1629; Vaulezard 1631; Migon 1643).

Desargues reacted vehemently to Dubreuil’s treatise, affixing handbills in the streets of Paris publicly accusing the Jesuit father of plagiarism and proclaiming him guilty of “unbelievable

errors” and “enormous mistakes and falsehoods.” According to Desargues, Dubreuil had failed to grasp the fine points of his *manière universelle* and had trivialized it. Dubreuil had replied to these accusations with a scornful pamphlet, *Advis charitables* (Charitable advice), and a new booklet on perspective, *Diverses methodes universelles et nouvelles* (Various new and universal methods), in which he attributed the authorship of Desargues’s *manière* to the mathematician Jacques Aleaume. In the meantime, the controversy had produced several texts on perspective by the most eminent members of the Académie Royale, fiercely attacking one another: on the one hand, Abraham Bosse, a strenuous defender of Desargues, and, on the other, Jacques Curabelle, Jacques Le Bicheur, and Grégoire Huret, who spared their opponents no insult nor personal offense.

Apart from personal malice and academic rivalry, the debate centered on the age-old question of the relationship between the principles of geometry and the practice of art. Desargues and Bosse advocated total geometric control in architectural drawing as well as in painting; but to their opponents, the use of proportional scales seemed a futile complication. Dubreuil also regarded the use of geometric rules as fundamental, since without them the painter could hope “only to paint for the ignorant”; but their application was functional to artistic practice and did not call for the rigor of a mathematical demonstration.

Anamorphosis and the Triumph of Illusion

Entirely extraneous to the academic disputes over the work of Desargues, but certainly well informed and sensitive to his innovations, was the Minim Friar Jean François Nicéron, who codified the rules of the so-called curious perspective or anamorphosis. Anamorphosis was the new frontier of studies in perspective. Introduced in the late fifteenth century by Piero della Francesca as a case of the projection of shadows (*De prospectiva pingendi*, III, X–XII), the technique had evolved over the course of the sixteenth century without any clear codification of its geometric

rules. Nicéron first investigated all possible declinations, expressing in geometric terms some philosophical questions on visual appearance already discussed in the *Dioptrique* of René Descartes. Behind the spectacular nature of the “anamorphic magic” lay a rigorous scientific concept that investigated the most complex themes of geometric optics and taught methods for deforming and regenerating images viewed either directly or using mirrors and lenses. The *Perspective curieuse* was published in Paris in 1638 and, quite extended, in Latin, in 1646 under the title *Thaumaturgus opticus*. This second, posthumously published, edition contained major technical and theoretical innovations, including two appendices devoted to Lodovico Cigoli’s use of a perspective instrument and to the projection of shadows (Nicéron 1646, II, pp. 191–218).

Nicéron was also the author of the two spectacular pictorial applications of this perspective technique. In his Parisian monastery in Place Royale and in the Roman monastery of Trinità dei Monti, he made extraordinary anamorphic compositions of great size. Those in the Roman monastery, accomplished in collaboration with his brother friar Emmanuel Maignan in 1642, are the only ones to have survived (Fig. 31): dreamlike images that transmute under the incredulous eye of the observer into a swirl of sinuous lines floating in an imaginary space, now shapeless, now perfectly recognizable. These stupefying illusions served as inspiration to the most virtuoso of the quadraturists, the Jesuit Andrea Pozzo, who imposed the same illusory mechanism on architectural space. Like the anamorphoses, his painted architecture was based on the adoption of a single viewing point, rejecting the multiplicity of points favored by the quadraturists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The illusory power of his fictive architecture was so strong that it forcefully conditioned the perception of space, leading neoclassical critics to censor his paintings as if they were actually buildings. On the technical level, the supreme skill of the Jesuit painter was undeniable. On both the theoretical and the practical level, the

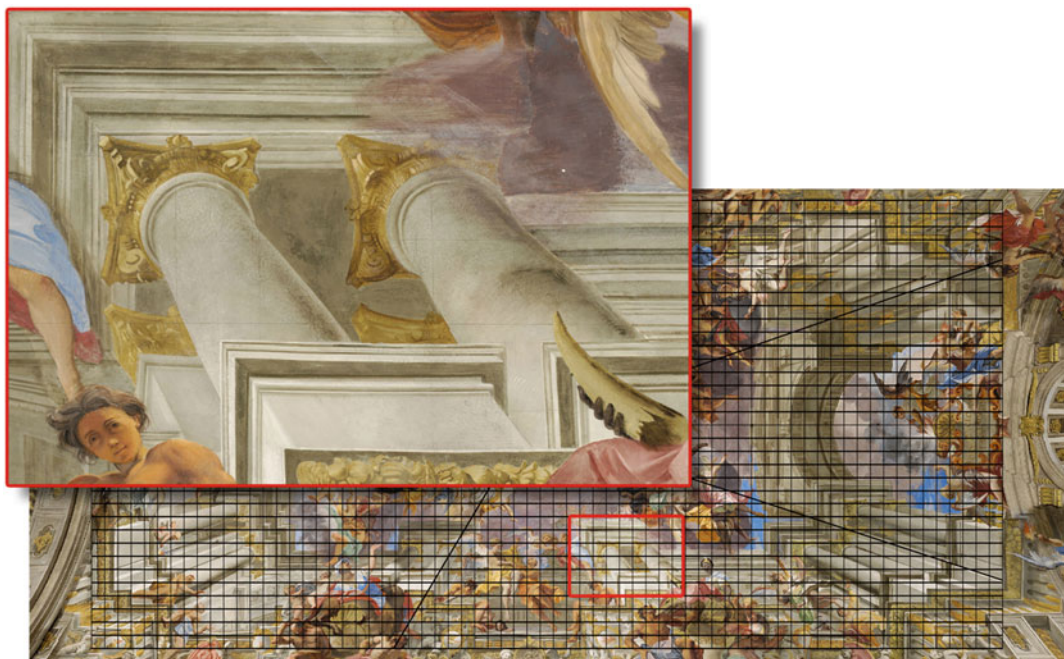


Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 31 Emmanuel Maignan, *Anamorphic image of St. Francis of Paola*, mural painting, 1644, Rome, Trinità dei Monti

meticulous exactitude of Andrea Pozzo was impeccable. The didactic structure of his treatise, *Perspectiva pictorum et architectorum* (Perspective for painters and architects, 1693), leading the reader to tackle a problem only after having thoroughly understood the one before it, is perfectly confirmed by the methodical conduction of his worksite, recognizable today by some meaningful signs. On the ceiling of the Jesuit church of Sant'Ignazio, in Rome (Fig. 32), for instance, the traces of the construction grid cut into the plaster reveal the utmost degree of precision in transferring the measurements of the sketch to the great dimensions of the pictorial surface. On the construction site, as in the treatise, each step is accurately measured, and in this absolute precision lies the secret of the amazing illusionistic effects achieved by Pozzo.

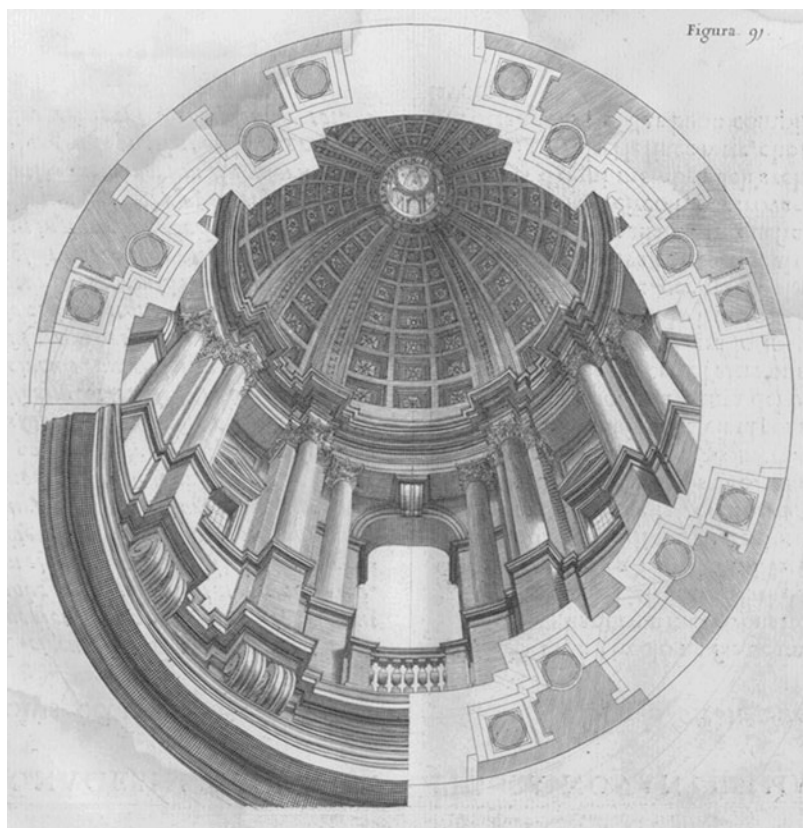
With a rigor matching his technical skill, Pozzo sets out the two basic rules of practical perspective, “distance point” and “intersection,” explaining how to evade the pitfalls of geometric drawing on highly foreshortened planes (Fig. 33).

With the same inflexible rigor, Pozzo rejects any mitigation of perspectival deformation, such as the use of several vanishing points preferred by the great quadraturists of Emilia and the Veneto, firmly imposing his faith in the single vanishing point that will provide maximum illusion and assigning an important added value to marginal deformations. Pozzo devoted the concluding appendix of his treatise, entitled *Risposta sull'obiezione fatta circa il punto di vista nelle prospettive* (An answer to the objection made about the point of sight in perspective), to this crucial subject, which he set out in three simple and categorical arguments: first, “the greatest masters” have always used a single viewpoint; second, “since perspective is but a counterfeiting of the truth,” the painter is not obliged to show it correctly from all points of view, but from only one; third, if a work is made to be seen from several viewpoints, none of them will the illusion be truly convincing. The glorious fresco over the nave in Sant'Ignazio is cited as proof of these statements, and the marble disk in that church



Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 32 Reconstruction of the grid traced on the plaster of the ceiling in the church of St. Ignatius, Rome

Perspective in Renaissance Philosophy, Fig. 33 Andrea Pozzo, *Perspectiva pictorum et architectorum*, Rome 1693, Pl. 92: perspective construction of a fake cupola on a flat ceiling



that unmistakably marks the position of the observation point has the unarguable tone of a geometric theorem, whose demonstration is renewed again each time to the astonished eyes of the observer. That marble disk is perhaps the most eloquent and emblematic image of the central nature of the gaze in the conception of pictorial and architectural space proper to the modern age.

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Peter of Candia

Born: ca. 1340, Crete

Died: 3 May 1410, Bologna

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Abstract

The Greek Franciscan Peter of Candia (c. 1340–1410) was a towering figure in intellectual and ecclesiastical affairs during the

Great Schism. His education and early teaching took him all over Europe until he began lecturing on the *Sentences* at Paris just as the Schism began. Afterward, he was active in northern Italy in the service of the future Duke of Milan and as a prelate, rising to archbishop of Milan and cardinal. He was also associated with leading humanists and the Palaiologan dynasty. Joining the conciliar movement, he was elected Pope Alexander V at the Council of Pisa in 1409, but he died the following year. His election no doubt helped make his main writing, his questions on the *Sentences*, a best seller in his day.

Alternate Names

Filargis, Petros; Filargis, Petrus; Philargis, Petros; Philargis, Petrus; Philargo; Philargus; Philaretus; Cretensis

Biography

Peter of Candia (present-day Herakleion) was born to Greek parents on Crete c. 1340, during the island's long period of Venetian rule (1211–1669). Peter was orphaned during the Black Death and raised by local Franciscans, who recognized his intelligence. Around 1357 Peter joined the order and embarked on a career reflecting the Franciscan school network, studying at Minorite *studia* in Padua, Norwich, Oxford, and, in the mid-1360s, probably Paris. He was then sent to teach in convents in Russia, Bohemia, and Poland. His superiors rewarded him by assigning him to lecture on the *Sentences* at Paris as Bachelor of Theology, which he did in the 1378–1379 academic year. Peter began with his first *principium* on September 24, 1378, 4 days after the outbreak of the Great Schism. He was licensed at the end of 1381 and incepted as Master of Theology in early 1382.

By 1384, Peter had moved to Italy, where he helped develop the University of Pavia. There Peter joined Giangaleazzo Visconti's service. Recognized as the most illustrious member of a court that included such great intellectual figures as

Baldus de Ubaldis and Manuel Chrysoloras, Peter became deeply involved in humanist circles, associating closely with Umberto Decembrio, Pier Candido Decembrio, and Coluccio Salutati. Peter's principal sermons delivered before his lectures on each book of the *Sentences* already revealed that he was a master Latinist, but he did not forget his Greek. Considering Plato and Aristotle his compatriots, Peter retained links to the Palaiologans in Constantinople and the Morea and translated some of St. Jerome into Greek. Thus, he represents an early bridge between the Latin and Greek phases of the Italian Renaissance.

In late 1386, Pope Urban VI appointed Peter bishop of Piacenza. He was then transferred to Vicenza (early 1388) and Novara (mid-1389). Still active as Giangaleazzo's emissary on various missions, Peter obtained for his master the title "Duke of Milan" from Emperor Wenceslas in 1394, and when the see became vacant, Peter was made archbishop of Milan on May 17, 1402. The Duke died 4 months later, but Peter continued his professional ascent: in 1405, the Roman Pope Innocent VII named Peter cardinal-priest of the Church of the Twelve Apostles. When the rival popes refused to take steps to end the Great Schism, Peter joined the conciliar movement, giving the sermon to open the Council of Pisa on March 26, 1409. The council deposed Popes Gregory XII and Benedict XIII and, on June 26, elected Peter of Candia pope as Alexander V, the only Greek pope after the eighth century. The election effectively produced three popes, although Alexander won the support of most of Catholic Christendom. Unfortunately, for Alexander and his legacy, his eventful papacy lasted only 10 months, and he died in Bologna on May 3, 1410. Thus, the Schism continued, and much later Alexander V was labeled an "antipope."

Peter of Candia's philosophical writings include the logic treatises *De consequentiis*, published by Maria Bertagna, and *De obligationibus*, edited but not yet published by Stephen F. Brown. Peter also wrote the theological tract *De divinis nominibus*, printed in early modern editions of Francis of Meyronnes' works. Peter's most important work is his questions on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, parts of which survive in at least 50 manuscripts,

making it one of the most popular specimens of the genre in the latter half of the fourteenth century. The work's greatest merit is that it serves as a virtual history of fourteenth-century thought on a variety of issues. Peter was so gifted at this that, concerning his portrayal of Peter Auriol's doctrine of divine foreknowledge, in 1470 Peter de Rivo would remark that "Peter of Candia explained his opinion with clearer words" than had Auriol himself. Not only would Peter survey these earlier opinions; he would usually give a succinct abstract afterward, summarizing his survey by beginning like this: "Therefore this doctor's view, as I see it, consists in the following...." Because of Peter's objectivity, his abstracts are a wonderful tool for understanding fourteenth-century philosophical thought. The following statement is a characteristic of his unbiased approach, in this case concerning a position of Auriol: "I don't care whether it's true or not, because right now I am not reciting it to adhere to it, but just to explicate the truth of what will be said later." Thus, the opening question to Peter's prologue to the *Sentences* has been aptly called his "Hundred Year 'History' of the Theologian's Role."

Peter of Candia also offers an independent appraisal of earlier scholars' theories, criticizing and approving where he thinks best, often with a touch of humor. For example: "But although these things appear beautifully said, they generate no melody in Ockham's ears." Again concerning Ockham: "Although one can maintain this position, because it would be hard to disprove it, in truth, if one pays close attention, it does not fish as deeply as the previous two." In another context: "I once heard this response from Master William of Cremona, when he was lecturing on the *Sentences*, but with all due respect, he did not then have the mind of a doctor." Peter often speaks "with all due respect" and sometimes "for the sake of argument." When Peter saw that what he was saying on the issue of the univocity of being was contradictory to what he had said before, he quipped: "I upheld this position in my second *principium*, against Master Gerard Calcar, and now I am holding the opposite here – not that I consider one position to be truer than the other, but in order to illustrate several ways of conceiving the problem, for the pleasure of those

who sometimes want to eat bread and sometimes cheese.” On divine foreknowledge of future contingents, Peter presents objectively and at length several opinions, but he finds them all wanting ends by declaring: “I, like a little dog, have started the hare for you. Capture it through whatever path of the aforesaid ways you wish.”

Given the nature of Peter of Candia’s major writing, perhaps it is best to finish in his own words: “But because I have written enough, and visibly, I believe the school has been oppressed enough with listening to me, I will refrain.” Or better, Peter’s last words in his entire work: “I was prepared to make a long discussion of this material, but God wants me to rest from my labors.”

Cross-References

- [Chrysoloras, Manuel](#)
- [Decembrio, Pier Candido](#)
- [Scotism](#)
- [Universities in the Renaissance](#)

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Petrarca, Francesco

Born: 20 July 1304, Arezzo

Died: 18–19 July 1374, Arquà (Padua)

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Abstract

Petrarch is the poet who above all perfected the original Vulgar Italian tongue, developing its melodious elegance and thus providing a model of verse composition for later writers, both Italian and European. He embodied the original modern intellectual, ready to travel the “world” for his work, eager to meet new colleagues for professional and cultural exchanges, and determined to conduct field research as he uncovered lost texts from the classical tradition. Petrarch’s contribution to the literary and more generally intellectual world is priceless. He was completely devoted to culture in a more practical sense, unearthing a number of important manuscripts and laying the foundations for a new concept of the public library, promoting the dissemination of information after centuries of oblivion. Petrarch also pioneered the genre of intimate and personal dialogue with past authors, addressing them in letters (*Epistolae*) and in the *Secretum*, his own personal “diary,” constructing a cultural continuum based on the transmission of knowledge. His literary works, both in Latin and in Vulgar Italian, are still considered among the most influential in the late Middle Ages, especially as an inspiration for Renaissance Humanism, not only for their

style but also for their adaptation of classical poems and philosophical treatises.

For Petrarch's biography, we have much more evidence than for contemporaries such as Dante or Boccaccio, in no small measure, because he wanted to devote more time to his studies in order to skirt the political and religious controversies of his times. His work in Law, in tandem with his renowned cultural background, enabled him to serve as Counselor to a number of important figures of State and Church, but he always managed to steer clear of risky professional associations, so that he could apply himself to his writing.

His method of writing poems gave rise to "Petrarchism," defined as the formal poetic style introduced by Petrarch. But this is not merely a literary expression that aims to evoke the themes, images, and stylistic figures of his poetry; it is also a way of life, both intellectual and spiritual.

Alternate Names

[Petrarch](#)

Biography

The Trecento is a century that saw the emergence of several European states with dynastic conflicts opposing, for example, France to England, which brought the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), while in Italy, the Signoria replaced the Commune. In north-central Italy, the Communes which became Signorie transformed in regional states: the most important were Milan, Venice, and Florence. In central Italy, the Church established a regional state for its territories, while the South was divided between the Kingdom of Naples, under the rule of the French, and Sicily, which was under Spanish domination.

This territorial situation brought the fourteenth century to be first of all a moment of great socio-political changes, with both an economic and demographic crisis and the plague, the Black Death in 1348, which decimated the European population. The reduction of agricultural and

artisanal production, as well as of the manufacturing industry had a negative impact on commerce, which led to social tensions and revolts among workers.

The fourteenth century also brought a crisis within the Church. During the year 1300, Pope Boniface VIII announced the first Jubilee of Christian history, which was an attempt of the pope to impose his authority on temporal power. Tensions arose particularly with King Philip IV of France and led the Holy See to be transferred to Avignon, France, under closer control of the French monarchs. It was the first time that Western Christianity tore apart in such a way and saw the coexistence of two popes: Urbano VI and Clemente VII, one in Rome and one in Avignon.

Petrarch lived through 70 years of the fourteenth century, right during the Avignon Papacy (1309–1376), in a historical context which led him to collaborate with both the Empire and the Papacy. However, he always kept firmly his political and spiritual beliefs, fighting for a righteous conduct of temporal power as well as a renewal of the Church and a return to its Roman seat.

Petrarch was born in the Tuscan town of Arezzo on July 20, 1304. He spent the first three years of his life there, before moving with his family to Carpentras in Provence, near Avignon; at the age of 16, he returned to Italy, spending the next 6 years in Bologna, until the death of his father. In 1319, his mother died at the age of 38, which corresponds to the number of hexameters in the *Breve pangeyricum defuncte matri* (*Epystole*, I, 7) that he wrote in her memory. Eletta Canigiani (1270–1319) had been born to one of the leading families of Oltrarno in Florence. In fact, both of Petrarch's parents came from White Guelph families and had thus been banished from Florence in 1302. Ser Pietro di ser Parenzo di Garzo dell'Incisa, nicknamed Petracco, (1267–1326) was a merchant, notary public, Chancellor of the Commission for Reforms in Florence, and ambassador for the State of Florence. In 1302, after the victory of the Black Party in Florence, a number of White Guelphs were banished and had their property confiscated, including Dante Alighieri as well as Petrarch's father. As a result, Petrarch would never live in the Tuscan capital, visiting only

once in 1350, since he perhaps wanted to outlive the memory of his father together with his political fate. This would leave him restless and ever on the move his entire life. He indeed never settled in one place for more than 9 months.

Petracco served out his exile in Arezzo, at the Incisa in Val d'Arno, before transferring to Pisa (where he met Dante) and then Avignon, a traditional meeting place for Guelph exiles. There he joined the mercantile company of the Frescobaldi, for whom he drafted contracts until 1310. Although he had been pardoned in February 1309, he still avoided Florence. Around 1311–1312, he brought his wife and children, Francesco and the younger Gherardo (born c. 1307), to Provence. Petrarch's brother soon afterwards became a Carthusian monk and would serve as a model for Petrarch of a practical and spiritual lifestyle. Petrarch would commemorate him in works such as the *De vita solitaria*, the *De otio religioso*, the *Secretum*, and the first Eclogue of his *Bucolicum Carmen*. Once his family was settled in Carpentras, Francesco and Gherardo began their studies under another Guelph exile, Convenevole of Prato (*Seniles*, XVI, 1), before being sent to Montpellier to continue their Law degree. After the death of his wife, Ser Pietro brought his children to Bologna in 1320 in order to study Law under Guido Sette. In these teenage years, Petrarch was more inclined towards literature and began to spend more time with the poet and Latinist Giovanni del Virgilio, who was in correspondence with Dante Alighieri and Albertino Mussato.

After the death of their father in 1326, the two brothers both left Bologna, and after a period of economic difficulties they returned to Avignon. Here Petrarch finally abandoned his Law career and he assumed lower holy orders, which did not impose ecclesiastical duties but still enabled him to obtain some lucrative posts and canonries. Indeed, for the rest of his life, his ecclesiastical appointments would remain his primary source of income.

On Friday April 6, 1327, in the church of Sainte Claire in Avignon, he met Laura; this would become a pivotal biographical event for his poetic output. As for Dante, the encounter with a woman (cf. the *Vita Nova*) was the moment in which biography blended with fiction. Laura

was in real life perhaps the daughter of Audiberto di Noves, and she was married to Ugo de Sade, or otherwise Laura di Sabran, or Laura Colonna; there are yet more suggestions that have never fully satisfied historians but which on the other hand made her literary mystery even more compelling: that is where her true authenticity can be found. The collection of poems composed in her name, the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, a series of fragmentary themes handled in vernacular Italian, consists of 366 compositions, one for each day of the leap year. Most (317) are sonnets, while 29 are songs (*canzoni*), 9 are sixtains, 4 are madrigals, and 7 are ballads. The initial core dates to 1336–1338, when Petrarch recopied a group of sonnets and a fragment of a song. In 1342, these poems were formally reorganized for transcription, but only after the death of his beloved Laura in 1348 did Petrarch conceive of a songbook (*Canzoniere*), a lengthy project that saw a number of intermediary stages, which would occupy him till his death. The final edition has been transmitted by the manuscript MS Vatican City, Apostolic Vatican Library *Vaticano latino* 3195, partially in his own hand. Another important codex, copied by Petrarch himself and by his helper Giovanni Malpaghini, is the MS *Vaticano latino* 3196 (known as Codice degli abbozzi). More than any other work this would influence subsequent Italian and European poetry as the stylistic and formal basis of Petrarchism.

In 1330, economic difficulties tied to the exhaustion of his father's inheritance drove him to look for employment, and his first ecclesiastical position was as chaplain of the family of cardinal Giovanni Colonna, where he would remain until 1347. His life was full of continuous travel, taking him in 1333 to Paris, Lyon, Liège (where he discovered two orations by Cicero), and Germany. In the meantime, he was receiving canonries from the new pope Benedict XII, who had succeeded John XXII in 1334, and with whom Petrarch maintained a close relationship, constantly urging him to return the Holy See to Rome.

In 1335, he met Simone Martini in Avignon, who painted a portrait of Laura. Petrarch then discharged his only ever legal commission, as he secured the pope's support for Mastino della Scala,

signore of Verona, who had just completed his conquest of Parma. In 1336, in the company of his brother Gherardo, he presumably climbed Mount Ventoux, in Provence by Carpentras, an experience which became part of the *Secretum* in his personal dialogue with Augustine. In the same year, Cardinal Colonna recalled him to Rome, but he soon returned to Avignon, and he bought a house in Valchiusa, thus fulfilling his dream of a solitary life surrounded by nature. Probably in the summer of 1337, his son Giovanni was born at Avignon to a mother whose identity remains unknown. At this time, he worked on the *De viris illustribus* and he began the *Africa*. His life was full of institutional and intellectual projects, but he always found time for his own work and studies.

On September 1, 1340, Petrarch received both from the University of Paris and from the Senate of Rome the offer of a poetic crown, the highest recognition available at the time. After having sought counsel from Cardinal Colonna (*Familiares* IV, 4), he decided to accept the proposal from Rome, influenced by the tradition of literary coronations in the Capitol. That autumn he went to Naples in order to be examined for an entire month by Robert of Anjou on the idea of the poetic art, on the details of the laurel wreath, and on the aims of poetry. This was how on April 8, 1341, still so early in his literary career (he was still drafting the *De viris illustribus* and the *Africa*, while the *Canzoniere* was still unknown to most), Petrarch received the crown, and for the award it was decided to bring the ancient world back to life with a memorable ceremony that, so it was said, had last been celebrated twelve centuries ago when paying tribute to the Latin poet Statius. In the *Sala del Palazzo del Senato* in the Capitol, he was recognized as a poet "laureate," and he was crowned with a laurel wreath in Rome by King Robert of Anjou as "Magnum poetam et historicum" ["great poet and historian"], he was given the title of *magister*, the appointment of Professor of Poetic Art and History, the formal endorsement of his present and future writings, the bestowal of all rights and privileges enjoyed by other professors of the noble and liberal arts, and he was granted Roman citizenship. It was on this occasion that Petrarch delivered his famous speech on the function of poetry, *Collatio Laureationis*. Its first

section is a discussion of the difficulties of the poetic profession, which can be overcome through love for the craft itself. With citations from Virgil and Cicero, Petrarch explains his handicap in dealing with a contemporary audience, which was less disposed to poetry than in Augustan Rome. He then analyzes the allegorical character of poetry, which allows authors to handle any topic, from physics to morals, under the mask of fiction. Through allegory, a poet can transform reality, but he cannot invent it (the same occurs in his poetry for Laura). Topics appropriate for poetry involve recognition of the glory and the immortality of the fame it bestows. He then cites Virgil, especially the *Eclogues* and the *Aeneid*, in discussing the role of the laurel itself, an evergreen plant that symbolizes eternal glory, especially since it is never struck by lightning.

He then moved to Parma where he stayed through January 1342, when he concluded a rough draft of the *Africa*. Between late 1342 and 1343, he was in Avignon and Valchiusa. At Avignon, he became a close friend of Cola di Rienzo, who happened to be in France on an embassy from the Pope. He shared Petrarch's desire to transfer the Holy See back to Rome; although the Eternal City had long been in decline, they aimed to restore its ancient pride and reputation, hoping for a long-term rejuvenation. In 1343, his daughter Francesca was born to a mother whose identity is unknown, as is that of the mother of his son. He served on an embassy from the Colonna family to Rome and to Naples on behalf of the pope, requesting the liberation of three prisoners from the powerful Pipini family, but in vain. When he returned to Parma, he thought about buying a house and moving there for good, but the idea was soon abandoned. In 1345, he began the composition of the song *Italia mia*, in which he asks political leaders to sacrifice their own personal interests and to devote themselves instead to egalitarian policies; this was in reaction to the deteriorating political situation both in Parma and more broadly throughout Italy, whose *signori* were so consumed by their rivalries that they had become oblivious to the needs of the masses who were growing desperate. This example of political writing in Petrarch would in fact be cited by Machiavelli in the 26th chapter of the *Prince*. Once the

civil strife in Parma became intolerable, Petrarch moved to Verona. There, in the Biblioteca Capitolare, Petrarch found further epistles from Cicero to his brother Quintus, to Atticus, and to Brutus, which he transcribed in his own hand. This discovery gave him a fundamental model of letter writing where he could converse with long-distance friends informally, with a flowing style that would then be further developed in the Renaissance. It proved to be a real gold mine for subsequent studies on Cicero, which inspired Petrarch to write letters of his own to great intellectuals of the past, such as Seneca, Varro, Quintilian, Horace, and Virgil, not to mention Cicero himself.

In Verona, before returning to Provence that autumn, he met Pietro Alighieri, son and commentator of Dante, with whom he maintained cordial relations. Once he was back in Vacluse, he immediately set out for Avignon in order to ask Pope Clement VI to return to Italy. Even though the pope was willing, this was in fact delayed till 1377. In return, the pope offered him in 1346–1347 the positions of Bishop and Papal Secretary, but Petrarch declined, figuring that such a commitment would take away time from his studies and his writing.

As for politics, Petrarch initially gave his full support to the Roman revolution led by Cola di Rienzo, as did the pope, since they hoped it would finally restore the fortunes of the city of Rome. The poet contributed to the election of Cola di Rienzo with a heartfelt letter themed on liberty against tyranny (*Variae*, 48). In 1348 in Parma, Petrarch met and became close friends with Luchino Visconti, *signore* of Milan. But this was the year in which the population of Europe was being decimated by the Black Death, which took many friends of Petrarch, including cardinal Giovanni Colonna, and on April 8 caused the death of Laura.

In 1349, he was appointed canon of the Duomo of Padua by Jacopo II of Carrara, and in 1350, he began a correspondence with Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), and the two stayed in touch for the rest of his life. Boccaccio was constantly encouraging him to read and study Dante, and although Petrarch was not fully convinced to do so, his verses still convey implicit references to Dante

and imply that Petrarch took his friend's advice. During the Jubilee year, Petrarch while on his pilgrimage to Rome to pay his indulgences, stopped in Florence for a brief 48 hours to visit Boccaccio: this will be his only ever stay in the Tuscan city that exiled his father. In 1350–1351, Petrarch mainly resided in Padua at the court of Francesco I of Carrara. Here, in March 1351, Boccaccio visited him as a ambassador of the Commune of Florence, and he offered him a position as a teacher in the Florentine *Studium*. But Petrarch declined and returned to Avignon where he also rejected the position of Apostolic Secretary. His decision however caused tensions with the new pope Innocent VI and led Petrarch back to Italy, for good this time.

In 1353, he settled in Milan at the court of the Visconti, where he would remain until 1361. Giovanni Visconti, Archbishop and *signore* of the city, as well as enemy of Florence, offered him not only hospitality but also a role as ambassador of Visconti policies. Petrarch shuttled between Paris, Venice, and Prague, and he met with Emperor Charles IV in Mantua. In Milan, Petrarch worked on the *Secretum*, the *De otio religioso*, a number of letters from the *Familiars* to the *Seniles*, collections of poetry in Latin (*Epystolae Metricae*) and Vulgar Italian (*Triumphs*), and continued the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*. This period of concentrated intellectual and spiritual development saw him build upon his erudite philological training to produce a new kind of philosophical literature founded upon Neoplatonic and Stoic principles of ethics.

In 1361, he fled the plague, first to Padua and then in 1362 to Venice. The Republic allowed him the use of Palazzo Molin in exchange for a pledge to donate upon his death his entire private library, the largest in Europe, but in 1367, after enduring some fierce accusations from a number of Averroist philosophers, he withdrew his offer. In Venice, he remained until 1368, where he hosted Boccaccio for a while.

He returned to Padua as canon to his friend Francesco I of Carrara; he was given a house in Arquà, into which he moved in 1370. There, he devoted himself almost entirely to revising his works, especially the *Canzoniere* over which he labored throughout his remaining days. During

the night between July 18 and 19, Petrarch died on the eve of his 70th birthday, and he was buried in the town church of Santa Maria Assunta. Similarly to Dante, the story of his sepulture is troubled and mysterious. After his tomb was opened, it was discovered that parts of his presumed corpse are in fact that of a female who died c. 1207. Moreover, his left arm was stolen in the seventeenth century, and his skull too was never recovered.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the late thirteenth century, an age of feudalism and superstition was coming to an end, and the religious experience of a number of Europeans was growing more proactive and personal. After centuries of protracted religious, social, and cultural closure, horizons were once again being broadened intellectually, morally, and politically, and people began to feel more responsible for their actions as part of an organized community. Indeed, the fourteenth century witnessed the development of Humanism, a cultural movement provoked by a new approach to human culture, rehabilitating the intellectual and practical capabilities of human beings with respect to God. Individuals were now reexamining, through philosophy and the arts, their role in both the earthly and the heavenly worlds. They were increasingly looking for answers to the history of human thought; in this way, a new interest in philology was born, fueled by respect and appreciation for literary texts as transmitters of knowledge and human values.

While Dante had already anticipated the value of restoring classical literature, choosing Virgil as his guide in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, Petrarch was rediscovering documents of classical culture that had been preserved by the Church and were kept out of free circulation. When he made his collection of books available to the public, he thus created for the first time the idea of a public library. On both of these points, Petrarch stands out amid the intellectual panorama of the fourteenth century, a guaranteed reference point for the attitude of a Renaissance intellectual. Among the vast number of extant medieval authors, Petrarch more than any other displayed a Humanistic spirit in search of the foundations of human culture,

looking to literature as evidence of the past, especially of the cultural civilization of Latin society. His contribution to the philological study of the Humanities is invaluable, promoting the idea that culture is a convergence of ancient wisdom, literary traditions, and past political institutions.

In his poetry in Vulgar Italian and in his Latin works, Petrarch maintained themes from the medieval tradition, such as aspiring to divine grace through the image of a woman, symbolizing the cosmic energy enclosed in the concept of God and activated through the eyes of the beloved. Even the concept, for example, of a dialogue with oneself represented through the fiction of a conversation with a Church Father – in his own case with Augustine in the *Secretum* – derives from the medieval intellectual perspective as a form of private confession and of respect for theological authority. In both of these aspects, however, there is a decisive departure from the fixed patterns of the Middle Ages in the way in which Petrarch examines himself, exploring his own essence in depth, and refusing to spend all his energy on the impossible attainment of his object of desire. For today's readers, this is the aspect that makes Petrarch feel closest to our own modes of self-expression. While Dante in the *Divine Comedy* embarks on a journey through the vices and virtues of human beings, and while Boccaccio represents in his *Decameron* human society in good and bad, Petrarch analyzes his own soul until he can compose its very biography. His idea of poetry involves entering in contact with the human spirit, with its feelings and its frailties. For this reason, he turned to classical texts that might help him to better understand the evolutionary trajectory of humans in society. This marked a rupture with the past that was still so dependent on religion that it restricted the open discussion of self-awareness and of examination of human attitudes, thoughts, and feelings.

On a linguistic level, he is likewise worthy of the title of Father of Humanism, as he reworked the rather crude Latin that was in vogue in the Middle Ages, raising it to its classical caliber as an elegant language of communication between great minds. Nor should his enormous linguistic contribution to Vulgar Italian be neglected, as he

standardized the written language for centuries, hence his verses were immediately easy to translate into a number of European languages, unlike Dante, whose Italian was for a while considered too complex.

Just like a modern intellectual, in order to devote himself to his own writings, Petrarch looked for patrons who would give him the time and the money to enable him to continue his studies. For this reason, he declined a number of official commissions, and he never pursued influential positions that would detract from his dedication to intellectual activity, or that would set him in opposition to heavyweights both religious and political.

Works

Letters

Petrarch composed a number of letters in Latin, of which some were sent and others were destined to his epistolary collections; his primary objective in all was to transmit an ideal image of himself as an exponent of the new Humanistic culture that communicated through epistolary writings, in accordance with classical models. The letters are particularly useful in conveying his restlessness (*Familiaries*), but even more interesting perhaps are those written in old age (*Seniles*) where he is more open, and he describes himself with humility and abundance of detail. Indeed these are envisioned for a wider audience than the immediate addressees, and they are organized into four collections. The *Familiaries* (*Familiarium rerum libri*) were addressed to friends and acquaintances to whom he would tell the story of his philological discoveries in libraries throughout Europe and in abbeys in Northern Italy; these are 350 letters divided into 24 books, written between 1325 and 1366. The final section of the collection contains letters addressed to great writers from classical antiquity, personal role models such as Homer, Seneca, Cicero, Horace, Virgil, Quintilian, etc. These authors are all conveyed as alive and fully participating in the poet's own times, reborn and rediscovered to take his age into the Renaissance.

The *Seniles* (*Rerum senilium libri*), dedicated to Francesco Nelli known as "Simonides," Prior of the Church of Santi Apostoli in Florence, consist of 126 letters written in the last phase of his life, between 1361 and 1374, the year of his death. They are divided into 17 books and they are conceived as a continuation of the *Familiaries*, interrupted after the death of "Socrates," nickname of the dedicatee Ludwig van Kempen, a Flemish Benedictine monk and music teacher of cardinal Giovanni Colonna in Avignon. This collection, whose structure is the posthumous work of the poet's friends and students, contains the section of letters to Boccaccio.

The *Liber sine nomine* is in 19 letters written between 1342 and 1358, and its addressee's name was omitted from the work for the sake of his security, owing to its polemic argument against the Papal Curia in Avignon. *Epistolae metricae* (1333–1361), 66 letters in hexameters, is on the model of Greek and Latin antiquity, discussing love, literature, and politics. *Variae* or *extravagantes*, 76 letters on different themes in different times rather than an organic whole, were collected by the poet's admirers after his death. These are letters that Petrarch himself excluded from his other books and would rather not have published while he was alive.

De Viris Illustribus

The work *De viris illustribus* consists of 36 short biographies of famous characters from the ancient world. Written in two different editions, the first was of 22 biographies of famous Romans, from Romulus to Cato the Elder, composed between 1338 and 1351; this work too earned its author's title of Poet Laureate, for the text remained faithful to the Humanistic idea of rediscovering the classics, or even more of bringing back to life ancient writers and thinkers. The second edition, defined as "universal," was written c. 1351; its setting was inspired by Augustine's *De civitate Dei*. The last phase, c. 1370, complied with the request by Francesco I of Carrara to cap the series of biographies with famous men linked to Padua. This section was completed after the poet's death by Lombardo della Seta in 1379–1380.

Africa

The *Africa* (begun between 1339, 1342, and 1351–53) consists of 9 books out of 12 projected. It is an epic poem on Scipio and the Second Punic War, modeled on Cicero's *De re publica*, Book VI particularly, which contains the *Somnium Scipionis*. The poem's topic derives from Livy, while the epic inspiration is from Virgil's *Aeneid*. Thanks to this work, and in particular to the classical models, which provided inspiration for both meter and content, Petrarch earned his poetic crowning in Rome (1341) by Robert of Anjou, to whom the poem is dedicated.

Rerum Memorandarum Libri

The *Rerum memorandarum libri* are collections of anecdotes linked to famous characters from past and present, categorized according to the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, strength, and temperance. Begun in 1343, it was abandoned in 1345 and never completed. This collection of historical examples and anecdotes for the purpose of moral education in Latin prose is modeled on the *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri* by Valerius Maximus.

Bucolicum Carmen

The *Bucolicum carmen*, written between 1346–1349 and 1361–1366, is a collection of 12 eclogues, poems in a pastoral setting taking the form of dialogues between allegorical characters who discuss love, morality, and politics following the model of Virgil. We find among the characters, for example, his brother Gherardo (Monico), who urges Petrarch (Silvio) to devote himself to poems on holy themes, and Laura (Dafne), who crowns Petrarch (Stupeo) with a laurel wreath. Other examples include a lament on the death of Robert of Anjou and on the ruins of the Kingdom of Naples; a celebration of the achievements of Cola di Rienzo; a denunciation of the corruption of the Papal Curia in Avignon; the plague; the death of Laura. Mainly because of its complexities in interpretation and its abundance of historical and allegorical references, the *Bucolicum carmen* was already being studied in universities while Petrarch was still alive.

De Vita Solitaria

The *De vita solitaria* (1346, 1353, 1366) is an ethical treatise in two books, which praises solitude as an existential condition that is crucial to a life of contemplation and attainment of intellectual spirituality. Here Petrarch sketches the ideal figure of the sage, which evokes his brother Gherardo after he became a monk.

De Otio Religioso

The *De otio religioso*, begun in 1347 after a visit to Gherardo, was constantly reworked until 1357. It is a treatise in two books on monastic life, similar to the *De vita solitaria*, and it tries to show that pagan life prefigures Christian life.

Psalmi Penitenciales

The *Psalmi penitenciales* are seven prayers of forgiveness in rhyming prose, which express contrition for past sins. They were composed c. 1347–1348, modeled on biblical psalms.

Secretum

The *Secretum*, whose complete title is *De secreto conflict curarum mearum*, is a personal dialogue in three books. A first draft was written in c. 1347, then a second in 1349, and a third in 1353. It is an imaginary dialogue with Augustine, who helps the poet after he has a vision in which Truth offers to heal the evils of his soul. The exchange with Augustine underscores once more in a work of Petrarch the importance of the dialogue with the past brought to life through actual conversation. In Book III, for example, they discuss his love for Laura and his ambition for glory, which Petrarch considers his noblest aspirations, but Augustine interprets them as shackles of the soul which obstruct him in his search for wisdom. As formal models for the *Secretum* Petrarch used the philosophical dialogues of Plato and Cicero, but his ideological model is the *Confessions* of Augustine.

Invective Contra Medicum

The *Invective contra medicum* is a polemical work against a medical doctor of the Papal Curia whose identity Petrarch conceals. Written at a time when Pope Clement VI was ill, it advertises the

superiority of poetry over all spiritual activities, in opposition to the claims of doctors who consider their profession equivalent to a liberal art.

De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae

The *De remediis utriusque fortunae* is an ethical treatise in two books written c. 1354–1366. Each chapter contains a dialogue following the model of the *Secretum* between Reason, Joy, and Hope (Book I), or between Pain and Fear (Book II). The arguments of Reason balance the optimistic or pessimistic excesses to which the soul is driven by its passions. Inspired by a treatise often attributed to Seneca, the *De remediis fortuitorum* was mentioned by Boccaccio in his *Genealogie deorum gentilium* as a work of absolute originality in the genre.

De Sui Ipsius et Multorum Ignorantia

The *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* is another polemical work against four Aristotelians visited by the poet during his stay in Venice, as he rebuts their accusations. It was written c. 1367.

Invectiva Contra Cuiusdam Anonimi Galli Calumnia

The *Invectiva contra cuiusdam anonimi Galli calumnia* is a work of invective against a French monk who supported keeping the papacy in Avignon, while Petrarch continued to advocate recalling the pope, in this case Urban V, back to Rome. It was written c. 1373.

Apart from some *Epistole*, Petrarch wrote only two works in Vulgar Italian: the *Canzoniere*, which is his most important and renowned masterpiece, and the *Trionfi*.

Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta

The project of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* was originally conceived as an organic autobiographical journey that celebrates his love for Laura in two different sections: sonnets 1–263 on the woman's life and 264–366 upon her death. It was composed over an arc that traverses almost the entire life of the poet, from c. 1336 to 1373–1374. His feelings for Laura are the core theme of the work, an unrequited love whose

motivations are debated over the narration of the poems, together with other secondary themes such as criticism of papal corruption in Avignon and, more broadly, contemporary politics. The work opens with a kind of proem that includes the first five sonnets, in which he asks for compassion from his readers for the mistakes of his youth that had kindled in the poet this passion no less deep than, as was ultimately revealed, it was based on an illusion. The second and third sonnets investigate the origin and circumstances of falling in love, while the fourth and fifth pursue the birthplace and significance of the woman's name, which gives rise to a number of linguistic variants that help the poet to amplify his own nomenclature, elevating the person to natural elements essential to life, such as air and poetic glory. The name "laura" appears already in the autograph manuscript tradition (made or commissioned by the poet himself) in lowercase letters, in order to emphasize the Italian wordplay between the proper name and "l'aura," i.e., light breeze and air, crucial to breathing. He plays on the assonance with a poet's laurels ("laurea poetica"), out of which crowns were woven that provided the highest recognition for poets, in memory of Daphne and her metamorphosis into a laurel tree in order to escape Apollo, god of the Sun and of the arts, including poetry. Her name recalls also the dawn ("l'aurora") as the beginning of a new day, and gold (the latinism "l'auro"), which symbolizes not only the precious metal but also the purity and attainment of one's highest aspirations, according to the alchemists. After the proem, the narration proceeds by placing the poet center stage in his role of the young man in love at the mercy of his feelings; he compares the positive and negative aspects of his relationship with the woman, vacillating between the hope and hopelessness that transform the feelings and character of a man. These transformations are rendered in literature with constant references to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, until the author is gradually persuaded that the woman is not exclusively an object of self-indulgent desire, but rather she can also contribute to the salvation of one's soul, and therefore only carnal passion is morally reprehensible. He then moves on to sublimation of this

desire, until concluding with a celebration of the spiritual elevation that can be provided by the love for a woman. This idea derived from Dante was initially difficult for the poet to accept, but it became necessary after sonnet 267, after the woman's death. This second section of the work spans all the author's doubts about the vanity of material objects, and it conveys the need for spirituality as a concrete path to salvation.

Trionfi

And finally come the *Trionfi*, composed from c. 1350 until the poet's death. This is an incomplete short poem in tercets on the model of the *Divine Comedy* of Dante. It is divided into six different Triumphs with Latin titles (*Triumphus Cupidinis*, *Triumphus Pudicitie*, *Triumphus Mortis*, *Triumphus Fame*, *Triumphus Temporis*, *Triumphus Aeternitatis*), and each one is devoted to visions experienced by the poet while he was asleep. In this allegorical work, Petrarch emphasizes once more the fundamental value of poetry, of his love for Laura both alive and dead, and more broadly of Love as a force that conquers all.

Impact and Legacy

Within a few years after the poet's death, "Petrarchism" had already become not only an Italian phenomenon but also a European one. In courts and academies throughout the continent, writers began to copy his expressive forms, especially the genre of the *Canzoniere* understood as a personal and intimate story of the poet, who tells the tale of how he fell in love. In the late fifteenth century, the lyric had once again become all but defined as love poetry, and it is from here that Petrarch became a stable point of reference.

The first rhymers who tried to imitate his style, such as Panfilo Sasso, Antonio Tebaldeo, and Serafino de' Ciminelli (Serafino Aquilano), fell short of his metrical precision and fullness of content, and their final product was closer to an intellectual game than to an authentic artistic expression. More successful results were achieved by the verses of Matteo Maria Boiardo and Iacopo Sannazaro, but

only in the next century did writers such as Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Leone Ebreo managed to associate Petrarch's idealism and tormented spiritual life with the values of Renaissance Neoplatonism. In these writers too, the love for a woman became a path to moral and spiritual elevation, and ultimately attainment of the divine.

After the invention of the printing press, the audience for literature and lyric expanded, both in numbers and in social composition. No longer restricted to a narrow elite, a national marketplace for culture emerged. This diverse audience from both cultural and linguistic points of view, from the South of Italy to the North, required a unifying basis, and through Petrarchism they tried to provide common themes and poetic language to writers and readers who were still tied to heterogeneous local conditions. After the 1530s, the lyric code became standardized under the common denominator of Petrarch, thanks to the publication by Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) of the *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), a dialogue in Vulgar in which he offers Petrarch as a paradigm for every poetic confession and meditation, furnishing theoretical foundations to what had been the spontaneous, improvisational practice of Petrarchism. Bembo proposes Petrarch as a classical model of Vulgar literature throughout Italy, thus making him as much of a point of reference as Greek and Latin authors had been in the past.

A new class of intellectuals in search of identity found it in the poetic language of Petrarch, as did Bembo himself, who in 1530 published his own rhymes in corroboration of his linguistic theories. His rhymes moved beyond sterile imitation, insofar as they avoided Petrarch's structural model, while still borrowing his diction, imagery, and motivations, applying them to different situations than those of the *Canzoniere*. Petrarchism assumed its final shape in a style that was natural, composed, elegant, clear, and harmonious, all corresponding to sixteenth-century classical ideals. These writers, when faced with their own uncertain and confused mortality, turned to Petrarch for a discourse that transcended time.

If his language became a model for all of Italy, his translations inspired all of Europe. In Spain,

followers of Petrarch included greats such as Juan Boscán (1500–1544), Garcilaso della Vega (1503–1536), Luis de Góngora (1561–1627), and Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645); in France, there were Pierre de Ronsard (1524–1585) and Joachim du Bellay (1522–1560); and in England no less than William Shakespeare. In Italy, other than Dante, Petrarch was the indisputable paradigm of musicality in verse, leading to failed attempts at imitation, in which the meanings of words were sacrificed to their melody, as in the case of seventeenth-century melodrama.

In the Renaissance, reading Petrarch was a cornerstone of one's poetic and more broadly intellectual formation. It is worth keeping in mind that at that time, knowledge was passed down through words, either one's own or those of other writers past and present. For this reason, Petrarchism can be defined as a rewriting of Petrarch, preserving both the intellectual and the spiritual processes of the poet. Subsequent generations have thus understood Petrarch more as a state of being than merely a love poet. For them, he came to signify above all the art of translating thoughts into writing with a style that was both simple and cultivated.

Petrarch, in this sense, was more than a poet or a writer: he provided a real *exemplum* of an intellectual humanist, able to infuse into his own work his love for literature, a refined sense of politics, and the practical value of learning. The dissemination of knowledge and the rediscovery of the classics characterized not only his writings but all his intellectual work, offering a combination of philology and philanthropy that could serve as an example for posterity.

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- [Boccaccio, Giovanni](#)
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- [Humanism](#)
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Petrarch

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Petro de Torres Ramilae

► [Torres Rámila, Pedro de](#)

Peurbach, Georg of

► [Peurbach, Georg of](#)

Peurbach, Georg of

Born: 1423, Peurbach

Died: 1461, Vienna

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Abstract

The teacher of Regiomontanus, Georg of Peurbach was one of the beginners in a thorough process of modernization of the traditional mathematical astronomy.

Alternate Names

[Peurbach, Georg of](#)

Biography

Georg of Peurbach was born in the village of Peurbach (or Peuerbach), near Linz, Austria. He matriculated at the University of Vienna in 1446 and in 1453 was enrolled in the Faculty of Arts. Between 1448 and 1453 he traveled through France, Germany, and Italy (especially in the Republic of Venice). Peurbach's interest in astronomy matured during this period by reading the works of Johann of Gmunden (c. 1380–1442) and by epistolary contacts with Giovanni Bianchini (c. 1410–c. 1469) and

Nicholas of Cusa (c. 1401–1464). In the 1450s, Peurbach accepted positions as court astrologer to the King Ladislaus V of Hungary and, later, to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III.

In 1450, while teaching at the University of Vienna, Peurbach met Johann Müller of Königsber, or Regiomontanus (1436–1476), who was one of his pupils. Within just a few years, the two formed a tight astronomical collaboration. Their observations of comets and eclipses made them aware that the existing astronomical tables were unreliable.

Along with several humanistic essays, in 1454 Peurbach completed the *Theoricae novae planetarum*. The work (published by Regiomontanus around 1474) was written to amend the so-called “Theorica Planetarum”, a thirteenth-century treatise erroneously attributed to Gerardo of Cremona (1114–1187). Peurbach represents the geocentric cosmos as a system of solid spheres carrying the three inferior planets (Moon, Mercury, and Venus), the Sun, and the three superior planets (Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) around the immovable Earth. Inspired by the *Liber de mundo et coelo* – the Latin translation of an astronomical treatise of Ibn al-Haytham (c. 965–1039), who in turn derived his theories from the *Hypotheses on the Planets* of Claudius Ptolemy (second century) – Peurbach describes each planetary sphere as a compound of concentric and eccentric orbs. In this way, he provides a physical explanation for the planetary movements theoretically described in Ptolemy's masterwork, the *Almagest*. Due to its clearness, the *Theoricae* was commented upon and reedited more than 50 times up to the seventeenth century and also translated into French, Italian, and Hebrew.

Completed around 1459, Peurbach's *Tabulae eclipsium* (published in 1514) was in a minimal part the result of new observations. The work is based on the same astronomical parameters of the so-called “Alphonsine Tables”, dating back to the mid-thirteenth century. Nevertheless, the *Tabulae eclipsium* has the remarkable advantage of providing much more user-friendly computational procedures.

Peurbach's and Regiomontanus's program to renovate astronomy received strong encouragement from Johannes Bessarion (1408–1472), Archbishop of Nicaea, who arrived in Vienna in 1460 for a diplomatic mission. When the three met, Bessarion proclaimed his intention of promoting the writing of both a new translation and an abridged version of the *Almagest*. Peurbach had a good knowledge of Ptolemy's masterwork, mainly through its two Latin translations prepared by Gerardo of Cremona and George of Trebizonde (1395–1473). He immediately agreed to personally take over the burden of preparing the abridgment. In addition, Peurbach and Regiomontanus made plans to follow Bessarion on a trip to Italy. Their aim was to study the Greek astronomical manuscripts which the Archbishop had with him and other manuscripts that might be found in that country.

Unfortunately, Peurbach died in 1461 before starting the trip. At that time he had prepared only the first six chapters of the *Almagest* abridgment. In fact, the *Epitome in Almagestum Ptolemei* was completed by Regiomontanus in 1463 and published in 1496. These first six chapters are actually for the most part a readaptation of another thirteenth-century text, the *Almagesti minoris libri VI*. Notwithstanding such limitations, up to the early seventeenth century, the *Epitome* became one of the primary reference texts used by scholars interested in Ptolemaic geocentric astronomy.

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- [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)
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Pharmacology in the Renaissance

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Abstract

In addition to practical handbooks, academic medicine in the sixteenth century offered various metaphysical accounts of the nature and causal powers of medicaments. One important strand of thought tried to reduce pharmacological powers to elementary qualities and their modifications in mixtures. In this context, the distinction between primary, secondary, and tertiary qualities was discussed. Another strand of thought ascribed so-called pharmacological powers "of the whole substance" to celestial influences. A third strand of thought discussed critically the prospects of applying emergentism – the view that from complex combinations of elementary qualities, new substantial forms with irreducible causal powers could arise – to the analysis of medicaments. While this third strand of thought faced serious ontological difficulties – such as the question of how something substantial could arise from something qualitative and the question of how unities could arise from multiplicities – some Renaissance pharmacologists adopted emergentism for particular groups of medicaments such as purgative drugs.

Introduction

Renaissance pharmacology produced a wealth of practical handbooks that listed medical properties of minerals and plants and described procedures for the preparation of medicaments (see, e.g., Lodovici 1540; Mattioli 1569; Ulmus 1597; see Palmer 1985). Paracelsus and the Paracelsians combined the practical aspects of “chymical” medicine with the stipulation of occult entities (such as heavenly spirit, demons, and “signatures”) and of powers deriving from them (such as “magnetic” sympathies and homeopathic causation). Within academic medicine, on which the present entry will focus, some pharmacological work incorporated considerations concerning the metaphysical analysis of the nature of medicaments and their modes of operation. These metaphysical views were still very much under the influence of a distinction going back to ancient medicine: the effects of medicaments that were taken to be explainable by the elementary qualities, their mutual modification in mixture, and the combination of these modified (or “tempered”) elementary qualities were distinguished from effects of medicaments that were taken not to be explicable in this manner. Galen coined the expression that a medicament of the latter kind possesses the capacity of “altering by its whole substance” (see Copenhaver 1991). There was unanimous agreement that some pharmacological potencies could be explained in a reductive way – a way that does not invoke any causal powers in addition to the causal powers of elements modified through their interaction – although there was some disagreement concerning the question of whether or not the potencies brought about by these “primary potencies” should be distinguished into different categories themselves. By contrast, there was fundamental disagreement concerning the question of whether or not pharmacological actions of the whole substance could be subsumed under a reductionist pattern of explanation. Most thinkers who advocated a non-reductive analysis of pharmacological potencies of the whole substance adopted various theories of celestial causation. But emergentism – the view that the temperament can bring forth novel causal

properties that cannot be analyzed as combinations of the causal properties of the constituents of a composite – was clearly perceived as a possible theoretical alternative, which in some cases, in spite of critical responses, was adopted by sixteenth-century thinkers.

Medicaments and Reductionism

In Renaissance pharmacology, the view was widely shared that some potencies of medicaments could be understood as being identical with combinations of primary qualities – i.e., the qualities hot, cold, wet, and dry. According to this view, many medical powers could be understood as secondary qualities that consist in the mutual modification and combination of primary qualities in a mixture. However, there was some disagreement as to whether or not this distinction should, within a reductionist framework, be supplemented by the concept of tertiary qualities. Guilielmus Puteanus (Guillaume Dupuis), professor of medicine at the University of Grenoble, for instance, surmises that since in all effects that can be explained in a reductive way, only tempered primary qualities are causally efficacious; the concept of secondary qualities is sufficient to capture all effects of these medicaments (Puteanus 1552, 22, 25–26). By contrast, Girolamo Mercuriale (1530–1606), a medical humanist and physician to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (see Siraisi 2003; Arcangeli and Nutton 2008), gives a differentiated account of what he calls “secondary potencies” (*secundae facultates*) and “tertiary potencies” (*tertia facultates*). Examples of secondary potencies are the capacities of medicaments to make parts of the organism denser and harder (or the opposite) (Mercuriale 1590, 11v). Examples of tertiary potencies are the capacities of medicaments to split up gall stones, to move urine, to draw menstrual blood, or to purge the lung or the seed (Mercuriale 1590, 17v). In both cases, what is causally efficient, according to Mercuriale, are the tempered elementary qualities – in this sense he says that the secondary and tertiary potencies “have nothing new.” However, he notes a significant difference: The secondary potencies can be

used for a variety of different purposes, and, in this sense, they are indeterminate with respect to a particular goal. By contrast, the tertiary potencies are specific to particular conditions of particular organs, and, in this sense, they are determinate with respect to a particular goal (Mercuriale 1590, 11v, 17v). Although Mercuriale does not mention the origin of this distinction, it can be found in one of Avicenna's smaller works, *De viribus cordis*, which Mercuriale mentions in a different context (Mercuriale 1590, 21r). Avicenna expresses the distinction as follows: "The qualities that are attributed to medicaments with respects to the impression that they make upon the body as beneficial to it remain to be dealt with: some of them are taken to derive from absolute actions, some of them are taken to derive from actions relating to special parts of the body" (Avicenna 1608, 341). By implication, "absolute" actions are to be understood as actions that occur in various body parts.

In spite of the scope of such reductive explanations of pharmacological phenomena, Puteanus and Mercuriale believe that not all effects of medicaments can be explained in this way. This is why Puteanus adopts a theory of celestial causation (see section "[Medicaments and Celestial Causation](#)") and Mercuriale adopts emergentism to explain the occurrence of these effects (see section "[Medicaments and Emergentism](#)"). Diverging from such hybrid accounts, some Renaissance thinkers expanded reductionism also to pharmacological actions of the whole substance. One of these thinkers is the Madrid-based physician and philosopher Francisco Valles (1524–1592, see Martin 2002), who regards this type of action as an outcome of the combination of similarity and elementary powers. He invokes similarity as an explanation for the specific actions of purgative medicaments on determinate body fluids (Valles 1582, 363). At the same time, he concedes that similitude cannot explain the direction of action since a medicament is no more similar to a determinate body fluid than this body fluid is similar to the medicament (*ibid.*). His solution is to suggest that what is causally efficient in attraction is elementary heat and that the direction of action can be explained by the presence of greater heat in one

of the relata (*ibid.*, 364). As he argues, similarity is nevertheless causally relevant. In his view, similarity does not concern elementary qualities but rather qualities such as thickness and thinness, friability, and its contrary (*ibid.*) – generally the qualities that follow what he calls the "mode of a substance" (*ibid.*) and what we now would call its structural properties. Valles's thought seems to be that greater heat inherent in the medicament can become operative only when the structural properties of the medicament resemble those of the body fluid upon which it acts. The concept of qualities that follow the mode of a substance brings in a sense in which only the combination of the causal powers of an elementary quality with structural properties that belong to an entire material compound produces pharmacological actions of the whole substance.

The most sustained chain of arguments in favor of a reductionist account of pharmacological actions of the whole substances can be found in the work of the Heidelberg-based physician Thomas Erastus (1524–1583). Erastus has recently received considerable attention as a defender of Aristotelian natural philosophy against alchemy and Paracelsian "chymistry" (see Newman 2006, 45–65), and also his role as a public figure in the complex confessional development of the Palatinate has been studied in detail (see Gunnoe 2011). For present purposes, his analysis of so-called "occult" qualities deserves attention. Erastus accepts two kinds of occult qualities: (1) those that are due to substantial forms and (2) those that are due to the temperament alone. An example that he mentions for the first kind of occult quality is the capacity of the torpedo fish to numb the hand that touches it (Erastus 1574, 25). This, however, is in his view not the kind of occult potency that is observed in medicaments. The occult potencies of medicaments, as he maintains, "can be reduced to" the potencies of the temperament of elementary qualities (Erastus 1574, 31).

Erastus gives a series of arguments for his claim that "the potencies of medicaments are not properties of substantial forms" (Erastus 1574, 23). The first of these arguments could be dubbed the "Dependence on Life Argument":

These qualities that depend in this way on form and are in the composite through the form are present when the form is present but when the form disappears, they must simultaneously disappear. For if they could inhere in a subject that is not informed by this form, they would not at all depend on this form. (Erastus 1574, 13)

Thus, if qualities that arise from forms depend on the persistence of life, qualities that persist after the death of a living being cannot be thought of as qualities that arise from forms. But this is exactly what can be observed in plant-based medicaments, since it is possible to separate by chemical procedures medically efficient plant parts; hence, their pharmacological powers cannot depend on the substantial form of the plant (Erastus 1574, 14; 18).

A second argument that Erastus uses could be called the “Variation of Powers Argument.” According to this argument, qualities that arise from substantial forms should be found in all individuals with substantial forms of the same species. But with respect to the medical powers of plant parts, there is variation from individual to individual (Erastus 1574, 14, 22). Hence, Erastus concludes that these medical powers cannot be essential, form-related qualities (Erastus 1574, 26). An extreme case of variation is the entire loss of powers: poison and medicaments can lose their power through long-standing acquaintance of the body with them; however, according to the conception of forms as essences, the powers of the substantial forms cannot diminish over time in this way (Erastus 1574, 15). The implication seems to be that a power that can be lost through mere long-standing acquaintance cannot be an essential quality that derives from a substantial form.

A third argument that Erastus uses could be called the “Activity Dependence Argument.” According to this argument, potencies of substantial forms follow immediately from substantial forms; potencies of medicaments, by contrast, need an external principle to become active. This follows from the fact that medicaments need to come into contact with the heat of a living body to become active. But, as Erastus argues, this is something that they have in common with all faculties that follow from the properties of matter

and the temperament alone (Erastus 1574, 27–28). Finally, a fourth argument could be dubbed the “Body Dependence Argument.” This argument starts from the assumption that potencies of substantial forms are most active when their body is in perfect shape; by contrast, it can be observed that the potencies of medicaments often presuppose the dissolution of natural bodies, for instance, in the preparation of pharmacological powders, and that many medicaments operate more strongly once they are ground to powder (Erastus 1574, 28–29).

Taken together, these arguments lead Erastus to a reductionist account of the notion of pharmacological actions of the whole substance: “we say that the whole substance acts because it acts not only through one or two qualities that dominates over the other qualities in mixtures but rather by the forces of the whole matter composed and mixed of so-and-so many parts of such-and-such a nature” (Erastus 1574, 46). As he explains: “We understand by ‘whole substance’ and ‘whole temperament’ not only the temperature brought about by the mutual action and passion of primary qualities considered, as it is called, abstractly, but rather together with the subject matter” (Erastus 1574, 47). Thus, in Erastus’s view, the only sense of wholeness required to explicate the notion of pharmacological actions of the whole substance is captured by the view that these actions involve the causal powers of the entirety of elementary qualities entering a temperament, plus the view that these powers never occur outside a material substrate.

Medicaments and Celestial Causation

One of the alternatives to such reductionist accounts of pharmacological actions of the whole substance invoked celestial influences on medicaments. For instance, in his treatment of purgative medicaments, Puteanus refers to the authority of a thirteenth-century pharmacological work ascribed to the Arabic physician Johannes Mesue (Yuhanna ibn Masawayh; on the authorship of this text and its influence, see De Vos 2013). Puteanus follows commentators on

Mesue such as Mondinus de Leuciis (Mondino dei Luzzi, ca. 1275–1326) and Johannes Costaeus (Giovanni Costeo, 1528–1603) when he interprets the nature of celestial influence that Mesue has in mind as theory concerning the celestial origin of forms (Puteanus 1552, 37). The relevant passage from Mesue reads as follows:

A medicament is purgative, and it acts upon the matter that has to be purged not due to the temperament nor in the way in which two contraries act upon each other, insofar as they are contraries, nor in the way one of two similar substances attract and draw out each other, nor like a heavy body moving downwards and a light body moving upwards, but because such a power originates in the heavens. (Mesue 1552, fol. 2v)

In his commentary on this passage, Mondinus maintains that Mesue ascribes the powers “of the fourth degree” to the specific form, for instance, the power that draws out a particular body fluid (Mesue 1552, fol. 5v). As Mondinus explains, “this specific form is nothing other than something added to the complexion by means of which it exerts an operation, such that even if the complexion is not the primary principle of occult operation, it nevertheless supports the occult action of this solving medicament” (ibid., fol. 6r). In particular, Mondino invokes the notion of specific form to explain why the medicament not only acts upon a determinate body fluid but also draws this fluid out on a determinate path and deposits it at a particular place (ibid.). This conception of the role of specific forms is taken up in Costaeus’s commentary (ibid., fol. 2v). Moreover, Costaeus gives the following characterization of the relation between similarity and celestial powers in the workings of purgative medicaments: “This attraction has to be ascribed to similarity not as an efficient cause, but as a *causa sine qua non*: such that the action is primarily referred to as being received from the heavens, from whose womb both the forms and the properties of forms emanate” (ibid., fol. 4v). Given the standard understanding of emanative causation as a process in which the effect instantiates in less perfect for the essence of the cause, such a conception of the origin of the forms of medicaments and their potencies implies that such

pharmacological potencies are themselves celestial potencies inhering in material composites.

Perhaps the most spirited defense of the idea of celestial causation in the origin of the forms of medicaments and of living beings can be found in the work of Jean Fernel (ca. 1497–1558). Fernel maintains that “the single Form of the Heaven comprehends in potency all forms, be they already existent or simply possible, of living beings, plants, stones, and metals, and as if pregnant with innumerable forms, begets and spawns from Herself everything...” (Fernel [1548] 2005, 111). Thus, mixed bodies such as metals, stones, plants, and animals “draw their essence of their form from heaven” (Fernel [1548] 2005, 315). He is explicit about the view that subcelestial bodies derive their form from the heavens because the motions of subcelestial bodies are influenced by the movements of celestial bodies (Fernel [1548] 2005, 307). Fernel holds that the multiplicity of movements of subcelestial bodies derives from the fact that the inner heavenly spheres rotate in a direction opposite to the rotation of the extreme sphere (Fernel [1548] 2005, 309). His view of celestial causation is combinatorial: the complex motions of composite bodies on earth are the result of the combination of motions of heavenly bodies. Moreover, to explain how the motion of distant heavenly bodies is communicated to composite bodies on earth and how the transmission of motion confers substantiality upon composite bodies Fernel invokes an entity called “*spiritus*” that he regards not only as a force that pervades the universe but also as a subtle, material medium (see Clericuzio 1988, 36–39; Bono 1990, 356–364; Dessi 1995; Hirai 2005, 88–96). The *spiritus* not only transmits celestial motions in a way such that composite bodies on earth would be purely passive but also transmits something of the powers of heavenly bodies to bodies on earth, such that the simple forms of composite bodies become principles of activity of their own (Fernel [1548] 2005, 359). Fernel maintains that the divine spirit “distributes itself” into the whole of a composite body and “despatches and installs the simple form into the prepared matter” (Fernel [1548] 2005, 319).

This can be seen as the relevant background for Fernel's analysis of pharmacological actions of the whole substance. Fernel's pharmacological conceptions are developed most fully in his *Therapeutics*, where he applies a variety of explanatory principles. For instance, he maintains that purgative medicament work sometimes by means of attraction by means of heat, sometimes by means of vacuity, and sometimes by means of similitude of the whole substance (Fernel 1585, 371). Thus, secondary potencies such as relaxation and attenuation, attraction, repulsion, and dissolution are given a reductionist account that points to the effect of the tempering of the elementary qualities on a body part (Fernel 1585, 388–389). Hence, in all such secondary potencies, what is causally efficient are still the tempered primary qualities. By contrast, action by means of similitude, in Fernel's view, cannot be explained in such a reductionist way: "This similitude does not belong to temperaments but to substances" (Fernel 1585, 371). Fernel compares such potencies of the whole substance with the forces of the magnet, which has "the power to actually attract iron through a celestial potency, which is beyond the elements" (Fernel 1585, 393). He claims that this kind is also the "tertiary potency" of medicaments, which "does not arise primarily and by itself from the temperament nor from matter but from the total substance of a thing and its form" (Fernel 1585, 393).

Medicaments and Emergentism

While the reduction of some (or all) pharmacological potencies to primary qualities and the alternative explanation of some pharmacological potencies through celestial causation were clearly the dominant explanatory patterns in the Renaissance, emergentism was clearly perceived as a possible third theoretical option. One context in which this becomes clear is Fernel's detailed criticism of Alexander of Aphrodisias' emergentism about medicaments and the soul (on the reception of Alexander in Renaissance philosophy of mind, see Kessler 2011). Fernel's literary figure Brutus

articulates the emergentist position of Alexander of Aphrodisias as follows:

[T]he form of a composite is a power, derived from the tempering and mingling of the bodies substrate to it; the preparation actually comes from the mingling of the substrate, and the potentiality itself, when it has attained completeness, becomes an entelechy, that is, a perfection, so as to be the form of the thing. Thus, I consider that a form develops from the potentiality of the matter, because the potentiality itself passes over into the form in an unbroken sequence, and becomes action. (Fernel [1548] 2005, 167–169)

Alexander's application of this line of thought to medicaments is made explicit when Brutus remarks about form:

[I]t appears to emerge from the temperament of the body, like a simple force originating from the temperament and concordant harmony of substrate bodies . . . [I]n this way we understand that the power of mixed theriac or of a medicated drink develops from the mingled and tempered powers of simples, and this accords with Galen's attitude too. (Fernel [1548] 2005, 175)

Fernel's literary figure here accurately represents Alexander's position. According to Alexander, the soul "is the power and form that supervenes on the blend of bodies in a particular proportion, not the proportion or composition of the blend . . . The soul . . . is not a balance, but the power [that supervenes] upon the balance: it cannot be without this balance, but is not [the same] as it" (Alexander of Aphrodisias 2008, p. 104 [*De anima* 25.2–8]; Alexander of Aphrodisias 2012, 51). As Victor Caston has argued, talk about supervenience should here be understood as amounting to the claim that mental states cannot change without a change of bodily states, thereby exactly matching the contemporary concept of supervenience (Caston 1997, 348–349). Moreover, Caston emphasizes that, for Alexander, the soul possesses causal powers that are more than the aggregates of the causal powers of the elements (*ibid.*, 349–350). Likewise, Alexander points out that some medicaments possess powers that arise from their temperament, and since this remark stems from the context of his criticism of the harmony theory of the soul, the implication again seems to be that these are powers that go

beyond the powers inherent in the harmony of elementary qualities (Alexander of Aphrodisias 2008, p. 104 [*De anima* 24.24–29]).

Fernel rejects emergentism due to two problems. The first problem could be called the “substantiality problem.” Fernel is aware that Alexander regards forms of composites as substances while at the same time regarding the forms of elements as belonging to the category of qualities (Fernel [1548] 2005, 147; see Alexander of Aphrodisias 2008, 70–72). However, Fernel’s spokesperson Eudoxus argues that Alexander faces a problem: “No accident can really accomplish the essence of a substance; in the same way, what some call the essential difference between things cannot be supplied from an accident, because an accident could not alter the essence of a natural thing” (Fernel [1548] 2005, 153). Thus, neither saying that the emerging form is a quality nor saying that a substantial form can emerge from qualities will be satisfactory. The second problem – call it the “Simplicity Problem” – is developed by juxtaposing quotations from Alexander’s treatment of elements and from his treatment of composites. On the one hand, Alexander writes: “Simple bodies which have a simple substrate, have taken on a simple form and nature. But those in which the substrate is not simple, but is already some body, or a composite: in them the form is more perfect, with more prominent and complex embellishment. And deservedly so, for the form which is in the matter and the substrate contributes something to the form of things that are composite” (Fernel [1548] 2005, 163, Alexander of Aphrodisias 2008, 74–76). On the other hand, Alexander adds a little later: “The multitude of forms, and their diverse mingling, can contribute a reasonable cause of change in substrate bodies” (Fernel [1548] 2005, 163; Alexander of Aphrodisias 2008, 76). Brutus comments on the latter passage: “Does not this say clearly that the forms of mixed bodies are themselves mixed too, and from them springs a form of the whole, to be itself composite?” (Fernel [1548] 2005, 163). Eudoxus is not satisfied: “[T]he simple form of a whole composite has to be single, and being different from the forms of the simple items and the

parts, can constrain these forms, unspoilt and intact, into a whole, though they would otherwise perish” (Fernel [1548] 2005, 165). As Eudoxus argues, a mere composite of substantial forms could not possess simplicity (Fernel [1548] 2005, 181) and therefore also could not possess new causal powers (Fernel [1548] 2005, 187).

Mercuriale adopts a different version of emergentism. He holds that the “potencies of the fourth degree” (*quartae facultates*) arise from the substantial form of medicaments (Mercuriale 1590, 20r). He ascribes to Averroes the view that “specific forms follow their own temperament, and therefore where their own temperament is weakened, also the power of the specific form is diminished, which is why, when in mixture the heat of gummi-resina is decreased by the coldness of camphor, consequently also the purgative power and what is adverse for us is decreased . . .” (Mercuriale 1590, 63r). The relevant sense of “following from” that Mercuriale has in mind is plausibly an emergentist one that involves the assumption of new causal powers since otherwise the contrast that he draws between potencies of the second and third degree that do not possess new causal powers (see above, section “[Medicaments and Reductionism](#)”) and potencies of the fourth degree would be pointless.

Perhaps the most fully articulated version of pharmacological emergentism can be found in the work of the Tübingen-based physician and natural philosopher Jacob Schegk (1511–1587). As in Avicenna’s version of emergentism, not all causal factors operative in the generation of substantial forms and their potencies in Schegk’s natural philosophy are potencies of matter. Most notably, Schegk uses the term “innate heat” (*calidum nativum*, *thermos emphytos*) to denote a kind of non-elementary heat operative in the generation of animate beings (on Schegk’s account of the generation of living beings, see Hirai 2011, chapter 3). In Schegk’s view, innate heat does not emerge from elementary qualities but rather derives from the (non-elementary) celestial bodies (Schegk 1585, 294). At the same time, he maintains that innate heat should not be regarded as the primary cause of generation but rather as one cause among others (Schegk 1540, 15r). Moreover, he does not

characterize this kind of heat as something corporeal but rather as a quality:

Because innate heat is a quality, it must necessarily inhere in its proper subject, which is that which, being of the same genus due to mixture, finally underlies the substantial form as the ultimate or proper matter. Before this heat is perfect, in ultimate matter, form will not be in it . . . Hence, simultaneously with ultimate matter the form arises and, simultaneously with it, it perishes, in such a way, however, that innate heat is a proper quality of the ultimate matter which is the proper subject of the nascent form. (Schegk 1580, sig. I5iiiiv)

Thus, innate heat for Schegk is a quality that is one of the causal factors that play a role in the emergence of forms from a suitably prepared portion of matter.

In line with such a conception, Schegk maintains that both inanimate forms and animate forms depend on the mixture of elements: “In nature, there is no essential potency, either manifest or hidden, without a natural potency or impotency that arises in natural things due to the mixture of the four elements – mixtures that are coming to be and ceasing to be as the instrumental causes of natural potencies” (Schegk 1585, 66). As he explains, “[w]e call an instrumental cause a cause due to which substances and their properties are generated and without which neither substances nor their properties can be saved from corruption” (ibid., 88). To illustrate the way in which the emergent potencies depend on matter, Schegk uses the phenomenon of plant degeneration – the process by means of which a cultivar reverts back to its corresponding wild variety. He interprets this phenomenon as an instance of species change: A change in natural potencies modifies the essential potencies of the seed and, hence, the “essential form” of the seed (ibid., 85). The relation between the instrumental causes and the essential form generated by them is characterized as a supervenience relation: the properties of forms vary with the variation of the natural potencies of the composites on which they depend.

Moreover, he characterizes the relation between instrumental causes and forms as a relation in which something substantial is generated out of something non-substantial. This becomes clear when he notes that the faculty by means of

which out of a non-substance a substance is generated as a faculty that differs from faculties that are always in the process of becoming (Schegk 1550, 144). As he expresses it, it is a faculty “that can all at once actually change and that is as a whole capable of exercising its whole activity without motion” (ibid., 143). This implies that something genuinely new is generated. Moreover, in contrast to ordinary changes that take place successively, the generation of substantial forms here is described as a momentary event. The emergence relation thereby is characterized as an instance of synchronic material causation.

Schegk also considers the role of the emergent forms and their potencies in downward causation. He maintains that the temperament of the mixture determines the substantial form, which in turn determines the further accidents that belong to the natural thing (Schegk 1585, 26). In particular, diachronic downward causation is described as being relevant for the generation of plant-based medicaments that act by their whole substance. In the first instance, downward causation affects the temperament of elementary qualities: “The soul of rhubarb is the cause of proper and ordinary proportions of elementary qualities without which rhubarb could not have its forces and potencies” (ibid., 89). But given the potency of the temperament of generating substantial forms, this change of temperament also can bring with it the generation of the substantial form of a plant part. Thus, the juice of rhubarb “receives its form from the soul and can subsist without the soul” (ibid., 90). This is why such medicaments act by their whole substance: “Forms are the causes and instruments of the preparation of elementary qualities, such that faculties arise in them when they change our body with respect to entelechy . . .” (ibid., 29). For example, water-hemp and absinth do not make our body dry and hot not because they are dry and hot but because they have a potency that derives from their substantial form that constitutes their essence (ibid., 30). Moreover, as he explains, when the soul produces posterior and perfect forms in similar parts, the previous forms of these parts are thereby not abolished. Rather, the posterior form existentially depends on the previous forms such that, if the previous forms were

abolished, the more perfect form would perish as well. This is what Schegk has in mind when he says that the previous forms stand in the relation of mediate matter to the perfect forms (ibid., 42). Diachronic downward causation therefore is described as a process of perfection of previously existing forms (ibid., 43).

Finally, this conception of a circle of causation is used to explain why the prior forms persist when the posterior forms are destroyed: even if the posterior forms are required for the changes in the physiology from which the modifications of the prior forms emerge, these modifications persist as long as their physiological basis persists (ibid., 44). In particular, this applies to the pharmacological powers of plant parts: even when the vegetative soul perishes, the substantial forms of the parts of the plant can persist (ibid., 45). Emergent plant souls thus are understood as one of the causal factors that, through downward causation upon their material substrate, lead to the emergence of the substantial forms of plant parts that can survive the death of the plant and that explain the powers of medicaments that act by their whole substance.

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Philagres

► [Philagrios, Joseph](#)

Philagrios, Joseph

Born: Candia c.1335

Died: Candia c.1400

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Abstract

Joseph Philagrios was a Byzantine scholar of the fourteenth century from Crete who wrote against the rapprochement between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. He was also a copyist of manuscripts.

Synonyms

[Philagres](#)

Biography

Joseph Philagrios was born in Crete when the island was under the Venetian occupation. His original name was John. He studied rhetoric,

logic, and ethics probably in the Pandidakterion at Constantinople. Although he had a strong interest in Aristotelian philosophy, he studied Plato, Porphyry, Antisthenes, Philoponus, and Ammonius. After his studies, Philagrios returned to Crete. For a short period of time, he stayed in Candia and opposed the Venetian authorities on religious issues. Then he moved to Mount Cophinas, south of Candia, where he built the monastery of the Three Holy Hierarchs. In the monastery, he incorporated a school for religious and secular education. His reputation as a scholar and teacher led a lot of students to the monastery, where Philagrios taught philosophy, theology, grammar, medicine, and astronomy. In addition, he created a scriptorium. His students and associates copied ancient codices and he personally wrote the marginalia. After his death, the school declined and was finally closed down. Philagres got engaged in the intense debate between Greek Orthodox and supporters of the Latin Church, which tormented the Greek-speaking regions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He blamed Demetrius Cydones and Emmanuel Calecas for their positions concerning the union of the two Churches. Philagrios worked together with Joseph Vryenios, Neilos Damilas, and Anthemos, the bishop of Athens, in order to repel the offensiveness of the pro-Latin party. His oration “Against the Latins” (*Ὁ κατὰ τῶν Λατίνων δικανικός*) comprises in an excellent manner the basic arguments of the Byzantine polemical literature. Calecas replied and accused Philagrios that he was ignorant and “blind,” thus blinding his students. In addition to the religious texts, Philagrios produced commentaries on the works of Aristotle, especially the *Categories*.

Impact and Legacy

For many centuries, most of his works had been attributed to Marcus Eugenicos. Philagrios’ work is best preserved in a manuscript, which is been kept in the *Angelicum* Library in Rome. In addition, his works are included in codices

that are preserved in Bucharest, Paris, Brussels, and the Greek island of Andros.

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Philaretus

► [Peter of Candia](#)

Philargis, Petros

► [Peter of Candia](#)

Philargis, Petrus

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Philargus

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Philelfus, Franciscus

► [Filelfo, Francesco](#)

Philology, Renaissance

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Abstract

Philology (from the ancient Greek φίλος “love” and λόγος “word”) is a branch of literary criticism that studies languages in written sources. Classical philology is concerned with the study of literary texts written in Latin and ancient Greek and originated in the libraries of Alexandria in the fourth century BCE. After a marked blossoming in the first century, this discipline suffered a slow but unstoppable process of decay throughout late antiquity and Middle Ages. Italian scholars in the late thirteenth century resumed this critical approach and sharpened its tools. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, they had many emended editions of ancient texts previously thought to be lost and helped make them available to European scholars (see Contini 1977; Pasquali 1920, 1934; Peck 1911; Reynolds and Wilson 1968; Timpanaro 1963; Turner 2014).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

A restricted circle of intellectuals who gathered in Padua in the second half of the thirteenth century showed an unprecedented interest in classical poetry and actively contributed to the rediscovery of such neglected literary genres as tragedy (see Billanovich 1953, 1976, 1985, 1990, 2002; Hyde

1966; Novati 1922; Sambin 1952; Weiss 1970; Witt 2000). Among these prehumanists, the jurist Lovato Lovati (1241–1309) played the most pre-eminent role (see Collodo 1985; Polizzi 1985; Kohl 2006; Weiss 1970; Witt 2000). Lovati's poetic talent, best demonstrated in his *Epistole metriche*, did not earn him a place among the Three Crowns nor among the future generations of humanists. Nevertheless, Lovato's frequent quotations of classical texts testify to his familiarity with Horace's *Odes*, Statius' *Silvae*, Tibullus's poems, and Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* 150 years before Poggio Bracciolini claimed the rediscovery of this text. Another intellectual from Padua shared with Lovato this same passion for the Classical world: Geremia da Montagnone (ca. 1255–1321). Unlike Lovato, Geremia never composed verses and remained a devoted jurist. His *Compendium Moraliū Notabilium*, however, demonstrates a marked familiarity with Catullus, Martial, and many texts thought to be lost, including Ovid's *Ibis* and Seneca's tragedies (see Bologna 1986; Ullman 1973; Marangon 1977). The *Compendium*, a massive work in 25 books, comprises five sections (*De religione*, *De iustitia*, *De prudentia*, *De temperantia et voluptatibus*, and *De solitudine*), each of which includes a vast collection of quotations from not only biblical and classical texts, but also patristic and medieval sources, listed in chronological order. The most remarkable feature of this otherwise dry list is the distinction Geremia draws between classical and medieval writers. The author refers to the former as *poetae* and the latter as *versilogi*. Such a deliberately contrasting classification shows Geremia's awareness of a clear discontinuity between classical antiquity and the Middle Ages, identifying the latter as a period of political, moral, and artistic decay (see Milan 2000; Weiss 1949, 1966). A more organic study of Seneca's tragic production was pursued by the third representative of the early Paduan Humanism. Like his contemporary Geremia, Albertino Mussato (1262–1329) was also a jurist in Padua. Mussato's fame as passionate classicist, however, has earned him a lasting reputation as a refined

man of letters (see Arnaldi 1980; Billanovich 1976; Bortolami 1985; Di Salvo 2000; Gianola 2004; Hyde 1966; Minoia 1884; Zabbia 2012; Zardo 1884). The influence of ancient Latin sources, especially historians, can already be traced in his early *Historiae* – patterned upon Livy and Sallust – but Mussato's major literary success was the drama *Ecerinis*, published in 1315. This tragedy represents the rebirth of a literary genre absent throughout the Middle Ages and was largely due to an attentive study of Seneca's dramas. Both its metric form and content are borrowed from the Latin dramatist: *Ecerinis* employs an iambic trimeter and warns against the unfettered authority of monarchs. This successful play recounts the rise and fall of Padua's tyrant, Ezzelino III da Romano, and in December 1315 its author was crowned as a poet laureate in an ancient ritual last performed in the first century AD.

In spite of Italy's political fragmentation, Paduan humanism spread beyond the city's territories to the neighboring towns of Vicenza and Verona, where the jurist Benvenuto Campesani (1255–1323) contributed to the rediscovery of Catullus (see Gloria 1884; Gorni 1974; Sabbadini 1885, 1905; Weiss 1955). In his *De Resurrectione Catulli* – three Latin elegiac distichs meant to prelude to the original *Carmina* – Campesani adopts a first-person narration and celebrates Catullus' long-awaited return to his homeland. The capitular library in Verona held a rare, ninth-century manuscript of the *Historia Augusta* that allowed Giovanni de Matociis (+1337) to compose his *Historia Imperialis*, a detailed chronicle of emperors' lives, from Augustus to Henry VII (see Adami 1982; Avesani 1976; Zabbia 1999, 2008). Although this ambitious project was left incomplete upon Giovanni de Matociis' early death, it is a first foray into applying ancient historiography to modern politics. Although the *Historia* is strongly influenced by Livy, Sallust, and Nepos, it also draws extensively from such medieval sources as Paul the Deacon, Isidore of Seville, Goffrey of Viterbo, and Richard of Poiriers. The result is not a mere chronological list of

events, but an accurate historical account with an unprecedented interest both in rhetorical elaboration and philologically reliable sources. The only philological work published during his lifetime, *Bevis Adnotatio De Duobus Pliniis*, argues that the same author did not write both *Panegyric* and *Naturalis Historia*. Giovanni was indeed able to identify the works of Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger based on the criteria of content, style, and chronology (see Weiss 1966).

This prehumanistic contribution to the development of philology as a literary discipline has been the object of a thorough and organic academic study leading to a complete reassessment of the pioneering role played by the Paduan humanists. The teachings of Lovati, Mussato, Campesani, and De Matociis quickly spread out throughout the peninsula, but it was in Tuscany that they found the most fertile soil thanks to Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374). No fourteenth-century intellectual was a more imposing and influencing poet as well as classicist (see Billanovich 1947a, b, 1996, 2008; Capelli 2013; Contini 1970; Dotti 1968, 1987; Rico 2015; Santagata 2004; Wilkins 1951a, b, 1955, 1959, 1961). Petrarca's life coincided with the Avignon Papacy (1309–1377). The French papal court fostered unprecedented cultural exchange between north and south of Europe and brought together eminent intellectuals of diverse nationalities, interests, and backgrounds. In 1329, Petrarca edited a thirteenth-century manuscript (London, Brit. Libr. *Harleianus* 2493) integrating the preserved third decade of Livy's *Historiae* with the first and fourth. His edition of Livy was based upon a strict collation of manuscripts, and the constant search for ancient Latin texts resulted in not only the richest library in West since the fall of Rome, but also in a more complete record for the study of Latin historiography. Cicero, in particular, attracted the attention of the young Italian scholar. Petrarca's corpus and influence span many literary genres, from oratory – with the *Pro Archia*, discovered in Liege in 1333 – to the *Epistulae ad Atticum* – found in the Cathedral Library of Verona in 1345. Cicero and Seneca's served as literary

models for his own Latin *classical* style, and he addressed in his own letters both to contemporaries as well as to ancient authors, whom he presented as rediscovered after the “Dark Ages.” Petrarca's library included a rare copy of Virgil's *Opera omnia* (including the *Aeneid*, *Bucolics*, and *Georgics*) and conducted an extensive commentary on these texts. Petrarca's interest in the Latin poet, as testified by the *Ambrosian Virgil*, lay not only in the text's philological accuracy, but also reflected a new conception of the manuscript as a precious and unique piece of art. The *Ambrosian's* frontispiece, indeed, bears a beautifully painted miniature by Simone Martini. Petrarca's critical approach to Latin texts was pursued by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) – who strongly pushed for the hiring of Leontius Pilatus as professor of Greek language and literature at the Florentine *Studio* in 1360 (see Branca 1956; Candido 2014; Cronin 1967).

Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), however, was Petrarca's greatest philological inheritor (see Baron 1955, 1988; Garin 1961, 1966; Stocchi 2014; Tanturli 2010; Ullman 1963). During his time as Chancellor in early fifteenth-century Florence, Salutati gathered such distinguished scholars as Leonardo Bruni, Niccolò Niccoli, and Poggio Bracciolini to Tuscany (see Ruini 2007). Salutati was a passionate bibliophile and a collector of ancient texts; scholars believe his library included as many as 100 volumes. The most noteworthy manuscripts in the collection were Ambr. R. 26 sup. – the oldest manuscript of Tibullus' poems – Vat. Ottob. Lat. 1829 – Catullus' poems – and a copy of Cicero's *Ad familiares*. This last manuscript's discovery in the Cathedral library of Vercelli was Salutati's greatest literary find, and made him the first European scholar in centuries to possess both collections of Cicero's letters (*Ad familiares* and, later on, the *Epistulae ad Atticum*). Salutati's transcription of these epistolary collections can be found in the Laur. 49.7 and 49.18. See Fiesoli (2010). Although not himself learned in ancient Greek, the Chancellor followed up on Boccaccio's efforts to attract to Florence the most eminent Greek scholars of Byzantium (see

Monfasani 2015; Wilson 2016). The hiring of Manuel Chrysoloras by the Florentine *Studio* in 1397 was largely due to Salutati's perseverance. Through his efforts, many of the second generation of Florentine humanists received an education in Greek (see Gentile 2010; Monfasani 1995).

Among the humanists fostered by Salutati, Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) was the greatest discoverer of ancient literary texts (see Baron 1966, 1968; Bigi 1971; Garin 1952, 1961; Saitta 1949; Tateo 1967). As a Papal secretary, Poggio traveled with the Curia to the Council of Constance (1414–1417) and interacted with some of the most illustrious European scholars of his time. While the Council was in session, Poggio traveled throughout Europe, and on a mission to Cluny in 1415, found a manuscript containing five of Cicero's orations, two of which – *Pro Roscio* and *Pro Murena* – had long been thought lost. This manuscript, the *Vetus Cluniacensis*, is no longer extant, but was copied by Nicolas de Clamange (Par. Lat. 14749). In 1416, while in St. Gall, Switzerland, Poggio discovered a manuscript containing the first four books of Flaccus' *Argonauts*. Although this manuscript is also no longer extant, its content survives in a copy made by the humanist himself (Madrid, Bibl. Nac. 8514). With the help of Bartolomeo da Montepulciano, Poggio also brought back to Italy manuscripts with texts of Lucretius, Silius Italicus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Statius' *Silvae* (Madrid, Bibl. Nac. 3678). While the ninth-century Carolingian text of Ammianus' *Res Gestae* (Vat. Lat. 1873) still remains the sole existing document bearing this text, the exemplars of Lucretius and Silius went lost. Poggio's copy of Lucretius generated the family of *Itali* manuscripts, and the modern critical edition of Silius' *Punica* relies on his copy. Another seven of Cicero's orations were found in Cologne and carefully transcribed (Vat. Lat. 11458), as well as a complete copy of Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*. The modern *stemma codicum* of this text relies on manuscript Par. Lat. 7989, which bears Poggio's signature (see Fiesoli 2013; Foffano 1969; Sabbadini 1905).

By the mid-fifteenth century, the vast majority of Latin literary texts known today had been

found and transcribed. In 1421, Gerardo Landriani located and transcribed a collection of Cicero's rhetorical works that included *De oratore*, *Orator*, and *Brutus* in the Cathedral of Lodi (Vat. Ottob. Lat. 1592). Eight years later, in 1429, Nicholas of Cusa brought an eleventh-century German manuscript (Vat. Lat. 3870) of Plautus' twelve once-list comedies to Rome.

These discoveries coincided with a flourishing of such literary disciplines as textual criticism and philology. Two Italian scholars, Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) and Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) played a central role in the advancement of philological studies. Their success was the result not only of a rare talent for ancient languages, but also of a growing number of libraries accessible to men of letters. The libraries founded by the Medici in Florence, Pope Nicholas V in Rome, and Alfonso V in Naples offered a fruitful working environment for scholars. Valla wrote most of his philological works in the Royal Library of Naples, not the least of which being a daring criticism of the *Donation of Constantine* completed in 1440 (see Antonazzi 1985; Camporeale 1972; Gaeta 1955; Garin 1986; Lanfranchi 1999; Regoliosi 2006, 2007). In this treatise, Valla identified several anachronisms and contradictions both in the *Donation's* form and content and declared the text's many barbarisms incontestable proof that the document was a forgery. This fundamental step in the history of philology also undermined any attempt on the papal part to claim political authority. Valla also composed the *Elegantiae Linguae Latinae*, a handbook of Latin language and style demonstrating an unprecedented study of Latin genres and authors (see Regoliosi 2000). From 1446 to 1447, he emended books XXI–XXVI of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* and employed his critical skills to rebut many emendations suggested by Bartolomeo Facio and Antonio Beccadelli.

Angelo Ambrogini (better known by the toponymic Poliziano) was fostered by Florentine patronage and was both an intimate friend of Lorenzo il Magnifico and tutor to his son, Piero (see Bausi 2011; Bigi 1960; Branca 1983; De Sanctis 1912; Orvieto 2009; Rizzo 2002; Viti 2011a, b). Poliziano's *Miscellanea* is a collection

of a hundred essays on different topics. The first section (*Centuria prima*) was published in 1489 and shows a level of accuracy in emending manuscripts unmatched until Lachmann's work in the nineteenth century (see Viti 2012). In *Misc.* XVIII, the Italian scholar observes that the manuscript Laur. 49, 7 containing Cicero's *Epistulae ad Familiares* penned by Salutati in 1392, was a copy of an existing and more ancient manuscript (Laur. 49, 9). This comment introduced the principle of *eliminatio codicum descriptorum* in textual criticism, a methodology that not only employed a close and analytical reading of the text, but also a comparative analysis of all of its surviving versions, both complete and fragmentary. To accurately reconstruct a lost text, a scholar relied on as many *lectiones* as possible in order to follow an objective parameter of analysis (see Perosa 2000; Viti 1996, 2014). This still embryonic *collatio codicum* allowed scholars to identify the origin of a text as well as the interrelationship of extant manuscripts (*stemma codicum*).

The invention of the printing press and the subsequent spread of literary *monumenta* allowed Poliziano to study, emend, and comment upon a vaster number of ancient authors, including many unfamiliar texts, such as Galen's *De Compositione Medicamentorum* (Laur. 75, 17), Pelagonius' *Ars Veterinaria* (Riccard. 1179, a handwritten copy by Poliziano himself taken from a now-lost incunabula), and Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* (1473). Although mainly known for his Latin and Italian poetical production, Poliziano was also a refined Hellenist, and his detailed knowledge of the vast majority of Greek texts available at his time allowed him to use his linguistic skills to cross-analyze manuscripts for philological purposes (see Pontani 2002). An emblematic example of this innovative analytic technique is the employment of Callimachus to emend a corrupted passage in Catullus (*Misc.* 66, 48).

By the later fifteenth century, Greek philology had become an academic discipline in Italy, thanks largely to the influence of Cardinal Basilios Bessarion (1400–1472), whose library contained more than 500 texts between Greek manuscripts and modern editions personally edited by the Cardinal himself (see Bianca 1999;

Geanakoplos 1962; Harris 1995; Monfasani 2011). Bessarion had fled Constantinople with as many Greek texts as he could manage while the Ottoman Turks were advancing on the city. Because of its long and strong ties to Byzantine commerce and politics, the Republic of Venice was the natural landing place for businessmen, traders, and scholars, fleeing the Ottomans with their families and treasures. Bessarion endowed the Republic with his monumental library, the seed donation for the future *Biblioteca Marciana* (see Labowsky 1979; Zorzi 1987). Bessarion also conducted a cross-analysis of Latin and Greek texts, and amended and partly rewrote Wilhelm of Moerbeke's translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. He also completed the first Latin translation of St. Basil's *Theophania*. In a brief pamphlet, *In Illud Vangelii: Sic Eum Volo Manere*, Bessarion argued about St. Jerome's Latin translation of *John* 21: 22 and after a compared reading of the texts, pointed out that the Greek conjunction ἐάν had been erroneously misspelled in *sic* instead of *si* (see Linde 2012; Wilson 2016). Such an unprecedented critical understanding of classical texts granted Bessarion a high degree of resentment among his fellow scholars – as in the case of George of Trebizond – and admiration; Valla called him *inter graecos latinissimus inter latinos graecissimus* (see Monfasani 2012; Wilson 2016). Bessarion's *In Illud* not only contributed to the development of linguistic philology in the Renaissance, it also showed that a scholar had the authority to apply linguistic criteria even to texts considered untouchable such as the Holy Scriptures.

Cardinal Bessarion's pamphlet, *In Illud*, paved the way for Desiderius Erasmus' (ca. 1469–1536) critical edition of the New Testament based on the original Greek text (see Bietenholz 2009; Christ-von Wedel 2013; Huizinga 1984). Erasmus' intention to philologically approach religious texts had become clear as soon as 1505, when he edited Valla's *Adnotationes in Novum Testamentum*. His need, as a Christian believer, to retrieve the original teaching of Christ laid at the bottom of his project to publish the Greek critical edition of the New Testament based on criteria of utmost philological rigor (see McDonald 2016). *Novum*

Instrumentum Omne was first published by Johann Froben in Basel in 1516 and enjoyed a vast success. There were four subsequent editions in 20 years (1519, 1522, 1527, 1536), and Erasmus' work served as a model for both Luther's German (1519) and Tyndale's English (1522) translations. This groundbreaking face-page, critical edition and Erasmus' methodology were both harshly criticized. The Dutch scholar had indeed based his analysis on only a few manuscripts: three versions of the Gospels and Acts, four versions of the Pauline epistles, and one manuscript of the Book of Revelation (see Olin 1979; Rummel 1986; Visser 2011). Yet, Erasmus' work brought Valla and Bessarion's efforts to their logical conclusion by applying the tools of critical textual analysis to sacred as well as secular texts. The figures of the Protestant Reformation applied these philological lessons to their arguments against Papal hierarchy, and the Catholic Church eventually responded in kind. Agostino Steuco's (1497–1548) *Contra Laurentium Vallam, De Falsa Donatione Constantini Libri Duo*, published in 1547, rebutted Valla's claims with his own discovery of Greek antecedents and provided the first draft of a *stemma codicum* of the Donation (see Graziosi 1974; Delph 1992, 1994, 2008). Steuco's *Contra Vallam* inherited Poliziano's teaching and applied his *collatio codicum* to question the validity of Valla's approach and support Papal secular authority (see Delph 1996).

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Philosophia Perennis

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Abstract

"Philosophia perennis" (Perennial philosophy) is a popular philosophical phrase and has its origin in Agostino Steuco's *De perenni philosophia* (1540). In his important essay titled *Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz* (1966), Charles B. Schmitt illustrates the sources, impact, and legacy of this complex concept from Agostino Steuco (1497/1498–1548) to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716). Whereas Schmitt's research is to this day a fundamental tool for fully understanding Perennial Philosophy's historical and philosophical meaning, equally important is the recent monograph by Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann titled *Philosophia perennis: Historical Outlines of Western Spirituality in Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Thought* (2004).

Agostino Steuco's Perennial Philosophy Prodrômes: Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) were the most significant philosophical predecessors of Steuco's conception. On the one hand, we refer to the Ficinian notion of a *prisca theologia* as *pia philosophia* and, on the other hand, to the Pichian universal harmony (*concordia*) and *pax philosophica* (philosophical peace).

Beyond a doubt, "one of the most important facts with regard to Ficino's revival of Platonism was his connection of the Platonic tradition with a supposedly earlier tradition of 'pre-Platonism' to which he gave the name, *prisca theologia*" (Schmitt 1972: ix; cf. Schmitt 1970; Gentile 2012). This theory asserts that the original wisdom, theological and philosophical at the same time, was revealed before the advent of Greek philosophy. Indeed, Ficino presents a genealogy of six *prisca theologi*: Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Aglaophemus, Pythagoras, and Plato: "in those things which pertain to theology the six great theologians of former times concur. Of whom the first is said to have been Zoroaster, head of the *magi*; the second is Hermes Trismegistus, originator of the priests of Egypt. Orpheus succeeded Hermes. Aglaophemus was initiated into the sacred things of Orpheus. Pythagoras succeeded Aglaophemus in theology. To Pythagoras succeeded Plato, who in his writings encompassed those men's universal wisdom, added to it, and elucidated it" (Schmitt 1966: 508).

The primal *sapientia* from Zoroaster reached its highest expression with divine Plato and came to its admirable crowning with Christianity. The Florentine philosopher writes: "the ancient theology of the Gentiles, into which Zoroaster, Mercury, Orpheus, Aglaophemus, and Pythagoras converged, is completely preserved in the writings of our Plato. In his *Epistles*, Plato announced the mysteries that finally after many centuries were going to be revealed to men. This happened when, at the time of Philo and Numenius, for the first time the meaning of the primitive theologians began to be understood from the pages of the

Platonists. This too came about after the writings and the speeches of the Apostles and their disciples. The Platonists in fact took advantage of the *divine* light of the Christians to understand the *divine* Plato. After this, Basil the Great and Augustine demonstrated that the Platonists usurped the mysteries of John the Evangelist. I as well discovered with absolute certainty that the more profound mysteries of Numenius, Philo, Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Proclus, were derived from Paul, Hierotheus, and Dionysius the Areopagite. From these last ones, Numenius and the others usurped all that of an admirable splendor they wrote concerning the divine mind, the angels, and other theological arguments” (Garin 2008: 244).

The ancient theologian’s thought is a *docta religio* (learned religion), and so it is a *pia quaedam philosophia* (cf. Schmitt 1966: 509). According to the Ficinian’s perspective, it seems clear that the ancient theology and the philosophical magisterium are “sisters,” in other words complementary aspects of a common heritage: there is a basic agreement between philosophy and religion and that many elements of pagan thought can be accommodated to Christianity (cf. Schmitt 1972: ix). This basic concordance, a distinctive characteristic of Ficinian’s syncretism, is embodied in two precise historical forms: Platonism (true philosophy which anticipates some aspects of Christian theology) and Christianity (true theology), both supreme expressions of the one and only truth. Ficino “pursued the idea of a Christian Platonism [...]. He gave an exact account of why Christian theology can and should use Platonic reasoning, and developed a theory about the history of revelation in antiquity which allowed him to presume a divine origin for Platonic philosophy, and which served as an historical argument to demonstrate the affinity of Christianity with Platonism. One of the most important results of this is the way in which Ficino tried to abolish the separation between religion and philosophy with his programme of *docta religio* and *pia philosophia*” (Lauster 2002: 45).

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) enlarges the Ficinian proposal, planning the ambitious project of a universal unity (*concordia*) between different philosophical epiphanies of the

truth, “but convergent in their affirmation of a single universal truth” (Pirillo 2014: 264; cf. Granada 2002). The truth is not exclusive property of some particular traditions, but of all traditions. In this respect, Pico’s universalistic vision opposes the Ficinian emphatic predilection for Platonism and Christianity, both privileged sources of truth. “Ficino’s *prisci theologi* have no special access to truth, but aspects of it are to be found in Averroës, the *Koran*, the Cabala, the writings of the medieval schoolmen, and in many other places as well” (Schmitt 1966: 513).

In addition, Pico integrates the Ficinian’s paradigm: According to the Count of Concord, not only is Aristotle a full part of the *prisca theologia*, but there is also harmony between Plato and the Stagirite. Ficino, by contrast, excludes Aristotle from the genealogy of the ancient theologians, in the footsteps of which he merely follows. Aristotle is a natural philosopher, (*physicus*) and so his research regards nature and not divine principle (cf. Granada 2002: 229–230). In the *Platonic Theology* (book VI, chap. II), Ficino writes: “the ancient theologians teach us this: Zoroaster, Mercury, Orpheus, Aglaophemus, Pythagoras, and Plato, whose footsteps Aristotle, the natural philosopher, for the most part follows” (Ficino 2002: 125, 127). By virtue of these Ficinian integrations, Ficino’s program becomes a truly universal *concordia* or harmony (cf. Granada 2002: 230).

Steuco’s *De perenni philosophia*

As is well known, “Philosophia perennis” (Perennial philosophy) is a popular philosophical phrase and has its origin in Agostino Steuco’s *De perenni philosophia* (1540) (cf. Di Napoli 1967; Steuchus 1972; Vasoli 1983–1984; Crociata 1987; Granada 1994). This phrase designates the true philosophy which exists “even from the beginning of the human species” (Schmitt 1966: 522). There is only one original truth and wisdom, revealed by God to all humanity and transmitted in different forms from generation to generation in a perfect historical continuity. The primeval unity and fullness of this knowledge are called “the

universal agreement” or “perennial philosophy” (Schmitt 1966: 522; cf. Muccillo 1988).

This primal wisdom, transmitted from ancient times to later centuries, is older than Greek philosophy. The original truth had its roots in Adam and in his progeny: “Wisdom was accumulated and complete in the first men. This is clearly proved by the fact that they recognised themselves, when they were born, to have been created by God, and that shortly before all had been created by him: heaven and earth and sea had been made from nothing, as well as animals, stars, and the seeds of the field. After their birth they had the fruitful experience of divine presence, and conversation with Him. Everything that happened from the time before their creation until their expulsion from paradise was miraculously known to Adam. So it is no accident that they did not transmit the memory of all this to their progeny. But it is also not probable that the first man forgot his and the world’s origin, and that he did not preach this to his sons wisely and in a loud voice” (Schmidt-Biggemann 2004: 429).

According to Steuco’s historical genealogy of the original truth, Adam’s knowledge was inherited by Methuselah, Noah, and then Abraham. This common and precious heritage, “during the following barbaric centuries, lost its certainty and firmness which it had among the first men and became worse in its old age. [...] Since, after the human race’s dissemination and scattering into all parts of the world there remained only people who lived far apart and who intended to recognise solely what was necessary for their lives, it happened necessarily that they neglected their memories which therefore remained restricted to a few people” (Schmidt-Biggemann 2004: 430).

In spite of this condition of decadence and oblivion of the original wisdom, “the nations that originated first, and in whose lands was born and developed the history of the ancients, preserved more than other nations clearer and more authentic vestiges of those events. I am speaking of Chaldeans, Armenians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Phoenicians. It is among these peoples

that the Theology of the Ancients can be found partly clear and manifest, partly mixed with fables and intricate, and partly corrupted by impious figments” (Garin 2008: 399–400). Among these ancient nations, in Steuco’s *Philosophia perennis*, Chaldeans and Egyptians are of great relevance in the historical transmission of the original and eternal *sapientia*. Indeed, “the Greek philosophers adopted the core of Chaldean and Egyptian philosophy as derived from Noah and explicated it as a science of the highest principle” (Schmidt-Biggemann 2004: 433).

So the ancient revelation of the unique truth arrives to Greek philosophy, and it finds its major depositaries in the divine Plato and in his Neoplatonic followers (Plotinus, Proclus). Eventually, the philosophical itinerary of the ancient wisdom has its culmination in Christian theology. Moreover, Steuco in his work reasserts a principle of Neoplatonic inspiration: the philosophical tradition is indistinguishable from religion. The true and perfect end of philosophy is piety and contemplation of God. More importantly, in specific sections of the *De perenni philosophia* Steuco wants to show the indubitable conformity of Christian doctrine and philosophical speculation: “the Trinity (I-II; 1-122); what he calls *De tota divinitate* (III; 123-165); the thesis that Aristotle (IV; 166-207), Plato (V; 208-236), and the later Greek and Roman philosophers (VI; 237-278) were all monotheists; the creation of the world (VII; 279-411); the good and evil angels (VIII; 412-489); the creation of man and the immortality of the soul (IX; 490-560); and the end of man consisting in piety (X; 561-619)” (Schmitt 1972: x). In his search for a “clearer notion of God” (Schmitt 1966: 519) and a general agreement between philosophy and Christianity, Steuco has a preference for the *divinus* Plato: “But in the range of talents, greater is Plato than Aristotle, who delighted more in the study of lower things and those things known by the senses and left the study of the hidden things, surpassing human abilities, the mysteries of the ancients, and the secrets of God to Plato and others” (Schmitt 1966: 519).

In truth's historical development, Steuco recognizes a constitutive continuity. Notwithstanding phases of rupture, degradation, or oblivion, the original wisdom preserves its essential unity. About its rediscovery, Steuco highlights three crucial periods: "The first was the blossoming and strong age of youth, which, when it came into the age of senility, began to be reborn and renewed in the second age of the philosophers. In the most recent times, philosophy was not only reborn, but became greater and more splendid than it ever was. Its light grows and shines as much as the spirits can grasp it" (Schmidt-Biggemann 2004: 434). According to Steuco's interpretation, in philosophy's history, from the *prima saecula* until modern age, there is no progress or acquisition of newness. Indeed, both reality and human knowledge find their origin in God. Hence, human reason's progress is understood as preserving a primitive sapiential patrimony (cf. Muccillo 1988: 60). In conclusion, "in Steuco [...] history flows like time, it knows not 'dark ages' and 'revivals'. There is but a single truth that pervades all historical periods. It is perhaps not equally well-known in all periods, but it is accessible to those who search for it. True theology, for example, is nothing other than the revealed truth which has been known to mankind from the earliest times. [...] this view of history serves almost as a prerequisite for his over-all interpretation of the *philosophia perennis*" (Schmitt 1966: 518).

Perennial Philosophy's Impact and Legacy

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the *De perenni philosophia* was highly praised: In one of his major works, Francesco Patrizi of Cherso (1529–1597) explicitly quotes the expression "perennis quaedam philosophia" (*Nova de universis philosophia*, 1591, *Panarchia*, Pars II, Liber XVII, 38v); Kasper von Barth (1587–1658) calls it a "golden book," and Daniel Georg Morhof (1639–1691) refers to it as an "opus

admirabile" (Schmitt 1966: 516–517). However, the work also had many critical readers: Benito Pereira (1535–1610), Giambattista Crispo (1550–1595), Denis Petau (1583–1652), Gerardus Johannes Vossius (1577–1649), Richard Simon (1638–1712), and Johannes Matthaeus Gesner (1691–1761).

According to Pereira, Steuco's positions were "not only false, but even most absurd and completely inconsistent with Christian teaching" (Schmitt 1966: 525). Giambattista Crispo, a little-known Italian thinker native of Gallipoli, in his *De ethnicis caute legendis* (1594), "criticizes 'that celebrated writer on perennial philosophy' (*celebrem illum de perenni philosophia scriptorem*) for comparing Moses to Plato: 'Steuco's odious comparison' (*odiosa Eugubini comparatio*)" (Schmitt 1966: 526). Petau, following Pereira's objections, asserts that the agreement to the Platonism with Christian tradition is theologically unacceptable. Johannes Vossius, theologian and philologist, condemns Steuco's idea that the ancient pagan religion were in profound agreement with Christianity: "he charges Steuco with twisting Plato's words to make them agree with Christian teaching. Vossius can see no connection between the teachings of the *prisca theologi* and Christianity, and concludes that no one who knows Plato well could agree with Steuco's interpretation" (Schmitt 1966: 527). Richard Simon remarks upon Steuco's excessive dependency on the *prisca theologia* and his misinterpretation. Finally, Gesner "found Steuco, along with Psellus and Ficino, to have erroneously held that religious truths may be known without actual access to the Scriptures" (Schmitt 1966: 527).

Conversely, in the syncretistic branch of sixteenth-century philosophy, Steuco's work met the favor of many interpreters. For example, Guillaume Postel (1510–1581) mentioned the *De perenni philosophia* in his *De rationibus Spiritus Sancti* (1543). In the prefatory letter to his translation *Libri de plantis falso Aristoteli attributi* (1556), Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558) calls Steuco "a divine man and easily a prince of true literature" (Schmitt 1966: 528). In his *Platonis cum Aristotele in universa philosophia comparatio*

(1573), Jacques Charpentier (1524–1574) was looking for material in support of his belief that Platonism and Christianity can be reconciled. In doing so, he cited Steuco as evidence that this goal could be achieved (cf. Schmitt 1966: 528). Paul Scalichius (1534–1574) in *De iustitia aeterna seu de vera promissione gradatio* (1559) and Muzio Pansa (1560–1640) in *De osculo seu consensu ethicae et Christianae philosophiae tractatus* (1605) were profoundly influenced by Steuco's philosophical thought. In particular, "Pansa's work is essentially an early XVIIth-century reiteration of the principles of perennial philosophy" (Schmitt 1966: 529).

Lastly, in this long historical tradition, we get to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716). As Charles B. Schmitt claims in his fundamental study titled *Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz* (1966), "Leibniz knew Steuco well [...] and traces of his influence can be found throughout Leibniz's writings" (Schmitt 1966: 531). Thus, Leibniz "was not the originator of the notion of *philosophia perennis*," although he "was the first to speak of *philosophia perennis* without specifically referring to Steuco as the author of the notion. [...] From this time onward the connection of 'perennial philosophy' with the theologian from Gubbio was often lost" (Schmitt 1966: 532).

Cross-References

- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism](#)
- [Steuco, Agostino](#)

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Philosophy in Safavid Persia

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Abstract

Often considered a high point of Iranian culture, the period of rule of the Ṣafavid dynasty (1499–1720) witnessed the flourishing of some of the most prominent postclassical Islamic philosophers, most notably Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā. But the wealth of philosophical activity in the period did not arise from nothing, nor did it end abruptly at the fall of the empire. Indeed, Ṣafavid philosophy is a natural outgrowth of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century philosophical and theological debates, especially in Shīrāz, and most of the topics, questions, and solutions would continue to be debated down to the nineteenth-century Qājār era and ultimately to our own day.

The first Ṣafavid Shāh Ismā‘īl I conquered and united the politically splintered Persia of the post-Timurid era at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Following Ismā‘īl’s declaration in Tabrīz in the fall of 1501, a constitutive part of the new power’s cultural policy was its staunch Shī‘ism. The consolidation of this cause required considerable support from Shī‘ite scholars, many of whom were invited to move to Iran from the Shī‘ite stronghold in Jabal ‘Āmil in Lebanon. Their encounter with the endogenous Iranian tradition of learning gave rise to a sustained competition for the court’s favor – a situation which characterizes the activity of most philosophers of the era. In general, it seems that philosophically inclined scholars were relatively successful in their relations with the Ṣafavid court, for their philosophical activities were not merely tolerated but often encouraged by the rulers. The Ṣafavid era is indeed often conceived as a golden period of Iranian philosophy and Iranian culture at large. It witnessed the flourishing of thinkers who proved

formative for the subsequent development down to our day, including the most prominent examples of Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631/2) and Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1635/6). Their work, like the results of the Ṣafavid religious policy, thus outlived the dynasty that was dethroned effectively in 1722 and nominally in 1760.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Ṣafavid philosophy did not arise from nothing. Iran, and Shīrāz in particular, was the site of vivid philosophical and theological discussion throughout the fifteenth century. This probably dates back to the activity of two famous theologians with strong philosophical inclinations, namely, ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355) and his commentator al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 1413/14). The latter’s role was especially formative for the thriving philosophical scene in Shīrāz, both of the primary actors of which, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 1502) and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī (d. 1497/8), were his second-generation students.

The philosophical scene in Shīrāz toward the end of the fifteenth century is dominated by al-Dawānī and al-Dashtakī, whose students would determine much of subsequent Iranian philosophy. Most important in this regard is al-Dashtakī’s son Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Manṣūr (d. 1542), who rose to prominent positions under the Ṣafavid Shāhs and was even invited to supervise the rebuilding of the Marāgha observatory. Importantly, the senior Dashtakī founded a philosophical *madrasa* in Shīrāz in honor of his son, an important institution that Ismā‘īl I recognized by exempting it from taxation duties.

Dawānī and the senior Dashtakī are heirs to a tradition of Sunnī learning, which found its authority seriously compromised by the introduction of the new Shī‘ite scholars. But Ghiyāth al-Dīn represents a new generation, who tries to gain authoritative ground within the new creed, evitably with some success. Even after falling into disfavor as a result of a doctrinal conflict on the direction of prayer with the prominent jurist ‘Alī Karakī during the rule of Shāh

Tahmāsb I, he was allowed to continue teaching in his *madrasa*. Similar ambitions were entertained by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Astarābādī, a student of al-Dawānī, who rose to a prominent position, functioning as the chief of religious affairs (*ṣadr*) under the first two Shāhs. Other notable students of al-Dawānī and al-Dashtakī were Kamāl al-Dīn Mīr Ḥusayn Maybūdī (d. 1504), Shams al-Dīn al-Khafrī (d. 1535), and Najm al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Nayrīzī (d. after 1536).

A notable feature of Shīrāzī philosophy, inherited from similar tendencies in earlier theologians, is its synthetic preoccupation with a wide array of intellectual traditions. No strict distinctions seem to have been perceived between philosophy (whether Avicennian or *ishrāqī*), theology, Sufism, and even the natural sciences. Another characteristic feature, again shared by the theologians of the earlier generation, is that the philosophers were mostly active as teachers and commentators. For instance, carrying on the debate between his father and al-Dawānī, the younger Dashtakī wrote four commentaries on his father's works, as well as a number of assessments on specific points of debate appended to the contestants' own commentaries, which in some cases make Ghiyāth al-Dīn's own works the fourth-generation commentaries.

The synthetic approach of the sixteenth-century thinkers is continued by Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā, but at the same time the seventeenth century witnesses a shift from commentary to the composition of original treatises and new philosophical *summae*. This approach becomes especially ambitious in Mullā Ṣadrā, whose *magnum opus*, the voluminous *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya fī al-asfār al-arba'a al-'aqlīya*, is an excellent example of it. It follows in outline the structure of the earlier theological *summae* but introduces material from a wider pool of knowledge, including not only theology and both Avicennian and *ishrāqī* philosophy but also the Sufi tradition, with special prominence given to Ibn 'Arabī and his followers. Another new feature in the philosophical literature of the period is the increasing use of Persian. While this was not unheard of (indeed, Avicenna had written a *summa* in Persian and

Suhrawardī produced a number of Persian treatises), writing in Arabic was still the norm, but subsequent authors would increasingly opt for Persian.

The bitter division between the old, philosophically inclined intellectuals and the new Shī'ite learned elite was relatively short-lived. In fact, one of the most prominent philosophers at the beginning of the second Ṣafavid century, Mīr Dāmād, was the grandson of 'Alī Karakī, the most authoritative of the Lebanese juristsprudents. This shows in the status of philosophy, for if the first two Shāhs had been relatively well disposed toward philosophy, this was definitely the case with 'Abbās I (1587–1629) during whose reign the new capital Isfahan became the center of philosophical life in Iran. The second half of 'Abbās' reign marks the point of entry of the so-called school of Isfahan, with Mīr Dāmād at its spearhead, the most important representatives of which served in positions at least as close to the court as those of the previous generation. Thus, although opposition to philosophy from some juristsprudents continued and although tides seem to have varied in this regard (Mullā Ṣadrā's self-imposed exile to the tiny village of Kahak, allegedly due to intrigues in the scholarly circles of Isfahan, being a case in point), in light of the de facto power of some of the main philosophical figures, overarching statements about the philosophers' aversion to politics seem unfounded. This was still the case during the time of Mullā Ṣadrā's student Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1680), who was a major juristsprudent and intimate to Shāh 'Abbās II.

In fact, it is a genuinely new feature of the Ṣafavid era that so many of the philosophers made their profession as religious officials. That philosophy is a pastime passion is not new in the Islamic context; the philosophers had always had to make their living by means of other fields of science, and with the exception of late and post-Ṣafavid Iran, the teaching institutions in the Islamicate world have traditionally not included philosophy as an independent discipline in their curriculum. But where earlier generations of philosophers were usually active as professionals in

the rational sciences, the Şafavid philosophers seem to have adopted a somewhat denigrating attitude to such mundane professions. Characteristic is Mullā Şadrā's critical remark in a review of Avicenna's attempted solution to an eschatological problem: had the great philosopher spent less time and effort on medicine and invested more in philosophy and religious striving, he would have met with greater success in tackling the problem. As a result of this bias, the renaissance of philosophy during the Şafavid era seems not to have been accompanied by the kind of flourishing of the other rational sciences that was characteristic of the classical period of Islamic philosophy. The religious credentials of the major Şafavid philosophers must also have been pivotal to their general veneration as men of wisdom.

A sociologically interesting feature of the period is also the emergence of dynasties of learned men, not unlike the parallel dynasties of jurists, some of which intersect with those of philosophers. The Dashtakīs seem to have established a pattern followed by both Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Şadrā, who had influential sons-in-law that carried on their work and produced philosophically active offspring in turn.

Innovative and Original Aspects

One of the most celebrated Şafavid contributions to philosophy is Mīr Dāmād's attempt at the solution of the Avicennian problem of how God is related to His creation. In particular, how can an absolutely unchanging and atemporal entity give rise to something that is in time and in constant flux? Mīr Dāmād's solution is based on a meticulous analysis of different senses of coming to be (*ḥudūth*) and different kinds of atemporality, depending on whether we consider the atemporal in its atemporality or in its relation to time. This analysis gives rise to the celebrated notion of "perpetual coming to be" (*ḥudūth dahrī*).

A debate characteristic of seventeenth-century Şafavid philosophy hinged on the question of which of the two key notions of Avicenna's metaphysics, existence and essence, is metaphysically

foundational. Mīr Dāmād is famous for having represented the allegedly Suhrawardian idea (known as *aşāla al-māhīya*) according to which essences constitute the basis of reality, whereas existence can be explained as a feature derivative of the thinking mind. For the posterior Iranian philosophical tradition, however, it would be Mullā Şadrā's diametrically opposed view that existence is foundational (*aşāla al-wujūd*), essences being explicable as features introduced by the intellect.

Closely related to the foundational status of existence is Şadrā's concept of substantial motion (*ḥaraka jawharīya*). This is a radical departure from Avicennian Peripateticism, which had specifically denied motion in the category of substance, claiming that this would make it impossible to attribute any kind of stable and knowable identity to beings; were it not for substantial forms, everything would be in flux and nothing could be known. Fully aware of this argument, Şadrā substantiates his theory with a new idea of identity. Curiously resembling contemporary four-dimensionalist theories of identity, Şadrā seems to suggest that absolute identity conditions can only be known from God's atemporal perspective, whereas all being and knowledge in time are subject to constant flux and development.

Finally, Mullā Şadrā also subscribed to the theory of cognitive identity or unity, that is, the view that in any act of cognition, the act itself should be conceived as an identity in being of its subject and object. Put another way, subject and object are only analytically distinguishable, not really distinct constituents, of the act of cognition. Although this idea is not entirely new (in fact, it can be traced back to Aristotle's description of sense perception and intellection in his *De Anima*), it does mark a significant departure from the Avicennian mainstream in the philosophical psychology of Şadrā's time.

Impact and Legacy

Although the generation of Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Şadrā can be said to represent the high point of

Şafavid philosophy, philosophical activity by no means came to a close after the first half of the seventeenth century. The most important students and commentators of Mīr Dāmād were Sayyid Aḥmad ‘Alawī ‘Āmilī (d. between 1644 and 1650) and Mullā Shamsā Gīlānī. Mullā Şadrā also had a number of influential students, including his sons-in-law ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī (d. 1661/2) and Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1680), Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī Riḍā Aghājānī (the author of a massive commentary on Mīr Dāmād’s *al-Qabasāt*, of whom little else is known), and Shaykh Ḥusayn Tunikābunī (d. 1690 or 1694).

Another important teacher was Mīr Abū al-Qāsim Astarābādī Findiriskī, whose students include Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1686/7), Muḥammad Bāqir Sabzawārī, and Rajab ‘Alī Tabrīzī (d. 1669/70). Of particular importance for subsequent generations of philosophers was Tabrīzī who, emphasizing a strict distinction between the existence of the Creator and that of creation and denying the doctrine of substantial motion, would provide a critical alternative to Mullā Şadrā down to the Qājār era. He had many students, the most important of whom was the notable philosopher, theologian, and jurisprudent Qāḍī Sa‘īd Qummī (d. 1691/2). Qummī, however, was also a second-generation student of Şadrā’s through Kāshānī and Lāhījī, and it is to the latter’s doctrine that he seems to have been inclined in his own writings.

An interesting feature of post-Şadrian Şafavid philosophy is a decisive turn to a combination of mysticism and philosophy (*‘irfān*), coupled with the opening of several Sufi centers, and a strongly traditionalist (*akhbārī*) take in jurisprudence. This shift culminated especially in Kāshānī but also in a more moderate form in Lāhījī, which received the blessing of the Shāhs Şafī (r. 1629–1642) and ‘Abbās II (1642–1666), and made philosophers once again close to the court. This would not remain the case, however, for hard-line rationalist (*uṣūlī*) jurists would gain the upper hand in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, which resulted in a drastic decline in the veneration, indeed legitimacy, of philosophical pursuits. Thus, for example, Qummī would be imprisoned for a time during the reign of Shāh Suleymān

(1666–1694). Philosophy became a largely questionable activity and certainly ceased to be part of the mainstream of the Shī‘ite scholars. It is due to the renaissance of Mullā Şadrā’s philosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that philosophy is featured in the curriculum of the Shī‘ite seminaries in Iran.

Such difficulties notwithstanding, philosophical activity continued uninterrupted until the end of the Şafavid era and beyond, but research on this late period is hardly in its infancy. A characteristic feature seems to have been the gradual increase in importance of Mullā Şadrā’s philosophy at the cost of the Avicennian and the *ishrāqī* alternatives. Notable thinkers of the later Şafavid period include Mullā Ḥasan Lunbānī (d. 1682/3); Mīrzā Muḥammad Şādiq Ardistānī (d. 1721/2); his student Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Almāzī who seems to have been the first to teach Şadrā’s philosophy in the context of the Shī‘ite seminary, ‘Ināya Allāh Gīlānī, an Avicennian; and Mīr Sayyid Ḥasan Ṭāliqānī. Their activity was crucial for the second blooming of philosophy during the Qājār period.

Cross-References

- [Al-Ījī](#)
- [Al-Jurjānī as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf](#)
- [Dawānī](#)
- [Mīr Damad, Muhammad Bāqir](#)
- [Mullā Şadrā](#)

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Physiognomy in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Rooted in the mutual correspondence between body and soul and based on a codified system of signs on the face and body, physiognomy aimed to judge character and nature from the visual analysis of physical appearance. As a law, rule (*nómos*) of nature (*physis*), it reached its greatest importance during the Renaissance, when, as never before, people pursued Socrate's idea of a window opening onto the heart, making visible invisible inner moral inclinations.

Physiognomy had both divinatory and medical origins. It spread to the West in the twelfth century, when ancient texts from Greek and Arabic traditions became available to the Latin reader. Primarily used by princes, it was recognized as a science by medieval academics who provided it with a causal explanation by recurring to the medical theory of humors and astrology, and then included it in the university curriculum. Thanks to the Latin translation of *Physiognomonics*, which was attributed to Aristotle at the time, physiognomy became part of natural philosophy.

The connection between physiognomy and the medical theory of humors consolidated during the Renaissance, when curiosity in

decoding the secrets of nature placed physiognomic investigation in the framework of a new attention to signatures and sympathies, thus renewing an interest in physiognomic syllogism and the analogy between animals and men. The special attention art theorists paid to physiognomy intertwined with new analytical and rhetorical instruments at the physiognomist's disposal, thus contributing to improving the theoretical framework of physiognomic judgment, which strengthened its fundamental role not only in politics but also in judicial courts. The condemnation of the divinatory dimension of physiognomy by the Roman Church favored the spread of books on natural physiognomy, pushing authors to rethink and redefine the aims and limits of their art.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Physiognomy (from the Greek *physis*, “nature” and *gnomon*, “interpreter” or *gnome* “indicator”) had both divinatory and medical origins. It started as a circumstantial practice based on careful, direct observation and interpretation of bodily signs. Like divination and medical semiotics, it was originally orientated to the analysis of concrete cases, to be solved only on the basis of clues, traces, and symptoms (Ginzburg 1986; Magli 1995, 25–50).

It spread to the West in the twelfth century, when ancient texts from Greek and Arabic traditions became available to the Latin reader. Philosophers and academics started to discuss its epistemological status, object, methods, and aims, thus neutralizing its divinatory and circumstantial nature and normalizing it as a moral and natural science (Agrimi 2002, 13). Late medieval and then Renaissance physiognomists referred to physiognomy as *nomos*, a “rule” of nature.

Due to its political importance as a major art of government – it was seen as enabling a prince to recognize men's virtues and vices and therefore help him in choosing his advisers – it was at the

court of Emperor Frederick II, and then of his son Manfred, king of Sicily, that some of those texts, which later became the starting point for the scholastic debates on physiognomy, circulated for the first time (Ziegler 2005): the Latin translation by Filippo da Tripoli of *Secretum Secretorum* (which was thought to have been written by Aristotle for his student, Alexander the Great), *Liber Physonomiae* by Michele Scoto (1230 ca.), and, later, the Latin translation by Bartolomeo da Messina of *Physiognomonics* (1260), which was also attributed to Aristotle at the time. The first and the last text, together with *De Physiognomia Liber*, an anonymous Latin treatise based on the classics of Greek physiognomy: Aristotle, Loxus, and Polemon, and *Ad Almansorem* by the Arabic physician Rhasis, constituted the canon by which physiognomy evolved into a scholastic science in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Agrimi 2002, 103).

The pseudo-Aristotle treatise was quickly adopted as the main scholastic reference tool: thanks to it, physiognomy became part of natural philosophy as the “*scientia de libro physionomiae*” (Agrimi 2002, 13). *Physiognomonics* elaborated the fundamental principle of physiognomic knowledge, the mutual influence between body and soul, and then defined which kind of signs should be taken into account in making a physiognomic judgment, for example, the quantity, type and color of hair, the sort of skin, the way of moving, the quality of voice, the shape and dimension of individual parts of the body, and the general physical appearance. Moreover, it provided a physiognomic description of 22 typologies of character – from the brave man to the one who had a good memory – and offered a systematic catalogue of bodily signs and their moral and intellectual meaning. Therefore, and most importantly, it systematically developed the analogy between men and animals linked to the physiognomic syllogism already described in Aristotle's *Prior Analytics* (II, 27). Due to their simpler form, animals were considered a necessary mediation to understand men's moral inclinations from their physical appearance. Referring

to an animal, the classic example being a lion, the physiognomic syllogism logically fixed the connection between a specific sign (e.g. having large extremities), and a particular character (in this case bravery) (Magli 1995, 118–127).

Following Scotto and his medical reading of physiognomy, medieval academics such as Pietro d'Abano (*Liber compilationis physionomiae*, 1295) and, later, Michele Savonarola (*Speculum Physionomiae*, 1455 ca.) recognized the scientific status of physiognomy, recurring to medical and astrological frameworks and therefore advancing beyond the simple repetition of consolidated lists of signs and their meaning, which characterized the classical tradition. By giving causal explanations, they tried to provide the discipline with solid theoretical bases, which they found in the Hippocratic-Galenic doctrine of humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, black bile) and temperaments (the permanent psychical dispositions, which were directly related to and caused by the compound of the four humors: complexion). Both philosophers and academic physicians recognized the scientific validity of physiognomy. While medicalization and causal explanation were the two main contributions of medieval physiognomy to the ancient one (Agrimi 2002, 56; Ziegler 2004), philosophic reasoning contributed to defining its limits. Philosophers felt the need to label it as a posteriori science, which could provide its practitioner with probable and conjectural knowledge: it only allowed the detection of moral inclinations rooted in the radical complexion, but could not predict actual behavior (Ziegler 2007).

This learned academic tradition strengthened Renaissance thinking, and the link between physiognomy, medicine, and natural philosophy became a recurring element in many publications of the time, starting with *Quaestio de subjecto physionomiae et chiromantiae* by Alessandro Achillini (1503) (Ziegler 2004).

The medical theory of humors became a fundamental component in Renaissance commentaries on Pseudo-Aristotle's *Physiognomonics*, which kept being commented on, printed, and taught at universities in the framework of

Aristotle's *Parva Naturalia* (Grendler 2002, 270). From Agostino Nifo (1523) to Camillo Baldi (1621), Renaissance academic commentaries on pseudo-Aristotle's text constantly referred to Galen within the framework of a renewed interest in the scholarly study of the soul through medicine and anatomy.

Renaissance physicians, such as the reformed Guglielmo Grataroli (*De praedictione morum naturarumque hominum*, 1553) and Girolamo Cardano (*Metoposcopia*, 1658 and *De utilitate*, 1561), manifested a particular interest in physiognomy. The idea that morality was connected to the balance of humors consequently created the idea that it was possible to modify men's moral inclinations by reason or education. A classic example of this, widespread in Renaissance physiognomic literature, was the physiognomic judgment of Socrates made by Zopyrus the physiognomer, who found signs of vicious inclinations on his face and body which the philosopher had been able to correct through his reason. In some instances, therefore, it was seen as possible to cure bad moral inclinations just like curing an illness. Intellectual inclinations were also linked to the balance of humors. For this reason, physiognomy played a significant role in the Renaissance debate on wits (Getrevi 1991, 53–72), which – starting with *Examen de los ingenios para las ciencias* (1575) by the Spanish physician Juan Huarte de San Juan, which was aimed at identifying young people's intellectual inclination in order to serve the Spanish Monarchy better – spread widely in Europe.

Grounding physiognomy on humoral medicine and anatomy was also a way to strengthen its epistemological status. In his *Fisionomia Naturale* (1606), printed posthumously by his nephew Angelo, the jurist and bishop Giovanni Ingegneri tried to demonstrate the conclusions reached by Aristotle and other ancient physiognomists with arguments taken from natural philosophy, medicine, and anatomy. By referring to complexion or to the combination of the natural elements, he was using methods, which belonged to a higher science than that of the

physiognomist (Ingegneri 1606, 8; Bragagnolo 2016a, b).

Physiognomy and the Counter-Reformation Church

The great development in the second half of the sixteenth century of “natural physiognomies,” linked to the medical tradition, was that related to the battle fought by the Roman Church against divinatory arts, *in primis* judicial astrology, which culminated in Sixtus V’s Bull *Coeli et terrae* (1586). This battle also involved those branches of physiognomy, which were traditionally linked to divination, such as metoposcopy or palmistry. These disciplines, widespread in the sixteenth century, looked at the bodily signs which were thought to be directly impressed by the stars on the body, particularly on the hands and foreheads, to foresee a man’s destiny, thus leaving dangerously little place for human free will. It was mainly due to the link with those arts for predicting the future that physiognomy swang between a licit and illicit discipline in the Roman Indexes as well as in discussions within the Roman Congregations, which distinguished between natural and divinatory arts, admitting the former and condemning the latter (Bragagnolo 2016b). Although the Church finally condemned divinatory physiognomy, it allowed the natural one, which was connected to the analysis of human complexion. But the potential danger of physiognomy to the principles of Christian ethics pushed authors to rethink and redefine it, as is seen in long prefaces discussing the aims and limits of their art. In this way, they tried to overcome the suspicions of the Church towards the deterministic implications of physiognomy on human actions, related to both the influx of stars and the dependence on bodily structures. Late sixteenth-century physiognomists stressed the distinction between physiognomy and divination, namely judicial astrology, by insisting on the conjectural nature of their art, which could not predict men’s behavior but only understand men’s inclinations to particular virtues or vices. They claimed the moral value of physiognomy as

working as a mirror in which men could see their bad moral inclinations (thus becoming physiognomists of themselves) and then correct them. Explaining the mutual interdependence between body and soul, which opened pseudo-Aristotle’s *Physiognomonics*, physiognomists affirmed the primacy of the latter over the former. That was also the case in the most complex and fascinating treatise of physiognomy printed in the Renaissance, *Humana physiognomonica* (1586) by Giovan Battista Della Porta (Bragagnolo 2016b).

Innovative and Original Aspects

As never before, people in the sixteenth century pursued Socrate’s idea of the “window opening onto the heart,” thus making visible invisible inner moral inclinations (Bolzoni 2001, 151–173). Renaissance texts intertwined physiognomic medical traditions with a renewed philological interest in a broader range of ancient texts. While systematizing the consolidated catalogues of physiognomic signs, physiognomists provided an extensive methodological reflexion on how to read bodily physiognomic signs. Moreover, general curiosity in decoding the secrets of nature placed physiognomic investigation in the framework of a new attention to signatures and sympathies, thus reviving interest in physiognomic syllogism and analogy between animals and men.

Giovan Battista Della Porta’s *Humana Physiognomonica* (1586) systematically gathered and developed ancient and medieval physiognomic traditions, adding his direct physiognomic observations to academic knowledge. It placed physiognomy in the framework of a magic vision of the world, applying the law of signatures to the human realm. Making the analogy between men and animals the core of his book – and the main topic of the gallery of its beautiful illustrations – Della Porta used physiognomic syllogism to position Renaissance physiognomy as a science. He employed the result of Aristotle’s physiognomic syllogism as a premise for a second one (if all lions are strong and some men resemble lions, the consequence is that those men are strong too) and then applied it to a wider spectrum of cases (Magli

1995, 168–181), which he had mainly used in his theatrical works (Bolzoni 2001, 163). At the same time, he maintained the causal explanation relating to the theory of humors, dedicating the sixth book of his treatise to how it was possible to cure bad moral inclinations.

Della Porta went into great detail when analyzing the signs to be considered for a physiognomic judgment and stressed the importance of distinguishing between permanent and temporary signs. While the first ones were born and died with men, and so were the proper object of physiognomic judgment, the second ones were accidents, able to reveal temporary states of the soul, like passions. If not correctly recognized, temporary signs could alter the physiognomic judgment. Della Porta also defined a hierarchy of signs, considering the face, particularly the eyes, the most important one.

In Della Porta's book, as in many other Renaissance physiognomic treatises, the Aristotelian idea of "mean," a middle state between two vicious extremes in physical shapes, which related to ethical *mesotes*, was the main reference for the interpretation of the signs (Vigh 2016). This principle interacted with the renewed attention paid to proportions by sixteenth-century art theorists and painters, who associated vices with mathematically deformed physiognomies (Magli 1995, 198–214). But it was not a one-way process, just as art theory had an impact on physiognomic writings, physiognomy was also extensively used by artists to depict the morality of the portrayed persons as well as to "visualize great men of the past" (Bolzoni 2001, 172; Casini 2000). Moreover, as physiognomy was a place where "several disciplines met," it became a "privileged site of conceptual change in late Renaissance" (Maclean 2011, 295; 2006).

With law and the theory of proofs, rooted in Aristotle's rhetoric and filtered through Cicero and Quintilian, Renaissance physiognomy shared a logic which stood behind the physiognomic judgment. Following pseudo-Aristotle, physiognomists could not base their judgment on the interpretation of a single sign, but they should collect several signs together and judge on the basis of various concordant witnesses (Della

Porta 1586, 86–87). Likewise, for condemning the defendant, the system of legal proofs, which characterized the Roman-canon Inquisitorial procedure, required a full proof which could be reached with at least two concordant witnesses: *Unus testis, nullus testis* ("One witness is no witness"). Evidence relied on a rigid hierarchy of proofs. Accumulating concordant half-proofs (conjectures, presumptions), or legal clues (*signa, indicia*), was a way to produce a higher-level proof. Generally speaking, several concordant physiognomic signs could generate what jurists called a (simple) presumption concerning moral inclinations: a probable knowledge derived inductively from something known, which could be invalidated by proving the contrary.

But it was not merely a question of methodological similarity. In the system of legal proofs, physiognomy had a specific legal relevance. Physiognomy in particular was taken into account among those clues which could lead to the defendant's torture, because a bad physiognomy presumed him to be inclined to crime. Technically speaking it generated a presumption about the defendant's nature.

Law and Physiognomy

Following Baldus' (†1400) commentary to Justinian's Code (C.7.65.2), medieval and early modern jurists agreed in saying that while a good physiognomy ("bona physionomia") favored the defendant, a bad physiognomy ("mala physionomia") harmed him because it presumed him to be inclined to crime. A bad physiognomy did not make a presumption of committing a specific crime but a general presumption of a bad and faulty nature. For jurists, who referred explicitly to pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomonics*, it was possible to deduce arguments from the contemplation of nature, which could be used in a trial.

Medieval and Early Modern *Practicae criminales*, and then sixteenth-century treatises on clues, further developed the interaction between law and physiognomy, better defining its use as a legal clue. They stressed that if many

persons were to be tortured, they should start with the one who had the worst physiognomy. However, a bad physiognomy was not sufficient reason to request the defendant's torture because that needed to be confirmed by other concordant evidence at his charge (Bragagnolo 2018).

It was possibly because of this legal thinking on and use of physiognomy in trials that the authors of two well-known treatises on physiognomy – Giovanni Ingegneri (*Fisionomia Naturale*, 1606) and, some decades later, moving from physiognomy to gestures, Giovanni Bonifacio (*Arte de' cenni*, 1616) – were jurists and judges.

Impact and Legacy

Renaissance physiognomy and its aim of detecting human personality via a codified system of fixed bodily signs maintained a concept about the link between body and soul in the following centuries. The well-known eighteenth-century book on physiognomy, Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1775–1778), can be seen as the high point of this long tradition. But the idea of a direct connection between the bodily structures and moral inclinations, founding its new bases in anatomy, physiology and neurology, developed in nineteenth-century phrenology, thus having an impact on Cesare Lombroso's criminal anthropology some decades later (1991; Magli 1995; Rodler 2009, 13–49).

At the same time however, from the seventeenth-century onwards, the attention of several physicians, painters, and naturalists – from Marin Cureau de la Chambre (*L'art de connaître les hommes*, 1659), to Charles le Brun (*Conférence sur l'expression*, 1668) and Charles Darwin (*Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, 1872) – moved away from understanding men's characters to detecting the expression of emotions and feelings on face. Making correlations between the contraction of facial muscles and emotional feelings, they developed a path, which helped lead to contemporary neuroscience (Freedberg 2014).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Achillini, Alessandro](#)
- ▶ [Anatomy, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Della Porta, Giambattista](#)
- ▶ [Humors in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Picardus, Michael

► [Piccart, Michael](#)

Piccardus, Michael

► [Piccart, Michael](#)

Piccart, Michael

Born: 29. 9. 1574, Nuremberg

Died: 2. (?) 7. 1620, Altdorf

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Abstract

Michael Piccart (1574–1620), a student of Philipp Scherb and Nicolaus Taurellus, taught logic, metaphysics, and poetics at the University of Altdorf since 1599. In logic and

metaphysics, he was mainly a follower of his teacher Scherb while preparing the ground for hermeneutic as a part of logic and introducing political philosophy as an independent sub-discipline into the philosophical curriculum. His influence on the later evolution of philosophical eclecticism is disputed. Kant was apparently aware of his work.

Alternate Names

Pickart, Michael; Pickhard, Michael; Picardus, Michael; Piccardus, Michael

Biography

Son of the pastor and rector of Altdorf University Johann Piccart and his wife Anna, née Kirchberger. Piccart studied at Altdorf University between 1586 and 1592. Doubts about his Lutheran orthodoxy stood in the way of a career as pastor or theologian. Suspicions of Socinianism could not be proven. In 1599, he succeeded his teacher Philipp Scherb (approx. 1555–1605) as professor of logic at Altdorf University. In 1604, Piccart became professor of poetry, in 1613 of metaphysics (Vollhardt 2016 with a complete bibliography of Piccart's writings). He probably taught history as well as politics in private lectures (Mährle 2000, 314).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Piccart worked in a period in which Lutheran school philosophy in Germany began to establish itself as an independent philosophical paradigm (Spam 2001, 475). He stands in the tradition of his teachers Philipp Scherb and Nicolaus Taurellus. His *Isagoge in lectionem Aristotelis* (Piccart 1605) is regarded by some as the most comprehensive summary of the philosophical tenets of Altdorf Aristotelianism that is characterized by logical instrumentalism (Mährle 2000, 219) and an understanding of metaphysics as a discipline based on wisdom and aiming for natural

knowledge of God (Spam 2001, 568–569). Besides metaphysics, Piccart made significant contributions to political philosophy, philosophical methodology, and logic.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In logic, Piccart was among the first to distinguish ancient and modern ways of disputing through questions (Felipe 2010, 35). In metaphysics he further developed the notion of metaphysics as natural theology, not a general science of being (Spam 2001, 568–570) and defended an “ontotheological” conception of the discipline (Leinsle 1985, 295). His work on Aristotle's *Politics* is regarded as one of the major contributions in the seventeenth century, on the same level of sophistication as Heinsius and Conring (Dreitzel 1970, 137). In 1607, he presided over the first German dissertation dedicated to Lipsius's political theory (Oestreich 1969, 130). He directed several dissertations in this area, at least in part on request of his students who often appear as both author and respondent (Philipp 2014, 214, 257). These texts discuss not only Lipsius, but other contemporary thinkers like Macchiavelli and Bodin (Philipp 2014, 257–258).

Impact and Legacy

Piccart's role in the prehistory of the seventeenth and eighteenth century German eclecticism is disputed (see Marti 2014, 183, for an optimistic assessment; Albrecht 1994, 149f, for a more skeptical evaluation). His comments on hermeneutic method had a significant impact on Dannhauer's hermeneutic (Sdzuj 2011, 595; Mährle 2000, 225–226, who claims that Piccart's understanding of interpretation was rooted in the didactic methods of his teacher Scherb). Immanuel Kant quotes the title of Piccart's *Isagoge* (1605) in a handwritten note (Kant 1966, R 4160, 439). This may suggest that he used Piccart as an inspiration for the distinction of analytic and dialectic (Pozzo 1989, 23).

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- [Bodin, Jean](#)
- [Lipsius, Justus](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- [Scherb, Philip](#)
- [Taurellus, Nikolaus](#)

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Piccio, Azariah ben Ephraim

- [Figo, Azariah ben Ephraim](#)

Piccolomineus, Franciscus Carolus

- [Piccolomini, Francesco](#)

Piccolomini, Alessandro

Born: 1508, Siena

Died: 1579, Siena

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Abstract

The Sienese Alessandro Piccolomini (1508–1579) was involved in various academies and was active in such diverse fields as playwriting, logic, mathematics, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, rhetoric, and poetics. He promoted a cultural program, which

aimed among other things to make philosophy accessible to women. Among his copious writings are the *Institutione*, one of the most influential Renaissance adaptations of Aristotle's *Ethics* (1542; a revised edition appeared in 1560); a vernacular treatise on logic (*L'istrumento de la filosofia*, 1551); and a commentary on the *Poetics* of Aristotle, preceded by a translation of this work (1572, 1575).

paulo quidem plenior and *Commentarium de certitudine mathematicarum disciplinarum*, both printed in 1547; the manuscript with the *Annotationes in Horatium* (Refini 2009, 2013), under the influence of Varchi and Speroni, he developed a comprehensive program of vernacularization of knowledge, which aimed among other things to make philosophy accessible to women (Panizza 2016). He then dedicated almost the rest of his life to the development of this program.

Biography

At the age of nine, Alessandro Piccolomini had already received several church benefices which were conferred on him by his uncle, Cardinal Giovanni Piccolomini in Siena. Alessandro studied at the university at Siena and Padua (1538–1542). He then moved to Bologna, where he studied for a short period at the local university until the summer of 1543, when he moved back to his native Siena, which he left again in 1546 and 1550, when he relocated to Rome. In 1555, he was ordained priest, and then, he was appointed coadjutor of the archbishop of Siena, Francesco Bandini Piccolomini, with the honorific title of Archbishop of Patrae in 1574 (Tomasi 2015). Piccolomini was closely involved in the *Accademia degli Intronati* (Academy of the Bewildered) in Siena, of which he later became the key figure (Baldi 2001; Cerreta 1960). Along with Sperone Speroni and Benedetto Varchi, he was a leading personality in the *Accademia degli Infiammati* (Academy of the Burning Ones) in Padua (Mikkeli 1999). Probably as a result of his stay in Padua, he moved away from his initial interests in theatre (see the comedy *L'Amor Costante*, 1536, and the comic dialogue *La Raffaella*, 1538) and classical literature (see his translations from Virgil, 1536; Xenophon, 1538; and Ovid, 1539) – though he never abandoned them completely – toward philosophy and science. Apart from a few works in Latin (among which are the translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on Aristotle's *Libri metereologicorum* and the treatise *De iride*, published in 1540; *In mechanicas quæstiones Aristotelis paraphrasis*

Innovative and Original Aspects

The most strikingly original and innovative aspect of Piccolomini's works does not consist of a specific philosophical or exegetical approach, nor is it expressed in one single writing. Rather, it was his systematic pursuit of a program of vulgarization of philosophical and scientific knowledge. If we exclude his most strictly scientific treatises (such as the astronomical works *De la sfera del mondo* and *De le stelle fisse*, 1540 – the first one was very successful and was reissued in 1566; *Della grandezza della terra et dell'acqua*, 1558; *La prima parte delle Theoriche*, 1568), Piccolomini devoted himself mostly to Aristotelianism. Following on from the program sketched already in an early letter written to Pietro Aretino (20 March 1541), Piccolomini approaches the Aristotelian corpus by using broad-range exegetical tools such as treatises, compendia, paraphrases, translation, and glossing, encompassing ethics, logic, natural philosophy, rhetoric, and poetics.

The *Institutione*, with its two very different versions (1542 and 1560), established its author as an outstanding authority in the field of ethics (Poppi 1997; Quondam 2010; Schmitt 1979): the second one, in particular, became a standard book of religious formation, reprinted eight times before the end of the sixteenth century and soon translated into Spanish (by Juan de Barzona y de Padilla, 1577) and French (by Pierre de Larivey, 1581). Although the *Institutione morale* was more successful than the *Institutione de l'homo nato nobile*, the first *Institutione* is crucial in many respects: first, because it marks a clear break from Piccolomini's youthful

experience as a member of the Accademia degli Intronati and in particular from his comic dialogue *Raffaella* (1539), of which the *Institutione* offers a kind of palinode, turning Piccolomini into a professional philosopher, and, second, because through a close rewriting – without acknowledgment – of Speroni's dialogues on love and on the household management (→Speroni, Sperone) Piccolomini develops a personal style for his philosophical discourse, corresponding to a more general pattern in contemporary philosophical prose summed up in Virginia Cox's formula "from the open dialogue to the closed book" (Cox 1992; Cotugno 2020).

Piccolomini's trajectory as a philosopher comes to a high point with the *Instrumento de la filosofia* (Cotugno 2014; Sgarbi 2014), an ambitious compendium of Aristotelian logic, to which he then adds a part on natural philosophy (1551, 1554). In later years, Piccolomini came to favor a more direct engagement with Aristotle's thought and even with his own words. This is the background for his vulgarizations of the *Rhetoric* (1565, 1569, 1571, 1572) and especially of the *Poetics* (1572, 1575). The latter is characterized by accurate exegesis of the most controversial passages of Aristotle's short treatises: comments via glossing ("per via d'annotationi"). This allows him to take into account, and often to criticize polemically, the Latin and vernacular exegetical traditions (see especially the case of Lodovico Castelvetro, who is mentioned by name; Cotugno 2006, 2015). At the same time, Piccolomini insists on a faithful presentation of Aristotle's own words: he includes important considerations on translation in the *Epistola ai lettori del modo di tradurre*, which accompanied both the vulgarization and the commentary on the *Poetics*. This text is one of the most important documents on translation, especially philosophical translation, of the fifteenth century (Lines and Puliafito 2019).

Cross-References

- [Accademia degli Infiammati](#)
- [Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance](#)

- [Tomitano, Bernardino](#)
- [Varchi, Benedetto](#)

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Piccolomini, Francesco

Born: 25 January 1523, Siena

Died: 22 April 1607, Siena

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Abstract

A professor of philosophy who spent most of his career at the University of Padua, Francesco Piccolomini was one of the most important and influential Italian interpreters of Aristotle in the second half of the sixteenth century. He was involved in a number of controversies, concerning the soul with Federico Pendasio and concerning the proper order of philosophical education with Jacopo Zabarella. His work on moral philosophy is possibly the most significant Italian treatment of that area of philosophy for the Renaissance period. Piccolomini is also important methodologically for his attempt to marry Aristotelianism and Platonism.

Alternate Names

Piccolomineus, Franciscus Carolus

Biography

Of a noble Siennese family, Piccolomini (biography in Baldini 1980b) studied and graduated in *artibus et medicina* at the local university (1546), where he probably studied under his distant relative Alessandro Piccolomini. He then taught philosophy at the University of Siena (1546–1549) and joined the Siennese Accademia degli Intronati (as “Il malinconico”) around 1549. He subsequently taught philosophy in Macerata (1549–1550) and Perugia (probably 1550–1560) before receiving an appointment at the University of Padua, where he taught for most of his career (1560–1598). Already in 1565, he was given the first chair of natural philosophy, initially in concurrence with Federico Pendasio. His differences with Pendasio eventually led the latter to seek employment elsewhere (he moved to Bologna in 1571); Piccolomini became the main teacher of philosophy in Padua, attaining an unprecedented salary for his subject (1,000 gold *scudi* in 1589). He was enormously influential on both Italian and foreign students, who included personalities such as Torquato Tasso (on whom see Kraye 2002, pp 79–80). Although he continued to be listed on Padua’s teaching rolls until 1600, in 1598 he retired to Siena, where he continued to be active in the production of philosophical works up to his death.

Of fairly elevated lineage himself and of a highly cultured family (his father was doctor *in utroque iure* and held important political offices), throughout his lifetime Piccolomini cultivated close contacts with those in power. He dedicated several of his works to the Venetian Senate (Jardine 1997) and, both before and after his retirement, to the Medici. He also maintained strong connections to his hometown, where he usually spent the summer holidays. In 1572 Piccolomini married a Siennese noblewoman, Fulvia Placidi, with whom he had two sons and two daughters. In September–October 1579 he held the office of prior in the *terzo* of S. Martino. After his retirement from teaching, in September–October 1599, he served as *capitano del popolo* for the *terzo* of Camollia. He joined and was active in the Siennese academy of the Filomati

(taking the name “Unico”). He was buried in the church of S. Francesco.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Despite portrayals (particularly in the older literature) of Piccolomini as fundamentally a Platonist (as in Garin 2008) or even a Scotist (Lewis 1978, 1980), recent literature has stressed his Aristotelian orientation, also as a university professor of philosophy (Kessler 1987, 1988; Poppi 1976). Piccolomini must be seen within the context of the sixteenth-century attempts to reconcile various philosophical schools, and several times he emphasizes the importance of taking into account both Aristotle and Plato in one’s views (Saitta 1961, pp 427–29; Plastina 2002) against the practices of some who declared allegiance to only one of the two. Toward Stoicism he held a highly ambivalent attitude, disagreeing with it on various points, but at the same time using it to support his philosophical framework (Kraye 2002). Although he is sometimes referred to as an Averroist (Nardi 1958; Saitta 1961), the label needs to be used with great caution.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Among the most notorious episodes of Piccolomini’s career was his long-standing dispute with Jacopo Zabarella, his colleague in Padua, on the proper order of knowledge and education (Ragnisco 1885–1886; Scattola 2002, pp 278–84; Lines 2002a, pp 256–63, 2002b, pp 311–21 for more recent bibliography). The exchanges between the two men were not the most temperate, and modern scholarship has tended on the whole to favor Zabarella’s position (well described in Poppi 2004). Piccolomini’s reputation has not been enhanced by his insistence on having the last word, after his adversary’s death. Nonetheless, Piccolomini’s position is one of great interest; responding to Zabarella’s *Opera logica* (and especially the *De natura logicae* and *De methodis*) of 1578 through his *Universa philosophia de moribus* (1583) and again to

Zabarella's *De doctrinae ordine apologia* (1584) through his *Comes politicus* (1594), Piccolomini promoted a view of teaching that, in certain cases, should feel free to adopt either the *ordo compositivus* or the *ordo resolutivus* depending on a teacher's preference. Zabarella instead thought that teaching depends on our order of apprehension and that those disciplines (including moral philosophy) that have action as their object should be taught according to the *ordo resolutivus* (starting, i.e., from a notion of the particular subject's end, as Aristotle does in the first paragraph of his *Nicomachean Ethics*). It should be emphasized that the discussion about the order of teaching was not original with Zabarella and Piccolomini (for pointers and bibliography on German antecedents, Scattola 2002, pp 284–287; Lines 2002a, p 258 n. 68), but their controversy certainly accelerated a debate that continued into the early seventeenth century and which echoed many of their concerns while also drawing on their approaches and solutions. From Piccolomini, for instance, German interpreters drew their idea that politics can be properly studied and taught only if one has determined the subject's *subiectum* and *ordo* (Scattola 2002, p 288); his use of the synthetic approach in moral philosophy became influential in the second half of the seventeenth century with Hermann Conring and his increasingly prevailing view of politics as a science (Scattola 2002, pp 305–309), although in the intervening period Zabarella's views had been more strongly embraced.

Piccolomini's *Universa philosophia de moribus* (*A Comprehensive Philosophy of Morals*), first published in 1583 but reissued in a revised edition in 1594, was a major achievement and has been described as the greatest theoretical effort with regard to ethics in the Italian Renaissance (“l’opera più consistente nella teorizzazione dell’etica durante tutto il Rinascimento italiano”; Poppi 1976, p 124). In addition to its pedagogical theory, the work is important for its view of the relationship between the branches of moral philosophy (ethics is viewed as the major, theoretical part, which is closely intertwined with politics, which however is practical; economics, the component

of moral philosophy that concerns the household, is considered an appendage to politics) and for its combination of Aristotelian, Platonic, and Stoic elements under the banner of Christianity (Kraye 2002; Plastina 2002). But the work is also significant for its reorganization of the discussion in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (although the *Universa philosophia* is essentially a philosophical commentary in the scholastic vein, Piccolomini abandons the linear approach that was traditionally associated with commentaries), for its sustained consideration of the views of past and present interpreters, for its treatment of topics such as the freedom of the will (Saitta 1961, pp 431–33), and for its unusual insights into the possible development of Aristotle's thought (Lines 2002a, b). This is the only work that Piccolomini chose to translate (or, rather, adapt) into Italian, as testified by his two manuscript works dedicated to the Medici, the *Istituzione del principe* and especially the *Compendio della scienza civile*, both of which enjoyed a fair circulation (Lines 2015).

Piccolomini's works on the soul, on natural philosophy, and on the theory of mathematics have not been studied in sufficient detail (but see Nardi 1958; Saitta 1961; Kessler 1987, 1988; Michael 1993; Claessens 2012, 2014), but it is clear that in several instances he made contributions (both in these fields and in moral philosophy) whose originality has not been properly recognized. He also gave more attention to the Greek commentators (especially Simplicius) than several of his contemporaries; he could read Greek, although he was not in any sense a philologist. These qualities have often been obscured by the tortuousness of Piccolomini's prose and his relentless use of the scholastic *distinguo*, but he is a figure who needs to be appreciated for his own merits and not simply as the competitor of Pendasio or Zabarella.

Impact and Legacy

Piccolomini was an influential teacher (as can be seen from the numerous surviving manuscripts of

his lectures; see Lohr 1988) and an important participant in various areas of philosophical discussion in the second half of the sixteenth century, including moral and natural philosophy (his works on ethics and the soul are especially important), logic, and the issues of the method in knowledge and order in education. His writings were significant both in Italy and beyond it – particularly in Germany (Kuhn 2002; Lines 2002b), where his works were well known and received several editions, although his solutions were not necessarily followed, and in Scandinavia (Mikkeli 2002).

Cross-References

- [Ethics, Renaissance](#)
- [Politics, Renaissance](#)
- [Stoicism](#)
- [Zabarella, Jacopo](#)

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Picho, Azariah ben Ephraim

► [Figo, Azariah ben Ephraim](#)

Pickart, Michael

► [Piccart, Michael](#)

Pickel, Konrad

► [Celtis, Konrad](#)

Pickhard, Michael

► [Piccart, Michael](#)

Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco

Born: 1469, Mirandola or Ferrara

Died: 1533, Mirandola

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Abstract

Gianfrancesco II Pico della Mirandola, Duke of Mirandola and Count of Concordia, is a sixteenth-century philosopher, theologian, poet, and political figure, attributable to the Savonarolan movement of the Piagnoni. He is often referred to as one of the first Renaissance intellectuals to rediscover Sextus Empiricus and employ Pyrrhonian skepticism in their philosophical treatises. He is also known as the official biographer of friar Girolamo Savonarola, and as the biographer/editor of his uncle, Giovanni II Pico della Mirandola. His philosophical and religious views, in continuous dialogue between humanist curiosity and Savonarolan devotion, characterize him as a fierce antagonist of the numerous attempts at finding concord between ancient and early

modern forms of knowledge and belief pursued at the time.

Biography

Born in 1469, son of Galeotto I Pico (1442–1499) and Bianca Maria d’Este (1440–1506), Gianfrancesco, future lord of Concordia, was just six years younger than his uncle Giovanni Pico (1463–1494), from whom he managed to buy the hereditary title to the lands of Mirandola. The deep relationship between the two Picos, uncle and nephew, is manifest not only in Giovanni’s will, dated 1491, but also in the letters the two men exchanged during Giovanni’s last years (Schmitt 1967). We find further proof of this close friendship in the fact that Giovanni himself tasked his nephew to continue his unfinished philosophical debate, after *De ente et uno*. Gianfrancesco’s contribution to Giovanni’s philosophical *querelle* with Antonio Cittadini da Faenza can be found in the various editions of his own works (Pico della Mirandola 1972). In fact, the bond of affection and esteem between the two men remained unchanged until the abrupt and unfortunate death of Giovanni in 1494. After Giovanni’s passing, Gianfrancesco became his official biographer and editor, inheriting de facto a wide network of friends and contacts in the courts of Florence and Ferrara. Among these contacts, it is important to stress the presence of Marsilio Ficino, who wrote a letter of condolences to Gianfrancesco after the death of Giovanni Pico (Pico della Mirandola 1972), Girolamo Benivieni, who dedicated an edition of his works to Gianfrancesco, Aldo Manuzio, Matteo Bosso, Pietro Crinito, Domenico Grimani, Filippo Beroardo the Elder, Battista Guarino, and Ercole Strozzi (Schmitt 1967).

During his early life and after the death of his uncle, Gianfrancesco followed the guidance of a new teacher, one of the most important figures of early modern philosophy and a man who has profoundly marked the development of the Italian Renaissance: Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498). From early adulthood, in fact, Gianfrancesco had

shown the signs of deep religious faith, an attitude that was further developed under the strong influence of both his humanist mentors, his uncle Giovanni Pico and the friar Savonarola. Notwithstanding the strength of the ties that bound uncle and nephew, nothing proved as significant as the teachings of Girolamo Savonarola for the development of Gianfrancesco's philosophical outlook. Despite the Dominican friar's fate – he was excommunicated by Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503) and then executed as a heretic in 1498 – Pico's affection for him and his ideas remained unchanged throughout the years. For example, during the period when this religious reformer was under attack, Pico wrote three apologetic defenses in his honor. The first, *Invectiva in prophetiam fratris Hieronymi Savonarolae*, was published in Milan in 1497 and reprinted in 1498 as *Defensio Hieronymi Savonarolae adversus Samuelem Cassinensem*. Another defense, named *Opusculum de sententia excommunicationis iniusta pro Hieronymi Savonarolae prophetae innocentia*, was written right after the friar's excommunication in May 1497, and was dedicated to Ercole d'Este. In 1498, however, when Savonarola's situation further deteriorated, Pico felt obliged to write a third and last defense of Savonarola, this time in Italian: the *Epistola del conte Zuanfrancesco da la Mirandola in favore de fra Hieronymo da Ferrara dappoi la sua captura* (Schmitt 1967). Furthermore, after the preacher's conviction and death in 1498, Gianfrancesco wrote his biography, a piece of writing that circulated in manuscript form from the beginning of the sixteenth century until its publication in 1674. Even after the death of the Dominican friar, Pico never stopped helping the Savonarolan cause. In 1501, Gianfrancesco drew up a defense of Pietro Bernardino (1475–1502), a controversial follower of Savonarola who had found refuge in Mirandola. Pico, moreover, offered ample support to the Savonarolan “living saint” Caterina Mattei da Racconigi (1486–1547), although the questionable conduct of the religious woman had already led to an interrogation by the court bishop of Turin in 1512.

When it comes to Pico's political life as the lord of Mirandola, extant documents give

evidence of a ruler marked by complexity and controversy. About a year after the death of Savonarola in 1498, Pico's own father died, leaving Gianfrancesco in a difficult position. In the years of his father Galeotto I's dominion, there had been several family disagreements over the rights of inheritance of the Duchy of Mirandola and the County of Concordia. In order to avoid future issues in matters of succession, in 1491 Gianfrancesco's younger brothers, Lodovico (1472–1509) and Federico, forfeited their right of succession. In the same year, Galeotto had been able to obtain the investiture of Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) to the domain of Mirandola and the surrounding areas together with the right of succession for his eldest son, Gianfrancesco. Following this new acquisition, Antonmaria, Galeotto's brother, tried in vain to gain the support of the Emperor, who rejected his request and confirmed Galeotto as lord of Mirandola. After his father died in 1499, therefore, Gianfrancesco inherited the coveted title. For precaution's sake, the young lord requested – and obtained – a new investiture by Maximilian I. Despite the Emperor's support, however, Gianfrancesco then faced the insurrection of his two younger brothers, who formed a coalition in order to take Mirandola forcefully. After several unsuccessful attempts, Lodovico and Francesco finally managed to conquer the region in 1502 with the help of their ally Gian Giacomo Trivulzio (1441–1518), forcing Gianfrancesco to exile.

Gianfrancesco's long period of banishment had a major impact on his life and marked his philosophical development in a profound way. During his eight years of exile, Pico managed to visit some of the most important courts of his time, especially the Imperial and Papal courts, allowing him to establish new, strong bonds with the intellectual milieus orbiting around these two cultural epicenters. Gianfrancesco visited the Emperor twice, in 1502 and in 1505. He did so mostly to gain support for his claim over the lands he had lost to his brothers. During his short stays, Gianfrancesco had the opportunity to get acquainted with some of the most important German philosophical and theological figures of the time, notably Johann Reuchlin

(1455–1522), Conrad Celtis (1459–1508), Beatus Renanus (1485–1547), Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530), Jacob Wimpfeling (1450–1528), and Thomas Wolf (Schmitt 1967). Wolf was also instrumental in the printing, distribution, and overall success of Pico's writings in Germany. The Emperor's seat in Germany was not the only pilgrimage site that Gianfrancesco visited several times. Indeed, another court had been very decisive in his quest for political support: that of Pope Julius II.

Despite the obvious differences of opinion that divided the two men in matters regarding faith and dogma – on that point, Pico notably accused the pontiff after his death – Gianfrancesco found in Julius II a solid political ally when his army allowed him to enter Mirandola once again in 1511, although only for a short period (Cao 2004). His first official visit to the Pope took place between 1508 and 1509. The reason for such a visit was simple: convincing the Pope to free Mirandola with his army lodged in Bologna. Although this visit did not have any immediate consequence, it nevertheless allowed Pico to start building a relationship with Julius II and his entourage. It is unclear if the second visit to the papal court between 1511 and 1512 had a major impact on Gianfrancesco's political troubles. However, his long stay in Rome allowed him to give a precious testimony to some of Julius II's greatest architectural and propagandistic works. Moreover, while stationed at the papal court, Gianfrancesco wrote one of his most influential works, the collection of *epistulae* between him and the Cardinal Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), eventually known as the *De imitatione* (Pico della Mirandola et al. 1954). With the death of Julius II in 1513 and the beginning of Leo X's (1475–1521) pontificate, Gianfrancesco thought he had found a better interlocutor, not only for his political claims but also, and more importantly, for his exhortations towards a moral reformation of the Church. For this very reason, Pico, once again in control of Mirandola thanks to the help of the imperial vicar bishop Matthew Lang of Wellemburg (1469–1540), strived to gain the new Pope's trust and support. Gianfrancesco's works *De amore divino* (1516) and *De*

reformandis moribus (probably written between 1513 and 1515, but printed only in 1520), two pieces of deep theological and moral value, were both dedicated to Leo X. The same can be said of the treatise *De veris calamitatum causis nostrorum temporum*, published after Leo X's permission to establish a printing press in Mirandola.

Between 1514 and 1533, Pico's main political controversies seemed resolved. Thanks to a diplomatic agreement with his family overseen by Bishop Matthew Lang, the duke of Mirandola finally ruled over part of his lands. After the long-awaited opportunity to rule, Pico quickly showed his religious and political inclination to the world. As a ruler, in fact, Gianfrancesco made continuous efforts to protect Savonarola's sympathizers, a clear sign of his unbroken devotion and dedication to the Savonarolan ideal. While he was helping alleged Savonarolan heretics, lamenting the unjust execution of friar Girolamo, and even interceding in support of a controversial holy woman, Caterina da Racconigi, Pico showed no remorse when it came to justifying his harsh treatment of heretics and vehemently denouncing Luther as "the worst heresiarch in history." He also enthusiastically supported the campaign against witchcraft initiated in Mirandola in 1522 by Girolamo Armellini (1470–1550), the filo-Savonarolan inquisitor of Reggio and Parma. In April of 1523, friar Luca Bettini, one of the Savonarolan radicals protected by Pico, was appointed vicar of Armellini. Finally united by their intent to eradicate sorcery and heresy, the inquisitor and the vicar tried more than 60 suspects and, with full support from Gianfrancesco Pico, they ordered the execution of seven women found guilty of witchcraft in 1522 and 1523. Gianfrancesco, who had expressed concerns about magic and witchcraft in some of his early works, was closely involved in the prosecution and, with the help of Armellini and Bettini, even interrogated some of the accused himself. His personal involvement in the different trials was clearly political, since some of the suspects lived in the domain of Francesca Trivulzio (1475–1560) and his patron, the Marquis of Mantua, who tried in vain to prevent the prosecutions

against them. In response to the growing criticism following the witch trials in Mirandola, Pico wrote the best-known book on witchcraft of the Italian Renaissance: *Strix, sive de ludificatione daemonum* (Bologna, Hieronymus de Benedictis, 1523). Promptly translated by friar Leandro Alberti (1479–1552) in 1524, the book became the first treatise on witchcraft published in the vernacular in Italy. Pico, among others, argued that witches were part of a heretical sect and praised the inquisitors who strove to exterminate them, while immortalizing Armellini as the figure of the judge in this dialogue. As examples of this book's tangible influence throughout the century, inquisitors such as Bartolomeo Spina (1474–1546 ca.) and important demonologists such as Jean Bodin (1530–1596), later referred to the *Strix* as a fundamental work on demonology and witchcraft.

After a life of political struggles, Gianfrancesco's dominion over Mirandola found a brutal end on 16 October 1533, the day his nephew, Galeotto II Pico (1508–1550), entered the castle of Mirandola, murdered Gianfrancesco and his son Alberto (1519–1533), and imprisoned his wife and the other family members. From the writings produced in the last years of his life, little remains but a meager collection of letters, mostly due to the dispersion of Gianfrancesco's library after Galeotto's siege and sack of the castle. This period was, however, far from uneventful. Indeed, Pico died a few years after the sack of Rome (1527) and the capitulation of the Republic of Florence (1530). It was the end of the age of strife that marked the beginning of the sixteenth century, an age that found one of its most iconic personalities in Gianfrancesco Pico.

Innovative and Original Aspects

One of the most innovative aspects of Gianfrancesco Pico's work can be found in his own unique narrative of Christian and pagan antiquity. Whereas many other Renaissance humanists, following in the footsteps of early apologists such as Justin Martyr and Eusebius of Caesarea, welcomed the rediscovery of ancient philosophical

knowledge and tried to incorporate such knowledge into inclusivist philosophical/theological grand narratives indicated as *Prisca theologia*, *Pia Philosophia*, and *Philosophia perennis*, Pico used his humanist education to provide philosophical proof that – regardless of its apparent beauty and complexity – pagan knowledge was fallacious, deceptive, and demonic in nature.

Following the teachings of Augustine of Hippo and other Church Fathers, Pico adhered to the idea that Christianity was de facto the most ancient and perfect religion, and that Jesus Christ was sent to restore the ancient creed after it had been abandoned due to the influence of demonic entities, which the pagans worshiped as their gods. Unlike other representatives of Christian irenicism such as Justin Martyr, however, Pico never accepted the fact that the ancient religion could survive in the words of certain pagan philosophers, inspired by the eternal *Logos*. Pagan antiquity, for Gianfrancesco Pico, was a long period of silence between God and most of humanity. Thus, he dedicated a great part of his life to showing his contemporaries that Christianity could not be reconciled with pre-Christian antiquity. This line of thought, which is presented most clearly in his *Examen vanitatis doctrinae gentium* (1523), shines through the entirety of Gianfrancesco Pico's work. Treatises like *Strix, sive de ludificatione daemonum* and poems like the *Hymni heroici tres*, *Staurostichon*, and *De Venere et Cupidine expellendis*, moreover, allow the reader to gaze into Pico's personal vision of pagan antiquity as a dystopian world where mortal vanity and madness enslaved humanity to Satan's will. Often inspired by apocalyptic anxieties and millenarist ideas, moreover, Pico's writings present this world as on the verge of returning, due to the resurgence of the same knowledge that condemned humanity in the days of old. This fervent critique of past and present "paganisms" is driven by the author's personal crusade of converting the intellectual elites of his time to a Savonarolan form of pietas, devoid of any pagan influence. Unlike Savonarola, Pico had little interest in guiding the common people toward his master's faith. With the loss of Florence and Savonarola's gruesome death, Pico saw the

clergy, the nobility, and the humanists as the only classes worthy of converting. Just like father Zanobi Acciaiuoli, another influential follower of Savonarola, Gianfrancesco Pico decided to fight his religious battle inside the courts rather than in the city squares.

The most groundbreaking tool used by Pico in his personal attack on ancient philosophy is certainly that of Pyrrhonian skepticism. Binding the skeptical arguments of Sextus Empiricus to Savonarola's critical view of natural knowledge, Gianfrancesco Pico was the first modern author since antiquity to utilize a Pyrrhonic approach in his theses (Popkin 2003). As Charles Schmitt asserted, the young lord of Mirandola must have read Sextus in a Greek manuscript, long before his work was published in Greek or Latin (Schmitt 1967). His use of ancient skepticism, however, is extremely peculiar, as it is employed to undermine confidence in human understanding and celebrate divine inspiration as the only true form of knowledge. In Pico's view, in fact, since humanity is unable to comprehend anything by rational means, the only source of knowledge must be divine revelation received through the sacred art of prophecy. This radical form of fideism is, to say the least revolutionary since – as noted by Popkin – it posits prophets as the only arbiters of truth, thus rejecting the claims of the Church as the sole true interpreter of God's revelation through the Sacred Scriptures (Popkin 2003).

Impact and Legacy

The importance of Gianfrancesco Pico as a humanist and political figure was manifest in the eyes of his contemporaries – as his extensive correspondence suggests – and his success as a writer continued until the beginning of the eighteenth century. During the last century, however, Pico's work has mostly been discussed by historians of philosophy interested in Renaissance skepticism and its developments. Charles Schmitt successfully traces Pico's philosophical influence in the works of Mario Nizolio, Giulio Castellani, the translator of Sextus Empiricus Gentian Hervet, Giovanni Battista Bernardi, Paolo Beni,

the authors of the Coimbra Commentaries, Filippo Fabri, Mersenne, Pierre Gassendi, Campanella, and Leibniz (Schmitt 1967).

Pico's importance as a biographer and apologist, however, must not be underestimated. Pico's *Life of Savonarola* (1496) has been long revered by the secret sympathizers of the Dominican priest's cause (Pico della Mirandola 1999) and freely circulated in Protestant territories and communities. His *Life of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola* (1496), moreover, received immediate attention and praise, up to the point of being edited and translated in 1510 by Thomas More. Gianfrancesco Pico's influence and agency as the editor of his uncle Giovanni Pico's works continues to be an important and controversial matter today. Giovanni Pico's *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, published posthumously by Gianfrancesco, has lately been accused of being utterly modified by the latter to fit a more Savonarolan form of pietas (Garfagnini 2004).

During his turbulent life, Gianfrancesco Pico managed to write extensively about a great number of matters that characterized the high culture of his time. Following in his uncle's footsteps, the young Pico was extremely active in the Renaissance diatribe on astrology. On this subject, he wrote two treatises – *De rerum praenotione* (1507) and the short *Quaestio de falsitate astrologiae* (1505–1514) – and a poem dedicated to Emperor Maximilian I known as *Staurostichon* (1505–1507). During the second decade of the sixteenth century, Pico developed an articulated critique on the concept of Platonic love, resulting in the publication of the treatise *De amore divino* (1516) – dedicated to Pope Leo X – and the poem *De Venere et Cupidine expellendis* (1513). He also wrote several theological works in defense of Savonarolan piety, such as *De morte Christi et propria cogitanda* (1496), *Theoremata numero XXV de fide* (1506–1507) – dedicated to Pope Julius II – and the famous *De reformandis moribus oratio* (1514 – published in 1520), a short oration addressed to Pope Leo X and the assembled Lateran Council, that would circulate widely, particularly in Germany, as propaganda for the cause of the Reformation (Schmitt 1967;

Cao 2004). Although the attribution of Pico's late work on alchemy – *De Auro* (published posthumously in 1586) – has been considered uncertain for a long period; later scholarship has brought new contextual proof of its possible authenticity (Secret 1976). If so, Pico's work must be acknowledged as a unique text among the vast production of alchemical treatises of the sixteenth century.

Cross-References

- ▶ Alchemy
- ▶ Angels and Demons in the Renaissance
- ▶ Antiquarianism
- ▶ Astrology in the Renaissance
- ▶ Augustinianism
- ▶ Bembo, Pietro
- ▶ Beni, Paolo
- ▶ Benivieni, Girolamo
- ▶ Bodin, Jean
- ▶ Campanella, Tommaso
- ▶ Castellani, Giulio
- ▶ Fabri, Filippo
- ▶ Ficino, Marsilio
- ▶ Gessner, Conrad
- ▶ Guarini, Battista
- ▶ Manuzio, Aldo
- ▶ More, Thomas
- ▶ Philosophia Perennis
- ▶ Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
- ▶ Reuchlin, Johannes
- ▶ Savonarola, Girolamo
- ▶ Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of
- ▶ Spina, Bartolomeo
- ▶ Vergerio the Elder, Pier Paolo
- ▶ Wimpfeling, Jakob

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Pierozzi, Antonino

Born: Florence, March 1389, to Niccolò di Pierozzo and Tommasa di Cenni di Nuccio Brunetti

Died: Florence, 2 May 1459

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Abstract

Antonino Pierozzi (hereafter, Antoninus) was a Dominican friar renowned for his achievements as a reformer, as a theologian, and for being “a mirror of holiness” to whom (according to a contemporary) crowds of devotees flocked. Antoninus was educated and later preached within the dynamic intellectual context associated with Renaissance humanism. He not only had a unique library at his disposal in the newly rebuilt convent of San Marco (1442-) but was well placed to understand the anxieties of Florentine citizens in relation to an inherited tradition. Fra Antoninus, like other successful preachers, acted as a cultural translator: he distilled, reclassified, and concretized ideas circulating in learned circles according to the circumstances most relevant to his audience (*de circumstantiae*). His intellectual engagement with the catholic theological and canonical traditions in terms of his own milieu is best exemplified by his monumental *Summa theologica*.

Alternate Names

[Antoninus of Florence](#)

Biography

Antoninus received the Dominican habit at Santa Maria Novella, Florence, in 1403, at the hands of

his mentor, Giovanni Dominici (1356–1419), and was sent immediately to the convent at Cortona for his year-long novitiate. In 1406 he was transferred with other young professed friars to San Domenico di Fiesole. His career encompassed important roles in his own Dominican order, including prior of convents at Cortona (1417–1422), Naples (1426–29), and Florence (1436–1440) and Vicar General of the Observant Dominicans in Italy (1431, 1436/7–c. 1446). He was auditor general of the Holy Roman Rota under Pope Eugenius IV (c. 1432–1446) and was appointed archbishop of Florence by the same pope in 1446 and presided over the city during the period most associated with the Florentine Renaissance (Morçay 1913; Orlandi 1959; Cinelli and Paoli 2012). He was canonized by Pope Adrian VI in 1523 (Polizzotto 1992).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

As a reformer (Peterson 1985; Peterson 1989a), Antoninus was inspired by Giovanni Dominici, his “famous, learned” master “who was the first in Italy to raise and revive the life of the regular observance in the Order of Preachers” (Antoninus, *Summa theologica*, 1740/1959). As a thinker, Antoninus deprecated himself as someone “without the genius for higher things” with his education limited to local Dominican *studia* (Cortona and Fiesole) and, for a time, the Studio Fiorentino (Howard 1995). Despite his own humility topos, he was extolled posthumously by Aurelio Bienato (1440–1496), the Neapolitan humanist, as a “second Plato,” and by the humanist pope, Pius II, for “his theological teaching” and his “numerous volumes which are praised by the learned” (Howard 2013). Though indeed lacking training in the higher *studia* of the order, Antoninus took seriously the injunction of the Dominican Constitutions that enjoined friars always to “be reading something or thinking about something, by day and by night, at home and when they are travelling.” It was in 1444 that Antoninus decided to make “things that appealed to [him] from what [he] came across whilst reading,” available to “brothers like himself,” but who were without access to books, for preaching, hearing confessions, and the care of

souls. His collation – “his harvest of holy learning” – was distributed across his four volume *Summa theologica* and its appendix, the *Summa historialis* (or *Chronicon*) (Howard 1995; Walker 1933). The former incorporated a range of treatises on key theological topics, ecclesiastical censures, excommunication, restitution, the ornaments of women, and sermons, all of which circulated independently in both manuscript and, eventually, printed form. The four parts of the *Summa theologica* traversed all relevant fields of theology, as well as explorations of pertinent moral issues. Grounded very much in the *prima pars* of Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa theologiae*, Antoninus’s own first volume moves from considerations of the nature of the soul, the essence of man and his dignity, the powers of the soul and the intellect, the nature of the will, sin, and law of various types. The second volume treats vices, while the third turns to various states of life, “lay no less than clerical,” in church and society. The fourth treats the virtues. These, along with his shorter, explicitly pastorally oriented manuals for confessors (Antoninus 1472; 1473; 1475), made his writings the most published in Europe during the incunabulum period, apart from the Bible itself (Howard 1995; Howard 2013).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The breadth of his engagement with theology is revealed at the outset of the *Summa* where Antoninus lists some of the books upon which he had drawn. No significant medieval or near contemporary theologian or canonist is omitted, and the text of the *Summa* itself reveals many more authors not initially listed. That idea for preaching, along with the Dominican tradition of up-to-date *summae* occasioned by need and circumstance and discussions in the *collationes* (pastoral discussions in local Dominican schools, i.e., *studia*), guided his reading, and copying is indicated in the published editions of the *Summa* by the phrase “per modum praedicationis” – “by way of preaching” – appended to different sections. Antoninus’s own avowed appreciation of the theological tradition was in terms of the

preachability of any particular author's material (Howard 1995). For this reason, his theological teaching could be referred to as public theology, rather than as a theology directed to the academy. The marginalia of the autograph manuscript of the *Summa theologica* reflect Antoninus's eye for material to use on particular occasions: for the third Sunday after Trinity, the day of Pentecost, etc. His way of structuring these and other parts of his treatises generally follows his preferred mode of preaching as revealed at the very outset of his *Summa*: "A verse of a psalm is taken as a theme, because it is readily at hand, because it is frequently in use in the Church, and because it lends itself to drawing together all material into doctrine" (Howard 1995; Howard 2013).

Antoninus has often, even recently, been denigrated as a mere popularizer of Thomas Aquinas who ostentatiously quoted the latter while advancing moral theology as a separate category rather than an integral part of it. This is, in part, a reflection of the way in which Antoninus casts his compendium of theology in familiar theological categories, as had happened with the generation of Thomas's students, for example, Henry of Rimini (fl. 1308) upon whom Antoninus draws extensively in the fourth part of his *Summa*, along with a local tradition of civic preaching that harked back to Remigio de' Girolami (fl. c. 1300), and Ptolemy of Lucca (also fl. c. 1300) with a focus on "il bene commune" (bonum commune) – the common good (Howard 2013). More than his mentor Giovanni Dominici, Antoninus himself was receptive to humanist ideas and modes of thought as a basis for civic life and adopted humanist modes of rhetoric when required, particularly in his role as archbishop. He counted Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) among his friends and drew extensively on his writings and, in his later years, appointed the humanist, Francesco da Castiglione (later a canon at San Lorenzo), as his secretary (Howard 1995; Howard 2012).

His views were more moderate than those of his contemporary, the observant Franciscan preacher, Bernardino of Siena (Cretyens 1958; Cretyens 1967). This was particularly true in the area of commercial practices (De Roover 1967). His writings reflect the capacity to weigh the

views of the different authorities – ancient to recent – and he excelled in applying his theological learning to specific circumstances and problems, and in uncertain cases, he gave the practical man of affairs the benefit of the doubt, in particular in the vexed areas of loans, usury, and exchange so that he could go about his business with good conscience. Here Antoninus's understanding of conscience as an internal conviction directing action was fundamental, since actions thus justified could even be at odds with strict doctrine, at least as then currently understood (Howard 2016).

Impact and Legacy

With his writings the most published in Europe during the incunabulum period, and his *Summa theologica* appearing in almost 20 editions between 1477 and the end of the sixteenth century, Antoninus had a profound impact. His writings often were the most up-to-date sources for thinkers on a variety of topics (Gaughan 1951; Edelheit 2014), including theories of rights, such as Conrad Summenhart's (Varkemma 2012). In the nineteenth century, Antonino's writings had a resurgence and an influence on Catholic social doctrine and the question of a broad interpretation of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council.

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Pietro da Bergamo

Born: Early XV century, Bergamo

Died: 15 October 1482, Piacenza

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Abstract

Pietro dall'Almadura or dalla Maldura, known as Pietro da Bergamo, was born in Bergamo in the early decades of the fifteenth century and was an important Italian Dominican theologian. At an early age, he entered the Dominican convent of St. Stephen, in Bergamo, where he began his philosophical and theological education, which he completed in the Dominican convent of Bologna, where he especially deepened his knowledge of the thoughts and works of Thomas Aquinas. He was a priest and teacher and had illustrious students such as Domenico from Fiandra,

Paolo from Soncino, and Girolamo Savonarola. He died on October 15, 1482, in Piacenza.

His major work, published for the first time in 1473 in Bologna, is the *Tabula*, later defined *Aura*: the most comprehensive and widespread Thomistic *tabula* of its era. He also published the *Ethimologiae sive Concordantiae dictorum atque conclusionum divi Thomae de Aquino* and the *Confessione cavata de l'Antonina*.

Alternate Names

da Bergamo, Pietro; d'Almadura, Pietro; de Bergomo, Petrus; Bergomensis, Petrus; de Bergamo, Petrus; Almadura da Bergamo, Pietro; dall'Almadura, Pietro; dalla Maldura, Pietro

Biography

Pietro dall'Almadura or dalla Maldura, known as Pietro da Bergamo, was a significant Italian Dominican theologian. He was born in Bergamo in the early decades of the fifteenth century to Baldassarre, but there is no reliable information regarding his exact year of birth. The information concerning his life is few and fragmentary. At an early age, he entered the Dominican convent of St. Stephen, in Bergamo, where he began his philosophical and theological education. Around the middle of the century, he was sent to the Dominican convent of Bologna, an important center for the study and dissemination of the Thomistic doctrine, where he perfected his theological training, especially deepening his knowledge of Thomas Aquinas' thoughts and works. In 1459, the Bishop of Ventimiglia, Giacomo da Savona, ordained him priest. Three years later, in 1462, he became a teacher and in 1465 was appointed Master of the Sentences for the years 1466 and 1467. In 1471, Peter obtained his Masters in "sacra theologia" becoming a Lecturer of Theology and until 1477 wielded the post of Bachelor of the Studium. He had illustrious

students, including Bartolommeo Comazzi, Vincenzio Bandelli, Domenico da Fiandra, Paolo da Soncino, and Girolamo Savonarola. He died on October 15, 1482, in the Dominican convent of Piacenza. The city of Piacenza erected a tomb for him near the altar of St. Thomas, in the convent church, and in 1485, his remains were moved under the altar of the Dominican church of S. Giovanni in Canale (see Falzone 2007; Mazzuchelli 1753 - 1763; Piana 1963; Ridolfi 1981).

All of his published writings deal with the works of Thomas Aquinas. His major work is the *Tabula*, later called *Aurea*, published for the first time in Bologna by Baldassarre Azzoguidi in 1473. The *Tabula* is the most complete and widespread Thomistic *tabula* of its era and offers a list, in alphabetical order, of entries, accompanied by references, in order to facilitate the discovery of the places associated with those entries. Under each lemma (*dictio*) all propositions (*sententiae*) which relate to it are grouped, assigning each of them an item number (see Guyot - Sterli 2003; Kaeppli 1980; Sterli 1995).

The *editio princeps* of the *Tabula* was quickly followed by two reprints: one in 1478 and another in 1495, both in Basel. A new edition, greatly enlarged and enriched with an *Index auctoritatum*, was later published in 1497 by Ambrogio Corradi, Peter's *confratello*. A new and further enhanced edition appeared in the edition of St. Thomas's works published by order of Pius V in Rome, in 1571, the so-called *editio Piana*. The *editio Piana* has been the basis of all the editions of the *Tabula*, until the 1880 Paris and 1960 Roman editions (see Guyot - Sterli 2003; Kaeppli 1980; Sterli 1995).

After publishing the *Tabula*, Peter published in Venice, in 1476, the *Ethimologiae sive Concordantiae dictorum atque conclusionum divi Thomae de Aquino*, a small volume in which Peter collected and attempted to reconcile 1222 apparently discordant propositions from the works of Thomas Aquinas. He also left a *tabula* written for the use of confessors, the *Confessione cavata de l'Antonina*, which contains a list of sins

divided according to the commandments, the capital vices, the works of mercy, and the violations of duties (see Falzone 2007; Mazzuchelli 1753 - 1763; Ridolfi 1981).

It appears that Peter also wrote many other secular and religious works, which, however, have never been published and were exclusively used internally in Dominican convents (see Mazzuchelli 1753 - 1763).

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Pio, Alberto III

Born: 1475, Carpi

Died: 1531, Paris

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Abstract

Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi, had a humanistic education under the direction of Aldo Manuzio. He promoted the studies on the Aristotelian corpus, supporting the works of many young scholars on Aristotelian texts. He gave a key contribution to the publication by Aldo Manuzio of the *editio princeps* of the works of Aristotle. Moreover, Alberto Pio wrote two pamphlets against Erasmus of Rotterdam and Martin Luther. The success of his works in Catholic countries greatly influenced the creation of a collective image of Erasmus as the father of the Reformation and friend of Luther.

Biography

Alberto Pio, the son of Leonello and Caterina Pico, was born on July 23, 1475, in his ancestral castle in Carpi (Braghirolli 1877, p. 342; Semper et al. 1882, p. 3; Semper et al. 1999, p. 257, footnote 4). Only 2 years later, in 1477, he lost his father and was then entrusted to the protection of the other lord of Carpi, his father's brother, Marco Pio. Alberto's relative favored his son Giberto in the succession of the principality of Carpi (Semper et al. 1882, p. 3). However, since early childhood, Alberto had an exceptional educational experience, which was to leave an indelible mark on his personality (Silingardi 1876, pp. 66–69; Semper et al. 1882, p. 3; Morselli 1939, p. 7). He did not have a military education. At the express wish of his mother Caterina and on the suggestion of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Aldo Manuzio became the tutor of Alberto. The

Pigo, Azariah ben Ephraim

- [Figo, Azariah ben Ephraim](#)

learned Marco Musuro (1470–1517) was Alberto's teacher of Greek for some time during his stay at Carpi, probably until 1502 (Schück 1862, p. 107; Dionisotti 1975, p. 343 footnote 3; Vasoli 1978, p. 14; Sabattini 1994, p. 10; cf. Lowry 1986, p. 377; Pagliaroli 2004, pp. 213–93; Vasoli 2008, pp. 17–25; Pellegrini 2012, pp. 576–582).

Probably as early as in the mid-1480s, Alberto Pio was able to make numerous trips to Ferrara, where he had the opportunity to study and further his cultural interests.

Alberto was unable to devote his entire life to his studies, since, as heir of a part of a small Italian state, he was involved in the complex events that troubled the political structure of the peninsula between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. In 1490, with the support of the Gonzaga and Pico families, Alberto received the investiture of half the domain of Carpi from Emperor Frederick III, but clashes with Marco Pio and his sons, who wanted to rule over the whole Carpi, incessantly continued (Svalduz 2001, pp. 62–135). After 1494, with the death of his legal guardian Marco Pio, Alberto intensified his administrative activities, becoming more independent, as revealed by numerous letters, which he used to weave a subtle web of diplomatic relations. The young lord's influential connections in pursuing this policy were the Marquis of Mantua, Francesco Gonzaga, and the Este family, in particular Duke Ercole I. The skillful diplomatic plots woven by the young Alberto obtained him imperial benevolence and reached the goal of preventing Giberto to steal his possessory rights to Carpi. However, on July 16, 1499, Giberto transferred the rights to his half of Carpi to the Duke of Ferrara. From that moment on, Alberto was forced to divide his power over Carpi with Ercole I d'Este. It is no coincidence that, at that time, Alberto began to function as a true diplomat. He realized then that the fate not only of Carpi but of the whole peninsula was to be decided between Paris and the imperial court (Sabattini 1994; cf. Forner 2005, p. 69). Upon request of Francesco Gonzaga, between 1505 and 1506, Alberto began a diplomatic mission at the court of King Louis XII of France. The

mission failed, but from then on, Alberto Pio became one of the most prominent Italian diplomats (Rombaldi 1977, pp. 15–16). In 1507 he met Pope Julius II, who appreciated his eloquence, his culture, and, above all, his ability in handling political affairs. In April 1507, he was in France on behalf of the Holy See; in August of that year, he returned to Rome as a French ambassador. As a result of his diplomatic activity, on June 14, 1509, Emperor Maximilian dispossessed the Duke of Ferrara of his half of Carpi and made Alberto sole ruler of the town, also bestowing on him the title of count and the right to coin money and to confer degrees (Semper et al. 1882, p. 6; Rombaldi 1977, pp. 17–18; Sabattini 1994, pp. 35–36). However, clashes with the Duke of Ferrara continued relentlessly. They ended only when the imperial troops in 1512, ousting the Duke of Ferrara, rapidly occupied the town and returned it to Alberto, who, from that moment on, became again the only master of Carpi (Sabattini 1994, p. 46). The years between 1513, with the election to the papacy of Giovanni de' Medici (Leo X), and 1519, when Charles of Habsburg was elected emperor, marked the heyday of Carpi and its lord. At that time, Alberto resided mainly in Rome, where, in 1518, he had married Cecilia Orsini, a relative of Leo X, thereby consolidating his relationship with the Pope (Sabattini 1994, p. 49).

His situation changed abruptly in 1519 with the election of Emperor Charles V. He was driven by strong distrust of the Prince of Carpi, who was considered unreliable because of his previous dealings with the French. Alberto's failed confirmation as imperial ambassador inaugurated his inexorable decline and fall. The Prince of Carpi, however, remained in Rome, officially at the service of Leo X, but secretly working in the service of the French. On January 3, 1523, Alberto was officially ousted from his possessions by the commander of the imperial army, Prospero Colonna, who confiscated all of Pio's assets. Alberto was then forced to link his fate to the King of France, in an attempt to save his property. However, the disastrous defeat of the French army at Pavia (February 24, 1525) greatly weakened the French influence in Italy and with it the hopes of Alberto

Pio (Semper et al. 1882, pp. 13–15; Rombaldi 1977, pp. 32–36; Sabattini 1994, pp. 71–72). From Rome, the deposed Prince of Carpi still tried to regain his possessions, but without success. During the Sack of Rome (1527), his palace was sacked, and Alberto, after a short stay at Castel Sant'Angelo with the Pope, was forced to take refuge in France, first at Lyon and then in Paris. There he dedicated the last years of his life to the controversy with Erasmus of Rotterdam. He died on January 8, 1531. He published a first *Resposio paraenetica* (1529) and the posthumous *Tres et viginti libri* (1531) (Minnich 1996; Forner 2009a; Forner 2014).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The education of Alberto Pio, led by Aldo Manuzio, is fully placed in the humanistic tradition, geared to the study of classical languages. However, Alberto cultivated a strong interest in the works of the philosophers of every age and later on was also a promoter of philosophical studies and in particular of Aristotelianism.

Alberto was educated to the inherent familiarity with the great literary and philosophical tradition of the classical world and had a sure knowledge not only of Latin but also of Greek. An essential part of his education was represented by the reading of medieval philosophical texts, which revealed the influence on his education of the cultural interests of his maternal uncle Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Alberto Pio made profitable use of all this knowledge in his controversy with Erasmus of Rotterdam (Dionisotti 1964, 220 ff; Vasoli 1978, pp. 16–19; Kristeller 1965, pp. 84–107; Forner 2002 passim). Throughout his life, Alberto collected numerous Greek and Latin manuscripts (Mercati, 1938; Di Pietro Lombardi, 2004, pp. 215–227). The last decade of the fifteenth century was particularly important in the intellectual formation of Alberto Pio. In that period, he lived in Carpi (where, as mentioned above, he had exceptional tutors) and in wealthy Ferrara. Duke Ercole I d'Este had led the city at the height of its development and attracted artists and scholars among the

most learned men of that time. In Ferrara, Alberto met and established friendship, among the others, with Ludovico Ariosto, Jacopo Sadoletto, Pietro Pomponazzi, Celio Calcagnini, Pietro Bembo, Thomas Linacre, and Ercole Strozzi (Morselli 1931, pp. 93–112 on the teachings of humanities at the University of Ferrara; Sottili 1998, xv–xvi). From 1513 onwards, Alberto lived mainly in Rome. There, he was close to the circles of the Roman Academy and formed very friendly relations with Pietro Bembo, Jacopo Sadoletto (whom he already knew from the time of his stay at Ferrara), Girolamo Aleandro, Paolo Giovio, and Baldassarre Castiglione, as well as with renowned artists such as Bramante, Baldassare Peruzzi, and Raphael (Vasoli 1978, pp. 42–43).

During his last years in Paris, despite his age and illness, Alberto resumed his beloved studies, particularly in theology and philosophy. He needed a more in-depth knowledge of these disciplines in order to sustain his polemic against Erasmus of Rotterdam (Guaitoli 1877, p. 295; Solana Pujalte 2003, pp. 122–132).

Throughout his life, Alberto cultivated a great interest in classical wisdom, an interest, however, by no means confined to the *belles lettres*, and indeed concentrated on the works of the ancient philosophers, and also open to their medieval commentators. In this manner, he broke with the part of the humanistic movement that preferred to concentrate its attention on grammar texts or on poetic and historical works, expressing disdain for much of the medieval tradition. It should be pointed out that the only works of Alberto Pio that appeared in print were those related to the controversy with Erasmus of Rotterdam: the first was the *Epistola paraenetica ad Erasumum Roterodamum*, published in Paris in 1529, followed, shortly after the death of Alberto, by the *Tres et viginti libri*, also published in Paris in 1531.

In these two works, Alberto argued that the origin of the thought of Luther was to be found in the ancient conflict between theologians and humanists. Moreover, in his opinion, humanists gave too much importance to the study of ancient rhetoric at the expense of more robust studies in philosophy and theology. This emphasis on

ancient rhetoric, according to Alberto Pio, created the fertile ground on which the Lutheran doctrine could take root. Thus, he compared the followers of Luther and their fate to those who promoted *belles lettres* in the German-speaking lands. Alberto had carefully and patiently collected the charges against Erasmus that had already been used in the previous years by many theologians, although with little success and somewhat limited influence. In the first letter printed in 1529, Alberto, while listing all similarities between Luther's and Erasmus's thought, also seemed to hope for a recantation and clear disowning of Protestant doctrine on Erasmus's part. In the *Tres et viginti libri*, the tone of accusation against the learned Dutchman prevailed, and the work took the form of a pamphlet against Luther and all his supporters, Erasmus among them (Kristeller 1970; Gilmore 1975; Seidel Menchi 1987, pp. 43–63; Minnich 1988; Heesakkers 1993; Forner 2002, pp. xxiii–xxx).

Erasmus answered repeatedly and forcefully to these works, rightly accusing Alberto of using old ones that he had already answered. Moreover, Erasmus accused Alberto of having been secretly helped in the composition of his books by a scholar under his protection, namely, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. Sepúlveda, however, denied the accusation of being the ghost writer of the works of the Prince of Carpi (Solana Pujalte 2005).

Yet, Alberto Pio should not be remembered only as the author of treatises against the doctrines of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Martin Luther, even though were of primary importance. A proper evaluation of the activity of Alberto Pio must consider not only the works actually published under his name, but also all those works that he, thanks to his role as a patron of the arts, helped publish. The prefaces to the *cinquecentine* of Aldus Manutius provide an example of his patronage. Not only did Alberto finance the publication of the *editio princeps* of Aristotle in Greek (Dionisotti 1975) but also aided a large number of philosophers and theologians, such as Pomponazzi, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Joannes Montesdoch, Graziano da Brescia, and Andrea Barro (cf. Solana Pujalte 2003, pp. 124–26).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Impact and Legacy

Alberto Pio was one of the few Italian scholars who openly took sides against Erasmus and Luther as early as the 1520s. Alberto Pio's arguments against Erasmus did not shine out for their originality. However, he raised the cultural level of the charges against Erasmus that were previously confined within the walls of some theological schools. The success of his works in the Catholic countries inseparably tied, for better or worse, the thought of Erasmus with that of Luther and laid the theoretical foundations for the painful and controversial inclusion of the works of Erasmus in the *Index librorum prohibitorum* after the Council of Trent (Seidel Menchi 1987, 2000; Forner 2012, 2013).

Equally important, though mediated, was Alberto's role in the field of philosophical studies, especially because of his efforts to promote studies on the Aristotelian corpus. Alberto Pio himself did not take an active role in the Aristotelianism of his time. Although he mentioned Aristotelian texts in his works, Alberto did not leave us any translations, editions, or expositions of Aristotelian texts. "However he was a patron of proponents for several different varieties of Aristotelian studies. If he was not at the forefront of Aristotelian studies himself [...] he was operating steadily and effectively behind the scenes. For that reason he must be seen as one of the more important Aristotelians in Italy during the years from the *editio princeps* to the Sack of Rome" (Schmitt 1981, p. 64). In this sense, the legacy of Alberto Pio for the Aristotelian studies and for the medieval philosophy and theology is conspicuous.

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Piracy

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Pleasure in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

In Renaissance thought, we can observe a growing interest in and to a certain extent a rehabilitation of the notion of pleasure. This new interest can be understood as an expression of a general trait of Renaissance culture that showed a greater openness towards

worldly pleasures than in previous times, but it was also inspired by newly rediscovered texts containing Epicurean philosophy. In the course of the fifteenth century, new sources became available, such as Lucretius' *De rerum natura* and Diogenes Laertius' *De vita et moribus philosophorum*, which supported the growing engagement with Epicurean philosophy and a rehabilitation of his concept of pleasure. Humanists used different routes to rehabilitate the Epicurean notion of pleasure. One strategy was to reinterpret Epicurus's position and to level the differences with other schools of thought. Another one was to use the Epicurean notion of pleasure in order to counter rigid Stoic moral philosophy and reinterpret Christian morality, as can be seen most prominently in the works of Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus of Rotterdam. Although Renaissance authors contributed to the recognition of Epicurean pleasure, it still took some time before Epicurus and the notion of pleasure became fully accepted in Western philosophical thought.

Synonyms

[Felicitas](#); [Gaudium](#); [Hedone](#); [Voluptas](#)

Introduction: The New Interest in Pleasure and Epicurean Philosophy

Pleasure (*hedone*, *voluptas*) is a generic term that refers to various kinds of positive feelings, comprising sensual as well as intellectual or spiritual experiences, usually seen as in opposition to pain (*lupe*, *dolor*). In Renaissance thought, we can observe a growing interest in and to a certain extent a rehabilitation of the notion of pleasure. This new interest can be understood as an expression of a general trait of Renaissance culture that showed a greater openness towards worldly pleasures than in previous times (Ebbersmeyer 2013), as becomes evident from the art of the period (e.g., Quiviger 2010; Cole

2016), but it was also inspired by newly rediscovered texts containing Epicurean philosophy.

While the term “pleasure” plays a certain role in Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic moral philosophy, it is especially within the context of Epicurean philosophy that the term becomes central in moral thought. According to Epicurus, pleasure is the “beginning (*arche*) and fulfillment (*telos*) of a happy life” (*Letter to Menoeceus*, 127). Although Epicurus considers every pleasure to be good in itself, he does not think that every pleasure should be pursued or chosen. These and other ambiguous comments by Epicurus are the reason for the notorious problem of how to interpret the Epicurean notion of pleasure; and they allow for different, sometimes contradictory, interpretations. While the critics tend to focus on the bodily and sensual aspects of pleasure, those in favor of Epicurean philosophy accentuate its spiritual character.

Even though positive references to Epicurus and his conception of pleasure can be found in the philosophical thought of the Middle Ages – for example, in John of Salisbury’s *Polycraticus* (John of Salisbury 1938, 373–374) or Peter Abelard’s *Dialogus* (Abelard 1995, 136ssq. and 142ssq.) – Epicurean philosophy was, in general, met with deep distrust and regarded as a threat to Christian morality. Epicurus’s original works were exposed to severe censure and, as a consequence, became unavailable, and finally lost to a great extent. Only some letters and fragments of his numerous works survived.

During the early Renaissance, the main available sources concerning Epicurus’ conception of pleasure were the same as during the Middle Ages, namely the reports found in the works of Cicero, Seneca, and Lactantius. In the course of the fifteenth century, new sources became available that further supported the growing engagement with Epicurean philosophy and a rehabilitation of his concept of pleasure. In 1417, the humanist Poggio Bracciolini discovered a manuscript of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* in the monastery of St. Gallen. This gradually permeated humanist culture (see Brown 2010; Palmer

2014). Marsilio Ficino, for instance, composed in his youth a commentary on Lucretius, although he says that he later committed it to the flames (Ficino 1576, I, 933). He also wrote a treatise *On Pleasure* (*De voluptate*, 1457), in which he defended the Epicurean notion of pleasure. In addition, Ambrogio Traversari completed his translation of Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives and Opinions of the Philosophers* in 1433 (Gigante 1988). The work contains in its tenth book an account of Epicurus’ life and doctrines and three of Epicurus’ letters; these allowed for a more nuanced understanding of Epicurean philosophy. However, even before these newly rediscovered texts circulated and could make an impact, one can observe a new attitude towards Epicurus and his conception of pleasure within humanist culture (Kraye 1988, 374–386).

The Rehabilitation of the Epicurean Notion of Pleasure

Humanists used different routes to rehabilitate the Epicurean notion of pleasure. One strategy was to reinterpret Epicurus’ position and to level the differences with other schools of thought. Such a reinterpretation of the Epicurean notion of pleasure can be seen already in the dialogues *On Happiness* (*De felicitate*, c. 1400) by the Paduan canonist and cardinal Francesco Zabarella. In the first dialogue, he refutes the view that happiness (*felicitas*) consists of sensual pleasure (*voluptas*). Finally, he also clears Epicurus of such a view and shows that “Epicurus is restored to accordance with the other philosophers” (Zabarella 1655, 28–31). Despite this sharp distinction between pleasure and happiness, Zabarella extensively discusses in the third dialogue to what extent the sensual pleasures of seeing, smelling and tasting can be experienced in the afterlife (ibid. 102–111).

A similar strategy, though not within a religious but a civic context, is used by Leonardo Bruni. In his *Isagogicon moralis discipline* (c. 1421–4), an introduction to moral philosophy, he discusses the nature of the supreme good.

He asks whether it consists in pleasure, as the Epicureans hold; in virtue alone, as the Stoics assume; or in virtue supplemented by bodily and material goods, as the school of Aristotle teaches. According to Bruni, the differences between these three positions lie only in words, not in matter; hence, all three positions could be reconciled (Bruni 1928; Griffiths et al. 1987).

A more radical approach is taken by the humanist Cosma Raimondi. Around the year 1429, he wrote a *Defense of Epicurus* (*Defensio Epicuri*) in the form of a letter to Ambrogio Tignosi, in which he describes the Epicurean notion of pleasure (*voluptas*) as the highest good and defends this position against the Academic, Stoic, and Peripatetic doctrines. He discusses in detail the pleasures of the individual senses and repeatedly points out that man consists not only of soul but also of body and soul (Davies 1987).

Pleasure as the Essential Criterion for Moral Action

The Epicurean notion of pleasure was also used to counter Stoic moral philosophy. Stoic-inspired moral doctrine, which based happiness on virtue alone and disregarded bodily pleasures, was more and more considered unrealistic and hypocritical. The mismatch between the rigid Stoic ideal, on the one hand, and the observation of actual human conduct, on the other, led to growing criticism of Stoic morality and a recognition of pleasure. This recognition was conducted through a reinterpretation of Epicurean philosophy.

One of the most famous Renaissance texts discussing the Epicurean notion of pleasure along these lines is Lorenzo Valla's dialogue in three parts *On Pleasure* (*De voluptate*, 1431), later renamed *On the True Good* (*De vero bono*) (Panizza 1978; Keßler 2004; Nauta 2017). The dialogue is centered around the question of the supreme good of man. The work first defends the Stoic position that the supreme good consists in the "honorable" (*honestum*) and thus in virtue alone. This position is attacked and refuted by

the second speaker of the dialogue, who praises instead the Epicurean notion of pleasure (*voluptas*) as the highest good. In the third part of the dialogue, the last speaker, being appointed to judge the presented positions, compares the Stoic and the Epicurean argumentations and renders a judgment in favor of the Epicurean. Afterwards, however, he shows that not even the Epicureans recognize the true good; this is accessible only to Christians, who can expect to enjoy pleasures even in the afterlife, which exceed many times the pleasures of this life. The sensual pleasures of the afterlife are presented as overwhelming and far more impressive than those experienced in this life. Every Christian has to measure and compare the pleasures of this life with those of the afterlife, "for we cannot have both" (Valla 1977, 266). In any case, there is no need to fear that Christianity brings with it a loss of pleasure (Valla 1977, 304). In this way, Valla not only rehabilitates the Epicurean notion of pleasure but also reinterprets Christian morality by devaluing Stoic elements and reconciling Epicurean pleasure with Christian doctrines (De Panizza Lorch 1985; Vickers 1986; Ebbersmeyer 2010, 222–255).

A similar approach can be found in various writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam, who was a great admirer of Valla's works. Like Valla, Erasmus makes use of Epicurean philosophy in order to refute rigid Stoic morality, and like Valla, Erasmus is concerned about reinterpreting Christian morality with the assistance of Epicurean philosophy. His work *The Praise of Folly* (1509) contains numerous Epicurean arguments, which are directed against Stoic morality (Panizza 1995). Additionally, we find references to the Epicurean concept of pleasure in some of the *Colloquia*, especially in *Epicureus* (1533) (Schmitz 2004, 141–153 and 164–195).

Epicurean morals based on the concept of pleasure also became the basis for a society model, most prominently in the writings of Thomas More, a friend of Erasmus. In his fictitious travel report *Utopia* (1516), he maps out a society characterized by a strict orientation

towards utility and collective pleasure (Surtz 1957). The Utopians “reckon that all our actions, and even all our virtues, terminate in pleasure, as in our chief end and greatest happiness; and they call every motion or state, either of body or mind, in which Nature teaches us to delight, a pleasure.” (More 1997, 49).

Impact and Legacy

Although Renaissance authors contributed to the rehabilitation of Epicurean pleasure, it still took some time before Epicurus and the notion of pleasure became fully accepted in Western philosophical thought. Francisco de Quevedo wrote a *Defense of Epicurus* (*Defensa da Epicuro*, 1635), in which he defends Epicurus’ notion of pleasure. He does so at the price of depicting Epicurus’ understanding of pleasure as being essentially Stoic: “Epicurus placed happiness (*felicidad*) in pleasure (*deleyte*), and pleasure in virtue, a doctrine so Stoic, that the absence of the name cannot hide it” (Quevedo 1635, 78v). The great promoter of Epicurean philosophy, Pierre Gassendi, took up the Epicurean notion of pleasure and re-interpreted it in Christian terms (Sarasohn 1996, 51–58). He even intended to write a book that “teaches Epicurus’ doctrine of pleasure by showing in what way the greatest good consists of pleasure and how the reward of human deed and virtues is based upon this principle” (Gassendi 1972, 72; [1964 3, 102]). Another promoter of Epicurean philosophy, Walter Charleton, found it still necessary to begin his work on *Epicurus’s Morals* (1656) with “An Apology for Epicurus,” although the charges against Epicurus’ morals do not include the concept of pleasure. However, the Epicurean assumption that pleasure is the fundamental criterion for human action found its way into the moral and political thought of such prominent philosophers as Hobbes (*Leviathan* I.6) or Spinoza (*Ethica* III proposition 28) and became thus a central feature of early modern philosophy.

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Pléiade

Started: 1549, *Deffence et Illustration de la langue françoise*

Ended: 1585, Death of Ronsard

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Abstract

We have come to call “Pléiade” a group of French poets of encyclopedic learning [Joachim du Bellay (*Deffence et illustration*,

1549), Pierre de Ronsard, Pontus de Tyard, Jean-Antoine de Baïf, Jacques Peletier du Mans, Rémi Belleau, Etienne Jodelle] who aimed to revitalize the classical arts and to argue for demanding poetry in the vernacular, both erudite and inspired. Their high-handed style contrasted with that of their predecessors (the *Grands Rhétoriciens* and Marotic poets), and their poetic production was varied.

The Pléiade had an important lexical and poetic impact. Its principles were inseparably literary and philosophical, due to a humanist trust in language’s capacity to reveal the hidden qualities of things as well as in the signifying power of classical, allegorical myth (cf. Jean Dorat’s teachings). They attracted criticism because of their erudition, but also because of Reformist rejection of pagan myth and “useless” profane poetry.

The Pléiade poets embraced philosophy and the sciences, especially mathematics, cosmology and meteorology, astrology, music, bestiaries, and lapidaries. They played a pivotal role in two Academies and some contemporaneous philosophical dialogues featured them in poetry or natural philosophy. As regards the philosophy of love, they explored the philosophical and literary innovations arriving from Italy (Neoplatonism, Petrarchism), at least temporarily; these influences were, however, enmeshed with the dominant Aristotelianism.

The influence of the Pléiade was so powerful that Ronsard came to represent negatively the Renaissance legacy for the following century. It also extended to other vernacular languages in Europe.

Introduction

Although Ronsard himself used the term “Pléiade” (*Elegie à Chr. de Choiseul*, 1556), the group of poets we have come to identify with this name was not an official entity nor a school. Moreover, as Ronsard’s various lists suggest (*Bacchanales*, 1552, *Isles Fortunées*, 1553, etc.), its membership fluctuated, as did its name, the more combative term of “Brigade” sometimes

being preferred to this metaphor drawn from the seven-starred constellation in which the great Alexandrian poets were supposedly reincarnated. Broadly, though, “the Pléiade” in the sixteenth century referred to a group of French poets which formed under Henry II (1547–1559), centered around du Bellay and Ronsard, whose overt aim was to break new aesthetic ground. The group is taken to include, additionally, Pontus de Tyard, Jean-Antoine de Baïf, Jacques Peletier du Mans, Rémi Belleau, and Etienne Jodelle; but many friends and imitators were also associated with it.

These young Paris-based poets were united by a whole series of shared experiences Chamard (1939–1963): they studied under the inspiring figure of the Hellenist Jean Dorat, who had been Baïf’s and Ronsard tutor, and then at the Coqueret and Boncourt Colleges (Simonin 1990); Peletier du Mans and others such as Marc-Antoine Muret facilitated their contact, and Pontus de Tyard provided the link between the poetic worlds of Lyon and Paris. Ronsard rallied everyone around him and was the group’s leader, while Du Bellay’s *Deffence et Illustration de la langue françoise* (1549) provided it with a sort of Manifesto.

The Pléiade’s poetic production was varied, ranging from minor classical genres to the “noble” genres of the ode and the epic. It included theater (Baïf and Jodelle), treatises on poetics and on science, and philosophical dialogues in prose (Peletier and Tyard). The life paths of the individuals involved were equally diverse. Ronsard was spectacularly successful: he was protected by the Guise and Odet de Coligny (cardinal of Chastillon) and was appointed as the king’s ordinary chaplain (1559), consorting with the great (from Marie Stuart to the royal family) to the extent of earning the epithet of “prince of poets.” Du Bellay, despite being born into one of the most prestigious families in France and serving as secretary to the Cardinal Jean du Bellay, became disenchanted with his post in distant Rome, as expressed in *Les Regrets* (1558). Then there was Jodelle, whose later life was embittered by a fall from grace. The high-handed style of these aristocratic poets contrasted starkly with that of their immediate predecessors (the *Grands Rhétoriciens* and Marotic poets), even though

most of them (except Pontus de Tyard) still depended on patrons for protection and ecclesiastical office. Ronsard and others never missed an opportunity to remind their benefactors of the fame and immortality it was theirs to bestow.

The Pléiade poets were humanists of encyclopedic learning. While embracing both philosophy and the sciences, especially mathematics – practiced by Peletier and Tyard to a high standard – they were versed in the allegorical interpretation of classical myth, thanks to Dorat’s teachings (Dorat 2000), and eager to explore the philosophical and literary innovations arriving from Italy, such as Neoplatonism and Petrarchism. Their poetic aim was to revitalize the classical arts and learning and to argue for demanding poetry in the vernacular, both erudite and inspired.

The Classical Heritage and the Break with Tradition

These were the ambitions expressed in Du Bellay’s *Deffence et Illustration de la langue françoise* (1549). In the wake of the Edict of Villers-Cotterêts (1539), by which French became the official administrative language of the kingdom, the *Deffence* championed national literature in the vernacular capable of rivaling its classical predecessors. It claimed that French was adequate in all knowledge areas, just like Greek and Latin. In opposition to the neo-Latin authors, who despised the vernacular as too impoverished, Du Bellay’s work spelt out how the French language should be *defended* and made *illustrious*.

Du Bellay was not the first advocate of the merits of the vernacular compared to Latin. His work was preceded by Thomas Sébillet’s *Art poétique françois* (1548, Goyet 1990) and the *Dialogo delle lingue* (1542) written by Sperone Speroni in the context of the *questione della lingua*, which emerged out of Ciceronianism and Bemboism in Italy, in which Speroni argued against Bembo’s precepts of linguistic purism (Speroni 1978). However, the *Deffence et Illustration* had the particularity of giving a coherent and provocative vision of language and literature, on which most of the early Pléiade’s experimentation was

based. Unlike Sébillet, whose examples were drawn from early sixteenth-century French poetry, Du Bellay rejected the previous generation (the *Grand Rhétoriqueurs* and the Marotic poets) and criticized their obsession with form, their practice of translation, and implicitly their courtly focus. The desire to break with the past was motivated not only by generational conflict but also by a certain aristocratic arrogance which was quick to be condemned in an anonymous counterattack, *Quintil Horatian* (1550), attributed to Barthélémy Aneau (Goyet 1990).

The *Deffence*'s yardstick was antiquity and the proposed "defense" of the French language had the theory of imitation at its core. One should imitate the ancients, but in conformity with the unique character of one's own language. This idea that each language has a specific "property" can be understood in the context of the contemporary controversies about translating "for sense" or "word for word." Translation, Du Bellay argued, should give way to imitation and personal assimilation of sources ("*innutrition*"), which fosters creative invention. Formally speaking, Du Bellay advocated redeploying classical poetic forms and the Petrarchan sonnet; among the stylistic ornaments he recommended, there were tropes such as periphrasis, comparison, metaphor, and hyperbole. He advocated combining inspiration (*furor*) with the more technical "*labor*" of the poet, whose aim was to move the reader. Above all, for the French to become "illustrious," as intended, it must be enriched: it was still feeble, but full of unexplored potential and promise, which should be identified and cultivated, in line with a certain idea of nature and the corresponding ideal of abundance (*copia*), as theorized in the Renaissance. "Nature" remained mostly inscrutable, except as a sign of the Creator's infinite inventiveness, and was no less compatible with a Plinian or Augustinian ideal as with the Aristotelian concepts of potentiality and actuality. In order to achieve this enrichment lexically, Du Bellay advocated the use of archaisms and dialectical expressions, technical terms and neologisms, particularly compounds and derivational affixes on the basis of existing roots ("*provignement*"), Grecisms and latinisms, and the nominalization of

infinitives and adjectives. It was this neologistic activity which would characterize the Pléiade for the ensuing generations, as much as its scholarly aspirations or inspired tone. With the advent of seventeenth-century classicism, Pléiade poetry, which had been so extensively imitated throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, became discredited and, after Malherbe's assault, was dealt a death blow by Boileau's condemnation of Ronsard's conceited ambitions, his stylistic "disorder," and the fact that his poetry "in French [speaks] Greek and Latin" (*Art poétique*, I, 1674). It was not until Sainte-Beuve, as representative of Romanticism and its particular agenda, that the Pléiade partially found favor again.

Original and Innovative Aspects

The Pléiade had an important and lasting influence, beyond its brash claims. Its impact on the French language was not only lexical, but also orthographic, the grammatical structure of words, and syntax. The Pléiade poets took an interest in spelling reform (cf. Louis Meigret, 1550), and they gave explanations of their choices of spelling and agreement in order to further linguistic standardization. Peletier du Mans wrote a *Dialogue de l'Ortografie e Prononciation Françoisese* (1555), which was not taken up, and proposed spellings which he used in his own works.

The Pléiade made a significant contribution to the French vocabulary. Although its detractors focused on the neologisms which were finally not adopted, many words, whose novelty we no longer notice, were naturalized into French. Such successful transplants were a tribute to the Pléiade's attention to the development of the language, which was far greater than Classicism gave it credit for. Ronsard stands as the prime example of an emergent authorial awareness in the Renaissance precisely in the care he took to assemble his writings into a *Complete Works*, a "monument" he constantly revised (from 1560 to 1584, not to mention the posthumous edition of 1587), and above all in his responsiveness to changes in the language, suggested by a whole series of

corrections of detail he made. This was his way of aspiring to immortality. Moreover, the Pléiade's linguistic principles were inseparably literary and philosophical: the Pléiade poets were criticized for their excesses, but they were actually seeking to fashion a total poetics, through their meticulous attention to language, including current usage. This poetics was informed by a certain idea of language's dynamic signifying movement and its capacity to reveal the hidden qualities of things through hitherto unsuspected interrelations produced by wordplay. The defense of the French language was thus inseparable from a new poetics which aspired to reveal the latent potential of words and of the world and to actualize things through words, as expressed in the idea of "perfection" (based on Aristotle's articulation of potentiality and actuality) (Pouey-Mounou 2002). Despite its apparent diversity, the Pléiade's vision was thus extremely coherent, combining lexical and stylistic innovation with poetic and political goals, a new status for the inspired poet, a revitalization of learning, and theories of language and the world.

For example, the value placed on diversity was based on an idea of natural diversity, which poetry was to imitate. Ronsard in particular adhered to this principle (Castor 1964) and wrote in a wide range of genres, which are highlighted by the architecture of his *Complete Works*: in the "monumental" 1584 edition, the books of *Amours* (to which Ronsard's work has often been reduced) come first, then the other sonnets, bawdy verse (the *Gayetez*, partly derived from the *Folastries* of 1553), *La Charite*, the *Odes*, the unfinished epic *La Franciade* (1572), *Le Bocage royal* which reworks and perfects previous attempts at a mixed-genre volume (*Bocage* and *Meslanges*), the eclogues, masquerades, *Combats* and *Cartels*, the *Elegies*, the *Hynnes*, the *Poemes*, the *Epitaphes*, and lastly the *Discours*. Ronsard was always experimenting, from his first *Odes* (1550), which found favor with scholarly circles (but not with the Court), to his first book of *Amours* (1552), which earned him notoriety, through to the maturer love expressed in the *Sonnets pour Helene* (1578) and the funeral sonnets of the *Derniers Vers* (1585). He used classical literary

genres (the ode, elegy, epigram, epistle, eclogue, epithalamium, epitaph, and epic) and the genre of the sonnet; but he also wrote pieces of court entertainment and bawdy and learned verse *Folastries* (1553), the cosmological and mythological *Hymnes* (1556–1557), as well as political writings, the *Discours des Miseres de ce temps*, in which he defended the Catholic royalist cause in the first War of Religion (1562–1563). The inventiveness of his *Odes* (Laumonier 1909), which combine both Pindaric and Horatian models, and particularly the inspired and digressive development, and the extremely complex metrical and stanzaic patterns of the Pindaric odes, amply illustrate his aesthetics of diversity, which aimed at "resembling nature" (Preface to the *Odes*, 1550). This ideal of diversity was later embodied more systematically in the books of *Amours*, which Ronsard worked on throughout his life. Changing the order of his poems and their distribution between the different volumes, and changing the name of his muse, as though better to advertise a new stylistic departure, Ronsard thus broadcasted his right to stylistico-amorous renewal: the *Amours* proceeds from the inspired and platonizing Petrarchism of the first book (1552), which became *Amours de Cassandre* in 1560; moves on to the "low" style of the *Continuations* (1555–1556), which in 1560 became the *Amours de Marie*; and then chooses a quieter, platonizing vein for the *Sonnets pour Hélène* (1578). Ronsard laid claim to absolute poetic freedom and defended diversity as the epitome of his poetic art. To this end, he often destroyed the image he had built up in preceding poems, perhaps also out of irritation with his imitators. Another way in which this freedom is expressed is in the mixed genre compositions, which are placed in different parts of the *Complete Works* depending on the edition and which espouse the aesthetics of the *silva*. And although Ronsard soon distinguished himself within the Pléiade for his "noble" genres (the ode and the epic) and learned poetry (the *Hymnes*), the *Folastries* (1553), published anonymously but immediately attributed to Ronsard, was a field of experimentation in a lighter, neo-Catullan vein, with richly inventive lexical, generic, and metrical choices, mixing *odelettes*,

epigrams, and Bacchic *Dithyrambes* in free verse containing impressive series of Greco-Latin epithets and exuberant flourishes of poetic “*furor*,” as well as two blasons of the male and female genitalia in sonnet form.

This experimental aspect is a general feature of the Pléiade. Although not all the poets of the group were equally wide-ranging, their work taken as a whole gives a very varied picture and is certainly not restricted to love poetry. One need only mention Belleau’s Anacreontic odes (1556), blasons (*Petites Inventions*, 1554–1556, *Les Amours et Nouveaux Eschanges des pierres précieuses*, 1576), and *Bergerie* (1565–1572); Baïf’s lists of proverbs in the genre of the *coq-à-l’âne* (*Mimes, Enseignemens et Proverbes*, 1576–1597); Jodelle’s classicizing tragedies (*Cléopâtre captive*, 1553, *Didon se sacrifiant*, [1557?]) and comedies (Baïf, *Le Brave*, 1567); Pontus de Tyard’s philosophical dialogues (1552–1558), and the treatises and learned poetry of Peletier du Mans; and lastly the Roman works of Du Bellay (1553–1558), including the lyrical and satirical sonnets of the *Regrets*, the *Divers Jeux rustiques*, and the *Poemata*, written in Latin despite the *Deffence*.

As regards poetic technique, the Pléiade innovated around the line and the stanza. Ronsard deserves a special mention here. In naturalizing the Pindaric ode into the French language, he introduced its stanzaic and metrical flexibility, including enjambements, its digressions and obscure mythological periphrases running over several lines, and even the structure of triadic series which he explored in his experimental Pindaric ode, *A Michel de L’Hospital* (1552). He additionally worked on short forms such as the Horatian ode, the *odelette*, and the epigram, as well as longer forms inherited from classical literature. His books of *Amours* enriched the sonnet form in France, made it more regular, and brought about its gradual transformation from decasyllables to alexandrines. He was still preoccupied with the issue of the comparative merits of these types of verses in *La Franciade* (1572) and explained in his *Preface* why, after all, he used decasyllables in this poem. The Pléiade was also a key protagonist in the controversies arising out of

Ciceronianism and Bembism and influenced by Ramism, concerning the capacity of a vernacular language without prosodic features, such as French, to be a match for Latin cadences (Meerhoff 1986). The Pléiade frequently considered rhyme to be an inadequate remedy for this defect of the French language, especially as it had been the focus of the previous generation’s poetic production. Through its work on “significant” rhymes (Du Bellay), as well as on rhythm (Du Bellay’s *Deffence* had explored the interconnection between the two), on sound (Peletier), homeoteleuta, tropes, and all sorts of experimental cadences, not forgetting Baïf’s metrical patterns “*mesurés à la lyre*,” the Pléiade thoroughly explored the potential of the French language. Certain forms became more regular, and the French ear was gradually trained to accept certain patterns of rhyme, rhythm, and sound, particularly through intensive work on the sonnet form, and countless usages, which we no longer notice, were systematized.

Unlike the Pléiade’s more provocative features, which took center stage, these innovations required subtlety. Ronsard in particular, but more generally all the Pléiade, was playing a double game, pandering to the tastes of the Court while actually aiming at fashioning their public’s taste. In the first book of the *Amours* (1552), for example, the contemporary fashion for love sonnets was the vehicle for an ambitious, mythological, and prophetic type of poetry, which the Court had spurned in the earlier *Odes* (1550). The second edition, in 1553, contained a commentary by Marc-Antoine Muret designed to elucidate its more obscure aspects and thus win over the public, and also musical settings, so that the sonnets could be sung in the order of their rhyme schemes. The series of corrections which Ronsard made to the *Odes* and *Amours* in his *Complete Works* (Terreaux 1968) bear out this negotiation with a public’s evolving tastes, which must be both flattered and transformed. These ambitious new goals, and the Pléiade’s real contribution to the French vocabulary and French poetic forms, explain the publication in the second half of the sixteenth century of anthologies (Gilles Corrozet, *Le Parnasse des poètes françois modernes*, 1571) and dictionaries of rhetorical technique

(La Porte's *Epithetes*, 1571, 2009) in which this poetry was championed as a model for poetic composition in French, just as Homer and Virgil had been models for Greco-Latin literature. The collaboration of Pléiade poets, already in 1555, on the translation into French of the Latin verse quotations in Ramus's *La Dialectique* was a true sign of their consecration and also, of course, of the effectiveness of their self-promotion (Ramus 1996).

Their growing acclaim was also amplified by the dynamics within the group, which took the form of joint ventures or, conversely, of individual members marking out their particular territory. Joint ventures included Baïf's bawdy verse (the second book of *Amours de Meline*, 1552), Ronsard's *Folastries* (1553), Magny's *Gayetez* (1554), Tahureau's *Mignardises* (1554), and Vauquelin de La Fresnaye's *Foresteries* (1555). One should also mention the Bacchic festivities crowning the success of Jodelle's *Cléopâtre captive* in 1553, which incorporated Baïf's and Ronsard's free-verse *Dithyrambes*, published in *Poèmes* and *Folastries* respectively, and also featured a ram adorned for sacrifice on the altar of Bacchus, which was still controversial a decade later, reemerging in the Protestant polemic sparked by the *Discours des Miseres de ce temps* (1562–1563, Pineaux 1973). As for relations between the Pléiade members, there was the exchange of blazons between Belleau and Ronsard and Du Bellay and Ronsard's well-known rivalry, which was one of the reasons for Du Bellay's emphasis on the supposedly "simple" style of his *Regrets* in opposition to Ronsard's learned and inspired poetry. More generally, these relations shaped the Pléiade poets' and their imitators' self-promotional strategies, under the acknowledged leadership of Ronsard. The "Brigade" claimed a new status for the poet, on the basis of the *Deffence*'s theory of imitation; the provocative gestures with which it often accompanied its inventive reworkings; the foregrounding of inspired "*furor*," giving a flattering image of the poet; and Ronsard's decision to create a poetic "monument," as well as his assertion in the *Discours* that the poet should carry a certain weight in public affairs. These were

precisely the ambitions of the poet – considered inflated – for which Ronsard would later be criticized.

Interconnections

Another characteristic of Pléiade poetry was its self-conscious erudition, for which it was also criticized. Its scholarly and recondite references to classical mythology, for example, embodied both an elitist address to the learned, who were indeed the first to recognize the young Ronsard's talent, in the *Odes*, and a fascination with the suggestive potential of little-known myths, often inspired by contemporary annotated editions and influenced by Dorat's allegorical approach in his teachings (Dorat 2000). These references also reflected a humanist trust in the signifying power of "the fable" (myth), understood as the locus of the secrets glimpsed by the ancients. The corresponding aesthetic, with its valorization of periphrasis, erudite epithets, and metaphor, favored circuitous indirection attuned to the fleeting revelation of the hidden mysteries of nature. It understandably had a certain prestige, linked to the aura surrounding antiquity and to the figure of the inspired poet-prophet (*vates*), at once an initiate and a discoverer, whose oracular style expressed his privileged status among men. However, not all the Pléiade poets were as erudite in their use of mythology. While Ronsard's later work was a little more straightforward, he was initially the most obscure, especially in the *Odes* and the first book of the *Amours*, in which his muse Cassandra is named after the Trojan prophetess with whom Apollo, the god of inspired prophecy, fell in love, but also after a particularly obscure version of the same myth, Lycophron's *Alexandra*, which Dorat had taught. Overall, however, the Pléiade poets unapologetically drew on pagan and classical themes in abundance.

This attracted criticism on two fronts. The first emerged with the publication of the *Odes* and resurfaced in the seventeenth century, as the aesthetics of clarity took hold. It targeted the obscure, learned references that Muret's 1553 critical edition of the *Amours* had sought to elucidate.

However, even if Ronsard later aimed for greater transparency, after the exuberance of the *Odes* and the first book of the *Amours*, he remained unrepentant, since his poetic program was inseparable from this work on vocabulary and the use of tropes and erudite allusions: the aesthetics of “illustration” implied exploring the world through language and using the unexpected interconnections between words to reveal the nature of things. The Pléiade also espoused the humanist ideal of the richly suggestive layers of meaning latent in the “fable”: this was embodied in Ronsard’s image (*Hymne de l’Autonne*, 1563) of the shimmering “*fabuleux manteau*” – a version of the *integumentum* – which both veil and reveal the mysteries glimpsed by the inspired poet. This approach to myth is derived from the notion of *prisca theologia*, the “first theology” considered to be present in pagan myth before the Christian Revelation, which justified the Neoplatonist and humanist return to Antiquity. Ronsard alluded to this in his *Hymne de l’Hercule Chrestien* (1555), one of his few overtly Christian pieces, in which he christianized the myth of Hercules, and again at the end of the controversy around his *Discours* (*Responce aux injures*, 1563), when he poured scorn on the criticisms of his Protestant adversaries. Such attacks relate to the second type of criticism leveled against Ronsard’s poetry, this time by Reform poets who rejected pagan myth (in favor of Biblical myth) and condemned the spiritual “uselessness” of profane poetry. This was what caused the rift between the Pléiade and the newly converted Théodore de Bèze after 1550, when, in the Preface to his *Abraham sacrificant*, he criticized the Pléiade’s use of pagan myth and their emphasis on love (Smith MC 1995). The differences in these issues were irreconcilable.

The affair of the ram (sacrificed or not) in the *Dithyrambes* of 1553 resurfaced for the same reasons in the polemic generated by the *Discours*, namely, its explicit paganism which seemed to call into question Ronsard’s Catholic commitment (Pineaux 1973). In their politico-religious leanings, the Pléiade poets were in the Catholic camp and sometimes expressed this through satirical pieces (Jodelle), or more substantial forms, but over a limited period, such as Ronsard’s *Discours*

des Miseres de ce temps (1562–1563). The claim to political status for the poet is what makes the *Discours* particularly striking, to the extent that some critics have labeled it – wrongly, and somewhat anachronistically – as the first example of “committed” literature in the French language. Be that as it may, the positions adopted are derived as much from a certain idea of the person of the king, the kingdom (Ménager 1979), and the place of man in the world as from properly religious convictions; they conveyed a world view, in which religion occupied a particular place. This global vision explains the coherence of the different elements comprising Ronsard’s poetics, both the politico-religious choices and the humanist inspiration. It also explains the fact that at the end of the first War of Religion and the polemic sparked by Ronsard’s *Discours*, it was one of the most brilliant defenses of his poetics, the *Responce aux injures* (1563), which could put an end to the debate.

The Pléiade was also interested in natural philosophy (Schmidt 1938). Peletier du Mans and Pontus de Tyard in particular were drawn to scientific ideas, as expressed in their treatises and dialogues as well as in their love poetry. Peletier, for example, who was known for his contribution to mathematics, wrote treatises on arithmetic, algebra, and geometry and his *L’Amour des Amours* (1555) draws on astronomy. Tyard’s Petrarchist and Platonizing vision of love guides at once his translation of Judah Abravanel (Leone Ebreo, 1551) and his philosophical writings (1552–1558). The scientific frames of reference were of their time – a vulgarized Aristotelianism blended with Neoplatonism and other classical theories – but many of the writings and debates associated with these figures at the time prove that they were also familiar with Copernicus’s *De Revolutionibus* (1543). Less consistently, the poets showed an interest in meteorology, such as Baïf’s *Les Météores* (1567) and Ronsard in many poems and metaphors. Belleau’s blazons show another facet of this scientific focus: his sources are Pliny, Albertus Magnus, the major bestiaries and lapidaries, and various contemporary encyclopedias. As for Ronsard, his *Hymnes* (1555–1556) and many aspects of his work

express a world view which, within the cosmological frameworks of his time, borrows eclectically from atomism, Empedocles (order and disorder), and Neoplatonism. The image which emerges is one of a coherent universe dominated by the tension between order and disorder (*concordia discors*), by the transmutation of elements into each other, and by a movement oriented toward the revelation of the concealed potential of the world, which is the task of poetry (Pouey-Mounou 2002). His *Hymne de la Philosophie* (1555) and several exordia to the hymns of the *III Saisons de l'an* (1563) illustrate his encyclopedic conception of poetry; according to which, by sifting through all knowledge, the poet may reconstitute for mankind fragments of divine mysteries which take the veiled form of myth.

The Pléiade's encyclopedic concerns are also evident in their pivotal role in two Academies (Yates 1988). The *Académie de Poésie et de Musique* presided by Baïf with Thibault de Courville (under Charles IX, 1570) worked with musicians to experiment with "quantitative verse [*vers mesurés*] set to music." Music was considered to have an encyclopedic value – capable of including all the arts and sciences – and philosophical, social, moral, and mystical "effects." In the second of these Academies, the *Académie du Palais*, Henry III invited Ronsard, Baïf, and Tyard, among others, to his private apartments in the Louvre to discuss problems of morals and natural philosophy in his presence. The attention given to these sorts of issues was already evident in Tyard's two *Solitaires* (1552 and 1555), which contained a theory of inspiration and a theory of music, respectively. Tyard's other philosophical writings, such as *L'Univers* (1557) or *Mantice* (1558), engaged with contemporary scientific debates. Other philosophical dialogues featured Pléiade poets on poetry or natural philosophy: Louis Le Caron's *Dialogue IV* ("Ronsard, ou de la Poésie," 1556) (Le Caron 1986) had Ronsard and Jodelle debating the relations between poetry and philosophy, the influence of Plato, the sociopolitical role of poetry, and the different aspects of poetic creation. Guy de Bruès's *Dialogues* (1557, Bruès 1953) set a dogmatic Ronsard against a

relativist Baïf on questions of natural philosophy, in relation, among other things, to Copernicus's model. These dialogues are fictional, but they reflect the freedom of tone and the keen involvement in contemporary philosophical debate, which can be found in some of these authors' poems: thus, one of Ronsard's corrections to his sonnets alludes to a debate opposing contemporary readings of Cicero and Aristotle around the question of *endelechy* or *entelechy*. The *Douze fables de fleuves ou fontaines* (1586) which, according to its publisher Tabourot, Baïf composed to decorate the Château of Anet, is one of the many examples of collaboration between the arts, which were all to be united within encyclopedic learning. It is significant in this respect that the logician, mathematician, and rhetorician Petrus Ramus took such a close interest in the Pléiade's debates.

Lastly, as regards the philosophy of love, the Pléiade was initially influenced by Petrarchist and Platonizing trends. These were introduced by Tyard (*Erreurs amoureuses*, 1549) and redeployed by Du Bellay (*L'Olive*, 1549), Ronsard (First Book of *Amours*, 1552), and Peletier (*L'Amour des Amours*, 1555). The development of Ronsard's *Amours*, with the "low" style of the *Amours de Marie* in counterpoint to the First Book, and then the *Sonnets pour Helene* which alludes to the Platonizing culture of his muse, but in a less pronounced way, correspond partly to an aesthetic of *variatio*. This aesthetic is also a hallmark of Baïf's poetry, in the range of subjects from which he drew his inspiration, and the formal diversity of the two books of the *Amours de Meline* (1552) and the *Amours de Francine* (1555). But it was also part of a more general development in which certain Pléiade poets began to reject Petrarchism, at least temporarily. Du Bellay, for instance, criticized Petrarchizing clichés (in his elegy "A une Dame," 1553, rebaptized "Contre les pétrarquistes," 1558), as did Ronsard in the opening text of the *Amours de Marie* ("Elegie à son Livre," 1567). Tyard, by contrast, remained exceptionally faithful to Petrarchist and Platonizing influences throughout his work. Neoplatonic influences were, moreover, enmeshed with the dominant Aristotelianism,

which was itself hospitable to new developments from Italy (Petrarchism and Neoplatonism), as well as, occasionally, to other systems of thought.

Impact and Legacy

The influence of the Pléiade in the second half of the sixteenth century was so powerful that Ronsard, along with the Protestant poet Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas, came to represent negatively the Renaissance legacy for the following century. Although this image is something of a caricature, the idea of language and the relation to the world embodied in Pléiade poetry is indeed typical of this period and was influential well beyond it, despite the disrepute into which the Pléiade fell in France from the seventeenth century onwards. The Pléiade's influence also extended beyond the borders of France through the defense and illustration of other vernacular languages in Europe and through foreign translations and imitations by poets, theorists, lexicographers, and members of foreign Academies.

The Pléiade's significance certainly went further than the group of seven poets one usually associates with the name. There was a whole nebulous of individuals – poets, playwrights, prose writers, artists, historians, moralists, lexicographers, and printers – “adopted” by and loosely attached to this core group. The Pléiade was thus associated with a significant proportion of the artistic production of the second half of the sixteenth century in France (Raymond 1927): with the theater of La Pérouse, Garnier and Grevin, Des Autels's poetry, and the paintings of Nicolas Denisot du Mans, called by his anagram “le conte d'Alsinois.” Among the different groups, and generations of imitators, some are distinguished by age, for example, the youngest group comprising Magny, Tahureau, Vauquelin de La Fresnaye, and Scévole de Sainte-Marthe. Philippe Desportes deserves a special mention, because he in certain respects eclipsed Ronsard's fame in the latter's declining years. One should also remember that certain major sixteenth-century poets, such as Du Bartas and Agrippa d'Aubigné, were not associated with the Pléiade, although they admired Ronsard and to

an extent were influenced by him – for example, Agrippa d'Aubigné's *Printemps* or Du Bartas in his cosmological themes, his notion of enthusiasm, and his use of learned epithets. After Ronsard's death, some of those who inherited the Pléiade's serious and profane vein distanced themselves from its linguistic model and produced a more polished, courtly style (Bertaut, Du Perron). Du Monin, by contrast, typified a philosophical approach which reproduced all the Pléiade's excesses, while Du Bartas embodied a Christian approach different from that of the Pléiade, but shaped by the latter's cosmological ambitions and linguistic enrichment. As regards love poetry, Petrarchist poetry was influenced by the italianizing style of Desportes – with his inflamed lyricism, his aesthetics of the “*pointe*,” and his taste for verbal artifice – and, in a less noble vein, “Catullian” poets, exemplified the general “disintegration of the aesthetic ideal of 1550” (Raymond 1927), despite the existence of a few faithful followers.

The Pléiade's influence persisted in seventeenth-century France among neo-Petrarchist followers of Desportes, in pastoral poetry, and also in a “black,” anguished neo-Petrarchism, of almost baroque sensibility, of poets such as Nuysement and Motin (Jarrety et al. 1997). To a lesser extent, its poetics informs licentious libertine writings, which drew copiously on Ronsard's *Folastries* and Du Bellay's *Divers Jeux rustiques*. Yet, as Classicism took hold, with its ideal of clarity and rationality, its linguistic purism, and grammaticalization, most of the salient features of Pléiade poetry came to be condemned, and Ronsard was paraded as a linguistic counterexample. Criticism was leveled primarily at the mythological and pagan themes, the neologisms – particularly compound adjectives – dialectal usage, archaisms, grecisms, and latinisms; the technical, prosaic and “base” terms, nominalizations, and inversions; and every form of poetic license, erudition and scientific and specialized language, as well as the figure of the inspired poet, which was abundantly caricatured. All these Pléiade features came to define the pedantic pedagogue pursuing Court favor in his affected language. The Pléiade style had additionally become less striking and more stereotyped

due to increasingly mediocre imitations and the appearance of various glossaries, manuals, and commonplace books. More fundamentally, the rejection of this legacy was a rejection of modes of thought: the poetic choices reflected social divisions, between the Latin sphere of the Colleges and the world of the salons and the Court; a changing relation to the past, most spectacularly illustrated by the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*; a strongly normative and dogmatic world view, whose moral order, as imposed by Richelieu, was also a reaction to the recent past of religious conflict and of scientific and libertine challenges. These choices also expressed a relation to language, which could almost be called ontological: what counted henceforth was conceptual clarity, syntactical coherence, the ideal of a perfect fit between language and thought, and the value of appropriateness, increasingly interpreted as *bienséance*. First Malherbe, then Boileau, consigned the Pléiade to oblivion, while at the same time, they were heavily indebted to the enriched lexis and the systems of versification and rhyme the Pléiade had developed.

The Pléiade's influence in Europe was linked to the struggle for vernacular languages and also, historically, to a large number of French Protestant émigrés in the countries of Northern Europe. In the Netherlands, for example, poets, theoreticians, and lexicographers imitated Ronsard, Du Bellay, and Du Bartas (Smith PJ 2010). The context of Anthoni Smyters's translation of de La Porte's *Epithetes* (1571) in 1620 was that of claims for the use of the vernacular in Dutch poetry among Flemish refugees and particularly around Karel van Mander, a painter, and literary mentor, and around the literary society *De Witte Angieren* ("the White Carnations") in Haarlem. The Dutch poet Jan van der Noot, who modeled his work on Du Bellay, Ronsard, Marot, and Du Bartas, and introduced the alexandrine into Dutch poetry, helped bring the Pléiade to England and Germany, during the spells of exile which his changing religious affiliations brought upon him. Spenser, and most of the great English poets of the time, reflect this influence. Martin Opitz in Germany, whose treatise on poetics (1624) owed much to the Pléiade, had a unifying role which

was crucial for German poetry. A member of the Fruitbearing Society (*Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*), and in contact with the Italian *Crusca*, his literary choices illustrate the highly paradoxical nature of this legacy: his recasting of the Platonic theory of enthusiasm; his preoccupation with technique (genres, versification, and rhetorical devices); his praise of the vernacular, which he sought to unify while rejecting dialectal usage; his advocacy of compound neologisms to which Germanic languages are so conducive; and the new metrical patterns he introduced in order to simplify, but also standardize, versification – all these changes led the Pléiade's influence, as transmitted by Opitz, to be interpreted in Germany as a new form of academicism, in the footsteps of Luther, just when French Classicism was rejecting this tradition for the opposite reasons. When he came into contact with French literary circles during his stay in Paris (1630), Opitz was thus both disconcerted and disappointed (Opitz 2009).

So, as we have seen, the relation to language depended on the specific context of reception. The linguistic unification sought by Opitz and both the German (*Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*) and Italian (*Crusca*) Academies was intolerant of dialecticisms, whereas French, which was more solidly structured as a national language, had less to fear from these at the time of the Pléiade. Ideological and religious factors were also crucial: the Protestant convictions of the Pléiade's Dutch and German imitators made them suspicious of its paganism, despite Du Bartas's successful reworking of the topics of enthusiasm. Such curious inverted trajectories, by which outside France the Pléiade's contribution was understood in terms of linguistic standardization and academicism, in such stark contrast to the terms of its reception (and rejection) by French Classicism, illustrate just two aspects of a complex influence, from which each literary history has retained only what suited it.

Cross-References

- [Atomism](#)
- [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)
- [Tyard, Pontus de](#)

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Poinsot, John

Born: Lisbon, 9 July 1589

Died: Fraga, Spain, 17 June 1644

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Abstract

John of St. Thomas, O.P. (Poinsot), was a Portuguese Dominican who was one of the most significant Thomists of his order during the seventeenth century. Born in Lisbon in 1589 as John Poinsot, he would take the name “John of St. Thomas” upon his admission to the Order of Preachers in 1610. Before joining the religious life, Poinsot studied arts at the University of Coimbra where Jesuit learning and education were in full force. From Coimbra, Poinsot followed his father, liege to the Archduke Albert of Austria, to Flanders. There Poinsot enrolled in the University of Louvain where he studied theology. John of St. Thomas

Aquinas's life was spent teaching in the various houses of studies that the Dominicans oversaw, but perhaps his most significant appointment was to the University of Alcalá where he held the cátedra de vísperas and then the cátedra de prima. During his time at Alcalá, John of St. Thomas authored the two texts for which he is most famous: the *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus* and *Cursus theologicus*. John of St. Thomas was forced to leave his academic life behind when he was chosen to be the confessor of King Philip IV. The Dominican died in his king's service at Fraga in 1644.

Biography

John Poinsot (John of St. Thomas), O.P. (Lisbon, 9 July 1589–Fraga, Spain, 17 June 1644), after his brother Louis Poinsot (d. 1655), was the second son of Peter Poinsot, secretary to the Archduke Albert of Austria, and Maria Garcez. In addition to figures such as Johannes Capreolus (ca. 1380–1444) and Tommaso de Vio Cajetan (1469–1534), Poinsot ranks as one of the most outstanding proponents of Thomism not only during the golden age of Spain's second scholasticism but for all time. In a deathbed pronouncement, Poinsot exclaimed that in the last 30 years of his life – his entire scholarly career – he had never written nor taught anything that was discordant with the truth or with the thought of the Angelic Doctor (*CT*, xii, n. 39).

Poinsot's academic life began in Coimbra where he, together with his brother Louis, enrolled in the university that had become one of the leading centers of education on the Iberian Peninsula. Associated with the Society of Jesus, Coimbra was home to some of the towering Jesuit intellectuals including the Conimbricenses, who produced several volumes of Aristotelian commentaries, Pedro da Fonseca (1528–1599) – also known as the “Portuguese Aristotle” – Luis de Molina (1535–1600), and Francisco Suárez (1548–1617). Concerning this last figure, though Coimbra was Suárez's home between 1597 and 1615, it is not likely that the youthful Poinsot had the occasion to study under the Jesuit since during

Poinsot's stay Suárez was embroiled in a controversy concerning the validity of epistolary confession between 1602 and 1604, which ultimately necessitated Suárez's travel to Rome to render an account of his (condemned) position to the Holy See. Poinsot in the meantime was in the midst of his arts studies and was awarded a bachelor of arts in 1605. Though Poinsot did not study immediately under Suárez, the latter would nevertheless exercise a considerable degree of influence over the future Dominican as shall be discussed below.

After completing his initial studies in the arts, in October 1605 Poinsot continued with a theological course of studies that he would be suspended in short order so that in March 1606 he could accompany his father to Flanders. Poinsot's academic hiatus was brief and he enrolled in the University of Louvain to continue his theological studies, where he earned a baccalaureate in biblical studies in 1608 (Doyle 1998, 117). Concurrent to these studies, Poinsot had been influenced by the Dominican preacher Thomas de Torres (Deely 1994, 262), and so on 17 July 1609, he entered the Dominicans at the Convent of Our Lady of Atocha. One year later to the day (17 July 1610) Poinsot made his formal religious profession and took the name by which he would be known in late scholasticism: John of St. Thomas.

While at Atocha, Poinsot spent five additional years (1610–1615) with philosophical and theological studies, and then from 1615 to 1620, he accepted responsibilities as a teacher in the arts (Doyle 1998, 117–18). His teaching career next took him to the Dominican priory at Plasencia where he lectured in theology for 5 years before being sent to the University of Alcalá. At Alcalá he was tasked with mounting responsibilities both within the Order of Preachers and beyond: first, as regent of studies in 1626 and, then, in 1627 as a consultant to the Supreme Council of the Spanish Inquisition. Nevertheless, Poinsot's development as a scholar continued unabatedly, and on 27 July 1630, he attained the cátedra de vísperas, which he held until 1640. Meanwhile, in 1633 Poinsot completed his doctorate in theology and began work on his *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus* (Doyle 1998, 118), which he published in Rome between 1637 and 1638. Upon completion of that project, Poinsot undertook another project, one that would

systematize theology, which he published as the *Cursus theologicus*. Eventually, on 1 October 1641, Poinsot assumed the cátedra de prima after its previous occupant, Peter of Tapia, became the bishop of Segovia (Ramirez and Combefis 1885, col. 804).

Poinsot had to abandon this final position in 1643 when King Philip IV selected the Dominican as his confessor. He accompanied Philip on military campaigns, and it was during Philip's siege of Lérida that Poinsot fell ill. On 17 June 1644, Poinsot died at the age of 55. His remains were transferred to the Convent of Our Lady of Atocha, where he had begun his religious career over three decades earlier.

Logic

Poinsot's *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus* opens with a two-part treatise on logic. He begins with the recognition that "In all arts two things must especially be considered, namely, the matter on which the art is performed, and the form, which is induced in such matter" (*Log.*, I prol., prae. 2). With respect to logic – which here Poinsot evidently regards as an art but elsewhere more properly as a (speculative) science (*Log.*, II, q. 1, a. 4) – there will likewise be a twofold consideration. Accordingly, the first – and notably shorter – part of his *Ars logica* is devoted to the study of formal logic, while the second, longer part takes up his material logic.

Formal Logic

Poinsot's discussion of formal logic unfolds according to the three operations of the intellect: simple apprehension (*simplex apprehensio*), judgment (or as he puts it composing or dividing), and reasoning in which one moves discursively and infers some truth from a prior known truth. He begins with a treatment of the "ultimate terms of resolution" that constitute discursive reasoning, namely, the terms composing the subject and predicate of propositions, before moving on to a discussion of signs (*signa*),

names (*nomina*), and *verba*. Following the operations of the intellect, Poinsot examines what pertains to judgment (i.e., composing and dividing) with a look at *oratio*, the mode of knowing, definitions, dividing, argumentation, and propositions and their kinds, in addition to other related issues such as supposition, appellation, opposition, and the square of opposition. Finally, with respect to the third act of the intellect, reasoning, Poinsot treats induction, syllogisms (and their modes), fallacies, and various argument forms.

Material Logic

While Poinsot's formal logic largely parallels the *Prior Analytics* of Aristotle and Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales* (Doyle 1998, 118), his substantially longer material logic unfolds what can be found in the *Posterior Analytics*, viz., the elements of and requirements for a science (*scientia*); the *Topics*, with matters related to probability; the *Sophistic Refutations*; and the rest of the works from the *Organon*, viz., matters pertaining to demonstration, probability, and dialectics. Among the first questions Poinsot addresses is whether or not logic is an art or a science. Having already given some indication that logic functions as an art in the prior section, here Poinsot fills out his account and explains that because logic performs demonstrative acts, it "is truly and properly a science, and, however, it is simultaneously a liberal art" (*Log.* II, q. 1, a. 2). Furthermore, according to Poinsot, the formal and adequate object of logic is *ens rationis*, not in all of its extension (e.g., privations and negations), but in terms of "relations," which Poinsot understands in terms of the logical intentions (*Log.* II, q. 1, a. 3).

Also of note in Poinsot's material logic is his rejection of Duns Scotus's teaching on univocity in support of Cajetan's theory of proper proportionality. Cajetan, says Poinsot, has "fully and subtly" addressed the difficulties involved with analogy in the *De nominum analogia* such that he has left very little for Poinsot himself to add (*Log.* II, q. 13, a. 3). Citing the same divisions as

Cajetan of analogy (viz., inequality, attribution, and proper proportion) and finding textual support for this division in Thomas Aquinas's *Sentences* I, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1 (ibid.), Poinsot follows Cajetan according to the primacy of proper proportionality (*Log.* II, q. 13, a. 4).

Occupying questions 21 through 23 is Poinsot's important treatise on signs which, among the questions of the *Ars logica*, perhaps best manifests the influence of the Conimbricenses, for whom semiotics was a perennial concern (Doyle 1998, 118). Each sign, whether it be formal or instrumental, fundamentally represents something other than itself (*repraesentat aliud*) to a knower (*Log.* II, q. 21, a. 1). For Poinsot, the characteristic of signs is their relational character, but, he points out, such relation is not predicamental; rather, it is transcendental or a relation "*secundum esse*" (ibid.). Predicamental relations will not suffice since some signs refer not only to things but to *entia rationis* or relations of reason, which are not real (i.e., predicamental) beings (ibid.). In sketching out his semiotic theory, Poinsot concerns himself with real relations (which determine natural signs [*Log.* II, q. 21, a. 2]), the nature of the terms involved in the relations (ibid., a. 3), extrinsic relations (ibid., a. 4), and the formal and effective causes of signification (ibid., a. 5). Important for Poinsot's consideration here is the division of signs into formal and instrumental (*Log.* II, q. 22). As an instance of the former, Poinsot holds that concepts or expressed species are most properly signs and so too are the sensible species expressed in the knower's sense power (*Log.* II, q. 22, a. 2).

Poinsot's material logic concludes with an examination of science considered as: distinct from some evident *habitus* (*Log.* II, q. 26, a. 1), as subaltern (ibid., aa. 2–3), and the relation of science to "*habitus inevidentes*," i.e., opinion, belief, and suspicion (ibid., a. 4). Of particular concern for Poinsot is the relationship between science, on one hand, and opinion and faith, on the other, and whether or not they are incompatible (ibid., a. 5). Finally, Poinsot closes his *Ars*

logica with a treatment of what constitutes the unity and diversity of sciences (*Log.* II, q. 27).

Natural Philosophy

The remaining two volumes of Poinsot's *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus* contain his philosophy of nature. These volumes are organized according to a fourfold division: common mobile being, corruptible mobile being, incorruptible mobile being, and mobile animate being. In its actual execution, however, Poinsot only brings to publication three of the four divisions. Absent is the second part, which was supposed to be a tract of "mobile incorruptible being," that is, a treatise on astronomy (Doyle 1998, 119). There is some speculation that, aware as he was of Galileo's 1633 condemnation, Poinsot was not eager to have his own astronomical theory attract the interests of ecclesiastical observers (Deely 1994, 262).

The first part of Poinsot's natural philosophy, which considers mobile being in general, consists largely of an exposition of Aristotle's *Physics*. It first treats the principles of nature: prime matter (*Phil. Nat.* I, qq. 2–3), form (q. 4), and privation (q. 5), as well as Aristotle's basic hylomorphic theory (qq. 6–8). There is a notable exception, however, to the basic Aristotelian program that Poinsot follows (Doyle 1998, 119). In question seven, Poinsot addresses subsistence and existence, which, as he notes, do not pertain to the constitution of nature itself, but they come (*adveniunt*) to the totality of what nature is. Here, Poinsot follows Thomas Aquinas's teaching that "existence in created things is distinguished really (*a parte rei*) from [their] essence" (*Phil. Nat.* I, q. 7, a. 4).

Concerning the second book of the *Physics*, Poinsot addresses the distinction between nature, art, and the unnatural (*violentus*) (q. 9). Also of significance is his detailed treatment of the four Aristotelian causes (qq. 10–13). Some of the other topics treated are motion and action (q. 14), infinitude (q. 15), place and where (*ubi*) (q. 16), the void (q. 17), and time (q. 18). The first part

concludes with the reduction of eternal motion to a first mover (qq. 23–26). In his argument for a prime mover based on the motion of the world, Poinsot holds two things on faith: first, that the world (and its motion) has no beginning in time and, second, that God produced the world out of no necessity (*Phil. Nat.* I, q. 24, a. 1). Poinsot follows Aristotle in holding that “from motion a first and entirely immobile mover can immediately and directly be demonstrated,” and, following up on this, that certain attributes of this first mover can be determined as that which is commensurate with pure act. Also important to Poinsot here are Thomas Aquinas’s two premises found in the *prima via* that “everything that is moved is moved by another” and “an infinite regress in moved movers is impossible” (*Phil. Nat.* I, q. 24, a. 3).

The third part of Poinsot’s natural philosophy extends beyond the *Physics* and elucidates Aristotle’s *De generatione et corruptione* and *Meteorologica*. Poinsot devotes 12 questions to the former text ranging over issues such as the generation of substances and their corruption, alteration, intension and remission, action and reaction, mixtures, condensation and rarefaction, nutrition, and growth. He ends his discussion of the first book of *De generatione et corruptione* with a discussion of the principle of individuation, which, Thomist that he is, he identifies with quantified signate matter (*Phil. Nat.* III, q. 9, a. 4). The remaining questions deal with elements and first qualities (q. 10), mixtures (q. 11), and reproduction (q. 12). His work on meteorology is relatively short and addresses the standard terrestrial and sublunary phenomena of the day such as the moon and its phases, meteors, comets, thunder, lightning, and even rainbows, wind, clouds, and rain. His last tractate in this section concerns metals: their efficient causes, kinds, and specific properties.

Poinsot concludes his exploration of natural philosophy with a 12-question volume on animate being, which corresponds to Aristotle’s *De anima*. He begins with a consideration of the soul in general. Poinsot argues against the Scotistic school and before it Avicenna, who maintained a

plurality of substantial forms in one and the same composite substance (*Phil. Nat.* IV, q. 1, a. 3). He then discusses various kinds of souls and their powers beginning with vegetative souls and moving to sensitive souls. Poinsot closes his discussion of the soul with an examination of intellectual souls, their immortality, and their faculties. Beginning with question nine, Poinsot’s focus shifts to the intellectual soul together with its faculties, concept formation, and will.

Cursus theologicus

Poinsot opens his *Cursus theologicus* with a discussion of the scientific character of theology. “Theology,” he says, “is knowledge about God which is reasoned to. . .” (*CT* I, q. 1, d. 2, a. 1, n. 1). Like Aquinas, Poinsot considers the discursive and syllogistic character of theology to be indicative of its scientific character. Unique to Poinsot is his understanding of theology as functioning in a mediate, revelatory capacity whereby that which is virtually contained in the articles of faith – the premises of theology – is made manifest through reasoning (*CT* I, q. 1, d. 2, a. 7, n. 11bis). For Poinsot, faith (supplying at least one if not both of the premises of theology) and reason (the discursive character of scientific theology) serve as the cognitive matrix where grace and nature meet in an intermingled synthesis. Additionally, the natural light of reason can itself supply a premise in a theological syllogism to be united to another premise supplied by the articles of faith. In fact, Poinsot holds that “Many of the demonstrations which are made in theology are usually reasoned from one premise of faith and another which is known by the natural light (*lumen*) [of reason]. . .” (*CT* I, q. 1, disp. 2, a. 6, n. 1).

Beyond matters that are strictly concerned with theology proper, the *Cursus theologicus* also affords Poinsot the occasion to discuss many of his metaphysical theories, for example, proofs for God’s existence (*ibid.*, I, q. 2, disp. 3, a. 2), the divine science (*ibid.*, I, q., 14, disp. 17), the Thomistic understanding of the relationship between *esse* and essence as act and potency, etc. It is within these more metaphysical contexts that

Suárez's influence (noted above) is perhaps most keenly observed. For instance, Poinsot, when reflecting upon the relationship between *esse* and essence understood in terms of act and potency, holds fast to Thomas Aquinas's teaching that act is limited by potency (ibid., I, q. 7, disp. 7, a. un., n. 2), yet at times seems to do so only tentatively. For instance, when arguing for God's infinity, Poinsot, though he takes exception to Suárez and Gabriel Vázquez – who argue that *esse* is not limited by potency since *esse* and essence are not distinct – does not find maintaining a real distinction between the two as essential. That is, while Poinsot himself holds to the real distinction, he thinks it sufficient to hold that a creature can be limited “objectively,” which is to say, in terms of its metaphysical dependence upon God. Accordingly, a creature's limitation need not be attributed to its being subjectively limited through its being received into some subject. God, of course, is not dependent in any way and so experiences neither objective nor subjective modes of limitation. The upshot of this argument is that the centrality of the Thomistic real distinction is seemingly displaced (Pereira 2007, 159–64).

Another area of Suárez's influence is Poinsot's consideration of God as “subsistent intellection” (ibid., 166–71). Thomas consistently describes God as subsistent being itself (*ipsum esse subsistens*) (cf. *Summa theologiae* I, q. 3, a. 4). Suárez, in contrast, is much more concerned with accommodating the Trinitarian processions within the Godhead (*DM* 30.15.15), and so, while he too understands God as subsistent being (ibid., 28.1.13), the *Doctor eximius* speaks of God in terms of “subsistent intelligence” (ibid., 30.15.15). Poinsot follows suit and, without gain-saying Thomas Aquinas's understanding of God as subsistent being, through which the divine being can be differentiated from created being, such a description is insufficient to the task of signifying, let alone differentiating, the divine Persons within the Godhead (*CTI*, q. 14, disp. 16, a. 2, n. 9). God's “primary principle of operation,” which is intellection, does, however, serve precisely as a means to identify a difference within the Godhead (ibid., I, d. 16, a. 2, n. 19). Accordingly, Poinsot follows

Suárez in holding that God is properly understood as subsistent intellection (Pereira 2007, 169–70).

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Pole, Reginald

Born: Stourton Castle, Staffordshire, England
March 1500

Died: Lambeth Palace, London, 17 November
1558

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Abstract

Reginald Pole was a member of the Plantagenet royal house of England and graduated in Arts from Oxford University. In 1521, he was sent by King Henry VIII (1491–1547) to study in Padua, Italy, where he became an enthusiast of the “Christian philosophy” of the Italian Renaissance. During the 1520s and 1530s, he devoted himself increasingly to biblical study and came to believe that faith in God, as revealed in Christ, surpassed all human knowledge and should be the goal of Christians. Pole was able to put some of his ideas into practice, as a cardinal of the Roman Church, from 1536; as papal legate, on several occasions, to England, France, and Emperor Charles V (1500–1558); and as archbishop of Canterbury (1556–1558). In the last 5 years of his life, he worked with Queen Mary I (1516–1558), and her husband Philip (1527–1598), to restore Catholicism in England. Most of his achievement was reversed after his death, but in Catholic Europe, he retained a reputation as a holy man and a Catholic reformer (Mayer, *Cardinal Pole in European perspective*. Aldershot, 2000; Edwards, *Archbishop Pole*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

Biography

Reginald Pole was the fourth child of Sir Richard Pole (1462–1505) and Margaret Plantagenet (1473–1541), who was a niece of King Edward IV (1442–1483) of England and countess of Salisbury. He was educated at Magdalen College,

Oxford University, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in 1515. In 1521, King Henry VIII sent him to study at the University of Padua, and although he seems not to have matriculated there, he spent about 5 years in Italy, forming part of the circle of Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (1456–1531). In Padua, he continued his studies in Classical and Renaissance philosophy and became increasingly interested in theology. In the 1520s, it seemed likely that he would become a courtier of Henry VIII, and in 1529, he was sent by the king as part of a delegation to the Theology Faculty of the University of Paris, which succeeded in gaining the theologians' support for Henry's divorce from his first wife, Katherine of Aragon (1485–1536) (Edwards 2014:1–29). After he returned to England from Paris, he turned against his royal master, opposing both the divorce of Katherine and King Henry's separation from the Roman Catholic Church and Henry's adoption of the title and role of Supreme Head of the English Church.

Pole returned to Italy in 1531 and remained there until 1553. In December 1536, he was appointed a cardinal by Pope Paul III (1468–1549), taking part in a papal commission to reform the Church and prepare for the General Council which eventually opened at Trent in December 1545. In the meantime, he was appointed as papal legate to France and the Holy Roman Empire, with the aim of securing peace between those two major Catholic powers. He was also named as papal legate to England, and his support of the traditionalist rebellion in the north of the kingdom in 1536–1537, known as the “Pilgrimage of Grace,” led to the execution of his brother Henry Pole, Baron Montagu (1492–1539), as well as other friends and relatives, who were accused of conspiring with him against the king. During these years, Pole made various attempts to return to his homeland, but it was only Mary I's accession to the English throne, in July 1553, that enabled him to do so. As papal legate to England once again, now on behalf of Julius III (1487–1555), he masterminded the restoration of Catholicism in England, Wales, and Ireland, continuing this process until he and Queen Mary died on the same day, 17 November 1558. In the 1540s, while governor of Viterbo and

Bagnoregio, in the Papal States, Pole and his circle had been suspected of “Lutheran” views and, during his last years in England, this suspicion resurfaced, in the reign of his former friend, but now his enemy on theological grounds, Pope Paul IV (Gian Pietro Carafa 1476–1559). Pole died under threat of trial by the Roman Inquisition, and the next queen, Elizabeth I (1533–1603), undid most of his ecclesiastical work, separating once again from Rome and restoring the vernacular liturgy of the Church of England, which had been introduced under Edward VI (1537–1553). Nevertheless, Reginald Pole subsequently became an inspiration to Catholics, in England and Wales and on the Continent of Europe, for what was regarded by many as his saintly life and for his contribution to the reforms decreed by the Council of Trent (1545–1563) (Mayer 2000a, b; Edwards 2014).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

During Pole’s time as a student at Oxford University, Oxford retained a medieval Arts syllabus, based on the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, but his own college, Magdalen, was at the forefront of teaching Classical languages, literature, and philosophy, in addition to the prescribed subjects. One of his college tutors, William Latimer (c.1467–1545), had previously been a pupil of Leonico at Padua. Evidence of Pole’s own intellectual development in Italy, between 1521 and 1526, comes from personal correspondence. No doubt building on foundations laid during his time in Oxford; he is known to have read deeply in Greek philosophy, including the works of Plato (circa 428/423 BCE), Aristotle (383–321 BCE), Galen (130–200 CE), the Academics, and the Peripatetics. By the early 1530s, when Henry VIII was trying to divorce his wife Katherine and beginning to threaten to break with the Church of Rome, Pole wrote to his friends, including Jacopo Sadoletto (1477–1547), bishop of Carpentras, and Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), that scholars of their own time were more fortunate than the Classical Greeks and Romans, because they had been given the light of the Christian

Gospel and had the Son of God as their guide. By this time, Pole’s interest had moved from philosophy to theology, and he regarded this as a progression to a higher science. By 1534, he had concluded, as he wrote to Sadoletto, that doctrine and ethics were far more important than those favorite pastimes of the Renaissance, poetry, and oratory. He still shared with his humanist friends the belief that the philosopher Plato was capable of leading a person to God. Even so, he now thought that reliance on the human senses and intellect would have ultimately to be abandoned, in favor of the recognition that humans, of themselves, could not have any knowledge that was truly sure and certain. Instead, he thought that anyone who sought the truth about the world and human existence must strive for, and maintain, faith in the Christian Trinitarian God. Only in that way could he (or she?) receive the benefit (*beneficium*) of Christ’s saving acts.

Despite this development of his views in the 1530s, it is still true that, although he would later be primarily associated with the main theological issues in sixteenth-century Europe, he was steeped in the “new learning” of the Renaissance. From his first stay in Padua until his death, he would express his religious faith in terms of the Christian humanism associated with Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536). In his preaching and writing, Pole avoided the scholastic techniques still used by most theologians of his day. Thus, instead of structuring his work as a series of *quaestiones*, with ample citations from medieval compilers and theologians such as Peter Lombard (1100–1160) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), he used a warmer and at times almost conversational style, frequently quoting, sometimes paraphrasing, or else commenting on Scripture. His emphasis, in both writing and preaching, was on the lived experience of the Christian faith – in the Bible, in Christian history, and in his own day (Edwards 2014: 85–108).

Pole wrote no major or systematic philosophical or theological work, but his most lengthy surviving treatise, generally known as *De unitate*, contains revealing passages about his intellectual methodology and confirms the general points made above. By 1535–1536, when he composed

this somewhat rambling tract, at the request of King Henry VIII of England, he seems to have fully developed his approach to exegesis, incorporating the humanistic techniques and approaches which he had learned in Oxford and especially in Italy. The fact that Henry and his supporters used biblical quotation and arguments to justify his divorce from Katherine enabled Pole to deploy his own scriptural study in opposition to it. Thus, in various passages of the *De unitate*, he criticized the methods used by his opponents, particularly concerning the nature of authority in the Catholic Church. In this lengthy and sometimes rambling treatise, Pole repeatedly built up arguments on the basis of biblical texts, in order to justify papal authority over the Church and over Christian rulers. A fine example is Pole's discussion of the fundamental question of whether, as the Roman Catholic Church claimed, St Peter, in New Testament times, had superiority over the other apostles, hence justifying and validating the papacy. Having discussed, in quite a sophisticated way, the meaning of the metaphysical use of the word "rock" in relation to Jesus's famous statement to Simon Peter ("You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church"), Pole followed the principles and method of many biblical scholars in the Renaissance, by seeking concord between the four Gospel accounts. In addressing the question of whether there was a hierarchy among Jesus's first disciples, Pole referred to the commissioning of the original apostles (Matthew 10; Mark 3) but focused particularly on Luke's account of the Last Supper (Luke 22). In his version of Jesus's rejection, on this occasion, of any such notions of supremacy, Pole combined the techniques of medieval glossators and Renaissance "Christian philosophers" by putting his own words into Jesus's mouth, referring to Christ's imminent betrayal by Judas. Both in *De unitate* and elsewhere, Pole did not provide a systematic biblical commentary of the kind that would appear in later centuries, but he was clearly fully aware of current scholarly developments on the subject, in Italy and elsewhere (Pole 1538; Pole and Dwyer 1965).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Pole was part of an innovative movement or tendency, among Catholic scholars and clergy, rather than producing original philosophical ideas of his own. His achievement was largely practical rather than theoretical. He put into practice, while in England as papal legate and as archbishop of Canterbury, some of the ideas about Christian teaching and worship that were shared and developed by his friends in Italy, in the 1520s–1540s. Although most of his work, between 1554 and 1558, involved the restoration of traditional Catholic observance and belief in England, his occasional sermons, some of which survive, indicate his Christian humanist approach (Fenlon 2005; Duffy 2006; Edwards 2014, 215–221).

Impact and Legacy

At his death, Pole's program of restoration and reform was incomplete, and the fact that he and Queen Mary died on the same day, meant that his legacy depended entirely on the new Queen, Elizabeth. She was a half-sister to her predecessor and the daughter of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn (1501–1536). Elizabeth quickly set about dismantling Mary and Pole's work in the Church, by separating once more from the See of Rome, and using Parliament to restore, with a few minor revisions, the 1552 Book of Common Prayer as the liturgy of the English Church, and having herself declared its Supreme Governor. Her choice as the new archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker (1504–1575), not only worked to put Elizabeth's ecclesiastical policies into effect but also did his best to vilify his predecessor and deny his achievement (Edwards 2014:249–262). Yet things would be very different in Catholic Europe, where the decrees of his London Synod, held in 1555–1556, were published as guides for the final sessions of the Council of Trent (1562–1563) (Pole 1562). In the Roman Catholic Church, he was primarily remembered as a Catholic reformer, but in that capacity, he nonetheless represented an important current in "Erasmian" Christian philosophy.

Cross-References

► [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)

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Polish Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

During the period of Renaissance in Poland (fifteenth–sixteenth century) there was a considerable development of learning that expressed itself, especially in natural and political philosophy. At the University of Krakow, there was a shift from the Aristotelian approach to the study of nature toward new methodologies. The university became well known as a

center of astronomical studies. Nicolaus Copernicus studied in Krakow and then in Bologna and Padua. The result of his scholarly activities was his work *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543), in which he presented the heliocentric model of the solar system and by which he significantly contributed to the Scientific Revolution and to the development of modern science. Political philosophy, which developed in Poland at that time, had also many outstanding representatives and contributed to the country's distinct national character. Polish political philosophers emphasized the unity between politics and ethics. The stress on national independence, clearly evident in Ostrorog's writings, has become a part of Poland's lasting heritage. Another political philosopher, Modrzewski argued that in order to improve conditions in any country it was essential first to improve citizens' morals. Goslicki emphasized the value of ancestral virtues and traditions, and claimed that because of cultural differences between nations, different countries could be governed by different laws. Gornicki tried to identify problems in Poland's political system and propose solutions. He and other Renaissance philosophers that we introduce are perhaps the most distinguished thinkers of that period, who, coming from Poland and being educated abroad, especially in Italy, synthesized Polish and European learning and expressed this in their works.

Introduction

The Renaissance in Poland (Polish: *Renesans, Odrodzenie*) lasted from the late fifteenth to the late sixteenth century and is widely considered to have been the Golden Age of Polish culture. Many distinguished citizens of the Kingdom of Poland (and from 1569 of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth) were actively involved in the European Renaissance. During that period, the country already had a well-developed educational system consisting of over 2500 schools and three universities (in Krakow, Vilnius and Zamość). Young Polish graduates, especially sons of

nobility (*szlachta*), traveled abroad to continue their education. The most popular destinations were Italian universities: Padua, Bologna, and Florence. Moreover, many Italian artists and architects traveled to, and spent some years in, Poland. Among them were Francesco Fiorentino, Bartolommeo Berrecci, Santi Gucci, Mateo Gucci, Bernardo Morando, Giovanni Battista di Quadro, and others. The Renaissance period, famously supportive of artistic and intellectual pursuits, produced outstanding philosophers, scientists, poets, artists, and literary persons. Among them are natural philosophers and scientists: Mikolaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus), Wojciech z Brudzewa (Albertus de Brudzewo), Jan z Glogowa (Joannes Glogouiensis); political philosophers and thinkers: Jan Ostroróg (Joannes Ostrorog), Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (Andreas Fricius Modrevius), Wawrzyniec Grzymała Goślicki (Laurentius Grimaldus Goslicius), Lukasz Górnicki (Lucas Gornicki), Jan Zamoyski (Joannes Zamoyski), Jakub Gorski (Jacobus Gorscius), Stanisław Orzechowski (Stanislaus Orzechowski), and Andrzej Wolan (Andreas Volanus); poets: Mikolaj Rej (Nicholas Rey) and Jan Kochanowski (Joannes Cochanovius); composers: Waclaw z Szamotul (Venceslaus Samotulinus) and Mikolaj Gomółka (Nicolaus Gomolka); and painters: Stanisław Samostrzelnik (Stanislaus Claratumbensis) and Marcin Kober (Martin Kober). At that time, there was a considerable development of learning that expressed itself, especially in natural and political philosophy.

Natural Philosophy: Methodological Pluralism and Scientific Revolution

In the fifteenth century, at the University of Krakow, there was a slow turn from the Aristotelian approach to the study of nature to new methodologies based on the use of mathematics, experience, and observation. A noteworthy influence came from the French nominalist philosopher Jean Buridan (Latin: Johannes Buridanus, c. 1300–c. 1358/61), whose work *Subtilissimae quaestiones super octo Physicorum libros*

Aristotelis, was used in lectures on Aristotle's physics. The nominalists believed that certain knowledge can be achieved only through the investigation of material things and of the concrete, and in physics by studying *corpus in motu*, the body in motion, rather than of mere being in motion. They introduced to the University of Krakow methodological pluralism and eclecticism, which combined medieval realism with nominalism and created an atmosphere conducive to scientific inquiry. As a result of these developments, the university became well known as a center of astronomical studies. Krakow's scholars were particularly interested in the problem of the movement and location of the Earth. On the basis of their investigations, they started to develop doubts concerning the accuracy of the Ptolemy geocentric system. Albertus de Brudzewo (Polish: Wojciech z Brudzewa) (c.1445–c.1497), the author of *Commentariolus super theoricis novis Georgii Purbachii*, collected important evidence for the falsity of Ptolemy's system. His student was Nicolaus Copernicus.

Nicolaus Copernicus (Polish: Mikolaj Kopernik) (1473–1543) was born in Royal Prussia, which was then a province of the Kingdom of Poland, and studied in Krakow and subsequently in Bologna and Padua. After his return to his home country, he engaged himself in various administrative-economic duties at the Lidzbark Warminski (German: Heilsberg, Ermland) palace of prince-bishop Lucas Watzenrode (1447–1512), who was both the spiritual and the secular leader of Warmia, an autonomous part of Royal Prussia, and his uncle and patron. While performing public functions, Copernicus clearly identified himself with the Polish state and, like his uncle, defended Warmia against the Teutonic Order's plans of conquest. He had proven himself to be a talented administrator and economist, who by his writings, particularly his essay *Monetae cudendae ratio* (On Coining Money, 1526), had contributed to his province's monetary reform. However, administrative-economic duties did not prevent him from astrological observations and scholarly activities. The final result was his major work *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres, 1543), in which

he presented the heliocentric model of the solar system. His epochal discovery that it was the Earth that moved around the Sun, which challenged the commonly accepted geocentric view of the Earth being the center of the universe, was inspired by both his empirical observations and his readings of ancient Greek philosophy. The authority of Aristotle supported the geocentric model, but the Pythagorean philosophers, especially Hicetas of Syracuse (c. 400–335 BC), to whom Copernicus referred as *Nicetus Syracusanus* (Nicetus of Syracuse) in his *De revolutionibus*, argued that it was the Earth that moved, with the sun, the moon, the stars remaining still. The movement of the Earth around its axis would not yet explain the observable movements of heavenly bodies but it provided Copernicus with a useful hint leading him to the conclusion that “any visible movement on the firmament does not come from the firmament itself but from the movement of the Earth” (*Commentariolus*, 1514). He had found additional hints about the Earth movement in some later commentaries to the writings of the Pythagorean Philolaus of Croton (c. 470–385) and of the astronomer Aristarchus of Samos (c. 310–230 BC). Finally, in his research, Copernicus was also guided by the mystical idea of spiritual transformation. He believed that his reform in astronomy had at the same time a profound religious significance, leading from the Earth to the Sun, that is, from a human and earthly oriented world to a divine and heavenly oriented one. By designing his heliocentric model of the solar system, he made a momentous contribution to the Scientific Revolution and to the development of modern science.

Political Philosophy: Unity of Politics and Ethics

Political philosophy, which developed during the early Renaissance period, had many outstanding representatives in Poland and contributed to the country's distinct national character and its unique political system, which is often described as a “nobles’ democracy” (Polish: *demokracja*

szlachecka) or simply as *Res Publica* (Commonwealth/Republic, Polish: *Rzeczpospolita*), a republic with a king, who was elected for life by the nobility.

Polish Renaissance political thinkers emphasized the unity between politics and ethics. The Machiavellian ideas leading to the separation between moral values and political practice had never become popular in Poland, and thus the Polish political outlook, to which these thinkers contributed, had been largely idealistic. On the one hand, they adopted a classical perspective based on virtue; on the other, they supported progressive ideas. The predominantly religious and cosmopolitan attitude of the Middle Ages was replaced in their writings by a modern approach, which would put stress on the secular and independent state and the idea of a nation.

Jan Ostroróg (Latin: Joannes Ostrorog, 1431–1501), born one generation before Niccolò Machiavelli, and educated at universities in Erfurt and Bologna, was a distinguished public official and diplomat, negotiating among others peace conditions after the 13 Years’ War (1454–1466), which was fought between the Kingdom of Poland allied with pro-Polish Prussian Confederation and the State of the Teutonic Order (German: *Staat des Deutschen Ordens*). He is best known for his work *Monumentum pro Reipublicae ordinatione* (A memorandum on regulating the Republic, ca. 1475), in which he called for fundamental political reforms. He supported strengthening the King’s formal powers, universal conscription, writing of laws in Polish, the separation of the state and the church, and Poland’s sovereignty. He argued that the Kingdom of Poland was “in all respects free”. It was free de facto, because the Polish King did not yield to any external power, and *de jure*, because the King did not consider any external jurisdiction except that of God. In his view, the power of the King of Poland was derived directly from God rather than bestowed by the pope or the emperor. The power of the pope, he claimed, was limited to religious issues and should not extend to worldly affairs. This stress on national independence, clearly evident in Ostroróg’s writings, became a part of Poland’s lasting heritage.

Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (Latin: Andreas Fricius Modrevius, 1503–1572). Another well-known political philosopher of that period was Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski. He studied in Krakow and Wittenberg, and then served as a King's secretary and diplomat. In *Commentariorum de Republica emendanda libri quinque* (1551), divided into five parts – “On mores,” “On laws,” “On war,” “On the Church,” “On education” – he proposed various ways to improve states. His work, originally written in Latin, was translated into French, German, and Spanish and was referred to by a number of scholars, including Jean Bodin, who simplified Modrzewski's family name to “Andreas Riccius.” Modrzewski argued that in order to improve conditions in any country, it is essential first to improve citizens' morals, which, he claimed, are not merely subjective or based on mere opinions but have their source in the nature of things and in God's decrees, written deeply in human hearts. As it was for Aristotle, for Modrzewski politics was an extension of ethics, and required the cultivation of virtues. As they were for St. Thomas Aquinas, positive laws were for him the work of reason and required compliance with the natural and divine laws. As it did later for Locke, freedom consisted for him in the obedience to self-imposed laws, and was not license doing as one likes. Modrzewski identified the ideal social life with order, virtues, and labor and saw its opposite in conflict and war. Human beings, he believed, were naturally cooperative and social, and any form of superiority or domination among them could only be justified on the basis of greater reason and superior virtue. Therefore, he was critical of hereditary nobility. He claimed that public offices should not be inherited but elected on the basis of qualifications. While these ideas were rare at his time, he was not a revolutionary. Instead of seeking to overthrow the existing order based on inheritance and rigid class divisions, he aimed at changing prevailing social customs and ways of thinking. He argued that nobility was a quality related to virtue rather than to ancestry and was against reserving higher positions in the government and in the Church for the nobles. He also stood against any legal or penal inequalities and

claimed that no one should be a judge in one's own case. Thus, according to him, landlords could not have jurisdiction over peasants working for them, but should be equally subjected to law, the same for all.

Wawrzyniec Grzymała Goślicki (Latin: Laurentius Grimaldius Goslicius, ca. 1530–1607) studied in Krakow and then in Padua and Bologna, and after his return to Poland joined the royal chancery and served as a secretary to two kings: Sigismund II Augustus (Polish: Zygmunt August) and then Stephen Báthory (Polish: Stefan Batory). He also became a priest and was successively appointed bishop of Kamieniec Podolski (1586), Chelm (1590), Przemyśl (1591) and Poznań (1601). A man of affairs and a political philosopher, he is best known for *De optimo Senatore*, originally published in Venice in 1568. While appreciating the humanist knowledge that he received during his studies abroad, he stressed in this work that one should never disregard one's own ancestral virtues and traditions. This conservative outlook, and the ideas of civil liberty, wise statesmanship, and nobles' democracy that he promoted, had a special appeal in England. *De optimo Senatore* was translated into English and had four different editions: 1598 (*The Counsellor*), 1607 (*A commonwealth of Good Counsellor*), 1733 (*The Accomplished Senator*), and most recently, 1994 (*The Accomplished Senator*). It became a political and social classic, read by Queen Elizabeth I of England and by William Shakespeare. It was popular among opposition forces to the Stuart monarchy and was widely quoted in revolutionary pamphlets during the period preceding the British Civil War of 1640. *De optimo Senatore* was written for a European audience, and not merely for people in Poland. Goślicki considered politics a science. To make correct political decisions, he claimed, the leader should employ both philosophy (reason) and history (experience). The empirical aspect of his approach consisted in looking at similar historical cases, as well as on such factors as soil, climate, and other conditions prevailing in a given country, and by considering these, formulating appropriate policies. Then his rationalism was expressed in the idea of *scientia civilis*, of

political science that was oriented on the public good and ultimately aimed at happiness in this world, and not in a transcendent world beyond. Goślicki was a devout Catholic and believed in the creation of the universe and its continuous government by God. However, he also believed that a special role in the divine government was given to human beings, who, according to God's plan, should exercise their leadership role in a wise and just manner. The ultimate goal of human life was happiness, which, he thought, was not a definite concept, but an idea related to specific living conditions and particular human needs. Like other Polish Renaissance political thinkers, he emphasized the role of moral values and linked happiness in society with virtue. As the most important political virtue, he regarded prudence as practical wisdom: an ability to correctly judge, predict events and make the right decisions. He emphasized that to ensure good government, prudence must be linked to justice, an ability to give each person what he or she deserves. Another important political virtue for him was friendship, by which individuals, groups, and classes could be linked, thus forming a happy society. While these ideas can be considered universal, Goslicki would also consider cultural differences between nations and claimed that because of these, different countries could be governed by different laws, and that it was laws that should be adjusted to specific countries and not the opposite. According to him, a prudent statesman should always consider what motivates people to action, and promulgate laws improving people morally, rather than those that merely punish them. For moral progress, citizens should exercise the right reason by learning how to recognize what is good and what is harmful, and consequently develop harmonious relationships with others. While Goslicki divided society into citizens, who enjoyed political rights, and subjects, who did not have them, he supported the idea of equality before the law, and in his view, any differences among people could only be justified on the basis of merit; the ultimate title to rule being virtue. Those who aspired to become political leaders were thus obliged to work on their perfection. The division of government into legislative, juridical, and executive that

he proposed was to ensure that human relationships are based on justice and goodness. The politics that he envisioned had a profoundly moral character.

Lukasz Górnicki (Latin: Lucas Gornicki, 1527–1603) studied at universities in Krakow and Padua, and, after his return to Poland, he performed various public functions and became a personal secretary and chancellor of the Polish king, Sigismund II Augustus. He authored a few works, of which the best known is *Dworzanin polski* (The Polish Courtier), published in 1566. This book was his unique translation and adaptation to Poland's needs of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* (The Courtier), which had been widely studied throughout Europe since it first appeared in 1528. A simple translation of this famous book, Górnicki believed, would not be successful because of the vast cultural gap between Italians and Poles, especially those parochial "domestic Poles" who would not study or travel abroad. His ambition was to enrich Polish culture with his version of *The Courtier* and to make Poland a more cosmopolitan place. This was also very much in line with the objectives of the King's court, particularly Queen Bona Sforza, Sigismund II Augustus' Italian mother. The continuation of this ambitious project was Gornicki's systematic work in political philosophy: *O elekcji, wolności, prawie i obyczajach polskich* (On elections, freedom, law and Polish customs), which was published posthumously in 1616. Its practical aim was to identify problems in Poland's political system and propose solutions. Having the literary form of a dialogue between a domestic Pole, representing backward views, and an Italian, representing novelty, this work tried to promote the spirit of reform. However, it was also based on classical and Christian concepts, particularly on the four cardinal classical virtues, the most important of which was, for Górnicki, justice, and the Christian virtue of love. If there is true love among people, Górnicki argued, there is no need for laws. But even if we have laws, he thought, they could not be really effective without love and goodwill among citizens. Thus, on these values a political community is to be founded, laws being insufficient by

themselves to stop wrongdoing. Hence, like other Polish political thinkers, Górnicki emphasized the importance of moral values in politics. He also made some practical proposals, including court reforms, to make laws effective, postulated that rulers should execute power with wisdom, and supported monarchy as the best possible political system because, as he claimed, it was always easier to find one wise person for the helm than many.

Impact and Legacy: The End of the Golden Age

The Renaissance philosophers introduced above are perhaps among the most distinguished thinkers of that period, who, coming from Poland and being educated abroad, especially in Italy, synthesized Polish and European learning and expressed this in their works. This auspicious age for science and culture ended with wars. Scientific and cultural developments require peace and are disrupted by armed conflicts, especially if they happen in the country's territory. Wars against Sweden, Russia, and Turkey and the Cossack rebellion, which occurred in the seventeenth century, weakened the old *Rzeczpospolita*. They contributed to the decline of scholarly activities and to the breaking of ties with centers of learning abroad. Only in the middle of the eighteenth century, because of the ideas of the Enlightenment and a number of brilliant individuals who were born around that time, did Poland restore its intellectual strength. The outstanding result of the work of Polish intellectuals was the Constitution of 3 May 1791, which is often described as Europe's first national constitution (and the second oldest in the world after the American Constitution of 1787). It was designed as a legal framework to implement social and political reforms, and repair the Polish state. But this was already too late. With the third partition of the country's territory in 1795 among the mighty powers Prussia, Austria, and Russia, whose rulers, influenced by the ideas of

modernity, clearly did not link politics to ethics, Poland was removed from the map of Europe until 1918, when it regained its independence.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Copernicus, Nicolaus](#)
- ▶ [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)
- ▶ [Historia Naturalis](#)

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Politian

► Poliziano, Angelo

Politianus, Angelus

► Poliziano, Angelo

Political Prudence

► Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of

Politics, Renaissance

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Abstract

The Renaissance was a fundamentally political phenomenon, a period of time in which questions about the purpose of political life and the nature of political legitimacy were raised, and in which actual Renaissance regimes took the first steps towards the modern state. Although the most influential studies have insisted upon a break with the medieval tradition and world outlook, much recent work by both medievalists and Renaissance historians has emphasized the continuity of political thought from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Yet, proper attention must be paid to the remarkable cultural change within the social and political context that occurred in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe. By that time, constitutional revolutions, expansionist conflicts, and the long dispute between France and Spain brought about the end of the established political balance in Europe and at the same time a crisis in old concepts of politics and government.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

A thorough understanding of modern political thought requires that its foundations be placed

against the medieval background – which, on closer inspection, can be seen to be permeated with most of the basic concepts associated with the Renaissance. The distinction between “humanitas” and “divinitas,” mundane and trans-mundane, natural man and citizen emerging between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries provided the premises for the secularization of governmental organization, thus paving the way towards the birth of the modern state. At the same time, the idea of civic life as necessary to human fulfillment and virtue, the necessity of testing virtue, and the Ciceronian model of rhetoric as the highest calling for a statesman were also concepts developed before 1400 (Blythe 1992, 2000). Indeed, the origins of the new *scientia politica* must be sought in the works of late medieval theologians, political writers, philosophers, and jurists, such as John of Salisbury, Thomas Aquinas, Dante Alighieri, Ptolemy of Lucca, Bartolus of Sassoferrato, and Marsilius of Padua. Their thought and doctrines must be read in light of the crisis of early representative democracy in northern Italy following the decline of feudalism alongside the weakening of the two universal powers, the church and the Empire, which took place in Europe in the fourteenth century (Ullmann 1977). The relationship between secular and spiritual powers, the supreme political authority and its limits and legitimacy, tyranny, the right to resist, the nature of law, and justifications for coercion were, therefore, the focus of discussion amongst scholastic theorists. However, the political impact of the European turmoil which occurred between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was especially manifest in the case of Italy. Due to its turbulent political and cultural life and the arrival of major European powers on its territory, the Italian peninsula underwent a set of social, institutional, religious, and philosophical changes that resulted in a new formulation of the language of politics. Thus, despite – or, perhaps, because of – its patchwork of popular, princely, oligarchical, and ecclesiastical regimes, partly subject to the Empire, partly under the aegis of the church, early modern Italy played a central role in the history of Western political ideas.

Although references to political science appear in the early Middle Ages, it was in the mid-thirteenth century, due to the translation of Aristotle's *Politics* around 1260, and to a lesser extent, of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, that the word *politica* definitively entered the language of Western political thought. From the late eleventh century, nearly all Italian cities and towns from Rome northward had organized themselves into independent city-states or "communes." Compared to the strong central governments of the great monarchies of Europe, these remarkable autonomous urban towns enjoyed relative political freedom and committed themselves to an ideal of free and equal citizenship, albeit narrowly construed, under the rule of law. At that time, early political theorists generally concentrated on practical issues related to urban government, such as the rights and obligations of princes and magistrates, the limits of their authority as well as their relationship to the Roman papacy. However, at the end of the thirteenth century, the Italian city-republics began to fail. William of Moerbeke's Latin rendering in 1268 of Aristotle's ambiguous word *politeia* into a regime as distinct from – or even opposed to – monarchy, a linguistic shift subsequently endorsed by Aquinas and his followers, clearly reflects the political context of the gradual transformation of the relatively free medieval communes into the autocratic *signorie* (Rubinstein 1982). As a result, the meaning of *politeia* to indicate both Aristotle's specific polity – that is, the constitutional or positive rule of the many – and its generic sense of constitution or regime in general, permeated most political texts of the age (Hankins 2019). This was particularly evident in the several Italian scholastic authors dealing with Aristotle's theory of constitution, which implied a discussion about the form of government most apt to prompt and preserve the best ethical and political life. Drawing on Aristotle's theory of the good and corrupt polities, scholastic and renaissance theorists favored some sort of mixed regime that included a monarchical element as well as aristocratic and popular elements (see ► "Government, Renaissance Forms of").

The earliest Italian writer to use the word *politica* in connection with the structure of

communal self-government was Brunetto Latini (c. 1220–1294), a leading member of the Guelf party who is credited with introducing the rules of the *ars dictandi* into the style of the Chancery of the Florentine commune. In his *Rettorica*, a work perhaps written in 1260 dealing with the formation and instruction of the citizen of the contemporary Italian city-state as the emerging governing class, he refers to politics as a branch of practical philosophy along with ethics and economics: "The third *scientia* is politics, for it teaches us to establish, preserve and govern a city or a commune" (Latini, *Rettorica*, argom. 17). A broader definition of *politique* can be found in the almost contemporary *Tresor* (III 73–105), Latini's greatly influential handbook composed for the need of the citizens in a civic context. In the third and final section, entitled "The Government of Cities," he presents politics as "the art necessary to the community of men" and, as such, "the highest wisdom and most noble profession there is among men," while the good citizen is someone who embodies all good civic virtues. Simply put, to live "politically" means to live in brotherhood according to reason and justice. In this perspective, the art of politics was also a vision of civic education. This development can be seen in the treatment of both monarchical and pluralistic governments. Although he favored monarchical rule, Giles of Rome (1247–1316) in his *De regimine principum* (*On the Government of Princes*, c. 1277–79) regarded the political community or the civic life as both the natural goal of men and the necessary condition for a virtuous life. Likewise, in his sympathetic description of republican self-rule, Ptolemy of Lucca (c. 1236–1327), who around 1300–1305 expanded Aquinas's homonymous tract *De regimine principum* (c. 1265), maintained that the main task of the political ruler, an elective magistrate whose power is limited by the laws, is the happiness of the *civitas*, a goal that can be achieved by displaying his own virtue, thus fostering the virtue of the city as a whole. About the same time, another Tuscan Dominican, Remigio de' Girolami (d. 1319), wrote a political tract entitled *De bono communi* (*The Common Good*) in which he stressed the equation between the common good and the good of the commune and

identified the way to accomplish it as obedience to the dictates of justice and right behavior. The intellectual importance of the literature on the city-rule lies precisely in emphasizing the role of politics as the condition within which men could enjoy civil happiness. Accordingly, the main concern of late medieval political theorists was the virtue of the ruler(s), that is, how he may acquire the virtues needed to rule wisely and magnificently (Kempshall 1999). This topic still represented the core of the conventional view of politics in humanist authors and works (Cappelli 2017; Hankins 2019). Indeed, it was only at the end of the sixteenth century that the field of political action was increasingly understood as potentially separate from the norms of justice and religion, thus assessing the pursuit of the common good according to specific contexts and circumstances (political realism).

The idea of “community” and “common good” as ethical values persisted in the political language of Marsilius of Padua (1275–1342), who composed his *Defensor pacis* (*The Defender of Peace*) in 1324, when most of the popular communes in north and central Italy had been replaced by the *signori*. By firmly grounding the concept of the common good, now intended in the Thomistic sense as the public interest, on the legal and constitutional structure of the city-states, Marsilius makes a theoretical attempt to check the advance of the new arbitrary power that was becoming consolidated in Italy. In the *Defensor pacis*, therefore, politics is primarily the art of taking decisions and laying down laws that are conducive to the common good of the city and as a such, the legislative power must be entrusted to those who are most likely to make good laws, that is the citizenry (Viroli 1992; Rubinstein 2004). Furthermore, Marsilius’ theory of the community as *legislator humanus* in a State ruled by the laws and governed with the consent of its citizens, together with his attack on the *plenitudo potestatis* claimed by the Popes, set the art of politics into the realm of *civilis sapientia*, namely wisdom in legislating for, and administering, justice. On this basis, by combining Cicero’s definition of civil law with the Aristotelian formula of man as by nature a political animal, fourteenth-century jurists such as

Bartolus of Sassoferrato (1313–1357) and his great pupil Baldus de Ubaldi (1327–1400) gave the word “politics” a strong juridical connotation. More specifically, they had to confront the delicate question of the independence of the ruler from positive law. As law and politics both aim at the preservation of the political community, they have in view the common good. From this juridical standpoint, whether associated with the self-governing community or the kingly or princely rule, the meaning of politics retained the commitment to the principle of justice, defined as a preference for the common good over private goods. Enforced by the doctrine of public law, this paradigm informed several works of the early years of the fifteenth century, when a “new genre of political literature” began to emerge (Skinner 1978, 2002).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The role of law and justice, the connection between the pursuit of political virtue, and the attainment of happiness along with Aristotle’s notion of humanity’s instinct for political association also represent some of the most recurrent features of the first Italian humanists. Drawing on classical learning, they all operated within a broadly Christian-Aristotelian framework and used humanist versions of Aristotelian and Ciceronian political terminology. Yet, while it seems clear that fifteenth-century humanists developed issues and theories inherited from earlier literature and re-elaborated them in terms of new concrete historical circumstances, it is also true that their appeal to civic consciousness and their quest for liberty represented a break with prevailing patterns. The claim that the intellectual history and life of the early Renaissance had been characterized by dramatic transformation and lasting changes with respect to the late Middle Ages was advanced by Hans Baron in his seminal work *The Crisis of the Early Renaissance* (1955). According to Baron’s well-known thesis, the most original contribution of the age to modern political thought was the advent of what he called “civic humanism” – that is, a new emphasis

on the civic participation in the government and the life of the city as a necessary condition for human fulfillment, which in turn prompted a strong defense of those republican liberties inherited from the communal age. It was no coincidence, according to Baron, that the cradle of this “revolution of mind” was Renaissance Florence. As a counterpart to the emerging unity of England, France, and Spain, the *signori* Visconti of Milan, by conquering the two foremost north-eastern territories – Verona and Padua – tried to create a centralized region state in northern Italy in the early 1400s. Such an attempt provoked the resistance of the surviving city-states, among them Florence and Venice, and minor tyrannies, which promptly reacted against the rapid advance of the Viscontean rule (Baron 1955, 1966). Thus, the military crisis of early Quattrocento played a decisive role in the development of moral and political topics committed to both civic ideals and educational concerns, which eventually affected the outlook of intellectuals and governing elite throughout Italy and Europe. Finally, some historians had even argued that by challenging absolutist political thought, Florentine republicanism prepared the ground for the spreading of more democratic values, which in turn inspired the French and American revolutions of the eighteenth century.

Baron’s speculations regarding civic humanist ideology have been criticized on various grounds and revised by major scholars (e.g., Kristeller, Rubinstein, Fubini, Grafton, Skinner, and Hankins), no doubt justly in many respects. Yet, most of the political literature of the fifteenth century undeniably displays an appeal to the values of civic freedom, the characteristics of which may be especially detected in the works of the great chancellors of the Florentine Republic, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406) and Leonardo Bruni (1370/5–1444). In defending Florence against his literary opponent Antonio Loschi, the supporter of Milanese despotism, Salutati proclaims the virtues of *florentina libertas* and the superiority of republican freedom over monarchy. Similar arguments occurred a few years later in the political writings of Salutati’s pupil Leonardo Bruni, particularly in his *Laudatio florentinae*

urbis (*Panegyric of the City of Florence*), composed in 1403–4 during Florence’s successful defense of its liberty against Milan, a text that has been regarded as the humanist celebration of the “popular” constitution. Strongly influenced by both Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374) and fourteenth-century chroniclers and jurists such as Giovanni Villani (c. 1280–1348) and Bartolus of Sassoferrato, Bruni asserted the independence and authority of the Florentine republic, the legitimacy of which derived directly from the Roman republic. He also stressed the connection between freedom to participate in politics and equality of the citizens before the law (Bruni 1968). Almost twenty-five years later, in the *Oratio in funere Nannis Strozze* (*Oration for the funeral of Nanni Strozzi*), his praise for the Florentine republican form of government is accompanied by a justification of Florence’s “imperialistic” policies in Tuscany. This attitude, together with some oligarchic stances informing Bruni’s and Salutati’s historical and political judgments, has led some historians to read civic humanists primarily as rhetoricians devoted to producing propaganda for the state (Hankins 2010, 2014). This aspect clearly emerges in the advice-books, a literary genre that goes back to the republican context of the thirteenth century – initially addressing the figure of the *podestà* – and continued to flourish in the middle decades of Quattrocento down to the Cinquecento in the form of educational treatises for rulers and those they ruled. After the failure of republican institutions in Italy and the introduction of hereditary rule at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, several humanists had composed books of advice intended for *signori* and princes, the aim being to supply them with useful and practical instructions about the conduct of their affairs, while celebrating the excellence of their government. These are, obviously, rhetorical texts, and the very favorable attitude they display towards this or that *signore* evidently does not constitute evidence of a particular political orientation on their author’s part. A striking example is Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder (1370–1444), who in his early works showed republican commitments, while later in his life he expressed admiration for monarchy and the mixed constitution of

the Republic of Venice alike. Far from overtly vindicating royal or popular rule, Vergerio's principal concern seems to be a government ruled by a legitimate and virtuous prince capable of ensuring peace and justice. Equally, Bruni's and Salutati's apparent inconsistency in their political commitments may be explained by an adaptation of their thought to the changing political setting. Such a prudential and relativistic attitude also persisted in sixteenth-century humanists. Their main goal was the cultivation of ethical governance, whether in a kingdom, oligarchy, or republic (Hankins 1995, 2000, 2014).

The idea that the given constitutional form of a polity was less important than the virtue of its ruler – undoubtedly of Aristotelian (but also biblical) origin – was also recurrent in the political writings of most Italian humanist theorists of the second half of the Quattrocento. Although it has long been studied under the shadow of Machiavelli's political thought, political humanism is not inferior to it in terms of originality and theoretical insight. One of its main commitments lay not so much in discussion of the best form of government, as in the establishment of the policies necessary for the management of a specific form of government, that is, a princely regime. Like their predecessors, the late humanists did not think that good government was necessarily incompatible with a one-man rule, which by that time had been superseded in almost all republican institutions. Thus, Francesco Patrizi of Siena (1413–1494), Bartolomeo Sacchi (1421–1481), Diomedes Carafa (1407–1487), and Giovanni Pontano (1429–1503) all produced works belonging to the so-called mirrors-for-princes treatises, devoted to emphasizing the virtues a good ruler should possess. Such literature adapted the political language of the medieval advice-books to make it fit new historical and political conditions, thus providing a pragmatic response to diminished opportunities for civic participation. Francesco Patrizi's two major treatises, the *De institutione reipublicae* (*How to Found a Republic*), probably written in the 1460s, and the *De institutione regni et regis* (*On Kingship and Royal Education*), composed between 1481 and 1484, were regarded as the standard humanist

portraits of the good citizen and the good king as the foundation of justice and the embodiment of virtues (Viroli 1992). But perhaps the most original text of this kind is Pontano's *De principe* (*The Prince*), presented to Ferrante of Aragon, king of Naples in 1468 and published in 1490. By presenting the virtuous ruler as the *speculum* or *exemplum* for judging all the actions of the subjects, Pontano's analysis appears to be grounded in the "organic analogy," that is, the idea of a well-ordered *corpus politicus* in which each component naturally performs a specific function under the rule of one. It is therefore the exercise of virtue that legitimates and guarantees the hierarchical structure of power. In this way, humanist political thought became refocused on the definition of a new cohesion to replace the one that, after two centuries of disruptive struggles, had been lost, thereby giving rise to a social and political body based on *ethos* and rationality (Cappelli 2012).

The humanist emphasis on the ideal of virtue leading to perfect life, achievable through education, had a twofold effect on the political literature well into the sixteenth century. On the one side, it produced several works focusing on the right kind of upbringing and instruction for both perfect courtiers and princes to attain and practice virtue, wisdom, and prudence. Hence, parallel to the mirrors-for-princes literature, an increasing number of courtier handbooks developed, such as Diomedes Carafa's *Dell'optimo cortesano* (*The Perfect Courtier*), written while its author was in service at the Neapolitan court in the 1480s, and Baldassarre Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*), first published in 1528, which became one of the most admired products of the Italian Renaissance. Although the work has often been read apolitically, either as a manual for the personal education of gentlemen or as a guide to the fully realized human life, it nevertheless displays a potential civic aim. By making his prince a better person, and thereby a better ruler, the capable and virtuous courtier takes the opportunity to be actively involved in the political life of the city, a prospect that by the time of Castiglione's writing of the book had all but disappeared (Lovett 2012). Such a renewed form of civic ethics also survived in several

political and moral treatises of the late sixteenth century, such as Giovanni Della Casa's courtesy book entitled *Galateo* (1558) and Stefano Guazzo's *Civil conversazione* (*Civil Conversation*, 1574). On the other hand, the humanists' conception of the good life had a concrete realization in the beautiful and perfect settings of the architectural treatises of the Renaissance. Leonardo Bruni's description of Florence as a perfect city, which is "admirable both in her exploits abroad, and in her internal order and institutions" (*Laudatio*, p. 232), displays motifs that became standard in the utopian writings of the sixteenth century from Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) to Tommaso Campanella's *La città del Sole* (*The City of the Sun*, 1602). The image of the city as a rational, planned space, whose external beauty and internal order had a great impact on its inhabitants, prompted debate about what a good place or social context should be. Perfect symmetry and harmony inform the planning and the building of the ideal town imagined in *De re aedificatoria* (*On the Art of Building*), written by Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) around 1450, thus reflecting the natural order as envisaged in the Platonic republic. Equally, in the fourth book of the early treatise *Della famiglia* (*On the Family*, 1433/1434), he depicts the "good" household management as well as the perfect life of the virtuous man who rules it. The same ideal setting inspired Matteo Palmieri (1406–1475), a disciple of Bruni, who in his dialogue *Della vita civile* (*The Civic Life*) discussed the principles of the good life and depicted the republic as an extended patrician family dominated by a paternal rule over women and children. Clearly influenced by the leading members of Salutati's circle, among them Pier Paolo Vergerio, Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), and Alberti, Palmieri's work is devoted to outlining the duties of the perfect citizen for the sake of the whole city. The link between treatises on good government and utopian works is also exemplified in the literary output of Anton Francesco Doni (1513–1574), which betrays the influence of Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) and Thomas More (1477/8–1535). In *I mondi* (c. 1552–1553), probably his most successful and best-known work, the description

of the ideal city, perfectly built according to geometrical regularity, referred to a Platonically orientated vision towards a society regulated by absolute morality, not subject to the instability of the age. At the same time, Doni's new world is characterized by both social and economic equality as the indispensable requirements to achieve happiness and peace, a regimented way of life which is a typical feature of the genre of Renaissance utopia. The sense of a harmonious, balanced, and ordered State transcended precise questions of constitutional configuration and permeated Renaissance political culture in general. Two other Italian utopias followed in the second half of the sixteenth century, *La città felice* (*The Happy City*, 1553) written by the philosopher Francesco Patrizi da Cherso (1529–1597) and *La repubblica immaginaria* (*The Imaginary Republic*), written by Ludovico Agostini (1535–1612) between 1575 and 1580, although unpublished until the twentieth century. Both these works share the essential idea that man can only thrive if he lives in a virtuous society.

Throughout the fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries, the so-called "northern humanism" established itself in Europe as an intellectual phenomenon. The impact of the Italian Renaissance upon the political thought of the northern humanists is manifest in their writings (Skinner 1978). Nevertheless, by analyzing the specific background and context in which northern humanism proliferated, a distinct turn from its ideological matrix may be detected. When the Renaissance began in the mid-fourteenth century in Italy, the mixed political system known as the Holy Roman Empire was constantly threatened by religious divisions and internal conflicts. Moreover, the huge impact of the fiscal pressure of Rome on the imperial church prompted the grievances of the "German nation" against the corruption of the church and papacy. Inability to secure internal peace, coupled with the French and Ottoman threats, induced an urge to reform. As a result, throughout the fifteenth-century Latin and German-language treatises offered proposals for administrative, judicial, and constitutional measures. As for political writings, they combined arguments about the importance of the *studia*

humanitatis in educating citizens, political propaganda, and instructions for good government. Humanist learning, with its revival of Tacitus's *Germania*, also contributed to the growing sense of national identity. However, at the end of the century, the Holy Roman Empire entered a period of institutional growth and increased political importance, with the birth of effective imperial institutions, among them its parliament (the Imperial Diet) as one prominent result. Following the 1512 Diet of Cologne under Maximilian I's rule, the name "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" became the official title of the Empire. Not only did this term present the empire as an equal heir to the legacy of the "Holy Roman Church," but it also challenged and limited claims on the Empire from French rulers such as Francis I, who campaigned for election to the imperial throne in 1519. At the same time, the spread of evangelical ideas and the quest for church reforms helped to strengthen the link between German humanists and the Reformation. In 1520, the Augustinian friar Martin Luther (1483–1546) published his important treatise, the *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, in which, by urging civil magistrates to take up their responsibility to reform the church, he deliberately followed the tradition of German grievances against Rome. Three further works followed – *The Freedom of the Christian*, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *On the Papacy at Rome* – in which Luther strongly attacked both the temporal power of the Church and its authority to direct and guide Christian life (Eire 2016). Luther's refusal to recant his teachings prompted the Edict of Worms (1521), which threatened his supporters with papal condemnation and an imperial ban prohibiting his writings. Ten years later, in his *Warning to His Dear German People*, Luther sustained the right of the subjects to resist when the king or the supreme magistrate commands something contrary to the faith. The topic was also addressed by the Wittenberg reformer Philipp Melancthon (1497–1560), the most prominent intellectual among Luther's early disciples. By analyzing the status of the law of nature and its congruence with civil laws, he developed an account of political authority aimed

at counteracting Ockhamist tendencies to legitimize rebellion. His arguments echoed Luther's doctrine of nonresistance, which by contrast had a strong theological basis (Jensen 2020). These events led to a shift in the focus of political thought, from an emphasis on religious commitment and political obedience to the role of the emperor and empire (R. Von Friedeburg and M.J. Seidler in Lloyd-Burgess-Hodson 2007). Building on both Luther and Melancthon, the jurist Johannes Oldendorp (1486–1567) developed an original theory of equity and equitable lawmaking and law enforcement as part of a broader biblically based theory of natural law. All these writers laid the foundations for a new legal, political, and social trend that dominated Lutheran Germany for the next three centuries (Strohm 2017). Concomitantly, Lutheran ideas about resistance achieved immediate and widespread impact in England, Scotland, and Switzerland as envisaged in the writings of John Ponet (c. 1514–1556), John Knox (c. 1514–1572), and Jean Calvin (1509–1564). Such literature had been further developed in France by Calvin's disciple Theodore Beza (1519–1605), who in 1574 wrote the *De iure magistratuum* (*On the Rights of Magistrates*), and by the anonymous *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, first published under the pseudonym of Stephanus Junius Brutus in 1579. Resistance theory also became important for the justification of the Dutch Revolt (1548–1648) and influenced Hugo Grotius's natural law theories.

Due to its geographical location, France cast itself as a zone of convergence and of dissemination of ideas from all parts of the continent. By the end of the fifteenth century, the University of Paris, one of the leading centers of university education in northern Europe, had produced a great number of professional officeholders who had been trained in both civil and canon law (*utrumque ius*). The most distinguished of these were the magistrates of the "parlements" (law courts) and the French higher clergy leading the faculty of theology (J.H.M. Salmon in Lloyd-Burgess-Hodson 2007). Moreover, the commitment of France's prominent scholars to Gallicanism together with the influence of European

humanists largely informed later French political thought. Although a nationalistic spirit began to emerge during the Hundred Years' War against England (1337–1453), its basis had been laid almost two centuries earlier by Gallican writers who claimed the non-Roman origins of French political and religious authority, while emphasizing the autonomy of the French church against the powers of both king and pope. At the beginning of Quattrocento, the conciliarist movement asserting the power of a general council to discipline and depose a pope became the leading political ideology of the French Church (Oakley 2003). Such ideas were forcefully developed in several political writings, such as the *Tractatus de ecclesia* (*Tract on the Church*) and *De potestate ecclesiastica* (*On Ecclesiastical Power*), written respectively in 1416 and 1417 by Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420) and his pupil Jean Charlier de Gerson (1363–1429). Their attacks on the absolute powers of the pope were also taken up by radical anti-monarchical authors, who read Gerson's arguments in terms of the deposition of kings as well as popes. Drawing on Marsilius of Padua, they claimed the right of the community to change both its ruler and form of the constitution with reasonable cause. A challenge to this view is represented by the constitutional theory advanced by the jurist, diplomat, and propagandist Claude de Seyssel (c. 1450–1520), who, in the spring of 1515, wrote *La grant monarchie de France* (*The Great Monarchy of France*), which is considered one of the best examples of European juridical-political literature of the sixteenth century. In this work, which provided a systematic discussion of the emerging French state almost 50 years before Bodin's *Les Six Livres de la République* (1576), Seyssel held that the power wielded by the monarch was both controlled and balanced, being restricted by religion, justice, and laws. Distancing himself from Machiavelli, who had emphasized the ability of a ruler to cause the State to grow, Seyssel points to good administrative order and the loyalty of the people as a prerequisite to expansion (Boone 2007). By contrast, the development of the French legal tradition (*mos gallicus*), together with the reception of Italian humanist advice-books on good government,

constituted the background of Guillaume Budé's *Institution du Prince* (*The Education of the Prince*), a compilation of anecdotes or *apophthegmata* on political governance, composed most likely in 1519 for Francis I. His innovation as a political theorist lies in his legitimating absolute power on humanist grounds, thus paving the way for more modern historicism at the end of the century (Kelley 1970). Arguments in support of royalist rights against papal authority figured conspicuously in sixteenth-century authors, among them the jurist Charles Dumoulin (1500–1566), who in his programmatic treatise on the French monarchy (*Traité de l'origine, progrès, excellence du Royaume et Monarchie des François et couronne de France*, 1561) affirmed the freedom of the secular monarchy from the jurisdiction of the universal church in temporal affairs. His antipapal stance came about through his acquaintance with Lutheran and Calvinist ideas about the roles of church and State (Kelley 1970). Emulating Luther's teaching on the two kingdoms and two governments, John Calvin in both the early and the late editions of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536 and 1559) had affirmed a clear distinction between a heavenly, spiritual kingdom that finds its expression in the church, and a civil, earthly kingdom whose institutional expression is the civil government. Yet, despite all his ambiguities, he departed from Luther's outlook and articulated a different political theology – one that would influence the theories of later Calvinist writers, thus providing an intellectual basis for the more radical kind of Protestantism that emerged in the second half of the sixteenth century (Fergusson 2010; Eire 2016).

Spanish political thought was undoubtedly influenced by both Italian humanism and Erasmus's program of ecclesiastical reform. Erasmus's topics, such as biblical study, education, peace in Europe, and civil concord, later surfaced in the works of Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540), the great Iberian humanist who studied at Paris, Bruges, and Louvain and taught at Oxford. Yet, unlike in the great northern monarchies, Protestantism never gained a strong foothold in Spain. Instead, one of the crucial questions involved the

legitimacy of the Spanish presence in America and the nature and rights of the natives, points that inevitably affected the political debates of the time. Several pamphlets were produced in order to demonstrate that the conquests had satisfied the requisites of just war, thereby casting the emperor as a universal monarch. Concomitantly, the atrocities committed by the colonizers on the Amerindians, the practice of selling them as slaves, and the means of evangelization aroused criticism. In 1515, the Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas (c. 1484–1576), invoking a universal conception of human dignity, openly advocated the rights of the natives before King Charles V. The issue was definitively addressed after two of the most dramatic campaigns in the Spanish colonization of the Americas, that is, Hernán Cortés's conquest of Mexico in 1520 and Francisco Pizarro's expedition against the Incas in 1533 (McAlister 1985; Tellkamp 2020). Las Casas's most famous work, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, written in 1542 and published ten years later, is at the same time a condemnation of the Spanish methods of colonization and a defense of the genuine meaning of Christian evangelization. His arguments were opposed by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573), a humanist who in his *Democrates alter sive de justis belli causis apud Indos dialogus* (*The second Democrates, Concerning the Just Causes of the War Against the Indians*, 1545) endorsed Aristotle's notion of "natural slavery" to justify wars of enslavements and the legitimacy of Spanish imperialism. In the same years, Francisco de Vitoria (c. 1486–1546) and Domingo de Soto (1494–1560), both professors of theology at Salamanca, firmly denied the legitimacy of arguments justifying the conquest of the Indies as well as questioning the pope's right to give European rulers dominion over primitive peoples. Furthermore, in his 1539 lecture on the Indies, *De iure belli* (*The Law of War*) Vitoria placed extraordinary constraints on the right to wage war, while underlying the role of natural law as a rational norm through which men can merge any kind of conflict and issue (Losada 1971; Scattola 2009; Beneyto-Corti Varela 2017). Broadly recognized as one of the "fathers

of international law", his theories influenced later great European thinkers, such as Alberico Gentili (1552–1608), Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), John Locke (1632–1704), and Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694) (García and García 1997).

The reception of humanist ideas together with the religious issues brought up by the Reformation began to take root in England by the start of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, the propagation of the *studia humanitatis* had already been promoted by several Italian scholars who went to teach at Cambridge and Oxford in the late fifteenth century. Until then, English writers had based their political questions on a range of sources largely drawn from key topics of medieval political thought, such as royal authority and community rights. Sir John Fortescue (c. 1394–1476) had turned to Thomas Aquinas's and Ptolemy of Lucca's ideas to elaborate his theory of the "political and regal king," that is a king who protected property and served the public good. The same concern with virtuous government and the good of the community as a whole was further developed in educational treatises and in English advice-books, which had similar characteristics to those produced in France, Spain, and Italy (M. Van Gelderen in Lloyd-Burgess-Hodson 2007). However, the unquestionably most famous exploration of "the best state of a commonwealth" was Thomas More's *Utopia*, the description of a republic ruled by excellent laws in which everyone lived in perfect peace and happiness while working for the common good. If it is true that *Utopia* reflects More's criticism and distaste for the corruption of his times, nevertheless, it represents his attempt at providing an alternative model of society combining private virtue and political life. As a reply to his close friend Erasmus, who in 1509 had dedicated to him the *Moriae encomium* (*The Praise of Folly*), More's *Utopia* embodies the author's demand for political and social reform. The same need for moral reform in order to promote the "commonwealth," or "public weal," informed the works of contemporary "radical" humanists and Protestant authors, such as Thomas Elyot (1490–1546), Thomas Starkey (1495–1538), and Sir Thomas Smith (1513–1577), whose works would become a

source of inspiration for Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. Yet, the most influential advice-book of northern humanism was Erasmus's *Institutio principis christiani* (*The Education of a Christian Prince*), addressed to the future Emperor Charles V in 1516. The *Institutio*, which has been often seen as the counterpart of More's *Utopia*, combines the humanist ideal of the virtuous prince with the reformist hope for the moral betterment of the body politic. Despite his criticism of Catholic institutions and practices, Erasmus refused to endorse the radical methods of the reformers and strongly opposed Luther's destruction of unity within the Christian Church. Rather, he sought to accomplish the reform of both the church and the State through the power and development of *humanae litterae*. By covertly questioning the universal monarchy and the futility of dynastic wars, he warned against the traditional concepts of glory and honor reshaping them in the spirit of the Christian and classical virtues. A father figure to his people, the Christian prince must dispense justice and provide spiritual leadership. Thus, in exercising his power, he is subject to the law and assumes as many responsibilities as honors. Provided he promotes the public good and not his self-interest, the prince can be regarded as the likeness of God (*imago Dei*) in his manners and qualities and, in turn, as the example to be imitated by all of his people. As a such, by his wisdom, he must prevent war, which usually arises from private reasons and interests (Tracy 1978; Trapman et al. 2010). Erasmus's disapproval of the warlike policy of his age is clearly expressed in the expounded version of his most famous proverb *Dulce bellum inexpertis* (*War is sweet to those who have not tried it*, 1515), in the *Enchiridion militis christiani* (*Handbook of a Christian Knight*, 1503/4) as well as in the *Querela pacis* (*Complaint of Peace*), which appeared in 1517, just as Charles V declared war on Francis I of France. In these works, the Dutch humanist discussed the unnatural state of war and vividly illustrates how the prosperity and good order of society, as well as the advancement of the arts, sciences, and education, are all the fruitful results of peace. Finally, by rejecting any kind of enforced conversion of faith, Erasmus offered his

own contribution to the doctrinal debate over "just war" culminating in the Valladolid dispute between Las Casas and Sepúlveda in 1550–1551 (Losada 1971; Tellkamp 2020).

The primacy of virtue as articulated by Erasmus was a standard tenet in humanist political thought inasmuch as it offered a new form of legitimation to the prince's rule: not only was virtue a personal distinction, but it also was a necessary and sufficient title for the exercise of power (Hankins 2014). This argument was challenged and overturned by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), who offered in his *Il principe* (*The Prince*), completed roughly at the same time as Erasmus's *Institutio* came off the press, an alternative approach to politics developed by his humanist predecessors. Unlike them, Machiavelli's political theory was based on a redefinition of virtue as whatever human quality, moral or immoral, good or bad, made for effective political power (Skinner 1978; Quagliani 2007; Hankins 2014). This implies the prince's free choice to depart from traditional morality for the preservation of the State, if necessary. As such, Machiavelli's *virtù* is less related to the individual qualities of the ruler than to the success of his actions and, therefore it is concerned with public affairs rather than with private relationships. His aim to avoid consideration of imagined matters and examine instead the reality of political affairs (*verità effettuale*) marked a clear methodological shift from the traditional model of mirrors-for-princes literature. Several scholars have argued that the fundamental differences between Machiavelli and his humanist predecessors reflect the different political conditions of Florence in his days (Sasso 1980; Rubinstein 1982; Cappelli 2017). The events following the French invasion of 1494, in which Italy became the arena of the violent battle for supremacy between the Germanic Hapsburg and French Valois dynasties, as well as the restoration of the Medici regime in Florence in 1512, had a traumatic effect on Florentine political thinking. The instability and uncertainty of things to which Machiavelli constantly refers in his writings, according to this line of interpretation, are in fact more than a vivid picture of the current turmoil he and his

contemporaries faced. In such a desperate context, the role of virtue becomes crucial for actively overcoming the challenges of arbitrary, capricious fortune, thereby involving the ruler's ability to adapt to mutable circumstances and to prepare, in times of peace, for a sudden change. Machiavelli's analysis is also an attempt to provide a remedy to the moral degeneration and political decline of republican liberty. Because of the wicked nature of human ambitions, the monarchical regime appears at first glance as the only effective government to control and restrain people's excessive ambition and corruption (see ► ["State in Renaissance Politics"](#)). Nevertheless, in the *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (*Discourses on Livy*), Machiavelli set about defining republican liberty and establishing the conditions of how it might best be achieved and preserved. In the first 18 chapters of the work, which had been probably developed out on an early treatise on republics datable 1513/1515, he outlined the framework of the conditions that make possible the "vivere politico," that is, the specific political regime or constitution which precludes tyranny and despotic rule through the rule of law and the safeguarding of the common weal (Pocock 1975; Viroli 1992). Indeed, in the second book of the *Discourses*, Machiavelli seems to express a clear preference for free or republican government inasmuch as "it is not the particular good but the common good that makes cities great. And without doubt this common good is not observed except in republics" (*Discourses*, II, 2, in Machiavelli 2000). More specifically, the Roman Republic is regarded as a positive example with regard to the benefits deriving from the political struggle between the various "humors" that compose every political body. In this respect, his renowned and scandalous thesis that "the disunion between the plebs and the Roman senate made that republic free and powerful" (*Discourses*, I, 4, ed. cit.) paved the way for the long history of conflictualism in western political thought (Pedullà 2018). Furthermore, although Machiavelli regarded religion as the chief of three essential bases upon which any political society is grounded – the other two being laws and military discipline – his critique of the papacy and of the

Roman Church Christianity as expressed in the *Discourses* parallels the line of reasoning of the last chapter of *The Prince*. More specifically, it is the Church that "has kept and still keeps Italy divided" (*Discourses*, I, 12, ed. cit.) and is thus the cause of the loss of republican liberty. Similar criticism of the Church emerges in the *Istorie fiorentine* (*History of Florence*), commissioned by Pope Leo X in 1520 and first published in 1532; there Machiavelli highlighted the dreadful effect of sectarianism within Christianity over the centuries. Yet, in the same year (1520) Machiavelli expounded to Pope Leo X and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (the future Pope Clement VII) a plan for constitutional reform to restore Florence to a "well-ordered republic" following the death of Lorenzo de' Medici the younger. The *Discursus florentinarum rerum post mortem iunioris Laurentii Medices* (written between November 1520 and February 1521) attempts to reconcile two contradictory needs: to give Florence the institutional structure of a "perfect republic" in which peace, prosperity, and harmony are guaranteed, and to grant the Medici absolute power.

The same concern with the political reform of Florence had been expressed by Machiavelli's friend Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540) in his treatises on constitutional problems, the 1512 discourse *Del modo di ordinare il governo popolare*, also known as the *Discorso di Logrogno*, and the *Dialogo del Reggimento di Firenze* (*Dialogue on the Government of Florence*), composed between 1521 and 1525. In analyzing the corruption of Florence's institutions and customs, Guicciardini tried to persuade his fellow citizens to reshape their public life through virtue and good deeds. Four years later he wrote an essay to advise the Medici about how to preserve and reinforce their dominion over the city. Yet, in the *Dialogo del Reggimento*, Guicciardini reiterated his commitment to the republican ideal. As in Machiavelli's contemporary *Discursus florentinarum*, the regime he proposed for the city was, in fact, a mixed constitution, i.e., a regime combining elements of different constitutional forms, such as monarchy with aristocracy or democracy. While, however, Machiavelli looked

back to the Roman republic, Guicciardini took as his model the Venetian government, inasmuch as “all the different types of government go to make it up” (*Dialogo del Reggimento*, in Guicciardini 1974, p. 139). Such a wavering attitude perfectly matched one of the key ideas of his thought, namely that “general rules” cannot be applied to politics inasmuch as each situation is characterized by a specific set of circumstances (Rubinstein 2012). Along these lines, Guicciardini’s shift from a republican to a non-republican language of politics appears to be permeated by the same pragmatism that characterized Machiavelli’s thought. For this reason, both authors have long been regarded as the initiators of a tradition of political thinking grounded on the reason of state rather than on the art of politics (Viroli 1992). The controversial phrase *ragione degli stati* (“reasons of the states”) in fact, is never used by Machiavelli. Rather, it appears in Guicciardini’s *Dialogue*, where he claimed that in international affairs rulers must be prepared to violate divine-natural law if the reason of states requires it, thus displaying a cynical perspective that considered the theoretical treatment of politics pointless because of the imperfection and corruption of men. Such ideas were destined to mold the new intellectual and political world marked by the advent of Counter-Reformation and the revival of absolutist theories (see ► [“State in Renaissance Politics”](#) and ► [“Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of”](#)).

Impact and Legacy

The separation of political rationality from traditional morality marked the beginning of a new political position in Renaissance humanism. Around the mid-sixteenth century, Machiavelli and the idea of reason of state made their appearance in political literature and rapidly placed Italy at the center of European political theorists. Yet, whether they attacked him or tried to ignore him, they could not escape their debt to Machiavelli. Although his works had received Pope Clement’s approval at the time of their publication in the winter of 1531–2, Machiavelli was

shortly to be considered a dangerous author, and the term “Machiavellism” came to denote practical politics combining utilitarian and immoral actions for the sake of seizing and maintaining power. Writings against Machiavelli by Protestants and Catholics, who equally deplored the separation of politics and morality grounded on religion as allegedly expressed in his books, became popular throughout Europe, particularly in England and France. Furthermore, Machiavelli’s and Guicciardini’s challenge to the theories of natural law and the pope’s indirect power in temporal affairs raised objections not only from the theologians of the so-called School of Salamanca but also from the most notable leaders of the Catholic Reformation, such as the English Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500–1558), the Portuguese bishop Girolamo Osorio (1506–1580) and the Italian Jesuit Roberto Bellarmino (1542–1621), who even advocated the pope’s right to depose wicked monarchs. In opposing Machiavellian views, they also shared anti-absolutist feelings (Birely 1990).

The role of law and its relationship with religion and morality became a fundamental issue in sixteenth-century European political thought. A notable example was the influential book *Les Six Livres de la République* (*Six Books on the Commonwealth*) by Jean Bodin (1529–1596), originally written and published in French in 1576 and later accessible in a revised and expanded Latin version in 1586. Bodin’s account of sovereignty is perhaps the major event in the development of European juridical-political thought and became the prototype for a whole new literary genre in the seventeenth century. Although it had been considered the typical product of the sixteenth-century political climate, the *République* was undeniably indebted to the juridical culture of the medieval era as well as to the political humanist tradition. Indeed, the language adopted in describing the power of princes, the prudence and the virtues they must possess, as well as the notion of “sovereignty” and the questioning of mixed constitution as described by Bodin display a knowledge of both the vocabulary of the Italian theorists, such as Bartolus of Sassoferrato and Baldo degli Ubaldi, and the legal

status of Italian regimes in the late Renaissance. In fact, his other main works, including the *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (*Method for the Easy Knowledge of History*, 1566), the *Colloquium heptaplomeres* (*Colloquium of the Seven*, 1587) as well as the *Theatrum universae naturae* (1596) have their roots in the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition of Renaissance philosophical thought (Vasoli 2008). Yet, Bodin's doctrine also had a specific and a general significance in relation to the religious crisis of his day, reaching its climax in the religious wars between 1562 and 1598. Such events led, in turn, to a rethinking of the concept of *religio*, which, in Bodin's view, is the essential civic bond without which no political community can exist. This issue had a great impact on the coming generation of writers on reason of state, whose main concern was the relationship between secular power and religious and moral concerns (De Mattei 1979; Borrelli 1994).

A striking effort to reconcile the practices of princely government and Christian morality was made by reason-of-state authors, who harked back to the ancient historian Tacitus and his works to covertly promote Machiavelli's teachings. As a result, between the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries commentaries on Tacitus paralleled the reason-of-state literature. In this field, the jurist Domenico Ferretti (1489–1552), author of a critical edition of the *Annals* (1542), as well as the erudite humanists Marc-Antoine Muret (1526–1585) and Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) made important contributions to the rise and spread of "Tacitism" in Italy and Europe. Still, it was the Italian preacher Giovanni Botero (1544–1617) who, in the first chapter of his famous book *Ragion di Stato* (*On Reason of State*, 1589), gave a definition of "reason of State" as essentially the knowledge of the means for the preservation of the state, thus making an effort to conciliate it with the Christian religion. This reason of state, neutral in itself, was aimed at the public good and allegedly operated in conformity with Christian values. Despite

the ambiguity of Botero's arguments, the "reason of State" he outlined was a practical set of moral and political rules of conduct enabling the prince to preserve his dominion, while avoiding anything that might affect the stability of the State. Three years later, in a tract on the same subject (*On Reason of State*), published in his 1590 political work *L'idea del libro de' governi di Stato et di guerra*, Girolamo Frachetta (1558–1619) distinguished between true and false reason of state, that is, civil prudence and the pursuit of personal interest, respectively. While true reason is separated from neither moral virtue nor religion, false reason is concerned only with self-advantage, with no consideration of God and duty. According to this view, the state of reason must always be subordinate to human laws and religion, not otherwise (Baldini 1996, 1997). By contrast, at the very end of the century, Scipione Ammirato (1531–1601), in his *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* (*Discourses on Cornelius Tacitus*, 1594), took this idea further: invoking Tacitus to reject Machiavelli's republicanism, he stated that reason of state might occasionally involve breaches of the law, thus displaying the tendency of the time to put political science at the service of established power. As a result, theorists of reason of state detached political thinking from the natural law tradition and steered it toward Hobbes's views on absolute and indivisible sovereignty. This led to the transformation of politics from a matter of civic prudence to a science dealing with the principles of power, a shift that definitively took place at the turn of the seventeenth century (Scattola 2003).

Historians have also stressed the influential role that northern humanism played in the development of international law and "social contract" theories. More specifically, in distinguishing between the *lex naturalis*, the *ius gentium*, and the *lex positiva*, the neo-Thomists of Salamanca and the Jesuit theorists of the mid-Cinquecento anticipated issues and arguments that became central in seventeenth-century European political thought. Their speculations, later discussed

by Hugo Grotius and Samuel von Pufendorf, contributed to the establishment of a new political language that was fully adopted by their successors in order to build up a modern version of the natural-law theory of the state. Grotius's most famous work, *De iure bellum ac pacis* (*On the Law of War and Peace*), written in 1625, has been regarded as one of the most important classics of international thought. In this book, he elaborated his theory of man's sociability, that is, the capacity to form relationships that are "communitarian" in nature, a term that was developed later by Hobbes and other social contract theorists. Thus, in Grotius's civic philosophy, the commonwealth – or the unified body of citizens based on their free consent – was the basic unit of civil law and of all forms of authority (M. Van Gelderen in Lloyd-Burgess-Hodson 2007). Grotius's theory of sociability is also linked with irenicism. Formed in the Erasmian humanist tradition, he constantly advocated a church based on concord, peace, and unanimity. Yet, his modernity lay in his insistence on cooperation between Christians of different confessions in case of war. However, despite his devotion to peace, Grotius (or, for that matter, Erasmus) cannot be regarded as championing the principle of toleration as it is understood today. A brilliant and incisive defense of religious toleration would be published not until Pierre Bayle's *Commentaire philosophique* at the end of the century.

Cross-References

- Bodin, Jean
- Botero, Giovanni
- Bruni, Leonardo
- Calvin, Jean
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Government, Renaissance Forms of
- Guicciardini, Francesco
- Humanism
- Luther, Martin
- Machiavelli, Niccolò
- More, Thomas
- Pontano, Giovanni
- Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of
- State in Renaissance Politics

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Poliziano, Agnolo

► [Poliziano, Angelo](#)

Poliziano, Angelo

Born: 14 July 1454, Montepulciano

Died: 28/29 September 1494, Florence

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Abstract

Poliziano is commonly acknowledged as one of the most important European humanists of the fifteenth century and a key figure in the history of classical scholarship. In his activity as poet and scholar – or, as he called himself later in his life, *Grammaticus* – he widely read and studied the works of thinkers and philosophers, both classical and medieval. In what follows, attention will be paid especially to Poliziano as a reader, translator, and commentator of philosophically relevant texts. Despite of the obvious centrality of his literary accomplishments in his intellectual biography, they will be left in the background.

Alternate Names

[Poliziano, Agnolo](#); [Politianus, Angelus](#); [Politian](#)

Biography

Angelo Ambrogini was born in 1454 in Tuscany, in Montepulciano, *Mons Politianus*, after which he took his nickname. Very little is known about his childhood and early adulthood, which most certainly must have been darkened by the murder of his father, Benedetto. No later than 1469, we find him in Florence, hosted not too comfortably by his cousin Cino di Matteo Ambrogini. Around this time he enrolled at the Studio, the University of Florence. Once again, we are not well informed about this last stage of Poliziano's education, although it is certain that among his professors were Cristoforo Landino, Johannes Argyropoulos, and Andronicus Callistus. Landino, a Medicean bastion at the studio and a greatly influential teacher of poetics and rhetoric, was the advocate of a Neoplatonic allegoresis of literature, something on which Poliziano was never especially keen, in spite of his professed admiration for the older master. In Argyropoulos – who was among the most revered Byzantine emigrés to Italy after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 – Poliziano saw the model of the encyclopedic scholar, as well as the subtle commentator of Aristotle. Besides interpreting the “ethical” Aristotle, whose study was traditionally privileged on the Florentine rather conservative philosophical scene and by the intellectuals close to the local oligarchy, Argyropoulos introduced the study of the “logical” and “physical” Aristotle, conducted on the Greek original texts. Callistus succeeded Argyropoulos at the studio in 1471, and in the *Elegy to Bartolomeo Fonzio* (late 1473 or early 1474) Poliziano speaks of him as he who “solves the knots of obscure Aristotle” and “teaches the delightful poems of the inspired man from Smyrna [i.e. Homer]” (Bausi 2003, 35). The opposition between “obscure” Aristotle and pleasurable Homer reveals that around that time for Poliziano, the Greek philosopher was still an object of only mild fascination, whereas Homer (and classical literature in general) would always

be central to his interests. But in the *Elegy to Bartolomeo Fonzio*, with its narration of a typical day of a young humanist in the making, Poliziano fictitiously describes his encounters with other Florentine intellectuals, and there he devotes significant space to Marsilio Ficino, arguably the dominating cultural figure in Florence at that time. He portrays Ficino as a man who is highly competent in natural philosophy, medicine, astrology, and music and who “refutes the impious words of insane Lucretius and wages war against Epicurus’ errors” (Bausi 2003, 31). Poliziano seems to allude only in passing to Ficino’s achievements as a rediscoverer of Plato’s teachings and seems rather be praising the philosopher for possessing unique and awe-inspiring wisdom. At this stage, the relation between the two, among the most debated issues among Poliziano and Ficino scholars, is that of an enthusiastic pupil eager to learn and an established master who, with the publication of the letters and the poems documenting his discussion with Lorenzo de’ Medici on the Supreme Good (1474), will soon become something similar to the official philosopher of the Medici’s regime. Of the few extant letters exchanged between Poliziano and Ficino in these months, it is worth mentioning one that goes by the name of *Laus brevitatis* (I, 15 of Ficino’s epistolary), where Ficino boldly affirms: “in such brevity of time, to speak vainly is more of the philologist than of the philosopher” (Ficino 1576, 681). Whatever interpretation we want to give to this sentence, we can safely affirm that it anticipates the main reason why their respective paths will eventually part: Ficino viewed philosophy as an autonomous and superior discipline, while for Poliziano it was part of the classical “circle of learning” (*encyclopaedia*) to be investigated with the instruments of philology (*grammatica*).

At the time Poliziano enrolled at the studio (ca. 1469), his greatest concern was still that of securing a remunerated protection for himself and returning to the *dulce studium* always threatened by “envious poverty” (Del Lungo 1867, *Lat. Epigr.* 1). The late Benedetto Ambrogini had some ties with the Medici family, and this eventually favored his son’s early entrance into their

extended circle. Indeed, between 1472 and the late fall of 1473, Poliziano served as secretary to Agnolo della Stufa, a Florentine personality of adamantine Medicean faith. During this time, the inclusion of Poliziano’s uniquely learned elegy entitled *Epicedion in Albieram* (1473) in a collection of writings assembled in memory of Agnolo’s prematurely departed daughter in law, Albiera degli Albizi, marked the young poet’s thunderous entrance as one of the Florentine’s finest muses. By the end of that year, Poliziano was finally admitted into the Medici household. Already in 1470, he had successfully tried to win Lorenzo’s sympathy by presenting him with a translation in Latin verses of book II of the *Iliad*, eventually followed by that of book III (1472). It was an ambitious operation, as according to the humanists’ social code, this gift situated Poliziano in a two old intellectual line of succession: literary – that of Homer – as well as political – that of Carlo Marsuppini, humanist and Medici partisan, whose translation of the *Iliad*, interrupted by his death in 1453, was now being carried on by a practically unknown 15-year-old. Lavish praise came from Poliziano’s contemporaries, and Marsilio Ficino soon acknowledged him as “Homerus adolescens” (Branca 1983, 39).

Poliziano’s admission into the Medici family is arguably his life’s major turning point. From then until his death, he will live his life “under the laurel” that is according to that alliance of literary glory and power granted to him by the close connection with “Laurentius Medices,” head of the family of bankers since 1469. In the beginning, Poliziano served as secretary to Lorenzo but was soon appointed as preceptor of his two sons: the irresolute and inept Piero, a fulgid example of the “pedagogue’s impotence on chromosomes” (Cordero 1986, 263), and the more cold-headed Giovanni, the future Pope Leo X (1513–1521). Poliziano’s intimate relation with Lorenzo, cemented by deep intellectual affinities, also suffered multiple crises, most notably at the end of the 1470s, when he refused to accompany Lorenzo on a critical mission to Naples and fled to the Gonzaga’s court in Mantua (winter 1479–1480). In spite of these ups and downs, by

the summer of 1479, Lorenzo must have realized Poliziano's outstanding potential as a scholar. He was ready to channel them into what was termed "Laurentian cultural policy," a broad cultural project marked by an overarching classicistic stance, including the shaping of a new high-style canon in the Tuscan vernacular and the launching of classical scholarship in Florence and in its relatively recently founded university. Accordingly, in a handful of years, Lorenzo granted Poliziano a number of allowances, presenting him with a small farm near Fiesole and appointing him curator of the Medicean private library. To top it all off, in the summer of 1480, on Lorenzo's impulse, the officials at the studio designated Poliziano professor of rhetoric and poetics. On his part, on several occasions, Poliziano already demonstrated his literary ability by exploiting the contingent nature of an event and turning it into political value. First, he did it with the *Stanze per la giostra*, a poem in octaves in two books imbued with Neoplatonic references, celebrating the joust as a festive seal of the alliance of Florence with Milan, Venice, and Rome, glorifying Giuliano, the lesser but more glamorous of the Medicean *Dioscuri*, and winning the tournament in piazza Santa Croce in January 1475. But 3 years later and a few churches away, Giuliano lay dead in Santa Maria del Fiore, stabbed to death at 25 in the conspiracy plotted by the Pazzi family, the Medici's archenemies. Unlike the *Stanze* – whose composition was interrupted by the death of the people it was meant to celebrate and then left unfinished to be printed almost posthumously in 1494 – the *Pactianae coniurationis commentarium*, a pro-Medicean pamphlet reminiscent of the Roman historian Sallust and the only historical work Poliziano wrote, had a much larger echo among the contemporaries, as it was printed in the immediate aftermath of the conspiracy and was part and parcel of an extremely aggressive campaign of propaganda orchestrated by Lorenzo and his supporters against the conspirators and their political protectors.

During his tenure at the University of Florence, which lasted until his death in 1494, Poliziano lectured publicly and privately, to local as well as international students. He produced a

vast output of works, especially commentaries – most of which he meant for private use and consequently left unpublished – and introductory orations to his courses (*praelectiones*), often containing programmatic statements offering important glimpses of his esthetic and philosophical convictions. From a look at his notes, which range from Homer – whom he saw as the primordial "ocean" from which all classical wisdom originated – down to Theocritus, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Persius, and many others, it seems that no known classical or medieval author or work escaped his sharp eye. Poliziano's final goal was the encyclopedic and exact reconstruction, by means of language, of the whole thesaurus of antiquity, a task eased by his unparalleled command of Latin and Greek. In his own words: "the functions of philologists are such that they examine and explain in detail every category of writers – poets, historians, orators, philosophers, medical doctors, and jurisconsults" (Celenza 2010, 245). Therefore, his preference leaned not only toward the works of grammarians and the *lexica* but also toward those writers providing the most vivid accounts of what he called the "erudite centuries" and whose books were redolent with detailed descriptions and *Realien*, especially Pliny the Elder, Plutarch, and Aulus Gellius. The two "miscellanies" – the *Miscellanea Centuria prima* (1489) and *Secunda* (left unfinished and unknown until its eventful discovery in 1973) – are the quintessential product of this most fecund season of philological studies.

Although we do not have a complete or exact chronology of Poliziano's courses at the studio, it is certain that in the early 1490s, he began lecturing on philosophical works, particularly those by Aristotle. In the academic year 1490–1491, he publicly read books III and V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, probably along with a private course on the *Physics*. The two semesters 1491–1492 were devoted to Aristotle's *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, and *On Sophistical Refutations* as well as to the works of some of his commentators, such as Porphyry's *Introduction* and (the spurious) Gilbert of Poitiers's *Liber de sex principiis*. In 1492 he taught the *Prior Analytics* and Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*. In 1493, he completed Aristotle's *Organon*, teaching the

Posterior Analytics and the *Topics*. Poliziano's interest in Aristotle and Aristotelianism is by no means new; what is novel, however, is the almost exclusive scholarly focus on the great Greek philosopher, the decision to make him the primary object of lectures, and the systematic approach to studying the arts of speech. In Poliziano's own words, it was Giovanni Pico who revived his interest in philosophy: "[he] trained me to look at philosophy with eyes that were not sleepy, as they were before, but rather that were alive and awake, as if he were giving me life, with his voice serving as a kind of battle-trumpet" (*Ang. Polit.* 1553, 310). Poliziano and Pico met in 1479, but they became especially close after 1484, when Pico first established himself in Florence.

Pico was soon absorbed into Lorenzo de' Medici's sphere of influence, and in 1489 Poliziano could affirm that Pico had "made its nest in the laurel" (*picus* is in fact Latin for "woodpecker," while the "laurel" is obviously Lorenzo) (*Ang. Polit.* 1553, 217). And it was on Lorenzo's behalf, namely, to enrich his unique library, that, between June and July 1491, Poliziano and Pico traveled together in Northern Italy hunting for books, many of which dealt with Aristotelian philosophy. Their relation was one of mutual and nearly absolute admiration, and Poliziano must have certainly benefited from Pico's vast philosophical knowledge. This close friendship inevitably affected Poliziano's attitude toward Ficino, whose relationship with the younger, intellectually restless Pico oscillated between the two poles of disinterested generosity and thinly veiled criticism. The frictions affecting this triangle of thinkers became apparent when Pico dedicated his *De ente et uno* to Poliziano in 1491. In this work, which contained *in nuce* his attempt to reconcile the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, Pico implicitly rejects Ficino's tenet of the preparatory validity of Aristotle's teachings and of Plato's superiority in the pursuit of happiness, as the latter had written in a letter to Pico dated to 1482: "Peripatetics do not easily make us erudite, Platonists make us also wise and happy" (quoted by Sebastiano Gentile in Viti 1994, 128). In addition, Pico there argues that the soul's journey to God may take place by following diverse traditions of thought and that does not necessarily occur through the *Via Platonica*.

The fact that, in the introduction to *De ente et uno*, Pico affirms that this work originated from Poliziano's earlier lectures on Aristotle and was influenced by the ensuing discussions involving Lorenzo, not only attests to Poliziano's primary role in the revival of Aristotelian studies but also aims at ascribing to the *Signore* of Florence the role of active participant and protector of the whole enterprise. Reading between the lines, one may also notice the attempt, on the part of both Poliziano and Pico, to contain the enduring impact of Neoplatonism in Florence and consequently isolate Marsilio Ficino. This attempt must have been quite successful if, less than one year later, in the letter narrating the circumstances of Lorenzo's death (8 April 1492), Poliziano could proudly affirm that, besides the family, only three people were admitted to Lorenzo's deathbed: Poliziano, Pico, and Savonarola.

Summoned by Lorenzo at Pico's request, the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola established in Florence in 1490. Thanks to his powerful rhetoric and mesmerizing personality, in a handful of years, he was able to leverage great influence over Lorenzo and the intellectuals around him, so that in Lent of 1492, we find him preaching from the pulpit of S. Lorenzo, the Medici's official church. Around the same time, the Dominican convent of S. Marco, of which Savonarola was appointed prior, became the main center of learned conversation among Florentine intellectuals. If Savonarola's teachings certainly had a relevant impact on Pico and Lorenzo – whose later works acquired an unmistakable religious tone – there is no general agreement among scholars on the extent to which he held sway over Poliziano. From a careful reading of the *Apologeticus de ratione poeticae artis* (1491), it seems that the views on literature and poetry thereby expressed by the friar and prophet in the making had many points *from that of Savonarola's* contact with those professed by Poliziano in those years, especially with regard to the reassessment that devalued poetry in favor of philosophy and, inevitably, of theology. But concomitantly with the publication of the *Apologeticus*, Poliziano released the *Nutricia*, composed in 1486, but previously left unpublished and eventually printed in two different editions (Florence and Bologna) between

the spring and summer of 1491. In this grandiose Latinate poem – whose title means “wet-nursing wages” and refers to our debt to poetry, that is, our wet nurse – Poliziano celebrates poetry, sent by God to mankind, as the supreme civilizer. Besides teaching men the concepts of law, reason, honesty, decorum, and justice, it shows them “how powerful is the force seeking for the truth” (Bausi 2006, 683). This was a completely different view from that of Savonarola, who believed that poetry and truth belong in two separate realms and, more dangerously, that cultivating the former poses a fatal threat to the pursuit of the latter.

After the death of Lorenzo de’ Medici, we find Poliziano more often in Florence rather than in Fiesole. He needed to stay close to his former pupil Piero, Lorenzo’s son and successor, on whom he still hoped to exert some influence. In these very last years, Poliziano was involved in countless polemics and quarrels (against Scala in Florence, Marullo in Naples, Merula in Milan) in which the personal component is often inextricably connected with the political one. It is in this light that we should read Poliziano’s last major literary endeavor, the *Liber epistolarum*, a collection of letters. This work, whose publication was announced to Piero on 23 May 1494, was actually released only posthumously in 1498, edited by two of Poliziano’s closest *familiares*, Pietro Crinito and Alessandro Sarti, who heavily manipulated the work’s original structure. The *Liber* constituted a widely orchestrated operation of self-invention aimed at supporting Piero’s fragile diplomatic relations as well as Poliziano’s now fragile position. It had an instrumental nature: it is noteworthy, for instance, that the majority of the letters can be ascribed to the very last years of the 1480s and especially to the early 1490s, the moment when the necessity of good publicity was most pressing. From its outset, the epistolary leaves no doubt as to its real goals: we are presented with a gallery of portraits of *homines doctissimi* who make up the “international” network that would sustain Poliziano’s own reputation: Pico, Ermolao Barbaro, Pomponio Leto, Battista Guarini, Filippo Beroaldo the Elder, Niccolò Leonicensi, and many others.

Poliziano died between 28 and 29 September 1494, a few weeks before the death of Pico and the entrance of the French King Charles VIII into Florence, which ultimately overturned Piero de Medici’s power. Despite the vicious rumors spread by his detractors concerning Poliziano’s immoral conduct, with Savonarola’s approval, Poliziano was buried with the Dominican vest in the convent of San Marco, where he had held his last learned conversations and whose library he so often frequented.

Poliziano and Philosophical Texts

Poliziano approached philosophical texts at various levels. He lectured or translated them, or used them in his activity as a commentator of classical authors. It is uncertain when he exactly took an interest in philosophy, but the obvious influence of Neoplatonism in his juvenile Latin version of the first books of the *Iliad* (1470–1473) leads us to think that he did so very precociously. His earliest Latin versions of Greek philosophical works date to the summer of 1479. The first of these translations is pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias’ *Problemata*, which he, along with other humanists such as Theodorus Gaza and Georgius Valla, did not consider spurious. This is a collection of “problems” or “questions” covering various topics and transmitted to us in a total of four books. Poliziano translated all the questions of book I, with the exception of no. 148 of the standard Ideler edition. What led him to this semi-obscure work is unknown, but from a letter Poliziano sent to the jurist Pandolfo Collenuccio, it seems that he might have been lured by some unusual stories contained in pseudo-Alexander’s work, such as the one telling of the perverse love between the Greek god Eros and one of the Erinyes. Albeit minimal, the information we can gather about the translation of the *Problemata*, if read in the light of Poliziano’s later achievements, testifies to some central features of his *modus operandi*: the predilection for literary sources in the original Greek; the preference given to lesser-known authors and episodes of literary history, the attention to negative or harsh aspects of reality, and the interest in an ethical-naturalist approach to

ancient myths. This translation does not seem to have enjoyed much circulation and was in fact printed only posthumously in the 1498 Aldine, together with a letter by Petrus Crinitus to Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni Pico's nephew. There, the former spoke of Poliziano's will to revise this translation, which was prevented by his death. Crinitus at first was tempted by the idea of discarding this text but decided nonetheless to include it in his master's collection.

Together with the *Problemata*, in the same summer of 1479, Poliziano translated the Stoic philosopher Epictetus' *Encheiridion* [handbook]. This work seems to have had a special appeal for Poliziano, as it offered him space for exercising his philological skills; it satisfied his craving for lesser-known or remote texts; furthermore, it could be of some practical use. This very last reason made Lorenzo de' Medici, who was the dedicatee of the work, also its practical addressee. As a matter of fact, around that time, Lorenzo was suffering pressure from every front: political, military, and financial – for warfare, plague, the unpredictable games of alliances, and the chronic need for money had all consumed him. So, if Poliziano could not actually fight by his patron's side – we should not forget that in December of that year he refused to accompany Lorenzo to Naples – he was still able to offer his support by helping him win another war: that waged within his patron against the afflictions of his own soul. In this regard, the translation was meant to furnish Lorenzo with the weapons of philosophy. Following Epictetus' golden rule ("bear and forbear") (Ang. Polit. 1553, 394), Lorenzo had to bear the turns of fate as well as the criticism of his adversaries and forbear the blows of passion. The publication of the *Encheiridion's* translation stirred a polemic with Bartolomeo Scala, the powerful pro-Medicean chancellor of Florence who had had a long-standing interest in philosophical matters, producing, among other things, a treaty *On Philosophical Sects* (1458). We do not have the actual letter carrying Scala's criticism, but we can infer its content from Poliziano's apologetic response, entitled *Pro Epicteto Stoico Epistola* (Ang. Polit. 1553, 405–409). The three allegations that Scala made against Epictetus were that he was obscure, that he taught things beyond human capabilities, and that he was mendacious. Poliziano obviously tried to

rebut these accusations, although, to our modern eye, his attempts do not seem entirely persuasive. Of course, his response is interesting in many ways, but two points need especially to be stressed: the first is unprecedented assimilation of Epictetus' Stoicism within Platonism; the second is that the very point that Scala made about the impracticability of Epictetus' teachings and which Poliziano rejects will, in fact, be at the core of Poliziano's later skeptical reflections.

The same ethical preoccupations inform the prefatory letter to Poliziano's translation of Plato's dialogue *Charmides*, dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici. Its chronology is uncertain: it was begun most certainly after 1473 and was left interrupted probably at the end of the 1470s. In this most interesting document, the pursuit of philosophy, inspired by the Platonic teachings, is presented as the cure for human unhappiness. This is by no means an easy task, "especially for those who do not blush to consider themselves Platonic philosophers." As Plato says in the *Phaedo*, "one has to die, to have the soul itself removed from any vicious contact, and almost claim one's right and freedom." Subsequently, one has to pass the examination administered by supercilious *Temperantia* and confront a group of "chattering, trifling, disgusting, silly, insignificant, petty, envious, haughty people committed to greed as well as to opulence, who don't consider it execrable to handle and taint with their – so to say – filthy hands, like those of the Harpies", that most sacred name of philosophy" (Ang. Polit. 1553, 447). In the fiction of the letter, it is Plato – whom Poliziano incidentally meets on his own way to happiness and whom he calls "the indisputable father of all philosophers and god of all wisdom, almost like an earthly oracle, as they say" (*Id.*, 447) – the champion who will plead the good cause of philosophy against those "philosophers' monkeys" (*Ibid.*). Finally, Poliziano invokes Lorenzo to be the judge in such a trial, inviting him to free his ears and turn his attention to the Platonic teachings. This preface was neither published in Poliziano's lifetime nor alluded to by contemporary witnesses: Poliziano possibly wanted to avoid the contentions which might have arisen between him and Ficino on the interpretation of Platonism in a moment in which the

latter was establishing himself as the philosophical guide of Lorenzo de' Medici.

In the *praelectio* entitled *Lamia*, there are some striking textual similarities with the prefatory letter to the translation of the *Charmides*, but Poliziano's attitude toward Plato and Platonism has changed dramatically. As a matter of fact, if over the 1470s and for part of the 1480s Poliziano's view of Plato remained substantially unchanged, it acquired a new, more problematic profile in the early 1490s, at a time when, urged by his academic opponents, he decided to tackle the question of philosophizing. He does so in the *Lamia*, which contains his most original treatment of philosophy and of the role of the philosopher. As a matter of fact, when Poliziano started lecturing on philosophical texts, the prominent philosophers in the Florentine academe heavily resented such an intrusion on his part, so he decided to rebuke their allegations publicly with the *Lamia* at the beginning of the academic year 1492. Earlier that year Lorenzo, who was the patron of the studio as well as of Poliziano himself, had died, and for the first time, Poliziano was confronting a demanding audience without his protector's backing. So the time had come for him to attack his opponents before they could land the first blow. Building on Italian folklore and classical tradition – namely, Plutarch – Poliziano disparagingly calls them “lamias,” nosy creatures that are able to remove their eyes at will, pointing out other people's faults while ignoring their own. In the first part of the *praelectio*, Poliziano provides what we may call a revisionist account of some philosophical sects, imbued with irony when not with sarcasm; in doing so, he refrains from a frontal attack and articulates his critique along the swift lines of rhetorical association, targeting the extravagance, the sectarianism, the vacuity, and also the avidity of certain so-called philosophers. In broader terms, Poliziano expresses his discomfort with some of the traditional tenets on what philosophy is or should be, allowing us some glimpses, by contrast, of his own ideas on philosophy. Although not openly ridiculed – unlike Pythagoras and his doctrines with which they were commonly associated in Renaissance Florence – Plato and Platonism are partly exposed to Poliziano's criticism against an utterly abstract and lofty form of philosophizing.

So, if man's dedication to Platonism is the core of the preface and translation of the *Charmides*, as well as the reason why Poliziano invites Lorenzo to embrace Plato as a philosophical guide, in the *Lamia*, instead, Platonic philosophy is one of the many possible modes of philosophizing and one that appears to Poliziano as ultimately impracticable. In the second part of the *Lamia*, which textually reproduces an improvised trial to which Poliziano is brought by his detractors, he directly attacks them. The lamias' accusations do not discuss the merit of the philosophy he is allegedly professing; rather, they call into question its legitimacy, because, in their view, he did not have the professional title necessary to philosophize, a title that, moreover, he refuses: “not that I am ashamed of the name ‘philosopher’ (if only I could live up to it in reality!); it is more that it keeps me happy if I stay away from titles that belong to other people” (Celenza 2010, 199). Poliziano's defensive line is grounded in the rejection of a title that he believes does not belong to him and in embracing and opposing another one, that of *Grammaticus* (i.e., philologist): “I lay claim to no other name than that of philologist” (*Id.*, 247).

A uniquely dense text, the *Lamia* leaves open many questions, such as the identity of the nosy creatures: some scholars have detected in the oration strong anti-Ficinian traits, while others, emphasizing its academic setting, traditionally dominated by masters of strict scholastic persuasion, have set the oration in the tradition of the early humanist, anti-scholastic invective, in the footsteps of John of Salisbury and Petrarch's *De ignorantia*. But the *Lamia* also reveals a new scenario, where a comparison is made not among different styles of philosophizing, as in the first part of the oration, but between philosophy and philology. To understand the relation between these two activities, one must think that Poliziano conceived of them as two disciplines that are strictly intertwined, both of which aim at answering, within their own modalities, the question of truth. As Poliziano had already argued in his unpublished notes to Statius' *Silvae* (1478), the quest for truth is not a task exclusive to the philosopher, as he shares it with those who practice the other *bonae artes*. In this perspective, philosophy and philology, as well as the other

arts, are parallel disciplines, since they both point to the truth even if they move on different tracks. But in the *Lamia*, as we have seen, these two tracks suddenly diverge: the path of philosophy is abandoned to its lofty and dubious glory; philology, instead, is radically embraced, at the point of constituting Poliziano's new identity, that of *Grammaticus*. In fact, devising these issues in terms of a struggle between philosophy and philology can be misleading. In the *Panepistemon*, the *praelectio* to Aristotle's *Ethics* of the previous year, Poliziano had distinguished three types of philosophy: theoretical, practical, and rational. Rational philosophy "explains or narrates or demonstrates or persuades or entertains. From it, grammar, history, rhetoric and poetics are derived" (Ang. Polit. 1553, 463). In this perspective, philology in its widest meaning is a form of philosophy. Therefore, according to his statements in the *Lamia*, Poliziano sets aside theoretical and practical philosophy, that is, metaphysics and ethics. Thus his rejection is not of philosophy as such but of the idea that philosophy can actually grasp some universal truths. It is as though, over the years – that is, at the very least from 1478 onward – Poliziano had progressively circumscribed the realm of (viable) philosophy until he realized that man is constitutionally unable to reach the goals set by some subdivisions of philosophy.

These last considerations lead us to the question of Poliziano's association with skepticism, among the most debated in recent scholarship. By no means is he a forerunner of Pyrrhonism. His scant interest in theology and metaphysics should not be taken as a form of atheism or radical skepticism. He approaches them as two separate disciplines, whose documents and monuments he treats philologically. As for theology, some contemporary witnesses recorded Poliziano's engagement in subtle discussions as well as the interest he showed in works of a religious nature in the last years of his life, but it seems fair to say that he preferred not to get involved in such delicate matters (not by chance, when Poliziano occasionally lists the series of authors to explain and lecture upon, he never mentions theologians). Poliziano certainly knew the writings of the skeptical philosopher Sextus

Empiricus, but Poliziano's extant annotations betray his usual doxographic rather than doctrinal interest, which certainly cannot be compared with the extraordinary use that Pico's nephew Giovanni Francesco will make of the same author a few years later. Poliziano's philological vocation, a veritable priesthood of textuality, absorbed any expression of thought to its textual dimension, so that the questions he addressed were often reduced to the exact determination of the author's intention, without a further discussion on their philosophical, practical, or ethical validity.

Poliziano never wrote systematic philosophical works nor erected speculative monuments – things we may expect from a philosopher in the modern sense of the word. Still, his ethical concerns, his investigation of truth and its conditions, his keen interest in all things philosophical, the vast amount of philosophical texts to which he had access, the nature and number of debates in which he was involved, the quality of thinkers with which he exchanged ideas, and the vibrant environment where these exchanges took place – all deserve the attention of philosophical scholarship and historiography. But apart from the single, specific philosophical issues he addressed, Poliziano's most original contribution to Renaissance philosophy is one of the methods, namely, what we may call the "grammatical" or philological method.

This method regards a set of practices, which Poliziano refined over time through his study of the most diverse works by classical and medieval authors and which he subsequently applied to the writings of philosophers. Poliziano's main goal was the textual restoration of a given work according to the original will of its author. Secondly, he would also provide an interpretation, an explanation or some clarifications. This formidable alliance between ecdotics and hermeneutics reveals Poliziano's technique at its best. His *modus operandi* is illustrated in the two *Miscellanies*, which contain a number of ingenious insights into textual criticism stemming from relentless observation and in-depth reflection on the often not systematic methodologies of authors, readers, scribes, and "occasionally" librarians. These innovative practices feature the assessment of every single witness available with regard to its quality (genuineness, reliability, completeness)

and to its relation with other sources (Poliziano was among the first to practice the “genealogical method” in textual criticism); the replacement of a generic system of reference with precise citations, often including the place where a given manuscript or codex was kept; the use of extraliterary sources, such as epigraphs or ancient coins; and the massive, unprecedented use of sources in the original Greek, something that very few humanists could do. In this regard, Poliziano’s approach to the Aristotelian tradition is exemplary: he aggressively despised most medieval commentators, whose works he deemed as sterile appendixes in convoluted Latin despite their continued widespread use in universities, and privileged the earliest Aristotelian commentators like Ammonius, Philoponus, and Simplicius. This distinct shift obviously had major consequences not only with regard to the Aristotelian texts these commentaries were meant to illustrate but also to the very writings of these authors, which began circulating again: a splendid example of textual care turned into intellectual dissemination.

Cross-References

- [Academy, Platonic](#)
- [Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of](#)

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Polyhistory

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Pomis, David ben Isaac de

Born: 1524, Spoleto

Died: ca. 1594, Venice

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Abstract

David ben Isaac de Pomis was an Italian linguist, physician, and philosopher. His life and work are considered a paradigmatic attempt

at strengthening the relationship between Jews and Christians. He did so by comparing the two traditions, showing their similarities, and emphasizing the common destiny of Jewish and Christian peoples. The study and practice of the medical profession provided him with an intense and fruitful intercultural field but also confronted him with the strong religious prejudices and political obstacles posed by Christian society and legislation. Thus the training of Jewish students at the medical faculties of the universities in Central and Northern Italy played a significant role in defining the status of Jewish physicians and fostering interaction between Christian and Jewish scholars (Shulvass 1973). Furthermore, the discovery during the Renaissance of numerous ancient medical texts was of great benefit to Jewish medical scholars, since they often had privileged access to them through Arab intermediaries. Especially in Venice, Jews were often highly appreciated for their expertise and skills in the medical profession, and several of them were exempted from the traditional ghetto curfew and from wearing the yellow biretta, the headgear usually required of Jews. Venice was the town where David de Pomis arrived in 1569, after being compelled to migrate for a long time from one town to another by strict anti-Jewish legislation imposed by the Church. He remained there for the rest of his life. The tolerant atmosphere of the city, extolled by de Pomis in all of his writings, allowed him to practice medicine and at the same time compose his various works. He produced medical treatises, translations, and commentaries of biblical texts, but his most important works are the *Ṣemaḥ David*, a trilingual dictionary of Hebrew, Latin, and Italian, and *De Medico Hebraeo*, an apology for the Jewish medical profession. As a highly estimated physician and scholar, de Pomis must be considered a relevant figure in facilitating both the exposure of the Christian learned society to Jewish medical studies and the intellectual exchange between Jews and Christians (Guetta 2014). He was recognized by many scholars for his commitment to defending the social position of Jews,

criticizing common Christian prejudices, and promoting Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Biography

David ben Isaac de Pomis (the original Hebrew name of the family is מִן הַתַּפּוּחִים, *Min ha-Tappuḥim*) was born in Spoleto in 1524 (Luzzati 2000). In the preface to his main work, *Ṣemah David*, de Pomis traces his family's descent to one of four illustrious families that were brought from Jerusalem to Rome as slaves by Titus. The original wealth of de Pomis family was lost by his father (de Pomis 1587; Toaff 1975), the learned Isaac de Pomis, soon after David's birth: the sack of Rome in 1527 persuaded Isaac de Pomis to dispatch his property from Spoleto to the cities of Camerino and Civita. On the way, the convoy was attacked by troops of the Colonna family, and the property confiscated. Subsequently, the family left Spoleto and settled in Bevagna, where the young David received his first education from his father. In 1532, the de Pomis family again moved, this time to Todi, where David studied with his uncles, Rabbis Jehiel (Vitale) Alatino and Moses Alatino (1529–1605), who introduced him to the study of medicine and philosophy. In 1545, de Pomis began to study at the University of Perugia, where he earned the title of *Artium et Medicinae Doctor* in 1551. He then practiced medicine in Magliano Sabina, not far from Rome, and at the same time held the position of Rabbi. In July 1555, Pope Paul IV (1476–1559) issued a bull, *Cum nimis absurdum*, which placed further restrictions on the activities of the Jewish population in the Papal State, and the many religious and economic limitations led to the creation of the ghetto in Rome. This anti-Jewish policy prohibited the Jews from owning property and Jewish physicians from practicing medicine among the Christian population. Therefore, de Pomis lost all of his property and his rabbinate and began serving Count Nicola Orsini and, 5 years later, the Sforza family (de Pomis 1587). With the accession to the papacy of Pius IV (1559–1565), life for the Jewish population improved considerably. De Pomis journeyed to Rome, where he delivered a speech in Latin

before the Pope and the cardinals, thereby obtaining permission to practice the medical profession among Christians at Chiusi. Unfortunately, the Pope died a few days after that meeting, and the permission granted to him was revoked by the new Pope Pius V (1565–1572). This event moved de Pomis to spend a long period of time wandering throughout Italy. He finally settled in Venice in 1569, where he also published most of his works. Only later, with Pope Sixtus V (1585–1590), was the original permission renewed.

Works

De Pomis' medical writings reflect the specific cultural and religious atmosphere in Venice during the Renaissance. Forced to settle in Venice due to the strongly anti-Jewish legislation in the Papal State, he enjoyed the tolerance of the Venetian government by gaining high esteem and reputation in the city. During that time, David de Pomis wrote his first works, an Italian translation and commentary of *Ecclesiastes*, written in 1571 and dedicated to Cardinal Marin Grimani, and the *Discorso intorno a l'humana miseria e sopra il modo di fuggirla* (*Discourse on Human Suffering and How to Escape it*). The book, printed in 1572 and dedicated to Margaret of Savoy, was conceived as an appendix to his translation of *Ecclesiastes*. He also published a number of medical writings, such as a treatise on the plague, *Brevi Discorsi et Efficacissimi Ricordi per Liberare Ogni Città Oppressa dal Mal Contagioso* (*Short Discourses and very Effective Advice to Free Every Oppressed City from Contagion*) printed in Venice in 1577; and on the maladies of old age, *Enarratio Brevis de Senum Affectibus Praecavendis Atque Curandis* (*Short Exposition Concerning Prevention and Treatment of Senile Maladies*), which was dedicated to the Doge and Senate of Venice and published in 1588 (Münster 2003). De Pomis' most famous work is the *Ṣemah David. Dittionario novo Hebraico* (*Plant of David. New Hebrew Dictionary*), a trilingual dictionary of the Hebrew, Latin, and Italian languages. The esteem and the wide consensus he gained in Venice motivated him to write his

second widely renowned work, *De Medico Hebraeo. Enarratio Apologica* (*On the Jewish Physician. An Apologetic Exposition*), a defense of Jewish physicians, intended to highlight the similarities between Jews and Christians concerning the practice of medicine. Probably after 1591, he produced the *Index novus in singulis Hippocratis libris cum annotationis propriis*, mentioned at the end of his *Enarratio Brevis de Senum Affectibus*, but the work is no longer extant. He also wrote two discourses in Vernacular: the *Breve discorso nel quale se dimostra la maestà divina haver particular cura e custodia della repubblica Venetiana* (*Short Discourse Showing the Divine Origins of the Venetian Republic*), dedicated to Giacomo Contarini, which was lost until it was recently rediscovered by Guido Bartolucci (2005), and the *Discorso meraviglioso sopra la guerra promossa da Selim, imperatore de' Turchi* (*Wonderful Discourse on the war initiated by Selim, Turkish emperor*), dedicated to Antonio Veranzio de Schybenik, Archbishopric of Esztergom. The texts were follow-ups of a memorandum he sent to the Venetian authorities after the victory in 1571 at the battle of Lepanto between the Ottoman and the Holy League forces, in which he tried to prove the continuity between Venetian institutions and biblical history.

Šemaḥ David (Venice 1587)

De Pomis' fame derives from the *Šemaḥ David*. *Dittionario novo Hebraico, molto copioso, dichiarato in tre lingue* (Venice, 1587), the aforementioned trilingual dictionary in Hebrew, Latin, and Italian, printed by Giovanni de Gara and dedicated to Pope Sixtus V, known for his more tolerant attitude. The preface to this work includes the author's autobiography, written in Hebrew, with his genealogy back to Elijah de Pomis, Rabbi and chief of the Jewish community of Rome, who was martyred in 1298. The work was modeled after the Talmudic and Midrashic dictionary, the *Arūkh*, by Rabbi Nathan ben Yechi'el Min Ha-'Anawim (1035–1106), a signed manuscript of which was in de Pomis' possession. Other sources were the Hebrew dictionary, *Sefer Hashorashim* (*Book of Roots*), by Rabbi David Kimhi (1160–1235), and the *Tishbi* by Rabbi

Eliāhu Levi Bachūr Tedesco (1468–1549). The aim of this work is to harmonize the Mosaic Law with the liberal arts. The work constitutes something completely new to the Jewish literary scene thanks to de Pomis' exact explanation of the three languages. The Hebrew and Latin were compared side by side, while the Vernacular was separate. The dictionary yields valuable insight into de Pomis' other writings and gives us an idea of what the lost works could have been. For example, he also refers to *Sukkat David* (*The Tabernacle of David*) and *Migdal David* (*The Tower of David*) as well as alluding to translations of and commentaries on Job and Daniel, which were never printed and remain lost.

De Medico Hebraeo. Enarratio Apologica (Venice, 1588)

De Medico Hebraeo is an apology designed to combat deep-seated prejudices of the Christians, especially concerning Jewish physicians treating Christian patients. The topic was a pressing one. During the Renaissance, Jewish physicians met with an ambivalent, even contradictory, attitude: on the one hand, ecclesiastical dignitaries such as the Pope actively sought and appreciated medical treatment by Jews. Indeed modern medical knowledge coming from international sources and continuous migration, which was often the result of anti-Jewish legislation, set Jewish physicians apart from the Christians (Fuchs 1990). On the other hand, the same medical practice continued to be openly discredited in an effort to foment fear and suspicion against the Jewish population. During the sixteenth century, the authority of Popes Paulus IV (the bull *Cum nimis absurdum*, 1555) and Pius IV (the bull *Dudum e felicis recordationis*, 1562) strictly forbade Christians to be treated by Jewish physicians. Pius IV introduced the obligation of the Christian faith as a condition for graduation in medical studies in an effort to exclude Jews from practicing medicine professionally. The Church actively propagated the belief that by treating the bodies of their patients, Jewish physicians also damned these peoples' souls. It followed also Pope Gregory XIII's bull, *Contra medicos Hebraeos* of 1581–1581 against which de Pomis's reacted by writing a second

work in defense of Jewish physicians, printed in 1588 and dedicated to Francesco Maria II, Duke of Urbino.

Venetian authorities resisted those pressures and officially showed their esteem for de Pomis as well as some other Jewish physicians by allowing them to treat Christian patients. De Pomis expressed gratitude and praise of Venice in all of his works, repeatedly referring to the divine origin of the city. In the preface to *De Medico Hebraeo*, which is dedicated to Doge Pasquale Cicogna (Doge of Venice from 1585 to 1595), he glorifies the government of the city by drawing a comparison with Moses' Laws. This commendation of Venice's government is indeed a Latin translation of the *Breve discorso*. De Pomis actually praises republican ideas as the foundation of good government, comparing the Venetian constitution to the Mosaic one. This *laudatio* was influenced by the ideas of the Portuguese philosopher Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508), who bravely compared the figure of the Doge to that of Moses in his biblical comments. De Pomis' book is a good example of a Renaissance Jewish intellectual figure attempting to show not only the innocuous role of Jews in society but also to showcase their merits and the benefits they bring to Christian society. De Pomis points out the willingness of Jewish physicians to render assistance to any patient without distinction, and their loyalty in different circumstances, but also argues that this attitude is in accordance with the biblical and Talmudic teachings. In doing so, de Pomis seeks to legitimize the exercise of medicine by the Jews and to refute the general prejudices against Jewish tradition and religion. In line with this purpose, the final section of the work includes a Latin translation of a selection of Talmudic rules in order to show that there are no reasons to despise the Talmud.

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Pomponazzi, Pietro

Born: 1462, Mantua

Died: 1525, Bologna

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Abstract

Pietro Pomponazzi (Mantua 1462–Bologna 1525) was undoubtedly one of the most important philosophers of his time. After receiving his doctorate in arts from the University of Padua in 1487, he spent most of his life there as well as in Bologna teaching natural philosophy and commenting on the books of Aristotle with great success. His work went beyond the purely scholastic realm and caused an enormous controversy which finally did not culminate in an official process against Pomponazzi because of the intervention of Cardinal Pietro Bembo, among others. Pomponazzi's main intention was to analyze thoroughly the most important premises and elements of Aristotelianism in order to determine whether or not it could fit in with the great dogmas of Christian thought about the world and human beings. The result of this analysis was a handful of writings of great historical significance such as the *De immortalitate animae* (1516), the *De fato*, or the *De incantationibus* (both of these published posthumously): in all of them, Pomponazzi denied that the immortality of the soul, human freedom, or supernatural explanations for certain events, like miracles, could somehow go well with Aristotle, the

paradigm of rationality still in the early sixteenth century.

Biography

Pietro Pomponazzi was born into a prominent family from Mantua in 1462. Probably influenced by his familiar context, he was always proud to be a Mantuan: this could be seen in his own writings, where he never missed an opportunity to cite the verses of another famous Mantuan, Vergilius Maro – usually called by him “Vergilius noster.” In 1484, Pomponazzi entered the University of Padua. There, he was lectured by three important scholars who played a decisive role in the formation of his own thinking (Pomponazzi always professed great affection for them). Francesco Neritone taught him the metaphysics of St. Thomas and gave him the theoretical bases of Thomism. Pietro Trampolino taught him natural philosophy, imbuing him with the elements of Aristotle’s psychology. And, finally, Pietro Rocobonella, a professor of medicine, showed him the interconnection between the body and soul and made him well aware of its importance to get effective therapeutic procedures.

In 1487, Pomponazzi obtained his doctorate in arts and almost immediately lectured on natural philosophy in Padua, soon achieving the respect and consideration of his students: in a letter to Tommaso Lippomanno dated October 4, 1489, Francesco Gonzaga – illustrious countryman of Pomponazzi – precisely mentioned the “opinione grande già concepta e stabilita” that the students had of the knowledge and personality of his teacher. According to the curriculum of this university, Pomponazzi had to expose the natural books of Aristotle (*De anima*, *Physica*, *De caelo*, and *De generatione et corruptione*) and the commentaries of Averroes; on holidays, he discussed the *Meteorologica* and the *Parva naturalia*.

In 1492, Pomponazzi held the chair of ordinary philosophy “secundo loco”; 3 years later, he received his doctorate in medicine, which promoted him to the chair of ordinary philosophy

“primo loco.” His *concurrrens* was Agostino Nifo (Suessanus), who would eventually become a powerful opponent in the debate on the immortality of the soul. Pomponazzi always felt for him a deep aversion that he could barely hide behind academic courtesy.

After 8 years of teaching in Padua, Pomponazzi moved to the court of Alberto Pio in Carpi, where he served as professor of logic and, together with Alberto Pio himself, studied the English mathematician Richard Swineshead (Calculator). As a result of the confrontation between Alberto and his brother, the former was forced to leave his city and head into exile in Ferrara, where his court stayed. Pomponazzi remained there until 1499, when he was summoned from Padua to succeed Nicoletto Vernia, who had just passed away.

In this second Paduan period, Pomponazzi had illustrious *concurrentes* like Achillini, Nifo himself, Francanziano, and Bacilieri. Also, at this time, Pomponazzi had some brilliant students who shone in different areas afterwards, such as Gasparo Contarini – future Cardinal – with whom Pomponazzi always maintained a cordial and affectionate relationship beyond their doctrinal differences over the immortality of the soul; disciples of him were also Andrea Mocenigo, Antonio Surian, and the humanist Lazzaro Bonamico. Over these years, the academic success of Pomponazzi was enormous: in 1504, the senate granted him the exemption to be subject to students’ vote at the end of the course. As a matter of fact, thanks to the work of his disciples, a collection of courses delivered in this transitional period has come down to us: among other manuscripts, we have those which compile his comments on Book III of Aristotle’s *De anima*, a *Quaestio de materia caeli*, a *Lectura super 8 Physicorum*, and some *Quaestiones de immortalitate animae*, *de unitate intellectus*, *quomodo fiat intellectio* (Pomponazzi 1966).

In 1509, Pomponazzi, who had lost his first wife, was claimed by the Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso d’Este, to take up a professorship at the university of that city. Pomponazzi achieved the dispensation of his contract at the University of Padua

from the Venetian Senate, and headed to Ferrara, where he stayed only 1 year since the war between Venice and the League of Cambrai forced to close the *Studia* (a little earlier also the University of Padua had to suspend all its activities).

From Mantua, where he had lived for nearly 2 years, Pomponazzi went to Bologna to lecture at its university as an ordinary professor of philosophy. He remained in Bologna until his death in 1525.

In 1516, Pomponazzi published his *Tractatus de immortalitate animae*, which immediately caused a bitter controversy from which Pomponazzi tried to defend over the next 3 years (Pomponazzi 2013b). Ambrogio Fiandino, Suffragan Bishop of Mantua, was the first to lead a severe criticism from the pulpit against the doctrine contained in the *De immortalitate animae*. Despite this, in a face-to-face interview in Bologna that year, Fiandino denied Pomponazzi having attacked him and announced that Agostino Nifo was preparing a text against the *De immortalitate*. At the same time, some Dominican friars in Venice denounced Pomponazzi as heretical to the Patriarch of Venice, Antonio Contarini. He resolved the complaint by condemning Pomponazzi. The sentence was approved by the Senate of Venice, which also instigated a public burning of his book, whose sale was banned. In addition, the book was sent to Cardinal Pietro Bembo so he would take action, but he did not find any heresy in it, nor did Silvestro Mazzolini, Master of the Sacred Palace. In the meantime, in Bologna, some prominent theologians attacked Pomponazzi's book in their lectures but did not write any work against him. Among those theologians, Vincenzo Colzade ran the Dominican school of Bologna and was Master of Bartolomeo Spina, who would become one of the fiercest opponents of Pomponazzi. Likewise, Pietro Manna, a renowned Thomist theologian, criticized Pomponazzi and shared an important epistolary relationship based on the question of immortality.

Over the next 3 years, Pomponazzi was the object of very harsh criticism. One of the attacks came from Silvestris of Prieras, a theologian at the court of Leo X who probably did much to ensure that the Pope publicly recriminated Pomponazzi.

Indeed, this finally happened on June 13, 1518; Leo X ordered him to keep his teaching in accordance with the doctrine of the Lateran Council. However, the discreet intervention of Cardinal Pietro Bembo, Papal Secretary, succeeded in revoking the warning and aborting the process before it could begin. Meanwhile, the scandal failed to undermine the academic authority of Pomponazzi, for that year he was released from the obligation to teach with a *concurrens* and allowed to choose the books and passages he would comment on in his public readings. Besides, in 1518, Pomponazzi published his *Apologia* in Bologna on February 3, although it is likely that he had completed it at the end of 1517 (Pomponazzi 2011a, 2013a). The work is composed of three books of variable length. Very interesting from the biographical point of view, the third narrates in the first person the different episodes of the controversy over the immortality of the soul that happened hitherto.

Even in 1519, the difficulties related to the contention did not stop. The *Defensorium*, i.e., the extensive response that Pomponazzi had written to Agostino Nifo's *De immortalitate animae adversus Pomponatium* (published in Venice in October 1518), was blocked by ecclesiastical authorities (Valverde 2010). The inquisitor Giovanni Teorfinnis and Alessandro de Peracinis, General Vicar, ordered that the book of Pomponazzi had to be accompanied by a formal rebuttal of the mortality of the soul. Then, the latter wrote to Crisostomo Javelli – a prominent Dominican theologian – asking him to redact some *Solutiones* to reaffirm the idea that the immortality of the soul was an article of faith. In this letter addressed to Javelli, Pomponazzi protested the fact that his position had been completely misunderstood: he had never tried to demonstrate the mortality of the soul, but only wanted to highlight that this was the position that better fit Aristotle's doctrine. Furthermore, he accepted without reservations the immortality of the soul as an article of faith. Apparently convinced of Pomponazzi's fideism, Javelli accepted his request and wrote those *Solutiones* which guaranteed the publication of the *Defensorium*. In any case, neither in the *Apologia* nor in the *Defensorium* did Pomponazzi retract the doctrine

exposed in his previous *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* (Nardi 1965, p. 27).

Throughout 1520 and probably the beginning of 1521, Pomponazzi worked on two of his most important books: the *De naturalium effectuum causis sive de incantationibus* and the *Libri quinque de fato, de libero arbitrio et de praedestinatione* (Pomponazzi 2004a, 2011b). In the first, the author addressed the analysis of portentous events under the assumption that they were simple deceits or must be explained as natural events whose very *raison d'être* is in the course of nature and in natural laws. In the second, Pomponazzi tried to prove that Aristotelianism represented not only a hostile domain for the immortality of the soul but also for individual freedom. Probably fearing that the controversy over the *De immortalitate animae* would intensify, Pomponazzi decided to leave unpublished the manuscripts of these two works. They were edited posthumously, both in Basel: the first in 1556 and the second in 1567. Also in 1520, his brother, Pier Giovanni, passed away and Pomponazzi took charge of his two children, Marco and Giulio, whose maintenance and education were carefully looked after.

In 1521, the *De nutritione et augmentatione* was edited in Bologna (Raimondi 2013). It is an extensive writing on the issues which the title announces. Pomponazzi had finished it in early September: it was his last work. In 1524, Pomponazzi got sick from kidney stones. He was forced to interrupt his lecture of the *De partibus animalium* (Pomponazzi 2004b; Perfetti 2004). In the manuscript, collected by a disciple, the disruption of Pomponazzi's teaching is recorded. Given the worsening of the disease, Pomponazzi issued his will in May. Just 1 year later, on May 18, 1525, Pietro Pomponazzi died. Two days after that, a direct witness of his last period, Antonio Brocardo, related the terrible suffering of his Master in a letter, stating that he refused to eat and speak. Finally, on his last night, he dared to say he was leaving happy. One of his disciples asked him where he was going, to which he responded: "where all mortals go." Just a month earlier, the *Tractatus acutissimi* had been published in Venice: this volume collected

all his edited writings, except for the aforementioned *De incantationibus* and the *De fato*, and his *Dubitationes in quantum meteorologicorum*, which appeared posthumously in 1563 (Pomponazzi 2013c; Perfetti 2012; Valverde 2013).

The *De immortalitate animae*: A Naturalistic Vision of Aristotle's Psychology

In December 1513, the Fifth Lateran Council, at its eighth session, finally approved the promulgation of the Bull of Leo X entitled *Apostolici regiminis*. The text reissued the condemnation of the Council of Vienne in 1311 against all those who dared to deny or doubt the immortality of the rational soul or considered it as unique for all men. It dictated that all those authors or supporters of any doctrine which might suppose an attempt against the Christian dogma of the soul should be pursued as heretics. Likewise, the text ordered professors of philosophy to refute these doctrines in their university teaching. This last mandate really forced the philosophers to play the role of theologians and second the ecclesiastical task of preventing the spread of teachings which could turn off toward fields unacceptable for the theological orthodoxy. Philosophy was then at the service of theology to explain, clarify, and defend the principles of the Christian doctrine; this way, the *Philosophi* were invited to sustain the dogma of the immortality of the individual soul, to do so by means of compelling and persuasive arguments, and to refute those who were against this dogma (Di Napoli 1963, pp. 220–221; Nardi 1965 p. 25; Kristeller 1979, p. 192–194).

In the background of the Bull, there was present a tradition – especially consolidated at the universities of Northern Italy – by which their teachers publicly commented on the texts of Aristotle aiming to make them understandable to their students and scrutinize the consequences of these texts as well as those of their most outstanding commentators. In this sense, Averroes was in a privileged position, as is known. This purpose was explicitly carried out in the field of natural reason, not in that of faith, whose superiority was

recognized beforehand, thus leaving the way open to philosophical discussion.

With regard to the question of the nature of the soul, a debate which had been started by Italian Aristotelians in the late fifteenth century became heated during the early sixteenth century in spite of the Bull of Leo X. Among the different interpretations of the psychology of Aristotle, those which came from the Averroists were doubtless many and widespread, but the alternative via of Alexander of Aphrodisias gradually gained general agreement: his paraphrase of Aristotle's *De anima* was translated into Latin for the first time in 1495 (Kessler 2011, pp. 49–81). In any case, it is true that the variety of approaches to the texts of the Master was enormous, especially throughout the sixteenth century, with the result that they are barely covered under the headline “Renaissance Aristotelianism.” Such a variety was also the motor of an interesting exegetical and doctrinal polemic around the question of what had been the real thinking of Aristotle with respect to the immortality of the soul (Di Napoli 1963, pp. 179 ff.; Poppi 1970, p. 22; Pine 1986, pp. 55 ff.). Some commentators, in fact, stressed those texts in which Aristotle had explicitly stated the special character that the intellect had with respect to other psychic powers; others emphasized the unquestioned hylomorphic character that, in Aristotle's opinion, the structure of living beings had. So, what appeared to be, after all, the perfecting factor of something could not be separated from that of which it was the perfection. In short, this was a discussion – not free from influences coming from outside Aristotle's own texts – that reflected a living and dynamic Aristotelianism (Schmitt 1983).

Clearly, in this area, the texts of Aristotle not only were not hospitable to a perfectly finished and seamless doctrine, but also the brevity and lack of clarity with which he sometimes expressed his own thought gave rise to different lines of interpretation regarding the question of the separable nature of the human soul (at least, with respect to its most perfect manifestation, thought). This question had a double character, epistemological as well as biological. From this second perspective, the soul is – in Aristotle's opinion –

only the principle of the activity of a living being. Thus, in this, we may differentiate (perhaps only conceptually) inert matter from this principle which organizes matter, gives it biological functions, and this way allows to develop of a series of activities that go from a lesser to a greater range of perfection. This is the famous hylomorphism of Aristotle, a concept prominently manifested in this general definition of the soul given in *De anima* II.1, 412a29: “The soul may therefore be defined as the first actuality of a natural body potentially possessing life.” Therefore, every activity of a living organism lies in its soul as the very principle of such an activity, since all living beings, from plants to men, are unified under that common definition beyond the degree of complexity of their activities. It was obviously an effective conception, but it closed, or seemed to close, the road to the possibility that the soul might be a separate entity from that matter to which it brings life. The soul must be understood, then, as the true source of the vital functions of a living being, and if this living being – of which the soul is a part – dies, it dies, too. This is valid both for plants and for animals, and eventually also for men, even though the human soul possesses a relative greater complexity and the activities of a human being are more perfect.

Now, was Aristotle categorical about denying the human soul a separate entity? Did he consider that rational thought and the knowledge that came from it could be understood as any other activity of a living being? Aristotle had definitely approached this question in a problematic manner: “In most cases it seems that none of the affections, whether active or passive, can exist apart from the body. This applies to anger, courage, desire and sensation generally, though possibly thinking is an exception. But if this too is a kind of imagination, or at least is dependent upon imagination, even this cannot exist apart from the body” (*De anima*, I.1, 403a6–10). This is the disjunctive hypothesis from which Aristotle sets out the question of the separability of the soul: if the human soul is separable, it must possess an activity that properly belongs to it, carried out without the assistance of the body and labelled as immaterial. May thought be such an activity? In this

passage, Aristotle seems to postpone the answer, but he clearly states the condition on which it depends: it is necessary to verify that thought has not any sensory dependence. Pomponazzi turned his attention to the cited text and affirmed that, taking into account what Aristotle said in *De anima* III (“when one contemplates one must simultaneously contemplate an image”), the answer that Aristotle finally gave was absolutely negative: human intellectual activity, like the rest of the activities we are able to execute, is linked to the body, in this case, through sensory perception.

Pomponazzi's view of this question, which had an illustrious precedent in Alexander of Aphrodisias, did not exhaust its enormous complexity. If we appropriate here Husserl's famous *noesis-noema* distinction, we can say that to think is in a certain aspect a paradoxical fact: it is individual but its result can be universal; it is the product of a temporarily defined process, but it can transcend all limits of time. Every cognitive act has a structure whose base is inevitably linked to sensory perception, never common, and yet, in the end, the building to be erected is unique and valid for all, that is to say, science. Theoretically, the man who thinks does not do it only for himself. In fact, he wishes to get a truth that belongs to all men in every historical moment. Thinking is, in short, an immanent activity that all men are able to do, since we are, after all, biological entities. Its own nature responds to a biological scheme: it is a process that progressively actualizes the possibilities that are present in an individual human being, so that it is only a continuous improvement for a man who keeps in himself future perfections: nothing is more biological. However, despite this, thinking is also a transcendent act because it gives us the opportunity to rise above our own existential limits and allows us to project our activity onto a universal level.

Given this ambiguity, many philosophers have wondered to what extent the act of thinking belongs to the individual who exercises it. For sure, the person who does it is *this* man, the one who is perfected and the acquired perfection first belongs to him. Nevertheless, can it be ensured that this act has been done by him with only his own intellectual instruments, or must he perhaps

share his authorship with a higher reality? From the textual information we have at our disposal, it is evident that Aristotle faced this problem, and the solution he found had the incredible potential to compensate the reader for its lack of clarity by being an endless source of stimulus for reflection.

Hence, the problem to be solved was twofold: first, it was necessary to explain how the material world can act on us and produce intellectual knowledge, that is, how this world can be at the origin of an activity which has an intangible nature. On the other hand, Aristotle also had to explain how we may be able to exceed the knowledge of the individual and take hold of universal structures, namely, how to transcend the realm of the particular sensory experience and achieve with (rather than in spite of) it universal concepts. Aristotle said basically that the passage from the thing sensorily perceived to the intelligible concept, from the particular to the universal, was possible only through the intervention of an active principle which he called *poiētikós*. It is true that the style of the text in which Aristotle mentioned this principle (*De anima*, III.5) is particularly laconic. Those who have commented on it in the course of history have questioned whether, in the mind of Aristotle, that principle is transcendent and unique for all men, or rather a single principle belonging to the faculties of the subject. The beginning of the aforementioned fifth chapter seems clear with respect to the fact that Aristotle points out that this principle is present *in* the human soul. All the same, despite this, the attributes he subsequently gives to it suggest a transcendent nature: it is described as separable, unmoved, without any mixture, and in a state of continuous activity by its very essence (*De anima*, III.5, 430a18-19). Many have considered that from the perspective of Aristotle, these attributes can never belong to a principle completely immanent to an individual thinking subject so as to speak of a transcendent active intellect.

Moreover, around this debate on the transcendence or immanence of the agent intellect, another equally problematic debate was raised with consequences far more important than those located exclusively in the epistemological field: can we

situate some kind of immortality in the thought of Aristotle beyond that which he explicitly attributed to separate entities in *Metaphysics* XII? Or, in other words, is it conceivable that the extraordinary nature Aristotle gives to the *poiētikós nous* involves some kind of immortality for our own advantage? If many participated in the discussion on the external or internal nature of the active intellect, many more debated whether or not, on the basis of its immortality, we may aspire to some sort of individual immortality from an Aristotelian point of view. The question was really difficult to resolve. Those who decided to confront the opinion of Alexander of Aphrodisias could do so only by emphasizing the intrinsic nature of the active intellect (as is known, in his *De anima*, Alexander of Aphrodisias identified the agent intellect with the first cause and stressed the perishable nature of the human soul. Like Pomponazzi eventually, Alexander regarded intellective activity as one of the operations linked to the body since it required images from the senses). These Aristotelians had to face not only Alexander of Aphrodisias in his role of renowned commentator of Aristotle's works but also those others like Themistius, Simplicius, or much later, Averroes himself, who had held a collective noetic and rejected more or less explicitly the possibility of individual immortality (Nardi 1958). The grand champion of anti-Averroism placed St. Thomas, but among Arabs Avicenna had tried to reconcile, in an unusual pirouette, the immortality of the individual soul with the common nature of the active intellect.

The question of the origin of the soul was also linked to this issue as an indivisible part of it. Cardinal Bessarion had already emphasized that, according to Aristotle's approach, it was necessary to establish full reciprocity between the terms "immortal" and "ungenerated" as well as between "corruptible" and "generated," which made the immortality of the soul *a parte post* a conception alien to the Aristotelian principles. Pomponazzi echoed this argument at the beginning of his *De immortalitate animae* and put it directly in the Debts column of St. Thomas' doctrine: "Beloved teacher, in former days when you were expounding the first book of *De caelo* to us,

and had come to that place in which Aristotle tries to show by many arguments that the ungenerated and the incorruptible are convertible, you set forth the position of St. Thomas Aquinas on the immortality of the soul. Although you were in no doubt that it is true and most certain in itself, yet you judged that it is in complete disagreement with what Aristotle says" (Pomponazzi 1956, p. 281). St. Thomas, in fact, had to go to the direct intervention of God to explain that the rational soul does not have its origin in the same process of natural generation which produces the other souls, but it is created by God and introduced into the compound at the culmination of that process.

In his *De immortalitate animae*, Pomponazzi formulated his own idea of the nature and destiny of the soul from the criticism that he had previously made of Averroes and St. Thomas' doctrine. In opposition to both, Pomponazzi thought that the human soul is in itself mortal and immortal only in a certain aspect or, in other words, it is essentially mortal and only relatively immortal. Also, in contrast with Averroes and St. Thomas, Pomponazzi affirmed that, if the soul is to be the form of human beings in the full sense, it has to lack a separate and distinct entity. This is because, in all its activities, including those of the intellect, our soul depends on the corporeal and material, and due to its plurality, it can be understood only from its relationship to the body, never as an independent entity. Finally, Pomponazzi sustained that the origin of the soul can only belong to the same process of natural generation that produces the compound of which the soul is itself an inseparable part. Only this way can Aristotle's text be saved, as well as the intermediate position attributed to man between the upper beings and merely earthly creatures. Rereading the Platonic *topos* of man as a microcosm, Pomponazzi considered the human soul as the most perfect of material forms since it possesses some activities that bring it closer to the Intelligences, which were the only entities Aristotle recognized as pure forms subsisting by themselves. However, this resemblance of activities between the soul and the celestial Intelligences is always limited: "since it is the noblest of material things and lies at the boundary of immaterial things, it savours somewhat of

immateriality, but not unqualifiedly. Whence it possesses intellect and will, in which it agrees with the gods; but rather imperfectly and equivocally, since the gods themselves are completely abstracted from matter, while it knows always with matter, since it knows with phantasms, with succession, with time, with discursiveness, with obscurity. Whence in us intellect and will are not truly immaterial things but relatively and to a slight extent.” (Pomponazzi 1956, p. 322).

This was for Pomponazzi the only way one can bridge the enormous gap between those beings who operate completely independently of matter and those whose being is totally sunk in matter. Indeed this bridge cannot be built from an impoverishment of the first beings, but rather from a kind of sublimation of the second by the intellectual activity that only men are capable of exerting (Perrone 2005). Notwithstanding, this activity, certainly able to go up into the abstract and universal natures, was subjected to a process which in the case of men inevitably departed from the images of the senses. Hence, Pomponazzi insisted that the human intellect required bodily organs which provided the initial object of its activity. This does not mean, as he himself pointed out, that the intellect must be identified with the corporeal sense or that it must be placed in a specific organ as vision in the eye: “Whence we say that the intellect does not need the body as subject in its knowing, not because knowing is in no wise in the body, since if the intellect is in the body it cannot be that its immanent operation is not in it in some fashion. For where the subject is, there must be the accident of the subject. But knowing is said not to be in an organ and in the body only in so far as it is not in it in a quantitative and corporeal manner. Wherefore the intellect can reflect upon itself, think discursively, and comprehend universals, which organic and extended powers cannot do at all. But all this comes from the essence of the intellect, since as intellect it is not dependent on matter or on quantity. But if the human intellect depends on matter, this is as it is joined to sense; whence as intellect it is accidentally dependent on matter and on quantity. Wherefore its operation also is no more abstracted than its essence. For, unless the intellect possessed something that

could exist by itself without matter, its knowing could not be exercised except in a quantitative and corporeal way.” (Pomponazzi 1956, p. 318).

The theoretical framework of this discourse is placed on the conception that there are three modes of separation from matter corresponding to the three ways of knowing that we can find in the universe: there is (a) the total separation from matter by which the Intelligences know and, on the other hand, there is (b) the lowest separation from matter by which the sensitive powers know, in need of a body both as their subject and as their object and limited to particulars. But there is (c) a third and intermediary kind of separation in which the body is required as object, but not as subject: the human intellect. It is a material form, a bodily function generated by the parents and not by special divine creation. Certainly, it represents the supreme and most perfect of material forms, though unable to operate in any way or existing without the body. However, in conclusion, the soul’s essential operation of knowing shows that in a certain manner, it participates in immortality, as it can grasp the universal and the immaterial. In short, while knowing requires material conditions, and is thus the activity of a human body, it does not function materially, but rises above the limitations of those conditions to grasp universals and truth. Knowing demands a body, though it does not take place in any localized part of the body (Randall 1956, p. 273; Kessler 1988, pp. 485–534).

Thence, Pomponazzi probably wanted to stay away from the reductionism of Galen, who had already considered the intellect as a mere organic principle. Yet, doing so, he had to set up a difficult doctrinal equilibrium: the soul is essentially material and only in an incidental way immaterial. Naturally, this could be accomplished only by minimizing the importance of those texts in which Aristotle (following Anaxagoras) clearly claimed the unmixed nature of the intellect in the sense that the material elements do not interfere in its activity or expressly said (*De anima*, III.4–5) that it is immaterial and immortal or that it originally comes from a source external to natural generation (*De generatione animalium*, II.3). Without doubt, Pomponazzi was aware of these

texts and the difficulties that their interpretation involved, as well as of the apparent hesitations of Aristotle himself: "From all of which" it is obvious that many things said by Aristotle about the intellect seem mutually contradictory, when they really are not at all. For he says at times that it is material and mixed, or not separable, but at times that it is immaterial and separable. For in the definition of the soul it is said that it is the act of an organic body; but at times it is said that it is not the act of any body. These seem indeed contradictory. Whence different men have turned into different paths, and some think that Aristotle did not understand himself" (Pomponazzi 1956, p. 324).

Pomponazzi estimated that when Aristotle expressed his own opinion about the intellect in this way, he did so by referring to an intellect *per se* different from that present in man. The intellect *qua human* depends on images, and because this dependence is linked to the body by close bonds, its possible separation is therefore precluded. The intellect *qua intellect* belongs to the celestial Intelligences, which occupy the highest hierarchy of the universe. However, Pomponazzi did not want to enter upon a discussion on the type of relationship between that intellect *per se* and our intellect. He simply states that the human intellect is moved to the reception of all the images by an active intelligence that is not a part of it. With regard to our own intellectual activity, this separate *noûs* has the same causality as the universal motor with respect to the reception of forms by prime matter. It has already been indicated (Pine 1986, p. 77; Valverde 2012) that there is a certain Averroist tone in this assumption, which involves that knowledge is something imposed rather than the product of human creativity. In the Peripatetic tradition, the function of abstracting universal concepts from sensory perception belonged to the active intellect, so if, as Pomponazzi seemed to opine, man lacked this power, then it lacked the capacity to abstract the intelligible forms from perceptible data. It is possible, in fact, that Pomponazzi had to sacrifice on the altar of coherence something as important as the creative capacity of the human mind. This was the toll that he had to pay for defending the idea that the active

intellect is alien to the natural constitution of human beings, an idea crucial to build his thesis of the integral materiality and mortality of man. He tried to explain (or maybe mitigate) this position by means of that ontological scale where human beings occupy such privileged position that permits them to have a soul which, not ceasing to be a material form, is capable of giving them the highest activity in the universe: abstract thinking. In that imperfect version we are able to pursue, this activity can only be a very pale imitation of that fullness of Intelligences, for Pomponazzi strongly denied any ontological link between men and the divine. Indeed, he openly criticized Averroes for placing human happiness in the union of the active intellect with the possible. Pomponazzi built this criticism by turning to common experience: how many men were engaged in the study? It was evident that many more lived as if they did not have any interest in science and knowledge (Bianchi 2003). Furthermore, the way men reach the knowledge of the universal, that is, through a slow and uncertain discursive process, demonstrated by itself, according to Pomponazzi, that our nature is quite another of the separate intelligences, which can reach such knowledge immediately and intuitively. From an Aristotelian point of view, Pomponazzi thought that the only mediation between animals' sensory perception and the pure and separate intellect is that which makes possible the human intellect, but this mediation does not involve the immortality of our soul.

Undoubtedly, Pomponazzi made a courageous reading of Aristotle's texts; despite the fact he had some precedents (Gilson 1961, pp. 173–183; Di Napoli 1970, pp. 214–226; Perrone 1999, pp. xxvii–xxix), we must recognize that he went further than anyone else in the thesis that, from the Aristotelian discourse, the nature of the human soul in its totality is mortal. He also wanted to examine and refute all the extraneous moral and pragmatic arguments for immortality. To know the soul is mortal is in fact a great achievement since it makes possible a secular and human morality, at last, corroborating this way those values the humanists held dear. The whole

human race is like a single man with differing members. All men should communicate in three intellects – the theoretical, the practical, and the productive – for no man fails to possess something of each. The general end of mankind is to participate relatively in the theoretical and productive intellects, but perfectly in the practical. If man is mortal, every man can have the end which suits man from a universal point of view, though not what suits the most perfect part. And this power can make almost everyone blessed. For the rewards and punishments of the hereafter, Pomponazzi has only scorn. The essential reward of virtue is virtue itself, and the real punishment of vice is vice itself. As he says in Chap. 14 of his *De immortalitate*, if one acts virtuously with the hope of reward, his act is not considered as virtuous as that of one who expects no external reward. And he who is punished externally, thereby, diminishes that guilt which is the greatest and worst punishment of vice (Randall 1956, p. 274).

This courageous statement, strongly influenced by Stoicism, is one reason among others which emphasizes Pomponazzi's historic importance (Kristeller 1983). Ernest Renan correctly stated that Pomponazzi really represented the living thought of a time, a brave spirit who adapted scholastic teachings to a new age (Renan 1852, p. 281). But in his eagerness to offer his students and readers a firm alternative to Thomism and in his zeal to observe strictly the basic principles of Aristotelianism, he brought to light its inconsistencies, these of a philosophy that was gradually losing its supremacy in the face of new ways of thinking. One can say, as Pine did (Pine 1986, p. 345), that Pomponazzi unwittingly staged the intimate contradiction which the Aristotelian explanation of the intellect and the intellectual activity involved because it is remarkable that, even if Pomponazzi emphatically affirmed that corruption of the organic functions produced the disappearance of the human intellect, he did not dare to openly state its organic nature; otherwise, he preferred to hide behind that immateriality *secundum quid*, whose lack of definition was criticized later. This latent conflict appeared in Pomponazzi in a double form: first, the more he

analyzed all the psychic functions, the more he found their essential unity and continuity. Thus, it was impossible to attribute organic characteristics to the lower faculties without also doing so to the highest. In contrast to this, he was aware that, if the intellect was considered an organic and material entity, its activity would also be limited in space. This had very dangerous consequences since, how is it possible to explain that an organic faculty is able to generate universal and objective knowledge? How can it be possible that what is limited in time and space is able to produce conceptually knowledge unlimited in time and space? At this crossroad, we find a Pomponazzi not fully defined between a materialistic naturalism and a peripatetic tradition that in one way or another emphasized the essentially immaterial nature of our mind. This tension between the organic and the immaterial, the corporeal divisibility and the spiritual indivisibility, between mind and body, in short, was in fact a constant feature of many Renaissance Aristotelians. On the one hand, they tried to explain the psychology of Aristotle defending the integral unity of all the faculties of the living being. On the other, they wanted to explain the special character of human beings by integrating an external and superior principle into that unity.

The *De incantationibus*

This naturalistic perspective addressed by Pomponazzi to explain Aristotle's psychology was also applied to other natural fields. He showed that in nature, there is an orderly uniformity of law which does not admit miracles nor demons or angels or even any direct divine intervention. This conception had some precedents precisely in the ranks of Mediaeval and Renaissance Aristotelians. For them, the universe is moved by the Prime Being, i.e., the first of the separated Intelligences which generate the motion of the heavenly spheres; just under them, the sublunary field is the arena of birth and decay. As Pine says (Pine 1986, p. 235), this entire emanation proceeds through an eternal, necessary

structure controlled by the Prime Mover Himself. From a strict Peripatetic point of view, the multiplicity of natural effects needs a multiplicity of intermediary causes, not the direct activity of the Prime Mover. These intermediary causes can only be the Intelligences which move the heavenly spheres. But, as the activity of these Intelligences is eternal, constant, and necessary, it is clear that the possibility of miraculous suspensions of natural processes must be laid aside. However, those Aristotelians, as Christians, were able to recognize that God is the real creator of nature; as such, He can impede or suspend natural laws at will. These two perspectives – one denying miracles and the other admitting them – can be formulated by the same Aristotelians, but taking into account that each of them belongs to a different plan. Rather than affirming a kind of “double truth,” they subordinated the Aristotelian view to the Christian view noting that science produced probable theories rather than absolute truths, which are present only in the realm of faith and sacred revelation.

When Pomponazzi wrote his *De incantationibus* (which remained unpublished), he took the path that Albert the Great, Roger Bacon, Siger of Brabant, or Pietro d’Abano had previously mapped out, but once again, he went further. He sought to explain all miraculous cures and events through purely natural causes, natural powers and the constant and regular influence of the heavens. When such events really occurred, they had to be understood as natural phenomena rather than miracles. Therefore, Pomponazzi tried to incorporate them into a universal law conforming to the normal processes of nature. Some of these strange things could be tricks of unscrupulous people or mere *figmenta* of imagination. Nevertheless, it is impossible – Pomponazzi admits – to explain all of them as an effect of trickery or credulity: many reputable historians have reported them as true stories. No doubt, such things happened, Pomponazzi said, but they were caused by conjunctions of the heavenly planets guided and directed by the divine Intelligences. Unlike Pico’s denial of astrology as incompatible with human freedom, Pomponazzi tried to make an orderly and rational

science of the stars, as opposed to all superstition. In his *Apologia*, edited for the first time in 1518, he stated: “All prophesy, whether vaticination, or divination, or excess, or speaking with tongues, or the invention of arts and sciences, in a word, all the effects observed in this lower world, whatever they be, have a natural cause.” Thus, the recorded and related miracles of religion are not events contrary to the natural order, but they are merely unaccustomed and rare. The very conception of an immaterial spirit precludes any particular operation: “In vain do we assume demons, for it is ridiculous and foolish to forsake what is observable, and what can be proved by natural reason, to seek what is unobservable, and cannot be proved with any verisimilitude” (*Apologia*, II, Chap. 7). “No effect is produced upon us by God immediately but only through the means of his ministers. For God orders and disposes everything in an orderly and smooth manner and imposes an eternal law on things which it is impossible to transgress” (*De incantationibus*, Chap. 1).

Many wondrous events, such as, for example, miraculous cures, can be explained as natural if we understand the special properties inherent in all natural beings, many of which are used in medicine. The properties of herbs, stones, minerals, and parts of animals can affect the body in three ways: by direct alteration of the body, by indirect alteration through the transformation into vapours, and finally, by invisible or occult properties. Confronted with these effects of the occult, it is not surprising that the rude ascribed them to God and demons, even if their cause was perfectly natural. The existence of these natural and occult properties in mineral, plant, and animal life leads inevitably to the conclusion that they must also exist in man. “As a microcosm combining and uniting the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual powers found in nature, man’s own being must also possess, in some degree, the same properties which his constituent parts possess in nature” (Pine 1986, p. 242).

Pomponazzi also gives a naturalistic account of the origin and development of religions: “Those men who are not philosophers, and who indeed are like beasts, cannot understand how God and the heavens and nature operate. Therefore, angels

and demons were introduced for the sake of the vulgar, although those who introduced them knew they could not possibly exist. For in the Old Testament many things are alleged which cannot be understood literally. They have a mystic sense and were said because of the ignorant vulgar, which cannot understand anything not bodily. For the language of religions, as Averroes said, is like the language of poets: poets make fables which though literally impossible yet embrace the truth of the intellect. For they make their stories that we may come into truth and instruct the rude vulgar, to lead them to good and withdraw them from evil, as children are led by the hope of reward and the fear of punishment. By these bodily things they are led to the knowledge of what is not bodily, as we lead infants from liquid food to food more solid.” (*De incantationibus*, Chap. 10). All religious phenomena are thus products of the eternal laws of motion. In this view, religions are seen as governed by the eternal cycle of birth, growth, and decay. Controlled by heavenly powers, these cycles produce the new religions from within the dying forms of the old religions. With the introduction of new religious ceremonies, old ceremonies and usages corrupt, “just as with the introduction of the male sperm, the menstrual cycle disappears” (*De incantationibus*, Chap. 12). Therefore, religions are born and die like all things human; for their renewing, striking signs are needed among men. And powers are placed in nature, whose exercise is rarely called for. “Since a change of religion is the greatest of all changes, and it is difficult to pass from the familiar to what is most unfamiliar, for the new religion to succeed there is need that strange and surprising things be done. Whence on the advent of a new religion men making ‘miracles’ are produced by the heavenly bodies and are rightly believed to be sons of God. It is with religions as with other things subject to generation and corruption: we observe that they and their miracles are weak at first, then they increase, come to a climax, then decline, until they return to nothing. Whence now too in our own faith all things are growing frigid, and miracles are ceasing, except those counterfeit and simulated, for it seems to be near its end.” (*De incantationibus*, Chap. 12).

The *De fato*

In the *De fato, libero arbitrio, et de praedestinatione* (written in 1520 though unpublished like the *De incantationibus*), Pomponazzi made his choice between human freedom and natural law. After a detailed survey of the attempts to reconcile freedom and providence, he concluded that none of them had succeeded. Not being a satisfactory answer to this dilemma, only the Stoics had the most consistent theory in this regard. Accordingly, the order and structure of the universe are the results of direct divine intention; therefore, having established the most rational order possible, God will not change it since any change would imply the destruction of the eternal coherence of nature. As Pomponazzi himself declared, God is “crippled by nature” (*De fato*, II, Chap. 7). So, even God’s freedom is limited by the order that He has established. At the same time, the movement of the heavens, stemming from the Prime Mover Himself, gives rise to a chain of causes which controls man by establishing the disposition of his nature and the directions of his actions. In conclusion, God and man are chained to an eternal, cyclical order of causes and neither is truly free (Pine 1986, p. 297; Perrone 2004, p. xi). The great variety in human habits and customs, and the existence of different moral dispositions, are just evident expressions of the diversity present in nature, which is necessary for its coherence no less than the divergence of animal, plant, and mineral natures. There can be no question here of justice or injustice and cruelty or kindness for two reasons: the universe requires this diversity for its order and the fixed compositions of all natures indicate, again, that God cannot alter the smallest aspect of the universal order. Thence, within human history, the oppression of the poor by the rich, the weak by the aggressor, and the martyr by the tyrant is all a necessary working out of human dispositions. A balance is, nevertheless, achieved by historical cycles which will ensure that one day the oppressed will be oppressors, the strong weak, and so on: “Humana enim natura – Pomponazzi said – est quoddam universum” (*De fato*, II, Chap. 7). We see that just like some men

live *veluti Dii* (e.g., all the prophets and saints), others live like animals and show the same habits as lions, vultures, or wolves. But this should not be imputed to a perverse will in God himself. The greatest advantage of the Stoic system, Pomponazzi concluded, was that it removed such imputation of evil from God. The varying dispositions of men, which under the heavenly influence produce the saint, hero, and warrior, are not the result of a free divine act. Rather, they are part of an eternal, universal structure, unalterable in its very nature. Therefore, good and evil exist as an integral part of the eternal, unalterable structure of the universe, and the human will is simply an element in this eternal process.

Anyhow, this Stoic determinism that Pomponazzi extracted from the core of Aristotelian physics (Perrone 2004, p. lxiii) is not his final word. In books III through V, he proposed a novel Christian solution to the problem of divine providence versus free will. This was nothing less than an attempt to develop a rational Christian theology as an alternative to this Aristotelian-Stoic determinism and involved a great shift in method for Pomponazzi. All his earlier treatises stressed the opposition between reason and faith. Indeed, they maintained the opposition to these two modes on the ground that faith is either superrational or irrational. Now, one could find that Pomponazzi explicitly wanted to defend the religious view of providence after accepting the assumptions of faith. As Pine and later Perrone said, the complexity of the *De fato* consequently made it entirely different from Pomponazzi's other works. The previous opposition between rational philosophy and a superrational faith was then dissolved. In its place, we find a dialectic between two different rational arguments. The first, based on pure reason alone, defends the strict Stoic-Aristotelian determinism, while the second seeks to discover, within the givens of revelation, a basis for divine and human freedom (Pine 1986, p. 302).

This dramatic change of perspective in Pomponazzi's procedure has been interpreted in

very different ways. Giovanni Di Napoli, for example, says that Pomponazzi played the role of the theologian only to deride Christian doctrine, proclaim the absurdity of predestination, and in the end reduce the Christian God to an immoral monster. The first question we must ask – says Di Napoli – is: does Pomponazzi seriously present a theological study in the last three books of the *De fato*? Di Napoli's answer is negative: such a study would indicate full acceptance of the basic elements of faith as a mystery beyond philosophic inquiry and would then attempt to illuminate certain aspects of this faith through rational inquiry. The result would be a systematic science of faith as a sacred science which is the organization of certain aspects of faith into comprehensible formulas, not faith itself. Thus, in theory, there could be as many formulas or theologies as theologians, although the greatest theologians have made their presence felt by attracting followers and creating schools.

As Pine says referring to Di Napoli's interpretation, Pomponazzi did not proceed in this theological mode: he simply equated the Thomistic position with faith itself. And, while professing great admiration for Thomas' profundity, he proceeded to make a mockery of his conclusions calling them absurdities, involutions, and irrationalities. So, what Pomponazzi's discussion produced was a quarrel with certain theologies, notably the Thomist one, rather than an independent theological system which sought to protect the essentials of faith and illuminate certain aspects of it through dialectic. Thus, the proposal to *do theology* was for Pomponazzi a pose which allowed him to ridicule the wisdom of God by reducing it to a series of theological absurdities whose emptiness was revealed through philosophical examination (Di Napoli 1970, pp. 185–186; Pine 1986, p. 306).

More recent scholars, such as the aforementioned Pine and Perrone, have stressed, on the contrary, the complex and problematical character of the last books of Pomponazzi's *De fato*, which cannot be reduced to a mere trick to discredit the Christian theologians' attempt to demonstrate

human freedom. In fact, he never rejected the basic attributes of the Deity as given by Christian revelation: an omniscient, omnipotent Deity who freely created the universe out of His own goodness. What he vehemently excluded were all the traditional attempts to square these characteristics of the Deity with human freedom. In other words, he condemned the traditional theological formulations of Thomism, Scotism, and Ockhamism. Since none of these was the equivalent to faith, one must hold that in his exploration of Christian theology, Pomponazzi did not refuse or attack faith directly. He immodestly argued that all previous solutions to the issue of divine power and human freedom involved absurdities, which his own position eliminated. Whether Pomponazzi was successful where others had presumably failed is certainly debatable. In any case, we must grant that he made a serious attempt to save human freedom within the traditional modes of Christian theology (Pine 1986, p. 309).

Impact and Legacy

As we have seen in the biography, the *De immortalitate animae* – published in 1516 – generated an enormous scandal which made Pomponazzi not want to edit his last two works, the *De incantationibus* and the *De fato*. In spite of this polemic, Pomponazzi was never condemned, even if the *De immortalitate* was temporarily banned in the city of Venice. As Perrone has remarked, this could be proof of the fact that his fideism was perceived as sincere by the majority of his contemporaries, including some high authorities in the Roman Curia (Perrone 1999, p. xcvi).

Other scholars, on the contrary, have stressed that, by breaking the link between reason and faith so openly, Pomponazzi's fideism could hardly avoid some paradoxical consequences (Biard and Gontier 2009; Sgarbi 2010). Surely, he has left the path open for natural reason and scientific research, setting them free from all external and alien intromission. He emphasized the rigorous

order of natural laws and the natural and temporal dimension of human existence, which was demonstrated by the indivisible unity of the body-soul compound that constituted our reality and by the substantial connection between all its functions (Vasoli 1988, p. 71). But, at the same time, he belittled the fruit of that method to irremediable inferiority with regard to a truth to which it could not aspire. For this reason, some as Pine and Di Napoli have said that this fideism is simply untrue and simulated by him, only to hide the destructive results of his discourse under a conventional appearance. In this sense, Pomponazzi has been considered a forerunner of the free thinkers, especially due to the use the French Enlightenment put on him (as well as on other Italian Aristotelians). Namely, this was the conception that Ernest Renan transmitted of the Mantuan philosopher in his celebrated book on Averroism. Still, as Paul O. Kristeller has shown, it is one thing to say that Pomponazzi held the same views as later free thinkers, and another to state that he represented an earlier phase in a development that in one of its later phases was to produce the views held by those free thinkers. In the latter sense, Pomponazzi was a forerunner of the free thinkers. In the former sense, he was not: "Hence we should not praise or blame him, depending on our own preferences and values, for being a free thinker, since we lack the factual basis for either judgment. Yet in a different sense we may praise or blame him, and I am inclined to praise him" (Kristeller 1964, p. 90).

In any case, beyond the question of the real intention of Pomponazzi's thought, the truth is that he was the most original and influential sixteenth-century Aristotelian philosopher. The school to which he belonged flourished for another 100 years or more after his death, and within this tradition, his name remained famous and his views on such questions as the immortality of the soul and the unity of the intellect continued to be cited, discussed, and even admired. The posthumous publication of several of his writings later in the century also gives testimony to his continued fame. As Kristeller says, the

number of manuscripts that copied his lectures and questions was quite large compared with other professors of philosophy at the time, an indication of his popularity among his students. Moreover, the considerable number of manuscripts containing the *De incantationibus* and the *De fato* proves that these works circulated widely (Zanier 1975).

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Ponet, John

Born: 1514, Kent

Died: 1556, Strasbourg

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Abstract

John Ponet was a Marian exile whose political work, *A Shorte Treatise of Politike Power* (1556), laid the foundation for the development of political philosophy when it applied a secularizing perspective to bear upon the political implications of the radical Reformation tradition. Writing to encourage rebellion against the Marian regime, Ponet influentially espoused the idea that monarchs receive their authority from the people and can be deposed if they fail to secure and maintain the well-being of society.

Biography

The Right Reverend John Ponet was an English Protestant ecclesiastic whose significance as an important contributor to the development of

early modern political thought has recently been recognized and duly assessed. Born in Kent circa 1514, Ponet was educated at Queen's College, Cambridge, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in 1533 and obtaining a Master of Arts in 1535. Ordained a priest in 1536, he became chaplain to Thomas Cranmer and archbishop of Canterbury in 1545; bishop of Rochester from 1550 to 1551; and bishop of Winchester from 1551 to 1553. When Catholic Queen Mary I (nicknamed "Bloody Mary" by Protestants) ascended the English throne in 1553, Ponet left England for Europe to escape the rule of a Catholic monarch who was antagonistic toward Protestants. In so doing, he joined the ranks of "Marian exiles" such as John Foxe, John Knox, John Bale, and John Jewel, Protestants who left England for more hospitable climes such as the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany. Ponet died in Strasbourg in 1556.

Ponet authored several works including *A defence for mariage of priestes by Scripture and aunciente wryters* (1549), *A notable sermon concerninge the ryght vse of the lordes supper* (1550), *A short catechisme, or playne instruction, conteynyng the summe of Christian learninge* (1553), and *A Shorte Treatise of Politike Power* (1556). An advocate of the reformed religion, he involved himself in doctrinal debates including the subject of whether priests should be allowed to marry. His *Defence for mariage of priestes* constituted a detailed defense of clerical marriage in Edwardian England.

Ponet is best known for his *A Shorte Treatise of Politike Power* (Ponet 1942), an explication of resistance theory and defense of tyrannicide. First published in Strasbourg in 1556 and reprinted in London editions in 1639 and 1642, *A Shorte Treatise* has recently attracted the attention of scholars for its contribution to the development of political thought in the early modern period (Nyquist 2013, pp. 57–91; Strier 1995, pp. 165–177). This contribution places him in the company of Reformation worthies such as Christopher Goodman (1931) and John Knox (1985) as well as George Buchanan (2004), the radical Calvinist theorist of *De Iure Regni apud*

Scotos Dialogus (A Dialogue on the Law of Kingship among the Scots) (1579) (Walzer 1965, pp. 100–109; Kelley 1988). Ponet wrote this treatise while he was in exile in Strasbourg to encourage rebellion against the Marian regime. Citing evidence from both Old Testament history and European history, he argues that it is lawful for a people to remove a tyrant from power and commit regicide, the first such polemical document in the early modern period to do so.

Ponet's radical position stems from the premise that it is the people who confer upon kings their authority to rule, which means that they also have the prerogative to revoke this authority from the ruler to whom it has been given. A tyrant can be deposed because he does not derive his authority from God. In Ponet's conception of society, the king, who is the head, is only one member of the body politic that constitutes the commonwealth. Tyranny is born when this head seeks its own desire and imposes its will on the people.

In *A Shorte Treatise*, "politike power" – the functioning of civil and political authority – is instituted by God, and its rightful exercise involves maintaining justice, defending innocence, and punishing evil, functions required for the good and order of postlapsarian society. While Ponet may appeal to biblical prooftexts to lend divinely sanctioned support to his treatise, his work also possesses a distinctively secular dimension. Ponet prizes peace, quiet, and prosperity as important signifiers of social order, arguing that a governor or king is put in place for the purpose of ensuring and maintaining the *weal* or well-being of the commonwealth (Lim 2006, pp. 30–41).

The challenging divine right theory that identifies rebellion against monarchical authority as sin, Ponet's work would be remembered in the 1640s during the English Civil Wars or Wars of the Three Kingdoms (1642–1651), a time of violent conflict between parliament and the crown that resulted in the execution of Charles I in 1649. Bringing reason, the law of nature, and divine revelation into rhetorical conjunction in constructing his argument for tyrannicide, Ponet bequeathed a revolutionary idiom to supporters of the political republic in seventeenth-century

England. Inflecting scriptural evidence of God's views on ungodly rulers through the faculty of reason and common sense, this idiom contributes importantly to the development of what today we refer to as political philosophy.

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Pontano, Giovanni

Born: 7 May 1429, Cerreto di Spoleto

Died: 17 September 1503, Naples

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Abstract

Philosopher, poet, and politician, head of the Neapolitan Academy, named afterwards *Accademia Pontaniana*. Pontano was the most influential humanist in Southern Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Alternate Names

[Pontanus, Johannes](#); [Pontanus, Johannes Jovianus](#)

Biography

Born in Cerreto di Spoleto, Pontano lost his father in factional strife when still a child and had to move to Perugia, where he received his education under the rhetorician Guido Vannucci. Having presented himself at King Alfonso I's camp in Tuscany, Pontano returned with the royal entourage and entered Naples in 1448, where he continued his studies and started his career in the royal chancery. In 1451, he accompanied Antonio Beccadelli, il Panormita, on a diplomatic mission to Venice. Beccadelli was Pontano's main point of reference in court, but he was also supported by a network of patrons from the Aragonese administration. Thus, he became a scribe under Giovanni Olzina, the king's first secretary, in 1452. Pontano also became the teacher of John of Aragon, the king's nephew and future Archbishop of Zaragoza, and opened a school for the sons of the Neapolitan nobility. His grammatical treatise *De aspiratione*, published in 1481, belongs to this period.

After the death of Alfonso I, Pontano took sides with Ferrante, Alfonso's son, against the

French contender to the throne, Jean d'Anjou, in the First Barons' War (1458–1464). During the war, he strengthened his ties with the Aragonese rulers, marrying the Neapolitan noblewoman Adriana Sassone in 1461 and being promoted to a more senior position in 1462. Following Ferrante's victory over his rival, he started to tutor Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, and work as his secretary. In 1466, he received a call as chancellor and professor of rhetoric in Perugia. An intervention of Pope Paul II, however, canceled his appointment. Pontano wrote his most important political works in the aftermath of the First Barons' War, including his educational letter *De principe*, the dialogue *Charon* and the treatises *De oboedientia* and *De fortitudine*. In 1471, he received Neapolitan citizenship and succeeded Antonio Beccadelli upon his death as head of the Neapolitan Academy. Under Pontano, the Academy became one of the most important humanist networks in late fifteenth-century Italy and was posthumously named *Accademia Pontaniana* (Furstenberg-Levi 2016). Beccadelli is remembered in Pontano's dialogue *Antonius*.

From 1475–1482, Pontano served as secretary to Ippolita Sforza, Duke Alfonso's wife. The 1480s were a time of unrest for the monarchy. The War of Ferrara (1482–84) and the Second Barons' War (1485–86) enabled Pontano to unfold his diplomatic talents, serving first as an envoy of the Duke of Calabria, then as a first secretary to King Ferrante from 1487 onwards. He faced the difficult task to mediate between the king and Pope Innocent VIII. The protracted conflict between the two powers came to an end only in 1492. In his dialogue *Asinus* he takes a satirical and somewhat bitter view of these negotiations. During his time as a first secretary, Pontano saw the publication of his treatises *De fortitudine* and *De principe* (1490), *De oboedientia* (1490), and his early dialogues *Charon* and *Antonius* (1491), all with the printer Matthias Moravus in Naples.

The situation of the kingdom precipitated into confusion when King Ferrante died in January 1494 and the French king Charles VIII invaded Italy in 1494–1495. Ferrante's son, now King Alfonso II of Naples, abdicated in January 1495

and fled to Sicily. In February, the Aragonese forces under his successor King Ferrante II left Naples, too. It fell to Pontano to negotiate the surrender and to hand the keys of Castle Capuano over to the French. On this occasion, he also held a speech in defense of the Neapolitans. It was probably this speech that led to later allegations of betrayal. With the fall of the Aragonese, Pontano retired from public life and returned to politics only occasionally. His last official document is a letter to King Louis XII of France in May 1503, shortly before Naples fell to the Spanish troops.

For the main part of his retirement, Pontano dedicated himself to his literary activities, however, depicted in his dialogues *Actius* (1495/99) and *Aegidius* (1501). In 1498, he published his treatises on the social virtues *De liberalitate*, *De beneficentia*, *De magnificentia*, *De splendore*, and *De conviventia*, which he had finished writing c. 1493/94. Belonging to this last phase are the treatises *De prudentia* (c. 1498/1500), the first two books of *De fortuna* as well as *De magnanimitate* (c. 1499), the third book of *De fortuna* and *De immanitate* in 1501. Pontano's last great treatise before his death in September 1503 is *De sermone*, written in 1501/02.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Pontano writes in the second half of the fifteenth century, a time in which the humanist movement in Italy reached its apogee. After a first phase characterized by the development of a new intellectual outlook and an aggressive stance towards more traditional approaches, reaching from Petrarca to Valla (Fubini 1990), Pontano participates in a second phase more concerned with consolidating the humanists' success and to further strengthening their position in politics and society.

Nevertheless, his early dialogues *Charon* and *Antonius* (Pontano 2012a) still show an aggressive stance, signaling rather infighting between different strands of humanist learning than an attack on "scholastic" authors as such. Lorenzo Valla, the main antagonist to Pontano's teacher Antonio Beccadelli, plays a crucial role here. Valla will remain a highly ambiguous *éminence*

grise in Pontano's writings. On the one hand, he criticizes Valla's militant intellectual style and rejects his radical reshaping of Aristotelian philosophy. On the other hand, he almost fully subscribes to Valla's philological method in which the discussion of the fine points of Latin style ("elegantiae") does not only concern rhetorical elegance but also implies philosophical discussions and semantics (Nauta 2011).

Later dialogues, most importantly *Aegidius* (Pontano 2013), celebrate the triumph of humanist culture, especially the creation of a new "Latin philosophy" that combines philological sensibility with philosophical acumen. Pontano's main point of reference is Aristotle. In fact, scholars of Italian Renaissance humanism have long noted the preponderance of Aristotelian thought in Pontano's treatises, although they tended to see Pontano's propensity towards Aristotle in a largely negative light: "His admiration for Aristotle never meant originality" (Vasoli 1961: 607). More recent studies argue instead that Pontano's Aristotelianism is not a trite repetition of platitudes but rather a reconfiguration of Aristotelian thought in sometimes intricate patterns and textures. He clearly continues the humanist project of taking Aristotle's writings out of the hands of the "scholastics," following in the footsteps of Leonardo Bruni and his retranslations of the *Ethics* and the *Politics*. Nonetheless, Pontano does not retranslate Aristotle but rewrites his moral and political thought, accomplishing a blend of different genres such as paraphrase, commentary, and dialogue (Roick 2017: 97–120).

Of course, Aristotle is not Pontano's only point of reference. As Pontano himself argues in *De immanitate* (Pontano 1970: 1–2), his writings combine the approaches of Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca. Thus, the Ciceronian and Senecan influences are very pronounced in his earlier political works *De principe* (Pontano 2003), *De oboedientia* (Pontano 1518–1520: i, 1r–48v), and *De fortitudine* (Pontano 1518–1520: 49r–86v). They also show the influence of medieval authors such as John of Salisbury, Thomas Aquinas, and Giles of Rome (Cappelli 2016). First and foremost with Seneca, Pontano could hark back to the propaganda which had transformed the foreign conqueror Alfonso into the "magnanimous" ruler of

Naples, centered on Seneca's treatment of Roman monarchy (Stacey 2007; Delle Donne 2015). In Pontano, the emphasis moves from laudatory writings such as Beccadelli's *De dictis et factis Alphonsi regis* (Beccadelli 1538) to a well-founded theoretical and doctrinal approach.

In later works such as *De prudentia* (Pontano 1518–1520: i, 147r–225v) and *De fortuna* (Pontano 2012b), Aristotelian learnedness outshines the influence of Cicero and Seneca. In these treatises, Pontano develops a more general vision of man and his life, integrating his moral and political discussions mainly with cosmological explanations (Tateo 1960; Trinkaus 1985). Pontano was a specialist in astrology and the author of *De rebus coelestibus*, an astrological treatise in 13 books. He made ample use of his astrological knowledge, in his philosophy as well as in his poetry and his self-fashioning (Soranzo 2014). Regarding philosophy, this is especially the case for *De fortuna*, based mainly on Aristotle's arguments in the *Physics* and the *Liber de bona fortuna*, a compilation of the chapters on fortune in the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Magna Moralia* (Roick 2017: 151–155). Here, Pontano also falls back on Middle Platonism and the Thomistic version of Aristotle's thought.

In other treatises, most notably the treatises on the social virtues (Pontano 2012b) and *De sermone* (Pontano 2002), Pontano goes beyond the scope of the original Aristotelian thought by painting a lively picture of the culture of his time. *De magnificentia*, for one, teems with examples of Renaissance buildings and comportments. *De sermone*, which discusses the art of pleasant conversation, gives interesting insights into courtly culture, including examples from classical and contemporary literature (Boccaccio).

Innovative and Original Aspects

At first sight, Pontano is not an innovative author. Far from the iconoclasm of Lorenzo Valla, Pontano's intellectual outlook is "conservative" in the sense that he does not want to dissolve traditional ideas by his return to the classics but to refine contemporary culture. In his treatises, he tries to reestablish and appropriate the authority of

Aristotle, explicitly arguing against Valla and his ideas of pleasure as the highest good, prudence as a mere intellectual ability, and a concept of virtue that is no longer defined as *habitus*.

Still, it would be a mistake to see Pontano as a mere epigone both to the classical tradition and to his humanist predecessors. In general, Pontano's moral and political thought reacts to major changes in the political landscape of Renaissance Italy and the moral culture of his time. From the late thirteenth century onwards, the urban civilization of the communal settlements in Northern Italy had given rise to new ruling classes, destabilizing traditional notions of moral and political authority (Ruggiero 2015). The innovative moments in Pontano's philosophical thought come to light only from this historical perspective. Like most humanists of the time, Pontano had strong ties with the new ruling class, in his case, the Aragonese. Their claim to the Kingdom of Naples was weak from a dynastic point of view. Therefore, it necessitated a strong ideological response, which was wrought by the humanists at court. Like his predecessors, Pontano shifted the discussion from mainly legal arguments to the language of virtue and wisdom. Some historians have placed this move firmly in the context of the "rise of the art of the state" and the "degeneration of politics," with Pontano exemplifying the "ideological trend connected with the establishment of princely rule over most Italian cities" (Viroli 1992: 112).

In a wider perspective, however, Pontano does not simply appropriate the new language of politics developed in the "republican" regimes in Northern Italy, adapting it to the Aragonese monarchy in the South. Instead, he rethinks the power of the ruler as well as the relation to his subjects. The key term of his analysis is *maiestas*, formulated mainly in *De principe*. It comprises a heightened sense of oneself, together with self-control and the effort to make cohere "internal" virtue and "external" representation of virtue (*De principe*, §§ 46–80). Accordingly, the "much-expanded interest in the more ritualistic aspects of princely government" (Skinner 2002: 136) coincides with a more radical understanding of the public role of the *princeps*, which involves a permanent control of his moral and political

comportment (Cappelli 2016: 95–98). Pontano's emphasis on the princes' virtues does not only reflect a laudatory stance, therefore, but also implies a kind of compact between the prince and his subjects (Cappelli 2016: 34). In *De obedientia*, Pontano continues *De principe*'s project by considering political organization as a whole, expanding his thoughts on the virtuousness of all parts of the body politic.

In contrast to his earlier works, Pontano's treatises of the 1490s and early 1500s do no longer focus on political virtue but rather investigate the role of virtue in one's personal conduct, both in terms of individual behavior and social comportment. This does not exclude political questions, as Pontano writes for a high-brow audience of nobles and functionaries. Still, the scope becomes broader.

De prudentia does not only discuss the Aristotelian virtue of prudence (*phronesis*) as such but rehearses the first books of the *Ethics* concerning the question of the best life (I) and the general definition of virtue (II). Only then does it turn to the intellectual virtues (III) and discusses the "parts" of prudence (IV), giving a long catalog of examples (V). On the surface, many of Pontano's discussions do not yield any new insights into Aristotelian virtue theory. When studied in detail, however, they reveal a surprising ability to reconfigure Aristotelian thought. Regarding the question of the good life, for example, Pontano proposes a model in which the active and the contemplative life do not exclude but complement each other during the course of one's life. Pontano's ideas on the topic are strongly inspired by his own autobiography. They clearly show to which extent philosophical thought and humanist learning had an impact on Pontano's self-perception, clearly shaping the narrative of his own life.

On a doctrinal level, Pontano reaffirms the definition of virtue as a mean (*mediocritas*) and as an inclination to act in certain ways (*habitus*). For Pontano, the mean does not so much imply a "golden mean" or the "middle way" but rather an aptness in the Ciceronian sense. Hence, it does not necessarily aim at moderation. Rather, the mean depends on the particulars of the situation. The emphasis on appropriate acts and the context of one's actions is a general trait in Pontano's

thought, and it explains why his use of examples goes far beyond the scope of mere illustration. It also helps to understand his propensity to subdivide virtues into their "parts" (*De prudentia* IV, *De sermone*) and to elaborate on the Aristotelian scheme of virtues and vices, adding new virtues such as *splendor* (magnificence on a household scale) (Pontano 1999) and discussing the nameless virtues. Thus, he terms the nameless virtue regarding ambition *ambientia* in *De magnanimitate* II (Pontano 1969).

Notwithstanding his "contextualist" or even "situationist" account of virtue, Pontano does not give up on the notion of self-cultivation and character development in his ethics. He highlights the necessity to acquire permanent dispositions (*habitus*) by a whole range of techniques of the self, including formation, regulation, and cultivation. However, Pontano is not always able to balance his insistence on the particular with his classical approach to *habitus*. Thus, he sometimes has difficulties drawing the boundaries between the intellectual virtues, especially between prudence (*prudentia*) and skill (*ars*) (*De prudentia* III). Nonetheless, he defends the status of prudence as a virtue, against Valla's arguments that prudence is a kind of ingenuity, neither good nor bad in itself. One could argue, however, that his discussion of the parts of prudence, famously including simulation and dissimulation, destabilizes the notion of prudence as a virtue. His historical examples, too, do not always work along the lines of a classical theory of virtue and include strong elements of what might be labeled as "strategic" approach.

De fortuna is a further example of Pontano's complex rewriting of Aristotelian doctrine. Here, he examines the notion of fortune from a wide range of perspectives such as Aristotelianism, Middle Platonism, Christian doctrine, and astrology. But despite Pontano's eclecticism, his argument has a specific twist to it. Central parts of the treatise propose a concept of fortune as "irrational nature," as a natural or divine impulse. Falling back on discussions of fate and fortune in Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome, the treatise moves between the poles of astrological determinism and a renewed belief in the powers of man.

De immanitate serves as a counterpoint, exploring the explanatory possibilities of Aristotelian moral psychology regarding “inhuman” behavior. Whereas his other treatises set positive standards, *De immanitate* seems to fathom the depths of negative human experience.

Impact and Legacy

After Pontano’s death, his works were published by his pupil and friend Pietro Summonte (Naples: Sigismund Mayr, 1505–1512). During the course of the sixteenth century, his *Opera Omnia* were printed also in Venice by the heirs of Aldo Manuzio (1518–1520), in Florence by Filippo Giunta (1520), and twice in Basle, by Andreas Cratander (1538–1540) and Heinrich Petri (1566). These reprints show that Pontano’s works were generally valued throughout Europe.

In his works, he treats many topics that will become important in the course of the sixteenth century, shaping the culture of early modern Europe. Themes such as prudence and fortune will reappear in Machiavelli’s works, although it is not clear to which extent the Florentine secretary had knowledge of Pontano’s writings (Ginzburg 2009; Robertis 2015). In the *Cortegiano*, Castiglione will make use of Pontano’s discussions on pleasant conversation; other topics such as magnificence and splendor will come to prominence, too.

Nonetheless, Pontano enjoyed long-lasting success mainly as a poet and literary scholar, while his impact as a philosopher became much more limited in later times. In Italy, his treatises came under critique rather early, mainly for their idiosyncratic attitude. They fell victim both to changes in the philological approach to Aristotle and a new trend toward writing in the vernacular (Lines 2013: 836). For transalpine Europe, the situation changes. Although we have only episodic evidence of Pontano’s influence, we know that Philipp Melanchthon held Pontano in high esteem as a humanist scholar (Pontano 1534). As Melanchthon was a crucial figure in the development of post-reformation education, it is probable that Pontano exerted a certain influence on his

treatment of Aristotle’s *Ethics*. Still, Pontano did not easily fit into a Christian version of Aristotelian morality, as a short letter on *De prudentia* by the German humanist Mutianus Rufus shows (Mutianus 1885: 383–5). Another indicator is that the Basle editions omitted *De fortuna* entirely.

There can be little doubt, however, that Pontano developed a new mainstream for early modern moral and political thought, rarely mentioned or quoted explicitly, but still strongly present in the ethical discourses of the time.

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Pontanus, Johannes

► [Pontano, Giovanni](#)

Pontanus, Johannes Jovianus

► [Pontano, Giovanni](#)

Porro, Branda

Born: 1487

Died: 1571

Silvia Fazzo

Milan, Italy

Abstract

A minor figure, no doubt, in spite of his high consideration in Milan among his fellow citizens, Branda Porro is a sample of the kind of Aristotelian scholarship in vigor when Girolamo Cardano joined the University of Pavia (*Studium Papiense*). There he was a University teacher in Philosophy, an Academic (a member of the Accademia degli Affidati in Pavia), a Catholic, and a friend of members of Milan's Senato (which governed the Università of Pavia). He left, apparently, no printed work.

Biography

Porro was Cardano's professor of Philosophy in Pavia, quoted by the latter in his works and especially in the *Theonoston*. A *Medicinae* doctor and a philosopher from a noble family in Milan, he taught Philosophy (mostly on Aristotle and Aristotle's commentators) in several places in Italy and especially in Pavia, at the *Studium Papiense* (which would be called "University" later on). He left no printed works, and no special innovation or legacy is to be found from his teaching. He can rather be taken as a sample of the kind

of Aristotelizing approach to philosophical teaching in Pavia in the times when Girolamo Cardano attended the Studium. Cardano himself, in his *De propria vita*, proudly recalls the public dispute (*disputatio*) he won against Branda, thus showing a more exact acquaintance even with Aristotle's text, which seems to have been the favorite field of his teacher. The fact, Cardano says, was recognized as true by Branda before the Milan Senate during the following days: "Accidit autem per eos dies ut Branda Mediolanum iret, res scripta erat senatui; interrogant an verum esset (It happened during those days that Branda was going to Milan; the matter was written to the senate; they ask whether it was true. A sincere and upright man, he certainly answered, it is very true.). Vir sincerus et probus, certe respondit, nimis verus est" (It happened during those days that Branda was going to Milan; the matter was written to the senate; They ask whether it was true. A sincere and upright man, he certainly answered, it is very true.). As it appears from the fact that he encountered the Milan Senate, Branda was a noble. This is confirmed by Paolo Morigi's *La nobiltà di Milano* (1595), which has a short entry with his name and praises him as "the most famous philosopher in his times" (with reference, I presume, to the Milan milieu) and as very close to the Catholic religion. This is further confirmed by the 'Impresa' (impresa being a member's designed emblem expressing his 'life's purposes') he got among the Accademia degli Affidati in Pavia, which is recalled in Contile's *Ragionamento sopra le imprese degli Affidati*. He taught, apparently, in Pisa as well (1551–1552). A minor and shadowy figure, no doubt, yet his fellow citizens would regard him as the best philosopher in his times: see AAVV *Storia di Milano*, VIII, 437, with special reference to a *Tractatus de anima* by him, where Aristotle's view is seen in contrast with Plato's. His close relationship with the Milan Senate, which governed the University in Pavia, may explain the increasing salary he was attributed year after year. The record of his academic career can be traced in Fazzo (1999) along with those of all the other teachers at the University of Pavia in Cardano's times. His works, if he had any, did not survive him. He left no printed works. Lohr (1988, p. 363), lists three *Commentaries* by Branda Porro

on Aristotle's works that have been found in manuscript form: Milano, Convento dei PP Cappuccini 5 (63), (A.D. 1551–1552), as follows: 1. In *Physicam*; 2. In *Primum De caelo et mundo*; 3. In *De anima*. Based on the given date, it seems possible that these commentaries were connected with Porro's teaching in Pisa. Due to the lack of further literature, it cannot be assessed whether the commentary on the soul is the same as to the *Tractatus de anima* mentioned above.

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Portaleone, Abraham ben David

Born: 1542, Mantua

Died: 1612, Mantua

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Abstract

Abraham ben David Portaleone (Mantua 1542–1612), a Jewish physician and author of an encyclopedic-religious work written in Hebrew, the *Shilte ha-gibborim*, and of a Latin treatise in form of dialogue on the properties of gold (*Dialogi tres de auro*) which features epistemological considerations on the

value of human knowledge and on its relation to religion and faith.

Biography

Abraham ben David Portaleone was born in Mantua on March 18, 1542. The scion of a Jewish family of illustrious physicians, he received extensive education in both rabbinic tradition and secular sciences from the best teachers of the time like Rabbi Meir Katzenellebogen of Padua (1473–1565), Rabbi Josef Sarko (Date of birth and death unknown), Rabbi Josef Sinai and Rabbi Jacob Fano (XVI Century, exact dates of birth and death unknown). In Mantua, Portaleone studied Latin and Philosophy under Judah Provenzali and Abraham ben David Provenzali. Thanks to a Papal dispensation Portaleone graduated in medicine and philosophy from Pavia on March 22, 1563 (Colomi 1950). The Duke of Mantua, Guglielmo I Gonzaga (1538–1587), granted Portaleone the permission to be examined by a board of physicians of Mantua which unanimously on December 3, 1566, admitted him into the College of the Physicians (Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga S III 9, 3391). On March 1, 1576 Duke Guglielmo enforced the Papal ordinances which forbade Jewish physicians to treat Christians. However, thanks to the support of several noblemen and, in particular, Count Camillo di Castiglione (1517–1598), the Duke (9/18/1577) bestowed a privilege upon Portaleone allowing him to treat all the Christians of the Duchy. Only in 1591, after long and laborious negotiations, the ducal privilege was confirmed by Pope Gregory XIV. Of Portaleone's four children, David, Lazzaro, Yehuda and Rebecca, only David continued the family medical tradition. David graduated in philosophy and medicine at the University of Padua (19/3/1597) and inherited the entire medical and philosophical library of his father including about 1000 books. (Miletto 2013).

In the summer of 1605, Portaleone suffered a paralytic stroke. He considered his illness a chastisement from God because in his youth he preferred to occupy himself “with the seductive words of the Greek wisdom,” (Portaleone, *Shilte*

ha-gibborim, p. 2b) and neglected the study of the Torah. At the end of his life, he wanted to write a religious work the *Shilte ha-gibborim* (“The Shields of the Heroes”) as a sign of his repentance and as atonement for his sins. The book was published in July 1612 shortly before his death happened.

The *Shilte ha-gibborim* is a Hebrew description of Solomon's Temple. However, Portaleone does not restrict himself to the description of the Temple complex and the cultic acts. Despite Portaleone's censure of philosophy and secular sciences, the numerous topics related to the Temple are used as a framework to deal with different aspects of the culture of his time. The mundane topics that Portaleone inserts into the description of the Temple can be summarized as follows: the Greek and Latin alphabet with other alphabets of real and imaginary languages as an introduction to the following 90 chapters; music and musical instruments (chapters 4–13), physiognomy (chapter 38) with an innuendo to the Aristotle tract *De historia animalium*, politics and administration (chapter 40), military art and weapons (chapters 41–43), gems and minerals (chapters 48–49, 54), zoology and the medical application of animals (chapters 50–53), coins and medals with their exchange rates and the price list of gems and pearls (chapters 55–56), weights and measures (chapter 72), different oils and wine types (chapter 75), different types of salt and the description of their extraction (chapter 76), and herbs, spices, and scents (chapters 78–88). Chapter 86 offers suggestions about the storage and the making of wine and vinegar, and chapter 88 describes the process of distillation. This variety of subjects show clear parallels with the contents of a *Wunderkammer* or of the *studioli* at Portaleone's time, which are more or less explicitly related to Solomon and his Temple. According to mnemonic-encyclopedic theories of the sixteenth century, particularly of Giulio Camillo Delminio (1480 ca.–1544), the Temple of Solomon was regarded as a microcosm of divine origin, representing the plastic, visual realization of the identification between science and divine word, and the architectonic exemplification of the harmonic cohesion of the variety of the creation. The seemingly contradictory mixture of religious and mundane topics is resolved in this way in the description of the Temple.

The *Shilte ha-gibborim* has been quoted by Menasseh ben Israel (*El Conciliador*, 4 vols., Amsterdam, 1633–1651), by Yom Tov Lipmann Heller (1579–1654) in his commentary on the Mishna tract *Middot* (Prague, 1614–1617) and by Rabbi Yoel Löwe (alias Brill, 1762–1802) in the introduction to the Psalms (Berlin, 1788). Portaleone was also known to Christian authors. He was one of the sources used by Johann Christoph Wagenseil in his Latin commentary on tract *Sota* (Altdorf, 1674). Wagenseil made known Portaleone to the German authors of the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries who dealt with the Temple and Hebrew antiquities like Johann Oelreich, Johann Lund, Josias Heinrich Opitz, and Johann Jakob Quandt. The chapters about music of the *Shilte ha-gibborim* were quoted by Athanasius Kircher in the *Musurgia Universalis* (Rome, 1650). Kircher made known Portaleone to several music historians of the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries like Andreas Senert (*Exercitationum philologicarum Eptas altera. IV. De Musica*, Wittenberg 1678), Wolfgang Caspar Printz (*Historische Beschreibung der edelen Sing- und Klingkunst*, Dresda, 1690), John Hawkins (*A general history of the science and practice of music*, Londra 1785), and Johann Nikolaus Forkel (*Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, Lipsia 1788). Biagio Ugolini translated into Latin some chapters from the *Shilte ha-gibborim* including them with the original Hebrew text (very misprinted) into *Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum* (Venice, 1744–1769).

Portaleone also composed a dialogue in Latin on the gold properties: *Dialogi tres de auro, Three dialogues on gold* (Venice, 1584). The dialogue is an epistemological treatise on the limits and value of human knowledge and experience.

Finally in the National Library of Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Latin 13,004), there is a manuscript with Portaleone's medical responses compiled by his son David (Berns 2011).

Cross-References

- [Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism](#)
- [Microcosm and Macrocosm in the Renaissance](#)
- [Practical Knowledge](#)

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Porzio, Simone

Born: 1496, Naples

Died: 1554, Naples

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Abstract

Simone Porzio was the most important Aristotelian of his generation. He spent his life in Naples and Pisa, but he earned an international reputation for his works. As a student of Agostino Nifo, he preferred to endorse the exegesis of Alexander of Aphrodisias, though correcting it when he found it incoherent (Vasoli 2001; Del Soldato 2010a). This attitude was particularly clear in Porzio's interpretation of the *De anima* and also in his *De rerum naturalium principiis* (Porzio 1553). Other works by Porzio were devoted to ethical and theological problems and testify to the sympathy of the philosopher for heterodox religious ideas. Interestingly, these two sides of Porzio – the loyal Aristotelian and the theologian – never interfered, and he considered philosophy and faith two independent realms. Porzio was also a skilled philologist, and as a member of the Florentine Academy, he made a contribution to the literary debates of his time.

Biography

Simone Porzio was born into a prominent family in Naples in 1496. He studied in Pisa under the guidance of Agostino Nifo, with whom he returned to Naples around 1525. He began teaching at the local university in 1529, and he quickly gained the esteem of the city's intellectual elites and in particular of the Viceroy Pedro de Toledo, who named Porzio his personal physician. Despite these honors, Porzio was not satisfied with his position in Naples, where he felt restrained by the restrictions imposed by the

Viceroy on cultural life, a sentiment that was probably accentuated by Porzio's ties to members of the evangelical circle led by Juan de Valdés. In 1544 he found an excuse to leave the city and started teaching at the University of Pisa as *professore sopraordinario*, a position which granted him a high salary and a number of other benefits (Del Soldato 2010a). Porzio quickly became one of the favorites at the court of the Duke Cosimo de' Medici, who shared his interest in natural philosophy. During this period in Tuscany, Porzio began a collaboration with Giovan Battista Gelli, a respected member of the Florentine Academy, an institution patronized by the Duke and devoted to the promotion of the vernacular as a language of elevated discourse. In harmony with the program of the Academy, Gelli translated in the vernacular a wide selection of Porzio's works, especially those dealing with ethics, religion, and *miranda naturae* (Perrone Compagni 2003; Puliafito 2011; Del Soldato 2015a). Most of Porzio's books were published while he was in Tuscany, a further confirmation of his uneasiness with the repressive environment in Naples. The works published in Tuscany include the edition/commentary of the *De coloribus* by Ps.-Aristotle (Porzio 1548); the medical *De dolore* (Porzio 1551b); the *An homo bonus vel malus volens fiat*, on ethics (Porzio 1551a); and the controversial *De mente humana*, which did not cause him problems at the time of its publication (Porzio 1551c). In 1552, ill and prematurely aged, the philosopher left Tuscany for good and went back to Naples, where he spent his final days in Posillipo together with his friend Girolamo Seripando. He died in 1554.

Porzio had many students both in Naples and Pisa who became prominent university professors, but none of them endorsed the revised Alexandrism of their teacher, preferring a more traditional Averroistic allegiance: among them were Francesco Storella, Girolamo Balduino, and Giovan Bernardino Longo (Del Soldato 2010a). Furthermore, his teaching style was considered too complex and unappealing to large groups of students. Even though he did not leave behind a school, Porzio was still praised and

admired throughout Europe in the years following his death: thinkers and collectors such as Ulisse Aldrovandi, Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, Claude Dupuy, and Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc searched for unpublished works of the philosopher or even just for pieces of information about his life. Nonetheless, his posthumous reputation quickly deteriorated: thanks to a biographical legend that described Porzio as a pupil of Pomponazzi because they both propagated a mortalistic exegesis of the *De anima*, he was incorrectly reduced to an epigon of Pomponazzi (Fiorentino 1911). By the seventeenth century, Porzio's name appeared almost exclusively in association with that of Peretto. Some of the works of the philosopher, however, still enjoyed circulation. The edition of the *De coloribus* by Porzio was repeatedly published and praised even by Goethe, and the *De mente humana* was discussed by Giulio Castellani, Giacomo Zabarella, and Fortunio Liceti. The *De rerum naturalium principiiis* was reprinted in Germany and then quoted by George Berkeley, and references to the *Parva Naturalia* booklets appear in works by Giovan Battista della Porta and Francesco Lana de Terzi. The crisis and then the implosion of Aristotelianism nonetheless condemned Porzio to long oblivion, which was interrupted only at the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to the pioneering studies by Francesco Fiorentino, who had the merit of restoring and highlighting the significance of Porzio for early modern philosophy and of attracting the attention of other scholars to the "most important Renaissance Alexandrist."

Porzio's books are characterized by a rigid separation between philosophy and theology: he does not tolerate reciprocal interferences between the two disciplines, and this clear distinction makes it unnecessary for him to make an explicit appeal to the doctrine of the "double truth." It is notable that in his theological works, such as the commentary on the *Pater Noster*, Porzio never quotes philosophical sources. At the same time, in his philosophical texts, he declares his hostility toward the attempts of certain theologians to mix "different broths." In his view, both philosophy and theology share an ambiguous idea of man, a

being composed of matter and soul and therefore divided between high and low. The ambiguous nature of man represents therefore a *fil rouge* in all the works of the Neapolitan philosopher, regardless of the context he was working in: it was useful for praising the theoretical balance of Aristotle, the only philosopher capable of describing the human being in all its complexity, for confining man inside the finite and material world and, paradoxically, for allowing him to become closer to God as well. Such a double standard is particularly evident when Porzio discusses two crucial topics: the question of the soul and the human will.

Porzio's *De mente humana* is one of the most radical readings of the Alexandristic exegesis of the *De anima* and represented the culmination of reflection on the topic lasting at least 20 years. The Neapolitan philosopher affirms the mortality of the individual soul by offering a number of arguments, mostly based on an analysis of the ambiguity of human nature, divided between divinity and bestiality, which anchors men to their finite materiality. Most importantly, he corrects Alexander of Aphrodisias about the nature of the active intellect. According to Alexander the active intellect was in fact God, but Porzio finds this solution too abstract and metaphysical because it would place the active intellect beyond the sphere of the Moon. To explain a direct action of the active intellect on the possible intellect, Porzio moved it below the Moon, and he considered it a *vis* scattered in the sublunar material forms. At a certain point, he even suggests, without endorsing it, the identity of active and possible intellect. The distance from Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate* is evident, since Porzio prefers to stay completely faithful to the paradigm offered by Alexander, to the extent of making the interpretation of the Aphrodisius more coherent. Nonetheless, when discussing human will from an ethical perspective, Porzio prefers to put his mortalistic interpretation of the *De anima* aside. Making an exception to his typical hostility to any fusion of philosophy and theology, Porzio claims that the *Nicomachean Ethics* is in fact central to theology, and his reading of the text in the *An homo bonus vel malus volens fiat* has a clear theological subtext. In the

An homo, the emphasis on the ambiguity of human nature is not meant to demonstrate the mortality of the soul, but rather to justify the need for salvific grace to guide the actions of men, who cannot be absolutely free nor absolutely slaves. The implicit interlocutor of Porzio throughout the work is Erasmus, an author with whom the Neapolitan philosopher was well acquainted, as demonstrated by his commentary on the *Pater Noster* (where he seems to rely also on Valdés and the *Beneficio di Cristo*). A different approach to the problem of the human freedom is offered in Porzio's final work, the *De rerum naturalium principiis*: here Porzio comments on the first two books of the *Physics* and, while rescuing the matter from the traditional label of *prope nihil*, accepts the solution proposed by Alexander of Aphrodisias in his *De fato*, according to which fate affects humans *ad speciem*, rather than *ad individuum*, and rejects the solutions to the problem offered by theologians. The *De rerum naturalium principiis* was discussed and debated even after Porzio's death, in particular by Francesco Vimercato, and possibly influenced the thought of Giordano Bruno about matter (Badaloni 1955). The same loyalty to Aristotelian principles is present in minor works by Porzio, such as the booklets on *De puella germanica* (Porzio S.L.D.) – the explanation of an apparently miraculous fast undertaken for months by a German young girl, which the philosopher conceived while teaching the second book of the *De anima* – and the epistle *De conflagratione agri puteolani* (Porzio 1539), in which he discusses the terrible earthquake that destroyed Pozzuoli in 1537. In order to undermine astrological readings of this natural disaster, he relied on arguments found in the *Meteorology*. Porzio also wrote some short texts on love, often as commentaries to Petrarchan lyrics. The most significant of these, the *De amore*, was originally composed during the period spent in Salerno and then completed when Porzio entered the Accademia Fiorentina. These works deal with a traditional Platonic topic from an entirely Aristotelian perspective and share almost nothing with works on the same arguments composed by Porzio's teacher Agostino Nifo. These writings

were never printed, like the catalog of fishes (*De piscibus*) that Porzio began, but never finished. The *De piscibus* was intended to be accompanied by drawings by the painter Bacchiacca. Despite the fact that it was never finished and hews closely to Aristotelian schemes, the *De piscibus* puts Porzio together with Rondelet, Belon, and Aldrovandi among the pioneers of early modern zoology and attracted the interest of a young Giovan Battista della Porta, who assisted Porzio while he was collecting material for the work (Del Soldato 2008). Porzio's medical expertise is evident in texts like the *De coloribus oculorum* (Porzio 1550) and the *De dolore*: the first one intertwines anatomy and physiognomy, and the second one takes position against Galen and insists on an Aristotelian hylomorphic conception of men in order to explain the nature of pain. Porzio was also a refined philologist: he edited and translated the pseudo-Aristotelian *De coloribus* into Latin, offering sophisticated observations about the paternity of the work. However, this was no surprise: familiarity with Greek commentators and the Greek Aristotle is a feature of his entire body of work as a philosopher.

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Possevino, Antonio

Born: 12th July 1533, Mantua

Died: 26th February 1611, Ferrara

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Abstract

Antonio Possevino was a Jesuit, diplomat, scholar, college founder and administrator. A very active member of his order in the core phase of its worldwide diffusion, he travelled throughout Northern and Eastern Europe as a diplomat, trying to prompt conversions and build alliances between Catholic and Orthodox countries against the Protestant Reformation and the Turks. While on the road, he established several Jesuit seminaries and colleges (Lukács 1955). Possevino is most renowned for his *Bibliotheca Selecta*, a two-volume *in-folio* bibliographic project, listing and commenting on all the works he deemed as fundamental for a complete Christian humanistic culture. Very influential in his time was a pedagogical treatise drawn from the *Bibliotheca* and translated by him into vernacular Italian, the *Coltura degl'Ingegni* (“Cultivation of Man’s Wits”), based on a

theory of natural talents governed by free will and emphasizing the educational value of real-life experiences.

Biography

Born to a wealthy but obscure family – his possible Jewish ancestry has still not been definitively proven (Donnelly 1986; Castaldini 2001) – Possevino followed the pathway of a classical humanities formation and started his career as Ercole Gonzaga’s secretary. He entered the Jesuit Order in 1559 and made his solemn profession 10 years later. He established from the very beginning good relationships with aristocrats across Europe, starting with Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy and then with the French court that entrusted him with the management of the Collège de Clermont in Paris, and he was appointed Rector of the Jesuit Colleges in Avignon and Lyon. Pope Gregory XIII charged him with important missions in Sweden – where he tried unsuccessfully to obtain from King John III Vasa, who had a conciliatory attitude to Catholicism, a formal conversion to the Church of Rome – then in Poland and Russia. He narrated his eastern travels and his meeting with Ivan IV “The Terrible” in his *Moscovia* (Possevino 1596; Graham 1977). His freedom of action inside the Order diminished after Claudio Acquaviva’s election as General and most of all after Gregory XIII’s death (1585). Possevino progressively retired in the Venetian province, even if he continued to be involved in his later years with delicate hubs in the diplomatic network of the church, such as the Venetian Interdict crisis, exchanging letters with the English ambassador Henry Wotton and writing pseudonymous controversies against Paolo Sarpi. Some of his letters (e.g., ARSI OO.NN. 333) show his resentment about his being confined between Mantua, Padua, and Venice (and later Ferrara), after his globetrotter life and his privileged relationships with the earlier Jesuit General Mercurian and the pope. When he died at age 77, the Jesuit Order had already reinforced its hierarchical and institutional structures, losing the experimental character of its first decades, and

had fully assumed the role of bastion of orthodoxy. This was the role Possevino had faithfully performed during his entire life but had also endlessly questioned and interpreted in a very flexible and sometimes independent way.

Innovative and Original Aspects: Impact and Legacy

Possevino's philosophical profile, as expressed by his choices in the *Bibliotheca* and by his declarations in the *Coltura*, was quite original (Possevino 1593). Drawing on Ficino's and Pico's Platonism, Cappadocian theology, and Christian kabbalah, it made for a problematic synthesis with developing Jesuit Aristotelianism (Casalini and Salvarani 2008). This as well as his unassuming death – so unlike the martyrdom of so many of his contemporary Jesuit brothers – may well account for his relative popularity. Nevertheless, the influence of his educational ideas, on whose basis he managed his colleges, was visible for decades after and contributed to the overall profile of the seventeenth-century Catholic man of letters. He stands as a lively example of the cultural complexity and intellectual freedom of the early Jesuits.

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Postallus, Guilielmus

► [Postel, Guillaume](#)

Postel, Guillaume

Born: (commonly 25 March) 1510, Barenton near Avranches, Normandy (France)

Died: 6 September 1581, Paris (France)

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Abstract

Guillaume Postel (1510–1581), primarily known as a Christian Kabbalist, was a sixteenth-century polymath, an eclectic scholar and philosopher, a self-taught linguist and geographer, a Jesuit, and a heretic. He held the first chair of Arabic in Europe, and he is

often considered the first European Orientalist. With his works, he has indeed contributed to renovating the representation of Islam in the Western culture, exploring and describing the Ottoman society and tradition. He has enlarged the scope of the fifteenth-century humanistic interest in the Hebrew language and the Jewish esoteric tradition. As a traveler and wandering scholar, he established relationships with literati from all over Europe, becoming their friend, master, and collaborator. Along with Orientalism, he has offered an invaluable contribution to early modern universalism as well. In a period of transition such as the sixteenth century, Postel was a child of his time, proclaiming himself a prophet, a New Elias, and announcing the forthcoming Age of Restitution, the Fourth Age of Man, i.e., the realization of a global religious and political unity of all people.

Alternate Names

Postellus Barentonius Doleriensis, Gulielmus; Postallus, Guilielmus; Rorispergius; Anusius Venetus, Petru; Anusius Synesius, Petrus; Boulaese, Jehan; Boulese Gauloys Cosmopolite, Jehan

Biography

Born in Normandy, close to the small village of Barenton, in the hamlet of La Dolerie, in 1510, Postel lived his early life in France, as a teacher in a village near Pontoise, Sagy, and then in Paris. He was an orphan of humble birth and suffered from severe illness during his first years in Paris (Thevet 1584). After a brief spell near Chartres, working at a farmhouse, Postel attended the Collège Sainte-Barbe of the University of Paris. A leading center in geographical studies, the Collège was strictly connected to the Portuguese Kingdom and the Spanish cultural milieu, thanks to its director, Diogo de Gouveia, to whom Postel was presumptively close (Baghdiantz McCabe 2008). During his stay at the Collège Sainte-

Barbe, Postel gained knowledge about geography – an overlooked interest of Postel’s philosophical production, despite the fact that he drew a world chart (Grendi Milanese 2011) and wrote on cosmography (Destombes 1985). But, above all, he learned various languages. The study of ancient and oriental languages, and in particular of Hebrew – conceived as the original language – played a fundamental role in Postel’s conception of global harmony and universal monarchy. Moreover, Postel was able to teach himself Spanish and Portuguese just by listening to students speaking at the Collège (Thevet 1584). He already mastered Greek, and once at the service of Jean Gelidius, an Aristotelian humanist at the Collège, he helped him with lessons and the translations of Themistius’s *Commentaries* on Aristotle. Although Jews were expelled from France already in the fourteenth century, Postel learned Hebrew thanks to a Jewish family that still resided in the neighborhood: they lent him a grammar book and a Hebrew-Latin *Book of the Psalms* (Thevet 1584). In those years, he became interested in Arabic as well; as a result, the King of Portugal, John III, offered him a chair in Lisbon, a position Postel refused to pursue his studies. We also have traces of an epistolary exchange with the Portuguese humanist Damião de Góis about their shared desire for reform (Kuntz 1981). It was during these years that he came into contact with Ignatius Loyola, who arrived at Sainte-Barbe in 1528, where he gathered his first companions. Loyola’s proselytism, zealous spirit, and spiritualism made a lasting impression on Postel: indeed, in 1544, he joined the Society of Jesus (1540) in Rome, albeit for less than 2 years. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to make Postel’s thought and the Jesuit spirit coincide. Postel’s political vision, philosophical-religious universalism, and self-proclamation as a prophet mark a clear boundary between him and Loyola’s order.

In 1536, Janus Lascaris sponsored Postel to the French Crown to make him be part of Jean de la Forêt’s company, the first official French embassy at the court of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. With this delegation, King Francis I attempted to secure an alliance with the Ottoman Empire against the Hapsburgs and Emperor Charles

V. During the expedition, Postel was formally in charge of recovering the treasure of a dead French jeweler from Tours, which the man had brought from India and had partially sold to the Grand Vizier of Süleyman, Ibrahim Pasha (Kuntz 1981). The unfortunate result of this mission notwithstanding, crossing the Mediterranean, from Tunis to Egypt and Istanbul, Postel collected manuscripts for the royal library of Fontainebleau and had the chance to pursue his study of Arabic and learn Turkish for the first time. In some of his published works, the French Orientalist reports his impressions of the Ottoman society and the way he learned Arabic from a local, who showed him the passages in the Qurʾān which referred to Jesus Christ. He declares that the Ottomans compared him to a demon, for his talent and fastness in learning Arabic, professing himself to be satisfied by having become capable of speaking anywhere, without the help of an interpreter.

After his first voyage to the Ottoman Empire, he published in Paris *De originibus seu de Hebraicae linguae et gentis antiquitate* (Postel 1538a) and *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum, introductio, ac legendi modus longe facilimus* (Postel 1538b). In the first treatise, following a humanistic pattern, Postel recognizes in Hebrew the primordial language, the most precious gift of God to Adam (Simoncelli 1984; Kuntz 1997), demonstrating it through examples and fabricated Semitic etymologies, which Postel has defined as “emithologies” (Secret 1958). In the second book, he collects the alphabets of 12 different oriental languages, reconstructing the pronunciation of letters, giving examples of translation, and confirming the Hebrew derivation of them all. In 1537, on his way to Paris, Postel stopped in Venice. There, he met the Antwerp printer Daniel Bomberg and the former Hebrew teacher of Giles of Viterbo, Elias Levita, with whom Bomberg was working on the *Books of Job and Daniel*, as well as Teseo Ambrogio (Postel 1538a). Ambrogio was the first European scholar of Syriac, teacher of Johann Albrecht Widmannstetter. Postel met the German scholar in Rome almost 10 years later and collaborated with him on the *editio princeps* of the Syriac New Testament (1555). To Ambrogio,

who published in 1539 his *Introductio in Chaldaicam linguam, Syriacam, atque Armenicam, et decem alias linguas*, Postel asked the types to print the Arabic and Armenian letters in his *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum, introductio*. At this stage, although the French scholar remained in Venice for less than a month, it becomes evident that Postel established significant intellectual connections with the Venetian humanistic circles (Kuntz 1988). Through them, moreover, he entered in contact with the Roman group formed around the Hebraist Giles of Viterbo, presumptively getting acquainted with the ideas of the Florentine Neoplatonists, too.

Back in Paris, in 1538, King Francis I appointed Postel *lecteur royal* to the chair of Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew at the Collège Royal, founded under the recommendation of the humanist Guillaume Budé. The establishment of this royal college displays the political struggle between the French Crown and the Roman Church in the monopoly of production, organization, and regulation of knowledge. Indeed, concurrently with the declaration of French as the national language, the teaching of oriental languages by professors paid directly by the monarchy, in an institution independent of the Sorbonne, and before the Vatican Sacred Congregation for the Propaganda Fide, was a remarkable, culturally revolutionary act (Baghdiantz McCabe 2008). In particular, Postel held the very first chair of Arabic in Europe. The urgency of teaching Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac and the institution of the related chairs in Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Avignon, and Salamanca had already been declared at the Council of Vienne (1311–1312), under the tenacious pressure of Ramon Llull’s educational and missionary ideals (Southern 1962). However, it was never put into practice before Postel’s appointment. From 1541 to 1543, Postel’s patron, Chancellor Guillaume Poyet, fell into disfavor with Margaret of Navarre, the King’s sister, and was imprisoned in the Bastille. Between 1540 and 1541, Postel found support in the Bishop Bouvery, close to Poyet and patron of Jean Bodin. Despite the troubles suffered by Poyet, Postel was extremely prolific (Secret 1970; Postel

1992). He was able to produce and publish several works, and write in just two months his main oeuvre (Bouwsma 1957), *De orbis terrae concordia libri quatuor* (Postel 1544). Once completed, Postel submitted this work to the theologians of the Sorbonne for approval; several months later, it was returned to him carrying the label *ad facultatem non pertinens*. He eventually published it in 1544 in Basle at Oporinus' printing house, which had already re-printed his *De republica, seu magistratibus Atheniensium* (1541). For the Basle edition, Postel decided to remove the final section because of the harsh criticism against the Protestants it contained. He printed it separately as *Alcorani seu legis Mahometi et evangelistarum concordiae liber* (Postel 1543).

The very structure of the *De orbis* demonstrates the consistency of Postel's production and interests: the role played by linguistic studies in the construction of a universal concord is extensively specified. Indeed, according to Postel, the recovery of oriental languages allows discovering the hidden correspondences between the Bible, the Qur'ān, and the Gospels, through the reading of *testimonia ex variis linguis* (De La Cruz Palma 2015). Thus, the study of languages shapes and defines the unity under a unique God, in a single *Ecclesia*. Although Postel conceives the religious unity between nations as a global concord under a Christian vessel, the Christian identity is renovated according to humanistic ideals. Refutations notwithstanding, he generally adopts a somewhat proto-tolerant view. Postel firstly judges ancient Judaism as the very heart of Christianity, he establishes a historical derivation of the Ottomans from the Jews (Lestringant 1985), and recognizes a shared identity between Muslims and Christians. Secondly, he describes the veneration of and the love for God as a natural and universal fact, based on the rational and intellectual instruments common to all humankind. On this very basis, he proclaims a global political union, under the French Crown, forecasting and laying the ground for Jean Bodin's political thought. Most of Postel's vision was deeply inspired by his first voyage to the Ottoman Empire and reveals that Postel was

influenced by, among others, Nicholas of Cusa, Marsilio Ficino (Kristeller 1988), Pico della Mirandola, and Annius of Viterbo. In this period, Postel already proclaimed himself a prophet of a new time and, presumptively, in this sentiment lies the reason why he warned King Francis I for an urgent reformation of his court, his people, and the entire world. Postel defends his political argument of the historical primacy of the French: descendants of the Galls, they are direct heirs of Noah's sons, as demonstrated, in parallel, by the direct derivation of French from Hebrew (Dubois 1972). Furthermore, *De orbis* and its messianic globalism establish a long-lasting relation with the religious and intellectual milieu of Basle, showing a specific inter-confessional dimension of the religious debate of the time in Europe (Rotondò 1974). Although Postel blames the Protestants, whom he calls *cenevangelistae*, and negatively compares to Muslims, the French scholar maintained close relationships with many of the Basle *literati*. In addition to Oporinus, Postel sympathized with Philip Melancthon's ideology and became friends with the Zurich Orientalists Konrad Pelikan and Theodor Bibliander, the editor of the first Latin printed edition of the Qur'ān (1542–1543), who undoubtedly shared an irenic ideology with Postel.

In 1544, dismissed from his position in France, Postel went to Rome and joined the Society of Jesus, until December of the following year. In the papal city, he met an Ethiopian priest, with whom he discussed the *Book of Enoch*, and Johann Albrecht Widmannstetter. Alongside their collaboration on the Syriac New Testament, thanks to Widmannstetter, a friend of Giles of Viterbo, Postel became more interested in Kabbalistic studies, on which research studies on Postel have almost predominantly focused (Secret 1981, 1998; Kuntz 1981; Weill 1987; Matton 2001; Petry 2004). In 1546, Postel wrote *De restitutione humanae naturae*, which he tried unsuccessfully to send to Oporinus. Possibly intercepted for its unorthodox opinions by apostolic authorities, this book was later incorporated in the *Restitutio rerum omnium* (1552). In Rome, Postel got acquainted with the Papal Vicar Filippo Archinto,

who showed an interest in Postel's oriental and esoteric studies, and with the Flemish scholar Masius (Andreas Maes). A Hebraist himself, Masius became a disciple of Postel in Arabic.

Between the end of 1546 and January 1547, Postel was back in Venice, where he remained until the summer of 1549; this period was crucial for the further development of Postel's messianic globalism. He indeed encountered the Venetian Virgin or True Mother of the World, whom Kuntz has eventually identified with Mother Johanna, or Madre Zuana (Kuntz 1981), an elderly woman who assisted the poor and indigents at the Ospedaletto of Saints John and Paul, where Postel served caring for people in need of spiritual guidance. Mother Johanna was not only a pious lady but also a mystic; Postel became her confessor, her spiritual father, and at the same time, her spiritual son, making her both his mystical daughter and spiritual guide. The ideal proclamation of a forthcoming Fourth Age of humankind, the Age of Restitution, the Sabbatism, was drastically confirmed to Postel by the prophetic encounter with the Mother of the World. She would have been the New Eve, the earthly embodiment of the sefirah *Shekhinah*, who would have restored the global unity between all people, spreading the ancient mysteries preserved by the ancient sages (*prisci theologi*) to renovate the True Religion. With the older, unlettered woman, Postel read the *Zohar*, of which he providentially (according to him) got hold. He stated that he had explored the hidden *arcana* of the text and had discovered in it, thanks to Mother Johanna's inspired comprehension, the confirmation of the venue of a new Angelic Papacy, that of Mother Johanna. In this period, Postel also succeeded in seeing some of his works published, such as his *Absconditorum a constitutione mundi clavis*, *De nativitate Mediatoris ultima*, and *Πανθενωσία* in Basle, by Oporinus, in 1547, and the Latin translation of his *Candelabri typici in Mosis Tabernaculo [...] interpretatio* (Postel 1548; Postel 1966) originally written in Hebrew. Then, he started translating the *Sefer ha-Bahir* and the *Sefer ha-Zohar*. Oporinus received Postel's translation of the *Bahir* and its apology

(*Dell'apologia*) in 1549, but he never published either his *Bahir* or his *Zohar* (Rotondò 1974).

In 1549, Postel departed again for the Ottoman Empire, joining the embassy of Gabriel d'Aramon, in which officially participated André Thevet, among others. The purpose of the ambassador was to prevent a possible alliance between the Sultan and Charles V after the Franco-Imperial Treaty of Crépy (1544). During this second voyage, traveling across the Ottoman Empire, from Anatolia to Persia, from Syria to Egypt, Postel collected rare books and manuscripts, especially Arabic works on science, astrology, and medicine, as well as Syriac and Arabic copies of the New Testament. This itinerary, of which Postel provides several details in letters to Masius and the Cardinal de Granvelle (Wilkinson 2007), is a rare example of knowledge and material transfer across the Mediterranean from the East to the West. The books and manuscripts he bought, despite his financial difficulties, later served as the core for oriental funds and collections in the major European libraries, and they were essential to the development of European oriental studies.

After this voyage, Postel published books on the Ottoman culture, such as *De la république des Turcs* (Postel 1560a) and *Histoire et considération de l'origine, loy, et coustume des Tartares, Persiens, Arabes, Turcs, et tous autres Ismaélites ou Muhamediques, dicts par nous Mahometains, ou Sarrazins* (Postel 1560b). Even though he composed these works after his second crucial voyage to the Ottoman Empire, these texts are based on Postel's records of his first voyage (Isom-Verhaaren 2017). Back in Europe, presumptively in August 1550, Postel stopped in Venice and discovered that Mother Johanna was deceased. During this very short sojourn, Postel consigned rare manuscripts to Bomberg and worked on the Syriac New Testament. Once in Paris, Postel was received at the new court of King Henry II, where he enjoyed the favors of his sister Margaret of Valois, to whom Postel dedicated *Les très merveilleuses victoires des femmes du nouveau monde* (Postel 1553). On January 6, 1552, Postel experimented with the "immutation," the

mystical union with the Mother of the World. Mother Johanna's spirit descended into his body, restoring the union between the male and female principles in his spirit and making him rise from the ashes as a new man, son of Christ and Mother Johanna (Kuntz 1981). The proclamation of his new birth and of the restoration of humankind in a new era caused his definitive estrangement from the French court. He consequently left France, arriving in Basle in June 1553, where he found generosity and friendship in Oporinus and Bibliander. He supported Servetus's ideas against Calvin; in 1555, presumptively in Padua, he wrote his *Apologia pro Serveto Villanovano*. Postel significantly established a lasting friendship with Theodor Zwinger, his future correspondent, Caspar Schwenckfeld, and, possibly, with Sebastian Castellio and David Joris. In August 1553, Postel was back in Venice, hosted by the printer Giunti, and, thanks to Moses of Mardin and his manuscripts, he worked on the Syriac New Testament. He furthermore offered a substantial contribution to Widmanstetter's edition, who at the time was in Vienna and welcomed there both Mardin and Postel.

Postel was obliged to leave Vienna in May 1554: the Venetian Inquisition included some of his books, such as his *De nativitate Mediatoris ultima* (Postel 1547), in the Index of the Prohibited Books. Back in the city, Postel asked for an audience at the Inquisitional Tribunal. In financial troubles, Postel was forced to ask for Masius' help in selling some of his oriental books to the Elector Palatine, Duke Ottheinrich. After the first inquiry, in 1555, Postel wrote and printed two more books, presumptively in Padua, as we know from the report of the Holy Office's procurator (Kuntz 1981), on the topics of his "immutation" and the mysteries of the Mother of the World. Postel was interrogated and imprisoned in the *cason* at Santi Apostoli, i.e., the Venetian prison in the *sestiere* Cannaregio, for the publication of *Il libro della divina ordinatione* and *Le prime nove del altro mondo* and their content. On September 17, 1555, despite Postel's denials, the Holy Office irrevocably

judged Postel a mad and delirious man, whose fanatic ideas were dangerous and heretical (Postel 1972). After that, he was charged with life imprisonment in Rome, and his suspected books were condemned. Kuntz (1981) has observed that the sentence of madness may have been released to save his life from a death condemnation. Benjamin Nehemiah ben Elnathan from Civitanova Marche was later confined in the same papal prison in Rome, and the chronicle he kept gives us substantial details of Postel's imprisonment (Secret 1965). Upon the death of Pope Paul IV (1559), all prisoners were freed; in the same year, Postel eventually saw his *Zohar* in Aramaic published in Cremona, and, from this version, he began to work on a second Latin translation. He unsuccessfully tried until his death to get the Latin text published, as his letters to Zwinger document. After his liberation, Postel went to Cremona, Basle, Venice, and Trent, hoping to encounter the delegates of the Council to expose his ideas against papal supremacy and then to Augsburg. In 1562, he settled down in Lyon, where a lawyer accused him of planning the substitution of Christians with Muslims and having formed a rebellious movement, the *Postellisme*.

Then, he returned to Paris, where he attempted to teach in public; eventually, he was incarcerated in the Monastery of Saint Martin des Champs for 3 months because of the demonstrations he nurtured. Charged, as in Lyon, with the organization of the *Postellani* – an accusation he vehemently denied –, Postel was grabbed from Joseph Scaliger's house, where he had found refuge. Despite his efforts to find support from Queen Catherine de' Medici, he was confined to the Monastery in 1564. However, it seems that he enjoyed some freedom during his detention: for example, in 1566, he was in Laon, where he assisted in the exorcism of a young woman. Postel interpreted this event as a miracle, recognizing it a sign of the Age of Restitution, as he explained in later books signed under several pseudonyms, such as Rorispergius – the most significant –, Petrus Anusius Venetus, Petrus Anusius Synesius, and Jehan Boulaese or Boulese (Kuntz 1981).

During these years, moreover, thanks to the mediation of his close friend Masius, he extensively contributed to the publication of Plantin's Antwerp Polyglot (1568–1573). Although Postel's name does not appear in the preface, most of the people involved were his disciples or friends.

He died in Paris, in the Monastery, on September 6, 1581.

Cross-References

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- Collège De France
- Cosmography in the Renaissance
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Ficino, Marsilio
- Jesuits in the Early Modern Period
- Kabbalah, Renaissance
- La Boderie, Guy Lefevre de
- Mysticism in the Renaissance
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Postellus Barentonius Doleriensis, Gulielmus

► [Postel, Guillaume](#)

Powder of Sympathy

► [Weapon Salve in the Renaissance](#)

Practical Knowledge

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Abstract

The incorporation and elevation of practical knowledge were one of the most important innovations in Renaissance natural philosophy. Manipulating nature for productive ends came to be seen as a principle means of studying the natural world and the ability to do so as the best evidence that a true understanding had been achieved. As improving the human condition through the acquisition of practical knowledge gradually became a vital goal of pursuing natural philosophy, the social and intellectual status of those who possessed it was enhanced through their association with elite patrons and power brokers. At the same time, those elite patrons increased their own power and status by harnessing their clients' practical knowledge, both to enrich themselves and to bolster the power and legitimacy of the burgeoning early modern nation-state.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Dating from ancient Greece, various types of human knowledge had long been understood and classified hierarchically, based on the degree of philosophical certainty they possessed. At the top of the hierarchy was *episteme*, a theoretical form of knowledge rooted in immutable philosophical ideas and acquired through logical reasoning, deduction, and mathematical demonstration. *Episteme* was considered the least contingent and therefore the most certain type of knowledge, the bedrock upon which a true natural philosophy should be based. At the bottom was *techné*, which was acquired through sensory interaction with physical things in an

ever-mutable material world. *Techne* was practical knowledge and was certainly valuable in terms of material production, but because it was rooted in the contingencies of the physical world, it was too uncertain to have any philosophical value – it could not reveal any underlying truths about nature. The relative value of each type of knowledge was likewise attributed to those who possessed it, with contemplative philosophers enjoying a far greater intellectual status than mere artisans and craftsmen, who could productively manipulate nature but were held to have no philosophical understanding of it.

With some notable medieval exceptions (particularly in alchemy), this hierarchy of knowledge persisted until the Renaissance, when the philosophical value of practical knowledge began to be reassessed. Many philosophers came to believe that artisans actually learned a great deal about the natural world through their physical manipulation of it and that their knowledge was capable of real certainty despite being derived from mutable, material things. Some even advocated that natural philosophers should make a point of acquiring practical knowledge themselves, as a necessary and revealing complement to their logical deductions and mathematical reasoning. At the same time, some learned artisans worked to enhance their intellectual reputations, writing books in an effort to codify and systematize their knowledge for a more philosophical audience. A fruitful interaction developed between philosophers and artisans, giving rise to a new, more practically minded natural philosophical method.

Impact and Legacy

The philosophical turn toward practical knowledge became a hallmark of the new natural philosophy that emerged in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. Though he was certainly not alone, the most influential philosopher in this regard was Francis Bacon (January 22, 1561 – April 9, 1626), who argued that

inductive, experiential knowledge was the only appropriate basis for building a natural philosophy. Bacon believed that acquiring practical knowledge was both a means and an end in studying the natural world: the ability to manipulate nature for productive ends, he suggested, was the best possible evidence that the philosopher had gained a true understanding, while improving the human condition was the most important reason to study nature in the first place. The Baconian method was deeply influential in natural philosophy throughout the seventeenth century, inspiring the early members of the Royal Society, among many others.

Beyond its new-found philosophical value, the great material value of practical knowledge attracted the interest of monarchs, royal ministers, and other elite patrons, who wished to gain control of such knowledge for their own ends, and offered their patronage to those who claimed to possess it. Practitioners put their skills and knowledge in the service of such patrons, enhancing their own intellectual and social status through the association, while their savvy patrons added to their own wealth and power in harnessing a wide range of productive knowledge. The burgeoning nation-states they served, meanwhile, also gained greater power and legitimacy through their growing ability to manipulate the natural world.

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Predestination

► Fate, Renaissance Concept of

Predestination in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

This entry deals with the concept of predestination, as it was developed in Christian debates in the time of the Renaissance. First, a brief philological introduction will be given, to show the origin of this debate. Second, Augustine's view of predestination will be examined. Thereafter, the focus will be devoted to the centuries XIV–XVII, first analyzing John Wycliffe and Jan Hus, then Luther and Calvin, Jacob Arminius, the inner-Catholic debate of the so-called “*de auxiliis* controversy,” and finally turning to competing conceptions of God's grace within three schools of Roman Catholic thought: the anti-Pelagian, Augustinian-minded school in the Spanish Netherlands – which later lead to Jansenism – the Thomist-Bañezian School in Spain, and the Jesuit Molinist school. In the course of the treatise, the difference between supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism will be clarified. Moreover, it will be necessary to consider several notions that are tightly linked with predestination, such as “grace,”

“foreknowledge,” “merit,” “free will,” “election,” and “vocation.”

Introduction

The theological problem of predestination, and the possibility (or impossibility) of human free will, has been debated since the beginning of Christianity. The opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism in the modern era was only one manifestation of this centuries-old debate, which also saw the opposition of, for instance, Augustine (Thagast, 354–Hippo, 430) and Pelagius (c. 360–418) in early Christianity, and Gottschalk of Orbais (c. 805–c. 868) and John Scotus Eriugena (c. 800–c. 877) in the Early Middle Ages. One of the results of this debate was the elaboration of two opposed theories of salvation. On the one hand, Pelagianism asserts the possibility for men to attain salvation on the basis of personal merits without the assistance of divine grace. On the other hand, Calvinism, with its doctrine of double predestination, makes a clear distinction between those whom God has already saved and those whom God has already damned from all eternity. Catholicism takes an intermediate position between these opposed theories, although it has also seen an internal debate in the sixteenth century regarding the respective roles played by God’s grace and human free will – one which produced a polarization between the Thomist and the Augustinian-minded traditions on the one hand, and Molinism on the other. The origin of these discussions was the use of the verb προορίζω (*proorízo*), literally “to determine before” in the New Testament, a term that appears just five times in the Pauline corpus (Rm. 8:29; Rm. 8:30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5; Eph. 1:11) and once more in the Acts of Apostles (Act. 4:28). This “before” in which God determines is the a-temporal dimension that precedes the creation of the world. The term, *proorízo*, was then translated in Latin as *praedestino* and in English as “to predestine.” The theological analysis of this verb seemed to be liable to different interpretations, since the effect of such predetermination could be the

annihilation of human free will. This led to several distinct and even opposing Christian schools of thought. The moment in which God predestines is a matter of discussion between two opposite factions: first, the infralapsarians, also known as postlapsarians or sublapsarians, who affirm that God by His foreknowledge saw Adam’s sin and allowed him to fall. After this original sin, God predestined men, bestowing His grace. Second, supralapsarian or antelapsarians, who maintain that God predestined men before Adam’s fall. The latter view totally refuses an active role of human beings in their path to salvation, while the former potentially leaves space for men’s free will.

Augustine’s View on Predestination

In one of his last writings, *The Predestination of the Saints*, Augustine furnishes a complete analysis of predestination. He first clarifies the difference between grace and predestination, arguing that the latter is preparation for grace, while grace is the gift itself. Hence, “the grace is effect of this predestination” (Augustine 1962: 10.19). Second, Augustine says that predestination depends on foreknowledge (*prescientia*). If there is predestination, there is foreknowledge, but not vice-versa: if there is foreknowledge, this does not mean that there is also predestination. Actually, God foreknows what he predestines, what he will create, but he also foreknows those things that do not depend on his will, such as sins. While he foreknows them, given his omniscience, he does not predestine them; otherwise, this would have the absurd consequence that God is the cause of men’s sins. Although sinners act against God’s will, they accomplish God’s will: they act against God’s will by sinning, but the effects of their sins are not in their power, for this is the effect of God’s will. In other words, only men are the cause of their sins, but God is the cause of the effects of those sins. Since God predestines from eternity and bestows his grace in time, men achieve no merits in obtaining salvation. “Grace” itself indicates what is freely given. Two reflections should be made. First, men who

are predestinated from eternity and receive grace in their lifetime are free, and their will is free. According to Augustine, freedom is to be understood not as the possibility to choose to do *a* or *not-a*, but instead as “freedom from sins.” In this perspective, a person who sins is a slave of sin; hence, human will is free only if subjected to grace and not to sins. Second, God predestines through vocation, but Augustine distinguishes two kinds of vocation: the first not efficacious, as that of the Jews that refused Christ; the second efficacious, “according to (his) purpose (*propositum*)” (Augustine 1962: 10.19). The latter vocation is addressed only to the elects, who were chosen not because they have believed – so for their merits – but in order that they could believe – so by grace. Therefore, in Augustine’s view, God foreknows his creation and predestines before creation those who will receive grace by means of vocation, choosing them on the basis of his own purpose. Starting from these premises, theologians and philosophers developed further Augustine’s view on predestination, marking out three major lines of thoughts: first, a fatalist or determinist model, in which God predestines to both damnation and salvation, the so-called double predestination, which excludes any human concurrence in the economy of salvation; second, a less strong model in which God predestines men to salvation, but not to damnation; and third, a model in which God predestines all men, bestowing his grace on everyone, but leaves it to man’s decision to positively answer His vocation.

John Wycliffe and Jan Hus

John Wycliffe (Ipreswell, 1331–Lutterworth, 1384) and Jan Hus (Husinec, c. 1371–Constance, 1415) were two promoters of the second model: God determines those who reach eternal salvation, but not damnation. He foreknows their sins, but He allows those sins. Actually, Wycliffe calls the former “predestined,” and the latter “foreknown” (Levy 2006: 355). Concerning the predestined, he writes: “predestination is God’s chief gift most freely given, since no one can merit his own predestination”, and grace “cannot be lost, since it is the foundation of glorification or beatitude, which

cannot be lost either” (trans. Levy 2006: 223). The Bohemian Jan Hus, although following Wycliffe, stresses the importance of acting well, as a sign of having been predestined (Leff 1986). According to them, the “Church” is the set of predestined people, but it determines “the denial of any visible identity of the church” (Leff 1986). This principle had political consequences: because there is no necessity to assume an identity between the church as a set of Christians and the Church as an institution, it denies the legitimacy of the Church as an institution. Hus wrote during the time of the Western Schism (1378–1417), in which the Roman Church suffered an internal division resulting in the simultaneous presence of three Popes in three different sees: Rome, Avignon, and Pisa. This situation was later solved during the Council of Constance (1414–1418), during which Jan Hus was sent to the stake as a heretic.

Luther and Calvin

The question of predestination was later a subject of discussion in the Reformation era. Martin Luther (Eisleben, 1483–Eisleben, 1546) never wrote an exhaustive treatise on the matter, but in his *On the Bondage of the Will* (1525), he describes the necessity of God’s will and also the necessity of His foreknowledge. Moreover, he recovers Augustine’s concept of human free will, which is free because it subjects to God’s grace and not to sins. Luther describes human will as a horse with two riders, Satan and the Holy Spirit. Man could not choose to act well or badly, but instead acts on the basis of the presence or absence of grace in him (Luther 1823: 62). Since God foreknows and wills necessarily, Luther seems to accept a “double predestination,” but John Calvin (1509, Noyon – 1564 Genève) developed this doctrine much further. The French theologian actually maintains that God, from eternity and only according to his own judgment decrees who is to be saved and who is to be damned. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), the Reformed theologian actually writes: “God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the

other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to damnation. I maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment” (Calvin 1962: II 201-1). For Reformed theologians, predestination is therefore God’s eternal decree to bestow an irresistible grace on people whom He had chosen from eternity. This doctrine is, therefore, to be considered supralapsarian, since God decrees a person’s doom before Adam’s fall. This doctrine is also called “unconditional election,” since God decrees a person’s doom only according to His own will, without being “conditioned” by a man’s use of his free will. God bestows his grace at once, and this grace is “irresistible.” Those who receive such grace could never lose it; it leads them inevitably to eternal life. Calvin’s idea of double predestination was later promoted by his successor in Genève, Theodor Beza (Vézelay, 1519 – Genève 1605). This view on predestination was also later accepted and codified by Reformed churches in the Belgian Confession (1561) written by Guido de Brès (Mons, 1522 – Valenciennes, 1567).

Debate Within Reformation: Unconditional Election versus Conditional Predestination

Jacob Hermandszoon (Oudewater, 1560 circa – Leiden, 1609), best-known as Arminius, was a Calvinist theologian who took his distance from Beza’s interpretation of Calvinism, trying to save individual free will. His view soon diverges from Calvin’s supralapsarian double predestination, proposing instead an infralapsarian “conditional predestination.” This is the doctrine that predestination becomes effective after a believer’s free and positive answer to God’s grace, while rejection is due to a person’s free refusal of it (Stanglin 2007: 84). Because of Arminius’ defense of human free will, he was accused of being a Pelagian (Stanglin 2007: 126). Arminianism was later refused by the Reformed Synod of Dordrecht (1617–1618), in which Calvinism asserted its five

points: (1) Total depravity of human nature: humans are completely corrupted by original sin; (2) Unconditional election: God elected some men without considering their merit; (3) Limited atonement: Christ died only for the elected; (4) Irresistibility of God’s grace: the elect cannot refuse God’s vocation; (5) Perseverance of the saints: the elect cannot lose grace or salvation.

The Catholic Answer

The Catholic Church maintains that “No one, moreover, so long as he is in this mortal life, ought so far to presume as regards the secret mystery of divine predestination, as to determine for certain that he is assuredly in the number of the predestinate” (Waterworth 1848: 39–40). This principle is stated in chapter 12 of the Decree on Justification, issued on the 13th of January 1547 by the Council of Trent. Moreover, the Tridentine fathers condemned the idea of double predestination in the 17th anathema of the same decree. The Council of Trent also declared the importance of human free will and its actions in the economy of salvation, although the cooperation of God’s grace is needed, since God’s grace is always first. In this way, the Church rebuts both Reform-minded theologians and Pelagius (360–420), who considered men able to reach salvation without the concurrence of grace. Catholicism, therefore, focused its interest more upon the relation between God’s foreknowledge and human free will rather than predestination. In particular, three schools arose: (1) the anti-Pelagian, Augustinian scholars in the Spanish Netherlands, (2) the Thomist-Bañezian theologians in Spain, both of whom stressed the efficacy of God’s grace, and (3) Molinists (see “► [Molinism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)”), who stressed the importance of human free will. The debate between the first two theological schools and the third one was fierce: the Thomist and Augustinian-minded scholars called their Jesuit opponents “Pelagians,” while the Jesuits in turn called them “Calvinists” (Craig 1988: 170). In 1597, Pope Clement VIII was forced to constitute the *Congregatio de Auxiliis* (“Congregation on [Grace’s] aids”), in order to resolve the debate

between the two parties, Domingo Bañez (Mondragón, 1527 – Medina del Campo, 1604) and the Jesuit Luis de Molina (Cuenca, 1535–Madrid 1600). A similar debate also took place in the Spanish Netherlands, between Michael de Bay (Meslin-l'Évêque, 1513 – Leuven 1589) and the Flemish Jesuit Leonard Lessius (Brecht, 1554 – Leuven, 1623). Again the former stressed God's grace, while the latter stressed human free will (Van Eijl: 1994). Finally, in 1607, Paul V intervened in the discussion, accepting both views as legitimate and forbidding the opponents to define each other as heretics. Within this discussion, predestination was always conceived as Augustine had conceived it, namely as "preparation for grace." The problem was therefore addressed to the concept of grace.

Which Grace? Adjuvant, Efficacious, Cooperative, Sufficient?

Catholic theologians diverged not only on questions regarding the nature of grace itself but also on questions regarding who the proper recipient of grace is. The radical anti-Pelagian, Augustinian-minded theologians and the Thomist-minded Bañezian theologians both maintain that God did not bestow the possibility of salvation on everyone, thus denying some sufficient grace that, on the contrary, would assure the possibility of conversion to everyone. Opposing this view, the Jesuits affirm that God created human beings not for their perdition, but for their salvation, giving them all the instrument – sufficient grace – to obtain eternal life. Moreover, Augustinian-minded theologians consider God's grace efficacious of itself. Men do not have to earn eternal life through their merits, since grace itself guarantees them their salvation, although they retain in principle the will to refuse God. Against this view, the Jesuits maintain that God bestows his sufficient grace on everyone, but each person must act well in order to be worthy of salvation. Therefore during a person's life, God sends his aids, such as preaching and sacraments, and so the adjuvant grace which induces men to believe. Once they convert themselves, their will

is helped by God in cooperation in which both human free will and God's grace work together for salvation.

Cross-References

- [Augustinianism](#)
- [Bañez, Domingo](#)
- [Calvin, Jean](#)
- [Calvinism](#)
- [Foreknowledge in Renaissance Philosophy: Divine](#)
- [Molina, Luis de](#)
- [Molinism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Preternatural History

► [Wonders in the Renaissance](#)

Primitive Moisture/Humor

► [Radical Moisture](#)

Printed Book

► [Book, Renaissance](#)

Printing Technique, Renaissance

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Abstract

The advent of print is widely acknowledged as one of the defining factors of the Renaissance. The printing process developed upon pre-existing techniques, such as the handpress already in use for block printing. Its fortune was largely supported by the dissemination of paper throughout Europe in lieu of parchment and other animal supports. Indeed, print usually developed in the proximity of papermaking centers. Moveable types were made of an alloy formed by lead, tin, and antimony that made them suitable for the mechanical process of printing. A printing shop included various roles within its walls: the pressmen, the compositor, and the master printer (though these may vary depending on the size of the workshop). The production of a book as a finished commodity relied on a number of different trades, depending on the presence and typology of illustrations, or the customization required by the reader.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The advent of the handpress book in early modern Europe around 1450 was a media moment of exceptional importance. The production of books was thus made much faster than it ever had been. Medieval Europe had been full of books; the production of manuscripts was a very efficacious commercial enterprise before the printing press and continued to be so well after (Pettegree 2010). Since the twelfth century, the trade of manuscripts had included procedures for the serial reproduction of text. The *pecia* system allowed to quickly replicate a text – traditionally, student handbooks – by splitting a manuscript into quires and assigning each to a scribe. Rather than an exercise in contemplation, the production of manuscripts evolved into the book trade alongside the growth of the major European universities and soon turned to devise the most suitable strategies to increase sales. As Elizabeth Eisenstein put it, “book production . . . had thus moved out of scriptoria three centuries *before* the advent of print” (Eisenstein 1979). The printing industry revolutionized the manufacturing of books by increasing the speed of serial reproduction of text dramatically. Originally this was the main objective of the book merchants who invested in a printing press: printed books were essentially the surrogate of manuscripts, designed to replicate the traditional features of their predecessors. The following decades in the history of printing were marked by the gradual detachment from the manuscript world.

Printing built on two pre-established techniques: the handpress, already used for block printing in the fourteenth and fifteenth century and itself based upon the much older wine press, and rag paper, imported into Europe via the Arab world in the twelfth century and perfected thanks to the spreading of linen textiles (Febvre and Martin 1976; Harris 2017). While representing the single most expensive element in the production of books – amounting to some 40% of the entire production cost – paper was significantly cheaper than the traditional skin and lent itself much better to the printing process if treated properly. The paper industry required a regular supply

of rags or rope, as well as clear-running water, both to operate the paper mill and for the rag paste that would become paper (Febvre and Martin 1976). The ideal location for papermaking, therefore, was near cities, where used rags would be easier to purchase, and uphill, so that water may run clean and fast. The flourishing of Fabriano, Italy, in this industry is thus easily explained, given its location in the mountainous Marche region, not far from densely populated areas. The consolidation of the great printing centers naturally took place in areas that had quick access to paper; the area around Lake Garda in Italy served the rapid expansion of the Venetian printing press, while paper mills in the Troyes area were the key paper suppliers in Paris. Indeed, the prominence of Troyes paper in Paris pre-dated the printing press and was well established before printing ever commenced (Febvre and Martin 1976).

Printing in itself already existed in late-medieval Europe in the form of block printing. Hundreds of thousand impressions – mostly of saints and other devotional subjects – had already been circulating in the late fourteenth and the early fifteenth century. The earliest dated example is a woodcut of St Christopher (1423), held in the John Rylands University Library, Manchester. Block printing was even used for short books, such as the *Biblia pauperum* or the *Ars moriendi* (Febvre and Martin 1976). Images were well suited to be carved in wood; however, the same material was not appropriate for the carving of small letters, which required a higher degree of precision. As a rule, only limited text was included with these iconographic blocks and was usually quite rudimentary. Text carved into a wood block of course would also create a certain fixity in the use of the block itself – therefore, while it might be suited for standard images intended for wide dissemination, it was not very useful in the case of books. Individual letters that could be composed into any text were much better value for money, as they could be used *ad libitum*, until they were worn.

Print was not the invention of one individual, but it was in many ways a natural development for the book world; around mid-fifteenth century,

others were at work trying to come up with the method that Johann Gutenberg is largely credited with today. In the words of Daniel Berkeley Updike, “Gutenberg’s invention consisted . . . in making brass moulds and matrices by which type could be *accurately cast in large quantities*” (Updike 1922). Many of the proto-typographers were goldsmiths by training; the skill in metalwork was essential in identifying the most suitable alloy for metallic characters, neither too hard (as it would break) nor too soft (as it would bend). Metal types were made of lead, tin, and antimony, though the compound varied in its proportions well into the eighteenth century (Febvre and Martin 1976). The alloy composition made it easy to work with, giving it a low melting point and a stable volume once the metal had cooled down (Gaskell 1995).

Like other features of the early printed book, types were designed to mimic script. Different declinations of the gothic script inspired many early types, especially in the Germanic territories. The revival of classical learning in Italy led to the development of humanist scripts – thought to be based on classical models, but in truth mimicking the Carolingian minuscule from medieval manuscripts. Roman types, common in Italy and soon imitated throughout Europe, were a mixture of the humanist script for lowercase letters and Roman epigraphic letters for the uppercase. The expressions themselves “lowercase” and “uppercase” derive from the distribution of the individual characters in the typographical case, from which the compositor would select them to set a text in metal type.

Non-Latin scripts took longer to develop due to technical difficulties. Among these scripts, Greek was the most important to the printing presses in Renaissance Europe. Greek printing in the fifteenth century was largely experimental (Gaskell 1995). The Aldine Press, founded by Aldus Manutius the Elder in the late fifteenth century, was the first to employ a cursive Greek script that was soon imitated throughout Europe (Barker 1992; Gaskell 1995). The Aldine Greek remained a widely sought-after model and was hugely influential in the printing and reading of Greek texts for some 300 years (Gaskell 1995). Wise to

the importance of his investment, when he was finally satisfied with the result of the commissioned Greek type, Aldus requested a privilege from the Venetian government to prevent others from imitation (Barker 1992).

Soon after, the Aldine Press released yet another font of type, inspired by the Latin cursive script (McLeod 2015). The Aldine italic was immediately a great success, and it was imitated throughout Europe, despite Aldus's efforts in securing another privilege. The new italic type was more compact than Roman types, despite allowing for a lighter-looking page; therefore, it was particularly well suited to small-format books, and indeed it came to fame through its use in the famous Aldine enchiridia or pocket-size books.

In the early years of printing, the printing shop usually also owned the matrices to produce their types; therefore much of the identification of early books can be done by looking at the type. The online portal, *TW – Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke*, developed alongside the *GW – Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, offers many such examples. From the mid-sixteenth century onward, it became customary that printers and publishers could acquire the type but did not own the matrices. These remained the property of the type designer, who could then sell the type to multiple customers (the examples of Claude Garamond or Robert Granjon are prominent). By this stage, printing types can no longer be used as means for the identification of editions.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The best analytical description of the typographical materials, the printing process, and the individual roles in a printing shop are given by Philip Gaskell (1995). Much of the process remained unchanged for some three centuries, so the illustrations of Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* remain for the most part on point for the Renaissance printing technique. English-speaking readers may use the version with an introduction by Giles Barber (1973), as well as

consulting the original *Encyclopédie*, available in open access on Gallica.fr.

The common press was formed of a wooden frame, fixed to the floor and the ceiling so to avoid movement. To this frame, two core moveable parts were attached: the carriage assembly that held the paper and the type and could slide in and out, and the impression assembly that performed the actual printing, pushed down onto the sheet and type by use of a lever (the bar). The carriage assembly was formed of a series of frames that folded onto one another: the sheet of paper was placed upon the tympan and fixed with pins; the frisket was then folded onto the sheet of paper, covering any parts of the sheet that should not be inked, similarly to a stencil; the tympan was then folded over onto the press-stone, and the coffin was rolled under the press. The rear of the tympan was padded with parchment and other recycled materials so that the impression would not tear the paper. The impression assembly was actioned by pulling the bar that would in turn move a wooden or metal nut which would cause the hardwood (or metal) platen to hit the tympan and the sheet of paper through it. The wooden press was operated by two pressmen: one pulled the bar and changed the sheet and the other inked the type. Pulling of the bar was a significantly heavier job, therefore the pressmen took shifts.

Handpress books were produced one sheet at a time, or indeed, one side of a sheet. The volume of work undertaken by the pressmen would vary considerably, though the highest figure for a day's work would have been in the region of 3,000 impressions (not sheets). Detailed account books such as those by Christophe Plantin offer real-life examples based on well-documented work undertaken at the Officina Plantiniana (Gaskell 1995). In setting up the printing, a number of preliminary operations had to be performed. The compositor or the master printer had to calculate the number of words in the text, so to estimate the overall length of the edition and to allocate work – a process known as “casting off” (Gaskell 1995). Thanks to such calculation, the composition of the text could be done by formes, i.e., the inner side of an entire sheet first, followed by the outer forme. While these calculations were usually fairly

accurate, the signs of a slightly erroneous casting off can be detected in the increased presence of abbreviations (when there was more text than anticipated) or added spaces between words or letters (when there was less text than anticipated), especially in the first page of a gathering.

The compositor worked with the type cases, choosing the characters one by one and composing the text (usually two lines at the time, but Gaskell [1995] suggests a different number of lines depending on the region) using a composing stick. The lines of text were then transferred onto larger trays known as “galleys.” Once the text set in metal reached the length of one page, it was completed with running title, page or leaf number, catchword, and signature; these elements were not always present, though they became increasingly more common throughout the sixteenth century and beyond (Sayce 1966). The type-set page was then tied with string, to ensure that all the lines were kept together (dropping type was one of the most common accidents in the printing workshop; Bowers 1949). Once the pages for a whole side of the sheet were set in type – the number of individual pages depended on the format – the process of imposition took place. The pages were distributed in the correct order, that is, the order in which they should be once the printed sheet was folded; they were then locked within a frame (the “chase”), using wedges and pieces of wood to fill in all the empty spaces, so that the type could not move. The chase was then transferred to the press, and the forme was ready for printing. A proof was usually printed, so that any mistakes could be removed from the text, though stop-press corrections were also extremely common, meaning that during the printing of a full run, the printing was halted, a correction was made, and the printing recommenced with the altered text. The two versions thus printed are what are called “state” variants (Bowers 1949). In most cases, the sheets printed before the identification of a mistake were still commercialized, as the cost of the paper made it uneconomical to discard them as waste. Often errors were only noticed much later in the process; printing shops such as the early Aldine Press would often make interventions in manuscript to correct the

erroneous instances. More commonly, an “*errata corrige*” (“mistakes to be corrected”) was printed at the end of the text, so that readers could make the corrections themselves if they so wished. Most of the time, however, mistakes went unnoticed and uncorrected. The type was usually distributed back into the cases immediately or soon after printing (Gaskell 1995).

The pile of sheets to be printed was wetted the day before and left under weight overnight. This was essential, as dry paper would have torn under the press, despite the padding provided by the tympan. Damp paper was also better suited to receive the ink, and this preliminary operation ensured a much better and even inking. Printing ink was made of varnish and color, resulting in a fatty liquid; consistency was important so that the inking balls run smoothly over the type, and the ink should dry quickly (but not too quickly, or it would not transfer onto the paper) but without staining (Febvre and Martin 1976; Gaskell 1995).

Inking in more than one color was achieved by printing each sheet in the first and then in the second (and subsequent) color. The frisket was cut accordingly, so to cover the sections of the sheet that ought not to be printed. The most common combination was red and black, the traditional coloring of books of liturgy. Elizabeth Upper Savage has been investigating the evidence provided by remnants of red frisket sheets in detail, with an ongoing census as part of her study (Upper 2014). The early printers attempted to print in two colors in one go, which resulted in contamination between the inks (Gaskell 1995). The process was, in any case, time-consuming, which accounts for the higher cost of such books. Occasionally other colors were used under the press in early printed books (e.g., yellow) though these experiments are in the minority. A recent collection of essays (Stijnman and Savage 2015) explores the use of color in pre-1700 printmaking, offering the first systematic treatment of the topic in a pan-European context.

While woodcut illustrations were printed through the same process as moveable type and could therefore be embedded in the same composition, copperplate engravings were produced on a

different press altogether. Copper allowed for a much finer detail but required constant retouching due to the softness of the metal; such illustrations usually exist in a set of states, following the necessary touching up. Engravings were printed with a special rolling press, and indeed, often the illustrations to accompany a text were printed in a separate workshop from the rest of the book. Engraved illustrations were significantly more expensive than woodcut ones, and they might amount to more than all the other production costs put together (Gaskell 1995).

Few early modern accounts of the printing process are preserved, as such handbooks tended to be for the internal use of a workshop and were thus used for destruction. Neil Harris has made a comprehensive list of known contemporary sources (Harris 2004). Most printing shops relied on different trades, such as paper as discussed above, punch cutters for the provision of type, and engravers and chalcographic presses for copper-engraved illustrations. Books were very rarely bound in the same place where they were printed, as binderies were separate businesses altogether (and indeed, the decoration of the bookbinding may be performed by a gilder). Customization processes added after printing continued to exist alongside the circulation of standard copies, usually by commission of the customer/reader – such as the bookbinding or the hand-coloring or illumination of the book. The production of the book as a finished commodity, therefore, relied on several different crafts.

Impact and Legacy

The impact and legacy of print can hardly be emphasized enough. It has been defined as a revolution (Eisenstein 2012), transformative of the cognitive and epistemological processes (McLuhan 1962). While scholars continue to discuss the extent of this impact on society, it certainly influenced and catalyzed the growth of literacy and the standardization of European vernacular languages through the circulation of compositorial practices.

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Prochoros Kydones

► [Cydones, Prochorus](#)

Proclus in the Renaissance

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Abstract

From the beginning of the fifteenth century onwards, Greek manuscripts of the works of the fifth-century Neoplatonist Proclus start to circulate among humanists such as Cusanus, Bessarion, Ficino, and Pico, although some of the medieval Latin translations by William of Moerbeke continue to play an important role as well. Proclus' metaphysical interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides*, and especially its theory of the One, i.e., the first principle of reality, had a major impact on the thought of Cusanus, Ficino, and Patrizi. Cusanus follows Proclus' sharp distinction between the first One – which transcends being – and the second One – which *is* – and he uses Proclus' qualification of the One as “not other” (*non aliud*) as a name to express both God's transcendence and immanence. Ficino makes extensive use of Proclus' commentaries in his own exegesis of Plato's *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*. Like Cusanus, he appears to adopt Proclus' distinction between the first two principles, although he mainly

uses Proclus as a doxographical source. Patrizi provides us with one of the most comprehensive receptions of Proclean metaphysics in the Renaissance. His discussion of the first principle, where he distinguishes between the absolute One and the essential One, is clearly based on the Neoplatonic interpretation of the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*. In the sixteenth century, the rediscovery of Proclus' commentary on Euclid's *Elements* sparked off an intense debate on the certainty of mathematics, whereas its central claim, namely, that mathematical concepts are innate, was adopted by Kepler at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

In the Latin Middle Ages, Proclus' influence had been both direct and indirect. For a long period, it was mediated through the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and the *Liber de causis*, until, in the second half of the thirteenth century, the Flemish Dominican William of Moerbeke translated the *Elements of Theology*, the *Tria opuscula*, the commentary on the *Parmenides*, and a part of the commentary on the *Timaeus* into Latin. During the High Middle Ages, the *Elementatio theologica* was by far the most important of Moerbeke's translations: it was cited, among others, by Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Albert the Great and allowed Aquinas to identify the *Liber de causis* as an excerpt from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*.

From the fifteenth century onward, Greek manuscripts of Proclus' works circulated widely, and copies were owned by Nicolaus Cusanus, Basilius Bessarion, Marsilio Ficino, Francesco Patrizi, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and others. Moerbeke's translation of the *Elements of Theology*, a summary of Proclus' metaphysics in the form of 211 propositions and proofs, was owned, among others, by Coluccio Salutati, Cusanus, and Lucas Holstenius, whereas Greek manuscripts of the text belonged to Bessarion, Pico, Patrizi, and again Holstenius (Kristeller 1987: 198). Ficino made excerpts from the

Greek text and a translation which is now lost. Nonetheless, the *Elements of Theology* appear to have been studied less intensively during the Renaissance than had been the case during the later Middle Ages, with the notable exception of Patrizi, who published a new translation in 1583 (Gersh 2014a: 21).

Cusanus owned – and richly annotated – a copy of Moerbeke's translation of the commentary on the *Parmenides*, and Ficino relied heavily on the Dominican's translation in his own commentary on the *Parmenides*. In the sixteenth century, Proclus' *In Parmenidem* was again translated by Nicolaus Scutellius.

It was only in the fifteenth century that one of Proclus' longest and most important works, the *Platonic Theology*, entered the Latin West. A first Latin translation, commissioned by Cusanus, was started but never completed by Ambrogio Traversari, while Pietro Balbi – again at the request of Cusanus – accomplished the task in the early 1460s (Kristeller 1987: 201). The title of Ficino's magnum opus, the *Platonic Theology*, was inspired by the Neoplatonist, although significant differences between both works exist. Most of the arguments that Pico attributes to Proclus in his *Conclusiones* are taken from the *Platonic Theology*, and the text was used extensively by Patrizi and Agostino Steuco (Kristeller 1987: 202). The work was translated by Scutellius in 1520.

Greek manuscripts of Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus* were owned by Bessarion and Ficino, and Paolo Beni made a partial translation of the work in 1593. The work was also used by Pico as a doxographical source for his *Conclusiones* (Gersh 2014a: 27). Ficino translated excerpts from Proclus' commentaries on the *First Alcibiades* and the *Republic*, and both works were rendered into Latin by Scutellius. Both Bessarion and Pico had a Greek manuscript of Proclus' *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*, and several passages from the prologue were incorporated in Giorgio Valla's encyclopedia *De fugiendis et expetendis rebus* of 1501 and translated in Kepler's *Harmonices mundi* of 1619. Proclus' commentary on the *Cratylus* was excerpted by Patrizi, and Ficino

claims to have made a translation of the *Hymns*, though this work has not been preserved (Kristeller 1987: 202). In 1488 Ficino translated the short treatise *De sacrificio et magia*, which plays a prominent role in book III of Ficino's *De vita*. Finally, translations of the *Elements of Physics*, a treatise on motion, were made by Ficino and Patrizi, but the former's translation is lost. Most of the *editiones principes* of Proclus' works were published by the German humanist Simon Grynaeus in the 1530s, but the *Platonic Theology* and *Elements of Theology* were only printed for the first time in 1618, in the edition by Aemilius Portus.

Impact and Legacy

As far as the influence of Proclus' philosophical doctrine is concerned, three Renaissance philosophers stand out: Cusanus, Ficino, and Patrizi.

Cusanus' first explicit citation of Proclus is found in *De beryllo* (1458), where he uses Proclus as an indirect source for a passage from Plato's *Epistula II*, but the Neoplatonist figures most prominently in the works *Tu quis es/De principio* (1459), *De non aliud* (1462), and *De venatione sapientiae* (1463). It is important to note that Cusanus believed that Proclus had lived after the time of Dionysius, which significantly shaped his interpretation of Proclean ideas in the framework of Christian theology. In his treatise *Tu quis es*, Cusanus drew heavily from Proclus' *In Parmenidem*, especially in following the distinction between the first One which transcends being, and the second One which *is* (*Tu quis es*, §19–28). By means of the Christian identification of God and “being itself,” both principles are directly connected in Cusanus' theology (Beierwaltes 1987: 291–292), where God is both being and beyond being. Proclus also played a major role in the development of Cusanus' concept of the not other, introduced in the dialogue *De non aliud* (Santinello 1993: 112–114). In keeping with Cusanus' theory of the coincidence of opposites, the Proclean expression οὐδὲν ἄλλο – attributed to the One (e.g., *Theol. Plat.* II, 3) – is used by

Cusanus as an enigmatic name to express both God's transcendence and immanence. God is *non aliud*: He cannot be identified with something other than Himself, nor is He "other" with regard to anything else. But since everything in creation is defined as *non aliud* with respect to itself, God is also in anything other than Himself (*De non aliud*, §20). In *De venatione sapientiae*, Cusanus refers to Proclus' theological system as expressed in the *Platonic Theology*. He mentions Proclus' distinction between creator-gods, the creator-intellect, celestial, mundane, and various external gods (*De ven. sap.* §21) and also refers to Proclus for the belief that all things derive from the finite and the infinite (*De ven. sap.* §88) (Gersh 2014b: 341–342). Cusanus' reception of Proclus can generally be characterized as a transformation and integration of a Neoplatonic metaphysics of the One into a Christian theology of divine transcendence and immanence.

Like Cusanus, Ficino was unaware of the exact relation between the writings of Proclus and the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, and he considered Proclus a non-Christian imitator of Dionysius (Allen 2014: 354). Nonetheless, the Neoplatonist served as one of Ficino's most important doxographical sources and, to a large extent, determined the Florentine's perspective on the Platonic tradition. Ficino followed Proclus in believing that the *Timaeus* (on physics) and the *Parmenides* (on theology) encompassed the whole of Plato's philosophy, and he made extensive use of Proclus' commentaries in his own exegesis of both dialogues (Allen 1982; Megna 2003). Ficino is probably indebted to Proclus for the development of his fivefold hierarchy of being – God, angelic mind, rational soul, quality, and body (Allen 1982) – and clearly follows Proclus' *In Parmenidem*, which he mainly used in the translation of Moerbeke, in his interpretation of the nine hypotheses of the *Parmenides* (Allen 2014: 366). For example, according to Ficino, who adopts Proclus' metaphysical interpretation of the dialogue, the first three hypotheses concern the first causes, and the following two introduce species and matter, whereas the last four hypotheses demonstrate that if the One does not exist, then nothing exists (*In Parm.* ch. 51; cf. Proclus, *In Parm.* 1059).

In the same work, Ficino also adopts Proclus' sharp distinction between the first principle, namely, the One and the Good, and the second principle, being and intellect, although the separation between both principles is not that rigid in his *Platonic Theology* (Kristeller 1987: 206). The general framework of Ficino's *Compendium in Timaeum* (1496) is also inspired by Proclus' corresponding commentary: in the introduction, Ficino takes up Proclus' definition of nature as the instrument of divinity. In his discussion of Plato's view on the eternity of the world (*In Tim.* ch. 13), Ficino uses Proclus as his source to distinguish between the interpretation of Severus, Plutarch, and Atticus, who claimed that the world had a beginning in time, and the view of Crantor, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus himself, who asserted that the world existed from eternity. In general, although Ficino's use of Proclus was often inspired by doxographical purposes, the Neoplatonist's metaphysical interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* considerably influenced Ficino's Christianized Platonism.

In Patrizi's *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591), we find the most elaborate reception of Proclean metaphysics in the sixteenth century. Together with Syrianus and Damascius, Proclus provided Patrizi with the Neoplatonic core for his "new philosophy." Like Cusanus and Ficino, Patrizi was greatly interested in Proclus' doctrine of principles and theory of the One (Leinkauf 2014: 383). His discussion of the first principle in the *Panarchia*, the second part of the *Nova de universis philosophia*, clearly echoes the writings of Proclus and Damascius and especially the Neoplatonic interpretation of the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*. According to Patrizi, a distinction can be made between the absolute, pure One (*unum tantum*), which is beyond being and essence, and the essential One (*unum essenziale*) or primary unity (*unitas primaria*), which emanates from the absolute One and comprises all unities (lib. I–V). In the first One, everything is "one" in a uniform (*uniter*) – a rendering of the Greek *ἐνναιώς* – and undivided manner, whereas in the One Being, everything is "united" (*unita*) in a differentiated manner. Patrizi here follows the

(Neo)Platonic model of enfolding and unfolding to describe the gradual multiplicity arising from the absolute One (Leinkauf 2014: 394–395). Still according to Patrizi, the first One, which is not other (*non aliud*) than the One, can be identified with God the Father, the second One can be equated with God the Son or the Word of God, and the Son’s love for the Father forms the third hypostasis of the Trinity (lib. X, 21r). In the same context, he uses the term “paternal depth” (*paternum profundum*) from the *Chaldean Oracles* (cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 312, 7) to denote the domain of the primary unity and its love for the absolute One. Below the first One, Patrizi’s chain of being consists of essence, life, mind, soul, nature, quality, form, and body. The triad essence, life, and mind appears to be a further differentiation of the primary unity (lib. XI, 23v), although Patrizi – like Cusanus, Ficino, and Proclus himself – appears to favor the derivative triad of *essentia*, *virtus*, and *operatio* (Leinkauf 2014: 397). It is safe to say that in Patrizi’s new philosophy, the reception of Proclean metaphysics reached a level that would not be matched for centuries to come.

The rediscovery of Proclus’ philosophy of mathematics, as expounded in the prologue of his *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid’s Elements*, was the initial impetus to the sixteenth-century methodological debate known as the *quaestio de certitudine mathematicarum* (De Pace 1993). In his *Commentarium de certitudine mathematicarum* (1547), Alessandro Piccolomini invoked the authority of Proclus to buttress his claim that mathematics does not make use of so-called *demonstrationes potissimae*, i.e., demonstrations that give knowledge of both the fact and the true and immediate cause of that fact, and is therefore inferior to natural philosophy. According to Piccolomini, the certainty of mathematics lies in the abstract nature of its objects, and he refers to Proclus with regard to the intermediary nature of mathematical objects and their existence in imagination (*phantasia*) (*De cert. math.*, 97r). Piccolomini’s fierce attack was countered by Francesco Barozzi, who published the first Latin translation of Proclus’ *In Euclidem* in 1560. Like Proclus, Barozzi uses the intermediary nature of

mathematics as an argument for its supremacy over natural philosophy: since mathematical objects are devoid of sensible matter, they direct us toward the intelligible realm. In 1615, in his *De mathematicarum natura dissertatio*, Giuseppe Biancani argues that Piccolomini’s reading of Proclus is incorrect (*De math. nat.*, 19–20) and that the Neoplatonist did believe that mathematicians use demonstrations *per causas* (Helbing 2000: 182). In addition, Proclus’ reference to a ὅλη μαθηματική in the same commentary (*In Eucl.* 18, 10) gave rise to speculations about a universal science of mathematics or *mathesis universalis* (Rabouin 2010: 224). Finally, according to Johannes Kepler in his *Harmonices mundi* (1619), Proclus was the only one in Antiquity to have given a philosophical interpretation of Euclid’s *Elements* (*Harm. mundi*, 15). In his theory of the harmonies, Kepler frequently appeals to Proclus’ philosophy of mathematics (Claessens 2011), and he translated a lengthy passage from Proclus’ commentary (*In Eucl.* 12, 2–18, 4), in which the Neoplatonist refutes Aristotle’s abstractionist account of mathematics by setting forth his own theory about the intermediate being of mathematical concepts. Kepler follows Proclus in claiming that the circle and the arc – the constitutive terms of the archetypal harmonies – belong essentially to our soul (*Harm. mundi*, 277). The reception of Proclus’ philosophy by one of the most famous early modern astronomers shows that the Neoplatonist’s influence reached well into the seventeenth century and beyond.

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► [Nicholas of Cusa](#)

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Profession, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

Having a profession, and thus having professional identity, increasingly mattered in late Renaissance Italy, above all in the sixteenth century. At the same time, there was a growing sense of the value of something that we might in retrospect reasonably call “professionalism,” even if that particular term was certainly not part of the available discourse of the period.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Having a profession (*fare una professione*) meant in Renaissance Italy that you could literally profess (*profiteri* is the Latin infinitive), you felt entitled to speak out on various matters to which you could claim mastery in your daily working life – as a doctor, a theologian, or a lawyer – to take three long-standing, recognized “professioni” of, before, and after the period in question. Accordingly, the term “profession” could be used as a virtual synonym for “art” (Italian *arte*, Latin *ars*), with the term “art” understood – like the concept of *techne* from the time of the ancient Greeks – as a highly specialized, determinate, rational, communicable, reliable, teachable, and often rule-bound form of skillfully applied and socially valued knowledge. More precisely, in the strictest sense of the term, a “professione” signified *the area of expertise* practiced by someone with significant training in it, while an “arte,” at least as the concept unfolded historically, typically signified *the form of knowledge* that the practitioner put into practice in the course of expertly working in the profession. So the two terms – *arte* and *professione* – could indeed be set side by side in

the same phrase without being seen as entirely redundant in meaning. Put differently, in theory, we can think of an art as a form of knowledge put into practice (the know-how of rhetoric, say, which allows one to be a rhetorician) that underpins a profession as an area of expertise (actually being a rhetorician who applies that knowledge of rhetoric with admirable skill). But a profession (being a rhetorician) does not underpin an art (rhetoric). Nevertheless, in reality, the two terms were used often enough interchangeably in Italian Renaissance culture, where “artes” can also refer to guilds, such as the 21 major and minor “arti/artes” of Florence and where one of the definitions synthetically applied to the term “professione” in the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (*Lexicon of the Academicians of the Crusca*, 1612) is, in fact, “ars.”

Innovative and Original Aspects

In thinking about Renaissance Italy, it would certainly be a mistake to talk about “professionalism” in the precise modern, sociological sense of the term: in order to signal the organizing, controlling, and credentialing of exclusionary labor in the full-blown capitalist economies associated with the large, complex, bureaucratic nation-states of the west in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. That said, it would be correct historically to use the term “professionalism” in a broader sense: in order to signal how widespread interest in professions and professional identity did indeed intensify greatly in the brokerage, patronage, guild-controlled, gift-giving, and proto-capitalist market economies of the small but increasingly bureaucratic courts, republics, princedoms, and duchies of late Renaissance Italy. In the sixteenth century, both practitioners and non-practitioners alike, after all, wrote an unprecedented number of treatises – far more than any prior century – directly addressing what was required in order to succeed in everything from being an ambassador, courtier, prince, cardinal, soldier, and secretary to that of a sculptor, architect, painter, metallurgist, engineer, cook,

goldsmith, surgeon, medic, and steward. In the process of doing so, these practitioners and non-practitioners self-consciously spoke about what it meant to have specifically a “professione,” and they articulated at the same time rivalries among “professioni.” As a result, the sixteenth century in Italy experienced what has been called a profound shift in a “rhetoric of profession,” with rhetoric here understood not just as the formal art of persuasion but as a discourse that is bounded with traceable *topoi* (commonplaces) and that is historically and culturally determined.

Impact and Legacy

This shift in the rhetoric of professions involved, among other things, marked attention to professional self-definition; a truly broad-based cultural exploration, leveling, and secularization of professions; increased attention to the value of vocational choice and work as a source of happiness and self-worth; a popularizing of these issues through the commercial press and in the vulgar tongue; an astonishing proliferation of the topic of professions in a variety of less learned cultural forms, from encyclopedic compendia to chronicles, to jokes, to civic rituals, to carnival songs, and to parlor games; and an extraordinary increase in – as well as cultural acceptance of and resistance toward – different professions as indeed professions. This widespread investment in professions culminated toward the end of the sixteenth century in Tomaso Garzoni’s cornucopian *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (*The Universal Piazza of All the Professions in the World*, 1585/1587), a massive, quirky, and encyclopedic book that covered virtually every profession under the sun, from that of the Petrarchan-modeled, humanist scholar ensconced in his study to, at the opposite end of the social spectrum, that of the lowly street cleaner or, for that matter, even the conniving street charlatan. We can thus legitimately talk about Italy possessing by the end of the sixteenth century something akin to what sociologists have called a “system of professions” long before

professionalism, as we have come to understand it in the academy today, took hold in the modern, post-Enlightenment era.

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Protucius, Conradus

► Celtis, Konrad

Providence, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

In the Renaissance, under the influence of the Reformation but also of “Neoplatonists” or natural philosophers observing material phenomena, the idea of *fortune* seems challenged, and *providence* makes a comeback, albeit in a problematic way. The ancient debate between Stoics and Epicureans seems to be played again, but it is fundamentally transformed by a new idea of human freedom and by the Christian views on God’s personal care for the world. Emphasizing fortune, or a more modern contingency, and the resulting denial of providence, become a way of radically questioning the very existence of God.

But even for those who believe in providence, this very concept is more and more challenged, especially in two main directions. First, for skeptics who revive the Epicurean tradition, providence, if it exists, has little or no relation to the particular affairs of individuals. Second, for Reformers or Christians influenced by authors such as Montaigne, providence operates in ways that are beyond the reach of human reason or experience. These new representations of the relation between man and the heavenly powers tend to

weaken the medieval sense of relative security, while a strong urge to find coherence in a troubled world still remains, exemplified in particular by the writing of universal histories or cosmographies.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The word *providence* derives from Latin *providere*, which means “to see in advance, foresee” as well as “to provide.” It refers to the way a transcendent agent governs the world in a just and rational way. In a broader sense, providence deals with the whole Creation; in a narrower sense, it only deals with mankind, and especially history. When capitalized, the concept can be identified with God, especially in the Christian context of a personal God. However, the history of this concept starts well before Christianity and even well before the actual word “providence” appears. Indeed, in Greek and later in Latin, the same word, be it *cosmos* or *mundus*, means both the *world* and a form of aesthetic achievement or perfection (*cosmos* = order and consequently beauty and *mundus* = totality and purity). This dual etymology has invited generations of thinkers to recognize in the visible world an expression of divine goodness.

The idea of a transcendent design is rooted in Greek Antiquity. It can be traced back to Anaxagoras, whose views are discussed by Socrates in Plato’s *Phaedo* (98b-c, see also *Laws* Lois 896e–907b-c). However, it is with Plato himself that the idea of providence really emerges, though it still lacks any precise designation. In *Timaeus*, Plato presents divine providence as a principle of conservation of a preexisting cosmic order, combining mutability and immutability. Platonic providence, therefore, identifies with the natural order, which implies a repetitive and cyclic time.

Nevertheless, only with the Stoics does the proper concept of *pronoia* explicitly appear, especially with Chrysippus (c. 279–c. 206 BC), who advocates firm anthropocentrism, according to which all nature is eventually made for man. Seneca dedicates a whole treatise to providence. Probably influenced by the Stoic Posidonius, Cicero

claims that the world is “made and ruled by divine providence” (*De Natura Deorum* 3, 92). The Stoics generally view providence as a metaphysical principle of universal explanation, which implies a total and inescapable determinism – and they claim that if providence is nothing but the world order, the wise man has to agree to this order (also called *fate heimarménè* or *fatum*) and even to desire it.

Conversely, Epicureans think that gods are fundamentally indifferent to man and subsequently that there is no providence but only chance; the wise man has to become indifferent to what he cannot change or understand, in order to avoid all suffering and worrying.

As for him, the Greek biographer and essayist Plutarch (c. 46–120) adopts a Platonist position, halfway between the Stoics and the Epicureans: he claims that a supreme intelligence designed the world but that this divinity does not engage in earthly matters – hence the importance of *tychè* as an inevitable component of human action.

It is thanks to the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (c. 13–c. 54), in *De opificio mundi* and of course *De Providentia*, that the concept of *pronoia* passes on to Judeo-Christian theology. Actually, it is no wonder that Jews, and then Christians, should reconsider the problem of providence from a new perspective, since the Bible grants mankind a central position and focuses on God’s historical interventions toward Israel, his elected people. However, except for the Book of wisdom (Wis 6, 7; 14, 3; and 17, 2), neither the Old Testament nor the New one really deals with the idea of a rational government of the world. Philo, therefore, plays a major role in emphasizing the harmony of the universe as a proof of universal providence, God being comparable to a just and careful *paterfamilias*. Philo thus establishes a far-reaching link between justice and providence, i.e., between soteriology, theodicy, and the idea of providence – a link which will become characteristic of the Jewish and Christian *Weltanschauungen*. In that view, providence is less a determinist order than a mode of God’s personal presence in the world and care for the world. For instance, in his *Civitas Dei*, the major early Christian theologian,

Augustine of Hippo (354–430), links the Stoician concept of providence with the problem of election: in this world or in the hereafter, God rewards the good and punishes the evil. *Pronoia* thus occupies a primary position in the early Christian thought: Christian freedom, which has to combine with God's rational ruling of the world, is opposed by the Fathers of Church (such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen) and the first scholasticism, to the pagan belief in *fate* (*heimarméne*).

Generally regarded as the founder of so-called "Neoplatonism," Plotinus (205–270) makes *pronoia* one of the main concepts of his philosophy, to which he dedicates a whole treatise (*Enneads* III, 2 et 3). Though influenced by the Stoics, his theodicy is more complex than theirs, since while for him the world's "soul," according to the Supreme Reason, is the drama director, each role must be interpreted by its own actor, which makes each human being responsible for his/her actions.

Also strongly influenced by Plato, Boethius (c. 480–524) introduces the far-reaching idea that God exists outside of time and is able in a single act of awareness to know all of the past, present, and future (*Consolation of Philosophy*, V, 6). Such omniscience preserves both God's timeless and absolute control over the world and man's freedom, since the vantage point from which God knows our decisions and actions is completely out of time.

In the twelfth century, while Averroes (1126–1198) breaks with anthropocentrism and presents an Aristotelian providence governing not the individuals but the whole sublunar world, in order to preserve all species, Maimonides' view on providence remains clearly anthropocentric: nature is "ruled" by chance, and only human beings are ruled by a God Judge, who rewards and punishes.

In the same period, Christian scholasticism inherits the ancient reflection on providence and makes it more systematic. For Aquinas, providence is the expression of God's will and intelligence, which applies to the whole universe as well as to particular beings and events (ST1a, q. 22, a. 2). However, being influenced by Averroes, Aquinas claims that God grants man "the dignity of causality" (ST Ia, q. 22, a. 3), distinguishing between primary and secondary causes.

In Medieval culture though, another concept is more prominent than *providence* in literary culture and iconography: *fortune*, which can refer to quite different agents, from an equivalent of *Providence* to a mysterious force, which influences human actions.

Innovative and Original Aspects During the Renaissance

However, in the Renaissance, under the influence of Reformation but also of "Neoplatonism" or natural philosophies concerned with material phenomena, the idea of *fortune* seems challenged, and *providence* makes a comeback, if a problematic one. Reformers are very wary of the popular belief in fortune and insist rather on the importance of God's direct intervention in life in the form of grace. Calvin especially insists on the theme of predestination. Therefore, the problematic relationship between theodicy and freedom becomes a central one for the entire early modern period. Undergoing a transformation from a widely accepted figure of European culture to something more akin to our modern *chance*, *fortune*, however, remains an important notion for those who refuse providence as an emanation of God's intention for the world.

But even for those who believe in providence, the concept is more and more challenged, especially in two main directions. First, for skeptics who revive the Epicurean tradition and are inspired by Lucretius, Lucian, the ancient Atomists thought, and sometimes Averroism, providence, if it exists, has little or no relation to the particular affairs of the single man. Second, for Reformers or Christians influenced by authors such as Montaigne, providence operates in ways bafflingly incomprehensible and hidden to human reason. This current is especially strong among Calvinists and in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, but it can also be related to the Augustinian feeling of a *Deus absconditus* which prevails later in seventeenth-century France. In this perspective, providence refers to seemingly arbitrary judgments of election and reprobation, which are beyond the reach of human reason or experience.

Those new representations of the relation between man and the heavenly powers tend to weaken the medieval sense of relative security, while a strong urge to find coherence in a troubled world still remains exemplified in particular by the writing of universal histories or cosmographies.

In some milieus of Renaissance Italy, a return to the Epicurean doctrine brings along the idea that to avoid superstitious fears and reach *ataraxia*, one has to understand that gods are absolutely indifferent to human concerns – which rules out the very notion of providence, in favor of a blind and fickle fortuna. This is exemplified by influential Machiavelli's *Principe*, which consequently emphasizes the importance of *virtù*, a purely human talent or ability directed toward the achievement of certain goals, which can sometimes defeat fortuna and is, therefore, the most vital quality for a prince.

The instability and unpredictability of the world and history lead many authors to adopt such an idea of fortune, which is especially obvious in reflections about natural calamities. For Filippo Beroaldo (*Opusculum de terraemotu* [*On Earthquake*], in *Varia . . . opuscula*, Basel, 1513, fol. 147), man's misery is caused by fortune's blind and arbitrary operations, and no real meaning, explanation, or remedy can be offered. Providence seems completely absent.

Another position, more mixed, is represented by Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), sometimes called the “last Scholastic and the first man of the Enlightenment.” Pomponazzi submits free will (*liberum arbitrium*) to the determinism of natural laws and tries to combine this celestial determinism, which he views as Stoic, with the Christian views on providence and also to reconcile the indeterminacy of human freedom with the immutability of divine knowledge.

In Renaissance France, as in Italy, the ancient debate between Stoics and Epicureans seems to be played again, but it is fundamentally transformed by the Christian views on God's personal care for the world.

Quite paradoxically, a frequent disintegration of belief in providence is shown both by skeptical writings (through various guises due to the censorship) and in the pious attacks (from Catholics

and Protestants alike) against proponents of skepticism. In *Zeus Rants*, Lucian mocks those who give the name *order* to a blind tendency and *providence* to the natural order. Although influenced by Lucian, Erasmus, on the other hand, denounces his providential view as blasphemy, while this same view is adopted by Des Périers in his *Cymbalum mundi* (ca. 1529–1530), regarding the injustices of life. The Swiss Reformed theologian Pierre Viret, in his preface to the second volume of *L'Instruction chrétienne* (1564), is shocked by the “execrable athéisme” (“vile atheism”) of those who, like the Epicureans, deny providence – and he denounces their improving number. The refusal to believe in providence will remain the main mark of atheism well into the seventeenth century (sometimes associated with debauchery) by heralds of providence such as Loys Le Roy, in the dedication to his translation of Plato's *Phaedo* (1553). In *Les Trois Veritez* (Bordeaux, 1595), Pierre Charron includes among his three types of atheists, the Epicureans, who seem to have some deity but hold it to be careless of this world and of us.

Unsurprisingly, Epicurus' critique is especially harsh from defenders of the Christianity, who pursue the ancient Christian reflection on the way God's providence and man's free will can combine. While relying, through Ockham, on a tradition dating back to Nicolaus de Cusa's *docta ignorantia*, Luther insists on the unknowable (and sometimes inimical to man) nature of a *Deus absconditus* design, Jean Calvin is extremely harsh toward Epicureans, and so are Hyperius (1511–1564), a Flemish Protestant theologian – and the French Reformers Théodore de Bèze and Antoine La Faye's *Propositions and Principles of Divinitie* (Edinburgh, 1591). However, in his commentary on Seneca's *De Clementia*, Calvin is also very critical of the Stoics, whom he reproaches for taking all wisdom and free will from God, forgetting that His wisdom is incommensurable to man. Providence is a key concept in his theological framework, and he distinguishes three aspects of it in his *Institution of Christian Religion*: general providence, which rules the whole universe with the laws of nature; special providence, which specifically care about

mankind and human history; and very special providence, which only cares about the faithful and their salvation through different steps (history of Israel, coming of Christ, writing of the Bible, history of the Church). For him, providence is closely linked to predestination or to God's "secret counsel": all events in this world actually happen according to God's secret decision of saving some men and damning others.

Conversely, many theologians on the Catholic side emphasize human freedom while trying to reconcile it with divine sovereignty. The Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina's theory of middle knowledge is an audacious attempt to do so. Since God knows prior to His decision to create what any possible creature would do in any possible circumstances, God in deciding which creatures to create and which circumstances to bring about (or permit) ultimately controls and directs the course of world history to His desired ends yet without limiting in any way the freedom of His creatures. Providence is thus the ordering of things to their divine ends, either by God's direct action or, in a perspective inherited from Aquinas, mediately through secondary causes.

Though skeptical and providentialist positions seem irreconcilable, Montaigne, the most influential writer of Renaissance France, exemplifies the complexity of the debate – which in his work is increased by a frequent wavering between the words *providence*, *destiny*, *fate*, and *fortune*. Indeed, while Montaigne favors the word *fortune*, he also uses *providence* probably because when in Rome, Church authorities strongly suggested that he used this theologically correct term in place of *fortune*. However, for some reason, he does not feel obliged to avoid *fortune* in his later writings; not only does this term remain much more frequent in his *Essays* than *providence*, but Montaigne does not restrain from attacking divine analogy. In his disguised polemics against Sabunde's hymn to man's privileged and glorious status under God (*An Apology for Raymond Sebond*), he claims that the world is disordered and unpredictable. It is hard to know if this should be interpreted as a result of his disbelief, as his attachment to the poets' and humanists' views on *fortuna*, or of his unruly character – but the fact remains that he does treat *fortune* and *providence*

as perfectly compatible – perhaps precisely because for him, the ultimate truth is unattainable. By breaking down not only the traditional anthropomorphism of providence but also the dichotomy between fortune and providence and by giving new attention to chance and contingency (*hazard*), Montaigne thus contributes to a revision of the concept of providence as profound, in the long term, as the one produced by Renaissance skeptical ferments.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Augustinianism](#)
- ▶ [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus](#)
- ▶ [Calvin, Jean](#)
- ▶ [Charron, Pierre](#)
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Pseudo-Pletho

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Ptolemy in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Among the works written by, or attributed to, Claudius Ptolemy (ca. AD 100–ca. 170), those which enjoyed the warmest reception

in the Renaissance were: (1) the *Almagest*, (2) *De Analemmate*, (3) *Planetary Hypotheses*, (4) *Quadripartitum* and the (spurious) *Centiloquium*, (5) *Geography*, (6) *Planisphaerium*, (7) *Optics*, (8) *Harmonics*, and later (9) *Phaseis*, and (10) *On the Criterion (of Truth) and the Commanding-Faculty* with the *Canobic Inscription*.

Impact and Legacy

Among the works written by, or attributed to, Claudius Ptolemy (ca. AD 100–ca. 170), those which enjoyed the warmest reception in the Renaissance were: (1) the *Almagest*, (2) *De Analemmate*, (3) *Planetary Hypotheses*, (4) *Quadripartitum* and the (spurious) *Centiloquium*, (5) *Geography*, (6) *Planisphaerium*, (7) *Optics*, (8) *Harmonics*, and later, (9) *Phaseis*, and (10) *On the Criterion and the Commanding-Faculty*, with the *Canobic Inscription*.

1. Ptolemy's resurgence in the Renaissance had a deep and extensive impact on astronomy and cosmology. His *Almagest* (*Μεγίστη Μαθηματικὴ Σύνταξις*) regained an unparalleled centrality in these fields between the mid-fifteenth and the mid-sixteenth century. At first, the *Almagest* was studied in small circles of specialists, who soon became aware of the unreliability of Gerard of Cremona's translation from Arabic (Toledo, 1175). So, between the 1420s and the 1440s, scholars began to (re)study Ptolemy on the basis of the original text preserved in Constantinople: John Chortasmenos left a lot of notes and calculations in his copy of the *Almagest*; Bessarion hand-copied the *Commentary* by John Alexandrinus; and Gemistus Pletho studied the one by Theodore Metochites (cf. Rigo 1991). The intrinsic complexity of the text and the mathematics within it were made more accessible to students on various occasions: for instance, the anonymous *Almagestum Parvum* offered an abridged formulation of Ptolemaic astronomy in the style of Euclid's *Elements* (Zepeda

2015), while Giovanni Bianchini's *Flores Almagesti* (1446–1456), following Ptolemy's footsteps, disclosed innovative methods for the computation of stellar coordinates and mathematical astronomy in general (Van Brummelen 2018). In the West, however, such a re-discovery began precisely in 1451, when Pope Nicholas V commissioned George of Trebizond to produce a Latin translation of the *Almagest* based on a Greek manuscript from Bessarion's library. The Cretan scholar completed the requested translation by the end of that year; he also completed and attached his demanding commentary on that work, in which he extensively criticized the historic *Commentary* by Theon of Alexandria, in an effort to restore Ptolemy's original text by dispelling subsequent misunderstandings. Even though George of Trebizond tried to gain recognition and promote his work in Venice, Rome, Naples, Istanbul, and Budapest, his anti-Theonian *Commentary* became the target of a harsh polemical campaign fuelled by Cardinal Bessarion (Steiris 2010). The latter first exploited the negative evaluation of George's endeavor by the papal reviewer Jacopo Cremenese and then appointed Peurbach (soon succeeded by Regiomontanus) to discredit such a "heterodox" interpretation of Ptolemy's astronomical work in print. As requested, Peurbach started composing an *Epitome of the Almagest* (*Epytoma in Almagestum*) in 1460–1461, which was completed by Regiomontanus in 1462. Eventually, Regiomontanus also wrote a second text on Bessarion's behalf – the *Defensio Theonis contra Georgium Trapezuntium* (early 1460s–ca. 1474), where he not only criticized his polemical target, but also tried to solve what he considered to be inconsistencies or interpolations in the work of Ptolemy (Shank 2002). Here, between the lines of the polemic, one can detect the emergence of novel astronomical ideas, such as those pertaining to the order, distance, and motions of the planets, and the overall cosmic dimension, arising both from much-needed

- revisions of the *Almagest* and the collation of its contents with other sources – most notably, Campanus da Novara’s *Theorica planetarum* (Shank 2020). Significantly, Regiomontanus’ epitome was later used by Copernicus as a reference handbook in his studies, often even in preference to the *Almagest* itself (Swerdlow – Neugebauer 1984: 51). In both his *Commentariolus* and the *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (1543), however, Copernicus shows his assiduous familiarity with Ptolemy’s *Almagestum*. As it has been noted, “Copernicus had studied the *Almagest* very carefully indeed. For the *De Revolutionibus* is the *Almagest*, book by book and section by section, rewritten to incorporate the new Copernican theory, but otherwise altered as little as might be” (Boas 1962: 74). Although Copernicus criticized Ptolemy’s lunar model (Goddu 2010: 154), his star catalog is entirely based on the data of the *Almagest*. That catalog would only be updated in 1598 by Brahe’s *Stellarum Inerrantium Restitutio* (Graßhoff 1990). Indeed, sixteenth-century astronomy can largely be described as an attempt to improve or correct Ptolemy’s observations (such as his views about the alleged path of the Sun, cf. Swerdlow 2010). As time passed, the improvements made were observational as much as philological. The first complete Latin translation of the *Almagest* was published in 1515. Grynaeus and Camerarius emended the Greek for the *editio princeps* of the text in 1538. Reinhold published an annotated Greek and Latin edition of the first book of the *Almagest* as a handbook for Wittenberg students in 1549 (*Ptolomei Mathematica Constructionis*, later printed as *Regulae artis mathematicae*), where he stuck to the traditional geocentric hypothesis notwithstanding Copernicus’ proposal (Omodeo and Tupikova 2013).
2. While some years later, in 1562, Ptolemy’s work on the mathematics of sundials (*De Analemmate*) was also published in an annotated edition by Commandino, Scholastic thinkers maintained their conservative approach to the subject of astronomy, in both their teaching and published works. To mention but one of the most telling cases, the Jesuit Christoph Clavius defended the validity and the reality of the Ptolemaic cosmological system from the first to the last edition of his highly influential textbook on Sacrobosco’s *Sphere* (1570/1612) against competing models, also resorting to sophisticated forms of logical reasoning (Haddad 2009). The Renaissance “*amor Almagesti*” did not fade away overnight.
 3. Ptolemy’s *Planetary Hypotheses* were drawn upon alongside his major astronomical work. They were translated by Matthias Bergius and completed by a different (anonymous) translator before 1587; another anonymous version circulated as *De suppositione planetarum before 1595; and finally*, John Bainbridge, who was appointed Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, published their translation under the title of *De planetarum hypothesibus liber* together with the Greek text (London 1620).
 4. In Renaissance times, Ptolemy also returned to being a protagonist of the cultural debate in the field of astrology. A direct engagement with his original texts was initially pursued as a means to bypass the medieval and Arabic tradition, whose hermeneutical, Neoplatonic, and sometimes magical overtones no longer matched the interest of its new students (Faracovi 2014: 87). Greater competence in the technical aspects of astronomical predictive models and a renewed philological sensibility prompted the need for a new translation directly from the Greek text of Ptolemy’s works. That is what happened with both the *Quadripartitum* or *Tetrabiblos* and the *Centiloquium* or *Karpus* (or *Fructus*), which was generally believed to be authentic (up to Cardano’s demonstration of its spuriousness in his 1554 commentary). The first to translate the *Centiloquium* into Latin was most probably George of Trebizond around the middle of the fifteenth century. His translation was later published in Rome by Luca Gaurico (in 1540), but anticipated in print by the translation – with a “naturalizing” commentary – by

Giovanni Pontano (Naples, 1512). In 1451, while in Naples, George of Trebizond completed the first translation of the *Quadripartitum*, produced with astrological and prophetic goals in mind (Steiris 2010: 192–194). Conrad Heingarter wrote a commentary on that work in 1477, Giorgio Valla another one in 1502. Pico della Mirandola took some arguments from Ptolemy's works, the *Quadripartitum* included, and turned them against astrology *tout court*. To this end, he frequently and deliberately undermined Ptolemy's authority in his *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (posthumously published in 1496), where he even retranslated, commented, and contrasted some Ptolemaic passages as part of his anti-astrological campaign (Rutkin 2020). Nonetheless, Ptolemy's *Quadripartitum* remained a common and widespread textbook in the university syllabuses for mathematics, medicine, and natural philosophy courses for more than another century (in Bologna, Padua, Ferrara, and Pisa, among other places). A more systematic translation of the first two books (out of four) was begun by Joachim Camerarius by working from a Greek text that he had newly established in 1535. The translation was eventually taken over and completed by Antonio Gogava in 1548. In 1553–1554, Philipp Melancthon revised and corrected the Greek text provided by Camerarius, retranslated all four books into Latin, and then published the new version by adding his own commentary, with the aim of bringing astrology back to its original purity. Furthermore, around 1574 Valentin Nabod completed another translation with a commentary, and later (after Conrad Dasypodius's additional translation of 1578) he published another work, the *Enarratio elementorum astrologiae* (Cologne, 1560), where he discussed Ptolemy's astrology in detail. In the expanded editions of his *Speculum astrologiae* (1581 and 1583), Francesco Giuntini translated and commented at length on Ptolemaic astrological works, among other authorities on the subject. During the academic year 1585–1586, Filippo Fantoni was still

reading, commenting on, and teaching Ptolemy's *Quadripartitum* (Rutkin 2010). Check after check, astrology was reformed, rather than undermined, on a more subject-informed basis through the return to a more philological understanding of Ptolemaic and pseudo-Ptolemaic works. As a sign of long-term persistence, we still find a new technical, annotated edition of Ptolemy's *Quadripartitum* in 1658: it was published by Placido Titti in Padua, the very place where Galileo had been working 50 years before (see Hasse et al. 2016 for a more comprehensive overview of the Latin reception of Ptolemy's astrology and astronomy).

5. The process of enhancing the understanding of Ptolemy's *Geography* was a major intellectual event of the Renaissance (Gautier Dalché 1999: 286), too. That work provided a realistic overview of inhabited lands and also offered geometrical and mathematical methods to fill the extant gaps in the geographical knowledge of the terraqueous globe. Moreover, Ptolemy's view of the world was consistently integrated into a “greater picture.” For, “thanks to its astronomical basis, the *Geography* fitted into the cosmographic pattern of the Renaissance thought, since it underscored the points of interdependence between the organization of the celestial and the terrestrial map: Ptolemy's *Geography* confirmed the [mathematical] correlation between the constant motion of the stars and sublunary world” (Shalev 2011: 9).

Ptolemy's *Geography*, however, was not completely forgotten by Western scholarship before the formal (re)acquisition, or “re-exhumation,” of the Greek text in Byzantium at the end of the fourteenth century (Pastoreau 2012; Gautier Dalché 1999). From Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages onwards (if we include the Islamic elaboration of the work), interest in the spatial coordinates of cities and places mentioned there remained alive. Indeed, this information was often used for the astrological “geo-localization” of the heavens' influences on

the earth and, in turn, for sanitary prognostications (Id. 2009). After all, “Ptolemy’s *Geography* was construed as a work belonging to the cosmic system described in the *Almagest*, and thus it came to be used for astrological purposes. This use is explained by the close association between the toponymic lists of the *Geography*, with their coordinates, and the equivalent synoptic lists in Ptolemy’s basic astrological manual, the *Handy Tables*” (Shalev 2011: 10). Aside from this, early Humanists such as Petrarch and Boccaccio were very much interested in identifying places mentioned by Greek and Roman authors under later-forgotten toponyms, so at first ancient works on geography were taken into the highest consideration for antiquarian interest blended with place-name curiosity (Gentile 2013).

The text of Ptolemy’s *Geography* was identified and retrieved in Constantinople by the Byzantine philologist Maximus Planudes in 1295. Following indications within the text, he was able to have the no longer extant maps drawn anew and donated a copy of the recreated manuscript to Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (Dilke 1987: 268). Cardinal Bessarion wanted this work to be copied in a luxury illuminated version (now *Marc. Gr.* 31 in the Marciana Library, Venice). However, Ptolemy’s *Geography* first reached Italy in 1397, when the Constantinopolitan ambassador and erudite scholar Manuel Chrysoloras visited Florence. He was invited as a teacher by the Humanists Coluccio Salutati, Palla Strozzi, and/or Jacopo Angeli. He brought many books with him for his assignment. Among these was a codex that, among other scientific treatises, contained a transcription of the *Geography*, or *Guide to Cartography* – as the original title reads there. Chrysoloras intended to use it as textual support for teaching the Greek language. The literal Latin translation of the book was begun by Chrysoloras himself, but the project was then taken over by his student Iacopo Angeli da Scarperia in 1401 and brought to completion in Rome in 1409. Once

completed, the translation was dedicated to Pope Alexander V under the title of *Cosmographia*. While this Latin translation was later to be judged inadequate, imprecise, and incorrect in many respects, it remained in use as the only available one for more than a century. From that moment onwards, the text underwent a long and nonlinear process of “cultural transfer” via subsequent transformations, adaptations, corrections, interpolations, appropriations, remakes, and distortions (Vagnon 2003) across Europe. Such a complex process, almost paradoxically, began with the quest for philological fidelity with respect to the original text.

Niccolò Niccoli, Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli (who also commented on the *Almagest*), and the circle of Humanists who gathered in the halls of the Monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence prompted the revival of Ptolemaic studies by focusing on the recovered text and especially on its toponymic nomenclature. Among these scholars, Francesco di Lapacino and then Domenico Buoninsegni translated the place-names found in the attached maps for the purpose of precisely identifying where Classical authors had set their ancient narratives. The text of Andrea da Barberino’s chivalric poem *Guerrin Meschino* (1410/1420) bore early traces of Ptolemaic place-names, which were arguably included via vernacular adaptations for the only purpose of tickling the Florentine audience’s imagination with the sounds of remote and exotic locations. It is clear, then, that even at this time Ptolemy’s *Geography* was still mainly consulted as a reference source for ancient and almost-forgotten place-names, if not as a fictional travel guide or an object of wonder. In dedicating his translation to the Pope, however, Angeli stressed the importance of more technical aspects emerging from the Ptolemaic text, such as the notion of scale, mathematical imaging, spatial coordinates, the bidimensional projection, or flattering transposition of sphericity to the plane besides the methods entailed, also – indeed, primarily – for astronomical and astrological purposes. It was not by chance that Pierleone of Spoleto,

physician to Lorenzo de' Medici, kept a copy of Ptolemy's *Geography*, alongside the *Almagest* and the *Quadripartitum*, in his personal library. The issue of how to represent the earthly globe on a bidimensional surface was a particularly debated one in France, where it was notably discussed in Pierre d'Ailly's *Compendium Cosmographie* (1410/'15), Guillaume Fillastre's *Commentary on Pomponius Mela* (1417), and Jean Fusoris' *Traité de cosmographie* (1432). All these works integrated the transmission of Ptolemy's *Geography* with new information as well as with newly recovered ancient data. At the same time, in German-speaking countries, interest in the *Geography* was mainly driven by astronomical and astrological requirements, as can be appreciated by considering the works of Johannes von Gmunden and Georg Münstinger. It was thanks to the work of Johannes Stöfler and his student Sebastian Münster in Tübingen that the study of the *Geography*, conducted in an astronomical context, merged with the technical expertise of map-making.

Ptolemy's *Geography* came with 26 regional maps and a map of the *oecumene* or known inhabited world. These maps were soon reproduced and updated, starting with the work of Florentine painter Pietro del Massaio. They were eventually improved upon in many respects and integrated with new maps (the so-called *carte nouvelle* or *tabulae moderne*) – also on the basis of Claudius Clavus's and Nicholas of Cusa's early maps of Northern European countries – by Nicolaus Germanus in the copy of the *Cosmographia* that he made while in Florence for Borso d'Este, the Duke of Modena, Reggio, and Ferrara (1467). A selection of city maps was also added in his later editions that were all dedicated to Pope Paul II. Francesco Berlinghieri, on the contrary, preferred to maintain a more conservative approach in the cartographic section of his rhymed *Septe giornate della Geographia* in vernacular (Florence 1482, but for 15 years in the making), more in accordance with the philological fidelity pursued by Toscanelli's

circle. Ptolemaic maps began to adorn the pages of luxury, large-format copies of *Cosmographiae*, as well as the walls of *studia* and Wunderkammern (Van Duzer 2014).

An isolated, hybrid case that stands out from the Florentine *milieu* of redefinition of the *Geography* is provided by a Venetian codex from ca. 1436/1450, in which the Ptolemaic place names are compared with the Plinian nomenclature and maintained upon new nautical maps of coastlines (Milanesi 1996; see also Cattaneo 2004). Analogously, in his *Atlas* (1436) seaman Andrea Bianco integrated the Ptolemaic world map with both a circular *mappamundi* and Portolan charts based on his maritime expertise. Fra' Mauro's *Mappamundi* (1448/1453) criticized the Ptolemaic model without hesitation, setting it in contrast to the reported eyewitnesses and marine cartography in use at that time, in order to devise a more inclusive representation of the known world. On the other hand, Battista Guarini's *De ordine docendi ac studendi* (1459) claimed that it was impossible to study geography without the aid of the "*pictura Ptolomei*." Heinrich Hammer (or Martellus) followed Germanus's improved projection system in his three manuscripts of Ptolemy's *Geography*, where he also inserted historical-geographical notes taken from other ancient authorities, such as Pliny and Marinus of Tyre. Flavio Biondo declared that the geographical knowledge provided by Ptolemy was all but complete (1453). Cyriacus of Ancona and Gemisthus Pleton claimed that the shape and the size of the inhabited world as described by the *Geography* were quite unlikely: the former reached this conclusion by the way of his field explorations, the latter by comparison with Strabo's testimony. Within this general revisionist context, Christopher Columbus obtained a copy of the first Latin edition of the book (the Vicenza *princeps* edition of 1475), which was printed without the maps, so that he might also critically consider Ptolemy's continental distances while drawing his own maps and planning his epoch-making voyage

(Dilke 1992). Therefore, Ptolemy's *Geography* indirectly contributed to the belief that the maritime distance between Europe and Asia was not so great as to be impossible to cover.

Thus, despite the authoritativeness of the established model, new factors were increasingly leading to a radical reconsideration of the newly recovered Ptolemaic geographical paradigm. These factors included – to list just some of them – accounts from incoming native travelers contradicting the ancient texts, the consequent disproof of claims concerning that the torrid zone and the austral hemisphere of the earth were uninhabitable, the inconsistencies gradually detected within the *Geography* itself, new and more precise positioning data provided by astronomers and nautical explorers, the rediscovery of various earlier authorities as sources of geographical knowledge besides Ptolemy, and the spread of new travel writings and reports. Renaissance cartographers slowly realized with dismay that Ptolemy might have been “wrong” too. It has aptly been remarked, however, that “the movement of critical reception of the *Geography* must not be interpreted as the improvement of Ptolemy as conducted in accordance with his own model” (Gautier Dalché 2009: 337 our transl.; see also Id. 2007: 285–287). Hence, its history should not be retold – as has often been done in the past – as a process of gradual approximation of the present ideal of “exact” spatial representation.

The history of the reception of Ptolemy's *Geography* would have been very different if Regiomontanus had managed to publish all the works that he intended to print on the topic, as he declared in 1473. These included his textual notes against Angeli's translation, his own new annotated translation, a *Descriptio totius habitabilis notae* with maps and, finally, the *Commentaria magna in Cosmographiam Ptolemaei* with an explanation about the use of the *meteoroscopium*, the instrument that Ptolemy had used to measure geographical latitude and longitude (Malpangotto 2008: 151–153). The Veronese

Humanist Domizio Calderini revised Angeli's first translation, edited the Latin text from various manuscripts, and corrected some of its mathematics; his work was completed and published by the Benedictine Arnold Bucknick (Rome 1477). In 1506, Bernardus Sylvanus amended the text of the *Geography* and touched up its numbers to make them more consistent, although he did not attribute any mistakes to Ptolemy but only to the manuscript tradition.

A telling example of the process of redefinition of the Ptolemaic geographical model is the “terrestrial theory,” as illustrated by Lopo Homem's *Mappamundi* in Miller's *Atlas* (1519). Here the Atlantic Ocean is shown as a *landlocked* sea, envisaged just as the Indian (open) sea is in Ptolemy's *Geography*, that is, as a basin, or enormous lake, entirely surrounded by terrestrial regions (see Fig. 1). Indeed, the lands found on the other side of the Atlantic were identified as being part of Asia; so, at this stage, the tendency was to “close” the margins of the water-mass along both its northern edge and its southern one, in accordance with the Ptolemaic idea of the earth as *Orbis conclusus* (Relaño 2003). The Ptolemaic belief in terrestrial continuity was not easy to dismiss before Ferdinand Magellan and Juan Sebastián Elcano's circumnavigation of the earth (1519–1522).

Willibald Pirckheimer retranslated Ptolemy's *Geography* for the first time after Angeli had produced his own translation more than a century before (Strasburg 1525), perhaps also consulting Regiomontanus' unpublished drafts. Peter Apianus published the *Cosmographiae introductio, cum quibusdam Geometriae ac Astronomiae principiis ad eam rem necessariis*, which can be considered the first printed handbook for teaching and learning the rudiments of Ptolemaic geography (Ingolstadt 1529; Venice 1533). The first critical edition of the Greek text was the one compiled by Erasmus shortly afterwards (Basel 1533).

Giambattista Ramusio's *Delle Navigazioni e Viaggi* (3 voll., Venice 1550 and ff.) paved

Ptolemy in the Renaissance, Fig. 1 Lopo Homem, *Mappamundi. Hémisphère portugais*, in “Atlas Miller” (1519). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ge D 26179 Rés. Central round selection [Public domain image]



the way for a new, or “substituted,” Ptolemy to deal with the unprecedented expansion of the geographical subject (Milanesi 1984). Portuguese literary works such as Luís Vaz de Camões’s *Os Lusíadas* (1572) and F. Mendes Pinto’s *Peregrinação* (posthumously published in 1616) share the same transitional nature: while grounding their descriptions in a Ptolemaic view of the world, they go beyond the Ptolemaic text and lead their readers to places that were unknown to Ptolemy and his followers (Gunn 2018).

The end of the Renaissance *fortuna* of Ptolemy’s *Geography* can be conventionally said to coincide with the publication of Gerard Mercator’s volumes, which neatly distinguish modern maps from Ptolemaic ones as independent representations of the geographical space (1578).

6. A peculiar intersection between the Ptolemaic system of geographical projection and the figurative arts can be found in the

Renaissance study of perspective. Leonardo da Vinci devised his *prospettografo* with the third method of projection described by Ptolemy’s *Geography* (Valerio 2012), while Leon Battista Alberti developed his “pre-Cartesian” arrangement of pictorial compositions according to the same principles based on spatial coordinates and perspectival reticulation (Veltman 1980). A similar convergence of interests can also be seen in Federico Commandino’s edition of Ptolemy’s *On Flattering the Sphere* or *Planisphaerium* (Venice 1558), where his commented translation is followed by a study on linear perspective.

7. Ptolemy’s *Optics* was less known than Euclid’s *Optics* in the Renaissance because it only survived in an incomplete Latin translation made in the twelfth century by Eugene of Sicily from a no longer extant Arabic version. Roger Bacon, however, treated Ptolemaic optics as complementary to Euclidean

and Arab (Alhacenian) optics – and he was not the only scholar to adopt such a syncretistic approach to the matter. A second reason why the *Optics* did not have the impact it deserved to have was probably the fact that it seemed too sophisticated to its readers, since it also covered the subjects of catoptrics (light reflection) and dioptrics (light refraction) with empirical examples or experiments, yet without the proper mathematical understanding. Attempts were nonetheless made to replicate those experiments (e.g., by Leonardo), in order to define the underlying theory. Improvements in glass technology later also played a role in this. Christoph Scheiner's and Christiaan Huygens' experimental explanations for binocular vision can be traced back to Ptolemy's text, partly via Ibn al-Haytham (Raynaud 2016). Moreover, Ptolemy endorsed the "extromissive" theory of vision, according to which the line of sight physically starts from the eye – a theory that was often studied in detail, but which not everybody was inclined to accept. Renaissance artists and painters took advantage of a couple of modeling techniques (aerial perspective and the perspective from an elevated viewpoint) that Ptolemy reported in his *Optics* (II, 123–125) as geometrical tricks to create the illusion of *trompe-l'œil* depth in bi-dimensional representations. "Of Ptolemy's *Optics* – it has been concluded – we currently know of 15 manuscript-versions, 11 of them dating from after the fifteenth century... [T]he *Optics* was being reproduced at this time not out of historical interest but out of a continuing lively interest in its theoretical content... In fact, publication of Ptolemy's *Optics* was contemplated twice (but never brought to fruition) during the Renaissance, once by Regiomontanus, in the later fifteenth century, and once by Georg Hartmann, in the early sixteenth" (Smith 2001: 156 and n. 20). It should also be mentioned that Moerbeke's translation of an apocryphal work on mirrors wrongly attributed to Ptolemy (and known as *De speculis*) was printed in Venice in 1518, together with

other texts on optics. The manuscript version of that text was used, alongside Ptolemy's *Optics*, by Witelo as a reference for his influential *Perspectiva*. Kepler himself developed his basic refraction theory by drawing upon the work of Witelo, Alhacen, and other perspectivists, who in turn ultimately derived their tabulations from Ptolemy.

8. Next, Ptolemy's *Harmonics* regained an equal, if not even superior, *fortuna*. The text, with Porphyry's commentary, was originally recovered in Byzantium around the tenth century and then probably reached Italy via Venetian collectors in the fifteenth century. A copy of Ptolemy's "Musica," that is, *Harmonics*, was spotted by Ambrogio Traversari in Vittorino da Feltre's library in Mantua as early as 1433. Giorgio Anselmi's *De musica*, which appeared one year later, betrays direct or indirect knowledge of Ptolemy's *Harmonics* in regard to the theory of musical harmony within the cosmos.

Ficino read Ptolemy's *Harmonica* in manuscript form, as is suggested by his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* (1496), in particular the passage where he projects the diatonic scale upon the circle of the zodiac.

In the third book of *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus opus* (1501), Giorgio Valla quoted Ptolemy on musical matters. Carlo Vargulio criticized Ptolemaic harmonics in the introductory essay of his Latin translation of Plutarch's *De Musica* (1507).

At the end of the fifteenth century, Franchino Gaffurio (or Gafori) commissioned Nicolò Leoniceo to produce a translation of Ptolemy's *Harmonica* from the Greek, which was eventually presented to Pope Paul III by Gian Giorgio Trissino. Previously, Gaffurio had mentioned Ptolemy as a referential authority in his *Theorica musicae* (1492, rev. ed.), but at that time he could not have a proper understanding of the text – as is also proved by the early and inaccurate interpretation of the primary source provided in his *Practica musicae* (1496). Nonetheless, his *De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum opus* (written in 1500 and published in

1518) was closely modeled on Ptolemy's *Harmonics*, from which he even derived some ideas about the relation between the sounds produced by the spheres and the resonances of corresponding parts of the human soul (making astrology, music, and psychology closely related). References to the Ptolemaic harmonic relations of the cosmos and its arithmetical/musical arrangement can also be found in Francesco Zorzi's *De harmonia mundi totius* (1525).

In his *Musica theórica* (1529), the autodidact Ludovico Fogliano developed a theory of intonation alternative to the Pythagorean one and grounded in the diatonic syntonon (intense or syntonic tuning) of Ptolemy's *Harmonics*, as Pietro Aaron had already done in *Libri tres de Institutione Harmonica* (1516) and Nicola Vicentino was to do in *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (1555).

In *Istitutioni harmoniche* (1558) – one of the most original and influential texts in the history of music – the Venetian *maestro di cappella* Gioseffo Zarlino established that tonal system as the new theoretical basis for Western tuning. The adoption of Ptolemy's diatonic syntonon enabled Zarlino to resolve the main problem in Renaissance music, both by reforming the Pythagorean-Boethian tradition from within and by adapting it to the musical praxis of his time. Consequently, the ancient Ptolemaic musical ratios and nomenclature were adopted as the referential standard intonation, which has remained in use up to this day (Haar 2006: 26–27).

In those years, Ptolemy's name appears in the publishing plans for translations (or re-translations) of ancient and modern musical writings drawn by the Accademia Veneziana della Fama.

One of Zarlino's students was Vincenzo Galilei, who studied Ptolemy's musical theory as well and compared it with alternative ones. In his *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna* (1581), he engaged in a dispute against his teacher, where the point of contention was also the use of Ptolemy's tonal

system in vocal music. (Zarlino later responded with his learned *Sopplimenti musicali* (1888), which makes it clear that he extensively consulted Ptolemy and other musical sources of antiquity in his life-long study of the subject.)

Girolamo Mei, one of the best-informed Renaissance scholars when it comes to ancient Greek music, claimed: “[among all the ancient authors who wrote on the musical science] I have resolved to take as my foundation Ptolemy, for I judge him to be the more exhaustive and conclusive of all,” although his surviving work – as he recognized – was still unavailable in its entirety (*Letter to P. Vettori*, 21 February 1562; see Palisca 1985: 265–266). However, that very year Antonio Govara published a Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Harmonicorum libri III*. Accordingly, in his *De modis musicis antiquorum* (circulating as a manuscript in Florence from 1573), Mei restored the Ptolemaic tonal system on new philological bases, against Boethius' enduring misunderstanding.

In his *Lecture in defence of Ariosto* (1583), Giovanni de' Bardi quoted Ptolemy to support the thesis that music is defined by verse, rhythm, and pitch, which should also govern true poetry.

After the Latin translation provided by Antonio Gogava (1562), Ercole Bottrigari claimed to have completed an Italian translation of Ptolemy's *Harmonica* in 1597 together with other ancient musical writings (although these texts are no longer extant).

Descartes' *Compendium musicae* (1618) is Ptolemaic in its essence. The long-term impact of Ptolemy's theory of harmonic proportion (syntonic diatonic) as applied to cosmology extends to Kepler's *Harmonice Mundi* (1619), where the author improved the original musical-based theory of consonance with his own theory of geometrical congruity. Even in Riccioli's *Almagestum Novum* (1651), specifically in book IX, sec. 5: “*De Systemate Mundi Harmonico*,” the relation was still discussed at length. Finally, in his *Philosophical Origins of Gentile Philosophy* (1683), Newton accused

Ptolemy and other gentile philosophers of having mystified the original Pythagorean wisdom, which had properly disclosed the secret of the harmony of the spheres, albeit in the form of myth.

9. The French Jesuit Denis Petau translated Ptolemy's *Phaseis* and published it under the title of *De apparentiis inerrantium et significationibus* as part of his *Uranologium* (Paris 1630), together with his *editio princeps* of the Greek text in two columns.
10. The astronomer and mathematician Ishmaël Bullialdus retrieved Ptolemy's *On the Criterion and the Commanding-Faculty* and the *Canobic Inscription* while working at the Royal Library of France. He completed their Latin translations, and published them along with the original texts, as *De iudicandi facultate et animi principatu* and *Inscriptio Canobi ad ipso consecrata* (Paris 1633). He published these works by Ptolemy – especially the former – with the declared intent of opposing Descartes' physicalist psychology (Long 1988: 178–179).

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Cross-References

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Puritanism in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Puritanism was a strain of English Protestantism that emerged after the reestablishment of the Protestant Church of England by Elizabeth I in 1559. Puritanism was not a coherent set of ideas, but rather a form of intense piety that led many to criticize the Church of England for not being as Reformed as Calvinist Churches on the continent. As such, Puritans and Puritanism changed in light of changing religious and

political dynamics in Early Modern England, becoming an increasingly political force under Charles I and leading to the English Civil Wars. Different Puritans promoted different models of a spiritual society in order to realize their ideals including conforming to the established Church, Presbyterianism, or separation and exile to America. What was constant, however, was a commitment to personal spiritual growth that produced an influential genre of writing on practical divinity.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Puritans were English Protestants whose intense piety led them to criticize the Protestant Church of England established by Elizabeth I (r.1558–1603) as being only “halfly-Reformed.” Inspired by Calvinist Churches abroad, English Puritans criticized Catholic practices remaining in the Church and condemned any attempts at reconciliation with Catholics later made by James I (r.1603–1626) or Charles I (r.1626–1649). The mixture of spiritual and political concerns created deep divisions in English society, leading to the Civil Wars (1642–1651), the execution of Charles I (1649), and the English Commonwealth and Protectorate (1649–1660) (Coffe and Lim 2008).

Running throughout any account of Puritanism are the twin themes of piety and opposition, as Puritans struggled to realize their vision of spirituality in Early Modern England. English Protestantism drew on the work of Jean Calvin (1509–1564), the French Reformer and theologian, and his followers. Particularly important was Calvin’s idea of predestination, namely that God had already chosen to save some people (the elect) while others were damned. Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562) and Theodore Beza (1519–1605) argued that the elect needed to live spiritual lives and that this was a consequence of their justification (their preordained salvation). The English Puritan William Perkins described this spiritual living as “sanctification” or “the habit of righteousness,” and this concept was at the heart of Puritan spirituality. Puritans

believed that sanctification took place in a community and also that it was an urgent imperative (Patterson 2014; Tyacke 1987). Puritans thought that every one of their actions either increased spiritual growth or actively hindered it, they could not conceive of an action that was “indifferent” or spiritually neutral. This produced an intense and often introspective piety. It also drove Puritan criticisms of the Church of England as they saw Catholic remnants in the Church of England like the use of surplices as a real and present danger to spiritual growth. (Oates 2012; Coolidge 1970).

The Church of England retained many elements of medieval Catholicism including practices like kneeling at the Eucharist, Cathedrals, and bishops. Puritan clergy (including some bishops) tried to reform the Church through parliament during Elizabeth I’s reign, and when that failed through a series of polemical pamphlets, most notably the Marprelate tracts in 1589. In 1603, the Calvinist King James I succeeded Elizabeth I, raising Puritan hopes for further reform in the Church, but the Hampton Court Conference that met in 1604 endorsed the status quo (Collinson 1971, 2013). When James’ successor, Charles I, adopted a conciliatory policy toward Catholics, Puritanism became increasingly identified with a political opposition to the King. Historian John Morrill described the Civil Wars that erupted during Charles I’s reign as the “last wars of religion” as the struggle to control the religious destiny of the country erupted into violence (Morrill 1984; Como 2004; Prior and Burgess 2011). Oliver Cromwell, a leader of the opposition to Charles I during the Civil War and later Lord Protector of England, came from a radical Puritan tradition and tried to establish a godly commonwealth in England.

Impact and Legacy

Puritanism was a spiritual impulse rather than a coherent program of action and produced different ideas about the best way of organizing a Church and society. Some English Puritans embraced Presbyterianism, drawing on the example of

Calvinist Churches in Geneva and neighboring Scotland. Some English Puritans became convinced that attending services of the Church of England compromised their souls, and in the seventeenth century several Puritans separated from the Church of England. These Puritans emigrated to escape persecution by the Church authorities, going first to the Netherlands and then to New England where they were known as the “Pilgrim Fathers.” But for much of this period, Puritans stayed in the established Church of England trying to secure change from within. They channeled their piety into spiritual living or “sanctification,” and English Puritans produced guides to practical divinity that were influential across Europe. Preaching was at the heart of Puritan culture along with bible reading and self-examination. Their concern with sanctification was not only frequently caricatured in popular literature but also encouraged Puritan men and women to constantly strive for spiritual growth, whatever the political or social cost (Bremer and Webster 2006; Durston and Eales 1996; Lake 1983; Ryrie 2013; Webster 1997).

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Puteanus

► Dupuy, Claude

Puttenham, George

Born: 1529, London?

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Abstract

George Puttenham was a courtier and writer during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1565–1603).

His major work, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), was published anonymously but is almost certainly by Puttenham. It is a handbook on poetry and rhetoric, offering the aspiring courtier advice on how to write well. It summarizes familiar concepts of poetry as civilizing art and argues for the vernacular's worthiness as a literary language. The book's

greatest contribution is a list of figures of speech together with original English terms.

Biography

Puttenham was probably born in London in 1529, nephew of the famous courtier and writer Sir Thomas Elyot. He was educated at Cambridge and the Middle Temple. Of his subsequent career little is known other than his continental travels and a long and fruitless battle with his former wife over their wealth and goods. Puttenham published nothing apart from his *The Arte*, though there exist two widely circulated works in manuscript ascribed to him. The “Partheniades” is a set of 17 encomiastic poems dedicated to the queen dating from around 1579. The prose letter “A justificacion of Queene Elizabeth in relacion to the affaire of Mary queene of Scottes” (c.1588) defends the execution of Mary through detailed legal and political proof. The author of *The Arte* mentions several other works, including drama, a verse romance, and some prose tracts, none of which have survived.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Arte of English Poesie, entered at the Stationers’ register in 1588, was anonymously published in the subsequent year. It bears a dedicatory letter to Lord Burghley by the printer who claims no acquaintance with the author. The book is generally, though not indubitably, ascribed to George Puttenham. *The Arte* emerges from both classical and recent continental thought on literary criticism and composition, arguing for poetic expression in the vernacular worthy of Greek and Latin. It interlaces practical advice on writing with historical observations, stories of contemporaries, and suggestions on courtly conduct in a chatty, sophisticated style. Throughout, Puttenham offers literary examples, usually his own or English verse stemming from the 1550s to the 1570s. The text is divided into three books: Book One, “Of Poets and Poesy,” proposes verse as a key impulse to civilization, rehearsing

familiar founding myths of society, including the singers Orpheus and Amphion. Book Two, “Of Proportion Poetical,” explores poetic form from stanza length and rhyme, to prosody, and shape poems. Book Three, “Of Ornament,” presents Puttenham’s claim to fame with his list of originally Englished tropes and schemes. Artful cunning in the craft of language composition is celebrated and elevated to potentially political action at court.

Impact and Legacy

Owing to the lack of further editions or citations in other literary works of the period, it is hard to judge the influence of *The Arte of English Poesie*. It is perhaps more useful to consider the book, not in terms of its impact *on* writing, but the status it accords *to* writing: intertwining the aesthetics of conduct and of words, *The Arte* transparently argues for radical social mobility through rhetorically sophisticated use of language. It remains a major reference work as the distillation of mid-Elizabethan literary criticism as well as serving as a practical guide to written composition.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Epideictic in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Invention, Renaissance Idea of](#)
- ▶ [Irony, Renaissance Idea of](#)
- ▶ [Sidney, Philip](#)

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Q

Qāḍī Abū al-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Rukn al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Jaffār ibn Aḥmad al-Bakrī al-Muṭarrizī al-Shabānkārī al-Shīrāzī

► [Al-Ījī](#)

Quercetanus

► [Du Chesne, Joseph](#)

Quevedo, Francisco de

Born: Madrid, 14 September 1580

Died: Villanueva de los Infantes, 8 September 1645

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Abstract

Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas was the most popular Spanish author of his century. He was also a consummate humanist and pioneer of the literary movement known as Baroque *conceptismo*. His primary contribution to

philosophy falls into the realm of Neostoicism. When seeking classical models for his own Neostoical works, he showed a strong preference for Latin Silver Age authors. His legacy is a unique blend of classical pagan philosophy and Christian teaching, a synthesis most appropriately described by the label Christian Humanism.

Biography

Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas was the most popular Spanish author of his century. Before 1634, his work had already appeared in 78 editions – more than twice the number of any other author. Quevedo was also a man of vehement opinions. As one prominent *quevedista* has remarked, he attacked Cicero, Tacitus, the Genoese, Protestants, Jews, Moriscos, women, and homosexuals while defending Homer, Epicurus, the Stoics, Spain, its patron saint Santiago de Compostela, and his own patron the Duke of Osuna. As a result of his violent loyalties, there has been much critical discussion of the “two Quevedos”: one lyrical, long-suffering, and devout and the other nasty, cynical, and abusive. Without entering into inconclusive posthumous psychoanalysis, it is nonetheless possible to see his massive *corpus* of works as including writings relevant to both ends of this spectrum.

Clubfooted and shortsighted, Quevedo was born in 1580 to a family of minor nobility; his

parents were secretary and lady-in-waiting to Princess María. When his father died 6 years later, he became the pupil of Agustín de Villanueva, a noble government official. As a young man, he studied with the Jesuits at the Colegio Imperial in Madrid, where he was able to escape from his mother whom he hated. He later went on to study classical and modern languages and philosophy at the University of Alcalá (1596–1599) and theology at the University of Valladolid (1601–1605). It was during his time in Valladolid that he began both his enmity with the poet Luis de Góngora and his Latin correspondence with Justus Lipsius. It was also during this time that his first poems appeared in print. From 1605 to 1609, he participated in various poetic academies at court, such as that of Count Saldaña, and wrote several of his satirical prose works, including the picaresque novel the *Buscón*. In 1610, he was denied the permission to print his *Sueño del juicio final*; the censor, Father Antolín Montojo, called its style “imprudent.” In 1613, he seems to have suffered a personal crisis in which he resolved to write more “prudent” works based on the Bible or the classics, a decision which resulted in such endeavors as *Lágrimas de Hieremias castellanas* and *Heráclito cristiano*.

From 1613 to 1618, Quevedo’s so-called Italian period, he served in various government functions – particularly under the Viceroy of Naples, the Duke of Osuna – in Palermo, Sicily, Rome, and Naples. His Italian period had a profound impact on his humanistic ambitions. We know from Lope de Vega’s detailed description of the literary atmosphere at court in 1608–1609 that Quevedo had been making no secret of his project of imitating Statius and other Silver Age authors. His stay in Italy strengthened this preference in his reading and the tendency in his writing to imitate these classical figures. During this time, he participated in the activities of the Accademia degli Oziosi in Naples, and since the Silver Age poet Statius himself had been a Neapolitan, Quevedo undoubtedly enjoyed the opportunity to continue working on his own *silvas* in this setting.

Upon his return to Spain, Quevedo became a knight of the Order of Santiago, but following quickly upon the heels of this honor were several tokens of political disgrace. His fortunes fell with

those of his mentor, the Duke of Osuna; after trying to defend the Duke in 1618 before the Council of State against the charge of having participated in the Conspiracy of Venice, Quevedo was banished to his country estate, the Torre de Juan Abad. He was imprisoned for some time in Uclés but then allowed to return to his country home under house arrest. When he became ill, he was allowed to go to a monastery in Villanueva de los Infantes. In 1623, he was back at court, trying to salvage his political career by writing overtly political works in favor of the king’s new minister, the Count-Duke of Olivares. In 1626 and 1627, to his great distress, three of his most popular works – the *Política de Dios*, the *Buscón*, and the *Sueños* – were pirated by the booksellers Roberto Duport and Alonso Pérez, in Zaragoza and Madrid, respectively. In 1628, he was banished again, perhaps because of his active involvement, through the publication of pamphlets, in the controversy over which saint – Teresa or Santiago, with Quevedo favoring the latter – would be the patron of Spain.

Refusing to learn his lesson about engaging in pamphlet wars, in 1631, he published two satirical pamphlets denouncing the deliberately obscure style and irrelevant classical allusions of his foremost literary rival, Luis de Góngora. These two pamphlets, *La culta latiniparla* and *Aguja de navegar cultos*, argue against the elaborate, obfuscating *culterano* style in favor of *conceptismo*, a more direct humanistic attempt to imitate the classics in terms of concepts or matter as well as manner. Quevedo’s use of his pen to participate in the political as well as literary controversies of his day (in all, he wrote 19 overtly political works) did not escape the attention of the authorities. In 1632, he was appointed to the nominal post of secretary to the king, but in the same year, his pre-1631 works, in both authorized and unauthorized editions, appeared on the Index of Prohibited Books “until such time as their true author recognizes them as his own, corrects them accordingly, and republishes them” (the 1640 Index would later continue the ban on his festive and satirical works, with only one exception). In 1634, the Duke of Medinaceli persuaded him to marry an older noble widow, Esperanza de Mendoza, who wished to escape scandal; this

unhappy marriage, which was more of a political alliance, would be dissolved a short 2 years later. In 1635, he was attacked viciously by his literary and political enemies in the anonymous *Tribunal de la justa venganza*, the title page of which called him “Maestro de Errores, Doctor en Desvergüenças, Licenciado en Bufonías, Bachiller en Suciedades, Cathedrático de Vizios, y Proto-Diablo entre los Hombres.”

Quevedo continued to be persecuted by his literary and political enemies throughout the rest of his life. Finally, at 11 o'clock on the night of 7 December 1639, he was arrested in the house of the Duke of Medinaceli with a letter from Olivares to the king accusing him of being “unfaithful and an enemy of the government and a slanderer of it and ultimately a confidante of France and a correspondent of the French.” He was seized with such abruptness that he did not even have time to get dressed. Quevedo was imprisoned in the convent of San Marcos in León for 4 years, during which time he suffered repeated bouts of ill health; the prison conditions were so wretched that he even had to cauterize his open sores with his own hands. Nonetheless, he continued to write such religious works as *Vida de San Pablo*. After his erstwhile enemy Olivares fell from power in 1643, he was released and allowed to return home. His health destroyed, his spirit permanently wounded, he spent a year in Madrid revising some of his manuscripts for publication. Increasingly ill, he retired to his country home for the last time. He died in a cell of the convent of Santo Domingo in Villanueva de los Infantes in 1645.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Quevedo imitated the Latin classics in terms of style as well as content, sometimes engaging in serious *mimesis* and other times using the classical texts as points for parodic departure. He knew and valued the Latin Golden Age authors: Ovid's mannerism appealed to his stylistic taste, and the elegists such as Tibullus and Propertius provided material for his love poetry. Even the sober Horace makes an occasional intertextual appearance in Quevedo's works. For example, his “Sermón estoico de censura moral” is composed on the

model of Horace's satirical *sermões*, while his “Epístola satírica y censoria,” written in tercets, is likewise written after the fashion of the Horatian *Epistulae*. Virgil, too, is represented in his humanistic *imitatio*, as the Dido story reappears in Quevedo's “Imitación de Virgilio.” But while he seems to have admired Virgil's poetry as a source for linguistic purity, mythological material, and the Stoic thought he believed was there, he also parodied this most serious of poets.

Ideologically and stylistically, Quevedo showed a strong preference for Silver Age authors such as Tacitus, Petronius, and especially Seneca, the classical Spaniard whom he patriotically chose to see as a literary and philosophical role model. He crafted his style in the *Marco Bruto* after the Latin prose style of Seneca, Tacitus, and Lucan, with its hyperbaton, repetition, and opposition of terms. At least 70 of his shorter poems are elaborations of quotations or epigrams from Martial, Persius, or Juvenal. The *satura* form of these latter two authors was also influential for Quevedo when he wrote his longer satirical works. Quevedo's *Sueños* fall within the tradition of Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* but also bear some resemblance to Lucian's *Dialogues*. Some themes from Seneca's tragedies and Lucan's *Pharsalia* are also evident in Quevedo's amorous poetry. Quevedo's translation of the *Letters to Lucilius* and his epitome *De los remedios de cualquier fortuna* (1638) show the depth of his direct knowledge of Seneca (or, in the latter case, pseudo-Seneca), but he also learned about Stoicism from Epictetus, whose *Enchiridion* he adapted and published in 1635.

By modeling many of his writings closely on the works of classical authors, Quevedo opted for the traditional philological approach to literary creation. In his *Sueño del infierno*, Quevedo shows himself well enough informed about the practices of contemporary scholarly method to condemn Julius Caesar Scaliger and other contemporaneous humanists to hell for sins that were fundamentally philological. Quevedo himself, however, was guilty (by modern standards) of one egregious philological “sin”: he tried so hard to reconcile pagan and Christian philosophy that he insisted, in his *Doctrina estoica*, on tracing a direct influence of the Old Testament book of

Job upon the Stoic thinkers Epictetus and Seneca. Quevedo cites these two Stoics as well as Juvenal and Persius as being compatible with Christianity. Lucan, like the other Silver Age authors whom Quevedo favored, lived after the birth of Christ and therefore had the opportunity to come into contact with Christian truth. But not all the Silver Age authors were as sympathetic to Christianity as Quevedo felt they should have been. Martial, for example, uttered many commendable sentiments “con profana boca” (“with a profane mouth”), while Tacitus is severely criticized by Quevedo for being anti-Christian at a time when he could – and in Quevedo’s eyes, should – have been sympathetic to the new religion. Quevedo stopped short in most instances of asserting that pagan writers actually converted to Christianity. But his synthesis of classical with Christian philosophy was typical of the Christian Humanism of his day.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Much has been written about Quevedo’s Neostoicism. One of the most influential factors in shaping Quevedo’s synthesis of Christianity with classical Stoic philosophy had been his youthful exchange of letters in Latin with the Flemish humanist Justus Lipsius. Quevedo’s correspondence with Lipsius had begun early, in 1604, but the effects of their relationship lasted for several decades. Quevedo’s interest in Stoic themes was probably reinforced by his banishment as well as his successive political and social disasters. As a result of his personal misfortunes, along with the Inquisitorial suspicion cast upon him by his ongoing placement on the Index, Quevedo wrote almost exclusively serious works beginning in the mid-1630s. In rapid succession came his translation of the *Introduction à la vie dévote*, his Neostoic work *La cuna y la sepultura*, his adaptation of a work attributed to Seneca, *De los remedios de cualquier fortuna* (completed in 1633; published in 1638), and his *Providencia de Dios...* (1641–1642). His Neostoic manifesto was published in 1635 as *Nombre, origen, intento,*

recomendación y descendencia de la doctrina estoica, but other moralistic works of his, such as *Virtud militante*, *La constancia y paciencia del santo Job*, and *Doctrina moral del conocimiento propio y del desengaño de las cosas ajenas*, bear strong Neostoic overtones. From the mid-1630s on, he seems to have wanted to change his image from that of a brilliant but heretical satirical writer to that of a sage and erudite humanist.

Impact and Legacy

Quevedo’s writings in almost every conceivable genre make him one of the foremost Spanish intellectuals of all time. But few of his more than 875 poems, including sonnets, Pindaric odes, *silvas*, *jácaras*, and *letrillas*, were published during his life, although many were later collected for publication by his nephew and his editor, Pedro de Aldrete Quevedo and Jusepe Antonio González de Salas. His humanistic accomplishments included translations of classical authors as well as imitations of their style and subject matter in both Spanish and Latin. An early example of his ability to imitate Seneca’s Latin is an epitaph for his friend and fellow poet, Luis Carrillo y Sotomayor. Typical of the early praise for Quevedo’s accomplishments is that of his editor González de Salas, who wrote in 1648 that “Hasta hoy no conozco poeta alguno versado más, en los que viven, de hebreos, griegos, latinos y franceses; de cuyas lenguas... tuvo buena noticia” (“Until today I do not know any poet alive who is more well-versed in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and French; of which languages... he possessed a good knowledge”). On the basis of his translation of such authors and works as the Greek anthology, pseudo-Phocylides, Anacreon, and Plutarch’s life of Marcus Brutus, Quevedo’s contemporaries regularly praised his Greek in particular, although a discordant voice was raised by his enemy Luis de Góngora. Modern scholars have tended to agree with the latter’s assessment of Quevedo’s Greek abilities, but his scholarly procedure in other areas met or exceeded the standards of his day.

Recent work on Quevedo and philosophy has emphasized his politico-moral stance as anti-Machiavellian. There have also been efforts to qualify his Neostoic doctrine as having been influenced to some degree by the Sophists. His *Stoic Doctrine* appears in English translation in the *Moral Philosophy* volume of the Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts, and he is likewise highlighted in the “Moral Philosophy” chapter of *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*. By any measure, Quevedo is a major figure within the pantheon of Renaissance philosophers and also one of the clearest examples of the intersection of philosophy with literature. His Christian Humanism represents a unique synthesis of pagan philosophy with religious belief.

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Quintilian

Born: AD 35–40, Calahorra (Spain)

Died: c. 96, Rome

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Abstract

Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* exerted extraordinary influence on many areas of European culture during the Renaissance, impacting a large array of topics, ranging from rhetorical precepts to pedagogy. Prominent figures of Italian and European humanism, such as Poggio Bracciolini, George of Trebizond, Lorenzo Valla, and Angelo Poliziano, examined the ancient rhetor at length, considering him to be a complementary or alternative model to Cicero. The high number of both *Institutio* editions and rhetoric manuals based on it show that Quintilian held a very dominant position within the sphere of educational teachings in Early Modern Europe.

Impact and Legacy

Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* exerted extraordinary influence on many areas of European culture, impacting not only the study of rhetoric but also poetics, pedagogy, morality, theater, and even the history of art (Galand et al. 2010). Known throughout the Middle Ages in a very partial text of the *Institutio Oratoria* and only scarcely mentioned in Late Antiquity, the Renaissance saw Quintilian become, instead, a reference model for pedagogues, grammarians, philologists, orators, and theorists of the arts in general, and philosophers were no exception (Johnson 1966; Winterbottom 1967; Cousin 1975; Classen 1994). Nevertheless, the history of Quintilian in the Renaissance still awaits to be written.

Petrarch came to know Quintilian at the end of 1350, albeit in a mutilated form, thanks to a gift

from Lapo Castiglionchio the Elder (the manuscript is Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 7720; Accame Lanzillotta 1989). His enthusiasm for the text was so great that in subsequent years, not only did he carefully annotate this manuscript, but he also dedicated a letter to Quintilian, the *Fam.* XXIV 7, in which he defined the *Institutio* as a precious object, hoping that someone could bring it back to light in its integral form (Accame Lanzillotta 1989, 1–4). Quintilian – who Petrarch, like his contemporaries, considered to be the author of the *Declamationes Maiores* as well – despite being an extraordinary educator, cannot measure up to Cicero as an orator (Accame Lanzillotta 1989, 3).

The scholar able to return Quintilian's full text to the humanists was Poggio Bracciolini, thanks to the lucky discovery of a manuscript during his first trip to Sankt Gallen between August and September 1416 (Winterbottom 1967, 340–344, 355; Fiesoli 2013, 135–137). Very famous is the letter to Guarino Veronese with which Poggio announced this great achievement (Bracciolini 1984, II, ep. IV 5), long coveted also by Coluccio Salutati (1896, III, ep. 9, 20 and Classen 1994, 80–82).

The Poggian tradition of the *Institutio* enjoyed great prestige and extraordinary vitality throughout the fifteenth century (Winterbottom 1967, 342–343), which was not limited solely to Tuscany (Ferrari 1984; Classen 1994). Before long the work became a fundamental text for any humanist engaged in an in-depth reflection on education. Numerous pedagogical treatises written between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (like those of Maffeo Vegio, Matteo Palmieri, Enea Silvio Piccolomini and, later, of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Juan Louis Vives, both Quintilian experts: Colson 1973, LXX–LXXII) are in fact imbued with Quintilian analyses, especially extracts from the first book of the *Institutio* (Classen 1994, 93–94; Nassichuck 2010). Similarly, many humanists (Erasmus, Fonzio, Vida, Rabelais, Ronsard, among others) drew from Quintilian ideas for their reflections on rhetorical theory and practice, recovering from the *Institutio* notions such as *copia*, inspiration, improvisation, and imitation (Galand 2010). Moreover,

Quintilian soon became part of the scholastic canon: Battista Guarini, for example, recommended that his students use not only the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero's texts to learn rhetoric but also those of Quintilian, "who is extremely good at this subject" (Guarini 2002, 11). In this respect, the education program developed some decades later by the Jesuits was perfectly in line with the humanistic one: Quintilian and his project for the formation of men based on rhetoric became a landmark in the educational system of the Society of Jesus (Baffetti 2010).

The renewed reading of Quintilian made possible by Poggio's discovery did not arouse unanimous reactions: in 1433–1434 George of Trebizond in his *Rhetoricorum libri quinque* criticized the ancient rhetor and even threatened to supplant him (Monfasani 1976, 262, 267–268). This is just one of the examples of the strain of anti-Quintilianism documentable in Renaissance Italy (Monfasani 1992). Almost a century later, in 1549, Peter Ramus, in his attempt to refute foundational texts in philosophy and rhetoric (Aristotle as well as Cicero), published his *Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum*, openly challenging Quintilian (Newlands and Murphy 1986).

Quite different was Lorenzo Valla's reaction, who went so far as to overturn Petrarch's judgment. Despite the prevailing devotion to Cicero of the time, in the juvenile *Comparatio Quintiliani Tullii*que, he attributed the palm of victory to Quintilian (referring, however, to the author of the *Declamationes*) in a clash with Cicero played out through orations: the declamation of Ps-Quintilian's *Gladiator* against Cicero's *Pro Ligario* (Pagliaroli 2006). The relationship between the humanist and the *Institutio* – which Valla declares to know "almost by heart" in *Antidotum in Facium* I 7, 2 (Valla 1981), and of which he transcribes entire chapters in his *Repastinatio Dialectice et Philosophie* – cannot be circumscribed, in fact, to just one sphere: Quintilian is foundational to Valla's conception of the language and involves the totality of his intellectual analyses (Camporeale 1972; Regoliosi 2010). In particular, the entire cultural undertaking of the *Elegantie* is formed by Quintilian's ideas (defined, alongside Cicero,

"light and gem not only of all wisdom, but also of Latin eloquence" in *Elegantie* I 17), as well as Valla's reformation of Aristotelian scholastic philosophy in his *Repastinatio* (Nauta 2009; Regoliosi 2010). The "re-plowing" of Aristotelian scholastic metaphysics, natural philosophy, and logic is based primarily on a review of the language, which derives from the Quintilian concept of *consuetudo* (Camporeale 1972). The resulting reduction of the Aristotelian categories made by Valla also originates from Quintilian's principle that dialectic must be "a very short and easy subject" (as he affirms in the second proem of the *Repastinatio*), depending on rhetoric which is, in turn, the structure of all knowledge (Regoliosi 2010). Even the demonstration of the falsehood of the *Constitutum Constantini* is based on rhetorical procedures extracted from Quintilian, in particular from *Inst.* V 5 (De Caprio 1978).

Valla's careful reading of the *Institutio* can be followed in his manuscript, which is still extant (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 7723; a second manuscript belonging to him is now lost), in which the humanist prepared a rich historical and erudite commentary, eminently legal (Valla 1996; Fernández López 1999). The manuscript is a witness of singular importance in the Quintilian tradition because of the many good readings that it preserves. Since many of them are directly written by the copyist's hand, it was assumed that they stem from an initial critical work on the text made by Valla (1996, XXI–XXIII).

The echo of the debate on Quintilian set into motion by Valla's theses (harshly criticized by Poggio, among others) reached Florence and the other great master of humanistic philology, Angelo Poliziano, who made the *Institutio Oratoria* the subject of his public lectures in the 1480–1481 so inaugurating his academic career in the Florentine Studio in the name of Statius and Quintilian. In his *Oratio super Fabio Quintiliano et Statii Sylvis*, while affirming not wanting to put Quintilian before Cicero, he considers "his *Institutiones oratoriae* fuller and richer than Cicero's rhetorical works" (Poliziano 1952, 877) and, for their ordered structure, better suited for teaching and learning rhetoric (Daneloni 2001,

12–13). There are no authentic testimonies regarding Ambrogini's lessons on Quintilian; his extensive work on the text of the *Institutio* is known instead thanks to the rich annotations recorded on his copy of the incunable published in Milan in 1476 by Antonio Zarotto (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 379). The notes, which perhaps constituted the preparatory material for the course, are wide ranging in variety, spanning from simple annotations made to facilitate the reading to textual corrections (including excellent conjectures) and comments indicating a high level of scholarship (Daneloni 2001).

The growing interest in the second half of the fifteenth century in Quintilian's text is demonstrated by the early prints of the work: the *editio princeps* of the *Institutio* was published in Rome on August 3, 1470, by the printer Filippo da Lignamine and edited by Giovanni Antonio Campano. Many others followed, including, in the same year, a second print by Konrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz and a third by Nicolas Jenson. The first two annotated editions were published in Venice (Cousin 1975, 171–172; Perosa 1981). The first one, published in 1493, was equipped with an extensive commentary attributed to Raffaele Regio and to Bartolomeo Merula. Regio, who dealt with Quintilian in his *Annotationes* and in the *Ducenta problemata in totidem Institutionis oratoriae Quintiliani depravationes*, was able to use some of the major experiences that humanistic philology had hitherto expressed (Winterbottom 1999; Perosa 1981, 286–287); it is likely that he obtained Quintilian materials relating to Poliziano's course of 1480–1481 (Daneloni 2001, 181–183). The second commented edition appeared in 1494 and included the commentaries prepared by Valla, Pomponio Leto, and Sulpizio from Veroli (Perosa 1981). The press and the work of great intellectual publishers like Josse Bade, who used the earlier works and especially Valla's comment, transformed Quintilian's masterwork into a European best seller, despite Cicero continuing to occupy a leading position in rhetorical teachings: between 1470 and 1539, the *Institutio*

became, in fact, readily accessible through more than 40 editions (Cousin 1975, 171–174; Classen 1994, 97–98).

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- Bracciolini, Poggio
- George of Trebizond
- Petrarch
- Poliziano, Angelo
- Ramus, Petrus
- Rhetoric in the Renaissance
- Valla, Lorenzo

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Quirini, Lauro

Born: Venice or Candia, 1420

Died: Candia, c. 1480

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Abstract

Lauro Quirini was a Venetian humanist, educated at the University of Padua, who took part in disputations with Leonardo Bruni, Lorenzo Valla, and Poggio Bracciolini. He made a key contribution to one of the most important debates of fifteenth-century humanism by using Aristotelian arguments against Bracciolini to defend the claim that nobility was based on descent. Around 1450 he wrote a political treatise in which he combined Aristotle's analysis of the best form of government with Cicero's idea of the republic. He may therefore be considered one of the leading figures of the Italian Renaissance.

Biography

Quirini was born into a patrician family in 1420 either in Venice or Candia, the first city of the administrative district of Crete then under the control of the Republic of Venice. In 1440 he graduated in liberal arts from the University of Padua, one of the main centers of Renaissance Aristotelianism. He went on to spend a year in Florence hosted by Cardinal Bessarion. As Vespasiano da Bisticci noted in his biography of

Quirini, during his stay in Florence, he met Leonardo Bruni and other leading humanists of the city. Despite becoming well established in Florentine society, in 1442 he returned to Padua to study civil and canon law.

Between 1443 and 1448, Quirini gained a reputation as an orator, among his addresses being the funeral eulogy of a famous mercenary known as Gattamelata, and in 1449 he gave public lessons in the city of Venice on Aristotelian ethics. Two years later, he became a lecturer in rhetoric and moral philosophy at the University of Padua. However, in 1452 he abandoned his academic career and moved to Candia, where his family had extensive business interests, and there he devoted himself to such profitable activities as the trade in alum, wine, and textiles.

Quirini remained on the island of Crete from 1452 until his death in around 1480. Although a merchant in the second part of his life, he never gave up his humanistic studies and served for a number of years as an agent to Cardinal Bessarion, procuring and transmitting important Greek manuscripts.

While living in Candia, Quirini also wrote a number of historical letters on the fall of Constantinople and on Turkish expansionism in the Aegean Sea. Two of his letters are noteworthy insofar as they were addressed to Pope Nicholas V (1454) and Pope Pius II (1464) and insisted on the need for a crusade (Quirini 2014, pp. 104–108). However, the letters of his earlier years are far more interesting since he corresponded with such humanists as Leonardo Bruni, Lorenzo Valla, and Poggio Bracciolini, disagreeing on certain theoretical issues. He also corresponded with the noblewoman Isotta Nogarola, to whom he gave advice on refining her knowledge of humanistic studies (Quirini 2004, pp. 107–113).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

All of Quirini's works were written before moving to Candia and were essentially based on Aristotelian arguments. His debt to Aristotle was already evident in his first work of 1440, the Latin dialogue *De politia*, in which he

imagined himself discussing moral and political questions with the Greek philosopher. Like other humanists, he was attempting to recover the authentic meaning of Aristotle's philosophy. Moreover, in line with the early, pre-Ficinian and pedagogical readings of Platonism, he attempted to show that Aristotle's teachings were not at variance with the ideas of Plato. As recently remarked (Martin 2014, pp. 50–53), the letter that he wrote to the captain of Padua, Andrea Morosini, in 1440 helps to clarify his approach to Aristotelianism. In it he refused to express absolute faith in Aristotle's authority, drawing a distinction between orthodox Christian belief and the views of ancient philosophies. Hence he argued that Aristotle's thought should be analyzed without reference to theological arguments, and thus it is unsurprising that he has been considered a Renaissance Averroist (Marwan 2006, pp. 700–714).

During his time in Florence, Quirini's interest in Aristotelianism did not wane, even though he also wrote more humanistic works: a lost commentary on the poem composed by Cyriacus of Ancona for the poetry competition organized by Leon Battista Alberti (the first "certame coronario") and two moral dialogues in the style of Lucian, the *De pace Italiae* and the *Dialogus in gymnasiis Florentinis*, the latter being a compendium of Aristotle's moral philosophy. He also tackled Aristotle's moral philosophy in his epistolary controversy with Leonardo Bruni, circa 1441. Bruni's replies to Quirini's lost letters reveal that he had brought into question the traditional construal of Aristotle's concept of virtue, maintaining that temperance, justice, and other virtues should be considered extremes rather than means between two extremes (Griffiths et al. 1987, pp. 298–300). This view recalls the critique of Aristotle's account of virtue developed by Lorenzo Valla in the *De voluptate ac de vero bono* (1432) and later in the *De vero falsoque bono* (1441). Yet one should bear in mind that around 1445 Quirini wrote several polemical letters to Valla, accusing him of writing in opposition to Aristotle. Moreover, in the *De sacerdotio Christi*, the Latin translation of a Greek document of the *Suda Lexicon* that Quirini dedicated to Pope Nicholas V in 1447, he defended the legitimacy of

the *Donation of Constantine* and made critical allusions to Valla's *Declamatio*.

However, the dispute between Quirini and Poggio Bracciolini is of far greater significance than any other. It was Bracciolini's *De nobilitate* (1440) that became the main polemical target of three works in which Quirini sought to define the concept of nobility. The first of these was a letter written in 1446 to Pietro Tomasi by Quirini and two of his friends, Francesco Contarini and Niccolò Barbo. The second was the *De nobilitate contra Poggium Florentinum*, a philosophical treatise on nobility that Quirini finished around 1449. The third work, the *De nobilitate responsio, quid iuris*, was a legal treatise, written about 1450, in which he addressed the issue of nobility in juridical terms. About 1450 Quirini also finished his last work, the *De republica*, a political treatise in which he discussed Aristotle's analysis of the ideal form of government. The three works on nobility and the *De republica* advanced an original, free interpretation of Aristotelian theses and were without doubt the most innovative and far reaching of Quirini's works, which is probably why they were not left in manuscript form but were published together in the second half of the twentieth century (Quirini 1977).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Quirini's role in the fifteenth-century dispute over nobility has been investigated in considerable depth (Kristeller 1985, pp. 321–339; Rabil 1991, pp. 143–181; Finzi 2010). As is well known, Bracciolini's *De nobilitate* initiated a debate on the issue in which many humanists took part. While Florentines like Carlo Marsuppini and Cristoforo Landino and also Bartolomeo Platina agreed with Poggio that nobility consisted in moral and intellectual excellence and thus was to be found only in virtue, Quirini and other non-Florentines, such as Leonardo from Chio and Tristano Caracciolo, maintained that it depended on descent rather than virtue and was inherited.

At stake in the dispute was a new view of political aristocracy, according to which men should have access to public office on the basis

of their personal qualities, irrespective of their social status. Bracciolini and his followers, it may be said, were trying to demonstrate that men of low birth could aspire to government office, if they were virtuous and had sufficient learning. To support this thesis, Bracciolini castigated the avidity and rivalry of noblemen who had risen to power by virtue of their lineage in such cities as Genoa, Naples, and Venice. In his letter to Tomasi, Quirini described the impact that Bracciolini's *De nobilitate* had had on its readership more clearly than other humanists by giving voice to Venetian, Genoese, Neapolitan, and even Greek merchants who had denounced Bracciolini's ideas on nobility while conducting their business near the Rialto Bridge.

Quirini's *De nobilitate contra Poggium Florentinum* got to the heart of the matter. The author did not deny that nobility could be based on virtue and, indeed, tried to show that virtue depended on nature. The subordination of virtue to nature was possible because he understood the latter in Aristotelian terms and thus consistently used the word to denote inclinations and dispositions that affect men from birth. It is therefore no surprise that he maintained that virtue could evolve by nature only in the most eminent men.

Like Aristotle, Quirini did not believe in natural equality among men and claimed that the distinction between nobles and common men was grounded on natural hierarchies of power that ordered the whole universe. Nobility was thus described as a natural phenomenon, but at the same time the questions it raised were considered in essentially political terms. According to Quirini, in fact, men were to be considered nobles if they were born to govern themselves and the political community. He was stretching Aristotle's thesis on citizenship, and when moving from Aristotle's distinction between citizens and other inhabitants of the city, he did so in order to claim that nobility was the only criterion according to which men should be considered worthy of public office. In this way he offered a philosophical justification for the role of nobility in the Republic of Venice, where political participation was traditionally limited to a finite body of patrician families. But to defend the political prerogatives of his class, Quirini also quoted the *Lex Cornelia* and

other ancient Roman laws that forbade marriages between patricians and plebeians.

The fact that Quirini's rejection of Bracciolini's ideas was a defense of Venetian institutions becomes evident in the passages where he challenged Bracciolini's description of Venetian aristocracy as a faction and emphasized that the Republic of Venice was the only city that had never known internal conflicts. However, unlike Pier Paolo Vergerio (*De republica veneta*, c. 1412) and other fifteenth-century humanists who created the "myth of Venice" (Robey and Law 1975), he refrained from disclosing that Venice was free from factions because it had a form of mixed government that combined the monarchic power of the Doge, the aristocratic power of the Senate, and the democratic power of the Great Council. Moreover, unlike Leonardo of Chio, he did not consider Venice superior to Florence: in accordance with the new foreign policy pursued by Doge Francesco Foscari, Quirini maintained that both Venice and Florence were heirs to the greatness of the Roman Republic (King 1986, pp. 118–131).

Bracciolini's dialogue is also mentioned in the legal treatise of 1450, although in that work Quirini wondered whether a man could legitimize the son of a fellow noble citizen without breaking the law of the Emperor. To answer this question in the negative, he touched on the distinction between nobility by virtue and nobility by birth, merging Aristotle's theses and legal arguments. By contrast, in his *De republica* Aristotle's theses were combined with Ciceronian arguments.

Quirini's political treatise aimed to demonstrate which was the best form of government. While humanists such as Giovanni Pontano (*De principe*, c. 1465), Bartolomeo Platina (*De principe*, 1470; *De optimo cive*, 1474), and Francesco Patrizi of Siena (*De rei publicae institutione* 1465–1471; *De regno et regis institutione*, 1481–1484) focused on the virtues needed to be a perfect prince or perfect citizen (Skinner 2002), Quirini directed his attention at political constitutions and analyzed them in Aristotelian terms. As he admitted in the dedicatory letter to Doge Francesco Foscari, the *De republica* was conceived as a digest of Aristotle's *Politics* but ended up being a very different work, the chief

disparity being his attempt to fit Cicero's arguments into an Aristotelian framework.

Impact and Legacy

Like the treatise on nobility, Quirini's work on the best form of government offered an original, free reading of Aristotelian moral and political arguments (Lines 2002). As in Aristotle's *Politics*, in Quirini's *De republica*, the analysis of correct and deviant forms of government preceded a section on education clearly influenced by Pier Paolo Vergerio's pedagogical treatise on the importance of humanistic studies (*De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis*, c. 1402) and was followed by an explanation of human sociability in which his debt to Cicero was unmistakable. To explain why men are by nature political animals, Quirini in fact drew on Cicero's idea of social ties that join all men by nature and also referred to Cicero's *On Duties*, *On the Commonwealth*, and *On the Laws*. On the basis of Ciceronian arguments that would resurface in Pontano's and Platina's *De principe*, he asserted that the prince should be considered as the guardian of the law. Unlike Aristotle, he criticized hereditary monarchies, which he viewed as naturally destined to decline, and praised elective monarchies, in which only the noblest and most virtuous men could become kings. He followed Cicero's theses rather than Aristotle's ones even when describing the slaying of a tyrant as an honest act. Furthermore, unlike other humanists, he used the Latin term *respublica* to denote not all political constitutions, but a specific form of government: as recently noted (Hankins 2010) by *respublica*, Quirini meant polity, the form of government by the many which Aristotle considered to be the best and which he contrasted to democracy.

In Aristotle's *Politics*, polity was the best form of government since its constitution established that public offices would be assigned partly by lot and partly by election and declared the ruling class to be the "middle" group of citizens—that is, a moderately wealthy class between the rich (the ruling class of the oligarchy) and the poor (the ruling class of democracy). By contrast, Quirini's ideal form of government was essentially an aristocratic republic in which noblemen ruled by turn,

and nobility was the only criterion used to select those worthy of public office.

As in the *De nobilitate*, in *De republica* nobility was a question of birthright rather than character, but the distance between the noble and common man was wider since Quirini held that people without rank or title should only ratify decisions aimed at ensuring that liberty did not turn into anarchy and that political unity did not give way to discord. Moreover, the distinction between noblemen and common men conflated into that between patricians and the plebeians because Quirini used the Roman Republic as an example alongside Aristotle's polity. There is no doubt that his model of the Roman Republic was a Ciceronian one since he referred to Cicero's definition of the republic as something belonging to a people (*res publica, res populi*), pointing out that not all human assemblies could be defined as a people and that the term "the people" was applicable only to a body of persons united in agreement over rights (Cic. *De rep.* I, 39).

Although Quirini made no direct reference to the Republic of Venice, it is probable that he turned to Cicero's notion of republic because it appeared to match more closely the political institutions of Venice than Aristotle's polity (Cappelli 2010). Thus in both his political treatise and his treatise on nobility, he interpreted Aristotle's ideas in a highly original way, with one eye on the Roman Republic and the other on that of Venice. This way of reading Aristotle constitutes the principal legacy left to us by Quirini.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alberti, Leon Battista](#)
- ▶ [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)
- ▶ [Bracciolini, Poggio](#)
- ▶ [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- ▶ [Law in the Renaissance, Roman](#)
- ▶ [Pontano, Giovanni](#)
- ▶ [Sacchi, Bartolomeo, Detto il Platina](#)
- ▶ [Turks, Renaissance Image of](#)
- ▶ [Valla, Lorenzo](#)

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R

Rabeinu, Nissim

► [Gerondi, Nissim ben Reuben](#)

Rabelais, François

Born: 1483 or 1494

Died: 1553

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Abstract

François Rabelais is a major French figure of the Renaissance. Active in his time as a physician, humanist, monk, and scholar of Greek, Rabelais was well-known in humanist circles, but it is his reputation as a writer of novels that has sustained his renown over the centuries. The protagonists of his most famous novels are two giants, Gargantua and Pantagruel; their fantastic and grotesque adventures, along with Rabelais' characteristic coarse and lewd humor and satirical tone, have become the distinctive features of his work. However, it was not always plain sailing for Rabelais, as his works were banned and systematically condemned by church authorities. His writings

have multiple meanings, and the reader is constantly urged to go beyond the text's surface meaning to discover the other levels of interpretation. Rabelais' novels and their success are a testament to his literary prowess, and his influence on literature has been acknowledged by critics who recognize him as one of the creators of the modern European novel. Today, he is considered to be one of the greatest writers of all time.

Biography

François Rabelais was born in La Devinière, near Chinon, in either 1483 or 1494. Little is known about his family; he was one of three sons of a landowner who was a lawyer by profession. Around 1520, Rabelais entered a Franciscan monastery in Fontenay-le-Comte, which was the busy capital city of the region of Lower Poitou at the time. There, he met Pierre Amy, who would become one of his closest friends, as well as the famous jurists André Tiraqueau and Amaury Bouchard. Like them, Rabelais was interested in topics such as natural history, medicine, religion, and the social organization of marriage. He read Latin and Greek and, following humanist philosophical methods, turned to ancient texts to enhance his knowledge. He first came to attention as a correspondent of Guillaume Budé and soon after was recognized as an eminent specialist of the Greek language. In 1524, he left the

Franciscan monastery where Greek books had been forbidden and fled to his friend Geoffroy d'Estissac, abbot of Maillezais, where he found shelter among the Benedictine monks. Geoffroy d'Estissac had an enlightened mind and was open to new ideas. Rabelais became his secretary and traveled with him throughout the region of Poitou, discussing issues for debate with other scholars. In his narrative works, traces of place names from both this region and the area around his birthplace, near Chinon, can be found.

In 1530 and 1531, Rabelais studied medicine at the famous university of Montpellier. There, he met Guillaume Rondelet, the naturalist and physician who would later find renown for his treatise on fish (*Histoire naturelle des poissons*, 1558). In 1532, Rabelais worked as a physician at the Hôtel-Dieu public hospital in Lyon. At that time, the town was a flourishing center of commerce, trading mainly with Italy and Switzerland. Alongside his job in the hospital, he met publishers and carried out several important translations: Greek medical treatises (Hippocrates' *Aphorisms*, *Ars parva* by Galen, 1532) and Italian texts written in Latin (1532, *Epistolarum medicinalium* by Manardi and 1534, *Topographia antiquae Romae* by Marliani). In 1532, he also published his first great novel *Pantagruel* (*Pantagruel, roi des Dipsodes, avec ses faits et prouesses épouvantables*); this first part was followed in 1534–1535 by the first edition of *Gargantua* (*La vie très horrifique du grand Gargantua, père de Pantagruel*), the story of Pantagruel's father; both books were revised in 1542. The narratives were published under the anagrammed pseudonym Alcofribas Nasier, who served as the story's narrator and was referred to on the title page as an "*abstracteur de quintessence*," a metaphorical designation of the author's function. Clearly, this pseudonym acted as a protective mask that not only shielded Rabelais from personal attacks but also came to suggest that the role of the author was not so different from that of an alchemist: to abstract quintessential matter. It should be noted here that this period of his life was marked by two directions in his writing: he published both scientific books and fantasy novels (the former with publisher Sebastien Gryphe and the latter with Claude Nourry and François Juste).

Between 1534 and 1536, Rabelais had the opportunity to travel to Rome on three occasions, each time accompanying the Archbishop Jean du Bellay, who served as the king of France's ambassador to the Pope. As a confirmed humanist, Rabelais took advantage of his travels to meet Italian scholars interested in painting, art, architecture, antiques, ancient books, and modern innovations. He explored the wonders of Rome and Florence; in Rome, he made a supplication to the Pope to be forgiven for his apostasy. He completed his studies in Montpellier in 1537 as a Doctor of Medicine where he practiced anatomy and taught *Pronostics* by Hippocrates. In 1538, Guillaume du Bellay, brother of Jean du Bellay, became the governor of Piedmont, and his political strategies in Italy inspired Rabelais to publish *Strategemata* in 1539. This last book has unfortunately been lost to time.

In 1541, he wrote an almanac under his own name, as well as a fake prognostication for the year 1541 under the pseudonym of Seraphino Calbarsy. In 1532, he had already published *A Pantagruéline Prognostication for the Year 1533* under his own name, "François Rabelais, doctor of medicine and professor of astrology." These real or fake prognostications were repeated every year until 1544. In 1542, he published a second edition of his first two novels, *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*. The Faculty of Theology at the Sorbonne placed both works on its Index of Prohibited Books. While the books continued to be published under a pseudonym, the author still made many significant corrections and additions in order to sound less offensive.

In 1543, Rabelais suffered a great loss with the death of two of his closest friends and protectors: Guillaume du Bellay, whose death was evoked in two different episodes of the *Third* and the *Fourth Books*, and Geoffroy d'Estissac.

In Paris, in 1546, Chrétien Wechel published Rabelais' *Third Book* (*Tiers Livre des faits et dits héroïques du bon Pantagruel*) under the author's real name, "M. François Rabelais, Doctor of Medicine." Soon after, the Faculty of Theology banned this book as well, and Rabelais left for Metz for his own safety. He likely went to Rome as Jean du Bellay's personal physician.

A first version of the *Fourth Book* (*Quart Livre*) was published in Lyon in 1548, with a final and complete edition published in Paris in 1552. Between these two dates, Jean Calvin, in his book *Scandals* (*Des Scandales*), protested against Rabelais' immorality. In the same period, Rabelais was appointed priest at Meudon, near Paris. At this time, his first three books were still banned.

Rabelais died in 1553. The *Fifth Book* (*Cinquième Livre*), first published in a short version under the title of *L'isle sonante* (1562), was published in 1564 and presumably was not entirely authentic. In 1564, François Desprez published *Les songes drolatiques de Pantagruel*, inspired by the works of Rabelais.

Heritage and Breaking with Tradition

At the Crossroads of Different Writing Traditions

The stories and main characters of the first two novels, *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, are inspired by different traditions. First, the tradition of the "great chronicles" (*Grandes et inestimables Chroniques de l'enorme geant Gargantua*), which is quoted in *Pantagruel's* Prologue: "those who liked the Great Chronicles would appreciate the new book," says the author. In ancient books written in epic medieval prose, heroes, who were also giants, had to overcome difficult ordeals at King Arthur's Court. The book of these "chronicles" was a real success. Rabelais then dedicated his own book to the passionate readers of such stories, claiming to belong to this tradition and to continue it, which he did, or at least appeared to.

In addition to the literary tradition, Rabelais drew a great deal on French folklore, in which Gargantua was already a well-known character, as was the fairy Melusine. Rabelais was fond of borrowing such characters and sometimes transformed them in his own way. Pantagruel, for example, is a little devil at first. In popular legends and in farces of fifteenth-century mysteries, he plays tricks on people by sprinkling salt in their throats while they sleep so that they wake up terribly thirsty. Rabelais kept these notions in his novel, but the little man becomes a giant endowed

with humanist and Christian principles that compel him to do good deeds.

Furthermore, being deeply familiar with antiquity, Rabelais' writings echo the comic tradition of the burlesque of Lucian of Samosata. This inspiration is very important, as it guides the narrative in the direction of a false yet apparently true story in which fantasy is told as perfect truth. This launches a sort of game with the reader who is challenged to believe the unbelievable, not only with settings on imaginary islands or in fantastic places but also with strange allegorical creatures and many bizarre encounters with different marvels.

Finally, bearing in mind that Rabelais was also a physician and keenly aware of the latest innovations and discoveries in natural sciences, the strong presence of science within his fiction cannot be overlooked. Epic battles, for instance, are written with the vocabulary of anatomic dissections, and imaginary plants, such as the Pantagruelion, are described in the style of a botanical treatise.

The Echo of Humanist Ideas

Rabelais' fiction not only strives to entertain but also aims to convey ideas. Rabelais was particularly fond of Erasmus' idea of the "*dignitas hominis*" and of the major role that formal education plays in an individual's personal education. Humanist or Erasmian principles are at stake in the childhood episode of the giant Gargantua, in which the young hero has to change teachers in order to experience new education. At first, he had to learn all kinds of idle knowledge by rote, understanding nothing, and taking no advantage of it to mature and gain experience. Even his innate qualities were repressed or stifled under his instructors. Once placed in the care of humanist teachers, he learned at last to read, understand, and comment on his readings. Acquiring such a fine education, he was finally able to come into his own and fulfill his potential: to show his true mind and to improve and achieve his real nature and capacity of being a prince. In *Pantagruel* (Chapter 8), a letter from Gargantua to Pantagruel betrays similar priorities – "knowledge without conscience is but the ruin of the soul" ("*science sans conscience*

n'est que ruine de l'âme") – and sums up the requirements for a complete humanist education. The student will focus on learning languages, both ancient tongues and modern vernaculars. This ideal education is then illustrated in the next chapter by Pantagruel's encounter with Panurge, a stranger who speaks 13 different languages fluently. It is only evident much later on when Panurge speaks in French that, in fact, this language is his mother tongue.

Education is not the only humanist idea Rabelais introduces in his narrative works. He also discusses the need for an appropriate diet, essential for good health, and stresses the importance of peace-keeping between different states, especially if they are neighboring ones. When Erasmus wrote about the rules of good government, he underlined the horrors of war and stressed the need for peace. Rabelais, in turn, told the story of the Picrocholine Wars to demonstrate the monstrosity and injustice of imperialism.

Rabelais' novels can rightfully be considered a mirror of humanist thought. This "serious" interpretation ought not to be considered antagonistic to the "joyful" or "humorous" one: each is complementary, since the stories always contain both aspects simultaneously.

Inside the Novels

The five-book cycle forms an ensemble, and the same heroes reappear in different adventures.

The first published book, *Pantagruel*, tells the story of Pantagruel's miraculous birth, youth, and life. Although the novel follows the medieval tradition of epic chronicles, the hero is now presented as a perfect humanist and Christian character, a very wise person – yet this does not prevent him from getting into trouble. Discovering Paris with his companions, Pantagruel meets several strange characters: a student from the region of Limousin, the perfect caricature of a stupid pedant, and Panurge, a fascinating trickster who does not care about morality and likes to show off his skills as a cheater and a laughing prankster. The war against the Dipsodians shows the interest of wit and tricks; interactions with ladies underline the fact that the medieval sense of "courtly love" had become old-fashioned. This

book contains the famous letter from Pantagruel's father about an ideal education (including the aforementioned "knowledge without conscience" quotation) and a curious episode at the end in which the gigantic hero swallows his own narrator, Alcofribas, who finds a "new world" in the throat of the hero where peasants live peacefully, convinced that they are living in the "ancient world." This episode is very revealing about the idea of the relativity of our conceptions of the world.

Gargantua, the second book, is structured along a similar biographical pattern. This time, the narrative focuses on Pantagruel's father, Gargantua, who tells the story of his extraordinary birth and curious adventures during his youth and into adulthood. The novel is meant to mislead the reader or at least toy with their expectations. After a miraculous birth through his mother's left ear, the young hero apparently spends his childhood like all of the other children in his country: eating and drinking, sleeping, and playing. But his games are quite special, for example, he invents an ingenious "*torchecul*" (arsewipe), plays tricks on his father's friends, steals the bells from the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, and takes revenge on Parisians by making his horse urinate so abundantly that it drowns part of the city. The first third of the book includes amusing episodes linked to Gargantua's gigantic body. Later on, a war is sparked from a misunderstanding. New characters come into play like Picrochole (literally, the "bilious"), the imperialist king of the neighborhood who cannot help getting angry and fighting. His officers are all ridiculous, whether for their names or their actions. Another important character of this war is Friar Jean, a monk who defends his abbey against enemy pillaging before joining Gargantua's company, where he takes part in both the fights and the feasts, always playing a very active, prominent, and stimulating role. At the end of the book, Picrochole is defeated, and Gargantua awards Friar Jean the opportunity to found an abbey according to the monk's own ideas. The Abbey of Thelema is a magnificent place, looking much more like the castles of the Loire than a cloistered monastery. All the rules and habits of a monastery are reversed: men and women can

live together in perfect harmony, and the main principle is to “Do what thou wilt” (“*fais ce que voudras*”). This episode is considered as a utopian attempt to describe an ideal society.

The *Third Book* begins with a very different purpose. Panurge is eager to get married, but not before making sure that his future wife will be faithful to him. He first asks his friends for advice, but remains uncertain and so then refers to different authorities, including a prophet, a philosopher, a physician, a man of law, and finally... a fool! The story proceeds from one piece of advice to the next, from one kind of knowledge to another, most of the time uttered in the most obscure specialist language that requires an explanation. Pantagruel always offers his interpretation of the answer, while Panurge, providing his own understanding, always contradicts him. It becomes apparent that the meaning of words depends on the listener and that the book demonstrates a kind of hermeneutic crisis: confronted with the universal ambiguity of language, the reader never knows where to stop interpreting as any interpretation invalidates a previous one, and none of them are especially convincing. Panurge’s quest for a final answer remains the central plot in the *Fourth Book*. He has convinced his friend Pantagruel to depart on a voyage to find “the bottle’s word” (“*le mot de la bouteille*”), which he thinks will be decisive in his search for answers. The narrative thus continues at sea, traveling from one land to another. While each of the islands visited by the protagonists is surprising and purely fictional, nonetheless, their inhabitants represent some social stereotypes of Rabelais’ time. Travel is thus to be understood in the allegorical sense of passing from one satire to another. Panurge’s sheep is one of the book’s most famous episodes. The trickster wants to take revenge on a stupid merchant selling sheep at an exorbitant price, but when the merchant does eventually sell him an overpriced sheep, Panurge throws it into the sea; the rest of the flock follow it eventually all the sheep drown. Having punished the pretentious merchant, Panurge laughs heartily.

As the “bottle’s word” has still not been found at the end of the *Fourth Book*, the story of the *Fifth Book* – whose attribution to Rabelais is called into question – tells the concluding episodes of the

quest. Once again, the heroes stumble into strange encounters in extraordinary or frightening fictional places. Finally, they meet the female priest Bacbuc, who reveals the long-awaited word, but only at the end of a complex ceremony. It comes in the form of a poetic calligram, written in the shape of a bottle. The characters are then invited to drink from a marvelous fountain, the “water” of which tastes like wine, but only like the wine the drinker thinks of while drinking; the priest’s magic formula is “Now, imagine and drink.” The magic water also gives the power to speak in verse. The final lesson of the book seems to rest squarely within the power of imagination, as the famous word they were looking for is simply “trinch,” which can mean the imperative “drink” in German or simply the sound of a breaking bottle. The interpretation that an individual gives to strange messages cannot be taken for granted, i.e., it is subjective, and in this case, it is called into question: is “trinch” a real message to be deciphered (and what does it mean in relation to the rest of the story?) or is it, literally, merely the sound of a bottle breaking by accident?

Innovative and Original Aspects

The summaries of the books show how Rabelais profoundly changed French narrative prose in the early sixteenth century. His stories are meant to be amusing, but they are also so much more. The dialogue, instead of opening relationships between the characters and revealing aspects that could help to advance the plot, leads to misunderstanding and perplexity, slowing down any advancement in this respect. A commentary would be necessary for a single understanding, but nothing conclusive or convincing is provided, so the reader is typically confronted by double meanings. With different interpretations, the reader has to choose for himself as the text only exposes a hermeneutic dilemma, without one unique or satisfying solution.

For Rabelais, paradox is a guideline to fiction. Within the story, both serious and comical tones are combined, contradictory interpretations presented, and medieval traditions merged with the

latest humanist ideas. Every book both begins and ends with several questions, but never offers an explicit conclusion. When reading such books, it should be born in mind that there is never one single meaning. Such hermeneutic potential shows that Rabelais' fiction addresses the problems and issues of his time, such as the investigation into the power of words and the tragedy of misunderstanding (i.e., the censorship of much of Rabelais' work), yet without denying the epic or adventurous settings that make it fiction. Therein lies a kind of explosive confrontation between past traditions and a new form of fiction that reinvents itself through provocation.

The Paradoxical Image of the Author

The author, who included encyclopedic content within a fantasy story, did not stand before his reader as an erudite scholar. On the contrary, he preferred to present ridiculous aspects of himself, especially in the Prologues. He claims that drinking, eating, and joking with merry companions are what can help him achieve perfection in writing. His main purpose, as he says in *Gargantua's* Prologue, is to fill every reader with joy and laughter, "Because to laugh is proper to man" (*"parce que rire est le propre de l'homme"*).

The tendency to portray himself as a laughing figure culminates in the *Third Book*, in which he adopts a specific persona following the example of Diogenes, whose apparent vanity and idleness were condemned by his contemporaries. What he does, however apparently useless and risible, is paradoxically regarded as essential, and Rabelais assumed the identity of a grinning figure to prove this. In the *Fourth Book*, in an epistle to his protector Odet de Châtillon, Rabelais explains how he had decided to quit writing because he could no longer endure so many attacks. He was close to retiring from literature when he found reassurance that his paradoxical posture was the device that enabled him to create his works. In fact, in all of his Prologues, Rabelais seems not to care about good manners and prejudices, addressing his reader brusquely, sometimes even crudely. This peculiar writing style can be explained by two different hypotheses, depending on the representation of the reader.

The Awakening of the Reader

First, the reader can be seen as a good companion, hardly different from a guest, as someone the author wants to talk to and who he cares about. Rabelais' dedication of his books to forgotten parts of the population, such as the victims of syphilis or gout, serves as compelling evidence. All of them are outcasts, familiar to Doctor Rabelais, and more than any other readers, they need comfort. Reading is thus to be understood as a skilful therapy: all worries can be forgotten with a happy story, thus allowing jokes with the reader, who is to be treated like a friend. Hence, the apparent brusqueness is really a way of showing how close the author and the reader truly are. However, a second hypothesis is also possible. If the author skips a polite *captatio benevolentiae*, it is because he wants to provoke the reader, setting the right tone for the entire work. In a way, the prologues are meant to be a jolt to the system, a "shaking up" of the reader's mind so that he will be ready for any possible situation, however incredible it may be. Indeed, there will be plenty of unbelievable things, not only in relation to the characters' actions, but especially in terms of language and interpretation. The reader could be surprised or shocked: he is warned from the beginning that however strange the situations may be, they are not meant to be outrageous: "Readers, friends, if you turn these pages / Put your prejudice aside / For, really, there's nothing here that's outrageous / Nothing sick, or bad – or contagious" (*Gargantua*, "To the readers").

Very early on, from *Gargantua's* Prologue, Rabelais insists on the need to literally open the book along with one's mind, stressing the need to look inside the book to see what is hidden as there is something to be found which is not clearly visible. It might be hidden by a contradictory appearance, when a facetious episode turns out to be full of wisdom – if the reader is able to understand. The skill of "*sens agile*" (agility of the mind) is required. Rabelais asserts the need for interpretation and compels the reader to start thinking as this is the only way for him to be able to reach the essence, the "*substantifique moelle*" ("Then you must, by a curious reading and frequent meditation, break the bone and suck

out the substantial marrow. . .”). His metaphors – bones to break, dogs cautiously biting them, the bottle to be opened, a funny box revealing a precious drug inside . . . – all convey the idea that the title of the book and the appearance (the “literal sense”) of an episode are but a beginning; they need to be followed and refined by true reflection to be useful to the readers, who could then have access to the “*plus haut sens*” (the highest, or deepest, meaning).

The disconcerting endings of many episodes – and even of the book *Gargantua* itself – split between opposite interpretations of a single situation and illustrate this need for a meditative reader. If two possible meanings are presented, it is ultimately the reader’s duty to choose between them.

Rabelais’ novels all play with reader expectations, provoking surprise, delaying resolution, casting heroes who are not necessarily heroic, telling tales of strange travels, and introducing many possible worlds and many impossible conclusions. In short, the author presents a thorough exploration of many potential devices for fiction and for hermeneutics. To the early modern reader, all this would have been terribly disconcerting and fascinating.

Stepping into Modernity

The invention of the concept of “Pantagruelism” is a good example of a newly created feature in early modern prose. Rabelais formed this word from the name of the hero Pantagruel and then went on to define it several times throughout the five books. Pantagruelism is a moral quality, close to Pantagruel’s mood: a so-called philosophy described in the Prologue of the *Fourth Book* as “a certain gaiety of mind pickled in the scorn of fortuitous things.” The giant, whose reactions are always measured and wise, displays an attitude of calmness and security toward the exterior circumstances (“fortuitous things”) that do not depend on his will.

On one level, Pantagruelism can be defined as a philosophy derived precisely from the specific character of the novel’s hero and his very name. Moreover, it refers to a pragmatic attitude applied not only to Pantagruel himself but also to many

situations covered in the work. It can therefore be considered as a kind of behavioral feature, affecting relationships between good people: by following this kind of optimism and receptiveness, they can call themselves “Pantagruelists.”

On another, more general level, all five books make reference to Pantagruelism as the word can be used to describe an attitude toward both writing and the act of reading (*Gargantua* is said to be a “book full of Pantagruelism”). It is an open-minded attitude, never in position to argue with rage (contrary to the censors) or to be upset (see the aforementioned “put your prejudice aside”).

In light of all this, Pantagruelism is naturally recommended as a remedy against the poisonous attitude of the “*agelastes*” (agelasts), literally “those who do not laugh” or do not know how to laugh and who are therefore banned from the utopian Abbey of Thelema or even from reading the book itself. As a philosophy, Pantagruelism is not confined to fiction as it transcends this boundary and is also related to writing, reading, and acting. This philosophy, based on fiction, is all the more original, as fiction invents its own referential pattern, without referring to existing models of readers, thereby creating its ideal reader. This means that roles can shift. The hero, Pantagruel, the model for such an attitude, can be considered as the best reader of his own adventures, which are themselves written by an author declaring himself to be a Pantagruelist. The metaleptic movement of this entire system shows how fiction is on the brink of changes to come, where the boundaries between author, reader, and characters disappear or become blurred. Parallels are often drawn between Rabelais and Cervantes in this respect, as they were both two important sixteenth-century authors in the process of inventing a new satirical style of writing.

The character of Panurge also represents a great renewal in the typology of characters. Firstly, anything but epic, he is not a hero; he cannot fight, hates weapons, and always prefers fleeing, cunning, or craftiness to bravery. Still, however cowardly he may seem, he is not a meaningless character. On the contrary, he instantly becomes Pantagruel’s best friend and is the most relevant figure capable of shedding light on all the

others. He fails to meet expectations and contradicts the most famous character types. Disconcerting and apparently irrelevant, he is made of imperfections, but due to his constitutive ambiguity, he is a very modern and audacious character. By himself, Panurge is impertinent; he is one of the risks taken by Rabelais with respect to traditions. He is also, for this reason, the very symbol of adventure. This character's role is twofold: as an instrumental literary device that moves the narrative forward and, at the same time, as a tool enabling the author to add an important layer of intellectual depth.

Finally, the creative use of language is one of the most important devices and originalities of Rabelais' writing. He introduces many languages in his fictional works. First, there are no less than 13 foreign languages in Chapter 9 of *Pantagruel*, including imaginary ones (e.g., the Utopian language). Within the French language, the net is cast wide: for example, the regional terms for navigation in the *Fourth Book* are taken either from the Mediterranean or the Atlantic coast of France. The reader can also recognize many words from the region of Tours and Chinon, the author's birthplace, especially concerning wine and drinking. On the lexical side, not only did Rabelais use a vast lexicon, but he also created many neologisms by making unexpected, humorous combinations of existing words put together in monstrous and hilarious combinations. He also wrote long chapters consisting only of dizzying lists of words, the most famous being Gargantua's games (*Gargantua*, Chapter 22), the parodic list of the books of the Library of Saint-Victor (*Pantagruel*, Chapter 7), and the different lists of insults between Friar Jean and Panurge (*Third Book*, Chapters 26 and 28). All are epic moments of language jubilation and can be either read as parody, poetry, burlesque, or profound jokes and word games.

Impact and Legacy

With its numerous feasts, drinking episodes, and gluttony, and because Rabelais' prose was based on comic features, jokes, and scatology, a rather

mythical image of Rabelais has taken hold in people's minds. His fiction was considered immoral, joyful, but shameful and generally reduced to the idea of gigantic meals and feasts. Some so-called "ugly" parts were even censored and withheld from young girls until the first half of the twentieth century. All of these ideas originate in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century readers, who generally read Rabelais this way. Thanks to Victor Hugo, who celebrated the author's enormous and magnificent use of the French language, the nineteenth century approach to his work differed. With the same level of fascination as Hugo, Gustave Doré also magnified the epic scope of Rabelais' fiction through a visionary interpretation in his engravings. On the other hand, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, while paying tribute to Rabelais' sublime use of oral language inside written prose, contended that he "failed," because nobody had followed or adopted his style, and the French language had, in the end, not profited from this literary experience.

With respect to the history of the French language, apart from Céline's extreme viewpoint, the studies of Rabelais' use of language have highlighted lexical creation and its benefit for the enrichment of the dictionary. Many words remaining in common use come from Rabelais' first experiments, when he introduced Greek words into French (including "exotic," for instance).

Regarding the realm of ideas, many studies have pointed out Rabelais' evangelism, his use of Plato's philosophy, or of Greek philosophers in general. Mikhail Bakhtin had some merit in the "rehabilitation" of Rabelais, when he showed that the treatment of the lower part of the body is linked not to a perverse tendency for scatology nor to immoral purposes, but rather to the celebration of a form of carnival, of an upside-down image of society, as a way to question the organization of social hierarchies. Although this thesis has been much disputed, it has proven important for understanding Rabelais differently. Since the 1990s, what seems to be essential for readers and scholars is to consider both sides of his fiction together, that is, the serious ideological side and the merry amusing one, as the literal sense (on the

joyful side) sounds as important as the allegoric or the symbolic one, both parts making an equal contribution. Rabelais' fiction has the strength of introducing science into adventure stories, and creating compelling characters who are neither good nor bad, neither totally praiseworthy nor blameworthy. They are essentially ambiguous, and their status must be interpreted by the reader. Thus, Rabelais places interpretation at the center of reading so as to convey the constant need for vigilance. His growing concern in the novels with fixed meanings comes to its culmination in the 56th chapter of the *Fourth Book*. The episode of the frozen words perfectly illustrates this: frozen words, looking like magnificent colored pearls on the deck of the boat, need to be picked up and warmed in the hands of good Pantagruelists to release their sounds and reveal their meanings.

Cross-References

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cultural artifacts and enshrined in ideology. Caricatures of the Jews emphasized their ineradicable internal difference from Christians: in the idea of the “blood purity” of the Jews propagated by the Spanish Inquisition can be seen the origins of a notion of biological race. Around the prevailing types and concepts, heterogeneous discourses can be discerned at a local and individual level. Racial theories generated debates in the fields of law and rights and were integrated into political relations and cultural practices over many fields (Erickson and Hulse 2000).

Race, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

The classification of humans into distinct races is first recorded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus it may be doubted whether “race” is a helpful tool for the study of early modern thought. Nonetheless, embryonic concepts of race have been traced to the Renaissance. The period inherited a rich body of ideas of human types, drawing on classical and medieval authors. This material prompted speculation over human nature: Are qualities fixed or malleable? Are all peoples capable of reason and open to conversion to Christianity? Does humanity embrace all types or do some fall outside it? Throughout the period anti-Semitism provided a grim template for defining identity through the “othering” of a particular group of people.

Encounters outside the Mediterranean accelerated from the fifteenth century: the “discovery” of the New World, the enlargement of the slave trade, and expanding commercial networks all shaped perceptions of humans as belonging to groups with distinctive traits. Such mental taxonomies hardened into stereotypes which were disseminated through

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Medieval Europe offers a diverse set of images of the peoples of the earth. These can be traced to classical sources, including fourth-century BCE Greek accounts of the figures of Indian art, which were apparently taken to be representations of actual people. Monstrous humanoid forms appear, for example, in the writings of Isidore of Seville (c.560–636), the tympanum of Vézelay Abbey (c.1100) which depicts differently formed peoples to be ministered to by the church, the *Travels of John Mandeville* (1357–1371), and the illustrations of the Nuremberg Chronicle (1493). These works do not necessarily equate physical with moral monstrosity.

In European consciousness, the Jews occupied a particular category. Over the late Middle Ages, aggressive anti-Semitism led to pogroms and expulsions. Jews were accused of magical powers; the “blood libel,” the accusation that Jews drank the blood of Christian children, dates from at least the twelfth century. Exclusion could foster a sense of exclusiveness. The Sephardic Jews wrote their own history, defining themselves as a separate race going back to the Jews of the Old Testament. From the eleventh century, crusades and pilgrimage heightened awareness of the Muslim Arabs, who were both demonized as enemies of the faith while at the same time their achievements were absorbed into the Western culture across scientific and artistic disciplines (Macdonald 1997).

Around these images of various people, questions arose, in particular the degree to which humans are fixed or self-fashioning. The intellectual community of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance did not unanimously hold racial identity to be an inherited absolute. Against types there is a countervailing concept of a human family: the Vézelay tympanum clearly expresses the idea that all corners of the earth are open to the Word of Christ. Biblical and patristic texts did not provide a coherent account of whether those of darker hue were or were not morally inferior, leaving room for a variety of views (Schwartz 1994).

Innovation and Original Aspects

One innovation was the body of ideas accompanying the encounter with American Indians and the increased trade in black African slaves. The plight of the Indians under the Spanish conquistadors was deplored in a series of polemics by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas (c.1484–1566). These fed the topic of Spanish cruelty, happily recycled by protestant countries like England, themselves culpable of atrocities. In the debates at Valladolid (1550–1551), de las Casas disputed with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494–1573) over the status of colonized people, an important moment in the development of rights theory and international law: at issue was the question of whether the Indians were, or not, fully human and thus free men by the law of nature.

As a strategy for justifying the slave trade, white Europeans developed stereotypes of black Africans as naked, pierced, lazy, sexually promiscuous, unintelligent, and the like. Though black Africans performed a diverse range of tasks, both as slaves and freemen, they are typically depicted in a limited range of activities, capable of imitative but not creative behavior (Earle and Lowe 2005).

Christian vilification of the Jews continued to be intense in the Renaissance. Myths such as the blood libel were quickly spread by the printing press. Preachers such as Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444) called on Jews to reside in special districts with special costumes and badges. In

1492 both Moors and Jews were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. A range of tools was developed to test the sincerity of those who opted to convert; the Spanish Inquisition, in its demand for ethnically “pure” inquisitors, developed a sophisticated bureaucracy for enquiring into individuals’ lineage, an originating point for later notions of biological race. While the stereotype of the African tended to concentrate on external qualities, that of the Jew focused on a supposed ineradicable internal separateness from the Christian. Arabs were equally subject to stereotype, while at the same time the scholarly and artistic techniques they introduced to the West were appreciated by intellectuals and a vital source of cultural renewal.

As a highly flexible term, “race” was not only used of people outside Europe but also as an instrument in internal politics: thus, the English usually employed “race” to mean family lineage, excluding the socially inferior, and described the Irish as another race, exhibiting subhuman qualities (Hall 1995). Racial and national identities develop in parallel. In Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, besides the much-discussed depiction of the Jew Shylock, characters from other European countries are also open to satiric delineation. Against this, to a modern reader, some of the most original visions of race come from intellectuals apparently resistant to prevailing typologies, such as the passionate Hebraist scholar Isaac Casaubon, who refused to characterize individual Jews by group characteristics, or Montaigne who, witnessing a circumcision in Rome, observed in his *Journal de voyage* that Jewish babies cried like Christian children at baptism (Grafton 2009).

Impact and Legacy

Renaissance racial thinking underpins imperial expansion and the justification of slavery, land-grabbing, and other forms of exploitation. It served to concretize the notion of humans falling into distinct and fixed categories, subject to pseudoscientific measurement of intelligence and other qualities. Black people formed a counterpoint to the developing notion of “civilized”

whites. In the cultural sphere, the notions of the noble savage and the earthly paradise were among discourses that flowed from the encounters of the fifteenth century onward, expressed in a variety of forms, from paintings to travelogues, essays, and drama. While the Renaissance notion of race is elusive, the stereotypes constructed in the period have proven very clearly to be destructive and persistent (The William and Mary Quarterly 1997).

Cross-References

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- Empire, Renaissance
- Exploration, Renaissance Concept of
- Jewish Philosophy, Renaissance
- Las Casas, Bartolomé de
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- Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance
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Radical Moisture

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Abstract

The radical moisture is a Galenic physiological concept developed by medieval Arabo-Latin medicine, referring to an inborn moisture specific to living beings. Illustrated by the metaphor of the oil lamp, it is compared to an oily wick consumed by the flame of innate heat, whose extinction is synonymous with death. The vital moisture is involved in the physiological discussion on spirit and innate heat regarding the conservation of life. It also provides abundant parallels in chymistry developed by Platonic and Paracelsian physicians.

Synonyms

Humidum Primigenium; Humidum Radicale; Primitive moisture/humor

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The definition of radical moisture is based on a medieval concept from Arabic medicine, inspired by Aristotelian natural philosophy and Galenic medicine (McVaugh 1974). In the tenth century, Isaac Israeli and Haly Abbas shaped the notion of secondary humors, including the alimentary humors and the radical moisture (Jacquart 2006; Reynolds 1999). Avicenna theorized the idea of the radical moisture in a general account of life, fever, aging, and death in his *Canon of Medicine*. The Galenic and Avicennian theory was then transmitted to Western Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries through Latin translators from Salerno and Toledo, e.g., Constantine the African and Gerard of Cremona. In the thirteenth

and fourteenth centuries, the medical debate on the radical moisture was explored in natural philosophy, alchemy, and theology, especially in the works of Albert the Great, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Arnold of Villanova, and Ramon Llull (Crisciani 2005; Crisciani and Ferrari 2010). From this medieval context, the decisive role of radical moisture in the conservation of life has given rise to various debates on its possible maintenance, decreasing or storing, in order to preserve the innate heat.

Scholastic physicians defined the radical moisture as a fatty humor feeding the spirit and innate heat. Received at birth alongside the spirit and innate heat, it is derived from the airy portion of the seed and the fleshy maternal blood substance. Within the human body, the vital moisture is in charge of fueling the innate heat, while the spirit is maintained and refreshed by breathing. Given its fixed quantity received at birth, the radical moisture undergoes a slow consumption, reflected by the aging process and mortality (Marinozzi 2010; Schäfer 2012). Moreover, corruption or premature consumption of the radical moisture may lead to specific diseases such as withering and hectic fever (Demaitre 1992; Niebyl 1971).

Among the traditional medieval topics related to the radical moisture, late Renaissance physiology concentrated on the metaphor of the oil lamp, as well as the relation between longevity, aging, and the inexorable consumption of the radical moisture (Fernel 1567; Hall 1971). Fernel underplayed the possibility of restoring the vital moisture through dietetic or chymical means, though he conceded the influence of nutrition on the preservation of radical moisture. Nevertheless, the chymical question of prolongevity through the restoration or the extraction of a vital substance would continue through Paracelsian medicine, as evidenced by the concept of balsam and vital sulfur (Severinus 1571; Hirai 2005; Bianchi 1982).

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- Fernel, Jean
- Galen and Galenism
- Innate Heat

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Raimondi, Cosimo

- Raimondi, Cosma

Raimondi, Cosma

Born: 1400, Cremona, Italy

Died: 1435/1436, Avignon, France

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Abstract

The humanist Cosma Raimondi (1400–1435/1436) was a native of Cremona and the pupil of Gasparino Barzizza (1360–1431). He helped to decipher an important manuscript of Cicero’s rhetorical works and wrote a well-known defense of Epicurus: *A Letter to Ambrogio Tignosi in Defence of Epicurus against the Stoics, Academics and Peripatetics* (1429). Leaving Italy, he moved to Avignon, where he later committed suicide.

Alternate Names

Raimondi, Cosimo; Cremonensis, Cosmus

Biography

Cosma (Cosimo) Raimondi was born in Cremona in 1400. In 1421 he moved to Milan, where he studied under Gasparino Barzizza (1360–1431), the eminent teacher of humanists such as Leon Battista Alberti, Pier Candido Decembrio, Francesco Filelfo, and George of Trebizond. Raimondi “attended Barzizza’s school for a period of 9 months in 1421–22” (Mercer 1979, 133). In the second half of 1421, Gerardo Landriani, Bishop of Lodi, discovered a very important manuscript of Cicero’s rhetorical works (the lost *Codex Laudensis*) containing *De Inventione*, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, *De Oratore*, *Orator*, and *Brutus*. On the instructions of Barzizza, Raimondi

helped to decipher this Ciceronian manuscript. “That Bishop Landriani had the *De Oratore*, *Orator*, and *Brutus* sent immediately to Barzizza in Milan (1421–22) attests to the impressive mark which the latter had made as a textual scholar and Ciceronian expert. [...] Although he probably played little part in the technical work of deciphering codices – that was mainly the achievement of his pupil Cosma Raimondi – he supervised the undertaking and put his experience at the disposal of those scholars involved” (Mercer 1979, 74). In 1429, dissatisfied with his living and working conditions in Italy, Raimondi moved to Avignon, where he taught law and carried on his studies of rhetoric. In the same year, he wrote a well-known defense of Epicurus: *A Letter to Ambrogio Tignosi in Defence of Epicurus against the Stoics, Academics and Peripatetics*. In 1431 he wrote a brief work entitled *De laudibus eloquentiae* (“In Praise of Eloquence”), which he dedicated to Jean Cadart. After a failed attempt to return to Italy, Raimondi committed suicide in Avignon between 1435 and 1436. His last desperate words were addressed to his friend Nicola Arcimboldi in a tearful elegy: “If destiny deprives you of me, your friend, /And the atrocious storm submerges my poor being, /You shall make a tomb for me and honor it. /On the tomb, write these words for me: /Here you lie, o Cosma, to be lamented, you /The favorite of Virgil, Cicero, and all other poets!” (Garin 2008, p. 185).

A Letter to Ambrogio Tignosi in Defense of Epicurus and the Rupture with Tradition

The revival of Epicureanism which took place during the Renaissance was largely due to the recovery of two ancient sources: Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* (discovered by Poggio Bracciolini in 1417) and Diogenes Laertius’s *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* (translated into Latin by Ambrogio Traversari in 1424–1433). Raimondi’s

letter in *Defence of Epicurus* “is the only thoroughgoing espousal of Epicurean ethical doctrine of the Quattrocento, preceding not only the widespread dissemination of the ancient sources on Epicureanism (Book X of Diogenes Laertius’s *Lives of the Philosophers* and *De rerum natura* of Lucretius) but also the popular dialogue of Lorenzo Valla, *On Pleasure* (1431)” (Davies 1997, 238). The letter is addressed to Ambrogio Tignosi, whose identity is still unknown: “perhaps a student at the Milanese University at Pavia” (Davies 1997, 238).

Raimondi defends the philosophical authority of Epicurus, whom he calls the wisest of men, and shows how unjustly Tignosi has attacked him: “I shall answer your letter and explain the whole matter in such a manner that you may actually be glad to return to the Epicurean camp you abandoned” (Davies 1997, 239). Raimondi maintains that the reason why the three ancient sects of Academics, Stoics, and Aristotelians had declared all of Epicurus’s opinions invalid was “because they were envious at seeing so many more pupils taking themselves to the school of Epicurus than to their own” (Davies 1997, 239).

Raimondi’s investigation concerns the complex subject of the supreme good, and he observes that Epicurus is criticized because “he is thought to have taken too effeminate a view on what the supreme good is, by identifying it with pleasure and using that as the standard to measure everything else” (Davies 1997, 239). His refutation continues with a critical analysis of the philosophical ideas about the supreme good held by the ancient Stoics, Academics, and Aristotelians. According to the Stoics, happiness is to be found in virtue alone; consequently, only the wise man is happy and, moreover, he remains happy even if he is tortured. Raimondi objects: “this is a position I most emphatically reject. What could be more absurd than to call a man ‘happy’ when he is in fact utterly miserable?” (Davies 1997, 239). As for the Academics, he does not even regard their view as worthy of refutation: “On these [. . .], though, I shall not need to dwell at length, as for them everything is uncertain. What sort of

philosophy is it that denies that anything is certain? I do not think that even the Academics themselves understood what they were saying. If the Stoics are madmen, the Academics seem to me quite insane” (Davies 1997, 241). Lastly, Raimondi examines the opinion of the Peripatetics and observes that “they are more difficult to refute. Not only do they have a standard of certainty, but they argue in such a way that there seems to be some substance to what they are saying” (Davies 1997, 241). The Peripatetics claim that the supreme good resides in the contemplation and study of the inmost mysteries of the universe; according to them, this is the greatest pleasure and the one in which true felicity resides. Raimondi disagrees, however, because his concern is human nature as a whole, and not just one part of it: “the Peripatetic thinker, no matter how profound, cannot be happy without external and bodily goods” (Davies 1997, 241). Indeed, when nature herself “was fashioning man, she polished her creation with so many little touches that he seems to have been made purely for enjoyment and to take advantage of every sort of pleasure. She endowed him with senses so distinct, varied and useful that though there were many different types of pleasure, there was none in which he could not share” (Davies 1997, 241). Therefore, Epicurus is right when he asserts that pleasure is the supreme good, since human beings are so constituted as almost to seem created for that aim. Furthermore, they “have a certain inherent mental disposition to seek and attain pleasure: as far as we can, we try to be happy and not sad” (Davies 1997, 242).

In the conclusion of the letter, Raimondi urges Tignosi, who has been seduced by the acumen of Stoic arguments and by the magnificence of the Academics and Peripatetics, to reform himself and to return to Epicurus’s camp: “turn then to embrace Epicurus, whose teaching I shall perhaps expound at more length if ever I have greater leisure” (Davies 1997, 243).

Cosma Raimondi’s *Defensio* attempts to rehabilitate the negative reputation of Epicurean

philosophy, traditionally associated in the Western Christian tradition with immorality, impiety, and lasciviousness: “the glaring theological errors of Epicureanism – denial of the immortality of the soul and of divine providence; belief that the universe had come into being by chance – ensured that it remained the pariah of ancient philosophies throughout the Renaissance” (Kraye 2007, 102). In particular, he retrieves the original and genuine sense of Epicurus’s hedonism (Wilson 2008, 18) as opposed to the stereotyped image of the Epicurean pleasure-seeking, a conceptual misrepresentation deeply dependent on the Christian interpretation. Raimondi writes about the Epicurean concept of pleasure: “if perhaps some think that by this Epicurus meant that we should spend our days wallowing in feasting and drinking, in gambling, games and the pleasures of sex, such a wastrel Epicurus would hardly deserve our praise. His teaching would indeed be lamentable if he wanted us to be gluttonous, drunken, debauched, boastful and promiscuous. But that is not what Epicurus in his wisdom said or recommended. In fact, so far was he from wanting us to live without virtue that virtue is actually essential for living up to his teaching, since it constrains and directs, as it were, all the bodily senses [...] and does not permit us to make use of them except when needed. Epicurus does not slide into pleasure in the manner of animals, without the exercise of judgement and when necessity does not require it, but rather enjoys it with restraint when it is right to do so” (Davies 1997, pp. 242–243).

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Rainolds, John

Born: 1549, Pinhoe

Dead: 1607, Oxford

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Abstract

John Rainolds was the highest authority English Puritan theologian of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. He was educated at Corpus Christi College in Oxford, where he converted from Catholicism to Protestantism. He read Greek from 1572, and from his readings we received the discussion manuscript of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, the first critical work to be written on the text of the Greek philosopher. From 1578 Rainolds dedicated his studies to theology, highlighting in the *Sex theses* written in 1580 a steadfast commitment to Calvinism and a rigid anti-Catholic attitude. Rainolds soon became the figurehead of the Puritan movement in Oxford: the many religious public disputes, his charisma, coupled with the intellectual stature of Rainolds increased his authority to the point of attracting the attentions and suspicions of Elizabeth I, so the queen decided to co-opt Rainolds in the Anglican episcopate in order to “neutralize” him and appointed him Bishop of Lincoln in 1579. The theologian could not refuse the assignment; however, he was able to postpone his inauguration until he gained the coveted appointment of the president of Corpus Christi

College in 1598. Once James I Stuart ascended to the English throne in 1603, Rainolds confided in a Presbyterian sense reform of the Anglican church, which seemed possible when the king decided to convene a religious conference at Hampton Court. Here Rainolds led the Puritan delegation, but, despite the favorable conditions, the king did not make any concessions in ecclesiastical matters, and therefore, Rainolds only obtained the consent for a new English translation of the Bible, satisfying his expectations in the last years of his life, which ended in 1607 in Oxford.

Alternate Names

Reynolds, John

Biography

Erudite scholar and prominent theologian of the English Puritanism, John Rainolds came to light in 1549 in a cultured and wealthy family: his father Richard was a rich farmer; his uncle, Thomas Rainolds, was vice chancellor of the University of Oxford; and his brother, William, became a professor of Theology in Reims. John Rainolds was educated at Merton College and then at Corpus Christi College, where since 1563 he was admitted as *discipulus* (Feingold 2004) and where he converted from Catholicism to Puritanism. We can assume that in 1569 the conversion was now well established, given that the Board commended him the tutorship of young Richard Hooker. He was awarded an MA in 1572 and was appointed reader of Greek. His lessons were guided by Christian and humanistic values: Rainolds recognized that classic literature played a central role in building morals and religious beliefs. The “pagan wisdom conveyed through Christian filters” (McConica 1979) was judged by the theologian as being particularly suitable for the education of youngsters. The readings given by Rainolds were the first critical study of the text of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (Rainolds 1986)

and became extremely popular on the Oxonian campus. He was ordained a priest in 1576, but 2 years later he left the lectureship of Greek to dedicate himself more fully to his theological studies. Rainolds highlighted *Sex theses* (Rainolds 1580) and embraced the Calvinist doctrines of *sola scriptura*, and in ecclesiastical matters, reaching strongly anti-Catholic positions. He won the support of influential figures such as Elizabethan aristocracy Dudley, Sidney and the Secretary of State Walsingham, who was replaced by the Earl of Essex when Walsingham died in the late 1580s. At the invitation of Walsingham, he argued publicly in Oxford and London with the Catholic John Hart, and this public debate was committed to print in *The summe of the conference* (Rainolds 1584). Again at the invitation of the Secretary of State, Rainolds held a theological polemic lectureship against Cardinal Bellarmine in 1586. He received his doctorate in theology in 1585 and became the key figure of the Puritan party in Oxford, and here the theologian had several contrasting opinions with some *religionis causa* because he suspected them of atheism or religious simulations.

The criticisms of the theologian had already led to clashes between 1575 and 1576 with Corro and Pucci, then in 1583 with Giordano Bruno. However, the longest and most bitter dispute which occupied Rainolds in Oxford was the one with the Italian jurist Alberico Gentili (Rainolds and Gentili 1977).

The clash, born from the dispute between the theologian and the playwright William Gager on the acceptability of academic stage plays, moved quickly on the crucial issue of the relationship between theology and jurisprudence (Rainolds and Gentili 1977). Rainolds maintained his firm stance against the Italian jurist: theology was the only *magistra vitae* of men, and it only had to be up the task of interpreting the divine laws and legitimize the political dictate. However, the puritanical zeal, intellectual stature, and charisma of the theologian aroused the suspicious attentions of Queen Elizabeth so much so that she put a stop to his appointment as president of Corpus Christi College in 1590 and co-opted the Anglican episcopate, by giving him the deanery of Lincoln in 1593. The

theologian was, reluctantly, forced to accept but procrastinated taking office in Lincoln until in 1598 he was finally appointed president of Corpus Christi College. When James I Stuart ascended to the throne in 1603, the Puritans presented the king with the Millenary petition, calling for a reform in favor of the Presbyterian Church over the Church of England. Hopes seemed to be on their side when the king summoned a religious conference at Hampton Court (1603–1604), particularly since the puritanical Rainolds was to head the delegation. However, Rainolds did not obtain any episcopal concessions from the king. In fact, James I was peremptory in sanctioning the principle of “no Bishop, no King” whereby there would not be any liturgical ceremonies. The Puritan theologian was nevertheless given the go-ahead for the preparation of a new English version of the Bible, to which he dedicated all his efforts in his last 3 years of life. John Rainolds died on May 21, 1607, leaving behind a reputation as being “one of the dominant figures of late sixteenth century Oxford intellectual life” (Schmitt 1983) and as an authoritative “pillar of the reformed churches” (Feingold 2004).

Cross-References

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Ramée, Pierre de la

► [Ramus, Petrus](#)

Ramism

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Abstract

The main aim of the French logician and philosopher Petrus Ramus was to provide a method of teaching the liberal arts enabling the completion of the undergraduate program of studies in 7 years. This method was based on a new logic, in which the complex structure of Aristotle's *Organon* and of the *Summulae logicales* of Peter of Spain were reduced to two main doctrines: the invention of arguments, by which it is possible to find the notions for reasoning and disputing in any discipline, and the disposition of arguments in judgment, i.e., in propositions and syllogisms. Since this logic applies both to demonstrative and to probable reasoning, Ramus and Rudolph Agricola, who first introduced it, labeled it as dialectic. Ramus completed this twofold dialectic with a method, according to which disciplines have to be taught by providing general definitions, to be explained by subsequent dichotomous divisions. According to Ramus, this method ensures a well-ordered hierarchy and division of disciplines, and an efficient means to teach them in a shorter time than in the pedagogical programs of Juan Luis Vivès, Johann Sturm, and Philipp Melanchthon. This method had its main diffusion in

the preuniversity institutions such as the German *gymnasia* and *gymnasia illustria* (e.g., of Herborn), while in Reformed and Catholic universities the acceptance of Ramism was hindered by the predominance of the Aristotelian curriculum.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The overall aim of Petrus Ramus (1515–1572) was to provide a reform of logic, or dialectic, in order to make it more suitable than scholastic logic for use in teaching the liberal arts. His dialectic was to be the basis of a 7-year program of studies in the liberal arts – outlined in an oration of 1551 (Ramus 1551) and explained in his *Scholae in liberales artes* (1569) – which he devised for boys from 8 to 15 years old, and which would replace both preuniversity instruction and undergraduate academic studies. This aim can be traced back both to his personal circumstances, since Ramus worked as servant before obtaining his MA at the University of Paris in 1536, and had to study with limited time and resources, and to the effort of the French king François I^{er} to limit the power of the university, based on the scholastic curriculum, by creating Royal Professorships – like that bestowed on Ramus in 1551 – and the Collège Royal in 1529, modeled on the humanist program of the *Collegium trilingue* of Louvain, inspired by Erasmus. Ramus's reform was part of a long-standing innovation in logic conducted by Rudolph Agricola, Juan Luis Vives, Johann Sturm, and Philipp Melanchthon, whose main change with respect to scholastic logic was to the order in which judgment and invention were treated in Aristotle's *Organon* and the *Summulae logicales* of Peter of Spain, the main logical texts in European universities. Moreover, Vives, Sturm, and Melanchthon provided new pedagogical programs for undergraduate students, which inspired and favored the acceptance of Ramism as the backbone of a shortened curriculum of studies. Their theories constitute the background of Ramus's reform (Skalnik 2002, 11–34, 63–87; Hotson 2007, 38–51).

Ramus refers to the *Summulae* in his *Scholae in liberales artes* (the texts of his lectures in Paris), labeling this work as useless for disputing and for acquiring skill in any discipline of the university curriculum (Ramus 1569, *Scholae dialecticae*, col. 153). Probably written by Pope John XXI (see Peter of Spain 2014), the *Summulae* was the most important example of a genre of logical textbooks which emerged in the thirteenth century, including manuals as those of William of Shyreswood and Lambert of Auxerre. The main function of the *Summulae* was to provide a textbook of logic covering the major topics of Aristotle's *Organon* and to serve as tool for conducting university disputations. In the *Summulae*, logic is defined as the "science of sciences or art of arts possessing the way to the principles of all methods," and consists of a theory of propositions, predicables, categories, syllogisms, topics (or places), and fallacies, which are dealt with by arguments taken from Aristotle's *Organon*, Porphyry's *Isagoge*, and Boethius's *De topicis differentiis*. Added to these matters were different sections (*parva logicalia*) devoted to topics debated during the Middle Ages: supposition, relative terms, extension, appellation, restriction, distribution, and exponible. Although attacked by Ramus for not providing a viable method of disputing and improving knowledge, the *Summulae* paved the way to a new kind of logic, in which the theory of invention of places or arguments precedes the explanation of their arrangement in judgments, i.e., in propositions and syllogisms. In the *Organon* of Aristotle, indeed, the treatment of places and of probable reasoning (dealt with in the *Topica*) comes after that of categories, syllogisms, and scientific demonstrations, treated in the *Categoriae* and *Analytica priora* and *posteriora*, on the assumption that judgment is to be taught before the notions which constitute its matter and that scientific demonstrations have a priority over probable reasoning. The *Summulae* contains, as does the *Organon*, a treatment of places, which are, according to the definition given by Cicero in his *De topicis* and restated by Boethius in his *De topicis differentiis*, "seats of arguments," and function as headings or sources of arguments which can be used as middle terms for syllogisms in any discipline. Places are ontologically loaded, i.e., they provide notions of

things: for instance, the *Summulae* offers an ontological conceptualization of substances, as these are signified or represented by substantive names. However, the *Summulae* lacks the theory of scientific demonstration contained in Aristotle's *Analytica posteriora*: the theory of places (treatise V) is dealt with just after that of syllogism (treatise IV). In this way, in the *Summulae* reasoning is reduced to a matter of probability instead of apodictic or scientific certainty. Logic, therefore, is equated to dialectic and is intended as an instrument of persuasion rather than of demonstration (Peter of Spain 2014; Ong 1958a, 55–67).

While Ramus refers in negative terms to the *Summulae*, he praises the dialectic of the Dutch humanist Rudolph Agricola (Ramus 1569, *Praefatio*). Agricola attacked scholastic logic for the first time in his oration *In laudem philosophiae*, delivered in Ferrara in 1476 (Agricola 1518): in this text he appropriates the Stoic tripartition of philosophy into logic, physics, and ethics, excluding metaphysics as a branch of philosophy separated from logic. Moreover, he stresses the connections between grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, which all contribute to the constitution of logic itself: grammar provides the formal basis for the comprehension of any discourse, dialectic serves to find or "invent" the places which make it possible to solve any kind of question, and rhetoric provides discourse with a disposition which makes it fit to persuade people. Agricola assumes these ideas on logic as guidelines in his *De inventione dialecticae* (1515, 1992). As it would be for Ramus, the main aim of Agricola is to reform logic in a way leading it to be more suitable for finding arguments for philosophy: in his view, natural and moral philosophy. For Agricola the logic of Aristotle and of the *Summulae* does not provide a reliable instrument to this end; he thus provides a reorganization of the matter of the *Organon* and the integration of logic with rhetoric; this integration is finalized to develop a logic or dialectic intended as "*ars probabiliter disserendi*," i.e., the art of discoursing with probability, rephrasing the definition of dialectic of Cicero as "*ars bene disserendi*," given in the *De oratore*: this art of discoursing, for Agricola, is also the art of discerning concepts. Agricola's *De inventione* is divided

into three books: the first is on the invention of places, the second is on the nature and use of dialectic, while the third is on the rhetorical means used in support of dialectic itself. The finding of places, which he appropriates from Aristotle, Themistius, Cicero, and Quintilian, consists of the establishment of tables ordering the concepts to be used in every discipline, being thus commonplaces. Agricola distinguishes between internal places, which define a subject according to its essence (e.g., definition, species, genre, proper, whole, part, adjacent, act, and subject) and external ones (e.g., cause, end, event, place, time, and so on). The definition of places themselves, such as what is a genre, difference, and so on, is left out of dialectic, as it belongs properly to metaphysics, which is now excluded from the domain of dialectic. The invention or finding of places precedes judgment, i.e., their disposition; however, judgment is treated in a scattered way by Agricola, who focuses instead on a theory of discourse appropriated from Cicero's rhetoric: this is divided into narration and confirmation (aimed at teaching), and exordium and peroration, which serves to move the listener or the reader. Judgment, on the other hand, is divided into induction or enumeration and syllogism (which are perfect forms of argumentation) and example and enthymeme (incomplete syllogisms). What is new in Agricola's account, with respect to scholastic logic, is that judgment relies on rhetorical means, as well as on the invention of places. This link between the two disciplines, on the other hand, was rejected by Ramus, who completed Agricola's reform by adding a comprehensive theory of judgment. Secondly, Agricola substitutes Aristotle's categories with places, which differ from categories as headings of modes of predication rather than of what is predicated (e.g., relations are listed under categories, while related things are set under places). This innovation was also incorporated in Ramus's dialectic (Vasoli 2007, 225–273; Ong 1958a, 96–130).

Secondly, Ramus was influenced by the innovations of Vives, who aimed, as did Sturm and Melanchthon, at both a logical and a pedagogical reform. Vives, who taught at the *Collegium trilingue* of Louvain, criticized scholastic logic first in his *In pseudodialecticis* (1519, 1979), inspired

by Agricola's *De inventione*. The main concern of Vives was with the uselessness of scholastic logic, represented by the *Summulae*, which for him – in line with the criticisms of Lorenzo Valla of the abstruse character of scholastic terminology – could not provide a method for discourse, as it relied on obscure metaphysical concepts which were not used in common linguistic practices. On the other hand, in his *De tradendis disciplinis* (1531) Vives delineates a dialectic based on the natural functioning of the human mind and capable of guiding it in the practice of discourse. For him, dialectic is simply the art of disputing and has no metaphysical function, which on the other hand characterized Aristotle's *Categoriae* and *Topica*, which are based on the concepts of difference, genre, and species and turn to be ontologically loaded, as in the *Summulae*. Vives dialectic is directly subservient to the liberal arts: it is an inventive logic aimed at finding places and arguments common to every discipline, to be dealt with in argumentation, or at connecting propositions by means of enumeration, induction, and syllogism. The basis of any argumentation is given by definition and division, by means of which places are identified and serve to provide the basic concepts of discourse. Vives's dialectic is naturally connected to rhetoric, since any discourse, since it is aimed at persuasion, relies on both disciplines. Moreover, given the new organization of dialectic, Vives reduces rhetoric to elocution from its classical fivefold division into invention, disposition or judgment, elocution, pronunciation, and memory. All the other parts more properly belong to dialectic itself, including pronunciation, which is reduced to elocution, and memory, which is reasoning itself (Vasoli 2007, 319–362). The dialectic devised by Vives was to be included in a renewed program of studies: as he explained in *De tradendis disciplinis*, undergraduate students had to study Latin and Greek for 8 years (from the age of seven), followed by the liberal arts (dialectic, physics, metaphysics, and mathematics) for 10 years, and then the higher arts (Hotson 2007, 39).

It was, however, the logic of Sturm and Melanchthon which constituted the immediate background to Ramus. Their programs are crucial

for a comprehension of Ramus's dialectic, as they took into consideration the method within logic itself, as Ramus would later do. The problem of method had been already discussed in treatises on various topics such as the *De methodo gravitatis sive virtutis commode dicendi* (1531) by the ancient rhetorician Hermogenes, the *Methodus conscribendi epistolas* of Christoph Hegendorf (1533), and in Erasmus's *Ratio vel compendium verae theologiae* (1519). In these texts method was considered as a *via* or *ordo* in the context of teaching. With Melanchthon, method is dealt with for the first time in a logical context. He first mentions the problem of method in the 1537 edition of his *Dialectica* (Melanchthon 1537), defining it as a criterion for the teaching and exercising of any subject, and offering three main examples of method: Avicenna's *Canon*, valid for medicine; Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, for rhetoric; and St Paul's *Epistolae*, for catechism. He does not, however, provide a comprehensive theory of the method, focusing instead on dialectic. Two years later, Johann Sturm – whose lectures in Paris were attended by Ramus – treated method in his *Partitiones oratorias Ciceronis* (1539a), where he distinguishes between art and method: art is the collection of propositions and observations useful for practice, while method is a procedure of teaching and serves to establish arts themselves. Method is threefold: (1) “systasis,” which proceeds from simple notions to general conclusions; (2) “analysis,” or the resolution of complex notions into simple ones; and (3) “diaeresis,” consisting of division or definition. These methods are derived from Galen's *Ars medica*, although Sturm renders “synthesis” – the term employed by Galen – as “systasis,” which is borrowed from rhetoric. In the 1543 edition of his *Partitionum dialecticarum libri* this threefold characterization of method is transferred from rhetoric to dialectic or logic. The first book of the *Partitionum dialecticarum libri* (1539b) is devoted to invention while the second to analysis (which consists of the use of syllogisms to resolve any kind of argumentation), thus matching Agricola's reorganization of logic. In a third book, added in 1543, Sturm included a section on method, changing the name of “systasis” to

“synthesis” or composition; this threefold method serves, for him, to teach all the arts and the subjects of the university curriculum, although he is not clear about showing how it is to be employed. Finally, Melanchthon, on the basis of Sturm, introduced an entire section on method in the 1547 edition of his *Erotemata dialectices* (Melanchthon 1547), which came out 1 year after Ramus's 1546 edition of *Dialecticae institutiones* (published as *Commentarii dialectici tres*, under the name of Omar Talon), in which Ramus introduced for the first time his own notion of method. In the *Erotemata*, Melanchthon, like Agricola, divides logic or dialectic into invention and judgment; however, he maintains the more traditional sequence of judgment (Books I–III) and invention (Book IV), and puts the treatment of method together with that of judgment, in Book I. Nevertheless, method still had an inventive function, as its aim was to find the “places,” i.e., to organize concepts in the right order and then to teach them. Accordingly, method is both a way of discovering and of exposition, as it also was for Ramus (Vasoli 2007, 405–475; Ong 1958a, 231–239). Both Sturm and Melanchthon, moreover, planned and realized a change in the undergraduate curriculum: Sturm reorganized the teaching of the gymnasium of Strasbourg on a ten-class model, including all the subjects of the liberal arts, which provided a model for the reform of pedagogy in western part of Germany. On the other hand, Melanchthon set up a more traditional program for the *gymnasia* of the eastern part of Germany, according to which preuniversity education was based on the *trivium* only (Hotson 2007, 40). The pedagogical efforts of Sturm and Melanchthon are crucial for understanding the dissemination of Ramism in Germany and for its internal transformation.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Although Johann Freige reported in his *Vita Petri Rami* (1575) that Ramus started his attacks on Aristotelianism by defending the thesis “everything that was said by Aristotle is wrong” during his MA examination, his approach towards

Aristotelianism did not entail a wholesale rejection of scholastic logic, i.e., of the of the *Organon* and the *Summulae* (Ong 1958a, 36–49). The innovative aspects of Ramus’s dialectic with respect to scholastic logic, in fact, were the introduction of a theory of invention as the first part of dialectic and the development of a theory of judgment and method which was omitted by Agricola. Ramus presented his ideas on logic for the first time in his *Aristotelicae animadversiones*, published in 1543 together with the *Dialecticae partitiones* (Ramus 1543a and 1543b), which was reissued in the same year as *Dialecticae institutiones* (Ramus 1543c, Ramus 1964) and then evolved into his *Institutionum dialecticarum libri* (1553) and *Dialectique* (1555a) (for a complete account of Ramus’s editions, see Ong 1958b). In his *Animadversiones* Ramus outlines a history of logic according to which dialectic had its highest development with Plato, who equated it with metaphysics itself, and was then corrupted by Aristotle and post-Aristotelians such as Theophrastus, Eudemus, and Chrysippus. Aristotle and his successors, indeed, made dialectic or logic into an overly abstract discipline, so that it was unfit for any real use in philosophy and the arts. In order to amend this corruption, Ramus first analyzes their theories in the *Aristotelicae animadversiones* and then proposes his own logic in the *Dialecticae partitiones* and *Dialecticae institutiones*. The *Organon* is treated in accordance with a scheme that Ramus appropriates from Agricola: invention is considered by commenting on the *Categoriae*, *Topica*, and Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, while judgment is dealt with in commenting on *De interpretatione* and the *Analytica priora* and *posteriora*. To this scheme Ramus adds a section on the practice or use of dialectic, treated in commenting on Book VIII of the *Topica* and on *De sophisticae refutationes*. However, the criticisms contained in the *Animadversiones*, as noted by Ong, cannot be summarized in a consistent way, as Ramus systematically misrepresents Aristotle’s positions (Ong 1958a, 174). He attacks Aristotle’s *Categoriae* as not providing a reliable classification of beings, while the *Topica* are mainly devoted to metaphysical issues such as the nature

of definitions, accidents, genus, and properties. In the *Topica*, moreover, Aristotle misunderstands the role of dialectic, considering it not as the art of reasoning and discoursing – as it was for Plato – but rather as the art of reasoning with probability. Finally, Ramus criticizes Aristotle for not providing any account of second judgment, which is the use of dialectic in long chains of arguments (which would be treated by Ramus as the method or order), and third judgment, or the use of dialectic as metaphysics. In order to restore the original function of dialectic as the art of reasoning and discoursing, Ramus provides in his *Dialecticae partitiones* and *Institutiones* a three-fold division of dialectic and of its treatment, which consists of: (1) “natural” dialectic, (2) dialectic as an art (*ars*) and as a doctrine or teaching (*doctrina*), and (3) the exercise of dialectic. For Ramus, this scheme is the basis of the presentation of any art (Hotson 2007, 47–48). Dialectic is defined, first, as the *virtus disserendi*, i.e., the natural power of discoursing, discerning and the use reason itself, which is a natural ability. Secondly, dialectic is an art, consisting of the imitation of this power, as well as of the classical models, above all, Cicero, as Ramus explains in his *Ciceronianus* (1557a). Accordingly, dialectic is based on the actual practices of discourse which one can find in any discipline. Moreover, dialectic is a doctrine, i.e., it teaches the ways of discoursing and reasoning: it is the *ars* or *doctrina bene disserendi*, as it was for Cicero, and serves to correct natural discourse by making it well formed. In addition, it is used to dispute, i.e., to answer questions or solve problems; therefore, in Ramus’s 1555 *Dialectique* (Ramus 1555a, 1996), dialectic was redefined as the art of disputing well. Since it is aimed at answering questions, Ramus accepts Agricola’s foundation of dialectic on a theory of the invention of arguments. In order to answer the question “whether man is a dialectician,” for instance, Ramus proposes to find a means to connect (or dissociate) the subject and predicate of this sentence, what he calls the “major” and “minor” part of the question. This is made possible by a syllogism with a middle term that connects these parts. In this case, the middle term “invented” is “rational,” by which one can

demonstrate that man is a natural dialectician. Therefore, Ramus proposes a list of places for all kinds of middle terms or arguments, by which he seeks to replace categories themselves. Furthermore, as stated in his 1555 *Dialectique*, he wants to substitute places as “seats of arguments” with arguments themselves, insofar as arguments are parts of places. In the 1543 editions of his dialectic (Ramus 1543b and 1543c), there are 14 places: five first arguments (causes, effects, subjects, adjuncts, disagreeing) and 9 derived arguments (genus, form, name, notations, conjugates, testimonies contraries, distributions, definitions). This list, in fact, would undergo several changes in later editions of the work. Arguments are then treated in relation to judgment, which concerns their collocation or disposition (*dispositio*); there are three kinds: first judgment, i.e., syllogism (including induction, example, and enthymeme, which are syllogisms defective in some part); second judgment, i.e., the concatenation of arguments; and third judgment, which is the use of dialectic as a metaphysics or a rational theology. The treatment of first judgment is based on Aristotle’s *Analytica*, although Ramus does not consider induction, example, and enthymeme as probable syllogisms, as Aristotle did, but only as defective ones, like Boethius. If first judgment allows to answer singular questions, second judgment allows to conduct a whole discourse and proceeds by a series of definitions and divisions, of which the demonstration consists. Demonstration, indeed, for Ramus, does not have the character of a proof, but rather of an explanation. This is noticeable above all in his mathematical writings; for instance, in 1545 Ramus published a Latin edition of Euclid’s *Elementa* (Euclid 1549), but with no diagrams, in order to make them less expensive and suitable for use by students, as it provided only explanations. Thirdly, judgment is used by Ramus as a metaphysics or rational theology, insofar it concerns the rational structure of reality: in this case, Ramus (like Plato) envisages dialectic as a move towards divinity. Finally, dialectic can be seen as the use or practice of the precepts conveyed by its doctrinal part, across various disciplines: in this respect, dialectic is not a habit of the mind (*habitus intellectualis*) or an instrumental discipline guiding

other arts and philosophical disciplines, but is itself a discipline concerning discourse and reasoning as such. It consists of the reading of texts and of their interpretation by examining the disposition of arguments, finding the goal and cause of the discourse, and using syllogisms to analyze or resolve it into a clear structure. Accordingly, interpretation is defined by Ramus as analysis, while the composition of texts is its form in reverse, i.e., genesis or synthesis.

This threefold structure of logic was maintained by Ramus in the editions of the *Dialecticae institutiones* which appeared after 1543, although with the introduction of a theory of the method, i.e., of second judgment and the omission of third judgment. In the 1572 edition of this work, for instance, Ramus reduces judgment as whole to *iudicium axiomaticum*, i.e., proposition, which was neglected in the first two editions, and *dianoeticum*, which includes syllogism and method. In 1546, he presented a full account of method in his *Dialectici commentarii tres* (published by Talon, Talon and Ramus 1546), as part of the treatment of disposition (Book II). Method is presented by Ramus as twofold. First, it is a method of teaching, which is the arrangement of knowledge from general to particular notions; according to this method, one first has to establish all the definitions and precepts of an art and then to proceed into its parts. Grammatical teaching, for instance, starts with the general definition of grammar and then proceeds into its branches. Such a division is made by means of dichotomies: this procedure has no theoretical justification in Ramus’s texts and may be motivated by his overall aim of providing a simplified teaching of academic disciplines. The division of different matters, in fact, was thoroughly refined by Ramus in the course of the various editions of his dialectical treatises: in the 1547 edition of his *Dialecticae institutiones*, for instance, one can find fully at work the use of tables of division, which serve to explain the matter of every discipline. As argued by Ong, the method of dichotomies made Ramist dialectic a “visual” representation of thought (Ong 1958a, 199–202). Second, Ramus introduces a “method of prudence” that prescribes how to dispose notions

according to the actual conditions of the audience, but whose treatment was not taken further in his works. The topic of the method, in fact, underwent several changes through the editions of his works and was omitted in the 1569 *Scholae dialecticae* (part of the *Scholae in liberales artes*), where the reader is redirected to the *Dialectici commentarii tres*. The final version of Ramus's method can be found in his 1572 *Dialecticae libri*. The main variations with respect to the first formulation of the method, on the other hand, can be found in the 1555 *Dialectique*. In 1555, he updated his method of teaching in light of the difference between what is known better either according to its nature (*notiora naturae*) or according to our mind (*notiora nobis*). For Ramus, the method of teaching corresponds to the order of what is known better according to nature, as this made it possible to equate the two kinds of order. This point is clarified in an excerpt from Book IX of the 1556 edition of the *Aristotelicae Animadversiones*, published in 1557 ("*Quod sit unica doctrinae instituendae methodus*", Ramus 1557b): there he deals with the problem of the "priority" of notions. For Ramus, as for Aristotle, in knowing we start from particulars, which are *notiora nobis*; however, by means of education it is possible to make the apprehension of the general more easy than that of the particulars: in this way, priority of nature and of time coincide. On the other hand, after the 1555 *Dialectique*, the method of prudence disappeared from Ramus's works: in his 1569 *Dialecticae libri* (Ramus and Talon 1569), for instance, he is committed to only one method, although divided into two: one for philosophy and arts – which is method as such; and the other for historians, orators, and poets, which differs from the former in that it teaches us how to convey probable premises to an audience as if these amounted to perfect knowledge; in order to do this, poets, historians, and orators have to reverse the order of exposition and start with conclusions. In this edition, moreover, method is based on an axiomatic theory: that is, instead of beginning with general definitions, the method starts with axioms which are known by themselves or by syllogisms, and proceeds by means of the general to the particular as from antecedents to

consequents; however, Ramus does not clarify how this progression from antecedents to consequents works. Finally, in the 1572 *Dialecticae libri* method is equated with "dianoia" or intelligible order, and is guided by three rules, also called "rules of philosophy" by Ramus. These rules are appropriated from Aristotle's *Analytica posteriora*, where they show how to conduct a scientific demonstration, i.e., a *demonstratio propter quid*. For Aristotle, these laws are the: (1) *lex de omni*, (2) *lex per se*, and (3) *lex de universali*, and they prescribe that in a scientific demonstration: (1) the subject is to be taken in its full extension, i.e., without restrictions to its validity; (2) the predicate has to be linked by essence to the subject; and (3) the predicate cannot be more extended than the subject. Ramus intends such laws as the guidelines for proceeding in any discipline, and he renders them as (1) the law of necessary truth, according to which a statement in one art has to be absolutely and necessarily true, and, therefore, has to be taken without restrictions and has to be necessary to the given art; (2) the law of justice or homogeneity, according to which statements in one art cannot be used in other arts; and (3) the law of wisdom, according to which all the statements in one art have to be compatible and not confused with each other – for instance, general and particular statements have to be dealt with separately. The provision of such rules had the function of making the teaching of disciplines more efficient by avoiding any meddling between different fields of knowledge and by providing an order of teaching from the more general to the more particular. In accordance with these rules, for instance, general disciplines such as logic and arithmetic have to be taught first in the curriculum. The foremost example of such meddling is the confusion between metaphysics and logic characterizing the Aristotelian tradition – in Ramus's account – as Aristotle dealt with logical notions (such as cause, opposition, comparison, genre, and species) in metaphysics and vice versa. The relation of these disciplines is resolved by Ramus by reducing metaphysics to dialectic itself, as it was for Plato (Pozzo 2000; on Ramus and method, see Ong 1958a, 245–263; Jardine 1974, 41–74; Bruyère 1984).

Ramus's Platonism and his use of the laws of philosophy can be seen in his dealing with mathematics. In his *Oratio de studiis mathematicis* of 1544 (Ramus 1544), Ramus expresses the highest appreciation for mathematics, as it was used by Archimedes for practice and by Plato for contemplation, i.e., paving the way to dialectic as the highest science and to its use as a third judgment. Moreover, in the preface to his edition of Euclid's *Elementa* (1549) Ramus labels mathematics as part of the natural dialectic, and, as soon as he identifies dialectic with metaphysics, he can set forth a correspondence between the mathematical, the rational-dialectical, and the divine domains. In his mathematical textbook, *Arithmetica* (1555b), however, Ramus changed this view (apparently after having difficulties in dealing with mathematics) and came to consider that Euclid had violated two of the laws of method, since he broke the law of homogeneity by mixing geometry and arithmetic, and the law of wisdom, since he started with geometry, whereas the treatment of quantity (in arithmetic) has to come first. Finally, in the *Proemium mathematicum* (1567), later expanded as the *Scholae mathematicae* (1569, which was part of the *Scholae in liberales artes*), Ramus criticizes Plato as a philosopher, on the grounds that he was responsible for the corruption of mathematics, which in his hands became an overly abstract discipline; and he also criticizes those ancient mathematicians – such as Euclid and Archimedes – who did not apply mathematics to practical disciplines (Goulding 2010).

The distinction between different kinds of art is reflected, moreover, by the sharp differentiation formulated by Ramus between dialectic and rhetoric. This differentiation is at work, for instance, in his *Brutinae quaestiones in Oratorem Ciceronis* (1547), where he attacks Cicero's and Quintilian's rhetoric for lacking a clear order, i.e., of treating grammatical and dialectical topics within rhetoric itself, and of giving a misleading order of the disciplines. Cicero, for instance, subordinated the knowledge of rhetoric to that of philosophy. Although rhetorical means were integrated into dialectic in the scholastic and humanist traditions, the aim of Ramus in establishing his rhetoric was to differentiate it from dialectic. The

traditional scheme of rhetoric – which can be traced back to Cicero's *De inventione* – included five parts: invention, disposition or judgment, elocution, pronunciation, and memory. Since invention and disposition had been included in dialectic, and since the art of memory is useless insofar as our knowledge always has to start with general notions and then proceed by following a natural order, Ramus considers that only elocution and pronunciation are branches of rhetoric. His rhetoric can be found in 1544 Talon's *Institutiones oratoriae* (Talon and Ramus 1544), likely written by Ramus himself, and in Talon's *Rhetorica* (1548), deeply influenced by Ramus, who then rewrote this text in its 1567 and 1569 editions (Talon and Ramus 1567, Talon and Ramus 1569); so, Ramist rhetoric was composed by the "Ramus-Talon team" (Ong 1958a, 270–271). These texts served to complement Ramus's *Institutiones dialecticae*. This treatise of 1545 follows the same threefold structure which Ramus imposed on dialectic. Intended as the power of speaking well, or "*vis bene dicendi*" (as defined in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*), rhetoric consists of (1) natural eloquence, (2) the art and the teaching of eloquence itself, and (3) its exercise. Natural eloquence is based on two main powers: thought and discretion of thought, corresponding to invention and disposition, which are then systematized in the art of rhetoric. In Talon's 1548 *Rhetorica* these parts are replaced by elocution and pronunciation or delivery, which, however, is almost entirely neglected; indeed, in this text the art of rhetoric consists of elocution alone, which is the ornamentation of speech provided by tropes (i.e., metaphors) and rhetorical figures. Thirdly, there is the exercise of rhetoric, which is divided, like dialectic, into interpretation (which is the analysis of the ornaments of speech), and writing and speaking, which are guided by the imitation of classical models. This third part, however, is also omitted in the 1548 *Rhetorica*. Eventually, Ramist rhetoric was restricted to a theory of the ornaments of speech, which are dealt with according to the Ramist method of analysis from the general to the particular in the 1567 and 1569 editions of the *Rhetorica* (Ong 1958a, 270–279; Meerhoff 1986, 175–199; Mack 2011).

Impact and Legacy

Ramism, across the different geographic areas of its reception, mainly influenced the disciplines of the *trivium* taught in Latin schools and *gymnasia*, where students were prepared for the study of philosophy at university faculties of arts. This phenomenon was due to the distinctive character of Ramus's teaching, which was primarily aimed at a reform of dialectic and rhetoric. Moreover, the limited dissemination of Ramism in universities was the result of resistance to innovation in the traditional teaching of logic on the basis of the *Summulae* and commentaries on Aristotle, Porphyry, and Boethius. This is clear in the main countries where Ramus's thought was received. First and foremost, Ramism characterized the teaching of logic in the *gymnasia* and *gymnasia illustria* (i.e., academies entitled to give bachelor and master degrees) in Central Europe, specifically in the German-speaking cities of the lower Rhine area, in northwest Germany, and in the Hanseatic cities. In France, Ramism had its main diffusion before the death of Ramus in the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day (1572); however, only his rhetoric was widely accepted at the University of Paris, because the entrenched Aristotelian logical tradition there prevented the acceptance of Ramus's dialectic. Along with Talon, the foremost French Ramists were Antoine Foquelin, who wrote a *Rhetorique françoise*, published in Paris in 1555 (Foquelin 1555), and Christophe de Savigny, who wrote a *Tableaux accomplis de tous les arts libéraux* (1587) presenting a Ramist dialectic and rhetoric (Ong 1958a, 295–298; Meerhoff 1986, 320–325; Angelini 2008). After the St Bartholomew's Day massacre, André Wechel – the publisher of Ramus in Paris (Maclean 2009, 163–226) – moved to Frankfurt, and German cities became the leading centers of European Ramism, as reconstructed by Howard Hotson. The works of Ramus and Talon on dialectic and rhetoric went through 27 editions in the area of Dortmund–Düsseldorf: Ramist logic became the standard at the Dortmund *gymnasium*, where it was taught by Johann Lambach from 1543 to 1582, and was then spread by Bernhard Copius, rector of the *gymnasium* of Lemgo

(1559–1566), and by Heinrich Betuleius, who taught in Essen, Soest, Wesel, Düsseldorf, and Lemgo (1557–1581). In Düsseldorf, Ramism was introduced by Franciscus Fabricius of Düren and was then consolidated by the teaching of Betuleius, Lazarus Schöner, Martin Hoping, and Sylvester Pribenius (from 1559 to 1609). In Hessen, Ramism was introduced at the Marburg *Paedagogium* by Wilhelm Roding, who published Ramus's *Dialectica* in 1574 (Ramus and Roding 1574). It was the *Landesschule* of Korbach, however, the first main center of German Ramism: founded in 1578, this preuniversity school was directed by Schöner, who provided editions of Ramus's mathematical writings; moreover, Wilhelm Adolf Scribonius taught dialectic, rhetoric, physics, astronomy, ethics, and medicine in Korbach using the Ramist method of dichotomies, thus broadening its use outside the boundaries of the *trivium*. From Korbach Ramism was transplanted into northern Germany: into Kassel, by Jodocus Jungmann, from 1581; and into Stade, by Copius's son-in-law, Reiner Lange, from 1587. Moreover, it was from Korbach that Ramism was disseminated to Herborn, the most important center of German Ramism, by Schöner, Herman Germberg, and Heinrich Crantz, who helped to introduce the teaching of Ramism at the newly founded Herborn *Paedagogium* or *gymnasium illustre* from 1584. Johannes Piscator, who had already taught Ramus's *Scholae* in Mörs, also contributed to setting up the program of the Herborn *Gymnasium Illustre*, which constituted a model for the foundation of those of Steinfurt (1591) and, by Matthias Martinus, of Bremen (1610). In Hanseatic cities, hosting simple *gymnasia* rather than academies, Ramism was also taken up because it fulfilled the need to teach a complete curriculum of studies in a short period of time; this was the case in the *gymnasia* of Danzig, Elbing, and Thorn in Prussia. As a consequence of its dissemination, Ramism assumed a confessional character. Even if it was rejected in major Reformed universities, with its introduction into schools Ramism served confessional aims: in Herborn, for instance, Ramism was part of the reform of the state based on Calvinist principles promoted by Johann VI of Nassau-

Dillenburg. Piscator, in his *Animadversiones in dialecticam Petri Rami* (1580), carried out such a confessionalization by illustrating Ramist method with religious examples; this led to an association of Ramism with Calvinism and to the subsequent rejection of Ramism in Lutheran states, as, for instance, in Leipzig from 1592.

The dissemination of Ramism in German areas was not only favored by the need to provide preuniversity schools with a curriculum, which was felt also by Vives, Sturm, and Melanchthon. Its acceptance was eased by the earlier spread of Agricola's dialectic from Louvain, where his *De inventione* was printed in 1515. It was then taught in Deventer by Alexander Hegius and at the cathedral school of Münster by Johannes Caesarius. Moreover, two editors of Agricola were active in Cologne: Bartholomeus Latomus – who, together with Johann Sturm, taught Agricola's dialectic in Paris – and Johannes Phrissemius. Agricola's dialectic also spread to Essen and Herborn via Marburg, where it was taught by Caspar Rudolphi. Finally, Sturm played the foremost role in the use of Agricola, providing a model for the reorganization of *gymnasia* in western Germany based on a sevenfold structure of teaching: this “stratified” structure favored the adoption of Agricola's simplified dialectic, and then of Ramus's. On the other hand, Ramism had a more limited impact in universities: Isaac Casaubon in Heidelberg and Joannes Caselius in Helmstedt opposed Ramism on the ground that it was necessary to teach philosophy by means of commentaries on Aristotle, and to include in the curriculum not only rhetoric and dialectic but the whole corpus of disciplines, whose contents were already available in scholastic textbooks. In Helmstedt, for instance, Cornelius Martini exhorted students in 1597 to cultivate the logic of Aristotle and Melanchthon rather than that of Ramus (Pozzo 2000, 2012). Yet, Ramism was gradually disseminated in universities as well. The transplantation of Ramism from *gymnasia* to *gymnasia illustria* and universities was made possible by its transformation into a methodology applicable to the higher arts of law, medicine, and theology, for which such institutions prepared students. This process is noticeable in Johannes Piscator's *Animadversiones*, where

Ramus's method is integrated with the logic of Melanchthon, giving rise to Philippo-Ramism or semi-Ramism. Also, in 1585 Piscator prescribed, in the *Leges Scholae Herbornensis* (Piscator 1585), learning Ramus's dialectic and Talon's rhetoric together with that of Melanchthon and of Aristotle himself. Such semi-Ramism spread to other academies modeled on that of Herborn, such as those in Steinfurt and Bremen; it is also observable in textbooks like that of Michael Sonleutner (*Institutiones dialecticae*, 1584), which aimed to find a *via media* between Melanchthon and Ramus. At the beginning of seventeenth century German Ramism was more and more integrated with alternative logical theories: this is the case of the *Systema logicum* (1600) and *Systema systematum* (1613) of Keckermann, professor at the University of Heidelberg, who integrated a Ramist explanation of disciplines – based on definitions and divisions – with Jacopo Zabarella's distinction between *ordo* and *methodus*. With his systematization, Keckermann paved the way to the ultimate outcome of Ramism in Germany: the *Encyclopaedia* of Alsted (1630), which is equally based on definitions, divisions, and dichotomies as means of exposition.

With its dissemination outside *gymnasia*, Ramism was thus applied not only to *trivium* but to the whole curriculum of the university. Scribonius published a Ramist natural philosophy in 1577 (Scribonius 1577), while Rudolph Snell (1594) and Freige (1585) lectured on the same subject in Marburg and Altdorf. Scribonius and Rudolph Goclenius then published Ramist texts in ethics in 1588 (Scribonius 1588) and 1592 (Goclenius 1592), while Johannes Althusius published his *Politica methodice digesta* in 1603 (Althusius 1603). At the University of Heidelberg Piscator subsequently applied Ramist method to the teaching of theology, providing a series of commentaries on the Bible from 1589 to 1597, while at the University of Basle Polanus von Polansdorf provided a systematic, Ramist theology in 1609 (Polanus Von Polansdorf 1609), and, Freige devoted his *Partitiones iuris utrisque* (1571) to the exposition of legal instructions in a Ramist way. Johannes Althusius, professor in Herborn, also published a Ramist exposition of

Roman law in Basle (1586) (on the use of Ramism in jurisprudence, see Oldrini 2001). In medicine Ramism had less diffusion, with Scribonius's *Idea medicinae secundum logicas leges*, published in Lemgo in 1584 (Scribonius 1584), the most notable example. The dissemination of Ramism in academies and, partially, in universities was moreover made possible by textbooks in which it was applied to metaphysics, such as those of Daniel Cramer, Nicolaus Taurellus, and the *Metaphysicae systema methodicum* of Clemens Timpler (1604) (Hotson 2007).

Outside Germany, Ramism had a consistent dissemination in Transylvania and Hungary: in 1629 Alsted and Ludwig Philipp Piscator (son of Johannes Piscator, and a Herborn Ramist himself), came to Alba Iulia – part of the Kingdom of Hungary – to establish an academy in 1629. In particular, Piscator introduced Ramist rhetoric into Hungary, where his *Rudimenta oratoriae* had five editions in 1630s and 1640s (Piscator 1649). Afterwards, Ramist dialectic was disseminated by Mihály Buzinkai, Istvan Tolnai, and Gyorgy Martonfalvi Toth, who provided commentaries on Ramus in the second half of seventeenth century (Kecske méti 2011). In Switzerland, Ramism was mainly taught in Basle. As well as Polandorf and Freige, Theodor Zwinger – a former student of Ramus in Paris – lectured in Basle on the ethics and politics of Aristotle by using the Ramist method of dichotomies, definitions, and divisions. Afterwards, Ramism in Basle was mainly represented by Ludwig Lutz, who provided an integration of Aristotle's and Ramus's logic (*Organum*, 1619). In Berne and Lausanne, Ramism was used in high schools, for example, by Markus Rüttimeyer and Jean-Rodolphe Le Fèvre (Rother 2001). In the Netherlands, before the breakthrough of Cartesianism, Rudolph Snell and his son Willebrord taught Ramus's dialectic and arithmetic at Leiden University. In Franeker, William Ames and Johannes Hachtingius were well-known Ramists. However, since scholastic philosophy was officially supported by orthodox theologians at the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–1619), Ramists never formed a consistent faction in Dutch universities. As in Germany, Ramism played a more consistent

role in the pre-academic course of the *trivium* at the Illustrious Schools – a form of higher education preparing students for the academic *quadrivium*. Yet Ramism was acknowledged as a full-blown school of logic by Franco Burgersdijk, who was entrusted by the States of Holland to provide a revision of Keckermann's *Systema logicum* and to make it more understandable to younger students. In his *Institutionum logicarum libri* (1626) Burgersdijk distinguishes between three schools of logic: the Aristotelian, which formed the basis of all logic; the Ramist, which had an overly narrow conception of logic; and Keckermann's logic, which combined Aristotelian and Ramist logic and dialectic.

As in Continental Europe, so, too, in England, Ramism was mainly taught as part of pre-university education, with hardly any presence in the curricula of universities themselves. Moreover, even at this level, it did not constitute a paradigm for teaching. As testified by the library catalogues of Cambridge scholars who owned Ramist texts, these do not make up a majority of their textbooks in logic, which included in most cases the *Organon* and the dialectic of Agricola and Sturm. Since in the sixteenth century pre-university education in England was often left to private teachers, Ramism could not be imposed by any central authority in education (Feingold 2001). Ramism was mainly embraced by Puritans, as it offered an efficient method of sermonizing and disputing. Under the influence of Laurence Chaderton, Ramism was received in Cambridge by Gabriel Harvey and George Downham, professors of rhetoric and logic at the Christ's College in 1570s and 1580s, and by William Temple, a fellow of King's College from 1576. Temple was the foremost exponent of Ramism in England: besides providing a commentary on Ramus's dialectic (1584), in 1580 he entered into a quarrel with Everard Digby, who attacked Ramus in his *De duplici methodo* (1580), to which Temple replied with his *Admonitio de unica Rami methodo* (1580). Temple, moreover, developed a Ramist ethics in his *Methodica adumbratio ethicae* (manuscript). In theology, Ramism was adopted by William Perkins, a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, who elaborated a method of

sermonizing based on Ramus's rhetoric (*The art of prophesying*, 1616–1618), and by Temple himself, who produced a Ramist analysis of the Psalms (*A logical analysis of twenty select Psalmes*, 1605). In Oxford, notorious Ramists included Laurence Humphrey (at Magdalen College) and Charles Butler. Ramism was also disseminated in London at the Inns of Court and in Church schools, by the teaching of Chaderton and Richard Hooker. Moreover, Temple spread Ramism to the grammar school of Lincoln, where he became a schoolmaster in 1581 (Mack 2004; Oldrini 1997, 227–308). Ramism also extended its influence through drama in the Elizabethan era: Christopher Marlowe portrayed Ramus's death in his play *The Massacre at Paris* (1592); moreover, Ramism appeared in plays written by students in the 1590s, ridiculing its use in the curriculum. A similar view appears in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1588) (Feingold 2001; Wilson 2011, Knight 2011). In Scotland, the foremost Ramist was Andrew Melville, whose reform of teaching served as the basis for the curriculum at the universities of St Andrews and Glasgow (re-founded in 1577), although the presence of Ramism is more discernible in the latter, because Melville was the only teacher of logic there, whereas at St Andrews, a bigger institution, the teaching was mainly based on Aristotle (Reid 2011). In Ireland, Ramism was taught in the *trivium* at Trinity College Dublin, where Temple was provost from 1609 to 1610 and reorganized the college (Boran 2001).

In Catholic countries, Ramism had less success, as it was officially banned by the Council of Trent in 1568. Before that date, Ramist rhetoric – which was more easily accepted than logic in universities – had an important dissemination in Spain, especially in Valencia, where Pedro Juan Núñez, a disciple of Ramus and Talon, wrote his *Institutiones oratoriae* on the basis of Talon's rhetoric (1552), followed in 1567 by Juan Lorenzo Palmireno's *Rhetorica* (Palmireno 1567) and in 1568 by Andrés Sempere's *Methodus oratoria* (Sempere 1568). After 1568 Ramist rhetoric was still taught in Valencia by means of *De arte dicendi* of Palmireno (1573) and the *Institutiones rhetoricae* of Núñez (1578). At the University of Alcalá de Henares, Benito Arias Montano taught his *Rhetoricorum*

libri (1569), while in Salamanca there was a partial acceptance of Ramus's dialectic, as testified to by Francisco Sanchez de las Brozas's *De auctoribus interpretandi* (1581), based on Talon's theory of elocution and on Ramus's dialectical disposition (Jiménez 2004). In Italy, Ramism was scarcely disseminated: the only traces of Ramism can be found in the unpublished *De numero et qualitate elementorum* of Antonio Persio, who was sympathetic to the ideas of Bernardino Telesio and who used Ramus's *Scholae physicae* against Aristotle.

Cross-References

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Ramus, Petrus

Born: Cuts (village in northern France), circa 1515

Died: Paris, 26 August 1572

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Abstract

Petrus Ramus was a French logician and philosopher who was against scholastic logic and Aristotle. He is considered to be the precursor to Descartes.

Alternate Names

Ramée, Pierre de la

Biography and Works

Born in Cuts, Petrus Ramus moved to Paris at the age of 11. In 1527, he attended the Collège Sainte-Barbe and Collège de Navarre, where he served a rich student, Sieur de La Brosse. There, he met the future Charles of Lorraine and discovered Aristotle with Jean Hennuyer, who later became Bishop of Lisieux (Normandy, France). He attended the lectures of humanist educator Johannes Sturm, German humanist Bartholomew Latomus, and Jacques Omphalius, who was later appointed imperial advisor. The courses were based on Rodolphus Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* (1515), which describes the characteristics of a discourse based on probability. At the age of 21, Ramus argued in his master's thesis that Aristotle's doctrines were false ("*quaecumque ab Aristotele dicta essent commentitia esse*"), which shocked and embarrassed his jury, who were accustomed to relying on the authority of the Greek philosopher.

Having obtained his master's degree, Ramus started teaching in 1537 at the Collège du Mans in Paris, and then at the Collège de l'Ave Maria in Le Mans (France), where he advocated for the combined study of philosophy and eloquence: orators and poets were featured in this popular course, which was inspired by Johannes Sturm. He met French humanist Omer Talon and Barthélémy Alexandre, a Hellenist eager to disseminate Greek texts in their original language. The three men became friends and taught courses open to the public, which were based on the works of Greek and Latin authors. Throughout his life, Ramus continued to support the study of Greek alongside Latin.

In 1543, Ramus published his first two works on logic and dialectic: *Dialecticae partitiones ad Academiam Parisienem* (1543a) – he gave a copy to Francis I, likely in the hopes of becoming one of his protégés – and *Aristotelicae Animadversiones* (1543b), dedicated to Charles

of Lorraine, in which he attacks Aristotle's logic more specifically and, indirectly, the masters of the Faculté des arts in Paris who taught Aristotle's works. Ramus explains for the first time his idea of one universally applicable method (contrary to Aristotle who makes a distinction between the apodictic and dialectic methods), which "consists of proceeding from the whole towards the parts by defining, dividing, giving examples" (Bruyère, 1984: 76). These works caused outrage and angered people such as Joachim Périon (doctor from the Sorbonne), Antoine de Gouvéa (Goveanus, a Portuguese legal advisor), and the regents of the Université de Paris. Ramus was therefore prosecuted. His *Aristotelicae Animadversiones* was presented to the Faculty of Theology, which banned the work. Members of the faculty wanted to defend teaching theology using Aristotelian physics and metaphysics, combining (human) philosophy and theology. In 1544, Ramus's works were banned by decree of King Francis I, who forbade him from teaching philosophy. Omer Talon took over his position, defending Ramus in his work on rhetoric published in January 1545 (*Institutiones orotoriae*). Ramus began teaching eloquence and mathematics and was the first to translate Euclid into Latin (1545). That same year, while Paris was affected by another episode of the plague, he became the head of the Collège de Presles (one of the colleges of the Université de Paris).

In 1547, Francis I died: Charles of Lorraine (now Cardinal of Guise) asked Henri II to annul the decree of 1544. Under Henri II, Ramus was given more leeway and could devote himself to writing, leading to a new edition of *Aristotelicae Animadversiones*, toning down the virulence that had been so controversial. He also published *Brutinae quaestiones in Oratorem Ciceronis* (1549b) and *Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum* (1549c), in which he criticizes Cicero and Quintilian. He once again incurred the wrath of Joachim Périon, as well as Jacques Charpentier, professor of philosophy at the Collège de Boncour. Pierre Galland – who was appointed professor of Latin eloquence from 1542 to 1543 by Francis I – revived Ramus's edition of Quintilian. In 1548, Omer Talon

published *Rhetorica ad Carolum Lotharingum*, based on Ramus's criticism of Cicero and Quintilian; the work was then translated by Antoine Fouquelin in 1555 (*La Rhétorique française*) with several terminological changes and examples from French literature instead of Virgil.

Thanks to Henri II, Ramus obtained the post of "royal professor of eloquence and philosophy" in August 1551, a new position that he alone would occupy. He championed the union between rhetoric and dialectic, the former being strictly subordinate to the latter. The principles of this "conjunction" are laid out in *Oratio de studiis philosophiae et eloquentiae conjungendis* (1549a), which states that doing well and speaking well go hand in hand. Ramus started teaching classes at the Collège de Presles that were extremely popular, combining once again the works of poets and orators with philosophical texts. There, he met Nicolas de Nancel, who became his student and secretary, and published his biography in 1599 (Nancel 1599).

In 1551, Ramus proposed a reform in Latin pronunciation, particularly concerning the "q." His interest in grammar led him to publish a Latin grammar manual in 1559, a Greek one in 1560, and a French one in 1562 (revised and reissued in 1572). He is best known for advocating for the distinction between "j" and "i" and "v" and "u" in French spelling. During this period, he continued pursuing his work on rhetoric and attacked Cicero and Quintilian in a collection of texts later published under the title *Scholae rhetoricae*. His *Institutiones dialecticae* (1554) and *Dialectique* (1555) focus on dialectic; he leaves *elocutio* and *actio* to his friend and colleague Omer Talon, looking instead at *inventio* and *dispositio*, as applied to dialectic (the art of reasoning methodically). While Rodolphus Agricola proposed an interpersonal conception of dialectic in *De inventione dialectica*, Ramus advocated a monological method, foreshadowing the work of Descartes a century later. While Agricola considers persuasion to be the aim of dialectic, Ramus believes dialectic seeks truth, and he considers the Aristotelian distinction between logic (the art of the real) and dialectic (the art of the probable) to be pointless. The

"precautionary approach" mentioned in his text – which cannot be applied to "assured" dispositions – completes the ideal and apodictic "method of nature"; however, it demonstrates that eliminating subjectivity, rhetoric and passion might not be feasible in all circumstances. Dividing rhetoric in two fields – dialectic (logic), which deals with *inventio* and *dispositio*, and rhetoric, with *elocutio* and *actio* – contributes to the "widespread restriction" of rhetoric.

With the support of Henri II, in 1557, Ramus was appointed to a commission that was given the task of proposing reforms for the Université de Paris. This reflection led to *Advertissemens sur la reformation de l'université de Paris* in 1562a, which criticizes and considers the consequences of having an unlimited number of professors, namely, the excessive cost of education. A protégé of Francis II and Charles IX, Ramus very effectively defended the privileges enjoyed by the Université.

Ramus was a devout Catholic up until 1561. However, the union between Aristotle and the Church – common since the beginning of the sixteenth century – meant that anyone who did not adhere completely to Aristotle's philosophical opinions was considered to be a heretic, and Ramus was no exception. Alienated from the Catholic Church and attracted to reformed Christianity, which counted among its ranks some of the greatest scholars and scientists of the century, Ramus converted to Protestantism at the Poissy conference in 1561. As a consequence, he lost the protection of Charles de Lorraine (Cardinal of Lorraine since 1550). His conversion renewed his desire to confront theological texts with the precepts of dialectic. In 1562, the French Wars of Religion broke out with the Massacre of Vassy; Ramus moved to Fontainebleau but failed to escape prosecution. He returned to Paris in 1563, following the signing of the Edict of Amboise, and resumed teaching grammar, rhetoric, and logic. In 1566, Jacques Charpentier and Ramus clashed once again; having taken an interest in mathematics since 1545, Ramus contested Charpentier's legitimacy as the recently appointed professor of mathematics at the Collège Royal. From 1568 to 1570, he traveled to Germany –

where he spent time with Johannes Sturm – and Switzerland, before his assassination in 1572, 2 days after the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in Paris.

Cross-References

- [Sturm, Johannes](#)
- [Talon, Omer](#)

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RaN

- [Gerondi, Nissim ben Reuben](#)

Ransom Slavery

- [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)

Rao, Cesare

Born: 1532

Died: 1588

Donato Verardi

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Abstract

Cesare Rao, an Italian philosopher and writer from Alessano, in the Otranto area, was born in 1532. We know for sure that the philosopher was awarded an Arts degree by the University of Bologna on 10 September 1556. He returned to his hometown after 1573, where he lived until his death, most probably in 1588. Rao's works are representative of some important

phenomena that were occurring in the second half of the sixteenth century. The first was the vernacular translation of the scientific doctrines of Aristotle, particularly the medieval and Renaissance Peripatetic meteorological tradition. The second phenomenon in which Rao participated was the creation of an Italian philosophical lexicon.

Biography

Cesare Rao, an Italian philosopher and writer from Alessano, in the Otranto area, was born in 1532. His writings include *Sollazzevol convito* (1562a), a text in which he addresses the usual themes of Ficinian Neoplatonism and the “philosophy of love”; *L’Argute e facete lettere* (1562b), a literary work that enjoyed considerable and lasting publishing success; a paper entitled *De eloquentiae laudibus* (1577a); two physico-meteorological works, *Dell’origine de’ Monti* (1577b) and *Meteori* (1581–1582); and *Invettive, orationi et discorsi* (1587) (Vacca 1948).

He left his parent’s home at the age of 18, when he decided to study at the University of Naples. A year later, he set off for Pisa, partly attracted by the fame of the renowned Aristotelian professor, Simone Porzio. Rao completed the second year of his studies in Pisa, but, due to an ongoing war in the area, he was forced to move to Pavia in 1553. It was most probably in this city that he began to write his first works. After some time, he returned to Alessano, where he spent a few years from between 1553 and 1560. We know for sure that the philosopher was awarded an Arts degree by the University of Bologna on 10 September 1556. Some of his letters from Rome, Florence, Genoa, Bologna, Milan, Pavia, Ferrara, and Mantua cannot be accurately dated, but were certainly written before 1562. He was in Lucca for a short period in 1562 and in Venice the following year. We have no information about Rao’s place of residence for the following decade. In 1573, the philosopher was living in Pavia, where he was probably a member of the Academy of Illustrators, to which he read or arranged a reading of his *Orazione in lode della Filosofia*. He finally returned to his

hometown after 1573, where he lived until his death, most probably in 1588 (Vacca 1948; Papuli 1967; Figorilli 2004).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Rao’s experience was deeply influenced by his university education, which contributed to his brilliant activity as a writer in the Italian language. He dedicated two important works in Italian to questions of physics: *Dell’Origine de’ Monti* and *Meteori*, in which he interestingly adopts an “eclectic” approach to the Aristotelian physical tradition, revealing the influence of various traditions of thought. With regard to meteorology, for example, he uses a combination of elements from the tradition of Aristotelian *Meteorologica*, together with others from the al-Kindi Arab tradition of (astrological) meteorology. It should be borne in mind, however, that Italian Arts and Medicine curricula at the time (even in Bologna, where Rao studied for his master’s degree) included a highly conspicuous selection of texts from the medieval Arabic tradition (Verardi 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2014a, b).

Innovative and Original Aspect

Rao’s works are representative of some important phenomena that were occurring in the second half of the sixteenth century. The first was the vernacular translation of the scientific doctrines of Aristotle, particularly the medieval and Renaissance Peripatetic meteorological tradition (Bianchi 2009; Sgarbi 2014). The second phenomenon in which Rao participated was the creation of an Italian philosophical lexicon. He considered this “effort” comparable to Cicero’s work of translating Greek knowledge into Latin. Through the creation of an Italian philosophical lexicon, Rao intended to explain to a broader public the rational causes of extraordinary phenomena, which were mistakenly regarded as supernatural by the “uncouth.” Thus the translation of science into the vernacular assumed a specific social role in the struggle against superstition (Vianello 1988; Verardi 2014a).

Impact and Legacy

The result is a view of the philosopher's activity as a radical struggle against every form of superstition, pursued not in the narrow confines of the university, but in the living fabric of society, under the banner of a new Italian philosophical language (Verardi 2013, 2014a, b).

Cross-References

► [Porzio, Simone](#)

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Rarefaction and Condensation

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Abstract

Rarefactions and condensations, in their simplest form, are those phenomena in which material substances vary in their densities, becoming more fine or tenuous on the one hand or coarser or thicker on the other. Although they might seem unproblematic concepts to modern readers, in fact they have a complex history and even have been seen as fundamental aspects of nature. For a number of thinkers, the phenomena of rarefactions and condensations seemed to suggest, inescapably, that matter must have inbuilt principles of activity. Essentially, this boils down to a belief that matter can determine its own dimensions in some way – either by spreading itself out, or contracting itself inwards, or, in the case of corpuscular theories, by moving its constituent particles closer together or further apart. And this kind of self-determination or self-movement was, for these thinkers, either occult or fundamental and unexplained. It is a sign of the complexity of the issues arising from condensation and rarefaction that alternative, non-occult, attempts to explain these phenomena never achieved full consensus. The most

influential account was eventually provided by Isaac Newton by supposing attractive and repulsive forces capable of acting at a distance between atomic particles. But even this was superseded by the non-occult kinetic theory of gases in the late nineteenth century.

Introduction

Rarefactions and condensations, in their simplest form, are those phenomena in which material substances vary in their densities, becoming more fine or tenuous on the one hand or coarser or thicker on the other. Although they might seem unproblematic concepts to modern readers, in fact they have a complex history and even have been seen as fundamental aspects of nature. For a number of thinkers, the phenomena of rarefactions and condensations seemed to suggest, inescapably, that matter must have inbuilt principles of activity. Essentially, this boils down to a belief that matter can determine its own dimensions in some way – either by spreading itself out, or contracting itself inwards, or, in the case of corpuscular theories, by moving its constituent particles closer together or further apart. And this kind of self-determination or self-movement was, for these thinkers, either occult or fundamental and unexplained. It is a sign of the complexity of the issues arising from condensation and rarefaction that alternative, non-occult, attempts to explain these phenomena never achieved full consensus.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The importance of the concepts of condensation and rarefaction can be seen from the fact that one of the earliest of the Pre-Socratic natural philosophers, Anaximenes of Miletus (BC. 585–528), considered them as fundamental to physics and ultimately responsible for all physical change. Seeking to reduce the complexity of the material world to one fundamental substance, Anaximenes fixed on air as the “originative substance and basic form of matter,” but it was only through condensation that air could manifest itself as liquid or

solid and only through rarefaction that it could return again to air or by further rarefaction manifest itself as fire. What is not clear is how these changes of state were brought about. He simply seems to suggest that air can condense or rarefy of its own accord, as though it works by its own power, an explanation which might be characterized as occult. The fundamental nature of condensation and rarefaction for Anaximenes can be seen in the fact that he explained other phenomena in terms of them. Noting that steam is hotter than water, and that fire is hotter than air, Anaximenes suggested that rarefaction resulted in the generation of heat. Similarly, the coldness of ice suggested that condensation from water to ice (the fact that ice is less dense than water was unknown to the Ancients) generated cold (Kirk 1983). One of the ways in which Aristotle subsequently rejected Anaximenes’ occult account was to insist that condensation and rarefaction were passive reactions of matter to what Aristotle saw as the “manifest” qualities of heat and cold (although some Renaissance writers, Jean Fernel, Bernardino Telesio, Daniel Sennert, and others, would later point out that heat and cold were no more manifest than any occult quality). The example of Anaximenes, anyway, reveals that right from the outset of natural philosophy, condensation and rarefaction were recognized to be problematic and defied easy explanation.

Approximately one and a half centuries after Anaximenes, the ancient atomistic explanation of rarity and density was equally problematic. Democritus and Leucippus explained rarefactions and condensations in terms of atoms either receding from (rarefaction) or approaching toward (condensation) one another. The ancient atomists never actually gave any further explanation as to how atoms could recede from or approach toward each other in this did they suggest how atoms in a highly rarefied substance should stand apart from one another for indefinite periods of time; what prevented particles of air from collapsing together and so condensing into water or ice?

Aristotle pointed out that the atomist position rested on the assumption that the atoms of any substance were initially at some arbitrary distance

from one another and hence depended upon the existence of what Aristotle called “self-determined voids.” In the atomist theory, as it were, gold (the densest substance) might be assumed to have particles which are touching one another but that air (composed of atoms of the same matter as gold) can only be so much lighter than gold by having its atoms intermingled with a greater amount of void. The implication follows that air particles can somehow hold themselves apart in void space.

Aristotle, always keen to resolve problems by carefully chosen definitions, therefore defined condensation and rarefaction in terms of the amount of matter in a given volume. A dense body had more matter in the same volume than a rare body. But the problem arises: how can more matter be put into a volume without the matter interpenetrating the matter already there (it seems to go against the dictum that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time)? Similarly, if a certain amount of matter is taken out of a previously full volume, how can the remaining matter fill that same volume? In short, Aristotle’s account was essentially unintelligible – it might seem unproblematic as a definition, but it was not easy to see how the definition could be translated into actual physical terms. As Thomas Hobbes later suggested, Aristotle’s definition depends upon illegitimately separating body from quantity, as though a body may have more quantity at one time and less at another time; but a body does not *have* a quantity that can be varied in this way, a body *is* a quantity.

The historical success of Aristotle’s attempt to define the problem out of existence probably owes much to the fact that the atomist account seemed to depend upon action at a distance. If rarity consisted in the atoms of a body standing apart from one another, there must be some repulsive force operating between them to keep them apart. Even the later Epicurean atomists (at least as represented by Lucretius) fudged this issue. Lucretius seems to imply that rarity can be explained by a body having “more vacuum in it,” and yet he explicitly denies actions at a distance and elsewhere implies that air flows in to fill the space between bodies and to keep those bodies

apart. This was one of the most intractable problems of atomist philosophy; it was not to be solved until Newton simply supposed, on what he regarded as unassailable empirical grounds, the existence of repulsive forces capable of operating at a distance between the particles (Henry 2011). The fact that the ancient atomists did not properly address this point strongly suggests that their concern was less to do with the niceties of the problem of rarefaction and condensation but more to do with establishing the existence of void space as a matter of principle. There was a classical experiment that atomists presented as evidence supporting the existence of micro-vacua: a vessel filled with loose ashes could be shown to hold as much water as the vessel did when it was empty. Although the atomists tried to use this to confirm the existence of empty space between the particles of ash, their opponents simply claimed that there was air between the particles of ash and the water displaced the air – furthermore this was close to the same amount of water that could be poured into the vessel when it was empty (Michael 2008). The obvious inadequacy of this experiment for demonstrating the existence of void space strongly suggests the atomists themselves did not want to develop alternative scenarios in which they might be revealed as subscribing to actions at a distance.

Even so, atomist arguments did occasionally appear throughout the Middle Ages in critiques of Aristotelianism. One of the most famous and influential medieval atomists was Nicholas of Autrecourt in the fourteenth century, whose treatise *De vacuo* is one of the best-known works against the Aristotelian notion that a void was impossible. Nicholas explains atomic movements in terms of the motion of an atom through different places and then uses such movements to give an account of the phenomena of condensation and rarefaction in terms of the quantitative changing of bodies, by the local movement of atoms within the body. But again, he prefers to remain silent about how the spacing out of the atoms is maintained, rather than facing the problem head-on (Grellard 2008).

Nicholas’s contemporary William Crathorn took a roughly similar line in understanding

rarefaction and condensation. Crathorn insisted that there are only two feasible ways of interpreting condensation and rarefaction: either as the result of some kind of alteration or as the result of a change in the positioning of atoms that exists due to vacuum – empty spaces filled in some other way or new empty spaces in a body causing an increase in size (Robert 2008). Again, there was no real attempt to address the Aristotelian objection to the existence of “self-determined voids.”

Innovative and Original Aspects

In view of this long history, it is hardly surprising that the problematic nature of the atomist account of condensation and rarefaction came to the fore again in the sixteenth and seventeenth century with the revival of atomist (or corpuscularian) natural philosophies. The Renaissance period can be seen as a period of revival of natural magical traditions and of increased recourse to occult traditions as an alternative to what was frequently perceived to be the moribund scholasticism of the Middle Ages. The revival of ancient atomism initially went hand in hand with this increasingly occult natural philosophy, but the beginning of the seventeenth century saw the emergence of a radically anti-occult version of corpuscular philosophy, the so-called mechanical philosophy, in which the emphasis was upon “matter in motion,” rather than “atoms and the void.” Clearly, self-determined voids and self-moving particles were as much a problem for the mechanical philosophies as they had been for scholastic Aristotelianism (Henry 1986, Palmerino 2011).

However, even the most ingenious and philosophically astute of the new mechanical philosophers, René Descartes, failed to deal in a satisfactory way with the phenomena of rarefaction and condensation. “Rarefied bodies,” he suggested, “are those which have many gaps between their parts – gaps which are occupied by other bodies; and they become denser simply in virtue of the parts coming together and reducing or completely closing the gaps.” Implicit in this

suggestion is the assumption that the bodies occupying the spaces between the particles of the supposed rarified body are somehow less dense than the rarefied body (otherwise, the rarefied would not become denser as its parts came closer together and excluded those intruding bodies). This immediately raises the question as to how their lesser density is explained – any attempt to suggest it is due to there being many gaps between their parts leads to an infinite regress, and so Descartes has to assume these bodies simply are less dense – which begs the question. By providing the example of a sponge, Cartesian philosophy shows its clumsiness in terms of the explanation of rare and dense. Descartes considers that rarefaction takes place when a squeezed sponge is released and the holes in its structure spring back open, but the holes are immediately filled with air or the subtle matter which Descartes invokes in order to fill in the gaps between larger particles. He then argues that this is “the only intelligible way of explaining rarefaction.” Descartes did not allow void space, and so he cannot consider voids as another intelligible way of explaining rarefaction, but his own explanation is by no means as intelligible as he professes. Given that matter is defined solely in terms of extension, we have no grounds to assume that one piece of extended matter is any more or less dense than any other part – so the particles filling the holes in the sponge must be as dense as the sponge itself, so there can be no difference in density between a squeezed sponge and a released sponge. Although Descartes seems to have been completely unaware of his error, the fact that he begged the question about the causes of rare and dense in this way surely indicates that ancient atomism provided the model for his account and that rarefaction involved “more vacuum” between the particles. Clearly, Descartes could not allow “more vacuum” between particles, so he unthinkingly substituted “more rare particles” between particles.

Pierre Gassendi did not fall into the same solecism. Gassendi was never fully convinced by Cartesian mechanical philosophy and always allowed for occult elements or active principles within his natural philosophy. Even so, his adaptation of

Epicurean atomism meant that he inescapably confronted the same difficulty as his atomist predecessors (Osler 1994, Fisher 2005). In *Syntagma philosophicum*, Gassendi cited a number of chemical phenomena as examples – the saturation of water with salt, the dissemination of dyes through water, and the penetration of air and water by light, heat, and cold (all of which he assumed to be corpuscular). Noting that water saturated with some salt was still as competent in dissolving alum as stainless water would have been, he therefore made the conclusion that there must be miscellaneous variously shaped micro-vacua in the water, each type of which receives exactly one type of corpuscles. From this, he simply confirmed his point that interstitial voids are an undeniable aspect of the atomic theory of matter. It is important to note, however, that the picture he presents is one of atoms touching one another in such a way that they define differently shaped interstitial void spaces. So, atoms might form a lattice with square-shaped holes, between them, or star-shaped holes, and so on. Each of these holes can be filled (e.g., in chemical reactions) by other appropriately shaped particles. Gassendi's voids are not self-determined but are determined by the geometry of the particles themselves and the way they are stacked and so forth. In this way, Gassendi avoids any suggestion that atoms stand apart from one another in the void – they are touching one another. This schema only allows for very limited rarefactions and condensations – we can imagine particles stacked with square holes between them being compressed so that the particles end up with smaller triangular holes between them. The effect would be that the body made up by these particles would be denser after compression. It is impossible to second-guess how Gassendi might have dealt with cases of extreme rarefaction, however, as revealed in experiments using the newly invented air pump later in the century.

Another leading mechanical philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, was evidently so baffled by rarefaction and condensation that he even went so far as to deny their existence. For Hobbes, the action of a so-called wind-gun, or air gun, which was generally assumed to depend upon compressed

air, simply derived from the motion of air. The pumping process to charge the gun did not compress the air in its cylinder, according to Hobbes, but merely put the air in the cylinder into violent motion. It was the violent motion of the air, not some imagined compression (which for Hobbes was an incoherent concept), which forced the bullet out of the gun. Similarly, effects in the chamber of the air pump which were generally attributed to extreme rarefaction of the air were said by Hobbes to be caused by violent motions of the air generated by pumping. Given the invisibility of the air, it was impossible to say whether a candle in the air pump was extinguished by lack of air or by a strong gust of air (or so Hobbes insisted). Hobbes's critics, however, were not slow to point out that the same substance could be made to vary in density – something which Hobbes was committed to denying (Schaffer 1998).

Not everyone was a corpuscularist philosopher. The problematic nature of condensation and rarefaction was also noticed by Francis Bacon, who had conducted a series of careful experiments to establish the relative densities of different substances (Manzo 2016). Accordingly, the concepts of condensation and rarefaction played important roles in Bacon's *Novum Organum*. Bacon, one of the latest thinkers in the Renaissance revival of magic, thought of rare and dense in terms of occult principles. Bacon considered that matter itself has the inherent tendency to expand and contract, by “folding and unfolding itself in space,” “within certain limits, without the interposition of a vacuum”; thus rarefaction and condensation were due to matter's own power. This view of matter, on the other hand, was also conceived as having a close relationship with motion. Bacon held a differential vitalistic theory, to explain rarefaction and condensation, as well as motion – he held to the view that bodies had a natural state which they wanted to maintain, and so a body subject to compression would restore itself upon release, and similarly, a rarefied body would gather itself back together as soon as possible to regain its natural state.

In spite of its non-corpuscularian nature, Bacon's theory was influential upon the English

lawyer, and dilettante natural philosopher, Matthew Hale (1609–1676). Hale also saw rarefaction and condensation as the result of an “internal immediate principle of motion,” namely, *vis activa*. It should be noted that Hale was writing in the 1670s much later than Bacon, when the Cartesian strict version of the mechanical philosophy was highly prominent in Europe. As an English natural philosopher, Hale developed the view of active qualities here not only as an answer to the causes of rarefactions and condensations but also the causes of motion, thereby rejecting the Cartesian account of completely passive matter in inertial motion. Although Hale’s work attracted critical responses from Henry More and Robert Boyle, it and Bacon’s account served to show not only that the Cartesian account was inadequate but also that no earlier philosopher had ever given a satisfactory account of it.

The inadequacy of previous accounts was noticed by Isaac Newton finally. In a letter to Boyle, written early in 1679, he tried to develop a theory of an ether which was rarer and more active than air. Evidently dissatisfied with these preliminary speculations, he wrote an essay “On the air and the aether” (*De aere et aethere*) in which he considered what it meant to say that air was much rarer than other bodies and that an ether could be much rarer than air. As an atomist, Newton assumed that rarefaction was due to particles being spread further apart (or separated by more void). Even with rough and ready calculations, Newton knew that air could be expanded to “a hundred or even a thousand times its normal space, which would hardly seem to be possible if the particles of air were in mutual contact.” Accordingly, Newton assumed there must be “some principle acting at a distance” between the particles to keep them apart. The only problem with this account of rarefaction and condensation was that it depended upon actions at a distance, which had hitherto tended to be seen as untenable. But Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* (1687) was about to make actions at a distance an accepted part of physics, with the universal principle of gravitation, and so Newton’s account of rarefaction and condensation became authoritative. In the Preface to his *Principia*, Newton wrote of his

suspicion that all phenomena may depend, not only upon attractions but also on repulsions between particles (Henry 2011). If the attractive forces accounted for gravity, cohesion, and condensation, the repulsive forces accounted for change of state and rarefaction. Once again, as with Anaximenes, rarefaction and condensation came to be seen as fundamental aspects of physics.

Cross-References

- [Action at a Distance](#)
- [Atomism](#)
- [Natural Magic in Renaissance Science](#)

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Rationalism

► Humanism

Ray Theory

► Light Theory

Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

The article explains the meaning of the concept “reason of state” and charts its development between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Scholars have traditionally concentrated on the debate raised by Machiavelli’s acceptance of the necessity of evil and the Christian response to Machiavelli put forward by Giovanni Botero. This entry also considers the use of the concept in texts directly connected to diplomatic experience, where “reason of state” does not appear as tainted with unethical meaning. Moreover, the entry establishes direct connections between the concept of “reason of state” and those of “political prudence” and “interest of state.” Following transformation of the concept of “interest,” this became the ethical alternative to “reason of state.”

Synonyms

Interest of state; Political prudence; Things of state

Definition and Early Use of the Concept

The experience of political affairs forms the basis of “reason of state,” in that this concept adapts to specific circumstances, but the principles of “reason of state” were first clearly formulated in early modern Europe, though without providing a definition of the theory.

Although the concept existed in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Post 1964; De Mattei 1979; Burke 1991), the expression “reason of state” (Lat. *ratio status*, It. *ragion di Stato*, Ger. *Staaträson*, Fr. *raison d’état*, Sp. *razon de estado*) was not used until the sixteenth century. Initially the expression ‘reason of state’ did not provide a definition of the concept: Francesco Guicciardini first refers to “ragioni degli stati” (“reasons of the states”) in his *Dialogo del reggimento di Firenze* (*Dialogue on the Government of Florence*, 1521–1525).

The action taken according to the principles of “reason of state” sacrifices commonly accepted juridical, economic, moral, and political principles in order to guarantee the security of the state. It is prescriptive, following the analogy of a physician, who prescribes a specific remedy for a specific illness, according to the specific characteristics of the sick individual. This process reflects the relativistic approach of the principles of “reason of state” and includes the preparatory process of information gathering to pave the way for subsequent action.

“Reason of state” can be a set of norms, in that it indicates what to do to achieve the state security; it can also be descriptive, in that it explains rulers’ actions in specific circumstances and how such actions meet the principles of “reason of state” (Pistone 2004). It applies both to internal relations between a ruler and his subjects and to international relations between rulers. The practical implications of the doctrine affect the relationships between states all over the world and focus on the difficult relationship between morality and politics.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the expression “reason of state” was associated with those of “political prudence” and “interest of state” (Baldini 1999). More recently, the concept

of “reason of state” has been considered a symptom of modernity (Meinecke 1998 [1924]), as it stresses the importance of individual states, their specific interests, and individual circumstances. For other scholars, “reason of state” was a concept that emphasized the role of expediency to maintain power, at the expense of the discourse about justice and legitimacy that characterized medieval communes (Viroli 1992). In this entry, we shall follow the use of the expression “reason of state,” “political prudence,” and “interest of state” through selected sixteenth and seventeenth century authors.

Although he never used the expression, the origin of the concept of “reason of state” is usually ascribed to Machiavelli’s political writings. In *Il principe* (*The Prince*, XVIII) he wrote: “A ruler . . . cannot always act in ways that are considered good because, in order to maintain his power, he is often forced to act treacherously, ruthlessly, or inhumanely, and disregard the precepts of religion. . . . and, as I said before, not deviate from right conduct if possible, but be capable of entering upon the path of wrongdoing when this becomes necessary” (Machiavelli 1988). Also, Machiavelli’s expression “things of state” (Descendre 2014) indicates an action taken against commonly accepted moral conduct; in *Discorsi sopra la prima decade di Tito Livio* (*Discourses*, III, 40), the Florentine secretary declared that it is acceptable “to use fraud against an enemy who does not trust in you” (Machiavelli 1996) or that it is acceptable to kill prisoners instead of compromising, which is always detrimental in matters of state. Thus, “things of state” suggests that states’ matters normally refer to international relations. With this perspective in mind, killing all the prisoners during a war is acceptable according to “things of state,” and similarly (in *Discorsi* III, 40, 41, and 42) Machiavelli justifies any action to save the fatherland, including breaking agreements that have been imposed and not chosen freely.

The first use of the expression “reason of state” occurs in Francesco Guicciardini’s *Dialogue* (pp. 158–159), as “reasons of the states” (“ragioni degli stati”). Guicciardini shows he is aware of the moral implications of this action, when he goes on to state that “anyone who wants to live totally

according to God’s will can ill afford not to remove himself totally from the affairs of this world, and it is difficult to live in the world without offending God” (Guicciardini 1994, 159). In this instance the action taken, though contrary to commonly accepted moral practice, is nevertheless necessary for maintaining power. Guicciardini’s studies and early practice as a jurist may have played a part in the use of “reason,” which here has a practical, rather than theoretical, meaning.

By contrast, in his *Orazione* (1547 [1960], 479–480), Giovanni della Casa’s reference to “reason of state” is clearly negative, given that he contrasts it with “civil reason.” Thus, he opposes altogether the idea that it is acceptable to act against commonly shared moral principles in state-related matters. This same negative accent on “reason of state” persisted in late sixteenth-century theorists, and in particular in the seventeenth-century language of politics, including Cesare Ripa’s iconographic representation of “reason of state” (Croce 1925; Borrelli 1994; Bondi 2017).

A Diplomatic Approach to the Concept

A vision of “reason of state” inspired by practice and with a direct reference to both internal affairs and international relations appears in the publication plan entitled *Somma delle opere che ha da mandar in luce l’Academia veneta* (*Works to be published by the Venetian Academy*, 1558), issued by the diplomat Federico Badoer’s *Academia della Fama* (Testa 2015). The section of the plan dedicated to politics sought to describe the political interests of European powers: *Cinque libri di ragion di stato, ne’ quali con maraviglioso ordine si contengono tutte quelle cose, che sono necessarie, e che ragionevolmente si possono sapere, dintorno alle persone, alle corti, a paesi, et a gli habitanti, et alle forze de’ Principi, si Christiani, come infedeli, delle rep[ubbliche] et d’ogni altro governo* (*Five books about reason of state, wherein are contained, in wonderful order, all details that are necessary and that can be known about people, courts, countries, inhabitants, and forces of princes, either Christian or*

infidel, of republics and of any other form of government). Although we do not know what exactly these five books were meant to contain (the editorial programme related to politics was fulfilled only partially), the use of the expression “reason of state” in this context is important because the rest of the Academy’s wish list related to politics suggests a nonmoral approach to describing individual states and their political interests. The other books in the political wish list were supposed to discuss states’ finances, rights of precedence, privileges, and agreements between states. This plan gave way to a genre in itself often identified with that of “reason of state,” that is, *arcana imperii*, or secrets of states, and was to find in the anthology *Thesoro politico* (1589) one of its best vehicles.

The Debate on the Morality of the Concept

The generation of political writers after Machiavelli felt uneasy about the justification *tout court* of the necessity to do evil in order to achieve a better outcome for the state and attempted to reformulate Machiavelli’s uncompromising opinion. Scipione di Castro’s treatise *Delli fondamenti dello stato et instrumenti del regnare* (translated as *The instruction of a Prince*), conceived in the 1570s and published for the first time in *Thesoro politico* 1589, is emblematic (Testa 2012). In a manuscript that was rewritten several times, Di Castro distinguished between two reasons of state. One is a legal reason (*ragione legale*), which is preferable: it usually delivers better results and makes people happier. Another is a “reason of state” that responds to a kind of justice that rulers have made up for their own benefit and that normally satisfies what is useful rather than what is honest. In another passage, Di Castro accepts the necessity of the action taken against the normally accepted moral norms; he also defines “reason of state” as a reasonable and necessary force that compels the prince to sacrifice what is honest for what is useful. In the final version of the treatise, Di Castro conceded that even the rightful prince might have to sacrifice honesty to utility out of the care that he necessarily

must bear for the whole state, acting as a sort of physician who prescribes a medicine to a sick body.

It is commonly accepted that the Jesuit Giovanni Botero’s *Della ragion di stato libri dieci* (*Reason of State*, 1589) sparked off the discussion on the meaning of “reason of state” and on whether or not it was possible to rule a state without acting against commonly accepted moral principles. Botero’s intention was to define a “reason of state” that should be distinguished from the political action inspired only by necessity, as Machiavelli had proposed. However, Botero’s definition of “reason of state” led to harsh criticism, as it seemed to contradict itself. While some scholars have recently affirmed that Botero was coherent in his purpose, others argued that Botero devised a new consistent idea of politics based on the principle of conservation (Bireley 1990; Borrelli 1993; Descendre 2009) rather than on enlargement. In this context scholars have noticed that in the eyes of the seventeenth-century writers, “political prudence” became a synonym for “reason of state” to be applied case by case and to be distinguished from its immoral counterpart, that is, shrewdness.

The Concept of Political Prudence

Both “reason of state” and its correspondent “political prudence” undermine the Aristotelian notion of prudence (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 1140a–1144b), on the basis of a misunderstanding (Battista 1966; De Mattei 1982–1984). Between the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century, political writers identified prudence (or *phronesis*, in Italian *prudenza*) with “politics” (De Mattei 1951; Battista 1966), whereas the philosopher had distinguished them clearly. According to this new interpretation of prudence, intellectuals had to make it coincide with moral aims. Sixteenth-century writers adopted Aristotle’s definition of “prudence” in order to resolve the conflict between ethics and politics. However, they misunderstood him when they interpreted prudence as a virtue that inspires political action.

Political literature made increasing use of “prudence” until it became the main instrument for

Botero's theory of "reason of state" as a strategy for the conservation of power. This was possible because Quattrocento political writers tended to praise prudence as a practical, empirical virtue to the detriment of a contemplative virtue such as wisdom, due to the increasing importance given to political life at the expense of contemplative life. The theorists of "*ragion di stato*" kept using a theoretical definition of "prudence" in order to explain the essence of "reason of state." Depending on the aim that one pursues (utility for its own sake or utility combined with religion, morality, and honesty), the outcome is a bad or a good prudence, a bad or a good "reason of state" (Frachetta 1592; Bonaventura 1623). One further instance of this transformation is visible in the Latin translation of the *Thesoro politico* (Coloresco 1589), which adopted the title *Praxis prudentiae politicae* (Schönwetter 1610) (Testa 2008). Thus, according to the theorists of "reason of state," the evaluation of the good of the state pertains to "prudence," but it is in the practical action to be undertaken for the good of the state that the authors cannot explain how an immoral action might be justified. Therefore, the attempt to define whether "reason of state" was acceptable or not remained unanswered. The author who placed the long debate to rest was Ludovico Zuccolo (1621), who affirmed that each country has its own "reason of state," in that it acts according to the characteristics and the needs specific to that country.

The Concept of Interest of State

The debate about "reason of state" did not produce any further new idea or acceptable compromise, until a new expression, already used by some Cinquecento writers, gradually replaced it. A concept that became interchangeable with "reason of state" was "interest of state" (Meinecke 1998 [1924]; Burke 1991; Taranto 1992; de Rohan 1995). Scholars have worked to define the origin and the different use of "interest" and found that "reason of state" was replaced by the expression "interest of state" first in sixteenth-century Italy and later in France.

Once again, we have to return to Francesco Guicciardini to see the first instances of

association between "interest" and political affairs, when he transferred the term "interest" from commercial language to political language (McKenzie 1981). Guicciardini was the first to use the locution "interest of state" and also made extensive use of the term "*utile*" (or *utilità*) meaning public interest, in order to describe "interest" in a way that he felt appropriate. In both *Ricordi* (Maxims) and *Storia d'Italia* (History of Italy), Guicciardini also drew a dividing line between a contemptible "personal interest" and a praiseworthy "interest of state." Thus, "interest" assumed the positive values of the Latin "*utilitas*" when it referred to the community, whereas it acquired a negative connotation when it referred to private issues. With this distinction in mind, the Cinquecento tendency to use the word "interest" became steadier, as can be seen in such normative authors as Giovanfrancesco Lottini and Paolo Paruta, as well as in the ambassadors' reports. The replacement of "reason of state" with "interest of state" appears already in the subtitle to the first edition of the successful *Thesoro politico* (Coloresco 1589). The essays contained in this miscellany make extensive use of the word "interest," and this certainly helped to popularize this and related expressions such as "private interest" (*interesse privato*), "one's interest" (*interesse proprio*), or "interest of the state" (*interesse dello stato*). This was possible not just because of the frequent use of the word but also because the writings contained in *Thesoro politico* were conceived to explain and reveal the true interest of states to the public. The target of the "*relazioni*," "*istruzioni*," and some of the "*discorsi*" were politicians, scholars, or institutions, with specific charges: the Venetian Senate, papal nuncios, cardinal-nephews, chancelleries, or bureaucratic apparatuses. The subtitle to a subsequent edition of *Thesoro politico* (1600) showed how "reason of state" and "interest of state" had become interchangeable: *La prima parte del Thesoro politico, in cui si contengono Relationi, Istruzioni Trattati et varii Discorsi, pertinenti alla perfetta intelligenza della ragion di stato et all'intiera cognitione degl'Interessi, et dipendenze dei più gran Principi, et Signori del Mondo* (The first part of the *Thesoro politico*, which contains

reports, instructions, treatises, and various discourses related to the perfect understanding of reason of state and to the knowledge of the interests and subordinations of the greatest princes of the world (1600)).

A few years earlier, Giovanni Botero had warned that what princes mostly seek is interest and thus a prince should also be careful that he does not have relationships with anyone who may be unable to obtain some advantage from this. In subsequent additions to his *Della ragion di stato* (Botero 1598), he eventually conceded that “reason of state” and “reason of interest” are the same thing.

As for the relationship between “interest of state” and foreign policy, Venetian ambassadors excelled in describing the characteristics of particular states and in drawing conclusions about the most likely actions of that specific state at international level, once the prince has understood the particular requirements of that state. In this sense, Venetian ambassadors were considered capable of detecting and, to some extent, predicting the action of the states within the international context. Thus, their *relazioni* represent a first step toward the analysis of international relations, although they do not provide a complete picture of the international arena.

In the seventeenth century, a further development of the inquiry into “interest of state” appears in the so-called *anatomies de l'Europe* (anatomies of Europe), a series of “discourses” published in France from 1617 to 1627, which aimed to describe the political interests at stake in various disputes among European powers (Thuau 1966). These short discourses described the current political relationships between European states without taking into consideration moral concerns. Finally, in his *De l'intérêt des princes et estats de la chrestienté* (1638), the Huguenot Henri de Rohan stated that “the prince governs the people, but the interest governs the prince.” This straightforward sentence underscored the importance of studying each European country's political interest and warned the prince that he ought to keep such interests in mind, should he want to understand and survive the rapidly changing geopolitical relationships between European countries.

Cross-References

- Botero, Giovanni
- Guicciardini, Francesco
- Machiavelli, Niccolò
- Politics, Renaissance
- Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of
- State in Renaissance Politics
- Stoicism
- Zuccolo, Ludovico

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Reformation

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Abstract

The term “Reformation” refers both to a process and to a complex of religious and political events in Europe between about 1500 and 1650. This rapid and cataclysmic breakdown in the religious and political consensus that had

held for hundreds of years laid the foundation for later configurations of religious and secular politics. The Reformation also altered the development of two earlier intellectual movements, scholasticism and humanism, absorbing and transforming both. The crisis of authority caused by the Reformation also contributed to fundamental shifts in early modern epistemology and political theory.

Historiography

Until the twentieth century, histories of the Reformation tended to serve denominational ends. Earlier historians routinely treated the period 1500–1650 from their own religious perspective. Some took the sources of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at face value. Many failed to distinguish the problems of the Reformation from those of their own time. More recent historiography has attempted to examine this massive social and religious upheaval in more neutral terms, and to appreciate the success or failure of individual groups according to the terms of those involved, to the extent that the individual historian's personal biases, training, and overview of the extant sources allow.

George H. Williams (1914–2000) characterized major reformers who cooperated with princely or municipal powers, such as Martin Luther (1483–1546), Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531), and Jean Calvin (1509–1564), as exponents of a “magisterial Reformation.” Williams also encouraged historians to reintegrate the “Radical Reformation” into their historical narratives and emphasized that the three major streams of Reformation theology – Roman Catholic, magisterial, and radical – can only be understood properly in terms of the relationships between all three (Williams 1992).

The Reformation and Other Religions

Although the Reformation was an event internal to the Christian church(es), other religious communities in Europe, notably Jews and Muslims, also played a role in this process. The expulsion or

forced conversion of Muslims and Jews in Spain in the late fifteenth century led to the formation of the Spanish Inquisition, which subsequently investigated the orthodoxy of Catholic reformers like Erasmus and drew up several editions of the Index of Forbidden Books, which proscribed the trade and reading of Protestant literature and other writings of suspect orthodoxy. Luther's apocalypticism was fueled not merely by his belief that the papacy had come to represent the Antichrist of Revelation but also by fears of Turkish military advances and a conviction of the immanent conversion of the Jews, a hope that spawned bitter recriminations when it failed to eventuate. The pragmatism of the Dutch Reformation provided Jews and other minorities a degree of toleration, even if this was partly motivated by economic considerations.

Medieval Traditions of Reform

The desire to reform the Church was not new to the sixteenth century. Throughout the middle ages, the Church had convened councils to clarify points of doctrine and to reform abuses and shortcomings in the administration of the Church and the conduct of both clergy and laity. For example, the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) insisted on doctrinal orthodoxy, ecclesiastical discipline, clerical morality, appropriate observance of the liturgy, and correct procedure in appointment to Church offices. Many monastic orders were born when members of older ones came to believe that the ideals of their founders were no longer being properly observed. Thus the Cistercian order grew out of the Benedictine order and the Observants and Capuchins out of the Franciscan order. The late middle ages also produced movements for educational reform, such as the Brethren of the Common Life, who promoted learning and devotion among the ascendant bourgeoisie of northwestern Europe.

The credibility of the papacy suffered during the Great Schism (1309–1417), when rival papal courts operated from Rome and Avignon. During this time, those who upheld the ultimate authority of the pope clashed with those who promoted that

of Church councils. While earlier reformers and reforming councils emphasized orthodoxy, late medieval reformers such as John Wycliffe (c. 1330–1384), a professor at Oxford who criticized clerical immorality and translated the bible into English, and Jan Hus (1369–1415), a professor at Prague who repeated Wycliffe's criticisms, were condemned for overstepping the bounds of orthodoxy and promoting heresy. Many Roman Catholic opponents of the sixteenth-century Reformation applied the Church's condemnations of Wycliffe and Hus to evangelical reformers, some of whom identified these men as their spiritual forebears.

Reform as a Theme in Renaissance Humanism

Renaissance humanists, convinced that the previous thousand years had witnessed a corruption and decline in linguistic usage and cultural orientation, attempted to recover the languages and literature of classical antiquity (Latin, Greek, and eventually Hebrew and other Near Eastern languages) and to reform education along ancient lines. They believed that ancient historical, philosophical, and literary works provided valuable instruction in ethical behavior. The desire to return "to the sources" (*ad fontes*) inspired some humanists to carry out philological work on the text of the bible. In the introductory materials to his 1516 edition of the New Testament (*Paraclesis, Methodus, Apologia*), Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (c. 1466–1536) expressed the hope that greater access to the bible, not only among scholars but also among the ordinary folk, would revive the simple "philosophy of Christ" practiced by the early Christians, a contrast to the sophisticated logical distinctions of scholasticism. Virtually all the Protestant reformers were influenced in some way by the reformatory impulses of Renaissance humanism. For example, Philipp Melancthon (1497–1560) emphasized the importance of dialectic and rhetoric in training students to construct sound arguments and express them convincingly on the page and from the pulpit; among the best models of these arts were to be

found in ancient literature (Dingel, et al. 2012). However, while the study of the Bible and the Church Fathers in their original languages strengthened through the sixteenth century, it was often pursued for sectarian ends, to justify the doctrinal position of a particular church.

While many of the reformers appropriated the humanists' desire to recover the benefits of antiquity, and harnessed their educational methods and literary style, humanism was irrevocably altered by the eristic culture of the Reformation. This change can be seen in individual authors. For example, Johannes Cochlaeus, an important humanist educator in Nuremberg in the 1510s, subsequently became a prolific Catholic polemicist, bitterly pursuing Luther and Melancthon in print for over three decades. In a caustic biography, Cochlaeus depicted Luther as a drunken and lustful charlatan, an image that remained influential in Catholic polemic until the twentieth century. By the end of the sixteenth century, the sunny faith in the humanizing power of classical studies held by pre-Reformation humanists would seem quaintly naive.

Critiques of Scholasticism

Scholasticism was not so much an identifiable set of doctrines as a method of organizing and articulating knowledge in a strictly logical way by framing the issue at hand as a question or thesis, organizing and defining its terms in a way suitable for discussion, putting forward and resolving potential objections, and then offering a resolution of the issue (Leinsle 2010). Nevertheless, some Renaissance philosophers and humanists objected to the way scholastics used propositions and categories from ancient pagan philosophy to express the Christian faith. Some condemned the use of Aristotle's logical methods and metaphysics to articulate Christian doctrine. Some objected to the "barbarous" Latin style of scholastic philosophers, others to their lack of interest in ethical improvement. Others had an ambivalent attitude towards scholasticism. The fifteenth-century Platonist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) complained that many scholastic philosophers had absorbed

concepts from Aristotle or the Arab philosopher Avicenna which contradicted Christian teaching on the creation of the world or the immortality of the individual human soul. Yet humanist objections to scholasticism were not indiscriminating; Ficino quoted Thomas Aquinas often and in some works imitated his systematic method.

Skepticism and Eclecticism

The crisis of authority of the early sixteenth century and the disagreements between professional theologians about fundamental beliefs led some to a philosophical skepticism. Erasmus, for example, suggested that non-essential elements of doctrine over which even experts disagreed should be considered optional. (Here Luther disagreed: he considered that in the matter of salvation, the stakes were so high that the Church had to be sure that it was teaching true doctrine.)

Yet few Renaissance thinkers adopted ancient skepticism as a complete philosophical system. Where such theologians and philosophers used the work of ancient philosophers, it was usually in an eclectic manner. Rather than treating the ancient philosophical schools as internally consistent systems of thought aimed at the transformation and perfection of the self – a notion that Protestant theologians rejected as a path to Pelagianism – later Renaissance theologians and philosophers tended to treat them as repositories of individual notions from which they could choose what suited them.

Luther's Reformation

Martin Luther was an Augustinian friar, priest, and professor of Scripture at the recently founded University of Wittenberg. As a young friar at Erfurt, Luther despaired when his strict adherence to the monastic life and intense study of the Bible failed to bring him inner peace. He became obsessed by the idea of God as righteous judge. Wondering if salvation was possible, he confessed his sins with painful precision. As a student of theology, he trained in the nominalist *via moderna*

and read works by medieval mystical theologians and recent humanists such as Johann Reuchlin. However, the greatest theological influences on Luther were Paul and Augustine. In his lectures on the Psalms, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews (1513–1518), he increasingly turned from the interpretive tradition of the medieval Church in favor of a consciously biblical hermeneutic.

While giving these lectures, Luther's interpretation of God's righteousness (Romans 1:17) changed radically; he understood it no longer as a demand of the law but as a gift of the Gospel. Luther did not arrive at his new interpretation of the Gospel on his own. His mentor Johannes von Staupitz, in the spirit of medieval meditation on the passion, encouraged Luther to focus on God's mercy in the atonement. Luther was also influenced deeply by Erasmus' conviction that a knowledge of the Bible and a simple devotion both lay at the heart of Christianity. Erasmus' Latin-Greek diglot New Testament also proved decisive. For example, he argued that the word *metanoeite* (Mark 1:15, Matthew 3:2, 4:17) should be translated not as "do penance," as Jerome's translation suggested, but "repent" or "change your way of thinking." This insight contributed to Luther's reconsideration of the Church's teachings on sin and repentance; he concluded that scholastic theology had obscured this insight and proposed that the curriculum of the University should be radically reoriented, to be founded on the Bible and the early fathers rather than on the scholastics. Likewise, Erasmus pointed out that *mysterion* (2 Thessalonians 2:7; Ephesians 5:32) means "mystery," not "sacrament," and that *dikaiosis* (Romans 4:3–5) does not imply "making righteous" but "reckoning as righteous." Such insights from Erasmus' commentary on and paraphrases of the New Testament prompted Luther and other evangelicals to reject much traditional Church teaching as based on cumulative misunderstanding of the biblical text.

During the middle ages, several related doctrines concerning sin had developed. Late medieval theologians taught that purgatory was a real place through which the souls of the dead must pass to be purified for heaven. They also taught that the accumulated merits of the saints can be

offset against the sins of ordinary believers and that the sacrifice of the mass can propitiate God and avert the punishment due for sin. In the late middle ages, mass foundations and devotions to the saints and to the Eucharist itself thus joined penitential exercises as means of spiritual purification and perfection, both for the living and the dead. Since the popes claimed to be the successors of Peter, to whom Jesus gave power to bind or loose in heaven and earth (Matthew 16:18), they granted remission of the punishment due for sin ("indulgences") when an individual performed some devotional act or paid a sum of money in lieu. However, the doctrine of indulgences was not articulated clearly, and the laity could easily come to believe that they were purchasing salvation for themselves or deceased relatives.

In 1517, Albrecht von Hohenzollern authorized the sale of indulgences within his territories to fund the massive debts he had incurred to secure his election as archbishop of both Magdeburg and Mainz and to send money to Rome for the construction of a new church to replace the dilapidated St Peter's Basilica. This campaign led Luther to criticize the theory and practice of indulgences in a series of 95 theses proposed for disputation, which he pinned on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, the noticeboard of the university.

Luther's theses began with a declaration that the Church's doctrine of penance was unscriptural, a conclusion he clearly reached through his reading of Erasmus. He denied that punishment for the sins of the dead could be forgiven through the activities of the living. He also emphasized that the life of the Christian must be characterized not by acts of outward penance but led entirely by a spirit of true penitence, through which alone one might receive remission of penalty and guilt. The pope, he continued, had every right to bestow blessings or remit punishments imposed by himself; but the Church, by arrogating to itself the right to forgive or reserve sins, even those of the dead, had wickedly sought to oppress faithful believers through the fear of damnation, in contravention of the Gospel. Furthermore, those who relied on indulgences for salvation, rather than a constant attitude of penitence and charity, were damned.

Luther's theses were printed several times without his authorization and tore through Germany. Albrecht von Hohenzollern denounced Luther and informed Rome. The theses were refuted by Albrecht's indulgence seller Johann Tetzel and the theologians Konrad Wimpina and Johannes Eck. Luther defended his position at a meeting of the Augustinian order at Heidelberg in 1518. He also addressed an exposition of his theses to Pope Leo, whom he personally admired. Following the late-medieval conciliarist tradition, Luther asserted that individual popes could err and that only a council could lay down doctrines, so long as these were consistent with Scripture, the Church Fathers, and Church law. Luther's ideas were encapsulated in memorable slogans that Christian doctrine and conduct should be guided "by Scripture alone" (*sola Scriptura*) and that believers are justified "by faith alone" (*sola fide*) and are saved by God's "grace alone" (*sola gratia*) and not by good works. Luther's ideas were spread rapidly by the printing press. By contrast, the failure of many of Luther's opponents to match his skill in exploiting the possibilities of print limited their chances of winning the publicity war.

Luther was summoned to appear at the Imperial Diet at Worms in 1521. When asked to renounce his heretical views, he refused, arguing that his conclusions were based on Scripture and reason, which he considered superior to the pronouncements of popes and councils. This meeting precipitated a crisis of authority which would have far-reaching consequences for philosophy. In return, Charles V declared Luther an outlaw and forbade trade in his books and public promotion of his ideas. However, Luther was protected by Duke Friedrich of Saxony, his temporal overlord and founder of the University of Wittenberg. Friedrich's protection allowed Luther's Reformation to continue. During the Reformation, the relationship between belief, orthodoxy, and temporal authority would be reconfigured in significant ways and would lead to bloody wars in France, the Netherlands, and the Holy Roman Empire.

In hiding after the Diet of Worms, Luther translated the New Testament into German with the

help of Erasmus' edition. Later he translated the Old Testament as well. Luther shared Erasmus' desire to place the Bible into the hands of the laity, stripped of medieval allegorical interpretation. Luther's Bible translation, which consciously drew features common to middle German dialects and the linguistic norms of the Saxon chancellery, became a foundational document of early modern German. While Luther initially believed that the Holy Spirit would lead sincere readers to true understanding of the Bible, the disorder of the Peasants' War proved to him that leaving Scriptural interpretation to the untrained was asking for trouble.

For the rest of his life, Luther attempted to articulate his understanding of Christian doctrine in various ways: in lectures, sermons, treatises, biblical commentaries, catechisms, and songs. He experienced resistance not merely from Catholic apologists but also from other Protestants, many of whom started from similar premises and insights but came to quite different conclusions.

Luther and Philosophy

Luther received his initial theological training in scholasticism, more specifically in the *schola moderna* of William of Ockham and Pierre d'Ailly and in the *schola Augustiniana moderna* of Gregory of Rimini. However, he later attacked Aristotle and many of the presuppositions of scholasticism. While Aquinas believed that the light of reason within the human mind remained unaffected by the Fall, Luther insisted that human reason, including that of the pagan philosophers, is irreparably corrupt and incapable of revealing the truth, which is only laid bare in Scripture. The epistemological and ethical pessimism of Luther and the other Protestant reformers inevitably affected their view of philosophy as a rational activity. Their insistence on the bible as the sole source of ultimate revelation – Luther famously described the human conscience as captive to the Word of God – was rooted in the principle of *sola Scriptura*. While Catholic apologists declared that Scripture is sometimes obscure and requires explanation, the Protestant reformers replied that it is

always clear in important matters. And whereas the Catholic Church taught that one should implicitly believe doctrines that one cannot understand simply because the Church had declared them to be true, Protestant reformers insisted that believers had to understand doctrines before they could fully assent to them and should not unquestioningly accept the authority of another fallible human, even a member of the clergy. For Luther, the clergy had an important role in teaching and dispensing the sacraments but could make no claim to relationship with the divine or special insight into divine mysteries.

Luther also objected to the application of Aristotle's ethics to Christian theology. Aristotle taught that virtue results from the habit of practicing virtuous actions. Some medieval theologians, developing this idea, taught that humans must act virtuously to receive the grace necessary for salvation. By contrast, Luther taught that humans, enslaved to original sin, are incapable of performing truly righteous acts. However, God imputes Christ's righteousness to humans and thus declares them justified. It is possible that Luther may have developed this idea from his reading of Gregory of Rimini. Calvin too insisted that righteousness is not an interior quality but is external to us, granted by God. This interpretation would be disputed by Catholic apologists.

One element that Luther and Calvin probably borrowed from the *schola moderna* was voluntarism, a philosophical position that emphasizes God's power to ordain a particular state of affairs, unrestrained even by the demands of reason. God does not command us to perform good works; however, certain works are considered good because God deems them to be good. Even Christ's redemptive work was effective only because God considered it to be so. And even if predestination may seem contrary to natural justice, it is nonetheless good because God chooses it.

Furthermore, Luther objected to the application of Aristotle's physics to Christian theology. For example, medieval theologians, notably Thomas Aquinas, had used Aristotle to explain the doctrine of transubstantiation: at the consecration, the substance of the bread and wine are

transformed into that of the body and blood of Christ, while their accidents (color, taste, smell) remain unchanged. Luther rejected Aquinas' explanation as founded upon neither Scripture nor reason and disputed the Catholic Church's claim to competence in explaining such matters. Other Protestant reformers shared Luther's objections to transubstantiation but provided widely varying accounts of what happens during the Eucharist. While Luther maintained that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine, even if they were not physically transformed, Zwingli interpreted the Eucharist as a symbol and memorial of the Last Supper. In response, the Council of Trent reaffirmed Aquinas' explanation (McGrath 2004).

Luther's associate Philipp Melancthon eventually overcame some of Luther's conclusions about the depravity of human reason and many of his objections to Aristotle, appreciating that classical logic could provide a useful structure to organize the theological propositions of evangelical theology (Kusukawa 1995). While Melancthon disagreed with many of the positions and distinctions of individual scholastic philosophers and objected to the "misuse" of philosophy in theology, he still appreciated the scholastics' systematic approach to theology and used some of their methods. Melancthon's most famous exposition of Christian theology was his *Loci communes* (1521, revised three times), ostensibly a commentary on the themes of Paul's letter to the Romans arranged under general theological headings with illustrative examples. Melancthon did not seek to Christianize Aristotle's philosophical ideas, as did many late medieval theologians, but made use of the technical philosophical means offered by the Stagirite. In this he claimed to refine the method of scholastic predecessors such as Peter Lombard.

Aristotelian scholasticism thus remained an important method for articulating Christian doctrine and natural philosophy. Despite the opposition of many Catholic humanists in the early sixteenth century, it was still used by important Catholic theologians and philosophers such as Tommaso de Vio (or Cajetan, 1469–1534) and Francisco Suárez (1548–1617). And despite

Luther's hostility, it was later used by distinguished Protestant philosophical theologians such as Abraham Calov (1612–1686).

Early Lutheran Radicalism

While Luther remained in hiding following the Diet of Worms, some of his supporters began to put his criticisms of the traditional Church into action. Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, the dean of the theological faculty at Wittenberg, introduced a radically simplified liturgy. Luther was horrified, believing that such a sudden alteration would alienate simple believers, and he returned to Wittenberg briefly in early 1522 to restore order. A group claiming prophetic powers appeared from Zwickau, but Luther denounced them and Karlstadt as dangerous fanatics. From this time, the Lutheran Reformation followed a consciously conservative direction.

Reactions to Luther

Reaction to Luther was mixed. Many humanists supported him, at least initially. His following was greatest in densely populated cities and towns, where there were higher levels of education, critical thought, and literacy. He gained many supporters among the religious, especially the Augustinian order to which he belonged. Many monks and nuns preached his ideas or left their convents altogether. Luther's defiance of papal excommunication (1520) prompted many to hail him as defender of Germany against curial rapacity. By contrast, many churchmen were aghast at Luther's frontal attack on papal authority and the doctrine of penance. Many misinterpreted him as teaching that good works were not necessary for salvation, and as promoting antinomianism (rejection of custom and lawful authority), a misunderstanding he refuted.

From the very beginning, Catholic theologians in Germany struggled to meet Luther's challenge head-on. They emphasized that Luther's disagreements with the doctrinal consensus that had united the Church to that point proved his error. They

refuted his insistence on the sole authority of Scripture by pointing out that the Church had always interpreted the Bible where it was unclear and transmitted doctrines held by the early Church not explicitly taught in the Bible. Disagreements between Protestant groups over the correct interpretation of Scripture proved the insufficiency of Scripture as sole guide to Christian life and teaching and the need for an ultimate doctrinal arbiter, the Church. However, their responses were generally ill-coordinated, often lacked official support, and sometimes led merely to mutual name-calling.

However, Catholic polemicists sometimes managed to reframe the issues. While Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* attacked indulgences, Tetzel, Prierias, and Eck interpreted them as a covert assault on papal authority, a more dangerous proposition, and attacked him on these grounds. Indeed, the nature of the Church (ecclesiology) was perhaps the central issue in the early years of the Reformation, at least in the eyes of Catholic defenders. Even the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura* implied conclusions about the nature of the Church.

While not all Catholic theologians writing after 1517 engaged in direct polemic, the Reformation had fundamentally altered the nature of theological discourse. Significantly, many of those who defended the old faith were not professional university theologians but educated clerics and even laypeople. Consequently, the character of their writing is heterogeneous. The issues they addressed most frequently included the limits of papal authority; the relative importance of Scripture and the Church's magisterium in matters of doctrine; the number and nature of the sacraments – particularly the mass, confession, baptism, and priestly vows – and their proper administration and maintenance; the veneration of the saints and their images; and purgatory. The attitudes of Catholic polemicists towards Luther were not uniform and reflect the variety of positions within the Catholic Church on matters such as the nature and limits of papal power. Humanist philology also played a role in these debates, as when Protestant critics pilloried their Catholic opponents for relying on texts which

humanists had dismissed as later forgeries, such as the *Donation of Constantine* or the writings of pseudo-Dionysius.

The character of the Catholic response to Luther changed over time. Until the 1530 Diet of Augsburg, most writing was adversarial. During the next decade, many Catholic writers worked towards finding points of agreement with Protestants, discussed at a series of colloquies. The years following the Colloquy of Regensburg (1541), which failed to find a consensus between Catholics and Lutherans, saw an increase in propaganda directed primarily towards a Catholic readership, including catechisms for instructing the laity and sermons that provided material for preachers. (Further, see Pettegree 2000, 97–108.)

Zwingli's Urban Reformation

The Swiss priest Huldrych Zwingli, more strongly influenced by humanism than Luther, was appointed as preacher at Zurich in 1519. Zwingli held that Christian society should be governed by civic government and the Church equally and insisted even more strongly than Luther that all aspects of society should be based upon Scripture. However, Zwingli and Luther clashed over their understanding of the Eucharist. Luther rejected the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation but maintained that Christ is truly present in the elements of the Eucharist. By contrast, Zwingli believed that the Eucharist was only a memorial or symbol of the Last Supper. When they met at Marburg in 1529 to discuss the matter, they could not reach a compromise, and the division poisoned relations between Lutherans and Swiss Reformed for decades. (Further, see Pettegree 2000, 169–189.)

Anabaptism

Anabaptism grew out of disputes within the Zurich Reformation. Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz disagreed with Zwingli over the tithe and admissibility of images in church. They also criticized Luther and Zwingli for underplaying the

importance of faith in ethical transformation. More importantly, they maintained that true discipleship demanded that believers make a conscious choice to become Christians. If we are justified by faith, then children too young to possess such faith should not be baptized. This position undermined the traditional theology of baptism, the sacrament that traditionally signified membership within the Christian Church. At Zwingli's recommendation, the Zurich city council mandated infant baptism in January 1525, but several adults in Zurich had themselves baptized again in defiance of the ruling, an action that led to their denunciation as "Anabaptists," that is, "rebaptizers." (Further, see Pettegree 2000, 237–256.)

The Peasants' War

Many saw Luther's defiance of the imperial ban (1521) as a challenge to the existing political order. The European peasantry was still dominated by its feudal masters: ecclesiastical institutions, prelates, and secular princes. The decades before the Reformation saw several peasant revolts in Germany, which sought to redress old grievances. In 1525–1526, groups of peasants radicalized Luther's notions of the "Gospel" and the autonomy of the "Common Man," and Zwingli's conviction that society was to be reformed in conformity to God's will for the common benefit, and took up arms against their overlords. Some were also inspired by the Anabaptist desire to transform the existing order. The rural uprisings of the 1520s, which gained moral force from the identification of political and religious grievances, threatened even greater dislocation than the urban reformations, both because of the numbers of people involved and because they called for the flattening of traditional hierarchies and feudal obligations to both secular and ecclesiastical lords.

Some peasant groups were inspired by the clergyman Thomas Müntzer, who was initially inspired by Luther but subsequently accused him of weakness and conformism. Müntzer claimed that God speaks the "inner word" of true faith only to those who suffer. The godly would usher in

God's kingdom on earth and violently destroy the godless forces of tradition and unearned privilege. Luther condemned Müntzer as a fanatic and condemned the armies of peasants for daring to bring violence against the hierarchies established by God. Encouraged by Luther, the secular powers – both Catholic and evangelical – decisively defeated the peasant armies through superior weaponry and military discipline. Müntzer was captured and executed. This tragic outcome damaged the popular appeal of the Reformation among large segments of the population. It also rendered authorities suspicious of religious and social radicalism. Wherever the Reformation was introduced after this time, authorities strove to keep the process of change firmly under control. Anabaptists who saw the Peasant uprisings as a chance for the "Common Man" to break free of traditional society now concluded that the only way to realize their aims was in separate communities. When secular and ecclesiastical authorities persecuted these communities, they merely strengthened their sense of election. Catholic polemicists pointed to the uprisings as proof of the seditious and revolutionary character of Luther's message. (Further, see Pettegree 2000, 127–145.)

The Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster

The preacher Bernhard Rothmann, who spread Luther's message at Münster from 1531, soon gained such support in the city that the city magistrates introduced the Lutheran Reformation by 1533. But when Rothmann began to preach ideas closer to those of Zwingli, the situation became unstable. At that moment, followers of the Anabaptist Melchior Hoffman, who had predicted that the world would end in 1533, arrived in Münster. In the meantime, Hoffman's successor Jan Matthys proclaimed to his followers that the end would come at Easter 1534 but that they could save themselves by accepting true baptism. When more Anabaptists arrived in Münster, many citizens left. The now dominant Anabaptist party in the city was voted into power in the city elections. Matthys mandated adult baptism and community of property, under pain of expulsion. Meanwhile,

the bishop of Münster had laid siege to the city to regain control. After Matthys died, he was succeeded by the tailor Jan van Leiden, who proclaimed himself as king and introduced polygamy. Finally, the bishop managed to take the city in June 1535. Most of the Anabaptists were killed, while their leaders were seized and hung in cages until they starved. The Kingdom of Münster, following a decade after the Peasants' War, convinced many authorities that the Reformation should be nipped in the bud. This led to the forcible suppression of Anabaptism and prompted those who identified with the magisterial Reformation to distance themselves from potentially destructive "enthusiasm."

Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation

While the Reformation in Central and Northern Europe was motivated by local considerations, such as long-standing tensions and resentments between the Empire and Rome, conditions in Italy, the home of the papacy, were different. Frequent Italian disdain for Germany rendered the Reformation unpalatable to many south of the Alps. Furthermore, there was a tradition of Italian dissent and reform that remained under the mantle of the Catholic Church.

Religious life in the early sixteenth-century Italy brought together several strands. The Black Death had led to an increased emphasis on collective acts of penance, which sometimes reached extreme heights, such as the purges of "vanities" led by Savonarola in Florence. Many Italian theologians encouraged an affective interior religiosity and encouraged the laity to nourish their knowledge of the faith through sermons and devotional literature and to participate more fully in the corporate life of the Church by receiving the sacraments more frequently. Confraternities continued to combine pious exercises with charity.

Italy also witnessed varieties of religious dissent that approached some Protestant doctrines but usually avoided its political implications. The Spanish Catholic thinker Juan de Valdés (c. 1500–1541) spent the last 6 years of his life

at Naples, where he promoted a religiosity that emphasized ethical conduct more than doctrine and even taught justification by faith. His followers, known as "Spirituals," included the cardinals Reginald Pole and Gasparo Contarini. Valdés's works were placed on the Index of Forbidden Books but were used extensively by Protestants. While some of Valdés's followers, including Pole, remained within the Catholic Church, others, including the Augustinian Pietro Martire Vermigli and the Capuchin Bernardino Ochino, converted to Protestantism and fled to Geneva and then to England, where they contributed to the establishment of Protestantism under Edward VI. Ochino ended his life in a Hutterite Anabaptist community in Moravia.

The reaction of the Roman Catholic Church was determined by medieval approaches to heresy, understood as a willful rejection of true doctrine, judged by the Church and punished by secular authorities. The Catholic Church responded to the challenge of evangelicalism in many ways. As some orders, such as the Augustinians and Franciscans, lost ground to the Reformation, new orders were founded in the 1530s and 1540s, such as the Ursulines, Capuchins, and Jesuits, and in the 1560s, the Reformed Carmelites.

The Catholic Church saw the first constructive measures to deal with the Protestant Reformation under Pope Paul III (1534–1549). In 1536, Paul appointed a commission of nine prelates under the leadership of Cardinal Contarini to investigate the state of the Curia. The following year the commission tabled a damning report, *A Recommendation on the Reform of the Church*, which detailed abuses in the Curia, particularly financial mismanagement. A manuscript of the report was taken to Strasbourg, where it was printed. Luther translated the work into German and added his own ironic commentary. Although Paul III did not act directly on the *Recommendation*, he began the process of convening a general council of the Church to address abuses, to redefine certain doctrines more clearly, and to point a way forward. In 1540, Paul approved the foundation of the Jesuits, who were deployed in flexible ways to promote Catholic orthodoxy, particularly in education and foreign missions to the Americas and the Far East.

In 1541, representatives of the Catholic and Lutheran churches met at Regensburg to try to reach an accommodation, but they failed to agree on many issues. Paul III and Charles V then convened an internal council, on one hand to renew the Church's institutions, doctrine, and spirituality (the "Catholic Reformation"), and on the other, to refute the claims of the Protestants and repair the losses caused by the Reformation (the "Counter-Reformation"). The Council, which sat several times at Trent between 1545 and 1563, clearly articulated the Catholic position on doctrines questioned by the reformers, including justification, the sacraments, and the relationship between Scripture and tradition. Moreover, it emphasized the Church's sole competence to make such definitions and pronouncements. The Council also sought to reform and streamline the institutions and practices of the Church. It promoted better education of the clergy, strict observance of monastic vows, and moral probity among the entire clergy. Furthermore, it mandated that bishops, resident in their diocese, should carry out visitations and convene synods to enforce conformity.

The Council was a mixed success. It shored up further internal decay by reaffirming the ecclesiastical hierarchy and insisting that the clergy of all levels, whether regular or secular, maintain a high moral standard. It promoted a wider knowledge of doctrine among the clergy and laity alike, especially through preaching and catechisms. It initiated a period of cultural, architectural, and artistic flowering within the Catholic Church. However, it also led to the entrenchment of doctrinal positions and the hardening of denominational divisions. It also failed to consolidate Rome's temporal power. After the Council, the curia still had to rely on the cooperation of local bishops to promulgate the Council's directives and of the secular powers to restrain or punish those who transgressed them.

The Militarization of Religion

Charles V's demand that the Lutheran princes and cities return to the Catholic Church in 1531 resulted in the formation of the defensive League

of Schmalkalden, which was to resist the threatened military consequences. After defeating the League in 1546–1547, Charles tried to re-impose Catholicism in 1548, a measure known as the Augsburg Interim. Lutheran resistance to the Interim led to a military counterstrike in 1552. In 1555, a peace was declared at Augsburg, which obliged the rulers of the Empire to declare whether their territory would henceforth be Catholic or Lutheran. This peace held until the Thirty Years' War.

The Unpredictable Reformation: England

The Reformation in England differed in several important respects from the continental Reformations. Firstly, it was motivated not so much by religious questions as by political ones, primarily the desire of Henry VIII for a male heir and for independence from Rome. Secondly, it was introduced in a series of acts of state. Thirdly, it lacked major religious leaders of the caliber of Luther, Zwingli, or Calvin. Fourthly, it differed in that a woman, Anne Boleyn, played a major role in its introduction and implementation, despite her brief ascendancy.

Henry VII and his son Henry VIII had brought England under firm central control and the habit of aristocratic deference held for the rest of the sixteenth century. Despite the vicissitudes of the English Reformation, the aristocracy generally limited any resistance to low-level obstructionism. The only other force in England that could have opposed Henry's introduction of the Reformation, the City of London, was divided over the Reformation. Those who opposed Henry directly, such as John Fisher or Thomas More, were simply removed.

The Reformation in England was ruthlessly pragmatic and disastrously indecisive. Henry VIII mercilessly suppressed those who agitated for reform in the 1520s through a genuine desire for religious renewal, yet when a political break with Rome seemed expedient and profitable in the 1530s, Henry carried it through enthusiastically. A theologically motivated Reformation in the

Protestant sense had to wait until the reign of his son Edward VI, who imported several prominent continental Protestants, such as Martin Bucer, the reformer of Strasbourg, who exercised a considerable influence on the theological and liturgical direction of Anglicanism. Edward's half-sister and successor Mary forcibly reintroduced a conservative Catholicism no longer entirely in step with more recent developments on the Continent. Her Spanish marriage and cruel persecution of Protestants compromised her popularity and success.

The broad and inclusive Protestantism imposed by Mary's successor Elizabeth retained many traditional features such as vestments; Elizabeth famously kept a cross on the altar of the Chapel Royal. Effective implementation of the Elizabethan religious settlement was at first hindered by resistance from a population weary of change and a lack of suitably trained clergy. The reign of Elizabeth also saw growing tensions between representatives of the moderate Protestantism she wished to promote and Puritans and Presbyterians who, returning from exile in Reformed centers such as Strasbourg and Geneva, rejected the Elizabethan Settlement as a compromise.

While some English Catholics quietly conformed to the Anglican Church or went into foreign exile, a small number refused to attend legally mandated Protestant services, receiving spiritual sustenance instead from priests trained in English Catholic seminaries on the continent who returned secretly, despite the threat of imprisonment and execution.

Under the Stuart monarchs in the seventeenth century, tensions within the Church of England between the royalist High Church party and the Puritans combined with political grievances in England and Scotland to plunge the kingdom into a Civil War and decades of political crisis. (Further, see Pettegree 2000, 225–236, 365–386.)

Geneva: An Alternative Model

The background of Jean Calvin, the reformer of Geneva, differed from that of Luther, as did the setting of his pastoral work. Besides studying

scholastic theology, Calvin also enjoyed a good humanist education; his first published work was an edition of Seneca. He also studied law, which he tended to see in more positive terms than did Luther, as a constructive regulatory force within society, laying down Christian norms of behavior.

After Calvin converted to Protestantism, he was pressed into assisting Guillaume Farel introduce the Reformation to Geneva in 1536. However, the city council bridled at the speed of their reforms and asked them to leave in 1538. Calvin went to Strasbourg, where he served alongside Martin Bucer as pastor to French and Flemish refugees. However, the situation in Geneva soon ran out of control, and in 1541 the council invited Calvin to return. Calvin served at Geneva until his death in 1564.

Calvin wrote his major work, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, to guide understanding of Scripture and theology. His own theology, set out most fully in the ever-growing editions of the *Institutes*, emphasizes several themes. Calvin adopted many of the fundamental convictions of evangelicalism, such as the conviction that salvation comes by faith alone and that the Scripture, the Word of God, is the ultimate norm against which all doctrines are to be judged. He also emphasized certain themes more strongly than Luther, such as God's sovereignty and providence, double predestination, and the place of Christians in the world. Calvin's emphasis on the goodness of providence makes his theology in some ways more positive than Luther's apocalyptic religious vision. Luther's thinking on predestination was not consistent throughout his life. While he sometimes affirmed Augustine's view that God has elected some people for salvation from eternity, at other times he concluded that others have been excluded from grace. Calvin held to this latter position of double predestination more consistently, though his exposition of this idea in the definitive edition of his *Institutes* (1559) is quite short. His successor at Geneva, Théodore de Bèze, used double predestination as the central axiom of Reformed theology, and in later Calvinist scholasticism, predestination became the doctrine by which Calvinist theologians most typically positioned themselves

against Lutherans. Where Luther thought of salvation as the aim of Christian life, Calvin and his followers considered it as the first step in a human life that should grow in sanctification and goodness, as a reflection of God's glory.

After his return to Geneva in 1541, Calvin implemented his model of an ordered Christian commonwealth, an explicit repudiation of the chaos of Münster, by instituting four orders of ministers – pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons – as well as a disciplinary body, the Consistory. Pastors performed clerical functions, preaching, teaching and admonishing, and administering the sacraments. Doctors preserved and transmitted true doctrine. Elders were laymen chosen by the magistrates to assist the pastors in enforcing discipline in the Consistory, which met weekly to examine those accused of violating public morality, and to discipline them where necessary, regardless of social estate. Deacons carried out charitable work with the poor and sick. (Further, see Pettegree 2000, 309–322.)

The Stillborn Reformation: France

In France, humanists such as Jacques Lefèvre and Guillaume Briçonnet, bishop of Meaux, promoted a return to the ideal of primitive Christianity, including a doctrine of justification coincidentally close to that of Luther. François I initially supported such elite reform, despite the opposition of the Sorbonne and the Parlement. However, François's attitude changed quickly when placards denouncing the Catholic doctrine of the mass were posted around Paris in October 1534. Realizing that the distinction between elite reform ideas and popular disorder could no longer be maintained, François now began to cooperate in the suppression of evangelicalism. François's son Henri II instituted a court for trying accused heretics, which operated from 1547 until 1550. The Edict of Chateaubriand (1551) limited the participation of Protestants in positions of public authority and banned Protestant literature. However, this did little to halt the growing popularity of Calvinism, and a Calvinist church was founded at Paris in 1555. Calvinist books poured in from

Geneva and were also reprinted secretly in France. Calvinist ministers sent into France spread their message through preaching and song, especially among literate city-dwellers. Many French nobles converted to Calvinism. Growing numbers led to increased confidence and visibility. The French crown used military force to check the spread of Protestantism, and between 1562 and 1598, the country was ravaged by a religious war marked by episodes such as the horrific massacre of some five thousand Protestants on and immediately after St Bartholomew's day 1572, the assassination of Henri III, and the conversion of Henri of Navarre to Catholicism to secure the French throne. These wars were also fueled by the religious identities and ambitions of three powerful families in France – Valois, Bourbon, and Guise – and their foreign supporters. The wars frightened some into converting back to Catholicism but prompted others to develop theories of resistance to state power. The French Wars of Religion ended only in 1598, when the Edict of Nantes mandated that while Roman Catholicism was to be the official religion of France, Huguenots were to enjoy toleration and the right to education and political equality. These rights held until Louis XIV revoked the Edict in 1685, leading to the exodus of about 200,000 Huguenots to Protestant states. (Further, see Pettegree 2000, 211–224, 323–343.)

Reformation and Sovereignty in the Low Countries

Evangelicalism spread early in the highly urbanized, highly educated Low Countries. However, Charles V could impose his authority more successfully in the Low Countries than in Germany, and he deployed the theological faculty of the Universities of Leuven and Cologne to investigate heretics and the local authorities to execute them. Such repressive measures simply pushed dissent into underground house churches.

Especially after the repression of the Kingdom of Münster, Anabaptists in the Low Countries were subject to harsh sanctions. The Frisian Menno Simons, horrified by the bloody outcome

of Münster, promoted a pacifist style of Anabaptism, which became the largest Protestant denomination in the Netherlands until the early 1560s, when it was eclipsed by Calvinism. Like other Anabaptists, Simons emphasized the moral purity of the community, the result of conscious imitation of Christ and divine regeneration. If individuals failed to live up to the community's high moral demands, they were to be shunned, in the expectation that the resultant shame would bring about a conversion and reintegration. Simons also taught that the spotless community should bear suffering as part of its programmatic imitation of Christ. The exclusivity, uncompromisingly high moral standards and lack of doctrinal cohesiveness within and between the various Anabaptist groups led to several internal fissures and mutual condemnations.

From the 1540s onwards, Charles V began an offensive against Calvinism in the Low Countries. Nevertheless, Calvinism grew in popularity there, as it had in France, and in 1555 a Calvinist church was established at Antwerp. Margaret of Parma, regent of the Netherlands, realizing the necessity of a pragmatic solution, petitioned Philip II to moderate the heresy laws. When he refused, powerful Calvinists forced Margaret to concede their demands anyway. Protestant agitation boiled over in an outbreak of iconoclasm in 1566. Philip II sent in a Spanish army under the command of the Duke of Alva to put down the rebellion, thus sparking a bloody war that lasted fitfully for the next 80 years. Some Calvinists, especially in the Southern Low Countries, returned to Catholicism. Others took refuge in England or in Emden (Northern Germany), where some produced Protestant literature for export into the Low Countries. While Calvin believed that Protestants should do no more than refuse to participate in "idolatrous" Catholic rites, Dutch Calvinists, threatened by extreme reprisals, resolved to resist any ruler who opposed "true" religion.

While the Duke of Parma, Spanish governor in the Low Countries, reversed Calvinist gains in the Southern Low Countries, troops under the leadership of William of Orange, in league with Calvinist pirates, retook large parts of the Northern Provinces of the Low Countries between 1568

and the 1580s, motivated either by a commitment to Calvinism or by the desire to cast off Spanish tyranny. In 1579, the seven Northern Provinces declared themselves a separate republic independent from Spain, with Calvinism as their official religion. Although Catholics and Mennonites were also permitted to worship privately in most Dutch cities – Catholic religious services led by missionary priests trained at Cologne or Leuven were held discreetly in concealed churches – ongoing religious tensions destroyed William of Orange's hopes of political unity in the Northern Provinces. A dispute between those who maintained the classic Calvinist exposition of predestination and the followers of the theologian Jacob Harmenszoon (Arminius, 1560–1609), who emphasized the need for individual human cooperation in salvation, was settled in favor of the traditional Reformed view at the Synod of Dordrecht (or Dort, 1618).

Resentment of Calvinist violence in the Southern Low Countries bolstered support there for the Spanish, enabling the Duke of Parma to retake this area by 1585. As a result, post-Tridentine Catholicism was re-imposed vigorously in the Southern Low Countries through the promotion of education, the religious orders, and popular shrines. As a result, remaining Calvinists and Mennonites migrated north to the United Provinces. The pragmatic policy of toleration pursued by the Dutch government also allowed a space for immigrant Jewish and Socinian communities (see below). (Further, see Pettegree 2000, 344–364.)

Doctrinal Primitivism and the Reconfiguration of Christology and Trinitarian Theology

The impulse to restore Christianity to its primitive form led to the interrogation and rejection of many doctrines of the Catholic Church. While the magisterial reformers accepted the Christology and Trinitarian theology of the Catholic Church with little or no modification, radical theologians, at first mainly Anabaptists and Spiritualists, began in the 1520s and 1530s to question whether these apparently fundamental theological categories

were original constituent parts of Christian theology or later importations, for example, from Neoplatonism.

The distinguished Spanish physician and theologian Miguel Servet (Servetus, c. 1510–1553), impressed by Erasmus' radically historical and textual approach to the Bible and doctrine, called the traditional Nicene doctrine of the Trinity into doubt. He declared that the various names used for God in the Hebrew bible expressed various ways by which God was understood; the names of Son and Spirit in the New Testament simply expressed yet further ways. Servetus' dualism is essentially Gnostic. He was condemned by Catholics and Protestants alike and was finally executed as a heretic at Geneva, with Calvin's complicity.

The Italian physician and theologian Giorgio Biandrata (1516–1588) developed some of Servetus' ideas, such as his rejection of the eternal divinity of Christ. In 1556 he settled at Geneva, but after clashing with Calvin and Bullinger, he left Switzerland for Poland and then Hungary, where he convinced the prominent Calvinist minister Ferenc Dávid that the earliest Christian theologians were not Trinitarians but Unitarians. Unitarian Calvinism gained official recognition in Hungary in 1571, though a further schism within this church occurred when Dávid denied the propriety of worshipping Jesus; this, Dávid maintained, compromised the worship due solely to God the Father.

Perhaps the most influential antitrinitarian theologian was Fausto Sozzini (1539–1604), nephew of another radical, Lelio Sozzini (1525–1562). Lelio taught that the soul dies along with the body and that only the righteous are resurrected. In his *Brief Exposition of the First Chapter of John* (1561), Lelio drew on Erasmus's *Annotations on the New Testament* to argue that the *logos* of John 1:1 was not a preexistent divine being, Christ, but God's creative word (*sermo*). Christ was a man created in time, not from eternity, on whom God bestowed divine attributes. Reading his dead uncle's unpublished religious writings, notably the *Brief Exposition*, Fausto resolved to complete his unfinished theological project. Fausto travelled widely in Switzerland and Eastern Europe and was in contact with

Biandrata and Dávid, who published Lelio's *Brief Exposition* in 1568. In his work *On Jesus Christ the Savior* (1578), Fausto denied that Christ's death represented a satisfaction for our sins but emphasized the importance of faith in Christ, whom God made the head of the Church. Elsewhere he followed his uncle's controversial ideas about the mortality of the soul and resurrection. Fausto spent the final decades of his life in Poland, where he engaged in published theological debates with other theologians: Catholics, magisterial Protestants, and radicals alike. His closely argued treatises compelled his opponents to define their own positions more precisely.

The Polish Unitarian Brethren with whom Fausto associated established a religious haven at Raków, with church, school, and printing press. Here Fausto's followers compiled a catechism that drew heavily on his writings. This *Racovian Catechism* became an important document in British Unitarianism. After the Unitarian Polish Brethren were expelled from Poland in 1658, many settled in the United Provinces and Great Britain, from where some later travelled to the United States.

Confessionalization and Consensus

Following the official recognition of Lutheranism in the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed churches on the continent sought to define and impose their own distinctive doctrines and consolidate their political power by securing the cooperation of temporal powers. This long process has been characterized as "confessionalization." After Luther's death in 1546, a rift opened between Philipp Melancthon, who had drawn up most of the formative documents of the Lutheran Church, and "genuine Lutherans" (or "Gnesiolutherans") such as Flacius Illyricus, who accused Melancthon of compromising Luther's message to appease his Catholic interlocutors. This dispute raged until the Formula of Concord was signed in 1577 to unite the warring parties. Lutheranism also lost ground when several German princes converted from Lutheranism to Calvinism in a "Second

Reformation.” Meanwhile, the Catholic Church in Germany was being revitalized, especially by the Jesuits. All churches sought to condense the essence of their distinctive beliefs in catechisms and sermons, but visitation records show that they often had difficulty in making message stick, especially in rural communities, where literacy was lower than in cities and where many medieval popular beliefs persisted.

Breakdown of the Consensus: The Thirty Years’ War

The delicate religious and political equilibrium between two power blocs within the Holy Roman Empire – the Protestant Union and the Catholic League – was disturbed by the election of Ferdinand II Habsburg as King of Bohemia in 1617 and as Holy Roman Emperor in 1619. Ferdinand, a Catholic zealot, set out to subjugate the Protestant powers through military force. At first the Catholic League won several decisive victories. In 1629 Calvinism was declared illegal, as it was not covered by the terms of the Peace of Augsburg. Catholic properties were reclaimed. The struggle became more complicated with the involvement of the Swedish and French armies. The war caused huge losses of life and property and severely diminished the political importance of both the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy, leaving France as the leading power in Europe. The conflict was finally stilled in 1648 with the Peace of Augsburg, a diplomatic settlement that held for more than 200 years. The increased autonomy enjoyed by local German princes after the war hindered any move towards national unification. (Further, see Pettegree [2000](#), 387–409.)

Some Philosophical Implications of the Reformation

Although the Reformation was motivated originally by theological and religious considerations, it soon drew in many issues with philosophical implications (Harrison [2007](#)). It also led to a

reevaluation of the work of Augustine, whose work exercised a fascination on figures as different as Luther, Calvin, Descartes, Pascal, and Malebranche.

Luther’s dissent raised questions of authority which combined with an incipient skepticism about the claims of the Church to create a broad crisis of authority. It has been suggested that this crisis led many philosophers to demand greater epistemological certainty. Furthermore, the need to articulate new systems of belief raised questions of method and the organization of knowledge. It has also been suggested that the Protestant emphasis on the literal meaning of Scripture and on divine voluntarism contributed to the rise of empiricism in natural philosophy. If human morality depends on divine will rather than inherent qualities, why should not also physical laws? Such laws, some argued, cannot be determined through reasonable argument but must be investigated experimentally. For example, some considered the corpuscular theory of matter consistent with voluntarism, since the motion of particles is caused by the activity of the divine will on matter. There are also interesting affinities between the way Protestant reformers minimized individual virtue in justification and the way many early modern natural philosophers minimized material virtues in their explanations of physical processes. Both groups believed that causation rests not in the inherent qualities of human actors or physical substances but in the divine will. Furthermore, the Protestant reformers’ insistence that the age of miracles was past and their reduction of the number of sacraments to two or three (baptism, Eucharist, and sometimes confession) may have contributed to a diminished sense of the supernatural and a desire to find natural explanations for natural phenomena. The Protestant rejection of allegorical readings of Scripture in favor of a literal reading also affected the ways in which Protestant natural philosophers read the Book of Nature. No longer were natural things considered sacred symbols of a higher reality; rather, they were to be understood in natural terms. The Protestant tendency to believe that God had placed natural things in the world for human use may have led to a greater willingness to exploit nature.

The reformers also developed new ideas about the individual. Luther's insistence on the right of individual resistance soon spilled into the political realm in ways he did not foresee. Luther's struggle with Erasmus hinged largely on the question of free will, which Erasmus defended and Luther denied. The emphasis on predestination in the writings of Calvin and his followers raised questions of individual responsibility.

The Reformation also affected ideas about society. At first, many understood Luther as advocating antinomianism. The fragmentation of religious identities in the Reformation forced states to reconsider how to deal with those who held different beliefs, whether at home or abroad, and thus catalyzed discussions of toleration more generally. Max Weber controversially suggested that the high value placed on manual labor by the reformers led to the "Protestant work ethic" and the beginnings of capitalism. The rejection of ecclesiastical authority in the Reformation and the emphasis on individual conscience seem also to have contributed to the rise of libertarianism.

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- [Anabaptism](#)
- [Antitrinitarianism](#)
- [Calvin, Jean](#)
- [Counter-Reformation](#)
- [Luther, Martin](#)

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Regiomontanus, Johannes

Born: June 6, 1436, Königsberg

Died: Early summer in 1476, Rome?

Renzo Baldasso

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Abstract

Regiomontanus is the most important astronomer and mathematician of the fifteenth century. An early mathematical humanist, he was committed to the recovery of ancient science and mathematics, publishing corrected texts inclusive of figures.

Alternate Names

[de Monte Regio, Johannes](#); [Müller von Königsberg, Johannes](#)

Biography

The information about Regiomontanus's life is fragmentary, but the key achievements, appointments, and geographic moves are the following. Born in Königsberg in 1436, Regiomontanus studied first at the university of Leipzig and then Vienna where he completed his bachelor in 1452. In 1453–1454, he studied with Georg Peurbach, becoming his protégé while also

earning the title of *magister artium* in November 1457 and teaching courses on optics and Euclid. In 1460 they met Cardinal Bessarion who invited them to follow him to Rome – Peurbach died in April 1461. As a member of the cardinal's entourage and household, Regiomontanus spent also time in Venice, Ferrara, and Padua; in Rome he was assigned a benefice through the Wurzburg diocese. In Italy, Regiomontanus had the opportunity to master Greek and study Byzantine manuscripts, partaking of humanist elites and engaging also Leon Battista Alberti, Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli, Nicholas of Cusa, and Theodore of Gaza among others. From these years survive epistolary exchanges with Giovanni Bianchini and Jacob Speier, leading astronomers in Italy. In the summer of 1467, he accepted the *magister* appointment in Budapest at the university founded by Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary and Bohemia. By the summer of 1471, Regiomontanus relocated to Nuremberg, becoming a citizen in November. There he organized a printing house, publishing seven titles from 1473 to 1475, years in which he traveled to Rome where Pope Sixtus IV bestowed him two more benefices. The last recorded information dates from May 1476; likely Regiomontanus died in Rome later that summer.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition/Innovative and Original Aspects

In his *oration*, likely composed in 1464 as the introductory lecture for the astronomy course Regiomontanus was going to teach at the University of Padua, he argued for mathematics as one of the three branches of knowledge together with metaphysics and natural philosophy and the only one endowed with certainty in its claims (position rearticulated in the dedication of the *Tabulae primi mobilis*). After outlining the history of mathematics – in which he also identified Diophantus as the father of algebra (instead of al-Khwarizmi or Fibonacci) – and praising the usefulness of its applications including astronomy, Regiomontanus criticized

the intellectual tradition that had disregarded it, underscoring that mathematics is instead a fundamental discipline that should be mastered by all intellectuals.

Though extant in manuscript form only, Regiomontanus's *Defence of Theon against George of Trebizond*, which he worked for years (to 1473 at least), include the best evidence of his interest in physical astronomy, including his commitment to three-dimensional spheres rather than two-dimensional circles apt for saving the phenomena in the spirit of Ptolemy.

Impact and Legacy

The accuracy of Regiomontanus's technical work in astronomy and mathematics and editing ancient texts, including the *Epitome in Almagestum Ptolemaei* (begun by Peurbach and printed in 1496) and the creation of new tables (projecting planetary positions through 1504), was unmatched in the fifteenth century, amply justifying the contemporary title of "prince of astronomers of our age" – this body of work created the conditions in which Copernicus developed heliocentric cosmology. However, the impact of Regiomontanus's publications was perhaps greater. He understood that printing was the means to implement a transformation in the scientific culture. His editorial program, advertised in a broadside, lists 44 titles, ranging from his own *Kalendarium* and Peurbach's *Theorica* to the works of Ptolemy, Euclid, and Archimedes; together they would have offered all of the foundational works of mathematics and astronomy, in new translations and with figures accompanying the texts. Text revisions during press work, figures printed from woodblocks and metal imprints, and extensive in-house hand-finishing underscore Regiomontanus's commitment to produce finished books and precise texts, setting an example for other printers. The employment of Roman types and large initials blocks (copied from those appearing in publications by Sweynheym and Pannartz) connect graphically Regiomontanus's books to Rome and Roman humanism.

Cross-References

- [Alberti, Leon Battista](#)
- [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)
- [Gaza, Theodore](#)

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Reisch, Gregor

Born: 1467, Balingen (Schwarzwald)

Died: 9 May 1525, Freiburg (Breisgau)

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Abstract

Gregor Reisch was a Carthusian prior and confessor to the Emperor Maximilian I. In 1503, in Freiburg he published a book entitled *Margarita philosophica* (*Philosophical Pearl*) which provides an introduction to the liberal arts and philosophy. *Margarita philosophica* follows the Aristotelian pattern of philosophy as was typical for medieval textbooks and covers a wide range of topics, not only the *trivium* and *quadrivium* but also the traditional branches of philosophy, i.e., logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy, and moral philosophy. Reisch's *Philosophical Pearl* contains many instructive woodcuts and was often used as a textbook at universities, in Northern Europe in particular. It was reprinted many times during the sixteenth century and became one of the most influential books of that period.

Alternate Names

[de Reycho](#); [Reysch, Georgius](#); [Reitschius](#); [Reyst](#); [Rieschius](#); [Rusch de Balingen](#)

Biography

Gregor Reisch was born in Balingen and studied as a clergyman of the Diocese of Constance at the university in Freiburg. He obtained his bachelor and master degree there and became a tutor at the university in Ingolstadt in 1494. In 1496, Reisch entered the Carthusian order in Freiburg (Breisgau). In 1501, he was nominated a prior in

the monastery of Buxheim and in 1502 was ordained a prior in Freiburg. In the same year, Reisch was appointed as a visitor of the Carthusian order for the Upper Rhenish Province. As a member of the General Chapter of the Carthusian Order, Reisch participated in the work on the new Rules of the Order, which were published under his supervision in 1510. Reisch was also the editor of the *Works of St. Jerome* for Johan Amerbach's printing shop, in which from 1513 was continued by Erasmus of Rotterdam with great praise for his predecessor. In 1510, Reisch became a confessor to the Emperor Maximilian I (Srbik 1961). In 1523, a stroke left him partly paralyzed and he died in 1525, in the middle of the German Peasants' War during the evacuation of the Freiburg monastery (Andreini 1997; Srbik 1941; Münzel 1938).

Margarita Philosophica

Margarita philosophica was written around 1496 and was published in 1503 (Reisch 2002). Reisch uses ideas from many different sources, from classical tradition, early Christian writers, medieval Arabic philosophers, and Latin writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth century; his work thus reflects late medieval knowledge with a certain influence from humanism and Renaissance philosophy. *Philosophical Pearl* was later called the first encyclopedia from the German-speaking region (Becker 1970), but it is rather a compendium of philosophy, i.e., more of a reduction of philosophy as taught at universities than an encyclopedia in the modern sense (Cunningham and Kusukawa 2010). Reisch follows the tradition of the seven liberal arts and the Aristotelian division of philosophy into theoretical and practical. He begins with the *trivium* of "rational philosophy" (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and *quadrivium* of "real philosophy" (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy). Following that, four books on natural philosophy are included involving psychology (Park 2008), and *Margarita philosophica* is concluded by a book on moral philosophy (Kraye 2008). Reisch's philosophy was created in the context of a spiritual

movement called "The Modern Devotion" and is based on Aristotelian grounds with a strong influence of pseudo-Dionysius' light metaphysics and Augustinian thought in regard to the distinction between Creator and creation (Cunningham and Kusukawa 2010).

Legacy

Gregor Reisch's *Margarita philosophica* was republished during the sixteenth century at least ten times (Ferguson 1929). Certain editions were not authorized, and some of them were supplemented by different appendices not originating from Reisch. The *Philosophical Pearl* was used as a textbook at universities in Northern Europe in the time before Reformation and afterward particularly in Catholic regions. The allegorical woodcuts and a number of detailed illustrations which supplemented the text also helped the popularity of the book for teaching purposes. In 1599, it was translated into Italian. In the 1583 edition and in the Italian edition, it was first titled as an encyclopedia (cyclopedia). From the seventeenth century on, its influence descended rapidly, but *Margarita philosophica* was still positively assessed by Alexander von Humboldt for its significance for the expansion of mathematical and natural philosophical knowledge.

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► [Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism](#)

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Reitschius

- [Reisch, Gregor](#)

Renaissance City States

- [Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Renaissance Manners

- [Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Reuchlin, Johannes

Born: 22 February 1455

Died: 30 June 1522

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Abstract

Johannes Reuchlin, German humanist, diplomat, and Hebraist, is one of the fathers of German humanism; he was also a pioneering figure of Jewish studies in the Christian world and is remembered as the most prominent figure of the intellectual and spiritual movement known as Christian Kabbalah, founded by the Italian humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. The most momentous event of his career was his involvement in the “Battle of the Books” from the year 1509 to his death. Reuchlin was consulted by the emperor in order to produce a legal advice to justify the destruction of all the books in Jewish hands, with the exception of the Bible. He took a courageous stand opposing the campaign of undifferentiated persecution of the Jewish literature, suggesting that this literary corpus should rather be studied before any censorship could take place. On the occasion, he produced, almost incidentally, the first history and systematical outline of Jewish postbiblical literature. Moreover, he had already published a Hebrew grammar and a dictionary (1506), the first one of this scope in Latin in order to allow the Christians to get acquainted with the original text of the Bible and with later Jewish exegetical literature. The core of his intellectual interest, though, was the mystical literature of the Kabbalah, which forms the focus of his two most important works: *De verbo mirifico* (1494) and *De arte cabalistica* (1517), both in the form of Platonic dialogues showing that the doctrines and the methods of Kabbalah were in the best position to demonstrate the truth of Christian faith. His intellectual and religious

endeavors, especially the fight against scholasticism, the critique of the Vulgate, and the advocacy of the superior value of the Hebrew original of the Old Testament, can be seen as leading to Protestant Reformation, but, since he refused to adhere to Luther's reform movement, he is best described as a genuine humanist of the period preceding Reformation, whose function as a precursor could be vindicated by different trends of the European intellectual panorama of the subsequent generations.

Alternate Names

Capnion

Biography

Born to Georg and Elisabeth Eck in Pforzheim (Baden) on 22 February 1455, Johannes Reuchlin studied in Freiburg, Basle, Orléans, and Poitiers where he obtained his title of *Magister Artium* in 1481. Afterwards he was at the service of Duke Eberhard of Württemberg with whom he visited Italy in 1482. In Florence, he met Lorenzo de Medici and some prominent humanists: Angelo Poliziano, Cristoforo Landino, and Giorgio Merula. In Rome, he was instructed in Greek, after a first training in Paris with Hermonymos of Sparta and with Johannes Argyropulos. In 1490, he traveled again to Florence, meeting Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and to Rome, where he met his acquaintance Ermolao Barbaro. In 1492, at the imperial court of Linz, he deepened his knowledge of Hebrew under the guidance of the physician of the Emperor Maximilian of Habsburg, Jacob Yehiel Loans. Due to the protection of the bishop of Worms, Johannes von Dalberg, Reuchlin was introduced to the circle of the humanists of Heidelberg: Johannes Trithem, Willibald Pirckheimer, Ulrich Zasius, and Jacob Wimpfeling. In 1498, he accompanied the Elector Palatine, Count Philipp to Rome, where he pleaded before Pope Alexander VI. During his stay in Rome, which lasted a few months, he

acquired many precious Hebrew books and studied under the guidance of Obadiah Sforno, philosopher and exegete. In 1500, he was appointed triumvir of the Swabian League and switched from the diplomatic to the juridical career. As an expert on Hebrew literature, he was consulted in 1509 by the baptized Jew Johannes Pfefferkorn who, with the support of the Dominicans of Cologne, was campaigning for the destruction of all the books (with the sole exception of the Bible) in the possession of the Jews living in the imperial territories. He was among the consultants of the emperor, who collected expert opinions in order to proceed with the campaign initiated by Pfefferkorn but his *Gutachten* was decidedly against the undifferentiated destruction of Jewish literature. This courageous decision (together with some imprudence in his polemical language) brought to a long series of processes and to his final condemnation in 1520. Only after his death Reuchlin was rehabilitated. In 1520, he was appointed as an instructor of Greek and Hebrew at the University of Ingolstadt. He taught the same subjects at the University of Tübingen in the winter (1521–1522). Reuchlin died in Stuttgart on 30 June 1522.

Principal works: *Vocabularius breviloquus* (1478), *De verbo mirifico* (1494), *Scaenica progymnasmata* (Henno, 1498), *Oratio ad Alexandrum VI pro Philippo Bavariae Duce* (1498), *Sergius vel Capitis caput* (1504), *Liber congestorum de arte praedicandi* (1504), *Tütsch Missive warumb die Juden in ellend sind* (1505), *De rudimentis hebraicis* (1506), *Augenspiegel* (1511), *In septem psalmos poenitentiales hebraicos interpretatio* (1512), *Defensio Johannis Reuchlin Pforcensis LL. Doctoris contra calumniatores suos Colonienses* (1513), *De arte cabalistica* (1517), and *De accentibus et orthographia linguae hebraicae* (1518).

Translations: Hippocratis, *De praeparatione hominis* (1510); Joseph Ezobi, *Lanx argentea* (1512); Athanasii, *Epistula ad Marcellinum in interpretationem psalmorum* (1515); and Athanasii, *De variis quaestionibus* (1515).

Editions: *Clarorum virorum Epistolae* (1514); *Illustrium virorum Epistolae* (1519); Xenophontis *Apologia Socratis, Agesilaus, Hieron* (1529); and

Greciae excellentium oratorum Aeschinis et Demosthenis orationes adversariae (1522).

Johannes Reuchlin, though distinguished in many fields, was not a philosopher in the professional meaning of the word nor in any metaphorical sense. Nonetheless, he deserves an enduring place in the hall of fame of Renaissance thought for at least three reasons: the rediscovery of Hebrew, Jewish literature, and Kabbalah for a Christian readership. Reuchlin was not merely a faithful pupil of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: in his footsteps, he had the ambition to complete Pico's only sketched project to win Jewish Kabbalah for the humanist movement. His first essay of considerable extent was the dialogue among three interlocutors bearing the title *De verbo mirifico* (1494). It contains already, although in a less developed form, all the essential themes of the literary production of the mature Reuchlin, who had a considerable evolution but maintained his fundamental attitude and the intuitions of his younger years. Deeply persuaded of the values and the stylistic paradigms of Italian Humanism, Reuchlin sought, already in this early "kabbalistic" work, to fill with a tangible meaning the rapid allusions of the *Conclusiones* (1486) by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. On the basis of a still quite primitive knowledge of Hebrew, Reuchlin attempted the construction of a discursive model which could explain some kabbalistic theses of the Mirandulan. He focused his discussion on the typically humanistic persuasion of the centrality of the "word" (*verbum*), and he tried to apply it to Christianity, explaining that the most powerful word, the wonder-working utterance, is the name of Jesus. One of the most contested theses of the Mirandulan, pointed to magic, together with Kabbalah, as the principal disciplines which would prove the divinity of Christ. Reuchlin interprets this conclusion, avoiding the theologically problematic black magic, as a reference to the efficiency of the Word, combining the virtues of the evangelical Logos with the power of the Hebrew biblical Name. Jesus' name represents thus a progress, granted by God's mercifulness, in comparison to the ineffable Tetragramm, toward the

redemption of the entire humanity. By inserting an S into the Tetragramm, the name IHSUH is obtained, which makes the divine name pronounceable, actualizing its power for the believers in Jesus, as if the real name of the Savior would be revealed or rediscovered after centuries of oblivion. It would be far from correct, however, to reduce Reuchlin's discovery to the magical dimension of the knowledge of the true name of Jesus. His most original contribution was rather, following Pico's lead, to be sought in the worship of the divine word and in the development of the exegetical methods allowing a Jewish confirmation of Christianity. The very structure of the *De verbo mirifico*, as well as in the later *De arte cabalistica*, serves precisely the apologetic function of letting truth emerge after and beyond the choices and the interests of the participating voices: the Epicurean philosopher Sidonius, not by chance at the center of the first book (of the three making up the work), represents the philosophical option, the lowest, but characterized by the curiosity which leads to unqualified "religion," interpreted in the second book by the Jew Baruchias, whose function is to interpret Judaism, but in a new form, not structured according to the traditional stereotypes of stubbornness, obstinacy, and blindness, but as the heir to a venerable tradition which potentially contains the highest truth and can access ultimate salvation, provided that it accepts Jesus as the solution of every enigma. The protagonist of the third book is Capnion, bearing the humanist Latinized name of Johannes Reuchlin himself (imagined as derived from "Rauch," smoke, through a diminutive of the Greek "kapnos" with the same meaning). He combined the philosophical curiosity of the first interlocutor with the religious tradition of the second, offering the definitive synthesis of Christianity, understood as perfect realization and ultimate answer to the questions of the philosopher as well as to the obscure intricacies of kabbalistic tradition. Reuchlin's Christianity is the focus toward which all sincere aspirations to truth converge, in other words his is a pious philosophy, striving to achieve the confirmation of Christianity through kabbalistic methods. Shortly after Pico

had been rehabilitated from the accusations of heresy by Pope Alexander VI in 1493, Reuchlin revives some suggestions of the theses, in particular the idea that the name of Jesus, which actually was for Pico Yeshu, in accordance with the Jewish tradition, containing a Shin (S), was in itself the kabbalistic proof of the Christian dogma of Jesus' humanity and divinity. Now, since the public discussion of the theses had been prohibited and Pico had received a formal interdiction to explain himself, Reuchlin advances his own conjectures, creating a new blend of Christian Kabbalah, not only interpreting Pico but also presenting an innovative and creative approach to Pico's slogans, with a rather peculiar "German" bent, since Nicolaus Cusanus had suggested, in one of his sermons, the idea that the letter S, peculiar of Jesus' name, could make pronounceable the ineffable Tetragrammaton. The book, quoted with respect to Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, in his *Psalterium Quincuplex*, established Reuchlin, way beyond his real merits, as one of the foremost experts of Hebrew literature, in particular of its most recondite meanders, which were becoming, at the beginning of the XVI century, object of a growing curiosity among the Christians as a possible way of neutralizing the neopagan inclination of the humanist movement. Hebrew, as a language and as a "forgotten" tradition to be rediscovered in the "*ad fontes*" humanistic race, remained at the center of Reuchlin's interests and publishing activity, becoming the cause of his glory but also of his judiciary suffering. The reactions of the readers to *De verbo mirifico*, documented by the correspondence, show clearly that his essay found a largely benevolent and remarkably curious readership but the majority could not grasp thoroughly his intentions, due to technical problems, since the Basle edition did not have Hebrew fonts, and also due to his intentional esotericism in tone. Reuchlin gave only partial explanations of the divine names hidden in the verses of the Psalms symbolizing the *Shem ha-Meforash*, the explicit and miraculous name of God, making prayer effective through the intercession of the angels. He understood very

well that, in order to realize his project of Christianizing the Kabbalah, two preliminary conditions had to be fulfilled. On the one hand, his knowledge of Hebrew and his Hebrew library needed to be significantly enriched. Moreover, the knowledge of Hebrew of his readers had also to be improved since his kabbalistic reasoning in Latin translation makes almost no sense at all. In order to achieve this ambitious double target, he went first to Rome, where he took lessons of Hebrew at an advanced level from Obadiah Sforza and he enriched enormously his Hebrew library. Then, in 1506, he published the first (if one excepts the modest primer written by Konrad Pellikan, which appeared two years earlier) systematic grammar of the Hebrew language in Latin with a pioneering dictionary, the *De rudimentis hebraicis*, supplemented, twelve years later, by the *De accentibus et orthographia linguae Hebraicae* (1518): the basic tools for teaching Hebrew at the university level were thus laid. The vicissitudes, on the other hand, were caused by the very same emergence of Reuchlin as the outstanding expert for Hebrew literature among the Christians. The vast campaign of persecution of Hebrew literature promoted by the convert Johannes Pfefferkorn found a benevolent ear in Emperor Maximilian I, who supported it under certain conditions: he most certainly saw in it an occasion to refill the imperial treasure, impoverished by continuous military campaigns, with the perspective of the fines which would ensue from a generalized seizure of books in the possession of the Jews in the Holy Roman territories. As a matter of course, his objective could not have been the undifferentiated destruction of the totality of these books, which was favored by the convert and the watchdogs of the orthodoxy and would have led to their unmitigated triumph, but which at the same time would have had no significant "outcomes" from a more material, strictly fiscal point of view. Reuchlin's expert opinion on this delicate matter could not have been ignored and, as it is well known, it was decidedly negative. Although favorable to the censorship and control, especially of blasphemous books and libels against Christianity,

such as the notorious *Sefer Nizzahon Yashan* and *Toledot Yeshu*, Reuchlin was sternly opposed to an indiscriminate destruction of the Jewish books. He was rather inclined to consider them, with few exceptions, and with different degrees, a most precious potential asset for the Christians, not only nor primarily as an apologetic tool for inducing conversion, but in order to retrieve the forgotten Jewish root of Christianity and, in perspective, to complete with Hebrew an ideal triad of humanistic languages associating with the already established Latin and Greek. Reuchlin's advice, although quite isolated and bitterly opposed by the suspicious Dominicans, happened to coincide with the imperial interests and prevailed, although only in the judicial matter of the seized Hebrew books. The quick formation of two parties the Reuchlinists and the so-called Obscurantists (the latter name, derived from the pro-Reuchlin satire *Epistulae obscurorum virorum*) started to delineate the front lines which will soon divide the German lands on the much more explosive theme of the reformation of the Church. The massive usage of the press, with the publication and capillary diffusion of pamphlets, satires, flyers, etc., shows clearly the new dimensions of the debate, which, such as in the case of Ulrich von Hutten, went quickly far beyond the original frame. The personal, decidedly slanderous confrontation with Pfefferkorn was certainly the immediate cause for Reuchlin's ultimate condemnation in 1520, but it is evident that the general context of unease in the Church, the first breaks in Christianity, and the dangerous extension of the terms of the discussion convinced the Pope and the Cardinals of the necessity of an exemplary punishment. One element deserves a special mention, since it forms the most important legacy of Reuchlin's argument, first in defense of the Jewish books and then in self-defense, is his strictly juridical argument, even more solid (in principle) than the cultural appeal held in the most general terms, according to which Jewish books are an intellectual heritage of importance for the Christians too. Juridically, Reuchlin argues that since Emperor Caracalla's edict, the Jews are fellow citizens (*concives*), and they

share with the Christians, in front of the secular power, the same rights: among others the right to see their property respected, as long as it is not demonstrated that they host in their libraries libels or blasphemous books. Within this frame, Christian-Jewish relations could find, in Reuchlin's vision, a new dimension. From a theological point of view, in fact, he did not differ very much from his Dominican opponents, but on a juridical basis, Reuchlin identified a possible common ground on which cultural exchanges would be mutually beneficial. With the publication of the *De arte cabalistica* (1517), Reuchlin reached the apex of his intellectual development and could reap the fruits of his patient strategy which, almost incidentally, constituted the foundation of modern Jewish studies. Once again a dialogue among three interlocutors, in this later work, there is no representative of the author's voice and not even a voice representing explicitly Christianity. The three participants represent each a philosophical or religious position: from the Pythagorean Philolaos to the eclectic, singular figure of baptized Moslem, bearing the curious name of Marranus, to the authentic protagonist of the dialogue: Simon, the Jewish Kabbalist who, in the heat of the debate, appears inadvertent of the fact that, while explaining methods, techniques, and contents of kabbalistic wisdom, he is delivering the key to discover and understand the true name of Jesus according to Kabbalah. At odds with the *De verbo mirifico*, anyway, the later dialogue presents a massive usage of kabbalistic texts (or of medieval Jewish texts, such as the *Guide of the Perplexed* which, in accord with Pico della Mirandola who in turn followed Abraham Abulafia, Reuchlin ascribed to the core of Kabbalah), in the original Hebrew and in Latin translation. The consistent practice of analogy to establish vast resemblances between Christianity and Judaism, the delineation of the contents of a "perennial philosophy," and the sustained polemics against scholasticism in favor of a Platonic, Dionysian, and Cusanian hermeneutics make Reuchlin the principal exponent of the transplantation of Florentine humanism with some corrections, inspired by Pico in the German intellectual climate. Reformation and the religious

struggles which will soon tear apart Germany and the Christian west will rapidly destroy his project of religious and intellectual renewal, whereas his enthusiasm for Kabbalah, the key, in his conception, to reconstruct the lost Pythagorean mysteriosophy, will wreck in the XVII century, under the attack of critical philology (showing that the supposed antiquity of kabbalistic doctrines was largely fictitious), a discipline he himself had contributed to establish with his bibliographic rigor and with his determination in reaching the authentic sources of the Christian synthesis, especially the Jewish ones. Nevertheless, it was Reuchlin, far more than Pico, the true father of modern Jewish studies, who established the knowledge of Hebrew as the precondition for any serious study of Judaism and as a peculiar intellectual interest for Christians. Moreover, his name will always be mentioned whenever there will be the need for a plaidoyer in favor of civil coexistence between Jews and Christians and also whenever, as it is periodically the case, one will want to understand Jewish esoteric tradition and the uncanny family resemblance it evokes among the Christians in an almost irresistible way, be it as repulsion or as powerful fascination.

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Revolution in Military Art

► Art of War in the Renaissance

Reynolds, John

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► [Reisch, Gregor](#)

Rheticus, Georg Joachim

Born: 16 February 1514

Died: 4 December 1574

Dennis Danielson

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Abstract

Rheticus (b. Feldkirch, 1514) in his early twenties became a professor at the University of Wittenberg, where Philipp Melanchthon declared he “was born to the study of mathematics.” In 1539, having heard rumors of a new sun-centered cosmology, he sought out the elderly, little-known astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus in Frauenburg (Frombork), remaining there for two and a half years. In 1540 Rheticus published his own first account (*Narratio prima*) of Copernicus’s cosmology, according to which earth is a planet rotating on its axis and revolving annually about a central sun. He later delivered Copernicus’s manuscript of *De revolutionibus* to Nuremberg, where it was published in 1543.

After the death of Copernicus, Rheticus served as the “apostle” of heliocentrism, developing mathematical tools to aid its hoped-for confirmation. His 1551 *Canon doctrinae triangulorum* contained the first tables of all six trigonometric functions, and his much larger (posthumous) *Opus Palatinum de Triangulis* (1596) fathered generations of trig tables not superseded until the twentieth century.

Rheticus’s impact was principally in astronomy and in closely related areas of mathematics. His theologically grounded belief in “God’s geometry in heaven and on earth”

supported his realism about the philosophical truth status of Copernicanism and a rejection of the instrumentalism according to which astronomy’s claims (in Andreas Osiander’s words) “need not be true nor even probable.”

Biography

Rheticus was the son of Georg Iserin, the town doctor of Feldkirch. He enjoyed a humanistic grammar-school education in Feldkirch and in Zürich, then a center of Swiss Protestantism. In 1532 he enrolled at Martin Luther’s University of Wittenberg, becoming a protégé of the Reformer Philipp Melanchthon (who wrote that Rheticus “was born to the study of mathematics”; Danielson 2006, 24). He became a professor there in 1536, and in May 1539, having heard rumors of a new sun-centered cosmological theory, he journeyed to Frauenburg (Frombork), where the elderly amateur astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus served as canon, administrator, and doctor. Rheticus stayed with Copernicus for two and a half years, encouraging the completion of the astronomer’s great heliocentric treatise, *De revolutionibus*. In 1540 he published his own first account (*Narratio prima*) of Copernicus’s cosmology, according to which earth is a planet rotating on its axis and revolving annually about a central sun. And in the autumn of 1541, he left Frauenburg with the finished manuscript of Copernicus’s work, carrying it first to Wittenberg and then to Nuremberg, where it was published in 1543.

In the decades following the death of Copernicus that same year, Rheticus served as principal “apostle” and defender of his master’s cosmology. Although his own career was impeded by restlessness, distraction, and ill fortune (he spent time in Wittenberg, Milan, Switzerland, Leipzig, Prague, Krakow, and Košice), Rheticus strove to refine – and provide computational tools for – the astronomically essential “science of triangles” later known as trigonometry. In 1551 he produced and published *Canon doctrinae triangulorum*, containing the first ever tables of all six

trigonometric functions – to which was appended a dialogue announcing that Rheticus was delivering “fruit from the most delightful gardens of Copernicus” (Danielson 2006 143). Later, during twelve of his years spent in Krakow, and while working as a physician so that he could pay the bills, he employed five computers – human assistants performing computations – to calculate ever more accurate results for his trig tables. In 1574, an eager student from Wittenberg, Valentin Otho, discovered the 1551 *Canon* and traveled to Košice to learn more from Rheticus. Although Rheticus died in his arms late that year, Otho pressed on with the trigonometry project and in 1596 published his and Rheticus’s work – almost 1500 folio pages, mainly in tabular form, roughly a hundred thousand ratios calculated to at least ten decimal places – as *Opus Palatinum de Triangulis*. Despite its manifold errors, this work formed the foundation for Bartholomew Pitiscus’s *Mathematical Treasury: or Canon of Sines* (Frankfurt, 1613), and thus fathered generations of tables only superseded in the twentieth century.

Rheticus’s impact was thus principally in astronomy (as impresario of the cosmology of Copernicus) and in the closely related field of mathematics. His work was undergirded by the conviction that mathematics – particularly geometry and its offspring trigonometry – could serve to produce real knowledge about both geophysics and astrophysics. His theologically grounded belief in “God’s geometry in heaven and on earth” (Burmeister 1968, 3:139) in turn produced a realism about the philosophical truth status of astronomical claims and a rejection of the instrumentalism according to which astronomy’s task was merely to “save the appearances.” This instrumentalist position was asserted by Andreas Osiander’s notorious unsigned preface to *De revolutionibus* alleging that astronomers offer merely a hypothetical “basis of computation” that “need not be true nor even probable.” In printed copies of *De revolutionibus* that came into the hands of Rheticus, he angrily defaced Osiander’s unauthorized preface (Danielson 2006, 109–112).

Methodologically, Rheticus is notable for his commitment to both observation and mathematical analysis combined with a rejection of

dogmatism. According to him, scientific obscurity should be tackled “by means of inquiry, not assertion” (*non affirmando, sed quaerendo*). Although he could not prove Copernican heliocentrism, his conviction concerning its philosophical verifiability – in addition to his heroic achievements in discovering, publicizing, and supporting Copernicanism – formed a significant component of the cosmological revolution whose later and more famous champions were Kepler, Galileo, and Newton.

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Rhetoric in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The rise of rhetoric during the Renaissance depends, first and foremost, on a social condition: the development of new city-dwelling and cultivated middleclass produced the requirement of devising an art of argumentation, appropriate to resolving the conflicts of the political, juridical, moral, and economic life, in a word, of the life of *negotia* (practical affairs). Consequently, Humanists consider that the art of rhetoric must enter in competition with the dialectic of medieval universities, since it must resolve the controversies of any disputed subject, which implies and plausible conclusions. The vicissitudes of rhetoric during the Renaissance can be described as the attempt to decompose and to recompose, in manifold manners, the functions of rhetoric and of the dialectic in unprecedented figures of argumentation (Vasoli 1964; Seigel 1968; Murphy 1983; Witt 2000; Green and Murphy 2006). On the one hand, rhetoric developed the function of eloquence, in order to persuade the public. The goal was to elaborate an effective discourse more than a plausible one. On the other hand, humanists attempted to recompose the functions of rhetoric and of the dialectic in a topical art of argumentation.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The rise of rhetoric during the Renaissance depends on a social condition: the development of new cultivated groups (merchants, bankers, lawyers, and all sorts of public figures) produced the requirement of inventing an art of argumentation, appropriate to regulating discussions and

resolving the conflicts of political, juridical, moral, and economic life, in a word, of the life of *negotia* (the practical affairs). It is true, however, that in the municipal Middle Ages, such a requirement had already been maintained, and translated itself by the development of the *artes dictaminis*, namely, a simplified form of the rhetoric for the writing of public letters. This art responded to the formation of civil servants in a situation of political decentralization and raised the status of the administrative class thanks to the prestige of elocution. So, the close connection between rhetorical study, the notarial art, and the interest in legal studies was an important feature of the Latin culture between the ninth century and the fourteenth century.

But does this aspect also characterize the conception of rhetoric in the Renaissance? Or is there in this field a certain continuity between the Middle Ages and Humanism?

Interpretations are often conflicting, but to respond appropriately, the fields of application of rhetoric and its purposes must first be determined. The schools of grammar taught not only the ability to read and to write Latin, but also literary criticism, metrics, and rhetoric. Moreover, any social relationship needs in the *vita activa* the mastery of eloquence. So, it can be said that humanists developed the *artes dictaminis* and the rhetorical skills of grammar, even more when the birth of vernaculars led to the transformation of rhetoric into linguistic analysis. This is certainly an aspect of continuity: one can think for example to Niccolò Perotti's *Rudimenta grammatices*, (1474) or Joachim Du Bellay's *Défense et illustration de la langue française* (1549) and Angel May (English Secretaries... (1586). But the praise of language both as a tool of virtue and a correct expression of the thought made consequently of rhetoric an essential element of man's education as an intelligent virtuous being, who is in essence a friend of other human beings. Such an education is provided by the imitation of Latin poetry (first, with Lovato Lovati in the second half of the thirteenth century, then with Petrarca in the mid-fourteenth century). However, the turning point was the teaching of rhetoric in Padua of Giovanni Malpaghini of Ravenna (1382–1405) who was

succeeded by Gasparino Barzizza. Still in Padua, Pier Paolo Vergerio proclaimed in his *De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis* (1402–1403) that moral philosophy, rhetoric, and knowledge of Latin letters, are essential elements for the social and individual education of a good man. The universal educational function of rhetoric and the study of ancient culture was the belief that led Guarino Guarino at Ferrara and Vittorino of Feltre at Mantua to found schools where philosophy, history, Greek and Latin literature, rhetoric, and poetry stood at the center of curriculum.

If the educational function of rhetoric is an original aspect of humanism, the principally political conception of eloquence is another significant one. In fact, while medieval schools were in the forefront of the legal documentary culture, the humanist schools emphasized the link between the political discussion and the effectiveness of rhetoric. Cicero was established as the model of the rhetoric anchored in real life not only through his works, but also through his own life, as a lawyer and citizen engaged in politics, desperately struggling in order to keep alive the Roman republic against Caesar's tyrannical temptations. Therefore, eloquence was placed at the service of freedom (see Coluccio Salutati, *De tyranno*, 1400) or of parliamentary debate, as in the schools created by Elizabeth I (inspired by Sir Thomas Eliot, *The Governor*, 1531). Humanists considered that the art of rhetoric must enter into competition with the dialectic of medieval universities, since it did not limit itself to teaching discursive strategies for civil servants, but must resolve the controversies of any disputed subject, which only deduces plausible conclusions. Nevertheless, the criticisms of the universities' dialectics depend in part on an attempt of auto-representation. The humanists presented themselves as "new men," therefore they devote themselves, often in a more polemic than informed manner, to the critique of medieval philosophy. In fact, competition, imitation, and mutual exchange between courtly employed humanists, and the university professors trained in medieval rhetoric remain constant thought the entire Renaissance.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The rise of rhetoric in the Renaissance followed the growing circulation of ancient works: Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (discovered in 1416); Cicero's *De Oratore* (discovered in 1421) as well as many of his speeches, the Greek "New Sophistic," in particular Lucian of Samosate and Hermogenes of Tarsus. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* entered late into Latin Europe and took a great deal of time before being capable of rivaling the Ciceronian model: the most used text of medieval teaching was the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, falsely attributed to Cicero until the end of the fifteenth century (Classen 2003).

Renaissance humanists considered rhetoric either as part of the argumentation theory or as part of the art of elocution, to persuade a specific public. The goal was to elaborate an effective discourse more than a plausible one. This is also the main reason for rhetoric's progressive impoverishment, reducing itself to an art of brilliant speaking in court societies. Rhetoric's evolution in the writings concerning *urbanitas* (urbanity) demonstrates this well. First, Ciceronian dialogues as well as the reflection on the relationship between laughter and rhetoric, presented by Cicero and Quintilian, furnish a model of civil conversation for the new urbanized and literate social classes. Beyond the spiritual and the economic life, rhetoric nourished the requirement of erudite and formally impeccable, although intimate, idle conversation, light where the remark, the repartee, the jets were considered to be the expression of one's own intelligence and of the recognition of certain social codes of decorum. In this perspective, Giovanni Pontano's *De sermone* (1509) praises *comitas* (affable courtesy), a smiling and ironic joviality, which must not offend others, but rather builds a link of complicity by the rituals of the new sociability. However, this was not intended as a form of faithful intimacy, since it is obtained by the rules of conversation.

The rhetorical art of civil and friendly conversations was progressively transformed into the art of the falsely spontaneous and highly artificial speech of the courtesan, who had no power over

the reality which surrounded him, but who nevertheless simulated a form of mastery of one's self and of events through light and ironic conversation. In Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528) urbane conversation became the mask of courtesy, which conceals a reality of social violence. The courtesan did not take political decisions, and social rituals became his only playing field: nothing remained for him besides mimicking strength by verbal jokes deprived of any real efficacy.

Also, in the England of the Tudors, under Elizabeth I, the *elocutio* was the most important part of rhetoric because the charm holds the power over the will and the feeling, in order to persuade the public. In these respects, the most original treatise was Henry Peacham's *Garden of Eloquence* . . . (1577, revised in 1593). It is a detailed and normative dictionary of tropes and style figures that are considered as images of language that can arouse great emotions. However, following the conception of Erasmus's *Adagia* (1500), in which the Dutch humanist, an advocate of *brevitas*, held that the flowers of eloquence reflected the variety of the nature's garden (Jardine 1993), Peacham underlined in the second draft of his *Garden*, that the speaker must pay attention to the prudent use of the tropes, which must aim at the exact expression of thought and not be considered a simple decoration. So, rhetoric must teach the practice of tropes and the figures of style whose function is to make the speech effective, exciting, convincing (Mack 2002).

Yet, humanist rhetoric developed beyond the function of elocution to ensure adequate expression and the clear communication of thought. In this respect, rhetoric is linked to philology, as the art of correct restitution and the interpretation of ancient works. The diffusion of ancient texts led grammarians to work on fragmentary and sometimes corrupted textual traditions. To reestablish the authentic signification of a text from the past, it is necessary to know the context of production, its precise semantic, and the history of the language in which it was written. The attention for the eloquence of ancient works did not solely depend on an aesthetic preoccupation, but also

on the awareness of a precise lexicon in each historical linguistic context.

The understanding of an author's style therefore depended on the interpreter's rhetorical skills. With this in mind, Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) wrote the *Elegantiae linguae latinae* (1435–1444), where he attempted to restore elegance, namely, the semantic specificity of the Latin language, in its historical evolution. The examination of the lexical pertinence of elocution and its history is an important element for the philological method, as Valla shows in his denouncement of the fake *Donation of Constantine* (*De falso credita et emenita Constantini Donatione* 1440) and in his annotations on the *New Testament* (*Collatio Novi Testamenti*, 1449). Erasmus of Rotterdam developed further on the editing and interpretation of the *New Testament* as well as of numerous Church Fathers, linking together the competences of the historian philologist, and orator. In the *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum* (1512), Erasmus underlines the link between the variety of expression and the richness of things, the first help to closely grasp the composite nature of the others.

The rhetorical interrogation about elocution equally touches philosophical terminology. For Lorenzo Valla, in his *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie* (1439), literally the “re-tilling” of the dialectic and philosophy, the philosophers of medieval universities used an obscure jargon-filled language that separates them from an adequate understanding of the real: their style was rough and convoluted. The dispute between the philologist Ermolao Barbaro and the philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola about philosophical writing demonstrates how controversial was the appreciation of elocution: Pico, in his letter to Barbaro, *De generi dicendi philosophorum* (1485), reacts to his friend's criticism according to which Pico's writing owes much to rhetoric, even though Pico claims to write as a philosopher and not as an orator. Pico understood Barbaro's ironic jokes. Therefore, he defended the philosophical writing of his favorite medieval authors, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus: a sober writing centered on the precision of reasoning, devoid of flowery

rhetoric. Nevertheless, Pico recognized that even the most austere philosopher must follow the correct rules of Latinity if he wanted to express himself clearly and to make himself understood.

But the centrality of elocution is also underlined in reflections about the relationship between the poet and the orator, which was largely legitimized by Cicero, developed afterwards by the medieval poetics of *trobar clus*, poetry by enigma, whose ideal was taken from in part by Guido Cavalcanti, Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio. However, it was a matter of the initiated few, who needed to recognize the literary model, the innovation in imitation and the signification of allegories. The veil of poetry hides and equally unveils the secrets of nature, which the Platonists of Chartres read as being traces of divinity on Earth. Moreover, the humanist, poet and the orator fused together in the new figure of the grammarian/philologist who analyzed the literary processes of the ancient works with his rhetorical tools. In this respect, Pietro Bembo, in his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), considered that the literary models in the vernacular must be Petrarch and Boccaccio. However, he seemed to forget that these authors had been writers in both Latin and vernacular, privileging former. Lastly, the priority bestowed on elocution led to the loss of the argumentative nature of rhetoric itself, so that the questions of style became paramount as in Sperone Speroni's *Dialogo della retorica* (1542): here the preoccupation about figures of style prevails over proof, the epideictic genre over the judiciary and deliberative genre, the desire to delight over educative ambition.

Topical argumentation was equally taken back from theology. Of course, sacred rhetoric had been an important element of medieval culture. But humanism changed its signification. During the Middle Ages, the principle requirement had been legitimizing a persuasive but "humble" speech, capable of touching all publics, by imitating the persuasive speech of Christ. The Christian message had to be simple, accessible to everyone. Consequently, Christian rhetoric underlined the educative and persuasive function of the fable,

the allegory, the metaphor, of which the Bible gives numerous examples.

However, the fear of heresies led to wondering more about the psychological attitudes of the public that is brought to believe this or that thing. The *artes praedicandi* (the arts of predication) developed, between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, the art of persuasion, even of conversion, in studying public attitudes. Gregory the Great, in his *Regula pastoralis* (in the sixth century) designated 36 couples of opposed characters (woman-man; young-old; poor-rich; wise man-fool, patient-impatient, humble-superb, etc.) but certain manuals of predication arrive at defining 120 categories of audience. In this context, rhetoric was considered essentially the art of *mouere*, which arouses and the passions and takes assent that way, in influencing character.

But rhetoric during the Renaissance was developed as an important part of plausible argumentation and its proofs. Against the technical language of the dialectic in medieval universities, rhetoric seemed to be to an appropriate model of argumentation for the real life. Yet, rhetoric cannot deduce necessary conclusions but rather only plausible ones: it aims at persuading by arguments, but also through the capacity of influencing the audience's passions and through the orator's moral posture. However, Humanists went beyond taking back these elements from the medieval rhetorical tradition, but rather they carried out significant transformations in a narrow confrontation with the dialectic and the multiple attempts to decompose and to recompose their respective functions. After all, during the Middle Ages Cicero himself was considered to be a *magister* of the dialectic.

In this context, the first humanist rhetorical treatise in Italy was *Rhetoricorum libri V* (1433–1444) by the Byzantine George of Trebizond, who draws elements from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, from the Second Sophistic, above all from Hermogenes, and also from Martianus Capella (Monfasani 1976). His principal author however remained Cicero, from

whom he appreciates, on the one side, the speeches, such as the *Oratio pro Roscio*, the *Oratio pro Ligario*, *Pro Lege Manilia*; on the other hand, the theoretical texts on rhetoric, such as the *Partitiones oratoriae*; *De inventione*. From the theoretical point of view, George of Trebizond's reflection implies two principal aspects: the assertion of the link between the political life and rhetoric as well as the separation between rhetoric and philosophy. Thus, rhetoric is, for George of Trebizond, a civil science concerning any political and social problem. The goal of rhetoric is therefore to convince an audience on a political question. The exercise of judgment and of deliberation has priority, therefore the epideictic genre, which decides on what is honest and what is agreeable, is situated outside of the field of true judgment. The political nature of rhetoric led George of Trebizond to develop elocution, in to the rhetorical tradition, and to historians such as Sallust and Livy.

The disposition of speech emphasizes strategies of persuasion. George of Trebizond took over the ancient doctrine of *ductus* ("expression, organization, and outline") that is found in Martianus Capella, and in part in Quintilian and Hermogenes. This doctrine classified discourses according to the relationships between what the orator expressly says and what he means to signify. If he says what he thinks, then he uses *ductus simplex*, if he says what he thinks, but by others reasons than those which are exposed, then he uses *ductus subtilis*; if he says what he does not think, in order to obtain public consent more easily, he uses *ductus oblicus*. Such a classification clearly denotes the activity of negotiation of ambassadors and of politicians, who must not hesitate using misleading and warped arguments to be convincing.

Discourse must therefore be effective. Thus, George of Trebizond detaches rhetoric from all moral considerations. The orator must not be, against Cicero and Quintilian's conviction, a good man. In the same way, the orator is equally detached from philosophy. Philosophy is speculative, since it deals with universal questions, concerning the ontological structure of things

and their immutable truth, while rhetoric, as a civil art, must judge contingent situations, in order to make shrewd decisions. However, effective speeches must be credible and call for a logical training, so that they must follow rules in order to find the best compelling arguments.

One of the most important elements that George of Trebizond introduces, taking it from Cicero and Hermogenes, is the theory of the *status quaestionis* or *causae* (the state of investigation), which had been generally neglected during the Middle Ages. The *status* designate the position on which two adversaries agree to start confronting each other on a controversial subject. For Cicero, there are three *status quaestionis*, or points of view according to which a question must be treated: conjecture, which wonders if a thing is; definition, which wonders about the nature of a thing, and quality, which wonders about the specificity of the thing. For example, the accusation affirms: "X killed." Whereas the? replies: "no, X did not kill," from which arises the point of view that the controversy must be organized from, namely: "did X kill?" (which expresses a conjecture, wondering if the fact took place. We could wonder after if it is a matter of homicide (definition) or if it was an act of self-defense (quality). The *status* therefore allow delimiting precisely the controversy and finding the most pertinent arguments. George of Trebizond, however, does not limit himself to taking up the Ciceronian three-way divide, but it enlarges it by borrowing Hermogenes' list, which establishes thirteen positions, among which are antinomy, amphibology, and counteraccusation.

Lorenzo Valla in his *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie*, propose a different project. The reform of the art of argumentation must serve to resolve controversial questions in *negotia*, but its links with morality and philosophy are essential. Valla estimates that rhetoric teaches using an elocution which is appropriate to the treated subject because it is expressed in a precise, but ordinary, language, following the criteria of *elegantia* "elegance," namely of the lexical pertinence of a given

historical language. So, *consuetudo*, common sense, roots a community in its institutions, above all in its language and allows communicating with one another, in reciprocally understanding each other. If rhetoric ensures the communication of thoughts in discourse, dialectic deals with putting to the test the validity of remarks by taking back up the two principal functions of the Aristotelian dialectic: interrogation and refutation (Mack 1993).

However, the link between rhetoric and dialectic is carried out by the reprise, for Valla, of the topical argumentation. The *topoi/loci* or “commonplaces” are the schemata of intelligibility, which allow elaborating better arguments to justify a thesis that one would want to make accepted by others (Biard and Mariani 2009). The commonplaces tell us where to go looking for such arguments, for example, in the commonplaces of oppositions, likenesses, causes/effects, or of less and more (which would allow for example constructing an argument such as: “If even the knowledgeable do not know everything, then I have the right to not study”). Yet, in the Aristotelian tradition, dialectic as well as rhetoric use commonplaces, but they are not, most of the time, the same and do not follow the same division. However, Cicero, in his rewriting of Aristotle’s *Topics*, had presented an exhaustive list and a definition of commonplaces specific to juridical argumentation, which became the model of any rhetorical argumentation. The commonplaces therefore allow proposing better arguments for a thesis, and this is why they intervene in the genesis of arguments, called “invention.” But *inventio* is not a matter of finding arguments of a hypothesis by chance, but by recognizing indexed modalities that can be used in an inventive manner, appropriate to a contingent situation.

Lorenzo Valla drew upon the list of commonplaces that Quintilian had enlarged from Cicero. The advantage of argumentation from commonplaces is that it introduces the mediation of maxims (and not only of premises) that allows constructing plausible arguments from a deontic point of view. This signifies that the modalities of

validity are not the necessary, the possible, etc., but what is useful, what is credible, what is agreeable, because they are more appropriate to describe the requirements of everyday life. Moreover, the devices of argumentation are enlarged: Valla introduces induction as a comparison between resembling elements, deductions with a single premise, analogies, polysyllogisms, in short, ampliative inferences, the conclusions of which contain more information than the premises (which breaks one of Aristotle’s “golden rules”). Consequently, argumentation extends knowledge by new information, even though only credible and plausible.

Rudolf Agricola developed this approach in his *De Inventione dialectica* (1515). His work clearly shows how the new link established between dialectic and rhetoric gives rise to an original form of argumentation. For Agricola, dialectical invention is the art of arts since it can treat any controversial subject. It does not depend on any particular science and allows arguing in the most feasible and plausible manner on any subject. Agricola formalizes dialectical invention in a strict manner: it depends on commonplaces. The topic is not only the art of discussion, but the whole of logic. In this way, the topic changes nature. For Agricola, in effect, the “commonplaces” are the points of view that show all the aspects of this or that subject. They are therefore not only forms of predication, but also heuristic modalities, uncovering the primary and secondary qualities of all objects. Description takes on a crucial importance at the expense of definition: knowledge must consider not only the primary qualities (uncovered thanks to the “commonplaces” of genus, species, whole and parts, etc.) but also accidental or secondary qualities (uncovered thanks to the “commonplaces” of resemblance, consequences, etc.). Even more than for Valla, for Agricola inferences must be ampliative: they allow increasing knowledge of controversial things; so the analysis of resemblances and of differences is essential. Agricola underlines, for that matter, the importance of the most contingent commonplaces (borrowed from Quintilian), such as the commonplaces of the person, time, and space.

The argumentative function of the commonplaces was similarly determined by Pierre de La Ramée, (1569) a Huguenot philosopher, killed immediately after Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre (1572). In his *in tres primas liberales artes* de La Ramée considers that the laws of logic correspond to the laws of the intellect, of which the commonplaces express the divisions. In this respect, the commonplaces contain the categories. Invention and disposition are, as for Agricola, the two essential parts of topical argumentation. However, de La Ramée distinguishes the functions of dialectic and rhetoric: the former deals with style, and the latter deals with invention, true argumentation, and disposition. De La Ramée's key concern is however the method of argumentation which must proceed from more general and truer arguments to what is more particular, in knowing everything that is necessary (primary and secondary qualities) about a subject. The practice of diagrams serves this finality and contributes to rendering topical arguments spatial.

On the other hand, the introduction of the topic in the humanist theological field stresses the argumentative and nonpsychological nature of rhetorical effectiveness, all the while wanting to respond to the same requirements of communication and education. Philip Melancthon, the friend of Martin Luther, in his *Loci communes rerum theologicarum, seu, Hypotyposes theologicae* (1521) recognizes the synthetic and educative power in theology, such as in the notions of sin, law, and grace. Consequently, Melancthon replaced rhetorical/dialectical commonplaces by commonplaces drawn from the reading of Saint Paul, such as God, the One, the Trinity, man, sin, faith, hope, sacraments, etc. Manifestly, not only do commonplaces here have a new theological signification, but also a structural function. They no longer serve to establish a plausible conclusion but legitimize indisputable dogmatic truths. Consequently, they lose their schematic function and are rendered spatial in *capita* ("chapters") that summarize doctrinal teachings. In this respect, the Dominican theologian Melchor Cano, in his *De locis theologicis* (1563), recognizes the benefits of the

Protestant usage of the topic and wanted to propose a Catholic equivalent in time for the Council of Trent. However, the argumentative nature of the commonplaces is more developed than the educative function of Melancthon's commonplaces. For Cano, in effect, the commonplaces do not serve to summarize given truths, but to find the best arguments in order to refute or support a thesis. Cano's commonplaces replace, however, the human commonplaces by other ones: the Holy Scripture, oral transmission, the Church, the decisions of the Councils, the authority of the Church Fathers, the authors of scholasticism, above all Thomas Aquinas, natural reason, philosophy, and history. The tendency to render the commonplaces spatial is therefore equally found in Cano. The commonplaces make up in fact the "treasure" of sources of authority where one can find justification for his remarks.

Ultimately, the tendency of rhetoric and dialectic to render the commonplaces spatial progressively removed its discursive nature from argumentation and weakened the relationship between proof and credibility. The commonplaces become the common places in which a culture uncovers, as within a treasure, its most precious goods (religious convictions, rules of behavior, diverse sources of authority, prejudices).

Impact and Legacy

Yet, the influence of the topic, as an art of novel argumentation, at the crossroads of dialectic and rhetoric, comes together in Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* (1620). The attempt to reform Aristotelian logic, in proposing a new inductive method, is rooted in the humanist tradition. For Bacon, induction is not the analysis of the accumulation of cases, but rather the result of a topical procedure that uses a system of *tabulae* (registers) (absence, presence, likenesses, differences) that take up and transform topical schemata. In particular, Francis Bacon underlines the importance of the analysis of secondary qualities in order to correctly describe a phenomenon and increase knowledge.

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Commonplaces-Dialectic-Eloquence-Philology-Persuasion.

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Ribadeneyra, Pedro

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Abstract

Pedro de Ribadeneyra, S.J., was one of the earliest members of the newly founded Society of Jesus. Born in 1526 in Toledo, Ribadeneyra spent most of his youth without a father. When he was introduced to Ignatius of Loyola at the age of 13, Ribadeneyra found in the Spanish saint a kind of spiritual father. In 1540 Ribadeneyra joined the Society of Jesus and made a career teaching rhetoric and composing biographies of some of the earliest members of the Society of Jesus. One of his most famous biographical pieces is the *Flos Sanctorum*, which details the lives of many saints within the sanctoral cycle of the Church's liturgical seasons. In addition to being a hagiographer, Ribadeneyra also touched upon matters of political philosophy. His *Tratado de la religion y virtudes* argued against Machiavelli-inspired politics in support of a monarchy that rules according to true Christian virtues. Ribadeneyra died in 1611.

Biography

Pedro de Ribadeneyra, S.J. (Born 1 November 1526, Toledo–Died 22 September 1611, Toledo), was among the first members of the newly

founded Society of Jesus. He was born of a rather noble family in Toledo, but lost his father at a young age (Bilinkoff 1999, 180). Lacking a father, Ribadeneyra would eventually come to fill the void and experience the tumultuous dynamics involved in the father-son relationship with his spiritual father, Ignatius of Loyola. His education as a youth was mostly humanistic and transpired first in Toledo and then in Louvain and Padua (Schmutz 2014). When he was only 13 years old, Ribadeneyra's mother arranged for him to be a page of the Italian Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, which meant the boy's move to Rome in 1539. It was in Rome – and not long after his move there – that Ribadeneyra made the acquaintance of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. At this point, Ignatius was in the process of obtaining papal sanction for his new religious order, and, only 8 days before he received official approval, Ignatius inducted Ribadeneyra into the fledgling society on 18 September 1540 (Bilinkoff 1999, 181; Schmutz 2014). Made a Jesuit at the age of 13, Ribadeneyra would – with all the ups and downs, some more dramatic than others, that constitute life – remain a Jesuit for around 71 years until his death in 1611.

Ribadeneyra began his studies in Paris before moving to Louvain and eventually to Padua. His early formation proved to be fraught with various challenges. As Ribadeneyra was still a child when he joined the Society of Jesus, one is hardly surprised to learn that he experienced the same turmoil and growing pains that accompany anyone's passage into maturity. Growing up can be a difficult matter for anyone but the task rendered twice as difficult, if not more so, when one grows up in the regimented confines of a religious order. Ribadeneyra himself tells us that he was “restless, naughty and impetuous, free-spirited and spoiled” (Bilinkoff 1999, 190). His Jesuit brethren's opinion was no better, as he was regarded as a terror and “little devil” (ibid.). Evidently, the vexing demons of youth reached a critical point when he was 17. Studying in Louvain, Ribadeneyra was summoned back to Rome in

1543. Answering the summons, Ribadeneyra headed back to the eternal city but succumbed to exhaustion when crossing the Alps; his was an exhaustion that was fueled as much by mounting anxieties concerning his vocation as by the arduous journey itself (ibid.). Ignatius of Loyola himself intervened and, after leading the young Jesuit through the spiritual exercises, helped Ribadeneyra resolve his concerns regarding his vocation. From thence, according to Ribadeneyra, he had no reservations or doubts about his vocation again (ibid., 191).

Ribadeneyra continued with his formation and studies. In 1549 he traveled to Palermo to help establish a program in rhetoric and Latin at the new Jesuit College there. Three years later, he was called to Rome to help establish yet another Jesuit educational venture, namely the Roman College, where he taught rhetoric (Schmutz 2014). In 1555 Ribadeneyra was sent to Belgium and then in 1558 to England (ibid.). Between 1555 and 1574, Ribadeneyra held various posts within the Society of Jesus in various locations, for example, Rome, Paris, Brussels, and London. Finally, with his health weakening because of the fatigue of constant travel, in 1574 Ribadeneyra returned to Spain and began the work for which he is most famous, namely, hagiography (ibid.).

One of his most famous works is the *Flos Sanctorum*, a compendium of several saints' lives published in Madrid in 1599 (Bilinkoff 1999, 181). Though God is made known throughout all His creation, explains Ribadeneyra, His omnipotence, wisdom, providence, and goodness are especially known in the virtues and souls of the saints (prologue). The *Flos Sanctorum*, then, is organized into various saints' feast days and arranged by month through October. It begins with a discussion of the pedagogical character of Christ's life, passion, and death, and the importance of emulating him. Ribadeneyra details the various events of Christ's life found within scripture and in the early Church Fathers. After his lengthy introduction concerning the life of Christ, Ribadeneyra then turns to a discussion of the liturgical feasts

celebrating the life of Christ as well as the Godhead, namely, the Resurrection of the Lord (fols. 23–28), the ascension of the Lord (fols. 28–32), the descent of the Holy Spirit (fols. 32–39), the feast of the Most Holy Trinity (fols. 39–45), and, finally, the Feast of the Most Holy Sacrament (fols. 45–56). The life of Mary, the mother of God, then occupies the next several folios of Ribadeneyra's work.

The *Flos Sanctorum* together with a number of other biographical writings established Ribadeneyra as a biographer *par excellence*. His service is especially valuable concerning the histories of the earliest members of the Society of Jesus, many of whom he knew firsthand, having experienced the inception of the new religious order. Ribadeneyra's biography of Ignatius of Loyola, the *Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola*, is an especially important work since it provides not only an encomium of the saint's life but it also documents the founding of the order (Bilinkoff 1999, 182). Accordingly, with his attention to documentary evidence, his almost exclusive use of literary third person and his shying away from discussions of miracles brought about by the saint, Ribadeneyra's work is notably "modern" in character (ibid., 182–83).

Ribadeneyra's *Flos Sanctorum* and *Vida* are also accompanied by yet another biography, the *Vida de Estefanía Manrique de Castilla* (the story of a devout noblewoman) and his *Confessiones*, an autobiography of the Jesuit himself. Beyond his biographies, Ribadeneyra is also known for his history of the English schism, the *Historia del Cisma de Inglaterra* (1588). This work would cause difficulties between Ribadeneyra and his superiors, who had forbidden him to publish the volume. Though the volume clearly articulated the Catholic position in its opposition to the Church of England in its break from Rome, Ribadeneyra's superiors were concerned that the chronicle of heretical events would actually promote heretical ideas themselves. When he appealed the decision before an advisory committee, the decision to forbid publication of the work was reaffirmed. Accordingly, Ribadeneyra

appealed to Claudio Acquaviva, the general superior, who finally gave permission for the text to go to print (ibid., 192).

Finally, mention must be made of Ribadeneyra's political work, the *Tratado de la religion y virtudes* which appeared in Madrid in 1595. As the very (sub-)title of the text itself suggests (*contra lo que Nicolás Machiavelo... de este tiempo enseñan*), Ribadeneyra offered it in direct opposition to Machiavellian values that were in circulation following the aftermath of Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513). In this work, Ribadeneyra attempts to make clear the principles which must govern the Christian ruler. In fact, the Jesuit goes so far as to claim that it is impossible for any ruler to maintain his kingdom or state without fostering religion, which is at once as natural as it is obligatory (c. 1; fol. 1). Even Machiavelli acknowledges the role of religion in conserving the state, Ribadeneyra notes, but the difference between the Jesuit and Machiavellian politicians is that the latter utilize the religion of their subjects, "whether true or false" in preserving the state, whereas Ribadeneyra insists upon Catholicism as the only true religion. Thus the politicians only have the "appearance" of serving the religious needs of their subjects, but Ribadeneyra maintains that the true ruler should serve according to the truth of the Catholic faith (ibid.; fol. 4). In short, Ribadeneyra regards political rule as a vocation, such that the ruler is ultimately accountable to God.

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Riccoboni, Antonio

Born: 1541, Rovigo

Died: 27 July 1599, Padua

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Abstract

Antonio Riccoboni, who taught rhetoric at the University of Padua, was a humanist, historiographer (*Commentarius de historia liber*, 1568; *De gymnasio patavino*, 1598), and the author of translations and commentaries concerning Aristotle's *Ethics*, *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*; as regards this latter work in particular, he offered an original interpretation focusing on the importance of the *fabula*. He was also involved in philological debates (on the attribution of a *Consolatio* to Cicero and on the interpretation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*), wherein he was notable for his philological training and astute critical judgement.

Biography

Antonio Riccoboni, having studied initially at Rovigo, moved on to Venice and then to Padua, where he was a pupil of Paolo Manuzio, Marcantonio Mureto, and Carlo Sigonio; he was a member of the *Accademia degli Addormentati* (abolished in 1562) and of the *Accademia degli Animosi*, founded by the abbot, Ascanio Martinengo, whose members included, among others, Sperone Speroni, Bernardino Tomitano,

and Francesco Piccolomini. In February 1571, he obtained a doctorate in civil law from Padua University, followed by another one in canon law and, in the same year, he became a professor, a position he held until his death. He also worked with distinction as a public orator, evidence of which is found in two books containing 34 of his orations, published in Padua in 1591 and 1592; these include the three speeches Riccoboni made on the occasion of his academic induction and which focus on the liberal arts, *studia humanitatis* and rhetoric. In 1581, he was granted honorary citizenship of Padua and in 1583 the University employed him to draw up its Statutes. Only a small number of his letters remains, notable among which is a letter to Galileo Galilei (11th March of 1588).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition: Innovative and Original Aspects – Impact and Legacy

Riccoboni was noted for his deep interest in historiography. In 1568, he wrote *De historia commentarius*, in which he examined the purpose of history and its relationship with grammar, rhetoric, and poetics, while also devoting attention to the study of sources (the work also contains a selection, with commentary, of fragments from Latin historians). In 1570, he was appointed to revise – together with Andrea Nicolio – the statutes of Rovigo, a job that took 20 years to come to fruition. But in this area, the work that brought him most renown (and which was also his last) is *De Gymnasio Patavino* (1598), the first study of the history of Padua University, the structure of which – focusing on affairs relating to the *doctores clariores* – influenced most of the work of his successors.

Riccoboni should, however, be especially remembered for the intensity of his work on interpreting the writings of Aristotle, concerning which he produced translations as well as commentaries: in particular, he translated the first

book of *Nicomachean Ethics* (1577) and also the first book of *Rhetoric* (in the same year), the first complete translation of which he published in 1579, accompanied by a rich commentary and, as an appendix, by the translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, regarding which he also, in 1584, published a notable commentary; his commentary on the whole *Ethics* appeared in 1596 (Lines 2002, 517). Despite its debt to Lodovico Castelvetro's interpretation, the main novelty of this work lies in its original redefinition of the role of poetry, identified in the *fabula* as able to generate pleasure and, therefore, useful (Toffanin 1920, 136 ff.). Thereby Riccoboni released poetry from a position dependent on utilitarian interpretation, without however leading it towards pure hedonism.

He was also involved in two significant controversies, which throw light both on his philological acuity and on his capacity for independent judgment. The first, involving Carlo Sigonio, revolved around the attribution of a *Consolatio* to Cicero, advocated by Sigonio in an edition devoid of editor's notes or comments, published in 1583 (modern scholarship endorses Riccoboni's rejection of Cicero's authorship, believing the work to be a forgery by Sigonio – see McCuaig 1989: 307–326; Forsyth et al. 1999, 1–26). The second controversy involves the Bergamasque priest Nicolò Cologno, who in 1587 had published a pamphlet, *Q. Horatii Flacci methodus de arte poetica*. Cologno had affirmed that Horace's *Ars poetica* had a coherent internal structure, which in his opinion reflected the Aristotelian genre system (epic, tragedy, comedy, and the satyr play). Riccoboni took a contrary stance in his *dissensio de epistola Horatii ad Pisonem* (1591). Unlike the earlier case, in this debate the reasons for scientific dissent here seem to be entangled with personal ambition: in 1591 Cologno won a professorship of moral philosophy at the Padua *Studium*, previously held by Giason Denores, to which Riccoboni also aspired (Frischer 1996).

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Riccobono, Antonio

► [Riccoboni, Antonio](#)

Ricenus, Thrasybulus

► [Khunrath, Heinrich](#)

Rieschius

► [Reisch, Gregor](#)

Rio, Martin del

Born: Antwerp, May 17, 1551

Died: Leuven, October 19, 1608

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Abstract

Martin del Rio was a Spanish-Flemish Jesuit (1551–1608) who was renowned in his own day as one of the most learned men in Europe. He published several volumes of edited and annotated Roman authors, but his lasting fame rests upon a massive survey of magic, witchcraft, and allied subject matter which he published in three volumes in 1599–1600. It is remarkable for the extent of its inquiries and discussions, and the erudition supporting them,

and it became the fundamental textbook for theologians and lawyers in particular until the middle of the eighteenth century. Its influence on witchcraft prosecutions was thus immense.

Alternate Names

[Delrio, Martin](#); [Del Rio, Martin Antoine](#)

Biography

Between c.1560 and 1660 Europe underwent a terror that evil aspects of the spirit world had been or were about to be unleashed and that large numbers of human agents were in league with Satan to subvert and destroy people's daily life on earth and prospects of ultimate salvation. These agents were almost any workers of magic, witches especially, who voluntarily made a pact with the Devil to obtain powers during this life in return for their soul hereafter. To help protect society against this terror, and to thwart Satan's malignant designs, secular states, sometimes supported by the various Churches, set about removing Satan's human agents via criminal prosecution and subsequent execution of those found guilty. These widespread and genuinely felt fears were systematized and given intellectual coherence by a series of writers, both Catholic and Protestant, throughout the most intense period of prosecution, building upon a tradition of essays and treatises from the 1480s to 1490s when earlier rumblings had foreshadowed the century of prosecution to come. The most detailed and influential of these earlier works had been the *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Hammer of Women Who Practice Harmful Magic) by a German Dominican, Heinrich Kramer (also called "Institoris"). *Malleus*, divided into three Books, addressed three audiences, the first theologians, the second preachers, and the third secular and ecclesiastical judges. It thus covered a very broad ground and gave pertinent advice to those groups and professions most intimately concerned with the problem of magic and the solution to its perceived threat to society.

After Kramer, the most significant writer in this field was Martin del Rio, a Jesuit, born in Antwerp on May 17, 1551. He came of a noble Spanish family. His father Antonio was Castilian, his mother Eleonora Lopez, Aragonese, and via his mother Del Rio was related to the French essayist Montaigne who later expressed trenchant skepticism with regard to the validity of witchcraft. Antonio was in royal service in the Spanish Netherlands and destined his eldest son for a political career right from the start. Hence, Martin was afforded every opportunity to get a good education and early in life showed a gift for languages, acquiring Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and a working knowledge of Aramaic, along with fluency in Spanish (his native tongue), Flemish (since the family was living in that part of the Spanish Netherlands during his childhood), German, Italian, and French. Many of these he seems to have studied in Lierre, a town about 9 miles southeast of Antwerp, before moving to Paris in the mid-1560s where the appearance of a series of editions of Latin authors, published by Denis Lambin at this same period, may have encouraged him to embark on his own annotations of Solinus and Claudian which he published a few years later in 1572. But he cannot have stayed long in Paris because from there he moved to Douai where he heard lectures on jurisprudence, after which he went on to the University of Leuven where he studied mathematics under Johann Stadius (of whose trust in electional astrology he disapproved) and jurisprudence under Pieter Peek the Elder, receiving his bachelor's degree in civil law in 1570. After this he took to his travels again, for at some point during the academic year 1571–1572, he was back at the College de Clermont to hear a series of lectures on demons by the Jesuit, Juan de Maldonado.

Throughout these years, France in general, and Paris in particular, was in a ferment of religious hostility between Catholics and Protestants, a turmoil which culminated in a massacre of Protestants in Paris and elsewhere in August 1572. Maldonado himself took part in a missionary drive in Poitou for several months between winter 1569 and September 1570, where he witnessed a large success in eradicating heresy and so returned

to the capital filled with the combative enthusiasm which informed his 1571–1572 lectures. In these he described the link he saw between heresy, demons, and witchcraft with a fervor which inspired not only Del Rio but several other writers on the same subject matter. Heresy spawned witchcraft, he said, both being aspects of a single ghastly crime, and it was people's blind unwillingness to see and confront these spiritual dangers which opened the door to Satan. Magic of all kinds, superstitious actions, witches, witches' meetings known as "Sabbats," the murder of infants for their fat, contracts with demons, and a witch's flight through the air, all these, denied by heretics, were real and thus offered an urgent challenge to faithful Christians. Satan encouraged these divagations from the faith, participated in them, and profited by them. Hence, their eradication would diminish his worldly influence and combat effectively his assaults on human souls. Del Rio absorbed, remembered, and reproduced these sentiments and theories when, nearly 30 years later, he came to write his own substantial treatise on the subject. So too did Pierre de Lancre in treatises published 1612, 1622, and 1627, the fruit not only of his own experience as a judge in witchcraft trials in 1608–1609 but also of the same formative educational experiences as Del Rio at the College de Clermont under Maldonado's tutelage.

By 1573 Del Rio was in Spain, studying for his doctorate at the University of Salamanca, Maldonado's alma mater, two of whose most noteworthy alumni were St Ignatius Loyola and St John of the Cross. There Del Rio continued to pursue civil law and in 1574 was awarded his degree for a thesis on commercial transactions, an appendix to which included notes and commentaries on aspects of Greek and Roman law. Returning thereafter to his home province of Brabant, he was made a member of the province's supreme court by King Philip II and, while there, produced a weighty and highly regarded tome on civil law. This was a period of turbulence in the region as King Philip's half brother, John of Austria, met resistance as he tried to assert Spanish control. Del Rio's family, prominent as it was, did not escape violence, his uncle Luis being arrested

during a full session of the senate in Brussels in 1576 and his father in 1577. Nor did Del Rio himself remain untouched, for he lost his extensive library to fire when rebel soldiers pillaged his father's house. John of Austria, the family's patron, died in 1578 and Del Rio commemorated his efforts to restore order in a book on the rebellion which he published under the pseudonym Rolando Natin Miriteo, an anagram of his own name.

Deeply affected by events during these latter years, Del Rio went back to Spain where, after a period of depression, he recovered his spirits and turned to religion in what may seem to have been an unexpected conversion but which was actually a change of direction fuelled by a lifetime's devout adherence to the faith, now sharpened by his experiences in the Spanish Netherlands which had lit in him an ardor to combat heresy. There were parallels with St Ignatius of Loyola. Both men were nobly born; both had tasted war and suffered because of it; and both had a period of reflection which resulted in a commitment to the religious life, St Ignatius at the age of 30 and Del Rio at 29. It is therefore not altogether surprising that in 1580, Del Rio decided to enter the Society of Jesus, beginning his novitiate in Valladolid on May 9 that year. After an initial 3 years there, he was sent back to the Spanish Netherlands by his superiors. His health, however, broke down on the way, and it was while he was staying in the Jesuit house in Bordeaux that he learned his father had died in Lisbon. From Bordeaux he went to Calais where he saw roses blooming in winter, a sign, it was said, of plague to come, and from Calais he passed to Leuven and Mainz where he continued his theological studies.

By 1589 he was back in Douai, teaching philosophy, although he did not stay there long, for in 1591 he found himself removed to Liege where he taught moral philosophy. Between 1595 and 1597 he seems to have commuted between Leuven and Spain, a series of journeys which could not have been easy and on one occasion at least in 1597 nearly cost him his life when his ship was caught in a severe storm off Cap Gris Nez. It was during 1597 in Leuven that he gave a series of lectures on superstition and the evil arts, clearly the result of

his accumulating information on the subject either while preparing to write *Disquisitiones Magicae* or actively engaged on them. From 1597 to 1600 he was in Graz, teaching at the new university which had opened in 1586, but by 1600 his health needed the warmer climate of Spain and so he returned to Salamanca. (It is noteworthy that on the title page of *Disquisitiones*, he describes himself as "formerly of the University of Graz, now Public Professor of Holy Scripture at the University of Salamanca.") A final journey in 1608, however, undermined him completely. On August 18 he left Pintia in the province of Valladolid but was unable to reach Brussels until October 18, and even then his difficulties were not over, for he was told to make his way to Leuven at once. The two cities are only about 16 miles apart and so Del Rio was able to arrive that same evening. But his constitution had been so weakened by fatigue and illness that the next day he needed to see a doctor. The physician gave him up for lost, so Del Rio made his confession, received the sacrament, and died quietly at "the seventh hour," about 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

The 1590s and 1600s saw Del Rio at his most productive. Publications from this time include a collection of sermons under the title *Marian Blossoms* (1597); the work for which he is most famous, *Disquisitiones Magicae* (Investigations Into Magic) (1599–1600); commentaries on the poems of St Aldhelm (1601) and the Biblical Song of Songs (1604); *A Work about Mary* (1607); a defense of Dionysius the Areopagite against Scaliger's criticism (1607); a commentary on Genesis (1608) and on Lamentations (1608); and *A Lighthouse of Holy Wisdom* (1608). A review of these makes it clear that *Disquisitiones* stands out from the rest since it is neither a work of religious devotion nor an essay in literary and textual criticism, although it actually partakes of both via its ultimate intention and Del Rio's working methods. The question therefore arises, why did Del Rio write it? If we accept what Del Rio's commemorative biographer, fellow Jesuit Heribert Rosweyde, says, Del Rio was writing and revising it while he was in Leuven between 1595 and 1598. This is just when the Counter-Reformation, with Jesuits at its

spearhead, was consolidating its attack on the Calvinism which had spread rapidly throughout the region since 1566. Del Rio's superiors had clearly seen him as part of the counter to religious upheaval, and *Disquisitiones* should thus be seen, at least in part, as a polemical work intended to provide clarification of the links, indeed near-identity, between magical activities and the spread of heresy which gave rise to an aggressive warfare, stimulated and directed by Satan, which was being waged by witches and heretics alike against the Catholic Church. Fears that the period's religious wars were heralding the End of Days and final judgement served only to exacerbate people's anxiety and intensify their fears of Satan and his demonic and human agents. *Disquisitiones* is thus a call to arms, a warning, an explanation, and a remedy, all in one, set out in the clearest and most prolific detail, leaving no aspect of its subject matter undiscussed.

The scope of the work, then, is immense. It is divided into three volumes, each consisting of three "Books," and covers every aspect of magical belief and practice common in Western Europe at the time, as well as other subjects such as alchemy, astrology, and divination which bordered upon or overlapped that general corpus. Book 1 goes straight to the root of the problem as Del Rio sees it, namely, superstition in all its forms. This he sees as a perversion of religion which takes, deliberately or not, the form of idolatry, either overt or implicit. Anything other than direct, intentional worship of God runs the danger, at best, of unintentionally slipping into the worship of something or someone else. At worst it does so deliberately. Hence, with the spiritual dangers inherent in every superstitious practice and if one bears in mind the presence of Christian words, symbols, names, and prayers in much of the popular magic of the day, Del Rio's point becomes especially clear. He then proceeds to magic itself which he divides into three types: natural, artificial, and demonic. The first is derived from knowledge of the natural world and thus includes astrology and alchemy. Whether practice of natural magic is licit or illicit depends on whether it is used for natural or preternatural purposes, and

its principal danger lies in the ease with which it may tip into demonic magic, the latter depending, as its name suggests, on overt or tacit assistance from evil spirits. Artificial magic rests upon human ingenuity to produce wonderful effects and so ranges from conjuring tricks and illusions to the use of incantations, music, written characters, and so on with the intention of causing magical effects. It thus overlaps with natural magic and superstition.

Book 2 is devoted to the kind of magic which depends on the assistance and cooperation of evil spirits. At the root of this magic is a pact, explicitly or implicitly made between a human being and an evil spirit. In return for his or her soul, the human is granted the use of powers beyond those naturally possessed by humanity, and while magical practitioners cannot stray beyond the laws of nature with these powers, they can accomplish a great deal with the help of their demon – for demons can move at more than human speed and their superior knowledge of the inner workings and potentialities of nature enables them to do things which either appear to be astonishing or to be flat contrary to anything nature normally intends. Del Rio gives many examples, such as transvection of witches through the air, appearances of the dead deliberately invited, and bilocation, and discusses not only how far demonic powers can go but also to what extent their marvels are real or merely illusions introduced into humans' heads to deceive and entrap them. Other questions commonly asked at the time are also considered. Can witches have sexual intercourse with demons and so give birth to children? Can they really change shape? Do they have any genuine control over the demons they claim to command? Del Rio's conclusions vary. He accepts the reality of the flight to the Sabbath and of the Sabbath itself but has reservations about the other behaviors popularly attributed to witches and ends by asserting that evil spirits cannot be coerced by human beings, the exception to this being priests who perform exorcisms sanctioned by the Church.

Book 3 follows the lead of Book 2 and concentrates on harmful magic and superstitious practices. Del Rio defines what is meant by "harmful

magic" (*maleficium*) and then discusses the range of behaviors and experiences caused by this type. They include not only obvious acts of hostility such as causing illness, abusing and killing children, and inflicting impotence but also inflicting demonic possession and manipulating people's emotions via love magic, this last coming under attack not only for its interference with people's feelings but also for its frequent resort to the improper use of ecclesiastical objects such as holy water, candles, incense, priestly vestments, and, much more seriously, prayers and the Mass itself. God allows Satan to tempt individuals into these practices partly because the temptation creates opportunities for people to strengthen and increase their virtue and partly because yielding to these temptations leads to punishment for the underlying proclivity to sin which made someone vulnerable to temptation in the first place. How easy it can be to slip into these kinds of sin is illustrated by an extensive discussion of popular superstitious practices. Del Rio reviews the widespread use of charms and divinatory techniques and weighs their validity or invalidity, ending with an exhortation to his readers to eschew their use completely.

Book 4 picks up the theme of divination and prophecy, asking what is the difference between divination and prophecy and how one is to tell the difference between a genuine message from God and one relayed by the Devil. Del Rio says they have certain aspects in common, but that divination reveals hidden things from the past as well as from the future and does so as the result of a tacit or explicit pact between the human agent and an evil spirit. Divination thus depends entirely upon traffic with evil and is limited in its apparent accuracy, partly because a demon may deceive and partly because even a demon's knowledge is limited. Divinatory practices, of which Del Rio provides many examples, are shot through with blasphemy and idolatry and those used to test a person's guilt or innocence, such as swimming a witch, are to be avoided as both insufficient and blasphemous in as much as on the one hand they are unreliable and on the other they are forbidden by the Church because one does not tempt God by asking Him to perform a miracle in dubious

circumstances and for somewhat dubious purposes. This discussion of popular purgations brings Del Rio to Book 5 and the specific case of witchcraft and how it should be dealt with by courts of law. He is detailed and specific. What kind of a crime is witchcraft, which courts are competent to deal with it, what is necessary to have a charge of witchcraft brought into court, who may give evidence and what value can be placed on that evidence, and under what circumstances torture may be used are only some of the major points he deals with. He also takes into account other considerations: the possibility that accusers or witnesses could be lying, the difficulties in establishing whether an accused or a witness has a good or bad reputation, and the weight which should be given to this point – whether the charges involve heresy or not. Are clerics who are accused and convicted of practicing magic to be punished the same way as lay folk? Should witches who have not killed anyone be executed? Should old age in the accused be taken into account when punishment is in order? In the case of those sentenced to death, can they be given the Holy Sacrament? What should happen to their corpses? What of those who die in prison before or after sentence has been pronounced? What happens in the event of an acquittal? On one point, however, Del Rio is decided. The crimes alleged of witches are not fantasies, so those who raise that possibility are mistaken.

Finally in Book 6 Del Rio turns to the duties of priests faced by the practice of magic by their parishioners. Confession, both sacramental and legal, and then the questions, first of whether it is permissible for someone to use counter-magic to alleviate or destroy the effects of hostile magic directed against her or him and second whether one may ask a magical practitioner to remove or destroy an object one suspects may be causing effects harmful to oneself or others or whether one may remove the object oneself, receive detailed consideration. The answer to the former is no, and to the latter, yes. But the Church herself provides a wide variety of ways with which to counteract and do away with the effects of hostile magic, and it is to these one should properly turn in the event of need.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Thus Del Rio ends his wide-ranging, definitive account of what magic is, what part it plays in human society, and how it may be dealt with legitimately and effectively. Del Rio spends a great deal of his time and effort upon “superstition” and what he calls “vain observance,” that is, the performance of pseudo-religious actions which have no value at all. In this he is at one with his contemporaries, both Catholic and Protestant, for whom the cluttering of religious worship with verbal and operative excrescences was one of the main features of their contemporaries’ behavior which needed vigorous reform. His topics were not new to him, of course. St Thomas Aquinas, for example, had dealt with this topic earlier, defining superstition as either service to God in a manner which was in some way incorrect or inappropriate or as service to some false deity expressed in ways which should have been directed to God alone, and Del Rio repeats this formulation, many of the examples he provides illustrating one or other of these definitions. Kramer’s *Malleus Maleficarum*, too, had devoted one of its Books to the technicalities of the court room, although Del Rio goes into more detail, his discussion being informed partly by his many years’ experience as a jurisconsult in a variety of different nationalities’ administrations and partly by his extensive knowledge of the relevant legal literature. But his panoramic approach to the subject is ultimately his own and the skill of his treatment unmatched by anyone else. *Disquisitiones* is dedicated to Prince-Archbishop Ernst of Bavaria, an ardent supporter of the Counter-Reformation, who in the 1580s held several bishoprics in the northwest of Germany and was active in combatting the spread of Calvinism in the region. Hence, almost certainly, his attraction for Del Rio. The first edition (1599–1600) is prefaced with two poems, one (a somewhat perfunctory puff) by Justus Lipsius, recognized in Europe as an important philologist and historian and a personal friend of Del Rio, the two probably having met first at Leuven, and the other (a pedestrian attempt at humor) by Heribert Rosweyde. The manuscript of *Disquisitiones* must have been completed early in 1598 because

the first two Books received the official approval of Del Rio’s Jesuit superiors on July 6 1598, and this was followed by the censor’s approval on February 8, 1599. Del Rio’s own dedicatory epistle is dated to the same month, and publication of that first volume quickly followed. 1599 saw the necessary approvals granted to the four remaining Books which were published in two more volumes in 1600, all three volumes coming from the press of Gerard Rivius in Leuven.

Del Rio’s preliminary reading for this major work is impressive, even by the standards of the scholarship of the time. Apart from references to or quotations from many classical authors, Fathers of the Church such as St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas, and Medieval theologians and natural philosophers such as Thomas of Cantimpre, Del Rio made extensive use of contemporary writers who dealt in some way with magic, and a notably large number of physicians whose views on witchcraft and its allied phenomena were of increasing importance to theological discussion of the subject. Andrea Cesalpino, Giovanni Codronchi, Jean Fernel, Giovanni Mercuriale, and Adolf Scribonius, for example, all contributed to the formation and formulation of Del Rio’s ideas, even if, as in the case of Scribonius, he disagreed with them. So it is noticeable that when he refers to magic and witchcraft in his dedicatory epistle, he calls them a disease (*pestis*) – “I have seen it, been troubled by it, and, with many people’s approval, have tried to make a medicine for this illness.” Not that this medical terminology was a clichéd metaphor. Rather, Del Rio meant it as an actual diagnosis. He did not, however, see witchcraft as a product of mental disorder as we might be tempted to understand it, and he rejected any hint of this from his reading, *De praestigiis daemonum* of the Lutheran physician Johann Wier, for example. Rather, he followed where others had gone before: Giovanni d’Anania, a Calabrian theologian, who maintained that demons can and do cause human illness, and Heinrich Kramer in *Malleus Maleficarum*, who had pointed to physical infirmities of all kinds – skin disease, blindness, sharp pains, bodily contortions – which demons, with God’s permission, had both wish and power to inflict. Disease thus served as a metaphor for the

corruption of a person's soul and as an actual description of its effect upon the body caused by both heedless and deliberate contact with and use of practices which could and did allow demonic access to that soul. In both senses, then, disease provided an illustration of how spirit entities could and did affect the physical world in deleterious ways.

Another group of authors consulted by Del Rio was, not unsurprisingly, given his own past history and the nature of the subject, writers on the theory and application of the law, both canon and secular. Del Rio's acquaintance with their books appears to have been extensive. They include discussions of the law in general, such as those by Claro, Bossi, Farinacci, Menochio, and Grammatico and those which dealt specifically with the particular problem of witches. Here many of the writers in question were known to have had personal experience of witch trials – Paolo Grillando, Nicolas Remy, Jean Bodin, and Johann Godelman are among the best known names. Some, such as Andreas Alciati and Gianfrancesco Ponzinibio, had expressed reservations about aspects of witch behavior, a witch's flight to the Sabbat and the reality of the Sabbat itself, for example. Del Rio clearly owes much to these jurisconsults, whether he builds on their propositions, such as Grillando's careful distinctions between various kinds of proof, or takes a different view, as when he disagrees with Farinacci about the extent to which a judge may vary punishments laid down by law. He also makes frequent use of works by fellow Jesuits. Juan de Maldonado's lectures on evil spirits had stayed with him, presumably in the form of notes as well as memory, since the early 1570s, but Peter Binsfeld's treatise on the confessions of male workers of harmful magic and witches was more recent (1589), as was Benito Pereira's *Adversus Fallaces et Superstitiosas Artes* (Against Deceptive and Superstitious Practices) (1591), both of which actually endorsed certain aspects of magic while casting doubts on others. Pereira, for example, distinguished between natural and demonic magic, and Binsfeld was dubious about the so-called Devil's mark and witches' ability to change their own shape. Reports from Jesuit missionaries also gave Del

Rio invaluable illustrative and confirmatory material from remote parts of the world – Luis Froes from the Indies and Japan in 1595 brought him right up to date – while historians such as Felix Haemmerlin, Olaus Magnus, and Nicholas Sanders furnished more.

Had Del Rio actually read all these sources? Scholars often tended to reproduce the material they found quoted by others, thereby providing a ready-made set of references for their literary successors, but even if one takes this into account, it is clear that Del Rio's use of his sources was carefully tailored to the development of his themes and not merely reproduced, relevant or not, from an earlier work. He is also frequently careful to give exact references, thus letting the reader know exactly where to turn so that quotations or references can be checked and seen in context. Caveats apart, therefore, his reputation for extensive learning therefore seems in large measure to be justified. But Del Rio did not rely entirely upon secondary written sources for his discussions, and every so often one finds a brief reference to or short anecdote taken from his own experience, as well as material derived from conversations with others. Thus, he remembers meeting a boy in Madrid in 1575, who seems to have been acting as a medium for a group of treasure seekers; he tells us of his discussions with Jean van Helmont on Kabbalah in 1594 and of his hearing, from one of the judges in the case, the details of the notorious trial of Jean del Vaulx in 1597, a monk who had been accused of practicing diabolical witchcraft in the Abbey of Stavelot and willingly poured out confessions of his magical activities. The enormous amount of disparate material which went into making *Disquisitiones* raises the questions of Del Rio's working methods. Without a modern card-index system, putting that material into comprehensible and useable order must have presented a challenge. One is reminded of Pliny the Elder who single-handedly wrote an encyclopedia of the natural world in the first century AD. He certainly had notebooks of some kind and arranged his references and quotations therein in such a way that he could draw upon them with relative ease when writing each book of his magnum opus. Presumably Del Rio had some similar system, for *Disquisitiones* is not

a rambling or vagrant work, but one which is under the tight control of its author, and therefore, its readers find it clear and easy to follow.

The structure of *Disquisitiones* and the arrangement of its material thus bear marks of an individual approach rather than any working to a formula. Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum*, of course, could have provided a major pattern for any subsequent writer on witchcraft and magic, such as Del Rio, to follow. It is divided into three parts, the first addressed to theologians, the second to preachers, and the third to judges. But for the most part, it deals with witchcraft and witches, so its range is considerably less than that of *Disquisitiones*, although its acceptance of the reality of witchcraft as a threat to the spiritual welfare of humanity, its alliance of witchcraft with heresy, and its provision of detailed consideration of the legal means of eradicating magical practitioners are, in general terms, similar to Del Rio's later views. Del Rio, however, is a good deal more subtle than Kramer, partly because he was more learned and partly because the spacious reading which contributed to his scholarship assisted him to make more nuanced judgements of the multifarious problems he was discussing. *Malleus* thus offered Del Rio an entry into the subject, if he needed one, and a large amount of illustrative material which he certainly used. But he did not use Kramer's work as a blueprint and structured his panoramic view of magic and allied subjects along different lines. *Malleus* was not a manual in itself, but rather three extensive essays on witchcraft addressed to three allied but separate groups of officials. *Disquisitiones* is arranged according to topic rather than intended audience and its final addresses (Books 5 and 6) to judges and confessors segue naturally from Del Rio's previous wide-ranging, theologically based surveys of magic as a whole, to form a logical coda to what was clearly conceived as a single work of definition and disputation.

Impact and Legacy

Del Rio's book arrived just at a point where prosecution of witches in Europe, and in parts of

Germany in particular, had almost reached its height and, as was perhaps inevitable, was beginning to produce a reaction. Learned debate centered upon the University of Ingolstadt which in 1590 had issued an official opinion on the best way to suppress witchcraft while avoiding any possible errors in so doing. Ten years later, in April 1601, the university was invited to consider the question again, and this time the debate lasted for more than 3 years, ranged more widely, and took opinions from a variety of institutions and individuals, including the universities of Dillingen (largely a Jesuit institution), Freiburg, Padua, and Bologna, and prosecuting territories such as Lorraine, Mainz, Trier, Köln, and Baden. Del Rio, as might be expected now that he had become the latest and most impressive published commentator on the subject, and Nicolas Remy whose personal experience as a judge in witchcraft cases was extensive were also asked to contribute, and in subsequent editions of *Disquisitiones*, Del Rio included an account of the arguments he and others had offered. These renewed academic efforts to reconcile varying opinions from both legal and theological standpoints had an immediate and a long-term impact, for from them developed an increasingly strong opposition to the wholesale prosecution of witches, although Del Rio's views remained stern, rooted in his firm conviction that witchcraft was a real phenomenon and therefore to be resisted with all the force at the state's and Church's command.

The later editions of his work give an indication of its popularity and influence. There were 25 of them altogether, 4 of which, apart from the original, he was able to revise and expand himself. The rest appeared at frequent intervals throughout the seventeenth century, the last coming from Köln in 1755. It largely replaced Kramer's *Malleus* as the standard work of reference. Indeed, as early as 1600 it seems to have lain on the desk of the judges who were conducting a witch trial in Bavaria. Benedict Carpzov whose *Practica Nova Rerum Criminalium* (1635) became the standard work of criminal law throughout much of the Holy Roman Empire made use of Del Rio's arguments in relation to the prosecution and punishment of

witches; Calvinist Scotland deferred to him in 1672 and 1678 as a prime source of information, while in a major witch trial in Edinburgh in 1697, the defense advocate employed him to support his pleas for the defendant; and Johann Heinrich Zedler's 68 volume encyclopedia (1731–1754) still regarded him as a weighty figure in the field of occult studies. Nevertheless, as witchcraft trials gradually disappeared from Europe, so too did the need for and interest in their proponents and opponents, and so Del Rio's work and reputation faded, too. *Disquisitiones* has remained obscure ever since, while Kramer's *Malleus* has been revived and has acquired fresh notoriety. This is partly because of the comparative lengths of the two works. *Malleus* is no longer than the average monograph, whereas *Disquisitiones*, because of its much broader canvas, presents a more unwieldy challenge to publishers. *Malleus* is also a much more sensational work. Its many anecdotes and forthright hostility to witches lend themselves to misapprehension as well as enlightenment about this aspect of the past, and the longevity of the Montagu Summers English translation has allowed Kramer's work a second life, even if that life has been fraught with dislike and disapprobation. Locked in Latin in an increasingly Latinless age, Del Rio's much better, much more subtle, much better argued, and much more engaging opus has thus largely escaped the admiration and opprobrium which, it may be thought, are both its due.

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Robortello, Francesco

Born: 9 September 1516

Died: 18 March 1567

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Abstract

Francesco Robortello lectured at the universities of Lucca, Pisa, Venice, Padua, and Bologna from 1543 until his death in 1567. With a focus on language disciplines, Robortello sought to restore a methodical and organic understanding of Aristotle's philosophy, in reaction to what he perceived as a fragmented and restricted understanding of it that prevailed among his contemporaries. Robortello availed himself of diagrams and visual aids in order to render visible the relations among different parts of a discipline. Crucial among his contributions was his revision of the theory of the topics of argumentation. In 1548, he submitted

to the press the first commentary ever printed on Aristotle's *Poetics*, which immediately became a point of departure for subsequent scholarship on the topic. In several works, Robortello argued for a reconceptualization of rhetoric as a tool for making ethics and politics comprehensible to popular audiences. Robortello attributed to history a similar function in the community. Also, anticipating future developments in the discipline, he viewed history not only as a mere account of facts, but also as the explanation of ancient customs, laws, and institutions, drawn from documents and public records. Robortello authored the first treatise ever printed on textual criticism, partially siding with the ideas of Piero Vettori, and actively contributed to classical scholarship through the edition of ancient Greek texts, such as Aeschylus' tragedies, the military treatise by Aelianus Tacticus, and the tract *On the sublime* by Pseudo-Longinus.

Biography

Born in Udine, Italy, in 1516, Robortello first studied under Gregorio Amaseo and then moved to Bologna to pursue his education with the son of Gregorio, Romolo Amaseo (Vanek 2007). Starting 1538, he lectured in Lucca, producing a volume of *Variarum locorum annotationes* on Greek and Latin authors that he published in 1543. Robortello's first contribution was well-received and was reprinted in Paris the following year. Thanks to his growing reputation and his contacts with part of Florence's intellectual elite, in 1543, Robortello was appointed to the chair of Humanities at the newly reopened studio of Pisa, following the renunciation of Giambattista Adriani (Blocker 2004).

In 1548, Robortello published a miscellanea of rhetorical, historiographical, and antiquarian contributions, and supervised the reprint of his 1543 *Annotationes*, augmented by a second book. He also issued the first ever printed commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, a career-making work that originated in his lectures of 1545 at Pisa and underwent a second edition in 1555 (Sgarbi

2019). Robortello's focus on the *Poetics* materialized at a time in which Aristotle's treatise had become the object of lectures by Bartolomeo Lombardi in Padua (1541) and Vincenzo Maggi in Ferrara (starting 1543), and had attracted some attention from Piero Vettori, who, apparently, did not appreciate Robortello's efforts (Bionda 2014). In 1549, and against the competition of Bernardino Partenio and Francesco Luisini, Robortello obtained the chair of Latin and Greek at the Scuola di San Marco in Venice (Cappello 2009). A clash with Giovanni Battista Egnazio, the previous occupant of the chair (Venier 1998), was followed by an open conflict with Maggi, whose 1550 commentary on the *Poetics* attacked with virulence many of Robortello's interpretations.

In 1550, Robortello delivered a lecture before the senate of Venice, proposing a republican, anti-tyrannical reading of Aristotle's *Politics* (Blocker 2004). Beginning in 1552, he occupied the prestigious morning chair of Latin Rhetoric at the University of Padua, vacated by Lazzaro Bonamico (Grendler 2002). That year, Robortello published an edition of the tragedies of Aeschylus with Greek *scholia*. He may have been the first to realize that the play that the manuscript *Laurentinus* 32.9 introduced as Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* was in fact two different plays. Robortello saw that a large lacuna at the end of the *Agamemnon* concealed the beginning of a different play, Aeschylus' *Coephorai* (Carlini 1989). That same year, Robortello issued the *editio princeps* of Aelianus Tacticus' *On Tactical Arrays of the Greeks* accompanied by his own Latin translation, as well as a set of engraved diagrams that revolutionized the scholarly tradition on that work (Hale 1988). The *editio princeps* of Pseudo-Longinus' *On the sublime* followed in 1554.

Robortello's tenure in Padua coincided with the first stage of what later would become a harsh controversy with Carlo Sigonio. Despite his criticism of Robortello's treatise *De nominibus Romanorum* (1548), Robortello still endorsed Sigonio to be his replacement in Venice once that he left for Padua in 1552. However, tension eventually escalated, with the two scholars

accusing each other of incompetence in matters of antiquarian studies and textual criticism (McCuaig 1989; Vanek 2007). Sigonio was, with Manuzio, Maggi, and Henri Estienne, one of the targets in Robortello's *De arte sive ratione corrigendi antiquorum libros* (1557), the first ever published treatise on textual criticism.

In his *De convenientia Supputationis Livianae annorum cum marmoribus Romae quae in Capitolio sunt*, Robortello condemned Sigonio's opinion that Livy's chronology was at odds with the lists of magistrates contained in the *Fasti Capitolini*, unearthed in Rome in 1546. The bitterness of the conflict, in which posterity has proved Sigonio right, might have prompted Robortello to accept the prestigious chair of Humanities at the University of Bologna, vacated by Sebastiano Corradi, himself the successor of Romolo Amaseo (Grendler 2002). In 1559, Robortello published the funeral oration for Charles V that he had delivered at the College of Saint Clement, as well as a treatise *De vita et victu populi romani*, originally intended as an index for a work on the life and the institutions of ancient Rome that never materialized. In 1560, Robortello issued a miscellaneous volume of rhetorical works entitled *De artificio dicendi*, published again posthumously in 1567.

In 1561, the senate of Venice called Robortello back to Padua, where in addition to rhetoric and poetry, he also taught moral philosophy (Grendler 2002). Sigonio was teaching there too, and Robortello's return reignited the fight. The senate of Venice allowed Sigonio to lecture in the morning in concurrence with Robortello, rather than demoting him to the less prestigious afternoon session. It was then that they started hanging posters to discredit one another. A series of disputations posted by Sigonio and published in a volume of *Disputationes Patavinae* appeared in the spring of 1562. They found response within a few months in Robortello's *Ephemerides Patavinae*, which, in turn, was met by Sigonio's reply. The climate was hostile. Cardinal Girolamo Seripando was unable to reconcile them, and Sigonio and his followers ended up covering the walls of the university with poems against Robortello. The dispute ended abruptly in 1563, when Sigonio

secured a position in Bologna (McCuaig 1989). Focused on reconstructing the system of ancient disciplines of language and reasoning, Robortello saw Sigonio's understanding of antiquarianism as a mere accumulation of random facts about the past. The two scholars looked at antiquity with entirely different aims, as was comically summarized in a poem that someone, probably a follower of Robortello, wrote on one of the extant copies of his *De arte sive ratione corrigendi*. It depicts Sigonio becoming pale, sweating, and crying as he sees Cicero's *Topica* and asks: *What book is this?* (Venier 2012).

Robortello remained in Padua for the remainder of his years. Starting 1565, a group of scholars met at his place to study Greek. That same year, Flaminio Filonardi contacted him on behalf of Cardinal Alfonso Caraffa to commission from him a biography, which he never wrote, intended to restore the damaged reputation of the late Pope Paul IV (De Maio and Romeo 1965). Robortello died of pleurisy in 1567.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Robortello declared that it was his aim to find a definite order and method (*ars et ratio*) that would render visible, for each of the disciplines of language, the relation among the parts, and between the parts and the whole. He mobilized visual aids (with shapes ranging from traditional tree diagrams, such as those he used to teach rhetoric in Venice in 1549, to a panpipe) to help his readers visualize synoptically the network of connections that made up a field of knowledge. As in a map, students would locate each question under a heading (Bolzoni 1995). The eye was expected to discern in the diagram the paths used by the mind to produce knowledge (Garavelli 2014; Sgarbi 2016, 2019).

Robortello's focus on method pursued to restore Aristotle's philosophy as a system, reacting to what he saw as the partial and fragmentary interpretations of the philosopher's thought available at the time. He argued that, by paying attention to universals (which are better known to the mind), philosophy served Aristotle

as a vantage point from which he could look into the particulars of each of the fields he studied (Robortello 1548b).

Robortello's fascination with "method" is most evident in his revision of the topics of argumentation, found in the four manuscripts that preserve his *Discorso dell'origine, numero, ordine et methodo delli luoghi topici*, which might have originated as a lecture delivered in his own home (Sgarbi 2019). There, Robortello criticized Rudolf Agricola's theory of the topics. According to him, Agricola had failed to follow Aristotle's understanding of the topics, which required that these be deduced from the relations through which the mind naturally operates. As a result, Agricola's topics were useful for the invention of arguments, but were of no use to judge their validity. Robortello claimed that he had restored the unity of invention and judgment by deriving the topics, not randomly, as he claimed that Agricola had done, but following the four problems that can be asked about a subject according to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (Sgarbi 2015; Sgarbi 2019).

Robortello's commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* (Robortello 1548b) also adopted a methodical and transdisciplinary approach, and represented a crucial step in the introduction of Aristotle's tract into mainstream theoretical and practical discussions on the art of poetry. Robortello used three different manuscripts to emend the Greek text published in 1536 as part of the same volume that included Alessandro de' Pazzi's Latin translation of the *Poetics* (Donadi 2001). Robortello divided Aristotle's treatise into 270 parts, which he illustrated through his knowledge of the language and of ancient customs, institutions, history, and poetry. Robortello introduced his commentary as a reaction to the focus on Aristotle's natural works that prevailed among his contemporaries. He defined a spectrum for the disciplines of language and reason, which encompassed demonstrative logic, rhetoric, and poetics as pieces of a single system. Logic stood at one end, closest to truth and furthest removed from poetics, the art of lying. Rhetoric (the realm of the credible) lay in between the two. The identification between poetics and untruth was in line

with the characterization of poetry as a "true lie," advanced by Plato's commentator Proclus (Blocker 2004). At the same time, the classification of poetics and rhetoric as logical arts mirrored Al-Farabi's division of the sciences, disseminated via the Latin translation of his works prepared by Dominicus Gundissalinus in twelfth-century Toledo and repeated as recently as Girolamo Savonarola's posthumous 1534 *Compendium totius philosophiae* (Hardison 1997). Despite a series of ambiguous remarks about Averroes' commentary of the *Poetics* (which Robortello read in Hermannus Alemannus' 1256 Latin version, first printed in Venice in 1481), he borrowed from it abundantly (Weinberg 1961; Wels 2009).

Robortello supplemented his commentary of the *Poetics* with five treatises dealing with specific genres that Aristotle had left out of his consideration. The rationale behind Robortello's decision was his belief that, if the treatise (like all of Aristotle's works) responded to a coherent method, it was therefore possible to conjecture what the philosopher left unsaid or was lost, by reconstructing the part that was extant. Robortello's addition was also symptomatic of the rise of a genre-specific reflection that was characteristic of sixteenth-century poetic theory (Javitch 2001).

Aristotle held that poets are builders of plots, chains of actions linked to one another "imitating" the way things happen, either always or for the most part. Plots are particular, but embody relations that are true and universal in a way that makes poetics "more philosophical" than history, which is concerned with factual truth. Robortello departed from Aristotle by identifying truth with factual truth, and by equating lie, which he made the province of poetics, with that which is non-factual. This led him to conclude that poets move the audience in as much as they are persuasive about the actions they "imitate," but, of necessity, they do so to a lesser degree than the historian (Sgarbi 2019). Unlike Aristotle, Robortello precluded actual events from entering a poem's plot. The only exception would be when a poet avoids the charge that he is stealing the role of the historian by balancing the actual facts included in the plot with fictitious events taking place in the secondary episodes.

Robortello's approach to Aristotle's *Poetics* was essentially rhetorical (Weinberg 1952, 1961; Javitch 2008). He explained that poetics provides the audience with examples, particular embodiments of ethical truths. In connection with this, Robortello was the first to grant centrality to Aristotle's assertion that the end of tragedy is the purgation or catharsis of passions through pity and fear. Taking inspiration from the eighth book of Aristotle's *Politics*, Robortello argued that tragedy frees the spectators from any excess of emotions. As they experience pity and fear at the misfortunes of others, they become better prepared to bear the ills of life (Loscalzo 2003; Blocker 2004; Sgarbi 2019).

Robortello's theory of poetics intersects at various points with his views on rhetoric and logic. Reacting against the conception of rhetoric as a discipline that taught how to speak persuasively about any given topic, Robortello considered that it was the orator's duty to render ethical and political notions understandable to the common people, who lack the preparation that is necessary to the understanding of scientific discourse. With this in mind, orators prioritize inference and examples, metaphors, and copiousness. They prefer particular over universal terms, and, for that purpose, they argue from enthymemes that elide the universal premise, which nonacademic audiences find more difficult to follow (Sgarbi 2016, 2019).

Robortello's views on history writing are contained in his tract *De historica facultate* (1548), his commentary on the *Poetics*, a letter he wrote in Venice in 1551 (Robortello 1548a, b, 1843), as well as his oration *Praefatio in Cornelium Tacitum* (1566). Robortello set out to counter the claim, advanced by the skeptic philosopher Sextus Empiricus, that history cannot have a method because it is made of an indefinite accumulation of facts that cannot be reduced to unity (Ginzburg 2006). In an attempt to demonstrate history's status as an art, Robortello chose to repurpose Cicero's claim that it is part of rhetoric. History's association with rhetoric might be behind the fact that *De historica facultate* advocated the use of speeches (*conciones*) invented by the historian according

to verisimilitude. However, in 1551, Robortello nuanced his stance, suggesting that eyewitness accounts would better inform about harangues or orations actually delivered by the agents in a particular situation. Likewise, Robortello's statement that the historian should avoid praising or blaming actions, leaving for the readers to use their own judgment, seems to indicate a similar departure from a narrow identification between history and rhetoric.

More importantly, rhetoric informs history's characterization as a civil science oriented towards the good of the community. History deals "with usages and methods of government," that is, with ethics and politics. The historian explains customs to his readers and makes them familiar with the structure of the body politic, the way to appoint magistrates and conduct trials. He resorts to disciplines that are auxiliary to politics; he masters the military art and also the description of places. Robortello anticipated some of the transformations in the discipline to be later formalized by his disciple Francesco Patrizi and by other scholars, such as Jean Bodin and François Baudouin. These would see history as a gate to understanding ancient ways of life, political structures, laws, warfare, and other aspects contained in the notion of "pragmatic history," embodied by the recently rediscovered works of Polybius – whom Robortello nevertheless faulted for treating the explanation of such topics as independent treatises, rather than in connection with the events they illustrate. Robortello's remark echoed the criticism of many of his contemporaries, who feared that Polybius's digressions and encyclopedism might transform the historian into a philosopher.

For Robortello, the particulars depicted by the historian enable the readers to abstract the laws that govern nature and human behavior. This makes them prudent, capable of judging present events, and foresee future incidents. Pointing to Aristotle's *Poetics*, Robortello defined history as "the narration or explanation of events in the way in which they took place." Since history is about truth, it keeps the names of the agents and looks for them in official documents, public records, and material remains of

the past – stones and inscriptions, which keep for the present the traces of ancient characters and deeds. Robortello insisted that history be made up of public events. Nothing private should be of interest unless it results in consequences for the state.

Robortello's tract on textual criticism, *De arte sive ratione corrigendi antiquorum libros disputatio*, offered a path to restore "the pristine splendor" of ancient authors (Robortello 1975). Robortello took sides with Piero Vettori and thus confirmed the legacy of Angelo Poliziano against the approach of Marc-Antoine Muret and Paolo Manuzio (Vanek 2007). Following Vettori, Robortello claimed that the emendation of a text should be based on alternative readings found in reliable manuscripts rather than conjecture. He insisted on the faithfulness (*fides*) required from the textual critic, who is expected to identify the format, script, and location of the manuscripts where he has found the readings he has chosen to favor. This is supposed to certify fellow scholars about the origins and motivations of any particular emendation. For Robortello, the critic needs to be instructed in antiquity. He should be familiar with the grammarians who codified the language and the authors who put it into practice in the period in which the text was written. This enables the critic to emend mistakes derived from the ignorance of early scribes regarding ancient history, the script, the grammar, or the vocabulary. Although Robortello's treatise was close to Vettori's ideas, he deviated from the latter's principles by leaving more room for conjecture, which he praised as a proof of wit and classified under eight types that mirrored the division of words found in Aristotle's *Poetics* (Venier 2012). In his practice as an editor, Robortello deviated even more from some of Vettori's guiding principles, and sometimes he was not up to the standards of faithfulness he praised in his model (Bionda 2014), preferring philologically restored manuscripts over less manipulated ones and generally neglecting the genealogy of the witnesses preserving a text (Carlini 1989). In some cases, he even departed from a reading in the manuscript in order to defend alternative

options that were better suited to his own expectations about the style of a particular author (Angioni 2011).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Impact and Legacy

Robortello's controversies with Sigonio, Maggi, and others contributed to creating a "black legend" that survived him for centuries (Cappello 2009). The impact of his works remains nevertheless beyond doubt. His commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* was the basis for Bernardo Segni's pioneering Italian translation (1549) and opened up a new field of studies. Robortello's commentary was annotated, followed, or attacked by virtually any scholar of poetics from Torquato Tasso to Lope de Vega and Pierre Corneille (Weinberg 1952). *De historica facultate* was included in Johann Wolff's anthology *Artis historicae penus* (1576, 1579), a collection that remains central to understand the critical transformations experienced by historiography in the sixteenth century. Robortello's art of textual criticism became a precedent that Caspar Schoppe deemed worthy of reprinting in his *De arte critica* as late as 1662. Even Robortello's revision of the topics of argumentation, preserved in manuscript, would reach a wider public through Orazio Toscanella's *Applicamento* (1575) and Antonio Riccoboni's often-reprinted *Ars rhetorica* (1579) (Sgarbi 2019).

Cross-References

- [Agricola, Rudolph](#)
- [Antiquarianism](#)
- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Bodin, Jean](#)
- [Historiography](#)
- [Induction, Philosophical Conceptions of](#)
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- [Philology, Renaissance](#)
- [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)

- Segni, Bernardo
- Sublime
- Topics in the Renaissance
- Tragedy in Renaissance Literature
- Vettori, Piero

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- Manutius, Aldus

Rorispergius

► Postel, Guillaume

Rosicrucians

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Abstract

The Rosicrucian manifestos *Fama fraternitatis* (1614) and *Confessio fraternitatis* (1615) conveyed Johann Valentin Andreae's utopian call for the reformation of science and society. However, although their appeals to experimentally based natural magic have been portrayed in terms of a "Rosicrucian" proto-Enlightenment, the manifestos also convey the inspirationism of Paracelsian theology and the magic of the Florentine Platonists (Ficino, Pico) received via Agrippa's overtly supernatural "magical Reformation." These conflicting ideological tendencies also characterize the content of the numerous apologetic tracts that appeared in the wake of the manifestos' publication, as diverse confessional voices vied to define the "true" Rosicrucians on the eve of the Thirty Years' War. While the utopian fraternity portrayed in the manifestos seems to have been a purely fictitious ideal, the Rosicrucian trials of the early war years reveal the emergence of large networks of self-described "Rosicrucian" inspirationists, thus heralding the dawn of a major current of Western esoteric religiosity.

Introduction

The publication in Calvinist Hessen-Kassel of the anonymous *Fama fraternitatis* (1614) and *Confessio fraternitatis* (1615) announced to Europe an imminent Reformation instigated by the Rosicrucian fraternity, an order of "true

Jesuits" in possession of the secrets of alchemy, magic, and the Christian Cabala. According to the manifestos' fictitious millennialist narrative, these secrets had recently been brought to light by the rediscovery of the tomb of the fraternity's founder, "Brother C. R." (Christian Rosenkreuz). With their powers, the brethren promised to end Catholic hegemony within the Holy Roman Empire, overthrow corrupt "Roman" Scholasticism as the dominant scholarly paradigm, and establish the essential unity of Biblical teachings and a pagan (i.e., Platonizing esoteric) *prisca sapientia*. The manifestos' ingenious synthesis of legend, prophecy, and historical events provoked a storm of sympathetic apologies and opposing polemical tracts (*Kampfschriften*) as diverse confessional voices advanced their own visions of the true fraternity. While it could be argued that the authors of the manifestos constituted a "Rosicrucian" brotherhood of sorts, genuine secret societies of self-described "Rosicrucians" had emerged within a few years of the manifestos' publication.

The Authorship and Doctrinal Orientation of the Manifestos

Early Rosicrucianism cannot be described as an ideologically unified "movement" or "culture" (Yates 2013, ix, xiii). This is true not only of the early reception of the manifestos' message within the virtual arena their publication created but also of the manifestos themselves, which evince two conflicting doctrinal tendencies (Tilton 2014). This tension within the texts reflects a broader struggle to define religious orthodoxy within a Christendom left ideologically splintered by the Reformation.

Above all the manifestos give expression to a super-confessional religious orientation derived from the theological works of Paracelsus (1493–1541), which circulated in manuscript form among his followers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Referred to as the *Theophrastia sancta* by the early Rosicrucian apologist Adam Haslmayr (Gilly 1994b, 450), this Paracelsian orientation was anti-institutional and inspirationist and inclined to supernatural magical practice. Echoing

the medieval movement for apostolic poverty, Paracelsus sought to recreate a primitive apostolic community reflecting Christ's injunctions to the apostles (Luke 9.1-6, 10.1-9); an avowed pacifist, he condemned the interconfessional bloodletting committed by the "walled churches" (*Mauerkirchen*) under the sway of corrupt worldly powers (Gantenbein 2008, 33–34). In their stead Paracelsus promoted a church of the "inner human," its politically and confessionally divided congregation united in the Holy Spirit and ongoing divine revelation. Similarly, the Rosicrucian brethren of the manifestos spurn worldly wealth and dedicate their lives to the healing of the sick, free of charge; their meeting place is the "house of the Holy Spirit," where all souls impelled by the spirit of God congregate (*Fama fraternitatis* 1614, 106; *Confessio fraternitatis* 1615, 79–80). In accordance with the explicitly supernatural magic promoted by Paracelsus, Christian Rosenkreuz is said to have gained his knowledge through communication with angels and elementary spirits (*Confessio fraternitatis* 1615, 59–60; *Fama fraternitatis* 1614, 97); a demonic hierarchy is represented upon the floor of his tomb, and the brethren guard the names of these "lower rulers" lest they be misused (*Fama fraternitatis* 1614, 115–116).

Yet the inspirationist and supernatural magical elements of the manifestos are at odds with their explicit description of the brethren's faith. Thus the *Fama fraternitatis* distinguishes the fraternity from "all enthusiasts (*Schwärmer*), heretics, and false prophets" and states the brethren partake of two sacraments as "the first reformed Church" employs them (*Fama fraternitatis* 1614, 121–122). Although these statements suggest the fraternity is Lutheran, hostile respondents to the manifestos felt free to refer to "the Calvinist-Rosicrucian brethren" (Germanus 1626, 92). License for such a characterization had been given by the catalogues of the Leipzig and Frankfurt book fairs, which had advertised the manifestos as "German theological books of the Calvinists" because they were published at Kassel with the specific authorization of the Calvinist landgrave Moritz of Hessen-Kassel (1572–1632) (Tilton 2003, 118).

Both ideological sympathy and political expedience motivated the support initially expressed in

some ruling Lutheran and Calvinist quarters for the manifestos' program. In the *Fama fraternitatis*, the brethren declare they will grant a future emperor their vast store of alchemically produced gold, as "Europe is pregnant and will bear a strong child who must have a great christening gift" (*Fama fraternitatis* 1614, 109); likewise, the markedly millennialist *Confessio fraternitatis* prophesies the coming of a "lion" who will use the brethren's treasures to "fortify his empire" amid the "final downfall" of the papacy (*Confessio fraternitatis* 1615, 66, 69). Respondents to the Rosicrucian manifestos identified this apocalyptic lion with a number of leaders championing the Protestant cause prior to and during the Thirty Years' War – most prominently the pretender to the imperial throne, the Calvinist Elector Palatine Frederick V (1596–1632).

The lion motif of the *Confessio fraternitatis* sheds light on the authorship of the manifestos, as it corresponds to a vision related by the Tübingen Paracelsian Tobias Hess (1568–1614) to his patron Friedrich I, the Lutheran Duke of Württemberg (1557–1608) in 1604. Within Hess' vision the eagle of the Holy Roman Emperor and the whore of Babylon – the papacy – are opposed by a lion whose roar shakes the world to its foundations (Gilly 1994a, 88). For Hess this defending lion was his own patron, who strove to bring the Lutheran states into closer alliance with the Calvinists; it was also the herald of the third age of the Holy Spirit foretold by Joachim of Fiore, which Hess predicted would arrive in 1620 (Gilly 1994b, 470).

Hess formed the focal point of an "intimate league of friends" in Tübingen that included the young Lutheran theologian Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654), the grandson of the editor of the Lutheran *Book of Concord* (1580) (Tilton 2003, 127). Today Andreae's involvement in what he came to describe as a youthful folly is well established (Brecht 1977, 286–290). Although a third party has also been implicated in the authorship of the manifestos (Gilly 2001, 28–32), their conflicting religious tendencies can be explained in terms of the respective worldviews of Hess and Andreae. Thus the supernatural magical practices they allude to stand in

stark contrast to Andreae's advocacy of a purely natural magic (Andreae 1618, 201–203). This natural magic is synonymous with the experimentally based mathematical and mechanical arts also practiced by the brethren depicted in the manifestos.

The Confessional and Intellectual Response to the Manifestos

Among the many competing visions of the “true” Rosicrucian fraternity that emerged in response to the ambiguous manifestos, the inspirationist Paracelsian interpretation is exemplified by Adam Haslmayr's *Antwort an die lobwürdige Brüderschaft der Theosophen von Rosencreutz* (1612). An early respondent to the manuscript manifestos, Haslmayr portrays the Rosicrucian brethren as harbingers of the millennium; their role is to illuminate the way for the Lion of Midnight (the subject of a pseudo-Paracelsian prophecy) with “the light of Christ and nature's sanctuary” (i.e., the Paracelsian lights of grace and nature) (Haslmayr 1615, 98). Haslmayr goes on to enumerate the elements of the *Theophrastia sancta* possessed by the fraternity: the Cabala, the “angels of good counsel,” the “necrolic” (life-preserving) alchemical medicine, the “sacred magic of Bethlehem,” the prophetic interpretation of heavenly signs through the *evestrum* or astral spirit, and the “blessed *nectromantia*” (revelation via scrying, divining, dreams, etc.) (Haslmayr 1615, 97–98). For his authorship of this *Antwort*, Haslmayr was condemned to many years' imprisonment by the Jesuits.

Haslmayr also refers in his apology to “Paul and the Cabalists or *Aniadi*” who remained after the Ascension to propagate Jesus Christ's teachings among the Jews and heathens (Haslmayr 1615, 88). The Paracelsian term *Aniadum* refers to the “celestial body” received from the Holy Spirit via the sacraments or alternatively to “*homo spiritualis* regenerated within us” (Dorn 1612, 42). Thus Haslmayr envisages the Rosicrucians as transfigured humans who have received the “seed” of Christ – a vision that draws not only from Paracelsus but also from Origen's reference

to “esoteric” teachings of Jesus disseminated by Paul to select initiates.

A number of other respondents to the manifestos also portray the Rosicrucian brethren as the inheritors of an esoteric magical tradition passed on orally by Jesus. A tract by the Christian Cabalist Julius Sperber (15??–1616?) dating to 1597 was printed as the *Echo der von Gott hocheleuchteten Fraternitet des löblichen Ordens R. C.* in 1615, together with an anonymous introduction dedicating it to the Rosicrucian fraternity (Sperber 1615, Diii verso-Div recto). In his tract Sperber depicted Jesus as a consummate exponent of the Cabala, which entails intoning the names of God in order to speak with angels, receive revelations, and ascend to the heavens to become one with God. Only members of the “magical college” instituted by Jesus understand the esoteric significance of the parables or have the ability to prophesy during the (Joachimite) age of the Son – and Sperber counts himself among their number, as he describes his use of an “archetypal mirror” in which he has attained the vision of the Merkabah (divine throne-chariot) and from which he has gained knowledge of the imminent age of the Holy Spirit and its new third Testament (Sperber 1615, 159–160, 172–175).

In his Rosicrucian apologies, Robert Fludd (1574–1637) also portrays the Cabala as the secret teaching of Christ, and like Sperber he derives the notion directly from Agrippa (Fludd 1633, 44; Fludd 1617, 28–29). Fludd's *Tractatus apologeticus integritatem Societatis de Rosea Cruce defendens* (1617) was directed against the anti-Paracelsian alchemist Andreas Libavius, an orthodox Lutheran who had written at length against the fraternity depicted in the manifestos. Libavius accepted that the parables of Christ possessed an esoteric significance, but he argued that the misuse of such symbolic language leads to just the sort of supernatural (and thus necessarily diabolical) magic advocated by the brethren (Libavius 1615, 283). He also castigated the fraternity for spreading its apocalyptic prophecies concerning the Lion of Midnight – such ideas were a dangerous spark that might ignite another Peasants' War (Libavius 1616, 13–14). In his reply to Libavius, Fludd defends the

practice of conversing with angels. He goes on to argue that the Rosicrucian brethren may well have foreseen the Second Coming in the supernova of 1604, just as the Magi once read the seal of Christ imprinted in the star they followed to Bethlehem (Fludd 1617, 25–26, 65). Moreover, the fraternity has knowledge of the dominion of the planetary angels or “world rulers” over historical epochs, a doctrine of Trithemius that Fludd also attributes to Jesus Christ (Fludd 1617, 130–138; *Confessio fraternitatis* 1615, 62).

The depiction of alchemical arts within the Rosicrucian manifestos gave rise to a class of apologetic tracts quite distinct from these inspirationist responses. The alchemical motifs of the manifestos do not amount to mere ciphers for inner, personal transformation (“spiritual” or allegorical alchemy); rather, they depict the laboratory pursuits of *chymiatría* (chemical medicine) and *chrysopoeia* (gold-making). Thus Christian Rosenkreuz – whose corpse remains “venerable and undecayed” – is said to have lived 106 years, while the fraternity’s great treasures of gold are a bywork (*parergon*) of their philosophy (*Fama fraternitatis* 1614, 124). Yet the manifestos also condemn those alchemical *Betrüger* (frauds) who swindle the gullible with “bizarre symbols,” “obscure language,” and misuse of the Holy Trinity – a reference to the printed works of Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605), whose association of the Paracelsian *tria prima* (sulfur, salt, mercury) with the Trinity offended orthodox Lutheran sensibilities by blurring the boundaries between the natural and supernatural realms (*Confessio fraternitatis* 1615, 78).

It is likely those orthodox sensibilities belonged to Johann Valentin Andreae himself, as a very similar critique appears in the “third Rosicrucian manifesto” published under his name: the *Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreütz, Anno 1459* (1616) (Andreae 1616, 46–47). This is the most famous work of Protestant alchemical allegory, a literary genre sanctioned by Luther’s own allegorical employment of alchemical symbolism. The *Chymische Hochzeit* portrays an alchemically conceived 7-day pilgrimage undertaken by Christian

Rosenkreuz, who attends a royal wedding and is admitted into an esoteric order governed by the virgin Sophia. The text’s symbolic depiction of the soul’s union with Christ reflects Paracelsian reception of the Wisdom literature, in particular the allegorical writings of Gerhard Dorn (Dorn 1659, 238–239).

Andreae’s allegory lies firmly in the tradition of Origen’s allegorizing interpretation of the Song of Songs. Nevertheless, it was reinterpreted as a veiled reference to laboratory alchemy in Rosicrucian apologies such as the anonymous *Practica leonis viridis* (1619) and Christoffer Rotbard’s *Elucidarius maior* (1617), which detected the “high secret of the blessed Philosophers’ Stone” within the opaque ciphers of both the manifestos and the *Chymische Hochzeit* (Rotbard 1617, 65–67). And although alchemy was only one element of the *prisca sapientia* possessed by the brethren of the manifestos, in his influential Rosicrucian tracts, the alchemist Michael Maier (1568–1622) portrayed it as their primary pursuit. In *Silentium post clamores* (1617), Maier argued that the fraternity’s failure to answer the many published requests for admittance should not be taken as proof of its nonexistence; rather, the brethren are merely observing the oath of silence kept by earlier “philosophical societies” such as the Pythagoreans, Brahmins, and Egyptian priests (Maier 1617, 26–46). From Maier’s mythoalchemical perspective, the chief arcanum of the fraternity and their forebears was the Philosophers’ Stone: hence in *Themis aurea* (1618), he argues the initials “R. C.” are in fact alchemical “hieroglyphs” and do not refer to a “rosy cross” (Maier 1624, 210–213; Tilton 2003, 171).

By proclaiming the “true” meaning of the fraternity’s laws, Maier wrote as if from the inside of an organized secret society; although he had no personal acquaintance with the Tübingen circle of Andreae, his aim thereby was to distinguish true Rosicrucianism from false and establish himself as the chief spokesman of the former. His success in this regard is evident from the words of the Jesuit polemicist François Garasse, who in his *La doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps, ou pretendus tels* (1623) described Maier

as the secretary of a “pernicious company of sorcerers” threatening the church, the state, and good morals (Garasse 1623, 82–93).

The Rosicrucian Trials

With the heightening of sectarian hostilities and the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618, Protestant states that had once tolerated or even tacitly supported the Rosicrucian phenomenon adopted draconian measures to ensure internal stability and social cohesion, leading to the persecution of those advocating an anti-institutional, inspirationist interpretation of the manifestos. In 1619 proceedings were initiated by the Lutheran Church in Württemberg against the Rosicrucian apologist Johann Faulhaber (1580–1635), who was condemned as an “enthusiast” and accused of being one of at least 70 “Rosicrucian brethren” communicating by letter and meeting in the region (Schneider 2005, 323). Soon thereafter Moritz of Hessen-Kassel himself oversaw proceedings against two men accused of being Rosicrucians: Philipp Heinrich Homagius and Georg Zimmermann. Among other heresies, the Calvinist inquisitors assembled by Moritz condemned Homagius, Zimmermann, and hundreds of alleged co-conspirators for their Paracelsian pantheism (“God is material and corporeal”) and their belief that the invisible church would be made visible at the dawn of the age of the Holy Spirit in 1621 (Hochhuth 1862, 113–120). They were also accused of disseminating supernatural magical manuals such as the *Arbatel* alongside the works of Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Valentin Weigel (Hochhuth 1862, 87–88).

Despite being sentenced to “perpetual imprisonment”, Homagius reportedly met with the Rosicrucian apologist Heinrich Nolle (158?–1626) in Gießen, the capital of Lutheran Hessen-Darmstadt, in December 1622. This meeting prompted their prosecution as leaders of “a new sect of enthusiasts”. While Nolle and Homagius fled its clutches, the Hessen-Darmstadt inquisition pitted the strictly Lutheran faculty of theology at the University of Gießen – whose duty was to prevent any further “reform” of the teachings of Luther –

against professors of medicine and law who had associated with the two “sect leaders” and had referred to themselves as “Rosicrucians” (Klenk 1965, 42, 54). Pointing specifically to Nolle’s portrayal of communication with angels in his allegorical *Parergi philosophici speculum* (1623), the Hessen-Darmstadt inquisitors found him guilty in absentia of enthusiastic inspiration in contravention of article five of the *Confessio Augustana* (Hochhuth 1863, 230–231).

The Legacy of Early Rosicrucianism

Following the Rosicrucian trials, historical traces of the “fraternity” – be it an organized secret society or an informal epistolary network – become infrequent. Nevertheless, there is evidence for organizational continuity among followers of Jacob Böhme in Amsterdam, a haven of relative religious tolerance. One early intermediary for this union of Behmenist and Rosicrucian currents was the Dutch engraver Michel Le Blon (1587–1658), an associate of Johann Arndt (1555–1621) and Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652) whose printed and manuscript works place supernatural magic within the framework of apocalyptic speculation on the seven angels of the Book of Revelation. By the later seventeenth century, the Amsterdam Behmenist-Rosicrucian tradition had coalesced around Ulrich Pfeffer (?–1680) and the Angelic Brethren of Johann Georg Gichtel (1638–1710); the doctrines and practices of this circle were passed down to later Rosicrucian groups (Asiatic Brethren, Golden Dawn, etc.) via the alchemico-Cabalistic grimoires of the powerful eighteenth-century *Gold- und Rosenkreuz* order (Tilton 2016).

Cross-References

- Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius
- Alchemy
- Calvin, Jean
- Fludd, Robert
- Hermes Trismegistus and Hermetism
- Kabbalah, Renaissance

- Luther, Martin
- Natural Magic in Renaissance Science
- Reformation
- Trithemius, Johannes
- Weigel, Valentin

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Roussanos, Pachomios

Born: Zante c.1508

Died: Zante c.1553

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Abstract

Pachomios Roussanos was a seminal sixteenth-century Greek scholar. In addition to his work as a copyist and editor of manuscripts, he wrote numerous treatises on religion, ethics, and grammar. He was a leading theologian of his century and throughout his short life he defended the Orthodox dogma from the influences of Western European theology.

Biography

Roussanos was born in a small village of Zante, a Greek island in the Ionian Sea. His father became a monk and short after Pachomios followed in his path. He was self-taught. He traveled in mainland Greece and stayed for a significant period of time in Mount Athos. He also visited the Holy Lands and Venice, where he interacted with the local

Orthodox community. He was known for his ascetic way of life. He devoted his life to teaching and delivered lectures in several Greek regions. His audience was clerics and laics. He died in Zante, in the monastery of Kremnon.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Roussanos applied the Christian doctrines on every field of knowledge. Furthermore, he studied Greek philosophy and accepted certain theories, such as the Platonic psychology. He opposed the heretics; among them he included the Catholics and the Protestants. Roussanos was the most zealous defender of the Orthodox dogma following the works of Marc Eugenikos and Gennadios Scholarios. Most of his works are written in the form of epistles or dialogues. Although he blamed the Protestants, he thought of the Holy Bible as superior to the Patristic texts and refrained from mentioning the Holy Fathers in his texts. In addition he heavily criticized ancient Greek philosophy, especially the insistence of certain philosophers about the eternity of the world and the role of fate. Roussanos opposed them and defended free will. He promoted education, since he believed that the study of the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Fathers, and the Greek language contributes to the development of human nature. His sudden death prevented him from publishing his main contribution, a book of grammar, in which he would have expounded the views of ancient grammarians.

Impact and Legacy

Although Roussanos' texts and lectures were not so innovative, church authorities and his fellow monks expressed opposition and pressured him to render faithfully the spirit of the Holy Scriptures. He also felt disguise for the way the monks lived. Indicative of his restricted popularity is the fate of his work against Cartanos, a heretic Greek monk of the sixteenth century, which was reproduced in a few manuscripts, while Cartanos' texts were very popular. His efforts were crucial for the revival of education in sixteenth-century Greece.

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Rovida, Cesare

Born: ca. 1549, Milan

Died: ca. 1592

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Milan, Italy

Abstract

Cesare Rovida was born in Milan from a noble family in 1549 ca. His life and work is representative of a still comparatively neglected phenomenon in the 16th c. intellectual history of Milan, of the close University of Pavia and of Northern Italy. It seems that Rovida and his fellow scholars gathered into seminar, reading

and commenting upon ancient Greek texts in their original language. Books owned by Rovida and by his teacher Ottaviano Ferrari, fully annotated as they are with marginalia in Greek and in Latin, shed light into the distinctive way of working of this circle of scholars. Most attention was paid to the ancient Greek commentators on Aristotle's corpus, which they commented upon in their turn, either in Latin or in Greek, focusing on textual criticism and on close exegesis of the Greek text. In Rovida's house, scholars formed the so called "Academia Rovidiana"

Biography

Cesare Rovida (1549ca.–1592ca.) was born in Milan from the noble Galeazzo Rovida. While his brother Alessandro Rovida was a member of the Milan Senate, Cesare studied classics, philosophy, and medicine and travelled through Italy listening to lectures by the best philosophy teachers. Once he graduated, Rovida entered the Collegium of medical doctors in Milan and was appointed at the *Studium Papiense*, (the former name of the University of Pavia), where he was soon promoted to the first Chair of Medicine. In his house in Pavia, Rovida gathered a circle of scholars which is called *Academia Rovidiana* in one at least of the contemporary manuscripts (Bibl. Ambrosiana, Milan, A 116 Inf., a. 1581–1600): "He collected an academy in the style of the ancient Peripatos for the sake of the youth's education. In Pavia, he opened his door to meetings of learned people thus establishing a celebrated academy for the sake of the young minds' instruction" (*"Peripatetico more Nobilem Academiam ad adolescentes exercitandos erexit. ... Eruditorum coetum, insignemque academiam ad excolendum adolescentium ingenium propriis in aedibus Ticini instituit, eaque annis MDLXXX et sequentibus florebat adeo ut Athenae rediisse viderentur,"* Gianbattista Silvatico *ap.* Corte 1718, s.v.). His teacher Ottaviano Ferrari filled the margins of the 1536 printed exemplar of Alexander of Aphrodisias Quaestiones held in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense (B XVI 6.078) with notes in Latin and Greek (Fazzo 1999) ; he

owned among many the manuscript M of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* now held by the Ambrosiana Library (F 113 Sup.). It was probably Ottaviano Ferrari, who initiated Rovida to a distinctive method of textual criticism, which they both practiced in the margins of contemporary, i.e., early printing of philosophical texts. Many of Ferrari's books came in the library of Rovida and were finally left with Rovida's books to the Ambrosiana Library, founded in 1607 by Federico Borromeo. A most interesting group of Rovida's books is made of exemplars of early printed editions (*editiones principes*) of Greek texts from the Aristotelian tradition. These copies are heavily annotated in Latin and in Greek. The way such annotations were made is a special feature of Ferrari, Rovida, and other scholars in their circle (e.g., Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, a great collector of books). Their method, in Fazzo's view (1999), is identified as a distinctive way of working of sixteenth century Aristotelian Scholars. A partly similar method was practised elsewhere in Italy, especially by ► [Pietro Vettori](#), whose annotated printed editions are now held by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich and have been taken into account by the Berlin edition of *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*. The method practiced in Milan shapes a somehow original *Lombardian Aristotelianism*. Rovida's method is thus described by his contemporaries and fellows: "The prime scope was editing Aristotle's works, putting into parallel Greek and Latin sources and revising new exemplars of Greek texts by collation with ancient ones" ("*Primum omnium verba Aristotelis constabilire, Graeca cum Latinis conferre, adhibitis veteribus libris novos emendare*"). Further information we owe to the work of one of his contemporaries (Francesco Ciceri's *oratio funebris* in honor of Capra): "Multa legebat quotidie; multa item quotidie observabat. . . . numquam [Capra] audire [Rovida] intermisit cum intra privatos parietes disputantem . . . tum publice physica Aristotelis explicantem." Special focus thus was on printed editions (*libri novi*), usually *editio princeps* of texts from the Aristotelian tradition, whose defective readings they revised with the help of ancient manuscripts and *ope ingenii*. Since some of Rovida's and of

Ferrari's exemplars were probably collated with Greek manuscripts, some of which could be nowadays lost, it would be interesting to know whether or not such notes could be now taken into account as indirect traditions of the relevant Greek text. The whole phenomenon testifies to the relevance of Ancient Greek learning in sixteenth century Milan, as shown by the relevant "*Ruoli delle scuole pubbliche*," where one can see that Greek classes were regularly provided in the so called Broletto, nearby Milan's Cathedral, since the time of Ludovico il Moro (late 15th c.). Rovida's method can be also contrasted with the kind of Aristotelianism Girolamo Cardano could react against in the former decades of the sixteenth century, see, e.g., ► [Branda Porro](#) as a well-known exponent.

Because of his early death, which was probably caused by excessive strain, he could not send any of his works to print. Rovida left a collection of manuscripts and printed books of ancient works, many of which are fully annotated in Latin and in Greek; Rovida also left manuscripts of his own, including a commentary on parts of Aristotle's *Physics* (I-III) which Rovida wrote himself in Greek (ms. Ambr. S 89 inf., 4–51, see Fazzo 1999 75). A description of manuscripts from his collection, which are now held by the Biblioteca Ambrosiana and whose content can be viewed online at the website <http://manus.iccu.sbn.it>.

Cross-References

- [Porro, Branda](#)
- [Vettori, Piero](#)

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Rubio, Antonio

Born: 1548 (La Roda)

Died: 8 March 1615 (Alcalá)

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Abstract

Antonio Rubio, S.J., was a Jesuit philosopher who lived during Spain's second scholasticism (1548–1615). A native of La Roda, Rubio, while still only a novice, was sent to the New World together with a number of other Jesuit missionaries. After his final religious profession and ordination to the priesthood, Rubio remained in Mexico where he taught both philosophy and theology. His *Logica Mexicana* bears the name of his adopted homeland and became a quick success among various Jesuit colleges where it was adopted as an official text. Eventually Rubio returned to Spain to assume administrative responsibilities within the Society of Jesus. He died in Alcalá in 1615.

Biography

Antonio Rubio (Ruvius), S.J. (1548 in La Roda) – 8 March 1615 in Alcalá), lived during the Golden Era of Baroque Scholasticism that flourished throughout the Iberian Peninsula and its provinces in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His early studies began at the University of

Alcalá, where, upon the third year of his philosophical studies, he eventually entered the Society of Jesus on 18 April 1569, aged 21 years (de Gylvés 1945, 5; Romero 1988, 10). His education was centered upon the Thomism of the Baroque period, as was to be expected given Ignatius of Loyola's determination that in theology Thomas Aquinas would be normative just as in philosophy Aristotle would be followed. At this point, the influence of Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), Rubio's contemporary, was not yet established among Jesuit scholastics, and so scholasticism's *Doctor Eximius* exercised little influence over Rubio (de Gylvés 1945, 8).

After having finished his novitiate, Rubio took his simple vows on 1 May 1571. In 1574, while still studying for the priesthood, Rubio's superiors sent him to Mexico to hold a chair in philosophy (Laurenti 1997, 201). Rubio, along with two other Jesuits, Pedro de Hortigosa and Pedro de Morales, arrived in Mexico sometime in September of 1576 (Romero 1988, 11), and there Rubio's career and religious life would unfold. Rubio made his religious profession in 1587 (de Gylvés 1945, 5) and remained in Mexico and served as a professor for many years, first teaching philosophy and then theology. One of his most famous and successful works bears the name of his adopted home: the *Logica Mexicana*. A short commentary on Aristotle's logic, the *Logica Mexicana* found quick favor at the University of Alcalá and was adopted in 1610 as an official text (de Gylvés 1945, 6). Given that Rubio, together with Francisco de Toledo and the Conimbricenses, is one of the few Jesuits René Descartes mentions having studied at La Flèche, it seems likely that Rubio's text enjoyed a good reputation beyond Spain.

The *Logica Mexicana* features a distinct treatise on analogy, the *Tractatus de Nominum Analogia*. Not surprisingly, this text considers Cajetan's own famous work of the same name, but Rubio's teaching on the subject differs in fundamental ways from that of Cajetan. Rubio, for instance, rejects Cajetan's claim that all analogies of attribution are extrinsic and that proper proportionality alone pertains to intrinsic perfections (Ashworth 1999, 52–53). Whereas

Cajetan's preoccupation was with the semantic conditions for the possibility of analogy, Rubio is much more concerned with identifying the relationship between semantics and ontology (Ashworth 1999, 53). Against Cajetan, but in agreement with Suárez, Rubio accords primacy to an analogy of attribution over that of proper proportionality. But, standing against Suárez and allying himself more closely to the Thomist position, Rubio rejects the claim that the concept of being enjoys an absolute simplicity. Instead, Rubio argues that the concept of being is distinct as it applies to God and as it applied to creatures (Ashworth 1999, 58).

In his philosophical anthropology, Rubio was largely content to follow the Aristotelian position as interpreted by Thomas Aquinas. Nevertheless, he did depart from Thomas in certain areas. For example, in addressing the question whether or not the vegetative soul is "formally" included in both the sensitive and rational souls, Rubio holds an opinion attributed to the "*Recentiores*" in opposition to Thomas, who had himself held that the rational soul "virtually" contains sensitive and vegetative souls (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 76, a. 3). Rubio argues that the rational soul "formally" contains both the sensitive and vegetative souls, which is to say that while man is sensitive and alive essentially, he is not so characterized specifically. Yet, man cannot be sentient and alive without the actualization and determination of some form, which is the rational soul, the only form man possesses. But since the form operates within the order of formal causality, man's sentience and vegetative powers are the *formal* effects of the rational soul which acts within the order of formal causality (de Gylvés 1945, 15–16).

In 1599 Rubio returned to Spain to publish his works and assume administrative responsibilities within the Society of Jesus. He remained active for another 15 years or so, teaching both philosophy and theology at the University Complutense of Madrid as well as composing various works on Aristotelian philosophy. Rubio eventually died at Alcalá on 8 March 1615 (Laurenti 1997, 201–202).

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Rusch de Balingen

► Reisch, Gregor

Russiliano, Tiberius

Born: 1490, Circa, Gimigliano (Italy)

Died: 1560, Circa, Perhaps in Africa

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Abstract

Tiberius Russiliano was a philosopher of the Italian Renaissance. A restless spirit with a profound knowledge of Aristotle and his commentators, he sought to establish himself in the academic sphere but, due to his subversive and even heretical theories, was forced to flee to Sicily. His extant works are *Apologeticus adversus cucullatos* (1519 or 1520) and *Universalia porphyriana* (1526).

Biography

Russiliano was born around 1490 in Gimigliano, near Catanzaro in Southern Italy. After completing his early studies in his home town, in 1515 he went to Naples, where he came into contact with the Pontanian milieu, and to Salerno, where he attended the lessons of the Aristotelian Agostino Nifo. Eager to establish himself in the academic world, in 1518 he went to Bologna to hold a quodlibetic debate. However, the 400 publicly posted theses he intended to debate aroused turmoil and outrage, and Russiliano only managed to avoid excommunication thanks to the intervention of Scotist Gerolamo Gadius. Forced to leave Bologna, Russiliano reached Florence, where once again his debate sparked an uproar and he was forced to recant before the Franciscan inquisitor Paolo da Fucecchio.

As evidenced by the work *Iesus vincit* by the Dominican Girolamo Armellini, printed in 1523, in which Russiliano's arguments are analyzed and refuted, the Calabrian philosopher's fame as a

heretic began to spread (Armellini 1525). Despite this, in Padua he was finally able to discuss his theses, adding to the previous 400 various others on the issue of the reconciliation of Platonic and Aristotelian thought. The content of the dispute was then put in writing and printed secretly in Parma at the end of 1519 or early 1520, with the title *Apologeticus adversus cucullatos* (Russiliano 1991; Russiliano 1994).

Escaping again to Tuscany, on September 17th, 1520, Russiliano held a lecture at the University of Pisa, as a substitute pending the arrival of Nifo. Relapsed and unrepentant, he was once again arrested and imprisoned in Florence but managed to escape to Sicily. Thanks to the limited control of the territory by political and religious authorities, he was able to become a professor of dialectics and, in November of 1526, published in Palermo an annotated translation of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, the *Universalia porphyriana*.

According to the testimony of contemporary Gabriele Barri (1737), Russiliano was murdered by his servant during a trip to Africa, around 1560.

The *Apologeticus adversus cucullatos* – opening with a *Prefatio* that retraces events in the life of the author and concluding with a *Peroratio* – consists in the discussion of 13 statements and is a veritable compendium of the author's ability to rework past philosophical tradition in a subversive way, presenting heretical positions as legitimate and even in harmony with the faith, with self-assured argumentative skill. Russiliano supported the validity of theories such as spontaneous generation, the eternity of the world, and the influence of the stars on all bodies, even on Christ, whose body was subject to the influence of the stars like all other men. But the Calabrian philosopher, fierce critic of the immorality of monks, went further and argued that there is no real presence of Christ in the Eucharist; that there is no eternal punishment – even in the face of mortal sin, reflecting Origen's great influence on him – that God is not one and triune; and, based on Averroes, that in life one can attain an intellectual intuition of the divine.

In the light of these statements, it is no wonder that *Apologeticus* was brought to the attention of the intellectual community by free-thinker Gabriel Naudé, who considered Russiliano to be one of the most innovative writers of his time.

The other work by Russiliano that has come down to us, *Universalia porphyriana*, is also configured as a continuous dialogue with tradition. In this careful exegesis of Porphyry's text, in which the author also revives various theses from the *Apologeticus* such as spontaneous generation, logical discussion (influenced by the approach of Lefèvre d'Étaples) is soundly based on metaphysics, and thus the *universalia* are at once real entities according to Being and entities of reason according to intelligence.

From *Apologeticus* to *Universalia porphyriana*, Russiliano conducts a close comparison with his predecessors, proving himself to be a subversive thinker, an Aristotelian 'eclectic'.

Cross-References

- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Generation in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques](#)

- [Nifo, Agostino](#)
- [Origenes in the Renaissance](#)

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Sacchi, Bartolomeo, Detto il Platina

Born: Piadena, 1421

Died: Rome, 1481

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Abstract

Bartolomeo Sacchi, better known as Platina, was an Italian humanist who lived an eventful life. Starting out as a mercenary soldier, he moved to the court of Mantua, spent some years in Florence, before transferring to Rome where he was arrested twice by Pope Paul II, and finally became prefect of the Vatican librarian.

Before 1475 he wrote many works, including a very popular cookbook. His compendium of the lives of the popes broke with medieval historical writing on the papacy. He developed original ideas and innovative arguments in his dialogues exploring the themes of love and nobility, as well as in his political works where he analyzed the virtues required by a perfect prince and an ideal citizen. His writings made him a leading figure of the Renaissance.

Biography

Bartolomeo Sacchi was born in 1421 in Piadena, a small town near Cremona from whose Latin name he derived the pseudonym Platina. Between 1445 and 1449, he served as a mercenary soldier under the condottieri Francesco Sforza and Niccolò Piccinino but gave up his military career to acquire proficiency in *studia humanitatis* under Ognibene da Lonigo, who had replaced Vittorino da Feltre (1378–1446) as teacher of the humanistic school of Mantua.

In 1453 Platina himself succeeded Ognibene da Lonigo and in this capacity served as the tutor to Francesco and Federico Gonzaga, the sons of the marquis of Mantua, Ludovico Gonzaga, who had been his patron for many years. Platina's first work, *Divi Ludovici Marchionis Mantuae Somnium*, was written between 1454 and 1456 to celebrate his patron's interest in the works of Virgil and in humanistic culture.

In 1457 Platina obtained authorization to travel to Greece to study Greek, but upon hearing that the Byzantine scholar John Argyropoulos had accepted a post teaching the ancient language (and moral philosophy) at the *Studium Florentinum*, he chose instead to study under him. During his stay in Florence, between 1457 and 1462, he enjoyed the patronage of the Medici family and spent time with Marsilio Ficino and

other eminent Florentine humanists. However, he neither taught Greek to Ficino (Kristeller 1956) nor became a member of the so-called Platonic academy, a group of humanists fascinated by the philosophy of Plato who gathered around Ficino after 1462 (Field 2002, pp. 365–372), as has sometimes been claimed. In addition to an oration in praise of Ludovico Gonzaga, in Florence Platina wrote the *Vita Nerii Capponi* (1457–c.1460) and a Latin translation of Capponi's *Commentari*, two works that confirm his closeness to the Medici.

Platina moved to Rome to follow Federico Gonzaga, who had been made cardinal, but his hopes of becoming Gonzaga's secretary came to nothing. Instead, in 1464 he became a member of the College of Abbreviators, a body of writers whose task was to draft bulls and briefs for Pope Pius II. When Pope Paul II decided to dissolve the college, Platina opposed his decision in such a manner that the pontiff had him imprisoned in the Castel Sant'Angelo for 4 months (1454–1455).

In 1468 Platina, together with other members of the so-called Roman academy – a fraternity of humanists gathered around Pomponius Laetus (Hankins 2011, pp. 31–46) – was again imprisoned by the pope who felt sure that their interest in Roman antiquity had deteriorated into heretical belief and in a republican conspiracy against his life. Although the actual existence of that conspiracy has neither been proved nor disproved by scholars (Dunston 1973; Medioli Masotti 1982), and although Platina was acquitted of heresy (Mitarotondo 2005), he remained in prison until 1469.

His rehabilitation came only in 1475, when Pope Sixtus IV appointed him Prefect of the Vatican library. His appointment was depicted by Melozzo da Forlì in a famous fresco in the Vatican museums.

The majority of Platina's works were written in Rome between 1464 and 1475. Prior to his first imprisonment, he wrote a biography of Vittorino da Feltre (after 1461) and two works by which he sought to curry favor with the pope and obtain a position in the Curia: a eulogy of the liberal arts

dedicated to Pope Pius II (*De laudibus bonarum artium*, c.1463) and a biography of Pius II (1464), which became the nucleus of his compendium of the lives of the pontiffs.

After his first arrest, Platina started *De falso et vero bono*, the consolatory dialogue dedicated to Pope Sixtus IV in 1472, and the *Historia Mantuana*, a historical work in which he celebrated his first patron, Ludovico Gonzaga, as the ruler of a new golden age. Shortly after his release, he began work on *De amore*, a consolatory dialogue on love that was given the title, in 1471, of *Contra amores*. While the date of Platina's epitome of Pliny's *Natural History* is still uncertain, there is no doubt that *De flosculis quibusdam linguae Latinae*, a compendium in the form of a dialogue on Lorenzo Valla's *De linguae Latinae elegantia* (1434–1435), was written between 1465 and 1466. In the same period, Platina completed *De honesta voluptate and valetudine*, a very successful cookbook unparalleled in the fifteenth century.

During his second imprisonment, Platina turned his attention to a very different subject: war. In the oration *De pace Italiae*, he praised the role of Pope Paul II in the pacification of Italy and in defending Europe against the Turks. But in the dialogue *De laudibus pacis*, he rejected the commendation of war made by his interlocutor, the prefect of the Castel Sant'Angelo.

On his second release from prison, Platina sought the patronage of Cardinal Bessarion, to whom he addressed a panegyric in 1470. In 1471 he completed *De principe*, a humanistic portrayal of the perfect prince dedicated to Francesco Gonzaga, a son of his first patron who had assumed the government of Mantua. In the same year, Platina started the *De optimo cive*, a humanistic depiction of the perfect citizen, which he presented to Lorenzo de Medici in 1474. Also in that year, he offered to Sixtus IV the *De vita Christi ac omnium pontificum*, a compendium spanning papal history from Saint Peter to his own day. In 1475 he wrote his final work, the dialogue *De vera nobilitate*, by which he took part in the humanistic debate on nobility.

Platina devoted the final years of his life to the reorganization of the Vatican library. He died in Rome in 1481, having contracted the plague.

Heritage and Break with Tradition

The works through which Platina made a key contribution to Renaissance thought were written in Rome between 1464 and 1475.

Platina's main historical work was of course the *De vita Christi ac omnium pontificum*, a collection of the lives of the popes that marked a turning point in medieval historical writing on the papacy. Unlike Jacopo Zeno, who made the first attempt to recast the medieval *Liber pontificalis* in the light of the humanistic idea of historical works, Platina not only described the lives of the popes in elegant and straightforward Latin but also displayed an interest in political history. His biographies were thus enhanced by frequent references to wars, negotiations, and effective government. In addition, he strove "to blur the lines between pagan and Christian antiquity" by depicting the popes as successors and heirs to the Roman emperors (D'Elia 2008, p. ix). In the course of his analysis, he drew from modern sources, including Flavio Biondo's *Decades of History from the Deterioration of the Roman Empire* (c.1453), and combined a variety of ancient sources, without, however, giving a critical evaluation of them. In spite of this limitation, his work enjoyed extraordinary success. After the *editio princeps* was published in Venice in 1479, the *Vita Christi ac omnium pontificum* was reprinted dozens of times, was translated into several languages and was revised and updated in both Catholic and Protestant countries (Bauer 2006). Its popularity was partly due to the fact that Platina had measured modern churchmen against the standard of Christian antiquity and humanistic ideals.

Platina's *Contra amores* held a prominent position among Renaissance works on the theme of love. Conceived as a consolatory dialogue to relieve a lovesick friend, it contrasted erotic love (*amor inhonestum*) with an open form of love in

which sensual pleasure was subordinated to virtue (*amor honestum*). Like other humanists, such as Leon Battista Alberti (*Deifira*, before 1428), Pietro Edo (*Anterotica*, 1492), and Battista Fregoso (*Anteros*, 1496), Platina considered the negative effects of love and recalled Platonic arguments (drawn especially from Plato's *Symposium*) to define it as a form of sickness that interfered with the exercise of reason. At variance with this view, Marsilio Ficino intertwined Platonic and Neoplatonic arguments to describe love as the means through which the human soul rejoined God. Mario Equicola, a supporter of Ficino's philosophy of love, summarized Platina's *Contra amores* in his popular *Libro de natura de amore* (1494–1496), and Thomas Sebillet included it in his *Contramours* (1581).

Platina's *De falso et vero bono* had nothing to do with Valla's *De vero falsoque bono* (1441). Whereas Valla had argued that pleasure was the goal of human life and tried to conciliate Epicureanism with Stoicism and Christian morality, Platina claimed that fortitude should help man to bear any hardship. What is of particular interest is that, when writing *De falso et vero bono*, Platina drew extensively to form the main Stoic sources for consolatory works used during the Renaissance: Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* and *On the Ends of Good and Evil* and Seneca's *Moral Letters*.

In *De vera nobilitate*, Platina contended that nobility did not spring from lineage or wealth but from virtue alone. As noted by several scholars (Tateo 1974, pp. 355–421; Skinner 1978, pp. 117–130; Rabil 1991, pp. 262–275), Platina played a key role in the fifteenth-century disputation on nobility, echoing the ideas that Poggio Bracciolini's *De nobilitate* (1440) had advanced 35 years earlier. Like *De nobilitate*, Platina's *De vera nobilitate* was widely circulated in both manuscript form and printed editions and thus contributed to popularizing the humanistic view that true nobility hinged on virtue.

Platina's *De principe* belonged to the wide and heterogeneous genre of the mirror for princes written during the fifteenth century. It focused on the moral virtues required for a perfect ruler rather than on the constitutional aspects of princely

government (Skinner 2002, pp. 132–135). Platina's *De principe* resembled the structure of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, the most popular medieval mirror of princes produced during the Renaissance, and therefore consisted of three books, each dealing with the prerequisite qualities for self-governance, government, and military matters. Nevertheless, the books were quite different in content: while Giles of Rome based his analysis on Aristotelian arguments and biblical sources, Platina defined the virtues of the prince by entwining quotations drawn from Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* and from Cicero's works (in particular, *On Duties*, *On the Ends of Good and Evil*, and *Tusculan Disputations*). He then used a long stream of historical evidence from a variety of classical sources to illustrate how they should be applied. In the course of his analysis, Platina also made reference to Plato's *Republic* and described the prince who was loved by all his subjects for his good qualities as a philosopher-king. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century, many humanists had used Plato's image of the philosopher-king to argue that power was justified when combined with moral knowledge based on humanistic education (Vasoli 1980, pp. 151–187). But Platina went further, asserting that power and knowledge were indissolubly linked.

As recently noted (Ceron 2011), one of the most intriguing sections of Platina's *De principe* deals with the issue of friendship. Like Giovanni Tinto Vicini (*De institutione regiminis dignitatum*, before 1406), Pontano (*De principe*, c.1465), and Francesco Patrizi of Siena (*De regno et regis institutione*, 1481–1484), he made use of the Aristotelian and Ciceronian ideal, according to which true friendship was based on virtue, in order to advise the prince to choose honest and trustworthy friends on whom he could rely to manage and administer his power. In other words, he employed the language of friendship to solve the problem of selecting the governing elite. Unlike the aforementioned humanists, Platina stated that the friends of the prince should be chosen from among the noblest of his subjects, since nobility was based only on virtue. Moreover, by insisting that virtue consisted of

intellectual excellence as well as moral greatness, *De principe* emphasized that the governing elite was also an intellectual elite, a point made less clearly in *De vera nobilitate*.

As demonstrated by Nicolai Rubinstein, *De optimo cive* was an abridged version of *De principe* (Rubinstein 1985, pp. 375–388). With just a few changes, Platina turned his treatise on the perfect prince into a dialogue in which the old Cosimo de' Medici explained to his grandchild Lorenzo how to become an ideal citizen. Platina substituted the first chapter, extolling the virtues of monarchy for a preface, which celebrated active participation in public life. He then added a section on patriotism, removed the chapter on the unhappiness of the prince, modified some historical references, and omitted the book on military matters. In the remaining parts of the work, he simply replaced *optimus princeps* with *optimus vir*.

Since Platina's catalog of virtues remained unchanged, *De optimo cive* displayed more clearly than other works of the humanist belief that citizens needed to possess the same qualities as princes to become perfect rulers; it thereby suggested that the humanism of the court should not be opposed to civic humanism. Yet, given that the dialogue between the *pater patriae* and Lorenzo de' Medici was made up of a long analysis of civic virtues, Platina's *De optimo cive* has often been compared to Matteo Palmieri's *Della vita civile* (c.1430–1438), with which it was published in a joint edition in the middle of the twentieth century (Platina 1942). As observed by Hans Baron, Platina revised Palmieri's ideal of active participation in public life and placed it within a cultural context where the life of contemplation had superseded civic life in terms of popularity owing to the so-called "return of Plato" (Baron 1966, pp. 564–566). Moreover, whereas Palmieri's work made no reference to the Medicean rise to power, in the section on patriotism in *De optimo cive*, Platina portrayed the Medici as the guardians of the freedom of Florence, seeking to conciliate their power with the republican tradition of the city. As recently remarked (Hankins 2010), one of the most interesting aspects of his work on the perfect citizen

was its description of the Republic of Florence as a popular republic (*popularis respublica*), which was not so much threatened by external enemies or internal factions as by the political ambition of unworthy and imperfect citizens.

Innovative and Original Aspects

While it is clear that Platina developed innovative theses in many of his writings, there can be no doubt that the most original of his works was *De honesta voluptate et valetudine*. Far more than a mere cookbook, this was a real literary work that had gastronomic pleasure as its main theme (Larioux 2006). Moving from medical considerations based on Galen's theory of the humors and the medieval dietetic tradition, Platina provided a long list of recipes that allowed dining companions to combine enjoyment with good health.

The contents were modern for, of his own admission, Platina derived most of his recipes from the *Libro de arte coquinaria* (1450–1467) by Martino of Como, a culinary expert and chef at the Roman palazzo of the papal chamberlain. However, the structure of *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* was ancient for Platina modeled his cookbook on that of Apicius. In the course of his study, he also drew on Pliny's *Natural History* and a variety of lesser-known classical sources, creating a new Latin vocabulary of food (Milham 1998).

It should also be noted that Platina attached to his recipes many anecdotes on the eating habits and tastes of his fellow members of the Roman academy for two reasons. On the one hand, the anecdotes gave prominence to the (Stoic) precept of self-restraint when dining. On the other hand, they illustrated how after-dinner talk could enhance the pleasure of a meal, in line with the Greek and Roman tradition of symposia and the Renaissance ideal of civil conversation.

Impact and Legacy

Like *De vita Christum ac omnium pontificum* and *De vera nobilitate*, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* was a highly successful work, being

reprinted many times between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century (Rome 1475 and 1517; Venice 1484, 1487, 1498, 1508, 1516, and 1517; Cologne 1529 and 1537; Paris 1530).

Platina's other works considered here were less successful, though equally far reaching. *Contra amores* gave a decisive contribution to the Renaissance philosophy of love, and *De principe* and *De optimo cive* developed an intriguing reflection on the perfect prince and the perfect citizen, thereby shedding new light on the nature and relationship of the humanism of the court and civic humanism. For these reasons, Platina has been considered one of the leading figures of the Italian Renaissance.

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- Bessarion, Cardinal
- Bracciolini, Poggio
- Ficino, Marsilio
- Friendship, Renaissance Understanding of
- Palmieri, Matteo
- Pontano, Giovanni
- Scientific Academies in the Renaissance
- Valla, Lorenzo

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Salutati, Coluccio

Born: Stignano, Italy, 1331

Died: Florence, Italy, 1406

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Abstract

Coluccio Salutati is not your typical intellectual figure. He certainly played his part as a scholar by promoting the humanistic movement: not only carrying on the tradition once Petrarch and Boccaccio passed away, but also making sure the next generation of students was well-prepared to continue it during the next century. In addition to his scholastic endeavors, he served as Chancellor of Florence from 1375 until his death in 1406. A few scholars have held such a high-profile position within their nation's government, but Salutati's frequent correspondence with figures both far and near allowed him to place Humanism on an international stage.

Modern scholars familiar with Salutati's work often notice the varied and often inconsistent ideas it contains. Both deeply religious and highly interested in classical studies, Salutati's work demonstrates medieval as well as humanistic characteristics. While this has perplexed some scholars, others point out how such inconsistencies seem reasonable given Salutati's background, as we will see below.

Biography

Coluccio Salutati, born in the small Tuscan town of Stignano in 1331, would become an essential

promoter of Humanism not only within Italy but throughout Europe as well. He would eventually follow in his father's footsteps and become a notary – a profession that would allow him to climb toward the upper circles of Florentine society in the late fourteenth century while keeping up with his studies in Humanism and his frequent correspondence with other humanists.

Salutati's father, Piero Salutati, worked for Taddeo de' Pepoli in Bologna, where most of Salutati's education would consequently take place. Taddeo de' Pepoli ruled Bologna and provided a fair salary and political refuge for Salutati's father, who was exiled from Stignano in 1330 as a result of his Guelf affiliations (Witt 1983, pp. 3–5). Even though his father died in 1341, the family enjoyed the protection and patronage of the Pepoli until the day they were removed from power in 1350.

Fortunately for Coluccio, this situation allowed him to attend school in one of the most sophisticated and advanced educational atmospheres in Europe at the time. Bologna, being the premier spot for anyone seeking a legal education in the fourteenth century, was, therefore, a perfect spot to study as a notary. His earlier education was not without importance, however. In grammar school, he studied under Pietro da Moglio, who was known as a follower of this new strain of Humanism, which had started in Padua in the mid-thirteenth century. Here, he learned the essentials of rhetoric and was introduced to some of the fundamental classical authors (for more detailed information about Salutati's schooling as well as Pietro da Moglio, see the first chapter of Witt 1983). Pietro da Moglio must have had some sort of influence over Coluccio given that the two corresponded later on in Coluccio's life (Witt 1983, p. 19).

After completing his notarial training, and given that his family's connections in Bologna were no longer in power, Coluccio moved back to the Valdinievole area (in which Stignano is found) with his family. He, therefore, started practicing as a notary in the small towns nearby, including Buggiano, Uzzano, Pescia, and Santa Maria a Monte, sometimes working in an official capacity for these small communes and sometimes working in his own private practice. Later

on, in 1367, he moved out of the Valdinievole area and became an official notary for the city of Todi, which was a more important position and a significant step-up for the, as of yet, small-town notary. During his time in Todi, he would spend time corresponding with his friend, Francesco Bruni, who worked in the Papal Curia, and asking for assistance in obtaining a position there. While responses from Bruni were few and far between, Salutati left Todi in the spring of 1368 and went to Rome, where he was eventually employed by the Curia. This was not only a more high-profile position for the ambitious notary, but also an environment that would influence Salutati's intellectual work of the future, as Witt explains:

...there was a noticeable change in Salutati's correspondence in the course of 1369, [...] and afterward, a new tone: the sharp conflict between virtue and fortune became blunted by the active presence of a third force, the Christian God. Man was no longer alone in his struggle with fortune as he had seemed to be in Salutati's earlier ethical pronouncements. (Witt 1983, pp. 86–88. Quotation from p. 88)

After his time in Rome, Salutati received another position in Lucca, working as an official notary with the city, which was yet another professional step up. Finally, in 1374, he would begin working with Florence in the office of the *Tratte*, which oversaw Florentine elections. (For more detailed information about the politics involved in each of Salutati's positions and the events leading up to them, see chapter four of Witt 1983.) Eventually, this position would lead to his election as chancellor, a position he would enjoy for the rest of his life.

Once elected as chancellor of Florence, he was in a high-profile position with international contacts, thereby providing a nearly worldwide stage for his humanistic interests and studies to play out. Given the increase in salary, he was able to build up a personal library with numerous manuscripts and writings, many of which are still heavily referenced by scholars today. Witt also describes Salutati's efforts to obtain copies of Petrarch's manuscripts upon his death (Witt 1983, chapter 7). This position in Florence was, therefore, a perfect place for Salutati to actively participate in society while promoting his interests as a humanist with his numerous correspondents.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

This combination of active interests and scholarly pursuits is perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects of Salutati's legacy. In fact, Salutati used his position to put humanism into practice, specifically with the numerous letters he wrote on the city's behalf, as we will see below. Scholars often note the efficacy of his diplomatic letters and their success not only in persuasion but in their mastery of sophisticated rhetoric (Witt 1976, 2000; Ullman 1963).

Another interesting aspect of Salutati's character is the fact that his thought and intellectual activity display aspects of both medieval and humanistic thinking at the same time. Salutati vigorously defended the value of reading classical authors in the midst of a culture that heavily questioned the purpose of reading any text not centered on Biblical teachings. Medieval texts often focused on reinforcing asceticism – namely that secular pursuits were secondary to Christian pursuits: better to withdraw from society and lead a life of contemplation separated from the corruption of the world than to be overly involved in worldly activities. From a medieval perspective, someone reading classical authors such as Seneca, Cicero, or Virgil would be spending their time on worthless pursuits – pursuits that could even pose a danger to their faith. Someone like Salutati, who was known for studying these authors, and simultaneously held such a high-profile position, would bring a level of patronage to such studies that were rarely seen during that time.

At the same time, Coluccio himself was known for his strong faith. His letters were often deeply pious in nature, especially after 1369, as we saw above. Some of his works, as we will see below, even reflect medieval tendencies such as his *De seculo et religione*, in which he praises the *vita contemplativa* over the *vita attiva* for his friend requesting encouragement as he prepares to take monastic vows. Ullman addresses the irony of such a text being composed by none other than the Chancellor of Florence (Ullman 1963). According to Ullman, scholars who regard such a text as a complete reflection of Coluccio's personal thought have over-interpreted;

Martin goes too far in thinking that Coluccio believed all he said, that he favored monasticism under any circumstances. Coluccio was sincere in urging it upon the monk who asked him to write something that would help him. He accepted the institution of monasticism but did not himself become a monk. If a friend had asked him for reasons for not dedicating himself to a monastic life, he might well have presented in great detail a point of view opposed to that of the *De seculo*. ... (Ullman 1963, p. 27)

(Here, Ullman is disagreeing with Alfred von Martin and agreeing with the assessments of Revilo P. Oliver, T.F. Rich, L. Borghi and E. Garin).

Thus, we see one of the more interesting, yet perplexing, aspects of Salutati's character. As Baldassarri mentions, this back and forth sometimes results in disapproval by some scholars:

Scholars [...] tend to depict Coluccio Salutati as [...] an author on the threshold of a new era that he himself has significantly contributed to usher in while retaining some no-less-significant features of the age about to disappear. [...] Yet a widespread consequence of such an approach [...] is that modern readers [...] are often disappointed by Salutati's work, finding it both inconsistent and below their high expectations. (Baldassarri 2014, p. vii)

Innovative and Original Aspects

In examining the legacy of Salutati's innovations and originality, a first place to start is certainly his letters. He left behind a plethora of letters, both public and private, some of which were collected and held by his friends on account of their elegance and sophistication. These letters were a platform for Salutati to examine some highly debated subjects of the time, such as friendship, fate, faith, and the *vita attiva* versus *vita contemplativa*, as we saw above.

They also became one of the primary means by which Salutati conducted diplomacy and foreign affairs during his tenure as Chancellor of Florence. Such diplomacy was an immediate necessity for Salutati given that the War of the Eight Saints was taking place right as Salutati began his term as Chancellor in 1375 (lasting until 1378). In fact, Salutati's letters were known to be so powerful and persuasive that Giangaleazzo Visconti

purportedly mentioned that “one letter of Salutati’s was worth a troop of horses”(Witt 2000, p. 302 – Here, Witt references the versions of this statement offered by F. Novati in his edition of Coluccio’s letters: *Epistolario di Coluccio Salutati*, ed. F. Novati. 4 vols. FSI, nos. 15–18. Rome, 1891–1911). Witt provides a thorough analysis of these letters, along with their rhetorical characteristics, in some of his scholarship, which will be helpful for our discussion here (Witt 1976, 1983, 2000). It is important to note that a good portion of these letters was meant to be read aloud to the recipient, usually while others listened (Witt 2000, p. 303). Salutati’s ability to manipulate this oral context in conjunction with an appropriate amount of “drama” in the text of his letter was key (Witt 1976, p. 39). As a student of classical authors and classical Latin himself, he was able to imbue these letters with an educated and sophisticated language that few of his peers were able to rival. Witt mentions how some of this talent with rhetoric stems from his education with Pietro da Moglio, one of Salutati’s earliest teachers (Witt 1976, pp. 37–38). Within these letters, Salutati also skillfully used historical anecdotes to support his point and enrich his discussion. During the War of the Eight Saints, Salutati exploited Florence’s Roman past in order to establish Florence’s reputation as a loyal descendant of Rome. Ancient Romans were known for their resistance to tyranny, and Florentines, as an heir to such a legacy, would do the same (Witt 2000, pp. 312–313). Later on, when tensions between Florence and Milan grew (specifically during the Milanese wars between 1390 and 1402), Salutati used Florence’s Roman past to counter accusations from Milan that Florence had planned to kill their leader, Giangaleazzo Visconti (Witt 2000, pp. 313–314). Baldassarri also discusses this in his introduction to some of Salutati’s works, noting how Salutati also references the “myth” of Florence being rebuilt by Charlemagne toward the end of the eighth century; Florence, consequently, would be loyal to its ties with France, given that French assistance was needed in their conflicts with Milan (Baldassarri 2014, pp. xxi–xxii). Witt offers a salient point that such historical references were not only effective as

propaganda, but also allowed listeners the opportunity to visualize themselves within the course of history at large, and not just a singular point in time (Witt 2000, p. 311).

In addition to his letters, Salutati was renowned for his contributions to textual criticism and philology (Ullman provides a great portrait of this in his chapter “Coluccio as a Scholar” in (Ullman 1963)). As mentioned earlier, Salutati was a great collector of manuscripts and religiously sought out copies not only of the classical authors but of his near contemporaries (such as Petrarch’s work after his death in 1374) (Witt 1983, chapter 7). Salutati referred to various renditions of the same work in order to reach the most realistic interpretation of the text he was analyzing (Ullman 1963, p. 101). He often spoke of the importance which scribes had in transmitting a text down through history and often blamed them for the many errors he found within various editions (Ullman 1963, p. 101). Some scribes were guilty on account of their ignorance while others, perhaps less ignorant, were guilty of deliberately altering a text for their own purposes (Ullman 1963, pp. 101–102). Ullman notes that Coluccio’s solution to this problem was establishing a library with trustworthy scholars who could spend their time reviewing the texts and making the necessary corrections (Ullman 1963, pp. 101–102). Cosimo dei Medici, establishing his famous library in San Marco of Florence, came close to realizing this solution (Ullman 1963, p. 102). Ullman discusses one of Salutati’s textual endeavors, namely finding the original name of Città di Castello, in which he consulted twenty manuscripts in order to get to the bottom of the dilemma (according to his findings, the city’s name was either Tyberine or Tyferne) (Ullman 1963, pp. 102–103). Aside from this, Salutati was known as an assiduous and detailed student of the texts he sought out, making corrections and notations where he could in the hopes of ultimately discovering the true text itself. He often had long discussions with his students about orthography and punctuation (Ullman 1963, pp. 108–112). As Ullman states: “Many of his emendations and the variants he took from other manuscripts find a place, unbeknownst to us, in our modern texts. Not only that, but his disciples

learned his methods and passed them on” (Ullman 1963, p. 100). Ullman even goes so far as to note how Salutati’s detailed investigations of texts and history represent an advance in the “scientific method” (Ullman 1963, p. 114).

In accordance with his philological and textual pursuits, Salutati also played a leading role in convincing Manuel Chrysoloras to instruct ancient Greek in Florence between 1396 and 1399. This would ultimately spark a renewed interest in the language throughout Italy, which only furthered the progression toward the Renaissance. And while Coluccio himself never progressed too far in his mastery of the language, he was instrumental in introducing his students, especially Leonardo Bruni, to the language which would become fundamental for their own future studies. Ullman notes the irony of Salutati’s role in furthering the study of Greek, especially given that much of Salutati’s thought seems contradictory to Platonism in general (Ullman 1963, pp. 85–89). As we will see below, Salutati often defended the value of poetry, yet poets are not treated so favorably by Plato in his *Republic* (Ullman 1963, p. 86). In fact, Platonism would become fundamental to humanist thought later in the fifteenth century and one wonders how Salutati might have responded had he known this outcome, as Ullman points out. Alas, this topic remains for debate among scholars.

Impact and Legacy

Salutati’s intellectual influence was both temporal and spatial. In more immediate terms, one pupil who studied directly under Salutati became one of Humanism’s more important scholars, namely Leonardo Bruni. Salutati had other students, including Poggio Bracciolini and Pietro Paolo Vergerio, who would achieve relative fame and later form an important part of the humanistic circle after Salutati’s death. (For more information on those who studied and corresponded with Salutati, see Ullman’s chapter “Coluccio’s Influence” (Ullman 1963)). These students carried on

Salutati’s fervor and methods for examining ancient texts and furthering our understanding of them, thereby continuing the growth and reach of Humanism.

Given his role as Chancellor, Salutati had the opportunity to correspond and interact with international contacts. As mentioned above, he had contacts with various persons in the Papal Curia, both in Avignon and Rome. Armando Nuzzo, in a recent article, also highlights Salutati’s correspondence with Hungary and the Italian statesman Filippo Scolari (Nuzzo 2005). Here, Nuzzo highlights the themes of the multiple letters sent to Hungary from the state of Florence (eighty-five letters known thus far, to be exact), which include discussions of politics and treaties among considerations of commerce and the like (such as the gold and salt markets) (Nuzzo 2005, pp. 347, 351). Salutati did not fail to insert humanistic topics in such letters, however, as Nuzzo shows in his examination of one of the Chancellor’s later letters to Scolari. Here, Salutati discusses the privilege of Scolari’s position, along with God’s providence in his attainment of it, and how the kingdom would benefit from his loyalty to the *Patria* (i.e., the country) – the *Patria* being another important theme for Salutati (Nuzzo 2005, pp. 354–357). Thus, Salutati’s passion for humanism was borderless.

Salutati, in addition to his letters, also left other original works for posterity, as we will now discuss. As previously noted, many of his works have puzzled scholars as a result of their inconsistencies and the variable positions they purport. We will start with the *De tyranno* and move on to some of Salutati’s other works which have perplexed scholars over the years.

Baldassarri provides a fitting introduction to the *De tyranno* in his recent Introduction to some of Salutati’s political works (Baldassarri 2014). The *De tyranno* was written by Salutati in response to inquiries by Antonio of Aquila, then studying in Padua as a law student. The main content of the work centers on the acts of Brutus and Cassius in murdering Caesar in ancient Rome and whether their actions were noble or immoral.

To sum up Salutati's response, given that the Roman monarchy was instrumental in promoting Christianity and preparing the world for the return of Christ, Caesar's success was part of a divine plan. Consequently, the actions of Brutus and Cassius stood against this plan. Salutati also states that this reasoning thereby justifies Dante's placement of these two figures in one of the lower circles of his *Inferno*. This line of reasoning is interesting given Salutati's tendencies of glorifying Florence's Roman heritage in fighting against tyranny and standing up for Republicanism and liberty, which we saw in some of his letters noted above. Baldassarri recognizes this and raises some crucial points, notably that Salutati was, more often than not, constrained to steering his logic wherever the needs of the state required it to go (Baldassarri 2014, pp. xv–xx). Given that the *De tyranno* was written in 1400, when Florence was at odds with Milan, "Understandably, such a move demanded that Salutati carry out a reassessment [...] of the respective merits of monarchy..." (Baldassarri 2014, p. xvi). Additionally, the same work mentions that monarchy is fit for some peoples (when the ruler is just and respectable), while not necessarily fit for others, such as Florence, given that rulers are oftentimes immoral and self-serving (Baldassarri 2014, pp. xvi–xvii). Given these contextual considerations, the apparent inconsistency of Salutati's thought is rather an adaptation to the various political circumstances occurring during the period. In other words, Salutati's works are more of a manipulation of literary and historical exempla in order to construct a lens with which to interpret and analyze political predicaments.

In a similar vein, W. G. Craven provides an explanation of Salutati's views on poetry, specifically looking at Salutati's *De laboribus Herculis* (Craven 1996). To sum up, the *De laboribus Herculis* investigates the reason behind Seneca's representation of Hercules as a God after having killed his wife and children. Salutati argues that allegory is indispensable in interpreting Seneca's treatment; given that Hercules' children represent the likes of lust and other vices, Hercules actions

become more than justifiable. Allegory was one of Salutati's frequent tools in his defense of classical poets, arguing that the act of hiding a noble meaning within a text, which, at first glance, depicts offensive actions or circumstances, was a frequent, yet admirable, habit of many poets. Salutati often pointed to the verse and allegory used within the scriptures as well when defending classical works. If such allegorical tools are used in interpreting the Bible, why should such tools not be applied to extract righteous meanings from the classical poets?

Earlier in our discussion, we noted Salutati's *De seculo et religione*, which praised monastic traditions – not necessarily a subject that one would expect to find from the same author of the *De laboribus Herculis*, where we find a defense of pagan poetry. As such, it is interesting to note some of the debates among scholars regarding such apparent contrasts in thought. As mentioned earlier, Witt mentions a distinct tendency toward more pious thought in Salutati's writings after his time in Rome between 1369 and 1370. Craven, on the other hand, believes that Salutati is merely partaking in the intellectual activity of "disputation," where consistency or cohesion of thought is not nearly as valuable as one's ability to recall as many examples and references as possible (Craven 1996, pp. 5–6). With regard to Salutati's differing positions on poetry, Craven states: "It was within a genre where it mattered more to have a range of arguments than it did to develop a coherent position, [...] Novelty did not rank high on the scale of values; it was more a matter of manipulating material from familiar sources and authorities" (Craven 1996, p. 27).

Another interesting work from the same author defending classical literature is Salutati's *De fato e fortuna*, in which he discusses the roles of fate and fortune, along with free will. In addition, he discusses how these fit into God's plan from a Christian worldview and follows the trail of Augustine's thought. Concetta Bianca provides a thorough introduction to this work, which she has edited, and discusses some of the major themes of the work, namely Salutati's reinforcement of the

importance of Patria and defending one's homeland (Bianca 1985). Here, Salutati argues that pursuing peace is important for the well-being of a city's inhabitants and promotes a healthy society (Bianca 1985, p. xxii). Bianca notes that such themes are not surprising from a person living during a time when wars, plagues, and other travesties were far too common.

In conclusion, while relatively unknown to those outside of academia, Salutati was not only an influential intellectual but an interesting one, to say the least. Far from subscribing personally to the *vita contemplativa*, he led a very public life as Chancellor of Florence. During his time in office, he was able to fully employ his rhetorical training to further the interests of the Florentine State during its conflicts with Milan at the end of the fourteenth century as well as during the War of the Eight Saints (even though Florence lost, in the end). Not only an effective statesman, he was also crucial in promoting humanism and ensuring that the next generation of humanists (i.e., Poggio Bracciolini and Leonardo Bruni) was educated by his findings and exposed to a passion for classical literature. He contributed to the development of philology and textual criticism with his relentless pursuit of manuscripts and sources in order to find answers to some of the most seemingly minute questions. While many recent scholars have been baffled by the stark contrasts within the canon of texts written by Salutati, others find logic behind the chaos of references and disconnected thought. Unafraid of tackling immensely abstract concepts, in the midst of his politically empirical role as chancellor, Salutati dove into such subject matters as "fortune" and "fate" as defined by Christian restraints (in *De fato et fortuna*) as well as the value of the *vita attiva* in comparison to the *vita contemplativa* (in *De seculo et religione*). As Witt mentions, he promoted the comprehension of historical context with his letters by including historical references and fostering propaganda for the state of Florence. As Ullman observes, Salutati is a man ahead of his time, reflecting the future of Humanism and the Renaissance, while maintaining medieval interests with his pious

references not only in his letters, but in his work *De seculo et religione*. In other words, he represents an interesting point on the barometer between these very distinct intellectual movements – not necessarily one or the other, he embodies characteristics of both. Perhaps instead of discounting the work of this highly appointed scholar, we should note the bravery entailed by the intellectual pursuits of such a pious man – willing to take on such daunting subjects as those mentioned above while maintaining ties to an often restrictive faith.

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- Bruni, Leonardo
- Chrysoloras, Manuel
- Council of Ferrara, Florence, and Basel
- Humanism
- Petrarch
- Philology, Renaissance

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Salviati, Giorgio Benigno

Born: 1444/1446, Srebrenica

Died: 1520, Barletta

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Abstract

Giorgio Benigno Salviati (Juraj Dragišić) was a Franciscan philosopher and theologian who lived between the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century. Despite being a little-known figure among the Renaissance humanists, he got in touch with some of the most important intellectuals and politicians of his time (Cardinal Bessarion, Federico da Montefeltro, Lorenzo de' Medici, Girolamo Savonarola, Johannes Reuchlin) and took part in important philosophical debates, such as the Plato-Aristotle controversy, the disputes concerning the *futura contingencia* and the nature of the angels, the quarrel about Savonarola's prophecies, and the controversy on the destruction of the Jewish books.

Alternate Names

Dragišić, Juraj; Benignus, Georgius; Benignus de Salviatis, Georgius; de Argentina, Georgius; Benignus de Feliciis, Georgius; Georgius Graecus de Bosnia

Biography

Giorgio Benigno Salviati, born Juraj Dragišić, was a Franciscan philosopher and theologian who was born in Srebrenica (lat. *Argentina*) between 1444 and 1446. In 1463, the Ottoman

invasion forced him to flee to Dubrovnik and then to Ferrara, where he entered the monastery of the Holy Spirit as deacon; he studied in Ferrara, Padua, Pavia, and later in the universities of Paris and Oxford, and, among his teachers, there was also the famous English Scotist John Foxal (Etzkorn 1989). On 18 March 1469, he was ordained, and, in the fall, he moved to Rome, where he got in touch with Cardinal Bessarion and became part of his cultural circle.

In 1469–1470 he wrote the so-called *Defensorium Bessarionis*, a treatise, now lost, composed in defense of Bessarion against George of Trebizond; because of his contribution, the Cardinal named him *Benignus* (Monfasani 1981). Bessarion is also one of the characters in his dialogue concerning the *futura contingencia*, *De libertate et immutabilitate Dei*, written in 1471 (Etzkorn 1997). When Bessarion passed away, in 1472, S. moved to Urbino as rector of the local *Studium generale*; there, he became the official tutor of Guidobaldo, Federico da Montefeltro's son. During his stay in Federico's court, he composed two dialogues, the *De communicatione divinae naturae*, about the mystery of the Trinity, and the *Fridericus, sive de animae regni principe*. In the latter, S. explains the relationship between soul, reason, and will, arguing that will is superior to reason and controls the soul (Sojat 1972).

In 1485, 3 years after Federico's death, S. left Urbino and moved to Florence, where he was adopted by the Salviati family and was appointed professor of theology at the *Studium*. While in Florence, he wrote several books, the *Dialectica nova* (a handbook of logic), the *Septem et septuaginta in opuscolo Magistri Nicolai de Mirabilibus reperta mirabilia* (a treatise about the cause of evil written against the Dominican Nicholas de Mirabilibus), and the *Opus septem illustrium quaestionum* (a theological commentary on Lorenzo de' Medici's sonnet *Lo spirito talora a sè ridotto*; Vasoli 1985), and a dialogue on the nature of the angels (*De natura angelica*) dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, which is still unpublished.

In 1494, after Lorenzo's death and the fall of his son Piero, S. was involved in the repression of the supporters of the Medici family, was forced to leave Florence, and repaired to Dubrovnik; one of his most famous works, the *Propheticae solutiones*, dates to the period of his exile. It deals with the question of the authenticity of Savonarola's prophecies: S. claims that, although the only authentic prophecies are those of the Old Testament regarding Jesus Christ, new prophecies are still possible after Christ's death and resurrection and that Savonarola's prophecies are reliable and trustworthy (Garfagnini 1989; Vasoli 1989). At the same time, he also wrote another dialogue called *De natura angelica*, which was printed in Florence in 1499. Here the debate focuses on the characteristics of the angels and their actions and hierarchy and on the relationships between humans and angels.

In 1500 S. returned to Italy, where he was granted important scientific and ecclesiastic positions. In 1505 he was designated rector of the Franciscan Order in Austria, in 1506 he became professor of theology in the *Studium Urbis*, and between 1507 and 1509 he was a member of a delegation to the court of Emperor Maximilian I, to whom he dedicated his *Vexillum christianae victoriae*. In 1507 S. was nominated bishop of Cagli and in 1512 he became archbishop of Nazareth, whose see was then located in the Apulian town Barletta. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, it is also probable that S. revised and divulged Blessed Amadeus' prophetic treatise *Apocalypsis nova* (Vasoli 1969, 1970; Morisi 1970).

In the 1510s, S. was involved in the quarrel about the destruction of Jewish books, especially the *Talmud*. In 1509 Emperor Maximilian I proclaimed that all Jewish books had to be confiscated and suppressed, but the German humanist Johannes Reuchlin opposed his decision; in 1517 S. published a dialogue called *Defensio Johannis Reuchlin*, in which Reuchlin argues that the *Talmud* cannot be destroyed and could even be useful for Christians wishing to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Holy Scripture.

He passed away in 1520, probably in his episcopal see at Barletta.

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Sambucus

► [Zsámboky, János](#)

Sánchez, Francisco

Born: 1551 Tuy

Died: 1623 Toulouse

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Abstract

Francisco Sánchez (1551–1623) was a physician, philosopher, and author of *Quod nihil scitur* (*That Nothing Is Known* in its most accepted translation). He was an original thinker and also a predecessor of Descartes. The use of the methodical doubt by the French comes directly from Sánchez. He also coined the term *methodus sciendi* (scientific method), a half-century before it was popularized by Francis Bacon. It is a term that will largely determine the philosophical paths of the history of thought from the seventeenth century onwards. Francisco Sánchez and his

philosophical writings are much more important and original than previously acknowledged. Despite his writings and his work as a doctor or as a singular philosopher and interpreter of skepticism, the question of his biographical analysis distracted the attention of most scholars. Sanchez's biography, although important, is not essential in the analysis of the intellectual or philosophical composition of his books. More important to our understanding of Sánchez as a philosopher are the aspects of his scientific or epistemological critiques as well as his use of skepticism that made him an evolutionary step in the development of skepticism in the Renaissance and in the history of philosophy.

Biography

Francisco Sánchez was born in Tuy, in the region of Galicia (Spain), in 1551, to a family of converted Jews. Although originally given as 1550, baptism records indicate that Sánchez was baptized on June 25 1551, in San Juan Church in Braga. It is therefore thought that Sánchez was born in 1551 rather than 1550 since many scholars consider unlikely such a lengthy delay between his birth and baptism.

The original homeland of Sánchez is also unclear. Many Lusitanian intellectuals and researchers have argued that Sánchez was actually Portuguese or, at least, should be considered Portuguese based on some data and documents about his birth. Raimundo Delassus, Sánchez's disciple, thought that his master was Portuguese because he was baptized in the diocese of Braga. Nevertheless, documentary evidence clearly indicates that Sánchez was born in Tuy, which, despite being under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the diocese of Braga at that time, is in Galicia. Sánchez himself declared his Spanish origin by signing with his own hand in the enrollment document of entry to the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Montpellier: "*Ego, Franciscus Sanctius, hispanus, natus in civitate Tudensi.*"

The conclusion to which we inevitably arrive is that Francisco Sánchez was born in Tuy, Spain,

and was baptized in the diocese of Braga, Portugal. He received the sacrament of baptism in Valença do Minho, a town across the Minho River (and the modern border between Spain and Portugal) from Tuy where Sánchez's family used to have friends and relatives.

Aside from the author's place of birth, for most of his life, Sánchez lived in France and, to a lesser extent, Italy. On the other hand, it is necessary to point out that Sánchez was conscious of his Hispanic origin, which is not an impediment to playing down the relevance that in an author such as Sanchez his origin may have.

Around 1562, Sánchez emigrated to Bordeaux with his family, where he attended the renowned college of Guyenne. Before this date and his departure to France, his life and academic preparation are obscure. Bordeaux was, in those years, a city that hosted a wide range of Jewish people and was a city known for its tolerance as well as being full of open-minded, liberal people. The college of Guyenne was an organization sponsored by people from the Jewish community and newly converted Christians; we cannot suppose that they kept any sort of activity related to the so-called Judaic Spirit (among the features that define the "Jewish spirit" in the sixteenth century, there would be a tendency to be reserved, a somewhat suspicious attitude, absent of patriotism, and a detachment from Christian customs). It seems that Francisco Sánchez's father, Antonio Sánchez, either converted to Christianity or was descended from Jewish converts. Curiously, Antonio Sánchez's brother-in-law, Antonio López, was the brother-in-law of Montaigne's father; thus, Sánchez and Montaigne, two of the biggest exponents of the skepticism in the Renaissance, were related.

Sánchez's journey to Bordeaux was probably motivated by anti-Jewish persecution in Spain and Portugal. The Sánchez family was no longer Jewish, but in this period, many converted Jews were considered "false Christians," and the society's pressure could become stifling. It is unclear how much Francisco Sánchez was influenced by Judaism, if at all, and this question seems very difficult to establish.

Religious beliefs cannot be perceived easily; they belong to the deepest intimacy and the character of every person. In a period like this, marked by intolerance, people hid their rites as a necessity imposed by law. This was especially true for people like Sánchez, whose ancestors linked him directly with the Jewish people. On the one hand, we have a number of details that connected Sánchez with Judaism or Crypto-Judaism, which was extensive in scale around the whole of Europe in the sixteenth century. On the other hand, in his public life, Sánchez never showed any sign that could cast doubt on the sincerity of his Catholic faith. Nothing in his works could make us doubt his adherence to Catholicism. In addition, it is significant to point out that two of his sons dedicated their lives to the priesthood.

The atmosphere of the college of Guyenne where Sánchez had studied during his stay in Bordeaux was quite peculiar. His professors were likely demanding and possibly even quite intransigent in the application of the most rigorous methods of philological humanism. This first training was of paramount importance to Sánchez's intellectual maturation. The college of Guyenne worshipped both classical antiquity and an approximation to investigation free of prejudices, attempting to distance Sánchez and his classmates to any kind of scientific dogmatism. It was in this early period of the author's formation when an emergent interest in the study of nature was planted in his mind.

After his father's and uncle's death in Bordeaux in 1570, Sánchez went to Rome in 1571, where he had some relatives and where he remained until 1573. It was in Rome, at Università di "La Sapienza," where he obtained his doctorate degree in philosophy. His training as a doctor and philosopher had here a deciding momentum. The studies of medicine were being completely renewed in Italy thanks to the great progress in anatomy and physiology. Galenic medicine, which had been reinforced with Arabic advances in medicine, was, up to the Renaissance, a practically sacred school and covered much more than medical issues; it was also a real conception of the

world, nature, and the human being. However, when Galenism went into crisis in that period, Sánchez showed one of the strongest characteristics of his character: the opposition to any sort of authority and tradition that moved away from empiricism in natural issues including medical ones. The only effective authority which Sánchez recognized was the one of nature, against the authority of the masters of the past.

In Rome, Sánchez initiated contact with the most important intellectual circles from the period and met Cristóbal Clavio, who was a celebrated mathematician; they became very close friends. Sánchez, probably, alternated between studies of philosophy and medicine. While in Rome, he also met his old childhood friend from Tuy, Diego de Castro, who took part in the Battle of Lepanto. Sánchez's works, *Carmen de cometa* and *Quod nihil scitur*, were dedicated to him.

Sánchez returned to France in 1573 and he registered at the Université de Montpellier, whose fame as a school of medicine was recognized throughout Europe. The atmosphere in this city was not as tolerant as in Bordeaux. Huguenots controlled the city and were hostile to the Catholic minority. Nevertheless, Sánchez managed to become a doctor in medicine on June 4, 1574. Sánchez was forced to leave Montpellier following the rejection by the university hierarchy of Sánchez's application to one of the chairs of the Medicine faculty. Part of the critics considered that the decision to reject Sánchez's application was enormously influenced by the fact that he was not only Catholic but also suspicious of having Hebrew ancestries. Moreover, the atmosphere of intransigence in Montpellier was not suited to Sánchez's antiauthoritarian temperament.

It was after his failure at Montpellier that Sánchez went to Toulouse, where he spent the rest of his life working as a professor at the Université de Toulouse. It was in Toulouse where he obtained fame, fortune, and admiration.

During the first years of his stay in Toulouse, Sánchez wrote part of his philosophical work. At the same time, his thought was beginning to take shape and develop in the sense that marked his

entire life. It was in January of 1581, the same year *Quod nihil scitur* appeared, that he started to work in the hospital of Santiago, in Toulouse. In 1585, thanks to his work and his personal value, he was designated Professor of Philosophy in the Arts Faculty at the Université de Toulouse. In 1610, after a brilliant examination, Sánchez finally achieved the position of Professor of Medicine. He maintained the position until his death, on November 15, 1623.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

A feature that should be discussed regarding Sánchez's philosophical stance is the influence of Jewish culture in his work. In order to analyze this hypothetical Jewish legacy, one of the elements that stand out is that the *Laus deo virginique Mariae* which appeared at the end of most of his works and writings is not included in two of the most important ones: *Quod nihil scitur* and *Carmen de cometa*.

The praise to Virgin Mary had his importance and it was included in a great part of the works of his time. *Quod nihil scitur* appeared in Lyon in 1581 but, according to the author himself, was written 7 years before. *Carmen de cometa* was written in 1578. Both books were early works from a period in which Sánchez might have kept the influence of his father, Antonio Sánchez, and his uncle, Adán Francisco. The absence of the praise to the Virgin could be due to close proximity to the beliefs that were abandoned by his family not many generations before. Nevertheless, Sánchez's real religious beliefs, in those early years of his philosophical maturation, cannot be known with total certainty. Furthermore, the personal development of the author once he was accepted in the Toulouse community, having gained prestige among the citizens, led him to a stronger assimilation with Catholicism, a belief by which he was forced to leave Montpellier.

It seems that the philosophical Jewish tradition left its mark in some elements of Sánchez's thought, especially in his first works. There are

some questions, for example, the critic of the analysis of names as the base of the philosophical investigation. One of Sánchez's accusations was that the whole history of philosophy could be summarized in vacuous crossroads of words. Instead of occupying their time in the direct investigation of nature, most philosophers had decided to waste their time being worried only about words, erecting a huge building of concepts that constituted the fabric of a fictitious unreal world external to nature. Sánchez accused Aristotle of being the first one who confused nature with words because he based all his philosophical theories on the definitions of words. Here appeared another coincidence with the Jewish world: the philosophical Sephardic tradition did not recognize the link between nature and language. Language was based on convention, not on nature; it is because of that that the meaning of the words did not reflect the real nature of things. In the same way, Francisco Sánchez denied the ability of words to reflect the real nature of things, due to the fact that the different languages are arbitrary and the fruit of convention. Words that formed the language cannot constitute a reliable source of information about the true and last essence of the object that they mention.

The influence of Judaism is more than probable. Almost certainly, Sánchez drank from the source of Jewish philosophy in which he was born and developed himself as a thinker. Jewish thought had a place in Sánchez's work in the sense that its ideas were used in the negation of the possibility of knowledge, which was Sánchez's goal. On the other hand, it is necessary to avoid exaggerations or dogmatic assertions. Jewish thought, however it was present in his work, was not a crucial element in his philosophy because of the innovative and radically new character of his books and because of Sánchez's philosophical orientation, which was, on the one hand, markedly scientific and, on the other hand, a different study of nature.

Philosophical Works

Francisco Sánchez wrote two philosophical books: *Carmen de cometa* in 1578 and *Quod*

nihil scitur in 1581 (written 7 years before according to Sánchez's testimony), both edited in Lyon. The importance of the latter is greater than any of Sánchez's other works. *Quod nihil scitur* was a preface, a statement of intent to introduce his philosophy. In this book, there were several promises of other books that would complete his philosophical vision.

The importance of this book increases when we acknowledge that it offers a new way of understanding science and knowledge. Sánchez was the first philosopher who proposed and spoke about a *methodus sciendi* (method of science) years before Francis Bacon wrote his *Novum Organum* (a work that was in the same direction and had an equal pursuit to that of *Quod nihil scitur*, but enjoyed much more success). This fact itself should have placed Sánchez in a more prominent position in the history of philosophy.

After Sánchez's death, his sons and his disciple, Delassus, published his other works of philosophical themes: *De longitudine et brevitate vitae liber*, *In librum Aristotelis Physiognomicon commentarius*, and *De divinatione per somnum, ad Aristotelem*, all published in Toulouse in 1636 under the title *Opera medica*, – a great work that included Sánchez's medical and philosophical treatises. All philosophical books written by Sánchez, excluding the medical treatises, appeared in 1649 in Rotterdam in an edition entitled *Quod nihil scitur*. In order to have a complete panorama of Sánchez's philosophical works, a letter found in 1940 entitled *Epistula ad C. Clavium*, addressed to his friend Cristóbal Clavio and signed with the false name of Carnéades, must be included. Other philosophical books which were promised but were never produced include: *Examen rerum*, *De anima*, *Libri Naturae*, and *De modo sciendi* or *Methodus sciendi*, the last of which was destined to be the most important of all had it been written. Sánchez promised to include his theory about science and knowledge in this book, but he never wrote it.

Thus, we can say that Sánchez's most important book was *Quod nihil scitur*. It showed the philosophical stance of the author and it deserves an important position in the history of thought.

Innovative and Original Aspects

A book such as *Quod nihil scitur* has countless problems and references, which are challenges not only for readers but even, it seems, for Sánchez. There is a wide range of philosophical questioning. Thus, there are intrinsic limitations in the analysis of Sánchez's work.

Before starting to enquire whether it is possible for a human being to achieve any sort of knowledge, Sánchez claimed that it was necessary to create a *tabula rasa* ridding the concepts learned during the futile and tedious scholastic *iter*. This critical "cleaning process" of the spirit, which consisted of "questioning everything as if no one had ever said anything" (as Sánchez wrote in *Quod nihil scitur*), presented some analogies with the methodical doubt which was later the basis of Descartes' speculation in *Discourse on the Method*. For Sánchez, however, doubt, even having a radical scope, is considered and analyzed exclusively in relation to science and wisdom.

In his battle in favor of doubt and against the unconditional acceptance of the authority's opinion, Sánchez chose the question as to the prime ally. Questions are shown as the best weapon to fight against the language of his contemporary peripatetic philosophers. Questions are absolutely superior to whatever kind of articulation of thesis and synthesis, due to their natural ability to instill doubt in the listener. The fact is that asking ourselves "who can say something is true of all that was, is, or will be?" presents a superior range when compared to the simple negation of whatever certain fact related to the past, the present, or the future. And this is so because it places the individual in the face of *variae hominum opiniones* and involves at the same time the scientific nature (or according to Sánchez, no scientific nature), and it goes further, leading to a critical reflection about itself.

Sánchez turned back at his own past and confirmed that what he thought was "science" proved nothing else but simple ignorance. He had no more choices, but claiming that "I don't even know this: I know nothing. I suspect, however, that neither I nor the others." In spite of the patent self-contradiction, of which Sánchez is

completely aware, this formula is the fundamental idea in the *Quod Nihil Scitur*. This formula already announces the abandonment of Pyrrhonism and the approximation to the negative dogmatism of Plato's Academy under the stewardship of Arcesilas and Carneades (which is, probably, what is best suited to Sánchez's philosophical stance). Nevertheless, Sánchez did not hesitate to use arguments taken from Pyrrho. The fact that there are Pyrrhonian and academic elements intertwined may lead some to think of some sort of Sanchezian eclecticism, but the truth is Sánchez's lack of clarity and his overall strategy to destroy the wisdom of his time made him to turn to any theory or concept which could help him in his purpose.

Among the several doctrines that Sánchez used, the one which had more scope in *Quod Nihil Scitur* was the negative dogmatism that opened and closed the work and was even present in the title itself. Sánchez claimed that we cannot know anything with certainty, although it is possible to continue with the tireless search for the truth in spite of the difficulty of achieving any goal. That is not an obstacle for Sánchez to say that he is confident to establish a certain and easy science. This stance is far from Pyrrhonism, and closer to the academic skepticism, that showed the impossibility of the perfect knowledge and admitted a plausible knowledge that approaches to certainty.

On the aim of the book which constituted the *pars construens* of Sánchez's thought, that is, to find what was the "*methodus sciendi*," there is no more than the promise. It is clear what it is that Sánchez understood by method of knowledge by taking what he claimed several times in his book: if a human being wants to know something, compatible with his abilities, it is necessary to carry out a conversion. This conversion required the thinker to abandon the previous conception of knowledge where truth was in the words of the great philosophers of the past and replace it with a personal and free inquiry of reality. On the one hand, the examination of reality is likely Sánchez's main goal. On the other hand, however, it is absolutely impossible to reconstruct, except in broad terms, what Sánchez understood as his

method. The method he proposed was based on experimentation and judgment and was barely developed. In fact, how can we even try to study the reality after the radical demolition of any possibility of knowledge? For Sánchez, the only thing that can be claimed is that this demolition should be made in the mind of the scientists, the professors, and the teachers.

Impact and Legacy

Being very interested in science, Sánchez started to use the concept of scientific method long before this idea was taken into account in the intellectual circles. His work was partially silenced by the vicissitudes of history that any text has to suffer; furthermore, it was not as successful as it could have been due to the fact that it was written in Latin. Menéndez Pelayo said that Sánchez was more quoted than read, which is a sad assessment for an author as original and provoking as him.

Skepticism marks the evolution of the scientific model. Modern science is the heir to the recovery of skepticism in the Renaissance due to its necessity of providing acceptable reasons to the critiques that were made to reason, understanding, and perception through skepticism. After all, doubt and the ability to question, typical features of human beings, are inserted in the deepest part of the personality of each individual. We cannot allow this ability to rule over us due to the high risk of being mentally inactive, as we can see in the Buridan's donkey example – a donkey being tied at the same distance from a container full of water and another one full of food; as it didn't feel much starving than thirsty, it did not eat or drink anything and, finally, it died.

It is not an insignificant fact that Sánchez published in 1581 a book with a remarkable skeptical tendency. It is not that Sánchez, out of the blue, wanted to use skeptical tropes and arguments of the academic skepticism. It needed a long process of assimilation, as well as the appearance of a new generation of thinkers willing to use these techniques in their critiques. Other thinkers who were in touch with the skepticism in the sixteenth century, such as Gianfrancesco Pico or Cornelius Agrippa, adopted a fideistic attitude by

placing faith and revelation before any other possibility of knowledge. This critique was integrated within the religious framework; Sánchez's critique was more focused in the aim of obtaining a general vision of the reality of the epistemic possibilities and its reflection was guided towards the investigation of a *methodus sciendi*.

Cross-References

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- [Sánchez, Francisco](#)
- [Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of](#)

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Sanctorius

Born: 29 March 1561, Capodistria, Venetian Republic (now Koper)

Died: 22 February 1636, Venice

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Abstract

Sanctorius was an important Renaissance physician and physiologist. He is best known for his role in developing experimental medicine and incorporating instruments of quantification

like the thermometer into clinical medicine, and he is considered the founder of metabolic studies. Engaging in an extended period of self-experimentation, Sanctorius employed a specifically designed weighing device to measure his ingestion, excretion, and body weight under different conditions over the course of 30 years, using this data to quantify insensible perspiration, the perspiration occurring through respiration and the pores.

Synonyms

Sanctorius Sanctorius; Santorio Sanctorius; Santorio Santorio

Biography

Santorio Santorio (Sanctorius) was born on March 29, 1561 in Capodistria, the capital of Istria (also known by its Roman name of Justinopolis), which was under Venetian rule at the time. His father was a Friulian nobleman who was a high-ranking official in the Venetian Republic, and his mother was from a wealthy and noble Istrian family. Sanctorius was educated in Capodistria and Venice before enrolling in 1575 at the University of Padua, where he studied philosophy, mathematics, and medicine. Between obtaining his medical degree in 1582 and establishing a medical practice in Venice in 1599, he seems to have spent time in Croatia as a personal physician to a local nobleman. From 1611 to 1624, he was professor of theoretical medicine at the University of Padua. Sanctorius was part of a circle that included Galileo. Upon retirement, he was honored with the permanent title of professor and an annual pension. He moved to Venice, where, in 1630, he became president of the Venetian College of Physicians and Chief Health Officer. Sanctorius died in 1636 (Eknayan 1999; Grmek 2008).

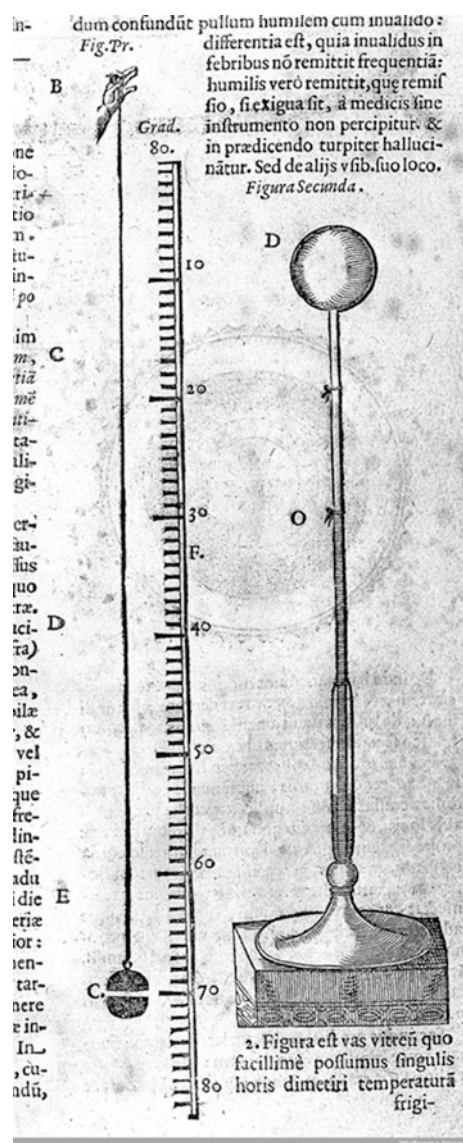
Heritage and Rupture

Sanctorius was trained in the ancient humoral medical theory inherited by the Renaissance, and

he gave lectures on Hippocrates, Galen, and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), publishing commentaries on their works (Sanctorius 1629, 1612, 1626). The four humors were black bile (melancholy), yellow bile (choler), blood, and phlegm. The proportion of humors within an individual affected temperament and health. Illness was linked to humoral imbalance, and medical therapy concentrated on achieving balance through diet and purgation. Heat and moisture were central to this medical theory: the humors, which corresponded to the four elements, were categorized as hot or cold and moist or dry, as were foods; digestion was believed to occur through the action of heat; and attention was paid to the innate or radical heat and moisture of the body. Although Sanctorius worked within the humoral tradition, he stressed sensory observation and reason over the authority of Galen, Hippocrates, Aristotle, and others (Grmek 2008). Sanctorius diverged significantly from Aristotelian natural philosophy and Galenic medicine in comparing the body to a clock, using a mechanical – rather than organic – metaphor, and in stressing the importance of mathematical properties (number, position, form), traditionally considered accidental, over qualities and essences (Van Helden 1995; Grmek 2008).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Sanctorius made original contributions to medicine through his experimentation and use of quantitative instruments (Eknoyan 1999; Lemmer 2015; Bigotti 2016). He invented devices to measure more precisely the pulse (with the pulsilogium), humidity (with the hygrometer), and temperature that were so important in humoral medicine. He is a key figure in the history of the development of the thermometer (Wright 2016). While Galileo seems to have designed an earlier air thermometer, Sanctorius appears to have been the first to add a numerical scale and to use it in clinical medicine (Grmek 2008) (see Fig. 1). In addition to his role in instrument invention, refinement, and application, Sanctorius is most famous for his study of *perspiratio insensibilis* (insensible perspiration) –

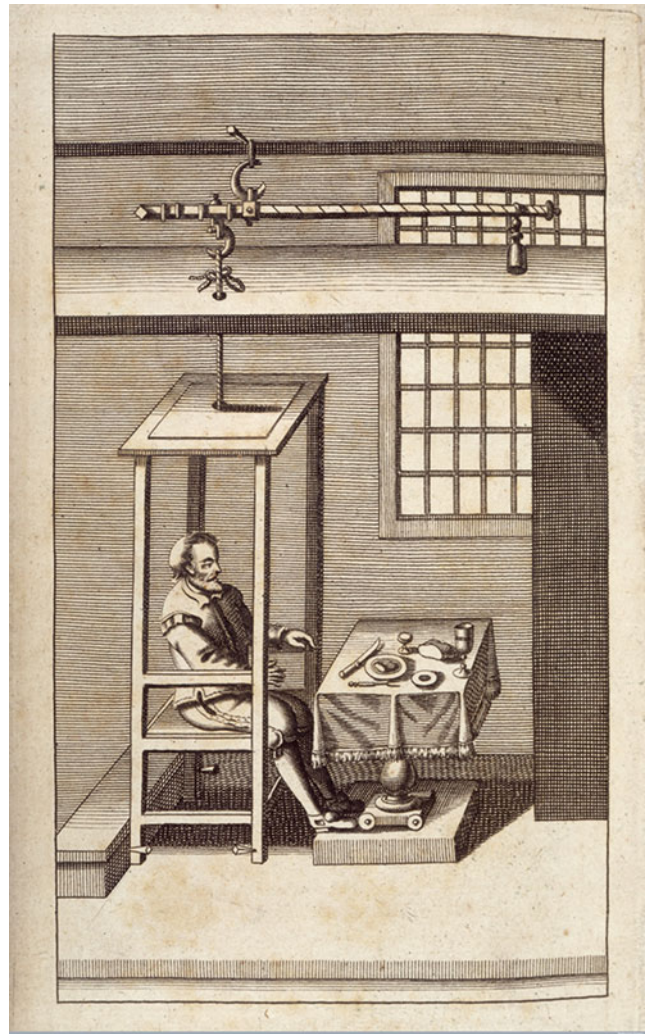


Sanctorius, Fig. 1 Sanctorius's pulsilogium (left) and thermometer (right) from his *Commentaria in primam Fen primi libri Canonis Avicennae*, 1626 (Courtesy of the Wellcome Library, London)

excretion through the pores and respiration – for which he is considered the founder of the study of metabolism (Eknoyan 1999). Although insensible perspiration was an ancient concept, Sanctorius undertook to measure it through an extended period of self-experimentation, claiming in an address to the reader that this had not yet been attempted by any philosopher or physician

Sanctorius,

Fig. 2 Sanctorius's weighing chair. From the frontispiece to John Quincy's 1718 translation of *Medicina Statica* (Courtesy of the Wellcome Library, London)



(Sanctorius 1676; Renbourn 1960). Over the course of 30 years he weighed himself, what he ingested, and his feces and urine, employing a specially designed weighing chair, thereby putting the balance to a new use (Dacome 2001) (see Fig. 2). In an early example of the application of mathematics to medicine associated with the iatromathematical school, Sanctorius determined the ratio of insensible perspiration to sensible evacuation under various conditions, observing that the amount of the former exceeded that of the latter, thus foregrounding its importance to health

(Eknoyan 1999; Bigotti 2016). He considered the effect of air and water, meat and drink, sleep and vigilance, exercise and rest, sexual activity, and the emotions – the nonnaturals of humoral medicine – on perspiration and body weight.

Sanctorius presented his findings as a collection of aphorisms in *Ars de statica medicina*, first published in 1614. In 1615, Ippolito Obizzi (Hippolytus Obicius) challenged Sanctorius in his *Staticomastix*, prompting a response in Sanctorius' second edition of his book (Grmek 2008), which was reprinted about 40 times into the eighteenth

century, and translated into English in 1676, Italian in 1704, French in 1722, and German in 1736 (Kuriyama 2008). Martin Lister, Giorgio Baglivi, and John Quincy, among others, provided commentaries on Sanctorius's highly influential book; references to Sanctorian perspiration appeared in a wide range of eighteenth-century discussions – about the resurrection of the body (Dacome 2006) and vegetarianism (Albala 2002), for example – and efforts were made by a new generation of weight watchers to improve his weighing device and repeat his experiments in different climates (Dacome 2012). Of Sanctorius, Kuriyama (2008) suggests that he was the first “to urge some vital connection between the numbers read off a scale and a person's state of being” (416), and Wear (1981) writes that in his “reduction of occult forces and properties to three-dimensionality” he “pre-figured, unconsciously, the mood of the new science of the seventeenth century” (256). He also influenced the later iatrophysical school and has been described as an important precursor of modern medical physics (Duck 2014).

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Sanctorius Sanctorius

- [Sanctorius](#)

Sanderson, Robert

Born: 19 September 1587, Sheffield

Died: 29 January 1663, Buckden Palace

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Abstract

In 1615, Robert Sanderson, then an Oxford college tutor of logic, was the author of a very popular textbook representative of the contemporary university teaching in this instrumental art of philosophy. However, he was not a philosopher by career, but an influential cleric in the Church of England. Sanderson spent much of his life as the rector of Boothby Pagnell, Lincolnshire, and received the bishopric of Lincoln in his later years. He was a convinced anti-Puritan, but also a convinced anti-Arminian. A famous preacher, his sermons, though influenced by the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, gained him nonetheless William Laud's favor and Charles I's protection. In the second half of the 1640s, as the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, he proposed original argumentation on the topics of natural law, obligation, and conscience. His correspondence in the 1650s on problems of decision-making in cases of conscience, published posthumously, also constitutes a crucial milestone in the history of Anglican moral theology and casuistry.

Biography

The descendant of an old family of Yorkshire, Robert Sanderson, born in Sheffield on 19 September 1587, was educated at Rotherham Grammar School. At 13, having made great advances in the Greek and Latin languages, he was admitted to Lincoln College, Oxford, by Richard Kilby, one of the translators of KJB. Given his young age, he did not matriculate until

1 July 1603. He graduated B.A. on 23 January 1605 and was elected a Lincoln Fellow in May 1606. He usually studied philosophers and classic authors 11 hours a day. Walton's *Life of Dr. Sanderson* reports that in his old age he was still able to recite all of Cicero's *De Officiis*, his main reading with Aristotle's *Rhetorics* and Aquinas's *Secunda secundae*. Having proceeded M.A. on 20 October 1607, he was elected Logic Reader on 7 November 1608. A few years later, he was admitted to holy orders (2 September 1611, deacon; 8 March 1612, priest) by John King, Bishop of London. He prepared for a B.D. degree, studying John Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis* with much care and applauding its conformity with Augustine. Sub-Rector of his college in 1613–1614 and 1616, he was chosen Senior Proctor of the University on 10 April 1616. All that time he had continued to teach philosophy at Lincoln. His lectures on logic, *Artis Logicae Compendium*, the most popular and influential textbook in seventeenth-century British universities, particularly at Oxford where it was on the colleges' reading lists for decades, was published in 1615. The manuscript of his *Physicae Scientiae Compendium*, presumably methodized in the same period, remained unpublished. With these two manuals, he intended to represent the division between the instrumental disciplines of philosophy and the sciences which are its theoretical parts. He was one of the first in England to organize a logic textbook according to the three acts of the mind. The function of logic was for him to direct these acts, simple concept, composition/division, and discourse (the most perfect, split into argumentation, and method or order). Although his doctrine of proposition summarized the medieval supposition theory, the brief history of logic exposed in appendix did not insist on fourteenth-century terminism. The key assertion was the preeminence of Peripatetic logic over Ramist and Lullist logics. His abridgment of the science of physics was Aristotelian too, ending with a doctrine of the soul and its faculties.

He gained his B.D. degree on 19 May 1617 and was licensed to preach. His clerical career began in May 1618, when his relative Sir Nicholas Sanderson presented him to the rectory of

Wyberton. He was also granted by dispensation the vicarage of Heckington. The place proving unhealthy to him, he soon surrendered his Wyberton office. On 6 May 1619, he resigned his Fellowship. On 8 July 1619, with the patronage of Thomas Harrington, esquire, he became rector of Boothby Pagnell, a living which he would conserve for over 40 years. Tobias Matthew, Archbishop of York, allotted him a prebend of Southwell Collegiate Church. He was also made chaplain to George Montaigne, Bishop of Lincoln. From then, he was regularly elected as a clerk on all the Church of England Convocations. In 1619 or 1620, he married Ann, daughter of Henry Nelson, rector of Haugham, with whom he would have three sons and two daughters. He soon became a prominent preacher with a variety of audiences: members of clergy on bishop's visitations; judges at the Assizes; crowds of faithful. Published in scattered order from 1622 to 1635, four sermons *Ad Clerum* from 17 April 1619 at St Botolph's, Boston, the parish of the Puritan John Cotton, to 22 August 1634, on William Laud's metropolitanical visitation at Grantham, three *Ad Magistratum* from 11 June 1623 at Grantham to 4 August 1625 at Lincoln, and seven *Ad Populum* from 27 February 1620 at Grantham to 6 May 1632 at St Paul's Cross were collected in 1637 and reissued in 1657. In his visitation sermons, Arminianism was portrayed in 1619 as semi-Pelagianism; in 1621, Calvinist predestination was claimed to be the "true" and "necessary" doctrine. In 1625, the year of Charles I's succession to James I, he seized the opportunity of the Convocation on which he was a clerk to state his position with regard to the Arminian controversy caused by Richard Montague's *A New Gagg for an Old Goose* and his *Appello Caesarem* in reply to John Heigham's Catholic pamphlet against the Anglican Church, *The Gagge of the Reformed Gospel*. The "peace of the Church" was his essential concern. His manuscript *Pax Ecclesiae* (published in 1678) insisted that the public controversy generated the risk of a "dangerous schism" within the Anglican Church. In this controversy over the Anglican Church's adhesion to Calvinist predestination, he rejected the identification of Calvinism with Puritanism and of

Arminianism with Catholicism, and pleaded for a middle way between two extremes, "rigid" Calvinism and "quarter-Pelagian" Arminianism. In defense of Calvinism against the accusation of Puritanism, he advocated the tutelary figures of the anti-Presbyterian John Whitgift and Richard Hooker (the Preface to the 1657 edition of his *Sermons* would advocate them again). Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* had a significant influence on his position.

On 3 September 1629, he was installed into the prebendship of Farrendon-cum-Balderton in Lincoln Cathedral by John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln. Laud, Bishop of London and Chancellor of the University of Oxford, although he advantaged the altar's sacraments over the preacher's pulpit, praised the casuistical expertise of his sermons. On his recommendation, he was given a royal chaplaincy in ordinary in November 1631. From then, he preached many Court sermons. Sixteen sermons *Ad Aulam*, from November 1631 at Whitehall to Charles I's detainment in 1647–1648 at Newport, Isle of Wight, were published for the first time in 1656 together with three new sermons *Ad Magistratum* and one *Ad Populum*. He became the favorite preacher of Charles I, who declared that he carried his conscience, not his ears as for ordinary preachers, to his sermons. In 1633, he was recommended to the rectory of Muston, Leicestershire, by the MP George Manners, seventh Earl of Rutland, and instituted with the King's patronage. He attended the royal visits at Belvoir Castle, a near place, in 1634 and 1636. He was those years a member of the Great Tew Circle, a group of Anglicans concerned with the lack of unity of their Church, who had meetings at Lucius Cary's house. During a royal visit to the University of Oxford in August 1636, he graduated D.D. The same year, he took part in the Sabbath observance debates roused by Charles I's decision in 1633 to impose James I's *Book of Sports*. He sided with the King's party, claiming that Sunday was not a divine institution, and lawful recreation could be used. He supported the "Etcetera Oath" introduced by the 1640 Convocation, but disapproved of its compulsory imposition. Although he had dedicated to Laud his 1635 edition of *Two Sermons*, he did not

conform to Laud's outlawing of predestinarian preaching, nor did he concur with his "beauty of holiness" program of ceremonial innovations for reforming the Church worship. Laud, however, charged him in 1641 to revise the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). From March to mid-May 1641, he also was among the members of the sub-committee nominated by the Committee of Religion installed by the Parliament about doctrinal and liturgical matters. From 1642, he held the Beekingham prebend of Southwell. In July 1642, he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford University in succession to John Prideaux, who was made Bishop of Worcester. The canonry of Christ Church was appended to his Divinity Professorship. Yet the civil war outbreking in August prevented him to take up his chair at that moment. In June 1643, he was among the nine Episcopalians nominated by the Long Parliament, together with Presbyterians, Independents, and Erastians, to reform the Church of England. Out of loyalty to Charles I, he sat not in this Westminster Assembly and rejected the Solemn League and Covenant adopted on 25 September 1643. His benefice at Boothby Pagnell was sequestered in 1644. He was for a time imprisoned at Lincoln, to be exchanged with the rector of Allington, the Puritan Robert Clark, prisoner of the King's garrison at Newark. In 1646, after Charles I left Oxford, his headquarters since 1642, he took up his chair of Regius Professor of Divinity. He delivered his Inaugural Lecture on 26 October 1646 and read at the Divinity School during Michaelmas Term seven Latin lectures on the obligation of oaths, published the following year. In 1647, he read ten Latin lectures on conscience and the obligation of human laws as grounded in the primary and absolute obligation of the law of God. The two sets of these lectures on oaths and on conscience constituted in the early 1660s an essential source for Locke's *Essays on the Law of Nature*. Conscience was not defined in the ordinary Thomistic sense of a mental act, but as a natural or innate habit enabling the human mind to apply by reasoning to particular actions self-evident practical principles or common notions. A good intention, good examples, or the authority of experienced men cannot

constitute "the adequate rule of conscience." Only the *voluntas signi* of God, which the "law of nature" makes manifest, shows what is man's moral duty. He opposed the Puritan scripturalist view that the written Word of God was the absolute rule of all actions whatsoever. His tenth lecture on conscience examined the aphorism "*The safety of the people is the supreme Law.*" It denounced the pernicious interpretation of the *salus populi* maxim as a liberty ("the right of the subjects") to be preferred to the prerogative of sovereignty, whereas its right meaning is that the sovereign has authority over the laws themselves and can "by his plenitude of power" suspend for a time their observance, in case of necessity. With Richard Zouch, the Regius Professor of Civil Law, author of the *Elementa Jurisprudentiae* used as an important legal reference in his lectures, he published in 1647 the pamphlet *Reasons of the present Judgement of the University of Oxford*, against submission to a series of Parliament ordinances on Presbyterian principles – the 1643 Covenant, the 1645 Negative Oath, and the Directory of Public Worship supplanting the BCP. His reasons of conscience and Zouch's legal arguments in defense of monarchy and episcopacy, approved by a full convocation on 1 June 1647, were immediately translated into Latin by Gerard Langbaine, the University archivist. On 14 June 1648, he was ejected by the Parliamentary visitors from his professorship and canonry at Oxford.

After Charles I's confinement to Hampton Court in August 1647, he and other chaplains, Henry Hammond, Gilbert Sheldon, and George Morley, were permitted to attend the King in his detainment. At Charles I's request, he composed an answer to the Puritan objections against Church government by bishops, which was published after the Restoration in 1661 with a dedication to Charles II. Afterward, he attended the King in his captivity on the Isle of Wight. During the negotiations with Parliamentarians for the Treaty of Newport in September–November 1648, he was one of the main ecclesiastical advisers to Charles I on matters of conscience, the religious reforms demanded by Parliament constituting for the King a perjury to his Coronation Oath. He preached before the King

in October 1648 a sermon on *Galatians* 5.22–23 which would be separately published in 1653, while his other sermons *Ad Aulam* in this period would be included in the 1656 edition of *Twenty Sermons*. Charles I's English translation of his 1646 lectures on promissory oaths, revised at Newport by James Harrington and Thomas Herbert, was subsequently approved by Hammond, Sheldon, and William Juxon, and published in 1655 as *De Juramento*. It was considered a model of casuistical argumentation in rupture with Jesuit "sophistries." During the Interregnum, he published in 1649 a *Resolution of Conscience* criticizing the justification for safety's sake of the allegiance to *de facto* power by Anthony Ascham in his *Discourse of the Confusions and Revolutions of Government* and his *The Bounds & Bonds of Publique Obedience*. He rejected Ascham's thesis of reciprocity between protection and obedience and denounced the self-preservation principle as dangerous, leading to attempt "continual innovations," and resulting in atheism. In the early 1650s, he carried on an active correspondence on cases of conscience, which constitutes a major contribution to the tradition of English Protestant casuistry begun with William Perkins. In the Oath of Engagement controversy, his position, expressed in a letter to Thomas Washbourne dated 20 December 1650, was that since in its literal meaning the Engagement did not oblige to approve the abolition of monarchy and to acknowledge the power of the present Commonwealth as a power possessed of *de jure*, to subscribe it in a "low" sense rather than suffer extreme prejudice could not be condemned. Influenced by the Aristotelian-Thomistic moral tradition, he argued that the rule of prudence does not violate the law of conscience. His answer on 12 November 1652 to another case of conscience concerning the use or abandonment of the old liturgy reveals that he had adopted after the 1645 banishment of BCP by Parliament an attitude of compromise, waiving at first its use in all services, and then modifying its wording by way of addition, transposition, or omission, so that the service might appear both other and "the same." This, he said, was not merely to avoid penalties, but ultimately to prevent the attribution

of his ministerial charge to Puritans exercising a "Presbyterian tyranny." Hammond, an uncompromising "Cavalier" whose thesis "*Our Saviour died for the sins of all mankind*" in his 1645 *Practical Catechism* had been attacked by the Presbyterians of Sion College in London, visited him around the beginning of 1651 to discuss Arminian points in the Quinquarticular Controversy between Remonstrants and Anti-Remonstrants. A correspondence on the topic of universal redemption and salvation followed with Hammond and Thomas Pierce – the two rejoiced in November 1653 when he abandoned the idea of attending the Puritan Tuesday-Lectures at Grantham. The 1657 republication of the 1637 collection of his *Sermons*, however, made only slight alterations to his initial affirmation of the similarity of Arminianism to Pelagianism. His predestinarian thesis on divine grace remained unchanged. In the Preface dated 13 July 1657, furthermore, he positioned himself between Puritans or "Anti-Ceremonians" and Arminians: ceremonies are in themselves indifferent things, but once they are constituted, the necessity to obey them arises from God's command that men obey their superiors. Condemning as erroneous the Puritan principle that nothing may be done which is not warranted from some command or example in the Scripture, he argued that the liturgy of the Anglican Church did not constitute a denial of the Protestant rule of faith, the sufficiency of the Scripture. Hammond, in his *Charis kai eirènè, or, A Pacifick Discourse of Gods Grace and Decrees: In a Letter, of full Accordance written to the Reverend, and most learned, Dr. Robert Sanderson*, attempted nonetheless to prove that Sanderson since 1625 had abandoned the "Sublapsarian way" and no longer owned his former Calvinist soteriology. Hammond's unreliability was denounced much later by John Edwards, in the Appendix to his book *The Arminian Doctrines Condemn'd by the Holy Scriptures, by Many of the Ancient Fathers, by the Church of England, and even by the Suffrage of Right Reason* in 1711: for Edwards, Sanderson "retain'd his Calvinistical Sentiments to the Day of his Death."

In the late years of the 1650s, he was reduced to severe poverty. Through Thomas Barlow, keeper of the Bodleian Library, Robert Boyle afforded

him financial support, awarding him from 1658 a special pension for reviewing and publishing his 1647 lectures on the obligation of conscience, which were circulating in manuscript copies (from which seemingly Jeremy Taylor borrowed a number of quotations for his *Ductor Dubitantium, or The Rule of Conscience in all her generall measures*, published in 1660). The publication was done in 1660, with a dedication to Boyle. An English translation by Robert Codrington was published in the same year. At the Restoration of monarchy, he was reinstalled in his professorship and canonry at Oxford in August 1660. Soon after, he was promoted to bishopric and received an episcopal see. He resigned his sundry prebends and was consecrated Bishop of Lincoln at Westminster on 28 October 1660. On the same day, there were 67 applicants to get their ordination from him. He managed then to repair (at his own expense) war damages to his episcopal palace at Buckden, Huntingdonshire. In a long Preface, dated 31 December 1660, to his edition of a manuscript treatise composed by James Ussher, the late archbishop of Armagh and primate of all Ireland, he firmly denounced the contractualist doctrine deriving the royal power from the people. In his view, this doctrine made the sovereign power precarious, while sovereignty must be absolute and unlimited. He attacked as a contradiction *in adjecto* the notion of mixed monarchy, which had become popular in the last years of the civil war. He also wrote the Preface to the *Clavi Trabales* published by Nicholas Bernard in 1661, which contained two speeches by Ussher, the one about the king's supremacy, the other about the duty of subjects to supply the king's necessities. In April–July 1661, he was the moderator in the Savoy Conference convened to consider the Presbyterian Exceptions to doctrinal points and ceremonial directions in the existing BCP of 1604. Most of the Exceptions were disallowed; he agreed only minor concessions to the Puritan leader Richard Baxter. He contributed to the new version of the Prayer Book, based on John Cosin's MS annotations to a copy of the 1619 printed BCP, the so-called Durham Book. His Preface to the new BCP emphasized the choice of a medium position

concerning traditional Anglican liturgy: "It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England. . .to keep the mean between the two Extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting, any variation from it." The new BCP was annexed to the 1662 Act of Uniformity enjoining all clerics to declare their "unfeigned assent and consent" to all its prescriptions.

Weakened by a chronic disease, he made his last will in early January 1663. In his account of his religious conviction, he insisted that his fight against Roman Catholicism and Puritanism had been on a rational basis, "after a serious and impartial examination of the grounds." He also asked for a modest funeral. He died on 29 January, survived by his wife and their three sons. He left a great number of manuscript volumes on the history of England (particularly of Lincolnshire), heraldry and genealogy. Although his last will stipulated that he disowned any writings published under his name after his death, posthumous editions publishing his letters on cases of conscience were made from the mid-1660s. Almost two centuries later, the publication of his six-volume *Works* in 1854 by William Jakobson, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, confirmed the lasting importance of his moral theology and casuistry.

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Sansouino

► Sansovino, Francesco

Sansovini

► Sansovino, Francesco

Sansovino, Francesco

Born: 1521, Rome

Died: 28 Sept. 1583, Venice

Ruben Celani

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Abstract

A prolific writer and publisher active in sixteenth century Venice, Francesco Sansovino was able to combine his humanistic education with a strong commitment to publishing and dispersing new information and a keen eye for the book market. Despite possessing a degree in civil law, which would have granted him steady employment, he chose the uncertain path of publishing and devoted most of his energies to spreading knowledge in the vernacular. He translated classical and modern authors, wrote manuals and treatises, compiled epitomes and collections of works on several subjects, sometimes copying unscrupulously from his sources, but often displayed creativity in his approach to such materials. His understanding of the contemporary book market guaranteed him enough success to open a printing press and to stay in business for over 20 years; he also contributed to the dissemination of culture, starting or boosting literary genres that became very popular in the succeeding years. His prolific and varied

production has been studied from several perspectives in the last decades (for a selected bibliography, see Davis, FONTES 43:12–14, 2009), but a specific feature has been observed by multiple scholars: with every subject, Sansovino consistently focused on its practical implications. This concrete, didactic dimension is probably his most distinctive trait and becomes particularly interesting when applied to politics.

Alternate Names

Guisconi, Anselmo; Tatti da Sansovino, Francesco; Sansovinus, Franciscus; Sansouino; Sansovini; Tatti, Giovanni

Biography

Francesco Sansovino was son of the sculptor and architect Jacopo Sansovino (born Jacopo Tatti). He spent his childhood in Rome, but in 1527 – after the city was ransacked – he moved to Florence and finally to Venice, where his father had been granted a prestigious job by the Republic. Jacopo's position gave Francesco the chance to receive a fine humanistic education, under the mentorship of Stefano Piazzone da Asola and Giovita Rapicio; at the same time, his father's friendship with Pietro Aretino helped Francesco come into contact with the Venetian cultural circle orbiting around the famous writer.

At the behest of his father, Sansovino studied law in Padua and Bologna between 1536 and 1543, with a short stay in Florence between 1540 and 1541. However, during those years, he showed greater interest in literary subjects than jurisprudence; in Padua, he joined the *Accademia degli Infiammati* (1540); later he became a member of the Florentine *Accademia degli Umidi* (1542). After graduating, he returned to Venice and began closely collaborating with several publishers as an editor, translator, compiler, and author of texts (among others, he worked for Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari alongside another famous polygraph, Ludovico Dolce). However,

this choice not only caused several arguments with his father but also guaranteed him no stability. Hence (upon Jacopo's suggestion) in 1550, he went to Rome in the service of Pope Julius III, but his experience as a courtier was a failure, and in 1552, he was back in Venice, where he married (1554) and settled, deciding to fully dedicate himself to literary activity (with the exception of a short experience as secretary of duke Paolo Giordano Orsini, between 1564 and 1565).

In 1558, he joined the *Accademia Veneziana* (or *Accademia della Fama*). Two years later, he opened his own printing press, which issued more than 40 publications before his death in 1583. At first, he shared the business with partners (seven titles published between 1560 and 1561 are signed by *Francesco Sansovino et compagni*), but soon enough he was running the press on his own. From 1569 on, all of his publications feature his son Giacomo on their imprints (Ascarelli and Menato 1989, 406–407).

A prolific and versatile writer, Sansovino dealt with almost every subject (a survey of his production is provided by Cicogna 1834, 31–91; and Mula 2010; but check also the database EDIT16 for a list of his publications). His main focuses were history and literature, but he also wrote about rhetoric, politics, law, medicine, agriculture, art, religion, and love. Most of his works appeared under his own name, though he sometimes also used pseudonyms (mainly “Giovanni Tatti”). With about a hundred publications to his name, Sansovino participated significantly in the dissemination of culture in many fields, fully matching the profile of a polygraph.

Writings and Thought

His humanistic studies, the Venetian cultural environment and his early experiences at the Paduan and Florentine academies all played important roles in shaping young Sansovino's mind. In fact, they put him in contact with a wide network of humanists, academics, artists, and noblemen, a feat quite impressive for a student still barely 20 years old. These connections are vividly outlined in the *Lettere sopra*

le dieci giornate del Decamerone (1542), a collection of epistles – one for each novel of the *Decameron* – addressed by Sansovino to an almost equal number of his acquaintances. Here the author approaches Boccaccio's text in an original manner, not only conversing about love but also often using the novels as sparks for religious, moral, and erudite reflections with his correspondents. The letters also sketch the moral picture of a young man highly contemptuous of the corruption within princely courts, critical of the hypocrisy of the clergy, scholastic thought and the cult of the saints, and eager for a simpler and more personal spiritual experience (Roaf 1985, 1993; Bonora 1994; Favaro 2014).

The *Lettere*, however, represent an exception to Sansovino's activities, in which he chose for himself the role of popularizer. As such, his first aim was a practical utility for a large public, and history – broadly speaking – was to be his subject of choice. In his works, he conveyed useful information about his own times, including descriptions of cities, chronologies, family histories, epitomes (Sforza 1897; Grendler 1969). He also aimed at offering a political interpretation of history, in the belief that this might provide lessons for the improvement of current administrations. Another interesting feature of his methodology is his modern approach to documentary sources. He in fact showed a remarkable appreciation for them, following in this the example set by such major historians as Francesco Guicciardini and Paolo Giovio (Grendler 1969).

In disseminating such ideas, Sansovino naturally chose Italian over Latin, sharing the commitment of the academies to spreading culture through the vernacular. This stands out especially in his early reflections about public speaking in Italian (*La rhetorica* 1543; *L'arte oratoria* 1546), which later took on a more didactic form in his collections of models for both speeches and letters (*Diverse orationi volgarmente scritte* 1561a; *Il segretario* 1564), in a collection of grammars (*Osservationi della lingua volgare* 1562; see Peirone 1971), and in the dictionary published by his own printing house (*Ortografia delle voci della lingua nostra* 1568), which also shows certain attention to spoken language and dialects

(Marazzini 1983). All of his activities as a translator and disseminator confirm his commitment, but his choice is particularly relevant when applied to disciplines, such as law, in which Latin remained the preferred language of communication (in 1552, he translated Justinian's *Institutiones*).

Both as a writer and a publisher, Sansovino understood his public. His many works about Turks and their history, for example, answered the growing desire to know about a foreign population, which undoubtedly felt very close at hand in those days. His *Historia universale dell'origine et imperio de' Turchi* (1560), in particular, became the main source in Italian about Turks until the end of the century (Bonora 1994; see also Zilli 2001). A few years later, in his *Del segretario* (a practical manual for the formation of chancery functionaries), he took an already existing genre and refashioned it to meet the needs of his contemporaries. This manual became very popular, was reprinted numerous times, and was taken as a model by several writers (for a recent and detailed study on the topic, see Panzera 2018).

Overall, Sansovino facilitated the rise of numerous popular genres, such as epistolary collections, speeches, novels, books of secrets, manuals, and compendia. He was also, however, very cautious about religious themes, especially after the Council of Trent. The juvenile and unorthodox feelings expressed in the *Lettere* faded from his mature production, while the few religious titles edited and published by him aligned closely with the positions of the reformed Church (Bonora 1994).

His most famous work, however, was *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (1581). This encyclopedic description of Venice was preceded by other city guides, such as *Tutte le cose notabili e belle che sono in Venetia* (1556), a short dialogue published under the pseudonym Anselmo Guisconi, which saw nearly 20 editions and several additions before 1600; and the *Ritratto delle più nobili et famose città d'Italia* (1575), in which many important Italian cities are described. Yet Sansovino owes a large part of his posthumous fame to his *Venetia*, which teems with

information and curiosities that are still of interest to today's researchers, guiding the reader through the city while celebrating the Republic with a description (from a rather antiquarian perspective) of its glories, monuments, and heroes (Bonora 1994, 2000).

Sansovino's Works on Politics

Most of Sansovino's books were republished several times in the succeeding decades, confirming that his strategies were highly successful. However, as a popularizer, only a minimal part of what he wrote can be considered truly original. He often extrapolated (when he did not copy entirely) his works from many different sources. Nevertheless, he showed some creativity in this process, at least in organizing the information conveyed in such publications. His method as a compiler can be understood by looking at his political works, the *Concetti Politici* (1578) and *Del governo dei regni et delle repubbliche* (1561b), which also provide a good example of the role played by Sansovino in the dissemination of culture.

The *Concetti* is a collection of 803 aphorisms on political subjects, derived from several authors. The first edition was translated into English by Robert Hitchcock, under the title of *The quintessence of wit* (1590). The work was then revised by Sansovino before his death and published in 1583 together with Guicciardini's *Avvertimenti* and Lottini's *Avvertimenti civili*. This second edition was reprinted in 1588, 1598, and 1608.

In the preface to the 1578 edition, Sansovino states that he drew the aphorisms from 36 authorities (a statement that was omitted from succeeding editions). These were both classical and contemporary sources (e.g., Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Cassius Dio, and Thucydides; Francesco Guicciardini, Giovan Battista Pigna, Marc'Antonio Sabellico, and Paolo Giovio), whose maxims Sansovino reported sometimes *verbatim*, though often he adjusted and integrated them with personal reflections. Grendler states that the *Concetti* provides a distillation of some

of the best political wisdom of the century (Grendler 1969, 163).

Notably, Sansovino's list includes Guicciardini but not Machiavelli (possibly to avoid censorship). In fact, Sansovino's appreciation for Machiavelli dates back to his juvenile manuscript *Dialogo della pratica della ragione* (see Scarpa 1980; Sartorello 2010); and in the *Concetti* the polygraph was largely indebted to both him and Guicciardini, deriving more than one-third of his aphorisms from their works. In fact, the selection made by Sansovino has been considered by Vincent Luciani an accurate reduction of Guicciardini's and Machiavelli's thought (as known in those days), although conveyed in maxims (Luciani 1950, 1952). Thanks to Hitchcock's faithful translation of the *Concetti*, Sansovino helped to spread the ideas of both writers within the Elizabethan court and among English readers (Luciani 1952, 839). Furthermore, scholars in the last decades have pointed out the early connection made by Sansovino between Machiavelli and Aristotle, anticipating what would have later become a very popular interpretation of Machiavelli's thought (Scarpa 1980; Figorilli 2011; Lepri 2016).

The publication in 1561 of *Del governo dei regni et delle repubbliche* is probably best put in relation to the cultural goals pursued by the Accademia Veneziana, which had been dismissed in the same year. The academy, in fact, had developed an editorial program that included a series of publications about politics. Some of the subjects considered in the *Governo* are actually mentioned in that program (Testa 2015, pp 109–111; Marx 1993).

The work, reedited four times before 1600, consists of 18 books (increased to 21 in 1567 and to 22 in 1583). In each book, Sansovino depicts the political structure of a government, first dealing with all kingdoms and then with all republics. He mostly describes offices and institutions but also occasionally considers other factors, including climate, territory, customs, and administrative history.

As in the *Concetti politici*, Sansovino extracts, translates, and adapts his descriptions from a number of works. These are declared in the

editio princeps, but – again – omitted in all later editions. Moreover, in an autobiographical letter to Filippo Magnanini, dated 1579 and attached at the end of his *Secretario* (Sansovino 1564, fol. 220v), he mentions both the *Governo* and the *Concetti* not as compilations but as original works. Though he might be accused of plagiarism for this, it is true that the *Governo* includes three original contributions authored by Sansovino; he wrote in fact the descriptions of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Genoa – both in the editorial plans of the Accademia Veneziana – and Lucca. By accounting also for the geography, customs, and history of these cities, his descriptions follow the pattern of sixteenth-century diplomatic reports, a pattern that was later confirmed in Giovanni Botero's *Relazioni universali* (1591) and that became very successful in seventeenth-century publishing (Carta 2007; Frigo 1992).

In the *Governo*, Sansovino enters the political debate over the dualism reign/republic. His point of view is that a good administration rests on the right combination of its institutions and a good balancing of offices and powers. He, therefore, supports a moderate government, whose best expression he recognizes in Venice. He also insists on the moral integrity of the citizens and on the importance of Roman republican *virtus*, praising the straight and simple customs of the Swiss Republics and of the city of Ragusa (Frigo 1992).

The comparative approach applied to the analysis of the institutions – a methodology later ratified by Jean Bodin – and the practical intent of the work are probably the most interesting features in Sansovino's *Governo*. In fact, Sansovino does not present the structure of an ideal society but rather provides examples of government and public administration for rulers who want to improve their own statecraft and for anyone else who, even without a solid background, would like to enter the political and administrative activity with the necessary knowledge (Grendler 1969; Frigo 1992; Rossi 2014).

As a result, one could say that Sansovino, though he added little to debates taking place in those years, still played a key role in organizing

political thought in his final decades and in disseminating it for the benefit of a broader public. The *Governo* and the *Concetti* were part of a process that became a very typical feature of late sixteenth-century publishing in many fields, a process fully embodied by Sansovino's lifework: the popularization of culture, which through guides, manuals, treatises, compilations, and translations aimed to make centuries of knowledge accessible to non-specialists.

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- [Academy of Fame](#)
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Sansovinus, Franciscus

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Santorio Sanctorius

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Sarpi, Paolo

Born: Venice, 1552

Died: Venice, 15 January 1623

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Abstract

With *The History of the Council of Trent*, published in London in 1619, the Venetian Paolo Sarpi established himself as both the

greatest Italian historian in the seventeenth century and the most formidable adversary of the Counter-Reformation in Italy. His life changed decisively in 1606 when Pope Paul V laid Venice under the Interdict. A friar in the order of the Servants of Mary, Sarpi was a staunch defender of the Republic, playing a key role in the “war of words” that lasted for a whole year between the two contenders, much to the amazement of the major European men of letters and rulers. He was 54 when he first entered the political scene and began writing for the press. Prior to that, he had concentrated on philosophical and scientific studies. In his *Thoughts* he discussed in the form of notes and aphorisms the most current themes of the scientific revolution; he also offered a disillusioned review of the natural and human world, reappraising with radical skepticism the development of society and religion. The Interdict made him venture onto the field of politics and history, and this engrossed him more and more for the rest of his life. Writing thus became for Sarpi an instrument of political warfare to defend the sovereignty of the State and a means for a controversial reconstruction of the history of the Roman Church.

Biography

Born in Venice in August 1552, Pietro Sarpi changed his baptismal name to Paolo in 1565, when he joined the order of the Servants of Mary in the Venetian convent of S. Maria. The son of a Venetian mother and a merchant from Friuli who died at a young age, he was educated in grammar and rhetoric by his maternal uncle who was a priest in the parish of San Marcuola. He then attended lessons in logic and philosophy held by Giovanni Maria Capella from Cremona, a friar from the Servants and an expert on Duns Scotus. Pietro’s religious decision as an adolescent was probably a result of Capella’s influence. Sarpi continued his studies in the Observant convents in Cremona, where probably he took his vows in 1572, and in Mantua. Thanks to the presence of Jewish scholars from the Gonzaga court, it was

here that he was able to further his studies of Hebrew and sustained successful public discussions on philosophical and theological theses, obtaining his baccalaureate in 1574. Archbishop Carlo Borromeo invited him to Milan, but he did not remain there long. In 1575 he was already back in the convent in Venice teaching philosophy, and in 1578 he was awarded the degree of doctor in theology at Padua University (Micanzio 1974; Cozzi 1979; Branchesi 2006). In the same year, he began writing notes on scientific and philosophical subjects, called *Thoughts* (Cozzi and Sosio 1996). His career in the order progressed rapidly: the provincial in Venice from 1579 to 1582 and procurator-general in the Apostolic See from 1585 to 1588, the second-highest post in the order after the prior general. In Rome, he initially attracted the admiration of the cardinal protector of the Servants of Mary, Giulio Antonio Santoro, as well as of Pope Sixtus V, but he also frequented more marginal or dissenting figures such as the Jesuits Nicolás de Bobadilla and Robert Bellarmine and Cardinal Giovan Battista Castagna, who was to become Pope Urban VII. As can be seen in the *Thoughts* he wrote in this period, he continued to cultivate his mathematical and theoretical interests. On a trip to Naples, he visited Giambattista Della Porta whom he might have already met in Padua. Although there is no clear documentation, he could have met the mathematician from the Roman College, Cristoforo Clavio, and might have collaborated in the complex undertaking of transporting the Vatican obelisk (Cozzi and Sosio 1996, XLI). However, he was later to have a very negative memory of the contact he had with the Roman Curia, at a moment in which considerable measures were taken to reinforce the Counter-Reformation Church. Once his term as the procurator-general had finished, his rise up to the top of the order came to an end.

Back in Venice, he returned to his studies with renewed vigor, intensifying his relations with the political-cultural circles of the capital and the university city. He participated in meetings that took place at the house of the patricians Andrea and Nicolò Morosini – in which Giordano Bruno also

took part in 1592 – and at Gian Vincenzo Pinelli's home in Padua, a reference point for Venetian patricians, university professors, and clergymen with both classical-humanistic and scientific interests. Here he met the mathematician Marino Ghetaldi from Ragusa and Galileo Galilei with whom he held discussions about optics and dynamics (Cozzi 1979; Cozzi and Sosio 1996; Bucciantini 2000). His network of contacts – not yet studied in detail – also included physicians and anatomists: Girolamo Fabrici d'Acquapendente and Santorio Santorio, both university professors in Padua, and Pierre Asselineau, a French Calvinist and probably the go-between for Sarpi's relations with the French ambassadors André de Maisse and Philippe Canaye de Fresnes. The latter, in turn, both aided Sarpi's correspondence with Isaac Casaubon and Jacques-Auguste De Thou (Cozzi 1979). At the end of the 1580s, he also began to be a frequent visitor at the mercers' shop at the Golden Ship, run by Dutch Calvinists, which was a meeting place for foreign merchants and travelers and a crossroad for news from all over the world. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Sarpi was therefore a friar with multiple skills and an authoritative interlocutor with men of science, noblemen, and foreign diplomats, curious about the novelties of contemporary politics (De Vivo 2006). He was, however, also a friar who was becoming increasingly ill at ease in his order, now divided into factions by the forceful intervention of cardinal protector Santoro, who had become his open enemy (Barzazi 2012). To escape these disputes, Sarpi asked the government for support twice, once in 1600 and again in 1601, to be appointed bishop of a minor Veneto bishopric. Paul V refused his request both times. The doubts the papal nuncio in Venice expressed about his own religious beliefs did not help him at all.

In April 1606 the tension overshadowing the relations between the Venetian Republic and the papacy exploded: Paul V ordered the senate to repeal several laws aimed at limiting the acquisition of property by the Church and the detention of two delinquent clerics. Faced with a refusal, Paul V proclaimed the excommunication of the

Doge and of the Venetian leaders and the Interdict of the entire dominions of the Republic, prohibiting the clergy from celebrating any religious functions and sacraments. By the end of January, Sarpi had already been appointed consultant in theological matters and canon laws, which was a new office in the Venetian government system. It was in this role that he drafted the “protest,” the official reply signed by the Doge, which declared the Roman censures invalid and unlawfully proclaimed and ordered the clergy to continue their church services as usual. During the following months, he organized the Venetian resistance to the attacks from polemicists in Rome such as Baronio and Bellarmine, writing pieces of advice for the senate and pamphlets that were to be broadly diffused in both Italy and Europe (Pin 2001; Tutino 2010; De Vivo 2007).

The diplomatic settlement of the controversy, achieved thanks to French mediation in April 1607, left him both disappointed and in an awkward position. In October of the same year, he was injured in an assault that was said to have been carried out by circles close to Paul V; in vain, emissaries of the Roman Curia and even the general of the order tried to convince him to submit to Paul V (Barzani 2006). His role as a consultant became less important. Considered a troublesome figure in the more moderate groups of the ruling class, he was summoned very rarely by the senate in the two years following the Interdict and only on matters that were of little significance (Pin 2006b). Progressively isolated from Venetian politics, Sarpi was, however, at the center of attention of European political and religious circles. They regarded him as essential in their plans to counteract Italian politics dominated by the axis between the papacy and Spain. Their scheme was the formation of a vast confederation of countries from the north of Europe and France under Henry IV, which would ideally make in post-Interdict Venice its possible base. Sarpi tried to support these plans and acted accordingly with the patricians he was closest to, while also taking independent initiatives. Together with the brother and future biographer Fulgenzio Micanzio, he made contact with the chaplain of the English embassy in Venice, William Bedell. He entered

into correspondence with outstanding figures in the Gallican world – Jacques-Auguste De Thou, Jacques Leschassier, and Jacques Gillot – and with French, Swiss, and German Calvinists such as Jérôme Grosloot de l’Isle, Philippe Du Plessis Mornay, Jean Hotman de Villiers, Jean Diodati, and Christoph and Achatius von Dohna. He expressed his aversion to the Apostolic See freely – to the Protestants in particular – voicing his hopes that the papacy’s incumbent presence and the supremacy of Habsburgs’ Spain would be brought down by a clash with the powers on the other side of the Alps (Busnelli 1931; Ulianich 1961; Cozzi 1979). It is unclear whether these clandestine ties were simply aimed at giving the Venetian Republic an influential role alongside the political and economic powers of the north or were also intended to remove the Venetian Church from Rome. In the summer of 1609, agents of the Protestant Union of Halle and the United Provinces of the Netherlands arrived in Venice, but the correspondents were by then disappointed with Sarpi’s excessive caution in taking any action. Any hopes of a great political-religious upheaval were dashed when Henry IV was assassinated in 1610. However, Sarpi’s letters to the Gallicans and the Protestants continued until 1612, successively becoming less frequent before ceasing altogether in 1616–1617. From 1612 he was equally in touch with the English ambassador in Venice, Dudley Carleton, with whom he exchanged letters till 1615, when Carleton had already moved to the Netherlands. At the same time, Micanzio, for his part, entered into correspondence with the latter as well as with William Cavendish, son of the Earl of Devonshire. Thomas Hobbes, Cavendish’s tutor, translated Micanzio’s letters from Italian into English (Cozzi and Cozzi 1969/1997; Barzani 2010).

It was from 1609 to 1610 that Sarpi’s role in the Venetian government was gradually consolidated and his activity as a consultant was intensified. The range of the issues he was asked to examine expanded, going beyond the ecclesiastic and jurisdictional fields – controversies on church benefices and clerical immunity, disputes regarding the Inquisition, the press and censorship, and

relationships with the Greek and Jewish communities – to those of more strictly political importance: regulating ecclesiastic and lay fiefs, border conflicts, dominion over the Adriatic Sea, international relations, and foreign policy. Some pieces of advice were in the form of short treatises regarding specific subjects, for example, *On the Office of the Inquisition* (1613), *On the Immunity of the Churches* (1620), or *Jurisdiction in the Patriarchs' Lands of Friuli* (1621), in which Sarpi denounced the faults of the Republic in arousing the controversy over the feudal rights of the Aquileian Patriarchate (Gambarin 1958; Pin 1985). The new position of the consultant meant compromise and mediation. During the eve and outbreak of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) – a very difficult period for Venice – Sarpi's relations with the ruling class had their ups and downs. In fact, those patricians who supported the anti-Habsburg line and a more decisive stance toward the Church found themselves up against a prevailing pacifistic and moderate tendency. However, Sarpi's counsel was in considerable demand, and in the last two years of his life, he even presented to the senate as many as two pieces of advice a week (Pin 2006b, p. 357).

Committed to replying day in, day out to the questions of the Venetian government, he did not completely abandon his scientific studies and philosophical meditations. In 1609 he collaborated with Galileo in developing the telescope (Bucciantini 2000). In the following years, he had his *Thoughts on Religion* transcribed; he also continued to record his astronomic observations and calculations (Cozzi and Sosio 1996). He was, however, more focused on history. From 1607 onward, in response to solicitations from J.-A. De Thou, he wrote the *History of the Interdict*, which he completed under the supervision of Doge Leonardo Donà (Pin 2006a); he also composed the *Treatise on Benefices*, an extensive study on the revenues' regime in the Church (Gambarin 1958). In the same period, the project on the history of the Council of Trent began to take shape. In a letter dated March 1608 to J. Gillot, Sarpi said he already had a considerable amount of documentation on the council, both originals and copies. Perhaps already started in

1611 (Pin 2006b, p. 393), most of the *History of the Council of Trent* was written between 1614 and the beginning of 1616 before being finally completed in 1617. These developments were followed with particular attention by the English ambassador D. Carleton as well as by King James I, who invited Sarpi to move to London more than once. It was the archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, who organized the publication of the *History*: in the spring of 1618, one of his fiduciaries had the manuscript transcribed in Venice and sent it to England, one gathering after the other, using the commercial network run by Daniel Nis, a Dutch merchant who lived in Venice and an old friend of Sarpi's. In May 1619 the work was published in London by the printer John Bill with the pseudonym Pietro Soave Polano, an anagram of the author's name (Paolo Sarpi Veneto), with a subtitle and a dedication to James I, both added by Marc'Antonio De Dominis. The author was extremely annoyed by the additions. In November the *History* was placed on the Index (Cozzi and Cozzi 1969/1997). In the meantime, Sarpi had been asked to write other historical works by the Venetian government, engaged in the unsuccessful war against the Habsburg archdukes of Austria on the eastern borders in 1615–1616 and in the following diplomatic negotiations. He penned the *Addition* and the *Supplement* to the *History of the Uskoks* by M. Minucci (1617–1618) and the unfinished *Treatise of Peace and Settlement*, likened to *The History of the Council of Trent* owing to its lucid analysis and rigorous argumentation (Cozzi and Cozzi 1965, 1969/1997, p. 1022).

Sarpi died on 15 January 1623 in the Venetian convent of S. Maria dei Servi. The senate made Micanzio compile an official report on his death. The faithful brother wrote that he had died at peace and with the comfort of the sacraments (Cozzi 1979; Barzazi 2010). The public funeral rites were celebrated amid fervent protests from the papal nuncio. The *corpus* containing more than one thousand pieces of advice by Sarpi was transcribed into large parchment volumes and deposited in the secret chancellery to be used by the Venetian magistracies and by his successors in the office of the consultant.

Works and Themes

“Even before the events of the world induced me to think about serious things [...] my natural inclination was already towards the natural and mathematical subjects,” Sarpi wrote to Jérôme Grosloot de l’Isle in July 1608 (Busnelli 1931, I, 22). The long-lasting attraction that most current scientific themes in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century had for him can be seen in his *Natural, Metaphysical and Mathematical Thoughts*, an extensive *corpus* with 655 notes, which survived only in eighteenth-century copies. Not intended for publication, these notes are actually an intellectual diary, most of which were written between 1578 and 1597 and also continued until the beginning of the 1620s (Cozzi and Sosio 1996). In the series of *Thoughts* dating back to the period between his degree in theology and the years of his provincialate, Sarpi dealt mainly with problems regarding optics: the mechanisms of vision, refraction, and the effect of light on celestial bodies, discussed on the basis of the masters of Medieval optics, Roger Bacon, Alhazen, and Witelo. Other notes are on acoustics, the propagation of heat, and local motion; he studied the latter from a philosophical and qualitative perspective, according to the approach of late Scholasticism. Sarpi also showed a keen interest in the theory of knowledge and this was to be one of the main lines of his reflections. Already in his very first *Thoughts*, he was dwelling on the uncertainty of the path that leads from sense perception to the understanding of the causes of phenomena; similarly, he took up the arguments of nominalist critics of Aristotelian science, also using corpuscular theories, drawn on Lucretius and Diogenes Laërtius and an important author in the mathematical Renaissance in the Veneto, Hero of Alexandria. His mechanistic vision became more articulate in the notes on the sense of matter, its composition, and continuous changes, believed to be the origin of all things (Wootton 1983; Frajese 1994; Cozzi and Sosio 1996). Between the provincialate and his appointment as the procurator-general of the order, Sarpi’s speculations went together with chemical experiments and dissecting animals with the aim of studying the

circulatory system and the structure of the eye in greater detail from an anatomical and physiological point of view (Micanzio 1974, pp. 1291–1294). During the three years he spent in Rome, his scientific attitude developed significantly. His *Thoughts* reflects the relations with a lively scientific milieu and his contact with the mathematical and astronomical investigations originated from the calendar reform carried out by Pope Gregory XIII. It was at this moment that Sarpi overcame the close association between optics and astronomy and began tackling cosmological problems with mechanical and quantitative reasoning, which actually also reveal a closer study of the heliocentric theories. Several great themes – motion of projectiles, acceleration and fall of bodies, and movement of the tides – all appeared in his notes. They were later to be at the center of his intense discussions with Galileo, which began just after the latter arrived in Padua in 1592 (Ernst and Canone 1994, p. 363). The correspondence between them and their writings show they agreed and disagreed on certain aspects, but Sarpi’s contribution to Galileo’s theories and inventions, as in the case of discoveries in other fields such as vein circulation and magnetism, is not specifically documented, thus resulting in conflicting interpretations (Sosio 2006). In fact, although Sarpi grasped the importance of the mathematical explanation of physical phenomena, he was never able to abandon the qualitative analysis of dynamics and the traditional scholastic instruments. Moreover, his reflections continued to cover a great variety of different fields: from optics – where he achieved the highest levels of expertise – to the states of matter, human physiology, biology, and animal metabolism. Nevertheless, he continued to read a vast range of the latest scientific works; in 1602 he commented on William Gilbert’s *De Magnete* (1600) with Galileo; in 1615 a correspondent sent him two posthumous writings by François Viète; he drafted extracts and comments on various works by Kepler, including the second edition of the *Mysterium Cosmographicum*, dated 1621 (Cozzi 1979, p. 162; Cozzi and Sosio 1996, LXXIII, CXC).

Sarpi’s criticism of the Aristotelian categories of knowledge equally remained founded mainly

on nominalism, Ockham's doctrine in particular, but he did grant Epicurean mechanistic philosophy greater room. It was on this basis that his study of sensory perception and the action of human mind gradually expanded to ethical subjects: happiness, conceived as a state of peace compared to the motion of passions, according to a stoic vision modified with references to animal behavior as described by Cynics, and the law, defined as the assumption as a rule of the habits of the majority, in a more relativistic and merely positive perspective. His reflections on the moral and political-religious world were particularly original and scathing in a dozen *Thoughts* he wrote between 1588 and 1591, after his return from Rome (Cozzi and Sosio 1996, pp. 289–320; Pin 2012). Sarpi's starting point in these was the nature of "true philosophy," which he called the "food of the soul." If, thanks to philosophy, men had been able to achieve peace of their souls – he said – they would have rather lived "in anarchy." However, as that was not possible, they had always sought the help of two "natural medicines" of human weakness and imperfection: the "republic," or political community, and the "torà," religion; the latter was designated with a Hebrew word emphasizing Sarpi's familiarity with the tradition of the Mosaic Law (Frajese 2006). The "torà" was actually a human institution, subject to change and deterioration, and was a "worldly thing," "property" of the "republic," which used it to reinforce its political power. Such opinions on the political use of religion offered nothing new and were variously discussed in the "reason of state" literature of that time. Sarpi, however, went further. He objected that it was not true that the "torà" was needed to reinforce the states and unite society, as could be seen by the fact that someone who had abandoned religion deep down did not necessarily change his behavior. The "torà" was therefore the same as any other means that generated fear and subjection in mankind, and its effectiveness would vary depending on the time and place. In fact, Sarpi concluded, "the torà is more influential in the South and the East, honour more in the North, and ambition in the countries in the Middle." Thus the ideas of ancient and modern

writers – including Lucretius, Averroes, Machiavelli, Pomponazzi, Bodin, and Montaigne – were revisited in a libertine vision that deprived religion of its most traditional function, separating it from civilization on the basis of anthropological and climatic considerations and contemplating the possibility of an atheistic society (Wootton 1983; Tuck 1993, pp. 98–99; Frajese 1994).

The research he carried out in a fragmentary form in *Natural[...]Thoughts* was developed in three short essays that were also not intended for publication and were probably written between the end of the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth. The first, known by the eighteenth-century title *The Art of Good Thinking*, is connected to Sarpi's deep interest in the structures of human knowledge, which he believed only differed from those of animals regarding quantity. In this small treatise, Sarpi analyzed the limits of cognitive processes: he classified the errors in the intellect's elaboration of data from senses; he cataloged the sources of error that were due to experience; he finally indicated the skeptic suspension of judgment as an obligatory step in view of a gradual correction of the false opinions of the intellect, which was forced to proceed by trial and error. Among the false opinions conceived by the human mind, Sarpi also included the idea of the immortality of the soul (Frajese 2006, p. 96). Probably fueled by the continuous attention he paid to the scientific explanation of natural phenomena, Sarpi's plea for methodical training of the human faculties was no more than a claim, to be developed fully by the seventeenth-century thinkers. It, therefore, prompted Sarpi's eighteenth-century apologists to suggest an unfounded comparison with Locke (Tuck 1993, p. 98; Cozzi and Sosio 1996, pp. 561–562).

The second essay, with the title – given later – *Medical-Moral Thoughts*, discussed the related subjects of happiness and taking care of the passions, inserting them into the pattern of therapeutic advice that was common in Hippocratic-Galenic medical literature. Sarpi quoted numerous classical authors – Epictetus, Plutarch, and Seneca – filtered through Montaigne's writing and Charron's *De la sagesse*, recommending to

the wise man the path of a moderate composition of pleasure and pain, which took into account the relativity of each choice and man's intrinsic fragility, avoiding any excessive rigor. Follow Socrates rather than Cato, Sarpi suggested. The message in the text could be interpreted in different ways. Indeed, some precepts expressed a lack of faith in the possibility of influencing traditional values and customs, suggesting the wise man detach himself totally from civil and political life, while other maxims prefigured the possibility of a prudent, cautious commitment, bearing in mind the limits of human action (Pin 2012).

In the philosophical notes written in 1588–1591, Sarpi had dealt with religion in its abstract social and political aspects. In his third essay, *Thoughts on Religion* – of which a copy made after 1609 survives with additional comments by the author – the subject was tackled from a different perspective. Sarpi put forward a genetic, historical analysis that used the reasoning in chapter V, book II, of Charron's *De la sagesse*, integrating it with passages from Lucretius' *De rerum natura* (Frajese 1990). In a lapidary and elliptic style, Sarpi claimed that the religious sentiment and the very idea of divinity had developed in mankind via a process of "amplification of the idea of oneself," facilitated by fear and the ignorance of the causes of natural phenomena. This process resulted in religions that rationed different "operative" and "speculative" components and that attributed different positions to God and man. Sarpi strived to identify the most suitable of these to support the action of political authorities and to satisfy the needs of both "unrefined" and more "subtle" minds. His reply was clear: the "best" religion was the one that raised God up to an extremely high sphere, distant from man in order to evoke reverence but not fear and to discourage the proliferation of rites and doctrines. In the final part of his essay, Sarpi reviewed the Greek and Roman religions, Judaism and Christianity, to conclude that the latter had originally been close to the "ideal" model previously outlined. Christianity had therefore been subjected to gradual corruption: the articles of faith had multiplied and its relationship with politics had become more difficult. In fact, after Emperor

Constantine, the Christian Church had claimed its own political role, concurrent to that of civil authority. The libertine-style vision put forward in *Natural[...]Thoughts*, which seemed to be indifferent to the variety of historical religions, was thus outpaced by a classification of religions based on a principle of functionality and sociopolitical use; Sarpi linked it to a reconstruction of the centuries-old development of Christianity that he was to present in greater detail in his historical works (Tuck 1993, pp. 99–100).

While he was revising these reflections, Sarpi became part of public life, taking advantage of a concrete, sensational dispute between Venice and Rome. The Interdict led him to experiment with a different writing style that was aimed at political communication and to tackle themes that were unlike his previous notes and essays. In the most comprehensive work he wrote in 1606 – *Considerations on the Censures [...] by Pope Paul V against the Venetian Republic*, published in Italian and Latin – he presented the Venetian cause while also defending the Republic's profound loyalty to Catholicism. By issuing laws regarding church property and punishing criminal clerics, the Venetian Republic – he claimed – had exercised a fundamental right and duty that God entrusted to secular authorities: that of protecting its own subjects and the authenticity of religious piety. Paul V accusation of Venice violating "ecclesiastic freedom" was merely an excuse. In fact, Paul V used the expression "ecclesiastic freedom" to refer to the economic and personal privileges the clergy had acquired, attributing a new, unheard-of meaning to the Christian freedom that Saint Paul had claimed and had been practiced in the church during the early centuries. At the same time, in his advice for the senate and in other printed pamphlets, Sarpi urged Venetian clergymen to respect the government's orders about the Interdict, suggesting the patricians to appeal for a general council; he argued in favor of the divine investiture of the princes and contrasted the spirit of Christianity in its beginnings with the wealth and wish for power of the Church in his days, citing the Gospels, the patristic texts, and the ancient councils. He now also openly tried his strength on the terrain of the theological

controversy (Cozzi and Cozzi 1969/1997; Pin 2001; Ulianich 2006).

In the critical two-year period, 1607–1609, his studies on ecclesiastical history intensified. The correspondence with the Gallicans spurred Sarpi on: he was encouraged to reappraise recent political and diplomatic affairs in his *History of the Interdict*; he could approach French legal culture and study church institutes in France that were linked to the royal power and independent of the Roman Pope. In a letter to Gillot dated 8 December 1609, he stated with clarity the idea of the profound separation between civil and ecclesiastic authority; the former invested with the exercise of political sovereignty and power of coercion, while the latter operated in a merely spiritual sphere (Ulianich 1961; Vivanti 2010). The parallel correspondence with the Calvinists gave him greater insight into the internal contrasts within the Protestant churches. Sarpi always supported the most intransigent Calvinism. In addition to its decisive role in European politics, he probably appreciated the convergence between ecclesiastical and civil institutions that Calvinism supported and its declaration of the unbridgeable distance between man and God. In 1618 he thus approved when the synod of Dordrecht sentenced the Remonstrants (Ulianich 1956). Other elements of his ethical-political vision emerged in his letters to the foreign correspondents: the controversy against the Jesuits, indicated as the columns of papacy, the disdain for the spread of exterior devotion and ceremonies, and the hypocrisy that Roman Catholicism imposed on Italians, forcing them to “wear a mask” (Pin 2010). His *Treatise on Benefices* clearly represents his confrontation during these years with both ancient and modern ecclesiastical structures. In this work, probably incomplete, Sarpi showed how poverty and the Church’s original community organization had gradually been abandoned owing to the transformation of the episcopacy and monasticism – enriched by bequests and donations – the affirmation of papal centralism, and the system of tithes and benefices. In an effort at concision, he described the decay the Christian Church had attained over the course of an entire millennium (Gambarin 1958; Cozzi and Cozzi 1969/1997). The

comprehensive ambitions of Sarpi the “theologian” are also palpable in *On the authority of Princes*, a draft of a work that was only partially developed (Cannizzaro 2006). Mentioned with high appreciation by the biographer, but only recently discovered in a seventeenth-century handwritten copy, this work was meant to be a reply to Bellarmine’s *De potestate Summi pontificis in rebus temporalibus*, published in 1610. Combining theses by Bodin, William Barclay, and James I, the divine right of the prince is reaffirmed here, leading to an exaltation of the unlimited “majesty” of an absolutist and almost Hobbes-like sovereign. The text also clearly emphasizes the prince’s obligation to impose laws on the church.

In 1610 Sarpi was, however, abandoning his “theoretical” and “systematic” ambitions of the post-Interdict period; in fact, the most intense phase of his activity as a consultant had already begun. In the previous years, his strong ideological commitment had driven him to recommend that the government undertook radical reforms on benefices provisions and projects focused on the autonomy of the Venetian Church from Rome. These plans had been refused by patricians who were more devoted to Paul V and interested in ecclesiastic positions. It was at this point that Sarpi changed strategy. Once he had set aside his unrealistic projects and the ardent anti-Roman tones, he dedicated himself to adapting the style and approach of his advice to a more concrete and everyday battle to defend the sovereignty of the Republic against the clergy’s jurisdictional claims (Pin 2006b). Instead of linking his proposals to theoretical schemes and general principles, he strived to associate them to traditional legal practice in Venice, indicated as a source of valid examples for the correct division of spheres between the State and Church and the restraint of the invasiveness of the latter (Frajese 1994; Pin 2006b). These examples were gathered following a careful study of the documents preserved in the Venetian archives. The historical-documentary research thus became a central element of Sarpi’s work as a consultant; his advice had the characteristic structure of concise dissertations intertwining historical account, legal

analysis, and careful political appraisal. Sarpi repeatedly laid claim to the particular characteristics of the consultant's work in comparison to that of legal professionals (Cozzi 1969/1997; Povolo 2006). At this moment the office had the structure that remained unchanged until the fall of the Venetian Republic.

The new course of action resulted in Sarpi's final change in direction and the writing of his masterpiece, *The History of the Council of Trent*. Shelving the model of the *Treatise on Benefices*, he concentrated on the key contemporary event in Catholicism, reconstructing its "causes and intrigues" by means of a variety of sources: diplomatic correspondence, private memoirs, council registers, and votes (Vivanti 1974). He described the Council of Trent as the conclusion of a centuries-old process aimed at the separation of the clergy from lay society, and the concentration of the power in Paul V hands, to the detriment of the bishops. It was therefore an unheard-of "deformation" that marked the triumph of papal monarchy and not a response to hopes of the Church reform. Inspired by Guicciardini, Sarpi portrayed with painstaking accuracy and polemic vigor an entirely political affair of the fight for power (Cozzi and Cozzi 1969/1997; Asor Rosa 1993).

Sarpi has always been a highly controversial figure. An excommunicated friar at the service of a Catholic state and author of works that circulated extensively in Protestant countries, he was constantly attacked by the Roman Curia as a heretic, an unbeliever, and a champion of hypocrisy (Infelise 2006; Infelise 2010). The Venetian Republic defended him and countered his profound morality as a public man and his integrity of life backed by several members of the Servite Order (Barzani 2004). The revival of his writings by eighteenth-century jurisdictionalism was marked by a bitter dispute that was repeated in the nineteenth century (Frajese 1994). The multiplication of critical studies after the middle of the twentieth century also gave rise to debate, resulting in divergent interpretations based on Sarpi's manifold and at times contrasting stances formulated in his *Thoughts*, in the letters, in the advice, and his historical works. A variety of images of Sarpi have therefore been put forward that are difficult to reconcile: the Calvinist, the

Pauline-spirited religious reformer, the "moral atheist" who tended to dissimulation, the "agnostic," and the skeptic philosopher. The relationship between some of Sarpi's positions and the rationalistic attitudes connected to anti-Trinitarianism has not yet been studied in depth (Trebbi 2006). The difficulty in suggesting coherent and comprehensive interpretations is confirmed by a recent eccentric portrait of Sarpi the "fideist" and passionate believer, who became a servant of both "God and State," thanks to his profound desire for reform (Kainulainen 2014). The problem of Sarpi's religious beliefs is still open and might always remain so. However, research carried out in recent decades confirms that the consultant of the old Patrician Republic was a key figure in the European political culture itself in the transition between "reason of state" and absolutism and a man able to offer an original insight on the philosophical-scientific and religious stimuli circulating in an epoch of great confessional conflicts.

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Sarrocchi, Margherita

Born: Naples, 1560

Died: Rome, 1617

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Abstract

Margherita Sarrocchi (1560–1617) was a poet, natural philosopher, and early supporter of Galileo. A celebrated polymath, Sarrocchi was the author of the epic poem *Scanderbeide*, first published in 1606, with a second, posthumous edition in 1623. She also authored works of literary criticism and mathematics that are no longer extant. A member of at least three academies, Sarrocchi hosted intellectual gatherings at her home in Rome. In 1611, Sarrocchi met Galileo when he visited Rome following the publication of his *Sidereus nuncius*; after Galileo returned to Tuscany, Sarrocchi began a correspondence with him which lasted until at least 1612. Sarrocchi died in Rome in 1617.

Biography

The Neapolitan poet and polymath Margherita Sarrocchi (1560–1617) was linked to some of the most well-known figures of her time and praised in letters and verse by her contemporaries. Deeply integrated into the fabric of early modern intellectual society, Sarrocchi was renowned not only for her epic poem, *Scanderbeide* (first edition 1606; second edition 1623) but also for her virtuosity in natural philosophy, including astrology and mathematics (Borzelli 1935; Russell 2006 and Ray 2015). Sarrocchi hosted a well-attended intellectual salon in her home – guests included the poets Torquato Tasso and Giambattista Marino, the mathematician Luca Valerio, and Federico Cesi, founder of the Accademia dei Lincei – and was associated with at least three formal academies, including the Umoristi and the Ordinati in Rome and the Oziosi in Naples. Details about these activities are found in (Capaccio 1608; Erythraeus 1729 and Toppi 1678). Sarrocchi also had links to the Accademia dei Lincei, who may have considered her for membership (Gabrieli 1989). Sarrocchi maintained close ties to the powerful Colonna family, traveling to Naples with the household of Marcantonio II Colonna and dedicating the 1606 edition of the *Scanderbeide* to Costanza Colonna of Monteleone (1556–1626). At the height of her career, Sarrocchi helped promote the telescopic discoveries of Galileo, whom she met in Rome in 1611. According to one of her biographers, so admired was Sarrocchi for her intellectual virtuosity that she was offered a chair in philosophy at the University of Bologna, “con mille e più scudi all’anno di provisione” – an annual salary of one thousand scudi, or more (Bronzini 1625), though no additional documentation of this claim has surfaced.

After the death of her parents, Sarrocchi was brought to Rome by the erudite cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto (1514–1585), who was appointed Vatican librarian in 1570. Sirleto placed Sarrocchi in the convent of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere and oversaw her unusually thorough education: Sarrocchi received instruction in Latin and Italian poetry and in mathematics from Luca Valerio (1553–1618), a friend of Galileo’s who

would become Sarrocchi’s lifelong intellectual companion (Baldini and Napolitani 1991). By 1588, Sarrocchi had married Carlo Birago (possibly an academician), but her relationship with Valerio remained her most enduring bond.

Sarrocchi’s stature as a woman gifted in the study of mathematics, astronomy, and natural philosophy, as well as poetry is attested to by numerous sources (della Chiesa 1620; Bronzini 1625). She is said to have authored commentaries on Della Casa and Petrarch, translated Musaeus’s *Hero and Leader* from the Greek, composed an essay on the theorems of Euclid, and written a theological treatise in Latin. Sarrocchi’s verses were included in an anthology compiled by Muzio Manfredi, titled *Componimenti raccolti da diversi per Dame Romane* [Compositions for Roman Ladies 1575]; and Tasso and others praised her in sonnets and letters (Manfredi 1606; Manuzio 1952 and Tasso 1994). In 1588, she contributed poems to Giulio Iasolino’s *De rimedi naturali* [On Natural Remedies], a balneological work dedicated to a member of the Colonna family.

In 1606, Sarrocchi’s *Scanderbeide* was printed (in a partial edition of only eleven cantos, which Sarrocchi claimed – probably disingenuously – not to have authorized). The work, a Tassian poem that recounts the military struggles of the Albanian hero George Kastrioti, or Scanderbeg, against the Ottomans, contains episodes relating to astrology and other aspects of natural philosophy and was the first complete work in the epic genre to be published by an Italian woman writer.

Sarrocchi was working on a new, complete edition of the *Scanderbeide* when she met Galileo, who had come to Rome to seek support for the discoveries detailed in his *Sidereus Nuncius*. Galileo attended Sarrocchi’s salon, where the two are said to have discussed “the movements of the heavens and other truly productive and celestial things” (Bronzini 1625). After Galileo’s return to Florence, they began a correspondence lasting from July 1611 to June 1612 (Govi 1870; Galileo 1890 and Bayarri 2004). Sarrocchi sought Galileo’s aid in revising her poem to a Tuscan standard and choosing a new dedicatee for it, offering in exchange to promote and defend Galileo and his discoveries to the scientific and literary

community (Ray 2015). Indeed, Sarroccchi expressed support for Galileo in letters to others, writing for example to Guido Bettoli of Perugia that “all that is said about the discovery of the stars by signor Galileo is true: that is, that with Jupiter there are four wandering stars with their own motion, always equally distant from Jupiter, but not from each other; and I saw them with my own eyes through Signor Galileo’s spyglass, and showed them to various friends, which the whole world knows” (27 August 1611). Sarroccchi also discussed astrology in her letters to Galileo, with particular reference to the production of natal charts, an activity in which both she and Galileo were skilled. The extant Sarroccchi–Galileo correspondence is comprised of seven letters from Sarroccchi to Galileo, transcribed in Favaro *Opere di Galileo Galilei*, and one letter from Galileo to Sarroccchi, in the Archivio di Stato di Modena. Sarroccchi is also mentioned in Galileo’s letters to Valerio (all translated in Ray 2016). The correspondence between Sarroccchi and Galileo appears to have ceased after 1612, possibly as a result of increasing tensions between Galileo and the Church.

When Sarroccchi died in 1617, she had achieved considerable recognition and stature. The *Avvisi*, a newsletter of important events in Roman society, praised her as “a woman of wide reading and excellent virtue, having published the heroic poem *Scanderbecheide* [sic] and other works,” and described her funeral in Santa Maria del Minerva, where she was “crowned with laurels and favored by the accompaniment of virtuosi and by many compositions [offered] around her coffin” (Verdile 1990).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Sarroccchi’s epic poem, *Scanderbeide*, was the first work of epic poetry to be published by an Italian woman writer. While it adheres in many respects to the model of Tasso, it presents some innovative aspects, for example, in the depictions of Calidora (1606 edition only) and Silveria, independent female characters invested with knowledge of the natural world (Cox 1997; Cox 2011 and Ray 2016). Sarroccchi’s poems and writings in the area

of literary criticism, translation, and mathematics were well known to her contemporaries, as was the literary salon she convened in her home.

Impact and Legacy

As the author of an epic poem and a member of the scientific circle that promoted Galileo in the early 1600s, Sarroccchi’s impact and legacy are multifaceted and reflect the deeply entangled nature of literary and scientific culture in early modern Italy. Not only is she important for her literary production, which provides a model of female-authored epic poetry that would influence later writers such as Lucrezia Marinella, but her example also offers important evidence of the role of women in the evaluation and dissemination of knowledge in the era of the Scientific Revolution.

Cross-References

► [Galilei, Galileo](#)

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Satan

► Devil, Renaissance Idea of

Satire in Renaissance Literature

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Abstract

Satire, in both prose and verse, was a relevant form of expression in the Renaissance. The development of Renaissance satire was influenced by the new vogue for the classics that brought back to fame satirists such as Horace and Juvenal. During the Renaissance, satiric works were written in neo-Latin and in the vernaculars and both in prose and in verse. Prose satire took the form of dialogues, letters, or mock encomia. Verse satire took the form of the satiric *capitolo* in rhyme, and such poetic forms began to be published in collections of works by different authors. During the same period, satire was also systematized from the theoretical point of view in various treatises on the nature of the genre. In spite of its popularity, nonetheless, satire experienced a drastic downfall at the end of the sixteenth century.

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Satire: A Definition

“*Satura tota nostra est*”: satire is entirely ours, famously said Quintilian to highlight the Roman origins of the genre. The term satire comes from the Latin *satura*, i.e., “full” and appears to be related to the gastronomical term *satura lanx*, a stuffed dish of uncertain identification. The idea of satire as being mixed, varied, and difficult to define corresponds to the nature of the genre. An exact definition of satire as a genre is complicated by the many forms that satiric works can assume, varying from verse compositions (such as the popular Renaissance form of the satiric verse *capitolo*) to prose essays which can take the form of letters, dialogues, mock encomia, and many more.

Satire extends from classical antiquity to the present times, making it a multifaceted and almost timeless genre. In addition, it encompasses not only a vast variety of literary forms, in both prose and verse, but also modes of expression: while “satire” is most often understood as pertaining to literature, it actually ranges from literary works to the visual arts and to performances. The tone of satire, too, can be extremely varied, spanning from polite amusement to angry invective. The variety of the genre has resulted in a very broad usage of the term satire: as pointed out by Alvin Kernan, “the word ‘satire’ has come [...] to be the general term for any kind of writing which attacks, directly or indirectly, something which is hated or feared” (Kernan 1973).

A definition of satire must take into account the recurring sets of characteristics that the genre has acquired since classical literature and that have persisted through the ages, with impressively few substantial variations. An apparent paradox of satire is that, while the satirist professes to be addressing pressing contemporary issues, most of the features of satire are formulaic.

In his pivotal work on satire, Alvin Kernan has identified such features as concerning the satiric speaker, the scene, and the plot of satire (Kernan 1959). The major merit of Kernan’s work – which concerns satire in general but that has especially important implications in the analysis of some Renaissance satirists, such as Ludovico Ariosto –

has been to dispel a common tendency to interpret the persona of the satirist as an actual self-portrait of the author. The satirist, instead, must be considered a poetic device employed by the author. All satirists share, in fact, some common characteristics: the satirist always portrays himself as a simple and humble man longing for a lost quieter and more natural way of living, and also as a moral man, disgusted by the corruption and loss of morality that surrounds him, who is compelled to write precisely to denounce the dissolution of the contemporary world. The scene that he sees in front of his eyes is, invariably, a scene of chaos and depravity. The world of the satirist is always in a state of disorder, and it is inhabited by individuals characterized by stupidity, ignorance, and depravity. One of the first acts of every satirist is, as a consequence, to mark the distance that separates him from his contemporaries, pointing out how he does not share their way of life or approve of their conduct. Coinciding with his self-representation as a simple man, the satirist claims to write in a plain, straightforward style; a style, furthermore, that avoids any embellishments because its first and only aim is to speak the truth. The satirist depicts himself as the only voice of truth – more precisely, as the only defender of truth in a world that uses language only to deceive and to falsify reality. In the complex and refined world of Renaissance courts, where words and manners needed to be as polished and as carefully chosen as possible, the satirist’s insistence on the truthfulness and the genuine simplicity of his words often becomes a way to oppose courtly culture.

A further common feature of every satire is the absence of any real plot. Despite the satirist’s denunciation, the scene is completely unchanged at the end of the satiric text: the world is still chaotic and corrupted, and its inhabitants are still perverted. And yet, the satirist will not desist from his purpose of denouncing the evils of society. At the same time, he is not expected to be the one to change things, either. In Ruben Quintero’s definition, the satirist sets his role to be that of a “watch-dog”: someone who alerts the rest of the world of possible dangers but who is not expected to be in charge of warding them off (Quintero 2007).

Satire is also always intended as having the goal of providing a corrective to vices, mistakes, and wrongdoings that the satiric speaker sees around him. For such a reason, the satiric speaker during the early modern period has at times been compared to a doctor, and satire becomes the bitter medicine that he employs to try to cure the afflictions of society. Satirists always have a tone that expresses, or at least lets transpire, intense emotions such as rage, disgust, and discontent, and yet, for satire to be written, the satirist must hold a residual hope that something can be changed, especially in virtue of his intervention. The cure of satire consists in exposing its subject to public denigration, thus motivating them to correct their habits.

The notion of the satirist as a doctor intervening against vices was preceded by the idea that magical powers were associated with satire and with the satirist. Robert C. Elliott, who has explored satire from an anthropological point of view, has shown that in a variety of ancient cultures (ranging from the Arab world to Ireland) satire was considered as invested with magical powers. In ancient Greece, the magic of satire was evoked during fertility rituals, and was believed to be able to banish evil through the power of its curse, so that the earth was spared from infertility. Moreover, in different cultures, works of satire were often believed to have the power to create actual harm to the satirist's enemies. In ancient Irish culture, satirists were deemed able to provoke the death of living beings simply with the power of their verse, while the Arabian tribes used to employ satirists in battle, having them ride with the army and cast invectives on the enemy (Elliott 1966). Even when in later cultures (such as in the Renaissance) satire and the satirist had lost their magical allure, the genre and its author might still be feared. One telling example is that of the renowned Renaissance Italian satirist Pietro Aretino, who was known as the "scourge of princes" and who relied on the popularity and on the causticity of his satirical poems and on the fear of defamation that they produced in potential targets as a way to elicit gifts and pecuniary rewards from the powerful.

The Classical and Medieval Roots of Renaissance Satire

When Quintilian defined satire as entirely Roman, he was relying on a rather restricted notion of the genre that included only the kind of verse satire, as composed by authors such as Horace, Juvenal, Lucilius, and Persius. Satire, however, did exist in Greek literature. Thersites, the ugly, ridiculous member of the Greek army sieging Troy in Homer's *Iliad*, has been proposed as being the first known satirist of Greek literature in virtue of his verbal attack on Agamemnon. This type of satire, based on reprimanding the vices of a particular individual, was popularized in Greek culture by the authors of iambic poetry, a poetic form that specialized precisely in personal attacks. A similar style, characterized by the mockery of human vices and by verbal abuse, was also employed by the authors of Greek comedy. Greek comedy, especially through the works of Aristophanes, also advertised the idea that the comic poet was someone who could teach good to the population and that the comic and satiric genres were ultimately useful to the city (Keane 2007).

It is however true that in ancient Rome satire reached a new dignity and a new systematization: it was thanks to the Romans that satire became an actual literary genre. Roman satire was always intended as a written genre and aimed at a literate public. Roman satire also fixed the characteristics of the satiric persona and of the satiric scene, as well as of satire as a commentary on contemporary society and of the satirist as the analyst of such a reality.

The most important satirists of Roman literature, and the ones who were both destined to have the largest impact on Renaissance satiric production despite their individual differences in style, were Horace and Juvenal. Horace established the model of satire as a sort of intimate conversation among friends. The style of its poems, while actually carefully constructed, appears as colloquial, almost too casual. Horace's eighteen satires depict various human types that the poet could meet in his daily life. The characters often become ways for the satirist to portray human shortcomings

such as avarice, pedantry, or foolishness. Yet, Horace's speaker always maintains an even-tempered, benevolent attitude; his condemnation of vice is always marked by sympathy and never gives way to wrath.

Juvenal, by contrast, employed a very different style and satiric persona. His satires are written under the urge of outrage, provoked by the moral dissolution that the satirist sees in contemporary society. Juvenalian satire takes the form of an invective launched against such a dissolution, which originates in the poet's indignation and in his lack of hope for the world in which he lives. The style of Juvenal's satires matches such a change in tone: no longer the conversational speech of Horatian satire, but an elevated style, that moves away from comedy and takes his satires in the direction of the style of tragedy. In the Renaissance, Horatian and Juvenalian satires will become the points of reference for two different forms of satiric writings: Horace will be the model of Ludovico Ariosto's colloquial, informal, and ironic satires, centered on everyday events in the author's life, while Juvenal will be the inspiration for a more politically committed kind of satire.

By contrast with the florid production of satires in ancient Roman literature, in the Middle Ages there seems to be a downtrend in the genre to the point that some scholars in the past have argued that satire was almost nonexistent in the medieval period. Recent scholarship maintains instead that medieval satire did indeed exist, and yet it is hard to recognize as such due to its differences in form and content from classical satire, leading medieval satirical works to be categorized under labels other than satire, such as romance, fables, and most often sermons. References to the sacred scripture and Christian values – or better, the lack thereof – played an important role in medieval satirical texts. Many medieval satires take the representatives of the Church – friars, priests, bishops, even the papal curia and the Pope himself – as their target, and princely courts and their courtiers (that will represent a major target of satirical writings in the Renaissance) make an appearance as well. An example of this latter kind of satire is provided by Walter Map's *De nugis curialium* (*Courtier's Trifles*), a text that

introduces the image of princely courts as hell on earth, a concept that will have a substantial fortune in the Renaissance.

In medieval satire, both clergymen and laymen are criticized for their attachment to earthly goods. Yet, the majority of satire criticizing materialism and cupidity was directed specifically against members of the church, who were attacked for their living in disregard of Christian principles. Such anticlerical satires were for the most part written in Latin, the language employed and understood by the clergy, and can therefore be considered self-referential: written by clergymen for their fellow clergymen. The Middle Ages also saw the presence of satirical writings in the vernacular, which were composed by jesters and performed during public festivities, although only a very few documents of this production have survived. A particularly florid medieval form of satire was represented by allegorical fables that often featured anthropomorphic animals (as in the case of the French satirical fable *Roman de Renart*, written by different authors during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries).

Satire in the Renaissance

Despite such appearances of satire in the ages that preceded the Renaissance, scholars agree that the birth of the current concept of satire needs to be traced back precisely to the Renaissance. The notion of the Renaissance origins of the present concept of satire was first introduced by Jakob Burckhardt, who in his groundbreaking study *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (first published in 1860) devoted a chapter exclusively to the birth of “modern wit and satire” (Burckhardt 1990). Burckhardt identifies the “absence of satire” in a collection of short stories composed in the thirteenth century as the biggest indication of the collection's “antiquity.” Although his statement may now sound too radical, it is undeniable that the Renaissance witnessed a sudden increase in the production and in the dissemination of works of satire. The reasons for such a success of satire are to be found in the retrieval of classical literature and in the

appeal that satire as an erudite commentary on contemporary society could have on the educated urban elites of the period. The popularity of the genre among the urban elites of the Renaissance has been compared to that of modern journalism for the present public. In addition, the flexibility of satire as a genre and the possibility that it offered for experimenting with new modes of expression made it particularly appealing to those who were in search of novel forms of writing (Blanchard 2007).

Fifteenth-Century Neo-Latin Satire in Verse and in Prose

The most popular satirists during the Middle Ages, and until the thirteenth century, had been Juvenal and Persius, whose texts, thanks to their moralistic tone, were considered close to biblical in nature and therefore better suited to the spirit of the time (Marsh 2014). It was during the Humanistic period and the rediscovery of the classics that Horace became a prominent model as well. The dissemination of satire in the fifteenth century was further fostered by the arrival of the printing press. More than fifty editions of Juvenal were printed during the fifteenth century; while the works of Horace – who had already been included among the greatest poets of all times in the fourth canto of Dante's *Divine Comedy* – became the center of attention thanks to Cristoforo Landino's very successful annotated edition printed in 1482 and to the many more annotated editions that followed (Abbamonte 2015).

Particularly relevant among the authors of Latin verse satire in the fifteenth century were Francesco Filelfo and Tito Vespasiano Strozzi. Filelfo is the author of ten *Satyrae* composed between 1431 and 1448 and printed in 1476. Filelfo's satires are noteworthy for demonstrating the influence of Horace while at the same time still being close to Juvenal's style. Filelfo's *Satyrae* features the common themes of the genre and, more originally, specific reflections on contemporary events. The legacy of Juvenal is evident in the invectives against what the author sees as the main vices of his times.

Strozzi's satires (published posthumously in 1514), by contrast, verge significantly in the direction of Horatian satire, as testified to by their epistolary form, structured as letters to friends and family (and therefore different from Juvenalian invectives), and by their mild and jovial tone. In addition, Strozzi's satires differ from Filelfo's for their criticizing not individuals but just their vices in general. Strozzi's satires feature subject matter such as praise of the villa and critique of the city, encomia of virtuous friends, and, intriguingly, also include a first systematization of satiric poetry, which attempts to define what the style and the topics of satire should be.

In addition to verse satire, the Renaissance also saw the production of numerous prose satiric writings. The development of prose satire in Europe was a byproduct of the renewed popularity of the Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata, whose works were translated into Latin and subsequently into the European vernaculars (Smith 1966). Lucian's satirical eulogies are also considered the model for early modern neo-Latin mock encomia, the most famous example of which is represented by Erasmus's *Moriae Encomium* (1509).

One of the most influential neo-Latin works of prose satire was Enea Silvio Piccolomini's 1444 *De curialium miseriis* (*On the miseries of courtiers*). The text, written as a letter to a friend, pertains to the genre of complaints on life at court, and Piccolomini most likely drew inspiration for the work from his years at the court of Emperor Frederick III in Vienna. Piccolomini's critique of courts and courtiers is also indebted to a medieval tradition. Anti-court writings were particularly popular in twelfth-century England, thanks to the works of authors such as John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Nigel of Longchamps, and Walter Map. Just like his predecessors, Piccolomini depicts life at court in utterly negative terms, both from the physical and from the moral point of view. Analyzing experiences related to the senses, Piccolomini comes to the conclusion that there is nothing at court that does not offend human perceptions: life at court means ugly sights, unbearable noises, disgusting smells, and unpleasant flavors. In addition, the court also corrupts a man's integrity. The court is so saturated

with the most awful vices – flattery, duplicity, ambition, envy, greed, cut-throat competition among peers – that even the most virtuous among men cannot preserve his integrity. Piccolomini's satirical letter while reiterating some elements that were typical of medieval moralistic satires (such as the idea of the court as a place for corruption that encourages men to desire fame and riches distracting them from the pursuit of eternal salvation) also introduces new elements that will be echoed by later satires: in particular, the notion of the frustration of a worthy courtier who is not rewarded for his loyal service and who sees instead himself disregarded while cunning sycophants receive all the favors.

A more indirect but equally vehement critique of early modern society – and especially of court culture – is expressed in Leon Battista Alberti's *Momus or The Prince* (1446). Through the mouthpiece of Momus, the Greek god of criticism, Alberti voices a denunciation of human vices, paying particular attention to the reality of the papal court (to the point that the work has been interpreted as an allegorical satire of fifteenth-century papacy). Both Piccolomini's and Alberti's works will play a crucial role in establishing the critique of courts and courtiers as one of the main subjects of Renaissance satiric writings.

The Development of Satire in the Sixteenth Century

After its neo-Latin examples, satire flourished all over Europe. The complex, variegated – some would even say “easy” – nature of satire was, according to some critics, one of the reasons behind its success. The permissiveness of the organizational principles of satire and its “mixed dish” nature that gave the genre its name allowed writers to enjoy a notable amount of freedom in writing. It was over the course of the sixteenth century, and in the prefaces to vernacular collections of satires, furthermore, that Renaissance satire received an extensive systematization.

The rediscovery and the successive dissemination and systematization of satire were particularly relevant in Renaissance Italy. The reason

for the peculiar Italian interest in satiric writings is to be found in the connection between the public dimension that characterized everyday life in the city-states that populated the Italian peninsula during the Renaissance and the public nature of satiric writings. In addition, the presence of satirists such as Horace, Juvenal, and Lucian among classical authors further ensured that, in a culture that highly valued imitation of the classics, satire could have its space as a genre. And finally, the prestige in which both the classics and Italian literature and culture were held all over Europe during the Renaissance created the basis for the development of satiric writings inspired by both the classical and the Italian models throughout the entire continent (Blanchard 2007).

Prose satire in the Renaissance appeared in different forms that could be inspired by the classics or represent an original Renaissance creation. Among the styles directly inspired by classical models were the mock encomia, where the speaker praised subjects commonly considered unworthy of praise (such as baldness, ignorance, indigence), thus intertwining satire with the rhetorical genre of the paradox. The purpose of this kind of satiric writings was often an indirect critique of the customs of the time.

Classicist Verse Satire in Italy

Renaissance verse satire was based on models developed in the Italian peninsula as well. One of the main forms of satirical expression in sixteenth-century Italian literature was the satiric *capitolo*, a verse composition that adopted the rhyming style of the *terza rima*. The *terza rima*, inaugurated by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, consists of a series of hendecasyllables set according to the rhyme structure ABA, BCB, et cetera. This particular structure makes the *terza rima* particularly apt for a discursive style, a characteristic that explains its success as mode of expression for verse satires.

The establishment of the *capitolo* as the preferred form for verse satire is dependent on the composition and publication of Ludovico Ariosto's seven satires, composed in all

probability between 1517 and 1525, and most likely at first privately circulated among the author's friends until their posthumous publication in 1534. The *Satires*, which experienced a long-lasting success after their publication, can be considered the foundation of Renaissance verse satire in the vernacular also in terms of style, of the topics of satire, and of the self-portrait offered by the satiric speaker.

Ariosto was the main source for the shift from the Juvenalian embittered tone that prevailed in medieval satires to the mild Horatian tone that became the preferred satiric style in the Renaissance. Similarly Horatian is the use of apologues: short stories involving speaking animals, or fantasy settings, that become the starting point for moral reflections on the state of the world and on human nature. Ariosto follows the epistolary model of Horace, by having each one of the satires addressed to a relative or a friend of the author's, which gives the poems the tone of private, informal conversations among intimates. The style is constructed accordingly: despite being the carefully crafted work of an extremely skilled and erudite poet, the *Satires* may at first reading appear as a casual and unsophisticated work written under the impulse of the moment. In accordance with such a style, Ariosto's satiric speaker adopts an easygoing and unpretentious persona. The author portrays himself as a genuine man, alien from the duplicity and from the complications of his contemporary world, honest to the point of bluntness, and aspiring to a life of quiet and rustic simplicity. The court society features preeminently in the collection: the first and the third satire depict in rather grim terms the author's relationships with his patrons, members of the eminent Renaissance dynasty of the Estes, rulers of Ferrara. The entire collection features the lamentation of the early modern court *litteratus* who sees his intellectual accomplishments disregarded in a court that forces its poets to turn into bureaucrats and that favors flattery over talent and dedication. The satires that are not directly or indirectly related to the world of the courts and to social and political events take their cue from events in the life of the author or his addressee (such as how to provide the best education for a

son, or whether to marry or not) to cast a reflection on contemporary society.

Ariosto's *Satires* became an extremely influential piece of work. In Italy, numerous writers followed in Ariosto's footsteps, most of whom also replicated his satiric persona and his mild and witty style. The most noteworthy exception in this sense is represented by the Florentine Luigi Alamanni, author of thirteen satires, twelve of which were published in France between 1532 and 1533 and which stand out for their heavily political tone and for their solemn and bitterly polemic style.

Ariosto's satires were soon disseminated outside of Italy as well. In France, they were an inspiration for the poet Joachim Du Bellay, and two of them were adapted into French by Jean Vaquelin de la Fresnaye between 1574 and 1595 (Wiggins 1976). The first English translation appeared in 1608, and one additional translation (titled *Ariosto's seven planets governing Italie*) followed in 1611.

The vogue for satire was further supported by translations of classical satires and by treatises that strived to define the genre and to confer to it literary prestige. In 1559, Ludovico Domenichi published a translation of Horace's works that was accompanied by a treatise on the origins of satire and by a discourse on satire. Essays providing theoretical systematizations of satire were also contained in collections of satires by different authors. In 1560, Francesco Sansovino published a collection titled *Sette libri di satire* (*Seven Books of Satires*), which featured works by well-known Italian satirists including Ariosto and which was introduced by Sansovino's own *Discorso sopra la materia della satira* (*Discourse on the Topic of Satire*). In his discourse, Sansovino highlights the educational and corrective purpose of satire, a moral genre created precisely to criticize bad habits and to discourage immoral behavior. Such a corrective character of satire is presented as dependent on the very nature of the genre. A popular Renaissance etymology erroneously connected the word "satire" to the word "satyr," the name of the Greek woodland deities known for their completely natural and untamed behavior. Just like the satyrs, the satirists are rustic and

even insolent at times and speak in plain and unaffected words. What readers need to infer is that the satirists' insolence must be tolerated since it is intended for the good of society, aimed as it is to chastise vice. Satire's simple style is related to the satirist's honest nature and to his always speaking the truth.

Similar concepts are expressed in Ludovico Paterno's *Lettera sopra la materia della satira* (*Letter on the topic of satire*) published in Mario degli Andini's *Satire di cinque poeti illustri* (*Satires of five illustrious poets*), published in 1565. Paterno reiterates the link between satirists and satyrs and once more presents a picture of satirists as the ones in charge of pointing out and castigating misconduct and whose harshness should therefore be excused. Paterno maintains in fact that satirists are like good doctors, who do not hesitate to cut off a damaged limb in order to save the rest of the body.

Non-classicist Satire: The Invention of Pasquino

A peculiar – popular and not dependent on classical models – form of satire was also born in sixteenth-century Rome. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the mutilated torso of a Roman statue was unearthed in a Roman *piazza*. By a means still unknown, people took the habit of attaching to the statue anonymous satirical poems that criticized the authorities of the city. The poems, known as pasquinades, represented the voice of popular discontent against those in power.

Many people made use of the mask of Pasquino to compose and disseminate satiric texts, and yet one writer in particular became so skilled in the genre of pasquinades that he was eventually able to build for himself a long-lasting reputation as a respected, even feared satirist. That writer was the notorious Pietro Aretino, whose works became the model for sixteenth-century vernacular prose satires. Aretino, furthermore, invested in fashioning himself as a satirist to the point that he chose the figure of the satyr, with his completely natural nature and his blunt sincerity, as his own *impresa* (Waddington 2004).

Prose Satire: The Works and Influence of Pietro Aretino

The appeal of Aretino's works of satire resides in their addressing the most relevant aspects of Renaissance culture. His pasquinades provided a cynical portrait of Roman society under the controversial papacies of the two Medici popes, Leo X and Clemens VII. His most renowned pieces of work are two satirical dialogues that, although different in topic, present a homogeneous critique of contemporary society. The *Sei giornate* (*Six Days*), published in 1534, features a series of dialogues among prostitutes, presenting a disenchanting view of Renaissance society as based on meretricious exchanges. The *Ragionamento delle corti* (*Dialogue on the Court*), published 4 years later, by proclaiming the court as the antithesis of culture demolishes the patronage relationship between prince and writer on which the status of the early modern *literatus* was founded.

Aretino's works are also relevant in establishing a new role for the early modern satirist. Aretino was able to refute the court and to support himself with his writings, thanks to the newly developed printing press, and most of all to his ability to establish himself as the arbiter of the reputation of the powerful, that he could either praise or blame in his satires. Aretino's clever blackmailing of those in power allowed him to become one of the first authors that could live, in the modern sense, off of the profits of their written work. Aretino's satires heavily influenced the generation of satirists that came after him. Later authors tried to follow in his footsteps in highlighting the most disquieting aspects of the crisis of the sixteenth century but also trying to replicate his model of an independent author.

Prose and Verse Satire in Europe

The influence of Pietro Aretino's works on English Renaissance satire is evident in the works of Thomas Nashe, who like Aretino wrote licentious works and satires that deal with the difficult conditions of early modern *literati*. English literature produced a systematization of

verse satire, too. The form and purpose of satire were investigated in George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), where, similarly to what happened in Italian texts, the satirist is defined as a moral individual who is in charge of reforming his fellow men from vice. Both Horace and Juvenal were models for English satirists, with John Skelton's satires being usually considered closer to Juvenalian bitterness, while Thomas Wyatt's are usually deemed closer to Horace (Jensen 2007). Wyatt's most famous satire, "Mine Own John Poyntz," is centered on the popular sixteenth-century topic of the immorality of life at court. The anti-court theme was prevalent also in John Donne's satires, which circulated in manuscript form in the last decade of the sixteenth century. Another celebrated work of English literature, Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), can also figure among satirical works given the criticism of present-day society it provides through the protagonist Raphael Hythlodæus's journey to the eponymous fictional island and through the depiction of its society and mores.

In France, the influence of Italian humanists led intellectuals to cast an increasingly critical view of surviving medieval institutions and the forms of learning that they promoted. The production of satiric writings in France was also fostered by the religious wars (from the 1560s until the end of the century) and by the social crisis that followed (Smith 1966). The peculiarity of French satire in the Renaissance is that the new forms of satire inspired by the humanists and their rediscovery of classical literature flourished while medieval forms of satire continued to survive. The two coexisting traditions were skillfully combined in the works of Francois Rabelais (Duval 2007). Rabelais's masterpiece *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (consisting of five books published from 1532 till 1564) features a wide variety of satiric targets, such as scholasticism and medieval forms of learning and teaching, political institutions, and the corruption of the monastic orders. In addition to Rabelais's work, the French Renaissance also experienced the revival of classical satire that emerged in the rest of Europe as testified to by the works of Joachim Du Bellay.

In Spain, satiric dialogues were developed in the sixteenth century under the combined

influence of Erasmus and of Lucian. Such satiric elements would, in the following century, feature prominently in the works of Miguel de Cervantes, whose masterpiece *Don Quixote de la Mancha* shows the legacy of Renaissance satiric writings (Gatti 2007).

The Decline of Satire

It was precisely at the moment when satire was experiencing its maximum success and dissemination that changes in European society and culture provoked its sudden decline. The popularity of satire received a halt in the second half of the sixteenth century when the index of prohibited books started banning satiric pieces of writing. As a result of this ban, the production and the publication of satiric texts decreased rapidly (Romei 1998). The downtrend was particularly evident in Italy, where the works of the most popular satiric (and, at large, comic) authors were banned in different editions of the Index published between 1564 and 1593. From that moment on, collections of satires circulated only in manuscript form, and satire was for a long time forced to a clandestine existence. In Spain, works that could be classified as satirical or comical, and that had been popular until a few years earlier, now had to be published in expunged editions to avoid censorship, and also in England the religious authorities issued a similar ban against works of satire at the end of the sixteenth century. Even in countries where the impact of Counter-Reformation ideas and of the censorship fostered by the Index was less significant, less noteworthy works of satires were produced, making the decline of satire a general phenomenon.

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Savonarola, Girolamo

Born: 21 September 1452, Ferrara

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Abstract

Girolamo Savonarola was one of the most important Italian preachers of the Late Middle Ages. He was a Dominican friar who lived in

fifteenth-century Italy, between Ferrara and Firenze, where he died following his death sentence on 23 May 1498. His fame is due to his intense preaching activity which reached its acme between 1494 and 1498. His message had theological, moral, and political contents and spoke to every social class; indeed, he addressed people in the vernacular Italian language and often, for his theological and philosophical treatises, opted to employ the vernacular rather than Latin (e.g., *Trattato contro gli astrologi*, *Trattato circa el reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*). He also wrote Latin works that he translated into Italian himself (e.g., *De simplicitate christianae vitae*, *Triumphus crucis*, *Compendium revelationum*) (Savonarola 1959; Savonarola 1961; Savonarola 1974) and genuine Latin treatises and sermons (e.g., *Triumphus fidei abbreviatus*, *Sermoni sul salmo "Quam bonus," Sermoni sul principio della Cantica*) (Savonarola 1976; Savonarola 1999).

Savonarola launched a strong, violent attack against the corruption of the Roman Church and papacy, especially Pope Alexander VI Borgia; he endlessly invited his followers to repent and atone and to recover the fundamental importance of the Holy Writ in Christians' life; he also promoted institutional and social reforms, becoming a prominent figure in the Florentine political life of the late Quattrocento. In 1494, he was sent by the Signoria to negotiate with Charles VIII of France and obtained the king's promise that the French troops would be allowed to pass through the city without violence.

Savonarola claimed to be a prophet, as he explicitly stressed in his *Compendium revelationum*, a work in which he explains the content of his past visions related to the corruption of clerics (the so-called *tiepidi*), to the flood of sins and vices, and to the descent of Charles VIII of France, "the new Cyrus." He pursued his aims until he was captured, tried, and (following a confession extorted through torture) condemned to death: this all happened in Florence, the same city that a few years before had looked to him as a leader.

Biography

1452–1482

Girolamo Maria Francesco Matteo Savonarola (Ferrara, 21 September 1452–Florence, 23 May 1498) was born in Ferrara, the third of seven sons of Niccolò Savonarola and Elena Bonacossi: the family moved from Padua to Ferrara in 1440, when Michele Savonarola (Padua, 1384–Ferrara, 1468), Niccolò's father, was appointed court physician to the Este, at the time of Niccolò III d'Este. Michele, Girolamo's grandfather, played a very special role in his grandson's life: he had taught medicine in Padua and written several medical treatises, such as the *Practica medicinae*, the *Speculum phisionomiae*, and the vernacular work *De regimine pregnantibus*, which is considered one of the first modern texts on pregnancy and childhood (Crisciani and Zuccolin 2011; Pesenti 1977). Michele gave Girolamo his first instrument for studying logic and grammar and introduced him to the school of liberal arts of Battista Guarino, son of the famous humanist, Guarino Veronese (Verona, 1374–Ferrara, 1460). Michele also represented for Girolamo a moral guide and, together with humanistic culture, taught him moral and religious principles: he died in 1468, when Girolamo was sixteen. Following his father's wishes, Girolamo obtained the title of *magister in artibus* at the University of Ferrara, as a first step toward becoming a physician, like his grandfather; he started to attend the Este's court but was disgusted by the luxury and vice he witnessed there. During these years, he began to change his attitude toward life: all of his biographers and Savonarola himself, on several later occasions, state that a new conscience took root inside his soul, and he grew daily more sensitive to corruption, sin, vice, and the low moral stature of the clergy, the *tiepidi* (lukewarm), as he later called religious men. From this juvenile period, we have two poems that testify to the change that was taking place within Savonarola: the *De ruina mundi* (1472) and the *De ruina Ecclesiae* (1475) are his earliest works, containing, *in nuce*, all his major themes (Savonarola 1968, 3, p. 6). At the beginning of May 1475, he visited Faenza (a small town in

central Italy, close to Ferrara) where he heard a friar preaching; he was strongly impressed by a sentence from the book of *Genesis: Egredere de terra tua!* (Leave your Land!): this was the seed of his new life as a friar, as he relates in one of the sermons in the book of Ezekiel (Savonarola 1955b, I, p. 374). Less than a year later, in April 1476, he decided to go to Bologna, to assume the Dominican habit in the convent of San Domenico: he left home without a word but, the day after his departure, wrote to his father, outlining his reasons; his decision created a fracture within the family, but he never looked back. During his first years in Bologna, he was particularly obedient and humble, gladly practicing fasting and prayer, but soon his superiors invited him to prepare for pastoral care and preaching, so he devoted himself to his theological studies. In 1479, for the first time since he left, he returned to Ferrara, as a teacher of novices; it is probable that he had the opportunity to witness a dispute of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Mirandola, 1463–Florence, 1494). A few years later, on 28 February 1482, Savonarola met Pico again, during the chapter of the Lombard Congregation of the Dominican Order in Reggio: here, Savonarola carried on a dispute in Pico's presence. During this chapter, Savonarola was assigned to the convent of San Marco in Florence as a *lector*, and this constituted his first Florentine sojourn (Ridolfi 1997; Burlamacchi 1937).

1482–1487

This period was important for several reasons: during the Advent and Lent preaching in San Gimignano and Florence, Savonarola began to elaborate a three-stage prophecy concerning the destiny of the Italians, i.e., the *flagellum* (plague), repentance and atonement, and a final rebirth as a new blessed community. He also experienced the rhetorical taste of the Florentines, a precious background that enabled him to refine and improve his preaching style. Moreover, Savonarola came into contact with the Medici's environment and constructed his own image of this political and cultural community, an image that was to be developed in the following years, mostly during his second Florentine sojourn (1490–1498) (Cattin 1973).

Savonarola's first Florentine sojourn began with a cycle of sermons attended in the church of Benedictine nuns in Florence, the so-called Murate (walled in) for the seclusion: the friar preached at the Murate for Advent, 1482, and Lent, 1483. For Lent, 1484, he was assigned to the cathedral (*basilica*) of San Lorenzo, one of the most important churches in Florence, which was closely connected to the Medici family: the attendants did not like the way Savonarola spoke. His accent revealed his northern origin, and he was considered rough and inelegant by the Florentines, who were used to a more gentle, literary rhetorical discourse, even in a religious context. Placido Cinozzi, a faithful Savonarolian follower, recorded this event in his *Epistola De vita et moribus reverendi patris fratris Hieronimi Savonarolae* (Cinozzi 1898). In the same year, Pope Sixtus IV died and Innocent VIII was elected: the election was dominated by the obscure action of Rodrigo Borgia, the future Pope Alexander VI; on this occasion, Savonarola wrote the *Oratio pro Ecclesia* and a hymn, *O anima cecata* (blinded soul), both in the vernacular, inspired by the moral crisis into which the church was sinking (Savonarola 1968, 4, p. 13). The preaching of the following years, 1485 and 1486, in San Gimignano (small towns between Siena and Florence), was crucial for Savonarola because he introduced into his discourse prophetic themes, particularly during Lent, 1486 (Verde 1989). In 1487, Savonarola preached in the church of Santa Verdiana in Florence before returning to Bologna and Ferrara (1488–1490). He preached in several cities in central-northern Italy at that time (Modena, Piacenza, Brescia, Pavia, and Genoa), but his destiny was, once again, decided by the chapter of the Dominican Order, held in Como in 1490. He was appointed *lector* to the convent of San Marco in Florence, but this assignment was not random; we have a letter from Lorenzo de' Medici, dated 29 April 1489, in which the Magnifico asked for *frate Hieronymo da Ferrara* to Florence. The request came from Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who still remembered the friar he met in 1482, during the Reggio chapter; Pico had been in Florence, at Lorenzo's court, since 1488; Lorenzo himself may

have had several reasons for recalling Savonarola to Florence related to his personal spiritual condition and the role of the convent of San Marco (Weinstein 2011).

1490–1494

Savonarola arrived in May 1490 and took up his role as *lector* at the convent of San Marco. During Girolamo's absence, Lorenzo de' Medici had increased his power, and, by that time, the members of the Medici circle controlled all of the most relevant commissions and institutions in Florence: the *accoppiatori*, for instance, who selected the members of the government, which was now closer to a *Signoria* than a republic (Rubinstein 1977). The first cycle of sermons was about the *Apocalypse* (Verde 1988), from August to the beginning of January, and, in the mornings of public holidays, he preached on the first letter of St. John (Savonarola 1998): his aim was to "say new things in a new way" (*nova dicere et novo modo*), indicating that he meant to address the public in a new, simple manner, avoiding the complex structure of the scholastic sermon and focusing on the Holy Writ. The tone of the sermons was harsh and firm, and the content was a critique of society based on the eight reasons he had already identified in 1486. Savonarola was invited to preach in the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, where he attended for Lent, 1491, urging his audience to repent and recalling the forthcoming troubles (*tribulazioni*) in the light of human sin (Savonarola 2001); he identified himself with the Old Testament prophets like Elijah, Amos, and Isaiah.

On 16 May 1491, Savonarola was elected prior to the convent of San Marco; a consequence, which was surely appreciated by Lorenzo de' Medici, was the increasing number of novices, especially among the eminent Florentine families, since the convent was losing the important role it had played at the time of Cosimo de' Medici; Niccolò Seratico (a future secretary of Savonarola) entered the convent in 1494, Zanobi Acciaiuoli in 1496, Giorgio Antonio Vespucci in 1497, and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in 1494, just before his death.

On 2 April 1492, Lorenzo de' Medici died in Florence, and his son, Piero, replaced him as leader of the Florentine government; unfortunately, he did not possess his father's capacity. The death of Lorenzo precipitated the alliance between Ludovico Sforza and the French king, Charles VIII, considering that the Magnifico had always urged the necessity for an inner Italian league, without external influences, as ratified by the peace treaty of Lodi (1454). Ludovico supported the Italian descent of Charles VIII, who announced his advent in 1491 claiming the reign of Naples. In August 1492, Rodrigo Borgia was elected Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503).

In 1492 and 1493, Savonarola described his visions and prophecies about the destiny of the Italian nation: we have mostly indirect statements for these years, since we do not have the *reportationes* of his sermons but merely his memoirs gathered in the *Compendium revelationum* and several sermons from 1494 to 1495, especially the *predica della renovatione*, held on 13 January 1495 (Tromboni 2013). The Lent preaching of 1492 started with the idea of a separation from the Lombard Congregation of the Dominican Order and the foundation of a new Tuscan autonomous congregation, accomplished in 1493 (Verde 1994b).

1494–1498

In the meantime, Charles VIII, after the death of Ferrante, king of Naples (on 25 January 1494), was preparing his Italian enterprise, when Savonarola began to report to the Florentines that the *flagellum* was coming: during Lent, 1494, in *Sermones quadragesimales super archam Noe* (ed. Venetiis 1536), he advised his followers to build a new arch in order to ensure their safety. The whole of Italy was frightened by the reports of the disasters caused by the French army, and Piero de' Medici, unlike Ludovico Sforza, refused to support Charles VIII. In June 1494, the French king expelled from France all Italian bankers and merchants, thereby striking a harsh blow to the Florentine economy; Piero, stuck between an anti-French league, led by the pope and the king of Naples and the approaching king of France, thought that perhaps he could face the French

army with his own resources. In September, Savonarola decided to face the situation, recalling the theme of the new arch: at this point, it was natural for all to regard the coming of Charles VIII as the biblical universal flood. Savonarola introduced another metaphor also: Charles VIII was a new Cyrus, who came to purify the whole of Italy and the Church and restore the political balance. From 1 November, Savonarola preached on the book of Haggai, one of his most important cycles of sermons, with which he accompanied his people through the flood, i.e., the descent of Charles VIII (Garfagnini 1997). The diplomatic initiative of Piero de' Medici was disastrous, since he ceded the cities of Pisa and Livorno, the strategic ports for Florence, and a remarkable amount of money. The Signoria decided to organize another expedition, guided by Savonarola, who benefited from the trust of the Florentines; the group left Florence on 5 November 1494. During his conversations with Charles, Savonarola was able to obtain a promise that the French troops would be allowed to pass through Florence without violence which, in the sermons of early 1495, Savonarola would call "a miracle." In the meantime, Piero de' Medici was banished from the city as the popularity of the friar increased. Charles VIII arrived in the city on 17 November (the day on which Giovanni Pico della Mirandola died) and departed on the 28th. Firenze was eventually free of the tyranny of the Medici and that freedom was obtained without bloodshed. Many chroniclers, including Pietro Parenti and Luca Landucci, claimed that this was entirely thanks to Savonarola. The friar continued preaching and his authority increased: he finally had a chance to promote institutional and political reform, to enlarge popular participation in government and reduce taxes. The supporters of the friar were called *Piagnoni* and his opponents *Arrabbiati*.

The main concerns of Savonarola at that time reflected the situation in the city: there was a strong contrast between the partisan and the opponents of the Medici, and the new Florence needed peace and stability in order to develop into a mature society. To extend popular participation in the field of Florentine politics, Savonarola promoted many reforms and also the establishment of

the Maggior Consiglio (Great Council), according to the Venetian model, as the major political organ of the Florentine Republic. The Maggior Consiglio was officially recognized on 23 December 1494, and Savonarola also supported the building of a new political space for the new Council, the Salone dei 500, in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio. In January 1495, he started to preach on the Psalms: the sermon on 13 January was the so-called *predica della renovatione* (sermon of the renovation) against the preacher Domenico da Ponzio who questioned the truth of his visions and predictions. Between 1 March and 24 April 1495, Savonarola preached on the book of Job (Savonarola 1957), stressing the themes of struggle and penitence and the destiny of Florence as a New Jerusalem. He kept pushing for the two reforms: an amnesty for the former supporters of the Medici and the Six Beans' authority.

In the meantime, Pope Alexander VI constituted the *Lega Santa* (Holy League) with Venice and Milan, to expel Charles VIII from Italy, and the figure of Savonarola was increasingly criticized, considering his role in the alliance between France and Florence. On 21 July 1495, the offended Alexander VI summoned Savonarola to Rome to question him about his visions. The friar refused to go to Rome and indicated that the *Compendium revelationum* was the most complete summary of his prophecies. The pope suspended his preaching, but at that time the friar had the Signoria on his side and he decided to return to the pulpit on 11 October 1495. A few days later, on 16 October, another Papal Brief arrived and Savonarola suspended his preaching activity until 17 February 1496, when he started to preach on the books of Amos and Zacharias (Savonarola 1971). He composed the *De simplicitate christianae vitae* (Savonarola 1959) in Latin and the vernacular and other spiritual writings. During summer 1496, Savonarola was invited to become a cardinal of the Roman curia: the pope was seeking to put a stop to his strong preaching activity, which was clearly directed against the clergy and papacy. Girolamo categorically refused the offer, claiming that the only red hat he wanted was a blooded martyrial one (*uno cappello rosso, uno cappello di sangue, questo*

desidero). On 7 November 1496, the pope intimated the dissolution of the Savonarolian congregation, threatening excommunication to all opponents; in Florence, Savonarola was still continuing his reformation process, and, in February 1497, the first bonfire of the vanities (*bruciamento delle vanità*) took place, in Signoria Square, involving a giant stake surrounded by singing children. This was another significant representation of the purity by which Florence should be inspired, but in the meantime, the Italian political situation was changing, and the hurried return of King Charles VIII to France compromised the Florentines' hopes of seeing Pisa return under Florentine domination. On 25 February 1497, Charles VIII signed a truce with the Holy League and took a step back from Italian politics, leaving sufficient space for the other forces to claim their role. Savonarola did not agree to dismantle his congregation and join a Tuscan-Roman one, considering all of the energy he spent on this institutional reform; due to his disobedience, he was excommunicated by Alexander VI on 12 May 1497. In the same year, he composed *Dialogus de veritate prophetica* (Savonarola 1997), to stress the truth of his prophecy, since his opponents were becoming increasingly aggressive and accused him of being a false prophet. 1498 was the last year of Savonarola's life: he composed *Trattato circa el reggimento e governo della città di Firenze* and continued preaching at Santa Maria del Fiore cathedral. On 26 February 1498, the pope sent two Briefs, to the Signoria and to the Chapter of the cathedral, to stop him from preaching, and, on the same day, many supporters of the friar, the *Piagnoni*, met in the church, fighting with the *Arrabbiati*. On 28 February, a new Signoria, hostile to Savonarola, was elected, but he continued to talk to his people, still accusing the pope of moral sickness: Savonarola was banned from the pulpit of the cathedral, and he returned to the convent of San Marco. The Signoria was still defending him but they asked him to fall silent; on 17 March 1498, the pope ordered the arrest of all Florentine merchants and bankers in Rome. It was the last blow in the 3-year fight between the pope and the friar: Florence could not bear the economical repercussions of

the papal decision and the Signoria decided to intervene. On 18 March 1498, Savonarola spoke for the last time to the Florentine people on *Exodus* (Savonarola 1955a; Cervelli 1998), and, a few days later, on the 25th, friar Domenico da Pescia was challenged to a fire test by the Franciscan, Francesco di Puglia. The test failed because of heavy rain (it was 7 April 1498) amid disorder and protests. The following day, Savonarola, Domenico da Pescia, and Silvestro Maruffi were captured in San Marco and brought to the Signoria's palace. From the beginning of April to the end of May, the friar was questioned and tortured repeatedly (Viti et al. 2001), and, at the end of the trial, the three friars were condemned as heretics and separatists. On 23 May 1498, the friars were hung in Signoria Square. Their bodies were then burned and their remains carefully scattered on the river Arno. Luca Landucci provided a detailed description of the execution: Savonarola was hung third, without uttering a word, a circumstance that disappointed his followers; as the chronicler says, many among them lost their faith (*onde non fu senza loro amaritudine. . . molti caddono dalla lor fede*).

Prophecy and Preaching

Starting from the sermons' cycle attended in San Gimignano (Lent, 1486), Savonarola elaborates a well-structured prophecy concerning the destiny of human beings. Year after year, sermon after sermon, the prophecy changes, according to the historical events and the preacher's priorities. This is why, at the beginning of his career, Savonarola formulated a wide, general warning about sin and vice, and, at the end, when the general picture was clear, he gave a precise formula for the prophecy concerning the destiny of Florence, meant to be the New Jerusalem. In 1486, in San Gimignano, Savonarola explicitly listed the eight reasons for the forthcoming plague: the sins and vices of human beings, including sodomy, simony, and lust, the moral sickness of priests, the lower quantity of good men, the lack of faith in human hearts, the spiritual disintegration of the Roman Church, and the excessive importance given to exterior

ceremonies in divine worship rather than internal disposition (Ridolfi 1935, 1997, p. 21). He was in Tuscany for the first time and was appointed as *lector* at the convent of San Marco. His priority at that time was to speak about sin and vice and to urge Christians along the right path. On returning to Florence in 1490, he had changed and so has his manner of preaching; he is now aware of his mission and determined to accomplish it. Therefore, when he starts to speak about the *Apocalypse* in 1490, he stresses the theme of the forthcoming *flagellum*. After Lorenzo's death (1492), the picture changes even more rapidly, since he wished to maintain the Florentine and Italy's political balance. Moreover, in 1492, Rodrigo Borgia became Pope Alexander VI and continued his action against Charles VIII and his dynastic claims to the rule of Naples. Savonarola defines his prophecy according to the Florentine situation; he starts to speak about his visions publicly and gains popularity due to the separation of the convent of San Marco from the Lombards. 1494 is the turning point in his life as a preacher and prophet: the Italian campaign of Charles VIII gives Savonarola an opportunity to see the historical realization of his predictions and the concrete beginning of the renewal process of Florence as the New Jerusalem; the king of France represents for Florence what Cyrus represented for Israel, the key element to be born again as the Elect Nation through the *flagellum*. At this very moment, Savonarola introduces new elements into his sermons, changing the mood of his discourse from a "negative" to a "positive" phase: Charles VIII arrives in Florence on 17 November 1494, and, from December onward, Savonarola included promises of material assets, such as wealth, prosperity, and the reconquering of the cities of Pisa and Livorno that had been lost during the French campaign (Weinstein 1970). Now, the prophecy becomes the reality and is actualized: the prophet and his people are actually living the prophet's announcement. This is why, for Savonarola, it is fundamental to affirm repeatedly the truth of his prophecy, a theme strictly related to his social, pastoral, and political activity in Florence. Apart from being treated in several sermons, the prophetic issue is the main object of two treatises: *Compendium*

revelationum (1495) and *Dialogus de veritate prophetica*. The first was also translated into the vernacular by the author, a circumstance that leads us to consider the importance of the Italian vernacular language as a communication tool in Savonarolian activity, chosen to reach a wide number of followers. In *Compendium revelationum*, Savonarola's visions are described accurately, visions he also recalls in his sermons. During the sermon of 13 January 1495, Savonarola related to the Florentines explicitly the vision he had had back in 1484, when Pope Innocent VIII died: a black cross standing above Rome-Babylon, symbol of sin and vice, with *Ira Dei* written on it and raining swords and a golden cross standing above Jerusalem with *Misericordia Dei* written on it. On top of Italy was a trembling sword, while the angels gave to humans a red cross to kiss and white dresses. Those who accepted the gifts could drink sweet wine, while those who refused them drank the lees. The trembling sword is the sword of Charles VIII, and the angels are the preachers who announce his coming. This sermon met with huge success; it was printed separately and spread, becoming a manifesto of the Savonarolian prophecy. Girolamo's claim to have the gift of prophecy is the critical basis of his actions: he clashes with the pope; he fights with several contemporary preachers, such as Mariano da Genazzano, Domenico da Ponzo, and Giovanni Caroli; and he is strongly criticized by the Florentine *Arrabbiati*. On the prophecy, he built an institutional and social reform system, promoted from 1494 onward, for his adoptive homeland by means of his preaching activity, and the regularity of his sermons clearly reflects the depth of his commitment:

- Sermons, 1494–1498
- Sermons on Haggai: 1 November 1494–28 December 1494
- Sermons on Psalms: 6 January 1495–25 October 1495
- Sermons on Job: 1 March 1495–24 April 1495
- Sermons on Amos and Zechariah: 17 February 1496–10 April 1496
- Sermons on Ruth and Micah: 8 May 1496–27 November 1496 (Savonarola 1962)
- Sermons on Ezekiel: 27 November 1496–27 March 1497
- Sermons on Exodus: 11 February 1498–18 March 1498 (and 4 May 1498)

Political Commitment

The political commitment of Girolamo Savonarola was intended to be a continuation of his moralizing action and was strictly linked to his prophetic vein: we may say that these two things are closely connected. For the friar, reforms were the means of rebuilding a new identity for the city of Florence, intended to be the new center of Christianity. Based on charity and loyalty to the Holy Writ, the reformatory action of Girolamo Savonarola is far from being merely an inspiration: on the contrary, he has a definite, concrete project related to the historical circumstances. The first institutional initiative involved the status of the convent of San Marco and the organization of the Italian congregations: the separation of the convent from the Lombard Congregation of the Dominican Order (1492–1494). The cardinal Oliviero Carafa was involved in the separation process, but the Dominican Vincenzo Bandelli referred it to Ludovico Sforza, who strongly opposed this reformatory initiative: therefore, a Dominican internal issue became an Italian political question, with consequences for the relationship between Florence, Milan, and the papacy. Savonarola considered that a more rigid rule of life was necessary to accomplish his reformation project and strongly insisted on the necessity of distinguishing the San Marco convent from the rest of the Italian Dominican convents: Cardinal Carafa played a key role, succeeding in inducing the pope to sign the bull. In June 1493, the separation process was accomplished, and in November, Savonarola was elected Provincial Minister of the newborn Tuscan congregation; in August 1494, the convent of San Domenico of Fiesole and the convent of Santa Caterina of Pisa joined it. The most important innovations that he was able to introduce into the Florentine system are related to the banishment of the Medici in 1494 and the restoration of a proper republican

government in Florence: he promoted the enlargement of popular participation in the city government through the foundation of the *Maggior Consiglio* (Great Council) and the progressive dissolution of the Medicean judiciaries, such as the *Consiglio dei Settanta* (Council of the Seventy), created by Lorenzo in 1480 (Rubinstein 1966; Cadoni 1999). The *Consiglio del Popolo* and *del Comune* (Popular and Civic Councils) were the two organs that oversaw the election of the members of the Great Council. Savonarola promoted also the foundation of the *Monte di Pietà* in Florence in 1497, a charity institution that was relatively common in late medieval Italy, based on the principle of financial loans under favorable terms, mostly fostered by Mendicant orders. He successfully pushed for the reform of the Six Beans law, which granted the authority to condemn a citizen without the possibility of appeal. Savonarola was deeply involved in moral reform; he invited people to moderate their habits and (mostly women) dress properly; taking advantage of the confraternity network in Florence, he organized communities and groups of children according to Biblical and religious values (Polizzotto 2004; Eisenbichler 1998): during Carnival 1496, there was the first touching procession of children along the streets of Florence, a sacred representation showing how much Savonarola and his friars had invested in youth education (Ciappelli 1996), attempting to stop the violent inclinations of young people, so common in Italian Renaissance cities (Niccoli 1995).

We have a compendium of his idea of a republican state in *Trattato circa el reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*, written in 1498, a political treatise in the vernacular devoted to Florentine politics, as a result of his experience in the city (Savonarola 1965; Leonardi 1997). He felt the need to stress the danger posed by an oligarchic or, even worse, monarchist government for Florence, two institutional systems that lead necessarily to tyranny, as the Medici system has shown (Garfagnini 1998). The only form of government that could derive from Christian principles is a popular government. In the second part of *Trattato*, Savonarola emphasizes the description of the tyrant, which seems to have been inspired

by the figures of Piero de' Medici and his father, Lorenzo, especially with regard to the continuous suspicion of betrayal by family members and fellow citizens. Recently, a new element has been discovered, that is, that the description of the tyrant is taken directly from Book V of Aristotle's *Politics* (Tromboni 2012, pp. 278–279). The tyrant is the political symbol of sin and corruption, representing the corruption of the monarchy, as Aristotle himself stated. Since he is interested only in his own good and does not consider the common good, he is the exact opposite of a good governor: for this reason, a Christian government must avoid the threat posed by tyranny (Cadoni 1999, pp. 196–201; Leonardi 1997).

Philosophy, Theology, and the Holy Writ

The cultural profile of Girolamo Savonarola is formed by conventional elements and peculiar ones, as far as his status as a preacher is concerned. As a Dominican friar, he had a traditional education inspired by Thomism (see Thomism, <http://www.springerreference.com/docs/html/chapterdbid/187919.html>), and it is relatively easy to feel recurring echoes of Thomas Aquinas' doctrines and works in his sermons and treatises. Thomas' presence is substantial in two texts written by Savonarola during his first sojourn in Florence (1482–1487) for the friars in San Marco, where he was sent as *lector*: *Compendium philosophiae moralis* and *Compendium philosophiae naturalis* (Savonarola 1988). These texts are handbooks devoted to the explanation of philosophical concepts (moral and scientific issues) with the help of the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great. Difficult to date, the two handbooks are associated with a third *compendium* about logic, *Compendium logicae* (Savonarola 1982). The Thomistic paradigm of Savonarola's thought is often evident in Girolamo's works, and the same can be said for Aristotelianism, a model to which Savonarola often resorts: recently, it has been highlighted that he had direct knowledge of classical philosophy. The friar was very familiar with Aristotle's works, which he possibly studied during his

youth, and also the Platonic dialogues: the proof of this direct knowledge is preserved in two collections of notes that have recently been edited, *De doctrina Platonicorum* and *De doctrina Aristotelis* (Tromboni 2012; Garin 1961; Verde 1998). Girolamo gathered notes, quotations, and brief summaries related to Aristotle's works, mostly according to the translation of William of Moerbeke, according to the translation by Marsilio Ficino (first edition, 1484): all of the original texts which Savonarola studied and worked on were preserved in the Library of San Marco in Florence. Among the Platonic notes, we find also a paragraph on *Commento sopra una canzone d'amore di Girolamo Benivieni* by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, a polemical unfinished treatise written in response to Ficino's commentary on *Symposium* (Hankins 1990). Thanks to the study conducted on *De doctrina Aristotelis* and *De doctrina Platonicorum*, we can find several parallel passages in which the philosophical notes are employed, such as the description of the tyrant taken from Book V of Aristotle's *Politics* within *Trattato circa el reggimento e governo* of 1498. Savonarola's interest in classical philosophy needs to be well defined; it would be incorrect to present Savonarola as a pure philosopher, but we can turn up the light on his philosophical culture, so that the traditional image of a rude friar devoted uniquely to censure, penitence, and biblical preaching is prominently reshaped. The friar employs, on many occasions (sermons, vernacular, and Latin treatises), quotations and passages taken from, e.g., *Metaphysics*, *De caelo*, *Ethics*, and also pseudepigraphical texts, such as *Mundo* and *De proprietatibus*, to enrich his discourse and often explain and facilitate the understanding of theological and religious concepts. He often mentions the figures of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as the major intellects of antiquity and models of self-control and virtue.

Savonarola's concept of literature and poetry is clearly described in many of his best-known, most widespread works. In 1491, he wrote *Apologeticus de ratione poeticae artis*, a Latin treatise devoted to the learned segment of his public about the status of poetry and the difference between sacred and profane poetry (Savonarola

1982, I, pp. 209–272). *Apologeticus* was a response to *Carmen de christiana religione ac vitae monasticae foelicitate*, composed in 1491 by Ugolino Verino and dedicated to Savonarola, in which the author theorizes about the difference between these two kinds of poetry. Girolamo, however, was determined to retain his position and, in his work, affirms decisively that poetry and religion cannot share any common ground and that the place of poetry, as a discipline, is far removed from that of theology and religion. Savonarola's answer was directed not only toward Verino but also toward Marsilio Ficino, who celebrated the poetic furor of Plato's *Io* (Bausi 1996). For the friar, the sole text on which human beings are allowed to rely is the Holy Writ, and his whole action, the political, the pastoral, and the social one, derives from this belief: Ficino's attempt to integrate religion and philosophy was inconceivable for Savonarola. This rigid perspective seemed limited to many of his contemporaries, but Savonarola intended it to be a safe path to salvation to avoid sin and temptation. Despite that, many Florentine intellectuals got close to him, fascinated by the prophetic destiny of reform and rebirth he predicted for Florence, including Marsilio Ficino who, on several occasions before 1498, affirmed that Savonarola was a genuine prophet (Vanhaelen 2012). Giovanni Nesi (1456–1506), disciple of Ficino, composed *Oraculum de novo saeculo*, inspired by the friar (Nesi 2009); full of astrological and kabbalistic doctrines, the *Oraculum de novo saeculo* announced the beginning of a new era, as claimed by Savonarola. Girolamo and Domenico Benivieni, Benedetto Luschino (2002), Giorgio Benigno Salviati, and Zanobi Acciaiuoli were also among the friar's supporters. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Girolamo Savonarola were very close, especially in the last years of Pico's life; the Count of Mirandola took the Dominican habit in 1494 and was buried in the church of San Marco. His nephew, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, was a fervent *Piagnone* and wrote a biography about friars that widely spread, *Vita Hieronymi Savonarolae* (Vasoli 1996).

This intellectual affinity with Pico is evident in *Trattato contra li astrologi* (1497), which

Savonarola wrote to illustrate his precise position regarding one of the most common tendencies in Renaissance culture: astrology. Girolamo spoke often about the mistakes that men who believe in astrology can make and, in 1497, composed the *Trattato* (Savonarola 1988) which is, as claimed at the beginning of the text, a vernacular, simplified version of *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, a treatise by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola that was published posthumously in 1494. There are two key points in *Trattato*: astrology cannot foresee single contingent events and, in no case, can it replace divine prophecy; since antiquity, the major thinkers, e.g., Aristotle and Plato, condemned astrology and its use (Garfagnini 1992, 2004).

Impact and Legacy

Since 1490, fluctuating groups of supporters of Girolamo Savonarola have been born in Florence. As the friar gained importance and authority, the position of these groups crystallized, and they became incompatible with the opponents of the friar. On the one hand, the *Piagnoni* affirmed the sanctity of Savonarola and the reality of his prophecy: after his death, they considered him a martyr to a republicanism inspired by Christian religion. On the other hand, the *Arrabbiati* and Savonarola's detractors accused him of being a deceiver of the Florentine people, uniquely devoted to the pursuit of his own interests. Many people changed their attitude toward Savonarola and his reformation after his death: we recall here the example of Marsilio Ficino, who got very close to Savonarola during 1494 and 1495 and changed his opinion radically a few years later. In *Apologia contra Savonarolam* (Kristeller 1937, pp. 76–79), Ficino hurled abuse at the friar, claiming that he was a false prophet, a deceiver, and an antichrist, who seduced the Florentines with lies and false promises. The *Apologia* was written immediately after the execution in Piazza della Signoria and was addressed to the Cardinal College (Collegio dei Cardinali) explicitly to disassociate himself from the Savonarolian movement.

In March 1498, Niccolò Machiavelli heard Savonarola preaching in Piazza della Signoria:

he developed a complex (► “Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of”), refined opinion of the friar and included the Dominican in many of his works, such as *Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di tito Livio* and *Principe*, besides making several mentions of him in private letters and documents. Machiavelli was aware of the political appeal of Savonarola, and he included him among the prophets and legislators, such as Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus, the founder of Rome. Nonetheless, they succeeded and Savonarola failed, since he was unarmed (*profeta disarmato*) and unable to control his followers once he constituted his new republic.

In later decades, several religious movements inspired by the Savonarolian reform grew in Italy, France, Germany, and later England. Martin Luther knew the works of Savonarola and translated some of his theological works into German.

For the Savonarolian movements in Italy and Europe, we refer to the studies of Polizzotto (1994) and Dall’Aglia (2006a, b, 2010).

Cross-References

► [Ficino, Marsilio](#)

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Scala, Bartolomeo

Born: Onci, near Colle Val d'Elsa [Sienna],
17 May 1430

Died: Florence, 24 July 1497

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Abstract

Florence of the Medici is well known for the incredible flourishing, in a relatively short period of time, of outstanding personalities in

all the fields of human practical and intellectual activities. It would be wrong to assume that this blessed period of Italian history and the history of the entire Europe would have reached such a glorious status without a whole range of minor functionaries and intellectuals that made possible the material organization and development of the city-state. Bartolomeo Scala was one of these individuals. He played an essential role in organizing some of the main political institutions of the Florentine political “state-apparatus.” His wide intellectual interests – which extended to some very specialized fields such as Epicurean philosophy, Neoplatonic mysticism, or geography and cosmology as well as more traditional humanist areas such as moral philosophy, political historiography, or religious thought – are a good example of the particular influence that the new cultural climate exerted in the shaping of early modern sensibility.

Biography

The son of a poor miller, Bartolomeo Scala studied law and letters under Carlo Marsuppini in Florence and then in Milan under the great Hellenist and Medici adversary Francesco Filelfo. In spite of that, he soon became a functionary at the service of the Medici and served from 1457 under Pierfrancesco de' Medici, a cousin of the main branch of the family.

In 1459, he was elected “cancelliere” – chancellor of the Guelph Party, one of the main institutions of the republican regime of Florence.

At the death of the patriarch of the dominant family in 1464, Cosimo de' Medici the Elder, real founder of the enduring power of the dynasty over Florence, Scala dedicated to him a collection of writings entitled *Collectiones Cosmianae*.

In 1465, Scala was elected Chancellor of the Comune, a charge whose significance was especially a cultural rather than a political one (Garin 1965).

His position in the Medicean milieu became more precarious with the ascent of the young Lorenzo, later to be called Il Magnifico (the Magnificent), in 1469.

The young ruler (who was also a poet, a philosopher, and a humanist in his own right) considered Scala a representative of the former generation, not in line with the new cultural policy that he and his circle intended to enforce in Florence.

Scala was the target of perhaps the most brilliant of the humanists that made up the court around Lorenzo, Politian (Angelo [Ambrogini] Poliziano), who derided his rudeness and his humble origins in an epode in iambic distichs edited in book XII of his correspondence (Letter 16).

After the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, Scala was relegated to a marginal position and became increasingly close to the oligarchic opposition to Lorenzo, animated by another Lorenzo, cousin of the former, and son of the previously mentioned Pierfrancesco.

It is no surprise then, that after the inglorious fall of Piero, son of the Magnifico, in 1494, after the French troops of King Charles the VIII entered Florence, Scala was soon reintegrated in his appointment as Chancellor and retained it throughout the moralist and pious regime of the Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola (1494–1498).

Impact and Legacy

Scala's main original works were not printed during his lifetime but were known and quoted by some prominent humanists.

Besides the *Collectiones cosmianae* already mentioned earlier, which are a collection of funeral orations, he composed a book of moral and philosophical apoloques, *Apologi centum*, to which he added a hundred more apoloques at the end of the 1480s. They deal with very popular and frequently discussed themes of the period: religion, superstition, fate, and fortune (Brown 2018).

He also manifested interest in the philosophical speculations and some early influence of Lucretius and Epicurean philosophy in general, as can be seen in two of his early works, the *De sectis philosophorum* (1458) and the *Dialogus de consolatione* (1463) written to mourn the death of Cosimo's second son Giovanni. His proximity to the Neoplatonic philosopher Marsilio Ficino

can be seen in his more mature works such as the already mentioned *Apologi* (1481) and the important dialogue on public law *De legibus et iudiciis dialogus* (1483), which establishes the superiority of natural laws over positive ones (Brown 2018).

Scala's main works were, nonetheless, of a historical nature. In 1483 he wrote a *History of the Florentine People* (*Historia Florentinorum*), which he revised and corrected 4 years later and which was published in Lyon as late as 1723. His *Apologia contra vituperatores civitatis Florentiae* (Defense of the City of Florence against its Prosecutors), composed in 1496, states the political importance of religion and prophecy in ruling the state and defends the particular kind of republican popular ideology that Florence experienced during the 4 years of the Savonarolian Regime.

These works testify to the difficulties for a representative of the glorious season of Florentine civic humanists who had also written histories of the city to go on defending republican ideals (Hale 1977). This especially in a context where, under the pressure of the economic and political circumstances, these ideals had lost any realistic consistency, as Niccolò Machiavelli would show so clearly in his political essays at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

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Scalichius, Paulus

► [Skalić, Pavao](#)

Scalicius, Paulus

► [Skalić, Pavao](#)

Scaliger, Julius Caesar

Born: 1484 (no documented place of birth)

Died: 1558, Agen

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Abstract

Julius Caesar Scaliger was an Italian physician who practiced medicine in Agen and produced a highly diverse literary output that documents both his interest in humanistic studies and in Aristotelian natural philosophy. He is one of the foremost Renaissance scholars on literary history and theory, produced massive commentaries on ancient botanic and zoological works, and authored a 1000-page critique of Girolamo Cardano’s natural philosophy. As far as matter theory is concerned, Scaliger combines the

traditional doctrines of minimism – the view that substantial forms require a minimal portion of suitably structured matter – and “Latin pluralism” – the view that composite substances such as living beings possess a plurality of substantial forms standing in relations of subordination – with numerous corpuscularian explanations of natural phenomena derived from the corpuscularian aspects of the Aristotelian *Meteorology*. However, Scaliger also departs from a central tenet of the Aristotelian tradition, namely, the view that ascribing essences to living beings implies that plants and animals cannot give rise to beings of a different biological species. Contrary to species fixism, Scaliger argues that the conception of a plurality of substantial forms in the bodies of living beings could provide an explanation for how, in singular cases, living beings can arise that belong to a species that did not exist before.

Biography

Julius Caesar Scaliger was a kind of impostor who managed to become one of the leading members of the republic of letters of his age. He is famous for his probably entirely confabulated curriculum vitae according to which he belonged to the noble family of the Scaligers of Verona and had studied with five of the most famous philosophers of his time (see Hall 1950). None of his biographical claims is confirmed by any extant documents (see Kristeller 1952), and ever since his lifetime there has been detective work going on to discover his real identity (see Richards 1962; Billanovich 1968). All that seems to be reasonably certain is that, after around 1525, Scaliger practiced medicine in Agen and produced a literary output that was both wide-ranging and influential. He composed one of the most highly regarded sixteenth-century studies of Latin grammar (Scaliger 1540; see Jensen 1990a, Chap. 5), wrote Neo-Latin poetry (Scaliger 1533, 1546, 1574), reflected on wisdom and happiness (Scaliger 1573), attacked Erasmus’s adoption of Cicero as a universally valid literary model (Scaliger 1999), and speculated about the

interpretation of dreams (Hippocrates 1539; see Haugen 2007; De Smet 2008). The philological side of his work was very prominently continued by his son, Joseph Justus (1540–1609) (see Grafton 1983).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Philological and philosophical interests come together in Scaliger's works on poetics (Scaliger 1539, 1561, 1994–2011). One aim of these works was to provide practical guidance for the production of poetry and drama through an extremely detailed analysis of the techniques of rhythm, verse, and figures of speech in classical Latin and Neo-Latin works. Perhaps the most innovative aspect of the *Poetices libri septem* consists in its pioneering contribution to several fields in the liberal arts that were beginning to emerge in Scaliger's time: literary history, comparative literature, and literary criticism. As to literary history, he develops conjectures concerning how poetry developed out of aspects of the popular culture of ancient Greece (see Bizer 1994). As to comparative literature and literary criticism, he compares works from ancient Rome with Neo-Latin poetry of his contemporaries, often in a highly subjective and opinionated way (see Reineke 1988). When it comes to the philosophical tenets of his poetics, most of what Scaliger says turns out to be derivative of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Horace's *Ars Poetica*, and Marco Girolamo Vida's *De arte poetica* (Vida 1527). With Aristotle, he shares the view that the imitation of nature is central for art in general and for poetry in particular (see Brinkschulte 1914, 46–51). With Aristotle and Horace, he shares the view that for portraying the essential qualities of humans a certain idealization of characters is required. In his view, what has to be observed is the coherence or "harmony" of characters, which at the same time has to remain within the limits of what will appear psychologically plausible (see Brinkschulte 1914, 51, 83–85). With Vida, he shares the view that giving a depiction of idealized nature works best by imitating Vergil, whose representation of reality Scaliger regards as a "second nature" (see

Rolfes 2001, 204–207). In one respect, however, Scaliger moves beyond his sources, as Walter Benjamin has emphasized (Benjamin 1972, 98–99). While Scaliger shares Aristotle's view that art is a disposition that is directed toward the goal of acting (Aristotle 1968, 1140a10; Scaliger 1994–2011, 2:78), he ascribes to affects a role that is not found in any of his sources: "The poet teaches actions through affects, such that we may embrace the good ones for acting and detest the bad ones with a view to abstaining from action. Hence, the action is a way of teaching the affect, which is taught for the purpose of acting. Therefore, the action will be . . . an exemplar or instrument in the fiction, the affect a goal" (Scaliger 1994–2011, 5:500).

In natural philosophy, Scaliger produced massive commentaries on the pseudo-Aristotelian *On Plants* (Scaliger 1556), to Theophrastus's *On the Causes of Plants* and *Natural Histories* (Scaliger 1566, 1584), as well as a translation of and commentary to Aristotle's *History of Animals* (Scaliger 1619; see Jensen 1986; Perfetti 2000, 155–181). His masterpiece, the *Exoteric Exercises* (1557), is a 1000-page book review of Girolamo Cardano's encyclopedic *On Subtlety* (1550). In spite of its chaotic organization, Scaliger's book was widely used in the Protestant university curriculum (see Jensen 1990b) and triggered two book-long responses by the Marburg-based philosopher Rudolph Goclenius (see Goclenius 1594, 1599). In the *Exoteric Exercises*, Scaliger develops a version of corpuscularian Aristotelianism that proved to be an important step toward the corpuscularian philosophy of the seventeenth century. This aspect of his thought can be documented in two fields that he discusses in detail: the theory of matter (see Emerton 1984, 90–102; Lüthy 2001; Blank 2008; Sakamoto 2016) and the theory of biological reproduction (see Blank 2010, 2012). Scaliger's philosophical writings also contain some remarks concerning traditional topics in philosophy of language. For instance, he adopts the medieval theory of mental signs to explain the origin of the signification of linguistic signs, as well as the nominalist view according to which universals are the result of a process of abstraction from particulars (see Jensen

1990a, Chap. 4). One also finds sketchy remarks concerning the philosophical interpretation of the Trinity, where the divine intellect, divine self-reflection, and divine self-love are understood as the three aspects that can be distinguished in the divine being (see Sakamoto 2010).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Arguably, Scaliger's greatest significance for the history of philosophy lies in his contribution to natural philosophy. In this field, he uses the traditional idea of minimism, according to which natural minima are a lower limit of matter beyond which a given form cannot be maintained (Scaliger 1557, fol. 28v; on minimism, see Emerton 1984, 90–91). Scaliger suggests a minimalist definition of mixture, when he writes: "mixture is the motion of the minimum bodies so that union is achieved" (ibid., fol. 143v). He argues that experiment shows that there are mixtures of heterogeneous substances which turn out to be inseparable from each other (ibid., fol. 148v). The conclusion that he draws is ingenious. On the one hand, he maintains that in mixture minimal parts form a continuum. On the other hand, since in the case of heterogeneous substances the forms of the minimal parts are different from each other, he suggests that in the most basic cases (such as the mixture of water and wine) the constituents of the mixture retain their numerical identity since they retain their form, even if they give up their boundaries (ibid., fol. 144rv).

Even if his *minima* thus do not behave in a fully corpuscularian manner, Scaliger derives corpuscularian explanations of the other phenomena from the Aristotelian *Meteorology*. For example, Scaliger mentions a passage from the second book of the *Meteorology*, according to which hot vapors of water get colder by getting mixed with cold particles of air (ibid., fol. 20r; see Aristotle, *Meteor.* II, 2, 354b24–33). Similarly, he points out that, according to the first book of the *Meteorology*, the parts of the world are one not by means of continuity but by means of connection (*coaptatione*), in the sense that the supralunar bodies are efficient causes the effects received by

the sublunar bodies (Scaliger 1557, fol. 19r; see Aristotle, *Meteor.* I, 2, 339a11–24). Scaliger also proposes a corpuscularian explanation of the phenomena occurring when a piece of lime is immersed partly in water. As he argues, water rises in lime beyond the level of the water into which the piece of lime is immersed; hence the air included in the upper part of lime is already in the sphere of air (Scaliger 1557, fol. 9r). Scaliger distinguishes between attraction (*attractio*) and succession (*subitio*). According to his view, attraction happens by means of an external force. This, however, is not what happens in cases such as water rising in lime. Rather, "a body that succeeds another body (such as a particle of water succeeding a particle of air in the pores of lime) is moved by an internal form of its own . . . , namely, a secondary one, such that no vacuum occurs. For elements not only strive towards their own WHERE, but they enjoy themselves outside their natural place, such that in order to avoid serious harm to the universe the place at which they are is not occupied by the most terrible enemy. In fact, nothing is more hostile to being than nonbeing. But vacuum is a non-being" (ibid., fol. 25r). Hence, bodies are not only preserved by their form, they also move due to their form in a way such that no vacuum occurs.

Puzzlingly, however, Scaliger also claims that "[i]n nature a vacuum exists necessarily. For otherwise, either there would be no motion or one body would penetrate the other" (ibid., fol. 6v). Did he hold inconsistent views concerning the existence of a vacuum? Clearly, he rejects the idea that matter is interspersed with *microvacua*, as is indicated in his discussion of the phenomena of rarefaction and condensation. On the level of elements, Scaliger embraces an Aristotelian conception of rarity and density according to which rarity and density are contrary qualities that, at different times, can be possessed by the same portion of matter. By contrast, there is a strongly corpuscularian strand in Scaliger's conception of rarity and density on the level of composite bodies. He holds that a body is rare if between its parts there are parts of another, less solid kind, like air or water in a sponge (ibid., fol. 112r). Consequently, he makes it clear that he

does want his notion of vacuum to be understood “in the way of the Ancients”: “For they supposed a vacuum without body. But we maintain a vacuum in which there is a body. Vacuum and place are the same: and they do not differ except with respect to the name” (ibid., fol. 6v). As he explains, place “is in some way a being, and in some way a non-being. It is a non-being, because a being is contained there; and it is a being, because it is something that belongs to something else, namely, a cavity within a body” (ibid., fol. 7r). Thus, although Scaliger embraces a theory of container space, he also thinks that portions of space are always occupied by some portion of matter or other.

Scaliger uses the idea that the forms of constituents of mixtures remain intact even when elements have formed a physical continuum in his theory of biological reproduction. According to his view, some processes of biological reproduction can be understood within the theory of species fixism that was traditionally understood to be a consequence of Aristotle’s views on the essences of living beings (see Hull 1965). At the same time he holds that, in some cases, new biological species can arise. According to his analysis of the former kind of processes, “things that already exist are mixed: such that they will not be inwardly and simply new; for they are made out of those that already exist, as it were, as out of parts: which we see happen in graftings which did not exist before” (Scaliger 1557, fol. 319v). Unfortunately, Scaliger never discusses what is going on in grafting in much detail. However, there is a related case, which he also conceptualizes in terms of “mixture,” namely, the cross-breeding of animals. His account of cross-breeding is firmly placed in the context of his conception of a plurality of substantial forms in each living being. In this respect, he takes up a long tradition from medieval philosophy that is sometimes called “Latin pluralism.” According to the basic insight shared by the members of this tradition, in each living being there is a single dominant substantial form and a large number of subordinate substantial forms that actualize subordinate body parts. Scaliger understands the subordination relation as a relation of final causation

(ibid., fol. 144v). Some material objects and some forms are less “noble” than others because they are made for the sake of other material objects and other forms. With respect to the structure of living beings, the picture that is suggested by this passage would be the view that bodily organs such as a nose or an eye, as well as their respective forms, are less “noble” than the entire body of the living being and its soul because they are made for the sake of the entire body of the living being and its soul. In this sense, subordinate forms that are all teleologically directed towards the dominant forms can be said to be “mixed” and to form a unity (ibid.) (On Scaliger’s psychology, see Gligioni 1999).

The second sense in which, in Scaliger’s view, the possibility of new species can be understood is meant to go beyond the newness that can be achieved by grafting. According to this second sense, new species “are in the potency of an agent . . . For a rose can be produced which did not exist before. But there is always something there, because it is in the potency of the rose bush” (ibid., fol. 319v). Unlike the plants arising from grafting, such a plant belongs to a species that is “simply” and “inwardly” new; but nevertheless, such plants are characterized as the result of something that is “already there” in the potency of an existing plant. The example given by Scaliger is certainly bewildering because, from a contemporary perspective, a new variety of roses would not be a plausible candidate for a new species. Nevertheless, even if the example is chosen inconsiderately, what Scaliger has in mind is the question of species membership. In his view, the question “[w]hether new species, which never before existed, can be generated?” boils down to the question “[c]an a new form arise that shapes matter for its own purposes?” (Scaliger 1566, 16). Species change, in his view, takes place when water-mint changes into mint (ibid.). As he explains: “When mint changes into water-mint, or vice versa, this happens due to the affinity of forms; and if the species differs also matter differs” (Scaliger 1557, fol. 386v). Commenting on Theophrastus, he takes darnel to be a case in which a plant of one species has its origin in the corrupted seed of a plant of a different species

(Scaliger 1566, 230). The corrupted seed no longer carries the form of the plant from which it originated. But it is also not altogether different from the form of the plant from which it originated. It seems most plausible to understand these claims in the context of Scaliger's conception of a plurality of substantial forms in living beings. If this is what Scaliger has in mind, what underlies his account of species mutability is the view that domination relations between substantial forms can break down such that a previously subordinate form becomes the substantial form of a new living being.

Cross-References

- [Generation in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Organism in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Seed Concept in the Renaissance](#)

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Scaliger, Paulus

- [Skalić, Pavao](#)

Scaligius, Paulus

- [Skalić, Pavao](#)

Scetticismo

- [Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of](#)

Schatzkammer

- [Kunstkammer](#)

Schegk, Jacob

Born: 7 June 1511 Schorndorf

Died: 9 May 1587 Tübingen

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Abstract

Schegk was the first Lutheran Aristotelian at Tübingen. Because of his broad learnedness, he became involved in many philosophical-theological disputes in his lifetime. With Petrus Ramus he was struggling over Aristotle's understanding of science. Whereas he was debating over the subject area of metaphysics with the Italian philosopher Simon Simonius, he became part of the antitrinitarian controversy after the critique of the Sorbonne theologian Gilbert Génébrard. At the end he earned personal animosity among Lutheran theologians in Tübingen because of his critique of Luther's doctrine of ubiquity.

Alternate Names

[Degen, Jakob](#)

Biography and Oeuvre

Schegk studied ancient literature, history, mathematics, and Aristotelian philosophy at the University of Tübingen from 1527 (for his biography see Sigwart [1889](#)). Upon completion of his M.A. (*-magister artium*) on 26 January 1530, he entered the faculty of theology and studied Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. Owing to the unrest caused by the introduction of the Reformation in Württemberg in 1534 by Duke Ulrich, Schegk gave up theology and changed to medicine. At the same time, he was commissioned by the Senate to teach Aristotelian philosophy. Schegk rarely left Tübingen and then only to avoid the various

plagues. The philosophy of Aristotle became his lifework around which he based his extensive oeuvre. It was his work with Aristotelian logic that made him one of the fiercest opponents of Petrus Ramus. In his *Perfecta et absoluta definiendi ars* in 1556 and more notably in his extensive treatise *De demonstratione libri XV* in 1564, Schegk defended the scientific teachings of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* against the critique of Petrus Ramus' dialectics. The arguments used in the various disciplines are set out in the topical section of the dialectics, whereas the various demonstrations of the sciences are presented in the analytics (Breidert 2003). Schegk became involved in a dispute over the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity with the Lutheran theologians Johannes Brenz and Jakob Andreae, which then broadened to encompass the debate with the Italian Simon Simonius on the definition of the subject area of metaphysics and its relation to experience (Frank 2015). In this debate, which spans the publication of *Responsum [...] ad Simonis Simonii libellum* in 1568, *Simoni Simonio meliorem mentem* in 1571, *Anatome* in 1572, and his great work *Antisimonius* in 1573, Schegk regarded himself as the first Thomist Lutheran who comprehended the unity and universality of metaphysics on the grounds of its analogous relationship to a prime analogate, defined as $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ by Aristotle. As a philosopher, he became similarly involved in discussions on the emerging concept of antitrinitarianism. Triggered by the criticism of the Paris theologian Gilbert Génébrard, who shifted Schegk closer to the Swiss antitrinitarians because of his supposedly modalistic doctrine of the Trinity, he developed in his trinitarian writings *Contra Antitrinitarios* (1566), *Antilogia* (1568), and *Apologeticus* (1573) the notion that the inner divine hypostases are not accidents, but rather powerful *potentiae*, a term that Schegk borrowed from the metaphysics of Aristotle (Met. Δ 12 a 1f., 1019a). Just before giving his final lecture at the university on 29 May 1577, the same year he became totally blind, Schegk completed his great commentary on Aristotle's *Topics* on which he had labored for 11 years. When this commentary finally appeared in print in Lyon in 1584, a storm of indignation once again broke out among the Tübingen

theologians. Opponents interpreted this publication as proof that Schegk saw the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity as an example of false definitions and conclusions. On 4 July 1585, Schegk made an official confession, professing his belief in the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity, under the supervision of the university provost Jakob Andreae, rector Jacob Heerbrand, and four deans. The confession was then published in the same year under the title *Admonito*.

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Scheibler, Christoph

Born: 6 December 1589, Armsfeld (near Bad Wildungen)

Died: 10 November 1653, Dortmund

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Abstract

The German Lutheran philosopher and theologian Christoph Scheibler is considered to be “the Protestant Suárez.” Among his main

works are the collected logical works *Opus logicum* (1620) and his *Opus metaphysicum* (1617), one of the most comprehensive writings on metaphysics in Protestantism. He was well known for his recourse to the entire philosophical tradition, which encompassed not only the Aristotelian, but also the Platonic tradition. Although Scheibler did not find his own school, he paved the way for an international reception of the Lutheran school of philosophy through the publication of his works in Switzerland and England.

Biography

The German Lutheran philosopher and theologian Christoph Scheibler studied in Marburg and Gießen where he acquired his master's degree in 1607. In 1610 he became a professor of Greek, later of logic and metaphysics. Scheibler wrote many philosophical writings in the Aristotelian tradition before, in 1624, he became superintendent and gymnasiarch in Dortmund where he died. Particularly important are his works on logic and metaphysics.

Between 1613 and 1619, Scheibler published four works on logic (*Introductio logicae, Topica, De propositionibus sive axiomatibus, De syllogismis et methodis*), which he collected under the title *Opus logicum* in 1620. Scheibler's recourse to the entire philosophical tradition is particularly significant. Another feature is his attempt to combine the rather antithetic theories of Peter Ramus and Jacopo Zabarella in a synthesis.

Scheibler defined logic, which he considered being equivalent to dialectic, in the Ramistic tradition as "the art of discussion of any being" (*ars bene disserendi de quovis Ente*). Nevertheless, he integrated Zabarella's description of logic as an instrument and intellectual habit into his own definition. Scheibler's contribution to modal logic is important. He considered it necessary to judge the status of statements – whether they should be regarded as true or false, necessary or contingent, possible or impossible. This was not only applied to the field of philosophy but also to theology. In his *Opus metaphysicum*, published in 1617, Scheibler also underlined the benefits of

metaphysics, in particular for theology, due to its use of philosophical concepts (nature, substance, character, cause, etc.) for specific theological explanations and doctrines. Scheibler utilized Jakob Martini's division of metaphysics into *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*.

The first part examines being in general and its properties, whereas the second part covers the dichotomy of substance and accident. The classification of substances into corporeal and incorporeal opens the field for natural theology, where Scheibler is discussing God, angels, and the separated soul (*anima separata*). As a result, Scheibler ignored Benedictus Pererius's proposed separation of metaphysics as natural theology from first philosophy as a pure ontology. For the Lutheran tradition, Abraham Calov came to this conclusion a few years later.

Scheibler defined metaphysics in the spirit of Francisco Suárez as a "science of being, insofar as it is abstracted from its materiality." He counted not only the real being but also the mere being of reason (*ens rationis*) in the subject matter of metaphysics. The desire to clarify important Trinitarian and Christological terms is a striking feature of Scheibler's work.

As early as 1611, Scheibler published a systematic treatise on the doctrine of the soul (*De anima*). In that treatise, Scheibler as a *philosopher* stated that "our soul is transitory and mortal by its nature," more or less as in the wake of Pietro Pomponazzi, whereas Scheibler as a *theologian* postulated the soul's immortality "from grace" (*ex gratia*). A complete edition of the most important philosophical writings appeared posthumously in 1657. Scheibler did not find his own school. However, his writings were printed not only in Germany but also in Switzerland and England, and it could be argued that Scheibler paved the way for an international reception of the Lutheran school of philosophy through the publication of his works.

Cross-References

- [Jesuits in the Early Modern Period](#)
- [Martini, Jakob](#)

- [Pereira, Benito](#)
- [Ramus, Petrus](#)
- [Suárez, Francisco](#)
- [Timpler, Clemens](#)

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Scherb, Philip

Born: 1553, Bischofszell

Died: 11 June 1605, Altdorf

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Abstract

The philosopher and physician Philipp Scherb is considered to be an important representative of Renaissance Paduan Aristotelianism at the Altdorfer High School. Scherb taught the whole branches of philosophy (including logic, ethics, politics, and metaphysics) and medicine. During his academic life, Scherb published just a few texts, but had a far stronger impact on his students, including Michael Piccart and Caspar Hofmann. He was particularly known for his teaching skills and for interpreting the Aristotelian writings.

Biography

The philosopher and physician Philipp Scherb is considered to be an important representative of Renaissance Paduan Aristotelianism at the Altdorfer High School (*Academia Norica*). He was born in Bischofszell in Switzerland and studied in Heidelberg, Basel, and particularly Padua where he met Francesco Piccolomini and Jacopo Zabarella. Scherb taught logic, ethics (as successor to Thomas Erastus), and medicine in Basel from 1581 to 1586. In 1586, Scherb was appointed professor of medicine in Altdorf where he remained until his death in 1605. He taught courses in logic, politics, physics, and metaphysics. During his academic life, Scherb published just a few texts, but had a far stronger impact on his students, including Michael Piccart and Caspar Hofmann. He was particularly known for his teaching skills and for interpreting the

Aristotelian writings. They were regarded as obscure and difficult in clarity, but Scherb defended the “pure” Aristotle against all deviations and distortions. In his *Dissertatio pro philosophia peripatetica* from 1590, he fought against Peter Ramus’ critique of Aristotle. Ramus had reduced Aristotelian logic, with its categories and doctrine of proof, to a dialectic and claimed that the Aristotelian metaphysics was a pile of logical tautologies. As a consequence, Scherb blamed Ramus for blurring the difference between the arts and sciences, and he defended philosophical freedom against a premature commitment to a “sacred truth.” Perhaps it was this *libertas philosophandi* (freedom to philosophize), the refusal to accept theological restrictions, that reminded Nicholas Taurellus, Scherb’s philosopher colleague in Altdorf, too much of Andreas Cesalpino. Such an influence, however, can hardly be reconstructed from Scherb’s writings. Scherb published the *Theses philosophicae* in 1603, and his commentary to Aristotle’s politics was published after his death, in 1610.

Although Scherb did not establish a separate school in the strict sense of the term, his influence can be traced quite a few places. Piccart’s *Isagoge in lectionem Aristotelis* from 1605, for example, provided an introduction to the entire Aristotelian work. It contained, among other things, the important speech *De ratione interpretandi* and a rearrangement of the books of Aristotle’s metaphysics. It is undoubtedly influenced by Scherb.

Piccart emphasized the autonomy of philosophy, too; it should not be “twisted” by theological dogmas. In addition, Hermann Conring had on occasion emphasized the importance of Scherb’s philosophy. The existence of a specific Altdorf philosophy was made evident by Johann Paul Felwinger with his eponymous anthology, containing the disputations of Scherb, Piccart, and Ernst Soner. A full appreciation of Scherb’s philosophy is still pending.

Cross-References

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- [Taurellus, Nikolaus](#)

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Scholarios, George

Born: Constantinople c.1400

Died: Mount Menoikeion, Serres c.1472

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Abstract

Georgios, Gennadios II (Scholarios), was the first Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople

(1454–1456) after the capture of Constantinople (1453) by the Ottomans, an anti-unionist, an Aristotelian, and surprisingly a Thomist. He was committed to theology, but he also studied, taught, commented on, and engaged in philosophical arguments. He was a member of the Greek delegation at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439), a Byzantine author marked by abundant inventiveness, a monk, and an opponent of everything that contradicted the faith of Roman Orthodox Church (Platonism of George Gemistos-Pletho, new theological trends, a union of expediency, the Ottoman threat, etc.). Scholarios embraced Thomas' scholasticism because Thomas also promoted the view that philosophy does not contradict theology. He regards Thomas to be infallible in most theological matters except those that are not in accord with Roman Orthodox Church. He composed theological and philosophical treatises, studied and commented Aristotle's works, translated scholastic writings, and synthesized epitomes. Scholarios is one of the last great representatives of Byzantine learning because he articulated an authentic approach to theology based upon the Christian patristic tradition and philosophy.

Synonyms

Gennadios II Scholarios; Kourtesis, George; Kourtesios, George; Korteios, George; George Scholarios

Biography

There are various and turbid pieces of information about Gennadios II Scholarios' (c.1400–c.1472) name, origin, place and time of birth, and character, but there are mostly many contrasting opinions about his life intentions. The Byzantine author, professor, and scholar became the first Ecumenical Patriarch after the fall of Constantinople (1454–1456), and he was enthroned in 1454 by Mehmed II the Conqueror (1432–1481). Although his fame rests principally on his

patriarchal activity and his anti-unionist attitude, recent research is mainly interested in the reception of Thomas Aquinas' oeuvre. There are many different spellings attributed to his name, but the name mostly used is George Scholarios or Gennadios.

He was born somewhere between the years 1398–1403, although modern scholarship accepts 1400 as the most probable year of his birth. The sources indicate that his birthplace was Constantinople. In his work *Refutation of Jewish error* (*Ἐλεγχος τῆς ἰουδαϊκῆς νῦν πλάνης ἐκ τε τῆς Γραφῆς καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὴν χριστιανικὴν ἀλήθειαν παραθέσεως: ἐν σχήματι διαλόγου*), he notes that his native country was Thessalia. It is believed that he grew up in a rich family, but his parents died at an early age.

Scholarios was ordained as a professor of theology in the palace, and he organized theological discussions in the presence of the royal family, courtiers, and various audiences. He was established as General Judge of the Romans, as judicial officer, and as General Imperial Secretary. These positions paved the way for his political and ecclesiastical career. The Byzantine Emperor, John VIII Palaiologos, requested him to contribute to his unifying policy. He accompanied the Emperor at the Council of Ferrara-Florence and worked with Bessarion (1400/1408–1472), who was at that time Metropolitan of Nicaea of the Roman Orthodox Church. The purpose of the council to discuss the reunion between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church that had been separated since the Schism of 1054.

After the enthronement of the last reigning Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI the Palaiologos (1449), Scholarios was removed from his duties and began his monastic course. He retreated to the Monastery of Charsianitos, somewhere between the years 1449–1452. According to the Byzantine historian Georgios Sfrantzis, Joseph Bryennios (c.1350–1430/1438) was appointed teacher to the Monastery of Charsianitos during this period. The name "Gennadios" was subsequently given to him.

Many of Scholarios' autographs that are written in the years of his patriarchy are signed under the title *ταπεινοῦ μοναχοῦ Γενναδίου* (*Humble Monk Gennadios*) which indicates his monk

name. He continued to use this name after his ascension to the Patriarchal throne and until the end of his life. The books which are signed by the name Gennadios Scholarios are written at the time he was at the monastery and thereafter. After the Fall of Constantinople, he was arrested by the Ottomans and transferred to Adrianople. It is said that Mehmed II the Conqueror allowed the election and ordination of a Patriarch, granting him considerable privileges. The sultan let the Orthodox Romans designate a patriarch and they elected Scholarios. As the Ecumenical Patriarch, Scholarios used the signature: *Γεννάδιος μοναχός καὶ Πατριάρχης τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ πνήτων* (*Monk Gennadios and Patriarch of the poor*).

The Sultan granted him the Church of the Holy Apostles and gave some privileges to establish the Patriarchate, which was instituted to represent the enslaved Orthodox Christians. The Patriarchate was soon moved after Scholarios' request to the Pammakaristos Monastery. Scholarios resigned in 1456 pleading health reasons. There is a possibility that two re-instatements to the Ecumenical Throne took place, in 1462 and 1464, but without any proof that he had re-performed the duties of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

He retired to the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos and then to the Monastery of John the Forerunner on Mount Menoikeion near Serres. Many years after his death his relics were buried in the monastery.

His tenure as patriarch, albeit brief, is considered to be of great importance, laying the foundations of the continued existence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.

Education

Scholarios received his basic knowledge from various scholars of his time and declares that, with great personal effort, he gained a thorough knowledge of rhetoric, philosophy, and theology. Furthermore, he studied the "old teachers," i.e., the philosophers, and their writings in order to learn the "brilliant doctrines of philosophy," especially Aristotelian.

There are reports that Mark of Ephesus (c.1394–1445) was his teacher, along with Joseph

Bryennios and Makarios Makres (c.1383–1431). Scholarios, in an epistle to Mark Eugenikos, refers to him as his teacher, despite the age gap of only 9 years. In fact, Gennadios wrote a eulogy for Mark in which he declares his love, admiration, and respect and addressed him as his teacher and mentor. John Chortasmenos (1370–1437), Aristotle's commentator and representative of the old generation of Palamism, was the teacher of Scholarios, Bessarion, and Plethon. Scholarios may have attended the lessons of Damaskinos, Theocritus, jurist Methodios, George Gemistos-Plethon (c.1355–1454), and Simeon of Thessaloniki.

Scholarios appears to have received the stimulus for the teaching of Thomas Aquinas by his teachers. It must be taken into account that the monk Joseph Bryennios had studied Thomas Aquinas' works and denounced some of his theological ideas. An example is the detailed report on the issue of the emanation of the Holy Spirit during the discussion between Bryennios and Maximos Chrysoverges (? – 1410/1429). Bryennios was aiming to overturn the arguments of Maximos, who was a Dominican monk and follower of Thomas. Bryennios' argument is related to the difference between philosophy and theology. According to Scholarios' teacher, the process of emanation of the Holy Spirit cannot be approached by intellect. Thus, from his perspective theology is beyond "all arts and sciences." John Chortasmenos had a humanistic education, beyond his mathematical, philosophical, and theological knowledge. He was also known for his astronomical and philosophical writings as well as for his translations. He is thought to be one of the greatest intellectuals of the Palaiologan era. Some later scholars call him Latinophile, although he opposed the Florentine Union. There is no evidence that Scholarios was stimulated by the teachings of Aquinas by Chortasmenos, even though the information which derives from Chortasmenos is that Mark Eugenikos received an excellent education in logic and philosophy.

In an epistle to Scholarios, Mark of Ephesus claims that he forgot many philosophical views, but it seems that during Scholarios' teaching with

Mark, they dealt with many philosophical topics. This is confirmed by two events. Firstly, Mark, in his last speech, interprets propositional logic, i.e., possible and necessary propositions and the appropriate arguments based on them. Secondly, Scholarios dedicated the defense of Aristotelianism against Pletho's Platonism to Mark. In any case, they were both engaged in philosophical and theological matters. Scholarios addresses Mark as a spiritual father and a teacher. On the other hand, Mark declares his fatherly love and friendship for Scholarios, and he regards him as the only scholar of his time who is capable to preserve the right beliefs from those who questioned the accuracy of the Orthodox doctrines.

Teaching Activity

There are reports that Scholarios was teaching in a private school the works of Thomas Aquinas, even though his theological works had raised many objections in the past by many Byzantine scholars such as Nilos Kavasilas (c.1298–1363). Scholarios also founded the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople, where he gave lectures about grammar as well as rhetoric. The Patriarchal Academy was the continuation of the Patriarchal School, or Patriarchal Academy or also known as "Great Step," which was founded in the ninth century. The school was re-founded by Gennadios in 1454, and for a few decades Matthew Kamariotes (d. c.1490) oversaw its operation by being the first director (1454–1489). It was an institution that at the beginning lacked organization, resources, and impact. Thereafter it operated almost uninterruptedly and is considered to be the oldest educational institution of Hellenism.

Legacy and Rupture with the Tradition

Scholarios and the Council of Ferrara-Florence

Scholarios' attitude toward the problem of Union between the Greek and Latin Churches was based on the concern about the feasibility and the expediency of the Orthodox participation in the forthcoming council. The Byzantines had reservations about the Union which aimed mostly at a

conventional and cooperative association to provide economic and military assistance due to the Ottoman threat. There are several views about Scholarios' attitude toward the union. Some claim that he supported it and others that he did not. At first, Gennadios supported a true dogmatic union, but when he lost his hope that this kind of union was ever possible, he worked to prevent it. As he says in the title of a work considering the Union [...] *there must be a union of dogma and not peace of expediency, as some desire* [...] (Τοῦ αὐτοῦ κῆρ Γεωργίου τοῦ Σχολαρίου πρὸς τὴν οἰκουμένην σύνοδον ὑπὲρ εἰρήνης· ὅτι δογματικὴν ἔνωσιν δεῖ ποιεῖν, οὐκ εἰρήνην οἰκονομικὴν, ὥς τινες βούλονται, καὶ τίς ἐστὶν αἴτιη). When he retired to the monastery, he wrote an apology in which argued that the reason for his negative attitude was the disenchantment of his expectations from the Catholic Church. Moreover, the fact that Scholarios never accused the Latins of heresy, despite their dogmatic errors, is attributed to his Thomism as well to his appreciation for Latin theology.

The Philosophical Rivalry Between Scholarios and George Gemistos Pletho

Scholarios opposed both the union and the religious Platonism of George Gemistos Pletho. Pletho opposed also the union, but while in Florence, he had the opportunity to disseminate his views about Plato to the Italian humanists. This led to the writing of *De differentiis* (Περὶ ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται), in which he questioned the widely recognized authority of Aristotle. He also advocated the view that Aristotle was fallacious on several counts and ignorant regarding the greatest theological issues (περὶ τὰ μέγιστα ἀμαθῆ), such as divine creation. Pletho intended to create a revitalized Hellenic religion that aimed to disarm Orthodoxy because he believed that the reason for the imminent fall of the Byzantine Empire was the Orthodox theology. He sought not only the formation of a political model but also the creation of a new philosophical-theological system that expanded in many fields of knowledge like Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*. For that purpose, he reintroduced the theological foundation of

ancient Greece, i.e., the worship of the ancient Greek gods adding elements from Neoplatonism and Zoroastrianism. This was the key point that led to the controversy between Byzantine scholars and specifically triggered Scholarios' polemic. Scholarios confuted and tried to disprove Pletho's interpretations of Plato's and Aristotle's views in his treatise *Contra Plethonem* (Κατὰ τῶν Πλήθωνος ἀποριῶν ἐπ' Ἀριστοτέλει). He focused on particular works of Aristotle deliberately to respond to Pletho's attack on Aristotle and to defend his political attitude toward the union. Pletho responded with his essay *Contra Scholarii* (Πρὸς τὰς ὑπὲρ Ἀριστοτέλους Γεωργίου τοῦ Σχολαρίου Ἀντιλήψεις). Scholarios avoided writing a reply or taking political action against Pletho's writings, although he suspected Pletho's paganism when Pletho was alive. He only was certain when the *Book of Laws* came into his hands, which he burned publicly. Scholarios was really aiming to defend the Christian Orthodox identity from all threats. In the Byzantine world, the victory of the Aristotelians was total, given that Scholarios became the Patriarch of Constantinople. This demonstrated the wider theological–philosophical problem of the fifteenth century which was personalized to Scholarios and Pletho. The controversy between the two men led to the beginning of a trend among thinkers juxtaposing Plato and Aristotle.

Scholarios as a Writer

Scholarios' work is vast and pertains to many subjects. So apart from his theological and philosophical work, Scholarios wrote grammatical, rhetorical, liturgical, and apologetical works, as well as religious poetry. He translated and commented on many Greek and Latin works, and he wrote a plethora of letters. His work covers eight volumes which were published in Paris by Louis Petit, Xenophon Siderides, and Martin Jugie between the years 1928 and 1936. It is a valuable project that reveals most of Scholarios' work, but it is said that it is lagging at literary and critical scrutiny.

Several later scholars praised Scholarios for his critical ability and the power of his argumentation. In every period of his life, he expressed

himself through writing. He defended theological positions, as well as philosophical ones without hesitation for the sake of true knowledge.

His teachings about the holy days of Orthodoxy, such as the Transfiguration of Jesus, the Friday of Sorrows, the celebration of the Holy Apostles, the three speeches dedicated to the Marian feast days (which he writes about during various periods of his life), his contra-Latin and contra-Jewish works, as well as his attitude against Barlaam of Calabria (1290–1348) and his Pastoral and Ascetic work, define him as a theologian.

His interests extend to other central theological topics, such as God's Providence, Divine Destination, immortal souls, and the way of their existence. Scholarios approaches these topics by quoting Greek Orthodox Fathers, such as Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, and many others. He also refers to the teachings of Plato, Plotinus, Origen, Augustine, Scotus, and others which may be thought of as controversial concerning his adherence to the Orthodox positions.

Scholarios' attitude toward complex philosophical and theological disputes, his commenting ability, as well as his capacity to negotiate dogmatic issues are indicative of his philosophical and theological abilities. An example of his critical ability lies in his claim that he made corrections to the translated Latin text of Thomas *De ente et essentia* to highlight its true meaning when he was appointed to the palace.

In addition to his few pastoral and ascetical writings, there are some treatises, like *Απολογία περὶ τῆς σιωπῆς· πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν*, which give valuable insight about the state of Constantinople at that time and the reasons for Scholarios' resignation from the Patriarchal throne. Furthermore, we find some original literary writing in the form of odes, and treatises about the subject of ethics, such as *Various Thoughts* (Κεφάλαια πάντων ὠφέλιμα) and *The difference between venial and deadly sins* (Περὶ διαφορᾶς τῶν συγγνωστών καὶ θανάσιμων ἁμαρτημάτων σύντομον καὶ σαφές and *Τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀναγκαῖα ζητήματα*). His correspondence gives a lot of information about his perceptions on many theological and philosophical matters.

Ecclesiastical and Philosophical Tradition (Palamism, Thomism, Aristotelianism)

The controversy about Scholarios' intensions begins from the fact that at the same time he supported Palamism and admired enthusiastically Thomas. The opposition to Palamism was associated with Latin scholasticism and especially with the scholasticism of Thomas, because many byzantine scholars drew their arguments from him. Scholarios is thought to be one of them but by being adherent to the Orthodox positions, especially on the matters separating the Churches. The conflicting views about Gennadios' stance toward Palamism initiated from the connection of Scotus' *distinction formalis a parte rei* with the Scholarian approach of the essence–energies distinction, which was considered as an attempt to temper Palamite theology. Modern scholars more and more contradict this view.

In the debate about the supremacy of Plato over Aristotle, Scholarios favored Aristotle, opposing his contemporaries Bessarion and Gemistos Pletho. Scholarios' desire to strengthen Christian dogma came along with the previous practice, as well as with the common practice that was used mostly to reconcile Aristotle's philosophy with Christian theology.

Scholarios as a Philosopher and Commentator

The theological debate on the definition of life took place in the Orthodox East by Scholarios, Mark of Ephesus, Theophanis of Medeia, and George Amiroutzes. This debate is not particularly known, but it is worth mentioning because it provides information about Scholarios. Mark of Ephesus connected life with prediction and predestination. This view correlated both with the views of Neilos Kabasilas and Augustine's theory of absolute predestination. Scholarios composed five treatises regarding the subject (the first was written in 1459). His approach is radical and shows his genuine theological and philosophical interest. Scholarios relied mainly on the orthodox position of God's wisdom. He also opposed the concept of *heimarmene* and gave further clarifications about the concept of the in-time existence of human freedom. Furthermore, in a letter written to his friend and defender Theofanes of Medeia, he

examines the concept of the soul. He refutes Plato's position of pre-existence, as well as the Stoic perception of the blending of human soul with matter, which according to Scholarios makes it subject to destruction.

Scholarios' ability to interpret and assess specific philosophical perceptions led to be characterized as "the last great representative of Byzantine erudition." His multiple references to philosophical concepts, as well as his comments on the works of Aristotle, prove his special interest in philosophy. He considers Aristotle the greatest philosopher who as to Scholarios conviction is compatible with Christian doctrine. The entire seventh volume of his *Œuvres Complètes (OC)* relates to the examination of Aristotle's thinking. He starts from Aristotelian logic, commenting upon Porphyrys' *Isagoge (Prolégomènes proprement dits l' Isagoge de Porphyre, 7–113)* and then *Categories, De Interpretatione, Physica, De caelo, De anima, Parva naturalia, Meteorologica*. Finally, he elaborates on various notions of Aristotle's philosophy, such as *deprivation* (στέρησις, *sterisis*), *ultimate end* (τέλος, *telos*), the categories of *having* (ἔχειν, *echein*) and *place* (ποῦ, *pou*), *dimension* (ἐκ τινός, *ek tinos*), *perfection* (τέλειον, *teleion*), *completion* (πέρας, *peras*), *disposition* (διάθεσις, *diathesis*), *hexis* (ἕξις), *passion* (πάθος, *pathos*), etc. At the introduction of the volume, Scholarios writes to Constantine Palaiologos. In this letter, he notes that for the purpose of commenting, he has in front of him the *Posterior Analytics* and also the Greek and Latin commentaries. Scholarios makes the distinction between the Greek and the Scholastic exegetical tradition. He also distinguishes between the old and new Latin commentaries. He acknowledges that the Latins took the previous comments into consideration and supplemented them.

There have been some objections as to the novelty of Scholarios' comments. This matter begins from the fact that he uses a sufficient number of comments from previous commentators. He attests that for the fourth part of his work, he uses Aquinas' commentary. This serves the purpose to praise Thomas' interpretation, which needs no further editing. Scholarios states that Thomas

tired himself enough with his interpretation and by doing so he thought that it was unnecessary to tire himself out too. Scholarios mentions in his writings the references to other commentators (τοῦ Θωμᾶ τοῦτο). Thus, there are indications that when he is using others' comments, he does not claim that they are his own. Gennadios argues that he knows the Latin language very well and has access to many texts concerning Aristotle. Furthermore, he asserts that he does not cite the comments of previous commentators without a critical eye. Scholarios attacks these views of the previous commentators in courteous terms by pointing out his objections. He aims neither to brag nor challenge, but for "his love for true philosophical explanations." On the contrary, he adopts what he considers good philosophical interpretations and respectively rejects those that do not promote philosophical knowledge.

Scholarios regards himself as one of the leading Byzantine philosophical thinkers, such as Leon Magentinos (thirteenth century), Michael Psellos (1017/1018–1078), and John Philoponus (490–570). He is also described by later scholars as the "Psellos of the Fall." In the introduction of the seventh volume, he also mentions that he founded a school of philosophy, but he had only a few capable students.

Thomism

Scholarios is known for being a fervent Thomist. But the coexistence of Thomistic and anti-Thomistic elements in Scholarios' works made some researchers refer separately to him when studying the case of Thomism in Byzantium. Scholarios has high esteem for Thomas and he appeals frequently to his authority. For this, he was accused of being a "Latinophile" and he wrote a long *apologia* to overturn the charge. He considers Thomas to be an excellent interpreter of various areas of thought. His comments and translations may not have intended to stand on the breach between Romans and Latins, but he acknowledges that Thomas is an expert user of classical philosophy. Scholarios as previously said encountered Thomas' commentaries on Aristotle. He also eagerly delved into Thomas' major works *Summae contra Gentiles* and *Summae*

Theologiae. His interpretation and comments take place in volumes V and VI of his *OC*. He also translated *De ente et essentia* for his student Matthew Kamariotes. In his letter to him, he accentuates the mentality and the method of the book which he considers to be excellent – minus some few parts where the doctrines differ.

Scholarios' study of Thomas led to the elaboration, partial translation, and commentary of the Latin text. Scholarios had at his disposal almost all the works of Aquinas. He claims that he had some translations of them and that he also translated some other parts in the Greek language. Probably, when Scholarios speaks about the previous Greek translations, he refers to the work of Demetrios Kydones (c. 1324/5–1397/8), an important Byzantine scholar who continued the work of Maximos Planoudes by translating Aquinas' major works.

Scholarios' convergence with Thomas, especially concerning *Summa Contra Gentiles*, is not superficial. It was a pertinence that designated the request for a provisory alliance and indicated the philosophical relations which manifest through Pletho's philosophy or through the presence of the Islamic element. Scholarios, as the main exponent of Orthodox theology, felt he had the duty to defend the orthodox gentiles, like the Balkans or other regions and tribes within the limits of the Byzantine Empire. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople was the major Patriarchate of the East and should have retained its ecumenical character and its theological influence over the gentiles as well.

Scholarios was also stimulated by Thomas' practical approach to philosophical and theological matters. This conclusion is valid since they both employed the method of scholasticism in articulating and defending their dogma. The common interest that Thomas and Gennadios share for Aristotelian philosophy and the fact that Aquinas refers to many Patristic sources of the Orthodox Church and cites from the Scriptures are the chief reasons why Scholarios chose to study his teachings. But Thomas' sources influenced indirectly Scholarios. Latin translations of Arabic and Jewish annotations of Aristotle, particularly those of Averroes and Avicenna, have particularly influenced Aquinas, despite the incorporation of

Neoplatonic elements into their own thinking. What is new and unexpected is the reception of these ideas by a Western thinker. This reception is particularly important, mainly for the understanding of the dissemination of philosophical ideas in the Late Byzantine and Post Byzantine periods.

Apart from his proclaimed appreciation of Thomas, Scholarios approaches Thomas' viewpoints certainly not uncritically. Moreover, Scholarios points out the differences between the Catholic and Orthodox Church wherever they emerge or in other cases, he stays away from dogmatic disagreements. In addition, this is not the case for all his work besides his dependence on western scholasticism in terms of content and structure. In many cases when Scholarios comments Thomas, he gives a slightly different argument to support an established position or a small addition to Thomas' answer. Therefore, he may use some viewpoints from the Latin texts and even adopt elements of other's teachings, but he does it in a critical manner, bearing always in mind his adhesion to the Orthodox positions. That is why Gennadios points out that Thomas supports the doctrines of the Catholic Church on the question of the emancipation of the Holy Spirit and on the distinction between divine essence and energies. Scholarios declares that he had remarked on these differences in the past and fought against them in many of his books, which are spread throughout the world.

Scholarios in the introduction to the fifth volume of *OC* attests the reasons for attempting the arduous task of epitomizing Thomas. He claims that the main reason was his love for the books. Their massive size makes them hard to interpret, understand, and transport – albeit the size of the chapters and the accuracy of their arguments. Scholarios states that his life was full of unintentional transitions. So, he came up with the idea of this epitome “out of necessity and with no other ambition,” as he notes, because he could not carry these books everywhere with him.

Scholarios also refers to the race, or else, *genos* (γένος) of the author of the books. It is important to note that he points the obvious, i.e., Thomas is Latin by *genos*, and that explains how someone perceives the beliefs of their church as ancestral

(Ὁ δὲ τῶν βιβλίων συγγραφεὺς Λατῖνος μὲν ἦν τῷ γένει· διὸ καὶ τῇ δόξῃ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐκείνης ὡς πατρίῳ κατείληπτο· τοῦτο δὲ τὸ ἀνθρώπειον ἔθος· [...]). From this point of view, Scholarios praises the writers' wisdom and recognizes the value of Thomas, as an exegete of the Old and New Testament, Greek and Latin Fathers, in addition to his innovative thought. For Scholarios, Aquinas is a wise man, worthy of study, an excellent interpreter and expositor of Christian theology.

Impact and Legacy

Scholarios' polemic against Pletho was continued by his student Matthew Kamariotes and by Matthew's student, Manuel of Corinth (c.1460–c.1551), although Gennadios' disciples did not evince any profound admiration about Thomas or other scholars of Latin Theology. But some other cases are found, in which familiarity with the Latin Patristic tradition is shown, as well as a close knowledge of Latin scholasticism (Joseph of Methone, Gabriel Severos, Maximos Margounios, Meletios Pegas, etc.). Concerning the influence of Scholarios' epitomes and translations, it is important to mention that only a few manuscripts were distributed in the close circle of his students. Scholarios in his writings complains about the low educational level and the lack of interest in learning of the Byzantines. This perception is followed by his deep concern for the intellectual progress and survival of his *genos*.

The whole controversy of Scholarios and Pletho over the primacy of Plato and Aristotle resulted in a revival of philosophical discussion among the Greek intellectuals of the final phase of Byzantine thought. Matthew Kamariotes, Theodore Gazes (c.1400–c.1475), Michael Apostoles (1420/1422–1474/1486), Andronikos Kallistos (1400–1476), George Trapezountios (1935–1472/1473), and Bessarion are some of these Byzantine scholars that took part in this philosophical debate. This led to the flourishing of new writings concerning philosophical topics, such as the problem of universals and to the readings of ancient commentators, which opened the

discussion about the Byzantine philosophical tradition.

Concerning the impact and legacy of Scholarios, the later scholars seem even more so interested in his work. A thorough study about the impact of fifteenth-century Byzantine theology and philosophy outside the limits of the Ottoman Empire is a desideratum. This research would enlighten us with respect to the impact of his ideas. It is thought that the legacy of Post Byzantine theology and philosophy in general, written in Greek language, resides especially in the theological developments of the West, as well as in the Russian Orthodox Church which is one of the autonomous Eastern Orthodox churches which was in full communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

At subsequent times, within the Ottoman territory, Scholarios influenced and contributed to the formation of two literary movements. These movements evolved beside the expected lack of interest in theological discourse that followed the Ottoman conquest. The first movement emerged from the literary tendency toward the reconciliation of Orthodox Christianity with Islam. The second movement was the Messianic utopian trend which concerned the salvation of the *genos* that later evolved into the formation of the *Great Idea*. These movements were not mutually exclusive in their timeframes and occurred somewhere between the fifteenth and nineteenth century. About the first trend, there are three works written by Scholarios which confirm the dialogue with Islam. Two of them are addressed to Muhammad II and the third to some Ottoman officials that were in Feres. The second trend relates to the Christian apocalyptic discourse and extends to eschatological themes. It also reaches across a wide range of literary subjects, some of them already used by Scholarios, such as hymns, oracles, interpretations in Christian eschatology (primarily of the Book of Revelation), chronographs, and folksinging. Scholarios is the leading figure in these movements.

It is also worthwhile to note that Scholarios, like many of his contemporaries, takes a careful look at the matter of the elements that contribute to the formation of the Hellenic identity. To the

question “Who am I?” Scholarios responds that he considers himself a Christian. Scholarios’ definition of identity does not come as a result of birthplace and language, but as a combination of his tradition and beliefs. Despite the commonly held view, Scholarios also thinks of himself as Hellene and Roman. He always bears in mind the possible ruination of his genus (τοῦ γένους ὀλέθρῳ). He only rejects the idea of a Hellenism that imitates classical antiquity and does not correspond to his time.

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School of Salamanca

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Abstract

The term “School of Salamanca” is used to refer to a group of Spanish theologians and jurists from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, ranging roughly from Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) to Francisco Suárez (1548–1617). There is a rather broad agreement that the works of this group of authors are, in one way or another, of great importance in the process of the emergence of modern practical philosophy. But there is little agreement with regard to both the content of the concept of the School of Salamanca and its exact extension. In this entry, we would like to offer an account of the controversies that surround this concept: We will first identify three central aspects of the historical context in which the School of Salamanca is usually situated and offer a preliminary profile of the

School. We will then describe how, i.e., by what features and in what fields, the works of these authors are thought to be relevant for an adequate understanding of the emergence of modern practical philosophy. Finally, we will try to sort the different strands of reception of the School and the different strategies of defining it and of assessing its impact and enduring relevance according to stakes that are often implicit in scholarly literature on the School of Salamanca. Our goal is to show how the very identification of the School is a matter of locating the decisive points of rupture and heritage on the part of today’s scholarship.

Introduction

General histories of practical philosophy often include a chapter on Francisco Suárez’ (1548–1617) account of natural law, which they take to be of some importance in the process of the emergence of modern practical philosophy (see, e.g., Schneewind 2003; Irwine 2008). However, more specialized scholarship on early modern practical philosophy has long come to acknowledge that Suárez is part of a larger group of Iberian authors from the sixteenth to seventeenth century, a group that, since the late nineteenth century – first, it seems, in writings in the history of economics and the history of international law –, is often referred to as the School of Salamanca (see Alves and Moreira 2013). More specifically, the term “School of Salamanca” is used to emphasize the impact of certain innovative and original ideas in practical philosophy during that time that cannot be explained with reference to the role and reception of single texts or even single authors alone. While there are also other terms used in the literature to refer to the same or a similar group of authors, e.g., “Second Scholasticism” or “Iberian Humanism,” there is a rather broad agreement that the works of this group of authors are, in one way or another, of great importance in the process of the emergence of modern practical philosophy. There is also quite a bit of research focusing on the theoretical philosophy of authors that are seen as belonging to the School of Salamanca, especially

on Francisco Suárez (see, e.g., Doyle 2011, Sgarbi 2010, Honnefelder 2013, and the respective contributions in Hill and Lagerlund 2012 and Schwartz 2013). But as far as we know, the term “School of Salamanca” is not used as frequently and as deliberately as it is used in the literature concerning the practical philosophy of the respective authors. Therefore, we will assume in what follows that the concept of the School of Salamanca is a concept that is central only to the history of *practical* philosophy.

Despite the widely shared idea of the importance of the School of Salamanca in the history of early modern practical philosophy, however, there is little agreement with regard to both the content of the concept of the School of Salamanca and its exact extension. Various attempts have been made at characterizing or “defining” the School of Salamanca, but even the kinds of criteria that such attempts should rely on are contested: Should the School of Salamanca be characterized according to certain geographical, institutional, or social settings? Or should it be characterized according to its particular intellectual heritage from the Middle Ages or according to certain of its discursive effects (intended or not)? Or should it be characterized according to specific substantial philosophical or methodological ideas? As a consequence, the exact extension of the group is controversial as well: For a long time, many scholars took the School of Salamanca to be a group of authors ranging roughly from Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) to Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) (see, e.g., Hamilton 1963; Brett 1997; Böckenförde 2002; Pagden 2011). In the meantime, however, a variety of more fine-grained views has been developed. They include the idea of a subdivision of the School of Salamanca into several interconnected generations of authors. They also include very narrow conceptions that limit the School of Salamanca to the holders of the theological *Prima* and *Visperas* chairs at the University of Salamanca (these ideas are not mutually exclusive; see, e.g., Belda Plans 2000 for a model of the school comprising several generations of holders of these chairs). And they include very broad conceptions that take the School of Salamanca to incorporate

non-theological authors, or authors writing even before Vitoria (see, e.g., Flórez Miguel et al. 2012) or after Suárez, and authors living and writing far beyond the city limits of Salamanca (see, e.g., Pena González 2009).

Given the rather perplexing state of scholarship, we will proceed as follows: Starting from the historical context in which the School of Salamanca is normally situated and from a preliminary profile of the school (II), we will describe how, i.e., by what features and in what fields, the works of these authors are thought to be relevant for an adequate understanding of the emergence of modern practical philosophy (III). In the final part of the entry, we will then try to sort the different strands of reception of the School and the different strategies of defining it and of assessing its impact and enduring relevance according to stakes that are often implicit in scholarly literature on the School of Salamanca, thereby showing how the very identification of the School is a matter of locating the decisive points of rupture and heritage on the part of today’s scholarship (IV).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition: The School of Salamanca in Twentieth-Century History of Practical Philosophy

The historic background against which the works of the authors of the School of Salamanca are usually situated is shaped by three major factors:

The first is the “discovery” of the “New World” and the beginnings of the Spanish colonial empire (see, e.g., Brufau Prats 1988; Brett 1997; Pereña 1998; Böckenförde 2002; Anghie 2007; Pagden 2012). On the one hand, this propelled the growing of Spain’s international importance as well as its own internal structural reformation: With a stream of resources imported from the colonies, and faced with necessities of administering the remote territories, Spain found its way to modernize the State in a creative way. New offices, such as viceroys and councils, and new fields of governmental activity and regulation (such as the trade with the colonies, which got its own “ministry,” the “Casa de Contratación”) were established and helped to consolidate central

power and to give it presence and effectiveness in all parts of the kingdom. On the other hand, the question of the nature and due treatment of the newly “discovered” peoples turned out to be of major importance: in 1537, Pope Paul III had declared in his papal bull “*Sublimis Deus*” that the indigenous population of the conquered territories should be considered human beings capable and worthy of salvation and, by extension, regular subjects of the king equal to their metropolitan co-citizens. The “equality effect” of this declaration, however, was negligible. Instead, it defined America as a stage for missionary initiatives and provided a justification for all kinds of incursions and oppressions based on the pagan culture of the indigenous peoples. Economic interests of the colonizers and their sense of religious and cultural (if not natural) superiority firmly established brutal regimes of slave labor, often against both explicit promises by local authorities and royal or papal policy decrees. However, beginning with Antonio de Montesinos’ Easter sermon of 1511, there also was a prominent and vocal public criticism of this ruthless behavior and of the oppression of the indigenous population. Official and unofficial reports reached the Court and the confessionals, so that the need to criticize and correct the developments in the colonies was felt in many places. The *Leyes de Burgos* from 1512 were a first official reaction, meant to provide a legal framework and procedures for the establishment and the organization of colonial communities, presumably not least in order to provide some measure of safety for the indigenous population. However, as, e.g., Bartolomé de Las Casas among others reported, the use of those laws by the *encomenderos* hardly bettered the situation.

The second factor that is often thought to determine the historic background of the writings of the School of Salamanca is the protestant reformation and the vision of moral and political life it entailed (see, e.g., Skinner 1978; Brett 1997, 2010; Schnepf 2007; Recknagel 2010; Scattola 2012). On the one hand, the protestant discourse is often seen as figuring as one of the major opponents in the writings of the catholic, “counter-reformation” authors of the School of Salamanca. For the protestant writers not only launched a critical attack

on ecclesiastic authority but also emphasized the sinful character of human nature and the necessity of the undeservable and imprevisible gift of divine grace, which was also taken to imply a conception of political power according to which governmental authority was necessary to compensate for the lack of morality but was itself isolated from moral considerations stronger than those of functional rationality. And while the Florentine author Machiavelli was not exactly a protestant, he laid the foundation for a theory that would, not least in protestant intellectual and academic contexts, be elaborated to a discourse of reason of state, decoupling political imperatives from morality. Against this background, the authors of the School of Salamanca are often portrayed as having “pelagian” convictions according to which human nature was not lost through original sin but is a firm, “secular” basis for morality. Also, they are attributed with a more substantial or even moralized concept of politics that contrasts with the conception of reason of state. On the other hand, however, there is also scholarship that shows how permeable the borderline between the catholic and the protestant discourse of this period was and how this allowed also for a great deal of positive influence of catholic authors on protestant authors, and vice versa, even if the authors themselves, for obvious reasons, may not explicitly acknowledge their indebtedness to writings that were associated with the opposite camp.

The third factor that is frequently taken to determine the historic background of the writings of the School of Salamanca is the particular tradition of Iberian (“scholastic”) Humanism (see, e.g., Noreña 1975; Skinner 1978; Fernández-Santamaria 1977, 2005/2006; Gil 2002; Espinosa 2008; Fuertes Herreros 2011, 2012; Pena Gonzalez 2010; Valenzuela-Vermehren 2013; Boone 2014). Various universities in France and Italy, most notably the University of Paris, had been places of formation for a considerable number of Spanish scholars who came to occupy chairs in theological, artistic, juristic, and other faculties in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries at universities on the Iberian Peninsula. They brought with them the latest developments

in natural philosophy and the beginnings of modern natural sciences, a more or less eclectic approach to methodology and to the traditional “three ways” of theology, a sensitivity for the importance of language and of textual sources, and a focus on the human and the daily life as the origin of questions addressed to science and scholarship. One of the major points of this development consisted in a turn to Aristotelianism and an interest in Thomas Aquinas’s Aristotelian *Summa Theologiae* in various domains of academic scholasticism. As we have seen, the political realm was in a particular need of new answers and approaches. And in Spain, unlike, e.g., in Italy, the extra-universitarian humanistic circles had never replaced academic scholarship in terms of political counselling. While practitioners have contributed important works and motives of political theory, this genre was anything but foreclosed from academic theologians, philosophers and jurists. In fact, in the fifteenth century, a group of theologians established an Aristotelian discourse on practical and political matters at the very university of Salamanca; they are often called the “First School of Salamanca.”

Even before Vitoria then, theological, philosophical, and juridical authors from the University of Salamanca have been conjointly involved in academic and political responses to all three of these factors. But scholars tend to agree that it was Francisco de Vitoria’s accession to the *Prima* chair of theology in 1526 that inaugurated the actual *School of Salamanca*. Vitoria was a charismatic orator and teacher – in fact, it was the students of Salamanca who elected him to occupy this chair – and the impact he made was founded mainly on his *relectiones*, i.e., university lectures that were open to all faculties and transcriptions of which have only posthumously been published in print in 1557. However, most contemporary authors agree that while the acknowledgment of an intellectual debt to Vitoria was a salient feature of the many members of the School of Salamanca, the latter would not have been established, were it not for Domingo de Soto and Melchor Cano, two immediate colleagues and self-styled disciples of Vitoria. (For different roles in the context of the constitution of a school, such as founder, leader,

disciple, etc., see, among others, Tiryakian 1981.) Soto has been characterized as a prolific author who invented a whole new academic literary genre for the concerns of the School of Salamanca, namely, the treatise *De Iustitia et Iure*, based on the respective but not directly consecutive parts *De lege* and *De iustitia* of Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* (see Scattola 2009). Cano, on the other hand, established an epistemological and methodological frame of reference that should be of lasting importance in theology (see Pena Gonzalez 2005, 2010) (more on those below). Together with these, a small number of other authors are commonly taken as the core or first generation of the School of Salamanca. There is some debate, however, over whether or not scholars from disciplines other than theology can be counted to that core: For reasons of conceptual precision, authors like Belda Plans (2000) suggest to restrict the concept only to holders of specific chairs in the faculty of theology at the University of Salamanca (e.g., Vitoria, Soto, Cano), whereas others, like Pena Gonzalez (2009, 2010), include jurists and professors of philosophy, reflecting relationships that are documented in academic works and letters. And while there is debate on how to distinguish subsequent “generations” of the School from mere influence and reception (“proyección”), it is clear that a vast number of authors – in Salamanca and elsewhere and in theology as well as in other disciplines – saw themselves as explicit heirs to Vitoria and the first generation and that the influence of the School was even greater, setting standards and arguments acknowledged even in protestant circles and in debates taking place centuries later.

Innovative and Original Aspects: Detailed Descriptions of Creatures and Fields

Against this commonly assumed historical background of the School of Salamanca, provided by the discovery of the “New World,” the protestant reformation, and the development of “Iberian Humanism,” diverse aspects have been put forward as articulating salient features of the School

of Salamanca, explaining both the group's coherence and its impact and relevance in the emergence of modern practical philosophy.

One obvious moment mentioned throughout the literature is the concentration on Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* and more specifically on its second part (see, e.g., Scattola 2010). The *Summa* was felt to provide a methodology better suited to dealing with contemporary issues in the discussion. Vitoria and Soto managed to get the formal theological curriculum at the University of Salamanca changed so that, instead of Lombard's *Sentences*, the *Summa* became the most important reference text. This was an initiative they brought with them from the University of Paris. The result was a curriculum with some contortions: Officially, the major text to be read was still the *Sentences*, but they were read "according to" the *Summa Theologiae*. Whereas the *Prima* and the *Visperas* chairs of theology were practically free to adopt any conceptual framework and to focus on what they perceived as important issues, Vitoria and Soto stuck closely to Thomas Aquinas. Over several decades, they lectured extensively on the *Secunda Secundae*.

However, a turn to practical issues in the School of Salamanca was not only an institutional matter of focusing one's lectures on certain parts of the *Summa* rather than other. According to many commentators, this "practical turn" became a centerpiece of the methodological orientation of many of the authors that have come to be included in the School of Salamanca. As a consequence, many commentators have suggested to make this "practical turn" itself a salient characteristic of the School of Salamanca (see, e.g., Brufau Prats 1988; Belda Plans 2000; Böckenförde 2002). While drawing on traditional methods of argumentation found in medieval scholasticism, especially in Thomas Aquinas, its members turn their attention to the social, economic, and political realities of the world they live in. And they do so not just with an academic interest in making the world the touchstone of the theories they inherited from the Middle Ages but also with an explicit interest in changing the world by their philosophically informed contributions to a public discourse. Besides their regular teaching activities,

the so-called *relectiones* proved to be an important aspect of their mission: At the end of the academic year, they held lectures that applied the concepts and arguments of their teaching to current, mainly political, problems – examples include the licitness of forced baptism of the indigenous population in the colonies, the divorce of Henry VIII, and just war. Students from all faculties attended these lectures and helped the School's theses to spread quickly.

Thus, on this reading, Francisco de Vitoria's *Relectiones*, being the public-spirited interventions on current political issues that they were, turned out to be something like foundational documents of the School of Salamanca that echo even in large treatises such as Luis de Molina's *De Iustitia et Iure*, which, despite its massive theoretical framework, remains closely in touch with the current situation of the Spanish empire. As has been mentioned, the issues the Salmantine authors concerned themselves with were the chief political and social questions of their times: Reflecting their humanist approach, the actual life of human beings as such – independently of rank and religious affiliation, but not isolated from their respective community or even from contact with other communities – was perceived to pose important problems. And for pragmatic reasons, the resolution of those problems had to be conceivable in the terms of human reason alone, independently of the authority of theological tradition (which was highly disputed – in protestant contexts – or even unheard of and unconvincing, in the American context). This argument is possible because, according to the Thomists, divine grace did not supersede, suspend, or eliminate (human) nature, but perfected it. Human nature was not thoroughly corrupted by the original sin. Hence, the core of valid solutions to practical problems in terms of capabilities and in terms of what counts as a solution in the first place could be found and elaborated independently of divine revelation. Also, Vitoria and his followers found human reason to be an intersubjective capacity, susceptible to improvement by expertise and exchange, accumulating with time and tradition. From this, there resulted an attitude of assessing and eventually acknowledging the legitimacy of practical and

social rationality independently of its theological justification. In this sense, a recurrent argument of the Salmantine authors goes, such a reliance on human capacities not only does not contradict but even confirms and lends credibility to Christian doctrine – organizing the social world and solving practical problems relying on a human reason available to every human being is well-suited to the pluralistic world in which the problems arise and at the same time promotes Christian values and furthers understanding of the Christian religion.

With regard to the language, in which such problems are dealt with, the debates in the School of Salamanca are usually seen as organized around the central concepts of (natural) law and justice. The pertinent questions are those of legality, admissibility, obligatoriness, etc. Commentators often interpret this focus as a turn away from many of the virtue-ethical or aretaic concepts inherited from the Middle Ages and toward a sort of “juridification” of morality (Wagner 2011; Birr 2013; Decock and Birr 2016; for a critique of this view with regard to Suárez, see Schaffner 2016). This turn is reflected in the conceptual scheme of the treatises *De iustitia et iure*, which are obviously inspired by commentaries on *Summa Theologiae* I–II, q. 90–108 (*De lege*) and *Summa Theologiae* II–II, q. 57–122 (*De iustitia*), but which, in contrast to continuous commentaries, leave out many other parts of the *Summa*, e.g., Aquinas’s treatment of happiness. It is not that these virtue-ethical concepts have no role whatsoever in the works of authors of the School of Salamanca; but the conceptual framework of their practical philosophy is based on juridical concepts such as justice, right, or law.

Giving a more precise shape to this “legalistic” approach, yet other scholars submit that it is a more or less specific doctrine of subjective and/or natural rights that characterizes the authors of the School of Salamanca (see, e.g., Brufau Prats 1988; Kaufmann and Schnepf 2007; Brett 1997, 2010). Drawing on the late medieval poverty controversy, which provided complex insights into both the will as the faculty of free choice and the concept of *dominium* as an individual entitlement

of a person, the authors of the School of Salamanca attempt to integrate the idea of individual rights or even of individual natural rights into the traditional framework of Thomist natural law theory. Thus, their work represents a shift in perspective, away from the idea of an objective order of society and toward the idea of society and its development as resulting from the free behavior of autonomous individuals who are the bearers of rights that structure the normative relations between them but do not prescribe a concrete manifestation of social order and individual action.

A significant strand of literature on the School of Salamanca discerns substantial commitments of its authors in terms of the very foundations of morality and natural legal obligation: In this debate, it is often assumed that the authors of the School of Salamanca are united in their rejection of a positivist or radically voluntarist understanding of natural law as an arbitrary command of God (a view which they associate with Ockham) and their rejection of the idea that morality does not have a natural basis, i.e., that human beings depend on their moral orientation and in their moral action on divine revelation and divine grace (a view which they associate with protestant moral theology). Against this background, commentators then draw on the idea of two generations of the School of Salamanca to characterize the moral thought of the respective authors: While the first generation, most prominently Francisco de Vitoria and Domingo de Soto, advocates a sort of ethical naturalism inherited from Aquinas and centering around the concepts of the ultimate end (*finis ultimus*) of human action and the natural inclinations (*inclinationes naturales*) of human beings (see, e.g., Deckers 1991; Doyle 1997), the second generation, notably Francisco Suárez, argues for a moderate form of divine command theory centering around the concepts of obligation (*obligatio*) and will (*voluntas*) (see, e.g., Böckenförde 2002; Stiening 2013). This view of natural law is often seen as avoiding the pitfalls both of Thomist naturalism (which is taken to be in danger of extending morality far beyond the realm of human action and of losing sight of the specific character of *moral* obligations) and of

Ockhamist voluntarism (which is understood as being unable to account for the non-arbitrary character of moral rules). As such, it is taken to have had a lasting influence in the modern discussion about morality and obligation that can be traced to the works of later authors such as Hugo Grotius (Darwall 2012) and Immanuel Kant (see Ludwig 1997; Pink 2012).

More recently, however, this picture of discussions of moral philosophy in the School of Salamanca has been challenged by two novel perspectives. On the one hand, there is scholarship suggesting that there might be a third view that can be found in the writings of authors of the School of Salamanca, namely, the view that morality has its roots neither in natural inclinations nor in divine commands, but rather in practical reason. Natural law, on this reading, is the law of (human and nonhuman) practical reason. Interpretations of this proto-Kantian variety have been developed, for instance, for the takes on natural law offered by Francisco de Vitoria (see Spindler 2015) and Gabriel Vázquez (see Mandrella 2016). On the other hand, there is the view that the literature on moral philosophy in the School of Salamanca has for a long time mistakenly overemphasized the relevance of foundational questions of natural law. For this, as commentators like Schüßler (2003, 2006) have argued, it may not be the field where innovation took place in the moral philosophy of the School of Salamanca. According to this view, the respective authors are not primarily interested in questions concerning the foundations of morality in the abstract but rather in the practical application of moral principles under conditions of risk or uncertainty. Hence, the important contribution that can be found in their texts is a relatively advanced theory (or at least elements of such a theory) of rational decision-making in the realm of morality which prepared the subsequent development of early modern “probabilism.”

In a similar vein, one of the most influential strands of the reception of the School of Salamanca finds the practical application of natural law considerations in concrete geopolitical contexts to be the most distinguishing feature of the School of Salamanca. In this view, it is the newly

acquired global perspective that prompts a distinctive form of secularization in the practical philosophy of the authors of the School of Salamanca (see, e.g., Kaufmann and Schnepf 2007) and establishes a distinct discourse of international law and international relations (see, e.g., Pereña 1998; Anghie 2007; Koskenniemi 2011; Pagden 2011, 2012; Thumfart 2012).

Heritage or Rupture? The School of Salamanca in Twentieth-Century History of Philosophy

In this final section, we would like to explore how these different strategies of characterizing the School of Salamanca and of assessing its role in the history of practical philosophy may be sorted according to the (often implicit) stakes in today’s scholarly literature on the subject. We will argue that this shows how the evaluation, and perhaps the very identification of the School itself, is a matter of locating the decisive points of rupture and heritage between the Middle Ages and modernity on the part of today’s scholarship.

One rather general aspect of today’s scholarship on the School of Salamanca seems to be the tendency to associate the question of how the School of Salamanca is best characterized with the question of how it fits into a narrative in the history of philosophy that explains the emergence of modern practical philosophy. While there is a variety of ways of presenting the school in such a narrative, we suggest to distinguish between two broad approaches and two evaluative attitudes: The first approach portrays the School of Salamanca as a last vestige of medieval practical philosophy, while the second identifies it as one of the first distinctly modern systems of political and practical philosophy. And the first evaluative attitude affirms modernity – whenever it originated – whereas the second is critical of it.

There are authors in today’s scholarship on the School of Salamanca who seem to assume, at least on a very abstract level, that the practical philosophy of the School of Salamanca is best characterized by its *continuity* with medieval thought. Merio Scattola, for instance, argues that practical

philosophy in the School of Salamanca is of interest to us precisely because it is modeled on a distinctly premodern and roughly Aristotelian understanding of what a theory of human practice can and should be – namely, a rather open and flexible body of knowledge that is adaptable and develops together with human practice itself. Thus, it contrasts sharply with modern attempts at a strict axiomatization of a “system” of moral thought that is modeled on the scientific ideal of mathematics (see Scattola 2017). Gideon Stiening, on the other hand, has argued that the authors of the School of Salamanca are something like the final representatives of a distinctly medieval approach to practical philosophy that has its roots firmly in traditional theistic theology and that it is not until authors like Immanuel Kant appear on the scene that the idea of a secularized conception of morality based on human autonomy emerges (see Stiening 2011). Thus, both approaches agree that the School of Salamanca unfolds its theory before the rupture inaugurating modernity; they disagree, however, on what constitutes this rupture and how it (and, along with it, classical modernity) should be evaluated.

The same is true of the idea that the School of Salamanca is best portrayed as itself constituting a point of *rupture* between the Middle Ages and modernity. This idea, too, may take different forms: Matthias Kaufmann and Robert Schnepf (2007), for instance, claim that the interesting new element in the practical philosophy of the School of Salamanca, setting it apart from classical medieval thought and connecting it to the modern discourse, is an explicit idea of subjective rights that distinctly shapes how these authors think about human practice (see Kaufmann and Schnepf 2007). In the same vein, Brufau Prats (1988) and others (e.g., García y García 1997) have suggested that in some way the modern concept of human rights originates in the moral thought of the School of Salamanca. Objections focusing on the non-individualistic aspect of the Salmantine doctrines have been countered by arguing that such motives are part of a collectivist understanding of human rights that are nonetheless subjective rights and that can even improve upon today’s human rights theory (da Silva Loureiro 2013).

On the other hand, however, commentators have argued from very different angles that it is precisely the modernity of the practical philosophy of the School of Salamanca that makes it an important part of, if not the origin of, a rather problematic development. For instance, Antony Anghie (2007) and John Williams (1990) have claimed that the School of Salamanca inaugurated an expansive or imperial phase of Western political hegemony: The alleged universality of the Salmantine’s cosmopolitanism then seems to be in fact a mere veil concealing particular interests and a versatile vehicle for an oppressive and exclusive domination of European, or Western, economic, political, and intellectual powers. An analogous criticism is voiced by more traditional scholars like Michel Villey (1973, 1987, 2006). They identify the School of Salamanca with a disastrous turn to liberal notions of individual subjective rights that has, alas, subsequently become all-pervasive in modern systems of law or, should we say, Western societies. (For this strand of the discussion, see also Brett 2015.) Thus, while all these different approaches agree on the identification of the School of Salamanca with the decisive break toward modernity, they disagree in their assessment of whether this rupture actually marks a step of progress. The evaluation of modernity itself by those authors seems to reflect in their reconstructions of the School of Salamanca.

There are, however, quite a few cases that further complicate the picture we have suggested. With regard to putting the School of Salamanca on one of the sides of the break between the Middle Ages and modernity (or of identifying it with the break itself), the arguments of such authors seem to reject the idea of a break itself: Maybe modernity is a consequent development or unfolding of medieval motifs. Then the School of Salamanca can either participate in this unfolding, or it can, as it were, stand apart. Wolfgang Kluxen, for instance, is one of a few medievalists who suspect that the practical philosophy of the School of Salamanca actually marks a kind of setback in the otherwise continuous and progressive history of practical philosophy. According to his view, there is quite a lot more congeniality between

Thomas Aquinas and a modern author like Immanuel Kant than between Aquinas and the self-styled Thomists from Salamanca who renounce many of Aquinas's insights that today appear quite modern (see Kluxen 2001). Spindler, on the other hand, suggests that much of the practical philosophy in the School of Salamanca can be interpreted as quite traditional, if we are ready to revise our common understanding of what medieval practical philosophy is: It is not just conceptions of ethical naturalism or divine command theories but also conceptions of autonomy that are part of the medieval heritage of the School of Salamanca, and these anticipate modern conceptions like Immanuel Kant's (see Spindler 2015).

The interpretations of this group of commentators (i.e., Kluxen, Spindler, etc.) taken as a whole actually suggest that maybe one cannot be so sure about what constitutes the fundamental core of modernity at all. The reception as a whole seems to indicate at least that modernity is a dialectical process, and if today's scholarship cannot agree on what the salient characteristic traits of modernity and what the directions of its developments are, how much more mysterious must this have been for open minds of the sixteenth century? The authors of the School of Salamanca have repeatedly shown to be quite conscious of "both sides" of the contemporary developments – of their emancipatory and universalizing advances but also of the oppression, exploitation, and discrimination going along with the universalization of European practices (Dussel 1993; Pagden 2003, 2011, 2012; Brett 2010; Koskenniemi 2011). On many points have the authors of the School of Salamanca indicated that they were aware of being witnesses or parties to fundamental transformations, and yet the essence of these transformations could not be transparent to them. In fact, it is questionable that this essence should have been fixed at all already at the time . . . if it is now, that is.

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Scientia in the Renaissance, Concept of

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Abstract

“Scientia” is a long-standing heritage of Aristotelian logic and denotes an epistemic ideal pursued through several centuries. According to Aristotle’s (1984) *Posterior Analytics*, knowledge that conforms to this ideal must consist of propositions that are *universally and necessarily true*. This necessity can be *demonstrated* through *sylogistic inferences* that proceed from premises containing the *cause* of the conclusion. Accordingly, *scientia* consisted in a *systematic*, demonstrative presentation of why things behave the way they do, and not in the discovery of the causes from which demonstrations followed. This ideal started to erode in the Renaissance period. Its various aspects had been challenged and alternative ideals of inquiry had been proposed. As

the emphasis shifted from the demonstration of phenomena in accordance with Aristotelian logic and metaphysics to the production of useful knowledge and the standards of intelligibility changed, the idea of *scientia* would be gradually abandoned. Syllogistic inference had been increasingly criticized as incapable of producing useful knowledge, and explanations that appealed to Aristotelian essences started to be perceived as empty or unintelligible. The increasing commitment to observation and experimental practices and an ensuing “culture of fact” replaced the conviction that in natural philosophy there is room only for universally and necessary true propositions, and the development and usefulness of mathematical practices shed doubt on syllogism as the only way through which demonstrative certainty could be achieved.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The ambiguity and heterogeneity of the modern term “science” are undeniable. Some put more emphasis on the instrumentality of potential technological output, some on the nature-controlling aspect, some on the universal laws, some on experimental foundations and empirical methodology, and others on the institutional settings involving laboratories, funding schemes, professionalization, and academies. None of these approaches is helpful in understanding what *scientia* meant in the period between 1350 and 1650. *Scientia* in the first part of this period referred to any body of certain theoretical knowledge which approached its subject (not necessarily nature) in a systematic way and relied on apodictic demonstration. Thus *scientia*, unlike today, involved theology as well, because it was demonstrable knowledge (Lindberg 1978, 1992).

What we understand by the term “science” today, that is, the systematic investigation of nature, would be better described in the Renaissance by the term *philosophia naturalis*, natural philosophy. Even this is not coextensive, however, with the present-day scope of science, because to the category of natural philosophy

“mathematical sciences” should also be added – a sometimes overlapping but sometimes separate category, which included arithmetic, geometry, and “mixed mathematics,” such as optics, astronomy, harmonics, and the science of weights (Lindberg and Shank 2003).

The term “scientia” is a long-standing heritage of Aristotelian logic and denotes an epistemic ideal pursued through several centuries. According to Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, knowledge that conforms to this ideal must consist of propositions that are *universally and necessarily true*. This necessity can be *demonstrated* through *syllogistic inferences* that proceed from premises containing the *cause* of the conclusion. This procedure leads to *certain knowledge* and *understanding* of the *necessary cause* of the phenomena and an *explanation* of why it is the way it is and cannot be otherwise. Being necessary and universal, this knowledge is focused on the *essential structure* of things, and through their essences it accounts not only for how they actually behave, but also for how they would behave in a variety of circumstances. Accordingly, knowledge or *scientia* consisted in a *systematic*, demonstrative presentation of why things behave the way they do, and not in the discovery of the causes from which demonstrations followed.

This ideal started to erode in the Renaissance period. Its various aspects had been challenged and alternative ideals of inquiry had been proposed. As the emphasis shifted from the demonstration of phenomena in accordance with Aristotelian logic and metaphysics to the production of useful knowledge and the standards of intelligibility changed, the idea of *scientia* would be gradually abandoned. Syllogistic inference had been increasingly criticized as incapable of producing useful knowledge, and explanations that appealed to Aristotelian essences started to be perceived as empty or unintelligible. The increasing commitment to observation and experimental practices and an ensuing “culture of fact” replaced the conviction that in natural philosophy there is room only for universally and necessary true propositions, and the development and usefulness of mathematical practices shed doubt on syllogism as the only way through which demonstrative certainty could be achieved.

Questioning various elements of the ideal naturally led to the emergence of new ideals of inquiry and knowledge. Towards the end of the period, competing ideals emerged that would prove to be especially influential for the centuries to come. An alternative ideal of inquiry was put forward by René Descartes, whose method of analysis and synthesis prescribed intuitively clear steps, replacing the Aristotelian standards of intelligibility. Francis Bacon's proposal for the advancement of learning focused on inductive practices such as various ways of collecting facts and their theoretical processing in order to produce useful and only intelligible knowledge. In several respects, Bacon's vision served as a source of justification for Royal Society apologists and as such it proved influential in forming the image of modern science.

By the end of the period, almost all crucial elements of the Aristotelian ideal had been effectively undermined, but the aspiration for certain and systematic knowledge persisted. In this vein, suggestions and rediscoveries from the preceding Renaissance period would be further refined and put to use by Isaac Newton, and many of his followers, who tried to infuse certainty into natural philosophy by deploying mathematical methods. Nevertheless, the limits of the applicability of mathematics repeatedly surfaced in various controversies in optics, chemistry, and life sciences, and forced even Newton to put constraints on the degree of certainty achievable in natural philosophy.

Any understanding of late medieval, renaissance, and early modern science depends greatly on whether we envisage a drastic rupture in the middle of this period, or rather a certain kind of continuity. The debate started a century ago, when the French physicist, philosopher, and historian of science Pierre Duhem (1861–1916) – who literally blew off the dust of medieval scientific codices – argued convincingly against the ruling nineteenth-century paradigm (exemplified by the influential William Whewell) that saw the medieval period as stationary and scientifically unprofitable. In his master work of ten volumes (*Le système du monde: Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic*) relying on

a large corpus of medieval manuscripts, Duhem documented that science was not a seventeenth-century invention. Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo, and the other early modern scientists, he argued, had intellectual precursors among the natural philosophers of fourteenth-century universities, particularly in Paris. For specific historical reasons – paradoxically as a result of the 1277 condemnations of Aristotelian principles by the Church (to be discussed below) – university masters were forced to seek non-Aristotelian ways of solving scientific problems. Their alternative ideas about the motion of the earth, the plurality of the worlds, the infinitely small and infinitely big quantities, and the void, thus paved the way for the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scientists to find anti-Aristotelian notions of space, time, and motion. Duhem's positive impact is undeniable even though his continuity thesis was far from being accepted by everyone, his enthusiasm to identify precursors of the modern science became a famous methodological mistake in the historiography of science, and he was also criticized for putting too much emphasis on French masters as compared to the British. Among his followers (usually challenging his more extreme claims), Lynn Thorndike, Charles Haskins, E. J. Dijksterhuis, Anneliese Maier, Marshall Clagett, and Alistair Crombie. All contributed with decisive monographs, critical editions, and translations to the history of science supporting some – usually more moderate – claim for the continuity. After Duhem, no historian could imagine that modern science was born on purely late antique grounds and that “the jump over the Middle Ages” would be a possible methodology to follow (Duhem 1913–1959; Lindberg and Westman 1990; Cohen 1994).

Still, advocates of the discontinuity thesis could argue that modern science was not a simple outgrowth of the medieval scientific achievement and that the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century marked a genuinely revolutionary period (to be called the “Scientific Revolution”). The Russian émigré Alexandre Koyré (1892–1964) wished to show that it was not the experimental or empirical nature of Galileo's and Newton's discoveries that made the seventeenth century a

revolutionary period but rather a shift in perspective, a change in the theoretical outlook on the world. As he phrased it: “founders of modern science (...) had to destroy one world and replace it by another.” That the revolution took place on a conceptual level was supported by the influential work of the historian and philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn, who argued in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* that a whole series of paradigm shifts took place in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century history of science (Koyré 1968; Kuhn 1962).

Today, most medievalists are moderate supporters of the continuity thesis. Both Edward Grant and David Lindberg reject that late medieval and renaissance science should be celebrated as anticipations of later developments; they do not see, however, any sharply definable moment when the revolutionary period would have started. As Lindberg puts it: “in order to demand respect for the medieval scientific achievement, we need not denigrate or diminish that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We need merely understand that the former shaped the latter and is therefore part of the ancestry of modern science” (Lindberg 1992, 368; Grant 1996).

As a consequence of the decisive impact of Aristotelian philosophy – and this is an often misunderstood issue – late medieval and renaissance science was predominantly theoretical and in many ways nonexperimental. Scientists sought theoretical knowledge for its own sake, that is, for making the world intelligible, and they did not focus on its instrumental aspects. Theoretical knowledge was categorically separated from any technological application and craftsmanship; its aim was not to produce better tools or a more efficient industry but to be reflected upon and to be disputed. Natural philosophy had a certain bookish, that is, textual character, and its content relied on a corpus of authoritative (Greek, Roman, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin) authors.

The medieval pupils of Aristotle accepted the methodological principle that logic preceded natural philosophy (demonstration preceded observation) and that the universal had priority over the particular (not the exceptions, but the naturally flowing usual processes and phenomena

constituted the subject of *scientia*). In the Aristotelian tradition, *ars* and *natura*, the artificial and the natural were believed to belong to two separate realms, the first not being informative about the second. In such a perspective, controlled and repeatable experiments could not obviously play the same role as they do in contemporary science. In addition, experience and experiments were not consistently distinguished in the Middle Ages, and curiosity – being a sin in the Christian framework – had a low reputation.

All this does not mean, however, that science was exclusively theoretical and lacked purposeful experimentation. Empirical observation, measuring, and to a certain extent experiments played an important role in medicine, astronomy, astrology, optics, and botany. Authors of natural philosophy often affirmed that a given claim was tried and tested (*probatum est; expertus est*), even though experiments had more a confirmational and illustrative, than a discovering, role. Alchemy, not being a university subject but available on the bookshelves of both medieval masters and members of religious orders, represented a serious challenge to the Aristotelian notion of science. With its interfering attitude into natural processes and its experimental ambitions, alchemy argued explicitly against the sharp *ars-natura* separation and against the generally accepted idea that artificial experiments (constraint motions) could not produce relevant knowledge in regard to natural phenomena (Lindberg 1978; Eamon 1994).

Various branches of natural philosophy were clearly distinguished in the texts (physics, optics, medicine, astronomy, astrology, natural history, science of motion, science of weights, geography, metallurgy, meteorology); this does not imply, however, that different types of professional scientists (specialists of biology, physicists, etc.) existed. Science (with the exception of the medical career and courtly astronomy and astrology) was not a separate profession. In the first part of the period under study, scientists were trained in universities, but one could not have a degree in a specific science, only in all of the liberal arts. Consequently, scientific facts, results, and argumentations were presented not only in treatises devoted to specific subbranches of science but

also in biblical commentaries, theological tracts, metaphysical, philosophical, logical, and other treatises (Lindberg and Shank 2003).

Late medieval scholastic science can be rightly characterized as the Latin reception and rearticulation of the Greek scientific heritage transferred and modified by Islamic civilization. This heritage (Aristotelian philosophy, Platonic cosmology, Ptolemaic astronomy and astrology, and the medicine of Galen) provided an elaborate account of the cosmos and how it should be investigated, and it thus gave a huge impetus to the evolution of Latin *scientia*. But – as the Aristotelian corpus contradicted in some important points the teachings of the Church, particularly in respect to the eternity of the world, the nature of the soul, and the determinism of the universe – the Christian rearticulation was not without conflicts. Although the hostility of some influential Church fathers, most notably, Tertullian, towards Greek philosophy and scientific tradition is undeniable, Augustine's (1958) handmaiden formula provided justification to the pursuit of philosophy and science. The idea that the classical scientific tradition could be seen as the handmaiden of religion and theology was further elaborated by Roger Bacon, Robert Grosseteste, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas (1967, 1987), who worked hard on rendering Aristotle compatible with religion. Thanks to these attempts at reconciliations, and also to the fact that the trainings, practices, and careers of theologians and scientists – as well as these very persons – were not always distinct, sometimes overlapped, and sometimes were even identical, and that all scholars were formed in both theology and science, classical science got successfully appropriated by the Church and was to a large extent Christianized (Grant 2001; Lindberg and Numbers 1986).

This was the notion and practice of science inherited by the renaissance era. In the course of the period under study, the characteristics above underwent serious modifications. The authority of Aristotle in the methodology of scientific endeavor, as well as the Aristotelian dichotomies (*ars-natura*, general-particular) organizing the content of science gradually subsided. Simultaneously, the variety of institutions, as well as the

number of the roles associated with scientific activity drastically increased, due to the differentiation of subdisciplines within science and the growing specialization and mobility of its practitioners. Instead of the restricted attitude towards the application of scientific theories that characterized the Middle Ages, more space was given to cooperation between science and crafts. Experience – never completely missing from the scientific practice – got new forms and new roles in scientific demonstration and confirmation. These changes led to the modern notion of science on the grounds of the heritage of the Middle Ages.

By the time Aristotelian understanding of what science is and what it is not, how it is supposed to be done, and what differentiations it encompasses (universal vs. particular, artificial vs. natural) was properly appropriated, first signs of the rupture with the tradition appeared. The 1277 anti-Aristotelian condemnations in the Paris University, so central to Duhem's precursor hypothesis, mark the beginning of the quest for new solutions. But the process was slow; the following 300 years can be described as a period of gradual alienation from the received tradition. There are many different theories about the causes. One is particularly relevant to Renaissance science, not because it is widely accepted but because of its inspiring nature. Frances Yates put forward the idea in a series of influential monographs in the 1960s and 1970s that modern science was not born on the grounds of late medieval scholastic science but rather as a result of the impact of the hermetic tradition. The heliocentric model, the intense use of mathematics, the idea that the scientist should interfere in natural processes and construct artificial experiments, and the new habit of gathering together in scientific societies and later in academies are all central characteristics of seventeenth-century science inherited from the philosophical-magical tradition based on the texts of the legendary Hermes Trismegistos and represented by Marsilio Ficino (1989), Cornelius Agrippa, John Dee, and other protagonists whose names hardly appeared in earlier histories of science. Although far from being accepted, Yates' theses rendered the neoplatonic, magical, and hermetic intellectual currents of the Renaissance an indispensable

topic in the summaries on early modern science, including Nicolaus Copernicus, Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, the national academies, and the new methodology (Yates 1968; Merkel and Debus 1998; Westman and McGuire 1977).

Innovative and Original Aspects

While there is a continuous debate on what exactly changed in the content of *scientia* during the Renaissance, there is a common agreement on how the scenes and roles of *scientia* were modified. “Scientists” in the late middle ages were all university professors or university-trained court intellectuals, usually – with the exception of medicine – trained in all scientific fields. While disciplines interpenetrated each other, the possible career paths, as well as the possible scenes of scientific activity, were very limited. This is probably the field where the early modern era brought the most serious modification: the range of roles, career options, and scenes of scientific activity dramatically broadened. Besides the university, the royal or princely court, and the monastery, during the Renaissance, the laboratory, the library, the academy, the botanical garden, the anatomy theater, and to a certain extent the piazza, the market, and the coffeehouse had also become possible scenes. Instead of multidisciplinary intellectuals and universal savants of the Medieval universities (such as Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, Jean Buridan, or Nicole Oresme), specialists of particular fields populated early modern science (like Niccolò Tartaglia in ballistics, Andrea Cesalpino in botanics, Conrad Gesner in zoology, and Georgius Agricola in mining and metallurgy). Genres of scientific literary production also changed (Lindberg 1978).

In the Renaissance period, there were many aspects of theoretical innovation that existed together with more traditional currents in the field of natural philosophy. Beyond doubt, one of the most provocative new insights concerned the status of mathematics. The vigorous revival of the Platonic and neopythagorean traditions in the fifteenth century, fueled by the stream of Greek manuscripts and scholars arriving in Italy after the

fall of Constantinople, brought with it the reappraisal of the studies of mathematics which was to develop into a powerful alternative to the scholastic logic in the centuries to follow. The humanist rediscovery of the Hellenistic mathematical texts (Archimedes, Pappus, and others), the commerce of previously unknown Greek manuscripts, the Latin and vernacular translations all contributed to the process of reshaping the map of the *scientiae* by reclaiming the high esteem and ancient pedigree of mathematics. Nevertheless, its eminent position in the hierarchy of the disciplines was anything but self-evident.

According to the 1563 *Oratio pro idea methodi*, a famous speech delivered by Petrus Catena (1501–1577) in Padua, the excellence of any discipline has to be assessed from three different points of view: its certainty, the nobility of its subject matter, and its usefulness. As regards mathematics, its deductive method based on definitions and axioms – self-evident propositions regarded as common knowledge (*koinai ennoiai*) – had served as the most rigorous model of certainty for all other sciences ever since its first systematic elaboration in the antiquity. This did not mean, however, that arithmetic or geometric arguments were supposed to lead up to physical conclusions. Traditionally minded peripatetic commentators maintained that mathematical abstractions failed to do full justice to the complexity of nature and stopped short of allowing for perfect demonstration in the Aristotelian sense of the word. The reason is that they did not provide causal explanations, a necessary condition that all bodies of knowledge were expected to meet when aspiring to the highest ranks of the sciences. (This is one of the reasons behind the rejection of Copernic’s heliocentric view in spite of its undeniable mathematical advantages in the description of the planetary system.)

A decisive step was made in Padua by some commentators who struggled for a thoroughgoing mathematical reading of Aristotle’s physics. These dialecticians insisted on the highest status of the *Mathesis* against their Aristotelian colleagues of strict obedience who maintained that scientific explanation must be based on demonstrations (i.e., on proofs accounting for the

phenomena through their natural causes). One of the best expositions of the new claim was the aforementioned inaugural speech held by Petrus Catena (1563). The same view is echoed in the famous preface to the first English translation of Euclid's *Elements* (1570), written by John Dee (1527–1608/1609). Exploring the respective values and the hierarchy of the *scientiae*, Dee gave prominence to mathematics over all physical disciplines not only for the utmost certainty produced by mathematical deductions but also for the metaphysical nature of its subject matter (the *Thynges Mathematicall* as he termed them). The theory of the middle status of mathematical objects represents an important shift in the conception of the physical world. A similar debate took place in the context of late scholasticism both in the Iberian peninsula and in Italy (where the issue loomed large in the writings of Christopher Clavius, a Jesuit professor of mathematics in the *Collegio Romano*, cf. Blum 2012, 117; Armogathe 2007, 58 sqq).

Another important challenge to the traditional view came from the new classification of certain studies known as middle sciences (*scientiae mediae*), a category that allowed for positioning a whole range of “mixed” studies between physics and mathematics (Blair 2007, 289–290). The association with mathematics endowed these disciplines (e.g., mechanics, ballistics, navigation) with a new prestige, in virtue of which the sharp difference between sciences and arts blurred and yielded the place to less rigorous demarcations. John Dee, for instance in the preface to Euclid, speaks indiscriminately of *Mathematicall sciences* and *Artes Mathematicall*.

In many respects, this mixture, composed of Pythagorean and empirical elements, set the stage for the new scientific outlook of the early modern age. It was typical of the work of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), who made an enormous impact on his contemporaries by his refined way of joining together the mathematical and the experimental aspects of the inquiry. On the one hand, he famously compared Nature to a book whose characters were written in the language of mathematics (Galileo 1623), but on the other hand, he equally stressed that the

content of the book cannot be grasped without empirical observations. The ensuing amalgam of the “reasoned facts” was emphatically not meant to facilitate either a priori speculations or the naive empirical reliance on the deliverances of the senses. Viewed against this background, Galileo's frequent appeal to the observation of the facts, to which preference is always to be given over the idle speculation, might be misleading. Some of the problems involved were reflected in the worries that Galileo's critics expressed about the intrusive nature of his observations and the active role played by the experimenter who, not content with being relegated to the position of a passive recipient, manipulated either the situation observed (as in the case of the free fall of bodies) or the process of gathering information (as in the case of celestial observations based on artificial instruments – telescopes, optical lenses, mirrors etc.).

A similar issue concerned Galileo's ignoring the traditional division of the universe into two different physical realms, the sublunar system (dealing with finite and mostly linear motions) and a supralunar one (in which the relevant motions are circular). Galileo's crossing this line of demarcation required to give up the ideal of the direct empirical stance attached to the point of view of the observer in favor of an indirect approach in which the meaning of the “facts” must be spelled out in terms of mathematics. The importance of this move cannot be over-emphasized. It gave rise to a new conception of the philosophy of nature as a discipline that is not supposed to provide the description of a *unitary cosmos* as it unfolds before our senses but consists of the search for *unitary laws* that obtain everywhere in the universe. Thus, the emphasis shifted from more or less spontaneous observations that should have given access to the nature of things, to experiments documenting merely *phenomena*, or appearances that require further interpretation and rational reconstruction if their latent structure and the governing laws are to be spelled out.

Galileo was also innovative in two further aspects. First, he resolutely maintained that the observation of nature cannot possibly interfere

with religious tenets since these two fields of interest are engaged in different projects (McMullin 1997). As he stated succinctly in a letter to the grand duchess Christina: what the Bible teaches us is not how the heavens go but how to go to heaven (Galileo 1615). This strategy, albeit proved unsuccessful in his personal life (cf. with his trial), became one of the standard positions in the debates of the centuries to follow.

Another innovative aspect of his thought worth mentioning is the way in which he captured the imagination of his age by his exceptional ability to advertise his achievements. His *Sidereus Nuncius* and the *Letter on Sunspots* (Galileo 1610, 1612), texts that can be regarded as the first scientific bestsellers of the modern era, are masterpieces of succinct but powerful exposition of facts coupled with the visual rhetoric of the images. Galileo was very talented in making credit to his views by reaching a wider audience through his books and extended correspondence by selling or presenting self-made optical devices, making use of the existing network of scientists all across Europe, and finding princely patronage (Biagioli 2006).

The latter point draws attention to a common phenomenon since practical and mathematical approach championed in one way or another by many of Galileo's contemporaries and predecessors was given a lift in prestige from the sixteenth century onward by its technical and military applicability (Devries 2006). It was especially through this practical aspect that middle sciences gained the highest esteem among the "military gentlemen" and enjoyed generous princely patronage throughout the early modern age. In fact, they were perceived as part and parcel of a larger group of arts requiring mathematical skills in a wide range of technical applications (cartography, military engineering, painting, gardening, architecture, and so on).

Nevertheless, the joining of mathematics with other subjects was far from being uncontroversial in the epoch. One of the most popular approaches to *scientiae*, elaborated by the Huguenot scholar Petrus Ramus (1515–1572) as part of his general reform of the higher education, sought to set the boundaries of each discipline in such a way that precluded any blending of the terms used in one or

another branch of the sciences. Because he regarded philosophy as an aggregate of well-defined and autonomous disciplines, each based on its distinctive axioms and theorems and allowing for no overlap, he was against trespassing the boundaries of the mathematical and physical studies, a move inherent in Copernic's results. He condemned the mathematical physics of the *De revolutionibus* as a clear instance of what he regarded as a *metabasis* in the Aristotelian sense. With this theory in mind, Ramus's aim was more to arrange and systemize the scientific propositions (running in his schemes from more general to more specific ones) for educational purposes than to provide a method of invention enhancing scientific advance. Though in this sense he did not engage in the epistemology of the sciences, he had an enormous impact on subsequent generations of scholars by his insistence on the right method. His pedagogical concerns complied with the need of the modern state demanding well-educated officers, businessmen and craftsmen, and his pragmatic approach gave a new impetus to the practical side of the sciences.

One of Ramus's methodological devices was the extensive use of the analytic and synthetic ways of reasoning characteristic of the Renaissance period. The combination of these methods stems from a major problem well known from the late antiquity onwards, the discrepancy between the theory of demonstration as can be found in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and the scientific practice exposed in his physical and biological tracts. Nowadays, this problem settled either by denying that the syllogistic method (put forward in the second *Analytics*) was meant to provide a true theory of demonstration, or by minimizing the differences between the two approaches. The same issue gave rise to competing methodologies in the Renaissance, the most important of which is known as *demonstrative regress*. This theory of demonstration tried to combine the two separate components of the Aristotelian method into one coherent scheme. The first component of the amalgam was the *demonstration of fact*, an *a posteriori* demonstration that commentators opposed to the second step that called a *demonstration of reasoned fact*. Whereas the first

provided an argument without giving the proximate cause of the phenomena concerned, the latter referred to their causes in the middle term of a syllogism. Put together, they provided a complex circle of demonstration whose first step was an inductive proof which, on the basis of empirical observations, established the causes of an effect. This step was called *resolution* (or analysis) since the initial state of affairs was decomposed into its simplest constituents thereby. The second step of the reasoning takes the opposite direction; it consists of a syllogistic reasoning supposed to deduce the effects from which the causes had been spelled out in the first phase. This second step is called *compositio* (composition or synthesis) since it allows for the reconstitution of the phenomena via their causes. What prevents this double method from degenerating into a vicious circle is the logical necessity inherent in the process of deduction. While in the first place the causes are established by mere observation, the second step is preceded by a meditation on the nature of the causes detected (this was called *consideratio* or *negotiatio*), so that the subsequent deduction does not merely produce the effects but it shows that they are logically connected to or contained in the nature of the causes.

A further aspect of novelty is closely connected to this point. As a result of the geographical discoveries and the abundant flow of information made available by the printing press, this period was especially marked by a new passion for the empirical investigation into the secrets of nature (Shapiro 2000). The new appetite for the rarities; the practice of anatomical dissection, collecting, and dressing up inventories; and founding museums, cabinets of curiosity, and *wunderkammers* all reflected the desire to capture the cosmic harmony reflected in the particular beings (specimens of herbs, minerals, animals, etc.). This interest contributed to the effort of the methodical arrangement of the material in combinatorial schemes, diagrams, or in the form of universal encyclopedias.

This feature of the Renaissance science is particularly marked in the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), who – in sharp contrast with Descartes, Malebranche, and other

Cartesians – expressed a clear preference for the formal criteria of knowledge over the role of the intuition in the quest of certainty. Leibniz's life-long preoccupation with the mathematical and experimental facets of the new natural philosophy along with his constant appeal to combinatorial method and universal harmony shows that no sharp dividing line existed between Renaissance and early modern scientific concerns.

His project of the science was based on the dream of a “universal language.” In accordance with the efforts of Athanasius Kircher, George Dalgarno, John Wilkins, and others, he attempted to set up a comprehensive vocabulary whose well-defined terms ruled out all ambiguity inherent in the natural languages. Inspired partly by Ramon Lull's *Ars magna* and partly by Thomas Hobbes' view that true reasoning is nothing else but a calculation, Leibniz assumed that through the systematic recombination of the symbols attached to the terms of the universal language, reliable knowledge can be achieved (Leibniz 1666). He insisted that in this systematic way, one can pursue both theoretical and practical goals. On the theoretical level, the method promised an *ars inveniendi*, a practical way of acquiring new pieces of knowledge. Since the primitive terms – like the letters of an alphabet – were conceived to refer to the elements of the human thought, their combination according to logically correct rules provided a means to elicit the consequences implicit therein (Buzon 1998, 619–620). This gave rise to the Leibnizian concept of “blind thought,” a process of mechanical reasoning (something that even the early modern calculating machines were supposed to realize), unaccompanied by attention and consciousness.

On the level of practicalities, the ideal of the *Mathesis Universalis* went hand in hand with an “art of memory,” and a project of educational reform, both based on the methods, arrangement, and processing of symbols much in the same way as a calculating machine can manipulate them. The whole effort resulted in an ambitious political program aiming at social, religious, and political peace warranted by a universal jurisprudence whose task was to harmonize different point of views and opposing interests. Influenced by some

scientists of millenarist leaning who, in one way or another, were associated with the reformed university of Herborn (Alsted, Bisterfeld, Comenius, and other “Herborn encyclopedists”), Leibniz believed that the proponents of the various philosophical and religious groups, engaged in fierce debate throughout the history, all glimpsed the same truth which, in its rich totality, could only be comprised in encyclopedias.

Nevertheless Leibniz’s preoccupation with the formal aspects of knowledge was only one of the possible ways of arranging the huge amount of information emerging in the various fields of inquiry. Another powerful method was that of Francis Bacon (1561–1626), who at the beginning of the seventeenth century initiated a full-scale revision of the Aristotelian ideal of knowledge. He proposed a new classification of knowledge with an intention to turn natural philosophy from a theoretical enterprise into a productive one whose chief virtue is not so much intelligibility, but instrumentality. In order to do so, Bacon stepped outside the framework of Aristotelian division of knowledge and its emphasis on metaphysics as its foundation that provided the unifying categories of natural philosophy and thereby blocked the way of methodological innovation. Particularly, the Aristotelian requirement of deriving explanations from “essences” posed a constraint that made irrelevant the study of things in contrived situations.

With his new division of knowledge, Bacon gave a new orientation of inquiry in which emphasis on the demonstration of phenomena gave way to discovery as the central focus of knowledge production. In Bacon’s division, knowledge of nature is divided into natural history and natural philosophy. He conceived natural history as a descriptive enterprise aiming at collecting and organizing observations of phenomena, and natural philosophy as an explanatory enterprise aiming at distilling the principles underlying phenomena so that they could be manipulated for the benefit of mankind. In the context of natural history marvelous, preternatural and contrived experiences gained a significance that could not be accommodated in *scientia*, because only the normal course of behavior can be demonstrated from

essences – abnormal phenomena or experimental findings has nothing to do with the essence of things as they arise from contingent circumstances. Bacon’s “experimental natural history” was conceived as producing situations that would not exist in nature without human intervention, that is, it increasingly meant an artificial step in knowledge production. On these grounds, natural philosophy was liberated from the constraints the ideal of *scientia* had placed upon it and thus opened up the possibility of transforming natural philosophy into the instrumentally useful enterprise that Bacon envisaged.

Studying and accounting for the natural as well as unnatural behavior of things is at the heart of Baconian natural philosophy as this gives the key to transforming nature to our benefit – an aim that again alien to the Aristotelian ideal that seeks to provide contemplative understanding by demonstration. Correspondingly, inductive inference replaces demonstration in the Baconian ideal: the “ways of true and good induction . . . can help the frail and crippled faculty of human intellect towards the sciences” (Bacon 1609, 4/5). Far from being a never-ending enterprise, fact collecting for Bacon is “the only enterprise that allows us to proceed with certainty” (Bacon 1609, 6/7).

And although the quest for certainty remains very much in the focus of sixteenth-century epistemic ideal, for Bacon this certainty did not arise from the mathematical treatment of facts collected. Mathematics for him served primarily educational purposes through strengthening mental capacities, and in *De Augmentis* he explicitly warns against mathematics taking over natural philosophy and confines it to an auxiliary role.

Though providing an abundant source of inspiration, Renaissance scholarship also bequeathed its latent tensions to the subsequent generations, and one fissure, becoming more and more palpable throughout the sixteenth century, concerned the mathematical and the empirical components of the amalgam that composed the new natural philosophy. These elements gave rise to different epistemologies depending on the emphasis scholars put on one or the other of part of the mixture. According to Agostino Nifo

(1473–1538/1545), the knowledge of the causes in the explanation of the natural effects through methodic resolution (*via resolutiva*) is always conjectural and, for this reason, the subsequent deduction of further effects (*via compositiva*) counts as a demonstration only in a very limited and improper sense. Claiming that the whole process is based on probable conjectures, Nifo's approach underscores the lower status of the philosophy of nature which, on this interpretation, cannot attain the highest level of mathematical certainty. Hence, Nifo insists that "the science concerning nature is not science absolutely as is mathematical science, but is science *propter quid*, because the discovery of the cause, which is obtained through conjectural syllogism, constitutes the reason for the effect" (Jardine 1988, 689). By some scholars, Nifo's view has been alluded to as one of the first expressions of a moderate skepticism which, according to the thesis of Richard Popkin, was on its way to evolving into one of the standard epistemological positions of the seventeenth century (Popkin 2003). In Jacopo Zabarella (1533–1589), we find an opposite approach to the problem. He did not regard induction as an inferential method necessary for gathering scientific knowledge, rather the role he assigns to it is just to produce images that dispose of the intellect to receive the *universal* forms produced in the human mind by a transcendent active intellect. Demonstrations, Zabarella insists, rely on transcendent principles.

Descartes (1596–1650), though in his thought the role of the active intellect is replaced by innate ideas, would take the same stand some fifty years later. Descartes in his *Principles of Philosophy* (1644) presented an influential vision of the system of sciences as a tree, the branches of which grow out of the trunk of metaphysics. Descartes's original vision of method that underpinned this unity prescribed analysis into intuitively clear and infallibly known metaphysical principles, the world's basic constituents, "simple natures" whose knowledge is innate and from which deductive knowledge in physics and other fields of knowledge is attainable.

The Cartesian ideal of knowledge diverges in several respects from the Aristotelian ideal while

preserving some of its characteristics. Descartes was still devoted to the ideal of *scientia* insofar as far as the aspiration to certainty is concerned. This certainty, however, was not supposed to be reached through demonstration by syllogistic inference that Descartes severely criticized as a useless logical instrument for discovery. Instead, he advocated a method of analysis and synthesis, that is, by breaking down complex questions into simple ones to which intuitively clear and distinct answers can be given and then proceed from these intuitive answers to answering complex questions. The demonstrativity of this process is preserved by intuitive insight: each step in the process follows intuitively from the previous one, and the reliability of this process is not due to the rule of syllogistic logic but the benevolence of God. God's benevolence entails that he does not intend to deceive, and it guarantees the reliable functioning of our faculties in the process of *cogitatio*.

The Cartesian ideal also diverges from the classical in that it does not consist exclusively of universal and necessary truths. A robust system of metaphysical knowledge is built upon Descartes's *cogito*, "I think therefore I am." So it is part of a systematic body of knowledge (i.e., Cartesian metaphysics); it is necessary and its certainty cannot be doubted. However, it is a singular proposition and as such it cannot meet the standards of Aristotelian *scientia*. A further complication arises for necessity as in Descartes necessary truths depend on divine will, so strictly speaking they are not necessary. This illustrates again the crucial role God plays in the Cartesian ideal of knowledge, and this gives a further distinctive feature if compared to the Aristotelian ideal.

God also plays a different and increasingly important role in the period. Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century vindicated philosophy as a remedy from the unfortunate consequences of the fall, and this vindication had remained valid for many even in the eighteenth century. Besides, a further vindication of natural philosophy had become a commonplace by the end of the Renaissance period. As several humanist works on anatomy and nature, or for example as Melancthon's program for education and Bacon's vision for

knowledge production make it clear, knowledge of God emerged as an increasingly important aim of inquiry natural theology, or physicotheology as it is sometimes called, it was unquestionably an important part of natural inquiry, and its significance would be preserved and even increased in the century to come. The need for a discipline that aimed at an understanding of God through the study of his creation arose from the widespread conviction that the world is the product of God's handwork. As such, God's intentions, attributes, and purposes were naturally taken to be reflected, to some significant degree, not only in the Bible but in his creation as well: God had written two books to be studied by different means, that is, the Bible and the "Book of Nature" (see Shapin 1996). Being the two books ascribed to the authorship of God, knowledge about the world perceived as God's creation had to be reconciled with knowledge contained in Holy Scripture perceived as God's word. In this enterprise, the resources of natural philosophy and theology had to be combined so as to reach a joint cognitive purpose: a Christian understanding of the world.

Impact and Legacy

Much of the further transformation of *scientia* into "science" as we know it today has taken place under the aegis of The Royal Society, founded in 1660, and within the framework of what its apologists labeled as "experimental natural philosophy." The knowledge making practices associated with this label had been vindicated by a Baconian ideology focusing on producing beneficial knowledge and making the world intelligible through the collection of empirical and the production of experimental facts.

With the Baconian ideology, the Royal Society also inherited the aspiration to understand the world as God's creation. This orientation of early modern natural philosophy is one of the most contested issues that arise concerning the continuity of natural philosophy and modern science. As Stephen Gaukroger points out, Royal Society apologists like Robert Boyle and Thomas Sprat "were talking of natural philosophy in terms of a

religious office," and natural philosophy was taken as a non-partisan way – that is, one free of sectarian confessional issues – of engaging religious questions of divine nature and purpose (Gaukroger 2010, 30). Andrew Cunningham (1991), in a similar vein, sees the role of natural theology in early modern natural inquiry as so central that on this basis he denies the continuity of natural philosophy and modern science. Natural philosophy is about God even when its practitioners are not talking about him, a feature entirely uncharacteristic of modern science: "no-one ever undertook the practice of natural philosophy without having God in mind, and knowing that the study of God and God's creation – in a way different from that pursued by theology – was the point of the whole exercise." And even if John Henry's verdict in the debate surrounding Cunningham's thesis may very well be true, namely, that "[n]atural philosophers, after all, were not theologians, and would have seen it as a betrayal of their natural philosophical principles to invoke God's direct intervention in their explanations" (Henry 2009, 110n65), the conviction that natural philosophers are studying God's creation provided the basic ideological framework of early modern science: this was a background presupposition against which significance of the enterprise was perceived and the ultimate meaning to its findings was ascribed. This ideology of knowledge was not superadded to the works of knowledge production: it was an intimate and unavoidable part of the framework of intelligibility and not external to knowledge claims themselves (Shapin 1981).

Behind the curtains of this ideology, the actual practices of knowledge production had been focused on inductive methods that could only yield probable, but not certain and demonstrative, knowledge by the standards of *scientia*. Such prominent figures as Robert Hooke and Robert Boyle deemed both syllogism and mathematics unsuitable to introduce demonstrative certainty into experimental philosophy, whose aspirations would thus be constrained to the realm of probabilities and not certainties. But this seemed less and less a shortcoming to many naturalists of the time: as the received Baconian ideology of inquiry

emphasized the value of instrumental knowledge, the cognitive merit of probabilities also increased as they promised potential, even if as yet unforeseeable, utility. So, even if probabilities cannot meet the standards the ideal of *scientia* set for the products of inquiry, their cognitive benefits are increasingly admitted.

The ideal of *scientia* is still lurking behind this process, as knowledge claims are typically evaluated against the background it defines. John Locke in his influential *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* distinguishes three kinds of knowledge: “intuitive,” “demonstrative,” and “sensitive.” The first two kinds are different only in degree, as demonstration consists of a series of intuitive steps in reasoning as in mathematics. Sensitive knowledge concerns “the particular existence of finite Beings” (Locke 1690, 4.2.14) and as such it is different in kind because it is incapable of certainty. As such, sensitive knowledge is sufficient for practical purposes, “for the use of Life,” but it is not sufficient for a “perfect, clear, comprehensive Knowledge of things free from all doubt and scruple” (Locke 1690, 4.11.8). Accordingly, the knowledge derived from experimental philosophy is founded on sensitive knowledge and as such it can only be probable. But this is not a shortcoming that should prevent us from conducting inquiry on this ground: in the *Essay* Locke himself admittedly followed a Baconian “historical, plain method” (Locke 1690, 1.1.2) in producing what is in effect a natural history of human understanding: a description and classification of various cognitive capacities.

Many early Royal Society apologists thought that mathematical demonstration can yield certainty, but they saw its sphere limited. Trust in what mathematics can achieve increased with the publication of Newton’s *Principia* (1687) with its project of introducing certainty into experimental natural philosophy through mathematical principles. As Newton claims in his early papers, as long as phenomena are treated by mathematical reasoning, the science of them is mathematical as well, and consequently, it can reach the same degree of demonstrative certainty as mathematics. Initially, many Newtonians, including John Keill,

John Friend, and Archibald Pitcairn, adopted this mathematical outlook on various phenomena and attempted to provide mathematical theories of phenomena in chemistry and physiology. Several decades later, however, as a result of the ensuing controversy with Anthony Lucas and Robert Hooke concerning the degree of certainty to be ascribed to such reasoning, Newton’s (1704) commitment would soften when he claimed in Query 31 of the *Opticks* that “arguing from Experiments and Observations by Induction be no Demonstration of general Conclusions; yet it is the best way of arguing which the Nature of Things admits of, and may be looked upon as so much the stronger, by how much the Induction is more general.”

Unlike the strong tendencies to mathematize nature, the emphasis Newton placed on the significance of experiment never diminished. It is Newton’s enduring aspiration to insulate experimental philosophy from metaphysical challenges, no matter if they come from Aristotelian, Cartesian, or whatever denomination. A chief epistemic commitment he repeatedly made clear is that experimental findings should not be exposed to other than experimental criticism.

The centrality of experimental practices in knowledge production led to a revision of cognitive ideals in natural inquiry. Instead of certainty and demonstrativity, a probabilistic and fallible conception of natural philosophy started to take shape. This is reflected in the division of knowledge that David Hume (1739/1740, 1.3.11.2) suggests. Hume’s division is tripartite just as Locke’s from some 50 years earlier, but it is divided differently into “demonstration,” “proof,” and “probability” and seems to be in concert with Newton’s use of “demonstrations” and “proof” (see Stein 1990). Demonstration is the field of a priori reasoning, i.e., paradigmatically of mathematics. Proofs and probabilities fall into the category that Locke labeled as the field of “sensitive” knowledge, but proofs, albeit fallible in principle, come close to certainty because they are founded on uniform experience.

According to Hume’s division, natural philosophy can aspire to a degree of certainty that falls short of being demonstrative, but still certain enough to be unanimously reliable and

instrumentally useful. These features are easily discernible in the self-image of modern science that emerged gradually as a result of putting forward, and putting into use, alternative conceptions and practices of knowledge production. This has been a long process, and its several crucial steps have been taken in the Renaissance period that, as a consequence, also witnessed the demise of the ideal of *scientia*.

Cross-References

- [Empire, Renaissance](#)
- [Elements, Renaissance Theory of Natural](#)

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Scientific Academies in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The first Renaissance academies developed around the middle of the fifteenth century and had a primarily encyclopedic character. The main trait of the knowledge cultivated in their first phase was the revival of the classical culture. On the one hand, they fostered a renewed interest especially in Platonic philosophy, and on the other hand, they cultivated the dream of a somewhat all-embracing knowledge.

Vernacular literature, liberal arts, music, mathematics, and the study of nature were all parts, within the fifteenth to sixteenth-century academies, of a wider landscape of interests.

It is exactly this tension and strife towards a unifying and organic picture of knowledge that threatens any attempt at formulating a classification of themes and contents that were addressed by the first renaissance academies.

The question of the scientific academy in the Renaissance should thus be posed and defined considering on the one hand the relation with the wider academic phenomenology and on the other hand with the birth and rise of the “new science,” in particular when it comes to the very process that science underwent in order to be autonomous from an organic and homogeneous view of knowledge, a view that was exactly the hallmark of that model in which the academies were born.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The expression “scientific academies” traditionally refers to those state-supported learned societies that, from the second half of the seventeenth century, carried out collective, experimental research and were regulated by a system of

norms or by a formal charter. The emergence of academies such as the *Royal Society* in London (1660), the *Académie Royale des Sciences* in Paris (1666), or the *Kurfürstlich Brandenburgische Societät der Wissenschaften* in Berlin (1700) is closely connected with a progressive specialization of the different types of learning that was largely foreign to the Renaissance conceptions of knowledge. And yet, it is precisely during the Renaissance that the Academy model developed and spread.

Starting especially with the groups that originated c. 1440 around renowned humanists such as Ottaviano Rinuccini and Marsilio Ficino (► [Ficino, Marsilio](#)) in Florence or Pomponio Leto and Cardinal Bessarione (► [Bessarion, Cardinal](#)) in Rome, hundreds of various types of academies flourished and thrived throughout the Renaissance (► [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)). Many such learned societies entertained close connections with the courts, with their dynamics, and with the unstable political and dynastic lives of the *signorie*; and all of them depended on the initiative and the patronage of a prince or an aristocrat to survive. For this reason, academies were not only numerous, but also quite ephemeral, often lacking a structure and a defined program.

An almost exclusively Italian phenomenon, Renaissance academies are de facto a product of humanistic culture, of aristocratic patronage, and of the polycentric cultural life of the time in Italy.

The first scientific academies were born in this context and represent, at least at the beginning, a variation on the humanistic academies of the Renaissance.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In his monumental *Storia delle accademie d'Italia* (5 vol., Bologna, 1926–1930), Michele Maylender identifies the Accademia dei Fenici, founded in Milan around 1550, as the first “scientific” academy. The activities carried out by this academy are documented, according to Maylender, in Book I of Bartolomeo Taegio’ *Il Liceo* (Milan, 1571), which discusses “the order

of the Academies and the Nobility.” The encyclopedic program described by Taegio is structured around ten monthly meetings or congregations, each devoted to a different subject and entirely carried out in the vernacular: dialectic, rhetoric, poetry, natural philosophy, metaphysics, arithmetic, moral philosophy, household and state government, and reading of academic works. Although it is difficult to determine whether Taegio is actually referring to the Accademia dei Fenici, the program of activities described in *Il Liceo* appears to provide a faithful picture of the relationships between science and the academies around the mid-sixteenth century.

Signs of interests that nowadays would be defined as scientific are also found in other “mixed” academies of the time, such as the Accademia degli Infiammati in Padua (1540–1550), the Accademia Fiorentina (Florence, 1541), the Accademia degli Affidati in Pavia (1562), or the Accademia degli Unanimi in Salò (1564). Among their activities are topics connected with arithmetic, cosmography, geometry, or philosophy of nature, which in turn entertain an organic relationship with more classical forms of learning. Only from the mid-sixteenth century do academies begin to focus on specific disciplines and thus evolve into increasingly more formalized and structured institutions. This process began with literary academies and later developed among scientific institutions – not only were the latter significantly fewer than the former but at least until the end of the seventeenth century they often lacked an organized structure and a program.

The academies devoted to figurative arts and drawing are in this respect an exception. Besides being considered among the most specialized scientific academies, they were also some of the most regulated and institutionalized ones. The year 1563 marked the foundation of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Florence, under the influence of Giorgio Vasari (► [Vasari, Giorgio](#)). The academy’s main purpose was to foster collaboration between artists, and from 1569 it also officially included mathematics, anatomy, and perspective among its fields of study.

The belief that mathematical sciences played a fundamental role in the new political and military

organization of the state brought Cosimo I to create one of the first academies endowed with a legal status and financed by the state. Like the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* – founded in France in 1648 and reorganized by Louis XIV in 1661 – the Florentine academy of drawing had a formal charter, was directly supported by the king and, more importantly, included teaching among its activities, something that academies both in the Renaissance and in modern times did not normally offer.

On the other hand, information regarding the academies devoted to the study of nature is very scarce at least until the Lincean experience.

In the proem to his *Secreti nuovi di maravigliosa virtù* (Venice 1567), Girolamo Ruscelli (c. 1518–1566) describes an academy “kept and called *secreta*” that he helped to establish in Naples. With the exception of his statements, there is no evidence that the *Accademia Segreta* ever existed but it was probably founded in the early 1640s when Ruscelli moved to Naples. According to Ruscelli, the aim of the academy was “to make the most diligent inquiries and, as it were, a true anatomy of the things and operations of Nature itself.” Even though the activity of Ruscelli’s group was meant to be kept secret, the members devoted themselves “equally to the benefit of the world in general and in particular, by reducing to certainty and true knowledge so many most useful and important secrets of all kinds for all sorts of people, be they rich or poor, learned or ignorant, male or female, young or old.” The *Secreti nuovi* contains 1,245 recipes that Ruscelli claims were only a fraction of the “experiments” carried out within the academy. Most of them dealt with medicine, the others ranged from alchemical processes and cosmetics to various technical recipes.

A similar academy, the *Accademia Secretorum Naturae*, was founded by Giambattista della Porta (► [della Porta, Giambattista](#)) at his home in Naples in the 1650s. As William Eamon pointed out, “the nearly identical names of the two academies, their proximity in time and place, and the similarity of their experimental methodologies, was surely no coincidence.” Della Porta only mentioned the academy in the preface to the second edition of his *Magia Naturalis* (1589), which

largely consists of a vast collection of recipes and experiments ranging from medicine to optics, from crafts to distillation. At least two artisans, the distiller Giambattista Melfi and the herbalist Flavio Giordano, were involved in the academy’s activity. Nevertheless, not much is known about the *Accademia dei Segreti*, probably also because of Della Porta’s concerns with secrecy.

Mainly inspired by Della Porta’s work as well as by Paracelsian philosophy and by the encyclopedism of the late sixteenth century is the foundation of what is probably the most renowned scientific academy of the Renaissance, the *Accademia dei Lincei*. The academy was created in Rome in 1603 by the young nobleman Federico Cesi (► [Cesi, Federico Angelo](#)) with the help of the mathematician Francesco Stelluti, of the Dutch physician Johannes van Heeck, and of his relative Count Anastasio De Filiis, a scholar in mechanics. Not unlike many other Renaissance academies, the Linceans had an emblem (the lynx) and a motto (*Sagacius ista*). A set of rules similar to those found in religious or chivalric orders defined the selection criteria for new applicants as well as the ideals and lifestyle to which the members would have to conform.

The *Lynceographum* (2001), which Cesi began in 1605, regulated every aspect of the Linceans’ life and called for a radical reform of learning and customs. The academy was initially designed as a sort of lay confraternity in which scientific activity was driven by religious enthusiasm. Every work published by one of its members had to display the title “Lincean” next to the name of the author; moreover, members were forbidden to belong to any religious order and to discuss matters connected with politics or religion. Cesi put forward a model of knowledge in which a disinterested form of knowledge contrasted with the “bookish” learning of the schools as well as with courtly worldliness. In his project, explained in the *Discorso del natural desiderio di sapere* (1616), the study of nature is articulated into observation and experimentation. However, this emphasis on the value of direct observation of nature and of experimental practice, which became even stronger in 1611 when Galileo joined the academy, was often relegated to a theoretical level rather than being adopted as a real

research model. The academy was in fact more an ideal community of scholars than a place for regular meetings. The exchange between members mainly took place in written form, through their correspondence, and the irregular academic sessions took mostly the shape of “lectures,” presentations of new works, discussions, and speeches. The Lincean experience, which ceased to exist after Cesi’s death in 1630, was therefore essentially another expression of the traditional communicative patterns of the Renaissance academic model.

Impact and Legacy

Throughout the Renaissance, observation and experiments remained mostly a moment of private investigation that did not belong to the academic sessions in which the results were presented and discussed. It is only around the second half of the seventeenth century that academies finally leave behind the project of an all-encompassing type of learning and the model of erudite conversation and become a place in which experiments are designed, refined, and then communicated through the means of a printed publication.

The Accademia del Cimento, founded in Florence in 1657 by Prince Leopoldo de Medici, is probably the first academy of this kind, though it lacked a formal charter and official rules. The experience of this academy, followed by the long-lasting and more renowned ones of the Royal Society in London (1662) and of the Académie Royale des Sciences in Paris (1666), opened a new institutional phase. Academies thus ceased to be an almost exclusively Italian phenomenon and gradually became a locus of production and dissemination of technical and scientific learning, thus also opening up to new knowledge challenges and institutional forms.

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Scotism

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Abstract

Scotism is a current or school of thought which is linked to the positions that the Franciscan John Duns Scotus taught in Paris. Unlike Thomism, Scotism was not a school in the strict sense (at least not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries); instead, the term was commonly used to describe philosophers who adopted Scotus's way of doing philosophy and theology. Scotism did not play an important role in Renaissance philosophy, with one exception: the University of Padua, which continued the medieval tradition of Scotism. Nevertheless, Scotus and Scotist positions were well regarded and made use of from time to time in Renaissance philosophy.

Although Scotism, unlike Thomism, was mainly characterized by its methodological approach to philosophy and theology, some key doctrines can nevertheless be identified: above all, Scotus's formal distinction and his theory of grades (on both of which, see below). These doctrines, in particular, have been used over many centuries to identify Scotism, Scotist positions, and Scotists. There are, however, other doctrines which also characterized Scotist thought, such as the theory of the univocity of being, the concept of *haecceitas* (by which something is individualized), and the form of corporeity.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

"Scotism" as a name or attribute seems to have been coined in the Baroque era; yet as early as the 1320s, one finds authors describing themselves as *scotiçantes* (Knebel 1995). Scotists were also called *formalistae*, which indicates that Scotism was more about applying a specific method than about following Scotus or the set of doctrines associated with him. It is, therefore, correct to say that, in Scotism, it was the method that produced the school, whereas, in Thomism, it was the school that produced the method (Hoenen 1998).

Although it is common to speak of "schools" at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries – for instance, the "early Thomist" or "early Scotistic school" – these loose groupings disappeared after the 1330s (Hoenen 1997). They reappeared, however, in the fifteenth century, but in a new context, that of universities. The new lines of division were "via antiqua vs. moderna," "reales vs. nominales," etc. Interestingly, Scotism – together with Thomism and Albertism – belonged to the "old way" (*via antiqua*) and the realistic approach (*reales*), while the "new way" or nominalist approach was closely linked to another Franciscan, William of Ockham.

Unlike Thomism, Scotism was rarely institutionalized, but instead operated as a "sheer conceptual force" (Hoenen 1998, p. 199). What this means is that individual authors, whether or not they were Franciscans, defended Scotus's positions rather than following the doctrine of a particular order. In fifteenth-century Cologne, for instance, Scotism, unlike Thomism and Albertism, was not institutionally grounded. A difficulty for the Franciscan Order was that it had two "stars": Scotus and Ockham. It was only later, when the order attempted to downplay Ockham's importance (as a corrupter of "synthetic scholasticism"), that it explicitly promoted Duns Scotus (Roest 2000, p. 185).

A defining feature of Scotists was their method (*processus*), which was set out in its so-called *regulae*. A table attached to a later edition of Francis of Mayronnes's commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard lists 139 rules which Scotists followed (Hoenen 1998, p. 207).

In the sixteenth and especially the seventeenth century, Scotism finally became an influential force. Many books (commentaries on Aristotelian works, as well as courses in theology and philosophy) *ad mentem Scoti* were printed (Schmitt 1978, p. 306; Edwards 2009). Scotist course textbooks such as those of Bartholomew Mastrius (de Meldola) († 1673) and Bonaventura Belluti († 1678) (Mastrius and Belluti 1727), and Theodor Smising († 1626) (Smising 1627) were published, and primers of Scotus's philosophy and theology also appeared in early printed editions: for instance in William Gorris's *Scotus pauperum* (Gorris 1492) or Mathurin Le Bret's *Scotus parvus* (Mathurin Le Bret 1528/29) (Schmutz 2002). Starting in 1639, Luke Wadding († 1657) and John Punch (Poncius) († 1661) published their edition of Scotus's *Opera omnia*, which remained the most important edition for centuries and which even nowadays is a point of reference. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, Scotist chairs were established in Alcalá, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Padua, Toulouse, Cracow, Coimbra, and Salamanca, thus institutionalizing Scotism in the most important universities in Europe. This is the context in which the famous statement of Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz (1606–1682) that the Scotist school is far more numerous than the others put together (“Scoti schola numerosior est aliis simul sumptis”) should be understood (Bak 1956; Edwards 2009; Schmutz 2002; also Schmutz 2016). Nevertheless, contrary to Lobkowitz's view, Scotism at the time was not, in fact, numerically the largest school, though it was among the most influential ones. Roger Ariew speaks of the “ubiquity of Scotism in the Latin and vernacular textbook culture” (Ariew 2000) and therefore assumes that Scotism even exerted influence on Descartes. Other scholars have identified a “Scotist Bodin” or “Scotist Pico” (Schmutz 2002, p. 68). The pivotal figures in the transmission of Scotist thought, however, were the Jesuits Francisco Suárez († 1617) and Gabriel Vázquez († 1604) and, above all, the Cistercian Eustache de Saint-Paul († 1640), for whom a key issue was the difference between *esse objective* and *esse cognitum* as defended by Scotus and Peter Auriol (Schmutz 2002).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Although Scotism is primarily defined by its methodological approach, nonetheless certain central doctrines, strongly connected to this approach, can be identified. Notably important are two doctrines which, throughout the centuries, have served to mark Scotist positions: Scotus's formal distinction and his theory of grades (Hoenen 1998). Scotus makes use of a formal distinction whenever he does not want to assume either a real distinction or a merely conceptual one: for example, the distinction between the persons of the Trinity and the divine essence, or between the soul and its powers. Even the difference between the common nature of a thing and its individual difference is described in terms of a formal distinction. While Scotus's terminology with regard to individuation is not consistent (he first assumes a form of individuation, then later an individual grade, and scarcely uses the term *haecceitas*), most Scotists interpreted Scotus as saying that the principle of individuation was a grade or even an intrinsic mode (e.g., William of Alnwick, Francis of Myrnonnes; see Dumont 1995, p. 217). Other doctrines that further characterize Scotist thought follow from these two main assumptions. One such doctrine is the theory of the univocity of being: the view that being is predicated of God and his creation not analogically (as the Thomist tradition has it) but univocally, so that the difference between God and His creation is only “one of degree” (Cross 1999, p. 39; Williams 2016). Another is the concept of *haecceitas*, which is used as an alternative description of individuation: “haecceity” is what renders the common nature individual. Finally, Scotus argues for at least two substantial forms in man: one is the human soul, which has powers formally distinct from the soul's essence; the other is a form of corporeity, which is responsible for the shape of the body (Duba 2012).

Impact and Legacy

Scotism was a major force in Paris during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century (see the list

below) and, next to Thomism, “the only other major theological influence in Italy” (Monfasani 1993, p. 270). It was also strong in German universities such as Freiburg or Tübingen (Zahnd 2014, esp. pp. 449–491; Bolliger 2003). In Freiburg, the *via moderna* was even for a time called the *via Scoti*.

The University of Padua played a central role in Renaissance Scotism, in that “the Paduan school, along with several others, forms a continuity with the medieval Scotism” (Schmitt 1978, p. 306). In 1474, a Scotist chair in metaphysics was established, followed 2 years later by another in Scotist theology. In 1490, Thomist chairs of metaphysics and theology were also established. All four of these chairs persisted until the eighteenth century. Professors of Scotist and Thomist metaphysics and theology were called “concurrents,” lecturing at the same time on the same day. Nevertheless, their competition was entirely professional and carried out in a friendly atmosphere (Gaetano 2013). Antonio Trombetta and Maurice O’Fihely were the most outstanding Scotists of the end of fifteenth century. Trombetta disputed with his Thomist “concurrent” Francesco Securo di Nardò; Trombetta opposed Nardò’s Thomism, as well as Averroes’s doctrine of the unity of the intellect and even denied Scotus’s idea that human reason could demonstrate the immortality of the soul. O’Fihely took a philological approach to Scotus by producing editions, including texts relevant to the Franciscan tradition (Mahoney 1978, pp. 217–218). Apart from the institutionalized Scotism in Padua, many other Renaissance philosophers picked up ideas from Scotus and integrated them into their own philosophy: for instance, Nicoletto Vernia, Agostino Nifo, and Pietro Pomponazzi. In addition, Marcantonio Zimara tried to come to the best philosophical positions by making use of (almost) all the different school traditions, including Scotism.

The success of Scotism in Padua is all the more surprising given the problems which had to be overcome (di Napoli 1978, p. 265). First, Scotus did not hand down a consistent or systematic presentation of his work (Pini 2010), already in the fifteenth century O’Fihely complained about the “chaos metaphysicale Scoticum” (cf. Duns

Scotus 1891, p. 429a). Second, Scotism stood in opposition to all the major currents of thought: Aristotelianism, Thomism, and Ockhamism. Third, Franciscans, who might have been Scotus’s “natural followers,” had to choose between him and Ockham, whereas the Dominicans, in general, followed the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas.

Other philosophers and theologians who have been labeled “Scotists” include (Roßmann 1989):

Early Scotists: Henry of Harclay († 1317), Antonius Andreae (= Scotellus) († 1320), Hugh of Novocastro († 1322), Anfredus Gonteri († ca. 1325), Francis of Mayronis († after 1326), William of Alnwick († ca. 1333), Francis of Marchia († ca. 1344), John of Reading († 1346), John of Bassolis († 1347), and Landolfo Caraccioli († 1351).

Scotists of the second half of the fourteenth century: Walter Burley († 1344/45), Thomas Bradwardine († 1349), Peter Thomae († 1350), Peter of Aquila (= Scotellus) († 1361), Andreas of Novocastro († ca. 1400), and Peter of Candia († 1410).

Scotists of the fifteenth century (mostly commentators on Scotus’s works): William of Vaurouillon († 1463), Nicholas of Orbellis, Stephen Brulefer († c. 1497), Pelbart of Temesvar († 1504), Paul Scriptoris (1505), Gratian of Brescia († 1505), Peter Tartaretus († 1509/13), and Antonio Trombetta († 1517).

Later Scotists: Francis Lachetus († 1520), Claudius Frassen († 1711), Hieronymus de Montefortino († 1738), Aodh Mac Cathmhaoil (Hugo Cavellus) († 1626), Parthenius Minges († 1926), and Déodat de Basly († 1937).

Cross-References

- [Ockhamism](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Scribal Publication

► [Book, Renaissance](#)

Sculpture, Renaissance

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Abstract

Sculpture in the Renaissance was renewed by the study of ancient art, taken as a universal model of perfection. This led to a different representation of the human figure in comparison to Gothic and medieval art. Florence witnessed the beginning of the new style through the works of Ghiberti and Brunelleschi. The most important artists of the Renaissance were Donatello and Michelangelo. Michelangelo's style in sculpture was, in turn, the model for the Mannerists, who, toward the second half of the sixteenth century, were active throughout Europe.

Innovative and Original Aspects

From the fifteenth century, a crucial change took place in Italian culture: The intellectual movement we now call humanism rediscovered, through critical studies, the classical past. As well as ancient literature, classical art became a model for the present: the beauty of Greek and Roman works of art – known both through texts such as Pliny's *Natural History* and ancient ruins and statues which were studied and reproduced in drawings by artists – was a universal ideal of perfection (Haskell et al. 1981; Bober et al. 1986). It was through sculpture that this new ideal first permeated the arts: together with a new conception of space and the use of perspective, ancient models renewed the figurative culture of Europe. The beginning of Renaissance sculpture dates back to 1401 in Florence, with the competition for the north door of the baptistery of the cathedral, won by Lorenzo Ghiberti. One of Ghiberti's rivals was Filippo Brunelleschi, whose bronze panel with the *Sacrifice of Isaac* is a dramatic scene in which figures move freely in the space and seem to go toward the spectator. This conception of space

marked a significant divergence from Gothic art. Ghiberti represented the space clearly in perspective in his second set of doors, the *Gates of Paradise* (1425–1452), and produced the first life-sized bronze statue since antiquity, *St. John the Baptist* (1412–1416) for Orsanmichele, the church of Florentine guilds. The decoration of the church, made by many artists, was an extraordinary compendium of the transition from late medieval to Renaissance sculpture. The most important artist working on Orsanmichele was Donatello, author of the marble statue of *St. George*, which reveals his deep study of the human figure at rest, modeled on ancient statues (Avery 1970, p. 33–69). In his bronze *David* (1440–3, Bargello, Florence, Fig. 1), a defining



Sculpture, Renaissance, Fig. 1 Donatello, *David*. c. 1440. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello. (Wikimedia Commons, attribution: Rufus46, CC BY-SA 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)

Sculpture, Renaissance,
Fig. 2 Donatello,

Equestrian statue of Gattamelata, 1446–1453. Padua, Piazza del Santo. (Wikimedia Commons, attribution: רנדום, CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)



sculpture of the Renaissance, a biblical subject is represented like an ancient statue, with classical nudity and a *contrapposto* stance, but also with a strong vitality in the figure's expression and pose (Caglioti 2000). Donatello's *Gattamelata* in Padua (Fig. 2) was the first equestrian statue since antiquity, inspired by ancient bronzes such as the Marcus Aurelius in Rome and the Horses of San Marco in Venice (Pope-Hennessy 1958, p. 64–65). Other important sculptors were Nanni di Banco (Florence) and Jacopo della Quercia (Siena), author of the Fonte Gaia (1414–1419) in the Piazza del Campo (Bloch 2020). During the early Quattrocento, it was also developed the art of small bronzes, so popular in antiquity, with subjects taken mainly from ancient mythology. All the major artists of the Renaissance produced small bronzes: Among the most popular was Agostino Riccio in Padua, and one of the masterpieces is the *Hercules and Antaeus* by Antonio Pollaiuolo (c. 1475; Bargello) (Pope-Hennessy 1958, p. 99–106).

The master of the early-sixteenth-century sculpture was Michelangelo Buonarroti, who was also a painter and architect. Among his earliest works are a *Bacchus* (1496–7, Bargello, Fig. 3), sculpted in Rome, in which Michelangelo recreates the ideal of an ancient statue, and the

Pietà (St. Peter's). A few years later, Michelangelo's *David* (1501, Fig. 4) became one of the symbols of Florence: a monumental statue of the greatest harmony and balance, representing the self-confidence and calm of a hero with a weapon in his hand. Other masterpieces were sculpted for sepulchral monuments: In Rome (1506–1516), Michelangelo sculpted the celebrated *Moses* for Julius II's tomb, and in 1520–1534 he executed the Medici tombs in Florence, with the four personifications of *Night*, *Day*, *Dawn*, and *Dusk*. His final work was the unfinished *Rondanini pietà* (1552–1564, Castello Sforzesco, Milan): in this group, he uses more delicate and elongated forms, in contrast with the strength and power of the body of Christ in the first *Pietà* of the Vatican (Avery 1970, p. 168–193; Steinberg 2018.)

Impact and Legacy

Renaissance art spread all over Italy and Europe. The art of late sixteenth-century Europe is called "Mannerism," the art in the "maniera" ("style") of the greatest artist of the Renaissance; the model for sculptors was Michelangelo. Among his followers in Florence were Baccio Bandinelli, whose



Sculpture, Renaissance, Fig. 3 Michelangelo, *Bacchus*. 1496–7. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello. (Wikipedia, public domain [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacco_\(Michelangelo\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacco_(Michelangelo)))

Hercules and Cacus (1534) was placed as a companion to the *David* in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, and Bartolommeo Ammannati, author of the Neptune Fountain (1560–1575) in the Piazza della Signoria. Benvenuto Cellini worked in Rome, France, and Florence, where he executed the *Perseus* (1545, Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence). In the same town settled the Flemish artist Giambologna (*Rape of the Sabines* 1579–1583 Loggia dei Lanzi). Examples of Mannerism are also found in Northern European countries (Low Countries, Germany, and France), as well as in Spain (Raymond et al. 2015).



Sculpture, Renaissance, Fig. 4 Michelangelo, *David*. 1501–4. Florence, Gallerie dell'Accademia. (Wikimedia Commons, attribution: ברנדום, CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)

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Scuola di Rialto

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Abstract

The Scuola di Rialto was a learning and cultural center active in Venice between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Established as a place devoted to the study of Aristotelian and natural philosophy, it develops, over time, the teaching of theology and of all the subjects characterizing the traditional Faculties of Arts.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Scuola di Rialto has its foundation, thanks to a bequest (agreed in 1397) of the Venetian patrician Tommaso Talenti including a salary of 50 ducats for a lecturer of renowned scientific authority to teach logic and philosophy in the city of Venice. The legacy becomes *de facto* operational at the death of the patron in 1403 (Nardi 1971, p. 14). A peculiarity, which the Scuola will maintain all over its history, is its being composed of one lecturer, who is the only responsible for all its activities (Grendler 2002, p. 138).

The first period of the Scuola is marked by a succession of lecturers who graduated in Padua and were influenced by the work of the famous philosopher Paolo Veneto (Lepori 1980, p. 540). This short tradition reaches its highest fulfilment with the teaching of the man who can be considered the most significant lecturer of the Scuola di Rialto: Paolo della Pergola. He conducts his duty between 1421 and 1454. His teaching is primarily based on logic. On the one hand, he focuses on the analysis of Occamistic nominalism and the Oxoian tradition. This is witnessed by his major works: *Compendium logicae*, *De sensu composito et diviso*, and the *Dubia super Consequentiiis Strodi*. On the other hand, it must be remarked

that a fundamental component of his work in Venice is the teaching of the Averroistic Aristotelianism (Lepori 1980, p. 555).

Paolo della Pergola operates many relevant improvements in the Scuola di Rialto, extending its educational offer and trying an institutional development. He does not restrict himself to the original task of delivering lectures focused on logic and natural philosophy – as established during the foundation of the Scuola. He develops, instead, the teaching of theology, moral philosophy, metaphysics, and many of the disciplines taught at the Faculty of Arts of Padua. Under his influence, the Scuola is also promoted by the Venetian government into a public educational institution, with the subsequent establishment of stable public funding, meant to cover its maintenance costs. Nevertheless, the main desire of Della Pergola is the complete transformation of the Scuola into a University. This project is opposed by the Republic and will never see its realization. The government of Venice had indeed previously decided that only Padua should be the University of the Republic and that there would be no room for another institution aiming to place itself as a competitor (Nardi 1971, pp. 49–51). This decision will never be considered as acceptable by Paolo della Pergola: a man who does not belong to the Venetian aristocracy and, consequently, is unaccustomed to the dynamics of the Serenissima's policies.

An interesting and not well-known aspect of the teaching of Paolo della Pergola is the study of the Scotist tradition; this is deepened by his successor Domenico Bragadin – who leads the Scuola di Rialto between 1454 and 1479. This approach is witnessed by an unpublished work, entitled *De Mortalium felicitate* and written by Nicolò da Catarro (1461–1462 cf. Lepori 1980, p. 559), but its influence on the Scuola is nevertheless not clear.

During the teaching of Antonio Corner, from 1479 to 1498, coinciding with the maximum development of Venetian humanism, several profound changes happen within the Scuola di Rialto. Most visible, the study of logic loses its preponderance in favor of a more open approach to the variegated cultural fields of the humanities; the same is applied to Aristotelianism, which

starts following an eclectic approach and becomes less regimented in a given model of interpretation (Lepori 1980, pp. 586, 587). Worthy of remark is a pupil of Corner, Francesco Bragadin, lecturer in Rialto after his mentor, who, starting from this context of openness, introduces in the Scuola some elements taken from Platonism and consequently incentivizes the study of theological and metaphysical disciplines.

A few years later, the Scuola di Rialto is driven in a different direction by Sebastiano Foscarini, who is considered one of the most important heads in the history of this institution. A Venetian patrician, Foscarini, called in 1505 to continue the work of Antonio Giustinian, remains in the Scuola until 1552. He is also very involved in the city's political life, and for this reason, he suspends his lectures for several periods. Foscarini's philosophical target is characterized by the restoration of the Averroistic Aristotelian and the aim of renewing the original *rioaltina* tradition (Lepori 1980, pp. 596–597). Other than this, the deficiency of sources does not allow to define a reliable framework of his project.

At the antipode of Foscarini's Averroism, there is the lecturing of Agostino Valier. Considering philosophy as the most appropriate form to express his multiform interests (Cipriani 2008, p. 25), he guides the Scuola di Rialto in the second half of the sixteenth century toward a new spirit, inclined in the direction of a possible correlation of Plato and Aristotle (Santinello 1991, p. 126), compatibilism, which takes Bragadins' previous attempt to a more radical and definite extent. During his years in Venice, Valier is influenced by the humanistic doctrines of Marsilio Ficino and Lorenzo il Magnifico, to the extent that his research is oriented toward the refusal of the idea of a radical break between paganism and Christianity (Negruzzo 2015, p. 262).

In its long activity, the Scuola di Rialto remains, together with the Scuola di S. Marco, the most accomplished attempt of realizing a center of education and research within Venetian humanism.

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Scutelli da Trento, Nicola

► [Scutellius Tridentinus, Nicolaus](#)

Scutellius Tridentinus, Nicolaus

Born: 1490, Trent, Italy

Died: 1542, Trent, Italy

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Abstract

Nicolaus Scutellius of Trent (1490–1542), an Augustinian friar and *protégé* of Giles of Viterbo (1469–1532), as well as a prominent Hellenist and translator of Greek Neoplatonic writings into Latin, is notable for his passionate participation in Renaissance controversies about Plato and Aristotle. In modern scholarly

literature, the only discussion of the life and works of this almost unknown and rather marginal figure in the history of European thought are found in the studies of John Monfasani.

Alternative Names

Scutelli da Trento, Nicola; Pseudo-Pletho

Biography

Nicolaus Scutellius was born in Trent (Italy) in 1490. In 1512, he became an assistant to Giles of Viterbo, a major humanist and General of the Augustinian Order (see Monfasani 2007). Scutellius “spent some time in various *studia* of the Order in the 1510s, but in the 1510s and 1520s he was mainly in Rome with Giles” (Monfasani 2005: 3). In 1513 and 1514, Scutellius worked in Rome as a scribe of Giles’s registers. In 1515, he moved to Siena to study, and in 1518 he received a Bachelor’s degree in Theology. He completed his Latin translation of Proclus’s *Theologia Platonica* in 1520 and of Proclus’s commentary on *Parmenides* in 1521. The following year, he became regent at the monastery of S. Agostino in Rome. During 1526 and 1527, he dedicated some of his major translations to Giles of Viterbo, including his Latin versions of Pletho’s commentary on the *Oracula Chaldaica* (*Zoroastri*) (1526) and the *Tabula* of the *Theologia Grecorum* and the collection of the *Fragmenta Orphica* (January and March 1527). Scutellius also produced Latin translations of the following important texts: Iamblichus’s *De mysteriis Aegyptorum* and *Vita Pythagorae*; Proclus’s commentaries on Plato’s *Republic* and part of *Alcibiades I*; a collection of extracts from Proclus’s *Theologia Platonica* known as “Le Grand Fragment”; Porphyry’s *Sententiae*; Albinus’s *Didascalicos*; and George Gemistus Pletho’s *Laws* (*Leges*). His versions of Pletho’s writings are particularly significant; as Monfasani points out, “Scutellius made the first known Latin translations of Pletho’s *Laws* and his commentary on the *Oracula Chaldaica*. Scutellius, in fact, translated the latter text from

a Greek manuscript, now in Dresden, that Giles himself had transcribed with his own hand years earlier” (Monfasani 2005: 5).

Scutellius’s interest in Pletho is evidenced by his treatise *Pletho in Aristotelem*, written under the pseudonym “Pletho” between the early 1520s and early 1530s. The work was discovered in 1990 by Monfasani and is not a mere translation of Pletho’s *De differentiis*, but an original philosophical treatise. Moreover, according to Monfasani, this work “is an important text for several reasons. First of all, it is powerful proof of how much the Augustinian Platonists around Giles of Viterbo took to heart the fifteenth-century Plato-Aristotle controversy” and, as such, it stands out as “a major piece of evidence for the interests and activity of a distinct group of Italian Platonists in the 1520s. Second, *Pletho in Aristotelem* is the only sizeable original philosophical document we have from the most competent Hellenist and Neoplatonic scholar in the circle of Giles of Viterbo” (Monfasani 2005: 15–16).

After Giles’ death (1532), Scutellius returned to northern Italy. He died in Trent in 1542 (Monfasani 2006: 332–333).

Scutellius’s Translations

List from Monfasani (2006: 333–334):

1. Iamblichus, *Mysteria Aegyptorum*, printed in Rome in 1556 and extant in several MSS.
2. Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorae*, printed in Rome in 1556 and extant in several MSS.
3. Pseudo-Plato, *De Iusto*, in MS Napoli, BN, V. F. 5.
4. George Gemistus Pletho, *In Oracula Zoroastri*, in MS Napoli, BN, II. F. 7, ff. 191v–195r, dated Palm Sunday, 1526.
5. George Gemistus Pletho, *Leges*, (partial), in MS BAV, Vat. Lat. 6320, ff. 161r–174r.
6. Collection of *Orphica*, MS Napoli, in BN, II. F. 7, ff. 4r–71v, with a preface dated 3 Non. Mar. 1527; and miscellaneous *theologia prisca* BAV, Vat. Lat. 6320, ff. 49r–122v.

7. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, in MS Napoli, BN, VIII. F. 7, ff. 37r–299r, with the colophon “Hanc feturam Viterbium peperit. MDXX Urbs Roma partum solvi.”
8. Proclus, *In Platonis Rempubicam* (partial, to the end of the twelfth dissertation, ed. Kroll, II, p. 296.16), in MS Napoli, BN, II. F. 7, ff. 74r–184r, dated 20 April 1526.
9. Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, in MS Firenze, Bibl. Riccardiana, 155, ff. 4r–426v; Wien, NB, Lat. 10056, ff. 24v–236v.
10. Proclus, *In Alcibiadem I* (partial; up to 72.7; = tr. Ficini., *Opera Omnia*, Basileae 1576, pp. 1908–1912, last line), in MS Firenze, Bibl. Riccardiana, 155, ff. 427r–459r; Wien, NB, 10056, ff. 223r–250v.
11. Porphyry, *Ansa* (= *Sententiae ad Intelligibilia Ducentes*), dated 6 October 1526, in BAV Barb. Lat. 322, ff. 133r–144r, copied by Luca Holstenus from a MS in Theatines’ library in Naples; Napoli, BN, II. F. 7, ff. 210r–227r.
12. Unidentified texts of Gregory of Nyssa, lost; see Seripando, *Registrum Generalatus*, II, p. 172.
13. Lucian, *Dialogus VII Mortuorum*, preface dated Rome, Id. February 1533, in Wien, NB, Lat. 10056, ff. 251v–252r, but the translation is no longer extant.
14. Four hymns in Homer to Venus, Minerva, Juno, the Muses and Apollo, in Wien, NB, Lat. 10056, f. 252r–v.
15. Extracts from various authors in alphabetical order, in MS BAV, Vat. Lat. 6320, ff. 185r–309v.
16. Albinus, *Didascalicos*, MS Napoli, BN, VIII. F. 7, ff. 425v–428r.

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Sebastiani, Antonio

► [Minturno, Antonio](#)

Seed Concept in the Renaissance

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Abstract

In Renaissance and early modern “chymistry” (alchemy/chemistry) and biomedical sciences, ideas derived from “seeds” (*semina*) were frequently used: “seeds of things” (*semina rerum*), “seeds of reasons” (*semina rationum*), “seminal reasons” (*rationes seminales*), “seminary” (*seminarium*), and “seminal principle” (*principium seminale*). These notions can be grouped together under the name of the “concept of seeds.” Widely diffused under the authority of the “Platonists,” this concept aimed to explain the formation and organization of natural bodies and even the origin of their forms in matter. It first took shape in the cosmological metaphysics of Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) and then was developed by physician philosophers such as Jean Fernel (1497–1558), Paracelsus (1593/1594–1541), and Petrus Severinus (1540/1542–1602) during the sixteenth century. It was finally reinterpreted in a corpuscular perspective, culminating in the notion of “molecule” (*molecula*) as the “seeds of things” (*semina rerum*) by French atomist Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655). The concept of seeds can be

regarded as a missing link in the chain which bridged between the medieval scholastic doctrine of substantial forms and the mechanistic corpuscular theories of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Closely connected to Renaissance chymical philosophy, it played a significant role in the rise of early modern science.

Synonyms

Concept of seeds; *Semina*; Seminal principle; Seminal reason; Seminal reason principle

Innovative and Original Aspects

In his philosophical works, Marsilio Ficino adopted various terms derived from the seed so as to designate the formative cause in the sensible world: “seeds of reasons” (*semina rationum*), “seminal reasons” (*rationes seminales*), “seminary” (*seminarium*), and “seminary reason of the world” (*ratio seminaria mundi*).

Following Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Proclus, Ficino elaborated the theory of hypostatical substances in his interpretation of Plato’s works (Allen 1982). According to the version developed in his *Commentary* on Plato’s *Symposium* (written before 1482), the divine “mind” (*mens*) derives from the good, which is the pre-eminent being of God, in the concentric metaphysical universe. It is followed by the “soul” (*anima*) of the universe, then “nature” (*natura*), and finally “matter” (*materia*). Nature is an intermediate hierarchy between the soul and matter. Ficino attributes “divine species” (*species divinae*) to each of these five hypostases: “ideas” (*ideae*) to the mind, “reasons” (*rationes*) to the soul, “seeds” (*semina*) to nature, and “forms” (*formae*) to matter. Ideas turn around God and connect Him with the mind. Reasons gravitate around the mind and communicate it with the World-Soul. Seeds revolve around the soul and link it to nature. Finally forms turn around nature and make the bridge between nature and matter. Forms in matter are the ultimate vestiges of the

divine species, all of which are incorporeal and spiritual. Thus seeds share the same source with superior species (ideas and reasons) and inferior species (forms). Beauty, regarded as the ray emanating from God, embellishes the divine mind with ideas, fills the soul with reasons, impregnates nature with seeds, and dresses matter with forms (Ficino 1956).

Ficino further identified nature with the “power of generation” (*potentia generandi*). He also qualified as “seminary” or “seedbed” (*seminarium*) the vivifying power, which is diffused in the whole world. Comparing the emanation of these hypostases with the sun’s rays, Ficino connected nature with “heat” (*calor*), which is responsible for the generation of bodies. Generation is linked to a biological notion of fertility. This fecundity is introduced into nature through the invisible ray of the World-Soul, which conveys the spiritual seeds. Ficino thus incorporated the concept of seeds as the integral part of his metaphysical universe. For him, these invisible and spiritual seeds are the vestiges of forms, which were introduced in formless matter so as to generate diverse beings in the sensible world (Ficino 1956).

In his masterpiece, *Platonic Theology* (*Theologia Platonica*) (Florence 1482), Ficino even went further by combining the Thomistic doctrine of substantial forms to his concept of seeds. According to him, nature encloses the invisible and spiritual seeds, endowed with the power to extract the substantial forms of the elements from the depth of matter. These seeds are superior to the elemental forms, and under their control, the elemental qualities bring about properties such as colors in natural things. Ficino’s seeds were, therefore, able to make Aristotelian physics subordinate to Platonic metaphysics and are not identical with the seminal reason principles of the ancients (Stoics, Neoplatonists, and Augustine) (Ficino 2001; Hirai 2002).

Jean Fernel of Paris was the first academic physician to introduce Ficino’s teachings into the foundation of learned medicine. In his major philosophical dialogue, *On the Hidden Causes of Things* (*De abditis rerum causis*) (Paris 1548), calling upon the belief in the “ancient theology” (*prisca theologia*), Fernel established the basis of

his natural and medical philosophy through the harmonization of ancients such as Plato and Aristotle. In doing so, he adopted Ficino's concept of seeds. According to Fernel, the seeds of the forms of natural things were sown by God at the moment of the creation of the world. Now these seeds fall from heaven, being carried by the World-Spirit diffused everywhere in the universe. Fernel connected Ficino's theory of the universal spirit with the Biblical idea of the spirit (breath) sent from God's mouth as is seen in Psalm 32. Fernel thus tried to place his concept of seeds in a Christian perspective (Fernel 2005).

Parallel to Fernel, Paracelsus also contributed much to the elaboration of the concept of seeds. Although he might initially have been inspired by the ideas of Ficino, he radically Christianized its contents. According to him, God sowed the archetypal word "fiat" as the primordial seed of the universe in the creation of the world. This divine seed enclosed within itself the seeds of the four elements (Paracelsus 1922-1933, XIII: 9, 12-13). Paracelsus did not see the elements as the material causes of natural bodies but as their cosmological receptacles, called "mothers" (*mütter*). These matrices contain all natural beings under the form of particular seeds and foster them until their maturation as "fruits" (*früchte*) (Paracelsus III: 32-33). Thus all creatures are born from their own spiritual seeds. Each being in nature lives its biological time and grows toward its definite end according to the "predestination" (*praedestinatio*) which was determined by God. At the time of "harvest," natural things are consumed by human beings as food or medicine (Paracelsus III: 34-35).

In Paracelsus, universal nature is depicted as the divine Sower's enormous bag, which contains the spiritual seeds of all natural beings mixed together. Each seed encloses the three principles (salt, sulfur, and mercury). These are not the natural substances bearing these names but the symbolical denominations based on their functions. They should not be understood as the material causes from an Aristotelian perspective. These three principles in the spiritual seed determine the development (life) of each individual through the intervention of administrator "workers," conceived in the guise of internal alchemists. Paracelsus referred to them as "vulcanus" when they are

in nature and as "archeus" when inside the human body (Paracelsus III: 35 and XI: 187-88).

Under the influence of Ficino, Fernel, and Paracelsus, Petrus Severinus established his unique system, which can be qualified as the "philosophy of seeds." Indeed the concept of seeds occupied the central place of his natural and medical philosophy. In his masterpiece, *The Idea of Philosophical Medicine* (*Idea Medicinae Philosophicae*), he built a synthesis upon the *prisca theologia* belief so as to defend the teachings of Paracelsus. Among his immediate fore-runners besides Paracelsus, he owed much to Fernel although he tried to eclipse the Frenchman's name with that of Paracelsus (Severinus 1571; Shackelford 2004; Hirai 2005).

Severinus's theory of the four elements largely depends on that of Paracelsus. They are not conceived as the material causes of natural bodies but as the cosmological receptacles of all creatures. According to Severinus, God implanted future fruits under the form of invisible and spiritual seeds in these matrices. The elements foster these seeds in their bosom so as to produce their fruits and nourish them. This process is programed according to a determined delay for each individual. The spiritual seeds assure the presence of life's vestige everywhere in the world and guarantee the continuity of natural species. They are the source of all kinds of action in nature since they provide all the properties of sensible things. In Severinus's favorite expression, everything in nature is regulated by the seeds' tide-like ebb and flow.

Severinus placed the "principles of the bodies" (*principia corporum*) in the invisible and spiritual seeds. Identified with Paracelsus's salt, sulfur, and mercury, these principles are subordinated to the seeds' incorporeal components: "reasons" (*rationes*), "knowledge" (*scientia*), and "gifts" (*dona*). These components regulate the flows of the seeds in the world to produce corporeal bodies in the process of generation with the help of inner instrumental agents. Severinus called these agents the "mechanical spirits" (*spiritus mechanici*), the invisible and spiritual workers or craftsmen conceived upon the model of Paracelsus's archeus. They produce individuals thanks to the *scientia* given to the seeds. According to Severinus, the spirits deprived of *scientia* are merely sterile

vapors, while the mechanical spirits endowed with *scientia* are fertile and productive. If they have the *scientia* of the heart, they construct the heart; if they possess the *scientia* of the brain, they build the brain (Severinus 1571; Hirai 2005).

Severinus's work was venerated by many physician philosophers of the turn of the century and exerted a considerable impact on the matter theories of the next generations. His fervent followers included Joseph du Chesne (1546–1609), Oswald Croll (ca. 1560–1608), and Jan Baptista van Helmont (1579–1644). Especially under the influence of du Chesne, the concept of seeds became widespread in the early seventeenth century to explain the generation of living beings (animals and plants) and the formation of nonliving things (stones, minerals, and metals) (Hirai 2005; 2010). Heavily influenced by Severinus in his youth, van Helmont long struggled to establish his own system of the seminal principle. Pierre Gassendi also considerably relied on Severinus's theory for his concept of molecules, identified with the “seeds of things” (*semina rerum*) (Hirai 2003). These figures, whose perspectives seem to diverge, shared the same source for their own concepts of seeds and their respective matter theories. Other prominent figures such as Francis Bacon (1561–1626) came to know this concept developed in the steam of chymical philosophy. Although Daniel Sennert (1572–1637) himself preferred forms and souls to spiritual seeds, Severinus's ideas led him to develop the notion of the “seminal principle” (*principium seminale*), to which the young Robert Boyle (1627–1691) and others were to pay considerable attention in the late seventeenth century (Clericuzio 1990; Anstey 2002; Hirai 2011). Thus the concept of seeds bears witness to the lively impacts exerted by chymical philosophy on the emergence of new matter theories during the scientific revolution.

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Segni, Bernardo

Born: 21 February 1504, Florence

Died: 3 April 1558, Florence

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Abstract

Bernardo Segni was a prominent figure in the cultural landscape of Florence and an active participant in the Accademia Fiorentina in the

1540s and 1550s. He published several significant translations of and commentaries on Aristotelian works in the vernacular, attempting to match the sophistication of previous Latin interpretations, on which he heavily relied. He was also an active political figure and penned acute observations on the events of his time (and in particular on the role of Duke Cosimo) in his *Istorie fiorentine*, published only long after his death. He also prepared a translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus*.

Biography

Born into a rich merchant family with interests in the wool and silk industry (his father Lorenzo had also held office, both in the Florentine Republic, occasioned by the expulsion of the Medici, and in the Medicean government after 1530), Bernardo Segni enjoyed a fairly comfortable childhood (biography in Lupo Gentile 1905, 11–34; supplementary details in Lupo Gentile 1903; Ridolfi 1962, 511, n. 1; Baiocchi and Albonico 1994). He may have spent part of his early years in Aquila, involved in one of the branches of the family business, but returned to Florence by 1520. We know little about his education, although he may have studied with Francesco Verino, a professor of philosophy at the University of Pisa (1497–1525) and later (1541) a discussant of the Platonic theory of love in the Florentine Academy. In December 1526 he went to Venice together with Paolo Antonio Soderini, entertaining good relationships among others with Alessandro dei Pazzi, the ambassador of the Florentine Republic. By March 1527 he was in Padua, where he came to know (and possibly study with) Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, formerly a professor of philosophy who had recently taken up private tutoring. By the start of 1528 Segni was back in Florence, where he opposed the Arrabbiati in favor of a more aristocratic form of government. From May to December 1528 he accompanied his father, who had been sent as ambassador to Ferrara, but then returned to Florence. In 1529 and 1530 his father's financial affairs received several setbacks and in 1531 Bernardo married Costanza

Ridolfi, partly to help the family situation through her dowry. The family's finances improved somewhat after the return of the Medici in 1530, but after the death of his mother and father (in 1534 and 1535 respectively) Bernardo sought further economic stability by entering in the favor of the dukes. First under Alessandro and then under Cosimo de' Medici, Bernardo held various offices, both in Florence and in other parts of the Duchy, including Anghiari. He also participated in the Accademia Fiorentina (Rilli 1700; Salvini 1717), where he was invited to give public and private lectures and where he served as consul (appointed 24 September 1542). At the same time, he continued his political service: in December 1546 he was made part of the Senato dei Duecento; between December 1546 and March 1547 he was at the Roman court; until shortly before his death, Duke Cosimo continued to give him political assignments (in Cortona, Volterra, Anghiari, and elsewhere), allowing Segni to pass on a much-improved inheritance to his two surviving sons. He died in April 1558 and was buried in Santo Spirito in Florence.

Impact and Legacy

Bernardo belonged to a lively circle of Florentine youth who had a passion for literature and (at times) Greek; these included Gian Battista Strozzi, Roberto Strozzi, the Antinori family, several members of the Pazzi (especially important is the relationship with Alessandro Pazzi), the Capponi, the Soderini, and Donato Giannotti. He was in close contact with some of the best Hellenists of his time, including Pietro Vettori and Francesco Robortello, and although he was not himself an expert in Greek, he was capable of reading it and making sense of it.

Segni published translations of and commentaries on Aristotle's *Rhetoric and Poetics* (Segni 1549a), *Politics* (Segni 1549b), and *Nicomachean Ethics* (Segni 1550), along with one of *De anima* that appeared posthumously (Segni 1583). He also wrote historical works, notably the *Istorie fiorentine* (Segni 1723a) and the *Vita di Niccolò Capponi* (Segni 1723b) in addition to his own *Ricordanze*.

Although it is his historical works that have caught the eye, Segni's greatest achievement was as an interpreter and disseminator of Aristotle's works in the vernacular (see Ridolfi 1962; Rolandi 1996; Langer 1999; Bionda 2001, 2002a, b, 2014, 2015; Blocker 2008; Lines 2013 and [forthcoming](#)). His publication in 1549–1550 of the four Aristotelian works listed above was the fruit of several years of labor and was the expression of one of the earliest cultural programs to offer a unified perspective of the Philosopher in the Italian language. He availed himself of a number of Latin models (including the commentaries of Donato Acciaiuoli and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, the translations of Leonardo Bruni, Johannes Argyropoulos, and Francesco Robortello, the expertise and insights of Pier Vettori) and was not himself a philosopher or greatly original; nonetheless, he offered an intelligent synthesis of various interpretations that spoke to the cultural climate of Florence in the 1540s. In particular, he offered his fellow members of the Florentine Academy accessible translations and high-level commentary in a way that complemented the approaches of Benedetto Varchi and Giambattista Gelli. His *Ethics* commentary, for instance, makes numerous references to Dante and to Italian historical events (Rolandi 1996; Lines 2013). His commentary on the *Politics* is obsequious toward the Academy's patron, Cosimo I (Toste 2011, 191–195; Lines [forthcoming](#)). Segni's activity, however, must be seen within the context of the interest of other contemporary figures (including Sperone Speroni, Antonio Brucioli, Alessandro Piccolomini, and others) in encouraging the study of philosophy in the *volgare*, which had recently attained new status in Italy after the long debates on the *questione della lingua*.

Also of considerable interest are Segni's historical works: the *Vita di Niccolò Capponi* (Lupo Gentile 1905, 36–47; Montevecchi 2004, 120–144) narrates the life and downfall of Segni's maternal uncle, who was deposed as *gonfaloniere* in Florence in 1529. Its authenticity was questioned (Sanesi 1896), but the attribution now seems secure (Lupo Gentile 1904). The *Istorie fiorentine*, in XV books, were written between 1553 and 1558 and cover both Florentine

and Europe-wide events from 1527 to 1555 (Cavalcanti 1723; Lupo Gentile 1905, 34–85; Fueter 1911, 86–87; Rossi 1941; Ridolfi 1960, 1963; von Albertini 1970, 329–34; Cochrane 1981, 278–82; Grassini 1982; Viroli 1992, 245–47; Baiocchi and Albonico 1994, 679–683; Piquet 2002; Capata 2009). Like the *Vita*, this work was not published until 1723, whereupon the Sacred Congregation in Rome in 1725 prohibited the *Istorie* “donec corrigantur,” in view of the work's unflattering descriptions of some churchmen. The best edition so far is that of 1857, but there is as yet no critical edition. The *Istorie* were dismissed by Lupo Gentile as a highly derivative work, and others have observed their antimedicean sentiment, accompanied by scarce attention for constitutional issues (Baiocchi and Albonico 1994, 681–682) but have been better appreciated by others, particularly von Albertini and Viroli. They are a private expression of Segni's unhappiness with Duke Cosimo, who is very much depicted as an Aristotelian tyrant (Genzano 2004; Lines [forthcoming](#)).

Other works of Segni including the *Ricordanze* and his translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus* (first published in 1778) have received hardly any attention. It would be very helpful to know how these fit into his overall production.

Of fundamental importance for understanding Segni's cultural activity is the climate of the Accademia Fiorentina and the role played within it by Cosimo. All of Segni's works were published by Torrentino, the ducal printer, and they were clearly directed to a public that included that of the Accademia. Although the cultural dynamics within the Accademia are now fairly well understood, several aspects remain unclear, including what its relationship was exactly with scholars such as Vettori and Robortello, who taught at the university.

Cross-References

- [Historiography](#)
- [Robortello, Francesco](#)
- [Vernacular Languages](#)
- [Vettori, Piero](#)

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Segovianus

- [Juan de Segovia](#)

Self and Individual Identity

- [Homocentrism](#)

Self-Determination (Political)

- [Liberty in the Renaissance: Political](#)

Semina

- [Seed Concept in the Renaissance](#)

Seminal Principle

- [Seed Concept in the Renaissance](#)

Seminal Reason

- [Seed Concept in the Renaissance](#)

Seminal Reason Principle

- [Seed Concept in the Renaissance](#)

Sennert, Daniel

Born: 25 November 1572, Breslau, Germany (today: Wrocław, Poland)

Died: 21 July 1637, Wittenberg, Germany

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Abstract

Daniel Sennert has aptly been referred to as an “archetypical transitional figure.” Sennert’s experimental atomism had a major influence

on later philosophers such as Robert Boyle and Joachim Jungius, but the Wittenberg professor remained committed to an Aristotelian view of natural philosophy that in large part followed Julius Caesar Scaliger. Sennert's medicine was built upon a Galenist humoral pathology, but he also drew heavily from Paracelsian and otherwise chemical medicine. Likewise, Sennert's corpuscular explanation of the origin of life and generation led to his rejection of spontaneous generation, but he also made a case for the existence of substantial forms and the action of semina or seeds – notions that came to influence Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.

Biography

Little is known of Sennert's early life save that he was born in Breslau to a shoemaker, Nikolaus Sennert, and his wife Katharina Hellmann. In 1593 Daniel matriculated at the University of Wittenberg, the institution where he spent practically his entire career, and after taking an M.A. in 1598, he graduated with a doctorate from the medical faculty in 1601. Despite claims of earlier biographers, it is unlikely that Sennert spent 3 years at universities in Frankfurt, Leipzig, and Jena (Lüthy and Newman 2000). Upon the departure of his former professor, Johannes Jessenius (1566–1621) for the royal court at Prague, Sennert was promoted to professor of medicine at Wittenberg, and he held this position until his death during an outbreak of plague in 1637.

Sennert's medical and natural-philosophical works were widely read in the seventeenth century beginning with his *Institutionum medicinae libri V* of 1611. His major natural-philosophical works include *Epitome naturalis scientiae*, a work that was revised several times, and *Hypomnemata physica*, which contains the clearest and most extensive exposition of Sennert's atomism. Nevertheless, it is evident that Sennert had already professed atomism by 1619 in his *De chymicorum*

cum Aristotelicis et Galenicis consensu ac dissensu (Newman 2006).

William Newman has argued that Sennert's atomism incorporated the medieval alchemical corpuscular theory of the *Summa perfectionis* of pseudo-Geber, matter theory derived from Book 4 of Aristotle's *Meteorology*, the neo-Aristotelianism that stemmed from Julius Caesar Scaliger, and finally several Paracelsian notions derived from Andreas Libavius (Newman 2001a, b, 2006). Far from being strictly theoretical or eclectic, however, Sennert's atomism was grounded primarily in the experimental practice of the chemical laboratory and, more particularly, so-called reductions to the pristine state that involved the dissolution of a metal in a strong acid and its eventual precipitation and recovery. Sennert employed such experiments to attack theories of mixture championed by scholastic philosophers following Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus.

Sennert's matter theory also included what historians have dubbed the “negative-empirical principle,” a notion derived largely from earlier Scholastic alchemy in which the end products of analysis could be regarded as foundational principles of nature. For Sennert, chemical analysis revealed the three Paracelsian principles salt, sulfur, and mercury, which he believed were the “prima mixta,” that is, the first mixtures of the peripatetic elements (Newman 2006).

Sennert enlisted his matter theory in his medicine and sought atomist explanations of disease etiology as well as therapy (Stolberg 2003; Klein 2016). Such efforts are especially evident in his explanation of “tartarous” diseases like gout and arthritis as well as his pursuit of a nearly universal medicine (Klein 2015, 2016). Sennert's negative-empirical methodology was embraced by later chemists, including Boyle and many of the followers of Joan Baptista Van Helmont, who ultimately helped to transmit this approach to chemists in the eighteenth century. Likewise, Sennert's experimentalist case for atomism had an especially strong influence on Boyle, who employed the same experiments, but with the

dissimilar goal of demonstrating the mechanical origin of qualities and the nonexistence of substantial forms (Newman 2006).

Cross-References

- [Atomism](#)
- [Boyle, Robert](#)
- [Chemistry](#)
- [Scaliger, Julius Caesar](#)

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Senses, Internal

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Abstract

The internal senses, which, generally speaking, included common sense, the imagination, the estimative faculty, and memory had a central place in the Renaissance understanding of the workings of the human mind. Understood as perceptual powers which mediated between the subject and the object of knowledge, they were considered essential to organize the sensory perceptions individually received by the five external senses into unified representations. Most authors treated common sense and the estimative faculty as powers of the imagination, which was doubtless the most

important of the internal senses. Memory, as the ability to visualize what is no longer there, was also often considered part of the imagination, and its role become increasingly important, as testified by the central role of mnemonics in conceptions of the human mind.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The internal senses, or internal wits, were understood as perceptual powers which processed and organized the incoming sensory-perception. They were thought to mediate between the body and the soul and to provide the soul with a sort of pre-intellectual awareness of the object of knowledge. Following the anatomical model of Galen (130 AD–210 AD) as it was revisited by leading philosophers of the Middle Ages, including Augustine, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and especially Avicenna (Kemp 1996) Renaissance scholars placed the internal senses in the spirit-filled ventricles of the brain. Even though there was not a conventional version of the theory, its general outline listed four internal senses: 1. common sense (*sensus communis*) of Aristotelian origin, which combined the data individually received by the five external senses into one unified perception; 2. the imagination (*imaginatio*), which acted on two levels, both organizing sensory perceptions into single representations and processing those representations on a prerational level. As the “organizer” and “unifier” of sensory perception, the *imaginatio* was often identified with *sensus communis* (Ficino 1576, 1549; Huarte 1604, 71; Vives 1782–90, III, 327–328; Casini 2013, 149); 3. the estimative power (*vis aestimativa*), which can be safely identified with Avicenna’s *waham*, i.e., a sort of empirical judgment that perceives the intentions in the object of knowledge, as in Avicenna’s celebrated example of the sheep perceiving the intention of the harm in the wolf and fleeing from it (Avicenna 1952, 3031; Black 1993, 2000, 60); and 4. memory (*vis memorativa*), which preserves the images of sensation and cognition.

The *sensus communis* was considered a power bonding the external and the internal dimensions

of knowledge, a primordial attempt to spiritualize the materiality of sense perception as received by the five external senses. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) described it as “the part where all the senses meet” and as “the seat of the soul” (Leonardo 1883, II, 838), to which he gave a specific place in the brain (Summers 1990, 71–90). The most important of the internal senses was, doubtless, the imagination, understood not only as a faculty able to bridge levels of different ontological and epistemological perfection, but also as a forceful transitive power which could affect one’s own body as well as other people’s bodies (Ficino 1987, 202; Cattani ca. 1502, e 6^e-e7^r in Hasse 2007, 123; Giglioni 2011, 46), as in the case of the evil eye or of the pernicious influences of the mother’s imagination on the fetus (Alberti 1755, 193; Paré 1982, 54). The sphere of action of the imagination was so wide that not only it was often identified with the common sense, but also with memory. Marsilio Ficino believed that “the imagination is naturally recollective” (Ficino 1576, 1740), and the Spanish physician Juan Huarte de San Juan (1529–1588) claimed that the imagination and memory “are so united and neere neighboured” that they could be hardly “distinguished or discerned” (Huarte 1604, 54). Just as the imagination, moreover, memory was thought to work on different cognitive levels, reaching as down as the animal and the vegetative life. For example, Ficino claimed that animals and plants follow their inner sense, i.e., the vegetative imagination, in order to get both pleasure and nourishment. Afterward, they “remember” the path followed by their imaginations. In the commentary on Plato’s *Philebus*, he says that the nature of “playful dogs, musical birds, ants” and “even plants...paints and forms the body with artful shapes and with the countless species and variety of colour as if by some conscious art of the inner phantasy” (Ficino 1975, 328–331). The essential connection between imagination and memory is best represented in Giordano Bruno’s art of memory, where images and similitude become the vehicles of recollective thought (Vasoli 1958, 285–198; Mertens 2018, 95–149; Yates 1966, 256–257). In fact, Bruno believed that the imagination could bind thinking (Mertens 2018, 209). The association between the imagination and memory informs the

memory systems designed by other scholars of the time, such as the famous English Paracelsian physician Robert Fludd (1574–1637), but also Charles de Bovelles (1475–1566) and the less famous Johannes Spangerbergius (Rossi 2000, 68–61).

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- Ficino, Marsilio
- Fludd, Robert
- Imagination in Renaissance Philosophy
- Memory in the Renaissance, Art of

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Senses, Outer

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Abstract

The Renaissance witnessed a new philosophical interest in the complex phenomenon of sense-perception which proved to be essential for the development of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries empiricism. Theoretical inquiries into the workings of the senses were mainly concerned with the ways in which the senses respond to reality and with their

cognitive ability, which was assessed according to the degree of truthfulness of the information they provided. Following the Platonic and the Aristotelian tradition, sight and hearing were considered the noblest senses, closer than the others to the immateriality of cognitive knowledge. The Renaissance, however, witnessed also a rehabilitation of the sense of touch, increasingly seen as an essential medium between the soul and the external world.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Renaissance was a golden age for the development of philosophical inquiries into the epistemology of sense-perception, which paved the way for the full rehabilitation of the senses operated by later philosophers, such as John Locke (1632–1704), George Berkeley (1685–1753), and David Hume (1711–1776). Theoretical inquiries into the workings of the senses were mainly concerned with the ways in which the senses respond to reality and with their cognitive ability, which was assessed according to the degree of truthfulness of the information they provided (Bianchi 1996; Bianchi 2006; Giglioni 2013). Francis Bacon (1561–1626) was one of the most outspoken advocates of the epistemological legitimacy of sense experience. Even though he was aware of the dangers implied by the human tendency to misinterpret sense perception, he believed that the study of natural phenomena must be grounded on senses. In general, the Renaissance understanding of the senses was informed by a time-honored tradition reaching back to Plato and Aristotle, which regarded sight as the highest sense, followed in order by hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Sight was closely associated with thinking and deemed essential for scientific inquiry, which depended upon the observation of the visible properties of nature. This reliability was further assured by the fact that sight worked from a distance and instantaneously. In his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*, Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) claims that: “Sight works from farther than hearing and is

able to do instantly what hearing does in time. For we first see the lightning and then we hear the thunder” (Ficino 1987, 78; Corrias 2018, 195). Likewise, for Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) sight was “the worthiest sense” (Leonardo da Vinci 1970, I, 53–4) and for Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) it was the “most excellent and noble of the senses” (Galileo Galilei 1957, 255). While sight was thought to be at the service of learning, hearing, which acted directly on the *spiritus* – i.e., the pneumatic substance which was thought to link the body to the soul – was believed to affect the emotional self (Ficino 1576, 1453; Walker 1958, 7). However, there were some authors who considered hearing to be intellectually superior to sight. Among them, Charles de Bovelles (1479–1567) and Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) stand out for the originality of their arguments, mainly based on the assumption that simplicity is metaphysically superior to “mixture.” Since sounds are absolutely pure, both philosophers claimed that hearing is superior to all other senses that have objects of a compound nature (Cardano 1663, 572; Bovelles 1511, Corrias 2018, 195; Frangenberg 1991, 83). Despite keeping with the previous tradition, which considered sight and hearing to be nobler – as they were the least dependent on the physical presence of their objects – the Renaissance witnessed a rehabilitation of the sense of touch (Giglioni 2013, 18). Touch found a prominent place in the philosophy of Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588), who claimed that sense perception takes place when the *spiritus* becomes aware of the impact of the external objects, which causes it to contract or to dilate (Giglioni 2009). Hence all senses, with the exception of hearing, depend on this original impact and, ultimately, derive from touch (Telesio 1976, 30; Cassirer 1964, 145 ff.; Giglioni 2013). Even intellectual functions, for him, originate in this impact and are, in themselves, a form of “touching” (Cassirer 1964, 146). Following Telesio’s approach, Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) claimed that all sensory experiences are caused by the *spiritus* being modified by the “touching” of the external world (Ernst 2010, 119) and that everything in the universe senses, including plants and stones

(Giglioni 2010). Taste and smell received far less philosophical attention, even though the period witnessed “a gradual narrowing of the divide separating taste from the palate (the organ of savoring flavors) and smell from the nose (understood as the metonymical representative of *fiuto*, that is, the ability to detect and interpret clues)” (Giglioni 2013, 16).

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Sepúlveda, Juan Ginés de

Born: 1490, Pozoblanco

Died: 1573, Pozoblanco

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Abstract

Though mainly known today for his polemical writings against Bartolomé de las Casas in defense of the Spanish conquest of America and for his views on natural slavery, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda was one of the most distinguished representatives of sixteenth-century Spanish humanism, ranking alongside Juan Luis Vives and Antonio Agustín. Not only did he write a vast quantity of works on history, law, politics, and chronology; he also produced important Latin translations of Aristotle and Aristotle's third-century AD Greek commentator, Alexander of Aphrodisias. As a translator of, and commentator on, both philosophers, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda is a notable example of the intellectual richness and depth of Renaissance Aristotelianism. Although a student of the scholastic Pietro Pomponazzi, Sepúlveda learned to be sensitive to the humanistic

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concern for Aristotle promoted by Alberto Pio and put into practice by many scholars in this period. Unlike his teacher, Sepúlveda had an excellent command of Greek and was well acquainted with the techniques of the humanists. In his role as a commentator on, and translator of Greek philosophical writings, we see exemplified many of the key features which characterized fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Aristotelianism at its best.

Biography

Born in southern Spain, Sepúlveda studied Greek and philosophy at the University of Alcalá. Inaugurated in 1498 by Cardinal Archbishop Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, the University of Alcalá applied the program of humanism to its curriculum and to the study of Scripture, even if conservative positions within it ultimately prevailed. As early as 1508, Jiménez himself initiated a great project of biblical scholarship which resulted in the printing between 1514 and 1517 (even though they were not actually published until 1522) of the six volumes of the renowned Complutensian Polyglot Bible (thus called from Complutum, the Latin name of Alcalá de Henares). The foundation of the University had, moreover, its roots in Jiménez's desire for religious reform. The institution became a center for ecclesiastical education, and among its professors and students were the first enthusiastic supporters of Erasmus in Spain.

Having received his first orders in 1515, Sepúlveda was recommended by Cisneros for the Spanish College of Bologna, where he studied under Pietro Pomponazzi until he received his doctorate in 1523. It was at Bologna that Sepúlveda met Giulio de' Medici, the future Pope Clement VII, who encouraged him to begin translating Aristotle's *Meteorology*, *Parva Naturalia*, *De generatione et corruptione*, and the Pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, a task which he continued afterward when he joined the papal curia. In Rome, Sepúlveda enjoyed a prominent role within the papal entourage at the time. As an example, in 1524 – also upon Clement VII's

advice – Erasmus wrote his *De libero arbitrio diatribae sive collatio*, an answer to the arguments which had been put forward by Luther in his *Assertio omnium articulorum per Bullam Leonis X novissimam damnatorum* of 1520. Luther's own reply came very soon and, a year later, he published the *De servo arbitrio*, a treatise in which the German theologian dismantled Erasmus's points. Sepúlveda joined the dispute in 1526 with his *De fato et libero arbitrio contra Lutherum*, in which he drew on Alexander of Aphrodisias's arguments on the matter. Acting once again in response to the suggestion of Clement VII, Sepúlveda decided to translate another text by Alexander of Aphrodisias, in this case his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which was published in 1527.

While in Bologna, Sepúlveda also enjoyed the company of his patron Alberto Pio de Carpi. In the following years, Sepúlveda assisted Alberto Pio in the composition of successive attacks on Erasmus, which culminated in his own *Antapologia pro Alberto Pio* of 1532. Despite Erasmus' shrill diatribe against Alberto Pio, Sepúlveda was advised by Pope Clement VII to keep his *Antapologia* within conciliatory terms. Alarmed by the progress of Lutheranism and aware of the pernicious effects that Machiavelli's thought could have on Christianity, the papal curia was reluctant to open a third front of hostilities and imposed restraint on Erasmus' Catholic critics. Although Sepúlveda's attacks on Erasmus' ideas fully came to the fore during his time in Italy, his attitude encapsulates the complex and at times contradictory nature of Antierasmianism in Spain. As with other Spanish critics of Erasmus, Sepúlveda was forced to tread a careful path between his orthodox views, his close ties with prominent members of the imperial court (a center of Erasmianism until the early thirties), and the demands imposed on him by the ecclesiastical authorities. Sepúlveda's frontal opposition to Erasmus (whose scholarship, however, the Spaniard held in high esteem) is all the more paradoxical given his training at the University of Alcalá.

Pope Clement's death in 1534 was the main reason for Sepúlveda's return to Spain, which

occurred two years later. Sepúlveda's appointment as official historian to the Emperor in 1536 and his selection as one of the tutors to the future Philip II six years later were an incentive to prepare his translation of and commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*, which was completed in 1548. Sepúlveda's finest contribution to Greek scholarship, his annotated translation of the *Politics* was reprinted in 1601 and 1775, the latter coinciding with a movement at the end of the eighteenth century to reprint many Renaissance translations of classical philosophers and scientific writers.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Proof of Sepúlveda's reputation as a translator can however be traced back to his lifetime and can be found first and foremost in the various reprints of his Latin versions. Except for his rendering of the *Politics*, the whole corpus of Sepúlveda's translations was reprinted in Paris in 1532. A reprint of the *De generatione et corruptione* was further issued in Germany in 1537, and as many as five editions of Sepúlveda's version of Alexander of Aphrodisias's commentary came off European presses between 1527 and 1561. Further evidence of the centrality of Sepúlveda's philological activity within sixteenth-century interest in Aristotle is given by his contribution to establishing the original texts of Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias. Until 1847, when the Greek text was first published, Sepúlveda's version of Alexander of Aphrodisias provided philosophers with a reliable Latin text of an important ancient commentary on one of Aristotle's most studied treatises. For its part, Sepúlveda's translation of the *Politics*, in conjunction with his annotations, became a useful tool for establishing the text of a handful of passages in Aristotle's work.

As with many sixteenth-century volumes, Sepúlveda's translations are often accompanied by dedicatory letters. Many humanists viewed such dedicatory epistles as opportunities for career building. They were used by these writers as vehicles for self-promotion, as a means to gaining financial rewards, and to advance their own humanist cause. Examination of this material

(as well as other "paratexts" such as prefaces, liminary verse, colophons, and so forth) is crucial if we are to understand fully the way authors, publishers, patrons, editors, and translators prepared a given text for its readership. Sepúlveda is no exception in this respect and his dedicatory letters help us to follow his movements in Italy and Spain in the 1520s, 1530s, and 1540s. The texts map Sepúlveda's life from his early years at Bologna in the company of Alberto Pio of Carpi and of Giulio de' Medici, to whom he dedicated, respectively, his translations of *De incessu animalium* and the *Parva Naturalia*, through his move to Rome in 1523, when he dedicated his version of *De generatione et corruptione* to Pope Adrian VI and his translation of *De mundo* to Ercole Gonzaga. The letters also bear witness to Sepúlveda's connection with the intellectual forces of Papal Rome throughout the 1520s and his links with the Spanish political establishment in the early 1530s. Whereas the dedicatory letter to Pope Clement VII prefacing his translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias of 1527 shows Sepúlveda's attempts at securing a prominent role within the Roman curia, his letter to Charles V accompanying the translation of the *Meteorology* in 1532 reflects his gradual approach to the Spanish party.

Sepúlveda's dedicatory letters therefore seem to have served a very immediate purpose and reflect Sepúlveda's efforts to gain patronage from key figures within papal Rome and Imperial Spain at a very precise time in his life. This is further reinforced by the inclusion, in Sepúlveda's own edition of his correspondence published in Salamanca in 1557, of a handful of letters dating back to the mid-1530s in which Sepúlveda discussed his ongoing translation of Aristotle's *Ethics*. Not completed until the mid-1550s, at a moment when Sepúlveda was collecting his own correspondence, this version was, however, never brought to the press despite Sepúlveda's desperate attempts to obtain permission for its publication.

Sepúlveda's choice of dedicatees for his translations doubtless owed to a conscious and careful exercise of self-advertisement. Throughout his life, Sepúlveda was no stranger to promoting his translations even before they appeared. The

publication in 1527 of his Latin translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is a good example of this. Aware of the expectations caused (as early as 1523) by the publication of this previously unknown work, in his dedicatory letter to Pope Clement VII, Sepúlveda is keen to highlight the importance of his scholarly enterprise. He is particularly concerned with showing the Herculean task he had to face when he undertook the translation of Alexander's text. Lack of a Greek printed edition and the absence of any Latin version – Sepúlveda points out several times – made it necessary to establish the source text before any translation could be carried out. To prove the arduous nature of his task, Sepúlveda states that he took into account “quattuor antiquissima exemplaria,” full of corrupt passages. Another example of Sepúlveda's self-advertisement tactics is the publication of the translation of and commentary on the *Politics*. Before the text was published in Paris in 1548, the Spanish translator had found an ingenious way to publicize his forthcoming version. In his dialogue *Democrates secundus, sive de iustis causis belli apud Indios* (*The second Democrates, or on the just causes of the war against the Indians*), written three years earlier, one of the characters quotes from Sepúlveda's Latin version of the *Politics*, with only a few slight changes from the printed text. And soon after its publication, in a letter to his publisher dated August 1549, he boasted of the excellent reception given to his translation: “From my friends' letters I learnt that my work has been received by scholars in France, Italy, Germany and Belgium with approval and, so they write, applause.” Despite these claims, Sepúlveda's translation and commentary were not mentioned at all during his lifetime, and it was only after his death in 1573 that scholars started to point out the relevance and quality of his work.

Sepúlveda's zeal in advertising his own translation is a reflection of the fierce competition posed by rival translators of Aristotle. In the case of the *Politics*, Sepúlveda's words as well as silence on the part of his contemporaries are to

be connected to the controversies, which emerged in the first half of the sixteenth century, between those Aristotelian translators like Joachim Périon, who favored a slavish imitation of Ciceronian vocabulary and style, and those, like Sepúlveda, who were not averse to employing nonclassical terminology. In a long passage from the preface to his version of the *Politics*, published not so long after Périon's translation, Sepúlveda outlined his own method and acknowledged the difficulties in harmonizing accuracy and a complete fidelity to Ciceronian vocabulary when translating Aristotle:

And it is not my intention, when translating others' work or explaining Aristotle, to be more Ciceronian than Aristotelian. Indeed there is a big difference between translating into Latin the Greek rhetoricians or historians and the philosophers, particularly Aristotle, who, despite standing out in elegance and correctness, when dealing with obscure and unknown topics, is compelled to use either new words or words never heard by the people and never used by learned men. These problems make it very difficult for the translator to be Aristotelian and Ciceronian at the same time, although it seems to me that I am Ciceronian enough if I have achieved what I attempted, that is to use a plain and clear speech as much as the contents of the source text allow me.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the preface to his translation of the *Politics* is used by Sepúlveda to prove his credentials as translator. Eager to beat competition from other translators, Sepúlveda regrets that he has taken up such a task without any appropriate help, due to the unreliable translations at his disposal. Glossing over the fact that Leonardo Bruni's elegant translation of the text had been available since 1438, Sepúlveda dismisses the work of previous Latin translators of the *Politics*: “I cannot give the name of translators to those who, with excessive fidelity, have rendered this text word for word.” Without naming names, Sepúlveda seems to be referring to William of Moerbeke's version, which is further criticized in a gloss to his translation (“...quem secutus vetus interpres, qui suo instituto Aristotelem ad verbum convertit”).

Sepúlveda's decision to dedicate his translation of the *De incessu animalium* to Alberto Pio should

also be regarded as an attempt to defend his own version against extant translations of the text (most notably that of François Vatable published in 1518). In order to lend prestige to his work – in his dedicatory epistle to Alberto Pio, a champion of Aristotelian studies in his own right, as described by Charles Schmitt – Sepúlveda craftily drops the names of two scholars who have helped him with his translation of Aristotle. He refers to Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (himself engaged in a version of the text at that time) and Pietro Pomponazzi (Sepúlveda's own teacher). He mentions giving his version to these two famous north Italian philosophers in order to solicit their corrections and suggestions. Moreover, as with the preface to his translation of the *Politics*, Sepúlveda employs the prologue to the *De incessu animalium* as an opportunity to attack rival translators of the Aristotelian corpus. In his dedicatory letter, Sepúlveda strongly condemns the method of the Hellenist and Ciceronian Latinist Petrus Alcyonius (1487–1527?), whose translations of Aristotle were published in Venice in 1521. He recalls how he first heard of Alcyonius when he was about to complete his own translation of the *Parva Naturalia*. Advised by Alberto Pio, after reading Alcyonius's version, Sepúlveda decided to write a pamphlet setting out the numerous mistakes he had found in the text of his rival. Alcyonius is not, however, the only target of Sepúlveda's criticism throughout his prefaces. He often censures the carelessness and lack of accuracy shown by previous translators, a factor which – he claims – drove him to attempt new translations of certain Aristotelian texts. As he states in the dedicatory letter to his version of the *Meteorology*, the main reason for producing another translation of the text was “the negligence of those who had translated this work before me.” In Sepúlveda's eyes, the act of translation goes, however, beyond the merely linguistic plane. Hence, his scorn – in his preface to the *De incessu animalium* – of those translators who, neglecting the study of philosophy as a necessary preliminary to producing a Latin version of Aristotle's writings, were confident simply in their

knowledge of both Latin and Greek. It was precisely his superior knowledge of Aristotelian natural philosophy that, Sepúlveda claims, led him to undertake a revision of his first translation of the *Parva Naturalia* only ten years after it had appeared in 1522. Central to Sepúlveda's attacks on his rivals and to his self-portrait as a solitary scholar battling against difficulties of all kind, is therefore the establishment of his stature as a skillful translator.

In Sepúlveda's dedicatory letters, praise of his own exegetical activity goes hand in hand with grateful tributes to the intellectual milieu within which his work was produced. Alberto Pio's contribution to the recovery, dissemination, and editing of the Hellenistic commentators of Aristotle is commended by Sepúlveda, who, through his close association with the Prince of Carpi, was able to use this mass of newly available texts for his own translations. In the preface to his version of the *Meteorology*, he informs us that, during the process of translation, he has consulted the commentaries on the text of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Olympiodorus. Significantly, the manuscript containing Alexander's commentary was borrowed from the Vatican Library sometime in 1518 by Alberto Pio, who kept it until 1524. It is reasonable to assume that, because of the close relation between Sepúlveda and the Prince of Carpi, the former had frequent access to the text of Alexander in Alberto Pio's hands.

Sepúlveda is also careful to present his Spanish and Italian patrons' commitment to scholarship as part of a long-standing tradition of patronage dating back to antiquity, which the Spanish translator is eager to partake. By hailing his dedicatee Charles V as a new Alexander, the Great Sepúlveda implicitly compares himself to Aristotle, who, as recalled by Sepúlveda in his letter to the Emperor, had dedicated his *De mundo* to Alexander (except, of course, that it was not Aristotle). The parallels drawn by Sepúlveda in his prefaces between his patrons and prominent benefactors from the early years of Humanism also reinforce this idea of continuity. In the dedicatory letter to Adrian VI prefacing his version of the *De*

generatione et interitu, Sepúlveda links Adrian's intellectual patronage to the active role, played by Nicholas V in the first half of the fifteenth century, in promoting Latin translations of Greek philosophical texts. Likewise, the Roman curia under Giulio de' Medici (Clement VII) is compared to the courts of his predecessors Lorenzo and Pietro in Florence.

Underlying his eulogy of the Medici and of the scholarly initiatives of Pope Adrian are Sepúlveda's subtle efforts to model himself upon the illustrious translators patronized by the Medici family and the Roman Pontiffs in the preceding century. Of all those, the Spanish translator regards himself as a close follower of the Byzantine scholar Johannes Argyropoulos, a key figure within the history of philosophical translations and whose versions of Aristotle had been commissioned by Lorenzo and Pietro de' Medici. Walking in the footsteps of Argyropoulos, Sepúlveda prides himself on participating in a new style of translation which – since the early years of the former century – had been replacing the rough versions of the Middle Ages and renewing the criteria used until then. Alongside Argyropoulos, he mentions the name of another Byzantine emigré, who dedicated his translations to Pope Nicholas V, Theodorus Gaza, the only one, according to Sepúlveda, who bears comparison with Argyropoulos. Sepúlveda's review of the best fifteenth-century philosophical translators is, however, not restricted to Latin Aristotelian ones. Well acquainted with other philosophical traditions and aware of the availability of translations of and commentaries on a wide variety of Greek texts, he praises Marsilio Ficino, another protégée of the Medici, comparing his activity as a translator of Plato with that of Argyropoulos in the Aristotelian tradition.

Argyropoulos, Gaza, and Ficino are enthusiastically described by Sepúlveda as the pioneers in a new style of translation aiming at replacing the medieval word-for-word method. Yet, the prestige and skill of these scholars as translators do not prevent Sepúlveda from disagreeing at times with their translation criteria as can be seen from a gloss to the *De sensu et sensilibus*. Sepúlveda's

assessment goes, however, beyond minor criticisms of specific passages in the translations. Despite his praise of Argyropoulos and Gaza, he exposes some of the shortcomings in their translation program. When addressing Giulio de' Medici in the preface to his translation of the *Parva Naturalia*, he reminds his dedicatee of the need to undertake versions of those writings not translated by Argyropoulos: "I thought it would be appropriate for me to offer you the translation of works overlooked by Argyropoulos." Moreover, former Aristotelian translators, he points out in the preface to his version of Alexander of Aphrodisias, neglected the texts of the Greek commentators on Aristotle: "For Theodorus Gaza, Johannes Argyropoulos, Ermolao Barbaro and Girolamo Donato all completely kept away from the commentaries on Aristotle." In Sepúlveda's eyes, his translation of Alexander's commentary would thus contribute to a deeper knowledge of Aristotle and fill the gap left by Argyropoulos and Gaza. Sepúlveda portrays himself then as the natural heir to the Byzantine scholars of the fifteenth century:

At the desire of your ancestors Johannes Argyropoulos translated rather fitly and elegantly the great part of Aristotle. For his part, Theodorus Gaza successfully and brilliantly rendered for Nicholas V both the *De natura et generatione animalium* and the *Problems*. Although we would not dare be compared to these men, according to the smallness of our mind, we have pursued their remains since we wish to be grateful to you.

Sepúlveda's versions of Greek philosophy included annotations. Appended only to his translations of the *Parva Naturalia* and the *Politics*, Sepúlveda's notes vary in length. Whereas in the case of the *Parva Naturalia* short annotations appear in the margins of the printed text, the much longer glosses to the books of the *Politics* are placed at the end of each chapter. Numbering a total of seven hundred, of which less than fifty belong to the translation of the *Parva Naturalia*, the annotations, according to Sepúlveda, are to analyze a selection of chosen passages. Some of the glosses to the *Parva Naturalia* deal with matters of textual criticism and other notes to

the text are merely explanations of Greek words or expressions and their nearest Latin equivalent. Sepúlveda's annotations to Aristotle's books on natural philosophy, therefore, constitute an excellent source that allows us to gain a deeper knowledge of his critical and exegetical methods.

Nevertheless, the most interesting annotations, which I would briefly like to discuss in the final part of my entry, are those belonging to the *Politics*. Arguably, their importance lies in the fact that they seem to assist Sepúlveda in making his own reputation as a prominent scholar in the Spanish court. Published in 1548, the version of the *Politics* must be seen as concomitant to Sepúlveda's role as one of the tutors to the future Philip II, a position the Spanish translator had coveted since the early 1530s. His eventual appointment in 1542 seems to be the reason behind his decision to dedicate his translation to the Spanish Prince six years later and to prescribe the text for his education. The contents of the *Politics* – and particularly of those books in which Aristotle reviews the different political regimes – enable Sepúlveda to make a favorable comparison in his annotations between antiquity and his own times, as well as to praise the immediate ancestors of his young dedicatee.

Sepúlveda was, however, drafting his dedicatory letter to Philip at a very crucial moment in his life. In 1548, two of the most prominent theologians from the University of Salamanca, Melchor Cano and Bartolomé Carranza, were asked by the Crown to examine a work completed by Sepúlveda three years earlier in dialogue form and entitled *Democrates secundus, sive de iustis causis belli apud Indios* (*The second Democrates, or on the just causes of the war against the Indians*). According to its author, the American Indians were like “pigs with their eyes always fixed on the ground.” Their brutish behavior, cannibalism, and paganism made them slaves by nature to their Spanish masters. In his *Democrates*, Sepúlveda issued four main justifications for enslaving Indians. First, their natural condition deemed them fit for slavery, and it was the responsibility of the Spaniards to act as

masters. Second, Spaniards were entitled to prevent Indians from engaging in cannibalism as they saw fit. Third, the same went for Indians who sacrificed innocents to their Gods. Fourth, slavery was an effective method of converting Indians to Christianity. Drawing on Aristotle's ideas on natural slavery discussed in his first book of the *Politics*, he concluded that war against the Indians was just on the grounds that they had violated natural law and were barbarous by nature. As Sepúlveda states:

Now compare these qualities of wisdom, inventiveness, magnanimity, temperance, humanity and religion [of the Spaniards] with those little men in whom one can scarcely find the remains of humanity, who not only lack culture, but who do not even use or know of the written word, lack written law, have barbaric institutions and customs, and do not preserve monuments of their history, but only a certain obscure and vague memory of some facts recorded in certain paintings. As for their virtues, if you want to know of their temperance and meekness, what can one expect of men given over to all manner of passions and loathsome fickleness and prone to feeding on human flesh? Do not believe that before the arrival of the Spaniards they used to live in the Saturnian peace sung by the poets; on the contrary, they used to wage war against each other continuously with such a fury that they considered the victory null if they did not satisfy their phenomenal hunger with the flesh of their enemies – an atrocity that is so much more magnificent let alone far removed from the invincible ferocity of the Scythians, who also fed on human bodies, since the former are so cowardly and timid that they can scarcely resist the hostile presence of our men, and often thousands and thousands of them have fled like women on being defeated by a small group of Spaniards whose numbers barely made up one hundred.

Given its inflammatory tone and the arguments it employed, the *Democrates secundus* was denied the royal license without which no book could legally be printed in Spain. Convinced that Bartolomé de las Casas – who in 1542 had written a fiercest critique of Spanish colonialism in the New World, published ten years later – was ultimately responsible for that decision, Sepúlveda pressed his case with the Council of Indies, which in August 1550 organized a debate between the two men. Sepúlveda's position was supported by the colonists and landowners who benefited

from the *encomienda* system. In the *encomienda*, the Spanish Crown granted a person a specified number of natives for whom they were to take responsibility. In theory, the receiver of the grant was to protect the natives from warring tribes and to instruct them in the Spanish language and in the Catholic faith: in return, they could extract tribute from the natives in the form of labor, gold, or other products. In practice, the difference between *encomienda* and slavery could be minimal. Many natives were forced to do hard labor and subjected to extreme punishment and death if they resisted. For his part, Las Casas represented one side of the debate. His position found some support from the monarchy, which wanted to control the power of the *encomenderos*, and within the Catholic Church. Although there was no formal outcome to the affair, the theologians refused to change their minds about the subversive nature of Sepúlveda's text.

Sepúlveda must have, therefore, regarded his dedicatory epistle to the future king prefacing his translation of Aristotle's *Politics* as a good opportunity to rebuild his reputation. The annotations appended to his version could be used by Sepúlveda in order to seek royal endorsement for his views on natural slavery. A gloss to a passage in the first book of the *Politics* in which Aristotle discusses the concept of natural slavery allows Sepúlveda to expound his ideas on the subject before the future King, in theory, the first reader of Sepúlveda's translation as it was Philip to whom the text was dedicated and to whom some of the annotations are directly addressed. Significantly, the annotation to *Politics* 1255 a 32–35 follows very closely the argumentation developed by Sepúlveda in his *Democrates secundus*.

Sepúlveda's dedicatory letters and annotations give us an insight into the ways in which not only did he read Aristotle and the text of Aristotle but also he wished to be perceived and read by his prospective patrons and fellow translators. Fortunately, in the abovementioned 1537 reprint of Sepúlveda's *De generatione et interitu*, we have a first-hand testimony of how Sepúlveda's translation method was actually judged by his contemporaries. Published in Leipzig by Nicolaus Faber,

this pocket-sized volume, of which only one copy is known to exist, includes a series of printed annotations in the margins of the text. Seemingly prepared by the printer, these annotations constitute a reflection on Sepúlveda's exegetical criteria. Particularly interesting are a handful of notes where some of Sepúlveda's solutions are negatively compared to the proposals offered by one of his rivals, the Frenchman François Vatable, whose translation of the text had been published in Paris in 1518. All in all, the commentator seems to prefer Vatable's version to Sepúlveda's translation, which is censured for its freedom and departure from the original Greek. Ironically, the most common feature of Sepúlveda's style is his respect for the contents of the texts to be translated, the pursuit of accuracy, and clarity being a constant theme in his prefaces and dedicatory letters. Despite Sepúlveda's conscious efforts to publicize his versions and translation method during his lifetime, the importance of his contribution to Aristotelian studies would only be fully appreciated in the centuries to come.

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Serpent

► [Devil, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Severinus, Petrus

Born: 1540/1542, Ribe, Denmark

Died: 28 July 1602, Copenhagen, Denmark

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Abstract

Petrus Severinus, a Latinized form of Peder Sørensen, was a Danish contemporary and one-time friend of the astronomer Tycho Brahe. While a university student, Severinus learned of the novel-sounding medical ideas propounded by the Swiss-Austrian physician Paracelsus, editions of whose works were being issued from German and Swiss presses during the 1560s. Severinus and fellow student Johannes Pratensis traveled extensively in Germany, Switzerland, France, and Italy from

1565 to 1571, perhaps acquiring a taste for Paracelsian and Neoplatonist ideas in Basel or Paris. In the spirit of the French physician Jean Fernel, who sought to harmonize Galen's medicine with Platonic philosophy and thus give classical medicine a more Christian interpretation, and the Parisian physician Jacques Gohory, who educed commonalities between Paracelsus' ideas and Neoplatonism, Severinus composed *The Ideal of Philosophical Medicine* (Basel, 1571) with the ostensible aim of reconciling the medicine of Paracelsus with that of the classical giants Hippocrates and Galen. Severinus' synthesis, which used the Aristotelian embryological concept of *epigenesis* as a model for elaborating a basically Neoplatonist emanation theory to explain the origin and development of bodies, produced a general biological theory that Andreas Libavius termed "vital philosophy." Severinus vitalism, positing the development of bodies from seminal ideas placed in nature by a providential God, provided an attractive explanation for medical writers, poets, and natural philosophers in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Born to bourgeois parents in provincial Jutland in 1540 or 1542, Severinus served as Royal Physician to King Frederik II of Denmark and then his son King Christian IV from 1572 until his death in 1602.

Alternate Names

[Sørensen, Peder](#)

Biography

Petrus Severinus was born Peder Sørensen in Ribe, an important regional town and seaport in southern Jutland, astride the main overland trading route between Denmark and the continent. His basic education at Ribe's Latin school provided him a good grounding in classical letters and eloquence, which enabled him to lecture on Latin poetry at the University of Copenhagen,

where he probably attained his bachelor's degree in 1561. Eager to pursue a medical education, which was not well supported at the university, he went to France in 1562. He returned to Denmark in 1563, when he was granted a canonry to support his study, and he completed a master's degree in Copenhagen in 1564. There he became friends with another aspiring medical student from Jutland, Johannes Pratensis (Hans Filipsen du Pr ), and the two shared a royal stipend to study abroad and matriculated at the University of Padua in 1566. Padua was the leading medical school in Europe at the time, owing in part to the reputation of its anatomists, the recently deceased Andreas Vesalius and Gabriele Falloppio, who was succeeded by William Harvey's teacher Hieronymus Fabricius in 1565. Severinus' writings show no evidence of interest in anatomy or surgery, and it is conceivable that he abandoned Padua for Paris, where he pursued Neoplatonic philosophy and chemical medicine advocated by Theophrastus Paracelsus, as evident from his manuscript on philosophical, astronomical, medical, and cabalistic questions, dated Paris, July 1567. He returned to Italy at some point, completing his signature work reconciling Platonist and Aristotelian natural philosophy with Paracelsian conceptions in Florence in November 1570. Severinus published this book, the *Ideal of Philosophical Medicine* (*Idea medicinae philosophicae*), in Basel, Switzerland, en route home in 1571, where he was appointed Royal Physician to King Frederik II, whose retinue also included the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe. Severinus served Frederik and his son Christian IV until his death in 1602. Two surviving daughters married government officials, and his son Frederik, an M.D., practiced medicine.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Severinus' significance in the history of science and medicine rests on his 1571 book, which a generation of scholars used as a guide to the complex and poorly articulated ideas of the German heterodox medical writer Theophrastus

Paracelsus. Severinus harmonized Paracelsian medicine with the Neoplatonic metaphysics of Plotinus and the biology of Aristotle and Galen by elaborating on the Stoic concept of *seminal reasons*, making these metaphysical seeds the foundation of his own theory of the generation of entities in the material world. Basically adapting Platonic idealism and Aristotelian epigenetic embryological theory to explain the generation of all material bodies, Severinus articulated Paracelsus' philosophical and medical views as what one critic, Andreas Libavius, termed "vital philosophy."

Impact and Legacy

It was mainly as an expositor of Paracelsian ideas that Severinus was known. Daniel Sennert referred to a "Severinian school" of thought (*secta Severiana*), Hermann Conring – no lover of Paracelsus – regarded Severinus as "the first among the students of Paracelsus," and the obscure Paracelsian writer Johan Kozackius called him "a second Paracelsus." But beyond his capacity as an interpreter of Paracelsus, it was the broad application of his vital philosophy within natural philosophy and medical theory that explains why Severinus and his ideas were widely cited by late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors, ranging from Paracelsian authors Thomas Moffett, Oswald Croll, Johannes Hartmann, and Jan Baptista van Helmont to the non-Paracelsians Daniel Sennert, Pierre Gassendi, Robert Boyle, and John Donne, and explains why his conception continued to have relevance to vitalists into the nineteenth century. Severinus' seed concept was employed to explain everything from the appearance of the 1572 supernova by Tycho Brahe to the healing properties and heat of underground mineral waters by Edward Jordan in addition to explaining how diseases arise through physical or metaphysical "transplantation" in the human body. Severinus' legacy is best represented in the extensive commentaries his book elicited, one by the German medical student and physician Ambrosius Rhodius

(1643) and two by the Scottish chemist William Davidson of Aberdeen (1660, 1663).

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Sforno, R. Obadiah ben Jacob

Born: Cesena, c. 1470

Died: c. 1550

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Abstract

R. Obadiah ben Jacob Sforno is considered among the foremost Bible commentators. Author of several commentaries on the Bible and philosophic books, Sforno is best remembered for his *Be'ur al ha-Torah*, a commentary on the Torah (Pentateuch) and his most important work. The *Be'ur* has been reprinted numerous times and is included in every *Mikraot Gedolot* (Rabbinic Bible). The *Or Ammim*, a philosophic work, is in opposition to those tenets of Aristotelian philosophy in conflict with the Jewish religion. Well trained in several fields, apart from his rabbinic learning, Sforno's scholarship was recognized in both Jewish and non-Jewish circles.

Biography

Born in Cesena, Italy, Sforno acquired a thorough rabbinic education and studied mathematics, philology, and philosophy prior to traveling to Rome, where he taught the Talmud, studied, and afterward practiced medicine. His rabbinic learning was recognized by such prominent figures as R. Meir Katzenellenbogen and R. Joseph Colon, both of whom refer to him in their responsa. His standing as a scholar was also acknowledged by Cardinal Domenico Grimani, who recommended Sforno to the humanist Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522). When the latter sought to improve his knowledge of Hebrew literature and grammar, Sforno wrote and then translated into Latin a work on Hebrew grammar for him. He left Rome in 1525, traveling to Italy, before settling in Bologna, the residence of his brother Hananel, who supported him financially for some time. He founded a yeshivah in Bologna which he headed until his death.

The *Be'ur al ha-Torah*, Sforno's commentary on the Torah (Pentateuch), is his most important work. It is possible that the first draft of the *Be'ur* was written while Obadiah was still in Rome, where he was studying medicine and giving lectures on the Torah. The first edition (Giovanni Gryphio: 4^o: 92 ff.) was printed 17 years after his death in Venice (1567). It is based on a manuscript in his possession during the last years of his life, and is therefore the final version of the commentary. The manuscript was edited by his brother Hananel.

The *Be'ur* is completed with a table of the subject matter of the commentary by weekly Torah readings, and *Kavvanot ha-Torah* (a discourse on the intentions of the Torah). The table is not a listing of the contents in the normal sense of the word; it was prepared by Sforno as an outline of the points he wished to emphasize prior to writing the *Be'ur*. Written in a succinct manner, they serve as questions for the reader. The *Kavvanot ha-Torah* is, to some extent, a supplement and completion to Sforno's *Or Ammim* (Gottlieb and Zev 1980). The subject matter is the structure of the Torah, the rationale of the

precepts, with emphasis on the Temple and sacrifices, and the deeds of the patriarchs.



1567, *Be'ur al ha-Torah*, Obadiah ben Jacob Sforno, Venice

Courtesy of the Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad Ohel Yosef Yitzhak

Sforno uses a clear and lucid style and is concerned with the literal meaning of the text. Although it is known that he was familiar with kabbalistic works, here he eschews mystical interpretations. He addresses ethical and philosophical issues, referring to both the halakhah and aggadah in the commentary. He is not reluctant to suggest innovative and even controversial interpretations. His varied sources, in addition to the Bible, Babylonian Talmud, and Midrashim for the *Be'ur*,

reveal his extensive mastery of earlier commentators, among them the Rashi, Abrabanel, Ba'alei Tosafot, *Bekhor Shor*, *Hizzekuni*, ibn Ezra, R. Moses ben Nahman (Ramban), R. Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam), Rav Sa'adiah Gaon, and others. *Be'ur al ha-Torah* has proven to be a popular commentary and was utilized by later commentators, frequently reprinted, and included in every *Mikraot Gedolot* (Rabbinic Bible).

Sforno also produced commentaries on several other books of the Bible, on *Avot*, and *Or Ammim*, as well as works still in manuscript. The *Or Ammim* (*Light of the Nations*, Gottlieb and Zev 1980, 4⁰: 64 ff.) is a philosophical work in defense of Judaism written in opposition to those tenets of Aristotelian philosophy in conflict with Jewish belief. In the introduction, he states that he wrote this work because even such a great personage as Maimonides had expressed belief in the correctness of many of Aristotle's theories. Among the Aristotelian positions, which he attempts to refute utilizing not only biblical but also Aristotle's own teachings, are those on the eternity of matter, God's omniscience, and the universality of the soul.

Sforno opposes the position that the Torah is based on belief rather than knowledge; a person must inquire, not being content with mere belief. The Scriptures provide a clearer and more reliable exposition of truth than philosophy. Only the Bible instructs on the central role of man in the universe, which has been created and exists for man, who, made in God's image, is endowed with free will. Man's purpose is thus to become like his Creator. That is why the righteous man who fulfills God's will is more precious to the Creator than the entire universe and all the heavens. Sforno is considered the last of the Jewish scholastic scholars, as reflected in the subject matter and methodology of *Or Ammim*.

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Sforza, Caterina

Born: 1463, Milan

Died: 1509, Florence

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Abstract

Caterina Sforza (1463–1509) was the daughter of Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan and Lucrezia Landriani. After her marriage to Girolamo Riario, a nephew of Pope Sixtus IV, she became countess of Imola and, later, Forlì; following her husband's assassination in 1488, she continued to govern these territories as regent for her eldest son. Caterina Sforza gained widespread fame for her skill in political and military affairs and was known for her interest in collecting alchemical, medicinal, and cosmetic recipes. In 1499, she lost her territories to the forces of Cesare Borgia and Louis XII. After a period of imprisonment in Rome, she was forced to renounce her claims on Imola and Forlì, and spent the remainder of her life in Florence. Caterina Sforza was the mother of the condottiere Giovanni dalle Bande Nere (1498–1526), whose son Cosimo (1519–1574) became the first Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Biography

Born in Milan in 1463, Caterina Sforza was the daughter of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza and his mistress, Lucrezia Landriani. Raised at her father's court, Caterina received a humanist education and was tutored by Francesco Filelfo. She

established a close relationship with her stepmother, Bona Maria di Savoia, who had married Galeazzo Maria in 1468; the two remained in contact by letter after Caterina's departure from Milan. Bona's apothecary, Cristoforo de Brugora, kept a medicinal garden, and it may have been through Bona that Caterina was first exposed to the cultivation of botanicals that would interest her throughout her life.

In 1473, at age ten, Caterina's marriage to Girolamo Riario, a nephew of Pope Sixtus IV, was arranged – a union that joined the Sforza and papal families. Four years later, in 1477, she made her way to Rome to join her new husband, where her first son, Ottaviano, was born in 1479. Girolamo Riario continued to amass power and in 1480 was given the lordship of Forlì by Sixtus IV. In 1484, however, the situation changed upon the death of Sixtus IV and the resultant period of civil unrest and uncertainty. In an effort to force the cardinals to negotiate terms favorable to herself and her husband, Caterina – pregnant with her fourth child – occupied the fortress of Castel Sant'Angelo, of which her husband served as castellan. Girolamo, however, was working independently to reach his own terms with the cardinals, and Caterina was compelled to abandon Rome with her husband for their territories in the Romagna. The arrival of Caterina and Girolamo in Forlì met with disfavor by many and Girolamo's subsequent levying of taxes increased hostility toward their rule. In 1488, Girolamo was assassinated in a violent plot orchestrated by the rival Orsi family.

In the wake of Girolamo's death Caterina held on to power, retaliating against the organizers of the conspiracy and ruling as regent for her eldest son Ottaviano. In 1488, she began a relationship with Giacomo Feo, brother of the castellan of the fortress of Ravaldino, and may have secretly married him. The relationship was opposed by some who feared it undermined the power of Caterina's Riario son and heir, Ottaviano, and in 1495 Giacomo, too, was murdered. Retaliating even more forcefully than before against the conspirators, Caterina continued to maintain power. In 1497 she wed Giovanni di Pierfrancesco de'

Medici, known as Il Popolano, who had been sent to Forlì as an ambassador for Florence. Their son, Lodovico, born in 1498 (subsequently renamed Giovanni), would go on to attain fame as a military condottiere known as Giovanni dalle Bande Nere (counts of these events are found in Burrièl, 1795; Braschi, 1965; and Pasolini, 1893).

Caterina's political stratagems and military exploits were legendary and confounded standard expectations for the period regarding women's behavior (Breisach, 1967). Machiavelli, who was sent by Florence in 1499 to negotiate grain prices with Caterina, memorialized in his *Discourses* the story of her defense of the fortress of Ravaldino following the coup that killed her first husband. Machiavelli's well-known account of the episode, which recounts how – in response to her foes' threats to kill her hostage children – Caterina lifted her skirts and retorted that she could make more, helped perpetuate a long-standing perception of Caterina as a Renaissance “virago (Machiavelli, 2001).” This episode – and its effect on the historical characterization of Caterina – is analyzed in depth by Bausi (1991) Freccero (1993), and Pasolini (2000).

In 1499, Caterina's defense of Forlì against Cesare Borgia and French forces earned her similar admiration. Writing of the resistance mounted by Caterina, the marchioness of Mantua, Isabella d'Este noted, “if the French condemn the cowardice of men, they must at least praise the daring and worth of Italian women” (Pasolini 1897, 105n1). This time, however, Caterina's efforts were not successful and she was taken as a prisoner to Rome. After a year of confinement in Castel Sant'Angelo (on invented charges that she had attempted to harm the Pope by sending him a letter contaminated by plague virus), Caterina was forced to renounce all claim on Imola and Forlì. She left Rome for Florence, where she would remain for the rest of her life. Here she spent 5 years fighting to secure the patrimony of her Medici son, Giovanni, winning her case in 1505. She also engaged in charitable works, for example, on behalf of the Benedictine convent of

Le Murate, where she resided on occasion. Caterina died in 1509 of a lung ailment and was buried at Le Murate (de Vries 2010).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Caterina Sforza was deeply immersed in the empirical culture of her day (Ray, 2010). As her correspondence attests, she was known to her contemporaries for her interest in alchemical experiments as well as in medicinal and cosmetic recipes and compiled the information she collected in a manuscript that she passed on to her son, Giovanni delle Bande Nere (Sforza, 1894, Nigrisoli 1928, Nigrisoli 1929, Tabanelli, 1970, Loreti Biondi, 1969, Ray, 2013 and Ray, 2015). This manuscript survives in a sixteenth-century transcription made by Lucantonio Cuppano, entitled *Gli Experimenti de la ex [cellentissi]ma s[igno]ra Caterina da Furlj* (transcribed in Pasolini 1893). This activity situates Caterina within a network of early modern men and women of varying social class who sought out and exchanged “secrets” – information about producing medicinal, cosmetic, and alchemical recipes – as a means to establish status and cement social or political relations (Ray, 2015).

Impact and Legacy

Caterina Sforza was the progenitrix of the Medici grand ducal dynasty in Tuscany. Her son, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, was the father of Cosimo I de’ Medici, the first Medici Grand Duke (Tabanelli, 1972). Caterina’s interests in alchemical and medical secrets can be seen reflected in the subsequent Medici fascination with collecting and experimentation: for example, in the *studioli* of Cosimo and his son Francesco in Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, and in the laboratory space later established by Francesco next to the church of San Marco, known as the *Casino Mediceo*. In the eighteenth century, the story of Caterina Sforza captured the imagination of

figures such as Antonio Gramsci and Gabriele d’Annunzio, who used her example as a political symbol.

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Shakespeare, William

Born: 1564

Died: 1616

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Abstract

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is the world's most highly acclaimed literary figure, known for his plays and poems. Shakespeare is celebrated for his comic touch; kaleidoscopic, tightly structured verse; and genial sense of human nature, manifest in finely detailed individual characterization. Less widely recognized, however, is the depth of his engagement with classical and contemporary philosophy, which bears comparison to more obviously learned contemporaries such as Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), John Case (c. 1540–1600), and Justus Lipsius (1547–1606).

Biography

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, the son of John Shakespeare, a glove-maker, municipal magistrate, and secret Catholic, and Mary Arden, a member of the

local gentry. He was educated in Latin literature at the local grammar school. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582 and fathered three children by the age of 21. The 7 years that follow the birth of his children, known as Shakespeare's "lost years," remain mysterious, due to lack of historical evidence. Having relocated to London, it seems that Shakespeare began his theatrical career as an actor, and then turned to playwriting in the early 1590s. He also became known for his narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, written in 1593–1594 while the theatres in London were closed due to outbreaks of the plague, and dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton.

Shakespeare's plays were performed in London by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which with the ascension of James I in 1603 became the King's Men. Shakespeare himself was a shareholder in the company, as well as the venue they constructed for themselves, the Globe Theatre. While in London, Shakespeare rented a room from the Mountjoys, a family of French Huguenot refugees. In 1596, he secured a coat of arms for his father, proclaiming his status as a gentleman, and in 1597, he bought New Place, at the time the second-largest house in Stratford, demonstrating the scale of the fortune he had acquired from his theatrical ventures in London. Shakespeare seems to have retired to Stratford at some point on or around 1610, perhaps prompted by repeated further outbreaks of plague in London 1603–1609 and died in Stratford in 1616 at the age of 52. Notable contemporaries include Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, and George Chapman, as well as the English commentator on Aristotle, John Case, and the Italian expatriate who translated Montaigne's *Essays* into English, John Florio.

Thirty-seven of Shakespeare's plays survive, as well as 154 sonnets, two epyllia, and a few other short poems. Prominent literary influences on Shakespeare's work include Roman comedy, Senecan tragedy, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as well as Gower, Chaucer, and traditional English mystery and morality plays. His plays about the English Wars of the Roses draw on Holinshed's *Chronicles* and his plays

about Roman history on Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Shakespeare cites a passage from Florio's translation of Montaigne's essay "On Cannibals" in *The Tempest*, and debate continues to this day as to the exact nature, timing, and extent of his exposure to Montaigne's thought. Florio's translation did not appear in print until 1603; some scholars, however, see signs that Shakespeare may have read Montaigne's *Essays* earlier, either in English in manuscript, or in another translation, now lost, or in print in their original French (Hamlin 2013, 2016).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Shakespeare is not typically associated with philosophy in the popular imagination. The depth of his engagement with contemporary as well as classical thought tends to be underestimated, due to two pernicious but abiding myths. The first such myth about Shakespeare is that he was relatively uneducated. Ben Jonson notoriously claimed that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek." John Milton describes him in *L'Allegro* in contrast to "learned Jonson" as "Fancy's child," warbling "native woodnotes wild." Nineteenth-century German Romantics seized upon Shakespeare as a representative outsider or folk artist, whom they saw as happily ignorant of classical norms (Paulin 2012). Shakespeare's disregard for classical rules of decorum, however, as well as neoclassical "unities" derived from Aristotle's *Poetics*, was not in fact naïve, but instead can be better understood as a deliberate rejection of the conventions of Senecan tragedy and Plautine comedy in favor of the more expansive, egalitarian aesthetics of medieval Christian drama (Auerbach 1946; Cooper 2006).

By the standards of our own historical moment, Shakespeare was remarkably well educated in classical philosophy and history, as well as literature (Burrow 2013). He was able to read Latin easily, and he shows some facility with French, as well, in *Henry V*. Over the course of his lifetime, synthetic works such as Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* and Plutarch's *Moralia*, as well as Montaigne's *Essays*, were translated

into English. Shakespeare cites Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, in *Troilus and Cressida*: Hector criticizes Paris and Troilus as "young men, whom Aristotle thought / Unfit to hear moral philosophy" (2.2.166–7; cp. 1095a2; Elton 1997). Brutus's funeral oration in *Julius Caesar* adopts the style of Stoic logic, as recounted by Cicero, as well as Seneca (Gray 2016a). Recurrent descriptions of friends and rivals as mirrors in his Roman plays recall Aristotle's *Magna Moralia*, as mediated through John Case's commentary on this treatise, *Reflexus speculi moralis* (1596) (Gray 2017).

The second such misleading but pervasive myth arises from Keats's claim that Shakespeare was a paragon of what he calls "negative capability." In brief, Keats maintains that Shakespeare, unlike Coleridge, does not seek to connect particular instances to the demonstration of more universal principles. This sense of Shakespeare as uniquely comfortable with "ambiguity" proved attractive to mid-twentieth-century critics such as A. P. Rossiter and Norman Rabkin, who present Shakespeare's plays as "undecideable." Their distinctive "ambivalence" is presented as in keeping with the aesthetic ideal Kant describes in his *Critique of Judgment* as "purposiveness without purpose" (*Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck*) (Rossiter 1961; Rabkin 1981).

Nevertheless, Shakespeare does take definite philosophical positions, which can be discerned in repeated instances across multiple plays. Shakespeare lived at a point of transition in which early medieval optimism about the possibility of a partial synthesis of classical philosophy and Christian theology through assimilation of Aristotelian concepts, methods, and terminology was breaking down in light of the resurgence of other forms of classical philosophy such as Stoicism and Epicureanism which were more obviously incompatible with Christian dogma. Within the context of this tension, Shakespeare is interested in ethics above all, and he tends to side with those classical schools of thought about ethics that are more compatible with Christianity against those which are less so. In other words, by the standards of his day, Shakespeare is relatively conservative. As was the case for most

of his contemporaries, his touchstones in terms of philosophy are Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Cicero's *De Officiis*, rather than, e.g., Seneca's *De Constantia* or, still less, Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* (Headlam Wells 2005; Bevington 2008; Gray and Cox 2014; Raspa 2016).

A third obstacle to recognizing Shakespeare's interest in philosophy arises from longstanding disagreement about what kinds of thinking can be considered properly philosophical. When Shakespeare uses the word itself, "philosophy," for example, it almost always means more specifically "moral philosophy." Like the ancient Romans, as well as many of his fellow Renaissance humanists, Shakespeare sees ethics as the central focus of philosophical inquiry, and success in attaining and preserving human "happiness" as its most reliable criterion. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, for instance, Lucentio tells his servant Tranio that he plans to "study/virtue" and "apply" that "part of philosophy" which "treats of happiness / By virtue specially to be achiev'd" (1.1.17–20). Tranio professes to admire such "moral discipline," but does not altogether share his master's "resolve / To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy" (1.1.27–30). "Let's be no Stoics nor no stocks," he begs, "Or so devote to Aristotle's checks / As Ovid be an outcast quite abjur'd" (1.1.31–33). To be a Stoic, as Tranio sees it, is akin to being a "stock": a deaf, dumb, insensate piece of wood. The pun, which goes back to Calvin, implies that being a Stoic, like being put in the stocks, means being forced into unnatural, uncomfortable immobility.

Shakespeare tends to distrust logical deduction. Syllogisms in his plays tend to be instruments of deception, rather than clarification; logic in general tends to be specious. Some of his most celebrated soliloquies are in effect case studies in self-serving, self-deceptive sophistry: Macbeth in *Macbeth*, "If it were done" (1.7.1); Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, "It must be by his death" (2.1.10); Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*, "May't be / Affection?" (1.2.137–8); and so on (Gray 2018a). This wariness towards the traditional tool of the trade, argumentation, puts Shakespeare at odds with Plato, Aristotle, Hellenistic Greek philosophy, and medieval Scholasticism, all of which,

like present-day analytic philosophy, tend to rely on the internal logical coherence of verbal propositions as their litmus test of truth. Instead, like Roman philosophers such as Cicero and Seneca, as well as Renaissance humanists such as Erasmus and Montaigne, Shakespeare tends to evaluate theoretical claims in light of their effects in practice. And by this criterion, he finds, like Montaigne, that Stoicism, in particular, fails to measure up (Miles 1996; Gray 2018b). Recalling the *domina-nutrix* trope of Senecan tragedy, Shakespeare repeatedly depicts characters denouncing attempts to appease their anguish with a conventional Stoic *consolatio* (Gray 2016b). "I pray thee, peace," Leonato says, replying to such blandishment in *Much Ado about Nothing*. "I will be flesh and blood; / For there was never yet philosopher / That could endure the toothache patiently, / However they have writ the style of gods / And made a push at chance and sufferance" (5.1.33–8). When Romeo learns he is banished, Friar Laurence tries to console him with "adversity's sweet milk, philosophy," but Romeo will have none of it. "Hang up philosophy," he cries. "Unless philosophy can make a Juliet, / Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom, / It helps not, it prevails not: talk no more" (3.3.57–60).

In terms of epistemology, critics tend to align Shakespeare, like Montaigne, with Skepticism, building on Keats's sense of his "negative capability," as well as the earlier, more formalist critical tradition represented by Rossiter and Rabkin (Bradshaw 1987; Bell 2002; Hamlin 2005a, b; Cox 2007; Nuttall 2007; Sherman 2007). Shakespeare's skepticism can be easily overstated, however, unless it is balanced by a sense of his more fundamental sympathies. Evaluating abstract conclusions about morality in light of hypothetical concrete case studies is not the same as remaining forever poised in exquisite, unresolved doubt. Shakespeare's emphasis on practical viability as opposed to theoretical consistency to some extent anticipates modern pragmatism (Engle 1993). Nevertheless, his truth-claims are not entirely provisional or unsystematic. Instead, Shakespeare can be better understood as sharing Aristotle's sense of

ethics as inherently somewhat imprecise; a messy business which is to some degree contingent upon circumstance, albeit not absolutely so (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a).

Like Aristotle, as well as Montaigne, Shakespeare is interested in “equity,” that is, in the process of accommodating and adjusting general principles to particular situations (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1137b; Decoursey 2011). Put in Christian terms, Shakespeare is interested in the tension between the “spirit” and the “letter” of the law. The “problem” in Shakespeare’s “problem plays,” for example, is precisely this question of accommodation. In *The Merchant of Venice*, *All’s Well that Ends Well*, and *Measure for Measure*, known as “problem plays,” Shakespeare evaluates the Christian ethical imperative to forgive others against what are in effect limit cases of its application. He acknowledges the attractions of revenge, as well as arguments for strict justice, but in the end, in keeping with Christian doctrine, upholds the superior use-value of what Portia calls “the quality of mercy” (4.1.180). “It is twice blest,” she explains; “it blesseth him that gives and him that takes” (4.1.182–3).

In sum, Shakespeare does arrive at answers to questions that are recognizably philosophical. His “organon” is not logic, however, but experience. He is not interested in how philosophers arrive at their conclusions, but instead in whether or not those conclusions correspond to his own lived experience. Fiction for Shakespeare, like history for Montaigne, serves as a thought-experiment to test the validity of a school of thought, juxtaposing its claims against representative, hypothetical examples. Once this method is understood, it is possible to see Shakespeare, like Montaigne, as returning to certain familiar philosophical controversies repeatedly over the course of his career. He sides with Cicero on the importance of our obligations to others, for example, against Epicurean exhortations to withdraw from society and “live unknown” (Bate 2008; Greenblatt 2011; Gray 2014). He opts for Aristotelian moderation of the passions, as opposed to Stoic eradication, which he sees as impossible in practice. “‘Tis all men’s office to speak patience / To those that wring under the load of sorrow,” Leonato observes,

“But no man’s virtue nor sufficiency / To be so moral when he shall endure / The like himself” (5.1.27–31). In keeping with a Christian sense of the limits of our unaided human capacities, Shakespeare does not believe it is possible for us to control our emotions reliably through the exercise of our own individual reason, much less eliminate such “affects” altogether. Berowne’s prescient warning in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* resembles the end of Montaigne’s *Apology for Raymond Sebond*, in its keen sense of man’s postlapsarian weakness: “every man with his affects is born, / Not by might mastered, but by special grace” (1.1.149–50).

Having said that Shakespeare’s focus is ethics, there is one notable exception. Turning to metaphysics, Shakespeare does occasionally show characters musing aloud about what seems to be Epicurean materialism, as well as its implications for the Christian doctrine of the afterlife. In *Measure for Measure*, visiting Claudio in prison in the guise of a friar, Duke Vincentio paints a picture of death as no more than “sleep,” which Claudio initially finds convincing and consoling (3.1.17). “Thou art not thyself,” the Duke tells him, “For thou exist’st on many a thousand grains / That issue out of dust” (3.1.19–21). Hamlet, too, wonders if death might be no more than “sleep” and reflects on the permutations of the particles that compose the body. “To what base uses we may return,” he observes, standing in a graveyard. “Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he finds it stopping a bung-hole?” (5.1.190–92) Horatio balks, but Hamlet gleefully persists, launching into a rhyming jingle: “Imperious Caesar, dead and turn’d to clay, / Might stop a hole to keep the wind away,” etc. (5.1.202–3). Some critics see signs of engagement here with Epicurean atomism, as well as its application in Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* as a refuge from fears about the afterlife (Martin 1945). Shakespeare’s use of the word “philosophy” in *Hamlet* lends support to claim that Shakespeare is responding here to Epicureanism: speaking to his friend, Horatio, about the apparition of his father’s ghost, Hamlet renounces this school of thought’s signature materialism. “There are more things in heaven and earth,” he

proclaims, “Than are dreamt of in your philosophy” (1.5.165–6). It is perhaps significant, as well, that neither Hamlet nor Claudio proves entirely able, in the end, to shake off and dismiss his conviction that life continues after death. When Shakespeare invokes Epicurean metaphysics, if indeed he does, he frames it and contains it within Christian orthodoxy.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In his sonnets, as well as his epyllia, Shakespeare invokes and subverts the conventions of Petrarchan poetry such as that of his English contemporaries Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser. Like Montaigne, as well as Sidney, Shakespeare sees Neoplatonic idealization of romantic love familiar from Italian models such as Dante’s *Vita Nuova*, Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, and Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano* as incompatible with human nature. His early comedy *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, above all, undermines Neoplatonic claims about the possibility of mystical transcendence through ascetic self-restraint. The premise of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* is that the King of Navarre and his companions, three young noblemen, vow to withdraw from the world, including especially the company of women, in order to devote themselves to “philosophy.” “To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die,” Dumaine proclaims, “With all these living in philosophy” (1.1.31–2). As one of them, Berowne, predicts, over the course of the play, each of the four men falls in love, breaks his vow, and returns to the world.

Shakespeare seems to have had some doubts, as well, about the possibility of Stoic “constancy” and “patience,” in keeping with debates going back to antiquity regarding Stoic claims about the imperturbable tranquility of the quasi-legendary Stoic sage or *sapiens*. Could such a man really exist? Hamlet praises his friend, Horatio, as a man who is not “passion’s slave” (3.2.73), and Horatio himself describes himself as “more an antique Roman than a Dane” (5.2.348). Yet even he has his moment of suicidal despair, once he discovers that Hamlet has been poisoned. Shakespeare’s most complete picture of a would-

be Stoic is Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, whom he presents as an amiable, misguided, self-deceived hypocrite. Despite strenuous effort, Brutus proves unable to entirely suppress strong emotions such as anger and grief (Nuttall 2007; Gray 2016a).

Shakespeare also seems aware of classical Cynicism. Apemantus in *Timon of Athens*, listed in the dramatis personae as “a churlish philosopher,” is a representative misanthropic Cynic; a model which Timon himself comes to imitate (Pierce 2005). When King Lear goes mad, he encounters a young nobleman, Edgar, in a rain-storm on a heath, disguised as a “poor Tom,” a mostly naked wandering madman. Lear refers to him repeatedly as a “philosopher,” perhaps thinking of Diogenes. “Thou art the thing itself,” Lear proclaims; “unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor bare, forked animal as thou art” (3.4.104–6). Lear then tries to imitate “poor Tom” by stripping off his clothes. Through memorable “bitter fools” such as Feste in *Twelfth Night*, as well as Lear’s Fool in *King Lear*, Shakespeare combines Cynicism with Pauline and Erasmian notions of the secret wisdom hidden in ostensible folly (Hershinow 2014).

Turning to philosophy of mind, supernatural figures such as Puck in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Ariel in *The Tempest*, and the witches in *Macbeth*, as well as Iago in *Othello*, can be understood in part as personifications of the imagination, as this faculty is described in Aristotle’s *De Anima*, as well as his *Nicomachean Ethics*. The Protean mutability, unpredictability, unreliability, and amorality of these characters speak to pervasive concerns about the contribution of “fantasy” or “fancy” to weakness of will (*akrasia*). Anxiety about the susceptibility of the imagination to human “passions” was exacerbated by contemporary Protestant iconoclasm (Rossky 1958). Iago’s relationship with Othello, for example, resembles the relationship between Archimago and the Red Crosse Knight in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*. Archimago, an allegorical figure for the imagination, takes on the appearance of a Catholic holy man but turns out to be a deceptive, malevolent magician, leading the hero astray (Gray 2007).

Impact and Legacy

Shakespeare's plays are widely considered the best in any language and continue to be performed regularly world-wide. Philosophers have been especially fascinated by *Hamlet*: thinkers who have grappled with the play include Kant, Coleridge, Herder, Hegel, Marx, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Benjamin, Arendt, Schmitt, Lacan, Deleuze, Foucault, Derrida, Badiou, and Žižek (Kottman 2009; Cutrofello 2014). Hegel, in particular, was exceptionally well versed in Shakespeare's plays, even translating part of *Julius Caesar* into German as a teenager. Hegel's influential account of the master-slave dialectic in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, for example, may in part be based on Shakespeare's depiction of male rivalry in his Roman plays.

Jacob Burckhardt celebrates the Renaissance as the birth of individualism, and many critics see Shakespeare as sympathetic to this development (Holbrook 2010; Strier 2011). Philosophically speaking, however, Shakespeare, like Hegel after him, was strongly opposed to neoclassical as well as classical admiration for what Lipsius, like Seneca, calls "constancy"; Kant, "autonomy"; and Quentin Skinner, "neo-Roman liberty" (Skinner 1998). Instead, Shakespeare sides with Aristotle, who sees human beings as by nature social and interdependent (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b; Selleck 2008; Kuzner 2011; Gray 2018b). In his *Politics*, as well as his discussion of friendship, Aristotle calls into question contemporary idealization of self-sufficiency. Aristotle's illustration of misguided self-isolation is Achilles' retirement to his ships in Homer's *Iliad* (*Politics*, 1253a; cp. *Iliad*, 9.63): an example which Shakespeare also takes up in his *Troilus and Cressida* (Tilmouth 2013; Gray 2017).

Shakespeare's critique of what he calls "sufficiency" can be seen most clearly, however, in his depiction of the Roman character Coriolanus, who tries and fails to disregard "instinct" and "stand, / As if a man were author of himself. / And knew no other kin" (5.3.35–7). Hegel draws upon such Aristotelian reflections on the inextricable connection between the self and the other,

as mediated through Shakespeare's plays, in his much more abstract articulation of the role of intersubjective "recognition" (*Anerkennung*) in self-definition. More recently, Stanley Cavell has taken up an analogous line of thought, analyzing plays such as *King Lear* and *Othello* in terms of what he calls "acknowledgment" (Cavell 2003).

Cross-References

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- ▶ [Augustinianism](#)
- ▶ [Burckhardt, Jacob](#)
- ▶ [Case, John](#)
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- ▶ [Sidney, Philip](#)
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- ▶ [Stoicism](#)
- ▶ [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Weakness of](#)

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Shalem, Menahem

Born: unknown (ca. 1340-1390)

Died: unknown (after 1413)

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Abstract

Menahem ben Jacob Shalem, also known as Menahem Agler (and sometimes referred to, incorrectly, as “Menahem Kara”) was an important Jewish Aristotelian philosopher in the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Prague. He wrote the most sophisticated Hebrew philosophical texts in Central Europe during this period. Unlike his colleagues in Prague, Yom-Tov Lipmann Mühlhausen and Avigdor Kara, he rejected Kabbalah and considered Maimonidean philosophy the most authoritative Jewish intellectual tradition. His works paved the way for other Jewish philosophers in Central and Eastern Europe in the late middle- and early-modern ages.

Biography

The dates and places of Shalem’s birth and death are unknown. In 1413 he was a member of the rabbinic court of justice (*beit din*) of Prague together with Yom-Tov Lipmann Mühlhausen and Avigdor Kara. Presumably, he composed his extant works in Prague. It has been suggested that he traveled to Jerusalem once, and then he adopted the Hebrew name “Shalem,” which may be understood as “the Jerusalemite” (Reiner 1984; Yuval 1989; Davis 1993). He is referred to as Menahem Agler in a correspondence he had with Abraham Klausner, an important rabbinic authority in late fourteenth-century Vienna. The name “Agler” may indicate that he originated from Aquileia (in German, Aglar) in northeastern Italy (Kupfer 1973).

Menahem Shalem and his colleague, Avigdor Kara, referred to each other as “my brother” in their writings. This phrase indicates a close relationship, but it is not to be taken literally: in fact, the two had different fathers and there is no reason to believe that they were related in any way. Nevertheless, misled by this phrase, some modern historians refer to Shalem as “Menahem Kara” despite the fact that the latter name is not attested in any primary sources.

In one of his writings, Shalem refers to hallucinations he experienced while he was imprisoned by Christians. Unfortunately, nothing more is known about this incident (see Kupfer 1973).

Works and Thought

Menahem Shalem left behind four major writings: (1) a philosophical compendium treating some of the classical themes of medieval Hebrew Aristotelian literature, such as intellectual perfection, prophetic visions, and proofs for the existence of God; (2) a series of glosses to Moses Narboni’s (cc. 1300–1362) commentary on Maimonides’ (1137/8–1204) *Guide for the Perplexed*; (3) a letter to Abraham Klausner, rabbi of Vienna, about philosophical and theological matters; and (4) a polemic fragment against the Christian doctrine of Trinity (see Kupfer 1973; Talmage 1980;

Shmeruk 1981; for some other, minor works, see Talmage 1983).

Much of Shalem's thought revolved around astral powers interfering with the sublunar world. On the one hand, Shalem held that the movement of the celestial bodies generated astral influences in a mechanical way; on the other hand, he believed that astral spirits had sympathy for human beings, especially philosophers, and they warned them of impending dangers through dreams and visions (Visi 2009).

Shalem believed that conjunction of human mind with the active intellect was possible, and such conjunction, once realized, protected human beings from harmful astral influences. Thus, by pursuing intellectual perfection, one could save himself/herself from the fate determined by celestial movements. On the one hand, following the Maimonidean tradition, Shalem argued that studying philosophical texts could bring about the redemptive perfection of the intellect; on the other hand, unlike Mühlhausen and Kara, he held the study of Kabbalah worthless. Shalem also argued that the Messiah and the prophet Elijah, mentioned in traditional Jewish religious texts as precursor to the Messiah, had allegorical meanings. The former signified allegorically the redemptive conjunction of the human mind to the active intellect and the latter alluded to the spiritual-intellectual development preceding it (Visi 2011).

Legacy

Most of Shalem's works still remains in manuscripts today. A single scribe copied most of the relevant manuscripts during the second half of the fifteenth century in Lesser Poland (Beit-Arieh 1981). Shalem is cited in a rabbinic debate about the possibility of the transmigration of the soul in 1466 in Candia, Crete (Kupfer 1973; on the debate itself, see Ogren 2009). Whether his works influenced sixteenth-century Jewish thinkers or whether one can speak about a continuous tradition of Jewish rationalism among late medieval and early modern Ashkenazi Jews is a debated question (see Kupfer 1973; Davis 1993; Fishman 1997; Reiner 1997; Visi 2011).

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Shalom, Abraham ben Isaac

Born: Date unknown, Catalonia

Died: 1492, Catalonia

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Abstract

Abraham ben Isaac Shalom, active in Catalonia in the late fifteenth century, belongs to the last phase of medieval Jewish philosophy. He typically combined his Jewish learning with influences of medieval philosophy – Jewish, Muslim, and Scholastic. His main writing is *Neveh Shalom* (*Abode of Peace*), a collection of homilies infused with these philosophic influences.

Biography

Shalom was active in the second part of the fifteenth century, one of the last Jewish philosophers in Spain before the great expulsion of the Jews (1492). Little is known concerning Shalom's life. He was active in Catalonia and died there in 1492. Shalom was a typical Jewish scholar of the period, who combined his Jewish learning with deep proficiency in the current philosophical trends. His thought integrated three traditions: medieval Jewish philosophy, mostly Maimonides, Gersonides, and Hasdai Crescas; Muslim philosophy, mostly Averroes, as he was translated into Hebrew; and Scholastic philosophy.

Shalom's main writing is *Neveh Shalom* (*Abode of Peace*), a collection of homilies based on aggadic passages from the Talmudic tractate *Berakhot* (twice published, Constantinople, 1539; Venice, 1574). Into this traditional literary genre, he interpolated various philosophical discussions, influenced by the abovementioned philosophic sources. His main aim here was to prove that "Moses [=Maimonides] is true and his teaching is true." He endeavored to prove the veracity of Maimonides' teachings against his many critics. In this, he joined the fierce Maimonidean controversy which raged in Jewish scholarly circles throughout the late Middle Ages. He fiercely defended the equilibrium Maimonides endeavored to create between the *Torah* and Aristotelian philosophy. He critiqued Gersonides' extreme position which criticized Maimonides for compromising philosophy, on the one hand, and Crescas' position which criticized Maimonides for compromising the *Torah*, on the other, and identified with what he considered to be Maimonides' true balanced position. Attempting this, he often got into difficulties in his quest to harmonize these conflicting authorities. His staunch belief in the authority of Maimonides led him at times to read him allegorically, thereby solving theological problems caused by the plain reading of Maimonides' views. This was also the tactic that he employed in order to answer the criticisms that both Gersonides and Crescas hurled at Maimonides, each from the opposite angle.

Neveh Shalom reveals a careful study of medieval Jewish thinkers, mainly Maimonides, Gersonides, and Crescas, and non-Jewish philosophers, such as Averroes; through him, he was influenced by the Platonic political thought. Shalom, however, is not considered an original thinker. His main motivation was not the revelation of philosophical truth, but apologetic, to defend the theological doctrines of the Jewish faith.

Another important facet of Shalom's scholarly activity was the translations of Scholastic treatises from Latin into Hebrew. This is another example of the increasing influence of Scholastic philosophy on contemporary Jewish scholars. Shalom translated two philosophical writings from Latin

into Hebrew: a compendium of the physical sciences by Albertus Magnus, *Philosophia Pauperum*, under the title *Ha-Filosopyiah ha-Tivit* (i.e., “Natural Philosophy”), extant in manuscript form (Hamburg Ms. 266), and a discussion of certain problems of Aristotle’s *Organon* by Marsilius of Inghen, under the title *She’elot u-Teshuvot* (“Questions and Answers”), partially published during the nineteenth century.

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Sideréal

► [Stars in Renaissance Science](#)

Sideréal Lights

► [Stars in Renaissance Science](#)

Sidney, Philip

Born: 30 November 1554

Died: 17 October 1586

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Abstract

Sir Philip Sidney helped usher in the great literary flourishing of the late sixteenth century in England. His posthumously published lyric poetry, prose fiction, and literary theory had an immediate impact on his contemporaries,

including Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare, and have exerted a shaping influence on the course of English literature to the present day. In his own lifetime, he was widely admired as the embodiment of the ideals of the era, and upon his death from wounds sustained in battle, his life became legendary. Of his literary works, the *Apology for Poetry* is the most philosophical – notwithstanding the fact that in the work Sidney explicitly pits poetry against philosophy (as well as history). In the *Apology* Sidney argues for the ethical and political value of fiction, contending that fiction can bring about self-knowledge that moves readers to repent of their faults and to embrace virtuous action. Sidney draws on a wide array of classical and continental sources, and critics have identified a variety of intellectual currents running through the work. Although critics have argued that one or another programmatic allegiance was decisive for Sidney, no consensus has emerged. What is clear is that Sidney departs from the older conception of poetry as veiled theology to a new understanding of poetry as distinctive and valuable in its own right. Throughout the work Sidney displays such wit and charm that it is difficult to imagine a more winning presentation of his position.

Biography

Philip Sidney (1554–1586), courtier, soldier, and poet, was a leading figure in the great literary flourishing that produced, in addition to his own works, those of Spenser and Shakespeare. He was born on November 30, 1554, at Penshurst in Kent, England, the eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Sidney. Sidney’s father’s family had long provided the crown important service. Sir Henry served as Lord Deputy in Ireland and Lord President in Wales and was enrolled in the Order of the Garter in 1564. As H.R. Woudhuysen points out (556), the connections on his mother’s side were even more important: his mother was a childhood friend of Princess Elizabeth. Her brother, Guildford Dudley, married Lady Jane Grey and, with her, was executed by Queen

Mary. No doubt due in part to his uncle's failed attempt to secure a Protestant succession, Sidney was named after Mary's new husband, Philip II of Spain, who was Sidney's godfather and, ironically, against whose troops Sidney was to die fighting. At the court of Elizabeth, Sidney's mother attended the queen, famously nursing Elizabeth to health during her battle with smallpox in 1562, a service from which Lady Mary emerged badly disfigured. Of Sidney's two surviving Dudley uncles, one was made Earl of Warwick and served as Master of Ordnance, and the other, Robert Dudley, who became Earl of Leicester, was a favorite of Queen Elizabeth and for many years her suitor.

Sidney had an outstanding education for his time. He attended Shrewsbury Grammar School in Wales, where Thomas Ashton was master and where he met Fulke Greville, who would become his devoted friend, fellow poet, and admiring biographer. At Christ Church, Oxford, his contemporaries included numerous future luminaries: Walter Raleigh, the historian William Camden, the great promoter of exploration Richard Hakluyt, the Anglican theologian Richard Hooker, and the future Jesuit missionary-martyrs Edmund Campion and Robert Parsons. To complete his education, Sidney made a 3-year grand tour of the continent, beginning in July 1572 when he was part of the English party that traveled to Paris for the wedding of Henry of Navarre (the future Henry IV) and Margaret of Valois. Sidney was already aligned with the Protestant cause through his father, who had arranged aid for the Huguenots, and through his uncle Leicester, who was the leading figure of the pro-Protestant bloc in the court of Elizabeth. The friendships he made with fervent Protestants in Paris confirmed and enlivened Sidney's commitment to the cause of European Protestantism. He met Admiral de Coligny, the Huguenot leader; Phillipe du Plessis Mornay, the first part of whose book *De la Verité de la religion chrestienne* Sidney would translate; François Hotman, the monarchomach political theorist; and, most important, the scholar and diplomat Hubert Languet, who had been converted by Melancthon. Languet served Augustus, Elector of Saxony, and then William of Orange, and he acted as a guide for Sidney throughout his European tour

and continued to mentor Sidney afterward through visits and an extensive correspondence.

Although the Protestant-Catholic marriage of Henry and Margaret was supposed to ensure peace, its outcome was quite the opposite. Five days after the wedding the St. Bartholomew Day's massacre began, and Sidney and the rest of the English party took refuge in the residence of the English ambassador, Francis Walsingham, his future father-in-law. From Paris, Sidney traveled to Frankfurt and then on to Heidelberg, Strasbourg, Hungary, Vienna, Venice, Padua, Florence, Genoa, and back to the Imperial Court in Vienna, returning to England by way of Poland. Because of his family connections, Sidney was received at the great courts of Europe and treated as a prince-in-waiting. The King of France, Charles IX, had been so impressed by Sidney that he made him a baron; William of Orange tried to arrange Sidney's marriage to his sister. In addition to princes, statesmen, diplomats, and humanists, Sidney formed friendships with the botanist Charles de l'Écluse, the physicians Camerarius and Crato von Krafftheim, and the printer Henri Estienne. During his 3 years on the continent, Sidney practiced his French, became fluent in Italian, learned some Spanish and German, worked on his Latin, and studied Greek.

On his return to England, Sidney waited on the Queen at court. In addition to assisting his father with his administrative duties, Sidney participated in tilts and entertainments, and he quickly distinguished himself as a courtier. At Leicester House, where Sidney lived, there arose an informal literary academy, which included Edward Dyer, Edmund Spenser, and Abraham Fraunce, all of whom were in Leicester's service. For the Queen's visit to Leicester's country house in 1578 Sidney composed an elaborate masque, *The Lady of May*, in which the queen is called on to decide which of two suitors should be given the hand of the maiden.

Sidney led a diplomatic mission to Prague in 1578, on the occasion of the death of Maximilian II and the succession of Rudolf II, but otherwise he never received the kind of responsibility for which he was educated and that he deeply desired. Sidney wanted Elizabeth to be more robustly supportive of European Protestantism. Elizabeth, however, was wary of the antimonarchical

constitutionalism that leading European Protestants advocated. Sidney's lack of advancement was certainly due in part to his outspoken support for political alliances with Protestant countries – rather than France – to counter the threat posed by Spain. In 1580, Sidney was forced to retire from court after writing a letter opposing the Queen's potential marriage to the French duc d'Alençon and quarreling with the Earl of Oxford, probably over the same issue.

Sidney served as a Member of Parliament in 1581 and 1584–1585. In 1582 Elizabeth called on him to be part of the escort for Alençon when he traveled to Antwerp, and in 1583 she knighted Sidney, though not in reward for his merits or service but so that he could stand in for his friend Count Casimir, who was being awarded the Order of the Garter *in absentia*. In that same year, Sidney married Frances Walsingham, a daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's Secretary of State and a close political ally of Leicester.

In 1585 Sidney was appointed to assist his uncle Warwick, the Master of Ordnance, helping England prepare for the anticipated war with Spain. In this capacity, he oversaw the production of maps and the manufacture of cannons and gunpowder and as a result was involved with mathematicians, engineers, geographers, and astronomers, men including Thomas Bedwell, Thomas Digges, and Thomas Blundeville, who with others would go on to form Gresham College (out of which later would be born the Royal Society).

Elizabeth reluctantly entered into the war in the Low Countries, and in 1584 she sent Sidney to serve as the Governor of Flushing and to fight under the military leadership of Leicester. In 1586, Sidney was wounded in a skirmish at Zutphen and died of the subsequent infection 25 days later at Arnheim, at the age of 31. The nation held Sidney as a hero, as the ideal gentleman and soldier, and in his death he became a legend. He was buried at St. Paul's Cathedral in one of the most elaborate and costly funerals of the age, and his death occasioned numerous literary tributes.

Works

When Sidney left the court in 1580, he retired to Wilton, the estate of his sister Mary, the Countess

of Pembroke. While rustivating at Wilton Sidney embraced his "unelected vocation" and dedicated himself to writing. Sidney wrote for a select audience, and there is no indication that he intended any of his works for print. For his sister, he wrote the *Arcadia*, a massive pastoral romance that introduced the form to England. Sidney later revised the work, and the unfinished revision, published posthumously in 1590 by his sister, became a seminal work of English narrative fiction. Sidney builds into the work the tensions that we now take to be commonplace, such as that between the individual and society. Pastoral had long been used as a vehicle to air philosophical debates and to comment on political and social matters, and in the *Arcadia* Sidney explores questions of government. Unlike Thomas More, Sidney does not advance a radical or utopian vision. Nor does he offer an imaginative version of the radical antimonarchical constitutionalism of his mentor Languet. Indeed, the political order he imagines is a monarchy very much like that of contemporary England. Sidney's fiction presents the pathologies of monarchical government and a vision of how those pathologies are overcome and political health is restored. It is a work that gets its start, like *King Lear*, when Basilius, the king of Arcadia, sheds his royal responsibilities. This fictional treatment of good government and its absence had a special urgency for Sidney and his contemporaries since they could see mirrored in it their own worries about their monarch not having named a successor. Like Shakespeare, who borrowed from the *Arcadia*, Sidney believed good government did not arise naturally but was an art that had to be cultivated with care, an art necessary for guiding an often unruly nature.

In addition to introducing the pastoral romance to England, Sidney gave the nation its first great sonnet sequence. *Astrophil and Stella* along with *Certain Sonnets* were composed probably in 1582. *Astrophil and Stella* is, like Petrarch's *Rime Sparse*, one of the period's greatest and most influential collections of lyric poetry. Its publication in 1591 set off a decade of sonnet sequences, including those of Spenser and Shakespeare.

Sidney's correspondence reveals a broad but earnest attitude, great energy, and a deep faith.

The serious temper of Sidney's mind is evident in the works he chose to translate into English. Sidney translated the Psalms with his sister; part of Philippe de Mornay's theological treatise *De la Vérité de la religion chrétienne*; and, according to Joshua Sylvester, Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas's *La Sepmaine; ou, creation du monde*. All were certainly motivated by Sidney's desire to advance the Protestant cause – and, in the case of du Bartas's hexameral poem, to advance it through poetry. Undoubtedly the best example of the kind of poetry that Sidney advocates in the *Apology* is Spenser's great epic, *The Faerie Queene*, in which Spenser used Sidney himself as the model for Sir Calidore, the hero of Book VI and the exemplar of Courtesy. When William Pitt, one of Britain's greatest statesmen, made Spenser's epic his *vade-mecum*, he was putting the fictional work to use in just the way Sidney would have wished – for virtuous political action (Shepherd 1).

Any claim for Sidney's contribution to philosophy must rest principally on his *Apology for Poetry*. As with most of Sidney's works, the *Apology* is difficult to date precisely. It was written around 1582 and published posthumously in 1595 in two versions that are substantially the same: the *Defence of Poesie* and *An Apologie for Poetrie*. Highly allusive and effortlessly inventive, the *Apology* deploys extraordinary learning with a light, often self-deprecating touch, and the reader cannot but be charmed by the persona that Sidney creates. The form of the *Apology* is that of an epideictic oration, and Sidney's praise of the art of poetry has the standard seven parts. Like Erasmus in his oration in praise of folly, Sidney employs *serio ludere*, though not in as sustained a fashion as Erasmus. Like Erasmus, he was motivated by the overarching desire for reform – in Sidney's case, a literary reform that would lead to ethical, political, and religious reform – and like Erasmus, he includes a long digression on the disappointing contemporary state of affairs, though Sidney's is less biting. A dazzling rhetorical performance, the *Apology* is a piece of literary theory that is itself an important work of literature, one that has had a lasting impact on the understanding of literature and its relationship to life.

In the *Apology*, Sidney defines poetry not as verse but as fiction making. Poetry figures forth an imagined world that mirrors the reader's world, especially in its ethical and political dimensions. In that heterocosm, readers can recognize the truth about themselves and their world – what they are and what they should be – and are inspired by the experience to embrace their better selves in the real world. Sidney gives special emphasis to heroic poetry, which brings forth idealized types that not only instruct and delight readers but also move them to imitate their heroic examples in their own lives. The ideal examples of poetry for Sidney are Virgil's *Aeneid* and Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. It was with an eye to emphasizing heroic action that Sidney was revising the *Arcadia*, and it was very much this idea of poetry that Spenser produced in the *Faerie Queene*. Spenser, like his patron Sidney, believed that artistic imitation could inspire moral imitation and that a great poem could shape the ethical and political life of a nation.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Sidney marshals a wide range of classical and continental authorities to mount his defense of poetry. Many of these had already been brought together by Julius Caesar Scaliger in his *Poetices*, the most important single source for the *Apology*. In the syncretistic manner characteristic of the period, Sidney's copious and well-advertised borrowings are synthesized rather than distinguished, sometimes doing violence to the actual positions of the authors he cites. Witness his definition of poetry as “an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture – with this end, to teach and delight” (Sidney 101). Sidney quickly segues from Aristotle on poetry as imitation to poetry as a speaking picture, a commonplace that can be traced back to Simonides, and to the Horatian ends *dulce et utile*.

Despite the literary accomplishments of Chaucer and the Tudor patronage for humanists including Thomas More, John Colet, Desiderius Erasmus, and Juan Luis Vives, imaginative

literature was often held in suspicion in Elizabethan England. The semantic range of the term “poet” was wider than it is today, and the term could be used as a synonym for “rhymers”; it also covered playwrights, and was thus associated with the public theater, a lightning rod for moral outrage in Sidney’s day. As Sidney acknowledges in the long digression at the end of the *Apology*, the derision of contemporary poetry was largely justified. Plato’s arguments against imitation and the stirring of base passions were very much alive in the works of contemporary antihumanist detractors, including the work partially responsible for eliciting Sidney’s *Defense*, Stephen Gosson’s *School of Abuse* (1579), which characterized poets as “Caterpillars of a Commonwealth” (Maslen 3). Although England did not have a single figure such as Savonarola, it did have many influential writers who, in the spirit of St. Augustine of Hippo, deeply mistrusted fiction for its power to lead souls astray and to weaken the national character. These are the fundamental critiques that Sidney rebuts. Distinguishing the art from the often defective products of that art, Sidney defends the art itself by showing how its best products have the power to move individual souls and the soul writ large to embrace virtue.

To assert the great dignity of the name “poet,” Sidney draws on the tradition of praising God as a maker and Nature as his work of art. For Sidney (as for Scaliger), the divine likeness is seen nowhere as clearly as in the human accomplishment of poetry, and the poet is not just any artist but, rather, a “maker” made in the likeness of “the heavenly Maker” (Sidney 100). When Sidney claims that the “wit” of the poet has the “efficacy of Nature [*natura naturans*],” he is following Plotinus’s argument that the artist does not imitate Nature but, rather, the immaterial principles from which Nature is herself derived (*Ennead*, V. viii). Sidney’s poet does not copy the objects found in nature – the traditional objects of artistic imitation – but draws only on his “*Idea* or fore-conceit.” In this pre-Lockean usage, “*Idea*” has not yet descended from the divine to the human mind, and Sidney is claiming for the poet access to nothing less than the divine ideas. Sidney gives the poet the power to use these ideas to inspire and

regenerate “when with the force of a divine breath” the poet “bringeth things forth far surpassing [Nature’s] doings” (Sidney 101). This is a bold claim in sixteenth-century England, where Augustine’s distinction between divine creation (by definition *ex nihilo*) and human making (always out of preexisting matter) was still religiously observed and the only human activities that were dignified with the word “create” were special legal or official acts, such as someone being created a duke. Though avoiding the use of the word, Sidney formulates a theory of human creativity that is a landmark in the history of European self-understanding.

Sidney’s elevated idea of poetry is both a continuation of and departure from the tradition of allegorical poetics. Plutarch had likened poetry to mother’s milk, providing appropriate nutrition for those not yet ready for the solid food of philosophy. Boccaccio and Coluccio Salutati sought to elevate poetry from the lowly status given it by medieval theologians, and they promoted a program of serious yet delightful allegory – poetry as veiled theology. Sidney advances this humanist program, but he does so by radically reframing the debate between the arts. Whereas the arts had been ranked according to the dignity of their object, with theology being the queen of the arts because her object is God himself, Sidney ranks the arts in terms of their ability to bring about the architectonic knowledge “of a man’s self, in the ethic and politic consideration, with the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only.” Giving priority to the knowledge not of how the heavens go but, rather, of how to go to heaven, Sidney argues that the highest art is therefore the one that best brings about virtuous action, the “ending end of all earthly learning” (Sidney 104).

To determine the human endeavor that most effectively promotes self-knowledge and virtuous action, Sidney rehearses the old battle of the arts and pits the poet against the moral philosopher, on the one hand, and the historian, on the other. In Sidney’s personified treatment, the Philosopher and the Historian each lacks what the other has. The Philosopher teaches what virtue is, but he offers only a wordish description. The Historian has lively examples that appeal to the senses, but

he does not have the Philosopher's mastery of the principles from which virtuous actions spring. In short, the Philosopher has the precept, the Historian the example, but neither has both. The Poet, however, is able to unite general truths to particular examples and, in doing so, brings virtue to life – in a way that not only shows what is good but moves the reader to embrace that good.

The rhetorical underpinnings of Sidney's poetic theory are nowhere more evident than in his assertion of the power of poetry to move readers. Like the antipoetic polemicists, Sidney believed in the persuasive power of poetry: he differed only in that he believed that it could move readers toward virtue as well as vice. Fiction has the power, according to Sidney, to present a "golden world," an ideal reality whose dazzling images of virtue move the reader to embrace those ideals in his or her own life. Acknowledging the fallen state of humanity, in which we can perceive the good with right reason – our "erected wit" – but fall short of reaching it because of our "infected will," Sidney claims for poetry the power to cure the general infection of the human will. Whereas Augustine was cured of his divided will by reading sacred scripture, Sidney says that we can be cured by reading pagan literature. For Sidney no less than for the early Michelangelo, the classical and Christian were fundamentally harmonious, and he had no doubt that the examples of classical heroes could make Englishmen better Christians.

Sidney's idealizing approach owes something to earlier persuasive performances, including Cicero's description of the orator and Castiglione's praise of the courtier (especially in the speech attributed to Bembo). Newman's characterization of the gentleman is a later example of idealized presentations meant to move readers to become what they read. Sidney speaks of this dynamic ironically in the opening of the *Apology*, in which he facetiously claims that an expert equestrian's praise of horsemanship almost persuaded Sidney to wish himself a horse. Sidney's serious point is that heroic poetry has the potential to shape the lives of readers and move them to know, love, and aspire to heroic virtue – to wish themselves not horses or horsemen but heroes.

For Sidney, the ultimate purpose of poetry is to engender virtue. The end of artistic imitation is ethical imitation, and through an effective poem, what begins as an "Idea or fore-conceit" in the "wit" of the poet can become the reader's Idea for his or her own life. Xenophon's idealized version of the historical Cyrus is thus "a Cyrus to make many Cyruses" (Sidney 100). For Sidney, the overarching justification of poetry is that it has the power to transform England into a nation of heroes for whom self-knowledge and virtuous action are one.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Because Sidney's *Apology* is so replete with traditional material, scholars have debated whether what Sidney presents is a coherent, let alone original, theory. Citing Sidney's reliance on his Italian predecessors, Spingarn famously declared, "it can be said without exaggeration that there is not an essential principle in the *Defence of Poesy* which cannot be traced back to some Italian treatise on the poetic art" (257–258). Since Spingarn, however, a long list of critics have claimed to have found a key to Sidney's thought in one or another philosophical, political, or religious program, including the synthesis of Plato and Aristotle's idea of the Idea, the Cusan art of conjecture, Ramist visual epistemology, Protestant poetics, Aristotelian rhetorical theory, and Plato's myth of creation in the *Timaeus*. This author has argued that Sidney models his theory on accounts of divine creation such as that presented by DuBartas. These interpretations all assert that the *Apology* offers an original synthesis that is more than the sum of its many borrowed parts – while differing on the nature of that synthesis. That Sidney's *Apology* is susceptible to so many diverse and weighty interpretations is in itself remarkable, and it certainly would seem to confirm Geoffrey Shepherd's claim that what the work embodies are nothing less than "moments of European self-consciousness" (11). It may well be that the most original aspect of the *Apology* is not its argument but its author, who draws seemingly new conclusions out of traditional material

and carries out this weighty task with his characteristic sprezzatura. Indeed, Sidney's winning persona and extraordinary wit are everywhere apparent in the *Apology*, such that the work has the compelling coherence of the man himself.

Impact and Legacy

Posthumously, Sidney was at the head of the literary flourishing that would include Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare. His impact, indirect as well as direct, is nothing less than monumental. His sonnet sequence made him the "English Petrarch," and his great pastoral romance not only helped inspire a great tradition of English pastoral poetry but also provided a rich store of material on which subsequent writers would draw. Shakespeare borrowed from the *Arcadia*, and Charles I is said to have made Pamela's famous prayer his own while awaiting execution. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, a foundational work in the history of the novel, drew the name of his protagonist and much else from the *Arcadia*. Even in the twentieth century the continuing importance of the *Arcadia* was felt by Virginia Woolf, who declared that in it "all the seeds of English fiction lie latent" (Kinney 423). And no less influential than his lyric and narrative works has been Sidney's theoretical justification of the aims and methods of fiction making. Sidney's playfully serious defense of his "unelected vocation" is arguably the most influential account ever given of why imaginative literature matters. Those who want to know where their ideas of literature come from should pursue their luminous originals in Sidney.

Cross-References

- [Action and Contemplation in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Allegory in Renaissance Literature](#)
- [Boccaccio, Giovanni](#)
- [Courtesy, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- [Duplessis-Mornay](#)
- [Ethics, Renaissance](#)

- [Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)
- [Ut pictura poesis](#)
- [Virgil in the Renaissance](#)

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Sign

► *Signatura Rerum* Theory

Signatura Rerum Theory

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Abstract

Natural things sometimes resemble each other. From antiquity to today, either in the East or the West, such similarity is often considered to be a hidden key toward important knowledge for human beings. To recognize this similarity it needs a sort of index, which measures the resemblance between things. A general index can be the external figure of natural things. This is the foundation of the theory called “signature/sign of things” (*signatura rerum*). According to a typical understanding of the sixteenth century, the invisible internal essence or force of natural things was visibly coined on their external figure as a sign. Human beings could decipher such signs by analogy and approach to the universal knowledge of nature or even to the will of God who engraved these signs in nature. The doctrine of *signatura rerum* was a manifestation of this way of reasoning and approach to nature. French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) addressed it in *Les mots et les choses* (*The Order of Things*), Chapter 2, and made it well known (Foucault 1966).

Synonyms

Sign; Signature

Major Aspects

Historically speaking, this kind of analogical reasoning can be observed everywhere in the world, especially in the field of medicine. A plant, whose figure resembles hands, was often considered to

be efficient for the diseases of hands. If the external appearance of some plants (or sometimes even animals and minerals) resembles the organs of the human body, those plants were believed to be efficient to the diseases and injuries of the corresponding organs.

In Europe, a portion of this doctrine can be observed in the *Materia medica* of Dioscorides, who synthesized the knowledge of pharmacological botany in the ancient Greek world, and in the *Natural History* of Pliny of Rome. Their Western followers of the Middle Ages widely used to acknowledge morphological analogies between medicinal natural things and sick or wound parts of bodily organs. Externally resembling plants were applied for the remedy of the bites by beasts such as snakes and scorpions. Thus, the morphological analogy among natural things was often used in medicine.

In the Renaissance, the doctrine of *signatura rerum* became popular and was discussed widely more than ever. Two major actors contributed to this move: Giambattista Della Porta (1538–1615) and Paracelsus (1493/1494–1538).

Della Porta devoted an entire monograph, entitled *Phytognomonica* (Naples, 1588), to this doctrine. In this work, he enumerated medicinal plants by way of the morphological analogy with the bodily organs. Citrus fruits, by their resemblance with the heart, were considered to be efficient for cardiac diseases. A plant called “pulmonaria” would be efficient for the sicknesses of the lungs. Corydalis was regarded as a medicine for the liver by its external resemblance to the organ. As pomegranates and toothworts resembled the teeth, they were taught to be good for the pains of the teeth. Likewise, he enumerated medicines for the hand, bones, hairs, head, eyes, ears, genital organs, spleen, kidneys, uterus, bladder, etc. (Della Porta 1588).

Not only the shapes of plants but also colors, smells, and other properties were taken into account. Long-life plants were believed to be good for longevity; plants having yellow flowers or saps would cure jaundice; the red petals of roses would purify the blood by purging heat. More curiously, animals having big ears were said to be efficient to bad hearing capacity; plants

growing on the rocks would break calculus; summer plants would be good for summer diseases. Animals, which slept well, would be good for the problem of sleep (Thorndike 1923–1958). By compiling the sum of knowledge about various plants and their signs, Della Porta claimed to follow the tradition which ran from antiquity through the Middle Ages (Della Porta 1588). For him, to understand the correspondence between the human being and medicinal natural things was to reveal the secret of nature, which was also the ultimate goal of his masterpiece, *Magia naturalis* (Naples, 1589).

As for Paracelsus, he tried to approach this doctrine in a more practical aspect. As a medical practitioner, he dealt with plants as medicines according to the analogy with the bodily organs. He believed that each disease had its own remedy which lay hidden as an invisible faculty or power in plants. For him, physicians had to extract this faculty and learn which plant had which faculty. The privileged way to seek such faculties of plants was an analogical thinking, and the signs of things held the key to such knowledge. For example, as *Eufrasia* resembled the eye, Paracelsus considered it to be efficient for eye diseases; he regarded melissa to be good for cardiac diseases since it resembled the heart to his eyes. In the case of St. John's wort, he emphasized the importance of deciphering the veins and fine holes of its leaves as well as the whole shape of its leaves and flowers. For him, the external figures of diverse plants and the particular shapes of their parts were the signs to discover and justify medicines (Paracelsus 1922–1933).

Paracelsus extended his theory from the kingdom of plants to the whole field of nature. He went even further to relate it with celestial bodies on the basis of the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm. As he was not satisfied with the application of this doctrine to medicine alone, he elaborated it to the level of an overall natural philosophy. Through this system, he wanted to find out useful knowledge for human beings and to understand the truth of the world through the study of nature (Müller-Jahncke 1984, 1985; Bianchi 1987; Bono 1995). Later in his career, Paracelsus tried to transform his theory into a

tool to craft a better society. For him, if shoemakers do a better job by learning the signs of leather, carpenters by those of wood, potters by those of clay, the life of those who use their products would be made better. Each profession would contribute to society as a whole by gaining its professional knowledge through a better understanding of the signs of things. In this scheme, Paracelsus's doctrine of signatures was a practical technique as well as practical philosophy (Paracelsus 1922–1933).

Thanks to Paracelsus's followers such as Joseph Du Chesne (1544–1609), Oswald Croll (1580–1609), Jacob Böhme (1574–1624), Jacques Gaffarel (1601–1681), and Wolfgang Fabricius (1625–1653), the doctrine of *signatura rerum* knew the vague in the seventeenth century (Du Chesne 1603; Croll 1609; Böhme 1621; Fabricius 1653; Hirai 2014). Its afterlife continued in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this connection, it is possible to say that Kepler (1571–1630) and Leibniz (1646–1716) were under the influence of Paracelsus (Bianchi 1987). Although historian of botany Agnes Arber (1879–1960) criticized it as an obstacle for the development of modern botanical science, the doctrine served as the intellectual foundation of natural philosophy more strongly in that era than in antiquity and the Middle Ages (Arber 1919).

This kind of reasoning based on analogies had a problem. If thorough knowledge about the world was sought by analogy through such signs, the world and its knowledge would share the essentially same structure and become a complex tapestry of interwoven analogies. This correspondence did not signify the identity of the world and its knowledge. Even if similarity between plants and human organs was acknowledged, these plants could not cure the sickness of the corresponding organs.

However, such a gap between the world and its knowledge did not lead to the total rejection of analogical reasoning. The divergence between both demanded another analogy to justify the first analogy. As plants similar to the heart were not only citrus but also melissa or lemon, one analogy required another analogy. Through this,

the network of analogies in the world became stronger. At the same time, the gap covering nature with a veil of mystery sometimes brought forth an unexpected cognition. In his *Natural Magic*, Della Porta described mysterious connections of natural things: pigeons would use the leaves of laurel to protect their babies against magic; elephants would use wild olives as antidotes when they ate chameleons by error.

Since signs were regarded as the words inscribed onto nature by God, they bore the absolute certificate of trueness. Thus, the truth had to be sought by tracing the endless chain of these signs (Bianchi 1987; Bono 1995). As everything in the world was believed to be connected by analogy and full of signs to decipher, the world itself was “magical.” Paracelsus emphasized the necessity to experience the natural world endowed with this endless chain of signs. What he called “experience” was the very “magic” (*magia*), which aimed to reveal the concealed relationship among natural things. The doctrine of *signatura rerum* necessarily comprised magic and experience, both of which were very important in the Renaissance (Kikuchiara 2013).

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Signature

► Signatura Rerum Theory

Silva, Miguel da

Born: 1475–80, Évora

Died: 5 June 1556, Rome

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Abstract

Miguel da Silva played a seminal role in transmitting diverse facets of Italian humanist thought and scholarship to Portugal. The foundation for his mediating role was primarily his scholarly dialogue with writers, architects, and artists in Italy and Portugal. Pursuit of his wide-ranging scholarly interests was combined with his diplomatic, political, and ecclesiastical roles as Portuguese ambassador to the Holy See, first minister to John III of Portugal, and finally cardinal during the papacy of Paul III.

Biography

Little is known about da Silva's early years. Through the patronage of Manuel I, he was sent

to study in Paris, where he met Juan Luis Vives. From Paris he transferred to Siena, where he pursued his study of Latin and Greek. During this time, he became close to members of the Medici family, and these contacts would shape the first phase of da Silva's political career. In late 1514 or early 1516, he was appointed ambassador to the Holy See, a post he held until 1525, when he was recalled to Portugal. During this first period of residence in Rome, he forged close ties to the city's intellectual milieu and demonstrated his political capacities as a diplomat.

While in Rome, da Silva benefitted personally, and Portugal politically, from the rise of the Medici popes Leo X and, above all, Clement VII. He also forged close bonds with other members of the Medici circle, in particular Giovanni di Bernardo de Rucellai and Lattanzio Tolomei. Rucellai brought him into contact with prominent Neoplatonist scholars and Rome's literary circles. He is also considered to have fostered da Silva's interest in the Albertian principles of architecture. Da Silva's interwoven philosophical, literary, architectural, and archaeological interests would be developed throughout his life, yet the breadth of his intellectual scope ranged far wider and encompassed "...all the aspects of a universal and encyclopaedic vision" (Deswarte-Rosa 1988, 199).

Da Silva's scholarly legacy is one of patronage rather than authorship. One key indication of his renown and learning is the many dedications authors made to him throughout his life. The one by Francesco Cattani da Diacceto's manuscript treatise *Paraphrasis in Politicum Platonis* (c. 1513) testifies to his philosophical and political interests, while the dedication of the 1522 *Il Petrarca* signals his literary renown. Undoubtedly, the most significant dedication was that of Castiglione's in *Il libro del Cortegiano* (Venice, 1528), which was published in numerous editions and translations. Castiglione's book offers further insight into the literary concerns of Rome's scholarly community, among whom he would have met da Silva. Besides being concerned with the application of learning in the sphere of court life and politics, his

book advocates the use of the vernacular for erudite discourse.

The latter would be a concern da Silva would pursue back in his native Portugal, to which he returned in 1625. While there, he ascended to the top of the court hierarchy and through the influence of Clement VII he likewise gained ecclesiastical prominence as the Bishop of Viseu. In Portugal, his learning was again celebrated in further book dedications such as André de Resende's in his *Erasmi Encomium* (Basle, 1531), which singled out his linguistic, literary, and philosophical prestige, although he and da Silva would later dispute the veracity of antiquarian findings.

Da Silva also commissioned architectural projects for Viseu Cathedral. These projects were designed by Francesco de Cremona and contributed to the wider dissemination of renaissance architectural principles into Portugal. His most celebrated patronage is that of the youthful Francisco de Holanda. Da Silva contributed to the young artist's humanist education, and in particular his knowledge of Rome in preparation for Holanda's journey there in 1538. The visual and literary dimensions of Holanda's manuscript legacy testify to his close contact with da Silva.

Yet, da Silva's name is absent from Holanda's writings due to his fall from grace and flight from Portugal in 1640, due to tensions between John III and the papacy. Exiled in Rome, he was made a cardinal in 1641 by Paul III, which compounded John's antipathy toward him. Da Silva's flight cost him his wealth. Nonetheless, he continued his scholarly activity. For example, a 1549 publication of the *fasti*, discovered in Rome's Forum, included an engraved architectural reconstruction by Michelangelo followed by a sonnet by da Silva; evidently da Silva was still an active participant in Rome's scholarly gatherings that were celebrated in the second book of Holanda's *Da Pintura Antiga*.

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Sin in Renaissance Theology

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Abstract

In late medieval and early modern Western thought, sin is a religious concept that needs to be understood against the background of biblical writings and the doctrinal traditions of the churches. Rather than attempting an in-depth analysis of the most sophisticated theological and philosophical discussions, the present entry offers a basic conceptual framework in which such discussions take place between 1300 and 1650. The positions of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Johann Eck, and Ignatius of Loyola are briefly described.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the Latin New Testament, the concepts “sin” and “debt” are often interchangeable. For instance, the prayer of Jesus “Our Father” employs “sin” in Luke 11:4 and “debt” in Matthew 6:12. Sinners need forgiveness of their debts. Forgiveness takes place both as an act of grace and in terms of payment. In the social imagination of medieval and early modern people, the logic of

payment and the logic of gift are complementary and overlapping mechanisms (Zemon Davis 2000). By confessing his or her sins, an individual receives forgiveness as an act of divine grace; at the same time, this person pays back some of his or her debt by doing works of satisfaction.

In addition to such economic horizons, the vocabulary of the lawcourt is often employed. The sinful person carries guilt (*culpa*) and deserves punishment (*poena*). Forgiveness covers both the forensic and the economic dimensions of guilt and debt. The legal vocabulary allows for sophisticated distinctions. For instance, in the Augustinian tradition of original sin, future generations may receive the punishment of Adam’s sin even when they have no personal guilt related to it. The baptism of infants can be explained with a view to similar considerations: the baptismal water can cleanse a person from inherited guilt and punishment even when no personal guilt is ascribed to the infant. On the other hand, the baptized person continues to commit actual sins. Therefore, his or her later guilt needs to be reconciled through the mechanism of confession and absolution.

The angelic Fall was typically considered to have been the first sin. It was followed by the original sin of Adam and Eve. While this original sin is, according to the Augustinian tradition, transmitted sexually, the theme of inheritance is predominantly discussed in legal (rather than sexual or corporeal) terms. The sins of an individual person are seen in terms of theological and legal continuity with the first sin. At the same time, each person remains legally responsible for his or her own sins.

The moral dimension is likewise prominent. The distinction between good works and sin is analogical to the distinction between virtue and vice. According to moral philosophy and theology, some moral flaw is found in the sinful person. While forgiveness cannot by itself make sinful persons virtuous, their future virtue can be trained by the works of satisfaction, educational efforts, and the effective powers of sacramental grace. In this manner, the ethical vocabulary of virtue is connected with the quasi-economic interplay of gift and payment.

Standard Catholic theology, in particular Thomism, operates with the help of these three (economic, legal, moral) conceptual frameworks of sin. Legal and moral analogies underline the personal responsibility of an agent for his or her sinfulness. The baptized can, at least in theory, avoid sin and cleanse themselves of culpability through using the sacraments of the church.

Especially in monastic traditions, the moral and legal picture of sin is regarded as superficial, as it does not reach the roots of sinfulness. Monastic theologians often emphasize that emotions and even everyday perceptions are already in themselves sinful. Sin is not something that takes place only after an act of free will; rather, our whole emotional and sensual life is sinful. The words of Jesus regarding the sinfulness of lust (e.g., Matthew 5:28) offer support for such a position. Philosophically, many monastic theologians approach the Stoic ideals of a complete eradication of harmful emotions and a holistic control of one's own inner life. On the other hand, conscious intention and free consent are often thought to be the moral and legal prerequisites of culpably sinful action. If emotions are considered to be judgments in a Stoic fashion, it may be possible to consider harmful emotions as sinful in this sense of culpability (Knuuttila 2004).

Like many monastic theologians, Martin Luther maintains that a merely moral and legal understanding of sin is theologically inadequate. For him, sin is a holistic power of corruption (*Verderbnismacht*) that is connected with the powers of death and devil. While Luther strongly advocates the baptism of infants, he also considers that baptized Christians continue to be sinful in some sense. Christians are "righteous and sinful at the same time," since they cannot eradicate all repugnant harmful emotions during their corporeal life. For this reason, Luther can say, for instance, that Christians commit sin even while doing good works. This is because their good works remain in some sense contaminated with the remnants of their sinfulness (Schneider and Wenz 2000; Bultmann et al. 2007).

For Roman Catholicism, this is a too pessimistic and even Manichean picture of Christian humanity. In the Leipzig disputation of 1519, the

issue of remaining sinfulness was debated between Luther's adherents and the Catholic theologian Johann Eck. The standard Catholic position, defended by Eck, considers that the basic evil desire of concupiscence can be called sin before baptism but not after it. After baptism, conscious sinful intention and consent are needed to make Christians truly sinful. Eck grants, however, that the Church Fathers have dealt with this problem in different ways. He concedes that the Lutheran way of labeling the concupiscence of the baptized Christians as sin is possible if the word "sin" refers to their punishment (*poena*) rather than to their guilt (*culpa*) (Seitz 1903, 242–255). In this manner, Eck shows some understanding of the monastic traditions of the Western church.

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) defines the normative Catholic teaching on sin in its *Decree on original sin* (sessio 5) and *Decree on justification* (sessio 6) (The Council of Trent 1990). The Council condemns, for instance, the Lutheran view that righteous people sin in their good works (sessio 6, canon 25). In this manner, Catholics evaluate the relative importance of remaining concupiscence differently from Protestantism. Basically, Catholics consider that Christians should remain free from sin (sessio 6, cap. 11). John Calvin takes over Luther's radical view of permanently sinful concupiscence (*Institutio* 2, 2, 24) (Calvin 2006). He teaches that human nature is so corrupted that a total renewal of human mind and will is needed (*Institutio* 2, 3, 1–5).

In spite of the confessional divide, we cannot draw the conclusion that early modern Roman Catholicism merely stuck to the old legal and moral vocabulary. The most influential early modern treatise on sin is contained in *The Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola (2009). The readers of Ignatius are expected not only to perform the exercises but to compile a training diary, allowing them to chart their progress in this healing. Ignatius distinguishes three kinds of morally relevant thoughts: some arise from one's own will, others from external good spirit, and still others from external evil spirits. Resisting evil thoughts is counted as merit. Ignatius admonishes the reader to remember the angelic Fall, the sin of

Adam and Eve, and the mortal sins of later people. Such remembrance trains the mind to understand the gravity of sin.

The introspective dimension belongs integrally to the exercises of the first week, devoted to healing from sin. Readers ask who they really are and lessen themselves, first by comparing themselves to other people, second by comparing all humans to angels and saints, and third by comparing all creation to God. The chain from the angelic Fall to human sinfulness is thus reversed and returned to God. This process affords a truthful grasp of one's bodily corruption and foulness. Meditating on hell complements these exercises. Readers are invited to visualize the flames of hell, hear the laments of the souls there, smell the odors, taste bitter things, and feel the burning of the flames. The body and its five senses play an important role in the exercises.

Philosophically, Ignatius's introspective emphasis and his constant attention to the corporeal and sensual existence of human beings are innovative features that have preserved their legacy until our day. Like the early Protestants, Ignatius does not consider sin to consist primarily of moral and legal matters. Rather, the healing from sin concerns the entire corporeal and spiritual existence of human beings. Ignatius wants the reader to train his or her *cogito*, the introspective capacity of thinking about one's own inner world. In many ways, Ignatius is concerned with how the reader appropriates the contents of his or her own mind. Ignatius is thus close to the later German philosophy of *Aneignung*, a concept developed by Hegel and Kierkegaard.

The Protestants also develop techniques to cope with sinful thoughts and emotions. Johann Gerhard's *Meditationes sacrae* (2010) can in some ways be read as the Lutheran counterpart of Ignatian exercises. As the early modern theologians often connect sin with death, meditating on death is a major concern of such techniques. The modern Enlightenment view, according to which death and illness belong to the category of nature, whereas vice, sin, and bad (=corrupt?) will belong to the different category of morality, is not clearly developed in the seventeenth century.

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Skalić, Pavao

Born: 1534 Zagreb

Died: 1575 Gdansk

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Abstract

A Croatian Renaissance philosopher, theologian, and adventurer, known in the history of philosophy as an ardent follower of Pico della Mirandola and one of the first thinkers who used the term *encyclopedia*, Skalić was a typical representative of Renaissance syncretism.

Alternate Names

della Scala, Paulus; Scalichius, Paulus; Scalicius, Paulus; Scaliger, Paulus; Scaligius, Paulus; Skalić, Stanislav Pavao

Biography

Skalić was born in Zagreb in 1534. After he had finished his studies and earned a master's degree in the *septem artes liberales* in Vienna and a doctorate in theology in Bologna, he went to Rome, where he spent some time in *Collegium Germanicum*. Afterwards, he traveled through Germany, where he converted to Protestantism. In the Protestant phase of his life, he subjected the Church politics to sharp criticism, pleading for the return to the spiritual sources of faith. During this phase, the Protestant version of his *Encyclopaedia* was published in Basel in 1559. The Catholic version of the same work, only slightly modified, would be published 12 years later. During his stay among the Croatian and Slovenian Protestants in Germany, he wrote the foreword for the *Glagolitic Catechism* and became the protégé of John Ungnad.

He was a professor of theology at Königsberg and Tübingen, but due to forgery of the documents that he was using to prove his noble origin, he acquired a lot of enemies and was obliged to flee to Gdansk, Poland. Afterwards, he went to Paris and then to Münster. Eventually, he returned under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Church and wrote Counter-Reformation pamphlets. He died in Gdansk in 1575.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Skalić wrote a great number of works that show that he is a typical representative of Renaissance syncretism. In these works and especially in his main work *Encyclopaedia seu orbis disciplinarum tam sacrarum quam prophanarum Epistemon*, he is trying to reconcile diverse traditions – the Orphic, Pythagorean, Hermetic, Chaldean, Kabbalistic, Platonic, and Aristotelian – and to harmonize them with the Christian doctrine. So he interpreted the doctrines of *Prisci Theologi* in terms of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In philosophy, he was a follower of Pico della Mirandola, also a representative of Renaissance syncretism. In his works, he sometimes takes over literally the entire parts of Pico's

texts. In accordance with Pico's fundamental orientation in philosophy, he too defends concordism, i.e., the thesis that it is possible to harmonize Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies. He sees the relationship between man and the world as the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Skalić thinks that man can influence the world around him, primarily by the use of magic. He associated the thesis on divine providence that governs the world with the astrological notion of causality. Many of his beliefs, and above all the beliefs in the existence of a *philosophia perennis*, were influenced by Agostino Steuco. He was also influenced by the German humanist Johannes Reuchlin. Encyclopedism and concordism are two main features of his philosophy.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Skalić follows the line of Renaissance Platonism that largely relies on Chaldeo-Hermetic-Kabbalistic sources within the tradition of *prisca theologia*. Defending the reform of the Church and the spiritual *renovatio* in general, he pleads for the return to the sources of faith and knowledge that are to be found primarily in the Scripture and in the writings of the Chaldean, Egyptian, Arab, Jewish, Greek, and Latin traditions. He holds all of them compatible with Christianity. The truth contained within all these traditions is one *aeterna sapientia*. It cannot be argued that Skalić was an original thinker, given the fact that the basic feature of his work is syncretism. Skalić is among the first thinkers who tried to give a synthesis of all sciences according to the Greek idea of *enkyklios paideia*. The fundamental intention underlying all his works was *scire omnia scibilia*. Hence, the title of his most important work was *Encyclopaedia seu orbis disciplinarum tam sacrarum quam prophanarum Epistemon*. Skalić, however, was not the first to use this term, as previously often thought. In none of his works did he present an original and unique doctrine of his own.

Impact and Legacy

Skalić left behind numerous works, in which a number of themes are repeated. His work did not have much impact on either the European or Croatian Renaissance philosophers. His adventurous and tumultuous life was of much greater interest to historians than his work.

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Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of

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Abstract

Skepticism played a major role during the Renaissance, both before and after the rediscovery of Sextus Empiricus' works and the revival of Pyrrhonism. In its various branches, this philosophical movement connected with various orientations, bringing forth new combinations that, albeit somehow eclectic, revealed its fecundity and strength of innovation. It connected with fideism (Gianfrancesco Pico), rhetoric and dialectic (Talon), occultism and Neoplatonism (H. C. Agrippa), empiricism (Montaigne), Stoicism (Charron), and epistemology and

metaphysics (Sanches and Campanella). Skepticism acted as a factor of moderation in theological debates (Erasmus, Castellion) and had an important impact on seventeenth-century philosophy, until Campanella, Descartes, and Hobbes.

Synonyms

Scetticismo; Skepticisme; Skeptizismus

Introduction

During the sixteenth century the discovery of new continents and new civilizations; advances in medicine, mathematics, and mechanics; and the rediscovery of the Hellenistic philosophies, almost all anti-Aristotelian, raised doubts as to the idea that the ancients and especially Aristotle, with his Scholastic disciples, had built a model of “perfect knowledge.” It was in this intellectual climate that the ideas of neo-academic skepticism, mainly transmitted by Cicero and Augustine, and the rediscovery of Sextus Empiricus’ texts at the end of the century gave new strength and topicality to skeptical objections, questioning consolidated knowledge and calling into discussion even the possibility of achieving an adequate and “scientific” knowledge of reality. Renaissance skepticism was different from ancient skepticism in many particulars: (a) in addition to the critique of knowledge, it also contributed to the crisis of fifteenth-century humanism and its anthropocentric conception, limiting the claims of human excellence that had been especially emphasized by Platonists like Ficino; (b) it intertwined and was confronted with very strong religious needs, typical of a dogmatic religion like Christianity, which, unlike the ancient and mythical religions, could interact more deeply with the issues of theoretical skepticism; (c) it developed the epistemological dimension much more than the ethical one and often interpreted the outcome of skepticism as a disturbing and distressing situation (doubt) rather than in terms of suspension of judgment (*epokhe*) and peace of mind (*ataraxia*);

(d) whereas ancient skepticisms were organized in different schools and conceived themselves as autonomous and self-contained positions, the Renaissance approach was quite eclectic and instrumental, in the name of the ideal of “freedom of philosophizing” (“*libertas philosophandi*”). Therefore, it made different trends combine with each other, as well within as outside skepticism, interpreting this latter as a tactic or a preliminary stage to be included and overcome in a higher synthesis. This explains the different connections that during the Renaissance were established with fideism (Gianfrancesco Pico), empiricism (Montaigne), rhetoric and dialectic (Talon), occultism and Neoplatonism (H. C. Agrippa), and epistemology and metaphysics (Sanches and Campanella). The Renaissance debate on skepticism was very influential also in early modern philosophy, involving great figures such as Bacon, Bruno, Mersenne, Gassendi, Descartes, and Hobbes (Paganini 2003a, 2004b).

Two great classics of historiography have divided the field of history of skepticism, focusing respectively on Pyrrhonism and fideism (Popkin 2003), neo-academic skepticism (Schmitt 1972), and anti-Aristotelianism (Schmitt 1967). New research has revealed a web of connections and uses of skepticism that go far beyond those settings. For all these reasons, Renaissance and early modern skepticism are now studied rather in the field of philosophical controversies than in that of separate philosophical movements (Paganini 2008; Paganini and Maia Neto 2009; Charles and Bernier 2005; Popkin 2008; Maia Neto, et al. 2009; Zerba 2012).

Heritage and Break with Tradition

Broadly meant, skepticism is a doctrine according to which it is impossible to decide the truth or falsity of any proposition. Ancient skepticism was divided in two main branches, Academic and Pyrrhonian. The doctrine of Pyrrho of Elis (ca. 350–ca. 270 BCE) was transmitted especially by Sextus Empiricus, whose texts almost disappeared in the West during the Middle Ages,

except for a few manuscripts (Floridi 2002). Pyrrhonism clearly separated itself from the neo-academic position and is presented by Sextus as a philosophy always open to searching and oriented toward an ethical goal, the tranquility of the mind. Academic skepticism uninterruptedly persisted in European culture, thanks to Cicero's works (Schmitt 1972; Moreau 2001). Deeply marked by the debates between Stoics and Academics over "comprehensive representation," the skepticism passed down by Cicero revolved around the notions of verisimilitude and probability and arrived at an explicit conclusion, even though a negative one, the "knowledge of not knowing." Thus, the Pyrrhonist notion of "phenomenon" remained foreign to Cicero.

Skepticism and Humanism. The influence of Cicero was overwhelming since the beginning of Christianity. The ethics of radical uncertainty and the idea that searching cannot have an end seemed incompatible both with the Ciceronian description of wisdom as "the knowledge of things human and divine" and with the Christian synthesis of philosophy and theology. Some new research has now increased the number of Sextus' manuscripts that were available in the West and that, thanks to a variety of testimonies (Aulus Gellius, Ammonius, Galenus, Lucian, and especially Diogenes Laertius), the life and doctrines of Pyrrho were already known enough, even before the rediscovery of Sextus' first manuscript works, probably owned by Cardinal Bessarion and Francesco Filelfo. The very first important testimonies appeared in dictionaries and encyclopedic works, already in the first half of the sixteenth century (Naya 2000 and Naya 2009). Therefore, the first context of the Pyrrhonian renaissance was entirely humanistic. Florence and Rome were the centers of the nascent interest in the Greek work of Sextus. Other manuscripts were obtained by Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence and probably kept in the convent of San Marco, where the friar-prophet Girolamo Savonarola lived. The great humanist and defender of human dignity, Giovanni Pico used Sextus' *Adversus astrologos* for his harsh criticism of astrology, in which he saw a threat to liberty of man (Pico 1946–1952). His nephew Gianfrancesco, who belonged to

Savonarola's inner circle, was the first to make an extensive use of the whole corpus of Sextus' works. The massive book written by the younger Pico, *Examen vanitatis doctrinae gentium* (Pico 1573), marked a break in the history of Florentine humanism and it is significant that this break was based on a particular reinterpretation of Pyrrhonian skepticism. The uncle Giovanni was looking for a great philosophical vision reconciling pagan, Jewish, and Christian wisdom under the label of a *prisca sapientia*, both pagan and biblical, culminating in the humanistic glorification of man's capacities to rise to the highest level. Marsilio Ficino developed the same idea, relying on the Platonic tradition, in which he saw the firmest ground for a synthesis between pagan philosophy and Christian theology. Against this tendency, Savonarola promoted a radical reform that was directed both against the ecclesiastical decadence and Renaissance humanistic thought based on pagan ideas. In this wake, he encouraged the younger Pico to study Sextus' works as a weapon not only against pagan philosophy, but also against all kinds of philosophy, showing – in the footsteps of Sextus – that it was impossible to reach the truth by means of human reason alone. During his enforced exile around 1510, Pico set out to work on his *Examen vanitatis*. Pico used Sextus to attack the "pagan" dogmatism of Aristotle and his disciples, yet for him skepticism was closely connected to the idea that Christian revelation would be better set up on the ruins of philosophical reason, after the corrosive effect produced by the critique of any rationalist dogmatism (Schmitt 1967). In reality, from a properly philosophical standpoint, Pico seriously misunderstood the true nature and meaning of ancient Pyrrhonism, in which he had only an instrumental interest.

The result seems to be paradoxical. Pico was really one of the earliest Renaissance authors to make an extensive use of *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes* and *Adversus Mathematicos*, yet he was in no way influenced by Sextus' anti-dogmatism, as Pico's general approach to philosophy was fundamentally authoritarian and contrary to philosophical liberty. One can observe two main points whereby Pico's philosophy can be qualified

as “Christian,” but not as truly “Pyrrhonist” (despite the label “Christian Pyrrhonism” coined for him and his followers). The first is his misunderstanding of the “zetetic” (investigative) nature of skepticism; the second is his rejection of *ataraxia* as a main moral goal to pursue. In Pico’s view, the truth of revealed doctrine is prior to every investigation and only indirectly confirmed by the destruction of dogmatic philosophies, as well as the superiority of religious end (soul’s salvation) is much more important than every kind of peace of mind (Cao 2007; Cao 2009). The true aim pursued by Gianfrancesco consisted in ridding the reader’s mind of any pagan or rational philosophy and so preparing the ground for a ready reception of bare revelation, according to Savonarola’s project of radical Christian reformation. This does not diminish the importance of Gianfrancesco as one of the first thinkers of the skeptical modern tradition, even though it seriously qualifies his aim. While demonstrating a humanistic interest in his minute presentation of the skeptical modes, Gianfrancesco attenuated or rather transformed the meaning of *epokhe*. In Pico’s view, judgment is more often interrupted than suspended; instead of showing the equipollency (*isosthenia*) of different phenomena and noumena, Pico demonstrates the falsity of all human controversies, until revelation will come up to disclose the real truth from above. For all his philological skills, Pico is personally very far from the psychological situation of uncertainty because – despite the display of Sextus’ dialectical arguments – he does not doubt at all; the source of his convictions is independent from philosophy. Pico criticizes “suspension of judgment” severely, seeing in it “a fault more than an achievement” (Cao 2007, p. 24). In conclusion, the first Renaissance reader of “Pyrrhonism” was at the same time the first to seriously misunderstand its true philosophical contents.

Religious and Cultural Reform. The second and more important religious crisis in which skepticism (more the “label” than the substance of it) played a major role was the Lutheran Reformation. Just as Savonarola and Pico used skepticism to mark the first break in the evolution of Italian humanism, similarly, the polemic between

Erasmus and Luther marked a similar break in northern humanism. In this case, the main reference was not Pyrrhonism, but the New Academy, yet once again the polemic nature of the exchange between the two figures did not help to reach a better understanding of the philosophical contents of skepticism.

Martin Luther in his *De servo arbitrio* (1525) accused Erasmus of arriving at de facto skepticism in theology for his doctrine of human freedom (Erasmus 1524). The reformer not only opposed the humanistic defense of human liberty but also considered as skepticism any doubt regarding his own interpretation of the doctrine of predestination, supported by the dogmatic certainty of being right. “The Holy Spirit is not a skeptic,” he warned Erasmus, maintaining that the believer ought to nourish absolute certainties in this regard. “Indeed, how will he be able to believe in a thing he doubts?” What could have seemed “skeptical” in Erasmus was rather a general attitude of hostility toward an excessive theological determination to investigate intrinsically controversial subjects. It is well known that, according to Erasmus’ conception of human salvation, prevalently moral ends ought to characterize Christianity over the adhesion to cold dogmatic statements. What was polemically presented as skepticism (by Luther) was in reality a profound hostility to investigations that are too exclusively or unilaterally dogmatic, as well as the emphasis put on the value of moderation against theological *rabies*. In fact, Erasmus’ *De libero arbitrio* (1524) was anything but skeptical. The only mention of the “skeptics” in the treatise is hypothetical and Erasmus is very careful to submit any hypothetical position to the authority of the Scripture and the Church. In fact, Erasmus used rational and scriptural arguments to defend the existence of a middle path between Pelagianism and extreme determinism, maintaining a fundamentally Thomist conception of human freedom and responsibility. At no point does Erasmus either suspend judgment or suggest that he does not know about the issue of freedom or about the overall Christian doctrine of grace. What might appear similar to the academic approach (the only one well known at that time) is his

method of comparing and weighing theses and biblical passages *pro* and *con* before assessing the one that is most valid (Backus 2009). Moreover, his humanistic and anti-dogmatic attitude had already found clear expression in his youthful *Stultitiae laus* (1511), written as a reaction to the scholastic theology of the University of Paris. There, he did not hesitate to evoke the Academic approach that evaluates different theses, refusing to take sides in controversial matters, and on the whole preferred to reason in terms not of certainty but of greater or lesser probability: “the variety and obscurity of human affairs is so great that nothing can be known clearly, as was well said by our Academics, the least reckless of all the philosophers.” Although he translated in Latin Galen’s opusculum *De optimo genere docendi*, which was an important source for the knowledge of ancient Pyrrhonism, it would be difficult to find in Erasmus skeptical propositions in a technical sense, such as the suspension of judgment or the impossibility of determining the truth of knowing. Popkin’s thesis, which identifies the classical and skeptical issue of the criterion of truth with the religious problem of the criterion of faith (Scripture or tradition, reason or inspiration) (Popkin 2003, pp. 3–16), is more a retrospection of the seventeenth-century controversies than a true description of the Erasmus-Luther debate.

This same humanistic idea of a “moderate theology” was emphasized by Sébastien Castellion, another author that can be considered relevant for the broad history of skepticism in the sixteenth century, starting from the very title of his major work: *De arte dubitandi et confitendi, ignorandi et sciendi* (published only in 1937). In this work some form of skepticism is present, which is however meant as moderation and restraining from “defining” theological and controversial matters. On the other hand, Castellion maintains that there is sure knowledge of God and his basic precepts, which is available to all mankind through reason and perception of creation. In this, there is no possible skepticism. His “moderation” was tied to a firm defense of the value of tolerance in religious disputes. Castellion had already had a practical confirmation of the link between dogmatism and intolerance when he tried to defend, in

vain, Michael Servetus against Calvin. The author of *De arte dubitandi* considers that it is permissible not to know things that have not been commanded by God and that are not necessary for knowing Him, nor for performing one’s duty. Another polemic opposed him to Beza on the issue of heresy and tolerance, polemic which culminated in Castellion’s work *De haereticis non puniendis* (published only in 1971), definitely an apology of religious toleration and moderation in dogmatic theology. In this work, it is the arguments of academic skepticism (and not of Pyrrhonists) that characterize the debate. Castellion contrasts the great philosopher Socrates, often presented as their ancestor by the neo-academics, with Aristotle and the Peripatetic school; moreover, against Beza’s defamation, he defends the principles of academic skepticism in so far as this school, acknowledging its ignorance, admitted also the inferiority of pagan systems to Christianity (Castellio 1971, pp. 22–23; Backus 2009, pp. 71–85).

In the turbulent yet innovative climate of German humanism, Agrippa von Nettesheim’s work stands relatively apart in so far as he followed a peculiar path that led him to publish, at a distance of few years, the most polemic attack on all sciences, *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* (Agrippa von Nettesheim 1530), and *De occulta philosophia* (Agrippa von Nettesheim 1533), in which he justified the epistemological status of magic on the basis of Neoplatonic philosophy. Despite its wide circulation and fortune, the former book is extremely poor from the point of view of the epistemology of skepticism. There, no philosophical argument for the condemnation of sciences occurs, most of the polemic dwells upon “the sins that all activities are heir to” (Popkin 2003, p. 28), whereas faith is proclaimed the only genuine source of truth, against the instability and unreliability of human opinions. One possible key to understanding this apparent contradiction is to come back to the opening lecture in a course on the *Corpus Hermeticum* held at Pavia in 1515, where Agrippa took on Ficino’s aversion to skepticism (Agrippa von Nettesheim 1600, II, pp. 1099–1100). As Perrone Compagni (2009) remarked, only one year later Agrippa addressed

the same accusation of being vain and quarrelsome to contemporary theologians, treated as “sophists,” and he kept this characterization intact in *De vanitate*. Therefore, Agrippa’s work should be classified neither in the category of “fideism” nor in that of epistemology: rather it is a manifesto for Neoplatonic and Hermetic theology, in which the demolition of sciences and skepticism serves only as preliminary stages or tactical weapons for what he considered a temporary alliance.

In this inflamed atmosphere of religious disputes, a turning point in the history of Renaissance skepticism was marked by the first printed editions (in Latin) of Sextus’ works: *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes*, at the hands of the Calvinist Henri Estienne (1562), and *Adversus Mathematicos*, edited by the Catholic Gentian Hervet (1569), while it was necessary to wait until 1621 for the *editio princeps* of the Greek text of both works. The comparison between the prefaces appended by the two humanists shows how theological disputes affected, at the end of the sixteenth century, even the philological reception of ancient skepticism. Both Estienne and Hervet highlighted the anti-dogmatic character of Sextus’ works and stressed also the utility of his argument from the theological point of view, addressing the false certainties of pagan philosophers. Nevertheless, the great divide between Catholicism and Protestantism influenced also the approach to the Hellenistic source. While Estienne, closer to the Reformation, presents the skeptical teaching in terms of moral reform and knowledge, seeing in skepticism the power to heal melancholy (Naya 2001 and Naya 2004), Hervet, ensconced in the cultural atmosphere of the Counter-Reformation, uses skepticism to stigmatize Protestant positions as a fresh example of dogmatism and inconsiderate reliance on human reason for their defense of free examination of Scripture (Floridi 2002, pp. 74–75).

Innovative and Original Aspects

With the first publications of Sextus’ works the philological revival ended and there began a new phase, characterized by the actual appropriation of

skepticism. Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) and Francisco Sanches (1551–1623) were the main authors that initiated new and modern interpretations of it. They made substantial contributions on the Pyrrhonist and the neo-Academic fronts, respectively.

Montaigne. Michel de Montaigne was the first European intellectual to fully realize the strong impact of the rebirth of ancient Pyrrhonism. He invented also a new literary form, the essay, which allowed him to digress into classical quotations (many from Cicero, Sextus, and Plutarch), anecdotes, and personal meditations. Without being a professional philosopher, practicing the apparently loose form of the essay permitted him to adopt an approach of free doubt and inquisition towards any matter. The essayist *à la* Montaigne is the modern incarnation of the “seeker” (*zētētikos*) or the “inquirer” (*skeptikos*) as it was depicted by Sextus, who practices the skeptical art of *zētēsis* (free research) without being enslaved to any dogmatic authority.

In 1571, Montaigne retired from public life to the tower of his castle. Locked up in his library, he had several Greek maxims (many of skeptical intonation) sculpted on the beams of the ceiling. There he finally began to work on the *Essays*. The earliest were short and impersonal and the following ones deeply influenced by Stoic ideals. The subsequent chapters of 1574–1575 already showed a stronger discontent with Stoical solutions, until the essay that is the longest by far, the *Apology for Raymond Sebond*, resulted in a strong attack on Stoicism, and more generally on any sort of dogmatism, both philosophical and theological. In this chapter, Montaigne heavily drew upon Greek skepticism and especially on Pyrrhonism as presented by Sextus and in the detailed *Life of Pyrrho* contained in Diogenes Laertius.

Montaigne disseminated in the *Essays* Pyrrhonian doctrines, while accurately distinguishing them from academic contaminations. He rethought and popularized technical notions such as “phenomenon,” “criterion,” “*epokhē*” or the suspension of judgment, equipollence (*isostheneia*), “ataraxy” or “apathy,” vicious circle (*diallelos*), and “infinite regress.” Furthermore, he translated Pyrrhonist terminology for the first time

into a modern language, French. His first important contribution had to do with the notion of “appearance” (Montaigne never used the term “phenomenon,” not yet in use in modern languages), which clearly derived from Henri Estienne’s translation and commentary of *Hypotyposes*. When he had to translate Sextus’ crucial chapter (PH I, 19–20) about *epokhē*’s limitations (“Whether skeptics eliminate phenomena”), Estienne felt it necessary to interpolate the text to explain better the sense of the Greek word *phainomena*. To this aim, he used all the variations on the verb “to appear” (Paganini 2008, pp. 38–47). In the next chapter – on the phenomenon as the “criterion” of skepticism (in a pragmatic and non-dogmatic sense: PH I, 21–23) – Sextus established an equivalence between phenomena and *phantasia* – the “sensible representation.” Estienne followed in the footsteps, with his Latin rendering, and these lexical choices were taken up by Montaigne too, who gave thus a phenomenalist and markedly empiricist presentation of Pyrrhonism. In giving a reasoned synthesis of *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes* I, 72–78 (Montaigne 1999, pp. 600–601), Montaigne explained the phenomenon by appealing to appearances and, at the same time, tightly connected this notion to that of *fantasie*, meaning not the faculty (as in Aristotle) but the sensitive representation. Thus, the main scene of skepticism for Montaigne became the dichotomy between appearance and reality. The first is knowable. The second, including essences and substances, is unknowable. In fact, this avoided as dogmatic any discourse about independent realities that do not reveal themselves through phenomena.

Montaigne introduced the genuine Pyrrhonist philosophy into early modern philosophy by giving it wide circulation. Before him it was mostly a topic of study for philologists, or was used to give support to apologists, or was intended to provide weapons for theological controversies (Popkin 2003, pp. 44–63; Paganini 2008, pp. 15–60). Montaigne rediscovered skepticism as a true philosophy worth taking seriously in itself. On the other hand, it is certainly true that his dichotomy between appearance and reality suggested a dogmatic residue in so far as Montaigne broke the link between reality and appearances, confining all of our knowledge to the latter. To illustrate this

difficult epistemological limitation, the *Apology* stated the famous dilemma of Socrates’ portrait: how can we be certain that the portrait is a picture of Socrates if we only have access to its representation, namely to appearances (phenomena and images), and do not have access to the original model? (Montaigne 1999, p. 601). In this scenario, the search for the criterion of knowledge is legitimate. Since appearance and reality are split, it is necessary to appeal to a “third” (the criterion) that should guarantee one is similar to the other. In turn, however, this criterion requires a new one for its legitimation, and this should go ad infinitum, bringing forth the aporia of infinite regress. The *diallelos* or vicious circle, as well as the dogmatic pretense to stop the regress to an alleged subjective evidence, would be based only on dogmatic assumptions (Montaigne 1999, p. 600).

In Sextus as in Montaigne, the weak version of *phantasia*, translated by *fantasie* and equated to *phainomenon*, is very different from the Stoic *phantasia kataleptike*; unlike the latter, the former is unable to provide a sure criterion of truth. This acknowledgment, on the other hand, opens the way for the study of the subjective states of the mind in relation to organic equipment of the senses, circumstances, conditions, locations, frequency or rarity, habits, etc. In this way, Montaigne follows the famous ten tropes of Enesidemus’ catalogue. Nevertheless, unlike the relativistic readings of these tropes, Montaigne rediscovers their original spirit. When he compares dreaming and being awake, being sober and being drunk, youth and old age, icteric and correct perception, and health and illness, the author of the *Essays* hints at calling into question the Aristotelian paradigm of “normality” that counted as a pattern of justification of our knowledge: what a “normal” subject, placed in a “normal” situation, with senses and intellect functioning according to nature, “normally” perceives of reality. One must read Montaigne’s paradoxical claim: “We are always with some sickness” (Montaigne 1999, p. 569), as a subversion of this paradigm. In the *Apology*, to perceive an object always means to be in a subjective state that reflects the quality of the subject rather than

the nature of reality itself. To be more exact, any state of the mind reflects a peculiar mixture of both subject and object. When perceiving a thing, Montaigne says, we accommodate ourselves to it, with the result of transforming the thing according to ourselves. This process of assimilation is at the same time a process of falsification that prevents us from judging what the thing is in itself: “Now, because our state accommodates things and turns them according to itself, we do not know what the actual things are anymore; as nothing comes to us but falsified and altered by our senses” (Montaigne 1999, p. 600; cf. 562, 587, 592, 599, 603).

In reality, the person “who judges by appearances judges on the basis of something different from the thing itself” (Montaigne 1999, p. 601), relying on phenomena belonging to the subject and its states and not strictly to the object. As a consequence, for a Pyrrhonist such as Montaigne is especially in layer (B) of the *Apology*, perceptions and any sort of mental representations are not warranted either epistemologically or ontologically. Besides these epistemological considerations, Montaigne helped transform skepticism into a modern way of living, suited to the different intellectual situations presented by modern European Christianity at the time of religious divisions and wars. Accordingly, Montaigne elaborated a new concept of belief, emphasizing its emotional character and giving prominence – in the field of religion – to that particular instinct from above that is divine grace. In spite of these overtures to fideism, the *Essays* presented a disenchanted view of the all-too-human form that religions take when they are transformed into superstition and intolerant fanaticism. His skeptical approach was hostile to the Inquisition and religious violence, criticizing war and especially the colonization of the New World. Reflecting on the oppressive and ferocious conduct of the *conquistadores*, he claimed that contemporary Europeans were much more “barbarians” than the so-called savages.

Another important innovation of Montaigne (Paganini 2008, pp. 52–60; Eva 2009) is the ubiquitous synonymy between skepticism and doubt, whereas ancient skepticism was much more

focused on *epokhe* and consequently on *ataraxia*. Benson Mates (1996, p. 30) showed how unsatisfactory it is to translate simply as “to doubt” the verb used by Sextus, *aporein*. In fact, although Montaigne correctly retrieved the main *phonai* (voices) of ancient skepticism and showed how they converged into the suspension of judgment (Montaigne 1999, p. 505), nonetheless, when he had to briefly summarize the doctrine and defend it from the accusation of being self-contradictory, he drastically reduced the whole bunch of these keywords to only two; the former was the formula of Socratic ignorance (“I ignore”), the latter the profession of doubting (“Je doute”) (Montaigne 1999, p. 527). In fact, both formulas are more a betrayal than a transmission of the genuine meaning of the *epokhé*, substituting a balanced neutrality with either a dogmatic denial (“I do not know”) or a statement of wavering perplexity (“I doubt”). This is not without consequences for the overall meaning of skepticism, because doubt is for Montaigne a state of restlessness and discomfort rather than of calm and liberation from emotion, as skeptical *ataraxia* should be. Through this shift, one can see how the author of the *Essays* was influential on our modern view, whereby skepticism and doubt have become co-extensional and synonymous.

Neo-Academics. Pyrrhonism became available to philosophers in its entirety only in the late Renaissance, whereas Cicero’s *Academica* was known much earlier, starting from Petrarca and Valla; it was printed in 1471 with Cicero’s other works. One of Petrus Ramus’ friends, Omer Talon, wrote in 1547 a work with nearly the same title, aiming at supporting Ramus’ attacks on Aristotle and Aristotelianism, in the wake of the “freedom of philosophizing” (Talon 1547; Schmitt 1972, pp. 78–108). Another work, still under the title of *Academica*, was published by Pedro de Valencia in 1596 and was considered as a proof that the Academic position was certainly much better known at the end of sixteenth century than at the beginning (Schmitt 1972, p. 75). In fact, as Laursen has convincingly shown, Pedro’s use of academic skepticism did not implicate a full allegiance to this trend, but rather involved a humanistic approach, skeptical only in the wider

sense of historical and critical exploration (Laursen 2009).

Sanches. The current of thought deriving from the New Academy was still alive and Francisco Sanches was much influenced by this kind of philosophy, as one can tell from the very title of his work (*Quod nihil scitur*, 1581) that reflects the classical formula of *akatalepsia*. In this work the distinction between Academics and Pyrrhonians seems to be erased in favor of the more general and indifferent category of “skeptics” and there are no traces in it of the Pyrrhonian notion of phenomenon (Paganini 2004). Sanches starts his work with the sentence: “I do not even know this, that I know nothing.” It is not by chance that Sanches’ work is clearly indebted to Augustine’s method of refuting the Academics, as can be seen from his “motto proposition” that clearly is a radicalization of knowledge of not knowing. He goes on to show the advantages of this argumentative strategy. If he is able to prove the initial premise, then he is right to infer that “nothing is known” (“nil sciri”); if on the contrary he does not prove the initial premise, so much the better, even from the standpoint of total skepticism (Sanches 1955, p. 4). Actually, the initial assertion will be confirmed (Lupoli 2009).

Quod nihil scitur is also a piece of dramatic rhetoric in the history of skepticism as Sanches does not scrimp on tragic tones. The idea of doubting as a result of despairing (“Despero”) that follows a passionate yet vain research lies at the base of the Portuguese doctor’s work. His research does not surrender to authorities, keeps investigating nature (“I keep on [asking]),” follows only rational investigation, and ignores the deceptive suggestions of rhetoric and dialectic. In the “Republic of Truth” it is better to doubt, to follow experience and reason than “swear on authorities.” Aristotle, with his dogmatic pretensions, is the worst enemy of the skeptic. In fact, Aristotle was “a human being like us,” warns Sanches, and although he presented himself as “one of the sharpest scrutinizers of nature,” he was often mistaken and unaware of many things (Sanches 1955, p. 28, 33–37).

However, *Quod nihil scitur* also contains doctrines that attempt to go beyond doubt. Besides

professing ignorance, Sanches develops another theme that constantly accompanies doubt: the return to oneself after the disappointment of not knowing. “I am going to return to myself, calling everything into question,” This is the second advice, with *akatalepsia*, that Sanches inherits from Socrates: the Delphic demand to know oneself. This topic takes on a more technical meaning in Sanches, being tightly connected to his classification of human knowledge. Knowledge is organized in accordance with the diversity of things that “the mind knows in different ways.” Sanches distinguishes between external – therefore sensible – and internal – therefore only intellectual – knowledge. Above all, he reconceives the status of “internal” knowledge that, according to him, the mind acquires by itself without the mediation of *species*. Being immediate and intuitive, this internal knowledge enjoys a special status and is absolutely certain. In this way, Sanches succeeds in giving an affirmative answer to the question that is at the heart of his research, namely whether one can say “something which would not be suspected of falsity.” In his attempt to positively answer this question, the author starts with the “maker’s knowledge” principle, according to which one only knows things that he is able to bring about (Sanches 1955, p. 30). Obviously, this principle applies to whatever is made by or happens in our intellect, in accordance with a criterion of self-transparency of the soul. Accordingly, the certainty about our own thinking, willing, and desiring is more perfect than any possible certainty regarding what comes from outside: “For I am more sure that I possess both inclination and will, and that I am at one moment contemplating this idea, at another moment shunning or abominating that idea, than that I see a temple, or Socrates. I have said that we are certain about the real existence of those things that either exist, or else originate, within ourselves” (Sanches 1955, pp. 32–33).

Nevertheless, what keeps making “our condition unhappy” is that there is some sort of inverse proportion between the “understanding” (or comprehension) and the “certainty” of knowledge. The more the mind is certain of a thing, the less it is able to understand the same and vice

versa. It follows that we are absolutely certain that “we think, we want to write,” etc., but “we do not know what this thought, this will, this desire is.” As regards comprehension or understanding, on the contrary, “the knowledge of external things through the senses is greater than the knowledge of internal things without the senses.” The opposite happens as regards certainty. In this case, knowledge “of things that are either in us or made by us” is of indubitable certainty. The knowledge we get through “discourse and reasoning” is much less reliable as it is not immediate and intuitive (Sanches 1955, p. 33).

It was therefore a result of great importance when the skeptic of the Renaissance harmonized the Delphic precept of knowing oneself with the activity of doubt (Yrjökonen 2000). In this way they not only considered Socrates as an ancestor of skepticism, but they went also much beyond the Augustinian thesis (“si fallor sum. . .”), which was too straightforward in refuting skepticism on the basis of the knowledge of the self. By distinguishing between internal and external states and explaining how it is possible to acquire much knowledge without going outside of oneself, Sanches enriched the tradition of early skepticism with an aspect that was absent from the Pyrrhonist tradition and was not that developed in the neo-academic trend (Paganini 2008, pp. 322–344; Paganini 2016).

Charron. At the beginning of the seventeenth century another influential figure was Pierre Charron (1541–1603) who, in his treatise *La sagesse* (1601, 1604 second edition modified), succeeded in systematizing Montaigne’s thought. Charron’s work was such a success that it became a milestone for the whole culture of the *honnête homme*, both in skeptical-libertine versions and in the Cartesian one. Charron uncovered a new face of skepticism, which had deep impact on the common image of this movement during the seventeenth century and later. In his work, the skeptical sage is not only an active and important character, but he also breaks away from the classical Pyrrhonist pattern as well as from its more recent reenacting in Montaigne’s *Essays*. As regards the ancient pattern of Pyrrhonism, most scholars agree on its quite passive approach and

consequently on its lack of strong subjectivity. According to Myles Burnyeat (1983, p. 133), the attainment of *epokhe* was basically the result of a process of “detachment from the self,” the fruit of an “accentuated passivity” of sensations and thoughts, something like “a paralysis of reason by itself.” Jonathan Barnes has written that in ancient Pyrrhonists *epokhe* was a *pathos*, some sort of passivity or passion, that happened to the inquirers (*skeptikoi*) right at the end of their investigations. In other words, for the ancient Pyrrhonists, even the apex of their intellectual activity, namely suspension of judgment, was less a voluntary effort than the product of a causal sequence impacting on them (Barnes 1983, p. 7). Nearly the same can be said of Montaigne, with the aggravating circumstance that this latter added a sense of pessimism and human frailty unknown to the ancient sources. When one reads the *Essays*, it appears that skepticism inflicts a heavy blow not only to human arrogance but also to the value of the intellect. Not by chance, reason is defined as “an instrument of lead and wax, which one can lengthen, bend, and adapt to any direction and extent” (Montaigne 1999, p. 565).

From this point of view, Charron’s skepticism is quite different, as it depends on Stoic sources (especially for the autonomy of the sage) and relies more on neo-academic skepticism than on Pyrrhonism (Paganini 2009; Maia Neto 2016, pp. 11–39). First, the author of *La Sagesse* stresses the strength of reason, even though it does not have “jurisdiction” on all matters: for example, he proclaims that skepticism makes no metaphysical claims and that relies on revelation in theological issues. Nevertheless, in his own field, the sage shows full “universality of spirit”; he is not restricted by the “municipal law” (Charron 1986, p. 406) that rules closed systems of beliefs, whether these beliefs be the elementary, sociological beliefs of the village or the more sophisticated beliefs of nations, philosophical schools, religions (i.e., actual religious rites and behaviors), and churches. In the mundane domain of “human wisdom,” reason preserves its complete right “to judge about everything” and to “restrain assent” when faced with inadequate reasons (Charron 1986, p. 399).

Therefore, we can claim that Charron's philosophy is one of the places where a philosophical theory of the modern subject was born. This is the main Charronian achievement: *epokhe* or suspension of judgment becomes with him a vigorous and voluntary liberating move from a system of beliefs rather than an imponderable point of balance between different opinions, as it was before in the ancient idea of equipollence. For the first time in the modern age, the skeptic is someone who *fights* against an entire corpus of beliefs, someone who *decides to doubt* and *seeks* for arguments to this effect. Far from being the passive effect produced by the unresolved *diaphōnia* of appearances simply registered by the observer, Charron's art of doubting requires a conscious and voluntary decision from the subject. Skepticism demands a whole set of epistemic virtues that preserve the wise from precipitancy, prejudices, and mistakes. After Charron, the modern skeptic is someone who *wants* to cast into doubt almost everything whereas the ancient Pyrrhonist *was cast* in doubt by the discordance of different phenomena. With *La Sagesse*, one can see the author initiate the typical modern attitude of negative suspicion against any belief whose sole justification is habit, authority, or tradition. From passive, skepticism becomes active; it is no longer the position of an impartial observer but the pose of a conscious protagonist that does not want to be enslaved to prejudices or opinions devoid of any rational justification (Popkin 1954; Popkin 2003, pp. 57–63, 68–70, 100–107).

Impact and Legacy

Reappraisal of Skepticism: Campanella. Histories of skepticism are now much wider in scope and include not only the effects of this philosophical movement but also reactions to it. However, there was until recently a huge gap, as the work of Tommaso Campanella in this field was ignored or neglected (only a few lines in Popkin 2003, p. 126), although the Italian philosopher dedicated the whole of the first book of his *Metaphysica* or *Universalis philosophia* to a detailed analysis and confutation of skeptical doubts. Now this gap is

filled by an in-depth analysis (Paganini 2009, pp. 101–170). In the Inquisition's prison Campanella wrote and rewrote the work many times, first in 1602, then in 1611 and 1624, and only in 1638 was the work finally published in its entirety in Paris. It is without question one of the seventeenth century's largest studies of the problem of skepticism, even though neither the publication of Sextus Empiricus' works nor the renaissance of Pyrrhonism seems to have influenced it (Paganini 2006; Paganini 2009, pp. 275–304). Basically, Campanella's text is a critical analysis of Aristotelian epistemology and the demonstration that this theory leads to a skeptical impasse as it is based on an idea of scientific knowledge completely unattainable by human beings. The central topic in fact is "the question of whether science exists and how limited and partial it is to an extent realized only by those who know that they do not know anything perfectly and completely" (Campanella 1994, p. 42). Campanella spends a large part of the beginning of the first book of *Metaphysica* reviewing the 14 *dubitaciones* of the skeptics. This may be the first and the largest sylloge written in the seventeenth century on this topic as it was composed prior to Gassendi's and Mersenne's analogous writings and earlier than Descartes' *Discourse on method*.

In Campanella's book I one can find many of the "commonplaces" of ancient and modern skepticism, renewed by Sanches and Montaigne, even if the author does not seem to know their works. Sense only grasps the "surface," the "accidents" or "effects" of things, whereas the "inner parts" ("interiora"), the "substance," and the essence ("quidditas") remain unknown to us (Campanella 1994, pp. 46–48). Each person knows things differently depending on how it is affected ("alius aliter afficitur"). What we do know, we only know "according to our measure and not according the measure of being and truth" (Campanella 1994, p. 50). Campanella further developed these arguments, which were particularly challenging for an author who had made sense the principle and verification of every type of knowledge, in a sort of crescendo during the third *dubitatio*, where he shows that the skeptics

do not even believe that partial and superficial knowledge is really possible, because “no sense perceives things as they are, but in the way in which that sense is affected” (Campanella 1994, pp. 74–75) and, since sensations lie at the base of the entire edifice of knowledge, each person ends up by having “his or her own philosophy that depends on the perception of his or her senses” (Campanella 1994, p. 86). It is a short step from there to confronting the sensory endowment of one man with others, but also men with animals. The obvious consequence is that beasts must be superior to us and, even if man is better-tempered, this is again relatively true, only for us and not for Nature (Campanella 1994, p. 88, 90–92). The author of *Metaphysica* pays particular attention to Plato’s *Theaetetus* in which the problematic and uncertain character of sensible knowledge is emphasized (Campanella 1994, pp. 100–102). From this dialogue Campanella only takes the *pars destruens*, namely the demolition of the value of sensible knowledge, whereas he rejects Socrates’ attempt to subtract those unalterable and ideal aspects, which alone would have enabled us to construct a certain science, from the universal change that affects sensible knowledge. Even though it differed from Platonism, Aristotelian epistemology, too, was grounded on permanent aspects, as “the species and the whole, rather than on matter and the single parts.” The obvious consequence for the Stagirite was that “science is about species” rather than individual entities. To this abstractionist point of view, Campanella reacts together with the skeptics, as Sanches already did. He confirms the need for a kind of knowledge that must attain concrete and individual things and denounces the Aristotelian science of the universal: “it is not wisdom but a confused, common and external one, which does not attain the inside of the thing” (Campanella 1994, p. 108). To the model of knowledge by abstraction, the second *dubitatio* opposes – to declare it unattainable – a kind of “total” knowledge that cannot be reduced to “the common things, without peculiarities,” on the example of God’s knowledge that reaches all the “peculiarities.” Campanella thinks in conformity with the theses of radical nominalism according to which

“universals exist only in particulars.” But precisely for this reason the reevaluation of the particular would lead to the skeptical heavy blow since in that hypothesis “in order to know something, which is impossible, we would need to know infinite things and the perishable ones too, which nobody can know” (Campanella 1994, p. 52).

The pre-Pyrrhonian character, in all senses, of Campanella’s discourse is striking. Several decades after the publication of Sextus Empiricus’ works, he appears not to be familiar with the peculiarities of this kind of skepticism. He speaks generically of “skeptics,” without differentiating between Pyrrhonists and Academics (Campanella 1994, p. 108), and throughout the first book he never names Pyrrho and only once mentions Sextus Empiricus, correctly distinguishing his position from the negative dogmatism of Socrates and Arcesilaus. Although *Metaphysica* contains an echo of the *leit-motiv* of the *diaphonia* among philosophical opinions, other more technical arguments, typical of Sextus, are missing, such as the aporia of the “criterion,” the figures of “dialleles,” and “regression to infinity.” There is only one passage in this Book I in which Campanella appears to evoke the argument of regression to the infinite; however, it is clear that Sextus is not the source of the argument as Campanella refers it to the typically Scholastic notion of “species” (Campanella 1994, p. 120).

In some interesting pages, Campanella looks at a number of arguments that, though already present in Cicero, were to enjoy new and better fortune after Descartes returned to them in *Discours de la méthode*. He examines the doubt between dreaming and waking and the comparison between wisdom and madness, to which he adds the more dramatic doubt on life and death, taken from Euripides (Campanella 1994, p. 126, 132). These themes, however, are amplified to the maximum in *Metaphysica* and thus take on a particular significance deriving from the principle (entirely due to Campanella) that knowledge is “passio” since in it a true transmutation takes place: “the knower is transformed into what is known; therefore to know is tantamount to an alienation.” It is not by chance that the theme of

human “delirium” was to return again in *dubitaciones* XI, XII, and XIII: “the fact that we sleep, that we rave, that we are in the shadow of death” can be deduced from many signs, first and foremost from the recognition of philosophical “ravings” (Campanella 1994, p. 138, 146), but also from the equally foolish contrasts surrounding the doctrine of “principles” including the foundations of morality and religion. The pages that Campanella dedicates to this latter, particularly treacherous theme provide a nice summary of the arguments produced by ethical skepticism (including ideas from Carneades already mentioned in Grotius’s *Prolegomena*), whereas his lively notes on the disparity among religions and on their strange beliefs appear to echo the famous darts shot by the libertines and the early deists, who had taken a lesson of disenchanted skepticism from theological conflicts, as he had described them in his *Atheismus triumphatus* (Campanella 2004, pp. 18, 33, 77–84, 92).

Skepticism, philosophy of mind, and reform of metaphysics. Other important metaphors flow from Platonic readings. The soul imprisoned in the body, locked up “like a craftsman in a dark cave” (Campanella 1994, p. 134), recalls the famous myth of Plato’s *Republic* (“as if we were placed in a cave so that we might see only the shadows of the things that flow”). The reference to “Platonists and Augustine” teaches that “all things we see are images of other real things that exist in the angelic world and in God” (Campanella 1994, p. 104). All these themes are spread across Campanella’s pages and clearly reveal something of the metaphysical background that underlies the skeptical *dubitaciones*. The frequent references to the Socratic model, with its wisdom of “knowing that one knows nothing,” serve to strengthen his much more Platonic than Pyrrhonian plot. However, Campanella does not seem inclined to take up the antiskeptical strategy that Socrates adopted in the *Theaetetus*. Rather, the author of the *Metaphysica* opposes the Platonic pretense of attaining the “stable and intelligible kind,” using the “reason” that has “science” as its aim, the primordial character of sense which even reason cannot ignore or give up: “No sane person will say that science begins from intellect. Science begins from

sense; therefore one needs to philosophize from sense as the Creator of things established.” While skepticism has good arguments to stress the boundaries and uncertainties of sense, Platonism is wrong in going further and denying that sensible knowledge is necessary, since there is no doubt that “the intellect does not know anything if not starting from sense” (Campanella 1994, pp. 122–124).

The author of the *Metaphysica*, on the other hand, finds his way out of this condition of uncertainty through his metaphysical and psychological program. He supplements sensationalism with the idea that any entity, and in particular the soul-*spiritus*, *sapit*, that is it has “taste” and “knowledge” of itself. As the tendency to self-preservation is innate in any being, so there must exist in us a latent faculty (“notitia indita et abdita”: “innate and hidden notice”) through which we can grasp ourselves in the interior: “The being of the soul, as of any other subject that knows, is self-knowledge” (Campanella 1638, II, p. 64).

If we examine the final part of Book I, which contains detailed replies to all the *dubitaciones*, it is clear that, in each reply, Campanella takes hold of various aspects of skepticism, correcting and integrating them into a positive and constructive view of human knowledge: a limited view of course, but it is one that is effective and adequate within its own framework. Right from his first reply, Campanella stresses both the partiality and the operative nature of knowledge: human science is “nothing compared to what has been said about it, but it is something in itself providing enough for human life.” Even when it is limited to sensible things, we still may go a little further and say that knowledge at least grasps the essence (“quidditas”) “for those things that of themselves move sense, such as heat, cold, light” (Campanella 1994, pp. 406–408).

Doubt III encapsulates another important truth: everyone suffers in different ways, but we may be equally certain that the interaction between objects and sentient beings is a reality. Whereas the skeptic stubbornly insists on an impossible objectivity or neutrality, the metaphysician, on the contrary, comes to terms with reality: “it is useless to blame the senses for the fact that they do

not perceive except thus. Nor can the nature of things be blamed for the fact that they are not capable of presenting themselves only thus to those senses" (Campanella 1994, p. 424). This "science suited to us" ("scientia secundum nos") will certainly be "slight and weak" ("modica et exilis"), as the author repeatedly stresses. Nevertheless, it will make available a precise confirmation of reality. If we determine the factors that cause appearance to vary, even that variation will lend itself to verification and correction, following the principle that "although the senses err in many things, they nevertheless correct themselves through other sensations" (Campanella 1994, p. 422).

The discourse on the "delirium of philosophers" (the subject of doubt XI) places positive stress on the ideal of "libertas philosophandi," the capability, that is, to philosophize "with an altogether free mind," fixing our gaze on the "divine code" and not on the "human schools" (Campanella 1994, p. 466). The reply to the doubt XII (that concerning the "deliriums about the principles of things") not only stresses the need for an examination that is not prejudiced by Aristotle's authority or by that of any other philosopher (Campanella 1994, p. 470), but also states Campanella's intention to rebuild the edifice of knowledge completely. He adds a defense of the different branches into which it is subdivided: metaphysics, logic, mathematics (which also includes astronomy and astrology), physiology, morality, politics, and religion (Campanella 1994, pp. 474–518).

Ernst Cassirer, who recognized in Campanella's work "a complete theory of skepticism," believed skepticism to be the result of the "conflict" between sensualist Telesian gnoseology and Platonic-Augustinian metaphysics, centered around the doctrine of ideas and of primalities of being, which integrates and corrects the former without ever achieving a true fusion with it (Cassirer 1922, pp. 240–257). The fact that the "innate notion" ("notitia indita") is never thrown into doubt, not even in the most radical *dubitaciones*, tends to confirm this evaluation. A contemporary of Gassendi and Mersenne, Campanella is not a "mitigated or constructive

skeptic," in the *scientific* meaning that Popkin gave this qualification (Popkin 2003, p. 112 ff.), despite his appeal to be satisfied with a "slight and weak science." In fact, the author of *Universalis philosophia* wants to go far beyond the horizons of physics and natural phenomena to include into knowledge the area of metaphysics. The "metaphysical" skeptic of his *dubitaciones* does indeed correct Platonism with sensualism, but at the same time he opens the door to a new kind of research that heads in another more ambitious direction: he moves from sensible data to derive judgments, and then reaches "reason" ("ratio") that, as he warns, "is not an abstract being" ("non est ens rationis") (Campanella 1638, I, p. 344).

The necessity of doubt. This new perspective paves the way to the properly metaphysical parts of *Universalis philosophia*, with its theory of the three primalities of being. Although Campanella assimilated skeptical instances in his gnoseology, he thought they could be overcome by turning to a platonico-augustinian theory of reason and ideas. Nevertheless, skepticism still plays a major role for him and cannot be simply dismissed. With his doubts, the skeptic brings to light truths that the simple empiricist ignores: he questions sensible knowledge and so helps reach a higher level of certainty, which is provided by metaphysical reason. Furthermore, as he always aims at realizing a synthesis of sensualism and intellectualism, metaphysics and empiricism can correct each other. This explains all his disdain for Aristotle's abstractionist epistemology or for the pure idealism of Plato, which are in the end rejected, like the objections of the skeptic. In fact, skepticism is for Campanella only a preliminary, but necessary, stage to be overcome in his reform of metaphysics that would include also sciences, which are still in need of a deeper philosophical foundation than that could be afforded by simple "mitigated skepticism."

Unfortunately, Descartes refused to read Campanella's *Universalis philosophia*, which Mersenne proposed to send him right after its publication in 1638. He already knew *De sensu rerum et magia* and was negatively struck by the sensualism contained in this work. However, if he had read *Metaphysica*, he would probably have

changed his negative opinion about the philosophy of the Italian author and possibly he would have appreciated both the foundational role assigned to skepticism and the attempt to overcome it by a new kind of metaphysics, even if Descartes' was to be more scientific and definitely dualistic (Paganini 2017). On the other hand, Campanella's major work had a hidden posterity even in France, in the Cartesian inner circle. In fact, Mersenne read *Metaphysica* when it was still in manuscript; what is worse, he plagiarized some significant portions of the first book on skepticism, in order to build the character of the "Pyrrhonian" in his *La Vérité des sciences* (Mersenne 1625; see Paganini 2005; Paganini 2008, pp. 129–170).

Interconnections

Descartes and the Renaissance skeptics. To what extent could Descartes's doubt and its solution (Popkin 2003, pp. 143–173; Paganini 2008, pp. 229–348) be influenced by the Renaissance revival of skepticism with all its innovations? To understand Cartesian doubt and its developments, it is essential to make two fundamental moves: (a) first, to shift the focus from the ancient sources, which mostly monopolized scholars' attention, and to consider instead Renaissance philosophers and seventeenth-century free-thinkers, which not only were closer to him but also transformed skeptical issues in-depth (Paganini 2008b); (b) secondly, to extend the range of the sources from the Pyrrhonian ones, basically Montaigne (Brunschvicg 1945; Panichi and Spallanzani 2013) to authors that were more eclectic, like Charron, or more involved with the new Academy, like Sanches. Today it is no longer possible to share Gilson's negative judgment on "philosophers of the Renaissance that were engaged in doubting," who failed because of their basic empiricism (Gilson 1967, p. 288). In fact, as we already saw, the skeptical positions of these philosophers brought forth new themes that went far beyond their original empiricist or sensualist culture. While Stoicism supported the autonomy of the sage in Charron and developed into a new

skeptical theory of the active subject, contributing to provide Descartes with "a skeptical base" for his *cogito* (Popkin 1954; Maia Neto 2003; Maia Neto 2016, pp. 97–123), the debate about certainty of the internal states of the mind deeply influenced Sanches and was taken up again by Descartes. On both of these sides, late Renaissance skepticism recovered a strong theory of subjectivity that was lacking in ancient Pyrrhonism and was put in practice, but not theorized in a due philosophical form, by Montaigne. In this way, modern and especially Renaissance skeptical themes were conveyed into Descartes's re-discovery of the self and its certainties.

Descartes and Sanches. Let us start with Sanches' case which is still less known. We shall focus on what one can find both in Sanches and in Descartes, and only in both of them, to determine which was the influence of the former on the latter. First, we can find in Sanches' work the feeling of a very personal experience, as later in Descartes's *Discours de la méthode*, an experience that reveals right from the start a strong need to return from words to things, from *verba* to *res*, even though in both thinkers, it ends up yielding a deep disappointment regarding the state of knowledge of their time.

If we leave aside the tragic tones adopted by Sanches, for example when he evokes the dramatic experience of the labyrinth and compares the skeptical checkmate with the encounter with the Minotaur, on the whole we can see that his considerations concerning the variety of things, the multitude and confusion of opinions, stand directly against the background of the *Discours*, where Descartes describes his despairing itinerary through "la diversité de nos opinions." Similarly, the sense of fallibility that strikes perceptions and extends to the mind, bringing about a condition of total uncertainty in the form of a true deception, cannot but evoke Descartes's suspicious approach adopted in the *Discours*, where he attempts to liberate the mind from all its prejudices "faisant particulièrement réflexion, en chaque matiere, sur ce qui la pouvait rendre suspecte, et nous donner occasion de nous méprendre" (Descartes 1964 ff., AT VI, p. 28). Reading *Quod nihil scitur*, Descartes realised the need of freeing his intellectual

power from any kind of authority, but at the same time he saw the failure of empiricism as it ended in scepticism. In the related passages, Sanches' procedure is in fact the proof *e contrario* of the value of an anti-empiricist prospective. While for Sanches it is true that we cannot usually do without knowledge of senses, it is actually no less true, for him, that just for this reason, the most complete uncertainty falls on knowledge of the whole ("Nil certius sensu: nil eodem fallacius"), until it precipitates into complete doubt. Many of the formulae adopted in *Quod nihil scitur* (for instance, "Nulla conclusio. Perpetua dubitatio. Omnia dubia esse") are particularly close, both in substance and in expression, to analogous considerations in Descartes' *Discours*, and that is even truer for the *Recherche de la vérité*, in particular for the statement of "universal doubt."

One might extend the comparison of Descartes with Sanches (Paganini 2009b) into more details, in particular to the need for the method of doubt, to the difficulty of using it, and to the fact that few are able to practice it. The differences between the achievements of different men mainly derive from the same causes for both authors. Analogously, on another front, Sanches, like Descartes, holds that one should reject authorities to follow only reason. In the first place, this is because it is difficult to choose one among those on the market, but, more than that, because in relying on others' opinions, the disciple becomes "a slave rather than a learned man." Descartes will say the same in a famous passage about the impossibility of sticking to one opinion once one starts meeting different teachers and becomes acquainted with different opinions and customs without thinking them barbaric. This passage is not only a repetition of Enesidemus' tenth trope; it flows from a well-defined literary model already established by Sanches when he describes the loneliness of the disciple who cannot appeal to the judgment of others when searching for the truth.

Telling the story of doubt. In fact, apart from the contents, Descartes appears to have taken the very form of the story told in the *Discours* from Sanches. Although *Quod nihil scitur* is not organized as an autobiography like the first parts of *Discours*, it is nevertheless built in such a way as

to describe the personal experience of an intellectual journey through the false certainties of an entire culture until its failures are unmasked. Most of *Quod nihil scitur* is written in the first person singular, and even when the author debates fiercely with a second person, it is more an internal discourse, a dramatic monologue with himself, than a true dialogue with another character. The account of a knowledge crisis is on the whole the same idea that governs the first four parts of the *Discours*, and reference to a literary model such as Sanches' work might solve the big problem that Cartesian scholars dwell upon when interpreting the *Discours*. All its commentators have stressed the highly personal nature of what Descartes describes as "l'histoire de ma vie"; but they have also been divided on the question of whether the story faithfully relates the opinions the young Descartes really harbored at that time. It does indeed seem highly improbable that, when attending the Collège de La Flèche (1606–1614, and so between the ages of 10 and 18) the young student would have been able to judge the pillars of his own learning so severely as related in *Discours*. It is much more likely that, when writing this work, Descartes reorganized and rebuilt his own autobiographical recollections, shaping them into a scheme that could have more easily been provided by a work like *Quod nihil scitur* than by Montaigne's *Apologie* or Le Vayer's skeptical dialogues. Indeed, the former was not written as a recollection of a personal experience and the latter, due to their explicit dialogic form, are very distant from an account told in the first person, as in Descartes. It was most probably Sanches' booklet that suggested Descartes the format to tell an epistemological crisis as a personal experience, even though the *Discours* is soberer and drier than his antecedent.

Beyond doubt: the internal states of the mind. Similarly, the constructive aspect of Sanches' work, namely his theory of the certainty of the internal states of the mind, can be related to the similar doctrine in Descartes. To appreciate the tight connection, one should note that Sanches' description of the epistemological certainty of internal states ("quae in nobis aut sunt, aut a nobis fiunt," see above) will reappear almost

literally the same in a passage of Descartes, where he defines the “cogitations” as “everything that happens / is made in us” (“omnia quae in nobis fiunt”), adding the claim that thoughts “taken in themselves and not referring to something else, cannot be considered false, if one speaks properly” (Descartes, *Principia philosophiae* I, 9 AT VIII A, p. 7; cf. *Meditationes* II AT VII, p. 33; *I^{ae} Responsiones* AT VII, p. 107; *IV^{ae} Responsiones* AT VII, p. 246). There is therefore quite a strong reason to see in this doctrine of the internal states of the mind a skeptical “antecedent” of Descartes’ thesis that the mind is transparent and that ideas are evident when considered in themselves. Distinguishing between internal and external states and explaining how it is possible to acquire much knowledge without going outside of oneself, Sanches’ discourse actually opened the path to an investigation in the direction Descartes will look for in the *Meditations* and *Recherche de la vérité*. To use Poliandre’s words in the last reply of this unfinished dialogue: “There are so many things in the idea of a thinking being that to develop them all we would need whole days” (Descartes, *Recherche de la vérité* AT X, p. 527). Obviously, Descartes’ different metaphysical attitude allows him to assign a foundational value to certainties that for Sanches were very strong in certainty but, on the opposite, very poor in comprehension. Whereas the inverse proportion between these two factors prevents the skeptic from proceeding further in the achievement of metaphysical knowledge, so that his distinction between things “inside” and “outside” stops at a dead-end, Descartes could profit instead from Sanches’ discovery of interiority to overthrow skepticism, as it were, from inside, digging into this sphere of internal and autonomous knowledge. In so doing, he exactly obtained what the skeptical crisis required in order not to be accused of preconceived dogmatism. Moreover, while Montaigne had no philosophical theory of the self but rather an experienced and literary practice of it (Paganini 2013), while self-awareness has in Charron mainly a moral import, Sanches goes straight to the issue of the metaphysical certainty: this is his constructive aspect that was often neglected by readers and is yet crucial for his

connection with Descartes. More than Montaigne, Charron, and Campanella, it is Sanches the real link between Descartes’ experience of doubt and the skeptical Renaissance thinkers. What is even more important, looking at Sanches, this connection regarded not only the destruction of false certainties but also the discovery of the true ones by the French philosopher.

Cross-References

- [Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius](#)
- [Campanella, Tommaso](#)
- [Charron, Pierre](#)
- [Montaigne, Michel de](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
- [Sánchez, Francisco](#)

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Skepticism in the Renaissance: Short Overview

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Abstract

Philosophical skepticism takes two distinct forms in the ancient Greek and Roman tradition, but only one of those forms has an afterlife in the Renaissance. Renaissance skepticism refers primarily to the revitalization of dogmatic skeptical argumentation in the service of religious truth, on the one hand, and the disavowal of a less assertive form of classical skepticism, on the other. Ancient philosophical skepticism inspired Renaissance thinkers who had already accepted religious truth on the basis of a fundamental faith in divine revelation, including Jewish rabbis preaching in Italy and Christian authors battling scholastic Aristotelianism in France. Ancient skeptical argumentation became grist for the religious mill of proclaiming the superiority of religious truth over the doctrines of philosophy.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Classical skeptics adhere to the belief that for human beings nothing can be known for certain, and the belief that one should suspend belief, even the belief that nothing can be known for certain. Sextus Empiricus' brand of classical skepticism invokes the example of Pyrrho and the goal of psychological tranquility and moderate feeling to profile the practical life of classical skepticism. By contrast, dogmatic skeptics are resolute in arguing for the belief that nothing can be known for certain. This second form of skepticism adheres more firmly to the belief that nothing can be known for certain, and that one should withhold belief. In arguing for these beliefs, dogmatic skeptics give assent to the framework of criteria and notions that dogmatic philosophers rely on to make

positive claims. Metrodorus of Stratonicea and Philo of Larissa, disciples of Clitomachus in the late Hellenistic Academy, broke ranks with the classical skepticism that held sway in the Academy from Arcesilaus to Clitomachus. Metrodorus and Philo believed firmly in the view that certain beliefs are more persuasive, beliefs which now enable the dogmatic skeptic to argue more stridently for the view that nothing can be known for certain. Thus traces of classical skepticism survive in Cicero's *Academica*. But in that work, Cicero devotes considerable effort to defending the dogmatic skepticism of the late Hellenistic Academy. Sextus' classical skepticism sanctions a mitigated and less assertive mode of belief according to which the skeptic lives an ordinary life and evades the framework of notions and criteria affirmed by dogmatic philosophers. It was as customary for philosophers in late antiquity and beyond to dismiss this way of life as untenable as it was for later religious thinkers to disavow it almost entirely, for the ordinary life of the Pyrrhonist does not seem readily reconcilable with the authoritative proclamations of truth according to divine revelation. In addition to Cicero and Sextus, the writings of Philo Judaeus, Plutarch, Galen, Aulus Gellius, Diogenes Laertius, and early Christian authors like Lactantius, Jerome, Augustine, Eusebius, and Photius should not be forgotten as indirect sources of ancient skeptical argumentation, but the textual remains of classical skepticism proved difficult for Renaissance thinkers to extract from later testimonies. Familiar with many of these ancient sources, the philologically trained Spanish humanist Pedro de Valencia (1555–1620) illustrates the difficulty. Valencia published in 1596 his *Academica sive de iudicio erga verum, ex ipsis primis fontibus*, perhaps the most probing and impartial historical exposition of ancient skepticism by a Renaissance thinker. But even Valencia is prone to ignore the subtle difference between classical and dogmatic skepticism in antiquity, judging academic skepticism in general to be a means to the realization that God is the sole source of truth.

Humanists and religious thinkers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries exploited the polemical zeal of dogmatic skepticism but paid no mind to the less assertive form of classical skepticism present in

Cicero and reported by Sextus. Friends and enemies of ancient philosophical skepticism transformed the remains of philosophical skepticism into dogmatic skepticism. Desiderius Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly* may be a curious exception, with his mild acclaim of classical Academic skepticism for not asserting anything. Despite the rediscovery of the polemical power of dogmatic skepticism during the Renaissance period, the appropriations of religious skepticism in the Renaissance had no more use for classical skepticism and the psychological state of tranquility than the philosophers and theologians of late antiquity and the Medieval period (Frede 1984).

Innovative and Original Aspects

A Dominican monk teaching philosophy in Florence, Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) understood the critical potency of the arguments contained in the extant manuscripts of Sextus Empiricus for the rejection of Aristotelian philosophy and the reform of the Catholic Church. Savonarola chose not to learn Greek, and thus had not read Sextus Empiricus himself. And yet he had enough sense of those writings to recommend them as part of a campaign against the dominant pagan philosophies of his time (Floridi 2002). He encouraged the translation and study of Sextus as a means of submitting oneself to the superiority of the Christian faith.

His disciple Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) composed in 1520 his *Examen vanitatis doctrinae gentium et veritatis christianae disciplinae*, an attack upon Aristotle's epistemology and pagan philosophy more generally with the help of arguments from Sextus' works (Schmitt 1972; Cao 2007). Pyrrhonian skepticism is worthy of Pico's attention insofar as the skeptic is a credible witness in the prosecution of philosophy in the service of divine revelation. Gianfrancesco was not intrigued by the end of the practicality of Pyrrhonian skepticism. The same can be said for Henricus Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1468–1535), whose *De Incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et atrium, atque excellentia Verbi Dei, declamatio inactiva*

(Agrippa 1530) criticizes all the human arts and sciences as unreliable and immoral, for he considered it much better to believe in the revelation of God and the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Mantuan Rabbi Judah ben Moscato (1533–1590) published in Venice a collection of 52 sermons titled *Nefuṣot Yehudah*, addressing an assortment of theological and philosophical topics from the perspective of the Jewish rabbinical tradition. Moscato's ideas range across non-Jewish sources, including Greek and Roman mythology, Neo-Platonic philosophy, and the classical philosophy of Heraclitus. In preaching that the human arts and sciences, including geometry, arithmetic, and metaphysics, consist of only partial truth, Moscato deploys the denials and negations of dogmatic skepticism, though it remains unclear whether, or to what extent, Moscato borrowed indirectly or directly from Cicero, Sextus, or later sources for an understanding of ancient skepticism. Nonetheless, in reserving perfect knowledge for those who study the Torah, Moscato's religious skepticism resumes the negative aspect of dogmatic skepticism to prepare the way for the positive truth-claims he does make on the basis of the Torah.

In 1562, Henricus Stephanus (Henri Estienne 1528–1598) published the first Latin translation of Sextus Empiricus' *Pyrrhoneioi hypotyposeis*, and in 1569, it was republished along with a Latin translation of *Adversus Mathematicos* by the Catholic Priest Gentianus Hervetus (1499–1584). The Latin translations had an immediate impact, especially in France, where Cicero's works already had a significant role in the controversies concerning scholastic pedagogy (Schmitt 1972).

The physician and philosopher Francisco Sanches (1551–1623) was reputed to be a skeptic in his own day. Pierre Bayle praised Sanches as a "grand Pyrrhonian," but today most scholars agree that Sanches had not been familiar with Sextus' writings (though he was certainly familiar with Diogenes' *Lives*). Scholars typically describe his 1581 *Quod nihil scitur* as the work of an Academic skeptic (Limbrick 1988, Popkin 2003), as it challenges the dogmatic claims of scholastic Aristotelianism, and to an extent Platonic philosophy. The very first words of *Quod*

nihil scitur, "Not even this one thing I know, namely that I know nothing," alerts readers not to expect arguments or claims that establish that nothing can be known. If Sanches had been an Academic skeptic, it was not the later dogmatic skepticism of Metrodorus, Philo, and Cicero (Caluouri 2007). In a letter to the Renaissance mathematician and astronomer, Sanches signs *Carneades philosophus*, making it seem as if Sanches was more inclined to revive the classical skepticism of Carneades' Academy, especially since he had no apparent interest in the Pyrrhonian goal of tranquility (*ataraxia*) or moderation in feeling (*metriopatheia*). As a Catholic, however, Sanches asserted the truth of divine Revelation and thus had strong beliefs about the aim of human life. Classical skepticism of the Academic variety, of course, refrained from such an assertion.

Michel de Montaigne's "Apologie de Raimund Sebond" (1580) is the most far-reaching appropriation of ancient skepticism in the Renaissance. Montaigne complies with his father's request to translate Raimund Sebond's *Natural Theology* and defends his theology in his longest and most skeptical essay. Despite having never read Sextus in Greek, Montaigne relied on Pyrrhonian tropes to attack the vanity of human reason "to make room for faith" (II.12, F375, V506). But in his ironic praise of Pyrrhonian skepticism (II.12, F422, V561), Montaigne appeals to a criterion favored only by dogmatic skeptics of the Academy, a signal to his more astute readers that his essays deliberately make a mongrel of classical and dogmatic skepticism. And yet, the "Apologie" concludes with a judgment much more characteristic of Sebond than classical or dogmatic skeptics, asserting that only faith may elevate humanity to a position of communicating with the divine. While Montaigne appeals to the dogmatic skepticism of Cicero in putting forth the criterion of the *probable*, Montaigne's "Apologie" reflects a harmonization of Christian faith and a notion of human reason expunged of its predilection for conceit and ultimate authority.

Writing in a more traditional style, the Catholic priest and theological advisor Pierre Charron developed in *De la Sagesse* (1601) a systematic

account of skeptical wisdom inspired mainly by Montaigne. Another important influence on Charron was Omer Talon (ca. 510–1562), the colleague of Petrus Ramus in Paris who wrote an influential commentary and introduction to Cicero's *Academica* in 1547 and Cicero's *de Oratore* in 1553. Ramus was accused of being a “new Academic” for his attempt to reform university pedagogy with the help of Talon, turning it away from scholastic Aristotelianism toward Academic skepticism and Ramism. Like Talon and Montaigne, Pierre Charron embraces the dogmatic skepticism of the Academy in arguing for the limited perfectibility of human reason based on a knowledge of human nature. The skeptical sage makes discoveries about what human reason cannot attain. Charron's skeptical wisdom reinforces religious truth through the positive acceptance of faith.

Simone Luzzatto (1583–1663), a Venetian rabbi proficient in mathematics and astronomy, published in Italian his *Socrate overo dell'humano sapere* in 1651. The work remains largely unstudied by Renaissance scholars today. Writing as the chief rabbi of Venice, Luzzatto seems to compose *Socrate* for a readership wider than his Jewish community. Luzzatto deploys a semihistorical Socrates in making a critique of his own scientific and cultural milieu, with extended commentary on the current sciences of the natural world, from observations in the field of optics to Galileo's studies of the moon and planets. While Socrates defends himself against the charge of subverting the human sciences, he identifies himself as a seeker of *probable* knowledge. In the end, Socrates renounces the pursuit of certain knowledge in light of the endless controversies in the natural sciences, but his belief in the certainty of divine revelation seems immune to Luzzatto's theologically motivated skepticism (Veltri 2011).

Impact and Legacy

Modern philosophy may have benefitted from a more accurate historical understanding of ancient Greek skepticism. Philosophers like Descartes and Hume reduced ancient skepticism to the

question of how impressions and ideas given to us could yield any *certain* knowledge about how things are. Descartes sought an answer to this question and reinvigorated the demand for the kind of certainty characteristic of ancient Stoicism, accepting the dogmatic framework of Hellenistic epistemology, as if classical skeptics had not already warned philosophers and dogmatic skeptics against this very framework. Hume may have found support for his tendency to evade the framework of dogmatic epistemology in the practical life of classical skeptics, but his understanding of ancient skepticism is for the most part reducible to dogmatic skepticism. In presenting modified versions of skepticism and seeking limited certainty, the Catholic priest and philosopher Pierre Gassendi, who had relied to a degree on the work of Sanches, may also have profited from the effort of classical skeptics to resist the kind of certainty idealized by other Hellenistic philosophers. The same could be said of Marin Mersenne, who sought to formulate a notion of knowledge independent of the criterion of cognitive certainty, anticipating what would become a criterion much more amenable to the modern natural sciences.

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Skepticisme

- [Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of](#)

Skeptizismus

- [Skepticism in the Renaissance, History of](#)

Skinner, Quentin

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Abstract

This entry focuses on the Renaissance philosophy scholarship of English historian of political thought Quentin Skinner. The work of Skinner's Renaissance political philosophy is highlighted. An effort is made to identify Skinner's key themes in Renaissance philosophy scholarship, including the leading philosophers he studies from the time period and the tradition that he departs from in the historical reception of scholarship in the field. All of Skinner's major book-length contributions to Renaissance philosophy are noted, including his edited works in this area.

Biography

Quentin Skinner (born 1940) is an English historian. His most noted work has been in intellectual history and the history of political thought. He was one of the founding figures of the Cambridge school of the history of political thought, while he was a professor at Cambridge University. He served as Cambridge University's Faculty of History's Regius Professor of Modern History. He was educated at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. Immediately after becoming a fellow there in 1962, he was made a fellow at Christ's College, Cambridge. Skinner is currently Barber Beaumont Professor of the Humanities at Queen Mary, University of London. He moved there from Cambridge in 2008.

Works and Themes

Skinner is a leading historian of Renaissance philosophy, especially political thought from the Renaissance. Skinner has published work on early Renaissance political painting. His notable contributions to Renaissance political philosophy include *Visions of Politics* (Skinner 2004) and *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Skinner 1978). He edits the book series *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* for the Cambridge University Press and has edited a volume containing Machiavelli's *The Prince* (Skinner 1981) in that book series. Among Renaissance philosophy, Skinner has in fact been most interested in researching Machiavelli, namely his notion of republicanism. He coedited *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Schmitt, Skinner et al. 2008) with other Renaissance philosophy scholars, in which he focused his scholarship for the volume on Renaissance political philosophy. Volume two of *Visions of Politics: Renaissance Virtues* (Skinner 2004) features Skinner's research essays on Machiavelli, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Thomas More's *Utopia*, Renaissance constitutional thought, humanism, scholasticism, popular sovereignty, virtuous

government, republican values and virtues, liberty, and translation. Volume one of *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Skinner 1978) features Skinner's scholarship on liberty, rhetoric, scholasticism, the Florentine (Italian) Renaissance, and the Northern Renaissance. In Skinner's writing on liberty, he studies the various city republics of Renaissance Italy. These city republics are juxtaposed with the Empire from the period, and with the Papacy. In the rise of rhetoric and liberty in the Renaissance, Skinner focuses on the emergence of despots from the era. Skinner has been interested in Republican liberty throughout his various works on the history of political thought, and traces the Republican liberty of early modern political philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes back to Renaissance philosophy.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Skinner finds a diminished sense of Republican liberty in Renaissance philosophy beginning in the thirteenth century, due to the class divisions that started to develop then in Renaissance Italy and its various city-states. Accordingly, Skinner studies Republican civic life from this period and location and has built on the work of Renaissance historian Hans Baron in this regard. Italian universities are studied by Skinner in an effort to demonstrate how the study of rhetoric from the period gave rise to political ideology. He identifies the humanism that emerged from such a study of rhetoric and builds on the work of Renaissance philosopher Paul Oskar Kristeller in making that identification. At this juncture, Skinner seeks a connection between the humanism of Renaissance Italy and that of French academic culture. In his work on the Italian portion of this divide, Skinner focuses on the work of Dante, including his *The Divine Comedy*. Skinner then moves to identify the reception of Scholasticism there and emphasizes that before Scholasticism there was humanism. On such a matter, Skinner emphasizes humanism's role in the larger educational tradition of the

liberal arts, including the trivium. He finds that the sources of scholasticism from the time period were traced mainly to the rediscovery of Aristotle's philosophical works, including his *Nicomachean Ethics* and his *Politics*, and that in time these texts of his appeared increasingly less threatening to the political and moral theory of Augustinian commentators.

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Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Three major features characterize slavery in Renaissance Europe: First, slaves were not a distinctive social stratum or class within European societies but formed part of a larger group of bonded people. Although slaves' status, unlike others, was at least formally marked by their market price and the fact that they could be (re)sold at any point to anyone else, their services and effective social agency were often comparable to the situation of serfs, household servants, or other bonded workers in town or countryside. Slaves clearly belonged to the most vulnerable groups of society, but their individual situations could vary widely, and they were not always in the most powerless position.

Secondly, scholarly discourses on slavery existed side by side with different “practices of slaving” in Renaissance Europe. Although almost everybody agreed that Christians were not allowed to enslave or sell fellow Christians and that the enslavement of foreign people had to follow certain rules of warfare and international law, slaving practices could sometimes significantly differ from those norms without great need for dissimulation or justification. Slaving practices were an unquestioned element of Renaissance Europe even though they were not always termed or perceived as such.

Thirdly, slaving practices in the Renaissance had their focus – even though not exclusively – in the Mediterranean and were characterized by reciprocity between Christian and Muslim actors, in terms of quantity and quality (Bono, Corsari nel Mediterraneo. Cristiani e musulmani fra Guerra, schiavitù e

commercio. Milano, 2001; Botte and Stella, *Couleurs de l'esclavage sur les deux rives de la Méditerranée. Moyen Âge–XXe siècle*. Paris, 2012; Guillén and Trabelsi, *Les esclavages en Méditerranée. Espaces et dynamiques économiques*. Madrid, 2012). The master narrative on Europe's path to modernity, however, still continues to disguise this part of the story of Renaissance Europe by contrasting the Muslim slave trade and corsair activities with a "humanistic," "enlightened" "West".

Synonyms

[Bondage](#); [Captives](#); [Captivity](#); [Corsairs](#); [Domestic slavery](#); [Galley slavery](#); [Household servants](#); [Piracy](#); [Ransom slavery](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

During the Latin Middle Ages, two scholarly discourses about slavery stood side by side. One was a legal discourse with a strong Aristotelian tradition; the other was a theological one starting with the early Fathers of the Church (Böckenförde 2002; Priesching 2012).

Aristotle had distinguished two types of slaves: Those who were slaves "by nature," considered virtuously and morally inferior to other people, and those who were slaves "by positive law," as a consequence of war, for instance. Since then, the question of whether some people were naturally inferior and could be dominated by others had been a much-debated, controversial one. And although most medieval legal scholars agreed that slavery was a consequence of community-building processes rather than a basic quality of mankind, the tension between natural (*ius naturale*) and civil law (*ius civile*) remained an unsolved issue throughout the premodern Western world. Given the jusnaturalistic claim for liberty and equality of all men on the one hand and the institution of slavery and the practice of enslavement as a matter of fact on the other, which law

was more powerful: natural or civil law? And if slavery was against nature, was it to be regarded as illegal in absolute or merely relative terms?

The New Testament and the theological debate of the early Church Fathers provided an additional source for discussions of slavery; they increasingly interacted and blended with the legal discourse of the time. Although the Bible presupposes the existence of slaves and does not call into question the institution of slavery as such, the New Testament introduces a new metaphoric use of slave semantics. Besides the designation of a certain social group within society, all men are considered slaves of the devil and of their predisposition as sinners. Enslaved by sin, one can truly be freed only by baptism and believing in Christ. Freed from the slavery of sin, Christians then become God's servants, following the example of Christ who is seen as the first and best example of a servant of God. Christian ethics therefore includes an inversion of social valence: God's son came as a poor man, and the poor will one day sit next to Christ. "Serving" and "being a slave" were reevaluated by the New Testament and received a new, spiritual sense. This reevaluation, however, did not push the early Church to change the social order inherited from antiquity. Indeed, St Paul never questioned the institution of slavery, although, in his epistle to Philemon, he encouraged setting slaves free or treating them as brothers. Slaves and slavery, and later on estate-based society, were seen as a consequence of the fall of man and thus as a temporal, but necessary, phenomenon of earthly existence (Töpfer 1999; Burnside 2011).

To what extent both discourses, the legal and the theological, were intertwined may best be illustrated by Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* which, in a way, set the basis for Renaissance philosophy later on (Aquinas 1980). Here, a theological concept of law and political order was combined with an Aristotelian argumentation of reason and rationality. For Aquinas (c. 1225–1274), the law of nations stands between the natural and the civil law and functions as a mediator between the two. In his conception, slavery (as much as property) is not set by nature but by

human reason and is thereby considered useful for human life (*ad utilitatem humanae vitae*). Whereas one of the first principles (*prima principia*) of natural law is that all men are free by nature, slavery as an institution of the rationally oriented law of nations functions as a useful addition (*additio*) to natural law. In addition to the *primum principium* that all men are equal and free, slavery can be seen as an element of a secondary set of rules (*secunda praecepta*) and is thus judged legal and legitimate as long as the rules of the law of nations are respected (II-II, qu. 57).

Aquinas' discussion of whether and under which circumstances waging war is permitted (II-II, qu. 40) set the ground for a debate on just and unjust wars and the conditions of legal enslavement of prisoners of war (Franke 2009); the debate lasted for centuries and only took a new shape with the natural rights philosophers like Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), Samuel of Pufendorf (1632–1694), and John Locke (1632–1704) and the Age of Enlightenment (Suárez 1856; Grotius 1720; Hobbes 1970, 1983; Pufendorf 1740, 1759; Locke 1965, 1970). It was the seventeenth-century debate on natural rights that “secularized” the scholastic argument for slavery as a consequence of the fall of man by replacing the theological argument with the one of human reason. The abolitionist idea, however, was still far from being born (Franke 2009).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Besides the two scholarly discourses of slavery, the legal and the theological one – and maybe as a consequence of their permanent interaction – it had become commonplace within western Europe that slavery was an unquestioned side effect of war, piracy, poverty, personal misfortune, or punishment, but that the enslavement of Christians by Christians was not allowed on European soil. By the turn of the millennium, the policies of worldly and ecclesiastical rulers and the new socio-economic conditions of estate-based society had indeed made slaves a rather marginal phenomenon within Western Europe (Fynn-Paul 2009).

During the time of the Renaissance, however, things changed fundamentally. Although the discourses of slavery remained more or less the same, slavery within Europe became a social and economic factor of some importance again. Slaves appear among other sorts of servants in urban households of patrician and bourgeois citizens; they work side by side with serfs and other bonded people on the fields of secular and ecclesiastical landowners or are involved in the workshop's production of craftsmen or the business activities of merchants (Haverkamp 2005; Cottias et al. 2006; Blumenthal 2009).

Most of these new Renaissance slaves initially came from the Black Sea Region and were increasingly replaced by people from south of the Sahara only after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the Portuguese discovery of the sea route to West Africa around 1460 (Earle and Lowe 2005). Here, the principle that Christians did not enslave Christians was obviously not applied to members of other Churches. People of Greek or Russian orthodox confession or members of the Bosnian Church regularly appear among the trading books, sales contracts, testaments, and inventory lists of western merchants and household masters (Verlinden 1955/77; Balard 1978; Karpov 1986).

From the sixteenth century onward, the face of European slavery changed again. This time, long-distance slave trade was complemented and gradually surpassed by economically motivated wars of corsairs and increasing piracy activity mainly in the Mediterranean Sea. Besides household slavery (the predominant form in late medieval times), court slavery, ransom slavery, and galley slavery became characteristic elements of early modern societies (Davis 2003; Weiss 2011; Jaspert and Kolditz 2013).

At court, young slaves from sub-Saharan Africa or the Ottoman Empire, most of them children, were used as an exotic kind of status symbol (McGrath and Massing 2012). Their publicly staged education and conversion to Christianity became an “important ritual enactment of ownership” and a “practice of subject-making” (Rothman 2012: 32) in the early modern state-formation process. The prisoners of war and captives of corsairs

or pirates, for their part, were a relevant source of income for rulers as much as for private individuals. Once these people were captured, their exchange value was calculated according to their social status and family background and the financial resources they could mobilize for their ransom at home (Kaiser 2008; Ressel 2012). However, those who were not suitable for representative use as status symbol at court and did not have social and economic resources to be ransomed mostly ended up as galley slaves and often did not live long as oarsmen at sea.

Impact and Legacy

During the Renaissance, the ground was set for two major developments: the introduction of cattle slavery in the New World (Justenhoven and Stüben 2006; Priesching 2012) and the invention of race as a basis for theories of racism (Whitford 2009).

When the Europeans expanded into the Americas, the debate on the “Indios” and the European war in the New World led by late scholastics like Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546), Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484/1485–1566), and Domingo de Soto (1494–1560) in Spain, the so-called *School of Salamanca*, built on medieval traditions (de Vitoria 1967; de Las Casas 1974; de Soto 1968). They renewed the Aristotelian argument of “slaves by nature” and justified the war against the “Indios” as a just war in the sense of Aquinas (Justenhoven and Stüben 2006; Priesching 2012).

When people from Africa were then brought in great numbers to the Americas and other places to form the new class of slaves in the colonial overseas societies, European rulers and scholars could lean on a reinterpretation of the Old Testament’s Curse of Ham (Gen. 9:25–26) that had been “a text of opportunity” for multiple interpretations from the fifteenth century onward. Whereas Noah’s son Ham represented the unfree serf in the feudal society of the Middle Ages, Anniius of Viterbo (c. 1432–1502), in his *Commentaria* (Anniius of Viterbo 1498), identified Africa as a place of banishment for guilt and sin. And it was during the Age

of Reformation, through the writings of intellectuals like the historian and explorer George Best (1555–1584) and later on of the physician and anthropologist Charles White (1728–1813), that Africans became the “sexually perverted other” (Best 1578; White 1799). By the eighteenth century, their black skin was clearly interpreted as the visible expression of Ham’s sin; the enslavement of Africans was now seen as a consequence of divine punishment (Whitford 2009).

Although slavery in the Americas developed its own, new face and even though its practice in terms of size and efficiency was pushed to a hitherto unseen level of “perfection,” it would not have been thinkable without its legal and practical traditions in Renaissance and Reformation Europe.

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Smiglecus, Martinus

Born: 1563, Lwów, Poland

Died: 1618, Kalisz, Poland

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Abstract

Martin Smiglecus was an eminent Polish logician and philosopher. In Poland and Lithuania, Smiglecus' prolific creativity attracted

Roman S. J. Darowski: deceased.

interest, above all thanks to his economic and ethical treatise *O lichwie* (On Usury, Vilnius and Kraków 1596), which came out in several editions. Starting with the 5th edition of 1607, Smiglecius sought in that text to defend the peasantry from the excessive exploitation and drudgery. In defense of their personal freedom, he demanded that they should be permitted to purchase their own property and move freely to other places.

In Europe, he was known and appreciated for his two-volume work *Logica* (Ingolstadt 1618 and three editions in Oxford). This was particularly popular in England, where its benefits were enjoyed and appreciated right up to the mid-nineteenth century. In Oxford, there was even a “Smiglecius Society.” Smiglecius also published several theological and polemical books in Latin and Polish.

Alternate Names

[Śmiglecki, Marcin](#)

Biography

Martin Smiglecius was born November 11, 1563, in Lwów, now Lviv, Ukraine. In 1581, he entered the Jesuit order in Rome and studied philosophy (1582–1584) and theology (1584–1586) at the *Collegium Romanum*, where Suárez and Bellarmino were his professors. In the years 1586–1590, he lectured in philosophy at the Vilnius Academy. His lectures on logic were written down by a student and have been published as *Commentaria in Aristotelis Organum*. In 1586/1587, Smiglecius was a member of the Polish committee, which gave its opinion on the draft of *Ratio Studiorum*. In the years 1590–1600, he taught theology at the Vilnius Academy. In 1591, he became Master of Arts and Philosophy and in 1594 obtained a doctorate in theology. At the end of the sixteenth century, he served as Chancellor of the Vilnius Academy. In the years 1600–1602, he was Rector of the Jesuit College in Pułtusk and

from September 13, 1602, Rector of the College in Poznań. In 1608 he participated in the sixth General Congregation of the Jesuits in Rome. In 1608 he was again Rector in Kalisz. From March 1609 on, he was the Superior at the Domus Professa in Kraków. In 1611 he returned to Kalisz, where he was Prefect of Studies of Philosophy and Theology. In 1615/1616 he participated in the seventh General Congregation of the Jesuits in Rome, where, after the death of General Claudio Aquaviva, Muzio Vitelleschi was elected as the new General. Smiglecius died July 26, 1618, in Kalisz, Poland.

Heritage

His monumental work entitled *Logica* (over 1600 pages in length) is a collection of 18 treatises (*disputationes*) on logic, explored against the broad background of epistemology and metaphysics. The philosophy of Smiglecius belongs to the Christian Aristotelianism, influenced by some Renaissance tendencies. It displays considerable originality, pursuing as it does an intermediate path between Thomism and Suarezianism. Smiglecius is considered the “initiator of a tendency in metaphysics whose continuation was, in some sense, the metaphysics of Leibniz and Wolff” (Domański 1989, 357). Ashworth and Lenz consider it probable that Smiglecius’ thought exercised an influence on Locke’s theory of language.

In Smiglecius, we encounter the initial beginnings of some areas within both more modern and contemporary formal logic. Among the issues covered are ones that can be deemed to belong to term logic, the logic of classes, propositional-sentential logic, the theory of logical entailment, and modal logic and semiotics.

Cross-References

- [Jesuits in the Early Modern Period](#)
- [Polish Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Suárez, Francisco](#)

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Smith, Thomas

Born: 1513

Died: 1577

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Abstract

Smith’s political philosophy of a mixed monarchical government, in which Parliament and citizens had an active ruling function, expressed most famously in his *De Republica Anglorum* (published after his death in 1583) emerged both from his intellectual involvement in the crucible of late Henrician Reformation political and theological debate and his practical experience of political office during the reigns of both Edward VI and Elizabeth I. In that work, as well as through the privately circulated *A Discourse of the Commonweal of England*, Smith first articulates what later becomes a commonplace account of English political stability: that the political structures of the English state echo and represent the social structure, in which there is a balance between Commons, Lords, and monarch, between center and regions, all subject to the law. His political embassy in France enabled him to contrast the developing English model of “mixed government” with the more oligarchic French practice. Nevertheless, this open political model continued to exclude men who did not own land, and all women: his inclusive social and political model uses the patriarchal family as exemplum.

Biography

Sir Thomas Smith’s successful early academic career (as Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University and then Provost of Eton College in the 1540s) turned to political service after the death of Henry VIII, as Clerk of the Privy Council to Lord Protector Somerset in 1547, then Secretary of State in 1548, helping to draft the Act of

Śmiglecki, Marcin

► [Smiglecius, Martinus](#)

Uniformity and the first *Book of Common Prayer*, and usher these successfully through Parliament in 1549. He wrote his first political treatise (*A Discourse of the Commonweal of England*) in the early 1550s, a plan for currency reform in response to high inflation and social unrest. On Elizabeth I's succession in 1558 he sat on the commission to re-establish the Protestant settlement. In 1561 he wrote *A Dialogue on the Queen's Marriage* (widely circulated in manuscript), in which he advocated the political necessity of marriage for a woman ruler. As ambassador to France from 1562-6, he was deeply engaged in political negotiations with both the Catholic and Huguenot parties and wrote *De Republica Anglorum* (Dewar 1964, p. 112). He became a Privy Councillor in 1571, then Secretary of State in July 1572. Elizabeth I granted him land in County Down, Ireland, to establish an English settlement, based on his detailed blue-print (circulated in manuscript) and a political manifesto, published in 1571 (*A Letter...*): his son was killed in the battles to establish the settlement, and he surrendered his colonial interests to the Earl of Essex. As Secretary of State he found Elizabeth I's political 'irresolution and long-waiting' (Letter, BL, Lansdowne MS 19/81, fo.178) frustrating: the academic political philosopher was always more influential than the practical politician.

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

His political treatises (*De Republica Anglorum* and *A Discourse of the Commonweal of England*) display an erudite understanding of political and economic philosophy and theory, freely referencing Plato and Aristotle, Roman and more recent European history, to formulate an understanding and account of the English "Commonwealth." Smith was the first Englishman to articulate as political philosophy the shift of political authority to a new secular nation-state in the light of the post-Reformation break from the pope. This was particularly acute in Tudor England, where political authority inhered successively in an under-age young man, and then two female rulers. Smith's model of "mixed government" (*De Republica Anglorum*, chapter 6) in which

Parliament, Crown, and Lords shared political authority subject to the law thus emerged out of this historical necessity: the implicit lack of adult male authority required the balance of a strong parliament, Lords, and the law. This idea of balanced and mixed government influenced seventeenth-century Parliamentarians, and later Whigs, an English defense against European and Stuart political absolutism. Smith defines the members of the Commonwealth as all "subjects and citizens" but excludes bondsmen ("the fourth sort of men, which do not rule," chapter 24) and women (Chapter 16) from ruling and making laws. He describes a fluid social structure in which yeomen can become gentlemen through wealth, education, and professional work (Chapter 21).

Smith's comparative political philosophy was written in a populist style: "I have [written]. . . in the language of our country, in a style midway between the historical and the philosophical, giving it the shape in which I imagined that Aristotle wrote of the many Greek Commonwealth books which are no longer extant" (Letter to Burleigh, cited in Dewar 1964, pp. 111-2), and is explicitly pragmatic: "not in that sort as Plato makes his common wealth or Zenophon his kingdom of Persia, nor as Syr Thomas More his Utopia feigned common wealths such as never was nor shall be, vaine imaginations, phantasies of Philosophers to occupie the time and to exercise their wittes: but so as Englande standeth and is governed at this day the xxviii of March Anno 1565" (Book III, chapter 9, p. 144). Smith's writings and political actions in the Irish colonial settlement were influential on Raleigh, Bacon, and John Smith's ideas on colonial practices over the subsequent decades.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Smith's articulation of the symbiotic relationships between Crown, Commons, and Lords models a balanced government and social mobility as key to political stability. His emphasis on the rule of law influenced English legal and political theory as it emerged in Elizabethan and Stuart Parliaments (for example, Edward Coke). Smith's

Letter to Sir Francis Walsingham in the wake of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572 illustrates his view that the rule of law is paramount, arguing that the supposed malefactors should have been "apprehended, imprisoned, interrogated and judged" rather than massacred (B.M. Harl.Ms.260/188).

Impact and Legacy

Smith's model of political inclusiveness was used by Republican Parliamentarians in the seventeenth century (e.g., in the Putney Debates) as a ground for social and political radicalism; but equally his defense of the power of monarch and Parliament were used by moderate Royalists to defend the status quo. His work's influenced Thomas Hobbes, Robert Filmer and John Locke, and the continued debate about the power balance between monarch and parliament.

Cross-References

- [Bacon, Francis](#)
- [Bodin, Jean](#)
- [Filmer, Sir Robert](#)
- [Hobbes, Thomas](#)

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Soares, Cipriano

Born: 1524, Ocaña, Spain

Died: 1593, Plasencia, Spain

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Abstract

Soares was the author of one of the top best-selling rhetoric manuals from the Renaissance. His *De arte rhetorica libri tres* (Coimbra, 1562), containing a summary survey of the discipline, decisively influenced the teaching and learning of rhetoric in southern Europe. The *De arte rhetorica* was later adopted as a rhetoric manual in the *Ratio studiorum* of 1599.

Alternate Names

[Suárez, Cipriano](#); [Soarez, Cypriano](#); [Soarius, Cyprianus](#)

Biography

Cipriano Soares (Ocaña, Spain, 1524–Plasencia, Spain, 1593) was born into a New-Christian family but entered the Society of Jesus in Portugal in 1549. Having studied and taught rhetoric and the *studia humanitatis*, he was made a master in arts in 1560. Soares taught Latin, Greek (and even rudiments of Arabic), and rhetoric at the College of St Anthony in Lisbon (1553–1555), where he was appointed prefect, and the Colégio Real in Coimbra (1555–1560). Years later became a master in theology and dedicated the rest of his life to the study and teaching of the Holy Scriptures and natural philosophy. He later served as the director of the Jesuit Colleges of Évora and Braga (1570) in Portugal up until his retirement in 1580, when he definitively returned to Spain (Moss and Wallace 2003, pp. 115–117). Thus, both the composition of the *De arte rhetorica* and its tremendous publication success are linked to the Jesuit educational system.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The book's appeal resides in the clarity of the exposition, the identification of the sources of the book in the margins (mainly Cicero, Quintilian, Aristotle, and *Rhetorica ad Herennium*), and the use of examples from Cicero's speeches to illustrate the exposition of theory (Mack 2011, p. 178; Albuquerque Garcia 1992: *passim*; Flynn 1957). There is equal evidence in the structure and treatment of topics that Soares's book is indebted to the work of Northern European rhetoricians like Agricola, Erasmus, and Melanchthon, who had been read more extensively by Portuguese and Spanish intellectuals than Italian rhetoricians (Mack 2011, p. 176; Pereira 2012, pp. 576–582; 707–749). The *De arte rhetorica libri tres* is, therefore, an important work of humanistic synthesis.

Soares's manual denotes his extensive knowledge of the corpus of classical rhetoric, and his work's structure illustrates this. Moss and Wallace (2003, pp. 130–186) offer a useful translation of Ludovico Carbone's complete *Tabulae* or guide to

Soares's book (itself printed countless times up until the eighteenth century). The following overview of the *De arte rhetorica libri tres* owes much to the work of Mack (2011) and Pereira (2012, pp. 795–809). Book I is dedicated to the definition of rhetoric, a discussion of the three types of rhetoric and an explanation of rhetoric as *ars* (informed by *De inuentione* and Aristotle), the importance of *inventio* (influenced by northern European rhetoricians), and a detailed exposition of the topics of invention based on Aristotle's *Topica*; book II opens with a discussion of the significance of *dispositio* with a particularly detailed exposition of the *exordium* (indebted to Aristotle), followed by a section on argumentation (which suggests that Soares saw a close link between rhetoric and dialectic, again showing the influence of North-European authors); book III focuses mainly on the theory of style, with much briefer sections on memory and *actio*. In book III, the chapters dedicated to tropes are indebted to Quintilian and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, while Soares bases his sections on prose rhythm on Cicero's *Orator*.

Though Soares praises the Church Fathers in his *De arte rhetorica*, he never uses them as examples and quotes instead often from Cicero (chiefly, but also), Horace, Livy, Vergil, Sallust, and Ovid. His detailed discussion on style denotes a preference for Ciceronian oratory at the expense of the low style of Christian eloquence endorsed at the Council of Trent (1545–1563). In the *De arte rhetorica*, Soares illustrates to what extent the Jesuit educational system was more permeable to Ciceronianism (Pereira 2012, pp. 806–809) in contrast to the Senecanism promoted, among others, by Justus Lipsius, and akin to the style of rhetoric advocated by Carlo Borromeo and his followers (Fumaroli 1980, pp. 135–152; Mouchel 1990).

Impact and Legacy

Mack (2011, p. 179) identifies 78 editions of the book between 1562 and 1620 and a further 51 abbreviated editions up to 1700, proving the popularity of Soares's book. Its second edition

(Venice, 1565), revised by the Jesuit Peter Perpinian who had worked side by side with Soares in Portugal, underwent some alterations, notably the inclusion of a section discussing rhetoric as imitation (1565, I.11). Soares's *De arte rhetorica* was later adopted as a manual of the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* in 1599 and continued to be read until the eighteenth century.

Cross-References

- [Agricola, Rudolph](#)
- [Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition](#)
- [Ciceronianism](#)
- [Colégio Real in Coimbra](#)
- [Dialectic in the Renaissance](#)
- [Imitation and Mimesis in the Renaissance](#)
- [Jesuits in the Early Modern Period](#)
- [Lipsius, Justus](#)
- [Melanchthon, Philipp](#)
- [Quintilian](#)
- [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)

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Soarez, Cypriano

- [Soares, Cipriano](#)

Soarius, Cyprianus

- [Soares, Cipriano](#)

Socini

- [Sozzini, Fausto and Lelio](#)

Socinianism

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Abstract

Socinianism is a term that could have at least two meanings. The first refers to the religious Unitarian movement broadened at the end of the sixteenth century by the early followers of the Italian thinker Fausto Sozzini (Faustus Socinus or Socini), which crossed and

overlapped with the *Ecclesia minor* (Minor Church) of Poland – the Antitrinitarian branch of the reformed Church of the *Fratres Poloni* (Polish Brethren). The second sense stands for the Christian theological, philosophical, and moral doctrine inspired by the works of Fausto and his uncle Lelio (Laelius), which became widespread in Europe, especially in Holland and England, from the seventeenth century and later in America.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Socinianism is rooted in the intense movement of people and ideas that distinguished the rise and strengthening of the Reformation in Europe. Its main connections can be found in sixteenth-century Antitrinitarianism, which has been considered one of the peculiar features of the Radical Reformation (Biagioni 2016), in the demand for religious renewal praised by Spiritualists and Anabaptists (Roth et al. 2007), and in the humanist ideal of critical thinking. In addition to Miguel Servet, Lelio, and Fausto contested the Trinity by reading the Scripture through the philological method of Lorenzo Valla (Cantimori 1939). In their criticism, however, a very important role was also played by Aristotelianism, which Lelio encountered during his stay in Padua (Rotondò's introduction to Sozzini 1986) and Fausto used eventually against the Platonism that, according to him, characterized Christian doctrine (Scribano 2007, Salatowsky 2015). Servet's death in Geneva in 1553 at stake because of his denial of the Trinity, obliged Antitrinitarians either to hide, with a nicodemite attitude very familiar to Italian dissenters (Cantimori 1939; Rotondò 1967), or to find a safe place where they were not prosecuted. As a consequence, many Italian thinkers fled to Poland, where the Confederation of Warsaw of 1573 had declared a policy of tolerance between Lutherans, Calvinists, and the Bohemian Brethren, who had been present in Poland since the 1550s. Formally excluded from the covenant, Antitrinitarians could also take advantage thereof (Wilbur 1947; Caccamo 1970; Balázs 2015). Hence, this climate of tolerance, which also

distinguished the later reigns of the Catholic Stephen Báthory (1576–1586) and his successor Sigismund III Vasa (1587–1632), allowed the growth of Socinianism consequent on Fausto Sozzini's influence on the Minor Church of Raków (Wilbur 1947; Kot 1957). Since his arrival in Poland in 1579, Sozzini became the reference point for the Polish Antitrinitarians, to whose reunification he contributed during the 1580s through an internal and measured discussion of several theological or practical issues, as, for instance, the commitment of Christians in politics (Szczucki 2004). However, starting from the 1630s, the increase in Poland of the Catholic Counter-Reformation due to Władysław IV and John II Casimir and the internal political divisions caused by the 30 Years War, led to the persecution of Socinians – in 1638 its center in Raków had even been destroyed –, who were definitively expelled from the country in 1658 (Tazbur 1974; Williams 1980).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The humanity of Christ and the unity of God are two among the several distinctive aspects of Socinianism. Both of these points descend from a critical analysis of the Scripture, in particular of John's Gospel. Through a historical and anti-metaphysical reading of its prologue, Lelio and then more extensively Fausto claimed that Christ was a man, who had been chosen and divinized by God in order to show the way to attain the eternal life, which is God's reward for good Christian conduct (*Brevis explicatio in primum Iohannis caput*, Sozzini 1986, 101–128; *Explicatio primae partis primi capituli Evangelistae Iohannis*, Sozzini 2004, I, 73–85). For this reason, and contrarily to some non-adorantist or Judaizing tendencies among Polish and Transylvanian Antitrinitarians (Szczucki 1982), Fausto Sozzini underlined that Christ must be worshipped, although he was wholly human and his death did not represent atonement for human sins but only an example to follow (*De Jesu Christo Servatore*, Sozzini 2004, II, 119–246).

Sozzini's reading of John's Gospel derived from the thesis according to which Christians should analyze the Scripture through reason, by explaining the problematic points with a comparative analysis of the Bible itself, as religious truths can be above reason, but never against it (*De Sacra Scripturae Auctoritate*, Sozzini 2004, I, 263–284; Cantimori 1939). Among these religious and rational truths, it is worth recalling, on the one hand, the refusal of the doctrine of original sin and the consequently great extent of human freedom (cf. Biagioni's introduction to Sozzini and Pucci 2010), and, on the other hand, the limits of the power and knowledge of God. Nonetheless, according to Fausto, even if human reason can grasp all the essential doctrines of the Christian religion, it cannot state by itself the religious truths, which only Scripture can reveal (Rohls 2005a). This form of rationalism, though very limited, as well as the distinction between *fundamentalia fidei* and *adiaphora* already present in Erasmus, whose thought was well known to Fausto (Bietenholz 2005), led Socinianism, from the time of Lelio's discussion with John Calvin, to the antidogmatic view that in order to be saved only a few doctrines needed to be accepted, since what really matters is behaving in accordance with the ethical principles preached by Jesus Christ (Ogonowski 1974). Despite Fausto's thinking that true religion lies in the Bible and that non-believers cannot be saved, since Christian doctrine provides the only true path to salvation, Socinianism became over time one of the most important supporters of toleration, whose limits and extension would be clarified by the 1665 Amsterdam edition of the Catechism of Raków, first published in 1605, one year after Fausto's death (Pintacuda de Michelis 1975).

Impact and Legacy

After the 1656 diaspora, some Socinians fled to neighboring countries, such as Brandenburg, East Prussia, and Silesia, where, however, they were not always well-received (Tazbur 1974). Consequently, they mostly emigrated to the

Netherlands, where their doctrines had been known since the end of the sixteenth century (Kühler 1912). In 1598, for instance, the Socinians Christophorus Osterodt, a German theologian, and Andreas Voidovius, a Polish nobleman, travelled to Amsterdam in order to obtain support from the Dutch political authorities (Simonutti 2005a; Rohls 2005b). Their mission failed, and the Antitrinitarian books which they carried with them, among which was Fausto Sozzini's treatise *De Jesu Christo Servatore*, were seized, but Socinian thought started to be analyzed and discussed by noteworthy thinkers, such as Hugo Grotius (Blom 2005). Ironically, during the intense conflict between Gomarists and Arminians that took place at the beginning of the seventeenth century, many exponents of Arminianism, who had criticized Sozzini's doctrine, as Hugo Grotius had done (Blom 2005; Rohls 2005a), were charged with Socinianism. This overlapping depended on the similarity that existed between Arminian and Socinian conceptions about predestination and human freedom (Visser 2004). Contrary to Gomarism or in general Calvinism, both confessions valued the role of human behavior for salvation, as well as the use of reason in religious matters (Rohls 2005b). As Pierre Bayle among others observed (Bayle 1740, art. "Socin, Fauste"), religious rationalism, as well as the already mentioned doctrine of tolerance, could be seen as the most important legacy of Sozzini's thought, despite the limits imposed by him on reason. This is particularly evident in the writings of Sozzini's nephew, Andrzej Wiszowaty, whose *Religio rationalis*, published posthumously in 1685 (Wiszowaty 1982), has been considered for a long time as the prelude to eighteenth-century Deism (Israel 2006). As has been shown, in seventeenth-century European philosophy Socinianism played an essential role in the debate and was recognized by the most important philosophers of the time – for example, Hobbes (Paganini 2005), Spinoza (Mignini 2005), Locke (Simonutti 2005b; Marshall 2000) and Newton (Snobelen 2005) – as a theoretical and theological system with which one must come to terms. Even after having been defeated by mainstream thinkers, Socinianism did not vanish.

Rather, it became an ideal paradigm of rationalism, tolerance, and freedom, especially in eighteenth-century North America (Wilbur 1952).

Cross-References

- Anabaptism
- Arminius, Jacobus
- Calvin, Jean
- Grotius, Hugo
- Humanism
- Nicodemism
- Philology, Renaissance
- Sozzini, Fausto and Lelio

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Socinus

- [Sozzini, Fausto and Lelio](#)

Soggetto/Oggetto

- [Subject/Object, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Soncinas, Paulus

- [Soncino, Paolo Barbo](#)

Soncino, Paolo Barbo

Born: Soncino, ca. 1458

Died: Cremona, 5 August 1495

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Abstract

Paolo Barbò da Soncino was an Italian Roman Catholic priest, friar of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), Thomist philosopher, and Doctor of Theology (Kaeppli T., Panella E. 1970–1993). His life and work fall within the ambit of Italian Renaissance Thomism of the fifteenth century. Among his masters were probably Peter Maldura of Bergamo (d. 1482) and Dominic of Flanders (d. 1479). His principal work, the exposition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, proceeds from a particular synthesis of the Arabic commentator Averroes, Thomas Aquinas, Hervaeus Natalis (d. 1323), and John Capreolus (d. 1444). Soncinas' work and position were frequently discussed from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century.

Alternate Names

[Paul of Soncino](#); [Paul of Soncinas](#); [Barbus de Soncino](#), [Paulus](#); [Soncinas, Paulus](#); [Barbosus, Paulus](#)

Biography

Soncinas was born around 1458 in the small Italian town of Soncino, near Cremona in Lombardy (Jindráček 2008, pp. 80–87). As a young man in 1472, he entered the Dominican Priory of St. James in Soncino which belonged to the Observant Congregation of Lombardy. After initial formation, he was from 1474 a student at the Dominican studium in Bologna and from 1481 a formal student at the Dominican studium generale, integrated into the University of Bologna. Among his schoolfellows in this period were Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio (d. 1527) and Girolamo Savonarola (d. 1498), who succeeded him in 1487 as the Master of Students (Jindráček 2008, p. 97). During this time, Soncinas probably wrote his first philosophical work *Elegantissima expositio in artem veterem Aristotelis* (printed in 1499), a scholastic exposition of Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories* (*Ars vetera*). After 1485, he was teaching and preaching in Milan and Landriano in Lombardy (in two convents of the same name *Santa Maria delle Grazie*), and at the same time, he was preparing an edition of Aquinas' *Opuscula* and Vincent Ferrer's *Sermones*, printed in 1488. In this period we can also place his edition of Peter of Palude's commentary on the fourth book of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, printed in Venice in 1493. In 1493, Soncinas returned to St. Dominic's priory in Bologna, where he taught theology in terms of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as a formal bachelor, and on 30 May 1495, he graduated from the University of Bologna as a Doctor (Magister) of Sacred Theology. To this period also, we can date two or three of his works: the edition of Aquinas' commentary on the *Second Book of Sentences* in collaboration with a Benedictine monk Marco da Benevento (d. ca. 1524), printed in Bologna in 1494, and the completion of the most important and most widely read of Soncinas' works, the *Acutissimae Quaestiones Metaphysicales*, first printed posthumously in Venice in 1498. The compendium, which Soncinas called *Divinum epitoma quaestionum in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, an extract of John Capreolus' *Defensiones*, likewise first printed posthumously

in Pavia from 1521 to 1522, is difficult to date but also probably comes from this last stay in Bologna together with his correspondence with the noted Renaissance thinker Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (d. 1533), the nephew of the more famous Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Picus 1573, II, pp. 1284–1285, 1313–1314). After his doctoral promotion, Soncinas was appointed as prior of St. Dominic's priory in Cremona where he died soon after on 5 August 1495 (Jindráček 2008, pp. 108–109).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Soncinas is one of the classic examples of a Thomist of the fifteenth century living in the ambience of the Italian Renaissance and following the observant religious reform whose intellectual formation was profoundly rooted in the scholastic method and Aristotelian-Thomist tradition. In addition to the works of the Stagirite and Aquinas, he had a very good knowledge of Averroes' commentary and other classical and scholastic authors like Cicero, Boethius, John Duns Scotus, Hervaeus Natalis, Gregory of Rimini, Antonio Andrea, Giles of Rome, Francis of Mayrone, et al. Among the Latin translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, he evidently preferred William of Moerbeke's (d. ca. 1286) version but also took into account that of Michael Scotus' (d. ca. 1235). Soncinas distinguished very precisely between theological and philosophical knowledge or method, and in philosophy he used only rational arguments. In general he was convinced that the best interpretation of Aristotle was to be found in Averroes' commentary and that Aquinas' interpretation was largely reconcilable with it.

Soncinas' works can be divided into three groups: In the first, there are editions of other authors like Vincent Ferrer's *Sermones* (1488) and Aquinas' *Opuscula* (1488). Soncinas' edition of the *Opuscula* is appreciated as one of the better versions, compared to earlier printed editions (*Summa opusculorum* 1485/1488), as is noted in the introduction to the critical Leonine edition (Thomas de Aquino 1976, pp. 117–118, 176, 222, 273–274). The edition presents

51 opuscula of which modern critics today consider only 16 to be inauthentic. Two other books, Peter of Palude's *In quantum Sententiarum* (1493) and Aquinas' *Scriptum super secundo libro Sententiarum* (1494), await critical evaluation.

With those editions is connected another interesting category of Soncinas' literary production, typical of the Renaissance culture: his scholarly or philosophical *epistolary*. There are introductions or dedications to editions such as the letter *Cum nuper Mediolanum venissem* of 29 February 1488 addressed to Ludovico of Calabria, the General Vicar of the Observant Congregation of Lombardy (1487–1489), published with Vincent's *Sermones*, the *Qui gratulatum* of 15 May 1488 for Cardinal Ascanio Maria Sforza (d. 1505) in Aquinas' *Opuscula*, and the *Constitueram magnis amniti viribus* of 1 July 1493 for Tommaso Donato (d. 1505), the Dominican Patriarch of Venice in Paludanus' *In quantum Sententiarum*.

Finally, here are three speculative works. The dating is not sure, but the first was probably the commentary on *Ars vetera* called variously as *Elegantissima expositio in artem veterem Aristotelis* (ed. Venice 1499) or *Lucida et subtilis expositio in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Praedicamenta* (ed. Venice 1587) or *Expositio in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Praedicamenta* (ed. Venice 1600). This is a classical scholastic commentary on Aristotelian "old" logic in two parts: an exposition of Porphyry's *Isagoge* in seven chapters and an exposition of Aristotelian *Categories*, subdivided into three parts *De antepredicamentis*, *De praedicamentis*, and *De postpredicamentis*. The work was very probably intended as a manual for students of philosophy (in Bologna?).

The second work is his *Divinum epitoma quaestionum in quattuor librum Sententiarum a principe thomistarum Ioanne Capreolo* (ed. Pavia 1521–1522; Lyon 1528, 1529, 1580; and Salamanca 1580). This book also most likely comes from his teaching activities and is mentioned in his correspondence with Pico (Picus 1573, II, 1313; cf. Paulus de Soncino 1521, I, a4v–a5r). The whole work is in fact an abbreviated extract from the monumental work *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis* of John Capreolus (Bedouelle 1997, pp. 201–204).

Because it is an "epitome" – an extract from another author, as is the case with Silvestro da Prierio's *Opus in Capreolum* in 1498 – its relationship to Soncinas' own thinking is somewhat problematic. This difficulty applies especially to the doctrine of the eternal truths which Soncinas later does not defend but in the *Epitoma* probably only expresses the opinion of Capreolus (cf. Wells 1994a, pp. 19–29, 1994b, p. 199, 1997, pp. 264–268; Mahoney 2004, pp. 630–631; Jindráček 2012, pp. 165–166).

The most important of Soncinas' works is his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* [*Acutissimae quaestiones metaphysicales* = AQM [ed. Venice 1498, 1505, 1526, 1576, 1588 (photo reprint Frankfurt 1967), ed. Lyon 1579 by Petrus Landry and another by Carolus Pesnot, ed. Oberursel 1622] where his own mature views are presented, together with relevant arguments and polemics. The dating in this case is also uncertain, but from the correspondence with Pico, it is evident that at the beginning of 1495, the work was considered to be complete (Picus 1573, II, 1313). This is a scholastic commentary in the form of questions and includes 8 of 14 of Aristotle's metaphysical treatises: books IV–X and XII. Soncinas explains this selection in his preface mainly on the grounds of the repetitive nature of the omitted books. Among Soncinas' characteristic views, we should note here especially his understanding of the *common being* to include God and separated substances as parts and not only principles (cf. AQM, IV, q. 10). This is a synthesis of Averroes' and Aquinas' arguments directed against Dominic of Flanders. Even more interesting is his view on the concept of the unity of being. Together with the classic analogical unity and predication, Soncinas defended the concept of being as a disjunctive term ("*ens*" expresses immediately the substance or accident = *conceptus disjunctus*); this view is probably taken from Hervaeus (cf. AQM, IV, qq. 3 and 4). On the question of distinction between essence and existence, Soncinas defended the fairly widespread Thomistic position of a real distinction, which he himself considered as "the most fundamental part of Aquinas' doctrine," even using the terms *res ad rem* (AQM, IV, q. 12). But in this work, we can also find some other less traditional ideas such as the

identity of a relation with its fundamentum (AQM, V, q. 28) and the exclusive competence of physics in the demonstration of the existence of God (AQM, IV, q. 9). Some of these ideas even led Cardinal Cajetan (d. 1534) to write a now lost polemical treatise called *Super erroribus Soncinati* (Von Gunten 1969, pp. 341–344; Jindráček 2008, p. 137).

Impact and Legacy

Although Soncinas' work is today known primarily for its role in the controversies with Francisco Suárez (d. 1617), he had some direct disciples and admirers. Among these can be mentioned Andrea da Perugia (d. 1548); Gaspare di Baldassare da Perugia (d. 1531), the author of the *Apologia Pauli Soncinatis olim magistri sui*, a polemical answer to Cajetan, which is itself now lost (Tavuzzi, 1996, p. 601); and Isidorus de Isolani da Milano (d. ca. 1528), his first biographer (Paulus de Soncino 1521, I, A2r-A6r) and editor of the *Epitoma*. With reference to Soncinas, we should also note Chrysostomus Javelli (d. 1538) and several other scholastic philosophers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Jindráček 2008, pp. 134–142) like Francesco Silvestri da Ferrara (d. 1528) or Domingo Bañez (d. 1604) and even Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (d. 1716).

Cross-References

- [Cajetan, Thomas de Vio](#)
- [Epistle in the Renaissance](#)
- [Letter in the Renaissance](#)
- [Savonarola, Girolamo](#)
- [Suárez, Francisco](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Sophists

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Abstract

The ancient sophists, such as Gorgias of Leontini and Protagoras of Abdera, are generally – and often superficially – connected to relativism, immoralism, skepticism, and opportunism. Their historical and intellectual identity was recovered during the Renaissance along with other classical authors, especially Plato who built his philosophy against the sophistic tradition of the fifth and fourth century BC. Starting with the fifteenth-century translations and commentaries, from Leonardo Bruni to Marsilio Ficino, the sophistic writings resurfaced and played an important role in the philosophical and literary history of the European Renaissance. Several Renaissance authors provided original reinterpretations of the ancient sophists both in Neo-Latin and vernacular literature. International scholarship has recently started a detailed exploration of the rebirth of sophistry in early-modern era and has already provided important results that this entry intends to summarize.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Because of Plato's condemnation of the sophists and the difficulty to recover their writings, the sophistic literature has been mostly transmitted as a fragmentary tradition in which secondary sources and different interpretations have played a major role. The recovery of the classical authors, especially Plato, in the fifteenth century represented an important turn. Indeed, for the first time, early-modern scholars were able to access an increased amount of primary and secondary sources that allowed them to deepen the study of the ancient sophists and their ideas, which led to either refuse or rehabilitate them. In these respects, ironically, the principal source for the recovery of the ancient sophists, especially Gorgias of Leontini and Protagoras of Abdera, was their worst adversary, i.e., Plato. The discussion between Socrates and the sophists is quite a consistent aspect of Plato's dialogues, and thanks to this fictional representation, Plato actually allows the reader to learn about sophists and their theories. When the fifteenth-century humanists translated and commented Plato's works in Latin, they gave the European readers the opportunity to access the sophistic tradition that Plato and Platonists wanted to destroy forever. Several sixteenth-century scholars interpreted and used this tradition in different original ways, so that the rebirth of sophistry affected both literature and philosophy of the Renaissance, both in Latin and the vernaculars and in different cultural contexts, especially Italy, France, and Spain.

Scholars have warned not to consider sophistry as a uniform movement, given that each sophist had in fact a specific intellectual profile and background, which explain the variety of works and thoughts within the literary production of the Antiquity. Since the nineteenth century, thanks to the collection of sophistic fragments published by Diels and Kranz (1951–1952) – to quote only the main scholarly enterprise – we are by now aware of the rich variety of the sophistic period, although we can still recognize some general common aspects in the authors of both the First and Second Sophistic (to use a classical and well-accepted periodization). But for the authors of the

Renaissance, that was no easy task, since some of their major sources for their knowledge of the sophists, i.e., Plato and Aristotle, tend to consider sophistry as a category (or the sophist as a kind, as it is clear in Plato's *Sophist*) rather than distinguishing the specificity of each sophistic figure.

As we mentioned above, the entire work of Plato intends to be a gigantic confutation of the sophistic tradition that needs to present the sophistic figures and their arguments in order to reach its goal. The first step in this recovery of the sophistic thought through Plato is Leonardo Bruni's Latin translation of the dialogue *Gorgias* in 1409 (Venier 2011), but the rebirth of the entire platonic corpus was possible only in 1484, when Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation and commentaries were published, to become soon a best-seller of its time. Aristotle's works, studied and translated with a new approach by humanists, played a role as well, in particular the texts where the sophists are discussed: the *Metaphysics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Sophistic Confutations*. Although Plato and Aristotle are the main references, the transmission of the identity and thought of the ancient sophists to the Renaissance passes through a large variety of sources. Two biographers were key figures as well: Diogenes Laertius, with his *Live of Philosophers* translated in Latin by Ambrogio Traversari in 1433 (Gigante 1988), and even more Philostratus, a sophist himself, with his *Lives of the Sophists*. Other works played a role in the transmission of sophistic thought and rhetoric: Aristophanes' comedy *The Clouds*, Euripides' tragedies, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Plutarch's *Moralia* (translated in Latin by Cardinal Bessarion around 1442), Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and *Adversus mathematicos*, and the works of Cicero, Quintilian, Seneca, and Aulus Gellius. Indeed, all these authors benefited from the humanist interest in recovering the classics, at the same time disclosing the important information on the sophistic tradition kept in their works.

Original texts of sophists are rare and often fragments of lost works. Pietro Bembo had the opportunity to translate in Latin, in 1493, *Gorgias'*

Encomium of Helen (Bembo 1983), a masterpiece of the Ancient sophistic rhetoric. The Venetian publisher Aldo Manuzio contributed to the diffusion of the sophistic rhetoric with his 1513 edition of *Oratores Graeci*, in original, including among others *Gorgias' Encomium* and *Defense of Palamedes*. The recovery of the protagonists of the Second Sophistic (a definition invented by Philostratus) has also a part, in particular Lucian of Samosata, author of very influential paradoxical dialogues which were translated by Desiderius Erasmus (Marsh 1999) and had inspired not only his *Praise of Folly* but also Sperone Speroni's *Dialogo dell'Usura* and *Dialogo della Discordia* published in 1542 (Buranello 1999; Katinis 2015).

Marsilio Ficino's commentaries to Plato's dialogues, especially *The Sophist*, *Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, *Euthydemus*, and *Theaetetus*, take the side of Plato against the sophists, but at the same time make some of the sophistic perspectives very interesting to the reader and even seem to rehabilitate part of their thought. In fact, this is the case of Protagoras' "great speech" in Plato's *Protagoras* that Ficino interprets as an allegorical Pagan anticipation of the Christian truth (Katinis 2013, 2018, 20–33). Ficino's commentary on *The Sophist* (studied and translated by Allen 1989) is also important for the elaboration of a theory on the relation between imagination and demons, which goes beyond the matter of sophistry and Plato's intention, while the diffusion of this Platonic dialogue spread the notion of a distinction between "icastic arts" (purely imitative) and "phantastic arts" (crafting illusions), which had an important role in the sixteenth-century literary debate among, for instance, Gabriele Comanini (1591, 2001), Torquato Tasso and Jacopo Mazzoni (Giglioni 2010).

After Ficino, Erasmus was the major Latin author who not only translated and commented but also originally reworked the sophistic tradition for his own writings, for example, in his *Praise of Folly* in which Folly announces to her audience that she will play the sophist. The complex use of the sophistic tradition and thought in several of Erasmus' works has been studied by Eric MacPhail in the first monograph ever

written on the rebirth of the ancient sophists in the Renaissance (MacPhail 2006, 2011). Thanks to MacPhail's work, scholars also have a detailed analysis of the transmission of the sources of the sophistic tradition during early-modern time as well as its impact on the vernacular French literature, in particular in François Rabelais' *Gargantua* (1542), *Pantagruel* (1532 and 1542), and *Tiers Livres* and Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* (MacPhail 2012).

The Protagorean antilogic, i.e., the making of opposite discourses (*dissoi logoi*) on a subject (e.g., to praise and to blame the same thing) or speaking on both sides of an issue, affected Montaigne's works for the skeptical attitude that this antilogic practice implies. More generally, the practice of Protagorean antilogic, or the truth of opposites, is at the core of the sophistic Renaissance (MacPhail 2011, 74–103) and represents one of the most subversive aspects of the Greek pre-Socratic thought which challenges not only Eleatism and Platonism but also the ground of Aristotle's logic and ontology. Besides, the antilogic clearly witnesses the agonistic nature of the archaic Greek culture – including rhetoric and philosophy – which had a wide impact on the humanists and Renaissance scholars. Francesco Bausi (1992) saw the practice of antilogic in Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogi ad Petrum Histrum* and identified in Cicero's dialogues an important source for the transmission of this Protagorean technique. But Protagoras' legacy of the fifteenth century is not limited to Bruni and involves also Lorenzo Valla's *Dialectical Disputations* (Trinkaus 1976; Nauta 2009, 255–260).

Antilogic and relativism in ethics and politics are aspects of the sophistic thought that play a role in Montaigne's writings as well as in Niccolò Machiavelli's *Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio* (MacPhail 2011, 92–101). A further aspect of the sophistic eloquence that fascinated the Renaissance was the idea and practice of *kairos* as a principle of improvisation and adaptability, or – in other words – an ethic of timing in performing speeches. Sophists were technicians of *kairos*, and the performances of Gorgias in the theater of Athens were particularly popular. MacPhail (2011, 105–118) argues for the influence of this principle in Francesco Guicciardini's

Ricordi, Montaigne's *Essais*, and mostly in Erasmus' works.

Machiavelli and Guicciardini are not the only Italian authors involved in the sophistic Renaissance. The relevance of ancient sophists in understanding the vernacular literature of the Italian Renaissance is a growing line of research that has already had several contributions, although a complete exploration is still far from being achieved. Scholars have studied the role of rhetoric and rehabilitation of the ancient sophists in the works of Speroni Speroni degli Alvarotti (1989), a Paduan philosopher and rhetorician usually considered an Aristotelian (Pozzi 1989, Girardi 1990, Fournel 2014, 216–220; Katinis 2018, Chaps. II and III). In particular, Speroni's "trattatelli" *In difesa dei sofisti* and *Contra Socrate* (translated in Katinis 2018, Appendix) are a unique case of explicit defense of the ancient sophists since the condemnation in Plato's dialogues. The debate over sophistry in sixteenth-century Italy involves also other authors, often connected to Speroni and his *milieu*, such as Jacopo Mazzoni and Torquato Tasso, among the major figures of the time. Mazzoni's *Della difesa della Comedia di Dante* (1587, 1982, 1983) presents poetry as a sophistic art with a clear reference to the definition of "phantastic arts" in Plato's *The Sophist*, but reversing the Platonic condemnation, while Tasso engages sophistry in discussing the matter of poetry in his *Apologia in difesa della Gerusalemme liberata* (1875) and in his *Discorsi del poema eroico* (1964, 1973) attacks the revolutionary theory proposed in Mazzoni's *Della difesa* (Scarpati 1985; Scarpati and Bellini 1990; Russo 2000, 2002; Moreschini 2016; Katinis 2018, chap. IV). Even if sophistry is richly elaborated and reinterpreted mostly in the Italian sixteenth-century vernacular literature, there are at least two works to mention on the Neo-Latin side: Gerolamo Cardano's *Neronis encomium* (a praise of the emperor Nero) published in 1562 and *Antigorgias dialogus sive de recta vivendi ratione* (a dialogue against Gorgias and on the right way to live) published in 1566 (Gigliani 2012).

Important scholarly achievements have been reached also in Spanish literature, particularly on the reception of Protagoras of Abdera,

through Marsilio Ficino's translations and commentaries on Plato, in Miguel de Cervantes (Merkel 2004, 2011). Merkel argues that Cervantes knew about sophistry from either Ficino or other sources and that his three *Quijotes* engage sophistry even if not explicitly, so that Cervantes had an important part in the rebirth of the sophistic tradition, although rejecting the sophistic perspectives.

Since the nineteenth century, sophistry is not anymore considered a uniform movement, as it was for the authors of the Renaissance. Despite this mistake in their historical perspective, Renaissance authors understood very well that sophists were not only very skillful rhetoricians, who mastered the art of crafting and performing persuasive speeches, but also offered philosophical approaches which are alternatives to Platonism and Aristotelianism. Indeed, sophists' legacy influenced different spheres of the Renaissance intellectual life, including ethics, politics, and poetics, offering an anti-metaphysical perspective on life. Some of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century scholars rejected this alternative; others were very attracted by it and explored its possibilities.

The early-modern fortune of the sophists goes beyond the Renaissance into the Baroque. One of the most important enterprises in these respects is the *Theatrum veterum rhetorum, oratorum, declamatorum* [...] by the Jesuit father Louis de Cressoles, published in Paris in 1620 (Fumaroli 2002, 299–311), while the works and discussions of seventeenth-century literature and criticism offer the material for further research in order to assess how long the sophistic Renaissance actually lasted. Further investigations and results on the debate over sophistry and its rebirth between the fifteenth and seventeenth century will be available in the forthcoming collection of essays that is now published in the journal *Philosophical Readings* 11.2 (2019).

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Soto, Domingo de

Born: Segovia, 1494

Died: Salamanca, 15 November 1560

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Abstract

Domingo de Soto, O.P., was a member of the Order of Preachers and, like many of his order brothers, was a devoted follower of Thomas Aquinas. Born in Segovia in 1494, Soto studied at various universities in Spain as well as in Paris before assuming a chair teaching philosophy at the University of Complutense. The Dominican was a major player in the Council of Trent which gave him the occasion to author his *De natura et gratia*, in which Soto attempted to address the errors of his Lutheran opponents. He also made contributions to logic, the philosophy of nature, and moral-political philosophy with his publications: *In dialecticam Aristotelis*, *Super octo libros Physicorum commentaria*, *Super octo libros Physicorum quaestiones*, and *De iustitia et iure*. Soto died in 1560 in Salamanca.

Biography

Domingo de Soto, O.P. (Segovia, 1494 – Salamanca, 15 November 1560), following in the tradition of other Dominicans (such as Francisco de Vitoria) in the School of Salamanca, was one of the principal proponents of Thomism in Spain's second scholasticism. Born in Segovia and baptized originally as "Francisco," Soto began his initial studies in Segovia but moved to Ochando, where he was a sacristan of the local parish (Solana 1940, 92). From 1513 to 1516, he continued his studies in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alcalá (ibid., 92), which would later be the academic home to many important Spanish intellectuals of the golden age, most especially the Jesuits Gabriel Vásquez and Francisco Suárez. Eventually, Soto pursued his education outside of

Sørensen, Peder

► Severinus, Petrus

Spain entirely and graduated from the University of Paris with a baccalaureate in philosophy and a master of arts (ibid., 92).

After having taught in the arts faculty at Paris (D'Ors 1984, 209), Soto returned to Spain in 1519. In 1520 he accepted a position teaching philosophy at the College of San Ildefonso at Alcalá (Solana 1940, 92). Shortly thereafter he accepted a chair in philosophy at the University of Complutense where he lectured against the nominalism that he had learned in Paris (ibid.). While considering whether he would seek advancement to a chair in theology, Soto began to entertain the idea of a religious vocation (ibid.). Originally, he considered a vocation with the Benedictines but then in 1524 entered the Order of Preachers. He took the Dominican habit and the name "Domingo" at the Convent of St. Paul of Burgos where he made his religious profession on 23 July 1525 (ibid.). Soto continued his teaching career at the convent in Burgos, teaching logic, before being moved to the Convent of St. Stephen. He was ordered by his superiors to seek the cátedra de vísperas in theology at the University of Salamanca, which he filled on 22 November 1532 (ibid.) and kept until 1549 (D'Ors 1984, 210). Meanwhile, on 8 November 1532, he graduated from the University of Salamanca with a master's in theology (Solana 1940, 93).

In 1545 Charles V sent Soto as his imperial theologian to participate in the Council of Trent. From 1545 to 1547, Soto attended the council in Trent until – owing to political difficulties between the pope and emperor – it was moved to Bologna. Soto followed the transfer, and this time not only did he serve as imperial theologian, he was also the designated representative for the Dominicans (ibid.). During his time at Trent, Soto authored his *De natura et gratia*, which was both a response to questions being entertained at the council regarding the relationship between original sin and grace and a sustained critique of Lutheran theology (ibid., 96). In this text, Soto considers human nature in four states: first, in a state of pure nature considered speculatively (*mente excogitatum*); second, prior to the fall in a state of original justice; third, after the fall; and, finally, after the restitution of grace (*De natura et gratia*, prol., fol. 2 r-v). Ultimately, for Soto, at the

base of the dispute between Catholics and Lutherans is the role human freedom plays in postlapsarian man. Briefly put, for Lutherans, the fall resulted in the loss of true human freedom and thus necessitated certain consequences such as election or perdition (Solana 1940, 97–98). Soto, however, argued for a strong sense of human freedom, perfected by grace of course, but as the condition for the possibility of cooperating with grace in the first place (*De natura et gratia*, lib. 1, c. 15).

In 1548 Charles V appointed Soto as his confessor, which necessitated the Dominican's attending to the royal court. The emperor held Soto in such esteem that he offered the Dominican the bishopric of Segovia upon the death of its previous occupant, Antonio Ramírez de Haro (Solana 1940, 93). Soto, however, declined the offer (ibid.). Finally, in 1550 Soto returned to Salamanca to fill the cátedra de prima in theology, which had been vacated by Melchior Cano, who had recently been appointed bishop of the Canary Islands. Cano would resign the position, though, before having filled it. Soto taught theology at Salamanca until his retirement in 1556 (ibid.). Less than 4 years later, in 1560, Soto died in Salamanca at the Convent of St. Sebastian.

In addition to his significant theological contributions, Soto's contributions to the history of philosophy are many yet fall principally under three main categories: logic, philosophy of nature, and law.

Logic

Soto's works in logic include his commentary on the *Summulae* of Peter of Spain, a commentary on the dialectics of Aristotle, as well as a commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge*. The *Summulae*, written at the behest of his superiors and friends, is the first work published by Soto (D'Ors 1984, 211). They present Soto's teaching on logic across five books in the course of his commenting on Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales* (ibid.). Book one deals with terms; book two concerns propositions; books three and four examine opposition; and, finally, book five explores syllogistic argument forms. Soto begins his *In dialecticam Aristotelis* with an enquiry into the necessity of logic. Logic, he says, is the art of defining and reasoning, which

operations have a crucial necessity for human beings in that they alone, among all creatures, are properly rational. That human beings reason, moving from what is known to what is unknown is entirely natural. What is more, logic is necessary for the prosecution of the other sciences (*India. Arist.*, proem., q. 1). Soto then explores the scientific character of logic. Here, Soto marks a distinction between *logica docens* and *logica utens*. The former is a *habitus* that concerns how properly to form definitions, demonstrations, and syllogisms, while the latter (*logica utens*) is a *habitus* whereby those intellectual operations are put to use in particular sciences. Soto holds that *logica docens* is properly a science, whereas *logica utens* is not a science but an instrument of science. His reason for this claim is that *logica docens* is a *habitus* that generates necessary and evident assent which is simply the nature of a science (*ibid.*, proem., q. 2). What is more, in contrast to nominalist teaching, Soto holds that logic, though constituted by several partial *habitus*, is nevertheless “absolutely and simply” a single science in the same way that something can be one in a certain genus but many according to other genera (*ibid.*, proem., q. 3). Additionally, Soto thinks that logic is speculative rather than practical in nature. Although it does treat of syllogisms and other operations of the intellect, which would seem to render it practical, Soto explains that logic is properly a theoretical science since it considers the abovementioned not as acts of the intellect but considers them in terms of their own natures. That is to say, logic examines the natures of the predicaments, syllogisms, and, according to Soto, other *entia rationis* (*ibid.*, proem., q. 4). This last point leads to Soto’s final opening claim of the *In dialecticam Aristotelis* that logic has as its proper subject matter *entia rationis* (*ibid.*, proem., q. 5).

Philosophy of Nature

In his *Super octo libros Physicorum commentaria* and in an additional volume, the *Super octo libros Physicorum quaestiones*, Soto presents his philosophy of nature. In the former text, Soto offers a transcription of the Aristotelian text translated by Francisco Vatablo together with his own

commentary on the text. In the *quaestiones* text, Soto informs the reader that the principal concern is not simply to discern what Aristotle himself thought – though the philosopher is frequently cited as an authority – but to point out what the truth itself is with respect to the various points that are discussed (Solana 1940, 113). Throughout this text, Soto raises numerous questions arising from the eight books composing the *Physics* of Aristotle and offers his own answers to those questions. Natural philosophy, he claims, is “necessary” for humans in the sense that humans have a natural inclination to know (natural) things (*Super oct. lib. quaest.*, lib. 1, q. 1; p. 4E). Interestingly, Soto claims that insofar as both science and nature derive from God, one cannot attain the truth of nature – at least not with many errors – without the light of faith, for which reason, he says, Aristotle could not understand that the world had a beginning (*ibid.*, lib. 1, q. 1; p. 11A). Nevertheless, Soto still upholds the Aristotelian teaching that physics, i.e., natural philosophy, has as its proper subject matter *ens mobile* (*ibid.*, lib. 1, q. 1; pp. 14 F-15A). Among the various questions Soto raises concerning book eight of the *Physics*, some are particularly noteworthy, for example, whether it is possible for the world to be eternal (*ibid.*, lib. 8, q. 2; pp. 359ff) and whether the claim “*omne quod movetur ab alio movetur*” – so crucial to Thomas Aquinas’s *prima via* – is true (*ibid.*, lib. 8, q. 3, pp. 364ff). Soto supports the latter claim, defending it from apparent counterexamples, but answers the former question affirmatively albeit with qualification. It is possible, Soto thinks, for the heavens and their motion together with a finite number of angels and rational souls to have been created from eternity, but he denies that the species of corruptible things and the succession of individuals within those species could have likewise been created from eternity (*ibid.*, lib. 8, q. 2; p. 364B).

Law

Soto’s treatment of law is chiefly found in his *De iustitia et iure*, a treatise of ten books that explores not only the nature and principles of various kinds of law (especially in its relation to justice) but also

particular issues related to the law, e.g., dominion, contracts, property, commerce, oath-taking, etc. Book one deals with the nature of law in general as well as its division into eternal law (*De ius. et iur.*, lib. 1, q. 3), natural law (*ibid.*, q. 4), and human law (*ibid.*, q. 4). Book two explores the “Old Law,” its precepts, the Decalogue, and ceremonial prescriptions prior to transitioning to a consideration of the “New Law.” In book three, Soto examines law as the object of justice. Book four pertains to the preambles of justice in general and treats such matters as dominion and restitution. Book five treats the inverse of the immediately preceding book, namely, injustice and injury. Of particular concern here – as was the case with Francisco de Vitoria – is the issue of homicide. The remaining books of the *De iustitia et iure* narrow to particularities within the law such as usury and contracts (lib. 6), vows (lib. 7), oaths (lib. 8), simony (lib. 9), and finally matters pertaining to canon or ecclesiastical law (lib. 10).

Note on Primary Literature Soto’s philosophical works underwent numerous printings and editions. Those mentioned below represent only the ones needed for the composition of the present entry and by no means represent an exhaustive list of the various extant editions.

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Sougdouris, Georgios

Born: ci. 1647

Died: 1725

Dimitrios Paradoulakis
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Abstract

Clergyman and teacher with a broad education and a solid philological training, who developed writing activity of philosophical, philological, and theological content in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Biography

Born between 1645 and 1647 in the town of Ioannina, Sougdouris descended from a noble family of Epirus (Petsios 2002: 241–308). He received his training at the Epiphaneio School in his hometown near famous local scholars such as Spyridon Triantafyllou, and before 1672 he settled in Venice in order to gain higher education. During the years 1671–1672, he studied at the Greek School of the city near the Aristotelian scholar, eminent professor, and later Bishop of Philadelphia (1685–1713) Matthaios Meletios Typaldos. Alongside, he attended the courses of

the also prominent Aristotelian professor Nikolaos Kalliakis (1645–1707). Immediately he became a member of the newly founded Greek printing press of his compatriot Nikolaos Glykys and undertook the tasks of correcting and editing Greek texts. Through his editorial activity, Sougdouris inaugurated his public intellectual contact with his contemporary Greek scholars (professors, editors, clergy). During his stay in Venice, he composed an epigram for the collection of epic – lyrical poems entitled *Gl' allori Freggiati* – published in Padua on December 15, 1672, on the occasion of the acquisition by the Cretan Marco Franco of his doctoral degree. In the same year, he wrote the prologue to the reader in the edition of the *New Treasure* (*Néos Θησαυρός*) published by the house of Glykys and edited by the distinguished clergyman and teacher Aloisios – Ambrosios Gradenigos (c. 1616–1680). One year later he prepared the revised Greek edition of the widely distributed *Grammatica* by the Renaissance scholar Constantine Lascaris (editio princeps 1476) and contributed to the modern publication of the liturgical book entitled *Pentecostarion*. In 1678, after completing the translation of the Latin textbook of ecclesiastical rhetoric by Francesco Panigarola (1548–1594) entitled *Rhetorica Ecclesiastica*, Sougdouris enrolled in the Università degli Artisti of Padua and became the student among others of his already known from Venice Nikolaos Kalliakis and the prominent Cypriot professor of Logic Ioannis Kigalas (1622–1687). During his academic studies in the period 1678–1681, he attended courses in Mathematics, Medicine, Meteorology, and Astronomy. At the same time, he had the opportunity to deepen the study of Logic, Physics, and Metaphysics structured according to the guiding tradition of the doctrines of Thomas of Aquinas and Duns Scotus, as well as that of theology and of the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures. On March 25, 1681, Sougdouris was ordained a priest by the then Bishop of Philadelphia, Gerasimos Vlachos. The following year, he moved to Ioannina and became the new director of the local Goumas School. Remaining in his position for almost three decades, Sougdouris introduced pioneering courses of Physics and Geometry into the curriculum of the School and

taught grammar by using his own simplified *Grammatical Epitome*. In his lectures he also included theological courses and the teaching of the Aristotelian philosophy following the model and method of Theophilos Corydaleus. During the period 1695–1699, a conflict of theological nature arose between Sougdouris and the then conservative Orthodox Bishop of Ioannina Clement of Chios. The latter's thesis on the nature of the differentiation between the divine substance and the divine energy was questioned by the more progressive Sougdouris. As a result, the Bishop convened a local Council in Ioannina aiming to condemn the Greek thinker under the accusation of heresy and atheism. However, in 1699 Sougdouris addressed the Patriarchate of Constantinople and proceeded to a confession of faith in order to avoid a possible excommunication. In 1715 Sougdouris withdrew from his educational duties and died in his hometown 10 years later (September 14, 1725).

Impact and Legacy

Georgios Sougdouris's writings include various pedagogical treatises of philological, philosophical, and theological content. As the most widely used in the Ottoman occupied Greek region is considered his work entitled *Introduction to Logic* (*Εισαγωγή Λογικής*), in which besides teaching the rules and the principles of logic as science, the author developed issues related to the field of philosophy and epistemology (Marazopoulos 1998). It is noteworthy that his philosophical conception and identity had already been formed and established before his studies at the University of Padua. During his stay and activity in Venice, he completed in 1674 his *Lectures on the Philosopher's De Generatione et Corruptione* (Petsios 1999: 246–251). His argumentation remained indebted to Aristotelian philosophy, and his methodology consisted of quoting and confuting the contrary opinions and finally presenting his own views on each subject. Prior to the *Lectures* is considered his composition of an extensive commentary on the Aristotelian *Physica*, as well as more comprehensive treatises on the Aristotelian *De Caelo* and the spurious *De Mundo*. Sougdouris'

philosophical writings reflected the interpretation of Aristotle's commentators (mainly Alexander of Aphrodisias, Simplicius, Avicenna, and Averroes). Nevertheless, the Greek thinker also appeared to be under the influence of the medieval Scholastic Aristotelian tradition, with the Thomistic and Scotist doctrines having a noteworthy impact on his philosophical thought. Sougdouris's principal belief is that the interpretation and the argumentation for the questions on natural philosophy either exist adequately in Stageirites's teaching or they can be manifested in the articulation of the latter's doctrines and those promoted by his commentators, ancient and medieval. In conclusion, the interpretation of the Aristotelian philosophy which Sougdouris attempted appears to be neither the antithesis nor in full agreement with the radical Paduan perception of the late sixteenth century and the methodological model established in the Greek thought by Theophilus Corydaleus.

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- the auspices of Hellenic thought, Renaissance scholars tried to define what sound is, unveiling its vibrating forces to understand its ability to shake the human body and soul. In such a way, the ever-present metaphors of harmony were much more than mere imagined, unreal thoughts: through them, Renaissance humanists shaped, organized, and understood the structure and passions of the world itself.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

What is sound? What is its nature? What is its sense? These and other questions about sound have had great relevance in Western thinking since ancient Greece (Barker 1989; Mathiesen 1999; Hagel 2010). We can find eloquent examples of such problematics in writings of many philosophers, from Plato and Aristotle to Church Fathers like Isidore or Augustine. Writing from his platonic background, Augustine, an author frequently cited and paraphrased during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, cleverly posed several important issues concerning sound in a brief passage of his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: "One who jubilates does not utter words, but it is rather a kind of sound of joy without words; for the voice is thus the soul dispersed out in joy, demonstrating as much as it is able the feeling without grasping the sense" (1990).

Trying to explain what sound is and does, Augustine evokes a dichotomy that will be a recurrent theme throughout the history and philosophy of music: "music" and "words," "sound" and "meaning," in the end (Dillon 2012). In his commentary, the voice has to make words audible (*cantus*) and unambiguously communicate the meaning of them (*res*) at the same time: therefore, at the very core of the problem is language. By focusing language's conundrum from a musical standpoint, Augustine articulates the disconcerting tension between both, sense and sound. But we must not overlook that, for him, such a way of singing fully outdoes language, making music an ideal vehicle to feel and communicate with God and, consequently, a field to reflect upon and through it. Later, the finding of a complete copy of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* by Poggio Bracciolini in 1416 would give new impetus

Sound in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Sound, basically characterized as air in motion since ancient Greece, has been at the core of the theories of many philosophers, as well as musicians, poets, scientists, and theologians. Under

to rethink the conflation of sounds/music with words/sense.

Since the thirteenth century, musical thinking was strongly influenced by ancient texts, due to the discovery and study of complete and authoritative testimonies of Greek theory. Well-known humanists like Giovanni Pico della Mirandola or Giorgio Valla collected manuscripts, published translations, and wrote commentaries that molded the understanding of ancient writings. Certainly, one of the figures whose ideas about sound influenced philosophers and musicians over centuries was Pythagoras. His relevance for the study of the subject in general, and particularly for music, resides firstly in his claimed establishment of the numerical base of acoustics. As told by Nicomachus (1994), Pythagoras determined the arithmetic ratios of intervals after listening to how hammers of different weights played consonant and dissonant sounds while he was walking near a forge. Secondly, but closely related, are the Pythagorean beliefs in a universe ordered by the same numerical proportions that produce musical harmonies, the so-called music of spheres.

From all the conceptions of sound based in Pythagorean and neo-Pythagorean accounts which Renaissance scholars usually knew, basically through translations made by Latin writers like Boethius (1867) (*De Institutione Musica*), it is worth noting two Platonic myths that had a long-lasting impact: in the first one, the explanation of the creation of the World-Soul is accomplished using Pythagorean proportions (*Timaeus*). In the myth of Er (*Republic*), Plato described the universe as a set of concentric rings on the surface of each of which a Siren sits singing (questioned by Aristotle 1995). Together they produce the harmony of spheres, a harmony created by difference, *discordia concors* (Haar n.d.). Due to the Hellenic inheritance, the concept of sound in the Renaissance was not only “a particular movement of air” (Aristotle 2011) but a way to explain, order, and, ultimately, make sense of the world and the whole universe (Godwin 1987, 1993). Such Pythagorean ideas were constantly reworked by Neoplatonist scholars until the end of the Renaissance.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Aristotle’s sparing definition of sound mentioned above has, nevertheless, two fundamental terms, words repeated time and again when an explanation of sound had to be proposed: air and movement. That fact can be seen perfectly clear in the theoretical works of Marsilio Ficino, one of the Renaissance thinkers most interested in scrutinizing the effects and influence of sound and music on the spirit (Ficino 1959; Tomlinson 1993; Prins 2014). Let me start with air, the first keyword. Integrating Neoplatonism with Aristotelian doctrines, Stoicism with medical thinking, in *De vita libri tres*, Ficino provides a glimpse of his notion of spirit: “almost not a body but a soul; or again, almost not a soul but a body” (1989). It is, of course, a ghostly image of the spirit, characterized as an airy substance lying in between the incorporeal soul and the corporeal body. It acted as a fundamental nexus, transmitting the vibrant force from the soul to the body and sending the corporeal spurs to the soul. Also in *De vita*, Ficino constantly related sounds and music with air or airy vapors and scents. In other words, spirit and sound, sound and spirit, were made of the same substance, so it is easy to grasp why sound and music could move the spirit.

Move. This leads me to the second term: movement, motion. In fact, this issue has been already raised with the air. By acting as connection of the body with the soul (and vice versa), the spirit had to remain in constant movement. Likewise, sound was not only air but air dynamically and lively set in motion. At this point, we should remember Plato’s dialogue concerned with the movement of the soul, where he states that *mousikē* and *philosophia* provide the soul with motion, and when this motion has been properly regularized, it joins high and low sounds resulting in an “imitation of the divine harmony revealed in mortal motions” (*Timaeus*). Although Plato’s theory surely was the basis of Ficino’s one, he increased the complexity of the subject. From his perspective, the movement of music could emulate human gestures, affections, or even the heavens: it was capable to imitate anything. The sound of music, therefore, was not only able to move and to

enact passions, but it also had the capacity to mimic the most meaningful and rational motions.

Ficino was by no means the only one who apparently broke with the primacy of the visual in favor of sound and hearing. In a dialogue on the theme of love called *Gli asolani*, the Italian literary theorist and poet Pietro Bembo, always concerned with the sound of the words, praised hearing for being the sense by which we can perceive the beauty of the soul. Persuasion, according to Bembo, was encouraged by an occult force of the words, a power caused by their natural properties (Bembo 1961). Ignatius of Loyola could have thought something similar about the power of sounds to persuade (Filippi 2015): meant to be read out loud, the fifth of his *Spiritual Exercises* encouraged Counter-Reformation Catholics to meditate about Hell by “hearing wailings, howlings, cries of sinners” to get an “interior sense of the pain which the damned suffer” (Schwartz 2011). “Nihil est sine numero sonoro,” Luther *dixit* (1965).

We have already talked about what sound is and why it could powerfully affect human body and soul. But how could sound produce these effects? I think we have to find the possible answers in music. On the one hand, music treatises from the end of the fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries usually emphasized the correlation of each of the modes (scales formed by a distinctive distribution of their sounds) with a particular *ethos* (Gaffurius 1492, 1496). Although it was very far from its original conception, such a Greek term generally shows the belief, shared by many Medieval and Renaissance scholars, that music can carry, enact, or even impose a specific mood on human beings. As the Renaissance tradition was by no means systematic, let us see as an example the conception of the third and four modes, Phrygian and Hypophrygian, as established by Spanish theorist Bartolomé Ramos de Pareja (1990). The Phrygian mode, which is associated by Ramos de Pareja with the yellow bile, increases cruelty and anger. By contrast, music composed in the Hypophrygian mode weakens it and so on for each mode, which, in Ramos de Pareja’s theory, were also linked to planets, colors, and muses.

On the other hand, we should not forget music’s mimetic capacities. Sixteenth-century composers and poets began to explore the wide variety of sympathies existing between text and music (Zarlino 1573; Montanos 1592; Salinas 1977). In the words of the Spanish music theorist Juan Bermudo: “. . . everything said in the text can be imitated in music. . . the notes should be put down so, in everything and for everything, they are very much in agreement with the text.” As we have seen before, words (as a sonic force) and music had a similar ontological status due to their airy and dynamic nature. So, blending both together would make them an overwhelmingly effective medium not only to reflect things on the imagination, as Giordano Bruno would say, but also to pierce the soul (Bruno 1991).

Impact and Legacy

As he continued discussing the relations between sound and word, music and rhetoric, in his astonishing *Musurgia Universalis* (1650), Athanasius Kircher included a plate representing Pythagoras, who looks at the reader while signaling an ear-shaped forge (Godwin 1979). Inside it, the hard-working blacksmiths are sounding the anvil, the apparently artless object through which the philosopher’s thoughts about sound were filtered, ideas that constituted the basis for speculative as well as scientific approaches to the issue for centuries. In Kircher’s sonorous thinking survived the Pythagorean ideal of the numerical relations of sounds, the *numerus sonorous*, an ideal underpinned, as we have seen, by entire generations of musicians and philosophers, from Johannes Tinctoris (Wegman 2005) to Gioseffo Zarlino (1573), from Marsilio Ficino to Robert Fludd.

Although the validity of traditional arithmetic ratios remained apparent and influential, since the second half of the sixteenth century, almost all the great philosophers and scientists of the time devoted empirical attention to the subject of sound (Burnett et al. 1991; Pasnau 2011). For thinkers like Girolamo Fracastoro, G. B. Benedetti, Vincenzo and Galileo Galilei, Johannes Kepler,

Francis Bacon, Marin Mersenne, or René Descartes (Descartes 1984; Stephenson 1994), one of the main areas of inquiry was the nature of pitches, precisely the domain where Pythagoras had a major impact. These philosophers displaced the issue from the Pythagorean view to a perspective based on physics (Taylor and Campbell n.d.). In this sense, in 1546 Fracastoro argued that pitch depends on the frequency of impulses transmitted through the air, by sequences of alternating condensations and rarefactions that produce a wave-like motion. On the other hand, Benedetti is considered to have been the first to relate the sensations of pitch and consonance to vibration frequencies (1563).

Other examples were the empirical studies of Vincenzo Galilei, father of Galileo, who demonstrated that the simple numerical ratios that constitute the consonant intervals in pipes and string lengths were not valid for the relative weights of hammers nor for the relative volumes of pipes. He also exposed that, the length of a string held constant, but changing its other parameters, such as tension or material, resulted in alterations in its perceived pitch. Supporting an empirical science of music perception, anticipating many contemporary psychologists, Galilei argued that disputes over tuning systems were futile, since the small differences that are at issue were not perceivable (Taylor and Campbell n.d.).

These studies cemented the way for a new mode of empirical investigation of pitch and sound perception (Erlmann 2010). Following this path, Galileo realized that pitch corresponds to frequency and showed that musical intervals could be uniquely characterized by frequency ratios. In order to demonstrate this fact, Galileo had to do a fundamental shift of perspective, considering not the sound produced by the vibrating object but the sound that reaches the ear. He also made the clearest presentation of the relation between pitch and frequency, elucidating why some intervals are more consonant than others.

However, the empirical study of sound wouldn't have been the same without the figure of Marin Mersenne, whose *Harmonie Universelle* (1636) is a landmark in the history of the issue. Mersenne, who went so far as to claim that "all

movements that occur in the air, in water, or elsewhere, can be called sounds, inasmuch as they lack only sufficiently delicate and subtle ear to hear them," designed an ingenious experimental method by which he demonstrated that the vibration frequency of a string varies inversely with its length. Furthermore, he was able to relate the sensation of pitch to vibration frequency and to estimate the vibration frequency of a particular pitch. Moreover, he was interested in the phenomenon of beats and overtones, anticipating later studies on timbre. These empirical investigations form the basis of later inquiries about sound, such as Newton's mathematical analysis of the propagation of sound or Euler's work on overtones (Newton 1999).

Cross-References

- [Alchemy](#)
- [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Astronomy](#)
- [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Fludd, Robert](#)
- [Galilei, Galileo](#)

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Sozzini, Fausto and Lelio

Born: Lelio Sozzini: 29 January 1525, Siena

Died: Lelio Sozzini: 4 May 1562, Zürich

Born: Fausto Sozzini: 5 December 1539, Siena

Died: Fausto Sozzini: 3 March 1604, Łusławice

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Abstract

Lelio and Fausto Sozzini, uncle and nephew, were two of the main exponents of sixteenth-century Antitrinitarianism. Their thoughts, especially Fausto's elaboration of Lelio's suggestions, became a point of reference for both

Italian religious dissenters and members of the Minor Reformed Church (*Ecclesia Minor*) in Poland. After Fausto's death (1604), his ideas were spread across Europe by several followers and gave rise to Socinianism, which emerged as one of the most important religious, moral, and philosophical doctrines of early modern times.

Alternate Names

Socini; Socinus

Biography

From the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Sozzini family, based in Siena, was famous in the domain of juridical studies, to such an extent that Pierre Bayle, for instance, dedicated to the illustrious juriconsult Mariano Sozzini (1401–1467) a specific entry in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Bayle 1740, 4, 226–227). His grandson Mariano Sozzini junior (1482–1556), the father of Lelio and Alessandro, the father of Fausto, continued the family tradition and taught law in Siena, Padua, and Bologna. For this reason, Lelio, who as a child followed his father in Padua and then in Bologna, was supposed to embark on the same career. However, at the beginning of his studies in Padua, he encountered the radical reformed thought that was already widespread in Italy – in Siena with Bernardino Ochino, in Padua with Matteo Gribaldi and Celio Secundo Curione among others – and especially in Veneto, thanks to the (relative) freedom of religion that the Republic of Venice allowed in its territories (Stella 1967). In Padua, and then in Bologna, to which he moved in 1542, Lelio transferred from juridical to theological studies with such passion and devotion that he started to learn Hebrew to read the source of the Scripture (Rotondò's introduction to Sozzini 1986, 27–28). In 1547, after 3 years of religious discussions in the intellectual radical circles of Siena, Padua, and Bologna, Lelio adhered to the Reformation and began to travel across Europe, from the Valtellina to the canton of

Graubünden, from Basle to France and England, until he reached Geneva and then Zurich (Taplin 2003), where he met John Calvin and Heinrich Büllinger, Zwingli's successor (Cantimori 1939). At this time, probably in 1549 and as a consequence of his discussions with Calvin on the subject, Lelio wrote a treatise on the resurrection of the bodies (*De resurrectione*, Sozzini 1986, 75–80) in which he cast doubt on Calvin's opinions (Sozzini 1986, 321–326). In 1550 he enrolled at Wittenberg University and made acquaintance with Melancthon. He did not stop there and continued his rise in Wien, Prague, and Kraków, where he made contact with the local Antitrinitarians, such as the physician Giorgio Biandrata. Lelio ceaselessly questioned several Christian standpoints, for example, the role and value of the sacraments (*De sacramentis dissertatio ad Tigurinos and Genevenses*, 1555, Sozzini 1986, 81–92), and also for this reason he was asked by Büllinger for a declaration of faith, which did not completely persuade Calvin and his fellows, despite its coherence with the reformed doctrine (*Confessio fidei*, 1555, Sozzini 1986, 93–100). Besides a short trip for financial reasons in 1552 – the Roman Inquisition had become very interested in Sozzini's family – Lelio remained in voluntary exile for most of his life. In 1559, he arrived for the last time in Zurich, where he wrote, perhaps in 1561, his most important work – *Brevis explicatio in primum Iohannis caput* (Sozzini 1986, 101–128). He died 3 years later after a wandering life of exchanges and debates with the most important Reformation exponents and dissenters of his time.

Fifteen years younger than Lelio, Fausto was educated in an environment that increasingly mirrored the reformed thought; his uncles Cornelio and Dario had been tried in Rome by the Roman Inquisition for their sympathies toward the Reformation, and there were many suspicions about their brother Celso (Marchetti 1975, chs. XIII, XIV). Nonetheless, Fausto did not seem to have any interest in religious questions during his youth, which he passed dedicating himself to literature and poetry (Sozzini 2005) as a member of the Accademia degli Intronati at Siena, which he joined in 1555 with the name of “Frastagliato”

(Sozzini 2004, X). In 1561, Fausto left Italy for Lyon, partly through fear of the Inquisition's increased attention towards Italians who sympathized with the Reformation, and partly in order to handle his economic interests and those of his uncles Celsio, Cornelio, and Camillo, who participated and had titles in Lyon's agency of the Lucca merchants Buonvisi and Micheli (Rotondò 2008, 212). When he learnt that Lelio had passed away, Fausto traveled to Zurich to collect his uncle's papers and then went to Basle, where he encountered Sebastian Castellio and wrote his *Explicatio primae partis primi capituli Evangelistae Johannis*, inspired by Lelio's work (Sozzini 2004, I, 73–85). Between 1563 and 1575, Fausto lived in Italy, under the protection of the Grand Duke Cosimo de' Medici and, from 1574, of Francesco I. From 1569 to 1573, he worked as a secretary for Paolo Giordano Orsini and his wife Isabella de' Medici, who protected him from the suspicions of the Inquisition (Marchetti 1969). Until 1578, he was in Switzerland, where he faced his first two theological discussions, one on the role of Christ in salvation with Jaquet Couvet (*Disputatio de Jesu Christo Salvatore*, published in 1594, Sozzini 2004, II, 115–252) and the other with Francesco Pucci on the condition of Adam before the fall (*De statu primi hominis ante lapsum disputatio*, 1610, Sozzini 2004, 253–270). At the end of 1578, Fausto arrived in Transylvania at the invitation of Giorgio Biandrata to argue against the non-adorantist position of the Unitarian Ferencz Dávid (Kot 1937). In 1579, after the death of Dávid, who had been imprisoned because he refused to recant, Fausto arrived in Poland. Here, he soon became the leader of the Minor Reformed Church, the Polish Brethren, mostly because of his sharp discussion skills and moderation of several burning issues, such as the baptism of adults and the relationship between Christians and social and political life (Szczucki 2005; Kot 1957). In 1586, he married Elisabeth Morsztyn, daughter of the nobleman Krzysztof who hosted Fausto in Pawlikowice from 1583 to 1587, and in 1587 became father to Agnese, the future mother of Andrzej Wiszowaty (1608–1678). In the same year, Francesco de' Medici died and Fausto lost

his last protection against the Roman Inquisition. Consequently, in 1590, the Holy Office in Siena seized all his assets and from then on Fausto could not count on anything but the support of his father-in-law and his followers (Szczucki 2001). In the final decade of the sixteenth century, Fausto devoted himself to deepening his thoughts on Christ, on the doctrine of atonement, and on the main principles of his faith, and to protecting the Minor Church from attacks by the Jesuits, who were extending their influence in Poland. In 1594, he was assaulted in Kraków, then more violently 4 years later, when some students, perhaps Catholic, broke into his house and destroyed most of his papers and books, among which was a lost treatise on atheism (Pioli 1952, 169–174). This event led Fausto to move from Kraków to the village of Lusławice, where he stayed until his death (3 March 1604), writing the basis of the future Catechism of Raków, published in Polish in 1605 and soon translated into German (1608) and Latin (1609), and several essays on the Church, the Supper, and the New Testament.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The thought of Lelio and Fausto Sozzini belonged to the movement of people and ideas that distinguished the second half of the sixteenth century. As is well known, the Italian situation in relation to the Reformation was extremely peculiar (Firpo 1993): Italian religious dissenters' famous – and discussed – nicodemism (Ginzburg 1970) did not keep them from being identified, controlled, and persecuted by the religious authorities (Rotondò 1967). As a result, most of them were obliged to spend their lives in a more or less voluntary exile in countries like Switzerland or those in East Europe in which the reformed thought seemed not yet wholly constituted, and were therefore more open to discussions and different opinions (Wilbur 1947). In this sense, Lelio and Fausto's lives clearly illustrate the complexity of the networks of dissenters that connected philosophers, theologians, jurists, physicians, and academics across Europe in the sixteenth century (Celati 2018).

With regard to the Italian cultural tradition, it has to be remarked that both Lelio and Fausto were acquainted with the philology of Lorenzo Valla and the Paduan Aristotelianism and thus with the critical attitude towards several aspects of the theological tradition, such as the notion of “persona” or the immortality of the soul (Cantimori 1939; Stella 1983). These elements, along with a sincere and genuine religious sentiment, led Lelio and subsequently Fausto to continuously analyze and discuss the Scripture, looking for a correct, rational reading of those themes that had to their eyes a strict connection with ethical behavior, which according to them was the real scope of God’s revelation. In this sense, Lelio, but mostly Fausto, tried to break the deadlock in which the reformed church, especially the Calvinist Church, seemed to be stuck because of its restriction of the interpretation of the Scripture to the pastoral body and its inability to redefine the Christian dogmas aimed at bringing back to light the evangelical message (Marchetti 2005). The first, and probably the main, result of their engagement can be found in the explanations of the prologue of John’s Gospel, which, by claiming the humanity of Christ against the metaphysical reading of the *logos*, brought about a rupture in the reformed thought.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The question of the Trinity, of its coherence and its truth, was widely diffused amongst the first generation of reformed thinkers (Biagioni 2016). Lelio and Fausto’s novelty lies in their inserting of this topic within a larger discussion on the humanity of Christ. This point, which distinguishes Socinianism from other confessions, was stated in Lelio’s *Brevis explicatio* and eventually deepened by Fausto through a particular reading of the well-known *incipit* of John’s Gospel “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος” (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”) (Rotondò’s *Nota critica* in Sozzini 1986, 347ff). According to Lelio and Fausto the “logos” is nothing but the discourse, the speech of

God (“sermo”, as Valla and Erasmus had already indicated, and not “verbum” as traditionally stated – Domański 1974), which was preached by a real, finite, man: Christ. This tenet is confirmed by the sentence “ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο” translated by Lelio and Fausto as “the Word *was* flesh,” and not the traditional “the Word became flesh” (Marchetti 2005). In Fausto’s opinion, the misunderstanding of the real meaning of John’s Gospel was a result of the influence of Plato’s philosophy on the Christian doctrine, which had then to be purged of these metaphysical interferences through a historical and philological analysis of the Scripture (Scribano 2007). A different translation was also proposed by Fausto for the Gospel’s opening words “In the beginning,” which in Sozzini’s opinion could not mean “from eternity” since Christ, being a man, did not preexist the creation. These words indicated only the starting point of human history, of the road to salvation that Christ showed us through his behavior and his preaching (*De Jesu Christo Servatore*, Sozzini 2004, II, 119–246). This does not imply that Christ must not be venerated: on the contrary, as Fausto clearly explained in *De Jesu Christi invocatione disputatio* against Dávid (1579), since Christ received from God the supreme power over human beings, we have to give him the divine worship. In this sense, Christ is our savior not because his death was the atonement for human sins – which are individual and personal – but because by resurrecting he revealed the right way to trust in God (Osier 1996). As we read in the Catechism, to trust in God means to obey him, and therefore to act according to the ethics preached by Christ. As a result, in the Socinian view, there is no distinction between faith and works (Crell et al. 1680, chap. 9, sec. 6), which can be accomplished through the intact freedom of human beings. As Fausto argued against Francesco Pucci (*De statu primi hominis ante lapsum*, Sozzini and Pucci 2010; Biagioni 2005), the reward for following God’s word is to become immortal, returning to the condition of Adam before the sin and of Christ after his death. Such interpretations of the Scripture were attained by Fausto through a peculiar form of rationalism, which intended to read the Bible by

means of a critical and rational analysis that showed and refused the illogical dogmas supported by the tradition, dogmas such as the Trinity (Ogonowski 1974), the infinity of God (Angelini 2017), the predestination, the original sin (Simonutti 2005b), and the creation *ex nihilo* (*Praelectiones theologicae*, Sozzini 2004, 585). In Fausto's account, human reason is perfectly adequate for the task of understanding religious truths, which can be above reason, but never contrary to it (Salatowsky 2015). However, as Fausto wrote in *De Sacra Scripturae Auctoritate* (Sozzini 2004, I, 263–284), the source of religious truths is the sole Scripture in which, therefore, all we need to be saved can be found (Cantimori 1939). Moreover, according to Fausto, what is important for salvation is not really a set of specific doctrines, but rather the ethical message praised by Christ. As a consequence, Fausto not only considered the number of doctrines that must be professed as very limited, but also created the conditions for a notion of tolerance that became, in the seventeenth century, the distinctive feature of the Socinian movement (Pintacuda de Michelis 1975; Ogonowski 2005).

Impact and Legacy

From the beginning of the seventeenth century, because of the rise of counter-reformation and as a consequence of the 30 Years' War, the Polish Socinians, the followers of Fausto, found themselves in a difficult situation. The first wave of persecutions reached a climax in 1638 with the destruction of the Socinian center at Raków, "the Sarmatian Athens" (Williams' introduction to Lubieniecki 1995), which hosted a school and a printer house. Twenty years later, in 1658, a decree imposed on all "Arians" demanded that they leave Poland by July 1660, giving rise to the Socinian diaspora (Wilbur 1947). Most of the Socinians fled to Holland (Bayle 1740, 4, 228–237), where their writings had circulated since the 1580s, despite the prohibition of the Dutch States General, and they were received favorably by the Arminians (Mulsow and Rohls 2005). In 1668 – but with the evocative date "after

1656" in order to remember John II Casimir's vote to expel Unitarians from the country (Wilbur 1947) – in Amsterdam – renamed Irenopolis, "Peace City" – Andrzej Wiszowaty promoted the publication of the most important works of the Polish Brethren, the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum* (Kuyper et al. 1668), whose first two volumes contained the writings of Fausto Sozzini. The publication of *Bibliotheca* increased the debate and the circulation of Socinian thought, which became a synonym for every form of religious rationalism. This reading did not depend only on the polemical interpretation of Socinianism driven by its opponents, but also on the positions held by the second generation of Socinians: Johachim Stegmann (1595–1633) and Andrzej Wiszowaty, for instance, in their books *De iudice and norma controversiarum* (1644) and *Religio Rationalis* (1676–1678) stated that reason is the sole judge in theological controversies (Salatowsky 2017). As has been noted, this attitude deeply influenced the thought of philosophers such as John Locke (Simonutti 2005a; Marshall 2000) and Isaac Newton (Snobelen 2005) and has been viewed as a source of eighteenth-century Deism (Israel 2006). The history of Socinian rationalism clearly shows the changes that occurred from the times of Fausto Sozzini: in fact, although Sozzini was diffident towards systematic and rational theology, his followers, from Johann Crell (1590–1633) to Noël Aubert de Versé (1645?–1714), attempted to build up an organized set of doctrines that they hoped would become a real alternative to the great philosophies of the seventeenth century (Scribano 2005).

Cross-References

- Anabaptism
- Calvin, Jean
- Curione, Celio Secondo
- Nicodemism
- Ochino, Bernardino
- Philology, Renaissance
- Socinianism

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Spagyria

► Alchemical Medicine and Distillation

Species, Intelligible

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Abstract

The doctrine of intelligible species formed an integrating part of the heritage of Scholastic philosophy handed down to the Renaissance. A large number of authors now applied themselves to the notion of species, defending, revising, or rejecting it, as the case might be, including fifteenth-century Platonics, the larger part of Renaissance Aristotelians, and exponents of late sixteenth-century naturalism.

Innovative and original aspects

Contributors to Renaissance discussions on the intelligible species can be divided into three rough classes, namely, Peripatetics, Neoplatonics, and a group of relatively independent authors, who most of the time were not attached to a university. Peripatetic philosophers and Scholastic authors often repeated medieval views and ideas. Yet, they also sought to apply new philosophical arguments and newly developed philological methods to defend (or to question, as the case may be) the intelligible species. By the turn of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century the Peripatetic camp was divided by profound controversies. Some authors, such as Alessandro Achillini and Tiberio Bacilieri, were openly skeptical about the need for intelligible species, yet without attacking the doctrine head-on. Other philosophers, such as Agostino Nifo, were of an essentially vexed

disposition, endorsing the notion of intelligible species only as the outcome of their tardy refutation of Averroist noetics. These ambivalent positions elicited an explicit defense of the species by (Pietro Pomponazzi 1966–1970, II, pp. 177–210) and (Marcantonio Zimara (Zimara s.a.), who in turn induced the opposition by Girelli (Girelli 1561) and Porzio during the 1540s and 1550s.

Unlike the professional philosophers, the precursors of the Second Scholasticism, such as Caietanus and Ferrara of Sylvester, did not question the concept of the intelligible species as such. Their aim was rather to clarify some problematic aspects of it, with particular attention to the relation between agent intellect and sensory representation. Subsequently, some Renaissance Peripatetics took up a suggestion made by Nifo, namely, to conceive of the intelligible species as *notio*. This decision was much more than a philological reorientation with regard to Aristotle's text. At the doctrinal level, it entailed a tendency to detach the reflection about representational entities or principles from the physicalist framework of Aristotelian psychology. Thus, it paved the way for a theory of mental content and its linguistic expression that is able to skirt the ontological issue of the species' exact nature.

In the Neoplatonic camp, Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola attempted to integrate conceptions of Scholastic authorities within an essentially Neoplatonic framework, while Marcantonio Genua's *De anima* commentary was a unique attempt at harmonizing the noetics and psychology of Averroes and Simplicius. This type of reflection prepared the way for the ultimate substitution of the intelligible species by the concept of "idea" in early modern philosophy.

Early attempts to reflect on the problem of formal mediation in intellectual cognition, relatively independent of school tradition, can be found in the works of Charles de Bovelles and Girolamo Fracastoro. No genuinely revolutionary attempts were made to solve the problem of knowledge acquisition until Bernardino Telesio, whose rigorous naturalism constituted the first non-Platonic alternative to Aristotelian psychology. Among the later independents was also Giordano Bruno. In

terminology and conceptual setting, however, his psychology did not break with the traditional schools as violently as that of Telesio.

The traditional doctrine of intelligible species presupposed a ternary relation between a representation that gives the mind an intelligible content and that grounds the mental *act*. In the course of the Renaissance disputes, a whole variety of meanings and functions were attributed to the species. With some notable exceptions, the framework for discussing the species was generally still that of representation, content, and act. In contradistinction to the Middle Ages, it is remarkable to note how few authors of the Renaissance (Pomponazzi, Zimara, Ferrara, and Javelli) took the intelligible species as mediate and unknown mental representations, distinct from both content and cognitive act. Most often the species were assimilated to either the known object or to the cognitive act, and sometimes to both. As noted earlier, the intimate connection of mental act, representation, and content was to be a crucial feature of seventeenth-century theories of ideas. Highly significant from a historical point of view was the interpretation of species as idea or notion in the Renaissance debate.

Renaissance Aristotelians only rarely abandoned the sense-dependence of cognition. Still, the traditional view was criticized from several directions. In discussions of the mind's "subjective" and "objective" reception of species and objects, respectively, it frequently happened that writers swerved from the physicalist framework of Peripatetic psychology. This applies in particular to critics of the species doctrine, who explained the generation of knowledge in terms of a mental or cognitive response to sensory stimuli.

The nativist interpretations of Aristotelian psychology opened up a new outlook on knowledge acquisition. Many Renaissance authors endorsed a traditional Platonicizing style of nativism with regard to content and held that the actualization of the mind's innate contents is only occasionally dependent upon the phantasms. They either rejected sense-dependent intelligible species or simply assimilated them to innate contents.

The Renaissance discussions on cognitive psychology in general, and the dispute on intelligible species in particular, made significant

contributions to philosophy on the following points: the nature and function of (un)conscious principles involved in the cognitive process; the role of innate dispositions or contents in the generation of knowledge; the relation between the simple apprehension of undivided objects; and the mind's conscious and discursive operations.

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led to a shift away from the traditions of medieval religious drama. Works such as *De re aedificatoria* by Leon Battista Alberti and the *Secondo libro di Prospettiva* by Sebastiano Serlio aimed to create a harmonious fusion of classical elements and innovation resulting from the use of perspective in stage design. Over the course of the sixteenth century, theatrical machinery and staging then became increasingly complex and spectacular all over Europe. Finally, alongside practical scenic solutions came the development of theories of spectacle, such as those of Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio, Leone de' Sommi, and Angelo Ingegneri.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

During the Middle Ages, performances mainly fell within the sphere of religious ceremonies, and scenography was as well closely related to religious themes. Regarding the scenographic process and dramaturgical elements, a progressive distancing from the traditions of medieval religious drama accompanied the renewed interest in classical antiquity that characterized Humanism and the Renaissance and involved buildings and plays as well as treatises on poetics (to which dramatic art assigned a prominent role) and architecture.

Perusing Vitruvius' *De architectura* inspired Leon Battista Alberti to draft a new treatise that adapted the precepts of the Roman architect to the changing times: this work was *De re aedificatoria*, written between 1443 and 1452 and published posthumously in 1485. In book VIII, Alberti lists the basic structural constituents of the theater itself, again taking up elements of the classical stage – the so-called stage front – such as the central entrances, but introducing the presence in the background of a city landscape with the houses of the characters. This heralded the scenography of theatrical performances held a few decades later at the court of Ferrara, following the indications of Pellegrino Prisciano, translator and commentator of Alberti's text.

Spectacle in Renaissance Theater

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Abstract

During the Renaissance, the rediscovery of the buildings and plays of classical antiquity, as well as ancient treatises on poetry and architecture,

A painted backdrop also characterized the performance of Ludovico Ariosto's *Cassaria* in Ferrara: it was a new type of scenery, created "syntactically," and very far from the medieval sort, which was structured in a linear way as a succession of places. Also thanks to the use of perspective, stage design was now able to unite different environments in an overall view.

An effective theoretical synthesis between Vitruvian precepts and the use of perspective is the *Secondo libro di Prospettiva* by Sebastiano Serlio 1545. The best architectural example of this approach is the Teatro Olimpico of Vicenza, designed by Palladio, in which the three entrances of the classical stage front and the linear perspective of Renaissance tradition are present simultaneously.

During the sixteenth century, stage machinery and theatrical productions became increasingly complex and detailed; notable in Florence were Bastiano da Sangallo, nicknamed "Aristotle" for his skill, and Bernardo Buontalenti. The sixteenth-century taste for spectacle was particularly expressed in the interludes, unrelated interruptions in performances absent in classical theater, allowing the creation of forms of entertainment freed from the Aristotelian unities of time, space, and action.

Real theoretical formulations began to appear regarding theatrical performance, such as those by Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio, Leone de' Sommi, and Angelo Ingegneri. In his 1543 *Lettera sulla tragedia*, which precedes *Orbecche*, Cinthio reinterprets the instructions of Aristotelian poetics, conferring new value on stage design, which must be perfectly consistent with the text performed. However, the first real director's manual was *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche* by Leone de' Sommi, written in the late 1560s and early 1570s. Here the author, who also had direct experience as a choragus, illustrates a precise method for theatrical staging, combining practical directions with psychological and theoretical comments (e.g., the lighting is considered to be useful for the representation of the characters' personality traits). Angelo Ingegneri also had experience in staging;

he supervised *Edipo re* at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza in 1585 and later in 1598 published *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche*, a treatise that censured those who care only about the literary construction of plays and praised dramatic transposition.

The diverse European panorama was a multifaceted reflection of the Italian experience. In England, thanks to the records of the Revels Office, which oversaw court festivities – and would later become the authority responsible for stage censorship – we note the increasingly complex stage design, in which the spaces were divided in a rational manner and the scenography displayed large curtains. Examples of this are John Lyly's plays, in which the scenes were constructed with multiple staging, and William Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, in which the various locations where the story unfolds are suggested to the public through painted backdrops indicated by signs. The first building to be used solely for paid public performances was The Theatre, designed and built by James Burbage and inaugurated in 1577. However, the most famous of all was the Globe, built in 1599, where Shakespeare's company performed. At the end of the 1500s, permanent theatrical sites were also created in Spain; these *corral de comedias* were set up within courtyards. Paris' first permanent theater, the *Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne*, was built in 1548 by the Confrérie de la Passion, a group of traders and craftsmen who had a monopoly on theatrical performances in the capital. A particular feature of this building was its narrow stage, further narrowed by the presence of multiple sets. Also noteworthy in the French context was the staging of ballets that mingled performances, music, singing, and dancing, and the precision of the stage sets corresponded to the extreme refinement of the costumes and stage machines. Thanks to its mythological subject and luxurious staging by Baldassarre Baltazarini da Belgioioso, worthy of mention is the *Ballet Comique de la Reine*, performed in Paris in 1581 at the court of Henry III and in the presence of the Queen Mother, Caterina de' Medici.

Cross-References

- [Alberti, Leon Battista](#)
- [Architecture and Renaissance](#)
- [Comedy in Renaissance Literature](#)
- [Giraldi Cinthio, Giovan Battista](#)
- [Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance](#)
- [Perspective](#)
- [Tragedy in Renaissance Literature](#)

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Spenser, Edmund

Born: ?1552, London

Died: 1599, London

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Abstract

Edmund Spenser was one of the great poets of the Elizabethan era. His work draws on native, classical, and European traditions. The clearest example of Neoplatonism in Spenser's writing comes in the *Fowre Hymnes* (1596). The first two of these, addressed to Love and Beauty (Cupid and Venus) present conventional depictions of the Platonic gaze ascending from the material to the intelligible realms. The second two, addressed to Christ and Sapience (Christian Wisdom), integrate Platonic ideas with Christian doctrines.

Biography

Edmund Spenser (c. 1552–1599) was one of the great poets of the Elizabethan age (Hadfield 2004). He was educated at Merchant Taylors' School, where he was taught by the humanist Richard Mulcaster and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge (matriculated 1569, BA 1573, MA 1576). At Cambridge he wrote poetry and studied Latin, Greek, French, and Latin and probably other languages, too. Spenser secured a place in the household of the Earl of Leicester and was acquainted with Sir Philip Sidney and other poets. In 1580, he was appointed secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, Lord Deputy of Ireland. His most notable poetic works are: *The Shepherds Calender* (1579), a set of eclogues on classical models; the sonnets of the *Amoretti*, and the wedding celebration "Epithalamion"; and the vast (though unfinished) allegorical epic *The Faerie Queene* (1590–1596), a glorification of Elizabeth and an exploration of the virtues, which are examined through chivalric adventures (Spenser 1989). Models for this work

include Virgilian epic, the Italian Renaissance epics of Tasso and Ariosto, and native verse.

Neoplatonism

The clearest exposition of Platonism in Spenser's writing is *The Fowre Hymnes* (1596), said in the dedication to have been written "in the greener times of my youth." The Hymns are addressed in turn to Love (Cupid), Beauty (Venus), Heavenly Love (Christ), and Beauty (Holy Wisdom). They combine tropes from courtly love, Platonism, and Christianity: the first two hymns are broadly Platonic, while the second two renounce a concern with earthly beauty and embrace Christian *agape* and orthodox doctrines of the Redemption in their evocation of Divine perfection (Dambe 2009).

The chief Platonic ideas at work in the hymns can be seen in the second, "An Hymne in Honour of Beauty." The poet is inspired by Love to praise Love's Mother, Beauty, in order to lift men's gaze to the "heavenly light." Beauty is what makes things seem fair to the eye; it starts as a "goodly Patern," or Platonic form, hidden from earthly view. Earthly things partake in Beauty, which refines the dross of matter, and "quickneth" it with its celestial force. This imparts grace to bodies and is the cause of "amorous desire." Beauty cannot be a matter of externals such as color or proportion, since objects like flowers or paintings do not stir this same desire, and all visible beauties fade. The cause of love is thus eternal and unearthly. A description of the lifting of the lover's gaze from material to intellectual beauty leads to an account of the soul, carrier of the divine spark. The fairest souls choose the fairest bodies ("for of the soul the bodie forme doth take," 132), though a noble mind can be imprisoned in an ugly body, and bodies can tempt admirers to sin. Like seeks out like, and couples are ordained in Heaven. True love starts with an admiration of the body, but the material image is refined into an intellectual one ("A more refyned forme," 214), by which the lover's contemplation is moved to a higher dimension. Thus Spenser embraces the Platonic doctrines of the Forms, the material and intelligible worlds, the

scale of Love, and the pre-existence of the soul. The Neoplatonic doctrine of the three worlds, in which the heavenly spheres are intermediate between the Platonic Material and Intelligible worlds, is referred to in "Hymne of Heavenly Beauty" (see Kaske 2000). Scholars have identified further instances of Platonic ideas in other poems, including passages in *The Faerie Queene* (Kaske 2000), the *Mutabilitie Cantos*, and the *Amoretti* (Quitslund 2016; Bulger 1994; Borris et al. 2009; Quitslund 1973).

Spenser's source material for Neoplatonism has been extensively studied. Early studies emphasized his familiarity with Florentine writings, and convincing parallels have been drawn with Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, and its epitome in Benvieni's *Canzona dello Amor Celeste e Divino*, with its own accompanying *Comento* by Pico della Mirandola (see Bennett 1931). Ellrodt (1960) is sceptical of Spenser's alleged direct links with the Florentine school and asserts the poet's adherence to a Christian and native tradition: he is a Platonizing Christian, not a Christianizing Neoplatonist. However, by the late sixteenth century, the ideas propounded by various Platonists and their textual paths of transmission were so multifarious that to assign an Italian and English school of Platonic thought is problematic and tracing exact sources for ideas is often impossible. Later scholarship avoids assigning Spenser to any particular school or program. Spenser's significance to the Platonic tradition is an example of how that philosophy works on a brilliant poetic imagination (Baldwin and Hutton 1994).

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Sphrantzes, George

Born: 1401, Constantinople?

Died: c. 1477, Corfu

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Abstract

George Sphrantzes (1401 Constantinople? to c. 1477 Corfu) was a courtier, a diplomat, and a minister in the service of the last three emperors of the Byzantine Empire. He is mostly known as a historian and the author of the *Chronicon Minus*, a chronicle recording autobiographical information and the authors' personal experiences, concerned also with the

historical, diplomatic, and political events of the last years (1401–1477) of the late Palaeologan period (1260–1453). Alongside his contemporaries Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Ducas, and Michael Critovoulos, Sphrantzes belongs to the group of the "Historians of the Fall", being the only one of the aforementioned who has eye-witnessed the events of the Fall of Constantinople (1453).

Biography

George Sphrantzes' name, cited also as Phrantzes, has been the subject of intensive scholarly debate (Laurent 1951a, b; Tsaras 1977; Philippides and Hanak 2011: 139–143). It is generally accepted that Sphrantzes is the appropriate form of his surname. The variant Phialitēs given to Sphrantzes is possibly due to scribal additions extant in two manuscripts (Mount Athos, Iveron Monastery, 382 and 388) that contain short chronicles (Lambros 1932: 17, 54; Zakythinos 1953; Tsaras 1977). Most of the details concerning Sphrantzes' life derive from his own work, since hardly any other information aside from his name can be found on the author in contemporary sources (Laurent 1951a; Philippides and Hanak 2011: 141–142). If we are to consider as truthful the information he provides in his work, we are able to reconstruct his detailed biography. Sphrantzes provides his exact birth date (30 August 1401), yet he does not specify his birthplace. Though the possibility that he was born on the Greek island of Lemnos, from which his paternal family originated, cannot be ruled out, George was most probably born in Constantinople. This can be deduced by Sphrantzes' recorded friendship with Emperor Constantine XI (1448–1453) from a young age, as well as from the fact that he was baptized by the revered and holy Thomais, who was a nun in Constantinople (*Chronicon* XVIII 1–8: 46–53). He was the offspring of a distinguished family, whose members served the Palaeologan emperors; one of his brothers was in the service of the Emperor John VIII Palaeologus (1425–1448), while his father and uncle acted as instructors to Manuel II

Palaeologus' (1391–1425) children, hence Sphrantzes' close relation to the Constantine XI.

Sphrantzes served as a state official under the last three Byzantine Emperors, Manuel II, John VIII, and Constantine XI the Palaeologi. After his parents' death due to an epidemic, George entered the imperial service (1418) and was appointed by Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus in charge of his chamber (*kelliōtes*), a position that allowed him proximity to the Emperor and the imperial family. In 1423, acting as trustee of Manuel's wife, Empress Helena Dragas, Sphrantzes participated in a diplomatic mission to Sultan Murad II. After Manuel's death in 1425, Sphrantzes came under the orders of Manuel's son and heir John VIII, whom he served for a few years. By 1427, when Constantine XI became Despot of the Morea, Sphrantzes preferred to follow his childhood intimate, whom he served with love and devotion for several years, participating in diplomatic and military missions. As Sphrantzes states, he was the one who rescued Constantine from death in a battle with the Ottomans and himself was held captive (*Chronicon* XVII 1–10: 40–47). Hence, Constantine awarded him for his services the position of the governor (*kephalē*) of Patras in 1430, while in 1432, Emperor John VIII appointed him ambassador and furnished him with the title of the first lord of the imperial wardrobe (*protovestiaritēs*).

In 1438, Sphrantzes married Eleni, daughter of Alexius Palaeologus Zamblacone who was an imperial secretary (*epi tou kanikleiou*), with whom he had five children. George offers in his work information on his children, who all passed away before him.

In 1440, Sphrantzes is found in Lesbos arranging the marriage of Constantine XI with Caterina Cattilusio, while in 1443, he was appointed governor of Selymbria and in 1446 governor of Mystra. Following Constantine XI's accession to the throne in 1448, Sphrantzes resided for a short time in Constantinople, before leaving for a journey that lasted 2 years (1449–1451) to Tribesond and Georgia, in an effort to secure a second wife for his Emperor. The ambassadorial journey was followed by another that led Sphrantzes to the Peloponnese and then to Cyprus. In 1452, George

was rewarded for his services and secretly received by the Emperor the title of the grand chancellor (*megas logothetēs*) (*Chronicon* XXXIV 1–11: 124–130), yet his promising career came to an end due to the events of the Fall of Constantinople (29 May 1453).

During the siege of Constantinople, George and his family were incarcerated by the Ottomans. His children Ioannis and Tamar suffered death after their enslavement by the Ottomans, Ioannis being executed under the suspicion of conspiracy against the Sultan Mehmed II, and Tamar's life coming to an end due to an epidemic while she was imprisoned in the Sultan's harem.

Finding refuge in Mystras, after buying his own freedom, Sphrantzes entered the service of yet another Palaeologus, Thomas, Manuel's youngest son, whom he represented in ambassadorial missions to Serbia (1454) and to Venice (1455–1456), managing in the meantime (1454–1455) to liberate his wife, who was held captive in Adrianople (Edirne). On his return, he left the Peloponnese (1460) to go first to Modone (1458) and later (1460/61) to Corfu. Although he refused to be placed "in charge of the household" of Thomas' wife in Corfu (*Chronicon* XLI 6: 168; Philippides 1980: 84), he accepted to offer his services to the despot for the last time and in 1466 George was sent on a journey to Italy in search for aid. After his return to Corfu, George adopted in 1468 the monastic garb under the name Gregorius. Becoming seriously ill in 1476, he died sometime in 1477.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Sphrantzes' single known work, the *Chronicon Minus* (*Chronicon* or *Chronicon Syntomon*), forms a unique case among the works of Byzantine literature, namely due to the extent of autobiographical information provided in the work. In the *Chronicon*, a work covering the years 1401–1477, Sphrantzes presents in chronological order, events of political, historical, and public life, in the majority of which he actively participated, while recording his own experiences and providing details of episodes of his personal life.

As himself states at the beginning of his work, “I...George Sphrantzes the pitiful ... wrote the following account of the events that occurred during my wretched life” (*Chronicon* prologue: 4–5; Philippides 1980: 21).

Although Sphrantzes’ work is referred to as a chronicle or memoir, its structure and content do not allow its listing in a definite literary genre, but rather point to the direction that the *Chronicon Minus* was actually an elaboration of the authors’ personal notes and diary. It appears that the composition forms an amalgamation of elements from historiography, memoirs, autobiographies and chronicles (Maisano 1990: 35*–36*). The sources used by Sphrantzes have been identified, being Byzantine short chronicles and annals of the court for the recording of public events, his personal diaries and notes for the writing of events of his life and actions, and oral sources for events he had not witnessed himself (Maisano 1990: 23*–27*).

The information of the *Chronicon* is structured in chronological order in a manner similar to diaries and histories. However, unlike other historiographers, Sphrantzes provides neither an introduction to his work nor does he divide his work into books or chapters, but rather confines himself to a short prologue declaring his name and aim, and proceeds with a brief reference to events of the years 1401–1413, which as he admits did not know with precision for he was very young (*Chronicon* III: 8–9). Then he continues in the main body with the narration of the events of the years 1414–1477 (Philippides 1980: 6–7). At times, the author interrupts the narrative and refers to past events in order to introduce his own views and speak of matters he considers of importance or fitting to the case (cf. *Chronicon* XVIII 1–8: 46–53, XXIII 5–12: 82–87 XXXIV 1–12: 124–131). The insertion of laments observed in the work is customary in chronicles (Hunger 1978: 496). His narrative is in general characterized by the succinct style of diaries. Yet the amount of information he gives in each case varies. In instances, he provides scrutinizing details of affairs of the Palaeologi dynasty and especially of those he was personally involved in, while omitting important events

occurring elsewhere in the Empire. Aside from that, it becomes also evident that Sphrantzes’ judgment is affected by his relations with members of the imperial family and his familiarity with clergymen and laymen of his times, while his feelings of aversion are clearly distinguished. Sphrantzes appears in his description greatly affected by personal motives; for example, while he criticizes the policies of John VIII, he extols Manuel II and Constantine XI and praises their efforts for the survival of the Byzantine state. Similarly, his feelings towards the Ottomans were influenced by the misfortunes he and his family suffered, yet again he does not portray them in negative light (Philippides 1980: 12; Maisano 2003: 131–141; Smarnakis 2015: 228). Remarkable is the fact that though an eyewitness of the Fall of Constantinople (29 May 1453) his description of the actual event is limited to a few brief chapters (*Chronicon* XXXV 6–9: 132–135), nevertheless he provides several explicit details, which make his report rather valuable. Thus, it appears that the chief criterion for the narrative was the participation of the author in the affairs described.

These observations, together with the fact that Sphrantzes does not proceed to a critical assessment of the historical events, set him apart from his contemporary historians. Sphrantzes is of course concerned with the customary for the period matters, that is, the survival of the Byzantine state and the siege of Constantinople, the union of the Churches and the relation between Byzantines and Ottomans. However, his notion of historical causation, his perception of God and his interpretation of events, mark in some instances a rupture with the Byzantine tradition. Following the traditional lines, Sphrantzes refers at times to the Scriptures to interpret events and believes in the providence of God, while considering tragic occurrences as God’s retribution. Nevertheless, it has been argued that Sphrantzes’ representation merely as a religious Byzantine Christian (Smarnakis 2015: 230–231) is superficial and does not reflect the author’s philosophy, which was largely “dominated by political motives” (Turner 1964: 353–354), contrary to other contemporary historians, notably Doukas and

Chalkokondyles. For Sphrantzes, “the single most important cause” that led to the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (*Chronicon* XXIII 4: 80–81; Philippides 1980: 50) was the Council of Florence, because of its political consequences and not for dogmatic reasons, while the failure of the “Christians abroad” (cf. *Chronicon* XXXVI 1: 136–137; Philippides 1980: 71) to provide military and financial aid to the Byzantine Empire, formed a subsidiary reason that led to the Fall. The absence in Sphrantzes’ work of the optimism for the revival of the Byzantine state, an idea accentuated by Doukas and Chalkokondyles, can be attributed to his pragmatic perception of events and political experiences.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The language of the *Chronicon* forms an interesting case. It has been suggested that Sphrantzes’ linguistic style was shaped by the autobiographical character of his composition, consisting of a mixture of the literary Byzantine language with the vernacular, while direct speech is composed in the spoken language. At the same time, Sphrantzes introduces a number of Italian and Ottoman words (Hunger 1978: 498; Kechagioglou 2001: 63). These elements add to the text’s vividness and it is for these reasons that the *Chronicon* could be considered an early specimen of Greek prose. The narrative is not written in a style similar to that of the majority of Byzantine authors who sought to imitate ancient historiographers, the account is straightforward and personal, and as such innovative.

The *Chronicon* is also an important source for the social history of fifteenth-century Byzantium and yields privileged insights into the circumstances of a member of the imperial court of the late Byzantine period. Sphrantzes was acquainted with prominent clerics and government officials (*archontes*), whom he presents or names in his work. He also provides significant information on court titles, a great number of which he claims to have possessed, royal garments, and imperial customs and decorum.

Impact and Legacy

Though neither of high style nor subjected to literary rules, the *Chronicon Minus* is a text of high historical value, which was elaborated in a later period, in a work known as the *Chronicon Maius* that covers the years 1258–1478. The *Maius*, wrongly attributed in the past to George Sphrantzes (Papadopoulos 1935a, b: 177–189), is actually a work compiled in the sixteenth century by Makarios Melissourgos-Melissenos, bishop of Monemvasia, best known as Pseudo-Sphrantzes. The *Maius* incorporates the *Minus*, elaborating the text with additions from other works, such as the narratives of Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Manuel Malaxos, Damaskenos the Stoudite, and the chronicle of Dorotheos of Monemvasia. It relies on Latin texts, such as Leonard de Langasco of Chios and Pope Nicholas V, as well as earlier Byzantine sources, for example, Theophanes Continuans, Nicetas Choniates, and George Acropolites (Hunger 1978: 496; Philippides 1981; Philippides and Hanak 2011). Until 1935, it was believed that the *Minus* was a compilation of Sphrantzes’ notes or an epitome of the *Maius*, hence for centuries it was Pseudo-Sphrantzes’ work that was in use (cf. Philippides 1981: 287–300, Philippides and Hank 2011). The *Chronicon Maius* “occupies a special position in the annals of Ottoman historiography as it provides a sixteenth-century bridge to the end of Byzantine historiography” while “the immense popularity of the *Chronicon Maius* in the Ottoman centuries attests to the high literary quality of the narrative” (Philippides 2008).

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Spina, Bartolomeo

Born: 1576 (or 1477), Pisa, Italy

Died: 1546 (or 1547), Rome, Italy

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Abstract

Bartolomeo Spina was one of the leading theologians of the sixteenth century. As a Dominican friar who followed in the footsteps of Thomas Aquinas, Spina strongly opposed Pietro Pomponazzi's views on the mortality of the soul, claiming that the immortality of the human soul can be demonstrated on the basis of Aristotle's texts themselves. Spina is also remembered for his participation in inquisitorial activities in Italy during the 1520s. He authored a number of works on witchcraft, where he upheld the authenticity of witchcraft and its maleficence.

Biography

Bartolomeo Spina was born in Pisa in 1476 (or 1477). At the age of 18, he entered the Dominican Order in the Convent of Santa Caterina in Pisa. After the customary 7-year course of studies in the Arts and Philosophy, Spina was ordained as a priest and went on to register as a student of theology in the Dominican *Studium generale* of

Bologna (1502). In 1512, the Master of the Order of Preachers, Thomas Cajetan (Thomas de Vio), appointed Spina as *Magister Studiorum* at the Convent of Sant'Eustorgio in Milan, and at the *Studium generale* of Bologna the following year. In 1514, Spina was appointed lecturer at the Convent of San Domenico di Castello in Venice. From 1518 to 1520, he served as inquisitorial vicar to Antonio Beccari da Ferrara, inquisitor of Modena and Ferrara (Tavuzzi 2007). It is in these years that Spina got involved in the debate surrounding the publication of Pietro Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate animae* (1516). Not only did Spina reject Pomponazzi's mortalist arguments completely, but he also took a stand against Thomas Cajetan himself, whom he charged for claiming that Aristotle had never understood the soul to be immortal in his writings. In the fall of 1519, Spina's works were banned in Bologna, a restriction that however was removed in 1526, following a general shift in the doctrinal orientation of the Dominicans of Italy. From this time, Spina's career in the Order started to take off. In 1530, he was appointed *Regens* of the *Studium generale* in Bologna; in 1531, he was elected vicar general of the Order; from 1536 to 1545, he held the chair of Theology in via S. Thomae at the University of Padua; in 1545, he was appointed Master of the Sacred Palace by Pope Paul III and also served in a number of committees at the Council of Trent (during this period, Spina authored a number of theological writings: Spina 1530, 1531, 1533a, b). He died in Rome between 1546 and 1547 (Bertolotti 2018).

Spina's most notable contribution to Renaissance philosophical discussions involves his participation in the lively debate following the publication of Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate animae*. In 1518, Spina penned three works explicitly aimed at confuting Pomponazzi's reading of Aristotle: the *Propugnaculum Aristotelis de immortalitate animae contra Thomam Caietanum*, the *Tutela veritatis de immortalitate animae contra Pomponatium Mantuanum*, and the *Flagellum in tres libros Apologiae eiusdem Peretti*. These writings, along with a brief *Quaestio de ordine sacro*, would be printed together in Venice by Gregorio de Gregori in 1519 under the title of *Opuscula* (published

again in 1535 by Stefano Nicolini da Sabbio). While Spina's *Tutela* and *Flagellum* offered a thorough refutation of the arguments Pomponazzi had presented, respectively, in his *De immortalitate* and in the *Apologia* (1518), a refutation that owes to a great extent to Aquinas' reading of Aristotle, his *Propugnaculum* made a direct attack on Thomas Cajetan himself. In his commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima* (Florence 1509, Venice 1514), Cajetan had posited that while the immortality of the soul may well be demonstrated on philosophical grounds, it is not possible for it to be proven based on Aristotle's works. Spina harshly objected to Cajetan's claim by endorsing Aquinas' view that Aristotle has indeed deemed the human soul immortal. For Spina, Cajetan's position was a serious threat to the primacy of theology over rational thought, and accordingly he should be held responsible for introducing the notion that the soul is mortal to the Christian community (Bertolotti 2018).

Similar doctrinal and political concerns characterize Spina's experience in the Inquisition. Between 1523 and 1525, he published three different works on witchcraft: his very influential *Quaestio de strigibus*, the *Tractatus de praeminentia sacrae theologiae super alias omnes scientias*, and the *Quadruplici apologia de lamiis contra Ponzinibium* (published together in Spina 1576). The aim of these writings was twofold. On the one hand, Spina upheld the reality of witchcraft and of the many misdeeds performed by witches, especially during their flights by night. In doing so, Spina was openly rebutting the claims of the Italian jurist Giovanni Francesco Ponzinibio, who denied in his *De lamiis et excellentia iuris utriusque* (1511) the reality of the acts with which the witches were charged. On the other hand, Spina aimed at affirming that theologians, and not jurists, were equipped to deal with inquisitorial matters (Bertolotti 2010).

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- Cajetan, Thomas de Vio
- Immortality of the Soul, Renaissance Problem of
- Pomponazzi, Pietro
- Witchcraft, Renaissance Idea of

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Spini, Gherardo

Born: Approximately 1528, Bologna

Died: After 1570, Rome

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Abstract

Gherardo Spini was a Medici courtier, secretary to Duke Cosimo I' son Ferdinando, a man

of letters and a member of the *Accademia Fiorentina* and the *Accademia Fiorentina del disegno* from 1567. Born in Bologna approximately in 1528, Spini experimented with poetry and was deeply involved in cultural circles. He was in close contact with men of letters, including Varchi, Domenichi, and Cellini, and noblewomen such as Laura Battiferra degli Ammaniti. Spini is best known for three unfinished and unpublished books, a treatise about ornaments entitled *I tre primi libri sopra l'istituzione intorno agl'ornamenti* which he started in 1568 and dedicated to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici.

Biography

Gherardo Spini, born approximately in 1528 into an aristocratic Florentine family, lived in Bologna, Florence, and Rome (Acidini 1980). Little is known about Spini's personal life. He married Caterina Cambi, the daughter of historian Giovanni Cambi, and had a daughter of his own named Gostanza Spini (Ardicini 1980). His two uncles, Ulisse and Girolamo, were both captains in Cosimo I's army, and it is likely that Spini went with them to France in their effort to support Francis I Valois (Acidini 1980). At age 13, Spini attended Pietro Vettori's classes at the *Studio fiorentino* and, according to Giovanni Della Casa Spini, was Vettori's best student. He also attended Ignazio Danti's classes at the same venue and became close to professor Antonio Maria de' Pazzi from the *Studio romano* (Ważbiński 1987). His sonnets appeared in many lyrical collections, firstly Lodovico Domenichi's *Rime di donne* (*Rime* 1559), and in several others composed in praise or to commemorate the death of famous figures (e.g., Eleonora di Toledo, Benedetto Varchi, and Michelangelo Buonarroti). He was also figured as a protagonist in renaissance dialogues, like Domenichi's dialogue on love (Domenichi 1562). Gherardo Spini was also designated the author of a courtly dialogue on behavior now lost in a prefatory letter to Domenichi's 1565 edition of the *Facetie* (Domenichi 1565). Spini is also known to have been the man behind the censorship and rewriting of Benvenuto

Cellini's *Trattati* that appeared in print in the form of Spini's humanistic reduction in 1568 (Gallucci 2003).

His most important work remains his unfinished treatise on architecture and ornaments, that is, *I primi tre libri sopra l'istituzioni intorno agl'ornamenti*, conserved in manuscript form and published by Acidini in 1980. He entered the *Accademia fiorentina* in 1567 (Waźbiński 1987) and is likely to have become a member of the Florentine *Accademia del disegno* in the same year. His first reflections on architectural theory though can be traced back to his preface to Giovanni Della Casa's *Le rime, le orazioni e il Galateo* published in 1564 (Afribo 2007; Waźbiński 1987). In the preface, he puts forward a universal understanding of architectural theory and history that sees its roots and origin in Palestine rather than Greece (Waźbiński 1987). The points mentioned in the preface would later be developed in the first book of his unpublished treatise.

Even though the composition of Spini's treatise began in 1568, according to De Pazzi's introductory piece, his writing was still very much in progress in 1570 and was still Spini's "principal occupation" (Payne 1999, p. 285). The nonlinear development of the treatise was influenced by different figures who shaped Spini's view of architecture. Among those is Duke Cosimo I's *maestro di cappella*, as well as organist and composer Francesco Corteccia, who inspired Spini to develop a system in which architectural orders are in line with musical proportions (Waźbiński 1987). From 1571, when his protector Ferdinando de' Medici moved from Florence to Rome, Spini thoroughly studied Roman monuments in the city. His interest in archaeology had a profound impact on the writing process of the treatise.

Spini's interpretation of the development of architecture consists of a sequence of cycles that eventually progress to the Tuscan style. In light of the revival of classicism and the literary, as well as artistic, narratives of Cosimo I as the new Solomon and Augustus of Italy, Spini sees the perfect model of architecture in Solomon's temple and criticizes the gothic and mannerist style of his time. In addition to a profound reflection on

antiquity with his reflections on Vitruvius (Payne 1999), Spini's eclectic views on architecture try to connect (not without contradictions) architectural elements to mathematics and music (Waźbiński 1987), figures of speech and rhetoric (Van Eck 2007), as well as the parts of the human body (Payne 1999, 2001). In his attempt to produce a new universal model, with its roots grounded in the classics, he sees style as a symbol and a tool to serve and reflect the unity of power (Waźbiński 1987).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Spini's work claims "an exceptional status" because it combines three genres: "the treatise on ornament, that on license (or prescription), and that on imitation" (Payne 1999, p. 147). Although not new, these concepts have never been associated with architecture. His approach is "unique" due to his direct statement that buildings are divided into "fabrica," which means *necessità*, and "ornamento," and from the ornaments is born "the dignity, and beauty of the edifice" (Payne 1999, p. 148). For the first time, the category of architectural *ornatus* comes explicitly into its own and claims an entire treatise. Nonetheless, Spini's text established an important link between the literary and architectural cultures of its time by creating space for a deep consideration of the notion of *licentia* in response to Michelangelo's work.

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Waźbiński, Zygmunt. 1987. Gherardo Spini. Un contributo alla teoria classica dell'architettura nella seconda metà del Cinquecento. In *L'Accademia Medicea del Disegno a Firenze nel Cinquecento. Idea e istituzione, 2 vols, I*, 215–234. Florence: Olschki.

seventeenth century and deeply influenced its further development. Drawing on different traditions of thought, he created a system of philosophy that challenged the views of his contemporary readers in almost every domain. From his metaphysics to his epistemology, from his account of morals to his political theory, from his method of interpreting Scripture to the method of exposition that he employed in his main work – namely, the *Ethics Demonstrated in Geometrical Order* (1677) – there is not a single aspect of Spinoza's philosophy which has not been thoroughly examined and discussed. Yet, Spinoza's theses and arguments continue to influence philosophical debates. Spinoza's substance monism, his identification of God with nature, his strict necessitarianism, his unique account of the mind–body relationship and of human affects, and his passionate defense of religious freedom and freedom of thought are still a source of inspiration for many thinkers and the focus of several studies, not necessarily related to the limited domain of the history of philosophy.

Synonyms

[Baruch Spinoza](#); [de Espinosa](#), [Bento](#); [de Spinoza](#), [Benedictus](#)

Spinoza, Baruch

Born: 24 November 1632, Amsterdam

Died: 21 February 1677, The Hague

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Abstract

Spinoza's philosophy radically changed the framework of Western thought in the

Biography

Baruch Spinoza was born on November 24, 1632 in Amsterdam, from a Jewish family, which emigrated from Vidigueira, in Portugal, to the more tolerant Dutch Republic. His father, Michael, ran a mercantile activity in Amsterdam. In 1639, Baruch commenced school at the local Sephardi Jewish community, recently reunited under the guidance of a unique congregation, called *Talmud Torah*, where he distinguished himself as an excellent student. Ten years later, in 1649, after the death of his elder brother Isaac, Baruch was directly involved in the management of his father's firm, and by 1652 he had left the rabbinic school. He then attended a school

of classical Latin studies, recently opened in Amsterdam by Franciscus van den Enden, an erudite former Jesuit, doctor, and philosopher with a humanist background and radical political views, who would later be hanged in Paris, on November 27, 1674, after having conspired against the king of France Louis XIV. It is likely during this period that Spinoza first approached the texts of Machiavelli, Bacon, Hobbes, and, most importantly, Descartes (Nadler 1999, 111). On March 28, 1654 Michael Spinoza died, leaving behind a considerable amount of debts. In March 1656, before having reached the legal age, Baruch requested to be put under legal custody as a minor and orphan (Baruch's mother, Hanna Debora, had already died in 1638), and, on March 23, his estate was separated from his father's bankrupt one. More or less at the same time, the *Mahamad* of the Amsterdam Portuguese-Jewish congregation started to examine Baruch's case to proceed with his expulsion from the Jewish community, which eventually occurred on July 27 of the same year – the formal reasons for this ban, or excommunication (*herem*, in Hebrew), being apparently due to Spinoza's "evil opinion and acts," "abominable heresies which he practiced and taught," and "monstrous deeds" (Nadler 1999, 120). Yet, the actual motives that may have led to such an upshot are still much debated by historians (Nadler 1999, 116–154; Israel 2001, 166–173; Popkin 2004, 27–38).

Little is known about Spinoza's life during the first few years after his excommunication. First he started to write a treatise concerning the goals and the right method of philosophizing, entitled *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione* (*Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*), a text that he left unfinished and that was later included in his *Opera Posthuma*. He then compiled the *Korte verhandeling van God, de mensch, en deszelfs welstand* (*Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being*), the first complete writing where Spinoza's main theses are exposed in a systematic and discursive way. It remained unpublished and relatively unknown until the discovery of two non-autographed Dutch manuscripts (probably translations of a lost original) in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the

meantime, Spinoza ceased his father's commercial activity and began a profession of his own as a lens polisher – a job that he kept doing until his death and that earned him a certain reputation. In 1661, he moved to Rijnsburg, near Leiden. During the summer of 1661 Spinoza met with Henry Oldenburg, Secretary of the *Royal Society of London*, with whom he started a long and fruitful exchange of letters, and through whom he was able to read and express his opinions on Robert Boyle's *Certain Physiological Essays* (1661). In 1663, under request of his friends, Spinoza consented to publish a manual on Cartesian philosophy that he was currently dictating to a student of his. The result consisted of a volume containing two separate texts, respectively entitled *Renati Des Cartes Principiorum Philosophiæ* (*Descartes' Principles of Philosophy*) and *Cogitata Metaphysica* (*Metaphysical Thoughts*), where Spinoza first exposes parts of Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* in geometric order and then discusses some traditional topics according to a Cartesian perspective. It remained the only book that Spinoza published under his name during his lifetime. In the same year, Spinoza moved to Voorburg, near The Hague, where he remained for less than ten years. There he had the opportunity to acquaint himself with Christiaan Huygens, who admired Spinoza's skills as a lens grinder. During these years Spinoza focused on developing his two masterpieces: the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (*Theological-Political Treatise*) and the *Ethica Ordine Geometrico demonstrata* (*Ethics demonstrated in Geometric Order*).

Spinoza eventually moved to The Hague between the end of 1696 and 1671. In 1670, in Amsterdam, the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* was published anonymously, bearing neither the author's name, nor the name of the publisher or the city of publication. Despite these precautions, the authorship of the text was soon attributed to Spinoza and its content provoked a great deal of controversy and scandal all over Europe. Spinoza's theories concerning the right method of interpreting Scripture, the identity of God and nature, and his denial of the existence of miracles seemed unacceptable to the great majority of

contemporary readers, prompting the redaction of numerous confutations throughout the following years. In 1671, Spinoza had to intervene in person, to halt the publication of a Dutch translation of the *Treatise*, fearing a possible condemnation of the text in the Dutch Republic. In February 1673, on behalf of the Elector of Palatine, Spinoza was offered a chair in philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, provided he did not abuse his freedom of philosophizing to perturb the publicly established religion; one month later, Spinoza politely refused the offer, justifying himself by claiming that he did not know within which limits his freedom of philosophizing had to be constrained in order not to disturb the local religious customs and rules. On July 19, 1674 the *Theological-Political Treatise* was eventually condemned by the Dutch Courts, along with Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (whose Dutch and Latin translations were respectively published in 1667 and 1668) and a treatise concerning the right method of interpreting Scripture written by Spinoza's friend Lodewijk Meyer, entitled *Philosophia Sacrae Scripturae interpres* (1666). The following year, Spinoza went on a trip to Amsterdam to arrange the publication of his *Ethics*; however, Spinoza states in his correspondence that rumors and slanders regarding the allegedly atheist nature of this text spread out even before it went to press, so that he eventually decided not to publish it. In the last few years of his life, he started to write the *Tractatus politicus* (*Political Treatise*), which remained unfinished.

On February 21, 1677, in his rented room at The Hague, Baruch Spinoza died of respiratory problems, resulting perhaps from a form of tuberculosis, as reported by several sources, possibly aggravated by the massive amount of glass powder inhaled while grinding lenses (Nadler 1999, 349–350; van Bunge et al. 2011, 36–37). He left his manuscripts to his friends, who took care to publish them in the same year in a comprehensive Latin edition – the *Opera Posthuma* (Spinoza 1677a) – which includes the *Ethica*, the unfinished *Tractatus Politicus* and *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, part of Spinoza's correspondence, and an unfinished *Compendium Grammatices Linguae Hebraeae* (*Compendium on*

Hebrew Grammar). A Dutch translation (the *Nagelate Schriften*) quickly followed (Spinoza 1677b). Both the Latin and the Dutch editions were published anonymously, except for the letters “B. d. S.” imprinted on the frontispieces, denoting the author.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Although Spinoza systematically avoids appealing to authority in his texts – with external sources and authors being rarely mentioned – his terminology includes concepts and categories drawn from both the theological and scholastic traditions, on the one hand, and from the “new science” and the Cartesian philosophical language, on the other hand. However, Spinoza often provides those same traditional notions with new meanings, more coherent with his overall philosophical understanding. Considering, moreover, the scarcity of information in our possession concerning Spinoza's life, it follows that it is arduous, if not impossible, to precisely identify all the sources to which Spinoza had direct or indirect access and assess how they variously contributed to the development of Spinoza's thought.

The Jewish philosophical and theological tradition of thought unquestionably played an important role in Spinoza's formation, beginning with his teacher at the Talmudic school, Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657). The influence of Moses Maimonides (1138–1204) and Hasdai Crescas (ca. 1340–ca. 1410) on Spinoza's thought is undeniable too and attested by direct references and quotations. Spinoza makes no explicit mention, however, of Jewish neo-Platonic philosopher Judah Abrabanel (also known as Leone Ebreo, ca. 1465–after 1521), even though he owned a copy of his famous work *Dialoghi di amore* (*Dialogues of Love*, 1535). Another possible Jewish source worth mentioning is Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591–1655), who was a student of Galileo Galilei in Padua and a friend of Spinoza's teacher Menasseh ben Israel (van Bunge et al. 2011, 74–82). Besides this, Spinoza was also well trained in classical literature and was acquainted with the major ancient

philosophical currents. He directly read Aristotle's writings, as he owned an edition of Aristotle's complete works (Manzini 2009). His philosophy often seems to echo Stoic themes and, as a matter of fact, Spinoza owned several writings of Stoic thinkers, such as Epictetus and Seneca. Like the Stoics, Spinoza conceives of a unique universe thoroughly governed by a necessary network of causal connections, and he identifies the best life in that of an individual capable of becoming aware of the causal network and of acting in accordance with it. Unlike the Stoics, however, Spinoza firmly rejects any finalism in nature (van Bunge et al. 2011, 82–84; Miller 2015).

Spinoza only mentions Francis Bacon (1561–1626) a few times in his letters, but he possessed some of his writings. To which extent Spinoza was influenced by Bacon's natural philosophy is uncertain and still understudied. Spinoza also read Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), whose reflections on politics, anthropology, physics, and method certainly were of some inspiration to Spinoza. Huge differences separate their respective philosophies, though, the most notable of which rests in Spinoza's preference for a democratic political system, regarded as the best and most rational form of civil organization. Moreover, Spinoza studied Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and held him in high regard, but the actual ways in which Machiavelli's analyses may have affected Spinoza's political thought are not sufficiently clear. Spinoza's innovative reading of Scripture as a secular text certainly drew some inspiration from Ibn Ezra's (ca. 1092–ca. 1167) biblical commentaries, as well as from the arguments put forth by Isaac La Peyrère (1594–1676) in his *Præ-Adamitæ* (1655), which Spinoza had in his library. The real impact that the political ideas of Franciscus van den Enden (1602–1674) may have had on his pupil Spinoza is still debated by historians (Nadler 1999, 107–114; Israel 2001, 168–171; van Bunge et al. 2011, 68–71). In addition to this, it has been proven that Spinoza was familiar with the thought of neo-scholastics, such as Franco Burgersdijk (1590–1635) and Bartholomeus Keckermann (ca. 1572–1609), and with the rising Cartesianism

defended, among the others, by Adriaan Heereboord (1613–1661) and Johannes Clauberg (1622–1665). Conversely, nothing conclusive can be said about Czech physician Johannes Marcus Marci (1595–1667), sometimes regarded as a precursor of some aspects of Spinoza's psychological theory. Spinoza's thought also seems to recall some features of Giordano Bruno's overall system (1548–1600), although there is no evidence that Spinoza ever had any contact with the Italian philosopher's texts or doctrines. In particular, they have been associated because of their pantheist and pananimist view of the universe, conceived of as eternal, infinite, and substantially homogeneous. The philosophy of Arnold Geulincx (1624–1669) and the heretical theses of Uriel da Costa (ca. 1583–1640) are other possible sources, whose influence on Spinoza has yet to be verified (van Bunge et al. 2011, 58–60).

The most important source of Spinoza's intellectual development is Descartes. Spinoza had several editions of Descartes' works in his library, and all of his philosophy – excluding his political and exegetical theories – clearly shows that he thoroughly studied Descartes and pondered over his theories. Spinoza's writing on *Descartes' Principles of Philosophy* testifies to the level of expertise and familiarity he had with Descartes' system. There he infers the main theses of Descartes' metaphysics and physics following the geometric order – a deductive structure consisting of definitions, axioms, and theorems (or propositions). The appendix to the treatise, called *Metaphysical Thoughts*, is a survey of topics in epistemology, metaphysics, and theology, which Spinoza treats and discusses along the lines of Descartes' philosophical principles. In this regard, Lodewijk Meyer's prefatory note to the text advises us about Spinoza's actual position, while he was acting as a Cartesian teacher and expositor: "Though he judges that some of the doctrines are true, and admits that he has added some of his own, nevertheless there are many that he rejects as false, and concerning which he holds a quite different opinion" (Spinoza 1985, 229). Indeed, despite Descartes' enormous contribution, Spinoza's philosophy cannot be reduced to a form of Cartesianism.

In his most representative work, the *Ethics*, Spinoza makes use of a Cartesian conceptual framework to overturn Descartes' main conclusions concerning metaphysics and epistemology. Extension and thought, which Descartes conceived of as separate substances, are regarded by Spinoza as different attributes of a unique substance, God. God is understood by Spinoza as the immanent cause of the existence of each thing – whereas, for Descartes, God is the external or transitive cause of the existence of both the extended and the thinking substances – and is finally identified by Spinoza with the infinite whole of nature. Spinoza rejects the Cartesian distinction between intellect and will and staunchly denies the existence of any free will. As a consequence, Descartes' theory of error, which is based on that distinction and on the existence of a faculty of free will, is completely abandoned by Spinoza. Spinoza's theory of error is grounded on the passivity and partiality of the human mind, conceived of as a finite part of God's infinite intellect: "if it is—as it seems at first—of the nature of a thinking being to form true, or adequate, thoughts, it is certain that inadequate ideas arise in us only from the fact that we are a part of a thinking being, of which some thoughts wholly constitute our mind, while others do so only in part" (Spinoza 1985, 33). Spinoza seems to agree with the basic tenets of Descartes' physics, although differences can be envisaged between the two – notably, with regard to the peculiar treatment Spinoza makes of the concept of *conatus*, which he broadly conceives of as the striving of a thing to preserve in its being and which is one and the same as the essence of the thing itself. Spinoza explicitly criticizes Descartes' doctrine of mind–body interaction. He claims that no causal interaction can ever occur between modes of extension and modes of thought and rejects Descartes' theory of a mediation of substances through the movements of the pineal gland as a "hypothesis more occult than any occult quality" (Spinoza 1985, 596). Finally, it is also worth noting that Descartes, at the end of his *Replies to the Second Set of Objections to the Meditations*, already delivered an example of deduction of the first principles of his metaphysics (namely, the existence of God

and the distinction between the soul and the body) in geometric order. However, the massive employment that Spinoza makes of the geometric order of demonstration in his writings – used to cover topics in the metaphysical and epistemological domains as well as in the domain of morals and in the analysis of human affects – simply has no equal in the history of philosophy.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In his unfinished *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, Spinoza states the reasons that led him to devote his life to philosophy: "I resolved at last to try to find out whether there was anything which would be the true good, capable of communicating itself, and which alone would affect the mind, all others being rejected—whether there was something which, once found and acquired, would continuously give me the greatest joy, to eternity" (Spinoza 1985, 7). The eminently ethical goal of Spinoza's speculations, consisting in the attainment of the highest human good, both individually and socially, characterizes the whole of Spinoza's philosophical production. Spinoza identifies our highest good in knowing God, and in the intuitive knowledge that we may have of things as they are eternally comprehended in God. This knowledge, Spinoza writes in the Fifth Part of his *Ethics*, causes the greatest satisfaction of the mind and an eternal, intellectual love towards God. In the political domain, Spinoza identifies the best civil order as a state that grants all its members the best means to achieve their good: thus, he argues that the best state is that which best grants its citizens mutual safety and full freedom to philosophize.

The metaphysical core of Spinoza's philosophy rests in the use that he makes of the concept of substance. Spinoza demonstrates that there is only one substance, infinite, uncreated, and eternal. This substance is God, which, in the First Part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza defines as "a being absolutely infinite, i.e., a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence" (Spinoza 1985, 409). It follows that

any thing in nature must be regarded as a modification of a unique substance, that is, God, conceived under one of its infinite attributes. As Spinoza puts it, “whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God” (Spinoza 1985, 420). Thought and extension are counted by Spinoza among the infinite attributes of God. All corporeal things are therefore modifications of God expressed under its attribute of extension. Similarly, any spiritual thing, or any mental act in general (all of which are commonly called by Spinoza by the same term, *idea*), is to be understood as a modification of God’s attribute of thought. Since God is infinitely powerful and capable of infinitely many modifications in each of its attributes, Spinoza claims that “from the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes” (Spinoza 1985, 424). God is therefore the cause of itself, immanent cause of all existing things, and efficient cause of the existence of an infinity of things in nature. As Spinoza writes in the *Theological-Political Treatise*, the universal laws of nature, according to which everything is determined to exist and to act in a necessary way, “are nothing but decrees of God, which follow from the necessity and perfection of the divine nature” (Spinoza 2016, 154). Spinoza denies the existence of final causes operating in nature – a thesis that he rejects as fictional. Rather, each of God’s modifications is necessarily determined to exist and to act in a certain way by another modification of the same attribute, which in turn has been caused to exist by another, and so on, to infinity. This entails the existence of an infinite and eternal causal network connecting each thing in each of God’s attributes. Although, as Spinoza maintains, no causal interaction can ever occur between modes of different attributes – hence, a body cannot modify an idea and, vice versa, an idea cannot modify a body – the order and connection of the ideas in God’s attribute of thought perfectly match the order and connection of things in the other attributes. “Therefore,” Spinoza writes in the Second Part of the *Ethics*, “whether we conceive nature under the attribute of extension, or under the attribute of thought, or under any other attribute, we shall find one and the same order, or one

and the same connection of causes, i.e., that the same things follow one another” (Spinoza 1985, 451).

On this account, also a human body is a finite mode of God’s attribute of extension; accordingly, the corresponding human mind is the idea of that body in God’s attribute of thought – hence, the human mind is a finite part of God’s infinite intellect. Therefore, everything that occurs to a human body, Spinoza argues, must also correspond to an idea in the corresponding mind and must be perceived by it. The fact that an individual is aware of the modifications that affect her body, however, does not imply that she also adequately knows anything. When a human perceives the traces produced in her body by external objects, and regards these traces as if they were the objects themselves, that individual is said to imagine. Moreover, as long as an individual is only conscious of her appetites and actions through the ideas of her affections, and remains ignorant about the causes that necessarily determine her to exist and act in a certain way, that individual is inclined to falsely think of herself as free. Such an individual is instead utterly passive, since in her case the external causes act upon her and determine her, without her being aware of them. The access to reason and adequate knowledge, Spinoza argues, is provided by common notions. Common notions grasp eternal and necessary truths, common to all bodies, or common to the human body and other bodies by which the human body is affected. Above imagination and reason, Spinoza adds a third kind of knowledge, which he regards as the highest and calls “intuitive knowledge” (*scientia intuitiva*, in Latin): “this kind of knowledge,” Spinoza writes, “proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things” (Spinoza 1985, 478).

In the Third Part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza affirms that he wants to consider human passions, actions, and appetites as natural phenomena, which arise in human beings with the same necessity and according to the same causal laws that rule any event in nature. “I shall consider human actions and appetites,” Spinoza claims, “just as if it were a question of lines, planes, and bodies” (Spinoza

1985, 492). On these grounds, Spinoza founds his geometry of human affects by building on a few principles common to all things. The first and most fundamental principle is that each thing strives to persevere in its being. This striving (*conatus*, in Spinoza's Latin terminology) constitutes the actual essence of the thing. In human beings, it corresponds with their appetite – that is, what is consciously perceived by humans as their “desire,” or is called “will” when referred to their mind alone. From one's appetite, all actions and reactions to external stimuli necessarily follow, aiming for the preservation of the self, according to one's powers and capabilities. Along with her desire, the most basic affects of an individual are joy and sadness. Joy is the affect connected to an increase in an individual's power of thinking and acting. Conversely, sadness is the affect perceived when a decrease in one's power of thinking and acting occurs. When joy or sadness are accompanied by the idea of their external cause, either love or hate towards the external object arise. By her affects of love and hate, a human is necessarily led to seek and take care of anything that might affect her with joy, and to avoid and possibly eliminate everything that might be the cause of her sadness or do her harm. From these few basic affects, all the others follow, even the most complex, allowing Spinoza to explain the whole of human behavior according to natural causal principles. Coherently, Spinoza contends that a thing is called either good or evil only to the extent to which it affects an individual with joy or sadness, that is, insofar as a thing is either useful or harmful to one's self-preservation. The most fundamental norm of reason is, therefore, to look for what is useful for one's self-preservation and joy: “since reason demands nothing contrary to nature,” Spinoza writes in the Fourth Part of the *Ethics*, “it demands that everyone loves himself, seek his own advantage, what is really useful to him, want what will really lead man to a greater perfection, and absolutely, that everyone should strive to preserve his own being as far as he can.” (Spinoza 1985, 555). In this sense, Spinoza says, human virtue is identical to one's power to preserve her being. Hence, virtue is a good to be sought for its own sake and, according

to Spinoza, is essentially linked to one's ability to use her reason and adequately know things. Indeed, Spinoza maintains that “we know nothing to be certainly good or evil, except what really leads to understanding or what can prevent us from understanding” (Spinoza 1985, 559). Since the greatest object of knowledge is God, our highest good and the greatest virtue of our mind rests in our capability of understanding God. This knowledge of God, Spinoza affirms, is the same knowledge that we may have of natural things by intuition, that is, by the third kind of knowledge. In the Fifth Part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza calls “intellectual love towards God” the joy that arises in humans from the highest kind of knowledge. The intellectual love of God, Spinoza argues, is as eternal as its object and is a part of the infinite and eternal love by which God loves himself.

Spinoza identifies right and power. “Whatever each man does according to the laws of his nature,” he writes in his *Political Treatise*, “he does with the supreme right of nature. He has as much right over nature as he has power” (Spinoza 2016, 508). It follows that in a state of nature everyone is allowed everything, except for what is against her appetite, or beyond her reach. The right of nature, therefore, does not prevent conflicts, hatreds, deceits, and everything that a human could be led to by blindly following her desire. Indeed, according to Spinoza, human beings, insofar as they are led by their passions, have different and possibly conflicting natures. When, however, they act according to reason, they necessarily aim to what is useful to the preservation of their common human nature and are most useful to each other. Hence, rational individuals acknowledge the usefulness of living in an organized society and accept the laws of the state, not by fear of being punished, but by free reasoning. A multitude organized around a common rule and “led as if by one mind,” Spinoza writes, has as much right as power. “This right, which is defined by the power of a multitude, is usually called *Sovereignty*. Whoever, by common agreement, has responsibility for public affairs—that is, the rights of making, interpreting, and repealing laws, fortifying cities, and making decisions about war and peace, etc.—has this right

absolutely” (Spinoza 2016, 514). The presence of a common established rule, and of an authority capable of implementing it, gives birth to social moral values, such as those of sin and injustice – which, outside an organized social and political context, would make, thus, no sense. In the *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza defines democracy as “the most natural state, and the one which approached most nearly the freedom nature concedes to everyone” (Spinoza 2016, 289). However, Spinoza’s political analyses concern all kinds of states. Just like any other thing in nature, also a state strives to preserve itself, and shall therefore permit nothing that can harm it or lead to its destruction. Since the end and reason of being of all civil organizations are grounded on their capability of preserving peace and safety for their citizens, a state which harms its citizens is basically acting against its nature and against reason and ceases to be a state. In particular, no state can deny its citizens their right to think without constraints, freely use their reason, and judge anything. “The end of the Republic,” Spinoza concludes, “is not to change men from rational beings into beasts or automata, but to enable their minds and bodies to perform their functions safely, to enable them to use their reason freely, and not to clash with one another in hatred, anger or deception, or deal inequitably with one another. So the end of the Republic is really freedom” (Spinoza 2016, 346).

The freedom to philosophize is also the focus of Spinoza’s considerations about revealed religion and the original meaning of Scripture. Spinoza’s *Theological-Political Treatise* aims explicitly “to separate faith from philosophy” (Spinoza 2016, 264). Spinoza critically examines Scripture, considering the historical context in which it was written, and concludes that its teaching (as well as all teachings of prophetic nature) only concerns the formal conditions of the obedience towards God, in which faith effectively consists. The teachings revealed in the Testaments, Spinoza contends, do not imply any scientific knowledge of the facts of nature. “Who does not see,” Spinoza writes, “that each Testament is nothing but a training in obedience, and that neither

Testament has any other aim than that men should obey from a true heart?” (Spinoza 2016, 264). There is, however, a universally valid law that can be drawn from Scripture, which also agrees with what sound reasoning teaches, and which prescribes us to love our neighbor as ourselves. No true religious faith, therefore, constrains anyone from freely philosophizing, as long as one attends to this tenet alone. “Faith,” Spinoza concludes, “grants everyone the greatest freedom to philosophize, so that without wickedness he can think whatever he wishes about anything” (Spinoza 2016, 271).

Impact and Legacy

Except for a circle of enthusiast friends and admirers, the first reactions to Spinoza’s philosophy were mostly negative. As a matter of fact, the appearance of Spinoza’s writings on the European scene created scandal and concern. Summing up a common opinion of his times, in his *Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet* (1682) Pierre Bayle referred to Spinoza as “the greatest atheist there ever was.” In the long article that Bayle devoted to Spinoza in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697) – where he defined Spinoza as a “systematic atheist” – he also acknowledged the fact that, by then, “Spinozism” had become a common label, used to address any apparent case of impudent atheism. Yet, the same article also greatly contributed to depicting the enduring image of Spinoza as an example of a “virtuous atheist” – that is, a thinker whose ideas are dangerous for any established religion, but whose behaviors appear nonetheless beyond reproach.

Several expositions, discussions and, above all, refutations of Spinoza’s philosophy were written and began to circulate soon after the publications of his major works, the *Theological-Political Treatise* and the *Opera Posthuma*. To provide a complete list of them is an almost impossible task. Among those who first reacted to Spinoza, Bayle mentions Jean-Baptiste Stoupe, author of *La religion des Hollandois* (1673), and Johannes Bredenburg, who wrote a refutation entitled *Enervatio Tractatus*

theologico-politici (1675). Bredenburg's case is interesting, for it seems that while he was working on his refutation, he was eventually convinced by Spinoza's arguments and became an advocate of Spinozism himself. In a similar way, Henri de Boulainvilliers' attempt at refuting (appeared in 1731) was mainly read as the proof of a conversion to Spinozism, and his writings on Spinozism became seminal for the later diffusion of Spinoza's thought in pre-revolutionary France. One of the first refutations of Spinoza's *Ethics* was written by Henry More. His *Confutatio* was published in 1679, in his *Opera Omnia*, and was translated into Dutch in 1687 by Frans Kuyper. In 1676, Kuyper himself wrote a refutation of Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*. Cartesian philosophers immediately distanced themselves from Spinoza's theses, as they had to defend themselves from intellectuals accusing Cartesianism of being the cradle of Spinozism. For instance, Pierre-Daniel Huet wrote various influential texts between 1679 and 1690, where he attacked with equal strength both Spinozism and Cartesianism. Christoph Wittich, Cartesian philosopher in the Dutch Republic, provided a thorough critical analysis of the *Ethics*, published in 1690 with the unambiguous title *Anti-Spinoza sive Examen Ethices Benedicti de Spinoza*. In 1696, the French Cartesian François Lamy published his own confutation of Spinoza, entitled *Le nouvel atheisme renversé*, which included a French translation of the First Part of Spinoza's *Ethics*. In 1704, Pierre-Sylvain Régis also refuted Spinoza from a Cartesian point of view, in a text entitled *L'Usage de la raison et de la foi*. On the other hand, Samuel Clarke saw the defense of Newtonian philosophy and the rebuttal of Spinoza as connected goals. In *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (1705), he attacked Spinoza, addressing him as "the most celebrated patron of atheism in our time." At the same time, he was engaged in a controversy over the nature of motion and matter with John Toland, who, in his *Letters to Serena* (1704), criticized the poverty of Spinoza's arguments concerning physics. Toland did not seem, however, to reject Spinoza's main metaphysical principles. A particularly successful

anti-Spinozist treatise was written in the Dutch language by Bernard Nieuwentijt in 1715. His writing was soon translated into English, with the title *The Religious Philosopher* (1718), as well as into French and German. The Scottish thinker Andrew Michael Ramsay wrote a refutation of Spinozism, published posthumously in 1748 with the title *The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, which is likely to have inspired David Hume's own criticism of Spinoza's philosophy (Popkin 2004, 117–118). In *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), Hume first accuses Spinoza of atheism and then accuses all those who maintained the doctrine of the immateriality, simplicity, and indivisibility of the thinking substance of being Spinozists – hence, of being atheists. This clearly demonstrates the extent to which the accusation of Spinozism, most of the time used as an equivalent of professing atheism, was to be taken seriously, at least until the second half of the eighteenth century. Among those who had to explicitly defend themselves from such an accusation, we can list, for instance, John Locke and Nicolas Malebranche. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, Spinoza's philosophy began to raise a great deal of interest in Germany, giving rise to the philosophical controversies commonly known as *Atheismusstreit* and *Pantheismusstreit*. Spinoza's philosophy was widely debated, and partially rehabilitated, following discussions that involved various authoritative intellectual figures, such as Gotthold E. Lessing, Friedrich H. Jacobi, Moses Mendelssohn, Johann G. Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, and G. W. F. Hegel. Among the most important readers of Spinoza one should also count Gottfried W. Leibniz, who heard about him as a philosopher and a lens polisher before 1670. He had the opportunity to exchange letters with him and met him in 1676. He read Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* and the *Opera Posthuma*, carefully annotating and commenting on Spinoza's texts. Leibniz expressed outrage over Spinoza's theses, but recognized in him an exceptionally acute adversary. The connection between the development of Leibniz's philosophy and his reception of Spinoza is currently at the center of interesting studies (Lærke 2008).

Cross-References

- [Abravanel, Leon](#)
- [Bacon, Francis](#)
- [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- [Burgersdijk, Franco](#)
- [Crescas, Hasdai ben Judah](#)
- [Descartes, René](#)
- [Hobbes, Thomas](#)
- [Keckermann, Bartholomaeus](#)
- [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- [Maimonideanism in the Renaissance](#)
- [Marci, Johannes Marcus](#)
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Spirit in Renaissance Medicine

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Abstract

The “spirit” (*pneuma* in Greek and *spiritus* in Latin) was often defined as the corporeal instrument of the “soul” (*psychê* in Greek and *anima* in Latin) for physiological functions in living beings. Since the soul was difficult to grasp in a material dimension, the role of the spirit as a key to understanding the secret of life

gradually increased in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. A long quest for a material spirit of life was launched.

Synonyms

[Pneuma](#); [Spiritus](#); [Vital balsam](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The notion of spirit was fundamental in the medical teachings of medieval universities. The *spiritus* was believed to reside in the body of living beings as an invisible, extremely tenuous, and vapor-like substance, which is diffused by the blood into the whole body. It was often seen as the soul's primary instrument, being responsible for physiological functions and serving as the medium between the soul and the body (Bono [1984](#)). This traditional notion underwent a profound mutation during the Renaissance.

Innovative and Original Aspects

At the end of the fifteenth century, Italian Platonist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) advanced an influential theory of the “World-Spirit” (*spiritus mundi*) in his *On Obtaining Life from the Heavens* (*De vita coelitus comparanda*), the third book of his successful work, *Three Books on Life* (*De vita libri tres*). Ficino posited the World-Spirit as the intermediary between the “World-Soul” (*anima mundi*) and its body (*machina mundi*). His theory was crucial in imposing a cosmological dimension on the traditional notion of *spiritus*. As this universal bond was meant to possess a special tie with the human being, it also contributed to the cosmic status of the human being. Adopted by many of Ficino's followers, the theory provided a fresh stimulus in Renaissance medicine and natural philosophy (Ficino [1489](#); Hirai [2002](#)).

French physician Jean Fernel (1497–1558) tried to elaborate the notion of spirit on the basis of his Platonized interpretation of Galen in his work *On the Hidden Causes of Things* (*De abditis*

rerum causis). He divided the *spiritus* into three kinds: the spirit of God, the spirit of nature, and the spirits of living beings. The spirit of God is that of the Bible, while the spirit of nature is inspired by Ficino's theory of the World-Spirit. For Fernel the inferior spirits of living beings are governed by and tied to the superior spirit of nature, which is in turn directed by the spirit of God. Since the inferior spirits and their innate heat are the causes of life's functions, their extinction provokes the death of living beings. The fundamental tools of Fernel's physiology are established on his particular reading of Aristotle's *Generation of Animals* 2.3, according to which “nature” in the seed's *pneuma* corresponds by analogy to the element of stars (Fernel [1548](#); Hirai [2011](#)).

Italian natural philosopher Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588) acknowledged two principles for all natural things: active cosmic heat and passive coldness. He also replaced the soul of living beings by the spirit as the cause of life's functions. He went even further to regard the spirit as an active material portion, in which cosmic heat is highly condensed. For him the spirit is, so to speak, the material vehicle of cosmic heat (Telesio [1586](#); Hirai [2017](#)).

Impact and Legacy

In his major work, *The Idea of Philosophical Medicine* (*Idea medicinae philosophicae*), Danish Paracelsian Petrus Severinus (1540/1542–1602) suggested the possibility of capturing the spirit in the form of a material entity, which could be manipulated by the art of chymistry (Severinus [1571](#)). For him this entity was the foundation of the “universal medicine” (*medicina universalis*), able to cure all kinds of diseases. Despite multiple names used by his forerunners, Severinus focused on one divine material, “vital balsam” (*balsamum vitale*), which he believed to hold the secret of life in the bosom of animals, plants, and minerals. Later in the early seventeenth century, his followers such as French Paracelsian Joseph Du Chesne (1546–1609) and English theosophist Robert Fludd (1574–1637) were eager to seek

the material spirit of life in view of achieving their dreams of the universal medicine and the prolongation of life (Debus 1984; Clericuzio 1994).

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- Ficino, Marsilio
- Radical Moisture
- Severinus, Petrus
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Stars in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Stars remained favorite objects of observation during the Renaissance, both from an astronomical and astrological point of view. New, accurate observations of the so-called fixed (*stellae fixae*) lead to a long re-discussion of many unsettled issues in regard to their nature, such as the understanding of their origin, form, number, light source, twinkling, dimension, position, distance, apparent fixity, and incorruptibility. The revision of traditional conceptions for each of those debated aspects contributed in general to the radical rearrangement and subversion of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmic model and in particular to the abandonment of the idea of existence of an outer crystal sphere where stars were presumed to dwell and eternally wheel around. Moreover, the discovery of variable stars, the display of unprecedented telescopic observations, and the unexpected appearances of novae in the heavens urged the scientific community between the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century to entirely redefine centuries-old notions of unchallenged stellar astronomy. At the same time, the production of more and more precise constellation maps, celestial globes, and star charts helped to reach a better comprehension of the arrangements of stars in the night sky and their relative positions in both the celestial hemispheres, especially for and thanks to intercontinental navigations.

Synonyms

Astral lights; Historical supernovae; Sidereal lights; *Stellae fixae*; Variable stars

Spiritus

- Spirit in Renaissance Medicine

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Stars have not always been conceived as celestial bodies made of hot gases radiating luminous energy. In Renaissance times, the debate about the origin and the nature of the stars was conducted swinging between two opposite theses: stars were either considered immaterial lights or were regarded as solid, shining bodies. For instance, according to Francesco Patrizi, a Neoplatonic philosopher operating in Italy at the end of the sixteenth century, stars were pure concentration of aethereal light, which entirely lacked any physical or corporeal constituent (*Nova de Universis Philosophia*, Ferrara, 1591, in particular *Pancosmia* c. 20r). Behind this conception there was still the view of Aristotle, according to whom stars were immortal living entities made of translucent quintessence that were thought to be “divine” and similar to gods in consideration of their unchanging perdurance and (apparent) eternal motion (Segev 2017, pp. 93–94). On the other hand, around the beginning of the seventeenth century, the presence of some physical component was devised as a necessary requirement for the existence of stars as they stand. Kepler, for instance, claimed the compulsoriness of some solid nature for the stars and for catalyzing out their light. For him even in the case that they were conceived just as some sort of mirrors reflecting the solar light and not as active light sources, it was maintained that stars had to have some substrate. However not even Kepler denied their aethereal essence but reorganized its structure into the forms of regular solids and supposed its origin by the way of spontaneous ignition within the Milky Way through the universal activity of a natural faculty of the living cosmos (Boner 2009, 2013, pp. 69–103).

Kepler’s account aside, however, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was generally believed that stars were dense accretions of aether having spherical form that were transported around the heavens through a transparent crystalline celestial vault, i.e., the so-called eighth spheres of the fixed stars, where stars were firmly accommodated along its circular motion. The spherical shape as such was considered to be the

most perfect form and – by analogy with the spherical forms of the Sun and the Moon – it was the form that in the superlunar world was presumably assumed by all the heavenly aethereal bodies in their turn. This was, for instance, the opinion of the French astronomer Jacques du Chevreul (*Sphera*, Ch. IV *De stellis*, Paris, 1623, cc. 74–75).

The alleged incorruptibility of the stars was justified by making reference to the absence of any visible variation in long-term observations of their appearance. The common explanation was that the aethereal material by which stars were made was incorruptible and inalterable by itself. In fact, aether for Aristotle and his aftermath was a transparent, meta-elementary material without a polar opposite in which it might physically turn, so that it was considered to be immune to corruption and decay. According to the aforementioned Jacques du Chevreul, the stars should have been thought of as denser and rarer parts of the heavens, so that in this way they could propagate a different amount of light in relation to their density and rarity, without affecting the assumed eternal homogeneity of the heavens (Ariew 2001, p. 576). However the unexpected outburst of glaring novae or new stars, as when “Tycho’s Supernova” appeared in the constellation of Cassiopea in 1572 or the “Kepler’s Supernova” appeared in the constellation of Ophiuchus in 1604 (cf. Thorndike 1941; Weichenhan 2004; Tessicini and Boner 2013), as well as the discovery of variable stars, as in the case of *omicron Ceti* or “Mira” – the wonder – first spotted by David Fabricius between 1596 and 1609 (cf. Bobrovnikoff 1942; Hoffleit 1997; Hatch 2011), paved the way to think the stars as subject to change as every other material occurrence in the sublunar world (Granada 2007).

The denser/rarer aether thesis was believed as a plausible account of the nature of the stars also in consideration of the different stars’ dimensions that were classified in six “magnitudes” or sizes since Ptolemy’s time. The telescope of Galileo showed for the first time the existence of stars with a magnitude inferior to the sixth that were shining in the night sky but were invisible to human eyes. Galileo also revealed the real nature of the Milky Way as an aggregate of very close

and previously inseparable stars on sight and not as the atmospheric condensation that it was usually believed to be.

Regarding the possibility of enumeration of the stars, the main source was still Ptolemy's *Almagest*, which listed 1022 fixed stars. In Renaissance times, this number was accepted as the standard reference number over Aristotle's and even over the Bible's claims, according to which stars were countless and innumerable. Still in 1611, for instance, the Croatian philosopher Giorgio Raguseo reported that precise number as the prevailing quota shared among mathematicians (Camerota 2014); he maintained so despite the publication of Galileo Galilei's *Sidereus Nuncius* in the previous year, where, as said, telescopic observations proved the actual existence of an infinitely higher number of stars that had been never counted before. Apparently, Raguseo and the mathematicians were also unaware of the imposing naked-eye observations that Tycho Brahe achieved some years before, probably because at first they had limited diffusion. For, "Tycho circulated his results, informally known as the 'thousand-star' catalogue, in handwritten form in January 1598 under the title *Stellarum octavi orbis inerrantium accurata restitutio*. An abridged version, containing a subset of 777 of the most accurately determined star positions, was printed in 1602, the year after his death; it formed part of a much larger book called *Astronomiae Instauratae Progymnasmata*. Tycho's thousand-star catalogue was eventually edited and published in 1627 by [...] Kepler. This catalogue formed part of the *Rudolphine Tables*, which were primarily tables for calculating planetary positions (they were named 'Rudolphine' after the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II)" (Ridpath 1988/2017; cf. also Verbunt and van Gent 2010). Once they spread, these new catalogues superseded the Ptolemaic list of stars contained in the *Almagest*, and stellar astronomy could then make more secure and wide steps forward.

The observational study of the stars lead to collecting position data for making reliable constellation maps and star charts in the renewed field of celestial cartography. The need for locating stars with precision pushed to an unprecedented

level of accuracy the traditional depiction for decorative purposes of the stars and their constellations. Although the first representations were just mythological figures printed aside from classical astronomical texts, such as Hyginus' or Aratus' *Phaenomena*, star maps started to be produced for astronomical and practical purposes, such as for navigation or for astrological reference. The first attempts to provide in print some kind of coordinate system with a basic magnitude scale for observation and reference can be listed as follows: A. Dürer's iconic double woodcuts (1515), A. Piccolomini's star atlas *De le stelle fisse* (1540), J. Honter's constellation maps in his *Rudimenta Cosmographica* (1542), G.P. Gallucci's pluriedited star catalogue *Theatrum Mundi et Temporis* (1588), and Th. Hood's celestial hemispheres, which was published as attachments to his book on *The Use of the Celestial Globe in Plano* (1590). In the seventeenth-century stellar cartography, one work stood out for its novelty and overall quality: it was J. Bayer's *Uranometria Omnium Asterismorum*, whose first edition in 1604 was at the head of a long series of reprints. There, Greek letters were introduced to name the stars according to their magnitude in the relative constellation and an accurate grid system was adopted for the location of the stars from the geocentric observational perspective. Many derivative star atlases were eventually influenced by (or even plagiarized upon) Bayer's achievement, until J. Hevelius' star catalogue and maps in his posthumous *Prodromus Astronomiae* (1690) were presented as the last original comprehensive collection of systematically observed stars and constellations.

"Other new constellations were created during the Renaissance in order to corporealize areas of stars that had been recorded, but were noted as unformed or outside the boundaries of any particular Ptolemaic constellation. In 1536, Caspar Vopel introduced *Coma Berenices* and *Antinous* on a new globe. In 1589, Petrus Plancius and Jacob Floris van Langren added *Crux* and *Triangulus Antarcticus*, likewise on a globe. In 1592, Plancius created *Columba* and *Polophylax* on the inset celestial maps of a larger world map. Plancius added nine biblical themed

constellations in 1612 on a globe produced in conjunction with Pieter van den Keere. Jakob Bartsch replaced Plancius's *Apes* with his own *Vespa* in 1624, and Isaac Habrecht II introduced *Rhombus* (an early predecessor of *Reticulum*) on his celestial globe of 1625" (Friedman Herlihy 2007, p. 104). Moreover, a more complete knowledge of the celestial Southern hemisphere was reached as an increasing number of expeditions took place under those untraced skies, especially after P.D. Keyser and De Houtman's austral voyage in the mid-1590s (cf. Dekker 1987).

A further debated issue regarded how to explain the typical starry twinkling. Aristotle referred to the faint flashing as the shortcoming of human eyes on long-distance sights; however Renaissance astronomers, such as, for instance, Aversa, attributed the reason for the optical shak-ing to the irregular glare of light from stars' opaque surfaces, while others, such as, for instance, Brahe, Serbellonius, and Scheiner, supposed an interference by the external medium between the observer and the stars, like agitated air, interposed vapors, or fluid aether. In his *De Immenso* (1591), Giordano Bruno claimed that the twinkling of the stars had to be intended as a result of their axial rotation, extending then this theory to the Sun (*Opera latino conscripta*, I, ii, pp. 42–44).

Two main opposite theses were defended in Renaissance astronomy regarding the presumed source of starlight: either the stars were self-luminous bodies or they were receiving their light from the Sun. At the end of the sixteenth century, the Coimbra Jesuits still claimed that the most common and shared opinion was the latter. Nonetheless, thinkers like Giordano Bruno or Nicholas of Cusa had already previously assumed that all celestial bodies were like self-luminous Suns (Dick 1982, pp. 40; 108). Successively, stars' self-luminosity was accepted and upheld by Kepler, Aversa, Descartes, de Arriaga, Poncius, and Riccioli. Although it would have become the standard view in the second half of the seventeenth century, there was still someone (like, for instance, George of Rodi, in 1671) that instead maintained the Sun as the only actual light source for the fixed stars (Grant 1994, pp. 415–419).

Finally, between the end of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth century, the very existence of the outer sphere of the fixed stars was called into question. Stars began to be no longer thought of as disposed on the surface of the external celestial vault according to an equal distance from the Earth and indeed the very idea of a "celestial vault" as such started to collapse. As Earth's rotation was accepted so that distances turned out as relative distances and movements as apparent movements, also "the idea of stars scattered through an indefinitely large space was immediately appealing, and acquired theoretical plausibility" (Donahue 1981, p. 209). Nonetheless, the dissolution of the outer bounding sphere opened the universe as it was known as infiniteness – a cosmological conception that was itself controversial, in consideration of the unique and undisputed infiniteness of God. In absence of a bearing support, stars' motions were intended as inherently dependent on their own substantial forms, which allowed them to proceed in perfect accord without the need of a moving intelligence underneath. In some cases, the omnipotence of God was extended also to direct or angelic motion of the stars, so that not even in this scenario a solid sphere was still needed (for, stars as such were generally considered incapable of self-motion). In some other cases, the aethereal crystal of which the stellar sphere was thought to be made was conceived as fluid, nebulous, or even spiritual-pneumatic matter where stars were all floating in the cosmic swirling stream before that its presumed consistency was disregarded and its alleged solidity was completely dismissed (ibid.).

Last but not least, nocturnal stargazing was generally considered a useful practice for relevant sectors of civic life, such as political astrology and astrological medicine. In fact, it was commonly believed that the positions of the stars and planets, in general, exerted their influence over the balance of bodily fluids or human humors. Therefore health and temperament of the entire population depended, among other factors, on stars. Accordingly, health treatises known as *regimina sanitatis* usually devoted long sections to the study of the movements of heavenly bodies and how they could predispose dangerous conditions of illness

on the Earth. Interpretation of celestial figures was considered also relevant for political decision-making, as, e.g., taking some possible actions or making some timing interventions, casting natal horoscopes of future sovereigns, providing genitures for political propaganda, or foreseeing the likely death of an enemy (Azzolini 2005, 2013).

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- [Geography in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Light Theory](#)
- [Telescope in Renaissance Science](#)

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State in Renaissance Politics

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Abstract

The modern state is the new form of domestic and international political organization in the European system of relations between the

fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its origin lies in the crisis of the medieval order and in the detachment of sovereignty from the earliest popular and territorial bases. While the formulation of the concept of sovereignty is conventionally associated with the emergence of the modern states-system culminating in its political formalization with the Westphalian settlement of 1648, it was in the late Middle Ages and definitely during the Renaissance that the word "state" acquired a meaning close to the modern sense. It was around this time that discussions about the state as a separate entity and its purpose and powers became widespread in the political language. A historic analysis of the word "stato" shows its multifarious meanings and the difficult process it went through from antiquity to Machiavelli before being accepted in its modern sense by scholars. Yet Bodin and Hobbes became the focal points for the birth and development of the modern state with the concept of sovereignty associated with it.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Any discussion about the state in Renaissance politics must begin with Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt's claim in his 1860 work *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* that fifteenth-century Italian intellectuals and politicians created a new sort of polity, "the state as a work of art." By this expression, undoubtedly of Hegelian origin, Burckhardt pointed to the creativity and energy that characterized the Italian city-states, not unlike the artistic "spiritual individuals" he so admired. Like a Renaissance painting, the state was a work of many hands, artfully rendered by those who held power in many regions of Italy. It is in this elaborate and self-conscious process by which Florence, Milan, Venice, and other Italian Renaissance republics and principalities developed their forms of governance in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that for the first time, Burckhardt suggested, it is possible "to detect the modern political spirit of Europe" (Burckhardt 1958, I, p. 22). More specifically,

the “Florentine spirit,” at once critical and artistically creative, has incessantly transformed the city, “which in this sense deserves the name of the first modern State in the world” (Burckhardt 1958, I, p. 95). Nevertheless, the individualism of the Renaissance for Burckhardt could sometimes result in “an amoral egoism, indifferent to the good of the community and destructive of the moral values necessary to the survival of civilised society” (Hankins 1995; Gilbert 1990). In this perspective, the state came to be conceived as a calculated technical structure aiming at achieving specific goals within a community, whereas politics was the art of the rulers to mold the matter of humanity “into whatever form they desired,” as Machiavelli puts it (Machiavelli 1995, *Il principe*, chap. VI, p. 33). Almost a century after Burckhardt’s book had appeared, the Italian historian Federico Chabod dismissed as bizarre the Burckhardian vision of Renaissance Italy as the birthplace of modern individualism, political calculation, and skepticism. Averse to any attempt to equate Renaissance states with modern states of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Chabod argued that the most significant feature of the Renaissance state was a staff of trained officials with distinctive habits and a collective identity that carried out well-defined tasks impartially (Chabod 1958). If the modern state did not yet exist in the Renaissance, it was, argues Chabod, first anticipated in the erratic bureaucratic apparatus of the Italian *signorie* and principalities as well as in the institution of a standing army. This process was also aided by the growth of diplomacy, which took its place beside the new warfare when the Italian city-states established resident embassies at foreign courts. Thus, the emergence of a bureaucratic apparatus free of personal ties placed Italy within the broader European context of modernization. Such a centralized model, clearly reminiscent of Max Weber’s sociology of the bureaucratic state and city, was in turn criticized and resolutely opposed by Marxian historians and the later Gramscian tradition: rather than being a sign of modernity, the autonomous development of regional states in the Italian Renaissance resulted in the loss of communal liberties, social involution and economic stagnation (Romano

1972; Vivanti 1972). Yet, a decisive shift away from Chabod’s “modern,” centralized, and highly bureaucratic vision of the state toward a pluralistic and decentered model was prompted by a new emphasis on the territorial dimensions of the Italian states. A more accurate enquiry into the historical-political process that from communes – unable to give a state order to Italian society – led around the middle of the fifteenth century to the creation of new structures, places the origin of the modern state precisely both in the regional states and in the more or less contemporary European national monarchies, such as England, Spain, and France (Chittolini 1979a, b, 1994). The rise of these territorial systems, grounded on cities, towns, and village communities, each with their own councils and governing bodies, provided a stimulating input to the study of particularisms, local autonomies, and diverse centers of powers. By focusing on them, historians have brought out the essential role played by ties of kinship, clan, and faction, by patronage and clientage, and their share in shaping political strategies and influencing social dynamics (Fasano Guarini 1983). A thorough investigation of such “privatistic” political practices, as well as of their interaction with those formalized as “public” or state institutions, may offer a better understanding of the process involving the emergence of the so-called “modern state” (Chittolini 1994; Fasano Guarini 1994a, b). At the same time, a parallel between the development of the state and the regionalization of economy has also been suggested (Malanima 1986; Mirri 1986). Finally, more recent historical inquiry on the late medieval and early modern state calls attention to both the political, economic, artistic, and cultural innovations and achievements that took place in Renaissance Italy and the weakness and failure of Italian republics, principalities, and rulers in the evolution of the modern European political identity (Gamberini and Lazzarini 2012).

Research on the rise of the modern state has continued and even intensified in the last several decades, with particular attention to the political thought of the Italian humanists. Nevertheless, the significance of Chabod’s analysis lies in having questioned the alleged Italian peculiarity in the

building of the modern state. As a result, recent scholarly debate mostly focuses on the interrelationship of the Italian states between the fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries with the wider European context, even though they had their own specific development. Indeed, the formation of lordships and principalities in Italy paralleled the formation of the great monarchies in Europe, that is, France, Spain, and England. In France, the Capetians gained control of nearly all duchies by staging internal wars and defeating England in the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453). They established a line of strong monarchs that lasted for eight hundred years and elevated France to the status of a major power. Although England was exhausted from the long conflict with France, the Tudor monarchs began a new dynasty after emerging victorious from the War of the Roses (1455–1485), a struggle between two families for control of the throne of England, and reigned until 1603. In Spain, the monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile laid the foundation of an immense empire by uniting several independent provinces. In the sixteenth century, during the reign of King Charles I, later Emperor Charles V, the Spanish empire spread east from Spain to include the kingdoms of Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, Naples, and Sicily. It also extended south and west to include possessions in North Africa and the Americas. Although it is difficult to identify with the same accuracy the beginning for each individual country of the creative process leading to a new state structure, all evidence suggests that the nation-state system came about in medieval Western Europe as a result of the fading political dominance held by the feudal lords and the Catholic Church. The rejection of the Church's claims to temporal power along with the decline of personal feudal obligations were necessary preconditions for the emergence of the territorial state. In government, city-states and regional and national principalities replaced the fading hegemony of the empire and the papacy and eradicated many of the local feudal jurisdictions that had covered Europe. This process was consolidated by two other developments that undermined the essential structure of feudalism: the growing

commercialization of the economy and the urbanization leading to the entry into political life of autonomous burghers (Gill 2016). Owing to increased trade, towns began to develop as centers of commerce. Over time, some of them demanded independence (or at least semi-independence) from their feudal masters. Gradually, the feudal manors lost their political dominance to trade and accumulation of money. Mobile capital was a resource for a new type of emerging state. This power vacuum created by the waning of the feudal lord's power gave rise to a new type of ruler: a single national monarch. Increasingly, people were no longer bound to their ruler by an oath; rather, they were citizens of cities and towns who enjoyed certain privileges and rights. These rulers in turn could consolidate more and more land under their control. Hence, new forms of co-ordination and dominion (regional states) overlaid the plurality of powers that had come into being independent until the end of the Middle Ages in the countryside (rural lordships) and in the cities (communes). This embryonic form of the modern state, resulting from the dissolution of the feudal society, presupposed that the state was first and foremost a power structure and that it had to be organized to make ruling and obedience effective. The principle of territorial sovereignty as articulated by the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance was to last for several centuries. Upon this foundation a new system and new concepts of statehood could arise.

Innovative and Original Aspects

While the Middle Ages witnessed the rise of complex structures of interaction between institutions, the ruled and rulers, the early modern period altered such framework significantly. During the sixteenth century, almost all the emerging European nation states, from the smallest Italian regional states to the largest, such as the Spanish Empire, display similar characteristics. Firstly, the territorial principle had to become the dominant form of organizing large-scale society. This had to be combined with the centralization of power and authority within that territory as well as with a

legislative, judicial, and fiscal unification. Furthermore, the function of sovereignty had to be fully autonomous, undivided, able to rely on its own strength and on an independent legitimacy. Louis XI of France, Henry VII, and Henry VIII of England and the Catholic Kings of Spain were the great sovereigns who played a leading role in the emergence of the modern state. The territorialization of governance also implied a new concept of political obligation: by virtue of living within distinct boundaries, people acquire obligations, independently of personal relations, vows, faith, or origin (Morris 1998). Associated with this was the emergence of a sense of national unity, although in the early modern period it was restricted to the elite levels of the society. The other fundamental principle distinguishing the modern state from the medieval political forms was the separation of the persons of the rulers from the office and institutions they occupied. During the sixteenth century, however, even this distinction was far from being clearly defined. The royal power, in fact, still retained some feudal features: the sovereign ruler(s) heads a hierarchy of vassals, keeping the idea of a personal and contractual bond between ruler and subjects. As a matter of fact, the Renaissance is a hierarchically structured world, in which “a tendency toward concentration of power is systematically counterpoised by recognition of positions of privilege and community rights and by acknowledgment of special powers of political agency” (Chittolini 1994, p. 49). In this context, within which subjects guarantee obedience and loyalty to their ruler providing the recognition of their own privileges, customs, systems of autonomous representations (parliaments, assemblies of states, etc.), the boundaries between public and private are rather equivocal, as the linguistic distinction between “state” and “government” is ambiguous.

The concept of the modern state developed along with the vocabulary in use in the political writings of the Renaissance. In the period from classical Latin to the thirteenth century, there is no univocal meaning of the word *status*, which for a long time remained almost alien to political language. The terms *imperium*, *regnum*, *principatus* were mostly used, while the word

respublica, a term applied in fact to a wide variety of regimes, signified the state until the seventeenth century. In the early thirteenth century, for instance, “state” came to indicate the situation in which one could enjoy the associated life or the prosperity of a specific community without any reference to a specific territory or to a politically structured organism. In this idea, there is no “government” (*regimen*) of the republic in the sense of something that is found above and beyond the welfare of the citizens. Between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, *status* had also come to designate the “state” or “condition” of a realm or commonwealth (*status reipublicae*), as well as of cities as independent political entities (*status civitatum*), as was the case in the Italian communal tradition. This use of the term, dating back to ancient Rome, corresponds, in its turn, to the *status regni* as used in medieval England, and ultimately to the *status rei Romanae* in *Digest* 1.1.1.2, referring to the condition or to the state of the people’s affairs and not to the bodies of magistrates in charge with running these affairs (Rubinstein 1971; Tenenti 1987; Skinner 1989). Yet, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, particularly in the well-established monarchies of France and England, *status* is generally related to the state of majesty, a high estate, a condition of grandeur, not to the state as a separate apparatus of government (Skinner 1989). This idea is perfectly consistent with the medieval vision of the state according to which royal sovereignty, given its divine origin, is mostly above the law. It was mainly the constitutional rehearsal of the *regna* and of the *civitates* in Italy that called into question the principle of the *plenitudo potestatis*, on which, albeit in different ways, both the papacy and the empire had founded their universalistic claims.

The consolidation of independent communes across central and northern Italy in the mid-thirteenth century also coincided with the rediscovery and translation of Aristotle’s *Politics*, a text that provided the early structure and style of city-state political culture. The recovery of Aristotelianism points to the problem of the conception of political sovereignty and its relationship with the emerging idea of state. It was precisely

after William of Moerbeke's translation of Aristotle's *Politics* around the year 1260 and Thomas Aquinas's unfinished commentary upon it, which he began in 1269, that in late medieval and Renaissance Italy the word *status* came also to designate the form of political regime of a community. Aquinas was well acquainted with both aspects of the state, the whole commonwealth, and the specific regime that gives it form and direction. In his main works, he raised the question of how a judge or a magistrate can promote the common good, or what it means for a *civitas* or *respublica* to attain its best state, a topic that will later be developed into the question of how the good *status* of a community is to be preserved. Going back to Aristotle's famous distinction as developed in the *Politics* between the ideal and perverted forms of government, Aquinas shows a strong preference for the rule of one (monarchy) as the most appropriate regime to ensure social unity and peace. Dante's views of the government were heavily influenced by Aristotle and Aquinas too. Taking an Aristotelian perspective, in his treatise *Monarchia* (probably written after 1308), Dante ardently believes that humanity, being ordained to an end, should have a single unified government in the form of a temporal monarchy or universal empire. However, Dante's supreme ruler is more likely an international overseer and arbitrator rather than a despot: what makes him a good leader is not obligation or interdependence with his subjects, but his absolute freedom from worldly influences and desires. Such a magnanimity, together with the divine order of the universe, limits his sovereignty: in pursuing the state's objectives, a universal monarch serves the population, thus aligning the universal monarchy with the achievement of individual happiness. Dante's belief in a separate existence of the church and state and his theory of limited sovereignty can also be found in Marsilius of Padua (1275 ca.-1342/3), who advocates world peace through unified temporal sovereignty. His *Defensor pacis* (1324), one of the most original political treatises produced during the Middle Ages, played an important part in carrying ideas of popular sovereignty and against the jurisdictional pretensions of the church, thus significantly influencing the modern

idea of the state and particularly the Machiavellian state.

It was precisely during those two centuries, going from Marsilius to Machiavelli, that the premises of a political reflection took place which, by combining some issues of both the late medieval legal theory and the classical political thought, laid the theoretical foundation of what would be the "modern state." Yet, modern historiography has not fully stressed the importance of the humanists' contribution to the issue of the modern concept of state and sovereignty, whereas greater emphasis has been placed on what has been regarded as the "Machiavellian" revolution. Similarly, the theoretical ties deeply linking Petrarch's thought and the fifteenth-century political treatises have not yet been adequately and exhaustively investigated. In the early Quattrocento, Renaissance humanists had to deal with the new political world dominated by two basic forms of government, monarchy and oligarchy. While at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Italy appeared as moving towards unity with the flourishing of city-states, the situation dramatically changed in the Quattrocento: by that time five major states – Venice, Milan, Florence, the Papal State, and the Kingdom of Naples – and a host of smaller city-states and signories were competing to dominate the Peninsula (see ► "[Politics, Renaissance](#)"). This new political framework involves in turn a change in political perspective. Hence, the main focus of humanist writers like Bartolomeo Platina (1421–1481), Francesco Patrizi of Siena (1413–1494), and Giovanni Pontano (1426–1503) was the legitimacy of the rulers and the obedience of the citizens (Cappelli 2012; Hankins 2019). They elaborated and developed a political doctrine of the state strongly based on the concept of organicism, namely, the representation of society as an organic body (*corpus mysticum*) inside which every member (*animae partes*) performs a specific function and the king is its visible representative, a reflection of the *unitas* that should be the basis for all social and political structure. According to this view, the political legitimacy of the state is tightly linked with the virtue of rulers, which, in turn, is both the guarantee of the consensus and a moral bond of

obedience of the citizens. Central to the humanist conception of the state is the notion of *amor* or mutual *caritas* between the prince and his subjects. Such a notion implies the prince's scrupulous and public compliance with a universal system of moral virtues (Cappelli 2012, 2016). This traditional humanist doctrine was rejected and completely overturned by the "revolutionary" Machiavelli.

Following a series of changes that affected its main meaning, between the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century, the term *status* crept more and more into political and ideological discourse, gradually acquiring a moral and social connotation both in Italy and in the main European monarchies. By this stage, the process of state-building eventually meant an increasing concentration of legitimate political authority as well as the accumulation of power in the same hands or in the hands of relatively few people, the result of chronic factional rivalries, oligarchic coups from within and mercenaries from without. This is the case of the centralized princely state being championed in the age of Machiavelli. Thus, this notion of state refers to the exercise of political direction, generally connected to winning and maintaining personal domination, without specific reference to those who hold it. In this respect, the medieval proposition that the preservation of liberty, law, and justice constitutes the central aim of political life was challenged by Renaissance theorists. They contended that the central task of government is to maintain security and peace. As a result, one of the main questions addressed in the Renaissance genre of advice books for princes was how rulers should act to secure and preserve their state, that is, to uphold their status or standing as princes. This marks the beginning, as Skinner put it, of "the most important linguistic innovation" that can be traced in the political writings of Renaissance Italy, that is, the use of *stato* to denote "the institutions of government and means of coercive control that serve to organise and preserve orders within political communities" (Skinner 1989). Machiavelli's *Il principe* (written in 1513), the most celebrated treatise of this kind, is almost entirely devoted to this issue. His usage of *stato*, whose occurrence is

second in the text only to the word *principe*, seems to suggest that he meant by it political power to be grasped vigorously and exercised with subtlety by one person or a group over the rest. According to this view, the state is literally owned and molded by whichever prince happens to have control of it, thus reflecting the characteristic claim of the ruler. In this case, by linking the ruler and his dominion, Machiavelli does not conceive the modern state as an abstract political body that transcends the individuals who compose or run it (Mansfield 1983; Skinner 1989). Some historians have also underlined the exploitative nature of the meaning of the term "*lo stato*" in *Il principe* as passive, that is, "the instrument the prince uses to get what he wants," no matter the particular form of his regime (Hexter 1957), whereas it is in the popular republic as envisaged in the *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, printed posthumously in 1531, that the seeds of an early modern theory of the state may be detected (Pocock 1975; Skinner 1989). In a more radical analysis, the multifariousness of the term "state" in his works has been explained as Machiavelli's plea for a form of a state where "no part of society, no estate should be in a position to rule over others" (Vatter 2014). In this view, Machiavelli set the groundwork for a republican conception of the state (Viroli 1992; Vatter 2014). Undeniably, it is most difficult to assess whether Machiavelli has in view a particular regime or an impersonal state. Likewise, so many divergent usages do not fall easily under a clear and coherent concept. In several passages of *Il principe*, "*stato*" is related either to a prince and to the maintenance of his personal condition or to the lands or collection of territories over which he (or a republic) holds sway. In this respect, Machiavelli's expression "matters of state," as he put it in his private letters to Francesco Vettori, can be explained with his following the diplomatic usage of identifying "state" (condition or station) with dominions (Descendre 2014a). Yet, there are instances, particularly in the opening sentence of the treatise and in the *Discorsi*, where it also refers to particular regimes or constitutions, or a type of political organization having the power to act or command (Rubinstein 1971). In this context, it is sometimes

used also to describe a group of people under one form of rule. As a result, the word “state” in Machiavelli’s literary output appears to embody all of these meanings: private property (*dominium*), political power (*potestas*), and political regime (*imperium*), thus referring to both an abstract and impersonal political and jurisdictional structure and to a concrete domain over which power is exercised (Chiappelli 1952). The issue at stake is the relation between Machiavelli’s discussion of the most appropriate ways to hold, consolidate, and preserve princely rule and power and his more general concern with the shape or the form of the republic, namely, the concepts of *dominium* and *libertas*. As claimed in *Il principe* “good laws [*buone legge*],” in combination with “good arms [*buone arme*],” are the foundation of all states and societies. In addition, military discipline and laws must be supported by religion, the latter being useful and even necessary to political stability inasmuch as it both promotes virtues and creates ties that bind citizens closer together. Machiavelli was convinced that a society that does not have these three ingredients in good measure (as was the case in Italy in his time) lacks the means for greatness. By stressing the need for a national army as an essential requisite for the independence and unity of a nation as well as by urging “the people” to react against the authority exercised by either the Catholic Church or foreign powers, Machiavelli placed himself among the forerunners (if not the founders) of the notion of the nation-state (Chabod 1961).

Machiavelli’s modernity has been variously disputed by scholars. Yet, the more interesting question is what kind of state Machiavelli is referring to when he uses this term in his political writings. Just as the meaning of the word was indeterminate, so there was also no single version of the “state” in the Renaissance. Actually, the political systems and governments that were taking shape during that period, particularly in Italy, were very articulated and complex. In the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the archetypal Italian city-states went through several changes in their configuration as the peninsula was plagued by both internal wars and foreign interventions. After the French invasion of 1494, petty

principalities, self-governing republics, kingdoms and tentatively territorial states comprised the political system of Renaissance Italy. The beginning of the sixteenth century provides a striking picture of the situation: though five political authorities dominated the greater part of the territory – the Kingdom of Naples (including the Kingdom of Sicily), under Spanish rule after 1442; the Duchy of Milan; the Republics of Venice and Florence; and the Papal State – the remaining states scattered throughout Italy numbered over 100 (some of them obviously quite small). The works of Machiavelli, who in 1512 had himself experienced the collapse of the Florentine republic, were intended to offer a practical and intellectual response to the political crisis of his age that had resulted in the dismantling of the central mechanisms of republican government. Therefore, his idea of the state was not only inspired by, but also intended to be applied to, the Florentine political situation of the day. By departing from the Aristotelian tradition and medieval treatises, Machiavelli analyzes only two of the basic types of regime, namely, principalities and republics in *Il principe* and in the *Discorsi*, respectively. These in turn may have two different forms of government, aristocratic and popular rule. If *Il principe* appears as the theorization of the “civil” or “popular” principality, that is a principality founded on the support of the people, the *Discorsi* are the celebration of the *stato libero* or *repubblica*, or that state that is able to tame differences between social forces and adequately compose the nobles and the people, thus avoiding the double excess in the oligarchic and ultra-democratic sense. Although celebrating the individual virtue of the prince, Machiavelli’s preference goes for a republic in which the solidity of the state resides in the *leggi* and *ordini*, namely, that “distinctive bundle of laws, social and political institutions and customs which he regards as the product of successful state formation” (Stacey 2013, p. 180). Whereas in the principalities there is the thorny problem of personal succession to power, in the republics continuity is ensured by an interweaving of opposing forces that prevent the dominance of a single individual authority, thus preserving freedom and balance of power. In this

regard, Machiavelli considers the tripartition of the Roman republic as an ideal model: consuls, senate, plebs. His solution consists of a republican constitution stipulating a degree of civic participation that ensures that the citizen body as a whole is involved in government. With these arrangements in place, no individual person or faction can be said to be imposing their particular will upon the whole body politic. As a result, *lo stato* does not correspond to any single type of naturally occurring regime. On the contrary, it is a peculiar entity that Machiavelli comes to call a *corpo misto*, or mixed body. The new and civil-popular principality thus appears to be the “virtuous” response to the crisis of a self-governing republic, in which internal clashes prevent the renewal of the republican experience; in short, it is an “exceptional” solution, an “extraordinary” way of dealing with the crisis at a time when the “ordinary” ways are powerless in the face of disaffection with public affairs. In this respect, Machiavelli’s modernity lies in the way he adapted and applied his ideas and concepts to a set of problems, which he took to be pressing in his age (Sasso 1980).

Impact and Legacy

Machiavelli was not alone among his contemporaries to use *stato* in such a multifarious and flexible manner. If the equation between *status* and *dominatio* (geographic connotation with reference to territorial dominion) was rather frequent in the political literature of the Italian humanists (Donato Acciaiuoli, Filippo Beroaldo, Francesco Patrizi, Vespasiano da Bisticci), current Florentine usage of the word also extended to the population over which the power is exercised, or, in a more generic sense, to political rights. Although the development of the concept of state as regime in late medieval and Renaissance Italy must be derived from Aristotle as interpreted by Aquinas, it was Leonardo Bruni (1370 ca.–1444) who in his early fifteenth-century translation of the *Politics* coined the expressions *optimatum status* for *aristocratia*, *paucorum status* for *oligarchia* and *popularis status* for *democratia*. In the case of despotic states, where *stato* as political regime

practically corresponded to *stato* as dominion, the two meanings were almost equivalent and overlapping (Rubinstein 1971). Soon after the rise to power of the Medici (1434), there was a shift in the meaning of the term from *stato* as power structure of the state to *stato* as prevailing regime. Finally, the word came to refer to an apparatus of political authority that served to preserve order within political communities (Skinner 1989). The centrality of the well-ordered political life in early sixteenth-century humanist treatises influenced the so-called utopian literature dealing with the attainment of the *optimus status*, the most representative of which is Thomas More’s famous book *Utopia* or *De optimo rei publicae statu* (see “Politics, Renaissance”). Parallel to this tradition, which goes back to Plato’s *Republic*, there are the contributions of the Florentine political writers of the thirteenth century, and particularly of quattrocento “civic humanists,” as Hans Baron described them (Baron 1966; Rubinstein 1971), centering on the idea that both individual and civil liberty, and therefore the common good, can be guaranteed best under the laws and institutions of a republic (Skinner 1989). Nevertheless, much research in recent decades indicates that Italian humanists generally avoided “exclusivist” preferences for a republican regime in the modern sense. Rather, they regarded the question of constitutional form as secondary to the issue of virtue, or as Hankins put it, “good government is ultimately about good rulers and not about ideal regimes” (Hankins 2019). However, a different *corpus* of political speculation on the rising European state existed during the time of Machiavelli. This was originated by the Dominican theologian and founder of the so-called School of Salamanca Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546). Vitoria’s conceptualization of political society, informed by Thomistic and Aristotelian teleology, proved significant for the development of a modern conception of state politics and political ethics. In his *De potestate civili* (1528), Vitoria developed the organic conception of the state in which a *potestas* brings society into unity and directs it toward determinate ends as well as the idea that the state power is subject to moral authority. In this respect, Vitoria’s approach

provided a vigorous critique of both state practice and literature founded on the doctrine of the reason of State. Traditionally associated with Machiavelli – although he does not mention it – the idea of “reason of state” was promoted by Giovanni Botero (1544–1617) in his treatise *Della ragion di stato* (1589). A similar formulation had already appeared in Francesco Guicciardini’s *Dialogo del reggimento di Firenze*, drafted between 1521 and 1524, and in Giovanni della Casa’s 1547 oration to Charles V, with reference to foreign policy and military conquests, thus distinguishing “reason of states” (law of foreign relations) and *ius civile* (private law) (Descendre 2014b). As mentioned above, it is approximately the same meaning Machiavelli intended when he hints to “*cose di stato*,” a usage of the term that is perfectly consistent with the relevance that he assigns to international affairs. Instead, by defining the state “as a stable rule over people” and reason of state as “the knowledge (*notitia*) of the means suited to found, preserve and extend such power (*dominio*),” Botero detaches it from any juridical and ethical principle and avows its instrumental and political purpose. In this respect, the state takes on a kind of autonomy: it acts on its own for its own interest.

The doctrine of reason of state shaped political discourse from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. However, the two authors who are traditionally credited with elaborating the political, juridical, and philosophical foundation of the modern state are Jean Bodin (1530–1596) and Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), both of whom tried to conceptualize a system that could depict a distinct and indisputable source of authority. In *Les Six Livres de la République* (1576), Bodin maintained that supreme power is essential to the idea of the state, claiming that sovereignty is constituted as absolute power over subjects and must be both unlimited and perpetual. It was in France, torn by the wars of Huguenots and Catholics that Bodin also developed his arguments on the requirement of undivided sovereignty for a stable state. In contrast to Machiavelli, he further suggests that the idea of a mixed state is not simply contradictory but also highly untenable. Similarly, Hobbes’ realist views as expressed in

such works as *The Elements of Law* (1640), *De cive* (1642) and *Leviathan* (1651) viewed sovereignty as “absolute, indivisible, unified, and self-perpetuating” and were heavily influenced by the socio-political context of his time, the English civil war. According to him, sovereignty is the artificial soul of “that great Leviathan called a Commonwealth or State,” which is the ultimate source of political power within a realm. Like Bodin, Hobbes believed that only a supreme and unbounded authority could rescue a state from the brutality of the war, thus ensuring the peace and happiness of the citizen-body as a whole. The awareness of such a need for an impersonal form of sovereignty, together with the doctrine of unitary power, the distinction between sovereignty and government and the subordination of spiritual power to secular authority paved the way to the birth of the modern state in Western Europe.

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Stellae Fixae

- [Stars in Renaissance Science](#)

Steuchus, Augustinus

- [Steuco, Agostino](#)

Steuco, Agostino

Born: 1497/1498, Gubbio, Italy

Died: 1548, Venice, Italy

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Abstract

Agostino Steuco – Canons Regular of the Lateran, Counter-Reformation humanist, Biblical scholar, and prefect of the Vatican

Library – was undoubtedly one of the most representative thinkers in the history of Renaissance Neoplatonism. His major work is *De perenni philosophia* (1540).

Alternate Names

[Steuchus](#), [Augustinus](#); [Eugubinus](#)

Biography

Agostino Steuco was born in Gubbio in 1497 or early 1498. Christened Guido, he changed his name to Agostino when he entered the Order of the Canons Regular of the Lateran at the convent of San Secondo in Gubbio in late 1512 or early 1513. From 1517 to 1525, Steuco lived at the convent of San Salvatore in Bologna; and at the University of Bologna, he perfected his cultural training in ancient languages, philology, rhetoric, and history. In 1525 he moved to Venice, where he remained until 1529.

In Venice Steuco was in charge of Cardinal Domenico Grimani's precious library at the Augustinian convent of Sant'Antonio di Castello. Domenico Grimani, upon his death in 1523, “had deeded to the canons at San Antonio a great portion of his extensive library. This substantial endowment, which included many manuscripts and printed works that had once belonged to Pico della Mirandola, was especially rich in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic works, as well as patristic authors and philosophical writings” (Delph 1994: 106–107). Grimani's valuable manuscript collection offered Steuco an opportunity to deepen his studies and was a great source of inspiration for his writings. In 1529 Steuco published his annotations on Jerome's Vulgate with the title *Recognitio veteris testamenti ad Hebraicam veritatem*, dedicated to Marino Grimani, Cardinal Domenico Grimani's nephew. “What Steuco produced were a set of critical emendations of Jerome's Old Testament Latin text, based upon extensive use of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts in the Grimani Library. [...] Steuco's pioneering set of Old Testament annotations soon exerted a wide

influence among biblical scholars throughout Europe” (Delph 1994: 108–109).

In 1529 Steuco was nominated prior of the convent of San Marco in Reggio Emilia. In 1530 he published *Pro Religione Christiana adversus Luteranos*: “in this work Venetian republican ideas and patrician dominance of the city shaped his response to the reformers as he defended Catholic rituals and notions of the sacred” (Delph 1994: 104–105). In 1533 he returned to Gubbio as a prior of the convent of San Secondo and published *In Psalmum XVIII et CXXXVIII interpretatio. Epistola Erasmi Roterodami ad Augustinum Eugubinum. Augustini Eugubini ad Erasmus responsio*. In 1534 Steuco left Gubbio and relocated to Rome at the cloister of San Pietro in Vincoli. In 1536 he worked in the service of Pope Paul III (1534–1549). On 11 January 1538, Steuco was appointed bishop of Kissamos on Crete, and on 24 October he became prefect of the Vatican Library. “During his tenure, the papal library flourished and grew, and, among other things, he personally worked on a catalogue of the Greek manuscripts of the collection” (Schmitt 1972: VII).

In 1540 he dedicated to Pope Paul III his most famous work *De perenni philosophia*, in which title he coined the phrase “*philosophia perennis*” (Perennial philosophy). This expression designates the true philosophy which has existed from the beginning of humanity. The primeval unity and fullness of this knowledge is called “the universal agreement” or “Perennial philosophy” (see Schmitt 1966: 522). There is only one original truth and wisdom, revealed by God to all humanity and transmitted in different forms from ancient times to the later centuries in a perfect historical continuity. This primal wisdom is more ancient than Greek philosophy and, in fact, originates from other nations. Steuco writes: “Hereby the nations that originated first, and in whose lands was born and developed the history of the ancients, preserved more than other nations clearer and more authentic vestiges of those events. I am speaking of Chaldeans, Armenians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Phoenicians. It is among these peoples that the Theology of the Ancients can be found partly clear and manifest, partly mixed with fables and intricate, and partly corrupted by impious figments” (Garin 2008: 399–400).

Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) were the most significant philosophical predecessors of Steuco’s conception. On the one hand, there is Ficino’s notion of the *prisca theologia* as a *pia philosophia* and, on the other, Pico’s attempt “to utilize the philosophies and theologies of the past in the formulation of a single system of philosophical truth” (Schmitt 1966: 512). In particular, Steuco “really carries the program of Pico della Mirandola to its logical conclusion. Whereas Pico founds some elements of truth in all philosophical, religious, and scientific traditions, Steuchus sees all traditions as agreeing on most, if not all, important issues” (Schmitt 1972: XI). Moreover, in Steuco’s syncretistic perspective, the philosophical tradition is indistinguishable from the religion, and this fusion is of clear Neoplatonic inspiration. The true and perfect philosophy’s end is piety and contemplation of God: “the *philosophia perennis* has an epistemology in which God is knowable by human reason” and “it is a religious philosophy” (Schmitt 1966: 522).

In 1547, in the polemical work *Contra Laurentium Vallam de falsa Donatione Constantini*, Steuco “applied his expertise in Greek and Latin, and his abilities as a humanist historian, philologist and textual critic, to the task of forever disarming Valla’s treatise as a weapon to be used by the Protestants in the debate over the authenticity of the *Donation of Constantine*” (Delph 1987: 262). In 1547 Paul III invited Steuco to participate in the Council of Trent. We know that he stayed during the summer of 1547 in Bologna, where the Council had been transferred. On 3 February 1548, Paul III suspended the Council and Steuco moved to Venice for reasons of health. Unfortunately, on 18 March of the same year, Steuco died in Venice (Crocata 1987: 18–19). His corpse was buried in the church of Sant’Antonio in Venice and then transferred to the church of Sant’Ambrogio in Gubbio.

Major Agostino Steuco’s Works

Recognitio veteris testamenti ad Hebraicam veritatem, Venetiis, in Aedibus Aldi et Andreae Soceri, 1529.

Pro Religione Christiana adversus Luteranos, Bononiae, Ioannes Baptista Phaellus, 1530.

In Psalmum XVIII et CXXXVIII interpretatio. Epistola Erasmi Roterodami ad Augustinum Eugubinum. Augustini Eugubini ad Erasmus responsio, Lugduni, apud Seb. Gryphium, 1533.

Cosmopoeia vel de mundano opificio. De rerum corporearum, visibiliumque creatione. De rebus incorporeis, et invisibilibus. An vulgata editio sit divi Hieronymi, Lugduni, apud Sebastianum Gryphium, 1535.

De perenni philosophia. De Eugubij nomine, Lugduni, Seb. Gryphius, 1540.

Contra Laurentium Vallam de falsa Donatione Constantini. De restituenda navigatione Tiberis, Lugduni, apud Seb. Gryphium, 1547.

De Aqua Virgine in Urbem revocanda, Lugduni, apud Seb. Gryphium, 1547.

Enarrationum in Psalmos pars prima, Lugduni, apud Seb. Gryphium, 1548.

Enarrationes in Librum Iob, Venetiis, apud Cominum, 1567.

(List from Crociata 1987: 241–242).

Impact and Legacy

Steuco's greatest philosophical contribution is in his work *De perenni philosophia*. In the seventeenth century, the book was highly praised: Kasper von Barth (1587–1658) called it a “golden book,” and Daniel Georg Morhof (1639–1691) referred to it as an “opus admirabile” (Schmitt 1966: 516–517). However, the work also had many critical readers: Benito Pereira (1535–1610), Giambattista Crispo (1550–ca. 1595), Denis Petau (1583–1652), Gerardus Johannes Vossius (1577–1649), Richard Simon (1638–1712), and Johannes Matthaeus Gesner (1691–1761).

According to Pereira, Steuco's positions were “not only false, but even most absurd and completely inconsistent with Christian teaching” (Schmitt 1966: 525). Giambattista Crispo, a little-known Italian thinker from Gallipoli, in his *De ethnicis caute legendis* (1594), “criticized “that celebrated writer on perennial philosophy” (*celebrem illum de perenni philosophia scriptorem*) for comparing Moses to Plato,

describing it as “Steuco's odious comparison” (*odiosa Eugubini comparatio*)” (Schmitt 1966: 526). Petau, following Pereira's objections, asserted that the agreement of Platonism with Christian tradition was theologically unacceptable. The theologian and philologist Johannes Vossius condemned Steuco's idea that the ancient pagan religions were in profound agreement with Christianity: “he charges Steuco with twisting Plato's words to make them agree with Christian teaching. Vossius can see no connection between the teachings of the *prisci theologi* and Christianity, and concludes that no one who knows Plato well could agree with Steuco's interpretation” (Schmitt 1966: 527). Richard Simon criticized Steuco's excessive dependency on the *prisca theologia* and his misinterpretations. Finally, Gesner “found Steuco, along with Psellus and Ficino, to have erroneously held that religious truths may be known without actual access to the Scriptures” (Schmitt 1966: 527).

Conversely, in the syncretistic branch of the sixteenth century, Steuco's work met the favor of many interpreters. For example, Guillaume Postel (1510–1581) mentioned *De perenni philosophia* in his *De rationibus Spiritus Sancti* (1543). Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558), in the prefatory letter to his translation of *Libri de plantis falso Aristoteli attributi* (1556), called Steuco “a divine man and easily a prince of true literature” (Schmitt 1966: 528). Jacques Charpentier (1524–1574) in *Platonis cum Aristotele in universa philosophia comparatio* (1573), because he “was looking for material in support of his own view that Platonism and Christianity are reconcilable, cited evidence from Steuco that such an end can be accomplished” (Schmitt 1966: 528). Paul Scalichius (1534–1574) in *De iustitia aeterna seu de vera promissione gradatio* (1559) and Muzio Pansa (1560–1640) in *De osculo seu consensu ethnicae et Christianae philosophiae tractatus* (1605) were profoundly influenced by Steuco's philosophical thought. In particular, “Pansa's work in essentially an early eighteenth-century reiteration of the principles of perennial philosophy” (Schmitt 1966: 529).

Lastly, in this long historical tradition, we get to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716). As Charles B. Schmitt claims in his fundamental

essay entitled “Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz” (1966), that “Leibniz knew Steuco well [...] and traces of his influence can be found throughout Leibniz’s writings” (Schmitt 1966: 531). Nevertheless, he “was not the originator of the notion of *philosophia perennis*” and “was the first to speak of *philosophia perennis* without specifically referring to Steuco as the author of the notion. [...] From this time onward the connection of ‘perennial philosophy’ with the theologian from Gubbio was often lost” (Schmitt 1966: 532).

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- philosophy, based on their reading of Cicero and Seneca. Seneca attracted much humanist attention and was the subject of biographies and commentaries. However Stoicism also had its critics, from Lorenzo Valla, adopting an Epicurean point of view, to Marsilio Ficino, defending his own Platonic position. The recovery and translation of Greek authors such as Diogenes Laertius and Epictetus expanded knowledge of the Stoa. Whereas early humanists associated Stoicism with Cicero and Seneca, later generations returned Zeno and Chrysippus to center stage. Seneca remained important, even after the correspondence with St Paul was dismissed as spurious, and attracted the attention of Erasmus, Jean Calvin, and Justus Lipsius. It was with Lipsius that the fortunes of Stoicism changed dramatically. His *De constantia* founded what has come to be called Neostoicism, while his two Stoic handbooks published in 1604 brought together for the first time more or less all the surviving evidence for Stoic philosophy. His contemporaries Michel de Montaigne and Guillaume Du Vair presented Stoic ideas in the vernacular and reemphasized the practical orientation of Stoicism. The early seventeenth century saw a flurry of scholarly studies by Adam Bursius, Caspar Scioppius, and Isaac Casaubon alongside those of Lipsius. Throughout the period, a continual theme was the compatibility of Stoicism with Christianity; by the end of the period, they were firmly disconnected, paving the way for eighteenth-century presentations of Stoicism as a form of materialism and atheism.

Stoicism

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Abstract

The ancient philosophy of Stoicism found both admirers and critics during the Renaissance. Early humanists such as Petrarch and Coluccio Salutati admired many aspects of Stoic

Introduction

The ancient philosophical school of Stoicism was founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium c. 300 BCE, and the school developed under his successors Cleanthes and Chrysippus. By the first century BCE, the Athenian school was no more, but its ideas were already well known in Rome. The works of the Athenian Stoics fell out of circulation in late antiquity, making Cicero’s extended

discussions of Stoic ideas in his philosophical works the earliest and most important record of early Stoic philosophy.

In Rome Stoicism attracted numerous adherents, of whom Seneca was probably the most significant, along with a number of others with whom he was acquainted, including Cornutus, Lucan, and Persius. Around the same time, Musonius Rufus lectured on Stoicism in Rome, and his most famous pupil, Epictetus, went on to found a philosophical school in Nicopolis, where his pupil Arrian recorded his lectures. Epictetus was an important influence on Marcus Aurelius, whose notebook reflections composed most likely in the 170s stand as the latest Stoic text to survive.

The Stoics identified God with Nature (or with the *pneuma* permeating Nature) and God's providence with fate, which they characterized as the order of causes in Nature. The human soul, they suggested, is a fragment of the divine *pneuma* in Nature and essentially rational. They dismissed the emotions of delight, lust, distress, and fear as the products of mistaken judgments and taught their eradication. They advocated a life in harmony with Nature guided by virtue, which they defined as a soul in excellent condition. Only virtue is inherently good, they held, and its opposite, vice, the only thing inherently bad. External goods and states of affairs may be preferable or non-preferable depending on whether they contribute to one's self-preservation, but they cannot contribute to one's happiness, for which virtue is the only necessary and sufficient condition.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the Latin West Stoic ideas were known primarily via the works of Cicero, Seneca, and Church Fathers such as Lactantius, Jerome, and Augustine. Further sources of information included Boethius, Calcidius, and Aulus Gellius. In the twelfth century, before the explosion of interest in Aristotle in the thirteenth, philosophers such as Peter Abelard and John of Salisbury engaged with Stoic ideas drawn from these sources. Although in principle it would have been possible to recover Stoic ideas on a fairly wide range of philosophical

topics, in practice the focus tended to remain in the realm of ethics. The most noteworthy examples of philosophers engaging seriously with Stoic ethical ideas were Peter Abelard (in his *Collationes*) and Roger Bacon (in his *Moralis philosophia*). In both cases Seneca and Cicero were unsurprisingly the main sources of information and inspiration.

Renaissance engagements with Stoicism continued in this vein, at least at the beginning. It would be some time before the full range of ancient evidence for Stoic ideas became readily available, and not until the sixteenth century that the most important Greek sources were put into print. Although the important account of Stoic doctrine in Book VII of Diogenes Laertius's *Vitae philosophorum* had been translated into Latin c. 1433 and first printed in 1472, the Greek text did not appear in print until 1529. Similarly, the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus was translated into Latin in 1450 and 1479 and first printed in 1497, but the Greek text did not appear in print until 1529. Arrian's *Dissertationes Epicteti*, upon which the *Enchiridion* was based, was first printed in 1535, and Marcus Aurelius's notes to himself were printed in 1559. Other key sources in Greek included material contained in works by Stobaeus, Plutarch, Philo, Sextus Empiricus, Galen, and the Greek commentators on Aristotle (in particular, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Simplicius).

Debates about the compatibility of Stoic ethics with Christian teaching, as well as about Seneca's relationship with Christianity (shaped by Jerome's assessment of him and his supposed correspondence with St Paul), continued well into the sixteenth century. Those debates culminated in Justus Lipsius's attempt to reconcile Stoic and Christian teaching in his *De constantia* of 1584. The gradually increasing body of knowledge about ancient Stoicism was also transformed by Lipsius when he drew it all together for his two sourcebooks of Stoic philosophy printed in 1604. Lipsius's scholarship marks a definite rupture with the medieval and early Renaissance reception of Stoicism. Later discussions of Stoicism by authors such as G. W. F. Leibniz and Pierre Bayle would not have been possible without the work of

Lipsius, upon which they relied for their knowledge of Stoicism as a philosophical system.

Innovative Aspects

The early Renaissance interest in ancient Latin texts brought renewed attention to Stoicism. The most important early figure was Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304–1374). Petrarch's knowledge of Stoicism was a little different from that of his medieval predecessors and was drawn mainly from Seneca and Cicero. If there was a difference, it was in his approach to the material. His particular interest in Roman antiquity and his practical philosophical outlook combined to make him take these authors far more seriously than most scholastic philosophers tended to do. In *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, Petrarch dismissed Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as a dry textbook of moral theory, admiring instead Cicero, Seneca, and Horace for their inspiring ethical maxims (Petrarch 2003, 315). His broadly Socratic approach to philosophy, seeing it as the art of living well, made him especially interested in the sorts of Stoic therapeutic practice found in works such as Seneca's *Epistulae* and Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes*. This is most evident in his largest philosophical work, *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (Petrarch 1554, 1991), written in the 1350s. In this text, he offers a series of remedies for both good and bad fortune: in Book I "Reason" (*Ratio*) debates with "Joy" (*Gaudium*) and "Hope" (*Spes*) in order to temper happiness with or desire for a whole series of apparent goods, from good health to fame after death, while in Book II "Reason" debates with "Sorrow" (*Dolor*) and "Fear" (*Metus*) about the apparent evil of things such as ill health, poverty, bereavement, and death. These four categories of emotion which "Reason" tries to subdue are taken from Cicero's account of the Stoic analysis of emotions in *Tusculanae disputationes* III.24–5 where delight (*laetitia*) and lust (*libido*) are defined as a belief in something good, either present or future, and distress (*aegritudo*) and fear (*metus*) are defined as a belief in something bad, either present or future. The dialogue form into which this Stoic

division is cast was, like the title of the work, inspired by a short treatise entitled *De remediis fortuitorum* which was thought to be by Seneca (but is now dismissed as spurious). While the content of Petrarch's various remedies draws on a wide range of sources, the overall structure and aim are firmly Stoic (see further Panizza 1991).

The influence of Stoicism can also be seen in Petrarch's *Secretum*, written in 1347. In this dialogue between Augustine ("Augustinus") and Petrarch himself ("Franciscus"), Augustine takes the role of an older and wiser teacher who offers Petrarch a Christianized brand of Stoic-inspired psychotherapy. He argues that the younger Petrarch's current unhappiness is ultimately his own fault but that it is also within his own power to escape from it. Augustine states that "virtue alone makes the mind happy" (*Secretum* I.3.1; Petrarch 2016, 16–17), and so we should not be disturbed by external events and objects, echoing fairly standard Stoic doctrine. He goes on to suggest that only a Stoic life in accord with reason will cure the young Petrarch of his current distress. Once again Petrarch the author draws on Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes* III.24–5 for the ensuing Stoic analysis of the emotions, which are presented as the principal impediment to a rational life.

Given that Augustine is the central character in the dialogue, reflecting his place as the preeminent influence on Petrarch, the discussion also includes a number of non-Stoic doctrines, where Petrarch carefully Christianizes his Stoicism: the soul, for instance, is said to be contaminated by the body (*Secretum* I.15.1; Petrarch 2016, 56–7) and must escape its grossness in order to ascend to heaven (*Secretum* I.8.3; Petrarch 2016, 34–5). The young Petrarch alludes to Augustine's own doctrine of grace, claiming that he can hope for nothing from himself, only from God. While Augustine acknowledges the role of grace, he continues to insist that Petrarch's troubles remain entirely within his own control (*Secretum* II.1.1; Petrarch 2016, 64–5). However, the final conclusion of the work owes more to Augustinianism than it does to Stoicism: the way for Petrarch to overcome his love for a woman (Laura) is ultimately not through Stoic rational psychotherapy but rather

by replacing that passion with a healthier one, namely, the love of God (*Secretum* III.5.2; Petrarch 2016, 166–7).

In both *De remediis utriusque fortunae* and *Secretum* Petrarch drew heavily on Cicero; he was also an avid reader of Seneca. He admired Seneca's writings but had doubts about the man, brought on in part by reading Suetonius's life of Nero. In his letter addressed to Seneca (*Familiares* XXIV.5; Petrarch 2005, III:322–5), written in 1348, Petrarch praised Seneca as the greatest moral philosopher and claimed to read him every day. However he also questioned Seneca about his relationship with Nero and what Petrarch took to be various errors in judgment. Petrarch was disturbed by this mismatch between Seneca's philosophy and his life, which, in the hands of harsher critics, might have been seen as hypocrisy (see further Ker 2009, 314–17).

While Petrarch's works drew widely on the Latin sources for Stoicism available to him, he did not attempt to defend or champion Stoicism directly. By contrast, his contemporary and sometime Greek teacher Barlaam of Seminara (c. 1290–1348) wrote a short text outlining Stoic ethics and explicitly defending it from Peripatetic criticisms. Barlaam's *Ethica secundum Stoicos* (Hogg 1997) can probably lay claim to being the earliest surviving example of Stoic scholarship. In it, Barlaam claims to draw on a wide range of Stoic sources, although he does not name them.

The work is divided into two books. Book I responds to the question “what is happiness?” and locates it in virtue and virtuous actions, arguing against the Peripatetic view that happiness requires other things beyond virtue. Book II asks the question “in what things does happiness consist?” and argues that it consists in having one's soul in a good condition, free from emotional disturbances. Here Barlaam argues against the Peripatetic doctrine of the moderation of emotions. It is within this context that he outlines a distinction between different degrees of emotional disturbance that may record an element of Stoic doctrine otherwise unknown (Hogg 1997, 9). It is possible that he may have had access to Stoic material now lost during his time in Constantinople. The ideal state of mind is constancy

(*constantia*). This requires three things: true judgment about goods and evils, mental equability, and a beneficent will (*Ethica* II.5; Hogg 1997, 116). The worst possible state of mind happens when their three opposites are present: false judgment, mental darkness, and a maleficent will (*Ethica* II.7; Hogg 1997, 117). In between these extreme states, there are six further grades of emotional disturbance, formed by different combinations of the absence or presence of these three factors. Immediately after presenting this otherwise unknown material, Barlaam then presents the well-known account of four types of emotional disturbance recounted in Cicero (outlined earlier) and explains how these two accounts fit together. Barlaam's treatise is relatively unknown but stands as one of the few technical discussions of Stoic ethical theory from this period.

A complex set of relationships with Stoicism can be found when turning to Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), a key figure in the development of Florentine humanism. Early in his intellectual development, Salutati adopted a broadly Stoic position inspired by his reading of Seneca. He knew both the prose works and the tragedies but thought they were the work of two different authors (*Epistolario* III.8; Salutati 1891–1911, I:150–55). In his letters, he commended a range of broadly Stoic ideas, even if he did not always mention the Stoics by name (Witt 1983, 63–5). In his most substantial work, *De laboribus Herculis*, inspired by Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, Salutati openly championed Stoicism above all the other ancient philosophical schools for coming closest to true virtue (Salutati 1951, 1:311). Elsewhere he defines nobility as the product of virtue rather than high birth (Ullman 1963, 73), implicitly endorsing the Stoic claim that true goodness comes only from virtue and echoing the famous Stoic paradoxes discussed by Cicero.

Yet he was also sensitive to the need to qualify his admiration for Stoicism in the light of Christian teaching. Like Barlaam, Salutati identified the distinctively human good as a life guided by virtue. However, unlike Barlaam, he denied that this was completely within one's control, suggesting in a letter of 1369 that a good life required not only virtue but also the grace of God (*Epistolario* II.18;

Salutati 1891–1911, I:110). This moderate, Christianized brand of Stoicism echoes the views of Petrarch, with whom Salutati corresponded in the same year.

Later in life Salutati became critical of Stoicism, openly acknowledging the shift from his earlier views. After the death of his son in 1400, a well-meaning correspondent, Francesco Zabarella, sent a letter of consolation based on the Stoic principles which Salutati himself had previously embraced. But in the wake of bereavement, he no longer found these arguments convincing and responded with a lengthy attack on this attempt at Stoic consolation (*Epistolario* XII.4; Salutati 1891–1911, III:456–79; Kraye 1997, 179–91). He challenged the claim that because only virtue is good and vice is evil, death is not an evil. Although morally death is not evil, it remains a genuine evil because it is the privation of the goodness of life. Salutati draws on Aristotle for support, calling him “the prince of philosophers,” while castigating the “cold-heartedness and unattainable logic of the Stoics” (Salutati 1891–1911, III:463; Kraye 1997, 182). The various forms of Stoic philosophical consolation reported by Cicero do nothing to soothe the mind; only the passage of time can heal it. Salutati’s firsthand experiences of grief had taught him some hard lessons. His dismissal of Stoicism in this late letter appears to have been an attack primarily on the sort of Stoic therapeutics outlined by Cicero in the *Tusculanae disputationes*. Cicero was himself skeptical of the efficacy of the cold and technical way in which the early Stoics presented their views (*Tusculanae disputationes* IV.9; *De finibus* IV.7). Salutati’s earlier enthusiasm for Stoicism, by contrast, relied more on the rhetorical presentation of their ideas in Seneca, whom he had often praised as the greatest of moral philosophers (e.g., *Epistolaria* II.2; Salutati 1891–1911, I:57, cf. Ullman 1963, 87).

In his admiration for Seneca, Salutati was by no means alone. Seneca’s reputation during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance was shaped in large part by Jerome’s judgment in his *De viris illustribus*, which was often reproduced in manuscripts containing Seneca’s works (Ker 2009,

182). Although brief, Jerome’s remarks implicitly affirm the authenticity of the correspondence between Seneca and St Paul and comment on the virtuous character of Seneca’s moderate life (*continentissimae vitae fuit*). Interest in Seneca’s life increased in the wake of Boccaccio’s discovery at Monte Cassino of a manuscript preserving the *Annales* of Tacitus; if Jerome had described Seneca as a pagan equivalent of St Paul, Tacitus presented his death as a heroic martyrdom on a par with that of Socrates. Boccaccio drew on both of these accounts in his commentary on Dante’s *Divina Commedia*, written in 1373–1374. There, Dante had placed Seneca in Limbo as an unbaptized pagan (*Inferno* IV.141). Boccaccio tried to rescue Seneca from this fate by arguing that the correspondence with St Paul suggested that the apostle saw Seneca as a Christian and that Jerome confirmed this judgment. The newly discovered testimony of Tacitus showed that Seneca’s death was not really suicide but an execution ordered by Nero, although one carried out by Seneca’s own hands. Not only that, the pool in which Seneca opened his veins became, on Boccaccio’s reading, a baptismal font in which Seneca was baptized before his death (Boccaccio 2009, 234–5). Thus, Seneca could be saved. A number of writers elaborated on these matters and wrote their own lives of Seneca, the most important of whom were Gasparino Barzizza, Siculo Polenton, Giannozzo Manetti, and Paolo Pompilio (Panizza 1977, 317; see further Panizza 1984).

The earliest of these, Gasparino Barzizza (1360–1431), wrote not only a biography of Seneca but also a commentary on the *Epistulae morales* and on the correspondence with St Paul. Although his commentaries on Seneca never made it into print, his biography was often included in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century editions of Seneca’s works, although shortened and either anonymously or mistakenly attributed to Polenton (Panizza 1977, 337). These works were the by-product of lecturing on Seneca at the University of Padua, sometime between 1407 and 1421. In his biography of the Stoic, Barzizza followed Boccaccio in claiming that Seneca was baptized moments before death but then went one step further by claiming that the mixture of

Seneca's own blood with the water constituted baptism by blood, i.e., martyrdom (Panizza 1977, 323–4). In the introduction to his commentary on the *Epistulae morales*, he praises Seneca as preeminent among ancient philosophers for guidance about how to put theory into practice (Barzizza 1977b, 352), comparing him with Socrates. Seneca's moral philosophy offers both medicine for the soul and spiritual guidance which is second to that of no other ancient author (Barzizza 1977b, 352–3). Indeed, Seneca's preeminence above all other Greek and Latin authors is precisely because his philosophy is focused on practical questions about how to live well (Barzizza 1977a, 349). Toward the end of his career, Barzizza shifted his attention to Cicero at the expense of Seneca, but this did not indicate a turn away from Stoicism conceived as a practical guide to life. Among other Ciceronian works, he lectured and wrote on *De officiis* and presented Cicero as a Stoic (Panizza 1977, 303–4).

In the case of Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459), we find a life of Seneca paired with a life of Socrates, explicitly modeled on Plutarch's parallel Greek and Roman lives (Manetti 2003, 166–7). For Manetti, Seneca is the prince of Latin philosophers (Manetti 2003, 164–5) and the greatest moral philosopher (Manetti 2003, 244–5). He was a friend of St Paul and the author of not only those works now attributed to Seneca but also a range of other writings since judged to be spurious (such as the *De quattuor virtutibus*, by Martin of Braga), as well as the rhetorical works by Seneca's father. Manetti drew on a wide range of pagan and Christian authors for his biography, from Plutarch and Tacitus to Lactantius, Jerome, and Augustine. He explicitly presents Seneca as a Stoic, whose views he champions over those of the other philosophical schools, and he even suggests that Seneca was the master and leader (*magister et princeps*) of the Stoics (Manetti 2003, 266–7). Manetti also defended Seneca against criticisms of his behavior, such as his great wealth, by showing that possession of a mere “indifferent” does not contradict Stoic doctrine (Manetti 2003, 270–1). This focus on the practical value of Seneca's philosophy alongside sustained defenses of his actions by

Barzizza, Manetti, and others highlights the way in which many of those drawn to Stoicism in this period approached it, not as an abstract theoretical system but rather as a philosophical way of life. However, elsewhere Manetti was skeptical about the benefits of Stoic consolation (McClure 1991, 100–3).

Seneca's fortunes were to change, however, in the wake of the much closer attention paid to his texts. For humanists such as Petrarch, Salutati, and Manetti, the name “Seneca” was associated with a collection of moral essays and letters, a whole series of shorter pieces including the correspondence with St Paul, rhetorical works, and a collection of tragedies. While some thought the moralist and the tragedian were different people, it was some time before the rhetorical works were identified as the work of Seneca's father. Central in all this was inevitably the question of the authenticity of the correspondence with St Paul. The first person to challenge its status was Leonello d'Este in the 1440s, probably inspired by the humanist Guarino Veronese. He may have been preempted by Lorenzo Valla in a now lost work written in the 1420s (Panizza 1977, 334–6).

Valla himself had little time for Stoicism. In his dialogue *De voluptate* (first completed in 1431, expanded as *De vero bono* in 1433, and eventually re-titled *De vero falsoque bono*), he compared Stoic and Epicurean views regarding pleasure and virtue. Ultimately Valla opted for a Christianized form of hedonism, but along the way he outlined and criticized the Stoic position. Despite claiming to follow Nature, the Stoics attempted to reform it, by trying to overcome our completely natural emotions (Valla 1977, 72–3). Moreover, their remedies against misfortune fail to help. The antidote to grief is not resignation but rather a healthy dose of its opposites: delight, pleasure, and cheerfulness (Valla 1977, 140–1). Stoic virtue does not cultivate happiness; instead, like the head of Medusa, it turns people into marble. For Valla, pleasure and suffering are necessary parts of a human life, and Stoicism fails to accept this basic fact. Elsewhere, in his *Retractatio totius dialecticae*, Valla describes Stoic doctrine in terms that might commend it to a Christian reader: the sect held that the world was made by

God for the sake of men and that human souls survive after death (Valla 2012 I:100–3). Both of these claims involve a partial reading of the ancient evidence, to say the least, and for Valla merely show that some of the time some pagan philosophers get some things right.

The humanist Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) is remembered for his long-running literary dispute with Valla. He also disagreed with Valla about the value of Stoicism. In his dialogue *De vera nobilitate*, composed around 1440, he has his friend Niccolò Niccoli champion the Stoic claim that true nobility derives from virtue rather than external goods (§69; Poggio 2002, 30). Stoic themes also appear in Poggio's *De varietate fortunae* (1447) and *De miseria humanae conditionis* (1455). His friend, Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), grappled with similar topics in his own dialogues, especially the way in which virtue might offer some kind of protection against the vicissitudes of fortune (Kircher 2012, 111–64). In this, both Poggio and Alberti followed Petrarch in turning to Stoicism and, in particular, Seneca for philosophical consolation (on Alberti see further Schöndube 2011).

Seneca was not the only Stoic whose works survived the end of antiquity. The gradual process of rediscovering Greek texts during this period brought to light a work by another Roman Stoic: the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus. This short text was translated into Latin by Niccolò Perotti (1429–1480), probably in 1450, and again later by Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) in 1479. In both cases Epictetus was read in the light of the Neoplatonic commentary on the *Enchiridion* by Simplicius of Cilicia. Perotti translated the preface of Simplicius's commentary alongside the *Enchiridion* and may have intended to translate the entire commentary by papal commission (Oliver 1954, 25). Poliziano made use of the commentary to supplement his defective Greek manuscripts of the *Enchiridion* and had significant recourse to it when interpreting the text as well. In both his dedicatory letter to Lorenzo de' Medici and a letter in defense of Epictetus written to Bartolomeo Scala, Poliziano follows Simplicius in making a connection between Epictetus's *Enchiridion* and Plato's *First Alcibiades*. One of

Scala's criticisms of Epictetus and other Stoics, repeated in his *Dialogus de consolatione*, was that they denied the value of the body (Scala 2008, 94–5). Rather than challenge this claim, Poliziano follows Simplicius in arguing that, like Plato, Epictetus held that a human being essentially consists of a rational soul and that the body is merely an instrument of the soul. Poliziano goes on to draw a number of other parallels with Platonic doctrines concluding that although Epictetus does not state these himself, the *Enchiridion* takes them all as given. Throughout the letter Poliziano calls Epictetus a Stoic; but the aim of the letter as a whole is to show that this Stoic is in many respects a Platonist. As he puts it, “our Stoic fights boldly, using Platonic arguments as his shield” (Garin 1952, 924; Kraye 1997, 198). In short, someone committed to Platonism can comfortably embrace the *Enchiridion*, even though its author happened to be a Stoic. While both translators admired Epictetus (Perotti calls him *nobilissimus philosophus*; Oliver 1954, 68), neither had wider interests in Stoicism.

In one respect this interest in Epictetus expanded the range of Stoic material available to readers, adding a newly translated Greek Stoic text to the familiar Latin ones. However, in another respect it did not; for Epictetus was, like Seneca, a late Roman Stoic whose works focused on practical ethical guidance. It is true that readers of Cicero could learn much about Chrysippus and the doctrines of the Hellenistic Stoa, but a fuller picture of early Stoicism would require access to a much wider range of Greek doxographical sources. One person who had access to such sources was Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481), who spent a number of years in Constantinople, became proficient in ancient Greek, and brought Greek manuscripts back to Italy. It has been suggested that his consolatory dialogue *De exilio* was modeled on Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes* and perhaps Seneca's works of consolation (Filelfo 2013, ix). What is most striking, however, about Filelfo's work is that his Stoics are not Seneca and Cicero, but rather Zeno and Chrysippus; and the Stoic doctrines which he discusses are ones that we now associate with the Greek founders of Stoicism rather than its

later Roman exponents. Following his sources, he also tells us the titles of the works by Zeno and Chrysippus from which his quotations come. In fact, he follows his sources very closely, and a number of the passages where he discusses Stoic doctrine in detail are more or less translations of sections from Sextus Empiricus (cf. *De exilio* I.227–9 with *Adversus mathematicos* XI.190–4; *De exilio* 2.95–106 with *Adversus mathematicos* XI.22–38; *De exilio* III.23–6 with *Adversus mathematicos* XI.3–17). Filelfo supplements this heavy reliance on Sextus with material from Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch's *Moralia*.

Given that the topic of the dialogue was exile, Filelfo was especially interested in the Stoic attitude toward external circumstances. This led him to recount the Stoic theory of “indifferents” (*adiaphora*) more than once (*De exilio* II.112–13; Filelfo 2013, 260, and *De exilio* III.23–5; Filelfo 2013, 324–6). The early Stoics (*veteres Stoici*) are aligned with followers of Christ (*Christi imitatores*), both being unconcerned with material goods. The (Stoic-Christian) wise man who possesses virtue wants for nothing, and so is always serene in the face of the vicissitudes of fortune (*De exilio* III.69–70; Filelfo 2013, 362). Filelfo draws on Stoic, Cynic, and Christian praise of poverty as part of a polemic against the material excesses of the Medici.

It was relatively easy for authors like Filelfo to point to common ground between Stoic ethics and Christian teaching. It was much harder, however, to reconcile Stoic physics and metaphysics with the doctrines of the Church, a point noted by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) in the opening chapter of his *Theologia Platonica* (Ficino 2001–2006). Ficino's project in this work was to demonstrate, by the use of reason, the immortality of the soul, a belief that which he took to be foundational for human happiness. His broadly Neoplatonic metaphysics involved a hierarchy of five levels of being: body, quality, soul, angel, and God, with the human soul located at the center and holding nature together (*Theologia Platonica* I.1; Ficino 2001–2006, I:16–17). The ancient atomists limited themselves to belief in just the first of these levels. The Stoics and Cynics do a little better by acknowledging the existence of an active

quality or power within nature, reaching the second level, but they too fail to admit the existence of an immutable human soul (*Theologia Platonica* I.1; Ficino 2001–2006, I:14–15; cf. II:124–5). The Stoic soul, immanent within matter, is subject to division and change and as such is irredeemably corrupted (*Theologia Platonica* I.3; Ficino 2001–2006, I:28–9). The Stoics also identify this soul within nature with God, a claim that Ficino rejects because it makes God dependent on the matter that he supposedly permeates (*Theologia Platonica* IV.1; Ficino 2001–2006, I:258–9). Although Ficino's remarks on Stoicism are brief, they are important because they form one of the first attempts to articulate the fundamental incompatibility between Stoic and Platonic-Christian metaphysics.

Ficino's Platonist attempt to demonstrate the immortality of the soul on rational grounds was challenged a few decades later by the Aristotelian Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), who argued in his *De immortalitate animae* that it was impossible to offer such proof. Although Pomponazzi was a committed Aristotelian, he also made use of Stoic arguments. In response to the concern that denial of the immortality of the soul would remove the possibility of postmortem punishment and so undermine virtuous behavior, he argued along Stoic lines that virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment (*De immortalitate animae* 14; Pomponazzi 2012, 180–1). He also pointed to Seneca as an example of someone who held the soul to be mortal while remaining morally upright, motivated by the Stoic doctrine that “virtue alone is happiness, and vice misery,” and pursuing only those external goods which serve virtue, while avoiding those which hinder it (*De immortalitate animae* 14; Pomponazzi 2012, 202–5). In a later work Pomponazzi was more explicit, stating that there is nothing disadvantageous to agreeing with the Stoics that the soul is mortal (Pomponazzi 2004, II:892–5).

The contrast between the views of Ficino and Pomponazzi is worth underlining and offers a window into wider debates about Stoicism both then and since. For Ficino, Stoicism is compromised by its metaphysics because human happiness ultimately depends on the existence of

an immortal soul. For Pomponazzi, by contrast, Stoic ethics stands autonomously and remains attractive independent of one's view about the nature of the soul. Not only that, the fact that it is possible to combine this with belief in the mortality of the soul shows that Stoic materialism and other positions like it ought not to be rejected simply on moral grounds. On this Pomponazzi prefigures later debates about the possibility of a virtuous atheist. With regard to Stoicism, both philosophers present opening positions in what was to become a long-running debate about the interdependence of ethics and physics in the Stoic system.

Elsewhere Pomponazzi himself engaged with other parts of the system. In his *De fato, de libero arbitrio et de praedestinatione* (published posthumously in 1567), he defended Stoic determinism against the criticisms of the ancient Peripatetic Alexander of Aphrodisias, arguing that the Stoic theory was more consistent and coherent than either the Aristotelian position or the Christian doctrine of divine providence (Pomponazzi 2004, 1:414–17; with Kraye 2016). His use of material from a Greek Aristotelian commentator like Alexander (even though in a Latin translation by Gerolamo Bagolino, 1516) marked a step forward in the recovery of ancient sources of information about Stoic doctrine.

Despite these small advances, in the early sixteenth century, Seneca remained the most famous of the Stoics and a key point of reference. Works of his had already been printed over 70 times by 1501 (Goff 1964: 555–8). A number of figures engaged with his works in various ways, producing editions and writing commentaries. The most important of these were Erasmus, Calvin, and Lipsius, although Celio Secondo Curione and Marc-Antoine Muret might also be noted.

Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1467–1536) edited Seneca's works twice, in 1515 and 1529. Unhappy with his work the first time around (or, to be more precise, the work of his collaborator), he decided to prepare a second edition (Erasmus 1906–1958, VIII:26–7). This did not, however, indicate unconditional admiration for his subject. Although he was drawn to Seneca by the value he placed on Jerome's endorsement (Erasmus

1906–1958, II:53), Erasmus had no desire to save Seneca in the way that Boccaccio and Barzizza had tried to do. Seneca was not a Christian and ought not to be read as if he were one. Notwithstanding Jerome's view, Erasmus rejected the authenticity of the correspondence with St Paul, based in part on a stylistic comparison with Seneca's other works. It was still included in both of his editions of Seneca but with a preface discussing its dubious status added in 1529 (Erasmus 1906–1958, VIII:40–1). The earlier Renaissance image of a Christianized Seneca was no longer tenable, and this inevitably had an impact on the wider reception of Stoicism.

In his own works, Erasmus had no qualms about criticizing Stoic doctrine and the idealized image of the Stoic sage. In *Praise of Folly* (written in 1509, publ. 1511), for instance, he ridiculed the Stoic's negative attitude toward the emotions, suggesting instead that emotions can act as guides and incentives to morally good behavior. The image of the Stoic sage is “a kind of marble statue of a man, devoid of sense and any sort of human feeling” (Erasmus 1979, 106). Although there remained valuable moral guidance in the works of a Stoic like Seneca, it was important to reject those doctrines which conflicted with Christian teaching. Erasmus's contribution to the reception of Stoicism in this period was effectively to unpick the attempts by some Italian humanists to smooth over the differences between Stoic and Christian thought. This formed an important step forward toward the recovery of ancient Stoicism on its own terms.

A similar move can be seen in the work of Jean Calvin (1509–1564), although this time more concerned with Stoic physics rather than its ethics. Calvin's intellectual career began with an edition of and commentary on Seneca's *De clementia*, published in 1532. In his preface, he defended both Seneca's style and his philosophy from his recent critics. In the realm of ethics, Seneca reigns supreme (*potissimum regnat*); in Roman philosophy and literature, he stands second only to Cicero; and reading his works gives one both profit and delight (Calvin 1969, 10–13). However, Calvin's most important engagements with Stoicism came later, and the topic of Stoic fate

preoccupied him throughout his subsequent works. In particular, he repeatedly distanced his own view of divine providence from the Stoic position in order to undermine the charge that he himself was a Stoic. Calvin argued in the *Institutio Christianae religionis* that his own doctrine differed from Stoicism in that he did not share the Stoic view that there existed a necessity in nature connecting all things (Calvin 1539, 265). Instead he insisted that God was master of all natural events. In fact, this view differed little from Seneca's own position (cf. *De beneficiis* VI.23.1), especially as interpreted by Augustine (in *De civitate Dei* V.8). This is especially clear in his *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione* of 1552, where Calvin repeats the view of Seneca that God "always wills the same thing, and this is the praise of his constancy" (Calvin 1552, 934). His repeated polemics against Stoic fate were necessary precisely because his own position was so close to theirs (although on other topics, such as the emotions, he was more critical; see, e.g., *Institutio Christianae religionis* III.8.9; Calvin 1961, 708–11). His argument was not so much with Stoicism as it was with a contemporary image of the Stoics which downplayed their commitment to divine providence. Either way, Calvin's contribution to these debates about Stoic physics and theology, focused on precise differences between Stoicism and various forms of Christian doctrine, marked another step toward grasping Stoicism on its own terms.

These debates about the relationship between Stoicism and Christianity and about the precise nature of Stoic fate were to become important themes in the work of Justus Lipsius (1547–1606). Like Erasmus and Calvin, Lipsius is also remembered for his editorial work on Seneca. In his case, however, it came at the very end of his career and stood as a final monument to a long-standing fascination with Stoicism. Lipsius was one of the few people during the Renaissance (or any other period since antiquity) to identify himself openly as a Stoic. Yet he also remained a Christian and grappled with the ongoing issue of the extent to which the two worldviews might be reconciled. He first tackled this in his *De constantia*, published in 1584. This consolatory

dialogue drew on Stoic material to offer remedies for emotional disturbances caused by external events. It opens with the Stoic claim that human suffering is ultimately the product of our judgments rather than external events. It goes on to offer arguments against the existence of external evils: they are imposed by God; they are the product of necessity and fate; they, in fact, benefit us; and they are neither grievous nor unusual (Lipsius 1584, 38). Much of this draws inspiration from Seneca, especially the claim that apparently evil events are, in fact, good for us, which repeats a line of argument developed in Seneca's *De providentia*. The most philosophically significant part of Lipsius's dialogue is the discussion of fate, in which he both drew on and distanced himself from the Stoic theory of fate, just as Calvin had done half a century earlier. Lipsius's explicit line is that Stoic fate ought to be modified in the light of Christian doctrine before it can be embraced. The problem with the Stoic position is that it subordinates God to fate, insists on an eternal succession of natural causes, denies contingency, and inflicts a violent force on our will (Lipsius 1584, 65). However, the details of Lipsius's account suggest that he thought there was no great dispute between the Stoic and Christian views of fate and that the Stoic position could be embraced unaltered (Sellars 2014, 657–63).

Twenty years later, in 1604, Lipsius revisited the topic, and this time was unequivocal in his embrace of Stoic fate. Central to the discussion was a problematic passage in Seneca's *De providentia* (5.8) which seemed to imply that God was himself bound by fate. Drawing on other passages in Seneca, along with the authoritative judgment of Augustine, Lipsius argued that the Stoics do not subordinate God to fate; rather, fate is the expression of God's will. And if fate is inevitable even for God, it is only because his perfection means he never changes his mind (Lipsius 1604b, 31–2). Although Seneca is sometimes clumsy in the way he expresses this, there is nothing in the Stoic theory that requires modification. Any apparent conflict is, as Augustine put it, merely a verbal difference (*De civitate Dei* V.8).

This second, more decisive, discussion of Stoic fate appeared in Lipsius's *Physiologia Stoicorum*,

printed in 1604, and one of a pair of volumes devoted to Stoicism published that year. The *Physiologia Stoicorum* and its companion the *Manuductio ad Stoicam philosophiam* (Lipsius 1604a, b) were both conceived as aids to the study of Seneca, whose complete works Lipsius was editing at the same time (and published a year later in 1605). In these two volumes, he gathered together the ancient evidence for Stoicism from a wide range of Greek and Latin sources, arranged it by topic, and added his own interpretive commentary (see further Saunders 1955). It was in these two books that for the very first time a reader could access more or less all the ancient evidence for Stoicism as a philosophical system in one place. This marked a watershed in the recovery of ancient Stoicism in the Renaissance.

All of Lipsius's works were written in Latin and intended for scholars. At the same time that he was preparing these, other writers attracted to Stoicism were among the first to present Stoic ideas in the vernacular. One of the earliest of these was Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), who was an avid reader both of works by Roman Stoics (Seneca, Epictetus) and of texts which were rich sources of information about early Stoicism (Cicero, Plutarch). His reading of Stoic material was certainly an important influence on him, but he never became an advocate of Stoicism as Lipsius had been. Even so, the impact of Stoicism can be seen throughout his *Essais*. In *Essai* I.14, for instance, he took as his theme the saying of Epictetus that people are troubled not by things but by their judgments about things (*Enchiridion* 5). He argued in support of the Stoic claim that death, pain, and poverty are not evils in themselves by appealing to the diversity of human opinion on these topics: some people embrace death or pain for the sake of a higher ideal; some people are happier without riches than they are with them, including himself. Although he briefly granted the Epicurean claim that pain is the worst thing that can happen to someone, he went on to qualify this by saying that the only reason we think this is because we overvalue the body and neglect the importance of the soul when assessing our well-being (de Montaigne 1962,

56–7). He cited with approval from Cicero's account of the Stoic theory of emotions in the *Tusculanae disputationes* (III.71) the claim that grief lies not in nature but in our opinion (de Montaigne 1962, 61). When denying the value of riches, he quoted from Seneca (*Epistulae* LXXIV.4) while also drawing on his own experience. His conclusion presented a straightforwardly Stoic view: each person's ease or indigence (*l'aisance et l'indigence*) depends on their opinion. External goods such as health, fame, and wealth only have the value we give to them. Fortune does us neither harm nor good, and it is our soul that is the only cause of our happiness or unhappiness (de Montaigne 1962, 67). Although Stoicism is never mentioned by name in his discussion, he knowingly drew on Stoic texts in order to develop his argument. However, the final arbiter for Montaigne here and elsewhere is how well something accords with his own experience. He presented Stoic ideas with approval only to the extent that they agreed with his own.

The Frenchman Guillaume du Vair (1556–1621) stood somewhere in between Lipsius and Montaigne. He shared with Lipsius a philosophical commitment to Stoicism, with Epictetus taking the place of Seneca as the major influence. Like Montaigne, he wrote in the vernacular; and he translated Epictetus's *Enchiridion* into French for the first time (1585, published 1591). His work *De la constance et consolation es calamitez publiques*, published in 1594, offered a vernacular counterpart to Lipsius's *De constantia*. In the present context, his most important work was his *Philosophie morale des Stoïques* of 1585. This work, Du Vair says in the opening letter to the reader, was his attempt to present the same material as in his translation of Epictetus but taken to pieces and rearranged in a more systematic fashion (Du Vair 1945, 61). The result is more organized but far from technical; and Du Vair runs through the central doctrines of Stoic ethics concerning the role of external goods, the emotions, and the importance of living in accordance with reason, virtue, and nature.

Modern scholars have often labeled the revival of Stoicism in this period “Neostoicism,” in order to indicate the ways in which it differs from ancient Stoicism (see, e.g., Oestreich (1982); Morford (1991); Lagrée (2010)). It is often claimed that “Neostoicism” differs from “Stoicism” by involving various amendments to Stoic doctrine intended to make it acceptable to a Christian audience. The founder of “Neostoicism,” on this account, was Lipsius. Yet, as we have seen, Christianized versions of Stoicism were commonplace well before Lipsius, and the details of his account of Stoicism are on the whole faithful to the ancient Stoa. Even so the label is well established and is often applied to Lipsius, Du Vair, and a number of others indebted to Stoicism in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Lagrée 2010, 20–1). Among these one might mention Pierre Charron (1541–1603), Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645), and Hugo Grotius (1583–1645). These Neostoics all drew on and adapted Stoic ideas within a broadly Christian context just as others had done in the preceding centuries. If there was a difference, it was simply a reflection of the quite different cultural contexts in which early and late Renaissance readers of Stoicism were working: late fourteenth-century Italy was not the same as early seventeenth-century Northern Europe.

Impact and Legacy

Lipsius’s Stoic handbooks were published in 1604, followed by his edition of Seneca in 1605; he died the following year. That decade also saw the publication of a number of other early works of Stoic scholarship. In Poland, Adam Bursius produced a comprehensive study of Stoic epistemology and logic in his *Dialectica Ciceronis...maxime ex Stoicorum sententia* (Bursius 1604). In it he covered topics from the definition of logic and its place in the Stoic system, through epistemology (*aisthêsis*, *katalêpsis*, *sunkatathêsis*), to modal logic and Stoic syllogisms. Although presented as a commentary on passages from Cicero, Bursius made full use of a

wide range of Greek and Latin sources in his discussion, including Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch, Galen, and the Greek commentators on Aristotle. Bursius’s volume formed a natural complement to Lipsius’s handbooks on Stoic ethics and physics published in the same year, although it was probably far less well known. In the following year, Isaac Casaubon published his celebrated edition of the Stoic poet Persius (Casaubon 1605) which included a vast commentary discussing many aspects of Stoic doctrine. Caspar Scioppius’s *Elementa philosophiae Stoicae moralis* (Scioppius 1606) was printed the year after. Scioppius, a German humanist who corresponded with Lipsius, argued for the educational benefits of Stoic moral philosophy, in an attempt to reform Catholic education and, in particular, to challenge the Jesuits’ Aristotelian curriculum. Echoing Petrarch, he contrasted Aristotelian moral theory, which merely teaches what goodness is, with Stoic practical philosophy, which trains people to become good. Stoic philosophy is not contemplative but rather, like music and medicine, is an art that must be put into practice. As such, mastery of this art will require not only the study of philosophical doctrines but also mental exercises (Scioppius 1606, 18r). He also claimed that Stoicism was, in fact, more compatible than Aristotelian doctrine with Christianity. For these reasons, Stoicism ought to be preferred over Aristotle when looking for a foundation for a moral education (see further Krayer 2008). Just a few years later, Daniel Heinsius praised Stoicism in his oration “De Stoica philosophia” (Heinsius 1612, 131–92). This text was not really a contribution to Stoic scholarship but rather simply an exhortation to Stoic wisdom. Nevertheless, it reflected the increased interest in Stoicism at the beginning of the seventeenth century (Santinello 1993, 131). By this time, then, all the relevant Greek and Latin sources for Stoicism were available in print, and there was a small but expanding body of secondary literature offering readers a guide through the intricacies of the Stoic system. At the same time, the popularity of works by Lipsius, Du Vair, and Montaigne continued to

remind readers that Stoicism also offered very practical guidance about how to live.

The most important legacy of the Renaissance interest in and recovery of Stoicism was the confirmation that Stoic philosophy and Christian doctrine were ultimately incompatible. The foundations for this were laid by philological work on the texts of Seneca by many hands, eventually separating Seneca from his father, identifying the moralist with the tragedian, and dismissing a whole range of minor works as spurious. Most important was the rejection of the supposed correspondence between Seneca and St Paul. The recovery of ancient biographical accounts of Seneca which were not always flattering challenged the medieval image of Seneca as a proto-Christian saint. The matter was finally brought to a head, however, by a shift in focus from the later Roman Stoic moralists to the doctrines of the Athenian Stoics Zeno and Chrysippus. With all the available evidence more or less to hand, increasingly sifted and sorted, it became clear to readers that despite all the talk of God and providence, the Athenian Stoics were, like their contemporaries the Epicureans, materialists. When they spoke of God, they simply meant Nature. Although they talked about providence, this was simply another name for mechanical fate. As the seventeenth century progressed, “Stoic” became a term of abuse used against philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes (by Bramhall; see Bramhall and Hobbes 1656, 195) and Spinoza (by Vico 1744, 1:116). Earlier concerns also persisted: philosophers drawing on the Augustinian tradition such as Blaise Pascal and Nicolas Malebranche were highly critical of Stoicism, attacking Epictetus and Seneca respectively for claiming that human happiness is within the power of the individual, without the grace of God. By the eighteenth century, Stoicism had become a form of atheism (Brooke 2012, 127–48) and an example of modern paganism (Gay 1966, 295–304). The great Enlightenment *philosophe* Denis Diderot admired both Seneca for his pagan virtue and Stoicism for its materialism and atheism. All of this would have been impossible without the philological labors and

philosophical debates that took place during the Renaissance.

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- Lipsius, Justus
- Petrarca, Francesco
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Storella, Francesco

Born: 1529, Alessano

Died: 1575, Naples

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Abstract

Francesco Storella was born in Alessano in around 1529. Close adherence to the text, exegesis, and criticism were the characteristic features of Storella's philosophical research, which was animated by a constant polemic against Girolamo Balduino. His works insist greatly on the importance of recovering the classical world through direct, unmediated study of Greek and Latin texts. His thought is permeated by a certain eclecticism, with references to aspects from Plato, Averroes, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham. The most significant aspects of Storella's intellectual experience are his activity as a publisher of works from the ancient and medieval philosophical tradition, the texts of which had become difficult to find, together with his commitment to a strictly rational foundation for the study of nature.

Biography

Francesco Storella was born in Alessano in around 1529 (Antonaci 1966). He was introduced

to philosophical studies by his father Giovanni, who was a disciple of Pomponazzi. In Padua, Francesco listened to the lectures of Bernardino Tomitano, Panfilo Monti, and Marcantonio de' Passeri (known as Genua); he studied under excellent teachers and was a fellow student of other important figures, including the surgeon from Modena, Gabriele Falloppia.

In 1548, at 24 years of age, he was elected by the students as Rector of the University of the Arts.

In 1549, at the end of his year as rector, he received the academic degree of *Doctor Artium* and discussed the one hundred and fifty *Conclusiones* to earn the title of "public lector."

In 1550, the philosopher moved to Naples, where he became friends with Simone Porzio and Giovan Bernardino Longo, to whom he dedicated his work *Logicalium Caputum Decas Prima*. In Naples he wrote *De Definitione Logices*, his *Explanatio in digressione undecimi commenti Averrois*, and *De inventore Logices*; he also republished and provided a commentary for the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*. In 1557, Storella taught at the *Studium* in Salerno and published *Libellus an singulare syllogismus ingredi*, against Girolamo Balduino. The following year, he was back in Naples. Storella's numerous stays in Alessano are a constant feature throughout his life. He completed some of his main works during these periodic stays in the area around Otranto, including: *De inventore Logices*, *Tractatus quinquaginta contradictionum*, and *De Utilitate logicae*. He died of apoplexy in Naples, on December 18, 1575 (Storella 1549; 1553a, b; 1557, 1561a, b).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Storella's publishing activities are of great importance for understanding his relationship with the preceding philosophical tradition. Among the numerous works he republished, particular mention should be made of *Secretum Secretorum Aristotelis ad Alexandrum Magnum*, a long letter reputedly sent by Aristotle to Alexander the Great, in which he discusses issues concerning politics,

medicine, and astrology. Storella's edition, the last Latin edition of the text to be printed, is the only one with a preface and a substantial body of footnotes, which shows a clear tendency to discuss topics concerning the good government of the State (Schmitt 1982). Another characteristic feature of Storella's work was his attention to medical and scientific studies, which he cultivated in particular during his years in the Studium of Salerno. This interest explains his republication of *Secreta secretorum Hippocratis* and *Libellus de venenis Averrois*. Storella is also credited with reprinting Dante's *Quaestio de aqua et terra*, two works on the extent and authenticity of the Aristotelian *corpus* and a work on the arrangement of the *corpus* of Tomas Aquinas (Antonaci 1966).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Close adherence to the text, exegesis, and criticism were the characteristic features of Storella's philosophical research, which was animated by a constant polemic against Girolamo Balduino (Papuli 1967). His works insist greatly on the importance of recovering the classical world through direct, unmediated study of Greek and Latin texts. His thought is permeated by a certain eclecticism, with references to aspects from Plato, Averroes, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham. Storella's predilection for the study of logic can be noted from the titles of his works alone, which are barely transliterated from Greek. He considered logic as both the science of thought and the science of the real, as it allows us to grasp things and then study their nature. Logic was both a practical and a speculative science. On the one hand, it had the characteristics of a theoretical discipline, and on the other, it provided cognitive tools for all the other sciences (Antonaci 1966; Longo 1996; Paladini 2009).

Impact and Legacy

The most significant aspects of Storella's intellectual experience are his activity as a publisher of works from the ancient and medieval philosophical

tradition, the texts of which had become difficult to find, together with his commitment to a strictly rational foundation for the study of nature (Schmitt 1982; Verardi 2012). He receives little mention in scholarly historical reconstructions of Italian culture during that period, and recent academic interest in his cultural activity has been focused on his role in the debate on logic in Padua and, above all, on his work as a publisher, particularly of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum* and Dante Alighieri's *Quaestio de aqua et terra*. His commitment to republishing texts of unquestionable philosophical and literary interest is the aspect that best represents his contribution to the cultural debate of sixteenth-century Italy (Antonaci 1966).

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Studiolo

► [Kunstammer](#)

Sturm, Jean

► [Sturm, Johann](#)

Sturm, Johann

Born: 1 October 1507, Schleiden

Died: 3 March 1589, Strasbourg

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Abstract

Johann Sturm was a Reformed pedagogic innovator, who established a teaching curriculum for gymnasia in order to provide an education based on the humanist ideals and on evangelical piety. This model described the

contents and the method of learning for boys from 7 to 16 years and consisted mainly of the study of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic (based on Cicero and on classic literature). His method of learning was based on memorization and imitation rather than on the understanding of formal rules of reasoning. This model, rather than introducing students to religion, was intended to prepare them for the autonomous understanding of Scripture. Sturm was important also as he contributed to the innovation of biography as a genre, which he intended as more realistic than the typified premodern biographies.

Alternate Names

[Sturmius, Ioannes](#); [Sturm, Jean](#); [Sturm, Johannes](#)

Biography

Johann Sturm was born in 1507 in Schleiden, in the region of Eifel. After having received his first education in the house of the count Dietrich of Manderscheid, in 1521 he moved to the Gymnasium of Saint Jerome of Liège, where he studied Latin, Greek, the logic of Aristotle, mathematics, and some elements of theology, in accordance with a division of subjects he will assume as a model for his Gymnasium (Tinsley 1989, 24). In 1524 he moved to Leuven, where he attended the lectures of Latin of Conrad Goclenius and of Greek of Rutger Rescius (with whom Sturm associated as bookseller) and obtained his M.A. In 1528 he moved to Strasbourg and followed the lectures of Martin Bucer, while in 1529 he moved to Paris, starting to study medicine and lecturing at the Collège Royal from 1534, under the protection of Guillaume Baudé. His lectures were on Cicero's *Partitiones oratoriae* (Sturm 1546) and on the dialectic of Rudolf Agricola and were attended by Petrus Ramus. Probably under the influence of the Swiss physician Ludwig Carinus, he embraced the Reform. After the failure of the reconciliation between the French King Francis I and the Protestants, Sturm left Paris in December

1536 for Strasbourg, governed by the *Stettmeister* Jakob Sturm (not related to Johann). Jakob Sturm had supported the Reformation in Strasbourg since 1524, and in 1530 the town became part of the Tetrapolitan Confession, as well as of the Lutheran *Confessio Augustana* (1531) (Brady 1995). Accordingly, an educational reform consistent with Reform had to be initiated: from 1524 the Lutheran theologian and botanist Otto Brunfels assumed the direction of the Strasbourg Latin school, while at the cathedral Bucer gave lectures on the New Testament. For the end of providing an education to the younger, Johann Sturm was granted to found and direct the *Gymnasium Illustre* (1538), whose pedagogic manifesto was his *De literarum ludis aperiendis* (Sturm 1538a and 2007). Eventually, Emperor Maximilian transformed the *Gymnasium* into an Academy in 1566–1567. In 1564 Sturm set the program for a gymnasium in Lauingen, for which he wrote the *Scholae Lauinganae* (1565). However, from the 1560s, he suffered attacks from the Lutheran pastor Johannes Pappus, who addressed his supposed Calvinist theology (Kittelson 1977; Schindling 1977, 132–140) and led him to lose his position in 1581. He then retired in Northeim and died in Strasbourg in 1589 (Schmidt 1855; Tinsley 1989, 23–26; Schröder 2009, 12–22).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Sturm was a humanist – i.e., a scholar devoting himself to the *studia humanitatis* (i.e., mainly to grammar and rhetoric) (Tinsley 1989, 24; Kristeller 1955, 9–11; Sturm 1538b, 1574, 1575, 1576) – and a pedagogical innovator. His main aim was to provide a reform of high education based on the humanist ideal and on Christian faith (Schröder 2009, 9–14), i.e., to pursue a “wise and eloquent piety.” In his *De literarum ludis*, he outlines an educational program based on the study of the classics and covering the disciplines of the *trivium*: grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic (including logic). It is divided into nine grades, for boys from 7 to 16 years. In the first year, students study Cicero’s letters, while in the next ones Virgil, Horace, Terence, Plautus, Caesar, and

Sallust, and the works of Cicero, whose civic orientation makes him the foremost author to be studied (see Cicero 1540 and 1541). In the fifth year, they begin with Greek, and in the sixth, they learn Aristotle’s logic and poetics, together with other Greek authors such as Homer and Demosthenes. In the eighth, they study Hebrew, while in the ninth year they start with mathematics and astrology. To this cycle, a 5-year-long series of lectures on law, medicine, and theology, as well as on philosophy, literature, and oratory follow, in order to complete the education of boys until the age of 21 (Tinsley 1989; Sturm 2009a; Mehl 2009). Sturm’s teaching method was based on memorization and on the imitation of models, disputations, and declamations, which replaced the teaching of the deductive apparatus for logic. This approach is borrowed from the dialectic of Agricola (Sturm 1539) and from Melanchthon’s use of rhetorical *loci communes* (Mesnard 1966; Tinsley 1989, 30–31). As to the relation between education and religion, Sturm restricts religious education to the reading of the history of Christ and Moses, as the humanist education he was proposing had only to enable students to read Scripture, thus acquiring “literary piety” (Mesnard 1965). This model was refined in his further writings, as in his *Scholae Lauinganae*, the program is accelerated into five classes, although maintaining the contents of the Strasbourg Gymnasium grades (Sturm 2009b; Schindling 2009), while, in the *Classicae Epistolae*, (1565) a tenth grade is added to the program and the focus is given mostly to the learning of Latin and classic literature (Sturm 1938; Tinsley 1989, 35–36; Spitz and Tinsley 1995; Schröder 2009, 371–375). The influence of Sturm’s pedagogy spread from Germany and Alsace – where it coexisted with the Jesuit colleges (Negruzzo 2005) – to England, where Sturm’s pedagogy was praised in the *Schoolmaster* of Roger Ascham (Armytage 2012, 2–4), and to Poland-Lithuania, Bohemia, and Riga (Pietrzyk 2009; Holý 2009; Klöcker 2009). Finally, Sturm is important as a founder of the modern genre of biography, more realistic and less morally oriented and typified than premodern biographies, signaled for the first time by Jakob Burckhardt

(Burckhardt 1990) and exemplified by Sturm's *Beati Rhenani Vita* (1551). The life of Beatus Rhenanus (1484–1547) is described in contrast with Sturm's humanist ideal of man, devoted both to letters and to civic life, which was neglected by Beatus (Weiss 1981; Backus 2009).

Cross-References

- Academy, Platonic
- Ascham, Roger
- Budé, Guillaume
- Burckhardt, Jacob
- Calvinism
- Ciceronianism
- Confessio Augustana
- Dialectic in the Renaissance
- Horace in the Renaissance
- Human Dignity in Renaissance Philosophy
- Humanism, Civic
- Latin in the Renaissance
- Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance
- Melancthon, Philipp
- Printing Technique, Renaissance
- Reformation
- Rhetoric in the Renaissance
- Scientific Academies in the Renaissance
- Trivium
- Virgil in the Renaissance

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- (1551); *The Lauingen school* (1565); *Classical letters* (1565); *Academic letters* (1569).
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Sturm, Johannes

► [Sturm, Johann](#)

Sturmius, Ioannes

► [Sturm, Johann](#)

Suárez, Cipriano

► [Soares, Cipriano](#)

Suárez, Francisco

Born: 5 January 1548 Granada

Died: 1617 Lisbon

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Abstract

Francisco Suárez, S.J., born in Granada, Spain, in 1548, was perhaps one of the brightest luminaries ever produced by the Society of Jesus. Astonishingly, his early years and youthful academic promise were mediocre at best. After being initially rejected for admission to the Society of Jesus, scholasticism's future *Doctor Eximius* was eventually admitted with probationary status. During his early formation, Suárez experienced an almost supernatural intellectual transformation. Ordained a priest, the Jesuit went on to hold many teaching

positions throughout Spain, Rome, and eventually Portugal's University of Coimbra. His literary output was both enormous and systematic. The *Disputationes metaphysicae*, published in 1597, put the science of metaphysics on a new footing. For the first time, metaphysics was treated according to the logical exigencies demanded by the science itself rather than by the commentarial practice that the haphazardly arranged treatises of the Metaphysics had generated. Suárez was also drawn into numerous controversies between the Holy See and various political powers. One such controversy pitted Suárez against James I, which resulted in Suárez's *Defensio fidei* in which the oath of allegiance was roundly critiqued. Suárez's political and legal philosophy was spelled out further and more explicitly in his *De legibus*, which treated everything from the nature of law (eternal, human, natural, civil, and canonical) and justice to war, ecclesiastical and temporal powers, and the old and new laws. After teaching at the University of Coimbra for nearly 20 years, Suárez retired from the classroom and sought a climate that would accommodate his ailing health. This eventually led him to Lisbon where the *Doctor Eximius* died in 1617.

Biography

Francisco Suárez, S.J. (Granada, 5 January 1548–Lisbon, 1617), scholasticism's *Doctor Eximius*, was without doubt one of the most significant and influential thinkers within the Society of Jesus and, as some have argued, served "as the main channel by which scholasticism came to be known by modern classical philosophers" (Maurer 1962, p. 356). Be that as it may, Suárez's beginnings were rather unremarkable, and his academic aptitude seemed lackluster at best. He was born to Antonia Vázquez and Gaspar Suárez in the wake of a recently reconquered Spain (Fichter 1940, p. 6). When still a youth, aged only 13 years, Suárez was sent to Salamanca to pursue studies in canon law. Amazingly, the man who would decades later become a master of law

and author of the *De legibus* barely managed to pass his early coursework (*ibid.*, pp. 11–12). Perhaps, more important than his studies in canon law at Salamanca, at least with respect to Suárez's future vocation, was his making the acquaintance of Juan Ramirez, an Andalusian Jesuit known for his captivating sermons and encouragement of vocations to the Society of Jesus (*ibid.*, p. 45). Inspired by Ramirez, Suárez pursued a vocation with the Jesuits, but, much to the astonishment of his biographers, the young man was rejected, and the reason given was his lack of intellectual aptitude (*ibid.*, p. 38). Though lacking in academic gifts, at least by the Society's estimation, Suárez was not lacking in persistence. Eventually, after at least one unsuccessful appeal to the Jesuit provincial in Castile (*ibid.*, p. 48), on 16 June 1564 Suárez was granted admission to the Society but only as an "indifferent," that is, as one whose future as a priest or lay brother in the Society was left undetermined (*ibid.*, p. 51). After 2 years, Suárez professed his first simple vows in August 1566 (*ibid.*, p. 53).

Suárez's superiors could hardly be surprised when the young Jesuit's early studies revealed the mediocre talent and learning difficulties that they had come to expect from him. What provoked great astonishment among his superiors, however, was Suárez's almost instantaneous and complete intellectual transformation. The same philosophical problems that had only days before (sometimes just 1 day before) seemed insoluble to the young Jesuit were untangled with ease proper to a master (*ibid.*, p. 69). Some of Suárez's biographers, perplexed at his radical turnaround, find no other explanation besides divine intervention mediated through the intercession of the Mother of God (*ibid.*, p. 69). Whatever the cause, Suárez's future was determined; he would advance in the study of theology, and he did so at Salamanca from 1566 to 1570 (*ibid.*, p. 74).

While still a student, Suárez was tasked with the responsibility of teaching philosophy to new members of the Society of Jesus (*ibid.*, p. 70). Among his pupils was Gregory of Valencia, who would later become famous in his own right as a professor of philosophy and theology at the Roman College. In 1571, prior to his ordination

to the priesthood, the Society moved Suárez to the Jesuit College in Segovia, where he made his solemn profession of vows on 14 December 1571. Not long after he was ordained a priest in March 1572 (De Scorraile 1912, I, pp. 130–133).

Though it is an exaggeration to say that Suárez's priestly activity was exclusively academic and non-pastoral, his scholarly activity and production are almost without equal. Until 1574 he taught philosophy at Valladolid and then taught theology until 1580 (Fichter 1940, pp. 149–150). His scholarly output consisted principally of commentaries upon Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, as had been the common academic practice at the time. From Valladolid Suárez was called to Rome to teach at the Roman College (ibid., pp. 111–119). The Roman climate proved to be incompatible with the Jesuit's frail constitution, and so at the end of the 1585 school year, Suárez was forced to return to the more hospitable climate of his native Spain, where he resumed teaching at Alcalá (ibid., p. 126).

While at Alcalá, Suárez played a significant role in the creation and implementation of the *Ratio Studiorum*, the Jesuit pedagogical plan. Additionally, Alcalá witnessed the first publications of the budding academic (ibid., pp. 136–138). In 1590 Suárez's treatise dealing with the Incarnation went to press (ibid., p. 149), and only 2 years later (1592) he published yet another volume devoted to the life of Christ, the *De mysteriis vitae Christi*, in which work was intended for the benefit of scholars and preachers of the Word alike (ibid., p. 154). In 1593 Suárez's frail health, exacerbated this time by tensions with his rancorous Jesuit colleague Gabriel Vázquez, prompted him to leave Alcalá and seek relief in Salamanca (ibid., pp. 168–170).

By this time, Suárez had already attained celebrity-like status as a theologian, and so Salamanca was only too happy to receive back its most famous alumnus. The peace that Suárez had begun to enjoy in Salamanca and the leisure to pursue his scholarly projects served as the perfect environment for the Jesuit to begin one of his most important and significant works: the *Disputationes metaphysicae*. This peace of mind

was short-lived, however, since, in May 1596, King Philip II commanded the Society of Jesus to send Suárez to the University of Coimbra where he would assume the principle chair of theology (ibid., p. 205). After several futile protests, in 1597 Suárez was finally obliged to assume the post.

The relative peace that Suárez had enjoyed in Salamanca was replaced with turmoil and conflict in Coimbra, not the least of which was the *De auxiliis* controversy that embroiled not only the Spanish Dominicans (largely following the banner of Bañez) and the Jesuits (chief among whom was Luis de Molina) but also the entire Church. Only an intervention by the pope (Clement VIII) could calm the matter, but even then the matter was never really resolved. Beyond controversies over free will and grace, the black plague, which was afflicting the area in 1599, forced Suárez to seek refuge once again in Salamanca before he could return to Coimbra to begin lecturing on Law between 1601 and 1603 (Fichter 1940, p. 240). These lectures would become the basis for the Jesuit's massive study on law published as *De legibus*. Like its metaphysical counterpart, the *De legibus* is a systematic and exhaustive work that examines various types of law (eternal, natural, international, positive) over the course of ten books.

After his course on law, Suárez turned his intellectual gaze to a study of the sacrament of penance, which resulted in the publication of his *De poenitentia* (1602) and *De censuris* (1603) - (Fichter 1940, p. 249). The speculations contained in these volumes led to a serious conflict between Suárez and the Holy See over the subject of epistolary confession, which Suárez supported and the Holy See condemned. After a trip to Rome to give account of his position to the Holy See, a position that Suárez would end up retracting, the Jesuit returned to Coimbra in 1605 to resume teaching and writing (ibid., p. 263).

Suárez's reputation was soon restored, however, when he entered into a dispute between the Holy See and Venice regarding the extent of papal jurisdiction. He sided with the Holy See and authored the *De immunitate ecclesiastica contra Venetos* in support of the pope. The work so

endeared him to Pius V that on October 1607, Suárez received from the pope the title *Doctor Eximius et Pius* (ibid., pp. 272–273). Yet Suárez would soon be swept up into an even fiercer controversy, this time concerning James I of England. At issue was the oath of fidelity that James required of all his subjects. Paul V condemned the oath and enlisted the service of his finest theologians, including not only Suárez but also Bellarmine, to critique the oath. For Suárez's part the result was his *Defensio fidei catholicae*. In it Suárez insisted upon papal authority and claimed that the crown has no primacy over the pope in spiritual matters. The work was completed in 1610 but, owing to a shortage of printing materials, was not published until 1613 (ibid., pp. 295–300).

By this time, Suárez's career as a professor was drawing to a close. After having taught at Coimbra for nearly 20 years, the *Doctor Eximius* retired in July 1615 (ibid., pp. 204–208). Though his teaching duties were abrogated, Suárez remained scholarly active, revising several of his works for publication, including the *De gratia*, *De religione*, *De angelis*, *De opera sex dierum*, and *De anima* (ibid., pp. 326–327). Ever in search of a more suitable climate that would accommodate his frail constitution, Suárez moved to Lisbon in order to complete his projects. Yet, once again, the Jesuit found himself in the midst of political and ecclesiastical turmoil, and, as to be expected, the subject of dispute was jurisdiction, more specifically, ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction over property rights. The squabble was so intense that the entire city was eventually placed under interdict (ibid., pp. 330–333). After his own investigation into the matter, Suárez himself came to the conclusion that the interdict was indeed licit according to both canon and civil law (ibid., p. 331).

As the political atmosphere decayed, so too did Suárez's health. By September 1617 Suárez's health declined beyond hope for recovery. Ever industrious, he spent his remaining days dictating letters of farewell and accepted the ministrations of his fellow Jesuits as they helped prepare him for death. Early in the morning of 25 September 1617, Suárez serenely slipped into eternity (ibid.,

p. 338). In recognition of the incalculable contributions that Suárez made to the intellectual life of the Church, the papal representative, Archbishop Accoramboni, temporarily lifted the interdict in Lisbon so that proper funeral services could be celebrated for the deceased Jesuit (ibid., p. 338).

Disputationes metaphysicae

Suárez was by his own estimation a theologian. Yet, in the course of developing his theological doctrine, Suárez, as he explains in the preface *ad lectorem* of the *Disputationes metaphysicae*, recognized that it would be worthwhile precisely for his task as a theologian to make explicit the philosophical principles employed within his theology. Thus, while in the midst of his commentary on the *tertia pars* of Thomas's *Summa theologiae*, Suárez paused his theological work to undertake the composition of what would be a mammoth metaphysical project that went entirely beyond the commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* that had been the standard practice of the time. Suárez organized his project according to the logic of the inner exigencies that the science of metaphysics required of itself: "And so to proceed with the greatest concision and brevity, and finally to be able to treat the things according to an appropriate method, we shall abstain – in that which concerns the text of Aristotle – from prolix explanations, and will consider the things themselves to which this wisdom is directed, with the order of the theory and the exposition that accords with them better" (*DM* 2 prol.). Nothing quite like the *Disputationes metaphysicae* had ever been produced before, and, while other Renaissance thinkers (such as Agostino Nifo, Crisostomo Javelli, and Diego Mas) authored texts that explored metaphysical themes explicitly and protractedly, none had produced a work that had the breadth, systematicity, and exhaustiveness of Suárez's 2,000-page masterpiece (Pereira 2007, p. 14).

Its novelty is undeniable, but so too is the *Disputationes metaphysicae*'s continuity with the medieval tradition. Étienne Gilson notes that insofar as the *Disputationes* locate their various theses

against the larger backdrop of the scholastic tradition and only after having evaluated thoroughly the claims made within that tradition concerning the issue at hand are they properly understood as an extension of medieval thought (Gilson 1956, p. 96). Indeed, according to Gilson, “Suárez enjoys such a knowledge of mediaeval philosophy as to put to shame any modern historian of medieval thought” (Gilson 1956, p. 99). Despite his embeddedness within a continuing tradition, the originality of a creative thinker shines through clearly. The opening *disputatio* examines the nature of metaphysics in general and attempts to determine the proper object of metaphysics. Suárez considers and rejects six theses concerning the adequate object of metaphysics before advancing his own claim that metaphysics has its adequate object being insofar as it is real being (*ens in quantum ens reale*) (DM 1.1.26). This opinion, notes Suárez, is consonant with the majority of the tradition and agrees with Thomas Aquinas, Alexander of Hales, Duns Scotus, Albertus Magnus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and several who have followed in their wake. What is more, so construed, metaphysics considers not only the divine being but other immaterial and material substances as well as their real accidents. Excluded, however, are beings of reason and *ens per accidens* (ibid.).

In the second *disputatio*, Suárez treats the character of being in general, its properties, and its causes, a task which is carried out in the remainder of the first part of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* (i.e., disputes 1 through 27). More proximately, Suárez is concerned with the features of being that allow the natural powers of the intellect to grasp it. Here, he turns to an examination of formal and objective concepts as they pertain to metaphysics. A formal concept, explains Suárez in agreement with common scholastic teaching, “is said to be the act itself, or (what is the same) the *verbum* by which the intellect conceives a thing or common feature [*commune rationem*]” (DM 2.1.1). To this the Jesuit contrasts the objective concept which is “said to be the thing or *ratio* which is properly and immediately known or represented by the formal concept” (ibid.). By way of example, Suárez explains that when one conceives a man, that

act, which is effected in the mind for the purpose of conceiving a man, is called the formal concept, but the known man represented by that act is called the objective concept, a “concept,” Suárez adds, that is so-called through extrinsic denomination relative to the formal concept through which its object is said to be conceived (ibid.). The latter concept is of chief importance for Suárez since not only does it pertain to singular things, it also pertains to universals, confused things, and common features among things as well as privations, negations, and the like. The second disputation primarily explicates the objective concept of being as such according to its complete abstraction, in which concept is, for Suárez, the “object of metaphysics.”

Since an examination of the objective concept is laden with great difficulties, Suárez proposes to conduct his investigation by turning to the formal concept since it is “more knowable” (*notior*) than the objective concept (ibid., 2.1.1). What is more, since the formal concept, objective concept, and *vox* signifying them maintain a proportional relationship among themselves, Suárez thinks that one can argue from one to the other (ibid., 2.2.24). Some have suggested that the Jesuit’s approach, though realist in orientation, adumbrates modernity’s epistemological shift, epitomized by René Descartes who makes an intramental subjective act (consciousness) – the correlate to the formal concept – the measure and guarantor of the real, the correlate to the objective concept (Pereira 2007, 31, pp. 137–139).

The third disputation concerns the properties and principles of being in general. Here, one finds Suárez’s transcendental analysis of the concept of being in which he differentiates himself from Scotus (DM 3.1.1–2), with whom, *prima facie*, the *Doctor Eximius* shares many points of similarity. Perhaps the most significant difference is that unlike Scotus, who regards the concept of being as *simpliciter simplex* – and thus as ultimately determinable by its transcendental disjunctive relations (e.g., infinite-possible, necessary-possible, etc.) – Suárez maintains that the concept of being is a confused one that “intimately transcends” its *inferiora* (3.1.6–8). As such, being is not really distinct from its *passiones*; it is only

conceptually distinct. This conceptual distinction has a basis in reality (ibid., 3.1.6), which implies, for Suárez, that being really includes its *passiones*, which are merely prescinded from in the intellect's inadequate conception of being (ibid., 3.1.12).

The fourth disputation explores transcendental unity in general. Suárez retains the by-then traditional claim that "unity adds nothing positive above being, neither in terms of a conceptual nor real addition, nor [does it stem] from the nature of the thing, nor only from the character of a distinct being" (ibid., 4.1.6). Rather, unity expresses a being's indivision by means of the negation of divisibility. Accordingly, inasmuch as unity is predicated upon a negation, it is conceived in terms of a relation of reason (ibid., 4.1.16). The fifth disputation narrows Suárez's transcendental analysis of unity to a consideration of individual unity and its principle. He explains the character of an individual or singular being by saying that it is "everything which is an actual being, or which exists, or is capable of immediately existing" (ibid., 5.1.4). Individuality does not add any real being to a common or specific nature (ibid., 5.2.8–9). What is fundamentally at issue here is the principle of individuation. Suárez rejects the Thomistic claim that signate matter functions as the individuating principle (ibid., 5.3.9–33), nor does the Jesuit accept the claim, attributed to Durandus, that substantial form serves as the principle of individuation for a material substance (ibid., 5.4.3). Finally, Suárez settles upon the notion that "in all singular substances, there is nothing lacking for the principle of individuation besides its own entity, nor beyond the intrinsic principles that are consonant with its being" (ibid., 5.6.1). The sixth disputation continues Suárez's exploration of unity but now with respect to the unity of forms and universals. He considers the Scotistic position, which holds that there is a formal unity in things that is distinct from a thing's numerical (individual) unity, as well as the Thomistic position, which holds that essence, taken precisely from the individual, does not have any real entity. Suárez agrees with all insofar as each holds that a per se formal unity congruent with each and every essence or nature is found in all

things (ibid., 6.1.8). He disagrees, however, in maintaining that the distinction between that formal unity and the individual is had through reason and does not stem from the thing or its nature (ibid., 6.1.9–10).

Since a recurring theme in the previous disputations is the notion of "distinction," Suárez devotes his seventh *disputatio* to a study of the issue. He first explores the nature of real distinction and then addresses the nature of a rational distinction. Briefly, a real distinction is basically the distinction of "a thing from a thing" (ibid., 7.1.1). Here, Suárez adduces the example of the distinctions that are obtained between and among various *supposita* and their accidents. A rational distinction, in contrast, "is that which formally and actually is not in things, which are thus denominated distinct, just as they exist in themselves, but only as our concepts subsist [in them], and from them they receive some denomination. . . ." (ibid., 7.1.4). As an example of a rational distinction, Suárez points to the distinction between and among attributes in God and also the relation of identity. The Jesuit then differentiates among various sorts of rational distinction. That distinction which has no foundation in a thing or reality is called a *distinctio rationis ratiocinantis*, which originates solely from functioning of the intellect. In contrast, a distinction that has a foundation in a thing is called a *distinctio rationis ratiocinatae*, in which distinction has some basis in reality prior to the operation of the intellect (ibid.).

With the basis established for the distinctions thus far employed, Suárez returns to his transcendental considerations and in the next four disputations addresses truth (disputations eight and nine) and goodness (disputations 10 and 11). Among the *passiones entis* truth is prior to goodness but is subsequent to unity. Suárez's reason for this order stems from the fact that the intellect, to which corresponds truth, is prior to the potentiality of the will, to which corresponds the good (ibid., 8 prol.). Following the "common opinion," Suárez holds that truth – as well as falsity – resides in the intellect's composing and dividing. Nevertheless he also admits that transcendental truth is intrinsically said of real being itself (ibid., 8.7.24).

Ultimately, such truth, while still denoting a relationship between the mind and the thing, consists in a relationship of correspondence to the divine mind (*ibid.*, 8.7.28–31). Disputation nine treats the opposite of truth, namely, falsity. Unlike truth, Suárez argues that falsity is not a feature or property of things. In fact, something can only be called “false” in a kind of metaphorical sense by means of extrinsic denomination (*ibid.*, 9.1.6).

The tenth disputation begins Suárez’s treatment of transcendental goodness. He considers theories that hold goodness to be a relation of reason and others that maintain it to be a real relation. Goodness does not add anything to being except the character of agreement (*convenientiae*), which is not a relation, Suárez insists, but only connotes the order between some nature and its own inclination, capacity, or conjunction with a perfection; thus, goodness is rightly said to be the perfection of a thing (*ibid.*, 10.1.12) and is founded on being (*ibid.*, 10.3.3). The eleventh disputation explores the converse of goodness: evil. Like the previous scholastic tradition, Suárez holds that evil is not a thing or a positive form, nor is it merely a negation. Rather, evil is a privation of some perfection that should be present in a being (*ibid.*, 11.1.3).

Disputation 12 begins a protracted treatment of the causes of being in general, followed by specific studies on the material cause of substances (disputation 13), the material cause of accidents (disputation 14), the formal cause of substances (disputation 15), the formal cause of accidents (disputation 16), efficient causality in general (disputation 17), proximate efficient causes (disputation 18), and necessity and contingency in efficient causality (disputation 19). Disputations 20 through 22 focus on creation as a specific instance of causality and related themes, namely, the concurrence of primary and secondary causes and the conservation of being. Returning to his treatment of the remaining four Aristotelian causes, the 23rd disputation treats final causality in general before examining – in disputation 24 – the ultimate end in particular. Suárez studies exemplar causality in the 25th disputation, and then in the 26th disputation, he considers the causal community that emerges between causes

and their effects, in which it is seen that no effect exceeds the perfection of its cause. Disputation 27 closes the first part of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* and offers a comparison of causes as they relate among themselves.

The second part of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* opens with the 28th disputation in which Suárez traces the descent of the common concept of being to its *inferiora*, namely, the disjuncts’ infinite and finite being. Important here is Suárez’s doctrine of the *analogia entis*, which attempts to balance two metaphysical dynamics: the unitary concept of being and the priority-posteriority of that concept as it descends to its *inferiora*. While Suárez is committed to the unitary concept of being, owing to the scientific demands of metaphysics that require a unified subject (*DM* 28.3.15), he does not embrace the Scotistic doctrine of univocity (*ibid.*, 28.3.5). Suárez’s disagreement with Scotus stems from the fact that, according to the Franciscan thinker, a univocal concept descends to its *inferiora* equally without an ordering of priority and posteriority. But, in the Jesuit’s eyes, there is an order in the descent of the concept of being since it pertains first (*per prius*) to God, who is being essentially, and secondarily (*per posterius*) to creatures, which are being *per participationem* (*ibid.*, 28.3.17). In noting an ordered relation within the concept of being, Suárez insists upon its analogical character. Yet the kind of analogy advocated here is far from the standard Thomistic view espoused by Cajetan and later affirmed by John of St. Thomas. In fact, Suárez’s view of analogy is hardly Thomistic at all. For Cajetan, analogy was understood in terms of proper proportionality – that is to say, a four-term relationship in which a: b::c:d – and attribution was inappropriate to a metaphysical project since, according to the Renaissance Dominican, attribution is entirely extrinsic. Yet, as Suárez sees it, proportionality is extrinsic and attribution – which denotes an ordered relation of cause to effect – functions intrinsically, whereby it is capable of accommodating the exigencies proper to being (*ibid.*, 28.3.11).

The 29th disputation is the locus of Suárez’s argument for God’s existence. He allies himself

with thinkers such as Albertus Magnus and Duns Scotus and, more remotely, with Avicenna, insofar as they favored an argument that was more metaphysical in character than the physical argument that had been the choice of Averroes (ibid., 29.1.3). Predisposed to a metaphysical approach, the Jesuit finds Thomas's proof centered upon the claim that "*omne quod movetur ab alio movetur*" is insufficient for the task of demonstrating God for the reason that there are instances in which the proposition simply does not hold, for example, actions of the will (ibid., 29.1.7), nor can it attain an immaterial first cause (ibid., 29.1.8). Accordingly, Suárez reframes the premise metaphysically as: "*omne quod fit ab alio fit*" (ibid., 29.1.20). He thus formulates his argument for God's existence as follows: "every being is made or not made (i.e., uncreated); but not all beings in the universe can be made; therefore it is necessary for there to be some being that is not made (or uncreated)" (ibid., 29.1.21). The major premise, argues Suárez, is evident since its necessity derives from two contraries; the minor premise argues against the possibility of an infinite regress with respect to created creator-beings and demands that one arrives at last at an uncreated-creator (ibid.).

After having demonstrated God's existence, disputation 30 develops Suárez's natural theology and proceeds to an examination of what God is. Hardly surprising, Suárez attributes all entitative perfection to God (ibid., 30.1.1). Additionally, despite the fact that finitude and infinitude have been understood to be attributes of mass, Suárez argues that God is properly understood as infinite (ibid., 30.2.2). He disagrees, however, with Thomas Aquinas who attributes infinitude to God on account of the divine *esse*'s not being received into some distinct essence or potentiality that would serve as a limitation (ibid., 30.2.19). Rather, as Suárez sees it, God's infinity consists in His possessing in His own *esse* the totality of all entitative perfection (ibid., 30.2.21). Only after having established God's complete perfection and infinitude does Suárez then conclude that God is pure act and entirely simple. The Jesuit then demonstrates in succession God's divine attributes: ubiquity, freedom,

unity, incomprehensibility, ineffability, life, knowledge, and will.

The 31st disputation moves on to a consideration of finite being, in particular, the relationship or distinction between finite essence and *esse*. By "*esse*," Suárez explains that he means the "actual existence of a thing" (ibid., 31.1.2). He first considers the (Thomistic) thesis that *esse* and essence are really distinct and, then, the (Scotistic) claim that their distinction stems from the nature of the thing, which is to say they are formally distinct. Suárez, however, describes and affirms a third thesis, namely, that *esse* and essence are distinct only according to reason (ibid., 31.1.13). As such, the Jesuit argues that prior to God's production of a creature, the creature's essence is "entirely nothing" (ibid., 31.2.1).

Disputation 32 focuses on created being in general and considers its division into substance and accident(s). The next four disputations (33–36) treat the nature of substance in general (including a discussion about the difference between primary and secondary substances), *supposita*, subsistence and its causes, and immaterial substances and their attributes. Of particular note, here, is Suárez's claim, supported by several arguments, that the existence of spiritual substances besides God can be demonstrated (*DM* 35.1). It is not repugnant, *ex parte rei*, that they should exist, nor is it impossible that the power to produce them efficiently should be lacking the first cause. In effect, Suárez argues that angels are possible (ibid., 35.1.3). He also maintains that the existence of an immaterial soul, which is incomplete yet immortal, suggests the possibility of the existence of a spiritual being that is not incomplete but more perfect than the soul (ibid., 35.1.4). Suárez also argues that the perfection of the universe requires grades of immaterial beings (ibid., 35.1.5).

The 36th disputation descends from a consideration of spiritual substances to a treatment of material substances, which are essentially the same, says Suárez, as corporeal substances that are composed of matter and form (ibid., 36.1.12). Additionally, the Jesuit rejects Averroes' claim that a material substance's essence consists only in its form and follows, instead, Thomas, who

argues that matter must also be reckoned to be part of the essence (ibid., 36.2.3).

The 37th disputation begins Suárez's treatment of the last nine Aristotelian predicaments, beginning, first, with a consideration of the nature of accidents in general, then explaining accidents' relation to substance in terms of priority and posteriority (*disputatio* 38), accounting for division of accidents into nine highest genera (*disputatio* 39), and, finally (*disputationes* 40 through 53), moving onto an examination of each accident individually. Disputations 40 and 41 deal with continuous and discrete quantity, respectively, while disputation 42 examines quality. Potency and act form the subject of the 43rd disputation. *Disputatio* 44 treats various *habitus*. The next two disputations return to a deeper consideration of quality in terms of contrariety (*disputatio* 45) and intensity (*intensio*) (*disputatio* 46). The 47th dispute addresses relation in general and in particular (viz., real, rational, etc.). Disputations 48 and 49 treat action and passion, respectively. Duration is then examined in *disputatio* 50. In the next two disputations Suárez attempts to establish a subtle but nevertheless real difference between place (*ubi*) (*disputatio* 51) and position (*situ*) (*disputatio* 52). That difference, he explains, amounts to the fact that *ubi* pertains to being "present" somewhere in terms of distance, but *situ* pertains to a thing's disposition in itself that results from an ordering of parts in a location, in which ordering does not include the notion of being "present" (*DM* 52.1.9). Then, in the 53rd disputation Suárez returns to *habitus*, but this time from the perspective of its being a certain genus of accident, that is, he considers it here as a quality or disposition (or a certain species thereof) of permanence.

Finally, Suárez concludes his mammoth *Disputationes metaphysicae* with a discussion of *entia rationis* (*disputatio* 54). At the onset of his metaphysical project, Suárez had clearly excluded *entia rationis* from the scope of metaphysics (*DM* 1.1.6). His reason was that *entia rationis* and *ens reale* do not fall under the same common concept of being (ibid., 1.1.4), in which concept is the adequate object of metaphysics (ibid., 2.2.1). Be that as it may, Suárez considers the examination of

entia rationis as beneficial to the study of real beings as well as for the successful progress of other sciences (ibid., prol.1). Beings of reason and real beings, though they have no metaphysical community, enjoy an analogical community in terms of proper proportionality (ibid., 1.1.5). As Suárez sees it, the "being" proper to *entia rationis* is simply that of being thought or *esse objectivum*. As such they only have an efficient cause, namely, the intellect that produces them, but none of the other four causes.

De legibus ac deo legislatore

The legal counterpart to the *Disputationes metaphysicae*, the *De legibus* is a massive and systematic exposition of law in all its categories: divine or eternal, natural, international (i.e., *jus gentium*), and positive or human. Composed of ten books, the *De legibus* begins with a consideration of law in general, the signification of the name "law," and related topics of concern (e.g., justice, the necessity of law, law's character or *ratio*, etc.). For Suárez, taken in its most fundamental sense, law is simply the rule of our operations and measure of their goodness or lack thereof (*De leg.* 1.1.1). He adverts to Plato's discussion of matters related to law the *Meno* wherein a twofold distinction is deployed between "art" and "custom," to which are added the notions of "order" and, with the *Timaeus* and *Gorgias* in mind, "natural propensity" (ibid., 1.1.2). Suárez then approaches law etymologically and tells the reader that "law" is drawn from the term "binding" (*ligando*) since law's "propter effect is to bind or oblige" (ibid., 1.1.9). Also of concern in the first book is the relationship between law and justice (*jus*). Justice signifies fairness and equality, which the law "prescribes" (ibid., 1.2.4); more specifically, "law" signifies "commanding" or "ordering" (*jubendo*), which Suárez identifies as the etymological origin of justice (*jus*) (ibid., 1.2.6).

In the second book of the *De legibus*, Suárez identifies and examines the nature of specific kinds of law, beginning with the divine or eternal law. Despite the claim that there can be no eternal law since it requires that it be imposed upon

someone and there is no creature coeternal with God upon whom the law could be imposed (ibid., 2.1.1), Suárez cites the common opinion of the theologians as militating against this position (ibid., 2.1.3–4). To this objection, Suárez responds with a distinction. Law can be taken in a twofold manner: first, as an internal disposition of the legislator and, second, as externally constituted through its imposition upon subjects. In the first sense, law can be eternally attributed to God, though not in the second (ibid., 2.1.5). For Suárez, the eternal law is fundamentally associated with the divine will. He denies that it governs immanent divine actions, such as the generation of the Word and Spiration of the Holy Spirit, for these actions follow entirely from the nature of God (ibid., 2.2.2). Rather, the eternal law pertains to God's free operations toward creation, that is to say, it pertains to the order God establishes within creation and the providential actions by which He governs the world (ibid., 2.2.3–4, 12–13).

At this point, the concern arises whether the eternal law is principally a matter of the divine mind or the divine will (ibid., 2.3.1). Suárez emphasizes the divine will and, in so doing, distinguishes himself from Thomas, who associates the eternal law with divine reason (Doyle, p. 14). For Suárez, the eternal law concerns the absolutely free decrees of God as they establish order, either generally as all parts of the universe are ordered to a common good, or immediately as these parts agree with the character of the whole universe (*ratione totius universi*), or specifically with respect to the order by which intellectual creatures measure their own actions (*De leg.*, 2.3.6). While divine providence, in terms of its governance, would seem to pertain to the eternal law, Suárez is careful to distinguish the two and follows Thomas in holding that the eternal law is compared to providence as general principle to particular conclusions or actions, just as occurs in the case with humans for whom first practical principles are compared to prudence (ibid., 2.3.12). Moreover, as the eternal law “is God Himself,” it has no cause over it (ibid., 2.4.1) but is the cause of certain effects that follow from it. Here, Suárez notes that the eternal law extends to its inferiors, namely, creatures, not so much by

imposing obligation upon them, but by inducing in them an “instinct, inclination, or naturally determined impetus to one thing” (ibid., 2.4.1).

In relating the eternal law to various other laws, Suárez explains that the eternal law is participated in by the natural law which concerns the rational order discoverable in nature; in a particular way, the natural law concerns those beings of a rational nature (ibid., 2.2.1), for it is, he says, “nothing other than rational nature itself” (ibid.). The reason for this claim stems from the fact that a rational being has the intellectual power to discern what is in accord (or discordant) with its own nature (ibid., 2.5.1). In fact, Suárez maintains that the natural law most properly exists in the actual judgment of the mind (ibid., 2.5.14). Nevertheless, it is distinct from conscience. Natural law pertains to a general rule regarding action, whereas conscience pertains to a particular situation or practice; in short, the latter is the application of the law to a particular work. Thus conscience applies not only the natural law, Suárez says, but other kinds of law (divine or human) as well (ibid., 2.5.15). In its most general consideration, then, the basic precept of the natural law is to do good and avoid evil (ibid., 2.7.5). Because the natural law is a feature of rational nature itself, Suárez disagrees with those (e.g., Navarrus and Sancius) who hold that it can be abrogated or dispensed by any other law or human power (ibid., 2.14.1). The pope, who is unable to dispense the divine law, is certainly not able to dispense the natural law (ibid., 2.14.5) nor is the king for that matter (ibid., 2.14.10). What is more, Suárez thinks that not even the absolute power of God is able to dispense with the natural law. Though the natural law, he says, includes the precepts and prohibitions of God, there is nevertheless supposed within nature an intrinsic value or worth (*honestum*), and, thus, God cannot not prohibit the rational creature from carrying out that which natural reason shows to be evil and dissonant with nature which is immutable (ibid., 2.15.4).

Stemming from the natural law is the *jus gentium* or law of nations. The *jus gentium* is natural in the sense that it derives from the dictates of (natural) human reason, but it is not to be

confused as it often is, Suárez thinks, with the natural law. Though the *jus gentium* is “nearest” to the natural law, it is actually between the natural law and human law (ibid., 2.17.1). Suárez notes that some distinguish natural law from the *jus gentium* insofar as the former is common to brutes as well as humans, whereas the latter pertains exclusively to the social relations of humans (ibid., 2.17.3). The Jesuit himself, however, marks a distinction between the two by noting that the natural law pertains to conclusions that are necessary that follow, not upon the will of individuals or society, but upon the principles of nature. The *jus gentium*, however, pertains to those conclusions that, though they follow from nature, are not absolutely necessary but consider the circumstances attendant upon human society and its conservation (ibid., 2.17.9). Accordingly, the *jus gentium* cannot be reduced to the natural law, nor can it be identified merely with conventional character of human positive law. Though it stems from the consistent social customs practiced across almost all nations, it does so with respect to a nature that is diversified across various cultural contexts (ibid., 2.19.6). The upshot of the *jus gentium* so construed is that it can serve as common stage of social discourse among various cultures. To be sure, the Jesuit points out that the *jus gentium* does not have as its intent or goal the formation of a global society or single nation. Rather, it serves as a forum for each and every republic, whereby each nation can interact justly and, if need be, redress injuries (ibid., 2.18.5). The *jus gentium* possesses special competence, then, to address issues such as ambassadorial privileges, commerce, war, trade, and even marriage (ibid., 2.19.10).

Book three of the *De legibus* descends from a consideration of the natural character of law to a treatment of positive human law. One of the main theoretical questions regarding human law is “whether humans can impose obligations upon themselves through proper laws” (ibid., 3.1.1). There is some doubt whether such a possibility exists since humans are free beings and, as sacred scripture itself says, “only God is the king, legislator, and master of men” (ibid.). Be that as it may, Suárez argues that man is firstly a social

animal and naturally and rightly seeks to live in community (ibid., 3.1.3). The Jesuit then notes that a community can either be familial or political. The former is “maximally natural and quasi fundamental” (ibid.), but, because of want or needs that could not be fulfilled within familial society, humans enter into community with others, thereby generating the state (ibid.). This association, moreover, is a free consequence of the will, and it is from the consent of its constitutive individuals that the state receives its power (ibid., 3.3.1). Of course, Suárez thinks that the ability to enter into agreement with the state is ultimately given by God: “In this matter the common opinion is seen to be that this power [to form political communities and author legislation] is given immediately by God as the author of nature; therefore men quasi-dispose matter and effect a capable subject with this power, God, however, quasi-bestows the form giving this power” (ibid., 3.3.2). God has thus immediately given humanity the power to punish evil doers (even to the point of putting them to death), to enact policies encouraging the good, to impose obligations, and to vindicate injuries of individuals (ibid., 3.3.3). Nevertheless, the state receives its power immediately from the people, and it is up to them to determine what form of government to adopt (*Def. fid.* 3.2.9). One may thus justly consider Suárez to be the progenitor of modern day democracy (Pereira 2007, p. 20). Still, Suárez himself thinks that monarchies are the best form of government (*De leg.*, 3.4.1). But even so, the king’s authority and power are not absolute, for that power stems not immediately from God but is instead derived from the people (*Def. fid.* 3.2.8). Accordingly, when a king steps beyond his authority and becomes tyrannical – as was the case with James I, according to Suárez in agreement with Bellarmine – the populace has the right to defend itself (ibid. 3.3.3). Indeed, Suárez even holds that it is just for a person attacked by a tyrannical king to defend himself, even if it should result in the king’s death (*Def. fid.*, 6.4.5; Doyle, p. 347).

The fourth book of the *De legibus* moves onto a treatment of canon law, that is, Church law. The Church, Suárez argues, does indeed have the

power to rule and govern itself; he cites both biblical authority – in which Christ gives the keys of the kingdom (i.e., authority) to Peter to bind and loose sins (*De leg.*, 4.1.2) – and Church tradition (ibid., 4.1.5). The Jesuit marks a distinction between canon and civil law insofar as each has distinct ends. Canon law pertains to supernatural felicity, the final unification of diversity, and the sanctification of the soul; civil law, however, pertains to the temporal governance of the political body (ibid., 4.2.1). The authority with respect to canon law pertains in a special way to the pope since, according to Suárez, Christ immediately gave Peter authority (ibid., 4.3.1). Nevertheless, that authority was also extended to the rest of the apostles such that Peter – the pope – could bestow the authority he received to other members of the Church; here, Suárez has in mind the rest of the bishops of the Church. Like Bellarmine, Suárez accords primacy to the pope – the head of the Church – and denies that the rest of the apostles are equal in power or jurisdiction (ibid., 4.3.4). But inevitably the question arises as to who is superior in jurisdiction and power: the papacy or the civil ruler; the Church or the state? Not surprisingly, Suárez accords supremacy to the Church. Nevertheless, Suárez's answer is far from simplistic and recognizes the difficulties involved in Church-state relations. The Church, through the ministry of its priests, has the power to remit sins, ordain other priests, bind and dissolve censures, and dispense from the spiritual treasures of the Church. In terms of its universal extension, then, Suárez holds that ecclesial power is “clearly . . . far more excellent than civil power” (ibid., 4.8.1). In part, Suárez argues for the supremacy of the Church over the state because of the former's unity as a mystical body, which stands over the diversity of individual states (ibid., 4.9.3). The Church has jurisdiction over its subjects and thereby over members of the state. The state is related to the Church, in Suárez's mind, as the Church is itself related to Christ, namely, “as the body is subordinate to the soul” (ibid.). This is not to say that Suárez sees no limit to the Church's authority over the state, for the state retains its right to immediate jurisdiction over its temporal affairs. The Church's primacy, in contrast,

concerns a superiority of spiritual over temporal affairs (ibid., 4.11.3, 5).

Book five treats human law in its varieties, both written and non-written, and investigates its relation to conscience, penalties, and contracts. Book six marks the beginning of the second division of the *De legibus*, and in it Suárez considers who counts as the proper interpreter of law and what those particular circumstances might be in which the law can be abrogated or amended. Book seven studies the manner in which custom affects the formation of civil law, especially its codification. Insofar as custom always involves (good) moral character as the source from which its actions derive, the connection that morality has to the formation of law is examined (ibid., 7.1.4). Privilege forms the subject of discussion in book eight, whereas the old and new divine laws form the topics of books nine and ten, respectively. In book nine, Suárez notes that while the Mosaic law is obligatory, it is a law that is incapable of “saving” (ibid., 9.7.1–14). The new law, however – treated in book ten – exceeds and completes the old. The old law was necessary, he explains, but only as a preparation for the new (ibid., 10.8.18). In fact, the two are related, says Suárez, as “truth to shadow” (ibid., 10.8.18), such that if the old law is to have any salvific function, it is only through being completed in Christ, whose blood has “opened the gates of heaven” (10.8.18).

De anima

Suárez's explicit and most developed thought on human nature, the rational soul, and its various faculties are found across the six books that compose his *De anima*. The first book examines the substance, essence, and informing character of the rational soul. In this opening book, a rather straightforward Aristotelian account of the soul and its nature is presented. Suárez maintains Aristotle's teaching that the soul is “the first act of a physical corporeal substance organized so as to have the power of life,” and “that by which we live, feel, move about, and understand” (*DA* 1.1.1). For Suárez, a discussion of the rational soul must be unfolded against the backdrop of

Aristotle's philosophy of nature, which is ultimately understood in terms of the hylomorphic composition of form and matter (ibid., 1.1.2). As there are many different kinds of material substances, some living and some inanimate, and even among those substances that are living there are various grades (e.g., plants, animals, humans), the principle of differentiation cannot be matter – that which each kind of substance has in common. Rather, the differentiation must derive from the formal principle, which is simply what the tradition or “common opinion” has understood as the soul (ibid., 1.1.3, 4).

Although Suárez principally intends to examine the rational soul *ex professo* in the *De anima*, he does find it necessary to account for its distinction from, but also continuity with, the lower souls, namely, vegetative and sensitive souls (ibid., 1.4). Here, Suárez holds that that which is less perfect can be separated from that which is more perfect. And, so, the sensitive soul, which is more perfect than the vegetative soul, is separate therefrom and, a fortiori, so too is the rational soul. Thus, “when animals sleep, they live as plants” (ibid., 1.5.1). But, Suárez is noting, here, a distinction between and among grades of kinds of being, not (substantial) distinctions within one and the same being, for he disagrees with the theory, as taught by some medieval thinkers, that there is a plurality of substantial forms within one and the same being (ibid., 1.6). All three – the vegetative, sensitive, and rational – are united in one simplicity (ibid., 1.6.13), he says, and their distinction comes about only through precise abstraction (ibid., 1.6.14).

In the second book of the *De anima*, Suárez examines the various powers of the soul, especially its nutritive and life powers. Here, he argues for a real distinction between the soul and all its powers (Doyle, p. 13). Suárez locates his own position against the backdrop of four common theses pertaining to the matter: first, there are those (such as Gabriel Vázquez and Ockham) who maintain there is no distinction whatsoever between the essence of the soul and its powers; others argue for only a formal distinction as does Duns Scotus; while still others, for example, Bonaventure, hold there to be no distinction between

the soul and its vegetative powers but maintain a distinction only between the soul and its sensitive and rational powers; finally, Suárez cites Thomas, who holds that the soul is “really distinct” from all its powers (ibid., 2.1.2). For example, the nutritive powers, notes Suárez, whereby a thing exercises the operations attendant to life are accidental and thus distinct from the substance of the soul (ibid., 2.1.4). Following Anselm, Suárez explains that vital powers, insofar as they are vital, have a distinct definition (*ratio*) from the soul precisely as soul. Suárez then attributes this difference in *ratio* to follow from a difference on the part of the things (*ex parte rei*) involved. In short, the character of the soul, insofar as it is a form, is essentially ordered to a body, whereas powers are essentially ordered to operation (ibid.).

The third book narrows the discussion to a consideration of the sentient soul and thus cognition, its nature, and powers. Suárez examines the various external senses and notes what is specific to each before passing to the next. Of some note here, while in the context of discussing sight, Suárez has occasion to enter an excursus concerning the nature of light (ibid., 3.14). In such discussions the limits of the Aristotelian physics, to which Suárez certainly subscribed, are reached. The “old view,” which the Jesuit dismisses, simply holds that light is the manifestation of color. Others, however, consider light to be a body. Suárez finds fault with this theory too and follows Thomas's interpretation of Aristotle, which holds that light is an active quality of the substantial form of fire (ibid., 3.14.1). For Suárez's part, he defines light as a “per se visible quality in the air taken just as an object” (ibid., 3.14.5). Surprisingly absent from Suárez's consideration here, especially considering the Jesuit's exhaustive grasp of the history of philosophy, is any mention of Robert Grosseteste's *De luce* in which the topic of light is treated at length in the latter's cosmogonical account of the universe.

In the fourth book of the *De anima*, Suárez explores the nature of the intellectual power. The first order of business is to determine what counts as the adequate object of the intellect. In this regard Suárez considers and rejects the claim that the adequate object of the intellect is being

in general. Thomas, he notes, holds that the proper object of the intellect is the quiddity of a material thing, but, following Scotus, Suárez shows why that theory is lacking. The intellect can know things beyond that which is material, i.e., the angels and God. Also, the intellect grasps something insofar as it is intelligible, but whatever has being is intelligible. Therefore, it cannot be the case that the intellect is restricted to the quiddity of material things (ibid., 4.1.2). Thus, Suárez concludes that the adequate object of the intellect is “being in its total latitude” (ibid., 4.1.3). Here, the Jesuit faces the question as to whether or not beings of reason fall under the scope of being “in its total latitude” (Doyle, p. 13). Despite the fact that real being and beings of reason do not possess a formal unity, Suárez holds that beings of reason, though they have only objective being, presuppose real being. That is, beings of reason always entail some order to real being, which is why negations and privations can only be understood relative to real being (ibid., 4.1.4).

Also of particular note in the fourth book is Suárez’s claim that the intellect knows singular things, as opposed to just universals (Doyle, p. 13). He notes contrariwise that Aristotle and his followers (viz., Alexander of Aphrodisius) insist that one of the chief differences between sensation and intellection pertains to the fact that senses know singular things but the intellect, which trades in intelligible species, grasps universals (ibid., 4.3.1). Suárez also points out that, according to Thomas, the intellect does not directly know the singular, but attains knowledge of the individual only reflexively (ibid., 4.3.2). In contrast, the Jesuit thinks that the intellect forms distinct and proper concepts of both universals and singular things. As it is the case that the intellect is capable of forming propositions about both singular (e.g., “Peter is a man”) and universal things, it must be capable of forming concepts corresponding to both. Additionally, both prudence and faith are intellectual powers, yet each involves cognition of singular things. One must therefore maintain the ability to form proper concepts, Suárez thinks, of the singular (ibid., 4.3.3).

Suárez devotes the fifth book of the *De anima* to a study of appetites. Appetites are shared in

common by both animate and inanimate things. A natural appetite, he says, is the propensity of something to its own proper good (ibid., 5.1.1). Appetite seems to be a natural joining together, then, of one thing with some other thing to which the former is ordered. This ordering need not necessarily presuppose cognition (ibid.), and so the object of an appetite is whatever elicits such an act (ibid., 5.1.2), but that object is always regarded as something good (ibid., 5.1.5).

The sixth and final book of the *De anima* is devoted to an exploration of the separated soul. Here, Suárez notes some of the philosophical difficulties surrounding the matter, for example, whether the being (*esse*) that the separated soul retains is the same being (*esse*) as the whole human (ibid., 6.1.1). What is at issue is the metaphysical status of personhood since a person has always been understood as a whole or complete substance. Yet a separated soul obviously lacks completeness. Suárez cites Cajetan’s claim, which, although “obscure” and “was lacking efficacy” (*non vendicabat*), held truly that the separated soul is a “semi-person” (ibid., 6.1.1). This is a position that Thomas Aquinas himself had made (*ST* I, q. 75, a. 4, ad 2). Suárez thinks that the separate soul has the same subsistence that it had in the body and that, in experiencing separation, it does not, as Cajetan had thought, experience a change in being (*mutat entitatem*) but only a change in a mode of being (*DA*, 6.1.3). The separated soul, in Suárez’s view, does not itself change or attain a new kind of subsistence, but simply retains the kind of subsistence it already always had prior to the corruption of the body (ibid., 6.1.4). Nevertheless, he does agree with Cajetan in calling the separated soul a “semi-person,” for the reason that the subsistent soul remains only a part of the totality of a human person (ibid., 6.1.5). “Absolutely speaking, the soul’s status in the body is more natural” (ibid., 6.9.6), Suárez holds, and so the unnatural status of the separated soul lends credence to a philosophically meaningful expectation of the resurrection of the body (Doyle, p. 14). After all, it is maximally consonant with the inclination of the soul to be perpetually united to the body. Accordingly, Suárez thinks that it falls to the providence of

God, who is the author of nature, to reunite the separated soul with a body that is in some way incorruptible so that one's complete nature and perfection can be attained (*ibid.*, 6.9.6).

Suárez's Legacy

It is impossible to overestimate the profound influence Francisco Suárez's thought has had both on succeeding generations of scholastic (especially Jesuit) philosophers and on canonical modern and even postmodern thinkers. Long considered the father of modern philosophy, René Descartes' association with Jesuit education, especially at La Flèche, has been well documented. Descartes himself, in a letter to the French Jesuit Jacques Grandamy, acknowledges his profound intellectual debt to the Society of Jesus and claims that they prepared the foundation for all his future learning. In a subsequent letter to Marin Mersenne, Descartes identifies the Conimbricenses, in particular Francisco de Toledo and Antonio Rubio, as especially significant to his intellectual formation. Nevertheless, Suárez's own thought is never too far away, and, in replying to Arnauld's objections to Descartes' position on materially false ideas, the French philosopher appeals to the *Doctor Eximius* to validate his own claims.

But Suárez's influence may have had an even deeper, although perhaps subtler, influence on modernity's epistemological shift to the cognitive subject. As noted above, Suárez's second disputation of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* addresses the relationship between formal and objective concepts. The proper and adequate object of metaphysics, Suárez argues, is the common objective concept of being. But, as he also maintains, since the objective concept of being is "more difficult to understand" than the formal concept, which, as a product of our own intellect, is more knowable, his metaphysical project will unfold with special reference to the formal concept (*DM* 2.1.1). In other words, Suárez has placed a subjective act (the formal concept) as the criterion and judge of what is real (the objective concept) (Pereira 2007, pp. 137–139). One

might thus argue that the path to modernity was clearly pointed out, and, though Suárez remained a metaphysical and epistemological realist, the inversion of the mental over the real would be accomplished with the Cartesian cogito's elevation as the standard for objectivity and Clemens Timpler's understanding of reality as fundamentally the "*pan noēton*" (Doyle 2012 B, pp. 70–71).

Whereas Descartes, much to the frustration of his biographers, seemed reluctant to acknowledge his sources and debts, Leibniz does not fail to provide an encomium of Suárez. The polymath tells his readers that, as a youth, he devoured Suárez like a novel (Pereira 2007, p. 27). In fact, Suárez's claim that the principles of entity are themselves the principles of individuation (*DM* 5.6.1) no doubt helped illuminate a philosophical option that led to Leibniz's famous monadology. The great esteem with which Leibniz held Suárez seemed to have been shared by his pupil Christian Wolff. Throughout Wolff's *Philosophia prima sive ontologia*, several scholastic theses are examined, but Suárez is one of the few scholastics mentioned by name and almost always with appreciation. What seems clear is that, for Wolff, Suárez represents the epitome of scholastic philosophy. When reflecting on the character of being, Wolff argues that the meaning of being is ultimately resolved in terms of essence; what is more, he cites Suárez as having taught the same thing. "Certainly Francisco Suarez of the Society of Jesus, who among the Scholastics, has meditated more profoundly upon metaphysical things, as is agreed upon, [holds] in his *Disputationes metaphysicae*... that the essence of a thing is said to be what is the first, radically and intimate principle of actions and properties that agree with the thing" (Wolff 1962, I 2.3.169). Finally, to the extent that Suárez helped shape Wolff's metaphysics, so would the Jesuit come to define metaphysics as Kant understood and rejected it. As Gilson put it, "Suarez begot Wolff" (Gilson 1956, p. 112), to which it could be added without too much exaggeration, and Wolff begot Kant. In short, one could argue, with great qualification and nuance of course but no less accurately, that Suárez begot not only Wolff but – as Heidegger has intimated – also modernity and even to a

certain extent postmodernity. Heidegger writes, “With the peculiar character which the Scholastics give it, Greek ontology has, in its essentials, travelled the path that leads through the *Disputationes metaphysicae* of Suarez to the ‘metaphysics’ and transcendental philosophy of modern times, determining even the foundations and the aims of Hegel’s ‘logic’” (Heidegger 1962, pp. 43–44).

As remarkable as his philosophical achievements and the lasting influence he has had on the history of philosophy are, what is more remarkable is the radical contingency of it all. That is, it is difficult to imagine how philosophy would have been reshaped had Suárez remained a reject of the Society of Jesus and not given the opportunity to become, and not only for scholasticism (one may justly argue), the *Doctor Eximius*.

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Subiectum/Obiectum

► Subject/Object, Renaissance Concept of

Subject/Object, Renaissance Concept of

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Abstract

The pair of concepts subject/object derives from the Greek **hypokeímenon** and **antikeímenon** and from medieval usages of the verbs *subiicio* and *obiicio*, which actually mean the opposite of their post-Cartesian usages.

Synonyms

Hypokeímenon/antikeímenon; **Soggetto/oggetto**; **Subiectum/obiectum**; **Subjekt/objekt**; **Sujet/objet**

Introduction

The couple of concepts subject/object involves philosophical approaches that are relevant to the

intertwinement of logic, metaphysics, ethics, and psychology (Kobusch 1984; Karskens et al. 1998; Kible et al. 1998). During the Renaissance, some major contributions were proposed by the Aquinas commentator Tommaso de Vio Cardinal Cajetan, the humanist Petrus Ramus, the pure Aristotelian Cornelius Martini, the semi-Ramist Bartholomaeus Keckermann, and the lexicographer Rudolf Goclenius. Mostly, however, the discussion was led by Ramus and his followers, the Ramists, because of the role they played in exacerbating a discussion on the constitution of objectivity that was to have an impact on Cartesian and post-Cartesian theories of subjectivity. Finally, keeping in mind that Kant was familiar with the *secunda Petri*, i.e., with the second part of Ramus's logic, namely, the theory of judgment, some common ground is recognizable on subject/object between Ramus and Kant as well. Decades and decades before Descartes, the issue of subjectivity arose as a consequence of the setting of domains of objects, which brought the momentous change that logic's foundations were not in nature (as Plato and the Stoics assumed), but as a habit, within a thinking subject. Subject/object is about three questions: (1) Is logic a system based on nature or is it in the human understanding as a habit? (2) What are the form and the matter of the object to be considered? (3) How does the human subject elaborate semantic models in accordance with the heuristic of each science (Pozzo 2012)?

Etymology. The concepts derive from the Greek **hypokeímenon** and **antikeímenon** and from medieval usages of the verbs *subiicio* and *obiicio*, which actually mean the opposite of their post-Cartesian usages (Risse 1963). The former refers to the logical discernment of the intellect and the latter to the investigative activity of the senses. In other words, the former designates what we today call a formal approach and the latter is close to what we call today the subjective conditions of experience. Several studies have investigated the history of this pair of concepts, and scholars have become again familiar with the pre-Cartesian understanding of the terms. There is still much to be considered, however, about the motives that led Renaissance philosophers to switch from the Aristotelian notion of a logical

or metaphysical subject to the Renaissance idea of a human subject who aims at using reason in the most consequential way (Pozzo 2002). Finally, it needs to be kept in mind that we are looking into the works of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century philosophers who talked of concepts instead of terms, of judgments instead of propositions, and of reasoning instead of arguments. They were philosophers who openly relied on psychology and, less openly, but just as effectively, on metaphysics (Easton 1997, i). A subject is what accidents subject to and is grasped by the intellect. An object is what one looks at and is felt by the senses. One has first to deal with the subject rather than with the accidents, because the accidents presuppose the subject. As a matter of fact, nothing is without subject, and the subject is either what the accident is in or that upon which the accident falls or inheres. Aristotle teaches in *Categories* 1a20-1b7 that something is either referentially (*de re*) in the subject (**en hupokeímenon**, *in subiecto*), in which case the predicate is in an individual subject, or something is said attributively (*de dicto*) upon the subject (**kath' hypokeímenon**, *de subiecto*), in which case the predicate is said to be of whatever substance is its subject. In the latter case, what matters is that a human being has posed a question and that his or her subjectivity has the responsibility of isolating a determinate domain. The task of providing attributive predication was taken over in the Renaissance by the operator **thema**, a characteristic feature of humanistic logic, which turns out to be pivotal for understanding the constitution of objects. In fact, it is up to the human subject to focus on domains of objects and to thematize them according to his or her operative conditions (Pozzo 1999).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The opposition of subject/object concerns intentional semantics. It focuses on the question of how we approach the subject we are speaking about or referring to (Hintikka 1975; Jardine 1988; Popkin 1988). In his *De natura logicae*, which appeared in 1578, Jacopo Zabarella gave a new interpretation of the question about the

subject of logic and of the individual sciences by connecting semantics with the epistemic questions related to the completeness of Aristotle's five intellectual habits. His goal is to formulate a general model for the semantics of a complete system of the sciences (Zabarella 1597). The particular logical theories to be presupposed here are abstraction and reduplication. The problem of the *subiectum* becomes relevant in traditional and in humanistic logic in connection with the task of providing a renewed approach to science based on the triad of *res significata*, *discursus*, and *conceptus* (Ashworth 1974, pp. 42–49). Gabriel Nuchelmans has referred to some occurrences of *modus concipiendi* in Arnauld and of *modus considerandi* in Leibniz (Nuchelmans 1982, pp. 74, 224) and Massimo Mugnai to occurrences of *modus concipiendi* in Leibniz (Mugnai 1979, p. 85), thus indicating to the later history of this problem up to Kant.

The following is the text by Zabarella in *De natura logicae* I,15 that constitutes the basis of the discussion:

In fact the subject of a science has two parts: one namely matter, which is called the thing considered *subiectum* [*res considerata*], the other form, which is said ratio and mode of consideration [*modus considerandi*]; the thing considered is not proper to some science, but can be common with others; the mode of consideration however is proper and it restricts the thing considered, which was for itself common: e.g., in operative disciplines we use to name the subject in as far as it is restricted by the goal: so we say that in the medical art the subject is the human body in as far as it must be healed; we see then that the subject of an operative discipline is the same thing considered in the contemplative discipline, and the goal of the operative discipline corresponds to the mode of consideration of the contemplative discipline according to a certain proportion; with which similarity however a dissimilarity is connected: for that mode of consideration in the medical art is not a determinate thing that exists and that is proposed for consideration; it signifies instead something that do not exist, which is proposed to be effected: for this reason we do not speak correctly when we say that the subject of the medical art is the human being in as far as it must be healed, almost as it were constituted by two parts, namely by matter and form; correctly speaking the former is called subject, i.e., the human body, the latter not subject, but rather goal. (Zabarella 1597, pp. 39–40)

Determination and Reflection. Looking at dictionary entries on determination and reflection from the Greeks to Spinoza, one cannot fail to mention Aristotle's description of the role played by **próthesis** in *Analytica posteriora* Alpha 27 in the passage “from the unity, which is a substance without position, to the point, which is a unity with a position: this passage is the result of a determination” (87a34–36). Reflection, instead, does not occur in Aristotle. It does not occur in any Greek thinker – and in fact, in the *Differenzschrift*, Hegel declares he was wondering what the ancient philosophers ever thought in terms of consciousness (GW 5: 11). It is true that in *De anima* Gamma 3, Aristotle admits that the “intellect can think itself” (429b9), but he leaves it there, so that one has to wait until Aquinas for an elaboration of the matter. In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas observes that since “the intellect reflects upon itself, by such reflection it understands both its own act of understanding, and the species by which it understands. Thus the intelligible species is secondarily that which is understood; but that which is primarily understood is the thing, of which the species is a likeness” (Pars I, Quaest. 85, Art. 2). The modern understanding of reflection goes back to Locke's *Essay*. Locke writes, “the second fountain from which experience furnisheth the understanding with *ideas* is the *perception of the operations of our own minds within us*, as it is employed about the *ideas* it has got: which operation... I call... *reflection*, the *ideas* it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself” (Book II, ch. 1, § 4). But it is Spinoza's connection of determination and reflection with negation that attracts our attention, as it attracted that of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel. In the letter of June 2, 1674 to Jarich Jelles (no. 50), Spinoza talks about conceiving geometric shapes as negations, not as positions, because as long as one considers matter indefinitely, matter cannot have any shape. Shapes can take place only in finite and determinate bodies. Given “that a shape is determination,” he argues, and given “that all determination is negation (*omnis determinatio est negatio*), it follows that a shape is nothing but a negation” (W 5: 121). Thus, every position of a new note to the list of intensions, i.e., every

position of the list of properties contained by a concept, implies (in accordance with the theorem of Port Royal about the inverse proportionality of the intension and extension of a concept) that in consequence of a determination, the concept is negated of some of the extensions, i.e., of some of the objects of which it used to be affirmed. In the *Ethica*, Spinoza introduces determination in terms of causal efficiency (*a Deo determinatur*; E1 P27–28), while whatever we conceive to be in the power of God (*a Deo concipitur*) necessarily exists (E1 P35).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The question is whether or not one is entitled to translate the Greek term *sképsis* (from *sképtomai* or *episképtomai*) in the first line of *Analytica Priora* Alpha 1 (24a10) with the Latin *consideratio*. In fact, *Metaphysica* Alpha elatton 3 (995a14) provides the syntagm *trópos epistémēs*, whose Latin translation with *modus cognoscendi* has a large diffusion in the eighteenth century due to Christian Wolff's interpretation of the cognitive difference between *forma* and *materia*. When introducing the distinction between *res* and *modus considerandi*, Zabarella explicitly refers to *Analytica Priora*, to *Ethica Nicomachea*, and to Averroes in *Analytica Posteriora* (Zabarella 1597, pp. 38–39).

Averroes. The most important source for *modus considerandi* is indeed to be found in a passage in Averroes' commentary of *Aristotelis... Posteriorum Resolutorium Libri Duo: Cum Averrois... Magnis Commentariis*, where the philosopher from Cordoba takes up the example given by Aristotle in *Ethica Nicomachea* Alpha 7 and compares perspective and geometry (1097a20–34). The latter “considers the line insofar as it is a line”; the former “considers instead the line is as far as it is an irradiating line.” In fact, “considering the matter absolutely... is closer to truth,” for “the science that considers its subjects in abstraction of the matter is more certain than the science that is depending on the matter” (Averroes 1562–1574, Vol. I/2: fol. 375B).

Averroes introduces *modus considerandi* in the section in his *Epitome in Libros Logicae Aristotelis* while delving into the distinction between *artes/scientiae universales* and *artes/scientiae particulares* on the basis of the *forma-materia* distinction (Averroes 1562–1574, Vol. I/2b: fol. 59C). Averroes begins with those *artes et scientiae speculativae*, which can be divided according to the universality or particularity of their objects. On the one hand, there can be a “universal art, which considers being absolutely [*quae considerat ens simpliciter*], and whose properties are only those that follow from being, such as plurality and unity, potency and.” On the other hand, there is also a “particular art, which considers being as it is [*quae considerat esse quid sit*] and the properties that follow from its parts, what this thing is, such as natural sciences and the other arts” (Averroes 1562–1574, Vol. I/2b: fol. 60C). Any individual discipline, according to Averroes, can thus be considered in a twofold way, namely, either “according to its subjects” or “according to the difference of *modus considerandi* in them. ... In as far as they differ according to consideration, certain sciences are universal arts, and they are of three parts: metaphysics, logic and rhetoric [*ars primae philosophiae, ars topica, et ars sophistica*]” (Averroes 1562–1574, Vol. I/2b: fol. 60D).

Cajetan. Thomas de Vio, Cardinal Cajetan was the most influential Aquinas commentator of the Renaissance (Vio 1503). For the sake of the argument, I refer to the exposition of Cajetan's theory that something can be in the intellect either *subjective*, or *objective*, or *objective consequenter* provided by Cornelius Martini in his metaphysics course of 1597, which was the first course on metaphysics ever to be held at a German Protestant university (Martini 1597):

In the first mode, subjectively, the intelligible species and the act of understanding are in the intellect, as accidents are in their carrier. In the second mode, which is objectively, the object is directly known by the intellect. In this mode, the thing that is subjectively external is objectively intelligible. When, e.g., a color is offered to vision, the color is subjectively not in vision but in the colored body; it is nonetheless said to be objectively in vision, because it is thrown to vision, insofar as it is in its

perspective. The intelligible thing that is offered to the intellect is the object of a potential cognition, and it is at the same time subjectively in the intellect, although the thing is outside it. In fact, the stone is not in the soul, but rather the species or idea of the stone, as it is given upon the soul. The species is said to be objectively in the intellect insofar as it is thrown to it and the species is thrown to the intellect's potency. The third, inferentially objective mode, is that in which one infers the essence of the thing insofar as it is known by the intellect. Essences, however, are outside reason, for the things do not correspond by their own essence, but rather because they are represented to the intellect, or, in other words, because the intellect reflects about them. This happens, e.g., to the human being when the intellect reflects upon him or her. It is the mind that investigates the correspondence between subjects and predicates, minor and major terms. This correspondence, however, does not lie in the human being itself insofar as it exists in nature, but rather insofar as the intellect is occupied about him or her. So correctly, wrote Cajetan. (Martini 1597, fol. 4r)

Just like Aristotle and Aquinas, Cajetan makes it clear that dealing with objects belongs to the realm of psychology. In fact, "for a given knowable object, there must necessarily be a certain habit, by means of which we can perceive it" (Martini 1604a, th. 12). Cajetan's exposition is connected with what Aristotle says in books Beta and Gamma of *De anima* (especially 424a17-424b20, 427a20-427b27). What is new is the stress on the workings of the mind, which determine the domain of both the subjective and objective modes, while the formal approach of cognition to truth, which used to be all-pervading for Aristotle and Aquinas, is for Cajetan confined to the objectively consequent mode.

Ramus. In his groundbreaking papers on Ramus and Descartes, Wilhelm Risse has pointed out that for Ramus, the principles of logic are known a priori, which means that Ramus relies on the Platonic standpoint that there is an ideal *systema* that provides mankind with necessary and universal truths. This kind of proto-idealism is quite the opposite of the Aristotelian stance that logic is rather a habit of the mind and that its principles are the results of generalizations of experience, just like the principles of any individual sciences (Risse 1960, 1963, 1964). From Ramus on, then, the theory of subjectivity

developed itself into the positions of Descartes and Berkeley (Wilson 1997).

Ramus submitted late scholastic semantics to a sharp critique. His tools were the operator **thema** and the theory of the **tópoi** or *loci*. For Ramus, the spontaneity of the human subject displays itself by means of the operation of making a domain of objects the theme of one's investigation. Philosophical investigation is not based on the experience of the subject, but rather on nature itself, which provides the human subject with eternal and necessary structures (the *loci*), for him to be made a theme of. Already in *Topica* Alpha 1 (100a19-20) Aristotle had explained that the object of an argument depends on the scope of its subject matter, insofar as it argues about every problem that has been proposed. But it was only in the Renaissance that **thema** was used to determine an objective and public content of thought, as opposed to the subjectivity of private ideas and images. In this spirit, Rudolf Agricola identified the object of logic with the discussion "about whatever one can talk of with order and propriety" (Agricola 1526, II, 6, 226). Eventually, however, it was Melanchthon who in his *Compendiaria dialectices ratio* put **thema** at the core of logic, which he defined as "the artifice of speaking orderly and appropriately of whatever theme" (CR 20: 711).

In Ramus's logic, there is no mention of the term *obiectum*, and the same holds for his metaphysics. One can, however, trace back the concept by looking at the *loci* of *subiectum* and *adiunctum* (Ramus 1572, p. 16). The latter is that to which something is subjected to (*subiicitur*); it is the argument, and if the subject is a light one, then the argument is more abundant and frequent (Ramus 1572, p. 18). What Ramus did not address explicitly, the Ramist Friedrich Beurhaus did. Beurhaus admits that his master has obliterated the role played by *obiectum* within the notion of *adiunctum*, which is undoubtedly wrong, and he proposes to configure *obiectum* as a *locus* that works as the exact complement of *subiectum* (Beurhaus 1588, p. 583). In fact:

There is a similarity between subject and object insofar as both exist and are not figments of the imagination. There is an important difference,

however, namely that the object can be effective and the subject cannot. Colors stimulate the eye to see, sounds stimulate the ear to hear, other sensible things stimulate the corresponding senses, and, generally, the things that are thrown stimulate our faculties to act. (Beurhaus 1588, p. 585)

Instead, the subject cannot be the efficient cause of its accidents, because its role reduces itself to merely offering a topical space for arguments. This is because the power by means of which the subjects occupy the accidents cannot be the same as an efficient cause. The subjects do not produce their accidents on the basis of a determinate matter. The subjects offer to the accidents only an occasional power of coming to be, but it is always the accidents that throw (*obiiciunt*) themselves to the intellect (Beurhaus 1588, p. 585). It is consequently not true, as Ramus has maintained, that all sensible things and whatever is proposed for discussion on behalf of their virtues and vices are *subiecta*, while all virtues, vices, and the arts that deal with them are their *adiuncta*. What is true is that “all *obiecta* and *materiae* are related to the corresponding *subiecta*, and cannot be simply identified with the *adjuncta*” (Beurhaus 1588, p. 596).

Zabarella. Zabarella indicates the basis for the distinction between *res considerata* and *modus considerandi rem* in the operations displayed by the scientists when they investigate. Zabarella’s systematization has a quadripartite shape. One has to consider four species of *subiectum*. In fact, “the first is when the subject is taken most amply for whatever thing considered in whatever; second, when it is taken for a subject of demonstration, which have contemplative sciences; third when it is metaphorically understood as a subject while being the goal of an operative faculty, e.g., when we say that health is the subject of medicine; and finally forth when it is taken for a subject of operation, which is properly said of the subject of operative disciplines, such is the human body in medicine and iron in carpenting” (Zabarella 1597, p. 40).

The *prima significatio* does not need any commentary, because one finds it also in everyday language (Zabarella 1597, p. 34). The *secunda significatio* is more determinate and refers to

specific conditions: “subject is taken more properly when not everything that is treated in a certain faculty is called subject, but only what satisfies certain conditions” (Zabarella 1597, p. 34). The separation between theoretical (*speculativae*) and practical (*operativae*) becomes relevant. First, because of the goals to be pursued, “operative disciplines have operation as a goal while speculative disciplines have science as a goal” (Zabarella 1597, p. 34). Second, according to the point of view of the subject. The conditions of the investigation and the scope of its application (*scopus*) apply only to a determinate kind of subjects, “the subject must be necessary being, which is preknown by us and signified by a name; it must have also its proper affections and principles, for the affections are demonstrated of the same by means of its principle” (Zabarella 1597, pp. 34–35). Zabarella calls this occurrence *subiectum demonstrationis (de quo)*. He reminds the reader that it deals only with *contemplatio*:

And no other should be the end of the philosopher that contemplates in such subject but knowing the affections of his subject and the principles, in case they are hidden; the subject of a science can thus be subject of demonstration, i.e., subjects *de quo*, while accidents are demonstrated as soon as they are known; the subject of contemplative sciences is of this kind. (Zabarella 1597, p. 35)

With regard to the *tertia significatio*, Zabarella first calls attention to a misunderstanding. It is true that the subjects of the operative sciences are constituted with regard to the goal (*finis*) to be accomplished by an operation, “Operative disciplines have a subject under a different condition: namely that in some way they can do without a subject, for they do not depend on the subject, they are constituted by the goal, whose generation is required” (Zabarella 1597, p. 35). Also Aristotle states, “art is constituted by its goal, while scientia is constituted by its subject” (Zabarella 1597, p. 35). Unfortunately, Zabarella remarks, it often happens that the goal of an operative discipline is confused with its subject, “in these discipline often the goal is called metaphorically subject; e.g., when we say that health is the subject of the medical art” (Zabarella 1597, p. 35). Therefore, the need to stress that the identification, “the

subject is the goal,” is neither legitimate nor precise, “for beyond their goal these disciplines have a subject that is properly taken and that is distinct from the goal: e.g., the medical art has the human body, *in quo* it aims at effecting or preserving health; so that if we want to speak correctly, we ought to call the human body the subject of the medical art, and we ought to call health not subject, but goal” (Zabarella 1597, p. 35).

The *quarta significatio* defines the *subiectum operationis (in quo)*. This is the actual subject of the *artes*, insofar as one can correctly perceive it without being misguided by the metonymical usage of subject *qua* goal, “such is in the medical art the human body, in the moral discipline the human soul, in the art of carpenting iron or wood” (Zabarella 1597, p. 38). This subject is distinguished from the *subiectum demonstrationis* because “the scope of an operative discipline is not knowing, it is operating; i.e., its subject is not proposed for knowing, it is proposed for operating, so that a certain form is generated in it, which is the goal of the discipline, e.g., the moral philosopher generated virtue in the human soul, the physician health in the human body, the smith the form of the key in the iron” (Zabarella 1597, p. 38).

The subject of a *scientia* or *ars* can be defined insofar as its application or scope (*scopus*) is distinctive and with it, the conditions which we must observe before treating it: “the scope of contemplative sciences is the perfect cognition of the proposed subject, which makes it possible that all its principles and its proper accidents be known without gaps; while the scope of operative discipline is not knowing, it is operating” (Zabarella 1597, p. 38). Zabarella concedes however “there is a certain similarity between the subject of science and that of an operative discipline” (Zabarella 1597, p. 39).

These explanations permit Zabarella to generalize his theory so that the twofold point of view of *res* and *modus considerandi* can be applied to every discipline. From a systematic point of view, the complementarity involved in any *scientia* or *ars* is expressed by the following formula: “the subject that sciences have we call the subject of demonstration, or *subiectum de quo*: of which

even the affections are demonstrated in accordance with principles; the subject of operative disciplines we call instead subject of operation or *subiectum in quo*; for in it one operates and something is brought to effect” (Zabarella 1597, p. 40). For an example, Zabarella recalls the distinction between logic and philosophy, because it can be explained following the criterion of *forma* and *materia*, “according to which distinction the logician discords from the philosopher in considering things” (Zabarella 1597, p. 48). The problem of the distinction of logic from other disciplines with regard to *forma* is summarized by Zabarella with the help of a formula taken from Averroes, “all things are the subject of both philosophy and logic, although in different modes” (Zabarella 1597, p. 49). This enables Zabarella to accomplish a fundamental determination of the subject of logic, which is threefold: (1) *in quo*, according to the nature of logic’s own instruments, i.e., concepts of concepts; (2) *ex fine*, according to its goal, i.e., the knowledge of things; and (3) *de quo, ex scopo*, according to the peculiarity of logic’s own *modus considerandi*” (Zabarella 1597, p. 50).

Ramism. Another Ramist, Anton Nothold, took a stance on subjectivity. Nothold charged the Aristotelians – he addressed himself first and foremost against Martini – of psychologism. He maintained that the respect shown by the Aristotelians for objectivity is an inadmissible hypostasis:

Either concepts are simple, if they are grasped without composition and division, or they are complex. Complex concepts are called propositions. If true, propositions have grounding in the things, and are caused by the things. At the same time, they are in the soul. How? Subjectively. For it is clear that no composition and division of concepts can take place outside the intellect. (Nothold 1597, fol. D6v-D7r)

Against the Aristotelian notion that the first intentions are concepts or images of the actual things, Nothold objects that if one accepts that the first intentions correspond to the things themselves, the status of the second intentions poses irresolvable problems. Would the second intentions correspond to the things only after a while? Or would they correspond outside the intellect,

given that the first intentions correspond inside it? Or would they not correspond to the things at all? The expressions “first intention” and “second intention” are a convenient way of distinguishing, e.g., what the predicable genus “animal” is from what an animal is. We first observe that there are animals of different kinds and that “animal” can be said of them all and that while a horse is an animal, we do not say that an animal is a horse – rather that some animal is a horse – nor do we say that “horse” is this particular one. In this way, we notice that our mind has related one thing to many in a special way. This is how we come to know in a reflexive way what a predicable genus is. What animal is – however vaguely known – a first intention, but the particular type of relation our mind conceives as we predicate it of different kinds is a second intention. Moreover, the Aristotelians maintain that the *formalitas* of a concept inheres immediately to the things themselves. But, Nothold observes, taking a hint from Ramus, it is not clear whether this holds for both first and second intentions. In fact, Ramus had refused to distinguish between *notiones primae* and *secundae* (Risse 1960, p. 49). Would first intentions inhere immediately and second intentions only mediately? Or would second intentions not inhere at all? These are the doubts that the Aristotelian position leaves the reader with (Nothold 1598, pp. 19–20). The distinction between first and second intentions is not only useless, it is wrong. The Aristotelians contradict themselves when they maintain that the first intentions are not the product of our mind while the second intentions are such, because the former would not receive existence from the mind. Granted that every concept is neither a first nor a second intention, then, there is no more need to rely on experience. The time has come, concludes Nothold, to abandon the Aristotelian theory of concepts and switch to Ramus’s proto-idealism.

Severin Sluter summarized the point of view of the Ramists: “the subject of all philosophical disciplines dealing with what is and inheres formally is the human mind” (Sluter 1610, th. 107). For Ramus and the Ramists, the accidents come to the human mind on behalf of the mind’s own powers. The mind is ready to know the accidents, not

insofar as they come to it from experience, but rather insofar as they are part of what the mind knows innately. In a word, Ramus and the Ramists stress the spontaneity of the mind when acquiring cognitions, while the Aristotelians stress the receptivity of the human subject.

Impact and Legacy

Aristotelianism. Against the Ramists, the Aristotelian Cornelius Martini claimed that the constitution of an object takes place by means of abstraction, not of thematization:

Whenever we conceive something that is thrown to our intellect, we first grasp it as something we can define as a whole, although it is still confused. . . . Thus, when the intellect apprehends the universal object, it apprehends it first as something definable, but which is still in a confused manner. (Martini 1607, th. 9, 49)

Martini maintains that second intentions are *entia rationis*, “for they are given only to reason, and nothing actual corresponds to them outside the intellect” (Martini 1604b, th. 11). Being the result of an operation of the mind, the *ens rationis* is accidental. It cannot be being itself, then, “because being cannot depend from accidents” (Martini 1604b, th. 13). The *ens quatenus est ens reale* is the opposite of this, and it provides the subject matter of metaphysics (Martini 1604b, th. 15). On the other side, the *non ens* cannot be the subject matter of metaphysics “because it is conceived by the intellect accidentally in the same way that the intellect conceives the *ens rationis*” (Martini 1604b, th. 16). For his definition of the subject matter of metaphysics, Martini relies on the Late Scholastic (precisely Scotist) and post-Tridentine (especially Suárezian) distinction between *conceptus formalis et obiectivus*. E. J. Ashworth has written on Descartes’s reception of the Scotist distinction through Pedro de Fonseca and Francisco Suárez (Ashworth 1997). First we know the objective concept of being (*conceptus entis obiectivus*), which is thrown by the things to the mind (*a rebus menti obiectus*) and which is then abstracted into a formal concept inside the mind (Martini 1604b, th. 17):

A formal concept expresses the similarity with the thing itself expressed in the act of the mind by means of which it represents the form... an objective concept expresses the thing itself insofar as it is known by means of a formal concept... For example, when I know a human being, the formal concept is the idea in my mind that expresses the form of the human being, and as such it is an accident of my mind; the objective concepts express instead the human being itself, i.e., the common and universal nature that is present in whomever human beings as it is derived from his or her formal concept. (Martini 1604b, th. 19–21)

In other words, when we grasp a *conceptus realis*, we imply a certain thing be thrown (*obiiciatur*) to the mind and be conceived in it. Such a concept is in the mind subjectively (*subiective*) (Martini 1604b, th. 23).

For Martini, an object is what determines the domain of human cognition, i.e., the scope (*scopus*) of the human mind, while a subject is determined by the way the mind gets hold of being. Metaphysics, says Martini, deals with the *ens quatenus ens*, which is *ens reale* as opposed to the *ens rationis*. The subject matter of metaphysics has being outside the intellect, because its first causes are God, the angels, the heavens, and the elements, which nobody denies to be *ens realia*. Besides, it is produced by an actually effective cause and it is in something subjectively (*subiective*), because the mind's concepts and habits are all formed by means of the intelligible species and the act of intellecting. Finally, metaphysics is a *scientia realis*, because it does not consider anything but actual subject matters. There is no doubt, then, that metaphysics is an objective science of the intellect (*obiectiva intellectus scientia*) (Martini 1605, pp. 15–16).

The subject matter of metaphysics is being, which is a formal concept that is posited in the intellect and becomes subsequently an objective concept in the things in the following threefold way. First, formal concepts are in our intellect “subjectively just like the intelligible species are formally in the intellect.” A formal concept is the idea of the thing itself expressed by an act of the mind, whereby it is always the thing, which constitutes the idea that the mind represents to itself, i.e., the thing itself is thrown to the mind. Second, concepts are in our intellect “objectively, because

the object or the thing itself is known by means of formal concepts.” So, when the color is offered to vision, it is subjectively not in the vision but in the colored body. However, when the color is thrown to the vision and generates a species in it, we say that it inheres to the vision objectively. Therefore, when the intelligible things are offered to our intellect as objects of its intellective potency, the intelligible things are not subjectively in the intellect, but only objectively. It is not necessary to give many examples, because it is easy to see that what is in the things, i.e., what causes my formal concept, i.e., the essence that is the cause of thousands of individuals reunited under one concept, cannot be in the intellect unless insofar as it is thrown to it as the object of its potency. Third, “concepts are in the intellect in an inferentially objective way insofar as they follow from the essence of the thing, i.e., insofar as the thing is thrown to the intellect” (Martini 1622, p. 64).

For Martini and the Aristotelians, the subject is not only the carrier of the accidents; it is also that without which there would not be any accidents; it is what gives them a formal structure. The object is the result of our elaboration on the subject, although the concept of an object, an objective concept, comes about merely by chance. The human subject is thus passive when constituting objectivity, and the principal roles it plays are to host the cognitive process and to support it by means of the intellectual habits.

Interconnections

Keckermann. At the close of the Renaissance, the semi-Ramist Bartholomaeus Keckermann reformulated the discussion on subject and object in the following terms. A “subject” is what accidents subject to. One has first to deal with the subject rather than with the accidents, because the accidents depend on the subject, i.e., “nothing is without subject, and the subject is that against which the accident falls or inheres, i.e., it is what the accident is in,” which is what Aristotle teaches in *Categories* (1a20–21) about something being **en hypokeímenon**, being *in subiecto* (Keckermann 1614, p. 190). Instead, the

Object is what a function of the soul is occupied with. We say that the object of vision is the color or the light and the object of hearing the sound, because vision is occupied with light and colors and hearing with sound. In the same way, a scholar is occupied with the study of languages and of virtuous things, which are his proper object, just like a farmer is occupied with cultivating, plowing, hoeing, and cutting his field. (Keckermann 1614, p. 195)

Keckermann thinks primarily of the Aristotelian use of **hypokeímenon** as *subiectum in quo*. He has, however, also the Ramist position in mind that the subject is not inert and passive, but rather spontaneous and active in specifying settings. This is what connects Keckermann's theory of subjectivity to Descartes. Keckermann does not mention Aristotle's **antikeímenon**, and this is no surprise. In fact, his understanding of objectivity is entirely active. He considers objects to be the result of determinate operations made possible by the faculties of the soul. It is clear that such a notion of objectivity can be constituted only on the basis of an active subjectivity, because nothing is without subject (*nihil sit sine subiecto*), as Keckermann says. Moreover, an object cannot be *in quo*, because it does not rely on an essence of its own. An object can only be *de quo*, i.e., it can be thematized, i.e., it is the effect of a cause to be determined. On this basis, Keckermann proposed a new division of the sciences in *obiectivae* and *directivae*:

The former deal with the things themselves posited in nature insofar as they are thematized by our intellect (like theology, law, medicine, and philosophy), the latter neither deal with the things themselves that are to be known, nor do they inform and perfect the human intellect with the things themselves, they only prepare operations of the intellect while directing and ordering it by means of certain norms and instruments (like arts and skills). (Keckermann 1614, p. 77)

Although he relied on Aristotle for the notions of logical subject and intellectual habits, Keckermann opened up the path toward the full evaluation of the spontaneity of human subjectivity when constituting objects, which was to be achieved by Descartes.

Goclenius. Goclenius's *Lexicon philosophicum*, the first philosophical dictionary ever to be printed, which was published in 1613, presented the pair of

concepts "subject" and "object" in its full complexity. Goclenius distinguished first the *subiectum metaphysicum sive topicum* from the *subiectum axiomaticum*. The former refers to being, "insofar as the subject of predication refers to the external world," the latter to the theory of judgments, "according to which the subject is the carrier of the predicates" (Goclenius 1613, pp. 1086–1087). As regards the *subiectum metaphysicum sive topicum*, Goclenius distinguishes between the *obiectum* as such and the *subiectum pressius acceptum*. The *obiectum* as such, says Goclenius, is the subject matter of psychology, while the *subiectum pressius acceptum* is that of logic. As a *subiectum inhaesionis*, finally, the subject expresses the determinate thing, i.e., its partial concept and the medium of its reception (Goclenius 1613, p. 1087). The *subiectum inhaesionis*, says Goclenius, is the *subiectum quo*, i.e., that in which the accidents are received immediately, while the *subiectum denominationis* is the *subiectum quod*, which is actually the essence that sustains the accidents, because it subsists on its own and not on behalf of others (Goclenius 1613, p. 1087). The pairs of concepts *subiectum denominationis* and *subiectum inhaesionis* or *subiectum quo* and *subiectum quod* correspond to the two methodical ways of analysis and synthesis. The *subiectum quo*, which is a second intention that results from an abstraction, represents the effects, and the *subiectum quod*, which is a concrete and a first intention, the cause. For example, Goclenius indicates one of the divine persons, which is affected as a subject *quod* in a concrete meaning, while the human nature is affected as a subject *quo* in an abstract meaning – in other words, God is affected in His own flesh and is the principle of what the human being feels (Goclenius 1613, p. 1087).

Speaking about the *subiectum topicum et metaphysicum*, Goclenius opposes **hypokeímenon**, *subiectum in specie* and **antikeímenon**, *obiectum*. The **hypokeímenon** can be divided into *ex quo*, *materia/permanens-transiens*, and *in quo*, *recipiens*. The **antikeímenon** depends on how we become aware of a state of affairs. Accordingly, it can be divided into *partiale* and *totale*. The *obiectum partiale* is either *principale* or *minus principale*, while the *obiectum totale* is either

mediatum seu commune vel remotum or propinquum, proprium, i.e., *immediatum* and *adaequatum*. The parts of the *obiectum proprium* are twofold, namely, matter (*res considerata*) and form (*modus considerandi*) (Goclenius 1613, p. 1087). The last one is an epistemic distinction that was conclusively elaborated by the Aristotelian Jacopo Zabarella and found widespread discussion in early modern philosophy until Immanuel Kant (Zabarella 1597, pp. 39–40). Goclenius's composition of the approaches of Ramus and Zabarella is the proof that the analysis of an object requires the epistemic distinction between *res* and *modus considerandi*. Goclenius is clear that *obiectum* does not belong to logic, but rather to psychology. Consequently, he requires that an acting subject carry out a thematization of a domain of objects. For Goclenius, "*Thema* is a position" (Goclenius 1613, p. 1131).

Descartes. The Ramist position had a fallout on Descartes's understanding of the workings of the mind. In fact, one can say that Descartes's distance from Aristotle was due at least in part to the impact of Ramus and especially of Ramus's idea that scientific method ought to be freed from the distinction between first and second intentions and thus from the requirement of being connected with experience. For Ramus, science does not consist of a series of progressive abstractions, but rather of a series of formally derived propositions that can be defined with clarity and divided with distinction; and scientific cognition must be based on universal and necessary, homogeneous and reciprocally convertible concepts. This, reminds Risse, is exactly what Descartes was eventually going to formulate in his four rules of method: (1) to accept nothing as true which one is not aware of being so; (2) to divide every question with sufficient precision; (3) to carry out one's reflections by proceeding from the standpoint of cognition, i.e., to go from simple to complex concepts, while avoiding the standpoint of the thing itself, which goes from what is elementary to what is derived; and (4) to review that nothing has been omitted (AT 6: 18). Ramus, says Risse, provided for Descartes's first rule when he maintained that logic should not limit itself to the proof of objective truths and rather extend to

the proof of the consequentiality of methodical procedures. Rationality, in a word, has intelligibility as its domain, not actuality, because only the intellect determines what is thinkable and because scientific cognition is the product of clarity and distinction (Ramus 1570, p. 157). The second rule is contained in Ramus's principle of logical division. The third is implied in the maxim of methodical order, and the fourth derives from Ramus's idea that the universality of a concept is a guarantee of the completeness of its extension (Risse 1963, pp. 280–282).

Burgersdijk. There is some probability that Descartes, concludes Risse, knew Ramus, at least through the mediation of Ramists such as first and foremost Franco Burgersdijk. With Ramus had begun that "subjectification" of logic, which Descartes was going to accomplish (Risse 1963, pp. 281–283). For Burgersdijk, exactly as for Ramus and Descartes, the object of a definition is not the objective data on the essence of the thing, but rather its conceptual illumination; the object of a division is not factual diversity, but rather our subjective ability to distinguish; the object of an argument is not formal consequentiality, but rather the material elimination of our ignorance; and the object of method is not a systematic order, but rather the systematic elimination of disorder (Burgersdijk 1626, p. 4; Risse 1963, p. 284).

Kant. In conclusion, a word on the role played by Renaissance philosophers on Kant. The philosopher from Königsberg was a product of eighteenth-century German scholastic philosophy, which was a curious blend of Aristotelianism, Cartesianism, Lockeanism, and Leibnizianism (Kuehn 1997). With him, the issue of subjectivity became centered on a transcendental theory of consciousness (Kitcher 1997). Without doubt, Kant had the Aristotelian distinction between *hypokeímenon* and *antikeímenon* in mind, when he specified that "objects are given to us by means of sensibility, and sensibility alone affords us intuitions; but objects can be thought only through the intellect, and from it arise concepts" (KrV B33). He did not go as far as to say that concepts are in the intellect subjectively, though, because he needed to keep

the word for phrases such as space and time being the “subjective conditions” of all outer appearances (KrV B42, B52), which, in a way, is close to the position maintained by Martini. On the other side, Kant’s notion of objectivity is in agreement with the stress on spontaneity made by the Ramists. In fact, Kant used *thema* as well, which for him means so much as the setting (*positio*) of a *thesis*, which eventually takes the form of a *Satz* (*propositio*) (AA 8: 193–194). Lastly, Kant knew Ramus, if not directly, for much of hearsay. In a passage reported in the *Logik Philippi* (a students’ notebook from 1772), Kant mentioned that:

Ramus began by declaring war against Aristotle in Paris. He proposed a dissertation in which he intended to contradict every proposition Aristotle had said. In this way he eliminated the blind and servile tyranny of Aristotelianism and awakened the spirits out of their lethargy. He wrote a logic whose first part dealt with *de inventione*, the second *de iudicio*. (From Ramus originates the way of saying that one is in lack of *secunda Petri*, i.e., which one is in lack of judgment.) (AA 24: 337)

Cross-References

- [Dialectic in the Renaissance](#)
- [Ethics, Renaissance](#)

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Subjekt/Objekt

► [Subject/Object, Renaissance Concept of](#)

Sublime

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Abstract

In early modern thought, the sublime is a great or noble quality of literature or art, which is characterized by an irresistible and overwhelming effect and which produces strong and often conflicting emotions such as awe, fear, and admiration in its recipients. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, a growing interest in Pseudo-Longinus' Greek treatise *Peri hypsous (On the Sublime)* emerged throughout Europe. The sublime as described by Longinus had an inherently dual nature: it could be seen as a type of style with corresponding stylistic devices and prescripts, as well as a ravishing and transporting effect, which emerges from genius and defies the rules of style. In the course of the seventeenth century, the latter interpretation of the Longinian sublime gained the upper hand and fuelled debates on the effects of literature, and later also of art, architecture, music, and spectacle. Besides Longinus' theory of sublimity, the early modern sublime was also shaped by the religious notion of *sacer horror*, the natural philosophy of Lucretius and Pascal's idea of infinity, and operated in a web of neighboring concepts such as *magnificence*, *le merveilleux*, *la meraviglia*, and *le je ne sais quoi*.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Sublime from Antiquity to Early Modernity

In ancient literary theory, “the sublime” or “sublimity” (Greek: *hypsos*; Latin: *sublimitas*; literally “height” or “elevation”) is a metaphor that denotes a departure from normal or regular speech to a heightened or extraordinary level (Porter 2016). It is identified as a stylistic category and/or as the aesthetic experience arising from literary or natural greatness (Till 2006).

Sublimity or grandeur as a stylistic category is formalized in theoretical discussions about the various types of style (Greek: *charaktêres tês léxeōs*; Latin: *genera dicendi*), such as can be found in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Pseudo-Demetrius’ *On style*, the *Rhetoric to Herennius*, Cicero’s *De Oratore*, *Brutus* and *Orator*, and Hermogenes’ *On types of style* (Quadlbauer 1958). Early modern rhetorical works, such as Gerardus Joannes Vossius’ *Commentariorum rhetoricorum libri sex* (1606) generally used a threefold division of a high, middle, and low style as their main framework and harmonized systems that discerned more than three styles with the tripartite system (Till 2006).

The sublime as an aesthetic experience is most commonly associated with Pseudo-Longinus’ treatise *Peri hypsous* (*On the Sublime*), written in the first or third century AD. The work describes how sublimity in writing can be achieved through elevated subject matter as well as dignified expression. In this respect, it largely conforms to other discussions of the highest style in writing, and hence early modern scholars often regarded the treatise as a discussion of the “high style” in a system of multiple styles (Till 2006; Huss 2011). In the course of the seventeenth century, scholarly interest however shifted to other aspects of Longinus’ theory, which would eventually come to dominate the interpretation of the treatise in later periods (Porter 2016; Jansen 2016). Longinus’ insistence that “greatness of thought” is the most important prerequisite for sublimity (*Peri hypsous* 9), his emphasis on the sublime effect (*Peri hypsous* 1 and 15), his approval of the outbursts of genius, even if erratic

(*Peri hypsous* 33–36), and his descriptions of awe-inspiring natural phenomena (*Peri hypsous* 35) engendered the construction of an idea of sublimity that transcends matters of literary or rhetorical style, and which is a matter of subjective experience rather than stylistic normativity (Kerslake 2000; Delehanty 2005; Till 2006; Eck et al. 2012; Porter 2016).

Other Sources of the Early Modern Sublime

The sublime as an independent aesthetic concept was not just shaped by Pseudo-Longinus’ treatise *Peri hypsous*. Notions of the sublime also played a role in ancient natural philosophy and Christian doctrine and were implicitly used in tragedy and epic. In his *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*), the Roman philosopher Lucretius (99–55 BC) for instance thematized the material sublime (*maiestas rerum*, “the greatness of things”) by reflecting on natural phenomena such as storms, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes. The primordial fear of cosmic infinity that is central to Lucretius’ natural philosophy is essentially a portrayal of the overwhelming effects of sublime phenomena on the human mind (Porter 2007; Porter 2016). Another type of sublimity was developed in the tragedies of the Roman playwright Seneca. His bloodthirsty horrors and monstrous personages raise overwhelming feelings of abomination and played an important role in early modern tragedy from the mid-sixteenth century onwards (Langdon 2012; Gunderson 2015).

The ancient and early modern idea of the sublime moreover bears a moral dimension, as is exemplified by the reflections on the antithesis between sublimity and humility in for instance Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and most importantly in the writings of Augustine. In the story of Phaeton (*Metamorphoses* 2.1–339), Ovid problematizes the relation between *sublimis* and *humilis* by confronting the deep human longing to be elevated above earthly pursuits with the impossibility to become part of the elevated world of the Olympians, which in the case of Phaeton eventually leads to disaster. Phaeton’s story inspired many early modern writers: Dante in *Divina Comœdia*, Shakespeare in *Richard II*, Vondel

and Lully/Quinault in their respective play and opera *Faëton/Phaeton* used the story to contrast the human craving for sublimity with the humble constitution of man (Brownlee 1984; Merrix 1987; Scott 1994; Bussels 2016). In Augustine's works, the contrast between *sublimis* and *humilis* refers to the magnificence of God and the humble constitution of man, especially in his *Soliloquies* (Michel 1986; Martin 2012). In *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine reflects on the paradoxical "sublime simplicity" of scripture, which springs from the fact that its subject matter is elevated while its language is often very simple, thus departing from the traditional rules of ancient rhetoric (Shuger 1988). Eventually, throughout the whole Christian world "the sublime" became a synonym for the sacred with, among other examples, *Sublimis Deus* in the title of the famous papal bull of 1537 that forbade the enslavement of the Indians, in which God's infinite, sublime love for the human race is emphasized (Prien 2017). God's sublimity moreover manifests itself in his wonders, which go far beyond human understanding and inspire awe and fear similarly. The divine wonders, as well as their worldly counterparts, the seven ancient Wonders of the World, became a standard reference point in discussions of the overwhelming feeling of ecstasy that results from beholding magnificence (Otto 1980; Clayton and Price 1988; Daston and Park 1998).

The Sublime up to 1674

For a long time, it has been assumed that Longinus and his idea of the sublime appeared on the stage of modern criticism only after Nicolas Boileau's canonical French translation of *Peri hypsous*, titled *Le traité de sublime, ou du merveilleux dans le discours* (Paris, 1674). In the preface to this translation, Boileau had stated that the sublime is not to be understood as the sublime style (*le stile sublime*) but as an extraordinary quality of discourse that can even be found in simple phrases (Adam and Escal 1966). Furthermore, as a result of Boileau's (polemical) exchanges with some of his contemporaries Longinus' quotation of the Biblical *fiat lux* became the key example of "sublime simplicity" in the late

seventeenth-century debate on the nature of the sublime (Declercq 1994). Although Boileau's writings certainly left a mark on the early modern interpretation of Longinus' treatise and the development of the concept of the sublime (Brody 1958; Doran 2015), the early modern engagement with Longinus and the sublime already started much earlier (Fumaroli 1996). Early seventeenth-century scholars, such as Daniel Heinsius, Jean Chapelain, Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac, Tanneguy Le Fèvre, John Milton, and Thomas Blount, already reckoned that the sublime, besides its usage as the highest category (*genus sublime*) in the stylistic hierarchy of the *genera dicendi* in rhetorical theory, could also be understood as an independent concept that pointed at the ravishing and transporting effects of discourse (see, e.g., Brody 1958; Hache 2000; Norbrook 1999; Cronk 2002; Jansen 2016; Gilby 2016). Moreover, the idea that the sublime is less about style than about the effects of discourse led to the association of the sublime with the unbridled outbursts of genius. Parts of Longinus' treatise could be read as an argument that sublimity might be reached by ignoring or transgressing poetical and rhetorical rules (Bussels et al. 2016; Jansen 2016). Against the backdrop of the widespread neo-Aristotelian emphasis on rules for the creation of literature and art, Longinus appeared throughout the seventeenth century as a major reference point in defending the importance of natural talent in the creation of truly great literature (Fumaroli 1996).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The Sublime in Different Media and Fields

Although Longinus and many of his commentators describe the sublime as an effect of discourse, the early modern use of the concept is not necessarily limited to the domain of literature or speech alone. Recent scholarship has elucidated early modern applications of the sublime to the visual arts, music, performing arts, as well as its use in the fields of religion, science, and in the experience of nature (Gilby 2006; Martin 2012;

Costelloe 2012; Van Eck et al. 2012; Van Oostveldt and Bussels 2016; Bussels and Van Oostveldt 2017). The terminology of the sublime for instance found its way in art theoretical works, such as Franciscus Junius' *De pictura veterum* (1637), which influenced many contemporary and later theoreticians throughout Europe (Weststeijn 2015; Nativel 2016). Musical metaphors in Longinus' treatise were interpreted within the framework of early modern musical theory, such as in Leone Allacci's *De erroribus magnorum virorum in dicendo* (1635) (Refini 2012). Claude François Ménéstrier's *Des représentations en musique anciennes et modernes* (1682) referred to Longinus in the discussion of the effects of spectacles (Bussels and Van Oostveldt 2017). In religious thought, a profound engagement with the sublime can be discerned in the interaction between the term *sublimis* and the idea of *sacer horror* in late sixteenth-century Jesuit writings (Melion 2016; Dekoninck and Delfosse 2016). For science and the experience of nature, Pascal's notion of the infinity of the universe or Dominique Bouhours' Lucretian inspired experience of the sea are likely candidates to be included in a discussion on the sublime in early modernity (Cronk 2002). Recent scholarship even discerns sublime "sensitivities" in artistic practices such as in the paintings of Poussin, Rembrandt or Allaert van Everdingen, in Bernini's sculptures, or in the construction of large public buildings such as the Amsterdam Town Hall or the colonnade of the Louvre (Nau 2005; Delbeke 2012; Weststeijn 2016; Sheers Seidenstein 2016; Blanc 2016).

The Sublime and Neighboring Concepts

Whether in early modern poetics, in the visual arts, musical theory, or the performing arts, the sublime does not operate as a strictly codified concept, which exclusively derives its theoretical foundation from Longinus' treatise *Peri hypsous*. In early modern thought, the sublime is rather a floating concept, which often operates within a wider network of other, "neighboring" concepts, such as the French idea of *magnificence*. In the early modern political and iconographical

tradition, *magnificence* is increasingly associated with the elevated status and imposing quality of royalty. In a mid-seventeenth-century French translation of Longinus' treatise, the term *magnificence* is used as a synonym for the sublime, giving the sublime a political undertone that suggests the enormous and overwhelming power of royal sovereignty (Gilby 2007; Martin 2012). The inexplicable character of the sublime as the product of natural genius runs parallel with seventeenth-century discussions of *le je ne sais quoi* in French criticism, as for instance in Dominique Bouhours' *Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (1671) (Scholar 2010). The astonishing effect of the sublime tunes in with early modern discussions of *le merveilleux* and *meraviglia* in the arts and even the sciences (Daston and Park 1998). To understand the history of and the impact of the sublime in early modern thought, one should acknowledge those varieties in the meanings and scope of the concept. A close look at how the sublime operates within a larger semantic field and how it "travels" from domain to domain may well open up unexpected connections and questions for future research.

Cross-References

► [Lucretius](#)

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Suessanus, Augustinus

► Nifo, Agostino

Sujet/Objet

► Subject/Object, Renaissance Concept of

Symmetry in Renaissance Art

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Abstract

Although many scholars suppose that the concept of bilateral symmetry was known in Classical times, the earliest evidence of it does not appear before the second half of the fifteenth century: it is a concept that originated in the Italian Renaissance. From the outset it was not only a descriptive concept but a normative one, which asserted that to be beautiful a design must be symmetric. The only person during the Renaissance known to have offered a rationale for this norm was L. B. Alberti, who claimed that Nature’s forms are symmetric and that the Ancients, recognizing as much, saw to it that their artifacts and buildings were always given symmetric shape. These claims (whether original to Alberti or not is unclear) would prove to be immensely influential and durable and are the origin, not only of the preponderance of symmetrical architecture, but of tenacious scientific fallacies such as the alleged symmetry of snowflakes and other crystals.

Symmetry

The concept of shapes whose left and right halves mirror each other – unknown in Classical and medieval times – had its origins in the early Italian Renaissance (Selzer 2016, pp. 41–79; 196–238). The earliest evidence of it is in three works of the latter half of the fifteenth century: Alberti’s *De re aedificatoria*; Pius II’s *Commentarii*; and Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. We do not know who first formulated the concept or what train of ideas led to it. The concurrent use of different terms for it may indicate that it sprang from more than one source.

“Symmetry” was one of those terms. In Classical Greek and Latin it meant something like

“pleasing proportions” (e.g., Plutarch 1932, pp. 540–542), and it retained this meaning during the Renaissance (e.g., Wotton 1624, p. 54); so that the one word was used – sometimes in the same book (e.g., [Colonna] 1499, b ii’ and a viii’) – for two unrelated concepts, both in the field of aesthetics. The confusion this engendered continues to our day, with some modern scholars (e.g., Tavernor 1998, p. 43) mistakenly claiming that when Vitruvius, for example, used the term he was referring to symmetry in the modern sense.

The *norm* of symmetry, with which the concept was associated from the outset, prescribed symmetric design for all artifacts, including buildings, on the grounds that only symmetric shapes can be beautiful. This prescription was usually presented as self-evident. Thus Pius II (1984, p. 547), explaining why a fake doorway was placed on a façade of his Pienza palace, declared only that its purpose was *ad servandam simmetrie gratiam*; similarly, Serlio (1584, p. 156) did not elaborate on his statement that an off-centered portal was *molto contrario alla buona architettura*. Others – among them Vasari (1568) and Michelangelo (1875, p. 554), echoed in England by Wotton (1624, p. 117) – limited themselves to citing the purported symmetry of the human body (which in fact is *not* symmetric!)

Leon Battista Alberti thus stands out as the only Renaissance writer known to have formulated a wide-ranging rationale for the symmetry norm. His *collocatio* comprises two elements. One is descriptive and stipulates that the right and left halves of a form mirror each other *exactly*. The other element of *collocatio* is prescriptive. It is based on Alberti’s assertion (Alberti 1966, IX: 7) that it is of the essence of Nature that all the forms she makes are symmetrically shaped (*tam ex natura est ut dextra sinistris omni parilitate correspondeant*). This, Alberti claimed, (*ibid*, IX: 7) had been recognized by the ancient Greeks, who deduced from it the fundamental principle that in works of art and architecture the right must accord with the left (*dextra sinistris convenirent*) even in the minutest details (*in minutissimis*). *Collocatio*, indeed, is a prerequisite of beauty (*ibid*, IX: 5).

These arguments are unpersuasive. As anyone can tell, Nature’s forms are invariably

asymmetric; and the insistence that only symmetric forms are beautiful cannot survive even a moment’s scrutiny. Moreover, there is no literary or linguistic evidence that the concept of bilateral symmetry was known in the Ancient world. Alberti wrote that he had discovered *collocatio* by carefully examining “every building of the ancients, wherever it might be, that has attracted praise” (*ibid*, VI: 1, 3, 6). Implausible in itself, this claim is not helped by the fact that the only ancient structure he cited were the ruined walls of Antium Anzio, about which he tells us merely that they must have been very long.

Separately, Alberti also argued that any combination of two disparate shapes is inherently offensive (*ibid*, IX: 7). We would be repelled, he wrote, by a dog that had one ear like that of a donkey. Whether asymmetric design is usefully characterized by such images may be doubted. Moreover, as he presented it, Alberti’s point is to deplore the asymmetry of the two ears, not the inappropriateness of one of them; which implies that we would not be repelled by the sight of a dog whose two ears were identically shaped like those of a donkey!

We do not know if these arguments were original to Alberti, but their jejune quality has always characterized attempts to rationalize the symmetry norm: for example, the argument of Montesquieu (1825, p.616) that: *la raison que la symetriad plaît à l’âme, c’est qu’elle lui épargne de la peine, qu’elle la soulage, et qu’elle coupe pour ainsi dire l’ouvrage par la moitié*.

Nevertheless the influence of the symmetry norm is undeniable. It accounts among much else for the predominant symmetry of Western architecture since the end of the fifteenth century, for the widespread belief that not just Classical art and architecture but the artifacts of primitive cultures were symmetric, and for such persistent scientific fallacies as the claim that snowflakes and bees’ cells – and indeed the universe itself – are symmetric.

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Syphilis in Renaissance Medicine

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Abstract

The attack of syphilis in Europe was first reported in July 1495 in connection with the Italian invasion of French King Charles VIII (1470–1498). During the war, many soldiers were contaminated with a new type of disease. As the army of Charles VIII was composed not only of Frenchmen but also of foreign mercenaries, the disease was spread in Italian cities and then in other European towns once those men returned. Going beyond the Alps, syphilis reached France and Switzerland by 1496, England by 1497, and the Northern European countries by 1499 (Quet  l 1986). Because France was regarded as responsible for this calamitous spread of the disease, it was called

“French disease” (*morbus Gallicus*) in most countries and “Neapolitan disease” (*morbus Neapolitanus*) in France.

Synonyms

French disease; Neapolitan disease

Major Aspects

Italian physician Girolamo Fracastoro (1478–1553) wrote a long poem entitled *Syphilis or French Disease* (*Syphilis sive Morbus Gallicus*) (Verona, 1530). In this work, he adopted the name of Syphilis, who was a shepherd contaminated by a sexually transmissible disease in Virgil’s *Georgica* (Fracastoro 1530).

Even before Fracastoro, since the early stage of its diffusion, diverse possible causes were speculated for syphilis. Soon after its mode of transmission was identified with sexual relations, a religious explanation became dominant: the disease was the sign or result of God’s anger against the perverted behaviors of human beings. At the same time, astrological arguments also gained popularity: celestial phenomena such as the conjunction of planets were its causes. A small book written by Joseph Gr  npeck (ca. 1470–1531) about syphilis devoted nine of its ten chapters to the disease’s connection with planetary conjunctions. In his *Prediction on Epidemic Scabies* (*Vaticinium in epidemicam scabiem*) (Nuremberg, 1496), Theodericus Ulsenius (ca. 1460–1508) adopted woodcut engravings by Albrecht D  rer (1471–1528). One of them depicted a man contaminated with syphilis and a heavenly sphere with an inscription of 1484 above him. This meant that the disease was produced by the great conjunction of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn of that year (Ulsenius 1496).

Following this line of astrological reasoning, Swiss physician Paracelsus (1493/1494–1541) elaborated his complex theory for the cause of syphilis. In his treatise, *On the Origins and Causes of French Disease* (*Vom Ursprung und Herkommen der Franzosen sampt Rezepten Heilung*) (written in 1529), Paracelsus argued that

celestial phenomena were not the sole cause for its appearance. Although its transmission is due to sexual relations, the disease itself was produced by the transformation of the pathogens, which already existed in the human body. These pathogens of an old type of disease were “transmuted” into syphilis by the influence of human perverted imagination and desire as the internal agents and by the power of the planet Venus which governs love and sex as the external agent. Using this idea of the transmutation from an old disease to a new disease, Paracelsus tried to explain the diversity of symptoms (Paracelsus 1922–1933, VII: 183–366; Keil and Daems 1977; Kikuchi-hara 2013).

As the sixteenth century went on, the view that syphilis was brought from America to Europe became dominant. It was because the outbreak of the hitherto unknown disease coincided with the return of the expedition led by Christopher Columbus (1450/1451–1506). According to this view, if Columbus’s crew members had sexual relations with local people contaminated with syphilis, they would be its first European patients. Those contaminated crew members came back to Europe and provoked the secondary contamination, leading to the outbreak of syphilis. Besides the theory of the American origin, there were also other opinions (including the theory of the African origin), which advanced that the disease already existed in Europe before the beginning of commerce with the New World. There had been lively debates on the American origin of syphilis over centuries, namely, at the end of the nineteenth century, when a historian of medicine Karl Sudhoff (1853–1938) used historical evidence to criticize dermatologist Ivan Bloch (1872–1922), who supported the American origin (Quet  l 1986).

As syphilis spread in Europe during the first decades of the sixteenth century, many curing methods were tested while searching for its cause. Among others, the wood of a tropical plant called “guaiac” (*Guaiacum*) gained popularity, as it was believed to be used by Native Americans for skin diseases. Since syphilis also produced skin wounds, the medicine produced from this wood was regarded as its specific cure.

Guaiac was called by diverse names such as “sacred wood” (*lignum sanctum*) and “wood of life” (*lignum vitae*). Although it was unclear when guaiac was first imported to Europe, it was used for syphilis in Spain as early as ca. 1508. Its use was spread all over Europe by the 1520s. The Fugger family of Augsburg contributed much to this wide diffusion. Not only did they have an exclusive right to import guaiac into Germany but also they promoted its use in the hospital they were running (Munger 1949; Arrizabalaga et al. 1997).

The first writings on guaiac appeared in the 1510s. German physician Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523) wrote a small treatise *On the Guaiac Medicine and French Disease* (*De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico*) (Mainz, 1519). Hutten, who himself was sickened by syphilis, defended guaiac’s healing power and contributed to its large-scale popularity. His work was a global guidebook on syphilis and guaiac. It aimed to explain not only guaiac’s properties and usage but also syphilis’s nature, origins, symptoms, curing methods, and even prognosis. It was more than a medical treatise since it also reported Hutten’s personal experience of the guaiac remedy as a patient. His book was very successful and was translated into several European languages (Benedeck 1992).

The guaiac remedy started to lose popularity in the second half of the sixteenth century. Despite its sporadic resurgence in the seventeenth century, it totally disappeared from the medical scene in the nineteenth century (Munger 1949). But what explains its vogue during the first decades of the sixteenth century? First, there was a resistance to the abuse of the mercury remedy. Although it was traditionally used by physicians, including Paracelsus, the mercury remedy was dangerous. Patients were confined in a room with a high temperature for many days and weakened by sweating and vomiting (Munger 1949; Quet  l 1986). The guaiac remedy, by contrast, did not provoke as much pain or side effects as the mercury remedy.

Second, the guaiac remedy respected the norms of the orthodox medicine of Hippocratic-

Galenic school. Its efficacy was believed to be at the highest degree if a patient with an empty stomach orally absorbed guaiac rendered in power and diffused in water, while a bad regime of a patient would diminish its efficacy (Munger 1949). A regime based on food restriction was advised, which naturally fit the traditional medical precepts. Although the plant was recorded nowhere in the works of the ancients, the remedy followed a typical perspective adopted in the medical tradition of Europe.

Third, there was the impact of the Age of Discovery and the natural history vogue that followed. With the expansion of commerce with Asia and America, a plethora of rare or unheard-of specimens and goods were brought to Europe. Among those specimens, medicinal plants used by native peoples were most appreciated because they inspired hope for curing diseases hitherto considered to be incurable. Physicians were interested in foreign drugs and medicinal plants and animals, which led to the vogue of natural history, including botany and zoology. The wood of guaiac was closely connected to this gain of interest in exotic products.

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Tacitus and Tacitism

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Abstract

Tacitism represents an important phase in the history of classical scholarship and a characteristic feature of Renaissance political thought. The two most prominent representatives of Tacitism are Marc-Antoine Muret and Justus Lipsius, exemplary editors, commentators, professors, and disciples of the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 55–120 AD). Tacitism is sometimes depicted as a sequel to Machiavellism, an updated version of cynicism and dissembling suited to the paranoid atmosphere of Counter-Reformation Europe. It can more properly be thought of as an important philological achievement and a productive literary motif. In fact, Tacitism forms a crucial link between classical scholarship and vernacular literature in the early modern era.

Biography

The Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus was a leading statesman and chronicler of the first century of the Roman principate. Tacitus himself tells us in the prologue to his *Histories* that his public

career or *dignitas* began under Vespasian, continued under Titus, and advanced quite far under Domitian before reaching the fortunate era of Nerva and Trajan (Tacitus 1911, 1). Among the offices he held were the praetorship in 88, membership in the college of priests known as *Quindecimviri*, and finally the proconsulship of Asia for 112–113. In 98 he published his first work, the *Agricola* about Iulius Agricola, governor of Britain, which was followed by the *Germania*, an ethnographic treatise on the tribes of Germany. Under Emperor Trajan, Tacitus began to compile the materials for his *Histories*, and at the end of his life he composed the *Annals*, which chronicle the atrocities of the Julio-Claudian dynasty from Tiberius to Nero. He is thought to have lived into the early years of Hadrian's reign.

Impact and Legacy

Despite the admiration of Pliny the Younger and other contemporaries, Tacitus seems to have enjoyed a rather meager *fortuna* in antiquity and the Middle Ages. His name seems to have survived primarily due to the opprobrium heaped upon it by Tertullian and the Christian tradition until his work was first edited from manuscripts conserved in German monasteries starting in the late fifteenth century. The surviving corpus consists of the following texts: the *Annals* in 16 books (of which books 7 through 10 are missing), the *Histories* in five books, the *Life of Agricola*, the

Germania, and the *Dialogue of the Orators*. All these works were available in print by 1515. Their impact upon Renaissance culture was manifold and immediate. To begin with, the *Germania* “was used to fan the fires of German nationalism” and helped give birth to the myth of German purity and simplicity (Mellor 1995, xxii–xxiii). In his capacity as the author of the *Germania*, Tacitus may even have played a role in fomenting the Reformation as an assertion of German independence from Rome. The *Annals* and the *Histories*, with their lapidary style and memorable portrayal of despotism, became a sort of breviary of European courtiers living in the new age of absolutism. In particular, the portrayal of Emperor Tiberius in the first six books of the *Annals* seemed to epitomize the perverse lesson of deceit and dissembling deemed necessary for survival and advancement at the courts of princes. Francesco Guicciardini testifies to this reputation as early as 1530 in his *Ricordi* where he proclaims, “Tacitus teaches people who live under tyrants how to act prudently, just as he teaches tyrants how to found their tyranny” (Guicciardini 1984, 28: “Insegna molto bene Cornelio Tacito a chi vive sotto a’ tiranni el modo di vivere e governarsi prudentemente, così come insegna a’ tiranni e modi di fondare la tirannide” C18). In this sense, Tacitism denotes the amoral utilitarianism to be derived by unscrupulous opportunists from a lucid and unemotional chronicler of grandiose inhumanity. In the domain of rhetoric, so constitutive of Renaissance culture, the *Dialogue of the Orators* offered the tantalizing possibility of a stylistic alternative to Ciceronianism in the transition from civic humanism to what Marc Fumaroli has called aulic humanism (Fumaroli 2002, 63–70). Tacitus’ *Dialogue* stages a debate over the *optimum genus dicendi* that seems to speak directly to Renaissance readers and that resonates particularly deeply with the tradition of Attic prose studied by Morris Croll (Croll 1966).

The vogue for Tacitean wisdom developed in tandem with work on Tacitus’s texts performed by Renaissance humanists. Circulating fairly widely in manuscript in fifteenth-century Europe, Tacitus reached print in 1470 in an edition prepared by the first Venetian printer Vindelino de Spira. The next

noteworthy edition was prepared by Francesco Puzeolano in Milan beginning in 1475, known as the Puteolanus. In 1515 Filippo Beroaldo the Younger published the complete works of Tacitus in Rome, including the *editio princeps* of books one to six of the *Annals*, based on a ninth-century manuscript conserved in the Laurentian Library in Florence known as *Mediceus primus* or *Mediceus* 68.1. There followed editions by the law professor and inventor of emblem books Andrea Alciato, by Erasmus’ disciple Beatus Rhenanus, and by another law professor Aemilius Ferretus, before Justus Lipsius revolutionized the field with his series of seven editions of Tacitus with commentary starting in 1574. Coinciding with the last of this series, in 1607, Curtius Pichena published a new edition of Tacitus based on careful collation of the *Mediceus* codex conserved in the Laurentian Library, to which he enjoyed privileged access as the secretary to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. In this way, “as the sixteenth century wore on, readers had a better and better text at their disposal” (Schellhase 1976, 15). The diffusion of Tacitus’s work benefited further from the industry of translators, including Giorgio Dati in Italy, Claude Fauchet in France, and Henry Saville in England.

The establishment of a reliable text and apparatus in turn helped to make the study of Tacitus a university discipline beginning as early as 1492 when Conrad Celtis lectured on Tacitus at the University of Ingolstadt. Later Lipsius would deliver an important oration on Tacitus at the University of Jena in 1572 in the course of his spiritual and geographic peregrinations. The decisive moment in the story we are telling arrived in November 1580 when Marc-Antoine Muret inaugurated his lecture course on Tacitus’s *Annals* at La Sapienza in Rome. In his survey of the Tacitist tradition for his Sather Lectures, Arnaldo Momigliano points to Muret’s pivotal role: “We may put the turning point around 1580, when Marc-Antoine Muret started to give lectures on Tacitus’s *Annals* at the University of Rome – the very center of the Counter-Reformation” (Momigliano 1990, 123). Similarly, in his own survey of Tacitism, Peter Burke looks to 1580 as the time when interest in Tacitus “turned into a fashion, a craze, a movement which lasted some 100 years” (Burke 1969, 150). Muret did not exert

his most crucial influence as editor or commentator but rather as public spokesman of the lessons of political prudence taught by the *magister prudentiae*.

On November 3, 1580, Muret inaugurated his course with an epideictic oration in which he praises history above all disciplines, Rome above all nations, and Tacitus above all historians (Muret 1971, 1: 376–382). As the holder of the chair of rhetoric, Muret starts by praising Tacitus for his style:

In the first place let us acknowledge that everyone grants Tacitus the highest praise in writing: never was any writer more prudent or careful; his style is dry and sober, sparing in words and dense in thoughts; nothing superfluous can be detected in his speech, nothing empty, nothing redundant; each word contains a thought. Great praise and such that he can do without others. For just as our most prized possessions are those whose size is small but whose value is great like gold or jewels, and just as the best foods are those with the least waste and the most flavor, so the best speech embraces the most thoughts in the fewest words. That proves that it is born in the mind not the mouth.

Tacitus's preeminence as a writer is confirmed by the celebrity and sagacity of his most prominent readers:

This excellence of style, which among all Latin writers is most evident in Tacitus, is the reason why the wisest men of all ages, led not by the empty sound of words but by the quality of thoughts, have always held Tacitus in great honor and judged his work most useful for princes. As proof I could mention the Emperor Tacitus who had the historian's image and his books collected in all libraries and archives. However, that is an old and obsolete example, and examples so far removed in time carry less persuasive force. Pope Paul III, than whom our age witnessed no wiser senior, wore out his copy of Tacitus with frequent reading. Cosimo dei Medici, the first Grand Duke of Tuscany, a man born to rule, a man who maintained that what the common people call fortune consists in deliberation and prudence, loved Tacitus and profited avidly from reading him. Today many princes as well as those who are consulted by princes in the highest matters of state read him religiously and consider him a teacher of prudence.

Here Muret consecrates Tacitus's role as *magister prudentiae* whose work is a mirror for princes and courtiers alike.

In teaching Tacitus, against considerable institutional resistance, as he explains in his subsequent lecture, Muret is conscious of his own innovative role (and wants to make sure that we are conscious of it too). He has reformed the curriculum, much to the chagrin of those who squandered their youth learning a few eclogues of Virgil or a speech and some measly letters of Cicero. Now it is time to learn something more serious and more profitable. Anybody can teach those scholastic trivialities, he boasts to his audience, but you will not find many teachers willing or able to teach Tacitus. With Muret, Tacitism emerges as a pedagogical reform.

The next day, November 4, Muret delivered the second installment of his inaugural discourse where he responds systematically to the detractors of Tacitus (Muret 1971, 1: 382–392), including, presumably, those Cardinals on the Congregation of the Index who previously had forbidden him to offer a course on Tacitus. We know from a letter of 1572 that Muret had tried and failed to obtain permission to teach Tacitus (Giot 2012, 382), but he persevered until he finally secured the necessary authorization in 1580. There are, Muret reminds us in this new oration, five charges traditionally leveled against his client: Tacitus is the chronicler of tyranny; he is a liar; he hates Christians; his style is difficult; and his Latin is distinctly non-Ciceronian. The first accusation allows Muret to highlight Tacitus's greatest asset: his timeliness in an age of absolutism. Practicing the very prudence that he professes, Muret reminds his audience that they live in neo-Roman times. Gone are the Republics of the past; everyone lives under the arbitrary rule of one. And though, by god's mercy, the current age has no Tiberius, Caligula, or Nero, nevertheless, it is handy to know how good and prudent men managed to live under such rulers without endangering themselves or shamefully approving others' vices. To elicit the pertinent lessons of such conduct requires some particularly torturous logic from the lecturer:

For there are many things about the Prince that a good man, though he cannot praise them, can allow to pass in silence. Those who cannot connive at their rulers' vices expose themselves and their

rulers to danger. For many people, who believe their vices to be hidden, will voluntarily correct them lest they be discovered; and while they still think they are considered good men, will endeavor to become so. Whereas if they see that their vices are obvious, they will openly do what is openly said of them.

At this point, politics and morality have parted ways. The exemplary figure of the *Annals* is Tiberius, and he teaches imperial dissembling:

From the perpetual dissembling of Tiberius, from his expression and speech which displayed everything except what he was thinking, we will learn to behave cautiously with princes and not always to trust their looks or compliments. We will learn to ignore the things which princes wish to keep hidden, regardless of what we actually know, and we will see how not to penetrate deeper into their secrets than they would like us to. . . . Thus, even bad examples will be useful.

In short, Tacitus teaches us to make good use of bad examples, and that ought to keep him in print indefinitely.

Another aspect of Muret's second lecture that merits our attention is his defense of Tacitus's writing style against partisans of Ciceronian Latin. Earlier editors had routinely acknowledged Tacitus's inferior Latinity but had blamed it on the degenerate tastes of his time, as we can see particularly well in the preface to Beatus Rhenanus's edition of 1533 (Ulery 1986, 105). Muret takes a different tack. If Tacitus spoke differently than either Cicero or Caesar, then he must have preferred a different style. If he uses many words and expressions that earlier writers had not used, so what? In effect, Muret restages here the debate in Tacitus's own *Dialogue of the Orators* where Marcus Aper, the *novus homo*, insists that style must change with the times and that whatever is different (from Cicero) is not necessarily worse: "nec statim deterius esse quod diversum est" (Tacitus 1975, 81). This is the motto of historicism, at odds with the strictest classicism (Grafton 1985). Erasmus' spokesman Bulephorus articulates the same claim in the *Ciceronianus*: "ne statim existimes deterius, quod dissimile est" (Erasmus 1971, 705), whose wording is hardly dissimilar from Aper's in Tacitus. So Muret's Tacitism participates in a much larger tendency of the modern age, which we can call historical

relativism and which is filled with productive tensions for historical thought.

Muret's public lectures helped to trigger what Momigliano has called "the sudden vulgarization of Tacitus" in the 1580s (Momigliano 1947, 98). As a witness to this chronology, he cites the Italian prose writer Giovanni Botero, famous for his treatise on reason of state. At the outset of the 1580s, Botero apparently was not familiar with the name of Tacitus, but by the end of the decade he informs us in the preface to his *Ragion di stato* (1589) that, wherever he went on either side of the Alps, at the courts of kings and princes he found people who would spend all day talking about reason of state and quoting either Machiavelli or Tacitus. As Botero was prefacing his work, Justus Lipsius, having seen to press his fifth edition of Tacitus, was preparing for publication the *Politicorum libri sex*. In a letter from September 1589 addressed to Michel de Montaigne, Lipsius announces the imminent publication of his work: "et nescio quid in Politicis brevi dabo, meo textu, non tamen filo" (MacPhail 2014, 84). The text is his, but the thread is supplied by others. As it turns out, Lipsius would supply plenty of thread to Montaigne when he revised his essays on the *Exemplaire de Bordeaux* after receiving a copy of the *Politica* from the author. Lipsius's *Politica* is in fact a vast tapestry of quotations taken from classical authors writing about politics and government. Preeminent among them is Tacitus, as Lipsius explains in the *Auctorum syllabus* that precedes the work:

See here, if you like, in one glance the authors from whom this book has been derived. CORNELIUS TACITUS stands out among them, who must be especially mentioned, because on his own he contributed more than all the others together. The reason for this is the man's Prudence, and the fact that his text is very full of pithy formulations; but also that he is very familiar to us, and presented himself without being asked. (Lipsius 2004, 255)

Jan Waszink, from whom this translation is taken, calculates that of the total number of 2669 quotations used by Lipsius, 528 or 21% [sic] are supplied by Tacitus (Lipsius 2004, 149). Tacitus's sententious style certainly lends itself to such a labor of excerption, and his prudence is unrivaled.

In effect, what Lipsius did was to merge two of the most important trends of Renaissance culture, Tacitism and commonplace method, in order to create a Tacitean commonplace book that inspired many others in its wake. The commonplace method, as Waszink argues astutely (Lipsius 2004, 155), seriously inflects the understanding of Tacitus's meaning, for the author of the *Annals* seems less broodingly ambivalent, less disillusioned with despotism, when taken in bite-size doses.

In the same year of 1589, after the publication of the *Politica*, Lipsius's publisher issued a separate volume of notes entitled *Ad libros Politicorum breves notae*. The note to book one, chapter nine of the *Politica*, on history as the easy road to prudence (*facilem ad Prudentiam viam*), appends a list of prudent historians, both Greek and Latin. Among the Latins, Tacitus is the leader, not by virtue of eloquence but for his other qualities, especially prudence and judgment. He has an amazing capacity to express more than he seems to express, or to mean more than he says: "Mirabilis omnino scriptor, et qui serio hoc ipsum agit, quod non agit" (Lipsius 2004, 733). In other words, Tacitus is the master of the art of insinuation, and he trains his readers to discern implicit meanings. This is the same property that Erasmus claims for his *Apophthegmata* and Montaigne for his *Essays*, and that Quintilian summarizes in the rhetorical figure of *significatio*: "plus significat quam dicit" (MacPhail 2014, 139–140). In this way, Lipsius inscribes Tacitus at the head of a tradition that includes some of the great monuments of Renaissance literature.

The following decades ushered in the Italian vogue for Tacitism, *il tacitismo*, illustrated, so to speak, by a host of second rate authors dutifully catalogued by Benedetto Croce in his history of the Italian baroque (Croce 1957, 86–89). Most of these works "serve the purposes of a disguised Machiavellianism" (Momigliano 1947, 98), but there is one which stands out both for its formal and ideological qualities. Traiano Boccalini not only authored a vernacular commentary on Tacitus that remained in manuscript until 1677 but also composed the satirical masterpiece *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, published in two centuries or collections

of 100 chapters, the first in 1612 and the second in 1613, the year of his death. With Boccalini's *Ragguagli*, we can see how the vogue for Tacitus was ripe for satire. In chapter 23 of the first volume, Lipsius, who had died in 1606, makes his triumphal entry into Parnassus, which occasions a quarrel over precedence between Tacitus, representative of political studies, and Seneca, champion of moral philosophy. Seneca is forced to yield, because the philosophers know that politicians will use any unscrupulous means to obtain their end. Having completed his triumphal procession with Tacitus at his right hand, Lipsius displays stunning ingratitude when he accuses Tacitus of impiety for having denied divine providence. Tried in the court of Apollo, the case turns on the interpretation of a passage from book one of the *Histories* (1.3) where the narrator suggests that the gods are not concerned with our safety, which Lipsius misinterprets in Christian terms. Tacitus is the only one who can correctly expound his own text and show that his sentiment was not only not impious but in fact an exemplary statement of piety, since the gods punished Rome for its crimes. Lipsius is obliged to admit his fault and to confess to his master, "the more we read you, the less we understand" (Boccalini 1624, 85), which is a dubious tribute but a fitting expression of Tacitism. This pseudo trial is an interesting parody of various aspects of Tacitism, since it stems from a philological problem, the meaning of *securitas nostra* (Tacitus 1911, 3) in Tacitean usage, and it pits a censorious Christian view of Tacitus against a historically relative interpretation where Tacitus furthermore comes out very strongly against despotism and tyranny. In this respect, Boccalini's episode represents the potential for a politically dissident, if not republican Tacitism.

Having once accused Tacitus, in a later episode of Boccalini's work (I, 86), Lipsius goes to the other extreme and professes such unqualified admiration for the Roman historian that, out of envy, other disciples of Tacitus like Beatus Rhenanus, Josias Mercier, and Muret accuse Lipsius of idolatry. When brought in chains to plead before Apollo, Lipsius rehearses the usual praises of Tacitus as the father of human prudence,

the very oracle of reason of state, and the touchstone for assaying the value of princes. Indignant, Apollo responds with a comprehensive vituperation of Tacitus, reversing all the value judgments expressed by Lipsius and leaving the audience, both inside and outside the work, uncertain of Tacitus's true merit. For Apollo, the very worst and most "intolerable" part of Tacitus is the life of Tiberius (*Annals* 1–6), which long remained hidden in Germany until some cursed German brought the manuscript to life at the very same time as Luther was spreading his heresy (Boccalini 1624, 404). This dual condemnation of Luther and Tacitus, as the dual source of a modern scourge emanating from Germany, prompted Momigliano's broad claim that "Tacitus found himself at the confluence of the two great movements of the sixteenth century, religious reform and monarchic absolutism" (Momigliano 1990, 122). Boccalini's Apollo rounds off his oration with a parodic lament that nowadays Tacitism is such a plague that even the shopkeepers and porters are experts in reason of state. When Lipsius steadfastly refuses to recant his beliefs, Apollo sentences him to be burned at the stake, like a heretic. In effect, in this warped parody of the Counter-Reformation, Lipsius risks becoming a martyr of Tacitism, although upon the point of death, he earns a reprieve in recognition of his Stoic constancy. While Boccalini's own view of Tacitus remains ambivalent, it seems clear that he enrolls the historian in a polemic against the cruelty and intransigence of religious orthodoxy, a polemic that was destined to enjoy a great future in seventeenth-century Europe. This may indeed be the most important aspect of Tacitism for the history of modern thought.

Boccalini was not the first to suggest a connection between the legacy of Tacitus and the urgent question of religious tolerance. Already in 1580, when he published the first edition of his *Essays*, Michel de Montaigne devoted an essay to the Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate under the provocative heading "On the freedom of conscience" (II, 19). The essay begins not with the posthumous reputation of Julian, whom Montaigne would rehabilitate, but with the fate of the

work of Tacitus. Good intentions, Montaigne tells us with his usual taste for paradox, can produce very vicious effects if they are pursued without moderation. The prime example of a viciously good intention is religious zeal, which has wrought havoc not only in his own era of religious war but also in late antiquity when Christians destroyed pagan literature in the name of religion. Of this process, Cornelius Tacitus is a good witness, "un bon tesmoing" (Montaigne 1978, 668), since most of his works were destroyed by Christian censors. The same zeal can also lead to the unwarranted defamation of pagan emperors such as Julian. In this prologue, Tacitus, who chronicled Nero's persecution of Christians, becomes an unexpected witness in the sense of a martyr to freedom of conscience. He witnesses the vicious effects of religious intolerance and persecution. Moreover, when Montaigne visited Rome in November 1580, his books were confiscated, including his copy of the *Essays*, and only returned to him the following March, with an explanation that the Roman censors had reviewed his work and formulated a certain number of objections (Montaigne 1992, 119). One of their objections was to the essay on freedom of conscience. So Tacitus's relation to religious tolerance is by no means an antiquarian question in an era of censorship, confessional struggle, and uneasy religious pluralism. From Montaigne to Boccalini, Tacitism becomes intertwined with the paradigmatically modern cause of freedom of conscience.

If we look back in retrospect in order to assess the legacy of Tacitus in early-modern Europe, we are struck by the hesitations, contradictions, and equivocations of his readers. It is not easy to measure the true scope of his influence. It is possible to dismiss Tacitism as a superficial fashion or, as Peter Burke suggests among possible conclusions to his survey of Tacitism, "as no more than a transition between moralized politics and scientific politics" (Burke 1969, 168). In this view, Tacitism is simply a step on the way from Christianity to social science. At the other end of the scale of possibilities, Arnaldo Momigliano, writing in the aftermath of fascism, thought that Tacitus had identified a problem "of immediate

relevance to us” (Momigliano 1990, 131). We may even suggest that, because of its contested relationship to religious orthodoxy, Tacitism, no less than Tacitus, remains immediately relevant today.

Cross-References

- [Counter-Reformation](#)
- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Guicciardini, Francesco](#)
- [Lipsius, Justus](#)
- [Montaigne, Michel de](#)
- [Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of](#)

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Tafari, Matteo

Born: 1492, Soletto

Died: 1584, Soletto

Donato Verardi

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Abstract

Matteo Tafari, lover of Greek and Latin literature, *philosophus*, physician, and skilled astrologer, was born in 1492 in Soletto, a small town in the Otranto area, where he died in around 1584.

From the Aristotelian tradition, he adopted elements of *physica*, understood as knowledge of celestial and terrestrial phenomena in relation to their natural causes, whereas Plato's *Timaeus* was a particular inspiration for his *Commentary on the Orphic Hymns*, where, as in the *Pronostico*, Ptolemy also proved to be a decisive source of influence, reinterpreted in the light of Plotinus' concept of star signs.

While the *Pronostico* confirms Tafari's ability to read horoscopes, his *Commentary on the Orphic Hymns* is a fairly bold attempt to combine Orphic, Platonic, and Hermetic elements with Aristotelianism, as well as Counter-Reformation Thomism.

Biography

Matteo Tafari, lover of Greek and Latin literature, *philosophus*, physician, and skilled astrologer, was born in 1492 in Soletto, a small town in the Otranto area, where he died in around 1584. As a young boy, he imbibed the teachings of Sergio Stiso, at whose school he learned Greek and Latin literature. He later spent various periods in Naples, where he studied the art of astrology and rubbed shoulders with Neapolitan scholars of medicine, natural magic, and physiognomy. The Neapolitan experience proved decisive for him. His relationship with Giovan Vincenzo Della Porta, elder brother of the more renowned Giovanni Battista, was of particular significance (Badaloni 1960; Rizzo 2014).

Tafari's talent blossomed so rapidly that his teachers urged him not to stay in Naples but to immerse himself in the most advanced schools of European culture. Thus Tafari frequented not only the most renowned centers of Italian culture, such as Rome, Padua, and Venice, but also went to England, France, and Spain. In 1525 he was in Venice. This was the period of his astrological dispute with Luca Gaurico, who dedicated to him a short section of his *Tractatus astrologicus*, which also features his native chart. Tafari later went to England, where he was suspected of Lutheranism and indulged in some misguided prophecies, predicting the imminent death of Charles V. It appears that Tafari may have been drawn toward certain shamanistic magical-religious practices there. Thus, on his release from prison, he went to Ireland, where he was accused of practicing magic and condemned by the Inquisition. However, papal intervention led to the charges being dropped, and Tafari was able to return to Venice.

In the following years, the philosopher was in Paris, where it appears that he graduated in

Artibus from the Sorbonne. He then went to Spain, Greece, and probably also Asia Minor (Manni 1997; Di Mitri 2001; Papuli 2001; Rizzo 2001; Galante 2005; Rizzo 2014).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

He is reputed to have written several works of natural magic, physics, physiognomy, and astrology. However, only two manuscripts still survive: a *Commentary on the Orphic Hymns* (pre-1537), written in Byzantine Greek, and *Pronostico del nascimento di Hemilio Del Tufo* (1571), in Italian vernacular. From the Aristotelian tradition, he adopted elements of *physica*, understood as knowledge of celestial and terrestrial phenomena in relation to their natural causes, whereas Plato's *Timaeus* was a particular inspiration for his *Commentary on the Orphic Hymns*, where, as in the *Pronostico*, Ptolemy also proved to be a decisive source of influence, reinterpreted in the light of Plotinus' concept of star signs.

Innovative and Original Aspects

While the *Pronostico* confirms Tafari's ability to read horoscopes, his *Commentary on the Orphic Hymns* is a fairly bold attempt to combine Orphic, Platonic, and Hermetic elements with Aristotelianism, as well as Counter-Reformation Thomism.

Thus, although he adopted aspects of Renaissance Platonism, permeated by Hermeticism and a certain mystagogical tendency, he also participated in the most advanced upheavals in the cultural environment of southern Italy, helping to reestablish natural magic on a new basis.

Impact and Legacy

His great ability to forecast future events, certainly frowned upon in the ecclesiastical circles of the late sixteenth century, earned him an extravagant mention in Giovan Battista Della Porta's *Coelestis physiognomonia*, in which the philosopher from Soletto is remembered as a man of excellence in every field of learning (Della Porta 1996).

Cross-References

- [Astrology in the Renaissance](#)
- [Comedy in Renaissance Literature](#)
- [Della Porta, Giambattista](#)
- [Natural Magic in Renaissance Science](#)
- [Satire in Renaissance Literature](#)
- [Tragedy in Renaissance Literature](#)

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Tahereteus, Petrus

- [Tartaret, Pierre](#)

Talaeus, Audomarus

- [Talon, Omer](#)

Talon, Omer

Born: Amiens? (city in France), c. 1510

Died: Paris, 1562

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Abstract

Omer Talon was a French humanist and author of books on rhetoric. He was a close friend and colleague of Petrus Ramus.

Alternate Names

[Talaeus, Audomarus](#)

Biography

The details of Omer Talon's life remain quite a mystery. We know that from 1534 onward, he taught rhetoric at the Collège du Cardinal Lemoine in Paris – a college of the former Université de Paris – and that he was a fervent disciple of Petrus Ramus.

Works

Omer Talon became famous for his commentaries on the works of Cicero (*Cicero, Marcus Tullius. Academia. In academicum Ciceronis fragmentum explicatio*, [1547a](#)) and Porphyry (*Dialecticae praelectiones in Porphyrium*, [1547b](#)), as well as his ideas on the components and content of rhetoric. He wrote *Institutiones oratoriae*, which was published in [1544](#) and reprinted several times (Pettergree and Walsby [2012](#), pp. 1506–1507). This work, which serves as a counterpart to Petrus Ramus's *Dialecticae institutiones* (1543), presents a basic discourse on the ornament of style, focusing on the number (*numerus*) and rhythm of Talon's time (Meerhoff [1986](#), p. 191 *sqq.*). His approach was clearly influenced by Ramus, precursor to

Descartes (La Ramée 1555). In fact, the two men worked so closely together that the authorship of their respective texts is sometimes put into question. *Dialecticae institutiones* and *Institutiones oratoriae* predicted that rhetoric would be split into dialectic – which, at the time, was related to *dispositio* (or “judgment”) and *inventio* – and rhetoric, the art of speaking well and elegantly through figures of *elocutio*. The combined works of Talon and Ramus therefore marked a turning point, with the onset of “restricted rhetoric” (Genette 1972, pp. 21–40), which progressively became confined to *elocutio* and detached from logical considerations.

Rhetorica ad Carolum Lotharingum was published in 1548. Three hundred and ten editions of this popular text were published in a dozen or so countries, up until the following century (Pettergree and Walsby 2012, pp. 1506–1507). This work defines rhetoric as the art of speaking well, notably by mastering style and pronunciation. Style is determined by tropes (metonymy, irony, metaphor, and synecdoche) and figures – such as number (*numerus*) – that are important when looking at the rhythm. Pronunciation focuses on tone and gesture. Once again, the link with Ramus’s ideas is apparent: Talon’s ideas on rhetoric had already appeared in Ramus’s *Brutinae quaestiones* and *Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum*, published in 1547 and 1549, respectively. In 1555, Antoine Fouquelin translated Talon’s *Rhetorica* into French (*Rhétorique française*), making a few changes to the examples (Fouquelin 1990; Meerhoff 2001, p. 96; Leake 1968).

Cross-References

► [Ramus, Petrus](#)

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Tanaguidus

► [Le Fèvre, Tanneguy](#)

Tanaquil

► [Le Fèvre, Tanneguy](#)

Tanaquillus

► [Le Fèvre, Tanneguy](#)

Tartaglia, Niccolò

Born: Brescia, Italy, 1499 or 1500

Died: Venice, Italy, December 13, 1557

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Abstract

Considered one of the greatest Italian algebraists from 500, he is principally known for his

contribution to the solution of cubic equations and the dispute with Lodovico Ferrari and Girolamo Cardano. Known are his studies of ballistics and his works as editor and translator of Euclid and Archimedes.

Synonyms

Fontana, Nicolò; Tartalea; Tartaia

Biography

Nicolò Fontana, the real name of Tartaglia, was born into a poor family; his father died when he was 6 years old and his childhood was beset with difficulties. In his *Quesiti et inventioni diverse*, he tells a story about having to interrupt his education when he got to the letter “K” in the alphabet. From then on he was self-taught and studied “the works of dead men” (*Quesiti*, bk. VI, question 8). During the pillage of Brescia in 1512, he was seriously injured by Gaston de Foix’s soldiers: a sword blow to the face caused permanent damage to his jaw and as a result, he stammered for the rest of his life. It was for this reason that he was called “Tartaglia” – which means stammer in Italian. In his career as a mathematician, he taught Abacus in Verona and Mathematics in Venice where he died in 1557.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition, Innovative and Original Aspects, Impact, and Legacy

Tartaglia’s name is linked to the history of Algebra, Topography, and Military Science.

His most important contribution to Mathematics concerns the solutions of cubic equations. The formula was first discovered by Scipione del Ferro (1465–1526) during the first 20 years of the sixteenth century, but was never disclosed.

Tartaglia rediscovered the same method in 1535, but he communicated the formula in his *Quesiti* in 1546 after it had been published without the author’s approval by Girolamo Cardano in his *Ars Magna*. This led to a dispute between Tartaglia and the mathematician Lodovico Ferrari

(1522–1565), a disciple of Cardano. Between February 1547 and August 1548, Ferrari published six Pamphlets (*cartelli*) which provoked six replies from Tartaglia (Ferrari and Tartaglia 1876).

The mathematical areas developed in the replies to the Pamphlets are multiple and refer to topics such as Calculus, Extraction of Root Numbers, Calculation of Denominators, Combinatorial Analysis, and the Calculation of the Coefficients of the Binomial which culminates in the definition of the so-called Tartaglia triangle.

Tartaglia developed an important role in the spread of classical geometrical and mathematical theories, publishing the first Italian translation of the *Elementi di Euclide* (Euclide 1543) and a collection of writings by Archimedes edited by William of Moerbeke in the thirteenth century (Archimedes 1543). In 1551 he returned to the works of the Syracuse scientist and wrote for the Venetian editor Curtio Troiano Navò the commented Italian translation of part of the first book of *De insidentibus aquae*, in addition to *Opusculum de ponderositate* by Giordano of Nemore.

Tartaglia also made important contributions in the field of Mathematics to the Military Arts. In 1537, he published *La nuova scienza*, a treatise traditionally considered to be the first work dealing with the science of external ballistics based on Mathematics.

The author presents the new science as a discipline for the use of artillery; however, references to technology and the phenomena connected to the use of firearms are marginal compared to those on the movement of bullets which is the main topic of the book. Tartaglia concludes that, leaving aside air resistance – a negligible element for heavy bodies like artillery bullets in his opinion – the trajectory described by them is always curved, and the maximum range can be reached with an elevation of 45°. In the treatise, some measuring instruments are described including the gunner’s quadrant which facilitated the positioning and elevation of the cannon and the ballistic tables. These themes were also dealt in *Quesiti* and in *General trattato di numeri et misure* (1556–1560). In the brief treatise *Travagliata invenzione*, Tartaglia finally presents a method for the salvaging of shipwrecks in addition to various topics of Technology, Meteorology, and Physics.

Cross-References

- [Archimedes: Reception in the Renaissance](#)
- [Euclid: Reception in the Renaissance](#)
- [Galilei, Galileo](#)

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Tartaia

- [Tartaglia, Niccolò](#)

Tartalea

- [Tartaglia, Niccolò](#)

Tartaret, Pierre

Born: c. 1460

Died: 1522

Christophe Geudens

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Abstract

Pierre Tartaret (d. 1522) was a philosopher and theologian active at the University of Paris during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. His *oeuvre* primarily consists of commentaries on school authors (Aristotle, Peter Lombard, and Peter of Spain), whom he explained according to the doctrines of Duns Scotus or fourteenth-century nominalists such as John Buridan and Albert of Saxony. His commentaries on logic and natural philosophy, in particular, had a remarkable *fortuna* and were reprinted until well into the seventeenth century.

Alternate Names

[Tahereteus, Petrus](#); [Tartaretus, Petrus](#); [Tataretus, Petrus](#); [Tateretus, Petrus](#); [Tataret, Pierre](#); [Tateret, Pierre](#)

Biography

Pierre Tartaret was a Scotist philosopher and theologian active at the University of Paris around the turn of the sixteenth century. Nothing is known

about the earliest years of his life, except that he was born in Romont, in the diocese of Lausanne. He enrolled at the University of Paris, probably c. 1480, where he studied philosophy at the Collège de Reims under Johannes Sudoris. He took his Bachelor's degree in 1483 and his Master's 1 year later, in 1484 (Lohr 1972: 372). Since the title of Master of Arts was only granted to students who had reached the age of 20, Tartaret was probably born in the first half of the 1460s. After graduating, he started teaching philosophy at his college; Jérôme d'Hangest and possibly also Josse Clichthove figured there among his students (Demonet 1999: 91; Sullivan 2011: 516–517). He combined these teaching duties with higher studies: in 1496, he obtained his licentiate in theology, and in 1501, he became a Doctor of Divinity (Müller 2013: 17–20). As a member of the (secular) Third Franciscan Order, he is known to have lectured on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* at the Franciscan convent at Paris during the early sixteenth century (Villoslada 1938: 218–219; Wegerich 1942: 187–190). Tartaret was one of the most respected members of the theological faculty at that time, which can be judged by the fact that he formed part of the committee of Parisian theologians who were assigned the task of examining the writings of the German humanist Johann Reuchlin in 1514 (Giard 1980: 12). He died in 1522, probably around the age of 60.

Philosophy

Apart from a treatise on natural philosophy based primarily on Gregory of Rimini (Tartaret 1493c), Tartaret's philosophical work consists solely of commentaries, which are the product of his teaching at the Arts Faculty and the Franciscan convent: he commented on Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales* (Tartaret 1494a), Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (Tartaret 1494b, 1519, 1520), and nearly the entire Aristotelian corpus (Tartaret 1493a, b, 1496, 1504). Most of these commentaries, which remain largely unstudied to date, were prepared for publication during the 1490s. According to his own testimony, they bear the stamp of the philosophy of Duns Scotus (*secundum mentem Scoti*). This Scotist inclination

is particularly apparent in his interpretation of theological and metaphysical issues, above all in his commentary on the *Sentences*: Tartaret's understanding of objective reality (i.e., entities that have only mental existence such as mathematical rules) in the first book of this commentary is indebted to the Scotist philosophers Johannes Canonicus and Antonio Trombetta (Marrone 2008: 295–297), and large parts of this commentary are essentially abridgments of Scotus' *Ordinatio* or *Opus Oxoniense*, which was itself a commentary on the *Sentences* (Zahnd 2014: 480–483). In addition, Prantl (1870: 204–207) pointed out that the introductory chapters of his commentary on the *Organon* contain a polemic against the nominalist conception of universals, and he stressed that Tartaret adhered to a strict Scotist interpretation of this issue. In the field of logic and natural philosophy, however, he was heavily indebted to fourteenth-century nominalists such as John Buridan, Albert of Saxony, Marsilius of Inghen, and Pierre d'Ailly. When, in his commentary on the *Summulae*, Tartaret addressed the relation between written and spoken propositions, for example, he refuted Buridan's opinion that the immediate significate of a written proposition is its spoken equivalent, arguing instead in favor of Pierre d'Ailly's view that both types of proposition stand on the same level and, hence, cannot be described in terms of sign and significate: both refer, through mediation of a concept, to things outside the mind, but cannot be subordinated to one another (Demonet 1999: 95–96; Meier-Oeser 1997; Nuchelmans 1980: 16–20; on Tartaret's logic, see also Ashworth 1974; Bäck 1996: 208–209; Ferreira 1952; Krieger 1990). His account of impetus theory, as outlined in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, is copied verbatim from Marsilius of Inghen's *Abbreviationes libri Physicorum*, and for the question of acceleration and natural movement, he relied heavily on Albert of Saxony's *Quaestiones in libros De caelo et mundo* (Duhem 1959: 97–105).

Impact and Legacy

Tartaret's commentaries, which were regularly reprinted between the 1490s and 1520s, were

quite popular during the first decades of the sixteenth century. His works on natural philosophy were taught at the University of Heidelberg when Philipp Melanchthon studied there during the 1510s (Pozzo 1998: 274), and his commentary on the *Summulae logicales* was used as a textbook at the University of Louvain in the same period. The Strasbourg educationalist Johann Sturm called him one of the leading logicians of his day (Sullivan 2011: 517; see also Ashworth 1974: 2), and Petrus Ramus may have read his manuals on logic when he studied for his Arts degree in Paris, at the Collège de Navarre (Ong 1958: 141). Yet his fame seems to have declined rapidly after 1520, when humanism gradually got a stronger grip on university teaching. Erasmus called him a sophist in his *Ratio verae theologiae* of 1518, and together with William of Ockham, John Mair, and Thomas Bricot, he was ridiculed by Rabelais, who satirized him by claiming that he wrote a treatise *De modo cacandi*, “On How to Defecate” (Bowen 2011: 39). Near the end of the sixteenth century, however, his works experienced a final revival. They were reissued under the impulse of Franciscan friars (mainly Italians), which resulted in a second flow of editions between the 1570s and 1620s, with an edition of his *Opera omnia* published in Venice as late as 1621 (Demonet 1999: 87). This sudden rise in popularity was due to his increasing use as a school author in the Franciscan *studia*, a practice that was formalized in 1594 and repeated in 1619, when Giacomo Montanari, the Minister General of the Order, declared in his *Ratio studiorum* that Peter of Spain and Aristotle’s logic should be explained “according to Tartaret” (*secundum viam Tartareti*) (Andersen 2016: 8–9). His works, though still known to Bartolomeo Mastri, a Franciscan philosopher active c. 1650, fell into oblivion in the second half of the seventeenth century (Forlivesi 2002: 119–120).

Cross-References

- [Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition](#)
- [Scotism](#)
- [Universities in the Renaissance](#)

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Tartaretus, Petrus

► [Tartaret, Pierre](#)

Tāshkubrī'zādah, Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā

Born: 2 December 1495, Bursa

Died: 13 April 1561, Istanbul

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Abstract

Tāshkubrī'zādah, Taşköprüzade, or Taşköprülüzade, İsamüddin Ahmed, son of Mustafa (2 December 1495 [Bursa] to 13 April 1561 [Istanbul]) was an Ottoman scholar and teacher and author of an encyclopedia of the sciences and of a collection of biographies of Ottoman sheikhs and jurists.

Alternate Names

[Taşköprülüzade](#); [Taşköprüzade](#)

Biography

Ahmed Taşköprüzade was the son of Muslihüddin Mustafa Taşköprüzade (1453–1529), judge, teacher, and the preceptor of Prince Selim (afterwards Selim I). After receiving the first

education from his father, he studied in various *medreses* (religious colleges) in Ankara, Bursa, and Istanbul and then became a teacher himself. He taught in Skopje, Istanbul, and Edirne and in 1551 became a judge of Istanbul, one of the highest posts in the ulema (jurist) hierarchy. He retired due to bad eyesight in 1554 and spent his last years dictating his works. Among his books, the most celebrated are *aş-Sakâ'ik an-nu'mâniyya* ("The Crimson Peony," completed in 1558), a biography of 502 Ottoman sheikhs and ulema, and *Miftâh as-sa'âde* ("Key to Happiness," completed in 1557), an encyclopedia of sciences, both in Arabic (the latter was translated by his son into Ottoman Turkish, with some additions).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In some respects, Tašköprüzade epitomizes the Islamic tradition of rational thought; his career shows an erudite scholar who had conscience of the place of his state in Islamic history and tried to justify it from a cultural point of view. From the aspect of philosophy, his most important work (yet the least studied so far) is the *Miftâh*, his encyclopedia, where he tried to provide a systematical account of the knowledge of his era. Nearly 400 branches of science, from mathematics to grammar and from Koranic sciences to magic, were described in this ambitious work. Tašköprüzade further attempted to classify these branches along the stages of God's manifestation according to the Sufi doctrine (universal spirit, intellect, nature, and man), which correspond to different stages of knowledge. Thus he recognized:

- (a) The spiritual sciences. These are further divided into practical and theoretical and again subdivided into those based on reason and those based on religion. This classification produces eventually four classes: (1) philosophical (or theoretical-rational) sciences (*ulûm-ı hikemiyya*), which include metaphysics (the science of man's soul), theology (angelology, prophetology, etc.), natural

sciences and medicine (including magic, alchemy, or the interpretation of dreams), mathematics, and music; (2) practical philosophy (*hikmet-i ameliyya*) or the practical-rational sciences, i.e., ethics and administration (from household to politics and the army); (3) religious or theoretical-religious sciences (*ulûm-ı şer'iyya*), i.e., Koranic exegesis and jurisprudence; and (4) finally, esoteric or practical-religious sciences (*ulûm-ı bâtinîyya*), i.e., mysticism.

- (b) The intellectual sciences (*makûlât-ı sâniyya*), such as logic, dialectics, or the art of debate.
- (c) The oral sciences (*ulûm-ı lafzîyya*), i.e., those pertaining to language. These include lexicography and etymology, grammar, and rhetoric, but also literary sciences such as philology and, interestingly, history or "conversation with rulers."
- (d) The written sciences (*ulûm-ı hattîyya*), i.e., calligraphy, spelling and orthography, the art of inscriptions, etc.

Furthermore, all sciences are to be differentiated according to their usefulness (politics, for instance, is considered a useful science), but also as good (those which are auxiliary to religion) and bad (such as astrology or magic); this distinction, however, mainly depends not on knowledge itself but on the use one makes thereof.

As for his religious views, Tašköprüzade follows al-Ghazali (1058–1111) in that, in order for a scholar to attain the greater realities, the mystical sciences are deemed necessary and these are based on esoteric contemplation. Moreover, in the old Islamic debate between extreme mysticists and rationalist "philosophers," he adopted al-Ghazali's moderate stance, insisting that mysticism should be interpreted in its own terms and that practices such as the Sufis' use of music or dance are acceptable. However, no one should devote oneself to only one branch of knowledge, since they all complement each other; in this respect, Tašköprüzade argued that the theoretical sciences, such as theology or mathematics, should regain their place (which had started to wane) in the *medrese* curriculum.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Taşköprüzade's encyclopedia may be said to summarize the Islamic knowledge of his era. Furthermore, his taxonomy of science seems to be quite original: its influences from al-Ghazali and (possibly) Ibn Khaldun notwithstanding, it does not follow any of the previous categorizations (cf. Gardet–Anawati 1970, 101–124).

Impact and Legacy

Taşköprüzade's work had a strong influence on Ottoman letters. His encyclopedia was translated to Ottoman Turkish by his son, Kemalüddin Mehmed Efendi, under the title *Mevzu'ât al-'Ulûm* ("Subjects of the Sciences") and had great success; Kâtip Çelebi (q.v.)'s bibliographic encyclopedia (the *Keşf al-Zünûn*) was compiled along Taşköprüzade's lines. His biographical work was considered a classic, and many subsequent authors wrote additions and supplements well into the seventeenth century.

Cross-References

► [Kâtib Çelebi](#)

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Taşköprülüzade

► [Tāshkubrī'zādah, Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā](#)

Taşköprüzade

► [Tāshkubrī'zādah, Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā](#)

Tataret, Pierre

► [Tartaret, Pierre](#)

Tataretus, Petrus

► [Tartaret, Pierre](#)

Tateret, Pierre

► [Tartaret, Pierre](#)

Tateretus, Petrus

► [Tartaret, Pierre](#)

Tatti, Giovanni

► [Sansovino, Francesco](#)

Tatti da Sansovino, Francesco

► [Sansovino, Francesco](#)

Taurellus, Nikolaus

Born: 26 November 1547, Mömpelgard (Montbéliard)

Died: 28 September 1606, Altdorf

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Abstract

Taurellus was a philosopher and medical scientist at Tübingen, Basel, and Altdorf. The main thesis of his first philosophical writing “*Philosophiae Triumphus*” was met with vehement opposition among Lutheran theologians because he claimed that philosophy was the foundation of theology. In his later metaphysical writing, he took up the concept of metaphysics in which the general doctrine of God was removed from the metaphysics and later passed on to the modern concept of the philosophy of religion. His definition of God as “*substantia absolutissima*” made him a forerunner of modern metaphysics.

Alternate Names

[Oechslein, Nikolaus](#)

Biography and Oeuvre

Taurellus studied philosophy in Tübingen in 1560 under Jacob Schegk (Degen) (1511–1587) and Samuel Heiland (1533–1592); 1565 Master of Philosophy and beginning of theology studies. From 1566, he studied medicine in Basel under Theodor Zwinger (1533–1588); 1570 Doctor of

Medicine. 1573, saw the publication of his important early work *Philosophiae Triumphus*, the first draft of a Protestant metaphysics in three parts: theological anthropology, the theory of principles in metaphysics, and the speculative doctrine of God. His main thesis that philosophy is the foundation of faith itself was met with vehement opposition. Taurellus’ justification for the thesis that philosophy was the foundation of theology postulated that philosophy must be antecedent as: “in Christ he believeth not who knoweth not God” (Ed. Wels (2012), p. 232). In this respect, i.e., that knowledge of the existence and power of God precedes faith, he argues that philosophy forms the foundation of theology as a doctrine of revelation. From 1580, Taurellus taught as a professor of medicine and natural philosophy at the University of Altdorf where his late works were published. The *Synopsis Aristotelis Metaphysices* of 1596 takes up the concept of metaphysics found in Late Scholasticism in Spain (Benedictus Pererius, ca. 1535–1610; Francisco Suárez, 1548–1617) in which the general doctrine of God was removed from the metaphysical and later passed on to the modern era as natural theology, ultimately leading to the newer philosophy of religion. Borrowing from Book 12 of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, which first deals extensively with sensible and changeable substances and then gradually traces them back to an eternal immovable substance, Taurellus reinterpreted the notion of God: since God is the most perfect being, his being exists in a state of pure reality so that God, in contrast to all other entities, is the most absolute substance (*substantia absolutissima*), a definition that presages modern metaphysics. Taurellus’ outline had a significant influence on the direction of natural theology in the Lutheran and Reformed traditions. His *Alpes caesae* of 1597 serves as a critique of the pantheism and world-soul teachings of Italian physician and philosopher Andrea Cesalpino (1519–1603). Taurellus criticized his theory of *anima universalis* on the grounds that it manifested a latent pantheism, as well as Cesalpino’s acceptance of the unity of the intellect, which seemed to refute the concept of the individuality of the human soul. Both important cosmological texts published in 1603 presented

discussions of contemporary debates on, for instance, the pseudo-Aristotelian, Apuleian text *De mundo* as explicated by Francesco Piccolomini; they are both, however, now thought to be lost. In his *Kosmologia*, Taurellus developed the theory that God created the world and all nature in such a way that no further intervention was required. Creation would not be perfect if what had been created could not subsist of itself. This thesis, which rejected the concept of the divine conservation of the world (*de mundi conservazione*), is fully in line with theodicy as it asserts that God's goodness cannot be reconciled with an imperfect world. In his *Uranologia*, he turns to general questions on the celestial bodies, exploring their materiality and corruptibility, which he attributes to the prime mover: if the prime mover is eternally both *substantia* and *actus*, it must be capable of moving the celestial spheres. In his *De rerum aeternitate* from 1604, Taurellus renewed his endeavors towards a harmony of philosophy and theology, which even found acceptance in the Enlightenment (Pierre Bayle, 1647–1706; Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, 1646–1716). This work discusses fundamental questions of cosmology, psychology, and metaphysics, contesting Francesco Piccolomini and Andrea Cesalpino. He establishes the relationship between theology and philosophy by the theory of three states: *philosophica ratio*, the first state of humanity, consists of the perfect knowledge and action of mankind, while the second state, after the Fall of Man, led to the loss of eternal paradise, ending in despair and eternal misery but not the abolition of the human cognitive faculty; the third state ultimately refers to theology, the object of which is divine grace.

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Teive, Diogo de

Born: c. 1513–1514, Braga

Died: c.1565, somewhere in Portugal

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Abstract

Diogo de Teive (c. 1513–1514?– c.1565?) was a Portuguese humanist. He studied in Spain and France, and upon returning to Portugal, he taught at the Colégio das Artes in Coimbra, where he was denounced to the Portuguese Inquisition alongside George Buchanan. He was an accomplished Neo-Latin prose writer, playwright, and poet (for a modern edition and translation, see Teive 2012).

Alternate Names

[Tevius, Didacus](#); [Tevius, Iacobus](#)

Biography

Born in the northern Portuguese city of Braga, Teive left his homeland at the age of 12 to study abroad at the Collège de Saint-Barbe, where Portuguese scholars were educated thanks to the grants awarded by King João III. Obeying his father's wishes to give up theology and study civil law, Teive left for Salamanca (1532–1534), where he became disappointed by the poor quality of the teaching of Greek. He returned to Toulouse

to continue the study of law but met with financial difficulties and then accepted André de Gouveia's invitation (in 1536) to teach in Bordeaux, at the Collège de la Guyenne, where Gouveia acted as principal. Teive taught both grammar and rhetoric at the highest level, while continuing his studies of Greek and law. In 1538 he went to Paris, where he made contact with the "lecteurs royaux" of the Collège Royal. After a short trip to Gascony, where Teive prepared the sons of two noblemen for entry to the university, he returned to Paris, but soon left for Montauban (in the summer of 1541), again to teach in the university. This teaching post allowed him to pay for his future studies of law at the University of Poitiers (1542). A year later, André de Gouveia invited Teive to return to Bordeaux, to the Collège de la Guyenne, where he met George Buchanan who became his friend.

In 1544, Teive was invited by King João III to teach at the Colégio das Artes in Coimbra, prior to which he was expected to help André de Gouveia to organize the team of staff to go from France to Portugal. Teive returned to Portugal in 1547, and with him came a prestigious group of international scholars: Buchanan, Elie Vinet, Nicholas de Grouchy, Guillaume de Guérente, and Arnould Fabrice. Well-known Portuguese academics included André de Gouveia, João da Costa, and Teive himself, who was responsible for the teaching of both Latin and Greek. In 1548, when Teive was replacing Gouveia as principal of the Colégio after Gouveia's death, an investigation into the activities in France of Teive, Costa, and Buchanan was ordered by the Inquisition in 1549: they were all accused of Protestantism and Teive, in particular, of possessing a copy of Calvin's *Institutio Christiani Religionis*, and of being a Lutheran. Teive, Costa, and Buchanan were convicted, deprived of their posts, and imprisoned, but Teive was treated with leniency and was released after a short period.

He moved to Braga to start an ecclesiastical career, and, upon returning to Coimbra, was appointed as principal of the Colégio das Artes (from 1552 to 1555) by King João III. When the Colégio was handed over to the Jesuits, Teive went to Lisbon to seek the help of the royal family: he was appointed as chaplain to the King and was

given the benefice of the royal priory of Vila Chã da Braciosa in Miranda do Douro (North of Portugal). Teive's return to Lisbon and to the court in particular occurred in 1563 and was the result of the patronage of the Spanish Julián de Alba, Bishop of Miranda, who was close to Queen Catherine of Portugal. Very little is known of Teive's final years: he died somewhere between 1565 and 1579, having likely left Lisbon for Braga after 1565.

Unlike many of his contemporaries whose work circulated in manuscript form, Teive had a successful career and his works were published in important centers in the Iberian Peninsula. He is the author of one significant historiographical account, his only published prose work: the *Commentarius de rebus a Lusitanis in India apud Dium gestis* (Coimbra, 1548) focuses on the siege of Diu, a Portuguese citadel in the south of Cambay, which suffered months of heavy fighting in 1546 against the army of Khoja Safar, at the service of Mahmud Shad, Lord of Gujarat. In addition to several minor occasional speeches and poems (see 1553, 1563, 1564a, 1564b), Teive also composed two substantial collections of poetry dedicated to the great men and women of his time in Portugal: the *Opuscula aliquot* (Salamanca, 1558) and the *Epodon libri tres* (Lisbon, 1565, see Fouto 2012). Teive also wrote two works of didactic poetry, the *Institutio Sebastiani Primi* (printed in the *Opuscula Aliquot* and in the *Epodon libri tres*; see Fouto 2011) and the *Sententiae* (in *Epodon libri tres*, 1565). He composed an important collection of hymns inspired by Prudentius' *Peristephanon* (book 2 of *Epodon libri tres*). Teive's biblical plays *David* and *Iudith* (now lost) were celebrated in his day, and his *Ioannes Princeps* (composed in 1554 but published in the *Opuscula Aliquot* in 1558, with a modern edition from 1977) is a rare example of classical tragedy commemorating a contemporary historical subject-matter (the death to the heir to the Portuguese throne).

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Teleology in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

Teleology is the idea according to which every event is directed toward a precise aim, even those not depending on conscious actions. The teleological interpretation of the world is particularly important in Renaissance natural philosophy because of the detachment from tradition. Nature’s regularity and organization are no more attributed to God but to nature itself. Starting from the sixteenth century’s Italian philosophy, nature is believed to be sensitive and intelligent to different degrees, and it implies a completely new teleological interpretation of the world.

Introduction

The etymology comes from the Greek word τέλος (*telos*) which means “purpose, aim.”

It is the idea according to which every event is directed toward a precise aim, even natural

events, not depending on will or human conscious actions.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism interpreted the world in a strongly teleological way. Contrary to what has been taught by Atomism, the other main philosophical schools explained the cosmos's organization and the phenomena in it with a precise project, a universal blueprint designed and organized by a superior Intellect. Medieval philosophy, guided by the cosmological ideas of the three great monotheisms – Christianity, Islam, and Hebraism – followed ancient thought in the teleological interpretation of the world. The natural philosophy of Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274), father of scholastic philosophy, attributed the intellect only to human beings and to no other thing in the material world. All other elements do not have any kind of intelligence, but the actions they perform are guided by the supreme Intellect, organizer of the cosmos, which means God.

In Thomistic natural philosophy, no natural being is gifted with intelligence, but nevertheless, the actions they perform are not casual; they are intelligently directed by God toward a specific purpose. No intelligence or knowledge guide the rock in its race toward the center of the earth or the flame in its attempt to reach the skies, but they are both externally guided by the intelligence of God as well (Landucci 2005).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The idea of a universe teleologically organized is particularly important in Renaissance philosophy because of a radical change of perspective with respect to Medieval thought: from an external teleology to an internal one. Every natural event is still considered as directed toward a precise goal, and intelligence is still considered the *conditio sine qua non* for being able to have a precise goal; for Renaissance philosophy of nature, intelligence must be attributed to natural things as such.

In Bernardino Telesio's (1509–1588) philosophy, every movement and every physical process in the universe originate from the ancestral conflict between heat and cold, two incorporeal principles in perpetual opposition. The sun and earth are the cosmic locations of those two principles: the balance between the earth, always motionless because of the nature of cold, and the sun, always in movement because of the nature of heat, made life possible. According to Telesio, everything originates from this primordial form of life and sense that puts cold and heat one against the other, so the whole universe is sensitive in different degrees (Bondi 1997).

Telesio's most famous scholar, Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639), starting from the teachings of his master, said that thinking that God itself guides every natural thing toward its aim should be considered an insult to God's dignity. Rooted in the heat-cold conflict, the most fundamental elements have a certain form of elemental knowledge: they are able to understand what is harmful to them and what is useful to their survival. The rock is able to understand that flying in the air is harmful to its nature and that staying as low as possible is good for itself: the rock falls because it attempts to reach the lowest possible place; its knowledge doesn't go further because God decided that for a simple thing like a rock is appropriate a simple form of knowledge. Just because complex beings are made of simpler beings, superior forms of knowledge are based on lower forms. Human rationality, consciousness, and intelligence are not different by nature but by degree from those of the elements, minerals, plants, or animals. According to Campanella, the greatness of God's creation lies in its independence: a creation that during his whole existence needs the intervention of its creator to reach his aims (that was how Aquinas interpreted nature) is an imperfect creation, unworthy of God's perfection (Ernst 2010).

A teleological interpretation of the universe is a characteristic of many schools of thought in history, and it opens the way to important questions. If the world is wisely organized and it's "programmed" to reach a specific purpose, how is it possible? Thanks to which power? After centuries

dominated by the idea of a superior Intellect declined in many different ways that guide an almost inert nature toward its purpose, Renaissance philosophy marks a turning point in the history of thought and in particular in the teleological interpretation of the world: nature is intelligent and perfect enough to understand what is the best thing to look for and to get organized to reach it (Ingegno 1988). This was a completely new kind of teleological understanding and a new idea of nature's dignity.

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Telescope in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

The importance of the invention of telescope cannot be underestimated, neither regarding its instrumental value within the astronomic field during the "Scientific Revolution" (and uninterruptedly after) nor regarding its philosophical and symbolical significance in so far as it was a device – the first with such an impact on human knowledge – that was given credit

for, and recognized as, being able of increasing natural perceptual capacity (i.e., sight), well beyond its contingent limits, even enhancing it to a level of improvement that was thought as impossible to reach.

Impact and Legacy

The debut of what we know as "telescope," an optical instrument for enlarging the view of long-distance objects, was not possible until some important conditions were historically realized, around the beginning of the seventeenth century. In fact, certain material requirements, technical preconditions, and philosophical points of no return had to be met not only before the telescope could actually be built but also before it could be recognized and profitably used as such. Among the material requirements, it should be mentioned, first, the acquired competence in the making of glass lenses (both convex and, later, concave) that had to be good enough to allow luminous transparency and visual clearness and, secondly, the development of adequate procedures for glass grinding and lens polishing, necessary for obtaining a correct refraction of the light by the optical medium. Among the technical conditions, it should be mentioned also the not so easily understood principle of aligning different lenses or mirrors for obtaining different visual effects (e.g., a concave lens before a convex one, as in the Galilean telescope, for a magnification of the observed object). Moreover, the basic notions of focus, depth of field, and *punctum inversionis* had to be somehow understood and mastered (as borrowed by, respectively, the practice of eyeglasses-making, the perspectivistic tradition of the visual arts, and the science of burning mirrors) before the functioning of the telescope could be conceived. Among the philosophical points of no return, it should be mentioned the conviction and the awareness that an *instrument* can guarantee reliable and useful results, *even beyond user's own perceptual capacities*: an acquisition that was accepted, against any comprehensible skepticism, even later that the first telescopes were already at work. All these

conditions were satisfactory met in the first years of 1600 in the Netherlands but only after a long “training” and “playing” with spectacle-makers’ lenses, reflecting mirrors, crystal spheres, and *camerae obscurae* in Italy and in England.

In England, Leonard Digges was credited of the conception of a rudimentary reflecting instrument, consisting of a mirror and a concave lens, as reported by his son Thomas in his *Pantometria* (1571), but it remains unlikely that he actually assembled such a prototype. Also John Dee, tutor of Leonard Digges’ son, made reference to some “perspective glasses” in his writings (1575) for military application, and in his *Treatise on the Properties and Qualities of Glasses for Optical Purposes* (1585 ca.), William Bourne described the effects of glasses for distant vision with confidence for their effectiveness and for their forthcoming development.

In Italy, Giambattista Della Porta, in his *Magia Naturalis* (1589), described from a theoretical point of view what will later turn out to be the Galilean telescope, although, for his own admission, without having been aware of the relevance of the invention and its applicative potential.

The Dutch-based spectacle-maker Hans Lippershey was the first to claim of having been “inventor of an instrument for seeing at distance,” namely, a little glass monocular device that he was able to build before the end of 1608. At the same time in which Lippershey applied for a patent of exclusivity to the States General in The Hague, two other Dutch candidates, namely, S. Janssen and J. Metius of Alkmaar, laid claim to being capable of assembling similar working optical instruments. A wide debate regarding the identity of the prime invention was open since then (some decades later, an inquiry was addressed to solve the controversy, and its results, published in *De vero telescopii inventore* (1656), assigned the primacy to Janssen, but revisionist petitions soon followed as well, leaving the debate undated for centuries, cf. van Helden 1977). Anyhow, what will be later baptized as *telescope* (literally the “farseeing,” from Greek *τῆλε* “afar” and *σκοπέω* “watch at”) was finally built and available.

In the spring of 1609, Galileo Galilei had already been made aware of the news by the

Venetian prelate and friend Paolo Sarpi (maybe by the way of a French student, J. Badouère, since at that time the first models of the instrument were already on sale in Paris and in other European cities). In few weeks’ time, Galilei not only understood how the enlarger instrument was made, up to recreate it, but he was even able to enhance it, improving its magnifying power up to 8 measures and, in 2 years’ time, up to 30 measures (equal to the intrinsic limit of that optical structure and its materials). Moreover, he soon improved the quality of lenses’ optical performance, preparing them himself with the excellent Venetian glass; he then added further tools on his longer sight tube, like a diaphragm for controlling the quantity of light on the lenses, a micrometer for calibrating its angulation, and a so-called *Jupiterlabe* for localizing the unforeseen Jupiter’s moons. In his *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610), Galilei publicly announced all the new astronomical discoveries that he made for the first time carefully watching the heavens through his “cannocchiale,” namely, the Galilean telescope, the first of a kind. Since then the progressive and tentative improvement, the instrumental and theoretical research on the telescope, together with the “aperture fever” that it always came with (cf. Watson 2004), has never stopped.

The importance of the invention of telescope cannot be underestimated, neither regarding its instrumental value within the astronomic field during the “Scientific Revolution” (and uninterruptedly after) nor regarding its philosophical and symbolical significance in so far as it was a device – the first with such an huge impact on human knowledge – that was given credit for, and recognized as, being able of increasing natural perceptual capacity well beyond its contingent limits, even enhancing it to a level of improvement that was thought as impossible to reach, even less artificially.

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Telesio, Bernardino

Born: 1509, Cosenza

Died: October 1588, Cosenza

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Abstract

Renowned as a “new Socrates” and “the first of the new philosophers,” Bernardino Telesio became a landmark for late Renaissance thinkers and men of science, developing a new approach to the study of the natural philosophy, in contrast to the scholastic Aristotelian tradition, and criticizing the medical science of Galen and of his followers. His thought influenced such eminent authors of early modern philosophy, as Agostino Doni, Giordano Bruno, Francis Bacon, Tommaso Campanella, Pierre Gassendi, and Thomas Hobbes.

Biography

Bernardino Telesio was born in Cosenza (Northern Calabria) to Giovanni Battista, a noble man of letters, and Vincenza Garofalo, the daughter of a lawyer. Bernardino was the firstborn of eight sons. His early education had been influenced by his uncle, Antonio Telesio (1482–1534), a fine humanist whose works

largely circulated across Europe. Antonio took care of his nephew during his journeys to the principal centers of Italian culture. In 1517 Bernardino left Cosenza, following his uncle to the Duchy of Milan. Here the young Telesio became acquainted with the illustrious pupils of his uncle as well as with eminent men of letters, such as Matteo Bandello (1485–1561). In 1523, Bernardino and Antonio moved to Rome, attending the intellectual *milieu* of the papal court and the Vatican library, animated by philosophers and humanists such as Paolo Giovio (1483–1552), Marco Girolamo Vida (1485–1566), Marcello Cervini (1501–1545), Coriolano Martirano (1503–1558), and Giovanni Antonio Pantusa (1501–1562). Bernardino left the *Studium Urbis* in 1527, soon after the sack of Rome. Then Bernardino moved to Padua, where his uncle rejoined him, as he had been appointed professor of Latin by the municipality of Venice (Oct. 17th, 1527). At the University of Padua, Telesio learned the new critical approach to Aristotle and Galen. He never gained the title of *magister medicinae et artium*, and yet he started to cultivate a significant interest in mathematics, medicine, and natural philosophy. After a couple of years, he came back to Calabria. He kept pursuing his studies in the field of philosophy, becoming familiar, in Rome (1534–1535), with the papal environment of Paolo III Farnese. Between 1536 and 1538, he spent a fruitful period of study at the Benedictine monastery of Seminara in the South of Calabria. Then he went back to Rome, getting acquainted with some illustrious members of the papal court: Benedetto Varchi, Annibale Caro, Niccolò Ardinghelli, Ippolito Capilupi, Alessandro Farnese, Gasparo Contarini, Niccolò Gaddi, and Giovanni Della Casa. In the early 1540s, he was already known as an anti-Aristotelian philosopher. Between 1541 and 1542, he spent some time at Padua and was introduced to Matteo Realdo Colombo (1516–1559), who, in his *De re anatomica* (1559), remembered Telesio as *auditor* of his early anatomical dissections (Mandressi 2009, 113). The specific interest of Telesio to the *nova ars medendi* was particularly attested in a work “adversus Galenus” entitled *Quod animal universum ab unica Animae substantia gubernatur* (“That the animal as a whole is ruled

by one soul and his substance”), written along 1560s, and posthumously published by Antonio Persio (Telesio 1590, 139–227).

In the late 1540s, he probably lived in the Neapolitan household of Alfonso Carafa (†1581), III Duke of Nocera, and in the early 1550s, he came back to Cosenza, marrying in 1553 Diana Sersale (†1561), a noblewoman of note belonging to the old municipality of Cosenza. He soon became a leading figure in the intellectuality of Cosenza, putting the basis for the creation of the “Accademia Cosentina” (Lupi 2011). Under his tutelage he had such distinguished pupils, such as the humanist Sertorio Quattromani (1541–1603) and Iacopo di Gaeta (fl. 1550–1600), the philosopher and physician Agostino Doni (fl. 1545–1583), the orientalist Giovanni Battista Vecchietti (1552–1619), and his first biographer, Giovan Paolo d’Aquino (†1612). In 1554 Telesio was elected mayor of Cosenza. Then, throughout the 1550s he had the opportunity to improve the first drafts of his works, and, soon after the death of his wife (1561), he probably spent a second period of study at the Benedictine abbey of Santa Maria del Corazzo (Sergio 2013).

In the early 1560s, he became more familiar with the academic environment of Naples, where the natural philosophy and the medical sciences began to be studied taking into account the works of Vesalio, Colombo, Cardano, Eustachius, Fracastoro, and Jean Fernel. There Telesio probably read the works of Giovanni Argenterio (1513–1572), a professor of medicine in Naples from 1555 to 1560, one of the most important referees for the diffusion of new medical ideas in Southern Italy. Like Fracastoro, Argenterio criticized Galenic theories of contagion and diseases, contributing to the slow downfall of Galen’s authority (Mulsow 1998, 260–272; Siraisi 2011, 329–355; Hirai 2012). Besides, Giovanni Filippo Ingrassia (1510–1580), a physician who received his scientific education at Padua studying with Colombo, Vesalio, Eustachius, and Fracastoro, was recruited as a professor of anatomy (1544–1556). Like Argenterio, Ingrassia gave a great contribution to the innovation of medical science in Renaissance Naples, and certainly, his critical approach to Galen’s works did not pass unseen in Telesio’s sight.

In 1563, Telesio went to Brescia, paying a visit to the Aristotelian Vincenzo Maggi (1498–1564). On that occasion, he submitted to his old friend (whom he had met at Padua in 1528) the manuscript of the first edition of his *De natura iuxta propria principia* (“On the nature according to its own principles”). Telesio’s work was published in Rome 2 years later. By 1565, he also wrote the first of his medical writings, the *Quod animal universum*. The next year was printed a little treatise, *Ad Felicem Moimonam Iris*, about the phenomenon of the rainbow (Telesio 1566).

In the same year of the publication of *De Natura*, Tommaso Telesio (1523–1569) accepted the position of Archbishop of Cosenza, a title initially offered to Bernardino by Pius IV. Along the second half of the 1560s and the beginning of the 1570s, Telesio’s philosophical reputation became more widespread: in 1567 the humanist Giano Pelusio wrote a little poem, *Ad Bernardinum Thylesium Philosophum*, where Telesio was compared to Pythagoras; during the next years, Bernardino was assisted by his disciple Antonio Persio (1542–1612) in the publication of the second edition of *De rerum natura* (1570). In the same year, three libels were printed: *De colorum generatione*, *De his quae in aere fiunt et de terraemotibus*, and *De mari liber unicus* (Telesio 1981). They were printed in Naples, where Telesio lived under the patronage of Alfonso and Ferrante Carafa (†1593).

The 1570s are crucial years for Telesio’s fame: in 1572 Francesco Patrizi wrote a review of Telesio’s *De rerum natura* (*Objectiones*), to which Telesio answered with a letter, the *Solutiones Tylesij*; meantime Antonio Persio wrote a reply entitled *Apologia pro Telesio adversus Franciscum Patritium*; in the same years, Florentin Francesco Martelli translated Telesio’s *De rerum natura*, *De mari*, and *De his quae in aere fiunt*. Between 1575 and 1576, Persio published three works: the *Liber Novarum Positionum* (1575), the *Disputationes Libri Novarum Positionum* (edited by an unknown “Andreas Alethinus,” who collected the philosophical debates *pro* and *contra* Persio held at Padua and Venice in 1575), and the *Trattato dell’ingegno dell’uomo* (1576). By 1577, Patrizi accomplished the writing of *L’amorosa filosofia*, a

dialogue wherein can be recognized that Telesio and Patrizi went through a close friendship and led in Modena the intellectual *milieu* of Tarquinia Molza (1542–1607). In the late 1570s, Telesio came back to Naples, and in the same period, the humanist Bonifacio Vannozi, rector at the University of Pisa, wrote a letter to Telesio, defining him as “our Socrates” (Artese 1998, 191). It is of no little matter that between 1579 and 1580, Telesio went to the monastery of Seminara, as testified in a letter from Angelo Grillo (1558–1629) to the physician Andrea Chiocco (1562–1624), one of Telesio’s adversaries (Sergio 2013, 63–64).

In the first half of the 1580s, living in Naples, Telesio immersed himself in the writing of the third edition of *De rerum natura*, which was published in 1586, dedicated to Ferrante Carafa, IV Duke of Nocera. In that edition, Telesio delivered in nine books the earlier and later topics of his work. During this time, his thought came to be known in England: along his *Grand Tour* in Italy (1581–1582), the mathematician Henry Savile bought a copy of the second edition of *De rerum natura* (Iovine 1998).

Soon after the publication of *De rerum natura*, a Neapolitan lawyer, Giacomo Antonio Marta (1559–1628), wrote a *pamphlet* against Telesio, the *Pugnaculum Aristotelis contra principia Bernardini Telesii* (1587). In that book Marta recalled the debates held in Naples in the 1570s, in which participated the physician Latino Tancredi and the Aristotelians Gerolamo Hurtado and Giambattista Crispo. A fierce attack against that book was moved, a few years later, from Tommaso Campanella, in his *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* (1591).

On July 23rd, 1587, Telesio came back to Cosenza, making his will, probably because of his bad health conditions. In Cosenza, he died the next year (October 1588).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Telesio’s natural philosophy can be read as a consequence of a new epistemological approach to the studying of nature. This approach does not depend uniquely on his alleged modern

“empiricism” (Giglioni 2010). Telesio’s principal aim is to inquire about the causes of natural phenomena getting rid of all the metaphysical speculation of the Aristotelian tradition. As he stated in the *incipit* of book I of the second edition of *De rerum natura*, “the construction of the world and the nature of the bodies contained in it should be not inspected by reason, as the Ancients did, but must be perceived by sense, and grasped from things themselves.” He does not belittle the role of reason; and yet he declined to attribute reason a primary role, where more direct evidence can be grasped from the senses. The beginning of his natural philosophy is the experience deriving from the sense perception, being the *sensus* the cognitive power closer to the nature of things than reason itself. The perception of a physical object establishes a causal relation to the object, which nature has to be investigated in physical terms. Antagonizing Aristotle, Telesio affirms that the ability of the percipient to reach a knowledge of the natural things is not “actualized” by the form of the perceived thing. At the same time, he does not believe that all acts of sense-perception simply mirror the natural beings of the external world; rather, he thinks that knowledge of the world is affected by the sensible data of the sentient; and that kind of affection is the very starting point to reach the knowledge of the world, because of the universality of *sensus* (the *nature* of the sentient is not different from the *nature* of the things perceived by him), and, what’s more, the sentient experience can be eventually corrected by the same kind of experience. In that perspective, Telesio abandoned the traditional doctrine of species (sensible and intelligible), denying that natural things are the result of the combination of matter and form. According to Telesio, the Peripatetic explanation to the problem of the human knowledge left unsolved the relation between the causes and the effects in the cognitive process.

Reasoning is nothing but the outcome of the self-organization of the “material soul” (*spiritus*) in cooperation with the “ways” or “means” of sense perception and the principal functions (memory, feelings, imagination) of the brain activated by the same principle of material soul. Telesio combined the Stoic notion of

“self-preservation” (*conservation sui*) (identified with the sensation of pleasure) with the key function of the spirit in the self-preservation of the health of the body (Telesio 1586, VII.3).

Telesio did not directly challenge the theory of intelligible species of scholastic tradition; however, he indirectly criticized it through the principles of his psychology. They can be accounted for as follows: (1) the intellectual cognition is based on a perceived similitude, which does not consist of a mental representation of an external object resulting from the encounter between the active intellect and passive sensation; rather, sense perception is an active operation of the material soul (Telesio 1586, V.34–47); (2) the sensible data coming from the percipient has a cognitive role (as Campanella and Hobbes later explained, the *sensus* is already a kind of *iudicium*); (3) the material agents involved in the cognitive process, from the “ways of sense” to the spiritus (“anima sentiens”) are merely corporeal (Telesio 1586, V.3–5, 10–12); and (4) the spirit is able to perceive because it can be subject to bodily alterations. In conclusion, Telesio’s naturalistic program took sensation as a material process involving exclusively material agents: the sensible objects, the “ways of sense,” and the *spiritus*.

Stating that the animal is ruled by one substance residing in the brain, Telesio abandoned Aristotle’s psychology and his threefold partition of the soul (intellective, sensitive, vegetative), as well as Galen’s partition of “pneumata” (animal, vital, natural) and his theory of “temperaments” (Telesio 1570, II.15). He also accused Galen of relying on abstract reasoning rather than sense perception and experience. Finally, electing the seat of the spirit to the brain, he rejected Aristotle’s biological cardiocentrism (Telesio 1586, V.27).

All natural things are the result of the antagonizing of two active forces, “heat” and “cold.” They make possible the creation of the inanimate and animate beings. The heat is responsible for the phenomena of elasticity, warmth, dryness, combustion, lightness, and rarefaction of the matter, as well as of the motion-velocity of the bodies; the cold is responsible for the slowness of

the bodies in motion, of their condensation, freezing, and hardness. All the other natural phenomena (such as humidity or fermentation) are the result of the combination of different degrees of heat and cold. The interaction of heat and cold affects the nature of matter itself, a notion that Telesio intentionally left unclear (Schuhmann 2004).

Against Aristotle, Telesio denied the theory of the *locus* as a limit of the body, taking into account the Lucretian theory of space as an empty place filled by the bodies. By means of the two forces of heat and cold, and affirming the idea of an absolute space, Telesio abolished the Aristotelian theory of a cosmos divided into a sublunary world, in which generation and corruption take place, and a superlunary world with timeless regular movements (Telesio 1565, I.35–38). What’s more, he moved a critique to the Peripatetic theory of natural locus pointing out that Aristotelians did not well explain the reason why the motion of the heavy bodies becomes uniformly accelerated (Telesio 1565, I.45–46; Telesio 1570, I.46).

Telesio chose heat and cold as the principal agents for the knowledge of the world because they are directly perceived by the sentient and immediately affect the body and its functions. At the beginning of the world, two primary bodies have been created, the sun and the earth. The former is the seat of heat, and the latter is that of cold (Telesio 1565, I.1–4). Life itself depends on the right balance of heat and cold. Heat and cold are finally called *agentium naturarum vires* (Telesio 1586, VII.9). Telesio is firmly persuaded that the world depends on the inner uniformity of nature and on its intrinsic virtue or “wisdom” (Boenke 2013).

In 1586 *De rerum natura*, Telesio introduced the existence of two kinds of soul, a “material soul” (*e semine educta*) and a divine soul (*a deo immissa*), pointing out that the latter has been uniquely given by God to the human beings. That distinction does not undermine the basis of his theory of knowledge; the divine soul is unable to ratiocinate without the sensible soul, and its contribution to the knowledge of the world is way long inferior to that of sense perception (Telesio 1586, V.2–3, VIII. 15).

Impact and Legacy

During the last decades of the sixteenth century, Telesio had a remarkable impact on Italian and European philosophers. In 1588, Francesco Muti published a work entitled *Disceptationum libri V contra calumnias Theodori Angelutii in maximum philosophum Franciscum Patritium, in quibus pene universa Aristotelis philosophia in examen adducitur*, in which he defended Telesio, taking in consideration the quarrel that took place at Ferrara along 1584 and 1585 between Patrizi and Angelucci. Just a year before, in 1587, the Spanish philosopher Oliva Sabuco de Nantes y Barrera published a book, *Nueva filosofía de la naturaleza del hombre*, where she elaborated a psychophysiology of the human body deeply influenced by Telesio's doctrines (Bidwell-Steiner 2010). In 1589, Sertorio Quattromani, the new founder of the "Accademia Cosentina," published a summary of Telesio's thought, *La filosofia di Berardino Telesio ristretta in brevità e scritta in lingua Toscana*; meantime in his *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* (1591), Campanella wrote a sharp defense of Telesian philosophy against Marta's *Pugnaculum Aristotelis*. Another early modern thinker, Alessandro Tassoni, devoted some pages of his works to Telesio's meteorology (*Dieci libri di pensieri diversi*, 1620); and Florentin Ludovico Delle Colombe, in his *Contro il moto della terra* (1601–1611), tied Telesio's followers ("i Telesisti") to Galileo's thought (Bondi 2018, 35–36).

In the early decades of the seventeenth century, Telesio's thought had some positive feedback and critiques from a significant number of philosophers and freethinkers. Francis Bacon devoted some pages of his writings to Telesio: formerly in his *Advancement of Learning* (1605), then in his *De principiis et originibus* (1613), and finally in his *Sylva sylvarum* (Rees 1977; De Mas 1989; Bondi 2001, 2018; Garber 2016).

In the French context, some traces of Telesio's legacy can be found in such authors as Marin Mersenne (1623), Gabriel Naudé (1625 and 1627), Jean-Cécile Frey (1646), Charles Sorel (1655, 2nd ed. 1668), and Pierre Gassendi (1658). Even though on more than an occasion Telesio is

mentioned among a group of Renaissance thinkers (such as Cardano, Patrizi, Doni, Ramus, Bruno, Campanella), his fame as one of the most important sixteenth-century *novatores* was widely recognized along the seventeenth century (Garber 2016).

A specific debt toward Telesio is accountable in Thomas Hobbes. In the first chapter of *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes openly rejected the doctrine of species, and in the successive chapters, he asserted a cohesive relationship between sense, imagination, and reasoning, close to Telesian approach. What's more, the notion of "self-preservation" (*conservatio sui*) is reassessed in Hobbes's anthropology. Telesio's influence became more explicit in 1655 Hobbes's *De Corpore* (Schuhmann 1988).

Cross-References

- Bacon, Francis
- Doni, Agostino
- Persio, Antonio
- Seed Concept in the Renaissance
- Species, Intelligible

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Temperamentum

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Temperatura

- [Complexion, Temperament, and Four Humor Theory in the Renaissance](#)

Temperies

- [Complexion, Temperament, and Four Humor Theory in the Renaissance](#)

Tendency

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Tevius, Didacus

- [Teive, Diogo de](#)

Tevius, Iacobus

- [Teive, Diogo de](#)

Textbook

► [Book, Renaissance](#)

Textbooks of Philosophy in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The textbook is defined by its use in educational environments: in schools of different levels, in tutorials at home, or in universities. Any change in these environments also had an effect on the educational material employed: the fate of religion, the curriculum of Latin schools, the politics of towns, or the death of one teacher were all important for what was taught and how texts were implemented in class. One of the most significant changes, however, took place outside the confines of the learning environment: the advent of the printing press in the second half of the fifteenth century had a massive influence on the production and use of textbooks in all disciplines. From about 1480, five striking innovations in teaching affected the production and use of philosophical textbooks in academic environments. All of them were supported by the advent of the printing press. First, teachers figured more and more as authors and commentators in their own right. Second, new forms of organization created new formats of textbooks. Third, reference books such as compendia and encyclopedias were not only written for every discipline, but they were also enhanced with illustrations. Fourth, students started to comment on and distribute their teachers' lectures, and some of these editions then featured as the next generation of textbooks. Finally, with mathematics and physics branching out into experimental fields from the

second half of the sixteenth century, mathematical and mechanical tools and chemical devices were discussed in lectures, creating new sets of illustrated manuals as textbooks.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The textbook is defined by its use in educational environments: in schools of different levels, in tutorials at home, and in universities. Textbooks served as catechisms for mature converts to Christianity, as language courses for immigrants, and as manuals for the introduction of new technologies (Grafton 2008, 15–16). Consequently, any change in the teaching environment also had an effect on the material employed: the fate of religion, the curriculum of Latin schools, the politics of towns, or the death of one teacher were all important for what was taught and how texts were implemented in class. One of the most significant changes, however, took place outside the confines of the learning environment: the establishment of paper manufacturing, the advent of the printing press in the second half of the fifteenth century and with it the rising book markets, as well as new distribution and organizational techniques, had a massive influence on the production and use of textbooks in all disciplines (Blair 2021, Pettegree 2010).

The philosophy curriculum underwent changes in the Renaissance: on the one hand, Gregor Reisch's widely used *Margarita philosophica* (1503) increased the seven liberal arts by adding ethics and physics; on the other hand, in universities and advanced schools philosophy teaching was reduced to Aristotelian logic, ethics, physics, and metaphysics courses (Cfr. Facca 2020; Omodeo and Wels 2019). According to the Zurich polymath Conrad Gessner (1516–1565), philosophy was included in all disciplines. He divided the arts curriculum into primary and secondary parts: the primary part consisted of ethics, physics, and metaphysics, while the secondary part consisted of philosophy's more practical ends: the physics served by medicine, the oeconomia served by politics, and finally the ethics that was served by

both politics and oeconomics. Dialectics, or logic, and mathematics, the medieval domains of philosophical thought, were classified by Gessner not as ends in themselves, but merely as tools that help us to think (mathematics) or to teach (dialectics) (Gessner 1586, 3). This was by far not the only way of classifying the disciplines pertaining to philosophy at the time: the Cambridge curriculum of 1570 included (Aristotelian) ethics in the philosophy course, but not, however, logic (Feingold 1997a, 213). This entry recognizes that all disciplines of the enhanced arts curriculum were interrelated, but uses the term philosophy in the pre-Gessnerian sense adopted by the Wittenberg professor of philosophy Johannes Bernhardi (Velcurius) (Velcurius and Schegk 1542). He taught Aristotelian natural philosophy as well as rhetoric and published commentaries on Erasmus's *De copia* (1534), as well as on Aristotle's *De anima* (1537) and *Physica* (1538); however, he used the term "philosophy" only for his exegesis of Aristotle's work. This entry also recognizes that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a broadening of authorities, and that the traditional Aristotelian domains were contested in university teaching by other philosophical directions, as, for example, Stoic moral philosophy (Kraye 2008).

All disciplines of the liberal arts in Renaissance and early modern European schools of higher learning, including logic, physics, ethics, and metaphysics, drew on and transmitted the classical and medieval heritage. Although curricula changed gradually throughout Europe, from Martianus Capella's *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (fifth century) up to the broad academic reception of mathematical, observational, mechanical, and chemical novelties in the mid-seventeenth century, the contents and modes of access were dependent on what happened locally. What was taught in schools was influenced by European networks of taste, as well as by fashions and regulations that differed locally, from school to school. Other factors determining the curriculum were the religious and economic interests of the towns or rulers. Courses could be streamlined on a local level by the use of commentaries and epitomes of classical literature, written and

distributed (orally, in manuscript, or in print) by university or school teachers and their students, who would hand out their transcripts to interested parties, often, in the early period of printing, in unauthorized editions. Nancy Siraisi (2008) opened up this field of inquiry by examining some unauthorized, printed lectures on practical medicine which, having originally been delivered orally by Girolamo Mercuriale to students at the University of Padua in the sixteenth century, were distributed to the medical community at Lyon in 1627.

The book supply at Oxford University, which has been extensively studied, reveals some examples of how textbooks were used in late medieval and early modern times. Usually, even in the very early years of the university, arts professors wrote textbooks for themselves and their colleagues, as a preparation for teaching or as a contribution to learned debates. Arts students and those studying for the philosophy baccalaureate did not need textbooks for their classes, since lectures were dictated to them, and they were supposed to prepare arguments orally in class, which were called *reportationes*. Outside class, collections of *reportationes* were in high demand. Students exchanged and enhanced copies very rapidly, thus defining a new type of textbook in the fourteenth century (Parkes 1992, 407, 427).

Students in the higher faculties of medicine, law, and theology did use textbooks in their courses. Professors wrote summaries of ancient and medieval texts and gave these out for scribes or students to copy in whole or in parts (the *pecia* system). In class, alongside *reportationes*, students were supposed to gloss their copies of set-texts with commentaries dictated by professors or to collect useful sayings in their notebooks (*florilegia*, *topoi*, *loci*), a practice also adopted by arts students (Parkes 1992, 408). All these methods continued with the advent of the printing press. Roughly from the end of the fifteenth century, textbooks were also introduced in the arts curriculum, and students soon began to write down notes from printed or manuscript set-texts in all their courses (Moss 1996, 147–9). Furthermore, *reportationes* adapted rhetorical methods and were transformed into *disputationes*, a genre

that Philipp Melanchthon pioneered with great success, though only for a short time, at Wittenberg University (Haussleiter 1897).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Beginning around 1480, five striking innovations in teaching affected the production and use of philosophical textbooks in academic environments. All of them were supported by the advent of the printing press. First, teachers figured more and more as authors and commentators in their own right. Second, new ways of organizing knowledge produced new textbook formats, replacing inherited genres such as the commentary or the lemmata edition. Third, reference books such as compendia and encyclopedias were written for every discipline, often enhanced with illustrations, aimed at enticing readers. Fourth, students started to comment on and distribute their teachers' lectures, and some of these editions then featured as the next generation of textbooks. Finally, with mathematics and physics branching out into experimental fields from the end of the sixteenth century, mathematical and mechanical tools and chemical devices were employed in lectures and illustrated in manuals and textbooks.

Teachers used textbook formats that not only included the set text and a set of classical commentaries, as was customary from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, but also their own contribution. Starting in Italy with the first humanist schools in the first half of the fifteenth century, teachers such as Guarino Veronese and his son Battista Guarino wrote, produced, and distributed their own textbooks first in manuscript (Guarino 1459; See Bolgar 1954, 270) and later in print, often sharing the costs and profits with the printer. One of the first well-documented cases of shared-cost printed textbooks involved the London teacher William Horman, who had the printer Richard Pynson print 800 copies of his textbook *Vulgaria*. The contract, dated 28 June 1519 (Furnivall 1868, 3), stipulated that Pynson would use three different typefaces and sufficient paper for the enterprise. He also promised on oath not to

print more than the prescribed number of copies within the next 5 years. The contract states, furthermore, that Horman would pay for the production of the book. The payment for each ream of paper was five English shillings, to be paid in two tranches: the first by delivery of the 800 copies for the payment of 500 copies, and the second a year after delivery. By participating in the production of the textbook and bearing some of the marketing risk, the teacher became a kind of entrepreneur helping to sell copies of his own work. Teaching thus became relevant not only to advancing the knowledge of the student but also to selling the teacher's books. This economic by-product might have shaped the professional habits of teachers, who would be keen to recoup their investment. Printer did not take over the role of book producers; they remained craftsmen and stationers, who provided their services in order to finish a product, for which the commissioner bore the main responsibility.

One feature of the new formats was to organize a large amount of newly accessible information, as in Gessner's *De anima* commentary (1563). For his discussion of Aristotle's notion of hearing ("de auditu"), Gessner included notes based on 51 treatises by classical and contemporary authors (Goeing 2013). Classification tables and systems of keywords, called *loci communes* or *topoi*, helped readers to find their way from one argument to another. A fruit of the new techniques were new formats with more or less pedagogically informed functions: individual commentaries led the reader from the more general to the more detailed and from easier to more complex notions, often accompanied by tables and abbreviated text editions (Lines 2008, 199). They could be read without the Aristotelian text, while published lemmata editions had to be read with the original text, explaining it sentence by sentence. Finally, illustrations and schemata ornamented incunabula textbooks throughout Europe, such as Peter of Ravenna's *Phoenix or the Art of Memory* (Peter of Ravenna 1491) or early mathematical treatises, including new editions of Archimedes and Euclid. Until the end of the sixteenth century, many textbooks of physics were also illustrated: subdisciplines of physics, that had merged with

mathematics (Kepler 1609), or medicine, a field for which Andreas Vesalius had collected and published illustrations on the human anatomy as early as 1543 (Carlino 1999; Margócsy et al. 2018).

Reference books such as compendia and encyclopedias were produced and used by scholars to facilitate access to various sources of information, whether other books or objects of nature and art. Authors collected material and experimented with different classification systems to store and organize the gathered information with combinations of alphabetical and topical listings. Petrus Ramus and his followers such as Theodor Zwinger in Basel worked out another distinctive system of classification: Zwinger built up an identification system in his *Theatrum vitae humanae* (Zwinger 1565) and connected descriptive adjectives by association to lead to a place and classification that he had given to the object or abstract thought in his labyrinth of knowledge (Blair 2010, 173–229). These reference books not only adorned the private libraries of wealthy scholars but were also used for teaching, as Ulisse Aldrovandi's practice at the University of Bologna shows: according to a note from 9 November 1566 in his personal copy of a compendium on natural philosophy selected and summarized by the Franciscan Frans Titelmans, he explicated this book to a Flemish student, Prince Charles of Tournai. Titelmans' reference book came out first in 1530 in Louvain, followed by many more editions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries published all over Europe. The exemplar that Aldrovandi used was a 1551 edition published in Lyon (Lines 2008, 195).

Illustrations enhanced and highlighted the characteristics of classification and identification systems, especially in works of natural philosophy. Gessner's illustrations in his encyclopedias on the different realms of nature, from animals and fish to stones, were printed with woodprints (Berger 2017; Fischel 2010). He used the pictures as a means to identify classes and species, a categorization scheme that was later perfected by Carolus Linnaeus (Linnaeus 1735). More refined techniques for illustrated reference books included copper engravings. A sixteenth-century

encyclopedia of fish with very refined illustrations, made from copper engravings, was Ippolito Salviani's *Aquatilium animalium historiae*, published in 1554 in the artistic center of Rome (Salviani 1554).

Students started to comment freely on their teachers' comments and to distribute their own comments, mostly in letters as part of the *Republica letteraria*. This helped to shape the second and subsequent generations of commentaries (Goeing 2009). Ruptures caused by wars – the Thirty Years' War, 1618–1648, in mainland Europe and the Civil War in England – led to reformulations of the entire curriculum of higher learning and shed new light on subjects such as law (including politics), with implicit effects on topics discussed in philosophy: new textbooks were composed for economic and political issues in philosophy, such as those written by John Locke and Thomas Hobbes (Hobbes 1650a, b; see Feingold 1997a). Finally, with mathematics and physics branching out into experimental fields from the end of the sixteenth century (Feingold 1997b), mathematical and mechanical tools and chemical devices were integrated into lectures, creating new sets of illustrated manuals used as textbooks. Gessner's *Thesaurus Evonymi Philiatrī* (Gessner 1552) was one of the first manuals on how to build a distillation apparatus to appear in an educational environment. It came out in many editions, and Peter Morwen, a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, translated the book into English as early as 1559.

Impact and Legacy

Textbooks and reference works had a huge impact on learning and the distribution of knowledge. Writers were responsible for the language and translations not only of newly edited ancient texts but also of their own works. Organizing bibliographical material into reference books, the idea of the encyclopedia was the foundation of modern learning. And finally, collections of books formed large libraries and were displayed in the cabinets of curiosity that we today admire as the beginning of public libraries and museums.

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Thaumaturgy

► Wonders in the Renaissance

Theaters, Renaissance

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Abstract

Between the disintegration of the Roman Empire and the sixteenth century, dramatic performances, provided by itinerant entertainers, took place in found spaces such as halls, inn yards, fields, and town squares. In liturgical drama, representations of biblical narratives moved out of the church into public spaces.

The Renaissance saw the introduction of the indoor theater, at first in temporary makeshift structures and later in permanent independent buildings. Italian architects studied Vitruvius and examined the remains of ancient theaters. The proscenium arch theater became the dominant model for later centuries. Theaters developed spectacular scenic effects, appealing to the senses and emphasizing perspectival vistas. From being a largely improvised and participatory experience, drama in the theater evolved into a fixed product in a fixed space, with the world of the play clearly demarcated from the audience.

At the same time, Renaissance theater in the public sphere stayed close to its popular base and drew on older traditions of stagecraft. The magnificent architecture and ingenious effects of Renaissance theater draw attention to themselves, in a striking parallel to metaphors in dramatic texts, which frequently comment on the illusory nature of the theatrical experience, and notions of reality and illusion more generally.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

After the disintegration of the Roman Empire, official theater ceased. Itinerant entertainment continued (though evidence is limited), preserving some aspects of late antiquity: similarities have been noted, for example, between the stock types of late Roman farce, the *fabula attelata*, and the characters of the *commedia dell'arte*, active from the mid-sixteenth century (Chaffee and Crick 2017). Another medieval entertainment was the courtly spectacle, such as a triumphal entry or wedding celebration. Performers of all kinds used found spaces rather than purpose-built structures (Brockett and Hildy 2010).

Liturgical drama began within churches. To edify the laity, aspects of liturgy and biblical narrative were enacted. Small booths called mansions were placed along the nave to represent locations for different episodes. Later the staging moved to the west door of the church and thence into public spaces such as market squares. For these performances, the text was in the vernacular, and acting was entrusted to laymen. Staging varied. As small

symbolic enclosures serving as curtained entrances, mansions were retained. Sometimes they were placed close together, while in England movable wagons were used to represent different settings in mystery cycles, telling the Christian story from Creation to Doomsday. Morality plays, enacting instructive tales, were played on makeshift platforms before fixed facades. In Cornwall are found the remains of round outdoor theaters, used for morality dramas (Wickham 1959, 1987). In Spain, wagons (*carros*) brought essential properties to an improvised stage (Brown 2001).

Medieval performances were typically generically mixed: farce, gravity, and satire might all be present in a retelling of the story of Noah. Realistic behavior and colloquial idiom existed alongside an elaborate tradition of symbols and visual rhetoric. Theater was movable and participatory, involving interaction between the audience and performers. These traditions continued in the public theaters of the Renaissance, particularly in England and Spain, where the classical model was less strongly enforced. The classical revival in Italy, sponsored by ducal courts and learned academies, introduced a new kind of theater, separating the space of actors and audience and providing elaborate scenic effects (Vince 1984; Cairns 1996, 1999).

Innovation and Original Aspects

Renaissance humanism brought with it an interest in the theaters of antiquity. Late fifteenth-century illustrations show performances of the plays of Terence using medieval mansions, linked together as in a street, but with the classical addition of framing columns, a possible origin of the proscenium arch. Inspired by the discovery of Vitruvius, temporary theaters were designed (e.g., by Serlio in Vicenza, 1530s) for the use of courts and academies (Hartnoll 1983).

The chief innovation in the Renaissance was the indoor theater (Hewitt 1958). The recovery of the *De architectura* of Vitruvius inspired the treatises of Alberti (*De re aedificatoria* (1443–1452)) and Serlio (*Trattato de architectura*, 1545). The

first permanent indoor theater was the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza (1585), designed by Palladio and completed by Vincenzo Scamozzi. Here a shallow stage is backed by a monumental *scaenae frons* (the Roman scene behind the stage). This takes the form of a colonnaded facade with five entrances, each one giving a street vista. Considerations of perspective are equally important in Scamozzi's *Teatro all'antica* at Sabbioneta (1588–1590), the first indoor theater in a separate building. Here, the *scaenae frons* is abandoned and the open stage itself forms a single architectural vista. The first proscenium theater, framing the stage like a picture with an elaborate arch, was the Teatro Farnese (1618), designed by Giovanni Battista Aleotti. Perspective creates privileged spaces in the auditorium. While the multiple vistas of Vicenza suggest the equality among academicians, the single-point perspective of the proscenium theater privileges the central viewing position, a space occupied in Europe by the monarch or other noble patron, enjoying *l'oeil du prince*, looking directly to the vanishing point. The Teatro Farnese was the prototype of European theater for the next 300 years (Mulryne and Shewring 1991).

In France, public theaters, such as the Hôtel de Bourgogne (1548), tended to be long and narrow with the audience distributed between pit and gallery. French court theater was designed by Italian architects, providing vast structures and elaborate scenery for an elite audience. The first proscenium theater in France was the Palais Cardinal (later the Palais Royal) built for Cardinal Richelieu (1641). In Spain, where the theater attracted popular audiences and writers of genius from the 1570s, spaces were simpler, following the native model of *corrales* – stages with backdrops set up at the end of squares. Indoor theaters in Madrid and elsewhere were an elaboration of this model (Thacker 2007). In England, London saw its first purpose-built outdoor theater with The Theater (1576), later reconstructed as The Globe (1599), home to Shakespeare's company The Lord Chamberlain's Men. These were followed by other structures, with a polygonal design which has been compared to Roman amphitheaters, arenas for bearbaiting, and inn yards. Indoor theaters in

London, such as two theaters created from the former Blackfriars Dominican Priory (first theater 1576–1584; second, 1596–1642) provided more expensive entertainment. This was taken to an extreme in the lavish masques created by Ben Jonson and architect Inigo Jones for the court of James I in England (Butler 2009).

Impact and Legacy

The prevailing notion of a theater today is a custom-made building, producing some kind of enacted secular narrative. To a considerable extent, this model derives from the Renaissance. Indoor theaters saw the elaboration of lavish scenery, with courts competing to procure the services of the finest architects and craftsmen. The new courtly genres of pastoral, opera, and masque exploited this kind of display and spectacle frequently dominated text (Román 2001). From being partly improvised and collective, the play in indoor theaters became a more prefabricated product, spatially removed from the audience. Perspectival scenery supplanted the limited stages of medieval theater, and realistic illusion took the place of verbal description and symbolic properties. The expense of the form linked it to patterns of wealth and power: though configurations have changed (the cheap pit has become the expensive stalls), different parts of a theater remain a marker of social status.

At the same time, the popular theater maintained many older traditions: the *commedia dell'arte* and traveling companies across Europe preserved the practices of medieval players (such as multi-skilled performers), while the character types of earlier drama can be clearly seen in the plays of Shakespeare and Lope de Vega. In Renaissance theaters, illusion on stage echoes the frequent theme of illusion in dramatic texts. Renaissance drama is rife with metatheatrical metaphors, elaborating the idea that “All the world’s a stage” and exploring the gap between outward show and inward sincerity and truth (Maus 1995). Both theater design and dramatic writing evoke a deep self-consciousness about the illusory experience of theater and life itself.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Architect](#)
- ▶ [Architecture and Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Perspective](#)
- ▶ [Shakespeare, William](#)
- ▶ [Spectacle in Renaissance Theater](#)

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Theatrum Sapientiae

► [Kunstammer](#)

Theodor der Ältere

► [Zwinger, Theodor](#)

Theology, Renaissance

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Abstract

Renaissance theology is characterized by a profound demand for renewal that affects both academic theology and the theology pursued outside theological faculties.

In the fifteenth century, alongside the two greatest currents of scholastic theology, Thomism and Scotism (the *via antiqua*), Ockhamism (the *via moderna*) becomes more and more significant. The latter argues for a clear separation between metaphysics (as the science of being) and theology (as a practical science) and reaffirms the primacy of divine will (*potentia absoluta Dei*) over every effort of natural reason. In the early Renaissance, theological Ockhamism, as well as the Scotist notion of *distinctio formalis*, would give rise to a kind of hypothetical and formal theology. This “degeneration” of theological hermeneutics would contribute to a widespread demand for unification and essentiality that emerges, though in different ways and different degrees, in the movements of spiritual renewal, in the Platonic theology, in the project of biblical humanism, and in the Protestant Reformation.

Luther’s thesis of justification by grace through faith goes hand in hand with a radical mistrust of man’s natural forces and thus of reason. Against Luther’s antimetaphysical prohibition, the Catholic Church responds with a renewed return to scholasticism (second scholasticism), first by the Dominicans and then the Jesuits. A certain continuity between the natural order of reason and the supernatural order of faith, between metaphysics and revealed theology, is reestablished in the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* of Francisco Suarez (1548–1617). Returning to Scotist teachings, Suarez identifies the appropriate object of metaphysics with the concept of *ens* (as genuinely *transcendens*), in which both infinite being (God) and finite being are comprised, each according to its own order. The *Disputationes* would not only be imported into the reformed *Schulmetaphysik* that distanced itself from Luther’s skepticism about the natural reason but would also contribute to the birth of modern ontology itself.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In the long period of time that goes under the name of Renaissance (1350–1650), theology goes through a season of extraordinary richness and complexity. The historical-political scenario that brings about and influences the different paths traveled by theological reflection in these three centuries is marked by a climate of uncertainty and radical novelties. The period opens with the great epidemic of plague which, between 1347 and 1353, exterminates almost one-third of the European population, and it is marked by the crisis of unity affecting the major late-medieval institutions (the monarchies and the Church), which will lead to the affirmation of the national states, to the failure of reconciliation attempts between the Eastern Church and Western Church, and to the division between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches.

Even the boundaries of the known world change: if the fall of Constantinople, in 1453, marks a setback in the expansion to the East, the

discovery of America (1492) opens new possibilities to the West and gives rise to an extraordinary season of exploratory journeys around the globe. The contacts with the East would then find new vigor not only through the reports from these journeys but also through the work of the missionaries of the newborn Company of Jesus (approved by Pope Paul III in 1540 with the bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae*), whose writings would bring to Europe the echo of those distant worlds.

There are also many cultural factors that helped shape the various faces of Renaissance theology. Some of them are, so to speak, internal to school theology itself, others refer to religious practice, and others relate to important cultural innovations which, although not originating in theological reflection *sensu stricto*, changed it profoundly. Think, for example, of the transformation of scholastic theology from the *via antiqua* to the *via moderna*; the need for renewal expressed by the *devotio moderna* (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries); the explosion of mysticism in German (fourteenth), Flemish (fifteenth), Spanish (sixteenth), and French (seventeenth) ground; the troubling events in the Papacy and Roman Curia ending with the Protestant Reformation and the Counter-Reformation; the humanists' philological claims; the rediscovery of Plato and the Neoplatonists; the cosmological rethinking by Copernicus and Galileo (in sharp discontinuity with the Aristotelian physics); and the resulting challenge of forming a scientific method.

To properly grasp the movements of Renaissance theology, it is, therefore, necessary to abandon historiographical schemes that are excessively neat, whether from a chronological or from a disciplinary point of view. In fact, the relationship between the Late Middle Ages and the Humanist-Renaissance era is much better understood as "continuity in discontinuity" and "discontinuity in continuity" (Leinkauf 2017, 17) than as the clear fracture that has long been depicted in historiography. This is the criterion that should be applied to both areas where theological discourse takes place during Renaissance: inside the universities and *studia generalia* of religious orders and outside the traditional

academic institutions, that is, in the intellectuals' philosophical-theological writings.

In the Renaissance, the *scholae* remain the privileged centers for teaching and studying theology and, by virtue of that role, the place of continuity with respect to tradition. Yet they themselves will become the place of renewed debates and the necessary condition for the revival of scholastic theology, as the case of Salamanca demonstrates. And similarly on the other side, the *novatores* will place themselves in clear discontinuity with the formalism and the *verbositas* of scholastic disputes but nevertheless will continue to use and be inspired by that same scholastic theology, whose contents and images date back to the Church Fathers. It should be remembered, furthermore, that in the Renaissance, theology, philosophy, and textual criticism (and also the natural sciences) were not disciplines studied and practiced by distinct people. Not infrequently, Renaissance intellectuals were dealing with many of these areas simultaneously. Therefore, a novelty introduced in philosophical, literary-critical, or scientific fields had unavoidable repercussions on theological thought and vice versa. Any historian of Renaissance theology must take into account these interactions.

The task of providing a brief introductory summary inevitably implies some choices. Here the two major focal points will be (1) the theology of the schools (universities and the *studia generalia* of religious orders) as a clear example of a "break" in continuity and (2) innovative aspects of theology developed outside the schools and their influence on "institutional" theology.

School Theology Between *Via Antiqua* and *Via Moderna*

As far as the province of university theology is concerned, between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the two great lines of scholastic theology, Thomism and Scotism, continue (the *via antiqua*). At the same time, the so-called *via moderna* – that is, the theology that harks back to the teaching of William Ockham (1285–1347) – is establishing itself in an ever more significant way (D'Onofrio 1995). In opposition to the *via antiqua* – that is, to the "way" of a

realism of universals ante rem – according to Ockham, universal names represent determinations that are purely conceptual (De Libera 1999). According to the *princeps nominalium*, therefore, universal names imply nothing about the existence or nonexistence of anything: the concept is thus reduced to a logical element (*signum*), to a “name”, which points to reality only by virtue of convention. This rejection of the reality of universals on a metaphysical level introduces a situation of uncertainty that no longer has to do merely with the gnoseological realm but that also affects moral principles and extends even to the realm of soteriology (Oakley 1961; 2002).

As far as the constitution of theology is concerned, with Ockham, the Thomist conception of theology as a science – already criticized by Scotus (1265–1308) – is brought to a crisis. Against the Thomist attempt to adapt a definition of theology to the Aristotelian concept of science, Scotus redefines both the distinction between metaphysics (speculative science) and theology (practical science) and their relationship: metaphysics provides theology with the subject it needs, the infinite entity, which it can give a philosophical demonstration. Conversely, according to Ockham, who radicalizes Scotus’s positions, philosophy is the science of being and is based on reason and experience (speculative science), while theology is the science of God and is based on revelation and therefore on Sacred Scripture (practical science). In contrast to what Scotus affirms, therefore, Ockham declares that the conceptual representation required by theology does not derive from metaphysics but only from revelation. The clear separation between the two different orders of knowledge brings theological discourse to place greater emphasis on the primacy of Scripture and consequently to focus on the unfathomable and absolute divine will. This last doctrinal aspect will have an immense influence on Renaissance Ockhamism – as demonstrated by the extensive discussions dedicated to the theme of *potentia absoluta Dei* (Oberman 1960). The reasons which led Ockham to detach theology decisively from the essentialism and intellectualism native to the Greek-Arabic Peripatetic tradition, and to valorize, consequently, a

version of the absolute power of God verging on pure arbitrariness, can be identified in an event that marked a real turning point in late-medieval theological debate.

In 1277, Bishop Tempier of Paris, with the help of a commission of theologians he established, condemned any mingling of theology with Peripatetic determinism (Hisette 1977; Piché et al. 1999). The Aristotelian vision of the God-world relationship, in fact, imposed a necessitarianism incompatible with the Christian doctrine of God as free Creator of the world and consequently set a limit to God’s omnipotence. Aware of these problems, Duns Scotus first proposed a redefinition of the logically possible (and consequently of the Aristotelian relationship between necessity and contingency) in the light of which the status of essences was redefined. In this way, he managed to interrupt the millennium-long tradition that had necessarily linked these eternal models of reality – i.e., essences – with the divine intellect (Hintikka 1973; Knuuttila 1981). Furthermore, by retrieving the distinction between *potentia ordinata* and *potentia absoluta* – actually already (Courtenay 1990) present in a number of twelfth-century debates – Scotus restores the divine will’s priority over the intellect, rendering it meaningless to search for any foundation for divine action prior to the divine decision itself.

Ockham, for his part, radicalizes Scotus’s position. The distinction between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*, derived from legal language, does not indicate two distinct powers in God but only two *modi loquendi* about the same object: divine omnipotence. While for Duns Scotus, God’s power has a limit, and this is the principle of noncontradiction, for Ockham the *potentia absoluta Dei* is bound by no principle or rational order. It follows that all things are contingent: God might have created them differently from how they are, or He might not have created them at all, and He may change them at any time – and this is what happens in the case of miracles. This position, which draws inspiration from an Augustinian background, would lead Ockham to deny any natural moral law, which depends rather on the free creative will of God only, as well as any rigid causal

determination of Aristotelian provenance. By denying the assumption that there are necessary links between contingent things, Ockham establishes the premises for the overcoming of Aristotelian physics, eventually leading to the development of the new Copernican scientific paradigm (Grant 1996).

Ockhamism had a great influence through the seventeenth century. Two of its fundamental theological theses, defended in various ways, would be the strong limitation of the reason's cognitive ability when faced with the questions of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul and the development of a conception of the divine will which is so absolute that it verges on arbitrariness, with repercussions in the area of justification and grace. In this connection, one may think of the positions of Gabriel Biel, Martin Luther's master (Hägglund 1955; Oberman 1987; Murphy 1979; Crucius 1989). The relationship between divine omnipotence and human freedom would be a central issue throughout the Renaissance, not only within the currents of Ockhamism but also in the humanistic theology that placed itself in open controversy with the special jargon of the schools (see *Will, Free*). From this point of view, it can be seen how Nominalism anticipates the "human anxiety in the face of the world" (Blumenberg 1974, 175) that would be a distinctive trait of Renaissance thought.

During the early Renaissance, Ockham's positions about language – that is, the analysis of a term's meaning through its properties (*virtus sermonis*) – and about *potentia absoluta Dei*, as well as the same *distinctio formalis* proposed by Duns Scotus, would progressively tend to develop autonomously, giving rise to a hypothetical theology that is attentive to the distinctions and to the formal aspect of theological argumentation (Dettloff 1954). A deep discomfort about this theological formalism was felt both inside the theological faculties (Piana 1977) and outside them, by the "humanists" (so-called in order to distinguish them from those occupied with the *studia divinitatis* and the other disciplines proper to the *scholae*, namely, Law and Medicine). This aversion to the intellectuals outside the university toward the abstract formalism of the scholastic

"*quaestiunculae*" and "*disceptatiuncule*" dates back, on closer inspection, to the time of Petrarch (1304–1374). It should also be said that the humanists' aversion is often directed more toward degenerations of the scholastic method than toward scholasticism itself. Think, for example, of the *Encomium sancti Thomae Aquinatis* by Lorenzo Valla (Mesnard 1955) or of Erasmus's harsh criticisms of the Nominalists and Scotists, who had reduced a doctrine worthy of being taught with seriousness to *vaniloquium* (Margolin 1979). The *novatores*' demand would be, instead, to find new answers to the traditional theological problems, in order to translate theological knowledge into a language more appropriate to the emerging bourgeois mercantile and financial class, for which the schools' theological elaboration was too technical and distant from life.

Protestant Reform and Second Scholasticism

In the province of school theology, starting from the fifteenth century, one sees a revival of scholasticism, which was able to take up once again the themes most dear to the medieval masters without betraying the achievements of humanistic culture, namely, the centrality of the subject, the attention to the sources, and the revaluation of contingency and history. In this regard, as E. Lewalter has said, "Humanism enters the schools, becomes 'scholastic,' or – what is the same thing – the tradition of the schools (scholasticism) becomes humanist" (Lewalter 1935). Along with the humanistic renewal, the second decisive factor contributing to the revival of scholasticism was the historical and political crisis of Catholic universalism.

The exhortation to unity in the Church is in fact one of the constantly recurring themes of the time, as already testified in Petrarch's letter to Pope Urban VI, dated 1366, wishing for a return of the Holy See to Rome (*Epistolae Variae*, 3). The effort – ultimately vain – of restoring unity between Eastern and Western Churches would be the dominant theme of theological debates taking place around the Councils of Constance (1414–1418), Basel (1431), and Ferrara-Firenze (1438–1449) and until the summoning of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517). Only a few months

after the closing of this Council, on 31 October 1517, the Augustinian monk Martin Luther makes public his 95 theses centering on the issue of indulgences, unleashing a debate (with implications on the political and financial planes) that would give rise to the Protestant Reformation. It is a dramatic event, marking a turning point in European culture and in theological debate.

Luther studied theology under the auspices of late-scholastic Ockhamism (Dieter 2001), but after taking over the chair of biblical exegesis at Wittenberg (1512), he placed himself in sharp disagreement with the metaphysically Pelagian way of thinking about the relationship between God and man. Against the scholastic's *theologia gloriae*, which wanted to understand the glory of God from the horizon of being and creation, Luther builds his own *theologia crucis*, founded on the Augustinian antagonism between sin and justice. Justification cannot be made either by the law – as already in St. Paul – or by works. This is the premise of what would become the real point of doctrinal rupture with Latin theology: justification by grace through faith (*sola fide, sola gratia, sola Scriptura, solus Christus crucifixus, soli Deo gloria*). If human nature is so corrupt as to be unable to make itself worthy of grace by its natural powers, reason would be likewise incapable of knowing God. Luther believes the radicalization of the fracture between reason and faith to be necessary in order to restore absolute primacy to faith in revelation. The need to bring the Church back to the essence of the evangelical faith (*sola Scriptura*) would lead him to reject the Catholic system of ontological and sacramental mediation and affirm the subjective immediacy of the relationship between the believer and God.

To this crisis, Roman theology reacts by reaffirming the primacy of tradition and the magisterium for a correct interpretation of the Bible (apologetical and controversistic theology) and further reasserts the congruence of revealed faith with natural reason (the *praeambula fidei*) (Buzzi 2000). According to the Aristotelian-Thomist canon. It should also be noted that in the debates within the Protestant milieu – already beginning with Melanchthon, in the wake of Erasmus – a more conciliatory tendency would develop with respect

to the relationship between Christianity's reasonableness and rational analysis (Melanchthon, *De loci communes rerum theologicarum*, 1521; *De dialectica*, 1528; *Erotemata dialectices*, 1547); it would lead to a recovery of scholasticism in the reformed context as well. With the reform of studies undertaken by Melanchthon, indeed, the form of disputation comes to be standard in almost all reformed universities (Paulsen 1919).

At the time of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and afterward, there is, therefore, a theological return to the medieval scholasticism of the twelfth century. This development is given the name “second scholasticism”; it should be kept in mind that it runs parallel to the other trends of thought mentioned above (the revivals of Platonism, Augustinianism, and Averroism or Alexandrian Aristotelianism). Catholic second scholasticism rises in Spain. It had been anticipated by Dominican scholasticism, but it finds renewed impulse among the representatives of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1534, and spreads swiftly to Germany and Central and Northern Europe as well as the wider world (Africa, India, Japan, China, Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, Canada). This new trend in the philosophy of the schools, therefore, enters not only into Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian Catholic institutions (Alcalà, Coimbra, and Padua) but also into those in Belgium (Leuven) and the large universities dominated by the Reform (Altdorf, Basel, Heidelberg, Leipzig, and, in Holland, Leida, and Haarlem) – giving rise in the latter to an interesting academic exchange between Lutheran and Calvinist philosophers and Aristotelianism of Catholic and Jesuit provenance (Eschweiler 1928).

A good example of the two tendencies of post-Tridentine theological scholasticism is the controversy that arose between Spanish Dominicans and Jesuits about the problem of the foundation of theology as a science. The controversy began with Melchior Cano (1509–1560). While fully aware of the Counter-Reformist orientation advocated by the Council of Trent, which he attended, he disputes the possibility of founding theology on the data of natural reason. In his *De loci theologici* Cano, indeed, reverses the order of

priority between philosophical *praeambula* and theological assumptions, denying any pretension of being able to find theology on rational arguments. Theological argumentation should instead start from the data revealed and transmitted by tradition and the magisterium of the Church (which represent the first eight of ten *loci theologici* he defined), in order later to add philosophical questions having to do with natural reason and history. If on one hand, Cano wants to emphasize the autonomy of theological reason with respect to the philosophical, by the same token, he risks presenting the data of revelation without regard to natural reason – exactly as Luther himself sought to do. It is precisely to overcome such a consequence that Jesuit scholasticism attempts to establish, in various guises, a renewed synthesis between metaphysics and revealed theology in order to uphold the continuity between the natural order and the theological order (or the order of grace). For instance, according to Benito Pereira (1535–1610), as well as Pedro de Fonseca (1528–1599), the texts of Aristotle remain the philosophical manual for students of theology. But, above all, the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* by Francisco Suarez (1548–1617) – designed as a propaedeutical course in philosophy for his theology students – represents a truly complete refiguring of the relationship between metaphysics and theology.

One of the great elements of novelty which would make this Spanish theologian the initiator of the modern form of metaphysical thought (Esposito 1995; Hoenen 1998) is his resumption and reinterpretation of Scotus's univocity of being (Honnefelder 1990), with which he distances himself from Thomas's conception of being as absolute perfection and act. Suarez argues instead for a *conceptus simplicissimus* of being, namely, a general concept of being (*ens in quantum ens*) that includes both infinite being (God) and finite being (the totality of entities), each according to its own order (*ordinate*). This decision radically redefines the relations between metaphysics and theology: from the doctrinal point of view, revealed theology is the point from which the philosophical search starts and to which it is directed; from the methodological point of view,

it is metaphysics that establishes the ontological order within theology.

In response to Luther's distrust about the possibility of reaching God through the created order, Suarez thus identifies in the concept of *ens* (as true *transcendens*) the key that allows him to translate the truth of revelation into an ontological language in such a way that revelation coincides with the very order of nature. This, so to speak, "neutral" character of Suarez's ontology – engaged with nothing but the purest essential constitution of being – will make it fruitful far beyond the Catholic milieu (Grabmann 1926; Freedman 1984; Esposito 2007). The *Disputationes* in fact became not only a theology manual for Jesuit students but also one of the most used manuals in Protestantism, which found in it a neutral or indifferent conception of being more compatible than that of Thomism with the native theology (Courtine 1990; Lamanna 2011, 2012).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Renaissance theology is characterized by a profound demand for *renovatio*, affecting the theology of the schools, the movements of spiritual renewal (*devotio moderna* and *Frömmigkeitstheologie*), the new Platonic theology, the philological hermeneutics of Sacred Scriptures, the Protestant Reformation, and the Roman Church's reaction to it.

What is characteristic of the *renovatio theologica* in each of these realms is the meaning given, time and time again, to the "return *ad fontes*," namely, the recuperation of a perfect past whose rebirth is somehow sought in the present. The guiding inspiration for this rebirth changes from occasion to occasion: Plato and the Neoplatonists; the pagan classics; a new way of interpreting Aristotle or the masters of medieval scholasticism (Thomas, Scotus, Ockham); original documents (including the Bible); the Fathers of the Church; or the evangelical radicalism of early Christians.

Alongside the problem of the relationship between divine freedom and omnipotence, which has already been discussed, the following

are examples of the most innovative aspects of theological discussion outside the schools: the concept of a *prisca theologia*, the problem of the immortality of the soul, and the philological criticism of the Bible and ancient documents. Not a few of these novelties from outside the academic environment would also affect in various ways the speculations of professional theologians.

Platonic Theology and *Prisca Theologia*

To those who have thought of the Renaissance as an era of the liberation of reason from its theological dependencies, it may perhaps seem paradoxical that at its beginning there is the fascination exerted by the myths of an ancient Eastern mystery religion (Toussaint 2003). In fact, one of the distinctive elements of Renaissance humanist culture is the search for ancient wisdom with the help of which it was held to be possible for people to come into a direct relationship with the divinity (Hankins 1990). This tendency is in part reinforced by the rebirth of Platonism, which profoundly marks the whole spiritual climate of philosophy and, more generally, of European culture itself (Vasoli 1995b).

Plato's entry into Renaissance philosophy has to be attributed first of all to the material arrival of the Platonic writings, previously unknown in the West (except for the *Meno*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Timaeus*), with the Byzantine experts who came to Europe with the Patriarch of Constantinople John VII Palaeologus on the occasion of the Ecumenical Council of Ferrara and Florence proclaimed by Pope Eugene IV (1438–1439). It stems, secondly, from the birth of the Platonic Academy in Florence, an extremely important center of studies, translations, and relationships brought about by Cosimo de' Medici (1462) and strongly influenced by the contribution of Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499).

Therefore, who is rediscovered in fifteenth-century Florence is not the Plato of the fourth-century B.C. Athenian Academy but the Plato studied in Byzantium and already strongly characterized by Neoplatonic interpretations like those of Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Proclus. Interestingly, this reception of Plato, mediated by the Byzantines, once inside the Renaissance

academies, assumes a completely different profile and scope. A prime example is the historical reconstruction of Platonic thought made by Ficino, to whom we owe, among other things, the first complete Latin translation of the works of Plato (as well as translations of the works of many Neoplatonists, including Plotinus).

In his reconstruction of the development of this ancient human-divine wisdom (*Plotini Epitomae, Proemium*), Ficino almost totally neglects to mention the contribution of Byzantine philosophy. He identifies its birth, by divine revelation, in ancient Egypt. It then goes through Pythagoras and Plato to Christ and, thanks to the mediation of the Neoplatonic philosophers, comes to the Fathers of the Church and to Dionysius, and from these, it reaches the representatives of its fifteenth-century rebirth. The reconstruction provided by Ficino, who showed himself well aware of being the heir and protagonist of this wisdom, provides a good example of what philosophy was meant to be in this age: a divine wisdom underlying the entire history of thought and bringing philosophy and religion together (*prisca theologia*). In fact, to Ficino the origin of philosophy is an illumination of the human mind by a real divine revelation that has shone the light of a single truth throughout the world, although along paths that are often hidden and in need of unveiling. That truth is the presupposition and the unitary summit of both philosophical and religious wisdom (Garin 1947).

And that is why Ficino, to describe such wisdom, adopts the terms "*docta religio*" (learned religion) and "*pia philosophia*" (pious philosophy): his ambition, in the wake of Plato, is to bring these to fulfillment. He speaks of the possibility of reestablishing an agreement between the *via philosophica* and the *via sacerdotia* to the truth (as he writes in a letter to Martino Uranio in 1489), both based on a single *sapientia* or on the supreme value of *amor* and *charitas* (Beierwaltes 1978).

This work of restoration of Platonism, understood as *praeparatio evangelica*, culminates with his *Theologia platonica de immortalitate animorum* published in 1482. In this work, he harmonizes the doctrines of Plato, Plotinus, and Proclus, as well as of the *Corpus hermeticum*,

with doctrines derived from Aristotle, Thomas, and Bonaventure. The result is an ontological-metaphysical structure of reality subdivided into degrees, where a central role is played by the human soul with its spiritual and cognitive vicissitudes.

The universal concord between Platonic and Christian wisdom is also the dominant note in the reflections of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494). Familiar with both Arabic and scholastic Aristotelianism and a reader of Proclus and Iamblichus (in Ficino's translations) as well as the works of the Fathers of the Church, Pico would appropriate the interpretative method of Jewish mysticism (the Cabala), with the intent of demonstrating the convergence between the revelation contained in Sacred Scriptures and in Pythagorean and Neoplatonist wisdom in his *Conclusiones philosophicae, cabalisticae et theologicae* (1486).

The myth of *prisca theologia*, born outside the theological faculties, would affect in various ways bold theologians such as Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) – who reprises with great originality terms derived from different traditions in order to show the original unity and infinity of everything – as much as it would affect the work of stricter apologists for Catholic doctrine who were committed to countering the Protestant Reformation. Think, for example, of the idea of *perennis philosophia* promoted by the Augustinian Agostino Steuco (1542), who was concerned to show how the theological positions newly contested by the Reformation were really an inheritance of ancient wisdom that arrived at its full completion with Catholic teaching. Traces of a universal concordism among Neoplatonic-Stoic wisdom, Judaism, and Christianity are also present in the work of the Franciscan Francesco Zorzi (1466–1540), the Augustinian Egidio Canisio da Viterbo (1469–1532), and the regular canon Agostino Steuco (ca. 1497–1548) and would inspire the *De vera philosophia* of Cardinal Adriano Castellesi (1507).

The Immortality of the Soul

The theme of the soul, so central in Platonic theology, provides an interesting vehicle for capturing many new aspects, not only of the

Renaissance theology that refers back to Aristotelianism but also of the *Frömmigkeitstheologie* (Hamm 1982) that develops outside the schools (in the *devotio moderna*, in the phenomenon of mysticism, in Catholic figurative art).

A lively debate about the immortality of the soul arises between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Factors of both historical and cultural kinds contribute to its rise. Among the historical events that came together to reignite the eschatological demand, one must remember both the Black Plague (1347–1353), with its subsequent epidemic waves all over Europe, and the crisis of medieval monarchies, which had created a state of general *insecuritas*. A trace of this can be found, for example, in the sermons of many preachers of the fifteenth century (Girolamo Savonarola, Giacomo della Marca, Bernardino de' Busti, Michele Carcano, Gabriele Barletta), who reserved a great deal of space for the problem of death and the destiny of the soul. The two cultural factors that contributed to fueling the discussion were the discovery, on the one hand, of Platonism and Neoplatonism and, on the other hand, of the ancient Greek commentators on Aristotle, in particular Alexander of Aphrodisias. The arrival of these traditions increased the number of possible philosophical solutions to the problem of the immortality of the soul: Neoplatonists in the area of Florence, headed by Marsilio Ficino, maintained the immortality of the soul and its superiority over the body, considering it to be a middle term in the conjunction between the intelligible and sensible worlds (*copula mundi*). Alexandrists – those who related their thinking to Alexander of Aphrodisias – affirmed the mortality of human soul and that only the *intellectus agens* (God) was immortal. Averroists – who defended instead the Aristotelian commentary developed by Averroes – claimed that there were two separate and immortal intellects, the possible intellect and the agent intellect, which all humans shared (Sgarbi 2014). The main place of confrontation between the positions of Alexandrists and Averroists was the University of Padua (Kristeller 1990).

A testimony of the importance of this debate, in which interpretations contrary to Catholic

teaching on the immortality of the individual soul were espoused, is the edict of 4 May 1489, issued by Pietro Barozzi, Bishop of Padua, with the help of the commission of the theologians he established (Martino da Lendinara and Antonio Trombetta), in which it was forbidden to hold public disputes (*publice disputare*) about the immortality of the soul.

Despite this ban, Averroism would continue to have in Padua its avowed followers: Marcantonio Zimara (ca. 1470–1537), Tiberio Bacilieri, Pietro Trampolin (1451–1506), and Agostino Nifo (ca. 1473–ca. 1546). The fact that this interdict failed to prevent the professors of Padua University itself from continuing to teach Averroist doctrines in schools (Nardi 1958), and that Platonic theses continued to circulate in universities outside the diocese of Padua, is demonstrated by the fact that years later the Roman Curia, with the seal of Pope Leo X, issued the bull *Apostolici regiminis sollicitudo* (19 December 1513). In this papal document, the Catholic doctrine of the individual immortality of the soul was reaffirmed, and the theses of those who claimed the identity of the human intellect for the entire species, the mortality of the individual soul, and the eternity of the world were condemned. The philosophers are then urged to clarify their doctrines according to the truth of the Catholic magisterium and, as far as possible, to try to show the agreement of the latter with philosophy. As has been observed (Grendler 2002), this last assertion reveals that not all members of the theological commission appointed to write up the bull considered it possible to demonstrate philosophically all the truths believed by faith – particularly the immortality of the soul. This is attested by the presence of the commission of the Dominican Tommaso de Vio, who in both his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* (1510) and in his *Parabolae Salomonis* (1542) asserts the philosophical indemonstrability of the immortality of the soul.

The same thesis was strongly supported by Pietro Pomponazzi in his *De immortalitate animae* (1516). Pomponazzi states that the interpretation of Aristotle given by Thomas cannot be maintained, since for the Stagirite the intellectual soul always needs the body and therefore is, like

the body, essentially mortal. The publication of this text aroused sharp controversy. The first to rebut the position of Pomponazzi was his former disciple Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542), a Venetian patrician, later destined to become the greatest personality of the Catholic reform movement (Sgarbi 2004; D'Onofrio 1995, 445sqq.). Pomponazzi would answer with an *Apologia* (1518) presenting his answers to Contarini and other opponents (Ambrogio Fiandino and Vincenzo Colzade). The controversy would begin again after the *De immortalitatae animae libellus adversus Petrum Pomponacium* (1518) by Nifo (Blum 2007).

The fact that the destiny of the soul was a crucial theme for Renaissance theology is also clear from its persistence in Catholic figurative art (Panofsky 1962). In fact, what is accomplished by, to give only one example, Michelangelo Buonarroti in the *Giudizio universale* (1536–1541) is a “theology in pictures,” influenced by the preaching of Giles of Viterbo (1469–1532) and guided by a precise iconographic program previously elaborated in the theology of Sixtus IV. Thus papal patronage early on, and Counter-Reformation preaching later, attempted to make the pattern of the Catholic doctrine of immortality available to the widest possible audience. During and after the Council of Trent, this led to a pictorial translation of the official doctrine. Cardinal Federico Borromeo (1538–1584), author of an important treatise on sacred architecture, and Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti were crucial figures in the politics of the image in this era (Verdon and Hendersson 1990).

The problem of the soul returns to the forefront in the famous controversy of Valladolid (1550–1551), which featured the opposing positions of the Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484–1566) and of the jurist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573). The object of the dispute – commissioned by Charles V in order to legitimize himself in the face of the denunciation of abuses committed by the Spaniards toward the Native Americans – was to discuss the legal and spiritual nature of the indigenous people. The controversy about the presence of the soul and therefore about the natural rights of the Native

Americans, which remained unresolved in Valladolid, had already received a definition in the papal bull *Sublimis Deus* (1537), by which Paul III recognized the indigenous, as creatures of God and rational beings, the rights to property and to freedom. Only with Philip II, 20 years after the controversy, would the wars of conquest end and a process of pacification with the New World populations begin.

Soul is the protagonist of two other phenomena important for the theology developed outside the universities: that of the *devotio moderna* (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries through the seventeenth century's *Frömmigkeitstheologie*) and that of mysticism (XIV–XVI). It is crucial that the care of the soul leads both these spiritual movements to amply value the body as well as, for example, in the “spiritual senses.” Catholic scholastic theology – which is a discourse (Logos) – “in fact lacked a body” (de Certeau 1982). There was, of course, the system of sacramental signs, which gave laymen access to a symbolic experience of mystery. Yet it was also heavily burdened by an apparatus of legal norms and directed by priestly mediation in an exclusive way. Secondly, ecclesiastical theology was the province of male religious orders. In spite of the substantial differences between *devotio moderna* and mysticism, each involves a renewal of theology in which women and the laity also become protagonists, and centrality is attributed to bodily immediacy. Among the mystics, that immediacy comes about through experiments with new expressive and symbolic languages in which visions, transverberations, and ecstasies are narrated; in the case of the *Devotio moderna* (which would be one of the preconditions of the Protestant Reformation; Kaufmann 2016; Lourdaux 1972; Stupperich 1967) through a direct reading of the Gospel, a valorization of sentiment and a concrete experience of charity (*imitatio Christi*) lived in the light of an imminent eschatology (*praeparatio ad mortem*).

Philological Criticism and Theology

With the renewal of the *studia humanitatis*, and therefore of the *trivium*, and with the increasing importance attributed to the value of philological

criticism in understanding and translating classical texts, the approach to Sacred Scripture and patristic sources undergoes a significant change, throwing new light on their original meaning (Lorenzo Valla, Lefèvre d'Étaples, Erasmus). Against the technicality and the proliferation of meanings assumed by theological hermeneutics, the humanists looked for a single literal meaning capable of unifying the entire discourse.

Lorenzo Valla stood at the origin of a demand for returning to the original biblical text that would animate Erasmus – according to whom “theology without philology is not possible” – as much as it animated the vernacular translations of the Bible undertaken by the Frenchman Lefèvre d'Étaples and, on its basis, by the German Martin Luther. Valla was also the initiator of modern historical criticism.

The project of biblical humanism was essentially accomplished in two moments (Bedouelle 1989): at the beginning, the humanists worked to make glosses and philological improvements to the text, correcting single expressions or words, and even discovering misunderstandings in Jerome's Latin translation, the *Vulgata*. In this direction lies Valla's *Collatio Novi Testamenti* (Valla 1970 [1442–1443]); its second improved version was edited by Erasmus in 1505 (*Adnotationes in Novum Testamentum*).

In a second phase, however, the original sense of the text was reestablished in the light of a translation of the sources from their original language. Here the humanists did not limit themselves to reestablishing the original version of Scripture but took care to recover the interpretation given to it by the Fathers. Indeed, if in the theology of the Middle Ages classical and patristic *auctoritates* were cited in a way that was directed toward the organization of the *quaestiones*, in the Renaissance, ancient sources instead represented indications of an alternative way of thinking (Buck 1968). It is therefore understandable why, in the Renaissance, there began a large wave of publications of the works of the Fathers, especially in Paris and Basel.

The critical and philological methods promoted by humanism produced at least two results. On the one hand, it served to awaken the interest

of official theology in biblical sources and refocused attention on the importance of translations and therefore on the need to study the original languages. Consider, for example, the Trinitarian debate between Catholic and Orthodox theologians which was a central issue of the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439) concerning the historical and terminological questions related to the doctrine of the *Filioque* (Vasoli 1995a). Or consider the foundation of various colleges for teaching and learning ancient languages (like the Trilingual College of San Ildefonso de Alcalá founded in 1502 by Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, who created the famous *Poliglotta Complutense*, or the College of the Young Greeks commissioned by Papa Leo X in Rome), which eventually would lead to the establishment of instruction in Sacred Scripture in the process of clergy formation that the Council of Trent sanctioned. Finally, think of the creation of several critical editions of the Old and New Testaments, such as the *Vulgata Clementina* of 1592 and the *Settanta* of 1578.

On the other hand, the philological method and its associated historical criticism greatly contributed to increasing skepticism about the claim to the truthfulness of certain pillars of the Catholic religious edifice of the time. That happened, for example, when Valla demonstrated that the famous *Donatio constantini* – according to which Constantine I was said to have endowed Pope Silvester I and his successors with primacy not only over the patriarchates of the Orient but even over the Emperor himself – was a forgery (Valla 1922 [1517]).

The emergence of skepticism concerning the actual value of religious assumptions is therefore in some respects a natural outcome of the critical maturation of the historical and philological methods, which would receive a new stimulus after the publication of the cosmological theses of a canon of the diocese of Warmia, Nicholas Copernicus. When in 1543 the six books of *De Revolutionibus orbium coelestium* appeared, there were no direct oppositions from the Roman Curia. With the nomination of the Dominican Gianmaria Tolosani (1470–1549) as Master of the Sacred Palace, some allegations

directed against the Copernican theory began to appear, since it “contradicted the principles of Sacred Scripture” (*De coelo et elementis*, 1549). Years later, in 1615, another Dominican, Tommaso Caccini, would go to Rome to denounce the Copernicanism of Galileo Galilei. Galileo’s scientific discoveries required revision not only of the canons of Aristotelian cosmology but also of the scope ceded to biblical interpretation. Beyond the events of Galileo’s own biography (e.g., his repudiation of Copernicanism on 22 June 1633), the “Galilean affair” brings to center stage an interpretive question about the distinction between the language of nature (mathematics) and the language of faith (history) which would continue to animate the debate over the subsequent centuries.

Impact and Legacy

The Renaissance is an age in which theology is challenged on several fronts to redefine its position with respect to other disciplines: philosophy, textual criticism, and natural science. The confrontation between each of these areas and theological discourse bears fruits not yet mentioned (1). It is also true that these same disciplines, though in themselves autonomous with respect to theological themes, more and more come to define their own “modern” status in an essential confrontation with developments arising within theology itself (2).

(1). 1.1 One of the versions of Christian Neoplatonism that will have particular influence through the seventeenth century is that of Augustine, who was already a crucial author for Petrarch. Augustinian gnoseological themes return, in fact, not only in Blaise Pascal (Wills 2012) but also in Cartesianism, especially in Nicolas Malebranche doctrine of ideas (Gori 2007). Augustine’s dialectic of sin and grace – which runs through the entire Renaissance, from Luther to the famous controversy *de auxiliis* between Jesuits and Dominicans – would continue in German Pietism and Jansenism. The latter, initially developed in Belgium and the Netherlands, had its core in the Cistercian Abbey of Port-Royal of Paris, where

Blaise Pascal (†1623) and Antoine Arnauld (†1694) – brother of Mère Angélique, the monastery's abbess (Sainte-Beuve 1871) – worked. Traces of a universal concordism in religious matters, peculiar to Renaissance Platonism, can be found in Pascal, who founds his Christian apologetics more on the hope of truth than on the presumption of acquiring irrefutable certainty. And those traces appear even more clearly in the “rational religion” proposed by Cambridge Platonism, whose religious and philosophical syncretism has its explicit sources in the Augustinian tradition and in the resumption of Renaissance Neoplatonic themes.

1.2 The philological attention to the New Testament inaugurated by Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus would encourage many editions of the Bible between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Particularly worth mentioning are the works of Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693–1754), who begins modern textual criticism with his New Testament edition in 1751–1754, followed by those of Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745–1812), Karl Lachmann (1793–1851), Constantin von Tischendorf (1815–1874), and his disciple Gaspar René Gregory (1846–1917). The pioneer of the textual criticism of the Old Testament, on the other hand, was Luigi Cappel (1585–1658), followed by Benjamin Kennicott (1718–1783) and Giovanni Battista de Rossi (1742–1831). These works lay the foundations for the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century development of the historical-critical exegetical method.

(2) The most significant results of Renaissance theology for subsequent thought are its impact on the codification of modern empiricism and on the canonization of modern ontology.

2.1 Modern empiricism, rightly regarded, has its characteristic theoretical presupposition in that “radical empiricism” (Grant 1996) which is at the root of the Ockhamist teaching on the *potentia absoluta Dei*. The knowledge possessed by humans living in a contingent world governed only by divine will is not founded on abstract universal ideas (*species intelligibiles*) but on a sensible experience (through the *cognitio intuitiva*). This epistemology establishes the premises for the development of Copernicanism and of a

conception of physics different from any philosophy of nature of an Aristotelian stamp. Think, for example, of Hume's empiricism or of modern mechanism, in which the universe is seen as a clock set in motion by a watchmaker-God who, once the initial start-up work is completed, remains completely indifferent to the subsequent operation of the mechanism that he has started (Randi 1987).

2.2. Jesuit scholasticism, born as a conceptual tool of the Catholic Reformation, was the model for the elaboration of Reformed and Lutheran *Schulmetaphysik* (Werner 1861, 1887; Paulsen 1896; Wundt 1939; Leinsle 1985, 1988; Courtine 1990; Kuhn 2002) and thus the presupposition for the birth of modern ontology (Lohr 1988). Suarez's *Disputationes* played a prominent role in this connection. With the Scotist resort to the concept of *ens* as true *transcendens*, Suarez overcomes the division between general and special metaphysics. Unlike Thomas, whose notion of *ens* constitutes only a part of metaphysical discourse, which is in itself governed by the concept of cause, Suarez, in the wake of Duns Scotus (Honnefelder 1990), assumes the *ens in quantum ens* as the adequate object of the entire science of metaphysics, under which fall the other special sciences and theology as well. In this way, the *Disputationes* represent one of the clearest points of passage from the classic to the modern meaning of the term “transcendental” (Esposito 2007).

Cross-References

- Copernicanism
- Ockhamism
- Scotism
- Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy

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Theophanes of Medeia

Born: Constantinople, 1400

Died: Constantinople, 1474

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Abstract

He was born Theodore Agallianos. He was appointed official of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchate. He was the author of seminal theological works. The value of his letters is priceless, as they shed light on the historical events pertaining to the period of the fall of Constantinople. Theophanes of Medeia condemned the scheming of church officials, while, as far as the compliance with church rules is concerned, he emphasized the principle of the distinction between needs and historical conditions.

Synonyms

[Agallianos, Theodore](#)

Biography

Theophanes of Medeia was a Metropolitan of Medeia, a renowned scholar, and a writer. He was born in Constantinople around 1400 and died before 1474. He was a disciple of the Metropolitan of Ephesus Marc Eugenikos, as well as a close friend of the Patriarch of Constantinople Georgios Gennadios-Scholarios. He originally assumed the office of deacon (1425) and hieromonachos (twice from 1437 to 1440 and from 1443 to 1454). Lastly, during Gennadios' patriarchal office, he was appointed grand chartophylax (1454) and grand oikonomos (1466). He was forced to relinquish these positions because he disagreed with the Patriarch. Meanwhile, he changed his name to Theophanes

when he was ordained a Metropolitan of Medeia in Thrace in 1467. There have been no testimonies preserved on his actions at the seat of the Archbishopric, probably because he had never been there.

Innovative and Original Aspects

His writings mirror a person with deep philosophical and theological expertise, as well as a bright, literate man, outspoken with commendable force and critical thinking. In his most influential work entitled *On Soul (Peri psyches)*, Theophanes exploits the methodological and conceptual richness of Greek philosophy in a creative way, so as to present the ontological aspects of the soul, according to the Orthodox Church. His work, which was highly praised by the Patriarch, was published in Leipzig in 1784 in a joint volume together with Nikiforos Blemmydes' *Logic*. Theophanes' treatise *On Providence (Peri pronoiias)* was written in the form of a dialogue. The initiator posed the questions and the mystic, who was Theophanes' alter ego, responded. Although in several parts of the specific work he admittedly incorporated direct quotes from the respective writings of Gennadios and Marc Eugenikos, he did not hesitate to criticize and argue against the views developed by the latter in his *On living conditions*. The two apologetic *Logoi*, published in 1463, as well as his correspondence with eminent men of his time – among others the prominent scholar George Amiroutzes, who commented on the edition of *On Providence* – are not only living proof of the turbulent and complicated situation of the Eastern Church, which was contested by both the intrigues of ecclesiastical officials and the schemes of Ottomanism; they also reflect Theophanes' broad-mindedness and independent spirit, as he expressed the view that the Church should not adopt a rigid and dogmatic approach to issues related to the administration of the Church (the reason for his disagreement with Gennadios) or issues that do not affect the core of religious faith, suggesting that the Church should be

more flexible in resolving emerging problematic matters, taking into consideration historical circumstances. Theophanes did not abandon Constantinople even when it was conquered by the Ottomans. He was imprisoned and was released a year later after the fall to witness the suffering and the atrocities the people of Constantinople suffered from the Turks. He shared this testimony in his *Chronicon simeioma peri ton ipo ton Tourkon epenecthenton kakon*.

His writings also include the following treatises: (a) *Against the Jews (Kata Ioudaion)*, as it was found with the code 6 of the Gymnasium of Mytilini, and (b) *Against the Latins (Kata Latinon)*, in which he manifests his strong opposition to the union of the two Churches and in fact braces the views of his teacher and Patriarch.

Impact and Legacy

Agallianos' works comprise 14 letters which are highly commendable, as they shed light on the turbulent period of the fall of Constantinople, and they reveal Theophanes' latitudinarianism and faith in the tradition of the Church.

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Theophanes of Nicaea

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Abstract

A Byzantine theologian of the fourteenth century (?–1380/1381), he is a leading figure of the Palamite party in the last phase of the Hesychast controversy and bishop of Nicaea. As an influential official of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Theophanes was involved in important ecclesiastic affairs, and he undertook multiple tasks: (a) to refute anti-Palamite assumptions expressed by Prochorus Kydones; (b) to vindicate the Hesychast views of Gregory Palamas and Theophilus Kokkinos, i.e., for the distinction and yet inseparability between God's essence and energies and deification; and (c) to defend Eastern Orthodoxy against pro-Latin views of certain Byzantines (such as Demetrius Kydones), especially on the issue of *Filioque*. He is considered the first Orthodox thinker influenced by Thomas Aquinas. In his writings, he adapts certain ideas of the great Latin theologian whose major *summae* had been translated into Byzantine Greek.

Biography

Very little is known about Theophanes' life and studies. He was a member of the intellectual circle around Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (c. 1292–1383) and perhaps a disciple of Philotheos Kokkinos (the pro-Palamite Patriarch of Constantinople, c. 1297–1379). Both officials

entrusted him with missions to resolve urgent ecclesiastical and state problems. Theophanes was elected Metropolitan of Nicaea after 1364, but when the city was conquered by the Turks, he confined himself to sending pastoral letters to his flock, exhorting the enslaved Christians to be long-suffering (Polemis 1996, 25–30; Zacharopoulos 2003, 37–44).

Theophanes did not produce many works; of special philosophical interest are his *Discourses on the Light of Tabor* (1369–1371) and the *Refutation* (after 1365).

The *Discourses Against the Latins* (after 1368) form part of the longstanding and massive anti-Latin Byzantine literature. Theophanes develops his theology on the procession of the Holy Spirit, a highly controversial issue between the Greek and the Latin Church. He distinguishes two ways of discussing theological issues: (a) through the relevant passages from the Scripture and patristic writings or (b) if they are not available, by examining the topic on the basis of theological criteria approved by the Fathers.

In the *Discourses Against the Jews* (after 1371), Theophanes argues not only for the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law by the Gospel but mainly for the superiority of the latter. The views expressed in this lengthy work are typical for medieval Christian literature that sought to denigrate the Jews as not being real descendants of the Old Testament's people of God.

The *Sermon on the Virgin Mary* (c. 1370) is perhaps Theophanes' most important theological work, given the place of Mariology in Christian theology (Bertetto 1981; Makarov 2012). There, he adopts Maximus' formula that God has created the beings not only to exist but for their well-being.

In his writings, Theophanes displays a solid knowledge of classical and Christian literature. Due to his complicated style, the meaning of many sentences remains obscure. The polemic purpose of his works and their dialectic character make him present in extenso his opponents' arguments (from various, direct and indirect, sources).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Theophanes was involved in the last phase of the Hesychast controversy (Makarov 2013) when the Prochoros Kydones' affair dominated. The eminent anti-Hesychast denied that God can be divided into essence and (uncreated) energies and that human beings can participate in him. The nature of the Thaboric light was a central theme in the controversy. What was at stake was the possibility and the nature of humans' participation in God, i.e., deification. For anti-Hesychasts the light experienced by the monks was not divine but a created symbol of divinity. Gregory Palamas had already stressed that divine energies are not merely attributes of God (as Barlaam had claimed); the deifying light pertains to God's essence (it is essential) while not being itself the essence of God – in any case, it is not symbolic. So deification is more than a natural perfection; it is a transformation of human nature by divine action.

Theophanes, in a *Letter to [the Latin] Archbishop Paul*, defends Palamas' thesis that divine essence and energies differ from each other in reality (i.e., as real things) although they are separated only conceptually. He amplifies this argument in the *Discourses on the Light of Tabor* (1369–1371). Involved in the official case against Prochoros Theophanes, he constantly takes the opportunity to cite and refute many views of the anti-Palamite thinker.

According to Theophanes three ways are available for men to know God: (a) a kind of natural theology; (b) an experience of the divine light that occurs when the natural faculties (mind, sense) of the “worthy” men have been transformed by grace through illumination; and (c) the interpenetration of the two natures and deification, when all natural operations cease. The affinities between Theophanes and Aquinas on this subject are obvious, although Theophanes does not imply any comprehension of the divine reality. His treatment of interpenetration depends on Maximus, and, generally, the influence of earlier Greek Fathers (Ps.-Dionysius, Maximus, John of Damascus) cannot be underestimated (for his relation to Palamas: Louth 2005; van Rossum 2013).

The long title of his most philosophically interesting treatise is indicative of its scope:

Demonstration by certain arguments, supposed to be irrefutable, of the possibility that the beings could have been created ab aeterno – and its Rebuttal together with an examination of the deceit of these alleged irrefutable arguments. The influence of the scholastic method and the use of many formulations found in Aquinas's translated works are uncontested. In the treatise Theophanes enumerates nine arguments for the possibility of the creation of the world ab aeterno (§§1–9), replies to them (§§36–44), and formulates his own twenty-five arguments (§§10–35).

Given the anti-Latin stance of dominant intellectual circles in Constantinople, Theophanes refrains from making explicit references to Aquinas. The fact is that Theophanes and other anti-Latin Greeks were influenced (or at least impressed) by the subtle scholastic argumentation and the systematic juxtaposition of *pros* and *contras*. Through Kydones' translations, Theophanes became acquainted with Aquinas's thought. He derives arguments for the eternity of the world from *Summa contra Gentiles*, and many textual parallels between the two writers have been identified. This, however, does not necessarily entail that Theophanes was a *stricto sensu* Thomist as the issue of the influence of certain Latin doctrines is a more complex one. His moderate style despite the polemic character of his works and his use of Latin writings does not imply that he keeps equal distance from Palamites and pro-Latin anti-Palamites. He uses Aquinas's formulations in an eclectic manner as if many sentences of the Latin theologian do match the Orthodox faith (Toulis 2014 contra Polemis 1996, 122–125).

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Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

Thomism is a philosophical-theological movement or school essentially inspired by the thought of Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), a Dominican master, traditionally called *Doctor Communis* or *Doctor Angelicus*. His doctrine is an original synthesis of Roman Catholic theology and a philosophical system based on Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, Roman, Arabic, and Jewish thought. Thomism in its original and authentic form distinguished very precisely between theological and philosophical knowledge or method. In philosophy, Thomism only used rational arguments, with the aim of providing, if possible, a universal philosophical interpretation of reality, neither relying on religious belief nor contradicting Christian Revelation or Catholic Doctrine (Kristeller 1974a, 843–844). With the development of a Thomist presence at the universities, especially in northern Italy, this school also received the designation of the *Via Thomae*, as opposed to the *Via Scoti*, a term reserved for those holding the teaching chair reserved for the Scotists (Tavuzzi 1992, 133; Kristeller 1974a, 855). Some key characteristics of Thomism’s development in the Renaissance were contact with Italian Aristotelianism, especially in its Averroist form; a highly evolved scholastic terminology; rigorous philosophical logic; polemics against the Albertist and Nominalist schools (influenced by Scotism), and later against Molinism (Luis de Molina d. 1600) and an alternative interpretation of Aquinas’s thought – especially the one proposed by Francisco Suárez (d. 1617). Typical works by Renaissance Thomists include the

Things of State

► Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of

commentaries on Aquinas's works and commentaries on the *Corpus Aristotelicum* in the form of questions, a new type of philosophical work – the *Compendium* and also the *Cursus* – and systematic expositions of all philosophical disciplines in the Aristotelian order and following Aquinas's interpretation. After 1492, with the Spanish colonization of the New World, Thomism made an important contribution to the development of international law and human rights, on the foundation of natural law.

Synonyms

Thomismus; Via Thomae

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The term *Thomismus* emerged at the beginning of the fourteenth century as a derivation from Aquinas's name "Thomas." Originally, however, Thomas's disciples were called *Thomatistae* by their adversaries (Ehrle 1920, 491–494). For the birth of Thomistic philosophy, the following works were crucial: the writings of Aquinas himself; the philosophical heritage of the first and second generation of Thomists (ca. 1274–1300), a heritage founded on polemics with Scotist and Augustinian scholars and expressed in particular kinds of treatises such as the *Correctoria*, *Apologiae*, and *Concordantiae* (cf. Torrell 1997, 10–24; Robiglio 2008, 18–39); debates with the Nominalists or Terminists such as Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (d. 1334), Willam of Ockham (d. 1347), John Buridan (d. 1358), and the highly original French thinker Peter Aureolus (d. 1322).

The Early Thomist School

In addition to theoretical and doctrinal polemics, the 1323 canonization of Thomas Aquinas in Avignon by Pope John XXII constituted a strong apology for Thomas's orthodoxy against his critics (Robiglio 2008, 70–72). In the

canonization declaration, Aquinas was, among other things, formally presented as the best teacher of evangelical poverty (!), against contemporary radical spiritualist (Franciscan) movements. The history of Thomistic Philosophy in the first half of the fourteenth century was marked by the work of Hervaeus Natalis (d. 1323), Gratiadeus Aesculanus (ca. 1341), Armandus de Bellovisu (d. after 1340), and anonymous but very influential pseudo-Thomasian treatises such as the *Summa totius Logicae Aristotelis*, *De principio individuationis*, *De natura generis*, *De natura accidentis*, and the spurious opusculum *De fallaciis*. During this first historical period, Thomists formulated some typical philosophical doctrines which distinguished them from other philosophical schools: (1) the theory that act and potency are two different, contradictory principles which divide being, a theory which also entails the purely potential character of primary matter; (2) the analogical unity of the concept of being; (3) the unicity of substantial form as a constitutive act for every individual subject, and by consequence that the human soul is the only substantial form of the human being; (4) the individuation of physical bodies by determined matter, and by consequence the impossibility of a plurality of separated forms in any given species; (5) the real distinction between the faculties and the essence of the human soul; (6) the primacy of the intellect in human nature and its decisive role in achieving happiness; (7) the possibility of a rational demonstration of the existence of God; and (8) the noncontradictory nature of the non-temporal or eternal creation of the world. In this period, the theory of the real distinction in creatures between essence and existence was strongly defended by many Thomists, but not by all. The theory of analogy as such and the doctrine of God's knowledge of future contingents would be developed in a more precise way in the future.

Roughly during the second half of the fourteenth century, Thomism suffered an immense decline. The causes were diverse and both internal and external, including social, religious, and

philosophical factors. Among the more important of these were: (1) the Western Schism or Papal Schism which tempted to internally divide the Roman Catholic Church from 1378 until 1417; (2) the Black Death (1346–1353), one of the most devastating pandemics in human history; (3) the violent Hussite movement; and (4) religious movements such as the Beguines and Beghards, Rhineland mysticism, and the *Devotio Moderna*, all of which had a very different doctrinal anchor and enjoyed extensive spiritual and intellectual influence. The overall atmosphere was rendered more difficult by an immense skepticism, accompanied by nominalism and (paradoxically) an extreme realism, as well as the growth of radical religious movements with strong apocalyptic tendencies. These circumstances led to a weakening and dividing of important institutions such as universities, religious *studia*, and priories, the very institutions in which Thomism had set down its roots.

Innovative and Original Aspects

After the exclusion of Dominican masters from the University of Paris (from 1389 to 1403), provoked by the scandal of Juan de Monzón (d. 1412) with his violent polemic against the defenders of the Immaculate Conception between 1387 and 1389, Thomism again gathered strength and expanded in impressive fashion in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Although Thomism still retained the scholastic method, and perhaps it would be better to speak of “Thomism in the Renaissance” rather than “Renaissance Thomism” (cf. Tavuzzi 1992, 132–133), we cannot overlook certain characteristics that shaped this school, especially under the influence of the Italian philosophical setting.

France

Without a doubt, one of the most highly influential Thomists in this period was John Capreolus (d. 1444), a Dominican master in Paris, where he was certainly present from 1407 to 1411. From 1409 to 1432, he worked and taught in various cities (Paris, Toulouse, and Rodez) and wrote a

monumental work, the *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*. This comprehensive, detailed commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* includes critiques of Duns Scotus, Henry of Ghent, Peter Aureolus, John of Ripa, Durandus, Gregory of Rimini, and William of Ockham. For several centuries, this work stood as a classic source for Thomistic theology and philosophy and was particularly prized by Paolo Barbò da Soncino and Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio, authors of the *Divinum epitoma* (1521–1522) and the *Opus in Capreolum* (1498) – both compendia of Capreolus’ *Defensiones*.

The Holy Roman Empire

Another Parisian scholar and colleague of Capreolus was a Dutch diocesan priest named Henry of Gorkum (Henricus de Gorricheum, d. 1431), the founder of the *Bursa Montana* (after 1420) an important college at the University of Cologne in Germany (cf. Hoenen 2012, 210–215). Especially notable among his works is the *Quaestiones in Summam Sancti Thomae* (ed. Esslingen 1473), which began the period of commentaries on Aquinas’s major works, and, in particular, the commentaries on the *Summa Theologiae*. This orientation of the Cologne scholars of the *Bursa Montana* can also be seen in the works of Gerardus de Monte (d. 1480), with his *Commentum in Thomae Aquinatis tractatum De ente et essentia* and *Tractatus ostendens concordiam Thomae Aquinatis et Alberti Magni* (ed. ca. 1485). In fact, the first commentator on the *Summa Theologiae* was probably Ioannes Tinctoris de Tornaco (d. 1469) from the same university, where Thomism was introduced and developed not by Dominicans but by secular masters (Goris 2002, 17–23; Bonino 2000a, 225–226). In any case, this German Thomist school was very important for its role in confronting the Albertists, toward which these Thomists had varying attitudes, sometimes polemical, sometimes conciliatory (Hoenen 2008, 127–130). In addition to this focus, the German Thomist school certainly left its mark with its commentaries on Aquinas’s works, especially on the *Summa Theologiae*. To complete our

overview of German Thomism, we must also mention Peter Schwarz of Kadaň in Bohemia (Petrus Nigri de Cadena, d. 1484), the first rector of the University of Buda in Hungary and author of the *Clypeus Thomistarum sive Quaestiones super Arte veteri Aristotelis* (Venice 1481). This work represents a late, very precise, sometimes eclectic and polemical reception of Hervaeus Natalis' and Capreolus' interpretations of logic (Bonino 2002, 182; Jindráček 2011, 493–497). We might also note a secular master and philosopher of the University of Paris, John Versor (Jean le Tourneur, d. ca. 1482), author of scholastic commentaries on almost all the works of Aristotle, on Peter of Spain, and on Aquinas's *De ente et essentia* (ed. Cologne ca. 1487). Versor has often been characterized as an “albertising” Thomist, and his wide reception is well documented in Germany and in Central Europe (Bonino 2000b, 630–631, 638, 642, 652).

The Byzantine Empire

A very special chapter in the history of the school might be entitled “Byzantine Thomism,” a movement active in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This movement represents a long-term convergence between eastern and western intellectuals, which was related to the pressure of the Ottoman Empire, the international culture at Venice, and the Ecumenical Council of Basel–Ferrara–Florence (1431–1449). During this period, a number of Byzantine orthodox theologians and philosophers expressed great interest in Aquinas's work, translated his works into Greek and commented on them. Some, like Demetrios Kydones (d. 1398), translator of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, even converted to Catholicism and entered the Dominican Order. With the collaboration of his brother Prochoros (d. ca. 1369), Demetrios also translated the *Summa Theologiae* and the *De rationibus fidei*. One should also mention three Greek Dominican brothers: Maxim, Theodor, and Andreas Chrysoberges, who were active in the first half of the fifteenth century. Finally, Gennadios Scholarios (d. ca. 1473), the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, translated both *Summae* and the *De ente et essentia* into Greek, along with

Armandus' commentary on the latter work (Plested 2012, 222–228; Porro 2012, 474–475; Ganchou 2002, 446–469).

Italy

The heyday of Thomism during the Renaissance came during its development in Italy, especially in the Dominican centers of studies in Bologna and Padua. The Italian university setting of the fifteenth century witnessed an immense resurgence in the study of Aristotle and Plato. The revalorization of classical languages, the importance placed on reading texts in the original language, and the free exchange of ideas among all philosophical schools present at the time encouraged the general public in a humanistic orientation (Kristeller 1974a, 853–858). In a certain sense, this critical spirit is apparent in the work of one of Bologna's Dominican masters, Pietro Maldura da Bergamo (d. 1482), author of the *Tabula operum Thomae Aquinatis* (called “Tabula Aurea,” ed. Bologna 1473), and the *Ethimologiae id est Concordantiae conclusionum in quibus D. Thomas videtur sibimet contradicere* (ed. Venice 1476). These are two closely related works: the *Tabula* is a brief explanation of keywords in Thomas' thought, while the *Concordantiae* compares various texts of Thomas to resolve difficulties and seeming contradictions (Guyot and Sterli 2003, 597–605; Colosio 1961, 123–129). This work had a great influence for many centuries. The invention of the printing press around 1450 had generally accelerated the spread of all texts; for Thomists, this presented an opportunity for the wider dissemination of Aquinas's own works. This development was closely linked with the first critical studies that sought to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic works as well as efforts to establish the most accurate text, using the surviving manuscripts. The first printed edition of Aquinas's works was probably the *Summa de articulis fidei* (Mainz, ca. 1460 perhaps by Johannes Gutenberg himself).

Another important figure in Italian Thomism was Dominic of Flanders (born Beaudouin Lottin, d. 1479). A former disciple of John Versor and professor at the University of Paris, Dominic arrived in Bologna and entered the Dominican

order in 1461. With extraordinary effort, he engrossed himself in the study of Aquinas's logic and metaphysics (Tavuzzi 1993, 95–98). Among his philosophical works the *Summa divinae philosophiae*, also called the *Quaestiones in XII libros Metaphysicae* (ed. Venice 1499), and the *Commentaria super libros De anima Aristotelis* (printed in 1496) and the *Commentaria super libris Posteriorum Aristotelis* et in *De fallaciis divi Thomae* (ed. Venice 1507) are especially noteworthy. Dominic taught in Bologna, Pisa, and Florence, and many of his works have survived in manuscript form; one of its characteristics is the foundation of metaphysics and of “predicamental” common being, i.e., exclusively on created being.

Among other Bologna Thomists, one should note also Paul Barbò da Soncino (d. 1495), the author of the *Elegantissima expositio in artem veterem Aristotelis* (ed. Venice 1499) and in particular, his *Acutissimae quaestiones metaphysicales*, printed posthumously in Venice in 1498 (Jindráček 2008, 120–134). Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio (d. 1527) also belonged to this group. A master of theology in Bologna, Padua, and Rome, his philosophical production includes the *Compendium dialecticae* (Venice 1496), the *Opus in Capreolum* (Cremona 1497), the *Conflatus ex Angelico Doctore S. Thoma* (Perugia 1519), and a polemical work against the Scotists of Padua, the *Malleus in falsas assumptiones Scoti* (Bologna 1514). At this time, the practice of writing Compendia of Logic or Dialectics also became well-established. Here, one could mention Girolamo Savonarola's *Compendium Logicae*, written in 1488 (Tavuzzi 1997, 24–38). Silvestro and other Thomists of this period (like many other thinkers) were interested in the socioeconomic question of the Mount of Piety, the late medieval Italian institutions for charitable works and financial loans, and produced short ethical and practical expositions defending them against the charge of usury.

For the systematic development of Thomistic philosophy, the work of Chrysostomus Javelli da Casale (d. 1538) is also important. His work offers a complete philosophical exposition, from logic and metaphysics to ethics, politics, and

economics, mostly composed in the form of questions about and explanations of the Aristotelian texts, including the *Liber De causis*. We should also take note of his treatise *De transcendentalibus* (after the somewhat neglected *De modis rerum* by Remigio dei Girolami d. 1319) which was probably the first systematic Thomistic treatise on the transcendentals.

Apart from Bologna, Thomism also gained strength at another major Italian university center, namely, Padua. While the Bologna Thomists paid close attention to Aquinas's texts, their authenticity, and concordance, the Padua Thomists engaged in extensive public debates with radical Aristotelians such as Nicoletto Vernia (d. 1499) and Pietro Pomponazzi (d. 1525) as well as with Scotists such as Antonio Trombetta (d. 1517). It was in this setting that there emerged the great figure of Thomas De Vio – the future cardinal Cajetan (d. 1534) – who even today is often thought of as being virtually the sole representative of Thomism in this period. In addition to his commentaries on Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* (1508–1523), his biblical commentaries (1520), and his debate with Martin Luther in 1518, which have given him a permanent place in the history of theology, Cajetan also left many remarkable purely philosophical writings. These latter works have been a subject of interest among researchers for several centuries. Among his books, one needs to mention at least the most important titles: *In De ente et essentia D. Thomae Aquinatis* (written 1493–1494), the *Commentaria in Posteriorum Analyticorum* (1496), *In Isagogen Porphyrii* (1497), *In Predicamenta Aristotelis* (1498), *De nominum analogia* (1498), and the *Commentaria in De anima* (1509). Cajetan also “completed” Aquinas's unfinished commentary on the *Peri hermenias* (book II, lectiones 3–14 in 1496), a common custom in scholastic literature. The author of an imposing corpus, Thomas De Vio encountered much criticism and doctrinal opposition from the outset, even within his own Dominican Order. Special should be given to his views about the (im)possibility of an apodictic demonstration of the immortality of the human soul and his particular conception of the analogy of being,

namely, the analogy of proportionality (Giacon, I, 131–134; Hochschild 2010, 146). His influence and authority (he was Master General of the Dominicans from 1508 to 1518 and named cardinal in 1517) seem to have helped bring about the gradual replacement of Peter Lombard's *Sententiae* by Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* as the standard book for theological formation in the sixteenth century (Jindráček 2009, 257). Here, a significant collaborator was Conrad Koellin (d. 1536), as witnessed by his correspondence with Cajetan in 1521 and 1522. Finally, it is worth mentioning an interesting seventeenth-century effort by Tommaso Maria Giovi to compile Cajetan's physics and metaphysics on the basis of his extant writings (cf. *Libri octo De Physica* (...) *Thomae a Vio Caietani*, Bologna 1683 and *Metaphysica eminentissimi et reuerendissimi P. F. Thomae a Vio Caietani*, Bologna 1688).

A contemporary of Thomas De Vio was Francesco Silvestri da Ferrara (d. 1528), called the Ferrariensis, who taught in Mantua, Milan, Ferrara and Bologna. In the history of Thomism, he is recalled mainly as a commentator on Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles* (Venice 1524). Ferrariensis engaged in significant discussions on the human soul, the principle of individuation, analogy, and the theory of knowledge. His commentaries on Aristotle include the *Annotationes in libros Posteriorum Aristotelis et sancti Thomae* (Venice 1517), the *Quaestiones luculentissimae in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis* (Venice 1601), and the *Quaestiones luculentissimae in tres libros de Anima Aristotelis cum additionibus ad easdem et aliis quaestionibus philosophicis Matthiae Aquarii* (Venice 1619). This last work was printed with the additions by Mattia Aquario (d. 1591), author of the *Dilucidationes in XII libros primae philosophiae Aristotelis* (ed. Rome 1584). Mattia Aquario taught in Milan, Rome, and Naples.

The *Editio Piana* 1570

The importance and value of Thomas' work in this period were undoubtedly enhanced by the influence of the Dominican Pope Pius V. In his bull *Mirabilis Deus* (April 11, 1567), the Pope set Thomas side by side with the Doctors of the

Church (Walz 1967, 156, 169–173) and presented his work as the best defense against heretical doctrines (doubtless an allusion to the Protestant Reformation). Afterwards, he ordered the printing of a high-quality edition of the first *Opera Omnia* of Aquinas (the so-called *Editio Piana*, Rome 1570), prepared at the studium housed in the Roman Priory of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Consisting of 17 volumes (with the *Tabula Aurea* of Pietro da Bergamo in the 18th vol.), the edition was undertaken by a commission composed of Cardinal Vincenzo Giustiniani (d. 1582), a former Master General of the Dominicans, and Tomás Manrique (or Manriquez d. 1573), Master of Sacred Palace, in collaboration with Remigio Nannini (or Nanni, d. 1581) and others (cf. Walz 1967, 159; Bataillon 1991, 142–143; Grendler 2006, 25–28). In these years, the General Chapters of the Dominican Order also determined a precise plan for the study of Aquinas and his commentators (Capreolus and Cajetan) for the centers of study and ordered the purchase of the *Editio Piana*. In this edition, the text of the *Summa Theologiae* and the *De ente et essentia* were accompanied by Cajetan's commentaries and by Ferrara's exposition on the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

Spain and Portugal

In Spain, the renewal and expansion of Thomism gained stimulus from the Paris Thomists. At the beginning of this process there emerged a fascinating character, the Flemish scholastic philosopher Peter Crockart of Brussels (d. 1514). Originally a disciple of the Scottish philosopher John Major (d. 1550), Peter found his way from the dominant school of Nominalism to Thomism, joined the Dominican Order, and published several philosophical commentaries. Among these, a note should be taken of his commentary on the whole of Aristotle's *Organon* (*Acutissimae quaestiones et quidem perutiles in singulos Aristotelis logicales libros* with the *Quaestiones super opusculum Sancti Thomae De ente et essentiali*, Paris 1509), the commentaries on the *Physics* and the *De anima* (*Argutissimae subtiles et fecundae quaestiones physicales* (...) *in octo libros Physicorum et in tres De anima*, Paris 1510), and an exposition on Peter of Spain's

logic (*Summularum artis dialecticae*, Lyon 1512). Crockart formed a very important pupil, Francisco de Vitoria (d. 1546). He and another Spanish Dominican, Diego de Deza (d. 1523), the Grand Inquisitor of Spain and a crucial supporter of Christopher Columbus, would play a decisive role in the development of Thomism in Spain, particularly at the University of Salamanca. Vitoria enters the history of human thought primarily as a co-founder of international law and political philosophy. He was especially noted for his contributions to just war theory, the Law of Nations (*ius gentium*), and the development of the concept of distributive justice (*iustitia distributiva*). Among his works, one should note the *Relectio de potestate civili* (1528) and the *Relectio de Indis et de iure belli* (a part of the *Relectiones Theologicae XII*, ed. Lyon 1557). Another important representative of the Salamanca school was Francisco de Vitoria's successor, Domingo de Soto (d. 1560) (Belda Plans 2000, 399–500). Besides his predominantly theological writings on grace, Domingo wrote numerous philosophical works reflecting a fairly original form of Thomism, including the *Summule* (Burgos, 1529), *In libros posteriorum Aristotelis, sive de Demonstratione absolutissima commentaria* (Venice 1574), and in particular the *Super octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis commentaria* (Salamanca 1555). In this last work, Soto expounded a theory of bodily motion (*motus uniformiter difformis*), which is in a way very close to the later theories of Galileo (Wallace 1997, 271–273). Galileo read Soto and was clearly aware of the Spanish Dominican's physics. The best-known representative of the Salamanca and Valladolid school, however, is undoubtedly Domingo Báñez (lat. Bannes, d. 1604), a pupil of Diego de Chaves (d. 1592), Melchior Cano (d. 1560), Pedro de Soto, (d. 1563), and Diego de Chaves (d. 1592). His theological writings include the *Scholastica Commentaria in Primam Partem Angelici Doctoris* (Salamanca 1584, 1588), the *Scholastica Commentaria in Secundam Secundae Angelici Doctoris* (Salamanca 1584, 1594), and the *Apologia Fratrum Predicatorum* (1595), and made an important contribution of the discussion on predestination and the divine

knowledge of future contingents. He also presents a number of philosophical ideas on the human soul and intellect and makes a contribution to the philosophy of nature. Among his philosophical works, one should mention the *Commentaria et quaestiones in duos Aristotelis Stagyrtae de Generatione et corruptione libros* (Salamanca 1585) and his book on logic, the *Institutiones minoris Dialecticae quas Summulas vocant* (Salamanca 1599). Among Báñez's students, several excelled in philosophy, especially Diego Mas (d. 1608) and Juan Sanchez Sedeño (d. 1615). Mas, who taught mainly at Valencia and Salamanca, became famous along with Ch. Javelli as one of the first authors of a systematic metaphysics that was not a commentary on Aristotle's text (*Metaphysica disputatio de ente et eius proprietatibus*, Valencia 1587). Sanchez composed a book of logic (*Aristotelis Logica Magna*, Salamanca 1600). He was familiar with Hervaeus and Crockart. Sanchez still attracts the interest of logicians today (Lacca 2012, 109–124). Another very original Spanish Thomist was Francisco de Araujo (d. 1664) with his two-part commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (*Commentariorum in universam Aristotelis Metaphysicam*, Salamanca 1617, 1631).

In a way, Thomism in the Renaissance period achieved a natural completion and a new direction with the so-called Baroque Thomism of the Portuguese Dominican John of St. Thomas (João Poinso, d. 1644). After his studies at the Universities of Coimbra and Louvain, John taught at the University of Alcalá (today a part of Madrid). His *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus* contains an exposition of logic and philosophy of nature (physics and psychology). John's work thoroughly utilizes the whole Thomistic philosophical tradition and presents a remarkable theory of signs, itself the subject of long-standing interest among many philosophers.

Impact and Legacy

Thomistic philosophy in the Renaissance period, taken in the broad sense as extending 1350–1650, was marked by six important historical

developments: radical Averroist Aristotelianism in Italy, Humanism, the witch trials, the Protestant Reformation, the foundation of the Society of Jesus, and the discovery of the New World.

Medieval Thomism had already studied the Arabic commentators on Aristotle, especially Averroes, and this interest had at once enriched Thomism and helped it to recognize unacceptable doctrinal solutions. In the Renaissance, this exchange led to a confrontation between Thomists and the world of Italian lay teachers and philosophers, especially on the issue of the philosophical repudiation of the soul's natural immortality. The result was a Thomistic polemic against such men as Nicoletto Vernia (d. 1499) and his students Pietro Pomponazzi (d. 1525) and Agostino Nifo (d. 1538). Nifo, however, would eventually become an important ally of the Thomists (cf. Nardi 1958, 383). In this controversy, perhaps the most intense debate took place between Bartolomeo Spina da Pisa (d. 1546) and Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio (cf. Tavuzzi 1995, 47–58). In his *Propugnaculum Aristotelis de immortalitate animae contra Thomam Caietanum* (ed. Venice 1519), Spina was de facto arguing against Pomponazzi as much as against Cajetan.

The Thomists' encounter with Humanism constituted a similar chapter in history. Although the Thomists never adhered to the principles of Renaissance Humanism, they never ceased having an active exchange with it and regularly engaged in public debates with its leaders. The most important debates took place between the following figures: Cajetan and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola at Ferrara (about 1494); Cajetan and Erasmus of Rotterdam (Cossio 34–35, 231–239); Girolamo Savonarola and Pico della Mirandola; Paolo Barbò da Soncino and Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola; Vitoria and Erasmus; as well as Juan Luis Vives. One of the positive consequences of this exchange of ideas seems to have been an increased interest in the Greek philosophical commentaries on Aristotle (e.g., Francesco Silvestri da Ferrara) and other ancient schools of thought such as Neo-Platonism (e.g., Javelli), as well as a greater interest in classical and biblical languages in general. Although the trial and execution of the former Dominican

and Renaissance pantheist Giordano Bruno in 1600 is well known to the general public, this event had no practical consequence on the history of the Thomist school.

A number of important Thomists in this period (e.g., Prierias, Spina, Deza) actively participated as judges or consultants of the inquisitorial courts, whether in cases of heresy or witchcraft (cf. Abbiati et al. 1984, 218–228, 254–266). These authors also left a number of remarkable writings in the field of demonology, which are interesting from a philosophical point of view because of their conception of the influence of separate substances (demons) on the human soul and matter, and for their theories of separate substances as possible causes of physical transformation and movement; e.g., Spina, *De strigibus*, 1523 or Prierias, *De strigimagarum daemonumque mirandis libri tres*, 1521 (cf. Tavuzzi 2007, 43–46, 109; Id. 1997, 58–59, 102, 124–127).

There is no doubt that Martin Luther (d. 1546), John Calvin (d. 1564) and the subsequent Protestant Reformation and Catholic Reform affected the whole of Europe – and indeed the whole Christian world. From the first, a number of Thomists were engaged in intense combat with the thought of Luther, like Prierias or Cajetan. Cajetan, for example, entered into direct discussion with Luther at Augsburg in October of 1518, but this event had no direct impact on the subsequent course of events. It is also true that many Thomists, especially Domingo de Soto, Pedro de Soto, Melchior Cano, Bartolomeo Spina, actively participated in the Council of Trent (1545–1563), but the substantial part of this conflict was played out at the theological level (the interpretation of the Bible, the question of Tradition, the authority of the Church, the question of justification and the sacraments, etc.). Some indirect results of Europe's confessional division included an ever-increasing skepticism about philosophical argumentation and the loss in many places of university teaching chairs by Catholic and thus Thomistic professors. Another indirect consequence of the Protestant Reformation was that, in the territory of the Holy Roman Empire, various religious centers of study closed entirely,

the interaction between different scholastic schools of thought declined, and the demand for official doctrinal unity in the Catholic camp grew, rendering open conflict between different philosophical schools undesirable – particularly in public, though confessional, universities in Catholic countries that had strong Protestant minorities.

A very difficult chapter in the history of Thomism is the role played by the most important new religious order of the era, the Society of Jesus, formed in 1539/1540 by Ignatius of Loyola (d. 1556). Although the Jesuits declared their interest in the study of Aquinas's thought from the beginning, with the rapid expansion of their Order, they soon created their own school of thought. Already by the end of the sixteenth century, the Jesuits came into sharp conflict with the main representatives of "integral" or "strict" Thomism, a group led mainly by the Salamanca Dominicans. The main protagonists of the dispute were the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina (d. 1600), a pupil of Pedro da Fonseca (d. 1599) and a professor at the University of Évora in Portugal (which published his famous book the *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione Concordia*, Lisbon 1588), and Domingo Bañez, who responded sharply to Molina in his *Apologia Fratrum Praedicatorum* (1595). Both camps had significant early followers. On the Molinist side, these included Pedro Arrubal (d. 1608) and Gregorio de Valencia (d. 1603); on the Thomist side, Tomás de Lemos (d. 1629) and Diego Álvarez (d. 1635), together with the Roman Commission (*Congregationes De auxiliis* 1598–1607). This doctrinal controversy did not reach a definitive conclusion. The basic issue was the question of human freedom and the influence of or human dependence on divine grace and God's power (the *praemotio physica* of the Thomists), but this also entailed the question of God's knowledge, especially the knowledge of future contingent events (the *scientia simplex* of Thomists and the *scientia media* of Molinists). Although this problem is of a theological nature, it undoubtedly has a strong metaphysical component. Later on, the issue made its way into

philosophical courses as an example of the nature of causality, as in the French "baroque" Thomist Antoine Goudin (d. 1695, *Philosophia iuxta inconcussa tutissimaque D. Thomae dogmata*, IV pars, *Metaphysica*, Lyon 1670). From a philosophical perspective, the issue is all about the dependence of secondary causes on the First Cause and the metaphysical limits of human freedom. Thomists defended the primacy of the First Cause. Perhaps, the Jesuit philosophical school's most influential Spanish thinker was Francisco Suárez (d. 1617). He not only commented on Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* but also wrote a number of original works, among which the *Disputationes metaphysicae* (1597) stands out. So-called Suarezinism is an original symbiosis of Scotism, Nominalism, and Thomism. Its relation to the Thomist school is difficult to determine. In the *De auxiliis* controversy, Suarez took a somewhat moderate position, known to history as "congruism." However, the Thomist critique also aimed at Suarez. In this and subsequent time periods, we see Thomism beginning to have a significant place outside of the Dominican Order. Religious Orders such as the Minims, Discalced Mercedarians, Discalced Carmelites, Trinitarians, and Benedictines all established Thomistic colleges.

The last major chapter of Thomism in the Renaissance period was its expansion into the New World, particularly in Central and South America and the Philippines. At the beginning of Spanish colonization, the Salamanca school and the Spanish Dominicans in general (Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de las Casas, d. 1566) defended the *ius gentium* or the natural right of the Native Americans. The leaders of the Salamanca school began to establish universities in the newly discovered territory that were under the protection of the Pope and the Spanish government. The most important foundations were as follows: in 1518, the General Stadium, and the future University of Santo Domingo in Santo Domingo; in 1551, the University of Lima San Marcos founded by Tomás de San Martín (d. 1555); in 1580, the University of Bogotá; in 1619 the University of Santiago de Chile; in 1611, the foundation of

the *Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario*, the future (1645) University of Santo Tomás; we should also note the academic activities of Juan Solano (d. 1580, the future founder of the College of St. Thomas in Rome at the Minerva), in Cuzco (Peru) and of his confrere Francisco de La Cruz (d. 1660). These academic centers now began to transmit Europe's scholastic tradition (in the case of the Dominicans, the Thomistic doctrine) and produce their own academic literature.

Cross-References

- [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- [Cydones, Demetrius](#)
- [Cydones, Prochorus](#)
- [Galilei, Galileo](#)
- [Javelli, Giovanni Crisostomo](#)
- [Law in the Renaissance, Roman](#)
- [Law, Renaissance Idea of Natural](#)
- [Luther, Martin](#)
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- [Predestination in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- [Scholarios, George](#)
- [School of Salamanca](#)
- [Soncino, Paolo Barbo](#)
- [Soto, Domingo de](#)
- [Universities in the Renaissance](#)
- [Versor, Johannes](#)

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Thomismus

► Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy

Thrasylbulus Ricensus

► Khunrath, Heinrich

Thucydides

Born: Athens, c. 455 B.C.

Died: c. 400 B.C.

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Abstract

This entry examines the impact of Thucydides in the Latin West on political thought, from Leonardo Bruni to Hobbes.

Biography

The Athenian Thucydides wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War* (431–404 BC), in which he himself participated. Having lost Amphipolis to the Spartans in 424/423, he was exiled, but was probably able to return after the capitulation of Athens. Thucydides lived to see the end of the war, but did not have time to finish his work, so he is believed to have died around 400 BC.

The *History* has always been admired for the speeches of politicians and generals that we find interspersed with the ordinary narrative. In a completely innovative manner, they constitute a dialectic investigation into the nature of politics and power. Thucydides maintained that while keeping as close as possible to the general sense of a given speech, he would make the speakers say what, in his opinion, the situation had called for (1.22.1). Other celebrated passages are the proem with the so-called *Archaeology*, treating the early history of Greece (1.1–22); the description of the plague in Athens (2.47.3–54); and the description of the civil war in Corcyra (3.81–84).

During the Middle Ages, Western readers had no direct knowledge of Thucydides' work. This changed around 1400, with the renewal of interest in Greek in Italy. An early student of Thucydides was the Florentine humanist Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444). In his speech for the condottiere Nanna Strozzi (1427–28), he imitated Pericles'

funeral oration, to the point where he boasted of the popular government of Florence, just as Pericles had exalted Athens' democratic constitution. Bruni's oration marks a shift in Western political thought which had until then generally accepted Aristotle's somewhat negative view on democracy.

The *History* gained wider circulation when it was translated into Latin by Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457); finished in 1452, Valla's translation remained in use until the nineteenth century. Not least with regard to Thucydides' political vocabulary, Valla came to influence later translators of the *History*, among them Philip Melanchthon and Giovanni della Casa.

Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), *praeceptor Germaniae* and Luther's close collaborator, translated several speeches, but even more important is his Latin version of Thucydides' chapters of the civil war in Corcyra, the description of how politics changed the meaning of words. First published in 1542 as the opening text of his *Instructions in Dialectic*, it became hugely popular and was reprinted numerous times.

During the sixteenth century, Latin translations of the speeches abound, their prefaces stressing how they contain important political lessons. We see a practical example of this in the work of the Italian diplomat and writer Giovanni della Casa (1503–1556) who translated several speeches in the mid-1540s as a rhetorical exercise to prepare himself for his own official speeches. There is also a strong Thucydidean influence in Casa's political letters.

Thomas Hobbes' (1588–1679) English translation was first printed in 1629. In the *History*, Hobbes found many of the ideas fundamental for his later political thought, such as the view on human nature, the function of fear, and the effect of ambition on political associations. For both writers, their investigation into the nature of men was the point of departure for political analysis: man being what he is, how may we create, and preserve, the good society? Thucydides and Hobbes shared a skepticism towards democracy, and although aristocracy was perhaps a better form of government, it was still liable to break up into warring factions. In his *On the Life and History of*

Thucydides (Hobbes 1629, a2r), Hobbes emphasizes that Athens under Pericles had in fact a government of one man and that Pericles himself was of royal descent. Apparently, Hobbes read into the *History* a preference for monarchy, and he used Thucydides' account of Greek fifth-century politics to argue in favor of absolute monarchy, in opposition to classical political theories like those of Aristotle and Cicero.

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Tignosi, Niccolò

Born: 30 March 1402, Foligno

Died: 14 September 1474, Pisa

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Abstract

Niccolò Tignosi was a physician and professor of medicine active in Tuscany (especially Florence) in the second and third quarters of the fifteenth century. More or less at the same time in which Johannes Argyropoulos began his famous activity of interpreting Aristotle there, Tignosi published a commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which received a rather hostile response from his contemporaries, prompting him to defend himself in a very interesting opusculum. He also wrote on Aristotelian logic and psychology and penned a series of historical and political treatises, displaying a desire to remain close to the Medici family. His works point to the numerous intersections between humanism and scholasticism in Renaissance Florence.

Alternate Names

[Tignosius de Fulgineo, Nicolaus](#)

Biography

Little is known about the education of Niccolò (the son of Iacobus, a doctor of law), who hailed

from Foligno, but whose university studies may have taken place in Bologna, Siena, and/or Perugia (the following sketch is based mainly on Sensi 1971–1972; see also Thorndike 1927, 1929, pp. 161–170; Rotondò 1958; Barale Hennemann 1974, pp. 33–111; Field 1988, pp. 136–158). Rotondò maintains that he was taught by Ugo Benzi and Gaspare Sighicelli in Siena, but several times Tignosi describes himself as a student of Paul of Venice (who taught in Perugia from November 1424 and in Siena in 1427). For at least 1 year (1426–1427), Tignosi taught logic in Bologna. In 1428, he was engaged in military activities in Milan. We then find him studying and teaching medicine in Perugia (1428 to c. 1438). He also taught medicine (“theorica”) and philosophy in Florence from c. 1439 (an important time in Florence because of the presence of the Church Council there between January 1439 and September 1443). Probably early on, he lectured there on Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, for which he requested a fresh translation from his humanist friend Giovanni Tortelli. Shortly afterward, Tignosi moved to Arezzo, where by 1442 he had married Angela, the daughter of Count Domenico de Marsuppini, and had acquired Aretine citizenship. A new period of teaching in Florence started around 1450 and lasted until 1464. During this time, Tignosi authored the *Expugnatio Constantinopolitana*, published his commentary on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (with relative defense treatise), and supposedly instructed Marsilio Ficino. (The evidence for the latter, uncomfortably slender, is summarized in Field 1988, p. 140, n. 43.) He was called to teach in Arezzo in 1464 (Vasoli 2006); we then find him in Todi (1468–1471) and in Narni (1472) before his teaching career resumes in Pisa (where the Florentine *studio* had just been transferred) in 1473–1474 (the year of his death). To this later period belong Tignosi’s remaining works, including *De origine Fulginatum*, *De ideis*, and the commentary on *De anima*, completed shortly before his death.

Although it is difficult to reconstruct Tignosi’s intellectual network outside of Florence (except for his ties to Paul of Venice), in Florence he had numerous friendly

contacts (deserving further exploration) with the intellectual avant-garde, including Tortelli, Poggio Bracciolini, Benedetto Accolti, Carlo Marsuppini, as well as Donato Acciaiuoli and Ficino. It is unclear what Tignosi’s relationship was, if any, with Johannes Argyropoulos, who in February 1457 started lecturing publicly on Aristotle’s *Ethics* in Florence and whose interpretation Tignosi opposed in the dedication letter to his *Ethics*.

Impact and Legacy

Other than being (supposedly) Ficino’s teacher, Tignosi is best known for a controversy that erupted in Florence, probably between 1461 and 1464, after the publication of his Latin commentary on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. The commentary (studied in Rotondò 1958, pp. 228–233; Sensi 1971–1972, pp. 385–388; Field 1988, pp. 140–145, 148–150; Kraye 1995, pp. 101–102; Lines 1999a, b, 2001, 2002, pp. 192–206, 490–491) is based on Leonardo Bruni’s translation of the text (1416/1417), reflecting Tignosi’s interest in recent translations (used also for his commentaries on the *Posterior Analytics* and *De anima*). The presentation copy, dedicated to Piero de’ Medici, must date to 1461, when Piero was the *gonfaloniere*, but the work was probably written earlier. The *Commenta* is unusual in terms of its approach. While treating philosophical issues, the work is obviously directed to a mixed audience, a good portion of which has no formal training in philosophy. It, therefore, explains fairly elementary philosophical concepts while also offering elements that make the work less scholastic. Indeed, Tignosi eschews *quaestiones*, neglects the traditional practice of *divisio textus* (i.e., of breaking down the text into its constitutive elements), occasionally uses Greek, and provides abundant historical examples (from both classical and contemporary times) as well as quotations from poetry (Kraye 1995, pp. 101–102). It is thus quite different from many contemporary Florentine commentaries on the same work (e.g., Guglielmo Becchi, Donato Acciaiuoli). In terms of its main sources, it

depends strongly on Averroes, Albertus Magnus, and St. Augustine (Lines 2002, p. 193).

Tignosi evidently misjudged the expectations of his commentary's audience; reactions to it were strong. Tignosi was forced to defend himself against his detractors (which included both humanists and scholastics) in a treatise entitled *Nicolai Fulginatis ad Cosmam Medicem in illos qui mea in Aristotelis commentaria criminantur opusculum* (see Rotondò 1958, pp. 233–241; Sensi 1971–1972, pp. 388–395; Lines 2002, pp. 206–214). In this work, Tignosi had to answer both for his practice of providing strongly philosophical explanations of the text and for his use of historical examples and poetical quotations. The work, which is sophisticated and deeply interesting, offers a glimpse into the cultural climate of Florence in a period in which the tastes of some tended to be very much confined either to literature and history or to philosophy. Tignosi presents himself as wishing to bridge the two: his appeals to poetry and history are actually, he says, an imitation of what Aristotle himself had done. His example is not, however, one that is immediately embraced by his contemporaries, although it makes for interesting comparisons with the approach of the Frenchman Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples a few decades later (Kraye 1995; Lines 1999b, p. 266, 2007, p. 289) and with that of Bernardo Segni in 1550 (Lines 2013, pp. 845, 852, 856–858).

Other aspects of Tignosi's work that have been examined but merit further attention include his exaltation of medicine over law and his "philosophy of ends" (Field 1988, pp. 142–158); his views of friendship, his relationship with the Medici family, and his political statements (Sère 2007, pp. 373–381); his theory of the soul and presumed Averroism (on the basis of his *De anima* commentary, published in 1551, it seems that Tignosi accepted some of Averroes' views; see Hasse 2004); and his relationship to Florentine Platonism (his treatise *De ideis* suggests that Tignosi was opposed to the kind of reconciliation of Plato and Aristotle attempted by Donato Acciaiuoli; for comments and historiographical summary, see Sensi 1971–1972, pp. 414–422). Finally, interesting work has been done (but much more remains

to be explored) on Tignosi's work in relationship to artistic theory and practice in Quattrocento Florence (Pfisterer 1999, 2001), a subject that his writings (particularly the *Ethics* commentary) mention fairly often.

Tignosi's status as a figure of some (if minor) prominence in Florence seems indicated by his appearance as a fictional character ("Niccolò") in Bracciolini's dialog on the relative merits of medicine and civil law in the second part of his *Historia disceptativa convivialis* (1450). He is possibly also the "Nicolaus medicus" of Lorenzo Pisano's *Dialogi quinque* (late 1450s or early 1460s) (Mercati 1938, pp. 284–285). Field underlines his possible influence on Bracciolini's legal humanism and on Ficino's philosophical viewpoints but is doubtful of his broader significance after the 1450s (Field 1988, p. 155). Further studies will confirm the contours of his legacy.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Averroism, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Bracciolini, Poggio](#)
- ▶ [Ethics, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- ▶ [Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques](#)

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Tignosius de Fulgineo, Nicolaus

► Tignosi, Niccolò

Time in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

As a central dimension of the Human experience, the conception of time has undergone

deep transformations during the Renaissance period, in relationship with global evolutions in European arts, sciences, and metaphysics. The Aristotelian definition of time as “a number of motion in respect to before and after” was challenged to open the way to an ontological determination of time, independent from motion and connected to the divine structure of beings in the universe. From Ficino to most innovative thinkers like Telesio or Patrizi. Bruno in particular introduced a relativistic perspective and showed that we should rather speak of a multiplicity of times. The reflection on the difference between time and duration has been another technical issue developed by Renaissance thinkers: since time was no more referred to in the Ptolemaic cosmos, the concept of duration was used to designate the internal time of things and existing beings, as Suarez makes clear at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This idea of time as an inner reality also had important applications in the field of literature and moral philosophy, as we see for instance in Shakespeare and Montaigne. Although Modern Philosophers like Descartes or Pascal seem to break with the scholastic approach of time, it is interesting to note that the pre-Newtonian concept of “absolute time” is rooted in Renaissance theories of time and the development of Copernicanism leading to the construction of a new reference frame, where the Suarezian “imaginary time” plays a central role.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

More than in any other period in the history of thought, the complexity and the fallibility of the philosophical definitions of time have been the object of close scrutiny during the Renaissance. While most of the medieval thinkers concentrate on Aristotle's *Physics* IV, 10–14, and tackle obscurities or objections that can be raised about the Aristotelian conception of time, the rise of humanist scholarship combined with a renewed access to ancient doctrines (Neoplatonism, but also Epicureanism, Stoicism, or Averroism) broadens the field of available references and

leads Renaissance thinkers to question the authority of the Aristotelian framework. Far from disappearing outright, the medieval language of time maintains itself in those debates: the distinction between the three modes of duration, eternity (*æternitas*), perpetuity (*ævum*), and time (*tempus*) as introduced in the course of the thirteenth century by the *Summa Halensis*, still informs theoretical inquiries. But during the Renaissance, the philosophical study of time aims not so much at solving problems of interpretation raised by Aristotle's texts as at helping to build a global and coherent view of the cosmos. Insofar as Neoplatonism provides a system of thought where time is primarily referred to eternity and motion is secondary to time itself, Aristotle's canonical definition of time as "a number of motion in respect to before and after" is indeed replaced by an alternative ontology. Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) is the prominent figure of such a transformation: according to him, time must be regarded as something of the world soul and, for this reason, it can neither be produced by motion nor be an accident or a property of it. In the Plotinian view that he promotes, time is "life" itself as it flows from the activity of the world soul and is tied up to eternity through a hierarchy of derivative forms of being. Ficino's philosophical program is coupled with a religious agenda, building a new Christianized cosmology and also, to this extent, facing the difficulties of compromise – as one can see from the uneasy combination of the linear conception of Christian time with the cyclical model exposed in Plato's *Timæus* (Prins 2014).

That time is a moving image of eternity does not mean, however, that it is a mere shadow or appearance. In the Neoplatonic view, it pertains to the very structure of things as they are ordered and divinely produced. Neoplatonic thinkers are eager to underline what may be the deepest flaw of Aristotelianism, namely the confusion between the knowledge of time (how do we come to know it?) and the ontological perspective (what is time and what is required for it to be?). Indeed, that the perception of time implies the existence of motion does not mean, as Aristotelians contend, that the very existence of time actually depends on motion, as Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) already suggests (Schmitt 1967). Time is prior to motion

according to Telesio (1509–1588), who sees it as an independent being having its existence in one-self and being like a receptacle of natural movements (Schumann 2004). Along with Bernardino Telesio and Francesco Patrizi (1529–1597), Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) develops a critical approach to Aristotle within a whole system of thought which, notwithstanding a few theoretical elements borrowed from the *Physics*, has no other goal than taking over the Aristotelian paradigm. Bruno's achievements are probably the most impressive as regards the theory of time. He views time as a species of duration and accordingly contends that it should not be seen as ontologically dependent on motion: it would be more correct to say that motion is related to time since we know of duration by looking at things as they move or change (Hutton 1977). But Bruno is also the heir of the Copernican revolution and for this reason, he considers that the very spectacle of heavens cannot be the measure of time any longer. The destruction of the Ptolemaic cosmology implies breaking with time as referred to the perfection of the *primum mobile* and favor, instead, an earthly reference, one point of view among an infinite variety of others (Seidengart 2015). According to Bruno's vision, there are many times rather than one time, each local time being one "age," that is to say, one aspect of eternity. The Platonic dualism between time and eternity plays an important role here: while "eternity" is seen as the genus of time or absolute duration, "age" is a particular fragment of it which is determined in connection to things in motion. Copernic himself did not feel the need of any updated conception of time, but he clearly provides a backdrop for understanding Bruno's theory as well as future attempts to think of time as different from motion and from celestial motion in particular (Blumenberg 1973; Daniel 1981).

But that some prominent Renaissance thinkers have chosen the tenuous bond of time with motion as a common target should not preclude another fact: namely, that Aristotle's authority has been defended throughout the Renaissance period. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Fathers of Coimbra, whose influence in European universities is well-known, continue to defend the idea that motion must be prior to time as what produces time and to focus on Aristotelian issues.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Now, does the autonomy of time as a concept mean that time is something real? For instance, can we hold time as an immaterial entity that flows without any reference to natural things?

The problem of the reality of time is all the more vivid since late medieval authors questioned the idea that time might be an independent being. William of Ockham's razor but also Duns Scotus's understanding of "existence" have led to the claim that time does not exist as something distinct from the existence of movement and, as a consequence, that such a distinction has no necessity, existence and intrinsic duration of a thing being one and the same. This is of course a strongly anti-Neoplatonic allegation: if time is not a property of moving things, it surely cannot be a property of an unchanging thing as eternity; it must be intrinsic to things themselves and therefore identical with them. Moreover, time is not the right word if we want to speak of what is really passing by: we should rather speak of "duration." Such a de-realization of time where time is made a property of the individual beings can be traced back to the Middle Ages, but it is given more influence at the end of the Renaissance, philosophers considering "not so much the relation between a thing and time, than the intrinsic duration of the thing itself" (Porro 1996). Following this trend, Francisco Suarez (1548–1617) has defended the view that duration is distinct from existence only "ratione" in his *Disputatio* 50, another anti-Aristotelian idea that has been challenged by the Fathers of Coimbra (Carvalho 2001). Of course, if duration is intrinsic to things, it is a problem to explain how time can be measured. Suarez maintains this possibility with the notion of an imaginary succession conceived as homogeneous and infinite to be applied to the enduring of a thing. What he calls "extrinsic time" designates time as measured by the reference to celestial movement and it is to be distinguished from the intrinsic account of time (Daniel 1981).

But when questioning the reality of time, one should not overlook the psychological side of the problem as it has developed not only in philosophy (Cassirer 1927) but also in the Renaissance literary tradition in order to explain how we think

of time, but also how we think and live *in* time (Edwards 2013). An important tendency in literature and arts leads authors to elaborate the personal experience of passage and mutability through "time-centered fictions" as we can see in Shakespeare who, as he is dependent on the Augustinian representation of time, holds time as being both a destroyer and revealer of truth (Hill 1997). This evolution, from the religious notion of the transience of life to the secular idea that temporal passage is a necessary condition of human experience, finds another striking expression in Montaigne's *Essays* who, better than any other philosopher, underscores that time is the most fundamental dimension of the self and the thinking of time must be linked with the very feeling of its successive flow.

Nevertheless, the problem remains to determine how human thought relates to time and this is quite a polemical matter in the field of Renaissance debates. Indeed, medieval authors, while theorizing the notion of a spiritual time proper to spiritual substances and distinct from the time of natural substances, have constantly refused to apply it to human souls (Steel 2001; Blum 2007). When Ficino speaks of "mora," a notion close to the medieval concept of discrete duration, he wants to preserve the human soul's immortality and he accordingly endows it with pure spirituality. The idea of a connection between time and the soul is not new; it can be found in Aristotle's *Physics* itself (*Physics* IV, 14). But along with Averroes' qualification of time as a mind-dependent attribute, reduced to the mental action of numbering, it has received wider consideration, especially in Italy during the course of the sixteenth century. Some followers of Alexander of Aphrodisias have attempted to think of intellection as a temporal reality, produced by a soul immersed within the natural duration of things. To this purpose, from Simone Porzio to Francesco Piccolomini, the Aristotelian concept of "act" is applied to human thought and sustained by a renewed description of the psychology of faculties and their mutual relationships. In such a context, time is conceived as an aspect of acts, either mental, corporeal, or involving both mind and body, such as sensation, intellection, or judgment. Because these acts occupy a very short lapse of

time or are said to be “instantaneous,” they are sometimes considered to be different components of one temporal activity rather than being autonomous operations or events (Dubouclez 2015). The old model connecting intellectual activity with time through the means of imagination, as it appears for instance in Thomas Aquinas, is challenged within this materialistic vision of man. Duration is no more a simple attribute of existence, but a real passage implying materiality and mortality.

Impact and Legacy

The legacy of the Renaissance conceptions of time must be appreciated in the light of the historiographical problem of continuity and discontinuity from Renaissance to modern times. In this respect, we might say that the Renaissance explanation of time, both Aristotelian and Neoplatonic, has mixed outcomes.

Indeed, we find in Descartes and Pascal a common attitude, namely the rejection of all philosophical definitions of time, vividly opposing the word-by-word method of explanation to be found in scholastic textbooks and even the very project of inquiring on time. Descartes in particular holds that duration and time are notions clear by themselves and that philosophical definitions obscure them and produce artificial difficulties. In the meantime, Descartes develops important reflections on the matter of time to be connected with late scholastic discussions, as debates around the doctrine of the “continuous creation” indicate. Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) refuses the Cartesian idea that time is made of divisible parts or instants and also the conception of an intrinsic time proper to enduring things and especially to the *ego*; he has indeed a realistic conception of time as a global flow, while Descartes’ distinction between “duratio” and “tempus” (*Principles of Philosophy*, I, 55 and 57) is close to the distinction between “internal time” and “external time” in philosophical textbooks (Edwards 2013). But there are other aspects of the Cartesian doctrine that look hard to reconcile with the Aristotelian

views: for instance, when Descartes replies to Arnauld that the same kind of “succession” is to be found in the thinking substance as in natural things, he has a unified conception of time as flowing in the same manner in natural substances and in the self (Solère 1997). One might see Descartes’ theory of time as “temporal dualism” articulating a physical notion and a psychological notion of it, time being both a reality to be divided into parts and an innate idea and attribute of the thinking substance, announcing the Kantian notion of “a priori form” in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Waller 2014).

This is obviously one of the most fruitful aspects of late Renaissance conceptions of time, namely the prevalence of duration over the Aristotelian cosmological approach, leading to the radical individuation of time as we see in van Helmont, who conceives of time as a biological and indivisible principle (Debus 1977). And it should be underlined that such a conception has also cosmological consequences of its own. Indeed, within another tradition that Renaissance thinkers are supposed to have initiated, namely the pre-newtonian concept of “absolute time,” imagination is attributed to a central role in the building of such a temporal reference frame. Renaissance scholars have shown that the “absolutization” of time has to be related to the development of Copernicanism, providing a response to the immobilization of the celestial spheres which is the consequence of the downfall of the Ptolemaic cosmology (Ariotti 1973), but also to the Suarezian notion of “imaginary time” as a means of measuring the intrinsic time or duration of things, a conception that will be prolonged by Gassendi and Gassendists (Bexley 2011).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Astronomy](#)
- ▶ [Bruno, Giordano](#)
- ▶ [Castellani, Giulio](#)
- ▶ [Copernicanism](#)
- ▶ [Copernicus, Nicolaus](#)
- ▶ [Cosmology in the Renaissance](#)

- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Generation in Renaissance Sciences](#)
- [Intellect, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- [Nicholas of Cusa](#)
- [Suárez, Francisco](#)

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Time-Keeping Technology

- [Clocks, Renaissance](#)

Timpler, Clemens

Born: 1563/1564, Stolpen (Meissen/Saxony)
Died: 28 February 1624, Steinfurt (Westphalia)

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Abstract

Clemens Timpler (1563/4–1624) was a Reformed Protestant and professor of philosophy at the Gymnasium illustre Arnoldinum in Steinfurt (Westphalia). He was an independent and innovative thinker. His textbook on metaphysics, first published in 1604 and reprinted at least eight times by 1616, was his most influential work. He was best known for his view that All that is Intelligible (omne intelligibile) – and not an entity (ens) – is the subject matter of metaphysics. His influence was hampered in

part because virtually none of his contemporaries agreed with his views concerning All that is Intelligible. His writings were cited – both critically and uncritically – during his lifetime and for many decades following his death.

Biography and Publications

Clemens Timpler was born in Stolpen (Meissen/Saxony) in 1563 or 1564. His father, Clemens (the elder), served as mayor of Stolpen. The father of his wife (Clara) was Jacob Birckner, who served as mayor in nearby Bischofswerda. Clemens Timpler (the younger) had at least three brothers and at least three sisters. All three of his sisters (Maria, Catherine, and Regine) married Lutheran ministers. Two of his brothers (Abraham and Georg) were Lutheran ministers; the third brother (Andreas) was a rector at a Lutheran school. Clemens Timpler appears to have become a crypto-Calvinist by about the year 1580.

Clemens Timpler enrolled at the University of Leipzig in the year 1580. However, he then left Leipzig and apparently did not return there until the late 1580s. During his absence, he spent some time at the Gymnasium illustre in Zerbst and possibly also in Padua. After returning to the University of Leipzig, he earned his Bachelor of Arts (1588) and Master of Arts (1589) degrees. Timpler was a private teacher there in May 1592 when he refused to sign the Lutheran Formula of Concord and was therefore expelled from the University. Timpler went from there – as a Reformed Protestant – to the University of Heidelberg, where he enrolled on September 28, 1592. At Heidelberg, he was an administrator at the Collegium Casimirianum residence and was active in academic life at the University. While in Heidelberg, he taught – apparently in the capacity of a private teacher – Bartholomaeus Keckermann (d. 1609).

He left Heidelberg in 1595 in order to succeed Otto Casmann (ca. 1562–1607) as professor of physics at the Gymnasium illustre Arnoldinum in Steinfurt (Westphalia). By about 1600, Timpler was a professor of philosophy and served as a

prorector (1596, 1599, 1605, 1614/1615, 1620/1621) there. In Steinfurt, he married Elisabeth, daughter of Rütger Deichmann, who was mayor and an alderman there. He had at least four children: Rodoger (1602–1655), Christoph, Clara (d. 1625), and Clemens (d. 1637). He remained a professor of philosophy there until his death on February 28, 1624.

During his 3 years in Heidelberg, he presided over at least five published disputations and held at least one published oration. While in Steinfurt, Timpler presided over numerous published disputations; he also published his textbooks on metaphysics (1604ff), general physics (1605ff), “inanimate” physics (Apsychologia) (1605ff), “animate” physics (empsychologia) (1607ff), ethics (1608ff), family life (oeconomica) (1610ff), politics (1611), logic (1612), rhetoric (1613), and optics and human physiognomy (1617). From 1606 onward, imprints of his textbook on metaphysics also included his short treatise on liberal arts (technologia). His collection of philosophical exercises was published in 1618.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Timpler profusely cites authorities throughout his published writings. Among ancient authorities, Aristotle and Sacred Scripture are the most often cited. Frequently cited are Cicero, Plato, Quintilian, Seneca, and Plutarch (in that order). Thomas Aquinas and Augustine of Hippo are the most cited medieval authors. The most frequently cited post-medieval authors overall are Bartholomaeus Keckermann, Jacob Zabarella, and Francis Suarez, in that order. In his textbooks on metaphysics, logic, and politics, the single most cited authors are Suarez (metaphysics), Petrus Ramus (logic), and Jean Bodin (politics), respectively.

However, Timpler appears to have arrived at his own viewpoints independently. When citing the writings of individual authors (e.g., Aristotle and Petrus Ramus), he agreed or disagreed with each individual author concerning a given individual point of doctrine that was being examined.

In the case of Ramus, Timpler disagreed with his individual viewpoints more often than not. In the case of Aristotle, Timpler might (in the course of discussing any given point of doctrine) cite individual passages of Aristotle in support of a given viewpoint and also other individual passages of Aristotle against that same given viewpoint.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Timpler's views concerning the subject matter of metaphysics – All that is Intelligible – provide the context for much of his innovation and originality. All that is Intelligible is divided into something (aliquid) and nothing (nihil). Something is either positive something or negative something (privation). Positive something is either essence (essentia) or entity (ens). All that is Intelligible comprises being (est) and non-being (non-est). This distinction lies at the core of the principle of contradiction, thereby linking logic and metaphysics. Timpler briefly mentions quiddity (“being”) in his textbook on logic.

Timpler also set himself apart from his academic contemporaries with his view that there are three souls in man. Also apparently novel was his distinction between moral good (a subcategory of absolute goodness) and morality (a subcategory of respective goodness that was apparently also considered ontologically basic). Timpler apparently placed both of these two viewpoints within the contexts of (i) his concept of All that is Intelligible as well as (ii) his distinction between absolute and respective entities.

In his textbook on inanimate physics (apsychologia), Timpler also departed from normal practice in his time with his view that there are two elements (water and earth) instead of four. Also noteworthy was the strong emphasis that he placed on the advanced study of rhetoric. The interdisciplinary importance of the study of “tropes and allegory” (tropologia) is noted in his textbook on rhetoric. And in his short treatise on the liberal arts (technologia), he appears to have been the first author to discuss (in the year 1606) the concept of a “systematic textbook” (systema).

Impact and Legacy

Timpler's textbook on metaphysics had the greatest impact among his published writings.

A preface – and in later editions, commentary – by Rudolph Goclenius the elder (1547–1628) may have contributed to this. Very controversial was Timpler's view that All that is Intelligible (omne intelligibile) – and not entity (ens) – is subject matter of metaphysics. His view was rejected – or simply not adopted – by virtually all of his contemporaries. However, the phrase All that is Intelligible was then utilized – beginning no later than the year 1631 – as the subject matter of gnostologia. Gnostologia served as an umbrella concept for the study of all academic disciplines, including metaphysics.

The term ontology (ontologia) was apparently first used by Jacob Lorhard in a treatise, the *Ogdoas Scholastica*, that was published in the year 1606. Timpler does not refer to ontology in his writings. However, in his *Ogdoas Scholastica*, Lorhard virtually copied basic components of Timpler's textbook on metaphysics.

The last known imprint of any of Timpler's writings appeared in the year 1625. His writings continued to be cited in academic writings (with gradually decreasing frequency) until the early eighteenth century. Although Timpler's writings did not continue to be utilized as long as the writings by some of his contemporaries – for example, Bartholomaeus Keckermann – the view can be advanced that Timpler's originality and his logical ability were exceptional.

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Additional authorized imprints: Hanau 1606, 1608, 1612, and 1616 – Additional unauthorized imprints: Lich 1604, Marburg 1607, Frankfurt am Main 1607 and 1612. All imprints thereof beginning with the Hanau 1606 imprint included his *Technologia ... de natura et differentiis artium liberalium*.

Physica seu philosophiae naturalis systema methodicum ... pars prima, complectens physicam generalem.

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Tiraqueau, André

Born: 1488, Fontenay-le-Comte

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Abstract

André Tiraqueau was a French jurist of the sixteenth century, who was notably a counselor of the Parisian Parliament. His works deal with many topics and concern both Roman law and Canon law but also French customs and judgments of the courts. His method applies humanist principles to the study of the law, without a complete break with the techniques of medieval jurisprudence.

Synonyms

[Andreas Tiraquellus](#)

Biography

André Tiraqueau was a French jurist of the sixteenth century born at Fontenay-le-Comte (Poitou) in 1488 and died at Paris in 1558 (Brejon [1937](#)). He certainly studied law at the University of Poitiers, which allowed him to become a judge in his hometown. In 1512, he married Marie Cailler, daughter of the “lieutenant criminel” (legal officer) of Fontenay-le-Comte. Then Tiraqueau became himself “lieutenant général.” He declined the office of counselor of the Parliament of Bordeaux, but became a counselor of the Parisian Parliament in 1541. There, he tied friendships with famous jurists, such as Charles Du Moulin, Michel de l’Hospital, and Christofle de Thou. The end of his career was notably marked by a trip to Rome in 1552–1553. Throughout his career, Tiraqueau published numerous law books.

Moreover, after his death in 1558, his son – who succeeded him in his office of counselor of the Parliament of Paris – brought out several unpublished writings.

The works of Tiraqueau are very various (Tiraqueau [1574](#)). They concern both Roman law and Canon law but also French customs and judgments of the courts. Besides, his books deal with many topics, such as matrimonial law (*De legibus connubialibus* [Tiraqueau [1546](#)]), property law (*De jure constituti possessorii*), nobility (*De nobilitate et jure primigeniorum*), succession law (*Le mort saisit le vif*), criminal law (*De pœnis temperandis* [Tiraqueau [1986](#)]), or also procedure (*De judicio in rebus exiguis ferendo*). These books made Tiraqueau famous among the jurists of the early modern period. They have been reprinted numerous times during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. They have also led to disputes. For example, Tiraqueau quarreled with his friend, Amaury Bouchard, about the famed “querelle des femmes.” The *De legibus connubialibus* portrayed women in an unflattered way, which relegated them exclusively to domestic duties (Veillon [2001](#)). In response, Bouchard wrote in 1522 a genuine praise of women, entitled *Femineix sexus apologia*. Tiraqueau then fleshed out his argument over the numerous reissues, which indicate the spreading of his works.

This success is specially due to the method of André Tiraqueau (Rossi [2007](#)). He does not entirely break with the techniques of medieval jurisprudence. Consequently, although a humanist, Tiraqueau is sometimes considered one of the last French Bartolists. Thus, his commentaries borrow several features to the method of the Glossators and Commentators. He quotes about 100 medieval jurists, particularly Bartolus de Saxoferrato, Baldus de Ubaldis, and Panormitanus. The formal appearance of his treatises may be compared to those of some of his predecessors. Nevertheless, he divides from the medieval scholastic due to his extensive humanist culture. He tries to combine new ideas with traditional methods. So, his writings have both practical relevance and great erudition: not only legal, but also literary. He obviously uses many ancient

sources, both Greek and Latin. The influence of Erasmus is particularly noticeable, and he quotes numerous Italian humanists, notably Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. His literary scholarship constantly serves the study of legal sources.

The humanist culture of Tiraqueau flourished in “cénacle de Fontenay-le-Comte,” which grouped important figures of the time. For instance, there, he befriended Pierre Lamy, who certainly taught him Greek. Moreover, François Rabelais belonged to this famous circle. The books of Rabelais probably offer the best illustration of Tiraqueau’s fame and innovations. The character Trinquamelle is traditionally identified with the French jurist. Above all, Rabelais criticizes vehemently medieval jurisprudence, but he praises the method of legal humanism, then represented by André Tiraqueau. The influence of the jurist so significant that some passages of the *Third Book* of Rabelais are inspired by Tiraqueau’s writings (Perrat 1954).

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Titus Lucretius Carus

► Lucretius

Toletus, Franciscus

Born: 1532, Cordova (Spain)

Died: 14 September 1596, Rome

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Abstract

A Spanish theologian, the first Jesuit cardinal. Known for his influential commentaries on Aristotle’s logic and physics. His *Commentaria* were widely used by the Jesuit schools, also influencing later works such as the famous commentaries by the Conimbricenses.

Biography

A Jesuit theologian and philosopher, born in Cordova (Spain) on 4 October 1532 and died in Rome on 14 September 1596. He studied philosophy in Valencia and theology in Salamanca, where he was a pupil of Domingo de Soto. There he later became a professor of philosophy. In 1558 he joined the Company of Jesus and was sent to Rome, where he taught as a philosophy professor at the Collegio Romano from 1559 to 1563. Later, from 1563 to 1569, he taught theology there. He received diplomatic postings and became, in 1593, the first cardinal in the history of the Jesuits.

Innovative Aspects

Influential as a theologian whose commentaries on Aristotle (Toletus 1561, 1572, 1573, 1574, 1575) were widely used by the Jesuit schools, also influencing later works such as the famous commentaries by the Conimbricenses, Toledo was one of the greatest sixteenth-century interpreters of the Stagirite and the Bible. He basically took Thomas Aquinas as his point of reference in his reading of Aristotle, often taking different

positions from Aquinas's and developing his own personal interpretations characterized by the eclecticism typical of his Order (Giacon 1947).

Logic and Theory of Knowledge

Among Toledo's important works are his commentaries on Aristotelian logic (Toledo 1572), by which the Spanish theologian contributed to a reworking of the so-called minor logic as well as theory of knowledge. Unlike Thomas, Toledo recognizes direct knowledge of the material singular in its individuality and thus held that the direct object of knowledge is not the thing in its generality but in its specificity. Taking the same position as Durando of San Porziano, the Cordovan cardinal denied the existence of an independently acting intellect and thus denied that any universal is produced by it in the spirit, as Cajetano had claimed (Hurter Stegmüller 1935). The acting intellect is however the same as the possible one: the act of abstraction is the operation of reaching beyond the incidental characteristics of things and considering substance in itself.

Metaphysics and Hylomorphism

Concerning metaphysics, Toledo accepted the analogical nature of thing-concepts but disagreed with Thomas's doctrines about the distinction between essence and existence (which he denied) and about the relationship between acts and potentialities, while recognizing three different forms of act: formal, entitative, and existential. As would be the case with Suárez and other Jesuit Aristotelians, Toledo did not believe that matter is only potentiality but that it exists in its own right, thus giving it the status of a complete substance. He also denied, therefore, that it is a principle of identification of the composite, as Thomas had held, since that role is taken on by form itself Hurter Echarri 1950. Matter, according to Toledo and according to Thomas before him, has a peculiar inclination to receive form, which is in a way indistinguishable from its very nature as matter (Des Chene 1996). According to Toledo, there are three kinds of "appetitus" that matter shows in relation to form: intellectual, sensory, and natural. The natural ones are those that are spontaneous tendencies shown by things (neither on a formal

nor on a material level) towards Good, assigned to them by God himself, and matter is in this sense proportioned for any form it may receive, though it has one already (Des Chene 2000).

Toledo's thought is also characterized by a probabilistic attitude to a wide range of issues: the distinction between the faculties and the soul is, he holds, only probable rather than real, as is the number of categories, which had been set by Aristotle at ten.

Cross-References

- [Conimbricenses](#)
- [Fonseca, Pedro](#)
- [Suárez, Francisco](#)
- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

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Tomaeus, Nikolaus Laonikus

Born: Venice, 1456

Died: Padua, 1531

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Abstract

Nikolaus Laonikus Tomaeus was a Greek Renaissance scholar who taught Aristotelian philosophy at Padua for almost 10 years. His lectures on Aristotle were extremely influential since he lectured on the Greek text instead of its Latin translation. He was highly accomplished in several fields, including art. His reputation among his fellow scholars, including Desiderius Erasmus, was high.

Synonyms

Tomeau, Leonik; Tomeo, Niccolò Leonico;
Tomeu, Nikollë Leonik

Biography

Nikolaus Laonikus Tomaeus was born in Northern Epirus, which nowadays belongs to Albania. He spent his life in Italy, where he studied and taught. After his studies at the University of Padua, he was appointed by the University to the position of Aristotelian philosophy (1497–1509), in an attempt of the University's authorities to

abandon the common Arabic interpretations and commentaries and teach the Greek original texts. In addition to Aristotelian philosophy, Tomaeus taught science (the Pseudo-*Mechanica* of Aristotle) and certain Platonic dialogues. From 1504 to 1506 he delivered lectures in Greek at the Cancellaria of San Marco. From 1521 until his death he taught privately in Padua.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Tomaeus' lectures at Padua were innovative since he chose to teach Aristotelian metaphysics with a Platonic blend. In addition, he used several sources in order to clarify Aristotle's texts, such as Thomas Aquinas, Averroes, and John Philoponus, despite the latter's harsh critique of key Aristotelian positions. He wrote a commentary on Alexander of Aphrodisias in which he defended the immortality of the individual human soul against several commentators of Aristotle. His lectures and works marked the shift of interest from the intellect to the immortality of the soul, an issue that monopolized the interest of scholars in Padua for decades. Tomaeus translated and commented on Aristotle's *Parva Naturalia* (1523), a work of crucial importance for the proper understanding and evaluation of Aristotelian natural philosophy. In his translation, he also included *De incessu animalium* and *De motu animalium*. Most sixteenth-century scholars approved his choice and his work became popular. Later Tomaeus started to translate and comment on Aristotle's *De partibus animalium*. In fact, he wished to complete the task that Pomponazzi left unfinished because of his death. Until his death, Tomaeus did not accomplish to finish the translation and the commentary, which would have completed his previous work on Aristotle. His nephew Magnus Leonikus found and published only a small part of his uncle's text. Tomaeus' texts are characterized by elegance, clarity, and philosophical precision. He did not follow the scholastic tradition, which was very strong in the Italian universities of his time. In addition, he promoted the ancient Greek commentaries and reproached the Arabic and Latin interpreters who failed to understand properly the meaning of Aristotle's

original texts. He attempted to reconstruct the original text of Plutarch's *Moralia* and translated the works of Pausanias, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, and Galen. He rendered into Latin Proclus's *In Parmenidem*. His seminal contribution was the translation of Pseudo-Mechanica.

Impact and Legacy

Among his students was presumably Nikolaus Copernicus Richard Pace, the influential professor at Cambridge University and secretary of King Henry VIII, and many other English noblemen, since the Venetian state ordered him to tutor the English students in Padua. Tomaeus enjoyed links with Erasmus and Erasmian circles. Erasmus expressed in various letters his respect for Tomaeus's personality and extraordinary scholarship.

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Tomeau, Leonik

- [Tomaeus, Nikolaus Laonikus](#)

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Tomeu, Leonik

- [Tomaeus, Nikolaus Laonikus](#)

Tomeu, Nikollë Leonik

- [Tomaeus, Nikolaus Laonikus](#)

Tomitano, Bernardino

Born: 1517, Padua

Died: 1576, Padua

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Abstract

Philosopher, physician, and humanist, Bernardino Tomitano became a doctor *in artibus et medicina* at the University of Padua, where he was a professor of logic from 1539 to 1563. Tomitano was one of the greatest representatives of humanistic Aristotelianism, which was affirmed in the Paduan school in the middle of the sixteenth century. His work was an important link between the speculation of the beginning of the 1500s and the more mature and systematic work of his famous disciple Jacopo Zabarella. His teaching was characterized by the choice of reading Aristotle in the original Greek with philological expertise, the preference reserved for ancient Greek commentators and modern humanists, and the frequent recourse to Plato's authority. Tomitano's contribution to logical thought consisted in the centrality of the questions of method, in the theory of *regressus* as a fundamental logical tool for progressing in the knowledge of natural facts, in the instrumental conception of logic, and in the definition of

sermocinal arts (grammar, rhetoric, poetics) as logical arts.

From his participation in the *Accademia degli Infiammati* of Padua, in the first part of 1540, the rhetorical and linguistic treatise *Ragionamenti della lingua toscana* originated, which was extended in 1570 into the *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana*, in which the main interlocutor was his master Sperone Speroni. The work was intended to promote oratory prose and “high” genre writing in Italian in general and gathered together several issues concerning the arts of the word in an organic synthesis that had at its core the theme of the relationship between philosophy and eloquence.

Biography

Born in Padua, Tomitano started his regular education at Padua University at the age of 13: he studied logic with Marcantonio Zimara, philosophy with Marcantonio Genua, and medicine with Francesco Frigimelica and Ludovico Carensio (the Tosetto). Great physicians and humanists active in Padua at the time, such as Girolamo Fracastoro and, years after, Giovanni Battista da Monte, contributed to his medical formation. In July 1538, he became a Doctor *in artibus*, receiving the title from Genua and being promoted by the eminent Paduan Sperone Speroni, with whom Tomitano maintained a lifelong affective bond. Soon after, he became a Doctor *in medicina* as well. The year after his degree, Tomitano received the office of lecturer of the Aristotelian *Organon* at the University, and in 1543 he was promoted to the First Chair of Logic. He retained this Chair until 1563, when he renounced it, probably because he was disappointed at not having been offered the Chair of Natural Philosophy, which had been vacant after the death of his old master, Genua. Jacopo Zabarella then became the Chair of Logic in 1564. The teaching publications of Tomitano were the *Introductio ad Sophisticos Elenchos Aristotelis*, published in 1544 (Tomitano 1544), and a more significant comment on Aristotelic logic, the *Animadversiones in*

Primum Librum Posteriorum Resolutoriorum. Contradictionum Solutiones [...], comprising notes from his lectures and gathered in the 1562 Venetian edition of Aristotle’s work (Tomitano 1562). There was also a remarkable *corpus* of lectures, still handwritten, consisting of both *reportationes* of his students and his own preparatory notes.

His main commitment as a teacher and scholar of the Aristotelic *Organon* did not prevent him from cultivating his humanistic interests, mainly rhetorical and poetical, that originated in his youth while attending Pietro Bembo’s house, and flourished under his friendships with scholars and educated fellow citizens, such as Speroni and the Venetians. Tomitano thus appeared among the most active members of the Academies that were created in Padua during that century, from the *Accademia degli Infiammati* (1540–1542) to the *Elevati*, *Eterei*, and *Animosi*. The linguistic–rhetorical treatise, *Ragionamenti della lingua Toscana*, dated back to his participation in the most important one, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*; it was published in 1545 and 1546 and then again revised and vastly expanded in 1570, with the title *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana* (Tomitano 1545/1546, 1570, 1984). In 1550, he wrote a very interesting letter, in *volgare*, to Francesco Longo, a young Venetian nobleman, which was a short treatise on pedagogical principles (Tomitano 1820). In the meantime, he dedicated himself both to Tuscan lyric, writing rhymes in the Petrarchan style, and to Latin poetry, becoming an epic poet and apologist of the Venetian Republic and achieving considerable artistic results.

Starting in 1547, Tomitano abandoned his poetical engagement in favor of an increasingly intense practice of medicine, for which he became renowned both in Padua and in Venice. Venetian magistrates, for example, turned to him for expert advice on the outbreak of plague in Venice in 1556: his *Consiglio sopra la peste di Venezia* was published the same year and in 1567 a demanding work on syphilis, *De morbo gallico*, followed.

In 1555, Tomitano was put on trial before the Venetian Inquisition because of his translation of

Erasmus's *Parafrasi* on Matthew's Gospel, printed in 1547. He successfully defended himself with two orations addressing *Alli Signori della santissima Inquisitione*. Together with a celebratory speech, he pronounced in 1554 in favor of the election of the doge of Venetia, Marcantonio Trevisan, and provided a *Prefazione* to the first book of the *Prediche* of the popular Franciscan preacher, Cornelio Musso. Written in the same year, these two court orations bore witness to Tomitano's engagement on the side of eloquence, both sacred and profane, and in rhetoric in general. He had already shown engagement and interest as a theoretical arrangement in his *Ragionamenti della lingua Toscana*, which then deepened in the later *Quattro libri*. Oratory declamation was mixed with historical narration and with the biographical and historiographical work to which Tomitano dedicated his years: an almost completely unpublished life, in *volgare*, of the great *condottiero* Astorre Baglioni, who was killed in the battle of Famagosta in 1571.

In 1576, a new outbreak of plague spread in Veneto and this time Tomitano was unable to avoid the infection: he died of the plague in the same year.

Heritage and Break with Tradition

Both Tomitano and his work fitted perfectly into the Venetian and Paduan culture of the sixteenth century, characterized by the convergence of the Aristotelism professed in the prestigious university and the humanist tradition, whose influence had by then spread throughout the School and, outside it, was cultivated in the lively city academies that had reaped the benefits of Pietro Bembo's heritage.

This double character of the Paduan intellectual environment was evident first in Tomitano's philological teaching method, which was introduced by his master Genua, and was specific to the Paduan Aristotelians of the new generation, who had assimilated the humanist lesson together with the contribution that the knowledge of the Greek annotators of Aristotle brought to it. The first formulation of an instrumental concept of

logic was made by those annotators: updated by Marcantonio Zimara, this conception was adopted by Tomitano, who also assumed from his master a prevalently Averroist orientation in the interpretation of Aristotelian texts. In general, in the panorama of logical thought of the sixteenth century, Tomitano was acknowledged by scholars to be an important channel between the speculation of the beginning of the 1500s, still inspired by the fifteenth century, and the more mature and systematic one of Jacopo Zabarella and Francesco Piccolomini.

Tomitano also continued the Paduan school tradition in the field of medicine, as a follower of the Galenian method based on the union between reason and experience.

The systematic nature of academic work characterized the linguistics and rhetoric of Tomitano for which he was particularly indebted to Sperone Speroni, who was himself inspired on the one hand, by Pietro Pomponazzi's theories, and on the other, by Bembo's teachings. Tomitano acted in line with the contribution brought to the development of modern language and eloquence by the Paduan *Accademia degli Infiammati*.

Tomitano's work was characterized by some aspects of innovation and originality, rather than by an actual break with tradition.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The core of Tomitano's speculation is the methodological doctrine, addressing not only the logical structures in themselves but connected to them "in a whole that is Logic as the method of truth" ("in un tutto che è la Logica intesa come metodo della verità") (Riondato 1964, p. 69). In particular, it was the truth relative to the knowledge of nature, according to the main trend of the Paduan school and of Tomitano himself, to whom "lacked a specifically philosophical and metaphysical interest, that could overcome the problem of method [...] or that it could insert the problem of method into the same context of metaphysical questions" ("manco un interesse specificamente filosofico e metafisico, che oltrepassasse il problema del metodo [...] oppure che inserisse il

problema del metodo nel contesto stesso delle questioni metafisiche”) (Riondato 1964, p. 71).

In his juvenile *Introductio ad sophisticos elenchos Aristotelis* he had already devoted an entire chapter to the *de methodis* question, “the most challenging, on a doctrinal level, of the entire treatise, so much so to be judged by modern critics as a brief, but complete and original, treatment of the subject” (“il più impegnativo, sul piano dottrinale dell’intera operetta, tanto da venire giudicato da critici moderni come una breve, ma compiuta e originale trattazione dell’argomento”) (Davi 1995, p. 83). Here, he affirmed the supremacy (or primacy), among the Aristotelian ways of solving sophist deceits, of the method of division (*distinctio*) that deconstructed the genre into differences and was also useful for practical disciplines, such as medicine.

Mainly didactical and close to the linguistic–rhetorical interests of his, *Ragionamenti della lingua Toscana*, the work “focuses on the logic dealing with the forms of elocution, aiming to identify the figures and verbal artifices that make the discourse false and captious” (“verte su quella parte della logica che si occupa delle forme dell’elocuzione, allo scopo di individuare le figure e gli artifici verbali che rendono il discorso falso e capzioso”) (Davi 1995, p. 17). From Tomitano’s humanist sensitivity, at least two aspects of originality were derived both in the *Introductio* and, above all, in the more mature comment to the *Analitici*: the first was the philological cure reserved for Aristotle’s Greek text and the interpretative effort of controversial passages, and the second was the wide recourse to Plato’s authority, mainly in the methodological dialogues and in the *Animadversiones*, on the relation between science and opinion. In the *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana*, not only the tendency to conciliate Plato and Aristotle was frequent, but a reform of the Paduan study that might introduce Plato’s readings into the program was wished-for through the words of Speroni.

Tomitano’s contribution to the history of logic can be found in the published and unpublished commentary on *Analytica posteriora*.

First, the concept of logic as an instrumental faculty, necessary and applicable to all arts and

sciences, was expressed. Its sphere of relevance was the *intentiones secundae*, conceptual forms functional to the demonstrative syllogism that, interacting with the distinct but similar proceeding of the definition – such as Tomitano argued in his *Contradictionum solutiones* – led to knowledge and was, therefore, the goal of logic. The theory of demonstration constituted most of the comment, with particular attention paid to the resolute–compositive method in scientific procedure and, more importantly, identifying in the *regressus* (the method that ranged from the effects, the *nobis notiora*, to the causes, and thus to the conceptual structures, which, based on these, explained the data) the fundamental logic tool for progress in the knowledge of natural facts.

Treating human discretions, Tomitano located in the *ratio* (or *cogitatio*), intended as the ability to argue, the peculiarity of the human being. On this basis, he considered the various arrangements of the arts, and in line with the trend of the Paduan school and the intellectual philosophers of the *Accademia degli Infiammati* (Sperone Speroni, Benedetto Varchi, Alessandro Piccolomini), he proposed placing grammar, rhetoric, and poetics (Averroè’s *artes sermocinales*) together with logic among rational disciplines, all with discourse as their objective. In this regard, along with other Aristotelian humanists, he distinguished between the logic of truth and science and the logic of plausibility and opinion: the first is typical of the philosophical knowledge whose objectives were absolute, immutable, and necessary laws and the second is pertinent to the rhetorical discourse that, regarding the changeable, contingent, and plausible sphere of morals and politics, did not require demonstrative procedures, but tools of persuasion. In social life and civil community, the primacy, therefore, belonged to the rhetoric.

These are the conceptual requirements at the basis of the *Ragionamenti*, then the *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana*, the treatise in the form of a dialogue that offers an account of the conversations that occurred among a large group of members of the Academies, students of the University of Padua, and Sperone Speroni in the aftermath of his election, in November 1541, as *principe*

of the *Accademia degli Infiammati*. The main interlocutor was Speroni himself, who led the discussion on the trace of the ideas already expressed in his dialogues, especially in *Delle lingue* and *Della retorica*, inspired by the thoughts of Pietro Pomponazzi.

The main theme of the first part was the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric, which defined their respective spaces and specificities, but showed how the former was necessary to the orator – and to the poet – who wanted to be perfect. The strength of science could indeed help the weakness of opinion, and the certainty of absolute and immutable concepts could approach the probable to push the probable toward the truth: the speaker who, in addition to strong dialectical tools, ethics, and politics, was familiar with speculative knowledge, was the author of eloquent speech, able to decline philosophical truths in the human and civil group. Founded on the indisputable primacy of speculation, Tomitano's intent was to protect the cognitive and veritative dignity of the *artes sermocinales*, distancing himself from the actual thought of Speroni who, skeptical about the ability even of contemplative disciplines to fully draw from the truth, pushed the rhetoric toward sophistry.

But the innovative value of Tomitano's rethinking of the Ciceronian binomial "wisdom and eloquence" mainly lay in the fact that it concerned the modern eloquence in the vernacular. The greatness and dignified utility of oratory increasingly practiced through writing in the free Venetian Republic testified to how it was by then capable of matching the quality of the Latin oratory. Consistent with the thought of Speroni and of the *Infiammati*, Tomitano recognized the suitability of the vernacular for becoming the language of culture and extending its use to the "high" genres of oratory, philosophy, and sciences. For this reason, he considered it necessary to provide it with adequate rhetoric and linguistic rules, and in the second part of the *Ragionamenti-Quattro libri*, he dealt with the relationship between Latin and *Volgare*, the "*questione della lingua*" and imitation, styles, the nature and function of literary writing, especially oratory prose,

its rules for rhetoric and elocution, among which his observations on the rhythm of prose stood out for their originality. In light of the cultural Paduan avant-gardes, Tomitano rethought the teachings of the great classics and Bembo, in an attempt to arrange them in a *summa*, almost a modern *De oratore*, that could shape the "perfect form or idea of the good Italian writer" ("perfetta forma overo idea del buon scrittore italiano") (Tomitano 1545/1546, p. 5, 1570, f. 2r).

Impact and Legacy

Tomitano's work enjoyed great appreciation among his contemporaries, above all in the field of logic. His legacy was collected and brought to maturity by Jacopo Zabarella, who developed the theory of *regressus*, in which, with due caution, a connection with the Galilean methodology could be recognized. Zabarella himself definitively classified rhetoric and poetics as logical arts, with major consequences for the definition of the relationship between sciences and arts in the culture between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The reflection contained in the *Ragionamenti-Quattro libri* was harshly criticized by his Florentine contemporaries, and yet, it not only favored renewed and necessary attention for the rhetorical-linguistic needs of Italian prose but, focusing on the problem of the specificity of languages and disciplines, helped to set off along that path of specialization of knowledge that would become established in the following century.

Cross-References

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- [Bembo, Pietro](#)
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Topics in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Aristotle's *Topica* provided a system of logical schemes (*topoi*) for constructing a consistent dialectical syllogism with plausible premises. In the fifteenth century, the Aristotelian theory of topics merged with the rhetorical practice of invention (*inventio*) and became a rhetorical means for finding probable arguments. The humanists' new interest in topics as an inventive dialectic was opposed to the metaphysical constructions and logical formalism of medieval philosophy. In Lorenzo Valla's work, dialectic took the form of an art of

discourse (*ars sermocinlis*) attentive to the needs of usual speech. By refusing every meta-physical assumption of Aristotelian logic, humanist dialectic became a simple instrument with a pragmatic and regulative function.

It was in this context that the conception of topics radically changed: *topoi* (*loci*) went from being an empty grid to becoming labeled containers which allowed for the quick recovery of all useful arguments about any subject (Rudolph Agricola). Humanists considered the *loci* as common elements (*capita communia*) of things and attributed to them the role of effective didactic-mnemonic support, leading the cognitive process. Thanks to these features, *loci* progressively structured themselves as a real alternative and complementary method to the syllogistic-demonstrative procedure. From the second half of the sixteenth century, this methodological function of topics went beyond the usual boundaries of rhetorical usage and came to embrace moral, theological, and natural investigation (Philipp Melanchthon, Petrus Ramus, Francis Bacon).

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

In his *Topica*, Aristotle (1989) defined *topoi* as logical schemes that originate in opinion-based elements (*endoxa*) and prevent any contradiction of the thesis supported during an argument (100a). According to Aristotle, *topoi* are a list of inferential processes through which it is possible to prove a thesis and to disclose the inconsistencies of a line of reasoning. This system of *topoi* had a solid foundation in Aristotelian ontology, although it operated in the field of probable (dialectic): the inferential schemes worked through the use of categories and predicables, which were at the same time logical and ontological concepts. From this point of view, Aristotle's dialectical syllogism, based on *topoi*, assumed the constructive function of a means to reach the first principles of any science.

In rhetorical practice, the use of *topoi* diverged from the dialectical model. In his *Rhetoric*,

Aristotle turned the logical and formal structure of the dialectical *topoi* into a means to find persuasive arguments (*pithana*) in a civic context. The rhetorical *topoi* (specific or common) became collection places for quickly locating the most effective argument during a public speech. It is in this last sense that the Latin rhetorical tradition interpreted the word *topoi* (*loci*) and the dialectical topics became one of the five parts of the rhetorical art, i.e., invention (*inventio*). This particular way of reading Aristotle's topics – by reducing their logical meaning – had its origin in Cicero's work (Cicero 1942, 1949, 1954). In his *De oratore*, Cicero defined the *loci* as *sedes et quasi domicilia omnium argumentorum* (II,39,62): they functioned as markings, facilitating the search for arguments that were useful in ensuring the success of judicial, deliberative, and epideictic speeches. Moreover, Cicero explicitly contrasted dialectical topics with rhetorical ones: the first was helpful only to judge the consistency of an argument (*ratio iudicandi*) through formal confutation; the second produced the conditions for finding appropriate, effective, and convenient things to say (*ratio inveniendi*) in a public discussion (*De oratore* II, 38, 157–161; *Topica* 6–7). Against this backdrop, topics assumed an exclusively instrumental function: the system of *loci* was a storage room that collected and ordered all known forms of argumentation through labels. This *a posteriori* collection of *loci* made the use of arguments easier, but the ability of the true orator depended on his talent and diligence, which allowed him to extemporize by creating new arguments or carrying them out in relation to the occasion (*De oratore* II, 35, 147–151; Quintilian 2002, V, 10, 102–125).

After his translation and commentary on Aristotle's *Topica* and on Cicero's *Topica*, Boethius (477–524 AD), in his *De differentiis topicis* (Boethius 1978), tried to unify these two distinct traditions by comparing Themistius' Aristotelian topics with Cicero's rhetorical *loci*. He proved that the rhetorical *loci* had their origin in dialectical *loci* and reduced the whole rhetoric to a section of dialectic. Moreover, he transformed the *loci* into maximal propositions (*maximae propositiones*), i.e., unprovable axioms and principles of

demonstrations. In so doing, he removed the topics – and the whole dialectic – from the field of the probable (*endoxa*) and placed them in the field of apodixis.

From this point of view, Boethius led the way in the medieval identification of logic, dialectic, and ontology (metaphysics). This was also made possible by his commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge*, which turned the concepts of Aristotelian dialectic (genus, species, specific difference) into a Platonic tree of being. This process deprived the topics of the specific feature of dealing with probable and plausible arguments.

From Petrarch (1304–1374) onward, humanists harshly criticized this identification of dialectic, logic, and metaphysics. They refused any Scholastic degeneration of this identification which had led to the consideration of formalism in logical discussions as the only object of philosophy (*logica modernorum*). The rediscovery of classical rhetorical sources (Cicero and Quintilian) and the non-mediated and critical rereading of Aristotle's works allowed the humanists to recover the concept of dialectic as *ars inveniendi*, strictly linked to the rhetorical practice. This process promoted the humanistic reappraisal of topics as a tool for producing an effective and persuasive speech, as a means to reform the educational system and facilitate learning and, progressively, as a method to arrange disciplines and acquire new knowledge.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The new humanistic interest in topics was therefore born as an attempt to overcome the abstractions and technical language of the fourteenth-century logicians. The roots of this attempt can be traced to the original humanistic conception of language as a rhetorical tool capable of adapting to the communicative needs of mankind (Vasoli 1968). Against this backdrop, humanists entirely renovated the *curriculum* of medieval studies: grammar and rhetoric were no longer exclusively preparatory disciplines, and they represented essential points of access to, and the culmination of, all knowledge. At the

same time, dialectic broke every link with metaphysics and regained the rhetorical meaning of *ars bene disserendi*.

The radical deconstruction of the logical-dialectical tradition and its metaphysical assumptions carried out by Lorenzo Valla in his *Dialecticae disputationes* (1444) played a key role in this process. Valla revealed the inconsistency of most of the concepts used by Aristotle and his commentators in establishing the rules of dialectical reasoning. This was achieved through coherent grammatical criticism and recurring reference to linguistic *usus* and *consuetudo* (Nauta 2009). Valla aimed to reduce dialectic to a few essential principles by reducing the number of transcendentals and categories (book I) and simplifying the structure of proposition (book II) and syllogism (book III). In so doing he proved that dialectic represented the less demanding part of rhetoric (Valla 2011, II, 2–7): it was a very small part of the *inventio*, i.e., only one of the five parts of rhetoric (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, actio*).

According to Valla, the multiple rhetorical forms of argumentation were opposed to the inflexibility of the dialectician's unique argumentative instrument, i.e., the syllogism (Mack 1993, 84–85). The necessity of dialectical inferential processes was likewise opposed to the different degrees of probability in rhetorical ones. According to Valla's observations, therefore, the field of dialectic reasoning shifted from an apophantic to a semantic form of discourse (Vasoli 1968, 65). In line with this perspective, the *Dialecticae disputationes* included a discussion of *loci* – drawn from Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* – as practical, auxiliary, and a-systematic tools.

Far from the radicalism of Valla, George of Trebizond showed a similar propensity for mixing dialectical and rhetorical forms. In his *Rhetoricorum libri V* (1433), he argued for the usefulness of *loci* as concrete supports for the invention of arguments. He combined this interest in *loci* with a significant insistence on the plurality of possible forms of argumentation by recovering the ideas of the Greek rhetorician Hermogenes (George of Trebizond 1547, 173–197).

In his *Dialectica* (1440), he included a section devoted to the rhetorical form of enthymeme together with an extensive discussion of *loci*, a deep knowledge of which enabled the achievement of *copia inveniendi* and clarity and speed of exposition.

With Rudolph Agricola's *De inventione dialectica libri tres* (1479), the ordering and guiding function of the topics took on an explicitly methodical role (Agricola 1539). Like George of Trebizond, Agricola was closer than Valla to the tradition of Aristotelian dialectic, but he showed a significant lack of interest in the ontological and metaphysical aspects related to logic. Trained in close contact with the Italian humanistic environment, his goal was to reform and rationalize the educational system and contemporary forms of learning and teaching. His purpose was to remove the unnecessary logical complications of late Scholasticism through the reestablishment of a simple and effective dialectical tool based on direct contact with linguistic habits and able to provide principles for clear and coherent teaching. Agricola, like Cicero, gave precedence to the first of the two parts of dialectic, i.e., *inventio* and *iudicium*. The development of a new system of *loci* to guide the *inventio argumentorum* was at the core of his reform of dialectic, which he described as *dux et directrix omnium artium* and the principal instrument of *docere*. His topical architecture had a radically innovative function: it represented an attempt to collect and order everything that is known or can be said about a thing – all the infinite multitude of its qualities – with *capita communia* able to grasp the *habitudines rerum*. According to Agricola, these labels (*capita communia*) formed a real grid through which to conduct things. This grid was useful both in investigating the nature of a thing in all its aspects and in comparing distant things to find the argument – the Aristotelian middle term – which links them. Against this backdrop, the *loci*, more similar to an *inventio*-oriented rhetorical collection than to the Aristotelian principles of inference, recovered a methodological function: they brought order to knowledge and provided a set of rules for comparing apparently unrelated things. Agricola made

an unprecedented effort to precisely define the relationships between different *loci* and their operating models. He made of the *loci* a sort of temporary and polyvalent set of filters to help understand things and their way of relating to each other (Mack 1993, 130–167).

According to Agricola, this new methodical and inventive dialectic occupied not only the whole space of the *inventio* and *dispositio* and the related function of *docere* but also a large part of the functions of *movere*. Contrary to Valla, who had marginalized dialectic and incorporated it into rhetoric, Agricola restored the primacy of dialectic and reduced rhetoric to the sole function of *delectare* (*elocutio*). Dialectic with its topical structure became a means of organizing knowledge and a rule for how to transmit it, an aid to reading and interpreting classical texts, and a norm of speaking *probabiliter*.

Agricola's *De inventione dialectica*, published for the first time in Agricola (1515), had a fundamental influence on the discussion of topics and methods that involved the sixteenth-century greatest humanists (Mack 1993, 257–302). Its numerous editions, commentaries, and epitomes rapidly spread across Europe (see the works of Alexander Hegius, Johannes Caesarius, Bartholomeus Latomus, Matthaeus Phrissemius, and Alardus).

The Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) was an attentive reader of Agricola's work where his pedagogical interest found support. In the 21 books of his *De disciplinis* (1531), he tried to restructure the set of disciplines and the way to transmit them (Del Nero 1991). Like Agricola, he was convinced that pedagogical reform needed to reconsider dialectic as a practical instrument in the organization of experience into an easily accessible and communicable system of knowledge. This process was grounded in a forceful criticism of Aristotelian logic and a rejection of the classificatory nature of its *topoi* which were disconnected from the pragmatic needs of everyday speech.

In the section of his treatise explicitly devoted to topics (*De instrumentum probabilitatis*), Vives aimed to strictly connect logical processes with psychological ones; i.e., the structure of *inventio*

and *loci* with the real mental operations of each cognitive act (Vasoli 1968, 226–227). According to Vives, the *loci* were no longer just the domiciles of possible arguments. They became the means through which reason attempted to interrogate the various objects of experience and establish relationships between them.

During the sixteenth century, this interest in the relationship between the system of *loci* and the *modus operandi* of reason led to an overlap between *loci argumentorum* and *loci memoriae*: the *loci* of the *inventio*, which represented and systematized real gnoseological and psychological processes, were more and more often compared with the mnemotechnical method of collection, reactivation, and combination of concepts developed in rhetorical practice. This was the main reason for the explosion, from the fourth decade of the sixteenth century, of the attempts to give a graphic output to the different systems of organization of the *loci argumentorum* in order to make it easier to memorize and use them.

A certain interest in the educative outcomes of the connection between *loci argumentorum* and memory is evident in the work of the reformed theologian Philipp Melanchthon. From the *De dialectica libri quatuor* (1528) – with its many re-éditions – to *Erotemata dialecticae* (1547), he centered his observations on the pedagogical function of dialectic, defined as *ars, seu via recte, ordine et perspicue docendi* (Melanchthon 1846, 515). According to Melanchthon, the main focus of dialectic was to support the *inventio argumentorum* by developing a consistent system of *loci* (Meerhoff 2001). The function of these *loci* was to define the boundaries of any subject matter and identify its interrelations. Without this *methodus* – Melanchthon was the first to use this term in relation to dialectic (Vasoli 1968, 296–299) – strictly connected to the elaboration of *loci*, human reason was destined to get lost and be blinded by experience data. The *methodus* allowed for the placing of every object within a reference system, setting the conditions for it to be interrogated and understood. This via *brevis* and *compendium* helped improve the use of knowledge and establish a clear internal order, and it was easily represented as a map (*tabula*), which could catch the attention of learners and aid their memory (see

book IV of *De dialectica*). Through this *tabula*, the mind could conceive of the whole order of words and things and understand how to investigate them. The topical method and its *tabulae* worked like an anatomical procedure whereby the whole body is dissected into its smallest components and subsequently reassembled to be better understood.

Melanchthon also applied the topical method to the definition and rational exposition of the principles of reformed Christian theology (Melanchthon 1854). In so doing, he established an easily understandable and communicable doctrinal orthodoxy.

While Melanchthon developed his topical theory, Johannes Sturm wrote and perfected his *Partitionum dialecticarum libri duo* (first edition 1539; latest version 1571), a work that deeply influenced Melanchthon's observations. Sturm taught in Paris from 1529 to 1536 and was the first to diffuse Agricola's work among the Paris *milieu*. He tried to dissolve the metaphysical substance of dialectic by converting Aristotelian categories (*praedicamenta*) into common *loci* of invention. The adoption of this perspective allowed Melanchthon to reduce the parts of dialectic based on the logical-metaphysical premises of categories – i.e., division and definition – to the inventive function of topics.

Sturm's contribution was an essential component in the definition of the relationships between dialectic and *methodus*: by combining rhetorical (Hermogenes) and medical (Galen) sources, he developed a threefold method based on *analysis* (from simple notions to general conclusions), *synthesis* (from complex notions to simplex ones), and *diæresis* (division and definition). According to Sturm, this method – related to the *pars iudicialis* of dialectic – was distinct from the demonstrative process, but it was particularly suitable for teaching and investigation.

The most famous among Sturm's Parisian students was Petrus Ramus. He was an inflexible critic of Aristotelian logic and made an effort to return dialectic to its Platonic origin. According to Ramus, dialectic should be an instrument able to follow and streamline cognitive processes. It aimed to reflect the innate structures through which experience and reality are interpreted by reason. Ramus's refusal of Aristotelian formalism

no longer depended solely on the humanistic interest in linguistic *consuetudo* and concrete human habits. Rather, it was connected to the need for an investigative tool able to adhere to the real operating mode of reason and to trace the principles that allow reason to understand the order of things.

In Ramus' work (Ramus 1543, 1555) the recovery of Platonism along with its dichotomous procedures came side by side with an interest in Sturm's reflection on method. This led Ramus to quickly discuss topics and *inventio* and to focus on the definition of a theory of *iudicium*. Ramus was especially interested in a kind of *iudicium* based on division and definition instead of one which focused on the evaluation of the coherence of syllogism. According to Ramus, this *iudicium* – which he called *methodus* – allowed for the arrangement of notions into an organic system of knowledge plotted according to their natural order (Ong 1958; Bruyère 1984). This method could be defined as a general science that systematized and joined all the others sciences into an encyclopedic chain.

This Ramist conception of method became a fundamental tool in structuring the teaching of logic in Central European *gymnasia* (Hotson 2007) and produced a large number of encyclopedic experiments such as Christophe de Savigny's *Tableaux* (1587) and Johann Heinrich Alstad's *Encyclopaedia* (1630) (Angelini 2008).

Impact and Legacy

The humanistic transformation of dialectic and the resulting rejection of syllogism as a unique instrument for producing knowledge were very relevant to the seventeenth-century discussion of method, which moved from the field of logic to the field of natural sciences. During this process, the new humanistic interest in topics and *inventio* played a key role: it represented an attempt to transform dialectic into a flexible instrument, related to linguistic use and *consuetudo* and suitable for non-purely formalistic research. Humanistic reflection on topics produced not only a substantial reform of teaching methods but also a new concept of scientific knowledge, new methods of investigation, and a new need for

systematization. Specifically, it had an essential influence on the method of collection and classification developed by Francis Bacon and related to natural history (Jardine 1974).

From a practical point of view, starting from the second half of the sixteenth century, topics merged more and more often with the elaboration of collections of commonplaces, which were employed as schoolbooks and became the core of European education (Moss 1996).

Cross-References

- [Commonplace](#)
- [Dialectic in the Renaissance](#)
- [Invention, Renaissance Idea of](#)

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Torrentino, Lorenzo

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Abstract

Lorenzo Torrentino was a printer active in mid-sixteenth-century Florence in the service of

Duke Cosimo I De' Medici. Born in Gemert (Netherlands) sometime between 1498 and 1501, he moved from Northern to Southern Europe to pursue his career in the book trade. In the early 1530s, he opened a bookshop in Bologna together with his compatriot Arnoldus Arlenius. In 1547 Torrentino moved to Florence, where he was appointed ducal printer by Cosimo. In return for his service to the Duke of Florence, Torrentino was granted a series of privileges, listed in a detailed contract. He set up a printing house in Via del Garbo in Florence and worked alongside his colleague Arlenius and the polygraph Lodovico Domenichi.

During the period 1547–1563, Torrentino printed some 290 works in the fields of literature, philosophy, religion, law, and art. His most famous publications include Bernardo Segni's translations of Aristotle's works, Francesco Robortello's commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* (1548), academic lectures on Dante and Petrarch by members of the Florentine Academy, Justinian's *Pandects* (1553), Francesco Guicciardini's *Historia d'Italia* (1561, 1562), and Giorgio Vasari's *Vite* (1550). In 1561, Torrentino was requested by Duke of Savoy Emmanuel Philibert to open a printing press in Mondovì to serve the recently founded local university. He died in Florence on 2 February 1563.

Alternate Names

Leenaerts van den Bleek, Laurens; Torrentinus, Laurentius

Biography

Lorenzo Torrentino, whose Flemish name was Laurens Leenaerts van den Bleek (Slits 1995, 7), was born in Gemert (Netherlands) sometime between 1498 and 1501. Not much is known about his education, although he probably attended humanist and playwright Georgius Macropedius's school in 's-Hertogenbosch.

Torrentino embarked on a career in the book trade, which led him to move from Northern

Europe (Antwerp) to the Center-South (Basel, Lyon, and Venice). From 1532–1533 he settled in Bologna, where he ran a bookselling business together with philosopher and Greek scholar Arnoldus Arlenius Peraxylus (born Arndt or Arnout van Eyndhouts). Torrentino and Arlenius imported Latin and Greek books printed in Lyon and Frankfurt and sold them throughout Italy and beyond. On 14 July 1543, he married Nicolosia de Amicis with whom he had three children. His first wife died in the early 1550s, and Torrentino remarried in September 1558 to Florentine Lucretia Albertinelli, with whom he had two sons.

Acting on the merchant Bartolomeo Gualterotti's recommendation, Duke Cosimo I De' Medici's secretary, the jurist Lelio Torelli, contacted Torrentino to offer him the position of ducal printer in Florence. Bernardo Giunti had earlier been approached to fill the role, but negotiations were unsuccessful. Cosimo finally opted for Torrentino because of his beautiful fonts, his valuable contacts in the European book trade (Simonetti 2005, 36–37), and his independence from Florence's intricate political and familiar scene (Perini 1981, 790).

A 12-year contract was signed on 5 April 1547. It consisted of a series of duties assumed by Torrentino in exchange for privileges granted by the Duke. Under the terms of the contract, Torrentino was expected to move to Florence to open a printing press with two presses, nine fonts, and all the necessary employees. Furthermore, Torrentino undertook to present the Duke the first copy of each new print, negotiate with the Duke the selling price of the books, print only previously approved books, and provide books to the universities of Florence and Pisa. The ducal printer was also given a specific task, aimed at increasing the international prestige of Cosimo: the printing of the Medicean codex of Justinian's *Pandects*. Carefully supervised by Torelli and his son Francesco, the printing took place in 1553 (Baldi 2010). The privileges granted to Torrentino include a rather vague monopoly on printing in the territory of the Duchy, a second monopoly on the import of French and German books (with the exception of law books), a prohibition on other printing presses importing books similar to Torrentino's, and a salary of 100 *scudi* a year (Ricci 2001, 105).

Torrentino established his printing house in Via del Garbo, in the suburb of Santa Croce, and hired his earlier business partner Arlenius and the polygraph Lodovico Domenichi for the editorial role and a number of agents, among whom was Pietro Perna (Nuovo 2013, 285–86), to attend the international fairs. The rate of Torrentino's print production, which amounts to some 290 works for the 1547–1563 period (Nuovo 2013, 232), was rather inconsistent and heavily affected by external factors (such as the size of the Tuscan book trade, shortages in paper supply, and the outbreak of war) and by the burden of the initial financial outlay establishing the business. After a promising initial phase, the rate of production decreased in the second half of the 1550s (Ricci 2001, 107–10; Richardson 1994, 128). Torrentino published mostly philosophical and literary titles, such as Bernardo Segni's translations of Aristotle's works (1549a, b, 1550, 1559), Francesco Robortello's commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* (1548), and Pietro Bembo's *Prose* (1548, 1549). His close link with the Accademia Fiorentina resulted in the publication of the academic lectures on Dante and Petrarch by eminent members such as Lucio Oradini (1550), Annibale Rinuccini (1561), and Giovan Battista Gelli's (1548, 1549a, b, c, 1551, 1555). Torrentino also printed historiographical volumes, such as Paolo Giovio's *Historiarum sui temporis* (1550–1552) and Francesco Guicciardini's *Historia d'Italia* (1561, 1562) (Ricci 2001, 111–12), and the first edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Vite* (1550) (Richardson 1994, 133; Simonetti 2005, 49–89).

With the permission of Cosimo, in 1561 Torrentino accepted the proposal of Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, to set up a printing press in Mondovì to provide books for its newly-established university (Duroselle Melish 2013). His death on 2 February 1563 in Florence prevented Torrentino himself from printing anything in Mondovì, but the business was taken over by his son Leonardo and Arlenius and continued under their management until Leonardo's death in 1566.

Impact and Legacy

Torrentino's press established an important precedent for future similar enterprises of printing

houses financially sponsored or favored by the state authority so as to foster the printing industry in specific settings (Nuovo 2013, 231–35).

More specifically, Torrentino's printing press was instrumental in supporting Duke Cosimo's political strategies. Torrentino committed to publishing the works of the Florentine Academy, closely monitored by Cosimo, whose main aim was to celebrate the splendor of Florentine language and literature. Furthermore, Torrentino's press fulfilled Cosimo's aim of providing wider public access to learning by using the vernacular language (Cochrane 1973, 85).

Cross-References

- Giraldi Cinthio, Giovan Battista
- Printing Technique, Renaissance
- Robortello, Francesco
- Segni, Bernardo
- Vasari, Giorgio

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Torrentinus, Laurentius

► [Torrentino, Lorenzo](#)

Torres Rámila, Pedro de

Born: 1583, Villarcayo

Died: 1658, Alcalá de Henares

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Abstract

A Spanish poet and humanist. He owes what little fame he has had to his work *Spongia*, published in 1617 and now lost, in which he accused Lope de Vega of distance from Aristotle's precepts.

Synonyms

[Juan Pablo Ricci](#); [Petro de Torres Ramilae](#); [Trepus Ruitanus Lamiva](#)

Biography

A Spanish poet and humanist. Born of humble origins in Villarcayo in 1583. Died in Alcalá de Henares in 1658. He graduated from the University of Alcalá in 1613 and was ordained in that year. He was assigned to the church of Saints Justo and Pastor. His works, all lost, were often signed under the pseudonyms of Trepus Ruitanus Lamiva and Juan Pablo Ricci (Columbario, 1618).

Torres Rámila owes what little fame he has had to his *Spongia*, a work published in 1617 and now lost, in which he poured scorn on the works of Lope de Vega for their incompatibility with Aristotle's precepts (Entrambasaguas, 1967). It is known thanks to the reply, *Expostulatio Spongiae*, published (perhaps by Lope de Vega himself and

some of his friends, probably Francisco López de Aguilar or Juan de Fonseca y Figueroa) in 1618 under the pseudonym of Julio Columbario, which quotes some passages from *Spongia* (Conde Parrado, 2012). It is probable that *Expostulatio* damaged Torres Rámila's literary career, resulting in him being criticized and ridiculed by the literary community (Tubau, 2009, 2010).

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Tragedy in Renaissance Literature

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Abstract

The Italian Renaissance reinvents modern dramatic theatre. In the second decade of the sixteenth century, tragedy first resurfaces in narrow philological circles. Playwrights and men of learning recover ancient texts and advance new theoretical considerations on a multitude of aspects pertaining to the genre – philological, literary, dramaturgical, architectonic, and more. During this phase, newly produced tragedies often remain private,

unpublished texts, read in front of small audiences and rarely represented on stage. They are structured following ancient examples, but written in Italian, and their experimental features reflect current debates on language, verses, and literary genres. The first generation of Renaissance tragic playwrights is connected to the cultural circle of the “Orti Oricellari” in Florence and includes authors such as Giangiorgio Trissino (1478–1550), Giovanni Rucellai (1475–1525), Alessandro Pazzi de’ Medici (1483–1530/31), Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556), and Ludovico Martelli (1500–1527/28). In their productions, they tackle different subjects or events from Roman or medieval history, or they draw from classical plays.

During a second phase, around 1540, a new dramaturgical model with distinctive features emerges from the examples of the past. From Florence and Rome, the epicenter of tragic creation moves to Ferrara, Padua, and Venice. These cities offer Renaissance playwrights, respectively, a court known for its interest in theatre since the late fifteenth century, one of the most renowned universities, and the printing industry’s capital. Playwrights of the era are educated and active philosophers, doctors, and men of letters, often with firsthand experience in theatrical productions, while at the same time contributing erudite texts to the debate about dramatic theory. Because of this background, these plays are, above all, oriented toward political and philosophical topics.

During a third phase, after 1570, tragicomedy and the pastoral genre replace tragedy in princely courts. Dramatic theatre endures within learned circles of academies and among the aristocracy in Venice, but its main subject shifts from politics to romance, albeit maintaining the previous oscillation between *pathos* and horror.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

During the medieval period and among the early humanists, interest in tragic theatre is marginal.

After the rediscovery of the treatise *De architectura*, written by Latin architect Vitruvius in the first century BC (printed in Rome in 1486), a large portion of which is dedicated to the theatrical building, the representation of ancient plays – both in Latin or translated into Italian – becomes an appreciated form of entertainment in Roman academies and northern Italian courts, including that of Ferrara. Slowly, important men of letters try to write original plays, such as the Tuscan humanists Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494; *Favola di Orfeo*, ca. 1478–83) and Antonio Cammelli, also known as “Pistoia” (1436–1502; *Filostrato e Panfila*, 1499). These first attempts are followed by a short period of silence with respect to tragic theatre, filled with a more prominent cycle of original comedies. Comedy, thanks to the almost uninterrupted fortune of the Latin playwrights Terence and Plautus (and their expositors), offered a more ready-to-follow structure (Pieri 1989). On the contrary, tragedy had yet to find a theoretical base upon which writers could lean. For this reason, the rediscovery of Aristotle’s *Poetics* constituted a crucial factor in explaining the revival and fortune of classical tragedy during the Renaissance. In 1498, the humanist Giorgio Valla (1447–1500) published his Latin version of the treatise, and a few years later (in 1508), the Greek scholar Janus Lascaris (1445–1534) prepared the first Greek edition of the text for the “*Rhetores Graeci*” book series, published by the famous Venetian printer Aldus Manutius (1449/52–1515). The latter had previously edited the edition of the collected works of Sophocles (1502) and Euripides (1503) in the original Greek, and subsequently Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulides* and *Hecuba* (1506) with a Latin translation by Dutch humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536). For the first Greek edition of Aeschylus’ tragedies, the public had to wait until 1518. In 1524, the playwright and writer Alessandro Pazzi de’ Medici printed his Latin translation of the *Poetics*, and from that moment onward, philosophers and commentators – especially at the University of Padua – worked to explain the Aristotelian treatise (Ariani 1974; Cremante 1988). In 1548, the philosopher Francesco Robortello (1516–1567) published his

Explicationes in librum Aristotelis de arte poetica, the first integral commentary written on Pazzi's Latin version. Robortello took the idea that tragedy had to be both pleasurable and useful from the Latin poet Horace, author of the well-known treatise *De arte poetica*. In this way, Robortello blended together the Greek and Latin theoretical traditions influencing contemporary theatrical production. Two years later, Vincenzo Maggi (1498–1564), professor of philosophy in Padua and Ferrara, printed the commentary he wrote with his colleague Bartolomeo Lombardi (*Explanationes in Aristotelem de Poetica*, 1550), adding to Robortello's interpretation the fundamental idea that tragedy should provide a moral lesson, through *catharsis*, or purification from the passions. In the meantime, the Florentine historian Bernardo Segni (1504–58) published the first Italian translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* in 1549. From this moment onward, scholars and philosophers produced both critical interpretations of the ancient treatise and original works on the topic: Antonio Sebastiano Minturno (1500–1574), *L'Arte poetica*, 1554; Pier Vettori (1499–1585), *Commentarii*, 1560; Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558), *Poetices libri septem*, 1561; Gian Giorgio Trissino, *Sei divisioni della Poetica*, 1564; Lodovico Castelvetro (1505–1571), *Poetica d'Aristotile vulgarizzata e sposta*, 1570; and Alessandro Piccolomini (1508–1578), *Annotazioni nel libro della Poetica*, 1575). For most of them, tragedy had a moral and educational purpose, but for others, the only aim of dramatic theatre was to evoke pleasant astonishment (*dilettevole meraviglia*) (Herrick 1946; Jossa 1996).

The framing of theoretical precepts was crucial for the reinvention of tragedy; however, translation also played a fundamental role in the development of this genre, to meet the increasing demand of the burgeoning print industry for new texts. This cultural and commercial endeavor reached its apex with the systematic effort of *volgarizzamenti*, promoted by Venetian and Tuscan printers. In this regard, the translation of Seneca's complete tragic works, completed in 1560 by the polygraph Lodovico Dolce (1508/10–1568), can be considered emblematic.

The attitude of Renaissance writers was reminiscent of the disciple trying to outdo the master. Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, the production of new tragedies complemented the efforts of translators. Nevertheless, playwrights had quite a limited range of possibilities. On the basis of Terentius' statement: "Nullum est iam dictum quod non sit dictum prius" (*Eunuchus*, v. 41) – *Nothing is said that hasn't been said before* – Renaissance writers usually removed the *inventio* (the finding of a subject) and thus reduced the first rhetorical steps to *dispositio* (the order in which the arguments are displayed to convey a message) and *elocutio* (the rhetorical embellishment). During the Renaissance, the latter was considered to be of the highest artistic virtue. Almost all plays were rewritten on the basis of archetypal texts (i.e., classical plays) even when they were not direct translations of existing literary works. Ultimately, only two generic plots directed the sequence of events in a tragedy. The first revolves around the struggle of a (usually) young woman fighting against the rules of men in defense of higher moral rights and the reasons in her heart – the Antigone type. The second presents a male character's futile resistance to the ruthlessness of Destiny – the Oedipus type (Jossa 1996; Gallo 2005).

Seneca was the first author (chronologically and in importance) to be taken as a model. Italian translations of some of his plays circulated in printed form from as early as 1497. Shortly afterward, with the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* and Greek plays, Euripides and Sophocles also became relevant in the work of Renaissance playwrights (Aeschylus' plays, on the contrary, were less popular and widespread at this time). In summary, both Latin and Greek models played an important role in the development of Renaissance tragedy, and their influence was visible throughout the sixteenth century and beyond.

Most of the philosophical problems tackled by playwrights in Renaissance tragedy originated in ancient theatre: the relationship with power (between kings, servants, counselors, or family members), good government, destiny and fortune, divine justice, and the human condition, among others. Because of the peculiar circumstances

surrounding the political and religious debate during this period, however, authors focused particularly on the moral aspects of tragedy as a means to condemn unethical rulers and sinners and at the same time to teach resilience and faith. The struggle against the passions, frequently represented as infernal presences, reached back to arguments about stoicism and Senecism, emphasizing the ideas of *frugalitas* (frugality) and *aurea mediocritas* (golden mean). Since Earth is the realm of sins and corruption, death becomes the means of freeing oneself from matter and errors, following the anagogic horizon of Platonic and Christian philosophy. This concept led to an irrevocable condemnation of earthly joys and fallacious happiness, originated from worldly values such as glory and power. Renaissance playwrights followed the Platonic legacy – mediated by Christian and Humanist philosophers such as Lactantius (ca. 250–317), Giovanni Pico (1463–1494), and Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) – that revived the Pythagorean and Orphic concept of the body as the prison of the soul, which Plato, in turn, connected to the problems of the immortality of the spirit and the divine origin of the soul (Gallo 2005).

Another fundamental question frequently represented in Renaissance tragedy concerned divine justice or theodicy. Descending from the *Book of Job*, and common in the Greek and Latin traditions, the idea of (apparent) earthly injustice affects all human beings without discrimination. In tragic plays, Divine Providence guides all of mankind, but it works in its own ways and time, and – within Catholic theology – does not negate human free will. Evil is, ethically, a challenge that God gives to mankind, or, cosmically, an element that guarantees universal harmony. It is, in any case, unquestionably necessary.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The principal innovative aspect of Renaissance tragedy resides in the plays' structure. First introduced by Ferrarese playwright Giovan Battista Giraldi Cinthio (1504–1573) in his *Orbecche*

(1541), the division into five acts spaced out by choruses – a stylistic device derived from comedy – and the separation of the prologue from the action are widely accepted by subsequent playwrights. Giraldi dedicated a central position to moral teachings. To achieve his moral goals, Giraldi used horror and compassion. He did not hesitate, for example, to represent death on stage. He wrote his plays (three tragedies, six tragicomedies, a pastoral, and a comedy) not for armchair readers, but to be represented on stage, namely, before Ferrara's prestigious court. He was thus perfectly aware of performance needs and boundaries. Giraldi was also the first to enter into the theoretical debate on tragedy, mainly arguing against the alternative proposition of Sperone Speroni's *Canace* (1500–1588; 1542). The latter defended the primacy of rhetoric and style above the need for representation. And yet, the opposition between Giraldi and Speroni, which lasted almost 20 years, can be read as a more profound contrast between two traditions: the humanist erudition of Ferrara and the Aristotelian sophistication of Padua. The former preferred *inventio* over *elocutio* because the plot's originality allowed the public to be astonished, inducing *catharsis*. For Speroni, a professor in Padua, surprise originated, on the contrary, from the author's rhetorical ability to narrate old stories in different and new ways. Speroni and Giraldi were also representative of the two most common playwright typologies in the sixteenth century: those who operated inside a literary academy and those who write for a courtly public. Speroni was a prominent member of the "Accademia degli Infiammati," where he read aloud his only play little by little during the writing process (*Canace* was printed in 1547 but was never performed on stage because of the sudden death of its protagonist, Angelo Beolco "Ruzante"). This latter tradition contributed to the increased amount of *volgarizzamenti*, rewritings of ancient plays and plots inspired by historical events (ancient, medieval, or contemporary) or mythological narratives (Roaf 1982).

The plays of mid-sixteenth-century writers, such as Pietro Aretino (1492–1556) and some lesser-known talents, are often considered simple

literary exercises, but when read carefully, these tragedies offer various points of interest. To a large extent, the core ideas represented in these plays are the same as those discussed in renowned literary and philosophical works of the time: relationships and power, rules for good governance, and, of course, the personal struggle between effects and politics. This convergence might explain the great number of tragedies written in Italy during the sixteenth century – nearly 120. Tragic plays offered stylistic devices to express controversial ideas that would hardly have been approved if framed in a different genre. Through tragedies, artists were able to address the fears of their time in a veiled manner.

Impact and Legacy

Some playwrights were also actors, such as Luigi Groto, “the blind man from Adria” (1541–1585), who performed his plays on a permanent public stage in the City of Adria, in Polesine. Toward the end of the century, such actors’ performances became more prominent, posing considerable problems for the production of classical tragedy, which required a large monetary investment to be represented on stage. Furthermore, tragic playwrights generally used highly elaborate language. Tragedy is a preferred academic genre, but even in those circles, dramatic texts were more read than staged. Playwrights increasingly abandoned the characteristic structural innovations of Renaissance tragedy (prologue, five acts, horrific, and novelistic plots) to adapt plays for the newly emerging environment. The erection of the first permanent stage in Vicenza, the notable “Teatro Olimpico” by the architect Andrea Palladius (inaugurated in 1585 with an Italian version of Sophocles’ *Oedipus rex* by Orsatto Giustiniani), confirms the increasing importance accorded to staged representation. To this end, Venetian writer Angelo Ingegneri (1550–1613) dedicated his treatise *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche* (1598).

Toward the end of the century, theatre often represented more effects than ideas. A noticeable

exception was provided by the late Renaissance playwright, Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), who represented the arrival point of the sixteenth century’s tragic (and most broadly literary) trajectory. His artistic production style combined a poetic reflection based on Aristotle (*Discorsi dell’arte poetica*, written over an extended period of time – 1562–1587 – then becoming *Discorsi del poema eroico*, printed in 1587) with the writing of several literary works. Among them was an epic poem (*Gerusalemme liberata*, 1581); a tragicomedy, or pastoral (*Aminta*, 1573, which critics read as foreseeing melodrama); and a tragedy, *Il re Torrismondo* (1587). In this tragedy – dedicated to Vincenzo Gonzaga, who freed Tasso from imprisonment in the asylum of Sant’Anna – the author mixed two dramatic traditions: the chivalric and courtly play, in which the main character was torn between love and honor (a plot derived from a historic source, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* by Olaus Magnus), and classical tragedy based on incest (here, as in the model, *Oedipus rex* by Sophocles, the characters were unaware of their actions). Tasso’s example, however, did not save tragedy from an inevitable flagging of interest (Cremante 1988). Along with comedy, both public and writers increasingly preferred pastoral plays and tragicomedy, which foreshadowed the seventeenth-century blossoming of lyric theatre.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Aldine Press](#)
- ▶ [Calcagnini, Celio](#)
- ▶ [Fortune in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Giraldi Cinthio, Giovan Battista](#)
- ▶ [Imitation and Mimesis in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Invention, Renaissance Idea of](#)
- ▶ [Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Politics, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Robortello, Francesco](#)
- ▶ [Scientific Academies in the Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Trissino, Giangiorgio](#)

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Transcendentals in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The doctrine of transcendentals – a key doctrine of medieval metaphysics – is of minor interest to Renaissance philosophers. However, some of them pick up focal points of the doctrine and transform them according to the more “practical” approach, genuine to Renaissance philosophy. Lorenzo Valla, for instance, criticizes the doctrine from a linguistic perspective. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, on the other hand, develops it further into a doctrine with ethical impact. The traditional approach, however, is further advanced in late medieval schools, from where it entered early modern discussions.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

While the notion of transcendentals was an important feature of medieval philosophy (cf., e.g., Aertsen 2012) and made its way via the

so-called Second Scholasticism into early modern philosophy, the doctrine was not so pivotal to Renaissance thought. This is first due to the Renaissance philosophers’ more general opposition against scholastic philosophy and second to a shift from a theoretical, i.e., mostly metaphysical and ontological, perspective to a more “useful,” i.e., practical, philosophy. However, there are some interesting remnants of medieval transcendental philosophy in Renaissance thought.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The medieval concept of transcendentals is far from being homogeneous. Moreover, it evolves from Philip the Chancellor (1225) to Francisco Suárez and the early modern period (see also Goris and Aertsen 2016). However, the account Thomas Aquinas gives – at least in *De veritate* 1, 1 – is not only “the most extensive one in the thirteenth century” (Aertsen in Federici Vescovini 2002, p. 139) but also a point of reference for Renaissance philosophy. Aquinas lists six transcendentals or common modes of being, namely, being (*ens*), thing (*res*), one (*unum*), something (*aliquid*), good (*bonum*), and true (*verum*) (Aquinas 1975, pp. 3–8). These modes are “transcategorical,” in the sense that they surpass the Aristotelian division of being into one substance and nine accidents. Every being, every existing thing possesses all of these modes. Hence, one can say that they are extensionally identical. Intentionally, however, they differ from each other. While “being” is the most fundamental notion, each of the last five transcendentals adds a different notion (*ratio*) to “being.” *Res* adds the notion that every being has an essence, and *unum* adds the notion that every being is undivided. *Aliquid* refers to the fact that every being has an essence that is separated from others. *Bonum* points to every being insofar as it is a possible object of the will, while *verum* considers it a possible object of the intellect. The first two notions refer to a being in itself, and the last three consider it in relation to other beings. The transcendentals *ens*, *unum*, *bonum*, and *verum* are already found

in Philip the Chancellor, while *res* and *aliquid* stem from the Arabic tradition, precisely from Avicenna (Sorge in Federici Vescovini 2002).

Lorenzo Valla explicitly picks up Aquinas's account in his *Retractatio totius dialecticae* (Valla 1981, vol. 1, p. 11; Aertsen 2012). He lists all six transcendentals of Aquinas in a slightly different order. Yet, he is displeased with such a multitude of principles, which he calls "kings" (*imperatores ac reges*), and pleads for one "king" or transcendental, while denying the other five a transcendental character. By applying a linguistic analysis, he arrives at the conclusion that *res* is the "king" and unique transcendental. Valla argues that all five transcendentals can be reduced to *res*: *aliquid* is some thing (*aliqua res*), *unum* is one thing (*una res*), etc. (Valla 1981, vol. 1, p. 12). So, the most fundamental notion is "thing" instead of *ens*, which itself can be reduced to "the thing that exists" (*ea res quae est*). Valla's "reworking" of the theory of transcendentals is due to a more general skepticism concerning dialectics in its Aristotelian-Scholastic form and regarding a metaphysical approach. Instead, he starts from the things insofar as they are known to us in our (ordinary) language.

We find another link to the theory of transcendentals in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, with an interesting move toward moral philosophy, another particular feature of Renaissance philosophy (Aertsen 2012). In his *De ente et uno*, Pico ignores the "Arabic" transcendentals *aliquid* and *res* and concentrates on the four remaining ones (Pico 1993, p. 104). Moreover, he connects them with God's causality. Similar to God, who is the efficient, exemplary, and final cause, any existing thing comes from God (*ab ipso*; hence it is called "*ens*"), is created through Him (*per ipsum* and hence "*verum*"), and directed toward Him (*ad ipsum* and thus "*bonum*") (Pico 1993, pp. 120–126). If it is considered in itself, it is one thing (*unum*). In ch. 10, the ontological perspective is then changed into an ethical one (Pico 1993, pp. 130–134): the striving for unity, truth, and goodness becomes the means by which man assimilates himself with God. In this perspective, the transcendentals are, according to Pico, the way to beatitude and to a morally praiseworthy life.

Impact and Legacy

As mentioned earlier, the importance of the transcendentals decreases in Renaissance philosophy. Remote discussions are also found in Nicholas of Cusa (Turner in Federici Vescovini 2002; Federici Vescovini in Federici Vescovini 2002), Charles de Bovelles (Trottmann in Federici Vescovini 2002), Juan Luis Vives (1990, p. 133), John Maior (1514, pp. 5–6), Crisostomo Javelli (1547, pp. 1–53), and even in Philip Melanchthon (1846, col. 554). The doctrine flourished, however, in Second Scholasticism, especially in Suárez's account in his *Disputationes metaphysicae*. It was continued at the universities in Salamanca, Alcalá, and Coimbra, as well as at German universities, especially where an Aristotelian approach to philosophy was preferred. It thus entered the schoolbook tradition and found its way into (early) modern philosophy (see, e.g., Timpler, Wolff, and others) (Aertsen 2012, pp. 587–634; Darge 2004).

Cross-References

- [Conimbricense, Collegium](#)
- [Metaphysics in the Renaissance](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)
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Translatio Studiorum

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Abstract

Translatio studiorum, literally the transfer of learning, refers to the transmission of knowledge from one place to another, one period to another, or/and from one intellectual context to another. It may also include the transfer of ideas and concepts from one medium to another, through material culture and the arts. Latin translations and commentaries from medieval Arabic became important mediators of Classical western knowledge, although some Renaissance humanists advocated the philosophical primacy of Greek, the language of scientific and philosophical classical scholarship. During the fifteenth century, Greek originals were rediscovered and revived and, by the mid-sixteenth century, both Greek and Latin texts were translated into native vernaculars and printed, thus reaching a larger public. Some recent scholars have claimed that the fundamental concern of *translatio studiorum* with literary

legacy has detracted from the contribution of material and artistic mediators. Furthermore, literature on *translatio studiorum* has generally promoted the assumption that human learning and cultural heritage originated in Greece and spread to the West, thereby ignoring mutual influences and interactions between the cultures and learning of East and West.

Transmission, Translation, and Innovation

Translatio studiorum literally means the transfer of learning or studies. It refers to the transmission of knowledge from one geographical place to another, from one period to another, or/and from one intellectual context to another. The concept implicitly conveys that the transmission of learning also carried with it the cultural ideals and values of intellectual heritage. The term has generally been described as a continuous transposition of texts and their rewriting, translations, and interpretations, but the limits of this definition have recently been debated. *Translatio studiorum* may also include the transfer of ideas and concepts from one medium to another, transfer by means other than texts, through material culture and the arts.

In classical Latin, *translatio* meant both *translation* and *transfer*. Later the Latin term *translatio* designated transmission, and *traductio* referred to what we call translation. The words *translation* in French and *traslazione* in Italian had a spatial sense, meaning the movement or displacement of a figure or object.

The concept is closely linked to *translatio imperii* (transfer of rule), a historical term originating in the Middle Ages, which described the movement of imperial dominance as a linear succession of transfers (Knauth, 2007). This idea of historical linearity was opposed by Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304–74), who is considered the initiator of the fourteenth century Renaissance or so-called proto-Renaissance, and by his humanist followers who perceived a new relationship to antiquity based on renovation or Renaissance.

Latin translations played a fundamental role in the transfer of learning and the philosophical acculturation of Europe. During the Middle Ages

and the early modern period, there was a general debate about the philosophical potential of Latin in its relationship to contemporary vernaculars and ancient languages, especially Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic (De Libera, 1997). Some Renaissance humanists advocated the philosophical primacy of Greek as opposed to scholastic Latin. Due to translinguistic and transcultural experiments in translations, primarily from Arabic and Hebrew, medieval Latin had developed a lexicon suited to philosophical discourse. Neo-Latin translations were produced in the fields of medicine, astrology-astronomy, and natural history (Giglioni, 2015). Classical sources of scientific and philosophical scholarship were in Greek but, since a few Renaissance literati could read them, Latin translations and commentaries from the Arabic became important mediators of ancient knowledge. Humanists produced Latin versions of the writings of Aristotle and Plato (4th c. BC), Archimedes (3rd c. BC), Dioscorides ((1st c.), Ptolemy (2nd c.), Galen (2nd c.), and others. The first complete Latin translation of Plato, by Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), was dedicated to the ruler of Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici, who had supplied him with the Greek manuscripts and was the patron of Ficino's *Accademia Platonica*. The translation of 1468/9 was published in 1484. Ficino also translated Hellenistic documents of the so-called *Corpus Hermeticus*, attributed to the mythical, primeval sage Hermes Trismegistus, and writings of Neoplatonists, including Plotinus. From the mid-fifteenth century, Greek originals were rediscovered and revived along with Greek scholarship (Worth-Stylianou, 1999). The work of Manuel Chrysoloras (ca.1350–1415), who came from Constantinople to teach Greek in Florence at the invitation of the humanist and historian Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406) was continued by Greek émigrés such as Cardinal Bessarion (1395–1472) and John Argyropoulos (1415–87) following the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. Prominent humanists, like Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94), and Angelo Poliziano (1454–94), translated works from Greek. Towards the mid-sixteenth century, Greek and Latin texts were translated into native vernaculars, primarily in Italy and France, in order to reach a broader

public. There was much opposition to literal, word-for-word translation during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although Ciceronian Latin was considered the ideal model, rigid *imitatio* was increasingly criticized. Salutati wrote “I must imitate antiquity not simply to reproduce it, but in order to produce something new.” In the sixteenth century, the eminent Dutch theologian and classical scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) ridiculed as “apes” those humanists whose imitations of Cicero were superficial.

The traditional perception of the Renaissance, as a period of “rebirth” and innovation, characterized by the departure from medieval cultural legacy, originated with Petrarch and subsequent Italian theorists, and was promoted by the cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt (1818–97). Modern scholars, however, have recognized that humanism owed a considerable debt to medieval learning and translations of Greek and Arabic scientific and philosophical texts – the medieval Latin *translatio studiorum*. The eminent Andalusian philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rushd, 1126–1198) wrote commentaries and emendations of Aristotle, which were the foundation of the Aristotelian revival in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and promoted Aristotelian studies in the West and in the Islamic world until the late Renaissance. Thus access to the writings of Aristotle and other classical authors came in part from Arabic translations and commentaries. One of the main centers of Averroistic-Aristotelian academic studies in Italy was established at the University of Padua. Separate editions of Aristotle and Averroes were published in nearby Venice in the 1470s, but the first humanist edition of Aristotle-Averroes combined dates from 1497, followed by sixteenth-century editions. Early patrons of the return to the Arabic authors, included the future cardinal Domenico Grimani (1461–1523) and Pico della Mirandola. The philosophical curriculum taught in Italian universities and promoted by humanists was reflected in contemporary paintings, such as *The Three Philosophers* by Giorgione (1509, Vienna), where a Jewish patriarch and Moslem sage symbolically represent the legacy of a Christian theologian, and *The School of Athens* (Vatican fresco, 1509–11), by Raphael, who painted Averroes among the Greek scholars. These stand in contrast to earlier fourteenth and

fifteenth-century paintings of *The Triumph of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, such as that by Benozzo Gozzoli (ca.1470–75, Louvre), where Averroes was shown trampled underfoot, illustrating the rejection of Arabic inheritance.

The Arabo-Judeo-Latin lineage was the basis for the Aristotelian corpus up to the mid-sixteenth century. The break came with the Venetian edition published by Thomas Junta in 1562 where the source was no longer Arabo-Latin, but Greek.

The concept of *translatio studii* has been fundamentally concerned with the translating, commenting, interpreting, and rewriting of texts. This concentration on literary studies has detracted from the contribution of material, and artistic mediators in cultural transmission, as some scholars have recently demonstrated (Flood, 2009).

From historical and geographical viewpoints, literature on *Translatio studiorum* has promoted the assumption that human learning and cultural heritage originated in Greece and spread to the West. Mutual influences between East and West and their continuous interactions in the transmission of culture and learning have largely been excluded from this discussion, due to the compartmentalization of scholarly research according to preconceived cultural, historical, and/or religious boundaries. One of the most widely diffused and translated literary compositions, illustrating east–west *Translatio studiorum*, is the collection of Indian animal fables called the *Panchatantra* (ca.3rd c.). The original Sanskrit version is lost, but the text and illustrations were transmitted, through revisions and translations, from India and Indonesia, through Islamic Asia, to medieval and Renaissance Europe, transcending religious, sociopolitical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries.

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Translation

- [Book, Renaissance](#)

Trapezuntius

- [George of Trebizond](#)

Trapolino, Petrus

- [Trapolino, Pietro](#)

Trapolino, Pietro

Born: 1451, Vigodarzere (Padua)

Died: 5 June 1509, Padua

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Abstract

An Aristotelian philosopher and a physician, Pietro Trapolino was a professor of *philosophia*

naturalis and medicine at the University of Padua. He studied at Padua under the Dominican Francesco Securo de Nardò and Nicoletto Vernia. He spent his teaching career there, where he was Pietro Pomponazzi's professor and later colleague and friend. His name is mostly linked with his commentaries on Aristotelian works (*Physica*, *De caelo*, *De anima*), in which he kept a moderate Averroism and showed a significant Thomistic inclination.

Alternate Names

Trapolino, Petrus

Biography

Pietro Trapolino was born in 1451 in Vigodarzere near Padua. He was the son of the aristocratic gentleman, Francesco. He studied at Padua under the Dominican Francesco Securo de Nardò, Professor of metaphysics *in via Thomae*, and Nicoletto Vernia. There, he became Doctor artium on 11 February 1483, and Nicoletto Vernia was one of his tutors. He received, thus, the degree of Doctor medicinae on 1 December 1486 (Vedova 1836; Nardi 1958; Lohr 2010). He married Donna Maria Roselli, the granddaughter of the well-known jurist Antonio, and had five children: four males (Francesco, Giulio, Alessandro, and Antonio) and one female (Alba) (Nardi 1958).

Since 15 November 1487, thus, Trapolino linked his life with the Sacro Collegio dei Medici e Filosofi and to the Faculty of Arts and Medicine of Padua. There, he taught initially *philosophia naturalis* and later, in 1493, medical practice and since 1495, theoretical medicine. He was professor, colleague, and also friend of Pietro Pomponazzi (Nardi 1958; Di Napoli 1963).

The Venetian war against the League of Cambrai seriously compromised the equilibrium at the *Studium patavinum*. On 6 June 1509, the German army of Emperor Maximilian I entered

Padua, and in the same day Trapolino died, at the age of 58, under unknown circumstances (Nardi 1958).

At his time, Trapolino was an important commentator of Aristotelian texts at the University of Padua and was the author of three still extant commentaries on Aristotle's *libri naturales: Expositio in IV libros Physicorum* (Ms Modena, Biblioteca Estense, lat. 375), *Quaestiones ac notabilia recollecta in libro Caeli* (Ms Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, lat. VI 301), and *Quaestiones ac notabilia recollecta super libris De anima* (Lohr 2010). The commentary on *De anima*, composed during the last decade of the fifteenth century, is preserved in two manuscripts (Ms Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale, 408 and Ms Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, lat. VI 301) which show some differences in the text. It is possible that they are two different *recollections* (or *reportationes*) of Trapolino's lectures transcribed by students. The *Quaestiones super De anima* held in the Venetian manuscript were recollectd by Benedetto Tiriaca, at that time student, who is also mentioned as the scribe of the commentary on *De caelo* kept in the same manuscript (Nardi 1965; Bakker 2012).

He wrote also some works on medicine: *Quaestiones super Hippocratis Aphorismi* (Ms Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 6537); *Quaestio de aequali ad pondus* and *De restauratione humidi radicalis* (Ms Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, N. 336 Sup.) (Bakker 2012).

Trapolino, together with Nicoletto Vernia, belongs to the Paduan Averroism, which since the beginning of the fifteenth century has been represented by Paolo Veneto and Gaetano da Thiene (Nardi 1958). Averroism arrived in Padua thanks to the spreading of Averroes' commentary on Aristotle's natural treatises and metaphysics. It was used to read Aristotelian texts together with those of the commentator even in comparison with other commentators (Alexander of Aphrodisias, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus). That use arose controversies between Averroists and Thomists, a debate in which even the Church of Padua took part (Nardi 1958). One of the main themes regarded the unity of intellect, which

Trapolino also commented on. He maintained the souls as separated, *assistens et non informans*, saving nevertheless the individual immortality (Garin 1947; Saitta 1966). Following Aquinas, he put the human soul between the pure forms of celestial intelligences and the *formae omnino materiales* entirely linked to the matter. As the student of the Dominican Francesco Securo de Nardò, Trapolino took into a greater account the Thomistic commentary, often favoring it over the Averroistic one (Di Napoli 1963; Nardi 1965; Saitta 1966; Poppi 1970; Garin 1966). He, thus, kept a moderate Averroism and did not receive any censorship from the Bishopric, whereas Vernia did (Nardi 1958).

Cross-References

- [Pomponazzi, Pietro](#)
- [Vernia, Nicoletto](#)

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Traversari, Ambrogio

Born: 16 September 1386, Portico di Romagna

Died: 21 October 1439, Florence

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Abstract

Ambrogio Traversari was a Camaldolese monk and humanist who lived in Florence during the first part of the fifteenth century. At the age of 14, he entered the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli, where he devoted his time to studying and translating Greek literature. The distinctive feature of Traversari was his ability to choose texts coherent with his Christian vocation, beginning with the works of the Church Fathers, and to plan Latin versions of these texts aimed to a didactic and ideological purpose. In 1431, when Traversari became prior general of his Order and could no longer devote himself entirely to the patristic translations, he had the opportunity of putting into practice what he had theorized earlier. During the few years of his public life (he died in 1439), three fundamental moments can be recognized. From 1431 to 1434, he traveled through the Camaldolese and Vallombrosian monasteries, and made every effort to restore the original monastic rule. In 1435, he was sent as ambassador to the Council of Basel to avoid a new schism. Finally, from 1438, he took part in the Council in Ferrara and Florence, where he worked to support the union of the Eastern and Western Churches. The consequences of Traversari's diplomacy vanished after a few years, but his translations had a different fortune. Read, copied, and later printed, his translations offered readers of his time who did not understand Greek, the opportunity to read a huge variety of patristic texts in Latin.

Ambrogio Traversari: Life and Culture

Ambrogio Traversari, Camaldolese monk and humanist in Florence during the first part of the fifteenth century, was born of a noble family of Ravenna in Portico di Romagna on 16 September 1386. At the age of 14, he entered the order of Camaldoli in the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence. There he devoted his time to studying and translating Greek literature until he became prior general of his Order in 1431 because of Eugenius IV's will. To reconstruct Traversari's biography is still of primary importance the *Vita Ambrosii Traversarii Generalis Camaldulensium* written by Lorenzo Mehus in 1759 (Mehus 1759). Among the more recent works on this subject are Stinger (1977), Somigli and Bargellini (1986), Frigerio (1988), and Pontone (2010).

From the few letters written before he became prior general, Ambrogio Traversari shows a huge knowledge of classic and patristic literature and appears entirely devoted to the patristic translations from Greek, a language that he learned, probably with the support of the older monk Demetrio Scarano, about 15 years after he entered the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli. On these letters are no expressed references to Traversari's theological and juridical studies, even though the library of the monastery preserved many books on these two subjects (Magheri Cataluccio and Fossa 1979, pp. 82, 98–100). It is possible that Traversari, during his early education, studied them as well, as it was common in the Camaldolese Order, but in the correspondence selected years later, he decided to perpetuate the image of a humanist free from the cultural heritage of the Middle Ages.

In fact, in the case of Traversari, the proximity to the new humanistic trend is clearly revealed by his activity as a translator from Greek. The idea – widely shared among the humanists of the fifteenth century – was to renew the contemporary society (*renovatio*) looking back to the example of the ancient word handed down by the texts of the classic authors. The peculiarity of Ambrogio

Traversari, humanist and Christian militant, was to choose texts coherent with his ecclesiastical vocation, beginning with the works of the Church Fathers.

Traversari's translations are not always philologically acceptable, due the large number of they contain errors, but they gave readers of his time who did not understand Greek the opportunity to read an enormous variety of patristic texts in Latin. Before he became prior general, the Camaldolese translated about twenty works (full list in CALMA I. 2, pp. 204–207). The amount of his Latin versions is quite impressive. In detail, during his early years (from 1416 to 1420), he translated the second letter *De vita solitaria* of Basil of Caesarea; the short treatise *Adversus vituperatores vitae monasticae* of John Chrysostom; the *Scala paradisi* of John Climacus; the first part of the *Theophrastus* of Aeneas of Gaza (finished within 1431; see Pontone 2011, pp. 81–82); another work of John Chrysostom, *De providentia Dei ad Stagirium*; and perhaps the first sermon *De statu*s. During the following years, Traversari translated other patristic works: Manuel Kalekas, *Contra errores Graecorum*; John Chrysostom, *Sermones contra Judaeos* and *Quod deus incomprehensibilis sit*; Basil of Ancyra, *De vera integritate virginis* itis; Ephrem the Syrian, *Sermones*; Gregory the Presbyter, *Vita Gregorii Nazianzeni*; and Palladius, *Vita sancti Johannis Chrysostomi*.

For some of these translations from before 1431, the manuscript tradition preserved the autograph versions as well: the so-called *Vitae Patrum*, a miscellany of hagiographic and ascetic works, translated between 1423 and 1431 (MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conventi Soppr. G. IV. 844), some sermons of John Chrysostom on St. Paul's letters (MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conventi Soppr. J. VI. 6), and some texts of, or attributed to, Athanasius of Alexandria (the treatises *Contra Gentiles*, *De incarnatione Verbi* and *Disputatio contra Arium*, MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conventi Soppr. J. VIII. 8).

In the coherent group of patristic translations made by Ambrogio Traversari during his early years, there is only one exception: the Latin version of the *Vitae philosophorum* of Diogenes Laertius, begun between 1424 and 1425, but finished only in 1433. Even though this translation presents many stylistic problems, it was one of the most widely spread translations made by the monk, because of the concise survey of the lives and thought of the ancient Greek philosophers.

Traversari had many difficulties in translating the *Vitae philosophorum*. It is true that the Camaldolese found many linguistic and rhetorical problems, because Diogenes Laertius' Greek was very different from the Byzantine Greek he was used to. But – most of all – Ambrogio Traversari met a lot of ideological and theological obstacles, especially in reading the tenth book on Epicurus' philosophy that, in fact, remained unfinished for years, from 1425 to 1433. It was only to satisfy Cosimo de' Medici's and Pileo de' Marini's will that the monk completed the Latin version of the *Vitae philosophorum*. Or, at least, this is the justification that he presented in his letters. What seems clear is that the pagan subject of Laertius' work clashed with the Christian vocation that moved the monk in choosing the patristic texts to translate (Gigante 1988, pp. 367–404). It does not mean that Traversari did not recognize the high educational value of the Classics, but he feared to make them easily comprehensible through Latin versions, as he wrote in his preface to the *Vitae philosophorum*. Even so, the translation was finished, because the Camaldolese was persuaded that it was necessary to understand the historical root of the *sapientia Graeca* to understand the contemporary East as well (Vasoli 1988, pp. 83–84, 87).

It seems clear thus that the plan of Latin versions realized by Ambrogio Traversari was aimed at a didactic and ideological purpose coherent with his Christian vocation. Even though the choice of translating patristic texts seems to remove the monk from the humanistic group, he agreed thoroughly to the renewal of *studia humanitatis* in the field of the style. In the dedicatory letter to the *Scala paradisi* of John Climacus,

the Camaldolese polemizes with Angelus Clarenus (the medieval translator of this text) and commends his new Latin version, no more *de verbo ad verbum* but *ad sententiam* (Stinger 1977, pp. 100–113). The result was much less innovative than what was expected (Sottili 1981, pp. 170–177; Varalda 2004, pp. 51–52, 56–61), but it is evident that Traversari strove to translate *ad sensum*, following the Ciceronian style and also respecting the meaning of the text, as a Humanist had to do (Cortesi 1995, pp. 470–484). The choice of translating patristic texts is therefore a peculiarity of the Traversarian Humanism, coherent with the religious aptitude of the monk.

In 1431, Traversari's life changed completely. When he became prior general Order, the Camaldolese was forced to leave the peacefulness of Santa Maria degli Angeli and begin a new frenetic life. During the few years of his public life (he died in 1439), three fundamental moments can be recognized. From 1431 to 1434, he traveled through the Camaldolese and Vallombrosian monasteries, making every effort to restore the original monastic rule. In 1435, he took part as an ambassador in the Council of Basel, where he supported Eugenius IV's interests; for the same reason, he met Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg. Finally, in 1438 he took part in the Council, moving first to Ferrara and then to Florence, where he worked hard to support the union of the Eastern and Western Churches.

Ambrogio Traversari did not have enough time to devote himself entirely to the patristic translations as during his cloistered life, but he had now the great opportunity of putting into practice what he had theorized before. For example, during his long journey through the Camaldolese and Vallombrosian monasteries (1431–1434), he tried to restore the original monastic rule, in accordance with Martinus V's and Eugenius IV's will (Frigerio 1988, pp. 60–63). All his efforts ended in a failure, but in this project, we can recognize Traversari's idea to pursue a *renovatio* of the Church, free from excess of wealth, as the monk had theorized in the patristic translations of his early years. The Camaldolese wrote a *hodoeporicon* (or *commentariolum*) too, in order

to tell in a journey diary his moralizing experience and offer the readers a modern *exemplum* of monastic virtue (Dini-Traversari 1912; Tamburini 1985; Iaria 2005).

During the Council of Basel, the Camaldolese supported the union of the Latin Church, probably because he considered the peril of a schism the worst danger that the Church could suffer, even worse than the ostentation of wealth condemned by the Council (Stinger 1977, p. 192; Caby 1999, pp. 675–682). During these days in Basel, he translated three orations entitled *De pace* of Gregory of Nazianzus (No. 6, 23, 22) to theorize what he was trying to put into practice through the diplomatic relations (Way 1961, pp. 91–96; Gentile 2000, pp. 95–102).

Coming back from Basel, Traversari tried to translate other two long patristic works, the entire *corpus* of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and ninety sermons of John Chrysostom on Matthews' Gospel (Stinger 1977, pp. 154–156), but in 1437, Eugenius IV moved the Council to Ferrara and the Camaldolese had to leave once again his peaceful life in the cluster. The pope wanted to reunite the Eastern and Western Churches under his supremacy in exchange for the military support offered in the war against the Turks (Proch 1990, pp. 300–319). Therefore, Ambrogio Traversari was called to have a part in the completion of the historic event.

Supporter of the Churches' union (Somigli 1964; Rao 1994), Traversari followed the Council from Ferrara to Florence, where it was moved to avoid the plague and assure political stability thanks to Cosimo de' Medici's help (Fubini 1994, pp. 62–86). The wide knowledge of the Greek patristics and the unremitting efforts as a translator were the wider contributions that the Camaldolese gave to the success of this event. For example, he translated part of the *Adversus Eunomium* of Basil of Caesarea that Giovanni da Montenero used during the meetings of the Council in Florence (Stinger 1977, pp. 216–217). Moreover, Traversari deepened personal relations with a lot of Byzantine prelates, thanks to his knowledge of spoken Greek (Pontani 1994, pp. 762–765).

Finally, on 6 July 1439, the text of the union between the Eastern and Western Churches, the bull *Laetentur coeli*, was signed (Proch 1988). Traversari himself signed it, and then he retired to a cloistered life in the hermitage of Camaldoli to keep on with his studies. Unfortunately, on 21 October 1439, he died in the monastery of San Salvatore in Florence. The causes of his death are unknown. The consequences of Traversari's diplomacy vanished after a few years, but his translations had a different fortune. Read, copied, and later printed, a lot of his Latin versions became part of the most important humanistic libraries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and offered readers that did not understand Greek the opportunity to read a vast variety of patristic texts.

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Treatise, Renaissance

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Abstract

The Renaissance treatise (Latin, *tractatus*) is an explanatory text presenting descriptions, arguments, and evidence to formulate a valid opinion about an object of knowledge. The variety of topics in this format covers the entire range of scholarly disciplines. Renaissance authors used the notion of *tractatus* in philosophy, broadly defined, to present the following types of reasoning: encyclopedic overviews of a discipline; interpretations and reorganizations of ancient and medieval texts; mathematical, astrological, and cosmographical descriptions; and logical thinking. Whereas these forms evince different aspects of reasoning and modes of discussion, the term *tractatus* was also employed merely as an organizational element, in the manner of the late ancient notion of separate essays on the same subject within the same volume.

The notion of a philosophical treatise with which we are nowadays familiar through, for example, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1922), was not the

sole form that Renaissance philosophical treatises assumed. On the contrary, there were a wealth of forms and formats and different ways of presenting arguments and collecting evidence, all connected under the headings “philosophy” and *tractatus*. Authors in this period were highly experimental, trying out new forms of reasoning and explaining.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Renaissance treatise (Latin, *tractatus*) is an explanatory text presenting descriptions, arguments, and evidence to formulate a valid opinion about an object of knowledge (Latin, *res*). The variety of topics in this format covers all the scholarly disciplines and includes encyclopedic works such as an illustrated compendium about the identification of herbs, the *Tractatus de herbis* (1440), today in the British Library, as well as juridical discussions such as those about the jurisdiction of matrimony in the *Tractatus de matrimonio regis Anglia* (1530), and displays of architectural forms organized by category (*Tractatus de architectura*, c. 1250).

In order to stay as close as possible to the Renaissance notion of *tractatus* and also to embrace the whole of Europe, the following characterization of treatises is based on a thorough study of all – not just philosophical – Latin European treatises in print that have *tractatus* in their title and that have been cataloged by the Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC), the most comprehensive database of Renaissance writing available on the Internet, with a chronological range from the beginning of print in the 1450s to the end of the sixteenth century. There are currently 3,860 treatises that match these criteria.

Philosophy in the context of the Renaissance included a number of different topics, and, to get to grip with the specifics of the philosophical *tractatus* as it was understood at the time, it will be helpful to work with the notion, which derives from Gregor Reisch’s *Margarita Philosophica* (1503), of an enhanced curriculum of the seven liberal arts plus ethics and natural philosophy.

Leaving aside the often-contradictory disciplinary borders and developments of contemporary philosophy, the samples considered here are representative of various aspects of topics and formats connected to the Latin treatise of the Renaissance.

As regards the geographical distribution of the 3,860 books with *tractatus* in their title, 1,479 were printed in the Italian peninsula, 995 in France, 946 in the Holy Roman Empire, 138 in Spain, 129 in the Low Countries, 96 in the Swiss Confederation, 28 in England, 26 in Poland, 17 without any indication of country, and nine in Portugal. Measured against the Latin print production of these countries or regions, the Italian peninsula leads with 3.85%, followed by Spain (2.85%) and France (2.52%). Portugal (1.86%) and the Holy Roman Empire (1.74%) are next, and the last group consists of England (1.12%), Poland (0.99%), the Low Countries (0.95%), and the Swiss Confederation (0.92%). These figures also show that the Latin term was not used as frequently in German-, English-, Dutch-, and Polish-speaking countries as in lands where Romance languages were spoken (with the trilingual Swiss Confederation as an exception). This raises the question of whether choosing the title *tractatus* was a purely linguistic decision or, instead, was influenced by the spread of Protestantism. Given that Protestantism had an effect especially on juridical and religious texts, the latter possibility seems more likely, since over 50% of all titles containing the term *tractatus* are found in the fields of jurisprudence (1,370) and religion (837). It seems that authors of Protestant jurisprudence and religion may have preferred to erase any link to the medieval scholastic *tractatus* by using other title keywords. This would explain why, at least during the sixteenth century, the term *tractatus* was used less in the British Isles and in the Protestant parts of the Holy Roman Empire and of the Low Countries than in Southern Europe. Jurisprudence and religion are not, however, among the disciplines covered by Reisch’s definition of philosophy, and medicine (296) is also excluded. The remaining titles (1,357) represent the liberal arts along with ethics and natural philosophy. The format of the *tractatus* was developed in different ways over the centuries,

according to the preferred methods of reasoning adopted by the various philosophical disciplines, with the help of the learned community known as the “Republic of Letters.”

Innovative and Original Aspects

Throughout the period from 1450 to 1600, authors used the notion of *tractatus* in philosophy, broadly defined, to present the following types of reasoning: encyclopedic overviews of a discipline; interpretations and reorganizations of ancient and medieval texts; mathematical, astrological, and cosmographical descriptions; and logical thinking. Whereas these forms evince different aspects of reasoning and modes of discussion, the term *tractatus* was also employed merely as an organizational element, in the manner of the late ancient notion of separate essays on the same subject within the same volume such as in the treatise on alchemy attributed to the legendary Hermes Trismegistus, *Septem tractatus seu capitula ... aurei*, published in Strasbourg in 1566.

An example of the type of layout found in the Renaissance *tractatus* is an early printed encyclopedia of natural history entitled *Ortus Sanitatis* (c. 1507) and attributed to the Frankfurt town physician Johannes Wonnecke of Kaub (Johannes of Cuba). A version of this book, containing only the section on herbs, first came out in Latin in 1484 and then a year later in German (Hirsch 1876); the last edition was published in 1538. The 1507 Latin edition separates the book into different *tractatus*: one each on herbs, animals, birds, fish, stones, and – showing that it is a medical reference book – types of urine. Each *tractatus* has encyclopedia-style entries arranged in alphabetical order and called chapters (*capitula*), most of which have identifying woodcut illustrations. Each chapter contains the physical description and medical use of one species. In this way, many short chapters combine to make one treatise, and six treatises make one book. The treatise on herbs is the most comprehensive, with more than 200 leaves, over 500 illustrations, and 530 chapters, accounting for more than half of the entire book. An alphabetical index for each

part of the book, placed at the end of the volume, indicates the medical use of the different species, thus helping the practitioner to find the right plants, animals, or stones for medical recipes. The development of encyclopedic printed reference books on natural history starts with works such as this which use the term *tractatus* in their title.

Another characteristic example is Heinrich Glarean’s new and annotated edition of Donatus’ Latin grammar, first published in 1535, together with eight *tractatus* of his own covering the main topics dealt with by the ancient grammarian: generic nouns, their declension, comparative forms, irregularities, conjugation, grammatical rules, syllables, and figures of speech such as tautologies or enigmas (Donatus 1535, 1540; see also Donatus 1527). Glarean’s eight treatises deploy many examples in order to explain how to understand and apply Donatus’ rules. This entailed a radical extension and transformation of the ancient grammarian’s approach. While Donatus’ grammar was designed to be short, so that children could memorize the declensions of nouns and conjugations of verbs, Glarean had a very different pedagogical aim: at more than 100 folios in length, his treatises were not intended to be memorized, but were instead explanatory statements to be consulted. From a dictation manual for teachers of small children, Glarean’s edition of Donatus had become a reference book for independent scholars of all ages. His eight *tractatus* had turned an ancient grammar text into an accessible manual for self-study and a repertory of grammatical information.

The questions about universals (*Quaestiones de universalibus*) written by the Oxford Franciscan John Duns Scotus before 1295 were used in the second half of the sixteenth century as university texts. The Paduan professor Gaspare Torri (1531–1595), who adopted the Franciscan convent name of Costanzo Boccadifuoco, or Sarnano (Moroni 1840; Dreyer et al. 2013), explained these questions to his students and published his lectures in 1576 in Venice (Boccadifuoco 1576). In this volume, he refers to Duns Scotus’ chapters as a sequence of *quaestiones* in order to highlight the scholastic format of late medieval syllogistic

argumentation. Boccadifuoco added one *tractatus* of his own to the volume, in which he introduced his young students to the methods of constructing a syllogistic *quaestio* and thus provided them with a manual, not only for understanding Duns Scotus' way of constructing logical deductions but also for formulating their own. (Boccadifuoco 1576, 503–525). Seven years later, in 1583, Boccadifuoco finally published an amended text of Duns Scotus' treatise, prefaced by a short biography of the “Doctor subtilis” (Scotus 1583).

Impact and Legacy

The *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus* by the Austrian-born philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein was a milestone in the new twentieth-century direction taken by philosophical argumentation, which aimed to understand and criticize the use of language in relation to the perception of the world (Wittgenstein 1922). In Bertrand Russell's words: “Mr Wittgenstein is concerned with the conditions for a logically perfect language ... that the whole function of language is to have meaning, and it only fulfills this function in proportion as it approaches to the ideal language which we postulate” (Russell 1922). The predecessors of Wittgenstein were philosophers of the Holy Roman Empire in the seventeenth century who used the title *tractatus logicus* in works they produced for universities. Two examples of this highly stylized genre, both exercises in syllogistic argumentation, were published in Giessen near Frankfurt am Main by Christoph Scheibler, a Lutheran philosophy professor at the University of Giessen: one on propositions and axioms and the other on syllogisms (Scheibler 1619a, b). Scheibler first explained the structure of truth-bearing sentences and presuppositions and then the methods of logical thinking, referring back to Aristotle and the medieval tradition of the *quaestio* (Roncaglia 2003). Another example of a *tractatus logicus* was a published examination for a philosophy doctorate in logic at the Lutheran University of Wittenberg: the student respondent was Christoph Boehm, and the philosophy professor Martin

Caselius presided over the examination (Caselius and Boehm 1633). Published dissertations were also quite common in the Holy Roman Empire from the seventeenth century onward (Marti 2011).

Although there are no sixteenth-century works called *tractatus logicus* in the USTC database, there are 1,008 Latin entries with titles containing the term *dialectica* – that part of logic which explained how to formulate an argument (Brown 1966, 26) – mostly without *tractatus*. With the appearance of the *tractatus logicus*, however, the seventeenth century witnessed a revival of medieval scholastic forms emphasizing the syllogistic *quaestio*, a trend which was connected to a revival of metaphysics (Posy and Ferejohn 1993; Hartbecke 2006; Smith 2010.)

The notion of philosophical treatise we are now familiar with, the *tractatus logicus*, was not the only form that Renaissance philosophical treatises assumed. On the contrary, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries devised a wealth of forms and formats, along with different ways of arguing and collecting evidence. Even though most treatises referred in one way or another to writings from antiquity and from the Middle Ages, Renaissance authors were highly experimental, trying out new forms of reasoning and explaining.

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- [Scheibler, Christoph](#)
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Tremellius, Immanuel

Born: Ferrara, c. 1510

Died: Sedan, 9 October 1580

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Abstract

Following his conversion from Judaism to Calvinism and flight from his native Italy, Immanuel Tremellius enjoyed a distinguished career as a professor of Hebrew and Old Testament studies at a range of academies and universities in northern Europe. As a scholar, he was responsible for a series of works of Christian–Hebraica. The most famous of these was his translation of the Old Testament into Latin, coauthored with Franciscus Junius, and first published in 1575–1579: this became the most important Protestant Latin Bible of the sixteenth century. As a whole, Tremellius’ career highlights the significance of Hebrew and the Jewish tradition to the Reformation.

Biography

Immanuel Tremellius was born a Jew in Ferrara in around 1510. In about 1530, he moved to Padua, where he may have attended the university. During the course of that decade, he began to move in eminent circles: among his contacts at this point were the Cardinals Alessandro Farnese (the future Pope Paul III) and Reginald Pole (the future archbishop of Canterbury). Pole oversaw Tremellius’ conversion to Catholicism, and also helped him to obtain his first post, recommending him to Peter Martyr Vermigli, the new prior of the Augustinian monastery at Lucca. Tremellius taught Hebrew there. During his short time in Lucca, Tremellius also gained greater familiarity with the works of a number of Protestants and evangelicals. Following the establishment of the Roman Inquisition, Tremellius left Italy in 1543, settling first in

Strasbourg, where he taught Hebrew at the recently established Academy. In 1549, he moved to England, and soon took up the post of Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge. On the accession of the Catholic Mary Tudor, he returned to the continent, and in 1554 became tutor to the young children of the Duke of Zweibrücken, in time becoming rector of the Academy which the Duke founded in Hornbach. In 1561, he became Professor of the Old Testament at Heidelberg, a position which he would hold for 16 years. In 1577, he moved to France where he became Professor of Hebrew at the Academy in Sedan. He died there in 1580, at the age of approximately 70.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Tremellius’ long, unusual, and illustrious career does much to explain the nature of his intellectual contribution, and its broader significance. As a convert from Judaism, he brought with him a proficiency in Hebrew and a familiarity with the Jewish tradition that was highly valued in both the lecture hall and in his publications. This was most apparent in the rapid explosion of career opportunities for someone with Tremellius’ skills: many of his posts were in institutions which had just been founded, and he was, consequently, one of the pioneers in the development of the study of Hebrew in the Reformation era.

A review of his published works illustrates the focus of his activities. These included a Commentary on Hosea, two works based on lectures which he had heard Martin Bucer deliver in Cambridge, a translation of the Targum Jonathan on the 12 minor prophets, a translation of the New Testament made from the Syriac, and an Aramaic and Syriac grammar. In addition, he was responsible for a translation into Hebrew of John Calvin’s Geneva Catechism, evidently intended to encourage further Jews to undertake the same religious transformation that Tremellius himself had undergone. Unlike most such “missionary” works of the period, Tremellius’ edition was distinguished by its absence of anti-Jewish polemic.

Legacy and Impact

Tremellius' most famous work, however, was his translation of the Old Testament, produced in conjunction with the French scholar Franciscus Junius, and first published by the Wechel presses of Frankfurt in five folio volumes between 1575 and 1579. More than 30 editions of this work would issue from presses across Europe, in a range of sizes, between the late sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries. The translation itself was characterized by its close fidelity to the language of the original; this was then supplemented by a large mass of notes and annotations, which largely avoided theological point-scoring, and instead focused on elaborating issues of historical and cultural importance. This edition of the Bible, which came to constitute a Calvinist equivalent to the Vulgate, was a critical element in the process by which the Reformed church established its independence from the Catholic Church. This work, and indeed Tremellius' entire career, in turn, epitomizes the Reformation's interest in, and dependence on, Jewish learning.

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Trepus Ruitanus Lamiva

► [Torres Rámila, Pedro de](#)

Trissino, Gian Giorgio

► [Trissino, Giangiorgio](#)

Trissino, Giangiorgio

Born: 1478, Vicenza

Died: 1550, Rome

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Abstract

Giangiorgio Trissino (1478–1550), a patrician scholar, poet, dramaturge, translator, and theorist of Vicenza, is credited with having been the first to write in blank verse in Italian, the first to write a complete *Poetica* (Parts I–IV, 1529; Parts V–VI, 1562) in Italian, the first to write a formal Renaissance tragedy (*Sofonisba*, 1524), and the first to write an epic in blank verse in Italian (*Italia liberata da Goths*,

1547–48). His treatise, *Epistola del Trissino de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte ne la lingua italiana* (1524) initiated the linguistic debates known as the *questione della lingua*. He also introduced Renaissance scholars to Dante's *De volgare eloquentia*, unknown at the time of Trissino's translation. A patron of Palladio (1508–1580), he is said to have given Andrea Di Pietro della Gondola his name in honor of Pallas Athena and introduced the young stone mason to Vitruvius and other classical treatises. Trissino completed many of the designs for his villa at Cricoli, on which Palladio worked. The fragment of Trissino's architectural treatise and his musical reforms are among his least studied contributions but no less erudite and innovative. His Petrarchan lyric poetry found in the *Rime* (1524) was enriched by his extensive knowledge and study of poets pertaining to the *dolce stil nuovo*, the Sicilian school, as well as Provençal and Spanish poets. He was a Pythagorean and well-versed in Neoplatonic philosophy.

Alternate Names

Trissino, Gian Giorgio; Trissino, Giovan Giorgio

Biography

Trissino was born on July 8, 1478, to Gaspare Trissino and Cecilia Bevilacqua. The Trissino name can be dated to mentions in medieval chronicles, some of which Trissino employed during the composition of his epic poem, *Italia liberata da Goti*. Paolo Beni's *Trattato della origine della famiglia Trissina* (Padova, 1614) traced the Trissino name to a Greek from Trenze who had come to Italy during the age of Flavius Belisarius (505–565). Leo X (1475–1521) later advocated on Trissino's behalf for the return of feudal possessions – from Montecchio Maggiore to the foothills of the Alps referred to as “of Trissino” or “of the Agno” – from the Venetians which had been lost during the many invasions of Vicenza. Trissino's education was overseen by his mother,

Cecilia, following his father's death in 1487. The adolescence of Trissino and his younger sisters, Maddalena (b.1479) and Isabetta (b.1482), in Vicenza put them in contact with Italian intellectuals, particularly classical scholars, associated with the local *scuola di grammatica* (a center for Greek and Latin learning). Trissino's friendship with Francesco Maturanzio (1443–1518) dates from this period and Maturanzio later credited his years in Vicenza as those to which he owed the greatest debt. At the age of 16, Trissino married Giovanna, daughter of Francesco da Trissino, on November 19, 1494. The marriage lasted until Giovanna's early death on April 12, 1505. Of their five children, Francesco, Giulio, Cecilia, Gasparo, and Vincenzo, only Francesco and Giulio survived their mother; only Giulio lived to adulthood. Following Giovanna's death, Trissino pursued an itinerant intellectual lifestyle which he would maintain for the next 40 years until his death in 1550. From 1500 to 1502, he resided in Rome where he befriended Luigi da Porto (1485–1529), Bartolommeo Paghola (1472–1517), and others who frequented the circle of Battista Graziani. Graziani's gardens were host to an erudite group that included learned noblewomen such as Cassandra Fedele (1465–1558), Laura Veronese (Laura Brenzona), and Graziani's own daughter. In July 1505, Trissino traveled to Brescia where he met with the Gambara family, in particular, the poetess, Veronica (1484–1550), who is said to have rivaled Gaspara Stampa (1523–1554) and Vittoria Colonna (1492–1547). Trissino's intellectual foundation is marked by four early phases which occurred in Milan, Ferrara, Florence, and Rome.

Trissino's first deep immersion in the study of the classics occurred in Milan. In the autumn of 1506, Trissino entered the tutelage of Demetrio Calcondile (1423–1511) who was among the most important early exponents of Greek in Italy, responsible for the early education of Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494), and others. Demetrio hosted an academy in his home attended by masters of Greek and Latin such as Giangiacomo Trivulzio (1440–1518), Aulo Giano Parrasio (1470–1522), Janus Lascaris (1445–1535), Jacopo Antiquario

(1444–1512), and Marco Musuro (1470–1517), many of whom were also members of the Greek academy pertaining to the Venetian printer, Aldus Manutius (1449–1513). By 1506, Milan had become a center for Hellenist studies, and Calcondile lectured there not only on the *Iliad* but also on the *Homeric Hymns*, the *Orphic Hymns*, and Apollonius of Tyana. Trissino also met the poets Camilla Scarampa (1476–1520) and Cecilia Gallerani (1473–1536), the latter of whom Matteo Bandello (1480–1562) dubbed both a muse and a Sappho, and who is thought to be the lady of Leonardo Da Vinci's "Dama con l'ermellino" (at the time, she was the consort of Ludovico Sforza, 1452–1508). Trissino also grew close to Margherita Pio (d.1524) with whom he would maintain a lengthy and unhappy epistolary affair. Ippolita Sforza (1481–1520), whose gardens became the site of numerous poetic and intellectual exchanges in Milan, also contributed to this period of growth. Already in Milan, it was said that over Latin, Trissino preferred the "language of Homer."

From 1509 to 1512, Trissino suffered a brief period of exile which arose from the uncertain fate of Vicenza following the League of Cambrai and the shifting alliances of the European powers. Trissino had been in attendance for the entrance of the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian of Austria (1459–1519), into Vicenza in October 1509. He composed an encomiastic poem for the emperor during his exile. By November 1510, he returned to Milan. In 1511, Calcondile died and Trissino would make an honorific mention of him in his *Ritratti* (1524).

In April 1512, Trissino arrived in Ferrara, where he quickly found favor with Lucrezia di Borgia (1480–1519), Duchess of Ferrara and wife of Alfonso d'Este (1476–1534). Her friendships with Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), Filippo Strozzi the Younger (1489–1538), Antonio Tebaldeo (1463–1537), and Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533) coincided with Trissino's arrival. In Ferrara Trissino expanded his study of Greek to encompass Philosophy, Mathematics, Music, and Natural Science. He began his first thorough study of literature written in the Italian vernacular which would become indispensable for his *Poetica* and the foundation for all of his major contributions to

linguistic and literary theory. A lifelong Hellenist, Trissino dedicated his career to translating his own erudition into imaginative and theoretical works composed in Italian. In his dedication of the *Sofonisba* to Leo X, he explicitly stated that he had chosen to write in Italian rather than Latin in order to make the work accessible.

In 1513, Trissino went to Florence, the third significant juncture on his intellectual itinerary and a period that augmented his engagement with classical philosophy. He befriended Francesco Cattani da Diacceto (1466–1522), a master of Greek and Latin and earlier friend of Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499). It was by way of Diacceto that Trissino came to know Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556), and Giovanni di Bernardo Rucellai (1475–1525) among others who gathered for the Platonic discussions hosted at the Orti Oricellari. Already in 1513, Trissino was considered by the others to be more of a master and superior than a companion or equal.

In the autumn of 1513, Trissino returned to Ferrara where he continued to cultivate some of his most intimate relations with the Dukes of Este and Mantua. He came under the protection of Isabella Gonzaga (1474–1539), Marchioness of Mantua, sister of Alfonso di Este (1476–1534), and wife to Francesco Gonzaga (1466–1519), also known for her patronage of, among many others, Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533) and Mario Equicola (1470–1525). It is to this period that the *Epistola de la vita, che dee tenere una donna vedova*, the *Rime*, and the *Ritratti* belong. The *Ritratti* was finished by March 1514 and there is evidence that Trissino had hoped to deliver the work in person to Isabella but with the requisite agreement that it would not be read by others for at least one year. The work is of a kind with Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano*.

In 1513, Giovanni de Medici (1475–1521), son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, had been elected Pope Leo X. By 1514, Trissino returned to Rome where, among the many circles of artists and intellectuals cultivated by the new pope, he rekindled his friendship with Giovanni di Bernardo Rucellai. Rucellai's tragedy, the *Rosmunda* was one of the first to take Trissino's *Sofonisba* as its model. Firmly enmeshed in

literary circles in Rome, Florence, Ferrara, and Milan, as well as his home in Vicenza, he spent the next 40 years as a peripatetic in the most learned circles of northern Italy. He also visited Sannazaro and Isabella D'Aragn in Naples. But by 1515 much of the corpus which would appear in Rome in 1524 and in Vicenza in 1529 had already been written or conceptualized. It is likely that by this time Trissino had already read and studied Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* and begun work on his epic poem, the *Italia liberata da Goti* (1547–48). During the last 15 years of his life, he spent an increasing amount of time at his home at Cricoli where he composed his, mostly lost, architectural treatise and mentored Andrea Palladio. From 1538 to 1540, he lectured at Padua. Trissino, who took his example from Virgil, is thought to have been a Pythagorean. His engagement with the works of Aristotle as well as Plato and the Pre-Socratics, in the original Greek, makes him potentially one of the most interesting, and possibly pantheistic, thinkers of his period. Unfortunately, he did not find an open place for the articulation of these pursuits within Counter-Reformation Italy. A full assessment of Trissino's thinking, taking into consideration his extensive correspondence and wide-ranging friendships, remains to be undertaken. Trissino died in Rome on December 8, 1550.

Innovative and Original Aspects/ Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Questione della lingua

The debates over formal, aesthetic, and dialectic choices for the Italian language known as the *questione della lingua* began with the publication of Trissino's *Epistola del Trissino de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte ne la lingua italiana* (Rome, 1524). This largely "Tuscan question" intensified the following year with the publication of Pietro Bembo's treatise *Prose della volgar lingua* (Venice, 1525). In 1529, several of Trissino's works continued the debate in spite of the publication of numerous reactions to his proposals. In the *Poetica*, the *Castellano*, the *Grammatichetta*, the *Dubbi grammaticali*, and the *Alphabeto*, he further developed and altered his suggestions.

These works are most fruitfully studied together. Trissino's Italian translation of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* was also published that same year, and though this text would become a focal point of the debate, at the time of publication Dante's treatise was so unknown that some believed it to be Trissino's own work disguised under Dante's name.

Trissino's position took up two central subjects: (1) the introduction of spelling reforms through the use of Greek letters to indicate differences in pronunciation, such as on the long and short "o"; he reworked these spelling changes between 1524 and 1529, having found them too difficult for implementation; and (2) the construction of an Italian language out of vernacular writing in the many Italian dialects including but not limited to Tuscan. In contrast, Bembo argued instead that only Tuscan – the language of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio – was to be considered the national language, Tuscan authors its exemplars. While the debate between Trissino's Italian and Bembo's Tuscan was amplified by several other interlocutors, Trissino's own use of Tuscan was extensive and all three of the *tre corone* are central paradigms in his *Poetica*. Trissino's friendship with Bembo remained until Bembo's death in 1547, which Trissino lamented with an encomiastic poem. Of his many texts on linguistic theory and practice, the *Castellano* is closest to the contemporary language debate: it is framed as an account recorded by Arrigo Doria of a discussion about Trissino's 1524 *Epistola*, which took place between Giovanni Rucellai and Filippo Strozzi. Trissino's advocacy of a courtly and illustrious Italian language constructed from a rich literary lexicon – as Greek had been refined through the conjunction of Attic, Ionic, Doric, and Eolic dialects – anticipates the Italian language practiced today.

Poetica

Trissino's *Poetica* is the first such work since Dante's *De vulgari* and Antonio di Tempo's *Summa Artis Rithimici Vulgaris Dictaminis* (1332). Trissino's innovation was to provide a work written in Italian which combined several schools and traditions of poets in European vernaculars. Trissino anticipates Boscán in Spain, Du Bellay and Ronsard in France, and Sir Philip

Sidney in England. In addition to Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, Trissino cites extensively from Cino da Pistoia (1270–1336) and Guittone d'Arezzo (1230–1294). The majority of his exemplars are drawn from the poets of the *dolce stil nuovo* and the Sicilian school, though he also makes mention of Provençal and Spanish poets. As a Greek and Latin scholar, Trissino drew on Aristotle (the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*), Homer, Pindar, Virgil, Catullus, and Horace. Both Horace and Pindar had served as models for his own innovative odes. The *Poetica* expanded upon the *questione della lingua*, particularly the construction of a courtly and illustrious Italian out of the literary lexicons of several dialects. The *Poetica* of 1529 (Parts I–IV) was augmented with the posthumous publication of Parts V–VI in 1562. While published after Francesco Robortello's (1516–1562) translation of the *Poetics*, Trissino's treatise constitutes the first translation and study of Aristotle's literary theory in the Renaissance. Trissino's late comedy, *Il Simillimi* (1548) was modeled on Plautus's *Menaechmi*, but it was also thought to extend the missing part of Aristotelian theory regarding comedy, based on Trissino's inductive reading of Aristophanes.

Sofonisba

Already in Trissino's own lifetime Benedetto Varchi (1503–1565) and Giovanni Battista Giraldi, "Cinthio" (1504–1573) had lauded Trissino as the first Italian tragedian. Composed in Rome around 1514–1515, the *Sofonisba* was presented to Leo X in 1518 and published in 1524. It was printed no less than twenty times in Italy over the course of the sixteenth century. Initially circulated and consumed through manuscript copies and private readings, it was not performed until 1562 when Andrea Palladio designed the staging at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza. This was the same year that Parts V and VI of Trissino's *Poetica* were printed posthumously. Translated into French by Mellin de Saint-Gelais (1491–1558), it was performed for the court of Catherine de' Medici in the Château de Blois in 1556. It also appeared in a translation of Petrarch in England in 1554. *Sofonisba* was drawn not only from the precepts of Aristotle but also from

Trissino's thorough reading of Euripides and Sophocles. Its combination of Greek forms and Roman history as well as its amorous plot make it unique to the Renaissance. In the *Sofonisba* Trissino introduced the use of blank verse, reserving rhyme for the chorus. Years later, he would again employ blank verse in the composition of his epic poem, *Italia liberata da Goti*.

Impact and Legacy

Trissino's influence was felt most strongly in the use of blank verse, Renaissance tragedy, the genre of poetic (verse) treatises, translations, and implementations of Aristotle's precepts, and classical epic verse. The annotations of Torquato Tasso (1544–1595) to the *Sofonisba* were reprinted in Bologna in 1884. Tasso also employed Trissino's *Poetica* in his own *Discorsi del poema heroico* (1594). Tasso's father, Bernardo (1493–1569), author of *L'Amadigi*, praised the *Italia liberata*. While Torquato reacted negatively to Trissino's epic, his own *Gerusalemme liberata* is clearly indebted to Trissino. In their adherence to classical theories and exemplars, Trissino and Torquato Tasso are much closer in style than either was to Ariosto. John Milton (1608–1674) and Alexander Pope (1688–1744) likewise inherited Trissino's exemplar in the epic tradition, influence that extended to Voltaire (1694–1778) in France.

The *Sofonisba* became the paradigmatic model of classical Renaissance tragedy throughout the early modern period in all of the major European languages. It served as the primary model for the early dramaturgy of Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616) in his *Numancia* and likely played a role in Milton's *Samson Agonistes*.

Trissino's influence on Andrea Palladio was also considerable.

Cross-References

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- [Cervantes, Miguel](#)
- [Chalkokondyles, Demetrius](#)
- [Dante Alighieri](#)

- [Epicureanism](#)
- [Petrarca, Francesco](#)
- [Tragedy in Renaissance Literature](#)
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Trissino, Giovan Giorgio

- [Trissino, Giangiorgio](#)

Trithemius, Johannes

Born: 1 February 1462, Trittenheim

Died: 16 December 1516, Würzburg

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Abstract

Johannes Trithemius was an abbot from the Benedictine monastery of Sponheim, and later the monastery of Würzburg. During his studies in Heidelberg, he was involved in

learned humanistic societies, and later he applied the ideal of humanistic eloquence in his works. Trithemius built large libraries and wrote a number of mystical, monastic, historic, and biographic writings. He became famous especially due to his book *Steganographia* which dealt with cryptography on the basis of natural magic and astrology working with angelic mediations. Though *Steganographia* remained in manuscript form, it influenced occult sciences in the sixteenth century and cryptography. Trithemius was also accused of necromancy and demonic magic.

Alternate Names

von Heidenheim, Johannes; Heidenheim, Johannes von

Biography

Born in a village in the valley of the river Mosel, Trithemius became one of two celebrated thinkers of this region – next to Nicholas of Cusa, as it was emphasized by his contemporary Konrad Celtis (Arnold 1991). Trithemius studied in Trier, the Netherlands, and Heidelberg, where he was influenced by the humanistic movement. Together with Celtis, Jakob Wimpfeling, and Johannes Reuchlin, he formed a Rhenish literary society there. In 1482, Trithemius entered a Benedictine monastery in Sponheim. In 1483, he was elected abbot, and in the following years, he reformed monastic life and built a large and famous monastery library containing manuscripts and printed books from different areas of contemporary knowledge. In 1505, after being denounced by the monks, he had to leave Sponheim, and after traveling through Germany, visiting the court of Emperor Maximilian I and other various courts, he accepted an offer to become an abbot in the Benedictine monastery in Würzburg, where he spent the rest of his life, building a second library and reforming monastic life there.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition: Innovative and Original Aspects

Trithemius was the author of numerous mystical and monastic writings, in which he follows Jean Gerson and Nicholas of Cusa in advocating the idea of learned piety in monastic life (Brann 1999). Trithemius also wrote a number of historical writings, containing fantastic fictional stories, and cultivated a genre of bibliographical literature (Grafton 2006). In all his writings, the list of them is given by Klaus Arnold (Arnold 1991), Trithemius develops the humanistic ideal of eloquence of text.

Influenced by humanism, Hermetic writings, Neoplatonism, Pythagorean numerology, Renaissance Platonism, medieval scholasticism (Albert the Great), and Kabbalah, Trithemius created a conception of mystical magic (Brann 1981, 1999; Zambelli 2007). He worked with alchemical and astrological precepts leading to mystical magical illumination, which was kept secret. In his unfinished and unpublished book *Steganography* (Trithemius 1605), the ascent to heaven is realized on the basis of a hierarchical cosmological system, with the assistance of spiritual substances. Provided that occult harmony binds all parts of reality, these substances are steganographically in a cryptic language invoked for the sake of the soul, to achieve eternal bliss. In the book *Polygraphia* (Trithemius 1518), Trithemius defends himself against accusations of practicing black magic and creates another form of cryptography not comprising angelic mediations.

Impact and Legacy

Trithemius was visited in Sponheim by Agrippa of Nettesheim, who was influenced by him in both his systematic book on occult philosophy, *De occulta philosophia*, and his skeptical work, *De vanitate* (Müller-Jahncke 1991). Trithemius thus became one of the important founders of Renaissance magic and occult sciences (Walker 1975). The cryptological aspects of his work had influence on Giambattista della Porta, Paracelsus, and John Dee. On the other hand, the Carmelite

Arnold Bostius, to whom Trithemius sent a part of his *Steganography*, and philosopher Carolus Bovillus, another of Trithemius' visitors, accused him of advocating and practicing demonic magic. Trithemius was then also accused of necromancy and was later connected with Dr. Faustus legend (Baron 1991).

In the seventeenth century, Trithemius' *Steganographia* and his cryptography still remained popular. It was considered to be the discipline of language by the members of Royal Academic Society in particular. The occult principles, i.e., the angelic-astrological mediation lying under the cryptologic theory, were neglected in the favor of encoding and enciphering. As a magician and mystical theologian, on the other hand, Trithemius was praised in modern theosophy (Brann 2006).

Cross-References

- Celtis, Konrad
- Dee, John
- Della Porta, Giambattista
- Natural Magic in Renaissance Science
- Nicholas of Cusa
- Reuchlin, Johannes
- Wimpfeling, Jakob

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Trivium

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Abstract

In the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern era, the formal structure of the seven disciplines of the Liberal Arts, inherited from late Roman antiquity, remained unchanged; nevertheless, it underwent substantial alterations in terms of the content. Especially with regard to the Trivium, which aimed to provide students with a full set of language skills, the Renaissance saw the attention of educators moving away from medieval manuals to the works of the ancient authors and a general rebalancing of the importance of the three subjects which made up the Trivium – grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric – in favor of grammar. The Renaissance Trivium was not intended merely to enable students to acquire the linguistic knowledge required to pass on to the study of theology, as in the Middle Ages,

but became the main vehicle for educating the individual to virtue and action in the world.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the Trivium compressed the three Liberal Arts of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic. This division is due to Martianus Capella, a late Latin philosopher (fourth to fifth century AD), who was responsible, among other things, for a classification of all human knowledge. We can find the first representation of the Liberal Arts in Martianus's *Satyricon* (410). Before him St. Augustine had tried to provide an organization for the Liberal Arts in his works *De ordine*, *De doctrina Christiana*, and *De musica*. In these treatises, Augustine attempted to show that the Liberal Arts correspond to mankind's need for natural knowledge, preparing the way to knowledge of God (Black 2001).

Another author who made a fundamental contribution to the structure of Liberal Arts was Cassiodorus. His works *De institutione divinarum litterarum* et *De artibus et disciplinis liberalium litterarum* defined the curriculum that became the norm during the Middle Ages. Cassiodorus also inspired the philosophical school of York, where intellectuals such as the Venerable Bede and Alcuin lived and worked. Alcuin revived Augustine's notion that the Trivium and the Quadrivium were propaedeutic to the study of theology. After Alcuin, the Trivium and the Quadrivium determined the practice of medieval teaching. Among the disciplines of medieval Trivium, dialectic played the dominant role, because it was identified with philosophy itself. Although the formal structure of the Trivium remained unchanged, the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance brought substantial innovation.

Even during the Renaissance, the seven Liberal Arts preserved the traditional division between the Trivium and Quadrivium. The Trivium, however, was reinterpreted in order to respond to the new cultural needs of the time. What disappeared, for example, was the combination of grammar and dialectic, which, in the past, had served to provide a solid foundation for theology. It was replaced by

a return to the combination of grammar and rhetoric, in line with the interpretation of Quintilian, whose *Institutio oratoria* was recovered in the 1420s. Grammar, during the Renaissance, performed new functions which made it the base discipline for all linguistic subjects. Dialectic, on the other hand, was restored to the role it had played in late ancient times, that is, in the field of eloquence and elegant speech. Taken together, the three disciplines of the Trivium in the fifteenth century were reconfigured by taking a direct and systematic approach to the *auctores* – the most important classical authors for education – while completely excluding medieval *summae* and making only limited use of manuals (Grendler 1989, 2002).

In the new Renaissance conception, grammar was needed to achieve several ends. Among these were how to explain and interpret words, investigate and expound poetry, and learn history. The Renaissance's finest educators, such as Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino da Verona, adhered strictly to the guidance of Quintilian in his *Institutio oratoria*. They divided the teaching of grammar into two key stages: the learning of language for the purpose of explaining and interpreting words and the analysis and explanation of authors, in relation to the study of poets and the learning of history. The first language to be taught was Latin, to which some masters, like Vittorino, added Greek (Huntsman 1983).

In the teaching of Latin grammar, we can clearly see the elements of continuity and rupture between the medieval Trivium and the new Renaissance model. The basics of grammar were still generally learned from Priscian's *Institutiones*, as in the Middle Ages. This work, however, was supplemented in the Renaissance by Diomedes, *Ars grammatica*, and Nonius Marcellus, *De compendiosa doctrina*. Using these manuals, teachers often addressed issues such as morphology, phonetics, syntax, and accentuation. For the study of lexicography, Renaissance teachers used the ancient encyclopedic authors, especially Pliny the Elder, Marcus Varro, Marcus Cato, and Cornelius Celsus.

For the teaching of Greek grammar, the Renaissance Trivium adopted the *Erotemata*, in

the version by the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras, which was revised, abridged, and translated into Latin by Guarino da Verona. This primer was, in some rare cases, supported and supplemented by the work of Polybius of Sardis, *De barbarismo et solecismo*, a copy of which, for example, was owned by Vittorino da Feltre for his pupils, as the catalog of his books shows, while for etymological and lexicographical issues the massive Byzantine encyclopedia entitled the *Suda* could be used (Botley 2010).

In the Renaissance Trivium, although the use of manuals was very reduced in comparison to the Middle Ages, textbooks, with their *regulae* and *exempla*, nevertheless remained an essential tool, a fundamental prerequisite to achieving linguistic competence. In the study of Greek and Latin, however, the Renaissance Trivium added an empirical approach in which they were treated as living languages. The first step was for teachers to introduce their students to relatively easy poetry, usually from Homer and Virgil. The next step was learning excerpts from authors of increasing difficulty, usually the letters of Cicero and the speeches of Demosthenes, analyzing the words (*verba*) and defining the meaning and construction of each of them, in order to advance to the second phase: exposition. Once the students were able to recite Homer, Virgil, and Cicero by heart, the first part of learning of grammar was concluded, since this showed that they had acquired both the theory and the technique of grammatical analysis (Black 2007).

Subsequently, the approach became less technical and more hermeneutic. The reading of *auctores* aimed to provide students with the life lessons handed down by these authors, in line again with the advice of Quintilian, for whom grammar was not confined to a sterile set of language skills but had to lead to *sapientia* ("wisdom"). The study and reading of ancient historians were particularly important. In a sense, in the Renaissance Trivium, the study of history took place within the learning of grammar. The reason, according to some important Renaissance educators, was that, from both a technical and a pedagogical point of view, while philosophy, poetry, and history were similar in content, history was closer to the realities of life

and was, therefore, better able to attract the attention of young people. In addition, the use of history textbooks enabled students to complete their education in the grammatical rules of prose (Woodward 1996).

The Latin historians studied within the grammar curriculum were generally Livy (*Historiarum Romanarum decades III*), Sallust (*Bellum Catilinae*, *Bellum Iugurthinum*), Julius Caesar (*Commentarii de bello Gallico*), and Valerius Maximus (*Memorabilia*). Among those educators who taught also the Greek historians, we find authors such as Plutarch (*Parallel Lives*), Xenophon (*Memorabilia*), Thucydides (*The History of Peloponnesian War*), and Arrian (*The Anabasis of Alexander*) (Woodward 2013).

After the historians, the teaching of grammar in the Trivium included a section on poetry. Again, the initial aim was to complete the students' skills in grammar, metrics, and style; only afterwards did the focus move to the content of poetry. In this way, they came into contact with the ideas of the ancients, learning to embrace virtue and reject vice. Among the Latin works studied were Virgil's *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*, Horace's *Satires* and *Odes*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Tristia*.

Other poetical works in the Renaissance Latin grammar curriculum were Lucan's *Pharsalia*, the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and the *Satires* of Persius and Juvenal. The Greek part of the poetic curriculum usually included Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Aesop's *Fables* in verse, the comedies of Aristophanes, and Theocritus's *Eidyllia* for older pupils. Among other authors, we find Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Hesiod. The teachers, in their lessons, were not confined to expounding these authors but often urged students to practice the *ars poetica* themselves, that is, to engage in imitative composition.

Within the program of the Trivium, the next subject to be taught was dialectic. The purpose of this course was the formation of Quintilian's ideal orator ("vir bonus dicendi peritus"), a man who combines eloquence and moral perfection. In this field as well, the Renaissance Trivium followed the guidelines set out by Quintilian, who assigned greater importance to ethics, that is, the transmission of the contents and ideas of texts, than to

aesthetics. It was widely thought, moreover, that dialectic was a science that related to the realm of *opinio* (“opinion”) and not of *veritas* (“truth”) and that it made itself explicit, above all, through *elocutio* (“expression through words”).

Some educators defined dialectic according to two interpretative keys: a rational science of discourse and the interpreter and guide of all the arts. From this point of view, therefore, emerges a full recovery of Aristotelian concepts, confirmed by the works that we find widespread for this teaching: the entire Aristotle’s *Organon* (in particular, the *Analytics* and *Topics*) and Boethius’s *De hypotheticis syllogismis*, which is a commentary on Aristotle’s *Categories* (Stump 1983).

Regarding educational practice, we know that instruction in dialectic was divided into two essential parts: the first was dedicated to the reading of texts and the explanation of rules, while the second was dedicated to the discussion and practice of syllogisms. The dialectical syllogism for many Renaissance masters was equivalent to the Aristotelian syllogism, that is, a rational argument aimed at persuasion but unsuitable for demonstrating the truth in an absolute sense. Overall, the lessons in dialectic were more practical than theoretical because teachers wanted their students to acquire three basic language skills: the ability to define the subject, the ability to distinguish between genres, and the ability to draw conclusions from a speech. Once these objectives had been achieved, the student could go on to the rhetoric course (Eisenbichler and Terpstra 2008).

The teaching of rhetoric in Renaissance schools and colleges began with the reading of treatises (*lectura*), followed by exercises in the translation and imitation of the main classical authors (*auctores*). The most important Latin author was Cicero, especially the *Philippics*, along with his letters and treatises. For the Greek language, the key authors were Demosthenes and Isocrates. Both in Greek and Latin, however, the aim of the masters was to teach schoolchildren to write in a concise and clear style, without bombast. Once they had acquired the basics of the discipline, students had to prepare a speech to declaim in front of their classmates, as had been the custom in ancient schools of rhetoric. The

study of rhetoric was thus finalized by practical and professional activities, using all the language resources which the students now possessed.

With rhetoric, studies of the Trivium, designed to provide a full linguistic education, were completed. The acquisition of this expertise gave students access to the next stage of their education, the Quadrivium, the part of the humanist curriculum covering arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (Camargo 1983).

This, then, was the general conception of the Trivium promoted by fifteenth-century educators such as Vittorino and Guarino. After the Council of Trent, moreover, the leading pedagogues of the Counter-Reformation, especially the Jesuits, took over the Renaissance rethinking of the Trivium and the Liberal Arts. Their “educational ideal was clearly humanistic . . . in line with the civic orientation of Renaissance humanism” (Casalini and Pavur 2016). The Jesuits brought this reformulation of the Trivium into the colleges that they established at the four corners of the world, alongside their work of evangelization.

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► [Quintilian](#)

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Trivoles, Michael

- [Maximus the Greek](#)

Trombetta, Antonio

- [Trombetta, Antonio](#)

Trombetta, Antonius

- [Trombetta, Antonio](#)

Trombetta, Antonio

Born: 1436, Padua

Died: 6 March 1517, Padua

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Abstract

Antonio Trombetta was an Italian Roman Catholic Bishop, member of the Order of Friars

Minor (Franciscans), and Scotist philosopher. He taught metaphysics at Padua, first as a regent of the Paduan school of metaphysics and later as a holder of the public chair of metaphysics *in via Scoti*. His major works are the *Opus doctrinae scoticae Patavii in thomistas discussum* (Venice 1493), in which he investigates some of the most relevant topics of Aristotelian metaphysics; a *Tractatus singularis contra Averroistas de animarum humanarum pluralitate ad catholice fidei obsequium* (Venice 1498), in which he discusses the Averroistic doctrine of the unicity of the intellect, opposing the interpretation promoted in Padua by Nicoletto Vernia and Agostino Nifo; and, finally, a *Tractatus formalitatum* (Venice 1502), in which he reworks some outstanding items of the ontological vocabulary developed by John Duns Scotus and his early followers. He exerted a strong influence on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scotism.

Alternate Names

[Trombetta, Antonio](#); [Trombetta, Antonius](#); [Trombetta, Antonius](#); [Tubeta, Antonio](#); [Tubeta, Antonius](#)

Biography

Antonio Trombetta was born in Padua, in the Italian region of Veneto, in 1436. From a very young age, he showed a particular aptitude for studies. In 1451 he began extensive training that included the study of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology. This training took place mainly in the Franciscan Theological Studium at Padua, where Trombetta received a biblical bachelor's degree in 1460 (Poppi 1962, p. 353).

After comprehensive philosophical training, which allowed him to approach the study of John Duns Scotus' works and, probably, some commentaries by John of Jandun and Walter Burleigh, Trombetta became regent of the school of metaphysics at Padua in 1469 (Mahoney 1978,

pp. 214–227). His edition of the commentary on the first book of the *Sentences* by John Duns Scotus (*Quaestiones in primum librum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*) dates back to those years. In 1476 (or 1477), after long training on the writings of Duns Scotus, Trombetta was appointed to the public chair of metaphysics *in via Scoti* (which he inherited from the Augustinian Thomas Pencket). This period of his teaching is characterized by a lively debate with the Dominican Francesco Securo di Nardò, who was then occupying the chair of metaphysics *in via Thomae* (which, a few years later, would inherit the Dominican Thomas de Vio Cajetan).

Trombetta's success was immediate. In only a few years, he became the most important representative of the Scotist tradition in Padua. His importance, however, was not only cultural and academic but also institutional. In 1489 he was named Provincial Minister of the Franciscan Minor Order: re-elected several times, he remained in office for around 10 years (Poppi 1962, p. 354). Some of his main works date back to this period. In 1490 Trombetta wrote a commentary on *De coelo et mundo*. Only 3 years later, in 1493, he published one of his most influential works, the *Opus doctrinae Scoticae Patavii in Thomistas discussum*, in which he condensed the results of his teaching. The work is actually a collection. It includes, indeed, a treatise on future contingents (*Quaestio de divina praescientia futurorum contingentium*), a series of metaphysical questions (*Quaestiones metaphysicales*), a commentary on the *Formalitates* by Antoine Sirect (*Tractatum formalitatum Scoticarum sententia*), and an edition of Antoine Sirect's treatise (*Hebdomades formalitatum recentiores secundum Doctorem subtilem*).

In the same years, the Paduan intellectual and academic milieu was characterized by a lively discussion regarding Averroes' doctrine of the unicity of the intellect. The debate quickly took on heated tones, so much so that the Bishop of Padua, Pietro Barozzi, decided to issue an edict prohibiting public disputes about monopsychism (1489). In the framework of this debate, which involved some influential philosophers (among whom the names of Nicoletto Vernia, Agostino

Nifo, and Alessandro Achillini stand out), Trombetta published, in 1498, his *Tractatus singularis contra Averroistas de animarum humanarum pluralitate ad catholice fidei obsequium*. This work had a twofold purpose. On the one hand, it aimed to demonstrate the compatibility of Averroes' writings with some fundamental assumptions of scholastic Aristotelianism (or at least to show the unsustainability of some of Averroes' theses). On the other hand, on the contrary, it was intended to stem the spread of the impious and philosophically untenable interpretations promoted by the Averroists who taught in Padua (above all, Nicoletto Vernia and Agostino Nifo) (Mahoney 1976, pp. 289–301).

In those years, having reached the pinnacle of his career as a professor, Trombetta began to suffer the opposition of his brethren. As a result of these circumstances, Trombetta resigned in 1498 as Minister Provincial of the Order. Subsequently, he also sought election as Minister General, but without success. During this period, having ceased to hold any office in the Order, Trombetta devoted himself mainly to teaching and the re-elaboration of some of his works. He published an augmented and revised edition of his metaphysics – the *Opus in Metaphysicam Arist. Padue in thomistas discussum*, printed in Venice in 1502. Like the previous edition, this edition also included a treatise on “formalities” inspired by the teaching of Antoine Sirect (*In tractatum formalitatum Scoti sententia*). After 1502 this treatise *de formalitatibus* would be printed several times separately, strongly influencing the evolution of Scotism throughout the sixteenth century.

Trombetta's diplomatic career within the Order only resumed in 1504, when he was re-elected Provincial Minister of the Order and Apostolic Commissioner for the Province of Milan. Later, on 7 November 1511, Pope Julius II ordained him Bishop of Urbino and entrusted him with the task of participating in the Ecumenical Council *Lateran V* (1512–1517). Trombetta's participation in this Council was discontinuous due to his ailing state of health. Nevertheless, Trombetta continued to study and, in 1513, he published in Padua a *Quaestio profunda de efficientia primi principii*,

in which he dealt not only with divine causality, as the title clearly states, but also with the attribute of intensive infinity (*infinitas intensiva*).

At this stage, Trombetta's state of health was becoming increasingly precarious. As a result, he resigned in 1512 as Provincial Minister of the Order and, in 1514, as Bishop of Urbino. On 29 May 1514, he was, however, appointed Archbishop of Athens, but his ministry was neither influential nor innovative. Trombetta died in Padua on March 6, 1517 (Poppi 1962, p. 365).

Contribution to Renaissance Philosophy

Trombetta's contribution to Renaissance and early modern philosophy is significant. It mainly concerns three objects (and three areas of investigation): firstly, metaphysics, to which the Paduan philosopher dedicated the *Quaestiones metaphysicales* that are included both in the *Opus doctrinae scoticae Patavii in thomistas discussum* (printed in Venice in 1493) and in the *Opus in Metaphysicam Arist. Padue in thomistas discussum* (printed in Venice in 1502 and 1504); secondly, the Scotist-inspired doctrine of formalities, to which he dedicated his *Tractatus formalitatum* (reprinted several times since 1502); and thirdly, the Averroistic doctrine of the unicity of the intellect, which Trombetta dealt with extensively in his *Tractatus singularis contra Averroistas de animarum humanarum pluralitate ad catholice fidei obsequium* (printed in Venice in 1498).

An interest in metaphysics dominated Trombetta's entire intellectual and teaching career. From 1469 (when he became regent of the school of metaphysics at Padua) until 1511 (when he definitively abandoned teaching), he never stopped working on metaphysics. In this regard, his purpose is clear and outlined. Trombetta intends, first of all, to provide metaphysics with a systematic structure. In his *Quaestiones metaphysicales*, he abandons the style of commentary and proposes a reorganization of the main contents of metaphysics within the framework of precise and well-defined questions. In this regard, his goal is not to comment on

every single book or chapter of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* but rather, much more prominent and decisive, to identify the principal nodes of Aristotelian ontology to be tackled systematically. The interpretation of metaphysics that he elaborates in his *Quaestiones metaphysicales* is strongly inspired by Duns Scotus, of whose philosophy he was becoming the most authoritative representative in Padua (Forlivesi 2008, pp. 265–277; Forlivesi 2014, pp. 29–35). From 1471 to 1511, Trombetta held the public chair of metaphysics *in via Scoti* and represented the Scotist position in the numerous debates that animated the University of Padua in those years. Trombetta's metaphysics takes up some of the main topics dealt with by Duns Scotus in his commentaries on the *Sentences* (Scapin 1966, pp. 501–504). In Trombetta's *Quaestiones metaphysicales*, special attention concerns the doctrine of the univocity of being, undoubtedly one of Duns Scotus's best-known metaphysical tenets. According to Trombetta, who closely follows the Subtle Doctor on this point, the concept of being is univocal. The main argument, which Trombetta recalls with the purpose of justifying this allegation is the classic argument *de dubio et certo*, i.e., the main argument that Duns Scotus developed in Book I, distinction 3, of his commentary on the *Sentences* (Scapin 1966, pp. 506–507). Unlike Duns Scotus, Trombetta shifts the doctrine of univocity of being within a “realistic” paradigm, sensitive to the suggestions of Renaissance Platonism. While Duns Scotus ascribes a conceptual character to the univocity of being, Trombetta interprets the *natura entis* as a true common *realitas* (which, nonetheless, he never understands as a genus, in accordance with Aristotle's teaching).

Trombetta's interest in ontological topics does not only appear, however, in his *Quaestiones metaphysicales*, where he deals with the interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In a way, this interest is even more apparent in his *Tractatus formalitatum*, published several times (albeit with different titles) between 1502 and 1586. In this treatise, which qualifies as a commentary on the *Formalitates* by the Parisian Scotist Antoine Sirect, Trombetta elaborates an authentic ontology based on the new conceptual vocabulary

developed by Duns Scotus and by his first followers (among whom stand the names of Petrus Thomae, Antonius Andreae, and Ioannes Canonicus). In this work, Trombetta deals mainly with the notions of *formalitas* and *modus intrinsecus* (Marrone 2018, pp. 35–86), the different kinds of distinction, the existing relationship between “being” and “thing” and the possibility (which he denies) to include beings of reason in the subject of metaphysics. In his inquiry, Trombetta does not limit himself to examining the new (Scotistic) lexicon of ontology but takes up some topics that he had already dealt with in his *Quaestiones metaphysicales*. Among these, the doctrine of the univocity of being is still of primary importance. Indeed, even in this work, Trombetta assigns a rigorous metaphysical significance to this doctrine. He understands the concept of being that is univocally predicated on all its inferiors as a “shared reality.” In the context of this realistic interpretation of univocal predication, Trombetta proposes a fundamental reworking of the distinction between *realitas subiectiva* and *realitas obiectiva* (Marrone 2008, pp. 290–297; Marrone 2013, pp. 203–218), which was first developed in the fourteenth century by Petrus Thomae and Ioannes Canonicus (alias Franciscus Marbres). *Realitas obiectiva*, in Trombetta’s view, constitutes the proximate foundation of univocal predication. Indeed, it designates that peculiar kind of reality, proper to conceptual objects, in which different and dissimilar things can univocally agree (Marrone 2018, pp. 70–153).

Trombetta also dealt with the Averroistic doctrine of the unicity of the intellect. This interest in the interpretation of Averroes’ monopsychism dates back to the last decade of the fifteenth century when Trombetta published his *Tractatus singularis contra Averroistas de animarum humanarum pluralitate ad catholice fidei obsequium* (Venice 1498). The motivation behind this work was primarily polemical: Trombetta’s *Tractatus* aimed to satisfy the need to stem the discussions that were animating the University of Padua in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. In 1480, a lively debate broke out regarding the Averroistic doctrine of the unicity of the intellect.

The discussion was instigated by Nicoletto Vernia who, in his *De divisione philosophiae*, and a now-lost treatise on the intellect, had explicitly sided in favor of Averroes’ monopsychism (Poppi 1964, pp. 104–106). Vernia’s thought on this topic (shared by other Averroists) was opposed by Trombetta, who contested at least two assumptions: firstly, the statement that the soul is not the substantial form of the body; and secondly, the claim that there is only one possible/passive intellect. In Trombetta’s mind, any alternative to the traditional explication is philosophically unsustainable. To affirm, as Vernia did, that the intellect refers to the body in the same way that a separate intelligence relates to the heaven it moves, means for the Paduan Scotist to provide an improper explanation of the substantial union. In his mind, the relationship between the intellectual soul and the body is much more intimate and radical than the wholly extrinsic relationship existing between the mover and the moved (Poppi 1964, pp. 113–114). Consequently, the only possible explanation for this relationship is for him that the intellectual soul is the substantial form of the body, infused by God in the *corpus ultimate organizatus et dispositum*. In the same way, the thesis affirming the unicity of the intellect is not even tenable. Since the intellectual soul is attached to the body, it can only be individual. This does not imply, however, that the intellectual soul corrupts itself together with the body, or that God cannot create the soul without the body, but only that, when God creates the intellectual soul, He creates the soul and the body *concomitantly*.

Accordingly, the unity between the intellectual soul and the body does not in any way compromise the immortality of the soul itself. Ultimately, it should be pointed out that in this inquiry about the intellectual soul, Trombetta not only opposes the Paduan Averroists but also takes a stand, at least on one point, against Duns Scotus himself. Unlike the Subtle Doctor, Trombetta maintains the possibility of proving the immortality of the soul by certain arguments and justifies his view by accurately responding to the objections that Duns Scotus had elaborated in refuting such a scientific demonstrability (Poppi 1964, pp. 114–115).

Impact and Legacy

Trombetta exerted a significant influence both on the history of metaphysics and on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scotism. His name appears in a large number of treatises and textbooks on metaphysics, such as the *Disputationes metaphysicae* by Francisco Suárez (Suárez 1597, 1861, passim), the *Rerum metaphysicarum libri tres* by Martin Meurisse (Meurisse 1623, p. 91b and passim), and the *Philosophiae ad mentem Scoti cursus integer* by Bartolomeo Mastri and Bonaventura Belluto (Mastri and Belluto 1678, passim). Trombetta's fame, however, is mainly linked to his *Tractatus formalitatum*. Printed repeatedly between 1502 and 1586, it became, over time, a reference textbook, in which students and teachers could find a synthesis of the Scotistic approach to metaphysical-ontological issues. As a result, Trombetta gave rise to a new current or philosophical trend within the Scotist tradition, generally remembered under the name of "Formalism." Among his main admirers and followers, albeit numerous, it is at least worth mentioning Giovanni Vallone (Ioannes Vallonis a Iovenatio), the author of *Lectura absolutissima in Formalitates Scoti* (Venice 1588), and Francesco Pitigiani d'Arezzo (Franciscus Aretinus), who wrote *Expositio exactissima, atque absolutissima Identitatum, et Distinctionum (quas Formalitates vocant) M. Antonii Sirecti Doct. Paris. secundum doctrinam Doct. Subtilis Scoti* (Venice 1606).

Cross-References

- Cajetan, Thomas de Vio
- Scotism

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Trombetta, Antonius

► [Trombetta, Antonio](#)

Tropes in Renaissance Rhetoric

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Abstract

A trope is the transfer of a word from its usual meaning to a different one, justified by a relation of similitude, or of another kind, between the two meanings. Early modern students of

grammar and rhetoric memorized the tropes and learned how to identify and use each of them through the use of widely reprinted ancient and contemporary manuals of rhetoric, as well as publications dealing exclusively with tropes, such as those by Despauterius, Mosellanus, and Susenbrotus. In practical terms, tropes stood out as crucial ingredients of the ornament of style, and as such, they were central to the way literate individuals would speak and, especially, write. Furthermore, from a theoretical standpoint, tropes were a catalyst for crucial developments in early modern linguistic and aesthetic thought. On the one hand, they provided a window to the mechanisms through which language works, opening as they did a distinction between literal and figurative meaning. On the other, tropes (and especially metaphors) attracted great attention as the locus of coalescence between cognition and pleasure and became, therefore, touchstones for the development of a theory of the beautiful.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

A trope is the transfer of a word from its usual meaning to a different one, justified by similitude, as in the case of metaphor, or by some other relationship, such as part to whole, cause to effect, and so on.

While early modern grammarians considered tropes acceptable deviations from convention, logicians saw them as sources of equivocation (Green 1999; Ashworth 2007). For rhetoricians, in turn, tropes were sources of the orator's artifice, a license granted to poets with even greater freedom.

At the time, children learned tropes in grammar school following the basics of morphology and syntax, only to meet them in more depth when studying rhetoric at a later stage of their education. They learned each trope by heart, including its name, definition, and examples (Green 1999; Mack 2011). Teachers pointed to tropes as part of their commentary on any work and considered them necessary to the understanding of the text and the artifice of the author (see Susenbrotus 1562). Students found the tropes in ancient and

contemporary manuals, usually paired with the figures or *schemata* (see Green and Murphy 2006 for the number of editions and reprints). Along with the sections on tropes in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Quintilian, or the grammarians Donatus and Diomedes, the recently discovered manuals of tropes by Rutilius Lupus, Aquila Romanus, and Julius Rufinianus went into print between 1519 and 1521. They shared a market with an increasingly noticeable presence of contemporary manuals on the same subject. After Erasmus of Rotterdam's *De copia* (1512), a series of handbooks dealing exclusively with tropes circulated from hand to hand and helped build a certain consensus due to the tendency of the authors of these books to rely on one another (Mack 2011). Manuals, such as those by Johannes Despauterius (1512), Peter Schade "Mosellanus" (1516), Johannes Susenbrotus (1540), or, in the context of Jesuit education, the section on tropes in Cipriano Soares' *De arte rhetorica* (1568), tried to stand out by means of new distinctions and examples, as well as by easing the task of memorization by organizing the tropes under headings. In 1521, Philip Melanchthon reduced them to seven, and in 1548 Omer Talon identified only four: metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, and irony (Mack 2011). The interest in the methods used in crafting a trope led Giulio Camillo Delminio to adapt the method of invention, originally intended for the discovery of arguments, to the subject of tropes (Camillo Delminio 1970–1974).

Familiarity with tropes was a fixed component of early modern literacy that influenced the way people read and wrote and fostered inquiry into the way language works (Mack 2011). Contemporaries noticed that tropes often became naturalized, playing a role in the transformation of language, and embodying the historically contingent nature of the mechanisms governing it (Cummins 2007). Emphasis was placed on the need to not excessively strain the relation between the two meanings, where the transfer of words takes place. Analogies that were too far-fetched were perceived as inappropriate and harsh or even cold and would lead to a weakened effect upon the reader. This was important insofar as tropes were intended to stir the feelings of the audience in the quest for persuasion. However, in the wake of the

rediscovery of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, the ability of tropes (and especially metaphor) to illuminate similarities while producing pleasure came to embody the coalescence of cognition and aesthetics. While some scholars followed Aristotle's assertion that the pleasure of metaphor results from the rapid apprehension of the similitude underlying the metaphor, others claimed that readers enjoy metaphor because they see themselves cooperating through the effort involved in understanding it (see, for instance, Piccolomini 1572). This was characteristic of a trend (generally labeled with such names as "wit" or "concettismo") that peaked around the mid-seventeenth century and conceived of pleasure taken in tropes as a manifestation of self-love that readers experience as a result of their ability to understand. With pleasure defined by challenge, polemic served to further carry a trope's limits of acceptability, as authors felt encouraged to render the intellectual process of detecting relations among things more demanding.

Cross-References

- Camillo Delminio, Giulio
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance
- Melanchthon, Philipp
- Piccolomini, Alessandro
- Quintilian
- Rhetoric in the Renaissance
- Talon, Omer
- Topics in the Renaissance

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Tubeta, Antonio

► [Trombetta, Antonio](#)

Tubeta, Antonius

► [Trombetta, Antonio](#)

Turks, Renaissance Image of

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Abstract

This entry offers an overview of Europe's image of the Turks during the Renaissance.

Various interactions, from military conflict to peaceful contact, engendered numerous writings about the Turks. After the Fall of Constantinople (1453), Europeans predominantly called for a crusade until a balance of power was established. Interest in Oriental characters and motifs grew from the seventeenth century onwards. Europeans held diverse views with regard to the Turks, the most influential of which were developed by Erasmus (pacifism), Luther (call for a crusade), and Machiavelli (political analysis of the Ottoman Empire). The entry indicates some geographical trends regarding these currents and touches on some ongoing debates between scholars.

Synonyms

[Ottomans, Renaissance Image of](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Europeans became increasingly interested in the Ottomans after the Fall of Constantinople (1453), the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. In addition to the eastward expansion, the Turks advanced westward. Especially under Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566) Europe felt this peril, which the battle of Lepanto (1571) symbolically averted. After the Ottoman defeat at Karlowitz (1699), exoticism gradually replaced fear.

Humanists like Enea Silvio Piccolomini lamented Constantinople's downfall. He continually called for a crusade, as did many other humanists throughout the centuries. In contrast to Piccolomini's view, his contemporary Michael Critovoulos wrote about the Turks in a more positive light. This mixture of dislike and admiration characterized Europe's view, though it must be noted that Europeans who praised the Turks often did so in order to criticize their own society (Pedani 2010, 69; Formica 2012, 4–6; Pippidi 2012, 63). Although the dominant discourse was one of conflict, countries such as France or Hungary formed alliances with the Ottomans when convenient. Norton (2013)

notes that Europeans and Ottomans shared the Mediterranean area, forging political, intellectual, artistic, and commercial contacts. Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481), for example, attracted Western philosophers (Akasoy 2013). Nonetheless, Trivellato (2010, 153–154) warns that Westerners did not necessarily form a favorable opinion about the Turks merely because they traded with them.

Europeans produced countless texts in which the Turks figured, including epics, historiography, prophecies, and suchlike. Medieval writings propagated crusades against the ‘infidel scourge’ said to be sent by God to punish Christian sins – an idea which later on Protestants, in particular, would entertain. Humanists developed more secular views. Some scholars acknowledge that medieval themes persisted but insist that the ‘Turkish barbarian’ is a humanist novelty (Hankins 1995, 121–123; Bisaha 2004, 42–44), while others maintain that humanists recycled medieval ideas (Daniel 1962, 271–307; Schwoebel 1967, 147–148; Meserve 2008, 149–154). Bisaha (2004, 77–78) claims that the term ‘barbarian’ arose from a Western sense of superiority and was increasingly applied to Muslims. Others assert that representations of wicked Turks sprang up, not from a sense of superiority but from fear of being conquered (Vitkus 1997, 146–147; Lohse 2010, 199–200). Meserve (2008, 10–12) stresses that humanists lauded certain Islamic empires that they considered possible allies against the Turks.

Bisaha (2004, 186) perceives three humanist currents: relativism and admiration; a call for understanding; and negativism. These are perceptible in the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli, Martin Luther, and Desiderius Erasmus, who were the most influential Renaissance thinkers on the Turks. (For Renaissance views, see Evans 1970; Brecht 2000; Jankovics 2000, 268–269; Malettké 2000; Soykut 2001; Maclean and Matar 2011; Pippidi 2012; von Martels 2013, 175–177; Malcolm 2013; Biasiori and Marcocci 2018.) Machiavelli’s political analysis of the rise and fall of states was applied to the Turks and notably used by Italians, Spaniards, and Frenchmen to interpret their failures and successes in confrontations with the Turks. Luther’s later writings

continued the call for a crusade, influencing his German and Hungarian followers. In contrast, Erasmus advocated peace. His irenic position partly originated in Neoplatonism, which was traditionally tolerant (Bisaha 2004, 171) and was especially adopted in Poland, Spain, Portugal, and Bohemia. While Pippidi (2012, 117) states that from the 1550s onwards the direct threat abated and Erasmianism gained European influence, Bisaha’s assertion (2004, 174–179) that sixteenth-century authors depicted the Turks negatively and at best combined Erasmus’s relativism with calls for a crusade, challenges Pippidi’s view. Pippidi (2012, 3) notes that Europeans fostered increasingly ambivalent and nuanced views about the Ottomans, especially after Lepanto; however, Pedani (2010, 73) and Formica (2010, 174–176) assert that besides relief, European writings still expressed hate and contempt. Some – especially in France, Italy, and Spain – combined Erasmian and Machiavellian ideas. There was no homogeneous European view of the Turks, as, for example, Evans (1970) shows: while many Bohemian intellectuals supported irenicism, others expressed anti-Turkish sentiments. The seventeenth century witnessed the emergence of a balance of power, and in 1634, Henry Blount wrote that “[t]he Turks are the only moderne people great in action,” (cited in Pippidi 2012, 183) which indicates a new perspective on the Turks; and, indeed, the gathering of information about the Turks, exoticism, and antiquarianism characterized Europe’s later attitude. Pippidi (2012, 138–149, 172–175, 183–184) regards England as an exception: medieval views persisted longer, and the English hardly felt the need for a crusade. Until the 1550s, the English were not interested in the Turks but became more familiar with them especially in the 1600s, resulting in the kind of new view expressed in Blount’s statement.

Christian slaves, converts, and travelers like Blount recounted both negative *and* positive stories. This did not necessarily imply that stereotypes were abandoned. While some scholars claim that traveling had a decisive impact (Pippidi 2012, 210 n. 126, for Kafé 1971, Warnier 1955, Delumeau 1970, and MacLean 2004), others take a more moderate view. Rouillard (1938,

354–356), for example, asserts that travelers' observations were not very influential and that a traveler like Guillaume Postel even sympathized with the Turks while advocating a crusade. Bisaha (2004, 180–181) even claims that travelers reinforced stereotypes and were blind to the positive aspects of the 'Other' they encountered, a view that is relativized by Parker (1999) and MacLean (2004) (Brummett 2013, 70). Others downplay the role of travelers, stressing instead the increasing importance of diplomacy (Pippidi 2012, 54–55; von Martels 2013).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Antiquarianism](#)
- ▶ [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- ▶ [Humanism](#)
- ▶ [Luther, Martin](#)
- ▶ [Machiavelli, Niccolò](#)
- ▶ [Ottoman Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Ottoman, Renaissance](#)
- ▶ [Postel, Guillaume](#)
- ▶ [Race, Renaissance Concept of](#)
- ▶ [Slaves, Slavery in the Renaissance](#)

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Tyard, Pontus de

Born: 1521/1522, Bissy-sur-Fley

Died: 1605, Bragny

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Abstract

Pontus de Tyard, a scholar of encyclopedic learning and a bishop (Chalon-sur-Saône), was a Petrarchist and Platonizing poet, associated with the “Lyon School” and the “Pléiade,” and a theoretician of poetry, music, and the sciences. He was, like Peletier du Mans, particularly interested in mathematics and in the potential of French as a literary and scholarly language.

In his poetry, Tyard successively sings the praises of two mysterious muses, linking human to divine love (*Erreurs amoureuses*

[1549–1555], *Vers liriques* [1552–1555], *Nouvell’œuvres poetiques* [1573], *Douze fables de fleuves ou fontaines* [1585]). In his scientific work, he investigated a series of knowledge areas and their applicability to issues of faith, the philosophy of language, and political thinking. He translated Judah Abrabanel’s *Dialoghi d’amore* (León, Hebreo, 2006) in 1551, and composed six *Discours philosophiques* (1552–1558), the *Solitaire premier* (on poetic frenzy), the *Solitaire second* (on music), the *Discours du temps, de l’an et de ses parties* (on time), *L’Univers* (*Premier* and *Second Curieux*, on cosmology), and *Mantice* (on astrological divination), and later he wrote some more treatises on science, faith, onomastics, and political writings.

He was an active member of two academies – the *Académie de poésie et de musique* presided by Baïf (under Charles IX) and the *Académie du Palais* (under Henry III). He contributed to contemporary debates around music and its primacy, the legitimacy of human curiosity, and the conception of language, in an allusive, dialogic way.

Biography

Born into the Burgundian aristocracy, Pontus de Tyard, a scholar of encyclopedic learning, entered the priesthood (Bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône). He was a Petrarchist and Platonizing poet, associated with the “Lyon School” and the “Pléiade,” (Saulnier 1948, Kushner et al. 2008) and a theoretician of poetry, music, and the sciences.

In addition to his links with the great poets of his time, Tyard was, like Peletier, interested in the sciences, particularly mathematics, and in the potential of French as a literary and scholarly language (Kushner 2001). In his religious functions, he was independent during the Counter-Reformation, as a Gallican and a shrewd politician, for example, when the League seized power in Chalon after the assassination of the Duke of Guise. Following a polemic with some Jesuits (Father Charles Suger), he resigned his office in

1593, devoting the rest of his days to study (Kushner 2001).

In his Petrarchist and Platonizing poetry, Tyard sings the praises of a mysterious Pasithée and then later extols a different muse, probably Claude-Catherine de Retz. His poetic oeuvre includes the three books of the *Erreurs amoureuses* (1549–1555), the *Vers liriques* (1552–1555), the *Nouvell'œuvres poetiques* (1573), the *Douze fables de fleuves ou fontaines* (1585, Marek 2006), and occasional verses in Latin. His motto, *Amour immortelle* (“Immortal love”), links human to divine love.

Tyard translated Judah Abrabanel's *Dialoghi d'amore* (León, Hebreo 2006) and composed six *Discours philosophiques* (1552–1558): the *Solitaire premier* (on poetic frenzy, Baridon 1950); the *Solitaire second* (on music, Yandell 1980); the *Discours du temps, de l'an et de ses parties* (on time); *L'Univers*, comprising the *Premier* and *Second Curieux* (on cosmology, Lapp 1950) and *Mantice* (on astrological divination, Bokdam 1990); later he wrote *Ephemerides octavae sphaerae* (1562), *De coelestibus asterismis poematum* (1573), some *Homilies* (1585–1586), a treatise on onomastics (*De recta nominum impositione*, 1603), some *Annotationes in libros Philonis Judaei*, and some political writings (1604). He thus investigated a series of knowledge areas and their applicability to issues of faith, the philosophy of language, and political thinking (Roudaut 2008, Bokdam 2003).

Tyard was an active member of two academies – the *Académie de poésie et de musique* presided by Baïf (under Charles IX) and the *Académie du Palais* (under Henry III) – and his contributions to contemporary debates drew on a vast range of ancient and modern sources, including Boetius, Gafurio, Glarean, Alessandro, Champier, Pico della Mirandola and Ficino, Plotinus, Lucian, Peucer, Origen, Melanchthon, and Cardano, as well as exegetical, ecclesiastical, and lexicographical works (Kushner et al. 2004–).

The *Solitaires* discusses the theurgic effects of music, the workings of the universe as musical harmony, and the primacy of music within the

hierarchy of knowledge. The *Universe* and *Mantice* examine human curiosity, its legitimacy, and modes of operation. Tyard's work, which throughout displays humanist confidence in humankind, is varied, allusive, and dialogic, making it difficult to circumscribe. He brings an extra dimension to contemporary debates by juxtaposing different systems – for example, the debate in *Mantice* on divination conflicts with his own *Premier Curieux*, which affirms man's vocation for knowledge (Bokdam 1990). Lastly, in his conception of language, he espouses a “second Cratylism” (Kushner et al. 2004–), which is closer to Plato's Socrates than to Cratylus himself.

Cross-References

► Pléiade

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Unicity of Intellect

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Abstract

The concept of the unicity of the intellect emerged in association with interpretations of Aristotle's theory of the soul distinguishing between the agent and the possible intellect. The term monopsychism is connected with the controversy, which arose in the Middle Ages with Averroes' (Ibn Rushd) commentary on Aristotle. Averroes considers not only the agent intellect but also the material (possible) intellect as transcendent and numerically unified. Thomas Aquinas and other Christian thinkers criticized this doctrine because it negates the concept of an individual immortal human soul. In the fifteenth century, the unicity of the intellect was often viewed as an interpretation fully in agreement with Aristotle's theory of the soul, and the doctrine is usually found in Renaissance Paduan Peripatetic philosophers, beginning with Paul of Venice and ending with Nicoletto Vernia. Criticism of the doctrine (particularly by Marsilio Ficino) influenced, however, the Church reaction and led to the condemnation

of monopsychism at the Fifth Lateran Council in 1513. The anti-Averroist attitude began to prevail in the sixteenth century. As a result of Pietro Pomponazzi affair, the subject of discussion shifted from the relationship of plurality versus unicity to the issue of immortality versus mortality. Monopsychism consequently declined both as a philosophical doctrine and as a viable interpretation of Aristotle in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Synonyms

[Monopsychism](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Aristotle in *On the Soul* (Aristotle 1961, 3.5.430a) distinguishes between two types of "intellect" – one that "becomes all things," i.e., is able to assume all forms, and the other which is capable of making forms actual in the mind. Aristotle does not further specify the latter type of intellect that in the subsequent tradition understood as the agent intellect (*intellectus agens*), unlike the first type which is usually referred to as the material intellect (*materialis*), or the possible intellect (*possibilis*). The aforementioned passage of Aristotle's *On the Soul* inspired his Greek commentators to produce various interpretations of the ontological status of the first or the second

intellect. Although the unicity of the agent intellect was adopted by a number of Greek (Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius), Muslim (Avicenna), and Christian medieval philosophers (Dominik Gundisalvi), a major controversy did not arise until the unicity was also attributed to the possible (material) intellect. In his *Long Commentary* to Aristotle's *On the Soul*, Averroes (Ibn Rushd) describes not only the agent intellect but also the material (possible) intellect as transcendent and numerically unified, considering it the last nonphysical substance. For many Christian thinkers, the implications of this doctrine on the unity of the possible intellect, called monopsychism, were unacceptable. Monopsychism was in conflict with the concept of an individual immortal human soul, since according to Averroes, what is individual and intrinsic to humans, i.e., the so-called passive intellect (*intellectus possibilis*), ceases to exist together with the body, whereas the possible intellect, made actual by the agent intellect, is immortal, but unified, like the collective reason of all of mankind, which in every single individual works so that it uses its notions in order to abstract the ideas therefrom.

Averroes articulated three main arguments in support of the unicity of the possible intellect:

1. If the material intellect (*intellectus materialis*) is multiplied according to the number of individual men, it would be an individual thing – *hoc aliquid* – a body, or a power in a body. However, *hoc aliquid* is a concept of the mind that only exists as a possibility. And this concept of the mind in potency is the subject of the material intellect. This implies that the material intellect would serve as its own subject, setting itself in motion and knowing itself, which is impossible (Averroes 1953, p. 402).
2. If the material intellect (*intellectus materialis*) was multiplied according to the number of individual men, knowledge would also be endlessly multiplied. Your and my knowledge of the same object would be numerically different although, as regards its nature, it represents an identical object, which is nonsense (Averroes 1953).
3. It would not be possible for students to learn something from their teachers. The teachers' knowledge would have to have the power to affect and produce students' knowledge (Averroes 1953, p. 411).

Thomas Aquinas, in contrast, in his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* contests Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle and rejects not only the unity of the possible intellect but also the unity of the agent intellect. According to Aquinas, the intellect is one of the faculties of the individual soul which is a form of the body. The theory of the unity of the intellect would contradict the fundamental experience underpinning Aquinas's argument that individual human beings do in fact understand (Aquinas 1976).

Following Thomas Aquinas, the doctrine on the unity of the possible intellect became the basic characteristic of Averroism. Despite the fact that Aquinas in his day gave rise to the "phantom of Latin Averroism" (Marenbon 2013), a number of philosophers in the fifteenth and sixteenth century in one way or another advocated the unicity of the intellect and were therefore known as "Averroists" (Martin 2013, 2014).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Advocates of Monopsychism

Averroism was traditionally discussed during the Renaissance at the University of Padua. The first advocates of monopsychism in the Renaissance allegedly included Paul of Venice. According to him, the possible intellect that becomes all things, i.e., understands the universals that are immaterial and eternal, has to possess these qualities. Being of an immaterial nature, it has to therefore be unique since a multitude arises from matter (Nardi 1958; Kuksewicz 1983). At the same time, Paul of Venice conceived the intellect as the substantial form of the human body, i.e., intellect was not connected with the body merely in the sense of activity, but also infused it with essence. This notion is close to Thomas Aquinas and seems to be in opposition to monopsychism (Conti 1992).

The thoughts of Paul of Venice were further elaborated by Gaetano da Thiene, who, however, rejected Averroes' monopsychism. Although, according to Gaetano, the unicity of the intellect enables us to understand the general, if the intellect does not pertain to humans as a substantial form, it is impossible to define man as a rational being (Kessler 2008).

Unlike Gaetano, a number of philosophers associated with the Paduan school were propagators of the Averroist doctrine. Although Niccolò Tignosi sided with Thomas Aquinas and adopted his doctrine on the soul as a substantial form, he believed that the true character of the doctrine on the unicity of the intellect depended on the "opinion of the faith" (*opinio fidei*). Rational arguments supporting the plurality of immortal souls are viewed as too weak, and, therefore, in relation to the natural intellect, Averroes' unicity theory must be approved (Hasse 2004a).

Johannes Argyropoulos in his commentary on *De anima* openly acknowledges Averroes' understanding of the agent intellect as a single and separated entity and also the unicity of the possible (material) intellect and finally even the concept of the mortal "passive" intellect (Monfasani 1993).

Like his predecessors, Elia del Medigo elaborated on Averroes' commentary on Aristotle's teachings in his two *Tractates on the Soul*. Averroes' possible intellect is originally considered a mere disposition which is, however, gradually becoming an immaterial substance as it approaches the separated active intellect until the final unification (Bland 1995). Del Medigo interprets the relationship between the possible and agent intellects with reference to the Kabbalist tradition that culminated in a mystical unicity.

Del Medigo's pupil, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, in his *Conclusiones* (1486) consequently presents 900 theses encompassing different philosophical traditions aiming to bring them in agreement, including Averroes' statement: "There is a single intellective soul for all humans" (Farmer 1998). Pico della Mirandola was convinced, however, that the theory of the unicity of the intellect was compatible with the immortality of the individual soul. This was

described by Pico della Mirandola as the unicity of the intellect with the separated intellect in the state of happiness (Still 2008).

The term "Averroism" is most often attributed to Nicoletto Vernia thanks to his tractate on the substantial unity of the human intellect (*Utrum anima intellectiva humano corpore unita*). In this work, Vernia defends Averroes' monopsychism as the only correct interpretation of Aristotle's psychology. Vernia believed that efforts by Aquinas and other medieval authors to assert the doctrine of the individual soul as a substantial form of the human body, separable from the body after death, were completely alien to Aristotle's thought. Conversely, Peripatetic thought, supported by Averroes' interpretation, postulates the intellective soul to be eternal and not multiplied, since immaterial entities are not subject to individuation (Mahoney 2000). For Vernia, the possible intellect is eternal and eternally connected with the agent intellect, i.e., as a separate substance possessing eternal intellectuality (Hasse 2004b).

Vernia's teachings represent the climax of the doctrine on the unicity of the intellect in the fifteenth century. Vernia and additional fifteenth-century thinkers viewed Averroes' concept of the possible intellect as a single, separate, superindividual substance as an interpretation fully in agreement with Aristotle's doctrine on the soul. This doctrine was at the same time in contradiction with the Christian belief in the immortal, individual human soul.

Criticism of Monopsychism

Opponents of monopsychism during the Renaissance were primarily thinkers who followed up on the teachings of Thomas Aquinas or who directly drew on his legacy. As one of their sources, they could have relied on the decree of the Council of Vienne (1311–1312) which banned the theory that the intellective soul was not a substantial form of the body and declared it a heretical doctrine, thus supporting the Thomist concept.

Aquinas's argumentation against the unicity of the intellect also inspired Nicolaus Cusanus whose *Idiota de mente* (Cusa 1983) explicitly

criticized the doctrine perpetuated by “some Peripatetic” about “a single intellective soul.” Cusanus rejects the unicity of the intellect on the grounds of the proportionality of the individual soul and the human body. Since the identity of the proportion cannot be multiplied, the identity of the mind animating the body in an adequate proportion cannot be multiplied either. Cusanus therefore inferred that it was impossible for all humans to share the same intellect. Similar to Thomas Aquinas, Nicolaus Cusanus condemned monopsychism for its inability to explain the experience of the individuality of thinking. His arguments are underpinned by the concept of the soul as an essential form of humans or Aquinas’s concept of the intellect as the capability of the soul which is a substantial form of the human body (Führer 2014).

Numerous Renaissance Platonists were critical of the doctrine of monopsychism. In his *In calumniatorem Platonis*, Cardinal Bessarion saw a difference between interpreting Aristotle in the sense of Alexander of Aphrodisias’ rejection of immortality and Averroes’ refusal of individuality. Given the eternal nature of the world, if we want to retain individuality and avoid Alexandrian mortality, we either have to adopt the doctrine on transmigration of the souls (metempsychosis) or the infinite number of souls. These contradictions may be resolved by means of Averroes’ postulation of a single intellect common to all. According to Bessarion, monopsychism thus presents an adequate interpretation of Aristotle’s philosophy, although it fails to stand the test of Christian faith, and needs to be replaced by Platonism which, unlike Aristotelianism, is in harmony with the Christian faith (Martin 2014).

Monopsychism was contested by Marsilio Ficino, who dedicated the entire 15th volume of his *Platonic Theology* (*Theologia platonica de immortalitate animorum*) to Averroes’ doctrine. Ficino points to the absurd consequences that would stem from the unicity of the possible and the agent intellect (Allen 2013). Ficino finally resorted to an eclectic formulation: adopting the concept of the immortality of the

possible intellect from Averroes’ teachings and the multiplicity of souls from Alexander of Aphrodisias. Ficino refuses to regard matter as the principle of individuation, which prevents him from sliding into one of the extremes and for the Christian faith unacceptable interpretations of Aristotle’s doctrine of the intellect. If the intellect is not individualized by matter, it loses both its immortality, which would have stemmed from its connection with the body, and its Averroist superindividuality and unicity of the eternal intellect separate from matter (Blum 2007).

It was presumably the effect of Ficino’s criticism of Averroism (Randall 1961) that led the Bishop of Padua, Pietro Barozzi, in May 1489 to issue a decree forbidding public debates on the Averroist doctrine on the unicity of the intellect. In response to the condemnation of monopsychism, Nicoletto Vernia produced the tractate *Against Averroes’ Perverse Opinion on the Unicity of the Intellect* (*Contra perversam Averrois opinionem de unitate intellectus*) in which he reviewed his original Averroist approach. Vernia here claimed that although he lectured on Averroes’ monopsychism, he saw it only as a dialectic exercise, and he himself was not an advocate of the monopsychist doctrine. In his new tractate, he not only opposed Averroist arguments, but even attempted to demonstrate the individuality of the immortal human soul (Hasse 2004b).

The publication of Barozzi’s decree was shortly followed by an anti-Averroist tractate by the Franciscan and Scotist Antonio Trombetta. Despite the anti-Averroist character of the treatise, Trombetta believed Averroes’ theory on the indestructibility of the soul to be congruent with Aristotle’s teachings as well as with Christian faith. Trombetta intended to support both the eternal nature of the intellect understanding universals and the plurality of the intellect (Blum 2007).

Aristotelian thinkers found the rejection of the Averroist unicity of the intellect problematic. In his *Quodlibeta de intelligentiis* published in 1494, Alessandro Achillini still

viewed Averroes' interpretation of the intellect as the correct approach to Aristotle's problem. Although he accentuated the fact that the doctrine on the unicity of the intellect contradicted the faith and also had to be disputed by means of philosophical arguments, he also employed pro-Averroist arguments. If the possible intellect would be multiple in its nature, it would be impossible, due to its individuation, to distinguish it from sensory perception, and it would be impossible to obtain knowledge of universal forms. Achillini rejected in the end the unicity of the intellect, although it seemed probable in philosophical terms, and the philosophical arguments raised against this theory were insufficient (Hasse 2004b).

Vernio's students Agostino Nifo and Pietro Pomponazzi similarly admitted in their early works that Averroist monopsychism appears to be the right interpretation of Aristotle which is difficult to refute. In his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, Agostino Nifo expounded on Averroes' monopsychism applying cosmologic terms, i.e., referring to a heavenly sphere, which he identified with the human intellect, and yet considering this doctrine unacceptable for Christian believers. As early as 1503, however, he published *De intellectu*, in which he rejected the entire doctrine. He does not rely on psychological and epistemological counterarguments, however, as those were not found convincing, but formulated objections drawing on ethical philosophy and religion as well as on arguments derived from natural philosophy and cosmology (Hasse 2004a, b).

It seems that even Pietro Pomponazzi in his early commentaries on Aristotle regards monopsychism as a legitimate interpretation of Aristotle. He paraphrases Averroes' position, confronting it with the explication by Alexander of Aphrodisias, i.e., with the plurality of individual mortal intellects. Averroes' doctrine on the soul is considered congruent with Aristotle's teachings, but useless and therefore not worth following. Alexander's interpretation of Aristotle's text did not prevail in Pomponazzi's argumentation until the 1520s (Pluta 1986; Van Dooren 1994).

Impact and Legacy

The oscillation of many philosophers between Averroist monopsychism on the one hand and Alexandrian emphasis on plurality at the cost of rejection of immortality on the other became one of the issues addressed by the Fifth Lateran Council. The bull *Apostolici regiminis* issued by Leo X on 19 December 1513 forbade the advocacy of both the Averroist and the Alexandrian position, even in the form of a mere dialectic exercise.

Pietro Pomponazzi's *Tractatus on the Immortality of the Soul* published in November 1516 caused controversy, however, due to his inclination to Alexandrianism, not Averroism. Pomponazzi rejected the unicity of the intellect, arguing in favor of the plurality of souls, to which he, however, attributed only relative immortality and absolute mortality. Pomponazzi's key argument against the unicity of the intellect was a thesis adopted from Aristotle arguing that the activity of the intellect cannot do without imagination, and it was therefore dependent on phantasmas, sensory images, produced by sensory perception. According to Pomponazzi, if the intellect is dependent on the body in terms of its activity, it depends on the body in terms of its existence, hence being individualized through the body.

The unicity of the intellect, condemned at the Council, was consequently rejected on the basis of philosophical arguments using an analysis of the process of knowledge. Thanks to Pomponazzi, the discussion subsequently shifts to a different level; the relationship of plurality versus unicity made way to the issue of immortality versus mortality. Pomponazzi himself differentiated between the agent and the possible intellect, viewing the agent intellect as an immortal and separate substance which affects the possible intellect, individualized through the body, just as the mover affects the moved. Gasparo Contarini, one of Pomponazzi's critics and advocates of the immortality of the human soul, also agreed with Pomponazzi not only in his rejection of Averroist monopsychism but also in viewing

the agent intellect as separate from the human soul (Contarini 2014). Cesare Cremonini later held the same position – on the one hand the immanency of the possible intellect and the transcendence of the agent intellect – while at the same time identifying the unified agent intellect with God (Kuhn 1996). As with Pomponazzi, Cremonini also drew on the thoughts of Alexander of Aphrodisias, similarly to Simone Porzio earlier, who, however, unlike Cremonini, rejected Alexander's identification of the agent intellect with God (Garin 2008).

One exception in the debate in the period in question, which began to be dominated by the anti-Averroist attitude, was Luca Prassicio, who defended Averroes as an advocate of the immortality of the soul both against Pomponazzi and Nifo. In his tractate on the immortality of the soul, he chose to support Averroes as the best advocate of the immortality of the soul, i.e., not only the agent but also the possible intellect. In Prassicio's theories, the problematic aspect of the concept of the unicity of the possible intellect from the perspective of Christianity curiously made way to the advocacy of the immortality of the soul, challenged by Pomponazzi (Hasse 2004b).

The second half of the sixteenth century consequently saw the doctrine on the unicity of the intellect and Averroism as a declining trend. One of the last philosophers to contribute to the topic of the Averroist unicity of the intellect was Francesco Vimercato, who in his writings on the soul arrived at the unicity of the active as well as the unicity of the possible intellect, although again, like many of his predecessors, he also claimed that this doctrine was incompatible with Christianity. The last advocate of the unicity of the intellect in terms of natural philosophy, although also emphasizing its falsity in the sense of Christian truth, was presumably Antonio Bernardi in 1562 (Hasse 2004a).

The gradual disappearance of Averroist thought in the second half of the sixteenth century also does not imply that philosophers would stop objecting to his theory. So-called

Conimbricenses and Francisco de Toledo regarded Averroes' monopsychism as a doctrine contradicting Aristotle's teachings and the true doctrine (Salatowsky 2006). The elaboration of alternative theories of intellection based on Aristotle's theories was actually the reason for a retreat from Averroist positions, both in Lutheran Germany by Philip Melanchthon and in Jesuit scholasticism (Wels 2000), represented by Francisco Suárez, or as part of Aristotelianism of Jacopo Zabarella (Hasse 2007). The last serious attack on Averroist monopsychism was in all probability formulated in the seventeenth century by Cambridge Platonists, most notably Henry More, although this critique was articulated from the Platonist perspective (Hutton 2013).

Cross-References

- Achillini, Alessandro
- Averroism, Renaissance
- Argyropoulos, John
- Bessarion, Cardinal
- Cremonini, Cesare
- Ficino, Marsilio
- Gaetano da Thiene
- Nicholas of Cusa
- Nifo, Agostino
- Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
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Universities in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The earliest universities appeared in the twelfth century in Bologna and Paris. These institutions grew out of preexisting schools already established in the two cities. Bologna and Paris provided a very influential model for newer institutions, with Southern European universities conforming to the example of Bologna, while Northern European universities adhered to the model of Paris. Northern European universities gave prominence to theology and arts teaching and mostly awarded bachelor's and master's degrees. By contrast, Southern European universities concentrated on law and medicine and mostly awarded doctoral degrees; they accorded marginal importance to theology, which was generally taught in the general schools of the mendicant orders.

Gradually, universities spread throughout Europe: until the first half of the fourteenth century, they proliferated mostly in the south and west of Europe; following the foundation of Prague University in 1348, they developed in Central Europe too. At the end of the seventeenth century, approximately 60 universities were in operation in Europe. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, the growth of universities began to slow down gradually.

Renaissance European universities maintained the structure and organization of the medieval pattern. The innovation fostered, among other factors, by humanism, led to the foundation of new subjects (such as botany), to the application of humanist philological method to a wide spectrum of subjects, and to the expansion of the canon of authoritative texts. Humanists eventually took up positions in universities, becoming a driving force for

change from the fifteenth century onward. Their entry into the academic world led to serious conflicts in Northern Europe, but they were received more positively in Southern Europe. European universities exerted a profound impact on society, which was not limited to research findings applied to everyday life. The Lutheran Reformation had its origin in an academic dispute which was to be held at the University of Wittenberg, where Luther was teaching biblical studies. His links with other colleagues, as well his teaching activity, played a crucial role in the defense and dissemination of the Reformation.

Universities

The university is an institution devoted to advanced learning and research. Today, it normally comprises a college of liberal arts along with professional and science schools. It provides graduate and undergraduate programs in a range of subjects and has the power to confer undergraduate and graduate degrees in various academic disciplines. This state of affairs is the end result of a long-term evolution, which proceeded smoothly and without dramatic changes. Tellingly, Walter Rüegg has defined the university as “the only European institution which has preserved its fundamental patterns and its basic social role and functions over the course of history” (Rüegg 1992, XIX). He has also identified another crucial element of the university: its Europeaness. This is due to the influence that this institution has exercised both within and beyond European borders. Not only has it been vital for the development of European society, contributing to shaping a common cultural tradition, but its structure and organization have also been adopted in diversified societies worldwide beyond the continent's borders (Rüegg 1992, XIX–XX).

Some scholars, mostly in the field of Islamic studies, have challenged this view. They have argued that the madrasas, in fact, provided the pattern (or, more cautiously, some features of the pattern) later adopted by European universities.

Madrasas are institutions of higher education, first established in eleventh-century Iraq and still active in Muslim lands, which have represented for centuries the main source for the development and diffusion of religious and scientific knowledge throughout and beyond the Muslim world. Their teaching centers on law and theology. During the Middle Ages, they were very small schools (with just a few teachers – sometimes even just one) founded and sponsored by a wealthy patron as an act of charity. Drawing a comparison between universities and madrasas (at least, those around the Mediterranean sea), Darleen Pryds has noted significant similarities in the figure of the patron, as well as in the function of political training provided by both these institutions (Pryds 2000, 95–99). In her analysis, she explicitly rejects the opinion of George Makdisi, who, by contrast, systematically listed the fundamental differences between these two institutions. Makdisi has stressed, in particular, that the European *licentia docendi* (permission to teach) was granted by the political authorities (such as a prince, king, or pope) who funded the university, whereas the Islamic *ijāza* was conceived as a personal qualification conferred by the master on the student. Furthermore, Makdisi has highlighted that the idea of *universitas*, as originally conceived in medieval Europe, was essentially alien to Muslim society. The Latin term *universitas* meant a guild, that is, a corporation formed to provide protection and pursue the common interests of its members. Only over time did the term gradually acquire the meaning of a “society of academics.” As we will see, this concept of corporation (*universitas*) proved to be crucial for the foundation and development of European universities (Makdisi 1970, 260–264).

Both Bologna and Paris claim the honor of being the site of the first European university. The title of oldest institution is generally assigned to Bologna. According to the traditional account, the foundation of the university dates back to 1088. This date was, in fact, chosen in the late nineteenth century by a committee chaired by the then rector Giovanni Capellini. The results of the committee’s investigation were celebrated in a powerful and passionate speech given by Giosuè

Carducci (1836–1907). Famous poet and Bolognese academic, Carducci praised Bologna for its contribution to the rebirth of the ancient tradition of Roman law through its law schools and, later, university. According to his account, although it is not possible to date the birth of the university precisely, it is undeniable that it happened in the closing years of the eleventh century, making 1888 the 800th anniversary of its foundation (Carducci 1888). This effort to determine a specific date was evidently aimed at instilling a sense of pride, in the form of a certain cultural supremacy, in the people of the newborn kingdom of Italy. Contemporary scholars tend now to reject this legendary account. They instead regard the foundation of early universities as a gradual process which took place over a long period of time.

The University of Bologna grew out of the private law schools already present in the city in the last decades of the eleventh century. Numerous groups of students gathered in the city to hear preeminent jurists, such as Irnerius (c. 1050–after 1125) lecturing on civil law and later the Camaldolese monk Gratian (c. 1075–1145/1147) lecturing on canon law. Students gathered around – and paid – an eminent teacher in order to receive professional training in law. These law schools, which were attracting a growing number of students, remained private institutions until at least the second half of the twelfth century. According to Jacques Verger, “the crucial change would seem to have taken place around the years 1180–1190” (Verger 1992, 47–48). From 1189 the local government of Bologna was able to gain more control over professors, who swore an oath of loyalty to the city. The resulting stability favored the arrival of large numbers of students coming from places both nearby and distant. Foreign students, lacking legal protection, formed associations to assert their civil rights and avoid various forms of discrimination. They grouped themselves in accordance with their own place of origin and named these organizations *universitates*. Following the appearance of law schools in Bologna, teaching in other subjects gradually materialized. By the middle of the thirteenth century, philosophy and medicine had attained a strong position in the university; and

by the end of the century, arts subjects also began to be taught. The school of arts and medicine was finally recognized in 1316. Another crucial factor in the development of the University of Bologna was papal intervention. In 1219, Pope Honorius III stated that permission to teach (i.e., the *licentia docendi*) had to be granted by the archdeacon of the city. This belated recognition of a situation already in existence (as the university had awarded degrees before this papal intervention) became an important precedent for other universities in following centuries, which were founded on the basis of a charter from a pope or emperor. Similarly, another crucial decision made by the University of Bologna set a further important precedent for other European institutions. Bologna regarded the university as a “civic enterprise” to whose development the city had to contribute (Grendler 2002, 21). Indeed, in the thirteenth century, the city began to pay – despite a few interruptions – law professors’ salaries and to levy a tax on the citizenry to promote the university’s growth. The same decision was later taken by Padua in 1262. Italian and European cities sponsored universities because they could increase their cultural and political prestige and contribute to the city’s economy. Moreover, by paying for the universities’ expenses, city governments essentially gained a firmer control over these institutions, taking over the power previously wielded by students.

A very similar chronology applies to the birth of the University of Paris. From the closing decades of the eleventh century, schools began to proliferate in the French city. Alongside the traditional ecclesiastical schools, well represented by the chapter of Notre Dame, which taught theology, many private schools were established, offering a curriculum based on the arts. After 1150, law and medical schools appeared, run by Italian-educated professors. The rapid expansion of these schools raised organizational issues. Continuous strife with city dwellers persuaded students to remain under the church’s control. Students obtained the privileges of clerics, while the Church assumed direct control over the schools. Probably starting from the 1170s, these schools determined to be organized in guilds. The

first guilds of students and masters appeared between 1200 and 1210. The pope did not interfere with this trend, whereas the local bishop and chancellor, who possessed a discretionary authority over these schools, fiercely opposed it. With the support of the pope, masters and students of Paris achieved a notable victory after 25 years of hostilities. They gradually attained all the features which were essential to form a corporation. By 1215, masters were able to gain control of the enrollment in the schools and to have statutes. In 1231, Pope Gregory IX asserted once and for all the legality of the academic statute.

As indicated above, both Bologna and Paris developed spontaneously from preexisting schools. The case of Oxford University is similar, growing out of schools that were active as early as the middle of the twelfth century. A provisional form of university was already in place at the beginning of the thirteenth century before it received the first papal statutes in 1214. Sometimes the birth of early universities occurred as a consequence of a migration from another institution. The foundation of Cambridge University is the result of a migration from Oxford, which happened between 1209 and 1214; analogously, the University of Padua owes its origin to a secession of students from the University of Bologna that happened in 1222 (Arnaldi 1977). The birth of a university could also be dependent on the will of the secular or religious authority. Emperors, popes, and European sovereigns had the power to create universities and often used it. Emperor Frederick II, for instance, founded the University of Naples in 1224. Similarly, Spanish political authorities put a great deal of effort into the creation of new universities: in addition to the short-lived *studium* of Palencia, the kings of Castile were responsible for the foundations of the universities of Salamanca (1218) and Valladolid (whose date of founding is disputed) before the end of the thirteenth century.

Despite some discrepancies in the data provided by historians, it is possible to observe some trends in the foundation of universities and to draw a general outline of their diffusion. From the foundations of the first universities of Bologna and Paris until the beginning of the seventeenth

century, there was a dramatic growth in the number of universities. As we shall see, this growth saw a strong increase in the fifteenth century, followed by a slowing of pace in the last period considered here (1500–1625). The year 1650 marks the turning point in this prolonged growth: thereafter, the number of new foundations more or less equals the number of universities which were closed down, transferred, or merged. By the end of the fourteenth century, there were around 30 universities in operation (31 according to Verger 1992, 57; 29 according to Grendler 2004, 2). The majority of universities that were newly founded in this century were located in the south and west of Europe (Italy, France, and Spain). The foundation of Prague University by Emperor Charles IV in 1348, however, marked the beginning of a powerful movement for the creation of new universities in present-day Germany and in Central Europe. Not by chance, the fifteenth century saw a general increase in the creation of universities throughout Europe and a sharp rise in Germany and in Northern Europe. Germany established 15 new universities; lacking medieval institutions, Scotland created 3 universities (St. Andrews, 1413; Glasgow, 1451; Aberdeen, 1495) and Scandinavia 2 (Copenhagen, 1475; Uppsala, 1477) before the end of the century. New institutions were also founded in Spain, France, Italy, and on the eastern fringes of Europe. By 1500, around 60 universities were in operation in Europe (63 according to Verger 1992, 57; 57 according to Grendler 2004, 2) – a doubling in the course of a century. In the following period, from the sixteenth century until the first quarter of the seventeenth century, 18 new universities were established in Europe (Grendler 2004, 2). The foundation in the sixteenth century of the universities of Marburg, Helmstedt, Jena, Wittenberg, and Frankfurt an der Oder made the central-eastern area of Germany particularly fertile in such institutions.

The diffusion pattern of European universities reflects the overall economic and “cultural development of the continent” (Patton 1969, 26). Yet, this diffusion was also heavily influenced by some other major factors such as political, religious, or ideological aims. The foundation in

the sixteenth century of German universities and of French universities (Douai, 1559; Pont-a-Mousson, 1572; Besançon, 1564) run by Jesuits clearly reflects the will to back the respective religious and political causes of Protestants and Catholics. Similarly, Spanish Catholic authorities founded the University of Gandia in the newly conquered south of Spain to educate converted Moriscos and assert direct control over the area (Frijhoff 1996, 70–71). These factors might also explain the absence of universities in certain areas, for example, the populated and developed areas of the Low Countries and the Baltic where no universities were founded in the fifteenth century. This seems to have been due to the unfavorable perception of Northern European universities, modeled on the example of Paris and thus mostly oriented toward arts and theology, subjects which did not attract pragmatic Northern European merchants (Patton 1969, 18–19, 26).

The universities of Paris and of Bologna, besides their chronological priority over newer institutions, also exerted a profound influence on them. They embodied, in fact, the differing archetypes of Northern and Southern European universities (Gieysztor 1992, 109–113; Grendler 2004, 3–12; Lines 2012, 2–7). Major differences originated from their curriculum as well as their structure and organization. Southern universities concentrated on law and medicine. They adopted the two-faculty system established in Bologna, where a separate faculty in arts and medicine was formally constituted after the establishment of the law school. In these universities, theology occupied a marginal place in the curriculum and was mostly taught in the general schools of mendicant orders, which were separate institutions. By contrast, the Paris model was structured into four faculties, with arts as the lower faculty and law, medicine, and theology as the higher faculties. A successful course of study in arts was seen as preparatory for more advanced classes and was generally required in Northern European universities in order to attend any of the three higher faculties. As a result, arts faculties “were the dominant element both numerically and juridically” in these institutions, within which “they also had

the youngest and the most volatile membership” (Leff 1992, 309).

Law was the largest faculty in Italian universities, with arts and medicine equally divided between them. In Bologna, for instance, the number of law professors was consistently higher than the number of arts and medicine professors until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the long-standing pattern was reversed (Grendler 2002, 9). It is possible to conclude that “about seventy-five percent of Italian professors taught law and medicine, another twenty percent taught arts” (Grendler 2004, 6). The remaining 5% taught theology, which acquired increasing importance in the mid-sixteenth century with the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Although some Italian universities had acquired the right to confer degrees in theology from the mid-fourteenth century, it was only in the last third of the sixteenth century that the number of theology professorships rose a little.

Whether or not universities had been teaching theology continuously since their foundations, they appointed one or more members of the clergy to theological professorships during or following the Council of Trent. It was only Padua that had a more consistent and established presence of theology in its university from the middle of the fifteenth century. The appointment of professors of metaphysics and theology was favored by inter-related interests. On one hand, the Venetian senate wanted to tackle the drop in matriculation numbers in certain areas of the curriculum of the University of Padua and to furnish it with prestigious teachers; on the other hand, students of arts and medicine had been expressly requesting a post in theology since 1433. Therefore, in 1442, the Venetian senate created a professorship of Thomistic metaphysics, which was followed in 1474 by a professorship of Scotist metaphysics. Since metaphysics was taught using Aristotle’s treatise on the subject interpreted from a Christian perspective, it was essential as preparation for the study of theology. Then, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the Venetian government founded two additional professorships in Scotist (1476) and Thomist theology (1490). Finally, in 1551, the Venetian senate created the first

permanent position in Sacred Scripture in Italy. In the sixteenth century, then, the University of Padua could boast the second largest presence (after Rome) of religious studies among all Italian universities. Its five professors of religious studies, out of a total average number of 56 lecturers, amounted to almost 10% of the whole professorship (Grendler 2002, 366–372).

The percentage of theology professors in Northern European universities was far higher than in Southern European ones. This is especially true for Paris and Oxford, which received an exclusive right from the pope to confer degrees in theology until the fourteenth century. Since Northern European universities showed a marked inclination for theology and arts, they awarded bachelor’s and master’s degrees, which were directly linked to these faculties, whereas Southern universities essentially conferred doctorates. The bachelor’s degree in arts was normally awarded after 4 years, while the master’s degree was conferred after 6 years in Paris and 7 years in Oxford. The degree in theology was at the top of the scale. In Oxford, in order to become a master in theology, a student had first to finish a master’s in the arts. This rule did not apply to Paris, where a student had to go through different stages in order to become a *bacchaliarius formatus* in theology; therefore, he had to continue his training for a total of 12–16 years before becoming a master. As a result of this prolonged course of studies, the minimum age for graduating as a master in Theology in Paris was 35.

Despite these differences, Northern and Southern European universities shared some key elements. Firstly, the language used throughout the medieval and Renaissance academic world was Latin. A few attempts to lecture in the vernacular were made in sixteenth-century German universities and later in other countries but did not prove to be either successful or lasting (Burke 2004, 76–78). Secondly, Aristotelian thought provided the dominant (although not exclusive) philosophical framework until the end of the seventeenth century in university learning. Thanks to its flexibility and its adaptability, it was the most suitable to accommodate new research findings. Furthermore, it seemed to

contemporaries more systematic, more rigorous, and therefore “much more didactically useful” than other alternative philosophical traditions (Bianchi 2007, 50). The third common element was the teaching method, which consisted of lectures and disputations. Lectures were of three kinds: ordinary, extraordinary, and cursory, in decreasing order of importance. Ordinary lectures were required to obtain the degree and were given by the most distinguished professors; extraordinary lectures were normally optional and were taught by less experienced professors; cursory lectures were open to the community and had an ancillary purpose in the curriculum and a more informal character. Disputations complemented lectures. Students were requested to attend or to take part in these disputations, in which the presiding master posed a question and participants were expected to back the positive or the negative side of the argument. Finally, the question was answered by the presiding master. These disputations were also designed to train students in dialectical reasoning, which lay at the heart of scholasticism.

The curriculum of European universities had much in common throughout Europe. The main differences appeared in the arts faculty, which taught a miscellaneous group of subjects from within the liberal arts. The focus was on three major fields of study: philosophical and linguistic training, providing classes on grammar, rhetoric, logic, natural, and moral philosophy; an overview of mathematical sciences (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music). In Northern European universities, the faculty established a close link to theology and therefore acquired a philosophical orientation. By contrast, in Southern Europe, the arts faculty in French, Spanish, and Italian universities, developed a more practical orientation and established links to law and medicine. It is no surprise, then, that until the fifteenth century, a subject with an essentially legal function such as the *ars dictaminis* (i.e., the art of writing Latin letters conforming to certain rules and models) was still included in the arts curriculum of Italian universities. Particular emphasis was also placed on rhetoric, which had value for students of the law.

University legal instruction centered on civil and canon law. Canon law was based on Gratian’s *Decretum*, a collection of papal letters, council decrees, and other ecclesiastical writings. The teaching of canon law implied the reading and the interpretation of the *Decretum* and its glosses. Canon law experienced a grave crisis in the sixteenth century due to the increasing secularization of society. Civil law was based on the *Corpus juris civilis*, a compilation of Roman law assembled by the officials of Emperor Justinian in the sixth century. After the *Corpus juris civilis* was revitalized by Bolognese glossators in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was re-interrogated and interpreted by fourteenth-century commentators or post-glossators. The philosophical background used by the early post-glossators such as Cino da Pistoia (1270–1336) was provided by the application of the Aristotelian “four causes” as elaborated in the French universities of Paris and Orleans and the adoption of their dialectic method (Kelley 1979, 782–783). Within this tradition, the two major post-glossators, Bartolus of Sassoferrato (c. 1313–1357) and Baldo degli Ubaldi (c. 1327–1400), both Perugia-educated, taught in various universities in central and northern Italy. Their teachings spread throughout Europe under the name of *mos italicus*. As we will see, in the sixteenth century, the *mos italicus* was rivaled by the *mos gallicus*, which implied the adoption of a philological perspective to the study of law.

University teaching of medicine was common to many universities. The first organized European medical school was located in Salerno, in the south of Italy, and was founded in the ninth century by Benedictine monks. The *Schola medica salernitana* is generally considered the forerunner of all university medical schools. Despite its obscure origins, the school attained great fame in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and notably hosted acclaimed female professors of medicine such as Trota of Salerno (twelfth century). The school lost its leading role in medicine in the thirteenth century, when the universities of Bologna, Montpellier, Padua, and Paris opened their medical schools. In the fifteenth century, Ferrara also joined this select group (Siraisi 1990, 55).

The medical curriculum focused on the intellectual role of medicine, which, at the time, was conceived as “a diverse collection of areas of knowledge and of intellectual interests” (Siraisi 2012, 492). As such, it included various disciplines and developed a practical character embedded in a theoretical framework. This philosophical orientation explains the links that medicine established chiefly to the faculty of arts. In addition to some disciplines such as logic which had a clear preparatory nature with respect to medicine, other subjects in the arts curriculum sparked the interest of medical students. These were natural philosophy and astrology. Natural philosophy was conceived in Aristotelian terms and, due to its closeness to medicine, was regarded as directly useful for medical students, who also had to take astrology into account since it considered the influence of celestial bodies on the health and psychological condition of human beings (Siraisi 1990, 66–68). The basic texts adopted in the medicine curriculum were a series of Latin translations of treatises attributed to Greek authorities such as Hippocrates, Galen, and Aristotle. Due to the volume of this material, the teaching of medicine largely relied on compendia, abbreviated treatises, and Arabic medical works in Latin translation, especially Avicenna’s *Canon*. These texts, adopted throughout Europe, remained more or less the same until the second half of the fifteenth century, when humanists were able to produce more accurate Latin versions of Greek texts than the medieval ones, as well as translating newly recovered Greek texts, thus dramatically improving knowledge of classical medicine.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

For decades, the universities of the Renaissance have been regarded as old-fashioned bastions of tradition. This questionable assumption was motivated by two factors. First, Renaissance universities stuck to a largely Aristotelian curriculum. By so doing, they delayed the appearance of modern science, whose emergence “is usually taken to be the results of throwing off the shackles of an old-fashioned Aristotelian worldview and its gradual

replacement. . . by a ‘new’ science” (Schmitt 1984, 35). Secondly, scholasticism, the predominant method adopted in university classes, has traditionally been considered to be an antiquated, dry, and orthodox system of thought. Scholasticism’s emphasis on the speculative sciences, its rigid and convoluted dialectic, and its deference to Aristotle have probably been exaggerated and have condemned it to a somewhat undeserved fate.

Although scholasticism occupied a central role in university learning, humanism also established a place for itself in universities’ halls. Humanism introduced crucial changes in every discipline taught in universities and contributed to the creation of new ones. The impact of humanism, which occurred throughout Europe, affected universities to different degrees. Humanist scholars and beliefs enjoyed a very different reception when they seeped into the academic environments and curricula of Northern and Southern European universities. The advent of humanism in Northern institutions led to rivalries between humanists and scholastics. Historians have offered different interpretations of these conflicts, portraying them as mere reflections of internal academic and personal antagonisms within the general coexistence of scholasticism and humanism or, alternatively, as the result of an unavoidable incompatibility between these two antagonistic systems of culture. Charles G. Nauert has compared the different positions, concluding that “the conflicts. . . may have been localized, personal, and muddled; but they reflect a disharmony that is fundamental. Conflict was not accidental; it was fated, irrepressible” (Nauert 1998, 432). Reciprocal criticism concentrated on a few major, and essentially intertwined, issues. Firstly, humanists and scholastics challenged each other’s methods. Humanists proposed an innovative approach to textual criticism, based on philological and linguistic skills, while scholastic claimed the validity of their established method of dialectical disputation and dismissively labeled humanist speculations as irrelevant *poetria* (poetical things). Along the same lines, scholastics and humanists quarreled over sources, with scholastics relying primarily on medieval commentators and humanists on classical authorities. Scholastic also criticized

humanists for their marked reluctance to accept texts as they were traditionally transmitted within the academic environment. This, of course, was a crucial matter when it comes to theology and sacred texts. Scholastics foresaw a potential danger of heterodoxy in the humanist treatment of religious texts. They argued that humanists, untrained in theological studies, should not be allowed to deal with the Bible and theological matters. Due to their lack of competence and qualification, humanists, in the opinion of scholastics, should not be allowed to approach scriptural texts. Humanists, for their part, attempted to rebut their opponents' claims. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466?–1536), in particular, condemned scholastics for their focus on pointless questions, their neglect of the correct and original meaning of the Bible, their reliance on some ignorant medieval theologians, and their practice of extracting single passages out of their contexts and assuming them as the revealed truth (Nauert 1998, 431).

By contrast, the penetration of humanism into the Italian university environment happened with relative ease. Some key factors facilitated this process. Firstly, the lack of powerful faculties of theology prevented that potential impediment to the diffusion of humanism. Secondly, the higher degree of specialization in Italian universities hindered the emergence of conflicts between professors teaching different subjects. Normally Italian professors were expected to teach a narrow range of subjects and to stay within their subjects' traditional boundaries. Professors of rhetoric, for instance, could not teach medicine or law. Therefore, they could not pose a threat to members of other faculties. Lastly, the "notable people" who appointed new university professors normally belonged to families imbued with humanist culture and values. Consequently, they looked favorably on exponents of humanism, who also were often the most in-demand professors on the academic market (Lines 2006, 339–340). Initial contacts between humanists and Italian universities happened at a very early stage. The first humanists were usually students of law who pursued (but mostly did not obtain) university degrees: Petrarch (1304–1374) and Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), for instance, both studied law in

Bologna. Still in the fourteenth century, Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) studied law at the University of Florence until he abandoned university studies to dedicate himself to the translation of classical Greek works. Again in Bologna, Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) received a degree in canon law prior to 1428. This (still limited) interaction between humanists and the university has led scholars to reevaluate this complicated relationship and to reconsider the supposed aversion of humanists to universities.

At this stage, however, their participation did not bring about any significant modification to the university environment. This happened only when a substantial number of humanists served as university professors, assuming the responsibilities of teaching, running, and organizing courses. According to Paul Grendler, the growing involvement of humanists in Italian universities passed through a series of stages (Grendler 2002, 204–248). Until the first quarter of the fifteenth century, they were not tempted to teach in the universities, and when they opted for a teaching career, they preferred to train students in boarding schools. University posts were not particularly appealing as the subjects usually taught by humanists were still poorly paid and did not confer great prestige on those appointed to teach them. The case of Vittorino de' Rambaldoni (1378–1446), known as Vittorino da Feltre, provides a good example of the shared lack of interest in university posts. He was appointed in 1422 to teach grammar and rhetoric at the University of Padua, but he resigned shortly afterward, disgusted by the rude manners of his university students. He then moved to Venice and later to Mantua, where, for more than 20 years, he ran a boarding school (Ca' Gioiosa) open to young aristocrats. The next generation of humanists gradually began to apply for and hold university positions on a more consistent basis. By the first half of the fifteenth century, the major Italian universities appointed humanists and provided a larger forum for humanist studies. The growing impact of humanism within Italian society corresponded to a more stable presence of humanists within the university environment, which welcomed them rather benevolently. It is then

interesting to assess to what extent this general assumption applies to the notorious case of the troubled relationship between Lorenzo Valla (c. 1407–1457) and the law professors at the University of Pavia. He was appointed to teach rhetoric in Pavia in 1431. Following an initial friendly welcome from the other university teachers, the situation worsened dramatically in 1433, when Valla published a controversial pamphlet. The trigger to write it was a comparison made by one of the university jurists between Cicero and Bartolus of Sassoferrato, favorable to the latter. Valla rebutted this opinion, stressing the obscurity of Bartolus's language, the incoherence of his syllogistic reasoning, and his lack of philological skills. Quite consciously, circulating this piece of writing, Valla became the defender and the advocate of humanist culture, which was gradually gaining strength in Italian universities. According to his pamphlet, even a jurist had to develop humanist skills in order to be able to interpret and contextualize historical Roman law, to write eloquently in a refined and classical Latin, and to acquire the moral and linguistic skills of the Roman orator. Valla paid a heavy price for this polemical writing: although the actual course of the events is still hazy (as accounts differ on a few important details), it is known that he had to leave his teaching post and even the city to avoid the outrage of the local law professors (Speroni 1979). The case of Valla is interesting because the initial reception that he enjoyed confirms once more the positive attitude toward humanists in fifteenth-century Italian universities. The later hostile reaction against his controversial pamphlet, however, reveals the underlying tension between humanists and scholastics, prone to escalate into bitter disputes. In the period between the middle of the fifteenth century and the last quarter of the sixteenth century, humanist studies and humanists obtained a central position in Italian universities. Until the beginning of the *Cinquecento*, the two leading humanistically oriented institutions were the universities of Bologna and Florence. Bologna could boast a cohesive group of humanists, led by the eminent figure of Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (1453–1505). He was best known for his encyclopedic knowledge, which was greatly admired by contemporaries. He was

also very successful in his teaching, which he undertook from 1479. According to contemporary sources, his classes were packed with hundreds of students. He was a prolific writer and was among the small group of humanists who first conducted comparative and philological analyses of classical texts, breaking with the traditional commentary tradition. The philological method was later raised to a higher level by Angelo Ambrogini, known as Politian (1454–1494; Grafton 1977). He was appointed in 1480 as professor of poetics and rhetoric at the University of Florence through the direct influence of Lorenzo de' Medici, unofficial ruler of the city. The appointment of such a young and ambitious man, who was also one of the leading figures of the new generation of humanists, was intended to provoke a reaction in the Florentine academic establishment. This was led at the time by the eminent humanist Cristoforo Landino (1425–1498), aged 56, whose rather conservative teaching was beginning to appear outdated. While Landino's star was starting to slowly fade, Politian's star was rising: this is testified by the growth of his salary, which reached the very considerable amount of 450 florins in 1491–1492. In his teaching, he developed a radical philological approach, aimed at reestablishing the original (or the closest to the original) form of the classical work he was reading and commenting on. For his explanations, he mostly relied on earlier commentaries, which he often criticized in order to assert his own preeminence in this literary genre. From 1490 onwards, Politian applied his philological skills to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, invading the traditional field of the philosophers. To counter the adverse reaction of his colleagues in philosophy, Politian devoted his 1492 inaugural lecture to arguing against them. He proudly claimed for himself the supposedly pejorative title of *grammaticus* ("grammarian"), which, according to him, meant that he possessed the necessary skills to read ancient works (in the original language), to restore them to their original form, and then to adopt these emended texts in place of the defective editions and the "barbarous" commentaries employed by philosophy professors (Mandosio 2008). Humanist influence declined in universities in the closing decades of the sixteenth century. The

proliferation of Jesuit schools, which offered free teaching in theology and humanist studies, partially accounts for this decline.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Much of the cultural innovation stemming from European universities is due to the influence exerted on these institutions by humanism. It played a decisive role in some of the crucial developments which took place in universities. Firstly, it contributed to changes in the relative positions of subjects within the hierarchy of the curriculum and even to the foundation of new subjects quite alien to the medieval curriculum such as botany, which emerged as a separate subject at the dawn of the sixteenth century. In the fifteenth century, the study of the healing properties of plants had been included in theoretical medicine. A major change occurred when humanists turned their attention to Dioscorides's *De materia medica* and Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis*, both invaluable for the study of botany. Dioscorides's treatise was published in the original Greek by Aldo Manuzio in 1499 and was translated into Latin by the Venetian scholar Ermolao Barbaro (1453/1454–1492) in the 1480s, though published posthumously in 1516. The latter attracted a great deal of attention for its richness of botanical terminology – as well as for its textual errors. Botany then became an independent academic subject: the University of Rome was the first to found a lectureship in botany in 1514, followed by Padua in 1533 (Grendler 2002, 343–345). Gradually, the aims of the subject became more and more independent from medicine. Indeed, it evolved as its focus moved from the medical effects of plants to a broader knowledge of natural history. Possibly, the leading authority in this field was the Italian Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605), who taught botany from 1556 until 1600 in Bologna. In addition to creating a botanical garden in 1568, Aldrovandi also collected numerous natural specimens and classified them according to scientific criteria.

Within that same field of the medical studies, developments in the study of anatomy were also a consequence of the humanist approach to the

subject. Anatomy was taught in Italian universities from an early age; however, after humanists focused their attention on Galen's works, (re) translated in more correct Latin in the first half of the sixteenth century, the study of anatomy changed radically. Galen's treatises enabled medical professors to gain a deeper understanding of the human body. Dissections became more frequent and more rigorous. The leading figure in this field was Andreas Vesalius of Brussels (1514–1564). He came into contact with the works of Galen at an early age, when he was a student in Paris and in Louvain. He was appointed by the Venetian senate as professor of surgery at the University of Padua in December 1537 with the express request that he undertake a systematic program of human dissection. His tireless efforts to improve research in the field of anatomy further led to the publication of *On the Fabric of the Human Body*, which he composed in parallel to his role as a translator of Galen. This monumental work, published in 1543 and in a revised edition in 1555, presented a comprehensive and exhaustively detailed overview of anatomical matters and, even more significantly, directly and polemically challenged Galen himself. In a similar way to Vesalius, other important anatomists were appointed by Italian universities, and finally, the University of Bologna established an ordinary professorship in anatomy in 1570 (Grendler 2002, 338).

Secondly, the spread of the humanist philological method moved beyond the traditional boundaries of humanist studies and contributed to transforming and overhauling many subjects. The great Milanese jurist Andrea Alciato (1492–1550) is regarded as the first to apply humanist methodology to the study of law. He trained in Pavia and Bologna and graduated from the University of Ferrara. Despite his Italian education, he spent about 10 years in French universities (Avignon and Bourges) as a university professor, before returning to teach for 17 years in Italian universities (mostly at Pavia). His main aim was to reform legal education through application of humanist skills, usually regarded with hostility by jurists. Alciato's rethinking of law studies was based on two humanist principles: the development of a

philological approach and the application of a historically aware interpretation of classical sources. His tenure at the University of Bourges was of crucial importance for the establishment of a new legal tradition, an alternative to the *mos italicus* and known as the *mos gallicus*. This reformed conception of law became dominant in France – and secondarily in Germany – while in Italy the *mos italicus* remained predominant. In the Italian peninsula, the legal tradition was, in fact, more “concerned to preserve the spirit of Classical forms rather than the letter of Classical texts” (Kelley 1979, 784). Recent scholarship, though, has argued that this opposition of approaches should not be seen as rigid since the two conceptions of law often coexisted in the university environment (Birocchi 2012). Such was the case, for instance, in the University of Pavia, where distinguished and lesser-known law professors between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century showed a general appreciation of humanist ideas and an inclination to follow the renowned exponents of the *mos gallicus* (di Renzo Villata 2015). Furthermore, a certain underlying tension in relation to this new reformed vision of law is testified to by the explicit request made by students of the University of Bologna: in a memorandum drafted in 1583 and sent to Ulysse Aldrovandi, they asked to be taught the *Pandects*, part of the *Corpus juris civilis*, in accordance with the French teaching style (Lines 2012, 19–20).

The new approach to the sources and their form helps to explain the third crucial development brought about by humanists: the reassessment of the canon of authorities and (on a more practical note) the replacement of texts and textbooks employed in university courses. Perhaps the insertion of Platonic theories into the canon of university courses was the most influential change. This process was neither smooth nor rapid nor long-lasting in a theoretical framework dominated by Aristotle. It was possible only after fifteenth-century humanists provided fresh Latin translations of Plato’s works, making it easier for scholars to lecture on them. Following pioneering attempts to offer a course on Plato’s works in fifteenth-century Ferrara and sixteenth-century Pavia, the first unpaid lectureship on Plato in the

Italian peninsula was established in Pisa in 1576, and the first ordinary professorship of Platonic philosophy was created in Ferrara in 1577 (Grendler 2002, 297–304). The Ferrara chair was first held by the Platonic philosopher Francesco Patrizi of Cherso (1529–1597), who proposed Platonism as a philosophical alternative to Aristotelianism. Despite the increased interest in Platonic works, Platonism as an academic subject never succeeded in firmly establishing itself within the university curriculum, and the number of Platonic lectureships decreased in the closing decades of the sixteenth century. In addition to Plato himself, the humanist determination to unveil new sources also brought in other philosophers belonging to the Platonic tradition.

In general, the pragmatic humanist approach also had consequences for everyday university life. For instance, it encouraged revision of the texts or materials used for teaching. There was often debate as to which books to use in class. Humanists teaching grammar in sixteenth-century German universities disapproved, for instance, of Alexander of Villedieu’s *Doctrinale*. They emphasized its lack of elegance and opted instead for the works of humanist grammarians. This apparently minor quarrel over a textbook actually implied a more profound discussion of the subject’s aims: on the one hand, traditionalists prepared students to engage in dialectical reasoning by acquiring a superficial and instrumental knowledge of Latin; humanists, on the other hand, wanted students to be able to comprehend and write Latin texts properly. The humanists won this battle, and the *Doctrinale* gradually fell into disuse in universities (Heath 1971, 16–17, 26–28; Nauert 1990, 804–805). Again in German universities, the efforts of humanists were instrumental in introducing Cicero and Quintilian into the teaching program of rhetoric (Nauert 1990, 806).

The assumption that humanism was the only factor encouraging innovation within the European university should be rejected for two reasons. First of all, the spread of the humanist methodology did not exclude scholasticism from universities. It is now clear that the resulting dichotomy cannot be drawn in rigid terms. The diffusion of humanist techniques throughout the

curriculum did not replace the dialectic method of scholasticism in university teaching. It was, then, a merger of these two apparently opposing methods that fostered development in many disciplines. Furthermore, modern scholars have arrived at a more unprejudiced and balanced interpretation of scholasticism. Although they have not denied a certain degree of backwardness, they have also recognized that this approach to education was creative and responsible for some important cultural advancements (Lines 2006, 344–345). For instance, the philosophy professor Pietro Pomponazzi of Mantua (1462–1525), who taught in Padua, Ferrara, and Bologna, played a key role in the development of the debate on the immortality of the soul, asserting the independence of the philosophical perspective from theology. In his major work, *Treatise on the immortality of the soul* (1516), he stated that while the intellective soul is mortal in philosophical, that is, Aristotelian, terms, it is immortal according to faith (Grendler 2002, 290–292).

To conclude, neither scholasticism nor humanism alone proved to be the key factor in fostering innovation in universities. On the contrary, it was more likely the evolution of this relationship that was the impetus behind the new developments mentioned above as well as many others. The Renaissance university, then, despite its still quasi-medieval structure, provided the most suitable venue for producing this evolution. It might, therefore, be tempting to conclude that early modern universities, together with other formal and informal institutions, such as academies, religious schools, courts, and humanist circles, were among the main centers of Renaissance innovation.

Impact and Legacy

As we have seen, Renaissance universities had a tremendous impact on several areas of learning. Yet, they had an even bigger impact on early modern society. These institutions provided a major contribution to the emergence and dissemination of the Protestant Reformation. The starting moment of the Reformation was in all respects an academic exercise, a disputation on a specific topic. The 95 theses composed by Martin Luther

(1483–1546) in October 1517 were structured as an academic disputation, concerning the topic of indulgences, expected to take place at the local University of Wittenberg. Although the disputation never took place, the links between the university and the Reformation were nonetheless highly significant for its deeper implications. Indeed, the defense and the spread of the Reformation enormously benefitted from Martin Luther's position at the University of Wittenberg. His tenure as a professor of biblical studies lasted more than 30 years, during which he enjoyed the loyal support of his colleagues, who firmly backed his position. More importantly, Luther and his colleagues were able to gain the passionate commitment of many students, who became followers and then leaders of the Reformation. A considerable number of his students became university professors during the sixteenth century and spread Reformation ideas even further through the collaboration of their own students (Grendler 2004, 14–20).

Cross-References

- ▶ [Aldrovandi, Ulisse](#)
- ▶ [Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao](#)
- ▶ [Humanism](#)
- ▶ [Luther, Martin](#)
- ▶ [Manutius, Aldus](#)
- ▶ [Reformation](#)
- ▶ [Vesalius, Andreas](#)

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Unlimited

► [Infinite, Renaissance Idea of](#)

Usque, Samuel

Born: Portugal, 1500/1520

Died: Italy, after 1555

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Abstract

(XVI century), member of the Portuguese Hebrew nation, author of *Consolaçam às tribulaçoens de Israel*, first edition Ferrara 1553, second edition Amsterdam 1599

Biography

Little is known about Samuel Usque's life: recent archival findings situate his birth between 1500 and 1520 in Portugal (Wilke 2014). It is however clear that he lived and experienced one of the most troubled periods of Jewish history in Europe: the end of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the king of Portugal John II (1455–1495) opened the doors of his kingdom to the exiles because he appreciated their talent in finance, tax administration, astronomy, and cartography. Nonetheless, he took their children from them and deported them to Sao Thomè on the African coast in order to have them baptized. His heir, Manoel I (1495–1521), set the Jews free. However, 1 December 1496, he issued a decree ordering the Jews and the Muslim to leave Portugal in the space of 10 months. The following year, he changed his mind and decided to force them to convert in order of being able to keep them and profit from their skills. According to traditional historiographic reconstruction, he acted so since he cherished the hope of marrying the Spanish princess daughter of Ferdinand and Isabel and uniting Spain and Portugal. Recent historiography has tried to challenge this assumption, which, however, seems to hold still its validity (Soyer 2007, 5–8). Thus, the Jews were turned into New Christians or, as they were commonly labeled, into Marranos; Jewish assimilation in Portugal had started. Nonetheless, the process was not as drastic and severe as it was in Spain. The members of this community ascended to a high level of wealth, and at the same time, they managed to preserve a double identity: they were Christians outwardly and officially; inwardly, they strove to preserve a secret allegiance to Judaism. Thus, they shaped for themselves an identity of their own and were called the *nação hebreia* (Hebrew nation) of Portugal (Yovel 2009). This ambiguity together with the wealth of the community did not remain unnoticed for long time. In 1506, the mob massacred the New Christians in Lisbon. In the wake of this massacre, Manoel's attitude changed, and he issued laws allowing some freedom to the Marranos. His successor,

John III, maintained these privileges. The Marrano community had the possibility of developing both from an economic and political point of view, and it knew a period of prosperity that came to an end in 1531, when the Inquisition was established in Portugal.

It is commonly assumed that Samuel Usque was a member of this Portuguese nation, a Marrano, whose Christian name remained unknown. His family came allegedly from the Spanish city of Huesca (Kayserling 1905, 387–388; Cohen 2002, 12). Usque possibly witnessed the Sao Thomè deportation, the massacre in 1506, and the establishment of the Inquisition (Cohen 2002, 13). According to Graetz, there is no doubt that he fled the Inquisition from Portugal and he succeeded in finding a safe harbor in Ferrara (Graetz 1998, vol. IX, 311). Recent archival discoveries locate Usque in Antwerp in 1543; from there in 1545, he arrived to Ancona where he claimed to be a Portuguese merchant. Later on, he moved to Ferrara. Legal documents attest his presence in Venice in 1548. A little afterwards, he came back to Ferrara and then he moved to Pesaro. In 1553, the text of the *Consolation* was published in Ferrara (Guerrini 2001). His relationship to Abraham and Salomon Usque has not been fully cleared (Cohen 2002, 14). Abraham Usque, however, printed the text of the *Consolation* in Ferrara in 1553.

Usque wrote his work in his mother tongue, Portuguese. Nonetheless, he had also command of Spanish and Latin, and he used these languages in order to access the original sources allowing him to compose an original work (Graetz 1998, vol. IX, 311–312). To these “languages,” Martin A. Cohen adds Greek and Hebrew and suggests that Usque may possibly have known some Italian and some French (Cohen 2002, 12).

Heritage and Rupture with the Jewish Tradition

The *Consolation for the Tribulation of Israel* is a historiographical work divided into three dialogues. The main character Ycabo tells the history of the people of Israel to the other two characters

Numeo and Zicareo. This history begins with the biblical origins of Israel, and it focuses on the countless tribulations Israel had to face since the fall of the First Temple until the author's present days. The last episode Ycabo narrates is the desecration of the Tora scrolls in 1553 in Pesaro.

Usque intended to address a very specific public, namely, the "Gentlemen of the Diaspora of Portugal" (Cohen 2002, 38). He dedicated them the prologue to the entire work, written in Portuguese to their benefit. In this prologue, he also explains that he aimed at consoling these people by reminding them that the past afflictions he recollects were much worse than the present ones.

The first dialogue begins with the description of a lost, golden age of pastoral life, where the children of Israel lived as peaceful shepherds and found their nourishment in honey and milk. The idyllic image is broken when a group of terrible shepherds arose from among the peaceful ones. They pursued different ways of life and decided to become hunters and to eat meat. The metaphor is explained by identifying the faithful shepherds with the Israelites that remained loyal to God. Then some of them became disobedient, they forgot God's commandments and were eventually punished because God sent several foreign peoples to conquer and devastate their land and to enslave them. The pastoral metaphor runs through almost the entire narrative and gives it a poetic accent. The lambs that belong to the flock of Israel are the persecuted; the hunters are the persecutors. The first dialogue ends with the fall of the First Temple. In the second one, Ycabo recounts the tribulations of Israel until the fall of the Second Temple. The third dialogue is possibly the most interesting one. There, Ycabo vividly describes the disgraces the Jews of Portugal had to face after 1492, namely, the deportation of Sao Thomè, the forced conversions, the Lisbon massacre in 1506, and the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal.

According to Graetz, Usque is together with Yoseph ben Joshua Kohen (1496–1578) and Solomon ibn Verga (second half of the fifteenth to first quarter of the sixteenth century), an outstanding historiographer who, in the middle of the tragedies that engulfed Jews and Marranos, tried

to find in Jewish history the traces of the work of the providence (Graetz 1998, vol. IX, 306). He labels him "the poet," and he points out that his muse found her own very personal expression in the composition of his historical work and masterpiece. In Graetz's evaluation, Usque was familiar with biblical history, and he succeeded in the composition of the *Consolation* because he strived to access the sources firsthand (Ibid. 311). Nonetheless, Cohen has shown that Usque was not able to draw a distinction between reliable and unreliable sources (Cohen 2002, 19 and 269). Accordingly, he differentiated himself from his predecessors in his effort to access the sources firsthand, but he failed in developing a solid historiographical method.

It may however be argued that scientific historiography was not on Usque's agenda while he composed the *Consolation* (Cohen 2002, 19). His main purpose seems to be an attempt to try and make sense of all the tribulations. To this end, the literary pastoral metaphor remains central. Usque himself, in his prologue, explains the metaphor: Ycabo is to be identified with Jacob the patriarch. Numeo and Zicareo are the prophets Nahum and Zechariah disguised as shepherds and sent to God's command in order to remind the Jews the blessing they received in exchange for their suffering.

Ycabo's narration reconstructs the entire history of Israel in the context of a fall from a golden age stemming from the disobedience and unfaithfulness to God that started already in the biblical times. Israel's history narrated in the first and second dialogue and the Marranos' vicissitudes described in the third dialogue are thus parallel (Cohen 2002, 22). The Marranos' tragedies are a variation on this very same theme: the tribulations that happened in Spain and Portugal stemmed from the forsaking of God's commandments due to the forced conversions. From this point of view, Usque seems to hint at another crucial parallel between the destiny of the ten tribes and the destiny of the Marranos.

Usque interprets the history he is narrating from a religious point of view. The fall from the golden age can be rectified. If in his rhetorical strategy, each tribulation is followed by a

prophecy that indicates that the tribulation is the fulfilling of the prophecy and that the restoration of the lost golden age is not very far. According to Usque, the facts of Spain and Portugal are a proof that salvation is approaching, for the measure of punishment for Israel's and the Marranos' disobedience is filled up. The fact that some Marranos were already reverting to Judaism was the demonstration of this thesis.

From the point of view of the interpretation of history, Usque remains an intellectual figure immersed in the traditional mentality. However, his expectation of the upcoming salvation foreshadows the messianic wave that was about to overwhelm Jewish culture and society. Furthermore, the ambiguity of his Marrano identity, a mystery that has not yet fully unraveled, turns him into the embodiment of a figure of transition towards the modern intellectual and political world.

Impact and Legacy

Usque's work has failed to receive the attention it would have deserved by his contemporaries and those who came thereafter. The text of the *Consolation* is probably one of the sources of Yosef ha-Kohen's (1496–1575) *Emeq ha-bakha* (*Vale of Tears*, 1575) (Kayserling 1905, 387–388; Cohen 2002, 267) and of Gedalia ibn Yahia's (1515–1587) *Shalshet ha-Qabbala* (*Chain of Tradition*, Venice 1587) (Cohen 2002, 30). The text reached the Jewish communities in England and in Amsterdam where it was reprinted but with many errors. In 1640, the Inquisition forbade the reading of the *Consolation*. At the same time, the dwindling of the Usque's generation of Marranos also worked against the dissemination of the work (Cohen 2002, 31–33).

Among the scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Graetz attempted a serious examination of Usque's *Consolation*. Furthermore, the text was reprinted in Coimbra (Portugal) in 1906–1908. The Yiddish translation Elias Lipiner published in 1949 must also be mentioned. Nonetheless, Samuel Usque's personality and work still deserve and await more in-depth studies.

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Ussher, James

Born: Dublin, 1581

Died: Reigate, 1656

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Abstract

James Ussher was one of the first students at the newly established Trinity College, Dublin. He quickly went on to become the university's

most highly regarded graduate in the seventeenth century. An early appointment as Professor of Theological Controversies largely set the tone for the rest of his life, which was dedicated to winning the denominational argument with Catholicism by making reference to history. As a product of Trinity, he was a Ramist, and his encyclopedic approach to writing reflected this approach. Ussher would gather sources together in order to frame an argument, and his knowledge of ancient literature and languages was justly admired.

Ussher is perhaps most well-known for his *Annales veteris testamenti* (1654) which contained a dating of creation at 4004 BC that proved resilient up until the modern era and in some cases beyond. If Ussher's reputation suffers from this, then it is to be regretted because there is much historical work in *Annales* that is groundbreaking in its attention to primary sources and sedulous in its attention to detail.

Biography

James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland, and scholar was born in Dublin. The Usshers were a prominent Anglo-Irish family, Protestant, and well placed; his father was one of the clerks of the chancery and his uncle preceded him as Archbishop of Armagh.

Ussher entered Trinity College, Dublin in 1594 as one of its first scholars. Trinity was, from the outset, a decidedly Calvinist institution, and Ussher's theological formation left a stamp on not only his future writings but his approach to ecclesiastical administration. Ussher was ordained in 1601 and awarded his Doctorate of Divinity in 1612. At this stage, he had already been appointed as Professor of Theological Controversies. This role meant that Ussher's initial focus was on anti-Catholicism and his lines of attack were primarily theological and historical. Already the country's most prominent Protestant theologian, he was largely responsible for drawing up the Church of Ireland's Articles of Faith in 1615.

In 1621, Ussher was made Bishop of Meath and he resigned his professorship. If Ussher was a

rather reluctant Church leader, he was even more indisposed to a political life. However, he did manage to continue his scholarly activities, and in 1622, he published *A Discourse of the religion anciently professed by the Irish and British* which sought to establish that the Celtic Church's practices were congruent with those of the Reformed Churches. Ussher's fortunes continued to rise and he was elevated to the See of Armagh in 1625. In spite of his promotion, Ussher continued to write, and his 1631 book on the nine-century monk Gottschalk, who advocated a theology of double-predestination, was a thinly veiled attack on the Arminianism that was establishing a hold on the English Church (Ford 2007). In 1632, he produced *Sylloge veterum epistolarum Hibernicarum*, an outstanding work of antiquarian scholarship which brought together sources relating to the medieval Irish Church. The educational ethos of Trinity had been Ramist; this left an impression on Ussher's methodology which often involved him gathering his encyclopedic knowledge and collating it into well-organized categories in order to establish his points. His 1639 *Britannicarum ecclesiarum antiquitates* is a history of Christianity from its arrival in Britain to the seventh century. Although inclined to be over accepting of certain legendary accounts, the work has a good deal of historical merit. Once again, Ussher's great achievement is editorial as he managed to marshal an impressive variety of material.

Though well established as a Calvinist churchman, Ussher was also an ardent Royalist. This put him in a rather paradoxical situation in the 1630s as the two sides in the emerging civil wars can be roughly divided into Calvinist Parliamentarians and Arminian Royalists. Something of Ussher represented both sides and his tract *Reduction of Episcopacy* set out a compromise solution. When it emerged that few in England had much appetite for compromise, Ussher threw his lot in with the King's cause; in 1640, he left Ireland for England, never to return (Cunningham 2007). In England, Ussher was made Bishop of Carlisle and he continued his role as mediator between the warring factions.

During the Interregnum, Ussher was one of the few bishops allowed to continue their lives largely unmolested. When he died in 1656, it is testimony

to his standing among his political enemies that Oliver Cromwell paid for a state funeral (Cunningham 2007).

Ussher's contemporary notoriety, for the most part, rests on his dating of Creation in *Annales veteris testamenti* (1654). The date 23 October 4004 BC remained as a footnote to the Genesis account in Bibles for many centuries. That this notoriety is now almost exclusively negative is hardly surprising, but it is also a pity. The birthday of the world aside, *Annales* represents a considerable academic achievement demanding the ability to manage an impressive array of sources as well as a grasp of several ancient languages. It is worth noting that he is largely accurate in the dating of other significant events.

Cross-References

- [Arminius, Jacobus](#)
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extensively taken up in writings on visual arts and provided one of the core concepts of poetics and art theories from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. As a full theory of painting was not inherited from antiquity, the foundations of Renaissance art theory are largely based on terms and concepts derived from the classical rhetorical tradition and Aristotle's *Poetics*. The analogy between painting and poetry was either used instrumentally, in order to legitimize and consolidate the status of artists, or explored from a more sophisticated theoretical standpoint, against the backdrop of a dispute upon the relative superiority of the arts (*paragone*) through which the analogy was extended to sculpture. The concepts of imitation, idea, art, and beauty were the object of continuous redefinition in discussions pivoting on *ut pictura poesis*, fuelled by the established rhetorical practices of *ekphrasis* and *enargeia*. Despite the instauration of the modern system of the arts in the eighteenth century and the fundamental distinction between spatial and temporal arts (Lessing), *ut pictura poesis* continued to nourish the thought of artists, critics, and philosophers, culminating in trans-medial aesthetic experiences in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The influential methodological legacy of the “Sister-Arts” model, especially the assumed neutrality of a comparative approach to the study of art and literature, has been the object of profound revision and critique in the theoretical reflection of Visual Studies.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The major historical and theoretical fortune of the formula *ut pictura poesis*, “as is painting so is poetry” (Horace, *Ars poetica*, 19-10 BCE), interweaves with that of the sentence attributed to the Greek poet and mnemonist Simonides of Ceos (556-468 ca. BCE), “Painting is mute poetry and poetry is a speaking picture,” transmitted through Plutarch's *De Gloria Atheniensium* (I cent. CE). The comparison between poetry and painting through the centuries was most crucially applied in its inverse form (“painting is like poetry”) and

Ut pictura poesis

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Abstract

The comparative notion of *ut pictura poesis*, “as is painting so is poetry” (Horace), although originally referred to literature, was

assumes an analogy between the two “Sister Arts,” whereas the parallel idea ascribed to Simonides emphasises a clear distinction of attributes while confirming the analogy: painting is associated with silence/dumbness and poetry with speech/voice (Barkan 2013).

The analogical notion condensed in the formula *ut pictura poesis* is close kin to a number of concepts inherited from ancient rhetoric and relevant to the relationship between the visual and the verbal, such as *enargeia/evidentia* (the stylistic effect by which a scene is brought vividly to the eyes of the listener) and *ekphrasis* (the graphic description of an object or scene). In fact, since antiquity theories and practices connected to *ut pictura poesis* developed at the crossroads between rhetoric, poetics, philosophy, and the art of memory (Bolzoni 1995; Von Rosen 2000). The organization and reception of both texts and images in the Middle Ages was essentially rhetorical (Carruthers 2000); however, it was in the works of fifteenth-century humanists that the categories of ancient rhetoric were explicitly adopted as concepts to describe and interpret works of art (Baxandall 1971). In the treatise *De pictura* (1435), a milestone in the history of art theory, Leon Battista Alberti built his discussion of the different parts of the process of artistic creation on the notions of *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*, three of the canonical partitions of oratory according to Cicero and Quintilian. This fundamental adaptation proved very influential throughout the Renaissance and was later echoed, for instance, by Paolo Pino (*Dialogo di pittura*, 1548) and Lodovico Dolce in his *Dialogo della pittura intitolato l’Aretino* (1557), a defense and celebration of painting thoroughly informed by *ut pictura poesis* (Roskill 1968): Dolce distinguished *invenzione* (choice of subject and general plan), *disegno* (projection of *invenzione* into a sketch), and *colorito* (addition of color). The absence of a theory of painting inherited from antiquity encouraged writers to emphasize the definitions found in Horace, Plato, and Aristotle, and to transfer concepts developed with reference to the verbal media to the visual media, on an analogical basis (Lee 1967).

The analogy between poetry and painting was fundamentally grounded on their imitative nature,

their main subject of imitation (human nature in action), and their moral and didactic aims. Both arts perform an imitation but they do so through different means, words in the case of poetry and colors in the case of painting (Daniello 1536; Varchi 1550; Dolce 1557). In the high Renaissance, the idea of *ut pictura poesis* circulates across a diverse range of works and genres but is especially widespread in treatises on poetics (Robortello 1548; Minturno 1559; Scaligero 1561; Castelvetro 1570, among others), many of which stemmed from the Aristotelian revival of the 1540s (Graham 1973; Kristeller 1990); in fact, in most cases the parallel between poetry and painting can be traced back to a theory of *mimesis* (imitation) that combines the heritage of Horace and the rediscovery of Aristotle’s *Poetics* (Herrick 1946), often intertwined with elements derived from the Platonic tradition (Mendelsohn 1982). A similar syncretism is attested to by the long coexistence of two different concepts of imitation (literal and selective) both in treatises on poetics and in writings on painting: here art is described either as the perfect imitation of nature or as the imitation of a perfect model, derived from a selection of natural beauties or from an ideal beauty in the artist’s mind. This nontranscendental notion of “idea,” mediated by Cicero (*De oratore*), is comparatively more widespread than the metaphysical one (de Holanda 1548; Lomazzo 1584; Zuccari 1607), more orthodox in Platonic terms (Di Stefano 2007). The ambiguous opposition between natural and ideal beauty, between literal and selective imitation was often conveyed through the paradigmatic anecdote of Zeuxis and the girls of Crotone, which circulated widely not only in writings on art and poetry, but also in lyric poetry and dialogues on beauty and love (Trissino 1524; Nifo [1530]). The Aristotelian (art as imitation of nature) and the “Platonic” (art as imitation of the ideal) lines of thought developed for centuries as parallel theories, eventually joined in the work of Giovan Pietro Bellori: according to his *Idea del pittore, dello scultore e dell’architetto* (1664), the imitation of natural beauty, if understood correctly, should necessarily generate the supreme beauty of art (Di Stefano 2007). The notions of “icastic” and “fantastic” imitation (Giglioli 2010) were shared by theoreticians of

art and literature, among whom Tasso and Comanini, whose *Figino overo del fine della pittura* (1591) carries out a thorough comparison between poetry and painting, considering proportion and unity of action.

Innovative and Original Aspects

As opposed to the ancient and medieval exclusion of visual arts from the rank of liberal arts, the Renaissance enhanced their status and assimilated them to poetry, although without establishing a system of the fine arts based on a common principle.

The theoretical contribution of Alberti had a pivotal role in this process, as his *De pictura* fostered a new vision of the relationship between poets and painters by introducing the figure of *doctus pictor* (“learned painter”), whose knowledge and use of literary sources rescue his work from mere craftsmanship and enable him to relate to poets on equal terms. Alberti’s strong focus on *historia* (“id de quo agitur”, the painted narrative – a story taken from myth, literature or history) and the choice of a human action as subject imply a reflection on the moral aim of art and *decorum* (Lee 1967), as well as the assimilation of stylistic concepts of rhetorical origin (*varietas, gravitas*). Pomponio Gaurico (*De sculptura*, 1504) performs a similar adaptation of categories and compares sculpture to poetry, while taking up the example of Phidias, whose Zeus was allegedly based on Homer’s description. The idea of the superiority of artists depicting “istorie” will exert a major influence until the seventeenth century, culminating in the thought and work of Nicolas Poussin (Marin 1995; Cropper and Dempsey 1996) and the golden age of French classicism (Fumaroli 1998). The gradual separation of painting, sculpture, and architecture from the crafts was accomplished and made clear in the notion of “arti del disegno” (“arts of design”), developed by Vasari in his influential *Lives of the artists* (1550 and 1568) and through the creation of the Florentine Academy of the same name (“Accademia del disegno”, 1563). Later on, the model of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome (1593) was imitated by the French Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture (1648), where

the parallel between painting and poetry was explored in significant theoretical writings (de Piles, Félibien, Le Brun). Roger de Piles translated into French and added comments to Du Fresnoy’s Latin poem *De arte graphica* (*L’art de peinture*, 1668); the work, which was based on Horace’s *Art poetica* and began precisely with the statement of *ut pictura poesis* and its influential reversal (“*similisque poesi sit pictura*”), was translated in England by John Dryden (1695), with the addition of a “Preface [...] with a Parallel of Poetry and Painting (Dundas 1993).”

In the Renaissance, *ut pictura poesis* evolves from the mere traditional parallel to a mutual relationship, without subordination (Corti 2004; Passignat 2017); simultaneously, an agonistic paradigm emerges alongside the analogical model, while the intellectual dignity of the visual arts is stated also on the basis of their kinship with scientific and mathematical knowledge (Hessler 2014; Ferrari 2019). Alberti himself celebrates Brunelleschi as the great inventor of perspective, so that in his *De pictura* the image of the learned painter – influenced by the literary model – coexists with the image of the artist as an insightful interpreter of nature and its laws, which has a significant fortune in the fifteenth century. Most famously, Leonardo da Vinci explores the relationship between poetry and painting from a new perspective, claiming the superiority of painting on the basis of the hierarchy of senses: the poet must represent objects by means of words, which reach the sense through the ear, whereas the painter can imitate forms themselves, addressing the eye directly (Leonardo 1995; Silver 1983). Born in the “occhio tenebroso” of imagination (Salvi 2012), poetry is confined to the mind of the poet, while painting is the object of sight, the noblest and most intellectual of senses, and the main source of human knowledge. Moreover, painting is immediate whereas poetry requires time to be read or listened to; as a consequence, the triumph of painting can be particularly evident in the case of the portrait, which renders physical beauty and offers it to the beholder with a truthfulness near to nature, and in the case of the visual depiction of a hectic battle, a scene that the slow pace of words would struggle to describe. The position endorsed by Leonardo is essentially

Aristotelian, as the act of seeing is an act of knowledge, whereas the opposed hierarchy could be supported from a Platonic perspective, arguing that painting cannot reach beyond the limit of the body and the visible. In prose writings on art from the second half of the sixteenth century as well as in poetic texts inspired by works of art, painting and poetry are associated respectively to the rendering of external (body) and interior beauties (soul and moral qualities). The distinction between poetry and painting therefore involves both imitation and reception: poetic and artistic imitation are exerted on different objects, perceived either by the soul or by the eyes (Varchi 1550; Castelvetro 1570), which are also their respective addressees – “in our souls” / “in front of our eyes” (Dolce 1557). However, this limit was frequently questioned, as for instance bodily gestures were considered to express “*motus animi*” and intentions (Alberti, Leonardo). Varchi himself, while establishing a clear correspondence between body and portrait, soul and sonnet (“the difference between poetry and painting appears to be as great as that which exists between the soul and the body” [trans. Mendelsohn 1982]), undermines this very distinction by stating that actually poets also describe external appearances (“what is outside”) and painters try to show “what lies within, namely *affetti*” (Varchi 1550). According to Lomazzo, who quoted several poetic examples in his *Trattato dell’arte della pittura, scultura et architettura* (1584), painting is most similar to poetry precisely in the expression of passions; furthermore, a poetic spirit shared also by painters would account for the fact that many artists were also poets, such as Bramante and Leonardo.

The agonistic comparison between the work of poets and that of painters was explored against a sophisticated theoretical backdrop in the mid-sixteenth-century debate on the relative superiority of arts known as *paragone* (Hendler 2013). At this stage, an intricate blending of Aristotelian and Platonic elements characterised the intellectual life of Italian academies; furthermore, not only had artists achieved a higher status, but many of them had been admitted to the academies and some were skilled poets in their own right (Michelangelo, Bronzino). On the one hand, it

would be simplistic to reduce the conceptual role of the parallel between painting and poetry to its self-promotional use by visual arts, because there is a deep and genuine connection informing the Renaissance discourse on the arts, mainly on rhetorical grounds. On the other hand, even treatises that explicitly focus on the comparison between painting and poetry (Gilio 1564; Possevinio 1593; Nunes 1615) do not examine it with the theoretical awareness and search for common principles that will be typical of later aesthetics (Kristeller 1990). The leading figure of the *paragone* is Benedetto Varchi, theoretician and poet, whose use of *ut pictura poesis* is not merely defensive, as he dwells on the practical side of the work of the artist and at the same time strongly highlights its affinity with literature and philosophy (Mendelsohn 1982; Varchi 2013). His influential *Due lezioni*, delivered in 1547 to the Florentine Academy and printed in 1550, concern respectively the process of artistic creation and the relative merits of painting and sculpture, resulting in a syncretic theory of visual arts whose sources are mainly literary and philosophical: lyric poetry and treatises on love and beauty, including Bembo and Leone Ebreo, in their turn influenced by Ficino and other Neoplatonic philosophers. The third dispute of the second lecture, which brings together painting and sculpture through the notion of *disegno* (design), is entitled “In che siano simili e in che differenti i Poeti e i Pittori” and evaluates painting and sculpture against the standard of literature; the discussion culminates in a defense of sculpture conducted by attributing to painting the inevitable falsehood Plato attributed to poetry (Mendelsohn 1982). The comparison between the poet and the painter could be extended to the sculptor through the idea of art as imitation of universals rather than particulars (Lee 1967; Panofsky 1968). As a rule, defenses of painting in fact focused strongly on the analogy with poetry (Dolce 1557), which Varchi reinterpreted at the service of sculpture.

The metaphorical association of sculpture with inner images (*imagini* or *concetti*) and of painting with external images occurs in lyric poetry, implying an explicit claim for the superiority of the interior representation, comparable to the idea in the mind of the artist, and hence an implicit – or

indeed explicit – claim for the superiority of poetry (Pich 2010). In the light of the double meaning of the Greek word *graphein* (“writing” and “painting”) and the Latin *pingere/pictura* (Carruthers 2000), metaphors derived from the work of artists were applied to rhetorical and literary phenomena since antiquity; in the vernacular tradition, this use is attested beginning with Dante Alighieri and Francesco Petrarca (Levi 2010; Zemanek 2010); in particular, Petrarca adapted rhetorical categories to the visual arts (*De remediis utriusque fortunae*; Perucchi 2014), while echoing the vocabulary of painting in his poetry. The success of this metaphorical use culminated in the reference to literary depictions, themselves building on pictorial metaphors, as recommended models for painters (Dolce 1557) and in the extensive use of architectonic metaphors in titles of literary works (*Tempio*, *Galeria*). In treatises, examples of the parallel between poets and painters were discussed either in terms of imitation – for instance, according to Varchi, Michelangelo would have imitated Dante in his representation of Hell in the Sistine Chapel – or in terms of style: (1553; Gelli 1887) compared Michelangelo to Dante and Flemish painting to Petrarca (or, more accurately, to Petrarchism) and Lenzoni (1556) argued for the superiority of Michelangelo over Raffaello, associating them with Dante and Petrarca, respectively, whereas Dolce (1557) adopted the opposite perspective, celebrating Raffaello-Petrarca (and Tiziano) against Michelangelo-Dante; Lomazzo (1584) focused on the assumed affinity that the genius of certain painters would show with the genius of certain poets, as in the case of Tiziano and Petrarca.

The model of *ut pictura poesis* informs other rhetorical and cultural practices which were familiar to both poets and artists and were the object of a remarkable revival that is peculiar to the Renaissance. On the one hand, the interest in *ekphrasis* was renewed by the model of Alberti, who in his *De pictura* built on Lucian’s description of the *Calumny*, a famous painting by Apelles, and by Vasari’s *Lives*, as well as by a number of translations and summaries from Lucian and Philostratus (de Vigenère 1597). On the other, an

important thread of the reflection on verbal and visual representation was reflected in the tradition of hieroglyphs, whose fashion, in connection with Neoplatonic wisdom, was revived by the publication of *Hieroglyphica* (1505), a treatise on Egyptian hieroglyphics attributed to the mysterious Horapollo, frequently reprinted and adapted over the century (Valeriano 1556). As opposed to the mediated form of verbal language, hieroglyphs were considered as a perfect language, conveying an immediate form of knowledge; they were interpreted in the light of Plotinus and Ficino’s idea of an original divine wisdom expressed in them (Gombrich 1948). As such, they were essential to the thought of Giordano Bruno (*De magia*, 1590), who believed they could provide access to the language of gods, and Athanasius Kircher (*Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, 1652–1654), who considered hieroglyphics a potential model for a universal language. The knot of verbal and iconic identified in hieroglyphs was at the basis of the widespread emblematic tradition (Alciato 1531), which was placed under the aegis of *ut pictura poesis*, materially featured on the title page of collections of emblems and *imprese* (Aneau 1552; Clements 1960). *Carmina figurata* (figure poems) and *imprese* (Giovio 1555), composed of an image and a motto, simultaneously embody and challenge Simonides’ opposition between painting as mute poetry and poetry as speaking picture, paving the way for numberless artistic experiments combining words and images across arts and media.

Impact and Legacy

A major watershed in the history of aesthetics is represented by the rise of the system of the arts (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry), which, although encompassing notions developed in the classical and Renaissance periods (Kristeller 1990), was established only in the eighteenth century, in the works of Batteaux (*Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe*, 1746). Whereas Dubos in his *Réflexions critiques sur la poesie et sur la peinture* (1719) examined both the similarities and differences between poetry and painting – stating a distinction between

the natural and immediate act of seeing and the mediated act of reading arbitrary signs, then taken up by James Harris (*Three Treatises*, 1744) – Batteaux applied the principles he derived from Aristotle and Horace (essentially imitation) not only to poetry and painting, but also to the other arts. In fact, the long-established centrality of *mimesis* could be undermined and replaced only later on, when the issue of representation became gradually less important than the problem of expression. Insightful criticism of both Batteaux and the notion of *ut pictura poesis* can be found in the writings of Denis Diderot, for instance in his *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* (1751). Despite the radical critique of *ut pictura poesis* carried out by Lessing (*Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Mahlerei und Poesie*, 1766), who distinguished diachronic “arts of time” and synchronic “arts of space,” in his turn criticized by Mendelssohn and Herder (Lee 1967), the traditional parallel between poetry and painting continued to exert a major influence over the reflection of writers, artists, and philosophers, while offering inspiration to different artistic theories and practices.

The centuries-old reflection on the relationship between word and image and on the similarities and differences between verbal and visual expression lies at the heart of modern semiotics and influenced the development of modern Logic, through the tradition of the art of memory and the search for a universal language (Rossi 1960). However, the most conspicuous heritage of the debates revolving around *ut pictura poesis* can be traced in the theoretical field of iconology (Warburg, Panofsky, Gombrich) and Visual Studies. While acknowledging the realms of word and image as “two countries that speak different languages but that have a long history of mutual migration, cultural exchange and other forms of intercourse” (Mitchell 1996), Mitchell undermined both the traditional analogy between poetry and painting and the distinction argued by Lessing, by introducing the “theoretical figure” of “image/text” (Mitchell 1986, 1994). The traditional notion of painting as “dumb poetry” has been deeply questioned through the concept of *Bildakt* (Bredekamp 2010), while the Leonardo attack against the indirect imitation performed by poets has been countered through

the full acknowledgment of the “rhetoric” of images (Pfisterer and Seidel 2003) and of the visual dimension of verbal language. The problem of *ekphrasis* has also sparked the reflections of art historians on their own visual perception and critical use of description (Baxandall 1985; Arasse 2003, 2009; Clark 2006; Elsner 2010).

Cross-References

- [Beauty, the Renaissance Idea of](#)
- [Imitation and Mimesis in the Renaissance](#)
- [Lyric Poetry in the Renaissance](#)
- [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)

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Utopia in Renaissance Philosophy

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Abstract

The term *Utopia* in Renaissance philosophy originates from and refers to Thomas More's 1516 work: *Libellus vere aureus, nec minus salutaris quam festivus, de optimo reipublicae*

statu sive de nova insula Utopia ("A truly golden little book, no less beneficial than entertaining, of a republic's best state and of the new island Utopia") (More T. In: Logan GM et al (ed) *Utopia*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002). This literary sensation gave rise to a philosophical and artistic genre that would flourish in the late Renaissance and Enlightenment, extending into nineteenth-century ideologies, namely utopian socialism. The term contains within itself an ambivalence of meanings that relate to its two possible roots – *ou-topos*, meaning a nonexistent place, or simply no place; and *eu-topos*, referring to a good place. Calling upon ancient Greek philosophic and literary traditions, as well as the biblical model of the Garden of Eden, Renaissance utopias would often describe imagined, isolated (or geographically confined) political or religious communities that possessed clear attributes of perfection. Sometimes, mere literary and philosophical speculations, more often early modern utopias inserted themselves within the ancient Greek traditions of criticizing existing societies and institutions through dialogue, by imagining (and therefore suggesting) the most perfect model of political philosophy in terms of human relationship and collective happiness.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Renaissance utopias emerged from humanism and the rediscovery of Greco-Roman traditions, combined with the example of harmony provided by the description of the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis. In ancient Greece, the exercise of imagining the perfect *polis*, in all its urban, architectural, political, religious, and juridical elements, pertained to the realm of political philosophy. Though imagined, these perfect cities often represented true aspirations or simply described the best possible outcome for specific strategies and were not simple literary exercises. Though not necessarily focused on the analytical description of ideal *poleis*, Plato's *Republic* was seen as the archetype of Renaissance utopias

(Annas 1981; Plato 1992; Purshouse 2007, Roochnik 2003; Rosen 2005). In it, Socrates – along with various Athenians and foreigners – discusses the meaning of justice, examining whether or not the just man is happier than the unjust man. This is done by considering a series of different invented cities culminating in a perfect city called *Kallipolis* (beautiful-city), which is ruled by philosopher-kings. Furthermore, the literary model used by Plato of the Socratic dialogue would, in turn, be adopted by Renaissance utopian authors. The influence of the *Republic* on utopian literature combined, firstly, an emphasis on education as the preferred vehicle to universal good in political and juridical terms; secondly, the role of harmony (extracted from its musical and mathematical connotations) understood in societal terms, where all components and relationships are governed by the desire to do good and achieve perfection. In Thomas More's second book of *Utopia*, this is reflected in a meticulously defined order of his imagined society, from its political institutions all the way to familial relationships. Utopia's mainly agrarian society is planned in all of its manifestations through a system of checks and balances that spanned beyond its political institutions: its capital (Amaurot) is in the middle of the island and all other towns are equidistant from the center. Each city has 6000 households, consisting of between 10 and 16 adults, and elected representatives who in turn chose a prince. The latter can be deposed if suspected of tyranny. To keep a balance in the distribution of population across the territory, people are transferred around the households and towns to keep numbers even, and if the island becomes overpopulated, colonies are created on the mainland. Slavery is part of Utopian society, and every household owns two slaves. The slaves are either volunteers from poor neighboring countries or local criminals. For this reason, illicit activity is almost wholly absent on the island (Bruce 1999). The criminals are tied with chains made of the gold that belongs to the communal wealth of the country. More uses this feature, alongside the absence of private property on the island, to describe the moral shunning of earthly goods by the inhabitants of Utopia.

Imagined Geographies

Renaissance utopias were often set in imaginary landscapes influenced by a multitude of sources, from the Greco-Roman tradition to the Garden of Eden, but also by the many geographic and scientific discoveries of that age of great transformations. Greco-Roman antiquity provided two fundamental models in connection to the imagined geographies within which Renaissance authors would set their literary constructs: firstly, the model of an isolated or island community; secondly, the idea of a perfect age of harmony between nature, mankind, and the divine known as the Golden Age. For the first of these models, Plato is again the foundational source. He describes a self-contained and potentially perfect society in two of his dialogues: in the *Timaieus*, when writing about Atlantis, the original adversary of Athens; and in the *Critias*, where the mythical island (or continent) is presented as an ideal kingdom. The natural descriptions of the mythical island's geography would be mirrored, almost a thousand years later, by More's detailed portrayals of the civilization of Utopia (Plato 2008). The similarities between these two literary constructs (both rich in resources and natural beauty) can be noted in their mythical and divine origins, as well as in the harmonious political institutions that govern them. For this reason, and with the aim of making the existence of Utopia more plausible, More offers lengthy descriptions of the island's imagined geography. The myth of Atlantis, combined with the aspirations and hopes that emerged with the seventeenth-century Scientific Revolution, inspired Francis Bacon's incomplete utopian novel, *New Atlantis* (Bruce 1999; Price 2002). Published posthumously in 1627, this fictional island set in the southern Pacific Ocean was supposed to represent a place in which an ideal social organization had been achieved through the knowledge derived by science. An orderly and divinely-ordained monarchy called the "House of Solomon" rules over the island community of Bensalem. Combining Christian faith with the scientific advancements of his age, Bacon imagined an island community devoid of all tensions. As in More's case, this was meant to spark the curiosity of seventeenth-

century European readers by inserting subtle criticisms of the religious persecution of scientists of that age of revolution and technological advancement. Moreover, science was seen as the one true method to ameliorate human society. Thanks to More and Bacon's examples, the field of British utopian authors of the seventeenth century would be particularly rich (Boesky 1996). Following in this literary tradition, Gabriel Plattes used Plato's model of a dialogue to describe Macaria, an ideal island society that had previously been mentioned in both *Utopia* and *New Atlantis* (Price 2002; Webster 1972). *A Description of the Famous Kingdome of Macaria* was a short pamphlet addressed to the English Parliament. It was published in 1641, originally under the name of Samuel Hartlib. Henry Neville's 1668 *The Isle of Pines* also has an apparently idyllic island setting, but the work does not clearly fit within the boundaries of utopian literature (Bruce 1999). This island community does not present the traits that make Utopia, New Atlantis, and Macaria ideal, and should instead be seen as one of the first examples of literary dystopias (Beach 2000; Rutkowski 2003). Published in 1675, Denis Veiras d'Allais' *The History of the Sevarites or Sevarambi* also follows in the English tradition of a perfect island community set in distant oceans (Veiras 2006; Rosenberg 2001). A critique of the Catholic Church of the seventeenth century, this utopia set in Oceania would be translated into French, German, Dutch, and Italian, influencing the work of Bayle, Kant, and Montesquieu. Like Veiras, Gabriel de Foigny, a former Franciscan friar converted to Protestantism, also set his imaginary land in Australia. Published in 1676, *La Terre Australe connue* (*The Southern Land, Known*) describes an egalitarian society where all institutions (including governments) and religions are absent (Atkinson 2009; Foigny 1993; Marrone 2004).

In addition to the myth of Atlantis, further models that inspired Renaissance writers and artists interested in defining, describing, and depicting states of human perfection were the Greek notion of Golden Age and the Judeo-Christian tradition of the Garden of Eden. The Former, first emerged in the mythology of Hesiod

(eighth century BC), in particular in his didactic poem *Works and Days* (Hesiod 2008). The Golden Age was part of the Myth of Five Ages that defined the stages of human existence through a progressive decline known as "deteriorationism." During the first age, the Golden Age, humans lived harmoniously alongside the gods. Ovid and Virgil transposed this model to the Roman tradition, giving the Golden Age further attributes of perfection, such as justice and peace. In turn, these would be used by Renaissance utopian authors and found in the visual representations of artists such as Lucas Cranach the Elder, Robert Willemsz de Baudous, and Pietro da Cortona (Bloch 1989). Virgil, in particular, started the literary tradition of Arcadia, a mythical Greek region in the Peloponnese where mankind had supposedly lived harmoniously in a perfect state of nature. All of these myths also expressed the hope that the idyllic state had not irrevocably been lost and that it could be regained – an idea that in Renaissance Europe would merge with the model of the Garden of Eden, as well as Christian millennialism and eschatology. Michel de Montaigne described such a state of harmonious relationship between man and nature in his essay *On Cannibals*. The French intellectual combined the ancient Greek tradition with the travel literature that described the peoples of the newly explored regions of Brazil (Montaigne 1993). In turn, Montaigne's essay and new perspective on barbarism and the state of nature is considered to be one of Shakespeare's sources for the 1610 play *The Tempest*. This is particularly evident in the first scene of the second act of the play, where Gonzalo, trusted adviser of the king of Naples, describes a commonwealth set in a state of nature, which also echoes the medieval peasant myth of Cockaingne.

Montaigne's interest in the Americas, More's setting of his imagined island in the Atlantic Ocean, and Bacon's southern Pacific island show a clear dependency on the travel literature, diaries, and journals that described the lands that had recently been explored by European sailors. *Utopia* and *New Atlantis* alike begin with the description of a journey by sea in perilous and previously unexplored regions of the world. This was

followed by a detailed account of the imagined indigenous civilizations that lived there. Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci's journals provided accounts of non-capitalist societies that inspired sixteenth and seventeenth-century utopian works. Furthermore, Renaissance utopian literature was often accompanied by visual aids, such as maps or other illustrations of the imagined worlds. This demonstrates a dependency on early modern advances in cartography and exploration. The early editions of More's *Utopia*, for instance, contained woodcut illustrations of the crescent-shaped island designed by German artist Ambrosius Holbein, as well as a depiction of More's imagined narrator himself, Raphael Hythlodæus. The maps illustrate themes of order and symmetry that More used to describe his perfect society. Similarly, this visual representation of ideal worlds can be seen in the French tradition of the *carte de Tendre* (map of Tendre – an imaginary cartography supposedly leading to true love). Particularly representative of this style is François Tristan l'Hermite's 1659 *Carte du royaume d'Amour*. In it was the illustration of a map containing the directions that led to the path to true love. The fascination with cartography also drew on other traditions, such as the Judeo-Christian model of the Garden of Eden, which also influenced Renaissance imagined worlds, such as in the case of Athanasius Kircher's 1675 *Topographia paradisi terrestris*. Similarly, Heinrich Bünting's 1581 map of the world using a cloverleaf model (*die gantze Welt in ein Kleberblatt*) is a further testimony of Renaissance interest in designing imagined geographies with allegoric and deep symbolic meanings. The fascination with the cartography of imagined worlds, islands, and even simple cities can also be seen in the illustration of Anton Francesco Doni's city, from his 1552 work *I mondi del Doni* (Comparato 2005). His interest in this literary genre had been sparked by Ortensio Lando's Italian translation of More's *Utopia*, which Doni himself had edited and published in 1548. His fictional geography emerges especially in the short dialogue *Il mondo savio e pazzo*. In it an imagined narrator called Savio (the wise man) describes in the form of a dialogue to Pazzo (the

mad man) the best way for mankind to liberate itself from all tribulations and cares. In Doni's star-shaped city pain is entirely absent, as are all of the causes of human suffering, including private property and familial relations. Following Doni's model of a perfectly happy city, but also conditioned by Marsilio Ficino's Neoplatonism, Francesco Patrizi da Cherso's *La città felice* (*The Happy City*) (1553) is a further testimony to how widespread the utopian style had become in the Italian peninsula by the middle of the sixteenth century (Comparato 2005; Saitta 1966). Like Doni, though mostly focused on the balance of power amongst ideal political institutions, Patrizi was concerned with describing a harmonious city-State and may have been influenced by Niccolò Machiavelli (Muccillo 1986). The city-State model had been a successful one in the northern and central regions of the peninsula in the early Renaissance, and for this reason it would often be chosen by Italian authors as the ideal setting for their utopian societies. One such city can be found in Lodovico Zuccolo's *Il Belluzzi, o vero della città felice* (Zuccolo 1944). The influence of utopian literature on Zuccolo's work is especially noticeable in his 1625 *La repubblica d'Evandria*, seen as one of the first works of Italian political/science fiction. Nevertheless, the earliest example of Renaissance utopia set within city walls was the French fifteenth-century *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* (*The Book of the City of Ladies*), by the female author Christine de Pizan. Finished in 1405, this allegorical work presents women as valued participants in society, advocating equal access to education for men and women alike (McCormick 2003).

The seventeenth-century Scientific Revolution would effectively broaden the scope of imaginary geographies, making them reach far beyond the models of idyllic islands or city-State societies, to include the sidereal realm. Probably inspired by Galileo's lunar observations and depictions, Johannes Kepler's *Somnium sive opus posthumum de astronomia lunari* (*The Dream*) uses the stylistic traits of utopian travel to describe the famous astronomer's scientific findings. Published posthumously in 1634 by his son Ludvig Kepler, the work did not define an ideal

political community, but was intended, rather, as a description of the astronomic and environmental conditions found on the Moon (Comparato 2005; Kepler 1984). Still falling within the humanistic tradition of a revival of ancient Greco-Roman knowledge, the *Somnium*'s sources were Lucian of Samosata's *Vera historia* (A True Story) and Plutarch's *De facie in orbe lunae* (Grewell 2001). Though lacking some of the fundamental elements that define Renaissance utopian literature, the *Somnium* would inspire a rich multitude of seventeenth-century novels that fall more clearly within the boundaries of that genre (Nicolson 1962). These include John Wilkin's 1638 *The Discovery of the World in the Moone*, Francis Goldwin's *The Man in the Moon*, also published in 1638 (Poole 2010), and Cyrano de Bergerac's 1657 *L'Autre monde ou les estats et empires de la lune* (*The Other World: Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon*) (Alcover 2004; Comparato 2005). Furthermore, Kepler's *Somnium* has sometimes been seen as having initiated a branch of utopian literature that was not focused on earthbound societies, but on the endless multitude of planets and stars that he himself had contributed to discover: science fiction (Comparato 2005). Published in 1666, *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing-World* by Margaret Cavendish also follows in this tradition. The only known work of utopian literature composed by a woman in the seventeenth century, *The Blazing World* describes a fictional world and satirical society that could be reached by journeying to the North Pole. Cavendish, probably influenced by her contemporary Thomas Hobbes, described an ideal and peaceful society ruled by an absolute and enlightened sovereign (Bowerbank et al. 2000; Khanna 1994).

Theocratic Utopias and the Role of Religion

If Plato provided the political model for later utopian thought, the religious and moral concerns of Renaissance authors would be inspired by different historical sources and events. Though varying in religious affiliation, most Renaissance utopias describe societies imbued with Christian ethics and moral norms. Published only one year before Martin Luther's *Ninety-five Theses*,

Thomas More's *Utopia* was not immune to the religious tensions that had already emerged across Europe in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. The citizens of Utopia professed, for the most part, a form of deism that closely resembled certain aspect of Christianity. Though not originally a Christian nation, Utopia had rapidly taken to this religion after it had been introduced by explorers to the land. Furthermore, religious tolerance amongst all faiths and beliefs was of paramount importance on Utopia. Several religions were practiced on the island, including the worshiping of numerous celestial bodies. Monotheists and ancestor-worshiping also could be found on Utopia, and all were tolerated. Only atheism was rejected, as it was seen to be dangerous for the island itself and its communalistic system. (According to More, the moral implications of believing or not believing in an afterlife would affect the sharing of goods and the communal family system of Utopia.) Religious toleration, almost entirely absent in sixteenth-century Europe, was treasured in Utopia in the form of a universal prayer that all would recite. In More's ideal world, religious tolerance was paired with the possibility of peaceful religious persuasion and conversion. Inspired by Erasmus' irenic views, all forms of religious fanaticism were seen as unlawful on Utopia. In a similar spirit and as a reaction to the widespread violence of war in sixteenth-century Europe, More presented peace as a foundational value of his imagined society. Utopians did not engage in wars, unless in self-defense or to protect other neighboring nations from tyrannical rule. A typically humanist trait seems the glory bestowed to those who would achieve bloodless victories through other forms of persuasion. Nonetheless, when the utopians undertook military campaigns, they made extensive use of mercenaries, bounties, and assassination attempts. When forced to fight themselves, both men and women were permitted to go to war.

The central religious archetype for Renaissance utopias was the Garden of Eden as described in the Book of Genesis. The initial harmony between creation and Creator provided a model, not only for theocratic utopias, but for all idyllic descriptions and imagined geographies.

Utopian authors were also influenced by the spiritual crisis of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, namely the Protestant and Catholic Reformations and the events leading up to them, including heterodox movements that did not fall within the boundaries of institutionalized churches. Certain aspects of Renaissance utopias, therefore, derived not from the humanist rediscovery of Greco-Roman philosophic and political sources, but from medieval and early modern Christian traditions. On the one hand, these included the monastic and communalist life embodied by the early Benedictine order, followed by Dominicans and Franciscans of the thirteenth century. On the other hand, some were inspired by the fifteenth-century movements to reform the church in Bohemia and Moravia, which were often condemned as heretical. Furthermore, the Judeo-Christian ideas of the covenant between God and his elect people, as well as millennialist and chiliastic aspirations were sometimes adopted in utopian literature. These could also be found at the center of isolated religious communities that aspired to live perfect Christian lives on Earth. In their quest to create a-political, separate, and peaceful Christian communities, the Taborites and the Moravian Brethren sought to implement practices described in utopian works. Thus, the theocratic utopias of sixteenth-century groups such as the Swiss Brethren, Hutterites, and Mennonites became historicized (Stayer 2002): not imagined potential futures, but a concrete present where individuals worked toward the construction of a perfect Christian community. Persecuted by Catholics and Protestants alike, Anabaptists often found refuge in isolation and were guided by principles of equality and nonviolence. Emerging from similar roots the brief interlude of the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster was an experiment that called upon the construction of a New Jerusalem on Earth (Driedger 2016). Between 1534 and 1535 Anabaptists from the German states and the Dutch provinces, under the leadership of Jan van Leiden and initial spiritual guidance of Jan Matthys, forcefully expelled all Catholics and Lutherans from the Westphalian city and enforced Biblical law. Though short-lived, this experiment, often described in dystopian terms, was a representation

of influential aspirations of the time and can be seen as a symptom and symbol of a form of utopian theology centered on the idea of a celestial city built on Earth. New Jerusalem, in this context, was a model of divine perfection that could elevate humanity from its fallen state, an idea that originated from the book of Revelation 21:2. Just as the early-modern utopian *urbs*, the city described by the Apostle John was one rich in religious symbolism whose divine leader was none other than Jesus himself.

Christian utopias, as well as monasticism, especially in the early Benedictine order, possessed many of the qualities usually ascribed to utopias: separation from society, self-sufficiency, equality amongst a perfect community of virtuous believers. Nonetheless, they lacked entirely the elements of a fantastical and marvelous imagined world usually found in the literary exercises of Renaissance and Enlightenment utopian authors. Clear Lutheran elements and aspirations can be found in *Wolfaria*, the imaginary land described in the tenth and eleventh chapters of Johann Eberlin von Günzburg's 1521 *Fifteen Confederates* (Dipple 2014; Groag Bell 1967). The "Statutes of Wolfaria" express in a rigorous way the normative role of the utopian legislator (Comparato 2005), combining these traits with the tangible grievances of German peasants, as well as with Lutheran teachings. Like many Renaissance utopias, *Wolfaria* was represented as a pastoral and rural society where all contributed to the needs of the community through agricultural work. Like More, but clearly influenced by peasant articles of the 1520s, Eberlin was concerned with the nefarious consequences of an economic system entirely based on private property. Similarly, the model set by *Utopia* is evident in the emphasis put on education for both boys and girls, peace, and religious tolerance for Jews and heretics. The criticism of the practice of selling indulgences and of belief in their theological efficacy, as well as the emphasis on a rigid morality make *Wolfaria* a more typically Lutheran utopia. It represents one of the culminating cases of the so-called imaginative world of the Reformation (Matheson 2001), consisting of a widespread utopianism that could be found

in the context of sixteenth century German-speaking lands. Another example of utopian thought in the context of Reformation Germany was Johannes Valentinus Andreae's *Christianopolis* or *Reipublicae Christianopolitanae description*, published in 1619 (Dickson 1996). Skirting the boundaries of Lutheran orthodoxy, the German theologian claimed authorship of the *Chymische Hochzeit* (*Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*), a pivotal work within the esoteric Rosicrucian tradition. Moreover, in central Europe, utopian thought became integrated with popular reform movements, most obviously the German Peasants' War of 1525. This is evident in peasant demands and articles such as the *Twelve Articles of Memmingen* and Thomas Müntzer's *Eleven Articles of Mühlhausen*. More comprehensive works coming out of the Peasants' War have a utopian flavor; some of these include Friedrich Weygandt's *Draft of Imperial Reform* and the *Tiroler Landesordnung*, supposedly written by Michael Gaismair. The latter, penned in the final stages of the Peasants' War in Tyrol, describes an ideal and egalitarian society set in the pastoral context of the Alps (Politi 1995). Similar traits can be seen in *Von der neuen Wandlung eynes christlichen Lebens* (*A New Transformation of the Christian Life*, 1527), thought to have been written by Hans Hergot. Like the case of *Wolfaria*, Hergot's ideal Christian society envisioned the elimination of all monastic orders and was centered on millenarian expectations (Manuel et al. 1979). In 1524, the Saxon Reformer Thomas Müntzer actively attempted to create a new covenant between God and the elect in Allstedt. According to his plan, the small Thuringian town would be rebuilt as a utopian "Christian Nazareth," paving the way for a new and universal society were "omnia sunt communia" (Martinuzzi 2017 22). Similarly, radical economic stances based on a Christian understanding of society emerged more than a century later in the works of Gerrard Winstanley, especially in his 1652 *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*. In this instance, the theocratic utopia crossed the boundary into political activism, suggesting that a Christian society

could only be found in a state where property and hierarchy were absent (Bradstock 1997).

The most influential early modern theocratic utopia emerged from an entirely different tradition. Tommaso Campanella's 1623 *Civitas Solis* (*The City of the Sun*) calls for a pope-like supreme leader to rule over his imagined theocratic city. Campanella, a Dominican friar, theologian, philosopher, and astrologer worked on his utopian project after being imprisoned for rebellion and heresy in Naples. Next to traditional traits of utopian literature – such as the dependency on Plato's *Republic*, a detailed description of a peaceful urban society where all goods, women, and children were held in common – the Calabrese friar included prophetic visions and aspirations. Through the use of a complex net of astrological language and calculations, Campanella prognosticated that the Spanish crown, in alliance with the Papacy, was to be the instrument of the divine will on earth. Influenced by the conversion to Catholicism of the indigenous populations of the Americas, Campanella stressed how God's plan was for true faith to triumph across the world. Nonetheless, this work does not fall precisely within the boundaries of Catholic Counter-Reformation theology but reflects the religious and cultural tensions present in seventeenth-century Europe. The religious beliefs of the Campanella's imagined citizenry, even though they include fundamental principles of Christianity (such as the immortality of the soul and divine providence) form a natural religion that establish a sort of osmosis between the city itself and the Solar system. The *Civitas Solis*, whose name derived from *Sol* (Sun) – the high priest and prince who rules over the city – was thus a symbolic reflection of the religious aspirations and scientific discoveries of the time. As in many other utopias, education plays a pivotal role in Campanella's model society. By imagining a form of architecture of knowledge, he describes an *ante-litteram* open-access encyclopedia inscribed on the city's seven circles of defensive walls: first circle displays the laws of mathematics; the second, those of metallurgy, geography, and meteorology; the third and fourth, those of natural history, with illustrations of flora and fauna; the mechanical

arts appear on the fifth; history, war, and philosophy on the sixth; finally, religion and law on the innermost wall (Campanella 1981). Further ideal cities set within this religious tradition can be found in the earlier model presented by Ludovico Agostini in his dialogues on the *Infinito* (Comparato 2005, 77). Written after 1582, these dialogues present an idealized community set within a self-sufficient, closed, and heavily regulated urban context. The citizens of this Counter-Reformation utopia are forced to live a laborious, austere, frugal life where all games and dancing are prohibited. Education is functional to the program of social and moral regulation that aims at creating a community imbued with Christian virtues. Inspired by the model of monastic life, but freed from the rules on celibacy, was the imaginary abbey of Thélème described by François Rabelais in his 1532 novel *La Vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel*. Next to other allusions to utopian literature, including a visit to Amaurot (the capital city of More's Utopia), Rabelais, a former Benedictine and Franciscan monk, described a model of a perfect community whose motto was: *Fay ce que voudras*. Turning the monastic model upside down, he denied any positive connotation to perpetual isolation and celibacy: all the citizens of Thélème were free to come and go as they pleased, and there were no laws or rules in this atypical abbey where men and women could marry (Rabelais 2018).

Innovative and Original Aspects

A typical trait of its humanistic origins is the literary innovations found in Renaissance utopias. A common element in this genre is the use of linguistic and literary devices to disguise the author's true identity and ideas, such as the use of the Socratic dialogue form. Fearing religious or political persecution, authors frequently published their works under pseudonyms, circulated their works as anonymous manuscripts, or devised literary constructs that could mask their more controversial and radical ideals. Thomas More, for instance, through the dialogue form used the narrating figure of Raphael Hythlodæus

(an invented explorer on Amerigo Vespucci's expeditions to the Americas) to disguise his ideas and to describe the ills of early sixteenth-century European society. This model allowed More not to claim ownership of ideas that could be considered dangerous. Raphael himself would define his political views as radical in connection to many practices and policies. These included a critical view of the bellicose tendencies of many European crowns, excessively violent punishments for crimes, widespread religious persecution, and the transformation of the agricultural landscape (namely the system of enclosing common land for sheep farming in England). In *Utopia*'s first book, More described the encounter with the traveler to whom he had been introduced while visiting the city of Antwerp. To further the plausibility of the true existence of the island of Utopia and of Hythlodæus himself, as described in the second book, More inserts letters between himself, Peter Gilles (town clerk of Antwerp), and Hieronymus van Busleyden (counsellor to Charles V) – both of them genuine historical figures. Raphael Hythlodæus becomes the medium through which More expresses his radical program of social reform, one that could hardly find a welcoming ear at the English court. *Utopia* followed the medieval and humanist tradition of how best to counsel princes. Similarly, Johannes Eberlin von Günzburg proposed a systematic way to educate a Lutheran prince in his 1521 *Furschlag* (Baldini 2010). Like More, when describing his fantastic kingdom of *Wolfaria* (from the term *Wholfahrt* meaning "all is well") Eberlin used literary constructs that could protect him from censorship or persecution. The *Fifteen Confederates* were, in fact, presented as a collection of pamphlets supposedly written by a group of laymen, and only in a later work would Eberlin admit authorship. The work also addresses the religious, social, and economic issues that the Southern German lands faced in the dawning years of the Reformation. The tenth and eleventh *Bundsgenossen* (confederates) contain respectively the *New statutes concerning reform of the spiritual estate which Psitacus brought from the land of Wolfaria*, and *A new ordinance concerning the secular estate written in Wolfaria*,

as described by Psitacus. Both ordinances of Eberlin's ideal secular and spiritual estates were described by two confederates, or commoners, who, in turn, had heard about Wolfaria from a parrot named Psitacus (itself the Greek term for parrot). On the one hand, the more controversial aspects of this work were the abolition of all religious orders and a clear Lutheran attack on indulgences. Worried about religious persecution, Eberlin used this triple layered precaution that included the anonymous circulation of his work, the use of imaginary narrating figures, as well as talking animals. On the other hand, the elements of social radicalism (such as his egalitarianism and the idea of an education open to all) might have simply been seen as the philosophic speculation of a humanist, and might not have encountered as much resistance had it not appeared only a few years before the 1525 German Peasants' War. The persecution of religious nonconformists and of those exploring the new worlds of science reached an apex when Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in Rome in 1600. For this reason, many seventeenth-century scientific works would be circulated in manuscript or published anonymously. For instance, Johannes Kepler never published the utopian work he had first composed around 1610. The *Somnium* was only published posthumously in 1634 by his son. Kepler incorporated religious arguments and reasoning, guided by the belief that God had created the universe according to an intelligible plan that was accessible through the laws of science; he wished to provide a form of celestial physics that aimed at completing Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and treatise *On the Heavens*. Although he made use of strong autobiographical references, Kepler also used an invented narrating figure, a young Danish traveler called Doracotus, to create an extra layer of separation between this work and himself. The *Somnium* described that Doracotus had learned astronomy from none other than Kepler's own teacher Tycho Brahe and had come into contact with the lunar spirits only thanks to the help of his witch-mother Libussa (Kepler's own mother had been accused and tried for witchcraft twice in 1615 and 1620). Despite its utopian connotations, Kepler's aim was not that of promoting an ideal

political system or perfect society. Rather, by following a typically humanist tradition, he was interested in inserting his scientific findings within a compelling literary context. Science also played a fundamental role in forging Francis Bacon's utopian island community of *New Atlantis*. Like the *Somnium*, *New Atlantis* was only published posthumously in 1626 and appeared as a short insertion in a larger work on natural history, the *Sylva sylvarum*. In Bacon's imagined island, the enlightened political elite of Bensalem corresponded to deeply knowledgeable scholars that used science for the general advancement of society. Like the *Somnium*, Francis Goldwin's *The Man on the Moon* was also published posthumously in 1638. It described a lunar travel and was greatly influenced by Galileo Galilei's *Siderius numncius*. Set in the Elizabethan age, an age of religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics, *The Man on the Moon* described the journeys of a Catholic Spaniard, narrator of this utopian work, that scholars have taken to signify Goldwin's opposition to the censorship of Catholic works in England at the time. A more notorious English utopia that faced political censorship was James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (Harrington 2008). Published during the years of Oliver Cromwell's republican rule, Harrington's work bridged traditional Renaissance utopias with Enlightenment works of imaginary worlds and times, providing the model for eighteenth-century utopian practices, and far beyond. Because of its call for a balanced government, the work was initially censored by the Lord Protector. It was eventually published in 1656 with a dedication to Cromwell himself. Because he favored the political and economic system of a democratic republic, Harrington found enthusiastic readers amongst American republicans and French revolutionaries. From the mid-seventeenth century, utopian literature faced increasing hostility from absolute rulers that did not tolerate the radical political aspirations of its authors. For instance, the novel *Les Aventures de Télémaque* was published anonymously in 1699 as an attack on the French crown. The author of this utopian work has been identified as François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon. Archbishop of

Cambrai (Fénelon 1994, 2017), Fénelon had been banished to his diocese by Louis XIV for religious and political reasons. Recounting the travels of Telemachus, son of Ulysses, the novel was recognized at the time of its publication as a critique to the sovereign's despotic rule. *Les Aventures de Télémaque* had a long-lasting influence on enlightenment and revolutionary figures such as Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Thomas Jefferson because it denounced war, luxury, and selfishness, elevating the brotherhood of mankind and altruism as supreme values.

Impact and Legacy

The island of Utopia paved the way for an *antelitteram* communalist economic model that ultimately would inspire eighteenth- and nineteenth-century utopian socialist thinkers, such as Henri Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen (Robertson 2019). Utopian socialism, for the most part, transferred to the realm of reality elements that had merely been theorized within the tradition of Renaissance and early-Enlightenment utopian literature. For this reason, next to the ideals of the French Revolution, utopian socialists often advocated communal or limited forms of private property, emphasized the importance of education, opposed war and violence, and actively promoted the creation of isolated and self-sufficient communities. More's model did not contemplate any form of private property describing a mainly rural and self-sufficient society. All goods were held in common in Utopia and distributed according to necessity; even homes were subject to rotation amongst citizens every 10-year period: "Thus I am wholly convinced that unless private property is entirely abolished, there can be no fair or just distribution of goods, nor can mankind be happily governed. As long as private property remains, by far the largest and best part of mankind will be oppressed by a heavy and inescapable burden of poverty and anxieties" (More 2002 39). Similarly, Eberlin's *Wolfaria* (influenced by the peasants' requests of his time) was a rural society, where the exercise of economic activity was strictly regulated. Though

set in an urban context, Campanella's *Civitas Solis* also imagines a society free from private property, where everyone is dressed in white (More also talks of the simplicity of the uniform-like clothing that all members of society wore) and eats in communal refectories. More's influence on later utopian systems can also be seen in the emphasis placed on the role of education. Similarly, Eberlin would stress the importance for an equal access to education for all from a young age. Learning from this tradition through the mediation of a second wave of utopian literature rampant in the Enlightenment, Charles Fourier's *Phalanstère* would transpose More's pastoral and egalitarian ideals to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France and beyond. Fourier rejected the production models of the Industrial Revolution in favor of a society where wealth was held in common and education for all was seen as fundamental value. Conversely, Robert Owen, a British textile manufacturer and social reformer, integrated the utopian tradition with the new means of production recently emerged, thanks to the process of industrialization. Owen did so by actively participating in the British political life to improve the working conditions in factories and openly trying to limit and abolish child labor. Owen's utopian ideology of social reform was reflected in his political activism and in the creation of experimental communities, such as New Harmony in Indiana. These (often short-lived) communities were meant to be rural and self-sufficient, yet strongly dependent on mechanized work. Both Fourier and Owen's models would be used to create religious and secular utopian communities in the United States, such as Utopia in Ohio and the North American Phalanx in New Jersey.

Cross-References

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Vacuum in Renaissance Science

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Abstract

As a phenomenon, the vacuum has been associated with metaphysical, theological, and physical issues since antiquity. Aristotle denied the existence of vacuums in nature, since any vacuum would render the movement of bodies impossible. In the seventeenth century, the vacuum experiments conducted by Torricelli, Pascal, Mersenne, Boyle, Hooke, and Huygens became a paradigm of new contemporary physics.

Synonyms

Void

Innovative and Original Aspects

Both the historical and the current physical problems associated with a vacuum can be illustrated by a simple experiment: One puts a burning tea light on a saucer and places a glass upside-down over the tea light. As the tea light is burning, the

saucer is filled with a small amount of water. Soon, the burning flame will die, and the water will be sucked into the glass. This experiment poses two central questions: (1) What keeps the water column in place? And, (2) what is the nature of the space above the water column? Is it air-evacuated or filled with a “subtle fluid”? Nowadays we know that the flame consumes the oxygen inside the glass, thus generating a rapidly cooling gas which causes the pressure inside the glass to drop. Hence the water appears to be sucked into the vessel by a vacuum. In fact, the water is, however, forced into the glass by the higher-pressure air on the outside.

Seventeenth-century vacuum experiments are regarded as a paradigm of new physics: In a 1643 experiment very similar to the one outlined above, Galileo’s student Torricelli generated a vacuum by means of a barometer, using mercury instead of water. In 1646, Marin Mersenne and Blaise Pascal successfully reproduced Torricelli’s experiments, presented them to the public, and promptly published the results in 1647. Especially Pascal’s experiment on the Puy de Dôme volcano in the low French mountain ranges was to become famous, demonstrating that the height of the mercury column depended on the weight of the air (Wootton 2015; Caverni 1891).

This indicated important differences compared to sixteenth-century vacuum experiments: It had, in fact, been argued since Heron of Alexandria (first century A.D.) that extracting air from a tightly closed vessel could – at least

artificially – create a vacuum. However, the Aristotelians’ (Toletus, De Soto) and the anti-Aristotelians’ (Telesio, Patrizi) debate for and against the creation of a vacuum was merely concerned with carrying out thought experiments and repeating the *experimenta* known from antiquity and the Middle Ages. It therefore remained unobserved that to generate a vacuum, ice expands rather than contracts in a closed vessel, the latter having been falsely claimed by both parties (Schmitt 1967).

Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, the water’s upward movement was, moreover, substantiated by theological and metaphysical arguments. Since, according to Aristotle, water and air merely have relative weights, it was conceivable that water tends to move downward with regard to its species, while it tends to move upward with regard to its genus. Paolo Veneto considered the latter the case when the superordinate aim of nature is to avoid a vacuum. According to this theory and following the teleology of nature’s “principle of subordination,” the “physical nature” is therefore subordinate to “universal nature” (Manzo 2013; Grant 1981).

The discussion of the vacuum in later centuries was, in fact, initiated because of Aristotle (*Phys.*, 4.8) who denied the existence of any kind of vacuum in nature for reasons relating to his theory of motion; the most important being that, in principle, a vacuum would render the movement of bodies impossible (Sorabji 1988). Galileo, on the other hand, did, indeed, assume the existence of movement within a vacuum by hypothesizing – and thus establishing the law of falling bodies – that in a vacuum all bodies fall at the same speed, irrespective of *impedimenti* (i.e., the type of matter, weight, friction, or air resistance) (Palmieri 2005).

The purpose of constructing the air pump in the 1660s was, in principle, to test Torricelli’s experiments. While Boyle and Hooke removed the air around the water column, thus causing the column to drop (which supported the vacuumists’ argument), Huygens’ water column remained in “anomalous suspension,” which Boyle and Hooke attributed to the fact that the air remained in the vessel (Shapin and Schaffer 2011). Huygens’

explanation for Boyle’s experiment, on the other hand, was the presence of air in the water column. As it was pressed out of the water, forming bubbles, the air accumulated in the upper space of the vessel and pushed the water down (an argument in favor of the plenists). Ultimately, the reproduction of these experiments with present-day vacuum pumps shows that Huygens’ “anomalous suspension” is to be explained by the fact that his water column consisted of *airless water* (i.e., that the air had been removed from the water prior to the experiment) and that the generated water vapor alone did not suffice to push down the water (Nauenberg 2015).

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Vade mecum

► [Commonplace Book](#)

Vadianus, Joachim

Born: November 29, 1484, St Gallen, Switzerland

Died: April 6, 1551, St Gallen, Switzerland

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Abstract

Joachim Vadianus (von Watt) was a significant representative of Viennese humanism and Lutheran reformer of St Gallen. His writings fall roughly into two groups: literary and scientific works from Vienna, written in Latin for the university and the court; and Reformation writings from St Gallen, mostly in German.

Biography

In 1501/1502, Vadianus enrolled at the University of Vienna, where he studied with Conrad Celtis. After graduating as BA (1504), he worked as a schoolmaster at Villach and traveled to Italy and St Gallen, before returning to the University of Vienna, where he received his MA (1508), taught Latin literature, poetics, and geography; attended classes in astronomy and medicine, and served in various administrative posts, including vice-chancellor and rector of the university. He maintained a close association with Celtis and his circle, including Cuspinianus and Tannstetter (his correspondence, edited by Arbenz 1890–1913, attests to his wide circle of associates). Among Vadianus' students was Philipp Gundelius, later secretary to Matthäus Lang and counsellor to Ferdinand I von Habsburg. In 1514, Vadianus received the poet's laurel crown from Maximilian I. In 1517, he was awarded his MD.

During his time in Vienna, Vadianus wrote and published religious poetry, satires against scholasticism, poems commending the works of others, humanistic homilies, orations given at princely

diets, and panegyrics in honor of Friedrich III, Maximilian I, Sigismund I of Poland, and Vladislav of Bohemia. His lectures on Pomponius Mela formed the basis of a published commentary (1518) containing excurses on various topics. In 1515, he published his correspondence with Rudolf Agricola the Younger on the discoveries of recent explorers. While at Vienna, he also edited several classical, medieval, and humanistic texts (full details in Schirrmeister 2013).

Vadianus' most significant early work is a treatise on poetics (published 1518), based on lectures given in 1513/1514. Going beyond mere rules of versification, he discusses the origins (mythological, historical, and theological) and dignity of poetry, drawing on contemporary Italian humanists and philosophers such as Ficino. He treats matters such as inspiration, talent, and *numerus* (number, rhythm, and meter) and assesses several ancient and contemporary authors. For Vadianus, poetry presupposes broad and deep knowledge, and encompasses all branches of human learning (text, translation and commentary in Vadianus 1973–1977).

In 1518, Vadianus was appointed as city physician of St Gallen (see Näf 1944–1957 for Vadianus' activity at St. Gallen). Soon afterward, he contributed to a collective panegyric on Switzerland with Heinrich Glareanus and Oswald Myconius and published a work on the plague. As his Vienna circle dispersed, Vadianus maintained ever fewer of his old contacts (see Arbenz 1890–1913). Friends, including Zwingli, tried to attract Vadianus to Zurich, but his election to the town council of St Gallen in 1521 bound him even more closely to his native city. Vadianus was elected mayor of St Gallen in 1526, and many times subsequently. Beside his political offices, he practiced medicine until his death but failed to combine both functions in reforming the municipal health service. Although Paracelsus practiced medicine at St Gallen from 1531 to 1533 and dedicated his *Opus paramirum* to Vadianus, there is little evidence of much contact between them.

Vadianus was greatly influenced by Luther, and he worked to introduce Lutheranism to St Gallen while mediating politically and

theologically with Zwinglian theologians. Vadianus wrote against Anabaptism, despite being married to the sister of the Anabaptist leader Konrad Grebel, and he refuted the Spiritualist Caspar Schwenkfeld's conflation of the two natures of Christ. In 1536, he wrote a work on the eucharist, a doctrine that divided Catholics, Lutherans, and Zwinglians. Among his unpublished works are a treatise on prayer, writings on monasticism, and an examination of the doctrine of Christ's descent to hell as expounded by the Christian creeds, which draws on Valla, Pico, and Erasmus.

Many of Vadianus' writings from St Gallen represent a northern civic humanism, and they build upon his earlier interest in history and geography. He used the library of the abbey of St Gallen, especially for his historical works, and saved some of its oldest documents during a Protestant attack in 1531. He also arranged for other evangelical scholars to use the library, though this sometimes led to disputes with the abbot. In 1534, he published a work on geography, including a description of the places described in the New Testament. This work was based on lectures on the Acts of the Apostles which he had delivered at St Gallen. Among his later unpublished writings are chronicles of the monastery and city of St Gallen, and fragments of a history of the fall of the Roman Empire, the rise of the Church, and the Frankish Kingdom.

Most of Vadianus' richly annotated books are still preserved in St Gallen, though some volumes were stolen by Melchior Goldast and ended up either in the University Library in Bremen or the Vatican Library. The reception of Vadianus's works in Catholic countries was hindered by the fact that they were placed on the Index.

Cross-References

► [Celtis, Konrad](#)

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Valdés, Juan de

Born: 1509

Died: 1541

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Abstract

The Spanish humanist Juan de Valdés made a significant contribution to sixteenth-century thought in the two areas of linguistics and theology. Raised in a family of converso descent, he studied at the University of Alcalá de Henares, and he spent the last decade of his life in Italy, where he wrote most of his works. His writings, with one exception, remained unpublished in his lifetime, but they circulated widely in manuscript during the sixteenth century and exercised a hidden but notable influence on his contemporaries in Italy, Spain, and Northern Europe.

Biography

Biographical information on Valdés is patchy, fuzzy, and, to some extent, conjectural. There is no consensus on the year of his birth; the dates that have been considered by scholars range from 1490 to 1510. The year of his death is not known for certain either (it ranges from 1540 to

1542, although there is a near-consensus on 1541). Even the date of composition of the *Diálogo de la lengua* is not known with certainty (it has been placed between 1533 and 1536, even though the vast majority of scholars agree on 1535). Other types of blurred information about Valdés include the following: the year in which he left Spain; his early stay in Rome and Naples; if he never again set foot on Spanish soil for the rest of his life, although recent research has had evidence to the contrary (Crews 2008; Anipa 2014); and the precise nature of posts that he held during his residence in Naples (recent archival evidence has shown that he worked, among other things, as a secret agent for Charles V (Crews 2008). Uncertainties persist about the origins of the Valdés family that settled in Cuenca, in the Middle Ages; they are believed to have come from either Asturias or Leon, but their roots have also been traced to twelfth-century England, from where they were constrained to migrate, due to nasty feuds in the royal circles where they belonged (Calvo Pérez 1991). And whether Juan was a twin of his brother Alfonso remains uncertain (scholars' views range from near-certainty to strong doubts). Thus, the biography of Valdés remains an unfinished business.

The primary biographical information on Valdés that can be said to be known for certain includes the following: Juan was born in Cuenca to Hernando de Valdés and María de la Barrera (both from noble family backgrounds); he had ten siblings – six males and four females – (Crews 2008) (earlier Renaissance scholarship had reported only four siblings); he had a converso ancestry, particularly on his maternal side but also on his paternal grandmother's side; he spent his youth in the service of the Marquis of Villena and was tutored by Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz; he studied at the University of Alcalá de Henares under famous humanists, such as Juan de Vergara, and corresponded with Erasmus of Rotterdam. We also know that, in Rome, Juan was a chamberlain to Pope Clement VII and served three cardinals, roughly between 1531 and 1534, before settling in Naples, where his teachings attracted a distinguished group of aristocrats, theologians, and

humanists. There he composed most of his major works. He died in 1541.

Writing on Language (K. Anipa)

Presenting the writing of Juan de Valdés (henceforth “Valdés”) on language is not a straightforward affair. First, almost all of his writings were on religious themes, with the only one on language being the *Diálogo de la lengua* (henceforth “the *Diálogo*”), and second, from the time of its first publication (Mayans y Siscar 1737), the status, subject matter, and purpose of the *Diálogo* became debatable, whereby some scholars believed that it was literature-cum-literary critique, some that it was linguistics, others that it was both, others that it was neither (but rather only a set of trivial scribbles not of much intellectual significance), and others that it was a manual on the Castilian language, but essentially meant to help Valdés's Italian followers understand his religious teachings better (Usoz y Río 1860; Perry 1927; Montesinos 1928; Lapesa 1940; Barbolani 1967; Lope Blanch 1984). Over the past couple of decades, however, those uncertainties and undeclared schools of thought surrounding Valdés's writing on language have changed substantially. It has gradually emerged that the *Diálogo* was, essentially, a sociolinguistic treatise steeped in the ideology of language and nation and efforts at language standardization, aimed at developing and codifying a national language for the Spanish Empire; consequently, the work dealt with a number of topics within macro-sociolinguistics, micro-sociolinguistics, stylistics, and, to a much lesser extent, literary criticism. From the late twentieth century, it has become almost inconceivable, in Valdesian scholarship, to understand and interpret the *Diálogo* outside of these key dimensions.

Macro-sociolinguistics

The Renaissance linguistic debate that emerged in fifteenth-century Italy did not take long to spread to other nascent States in Western Europe. An

important aspect of that humanistic fervor was that of the quest for the origins of nonclassical languages. In Spain, the earliest thoughts on the subject were those of Alonso Fernández de Madrigal, in the first half of the fifteenth century, and Antonio de Nebrija (the father of Spanish humanism), toward the end of the century, although those early thoughts were quite sketchy in their nature and scope. Valdés's contribution, in contrast, was much more elaborate, as he carefully thought through the issue, including how his own knowledge of the subject had had to be modified, with time. And, in spite of drawing largely the same conclusion as his predecessors (that Castilian was primarily a deformed version of Latin), Valdés made a crucial difference in his consideration of the linguistic picture of Spain by incorporating into his thought the linguistic picture of the Iberian Peninsula, prior to the Roman invasion and introduction of Latin; in other words, he adopted a more holistic approach, as he worked through the diachrony of what eventually became Castilian.

Later in the sixteenth century, the debate was rekindled and significantly expanded by Florián de Ocampo and Alejo Venegas del Busto. With time, two main schools of thought developed: first, the Primitive Castilian Theory (propounded by Gregorio López Madera, which attracted many adherents, including Luis de Cueva, Francisco Bermudez de Pedraza, Tamayo de Vargas, Bartolomé Ximénez Patón, and Gonzalo Correas). Madera rejected the theory of deformed Latin as a viable explanation for the origins of the Castilian language. He firmly believed that Castilian existed in primitive forms right from the time of the first human settlements of the Iberian Peninsula, traced to Tubal (fifth son of Japhet, son of Noah). Madera based his theory on archaeological finds (relics, inscriptions, and manuscripts on parchment, partly written in Castilian) from the Monte Santo of Granada; the writings were attributed to Saint Cecil, disciple of Saint James, patron saint of Spain. Later, a fully-fledged Deformed Latin Theory (led by Bernardo de Aldrete and his collaborators) was developed, in order to counteract the Primitive Castilian one. As the sixteenth century wore on, an offshoot of Madera's school, the Euskadi Theory (advanced

by Lucio Marineo Sículo and such followers as Fray Domingo Valtanas, Esteban Garibay, and Andrés Poça), entered the fray; their argumentation was that there was, indeed, a primitive Castilian, but that it was Euskera. The heated debate lasted decades (Bahner 1966). Eventually, it was the Deformed Latin Theory that won the day. The significant merit of Valdés's treatment of the subject is the fact that he reflected on the bulk of the above aspects, including the Euskadi Theory, several decades prior to their fullest configuration.

Multilingualism, both as a universal sociolinguistic reality of every society (Hudson 1996) and as specifically applied to Spain, was a subject of interest to Valdés. He identified five languages in use in Spain – Castilian, Catalan, Valencian, Portuguese, and Vizcayan – before proceeding to explain a set of theories, based on geopolitics, linguistic borrowing, and variability caused by everyday language usage, all of which bring about multilingualism in States. It is to be noted that Valdés's inclusion of Portuguese among the languages used in Spain may not have had any imperial motives (Portugal having been a separate polity since late eleventh century), but that it had more to do with the fact that he viewed the geographical area as a single region in the form of the Iberian Peninsula. The later Iberian Union (1580–1640) can be understood as exemplifying that viewpoint; likewise, Valdés's assertion that typical Castilian words used among the nobility could be found in the language of the king of Portugal (Anipa 2014) must be a testimony to that conceptualization.

Valdés's thoughts on multilingualism are very much in line with modern sociolinguistic insights; in that discussion, he transcended linguistic scholarship of his time by covering what modern sociolinguists characterize as “a-type” and “b-type” levels of multilingualism (Coupland and Jaworski 2009), as well as “broad diglossia” (Fasold 1984). He, then, shifted his discussion to the specifics of the languages of his State, characterizing their crosslinguistic features as follows: Vizcayan, which he duly identified as an isolate, had lexical borrowings from Latin, but subjected them to such severe phonological nativization that they had become unrecognizable; Catalan had loaned

words from Latin, French, Castilian, and Italian; Valencian was close to Catalan, except for its phonology, but was still closer to Castilian; Portuguese had borrowed from Castilian much more than any other language and, as a result, was closest to it, apart from grapho-phonological features; Castilian was spoken even in Aragon and Navarre, and the linguistic and historico-geopolitical circumstances of the two kingdoms were comparable to those of Andalusia and Murcia.

With respect to crosslinguistic communication and the task of meaning transfer from one language to another, Valdés discussed serious difficulties involved in translation. Notwithstanding his concentration on the national language ideology and well in contrast to Charles V's famous proclamation, in Rome, of Castilian as a superior language, Valdés argued for equality of languages, declaring that all natural languages had the same natural capacity; his linguistic philosophy in that respect can be acknowledged as impressive, when we take into account the fact that the stance that he adopted is something that even modern professional linguists still struggle to achieve, as epitomized, for instance, by the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and its reverberations, during the twentieth century. In the climate in which Valdés operated, his recognition that linguistic idiosyncrasies did not imply superiority or inferiority, or lack of expressivity, showed his independence of thought; he was very much ahead of knowledge of sociolinguistic reality.

Moreover, the translation difficulties that he outlined were no different from those that modern translation theorists and practitioners have discussed and grappled with for generations. Moving on from discussing the issue at a generic level in his mother tongue, Valdés noted that, due to the tricky nature of translation, he was unable to assess works translated from other languages rather than written originally in Castilian. That was the thought of a fairly objective individual, who did not shy away from admitting to his doubts, uncertainties, and weaknesses, in the face of linguistic pluralism as a phenomenon.

In every emerging State in Early Modern Europe, the nurturing of a national language was

an important one to the ruling elite and intellectuals. In the case of Spain, the main efforts on that front are credited to Antonio de Nebrija, particularly his pioneering grammar of Castilian (1492) ("I wanted to lay the foundation stone" were Nebrija's explicit words). Valdés was among those who took over the baton, as he became a key player in the effort to engineer a standardized Castilian for the Spanish Empire. In the context of imperial ambitions and geopolitical realities of the early sixteenth century, the idea that Valdés's *Diálogo* must have been officially commissioned (Crews 2008) is not far-fetched.

In terms of the technicalities of the language standardization process itself, it has been explained that of the four key stages – Selection, Codification, Elaboration of Functions/Intellectualization, and Enforcement/Acceptance (Garvin and Mathiot 1953; Haugen 1966, 1983) – Castilian had already, by the fifteenth century, fully achieved Selection and Enforcement/Acceptance, as well as a degree of elaboration (initiated by King Alfonso X The Learned, in the thirteenth century), more than any emerging Western European State at the time (Anipa 2012b). Thus, Valdés's work on language represented an essential complement to that of Nebrija (captured in the latter's (1989, 1492) oft-quoted words "language and empire always went hand in hand"). Evidence that the stages of selection and enforcement had been accomplished by Valdés's time can be confirmed by his own statement to that effect (Anipa 2014, pp. 51–52). Valdés's aim, therefore, was to underpin Nebrija's prescriptive effort with a *proscriptive* one (the well-known display of hatred by Valdés toward Nebrija and his works, due to regional rivalry, should be understood to be a relatively superficial one). In effect, "[n]o Spanish humanist would work harder to make Nebrija's dream of a Spanish imperial language a reality than Juan de Valdés" (Crews 2008, p. 29). Valdés took the process to the level of "ironing out variability, usually by stigmatizing as "non-standard" the forms found in regional or working-class varieties" (Poplack et al. 2002, p. 89). Ascertaining these modern sociolinguistic facts in his work goes to confirm his close collaboration in the timeless standard language ideology.

Micro-sociolinguistics

One of the qualities that set apart Valdés's work on language is the fact that he efficiently backed up his active engagement in the ideology of standard ("status planning") with examination of concrete linguistic data ("corpus planning"). His corpus, in contrast with those of the rest of his (near-) contemporaries, consisted of a wide range of variable features of Castilian, from graphology, grapho-phonology, morpho-phonology, morphology, morpho-syntax, syntax, lexico-semantics, discourse to stylistics. Modern sociolinguists reduce all these levels of linguistic inquiry to two major dimensions: (a) codification, comprising *graphization*, *grammatication*, and *lexication*, and (b) elaboration, which comprises *terminological modernization*, *stylistic development*, and *internationalization* (Haugen 1983). A display of Valdés's Table of Contents (below), extracted

from the "front matter" of the *Diálogo*, reveals quite an extensive project, covering both of these dimensions (See Fig. 1).

It is not only the range of features he covered in his corpus planning that made his project fascinating; it is the manner in which he filtered them through the three paradigms of descriptivism, prescriptivism, and proscriptivism. The complexity and sophistication of the *Diálogo*, in terms of the corpus that Valdés worked with, only fully emerge when one computes these three paradigms with the variegated levels of linguistic inquiry, then, with the individual linguistic features that he handled. It is no exaggeration when Calvo Pérez (1991, pp. 103–104) observes that the *Diálogo* is like an ambitious linguistic research program, which, even in our day and age, would require the collaboration of many experts from different areas of specialty to be able to carry it out efficiently. He also views the

Valdés, Juan de,
Fig. 1 DIUIJ'ION. TOTI'
OPERIS DESCRIPTIONE

I DIUIJ'ION. TOTI' OPERIS DESCRIPTIONE (División y Sumario de toda la obra)	
<i>Prólogo:</i>	<i>De la autoridad lingüística</i>
PRIMERA PARTE:	<u>Del origen dela lengua</u> —('le preguntaremos lo q̄ sabe del origen /o principio q̄ an tenido aſsy la lengua Castellana como las otras lenguas q̄ oy se hablan e'n España').
SEGUNDA [PARTE]:	<u>Dela Gramática</u> —('loq̄ perteneçe a la Gramática').
TERÇERA [PARTE]:	<u>Delas letras à donde entra la Ortografía</u> —('lo q̄ le auemos notado enel eſcreuir vnas letras mas q̄ otras').
QUARTA [PARTE]:	<u>Delas ſylabas</u> —('lacaufa q̄ lo mueue a poner /o quitar en alg. ^{os} vocablos vna ſylaba').
QUINTA [PARTE]:	<u>Delos vocablos</u> —('le pediremos nos diga porq̄ no vſa de muchos vocablos q̄ vſan otros').
SESTA [PARTE]:	<u>Del eſtilo</u> —('le rogaremos nos auife delos primores q̄ guarda quãto al eſtilo').
SEPTIMA [PARTE]:	<u>Delos libros</u> —('le demãdaremos fu parecer açerca de los libros q̄ eſtan eſcritos en Castellano').
VLTIMO:	<u>Dela conformidad delas lenguas</u> —('haremos q̄ nos diga fu opinion, ſobre qual lengua tiene' <u>por mas conforme ala latina la Castellana o la Toſcana</u> ').

work as translinguistic and generic in its scope, which can be easily related to any historical state of any given language.

Valdés operated with what has become known as Haugen's (1972) classic formulation of *minimal variation in form* versus *maximal variation in function*, two spheres in which codification and elaboration of functions are viewed in modern Sociolinguistics. Valdés's minimal variation in form is verifiable from how the vast majority of the linguistic features that he discussed had two or more variants. That, to him, was a problem that needed resolving, and the solution lay in proscriptivism and prescriptivism. He "set himself up as a lawgiver [...] not content to record fact; he pronounced judgment [as it] seems to have been accepted as self-evident that of two alternate forms of expression one must be wrong" (Baugh and Cable 1993, p. 272). Consequently, of all the instances of two linguistic variants that Valdés considered, his formula was to declare one of them to be wrong or unacceptable, for one reason or another. He made use of a wide range of expressions in pronouncing his judgments, either explicitly or implicitly.

Turning his attention to lexication, he assessed a list of 106 items, ranging from *abonda* to *zaque* (Anipa 2014, pp. 86–94). His apparent intention to discuss the words in alphabetical order and to provide a replacement lexical item for each of the items was not entirely successful (because 13 of the words did not have replacements, and there was a mix-up, in a few cases, of the intended alphabetical order). However, the effort toward minimal variation in form was enthusiastically displayed.

For his effort toward maximal variation in function, Valdés equally carried out corpus planning. He considered semantic expansion, via double negation, reiteration, overlaid clauses, etc., dwelling on polysemy, in 20 Castilian words (Anipa 2014, pp. 95–100). Since these polysemic words had not been used commonly enough in Castilian, before Valdés's time (he referred to them as "half-used words"), his intention was to prescribe the need to maximize their functions and usage frequency in the language.

In his effort to forge the intellectualization and internationalization (Kaplan and Baldauf Jr. 1997)

of Castilian, Valdés considered linguistic borrowing to go beyond long-standing earlier Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Italian sources of the Castilian lexicon. He argued that there was no language in the world that did not benefit from borrowing, both for filling in lexical gaps and purely for enrichment, and declared his readiness to encourage the use of a variety of lexical items and phrases from contemporary Greek, Latin, and Italian, noting how technically impossible it was to draw a neat line between one language and another (Hudson 1996). Once again, the manner in which he discussed the words that he considered for borrowing, and the fact that they had been in the language from the Middle Ages, showed that Valdés meant to encourage the expansion of their semantic fields. Modern sociolinguists agree that a standard language (Valdés's final goal) is more of an ideology than a concrete reality: "It seems appropriate to speak more abstractly of standardization as an ideology, and a standard language as an idea in the mind rather than a reality – a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent" (Milroy and Milroy 1999, p. 19) and that the process inevitably involves having "to make some embarrassing decisions" (Haugen 1966, p. 932). Interestingly, Valdés's language philosophy exhibited all these sociolinguistic realities.

The question of linguistic accommodation (closely related to borrowing) also featured in his work. To explain his point, he drew on a list of 32 pairs of words and phrases, with one element in each pair being Italianate (Anipa 2014, pp. 105–106). It is quite striking that the very concept and term *accommodating* that he used to describe the phenomenon, in the early sixteenth century, is the same one used by modern sociolinguists in our day and age. Once again, there is a degree of mix-up of three of the items on this list, but the intention and effort invested are very clear to see. He also treated discourse markers, stylistics, and etymology along the same lines (Anipa 2014, pp. 106–126), separating polysemy (which he prescribed) from ambiguity (which he condemned and proscribed).

The idea of language as a living thing that exists independently of its users is associated

historically with the nineteenth-century Neogrammarians. From the twentieth century, however, sociolinguists have had to work hard to argue vehemently against, and deconstruct, that conceptualization of language as fallacious. J. Milroy (1992, p. 23), for example, has stated that “it is not true that language is a living thing [...] it is a vehicle for communication *between* living things, namely human being.” It is fascinating that, nearly half a millennium earlier, Valdés made the same argument: that a language could not change without the human beings who used it. To the hypothetical notion (from one of the interlocutors of his dialogue) that a language might change naturally, he crisply stated that it was ridiculous to think so, before proceeding to assert that it was humans who, gradually and subconsciously, over time, brought about linguistic change, through usage (Anipa 2014, p. 81) – as if he had traveled in a time machine and were addressing the Neogrammarians and their modern heirs directly.

Renaissance linguistic thinkers were, invariably, confronted with an intriguing paradox. On the one hand, there was the need to distance nonclassical languages from Latin, in order to assert the “new” languages’ potential for self-sufficiency; on the other hand, there was the need to link the same languages, as closely as possible, to Latin, in order to endow them with the much-needed prestige that Latin had enjoyed for centuries. Valdés did not shy away from that paradox and the balancing act that it entailed. In an era of significant resentment, among European scholars, to efforts by Italians to claim cultural supremacy (for having directly inherited the treasures of classical scholarship of ancient Rome), Valdés can be commended for having handled that thorny issue in a most diplomatic manner, as he compared the closeness of Castilian and Tuscan to Latin (see the last chapter heading of his Table of Contents, above). He largely argued that a careful and objective etymological analysis would reveal that there was hardly any difference in closeness to Latin between Castilian and Tuscan, except for the degree of modification to which they subjected words of Latin origin; and he ended the tricky

discussion tactically by leaving the issue open for further discussion (Anipa 2014, p. 126).

Literary Criticism

As indicated earlier, the long-standing interpretation of the *Diálogo* as literature or literary criticism has changed rapidly. But Valdés did not neglect literature altogether. He openly acknowledged the importance of a body of high-status literature as one of the pillars of a standard language ideology and devoted about 14 % of the *Diálogo* to commenting on a number of literary works, written between the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century.

The relationship between literature and linguistics has been a subject of discussion over the decades, and there is a broad consensus among sociolinguists that literature is a legitimate data source on which sociolinguistic behavior can be observed, because even the language of fiction is somebody’s creation (Anipa 2012a, p. 180). The purely literary aspect of Valdés’s discussion can only be gleaned from the *Diálogo*, and it dealt with the need for realism as a fundamental precept in fiction writing: “los q̄ eſcriuen mentiras las deuen eſcreuir de fuerte, q̄ ſe alleguen quanto fuere poſſible ala verdad, de tal manera q̄ puedan vēdē ſus mentiras por verdades” (Anipa 2014, p. 119). Beyond that, Valdés focused on word choice, syntax, style, and appropriateness of diction. On this issue, Romaine (1982, p. 21) has pointed out that “[t]he linguist will be interested in the language as language in the first instance, while the literary critic is interested in the language as literature.” It is most interesting that Valdés made an almost identical statement, in the literature part of his *Diálogo*, stating that his main interest in discussing literature was language as language: “aqui no hablamos ſino de lo ē perteneçe a la lengua” (Anipa 2014, p. 114). Bearing in mind the rather late recognition of Valdés’s *Diálogo* as a unique work on language, it may be fair to note that there remains more about its multifaceted dimensions yet to be unraveled by future generations of Renaissance scholars.

Writing on Religion (Terence O'Reilly)

The religious writings of Juan de Valdés may be divided into two groups. First, there are his works on certain books of the Bible. His university education in the 1520s, which included Greek and an introduction to Hebrew, equipped him to study the Scriptures, a task to which he devoted himself throughout the 1530s. He was the first person of his time to translate the Psalter from Hebrew into Spanish (Ricart 1964), and he wrote a commentary on the Psalms, only part of which has survived (Psalms 1–41). He also translated and commented on the Gospel of St. Matthew. These works remained in manuscript until modern times. Two further translations with commentaries, both on the letters of St. Paul, were published in the sixteenth century, one on the *Epistle to the Romans* (c.1556), the other on the *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1557). These biblical writings were edited piecemeal in the nineteenth century, but scholarly studies of them have been few, and we do not yet possess a critical edition of them all. The second group consists of Valdés's writings on the nature and development of the Christian life (Reinhardt 1990–99). These have been edited in one volume by Ángel Alcalá (1997). Most of them are short treatises, but three are works of substance in which Valdés gave detailed expression to his thought: the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana*, the *Alfabeto cristiano*, and *Ciento diez divinas consideraciones*.

Diálogo de doctrina cristiana

The *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* was printed by Miguel de Eguía in 1529 in the university town of Alcalá de Henares. Prohibited a short time later by the Spanish Inquisition, it disappeared from view until the early 1920s, when a copy in the Biblioteca Nacional in Lisbon was discovered by Marcel Bataillon, who published it in facsimile in 1925 (Bataillon 1925). The book is dedicated by its anonymous author to the Marquis of Escalona, Diego López Pacheco, in whose household Valdés had spent a formative period of his youth, and it is cast in the form of a colloquy between three

speakers. Antronio is an unlettered parish priest who wishes to teach children the rudiments of the Christian faith. He is unsure, however, how to carry out his task. Eusebio is a member of a religious order who has met and befriended Antronio and wishes to help him obtain the Christian formation he needs. With this in mind, he introduces him to Pedro de Alba, the Archbishop of Granada, who is a devout and learned man. Alba then proceeds, in the course of a day, to instruct his two hearers on the main points of Christian faith and practice. His subject matter is traditional. He considers in turn the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Deadly Sins, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Cardinal and Theological virtues, and the Our Father. Such topics formed the substance of the catechetical literature that became popular in the late medieval Church after the Lateran Council of 1215. The treatment of them in the *Diálogo*, however, is influenced by two writers who were sharply critical of late medieval piety: Erasmus and Luther.

When the *Diálogo* appeared in print, Alcalá de Henares was a center of enthusiasm for the writings of Erasmus, especially those on prayer and the Christian life. His *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* had been printed by Miguel de Eguía 3 years earlier in a lively Spanish translation that quickly became a best seller (Bataillon 1991). A number of themes in the *Enchiridion* reappear in the *Diálogo*. One of them is that the life of perfection described in the Gospel is the fruit of baptism. It is, therefore, open to all Christians, and not only to clergy and religious, a point made often by Erasmus and summed up in the *Enchiridion* by the phrase *monachatus non est pietas* (piety is not the preserve of the monastic state). Another is biting criticism of attachment to the outward forms of religious practice. True Christianity, it is affirmed, is interior and spiritual and centered on Christ. A dramatic contrast between mere externals and a devout interiority runs through the work. The renewal of Christendom, it is indicated, will be brought about by conversion to Christ and by the study and practice of his teachings in the New Testament. These themes come together forcibly in the opening section on the Creed, which is a lightly adapted version of

one of Erasmus's *Colloquies*, the *Inquisitio De Fide*, first published in 1524. Elsewhere the Archbishop urges his listeners to read Erasmus, whom he describes as "truly a theologian," and the translation of the Sermon on the Mount with which the work concludes is based on the Greek text and the new Latin version that Erasmus had published in 1516.

Erasmus, despite his importance, was not the only influence on the movement of religious renewal in Alcalá. Its adherents drew inspiration also from other currents, some of them hard to reconcile with his thought. These included various forms of later medieval spirituality and the teachings of the Spanish illuminists or *alumbrados* (Asensio 1952). Protestant works, though banned, circulated clandestinely in certain quarters, including the circle around the humanist Juan de Vergara to which Valdés belonged. The *Diálogo* shows that its author was acquainted with them and in particular with the writings of Luther, from which numerous passages, mostly brief, are drawn (Gilly 1983). In these passages, whose source is concealed, a recurrent theme is the damage inflicted by the Fall on the capacity of human beings to will or perform what is good and their utter dependence as a result on divine grace, granted through trusting faith in Jesus Christ. Luther's dark perception of human nature, which he found confirmed in the writings of St. Augustine, stood in marked contrast to the outlook of Erasmus, who was influenced by the more optimistic theologies of Origen and the Florentine Neoplatonists. The divergent views of the two reformers led to the formal break between them that took place in 1524. The *Diálogo* shows that in this matter, Valdés sided with Luther. He was probably disposed to do so by his experience as a young man of hearing the sermons of the *alumbrado* Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, in which the moral weakness of the human will was underlined (Nieto 1970, 1979). An Augustinian view of human sinfulness also informs much of the devotional literature popular in Spain when Valdés was growing up, including two works recommended in the *Diálogo*: the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph the Carthusian and the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis.

The influence on the *Diálogo* of both Erasmus and Luther means that it cannot accurately be described as either Erasmian or Lutheran (Gilly 2005). Valdés borrows from both writers in order to articulate a position that is distinctively his own. He implies that justification by faith is an essential element in religious renewal, but he does not follow Luther in rejecting the structures of the late medieval Church. Instead, he envisages a revival that will take place within them, without disturbing the unity they underpin. The commandments of the Church are described as human ordinances that require a formal observance, unlike the divine precepts of the Gospel that engage the conscience intimately. They are to be observed, with discretion, nonetheless. The speakers in the *Diálogo*, moreover, represent the three clerical orders of priests, religious, and bishops, each of which is accorded a role in the task of reform. This task will begin in the parishes with the instruction of children and adults by priests and religious who are both educated and devout, and it will be led by enlightened prelates of whom the Archbishop is a model. Pedro de Alba, who died a year before the *Diálogo* appeared, was remembered for the learning and zeal with which he had discharged his pastoral duties, qualities exemplified also by Hernando de Talavera, his predecessor in Granada (Pastore 2004, 2010).

Alfabeto cristiano

The *Alfabeto cristiano* was composed in Naples, probably in the spring of 1536. In the early 1540s it was rendered into Italian by Marcantonio Magno, and his translation, which survives in a manuscript of the Vatican Library (Firpo 1994), was printed in Venice, with minor amendments, in 1545. The Spanish text on which it was based has not survived. Like the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana*, the *Alfabeto* offers an introduction to the Christian life. Its focus, however, is not the teachings of the catechism but the process of inner conversion that the call of the Gospel entails, a process that leads, it shows, to perfect love in union with Christ. The origin of the work is

explained at the start: it records in dialogue form a conversation that took place one day between Valdés and a young aristocrat, Giulia Gonzaga. They met as she was returning from a sermon by the Capuchin friar Bernardino Ochino, whose words had disturbed her deeply for reasons she could not understand. Valdés, after listening, is able to tell her why. Her problems are those of human nature in its fallen state, in which self-interest reigns supreme. The remedy is to move away from preoccupation with herself and to turn with faith toward God, a change of heart that he describes in the language of St. Paul as taking off the Old Adam and putting on Christ, the New Man fashioned in God's image. To help her he prescribes certain spiritual exercises. Each day she is to meditate on two subjects: first, her own moral weakness, which will teach her knowledge of self, and second the goodness of God, made visible especially in *il beneficio della passione di Cristo* (the gift of the Passion of Christ). His hope is that she will pass from a life ruled by fear to one in which her only motive is love: "I want you to walk along this path as a lady, not a servant, as a free person, not a slave, with love, not fear" (p. 330). Giulia is willing to comply, but she confesses to a further doubt that holds her back: the teaching of Ochino that good works performed without pure love have no merit in the eyes of God. This makes her wonder how she can be saved, for she knows that her own works are inspired by the selfish motives of fear of Hell and desire for heavenly glory. Valdés explains in reply that God draws us to himself in stages, beginning with fear of punishment and moving on to gratitude for his gifts and longing for the joys of Paradise. Eventually, we come to know that he is truly good and to love him with a passion that is disinterested. Then we serve him, "not as slaves but as freemen, not as mercenaries but as sons; and this is what Christian freedom means" (p. 361).

Despite its distinctive character, the *Alfabeto* has much in common with the *Diálogo de doctrina Cristiana*, whose themes it develops in three ways. First, it underlines that the life of perfection is open to all. The notion that spiritual progress involves passing from the fear of slaves, through the self-interest of mercenaries, and on to

the love of sons was adumbrated by the Fathers of the Church and developed in the monastic writings of the Middle Ages. The *Alfabeto* reveals how familiar Valdés was with such writings, a familiarity confirmed by his reply when Giulia asks him what she should read. The works he recommends, in addition to the Bible, are all monastic in provenance: the treatises of John Cassian, the lives of the early hermits by St. Jerome, and the *Imitation of Christ*. He adds that he himself has found them helpful. However, the context of the *Alfabeto* is not monastic at all. Giulia is a noblewoman involved in activities appropriate to her class, and Valdés does not counsel her as a priest but as a layman. The setting of their dialogue, moreover, is not a monastic cloister, but urban, feminine, and domestic. This becomes apparent when they discuss the times and places suitable for meditation. Valdés pictures Giulia in her home and in her bedroom, meditating at whatever time suits her best. He recommends the highest Christian ideals, but he emphasizes in doing so that they may be lived in the heart of society. When Giulia asks him to tell her how to lead a devout life that is private and hidden from the gaze of others, he responds by showing her that to be perfect one does not have to abandon the world and take religious vows. His words astonish her, for she had always supposed that the state of perfection was reserved for nuns and friars, but he insists that she is mistaken. All Christians, clerical, religious, and lay, will be judged by the same standard: "those who are friars and those who are not will have as much Christian perfection as they have faith and love of God, and not a cent more" (p. 292).

Second, the *Alfabeto* accords a central place in the Christian life to St. Paul's teaching on justification. In this respect, it reflects a general change in spiritual writings of the time. The initial wave of Erasmianism in Castile lasted from 1516, when the first translation of Erasmus appeared, to the early 1530s, when the Inquisition began to take action against individuals with strong Erasmian and reformist views. In the decades that followed, the process of repression continued, reaching a climax in the late 1550s. During the same period (c. 1530–1559), the concerns of spiritual writing

moved away from the topics that the *Enchiridion* had made popular. In the works of contemporaries of Valdés, such as Juan de Avila, Luis de Granada, and Bartolomé de Carranza, attention came to be focused not only on the conflict between letter and spirit that the *Enchiridion* had analyzed perceptively, but on justification, trusting faith in God, and gratitude for the benefits of Christ's Passion. Signs of this development are apparent in the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana*, but they are more prominent in the *Alfabeto*, where Valdés affirms repeatedly that a person is made just by faith: "to be a Christian is to be just, and no one can be just except by faith, for the just man lives by faith" (p. 412). The object of faith is the Passion of Jesus, which reversed the Fall and made possible the forgiveness of sins. In the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana*, there are few references to the Cross and implied criticism of popular devotions to the Passion that involved reconstructing imaginatively the events of Christ's death. Both Erasmus, in the *Enchiridion*, and the *alumbrados* of Castile were critical of such devotions too. In the *Alfabeto*, by contrast, Valdés advises Giulia to dwell continually on *Il beneficio di Cristo*, with confident faith that Jesus died to set her free. The contemplation of Christ crucified enables one to master temptation, it replaces fear with selfless love, and it helps the Christian to grow: "we cannot know, believe or love God except by the contemplation of the crucified Christ" (p. 428). Valdés shows how this principle may be applied in Giulia's everyday life. He also indicates its implications for the Church as a whole. The recovery of justifying faith among Christians, and their release from fear and self-interest, will destroy the attachment to religious externals in which many have sought salvation. It is for him the key to Church renewal.

Third, the *Alfabeto* works out in more detail the assumption in the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* that an interior life animated by justifying faith is compatible with fidelity to the Church. Valdés encourages Giulia to ponder often, and in the light of her experience, the articles of the Creed that the Church offers for her instruction. Then she will not just recite the words but will grasp inwardly the teachings they proclaim. This is true of the articles on the Church itself, which

describe it as one, holy, catholic, and as the communion of saints. She will see that Christ's Church is universal; that it shares in the holiness that is his; that its members include the bad and the good; and that to those who are moved by faith, hope, and love, it offers a union that is spiritual. It is, moreover, protected by Christ: "He promised that faith would not fail in the Christian Church, and it has not failed" (p. 436).

This positive conception of the Church, which coexists with the conviction that it needs reform, underlies the advice Giulia receives about how to perform her religious duties. She is to observe the commandments of the Church, without forgetting the spiritual purpose that underlies them, and she is to approach conscientiously the sacraments of penance and communion. When she goes to confession, she should do so with trusting faith in Christ's promise to give his priests the power to forgive sins, and once the minister has pronounced the words of absolution, she is to believe firmly that she has been pardoned, not because she has confessed, for "that would be to attribute to yourself what is not yours" (p. 465), but because of her faith, hope, and love, centered on Christ. In the same spirit, she should attend mass regularly, not only on feasts but every day, unless prevented by a work of charity. There she should attend carefully to the readings and liturgical prayers, and she should listen to the sermon as if it were Christ's own words. If the priest talks about worldly matters to the neglect of spiritual ones, she may choose to leave, as Valdés often does in exasperation, but if she has the patience to stay, she should beg the Lord to send worthy preachers to the Church. Above all, she is to adore Christ in the Eucharist, where his body and blood are truly present. This will inspire her with a fervent longing to be incorporated by faith and love into the Passion, for the Eucharist recalls the death that established a new covenant, a covenant that makes it possible to believe that "we are justified by the blood of Jesus Christ" (p. 467).

Ciento diez divinas consideraciones

Justification is a recurrent theme in all the religious writings that Valdés penned between 1535

and 1541. They include *Ciento diez divinas consideraciones*, which was printed in Basle in 1550 in an Italian translation. It consists of a series of meditations on the Christian life, from its beginnings in justifying faith to its end in perfect love of God. Valdés composed them week by week for the gathering of friends that took place in his home in Naples every Sunday. Each meeting began with a reading out loud of the meditation he had prepared in advance, and it ended with a general discussion in which he answered questions. He sometimes wrote up afterwards the questions asked and the answers given, and a number of these records found their way as well into the finished work (Crews 2008). This has come down to us in several redactions. There is the Italian translation, probably by Mario Galeota, which was printed in the *editio princeps* of 1550. There are also two contemporary versions in Spanish, one conserved in the Stadt Bibliotek in Hamburg, the other in the Biblioteca Vaticana, and a partial Spanish version of 39 meditations, preserved in a manuscript of the National Library of Vienna. The relationship between these versions and the original Spanish text of Valdés is not clear, and because the redactions differ among themselves in several ways, including the number and ordering of the contents, it is not possible to establish on their basis a definitive text. The purpose of the work is nonetheless clear. Aware of moves in the late 1530s to heal the schism between the Christian churches, Valdés wrote the *Consideraciones* in the hope that his approach to the divisive issue of justification, and in particular to the relation between faith and good works, would win the approval of both sides (Crews 2008). The book circulated widely within Italy in manuscript, and along with his other late writings, it came to the attention of those involved in bringing Catholics and Protestants together. They included two cardinals, Gasparo Contarini and Reginald Pole, who shared the goal of restoring unity by a double-edged strategy: by convincing Catholic theologians and churchmen that Luther's understanding of justification was fundamentally orthodox and by reconciling the Reformers to a Catholic view of the sacraments and the Church (Fenlon 1972). Matters came to a head in the spring and early summer of 1541 at the Colloquy of Regensburg,

when theologians from both sides assembled to discuss their differences. In the matter of justification, they found common ground, and they came to a formal agreement that reflected, in its essentials, the approach that Valdés had pioneered. The talks broke down, however, when they turned their attention to the sacraments and the structures of the Church, on which their views diverged. The collapse of the Colloquy was followed, in the August of that year, by the death of Valdés.

The *Ciento diez divinas consideraciones* tackles the matter of justification by examining three stages in the life of the person who comes to believe in Christ. First, there is the natural state of fallen humanity, which Valdés portrays in dark, Augustinian terms as the loss of the divine image in which human nature was made. The person subject to it is ruled by self-interest and a corresponding abhorrence of God. Second, there is the act of faith by which a person accepts the reconciliation with God made available by the death of Jesus, who took on himself the punishment of humanity's sins. This is the *beneficio di Cristo*, the gift bestowed in and by Christ. Third, there is the process of regeneration by which the divine image lost at the Fall is restored. The faith of the Christian bears fruit increasingly in hope and love, a love that finds expression in good works, and he comes to serve God as a loving son rather than as a fearful slave. A feature of this third stage is the experience of being guided by the Holy Spirit in all things, including the interpretation of Scripture, a theme that Valdés may have drawn from the teachings of those among the Spanish *alumbrados* who practiced *dexamiento*, the surrender of one's will to the action of God in the soul (Hamilton 2010; Firpo 1990).

In his discussion of these three stages, Valdés speaks always in his own voice. Though familiar with the literature on justification composed by Catholics and Protestants of his time, he does not refer to it directly, and despite his learned interest in the Fathers of the Church, he does not allude to their writings, which both sides invoked. Nor does he use the language of scholastic theology that both sides readily employed, though he is aware of its importance in the debate. He seeks instead to address the issues at stake in a way that is not

confrontational by basing his own approach on two sources whose authority was accepted by all: the experience of life in Christ that baptized believers share and the testimony of Scripture, especially the letters of St. Paul. His focus is the interior life of the individual seen as a member of the Church, which is described as the mystical body of Christ. He does not move beyond justification to consider further contentious matters, such as the sacraments or the structures of the Church. A concern to avoid dissension, and to preserve Church unity as far as possible, is evident in other late writings, including the commentary on First Corinthians, composed circa 1539. There he inveighs against individuals who allow their theological opinions to disrupt the harmony of the body, and in the teachings of St. Paul, he finds guidelines for reconciling those who have been seduced by false prophets and have left, or are about to leave, the Church. Preserving ecclesial unity is a duty incumbent on all (Crews 2008).

Impact and Legacy

Language: The fact that Valdés's work on language was not published for two centuries might raise the question as to its possible dissemination and impact during the Renaissance. But there is a prerequisite to an objective judgment of the issue: proper understanding of the work. "The *Diálogo de la lengua* of Juan de Valdés is commonly misunderstood" (Navarrete 2004, p. 3). It is a dense and multilayered work, best understood through the prism of modern sociolinguistics. This is because "the primary focus of the *Diálogo* is sociolinguistic" (Ibid., 2004, p. 11). Calvo Pérez (1991, p. 104) rightly observes that Valdés's work on language was several centuries ahead of that of any other linguistic thinker of his time.

Depending on circumstances, lack of publication may not necessarily be evidence for lack of dissemination or impact. In the case of the *Diálogo*, a couple of factors were crucial. First, we know that a manuscript tradition, alongside the print tradition, remained vibrant among intellectuals, during the Renaissance (Bouza Alvarez 2004). A second factor is the subject matter of the *Diálogo*. A work on language ideology and

standardization need not have been read necessarily by a large number of the populace, in order to have fulfilled its intended aims. This is because language policy and language planning are mostly a "top-down" operation (Cooper 1989; Kaplan and Baldauf Jr. 1997). That being the case, some impact of the work among the elite would have been sufficient for its purpose. This understanding is no mere conjecture on my part, because Valdés himself stated explicitly in the *Diálogo* the class of people that the work was meant to serve. Written in Naples, the *Diálogo* did not take long to reach Spain, where it was read, passed round, and copied among a group of humanists (known to Renaissance scholars as the Toledo Circle), who were closely connected with the ruling elite. Not only did they read the work keenly, but they also took appropriate steps to shield it from the potential perils of the Inquisition (Anipa 2011). Even after the *Diálogo* found its way into print, there was still some interest in copying the manuscript; such was the case of Usoz y Río, who copied it (MS 7265) and went on a quest for another copy that he had read about, prior to publishing his edition, in 1860. Through Usoz y Río, interest in the *Diálogo* reemerged in nineteenth-century England, where it was well received, read (at least, among the Quakers), and even translated into English, in 1856–1857. In twentieth-century Spain, the work became required reading in graduate courses in Spanish, which contributed to the *Diálogo* being "the best-known Valdesian work" (Crews 2008, p. 102), although it has attracted less than 10 % of all writings on Valdés (Calvo Pérez 1991, p. 54). A bilingual Spanish-French edition was published as recently as 2008; and it might not take long before an English edition appears. All in all, the *Diálogo* has been the number one source of authoritative reference (multiple times more than Nebrija's grammar) for modern Hispanic historical linguists working on Castilian, from the sixteenth century onwards.

Religion: In the course of 1541 the disciples of Valdés in Naples dispersed. Some of them crossed the Alps after the Colloquy of Regensburg and joined the Protestant Reform. Most of the others moved north to Viterbo and entered the circle of Reginald Pole (Firpo 1990, 2013), who after the death of Contarini in August 1542 became the

leading figure in the movement to reconcile the Churches (Edwards 2014). In the run-up to the Council of Trent, which met in 1545, the Viterbo group disseminated the teachings of Valdés in manuscript, translation, and print, and one of their number, Marcantonio Flaminio, coauthored *Il beneficio di Cristo* (1543), a treatise that drew significantly on Valdés's ideas and expressed them in forthright terms (Caponetto 2009). When the Council assembled in 1547 to discuss justification, the writings of Valdés were therefore known not only to the papal legates, who included Reginald Pole, but to many of the bishops, a large proportion of whom were Italian. In the event, the debate in the Council was shaped by the scholastic theologians present, especially the Thomists and the Scotists, and the prelates who favored a theological discourse that would be acceptable across the theological divide found themselves in a minority (Fenlon 1972). The final decree laid emphasis on a number of themes that Valdés had developed earlier, including the dependence of justification on the merits of Christ, the fruitfulness of faith in hope and love, and the union of baptized Christians in Christ's mystical body. It was careful, however, to avoid terms and concepts that the Reformers had made their own, including a distinction between imputed justice and regeneration that Valdés had been happy to use. In the Canons with which it concluded, moreover, the decree spurned explicitly the main tenets of Luther's teachings as the Council Fathers understood them (McGrath 1986; O'Malley 2013), and from that point onwards, pressure grew on Catholic writers to build into their theological language the affirmations and anathemas that the Canons enshrined. In such circumstances, the writings of Valdés came to be seen in retrospect as heterodox, and in both Italy and Spain, they were included in the Indices of Prohibited Books by which the decrees of Trent were enforced. In the twentieth century, however, developments in Catholic theology, and agreements about justification between Rome and the Protestant churches, made it possible to view Valdés in a different light and to argue that his teachings, in their pre-Tridentine context, did not mark a break with Catholic orthodoxy (Domingo de Santa Teresa 1957; Crews 2008).

In the aftermath of Trent, the religious writings of Valdés were preserved by his followers who had joined the Reform, and through them, his teachings became widely known among Protestants (Ricart 1958). Their reception in such circles was mixed. Some were severely critical, including John Calvin and Theodore Beza, but others found in them a sympathetic statement of their beliefs. In England in the seventeenth century, for instance, the *Ciento diez divinas consideraciones* were translated from the Italian by Nicholas Ferrar, the founder of the Anglican community in Little Gidding, and the work was praised, despite some reservations, by the poet and pastor George Herbert. Among Lutherans, Anabaptists, Quakers, and even Unitarians, Valdés found interested readers, and in the nineteenth century, his legacy was restored by Protestant scholars who traced and edited the greater part of his works. Their patient labors drew attention to his importance, and they laid the foundation of the modern studies of his thought that began in the 1920s with the work of Marcel Bataillon. He argued that all the themes of Valdés's late writings were present implicitly in his first work, the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana*, which he described as "a moderately Erasmian catechism." Valdés's contact with the *alumbrados*, he held, would have disposed him to read Erasmus with enthusiasm. The moral pessimism of the text, and its allusions to justification by faith, did not indicate, in his view, that Valdés at the time had read Luther. He could well have arrived at such convictions himself, for example, through reading St. Paul (Bataillon 1925). Bataillon's interpretation held sway until 1970, when it was contested by José Nieto, who argued that the Erasmian elements in the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* were designed to mask a Protestant theology of justification and the Church. Valdés, he held, did not draw this theology from Protestant writers directly, but from the *alumbrado* teacher Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, who had reached, independently, the same conclusions as Luther (Nieto 1970, 1979). Nieto's thesis received a mixed response. It was accepted by Bataillon, who confessed himself persuaded that Valdés had used Erasmus to conceal Protestant beliefs, and it was carried further by Massimo Firpo, who applied it to the activity of Valdés in

Italy during the 1530s. He detected in the late writings of Valdés a strong *alumbrado* influence, especially in his teachings on guidance by the Holy Spirit, and he argued that Valdés was a Nicodemite who held that outward conformity with Catholic practice was compatible with inner dissent from certain Catholic doctrines (Firpo 1990). More recent research, however, has called into question the premises on which Nieto's argument was based. Studies of the *alumbrados* have not confirmed that the teachings of Alcaraz anticipated those of Luther (Hamilton 2010), and an alternative explanation of Protestant elements in the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* has been provided by Carlos Gilly, who has shown that when composing it, Valdés was familiar already with the writings of Luther, Johannes Oecolampadius, and perhaps Philipp Melanchthon too (Gilly 1983). The notion that Valdés used Erasmus as a rhetorical mask for heresy has been discounted by a number of scholars (Pastore 2004, 2010; Gilly 2005; Crews 2008) who have concluded, on various grounds, that the theology of Valdés was indebted to both Erasmus and Luther without being reducible to the thought of either, and the related notion that the ecclesiology of Valdés was Protestant has been undermined by evidence that Valdés believed it possible to combine his theological convictions with faithful membership of the Catholic Church (Crews 2008; Firpo 2013). In spite of these advances, historians continue to disagree about the precise sources, nature, and impact of Valdés's religious ideas, and further research into the matter has been hindered by the lack of a critical edition of his surviving works. The manuscripts and printed texts necessary for such an edition have been identified (Kinder 1988; Firpo 1994), but the task of producing it has yet to be carried out.

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Valier, Agostino

Born: Venice, 7 April 1531

Died: Rome, 23 May 1606

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Abstract

The Venetian Agostino Valier (Venice, 7 April 1531 – Rome, 23 May 1606), Cardinal and Bishop of Verona, prefect of the Congregation of the Index, and member of the Holy Office, was one of the leading figures of the Italian Church in the years of the Council of Trent. As a professor of philosophy in the so-called

Scuola di Rialto, he achieved a form of eclecticism founded on the interaction between philosophy and humanism. He wrote over 200 works, both in Latin and in the vernacular, including letters, treatises, booklets, orations, dreams, eulogies, biographies, reports, and commentaries, which demonstrate his interest in different literary genres and topics, such as philosophical exegesis, conduct literature, historiography, and rhetoric. His first texts, mainly addressed to members of the Venetian aristocracy, offer a series of practical norms to prepare them for the political or civil roles with which they would be invested. Once he became Bishop of Verona, he tried to reconcile his previous philosophical and pedagogical interests with his new public role, following the example of other humanists, such as Cardinal Gian Matteo Giberti. Therefore, he pursued social and religious reforms, combining the humanist system proposed by Giberti with the models for pastoral care discussed and promulgated during the Council of Trent, and particularly, under the influence of Carlo Borromeo.

Biography

Agostino Valier was born in Venice, on 7 April 1531; his father, Bertuccio, was a patrician, as was his mother, Lucia, sister of the future Cardinal Bernardo Navagero. Valier was educated in Venice and then went to Padua to study the Greek language. During these years, he wrote a series of orations and letters addressed to illustrious members of both the Paduan university and the Venetian aristocracy (e.g., Lazzaro Bonamico, Marcantonio Genua, Pietro Landi, Marcantonio Trevisan). In 1555 he visited Rome with his uncle Bernardo Navagero on the occasion of the election of Pope Paul IV. In the same year, he also became *Minoris Ordinis Praeconsultor* (a rank appointed by the Venetian Senate). In 1558 he obtained the chair of philosophy in the so-called Scuola di Rialto: on that occasion he delivered the *Praefationes nonnullae habitae in gymnasio Veneto cum moralem philosophiam Venetis adolescentibus explicaret, in quibus sacram*

theologiam cum philosophiae studio coniungendum esse ostendit. The texts which Valier wrote in these years show an original and personal approach to philosophical matters: departing from the dogmatic interpretation of Aristotelianism (characterizing works such as his *De tempore* or *De loco*), Valier aimed to achieve a form of eclecticism founded on the interaction between philosophy and humanism. One work embodying his perspective is the *De recta philosophandi ratione*: this text is dedicated to defining the need for a balance between conflicting trends (philosophy and religion, but also Aristotelianism and Platonism), rather than establishing a specific method, since “to him, the proper use of philosophical knowledge was more important than philosophical method or the choice of any particular philosophical system” (Pullapilly 1992, p. 331). The *De recta philosophandi ratione* is first printed in 1577 in a volume collecting also other *praefationes*, that is, philosophical lectures on different topics (e.g., *In libros de moribus Aristotelis*, *In Cebetis tabulam*, *In libellum Porphyrii de quinque vocibus*, *In libros del coelo*). The 1577 edition also contains four *opuscula*, addressed to members of the Venetian aristocracy, which offer a series of practical norms to prepare them for the political or civil roles with which they would be invested. These works are *Qua ratione versandum sit in Aristotele*, *Qui mores in cive Veneto requirantur*, *Quibus in artibus adolescens Venetus debeat excellere*, and *De commentariis conficiendis memoriae causa*. That means that the literary production of the 1550s is not entirely devoted to philosophical topics; rather, it is also characterized by works on conduct, “dominated by a theme that was to recur with little change in the writing of Valier’s episcopal period: condemnation of ambition and exaltation of contempt for honours” (Logan 1996, p. 222). In these works Valier stresses the importance of the *studia humanitatis* as a link between intellectual and public life and attributes to men of letters the role of leading figures within their own societies. In 1560, therefore, Agostino Valier located his principal interests in teaching and civil engagement, but also in the fulfillment of his personal

view of a type of humanism in which philosophy, letters, and religion converge to create an ethical system.

This perspective underwent a change in 1561, when Bernardo Navagero, Valier's uncle, was elected cardinal. Valier, who had already addressed to the uncle his lost *De fugiendis honoribus* (another conduct text in dialogue form), became Navagero's secretary and left Venice for Rome. At the Roman court, Valier met Carlo Borromeo, who invited him to take part in the academy called *Notti Vaticane* (this experience would provide the subject matter for the *Convivium Noctium Vaticanarum* by Valier). A few years later, he again accompanied his uncle, now Bishop of Verona, to the Council of Trent; but on the way back, Navagero fell ill and, before dying (31 May 1565), asked and obtained that his nephew should replace him as leader of the diocese of Verona. Therefore, Valier was elected Bishop of Verona on 28 May 1565. Once in his diocese (17 June 1565), Valier tried to reconcile his previous philosophical and pedagogical interests with his new public role, following the example of other humanists, starting from one of his predecessors in the diocese, Cardinal Gian Matteo Giberti. Valier continued and pursued the social and religious reforms introduced by Giberti in sixteenth-century Verona, which concerned various aspects of life (Christian practice, education, marriage, family). However, Valier tried to combine the humanist system proposed by Giberti with the models for pastoral care discussed and promulgated during the Council of Trent and particularly under the influence of Carlo Borromeo (see Tacchella 1972). Following the example of Borromeo in Milan, and with the support of new religious orders (such as the Theatines and the Jesuits), Valier promoted a series of initiatives, such as the founding of a diocesan seminary, the reform of local monasteries and religious institutions, the organization of Catholic associations and confraternities, and the diffusion of schools of Christian doctrine. All these projects were related to specific editorial plans, because Valier attributed to the printing press an important role in the diffusion of the ideals of the Reformed Church. This is why the works written by Valier

(or published with his support) soon after his election – catechisms, texts for clerics, rules for schools of Christian doctrine and for confraternities – are characterized by a strong pragmatism.

Alongside this prescriptive production, Valier also wrote some works which are at once descriptive and prescriptive, concerned with both religious and social education, and intended to define the behavior of a good Christian. These works, deeply influenced by his friendship with Carlo Borromeo, who was overseeing a similar reform in the diocese of Milan, can be divided into two groups, according to the different readerships (religious or secular) they were meant for. One group comprises treatises and collections of practical examples for priests, monks, and clerics: these works aim to regulate fields such as Christian oratory (*De rhetorica ecclesiastica ad clericos*, 1574), the life of a bishop (*Episcopus, seu de optima Episcopi forma*, 1575) and of a cardinal (*Cardinalis, sive de optima Cardinalis forma*, 1575), but also the behavior of nuns (*Ricordi [...] lasciati alle monache nella sua visitazione fatta l'anno del santissimo Giubileo 1575*, 1575). The second group of works may be connected, much more directly, to the so-called social disciplining, that is, the attempt to regulate people's private lives (see Oestreich 1969; Prodi 1994). Among these works we can mention the *Ricordi al popolo della città e diocesi di Verona* (1579), and especially the three books for women published in 1575 under the single title of *Instituzione d'ogni stato lodevole delle donne cristiane*: that is, *Del modo di vivere delle vergini che si chiamano demesse*, for unmarried women; *Della vera e perfetta viduità*, for widows; *Istruzione delle donne maritate*, for married women (Valier 2015). These manuals of behavior demonstrate extensive continuity with the prescriptive texts for clerics, but also with the works addressed to the Venetian aristocracy at the beginning of Valier's literary career. Although now influenced by Tridentine precepts, the texts for secular as well as religious men and women by Bishop Valier continue the project of a philosophical humanism, which he had already pursued at the Scuola di Rialto. This literary production differs from the previous works by Valier in the

choice of simplicity in style and of the vernacular in terms of language and influences his later historical writings (e.g., the *Ricordi per lo scriver le historie della Repubblica di Venezia*, dedicated to Alvise Contarini, historian of the Republic, which present history as a source for moral advice and practical suggestions to follow in everyday life).

In the same years, Valier continued to exercise his episcopal role, visiting his diocese (see Archivio storico della Curia diocesana di Verona 2000 and 2001), and writing pastoral letters, collections of homilies, and rules for the clergy. In recognition of his activity, on 12 December 1583, Pope Gregory XIII elected him a cardinal. On this occasion, he wrote an oration (now lost) entitled *Concio de onere Episcopatus et Cardinalatus*, a description of the perfect Tridentine bishop and cardinal, represented by Carlo Borromeo (who died a few months after the election of Valier, as described in his *Vita Caroli Borromaei*: Valier 1988). In 1587 Sixtus V elected Valier a member of the Congregation of the Index, but despite this Valier did not interrupt his production of works on ethics and conduct, such as the *De occupationibus Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Diacono Cardinale dignis* and the *Quatenus fugiendi sint honores* (both addressed to Federico Borromeo, the cousin of Carlo). However, the most important texts written after his election are the *Philippus, sive de christiana laetitia* (two dialogues, set in 1591 Rome, dedicated to Filippo Neri and his *Oratorio*: Valier 1975), and the *De cautione adhibenda in edendis libris* (an autobiographical description of the life and works of Valier, dedicated to Silvio Antoniano and first published only in 1719). Even if this second text is presented as the last work written by the Venetian cardinal, between the composition of the *De cautione* and his death, Valier continued writing. His extraordinarily prolific production collects over 200 titles, both in Latin and in the vernacular, including letters, treatises, booklets, orations, dreams, eulogies, biographies, reports, and commentaries, which demonstrate his interest in different literary genres and different topics, such as the exegesis of the Scriptures, philosophy, conduct literature, historiography, and rhetoric. All his works preserve his personal view of humanism: a practical knowledge in which a perfect balance of letters,

philosophy, and religion can offer useful advice for prescribing and describing human behavior in contemporary society.

Agostino Valier died in Rome, on 23 May 1606.

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Valla, Giorgio

Born: 1447, Piacenza

Died: 23 January 1500, Venice

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Abstract

Giorgio Valla was a fifteenth-century humanist who studied and worked in Pavia, Genoa, and Venice. He established a remarkable collection of manuscripts that fuelled his study and translation projects. Although he also provided commentaries on Cicero and Juvenal, Valla focused on Greek scientific texts, which he translated into Latin. From around 1470 until his death, Valla was also occupied with writing an encyclopedia in which he collected all his knowledge based on mainly Greek authors. The encyclopedia's lack of structure and the philological errors have provoked harsh criticism from the Renaissance until modern times, but it was nevertheless read by the greatest early modern scientists during their formation.

Biography

Giorgio Valla was born in Piacenza in the autumn of 1447, shortly after the death of Filippo Maria Visconti. After the attack on Piacenza by Francesco Sforza, Valla's family fled to Vigoleno. There, the talented young man would be educated

from 1457 until 1462 together with the son of Alberto Scotto, the count of Vigoleno. Valla then moved to Milan, where he became the pupil of Constantine Laskaris for 3 years. He further met Cicco Simonetto, Secretary of Francesco Sforza, and Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, later Marshal of France under Louis XII. To him, he would dedicate a commentary on Cicero's *De Fato* (Cicero 1485), and they exchanged ideas on Livy and Caesar. Another notable figure with whom Valla acquaints himself during his Milanese years is Jacopo Antiquari from whom he will receive support further on in his career. In 1466, Valla moves on to Pavia, where he studies and teaches Greek with Andronikos Kallistos and physiognomy, mathematics, and natural sciences with Giovanni Marliani, who puts him into contact with other humanists among whom Francesco Filelfo. After an interval of a year from 1477 to 1478, during which he teaches rhetoric at the University of Genoa, Valla returns to Pavia. He becomes the tutor of Cicco Simonetta's children and is appointed Maestro di Umanità at the university until 1484. In 1485, Valla moves to Venice, where he replaces Giorgio Merula at the San Marco School. It was Ermolao Barbaro who advised the committee in favor of Valla's appointment, and the two humanists would remain on friendly terms during the following years. Valla's stay in Venice coincided with his most prolific period (Heiberg 1896; Gardenal et al. 1981; King 1986). Now at the heart of Italy's book industry, he was able to put his editorial and translation work in the service of printers like Aldo Manuzio, who acknowledged more than once the value of the humanist from Piacenza (Raschieri 2012). Valla started a friendship with Lorenzo Loredan and counted among his students Vittore Pisano, Giovanni Antonio Flaminio, Pontico Virunio, Gaspara Contarini, and Giovanni Pietro Valeriano. They would have followed Valla's courses on Cicero's *Rhetorica ad Herennium* in 1490, on Pliny's *Historia Naturalis* a year later, and on Vitruvius, Euclides, Plautus along with Cicero's *Orator* in 1492. In 1496, Valla lectured on Aristoteles' *Poetica* and *Magna Moralia*. It is also the year in which he was imprisoned on the charge of espionage for the

French King, who at that time was in conflict with Venice and Milan. Apparently, it was Valla's friendship with Trivulzio that lay the basis of this accident. He was finally acquitted of all accusations, and in October, after 8 months of imprisonment, he was released. He subsequently got back his teaching position, and 3 years later he would lecture on Cicero's *Tusculani Disputationes*. Valla died on 23 January 1500 and was replaced at the San Marco School by Marc Antonio Sabellico (Heiberg 1896; Gardenal et al. 1981; King 1986). Bartolomeo Zamberti took care of the funeral laudation, in which he abundantly praised his deceased teacher and friend (Rose 1976). Valla's encyclopedia was posthumously published in 1501 by his adoptive son Gian Pietro Cademusto, who also wrote a biography of him (Heiberg 1896).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

While living in Venice, Valla had the opportunity to acquire a remarkable collection of manuscripts, that was well known all over Italy. Two book hunters in service of the Medici, Giano Laskaris and Angelo Poliziano, visited Valla in respectively 1490 and 1491. Some of his volumes came from Bessarion's library, others were acquired from Byzantine immigrants and traders who had brought them in from, for example, Constantinople. The most famous exemplar is the codex A of Archimedes, which is now lost, but Valla also possessed Heron's *Pneumatica* and made use of the Sophocles manuscript *Mutin.* α.U.9.19 (Gr. 99). After his death, the books were acquired by Alberto Pio di Carpo, and a substantial part of them is now in the Biblioteca Estense (Heiberg 1896; Cataldi Palau 1994; Tessier 2003; Bellé et al. 2014; Rose 1973).

Valla's bibliophile interests furnished him with the material to pursue cutting-edge research and translation projects. For example, his 1486 commentary on Juvenal's *Satires* relied on hitherto unknown scholia which he attributed to Probus (Anderson 1965). His possession of the *Parisinus Graecus* 1807, containing a portion of Plato's works, allowed him to comment on Cicero's

Timaeus while making use of the original Greek dialogue (Pagani 2008). For his first-ever Latin translations of Archimedes, Eutocius, Hero, Manuel Bryennius, and numerous other Byzantine and classical Greek authors, he could also rely on his personal library (Rose 1975; Gardenal et al. 1981).

Apart from the usual humanist interest in Latin classical authors like Juvenal, Cicero, and Plautus, Valla's real focus point was Greek scientific texts. Probably inspired by his former teacher Marliani, he translated Galen, Hypsicles, Alexander of Afrosdias, Nicephorus Blemmydes, Euclid, Proclus, Aristarchus, Cleomedes, Eusebius, Psellus, Rhazes, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Timaeus of Locri, and others (Heiberg 1896; Gardenal et al. 1981). While some of these works appeared independently or bound together with either originally Latin texts or translations by different people, (Galen 1481; Aristotle 1488, 1496; Cleonides 1497; Alexandrus of Afrosdisia 1994), twenty-five of them were printed together in 1498 at the presses of the Venetian printer Bevilacqua, each with their own dedication letter (Nicephorus et al. 1498). Alongside the majority of treatises on medical topics, mathematics, astronomy, and music theory, the miscellany also includes logic, rhetoric, theology, and ethics (Nicephorus et al. 1498). In addition to these translations, Valla added one work of his own, namely *De expedita ratione argumentandi*, a scholastic work on rhetoric that is based on Nicephorus, Cicero, Quintilian, Fabius, and Aristotle (Vasoli 1960; Gardenal et al. 1981).

Valla's *magnum opus* was his vast encyclopedia *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus*. It was divided into seven heptads, and the largest Aldine volume ever. In its earliest stage, during the second half of the 1470s, *De expetendis* was titled *Quibus rebus humana perfecta sit foelicitas*. The ethical character of these two titles indicates the encyclopedia's attempt to forego "a sectorial vision of sciences" in order to reach a balanced harmonization of mundane reality and the human knowledge thereof (Raschieri 2012). The work attempts to provide a compendium of all knowledge, molded in a system of subdivisions that fitted well into the Aristotelian tradition that

prevailed in Venice and Pavia (Gardenal et al. 1981; King 1986).

According to *De expetendis*, man's felicity is subdivided into matters that pertain to the soul, the body, and external goods. For the soul, Valla names *veritas*, *virtus*, and *affectus* as the tripartite goal, of which *veritas* can be reached by means of the *mens*, *ratio*, *intellectus*, *iudicium*, *consilium*, *ingenium*, and *opinio*. These are the tools for knowledge, of which Valla discerns two kinds: knowledge about things that are external to us (of a metaphysical or scientific kind) and things that pertain to ourselves (morals, economics, politics, and the trivium cum poetics). Books I–XXXIII are devoted to arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy, physics, and medicine – book XXII was finished in 1491; books XXXIV–XL contain grammatic, dialectic, poetics, and rhetoric; XLI–XLIII are about moral philosophy and were finished in 1494; book XLIV discusses economy; books XLV–XLVII have politics as their subject; and the last book before the conclusion, book XLVIII, is devoted to physiology and psychology. The work was probably finished by 1495, but Valla did not succeed in revising it for publication before his death (Heiberg 1896; Gardenal et al. 1981; Mauro 1995).

The largest part of the encyclopedia is taken up by the exact sciences, for which Valla draws much on his unique manuscript collection with rarely to never studied Greek texts. He largely ignores the medieval and Arabic heritage and makes some disparaging remarks about their achievements (Gardenal et al. 1981). His choice of sources seems to be arbitrary and generally motivated by the rarity of the manuscripts. For his books on music, he relies on Cleonides, Aristides, but most prominently on the *Harmonika* by the fourteenth-century Byzantine scholar Manuel Bryennius, whom Valla could not date correctly. For the mythical origins of music, however, he gets his material from pseudo-Plutarch, and to explain the harmony of the spheres, he uses Ptolemy's writings as well as Macrobius' *Somnium Scipionis*. The Latin tradition is further represented in these books by St Augustine's *De Musica*, which Valla borrows from Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Boethius' *De Institutione*

Musica, and also Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*. While the section on music is primarily concerned with the theoretical and speculative side, Aristides and Bryennius provide the sources for discussing also the technical aspects of audible music (Palisca 1985; Mauro 1995).

Music is followed by geometry, where the most important classical authors cited are Varro, Proclus, Hero of Alexandria, and Euclid. The next books, on astronomy, refer to Proclus, Cleomedes, Johannes Pediasimus, Ptolemy, Euclid, Porphyry, Demofilo, Autolycus, Hypsicles, Theodosius, Antiochus, Heraclitus, Aetius of Amida, Hippocrates, and Vettius Valens (Ruffo 1977). On this subject, we also find the odd moment of original thinking by Valla, on, for example, doubling the cube and squaring the circle (Gardenal et al. 1981). The largest section, consisting of seven books on medicine, depends heavily on again Byzantine compilers, namely Paulus of Aegina and Aetius of Amida whose references to Galen Valla recycles. Celsus is the only Latin author of whom he makes extensive use, while Pliny only provides the necessary vocabulary (Gardenal et al. 1981). In the section on poetics, Diomedes and Horace are Valla's main guides, while Aristotle is only used partially without a single mention of his concept of mimesis (Tigerstedt 1968).

Impact and Legacy

Despite his interest in collecting valuable manuscripts, Valla was not always able to make use of the most authoritative copies of a specific text. His translation of Aristotle's *Poetica*, contained in the 1498 miscellany of translations (Nicephorus et al. 1498), might have been the first Latin version of the work that appeared in print, but it was based on an inferior Greek manuscript. Furthermore, Valla's knowledge of the Greek language was not always sufficient to cope with such a difficult work, and his translation was superseded by a new and better one already in 1536 (Tigerstedt 1968). His lack of understanding and philological flaws have been recognized by scholars from the sixteenth century until our age. Paolo Giovio

denounced the chaotic ordering of the translated excerpts in *De expetendis* and in a collection of Gilles Ménage's sayings, edited by Bernard de le Monnoye, we find a sharp epigram that criticizes the encyclopedia as a book to be shunned (Ménage and de la Monnoye 1715; Giovio 2006). In modern times, Heiberg (1896), Gardenal et al. (1981), and Palisca (1985) also questioned Valla's abilities. The heavy encyclopedia without page numbering was furthermore difficult to use and was never reprinted (Gardenal et al. 1981).

His translation projects have nevertheless contributed to the establishment of a lasting scientific lexicon that is based on Latin (although Valla did not refrain from Grecizing neologisms or calques). Indeed, for most of the subjects that *De expetendis* covers, traces of its influence can be identified in the work of later scientists. For example, Francesco Maurolico makes use of Valla's encyclopedia in his *Hippocratis tetragonismus*. As *De expetendis* was the means by which Maurolico became acquainted with Euclid's work, and also provided him with a specific proof for the law of reflection, we could say that Maurolico was perhaps the mathematician who was most influenced by Valla. Valla's innovative inclusion of optics and mechanics within the *quadrivium* furthermore inspired Maurolico to explore in his own work the idea of the geometrization of nature. Also within the mathematical field, Johann Werner's and Pedro Nunes' discussions of the mean proportional and the conic section draw on Valla's geometry chapters (Bellé et al. 2014).

In music, Valla was the first one since Boethius with enough knowledge of Greek and with all the necessary manuscripts at hand to discuss in-depth the *tonoi* theory. However, he fails to make a critical comparison of his sources, Ptolemy, Bryennius, and Cleonides. He consequently enhances the readers' misunderstanding and thus fails to engender a revaluation of the Greek tonal system. His publication of Cleonides' *Harmonicum introductorium* in Latin translation introduced a musical theory that was independent of the Byzantine and Medieval traditions. This work did, however, not find its way into *De expetendis*, and there are no indications in the

form of marginal annotations that Valla understood the work. Its first readers don't seem to have taken anything from it either. A method to establish ratios from the geometrical section of *De expetendis*, however, was used by the sixteenth-century music theorist Gioseffo Zarlino to develop a tuning method that makes use of the mesolabe (Palisca 1985).

Nicolaus Copernicus also profited from Valla's translations. They helped him to master the Greek language and for his *De revolutionibus* (1501), he used Valla's Latin rendition of Pseudo-Plutarch's *De placitis philosophorum* in *De expetendis*. He also used the 1498 miscellany of translations (Nicephorus et al. 1498), from which he took a mistaken calculation of Mars' revolution around the sun. Copernicus seems to have been aware of the inaccurate character of Valla's work and never mentions Valla's name but instead refers to him with *nonnulli* (Rosen and Hilfststein 1995; Goddu 2010). It is further noteworthy that Leonardo da Vinci used *De expetendis*, in which he read about pneumatic automata, optics, lunulae, and perhaps also the idea that science is dependent on the intellect as well as on experience or experiments (Tucci 2008; Scarpati 2000).

Valla's minor work on rhetoric, *De ratione argumentandi*, contained in the 1498 miscellany of translations (Nicephorus et al. 1498; Valla 2017), had some success after it was added to George of Trebizond's *Dialectica ex Aristotele*. It was printed with glosses by Peter Schade and praised for its educational usefulness by Sixt Birck in a prefatory letter to the 1529 Basel edition. The latter also used it in his teachings, while in the work of Giovanni Paolo Cesario and Philip Melanchton, at least citations from *De Ratione* can be found (Gardenal et al. 1981).

Cross-References

- [Astronomy](#)
- [Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao](#)
- [Copernicanism](#)
- [Encyclopedia and Encyclopedism](#)
- [Filelfo, Francesco](#)

- [Galen](#)
- [Harmony, Renaissance Conceptions of](#)
- [Humanism](#)
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- [Poliziano, Angelo](#)
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Valla, Lorenzo

Born: Rome, 1406

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Abstract

Lorenzo Valla played a considerable role in the Renaissance humanism for three principal reasons: he contributed to transforming the art of grammar within philology; he closely linked the art of argumentation to its expression in

a historically determined language; and he considered the place of pleasure, understood in the Epicurean tradition, in the conception of earthly happiness and celestial beatitude. Firstly, the development of the philological consciousness leads Valla to consider that language is not only the means of thought's expression but also an essential moment in its elaboration. Therefore, the art of argumentation must abandon the obscure formality of the medieval dialectic and adhere to the real-life requirements of political, moral, and juridical discussion in a precise but ordinary language, proper to common sense.

Consequently, Valla proposes the emendation of the logic practiced in medieval universities along with its replacement by a new art of argumentation, which decomposes and recomposes the functions of rhetoric and dialectic. It is a matter of elaborating an art of argumentation suited to ordinary life's contingent and uncertain situations, characterized by controversy. It is necessary therefore to devise an art of argumentation that allows deducing plausible conclusions, while at the same time elaborating credible proofs. In this respect, Valla attempts to link the credibility of the proofs with a reasoned agreement. Finally, Valla's defense of pleasure as a form of increment, and as a growing satisfaction, implies that "the useful" takes on the signification of the search for a particular benefit for one's self, for a reward, or even for one's own interest. In the same way, the modality of pleasure specific to celestial beatitude consists of a kind of benefit, namely, a constant and peaceful intensity.

Biography

Lorenzo Valla was born in Rome in 1406. His father was a lawyer working at the papal court. Valla moved to Pavia in 1431, where he taught rhetoric. However, Valla was a polemical and quarreling mind which made him many enemies in Pavia, Rome, and Naples. In 1431 Valla wrote *De Voluptate* (the second edition dating ca. 1441–1449 under the title *De vero falsoque bono*.) In 1433 Valla moved to Naples, at the

Aragonese court. He remained in Naples till 1447. In this phase of his life, Valla wrote a lot of significant works, especially *Elegantiae linguae latinae* (1435–1444); *De libero arbitrio* (1435–1439); *Dialecticae Disputationes* (first edition 1439; second edition ca. 1444–1449); and *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione* (1440). Valla returned to Rome in 1447, where he wrote *In Novum Testamentum Adnotationes* (1449) and became, in 1455, a secretary of Pope Nicholas V. He died in 1457.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Because he was a polemic and combative mind, Valla thought that the works of ancient culture, whether sacred or pagan, had come down in a fragmentary, sometimes corrupted, manner. Grammar, the art of correct spelling, needed therefore to be transformed into an art of restitution and correct understanding of its authentic signification. In order to do so, knowing the cultural context of the genesis of the work, the history of the language and its semantic pertinence, or what Valla calls "elegance," was necessary. The *Elegantiae linguae latinae* ("Elegances of the Latin Language") aimed at restoring the semantic precision of Latin, corrupted by medieval culture, all the while underlining the polysemy and the historical development. It is precisely the examination of an utterance's cultural context and the analysis of the lexical and historical pertinence of expressions that allowed Valla to denounce, in his *De falso credita et ementita Constantini Donatione* ("On the Donation of Constantine," 1440), the document, allegedly from Constantine, which ceded a large portion of the Empire to Pope Sylvester, as a fake dating from the eighth century. The same critical attitude is found again in the *Collatio Novi Testamenti Adnotationes* ("Remarks on the New Testament," 1449), where this or that biblical passage is analyzed from a philological point of view.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The development of the philological consciousness leads Valla to consider that *language* is

not only the means of thought's expression but also an essential moment in its elaboration. Consequently, the art of argumentation must abandon the obscure formality of the medieval dialectic and adhere to the real-life requirements of political, moral, and juridical discussion, in a precise but ordinary language, proper to common sense. In this way, in his *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie* ("Dialectical Disputations" 1439 literally the "re-tilling" of the dialectic and of philosophy), Valla proposes the emendation of the logic practiced in medieval universities along with its replacement by a new art of argumentation, which decomposes and recomposes the functions of rhetoric and dialectic. It is a matter of elaborating an art of argumentation suited to ordinary life's contingent and uncertain situations, characterized by controversy. In this context, the necessary conclusions of the analytic syllogism are not valid. It is necessary therefore to devise an art of argumentation that allows deducing plausible conclusions, all the while elaborating credible proofs. In this respect, Valla doesn't prescribe the search for public approval obtained through the manipulation of the passions but rather looks to link the credibility of the proofs to a legitimate and thought-out agreement. This is why his project remains above all dialectical and not rhetorical. In effect, rhetoric, as the art of persuasion and of plausible argumentation, ensures the communication of arguments. In this way, the first condition of persuasion is the intelligible nature of the language in which the arguments are expressed. Thus, common opinions and value judgments specific to a community that finds herself held in the semantic and lexical "treasure" of a historically given language must constitute the starting point of any controversy.

The opposing parties must above all be in agreement about the significance of the controversy and the terms that define it. The notion of *consuetudo*, taken up from Quintilian, defines for Valla the requirement that the interlocutors understand each other while they discuss, because they understand the same signification of the terms used: they speak of the same thing. A valid signification then is a signification confirmed by common sense and the cultural tradition of a language.

In this respect, Valla maintains that numerous philosophical conflicts about being and essence, and about transcendentals or categories, depend on the inappropriate usage of terms. Philosophy and theology require first off a philological effort and a critique of emendation.

Yet, invention (*inventio*) is the mother of arguments and always refers to an analytical process: we want to demonstrate a certain thesis, and we look for (in order to invent them, find them) the most plausible arguments in order to convince others. The method of invention is both rhetorical and dialectical, because it uses "areas" (*loci*) that are common to the two arts. The areas are schemata of intelligibility that allow elaborating the most convincing arguments for all controversial subjects: they can be provided by causes, similarities, consequences, means, etc. These areas are linked to the usage of maxims, which don't express laws but rather valid rules for most cases and that are easily understandable by the public. However, as the grammarians are not limited to studying syllables and letters, so too must the orator not be limited to knowing these areas: he teaches himself to use them in an appropriate manner, in adapting them to specific situations.

But the requirement of presenting credible proofs leads Valla to underline the dialectic's criteria of validity: interrogation and refutation. The dialectic is, for Valla, as for Aristotle, the unique art of critical discourse because it is essentially a method that tests arguments, whether it is a matter of one's own arguments or the arguments of the adversary. But, unlike the Aristotelian dialectic, Valla considers that argumentation's modalities must be deontic: they must include not only the true or the false, the necessary, or the possible but also that which is agreeable, useful, and habitual. These elements don't refer to a criterion of probability, but rather to a form of plausibility defined by what occurs most of the time. This expresses the horizon of meaning of a historical community, its value judgments, and its subdivisions of signification that are translated into its institutions, of which the language just as the law are the essential manifestations.

The anchorage in the reality of controversies and requirements of life together is equally found again in the conception of happiness. Valla, in his *De voluptate* ("On Pleasure," 1431) renamed *De vero falsoque bono* ("On the True and False Good," 1433), introduces Epicurean elements (as well as Lucretian, for Lucretius' work "On the Nature of Things" had been discovered in 1417 by Poggio Bracciolini) in his conception of worldly happiness and celestial beatitude. The text is built as a Ciceronian dialogue, expressing three points of view. In Valla's work, however, the Epicurean celebration of pleasure, that the other Hellenistic schools, both Greek and Roman, had fiercely criticized, predominates. In effect, all the while looking for a specific human natural foundation in order to legitimize moral norms, the Stoics as much as Cicero refuse to recognize the moral foundation in pleasure, which is considered an animal expression and an egotistical compulsion, barring the route to all living together. On the other hand, the foundation is given by a sort of proximity with oneself (the *oikeiosis*) that is closely linked with the desire to protect and to ensure the development of one's near and dear, or even of one's city. The familiarity with one's self implies then a form of altruism and founds living together. Usefulness is not considered here as the manifestation of the search for one's own interests, but as the expression of the collective effort to carry out the common good.

In this respect, Valla's originality consists in defending pleasure as a form of increment and as a growing satisfaction that guides our actions, in such a way that the useful takes on the signification of the search for a particular benefit for one's self, for a reward, or even for one's own interest. Selfishness is solidly anchored in human nature: this is a fact. Valla, therefore, leaves out the principal definition of pleasure for Epicurus, namely, that of the absence of pain. This criterion is insufficient for Valla, and it was criticized as contradictory already from antiquity. Pleasure is, on the other hand, fullness, satisfaction, intensity, and joy. The sum of pleasures is the guide of our earthly lives. Since the useful and pleasure intersect, Valla transforms the Epicurean hierarchy of pleasures between necessary and natural

pleasures, natural and non-necessary pleasures, and pleasures that are neither necessary nor natural. For Valla, natural but non-necessary pleasures and the pleasures that are neither necessary nor natural take on crucial importance in worldly life, for happiness closely depends on acquired benefits and secondary goods that make life joyful and agreeable (like riches, fame, friendship).

In the same way, the distinction between pleasures in movement and stable pleasures acquires a new signification, since they don't define two different modalities of pleasure, but rather two areas: whereas pleasures in movement characterize the worldly existence, stable pleasures define, for Valla, the modality of pleasure specific to celestial beatitude, which consists more in a constant intensity and perfection with nothing leftover as in a contemplative state. Stability therefore no longer defines, unlike the Epicurean philosophy, cosmological equilibrium or imperturbable tranquility of the sage but rather the joyous and eternal accomplishment of the blessed.

The historiography around Valla is highly controversial, in part because of the provocative and polemic nature of his writings, which don't truly fill their claims of originality. Nonetheless, Valla opened new paths in the field of philology, in the semantic and historical study of the Latin language, in the reform of the art of argumentation, and in the domain of morality, in affirming, by means of pleasure, the compatibility between worldly happiness and celestial beatitude.

Impact and Legacy

Valla's philological, critical approach had a noteworthy impact on the humanist grammarians and philosophers such as Angelo Poliziano (1454 [Montepulciano]–1494 [Florence]), Erasmus of Rotterdam (Basel, 1466?–1536), and Thomas Hobbes (1588 [Westport]–1679 [Hardwick Hall]). His polemical criticism of Aristotelian and scholastic tradition and his interpretation of the link between rhetoric and dialectic influenced the art of argumentation in the Renaissance. In this regard, Rodolphus Agricola (1444 [Baflo]–1485 [Heidelberg]) and Pierre de la Ramée (1515

[Cuth]–1572 [Paris]) were the lawful inheritors of Valla's reform of argumentation.

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Van Helmont, Jan Baptiste

Born: Before 12 January 1579, Brussels

Died: 30 December 1644, Brussels

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Abstract

The Flemish physician Jan Baptiste van Helmont is one of the most important followers of Paracelsus. Van Helmont had a major influence on the iatrochemical movement in early modern Europe. His most important book *Ortus medicinae* was published posthumously and sets out his medical, philosophical, and religious worldviews. He is famous for inventing the concept and word *gas*.

Biography

Jan Baptiste was born as the youngest son in a Catholic noble family in current-day Belgium. His youth was overshadowed by the early death of his father and the onset of the 80-years war. Against the will of his mother, he pursued his studies in medicine at the University of Leuven. He finished his university education officially in 1599 but did not accept his degree until 10 years later. This was because he felt compelled to compensate for what he saw as the shortcomings of the university education by traveling through Europe and reading all books he thought were necessary for obtaining a medical degree. By the time he took his degree in 1609, he had married Margarita van Ranst and moved to Vilvoorde where he practiced medicine and set up his own laboratory. Five of his six children were born here before he moved the family back to Brussels. His fifth child and youngest son Franciscus Mercurius (1614–1698) became his most important ambassador after his death on 30 December 1644.

Van Helmont published several treatises between 1621 and 1624, most famously the *De magnetica vulnerum curatione* [On the magnetic cure of wounds] (Paris 1621) in which he described the natural cause of the weapon salve based on magnetism. This treatise gave rise to an allegation of heresy and became a source of major problems for the rest of his life. Led by the Jesuit Jean Roberti, a group of theologians, mainly from the University of Leuven, judged Van Helmont's work to be anathema to church doctrine. Van Helmont appeared three times for the archiepiscopal court in Mechelen. During this period he was not able to publish and lived several years under house arrest. However, several of his autographs that were confiscated by the ecclesiastical court can still be found in their archives in Mechelen. In 1642 he published the first of four influential treatises, on fevers, the stone, the plague, and the four Galenic humors. The set of four was published in 1644 as *Opuscula medicina inaudita* [Small medical works, previously unheard off]. They were reprinted as part of his largest work, the *Ortus medicinae* [The Rise of Medicine] (Amsterdam 1648), posthumously published by

van Helmont's son. Another 11 years later, Van Helmont's Dutch work *Dageraad* was published. The story goes that van Helmont had given this Dutch work to one of his daughters during his life. A friend subsequently discovered the manuscript and immediately brought the manuscript to the printer.

Van Helmont is in current historical studies especially known as an alchemical author and follower of the Swiss physician Paracelsus (1493–1541). In his own laboratory, he experimented with alchemical and medical recipes, procedures, and methods. He described these in his writings which all bear medical titles yet contain diverse material touching upon other fields. These works expound not only upon medical ideas based on Hippocrates as well as Paracelsus but also develop a full philosophy of the world, human beings, the soul, and the body. In accordance with Neoplatonic ideas, he placed the faculty of “intellect” as the image of God at the pinnacle of human nature, whereas “reason” in van Helmont's philosophy has no such status. Van Helmont's rejection of scholastic medicine complements arguments against Aristotelianism and the use of mathematics for complex processes throughout his works, together with suggested reforms in education and methods for acquiring new knowledge, namely, by experiment and experience. His methods of quantification of his experiments have been important for later developments in chemistry and science in general. The many new concepts and ideas discovered and invented by van Helmont were given new names by him, in both Latin and his native tongue Dutch, with the most famous surviving term being “gas.”

Cross-References

- ▶ [Alchemical Medicine and Distillation](#)
- ▶ [Fludd, Robert](#)
- ▶ [Innate Heat](#)
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- ▶ [Seed Concept in the Renaissance](#)
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Vanini, Giulio Cesare

Born: Taurisano, 1585

Died: Toulouse, 1619

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Abstract

With his restless spirit, feeling vested with the civil task of a profound political and cultural renewal of human beings and society, Vanini, at the dawn of the modern age, conducts a systematic demolition of Medieval and Renaissance theological learning from the perspective of radical rationalism, almost pre-Enlightenment, and paves the way for a refoundation of learning on the basis of the autonomy of reason and nature, with often

subversive outcomes of the ethical and cultural values of the Christian tradition.

Biography

Born in Taurisano (Lecce) between January 19 and 20, 1585, of Giovan Battista and Beatrice Lopez de Noguera, in 1603, Giulio Cesare Vanini took vows under the name of Gabriel in the Neapolitan convent of Carmine Maggiore; a few years later, on June 1, 1606, he graduated in civil and canon law at the College of Doctors, then joined to the *Studium* in Naples. After February 1610, he moved to Padua in order to attend the academic courses in Theology or perhaps in *Artibus*. But on January 28, 1612, his expectations were rudely interrupted by a severe disciplinary measure from the General of the Carmelite Order, Henry Silvio, who aimed at relegating him to a dark convent of Cilento. In association with his brother Giovanni Maria Ginocchio, Vanini preferred to escape to England, where perhaps he hoped to establish himself as a philosopher – theologian, critic of the principles of the Council of Trent. The escape route was carefully planned by the English Ambassador in Venice, Dudley Carleton, who entrusted him to the care of his friend John Chamberlain and placed him under the protection of the mighty Primate of England, George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, which gave him hospitality at Lambeth Palace after he arrived in London, on June 20, 1612. On July 8 of the same year, Vanini pronounced the abjuration of Catholicism in Mercers Chapel.

The difficult relation ship with Abbot induced Vanini to come into contact with the Catholic world again by means of the Spanish ambassador in London, Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, and the Nuncio of France, Roberto Ubaldini. In March of 1613, he had sent a memorial to Paul V, unfortunately lost, the contents of which are made known to us by a report from the Congregation of the Holy Office (Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, S. O., Decrees, 1613, ff. 166 and 168). We thus know that with his brother Ginocchio, he asked the Pope for absolution *in foro fori*, to be released from the vows of

the religion of Carmel, and for the opportunity to wear secular clothing or priestly cassock. His proposals were examined by the Holy Office in its sessions on April 11 and August 22, 1613 (Decrees 1613 ff. 413–414), in which the Pope granted them pardon on the condition of their spontaneously appearing, and formally renouncing the Anglican religion.

Having become aware of his attempt to leave England, on February 2, 1614, Abbot placed Vanini under arrest, first in Lambeth Palace and later (from February 14) in the Gatehouse. On February 15, 1614, he brought Vanini to trial before the High Commission. From the minutes of the *Second examination* (Archives of the Archdiocese of Westminster, Series A, XII, no. 23 ff. 49–52), we learn that Vanini was suspected of having had contacts with a few Catholics imprisoned in Newgate. He was charged with antitrinitarianism and Arianism Calvinism and British Puritanism, and that he was a miscreant because he left in his cell the books by Machiavelli and Pietro Aretino “super institutiones” (with obvious reference to the *Prince* in the case of the first and to *The reasoning of the courts* in the latter case).

Having escaped the Gatehouse with the support of the Spanish Ambassador and with the secret consent from King James I of England, Vanini goes to Ubaldini, asking to publish with the permission of the Congregation of the Holy Office the *Apologia pro Concilio Tridentino*, in 18 books, unfortunately lost. However, the Church authorities show some interest, rather than in examining the text, in bringing the ex-apostate to Rome for trial before the court of the Holy Office. This is, in fact, the hint of the Apostolic Nuncio (letter of July 31, 1614, to the Roman Inquisitor, Giovanni Garzia Millini), and this is also the proposal of the Pope (decree of the Holy Office, dated August 28, 1614, Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, SO, Decrees 1614, ff. 420–421). Vanini is careful not to get to Rome and stops in Genoa, where he makes friends with Scipione Doria, who entrusts him with the task of teaching philosophy to his son Giacomo. On January 19, 1615, following the arrest of Ginocchio ordered by the Genoese inquisitor, he feels targeted by the Holy Office.

He hastens to leave the Republic and goes to Lyon, where he publishes the *Amphitheatrum*.

After a further meeting with Ubaldini in July of 1615, he finally breaks the connection with the Nuncio and seeks protection and success in the *milieu* of kingly courts and in the libertine circles which proliferated in the French capital. Paris opens to him the doors of the coveted success and offers the protection of leading personalities such as Arthur D’Epinay de Saint-Luc, François de Bassompierre, Nicolas Brûlart, the Earl of Cramail, and lastly the Duke of Montmorency. Within this cultural *milieu*, Vanini was able to breathe the atmosphere of intellectual freedom which led him to edit the *De admirandis reginae deaeque Mortalium arcanis*, published by Adrien Perier on September 1, 1616. The book had an immediate *succès de scandale*, but just one month after publication, the Theological Faculty of the Sorbonne intervened with a sentence (Archives Nationales de France, Reg MM 251, 1608–1633, f. 68). Forced to seek a safer refuge, Vanini moved into the strongly Catholic Toulouse under the protection of Cramail.

On February 9, 1619, by which time the normalization policy of Louis XIII could no longer tolerate the extremes of Vanini’s radicalism, Toulouse reserved him the tragic end of the stake. Arrested by the *Capitouls* Paul Virazel and Jean d’Olivier on August 2, 1618, and submitted to the *Cour de Parlement*, he was sentenced under the guise of Pomponio Usciglio, perhaps because the Court became convinced that the name Julius Caesar had been adopted by the philosopher in order to rise as a new Caesar, conqueror of Gaul to the word of atheism. On that same day in the *Place du Salin*, the executioner performed carefully the sentence: cut off the tongue of the condemned with pincers, hung him from the gallows, burned him on the stake, and, finally, scattered his mortal ashes to the wind.

Vanini’s Atheism Between Criticism of Tradition and Civil Engagement

The introductory pages of the *Amphitheatrum* and *De admirandis* lead us to suppose that the

philosopher developed his own thinking in close correlation with his own historical time. The experience of living in London, in contact with the intransigence and the rigorism of the most extreme wing of English Puritanism, and the Parisian stay, which occurred during the most tragic years of the regency of the Queen Mother, who did not hesitate to unleash a bloody civil conflict, placed the Salentino face to face with the heavy moral, political, and religious crisis which gripped Europe in the early seventeenth century.

He identifies the roots of this European crisis in the cultural tradition of Christian theology of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, which, subject to critical investigation, appears to him interwoven with lies and deceit, fraud and falsehoods, and imposture and superstitions. Unlike other spirits of the time, who stick to the generic, deistic (e.g., the libertines), or irenistic formulas that remained, at any rate, within that tradition, Vanini arrives at theoretical atheism, understood as a liberating and emancipatory philosophy, able to close a historical process and usher in a new set of values for the modern age. He presents himself as an innovator, the bearer of a new philosophy marking discontinuity and a sharp break from the past. He is convinced that the battle for the liberation and emancipation of humanity can assume only the anti-historical function of demolition of the ideological-cultural heritage of the Christian West. In this attitude, which could be defined as pre-Enlightenment, we find the deepest motivation for that critical and destructive dimension of his thinking, often mentioned by its interpreters. The legacy of medieval and humanist-Renaissance ages crumbles shattered: he demolishes the myth of anthropocentrism; unhinges the principles of Christianized Platonism; shakes the pillars of concordist Aristotelianism; dismantles the construction of a compact, finite, harmonized universe, having at its summit God and the choir of angelic Intelligences; crushes any form of teleology; discredits the myth of human supremacy among the living beings; shatters the most established principles of Christian ethics, and unmask the illusions of magic and of astrology.

The dismantling of the cornerstones of Christianity is accompanied by a return to ancient times

for at least two reasons. The first is that Vanini feels the need to reconnect modern atheism and the ancient approach (“*Veteres philosophi [...] ut qui illorum praesidio innituntur moderni athei,*” *Amph.*, 1615, p. n.n. 17). It is no coincidence that he mentions in the *album atheorum* thinkers such as Cicero, Protagoras, Diagoras, Diodorus of Sicily, Luciano, Pliny, and among the moderns, Machiavelli and Cardano. The second reason is that ancient philosophy is the ground on which it is possible to recover the natural reason which Vanini identifies with Aristotelian pre-Christian *ratio*, not yet bridled by the chains of religious categories. It follows that his thinking takes a rationalistic and radical shape because it does not detract any domain or privileged object from the critical scrutiny of natural reason. Excluding any supernatural or metaphysical dimension, modern atheism coincides, according to Vanini, with the construction of a new learning based on the two pillars of the autonomy of reason and autonomy of nature. In this perspective, he assigns to himself and to the emerging new century a subversive function of civil and intellectual emancipation. The introductory pages of the *Amphitheatrum* and of *De admirandis* insist on a drastic reversal of values: the age of ideological conflicts resulting from the proliferation of sectarianisms and heresies, emerging from the crucible of the Reformation, is finally closed. The novelty that advances is a *secretior philosophia*, which coincides with atheism, represented by the metaphor of lush vegetation that expands and invades the whole European world. The term *secretior* should not mislead: it has nothing to do with theosophical, platonizing, or neoplatonizing mysticism. The terminology of Platonic origin has in Vanini’s texts a mere function of coverage. Atheism is for Vanini the antidote to mysticism. It is *secretior* because, in order to escape the watchful censorship of the inquisitors, it disguises itself in the *chiaroscuro* of the technique of textual composition in which ambiguity and irony alternate with the mimetic game of simulation and dissimulation. In any case, Vanini’s key to understanding the modern world is quite clear: the age of the ideological predominance of religion, in his view, is superseded by a radical secularization process

of political and social values. It is significant that in the *nuncupatoria* to Bassompierre he presents his talent as a sapling that, having grown up in the barren soil of traditional philosophy, was unlikely to produce significant results, but revived under the action of the turgid and vigorous seed (“protuberante, turgenteque semine”) of atheism; this allowed him to go beyond the goals of ancient philosophers and to overcome the difficulties of modern ones (“Veterum philosophorum metas transiliens et recentiorum obstacula superans,” *De adm.*, 1616, p. nn 4).

But even more insightful are the pages of Dialogue 1, where the new philosophy (i.e., atheism) is presented as a sudden light that hurts the eyes of those who have long lived in darkness (“Fit laesio repentina, illata luce ijs, qui diu in tenebris commorati sunt,” *De adm.*, pp. 2–3). Even here the terminology is influenced by Platonic reminiscence, but in Vanini, it has connotations in the opposite direction, because the darkness is metaphorically traditional learning, and the theme of sudden enlightenment suggests the idea of a philosophical turn destined to fundamentally alter the sensitivity of modern humanity. The metaphor of the light alludes to a *Renovatio* which nevertheless no longer has colorings of a religious character but coincides with liberation from the lies and the frauds of the Christian tradition (“fraudes detegere, figmenta patefacere,” *De adm.*, pp. 369, 392, 442, 474). And the historical, moral, and civil task of the philosopher is to transmit at least one drop (“gutta”) of his own renewed learning to the younger generations (*De adm.*, 1616, p. 3).

Vanini's atheism is thus outlined on the basis of a new conception of humanity and the world. His universe is autonomous in its material composition and its constitutive principles of motion and rest. Vanini has in mind a mechanistic model; the world is understood, according to Lucretius, as a *machina* that has inside it and in the structure of its gears, not unlike those of a watch produced by German craftsmen, reliable and stable laws referring to an internal principle of movement. Just as materialistic and mechanistic is the model used to explain the functioning of living organisms, including humans. The physical and mental life

of humans is in a symbiotic relationship with the natural and human environment. The psychological characteristics depend on the food, habits, social customs, and transmission of the seed. The physical and mental life of humans is entirely internal to nature and to society not only in the sense that it is their product, but also in the most radical sense that nature and society are the only horizons within which human life develops and dissolves with the exclusion of any other extranatural dimension. The reasons for concluding in favor of the mortality of the soul are more consistent and stronger than those in support of immortality. The life of the mind is rooted in the materiality of the body and in the mechanistic motion of vital and natural spirits. The soul itself is nothing but *spiritus* which coincides with *aër* because *spiritus* springs from *spirare*, which is the material act of breathing (*De adm.*, p. 345).

The autonomy of reason and of nature is not real if it is not autonomy from the supernatural. Vanini severs at the root of the relationship between God and nature: he not only denies the creative act but also excludes the assistential, providentialistic, and teleological activity of a supernatural intelligence. God is not the ultimate aim of the universal order. Being autonomous, the cosmos is eternal and has no beginning and no end; it is not perfect, but it is, according to the famous paradox of Empedocles, perfectible precisely because of its imperfection. The *Amphitheatrum* is the text in which the most radical refutation of the idea of providence is conducted: in it all sorts of teleologism are rejected; there are no extraordinary interventions by divinity in the world, the distribution of good and evil is totally random, and miracles are either attributable to *causae naturales* or turn out to be frauds of priests and politicians; in the natural order, there is no trace of an intelligence or of an organizing will, as evidenced by the deformity studied by teratology. All is reduced to living and to vivifying matter, without hierarchies and degrees of reality, since the matter of which heavenly bodies and earthly ones are made is only one, down to the humblest such as the scarab. Life is the random effect of spontaneous generation. Human beings are no

exception; strictly rooted in the animal kingdom, they are also a random and spontaneous production of matter: their past is on all fours and in their soul, there is no trace of the divine imprint.

If God is not the ultimate aim, He is not even the first cause, neither in the sense of a free and contingent causality nor in the sense of a necessary causality. Vanini excludes, on the one side, Scotian voluntarism and contingentism and, on the other, Thomistic necessitarianism. If God were a free cause, or an absolute will, or an infinite might that has no limits or obstacles to His power, He would compromise the order of nature. If the natural order were preserved instead in its rigid regularity, God's free and absolute power would remain, in fact, inactive and without effect. On the other hand, free causality coincides with contingent acting. But if God can act or not act, if He can be determined now in one way or another, this means that He is from time to time, now indeterminate and now determined, and that in Him there is, as in us, the shift from indetermination to determination or the shift from one determination to another. But this implies imperfection and it is not compatible with the immutable essence of God. Nor is it possible that God is necessary causality, because otherwise the world would have been created from the time immemorial and would necessarily be co-eternal with God with the further consequence that the necessary causality would rule out human free will.

Vanini's next step is dismantling the traditional evidence of God's existence, from the cosmological *a posteriori* to the ontological *a priori*. The refutation of the ontological proof is not directed only against Anselmo, but also against Suarezian scholastic which had replaced the old question *An sit Deus?* with *quid sit Deus?* Vanini closely links the two questions of the theologian and shows how the response to the latter constitutes implicitly an answer to the former: defining the *quid* of divine essence means to emphasizing its inner contradiction and thus the impossibility of its existence. The same fate obviously concerns cosmological evidence. Evidence *ex motu* or *e pulchritudine universi* is null and void. They all clash with the impossibility that the eternal and

immutable entity is compatible with motion or with the novelty of Creation.

Of course, the *athéisme de théorie* does not fail to be accompanied by peaks of an irreverent nature which turn Vanini's philosophy into a philosophy of unmasking: to expose the frauds and lies is its most subversive feature. Its privileged targets are the religions that, having originated from fear (Primos in orbe deos fecit timor, *De adm.*, p. 366), belong to the world of fiction. And Vanini's weapon is derision, to the points of sarcasm, subtle irony, and the intention to demystify and desacralize everything. He does not save even the biblical text, equated to Aesop's fables; indeed, he points out, not without a mischievous satisfaction, that no one has ever found its original. The Solomonic verses, far from being discoverers of divine wisdom, are lascivious, inelegant, devoid of any rational value just full of popular proverbs. The narration of the creation of the world by Moses is worthy of sponge and of coal; biblical resurrections are stories embellished *fusco sanctitatis* or are related to apparent death phenomena.

Human Knowledge and Divine Knowledge: The Antimetaphysical Structure

Vanini's philosophical horizon is not only anti-theological, but it is also antimetaphysical. This means that he not only excludes the existence of a free and intelligent will but also the complex array of necessary and eternal essences of classical metaphysics. The test bench for the antimetaphysical battle is that of gnosiology or better of the opposition between human and divine knowledge. The instruments of human knowledge are *ratio* and *experimentum*, that is to say, reason and sense. Reason is, as already mentioned, the *ratio naturalis* which is autonomous, anti-dogmatic, and critical; it is not of divine origin nor is it absolute and abstract; it is a flexible and malleable tool, able to capture the multiform variety of nature in its own becoming. Fitted entirely within the human and mundane horizon, reason is no longer opposed to sensitivity and to animal

appetites. Nothing is more foreign to Vanini's thinking than a speculative and contemplative, pure and passionless, activity. If the human mind were of divine origin – he writes – it should always think in terms of divine or at least human truths (“Si divina mens nostra est [...] divina semper vel humana saltem vera cogitaret,” *De adm.*, p. 491). On the contrary, according to Vanini, human rationality is concrete and follows the same procedures and techniques of argumentation and reasoning which in turn require material tools (“Materialia instrumenta ad ratiocinandum requiruntur,” *De adm.*, p. 382). In order to avoid escaping towards metaphysics, Vanini states that rationality is inherent in the materiality of the body and in continuity with the animal instinct. Overturning the Stoic philosophy, which draws a sharp demarcation line between humans and animals, he brings back reason to instinct. What in us is called “reason” – he writes – coincides in animals with what we call “natural instinct” (“Quod in nobis vocatur ratio, in brutis naturae instinctus a nobis dicitur,” *De adm.*, p. 343). In other words, *ratio* belongs to the scope of natural and animal reality. Whereas instinct guides animal life, reason guides human life. The only difference is that the former determines in brutes a univocal and repetitive behavior, while the latter gives humans a wider range of choices. But in both cases, these are behaviors which related solely to the environment, purely physical for animals and physical and cultural for humans.

Being natural, human rationality belongs to the time, because it is part of nature's becoming; the eternal and absolute truths are precluded from it. Vanini rejects the Aristotelian concept of duality of the intellect, active and passive. Human knowledge does not depend on an intellect that intuitively grasps the intelligibles, but it depends on direct contact with the contingent order of nature. The intellectual intuition of the eternal essences is rejected because it does not have any impact on scientific knowledge. Scientific truths are for Vanini hard to conquer, because our theoretical faculties are discursive and marked by subjective components such as *assensus* or *dis-sensus*, *credulitas*, *fides*, and *consuetudines*.

Consequently, the *scientia Dei* is rejected, which, on the one hand, may not have access to the *varietas* of the natural world and, on the other, cannot be the cause of things, because in either case, it is incompatible with natural becoming. If the divine mind knew individual, changing, and contingent things, it would, like the human mind, be subject to change and error, and vice versa, if it had no knowledge of them, divine wisdom and divine power would suffer a restriction incompatible with the nature of divinity.

The logical principle, of Aristotelian derivation, from which Vanini moves, is that the nature of science depends on that of known objects. The object of science – he observes on the basis of Aristotelian *posterioristics* – cannot be of a different nature from that of the cognitive faculty. You cannot have any certain knowledge of what is inherently uncertain. Vanini uses this principle to draw a sort of demarcation line between divine science and human science. Theology has done nothing other than transfer into the divine mind the intelligible essences of Aristotelian origin. Divine science is certain because it relates to necessary and universal essences but has as its counterpart the impossibility to incorporate as its own objects the individual and particular entities that are subject to becoming and changing. Not surprisingly Aristotle had said that if God were aware of those, He would be degraded. With a hint of radicalism, Vanini infers that God does not have knowledge of all things; but rather of the individuals. He does not even have the knowledge of them, which brutes have (*Amph.*, p. 243).

Demolished theology, also the epistemic ideal of Aristotelianism that has its foundation in the science of the universal collapses. What is the use – Vanini notes – of knowing that Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are “men” if you ignore the specific individuality whereby each one differs from the other? Essentialist metaphysics is inadequate for building scientific knowledge. The parameters of science should be redefined starting from the real conditions in which human knowledge is produced. For Vanini our intellectual faculty is operational and is constantly moving and constantly becoming something else, like all other natural beings. This means that his gnosiology is

shaped in the subjectivistic sense: our intellect is not concerned with eternal truths that precede experience; we – writes the philosopher – are circumscribed within the limits of time and space; our knowledge changes with the changing of things; it does not have the stability of divine knowledge but moves from agreement to dissent, from truth to error or vice versa.

Vanini does not push his analysis to the limits of phenomenalism or, even worse, skepticism. Unlike the libertines, he is confident in science. The human intellect is indeed caught within the meshes of time, but it is also a conjectural and operational faculty, which, acting on the material provided by the senses, increases its knowledge indefinitely, just as in the process of indoctrination (*Amph.*, pp. 138, 253), which produces organic accumulations of knowledge. But the basic problem is to determine what are the conditions for the certainty of human knowledge. And in this respect, he has in mind a change in the epistemological model of science, no longer anchored to the needs of universal essences, but to the necessity inherent in the causal relationship. The size of certainty in human knowledge is not precluded because natural order coincides with the causal chain that links events and things. The conjectural faculty is to predict the possible effects of present or past causes. In short, the necessity inherent to causal connection is a guarantee of order and knowability of the things and therefore also of the certainty of human knowledge (*Amph.*, p. 131). In the light of this change in perspective, the continued insistence of the Salentino on the natural causes that take away from things or events the enamel of *arcanum* and of *admirandum* is explained. Removed from divine nature, causality, as a necessary and intrinsic connection to things, is lowered into the physical world; it is indeed a kind of its internal law or rule on which the certainty of human knowledge is based. The natural world is no longer subject to the whim, to the will, or to the power of an external agent, but it is a self-sufficient order, governed by its own principles.

Unfortunately, Vanini takes a step towards the foundation of modern science only in view of a purely theoretical frame, from which mathematics

is absent which, however, constitutes its main tool. He is even less equipped at the level of experimental research, because his concept of experience is mostly equivalent to mere empirical observation. It follows that he conducts the identification of proximate causes with a good dose of approximation. This means that his scientific research remains in many ways conjectural; most of his results are fleeting and often, in the absence of accurate identification of proximate causes, he is lost in a farraginous jumble of assumptions sometimes inadequate, sometimes even elementary and simplistic, sometimes perhaps excessively influenced by irreverent or subversive purposes. The exceptions are some brilliant insights in the field of biology which some scholars considered forerunners of Darwinism and which perhaps would fit more appropriately within the frame of a naive or primeval biological transformationism.

Politics and the Unmasking of Power. Secularized Ethics

The common thread of Vanini's political thought is given by a Machiavellism widely contaminated by the theory of imposture derived from Lucian and by a strong challenge to the power of the courts of Aretinian origin. Therefore, in the hands of the Salentino, Machiavellianism is translated into a kind of useful tool to unmask the connection between religious power and political power. The task of the philosopher is to denounce the absolute arbitrariness of both; indeed, it is, more precisely, to reveal the intimate intertwining whereby the former appears to be the ideological support of the latter, both of which are based on a system of lies that affect civil and intellectual liberties which are vital for the free expression of art and science.

This explains the subversive nature of Vanini's thought, who is obviously not interested in safeguarding or preserving the political-social order, but rather in its demolition through the demolition of the *Leges*. If the *libertins érudits* are aligned up on the ideological positions of the conservative bourgeoisie and if the libertinism of

the poets that move in the *entourage* of Théophile de Viau feeds on the rebellion of the aristocratic classes and trespasses into forms of wickedness and unbelief mostly gratuitous and without theoretical consistency, Vanini theorizes a law of nature, which has a double meaning, ethical and political, and is alternative to religion and to historical-positive law.

Everything that moves away from the law of nature is arbitrary and is violence perpetrated on men. The unmasking of power passes through a close confrontation between the divine government and the human government, which are mirror images of each other, and both arbitrary. The emphasis is often on the theme of revenge. Both divine justice and human justice appear more like revenge than fairness. The God of the Sacred Code (note the substitution of religious with legal terminology) is the avenger of crimes; the earthly judges are his ministers. Since he derives his power from a divine origin, the sovereign legitimates his own power to administer justice. The punitive actions of the earthly prince have an immediate effect, those of divine justice postpone rewards and punishments to a fictional future life so that political-religious deception is not easily exposed (“ne fraus detegi possit,” *De adm.*, p. 366) and helps perpetuate the status of slavery and psychological subjection of the people (*Amph.*, pp. 82–83, 85–86; *De adm.*, p. 366).

Removing from the power of the prince the material and spiritual foundation means for Vanini revealing its arbitrary nature. All power, whether divine or earthly, is arbitrary, not bound by any law, because the law is nothing more than the will of God or of the earthly prince itself. This means that any power, divine or human, everything is permissible: if God makes us all sinners, he does not act in violation of any rule, simply because he acts in accordance with his will (*Amph.*, p. 103). The same applies to the earthly prince. But if power is arbitrary, it means that it is no longer of divine origin and is therefore questionable. What prevents people from rebelling is not the fear of divine punishment, but that of a violent and persecutory reaction from the prince. The

philosophers themselves had to bow their heads and take refuge in silence, spurred by the fear of public power. The example of Socrates was a warning to all. Aristotle left Athens to prevent a new crime against philosophy from being committed. The free expression of ideas is always opposed by the religious power; the books by Protagoras were burned in the public square, in a climate of intolerance not unlike that of the age of the Counter-Reformation (*De adm.*, 1616, p. 367; *Amph.*, p. 90).

Political power as much as religious power is based on cunning, fiction, and on deception. Not even Christianity is free from them. The figure of Christ is drawn by Vanini according to the parameters of the fox-like cunning of Machiavellian mold: pretending to preserve or to complete the Jewish religion, Christ subverts its foundations and establishes in its place the Christian religion. Then, to protect it from the risk of inevitable corruption, he starts circulating the prophecy of the Antichrist. The new prophet, that is, behaves in the same way as a new prince: to consolidate his power, which in the initial phase is weaker, he uses cunning or weapons. Christ chose to found the Christian law, exposing and sacrificing himself to an ignominious death, so that his example was not attractive to other self-proclaimed Messiahs; Moses always carried weapons and sowed carnages and blood in his path. The religions, Mosaic and Christian, had a long life because of their link with the dominant power; Apollonius of Tyana founded a short-lived religion because he preached poverty and came into conflict with vested interests (*De adm.*, pp. 357–359, 454).

But it is not enough to denounce that religions are based from the outset on deception and lies. The objective of Vanini is to emphasize that they also exert psychological tyranny. Deception – he notes – in order to be lasting must affect basic human needs and must relate to hopes and fears: only these exert a psychological, intellectual, and social tyranny over believers. This explains, therefore, how the action of the prince or of the prophet on the people is one of seduction and plagiarism (*De adm.*, 1616, p. 453). The

stratagem which they commonly use is to make people believe they have a direct and privileged relationship with divinity, so that the opposition to their power is immediately perceived as a violation of divine will. All acts of the prophet are intended to reinforce this belief. Political domination and priestly power, to perpetuate themselves over time, are formed so as not to be susceptible to challenge. To perpetuate the religion which he founded, the new prophet seeks to exert a cultural domination that extends beyond his death. The stratagem of resurrection or ascending to heaven is functional to this. Moses threw himself into an abyss so that the people believed him resurrected. So did Empedocles and the prophet Elijah. And the implication, not even so veiled, is that Christ did the same to consolidate the newly born “Christian slavery” (*De adm.*, 1616, pp. 390, 361).

No positive religion, no historic civilization has an infinite lifespan: Vanini has a strong sense of the historicity of civil and religious institutions – cities, kingdoms, and religions are subject to the iron law of natural becoming. He tends to place a strong emphasis on the natural law of generation and corruption of all things: “*Omnia orta occidunt*” – all that is born is bound to perish. Nothing lasts forever – values, customs, traditions, ways of thinking, beliefs, ethical rules, and civic and religious organizations – everything is swept away by the law of becoming. What was holier and nobler than the name of *Jupiter* according to the faith of the Gentiles? And what is the meaner and more execrable than this in the Christian faith? Kingdoms and religions are historical products: they are born, they grow, they reach the peak of their vitality, but then they begin their inexorable process of senescence and exhaustion. In the birth phase of the new religion, miracles abound, because the prophet wants to appear as the son of God or as an envoy, and then decrease steadily until they disappear altogether. Finally, a religion replaces another. And since the world is eternal, rituals periodically return: the ones currently in force have been activated thousands of times and will come into force again, not according to the individual, but

according to the species, i.e., not in the form of their individuality, but in that of their specific essence (*De adm.*, pp. 386–389).

Radical and de-theologized is also Vanini’s ethics, which has a strong naturalistic inclination almost flattened in a medical-scientific or physiological investigation of human passions and affections, traced mostly to a mechanistic motion of the vital spirits. The most relevant data is that it is ethics autonomous from the metaphysical considerations, either from theological assumptions or religious evaluations. As in political thinking, the parameter of an ideal State is absent, in ethical thinking are the dimensions of the absolute absent. Moral behavior is seen only from a relativistic viewpoint in relation to the composite structure of the subject agent. Of course, it is unprejudiced ethics in the dual sense that it is free from conditioning prejudices and unrelated to morals, and it is also an effort, a propensity, and a fight against any free prejudices that mortify natural human life. It is therefore primarily ethics liberated and emancipated from the connotation of sin, full of epicurean traits, strongly aimed at the evaluation of the pleasure.

In Vanini’s ethical reflection, sexual pleasure plays a central role, not least because it is what presides and ensures the perpetuation of the species. Life on earth would run the risk of becoming extinct if nature had not endowed us with the coupling instinct. Therefore, sexuality is freed from any negative connotation: sexual organs do not deserve the name *pudenda*, because they are authors and masters of reproduction: “procreationis magistrae [...] et opifices” (*De adm.*, p. 311). The Dialogue XLVIII is a full and radical reevaluation of sexual pleasure, proposed as a sixth sense and a very sweet thing (“res dulcissima”) because it is a function of reproduction. Vanini’s ethical hedonism is far from taking spiritualistic veins: pleasure is not viewed as an affection of the soul, but of the compound, i.e., of the *synolon*, understood in line with Aristotelianism as a union of soul and body. Pleasure, therefore, cannot but have a bodily and material component.

This means that *felicitas* consists neither in the Averroistic copulation nor in a vision-contemplation of transcendent deity, it is rather an all-earthly *felicitas* which Vanini with caution projects in the rarefied celestial sphere of a *Respublica* in a sort of social-political, reversed *utopia*, where the negative values of the existing social model are overturned: "A Republic in which participation is without envy... all men want others to partake in what is there... because he who wants, wants others to want the same things and makes sure that we also want what he wants" (*Amph.*, p. 196).

And it is precisely on the subject of happiness or bliss, understood as the enjoyment of the highest good, that the claims of ethics of religious origin collapse. Vanini, in fact, insists on the impossibility of unification of finite and infinite. Only the infinite God can identify with himself as the infinite being. So only God can be blessed. Even more radical is the observation that the act can have an aim provided that the aim does not exceed the power of the operator. In other words, the purpose generally cannot exceed the material conditions of the actor. As the coach, which is the final term of the operation, does not exceed the potentialities of the carpenter, the aim of the will cannot transcend its potentialities. The human will does not immediately want the highest good, because it is taken with the desire of being. So if good is the being, our will desires the being, not because is devoid of it, but because it possesses it. We do not desire the being which we already are, but we want its preservation. Having embarked on this path, there is no supernatural finality. In fact, we do not desire God's being, because those who desire, desire their own perfection. If we wanted God's being, we would want our corruption and our destruction (*Amph.*, pp. 189–196).

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Varchi, Benedetto

Born: Florence, 19 March 1503

Died: Florence, 19 December 1565

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Abstract

Benedetto Varchi was one of the most versatile intellectuals of the sixteenth century, who offered highly innovative and original answers to the cultural challenges of his time. He devised a new theory of language that anticipated modern sociolinguistics and put the vernacular at the forefront of the philosophical and literary developments of his time. In turn, he renewed the scope of philosophy through a language that was conceptually accurate and stylistically pleasant and applied his theory to his translations of classical authors and his linguistic dialogue *L'Hercolano*. Varchi lectured extensively on the ancient classics, as well as Dante and Petrarch; he is the author of a major history of Florence commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici.

Biography

Benedetto Varchi was born in Florence on March 19, 1503. His father was Ser Giovanni, a notary from Montevarchi (Busini 2008, pp. 92–93; Lo Re 2008, pp. 295–296); his mother was Diamante, widow of painter Benedetto del Ghirlandaio (Valori 2008, p. 117). After completing a Law degree at the University of Pisa (Ferrone 2003, p. 9), Varchi devoted himself to the study of philosophy and literature, and attended, at a very young age, meetings at the “Orti Oricellari” (Lo Re 2008, p. 295). His first mentors were Francesco Verino “Primo” and Piero Vettori (Pirotti 1971, pp. 10–11; Lo Re 2008, p. 30). Varchi’s republican sympathies forced him to

flee Florence after Cosimo de’ Medici succeeded Duke Alessandro (January 1537): he followed Roberto Strozzi, who was the son of Filippo Strozzi, a prominent banker, and leader of Florentine expatriates, first to Venice then to Padua, serving as a tutor for Roberto’s younger brothers (Pirotti 1971, pp. 13–15). Varchi remained in Padua even after his relationship with the Strozzi soured and began to gravitate around a group of intellectuals linked to the University of Padua (Vasoli 2007, pp. 405–506). He was among the founders of the Paduan Accademia degli Infiammati, where he delivered several lectures on Greek and Latin classical authors (Theocritus, Horace, Tibullus), Petrarch, and contemporaries such as Pietro Bembo or Giovanni Della Casa (Lo Re 2008, pp. 191–256; Andreoni 2012, pp. 43–63). Varchi’s most ambitious endeavor at the Infiammati was the project (never completed) of translating and commenting on Aristotle: he lectured on the *Nicomachean ethics* and wrote vernacular commentaries on *Ethics* and *Prior analytics* (Lo Re 2008, pp. 216–229; Brancato 2018a). In 1541, Varchi moved to Bologna and attended the lectures of Ludovico Boccadiferro, who taught philosophy at the University (Rotondò 1969; Lo Re 2008, pp. 242–243). Meanwhile, Cosimo de’ Medici, in recognition of Varchi’s rising reputation, invited him back to Florence to become a member of the newly established Accademia Fiorentina. Thus after a brief sojourn in Ferrara, Varchi was pardoned and allowed to return to his hometown in 1543 (Pirotti 1971, p. 20; Firpo 1997, pp. 264–266; Lo Re 2008, pp. 287–295).

Back in Florence, Varchi continued his work on Aristotle and drafted a commentary on the *Meteorologics*, a text he might have studied with Boccadiferro (Gilson 2016); he was also appointed to lecture on Petrarch at the Accademia Fiorentina, where he defended Bembo’s linguistic theories and offered philosophical readings of Italian authors (Andreoni 2012, pp. 15–20). He was the first, for instance, to emphasize the Aristotelian content of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* (Andreoni 2012, pp. 98–106). Varchi’s innovative ideas and methodology entered into conflict with those of other academicians, especially Carlo

Lenzoni, Pierfrancesco Giambullari, and Cosimo Bartoli (Plaisance 2004 [1974], pp. 129–148; Firpo 1997, pp. 179–191, 268–270; Lo Re 2008, pp. 302–319). The rivalry between Varchi and these intellectuals was not limited to academic tensions: in 1545, the year Varchi was appointed consul at the Accademia Fiorentina, Lenzoni wrongly accused him of sexually assaulting a young girl. Varchi was once again pardoned by Cosimo thanks to Bembo's help, but had to accept the charges and pay a fine to save the real perpetrator of the rape (Lo Re 2008, pp. 332–336; Lo Re 2010). During his consulship, Varchi gave several lectures on Dante but his workload as an academician decreased when Cosimo and his wife, Eleonora di Toledo, requested him to translate Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (1549; published 1551), and Seneca's *On benefits* (1548; published 1554). Above all, at the end of 1546, Varchi was appointed as the official historian of the Duchy of Florence and was commissioned to write a history that would originally cover the final years of the last Florentine Republic (1527–1532); the work was eventually expanded to include events up to 1538 (Bramanti 2017, p. 147, 190). Varchi spent the last years of his life working on several other projects, the most important of which is *L'Hercolano* (printed posthumously in 1570), a dialogue on language that discusses sixteenth-century debates on the *questione della lingua* and offers an original contribution. Varchi died a few hours after suffering a stroke, on December 19, 1565, leaving most of his works incomplete or unpublished (Brancato 2017, p. 55).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Very little is known of Varchi's early philosophical education: We know that he studied logic with Verino; the only surviving works by this philosopher, three lectures on Dante, emphasize the "concordia" among Plato and Aristotle (Vasoli 2007, pp. 403–404). Many Platonic themes in Varchi's lectures, such as that of love, may as well come from Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, an author Varchi knew well (Vasoli 2007,

pp. 404–405); as a child, Varchi lived in the house next to Diacceto's (Valori 2008, p. 117); in 1559, Varchi even wrote his biography, published in 1561 (Del Soldato 2013). The years in Padua were crucial to Varchi's intellectual formation: in particular, his belief that the vernacular could replace Latin as the language of philosophy, an idea that was shared by some members of the *Infiammati*, determined at least in part his subsequent views on philosophy and language (Andreoni 2012, pp. 42–53; Siekiera 2013). Varchi was certainly influenced by his fellow academician Sperone Speroni. A student of Pietro Pomponazzi, Speroni borrowed from his mentor the idea that vernacular languages were perfectly apt to convey any philosophical truth; that Latin's alleged superiority was based on false premises, given that incorrect Latin translations were the direct cause for misinterpreting ancient philosophy; and that accurate translations would enable every citizen of the world to access and practice philosophy (Fournel 1990, pp. 115–151; Vasoli 2007, pp. 406–408). Varchi's position was different, however, in that, first, he did not reject the medieval Latin tradition altogether. For example, in his vernacular translation of *Prior analytics*, he deliberately chose to italianize Boethius' Latin lexicon rather than rely on Cicero's vocabulary (Brancato 2018a, pp. 112–115). Evidence also indicates that Varchi readily used Latin, particularly in contexts in which it was easier to do philosophy in Latin rather than in the vernacular. Thus when he gave public lectures on *Ethics* in Padua, he readily switched from Italian to Latin when his audience, which included students, complained that they could not understand the Italian vernacular (Lo Re 2008, pp. 218–224); he also chose Latin to write a short exposition on the three figures of syllogism that he used as preparatory material for his vernacular commentary on *Prior analytics* (Brancato 2018a, pp. 107–109). Secondly, and most importantly, Varchi's ideas on the role of the vernacular were markedly different from those of Pomponazzi and Speroni. Pomponazzi and Speroni, who came from Northern Italy, considered that philosophy should be expressed by using any "natural," spoken vernacular language, which excluded the literary

language of Dante and Petrarch based on Tuscan. In contrast, for Varchi and other *Infiammati* philosophers such as Alessandro Piccolomini, whose native tongue was Tuscan, this distinction between literary and natural/spoken vernacular was much more blurred (Siekiera 2007, p. 6; Cotugno 2014). It is during the same period in Padua that Varchi developed his theory on language and explored ways to put this theory into practice. For instance, he wrote comparative grammars of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Tuscan with a view to testing the capacity of the vernacular to reproduce the grammatical structures of ancient languages (Sorella 2007, pp. 17–41; Siekiera 2013, p. 151). As we shall see, these investigations eventually constituted the theoretical underpinning for his *Hercolano*.

As far as Varchi's philosophical ideas are concerned, the figure who had the greatest impact was Lodovico Boccadiferro. A very charismatic mentor, Boccadiferro offered an interpretation of Aristotle that combined a strong attachment to traditional scholastic Latin authors with a clear interest in the recent advances of humanism. Boccadiferro's lectures were characterized by a critical attitude towards all *auctoritates* (whether ancient or modern) and an openness towards the newly revived Greek commentators as well as Plato (Bianchi 2004, pp. 363–370). In that respect, Boccadiferro provided Varchi with an Aristotelian interpretative framework that was sufficiently flexible and versatile to be adapted to his lectures on Dante and Petrarch at the Accademia Fiorentina (Andreoni 2012, pp. 98–99).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Varchi's intellectual path was not linear: He was exposed to different cultural environments (ranging from informal meetings to public events, from academies to universities) and various disciplines (natural philosophy, logic, ethics, medicine, literature). This might give the modern reader the impression that he was an eclectic and unoriginal thinker. In fact, Varchi was particularly receptive to the cultural changes he witnessed and

offered highly innovative responses to these changes, which were motivated by the belief that philosophy as a whole had to undergo a radical renewal through the creation of a new language and a new method of learning (Andreoni 2012, pp. 187–188). This explains, for example, his investigations on method and the organization of knowledge, the reassessment of literary genres and the creation of a vernacular literary canon, or the particular place given to logic in the creation of a vernacular language that was suitable for philosophy (Andreoni 2017, p. 7; Siekiera 2013). As we have seen, for Varchi, the new philosophical language should be closely connected to the Italian literary tradition, a position that clashed with the opinion of philosophers such as Pomponazzi, because it gave the Tuscan language pride of place. Over the course of his career, Varchi developed and refined a theory that in many ways anticipated modern-day sociolinguists' concept of "class variation" (Ward 1991). In the *Hercolano*, Varchi compared classical and modern idioms and developed a new classification of languages in which the vernacular spoken by the upper classes of Florence is described as the most suitable language to express philosophy and the only language that naturally resembles the literary language. Varchi's theoretical model followed that of Pietro Bembo in that it was based on the works of Petrarch and Boccaccio, but it also differed from it: it was also open to other authors censored by Bembo, such as Dante; and, in contrast to Bembo's theory, it integrated idioms and syntactical structures taken from the spoken language (Sorella 1995, pp. 48–70; Marazzini 1999, pp. 77–86). Varchi's theory was refined over the years, but an early practical application of this model can be appreciated in his translations, in particular that of Boethius' *Consolation*, in which one can find almost verbatim quotations from Petrarch along with typically Florentine idiomatic expressions (Brancato 2018b, pp. 74–84).

Varchi's strife for a renovation of philosophy is also reflected in his sustained interest in the new intellectual trends of his time, which he actively sought to appropriate in his own work. He was particularly attentive to the new scientific

advances of his time, such as Ramus' discussion on method (Vasoli 2007, pp. 422–427) or Andrea Vesalius' use of anatomy (Andreoni 2012, pp., 106–110). More interestingly, Varchi did not hesitate to use first-hand material (such as contemporary testimonies or interviews) when secondary literature on a specific subject lacked. This was the case for his two lectures on the arts (*Due lezioni* 1550), especially the second one, on the comparison between painting and sculpture. Rather than drawing on existing written sources, Varchi asked a number of artists (including Michelangelo) to express their opinion on the respective merits of the two artistic forms and published their responses (Mendelsohn 1982; Quiviger 1987; Collareta 2007). Similarly, in the *History of Florence*, when recounting the assassination of Duke Alessandro (1537), Varchi included data taken from an interview with Scoronconcolo, one of the two murderers (Bramanti 2017, pp. 187–188).

Impact and Legacy

Upon his untimely death, Varchi's library was dispersed, a significant part of his correspondence was lost, and many of his works remained unpublished until the nineteenth century (Bramanti 2008, pp. xi–xv). His *Storia fiorentina* was immediately condemned after publication on account of its suspected immorality and inconvenient political content (Brancato and Lo Re 2016, pp. 223–224). In the twentieth century, his work was often dismissed as derivative and of poor literary quality; Guido Manacorda (1903) went as far as presenting Varchi as a debauched and sexually devious character, whereas Carlo Dionisotti (1980, pp. 427–433) viewed him as an intellectually dishonest courtesan (Lo Re 2008, pp. 13–39). More recent studies, however, have done much to recognize the centrality of Varchi's works in sixteenth-century Italian culture, although many of his writings are still awaiting detailed study and/or critical edition.

The versatile character of his work and his ability to answer the cultural challenges of his

time in a highly innovative and indeed original way make him one of the most interesting figures of the sixteenth century. Varchi's work is particularly significant in the history of Renaissance literary criticism. His academic lectures on Petrarch and Dante, even if they remained for the most part unpublished until the nineteenth century, circulated widely among his contemporaries and in the following centuries. In his lectures, Varchi is one of the very first authors to combine the insight of Horace's literary criticism with the recently rediscovered Aristotle's *Poetics*; he is also original in his comparative approach to Dante and Petrarch, paying particular attention (something that was highly unusual at that time) to the rhetorical, linguistic, and grammatical aspects of their texts. He is notable for having applied the humanistic philological tools to Dante and his method of collating several manuscripts of the *Comedy* formed the basis of modern Dante philology (Andreoni 2017, p. 4).

Varchi's innovative ideas were in conflict with the conservative cultural environment of Florence. His lectures on Dante, especially those where he defined Dante as a truly Aristotelian philosopher, were often criticized and derided by his fellow academicians. His defense of Bembo's ideas was openly rejected by Lenzoni, Giambullari, and Bartoli. Despite being marginalized in Florence, however, Varchi was at the center of a wide intellectual network that allowed many of his ideas to thrive and survive. He also had many pupils whom he involved in the production of his works and in the activities of the Accademia (Brancato 2018a, pp. 115–116). It is also thanks to Varchi's original adaptation of Bembo's ideas (adding to Bembo's classicism a strong attention to the grammar of the spoken language) that the *Prose della volgar lingua* became the linguistic model for standard Italian language: The canon of vernacular authors that Lionardo Salviati (who happened to be Varchi's pupil) used for the first Italian dictionary (*Vocabolario della Crusca* 1612) was precisely modeled on Varchi's linguistic theory (Marazzini 1999, pp. 86–87, 90–93).

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Variable Stars

► Stars in Renaissance Science

Vasari, Giorgio

Born: 30 July 1511, Arezzo

Died: 27 June 1574, Florence

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Abstract

Giorgio Vasari, painter and architect from Arezzo, who obtained many important commissions during his long artistic career (1532–1574), is the author of the *Lives*, published in Florence in 1550 (Vasari 1550) and reedited in 1568 (Vasari 1568b).

The text is the first example of modern artistic literature: after analyzing the three arts (architecture, sculpture, and painting), Vasari traces the biographical profile of the artists from the Middle Ages to his era and focuses on their works.

Cited, imitated, translated, the *Lives* represented a model of artistic historiography for at least two centuries and still remain an

essential source for the documentation and information provided as well as for the careful reading of the works of art.

The role of Vasari as a man of letters, and also as an important artist, is already clear in the letter that he sent to Benedetto Varchi during the survey launched by the latter in 1547 (and published in Florence by Lorenzo Torrentino in January 1550 with the title *Due lezioni di M. Benedetto Varchi, nella prima delle quali si dichiara un sonetto di M. Michelagnolo Buonarroti. Nella seconda si disputa quale sia più nobile arte, la scultura o la pittura, con una lettera d'esso Michelagnolo, et più altri eccellentissimi pittori et scultori, sopra la quistione sopradetta*).

Introduction

Giorgio Vasari, painter and architect from Arezzo, is the author of the *Lives*, published in Florence in 1550 and then reedited in 1568.

The *Lives* is the first example of modern art literature: after a general introduction of the three arts (architecture, sculpture, and painting), Vasari traces the biographical profiles of artists from the Middle Ages up to his own time and analyzes their works. In his opinion, the revival of the arts begins only with Cimabue and Giotto; as he explains in the preface to the *Lives*, art slowly rose to the height of perfection in antiquity and then decreased gradually from the time of Constantine onwards and later was completely destroyed after the invasions of the barbarians, the Goths.

Vasari subdivides the history of art into three phases (and a specific *Part* of the *Lives* corresponds to each one of them) on the basis of an anthropomorphic model, such as a representation of childhood, youth, and maturity; Vasari based his division of history into epochs on a biological concept of history known since antiquity and present in authors such as Polybius (but also attested in Machiavelli): the comparison between the age of a human being and the development of a State (Mattioda 2007).

After the first phase (*primi lumi*), a period of growth and improvement followed (*augumento*),

and finally the third epoch arrived, which extended up to Vasari's time, the time of perfection (*perfezione*), reached by Michelangelo. In the first (whose greatest exponent is Giotto), artists had begun to imitate the colors and forms of nature, the three-dimensional appearance of the figure, and the expressiveness of the living human body. In the second, datable from ca. 1400 to ca. 1500 (Masaccio was its main exponent), artists had dedicated themselves to a long series of experiments, especially in perspective and anatomy, leading art to the ability to record the real world almost completely, although with an artistic expressiveness still stiff or imposed by the rules. Only in the third period, which included the *Lives* of Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo, artists not only showed mastery of nature, but triumphed over it. Vasari did not invent the idea of the process of perfection of art through its greater similarity with nature; it was also known in ancient literature, for example, in a passage of Cicero's *Brutus* that Vasari quoted almost word for word (Gombrich 1960). He applied this model to the art of his age and also used it as a means of classifying the art of the past: so the artists of earlier times could be judged and ranked according to their proximity to his ideal, the *perfetta regola dell'arte* (perfect rule of art). In the third preface (which introduces the third part of the *Lives*), Vasari defines the *perfetta regola dell'arte* as the practice of five precepts in art, that is, *regola* (rule), *ordine* (order), *misura* (measure), *disegno* (drawing), *maniera* (style), this later one especially when it becomes *bella maniera* (beautiful style). By borrowing the concepts of *regola*, *ordine*, and *misura* from the theory of architecture, he applied them also to the other arts. Art attained perfection in the third epoch – says Vasari – thanks to the contemporary discovery of ancient statues, which allowed artists to overcome the rules imposed by study and artistic discipline with some freedom (*licenzia*) that was not, however, arbitrary, but regulated by the judgment of the eye, the supreme authority (De Girolami Cheney 2005).

Together with the *perfetta regola dell'arte*, Vasari, as he explains in the second preface, introduces another norm, the *qualità de' tempi* (the

peculiarity of time). That means that the art of earlier times, which could only be described as imperfect when judged by contemporary criteria, could, however, be praised. In this way, Vasari established the general principle of his historiography, which was to evaluate time, place, circumstances, and people in judging historical facts. The *Lives* is much more than a chronological sequence of biographies (a literary genre that already existed): it is the first critical history of style in the arts (i.e., architecture, painting, and sculpture) (Sohm 2000).

The *Lives* is, in fact, based on the humanistic concept that history can instruct and encourage through remembering the most important men and their careers and achievements.

Vasari's book is an important document of the cultural world in sixteenth-century Italy and well attests that an artist has been able to master the cultured instrumentation hitherto the preserve of the high social classes in order to draft the first systematic treatise of art history.

In the sixteenth century, its value had been recognized by writers of art such as Raffaello Borghini (author of *Il Riposo*) and Francesco Bocchi (and again in the seventeenth century by Giovanni Baglione and Filippo Baldinucci), but had also become the subject of strong criticism: already in 1557, Lodovico Dolce wrote the dialogue entitled the *Aretino*, where he argues vigorously against Vasari's text and asserts the superiority of Titian even over Michelangelo. Strong allegations of partisanship in favor of the Tuscan artists were repeated in the seventeenth century by Marco Boschini (*La Carta del navigar pitoresco*) and Carlo Cesare Malvasia (Sohm 1995, 2001; Cropper 2013).

The large number of marginal notes in copies of the *Lives* (Ruffini 2009), written in their own hand by artists such as Federico Zuccaro, Annibale Carracci, Francisco de Holanda, and El Greco, or by *connoisseurs*, such as Sebastiano Resta, testifies to the interest with which Vasari's work was read and the controversies that followed (Spagnolo 2007).

The numerous histories of art modeled on Vasari's book, as well as the new editions of the *Lives* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

are the clearest evidence of the impact that the work has had on European culture: from the Netherlands (Karel van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*, 1603–1604) to Spain (Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, 1649) and Germany (Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie*, 1675).

Cited, imitated, and translated, the *Lives* has represented a historiographical model for at least two centuries and still today remains an essential source for the documentation and information provided as well as for the careful reading of artworks.

Biography

Vasari was born in Arezzo, the son of Antonio Vasari (d. 1527) and Maddalena Tacci (d. 1558). His family came from Cortona, where his great-grandfather, Lazzaro di Nicolò de' Taldi, was a craftsman of saddles and painted scenes: one of his four children, Giorgio, was a potter (in Italian “vasaio”); Giorgio Vasari, his nephew, inherited his name and patronymic. As claimed by Vasari in the *Life of Luca da Cortona* (but only in the second edition published in 1568 by Giunti in Florence), the painter was his relative, because the father of Luca, Egidio, had married Lazzaro Vasari's sister.

Vasari studied Latin and the humanities in the late 1510s under Antonio da Saccone and Giovanni Lappoli (called il Pollastra, 1465–1540). He also became a pupil of Guillaume de Marcillat, a French master glassmaker at that time working in Arezzo, where he ended his life (1529), and in 1524 Cardinal Silvio Passerini of Cortona, a man of the court of Pope Clement VII, introduced Vasari to the circle of the Medici family in Florence. While he was living in the house of Niccolò Vespucci, he received further instruction from the teacher of Alessandro and Ippolito de' Medici, Pierio Valeriano (1477–1558), and he met Michelangelo Buonarroti and attended the workshops of Andrea del Sarto, Vittorio Ghiberti, and Baccio Bandinelli, who taught him draughtsmanship very well. After the expulsion of the Medici in 1527 and because of the spread of the plague (which reaped among its victims

Vasari's father), the young artist was called back home by his uncle Antonio to Arezzo, where he became familiar with the teachings of Rosso Fiorentino, who took refuge in the countryside to escape the epidemic. Vasari arrived in Rome in 1532 as a member of the retinue of Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici (d. 1535): together with Francesco Salviati, he devoted himself to the study and making drawings of antiquities and works of art kept in the *Urbe*. After his return to Florence, Vasari was benevolently received by Ottaviano de' Medici and then entered the service of Duke Alessandro (his portrait now in the Uffizi is by the young painter) until his death, killed by his own cousin, Lorenzo de' Medici (January 6, 1537) (Plaisance 2013). Shocked and stricken by the assassination and disgusted by court life, Vasari took refuge in Camaldoli, thanks to the good offices of the Aretine scholar Giovanni Lappoli (il Pollastra, his former teacher), and Don Miniato Pitti, with whom he had been familiar since his stay in Pisa in 1529, when the Olivetan monk was in charge as abbot at the monastery of St. Jerome in Agnano Pisano. Thanks to the Olivetan patronage, Vasari got assignments that took him to other monasteries and Italian cities: he was in Bologna, at S. Michele in Bosco, in 1539; in Naples, at S. Anna dei Lombardi or Monteoliveto, in 1544–45; in Rimini and Ravenna in 1547–48; and in Arezzo in 1548 (where he painted the *Wedding Banquet of Esther and Ahasuerus* for the Refectory of the Abbey of Saints Flora and Lucilla, now kept in the Medieval and Modern Gallery and Museum, in Arezzo) (Carrara 2006); in the meantime, he got to meet and work for people such as Pietro Aretino (who called him to Venice in 1541 to prepare and paint the scenic apparatus for his comedy, *La Talanta*); Bindo Altoviti, the wealthy Florentine banker living in exile in Rome; and Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, the nephew of Pope Paul III, who commissioned from him the *Allegory of Justice, Truth and the Vices* (the *Farnese Justice*, 1543, now in Naples), and the cycle of frescoes in the *Sala dei Cento Giorni* in the Palace of the Chancellery in Rome (1546) (Fenech Kroke 2011).

Vasari had already returned to Rome in 1538 to continue his training by drawing antiquities and

was called again to the *Urbe* in 1550 by Pope Julius III who appointed him to the building of his family chapel in S. Pietro in Montorio and, together with Bartolomeo Ammannati, of the nymphaeum of Villa Giulia. In 1554 Vasari moved to Florence to enter the service of Duke Cosimo de' Medici: he worked in Palazzo Vecchio and in Palazzo Pitti (Romby and Ferretti 2002, pp. 164–196) and built the Uffizi; he also restored numerous churches in the city (Sta. Maria Novella, Sta. Croce) and began the frescoes of the dome of Sta. Maria del Fiore, the Florentine Duomo (1574). He was also active in Arezzo (he restored the parish church of Sta. Maria, 1560–1564, where he erected also his tomb and built the Lodges of Piazza Grande, 1570–1572) and in Pisa (church and palace of the Knights of St. Stephen, 1562–1569). He returned again to Rome in 1571–1573, thanks to the commissions obtained from Pope Pius V for the decoration of three chapels in the Vatican (Aurigemma 2012).

In 1549 he married in Arezzo the young Nicolosa Bacci, who could not bear children. Vasari had already fathered, however, a daughter (and perhaps also a son) with Maddalena Bacci, his wife's sister, and then later had another son by Isabella Mora, his domestic servant (Lepri and Palesati 2003; Fubini Leuzzi 2015).

In 1563 he founded the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, under the influence of Cosimo de' Medici, together with Vincenzo Borghini, the Prior of the Foundling Hospital (Ospedale degli Innocenti), and Lelio Torelli, first secretary of the Duke (Waźbiński 1987; Barzman 2000; Carrara 2008; Zangheri 2013).

His house in Arezzo (via XX settembre 55) is now a museum (Casa Vasari), while his home in Florence, which was a private residence for a long time, after a total restoration is visitable by appointment: both the palaces were decorated by Vasari with an ample cycle of frescoes (De Girolami Cheney 2006; Cecchi 2014). In the Aretine house are still kept some pieces of the precious collection of Vasari: a plaster statue of *Venus* by Bartolomeo Ammannati and a terracotta head of Emperor *Galba* by Andrea Sansovino, while the painting by Piero di Cosimo, *Venus*,

Mars, and Cupid, is in Berlin (Staatliche Museen) (Baldini 2014).

His famous *Libro de' disegni* (composed probably at least of seven volumes if not twelve) (Collobi Ragghianti 1974) is now disassembled, and many of its pages are housed in Paris (The Louvre) and in Florence (Gabinetto disegni e stampe degli Uffizi); some sheets are even in Oxford, Stockholm, and other collections. Vasari began to collect drawings during his apprenticeship (1528–29) with Vittorio Ghiberti, who gave him a group of sheets by Lorenzo Ghiberti and artists of the fourteenth century, maybe from Lorenzo's collection. He assembled with great care his drawings in the book, with marginal decorations along with its pages and portraits of the artists who had drawn them; unfortunately, where the characteristic Vasari mount has been removed from the drawings, as in the Uffizi, their provenance is seldom demonstrable. The dispersal of the Vasari collection began soon after his death: Francesco I de' Medici obtained a volume from Vasari's heirs; then some others were acquired by Niccolò Gaddi, the wealthy Florentine collector, and patron. In the seventeenth century, the volumes began to be broken up and the sheets were scattered all over (Forlani Tempesti 2014).

Works and Themes

The Paragone Debate and the Letter to Benedetto Varchi

In 1547 the philosopher and scholar Benedetto Varchi (1503–1565) launched a survey among the Florentine artists about the “maggioranza delle arti”, that is, a debate on the competition and rivalry among the arts: he collected the letters with their opinions, and in January 1550 he published them together with his own text on the question (*Due lezioni di M. Benedetto Varchi, nella prima delle quali si dichiara un sonetto di M. Michelagnolo Buonarroti. Nella seconda si disputa quale sia più nobile arte, la scultura o la pittura, con una lettera d'esso Michelagnolo, et più altri eccellentissimi pittori et scultori, sopra la quistione sopradetta*, Florence, Torrentino) (Bätschmann 2010; Andreoni 2012, pp. 16 and

20). Vasari, together with Agnolo Bronzino, Jacopo Pontormo, and Niccolò Pericoli, called Il Tribolo, Giovanni Battista del Tasso, Benvenuto Cellini, and Michelangelo, answered the call, and his letter, very well elaborated and refined, is – not coincidentally – the first in the Varchi book, while Michelangelo’s closes the list (Varchi and Borghini 1998, pp. 61–66 and 84): Vasari strongly affirms the superiority of painting over sculpture based on the increased capacity of imitation (“mimesis”) through the use of colors.

Vasari’s letter to Varchi reveals a remarkable skill in writing literary texts, which is the result of the education, certainly not a poor one, he received in his youth (Carrara 2011a), as well as a tireless ability to entertain an increasingly larger network of personal relationships, making use of correspondence as a privileged vehicle: the correspondence of Vasari, extensive since his early years (*Der literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris*, Frey and Frey 1923–1940; Agosti 2010), testifies to his continual assiduity and friendship with scholars – Pietro Aretino, Paolo Giovio, Annibal Caro, or Lodovico Domenichi, just to name a few – while the artist was traveling in Italy, finding hospitality and commissions in the most important cities and courts, from Florence to Venice and Rome, from the “familia” of Alessandro de’ Medici to the circle of Aretino and the palace of Cardinal Farnese (see Agosti 2011, 2013; Carrara 2013).

The “Lives”

First Edition

The aforementioned letter written by Vasari to Varchi was an essential starting point for the drafting of the *Lives*, appeared in Florence in 1550, and was published by Torrentino (Vasari 1550, 1986). *Le Vite de’ più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a’ tempi nostri, descritte in lingua toscana da Giorgio Vasari pittore aretino* is composed of a dedicatory letter addressed to Cosimo I de’ Medici, the prefaces (one to the Whole Work and the other three before the three parts – *tre età* – of the *Lives*), and the biographies (from Cimabue to Michelangelo, and the latter was the

only artist still living except Benedetto da Rovezzano, a blind sculptor, “dead” for making art), followed by the conclusion, that is a letter to artists and to readers. It is in the preface to the Whole Work that Vasari elaborates the thesis expressed in his letter to Varchi, to achieve a new synthesis whereby the two arts, painting and sculpture, are both daughters of *disegno* (i.e., drawing, Vasari 1966–1987, I, p. 26), an innovative and successful formulation, which in turn had much in common with the views expressed by Varchi in his own text (Varchi and Borghini 1998, p. 43). For Vasari the unity of the arts (which are therefore sisters) was embodied by Michelangelo, the artist who is excellent not only in painting and sculpture but also in architecture, and for that reason he can rightly be called “divine” (Vasari 1966–1987, I, pp. 26–27): Buonarroti by virtue of his exceptional draughtsmanship and excellence in all fields of art puts an end to disputes between painters and sculptors.

Disegno is the common “father” of all the arts, a concept which Vasari described with greater fullness in the second edition of 1568 (Vasari 1966–1987, I, pp. 111–113), and its role is discussed extensively in the introductions to the three arts, that is the *Teoriche*, where Vasari explains and tries to set his technical knowledge: he analyzes in detail what materials can be used, their mode of utilization, the necessary skills for artists, and how they can learn these ways of proceeding (Vasari 1966–1987, I, pp. 31–172).

Vasari’s insistence on technical terminology is one of the main themes of the entire body of the *Lives*, and, as he anticipates and states in the abovementioned preface to the Whole Work, he apologizes if he had to use nonliterary terms but more suitable and precise words to express the language of the artistic profession (Vasari 1966–1987, I, p. 29). The use of that technical terminology arises from the intent to be fully understood, because the *Lives* was written for those interested in art and its history, such as artists, collectors, or scholars. This was the aim of Vasari, when he started collecting copious amounts of material for his book, and he wanted to make sure that, as he states in the Conclusion of

his work, anyone could read his *Lives* (Vasari 1966–1987, VI, p. 412). Again in the Conclusion of the *Lives*, Vasari explains how he collected his data, by trying to verify and check what he had learned from memories written by artists of the past or from oral stories by older artists (*ibidem*, p. 411). Vasari, indeed, in the preface to the Whole Work declares that he dedicated a long time to the collection of data on artists (Vasari 1966–1987, I, p. 30), and in the Conclusion he affirms that he had the help and support of many good friends (Vasari 1966–1987, VI, pp. 409–410).

Among the *buoni amici*, the name of Paolo Giovio cannot be left out, the scholar and bishop from Como, who met Vasari in 1532, when he was in Rome for the first time (Agosti 2013, pp. 16–17): Giovio, who began writing in Latin the *Lives* of some famous artists (*Vincii Leonardi, Michaelis Angeli et Raphaelis Urbinate vite*, in Giovio 1999, pp. 234–279), recognized the skills of Vasari also as a writer and encouraged him to write biographies of artists.

In a letter, dated September 2, 1547, Paolo Giovio urged Vasari to present his work to Benedetto Varchi, in order to have an informed opinion, equal to that of Annibal Caro, to whom Vasari had sent the *Lives* by then finished, as a letter written by Caro on 15 December of the same year confirms (see Frey and Frey 1923–1940, I, pp. 209–210).

The preparation of the text to be printed by Torrentino was begun at least by the end of November 1546, as a letter written by Vasari to Giovio testifies (see Frey and Frey 1923–1940, I, p. 175). A decisive boost arrived thanks to the writing of a complete apograph (i.e., a copy not by Vasari's hand) at the abbey of Scolca near Rimini, where the painter worked for the Olivetan abbot Gian Matteo Faetani between September and December 1547. On this specimen intervened, by correcting its mistakes, Pier Francesco Giambullari, in order to proceed with the preparation of the copy to be sent to the Torrentino workshop; Giambullari then checked the mere typographic work, together with Don Vincenzio Borghini, who assumed the task of drawing up the indexes and revising the text to remove as many errors as possible (Scapecchi 1998).

The charge against Vasari – strongly asserted in recent years (Hope 2014) – to be just one of the many authors of the *Lives*, which has to be considered only the result of the collaboration of several writers, and in particular of Cosimo Bartoli (Frangenberg 2011), as is clear from the diversity of writing and methodological approach between the prefaces, literally more refined, and the drafting of the *Teoriche* and the biographies, more colloquial (Blum 2011, p. 159), fails fatally thanks to a thorough reading of the correspondence of Vasari, documenting the precise sequence of events and the real role of the men of letters mentioned (Scapecchi 2011).

An allegation destined to disappear, moreover, thanks to a thorough analysis of the narrative structure and composition of the *Lives*, which shows clearly how Vasari reused – just in some particularly complex and sophisticated passages – historical texts and compendia written in the vernacular, widely present in the Italian book market in the mid-sixteenth century (Rubin 1995, p. 169 note 104; Carrara 2010–2012, p. 161), and so easily accessible to an artist, although the cultural dimension of this figure has been reduced recently (Hope 2010).

On the contrary, the *Lives* confirms once more the greatness of Vasari as a writer and author in the Italian Renaissance and his extensive knowledge of many sources (from Vitruvius to Leon Battista Alberti, Francesco Albertini and Sebastiano Serlio), sometimes no longer preserved (Rubin 1995, pp. 165–177; Fratini 2012).

Second Edition

The volumes of the first edition of the *Lives* – which caused both the resentful reaction of Michelangelo (so much troubled by the lack of firsthand documentation in his *Vita* that he asked Ascanio Condivi to write the *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, Blado, Rome 1553) and the criticisms of Lodovico Dolce, eager to defend the Venetian art and the grandeur of Titian – were sold out quickly (Simonetti 2005, p. 105).

Vasari decided to draft a second version of the *Lives*. To this end, in just two months (between April and June 1566), he faced a long journey that took him from Florence in Central Italy (Rome,

Umbria, and the Marche) and then through Emilia Romagna to Lombardy and Veneto, and finally he returned to Florence via Ferrara, Bologna, and Pistoia (Davis 1981). The visual and documentary material collected in his travels was to be used to obtain accurate and reliable information on the main centers of Italian art and to allow him to see up close the work of the most important artists of his contemporary period.

Vasari changed in-depth and radically, therefore, the 1550 edition, aimed at the celebration of the greatness of Michelangelo, who died on February 18, 1564 (Ruffini 2011, pp. 85–88), by accepting instances that came from non-Tuscan areas and ultimately to legitimize his work as a painter and architect of the court of Duke Cosimo de' Medici, the dedicatee of his book.

The second edition, published by Giunti in three volumes in 1568 (Vasari 1568b), presents a greater number of *Vite* than the first one printed by Torrentino, but the biographies have almost always lost the wide introduction expressing thoughts of a moral nature (such as reflections about the good fortune or misfortune of artistic careers), present in the printing of 1550 (Pozzi and Mattioda 2006, pp. 310–330). The biographies are coupled with the artists' portraits: Vasari planned these engravings already for the first edition of the *Lives*, but he could realize his project only in the one printed in 1568 (Prinz 1966).

The second edition of the *Lives* represents a significant extension of the first both in chronological order and in its contents, as a result of thoughtful reflections by Vasari, thanks to the possibility of acquiring new information (Carrara 2012) and to constant comparison with Vincenzio Borghini. In a letter sent to Vasari on August 11, 1564, Borghini invited him to write a "comprehensive history of all paintings and sculptures of Italy" (Frey and Frey 1923–1940, II, p. 98), that is, a history focused more on works than on artists.

As a matter of fact, in the *Lives* published in 1568, even greater attention is devoted to techniques, especially those most neglected like engraving, which became the subject of extensive analysis in the *Vita* of Marcantonio Raimondi, as well as great importance was given to the production of engravings in the Flemish area, much of

which is indebted to the letter in Latin sent by Dominicus Lampsonius to Vasari on April 25, 1565 (Gregory 2012).

Significant additions were made to the *Prima Età* of the *Lives*, like the *Vita* of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, sculptors, and architects, in a general expansion of information provided in its first section (Barocchi 2000), and was added the *Lettera di messer Giovambatista di messer Marcello Adriani a messer Giorgio Vasari*, which explains Greek and Roman art history, in order to fulfill the comprehensive information required by the competent authority of Borghini (Carrara 2011b, pp. 1–2).

A detailed description of the festivities of 1565–1566 on the occasion of the marriage of Francesco I de' Medici to Joanna of Austria is printed at the end of Vasari's paragraph on the Accademia del Disegno and its artists: the text, attributed in the *Lives* to "a person of leisure who delights not a little in our profession" ("persona oziosa, e che della nostra professione non poco si diletta," Vasari 1966–1987, VI, p. 255), was written by Giovan Battista Cini (Feo 1981; van Veen 2006, p. 93 and *passim*).

Other Writings

The vast amount of Vasari's letters – recently increased by new findings (Carrara 2010; Sottili 2011; Fratini 2013) – is only a part of the extensive body of his manuscript texts: the *Ricordanze* (Vasari 1927) and the *Zibaldone* (Vasari 1938) are important, in particular, for information provided about the career and the life of the artist.

In 1588, Giorgio Vasari il Giovane, Vasari's nephew, published his *Ragionamenti* (Vasari 1878–1882 [1588]), but the text – a long description of the works realized by Vasari and his workshop in Palazzo Vecchio – had already been in its manuscript form and was mentioned by Vasari himself in the *Lives*. The last book published by Vasari was instead the description of the ephemeral apparati for the baptism of Eleonora de' Medici in 1568 (Vasari 1568a), which testifies again to his seminal importance not only as an artist at the Medici court but also as an author in first person of literary texts in the Italian Renaissance of the sixteenth century.

Cross-References

- [Benedetto Varchi](#)
- [Disegno \(drawing\)](#)
- [Dominicus Lampsonius \(Dominique Lampsonne\)](#)
- [Fortune/Misfortune](#)
- [Leon Battista Alberti](#)
- [Paolo Giovio](#)
- [Pierio Valeriano or Valeriano Bolzanio Pierio \(born Giovanni Pietro Dalle Fosse\)](#)
- [Pietro Aretino](#)
- [Rebirth of Art](#)
- [Reception of Pliny in Italian Renaissance](#)
- [Renaissance](#)
- [Vincenzo Borghini](#)

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Vatable, François

Born: ca. 1495, Gamaches (Picardy, Fr)

Died: 16 March 1547, Paris

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Abstract

François Vatable was a collaborator of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples at the Faculty of Arts in Paris in the 1510s. He translated, coedited, and published Old and New Latin translations of Greek philosophical texts (mainly Aristotle). He also assisted Lefèvre in the Evangelical reform experiment in the diocese of Meaux (1521–1525). In 1530, he became the first royal lecturer of Hebrew (later became the *Collège Royal*). He coedited and published the first Hebrew Bible (Robert Estienne) and participated in the production of a series of magisterial Latin Bibles also by Estienne. His name is associated with Estienne's Latin Bible of 1545, a parallel edition of the Vulgate and a New Latin translation. Since Estienne attributes the explanatory notes in this Bible to Vatable, it became known as the *Vatable Bible*.

Alternate Names

Guastebled; Ouastebled, François; Vatablus; Watablus; Wateblé; Wattebled

Biography

François Vatable was born in Gamaches (Picardy) as François Wattebled, probably in the last decade of the fifteenth century. After an education at the cathedral school of Amiens, he enrolled as a student in Paris. From 1511 onward, his name appears in books, prefaces, and other documents. He collaborated with Girard Roussel in providing a textbook for students on Aristotelian logic (*logices adminicula*). On behalf of Girolamo Aleandro, he completed an edition of the Greek grammar of Chrysoloras (1512). He appears to have been a young, dynamic postgraduate member of the Faculty of Arts in Paris, active at the *Collège Cardinal-Lemoine*, first as a student and soon lecturing himself. Pedagogically and spiritually, he belonged to the Christian humanist circle around Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. Apparently, languages were Vatable's forte. After having perfected his knowledge of the Greek tongue under the tutelage of Aleandro, he moved to Avignon to study Hebrew. After his return (ca. 1516), he embarked on the revision and translation from the Greek of a number of important philosophical treatises of Aristotle. He revised the old Medieval Latin translations, he edited available up-to-date translations (Argyropoulos), and if no modern translation was available, he provided one, based on Greek manuscripts and/or the famous Aldus edition – *Ex physiologia Aristotelis libri duodetriginta... Francisco Vatablo interprete. Quibus omnibus, antiqua tralatio tricenos libros continens, ad Græcum per eundem Vatablum recognita: columnatim respondet* (Henri Estienne: Paris, 1518 – Crantz/Schmitt 107.850). This voluminous book (336 folios) contains the old and the new translation side by side (the old though in a larger type), with summarized introductions and marginal notes. It appeared in print in 1518 with Henri Estienne. The texts in question, *Physica*, *De Caelo*, *De Anima*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, and the so-called *Parva Naturalia*, are all works from Aristotle, "the Philosopher" as he was then called, dealing with the world we live in, inquiries in physics, human and animal nature, psychology, astronomy, and meteorology. Separate editions of the



Vatable, François, Fig. 1 Portrait of Vatable in Theodorus Beza, *Icones, id est verae imagines virorum ... illustrium...* (Geneva, Jean de Laon, 1580)

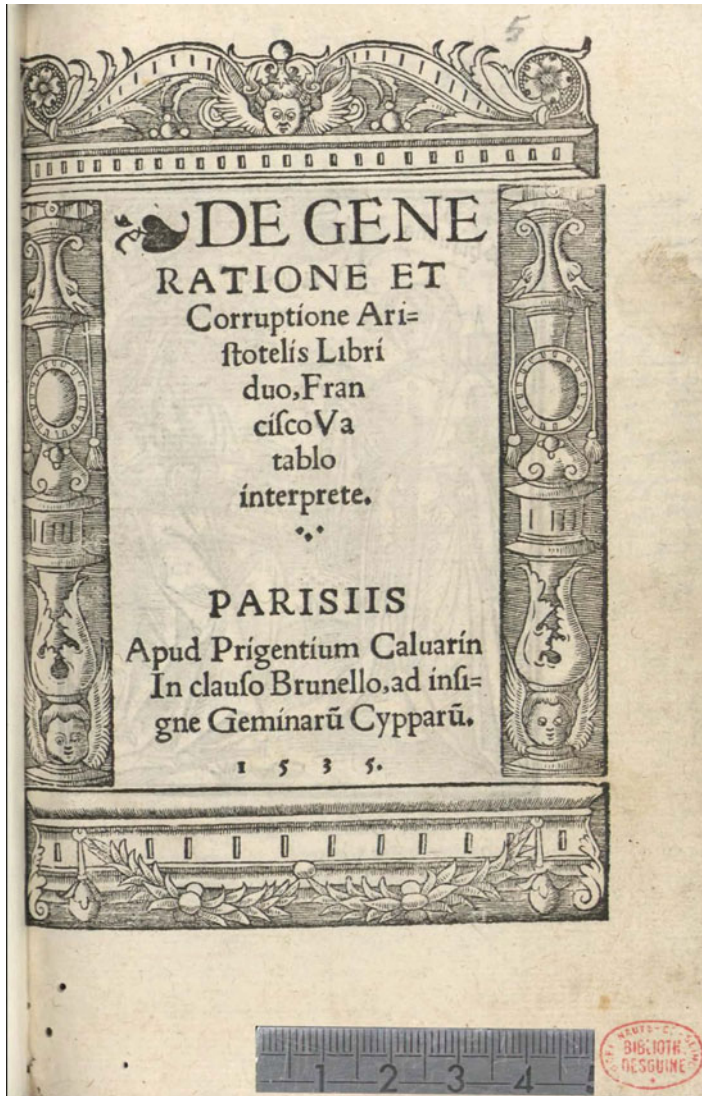
works of Aristotle were extracted from this compendium and printed as student textbooks (for an example, see Fig. 2).

In the 1520s, Vatable followed Lefèvre to Meaux to assist Bishop Guillaume Briçonnet in his experiment to reform his diocese. Whether he actually preached or only assisted in the production of elementary biblical and homiletical material is not known. Under pressure from the conservative party in Paris, the experiment collapsed. In 1530, King Francis I appointed Vatable as a royal lecturer of Hebrew. This implied a public reading of texts (*lectio*), translating and explaining them (*sensus*). As such he taught an entire generation of French scholars to read and understand the Hebrew tongue. Very similar to what he had done with Aristotle, he now began to do with the text of the Bible: editing, emending existing translations by referring to the original texts, and – if necessary – providing new translations. For this, he – and his colleague royal

lecturers, but his name is singled out several times – collaborated with Robert Estienne (1538 onward), providing trustworthy editions of the Bible from a textual critical edition of the Vulgate (with marginal notes, 1540) to Hebrew Bibles *in quarto* in which almost every Bible book has a title page of its own (bilingual: Hebrew and Latin, 1539–1544). Vatable's name is explicitly connected to an edition of the 12 minor prophets in Hebrew, supplemented with the rabbinical commentary of David Kimhi (only the first had a Latin title; the rest was in Hebrew). He is explicitly mentioned as the one who provided didactical illustrations of Noah's Ark, the Tabernacle, and the Temple in Estienne's 1540 Bible. These were no products of an artist's imagination but carefully drawn scholarly representations based on the indications in the Bible itself, as explained below the pictures. A series of reprints of the Hebrew bible (this time in pocket size) appearing from 1543–1546 (13 parts) was apparently destined for students to make notes while Vatable lectured. Finally, Estienne claimed he used student notes of Vatable's *lectiones*, integrating them in the marginal explanatory notes of his beautiful Latin Bible *in octavo* of 1545. This Bible contains a parallel edition of the Vulgate and a new Latin translation from the original tongues with explanatory marginal notes. This Bible is sometimes called the *Vatable Bible* and the notes *Vatable's notes*, although many of the notes are also present in the 1543 Zurich Bible. In 1543, Vatable was named commendatory abbot of the Abbey of Bellozane (in the diocese of Rouen), a title and income he kept until his death on 16 March 1547.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

With his translations and editions, Vatable is anchored in the humanist tradition of returning to the sources: *Ad fontes*. He wanted to restore the works of Greek and Hebrew authors by republishing them from trustworthy sources and if necessary translating them into Latin. The translation of the philosophical curriculum was a collective effort taking place under the *aegis* of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. It was spread over



Vatable, François, Fig. 2 Title page of Vatable's translation of *Περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς* (Aristotle), *De generatione et corruptione libri duo* (Paris, Prigent Calvin, 1535)

three decades (1490–1522). Next to Lefèvre, Vatable collaborated with Josse Clichtove, Charles de Bouvelles, and Girard Roussel. By means of fluent Latin translations (imported from Italy or self-made), commentaries, introductions, and paraphrases, these scholars tried to recover and shed light on the true value of these ancient works. They were working on a linguistic level – new translation into Latin following the rules of Latin syntax, grammar, and idiom –

rejecting the medieval way (almost verbally Latinizing the Greek, deprecated as “barbarous”), because it was not acceptable anymore to the Latinists of the Renaissance and obstructed the reading and understanding of the texts. A similar motivation is behind Vatable's biblical activity: a text-critical edition of the Vulgate and editions of the Bible texts in the original tongue, with and without translations and notes. Since this implies a tacit deprecation of the church's official textbook

and Jerome's translation, this could only be achieved because the King himself protected both Vatable (royal lecturer) and Robert Estienne (royal printer). In theological matters, Vatable also showed himself a true disciple of Lefèvre d'Étaples, whose idea of combining pietas and scholarship, philology and theology, and tradition and modernity he seems to have interiorized. As in his work on Aristotle, Vatable wanted to improve the edition of texts, to help readers understand them properly, always keen on keeping in touch with tradition that has gone before (*trahatio nova et vetus*), even when the errors and shortcomings in the old translation are not covered up, building bridges rather than destructing bonds.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In his translation of Aristotle, Vatable shows a profound and deep knowledge of both the similarities and differences between Greek and Latin. He sometimes drops the generally accepted titles with which Aristotle's works in Latin were known. Editing *Περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς* (*De Generatione et Corruptione*), the custom translation of the first line remains as title, but the book begins with "De ortu autem, ac interitu eorum. . .," in English "On coming-to-be and passing-away." Concerning his biblical work, together with Robert Estienne, he prepared the first Hebrew Bible to be printed in France. Comparing this edition with its predecessors (the Rabbinical Bible of Bomberg, Venice, and the Polyglot Bible of Alcalá), Estienne's editions have some particularities which suggest that his editors were familiar with the Masoretic tradition. Most particular for this Bible, and exclusively Vatable, is the publication of Kimhi's commentary on the Minor Prophets. The way these texts are edited betrays the influence of Jewish publications dating back to the time before the Rabbinical Bible appeared. The notes in the Latin Bible of 1545 and the student notes of some of his lectures (*reportationes*) are characterized by a profound knowledge of the Hebrew language, syntax, and idiom. They also show that Vatable himself had

found the commentary of Kimhi very useful for studying the Bible. He shared Kimhi's conviction that the literal and historical meaning of a text (rabbinical: "peshat") is the most important and should be established based on a sustained philological reading of the text. This became a common exegetical praxis among biblical scholars and a characteristic element of reformed hermeneutics.

Impact and Legacy

Vatable's Aristotle translations were reprinted many times, and separate editions of them (in small booklets for students) were used to teach philosophy, not only in Paris but also in Lyon and soon also outside France. All his translations were included in Aristotle's *Opera omnia* edition which appeared in Frankfurt in 1593. From these translations, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *Meteorologica*, and *Parva Naturalia*, were the most successful and had long-lasting effects. Vatable was known and respected as a translator, editor, and commentator of philosophical texts throughout Europe. The impact of Vatable's Hebrew teaching and his cooperation with Estienne in publishing the source texts of the Bible is also considerable. The attribution of the scholarly notes in Estienne's Latin Bible of 1545 spread his fame over Europe. These notes were de facto anonymous and only partly by Vatable, but since they were copied over and again in successive scholarly Bible editions (to name only the two most influential: Estienne's Geneva Bible of 1556 and the Salamanca Bible of 1584), these notes made his name. The full set was also included in Pearson's *Critici Sacri* (1660), a protestant Bible compendium that served as a source for other compendia for centuries. The same goes for the Roman Catholic tradition because Menochio included them in his *Brevis Explicatio Sensus Literalis Sacrae Scripturae* (1630). In secondary literature based on these editions, the glosses are often introduced with phrases like "Vatablus vertit. . ." or "ut interpretatur Vatablus," thus rightfully honoring the quality of Vatable's teaching while greatly overestimating the quantity of his contribution.

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Vatablus

- [Vatable, François](#)

Vergerio the Elder, Pier Paolo

Born: 1368–70, Capodistria (today Koper, Slovenia)

Died: 1444, Budapest

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Abstract

Pier Paolo Vergerio was a particularly prolific and versatile humanist. After completing his early education in Padua, he was active in the noteworthy Italian environments of Florence, Bologna, and Padua again, cities in which he came into contact with some of the defining figures of early humanism: Giovanni Conversini, Francesco Zabarella, Coluccio Salutati, and Manuel Chrysoloras. The last two had a decisive influence on the development of Vergerio's intellectual identity. Moreover, his shared interests and cultural tendencies with the circle of Florentine humanists emerge sharply from the dedication of Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogi ad Petrum*

Paulum Histrum. In 1405, he entered into the service of the papal Curia under Innocent VII and Gregory XII, where he would remain until 1409, occupied by serious questions pertaining to the Western Schism. Vergerio participated in the unsuccessful council of Cividale and, after a brief stay in his native Capodistria, in the Council of Constance (1414–1418), he moved into the service of the Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg. Relatively little is known of the last 26 years of his life in Hungary. His multifarious literary activity embraced diverse genres (both in prose and poetry) and was combined with a vast network of cultural relationships evident from his impressive letter collection. His works focus principally on a number of closely connected thematic cores to which Vergerio made original contributions: pedagogical theory, reflections on political orders and forms of state, the study of the classics, and the diffusion of the cultural legacy of Petrarch.

Alternate Names

Vergerius

Biography

Pier Paolo Vergerio (not to be confused with the intellectual and Protestant polemicist of the same name, to whom he was related) was most likely born between 1368 and 1370 in Capodistria (now Koper, Slovenia), the only child of Vergerio di Giovanni de' Vergeri and Ysabetta de Azonis (the date of birth accepted here is that proposed by McManamon (1996, 1–2), on the basis of Baron (1977, 599–604) and Calò (1939, 226–228); however, according to Smith (1934, XI–XII), who in turn follows previous biographers, Vergerio was born on the 23 July 1370). Leaving their homeland in haste when it was under attack by the Genoese, the family settled in Friuli, presumably in Cividale. From there, Vergerio moved to Padua and from 1385 dedicated himself to the study of grammar. A series of stays in Florence – between 1386 and 1387, in

1394, and between 1399 and March 1400 – were of particular significance for Vergerio's cultural development. These visits allowed him to come into contact with the circle of Coluccio Salutati (1332–1406), to meet Francesco Zabarella (1360–1417), who remained a long-term friend, and, on the last stay, to encounter the masterful teaching of Manuel Chrysoloras (1350–1415). Between 1388 and 1389 we find him in Bologna, teaching logic at the Studio and learning medicine; this phase resulted in the composition of the *Paulus* (Perosa 1983; Grund 2005), considered the first humanist comedy, in which an adherence to the theatre of Terence coexists with the atmosphere of the Bolognese university context. In 1390 he returned to Padua, where he would remain until 1397. In the years of his stay in Padua, Vergerio dedicated himself, beyond the study of law, to learning rhetoric at the school of Giovanni Conversini (1343–1408), at the time the intellectual most representative of Padua under the Da Carrara. It was at this point that he was given the task of producing an edition of the *Africa* by the local Petrarchists, a group led by Francescuolo da Brossano (d. 1405), Petrarch's son-in-law, together with the trusted Lombardo della Seta (d. 1390), principal manager of the Petrarchan legacy. The great epic poem, dedicated to the glory of Rome, remained incomplete and the expectation of the first generation of humanists around it was considerable. The choice of Vergerio as editor was certainly not made casually, as the young Istrian was among those under the protection of the influential Zabarella and was esteemed by Salutati, who had previously proposed himself as editor of the poem (Fera 1984a, 83–104; 1984b, 7–43).

In 1397, Vergerio returned to Bologna, from where he composed an invective addressed to Ludovico Alidosi and directed against Carlo Malatesta (Smith 1934, 189–202), the protagonist of the famous episode of the removal of Virgil's statue in Mantua. The work defends ancient authors (Robey 1969), in the context of a controversy on the lawfulness of studying the pagan classics that would reach its culmination in the 1406 clash between Salutati and Giovanni Dominici. A journey to Rome with Zabarella

followed, during which he came to know and develop ties of friendship with Cardinal Cosmato Migliorati, the future Innocent VII. Between 1399 and 1400, he took the previously mentioned visit to Florence, during which he attended the Greek classes of Chrysoloras. When the Greek scholar left Florence, Vergerio returned to Padua, where he remained until March 1405 and was conferred with the title of *doctor* in civil and canon law. Just a few months after this he moved to Rome and remained there until 1409 in the service of Popes Innocent VII and Gregory XII, principally occupied on questions relating to the Western Schism. He accompanied Pope Gregory to the Council of Cividale in 1409 and after its failure returned for some years to Istria. He contributed to the much more significant Council of Constance (1414–1418), where he supported the position of Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg. After the Council concluded Vergerio followed Sigismund to Bohemia, where he made a decisive contribution to the diffusion of humanism in Germanic regions and in Hungary. The emperor held him in extremely high regard, bestowing the title of *Poeta laureatus* upon him. Very little is known of the last years of Vergerio's life in Hungary; he died in Budapest in 1444 (Zaccaria 1990, 400–401).

Impact and Legacy

Pier Paolo Vergerio was a leading figure among the first Italian humanists. His versatility and vastness of interests emerge most clearly from his epistolary *corpus*: 148 letters, of which he composed 131. The importance of this collection is not just in the abundant quantity of biographical data on the author it contains, but also in its rich detail on the environments and personalities with whom Vergerio was in contact. Beyond the aforementioned Zabarella, Salutati, Conversini, and Chrysoloras, his correspondents included figures of the caliber of Ognibene Scola, Gasparino Barzizza, and Guarino Veronese.

Vergerio's most significant works, recognized as such by his contemporaries as well as by successive generations of humanists, were concentrated around a number of thematic nuclei:

pedagogical thought, reflections on political systems and forms of state, study of the classics, and the diffusion of the cultural legacy of Petrarch.

His work *De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis adolescentiae* (Gnesotto 1917–1918; Kallendorf 2002) established Vergerio as a figure of influence in the history of Renaissance pedagogical thought. Dedicated to Ubertino, the youngest son of Francesco Novello da Carrara, the text enjoyed immediate and persistent success, as is evident from the high number of manuscripts and printed editions it was transmitted through (McManamon 1999, 271–279). The work, as can be gathered from the dedication, has the formation of the youth of ruling houses as its objective, by way of a complete education based on liberal studies, the arts, moral philosophy, and physical and military exercises. The author accepts and amplifies some of the fundamental tenets of humanism, such as the necessity of the study of letters, to which a primary role was given in the formation of an individual. The intended purpose of the treaty cannot be limited to the pedagogical matrix alone, as it also ends up straying into the field of political theory. This can be seen from the debate surrounding the “civic” reading supported by Eugenio Garin (1957, 129–132) – and also advocated by Giuseppe Saitta (1949, 267–273) and Hans Baron (1966, 129–134; *passim*) – and rejected by David Robey (1973, 1980, 1983). One aspect which characterizes not only Vergerio's pedagogical writings but also his entire output is his theorizing on the forms of government. In the Italy of the time, this reflexion – combining ideal models with examples taken from classical literature and, above all, historiography – went beyond the theoretical dimension. Hans Baron (1966, 126–133), in particular, highlighted the ideological continuity between Vergerio and Salutati, on the basis of a number of texts but in particular a letter that Vergerio had written in the name of Cicero (Smith 1934, 436–445; Rizzo 1991). Presumably composed in 1394, the letter took inspiration from an earlier, similar example by his friend and patron Zabarella (Sottili 2015, 57–84). It is a response to Petrarch's *Familiare* 24, 3 (written following the Florentine poet's rediscovery of the *Epistolae ad Atticum* in 1345)

in which Petrarch reproaches Cicero for weaknesses such as inconstancy and for, in his advanced years, becoming involved with contemporary political conflicts and renouncing the *otium* that was more appropriate for old age. This line of argument was contested by Robey 1973, for whom the position of Vergerio could not be evaluated only from a political point of view – and therefore as an opposition between Florentine *libertas* and Paduan *Signoria* – so much as a more generic exaltation of the *vita activa et civilis* promoted (and personified) by Cicero, combined with an authentic admiration for him (Zaccaria 1990, 401). The response by Vergerio/Cicero, a full defense of the Roman orator's work, was interpreted by Baron as proof of Vergerio's full commitment to the ideals of Florentine republicanism, internalized at the time he had participated in Salutati's circle, from which he would abruptly move away in the following period at the service of the Carraresi.

In the years he spent in Padua, Vergerio was among the most prominent intellectuals at the court of the da Carrara family, whose cause he actively promoted. This emerges, as well as from the previously mentioned pedagogical treatise aimed at the offspring of ruling houses, from three orations: *De dignissimo funebri apparatu in exequiis clarissimi omnium principis Francisci senioris de Carraria* and *In funere Francisci Senioris* (Muratori 1730, 189–198), composed and given for the death of Francesco il Vecchio (both presumably dating from 1393), and the more engaged *Ad Franciscum iuniorem de Carraria, Paduae principem, pro communitate Patavina* (Muratori 1730, 204–215), in which he recalls the events of the reconquest of Padua from the Visconti (Ferraù 2020, 289–295).

In the same courtly vein, but of wider scope and stronger ideological commitment, are a number of other works: the fragmentary *De Monarchia* (Smith 1934, 447–450), a treatise in which the author puts forward in no uncertain terms the primacy of the monarchical order according to topical schemes (for example, the similarity to the divine order); the *De Republica Veneta* (Robey and Law 1975) a panegyric to the city of Venice; and the *De principibus Carrariensibus* (Gnesotto

1924–1925). This last is an incomplete history of the Paduan *Signoria* aimed at extolling its origins and deeds, constructed from biographies and equipped with an introduction that outlines the historiographical tradition of the Paduan state up to Francesco Novello (Ferraù 2020, 306–325).

It is also necessary to linger on Vergerio's more strictly scholarly activity. In addition to co-authoring a treatise on meter with Zabarella, he translated the Hippocratic Oath and the demanding *Anabasis* of Alexander by Arrian of Nicomedia from Greek. It was, however, his Petrarchan works that gave him a leading role in the history of humanist philology. Between 1395 and 1396, at the request of the Paduan Petrarchists, he not only produced an edition of the *Africa* but also supplied it with the *Argumenta*, poems made up of nine hexameters that summarized the material of the nine books, monostichs which gave an overview of the content of the entire poem, and a valuable preface, the *Sermo de vita, moribus et doctrina illustris poete Francisci Petrarce et eius poemate quod Africa inscribitur* (Solerti 1904), composed on the basis of primary materials including the rare *Epistola ad Posteritatem* (Refe 2014, LXXIV–LXXVIII).

Works

Vergerio was a highly prolific author. Below is an alphabetically organized list of his most important works with their known or most probable chronology. For a more detailed picture of the Istrian humanist's works (including those dedicated or erroneously attributed to him), accompanied by accurate lists of manuscripts and printed editions, see McManamon 1999, 267–323 (on which this section of the biography largely relies).

Arrianus Flavius, *Anabasis*: Latin translation with a preface to Emperor Sigismund (Buda, 1433–1437); *De arte metrica*, together with Francesco Zabarella (Padua, 1395); *De dignissimo funebri apparatu in exequiis clarissimi omnium principis Francisci Senioris de Carraria* (Padua, November 1393); *De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis adulescentiae* (Padua, 1402–1403); *De monarchia sive de optimo*

principatu (Padua, 1400–1405); *De principibus Carrariensibus et gestis eorum liber* (Padua, 1390–1405); *De Republica Veneta* (Padua, 1402–1405); *De situ urbis Iustinopolitanae*, fragm.; *Epistolae*; *Epistola nomine Ciceronis ad Franciscum Petrarcam* (Padua, 1 August, 1394); *Epitaphium* for Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara (Padua, 21 November 1393); *Epitaphium* for Manuel Chrysoloras (Constance, April 1415); Hippocrates, *Iusiurandum*, Latin translation; *Oratio ad Franciscum Iuniorem de Carraria, Paduae principem, pro communitate Patavina* (Padua, 1392–1393); *Oratio in funere Francisci Senioris de Carraria, Patavii principis* (Padua, 21 November 1393); *Oratio pro fortissimo viro Cermisone Patavino ad illustrissimum principem Franciscum Iuniorem de Carraria* (Padua, 8 September 1390–January 1392); *Paulus* (Bologna, 1388–1390); *Petrarcae vita* (Padua, 1395–1396); *Quaestiones de ecclesiae postestate* (Constance, 10 August 1417); *Sermones decem pro Sancto Hieronymo; Testamentum* (Buda, 3 May 1444).

Cross-References

- [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- [Chrysoloras, Manuel](#)
- [Petrarca, Francesco](#)
- [Salutati, Coluccio](#)

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Vergerius

► [Vergerio the Elder, Pier Paolo](#)

Vergil, Polydore

Born: About 1470, Firmignano (Urbino)

Died: April 1555, Urbino

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Abstract

Polydore Vergil was a priest, humanist, and historian from Urbino who spent most of his life in England, where he moved in 1502 as a papal sub-collector. Besides a collection of proverbs that gave life to a dispute (and later on to a friendship) with Erasmus of Rotterdam, his most famous works, in all of Europe, were: an erudite encyclopedia about human origins and discoveries (*De rerum inventoribus*), and

an impressive history of England (*Anglica historia*), the first to be inspired by a humanistic method. Back to his home country in 1553, he died there 2 years later.

Alternate Names

[Virgili, Polidoro](#); [Virgilio, Polidoro](#); [Vergili, Polidoro](#); [Vergilius, Polydorus](#); [Vergil, Polydore](#)

Biography

Polydore Vergil was born in the castle of Firmignano, near Urbino, around 1470. His father's father, Antonio, a doctor, and astrologer, had been a professor at the University of Paris; his father Giorgio owned an apothecary in Firmignano. The Vergils were related to the Pini family, to whom belonged Teseo – Polydore's uncle – who was the author, around 1484–1486, of a treatise about wanderers (*Speculum cerretanorum*) which can be considered the ancestor of a literary genre that became widely popular in modern times.

Polydore studied in Bologna (probably attending the lessons of Filippo Beroaldo) and in Padua before he received the ordination in 1496. His first work, the *Proverbiorum libellus*, dates back to 1498 and was followed a year later by the *De rerum inventoribus*, respectively a collection of proverbs, and an encyclopedic catalog of discoveries and inventions. Both works became incredibly popular, giving their author European fame.

In 1502, the young humanist was at the service of the Roman Curia, and in the same year, he was sent to England, with the role of sub-collector, by Cardinal Adriano Castellesi da Corneto. Except for some brief interruptions, Polydore lived in England for more than 50 years, fulfilling prestigious roles and striking up a friendship with the most remarkable exponents of English humanism (from John Colet to Thomas More); but he also underwent a disgraceful period between 1515 and 1516, when he was arrested for the wish of the ambitious minister plenipotentiary of King Henry

VIII, Thomas Wolsey – who allowed his release only after having obtained from Pope Leone X the cardinal hat. During his long staying in England, Polydore wrote the dialogues *De prodigiis* (Vergil 1531) and around 1506 he was commissioned by Henry VII to write a fundamental history of England (*Anglica historia*) published for the first time in 1534 (and then, in expanded versions, in 1546 and in 1555).

He came back to Italy in 1553 and died in Urbino in April 1555 (Connell 2004).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The *Proverbiorum libellus* was published in 1498, 2 years earlier than the 1st edition of the more famous *Adagia* by Erasmus of Rotterdam. The two humanists had worked autonomously at their collections, and the debate about the priority of the one or the other work – raised by the opponents of the Dutch humanist – did not forbid the friendship between Erasmus and Polydore, as their written correspondence testifies (Ruggeri 1992, 2000).

Polydore carried on working at his *Libellus* until its 20th edition (1550), and in the same way, he re-elaborated and expanded on several occasions the *De rerum inventoribus*. To the three books of the 1st edition (1499), devoted to the conquests and the inventions of the *homo faber*, he added in 1521 five more books, where he investigated the origins of rituals and of religious institutions (Atkinson 2007). Humanist as well as priest, Polydore shows the same plot between rational criticism and theological explanations in the dialogues *De prodigiis*, where he adopts the naturalistic point of view of Cicero's *De divinatione* to deny the existence of the pagan prodigies, not of Christian miracles.

Polydore's critical and comparative method emerges far more clearly in his *Anglica historia*, England's first history carried out with a humanistic method, so that it has remained a reference point for English historiography, until the nineteenth century.

Impact and Legacy

All Polydore Virgil's main works had a great fortune, with their several reprints and translations in the main European languages, but the most extraordinary fame went to the *De rerum inventoribus*, that could count, within the end of the seventeenth century, on more than 100 editions.

The IV–VIII books of the *De inventoribus* felt the effects of the events linked to the Reformation, and for the frequent criticism against the ecclesiastical decadence or practices like the ecclesiastical celibacy and the indulgences, the encyclopedia was inserted on several occasions in the *Index librorum prohibitorum*, and various expurgated editions were planned (Lodone 2010).

Cross-References

- Bruno, Giordano
- Ciceronianism
- Erasmus, Desiderius
- Montaigne, Michel de
- More, Thomas
- Reformation

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Vergili, Polidoro

► [Vergil, Polydore](#)

Vergilius, Polydorus

► [Vergil, Polydore](#)

Vermigli, Peter Martyr

Born: 1499, Florence

Died: 1562, Zürich

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Abstract

Peter Martyr Vermigli is still largely unrecognized among the spiritual fathers of the Protestant Reformation. His career is neatly divided by his flight to Zürich in 1542. Prior to that, one can see the fruits of his superb philosophical and theological education in Italy, which manifested themselves primarily through scriptural commentary and Aristotelian exegesis. Afterwards, he participated – and always at the forefront of the debate – in increasingly harsher controversies ranging from liturgy to the Eucharistic doctrine. In his last years,

beginning in 1556, Vermigli finally settled as a Hebraist, teaching in a prestigious and non-Lutheran academic stronghold.

Biography

Peter Martyr Vermigli, born Piera Mariano, is probably best known for what has been called his “stromatic theology” (McLelland 2009), that is to say, the application of fifteenth-century, miscellaneous principles to biblical commentaries. The extent and organization of this method is especially visible in Vermigli’s *Loci Communes*, a compilation first published posthumously in 1576, which became a standard Reformed theological textbook. In the intellectual persona of this Protestant humanist, however, came to fruition several strands of thought within and beyond the Reform and the controversial history of the Reform’s censorship in print – namely, an effort to harmonize Aristotelian *Ethics* with the Bible, with beloved patristic commentaries, and with what Vermigli himself (amidst obvious sympathy) referred to as the wisdom of “Rabbinic sources.”

The eldest of three children, Vermigli was born in Florence (on September 8, 1499) to Maria Fumantina, who taught him Latin before he enrolled in school, and to Stefano di Antonio Vermigli, a wealthy shoemaker and former follower of Girolamo Savonarola, who strongly supported religious leadership in urban areas. Encouraging these ideals, the young Piera was sent to train at the Badia Fiesolana, from which, after obtaining his novitiate in 1518, the Lateran Congregation would send him to the monastery of St. John of Verdara in Padua to study Aristotle. While in Padua, Vermigli taught himself Greek and made the acquaintance of Reform-minded theologians such as Pietro Bembo, Reginald Pole, and Marcantonio Flaminio. Following his ordination in 1525, Vermigli embarked on a fruitful decade of traveling and lectures, in which he also mediated with Roman authority in his capacity as a Spoletan abbot and taught himself Hebrew. In 1537, he moved to Naples where he entered into circles of *spirituali* led by Juan de

Valdés: even though, at this juncture, Vermigli's passage to Protestantism is undeniable, the influence between him and Valdés is now believed to have been mutual (James 1998). Still, suspicion towards Vermigli's preaching began to gather as early as 1539 and was dispelled only thanks to the intervention of his powerful Paduan friends. Two years later, Vermigli was appointed prior of the Basilica of San Frediano in Lucca, which he energetically sought to wake up from its moral laxity; in addition, by exercising his episcopal authority, he also reformed the university curriculum by following the humanistic model recently implemented at the Corpus Christi College in Oxford, where teaching was in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew as well as aimed at clarity and simplicity.

The year 1542 marked the downfall of Vermigli's cautious approach. A combination of factors – the reorganization of the Inquisition and the political fear that Lucca, commonly viewed as a Protestant haven, would lose its independence from the Holy Roman Empire – made Vermigli escape to Zürich. Once established as a professor in Strasbourg, he spent the first part of the 1540s lecturing on minor prophets, befriending Martin Bucer, and beginning his marriage to his first wife, Catherine Dammartin. After the accession of Edward VI to the throne of England, with the continental advances of Charles V making Germany a hostile environment to the Reform, Vermigli sailed with Bernardino Ochino on an invitation to teach at Oxford. Since 1548, his lectures – like those on 1 Corinthians (Balserak 2009), where he denounced the Catholic doctrines of Purgatory, celibacy, and Lenten fasting – caught fire both with the clergy and the academics, on one side, and common people on the other. A formal disputation organized by the University Chancellor, himself a firm Protestant, was held at Leuven in 1549, in which Vermigli argued against transubstantiation. This placed him at the forefront of the debate over the nature of the Eucharist. Opposition, though, was fierce. Only 2 years after his return to Oxford, rioters in the streets threatened Vermigli with death, and his windows, overlooking Fish Street at the Great Quadrangle, were smashed several times (McNair 1994). While his deep involvement with English church

politics is signaled by the changes he recommended to the *Book of Common Prayers*, the accession of Mary I of England brought to an abrupt end Vermigli's days in Oxford. In fact, after 6 months of house arrest, he narrowly escaped execution, but his wife, well known in the city for her piety and ministry, died childless slightly before he departed for Strasbourg in 1553.

Vermigli was restored to his previous post as a lecturer but not without controversy. He turned his attention to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and his house became a place of gathering for Marian Exiles (Anderson 1996). At the same time, he was asked to sign the Wittenberg Concord as a condition for his reappointment, for Vermigli's doctrine of double predestination continued to sit uncomfortably with the Lutheran establishment. In an atmosphere of increasing alienation, despite renewed friendship with Girolamo Zanchi, a former Protestant convert under Vermigli in Lucca, the professor moved to Zürich in 1556 to teach Hebrew and would never move again until his death. Three years later, he also married his second wife, Catarina Merenda of Brescia. At first, the Hebraist Theodore Bibliander shared teaching duties with Vermigli, but in 1557, he openly attacked his double predestinarian views, at one point allegedly challenging him to a duel with a double-edged ax. Eventually, Vermigli's own position emerged as the official, allowable stance of the Zürich church (Steinmetz 2001), but another front had already opened when Zanchi in Strasbourg was attacked by the Lutherans for heretical teachings on the Eucharist. During the abortive conference at Poissy in 1561, which he attended with Theodore Beza, Vermigli enjoyed talking to Catherine de' Medici of France in his native language and defended the view that Jesus' words at the Last Supper were figurative rather than literal. His health already declining, Vermigli succumbed to an epidemic fever in 1562, attended by the physician Conrad Gesner.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Vermigli's theology is notable for having developed a strong doctrine of double predestination

independently of John Calvin. (His belief is overall similar but not at all identical to Calvin's.) Moreover, his presence and activity in England fueled important political developments in the Elizabethan religious settlement, providing theological justification for Royal Supremacy, that is, privileging the king of a territory, instead of any ecclesiastic authority, to rule the church. With that said, however, at least from an Italian point of view, Vermigli's trajectory should be mapped as the overarching profile of those lives, Erasmian or not, who suffered opposition from the Roman Inquisition and decided to flee Italy for a Transalpine location, therefore enabling a re-orientation of their intellectual heritage at once theological and geopolitical. In this respect, Vermigli could be appropriately compared to the experience of another exile, Pietro Perna (1519–1582), a leading printer in late Renaissance Basel. Perna was originally born in Villa Basilica, near Lucca, and was an admirer of Vermigli (Perini 2002); among the books he printed in Basel feature several Aristotelian commentaries, other titles that sparked a considerable theological debate, such as the *De amplitudine regni Dei*, of 1554, and a 1560 edition of Machiavelli's *Prince*, which substitutes the dedication to Lorenzo de' Medici with another one to the Polish knight Abraham Sbaski (Lepri 2013).

Vermigli's insurrection against the tenets of his early education represented, so to speak, the theological idiom of a larger intellectual discourse of sixteenth-century Italian dissent. If this is true, and remembering that Vermigli, like Erasmus, was much read in Venice and Lombardy (Seidel Menchi 1987), the situation with the circulation of forbidden, "heretical" books bears further scrutiny in order to better assess what the Florentine professor inherited and how he situated himself. Vermigli's Paduan years marked a substantial axis in his career; as such, they also implicate two groups of participants – the German Protestant students enrolled at the University of Padua and the German Protestant merchants, living and working at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice. In each case, curiosity had to be sustained by conversation. And religious sympathy for the Reform had to be wrapped or materialized

through the study of actual books. Thus smuggling and shipping illicit titles is an activity that binds at least two major routes: one proceeding from Switzerland to Chiavenna to Venice and another surging from the activity of Greek copyists in Venetian-controlled locales such as Crete or Cyprus. Not only was Vermigli influenced by Greek Patristic thought – and possibly he read about Chrysostom in Oecolampadius' edition, after Erasmus himself proved to have been particularly drawn to this golden-tongued father (Kirby et al. 2009). One might as well take Vermigli as the figure who structured and repositioned at the heart of the continental reformation an acerbic line of rhetorical and Patristic commentary that first appeared in the Veneto, in correspondence with the East, and was subsequently persecuted through the inquisitorial files (Fragno 2001).

Against this background, two conclusions emerge. First, Vermigli's interests and changing notions of faith and theology mirror the objectives of humanist and lay circles such as those of Sperone Speroni, Antonio Brucioli, and Francesco Patrizi, who also collectively supported the trading of old manuscripts from the Levant (Chayes 2012). Second, and as a corollary, Vermigli's closest parallel in sixteenth-century intellectual history is, perhaps, Filippo Mocenigo, archbishop of Cyprus from 1560 until 1568, who was accused of heresy and possession of prohibited books in a harsher climate of repression (Bonora 2006).

Original Aspects and Legacy

In his epistolary exchanges, Cardinal Baronio reminded his adversaries of a long genealogy of converts who had broken their vows in order to follow true religion: in particular, Luther, a former Augustinian monk, Peter Martyr Vermigli, an ex-Dominican, and Martin Bucer. In itself, apologies aside, this is not extraordinary, although the Italian Reformation proved to be a frail and remarkably vanishing product of history. Yet, with the names of Vermigli and Bucer, one sees two scholars who had been offered leading professorial chairs in their time – respectively, in

Oxford and Cambridge – and were able to structure in a lasting organizational capacity two non-Lutheran strongholds in Strasbourg and Zürich. In their wake came hundreds of lesser asylum-seekers. And while an interesting, historical argument was put forward long ago (Carter 1924), that Vermigli's Eucharistic adjustments may perfectly plausibly be seen as an effort to update the liturgy to reflect developments in Reformed Protestant thinking, the letters traveling from Zürich to leading English exiles betray an atmosphere of mounting anxiety to see whether the new regime would be as aggressively Reformed as under Edward VI (MacCulloch 2005). In this context, Torrance Kirby's recent essay (Ha and Collinson 2010) fills an important gap, providing evidence to support his claim that the Reformed Vermigli played a pivotal role in the formation of the Protestant religious settlement under Edward VI and consolidation under Elizabeth.

In light of these considerations, Peter Martyr Vermigli should be recognized as someone who, before his flight to Zürich in 1542, was superbly educated as a philosopher, theologian, scriptural commentator, and, subsequently, as someone who was able to tie together the embryonic Italian Reformation and the Protestant theologies of Northern Europe. It was, in particular, his command of scriptural texts – along with the early fathers and Aristotle – that enabled him to set the tone of his contributions (Opitz 2011). Surprisingly, given his polyglot interests, he never wrote a popular treatise in vernacular. Vermigli's erudition, however, was never a mere ornament but a tangible sign of the boundaries and borders, confessional as much as political, that were dividing Europe and that no amount of learned discourse could overcome. Perhaps, as has been suggested, Vermigli's originality should be assessed through his biographic wanderings, not only his thought (Campi et al. 2002).

Although in several textbooks on the reformation Vermigli is seldom cited, his legacy deserves a greater appreciation based upon the impact that his figure was able to conjure up during his own life – despite the fact that he did not form a new church and was forced to be itinerant after

crossing the Alps. A good starting point is the decision of the Zürich seminary to appoint him as a Hebraist, on very favorable terms beyond the lecture room. Why was he so attractive to the council? Reaching two independent scholarly conclusions, Bauman and Bravi suggested that the city father knew about Vermigli's political views, and, fearful of the turbulence stemming from the countryside in previous decades, they thought his defense of a republican government would help create a clergy loyal to their authority. Moreover, drawing on Aristotelian exegesis and Florentine political discourse, Bravi further underlined Vermigli's description of Israel under the rule of the Judges as an ideal republic (Campi et al. 2002), which anticipates by many decades the European thesis on the "Hebrew commonwealth" (Nelson 2010). Before being highly regarded among New England Puritans, Vermigli's writings – and especially, his *Loci Communes* – were reprinted about 110 times between 1550 and 1650 and were probably consulted by John Milton when writing *Paradise Lost* (Donnelly 1976).

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Vernacular Languages

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Abstract

Several debates existed vis-à-vis vernacular languages, in various parts of Europe, from the fourteenth to sixteenth century. Those languages underwent a process of progressive regularization, a limitation of the dialectal

variety, and the incorporation of new uses and registers, especially in those fields of the literate world that had retained Latin during the Middle Ages. The vindication and dignification of vernacular languages involved a slow but inexorable process of substitution of Latin in the learned arena, which entailed a redistribution of cultural prestige, a change in discursive models, and also the emergence of new agents. Nonetheless, this substitution did not occur in all languages in the same way or at the same rate.

Introduction

The European Renaissance witnessed a vindication and dignification of many of the vernacular languages. At the urging of humanists and intellectuals, European vernacular languages underwent a process of progressive regularization (mainly grammatical, lexical, and orthographic), a limitation of the dialectal variety, and the incorporation of new uses and registers, especially in those fields of the literate world that had retained Latin during the Middle Ages. The definition of “illustre vulgare” [illustrious vernacular], which Dante Alighieri proposed in his treatise *De vulgari eloquentia* (1304–1305), summarizes the initial phase of these processes: “dicimus illustre, cardinale, aulicum et curiale vulgare in Latio, quod omnis latie civitatis est et nullius esse videtur, et quo municipalia vulgaria omnia Latinorum mesurantur et ponderantur et comparantur” (Alighieri 2018: 212). [“I call illustrious, cardinal, courtly and curial vernacular of Italy that language that beats in all cities but is not perceived in any, and from which the municipal vernaculars of each city are measured, considered and compared.”]

Although the expression *lingua materna*, in reference to the vernacular language, was forged in the thirteenth century (Carrera de la Red 1988: 21) and the fact that awareness of the diglossia between Latin and the vernacular could even be traced back several centuries before, the Renaissance made the reflection on vernacular languages a central issue of its intellectual project.

Lacking homogeneous scope or depth, the process of dignification of the vernacular extended to Italian, French, English, Catalan, Spanish, and German, among many other languages and dialects. Hence, assuming the nuances and peculiarities of each case, one can speak authoritatively of a true question of language in the European Renaissance.

Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in various parts of Europe, several debates existed vis-à-vis language, of which the *Questione della lingua* surrounding Italian may be the most famous and extensive. These debates not only addressed the confrontation between Latin and the vernacular for legitimacy and cultural prestige but also served to raise the issues of how to think and update intellectual disciplines, how to connect the dignity of man with the dignity of language, and how to build a historical position from which to reread and appropriate the legacy of ancient times. Moreover, extralinguistic considerations intruded into these debates: religious (the translation of the biblical texts, for instance), political, and administrative issues (e.g., associated with imperial projects) and strategies for spreading prestige and social distinction (from one social group over another, from one region against another). In short, the debates on vernacular languages were the symptom and at the same time the fulcrum on which the construction of a new cultural and literary system pivoted, based on the need for a new code that allowed an audience to be addressed that would eventually accept, by the seventeenth century, a new relationship with language based on strategies, habits, and discourses that were distinct from Latin.

Heritage: Origin and Scope of the Problem of Language

The process of dignification of vernacular languages began, in general terms, when the first Italian humanists and philologists of the fourteenth century had to consider which language to use in their texts, while in other languages this “question about language” did not emerge until the late fifteenth century or even the early

sixteenth century. In the *Trecento* and, in general, in the early stages of each case (of each language), however, the debate did not focus on the vernacular but rather mainly revolved around the quality of Latin, a Latin that many considered corroded through scholastic applications and the poor linguistic knowledge of the clergy who had appropriated its cultivated use. Hence, together with the great Renaissance cultural project of the restitutum in integrum of ancient literature, the humanists set out to restore classical Latin with all its purity. Their aim, then, was “the repristination of its language and style” (Campanelli 2014: 140) and the eradication of medieval barbarisms. Finally, in the *Quattrocento* humanists succeeded in ensuring that the restored Latin, this new Latin, reached disciplines such as medicine, philosophy, and law, whose language of expression had been until then medieval Latin. This, then, was a debate that took place over time, which brings to mind the intervention of several generations of thinkers and influential figures such as Leon Battista Alberti and Lorenzo Valla in the fifteenth century and Desiderius Erasmus (Erasmus of Rotterdam) in the sixteenth.

In the heat of the debate on the quality of Latin, theoretical problems, arguments, and positions emerged that would make the incorporation of the problem of the vernacular into the dispute progressively indispensable. Thus, the emergence of historical awareness of the evolution of Latin (that Latin has always been a language with various registers) and also the acceptance of its artificiality or its insufficiency to convert it into a language of daily use would be added to the first evidence of the expansion of the vernacular to areas of cultural and literary prestige hitherto exclusive to Latin, as occurred, for example, with cultured literature that emerged in Occitan and French at the end of the twelfth century or the philosophical texts in Catalan of Ramon Llull between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Both trends, the development of the debate on Latin and the evidence of the expansion of the vernacular, would contribute to the shift of the linguistic debate toward vernacular languages. Indeed, it is still necessary to remember what Stuart Hall Jr. stated in 1942: “the debates of

the *Questione della lingua* must be regarded rather as an effect than as a cause of the rise of the *koiné*, and as a faithful reflection of the problems facing the standard languages at the various critical points in its history” (1942: 1).

Nevertheless, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the contrast between Latin and the vernacular at an early stage, when occurred, was articulated from a hierarchical and essentialist distinction by which Latin was, idiosyncratically, more refined than the vernacular. Thus, for example, when Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marquess of Santillana, wrote his defense of poetry in the form of the “Carta e proemio al Conestable de Portugal” (1449), he based it on a hierarchical distinction of languages as the basis of his literary hierarchy: Latin and Greek authors were described as “sublime,” while literary texts written in the vernacular were described as “mediocre,” and those from popular and oral genres also written in the vernacular were labeled “humble.” This perspective would become more nuanced as the debate progressed and incorporated a diachronic dimension and a historicist view on the study of language.

Innovative Aspects: Theoretical Approaches to the Problem of Language

Dante Alighieri wrote his treatise on *De vulgari eloquentia* between 1302 and 1305, although he left it unfinished midway through the second book (of four initially planned books). The treaty established two of the fundamental lines of development of the process of dignification of vernacular languages: the first was the need to construct a standard, to which the comparison between Italian dialects in Book I was dedicated; the second was the creation of a literary register for the vernacular, which the unfinished Book II sought through a formal analysis of Occitan troubadours and Italian *stilnovisti*. These two lines would form fundamental axes to the question of the dignification of the vernacular during the fifteenth century, despite Dante’s treaty not being the subject of debate until two centuries later. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that

Dante’s *De vulgari eloquentia* was not translated into Italian until 1529 (by Giangiorgio Trissino, one of the protagonists of the *Questione*), while the original Latin edition (by Jacopo Corbinelli, a Tuscan exiled in Paris) did not appear until 1577. The text, however, addressed some of the fundamental problems posed by this two-pronged approach.

Art and Use

The distinction between Latin as a language that had to be learned “by reason and art” (Carrera de la Red 1988: 56) and the vernacular, which was assimilated through use, was one of the most frequently mentioned bases on which to form the debate. Dante begins *De vulgari eloquentia* by proposing this distinct functionality: “quod vulgarem locutionem appellamus eam qua infantes assuefiunt ab assistentibus cum primitus distinguere voces incipiunt; vel, quod brevius dici potest, vulgarem locutionem asserimus quam sine omni regula nutricem imitantes accipimus” [“I call *lingua vulgar* that which children learn, [...] without obeying any rule”] (Alighieri 2018: 142). Then, referring to what Quintiliano referred to centuries before in his *Institutio Oratoria*, and even Seneca and Cicero (Väänänen 1988: 32–33), the Italian poet identified Latin with grammatical discipline: “Est et inde alia secondary locutio nobis, quam Romani grammatical vocaverunt. Hanc quidem secundarym Greci habent et alii, sed non omnes: ad habitum vero huius pauci perveniunt, quia non nisi per spatium temporis et studii assiduitatem regulamur et doctrinamur in illa” [“We also have another secondary language that the Romans called *gramática*. This secondary language is owned by the Greeks and other peoples, but not all; in reality, few come to possess it, since we manage to learn it and master it only through long and diligent study”] (Alighieri 2018: 144). In some cases, as would occur in the famous debate of 1435 in the anteroom of Pope Eugene IV, the assimilation of Latin with the scholarly disciplines that served to study it (rule versus use) would lead to the postulation of a distinct nature for each language and to the deepening the notion of diglossia, something

that deprived the vernacular of the essential quality by which it could be used in certain cultured contexts.

Contrary to this position, however, Dante attempted to base the priority of the vernacular on this distinction: “Harum quoque duarum nobilior est vulgaris: tum quia prima fuit humano generi usitata; tum quia totus orbis ipsa perfruitur, licet in diversas prolationes et vocabula sit divisa; tum quia naturalis est nobis, cum illa potius artificialis” [“Of these two, vernacular speech is the most noble [*nobilior*] because it was the first used by the human race, and because it was enjoyed throughout the world, although scattered in different pronunciations and terms; also because it is natural to us [*naturalis*], while the other is somewhat artificial”] (I, I,4). The opposition between the naturalness of the vernacular and the artificiality of Latin derived from the previous opposition between use and art.

As the debate on the ownership of Latin advanced, appeals to the literate would proliferate in order to make it a language of daily oral use, at least in school and university settings. These appeals were frequent, for example, in the Castilian arena of the fifteenth century (Carrera de la Red 1988: 62). Nevertheless, they led to an awareness of the insufficiency of Latin as a language of use in addressing more intimate and routine procedures and the difficulty of taking advantage of the oral use of Latin for its refinement. Indeed, in 1566, the vice-chancellor of the University of Salamanca, Juan Escribano, certified the failure of converting Latin into a language of use when he stated that “the style of speaking Latin was corrupted by the continuous speaking of Latin” (Gil Fernández 1997: 59).

Did the Romans Use Vernacular?

The first humanists inherited from the late Middle Ages the idea that in ancient times, a diglossia also existed, as occurred in their time between the Romance languages and medieval Latin, and that therefore two distinct categories of languages had always coexisted: the language spoken by the common people (such as the contemporary vernacular languages) and the written language (Latin) in such a way that “Latin, with its complex

morphology and syntax, was thus considered a creation of scholars, not subject to alteration over time; it represented a realm of stability, whereas vernaculars were the domain of mutability and disorder” (Campanelli 2014: 139). It was an artificial language, a *lingua franca* that served as a *koiné* to convey the expression and cultural exchange between literate people. Indeed, this notion regarding the nature of Latin, already expounded by Dante in his *De vulgari eloquentia*, justified the objective of the restitution of classical Latin previously mentioned. Only until well into the *Quattrocento* did some humanists begin to reject this thesis (Stever 1988: 377).

It was precisely the recovery of many works of classical Latin literature that encouraged some intellectuals to rethink the nature and use of Latin in antiquity, which sparked a famous debate about the existence of a vernacular in ancient Rome that took place in the antechamber of Pope Eugene IV in 1435 and that marked, undoubtedly, a turning point regarding the concept held until then about Latin as an artificial language and reserved for certain areas. The faction led by Leonardo Bruni adopted Dante’s position and maintained that ordinary Romans could not have mastered grammar and Latin (Stever 1988). Specifically, he said that Roman orators used the vernacular spoken in the street to deliver their speeches, speeches that were later written in *grammaticam Latinatam* [in proper Latin] to be set for posterity (Campanelli 2014: 141). At stake in this argument was a specific concept of rhetoric, whose scholarly application was in dispute in the fifteenth century according to which rhetoric was a formal art elevated above ordinary discourse. Antonio Loschi summarized this in his *Inquisitio super Undecim Orationes Ciceronis* (ca. 1498): “Sed altior res est eloquentia et a vulgari sermone remotior, quae licet plerumque in ambiguis communibusque versetur, ea tamen proprio quodam ac certo instituto continetur” [“Eloquence is a higher thing [than the conventions of daily speech] and more removed from vulgar speech and, even if it often concerns uncertainties and common things, still it is contained in its own peculiar and certain principles”] (Stever 1988: 377).

However, Leonardo Bruni did not propose a genuine diglossia in antiquity but rather a bipolarity between grammatical and non-grammatical language (although probably his opponents in the debate of 1435 did indeed interpret him as proposing a diglossia). In this regard, Strauss (1938: 42) highlighted that Bruni only spoke of an ancient vernacular language, which he considered independent with respect to standard literary Latin. “He had no historicist perspective on ancient Latin, and accepts the medieval conception that vernaculars are ungrammatical. For this reason, he cannot possibly claim a typological identity between Latin and the vernacular. In his letter to Biondo (1435), he states that the Latin language of the educated (*litterata lingua, sermo litteratus, sermo litteratorum, latine litterateque loqui*) in antiquity, in the time of Terence and Cicero, was distinct from the popular language (*vulgaris lingua, vulgaris sermo, sermo vulgi*), just as in his own time” (Eskhult 2018: 202). In short, Bruni positioned himself along the same lines as the medieval tradition that Dante continued, namely, in favor of a permanent bilingualism between Latin and Italian.

The opposing faction, led by Flavio Biondo (and later supported by Guarino Veronese, Francesco Filelfo, and Lorenzo Valla), defended the continuity, the relationship, between the language of oral use of the Romans and written Latin (*grammatica*). Biondo had read Cicero’s *Orator* and transcribed *Brutus* in 1422, a year after this fundamental treatise on rhetoric was unveiled. These texts, together with *Institutio Oratoria de Quintiliano* (rediscovered in 1416), were key in their conviction that Latin was truly a living language in common use in ancient Rome “and differences within the large Latin-speaking community were due only to a varying degree of refinement in its language usage” (Campanelli 2014: 141). Biondo was opposed, then, to the theory of bilingualism, arguing that in ancient times, there was only one Latin, in other words, a single linguistic unit of Latin, regardless of social class, gender, degree of literacy, and formal education. Nevertheless, this theory of monolingualism did not correspond to an idea of linguistic uniformity. Biondo

recognized the internal variation of ancient Latin both at the individual level and at the functional level according to a tripartite sociocultural division that could be correlated with the triple division of the rhetorical style of diction (*tres latinae dictionis formae*), which Cicero proposed, namely, *forma poetica*, *forma oratoria*, and *forma vulgaris*; the latter, the vernacular, “lacked artfulness and rules and was used by common people” (Eskhult 2018: 205–206). In the letter with which he intervened in the debate, Biondo also documents his argument with the survival of a Latin lexicon about knives or farm animals in isolated mountain villages and regions. This conviction, in short, led him to compare the linguistic functions of grammar and use: “he decides that grammar is not prior to but is the observation of usage” (Stever 1988: 378).

Moreover, in a fragment of his letter, Biondo includes the vernacular as an example of his argument: “I have no doubt that the multitude never knows tense, mood, number, a case from art, and, although they sometimes make mistakes, still, I observe them say much correctly and coherently. Everywhere, among all the Italians, those who speak with the most corrupt vulgarity, we see something instilled by the nature of language so that no one is so rustic, crude, and dull that, if he can speak at all, he will not know in speech to vary somehow tense, case, mood and number according to the exigencies of time and sense in narration” (cit. in Stever 1988: 379) [“Stationibus, ut video, erumpet, impetumque faciet quispiam et cornuta urgebit quaestione verborum ne desinentias et tempora ac modos nominumque inflexionem et numeros servasse an penitus confundisse multitudines credam. . . . Tempora vero modos numerosque et casus ab arte illas nequaquam nosse non dubito, quas tamen alicubi errante multa recte et ordine video proferre; quamquam omnibus ubique apud Italos corruptissima etiam vulgaritate loquentibus idiomatis natura insitum videmus, ut nemo tam rusticus, nemo tam rudis, tamque ingenio hebes sit, qui modo loqui possit, quin aliqua ex parte tempora casus modosque et numeros noverit dicendo variare, prout narrandae rei tempus ratioque videbuntur postulare”] (cit. in Stever 1988: 379).

In this fragment, Flavio Biondo anticipated the linguistic positions of Lorenzo Valla and maintained that it was the logic of the language that established the meaning of speech, with which the priority of the real referred thing versus the language, the position defended by Dante and Bruni, was reversed: the idiosyncrasy of each language was seen as a condition of the suitability and precision of that language to address or think about certain areas of reality and knowledge. In this way, the problem of language became a philosophical one.

However, the consequences and resonances of the debate did not end there: “This debate about grammar, besides producing ideas about knowledge and culture, enabled the Volgare finally to be treated on a par with Latin. In his letter, Guarino concludes that all languages — Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Italian— are governed by everyday usage (*consuetudine*) not the reasonings of grammarians (*grammaticorum rationibus*)” (Stever 1988: 380). Biondo’s theses argued that ancient peoples had written in their vernacular language, with which the modern vernacular was enabled in literary terms and its natural inferiority questioned. Moreover, the awareness that in ancient Rome there existed a diastatic and changing Latin led to the notion that “for the first time, language became a subject of historical inquiry” (Campanelli 2014: 142).

Which Historical Vernacular Would Become a Model for Language?

When the *Questione della lingua* re-emerged in the first decades of the sixteenth century, the immutability attributed to Latin by the first humanists through its identification with grammar moved to the debate on the vernacular. One of the fundamental texts of the *Questione*, Pietro Bembo’s *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), promoted the literary Tuscan of Francesco Petrarca (1300–1374) as the standard unitary language model. The *Prose* is a seminal text with multiple aims: “un dialogo maieutico, che in definitiva perverrà a descrivere-prescrivere dettagliatamente il modello fono-morfo-sintattico dell’italiano letterario (libro III), ma che prima di adempiere a questo storico ufficio si vorrà distendere sui

fondamenti e la storia del volgare (libro I) e sulla sua retorica (libro II). Il trattato che risulterà la fondamentale grammatica della codificazione letteraria italiana” (Tavoni 1992: 221).

Therefore, the *Prose* was not only a grammatical study on Italian but also a treatise on the vernacular in all its dimensions. Bembo’s position on the vernacular had developed from his editorial work for Aldus Manutius in 1501 (Petrarca’s *Rime Sparse*) and 1502 (*Le terze rime di Dante*), work which forced him to use a more demanding standard than that available to him (e.g., the one used by Cristoforo Landino a few decades earlier in his translations of Dante) (Campanelli 2014). Despite the fact that Bembo’s text was published in 1525, the celebrated autograph manuscript Vatican Latin 3210 allows us to conclude that the *Prose* was written over an extended period of time: the first news of it appeared toward the end of 1500, and by 1512 Bembo had only written the two first books (Tavoni 1992).

In his text, Bembo defended a model of literary, minority language that was fixed at a precise moment in history: the Tuscan *Quattrocento*. His correspondence with Pico della Mirandola in 1513 established the political dimension of his position: “rather than Pico’s democratizing general principles, Bembo makes it clear that his take on style is a theory of excellence, intended for a chosen few and consistent with a strictly aristocratic idea of art” (Campanelli 2014: 152). In this establishing of a refined model of language, Bembo opposed the model defended, among others, by Baldassare Castiglione. In *Il Cortegiano* (a dialogue set in Urbino in 1507 and written from 1513 onward and published in 1528), Castiglione defends an Italian based not on the use restricted to the archaic language of the triple crown of canonical authors usually cited as models (Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca) or the centrality of a specific dialect (Tuscan) “but grounded in the vernaculars used in the main cities of Italy, especially by the courtly intellectual elites” (Campanelli 2014: 159). In short, a language “communal, rich and various, and like a delightful garden full of different flowers and fruits” (*Il Cortegiano* I.35). [Se adunque degli omini litterati

e di bon ingegno e giudicio, che oggidí tra noi si ritrovano, fossero alcuni, li quali ponessimo cura di scrivere del modo che s'è detto in questa lingua cose degne d'esser lette, tosto la vederessimo culta ed abundante de termini e belle figure, e capace che in essa si scrivesse così bene come in qualsivoglia altra; e se ella non fosse pura toscana antica, sarebbe italiana, comune, copiosa e varia, e quasi come un delizioso giardino pien di diversi fiori e frutti. Né sarebbe questo cosa nova; perché delle quattro lingue che aveano in consuetudine, i scrittori greci, elegendo da ciascuna parole, modi e figure, come ben loro veniva, ne facevano nascere un'altra che si diceva commune, e tutte cinque poi sotto un solo nome chiamavano lingua greca].

Bembo's attack on the courtesan language model defended by Castiglione pivots, again, on the normative role ascribed to its use: "no contro el nome ma contro la cosa, contro l'idea di lingua eclettica, interregionales e compromessa con l'uso parlato (che implicitamente copre anche la trissiniana *lingua italiana*), antitetica al compatto e classicistico modello bembiano mutuato dalla teoria dell'imitazione" (Tavoni 1992: 228). The novelty of this approach lies in the need to ask to what extent it is necessary to contain or repress the tendency for change and the variety of the language based on its use and opting for a stable and unitary model.

Bembo takes this idea from Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*, whose text he had access to around 1510 despite the fact that Trissino's Italian translation had not yet been published (Pulsoni 1997). Bembo (a Venetian aristocrat who lived in Urbino and Rome) called for linguistic unity in the absence of political unity (as Dante did) after the political disasters experienced by Italy in the first quarter of the century. However, in prioritizing Petrarchan Tuscan, he does not observe a dialectal or political priority linked to its present but defends the prestige of that language that already enjoyed a literary register, which he strips of its oral traces. Thus, in his defense of the learning of ancient Tuscan, he states that contemporary Tuscan speakers had no greater advantage over others: "this suggests that Tuscan is exactly the same kind of *artificial*

language Dante in the *De vulgari* argues that Latin is" (Campanelli 2014: 157).

With this, he dignifies the vernacular with the framework that had previously served to place it hierarchically below Latin. In this way, Bembo's text is a turning point in the theoretical process of the dignification of the vernacular: "Bembo's treatise set the standard against which later literary, grammatical and lexicographical developments throughout Italy were to be measured" (Campanelli 2014: 162–163).

Do Languages Evolve or Does Each Language Have an Invariable Nature?

The debate of 1435, together with the counterposition of subsequent ideas vis-à-vis the vernacular between Pietro Bembo and Baldassare Castiglione, raised the issue of the existence of a dual concept regarding the nature of languages, which were classified into two categories: those immutable languages intrinsically associated with a grammatical structure and lexical richness that made them ideal for dealing with certain lofty issues (and, in a very particular way, religious issues) and those languages suitable for talking about common, lowly issues, precisely because they lack the grammatical factor and rich vocabulary and were determined by their use. That hierarchical concept of languages formed the basis of Dante's notion of the three divine languages (*tres linguae sacrae*): Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. These languages, in which the Holy Scriptures were written, were considered to be "shaped and regulated by rules, learnt through formal study and unchanging through time and space" (Law 2003: 231), which put them up against (and before) vernacular languages. Nevertheless, the process of dignification of the vernacular allowed some humanists to introduce into the debate on the grammaticality and stability of some languages and the historicity of others as a defining element. These oppose those that established a direct relationship between grammar and a structure of thought (Stever 1988: 369).

This philosophical and language theory problem was expressed very clearly by means of the concept of *copia*, which Erasmus developed

in his work *De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia*, a small rhetoric manual that, inspired by the ideas of both Cicero and Quintiliano, concerned the imitation of words and ideas used by classical authors. He first wrote it in 1511, but the concept of *copia* was developed throughout his life. “*Copia* is an important idea in humanist philosophy of language, a concept used to demonstrate the nexus of language and thought. Besides this epistemological motive, *copia* is used in theory of culture. Many humanists share an idea of the history of language and culture, which is as follows: Languages develop through stages. In the primitive inchoate stage, few words are used to mean many things. The next is maturity, in which the use of language becomes self-conscious. There is reflection about language itself, which produces grammars and lexicons. The last phase is decline, in which the better conventions of the previous age are abandoned” (Steuer 1988: 370).

In reality, it was precisely the discovery and reading of Cicero’s works that allowed many humanists to become aware not only that Latin already had various registers in the classical era but also that, in addition, it was not always the lofty and divine tongue that Dante spoke of. And it is thanks to Cicero’s work that Latin was first a language of shepherds and soldiers, a little refined language, that the learned Romans used Greek to express themselves and write, and that it was Cicero, faced with the need to translate the ideas of Greek philosophers into Latin, who had worked to furnish the language of Rome with the philosophical vocabulary that until then it had lacked (Law 2003: 231).

This led some humanists to defend the notion that languages are not immutable by nature but that they evolve. At this time in history, then, Latin seemed to be experiencing a phase of decline both because of its “corrupt” state (which had motivated the recovery of classical Latin by humanists) and the evidence that most people no longer understood it. In contrast, vernacular languages found themselves in a phase of bloom and early consolidation. This is why, given the realization that these languages still lacked the tools to accurately and adequately

express lofty ideas (and, therefore, to speak or write about theology, philosophy, law, medicine, etc.), these humanists claimed that it was necessary to equip them with grammars and lexicons, since the vernacular had to be the usual language of expression, the language that most people understood and through which their works would reach a much wider audience. Together, this implied splitting off the tongues of a supposed immutable (and divine) essence and associating them with the cultural convention: associating them, in short, with the possibility of refinement. Thus, the need for grammars and lexicons was born, not simply through wanting to write in the vernacular works on philosophy or law (many of which are still written in Latin) but above all by having sufficient tools to translate those works from Latin (Ynduráin 1982: 22). Because until then, translations into the vernacular had suffered from a lack of vocabulary, formulas, jargon, grammatical solutions, etc.

One of the elements that clearly demonstrates the progressive preeminence of the vernacular versus Latin is the large number of translations of which we have evidence. Many of them, moreover, are commented self-translations, in which the author highlights the difficulty in finding the appropriate vocabulary. “For example, Alfonso de Palencia recognized and denounced the dearth of Latin of his time, agreed with Valera in translating compendiously and also harboured the same hope that his treatise would awaken curiosity in the originals” (Ynduráin 1982: 24).

Finally, it is important to point out that one of the areas in which the use of the vernacular would be highly relevant and revealing was precisely religion – not only in its daily use (e.g., in homilies) but, above all, in its learned use – which had until then been reserved for the *linguae sacrae*, of which we have two paradigm examples: translations of the Bible, on the one hand, and the texts written by the Castilian mystics, on the other.

The first case began with the first attempts to translate biblical texts into vernacular languages, which was driven by the appearance of the printing press, although the various reformist projects would be a key element in this process.

Thus, Martin Luther was fundamental both for his translation of the Bible and, above all, for his dignification of German: “Luther was not the first to translate the Bible into German, but he was certainly the first one to make vernacular German into the normative principle for the whole translation of the Scriptures” (Westhelle 2003: 20).

The second case, that of the Castilian mystics such as Saint Teresa of Jesus, Fray Luís de León, and Juan de la Cruz, sought in the expressiveness of the vernacular the possibility of transcribing mystical experiences into a written language, something that by nature they tended to reject or at least resist. Therefore, the language used must be accessible. Nevertheless, precisely because of their use of the vernacular, the mystics would be repressed by counter-reformist orthodoxy, who would see the use of a language other than Latin in religious texts as being something that had to be persecuted; the Counter-Reformation associated this fact with how the different reforms of Christianity in the sixteenth century made the translation of religious texts into the vernacular one of its fundamental pillars when defending individual contact with sacred texts. Somehow, then, the Castilian mystics kept the Erasmist footprint alive in their vision of an accessible, living language at a time when this legacy and this vision of language were viewed with suspicion for being alien to the counter-reformist positions resulting from the Council of Trent (1546–1563).

Is the Model of Language Associated with the Model of the Individual?

In some of the interventions on the problem of language, the quality of the language was identified with the quality and *dignitas* of the individual who used it. The linguistic debate thus extended to social and moral spheres. This issue appears frequently in texts dating from the first decades of the sixteenth century by authors such as Desiderius Erasmus, Baldassare Castiglione, and Juan de Valdés. However, the first accounts can be traced back to the Italian *Trecento*.

The first to highlight this identification were the Italian humanists – embodied in the figure and

work of Francesco Petrarca – who backed a restoration of the *latinitas*. From the *restitutio in integrum* of Latin literature, they sought to recover that which in Latin found its most lively and precise expression: “Thus the great barrier between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was lifted; the cultural and pedagogical revolution, the *studia humanitatis* versus the formalism of previous studies, the *litterae* bearers of the authentic *dignitas homini* versus the cold scholastic theology, the reason that strives to seek the truth versus that which is debated in absurd syllogisms and apriorisms” (Carrera de la Red 1988: 27).

Erasmus’s approach to Latin (in which he wrote all his texts) followed this same line, although he defended a version of it that was more oriented toward practical and everyday spheres, an accessible lingua franca that allowed Latin to recover its use and lost vitality. The Erasmist mark and influence allow some significant features of a paradigmatic case, namely, Castilian, to be noted. From the problematic awareness of diglossia in the thirteenth century during the reign of Alfonso X, who encouraged the proliferation of translations, Castilian was furnished with the first grammar dedicated to a vernacular language in 1492 (by Antonio Nebrija). In the sixteenth century, Castilian embraced the Italian literary models as the beginning of a refinement that would culminate with the Baroque Castilian of the seventeenth century, which was capable of attaining a practically autonomous literary and cultural system with respect to Latin: “Latin, there is no one to thank it” [“latino ya no ay quien lo agradezca”] would affirm one of the characters from Félix Lope de Vega’s 1632 dialogue *La Dorotea* (1968: 243).

Due to its rapid evolution, its variation with respect to the Italian *Questione*, its complexity, and its extralinguistic resonances, it is worth pausing here to look in more detail at the case of Castilian. Carrera de la Red summarizes with great clarity the process carried out in the Castilian sphere: “upon the Latin model of the classical era, a humanistic Latin and vernacular were developed for literary and cultural expression that were distanced from scholastic Latin and

the *sermo cotidianus* and connected by the middle-vernacular, which, except in rare cases, humanists used in daily life” (167).

The first foundation of this process emerged in the first generation of Spanish humanists at the end of the fifteenth century. Antonio de Nebrija, one of its principal representatives, was commissioned by Isabel I to write a number of *Introductiones latinae* (1487) for learning Latin. In addition to representing a symptom of the insufficient spread of Latin among certain elites, this need to translate this text into Castilian led to Nebrija becoming aware of the difficulty in translating subjects of art, techniques, and metalinguistics into Castilian, which were not problematic for Latin. This would partially justify his project to formulate a *Gramática de la lengua española* (1492), the first one published for a romance language, and the preceding *Vocabulario español-latino* (1495). Before Nebrija’s project, Castilian was viewed as a communication tool that did not serve when addressing learned and literate areas.

In the prologue to his *Gramática*, Nebrija introduced a reference to the connection that had historically existed between the expansion and the unity of an empire with the unity and strength of its language, an argument that was not new but that was a prelude to the political implications that, from that moment on, the dignification of vernacular languages and especially Castilian would have in terms of its penetration into the American continent. This would go on to become one of the distinctive and central issues in the reflection on Castilian (Carrera de la Red 1988: 109).

The second issue was, as has been said, the Erasmist mark in the second generation of humanists, which coincided with the rise to the throne of Emperor Carlos I. Such influence would lead the reflection on the language toward more practical and less theoretical issues than those that characterized the Italian *Questione*. The influence of Desiderius Erasmus would become evident in figures such as Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, founder of the University of Alcalá and one of the promoters of the *Biblia Políglota Complutense* project (published in 1520), a

complete edition of the Bible with the same text in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek (with additions in Aramaic) arranged in columns for the purposes of comparison.

Another figure to be influenced by Desiderius Erasmus was Juan de Valdés, who wrote the *Diálogo de la lengua* in Naples in 1535, although it would not be published until 1577. The text is relevant because it based its reflection on the use of Castilian and was explicitly belligerent when it came to the “gramatiquerías” (Valdés 2014: 55). Indeed, he bitterly criticizes the academic dimension of the previous generation (Juan de Mena, Jorge Manrique) and, especially, Nebrija for his project to establish an *ars* for Castilian (although it seems that he never got to read his *Gramática*) and for his Andalusian origin, an attack that would reappear frequently in linguistic disputes, especially in texts from the courtly setting and the University of Salamanca, and that portrayed a territorial and political struggle for the prestige that would enable the establishment of a standard language model.

As Valdés was unable to find any literary works in Castilian that served as language models that Italians such as Bembo had indeed found in Petrarca, he chose to take as a model the sayings of the vernacular and common speech, his text thereby becoming a series of examples taken from the living language spoken at that time. Valdés defended a linguistic naturalism and, on this point, added the ideal championed by Castiglione to the Erasmist fingerprint. The Italian claimed, in his dialogue *Il Cortegiano*, which dealt with the model of behavior and of the individual, that “writing is nothing more than a way of speaking” (I, 30) [“io non posso negarvi che la scrittura non sia un modo di parlare”]. This commitment to the *llaneza* (simplicity and clarity) of Castilian could also be linked to the distinction between the areas of use with respect to Latin at the beginning of the sixteenth century: while Castilian was found in administration, preaching, and poetic texts, subjects related to teaching, science, philosophy, diplomatic relations, theology, or homiletic literature were practically exclusive of Latin.

Figures such as the poet Garcilaso de la Vega (1498?–1536) would follow that same commitment to naturalness and promoted a kind of “spoken writing” (Carrera de la Red 1988: 116) that was characterized by transparency and serenity. In his case, he perfected the adaptation into Spanish of the Italian genres and meters that the poet Juan Boscán, a friend of his, had begun to experiment on, as the latter explains in his famous epistle to the Duchess of Soma in 1526. Boscán and Garcilaso de la Vega fostered an experimentation with the hendecasyllabic verse and paroxitonic rhymes that would arouse certain controversy but would end up endowing Castilian with greater musicality and eradicate the acute verse characteristic of the *cancionero* poetry (songbooks) that prevailed in the fifteenth century, which retained a medieval-style trace (Rico 1983).

The first edition of the poems of Garcilaso de la Vega appeared posthumously as an annex to the complete works of Juan Boscán, which his widow published in 1543 (*Las obras de Boscán y algunas de Garcilaso de la Vega*). For an era that was so reluctant in accepting the *imitatio auctoris* of contemporary models, the rapidity with which the works of the Toledan poet appeared is significant. These works at first appeared in isolation (1569) and, shortly after, became the object of comments that claimed his status as the model author for the refinement of Castilian. The first to do so was the professor of rhetoric at the University of Salamanca, Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas. His *Anotaciones y enmiendas* to the poetry of Garcilaso appeared in 1574 and are a compendium of sources and “thefts” (*hurtos*) and a manual undoubtedly oriented at teachings (Viñas 2002).

Of a very distinct nature and a more formidable workmanship, the *Anotaciones a la poesía de Garcilaso de la Vega* by the Sevillian poet Fernando de Herrera appeared in 1580. Herrera did not limit himself to making an inventory of citations and motifs; instead, he took advantage of the poetry of the Toledan to put forward an authentic prose that was capable of adopting the language model of Garcilaso de la Vega that was

not, as a result, shy of formulating criticisms and differences. The need to convert Garcilaso into a language model was defended by Francisco de Medina in his prologue to the *Anotaciones* with the argument that Castilian was not a refined language because the “wise men” (de Herrera 2001) that were occupied with such an undertaking were more attentive to Latin and Greek. It was this barbarized state that led the Salamaca economist, Tomás de Mercado, in his *Suma de tratos y contratos* (1569) to raise this paradox:

“And so I have touched on writing in romance, I will not silence what many can take advantage of, what should be noted: that in order to write Latin it is enough for a man to be learned, but in romance it is necessary to be very learned and prudent, it is necessary that he writes much more clearly and plainly than in Latin and that he knows what in this language should be written. [...] To dictate in Latin it is enough to understand the subject well and, with the precepts of the dialectic, to have to hand the doctrine with good method. [...] However, writing in common language, [...] it is necessary to observe many circumstances, explain them with a plain and simple style, consider not only what has to be written, but also mainly what has to be silenced, to tie and take in the sails of understanding many times when it flies” (cit. in Ynduráin 1982: 20–21) [“Y pues he tocado el escribir en romance, no callaré lo que a mucho pueda aprovechar, conviene a saber: que para escribir latín basta un hombre ser docto, mas para en romance es menester ser doctísimo y prudentísimo, es necesario que escriba muy mas claro y llano que en latín y que sepa lo que en este lenguaje conviene escribir. [...] Para dictar en latín basta entender bien la materia y, con los preceptos de la dialéctica, disponer con buen método la doctrina. [...] Pero, escribiendo en lengua común, [...] es menester guardar muchas circunstancias, explicarlas con estilo llano y fácil, considerar no solo qué se ha de escribir, sino principalmente lo que se ha de callar, atar y coger las velas al entendimiento muchas veces cuando va volando”].

It was also this barbarized state in which Castilian found itself, therefore, that prompted the

possibility of also amending the poetry of Garcilaso. In these amendments appeared, for example, the criticism of the use of words employed for oral use and the defense of learned words and archaisms: “the old voices brought from long ago, as Quintiliano says in numerous places, are not only defended and welcomed and esteemed by some, but bring majesty to prayer, and not without delight; because they bring with them the authority of antiquity, which gives them value (saying it thus) that religion of their past” (431?).

Notes such as this latter one suggest the need to more noticeably separate the spoken language and the literary register. With the increasingly accepted incorporation of the rhetorical precept of *decorum*, according to which the dignity of the thing (*res*) must be reflected in the dignity of the way in which it is referred to (*verba*), the literary system shifted progressively toward stylization and a language model that began to move away from Garcilasian transparency and simplicity: “it is about looking for propriety, fleeing the affectation and the barbaric simplicity and elaborating the *elocutio* of the mother tongue” (Carrera de la Red 1988: 160).

In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the process of dignification of Castilian seems to reach a certain balance and refinement: “in general terms, we could speak in the last quarter of the sixteenth century of vernacular classicism, essentially based on Horace, Cicero and Quintiliano, accepted by representatives of a cultured and *discreta* social class, with a desire to avoid vulgarity in speech and to endow their manifestations with essentially Renaissance values, somewhat forgotten in the world of the Counter-Reformation” (Carrera de la Red 1988: 164).

With the turn of the century, the generation of baroque poets led by Luis de Góngora and Francisco de Quevedo would intensify the formal artifice and, especially in the case of de Góngora, would introduce the veneration of poetic difficulty and hermeticism into literary Castilian, which would materialize in the *Soledades* (1613) and the *querelle* raised in the following years and decades. Although in 1611 Luis Carrillo y Sotomayor had theoretically cemented this search

for obscurity and difficulty through his *Libro de erudición poética*, it would be the intervention in the debate on poems of Góngora by some of the most relevant scholars of that time that would substantiate the culmination of the refinement of the Castilian that had begun with Nebrija.

The culmination of this linguistic process occurred alongside the replacement of the ideal of language and the model of the individual that was associated with it at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the Baroque period, the predominance of the *inventio*, the ingenuity in the model of language, and the discretion in the model of the individual, replaced the veneration of Renaissance naturalness and simplicity (*llaneza*). It was then, with the awareness of the creation of a literary Castilian, when the process of dignification of Castilian culminated, which led it to a remarkable autonomy with respect to Latin, to the extent that a literary and cultural system had been built around the vernacular, with a specific code, public, models, conventions, and agents. Latin would endure as the technical language of scholastic philosophy, theology, and some sciences, but many symptoms of the discrediting of classical scholarship in different areas of society would appear. This is, indeed, what is understood of the phrase “*Latín, ya no hay quien lo agradezca*” [“Latin isn’t appreciated by anyone anymore”], uttered by Lope de Vega’s main character in *La Dorotea* in 1632.

Impact and Legacy: Unfinished Processes

The processes of vindication, refinement, and normalization of vernacular languages did not end in the Renaissance and continued for much longer, adopting the cultural, linguistic, and political inflections of each case and moment. However, as in the Renaissance, a reflection on the vernacular, the density of texts and ideas, its extension to the vast majority of languages, and its controversial friction with a language of prestige and tradition, as was once enjoyed by Latin, would never occur again. Regarding the latter, Latin, the vindication

and dignification of vernacular languages involved a slow but inexorable process of substitution in the learned arena, which entailed a redistribution of cultural prestige, a change in discursive models, and also the emergence of new agents, from academies to the public. Nevertheless, this substitution did not occur in all languages in the same way or at the same rate. Indeed, there are a wide variety of cases and nuances that, however, can be reduced to three descriptive paradigms that we propose below.

The first corresponds to those languages whose process of normalization was associated with the strengthening of central political power. This is the case, as mentioned, of Castilian, which was explicitly associated with the imperial expansion of the Hispanic crown during the sixteenth century. It is also the case of French, which underwent an intense process of orthographical, rhetorical, lexical, and literary regulation between 1530 and 1550. Perhaps the most famous text of that time, Joachim Du Bellay's *La Défense et illustration de la langue française* (1549), imported most of the arguments of Pietro Bembo's *Prose* into French. However, Du Bellay related his defense of French with the promotion of a new generation of writers (the *Pléiade*), who sought to position themselves within the literary field by breaking with previous authors and literary models; however, unlike Bembo, he refused to propose to these writers as a language model: "Ly, donques, et rely premierement (ò Poëte futur), fueillete de Main nocturne, et hournell, les Exemplaires Grecz et Latins: puis me laisse toutes ces vieilles Poësies Françoises aux Jeux Floraux de Thoulouze, et au Puy de Rouan: comme Rondeaux, Ballades, Vyrelaiz, Chantz Royaulx, Chansons, et autres temmes episseries, qui corrumptent le goust de nostre Langue: et ne servent si non à porter temoingnaige de notre ignorance" (Du Bellay 2007: 132).

Despite Du Bellay's recommendation to refine French by imitating the Latin and Greek of the classics, the support of this process by a central political power would end up turning French into the new *lingua franca* in eighteenth-century Europe. Moreover, its role of replacing

Latin, increasingly associated with ecclesiastical and scholastic fields, would burden French with opposing liberal and secularizing values, so that French would end up being identified with reformist, progressive tendencies in philosophy, politics, and aesthetics (Casanova 1999).

The second paradigm is populated by those languages that did not receive the support of political or administrative unification in the search for linguistic unification. Such is the case of Italian and German, among others. Their process of reflection and linguistic unification was extremely intense during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and they promoted highly refined and mature language models. However, the persistent fragmentation of the regions in which these languages were used (the unification of Italy took place in 1861 and that of Germany in 1871) did not facilitate the spread of these models beyond small social groups and would make it impossible to bring to an end their respective *questione della lingua*. However, the fundamental arguments and criteria in the debate would be set during the Renaissance: some even suggest that the *questione* persisted during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries without new elements being added to the discourse (Hall 1942: 9).

The third and final paradigm is occupied by those vernacular languages and dialects that enter into territorial, cultural, political, or demographic competence with another vernacular, whose influence closed the process of normalization of those minority languages or dialects, a process that was prematurely suspended or postponed. Many examples of this latter situation could be cited, but we will illustrate them with the case of Catalan. The Catalan language represents a process of expansion, dialectal fragmentation, and self-awareness during the Middle Ages similar to other peninsular languages mentioned, such as Castilian. It reached a peak in the fourteenth century as a language of significant cultural and literary use, which was accompanied by the commercial and political expansion of the Crown of Aragon throughout the Mediterranean. At the end of the thirteenth century, the Cancelleria Reial, created in 1264, ordered all

administrative texts to be written in Catalan, something which led to the need to establish a progressively unified language model for disparate territories and dialects.

In the first half of the fifteenth century, the Cancelleria began to use the common denomination of “Catalan language” for all the territorial dialects, despite the fact that the disparity of denominations (Valencian, Mallorcan, etc.) predominated (Ferrando and Nicolás 2011: 165). It is at this time of linguistic consolidation that the influence of the Castilian nobility would gradually introduce its linguistic uses in areas of social and cultural prestige. This process would culminate in 1479 with the federation of the crowns of Aragon and Castile and the economic, demographic, and cultural preeminence of the latter over the former. The dignification of Catalan would continue during the second half of the fifteenth century with translations as significant as Bonifaci Ferrer’s Bible and the lexicons, such as Pere Miquel Carbonell’s *Regles d’esquivar vocables o mots grossers o pagesívols* (1492); however, the progressive expansion and political promotion of Castilian would convert Catalan into a subordinate language from a cultural and economic point of view during the sixteenth century: “As noted in the printed language of the beginning of the sixteenth century, Catalan started a process of cultivation, but adverse political conditions prevented this process from resulting in the process of grammatization, which would have placed it on an equal footing with the great Romance languages of the time” (Ferrando and Nicolás 2011: 173) [“Segons es constata en la llengua de la impremta de principis del segle XVI, el català encetà un procés de cultivació, però les condicions polítiques adverses impediren que aquest procés desemboqués en el de gramatització, que l’hauria situat en condicions d’igualtat amb les gran llengües romàniques de l’entorn”]. Thus, the process of the normalization of Catalan, as with other languages, was suspended and postponed until the twentieth century, when it was resumed following several attempts to rehabilitate and vindicate it throughout the nineteenth century.

Cross-References

- [Bembo, Pietro](#)
- [Bruni, Leonardo](#)
- [Dante Alighieri](#)
- [Erasmus, Desiderius](#)
- [Humanism](#)
- [Petrarca, Francesco](#)
- [Philology, Renaissance](#)
- [Pléiade](#)
- [Valdés, Juan de](#)
- [Valla, Lorenzo](#)

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Vernia de Chieti, Nicolettus

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Vernia, Nicoletto

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Vernia, Nicoletto

Born: 1420, Chieti/Italy

Died: October 5, 1499, Vicenza/Italy

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Abstract

Nicoletto Vernia is the greatest Aristotelian of the fifteenth century and has contributed to all the most important aspects of the speculation of his time: gnoseology and the problem of the immortality of the soul, logic, physics, and the theory of *impetus*, research methodology and the theory of *regressus demonstrativus*, cosmology, and the metaphysics of celestial intelligences.

He claims the autonomy of physics with regard to metaphysics and the superiority of natural science.

Vernia was a pupil of Paolo della Pergola and Gaetano of Thiene and successor of the latter as professor of *Philosophia* at the University of Padua in 1465. He has among his pupils, Pietro Pomponazzi, Agostino Nifo, and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

Alternate Names

Vernia, Nicoletto; de Vernia, Nicoletto; Vernia, Niccolò; Vernia, Nicolò; Vernia de Chieti, Nicolettus; Vernias Theatinus, Nicoletus; Vernias, Nicoletus; Vernias, Nicolettus; Vernias, Nicholetus; Verniatus, Nicoletus

Biography

Nicoletto Vernia was born in Chieti, around 1420, the son of Ser Antonio Vernia, who was also born in Chieti.

He declares that he spent his youth in Venice as a guest of the noble family of Sebastiano Badoer,

of which some members were the Patriarchs of Venice.

An important phase of Vernia's education is his period of study at the Rialto School where he is a pupil of Paolo della Pergola.

Paolo della Pergola is of particular importance since Vernia regards him as his first teacher.

In 1442, he had become a rector of the school annexed to the Church of San Giovanni Elemosinario in Rialto in Venice and remains here until 1455, the year of his death.

After Paolo della Pergola, many distinguished scholars of the University of Padua teach in this school, so, from the second half of the fifteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century, the school is a branch of Padua's University where many young Venetians begin their studies of logic and natural philosophy, which they then complete at the University of Padua where they obtain their doctorate.

It should therefore be remembered that the curriculum of studies conducted in the Rialto School has as its fundamental subjects the Aristotelian disciplines included in *Organon*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics*, as well as *Mathematics* and *Abacus*.

It is evident, then, that there is a direct connection between the didactic activity of the Rialto School and the scientific activity of the Faculty of *Artes* of the University of Padua, and therefore, there is a direct progression of Vernia's education that passes from the magisterium of Paolo della Pergola to that of Gaetano of Thiene, the most important professor of *Philosophia naturalis* at the Faculty of *Artes* of the University of Padua from 1422 to 1465.

Vernia then reports that, after graduating, he goes to Pavia to study logic and physics according to the theory of the *Calculatores*, and studies in depth the doctrine of Richard Swineshead.

He began his professional curriculum in 1466 with the *primum gradum profitendi* qualification in the teaching of *Philosophia Naturalis*.

The year 1468 is the most important year in the career of Vernia, who becomes an ordinary professor of philosophy in the chair previously occupied by his master Gaetano of Thiene.

On June 20, 1469, Vernia is admitted to the Sacred College of Doctors and Philosophers of the University of Padua. The prestige of this institution is increased by the fact that only the members of that college have the right to promote the admission of those who are worthy of the graduation exam.

The first work as editor of Nicoletto Vernia is the edition of *De coelo* written by his master Gaetano of Thiene to which he adds his *Quaestio de gravibus et levibus* (Vernia 1474), which is both the subject of his studies as a youth, and the main field of research of his master.

Concerning the text of the *quaestio*, Vernia, starting from Averroes' doctrine, discusses the local motion of heavy and light bodies, that is, whether they receive the motion externally or possess the motion internally as an intrinsic *virtus* that develops once the obstacles that hinder it are removed.

Vernia confirms his full adherence to Averroes' doctrine which appears to him the most faithful exposition of Aristotle's thought. Movement leads the bodies to their natural places, where the element of the body is present in greater quantities.

Vernia can thus oppose Averroes' thinking against the doctrines of *Calculatores* by pointing out his criticism, above all, of the thought of the scholars of the University of Paris.

He mainly takes into account the theories of Albert of Saxony and his supporter Gaetano of Thiene. According to Albert of Saxony, the *impetus* with which an object falls into the void is a virtue that the object acquires together with the progressively achieved speed and with the time it takes to reach the stasis point, regardless of the medium in which the movement takes place.

Marsilius of Inghen is instead the opponent less contrasted by Vernia, who proposes a mediation between the doctrine of *Calculatores* and that of orthodox Aristotelians, believing that air performs an auxiliary function in motion as the *impetus* is transmitted not only to the moving object but also to the air surrounding it.

In February 1480, Nicoletto Vernia completes and publishes in Padua the volume of the *Commentaria* to the *De generatione et corruptione* of Giles of Rome, Marsilius of

Inghen, and Albert of Saxony, which is the second printed work of which he is the editor. Even in this edition, as he usually does, he adds his own *quaestio*, the second in order of a printed publication, which is titled *Quaestio an ens mobile sit totius naturalis philosophiae subiectum* (Vernia 1480, cc. 129r–131v).

In this work, Vernia identifies those that, in his opinion, are the fundamental conditions for unambiguously identifying the object of natural science.

One of these conditions is to set as a subject of study a natural entity that rigorously belongs to the perceptible reality.

Another condition prescribes that the goal of science is universal in every respect: it must therefore be a possible predicate of all entities in a direct or indirect way.

Another condition is that such an object not only does not transcend natural reality but is not confined to any particular science so that its validity can be verified in every field of research.

In 1480, Nicoletto Vernia wrote his first treatise on the intellectual soul titled *Utrum anima intellectiva humano corpori unita tanquam vera forma substantialis dans ei esse specificum substantiale, aeterna atque unica sit in omnibus hominibus*.

In this first *Quaestio de unitate intellectus*, left in manuscript form, Vernia studies the nature of the intellectual soul and, in particular, examines whether it is united to the human body as its true substantial form or whether it exists separately from the body and is incorruptible, eternal, and unique for all human beings.

The subject of discussion is how the nature of man is to be understood, that is, whether it is of a corruptible nature or whether it is composed of an aggregate of a corruptible nature and intellect.

If he had only a perishable nature, man would not have intellectual attitudes or tend to happiness, as such characteristics are only of the aggregate of corruptible and incorruptible nature.

It is interesting to note the distinction that Vernia makes in the definition of the aggregate that enables the intellectual activity of man.

He emphasizes, in fact, that the bond that unites the intellect to the body, while being of a

substantial nature, cannot be considered similar to the one that exists between matter and form, since it is restricted to a single function which is precisely that of knowledge.

However, such an aggregate of intellect and corporeal matter makes it possible to exercise rational function, since the body cannot exist or exercise its functions without the intellect and, vice versa, the intellect receives its perfection from the body, that is, the ability to operate.

On July 31, 1481, Nicoletto Vernia fulfilled, in Padua, the *Quaestio an coelum sit ex materia et forma constitutum vel non* (Vernia 1483, cc. 3r–5v).

Vernia, therefore, provides the ultimate answer to the question posed by the *quaestio*, consisting of whether heaven is made up of matter and form or not, moving from the observation that, according to the original doctrine of Aristotle and Averroes, heaven can be considered in four ways. It can be considered as the whole universe, as the entire celestial sphere, as the aggregate of all the individual celestial spheres, and as the aggregate of the intelligence and of its sphere.

Considering heaven in the fourth way, that is, as an aggregate of intelligence and its sphere, Vernia can thus clarify that, according to Aristotelian–Averroistic perspective, heaven must be considered a unique compound of matter and form whose being is identical in each of its components so that the movement of heaven itself, which is determined by its intelligence that animates it, is produced by an absolutely harmonious synergy of potency and act. Consequently, it is animated by an intelligence that has as its attributes *intellectus* and *virtus desiderativa* but not *virtus imaginativa*.

Considering heaven in the first way, that is, like the whole universe, one cannot properly identify a difference between matter and form. Considering heaven in the second and third way, that is, as the whole celestial sphere or as the aggregate of all the individual celestial spheres, it only confers itself as a power to occupy a space and therefore cannot be considered as a synthesis of matter form.

More specifically, heaven must be considered as a three-dimensional corpus, existing as a middle nature between the world of intelligibles and

the sublunary forms characterized by generation and corruption.

Vernia concludes that heaven, as in the tradition that starts from the Chaldeans, passes through Aristotle and arrives in his time, is not generated, incorruptible and eternal, that is without a beginning and an end, and, as a consequence, there is no creation nor a final judgment as in the Christian perspective.

The *Quaestio de divisione philosophiae* (Vernia 1482a, cc. 2r–3v) is completed in 1482, as it is appended by Nicoletto Vernia to the *Quaestio an medicina nobilior atque praestantior sit iure civili* (Vernia 1482b, cc. 3v–5r), which, in turn, he completed on February 26, 1482, and published in the edition of the *Expositio* of Walter Burley to the Eight Books of *Physics* of Aristotle, edited by Vernia, which is printed on April 15, 1482, in Venice by Johann Herbart.

Vernia, on the basis of the threefold distinction of the sciences in theoretical, practical, and *poietical*, engages in an interesting discussion on the classification of the sciences and *artes* of his time. While practical disciplines, called *activae*, are orthodoxly divided into ethics, politics, and economics, the *poietical* disciplines, called *factivae*, have interesting distinctions. Medicine, for example, although being so close to *philosophia naturalis*, which, of course, is part of the theoretical sciences, is considered an integral part of the *factivae* disciplines because of the simultaneous presence of theory and *ars* within it.

The important fact is that precisely this simultaneous presence of theory and *ars* within a given activity will be considered one of the most important factors in the birth of modern science.

Even when Vernia speaks of the division of theoretical sciences, he provides interesting information typical of the way of understanding philosophy in general and Aristotelianism, especially during the second half of the fifteenth century. Theoretical sciences are therefore divided into three parts: *philosophia naturalis*, mathematics, and metaphysics, called *scientia divina*.

But even mathematics reserves surprises when the four traditional sciences associated with it, namely, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music, are found united with perspective.

This discipline in the second half of the fifteenth century is becoming more and more affirmed but will have developed entirely at the height of the Renaissance.

Quaestio an medicina nobilior atque praestantior sit iure civili (Vernia 1482b, cc. 3v–5r) is part of the wider “dispute of the arts” of the fifteenth century. Nicoletto Vernia obviously sides with the superiority of medicine but that which is original in his theory is the fact that his opinion has a methodical foundation and tends to return to the original teachings of Aristotle.

The first aspect taken into consideration is the use of the demonstration. Vernia establishes a ranking of the nobility of the disciplines based on the use they make of the demonstration; he, in fact, is the first to argue that the criterion of classification must be that of scientific trust.

It is obvious that the physical sciences in this have primacy because they use the demonstration in a completely constitutive way. Medicine also uses both *demonstratio quia* and *demonstratio propter quid*. The inferiority of jurists depends, on the other hand, on the fact that they only use a particular field of logic that is dialectics and they do so also in a nonconscious and therefore unsystematic way.

The second aspect taken into consideration concerns the hierarchy within the sciences themselves, since each discipline derives its importance from the level covered by the one to which it is subordinate.

Medicine is subordinate to natural science, which plays a more prominent role than politics, which is subordinate to jurisprudence, and that is enough to make the practice of medicine much more valuable than the practice of law.

Precisely on this basis, Vernia founded the third aspect of the superiority of medical science over the juridical one as, while the politics, which is related to the jurisprudence, is limited to pursuing happiness within the civil community, the natural science to which medicine is bound, permits the knowledge of the highest essences allowing us to reach the sum of happiness that lies in the contemplation of the absolute.

In the same year 1482, the *Quaestio de inchoatione formarum* was also written. It has

remained unpublished and we only have in possession a handwritten copy of it with the following title *Quaeritur utrum sint ponendae rationes seminales in materia respectu rerum quae ex ipsa generantur*. This manuscript is preserved in the Vatican Library and is part of the Codice Urbinate Latino 1492, ff. 83v–85r.

This *quaestio* is very brief and the discussion that it deals with is about the role of universals, which is one of the main topics of interest of Vernia and to which he devotes a profound study that will lead to the *Quaestio an dentur universalia realia*.

In this work, he argues that the form operates even before arriving in the act according to the principle of *inchoatio formarum*, which determines not a change in the state of the substance but a certain inclination of the form to shape the matter.

On November 18, 1491, Vernia concludes his *Quaestio an coelum sit animatum*, which has remained unpublished. Alessandro Sermoneta made a transcription of it, which was, later published by Pietro Ragnisco (1890–1891a, 275–302).

Vernia discusses two topics concerning the perfection of the heavens and the quality of their motion.

With regard to the first argument, he says that if heaven had not a soul it would lack something that completes its essence and for this reason, it would be imperfect. Living beings, in fact, are more perfect than other beings precisely because they have a soul. The heavens, precisely because they must be considered absolutely perfect, must therefore also be considered endowed with a soul.

On the other hand, with regard to the subject of the quality of movement, it must be borne in mind that if the movement of the heavens is not violent, it must be determined either by the soul or by nature. The fact that the movement of the heavens is not violent is self-evident. The fact that the celestial movement is not a motion determined by nature is proved both by the observation that every natural movement ends when it reaches its place whereas the movement of the heavens is endless, and also by the fact that every natural movement has an increase and decrease while

the heavens move constantly. Consequently, the motion of the heavens is caused by their soul.

Nicoletto Vernia completed the *Quaestio est an dentur universalia realia* (Vernia 1492, cc. 2v–5v) on February 17, 1492.

He has a position that is intermediate between the two extremes of nominalism of William of Ockham and the realism of Walter Burley.

Vernia admits the existence of the universals by considering them in two distinct ways: in the first way, the universal is considered on the basis of itself; in the second way, the universal is considered on the basis of how it is realized in matter.

The first way includes, in turn, two different typologies: the first one is connected to the absolute essence of the universal that is not linked to its being present in matter; the second one is linked to its manifestation in particular things.

In this way, it is possible to affirm both the role of the universal as a common collector of meanings and the presence of the common essence in things belonging to the same species.

Vernia, between 1492 and 1495, also composed the *Expositio in Posteriorum librum priorem*, which remained unpublished and is now part of the Oxford manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Canon. Lat. Mix. 506, ff. 224r–241r.

This *expositio* has a particular relevance because it is an important testimony of an epochal transition both in theoretical and epistemological terms.

As is well known, in the second half of the fifteenth century, when the University of Padua became the leader in European scientific research, its professors achieved the overcoming of the epistemology of scholars known as *Calculatores*, who first taught in Paris and Oxford and then in Pavia.

The opposition to the epistemology of the *Calculatores*, many of which are close to the nominalistic position, is through the re-evaluation of Averroes' Commentary to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. This task, already begun by Paolo Veneto and continued by Gaetano da Thiene, was completed by Nicoletto Vernia.

He, in fact, opposes the attempt to arrive only logically at the comprehension of all reality, both the simplest one, consisting of phenomena, and

the most complex one, constituted by the investigation of causes, which are examined by *Calculatores* on the basis of a calculation connected with the degrees of *intensio* and *remissio formarum*.

Vernia proposes, instead, the study of the Aristotelian *Organon* with the commentary of Averroes which indicates, instead, a scientific procedure based on demonstration.

The *Expositio*, in fact, tends to re-evaluate the centrality of scientific syllogism, whose pivotal point is the adoption of the cause of the phenomenon that we want to investigate as a medium term.

Inside the Oxford manuscript several *quaestiones* can be identified, such as *Quaestio utrum logica sit scientia*, *Quaestio est quae scientiarum sit prima ordine doctrinae, sive sit practica sive speculativa*, *Quaestio de minimis*, *Quaestio de causa virtutis secundum quod gravia et levia eorum locis appropinquantia velocius moventur*.

The most important *quaestio* is inside the *Expositio* and has the title *Quaestio de regressu*. It corresponds to the Commentary on Chapters 2 and 3 of Aristotle's first book of *Posterior Analytics*, in which the Stagirite points out that the true scientific process is only that which is based on knowledge of the cause. The entire methodological tradition developed at the University of Padua focuses on the possibility of attributing maximum certainty to the principles on which science is based. Natural science is, therefore, always conjectural and cannot aspire to the absolute certainty that comes from mathematical science. In the natural sciences, in fact, we must start from that which is best known to us, using induction, and then arrive at a universal statement. Perfect induction, however, can only be achieved when all cases occur or when, after some of them have been verified, it can be said that the conclusion that has been reached is true for every other individual.

Since natural research lacks such certainty, consequently the medium term on which the syllogism of its demonstrations is based is not really universal. This universality would be possible

only if the medium term were a cause attributable with absolute certainty to its effect, i.e., to the object of the observation.

The logical tradition of the University of Padua, on the other hand, pursues the ideal of conferring on natural research the same certainty that characterizes deductive sciences such as mathematics and for this reason, it seeks the possibility of connecting the inductive process, typical of natural sciences, questioned by conjecture, with the deductive process of mathematical sciences capable of guaranteeing the perfect connection of a given cause to a certain effect.

The possibility of connecting the *demonstratio quia*, which develops the inductive process, with the *demonstratio propter quid*, which develops the deductive process, takes on the name of *regressus demonstrativus*.

During the year 1499, Vernia completed his last and most famous work, the *Quaestiones de pluralitate intellectus contra falsam et ab omni veritate remotam opinionem Averrois et de animae felicitate* (Vernia 1504, cc. 2r–10r).

In order to understand the change of perspective in Vernia's thought, it is necessary to remember that on May 6, 1489, the bishop of Padua Pietro Barozzi, with an episcopal edict, warned the teachers of the University of Padua against discussing the subject of the immortality of the soul under threat of excommunication. From that moment begins a long phase of reflection in which Vernia's primary objective is to prove his adherence to the orthodoxy of the Catholic faith.

The aim of this *quaestio*, therefore, consists in demonstrating that his thought coincides with that of Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus and that, as they proved, Aristotle's thought, if correctly interpreted, coincides entirely with the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Vernia, in perfect conformity with the dictates of the Church, but in total divergence with his previous position on the subject, affirms that the intellectual soul is the substantial form of the human body, that it formally confers its existence, that it is intrinsic to every individual, and that it is infused by God in every man.

Vernia also asserts that the number of souls is equal to the number of individuals and that the soul is created by God and is not pre-existing in the body.

Also of great interest is Vernia's position toward the thought of Alexander of Aphrodisias, especially in view of the fact that the pupil of Vernia, Pietro Pomponazzi, will base on Alexander's thought the most important historical turning point on the treatment of the immortality of the soul present in Renaissance thought.

Pomponazzi, in fact, recognizes Alexander as the authentic interpreter of Aristotle's doctrine of the soul and therefore agrees with his interpretation according to which the soul is mortal. This causes one of the most famous discussions within the thought of the Renaissance with important political implications, given its clear opposition to the Church's thinking, based on the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas.

Nicoletto Vernia, in an astonishing way, uses philology this time to propose an interpretation that suggests that the thesis of the mortality of the soul comes from an erroneous understanding of Alexander of Aphrodisia's thought by Averroes, who had thus erroneously handed down the doctrine according to which the soul is mortal.

Averroes misinterpreted the thought of Alexander of Aphrodisia as he did not have a reliable text of his *De anima*. Averroes thus attributed to Alexander the thesis of the mortal nature of the human intellect mistakenly claiming that he spoke of this subject while Alexander spoke of the cognitive virtue that for him, as for all philosophers, is obviously mortal as the attitude to abstraction ends with the body being connected with materiality.

On these bases, Vernia affirms that Alexander of Aphrodisia believes that both the active intellect and the passive intellect are eternal and therefore that the soul is eternal.

On October 5, 1499, Nicoletto Vernia dies and is buried, according to his will, in Vicenza where he still lies.

It is difficult to reconstruct, however, the destiny of his library that, leaving aside the dispersion

of the texts sent to Pisa, mainly follows the destiny of the displacement of books removed, over the centuries, from the Library of the Convent of San Bartolomeo in Vicenza. That which is currently found is divided between funds available at the University Library of Padua, the Antonian Library of Padua, the Marciana Library of Venice, the National Library of Rome, the Vatican Library, the National Library of Paris, the British Library of London, and the Bodleian Library of Oxford.

The incunabula we have received are about twenty and among them are the most important texts of Albert the Great, John Duns Scotus, Walter Burley, John of Jandun, Gaetano of Thiene, Themistius, and Ermolao Barbaro.

The most important manuscripts contain writings by Giovanni Marliani, Gaetano of Thiene, Richard Swineshead, Giovanni de Arculis, Angelo of Fossombrone, Mesino de Codronchi, Dino del Garbo, Antonio of Imola, Hervaeus Natalis, Peter of Auvergne, William Heytesbury, Richard Kilvington, Walter Burley, Thomas Bradwardine, Roger Rosetus, Nicolas Oresme, Marsilio Santasofia, Biagio Pelacani, Jacopo of San Martino, Antonio of Conegliano, Gregorio of Rimini, and Giovanni of Casale.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

As is known, the *Posterior Analytics* of Aristotle is the reference text of science throughout the period from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, that is, until the advent of modern science.

Starting from the study of this text, Aristotelian epistemologists focus attention on scientific demonstration, which is that consisting of a syllogism that moves from universal and necessary premises, and tries to connect the inductive method with the deductive method.

They want to achieve, in fact, the connection between the scientific demonstrative syllogism that starts from the effects to return to the causes, named *demonstratio quia*, and the scientific demonstrative syllogism that starts from the causes to get down to the effects, named *demonstration propter quid*. In this way, a perfect

scientific method would be created that combines the analytical procedure with the synthetic one and thus manages to explain the totality of the cause–effect relations between phenomena.

Aristotle, however, not only never mentions the possibility of connecting, through syllogism, the inductive process with the deductive one, but also does not give preference to a certain modality of syllogism except on the basis of the typology of the object of the scientific investigation according to the criterion that prefers deductions in mathematical science and induction within the natural investigation.

During the fifteenth century, the University of Padua became one of the most important centers of scientific research. In this University, however, a methodology was used that is radically different from that based on *calculatoria* logic. The scholars of the University of Padua seek, in fact, a method more closely related to the actual reality of the objects of investigation, and this leads them to turn to the historical epistemological tradition that passes mainly through the reflection of Galen, Themistius, and Averroes.

In this way, they try to connect the *demonstratio quia* and the *demonstratio propter quid*, obtaining an original epistemological instrument destined for a centuries-old fortune, whose name is *regressus demonstrativus*.

The first scholar at the University of Padua to elaborate on the theory of *regressus* is Paolo Veneto. He, however, supports the theory of the priority of the *demonstratio quia* within the *regressus*, and this position characterizes the speculation of his successors right up to Vernia. Paolo Veneto emphasizes the fact that the *quia* process, which follows the *prius nobis*, i.e., that which is present first to knowledge, is so inherent to our way of knowing that it is through the *demonstratio quia* that we are able to acquire the notions of cause and effect. These notions are those we use as predicates to attribute to the data we investigate in order to establish the order in which they should be placed. Veneto underlines, therefore, that such data would remain without the cause–effect connection, which characterizes its scientificity, if such notions of

cause and effect did not come directly from the activity of *demonstratio quia*, to which the *demonstratio propter quid* owes everything in regard to the certainty of its results.

The idea of the superiority of the inductive phase in the cognitive process remains the most followed until Nicoletto Vernia's speculation. He proposes, instead, for the first time the thesis of the superiority of *demonstratio propter quid*, that is of the deductive process, destined to characterize all subsequent logical theories.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Vernia is also the first theorist of the *regressus demonstrativus* at the University of Padua, given that, on the one hand, he frontally opposes those who consider the circular demonstration logically impossible, and on the other hand, he argues that not only is the circular demonstration possible but that it must use both inductive and deductive syllogism at the same time.

He is, therefore, the first supporter of the possibility of creating a virtuous and not tautological circle using two syllogisms: the first syllogism realizes the analytical process of ascending from empirical data to the first universal knowledge of the cause, while the second syllogism realizes the synthetic process with which scientific knowledge is perfected by verifying the belonging of the cause to its particular effect.

In this perspective, it is necessary both to reduce the priority of the *demonstratio quia* and to revalue the *demonstratio propter quid*, whose role of going down again from causes to effects represents for Vernia the true guarantee of scientificity because it leads to the same level of certainty proposed by natural causation.

He is also the first to propose the figure of the *negotatio intellectus*, which is a third phase that follows the *demonstratio quia* and precedes *demonstratio propter quid*. In this phase, the *inventio intellectus* takes place, which is a process whereby the cause, which after the use of inductive syllogism is still at the phase of simple

hypothesis, becomes an epistemic certainty that guarantees the certainty of the cause–effect relationship, then further confirmed by the subsequent deductive syllogism.

Impact and Legacy

It is important to remember that, in the case of *negotiatio intellectus*, Nicoletto Vernia is the first proponent of a methodological innovation destined to be successful until the speculation of Iacopo Zabarella and the early methodological theories of Galileo Galilei.

Ultimately, it can be affirmed that, thanks to the first and original introduction of the methodological innovations constituted by the priority of the *demonstratio propter quid*, by the *negotiatio intellectus*, and by the first complete theorization of the *regressus demonstrativus*, Vernia represents the leader of innovations destined to indelibly mark the logic of the whole fifteenth and sixteenth century until the dawn of the modern age.

Cross-References

- Averroism, Renaissance
- Barbaro the Younger, Ermolao
- Nifo, Agostino
- Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
- Pomponazzi, Pietro
- Zabarella, Jacopo

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Vernia, Nicolò

► Vernia, Nicoletto

Vernias Theatinus, Nicoletus

► Vernia, Nicoletto

Vernias, Nicholetus

► Vernia, Nicoletto

Vernias, Nicolettus

► Vernia, Nicoletto

Vernias, Nicoletus

► Vernia, Nicoletto

Verniatus, Nicoletus

► Vernia, Nicoletto

Versor, Johannes

► Versoris, Johannes

Versoris, Johannes

Born: c. 1410

Died: probably after 1482

flourished c. 1435–1458

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Abstract

Johannes Versoris (probably died after 1482) was a Master of Arts active at the University of Paris in the fifteenth century. He wrote a number of influential commentaries on the *corpus Aristotelicum*, Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales*, and Thomas Aquinas's *De ente et essentia* which were frequently reprinted between 1480 and 1500, especially in Cologne. Since Versoris's commentary work bears traces of both Thomist and Albertist thought, the question of his relation to the contemporary schools of thought is highly controversial and as yet unresolved.

Alternate Names

Versor, Johannes; Versorius, Johannes; Le Tourneur, Jean

Biography

Little is known about the life of Johannes Versoris, a realist philosopher and celebrated commentator on Aristotle who taught at the University of Paris during the fifteenth century. Although generally called “Versor” in the scholarly literature, there is some evidence that his actual name might have been “Versoris” (that is, “son of Versor” or Le Tourneur) – at least that is how he is referred to in Parisian documents of the time, and this spelling also appears on his (undated) epitaph. The name Versoris first crops

up in 1435, when he is mentioned as a Master of Arts in a document pertaining to the Norman nation (*natio Normannorum*) of the University of Paris. Since at Paris students were supposed to have reached the age of twenty before the title of *magister artium* could be conferred, it is reasonable to conjecture that Versoris was born around 1410. In 1449 the Arts Faculty proposed him as rector of the Paris *studium*, but he refused the post; when in 1458 his name was put forward again, this time he accepted. Information on the activities and whereabouts of Versoris after his rectorate is scarce: it is only in 1478 that the Paris documents again mention a certain Johannes Versoris, who, however, is referred to as a Master of Arts not in the *natio Normannorum* but in the *natio Picardorum*, the Picardian nation. It is not impossible, nevertheless, that these notices concern one and the same person – and scholars generally assume that they do – although this cannot be proven. If this identification is correct, Versoris probably spent his entire career teaching at the Paris Arts Faculty and may have died after 1482, as the last reference to the Picardian Versoris occurs in this year.

As part of his teaching activity at Paris, Versoris composed commentaries on nearly the entire Aristotelian corpus (although the attribution of some commentaries is problematic, *pace* Flüeler 1994: 80–84), the *Summulae logicales* by the thirteenth-century logician Peter of Spain (Versoris 1981) and Thomas Aquinas's *De ente et essentia* (Versoris 1486) – in total, his writings are preserved in some 180 manuscripts (Seńko 1958/1959). Versoris is also said to have been the author of a commentary on the *Ars minor* by the ancient grammarian Donatus, although this attribution is probably spurious (Kneepkens 2004; Versoris 1489). His expositions of Aristotle enjoyed a certain popularity at the university in Paris, from where they spread to Cologne, Prague, and Cracow during the second half of the fifteenth century (Markowski 1968; Kuksewicz 1973; Šmahel 1980). All of his commentaries were printed multiple times before the turn of the century, mostly in Cologne (Rhodes 1970; Lohr 1971: 290–299). Risse (1965: 282) counted 23 editions of his commentary on Peter of Spain between 1473 and

1639, which makes Versoris “the most popular commentator” on Peter’s *Summulae* of the era (Ashworth 2008: 621). His questions on Aristotle’s physical works and Thomas’s *De ente et essentia* were even translated into Hebrew by the Spanish Jewish scholastic Eli Habillo in the course of the 1470s (Rothschild 1994).

It is unclear whether Versoris ever held a position at the University of Cologne. Despite lack of proof, older studies generally assume that he did (De Wulf 1925; Meersseman 1935; Weiler 1962). Yet his name does not appear in the acts or matriculation lists of the university (Weijers 2003), and contemporaries consistently refer to Versoris as a Parisian scholar (*Parisiensis*). It seems unlikely, therefore, that he was ever actively engaged in teaching at one of the Cologne *bursae*, although it has been suggested that he was on good terms with the Cologne Masters of Arts, especially those affiliated to the Thomist *Bursa Cornelianiana* and *Bursa Montana* (Meuthen 1988: 185; Tewes 1993: 189–190). This could account for the fact that Versoris’s commentaries on Aristotle and Peter of Spain were printed no fewer than thirty times in Cologne during the 1480s and 1490s (Corsten 1981). It has also been suggested, moreover, that sometime during the heydays of his academic career, Versoris stayed in the Iberian peninsula. This hypothesis, though controversial, could account for the fact that the aforementioned Spaniard ‘Eli Habillo in the preface to his translation of Versoris’s commentary on the *Physics* refers to the Parisian scholar’s name in such a familiar wording that it suggests a personal acquaintance. Moreover, in the Hebrew chronic *Shebet Yehudah* (c. 1510), one finds the curious reference to a certain king Alfonso (possibly Alfonso V, King of Portugal between 1438 and 1481, or Alfonso V, King of Aragon between 1416 and 1458) who addressed a series of questions on the trustworthiness of Jews to a savant called Weyrśōrīs. Given the present state of our knowledge of Versoris’s life, it is impossible to determine whether this reference actually concerns our Parisian philosopher or not. Whatever the case, Versoris’s commentaries were well known in this part of Europe, and the numerous manuscripts of Versoris’s works that are still

preserved in Spanish libraries today testify to this popularity (Rothschild 2013: 309–314).

Philosophy

A fifteenth-century Master of Arts, Versoris taught during a period that was marked by the formation of the so-called schools of thought. In Versoris’s Parisian setting, Thomism flourished and Albertism was gaining influence under the impulse of Johannes de Nova Domo (†1418), while nominalism was in decline (eventually to be banned by a royal decree in 1474). Given this predominantly realist milieu, it is hardly surprising that Versoris set himself up as a proponent of the *via antiqua*, the realist school of thought associated with followers of Thomas and Albert. Yet the question of which type of realist philosophy Versoris adhered to (and especially his predilection for Thomism or Albertism) is a controversial one. Ever since Prantl (1870: 220–221), Versoris has generally been regarded as a Thomist philosopher and logician, although it seems closer to the truth and more in accordance with contemporary testimonies to characterize him as an eclectic thinker – indeed, his pupil Dominique of Flanders may have listed him among the adherents of Thomism, but he added that Versoris occasionally embraced the teachings of Albert the Great (*sed Albertizabat* – see Mahieu 1942: 22; Lohr 1971: 290). Matters are further complicated by the fact that Versoris himself, unlike many of his contemporaries (such as Heymeric de Campo or Arnold of Tongeren, two convinced Albertists), never explicitly expressed his loyalty to either Thomas or Albert. As regards his ideas on physics and moral philosophy (see Versoris 1484, 1967a), there is consensus that Versoris was heavily indebted to Thomas (Birkenmajer 1925; Sère 2007; Saarinen 2011; Müller 2016). This also holds true for his interpretation of the *Metaphysics* (Versoris 1967b; Bakker 2014). The situation is less clear, however, in his commentaries on the *Organon* (Versoris 1967c, 1967d). Bos (2002) emphasized Versoris’s Albertism in his questions on the *Categories*; Rutten (2005: 323), mainly on the basis of Versoris’s explanations of the *logica*

vetus, described his doctrinal profile as “indistinct and at best a blurred form of Thomism” and insisted that in his own time he was seen as an authority in his own right rather than a representative of either movement. This is in line with the interpretation by Krause (1991: 520), who suggested the possibility of “Versorism” as a distinctive subcurrent of Thomism.

It can easily be seen why the question of Versoris’s relation to Albert and Thomas causes so many difficulties, since Versoris’s balancing of the interpretations of both realist philosophers may be considered a guiding thread leading through his oeuvre, and on different occasions, he appears to align himself quite randomly with either of them. The following examples may suffice to demonstrate this point. In his commentary on the *Isagoge*, Versoris (1967d: f. 21r-v) briefly touches upon the problem of incipient forms (*inchoatio formae*), a question related to Aristotle’s discussion of the principles of form, matter, and privation (see *Physics* I.9, 192a16-34). Briefly put, the problem of *inchoatio formae* concerns the question of whether or not matter contains some innate aptitude for receiving a particular form. Albert answered this question in the positive, Thomas in the negative. Versoris himself closely paraphrases Albert’s text and merely points out that Thomas held a different opinion. However, when discussing the same issue in his commentary on the *Physics*, Versoris rejects Albert’s view in favor of the opinion held by Thomas (see Rutten 2005: 304–312 for discussion). The same pattern can be discerned in Versoris’s account of substance and being, as expressed mainly in his commentaries on the *logica vetus* and Thomas’s *De ente et essentia*. As regards the notion of substance, discussed in his commentary on the *Categories* (Versoris 1967d: f. 30r), Versoris embraces the explanation of Albert that this term entails a threefold meaning: (a) the metaphysical notion of essence, (b) the logical notion of the first thing predicable, and (c) individual substance (Bos 2002: 71–73). Furthermore, in his commentary on the *Isagoge*, he equally agrees with Albert when he claims that a universal should be understood in terms of the *forma totius* and has, moreover, a threefold mode

of being: *ante rem*, *in re*, and *post rem* (Versoris 1967d: ff. 7v-14r; Rutten 2007: 129–132). However, when Versoris, in his commentary on *De ente et essentia* (Versoris 1486: sig. D5v), discusses the notion of being (*esse*) as composed of essence (*esse essentiae*) and existence (*esse existentiae*), he aligns himself with the interpretation of St. Thomas that actual existence really (*realiter*) differs from essence and merely notes that Albert holds the opposite opinion (Riesco Terrero 1966; Krause 1991: 510). As regards the principle of individuation, which is also discussed in the commentary on *De ente et essentia* (Versoris 1486: sig. D1v), Versoris agrees with Thomas that signate matter accounts for the numerical distinction of corporeal substances; he rejects the opinions held by Giles of Rome and Albert, who explained individuation in terms of quantity and matter respectively (Krause 1991: 514–515; Rutten 2005: 316–319).

As a possible solution to the problem of Versoris’s doctrinal inclination, Rutten (2005: 319–324) suggested that Versoris’s predilection for either Albert or Thomas is related to the specific work he was commenting on. In the case of the *Isagoge* or *Categories*, for example, he had no choice but to follow Albert, since Thomas never composed a commentary on these works. When he did have a choice, however, it appears that he decidedly embraced the interpretations of the *doctor angelicus* (see the examples from the *Physics* or *De ente et essentia* explained above). This could also account for the fact that, when Versoris paraphrases the explanations of Albert and notes a difference of opinion between Albert and Thomas, he never proves Thomas wrong – in some instances he even refers to the opinion held by the *Albertistae*, which implies that he did not consider himself as one of them (Rutten 2005: 314).

Since Versoris was a university teacher whose entire oeuvre consists of questions, paraphrases, and summaries of school authors, the question of the originality of his thought is perhaps not the correct one to ask. Medieval or early modern school teachers were not supposed to be original. Rather, they were supposed to explain the texts prescribed by the university statutes and render

these texts intelligible by making use of a fixed set of commentators who were considered authoritative. Versoris's popularity, therefore, was not based on the fact that his commentaries contained some original insights into, or elaborations on, the matter he explained (although in some cases they do, see Bakker 2014: 611–612), but instead on his ability to present interpretations excerpted from the great philosophers of previous ages in a synoptic, lucid, and accessible way. As a compiler and interpreter, Versoris was, together with the Scotist Petrus Tartaretus and the nominalist George of Brussels, one of the most successful of his time.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Albertism](#)
- ▶ [Aristotle: The Giuntine Edition](#)
- ▶ [Commentary](#)
- ▶ [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)
- ▶ [Universities in the Renaissance](#)

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Versorius, Johannes

► [Versoris, Johannes](#)

Vesalius, Andreas

Born: 1514, Brussels

Died: 1564, Zákynthos

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Abstract

Andreas Vesalius is the most renowned of Renaissance anatomists. After several stops and starts in his education, he took his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Padua where he quickly rose to prominence as a lecturer of surgery. His university career, though important in inspiring both contemporaries and

subsequent generations of anatomists, was relatively brief, lasting from 1537 to 1543. Even before the publication of his widely celebrated *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543), Vesalius was appointed Imperial physician to Charles V and he achieved some fame as a surgeon. Traditionally described as a major reformer of the field, even one who revolutionized anatomy, Vesalius's research actually continued some of the innovations of earlier Renaissance anatomists, namely in stressing the importance of dissection and in criticizing Galen. On a deeper level, his approach remained fundamentally Galenic, though he revealed that Galen had relied upon animal dissecting in writing about human anatomy. Vesalius stressed that human anatomy required human dissection, but Vesalius, too, performed animal dissections and comparative anatomy. Although he was invited to return to his academic post and may have wished to do so, he died on the return trip from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1564. His work confirms the close relationship between Renaissance anatomy and natural philosophy (Mandressi 2003; Vesalius 2014).

Biography

Vesalius was born into a medical family; his father was an apothecary to Charles V. Initially educated in Brussels, Vesalius entered the Castle School in Louvain in 1530, where he studied Latin and Greek, philosophy, and rhetoric, before transferring to the University of Paris in 1533. There Galenism increasingly dominated medical teaching and his mentors included Guinter of Andernach, Jean Fernel, and Jacopus Sylvius, the latter a staunch defender of Galen's infallibility. Sylvius would later become Vesalius's enemy in polemics over Galen. Vesalius would nevertheless acknowledge his indebtedness to his teachers in Paris although he did not complete his degree there (O'Malley 1964). He left off his studies in 1536 and returned to Louvain, owing to the war between France and the Empire.

The following year he enrolled at the University of Padua, which held one of the leading European medical faculties at the time, and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine in the same year. He was immediately appointed lecturer in surgery at Padua. Shortly thereafter, Vesalius began anatomical demonstrations, fulfilling simultaneously roles that had hitherto been distinct – those of lecturer, dissector and demonstrator – in which the lecturer traditionally sat in a raised seat explicating an authoritative text while barber-surgeons performed the dissection. In the frontispiece and author portrait of the *Fabrica*, both represent Vesalius in the act of dissecting; indeed, he would argue that the barber-surgeons who conventionally performed the dissection should be sent away (O'Malley 1964). Vesalius also began to think about pedagogical aids, and he produced detailed anatomical drawings, three of which were published in his *Tabulae anatomicae* of 1538 (Vesalius 1538). This text also included anatomical figures by Jan Stephan van Calcar, generally held to have been the artist of the *Fabrica*, though no definitive evidence has ever come to light (O'Malley 1964; Vesalius 2014).

The direct experience Vesalius earned through his dissections increasingly called his attention to Galen's errors, and by 1539, having produced several minor publications, Vesalius began outlining his *Fabrica* (O'Malley 1964). Developments over the next few years were crucial in permitting him to complete his treatise. The support of the judge Marcantonio Contarini assured Vesalius of more cadavers for dissections at a juncture in which he did not practice privately and could not rely on the experience yielded by consulting patients (O'Malley 1964; Park 2006). At the same time, his reputation in medical circles grew, bringing opportunities to lecture outside Padua; these occasions disseminated more broadly his outspoken criticism of Galen's inaccuracies resulting from his dependence on animal dissection when writing on human anatomy (O'Malley 1964).

Vesalius concentrated energetically on the *Fabrica* in 1540–1541 and in the following year left Padua for Basel to supervise the treatise's publication (O'Malley 1964). In 1543 while awaiting the volume's publication, Vesalius, who had applied

for an imperial post, was named physician to the imperial household and he left his university chair. In service to the Emperor, however, Vesalius seems not to have been wholly satisfied and he sometimes lamented his obligations (O'Malley 1964). He evidently strove to continue his anatomical research as much as he could, acting as a military surgeon and accepting invitations to provide demonstrations. In 1546, Vesalius published his letter on the therapeutic effects of the China Root, which also continued the polemics concerning the appropriate use of Galen (Vesalius 1546). His experience as a surgeon contributed to his fame, and in 1559, he was even called to the bedside of the fatally wounded King Henry II, in spite of the presence of the esteemed royal surgeon Ambroise Paré. Notwithstanding his acclaim, Vesalius increasingly acknowledged that the *Fabrica* contained errors and he embarked on a second edition with his publisher Oporinus, probably completing many of the revisions in 1550–1551. The second edition was published in 1555, the same year that Charles V abdicated (Vesalius 1555). Vesalius then entered the service of Charles' son, Philip II, as a physician to the Netherlands at the Spanish court. He was granted leave by the emperor to complete a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1564 and en route stopped in Venice, where he was invited to resume his university post at Padua. This never materialized, for, on his return trip from the Holy Land, his ship encountered a storm and anchored at Zákynthos, where Vesalius died.

Vesalius' stance with respect to Galen is complicated and is still sometimes mischaracterized. If he pointed out many of Galen's errors, Vesalius's methods were fundamentally Galenic in nature, particularly in stressing the importance of dissection, the fundamental role of touch and observation, and the necessity of repeat dissections in order to provide certainty (O'Malley 1964; Cunningham 1997; Siraisi 1997; Mandressi 2003; Vesalius 2014). Vesalius' crucial criticism of Galen lay in the latter's use of animal dissection to write human anatomy, which Vesalius insisted must be founded upon human dissection (Mandressi 2003; Vesalius 2014). In a period of a limited supply of human cadavers, Vesalius nevertheless also relied

extensively on animals and frequently undertook comparative human/animal anatomies (O'Malley 1964; Cunningham 1997).

Although the achievement of Vesalius's *Fabrica* in providing exhaustive textual and visual descriptions of the body can hardly be overstated and the *Fabrica*'s role in stimulating anatomical research and elevating the status of anatomy in medical study is certain, Vesalius was neither the first Renaissance anatomist to recognize the importance of images in anatomical texts nor to underscore the direct observation of the human body. In both respects, he continued the interests of his predecessors (O'Malley 1964; French 1999; Carlino 1999; Mandressi 2003). Even if the *Fabrica* was not without errors, as Vesalius' contemporaries and successors were keen to point out, the scope of it and the quality and number of its images found no rivals for decades, and his illustrations were widely plagiarized. At the same time that Vesalius asserted the importance of dissection, encouraging students to dissect as well as to see and touch the body (O'Malley 1964; Cunningham 1997; Park 2006), he maintained allegiance to humanist medicine in his attention to the linguistic problems of anatomy and particularly in nomenclature, making reference to Latin and to a lesser extent, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic terms and he would have expected readers of the *Fabrica* to know the authoritative texts. (O'Malley 1964; Siraisi 1997).

Rather than simply describe and illustrate the process of dissection in his *Fabrica*, Vesalius broke new ground by focusing on the structure and composition of the body, commencing in Books I and II of the *Fabrica* with the skeleton and bones and muscles and ligaments respectively, but here he harkened back to Galen's view that the bones were the body's foundation (Mandressi 2003). This interest in the fundamental principles of nature demonstrates his view that anatomy was inextricably related to natural philosophy; anatomy was an investigation of nature's parts and her workings (Park 2006; Vesalius 2014). His research helped ensure that anatomy would assume a fundamental place in medical education by the seventeenth century (O'Malley 1970).

Cross-References

- [Anatomy, Renaissance](#)
- [Colombo, Realdo](#)

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Vescovo di Bitonto

- [Musso, Cornelio](#)

Vettori, Piero

Born: July 1499, Florence

Died: December 1585, Florence

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Abstract

The last of the great Florentine humanists, Piero Vettori made his mark on a golden age of classical scholarship in the Florence of Grand Duke Cosimo I. Vettori rose to prominence in public and professional life as a scholar, orator, ambassador, and teacher, serving as professor of Greek at the Florentine Studio for over 45 years. In his scholarly career, Vettori concentrated primarily on the restoration and conservation of the classical heritage through careful study of the manuscript tradition. Such study allowed him to resurrect lost works from oblivion, including Aeschylus' tragedy *Agamemnon*. Vettori's work as editor and commentator entitles him to a distinguished place in the Aristotelian tradition, and he can truly be said to have exemplified the Renaissance ideal of the alliance of philology and philosophy. Last but not least, Vettori was a crucial figure in the Sophistic Renaissance, of which much more remains to be said.

Alternate Names

[Victorius, Petrus](#)

Biography

Born to a prominent Florentine family at the very end of the fifteenth century, Piero Vettori was educated in Florence and Pisa as a humanist and more particularly a Hellenist, by disciples of Francesco Filelfo and Angelo Poliziano, before inaugurating his own long and successful

academic career at the Florentine Studio. Married at a young age, Vettori raised a family of two children and earned a number of accolades both civic and scholarly while playing the part first of an ardent Republican and then an ally of the Medici regime. When the Medici were expelled and the Florentine Republic reestablished in 1527, Vettori, profiting from family connections, was named ambassador and later Gonfaloniere and even delivered a public oration to the Florentine militia, which did not have much practical impact on the unequal military contest (von Albertini 1955, 404–411). The Medici were restored to power in Florence in 1530, and Vettori discreetly retired to the family property in San Casciano in Val di Pesa, where Machiavelli had passed a part of his exile after the fall of the first Florentine Republic. He quickly returned to Florence and maintained a low profile during the reign of Alessandro de' Medici or Lorenzaccio, whose assassination in 1537 brought Cosimo de' Medici to power as Grand Duke of Tuscany, partly through the machinations of Piero's older cousin Francesco Vettori, famous as a correspondent of Machiavelli. In 1538 Piero Vettori was named to the chair of Greek newly established by Cosimo at the Florentine Studio where he taught until 1584, providing one of the best arguments against a mandatory retirement age at the university. Cosimo favored Vettori with various appointments, naming him to an embassy to Pope Julius III in 1550 before appointing him in 1553 to the Florentine Senate known as the *Quarantotto* or 48. Cosimo also named Vettori to his Council of the Two Hundred. Already in 1541, Vettori was admitted to the Florentine Academy, the very year of its foundation. In his scholarly career, Vettori distinguished himself as an editor and commentator of classical texts while the Medici family kept him busy as a funeral orator, especially at the funeral of Grand Duke Cosimo in 1574 (Mouren 2014). During his maturity, Vettori conducted an important correspondence in Latin and the vernacular with many distinguished Italian men of letters, including Benedetto Varchi, Giovanni Della Casa, and Fulvio Orsini (Lo Re 2006, de Nolz 1889). Only partially edited, this extensive correspondence offers precious source material for the intellectual history of the later or

second Renaissance. Vettori also made a valid contribution to the thriving genre of the Renaissance miscellany with his 38 books of *Variae lectiones*, of which the first 25 were published in 1553 and the remaining 13 in 1568 (Mouren 2001). Worn out by his labors, Vettori died at the end of 1585, and in January of 1586, the Florentine Academy staged an elaborate funeral ceremony at the Church of Santo Spirito which confirmed his status as civic hero and luminary of the Republic of Letters. After his death, Vettori's books and papers ended up at the Bavarian State Library in Munich where they await the intrepid researcher today (Pfeiffer 1976, 139).

Heritage and Rupture with Tradition

Vettori's greatest achievement was his contribution to the development of textual criticism, which has earned him an honorable place in the history of classical scholarship, not to mention the *History of Classical Scholarship* by Rudolf Pfeiffer and the earlier work of the same title by John Sandys, who christens the sixteenth century the *saeculum Victorianum* or Age of Vettori (Sandys 1921, 2:135; Pfeiffer 1976, 135–136). For Jill Kraye and Anthony Grafton, Vettori came to prominence by exploiting the methods of textual criticism pioneered by Angelo Poliziano, especially the careful collation of manuscripts necessary to identify the earliest extant witness and to eliminate unwarranted emendations perpetrated by overconfident editors (Grafton 1983, Kraye 1999). Like Poliziano, Vettori is keenly attentive to the Greek sources of Latin wisdom and eloquence. Vettori first applied these Florentine methods of philology to his edition of the complete works of Cicero, which appeared in four volumes from 1534 to 1537 with the Giunti in Venice. His most notable contribution to this enterprise was his appendix of critical notes explaining his corrections to the text. Among his other philological triumphs was his work on the Attic tragedians, especially Aeschylus and Euripides. In 1545 he published the *editio princeps* of Euripides' *Electra* in Rome, and in 1557 his edition of Aeschylus with Henri Estienne restored the mutilated text of the *Agamemnon* to its full length

(Pfeiffer 1976, 111). In this way, Vettori realized Poliziano's ideal of the humanist as Aesculapius, who restores the lost integrity of damaged texts just as the god of medicine put back together the dismembered corpse of Hippolytus.

Innovative and Original Aspects

The history of philosophy will remember Vettori as an Aristotelian and more particularly as a commentator of Aristotle. He published commentaries on the *Rhetoric*, the *Poetics*, the *Politics*, and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and all four of these works can still greatly facilitate the comprehension of Aristotelian doctrine. Vettori draws on a comprehensive knowledge of the *corpus Aristotelicum* and indeed of the entire classical canon in order to explore exegetical issues that are largely foreign to the scholastic commentary tradition. His comments are lexical, historical, and genealogical but also lucid and ironic. One area where his originality stands out is the revival of interest in the ancient Greek sophists in Renaissance Europe, which was largely tributary to the reception of Plato and Aristotle (MacPhail 2011). One of the key passages for the reception of sophistic is the definition of the sophist from the very first chapter of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Having acknowledged that rhetoric entails an ability to argue on both sides of a question, or to persuade opposites (1355a29), Aristotle is at pains to distinguish rhetoric from sophistic, to which it bears an unseemly resemblance. He operates this segregation of rhetoric from sophistic on the basis of the distinction between *dynamis* and *proairesis* or ability and purpose (1355b18). The rhetor like the sophist is able to use true and false arguments, or true and apparent persuasion, but the sophist chooses to deceive. Rhetoric like dialectic may be amoral, able to use true and false means, but sophistic is immoral, not to say perverse. In his commentary of 1548, which remained the most important contribution on the *Rhetoric* until the work of Spengel and Cope in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Vettori draws on his formidable knowledge of Aristotle in order to link this passage in the *Rhetoric* to other uses of the pair *dynamis-proairesis*. First, he points out that Aristotle uses

the same terminology to characterize the ἀλαζών or boaster in book four of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Vettori 1548, 24). Boastfulness and false modesty are the two extremes that diverge from the mean of truthfulness, so the *alazon* is also a type of liar. The worst boaster is the one who does so for the sake of gain, since the boaster is defined not by his ability but by his purpose (1127b14). By invoking this testimony, Vettori conflates sophist and *alazon* in order to yield the stereotype of the mercenary boaster. He also refers us to the passage in book Γ of the *Metaphysics* which says that the sophist differs from the philosopher on the basis of his choice of life, or "electione vitae" in Vettori's Latin. Through these cross references, Vettori identifies the definition of the sophist in *Rhetoric* 1.1 as a key tenet of Aristotle's philosophical system.

Vettori is also keenly sensitive to those moments when Aristotle betrays his own sophistic instincts. In the *Rhetoric*, when discussing fallacious enthymemes, Aristotle reminds us that making the weaker argument stronger was the characteristic trick of the sophist Protagoras of Abdera (1402a24). Vettori, whose commentary lingered indignantly over this passage (Vettori 1548, 439–440), remembers it when he explicates the *Nicomachean Ethics* at the very end of his career. In the latter work, Aristotle reports the remarkable argument which Eudoxus of Cnidus used to prefer pleasure to all other goods. Pleasure is not praised and therefore must be superior to those things which are praised, just like God and the good (1101b28–30). Vettori's comment is quite cunning: "and seeing that no one praised pleasure, he ingeniously proclaimed that the very same argument which his adversaries used to disparage it actually proved the nobility of pleasure, as we learn from Aristotle, who clearly seems to have recognized and enjoyed the elegance of this reasoning" (Vettori 1584, 61). This comment helps us to understand the elegant simplicity of Eudoxus' surprising argument. Rather than refute his adversaries, he reverses their logic. This is a classic example of making the weaker argument the stronger: pleasure is superior for the very same reason for which we think it is inferior. Both Aristotle and Vettori seem to approve this reasoning. Similarly, book two, chapter eight of the

Politics raises the question of whether it is advantageous or disadvantageous to cities to change their old laws if a better one is available (1268b26–28). Aristotle does not resolve this dilemma but is content to rehearse arguments on both sides of the question. In his commentary, Vettori recognizes this method as the sophistic tactic of antilogic or the art of opposing speeches: “He argues on both sides of the issue, and first he instructs and equips one who would approve this proposition [to change the laws]. . . Now he instructs and arms the other side and shows what can be said by others, who think that it is not right to change the laws, though they may not be entirely useful” (Vettori 1576, 135–138).

One of Aristotle’s arguments for changing the laws is that the original laws were made by primitive people emerging from one of the periodic cataclysms of the earth and it would be absurd to respect their decrees (*Politics* 1269a4–8). Vettori links this idea to the theme of the Renaissance: “He calls ‘the first men’ those who lived after some catastrophe, arising in a certain place or land, from a great flood, or pestilence, or some other disaster, so that it was necessary to regenerate the human race as if from the earth. Another opinion is that some people survived that destruction and gradually the population was replenished. In any event, the first people must have been very primitive. For who does not know that after the barbarian invasions of Italy and the fall of the Roman Empire, all the arts disappeared and only through tremendous effort and infinite study were the arts brought back to light and resuscitated as it were. This is clearly the case in the art of medicine, in painting, in agriculture, in military science and practically in all other disciplines” (Vettori 1576, 137). This Aristotelian adaptation of Renaissance self-consciousness can be understood as Vettori’s contribution to the philosophy of history.

Impact and Legacy

Apart from his place in the Aristotelian tradition, Vettori’s legacy can be felt in other domains. For instance, Torquato Tasso was a very careful reader of Vettori’s commentary on the *Poetics*, as we

know from his personally annotated copy now in the Vatican Library, and the influence of the commentary can be seen in Tasso’s *Discorsi* on the art of poetry and on the heroic poem (Vettori 2009; Scarpati 1982, 165–179). In the field of lexicography, the Accademia della Crusca consulted Vettori’s vernacular treatise on the cultivation of olives for the third edition of its Italian dictionary (Vettori 1574). In this way, the consummate Latin humanist contributed to the codification of vernacular usage. Vettori’s main impact remains in the realm of philology, where he left behind improved texts of an impressive array of classical Greek and Latin authors.

Cross-References

- [Philology, Renaissance](#)
- [Poliziano, Angelo](#)
- [Sophists](#)

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dignitate (*On the dignity of the republic*) dedicated to the papal legate at the Council of Trent, Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500–1558), wherein among others the famous humanist poet Marcantonio Flaminio (1497/98–1550) and Marco Girolamo Vida (ca. 1485–1566) are talking about the meaning and purpose of the state community during a hot summer day in 1545. Vida wanted his dialogue to serve as a replacement for Cicero's philosophical treatise *De re publica* (*The Republic*), which was lost in his day. In the dialogue *De rei publicae dignitate*, there are several allusions to Cicero's other philosophical treatises.

Via Thomae

- [Thomism in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

Victorius, Petrus

- [Vettori, Piero](#)

Vida, Marcantonio

- [Vida, Marco Girolamo](#)

Vida, Marco Girolamo

Born: ca. 1485, Cremona, Italy

Died: September 27, 1566, Alba, Italy

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Abstract

This essay deals with Vida's life and his dialogue on political philosophy *De rei publicae*

Alternate Names

[Vida, Marcus Hieronymus](#); [Vida, Marcantonio](#)

Biography

Marcantonio Vida was born ca. 1485 in Cremona in Northern Italy to Guglielmo and Leona Ocasale. At a young age, he entered the order of the Canons Regular of the Lateran in San Pietro in Po in Cremona, in which he adopted the names Marco Girolamo (lat. Marcus Hieronymus). After beginning his studies of philosophy, theology, and canon law in Cremona, he moved in 1510 to Rome to continue his studies and became a canon of St. John Lateran.

The first patron of Vida as a poet was the cardinal and diplomat Oliviero Carafa (1430–1511), famous for his support of artists, among them the painter Filippino Lippi and architect Donato Bramante. Vida belonged with his friends to the humanists' group gathered in the court of Marchioness Isabella d'Este, some of whose members occupied high positions in the Vatican, such as Jacopo Sadoletto, Paolo Giovio, Pietro Bembo, Janus Lascaris, Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, and Gian Matteo Giberti.

The didactic poems about silk cultivation *Bombyx*, and *Scacchia ludus* about the gods playing chess, which was later paraphrased by the great Polish Renaissance poet Jan

Kochanowski, brought him his major recognition and fame.

His next patron, Pope Leo X, found that Vida was able to write an epic about Jesus Christ's life – the *Christiad*, which he began to write ca. 1518. The six-book poem was published for the first time in 1535 and overshadowed another poem with a similar topic, namely *De partu Virginis* of Jacopo Sannazzaro.

The first collected edition of the poet's works was published in May 1527, days before the so-called *Sack of Rome* – the despoliation of Rome by Emperor Charles V's army troops on 6 May. This edition contained *Ars Poetica* – *Poetics*, which was dedicated to Francis, the son of French king Francis I, and *Bombyx*, and *Scacchia ludus*, together with *Hymns* and *Bucolics*.

His single treatise on moral philosophy, in two books, *De rei publicae dignitate* (*On the Dignity of the Republic*), written in dialogue form, was first published in 1556 in Cremona – the only edition in the Renaissance. We had to wait for the next editions until the eighteenth century, when the two collected editions of his works were published in 1731 in Padua and in 1732 in London. The last and fourth edition of the dialogue appeared in 2004 in Trier, edited, translated, and commented on by Peter Hibst.

Returning to Vida himself, in 1533 Pope Clement VII nominated the poet Bishop of Alba in Lombardy, so Vida took part in some sessions of the Council of Trent (1545–1563). We know about his last act as Bishop of Alba, namely that in July 1566 Vida went to his native Cremona to buy for the Cathedral of St. Lorenzo the picture of St. Lorenzo painted by Giulio Campi which he had ordered.

Shortly after his return to Alba, Marco Girolamo Vida died on 27 September 1566 and was buried in the same Cathedral.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

According to Vida, the dialogue *De dignitate rei publicae* was to have completed the whole of Latin moral philosophy by providing the missing

part on the political philosophy, thus replacing with this dialogue Cicero's philosophical treatise *De re publica* (*The Republic*), which was lost in his day. Vida's aim is to make a synthesis of the Greek philosophy of the state and Christian doctrine; he judges it as his duty toward society to do so, as nothing he thought to be more useful than a presentation of the worth of the state to perfect the people morally. This is an echo of Cicero's opinion in *Tusculanae disputationes* (*Tusculan Disputations* 1,5) that philosophy was neglected in Latin literature until his time and that his mission was to restore its grandeur. Cicero emphasizes that he wants to establish Greek philosophy in Rome presenting the science in Latin which deals with the right way of living.

Vida wants to discuss the matter applied to his turbulent time, not just theoretically. A similar note can be found in Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (1,7) that philosophical problems grow from everyday life. It is interesting that Vida uses in his vivid dialogue a great many quotations from the *Tusculan Disputations*, which present the stylized dialogue between the student and the master, and have nothing in common with a dialogue between equal partners.

The scene of Vida's dialogue *De dignitate rei publicae* is presumably the Palazzo delle Albere at Trent, a suburban residence of Cristoforo Madruzzo, where Marco Girolamo Vida and the dedicatee – the last Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, Reginald Pole (1500–1558), the famous humanist poet Marcantonio Flaminio (1497/98–1550), the noble Venetian patrician Alvise Priuli an associate of Pole (sixteenth c.-1560), and the two future popes: cardinals Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte (1487–1555) (Pope Julius III from 7 February 1550 to 23 March 1555) and Marcello Cervini degli Spanocchi (1501–1555) (Pope Marcellus II from 9 April 1555 to 1 May 1555) relaxed one evening in the summer of 1545 in the garden during a pause in the negotiations in the Council of Trent, talking about the meaning and purpose of the state community.

The construction of the dialogue is the “debate for and against” (lat. *disputatio in utramque partem*), so the essential point of the dialogue is

the statements of the two orators. The first one, Marcantonio Flaminio, gives a fiery speech against the state, and the second one, Marco Girolamo Vida, defends the idea of the state. Flaminio's main allegations are that the state is a disaster for mankind, promotes greed, and destroys the virtues. Justice existed only in the Golden Age, and the state causes justice to perish. The ideal state is a philosophical fiction, and the philosophers have aimed at governing the state themselves, perorating uselessly about virtue and duty without consideration of the vice and crime in the state. Flaminio speaks in favor of the universal world state, which is based on natural law.

Vida counters that a good and happy life is the specific aim of the state, that the relation between justice and the public welfare is a requirement for the existence of the state, and that the virtuousness and the morality of the citizens and the sovereigns enable them to achieve felicity in the state. Vida argues that political authority is in accordance with the intentions of God and nature so that there can be order in society. He assigns the Golden Age to the primary phase of every society, regarding gradual decadence as a natural process. The decayed state can be raised again by virtuous citizens. According to Vida, law, religion, and philosophy are the achievement of the growing development of human reason in the state community.

In this discussion, there is a very interesting point, namely that Flaminio's utopian idea of a return to an allegedly ideal primeval time cannot be taken seriously, but Vida cannot completely refute Flaminio's objections against the state. Referring to Cicero's dialogues, where the "debate for and against" takes place, Vida lets the reader feel free to judge which opinion is right. He does not force us to accept his own point of view, although his preference is clear. No rupture with tradition exists in Vida's work, and his aim was to invoke the classical tradition and to show his mastery in adapting the philosophical thought of one of the most influential thinkers synthesizing the Greek philosophy of the state.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Vida extracts a lot from Cicero's philosophical treatises, especially certain structural similarities of the dialogue can be observed, which are repeated in most of the dialogues. One example is the *topos* of a pleasant, secluded place. Cicero used the motive of a shadowed, cool place for the conversation where the guests can relax during the hot summer day from Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*. The same motive was used by Vida, too, but he went further and made a direct allusion to the *Phaedrus* (230c), mentioning the chirp of the cicadas. Although he used the motive taken from this scene, he left unconsidered the other well-known details such as the running creek, shady trees, beautiful grass, and pleasant wind, so he shows his independence in his artistic remodeling of this motive.

The second example of Vida's creative reference to Cicero's dialogue is the use of the two testimonies of the lost *De re publica*. Vida had the possibility of extracting some material from *De re publica*, because he evidently used the testimony about *De re publica* from Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (*The City of God*, 2,21), which allowed him to know about the structure of the dialogue and one of the interlocutors, named Philus, who plays the role of somebody who acknowledged the injustice in the nature of the state, having emphasized at the same time that the presented point of view is not his own and should just serve to find the truth. The second obvious testimony is Lactantius' *Institutiones divinae* (*The Divine Institutes*, 5,16,2–5) about Carneades' argumentation that justice could be achieved only through a return to the old way of life. Creating his dialogue *De rei publicae dignitate*, Vida let these points of view be presented by one person, namely Flaminio.

The interesting historical fact is that the palimpsest of Cicero's *De re publica* with the great parts of the first and second book, some text of the third book, a little bit of text of the fourth and fifth book, and none of the sixth book, was not found by Angelo Mai, the prefect of the Vatican library, until 1819. In May 1822, Angelo Mai published Cicero's *De re publica* with an

extensive commentary. This does not mean that Vida's effort is wasted, for his dialogue allows us to observe the art of the Renaissance humanist, and his way of alluding to the classics, and at the same time the author's own craft.

Impact and Legacy

Vida was known mainly for his poems. The *Christiad* had a great influence on works such as Torquato Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* – the famous scene of the devils' council, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's *The Messiah*.

The *Poetics* was very popular; from 1527 to the second half of the nineteenth century, 69 editions of this poem were published. It was considered that Vida's work was fundamental for the theory of Neolatin literature. His talent and *Poetics* were appreciated by Eobanus Hessus (1488–1540), who expressed his admiration in an epigram *In Poeticam Hieronymi Vidæ (On Poetry of Girolamo Vida)*, and by Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558), who wrote in some passages of *Poetices libri septem (Seven Books on Poetry)* about Vida's works.

One of the greatest poets of British classicism, Alexander Pope (1688–1744), appreciated Vida's poetical work so much that he alluded in the *Essay of Criticism* to some lines from the *Poetics*, which he cited in the annotations, and describing the Renaissance he mentioned Vida, Pope Leo X, and the painter Raphael.

Denis Diderot (1713–1784) in the *Jacques le fataliste et son maître (Jacques the Fatalist and his Master)* lets Jacques' master judge the story told by the hostess, in which she presented a girl who was in sequence a prostitute, a false devotee, and a regretful wife, with this sentence: “Vous avez péché contre les règles d'Aristote, d'Horace, de Vida et de Le Bossu” (“You broke the rules of Aristotle, Horace, Vida, and Le Bossu”).

The lingering popularity of Vida's *Poetics* is demonstrated by the observation of a Prussian pastor, Johann David Müller, who complained in the preface to his translation of the *Christiad* (1811) that the *Poetics*, which shows the genius

of the author, is known quite well in every secondary school, unlike the *Christiad*.

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Vida, Marcus Hieronymus

► [Vida, Marco Girolamo](#)

Vimercato, Francesco

Born: 1512, Milan, Italy

Died: 1571, Milan, Italy

Leen Spruit

Faculty of Arts and Center for the History of Philosophy and Science, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Abstract

Francesco Vimercato (1512–1571) studied philosophy in Bologna, Pavia, and Padua; he was Royal Reader in Greek, Latin, and philosophy in Paris; from 1561, he was a professor of philosophy at the newly founded University of Mondovì; he is known for his commentaries on Aristotle's psychological, ethical, and zoological works.

Biography

Francesco Vimercato was born in Milan in 1512, and he studied philosophy in Bologna, Pavia, and Padua. In 1540 he wrote an appeal for recognition to Pierre Du Châtelhad, a scholarly prelate, hoping to become one of the King's readers at the University of Paris. His letter was accompanied by a work entitled *De placitis naturalibus*

Platonis et Aristotelis (ms in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Fond. Lat. 6330; Nardi 1958; Del Soldato 2012). In 1542 he was appointed king's reader in Greek and Latin philosophy. In 1543 he published a commentary on *De anima*, along with a "Peripatetic Discussion on the Rational Soul," in which he reviewed the discussions of Theophrastus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Simplicius, Scotus, Pomponazzi, and others on immortality (Vimercato 1543). Shortly after his appointment as king's reader, he became involved in the Ramist dispute, serving as one of the jurors in ten debates between Ramus and Goveanus. In 1550 he published his commentary on the *Physics* (Vimercato 1550), and in 1551 his analysis of Book Lambda of the *Metaphysics* (Vimercato 1551). In this work, dedicated to Cardinal de Bourbon, he defended the study of Greek philosophical theology (Vimercato 1543). His next work was a huge commentary on the *Meteorologica*, important for its philological qualities (Vimercato 1556). When Henry II was killed in 1559, he addressed the mourning Caterina de' Medici with a letter of consolation. In 1561 he found a new sponsor in Duke Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy, who called him to the chair of philosophy at the University of Mondovì (later, Turin). Vimercato was also named to the duke's governing council. In Turin he made the acquaintance of the mathematician Giovanni Battista Benedetti. From 1567 to 1570, he served as ambassador of the Duke of Savoy to Milan (Gilbert 1965; Schmitt 1983; Hasse 2004).

The work *De principiis rerum naturalium* was posthumously published (1596), and several commentaries on Aristotle remained unpublished (on *De caelo*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *De partibus animalium*).

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Vinet, Elias

► [Vinet, Élie](#)

Vinet, Élie

Born: 1509, Les Planches, Barbezieux - Saint-Hilaire, Saintonge area

Died: 1587, Bordeaux

Luigi-Alberto Sanchi

CNRS, Institut d'histoire du droit, Paris, France

Abstract

Professor at the Collège de Guyenne, Élie Vinet was a scholar with a manifold knowledge: he pioneered archaeological studies, wrote innovative books on antiquities in Bordeaux and its surroundings as well as on

sundials and on land surveying; prepared editions or translations of classical and medieval texts, especially Ausonius; and exchanged philological matters with the best scholars in his time, like de Thou, Cujas, and Scaliger. His international experience includes a period in Coimbra, Portugal, with André de Gouveia and other professors, invited by King John III.

Alternate Names

Vinet, Elias; Vinet, Helies; Vinetus Santonensis, Elias

Biography

Vinet's birth year, 1509, is obtained by deduction, since we know he died in 1587 at the age of 78. His birthplace, Les Planches, is in Barbezieux – Saint-Hilaire, in the ancient Saintonge area, which explains the form “Santonensis” in his name. As he recalls (Vinet 1568), his ancestors came from the Poitou region and turned the village's name into “Les Vinets.”

After studying at Poitiers University, Vinet had the opportunity to stay in Paris and learn Greek and mathematics at a high level. In 1539, he was appointed as a professor at the Collège de Guyenne, in Bordeaux, by its principal, the famous humanist André de Gouveia (Gaulleir 1874).

Vinet took soon a pause from teaching, 1542–1547, in order to prepare classical text editions for his students and colleagues (Desgraves 1977a); he thus published his first edition, Theognis, with a Latin translation (Vinet 1543). Then, André de Gouveia proposed him and other professors at Guyenne like George Buchanan and Diogo de Teive to found a College at Coimbra, Portugal, on the demand of King John III. This appointment lasted until Gouveia died, in June 1548, and Vinet returned to France the next year. During his stay in Portugal, Vinet visited Evora's site (Vinet 1565) and met the mathematician Pedro Nunes, from whom he learned the sundial's theory; later on, he wrote a treaty on this subject (Vinet 1564).

In 1556, the town council chose Vinet to become principal at his Collège de Guyenne, but

he had to wait until 1562 to obtain the appointment (Desgraves 1977a); in the meantime, he retired and wrote essays on his area's antiquities (Vinet 1565, 1567, 1568). He kept working on his philological editions and other historical research (see full bibliography in Desgraves 1977a); the discovery of a new Ausonius manuscript, acquired by Jacques Cujas, stimulated the critical work on the ancient Gallo-Roman poet. After a first edition (Vinet 1551), Vinet prepared a new one (Vinet 1580), which was published only after Joseph Scaliger set out his one, incomplete but with several “silent borrowings” from Vinet's scholarship (de La Ville de Mirmont 1917–1919; Desgraves 1977a; Grafton 1983), as it happened for other ancient authors that Vinet studied (Grafton 1993). On his death in 1587, the best French scholars honored his memory.

Vinet's manifold scholarship and industrious work set new standards for historical and archaeological research (Cooper 2005) and for the study of ancient and modern sciences and techniques, like land surveying (Vinet 1577). His editions and translations into Latin or French were often reprinted and obtained international success; his letters (Desgraves 1977b; Banderier 2004; Girot 2004) show the range of his philological discussions with scholars of the day, like Pierre Daniel, Cujas, or Henri de Mesmes. Vinet published the first French translation of Eginhard's *Life of Charlemagne* (Vinet 1546) and of Proclus' *Sphaera* (Vinet 1544).

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Vinet, Helies

- [Vinet, Élie](#)

Vinetus Santonensis, Elias

- [Vinet, Élie](#)

Virgil in the Renaissance

Born: 70 BCE, near Mantua, Italy

Died: 19 BCE, Brindisi, Italy

L. B. T. Houghton

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Abstract

The Roman poet Virgil played an important part in the thought and writings of Renaissance philosophers, largely as a result of the enduring place held by his poetry in Renaissance education and the long tradition of philosophical interpretations of Virgil's works.

A Continuing Tradition

The poetry of Virgil occupied a central position in educational curricula throughout the period of the Renaissance. Language and imagery from the works of the Roman poet consequently permeated almost every aspect of Renaissance culture, and philosophy was no exception (Zabughin 1921–1923; Baswell 1995; Wilson-Okamura 2010; Usher and Fernbach 2012; Hardie 2014; Houghton and Sgarbi 2018). From late antiquity, Virgil's poems had been regarded as a repository of philosophy and other wisdom (see especially the late antique commentary of Servius, Fulgentius' *Expositio Virgilianae continentiae*, and the disquisitions on Virgil's compendious learning in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*), and this tendency continued through the Middle Ages and into the early modern period. In his treatise on the study of literature, Leonardo Bruni quotes Virgil's lines on the inner spirit pervading all things from the speech of Anchises in the underworld in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, before going on to ask, "When we read these things, what philosopher do we not hold cheap? Who has ever spoken of the nature of the soul with such clarity and knowledge?" (*De studiis et litteris* 22, quoting Cicero, *De senectute*).

Cristoforo Landino, who also wrote a commentary on the *Aeneid*, devoted the third and fourth books of his *Disputationes Camaldulenses* to a Platonizing exegesis of the poem, the allegorical thrust of which bears some similarities to the readings of Virgil's epic expounded in earlier centuries by (pseudo-) Bernardus Silvestris and others (Kallendorf 1989, 129–165).

A Guide and Model

The *Aeneid*, in particular, was often seen as providing not only a model of literary eloquence but also a guide to moral and virtuous behavior (Kallendorf 1989). Petrarch, who in one of his later letters (*Seniles* 4.5) advanced an elaborate moralizing interpretation of the narrative of the poem, asserted that in his presentation of the figure of Aeneas, Virgil had intended to offer his readers a portrait of the perfect man (*vir perfectus*). Likewise, Landino maintained in a lecture delivered in Florence in the 1460s that the poet's aim had been "to encourage us not only to good speaking but to upright living, that he might advise the human race as best he could."

Nor was the poet's sphere of authority limited to matters of individual morality; in the city-states of Renaissance Italy, Virgil was also enrolled among the champions of civic and constitutional values, his famous words on the mission of Rome to spare the conquered and war down the proud from *Aeneid* 6.853 appearing beneath the personification of Magnanimity in Taddeo di Bartolo's frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena. Virgil himself is depicted as one of a series of famous men from antiquity, scripture, and mythology in a series of fifteenth-century frescoes in the Palazzo Comunale of the small Tuscan commune of Lucignano, displaying on the pages of his book the same passage from *Aeneid* 6, with the word *Romane* (Roman) altered, consciously or otherwise, to *ratione* (by reason) – a significant modification, in view of the importance of "ragione" (reason) in late medieval Italian civic discourse. Craig Kallendorf has demonstrated how Virgil's works were later used to reinforce the distinctive emphases of the "Myth of Venice," promoting

civic cohesion and suppressing possible sources of challenge and dissent (Kallendorf 1999).

Philosophy and Religion

Various attempts were made to accommodate Virgil's poetry within formal philosophical systems. The adoption of the classical author as a forerunner and figurehead by Landino (for whom Virgil was "altogether a Platonist") and other exponents of Neoplatonism has already been noted; the Ferrarese scholar Nascimbene Nascimbeni set out to produce a commentary on the first six books of the *Aeneid* "according to the thought of Aristotle and Plato" (Zabughin 1921–1923, 2:79–81). The Roman poet was also widely revered as a conduit of theological truths, mainly thanks to the long tradition of seeing his fourth eclogue, with its predictions of the return of the Virgin, the birth of a divine child who will restore the Golden Age, and peace and abundance in the natural world (expressed in terms reminiscent of the prophecies of Isaiah) as a conscious or unconscious anticipation of the birth of Christ (Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, 487–503). Famously affirmed by Dante's Statius (*Purgatorio* 22.64–73), this conception finds expression in the works of Coluccio Salutati, Leonardo Bruni, and Antonio Mancinelli, among others.

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Vitoria, Francisco de

Born: 1483, Burgos

Died: 1546, Salamanca

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Virgil, Polydore

► [Vergil, Polydore](#)

Virgili, Polidoro

► [Vergil, Polydore](#)

Virgilio, Polidoro

► [Vergil, Polydore](#)

Viscount St. Albans

► [Bacon, Francis](#)

Vital Balsam

► [Spirit in Renaissance Medicine](#)

Vital Heat

► [Innate Heat](#)

Abstract

Francisco de Vitoria is recognized not only as one of the founding fathers of international law but also as one of the renovators of the sixteenth-century theological method. During his 20 years of teaching, he carried out an intense intellectual activity of reflection on various themes and problems not only of an academic nature but also related to the strong political, social, and economic tensions that marked the first half of the sixteenth century. Thomas Aquinas was his guide to the discussion of these problems. By adopting Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* in place of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* for his classes, he renewed university teaching. As a matter of fact, it is from Aquinas' work that he drew the main theoretical fundaments of his own reflections on the pressing issues that mid-sixteenth-century European consciences were called to face for the first time. Specifically, he commented I-IIae qq. 90–108. There, he found the concept of *lex naturalis*, which became the main focus of his ethical and political speculation. The importance Vitoria gave to the natural law can be seen in the *De Indis* (1539), with which the author joined the debate on the thorny question of the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of the American territories. Indeed, in this *relectio* he managed to combine a new interpretation of subjective rights with the theme of natural law, typical of the medieval tradition, this way proposing a valid defense in favor of the Indians.

Biography

Francisco de Vitoria, born in Burgos in 1483, is recognized not only as one of the founding fathers of international law but also as one of the renovators of the sixteenth-century theological method. His father, originally from Vitoria, holds an important position in Burgos at the service of the Catholic Kings. Therefore, since Vitoria comes from a well-off family, he has a privileged education (Hernández Martín 1995, 11–16).

In 1505, he enters the Dominican Order. At the end of the summer of 1508, he moves to Paris to complete his philosophy studies and begin his theology studies (Lamacchia 1995, 19–33). In these years, he resides at the convent of Saint Jacques, where he obtains a Master's Degree in Arts (1509) and a Doctorate in Theology (1522). There, he also begins his career as a teacher which he will continue upon his return to Spain in 1523 at the Colegio de San Gregorio of Valladolid. In 1526, he becomes a professor of *Prima Theologiae* at the University of Salamanca, a position that he will hold until his death in 1546 (Belda Plans 2000, 317–333).

During his 20 years of teaching, he carries out an intense intellectual activity of reflection on various themes and problems not only of an academic nature but also related to the strong political, social, and economic tensions that marked the first half of the sixteenth century. Thomas Aquinas is his guide to the discussion of these problems. By adopting Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* in place of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, he renews university teaching, this leading to a rebirth of far-reaching theological studies with consequences at a European level.

The work of Francisco de Vitoria can basically be divided into two main groups.

The first group includes the *Lecturae*, that is, his ordinary university lectures on the *Summa Theologiae* or Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (Lamacchia 1995, 36–39).

The choice of the *Summa* as the textbook for his courses from 1526 onward constitutes the fundamental characteristic of his teaching in Salamanca, during which he explains the *Summa* twice.

During his magisterium he holds a series of courses: 1526–1527, II book of the *Sentences*; 1527–1529, II-IIae of the *Summa theologiae*; 1529–1531, IV book of the *Sentences*; 1531–1533, I pars della *Summa theologiae*; 1533–34, I-IIa of the *Summa theologiae*; 1534–1537, II-IIae of the *Summa theologiae*; 1537–1538, III pars (qq. 1–59) of the *Summa theologiae*; 1538–1539, IV book of the *Sentences*; 1539–1541, I pars of the *Summa theologiae*; and 1541–1542, I-IIae of the *Summa theologiae* (Beltrán de Heredia 1928, 114). The contents of these ordinary lessons are described in the *Reportationes* of his students (Langella 2011, 30–34).

The second group, instead, includes the *Relectiones* (Lamacchia 1995, 40–45). These are the solemn lessons that professors have to hold on a yearly basis on a monographic theme in front of the entire University and whose function is to investigate in-depth a particularly difficult subject that, due to its complexity, cannot be explained in full during ordinary classes. These lessons can either be focused on a current topic or on a theme related to the academic course held by the professor. Dealing above all with topical issues, Vitoria has the ability to transform this academic obligation into an opportunity to discuss important issues such as morality and law, which will always make reference to the historical context of his time. The main issues he discusses include the so-called Indian question but also the limits of civil and spiritual power, Papal power, conciliarism, and war, as well as more specific issues such as suicide and marriage. The *Relectiones* of Vitoria that we can still read today include *De potestate civili*, *De homicidio*, *De matrimonio*, *De potestate Ecclesiae prior*, *De potestate Ecclesiae posterior*, *De potestate Papae et concilii*, *De augmento caritatis*, *De eo ad quod tenetur veniens ad usum rationis*, *De simonia*, *De temperantia*, *De indis prior*, *De iure belli o De indis posterior*, and *De magia*. Both his first lecture, *De silentii obligatione*, dating back to the academic year 1526–1527, and the lecture dating back to the academic year 1540–1541, continuing on the subject dealt with in the *De Magia*, have been lost. The 13 Reflections above are held by Vitoria between 1528 and 1540, with

the exception of the academic years 1531–1532 and 1536–1537, during which he does not hold any. In the academic years 1534–1535 and 1538–1539, instead, Vitoria holds four *relectiones* (Beltrán de Heredia 1928, 73 and 132–153).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

In 1526, Vitoria replaces Peter Lombard's *Liber Sententiarum* with Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* as his course book (Aquinas 1882, *Summa Theologiae*). From this text, he draws the main theoretical fundaments of his own reflections on the pressing issues that mid-sixteenth-century European consciences are called to face for the first time.

More precisely, by commenting on I-IIae, qq. 90–108, he finds in the concept of *lex naturalis* the main focus of his ethical and political speculation. In his commentary dating back to academic year 1533–1534, he defines the essence of the *lex* in itself – a definition that can be applied to any kind of law.

Vitoria states that the law is the rule and measure of human acts and that the word *ley* (law) comes from Latin *legare* (bond), as it poses an obligation. Therefore it belongs to reason, as it is the duty of the reason to issue commands. In other words, law in itself carries the obligation to act, as it is the rule and measure of human acts (Vitoria 2010, 88).

As for the *vexata quaestio* as to whether law is an act of intellect or will, Vitoria underlines, in contrast with the shared opinion of “modern” philosophers, that law is a mandate that belongs *immediate ad rationem* (Vitoria 2010, 90). In actual fact, law is determined by reason, not will, as it has a purpose; commanding, however, is an act that is typical of and exclusive to an intelligent being and, hence, is an act of intellect. Therefore, law is an order by reason, a rule, norm, or measure of acts, through which men are induced to act or are restrained from acting. It is an obligatory mandate and, as such, not only does it show the way but also gives an order that must be obeyed.

If law is a rule, a measure of the righteousness of human acts, the purpose of law must be good. Law must always be aimed at the common good (Vitoria 2010, 92). All norms that are not aimed at

the common good are not laws, as this is the characteristic that defines a law as right and good. The fact that it is aimed at the common good, however, does not imply that the private and individual good must be disregarded, even though, first and foremost, it is the common good that must be achieved, while the private good is secondary.

The ordination for the common good does not originate from the arbitrary will of the legislator: it is the law, by its own nature, that is ordained for the common good. This ordination constitutes the purpose of the law because, as the common good ceases, the law also ceases. Since the law is necessarily ordained for the common good, it may exclusively be promulgated by the ruler for the community he rules (Vitoria 2010, 94). Indeed, laws cannot be promulgated by anyone but only by those people who are in charge of the community. That is to say, only by those people who care for the same common good to which the law is directed: “non spectat facere leges ad rationem cuiuscumque, sed solum illius qui gerit curam communitatis, quia talis gerit curam boni communis ad quod ordinatur lex” (Vitoria 2010, 94).

Finally, for the law to be applied, its promulgation is necessary (Vitoria 2010, 96). The *promulgatio* is a necessary condition for a law to be enforceable and to establish obligations. Effectively, it is essential that the law be promulgated, as a rule must be applied to those things it regulates and measures (Vitoria 2010, 96). In actual fact, in general, whoever ignores the law exclusively because it was not promulgated is excused by this fault and by the relative punishment. Without a doubt, the natural law, although ignored, does not cease to oblige. For instance, should a man marry his sister because he does not know of this bond, the marriage would not be valid, although his guilt may be pardoned because of his ignorance: *lex naturalis*, indeed, is valid and effective also for those for whom it has not been promulgated. Therefore, it is not necessary to be promulgated for it to oblige.

Nevertheless, as regards the positive divine law, Vitoria states that this law was not effective before being promulgated. Once promulgated,

however, the law obliged all persons, despite not having been promulgated to all. In the same way as the evangelic law became obliging since the moment it was promulgated, yet forgiving those who were not aware of it, now every man is obliged by the law of Christ, yet those who never heard of it are forgiven, should they not comply with it. In turn, even positive human law does not oblige anyone if it is not promulgated and has no strength or validity. Vitoria demonstrates this by asserting that issuing a law is ordering, but ordering is promulgating. If the prince issued a law that was obliging from the very moment of its creation to, for instance, sell the primogeniture and somebody had sold it before, the contract would not be valid. On the contrary, the law would have been valid if it had been promulgated. The legislator is a public representative and cannot create a law without publicly promulgating it. For the human law to oblige, it is not sufficient that it is promulgated privately in a group or among wise men. It needs to be solemnly promulgated. The prince only has the authority to create the law due to him being a public representative. Vitoria demonstrates this with an argument of reason: as a matter of fact, human laws must be aimed at easing the salvation of souls. If a private promulgation were sufficient, this would represent a great obstacle for men, as the obligations set forth could be ignored due to the ignorance of many. In any case, although a solemn promulgation is necessary for the human law to oblige, it is not necessary that it is promulgated before the whole community.

Having defined the essence of the universal *lex* that may be applied to any kind of law, as every law contains it by analogy, Vitoria defines the different types of law according to Saint Thomas' categories. *Lex* is divided into divine and human law. The former is further divided into eternal, natural, and positive law and the latter into ecclesiastic or canon law and civil law (Vitoria 2010, 106–109). The eternal law is almost not specified: it is nothing else but a practical principle promulgated from eternity by God. Moreover, since God is the supreme legislator, all other laws derive from it. Through human reason, the eternal law reveals itself as natural and human law. It is the

source and origin of all right laws, as they receive their mandatory force and normative character from the eternal law. Vitoria also states that, in the same way as a revealed knowledge was necessary, because human science is full of errors and requires a great deal of time to reach the truth, a revealed divine law was also necessary, along with the *lex naturalis*, although the natural law also made it possible to save some men (Langella 2013, 164–165).

The eternal law, the *ratio* governing the universe, governs all rational and irrational beings with its wisdom. However, if everything is subject to the eternal law by its own inclination, as far as knowledge is concerned, only the rational creatures are subject to it (Vitoria 2010, 120). Therefore, men are subject to the law in two different ways: by nature and because they are rational beings. This latter aspect is the basis of the *lex naturalis*. Strictly speaking, it not only belongs to reason, but it is naturally inscribed in the minds and hearts of men (Rom 2:14). Hence, not only does it conform to reason, but it is also intrinsically related to the same needs of human nature: reason, by examining the natural inclination of men, prescribes what men must or must not do to be fulfilled.

The inclinations that allow the *ratio* to know the *lex naturalis* may be classified into three groups: those shared by men with all living creatures, those shared by men with animals, and those that are strictly human. Therefore, the natural law is the rational expression of the different inclinations of the human nature toward good. Hence, the precepts of the natural law are multiple, although they can be reduced to a single principle, on which all actions are based: “*Bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum.*” This first principle is based on the notion of good, as the good is what all beings seek and is compelled by practical reason, without mediation (Vitoria 2010, 124). Following Saint Thomas' doctrine, Vitoria asserts that those things to which man is naturally inclined are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and because of this, good is to be done, while their contraries are apprehended as evil and are to be avoided. Indeed, good is the object of pursuit, while evil is its contrary. Hence, the order of

precepts of the natural law follows the order of natural inclinations. In actual fact, the objective basis of these practical judgments is found by reason in the different rational tendencies of nature: by way of example, the natural inclination to live leads to the human rights to life and to its protection and development. From there, it is possible to deduce that not only do several principles exist, given that several natural inclinations exist, but also that acting against the natural inclinations means acting against the natural law itself (Vitoria 2010, 124).

It has already been stated that the *lex naturalis* is the result of the *naturalis ratio*. The pure natural reason, however, does not consist in expressing these clear judgments on what is right or wrong. Rather, it consists of the *habitus* of the first practical principles, what Saint Thomas calls *synderesis* (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 79, a. 12). Now therefore, wondering if the natural law is a *habitus*, Saint Thomas clarifies that it cannot be a *habitus*, either properly or essentially. It can be called so in an improper manner only (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia-IIae, q. 94, a. 1). In this regard, Vitoria adds that the natural law can be called a habit not because it really is a habit but rather because it is something which we hold by a habit. Indeed, by natural inclination we believe that these things are right (Vitoria 2010, 122). Hence, the natural law is not the reason considered as a faculty, nor the act of practical reason, but the product of the act or of the immediate and spontaneous activity of reason. In other words, it is the *opus rationis*.

Human reason only is clearly provided with the first principles that are known to it without effort. For this reason, also practical intellect has immediate access to the common principles, or general maxims, that are imposed by their own evidence. Starting from these principles, our reason must process, through a slow deductive process, all other precepts that belong to the natural law. Hence, different degrees exist between the natural precepts, depending on their proximity to the first practical principles, in the same way as this occurs in the speculative field, typical of sciences. These secondary precepts are derived from the first principles either as proximate and immediate conclusions that are deduced from them without any

effort, or as remote conclusions, that can be reached by reason only thanks to elaborate reasoning, that is within reach of the wise men only.

Moreover, as is the case for all other laws, the natural law also partakes in and is a reflection of the eternal law (Vitoria 2010, 106 and 118). Thanks to this participation in the eternal law, whose knowledge is by itself reserved for the blessed, men can come to know it by means of the principles of the natural law (Vitoria 2010, 130). In this regard, it must be stressed that despite the fact that all laws, in essence, participate in the eternal law, there is no doubt that the *lex naturalis* boasts a privileged relationship with it (Vitoria 2010, 130). Because of this, it has a nature of law to the highest degree (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia-IIae, q. 91, a. 2).

Finally, as has already been stated, the natural law, although ignored, is in any case a real law and does not require to be promulgated in order to be obliging. Hence, it cannot be dispensed or revoked.

The natural law is a reflection of the primordial needs of human nature, and therefore, it is just like nature itself: one, universal, and immutable (Vitoria 2010, 98). All precepts contained therein are inscribed in a first, universal principle: "*Bonum est amandum et malum fugiendum.*" Moreover, as far as the first principles are concerned, the natural law is the same for everyone, both as regards its knowledge and as regards the validity and truth of its principles. With regard to these, indeed, it is known by all men and is always true and just. In the same way as the first speculative principles are known by everyone and are always valid, the same must be said for the first practical principles, due to their similarity with the speculative principles. However, as regards the conclusions that can be drawn from the first principles of the natural law, they are not always known by men, be it because of ignorance or owing to the many circumstances that must be taken into account to know what is right and what is not (Vitoria 2010, 126). This means that the further the conclusions are from the first principles, the more mistaken the intellect can be about them. Indeed, drawing universal conclusions from some principles, to be applied to

specific actions, requires taking into account several circumstances that may invalidate the correctness of the reasoning and is, therefore, the prerogative of the wise man. This leads to the acceptance of progress in the knowledge of the natural law, in terms of clarification, that does not demonstrate an alteration in the *lex naturalis* but rather, a development in the knowledge that humans have of it (Barrientos García 1978, 124).

Finally, as concerns the immutability of the natural law, it should be stated that it may change by “addition” only; this means that only circumstances may be added to it to improve it. On the contrary, it cannot be changed by “subtraction”; this means that no principle can ever be abolished. Indeed, the first principles can never be altered by subtraction, although the secondary principles can vary. An instance of this can be seen in the conclusions drawn from the first principles. In actual fact, however, also concerning the secondary principles, the change does not properly concern the law; rather, the change takes place because of the variability of the matter to which it applies.

The third property of the natural law implies that human or divine authorities cannot dispense with it. As for human authority, it is clear that it is in charge of the custody and safeguarding the natural and divine laws and, consequently, does not have the competence to modify them. On the contrary, the problem arises before the almightiness of God (Vitoria 2010, 194). Indeed, some events described in the Bible seem to suggest that there actually is some dispensation with certain actions ordered by God as regards the precepts of the Decalogue, such as the order that God gave to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, the topic of fornication (Gn 22:2), what is stated in the Book of Oseas (Os 1), or even the Jews’ plundering of the Egyptians’ goods (Ex 12:35–36).

The problem was already discussed by Saint Thomas who, in his comment to q. 66, a. 5, of the *Ila-IIae*, wonders if the mandate God gave to the Jews to plunder the Egyptians of their goods was or was not to be intended as stealing. In this regard, Vitoria expressed the opinion of Ockham and of those authors who admitted the dispensation with all precepts of the Decalogue by divine

will; Vitoria was against Scotus’ opinion, who instead asserted that such a possibility was allowed exclusively as regards the precepts related to the fellow man, thus excluding the precepts contained in the first tablet from dispensation (Saint Augustine, *Sermo* 33, 2. PL 38, 208). Scotus then asserted that “dispensation” can be understood in three different ways. According to the first inappropriate interpretation, “dispensation” means completely revoking a law, repealing it. According to the second interpretation, it means “interpreting and clarifying” what the law implies or does not imply, depending on the circumstances, as is the case for a bishop who explains that someone is not obliged to fast for a given reason. Finally, “dispensation” is intended in its proper meaning to allow someone to act contrary to an obligation. Vitoria states that this is the way according to which the term must be interpreted to debate the problem.

The opinion supported by Ockham, according to which God not only can dispense with the precepts of the Decalogue but also order the contrary, appears to be irrational to Vitoria, as God’s almightiness may not imply contradictions. However, dispensing with the precepts of the Decalogue does imply contradictions, as one may hate God and do good, thus being a friend and an enemy of God, which is impossible. Therefore, no dispensation or repeal from the legislator of the natural right, that is God, is admitted by Vitoria (2010, 198) who, however, admits that Scotus’ intermediate theory may somehow be likely (Vitoria 2010, 206).

To solve the problem, Vitoria observes that God almighty has two different powers over the universe: one deriving from his role of creator, thanks to which he is the lord and owner of everything, and one deriving from his role as legislator and universal judge. By virtue of the latter power, God may not command that someone lawfully steals goods from someone else, as this is intrinsically bad. There is no doubt that he may command to do so, in his role of lord, but this does not imply any dispensation with the law, considering that he is donating something over which he has full command. By resorting to this dual power of God, it is possible to explain the passages in the

Scriptures where it may appear that there exists a dispensation with the precepts of the Decalogue such as, for instance, the order God gave to the Jews to take possession of the goods of the Egyptians or the order to sacrifice Isaac. In actual facts, since God acted by virtue of his right as creator, no dispensation was necessary at all.

The importance given by Vitoria to natural law can be seen in the *De Indis* (1539), with which Vitoria joins the debate on the thorny question of the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of the American territories. In this *relectio*, he manages to unite the theme of the medieval tradition of natural law with a new interpretation of subjective rights, thus laying the foundations for a valid defense of the Indians.

Now, the complex conceptual structure of the *De Indis* can be schematically simplified by identifying a *pars destruens* and a *pars construens* which, respectively, analyze the illegitimate and legitimate titles for the *Conquista*.

In the first part, having rejected the Medieval interpretation of the Pontiff as a *monarcha temporalis* in toto orbe, Vitoria defines two concepts, both proceeding from the natural right, *dominium* and *ius gentium* (Beneyto and Corti Varela 2017, 57–60).

As regards the concept of *dominium* (Vitoria 1934, III, q. 62, 61–221), it should be reminded that for a theologian, humans were the bearers of a “capacity to use things” not by human law but by natural law (Vitoria 1934, 82). In other words, Vitoria would propose *dominium* as an inalienable natural right (Folgado 1960, 191–198; Beneyto and Román Vaca 2014, 55–72; Langella 2015, 151–174).

To the objection of the *opositores* that saw in the natives’ sins of anthropophagy or sodomy their inability to self-control and therefore their incapacity with regard to *dominium*, Vitoria replied that guilt, madness, or idiocy did not affect human dignity or human capacity to own: the natives’ infidelity, and their state of sin, did not question their humanity but only made it weaker. Hence, Vitoria asserted that there was no cause that could legitimize the expropriation of the lands of the American Indians: the natural law and the faculty to possess or own things for their own use

would apply to them, just as they applied to the rest of humanity (Vitoria 2017, 525–567).

As regards the other fundamental concept debated in the *relectio* of 1539, it should be highlighted that it is not perchance that, in the *De Indis*, Vitoria stated that the *ius gentium* was derived from the natural law, clarifying all ambiguities of an interpretation that would see it on the cusp of the positive right. Indeed, for Vitoria the *ius gentium* was of natural right or derived from it: “Vel est ius naturale vel derivatur ex iure naturali” (Vitoria 2017, 658). However, in his commentary to the Ila-IIae, q. 57, of 1535, Vitoria included the *ius gentium* in the positive right. After stating that “quia omne aliud ius a iure naturali, est positivum. Dicitur enim positivum quia est ex aliquo beneplacito” (Vitoria 1934, 7), he affirmed that “ius gentium potius debet reponi sub iure positivo quam sub iure naturali” (Vitoria 1934, 14). In doing so, Vitoria wanted to reject a conception of the natural right that was traditionally extended to irrational beings as well and, at the same time, to limit a conception of the *ius gentium* that included all precepts which, according to the Spanish theologian, belonged to the natural right (Vitoria 1934, 13–14). For Vitoria, the *ius naturale* was, on the one hand, closely linked to human reason and, on the other, to what was good in itself, regardless of anything else.

In discussing this, it should be emphasized that for Luciano Pereña, it was impossible to state that Vitoria’s position on the right of nations, defended during the lecture of 1535, changed in 1539 with the drafting of the *De Indis*. According to the scholar, Vitoria always supported the positive, constitutional, and historical character of the *ius gentium*. In the *Relectio* of 1539, Vitoria wanted to demonstrate and affirm the rights of the Spanish with regard to the foreign peoples (Pereña Vicente 1952, 620). As noted by Reginaldo Pizzoni, however, if the vision of the right of the nations was completely positive, the *relectio De Indis* and the *De iure belli* would have had no reason to exist. More specifically, the *De Indis* would have lost its character of claim against the injustice perpetrated overseas, and this would have led to leaving the Indians at the Spanish conquerors’ mercy,

abandoned to their greed (Ramírez 1955, 145; Pizzorni 1988, 575).

In the second part of the *De Indis*, after examining a series of titles that are generally acknowledged to be valid and that are rejected by Vitoria, the Dominican Master detailed the possible legitimate and valid titles justifying the Spanish presence in America. The first title proposed the topic of the Spanish rights to cross the recently discovered lands and to remain there without causing any harm to the Indians. The second title newly discussed the question of the legitimacy of spreading the Christian faith. The third, fourth, and fifth titles were related to the right of the converted Indians to be defended and required the *iustum belli* against those princes imposing idolatry. The sixth and seventh titles once again declared the rights of the natives that were fighting one another to resort, following a free election, to the help of the Spanish administration (Vitoria 2017, 659–697). The last title finally referred to the utility, for the recently discovered peoples, to accept the administration and government of the King and Queen of Spain, considering that they knew the science and the mechanical arts and had no advanced agriculture and craftsmanship. As for the validity of this latter title, however, Vitoria had serious doubts (Vitoria 2017, 696–699).

In examining the legitimate titles, the new position of Vitoria is of paramount importance, as it was based on a new vision: the natural society of all peoples (Urdániz 1960, 598–600). Both in the first part of the *De Indis*, where the Master lists and rejects the illegitimate titles for the *Conquista*, and in the second part of the *relectio*, where the legitimate titles are analyzed, it is the natural right, the source of all other human laws, to be the *fil rouge* of his reasoning. Rights are granted to both the Europeans and the Indians and along with them, also duties. The illegitimate titles for the conquest are against the natural right, as they deprive the Indians of their right to property, to self-government, and to freedom (Vitoria 2017, 574–575). The Spanish, therefore, may not deprive them of their lands, as all peoples are entitled to own goods and to appoint rulers. The question thus appears to be resolved by Vitoria, in

view of the natural right that originally provided the human-kind with *dominium*.

In the same way, should the Indians deprive the Spanish of their natural right to cross their lands (Vitoria 2017, 658–661) and to trade with them (Vitoria 2017, 662–665), a right derived from the original and universal availability of the common good and of the *cognatio* of men (*Digesta* I, 1, 3), established among them by their own nature, or hinder evangelization (Vitoria 2017, 676–683), persecute those who converted (Vitoria 2017, 684–687), or even harm the innocent (Vitoria 2017, 688–691), or, in brief, should they not live in compliance with the *ius gentium*, which is based on natural law (Vitoria 2017, 666–667), then they would be unfair and so should be punished.

These last considerations on the Spanish rights were often misunderstood and interpreted as a method for Vitoria to give a legal basis to colonization wars (Todorov 1982, 191). In actual fact, the aim of Vitoria's reflection was to specifically, and not only formally, acknowledge the equality of the Indians, placing all subjects involved on the very same level, where duties and rights converge. Vitoria indeed recognizes that the Indians are rational and free subjects. They are the bearers of rights, and, as such, they are participants in natural justice, where duties and rights are intertwined by necessity and in a complementary fashion. Then, for Vitoria, the natural law is the basis on which the threads of the universal justice can be woven, where conflicts and issues, regarding all topics, ranging from mere political topics to spiritual ones, are ordained according to a rational layout.

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Vivachi

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Vives, Juan Luis

Born: 1492/93, Valencia, Spain

Died: 1540, Bruges, Belgium

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Abstract

Juan Luis Vives (1492/3–1540) was a Spanish-born humanist who spent the greater part of his life in the Low Countries. He strongly opposed scholasticism and made his mark as one of the most influential advocates of humanistic learning in the early sixteenth century. His bent was philosophical rather than philological. His works deal with a wide range of subjects including education, psychology, politics, social reform, and religion. Vives was not a systematic writer, which makes it difficult to classify him as a philosopher. His thought is eclectic and pragmatic, as well as historical, in

its orientation. He took what he considered most valid from a variety of sources and combined these elements into a Christianized Aristotelianism.

Biography

Juan Luis Vives was born in Valencia, Spain in 1492, or more likely in 1493. His parents were Jewish merchants who had converted to Catholicism and who strove to live with the insecurities of their precarious situation. His father, Luis Vives Valeriola (1453–1524), had been prosecuted in 1477 for secretly practicing Judaism. A second trial took place in 1522 and ended 2 years later when he was burned at the stake. His mother, Blanquina March (1473–1508), became a Christian in 1491, 1 year before the decree expelling Jews from Spain. She died in 1508 of the plague. Twenty years after her death, she was charged with having visited a clandestine synagogue. Her remains were exhumed and publicly burned.

In his youth, Vives attended the Estudio General of his hometown. In 1509, he moved to Paris and enrolled as a freshman in the faculty of arts. He was never to return to Spain. Vives began his studies at the Collège de Lisieux, where Juan Dolz del Castellar had just started a triennial course, but soon moved to the Collège de Beauvais, where he attended the lectures of the Fleming Jan Dullaert (1470–1513). From the fall of 1512, Vives started to attend the course of the Aragonese Gaspar Lax (1487–1560) at the Collège de Montaigu. Through Nicolas Bérault (c.1470–c.1545), who was an associate of Guillaume Budé (1467–1540) and taught at various colleges in Paris, Vives also came into contact with the Parisian humanist circle.

In 1514, Vives left Paris without having taken any formal academic degree and moved to the Low Countries. He settled in Bruges, where he became the tutor to the children of Bernard Valldaura, a wealthy merchant of the flourishing Spanish community of that city. About this time, he was introduced to the court of Brussels, where he met Erasmus and, around 1517, was appointed as tutor to the Flemish nobleman William II of

Croy. Until Croy's sudden death in 1521, Vives lived in Louvain and taught at the Collegium Trilingue, a humanist foundation based on Erasmian educational principles. In this period, he wrote *Fabula de homine* (*A Fable about Man*, 1518), an early version of his views on the nature and purpose of mankind (Colish, 1962; De Bom, 2008); *De initiis, sectis et laudibus philosophiae* (*On the Origins, Schools and Merits of Philosophy*, 1518), a short essay on the history of philosophy; *In pseudodialecticis* (*Against the Pseudo-Dialecticians*, 1520), a lively and trenchant attack on scholastic logic; as well as a critical edition, with an extensive commentary, of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (*City of God*, 1522), which was commissioned by Erasmus.

From 1523 to 1528, Vives divided his time between England, which he visited on six occasions, and Bruges, where he married Margarita Valldaura (1505–1552) in 1524. In England, he attended the court of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon and was tutor to their daughter, Mary. He also held a lectureship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and associated with English humanists such as Thomas More and Thomas Linacre. During these years, he published *De institutione feminae Christianae* (*The Education of a Christian Woman*, 1524), in which he set out pedagogical principles for the instruction of women; the extremely popular *Introductio ad sapientiam* (*Introduction to Wisdom*, 1524), a short handbook of ethics, blending Stoicism and Christianity; and *De subventionem pauperum* (*On Assistance to the Poor*, 1526), a program for the organization of public relief, which he dedicated to the magistrates of Bruges. In 1528, he lost the favor of Henry VIII by siding with his fellow countrywoman Catherine of Aragon in the matter of the divorce. He was placed under house arrest for a time, before being allowed to return to Bruges.

The last 12 years of Vives' life were his most productive, and it was in this period that he published several of the works for which he is best known today. These include *De concordia et discordia in humano genere* (*On Concord and Discord in Humankind*, 1529), a piece of social criticism emphasizing the value of peace and the absurdity of war; *De disciplinis* (*On the*

Disciplines, 1531), an encyclopedic treatise providing an extensive critique of the foundations of contemporary education, as well as a program for its renewal; and *De anima et vita* (*On the Soul and Life*, 1538), a study of the soul and its interaction with the body, which also contains a penetrating analysis of the emotions. *De veritate fidei Christianae* (*On the Truth of the Christian Faith*), the most thorough discussion of his religious views, was published posthumously in 1543. He died in Bruges in 1540.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Vives' career as a leading northern European humanist starts with the publication in 1520 of *In pseudodialecticis*, a satirical diatribe in which he voices his opposition to scholastic logic on several counts (Fantazzi, 2008). He follows in the footsteps of earlier humanists such as Lorenzo Valla (1406–57) and Rudolph Agricola (1443–85), who set about to replace the scholastic curriculum, based on syllogistic and disputation, with a treatment of logic oriented toward the use of the topics, a technique of verbal association aiming at the invention and organization of material for arguments, and persuasion. Vives' severe censure of scholastic logic was derived from his own unhappy experience with the scholastic curriculum at Paris. Therefore, as he himself emphasized, no one could accuse him of "condemning it because he did not understand it" (*Opera omnia*, 1964, III, 38; all references below are to this edition). Erasmus wrote to More that no one was better suited for the battle against the dialecticians, in whose ranks he had served for many years.

The main targets of Vives' criticism are Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales*, a work dating from the thirteenth century but which still held an important place in the university curriculum, and the theory of the property of terms, a semantic theory dealing with properties of linguistic expressions such as signification, i.e., the meaning of a word regardless of context, and supposition, i.e., the meaning of a word within the context of its use in a proposition. He repudiates the use of technical jargon, accessible only to a narrow

group of professionals, and maintains that if scholastic logicians made an effort to speak plainly and according to common usage, many of their conundrums would disappear. Instead, they choose to fritter away their ingenuity on logically ambiguous propositions known as *sophismata*. Vives provides many examples of such propositions, which in his view make no sense whatever and are certainly of no use. Many of these, such as "Some animal is not man, therefore some man is not animal" (III, 54), were standard scholastic examples. Others, such as "Only any non-donkey *c* of any man except Socrates and another *c* belonging to this same man begins contingently to be black" (III, 40), are intended as a mockery of the futile quibbling he associated with scholastic method. Since dialectic, like rhetoric and grammar, deals with language, its rules should be adapted to the rules of ordinary language; but with what language, he asks, have these propositions to do? Moreover, dialectic should not be learned for its own sake, but as a support for the other arts; therefore, no more effort should be spent on it than is absolutely necessary. Vives' criticism is also informed by ethical concerns and the demand for a method that would be of use in everyday life rather than in academic disputations. According to him, those who spend too many years in these futile and inane studies, "when brought out from under their scholastic roofs into the gatherings of prudent men, look so dumbfounded that they would think they had been brought up in the woods. They seem so mystified by the strangeness and unfamiliarity of everything that you would think that they had been introduced into another world. So ignorant are they of life and common sense, so embarrassed, so tongue-tied, that if they were to do or say something, you would swear that they were not men at all. [...] The result is that in the conduct of business, fulfillment of duties, administration of public or private affairs, and in questions of personal feelings, they show as much ineptitude as a man of straw" (III, 60).

A more detailed criticism can be found in *De disciplinis* of 1531. This encyclopedic treatise is divided into three parts: *De causis corruptarum artium* (*On the Causes of the Corruption of the*

Arts), seven books devoted to a thoroughgoing critique of the foundations of contemporary education; *De tradendis disciplinis* (*On Handing Down the Disciplines*), five books in which Vives outlines his program for linguistic and educational reform; and five shorter treatises *De artibus* (*On the Arts*), dealing mainly with logic and metaphysics. These five treatises include *De prima philosophia* (*On First Philosophy*), a compendium of Aristotelian physics and metaphysics from a Christian point of view; *De censura veri* (*On the Assessment of Truth*), a discussion of the proposition and the forms of argumentation; *De explanatione cuiusque essentiae* (*On the Explanation of Each Essence*), which offers an account of the predicables and definition; *De instrumento probabilitatis* (*On the Instrument of Probability*), which contains a theory of knowledge, as well as a detailed account of dialectical invention; and *De disputatione* (*On Disputation*), in which he discusses nonformal proofs. In these treatises, Vives not only continues the trends in humanist dialectic initiated by Valla and Agricola but also displays a familiarity with philosophical technicalities that was unusual among humanists and that reveals the more traditionally Aristotelian aspects of his thought. His appraisal of the Aristotelian corpus is summarized in *Censura de Aristotelis operibus* (*Assessment of Aristotle's Works*, 1538). A posthumously published treatise entitled *Dialectices libri quatuor* (*Four Books of Dialectic*, 1550) appears to be a youthful work that Vives evidently did not consider suitable for publication.

Vives' criticism of scholastic logic hinges on a profound analysis of the arts of discourse. For him, the supremacy of the *sermo communis* (ordinary discourse) over the abstract language of metaphysics is indisputable. Philosophy ought not to invent the language and subject of its own specific investigation (VI, 140). In *De causis corruptarum artium*, he writes: "enraged against nature, about which they know nothing, the dialecticians have constructed another one for themselves – that is to say, the nature of formalities, individual natures (*ecceitates*), realities, relations, Platonic ideas and other monstrosities which cannot be understood even by those who have invented them" (VI, 190–1). Instead of the formal

language of the dialecticians, which he found completely unsuited to interpret reality, he proposes the less rigorous but more concrete universe of everyday communication, which answers all our practical needs and aims to provide a knowledge that is useful (Nauta, 2015).

Vives was pessimistic about the possibility of attaining knowledge as understood in Aristotelian terms, and his thought anticipates the moderate skepticism of early modern philosophers such as Francisco Sanches (1551–1623) and Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655). Vives belongs, like Francis Bacon (1561–1626), to the so-called maker's knowledge tradition, which regards knowledge as a kind of making or as a capacity to make. He often insists on the practical nature of knowledge; for instance, in *De causis corruptarum artium*, he maintains that peasants and artisans know nature far better than many philosophers (VI, 190). In *Satellitium animi* (*The Soul's Escort*, 1524), a collection of aphorisms dedicated to Princess Mary, he points out that "man knows as far as he can make" (IV, 63). A central tenet of the maker's knowledge tradition is that man cannot gain access to nature's intimate works, since these, as *opera divina* (divine works), are only known to God, their maker. In *De prima philosophia*, he describes nature as an automatic machine, like a clock, prepared and adapted by God. Moreover, God is always present in nature, holding together his construction with his continual assistance in the same way as the human soul maintains the harmony of the human body (M, III, 212).

According to Vives, things have two different layers: one external, consisting of the sensible accidents of the thing, and another, internal, and therefore hidden, which is the essence of the thing (III, 197). "The true and genuine essences of all things," he writes, "are not known by us in themselves. They hide concealed in the innermost part of each thing where our mind, enclosed by the bulk of the body and the darkness of life, cannot penetrate" (III, 406–7). Vives subscribes to the Aristotelian principle that all of our knowledge has its origin in perception. We cannot learn anything, he asserts, except through the senses (III, 193 and 378). But he also maintains that the human mind "must realize that, since it is locked

up in a dark prison and surrounded by obscurity, it is prevented from understanding many things and cannot clearly observe or know what it wants: neither the concealed essence of material things, nor the quality and character of immaterial things; nor can it, on account of the gloom of the body, use its acuity and swiftness" (III, 329). In other words, since the senses cannot grasp what is incorporeal or hidden, sense perception does not yield any knowledge of the essence of things but only of their accidents. Vives' view, however, is that sensory knowledge must nonetheless be transcended by means of reasoning. Yet, according to him, the best that human reason can accomplish in this process is to provide a judgment grounded in all the available evidence, thereby increasing the probability of the conclusion. In his view, our knowledge of the essence of a thing is only an approximate guess based on the sensible operations of the thing in question: "Like those who live in a small room, with only one little window to the outside, do not see except through that window, thus we see nothing except through our senses. Nevertheless, we peep into the outside and with our mind we infer the existence of something beyond our senses, but only as much as our senses permit us to do. Our mind rises upon the senses, but is based upon them. The senses point to the way, nor is there any other. The mind infers the existence of something, but it does not see it. Therefore, when we say that something is or is not, that it is this or the other way, we determine it from the judgment of our own soul, not from the things themselves, because they are not their own measure, but our mind is" (III, 193–4).

The most reliable guide for human inquiry, he argues, is mankind's natural propensity toward what is good and true. This light of our mind, as he also calls it, is always, directly or indirectly, inclined toward what is good and true and can be regarded as the beginning and origin of prudence and of all sciences and arts. This natural propensity can be perfected if it is subjected to teaching and exercise, just as the seeds of plants grow better if they are cultivated by the industrious hands of a farmer. He found philosophical grounds for this idea in Cicero's report (see, e.g., *De natura deorum* [*On the Nature of the Gods*],

I.43–5) of the Hellenistic theory of *anticipationes* (anticipations) and of *naturales informationes* (natural notions), which we have not learned from teachers or custom, but are instead derived and received from nature (III, 356–7). Nevertheless, human knowledge can be nothing other than a finite participation in creation. Because of the limitations that characterize man's fallen state, investigations into the realm of nature can only lead to conjectures and not to firm and indubitable knowledge, which we neither deserve nor need. In *De prima philosophia*, Vives writes: "human inquiry comes to conjectural conclusions, for we do not deserve certain knowledge (*scientia*), stained by sin as we are and hence burdened with the great weight of the body; nor do we need it, for we see that man is ordained lord and master of everything in the sublunary world" (III, 188). In his opinion, certainty is not a prerequisite for advances in science and philosophy, and as a criterion for scientific progress and for the rational conduct of life, he advocates a method consisting of sound judgment based on experience (Casini, 2009).

History, seen as the sum of all human experience, is therefore of great importance for all branches of learning. In *De tradendis disciplinis*, Vives maintains that "history appears to surpass all disciplines, since it either gives birth to or nourishes, develops and cultivates all arts" (VI, 291). In this sense, history is not primarily regarded as the memory of great deeds or the source of useful examples, but as a process of development. In principle, every new generation is better equipped than the preceding one, since it can derive advantage from all earlier experience: "It is therefore clear – he maintains – that if only we apply our minds sufficiently, we can formulate better opinions about matters of life and nature than could Aristotle, Plato, or any of the ancients" (VI, 6–7). According to Vives, the saying "we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants" is plainly false. We are not dwarfs, nor were they giants. Our stature is the same (VI, 39). The idea of progress plays an essential role in Vives' conception of intellectual history, and several of the cultural problems he deals with, such as the causes of the corruption of the arts, are approached from a historical perspective (Bejczy, 2003).

Vives' moral philosophy stems mainly from his Christian humanism and is aimed at the reform of both individuals and society. He often proclaims the superiority of Christian ethics over pagan wisdom (I, 23; VI, 209–10). In *De causis corruptarum artium*, he argues at length that Aristotle's ethics, on account of its worldly conception of happiness and virtue, is completely incompatible with Christianity: "we cannot serve both Christ and Aristotle, whose teaching are diametrically opposed to each other" (VI, 218). He has more sympathy for Platonism and Stoicism, which he believes are broadly in line with Christian morality. In *De initiis, sectis et laudibus philosophiae*, he even asserts: "I do not think, in fact, that there is any truer Christian than the Stoic sage" (III, 17).

In *Introductio ad sapientiam*, inspired by the teaching of the Stoics, he recommends self-knowledge as the first step toward virtue, which he regards as the culmination of human perfection. We should not, in his judgment, call anything our own except our soul, in which learning and virtue, or their opposites, are to be found. The body is "a bonds slave of the soul" (*mancipium animi*), while such things as riches, power, nobility, honor, dignity, and their contraries, are completely external to man (I, 2; VI, 401). Vice follows from a wrong judgment about the value of things: "Nothing – he writes – is more destructive in human life than a corrupt judgment which gives no object its proper value" (I, 1). To be wise, however, is not only to have true opinions about things but also to translate this knowledge into action by desiring honorable things and avoiding evil (I, 2). Wisdom, therefore, requires the subordination of the passions to the control of the intellect.

Vives holds that the best means to secure the reform of society is through the moral and practical training of the individual. Man, by his own nature, is a social being: "Experience proves every day that man was created by God for society, both in this and in the eternal life. For this reason God inspired in man an admirable disposition of benevolence and good will toward other men" (VI, 222–3). In the first book of *De subventionem pauperum*, which consists of a theoretical

discussion of the human condition, he stresses not only our need for and dependency on others but also our natural inclination to love and help one another. He regards the development of society as a distinctly human achievement, based on the ability to profit from experience and turn knowledge to useful ends. Social problems, such as poverty and war, are the result of emotional disorders.

During Vives' lifetime, Europe experienced dissension and war between princes and within the church, as well as the increased threat posed by Muslim expansion into Western Europe. He addressed the problems of political and religious disturbances in several works, which also dealt with the psychological origins of discord, the proper conduct of all the offices of the commonweal, and the theme of Christian harmony. His major political text on European war and peace is *De concordia et discordia in humano genere* (1529), where he sets out the case for the origins of discord in society and then aims to show how peace and concord can be fostered through knowledge of human nature, especially the emotions. According to him, the virtue of the people can only be maintained and promoted in peace. "In war, as in a sick body, no member exercises its office properly" (V, 180f.).

Vives deplored the Italian war between France and Spain (1521–6), which, he felt, completely ignored the rights of the suffering population, and accused Francis I and Charles V of irresponsibility and criminal ambition (VI, 480). In these circumstances, he often referred to the notion of natural law, which, as he explains in his preface to Cicero's *De legibus* (*On the Laws*), has the same validity everywhere because it was impressed on the heart of every human being before birth (V, 494).

Another area in which Vives enjoyed considerable success was psychology. His philosophical reflections on the human soul are mainly concentrated in *De anima et vita*, published in 1538, which provides the psychological underpinning for many of his educational ideas and can be characterized as a prolegomenon to moral philosophy. He attempts to reconcile the Aristotelian view of the soul as an organizing and animating principle with the Platonic conception of the soul

as an immaterial and immortal substance. He also pays close attention to physiology and, following the Galenic tradition, maintains that our mental capacities depend on the temperament of our body (Casini, 2010).

The structure of the treatise is indebted to the traditional approach of faculty psychology, in which the soul is said to be composed of a number of different faculties or powers, each directed toward a different object and responsible for a distinct operation. The first book covers the functions of the vegetative soul (nutrition, growth, and reproduction), the sensitive soul (the five external senses), and the cogitative soul (the internal senses, i.e., a variety of cognitive faculties, including imagination, fantasy, and the estimative power, which are located in the three ventricles of the brain and whose acts follow from the acts of the external senses). The second book deals with the functions of the rational soul and its three faculties (mind, will, and memory), as well as with topics stemming from Aristotle's *Parva naturalia*, such as sleep, dreams, and longevity. The third and final book explores the emotions, which Vives, rejecting the Stoic view, regards as natural responses to the way things appear to us and as essential constituents of human life (Noreña, 1989; Casini, 2005).

He defines the soul as "the principal agent inhabiting a body adapted to life (*agens praecipuum, habitans in corpore apto ad vitam*).” The soul is called an agent in the sense that it acts through instruments – e.g., heat, humors, and spirits – by means of its own power. That it is the principal agent means that, even though its instruments act on the body, they do not operate by means of their own power but only through the power that they receive from the soul (III, 335–6). The organs governing our rational functions consist of fine and bright spirits exhaled from the pericardial blood. Although the heart is the source and origin of all the rational soul's operations, the head is their workshop. In fact, the mind does not apprehend, nor is it affected, unless the spirits reach the brain (III, 365–6).

According to Vives, the rational soul reflects the image of the trinity and includes three main functions, faculties, or powers: mind or

understanding, will, and memory. He maintains that the human being was created for the eternal good and was therefore endowed with the faculty to seek the good so that it might desire to turn to it and unite with it. This faculty is the will (Casini, 2006). That which is not understood, however, cannot be desired. Therefore we have also the faculty of understanding. According to Vives, there are two different acts of the will: approval (*approbatio*) and disapproval (*reprobatio*), from which our external actions follow. Approval, which pertains to the good, produces the effort to obtain it, and disapproval, which pertains to evil, produces either the reaction to overcome it or the retreat and the flight in order to avoid it (III, 386–7). According to Vives, the will is the ruler and commander of all things, but since it has no light of its own, it is illuminated by the mind, which has been paired with it, not in order to rule and force it, but to advise and guide it. The will does not try to pursue or avoid anything that has not been pointed out beforehand by reason. Thus, according to Vives, an act of will can be described as “conceived by reason, but delivered by the will” (III, 382). Moreover, when we reason, we pass from thought to thought, and therefore a kind of container for the storage of all our thoughts is necessary, so that we might return to these thoughts and fetch them when needed. This function is called memory (III, 341).

The enormous importance Vives attaches to the exploration of the emotions is reflected in the fact that he describes the branch of philosophy that provides a remedy for the severe diseases of the soul not only as “the foundation of all morality, private as well as public” (III, 299–300) but also as “the supreme form of learning and knowledge” (I, 17). Emotions (*affectus sive affectiones*) are defined as “the acts of those faculties which nature gave to our souls for the pursuit of good and the avoidance of evil, by means of which we are led toward the good and we move away from or against evil.” He stresses that the terms “good” and “evil” in this definition mean not what is in reality good or evil, but rather what each person judges to be good or evil (III, 422). Therefore, the more pure and elevated the judgment the more it takes account of what is genuinely good and true,

admitting fewer and less intense emotions and becoming disturbed more rarely. Immoderate and confused movements, on the other hand, are the result of ignorance, thoughtlessness, and false judgments, since we judge the good or evil to be greater than it really is (III, 425).

Vives distinguishes between different kinds of emotions in accordance with their intensity. He compares the motions of the emotional faculty with those of the sea:

Just as in the motions of the sea one is a soft breeze, one stronger, and another vehement, stirring up in a terrible storm the whole sea from the depths, along with the sand and the fishes; so in the motions of the soul, some are light, so that you might almost call them beginnings of a rising motion, some more intense, and others shake up the whole soul and drive it away from the seat of reason and condition of judgement. These are real disturbances and unrestrained motions, since now the soul is hardly in control of itself, becoming instead subject to an alien power, blinded and unable to see anything. The former you might rightly call emotions, while the latter are the commotions and agitations that the Greeks call *pathê*, that is, passions, since the whole soul suffers, as if from a blow, and becomes agitated (III, 424).

Vives' distinction between different degrees of emotion is also discernible in his classification of emotions, which is expounded in accordance with his definition, and distinguishes between movements toward the good and movements away from, or against evil:

All the motions of the soul are about the good or the evil, as far as it is the opposite of the good. These motions are toward the good, away from evil or against evil. Good and evil can be present, future, past or possible. The absence of good is evil and the absence of evil is good. The good, as soon as it becomes known to the mind, pleases us at once. This feeling is first like the gentle breeze of a rising motion, which is called liking (*allubescencia*). If it is confirmed, it becomes love (*amor*). The motion pertaining to a present good that we have attained is joy (*laetitia*), the motion pertaining to a future good is desire (*cupiditas*), and falls within the boundaries of love. The first motion pertaining to evil is called vexation (*offensio*), which is the opposite of pleasure. If it is confirmed, it becomes hatred (*odium*). The motion pertaining to a present evil is grief (*mæror*), the motion pertaining to a future evil is fear (*metus*). The motions against a present evil are anger (*ira*), envy (*invidia*) and indignation (*indignatio*). The motions against a future evil are

confidence (*fiducia*) and audacity (*audacia*). Under the heading of love, we find favour (*favor*), reverence (*reverentia*) and compassion (*misericordia*); under joy, pleasure (*delectatio*); under desire, hope (*spes*); under grief, longing (*desiderium*). Pride (*superbia*) is a monster composed of many emotions: joy, desire and confidence (III, 426).

One of the most distinctive features of Vives' study of the human soul is the fundamental role that psychological inquiry came to play in his reform program. His use of psychological principles in his writings often surpasses that of previous authors in both scope and detail. He applies these principles, for instance, not only to individual conduct and education but also to professional practice, social reform, and practical affairs in general. According to Vives, psychology is relevant to all disciplines. "The study of man's soul," he writes in *De tradendis disciplinis*, "exercises a most helpful influence on all kinds of knowledge, because our knowledge is determined by the intelligence and comprehension of our minds, not by the things themselves" (VI, 375).

In *De disciplinis*, Vives did not include a section on theology, which he proposed to deal with at a later time. His work *De veritate fidei Christianae* was still in progress when he died. The treatise, which consists of five books, was published posthumously in 1543. In the first two books, he exposes his views on God, human nature, and Christ. The next two books are dialogues, in which a Christian engages a Jewish and a Muslim interlocutor. The fifth book concludes by recapitulating the superiority of Christianity over any other persuasion (Colish, 2009).

Impact and Legacy

Vives' works, which went through hundreds of editions and were translated into several vernacular languages, continued to be widely read and extremely influential during the century after their publication. His critical attitude toward the Aristotelian orthodoxy of his day left a mark on several authors. Mario Nizolio (1488–1567) cites Vives numerous times in *De veris principiis et vera ratione philosophandi contra pseudo-philosophos* (*On the True Principles and True*

Method of Philosophizing against the Pseudo-Philosophers, 1553), an attack on Aristotelian dialectic and metaphysics, which G. W. Leibniz (1646–1716) considered being worth editing more than a hundred years later. In *Quod nihil scitur* (*That Nothing is Known*, 1581), one of the best systematic expositions of philosophical skepticism produced during the sixteenth century, the Portuguese philosopher and medical writer Francisco Sanches displays a familiarity with *De disciplinis*, and there are indications that he might also have been acquainted with *In pseudodialecticis*. In *Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristoteleos* (*Paradoxical Exercises against the Aristotelians*, 1624), a skeptical attack on Aristotelianism, Pierre Gassendi says that reading Vives gave him courage and helped him to free himself from the dogmatism of Peripatetic philosophy.

Philip Melancthon (1497–1560) recommended *De anima et vita* in the prefatory letter to his *Commentarius de anima* (*Commentary on the Soul*, 1540). The Florentine humanist Benedetto Varchi (1503–1565) relied heavily on *De anima et vita*, especially in his treatment of jealousy. Vives' influence on the naturalistic pedagogy of the Spaniard Juan Huarte de San Juan (c.1529–1588), in his celebrated *El examen de ingenios para las ciencias* (*The Examination of Men's Wits*, 1575), is undeniable. In his discussion of the passions of the soul, the Jesuit Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) counted Vives among his authorities, pointing out that the study of emotions belongs to natural philosophy and medicine as well as to moral philosophy. Vives' treatise was also an important source of inspiration for Robert Burton (1577–1640), who, in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), repeatedly quotes from *De anima et vita*. The reference to Vives by René Descartes (1596–1650) in *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649) suggests that he had read the book.

Although Vives is rarely mentioned in the scholarly literature on the Scottish philosophy of "Common Sense," the impact of his thought on leading exponents of the school was significant. William Hamilton (1788–1856) praised Vives' insights on memory and the laws of association. In his "Contributions Towards a History of the Doctrine of Mental Suggestion or Association,"

he quotes extensive portions of Vives' account of memory and maintains that the observations of "the Spanish Aristotelian" comprise "nearly all of principal moment that has been said upon this subject, either before or since." Moreover, Vives' *Dialectices libri quatuor* (1550) was one of the primary sources of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) in his "A Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic" (1774).

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, Vives was mainly read and studied as a pedagogue and psychologist. In his most important philosophical work, the impressive *Geschichte des Materialismus*, which was printed in 1866 and remained a standard introduction to the history of philosophy well into the twentieth century, the German philosopher Friedrich Albert Lange (1828–1875), one of the originators of neo-Kantianism and a significant figure in the founding of the Marburg school, describes Vives as the most important reformer of philosophy of his time and a precursor of Francis Bacon and René Descartes. In a long article on Vives, published in the *Encyklopädie des gesamten Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesens* in 1873, Lange calls Vives "the father of the new empirical psychology." This positive assessment concerning Vives' originality within the field of psychology has thereafter often been restated by scholars of many different nationalities.

Other major theorists that showed interest in Vives' ideas are Ernest Renan (1823–1892), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), Pierre Duhem (1861–1916), Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945), and José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955). According to Ortega y Gasset, Vives' method, firmly based on experience, and his emphasis on the need to found a new culture grounded, not in barren speculation, but in the usefulness of knowledge, anticipate some important elements of the modern *Zeitgeist*.

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Vlachos, Gerasimos

Born: ci. 1607, Candia (actual Crete)

Died: 1685, Corfu

Dimitrios Paradoulakis
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Abstract

Cretan Greek Orthodox clergyman and intellectual with profound philological, theological, and philosophical training, who developed broad ecclesiastical and educational activity.

Biography

Born probably in 1607 in Venetian-ruled Candia, Gerasimos Vlachos derived from a noble and wealthy family (Spyridakis 1949, 70–84; Tatakis 1973, 3–27) About the first 35 years of his life, his studies, and his youth, there is no detailed information. He certainly acquired his basic education in his homeland, and there are hypotheses for possible further studies at the Università degli Artisti of Padua. By 1640 he had already been ordained a Greek Orthodox priest-monk (hieromonach) and had earned a reputation as a preacher and professor of sciences (philosophy and theology) in his hometown. With the onset of the fifth Ottoman-Venetian War of Candia (1645–1669), he developed patriotic activity on the side of the Venetians. He provided the latter with financial aid, and he warmly urged his compatriots to resist the invaders and participated in the armed defense of the besieged city (Olar 2016, 249–274). In his effort to maintain the unity and cooperation between the Greeks and the Venetians, he participated in a theological conflict instigated by the Jesuit missionaries of Santorini in 1653. In this context, he composed a pro-Orthodox brief treatise [*consulta*] entitled *Obfuscation of the False Believers* (Σκοτοδίνη τῶν μὴ ὀρθῶς φρονούντων) on the controversial subject of the essence of the Tabor light during the transfiguration of Christ. In late 1654 Vlachos was forced to abandon his homeland and seek refuge in Venice within the local Greek community. In 1656 he was appointed

teacher at the Greek School of the city, a post he occupied until 1662. One year after his appointment, he composed on behalf of the community and at the request of the Venetian Senate an encomiastic entreaty entitled *Triumph Against the Reign of the Turks* (Θρίαμβος κατά τῆς τῶν Τούρκων βασιλείας), addressed to the Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich (1629–1676). In his text, Vlachos urged the Tsar to form an alliance with the Republic of Venice in order to repel the Ottoman peril in Eastern Mediterranean (Lascarides 2002, 251–279, 303–324). The Cretan scholar also offered valuable services to the French patrologist François Combefis (1605–1679), to whom he sent in 1658 a manuscript copy of the *omnia opera* of Saint Maximus the Confessor in order to be published in Paris. As a teacher at the Greek School, Vlachos published two works in order to be used as textbooks in the Greek educational institutions of Venice and Padua. First published was his four-lingual (ancient Greek, Latin, Italian, and vernacular Greek) dictionary entitled *Thesaurus encyclopaedicae basis quadrilinguis* (Θησαυρός τῆς ἐγκυκλοπαιδικῆς βάσεως τετραγλωσσος) [Venice: Ex Typographia Ducali Pinelliana, 1659]; 2 years later he published a bilingual collection of philosophical, theological, and philological definitions entitled *Harmonia Definitiva Entium de Mente Graecorū Doctorum* (Ἀρμονία ὀριστική τῶν ὄντων κατά τοὺς ἐλλήνων σοφούς) [Venice: Typis Andree Giuliani, 1661]. Failing to be reelected as a teacher in the Greek School in 1662, he became an abbot in the Greek Orthodox monastery of Virgin Mary of Palaiopolis in Corfu, where he settled in 1664 for almost 17 years. Alongside his priestly duties, he developed intense preaching activity and devoted himself to the composition of mainly theological treatises. These were a textbook on homiletics entitled *Teaching About the Pure Way to Teach the Divine and Holy Gospel* (Διδασκαλία περὶ τοῦ ἀκραιφνοῦς τρόπου τοῦ διδάσκειν τὸ θεῖον καὶ ἱερὸν Εὐαγγέλιον) and two polemical treatises: the first one *Against the Jews* (Κατὰ Ἰουδαίων) and the second one against the Muslims entitled *On Muhammad's Religion and Against the Turks* (Περὶ τῆς τοῦ Μωάμεθ θρησκείας καὶ κατὰ Τούρκων) (Argyriou 2017). On September 3, 1679, the Greek Confraternity of Venice elected Vlachos in the office of the Bishop of Philadelphia,

with the latter undertaking his church duties in early 1681. As the religious shepherd of the Greek community, he continued to preach to his flock the church doctrines and Christian teachings in San Giorgio dei Greci and proceeded to numerous measures for the relief of the refugees from the fallen Kingdom of Candia. Being characterized by the modern scholarship as the most intellectual of the bishops of Philadelphia, he exercised his hieratic duties until his death from apoplexy on March 24, 1685.

Impact and Legacy

Gerasimos Vlachos' writings can be classified into three principal categories: (a) grammatological (handbooks of ancient Greek and Latin grammar, rhetoric, metrics, epistolography, and dictionaries); (b) theological (homiletics, scholastic theology, didactic sermons, and polemical treatises); and (c) philosophical (introductions, summaries, anthologies, and commentaries on the Aristotelian corpus, specifically in the fields of Logic, Physics, and Metaphysics) (Camariano-Cioran 1974, 16–28; Bobou-Stamati 1975, 375–393; Apostolopoulos 1981, 187–195; Benakis 1986, 141–167; Fonkič 1994, 591–597). All of his works fulfill the same requirement, as they are chiefly intended as *vade mecum*s for teaching purposes and school use. His writings were widely circulated within Greek circles of both the Venetian Stato da Mar and the Ottoman Empire. The driving force of Vlachos' philosophical and pedagogical projects is considered the Aristotelian spirit and teaching. As a genuine seventeenth-century Greek scholar, he acted within the late Paduan perception of Aristotle, introduced, and established in the Greek region by the Athenian philosopher Theophilus Corydaleus (1570–1645). Undoubtedly, Vlachos had studied Corydaleus' philosophical method and the content of his commentaries. As a result, his interpretation agreed in its main and external points with the typical Corydalean method. The Cretan thinker first quoted in detail the various, often contradicting opinions of the most eminent authorities of the Aristotelian tradition. Then he critically reconsidered the issues he examined and refuted the opinions opposing his

argumentation. He often concluded to express an authentic philosophical word by offering his own personal opinion on each subject. However, the Cretan cleric placed limits on his philosophical thought by refusing to utterly reject the authority of the medieval scholastic commentators of Aristotle. In his writings, he seemed unwilling to abandon his religious culture, his ecclesiastical education, and his piety. In contradiction to Corydaleus' drastic separation of philosophical reasoning from theological thought, Vlachos' opinion is that the perception and interpretation of Aristotelian philosophy do not occur through its complete detachment from the Greek – as well as the Latin – theological tradition but through a fruitful conciliation of the two. Refusing at the same time to follow the standard practice of medieval scholasticism and manipulate philosophy as something inferior to theology, he promoted both as equal agents of spirituality, inseparably united and interdependent, but at the same time each one preserving its entity unalterably.

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Void

- [Vacuum in Renaissance Science](#)

Voluptas

- [Pleasure in Renaissance Philosophy](#)

von Heidenheim, Johannes

- [Trithemius, Johannes](#)

Vossius, Gerardus Joannes

Born: Spring 1577, Heidelberg

Died: 17 March 1649, Amsterdam

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Abstract

Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577–1649), a professor at Leiden University and the *Athenaeum illustre* in Amsterdam, was a philosopher in a

limited sense only: he was a polymath who wrote about history, poetry, culture, theology, and philosophy in a very systematic, encyclopedic, and eclectic way. As such, he was not so much an original thinker as an author who made topics easily accessible for fellow scholars, students, and well-educated patri-cians and merchants. Vossius made an important contribution to philosophy, by publishing his *De theologia gentili sive Physiologia christiana* (1642), a much-acclaimed introduction to the natural knowledge of God.

Biography

In the early spring of 1577, Gerardus Joannes Vossius was born in Heidelberg as the son of a merchant-preacher. In 1583, the family settled in Dordrecht, where both his parents died. Vossius stayed in Dordrecht and attended the Latin school. At the age of 18, he was granted a scholarship that enabled him to study *artes* and theology at Leiden University (he matriculated on 21 September 1595 and obtained his MA on 13 March 1598). First, he served as a teacher and rector at his former school in Dordrecht, but in 1615, he was nominated regent of the Leiden “States College,” the academic institute where future ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church received their theological training. In 1619, the quarrels on predestination and grace that shook the foundations of the Dutch Republic came to an end. Vossius was dismissed on the grounds that he was a “modern” theologian who advocated the “Arminian,” i.e., Remonstrant theology. The scholar’s stance in this opaque controversy is not easy to fathom. Although he pictured himself in a letter to Franciscus Gomarus as a rather unflagging orthodox believer who managed to keep his distance from innovative Arminian theology, he actually endorsed a view on grace and free will that, to say the least, positioned him as an outsider in the Contra-Remonstrant camp. Just like his friend Hugo Grotius, Vossius refused to wholeheartedly endorse harsh Contra-Remonstrant views, which he saw as a one-sided interpretation of the authoritative Church Father Augustine, who in his anti-

Pelagian polemics had bequeathed a legacy to the Church which had caused much internal strife throughout the centuries. Nonetheless, in 1622, Vossius overcame all difficulties by gaining a professorship in eloquence at Leiden University. His task was to teach Latin language and literature, and world history. In 1631, he moved to the newly created *Athenaeum Illustre* in Amsterdam, after attempts to offer him a professorship in Cambridge had come to nothing. As the first rector of the *Athenaeum*, he taught history and political science. With his colleague Caspar Barlaeus (1584–1648), who took care of the courses in philosophy and rhetoric, he maintained a lifelong friendship. It was during the Amsterdam period that he wrote and published most of his works, which cover a broad spectrum of disparate disciplines: history, rhetoric, linguistics, and literary, cultural, religious, and philosophical subjects. In the international world of scholarship, he distinguished himself as a prolific letter writer. His vast correspondence encompasses 3,388 letters, 1,296 of them written by Vossius himself and 2,092 addressed to him. He married twice, in 1602 with Elisabeth van den Corput, daughter of a minister, and after her death with Elisabeth du Jon, daughter of Franciscus Junius (Sr.). Of his ten children, only Isaac Vossius (1618–1689) would survive him. His brother-in-law was the philologist, theologian, and writer of art Franciscus Junius Jr. (1591–1677); they worked together on books of art theory. On 17 March 1649, Vossius died of an erysipelas infection that had forced him to stay in bed for 5 days. Quite symbolically, another story claims that the scholar met his fate when he climbed an unstable ladder, reached a book on the upper shelves of his library, and had some hefty folio volumes come down on him.

Introduction

At first sight, it seems strange to rank Vossius among the philosophers of the seventeenth century, for he hardly wrote on philosophy or philosophical topics in the modern sense of the word, and his few works on the subject were certainly

not original. However, as an author of systematically ordered surveys and reference works, he elaborated on many subjects regarding poetry, culture, theology, and philosophy. He often wrote about the “character” and “arrangement” of the subjects he treated, terms that are used in the title of some of his works, for example, *De artis poeticae natura ac constitutione* (1647). As such, he was not so much an original thinker, let alone an innovator, but rather an industrious polymath, who systematically applied traditional distinctions, divisions, and arrangements to the subjects he discussed, in an attempt to create a didactically sound program of learning. He unfolded a topic by dividing it into subtopics, dealt with its history, listed its main representatives, and went into many aspects related to it. Thus he tried to make the topics accessible to scholars, teachers, and students in an “encyclopedic” way. “Encyclopedic” has to be understood in two senses here: knowledge was analyzed and presented in an array of items as a (modern) encyclopedia does, treating all relevant details related to a particular subject, and it was synthesized as a part of the “entire circle of learning and education” as in the original meaning of the Greek “ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία.” Thus Vossius’s books, which together form the ideal curriculum of universal humanist learning, amply contributed to the erudition and conversational skills of the Dutch patricians, notably the elite of officeholders and merchants in a metropolis like Amsterdam, where Vossius concluded his impressive career. Not long after that, at the end of the seventeenth century, the wish to encompass all human knowledge in a more or less coherent frame lost its appeal. Trying to assess Vossius’s work as a historiographer, Wickenden reached the verdict that he was “not a fount of inspiration, but a quarry of materials.”

Beyond any doubt, Vossius made an important, albeit indirect, contribution to philosophy, by publishing his *De theologia gentili sive Physiologia christiana* (1642). In this work, he not only traced the origins of pagan mythology and cults, including those of the Far East and the newly discovered Americas, but he also delivered a detailed description of the natural world, God’s creation, and thus composed an introduction to the natural

knowledge of God. In the mythographical part, Vossius tied pagan deities to Biblical figures and historical heroes and explained supernatural phenomena in a rational way. His approach was purely literary: as in other works, he relied on previous authoritative works.

Vossius wrote three books on philosophy proper: the theses he defended for his academic promotion in 1598 (*Universalis philosophiae ἀκρωτηριάσμος*), briefly treating grammar, rhetoric, poetics, logic, metaphysics, physics, astronomy, and ethics, the posthumously published *De philosophia et philosophorum sectis* (1657), which discusses the philosophic currents and schools in antiquity, giving their main characteristics, and *De logica* (1658).

In *De artium et scientiarum natura ac constitutione libri quinque* (first published in 1697 in the *Opera omnia*), Vossius draws up an overview of humanistic knowledge. In this work, he takes logic not as a part of philosophy, but as an essential instrument for a philosopher. He defines philosophy in the medieval tradition as “knowledge of all things through causes, as far as a man can understand them by the light of nature” (cf. the scholastic definition: “philosophy is the science of all things through the highest causes, obtained by natural reason”). The work contains a summary of Aristotle’s works about logic. Vossius’s practical attitude is demonstrated by his division of philosophy into “*philosophia naturalis*” (including “*prima philosophia*” and metaphysics), leading to “*sapientia*,” and “*philosophia activa*” (including ethics, politics, and eloquence) that should lead to “*prudentia*.”

Heritage, Innovative Aspects, and Legacy

That Vossius does not rank as an innovative philosopher also comes to the fore in many of his works on other subjects where he upheld the preponderance of Aristotelian thought in the academic curriculum. In this respect, however, he was not very rigorous. His main goal was to collect all human knowledge and divide it into clear-cut pieces. In his opinion, knowledge should

be assembled and conveyed in a coherent and clear way, by means of ramification and eclectic procedures, in accordance with his concept of philosophy as knowledge by understanding the causes of phenomena. As an omnivorous reader, Vossius also stressed the paramount importance of a critical approach to written sources. In his view of history, he was certainly original, stressing the use of historiography as an independent discipline that should also serve as the basis of other disciplines of knowledge and science. The historian should first of all aim at a thorough knowledge of those facts that were useful for a comfortable and happy life. Furthermore, historical knowledge helped to understand the true character of the outside world and was – as a consequence – an auxiliary tool for philosophical understanding. But historical facts must be collected not only for their practical relevance or the insight they provide into natural phenomena but also for their use in ethics: history served as an arsenal for ethical rules. Historical research, therefore, should be accompanied with philosophical reflection.

Vossius applied the same approach to poetics: a literary genre can only be understood by delving into its origin and by dissecting it into several parts and aspects. In this way, Vossius distinguished himself as a predecessor of German positivism that equally claimed that insight in a phenomenon's causes implied understanding it. For Vossius, the ethical aspect was highly important in all spheres of knowledge, including those of poetics, music, and painting. Works of literature and of art should inspire high moral standards, instead of corroding them. He developed his views on this particular topic in his rhetorical works, where he expressly stated that the virtuous impression one makes on one's audience is of paramount importance. Understandably enough, most of his work has to do with ethics as the preeminent branch of philosophy. Furthermore, it is important to note that in all of his works, Vossius comes to the fore as an eclecticist, assembling knowledge from everywhere into an encyclopedic whole. In chapter V "De graphice" of his *De quatuor artibus popularibus* (1650), for instance, he founds the theoretical section about

"the nature and constitution" of painting on ancient authorities such as Aristotle, Philostratus, Horace, Pliny, and Philo and on "topoi specific to the history of painting and art theory," as Colette Nativel has shown. His division of the popular arts is based on categories taken from Aristotle's *Politica*, whereas in *De philosophia*, many human activities, including painting, physics, and medicine, are explained as philosophical arts.

Vossius's significance for philosophy can be illustrated by his *De theologia gentili*, because it informed the later discussion on natural religion and Deism to a large extent. Vossius's legacy, however, is not easy to assess, because as a polymath, he stuffed his books with observations that others had already made before him; this encyclopedic way of collecting information served the goal of "Bildung" (education) and helped to understand the world. In this way, his oeuvre marks the end of Renaissance thought. Paul Sellin dubbed his introduction to the art of poetry, the *Poeticae institutiones* (1647), "the last of the Renaissance monsters." Vossius wholeheartedly endorsed the idea that it was within everybody's reach to "learn" to write poetry or to produce a painting. This rather formal, mechanical conception of art was at first acclaimed by contemporaries. Later on, it also exerted great influence, for instance, on French dramatic theory, but around 1800, it was superseded by Romantic ideas on "divine" inspiration. Hence the Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge found his poetics "thoroughly worthless." But it seems rather unfair to conclude in such a negative vein. In the international scholarly world of the Late Renaissance, Vossius continued to exert a thorough influence that stretched well into the eighteenth century. His later fame was greatly stimulated by the careful way in which the eminent printing firm Blaeu in Amsterdam published many of his works, especially the *Opera omnia*.

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Vryennios, Iosif

Born: 1350, c. Constantinople

Died: 1431 or 1432, c. Constantinople

Anastasios Mandrapilias

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Abstract

Iosif Vryennios was a Byzantine monk, scribe, and scholar, who played a distinctive role in Orthodox diplomacy, specifically regarding the union between the Eastern and Western Church during the fifteenth century in Crete, Cyprus, and Constantinople. He also taught in the so-called Constantinople's University of which he became director while holding the

position of the minister of the Imperial Court as well.

Alternate Names

Vryennios, Joseph

Biography

Iosif Vryennios was born in Constantinople approximately in 1350 and died around 1431/1432. The exact time of his birth and death are unknown though, as well as his birth name. He received a thorough education and was considered to be one of the best-educated people of his era. He became a monk and lived in the Stoudiou Monastery at first and in the Charsianitou Monastery later on, both in Constantinople. Iosif Vryennios moved to Crete for approximately 20 years. He was sent there by the Constantinopolitan Church authorities around 1380 because Crete was not allowed to have orthodox high priests due to being under the dominion of the Latins since 1204. Vryennios during his stay in Crete had been a spiritual guide for the Orthodox Cretans without creating any serious clashes. At the same time, however, Vryennios condemned many Cretans who led sinful lives. It was this group that later on accused him of being a subversive monk and succeeded in having him imprisoned and evicted from Crete.

Upon his return to Constantinople, he joined the Stoudiou Monastery and became an instructor at the University. After a while, he was sent to Cyprus, which was under the Latin conquest since 1192. Vryennios arrived as the vicar of Constantinople's throne in 1406, after the Cypriots' request to be reunited with the Constantinople Church, where he discovered that their request was only superficial and the true desire of the Cypriots was to remain subservient to the Latin Church. Despite his attempts to indoctrinate the Cypriots, he did not succeed

and left the island without succumbing to their proposals. Due to his contribution, the union between the two Churches was postponed and remained an open subject. Coming back to Constantinople, Vryennios joined the Charsianitou Monastery and dedicated his time to academic teaching, the indoctrination of the population, and the preparation of the next Ecumenical Council related to the union of the Churches. He became a minister in the Imperial Court, President of the University, and Head of the students' scholarships, and as such he reconnected with a great number of influential persons. He died around in 1431 or 1432 in Constantinople.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Vryennios played a distinctive role in the Church relations field, specifically on the matter of the union. He did not hope for the union to happen, and he fully supported the orthodox faith as the one and only true faith. However, he handled the matter of the union with solemnity, rejecting at the same time every political agenda interfering with its core basis. At the same time, he attempted to teach and guide people to lead a Christian life. His work consisted of many speeches, lectures, letters, and studies dedicated to highlighting the Holy Trinity and the emanation of the Holy Spirit directly from God, the significance of living a Christian life, and arguments against the two Churches' union.

Impact and Legacy

Vryennios' services to Church were of prime importance. He believed that a union between the Eastern and Western Churches would cause alienation of faith and rejection of the orthodox theology and that it was impossible to be accepted by the Orthodox. His work, although nonconfrontational and almost anonymous, had a huge impact, and in it, we can find concentrated

the patristic teachings. Though unsuccessfully, he fought to prevent the Papal proposal for the relevant Ecumenical Council to be convoked in Italy.

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Vryennios, Joseph

► [Vryennios, Iosif](#)

Warburg, Aby

Born: June 13, 1866: Hamburg

Died: October 26, 1929: Hamburg

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Abstract

Aby Warburg (1866–1929) dedicated his career to studying the *Nachleben der Antike* (afterlife of antiquity) in Renaissance art and thought. Inventor of iconology as an art-historical method, Warburg later explored other, more experimental methods of making visible what he called the “pathos-formulas” that fueled Renaissance culture. Warburg’s studies of astrological images in the Renaissance, together with his interest in images from Renaissance popular culture, are emblematic of his ambition to create a broad *Kulturwissenschaft* (cultural science). Warburg’s thought and methods have influenced thinkers in many disciplines, from art history to philosophy. The library he founded in Hamburg, now the Warburg Institute in London, is another crucial, vital aspect of his legacy.

Biography

“Ebreo di sangue, Amburghese di cuore, d’anima Fiorentino” (*Jew by blood, Hamburger by birth, and Florentine in spirit*) is how Aby M. Warburg described himself (Bing 1960). Though the eldest scion of a Hamburg banking family, Warburg chose the scholarly life instead. During his university career (1886–1891) at Bonn and then Strasbourg, he studied with the historian of religion, Hermann Usener, the art and economic historian Karl Lamprecht, and the art historians Carl Justi and Hubert Janitschek (Gombrich 1986; Lescourret 2014). An art history seminar in Florence with August Schmarsow in 1888 was also very influential. His dissertation on Botticelli’s *The Birth of Venus* and *Spring* was published in 1893 to great acclaim due mainly to its novel iconological method. In 1895–1896, Warburg traveled to the USA and the Hopi pueblos in the Southwest to observe ritual dances. Upon his return he married the artist Mary Hertz. They lived in Florence from 1898 to 1902, where Warburg did art-historical research, filled notebooks and notecards with his writings, but published very little. Back in Hamburg by 1902, for the next 16 years or so Warburg wrote articles and gave lectures on Renaissance art history, letters,

and, beginning around 1908, the history of Renaissance astrology (Warburg 2013; Lescourret 2014). He also curated his private library, which, with the help of Fritz Saxl (who came to Hamburg in 1913), became in 1921 the *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg* (Warburg Cultural Science Library), an indispensable “organon,” as Warburg’s friend Ernst Cassirer dubbed it (Cassirer 2000, xiii) (With the Nazis’ advent, the Library was moved in 1933 to London where it eventually became the world-renowned *Warburg Institute*, which continues to foster research and teaching on all aspects of Renaissance culture.) Deeply disturbed by WWI, Warburg suffered from manic depression, which led to a six-year breakdown, most of it spent in Ludwig Binnschwanger’s Kreuzlingen Sanatorium. Recovered and back in Hamburg by 1924, Warburg, with Saxl’s and Gertrud Bing’s assistance, continued to research and lecture on various aspects of the *Nachleben der Antike* (antiquity’s afterlife). He experimented also with new modes of presenting the fruits of his research, both to reach a wider audience and to obviate long-standing difficulties with academic writing. Warburg never took a permanent academic position; though he did give a few seminars at the University of Hamburg in 1925–1928. He died of a heart attack in October 1929, several months after returning from a nine-month sojourn in Italy made ostensibly to collect materials for his *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*. Two volumes, containing all his published writings and some of his lectures, appeared posthumously in 1932. Yet his *Nachlass*, which includes the incomplete *Atlas*, is also an essential part of his legacy, as the ongoing-publication of his *Gesammelte Schriften* (Collected Writings) confirms.

Heritage and Breaking with Tradition

In all its forms, Warburg’s work was dedicated to explicating the *Nachleben der Antike*, particularly as it informed Renaissance imagery. His dissertation broke with the aestheticising and formalist art history of his time to invent what he eventually termed “iconology,” which interprets and

historicizes the artwork by adducing contemporary textual sources from various disciplines. (In the 1920s, Erwin Panofsky adapted Warburg’s iconography/iconology to create a more systematic method of producing “synthetic intuition” about the artwork, a method that ultimately aimed for “synthesis.”). However, Warburg also aspired to a broader “Kulturwissenschaft” (*cultural science*) (Wind 1983; Villhauer 2002; Wedepohl 2005). Two essays (1902, 1907) centered on the late quattrocento Florentine patron and banker, Francesco Sassetti, and cast as supplementing Jacob Burckhardt’s cultural history, exemplify this aspiration, as do his studies, beginning around 1907, on the history of astrology. Drawing on an eclectic array of visual and verbal artefacts and borrowing methods and ideas from a wide-range of disciplines (the history of art, literature, science, philosophy, religion, myth, but also contemporary linguistics, anthropology, and psychology), Warburg scoured culture high and low for *pathos formulas*, symbolic expressions which diachronically and synchronically capture the “polarity” between immediate experience and formal abstraction. “[A]n indissoluble intertwining of an emotional charge and an iconographic formula” (Agamben 1999, 90), the *pathos-formula* (aka the *dynamogram*) was Warburg’s most innovative contribution to the theory of the symbol. He traced *pathos-formulas* expressing mourning, suffering, devotion, victory, etc. in Renaissance works, but also in classical, medieval, and contemporary ones. More particularly, Warburg highlighted the exceptional ability of works by Dürer, Mantegna, and Rembrandt to mediate “superlatives,” i.e., “expressive values” fueling a “language of gestures” which had become too exaggerated and so too subjective. He celebrated these artists for how they made style respond to ethical and psychological needs (Warburg 1999, 556–558). “Besonnenheit” (*sophrosyne* or prudent understanding), both in word and image, was the chief virtue of Warburg’s Renaissance (Warburg 1998, I.2.534). Or, as he wrote at the end of a 1927 lecture on Rembrandt: “Jede Zeit hat die Renaissance der Antike, die sie verdient” (*Every age has the Renaissance of antiquity that it merits*) (cited in Johnson 2012, 181).

Innovative and Original Aspects

In mapping the recurrence and variation of *pathos-formulas* in time, space, and across media, Warburg spurned disciplinary borders and adopted a discourse rich in metaphors and neologisms. A brilliant historicist, he assiduously investigated the contexts together with the efficient and material causes of artworks. For example, in an essay on Florentine *intermedi* in 1589 Warburg rejects Nietzsche's account, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, as "fundamentally wrong in relation to the historical process" (Warburg 1999, 544). Yet, especially in his last years, Warburg also mined Nietzsche's recursive philosophy of history. He gave a seminar on Burckhardt, with a final session on Nietzsche, at the University of Hamburg in 1927–1928. For Warburg, Burckhardt and Nietzsche were "catchers [*Auffänger*] of mnemonic waves" and "very sensitive seismographs" (cited in Pfothner 1985, 311). Nietzsche's Dionysian-Apollonian duality is subtly adopted to interpret not just Renaissance art history (Agamben 1999, 97), but also, as the draft Introduction to the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* urges (Warburg 2008a, 4), all Renaissance culture. More particularly, a Nietzschean *Pendelbewegung* (oscillation) informs his characterization of sixteenth-century Germany as "the age of Faust, in which the modern scientist – caught between magic practice and cosmic mathematics – was trying to insert the *conceptual space* [*Denkraum*] of rationality between himself and the object. Athens has constantly to be won back again from Alexandria" (Warburg 1999, 650).

In his later years, Warburg experimented with a *Bilderreihe*-technique to make palpable the "Wanderstrassen" or digressive, migratory routes taken over time by *pathos-formulas* and mythological and cosmological motifs (Warburg 2012). A kind of belated *ars combinatoria* or memory theater that relied on metonymy and metaphor to present a wide variety of exemplary images, it was designed to bring historical "expressive values" before the eyes of both specialists and the general public. Drawing from an inventory of several thousand images (mainly from the Renaissance, but also including classical, medieval, and

contemporary objects), Warburg would first select, arrange, and rearrange a handful of images (usually around 20–30) on a large black panel; then individual panels were set in sequences to indicate larger morphologies. In his best known, last, unfinished project, the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (1928–1929), Warburg mapped over the course of 63 panels two themes central to the Renaissance: "the attempt to absorb pre-stamped expressive values by means of the representation of life in motion" in visual art and the process of "Orientation" by which humanity came to understand and figure the cosmos (Warburg 2008a, 3–6). As the self-nominated "psycho-historian" who diagnoses "the West's schizophrenia" through its images (Warburg 2001, 429), Warburg believed that his method could reanimate cultural memories in ways critical not only to the progress of *Geistesgeschichte* but also for his own self-understanding. This conflation of the objective and subjective is epitomized by a passage from his last public lecture in 1929 at the Hertziana library in Rome. In describing how Ghirlandaio in his paintings appropriated the past, Warburg is undoubtedly describing himself as well: "It is a wish-image of one who is burdened by the tradition, who confronts the question whether he can adequately spiritualize and internalize [*einverseelen*], on the one hand, the past's legacy and, on the other, impressions from the living environment. How these wish images, arranged positively or negatively in relation to self-consciousness, selectively have an effect in the artist's attempt at composition, one can only hope to ascertain where both legacy and impressions allow themselves to be demonstrated phenomenologically in their constituent parts of an artist's work" (Warburg 1929, fol. 3).

To undertake this phenomenology, Warburg devised a *Kulturwissenschaft* that eclectically appropriated strands of Renaissance humanism. For instance, Poliziano's Ovidian poems, *Giostra* and *Orfeo*, are the central documents in his interpretation of Botticelli's paintings (Warburg 1999, 89–156), as they helped him formulate the cardinal concept of the "mobile accessory" (*bewegtes Beiwerk*), or how the quattrocento artist subtly

reanimated classical expressive values by depicting the organic motion of hair and clothes (Papapetros 2012). Alternatively, the value of the artistic, but also phenomenological detail, underscored by Warburg's famous motto, "Der liebe Gott steckt im Detail," may well lean on Leibniz's notion of the "petites perceptions" that bind together past, present, and future (Warburg 2015, 115; Heckscher 1974).

Warburg's early theoretical writings, especially the fragmentary *Symbolismus als Umfangsbestimmung* (1896–1901), are indebted to Neo-Kantian thought (Warburg 2015, 317). Yet the Neo-Kantian term *Umfangsbestimmung* (determination of scope), which appears throughout Warburg's writings, concerns not an apriori act of understanding but rather a form of symbolic thought involving physical perception and memory: "Through conscious, subjective incorporation distance [Entfernung] is really destroyed, though it is regained in the mind as consciousness; *consciousness of distance* [Entfernungsbewußtsein] deposits itself in the brain as memory" (Warburg 2015, 315). Instead of leading to concept-formation, *Umfangsbestimmung* is a metaphoric act that fosters an "Entfernungsbewußtsein," which rejects the earlier, magical "identification" of self and world. Warburg outlines three stages of distance-creating *Umfangsbestimmung*: "angleichende" (*adapting, approximating*), "ausgleichende" (*balancing, compensating*), and "vergleichende" (*comparing*). Each is an act of memory essential to culture in general and to Warburg's hermeneutics more particularly. In the first instance humanity produces "ornament" and "instrument"; in the second it cultivates "pictorial art"; and in the third, it discovers the linguistic means to evaluate and critique (Warburg 2015, 311–316). Indebted also to Usener's and Tito Vignoli's Viconian histories of myth, Friedrich Theodor Vischer's account of the symbol, Robert Vischer's empathy theory, and Richard Semon's account of the physiology of memory, Warburg's symbol theory was as capacious as it was syncretic (Pinotti 2001; Zumbusch 2004, 220–224, 232–235).

In contemplating the historical tensions between astrological and astronomical imagery and thought, Warburg anticipated recent

approaches in the history of science and science studies. Complicating the narrative of epistemological progress associated with the so-called Scientific Revolution are the essays, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia Ferrara" (1912) (Warburg 1999) and "Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther" (1920) (Warburg 1999), a lecture, "Die Einwirkung der Sphaera barbarica auf die kosmischen Orientierungsversuche der Abendlandes" (1925) (Warburg 2008b), and many plates of the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*. In these, enlisting Abu Ma'sûr, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Girolamo Cardano, Cornelius Agrippa, Philip Melancthon, Johannes Kepler, and others, Warburg contends that classical astronomical thought was transmitted and distorted by Alexandrian, Arabic, and medieval astrological thought, before it regained classical clarity and "Besonnenheit" in the late Renaissance when empirical-mathematical thought successfully mediated "untethered" mythological-magical thinking. Exemplifying this is how Kepler straddled astrological and astronomical worldviews (Warburg 2008b, 123–125); tellingly, Kepler's account of the ellipse in his second law of planetary motion had immense symbolic value for Warburg (Bredenkamp and Wedepohl 2015). Similarly, in 1928 and 1929 during his Italian sojourn, Warburg became convinced that Bruno's thought and imagery constituted a decisive moment in late Renaissance intellectual history. He met with Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce to discuss Bruno, before he seized upon the medieval notion of *synderesis*, or ethical intuition, to explain Bruno's ability to negotiate the polarities of astronomy and astrology, word, and image (Johnson 2012, 194–229). For his part, Cassirer was convinced that Warburg's interdisciplinary approach to a text like the *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* was far more promising than pursuing just the "philosophic history of the problem" (cited in Johnson 2012, 198).

Warburg's wide-ranging interest in anthropological subjects and methods was crystallized in his "Images from the Lands of the Pueblo Indians in North America," a lecture given while he was still in Kreuzlingen – as a test of sorts of his sanity

and his readiness to return to Hamburg. Here, after contemplating the Hopi snake-dance, Warburg turns to medieval Europe and a Spanish astrological calendar where the snake and the “infinity” it represents is transformed into a celestial constellation, into a “mathematical determination of scope.” “Cultural evolution toward the age of reason,” Warburg concludes, “occurs in the same way, as the tangible, coarse fullness of life fades into mathematical abstraction” (Warburg 2010, 554). Arguing by analogy and typology, in this manner Warburg traces the shift from religious ritual with masked dancers and “its monstrous concreteness” to an “invisible” and “systematic linguistic mythology” (Warburg 2010, 557, 565). That Renaissance European culture for Warburg struck the ideal balance between such monstrosity and abstraction remains perhaps his most provocative and fruitful idea.

Impact and Legacy

Given ideas like this one, together with his methodological innovations, and thanks to the ongoing republication of his work and the scholarly boom that has attended it, Warburg is now regarded as one of the twentieth century’s most influential intellectual and cultural historians. But this verdict was already anticipated by E. R. Curtius, who co-dedicated *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948) to Warburg – this despite misunderstanding or misrepresenting his friend’s *Kunstwissenschaft*. For his part, Cassirer, who arrived in Hamburg in 1919 to teach at the University (while Warburg was still in Kreuzlingen), mined the library as he turned away from Neo-Kantian philosophy toward a broader, more contingent understanding of thought and culture (Habermas 1997). The result was his three-volume *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923, 1925, and 1929), which endows the symbol and its mediating “functions” in language, myth, and mathematical science with all manner of phenomenological, cultural, and transcendental meaning. And though Cassirer, in pursuing his historical teleology, progressively strips the symbol of its affective force in ways that Warburg’s own

thought resisted (Didi-Huberman 2002, 440), he was happy to borrow from Warburg when it suited him. Dedicating *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (1926) to Warburg, he lauds how the Warburg Library has forcefully upheld the “principles” governing “research in intellectual and cultural history.” Further, “[i]n its organization and in its intellectual structure, the Library embodies the idea of the methodological unity of all fields and all currents of intellectual history” (Cassirer 2000, xiii). In the text proper, to explain how Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) balanced ideas about freedom and necessity, Cassirer cites Warburg’s notion of *inversion*, or how in the visual arts the medieval concept of fortune is transformed, and “imbued with a new spirit and new life.” In short, Warburg’s method is exemplary: “In the realm of thought. .. new solutions are not immediately achieved. Before that can happen, it is necessary to create, so to speak, a new *state of tension* in thought. There is no real break with the philosophical past; but a new *dynamic* of thought announces itself, a striving – to speak with Warburg – for a new ‘energetic state of equilibrium.’ Just as the visual arts seek plastic formulas of balance, so philosophy seeks intellectual formulas of balance between the ‘medieval faith in God and the self-confidence of Renaissance man’ (Cassirer 2000, 75–77). In a journal entry contemplating the *Atlas* and its aims, Warburg returned the favour: “Individual and cosmos: exactly my theme as well. Attempt at reformation of pagan ecstasy through metaphoric determination of scope [*Umfangsbestimmung*]” (Warburg 2001, 436). But while for Cassirer Renaissance philosophy was dominated by “the problem of self-consciousness” (Cassirer 2000, 123), for Warburg, Renaissance thought – a more porous, capacious category – was shaped most decisively by the symbolic struggle to establish contemplative “distance” from the world even while preserving the vital connections with the movements animating it.

Georges Didi-Huberman, Warburg’s most philosophically ambitious interpreter contends that with the *Bilderatlas* Warburg invented an ethical way of knowing the *Nachleben der Antike* in the Renaissance, a nonsystematic approach that

is at once “inexhaustible” and “unfathomable,” and thus at odds with the systematic efforts of Cassirer or, for that matter, Panofsky (Didi-Huberman 2010). Seizing upon Warburg’s motto *Per monstra ad sphaeram* (which remakes Kepler’s motto *Per aspera ad astra*) and his phrase *Dialektik des Monstrums*, both of which indicate how medieval and Renaissance astrological thought (to say nothing of Warburg’s own thinking) wrestled with the irrational and the unconscious, Didi-Huberman – drawing on Nietzsche, Deleuze, and Freud – resists any attempt to reduce Warburg’s thought to one or another form of critical *Nachleben* (2002, 2010); instead, for him Warburg offers what a 1929 notebook entry, referring to the *Atlas*, terms a “Kritik der reinen Unvernunft.”

Warburg’s more general influence on art history, cultural studies, and intellectual history has been remarkably widespread and continues to grow. Aside from the so-called Warburg Circle (Saxl, Panofsky, Bing, Edgar Wind, and Raymond Klibansky), Ernst Gombrich, despite great ambivalence, wrestled with Warburg long enough to write his “intellectual biography” (Gombrich 1986). As for philosophy, Giorgio Agamben has become arguably Warburg’s most influential reader. In grappling with the *Nachleben der Antike*, Warburg “aims to configure a problem that is both historical and ethical” (Agamben 1999, 92). Comparing Warburg’s “nameless science” to Leo Spitzer’s “historical semantics,” Agamben affirms that Warburg describes a virtuous hermeneutic circle or “a spiral that continually broadens its turns” (Agamben 1999, 92–96). Elsewhere, essaying the nature of the historical paradigm, Agamben considers Warburg’s “nymph,” as featured in plate 46 of the *Bilderatlas*, and argues that with the plate’s 27 images Warburg is neither searching for origins, nor undertaking iconology. Instead, in combination these images show that the nymph is “undecidable in regards to diachrony and synchrony, unicity and multiplicity. This means that the nymph is the paradigm of which individual nymphs are the exemplars. Or to be more precise, in accordance with the constitutive ambiguity of Plato’s dialectic, the nymph is the paradigm of the single images, and the single images are the paradigms of the nymph”

(Agamben 2009, 29). In this manner, Warburg produces a vital, paradigmatic form of analogical knowledge (Agamben 2009, 31). Further, Agamben suggests that Warburg’s paradigm is grounded in Renaissance philosophy. Noting how Warburg’s “Schifanoia” essay leans on the thirteenth-century, Latin-Arabic *Picatrix*, he argues that Renaissance hermeneutics resembles a magical act of sympathy. By analogy, he concludes, in Warburg’s twentieth-century *Bilderatlas*, individual images do not represent, “[o]n the contrary, they have value in themselves” (Agamben 2009, 55–56).

Cross-References

- ▶ Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius
- ▶ Astrology in the Renaissance
- ▶ Astronomy
- ▶ Bruno, Giordano
- ▶ Cassirer, Ernst
- ▶ Humanism
- ▶ Luther, Martin
- ▶ Melancholy in Renaissance Medicine
- ▶ Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco
- ▶ Poliziano, Angelo

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Warfare, Early Modern

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Watablus

- [Vatable, François](#)

Wateblé

- [Vatable, François](#)

Water Culture in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Water supply systems in the Renaissance both recovered classical models (often through the lens of Arabic and Byzantine engineering treatises) and applied this set of principles to

expanded uses which came to characterize the period: hydraulic gardens and games; fountains public and private, miniature and monumental; and interior plumbing systems which revolutionized standards of hygiene and created a clean break from medieval culture for privileged social classes. This entry reviews the transmission and reception of classically derived water supply systems from the Medieval Islamic East, their integration into larger-scale, inventive adaptations created in France and Italy, early fountains and their statuary which anticipated arrangements which became commonplace later in the Renaissance, and the adoption of a system to deliver hot and cold water on tap to the interiors of princely palaces and villas, facilitating new habits of bathing and cleanliness.

Synonyms

Fountains; Hydraulic engineering; Plumbing history; Water gardens

Impact and Legacy

Mirroring other aspects of engineering history, Western civilization's capacity to channel water for both civic and private contexts is generally perceived to have experienced an acceleration of development from the Medieval period onward with the influx of classically derived Arabic and Byzantine treatises. The surviving Sicilian water gardens from the early medieval period which changed hands between Muslim and Christian rulers, such as Al-Zisa of Palermo, illustrate the early counterparts with which Europeans came into contact around the Mediterranean. Hesdin in late thirteenth-century Picardy constitutes Europe's earliest and most extensive importation of water supply systems by a returning crusader for purposes of diversion and delight, anticipating the Renaissance hydraulic systems and devices which characterized princely sixteenth- and seventeenth-century gardens and villas. In Hesdin's works, we witness original features

developed alongside innovative reconceptions of the application of hydraulic engineering principles. Its engines were recognizably the hydraulic automata of Al-Jazari and other treatises which emerged from the Caliphates, reborn in shapes both familiar and foreign (elephants, goats, stags, apes, and singing birds). In the fifteenth century, with Hesdin's refurbishment under the Dukes of Burgundy, a variety of "trick" water jets were introduced, greatly expanding the system of conduits and controls necessary to supplying the dynamic force of water. Monumental, virtuosic expansions of these systems in Italy, at the Villa d'Este of Tivoli, of the Villa Medici at Pratolino, the Villa Lante of Bagnaia, and others, inherited, refined, and applied principles which produced ever-expanded, ever-elaborated networks of pipes, canals, ponds, fountains, and games.

Concurrently, medieval fountains expanded the reach of water supply systems, in some cases restoring a standard of public access to water enjoyed in Roman times (as with the great civic fountains and aqueduct refurbishments, e.g., Siena and Florence) and in others bringing water systems into the private garden and even to the courts and tables of princes, as with the smaller-scale gothic table fountains. A 1365 illustrated manuscript of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the earliest known of its kind executed during the author's lifetime, contains the depiction of a fountain, with no direct correlation in the text, composed of a hexagonal base, three water spouts in the shape of animal heads, and a nude female figure (presumably Venus) at its top. Whether or not this was an illustrator's interjection drawn from personal experience or rather a direct, allegorical invention by the author himself is a question left unresolved, but nevertheless we have here early indications for the trend of garden fountains which became increasingly ubiquitous.

As with parallel developments in the history of technology in the medieval and Renaissance, fountains and water systems increasingly became fixtures within newly (re)emerging concepts of hygiene and bathing built into Renaissance palaces and villas. The presence of a room or suite of rooms with running water, much less hot and cold

water on tap, for the princes who could afford to have them meant having the luxury of a break from the hygienic standards of their medieval predecessors. Federigo da Montefeltro consciously lived his daily life in emulation of ancient Roman exemplars, and his suite of rooms in the Palace of Urbino featured a *lararium*, a shrine to the household gods, spaces for both reading Greek literature, and physical exercise on the classical model. In fashion by the end of the fifteenth century and a standard fixture of Italian castles, Renaissance bathing spaces were, for elite patrons, transformed into ornate classical fantasies and follies, e.g., the tub room of Julius II decorated by Peruzzi. Cardinal Bibbiena's bath-room painted by Giovanni d'Udine evokes a studiolo with the combination of its small enclosed space, dense iconographical program, and lavish decoration. Hot and cold faucets came from the horns of a satyr's mask; nymphs and other nude female forms with classical identifications were other conventional methods of water delivery in chambers such as these and justifiably so. Water and Venus as life-givers and embodiments of fecundity were intimately entwined. When we encounter the Stufa, either by itself or in its own dedicated grotto at Pratolino, we witness the capacity to bathe in heated waters in imitation of classical, as opposed to medieval, rituals of hygiene.

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Water Gardens

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Weapon Salve in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The weapon salve claimed to be a cure for the healing of wounds at a distance. On the basis of sympathetic or magnetic powers, the salve supposedly could heal a wound in a clean and painless manner. Attributed to the Swiss physician Paracelsus, this cure was widely discussed in medical and theological circles throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Several disputes over the weapon salve in the early seventeenth century made the alleged cure widely known and widely discussed. The disputes did not revolve around the efficacy of the cure but rather concerned the question of whether the nature of the cure was natural or demonic. As such, these disputes had an impact on the ideas of natural philosophy of the time.

Synonyms

[Army unguent](#); [Magnetic cure](#); [Magnetic unguent](#); [Powder of sympathy](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The weapon salve, attributed to the Swiss physician Paracelsus since the sixteenth century, heals a wound at a distance (Libavius 1597). Instead of applying the salve to a wound directly, the salve was to be applied to the weapon that caused the wound (Camenietzki 2001). The wound then will be cured through the sympathetic or magnetic power of the salve (Clark 1997; Stolzenberg 1998). The recipe for the weapon salve differed throughout the seventeenth century, but almost always contained *usnea* (moss growing on or inside of a human skull) and *mumia* (remnants of human blood and flesh) (Waddell 2003; 2016).

Innovative and Original Aspects

The weapon salve was the subject of a heated controversy in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century (Müller-Jahncke 1993; Thorndike 1958). It was not the effect of the cure that was disputed, but rather the questions of why and how the cure worked. The Jesuit priest Jean Roberti and the Calvinist physician Rudolph Goclenius each wrote several treatises about the weapon salve between 1608 and 1621 (Pumfrey 1987). In the first publication *Tractatus Novus* (1608, with a 2nd edition in Goclenius 1613), Goclenius defended the weapon salve as a natural cure. Based on a Neoplatonic worldview in which sympathetic and antipathetic powers and the relationship between micro- and macrocosm were active, Goclenius explained how magnetic powers could travel by celestial spirit and cure the wound at a distance (see also Debus 1964; Gilbert 1600). For the Jesuit Roberti, this was an unacceptable heresy, and he judged the weapon salve to be demonic and used the subject to write an attack on Protestant heresies in general. The Catholic physician Jan Baptiste van Helmont was involved

at the very end of this discussion by publishing his *De magnetica vulnerum curatione* (1621) in which he opposed the natural philosophy as discussed by Goclenius, arguing that what Goclenius calls sympathy should be explained as magnetism. However, his attack on Roberti was much fiercer. He discussed how magnetism cannot be seen as diabolical but instead is a natural phenomenon. He extended his argument to include an explanation for the efficacy of relics along the same lines. This embroiled him in a lifelong struggle with the ecclesiastical authorities of the diocese of Brussels-Mechelen. He was only posthumously absolved in 1646, 2 years after his death (Pagel 1983).

Impact and Legacy

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the weapon salve remained a topic of discussion (Charleton 1650). A collection of all texts and treatises on the topic was published as *Theatrum sympatheticum* by Sylvester Rattray (1662). In England the weapon salve was discussed in a publication by Sir Kenelm Digby (1658), and only 3 years later, the Royal Society devoted its attention to the topic in one of its meetings (Hedrick 2008).

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- Fludd, Robert
- Gilbert, William
- Kircher, Athanasius
- Van Helmont, Jan Baptiste

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Weigel, Valentin

Born: 1533 Großenhain

Died: 1588 Zschopau

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Abstract

Valentin Weigel was a dissenting Lutheran pastor, whose work incorporates various medieval and Renaissance influences in an attempt to justify the freedom of conscience and thought of the layman.

Biography

Valentin Weigel was as limited in movement and outward activity as he was bold in dissent and speculative thought. After completing his university studies in theology in Leipzig and Wittenberg, he served as Lutheran town pastor in the city of Zschopau. While serving with the apparent sympathy of his congregation, he quietly composed treatises and sermons of dissenting theology. Published posthumously during the tension-filled decade preceding the 30 Years' War, these writings earned Weigel a long-standing infamy. His reputation is perhaps best regarded as a measure of the authoritarian petrification of Lutheran

culture in the wake of the mid-century internecine doctrinal disputes, the enforcement of the Lutheran Formula of Concord (1577), and the rising threat of religious war, all of which he vehemently opposed.

The term commonly applied to Weigel's orientation is Spiritualism. In contrast to orthodox Protestantism and Anabaptist dissent, the ideal type of the individualistic Spiritualist disdains the externalities of formal doctrine, sacrament, and ceremony in favor of the divine inner authority of the Holy Spirit or inner word. By its very nature, the Spiritualist type is elusive in comparison with the confession or sect. By the same token, the Spiritualist appears more modern and tolerant. Weigel's absorption of the influences of mysticism (Meister Eckhart, Tauler, and the *Theologia Germanica*), medieval philosophy (Hugo of St. Victor and probably Saint Augustine and Nicholas Cusanus), the nature philosophy of Paracelsus, and the currents of Protestant dissent (notably Sebastian Franck) contributed to an evolving synthesis aimed at arming the thinking lay person against clerical authoritarianism.

Weigel's earliest writings after leaving the university tended toward the eclectic; however, the power of his critical intellect soon began to create something new and whole which, on the one hand, recovered the deeper impulses toward lay opposition and intuition in his sources and, on the other, reformulated the received impulses in response to the post-Reformation era. Already in his *Gnothi seauton* of 1571, the reorientation reveals his well-grounded originality. Restoring a tendency of thought developed by Saint Augustine and Meister Eckhart, Weigel advises the reader to look within to achieve a selfless self-knowledge. Tantamount to a knowledge of God, Weigel's inner knowledge approaches union with God, though this union is rather a daring leap of logic than the outcome of ritual steps of purification. *Gnothi seauton* can be read as an epistemological treatise on sense perception and intuition. It is closer to Augustine and the scholastic Hugh of St. Victor than to Kant and the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, in any full survey of the history of epistemology, Weigel must stand among the adherents of the principle that knowledge is

generated in the knower and not derived from the thing known. In his case, this position in effect responds to the aporia of the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*: if all truth of salvation derives from the Holy Scripture, how is it possible that various advocates of the Reformation are embracing putatively Bible-based doctrines which are in violent opposition to one another? His response to the religious quandary, more than deliberate borrowing from Platonism itself, drove Weigel to look inward.

Soon after writing *Gnothi seauton*, Weigel was denounced by a fellow Lutheran pastor for questioning the authority of Luther. By carefully defending his views and stressing their general conformity to the Lutheran spirit, Weigel was able to save his position. We can assume that during the standard visitations carried out in every Lutheran territory, his parishioners were asked about the propriety of their pastor. His retention of his position suggests that either his opinions were well concealed or, perhaps more likely, the congregation was on his side. Modern research into the preserved notes from visitation inquiries reveals stubborn popular resistance to the supervisory demands for conformity. Indifferent to doctrinal fine points, parishioners were inclined to close ranks and denounce a pastor for authoritarian behavior or lack of sympathy for the laity regardless of doctrinal considerations. It therefore seems rather likely that Weigel was protected by his congregation. It is certain that he defended them by validating the conscience of the individual.

The mid-1570s saw Weigel's most refined and radical theoretical treatises: *On the Place of the World* (*Vom Ort der Welt*) in 1576 and *The Golden Grasp* (*Der güldene Griff*) in 1578. Both works typically incorporated cosmological, epistemological, exegetic, and devotional themes and ideas. In *On the Place of the World*, the key symbol is that of a cosmos suspended in the infinite void of God: there are no objective coordinates of up or down. Intriguingly, this theme is borne out by some rather concrete cosmological reflections revealing Weigel's interest in the scientific activity of his day. The thrust of his argument is intended to deprive outer reality of its

overbearing solidity, thereby shifting the locus of knowledge and meaning inward. In *The Golden Grasp*, the author again covers a range of themes, but his focal point is that all knowledge occurs in the knower and does not reside in the external object of knowledge. The Bible is an external object whose meaning is only disclosed within the divinely illuminated, therefore selfless and nonauthoritarian, human intellect. The title of the work may be an allusion to Matthias Flacius Illyricus' strict scripturalist anti-spiritualist exegetic work known as the *Aurea Clavis* or "golden key." The metaphor of the "key" was associated with the authority of the church and its power to bind and unbind or to lock and unlock the gate of heaven. Unlike the metaphorically external "key," our "grasp" of truth is intrinsic.

Another work deserves to be singled out for its clarity and originality: Weigel's *Dialogus de Christianismo* of 1584. It stands out both because of its staunch opposition to spiritual tyranny and religious war and on account of its unusual dialogue form between a universalized Preacher and a layman Auditor. The figure of Death (Christ) puts an end to the conversation, as both men pass through deathbed scenes declaring their convictions. Death finds in favor of the Auditor. The Preacher is consigned to a kind of spirit-world afterlife which is his just punishment, though hardly as grim as the orthodox visions of Hell. Here, too, most of Weigel's themes are recapitulated, but the *Dialogue on Christianity* has in addition a certain literary drama to it. It can stand alongside the *Everyman* dramas and *Faust* plays as one of the most powerful judgmental visions of the highly judgmental sixteenth century.

Though these writings are perhaps of greatest interest in philosophy, they are only a portion of his entire work. Weigel wrote cycles of sermons based on biblical texts. We do not know whether they were delivered to his congregation or whether the homiletic form was only a vehicle, rather like the essay form for others. Even the chapters of his more theoretical works consist of sermon-like tracts which sometimes conclude with a prayer or invocation. Weigel was of course

by training and vocation a preacher. His criticism of the pastorate was self-criticism, but this was by no means unusual. Of the countless anticlerical voices of his century, the majority were almost certainly clergymen, just as the ranks of academics today include many critics of the academy. It is also worth noting in consideration of his seemingly modern clarity, tolerance, and antiauthoritarianism that Weigel was very much a man of the sixteenth century who appears to have believed in unobserved supernatural spirits and elemental creatures in the tradition of Paracelsus. Upon the authority of the latter, he accepted an alchemical theory of nature which posited a triune process at the core of created being.

Among the tasks to be completed in Weigel studies, one of the foremost is the evaluation of the writings attributed to him or published under his name. They can tell us much about his impact and early reception. Also of interest is the resonance of his work with the thought of later figures such as Gottfried Arnold and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, as well as the possible impact of early Dutch and English translations of his writings. It seems likely that such research will arrive at credible conclusions only by exploring his impact as part of larger currents. Looking backward, more needs to be studied regarding his debt to Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor.

Primary literature: Beginning in the nineteenth century, Weigel's writings were recovered and studied in order to restore a voice of early modern dissent which, despite its posthumous delay, still speaks out boldly with surprising clarity and conviction. In the twentieth century, Siegfried Wollgast, a historian of early modern philosophy, strengthened the foundations of Weigel Studies by publishing in one volume the chief writings with a first-rate commentary. Winfried Zeller had already undertaken a complete edition. After Zeller's death, his survey of Weigelian materials undertaken in inauspicious times was deemed inadequate for completion of the project. Based on a more successful search for sources, Zeller's erstwhile assistant Horst Pfefferl began again and at last completed a comprehensive edition.

The most substantial writings were edited by Wollgast in Valentin Weigel, *Ausgewählte Werke (Gnothi seauton, Vom Ort der Welt, Der güldene Griff, Die Predigt vom armen Lazarus, Dialogus de Christianismo)* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1977). Available in English are *Sermon on the Good Seed and the Weeds, On the Place of the World*, and *The Golden Grasp* in Valentin Weigel, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. and intro. Andrew Weeks, pref. R. Emmet McLaughlin (New York, Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2003). Most important of all for the accuracy and scope of its sources and the breadth of its commentary and bibliography is Valentin Weigel, *Sämtliche Schriften* (Neue Edition) (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996f.).

Secondary literature: Historical and philosophical context can be found in Siegfried Wollgast, *Philosophie in Deutschland zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung, 1550–1650* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1988). An overview in English of his life, times, and writings is offered by Andrew Weeks, *Valentin Weigel (1533–1588): German Religious Dissenter, Speculative Theorist, and Advocate of Tolerance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).

White, Thomas

Born: 1592 or 1593, Essex

Died: 6 July 1676, London

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Abstract

Thomas White was an English priest. As leader of the Blackloist faction in English Catholicism, he aimed to make Catholicism more acceptable to Protestant authorities. In his natural philosophical works, White combined Aristotelian philosophy with the findings of the new science. In his political work, he argued that rulers owe their authority to the

people rather than to God and that states that fail to serve their subjects' best interest lose their legitimacy.

Biography

Thomas White was born in 1592 or 1593 in Essex. Receiving his education at the English Catholic colleges of St Omer, Valladolid, and Seville, White graduated B.D. in Leuven in 1614. Between 1618 and 1623, he taught philosophy and theology at the English college of Douai and between 1625 and 1629 acted as a representative of English Catholics in Rome. Having served as President of the English Catholic college in Lisbon between 1630 and 1633, White spent the early 1640s in Paris, where he associated himself with the so-called Mersenne circle, which acquainted him with such figures as Kenelm Digby, Gassendi, and Hobbes. By 1655, White had returned to England, where he was to become leader of the Blackloist faction of English Catholicism, which was so-called after one of his aliases, Blacklo. Blackloism comprised both a broadly Aristotelian philosophical program and the political ambition of securing toleration for English Catholics by renouncing all worldly power. In theology, White's Blackloism entailed a critique of papal infallibility and the traditional doctrine of purgatory. During the 1650s White continued to pursue his scientific interests, meeting and corresponding with such men as Ward, Wilkins, and Fermat. In 1655, White in his *Grounds of Obedience and Government* advised English Catholics to support the Cromwell regime. Just before the restoration of Charles II in 1660, White withdrew to Holland in 1659, returning to England in 1662. He died in London, on 6 July 1676.

Philosophy

In his early works on natural philosophy, White combined traditional teaching with the new science. Thus, in his 1642 *De Mundo*, White combined aspects of Galilean cosmology with

Aristotelian natural philosophy and the 1646 *Institutionum Peripateticorum* outlined a mechanistic account of bodies within a broadly Aristotelian framework. Bodies were compounds of matter and substantial form. But at the same time, they were constellations of minute corpuscles of the four elements, and their characteristics could be accounted for in terms of the constellation and motion of these corpuscles. White's synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and mechanism owed a lot to the work of his friend Kenelm Digby, who in his *Two Treatises* of 1644 had claimed that bodies and their operations result from the motion of elementary particles and that this had been the thrust of Aristotle's natural philosophy.

In his *Grounds of Obedience*, White argued that although "the Nature of Man is to be *free*," man chooses to submit to government seeing that this is in his own best interest (White 1655, 6). The subject of a state must see that "what was ordered by the Government, was his owne truest interest" and states that fail to make this clear will in the long run lose their legitimacy (White 1655, 3). Among the *yielding Grounds* most vocal critics was Roger Coke, who reproached Grotius, Hobbes, and White for holding that men are by nature free and that the state derives its authority from the people. Instead, Coke argued that "Men are by nature born into society and subordination" and that the power to rule was divinely instituted (Coke 1660, 53).

As a Catholic, White believed that the text and meaning of the Scripture were too uncertain to function as a rule of faith. Only the unbroken oral tradition of the church could provide doctrinal certainty. Protestants such as John Tillotson and John Wilkins would later argue that certainty beyond a reasonable doubt, or moral certainty, was enough in religious matters, but White would not lower his standards in this way. In his 1663 *Scire, sive Sceptices et Scepticorum a jure Disputationis Exclusio*, he attacked Joseph Glanvill, who had argued that absolute or infallible certainty is not humanly attainable and that though we must aim to rule out reasonable doubts, we will never succeed in the elimination of every possible doubt. According to White, to settle for

moral certainty was to give in to the sceptic, and in the second half of the seventeenth century, White's friend, the Blackloist John Sergeant, would repeat and further develop this line of argument.

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Wilkins, John

Born: 1614, Fawsleys

Died: 19 November 1672, London

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Abstract

One of the founding fathers of the Royal Society, Wilkins' early natural philosophical works contain defenses of Galilean and Copernican astronomy. Dissatisfied with the ambiguities of natural languages, Wilkins in his 1668 *Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* developed an artificial language. In his *Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, posthumously published in 1675, he argued that in religion and science, absolute certainty is beyond reach. Moral certainty or certainty beyond a reasonable doubt is all we have and need.

Biography

John Wilkins was born in Fawsley in Northamptonshire, in 1614. Having attended a private school in Oxford, he was admitted to New Inn Hall in 1627, but in October of that same year entered Magdalen Hall, which then had a reputation for Puritanism. Wilkins graduated B.A. in 1631 and M.A. in 1634 and tutored at Magdalen Hall until 1637, in which year he was appointed a vicar in his birthplace. He was ordained priest in 1638 and served some years as a private chaplain to, among others, George, eighth Lord Berkeley and Charles Louis, Prince Elector Palatine, the nephew of Charles I. In 1645, Wilkins was appointed preacher at London's Gray's Inn. During his years in London, he began to meet with a group of scientists often referred to as the Gresham College Group. This group broke up in 1648, the year in which Wilkins became Warden of Wadham College, Oxford. There, Wilkins gathered around him a group of scientists, including some of his former London acquaintances as well as men such as Robert Boyle and Christopher Wren. This Oxford Philosophical Club is often regarded as a forerunner of the Royal Society. In 1659, Wilkins was appointed Master of Cambridge's Trinity College by Cromwell, his brother-in-law, but lost this position 1 year later with the restoration of Charles II. After the restoration, Wilkins held various positions in the Church. His return as a preacher to Gray's Inn in 1660 brought him back to London, where he became a founding father of the Royal Society, serving as one of its secretaries in 1663 and supervising Thomas Sprat's 1667 *History of the Royal Society*. In 1668, Wilkins was appointed Bishop of Chester. Suffering from kidney stones, Wilkins died in London on 19 November 1672 (for a detailed account of Wilkins' life and career, see Shapiro 1969).

Philosophy

Wilkins' earliest writings on natural philosophy are his 1638 *Discovery of a New World* and the 1640 *Discourse Concerning a New World*. These

works do not contain new, but rather aim to popularize Galilean and Copernican astronomy. The latter work was written in response to Alexander Ross, a conservative Aristotelian who in his 1634 *Commentum de terrae motu* had rejected the motion of the earth. In 1648, Wilkins published a treatise on mechanics under the title *Mathematical Magic*.

Wilkins' philosophically most important works are the 1668 *Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* and his *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, which was posthumously published in 1675. In the first, Wilkins' project was to develop an artificial language that lacked the ambiguities and redundancies of natural languages. In the first half of the *Essay*, he set out to enumerate all things that his artificial language must be able to denote, offering among others an extensive classification of plants and animal species. The book's second half outlines a system of signs which Wilkins hoped would not only name these things but also reflect their nature and the relations between them. Wilkins' attempt at developing an artificial language may have been inspired by the work of the Scottish scholar George Dalgarno, who in his 1661 *Ars signorum* had set out to construct a universal language. The works of Wilkins and Dalgarno were read with interest by Leibniz, who yet remained critical of the way in which these men had executed their projects.

In the *Principles and Duties*, Wilkins' aim was to defend the principles of natural religion against skepticism and infidelity. To do this, he first distinguished between various degrees of certainty. Absolute certainty, he held, was not humanly attainable. The highest certainty humanly attainable was the certainty of sense perception or physical certainty. The next degree of certainty was the certainty of mathematical reasoning or mathematical certainty. Finally, the lowest degree was that of moral certainty. Moral certainty was certainty beyond a reasonable doubt, and examples of moral certainties are historical matters of fact and the existence of far-away countries.

Explaining that different degrees of certainty suffice in different sciences, Wilkins pointed out that in religious matters, we should not expect or

look for more than moral certainty. The principles of natural religion may not be beyond every possible doubt, but they are beyond a reasonable doubt. And in religion as well as in history and cartography, such certainty was certainty enough. Wilkins here argues as a constructive skeptic: granting the skeptic that absolute certainty cannot be had, he proceeds to claim that this fact is not much to be lamented. A similar strategy and emphasis on moral certainty can be found in the works of Joseph Glanvill and in natural scientists like Boyle, who saw that trial and experiment will never yield absolute certainty, but a certainty beyond reasonable doubt at best (on the concept of moral certainty, see Van Leeuwen 1970).

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Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Bondage of

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Abstract

The phrase “bondage of the will” was coined by Martin Luther in his debate with Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1525. Luther's elaboration of the phrase is theological rather than philosophical, elucidating his basic conviction of justification by faith. Later Lutheran teaching on the will

affirms its qualified freedom in human affairs and denies the will's ability to contribute to salvation. Anglican and Reformed confessional texts teach in a similar fashion. John Calvin takes over Luther's view of bondage and develops it into a systematic topic that is related to Calvin's overall view of divine election and predestination. The Canons of Dort affirm Calvin's doctrine in a strict manner. While Calvinism and Molinism evaluate human bondage differently, both early modern currents interact insofar as they develop complex philosophical theologies that affirm both divine foreknowledge and human responsibility.

Impact and Legacy

The phrase "bondage of the will" (*servum arbitrium*) became famous through Martin Luther's book *De servo arbitrio* (1525) in which Luther attacks Erasmus of Rotterdam's view of human free will. Latin Christianity and philosophy traditionally affirmed a notion of "free decision" (*liberum arbitrium*). Luther took his phrase from Augustine's *Contra Iulianum* (2, 8, 23). In Augustine's late anti-Pelagian writings, the continuing servitude to sin is emphasized. Whether Luther's phrase captures adequately Augustine's theology (Nisula 2012) has remained an issue that continues to create tensions between Protestants and Catholics (Schneider and Wenz 2000).

In early German treatises of the Reformation, the term *arbitrium* was often translated with *Willen* (the will). For this reason, the Latin words *arbitrium* and *voluntas* both tend to be translated with "will" in early modern vernacular texts. While Protestants remained sympathetic to the basic idea of reducing the freedom of the will in religious matters, the traditional doctrinal positions regarding *liberum arbitrium* were also affirmed in qualified ways.

The most influential early normative text of the Reformation, the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* of 1530, contains an article (§XVIII) "Concerning Free Will" (*Vom freien Willen, De libero arbitrio*). In this article, Lutherans teach "that the human will has some freedom for producing civil

righteousness and for choosing things subject to reason. However, it does not have the power to produce the righteousness of God or spiritual righteousness without the Holy Spirit" (*Augsburg Confession* 2000, 51). Such a formulation does not deviate much from the overall anti-Pelagian tradition of Latin Christianity. Recent study on the reception history of *De servo arbitrio* has shown that early Lutherans understood the bondage of the will in the manner of the *Augsburg Confession*. It was generally considered in Lutheranism that human beings have responsibility of their works and that the fall into sin does not deprive humans of all freedom of choice (Kolb 2005, 285).

Philosophically, Luther's criticism of Erasmus contains two different sets of arguments that are difficult to reconcile with one another. Luther's arguments from God's foreknowledge seem to lead to a strict and comprehensive determinism, as he argues that divine foreknowledge entails a strict predetermination of all later events (e.g., Luther WA 18, 615). Such arguments have, however, little to do with the psychological origins of human bondage. Luther's arguments regarding the origins of human action are more nuanced; they also leave room for indeterminism in ways that the arguments from foreknowledge seem to rule out.

Luther's psychology of action employs a theological dualism between spirit and sinful flesh as its starting point. Carnal people are ruled by sin; they therefore remain in complete bondage. In Christians, however, a continuous struggle between spirit and flesh takes place. As both of these theological principles are heteronomous, Christians are not self-ruling and self-determining persons. They are rather "beasts of burden" that are led by either God or sin (WA 18, 634). At the same time, however, Luther's philosophical psychology assumes that humans are different from beasts and inanimate things in at least three ways.

First, Luther affirms man's so-called natural aptitude, that is, the intentional capacity to receive gifts and even supernatural donations, such as the Holy Spirit. Second, a person has the freedom of choosing ordinary means, such as "the right to use, to do and to leave undone, according to his own choice." Third, with the help of God's grace,

humans can cooperate in all kinds of things (WA 18, 636–638 and 753–754). Philosophically speaking, these three affirmations do not deviate much from those adopted by Erasmus. Luther does not aim, however, at reaching a philosophical position, but he wants to underline the basic teaching concerning justification by faith and the absolute dependence of all humans on external theological powers. Luther's psychological arguments in *De servo arbitrio* lead more or less to the normative position adopted in the *Augsburg Confession*. The anthropological core of this position is the Christian's inner struggle between spirit and flesh.

As a rule, incipient Protestantism does not adopt the phrase "bondage of the will" in its normative texts. Its churches rather speak of *liberum arbitrium*/"free will" and qualify it accordingly. Thus, the *Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (1562) consider in §10 that not natural powers, but the grace of God makes humans capable of willing and cooperating with God in doing good works. The Puritan *Westminster Confession* (1647) affirms original natural freedom in its §9 "Of Free-Will," saying that "God hath indued [endowed] the Will of Man with that natural Liberty, that is neither forced, nor by any absolute Necessity of Nature determined to do Good or Evil." A sinner loses all ability to will the good, but when God works in the person, "he freeth him from his natural Bondage under Sin; and by his Grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good." Since the sinful nature does not vanish in the Christian, such action is not yet perfect; some evil tendency remains.

The above-mentioned texts aim at affirming a theological compatibility between human responsibility and human inability to do good. This compatibility is not argued philosophically; rather, the different arguments provide particular elucidations of the basic Reformation conviction that salvation is by faith only and by God's grace only. For this reason, the philosophical coherence of the diverse arguments is not always convincing.

Probably the first ambitious and philosophically subtle defense of simultaneous bondage

and responsibility is John Calvin's *Institutio* of 1559 (esp. II, 1–5). Calvin wants to defend Luther's reading of the strictly anti-Pelagian Augustine, showing that humans sin of necessity but without compulsion (II, 3, 5) and that the will must be made wholly dependent upon grace (II, 3, 14). While Calvin's final arguments for the bondage of the will are scriptural rather than philosophical (II, 5), he clearly aims at a coherent theocentric compatibilism in which everything serves the purposes of God. All actions are finally caused by God, but Calvin considers that actions can nevertheless be co-assigned to humans. For this reason, humans work willingly and are responsible beings, although they do not have any free choice of the will (II, 4, 2).

The doctrine of bondage has its most elaborated form and greatest philosophical and theological impact in strict Calvinism. The *Canons of Dort* of 1619 are the most important normative explication of this doctrine. These canons connect the doctrine of divine election and predestination with the bondage of the will. They refute the view that humans simply start to employ their own powers after receiving the grace of God. At the same time, they concede that when the renewed will is moved by God, it also moves itself (*a Deo acta, agit et ipsa*: 1619, 3–4, 12). In this manner, even the strictest form of Calvinism holds that renewed human beings are capable of voluntary action.

While the phrase "bondage of the will" is typically Protestant, the issues of human powerlessness, the omnipotence of God in salvation, and predestination were also discussed in early modern Catholicism. Catholic spiritual thinkers like Cornelius Jansen, Mme de Guyon, and Francois Fénelon are relevant in this respect. Philosophically, Calvin's attempt to combine predestination, bondage of the will, and human responsibility led Calvinist theology into the neighborhood of Molinism. Luis de Molina's attempt to show the compatibility of God's foreknowledge and human free will with the help of the concept of middle knowledge (*scientia media*) was discussed actively in early Calvinism (Muller 2006). While the issues of bondage and determinism became prominent in the early modern period, the phrase

servum arbitrium was never so frequently employed as its classical counterpart *liberum arbitrium*.

Remarkably, Molinist and Calvinist issues regarding the compatibility of determinism and freedom continue to be prominent in today's philosophy. Leading Christian philosophers such as Alvin Plantinga and Peter van Inwagen investigate compatibilist arguments and the Calvinist claim of final divine-human cooperation (Tooley 2012, ch. 9). In a somewhat paradoxical manner, the early antagonism between Luther and Erasmus has led to later convergences between Calvinists and Molinists.

Cross-References

► [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free](#)

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Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Free

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Abstract

Renaissance philosophy receives the patristic traditions of Augustine and Bernhard of Clairvaux as well as the scholastic teachings of Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus. In the fourteenth century, the moderate voluntarism of John Buridan and the consistent voluntarism of William Ockham become dominant new currents. Along with these, Thomas Aquinas's view of human action continues to exercise a great influence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Many Renaissance authors develop an interest to the issues of fate and fortune, teaching that human free will is an exception to the general rule of fate and providence. Fatalist and determinist views of John Wycliff and Lorenzo Valla are normally rejected. Erasmus of Rotterdam argues that free will can be defended on both moral and biblical grounds.

Martin Luther and John Calvin want to downplay the significance of free will in religious matters. After Philip Melancthon, early Lutheranism nevertheless affirms free will in nonreligious life. While Calvinism teaches predestination, it also wants to affirm human moral responsibility, sometimes approaching Neo-Stoicism. The Council of Trent affirms the existence of free will (*liberum arbitrium*). Luis de Molina's doctrine of "middle knowledge" (*scientia media*) aims at proving that God's foreknowledge does not rule out human free will. Francesco Suarez and René Descartes affirm similar positions. At the same time, early modern natural science underlines determinist causality. In Renaissance literature, authors like Marsilio Ficino and William Shakespeare, portray a many-sided will that establishes flexible individual identities.

Synonyms

Free choice; Free decision; *Liberum arbitrium*

Impact and Legacy

Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux continue to be philosophical and theological authorities through the Renaissance and Reformation period. In his *De libero arbitrio* (e.g., 1, 11, 21), Augustine teaches that human free decision or choice (*liberum arbitrium*) integrally belongs to the will (*voluntas*) so that the will is in some sense free (Augustine 1865). While decision and will are thus conceptually distinguished from one another, free decision is predominantly considered to be an act of the will in the Augustinian tradition. The vocabulary of free will is, however, complex for many reasons. Sometimes *voluntas* means for Augustine simply a power or desire. In his late anti-Pelagian writings, he restricts the freedom of the will because sinful concupiscence prevents people from doing good. Finally, in his *Retractationes* (1, 9, 3–6) Augustine considers that his *De libero arbitrio* remains compatible with his later anti-Pelagian stance.

Among the many different expressions that Augustine uses to depict the free decision of the will, “consent” (*consentire, consensio*) often means a free and responsible act. He states, for instance, that we do not sin in feeling the evil desire but in consenting to it (*ex prop. Rm 12, 8*). The dichotomy between inevitable desires and free consent is a recurring feature of later Augustinian traditions.

In his *De gratia et libero arbitrio* Bernard teaches that the human will inevitably contains an aspect of freedom: “Where the will is, there is freedom” (*ubi voluntas, ibi libertas*) (Bernard 1993, 1–4). This is so because the person who laments his lack of good will already experiences some freedom from necessity. While all rational creatures possess this kind of freedom, its higher degrees, freedom from sin and misery, need divine help in order to emerge. For such reasons, Paul’s lament in *Romans 7* does not falsify free will but

rather proves that the speaker is free from necessity. Divine help is, however, needed in order to accomplish the good.

The Aristotelian scholasticism of the thirteenth century introduces a theory of human action in which rational deliberation is made responsible for intentional action. Thomas Aquinas and many others adopt the so-called practical syllogism, a calculative model of human action. Within this framework, the place of free will becomes again an issue of debate. The so-called Parisian articles of 1277, promulgated by the Bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, aim at preserving Augustine and Bernard’s notion of free will within new Aristotelian paradigms of action. The articles condemn various views according to which reason determines the human will so that it cannot act contrary to reason or exercise a freedom of its own. Even sixteenth-century authors like John Mair still feel the need to state their conformity to the Parisian articles (Saarinen 2011, 27–35, 83–95).

Late-medieval Franciscan thought refined the idea of free will. In many ways, John Duns Scotus and William Ockham constructed that philosophical concept of free will which is familiar to us in modern discussions. Scholars have paid attention to the terminological point that until 1270 writers discussed *liberum arbitrium*. After that date, the expressions *voluntas libera* and *libertas voluntatis* also came into use. Franciscan authors often defended an idea of the will as the ruler of the soul; in this view, reason acts as the will’s adviser (Kent 1995, 98–99).

John Duns Scotus takes over from Anselm of Canterbury the distinction between two affections of the will, *affectio commodi* and *iustitiae*. While the first affection seeks one’s own advantage and happiness, the second seeks universal justice. Because the will is free and also possesses the affection that transcends the quest for one’s own happiness, free will can prefer justice over happiness. This idea gives voluntarism and free will a broader scope than in earlier Augustinian and Aristotelian traditions. For Scotus, the will no longer needs to serve the drive for self-realization and advantage, but it can freely will what is morally right (Kent 1995, 193–198).

William Ockham's voluntarism can be considered as the apex of late medieval ideas of free will. For Ockham, freedom basically means the possibility to choose between opposite alternatives. While volition requires some sort of cognition in order to be connected with objects, such cognition and belief are not the cause of volition. At most, cognition may guide or facilitate volition, but the willing agent freely performs the acts of free will. The possibility to opt for opposite choices means, among other things, that the free agent must always be able to act against what he takes to be the right or good (Panaccio 2012, 90–91). In this manner, the positions of Duns Scotus and Ockham enable the conceptual analysis of situations in which the will freely and consciously chooses against one's own interests and contrary to what is right.

The standard teaching on free will in the fourteenth century is contained in the third book of John Buridan's *Questions on Aristotle's Ethics* (1968). This work continued to be printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and its influence is visible in many early modern sources. Most importantly, it represents a sort of *via media* that connects the Aristotelian theory of Thomas Aquinas with emerging late medieval voluntarism. Buridan also pays detailed attention to the Parisian articles and the older tradition of Augustine and Bernard.

Buridan starts his discussion by stating that we need to believe in a so-called freedom of opposition (*libertas oppositionis*) as a doctrine of faith and moral responsibility. While this statement resembles the position of Ockham, it may, historically speaking, simply relate to the necessity, for a philosophy teacher, to express his agreement with the Parisian articles. For Buridan, the freedom of opposition means that "it is possible for the will, everything else being equally disposed, to choose sometimes one of the opposites and sometimes the other." Buridan interprets this view to mean that in the state of not-willing (*non velle*) there can be at least two mutually exclusive options open to the agent (Buridan 1968, 36rb–37va).

This option of not-willing is affirmed by the Parisian articles as a sufficient condition for the will's freedom. Buridan (1968, 36vb) quotes the

Parisian view stating that it must be possible for the will not to will when other natural conditions for its movement are present. Such freedom of *non velle* also plays a role in John Duns Scotus (Kent 1995, 193). In order to explain what this freedom means, Buridan (1968, 41va) asks "whether the act of volition or nolition is preceded in the will by some other act or any other mediating disposition through which the act of volition comes into being in the same will."

Buridan undertakes an important distinction between the first and the second acts of the will. In its first act, the will judges something under the aspect of goodness or badness and develops a liking or disliking of its object. This happens inevitably and does not necessarily lead to an action. In its second act, the will accepts or refuses the object thus presented. This second act prompts the action. The agent is morally responsible for this second act. In order for the second act to emerge, the first act must have occurred. At the same time, the will can postpone its second act to inquire further about the alternatives. This is the freedom of not-willing (Buridan 1968, 42rb–44vb).

The will can choose something that is only judged to be good "in some sense." In other words, the will is free to choose in situations of uncertainty and ambiguity. The option of postponement is not unlimited: at some point, it would obviously be irrational to delay decision-making (1968, 44vb). This means that Buridan can have a *via media* position between intellectualist Thomism and voluntarist Franciscan thinking. On the one hand, the will always follows the rational judgment. On the other, however, the will is free to postpone its action to an extent; the will is also free to choose one of several options when each one of them appears under some aspect of goodness but none of them is compelling. For instance, weakness of will can occur in situations of uncertainty, but not when the case is clear (for this, see the entry ► "Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Weakness of"). The freedom of opposition pertains to situations in which the agent can at least for a while stick to the option of not-willing.

Buridan's distinction between first and second acts of the will resembles the Augustinian

distinction between inevitable desires and free consent. At the same time, Buridan develops the distinction towards a Scotist view: both acts are acts of the will, and the second act has the capacity to consider universal reasons that reach beyond one's own advantage. In addition to these features, Buridan's view has a certain affinity to Thomism: the will acts rationally, the decision-making leading to action is performed through practical syllogism, and some ignorance inevitably belongs to wrong choices – though they cannot be excused on such grounds.

Martin Luther's teacher Bartholomaeus Arnoldi de Usingen adopts Buridan's view of human action and considers that the "freedom of opposition" is the Catholic way to speak of free will or decision: "According to both moral philosophy and the Catholic way of speaking the sinful act proceeds from free decision insofar as the agent can consider other alternatives. And according to Augustine, sin is thus free; and if it does not come about freely, it cannot be sin" (Usingen 1499, 63v). One fascinating aspect of this view is its similarity to economic models of decision-making: after the introduction of a variety of available options in the first act of the will, reason can still calculate their different relative benefits in its intermediate state of *non velle*. When the agent freely chooses the best option in the second act of the will, this rational choice normally represents the optimal amount of what is considered advantageous and/or right (Saarinen 2013).

Recent research on Renaissance philosophy has shown that the new commentaries on Aristotle often continue to promote late medieval scholastic views, though in more elegant Latin. From 1300 to 1650, the views of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas on human action continue to be widespread and are often regarded as the standard position in academic teaching (Lines 2002; Lines and Ebbersmeyer 2013). This basic fact should be remembered as the background from which new and innovative discussions emerge.

Some Renaissance authors develop an interest towards the issues of fate and necessity. In his *De remediis*, Petrarch takes a critical stance towards

wishful thinking in general and astrology in particular. He criticizes fortune-tellers (Petrarch 1991, ch. 112) and then remarks to those who hope for better times that "happiness or sadness depends not on the times but on you yourself. As soon as you realize this you will know how to hope for happy things, and how to cope with sad ones" (1991, ch. 115). In Petrarch's *Secretum* (1989), this voluntaristic stance is investigated more closely.

In his *On Fate and Fortune*, Coluccio Salutati defends a view according to which natural things happen necessarily (Salutati 1985). Will, however, is an exception to the general course of nature:

Will alone, the potential of rational creatures, is bestowed with freedom of decision, so that it were not at all if it were deprived of freedom (which is impossible), freedom, that is, in choosing to will or nill, which appertains to us so naturally that it were not wrong to state that, if God would take it away, it would not be will anymore. (modified from Blum 2010, 57)

In spite of this voluntarism, Salutati teaches that free will is embedded in God's providence. Fate is the totality of cooperation taking place in the acts of God and humans (Blum 2010, 59–60).

In his treatise *De libero arbitrio*, Lorenzo Valla teaches, on the one hand, that God's foreknowledge does not entail necessity (Valla 1934). On the other hand, the work also contains an anti-intellectualist defense of a religious view according to which God hardens some hearts but not others. Salutati and Valla do not aim at reaching a philosophical solution to the problems of free will; they rather elucidate the issues from various angles (cf. Copenhagen and Schmitt 1992, 212–213; Blum 2010, 55–94). Some late scholastic thinkers, for instance, John Wycliffe, present a stronger doctrine of predestination than Salutati and Valla. The later reputation of Wycliffe and Valla shows that their views of fate and predestination were generally rejected in the Catholic Church. In this sense, free will was considered to be the standard Catholic doctrine.

In later Renaissance philosophy, the compatibility of fate and free will could nevertheless also be defended. In his *De fato, de libero arbitrio et de*

predestinatione, Pietro Pomponazzi (1957) considers that contingent natural events in reality follow the laws of nature, being deterministic in this sense. In an analogical fashion, the human will does not initiate its own freedom but is rather determined by the intellect as Aristotle has shown. Like Buridan, Pomponazzi thinks that the freedom of the will is not found in any positive exercise of choice but rather in the will's capacity of not-willing. While Pomponazzi leans towards a Stoic conception of fate, he considers that the free will can be made compatible with this conception when it is understood as the power to suspend its own act (Poppi 1988, 659). Deterministic features of human action were also sometimes supported with the authority of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas on the grounds that they do not ascribe the capacity of self-determination to the will.

Erasmus of Rotterdam (1969) undertakes an extensive defense of free will in his treatise *De libero arbitrio*. Erasmus was writing against the early Lutheran Reformation, which was critical of the scholastic view of free will (for this, see the entry ► “Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Bondage of”). Like his Renaissance predecessors, Erasmus does not want to present an overall philosophical solution, but elucidates the issue from various angles. He first says that the problem of free will is a profoundly mysterious labyrinth (1969, Ia1). The ancient authors give a variety of different opinions in this matter. While Erasmus is somewhat uncertain of his own position, he believes that human free decision is effective in some sense (Ia5).

Erasmus considers that most Church Fathers have affirmed free decision. Among those who have rejected it, he counts Mani, Wycliffe, Valla and Luther (Ib2). Erasmus considers that Pelagius gave too much credit to free decision and Scotus also ascribed a high value to it; compared to these, his own position emphasizes grace but nevertheless leaves some room for free decision (IV16). Erasmus grants that we do not know the depths of God's providential rule and thus cannot falsify the doctrine of predestination. In practice, however, it is prudent to teach free decision, since this doctrine motivates sinful people to improve their lives (Ia8-10). The philosophical grounds of free will

are thus moral rather than metaphysical or theological.

Erasmus devotes many pages of his treatise to discussing biblical verses that speak in favor of free will. Such verses include, for instance, Matthew 19:17, 19:21, and 23:37. In these verses, Jesus makes an appeal to people's will. If humans have no free will, such an appeal makes no sense (IIb1). Erasmus underlines his anti-Pelagian stance by concluding that God's grace gives human will its effective power. If someone opposes him by saying that such a weak concept of free will is useless, Erasmus responds that the ideas of humanity and free will distinguish the divine-human cooperation from the mere production of artifacts (IV16). Erasmus' concept of free will thus remains modest and moderate when compared to the voluntarism of Duns Scotus and Ockham.

Luther's closest colleague Philip Melanchthon sides with his mentor in the controversy with Erasmus. At the same time, the Melanchthonian wing of the Reformation accepts many Erasmian teachings. The basic interest of the early Lutherans is concerned with the “noneconomic” mode of understanding human action in salvation: our works do not merit anything, and we are justified by grace alone. A free will that aims for an “economic” gain is thus rejected; however, it is obvious that theories of human person and action also have other aims. Melanchthon is clearly aware of them and develops a differentiated view of free will (Saarinen 2011, 2013).

In his last doctrinal treatise, *Responses to the Articles of the Bavarian Inquisition*, Melanchthon (1955) lays out this differentiated view. He repudiates the Stoic and Manichean views of fate and predestination. At the same time, he rejects the Pelagian view of free will. Melanchthon affirms a nontheological free will: “In human beings who are not reborn there is some freedom of the will which is able to perform external works. Achilles was able to control his hands, so that they would strike Agamemnon, and he could compel them not to strike him” (quoted from Kolb 2005, 98). Philosophically, Melanchthon opts for a kind of fideistic compatibilism: “There is contingency, and the source of contingency in our actions is the

freedom of the will. . . . Both propositions must be believed: there is divine determination, and there is contingency, and not every point of contradiction between the two can be explained” (quoted from Kolb 2005, 99).

For the history of philosophy, it is important to see that Erasmus and Melancthon were tremendously influential as authors of basic university textbooks in the sixteenth century. While they remained on opposite sides of Protestantism as it was then emerging, they both represent a *via media* on the issue of free will, claiming that it is free will that allows humans to be considered something more than mere artifacts. In addition, free will makes it possible to reject fatalism and teach human responsibility. At the same time, these leading humanists do not teach voluntarism or human decision-making in terms of economic rationality. Rather, they grant that we do not really know the basic motives of human action and that free will is, therefore, something that needs to be believed rather than demonstrated.

The official Roman Catholic teaching on free will, as defined by the Council of Trent, is fairly similar to the view of Erasmus. As the early modern Catholic authors needed, at least in theory, to formulate views that were compatible with the Church, it is instructive to quote the essence of this official teaching:

If anyone says that a person's free will (*liberum arbitrium*) when moved and roused by God, gives no co-operation by responding to God's summons and invitation to dispose and prepare itself to obtain the grace of justification; and that it cannot, if it so wishes, dissent but, like something inanimate, can do nothing at all and remains merely passive; let him be anathema.

If anyone says that, after the sin of Adam, human free will was lost and blotted out, or that its existence is purely nominal, a name without substance, indeed a fiction introduced into the church by Satan: let him be anathema. (Council of Trent 1990, canons 4–5 concerning justification)

Philosophically, these statements commit a Catholic author to affirm free will. Remarkably, the normative Protestant doctrine does not deviate much from this, at least when considered in terms of philosophy. Lutherans normally affirmed a concept of “civil righteousness,” according to which human beings can operate with free will in their

nonreligious behavior. Calvinists, on the other hand, tended to evolve towards philosophical compatibilism: while they affirm predestination and human bondage under sin, they also teach that actions can be co-assigned to humans. Therefore, when the will is moved by God, it also moves itself (see the entry ► “Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Bondage of”).

Perhaps the most sophisticated innovation of the sixteenth century regarding free will is formulated by Luis de Molina in his *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis*. In this work Molina (1876), a Catholic author, introduces his doctrine of “middle knowledge” (*scientia media*), that is, God's knowledge of future conditionals of the type “If A were in situation S, A would freely do X.” This knowledge is “middle” in the sense of existing between necessary truths and all particular possibilities. To grant A free will, God does not predetermine all particular possibilities through divine foreknowledge. However, through middle knowledge, God knows all conditionals that relate to possible situations.

To put the doctrine as simply as possible: because of this knowledge of future conditionals, God knows in advance what everybody would do, but humans nevertheless choose freely to do it. Molina argues that such middle knowledge does not extinguish free will. On the one hand, God's foreknowledge is not directly applied to particular possibilities and thus does not predetermine them. On the other, God knows everything in advance, since the conditional sentences of middle knowledge allow God to know what A would freely do in every situation that A encounters.

Molina's position was extensively discussed in both Catholic and Protestant circles of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The primary relevance of these discussions does not concern free will, but themes like theodicy and the semantics of possible worlds. While Calvinists rejected Molinism for the most part, they also became aware of the need for compatibilist solutions that preserve both God's foreknowledge and human responsibility. Molina's views found support in Arminian and Socinian wings of Protestantism, that is, in movements that wanted to

preserve human free will and therefore distinguished themselves from orthodox Calvinism (Muller 2003, 411–432).

Among Catholics, Francesco Suarez adopts a modified version of Molina's middle knowledge. Suarez considers that the freedom of the will is not an aspect of the will's rationality; rather, the will moves itself and can choose among a variety of different options in this fashion (Ramelow 2004, 776). René Descartes defends free will and compatibilism in ways that bear a certain resemblance to Molina and Suarez. Descartes writes: "That there is freedom in our will is so evident that it must be counted among the first and most common notions that are innate in us . . . we have such a close awareness of the freedom . . . which is in us, that there is nothing we can grasp more evidently or more perfectly" (Descartes 1644, I, 39, 41, quoted from Sleight et al. 1998, 1206).

The new mechanistic and geometric ideals of early modern science tend to promote determinism or at least postulate a radical gap between human free action and mechanistic course of nature. Renaissance discussions of fate and fortune, discussed above, anticipate these early modern solutions to some extent. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Neo-Stoic authors support similar views.

In his *De constantia* (1586), Justus Lipsius summarizes many basic views of Neo-Stoicism. Lipsius considers that fate and providence steer the world and that many natural events therefore follow their necessary course. People should show steadfastness and endurance against the rule of fate. These virtues emerge through active work; at the same time, the free will displayed in such behavior is not limitless freedom of choice but rather the capacity of mastering oneself within the limits of natural necessities. The Neo-Stoic views regarding fate, fortune, and necessity often focused on the interactions between seemingly free human will and the deterministic course of nature.

Another typical and distinctive theme in the Renaissance philosophy of free will concerns the inner struggle. This discussion has its roots in ancient and medieval philosophy. At least three kinds of inner conflict can be observed in this earlier discussion, namely (i) oscillation, a state

in which the mind repeatedly changes its decision, (ii) vacillation, a state in which the mind cannot establish a fixed decision, and (iii) lack of self-control, a state in which the mind fails to maintain autonomy (Price 1994, 3–5). All these variants continue to be discussed during the Renaissance and the Reformation. They are also influenced by the Neo-Stoic ways of dealing with harmful emotions (Saarinen 2011).

In addition, two other variants may be observed, namely (iv) an inner struggle with powers that do not represent the mind or the self, and (v) a struggle in which the old self becomes replaced with a new self. These two variants are connected with religious doctrines, as the struggle against sin or the conversion event, but they are also distinctly philosophical views that elucidate the powers of the will. Neo-Stoic steadfastness in facing destiny, for instance, can be understood as an instance of (iv).

In his *Ethices christianae libri tres* Lambert Daneau (1583) develops a new view of ethics as theological discipline. Daneau argues that Aristotelian virtue ethics is impossible since all humans continue to struggle with harmful desires and thus cannot reach true virtue. The highest goal that we can reach is continence, a strong-willed continuous struggle. This achievement Daneau calls *virtus luctans*, wrestling virtue. As a Calvinist and Neo-Stoic he does not really believe in free will, but he teaches that the moral responsibility of human beings nevertheless concerns a steadfast prevailing in this wrestling (Saarinen 2011, 188–200).

Daneau takes over the old Augustinian view of two wills that struggle within a person. He interprets this idea so broadly that "we then clearly perceive as if two persons (*homines duo*) and two wills were active in us." The continent person can observe the enemy as another person: "When the virtue and the holy desire to do good, which the Spirit of God gives, prevail in this wrestling, the will remaining repugnant, it is called continence. Such is the case of Jacob wrestling with the angel" (Daneau 1583, 104v–105r). In this manner, the strong alienates or "outsources" other powers from itself.

The change of identity as a result of inner struggle (v) is often used as a literary theme of

the Renaissance. Marsilio Ficino's *De amore* (1985, II, 8 and VI, 10) depicts love as a passage through death: when I fall in love, my beloved takes my soul away so that I die. When my beloved gives my soul back, my new life begins. This means, however, that the beloved is also a murderer, so that I both love and hate my beloved. Ficino writes:

You would not want to be with this murderer of yourself, but you do not want to live without his blessed sight. . . . You would certainly not want to love, O madman, because you do not want to die. You would also certainly not want not to love since you think that service must be rendered to an image of heavenly things. (Ficino 1985, VI, 10)

When Ficino here uses the Latin word *nolles* four times, he underlines the fluctuating identity of the willing person. In some sense, the act of the will defines the identity of the person. At the same time, the events of willing and “nilling” (*nolle*) prove to be a source of both joy and sorrow so that a plural identity emerges.

Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (1609) may be the most prominent Renaissance source in which the plurality of wills (and Wills!) is elaborated and taken as a basis of shifting identities. Sometimes Shakespeare can describe an inner struggle (in the sense iii or iv) in almost Puritan or Calvinist terms, as in *Sonnet 146*:

Poore soule the center of my sinfull earth,
My sinfull earth these rebbell powres that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth
Painting thy outward walls so costlie gay?

Other traditional instances of inner struggle (in the senses i–iii) include, for instance, the famous verses “Such civill love is in my love and hate” (35) and “Two loves I have of comfort and dispaire” (144).

The *Sonnet 136* employs sexual imagery to draw a stunning picture of the interplay of soul and will. In this interplay, the soul remains little more than a blind platform on which the various wills exercise their activities so that identities are shifted (v):

If thy soule check thee that I come so neere,
Sweare to thy blind soule that I was thy Will,
And will thy soule knowes is admitted there,
Thus farre for love, my love-sute sweet fulfill.
Will, will fulfill the treasure of thy love,
I fill it full with wils, and my will one . . .

Shakespeare does not aim to take a philosophical stance but presents a playful variation of complex identities that appear as a plurality of wills. *Sonnet 135* attempts an even greater complexity of identities (v) than *Sonnet 136* quoted above. Like many other Renaissance authors, Shakespeare is more interested in elucidating the problems of will from different angles than solving them. At the same time, however, the literary productions of the Renaissance are not completely detached from philosophical views. Shakespeare's use of inner struggle and his interplay of love, hate, and will connect him with Ficino and the broader intellectual tradition of inner wrestling.

In sum, the innovative and original aspects of Renaissance thought concerning free will do not constitute a grand narrative but rather a variety of short stories. There is, first, the story of moderate voluntarism that comes from Aquinas and Buridan to Pomponazzi and Erasmus, being continued by the Council of Trent. A more radically voluntarist trend comes from Scotus and Ockham to Molina and Suarez; this may be the most ambitious story philosophically. The Protestant story wants to downplay voluntarism, but finally it affirms free will in the moderate fashion of Melancthon and Neo-Stoics. The literary story of Ficino and Shakespeare highlights love and flexible identities, while borrowing from philosophical traditions.

The impact and legacy of Renaissance views is also manifold and scattered along diverse paths. Philosophically, the Molinist elaboration of contingency and freedom continues to be discussed until the present day. In contemporary analytic philosophy, the semantics of possible worlds employs ideas that resemble Molinism. In theology, free will is often seen as an issue that divides different Protestants from each other as well as from Roman Catholics. As the positions of Erasmus, Melancthon, and the Council of Trent are, at least philosophically, fairly similar, the differences in this issue may have been exaggerated in the teaching of the churches.

Probably the most important legacy of the Renaissance at this point concerns the new literary and artistic ways of understanding human freedom and inner complexity. Authors like Ficino

and Shakespeare develop creatively various themes that they receive from scholarly traditions. Due to the literary creativity of the Renaissance, an increasingly individualistic patchwork of love, freedom, and many-sided will emerges. This patchwork is no longer philosophical in itself, but it needs to be understood against the broader Western intellectual tradition of free will.

Cross-References

- [Sin in Renaissance Theology](#)
- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Bondage of](#)
- [Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Weakness of](#)

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Will in Renaissance Philosophy, Weakness of

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Abstract

Weakness of will (akrasia) continues to be actively discussed in the Renaissance and the Reformation. Important treatises are written by John Buridan, Petrarch, John Mair, Josse Clichtove, Joachim Camerarius, Francesco

Piccolomini, and Lambert Daneau. The dominant Aristotelian framework is complemented by Neo-Stoic and Platonic considerations. Increasingly voluntarist interpretations gain ground, stressing the “clear-eyed” nature of some akratic choices. While the practical syllogism continues to be employed, its overall significance for the explanation of human action decreases. Typical of early modern discussions is an inner wrestling between various rational arguments, or between reason and emotional perturbations, or between spiritual and carnal aspects of humanity. The uncertainty of human knowledge and the decisive importance of particular facts are emphasized more strongly than in classical and medieval discussions.

Synonyms

[Akrasia](#); [Incontinence](#); [Moral weakness](#)

Heritage and rupture with the tradition

Weakness of will, sometimes called with the Greek term *akrasia* or the Latin term *incontinentia*, depicts the phenomenon of acting against one’s better judgment, that is, the situation in which one knows the good one ought to do but nevertheless does something else. A person who does the good while also having harmful tendencies is called continent or enkratic. Virtuous and vicious people do the good or the evil without any inclinations to the contrary. The concept of *akrasia* has its origins in Book VII of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (EN), in which this phenomenon is discussed. Since knowledge is stronger than opinions or emotions, and since better judgment represents this knowledge, no rational person should act against what he or she considers best. Often people nevertheless seem to act akratically. How can this phenomenon be explained?

As one crucial part of his explanation, Aristotle launches the practical syllogism, a calculative model of the emergence of human action. The

practical syllogism consists of a major premise that expresses a general principle and a minor premise that states a particular observation. Given the intellectualist framework, rational beings should follow the conclusion implied by the two premises. Aristotle’s famous example concerns eating: “Sweet things are to be avoided” (major); “this is sweet” (minor); and “this should be avoided” (conclusion). Hence, a person’s acts result from his or her calculative deliberations in terms of practical syllogism (EN 1145a-1147b).

The standard Aristotelian answer to the problem of *akrasia* is that akratic persons know the good in a universal sense, but their grasp of the minor premise is impeded or imperfect. Thus, the akratic person eats the sweets, knowing that sweet things should generally be avoided, but fooling himself or herself into ignoring the particular case at hand (EN 1147a-b). Is this ignorance voluntary or not? A great range of different answers has been presented. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, says that philosophically such behavior is like involuntary forgetting, but theologically it is voluntary (Saarinen 1994, 118–131).

In addition to Aristotle, there is a Stoic tradition of *akrasia* of which scholars have only recently become better aware (Müller 2009, 155–193). The Stoic tradition is fragmentary; we have some texts of Chrysippus and Galen and uncertain mentions from Plutarch, Epictetus and Origen. Augustine is in some ways connected to this tradition (Saarinen 2011, 19–27). The Stoic tradition survives in some examples, of which the two most popular ones are “the runner who cannot stop running” and the literary figure of Medea who falls in love and kills her children against her better judgment. Both Medea’s love and her rage are used as examples of *akrasia*.

The Stoics discuss two possible options of *akrasia*. First, there may be so-called pre-passions, akratic leanings that emerge before (sometimes only immediately before) a judgment is formed. Second, the agent may be so strongly predetermined by some earlier habits that the new information cannot change his or her course of action immediately but only after a delay. After the assented judgment, for instance, to stop running, the runner proceeds at least for some meters.

This proceeding might be called acting against one's own better judgment.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 7, 20–21, Medea claims to “see the better and approve it, but follow the worse.” This means, according to the Stoic view, that she saw that it was better to stay at her father's home, but her love nevertheless caused her to continue with Jason. Although she intellectually decided to stay with her father, her earlier course of life was still so predominant that it led to a different action. In this manner, the case of Medea exemplifies the second Stoic option.

Plato's writings also play a role in the interpretation of akrasia. In *Protagoras* 351–358, Plato draws a picture of Socrates that is very similar to Aristotle's discussion in EN VII. This Socrates defends the view that “no one willingly goes to meet evil or what he thinks to be evil” (358c). In *Republic* 431, however, Plato outlines the inner conflict between the better and the worse parts of human soul, teaching that the better part, or reason, should rule the lower and irrational part. However, akrasia remains a genuine possibility, as there are situations in which the better part stays alive but is mastered by the lower one (Hoffmann 2008, 1–22). We may label the option of *Republic* as a/the “commonplace Platonic” view of akrasia, meaning a position in which reason and desire struggle in the human soul; desire can sometimes overcome reason. Augustine seems to have received some ideas from this tradition as well.

All three traditions – the Aristotelian, Stoic, and commonplace Platonic – are relevant for the understanding of weakness of will in the period between 1300 and 1650. The Aristotelian heritage dominates late medieval and early modern discussions. Stoic considerations and examples, Medea in particular, are increasingly mentioned in the sixteenth century. The commonplace Platonic picture of inner struggle is often mentioned in the treatment of akrasia; however, this picture is a general feature of the discussion rather than a distinct explanatory tradition.

The most important fourteenth-century discussion of akrasia takes place in John Buridan's commentary on EN. Buridan teaches that the will is prepared for action through three stages. The will first receives a judgment of the practical intellect,

informing it of various good and bad aspects of the alternatives under consideration. This preliminary judgment does not prompt action but only generates an act of “complacency” or “displacency” in the will. The cluster of first acts is followed by the second act of the will, which is the actual acceptance or refusal of the judgment's conclusion. The third act of the will is the action itself (Buridan 1968, 41–43).

Akratic conduct occurs in a situation that is characterized by a “twofold inclination”; that is, a situation in which a person inclines towards contrary alternatives. Incontinence is primarily located in the will, because it is the faculty of the soul that can exercise a choice towards one alternative or its opposite (Buridan 1968, 141). Although the different first acts of the will can exemplify different preliminary judgments, Buridan defends the final unity of judgment and assent. He therefore refutes the view that a person can, strictly speaking, have contrary judgments about a particular action.

Buridan is both Stoic and Aristotelian in his emphasis on the unity of the judgment. Although the first act of the will can generate different and contrary viewpoints, the complete situation will finally be judged in a unified manner. This is expressed in the second act of the will, which prompts action. The second act is not, however, a voluntarist manifestation of freedom, but an intellectualist affirmation of the best option. Buridan underlines this intellectualist stance in his decisive questions regarding weakness of will. In his view, since it is not possible to act against actual, particular, and perfect knowledge, akrasia is accompanied by some ignorance. He further holds that the will necessarily obeys the conclusion of the practical intellect, if this conclusion is argued with full clarity and certainty. On the other hand, Buridan concedes that concrete decision-making often takes place in uncertain situations in which weakness of will can occur (Saarinen 1994, 178–181).

Buridan's commentary had a vast manuscript diffusion (particularly in central Europe) and had several printings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; it remained influential in the universities. Through Martin Luther's teacher

Bartholomaeus Arnoldi de Usingen, Buridan's views were familiar to the early Reformers. As Luther was critical of the scholastic treatment of "good works," Buridan's theory of action represented for him a typical scholastic view in which merit and virtue can be achieved through rational decision-making (Saarinen 2011, 105–132).

Among early-modern scholastic interpreters of weakness of will, John Mair (1470–1550) offers a thorough discussion that both continues Buridan's intellectualist leanings and is innovative in its strategy of preserving the idea of free will. He affirms the possibility of *akrasia* in three ways (Mair 1530, 110). First, Mair concludes that a person's will can prevent itself from working. This point resembles the Parisian condemnations of 1277 and John Buridan that ascribe to free will the option of remaining in the state of *non velle* (refusal to will something??) (Saarinen 1994, 168). The second way interprets Aristotle in a somewhat "commonplace Platonist" manner, claiming that the conflict between reason and desire features prominently in action theory and that desire can sometimes overcome reason.

The third way compares *akrasia* with so-called mixed actions, which are discussed in EN III, 1. A classical example of this kind is the shipping merchant who throws his goods overboard to survive a storm. For Mair, Aristotle's mixed actions recall features of *akrasia* although the person in Aristotle's examples does not ignore or forget anything. To make room for such affirmations of *akrasia*, Mair undertakes an original claim that in syllogistic deduction the *akratic* person can affirm something shameful while also thinking that nothing shameful should be followed. This is possible if the first case refers to some concrete choice at hand, whereas the second case pertains to what is morally right. In this manner, Mair can combine voluntarist conclusions with the overall syllogistic structure of Aristotelian action theory.

Petrarch's *Secretum* is an early example of the humanist reception of the problem of *akrasia*. In Petrarch, a person freely chooses the wrong option. While this fundamental choice is not caused by ignorance or disorder, it brings about ignorance and disorder as its consequence. These

problems of the incontinent person can be remedied in cognitive therapy so that the person can see his voluntarist nature in a truthful light. This picture is not very far from late medieval Franciscan voluntarism. When Petrarch's mask Francesco at the end of *Secretum* states that he cannot restrain his desire for study and turn to the spiritual road proposed by Augustine (Petrarch 1989, 144), he is not making a nonreligious free choice, but rather continues the tradition of late medieval voluntarism in an original way.

Much of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanist philosophy continues the doctrinal patterns of late medieval Aristotelianism. For this reason, the presentations of *akrasia* in Donato Acciaiuoli (1428–1478) and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1455–1536) are traditional (Acciaiuoli 1565, Lefèvre d'Étaples 1497). Some important innovations take place in Josse Clichtove's (1514) commentary, in which he provides the above-mentioned example of Medea's conflict as paradigm of *akrasia*. This example became extremely popular; it is discussed by most later commentators of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Medea exemplifies "clear-eyed *akrasia*," a situation in which one goes wrong knowingly and willingly, this example creates a counterweight to Aristotelian intellectualism. Different traditional interpretations of Paul's struggle in *Romans* 7 also appear in this context (for *Romans* 7, cf. Müller 2009 and Saarinen 2011).

Among later Catholic treatises, the moral philosophy of Francesco Piccolomini (1520–1604) discusses weakness of will in detail. Piccolomini wants to integrate Platonism more strongly with the existing traditions of Aristotelianism and Neo-Stoicism. He is aware of the intellectualist stance of *Protagoras*, but stresses also the "commonplace Platonist" view of inner struggle. He also analyses the case of Medea. One of his basic conclusions is that, while Plato focuses on the pure mind, Aristotle pays attention to the actual human condition. For this reason, Aristotle's views are to be preferred (Piccolomini 1595, 262–267). As a whole, however, Piccolomini's discussion remains eclectic and combines elements from different intellectualist

and voluntarist traditions. As a comprehensive textbook, his work had an extensive reception history in both Protestant and Catholic milieus.

In early modern Catholic thinking, the vocabulary of weakness of will is often replaced with other Aristotelian and scholastic discourses. For instance, while Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) discusses the influence of coercion, concupiscence, fear, and ignorance on voluntary action in great length, he does not treat these as instances of *akrasia* (Suárez 1856, 181–233).

The Protestant reception history of *akrasia* starts with Philip Melanchthon's scattered remarks. Melanchthon (1497–1560) is interested in the case of Medea and speaks frequently of the inner wrestling and struggles that last through a Christian's entire life (Saarinen 2011, 132–142). John Calvin (1509–1564) discusses *akrasia* explicitly in his influential *Institutio* (Calvin 2006, II, 2, 23). For Calvin, the conscience informs even sinful persons of their wrongdoing. At the same time, people can go wrong in their evaluation of particular facts so that they act against their better judgment. Calvin's view is fairly Aristotelian and has some resemblance to that of John Mair.

Melanchthon's pupil Joachim Camerarius (1500–1574) lays out a particularly detailed analysis of weakness of the will in his commentary on EN. Camerarius knows well the Platonic and Stoic traditions, but he adheres to Aristotelianism, which he attempts to harmonize with Melanchthon's theological and philosophical insights. He keeps the structure of the practical syllogism and argues, in keeping with the Aristotelian tradition, that the particular facts of the minor premise are not grasped properly in the akratic deliberation. Thus, some ignorance precedes akratic acts. Unlike former Aristotelians, however, Camerarius considers that the uncertainty related to our perception of empirical particulars is nothing less than "the cause of all evil" (Camerarius 1578, esp. 325–326).

The error of the akratic person thus concerns the particular circumstances: the devil is in the details. While this view is close to the Aristotelian syllogistic model, Camerarius is so focused on the uncertainty of particulars that his discussion

resembles that of Buridan. The neglect of the particulars is also voluntary. Camerarius advances significantly beyond Melanchthon and Calvin; he also departs from the earlier Aristotelian tradition. The weight of empirical particulars and the uneasiness provided by small changes is an innovation of Camerarius that we encounter later in Leibniz.

Among the early Calvinist authors on *akrasia*, Lambert Daneau (1535–1590) is particularly interesting for several reasons. He is often considered the first author who develops a Christian ethics, understanding ethics no longer as a philosophical but rather a theological discipline. Daneau is also the first author who applies Martin Luther's view of the Christian as "righteous and sinner at the same time" consistently to ethics. While Melanchthon and Calvin also borrow this idea from Luther, they do not work it out in detail and do not fully grasp its significance for the analysis of the human condition. The Reformation anthropology that has its origins in Luther receives its first fully elaborated moral-philosophical expression in Daneau's Christian ethics (Saarinen 2011, 188–200).

Daneau establishes the picture of inner wrestling as a core doctrine of ethics: Christian ethics is concerned with *virtus luctans*, the virtue that continuously wrestles with harmful affects. The results of this struggle manifest themselves as continence and, in case of failure, as *akrasia*. Daneau points out that no human being can achieve true virtue in this life because the power and tinder of sin remain active in us. Even the apostle Paul could not achieve perfect virtue, as *Romans 7* shows. *Romans 7* is an example of Paul's continence, not of his virtue nor of his weakness of will (Daneau 1583, 101). Daneau draws the conclusion that continence is the best stage that Christians can achieve in this life. It further means that a textbook on Christian ethics has to focus on the so-called wrestling virtue, as it is the option that we really encounter. Christians thus struggle between continence and weakness of will.

While the early modern period revives the old traditions of Aristotelianism, Stoicism, and Platonism, this period is also innovative in its treatment of *akrasia*. Buridan and Mair pay increased

attention to uncertainty and the voluntarist nature of human decision-making; this innovative current is continued by Camerarius. The Protestant authors claim that pure virtue is almost impossible in this life; at the same time, conscience points to the difference between right and wrong. For this reasons, Christians remain in the struggle between continence and akrasia. Daneau presents the universal version of such innovative claims in his view that Christian ethics as a whole is concerned with wrestling virtue.

The cultural and intellectual impact of these innovations is considerable. In practical philosophy, the new prominence of uncertainty and voluntarism means that moral considerations no longer appear as universal as they did in earlier Aristotelianism. The inner struggle exemplified by Medea and *Romans* 7 became a fashionable literary and theological paradigm in the early modern period. All humans were supposed to experience an inner struggle, and there are many different variants of such wrestling. Among the literary expressions of inner struggle, Shakespeare's *Sonnets* belong to the most famous.

The philosophical legacy of these themes is visible in the extensive contemporary literature concerning weakness of will. Not unlike Aristotle, contemporary philosophy often aims at explaining human action in terms of rational calculation. Phenomena like inner struggle and irrational behavior can be considered as philosophical challenges of such explanatory paradigms (Stroud 2014).

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Wilson, Thomas

Born: August 1523 – January 1524

Died: 20 May 1581, London

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Abstract

Thomas Wilson was an English humanist, diplomat and administrator who rose to become an influential figure at the court of Queen Elizabeth I, culminating in his appointment as one of the queen's principal secretaries. He was educated in the Protestant environment of mid-century Cambridge, and both his humanist commitments and anti-Catholicism were sharpened by the experience of exile in Padua and torture and imprisonment in Rome. He is the author of a number of works which are significant for their success in disseminating ancient learning in the English vernacular in the fields of logic and rhetoric, including *The Arte of Rhetorique*, first published in 1554.

Biography

Thomas Wilson was an English humanist and administrator who rose to become an influential figure at the court of Queen Elizabeth I through powerful connections established during his education at Eton College and King's College, Cambridge. There he became a protagonist of the so-called Cambridge connection of Protestant humanists led by Sir John Cheke. His first positions were as tutor to the children of leading aristocrats, and in 1551 he published a manual on logic, *The Rule of Reason*, dedicated to King Edward VI (Wilson 1551). This was followed in 1554 by *The Arte of Rhetorique* (Wilson 1982). During the reign of Queen Mary I, Wilson, like many leading English protestants, went into exile and stayed in the city of Padua in north-east Italy with a circle of English friends. He proceeded from there to Rome, where he was denounced as a heretic, tortured, and imprisoned by the Inquisition. He only escaped when the prison was sacked and burnt down on the death of Pope Paul IV in 1559. Before returning to England, he acquired a doctorate in civil law from the University of Ferrara.

Back in England, Wilson pursued a career as a civil lawyer and member of parliament, but through the support of Sir William Cecil and Sir Robert Dudley, he also, in the 1560s, undertook duties for the privy council, including the examination of political prisoners, Catholics, and suspected traitors.

In the same period and into the 1570s, he acted as a diplomat for the English government in Spain, Portugal, and the Low Countries. This work earned him membership of the privy council from 1577, as well as his appointment as one of the queen's two principal secretaries. These major offices were assumed during a period when the queen was considering military intervention in the Low Countries against Spain, which Wilson, as an ardent anti-Catholic, earnestly supported.

Wilson's *The Rule of Reason* was the first logical treatise written in English and therefore represents an important moment in the vernacular domestication of the Latin liberal arts in England. It was reprinted seven times in the sixteenth century. *The Arte of Rhetorique* continued this

development and is a milestone in the Tudor and protestant humanist endeavor of transmitting ancient learning in the English vernacular, an ambition shared by many of Wilson's Cambridge contemporaries, and in a field – rhetoric – central to so much of Renaissance culture. Although this was not the first rhetorical manual to be printed in English, it was far more comprehensive than any of its predecessors, synthesizing the practical lessons of the major ancient and Renaissance rhetorical works and updating them with topical, humorous, patriotic, and protestant illustrations of rhetorical parts. It advances a linguistic agenda characteristic of Wilson's generation of English intellectuals, namely, to promote a pure vernacular English uncontaminated by foreign “inkhorn” terms.

The Arte of Rhetorique ran to eight editions in the sixteenth century, and Gabriel Harvey commented in 1570 that both this work and *The Rule of Reason* were “the dailie bread of owr common pleaders & discoursers” in the Inns of Court (Stern 1979).

Wilson continued the work of bringing ancient wisdom to a vernacular audience in his English translation of the Athenian rhetorician Demosthenes's *Orations* dating to 1570. However, this work also functioned as a scarcely veiled political allegory in support of an interventionist foreign policy against King Philip II of Spain, who is implicitly compared in this work to Demosthenes' foe, the expansionist King Philip II of Macedon.

Wilson's impact was significant as a popularizer and disseminator of ancient learning to an English-reading audience, particularly in the areas of logic and rhetoric.

Cross-References

► [Rhetoric in the Renaissance](#)

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Wimpfeling, Jakob

Born: Schlettstadt, Alsace, 25/07/1450

Died: Schlettstadt, Alsace, 17/11/1528

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Abstract

Jakob Wimpfeling (1450–1528) was a prolific German humanist, historian, poet, and advocate of a renewal within the Catholic Church based on the reorganization of the education system. He denounced the wrongdoing inside the clergy and committed to educate young people through the reading of the classics. Because of the fame acquired, his advice was greatly considered by Emperor Maximilian I in affairs concerning diplomatic relations.

Biography

Jakob Wimpfeling (or Jacob Wimphenling) was a German theologian born in Schlettstadt,

nowadays Sélestat in France. Following the versatile attitude of humanist scholars, his written production concerns numerous areas of interests, ranging from literature to pedagogy and history, making him an illustrious exponent of humanism in Germany (Spitz 1963, 41–60). Specifically his works display fervid patriotism for German identity and resolute pedagogic vocation (Könneker 1987, 448).

After his father's death in 1463, his uncle Ulrich, parish priest in Sulz, took care of his upbringing and set Wimpfeling on the path of academic education and ecclesiastical career. He studied philosophy at the Freiburg University between 1464 and 1470, obtaining in 1466 the Bachelor of Arts. Forced to leave the city by the plague outbreak, Wimpfeling moved to Erfurt first (Knepper 1902, 3–13), then in 1469 to Heidelberg, where he focused to canon and theology and resided until 1483. In 1471 Wimpfeling was appointed *Magister artium* and ordained priest. At the time when he obtained the Licentiate of Theology, Wimpfeling was teaching at the Faculty of arts, of which he was appointed deacon at first, then vice-chancellor, and lastly dean (1481–1482; Geiger 1898, 525). Between 1483 and 1497, he became preacher in Spreyer Cathedral (Mertens 1993, 48) and subsequently taught rhetoric and poetry in Heidelberg until 1501, as requested by elector Palatine Philippe.

During these years, Wimpfeling entered the *Sodalitas Literaria Rhenana*, guided by Conrad Celtis since 1495 (Mertens 1993, 48–49), and, after some exercise in Latin poetry, was deeply committed to linguistic studies working on the *Elegantiarum medulla* (1493), an introduction to Latin composition, inspired by Lorenzo Valla (Könneker 1987, 448). The satirical comedy *Stylpho* (1495), written with Terentian features, increased his literary fame and introduced this genre in the coeval German literature (Mertens 1993, 46–47; Könneker 1987, 447). Furthermore he arranged his thoughts about the principles of youth education in the *Isidoneus Germanicus* (1496) – where he criticized the unproductiveness of the medieval scholastic system and claimed that pupils should draw directly from classics after a preparatory introduction to grammar – and in the *Adolescentia* (1500), which became a

manifesto in the field of humanistic pedagogy thanks to its Anti-Scholasticism (Geiger 1898, 533–534).

Pedagogical concern and theological commitment proceed hand in hand through Wimpfeling's life. While dealing with the reorganization of liturgical materials and promoting the improvement of clerical discipline, he demanded, in the *Oratio ad clerum Wormatiensem* (1477), that the Church played a crucial role in children's education in order to reform the Church itself. As Heidelberg Dean, he denounced, in the *Oratio de Sancto Spiritu* (1507), the abuses perpetrated within the Church because of clergy's avidity and stigmatized the moral corruption among young people.

In 1501 he forsook the tenure and left Sulz parish – where he succeeded after his uncle's death – for a moderate retirement and was welcomed to stay at Williamite Monastery in Strasbourg until 1515. During the first decade of the century, he published some historical treatises like *Germania* (1501), where he supported the German identity of Alsace (Mertens 1993, 50), and the *Epithoma rerum germanicarum* (1505), a handbook of German history (Geiger 1898, 532; Gotzen 2010, 1516–1517). Following the example of Celtis, in 1510 Wimpfeling created in Strasbourg, along with Sebastian Brant and Johann Geiler, a new *Sodalitas Literaria* that had the honor to host in 1514 Erasmus of Rotterdam among its guests. Hereafter Wimpfeling kept an enduring epistolary correspondence with the Dutch humanist.

In the same year, Emperor Maximilian I proposed him a project concerning the adoption in the Empire of a *pragmatica sanctio* (similar to the one issued in Bourges in 1438), the appointment of a perpetual papal legate for ecclesiastical affairs, and the suppression of German tributes to the Church of Rome. Wimpfeling advised against the first two points and pressed on the economic reform, treasuring the ideas developed in the *Gravamina* of the German nation (1457; Geiger 1898, 531; Könniker 1987, 448). From 1515 he lived permanently in Schlettstadt until his death. Although Wimpfeling initially sympathized with some of the reform ideas supported by the

Lutheran movement, he strongly opposed the Protestant Reformation after the public rupture between Luther and Pope Leo X (Könniker 1987, 449–450).

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Witchcraft, Renaissance Idea of

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Abstract

There were two clearly differentiated ways in which the Renaissance understood the concept of witchcraft. The first one, originating from intellectual circles embedded in the Neoplatonic tradition, managed to either harmonize it with the categories which defined natural magic and other complementary occult disciplines or, on the contrary, consistently tried to disconnect it from established high-magic practices which, for these authors, had nothing to do with negromancy or demonic possessions. The second one emanates from the general debate that can be traced back to the Middle Ages concerning the nature and characteristics of witches. This conception leads to

the publication of Heinrich Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), whose contents, ultimately blended with contemporary social, political and theological issues, largely influenced the outbreak of constant witch trials across Europe during the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Outside of significant practices dealing mostly with alchemical purposes, throughout the Middle Ages there was no distinction whatsoever between the concepts of witchcraft and magic. The established theory, which went back to Augustine of Hippo, who described magical activities as "criminal" (*Civ. Dei*, VIII, 18, 19, 26; IX, 1), considered any type of invocation of supernatural forces or phenomena as an act of rebellion toward God's omnipotence, something which could only be explained by means of an association between the magician and the devil (Levack 2006, 37–39).

This idea experienced, however, a noteworthy change during the course of the fifteenth century. The revival carried out by Marsilio Ficino's Florentine Academy of the *Hermetica* and of late-pagan Neoplatonic and neo-Pythagorean philosophers offered new insights on the practice of magic and theurgy. These contributed to the progressive delimitation of witchcraft as a vulgar and heretical activity opposite to the pious and noble practices of the Renaissance *magi* (Walker 2003, 30–54; Zambelli 2007, 35–43). As a consequence, Renaissance Neoplatonism distinguished two opposite types of magic: one which is, in Pico della Mirandola's own words (*Orat. de hom. Dig.*, § 37, 228), "execrable" and "monstrous" (*execranda et portentosa*), thus defining the nature of witchcraft and "black" magic, and another one which represents "the absolute perfection of natural philosophy" (*naturalis philosophiae absoluta consumatio*), which constitutes the basis of natural or "white" magic.

Despite this intellectual clarification, Renaissance demonology soon recovered the medieval spirit of establishing the social, political, and legal consequences of negromancy with the

publication in 1487 of Heinrich Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum* – based on Nicolau Eymerich's 1376 *Directorium Inquisitorum* (Bailey 2003). The *Malleus* became one of the most renowned authorities in dealing, both theoretically and practically, with everything related to devil, witches, and Satanism. It gave rise to a number of treatises, such as Jean Bodin's *De la Démonomanie des sorciers* (1580), that, circulating throughout Europe in the late sixteenth-century, encouraged the outbreak of the first waves of witch-hunts. Nevertheless, there were still authors who remained skeptic with regard to the apparent devilish and demonic forces that characterized witches, to their initiation rites in the Sabbaths and, what is more relevant, to their influx on the human realm. The belief that the magical powers which were thought to be operating in witches by the action of evil spirits could be explained through natural phenomena and that their brutal and irrational manners could respond more to insanity or mental health issues than to hellish possessions, contributed to the emergence of another group of works, such as Johann Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum* (1563), that aimed at moderating the punishment given to convicted witches – which normally involved torture and immediate death – claiming that they were unconscious receptacles of the devil.

In one way or another, there is enough evidence to verify the significant role that witch-hunts performed as instruments of political, social, and theological control (Clark 1999). In terms of the latter, the importance of preserving common beliefs within the boundaries of orthodoxy and of guaranteeing the moral effectiveness of persecutions led to the regular issue of public summonses in trials or executions and the wide dissemination of witch sermons pronounced by local preachers and other ecclesiastical authorities. Even more, these public *exempla* served as a method of overcoming potential political rebellions. There were many religious groups that, in the form of heretical and sinful movements inspired by the devil, were in fact organized structures that, in seeking power and control, made use of the popular credulity for their own aims (Levack 2006, 60, 65–67). It was not until the last quarter of the seventeenth century,

with the progressive decline of Renaissance occultism, that the concept of witchcraft, free from its philosophical, religious, and sociopolitical background, started to be approached from an eminently critical and historical perspective (Monter 1972; Henry 2008).

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- Bodin, Jean
- Devil, Renaissance Idea of
- Natural Magic in Renaissance Science
- Occult Properties in the Renaissance

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Women Writing in the Renaissance

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Abstract

Since the sixteenth century, more women published their work despite the still existing

belief of their distinct gender inferiority to men. Women used to receive literacy and education according to their social class and wealth; however in the Renaissance a larger number of women could read and write their native language. The new printing industry was one of the factors that stimulated women to write and publish. It offered a new accessibility of knowledge and the opportunity to easily communicate with the external world. A larger number of translations from Latin into vernacular were available, and a new attitude toward culture promoted by humanism produced a change toward the involvement of women into culture. Many of these women writers are considered proto-feminist and were involved in a literary debate about the nature and status of women, known as the *querelle des femmes*.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Even though the society was men-centered, women writers began making important contributions to Renaissance culture starting the fifteenth century. Educated women were nuns, noblewomen, and courtesans, and many of them wrote poetry and prose. There are a few recorded writers of the fifteenth century; some of them are considered proto-feminist and are classified under the label *querelle des femmes*, “the woman question.”

Christine de Pisan (1364–1430) was born in Venice, but lived mostly of her life in France. She wrote in vernacular French *The Book of the City of Ladies* (around 1405) and *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (after 1405). Isotta Nogarola (1418–1466), born in Verona, was one of the women humanists. She wrote in Latin several letters to the intellectuals of her time. She was a fine scholar and very knowledgeable of the works of Aristotle, Boethius, Aquinas, and Averroes. Her famous work is *De pari aut impari Evae atque Adae peccato* (*Dialogue on the equal or Unequal sin of Adam and Eve*), which was also printed a century later by Aldo Manuzio in 1563. Other notable women humanists were Cassandra Fedele from Venice (1465–1558), and Laura Cereta from Brescia (1469–1499).

Cassandra Fedele was an excellent Latinist. She was famous for her letters, orations, and a philosophical work, *De scientiarum ordine*, which is nowadays lost. Laura Cereta composed her *Epistolae Familiaris*; while she shows a deep knowledge of classical authors, and philosophers, she also provides egalitarian positions toward women's intellectual capabilities.

Starting the sixteenth century, there was an increase of the use of the vernacular for scientific/philosophical texts; this can be related to a broader woman's readership, and consequently there were more women who published their own works in vernacular.

In the sixteenth century in particular at the court, women had very important role, as the treatise of Galeazzo Flavio Capella (or Capra) *Della eccellenza et dignità delle donne (on excellence and dignity of women)* published in Rome in 1525 and then in Venice in 1526 and Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528) document. Women were expected to be able to converse with political men, diplomats, and intellectuals and actively participate to the cultural life. Many women became noteworthy for their fame and publications.

Vittoria Colonna (1492–1547), marchioness of Pescara, was a poet and intellectual. She married in 1509 Francesco Ferrante D'Avalos, maquis of Pescara, who was one of the commanders of the imperial army of Charles V. Starting 1519 she lived in Ischia and participated in the intellectual and cultural life of the Neapolitan court. Her husband died after a battle in 1525 and after that she decided to devote herself to a spiritual life in Rome. She wanted to become a nun, but pope Clement VII opposed her decision. Because of that she went back to Ischia where she lived surrounded by many intellectuals of her time. She exchanged letters with Pietro Bembo and was admired by Ludovico Ariosto. She was deeply active in theoretical and theological issues for the reformation of the Church. She was actively involved in the thought of Juan de Valdes and later followed the friar Bernardino Ochino with his reformation plan. In 1540 Vittoria was involved in the new spiritual movement lead by Reginald Pole and actively participated to all the reformation debates in Viterbo and Rome.

She was an active intellectual and considered one of the most brilliant minds of her time. Unfortunately little remains of her writings. The only collection that was edited directly by her is contained in the manuscript Vat. Lat. 11539 and was donated by her to her dear friend Michelangelo Buonarroti in 1540/1541. No printed edition was ever evaluated by her. Her prose works are mostly in the form of letters. Vittoria Colonna's poetry and prose show her religious views, which are connected to many of the philosophers of her time. Despite Neoplatonism, also Aristotelian and Averroistic trends are present through the medium of Agostino Nifo (Tallini, 2011).

Contemporary of Vittoria was Laura Terracina (1519–c. 1577), a member of the Accademia degli Incogniti. She wrote moral lamentations and poems and published the *Discorso sopra il principio di tutti i canti d'Orlando furioso (Interpretation of the first cantos of Orlando furioso; 1549)*.

Tullia D'Aragona (1510–1556), who defined herself as an "honest courtesan," was a poet and a philosopher. She was born in Rome in 1510 to Giulia Campana, a courtesan known as Giulia Ferrarese, and her father was thought to be Cardinal Luigi D'Aragona, who was in blood lineage connections with Ferdinand I of Naples. Giulia Ferrarese married Costanzo Palmieri d'Aragona who provided for Tullia a strong classical education. She became a courtesan at age 18 and lived her life between Siena, Venice, Rome, Ferrara, and Florence. She was known to be a brilliant and beautiful woman, and many intellectuals participated in intense conversations at her salon first in Venice, then Rome, and Florence. Among them Sperone Speroni, who adopted her person as one of the two voices on his *Dialoghi D'Amore* (1542), Bernardo Tasso, Claudio Tolomei, Girolamo Fracastoro, Benedetto Varchi, and Francesco Maria Molza. These last two are the interlocutors in addition to herself in her *Dialogues on the Infinity of Love* (published in Venice in 1547). This work shapes a new philosophical perspective from a woman point of view about love and the practices of love. Tullia shows a deep knowledge of the contemporary intellectual philosophical trends,

with interesting considerations on Platonic, Neoplatonic, Aristotelian, and logical argumentations. Tullia also left to us love poems and *Il Meschino* (1560), the first epic poem written by a woman. Other courtesan writers were Veronica Franco (1546–1591) and Gaspara Stampa (c. 1523–1554) who made major contributions to Renaissance love poetry.

Chiara Matraini (1515–1605) from Lucca, Tuscany, is another example of woman writer, who wrote poetry and prose. Of particular interest is her *Dialoghi Spirituali* (*Spiritual Dialogues*) that is modeled on Boethius' example of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.

More related to the *querelle des femmes*, also in relation to contemporary works such as Ludovico Domenichi's *La nobiltà delle donne* (*On the nobility of women*) Venezia, 1549, and to the translation (1549) into Tuscan vernacular by Alessandro Piccolomini of the work of the German physician and philosopher Heinrich Agrippa of Nettersheim (1486–1535) *Declamatio de nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus* (*Declamation on the nobility and preeminence of the female sex*, 1529), there is the work of Moderata Fonte, whose real name was Modesta dal Pozzo (1555–1592), a Venetian noblewoman. She composed religious poems and musical dramas in verse and wrote *Il Merito Delle Donne* (*on the Merit of Women*) published after her death in 1600. It was a work dedicated to the importance of women in the society and on their possibility to act and change for the best of the society.

Lucrezia Marinella (1571–1653), whose father was a famous physician and natural philosopher, lived mostly in Venice and had the opportunity to study and express herself. She wrote poetry and prose, among them her *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne* (*the nobility and excellence of women*), published in 1601. Marinella wrote this work in response to Giuseppe Passi, *I donneschi difetti* (*The Defects of Women*), published in 1599 in Venice and Milan. Marinella tips over the Passi's misogynistic argumentations and offers a scientific-philosophical work that rebuts Passi's points that declassified women. Marinella analyzes the

ideological basis of the patriarchy criticizing in particular Aristotle's gender theories showing the contradiction of his argumentations and all the weak points. Her discourse focuses on the nature of the rational soul, how there is physiological conformation into the gender of the body. This provokes a different way to react to desire and address the will. Physiology is related to ethical issues, and ethical work is significant for philosophy and history of medicine. Arcangela Tarabotti (1604–1652) continues this type of writing with *La tirannia paterna* (*Paternal tyranny*) published after her death as *La semplicità ingannata* (*Innocence deceived*; 1654).

Sara Copia Sulam (1600?–1641) left to us important writing from a Jewish woman perspective, in particular *Manifesto di Sarra Copia Sulam hebrea Nel quale è da lei riprovata, e detestata l'opinione negante l'Immortalità dell'Anima, falsamente attribuitale da SIG. BALDASSARE BONIFACIO* (*The Manifesto of Sara Copia Sulam, a Jewish woman, in which she refutes and disavows the opinion denying immortality of the soul, falsely attributed to her by Signor Baldassare Bonifacio*), published in 1621, in which she defends herself from accusation showing a deep knowledge of philosophical and theological problems.

Other European women writers were in Spain Teresa d'Avila (1515–1582) with her mystical writings and in France Margaret of Navarre (1492–1549), sister to the king of France, with her *Heptaméron* (1558), a collection of stories, and Louise Labé (c. 1524–1566), who, as poet, prompted women to intellectually excel. In England women authors connected to the *querelle des femmes* are Jane Anger with her *Protection of Women* (1589), Rachel Speght (born c. 1597), and Constantia Munda.

In the Renaissance the women writers came from a variety of social class; this shows a broader cultural emancipation, which involves also lower classes. Despite their different backgrounds and personal life, all these women show a deep interest in contemporary scholarship and an involvement and active participation toward the intellectual life.

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Wonders in the Renaissance

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Abstract

"Wonder" can describe both an object as well as the emotion it elicits, and the Renaissance reaction to these stimuli demonstrates marked departure in the intellectual history of previous ages. This age was defined by an embrace and indeed appetite for the production and collection of such objects, grounded in psychological, sociological, and political constructs of the day. Wonder became less of a transgression in a realm of knowledge from which one was

believed to be excluded by divine *fiat* (as with the essentially medieval attitude towards the mysteries of nature and man's inclination to curiosity) and more a pursuit of learned European culture from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries onwards. Objects which elicited this wonder, whether they were naturally formed (or deformed in many cases) or man-made displays of technology and virtuosity, enjoyed a new prestige and position at the court and dedicated collections, the celebrated *wunderkammern* and similar encyclopedic arrangements throughout the continent.

Synonyms

History of the marvelous; Marvels; Preternatural history; Thaumaturgy

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

The Latin *mirabilia* has been noted to blur sacred and secular objects of wonder from at least the twelfth or thirteenth century, yet theologians and philosophers maintained a formal boundary between the supernatural (miracles) and the preternatural (marvels) which shaped Renaissance and early-modern conceptions of what qualified as either a wonder or wonderful. The major criterion of objects so defined was its capacity to evoke the emotional experience we also call wonder in its audience. This feeling of wonder had been elevated in the spectrum of the human experience from Aristotle for its role as the gateway to contemplation of the divine and therefore the door to all philosophy. Wonder and mystery were at the center of mystery-cult worship which flourished through the early centuries of the Common Era, including those of the Neoplatonic philosophers which the Renaissance subsequently inherited. In many instances, heights of religious display were matched by some thaumaturgic display which rested upon a closely-guarded secret known only to priests and initiates. These secrets could be technological and/or

related to some aspect of natural philosophy, and in the ancient world, the miraculous and the wonderful mingled freely. It was only with the advent of Christianity and the need to distance "true" Christian miracles from wonders and tricks from their pagan counterparts that distinctions between the supernatural (the agency of god, angels, demons, and other non-human forces), the merely preternatural (forces not yet understood but presumed to be natural; the cosmic rays, the world-soul, or various conceptions of spirit/aether/quintessence fall into this latter category), or manipulations of the known natural world had to be made. Whereas thirteenth- and fourteenth-century philosophers agreed on the importance of supplying natural causes for preternatural effects, the resulting analyses were subject to wide-ranging variation, especially with the expansion of Latin materials with the influx of Arabic writings' new repertoire of causal mechanisms. There was considerable overlap (the "wonderful" moving mechanical cult statues of Alexandria and ancient Egypt anticipated Renaissance automata and this class of related wonders, yet the moving/"living" statues which one encounters in medieval Catholic worship were presented as miraculous); however, the constant factor underlying wonder-theory and its associated material associations and production was a restricted access to knowledge about the wonders' operating principle, from late antiquity through the Renaissance. The attitude about the accessibility and transmission of this secret knowledge is its own topic charted in scholarship.

The wonder thus generated among audiences to whom this secret was denied generated its own kind of powerful social currency in the Renaissance and reinforced hierarchies of superiority and dependence among rulers as patrons and their courtly and diplomatic audiences as awed subjects. To successfully project wonder was to be perceived to wield the mystic dimension sought after in constructions of power. A king who demonstrated a vast knowledge and control of nature, and especially of forces both known and occult, was engaged in a display that was calculated to bolster his legitimacy by elevating him away from the apparent limitations of mundane

experience. The passive experience of wonder, which is from the viewer's perspective, also underwent a reevaluation between the medieval and Renaissance period. What was once considered an unseemly reaction from both a theological (it encouraged the dreaded curiosity looked down upon in Augustinian tradition) as well as social standpoint (it acknowledged ignorance), wonder began to be experienced as its own form of pleasure. The relationship of this wonder to another emotion, curiosity, can be used to demarcate what we may term a medieval mindset from its evolution in the proceeding centuries. Curiosity came to be reevaluated and transformed into a virtue; by the late sixteenth century, wonders are celebrated and promoted in treatises whose authors are conscious of the appeal of wonders to the intellect and the imagination as well as to the senses.

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Zabarella, Jacopo

Born: 5 September 1533, Padua

Died: 15 October 1589, Padua

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Abstract

Jacopo Zabarella (1553–1589) is considered one of the most acute and brilliant logicians of all time. He made an important contribution to the interpretation of Aristotle and developed original ideas especially in the field of logic and epistemology, opening up the pathway of early modern science.

Biography

He was born in Padua on 5 September 1533, the eldest son of Giulio Zabarella. He was well-versed in Latin and Greek from childhood, as one of his letters to the praetor of Padua demonstrates. He studied at the University of Padua, where he graduated on 19 June 1553, supervised by Marco Antonio Genova (1491–1563), who was professor of natural philosophy. He studied logic with Bernardino Tomitano (1517–1576), Latin and Greek with Francesco Robortello (1516–1567), and mathematics with Pietro Catena (1501–1576).

On 13 January 1564 he was appointed to the first chair of logic, succeeding Tomitano. On 4 January 1569 he secured the second extraordinary chair of natural philosophy. There was likely a pause in his teaching from 1574 to 1576 on account of the severity of plague in Padua. On 26 March 1577 he acquired the first extraordinary chair of natural philosophy, and in 1578, he published his *Opera logica* in Venice, thus opening a large debate on the order and method of knowledge among his contemporaries – especially with Francesco Piccolomini (1520–1604) and Bernardino Petrella (1529–1595). In 1580 Zabarella published his *Tabulae logicae* and also founded the Accademia degli Stabili. In 1584, he came under attack in two directions: from Piccolomini in his *Universa philosophia de moribus*, and from Petrella in his *Logicarum disputationum libri VII*. The same year, Zabarella's reply to Piccolomini was his *De doctrinae ordine apologia*. In the meantime, on 6 September 1585, he became professor of the second ordinary chair of natural philosophy, and the following year he published his *De naturalis scientiae constitutione*. In 1584, Ascanio Persio (1554–1610), a student of Zabarella, had replied to Petrella's charges in his *Logicarum exercitationum libri II*, to which Petrella himself responded with his *Propugnatio*, Persio re-engaging again in 1587 with his *Defensiones criticorum et apologetici primi adversus Bernardini Petrellae logicam*. Zabarella died in Padua on 15 October 1589. Five years later, in 1594, Piccolomini countered the *Apologia* with

his *Comes politicus pro recta ordinis ratione propugnator*. During Zabarella's lifetime, the *Opera logica* went through at least three different editions (1578, 1586, 1587), and after his death there were eleven further editions (1591, 1594, 1597, 1599, 1600, 1602, 1603, 1604, 1608, 1617, 1623). The *Tabulae logicae* was published five times (1580, 1583, 1586, 1587, 1589) in the decade before his death, and subsequently became part of the *Opera logica*. The commentary to the *Analytica posteriora* was published in 1582 and 1587, and appeared thereafter in the *Opera logica*. The *Apologia de doctrinae ordine* was published twice in Zabarella's life – in 1584 and 1587 – and then a further four times (1594, 1595, 1599, 1604), before becoming part of the *Opera logica*. The *De rebus naturalibus libri triginta* was brought together after Zabarella's death, and went through ten editions (1590, 1591, 1594, 1597, 1601, 1604, 1606, 1607, 1617, 1654). The treatise *De naturalis scientiae constitutione*, which was a part of the *De rebus naturalibus*, went into a separate edition in 1586. The *Commentarii in tres libros De Anima* underwent four editions (1605, 1606, 1619, 1647). The *Commentarii in libros Physicorum* (I, II, VIII) was published in 1601 and 1602, with the *Commentarii in libros de Generatione et Corruptione, et Meteorologica* appearing in 1602. The year 1602 additionally saw the publication of the treatises *De Augmentatione* and *De Putrefactione illa, qua Vinum vertitur in Acetum*.

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Zabarella is one of the main exponents of so-called Paduan Aristotelianism and has been considered one of the most faithful interpreters and commentators of Aristotle. His exegesis is grounded in the reappraisal of ancient Greek commentators like Simplicius, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Themistius. Yet, Zabarella cannot be characterized a pedantic follower of Aristotelian doctrines and in his works he firmly distinguishes the role of the philosopher from that of commentator (Randal 1961; Poppi 1972; Risse 1983; Mikkeli 1992).

In his 1568 *Praelectio*, Zabarella points out the duties and limitations of the commentator. He views a commentator as someone “who transmits to others the knowledge received from another, not as his own, but as that he received from another” (Bibl. Ambrosiana, Ms. D 360 Inf., 1v; cf. Bouillon 2009, 461–72). The commentator simply teaches what he has passively learned from other philosophers and discovers no new knowledge. Thus, the commentator is also named interpreter, because in general interpretation is “knowledge transmitted as received from another as such.” The commentator is always inferior to the commented author because otherwise he would teach “his science rather than that of another” (Ms. D 360 Inf., 2v). The commentator must recognize his peculiar inferiority, and for this reason “interpretation involves a certain form of servitude, and the interpreter is a servant (*interpres servus est*)” (Ms. D 360 Inf., 2v). Zabarella is critical of this kind of attitude toward knowledge, maintaining that this kind of servitude “is in itself very undesirable” (Ms. D 360 Inf., 3r). The commentator cannot recognize the truth by himself and needs to appropriate knowledge from the best philosophers. However, no good is greater than to acquire knowledge by one's own effort (Ms. D 360 Inf., 3r). Someone who teaches his own knowledge is not a commentator but a real philosopher (Ms. D 360 Inf., 1v) and aspires to acquire truth. So, a real philosopher, dealing with Aristotle's writings, should make it clear that some of Aristotelian doctrines are erroneous (Ms. D 360 Inf., 4r) – or else he provides a great disservice to the advancement of knowledge. Yet in his 1585 *Praelectio*, instead, Zabarella writes that a real philosopher is one who investigates the causes of things, working in the first instance directly with sensation and reasoning, and not relying on the authority and words of others. His view is that this is Aristotle's most compelling thesis (Dal Pra 1966, 288). Zabarella criticizes those alleged philosophers holding ideas that are “incompatible with sensation and natural reason” (Dal Pra 1966, 288). He emphasizes the fundamental role that empirical observation plays in scientific cognition, and stresses how reason, and not Aristotle, is the ultimate foundation of science

(Schmitt 1983, 11). Aristotle “despised neither sensation nor reason, but harmonizing reason with sensation and sensation with reason, and relying on the most solid foundations derived from sensation, he sought to penetrate the secret nature of each thing” (Dal Pra 1966, 289). Zabarella states that one should imitate Aristotle, and he writes that someone is an “imitator of Aristotle and a true Peripatetic because he follows his rule instead of his words” (Dal Pra 1966, 289–90). The rule sets aside probable opinions or conjectures that do not lead to epistemic knowledge in order to focus on demonstrative arguments based on sensation. Thus Zabarella can state that “I will never be satisfied with Aristotle’s authority alone to establish something, but I will always rely upon reason; such a thing is truly both natural and philosophical for us, and I will also seem to imitate Aristotle in using reason, for in fact he seems never to have put forward a position without using reason” (Dal Pra 1966, 290). Equally, Zabarella rejects the slavish attachment of Aristotle’s commentator to the philosopher’s word. One should not disdain to contradict his opinions or the ideas, “*quando ratio cogerit*” (Dal Pra 1966, 290). For Zabarella, therefore, Aristotelian ideas are valid not because they are “Aristotelian,” but because after careful scrutiny by the court of reason they are proven to be true (Palmieri 2007).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Zabarella’s greatest contribution to the history of logic is his instrumental conception of logic and his theory of scientific method (Vasoli 2011). He reached the conclusion that logic is an instrument through an examination of the various disciplines, of their subjects and aims. He proceeded from the recognition of the existence of two kinds of things, those necessary and eternal and those contingent. Necessary and eternal things are not under the mind’s control and their causes must be sought beyond the human will. They are the subject of “contemplative disciplines,” that is, theoretical sciences which search for the causes of things (divine philosophy or metaphysics, natural

philosophy, and mathematics). Contingent things, by contrast, are under the mind’s control, will and activity, and form the subject of operative disciplines. These latter cannot be considered either science or wisdom, because both deal in different ways with necessary things, whereas operative disciplines like ethics and poetics deal rather with prudence and art. Zabarella’s aim is to show that logic is neither a contemplative nor an operative discipline. To demonstrate this, he makes a distinction between “first notions” (*primae notiones*) and “second notions” (*secundae notiones*). Logic deals only with “second notions,” which are also called mental concepts. The “first notions” are subject to investigation by the philosopher (i.e., the natural philosopher), and these are concepts that immediately designate real things independent of the power and activity of the mind. They are always concepts, not things, although they refer to and directly mirror things, and this means that the natural philosopher never deals directly with things, even if he describes how things are. The natural philosopher deals with concepts that directly characterize things and aims for explanatory strategies to explain them. The “second notions,” on the other hand, derive from “first notions.” They are products of the mind in the exercise of its cognitive faculties. The main difference between “first notions” and “second notions” is that “first notions” designate things as they are, while “second notions” concern things as they are known and conceived in the mind – that is, they describe reality as it is thought to be. Zabarella gives an example that comes from the *Analytica posteriora* II.19: if we know Socrates, Plato, and Callias through perception, the mind forms a common concept of “man,” which is the concept of the thing (*conceptus rei*), that is, a first notion. When we are aware that the concept of “man” is the concept of every individual with the characteristics belonging to the concept of “man,” the concept itself becomes a species, that is a second notion. Given that “second notions” are a product of the mind according to its own will, and therefore contingent, they cannot be the subject of science, because science deals only with necessary things. For this reason, logic cannot be a science, but Zabarella also denies that it is

an art. With an art, the result of an operation is distinct from the operator and it is often associated with matter, while logical operations are entirely immanent in the mind. Zabarella therefore defines logic as an instrumental discipline or habit – in particular, the habit concerning “second notions.” It teaches us how to order concepts in the mind and how to acquire new knowledge.

Having defined the nature of logic, Zabarella’s pivotal epistemological problem is to solve the question of how scientific knowledge is possible, starting with an examination of the cognitive powers of the mind. In *De tribus praecognitis* Zabarella deals with the conditions of the mind in acquiring scientific knowledge as put forward by Aristotle in *Posterior Analytics*. Zabarella states that the object of speculative science is twofold: the first – the material aspect – is the *res considerata*, while the second – the formal aspect – is the *modus considerandi*. In the Aristotelian framework science exclusively concerns necessary things, and since matter is always contingent and accidental, science is concerned only with the form – that is, the *modus considerandi* – which is a priori to the object of knowledge (*res considerata*) and makes it knowable, whatever it is. Scientific investigation, therefore, is an examination of the condition of possibility for cognition in relation to a possible object in general. The conditions of possibility for cognition are what Zabarella calls pre-cognitions (*praecognita*). Since the speculative science is preceded by pre-cognition, to investigate the condition of possibility for cognition with respect to an object amounts simply to investigating these pre-cognitions. But again, pre-cognition, on which the speculative science is based, cannot be accidental, otherwise scientific knowledge would ultimately be accidental too. Pre-cognition must be grounded in principles that are primary, true, and immediate – that is, in logical principles that make cognition possible. Investigating the condition of possibility for cognition in general means, therefore, investigating the first principles of the sciences.

There are various first principles that are not demonstrable but for the purpose of demonstration and they are acquired thorough the senses. Zabarella explains that the knowledge of

principles is acquired by means of induction beginning from sensible knowledge. Induction, however, should not be understood as a syllogism that demonstrates unknown things by means of prior knowledge, but as a process that notifies the transition of knowledge of one and the same thing from sensation to the intellect. Ultimately, induction is the process by which particulars are comprehended under the general concept, but properly speaking it does not create new knowledge beyond what the mind has already acquired through sensation.

Sensible knowledge is the foundation for science, but it is not science itself. Indeed, sensible knowledge must first become intellectual knowledge to form then the basis of science, and this is made possible only by the passage of the sensible object – at first as images and then as an intelligible object – through a process of intellection. The transition from sensible to intelligible object is guaranteed both by the continuity of the process of knowledge and also by the subordination of the faculties of the mind. In other words, what is apprehended by sensation, the lowest faculty of knowledge – that is, the singular object – is apprehended also by imagination, a higher faculty of knowledge. The difference between sensation and imagination is that the former always works in the presence of the object, while the latter works in its absence. In turn, what is apprehended by imagination is also apprehended by the highest faculty, the intellect. Therefore, the sensible object is contained through its image in the intelligible object, and the intellect can thereby know the singular concrete object. The difference between sensation, imagination, and intellect lies in the fact that the latter acquires universal knowledge, from which the other two faculties are precluded.

Zabarella’s method is grounded on sensation, which provides all knowledge to the intellect, which means that method is the process of discovery through sensation what is most knowable by nature, namely the causes of things and universal concepts. In order to make his conception clear, Zabarella distinguishes the real method of learning from the order of learning. Such a distinction is fundamental to the difference between Zabarella and his follower’s conception of

method, and that of Platonic scholars and Ramists. Zabarella states that method is a logical instrument leading to the discovery of something unknown, while order is not an inferential process, but simply an arrangement of knowledge. In other words, order is not method: the former “arranges,” while the latter “notifies” or provides knowledge. Method discovers new knowledge; order does not. In starting with what is more knowable to us – that is, sensible knowledge – Zabarella rejects the common assumption of humanistic logic that it is always necessary to start from what is primary in nature. Zabarella is clearly distinguishing an ontological order from an epistemological order. His science rests on logic and epistemology, whose interest is limited to explaining the things that appear to the senses.

Method for Zabarella can be either resolute (analytic) or compositive (synthetic or demonstrative). The analytic method proceeds from effects to causes, while the synthetic proceeds from first causes to effects. The synthetic method is superior to the analytic because its demonstrative power is superior, starting from the knowledge of causes; indeed, the analytic method “serves” the synthetic method. In particular, the synthetic method is superior because its end is not simply the discovery of first principles, but the knowledge of things, that is, effects, by means of causes. Furthermore, Zabarella adds, if the principles were already known, the analytic method would be useless.

Zabarella’s entire logical system, however, is grounded on the analytic method. He posits two kinds of analytic method: (1) demonstrative induction, and (2) demonstration from effects (*ab effectu*). The analytic method is the necessary but not sufficient condition for acquiring scientific knowledge, most of all because it provides a confused knowledge of a thing’s existence. The synthetic method, conversely, demonstrates the cause or essence of the thing and for this reason it is called demonstration *propter quid*. Unlike other logicians, Zabarella argues for an identification of demonstration *propter quid* with *demonstratio potissima*. The latter was usually considered the best kind of demonstration because it gave reasons for both the existence and the cause of a thing, while the former did so only for the cause.

However, according to Zabarella, cause cannot be properly demonstrated without existence, and so demonstration *propter quid* cannot be otherwise than *demonstratio potissima*.

Scientific knowledge can be acquired only in the conjunction of the analytic and synthetic methods, and in this conjunction lies the entire theory of the regress (*regressus*). Regress leads the initial confused knowledge to a final, distinct, and perfect knowledge. Take the demonstration *ab effectu*:

where there is generation, there is matter,
in a natural body there is generation,
therefore in a natural body there is matter

The major premise (“where there is generation. . .”) is discovered by induction and therefore provides only confused knowledge; the minor premise (“in a natural body. . .”) comes from observation, so the conclusion can only be known in a confused way. What the demonstration *ab effectu* proves is not the cause itself, but simply that there must be a cause of the effects, and perhaps the one we have obscurely recognized. This is the first part of the *regressus*.

In order to acquire knowledge of the effect by means of a distinct knowledge of the cause, and to demonstrate that the cause discovered by the analytic method is that correctly pertaining to the effect, Zabarella requires a “mental examination.” Mental examination, or consideration, is constituted by two moments. The first recognizes the *existence* of the effect’s cause and prepares for the discovery of that cause’s essence or nature, while the second compares the cause (known only confusedly) with the effect. If the comparison is successful, we can say that the causes and principles discovered initially in a confused way are the genuine causes and principles of the effects, now known perfectly. This is the final moment of the *regressus* and it coincides with the *demonstratio potissima* – that is, with the acquisition of scientific knowledge (Berti 2009; Mikkeli 2010).

Impact and Legacy

Zabarella’s philosophy had a profound impact on the development of logic in the seventeenth

century, especially in Britain and Germany. As regards direct influence, in the seventeenth century the British Isles saw his works adopted by the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow, St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Dublin. British logical textbooks such as those of John Argall (1605) and Richard Crakanthorpe (1622), which were far more detailed and advanced than Ramist textbooks, were largely inspired by Zabarella. Griffin Powell's *Analysis analyticorum posteriorum sive librorum Aristotelis de demonstratione* (1594) and John Flavel's *Tractatus de demonstratione methodicus et polemicus* (1619) clearly evince Zabarella's legacy. Respecting the nature of logic and syllogistic, Zabarella plays a major role in Robert Sanderson's *Logicae artis compendium* (1615), which had a direct influence on John Locke and Isaac Newton. Zabarella's impact on British seventeenth-century logic was additionally mediated by French textbooks such as Philippe Du Trieu's *Manuductio ad logicam* (1614), and by the publication in Britain of Giulio Pace's *Institutiones logicae* (1597) and *Logicae rudimenta* (1612), which were commonly used for logic classes. A special role was reserved for syncretist Bartholomaeus Keckermann, who in his *Gymnasium Logicum* (1606) mixed Ramist elements with Zabarellean doctrines. Zabarella's logic equally enjoyed widespread success in the German territories. Authors such as Clemens Timpler, Bartholomäus Keckermann, Johann Heinrich Alsted, Georg Gutke, and Abraham Calov show his influence. The early reception of Zabarella's *Liber de tribus praecognitis* is particularly clear in Alsted's four books of the *Philosophia digne restituta* (1612). In the second book, devoted to the foundation of the science of the intellectual habits – that is *Hexiologia* – he clearly draws on Zabarella's ideas. Zabarella contributed to the rise of facultative logic in Protestant countries, especially in the genesis of the disciplines of gnostology and noology. The first important work is Georg Gutke's *Habitus primorum principiorum seu Intelligentia* (1625), which is re-elaboration of Zabarellean logic. Calov exploits Zabarella's logic and considers gnostology an instrumental discipline which has

to do with the habit of the mind knowing an object perfectly, while noology is the science of the mental habit from the use of which the mind acquires the first principles of knowledge (*principia cognoscendi*) of demonstration. Calov's philosophical elaborations made Zabarella's thought pivotal in the history of the philosophy of mind, exerting a powerful influence on Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the German Enlightenment, and critical philosophy (Sgarbi 2012, 2017, 2018).

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Zayn al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥusaynī

► [Al-Jurjānī as-Sayyid ash-Sharīf](#)

Zimara, Marcantonio

Born: 1470, San Pietro, Galatina

Died: ca. 1529

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Abstract

Marco Antonio Zimara was born in San Pietro in Galatina in around 1470 and died sometime after 1529, the last year for which we have certain information regarding his life. He completed his studies in Padua, receiving a doctorate *in artibus* in 1501 and obtaining a degree in medicine. Marcantonio's fame is linked in particular to the compilation of his *Tabula*, but he was also a prominent figure in the world of Renaissance publishing. This can be seen, for example, in the wide circulation of his works throughout Europe for most of the seventeenth century and his efforts as an editor of the works of Aristotle and his medieval interpreters, as

well as in his attempts to resolve the most debated contradictions between the teaching of Aristotle and that of Averroes. This endeavor gave rise to the *Theoremata* and the *Solutiones contradictionum* and can clearly be discerned in all his work, including his surviving manuscripts. Following Aristotle, he reaffirms the superiority of *diffinitio* over *demonstratio* and, within the latter, the priority of *demonstratio propter quid* over *demonstratio quia*. However, he recognizes that the complexity of nature eludes the absoluteness of logical reconstruction, which is more suited to metaphysics.

Biography

Marco Antonio Zimara was born in San Pietro in Galatina in around 1470 and died sometime after 1529, the last year for which we have certain information regarding his life. He completed his studies in Padua, receiving a doctorate *in artibus* in 1501 and obtaining a degree in medicine. His teachers at the *Studium* of Padua included the Scotists Antonio Trombetta and Maurizio Ibernico, the Averroist Nicoletto Vernia, and Pietro Pomponazzi. In 1507, in Padua, he was appointed to the extraordinary chair of philosophy, and later, in 1525, to the chair of ordinary philosophy *in primo loco*. Between his first and second teaching periods in Padua, he continued with his didactic activities, moving first to Salerno (1520) and then to Naples (1523), and he also became involved in the political life of his native town, where he held the office of mayor in 1514 (Antonaci 1970; Paladini 2001; Rugge 2004).

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Zimara's commentaries on the Aristotelian *corpus* and on editions of Aristotle by medieval interpreters are important for understanding his relationship with the preceding philosophical tradition. In addition to Aristotle, Marcantonio also commented on and republished the works of Themistius, John of Jandun, and Albert the Great.

Zimara's interest in the works of Aristotle went hand in hand with his teaching activities. Close examination of the chronology of Zimara's editions of Aristotle reveals that the focus of his interests was related to the centers of study in which he was lecturing. Thus, in the early sixteenth century, during his first teaching period in Padua, he was concerned with publishing logical and metaphysical works, without neglecting the more important commentaries, such as those of John of Jandun and Albertus Magnus. In Salerno, however, already towards 1520, he gave greater importance to Aristotelian physics and medical questions, which were gaining ground in that center, traditionally more inclined toward problems of medical science, due to the diffusion of the apocryphal *Problemata*. His time in Naples and the second period in Padua, however, were taken up with more specialized works, which reflect his mature thought (Antonaci 1970; Garin 1973; Papuli 1991; Spruit 1995).

Innovative and Original Aspects

Marcantonio's fame is linked in particular to the compilation of his *Tabula*, but he was also a prominent figure in the world of Renaissance publishing. This can be seen, for example, in the wide circulation of his works throughout Europe for most of the seventeenth century and his efforts as an editor of the works of Aristotle and his medieval interpreters, as well as in his attempts to resolve the most debated contradictions between the teaching of Aristotle and that of Averroes. This endeavor gave rise to the *Theoremata* and the *Solutiones contradictionum* and can clearly be discerned in all his work, including his surviving manuscripts (Antonaci 1970; Rugge 2004).

Zimara's *Tabula* was published posthumously, with the first edition dating to 1537. The encyclopedic nature and organization of the work, which was one of the earliest and most successful examples of a dictionary of philosophical terms, made it extremely useful in Italian and foreign centers of study. An examination of the various editions, which were also gradually improved in terms of

their layout and the prominence given to the most important entries, allows the development of particular topics and the new features they assumed to be traced, particularly with regard to physics (the concepts of motion, time, and space) and medicine (the circulation of the blood, the function of the liver, and the anatomy of the heart and the arteries), which now attracts the attention of teachers and students in the Faculty of Arts.

The *Tabula* would be sufficient, in itself, to provide an overview of the history of thought in the period spanning the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Marcantonio had a particular propensity for synthesis, which was the result of his careful examination of the questions.

The *Theoremata* was also a fundamental work with a broad scope, and was as widely read as the *Tabula*. Its topics range from logic, physics, and metaphysics to medicine. The latter is given much importance because, although the *Theoremata* was completed and published for the first time in Naples in 1523, when Marcantonio Zimara was teaching metaphysics at the University of San Lorenzo, it was greatly influenced by his time in Salerno and the speculative interests of the Studio there, where he had not only taught philosophy but also theoretical medicine during the previous years. Zimara remained in Salerno for a number of years (probably from 1518 to 1522) and left a lasting impression there. Many additions were made to the subsequent editions of the work (from 1539 onwards), particularly by his son Teofilo, without, however, deviating from the genuine text and thought of the *Teoremata*.

Yet another, equally significant work by Zimara was his *Solutiones contradictionum*. The original version of this dates back to Zimara's first teaching period in Padua, in around the first decade of the sixteenth century. It reflects the richly polemical and often tumultuous environment that stimulated the minds of the pupils and teachers, both in and out of school, centered on one essential issue: the correct interpretation of Aristotle by Averroes.

Zimara took a stand against the Arab philosopher's detractors. Nevertheless, as he himself stated, his intention was not an indiscriminate and preconceived acquittal of Averroes, but a

careful examination of the text and the commentary, which was not to be forced or led toward interpretations that reflected neither Aristotelian nor Averroistic thought.

The detractors of Zimara's position included his teacher, and then bitter rival, Pomponazzi, who used his authority and prestige to hamper his assignment to the ordinary chair of philosophy for a long time, as is well known (Nardi 1958; Bianchi-Randi 1982; Bianchi 2003).

Impact and Legacy

In both *Solutiones contraddictionum* and the *Tabula*, as well as in the *Theoremata*, Zimara admits the possibility of regressive demonstration in *scientia*. Following Aristotle, he reaffirms the superiority of *diffinitio* over *demonstratio* and, within the latter, the priority of *demonstratio propter quid* over *demonstratio quia*. However, he recognizes that the complexity of nature eludes the absoluteness of logical reconstruction, which is more suited to metaphysics. The cognitive subject emerges as central to Zimara's thought, safeguarded by logical procedures that are indispensable for scientific progress, due to their discursive and argumentative nature. Logic, as can be clearly seen from a reading of his *Annotationes* to John of Jandun's *Metafisica*, has a formal and instrumental nature and is strictly distinct from metaphysics. Logical rigor is in fact the means by which the subject involved in study gains awareness of his centrality in the cognitive process. Some interpreters have recently highlighted this centrality of the cognitive subject as his most interesting contribution to the philosophical debate of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, making Zimara a figure of unquestionable importance in both the teaching of Padua and in Renaissance publishing (Mahoney 1971; Verardi 2012; De Carli 2013).

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Zodiac, Renaissance

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Abstract

The zodiac is a celestial coordinate system, both with conventional astronomical purposes and with symbolic, astrological meanings. From ancient times to the present day, the zodiac is intended as a sort of circular belt on the starry vault that is transversally situated in respect of the solar ecliptic (namely, the apparent path of the Sun on the celestial sphere, along its annual turn), marking the zone where the relative movements of the Moon and the solar system planets usually take place. Because of Earth's rotation, the constellations in this area always appeared to be in circular motion: hence it came its ancient name of ζῳδιακός (*zōdiakós*), a compound of *zōon*, “animal,” or “living being,” and *hodòs*, “path.” In fact, the “proceeding” stars within the zodiac have been grouped into 12 consequent constellations called *signs*, according to a 12-fold classification that also and especially in Renaissance was maintained as based on the imaginative appearances of mythological beings in the skies and their respective astrological/astronomical significance.

Impact and Legacy

A formal definition of what was the zodiac in Renaissance times can be found in Knittel's *Cosmographia elementaris* (1647), where the scholar wrote: “Zodiacus est circulus maximus, cuius poli distant a polis Mundi gradibus 23½.

Secat Aequatorem oblique, ita ut super aequatorem sit inclinatus, et una zodiaci medietas vergat ad Septentrionem, altera ad Austrum. Punctum vero medium utriusque; Medietatis ab Aequatore recedit gradibus 23½. Secat illius latitudinem per medium una linea, quae dicitur Ecliptica, quia in ipsa, aut prope ipsam fiunt Eclipses. Caeterum continet intra suam amplitudinem 12 constellationes, quae libet continet 30 gradus. Earum autem nomina sunt: ♈ Aries; ♉ Taurus; ♊ Gemini; ♋ Cancer; ♌ Leo; ♍ Virgo; ♎ Libra; ♏ Scorpius; ♐ Arcinens [Sagittarius]; ♑ Caper; ♒ Amphora; ♓ Pisces.” He made clear that the practical functions of the zodiac for astronomy were many: it divides the heavens in their austral and boreal parts; it is the region where eclipses take place; it allows to measure the proper motion of planets and calculate the longitude of the fixed stars; it is the cause of night/day inequality and of the seasonal alternance along the year. Finally, he reminded that the zodiac has four main points: two of them are equinoctial, where the zodiac intersects the equator, and two of them are solstitial, which are at the maximal distance from the equator.

Nonetheless such an astronomical definition of the zodiac was somehow a point of arrival, since the main role that it had for centuries, or rather for millennia, was peculiarly astrological. Planets and zodiac stars were regarded as influential or even responsible for almost all the earthly events, human matters included, and even on individual level. The planetary configuration in the zodiac as it appeared at the time of the birth was considered to have effect on the genesis of inner predispositions, inclinations and behavioral attitudes, formation of humors and temperaments, anatomical structure, and even physical aspect. Consequently, during Renaissance times, the astrological importance of such celestial coordinate system was a decisive element for horoscopes and nativities, as well as for predictions and any sort of important decision-making, since “according to the relation of the planets among themselves to the signs of the zodiac, future events and the course of whole lives were divined and the most weighty decisions arrived at” (Burckhardt 1860).

The zodiac subject *as such* was never felt as a heretical field of knowledge, and it was easy to maintain an astrological faith in the stars together with a religious devotion to God (as attested, e.g., by the emblematic case of Agostino Chigi and the frescos that he commissioned, where both the elements are present).

The view of Marsilio Ficino was also hybrid and somehow ambiguous, because on the one hand he condemned the astrological use of the zodiac in his *Disputatio contra iudicium astrologorum* (1477) and on the other hand he defended its normative utility for the medical field in his *De vita* (1489); and in his *De Rationibus musicae* (1484), he set the zodiac signs in relation with musical notes, where the positive or the negative aspect of the signs matched, respectively, with harmonic consonances and dissonances (Kristeller 1937; Garin 1976).

Campanella thought that zodiac signs were the expression of minor “dignities,” the last supernatural powers of the celestial hierarchy, whose influence was very hard to decipher for the sky observer. According to him, it was essential to know the “ascendant” of the event that was under interpretation, even if getting the right ascendant was almost impossible and always correctable. Interestingly, he observed that adopting the geocentric or the heliocentric astronomical model was non-influential for astrology, since it was interested just in the *relative* positions of the sun, planets, and zodiac stars *from the earthly point of view* (Tester 1987).

However there was no shortage of attacks against the zodiac and the astrological doctrines that it was accompanied with. Savonarola’s *Tractato contra li astrologi* (1497) and Pico’s posthumous *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (1496) represented two of the strongest threats against the astrological zodiac and its mundane understanding. Pico, in particular, criticized the arbitrary division of zodiac sectors in the heavens (“where the stars are turned into animals and the sky is full of fairy tales”), as artificial, questionable, and disagreeable, also because of the phenomenon called “precession of the equinoxes,” that the astronomers of his time wrongly did not take account of.

According to A. Kircher’s *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae* (1646; 1671), zodiac is the place where the blessed and the saints found their afterlife rest, and its 12 signs correspond to the 12 emanations of divine virtues. Among many others, he held to the ancient Hermetic doctrine that the human being, as a microcosm, reflected the macrocosm so that every part of the body was dependent on a sign of the zodiac, from Aries at the head to Pisces at the feet (a doctrine known as *melothesia*). In fact, as Stegman wrote: “in the Renaissance. . .the Zodiac [as symbolic set] provides an explanation of the celestial system as well as of temperaments and humors from which even pure scientists, who ignored or condemned legal astrology, deducted psychological correspondances and clinical diagnosis. It was, in fact, also through the symbolic sciences that natural sciences, physical and psychosomatic medicine progressed” (Stegman 1972, 10–11).

The Jesuit Jeremias Drexel wrote a popular *Zodiacus Christianus* (1618; 1622), where he tried to christianize the 12-fold pattern of the zodiac into a new one, with moral intent. Also William Lilly’s *Christian Astrology* (1647) was an attempt of making use of the zodiac for Christian purposes.

In his *De Stella nova* (1606), Kepler argued that the 12-fold division of the zodiac is just a historical, made-up device and so also the nomenclature of the signs is anything but the result of human imagination, so without any natural significance (Field 1984, 201). On the other hand, the astrologer J.-B. Morin still maintained that zodiac’s celestial sectors (or “houses” of the signs) are not arbitrary nor conventional divisions but rather that they are real marks always present in the nature of the heavens, as he wrote in the seventeenth book of his posthumous work *Astrologia Gallica* (1661).

Both Islamic and Jewish cultures were also very acquainted with the astrological and iconographic power of the zodiac. The zodiac pattern emerged as a decorative theme in Jewish art, from synagogal mosaics to frontispieces of Hebrew manuscripts, with concealed meaning of messianic expectation (Sonne 1953). The Arab Middle East made a precise and stylized use of the zodiac

on detailed stellar maps, although there it was deprived of almost all its mythological background (Saxl 1985 [1925–1926]).

In Renaissance times, the zodiac set of constellations was a widespread iconographic motive and favored symbol of adornment, both in private and in public sphere, making its appearance even on tapestries, miniatures of codices, tarots, and playing cards (Zuffi-Novellone 2009). Along the time, it appeared on stellar circular maps, as on the famous Dürer's engravings, and on celestial globes of the starry vault, with decorative and didactic purposes (Bodnár 2007).

It had also a recognizable civic and urban character, as it appeared in courthouses and on many tower clocks of some European central squares, but it was on the walls of noble halls that zodiac imaginary dominated the scene. In fact magnificent representations of the zodiac can be found not only on the ceilings of many court palaces of the main royal houses but even in shrines and chapels in the Vatican, with astrological and heraldic valences.

The mythological images of the zodiac struggled for a long time to be always updated in consideration of the new astral discoveries, trying to maintain their long-standing role among the sciences, until the roads of astronomy and astrology started to tear irremediably apart.

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Zorzi, Francesco

Born: Venice 1466

Died: Asolo 1540

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Abstract

The Franciscan friar Francesco Zorzi was one of the leading figures of the Christian Kabbalism. Inspired by the writings of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Zorzi in his *De Harmonia Mundi* and in his *In Sacram Scripturam Problemata* built a theological system whose aim is the concordance of the universal wisdom. His personal mystical chrystology and eschatology – which will drive in the ultimate and ineffable restoration in the Supreme Good – are led by constant calculations on musical theory. The study of the musical tones, indeed, allows to understand the intimate structure of the universe.

Zorzi was fundamental in creating a sort of philosophical encyclopedia on Platonism, Pythagoreanism, and Kabbalism, destined to be influential in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. His books will have a long censorial history, started before of the creation of the Sacred Congregation of the Index.

Biography

Francesco Zorzi was born in an influential aristocratic family of Venice in April 1466. He had an ecclesiastic career in the Franciscan Order, during which he was *delegato apostolico* for the Jubilee of 1500 and provincial superior (*Vicario provinciale*) for Venice in 1513–1515 and in 1522–1525 (as *Ministro provinciale*). Zorzi was preacher in the St. Mark's Basilica and multiple times candidate for the Patriarchate of Venice. At the same time, he took part to the Venetian civil life, holding relevant diplomatic assignments (Berengo Morte 1946). In 1530–1531 Zorzi collaborated with Henry VIII's emissary, Richard Croke, in order to collect favorable responses, among Christian and Jewish theologians, for the case of divorce of the King (Vasoli 1974; Campanini 2010). Zorzi was indeed one of the leading figures of the Christian Kabbalism to the point that Francis Yates called him "the Cabalistic Friar of Venice" (Yates 1979, p. 29).

He taught biblical studies and Hebrew language in the convent of San Francesco della Vigna in Venice. In 1533 he was appointed to supervise, as "procuratore della fabbrica," the reconstruction of the Church, committed to the architect Jacopo Sansovino. Zorzi developed a *memorandum* of Platonic and Kabbalistic numerology, based on the power on the number three (because of its association with the Trinity) which was the Sansovino's guide for the project (Wittkower 1962; Vicentini 1954; Foscari and Tafuri 1983).

Master of Kabbalistic studies, innovator in musical theory, eminent Platonic theologian, Zorzi spent last years of his life in convent in Asolo where he died in 1540.

Works

Zorzi's principal works has been defined by an attentive scholar of the Italian heresy, Antonio Rotondò, as the most disturbing books of the sixteenth century (Rotondò 1973, p. 1428). His masterpiece was *De Harmonia Mundi totius cantica tria*, published in Venice (1525). It is a poem in prose, which aims to the concordance of the universal wisdom; be able, for a side, to traduce the cosmic harmony in an architectonical and musical structure; for another side, to trace a mystical ascension which enlightens the principle of the coincidence of the beginning with the end of the universe. The book is divided in three *cantiche* (respectively, on God, Christ, Man) each consisting of eight tones. At the end of the book, 20 mystical hymns describe the beauty, the quiet, and the perfection of the celestial realm. The *In Sacram Scripturam Problemata* (Zorzi 1536) is a collection of interpretations of biblical passages to the light of the *prisca theologia*, with the intention to satisfy the new spiritual (and political) issues arising from the deep religious crisis in Europe. Zorzi (1991) furthermore wrote a philosophical poem in vernacular Italian, the *Elegante Poema*, inspired to Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Scapparone 1990) and a *Commentary* on the Kabbalistic *Conclusiones* of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, which will have subterranean circulation in the Franciscan Order (Wirszubski 1974; Campanini 2010, p. XXIII).

Despite their difference in structure and finality, the works present a common view. The richness of the Zorzi's knowledge of the Hebrew sources is integrated into a coherent Neoplatonist system, melted with Pythagoric and Vitruvian fascinations: musical analogies and Platonic theory of the proportions offer the framework for the description of the universe. In Zorzi's doctrine, the Platonism and Hermeticism of the late Florentine Quattrocento – and their prominent anti-Averroism – are matched with contemporary apocalyptic anxieties. Furthermore, alchemical suggestion and Origenistic proposals found a synthesis which has the Kabbalism as *leitmotiv*. The explosive combination is filtered in a personal mystical chrystology and eschatology which will

drive in the ultimate and ineffable restoration in the Supreme Good (Busi 1997; Campanini 2007).

Doctrines

At the center of the Zorzi's theology is the One, the absolutely simple first principle of all. It is both "self-caused" and the cause of being for everything in the universe. The cosmos is subdivided in grades and orders which reflects the harmonic structures of the nature, which is readable according to musical and geometrical symmetries. The soul is a fundamental mean of communication of the universe. Through the harmonization of Scriptural quotes, Platonic doctrines, Hermetic texts, and Kabbalistic interpretations, Zorzi analyzes the birth and the movements of the soul. He supposed a double moment in the creation in order to conciliate the creation of the man as image of God (*Gn.* 1. 26–27) and the successive formation of the man from the ground through the breath of life (*Gn.* 2. 7). So, according to Zorzi, God has created a universal soul, from which derived the individual souls, as from a mass of molten glass derived the jugs. The insufflations of the soul on Adam correspond to the second act of the creation. In other words, the universal soul should be considered as the Platonic idea: an archetype of the soul, to which the individual souls take part. The solution would allow to reconcile the creation *ab aeterno* with the continuous "infusion" of the souls, which would have forgotten their participation to the archetype, when they become individuated soul (*In Scripturam Sacram Problemata* p. 203 prop. 492–493). The soul is tied with the supernatural world and has a deep similarity with the angelic intelligence, sharing almost the same features of the angels. For this reason, angels serve as prophetic guides as well as their help in spiritual transformation.

In this harmonic architecture, the man has a fundamental role as the midpoint of the universe. Zorzi used arguments derived from Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, to show that the man participates both to the terrestrial and the superior things. With the help of Kabbalistic exegesis, Zorzi connects the different parts and functions of the body to the ten

sefirot: this operation allows the connection between immanent elements and transcendent ones.

Fundamental axis of Zorzi's theology (particularly in the *De Harmonia Mundi*) is chrystology: Christ, of both human and divine nature, has the perfect role of medium, as synthesis and center of everything, enclosing in himself, as *logos*, the "ideal" reason of the whole cosmos. The result of his speculations is a fine drawing of prophetic and astrological lines of the second *canto* of *De Harmonia Mundi* that seeks to demonstrate the eternal presence of Christ in the world by means of an extensive use of the patristic and Kabbalistic sources.

The cosmic role of Jesus as well as the profound analogy that ties the history of mankind to the ontological structures of the universe makes Christ's sacrifice decisive not only for human redemption from the original sin but also for the entire nature. The Venetian monk probably believed near the moment of the cosmic regeneration, with the absorption of the fractures between religions and the conciliation of mundane and spiritual elements: when the time will be ripe, in the seventh day of rest of the *Genesis*, all the creatures would be then returned to the Creator.

Significance and Legacy

Zorzi was fundamental in creating a sort of philosophical encyclopedia on Platonism, Pythagoreanism, and Kabbalism, destined to be influential. Giulio Camillo Delminio, Marcello Palingenio Stellato, Leone Ebreo, Cornelius Agrippa, Guillaume Postel, and John Dee were all careful readers of Zorzi (Blau 1944; Secret 1964). His books were quite successful indeed: *De Harmonia Mundi*, in particular, was published in Paris in 1546 and 1564 and then translated in France by Lefèvre de la Boderie (1578). Its influence might also be measured by the fact that the most authoritative book on magic in the sixteenth century, the *De Occulta Philosophia* of Cornelius Agrippa, was reviewed by the author after an attentive scanning of the *De Harmonia Mundi* (Perrone Compagni 1982, 1992, p. 35 sgg.)

The books of Zorzi will actually have a long censorial ride, started before of the creation of the Sacred Congregation of the Index. Initially, the printing of *De Harmonia Mundi* in 1525, despite some doubts, does not worry too much the orthodox hierarchies (Vasoli 1974, p. 177 e p. 227). After all, the book appeared as an expanded *summa* of the doctrines of Ficino and Pico, and the hazardous issues were hidden in a massive tome of uneasy reading. But when the arguments of *De Harmonia Mundi* were proposed in the *In Sacram Scripturam Problemata* in 1536, disembodied in single propositions tied to Scriptural quotations, they appeared more dangerous. The Ficinian atmosphere was far, and the central problems for the theologians were the last efforts to solve the Protestant schism in direction to an internal reform of the Catholic Church that cannot be postponed. The *Problemata* was the answer of Zorzi to the crisis of the Church, but the book bothered the Vatican as well several protagonists of the Italian evangelical movement, as Gasparo Contarini, Federigo Fregoso, Gregorio Cortese, his possible allies. The book finished, in fact, under the observation of Tommaso Badia, the Master of Sacred Palace, appointed to examine the dangerous texts. Gasparo Contarini, friend of Zorzi's family, tactfully express his criticism on the doctrine of the soul and of the Trinity, maybe to avoid a tougher attack of other theologians (Contarini 1537). Contarini fought the Jewish and Platonic matrix of the double creation of the soul and the suspected Arianism of Zorzi's Trinitarian dissertation. More generally, he found very suspicious the continue recourse to the Kabbalistic hermeneutic and the use of Origen of Alexandria.

The Platonic errors founded by Contarini were resumed and deepened by Sixtus of Siena, in the fifth book of his *Bibliotheca Sancta* (Sixtus of Siena 1566, II, p. 574 sgg.). Interestingly, Zorzi is the only modern theologian extensively quoted (and indicted) among the wrong "expositors" of the Old Testament. The work of Sixtus was the guideline for the official censors charged to expurgate the works of Zorzi. The hazards of the *Problemata* have been signaled in fact in the 1577 – in the long process of the review of the Roman *Index*

of 1564 that will run until 1589 – probably in parallel to the success that the tomes have found in France in those years. Both the books of Zorzi were then suspended in the *Index* of Parma of 1580 and in the official Roman *Index* of the 1596, with the clause "until they were espurgated" (*donec corrigantur*). The operation of an orthodox editing of Zorzi was complicated, for the vastity and the obscureness of his pages, as an internal document of the Congregation denounced in 1583 (Rotondò 1973, p.1436; p. 1456; Ricci 2008; Vasoli 1991), but also for the difficulties to divide the philosophical parts and the theological proposals and to reduce his heresies to already known categories. Since the first interventions, the hostilities of the censors were directed against its mixture of Platonic and Kabbalistic doctrines. The development of process was finally concluded at the beginning of the seventeenth century, with the *expurgationes* finally published by Giovanni Maria Guanzelli in his *Index librorum expurgandorum* (1607): Zorzi obtained the doubtful primacy to be the recipient of the largest number of corrections in the history of the *Index*.

Cross-References

- [Ficino, Marsilio](#)
- [Kabbalah, Renaissance](#)
- [Origenes in the Renaissance](#)
- [Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco](#)

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Zsámboky, János

Born: Trnava, 1 June 1531

Died: Vienna, 13 June 1584

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Abstract

János Zsámboky (Samboky), by his humanist name Johannes Sambucus (Trnava, 1 June 1531–Vienna, 13 June 1584), a Hungarian-born scholar, philologist, historian, physician, cartographer, letter-writer, and collector of manuscripts, books, and art treasures. He spent 22 years in various towns of Europe. From 1564 until his death, he lived in Vienna, in imperial court service.

Alternate Names

[Sambucus](#)

Heritage and Rupture with the Tradition

Sambucus studied at Wittenberg University, but following either the Lutheran or other denominations is not characteristic of him. Of literary tradition, he was mostly interested in antique culture and contemporary humanist literature. He did not break with medieval religious heritage spectacularly, but he preferred philological aspects to anything else. His correspondence contains 340 letters, which show his orientation. He took

part in the intellectual movement of European “*respublica litteraria*”; he was in contact with almost every renowned scholar of his age via correspondence or in person. First these were academic contacts (Vienna, Georg Rithaymer; Ingolstadt, Veit Amerbach and Peter Apian; Strassburg, Johannes Sturm; Paris, Jean Dorat, Adrien Turnèbe, Petrus Ramus, and Pascal Duhamel, contact with the Pleiade; Padova, Andreas Vesalius). He was a passionate collector of books and manuscripts. His library contained 3,327 volumes, mainly Greek and Latin works on rhetoric, philology, and theory of language. He published several pieces of his highly valued collection of Latin and mostly Greek manuscripts (c. 600 volumes) partly himself, partly through other publishers. Thus he came into contact with outstanding philologists, philosophers, and publishers of his age (Paulus Manutius, Christophe Plantin, Piero Vettori, Theodor Zwinger, Fulvio Orsini, Antonius Muretus, Johannes Oporinus, Conrad Gesner, Abraham Ortelius, Joachim Camerarius Jr., Carolus Clusius, Justus Lipsius, Johannes Crato von Krafftheim, Hugo Blotius, Nicasiaus Ellebodium, and others). As part of his conscious editing program, he published more than 50 works in print, among them important works of humanist writers connected to Hungary (Petrus Ransanus, Antonio Bonfini, Janus Pannonius, István Werbőczy). Twenty-eight unfinished publishing projects of his are known from the time before his death.

Innovative and Original Aspects

In the case of Sambucus, it may not be regarded only as a formula of modesty when he said that his intellect was just enough for diligent work, so he considered the transmission of antique, mainly Greek works and their publication more important than writing original works. As a philologist, he did not favor conjectures worked out from personal ideas, but he tried to find the most authentic manuscripts and make editions based on them. With his editions, he made efforts mostly for the revival of Greek literature and culture, which he, like Dorat, considered more valuable than Latin.

He summarized his views in his works titled *De imitatione Cireroniana* (Paris, 1561). Sambucus wrote only in Greek and Latin, but he held it important to “defend” Hungarian language, and he thought to improve it on the model of the Latin language. He wrote about the art of letter-writing, and he combined Neoplatonic and Aristotelian approach when talking about Horace’s *Ars poetica*.

Impact and Legacy

The most renowned of his own works is *Emblemata*, an illustrated volume of Latin poems, which was edited five times. Geoffrey Whitney translated 50 emblems from it into English, which were used by William Shakespeare as source material. Sambucus had a significant impact especially on the science of philology. By publishing the works of Diogenes Laertios, Petronius, Plautus, Vegetius, and others, he created the basis for editing primary sources in later times. In the last two decades of his life, he lived a courtly life in the imperial court in Vienna, but scholarly activity was the most important for him all the time. However, it caused a financial disadvantage for him, so he sold a great part of his valuable collections to Emperor Rudolf II.

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Marche territory (*Picenum*), was a political theorist and philosopher. His *oeuvre* includes moral, philosophical, and political dialogues, poems, and works on economics and utopian ideals. He was most renowned for his treatise *On the Reason of State*.

Alternate Names

[Zuccolo, Lodovico](#)

Biography

Ludovico Zuccolo was born on September 18, 1568, at Faenza, an Italian town in the province of Ravenna, then part of the Papal States. Little is known about his life. He was the son of Alessandro, a Faentine nobleman who died in jail after being sentenced for heresy a 5-year service on a papal galley (Nediani 1953–1954; Firpo 1969; Frajese 1995; Lavenia 2020). In 1607–1608, Zuccolo joined the Accademia degli Smarriti, and while a student at the University of Bologna, he gave lectures in philosophy and eventually graduated there on 13 July 1608 (Pissavino 1984; Lavenia 2020). Shortly afterwards, he entered the service of Francesco Maria II della Rovere, last Duke of Urbino, as secretary and tutor to his son Federico Ubaldo, and issued his first book, the *Gradenico*. However, the ill-will of several men of letters at court as well as his impatience with the rigid rules of courtly life eventually led him to look for appointments and patrons elsewhere. During his stay at Urbino, Zuccolo also travelled between Venice, where he published some of his dialogical works, and Faenza, where he became a member of the *Accademia dei Filoponi*, the town's most illustrious and enduring literary academy; founded in 1612, continued into the early nineteenth century. After 9 years “of ill-fated servitude,” as he himself defined his stay at the ducal court (Zuccolo 1625a, b), he definitely left Urbino sometime around March 1617 and moved firstly to the Republic of Ragusa, in Dalmatia, where he taught philosophy (Nediani 1960, 1969), and finally established himself in Faenza at the beginning of 1618. To this period date back

Zuccolo, Lodovico

► [Zuccolo, Ludovico](#)

Zuccolo, Ludovico

Born: 1568, Faenza

Died: 1630, Bologna

Tiziana Provvidera

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Abstract

Ludovico (Lodovico) Zuccolo (1568–1630), also known as the *Picentino* because he lived for almost 9 years (from 1608 to 1617) in the

both his acquaintances with the political-cultural circles close to Fra Paolo Sarpi and his involvement with the Venetian printer Marco Ginammi, who was constantly in danger of censorship because of the printing of books not in line with the Counter-Reformation. Much of Zuccolo's literary production came out from his press. After trying unsuccessfully to obtain a university chair, first at Bologna and later at Padua (Nediani 1960; Pissavino 1984), in December 1623 Zuccolo found himself in Spain with the Papal nuncio, Innocenzo Massimo (1581-1633), bishop of Bertinoro, and later bishop of Catania. Once back to Italy in Rome at the end of 1625, Zuccolo was reported twice (November 29th and December 18th) by a young Portuguese called João Monteiro to the Holy Office on suspicion of heterodoxy. He had denied, it was alleged, the immortality of the soul by favorably quoting the views of Epicurus, Galen, and Aristotle, besides having suggested that "religion was a pretext for the princes for keeping the people in check" (Ginzburg 1967; Nediani 1968; Frajese 1995). His family's long-standing religious stance also made him a target of the Venetian Inquisition, which viewed his works with grave distrust. In the event, it was the Venetian ecclesiastical censors who prohibited the publication of an essay due to be included in the first collection of his *Discorsi* (1617), chiefly on account of its critical assessment of Thomas More's *Utopia* and its catholic author. The dialogue, called *L'Aromatario, ovvero della repubblica d'Utopia*, a book resonant with Machiavellian echoes, was eventually published in 1625 in the second edition of his *Dialogues* (Nediani 1960; Firpo 1969). Over the next 2 years, he moved from one city to another; first he went to Naples and later to Sicily, perhaps in the hope of finding a safe haven following the proceedings instituted against him by the Congregation of the Holy Office. In the last months of 1627, he was employed in the service of the legate cardinal Bernardino Spada da Brisighella in Bologna, where he probably died in 1630 from the plague (Nediani 1960).

Well-versed in ancient Greek and Roman culture, with a preference for Aristotelian philosophy, and devoid, it seems, of any interest in Christian authors, Zuccolo developed a political

philosophy and utopianism that was remarkably original and unconventional. Neglected for many centuries by scholars, his merits as a political theorist were revived, early in the twentieth century by the German historian Friedrich Meinecke and the Italian idealist philosopher Benedetto Croce. The latter presented him as "the most profound political philosopher of his time and a forerunner of the theories of the autonomy of politics from morality" and declared his *Della ragion di Stato* to be "the most sharp and original work written on the subject in his time" (Croce 1927). In more recent years, Zuccolo has been portrayed by critics as a utopian thinker (Pissavino 1993, 2000, 2007a), a heretic and libertine (Ginzburg 1967; Firpo 1969).

The earliest of Zuccolo's manifold works is the unpublished *De quantitate solis contra vulgatas astrologorum et philosophorum disceptatio*, written as early as 1606. The treatise is an apology for Epicurus's astronomic theories, prompted perhaps by his bid for a post at the court of Duke Francesco Maria II, who had shown great interest in the sciences and the arts (Nediani 1957; Pissavino 1984). In the first of his printed dialogues, *The Gradenigo. Dialogo nel quale si discorre contra l'amor platonico, et a longo si ragiona di quello del Petrarca* (1608), Zuccolo severely condemned Platonic love, or the courtly love tradition of Petrarch and his followers, particularly Judah Leon's *Dialoghi d'amore*. His next dialogue called *L'Alessandro*, published in 1613 together with three eclogues, the *Eduilio*, the *Critio*, and *Dorinda*, is a defense of pastoral drama based on the idea that its "youth" compared favorably to the "decrepitude" of comedy and tragedy. Accordingly, pastoral drama is the most popular of the three genres inasmuch as it satisfied contemporary taste for spectacles befitting princely decorum (Zuccolo 1613). Both *Gradenigo* and *L'Alessandro* were reprinted in his first edition of *Dialoghi* published in Perugia in 1615. In the same year, Zuccolo dedicated the *Heroica virtus sive de honesto gloriae studio* to his disciple, Federico Ubaldo della Rovere, who succeeded to the Duchy of Urbino on 3 November 1621. The treatise, didactic in tone, encouraged the young prince to aspire to virtue and glory and underlined the philosopher's civic role (Pissavino

1984). The topics of virtue and glory reappear both in his 1617 *Discorsi. Della gloria. Del genio. Della pena della discortesia* and in *Discorsi dell'honore, della gloria, della riputatione, del buon concetto* (1623), in which Zuccolo opposed Botero's idea that the best way for a ruler to maintain stability in the state and concomitantly keep hold of power was to gain a good reputation among his subjects. Rather the indispensable conditions for peaceful coexistence and good government were, he insisted, honor and virtue. Religion might be the most effective means, but honor of a ruler or ruling body was a viable alternative for encouraging social cohesion. Finally, in the *Discorso delle ragioni del numero del verso italiano* (1623), a short work on poetics addressed to Innocenzo Massimi, he examined the forms, criteria, and examples of Italian versification and mourned the progressive decadence of Italian poetry (Zuccolo 1623b; 2005).

Zuccolo's most important innovations were in the field of political theory and more specifically his interpretation of "reason of state" and the methods for building a consensus in an ideal state. In 1621, he published the *Considerationi politiche e morali sopra cento oracoli d'illustri personaggi antichi* - a commentary of a hundred "oracles," or quotations from classical Latin authors, with his translations into Italian - in which he discussed, "following the teachings of Aristotle, the authority of Cornelius Tacitus, and other political writers, various matters related to the government of the States, to the spreading of good customs, and to the understanding of History" (Zuccolo 1621). The work, dedicated to the archbishop of Ravenna, Cardinal Luigi Capponi, encompasses the short tract *Della ragion di Stato* (*Oracle*, XI) written in contrast with Giovanni Botero and Scipione Ammirato's arguments on the subject (Lavenia 2020). It became popular in Italy and abroad, partly thanks to the Latin translation by the German jurist Johann Garmers (*Dissertatio de ratione status*, 1663). A revised and corrected edition of the *Considerationi* (1623), dedicated to the Genoese poet and writer Giovanni Vincenzo Imperiale, contains a reply

to an unknown "Accademico Pellegrino" in Rome who had criticized the first edition of his tract.

Political theory became a popular topic in Counter-Reformation Europe, particularly in Italy, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Zuccolo's *Della ragion di stato* was an innovative example in several respects. According to him, "reason of state" was no more than the understanding and application of the means for establishing and maintaining any given state. That is to say, there was not one "reason of state," but many, as many, in fact, as there were existing forms of state. The *ratio status* of a good monarch differed from that of a tyrant and differed too from that practised in a republic (Zuccolo 1621). Taking issue with Machiavelli that the end justified the means, Zuccolo relates the question of political authority and right political conduct to the different forms and practices of governments. "Reason of state" did not necessarily entail breaches of the law. It tended to occur in corrupt states. By contrast in healthy states, civil law and "reason of state" could coexist. In general, as Meinecke pointed out, "the *raison d'état* of good State forms was itself respectable and good; and the opinion that all *raison d'état* was evil applied only to bad forms of the state" (Meinecke 1924). The novelty of Zuccolo's interpretation was that "reason of state" did not have an intrinsic moral or amoral status. It had been Machiavelli and others in his train, "wicked and sinful writers," who taught "the ways and means to act in accordance with reason of State in evil governments" (Zuccolo 1621). True, good governments are rare, as Aristotle had declared, but this did not prove that good versions of "reason of state" were impossibilities. In keeping with this interpretation, Zuccolo concluded that republican government was preferable to any other since, more than any other type of state, it encouraged the coincidence of "reason of state" and good government.

Zuccolo's classification between "good" and "bad" forms of state introduced the Aristotelian principle that politics should provide for the public welfare of those who obey and those who

command. “Reason of state,” following his definition, served to defend the state and not (as Machiavelli had said) the interest of the ruler. It constituted, that is, only a part of the art of government, the other part being “political pragmatism” (*prudencia politica*) founded on popular approval. Hence, in response to Botero and to the leading Italian political theorists of his time, he contrasted the “reason of interest” with a reason “that is proper to the state alone,” the latter being confined “those interests which affect the constitution and form of the republic” (Zuccolo 1621).

In 1625, a second edition of Zuccolo’s *Dialoghi*, containing old and new texts revised and enlarged by the author, was published in Venice. The work includes the so-called utopian writings, the already mentioned *L’Aromatario, overo Della Repubblica di Utopia*, in which he laid bare the inaccuracies and contradictions in More’s *Utopia*; *Il Porto, overo Della Repubblica d’Evandria*, in which he sketched of an utopian community intended as a possible model for existing societies, and *Il Belluzzi, overo Della città felice*, in which he extolled the political liberty of the small Italian republic of San Marino. The collection also involves a critical analysis of Aristotelian doctrines and a *summa* of the practical wisdom that he had accrued during his many years of service at Italian Renaissance courts. Even so, it was the aristocratic republic that he identified as the best form of government (*optimus status*), with freedom praised as the indispensable condition for its property. Granted that there were different types of “reason of state” according to the type of state, and granted too that maintaining power was the more likely the more that a ruler, irrespective of the kind of state, governed well (*bene operare*), conversely it was also true that the ideal state could be adapted to the needs of statecraft as it was actually practised, as in fact utopian models also required (Pissavino 2007b).

Like his writings dealing with the “reason of state,” Zuccolo’s utopian dialogues proposed a secular response to the political issues posed by Counter-Reformation ideology. The relentless focus on political preservation as it emerges in

this literary production, turned in later works into a peremptory admonition to harmony (Pissavino 2014). In *Molino, overo della amicitia scambievole fra’ cittadini*, a dialogue also belonging to the 1625 Venetian collection, he argued that political stability was guaranteed by friendship and harmony among the citizenry. The same topic appears in the *Secolo dell’Oro rinascente nell’amicizia fra Nicolò Barbarigo e Marco Trivisano* (1629), a work in praise of the friendship between two influential Venetian patricians, Nicolò Barbarigo and Marco Trevisano. The book did not endear the author among the literati of contemporary Venice, who had written, in an unflattering vein, of the relationship between the two men. Furthermore, in *Nobiltà commune et heroica* (1625), dedicated to Pietro Contarini, Zuccolo attacked Alessandro Tassoni’s views on nobility, provoking a literary dispute in which outstanding academicians of the time, such as Camillo Baldi and Scipione Chiaramonti, became involved.

Zuccolo’s last printed work is the *Discorso dello amore verso la Patria*, posthumously published in 1631. The book contains a covert criticism of temporal power in the form of a diatribe against Charles V, particularly his failure to curb the spread of Lutheranism in Germany and his focus, instead, on the conquest of Italian states (Firpo 1969). Deploping the decline of the mores and national pride, even more evident when compared with the state of affairs in other European lands, Zuccolo expressed his disdain for the wretched circumstances of the small Italian States and city-states that had been occupied by foreign armies. More provocatively still, he identified the Roman Church and the Catholic religion itself as the reason why Italians had not recognized themselves as a free people, a view strongly reminiscent of Machiavelli.

Cross-References

- ▶ Machiavelli, Niccolò
- ▶ Reason of State, Renaissance Concept of
- ▶ Utopia in Renaissance Philosophy

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Zvingerus, Theodorus

► [Zwinger, Theodor](#)

Zvinggerus, Theodorus

► [Zwinger, Theodor](#)

Zwinger, Theodor

Born: 2 August 1533, Basel

Died: 10 March 1588, Basel

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Abstract

Humanist, physician, philosopher, and polymath, Theodor Zwinger first studied under the anti-Aristotelian Petrus Ramus in Paris and later in the bastion of Aristotelianism in Padua. He became one of the most influential late humanists of Basel. He published commentaries on Galen and Hippocrates and commentaries on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. He is also the author of books on ethics, history, and travel. Despite his earlier dissent with Paracelsianism, he later accepted certain Paracelsian concepts. His book entitled *Theatrum humanae vitae*, comprising thousands of pages of "encyclopedical" contemporary knowledge, was extremely influential up until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Alternate Names

[Theodor der Ältere](#); [Zuingerus, Theodorus](#); [Zvingerus, Theodorus](#); [Zvinggerus, Theodorus](#); [Zwinggerus, Theodorus](#)

Zuingerus, Theodorus

► [Zwinger, Theodor](#)

Biography

Theodor Zwinger was born into a renowned Basel humanist family as the nephew of the famous Basel printer Oporinus. Theodor received a private humanist education in his native city through his stepfather, the humanist Conrad Lycosthenes. He continued in his studies in Lyon over the years 1548–1651 where he simultaneously worked in a printing shop. He moved to Paris in 1551 where he studied under Petrus Ramus. Zwinger studied medicine in Padua under Bassiano Landi as of 1553 where he obtained his doctorate in 1559. After his return from Italy, Theodor Zwinger opened up a private medical practice in Basel. In this period Zwinger edited in Basel the works of the Italian Platonist Francesco Cattani da Diacceto (Zwinger 1563) and also published commentaries on Galen (Zwinger 1561). Here and in his later works, Zwinger frequently employed the method of division of a subject by means of tables, which he derived either from his Paduan medical studies (Fortuna 1993) or from Petrus Ramus (Gilly 1977, 1979).

Zwinger became professor of Greek at the University of Basel in 1565, professor of ethics in 1571, and professor of theoretical medicine as of 1580. In the realm of practical philosophy, Zwinger commented on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Zwinger 1566) and *Politics* (Zwinger 1582) and wrote works dealing with ethics (Zwinger 1575), which followed in the Aristotelian tradition. Zwinger combined both the use of tables as a method of presenting ethics and enumerating examples of vice and virtues with the aim of connecting up ethical philosophical theory and the practice of living (Lines 2007).

Zwinger, as a pupil of Paduan medicine, initially dissented from Paracelsus and Paracelsianism. After his edition of Hippocrates (Zwinger 1579), however, Zwinger began to appreciate certain parts of Paracelsian medicine due to its emphasis on experience which was in his view similar to Hippocrates (Gilly 1977, 1979). Zwinger was intrigued by Paracelsus' work, specifically by his efforts in healing by means of powers hidden in nature (Zwinger 1610). He criticized, in contrast, Paracelsus' lack

of interest in anatomy (Portmann 1987). Theodor Zwinger was later in contact with the Paracelsian physician Petrus Severinus (Shackelford 2004) and may have been a teacher of Heinrich Khunrath and Andreas Libavius (Forshaw 2008).

The most renowned work by Theodor Zwinger was the comprehensive compilation of contemporary knowledge entitled *Theatrum humanae vitae*, first published in 1565 (Zedelmaier 2008). This systematically ordered knowledge, presented with the help of tables, had a double goal: theoretical knowledge and a practical attitude to the world, i.e., an ethical approach. Zwinger distinguishes between two equal sources of knowledge: theory on the one hand and experience and history on the other, which deals with particulars and provides exempla (Blair 2005). The first edition of the *Theatrum* contained 1,400 pages (Zwinger 1565) and the third edition from 1586 as many as 4,500 (Zwinger 1586). The *Theatrum* was reworked in 1631 by the Catholic Laurentius Beyerlinck into eight volumes of 7,500 pages plus an index and was printed in this form five times up until 1707.

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- Hippocrates and Hippocratism
- Khunrath, Heinrich
- Ramus, Petrus
- Severinus, Petrus

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Zygomalas, John and Theodosius

Born: John Zygomalas: Nafplio 1498

Died: John Zygomalas: Istanbul 1584

Born: Theodosius Zygomalas: Nafplion 1544

Died: Theodosius Zygomalas: Istanbul 1607

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Abstract

John Zygomalas and his son Theodosius were sixteenth-century Greek scholars. They resided in Constantinople and were active in the contacts between Protestants and Greek Orthodox Church. Their contribution to the preservation and further development of ancient Greek and Byzantine thought was crucial, since they held key positions in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

Biography

John Zygomalas was born in Nafplio, a small city in Southern Greece, which at the time was occupied by the Venetians. Stavrakios Malaxos and Arsenios Apostolis took care of his elementary education and taught him ancient Greek. He continued his studies at the University of Padua, where he learned Latin and Italian. He rejected, despite offers, to stay in Italy and work for the Greek community in Venice. After spending several years in Italy he returned to Nafplio and worked as ecclesiastical orator and teacher. John was esteemed by the authorities of the Greek Patriarchate and accompanied the future Patriarch Metrophanes III in his trip to Italy. Around 1550 he moved to Adrianople and 5 years (1555) later to Constantinople, upon an invitation from the Patriarch Ioasaph II, who was Zygomalas' former

Zwinger, Theodor

► **Zwinger, Theodor**

student, in order to assist the educational plans of the Patriarch. There Zygomalas was proclaimed “Great Orator” of the Patriarchate. Until his death he lived and taught in Constantinople, possibly at the Patriarchal Academy. In 1576 Patriarch Ieremias II proclaimed him “Great Interpreter of the Scriptures.” The same year John traveled to Vienna in order to convert the emperor Maximilian II to the Orthodox dogma. John’s son, Theodosius, was also born in Nafplio and moved to Constantinople with the rest of his family. He quickly ascended the hierarchy and became chief secretary of the Patriarchate (*protonotarios*). He played a significant role in the correspondence between German Lutherans and the Patriarchate. His personal correspondence with Martin Crusius, the famous professor of ancient Greek and Latin philology at the University of Tübingen, is important since he encouraged German intellectuals to study and appreciate post-Byzantine culture.

Innovative and Original Aspects

Since his arrival in Constantinople John Zygomalas started to teach Ethics, Dialectic, and Rhetoric. Patriarch Ioasaph II referred to Zygomalas when he wrote that “we engaged a master of philosophy.” According to Crusius, Zygomalas’ teaching was of poor quality and his philosophical and philological background mediocre, although he had studied at Padua. Despite Crusius’ bitter comments, John Zygomalas was very influential. The vast majority of the ecclesiastical authorities and scholars in various fields were his students. Theodosius Zygomalas was a productive translator. He rendered in Modern Greek several works of ancient and Byzantine literature.

Impact and Legacy

John Zygomalas was a leading figure in the Patriarchal Academy, the only notable

educational institute in the Greek-speaking territories during the sixteenth century. The vast majority of the ecclesiastical authorities and scholars in various fields were his students. Theodosius’ work gave to Western Europeans, through his correspondence with Crusius, the opportunity to know and appreciate Modern Greek language. Their work and the letter exchange with German Protestants contributed in the dissemination of post-Byzantine Greek thought in Western Europe and inflamed philhellenism.

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